
JOSEPHUS' *JEWISH WAR*
AS A NARRATIVE FIVE-ACT TRAGEDY

Submitted by

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To Elvira
And our Six Stars

*Non semper ea sunt quae videntur: decipit
Frons prima multos, rara mens intellegit
Quod interiore condidit cura angulo.*

Things are not always what they seem:
First impressions do mislead many;
Rare mind, though, discovers what
Fear has placed out of sight.

Gaius Julius Phaedrus
Augustuus libertus
Fabulae 4.2.5-7.

STATEMENT OF SOURCES

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma. No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgment in the thesis. This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

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ABSTRACT

The Dissertation, *Josephus' Jewish War as a Narrative Five-act Tragedy*, develops a method of reading the war narrative of Josephus that is consistent with the textual design of the literary work.

Traditionally *Bellum Judaicum* has been held as a history, with little discrimination among the many types of history. A different understanding of the genre of the war narrative of Josephus is proposed in this study from what has been traditional, namely, that in addition to being a narrative history, *B.J.* is also a narrative five-act tragedy. Given the ease of recognition, the narrative history may be considered as placed in the foreground and the narrative of five-act tragedy in the background. It is a rare literary phenomenon here named *genres disjunction*.¹

This raises the issue of what motivated Josephus to undertake such an extraordinary literary creation. It is argued in Chapters 2 to 4 of this study that the author of *B.J.* was led to this manner of writing by his covert political dissidence against the Romans in general, and against the Flavians in particular. In this, Josephus had a precedent in Lucius Annaeus Seneca in his public life and a model in his writings. In the latter, the nine tragedies in general, with exceptional relevance of *Hercules Furens*, served as source and inspiration for constructing *B.J.* in genres disjunction. After briefly discussing that *B.J.* is a composite work with sections in the expository and narrative modes, it is recognised as a narrative

¹ *Genres Disjunction* is a term created for this study to identify a literary phenomenon of the presence of two genres in one literary work. It also implies that a work is constituted with as many texts as there are full genres in operation. It is the genre that defines a text.

history. However, the major emphasis from Chapters 6 to 10 has been on *B.J.* as a narrative five-act tragedy.

The implications from the newer understanding of the dual genres of *B.J.* have been drawn in the last section, titled *Conclusion*.

The implications affect the Text, the Creator of the Text and the Reader-Responder to the Text. The text of *B.J.* easily accessible to any reader is one in the genre of narrative history, whereas the text of the narrative of five-act tragedy calls for a more skilled reading. The second text, structured as a five-act tragedy, is constituted with *B.J.* 1 - 2 as the *Exposition*, *B.J.* 3 the *Complication*, *B.J.* 4 the *Crisis/Climax*, *B.J.* 5 the *Reversal* and *B.J.* 6 - 7.162 the *Resolution*.

The issue of how to read the two texts in genres disjunction is a major challenge, particularly with each text holding its own *valid* meaning. The most appropriate strategy is for the reader to follow what was available to the historical reader to determine meaning of the texts. It is argued that to determine which of the two meanings is preferred, or which is both *valid* and *relevant*, is to apply the Roman reading strategy of the ironic mode as developed in Cicero's *De Oratore* and in Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria*.

The Creator of *B.J.* is the historical person Flavius Josephus, with three roles as the historical author, the implied author and the character in the narrative. In each of these roles Josephus' involvement in the Text is different in kind. Unless these roles are identified and their distance from the text determined, it is impossible to read the Text as it calls to be read. Associated with the role of the historical author is another much vexing question of the alleged help of Assistants. Implications of having such Assistants are drawn from the study.

The implications of reading successfully a work in genres disjunction of two texts, places added obligations on the reader-responder as the historical reader. Not only is this reader expected to be well-versed in classical Greek and Latin literature of the time, but also to be in the author's confidence as a covert dissident against the Flavians. With appropriate changes, these expectations would cover all the actual readers of *B.J.*

ABBREVIATIONS USED

<i>AA</i>	<i>Acta Antiqua</i>
<i>Ab Urbe</i>	<i>Ab Urbe Condita</i>
<i>AC</i>	<i>Acta Classica</i>
<i>Ag.</i>	<i>Agamemnon</i>
<i>ANRW</i>	<i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt</i>
<i>A.J.</i>	<i>Antiquitates Judaicae</i>
<i>AJP</i>	<i>American Journal of Philology</i>
<i>Ant. rom.</i>	<i>Antiquitates Romanae</i>
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apocryntosis</i>
<i>B.J.</i>	<i>Bellum Judaicum</i>
<i>Ben.</i>	<i>De beneficiis</i>
<i>BICS</i>	<i>Bulletin of the Institute of Classical Studies</i>
<i>C. Ap.</i>	<i>Contra Apionem</i>
<i>CJ</i>	<i>Classical Journal</i>
<i>Clem.</i>	<i>De Clementia</i>
<i>CQ</i>	<i>Classical Quarterly</i>
<i>CBQ</i>	<i>Catholic Biblical Quarterly</i>
<i>De Or.</i>	<i>De Oratore</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogi</i>
<i>DHA</i>	<i>Dialogues d'Histoire Ancienne</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae Morales</i>
<i>Helv.</i>	<i>Ad Helviam</i>
<i>Herc. fur.</i>	<i>Hercules furens</i>
<i>Herc. Ot.</i>	<i>Hercules Oetaeus</i>
<i>HERE</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics.</i> James Hastings, ed. 12 vols. (Edinburgh 1914)

<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutio Oratoria</i>
<i>Ira</i>	<i>De Ira</i>
<i>JJS</i>	<i>Journal of Jewish Studies</i>
<i>JQR</i>	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JSJ</i>	<i>Journal for the Study of Judaism</i>
<i>Lucil.</i>	<i>Ad Lucilium</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Ad Marcian de consolatione</i>
<i>Med.</i>	<i>Medea</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Naturales Questiones</i>
<i>OED</i>	<i>The Oxford English Dictionary</i>
<i>Oed.</i>	<i>Oedipus</i>
<i>PEQ</i>	<i>Palestine Exploration Quarterly</i>
<i>Phaed.</i>	<i>Phaedra</i>
<i>Phoen.</i>	<i>Phoenissae</i>
<i>Poet.</i>	<i>Poetics</i>
<i>Polyb.</i>	<i>Ad Polybium de consolatione</i>
<i>Quo. Hist.</i>	<i>Quomodo historia scribenda sit</i>
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der klassischen Altertumswissenschaft, August Pauly and George Wissowa, (eds)</i>
<i>SC</i>	<i>Sources Chrétiennes</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta Classica Israelica</i>
<i>Thy.</i>	<i>Thyestes</i>
<i>Tranq.</i>	<i>De tranquillitate animi</i>
<i>Tro.</i>	<i>Troades</i>
<i>Vita</i>	<i>Vita</i>
<i>Vit. beat.</i>	<i>De vita beata</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>

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INTRODUCTION

Three literary experiences of reading *B.J.* initiated this dissertation, *Josephus' Jewish War as a Narrative Five-act Tragedy*. The first was of being much surprised at the impressive skills of Josephus as a writer, particularly his ability to move the reader to experience the events as he had experienced when he witnessed and participated in them. As part of this encounter, it was curious that the author found it necessary to claim repeatedly that he was being truthful. Why was he preoccupied with truth? What truth did he have in mind? Or, was he rather concerned that his work would be misread?

The second experience was of reading Seneca's tragedies. Of the nine Senecan tragedies, *Herc. fur.* seemed the most intriguing, since it kept recalling the Herod narrative in *B.J.* both in its details and in its structure. An analysis of this particular narrative unit reinforced the first impressions and raised the possibility that the whole of *B.J.* might be a narrative five-act tragedy in the Senecan mode.

The third experience was of my early reading of what some of the scholars had to say about Josephus. Their comments, by and large, contradicted my response in as much as their focus was on the history behind the text. It was in this welter of comments and opinions that the idea for the dissertation was born, that it would be a worthwhile endeavour to find an appropriate way to read *B.J.* through determining its genre.

As appropriate to a literary research, the design of this study is analytical, not empirical.¹ Instead of a statement of hypothesis, a thesis or an argument is proposed and pursued. Assumptions are stated so are its limits. The terms are defined and a description of the method used to locate data is provided. Such a design requires that the main texts are identified and a selection of representative texts by the same author or authors and by contemporaries or near contemporaries is provided. This can be extended to include scholarly works, even remote in time, chosen for their secondary relevance to the thesis. The secondary texts do not enjoy the validity and reliability of the primary texts. Reliability and validity in the analytical design depend more on consulting the primary sources, and less on secondary, even scholarly, sources.

If *B.J.* could be read consistent with its genre it would enable, on the one hand, to obviate the problems emanating from a misreading of it, and on the other, to offer resolution to not a few of the antinomies Josephan scholarship has found in the text. Given the purpose, the study has been restricted exclusively to *B.J.* Such a limitation of scope is intended to help focus clearly on the issues springing up in one work rather than complicate them with diverse problems that are peculiar to other works, not strictly relevant to *B.J.* The restricted approach also has no mean advantage of enabling the study to be completed within the prescribed limits.

In Chapter 1 the review of how modern Josephan scholarship from 1853 has attempted to read *B.J.* highlights a common trend among the scholars: namely, to read

¹ J. Anderson, B. Durston, M. Poole, *Thesis and Assignment Writing* (Brisbane, New York, Chichester, Toronto: John Wiley and Sons, 1985), 19-21. There are eight elements in the empirical study design. These are: statement of hypotheses, statement of assumptions, statement of the limitations of the study, definition of terms, appropriateness of research design, description of population and sample, the control of error and, lastly, reliability and validity. Some of the elements are common with the analytical study design, however, the definitions of these varies between the two types of designs.

the work as history. This is done in two ways. One of the traditional ways has been, and continues to be, to read it as an expository history. In all expository writings, given the objectivity of the approach and the implied assurance of reliability of the textual truth, the credibility of the author necessarily becomes the uppermost consideration. Scholars who considered *B.J.* knowingly or unknowingly as an expository history, found Josephus seriously wanting as a writer. They attacked the historical person calling him a liar, a plagiarist and a Roman lackey for his perceived personal shortcomings. They transferred these to the writer, as if the historical person and his role as a writer were identical, thereby impugning his work.

The other way, running concurrently with the first, was to read *B.J.* as a historical narrative. The perspective of narrative seems to have allowed greater flexibility to Josephus, the historian, to use literary devices, to exercise his imagination and to take classical models for his work. Scholars also found they could live with personal shortcomings of the historian of the Jewish war simply because the textual qualities were seen as distinct from the personal qualities of the writer. Only since the last few decades have there been attempts to go further into what was understood through the term historical narrative. Yet serious thought has not been given to the significance of the difference between historical narrative and narrative history. Nevertheless it is clear that with time the trend has come to see *B.J.* generally as a literary work. While much remains to be done about why *B.J.* is a narrative history preliminary steps are taken in this study to clarify it.

At this point it is worth noting that some readers may observe that the events of the war in the narrative of *B.J.* naturally follow the sequence of a tragedy. This observation

is not rejected in this study. Rather it argues that *B.J.* follows more than a sequence of a tragedy; that it is much more than a narrative in tragic mode. As the presence of conventions of the classical tragedy genre embodied in it demonstrate, that the historical author has consciously structured *B.J.* as a narrative five-act tragedy, and with the aim to express his covert dissidence against the Flavian dispensation.

The study proceeds in two parts. The main focus of Part One is to seek to establish connections between Lucius Annaeus Seneca and Flavius Josephus. The process begins with the possibility in the coincidences in the lives of these two historically famous contemporaries, which then moves into probabilities through parallels and then into the actual links.

The scope of the process is to investigate into the coincidences in the lives of the two personalities. Next, a search for attitudes in Seneca's writings leads to an investigation of similar attitudes in *B.J.* Finally, actual literary links are recognised in the tragedies of Seneca and *B.J.* as well as how Josephus uses Seneca's model for his own purposes, particularly in the Herod narrative.

Being well known political and literary actors, the possibility of Seneca and Josephus encountering common experiences is very real. Chapter 2 is focused on finding common ground between the two contemporary writers. Appearances at first glance suggest diversity in their cultural background, the places with which they were associated, their political accomplishments and their literary achievements. Yet they had similar experiences, common reasons for attitudinal disjunction and the rationale to be covert dissenters. In addition, for Josephus as a historian of the Jewish war it was a challenge to reconcile his loyalties to the Jewish nation and the Flavian dynasty.

Chapter 3 explores political and literary contexts of Seneca's tragedies and Josephus' narrative of the Jewish war. The parallel elements suggest potential links between the authors. It is the common literary elements in the tragedies and the war narrative that point to such links. Even here, while the minor elements tend to balance between the potential and actual links between the two near contemporary authors, it is the major element of the theme of madness that tilts the balance in favour of actual links. This is perceivable with significant force when Josephus subsumes what Seneca has to say about the theme of madness in all his tragedies. What is more, Josephus takes it further with impressive complexity through converting it into the *motif* to give his entire *B.J.* narrative its driving force.

Chapter 4 confirms the actual relationship between Seneca and Josephus, through echoes of and allusions to the details in the work of the former in the narrative of *B.J.* The actual relationship is focused in the dependence of modelling of the Herod narrative in *B.J.* on Seneca's *Herc. fur.* After eliminating the probability of direct links of Josephus with Euripides, the study outlines connections between Seneca and Josephus. An abundance of data available is presented in evidence of what may fairly be termed as the real links between the two contemporaries: in the details from the sequence of the acts, the Hercules myth, the unnatural crimes, the presence of the stock characters in the play and the narrative, the shared critique of social morality, the tragic themes, and finally the presence of five-act tragedy structure.

In Part One two sets of parallels between Seneca and Josephus become clear. The first reveals many similarities in the lives of these contemporaries. These seem to be no more than coincidences. The second set of parallels in the writings of the two points to

something more. The similarities in the writings show that they are more than coincidental in that the Senecan tragedies have a marked influence on *B.J.* The persuasive basis for such an argument, as already examined, is how the Herod Narrative is closely modelled on *Herc. fur.*

The second part of the study extends the connections found between *Herc. fur.* and the Herod narrative to the whole of *B.J.* This is accomplished through an analysis of the narrative of *B.J.* structured as a five-act tragedy. Chapter 5 serves as a bridging chapter between the two parts of the study in establishing that *B.J.* is made up of expository units as well as narrative. The preface and the coda are in the expository mode while the rest of *B.J.* is in the narrative mode. It is commonly accepted that *B.J.* is a narrative history. The present study focuses on *B.J.* as a narrative five-act tragedy. As a prelude to the second part, Chapter 5 also discusses the conventions Seneca follows in the five Acts of his play *Herc. fur.* It is these conventions, by and large, that guide Josephus' narrative five-act tragedy.

Chapters 6 to 10 proceed in a uniform fashion. A description of what conventions constitute each Act is first given. After this an analysis of the book is taken up to argue that it is an application of the conventions of a particular Act within the tragedy.

In Chapter 6 the conventions of Exposition are explained and of how they apply to Books 1 and 2. In the first section the focus is on how Book 1 serves as a remote setting of the tragedy of the Jewish war. Beginning with the Hasmonean period, the analysis of the narrative continues into the Roman period. The focus shifts closer to the war in the Herod phase. In the second section the patterned sequence of events of Book 2 are focused as proximate setting. As Book 2 develops, it gives the situation in Judaea first,

followed by what happened in Rome and then details the impact of Roman decisions on Judaea. Thus it becomes clear that Judaea and Rome were not ready for the consequences of appointing incompetent procurators but men bent on destroying any good will that might have existed between the Jews and the Romans. This becomes the proximate setting as the mischief of the procurators begins to bear fruit in transforming the Jews and the Romans into tragic antagonists. The proof of it lies in the rout of Cestius and the loss of his legion, on the one hand, and the hubris of the successful Jewish rebels, on the other.

Exposition leads the study into Book 3, since it conforms to the second Act, Complication in Chapter 7. After explaining what conventions embody the second Act, it is argued that conflicts hold the central focus in Book 3 as is proper to Complication, with a specific “exciting force” serving as a trigger. The conflicts cover the whole range from mutually exclusive societies, to individuals and groups at odds with each other, and the individuals in conflict with themselves and nature and superhuman forces. The war textually begins in this book.

Book 4 develops the Complication into the Crisis-Climax of *B.J.* It is explored in Chapter 8. The rebel activities are traced geographically. The friends and foes of the Jewish nation the “hero-victim”² are noted in the patterned events and their impact. The complex play of multiple narrative voices appears and equally impressive is the march of the twelve trials of the “hero-victim” from the “turning point” to the Climax.

² In this study, the “hero” is the protagonist, “the central character in a work of fiction or a drama.” In a tragedy, given the characteristic victimisation of the *hero*, it seems more appropriate to term the central character as the “hero-victim” without gender differentiation or limitations of number of characters or the cities where they live, who together fulfil the role. See C. H. Holman, *A Handbook to Literature*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs Merrill, 1983), 211.

Chapter 9 is a study of Book 5 as it offers the Reversal, or the fourth Act of the tragedy. The civil war is dealt with chronologically, geographically and logically. In the third, the logical order, three sequences work in tandem: the Jewish, the Roman and the combined in which the two combatants meet in a staged battle. The tragic narrative has its beginning in the “tragic force” as the antagonists set themselves against each other. The fortunes of the “hero-victim” fall in fifteen structured steps. These may also be viewed in terms of six stages of madness.

Books 6 and 7.1-162 are studied together in Chapter 10 as they form the Catastrophe of the five-act tragedy. On the surface Book 6 is about the final Roman assault on the City and its political and religious landmarks. As Catastrophe it is a narrative of the death of the “hero-victim” symbolically in the burning first of the Temple and second, of the City. There is a third stage through the deaths of the captives in 7.1-162. The Flavian Triumph in Rome becomes the celebration in reward for the three-fold death of the “hero-victim.”

Lastly, conclusions from the research are brought together. It covers such areas of *B.J.* as a literary work in “genres disjunction,” the reading of it in the ironic mode, and the textual truth of *B.J.* Conclusions are then drawn from what the three distinct roles of Josephus, the historical person, mean. In this, particular emphasis is put on the role of assistants who might have aided Josephus as the writer. What this reading suggests regarding the intended reader-responders of *B.J.* is also considered.

CHAPTER ONE

MODERN LITERATURE ON JOSEPHUS

*Asking new questions of the narrative
may produce a very different reading.*
Steve Mason,
in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 270.

Bellum Judaicum of Flavius Josephus has been read, as Per Bilde argues, in progressive phases since 1853. Per Bilde targets the conceptually evolving relationships among the scholarly works.¹ He briefly considers Schreckenberg, Feldman and eight other authors from Farmer in 1956 to Moehring in 1984 who attempted surveys but left the topic of trends untreated. In Bilde's opinion this is a significant void left unattended.² Bilde undertakes the task of filling what he considers as the lacuna.³ He sees three specific "phases" in the development of Josephan research over the past century and a half.⁴ The first "phase" "corresponds to the traditional Christian concept of Josephus encompassing antiquity and the Middle Ages" and is characterized by "an uncritical attitude."⁵ The second "phase" is perceived as a reaction against the Christian concept. In the 16th and 17th centuries "assumed infallibility" of Josephus is replaced with doubt about his integrity, while the authenticity of

¹ P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus Between Jerusalem and Rome: his Life, his Works, and their Importance* (Sheffield: JSOT, 1988), 123-24.

² H. Lindner, *Die Geschichtsauffassung des Flavius Josephus im Bellum Judaicum. Gleichzeitig ein Beitrag zur Quellenfrage* (Leiden: Brill, 1972); H. W. Attridge, *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the Antiquitates Judaicae of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976); W.C. van Unnik, *Flavius Josephus als historischer Schriftsteller* (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1978); T. Rajak, *Josephus. The Historian and his Society* (London and Philadelphia: Routledge, 1983); H. R. Moehring, "Joseph ben Matthia and Flavius Josephus: the Jewish Prophet and Roman Historian," ANRW II, 21.2, (1984): 864-944.

³ Bilde, *Flavius Josephus*, 17-18, 123-71, and *Josefus som historieskriver. En undersøgelse af Josefus' fremstilling af Gaius Caligulas konflikt med jøderne i Palaestina (Bell 2, 184-203 og Ant 18, 261-309) med særligt henblik på forfatterens tendens og historiske pålidelighed* (København: Gad, 1983).

⁴ Despite Bilde's time limit applied to the scholars analysed, the trends in scholarship are acknowledged to be dating well back to the First Century CE.

⁵ The uncritical attitude is seemingly founded on a Christian bias in favour of Josephus supported by references to Christians in the *Antiquities* (Ant. 20.200), to Jesus (Ant. 18.63-4), to John the Baptist (Ant. 18.116-19), and to James (Ant. 20.200-3). Equally importantly in Christian eyes, the description of the fall of Jerusalem and the razing of the Temple in *B.J.* as well as the *Testimonium Flavianum* accorded Josephus "a quasi canonical status", the honour of a "Jewish Church Father" and even of "a fifth evangelist." See Bilde, *Flavius Josephus*, 17.

the *Testimonium Flavianum* is seriously called into question. Bilde calls this “phase” the “Classical Conception”, marked by features incompatible with objective historical writing.⁶ This “phase” is amply illustrated in the 19th century.⁷ The third “phase” is characterized “as a synthesis of the first two.” This may be seen in a new and a more tolerant attitude towards Josephus among the scholars of the 20th century. Bilde considers this the “Modern Conception.”⁸ This “phase,” begun at the end of 19th century continues to the present.⁹ The present review, while acknowledging Bilde’s contribution, takes another look at the scholarship, briefly touching upon literature from 1853 to 2000. The focus is on the developments in the perspectives on Josephus and his work, or on the work on its own, with specific trends in each perspective. These trends will help to identify if and how the scholars’

⁶ The features incompatible with objective historical writing are identified as threefold. The first is the unpleasant “tendentiousness” in the writings like the servile flattery of the Flavians, apologetics for the Jewish people and for Josephus’ own morally suspect character. The second feature is Josephus’ so called plagiarist practices of using the unacknowledged “anonymous middle source” and lack of originality. The third refers to Josephus’ own weak and untrustworthy personality. Mason describes the classical conception as one that “assumed a simple though erratic model.” See Mason “Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines,” in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome. Culture, Image, Text* (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 563, for a brief summary of the “model.”

⁷ H. Graetz, *Geschichte der Juden von den ältesten Zeiten bis auf die Gegenwart*, Vols 3.1 and 3.2 (Breslau: Schottlander, 1853-75); J.M. Jost, *Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten, I-III* (Leipzig: 1857-59); J. von Destinon, *Die Quellen des Flavius Josephus in der Jüd. Arch. Buch XII-XVII = Jüd. Krieg Buch I* (Kiel: Lipsius and Tisher, 1882); G. Hölscher, *Die Quellen des Josephus für die Zeit vom Exil bis zum jüdischen Krieg* (Leipzig: Teubner, 1904); N. Bentwich, *Josephus* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1914; rep. 1926 and 1976; R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker Flavius Josephus. Ein biografischer Versuch auf neuer quellenkritischer Grundlage*; trans. C. Diesler, ed. S. Mason, *The Jewish Historian Flavius Josephus: A Biographical Investigation based on New Critical Sources* (Gießen: Münchow’sche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1920, and Toronto: York University, 2005).

W. Weber, *Josephus und Vespasian. Untersuchungen zu dem Jüdischen Krieg des Flavius Josephus* (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1921; rep. Hildesheim: Olms, 1973); F.J. Foakes-Jackson, *Josephus and the Jews. The Religion and History of the Jews as Explained by Flavius Josephus* (New York: Smith, 1930; rep. Grand Rapids: 1977); A. Schalit, *Die Vita des Flavius Josephus, Eine historischkritische Untersuchungen* (Wien: 1925); S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome. His Vita and Development as a Historian* (Leiden: Brill, 1979); F. Trisoglio, “L’intervento divino nelle vicende umane dalla storiografia classica greca a Flavio Giuseppe e ad Eusebio di Cesarea”, *ANRW II*, 21.2 (1984): 977-1104.

⁸ The modern conception is marked by two characteristics: the first is the focus on Josephus’ own creative contribution and the second concerns the interest in how Josephus was motivated in literary, theological and political aspects.

⁹ The term “phase” seems a misnomer. A “phase,” as Bilde understands it, is sequential. What Bilde calls a “phase” is rather an ‘attitude towards Josephus and his work,’ that can coexist and overlap with another. For the purposes of this study the focus is on the scholars’ perception of Josephus and his work. An attitude is implicit to a perception.

understanding of the status of Josephus as a historian and as a person influenced their reading of *B.J.* as a literary work.¹⁰

For the purposes of this study 2005 determines the cut- off point for modern Josephan scholarship.¹¹ In general, *B.J.* has been read either as a history or as a history with literary elements in it. There has not been a single case of reading it simply as a literary work, free of its historical underpinnings. It thus leaves only two practised ways of reading *B.J.*, namely, as history or as history with literary overlay. In these two ways of reading there lies a remarkable progress in perceiving Josephus and his work in the last 30 years. Josephan scholars have been instrumental in achieving it, necessitating in some instances significant changes in their earlier positions. This Review is set out in three sections: the first briefly deals with the traditional reading of *B.J.* as a history; the second deals with the gradual shift toward the current manner of reading *B.J.* as history with literary elements; the third deals with the most recent period, when *B.J.* is without hesitation seen as a literary work with historical underpinnings.

1.1 READING *B.J.* AS HISTORY

1.1.1 *B.J.* AS EXPOSITORY HISTORY

The earlier manner of reading *B.J.* as a history began, as Bilde has it, in 1853 and continues to the present. In this first phase, there were two clear tendencies. The first tendency

¹⁰ S. Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the Lines" in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome*, 559, 566, highlights the result of the "academic tradition" of studying the works of Josephus "from the perspective of Judaeian *realia*," rather than the "literary investigation of his legacy" and the "setting in which he first published his compositions: Flavian Rome." This study addresses aspects of the literary legacy and the Flavian setting as integral to that legacy.

¹¹ P. Bilde, *Flavius Josephus* and S. Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning: Reading Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum* in the Context of a Flavian Audience" in J. Sievers and G. Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History in Flavian Rome and Beyond* (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2005), 71-100.

considered *B.J.* as an expository history, which is objective factual history or ‘scientific history’.¹² Von Ranke propounded an extreme type of this approach.¹³ Such a genre would demand that the historian Josephus explicitly be part of his work so that the voice in the text is that of the author. The truth of the work would entirely depend on the historian’s credibility as a person and on his competence as a writer. Not every scholar who accuses Josephus of lying, of contradicting himself, of being a Roman lackey, or of being incompetent copyist and so on, consider that *B.J.* is an expository history. Scholars who do not distinguish Josephus the historical person from his functions as a historian, as an implied author, and as a character tend to blame Josephus for all the defects they notice in his history for undermining it as a historical source.¹⁴ Evidently, the scholars focusing on *B.J.* as a historical source exclusively were not interested in its literary qualities.

1.1.2 *B.J.* AS NARRATIVE HISTORY

While the first manner of reading *B.J.* was as expository history, the second manner reads it as historical narrative. It is seen as a history in the narrative mode. The narrative lifts factual history to another level where it becomes an account of events which are factual to a large

¹² The term ‘expository history’ has not been used before. It is introduced here as a species under the genus ‘history,’ with its other branch of ‘narrative history.’ Expository history itself includes subcategories of positivistic history or scientific history as well as a moderate expository form used by Polybius. The latter needs further study.

¹³ L. Von Ranke, *Zur kritik neuerer Geschichtschreiber* (Berlin: Universität zu Berlin, 1824).

¹⁴ H. Graetz, *Geschichte Der Juden Von Den Altesten Zeiten Bis Auf Die Gegenwart*. vol. 3.2. (Breslau: Schottlander, 1853-1875); J. von Destinon, *Die Quellen des Flavius Josephus in der Jüd. Arch. Buch XII-XVII = Jüd. Krieg Buch I* (Kiel: Lipsius und Tischer, 1882); R. Laqueur, *Der jüdische Historiker*; W. Weber, *Josephus und Vespasian*; P. Vidal-Naquet, *Du Bon Usage De La Trahison, in Josephus' De Bello Judaico*, trans. P. Savinel, (Paris: Bayard, 1977); S. Schwartz, “Josephus and Judaism from 70 to 100 of the Common Era,” Ph.D. diss., Columbia University, (1985). Feldman has convincingly refuted Schwartz. See L. Feldman and G. Hata, eds., *Josephus, the bible and history* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1989), 395. J. Lewy, “The Motives of Titus to Destroy the Temple according to Tacitus,” [Heb.], *Zion* 8, (1942-43): 81-83; L. Bernstein, *Flavius Josephus: His Time and His Critics* (New York: Liveright Publishing Corporation, 1938).

extent while allowing for non factual elements to embellish or to interpret the events.¹⁵ It allows for a distance between the extra-textual historical author and the intra-textual implied author or narrator. The scholars who consider *B.J.* as a historical narrative acknowledge the need for historical facts to underpin the narrative while exercising tolerance of Josephus' alleged shortcomings as a person. He was not a mere chronicler of historical events, but a creative raconteur of historical stories with latitude for imagination. A clearly discernible diminution of personal attacks on Josephus as a person and as a writer distinguishes these scholars from the first group.¹⁶

The second phase retains some traditional antipathy against Josephus, the person and the historian, and accepts an increasing role for literary elements in *B.J.* Such a phase begins more perceptively around the late 1970's, and continues to the present. It is a phase that increasingly looks at the text independent of Josephus, the historical person. In the creation of the text, the person of Josephus and his role as the writer take positions extra-textually. Because of such a perspective, the text is recognizable as being endowed with a greater say in determining the meaning embedded in it. The style and the manner in which the content of the text is shaped become significant elements in understanding the meaning of the text.¹⁷ If the text is

¹⁵ Holman, *A Handbook*, 284. Mason categorically states that "everyone who recounts the past necessarily interprets it." This can be true only of history in the narrative mode where interpretation with subjective elements is possible, not in the expository mode where, by definition, objective analysis is appropriate. See S. Mason, *Josephus and the New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 299.

¹⁶ B. Niese, "Der Jüdische Historiker Josephus," *HZ* 40, (1896), 193-237, translated into English as "Josephus" *HERE* 7, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1914), 569-79; H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: KATAV, 1967), 23-7; H. R. Moehring, "Joseph ben Matthia and Flavius Josephus: The Jewish Prophet and Roman Historian," *ANRW* II 21.2, (Berlin and New York: Walter de Gruyter, 1984), 864-944. A. Schalit, "Josephus Flavius" *Encyclopedia Judaica*, vol. 10, (1971): 251-65; D. R. Runnalls, "Hebrew and Greek Sources in the Speeches of Josephus' 'Jewish War'," Ph.D. diss. (University of Toronto, 1971); G. Hata, "The Jewish War of Josephus: A Semantic and Historiographic Study," Ph.D. diss., (Dropsie University, 1975). H. Lindner, *Die Geschichtsauffassung*; B. Thérond, "La discourse de l'histoire dans 'La guerre des Juifs' de Flavius Josèphe," Thèse de doctorat de 3 cycle [Études grecque], University of Paris, (1979), and "Les Flaviens dans 'La Guerre des Juifs' de Flavius Josèphe," *DHA* 7, (1981).

¹⁷ The meaning of the text is distinct from the interpretation of the text. The first is controlled by the elements in the text and confined to the text. The second is what the reader contributes to the meaning with wider

singularly significant for its meaning, then the remnants of the lingering negative attitude towards Josephus, the historical person, become increasingly irrelevant.

1.2 *B.J.* AS A LITERARY WORK

Scholarship on Josephus in the last three decades has directed its attention to the text of *B.J.* and to its historical author. The discussion of the text has been on determining its genre as a historiography. Connected with the topic of genre are the questions of how the content and presentation merge into each other and if at all the pre-textual matter can be educed from the textual content. The other topic, Josephus the historical author, has been fine-tuned vis-à-vis his text of narrative history of the Jewish war. While his personal shortcomings fade into insignificance in the discussion, the tension of living in the Principate is seen increasingly as worthy of consideration in the writing of the *B.J.*, adding inevitable complexity to it. It is the task now to outline the contribution of some of the key figures in the above developments.

Shaye Cohen is among the earliest scholars to raise literary issues. He starts his investigation with the apparent problem of discrepancy between *B.J.* and *Vita*. He presents a survey of literature on the topic, which extends from J. A. Fabricius in the late 18th century to R. Laqueur in the first quarter of the 20th century. After acknowledging the contribution of over a dozen authors, Cohen points out the weakness in the attempt of each of them. His approach is to determine “the relative historical value of V and BJ” by first understanding “the literary relation of V to BJ” and then by tracing “the tendentious elements of V and BJ”.¹⁸

In the process of achieving the two objectives, Cohen makes a variety of comments on Josephus and on the genre of *B.J.* Comments on Josephus, either on his personal traits or on his

implications and further insights which the author did not necessarily have in mind. See E. D. Hirsch, *Validity in Interpretation* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967) and *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976).

¹⁸ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 23.

ability as a writer, are mostly negative. On his personal qualities, after noting that Josephus views himself not as a traitor but as Jeremiah *redivivus*,¹⁹ Cohen condemns him as a Flavian lackey,²⁰ as vain,²¹ as a “known liar”²² and being insecure.²³ As a writer, Josephus is credited with knowledge of Greek²⁴ but then he is said to have borrowed from sources without acknowledging them.²⁵ He is accused of failing to maintain a sense of proportion in the length of narratives, and this with specific reference to the Herod Narrative.²⁶ Further, Josephus apparently failed to resolve contradictions.²⁷ As an author, he is charged with failing to note his intentions at Jotapata where he was a participant in the hostilities,²⁸ and of course he goes to great lengths to paint himself as an ideal general as defined by Cicero.²⁹ For these and other authorial shortcomings, Cohen criticises Josephus as sloppy and unreliable³⁰ or just sloppy.³¹ Cohen has one foot clearly in the old tradition.

As well as his appraisal of Josephus as a writer, Cohen analyses the genre of *B.J.* and identifies it as “rhetorical historiography” without defining the term.³² Cohen returns to

¹⁹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 232.

²⁰ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 86.

²¹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 91, 212, 230, 239.

²² Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 200.

²³ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 212.

²⁴ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 45.

²⁵ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 44, 490, 77.

²⁶ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 58.

²⁷ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 182, 184, 190, 198, 201-02.

²⁸ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 204.

²⁹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 92-7, 239.

³⁰ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 181.

³¹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 92-97, 239.

³² “Rhetorical Historiography” has been traced back to Cicero, if not as a term, at least in its meaning. The sense of the term becomes clear in Cicero’s letter to his friend, Lucius Lucceius, wherein he is requested to eulogize Cicero’s actions “with even more warmth than perhaps you feel, and in that respect to disregard the canons of history” and to exaggerate Cicero’s merits “a little more than may be allowed by truth” (*Ad Familiares* 5.12.3). Cicero offers precedents for the concept by recalling the works such as Callisthenes’ Phocian War, Timaeus’ War of Pyrrhus and Polybius’ Numantine War (*Ad Familiares* 5.12.2). Feldman adds, “It will be noted that all of these are accounts of wars, and by that standard Josephus’ Jewish War could be regarded similarly.” See Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus’s Interpretation of the Bible* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1998), 9.

“historiography” later in the study and describes it as “historical fiction”.³³ No analysis follows of how historicity and fiction might affect each other in the same work. Being singularly focused on the question of history, Cohen claims that fiction distorts the facts. Cohen does, however, note in *B.J.* certain peculiarities of the genre, as he understands them. He rightly notices “a dichotomy between the advocates of the war and of peace”³⁴ but without considering if the genre required the dichotomy. Cohen finds that Josephus rhetorically idealizes what constitutes a heroic general but does not inquire into the intrinsic links between the two parties, the hero and the villain.³⁵ Cohen also notes that Josephus follows “traditional patterns” for characters when he describes himself as hero,³⁶ and John of Gischala as “a trouble maker”³⁷ without discussing the “tradition” that dictated the “patterns”. Cohen criticises the separation of chronology as pre and post defeat of Cestius Gallus as incorrect,³⁸ but tolerated as “thematic”.³⁹ Despite the negative comments on the perceived weaknesses of Josephus as a writer, Cohen acknowledges towards the end of the study that Josephus “was not a slave to the sources”.⁴⁰ He admits that Josephus “intentionally changed from a Roman apologist to a religious nationalist” by the end of the war.⁴¹ Finally, while tracing the literary sources of non Josephan data, Cohen confirms that no data external to Josephus exist either on the early stages of the war or on the situation in Galilee, the political parties within the revolutionary movements and the central command of the war prior to 65 C.E. What external evidence exists does verify the pro-Roman sentiment of Sepphoris, the defeat of Cestius and the general course

³³ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 188.

³⁴ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 183.

³⁵ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 90-97, 186, 203.

³⁶ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 92-97.

³⁷ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 222.

³⁸ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 230.

³⁹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 52-53.

⁴⁰ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 232-33.

⁴¹ Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 240.

of the war.⁴² In this Cohen has the other foot in the current trend. These are the first steps of the new trend in Josephan scholarship and Cohen strides the two phases in holding on to the traditional criticism of Josephus the person and the writer and raising the issue of genre of history. Perhaps unintentionally, Cohen points out that studying Josephus as a writer is warranted.

Tessa Rajak is another prominent scholar to be aware of the literary aspects of the writings of Josephus. In the essay in memory of Morton Smith,⁴³ Rajak investigates the two Josephan accounts of the Essenes, one in *B.J.* and the other in *A.J.* In explaining the similarities and contrasts between the two digressions, she maintains that these are “both ethnographic fiction and a realistic account”⁴⁴ of what Josephus experienced first hand. As “ethnographic fiction”, the digressions depend for their thematic schemes on Plato’s *Republic* and Aristotle’s *Politics*. Rajak points out that the models for the “ethnographic fiction” do limit the content as do the interests of the readership and the author’s own realization of the lack of freshness of material. These limitations are seen in the omissions in the content and in changes of emphases in some of the details of the content, to name but a few.

What is a more significant contribution of Rajak is her principle of literary interpretation that literary form can restrict the content. She calls these restrictions “constraints of the literary form” and “the tyranny of the text”.⁴⁵ She thus highlights how the above limitations impose on the reader fidelity to the literary text. Rajak then favours “an approach to Josephus’ historiography generally, where we can find that literary form controls content to a surprising

⁴² Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 248-49.

⁴³ T. Rajak, “Ciò che Flavio Giuseppe vide: Josephus and the Essenes,” in Fausto Parente and Joseph Sievers, eds., *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman Period* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 141-60.

⁴⁴ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 145.

⁴⁵ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 158.

extent”,⁴⁶ that is “the largest single determinant in his presentation of Jewish history”.⁴⁷ This is acknowledged with the proviso, “all things considered”; a phrase which includes Josephus’ experience, constraints of patronage, of dishonesty and his temperament. There is a corollary to this stance. Rajak claims, “It has not been profitable to subject each Josephan claim in either War or Antiquities to a test of truth or falsehood, even if there are moments when scholars need to do this over particular claims.”⁴⁸ She is convinced that it is naïve to believe “that realistic reportage, even if squeezed, can survive such onslaughts [by literary forms] intact and be extracted in nuggets from a narrative.”⁴⁹

In the essay, Rajak does not enter into a discussion of the nature of literary truth, nor does she deal with the mode chosen for *B.J.* Initial steps, however, were taken to grapple with these issues in her earlier work published a decade before the essay. Without hesitation, in that book, Rajak accepts that “Josephus is not an objective writer.”⁵⁰ Writing in flattery of the emperors was quite in tune with the times.⁵¹ Nevertheless, Rajak maintains that “it is quite safe to take Josephus’ works starting with the first [*B.J.*] as his own, and to treat him exactly the same way we do other ancient writers.”⁵² She also adds, “Strong emotion does not disturb his capacity ... to tell the truth and nothing but the truth.”⁵³

⁴⁶ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 159. H. Attridge takes what seems a similar if not an identical position to Rajak’s in *The Interpretation of Biblical History in the “Antiquitates Judaicae” of Flavius Josephus* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976), 56, where it is claimed that Josephus moved from form to content: he became aware of “the possibilities of historical literature as they were defined by historical rhetoricians like Dionysius.”

⁴⁷ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 159.

⁴⁸ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 159.

⁴⁹ Rajak, *Ciò che*, 159.

⁵⁰ Rajak, *Josephus*, 185.

⁵¹ Rajak, *Josephus*, 7.

⁵² Rajak, *Josephus*, 63.

⁵³ Rajak, *Josephus*, 79.

In discussing the mode of *B.J.*, Rajak makes two relevant statements. The first is that *B.J.* is written in “a prominent historiographical fashion of the time”.⁵⁴ In this is to be found “the only complete surviving example of a Thucydidean history of a war of the early imperial period.”⁵⁵ The second statement is that *B.J.* is the best instance in Greek of the “tragic manner of writing history.”⁵⁶ By this phrase it is unclear that Rajak means that the structure of *B.J.* is in the classic tragic genre. Rather, what is clear is that in style *B.J.* was according to the contemporary tendency to be emotive, pathetic and even grotesque. This was a popular form in the Hellenistic period, a tendency that was a subject of Lucian’s satire and Polybius’ censure.

For the issues under investigation in this study, Rajak’s contribution is of immense significance. First, she accurately points out that Josephus’ writings cannot be taken in entirety as realistic but as a blend of fiction. Fiction allows Josephus, at least in the digressions, to employ thematic schemes borrowed from the classical writers. It is an implied conclusion that Rajak would consider *B.J.* as a historical narrative. Secondly, Rajak notes that the content of the narrative is to an extent moulded into a given shape by factors external to it, precisely because it is cast in a particular genre. There cannot be any doubt that literary form can shape the content and allow room for other, political, moral, social and psychological, determinants as well. In her monograph on Josephus, Rajak notes specific Greek influences on *B.J.*, but leaves open the question of Roman literary influences on Josephus.

Gregory E. Sterling attempted to explain the genres of Josephus’ histories of *A.J.* and of *B.J.*, concluding that as far as the former was concerned the oriental and occidental historiographical traditions were applied.⁵⁷ The oriental tradition used records of ancient events

⁵⁴ Rajak, *Josephus*, 9.

⁵⁵ Rajak, *Josephus*, 9.

⁵⁶ Rajak, *Josephus*, 9.

⁵⁷ G. E. Sterling, *Historiography and Self-Definition* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

for a truthful account and the occidental or the Greek tradition, used patterns of setting out the content in a particular form.⁵⁸ In this Josephus used the Greek stress on style without undermining truth, since the Greek practice was to emphasise style at the expense of truth. Consequently, Josephus specifically adapted the strategies of Dionysius of Halicarnassus in *A.J.*, including his apologetic intent as it was familiar to the Greek and Roman audiences.⁵⁹ Sterling came to the conclusion that for Josephus his *A.J.* was an “antiquarian rhetorical history” only in a partial sense, since it was also an “apologetic historiography”, or “a rehashed history” for the aim of promoting the Jewish nation as ancient as any other and for the Jews it was an exercise in self-definition.⁶⁰ As far as *B.J.* is concerned, it is also an “apologetic historiography” intended to promote the innocence of the Jewish nation by blaming the few fanatics for the rebellion, and a “rhetorical historiography” but not wholly of the antiquarian type as it relied on eyewitness accounts for the war proper.

In both histories, Sterling explains how the audience is Greek, Roman and Jewish with specific apologetic authorial intent used for each.⁶¹ Unlike Rajak, Sterling does not accept that form controls the content but, on the contrary, that the nature of the content drives Josephus to look for an appropriate form. Sterling does not explain what Josephus means by truth in both of his histories. Nor does he investigate if the strategies Josephus used in *A.J.* are indeed endowed with genre traits of “rhetorical historiography” whether antiquarian or contemporary. Nevertheless his work is a serious attempt at analysing the literary genre of Josephus’ texts.⁶²

⁵⁸ Sterling, *Historiography*, 290-95.

⁵⁹ Sterling, *Historiography*, 298-305.

⁶⁰ Sterling, *Historiography*, 245.

⁶¹ Sterling, *Historiography*, 298, 302, 306.

⁶² M. R. Niehoff in the article, “Two Examples of Josephus’ Narrative Technique in His “Rewritten Bible” in *JSJ*, vol. 27, (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1996), 31-45, confirms Sterling’s observations, without naming him, on the Rhetorical Historiography and the Roman Antiquities and adds Josephus’ dependence on Dionysius including motifs, points of emphasis, strategic structuring of the biblical material and a conscious manipulation of the narrative perspectives.

Louis H. Feldman inquires further back than Sterling does into “the historiographical ideals of [Josephus’] Greek predecessors” to find “two schools in particular vied for [his] allegiance:” the first, the rhetorical school associated with the name of Isocrates (463-338 BCE), the second, the scientific school founded by Aristotle (384-322 B.C.E.).⁶³ The notable contribution of the Isocratean School was the introduction of fictitious speeches into the narrative, of digressions loosely connected to the narrative theme, of stress on moralising and psychologising and of the importance of careful selection of historical examples to suit the “propriety” of the occasion. Isocrates himself pioneered the writing of eulogistic biography in his *Evagoras*. Feldman points to a further evolution of Isocratean initiatives. He does this through the fifty tragedies of Theodectes, the panegyrics and tirades in the history of Ephorus and finally in the *Philippica* of Theopompus, in which the biography of Philip II of Macedon is written as psychological history.

Theopompus served as a bridge for the Peripatetics. Aristotle himself refers to the narrative of Alcibiades in Book 10 of *Philippica* as an example of history in his *Poetics*.⁶⁴ In that innocuous illustration Aristotle’s disciples saw a widening of the scope of history from exclusively public events to include also an individual’s biography. Thus his disciple Theophrastes first set about classifying types of lives and diversifying biographies. Soon biographies were diversified, based on Aristotelian ethical categories. Duris of Samos followed with history in the tragic mode extending Aristotle’s concept of tragedy from poetry to history. Phylarchus extended the element of tragedy in his *Themistocles* in such a manner as to blur the distinction between a tragic play and a tragic history.

⁶³ L. H. Feldman, “Cicero’s Conception of Historiography,” Ph.D. diss., (Harvard University, 1951) and *Interpretation of the Bible*, 13.

⁶⁴ *Poet.*, 9.1451 b 10.

Based on the research of Wacholder, Feldman links Josephus to the dual schools of Isocrates and Aristotle through Nicolaus of Damascus, “a Peripatetic Philosopher and historian.”⁶⁵ It was Nicolaus who is reputed to have abandoned the distinction between history and biography. Josephus, according to the research cited, models his biographical narratives on Nicolaus’ now lost biography of Augustus thus blurring the differences between history and biography. Feldman is able to prove convincingly that “Josephus shows considerable knowledge of Greek literature, in matters both of style and of content, chiefly Homer, Hesiod, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato and Aristotle.”⁶⁶ There is a close resemblance between *Rom. ant.* of Dionysius of Halicarnassus and the Jewish Antiquities. There are also further similarities with Livy and Dionysius in the use of “psychologising and philosophising remarks throughout [Josephus’] history.”⁶⁷

Feldman’s observations have a direct bearing on *A.J.* and the biblical characters as well as the post-biblical characters of Agrippa I and Herod. He does compare *B.J.* and *A.J.* as historiographies. The distinction between *B.J.*, as a critical historiography, and *A.J.*, as rhetorical historiography, is rejected. By the time of Josephus “virtually all historiography was ... actually rhetorical.”⁶⁸ This is maintained despite Josephus’ attack in *B.J.* 1.17 on those who wrote history rhetorically. Josephus himself writes *B.J.* rhetorically. Like Phylarchus in *Themistocles* he blurs the differences between tragic play and the tragic narrative in *B.J.* There are rhetorical elements identifiable in *B.J.* shared with Theopompus and Euripides. The

⁶⁵ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 4. See B. Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962).

⁶⁶ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 218.

⁶⁷ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 219.

⁶⁸ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 9. See also H. W. Attridge, *Interpretation of Biblical History*; and the Appendix in S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

narrative itself, particularly in Book 6, resembles *Themistocles* in stirring the readers' emotions of fear and pity as the plot moves to the historical catastrophe. The Herod Narrative in *B.J.* is remotely modelled on *Heracles* of Euripides, which opens the way to be examined if it has any links with Seneca the Younger, "Josephus' elder contemporary".⁶⁹ Even though Feldman does not pay attention to this specific relationship with Seneca, he does offer a valuable precedent for *B.J.* to be considered as a tragic narrative resembling a tragic play.

James McLaren's study *Turbulent Times?* is unique both in sharply focusing on the felt need to identify and comprehend the pre-textual 'facts' and in demonstrating how to meet the need through the text without being controlled by its "framework".⁷⁰ To identify and grasp the pre-textual facts involves three steps: first, isolation and study of "actual events and situations"; second, an exploration of other textual interpretations of the above and third, an understanding of how the facts, on the one hand, and their interpretation at their specific chronological distances, on the other, are related.⁷¹ Each step is seen as a chronological phase. The first is of the actual incident; the second is of the near contemporary and the third of later era. Josephus belongs to the second phase. Therefore, his narrative cannot be taken as the framework to reach the actual facts.⁷²

However, McLaren proposes Case Study method to focus on pre-textual facts or "actual events and situations", rather than on the content of the text or "the authorial summaries." The Case Study involves three steps. First, individual incidents requiring investigation are identified and isolated. Second, each incident is examined on an individual basis and third, disparate pieces of information regarding each incident are synthesised with context of other

⁶⁹ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 197.

⁷⁰ James S. McLaren, *Turbulent Times?: Josephus and Scholarship on Judaea in the First Century CE*, JSPS 29, (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998).

⁷¹ McLaren, *Turbulent Times?* 219.

⁷² McLaren, *Turbulent Times?* 224, 234-35, 252.

incidents, with materials in non-event based sources, with socio-political environment of Greco-Roman and Near Eastern World, and with themes and patterns across the incidents.⁷³

The interest in pre-textual facts is worth pursuing. Those facts help to underscore how the author has developed the content of the text and what other possibilities exist for other designs. In this the motivation for the author's selection and peculiar bias of the narrative become intelligible. The complexity of the Case Study guarantees that the effort to reach the facts is serious and demanding of a great deal of methodological clarity and commitment. It is a valid principle of literary criticism that the text be read as the author would have told it. If Josephus recounts the narrative from hindsight, so the readers must maintain the same narrative perspective. This alone, it needs to be noted, is inadequate to read the text for the fuller meaning. Moreover, the methodology is based on a questionable premise that the reader can reach the pre-textual facts by going past the content of the text and without knowing authorial intentions. Such a "symptomatic reading" is useful for a psychological analysis of the author but not to gather his textual meaning, namely, the meaning the author wished to communicate. Indeed, it would ensure the opposite, which is a misreading of the text. When McLaren admits that "The exact nature of the relationship between Josephus and his literary context within the Greco-Roman world is [seen to be] beyond the scope of [the] study,"⁷⁴ he misses an essential step. The result could only be stumbling into the possible at worst, or into the plausible at best. It could never reach the probable much less the actual. Only with meeting the author in the text is there a sure means of reaching the actual, though not always in its starkness but certainly as enhanced imaginatively. Further, one cannot obtain pre-textual facts from the text alone

⁷³ McLaren, *Turbulent Times?* 253-56.

⁷⁴ McLaren, *Turbulent Times?* 60, note 20.

without reference to other contemporary and the chronologically later but related extra-textual sources.⁷⁵

To explore “how and why Josephus uses the Greco-Roman literary devices of Spectacle and Tragedy in his account of the war between the Romans and the Jews in the *Bellum Judaicum*,” Honora Chapman analyses the siege of Jerusalem with the primary emphasis on the Temple, followed by Mary’s cannibalism and concluding with the fall of Masada.⁷⁶ The analysis is introduced and concluded with three aims attributed to Josephus: first, to demonstrate that the majority of the Jews were tragic victims of a few malicious Jews; second, to present that the Temple, “the greatest spectacle was viewed as valuable” by both the Jews and the Romans, especially by Titus; and third, to prove that “the opposition to Roman imperialism [was] wasteful, deadly and ultimately impious.”⁷⁷ To make the narrative effective, persuasive and appealing, Josephus “colours his history with tragic language and themes,” because such use of language and of spectacles was “a common concept for describing the transmission of information” as it was “the main feature of Roman public life.”⁷⁸

Chapman next sets down how *B.J.* is to be read. “The task of reading Josephus is complex, because one must always take into account the multiplicity of meanings from the Greco-Roman and Jewish perspectives as they are transmitted in the Greek language.”⁷⁹ The phrase “multiplicity of meanings from the Greco-Roman and Jewish perspectives” suggests, to begin with, that it is the historical readers, whether Greco-Roman or Jewish, with their peculiar cultural baggage determine the meaning of the text. Projecting meaning into the text rather

⁷⁵ S. Mason, “Contradiction or Counterpoint?: Josephus and Historical Method” in *The Review of Rabbinic Judaism: Ancient, Medieval and Modern*, Vol 6.2-3, (Leiden: Brill Academic, 2003), 144-188, especially 184-85. Mason agrees with the assessment in this study of McLaren’s approach.

⁷⁶ Honora H. Chapman, “Spectacle and Theater in Josephus’s *Bellum Judaicum*,” PhD Diss, (Stanford University, 1998).

⁷⁷ Chapman, “Spectacle and Theater,” 5-6, 195.

⁷⁸ Chapman, “Spectacle and Theater,” 5, 194-95.

⁷⁹ Chapman, “Spectacle and Theater,” 195.

than letting the text determine its meaning runs the danger of relativism. When the readers are extended from the historical to the empirical, the danger of relativism considerably widens.

While recognising the tragic elements and the spectacle in *B.J.* they are perceived as mere stylistic devices, no more than embellishment to the narrative. The valuable reference to Elaine Fantham's article holds the clue to reading *B.J.*⁸⁰ In the article Fantham refers to "the subterranean tradition" in which mime, personal elegy and satire had "an invisible continuity."⁸¹ If the clue were heeded it would lead one to look at the tragic language, images, fabula and spectacle in *B.J.* as not merely "to attract and entertain [the] readers and ... to foster a sense of sympathy in [the] audience for [Josephus'] own apologetic stance," but to achieve a deal more.⁸² It would encourage an enquiry into stylistic devices to determine if they were intrinsic to the presentation of the text, if they were indeed integral to a genre, so that they would necessarily reconstitute the content and thence determine the meaning of the text.

Jonathan Price, as if to push the new trend forward, recognizes "matters involving creative choices and subtle arrangement and control of [Josephus'] material."⁸³ He explains how in the episode of Eurycles the Spartan, in the Herod Narrative of *B.J.*, Josephus "employs dramatic techniques and language and even a dramatic structure."⁸⁴ Price claims, "The inspiration for this way of writing was particular forms of spectacle, which were a permanent fixture in

⁸⁰ Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater," 4.

⁸¹ R. E. Fantham, "Mime: The Missing Link in Roman Literary History", in *Classical World*, 82.3, (1989): 153-63.

⁸² Chapman, "Spectacle and Theater," 154.

⁸³ J. J. Price, "Drama and History in Josephus' BJ", <http://www.josephus.yorku.ca/sbl.htm> 1999, SBL Papers on Line. See also his *Jerusalem under Siege: the Collapse of the Jewish State, 60-70 CE* (Leiden: Brill, 1992).

⁸⁴ Price, "Drama and History," 1.

Roman life, as well as the distinguished precedents in Greek historiography.”⁸⁵ In the analysis of the Eurycles episode, Price identifies the “villains,” the audience, the supra human tragic agents: jealous Fortune, *nemesis*, and malignant spirit, which bring about misfortune and Herod who is a dupe and a victim of Eurycles, deserves the punishment he gets. The whole episode is described as set out in three parts.

Price correctly identifies the elements of classical tragedy. He has set the stage to demonstrate that the Greco-Roman influence is more than the theatrical atmosphere. It is literary as well. The structure of the Eurycles episode, it must be noted, is far more intricate than the three parts Price identifies. However, in this study the insight of Price into the elements of tragedy is followed up mainly through their presence in the seven books of *B.J.*

Given the intricacy of the structure and the use of tragic elements, Price raises the legitimate question of the authorial role of assistants in *B.J.*. Price is of the opinion “that Josephus is to be credited with the artistic and creative decision to compose Herod’s domestic troubles as a ‘tragedy’ not only employing language and other techniques of the theatre but giving the entire narrative a dramatic structure”.⁸⁶ Price’s research confirms that *B.J.* has plots in it and that can only mean that it is a narrative. The dramatic structure of the episode recalls the blurring of genre boundaries as in *Themistocles*.

Gottfried Mader’s monograph, *Josephus and the Politics of Historiography*, removes uncertainty with regard to the place of stylistic elements in the works of Josephus.⁸⁷ Mader’s threefold aims are “to reconceptualise the question of Josephus’ intellectual affiliation to his classical predecessors” and to the laws of history; “to consider the work’s classical and generic

⁸⁵ Price, “Drama and History,” 3.

⁸⁶ Price, “Drama and History,” 27.

⁸⁷ G. Mader, *Josephus and the Politics of Historiography: Apologetic and Impression-Management in the Bellum Judaicum* (Leiden: Brill, 2000).

[sic] features in other than just formal-stylistic terms;” to pay “closer attention to the neglected literary, artistic and structural aspects of BJ.”⁸⁸ The aims are incorporated in the argument which is to prove “that there is a demonstrable correlation between Josephus’ use of classical themes and generic [sic] conventions on the one hand, and his tendentious interpretation of the Jewish revolt on the other.” Immediately the two sides of the “correlation” are specified with synonyms so that the first is “his historiographical method” and the latter is “his political agenda.”⁸⁹ The method of analysis is to treat the two sides of the “correlation” not as “traditionally been treated apart from each other” rather as “closely interconnected.” The rationale behind such a method is “that each can be better understood when they are analysed in tandem and as a conscious reciprocity.” In other words, what is to be demonstrated as correlated is presumed to be correlated in the process of demonstration.⁹⁰

Mader then applies his method to the Jewish insurrection in *B.J.* in Books 4 to 6. He finds that Josephus closely models his Jerusalem stasis on the Athenian Plague and Corcyrean stasis. Just as in *The Peloponnesian Wars*, “the external convulsion precipitates a corresponding dislocation in men’s attitudes” and “destabilizes language,” so it is claimed happens in *B.J.* Therefore, to make sense of *B.J.*, the reader would first have to make sense of Thucydides’ work, where the readers would know that the genre was first established.

Without going into the terminological, the literary-critical and the logical complications in Mader’s work, one of his conclusions is relevant to the present study. “Where form cannot be explained apart from the work’s polemical-apologetic tendencies, genre and generic [sic]

⁸⁸ Mader, *Josephus and Politics*, ix. Note that Mader uses the term ‘generic’ as an adjectival form of ‘genre’. Such a form is not yet current. The current meaning of ‘generic’ is ‘general’ without reference to ‘genre’. See OED 2nd ed., J. A. Simpson and E. S. Weiner eds., Vol. 3, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 437-38.

⁸⁹ Mader, *Josephus and Politics*, ix.

⁹⁰ This is a fallacy of begging the question. See L. S. Stebbing, *Logic in Practice* (London: Methuen, 1959), 60.

affiliation in *B.J.* are plainly not just a matter of style or literary ornatus, but serve as a system of communication which can be described from the perspectives of both writer and recipient.”⁹¹ Mader acknowledges his debt to Fowler, Entman and Taylor for this insight.⁹² While Mader’s manner of arrival at the conclusion is open to question, the conclusion itself is valid in the literary-critical theory of the relationship between the genre and the reader-response to the meaning in the text. By acknowledging that the literary form is more than mere embellishment or “literary ornatus,” Mader adds a positive dimension to the literary form against what Rajak had earlier claimed as a restriction. This literary-critical principle may be further enlarged to mean that the literary form may both reconstitute and even constitute the content. The present study will discuss the principle through the analysis of the whole of *B.J.*, thus opening new vistas for Josephan scholarship. Scholarly studies widely recognise Josephus’s reliance on the Greek sources, whether Thucydidean or others. It needs to be complemented, however, in terms of the possible impact of Roman sources on *B.J.*, which will be specifically identified.

Steve Mason is the first to begin with the traditional view of *B.J.* as an expository history and apparently abandon it in favour of the same work as a narrative.⁹³ The first stance of Mason may be seen in his composition - critical study of Josephus on the Pharisees⁹⁴ wherein he proposes a methodology for reading Josephus already practised by Neusner a score of years earlier, in his extensive scholarly undertaking on the rabbinic tradition about the Pharisees.⁹⁵

⁹¹ Mader, *Josephus and Politics*, 150.

⁹² Mader, *Josephus and Politics*, 150-51. See also A. Fowler, *Kinds of Literature: An Introduction to the Theory of Genres and Modes* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1982);

R. M. Entman, “Framing: Toward Clarification of a Fractured Paradigm,” *Journal of Communication* 43.4, (1993): 51-58; P. M. Taylor, *War and the Media* (Manchester and New York: Macmillan, 1992).

⁹³ Given Mason’s exceptional position among Josephan scholars, his journey mirrors that of the other scholars in the field. Hence his contribution is analysed extensively to find the points of contact for this study.

⁹⁴ S. Mason, *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees: A Composition-Critical Study* (Leiden: Brill, 1991).

⁹⁵ J. Neusner, *The Rabbinic Traditions about the Pharisees before 70 CE*, 3 vols., (Leiden: Brill, 1971).

Neusner's methodology is highly disciplined in not being in a hurry to ask questions about the historicity of the content. He proposed to analyse the presentation of each source, first. Only as a second step he would construct a hypothesis of events and intentions about the group. While following Neusner on his heels, Mason aims to recover the external or physical history of the Pharisees as well as their intentions and thought. To achieve his aim he adheres closely to the two-step methodology of Neusner.

The first step is titled "exegetical phase" in which by exegesis the presentation of only the sources chosen as "admissible" are analysed. This phase attempts to determine the historical value of the content of a text one needed first to comprehend the literary qualities of the text. Mason's methodology, and on that score Neusner's too, implies that the historian be aware that the literary text operates at three levels: that of the original level, namely, of material events; that of presentation, of conscious or unconscious imparting of style; and, between the two, that of the author who "with his intentions, proclivities, perception of events, motivation found to record the events, the exercise of will to select, omit, shape the material to serve his ends."⁹⁶ Mason's description becomes clearer if the material events are seen as extra-textual facts. What the author does with them is the intra-textual content. The imparting of style would then be part of the presentation, also intra-textual, with genre, structure, emphases and key terms and characteristic vocabulary.⁹⁷

The second phase is the "hypothetical phase". Mason acknowledges the complexity of this step. It involves first how the original readers understood the framework. An understanding of how the given segment on the Pharisees falls within the larger narrative follows the first. After this a hypothesis is formulated concerning the aim mentioned earlier, and on that a

⁹⁶ Mason, *Josephus on Pharisees*, 16.

⁹⁷ Mason, *Josephus on Pharisees*, 16.

demonstration of the validity of the hypothesis takes place. Mason sees this as an ancient Greek literary conceit of courtroom cross examination that Herodotus and Polybius in particular expressly used to test the reliability of witnesses to their material facts.⁹⁸ The “hypothetical phase” is indeed a historical reconstruction phase. As M. Bloch is quoted as saying, “Then, [the historian] was concerned with grasping the author’s meaning; now he will present his own account. Then, he was looking for the witness’s intentional statements; now he seeks the unintentional evidence that will expose the witness’s biases and limitations.”⁹⁹ There lies the rub.

Neusner, Bloch and Mason, all three seem to assume that the hypothetical phase gradually leads to a historian’s creative contribution free of the text. Mason’s recognition, with Neusner, Cohen and Bloch, of the need to understand the mind of the author expressed in the text as the first step in any serious study of Josephus is a significantly valuable contribution. In addition, Mason’s research method closely reflects scientific method, and this suggests that Josephus’ history is to be taken as expository, if not of the extreme positivistic kind. Mason’s effort has the virtue of helping others to question if the mode of Josephus’ histories was indeed expository.

Steve Mason’s subsequent research has brought him into the current phase of reading *B.J.* as a narrative history with literary elements in it. In *Josephus and the New Testament*, Mason succinctly gives his position with regard to *B.J.* In the section subtitled *Jewish War*, the war narrative of Josephus is called a “narrative” many times, but only once indirectly as “a

⁹⁸ Mason, *Josephus on Pharisees*, 16. “Once the witnesses have all been heard on their own terms and have given their own interpretation (the exegetical phase), the investigator steps forward to pose his questions, in order to rediscover the events that stood behind all of the accounts.”

⁹⁹ M. Bloch, *Apologie der Geschichte oder der Beruf des Historikers*, trans. S. Furtenbach, 2nd ed., rev. F.J. Lucas (Stuttgart: E. Klett – J.G. Cotta 1974), quoted by Mason, *Josephus on Pharisees*, 16.

historical narrative” not as a narrative history.¹⁰⁰ There are five elements to be noted about the narrative. As a “narrative” *B.J.* is “a work with a narrator,”¹⁰¹ or “any telling with a teller,” strictly external to the action narrated. The narrator of *B.J.* is assumed to be Josephus without distinguishing the historical person from his roles as a historical author, the implied author and the character. The “tone” is attributed to Josephus which properly belongs to the narrative voice, which is the voice of the narrator, or the implied author. That Josephus can also sometimes be a character in the narrative action is not mentioned.

Secondly, the narrative work is an account in prose of actual or fictional events structured as a sequence of actions related chronologically or causally or contextually. Whenever the Jewish God, fate, fortune, or providence intervenes in *B.J.* one cannot be speaking about actual events,¹⁰² rather of the fictional or the fictitious. This finer, but essential aspect of the presence of the fictional and fictitious goes without a comment. On the other hand, Mason well explains the “symmetrical concentric” structure of *B.J.* This is done with reference to Onias (1.31-33 and 7.420-36), Parthian kingdom (1.175-82, 248-69, 288-91 and 7.105, 221-24, 237), Roman civil war (Book 1 and 7.157), Masada (1.237-38, 264-66, 286-94 and 7.255-406), Passover (2.10-30 and 6.421-31, 259), burning of the roof of the Temple colonnade (2.229-30, 405 and 6.233), and Idumeans (4.224-304, 318, 353 and 7.267). Above all, Mason notes how the deaths of Ananus II and Jesus (4.305-65) are the central episode of the whole of *B.J.*¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 65. “It is not easy to make a compelling argument about the larger aims of a historical narrative, for we must make sophisticated deductions from what is included and excluded and from the author’s tone.” A phrase like “a historical narrative” may mean that the narrative is of history with focus on the subject of the narrative. Whereas, the phrase ‘narrative history’ will immediately denote that the history is in the genre of narrative history.

¹⁰¹ S. Onega and J. A. G. Landa, eds., *Narratology* (Harlow: Longman, 1996), 5.

¹⁰² Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 65.

¹⁰³ Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 67. “The story of Ananus’ murder not only occupies the midpoint of the narrative, but it also serves as the literary fulcrum.”

Thirdly, events are selected for their relevance to the author's purposes and for their outstanding quality to achieve them. Mason gives two types of authorial purposes for *B.J.* to refute five current misunderstandings about the Jews and four arguments in support of his countrymen. The five misunderstandings are that Jews held bizarre values; that they were a belligerent nation; that they were poor citizens of the Roman empire; that the revolt in Judaea was an expression of national character; and that the Roman victory represented martial virtue of Titus, the triumph of the Roman gods and the defeat of the Jewish God.¹⁰⁴

Josephus aims to "preserve the dignity of a conquered and humiliated people" through four arguments. First, the Judaeans ruling class behaved honourably both towards their nation and the Romans. Second, civil wars were pervasive among the Jews and the Romans. The Jewish civil war was due to Jews differing with their fellows on how to deal with the provocations from the procurators. Third, the Romans cannot take credit for the destruction of the Temple and Jerusalem. It is the work of the Jewish God who had condemned his people and used Romans as his agents. Fourth, even though the Jews were ridiculed for their lack of military prowess, yet without their legitimate leaders they fought the Romans with impressive courage and resourcefulness.¹⁰⁵ The anti-Roman sentiment which underlies the four arguments is far more serious than acknowledged.

Fourthly, the narrative is presented with utmost artistry with appropriate artistic devices. In addition to the "symmetrical concentric" devices noted above, Mason justifiably draws attention to the highly original and literary Greek of *B.J.*, the themes and vocabulary native to

¹⁰⁴ Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 64.

¹⁰⁵ Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 68-92

Greek and Hellenistic literature,¹⁰⁶ the use of dramatic forms in Herod's portrayal¹⁰⁷ and others, and pauses to reflect on current issues of Hellenistic philosophy or historiography.

Lastly, the narrative is communicated to an audience in a variety of ways. Mason briefly notes that the audience within Rome is the non Jewish Greek speakers. These would be the primary audience. The secondary audience would have been around the empire, both Gentiles and the Jewish readers. If the Romans were the intended audience, as they certainly were, they would have to be the educated elite.¹⁰⁸

The movement in Mason's appreciation of *B.J.* from 1991 to 2005 is inconsistent. There needs to be finer tuning of the concepts of narrative and of narrative history as a genre. Mason has shown keen interest in the use of irony in *B.J.* There is wide scope for research in that area. The third aspect is the basis for anti-Roman sentiment in *B.J.* and the time of its composition. What hinders Mason's consistent progress into contemporary trend is his empirical methodology for the study of *B.J.* Being a literary text, any study of *B.J.* needs to be guided by an analytical study design.¹⁰⁹

The above issues have been tackled in the most recent Josephan studies in a way that is significant to the perception of *B.J.* as a literary work. Tamar Landau has attempted to incorporate the concepts from Narratology into her analysis of Herod narrative.¹¹⁰ John Barclay has noted that where Judean pride and imperial self-image were at stake and

¹⁰⁶ Chapman deals with these in "Spectacle and Theater" and in the chapter "By the Waters of Babylon": Josephus' and Greek Poetry," in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 121-46.

¹⁰⁷ See T. Landau, "Power and Pity: The Image of Herod in Josephus' *Bellum Judaicum*," in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 159-81.

¹⁰⁸ Mason, *Josephus and NT*, 96-97. For an extensive treatment of this topic see Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning" in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 71-100 and J. J. Price, "The Provincial Historian in Rome" in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 101-120. See also Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome: Reading on and between the lines," in A. J. Boyle and W. J. Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome*, 559-589.

¹⁰⁹ See above, Introduction, 1, note 1.

¹¹⁰ Landau, "Power and Pity," in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 166-69.

potentially in conflict, it would be sensitive terrain for the historian like Josephus to enter.¹¹¹ In a similar vein Paul Spilsbury notes “the importance of paying special heed to the very significant constraints Josephus laboured under – the constraints of empire.”¹¹² This would apply to all the writers during the Principate. James McLaren has pointedly noted that Josephus himself might have been conquered but that did not necessarily make him submissive.¹¹³ It leads to the conclusion that Josephus probably was a covert dissenter against the Flavians.

1.3 ROMAN IRONY

Taking into consideration “the constraints of empire,” on the one hand, and Josephus’ repeated acknowledgement of the obligation to tell the truth in his war narrative, on the other, this study inquires how he could have reconciled the apparently mutually exclusive demands on him as a historian. In other words, it is worth inquiring how Josephus could have been a covert dissenter as a historian of the Jewish war. A proposed solution is that Josephus wrote *B.J.* in “genres disjunction” using ironic mode developed by Cicero and Quintilian rather than the Greek variety of irony.

Greek rhetoric projects a pejorative connotation of irony as a form of deception. Plato, Demosthenes, and Aristotle, consider irony denotatively synonymous with deliberate fraud, primarily revealed in deceptive behaviour.¹¹⁴ By extension, such irony in language becomes deceptive use of verbal communication, which carries the intention of misleading the audience.

¹¹¹ J. M. G. Barclay, “Judean Historiography in Rome: Josephus and History in *Contra Apionem* Book 1,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 29.

¹¹² P. Spilsbury, “Reading the Bible in Rome: Josephus and the Constraints of Empire,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 209.

¹¹³ McLaren, “Josephus on Titus” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 295.

¹¹⁴ *Repub.* VI.478.b-d; *1 Philip.* iv.7; *Eth. nic.* 7, *Eth. eud.* iii.7.

The Roman understanding of irony, on the other hand, follows a totally different paradigm. Cicero distinguishes the unsophisticated from the sophisticated irony and makes a serious beginning for the theory of the rhetoric of irony in his *De or.* In one phrase he makes a clean sweep of unsophisticated irony, which includes all kinds of *contraria*, not only the opposites, even the unacceptable Greek elements associated with them as well. He sets his eye on the sophisticated. Irony exists when “things are said other than you may have in mind,” “when at play seriously,” and the hearer thinks otherwise of what is heard and the speaker thinks otherwise of what is said (*De or.* 2.209-72, 289; 3.203).

This is possible only if the acts of speaking and of listening are intentional, and the rules of the serious language play are mutually shared between the speaker and the listener. The meaning conveyed, being unspoken, allows for indeterminate perception of many hues, limited only by the listener’s competence and the cultural, intellectual and emotional contexts of the speech of the ironist.

Quintilian, a contemporary of Josephus, adds further refinement to Cicero’s creative contribution. He accepts Cicero’s duality of the unsophisticated and the sophisticated when defining irony. He also places under one genus both “the opposite of what is actually said” (*Inst.* 9.2.44) and what is “other than the words seem to express” (*Inst.* 6.2.15). He adds the specific distinction between irony as a trope and irony as a figure of speech. As a trope, irony is franker in meaning, claims Quintilian, and the conflict is not radical but merely verbal. As a figure of speech, entire meaning is disguised while the conflict is both in the words and in the tone of voice adopted (*Inst.* 9.2.45-6.). He further refines irony as a figure of speech. He differentiates the

rhetorical figure from a habit of discourse as Socrates practised it (*Inst.* 9.2.46), and adds a third, an elaboration of it into an entire argument (*Inst.* 9.2.65-6). He points out that irony is recognised as present when there is a disjunction between “the delivery, the character of the speaker, or the nature of the subject,” on the one hand, and the words, on the other. “When any of these is out of keeping with the words, it at once becomes clear that the intention of the speaker is other than what he actually says” (*Inst.* 8.6.54).

In addition, Quintilian offers yet more significant insights. He notes that irony as a “class of figure is of the commonest occurrence.” He claims that in practice the rhetoricians of his time not merely “indicate that [their] meaning is other than [their] words would seem to imply, but rather a hidden meaning which is left to the hearer to discover.” Quintilian’s insight into irony is replicated in “genres disjunction” when the meaning of the text in the foreground yields its primacy to the meaning of the text in the background. It is the “hidden meaning which is left to the [reader] to discover” (*Inst.* 9.2.65). This strategy was so commonly used in the first century that, Quintilian adds, the “modern rhetoricians practically restrict the name of *figure* to this device, from the use of which *figured* controversial themes derive their name” (*Inst.* 9.2.65-67). He gives three occasions when such ironic strategy is helpful in public speaking. “First, if it is unsafe to speak openly”, as when the tyrants lay down conditions for public utterance, or the senate passes restrictive decrees or when “it is capital offence to accuse a person with what is past, or not expedient to the courts or what is forbidden to the rhetorical schools.” “Secondly, it is unseemly to speak openly; and thirdly, when it is employed solely with a view to the elegance of what we say and gives greater pleasure by reason of the novelty and variety thus introduced than if our meaning had been expressed in straightforward

language.”¹¹⁵ Out of the three occasions, the first applies to Josephus the covert dissenter, as he can safely criticise the Flavians through the use of the ironic mode.

1.4 CONCLUSION

Briefly, in this study insights of the scholars in the second phase from 1979 to 2005 are subsumed and extended. That *B.J.* is a literary work is widely acknowledged among the recent scholars to the extent that it may be taken as a given. While it is true that the work is recognised technically as a “narrative” and as a “historical narrative,” the genre of “narrative history” as applying to the work is yet to be adequately analysed. First steps in this direction are taken in part two of this study.

Far more significant in the scholarship are the hints of tragic elements and structures in *B.J.* as well as “the constraints of the empire.” These suggest common grounds between the contemporaries, Lucius Annaeus Seneca and Flavius Josephus, in their personal lives as in their literary achievements. The investigation into the common grounds leads to the discovery of a second narrative genre in the *B.J.* of a five-act tragedy closely modelled on Seneca’s tragedies. The rationale for the second genre, hidden behind the genre of narrative history, is the fear of discovery of covert dissidence. It is the fear engendered through “the constraints of empire” that both Seneca and Josephus had reasons to experience in various degrees.

Given that the narrative history genre is overt, attention is focused in this study on the details of the discovery of the second genre in *B.J.*, that of the narrative five-act tragedy. It raises the question of “genres disjunction” in *B.J.* The problem closely related to this topic is how to read for authentic meaning in a work structured in single genre and in dual genres.

¹¹⁵ Further on the danger of discovery under the Principate and the need to write the works and to read them ironically, see Mason, “Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome” in Boyle and Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome*, 559-60.

It is to be argued in this study that the way to read a work with two texts in “genres disjunction” is through the ironic mode. It is the irony not as proposed by the Greeks, rather by the Romans, according to which the hidden text carries the preferred authorial meaning.

CHAPTER TWO

LUCIUS ANNAEUS SENECA AND FLAVIUS JOSEPHUS

*Seneca had something compelling to say,
in dramatising the gap
between language and the world.*

A. J. Boyle,
in *An Introduction to Roman Tragedy*, 197-98.

Of the Josephan scholars, Louis H. Feldman alone explicitly links Seneca the younger with Josephus in describing the former as “the elder contemporary” of the latter.¹ Between these two historically well-known personalities little is known to have been in common, much less is recognized in the achievement of Josephus as deriving from Seneca, except that the first lived between c. 4 B.C.E. and 65 C.E. and the latter between 37 C.E. and c. 100 C.E., having thus shared no more than twenty-eight years as contemporaries.²

2.1 APPEARANCES

There seems to be far less reason to believe that there could have been any grounds for contact between the two, if one were to take into account their cultural backgrounds, the places they visited or lived in, their political accomplishments and their literary achievements. In their cultural backgrounds, Seneca and Josephus could not have been more different. Seneca was born into an erudite Spanish equestrian family of Lucius Annaeus Seneca the Elder. The family had aristocratic connections in Rome. Seneca was related through marriage of his step-maternal aunt to L. Gallicus, who became the Prefect of Egypt under Tiberius. He was educated in Rome from the age of five through grammar and

¹ Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 197.

² M. T. Griffin, *Seneca: A Philosopher in Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), 35-36 and A. Schalit, "Josephus Flavius," *Encyclopedia Judaica*, Vol. 10, (1971): 251.

rhetorical schools. As Rudich notes, nothing is recorded, until after he turned forty years of age, of his interest in morals or religion, except to follow what was considered as *mos maiorum*.³

Josephus, on the other hand, was born into an aristocratic priestly family belonging “to the first of the twenty-four courses” (*Vita* 2). Through his mother he was related to the Hasmonean dynasty (*Vita* 4). His religious education as a Jewish child is acknowledged (*Vita* 7-9). Although a Hellenistic education is not noted explicitly, it is perceivable in his writings.⁴ His active religious zeal as an adolescent is revealed in his supposed expert knowledge of the *Torah* and the three years he allegedly spent as a sect member of Bannus (*Vita* 10-12).

The cultural background reveals little in common between the two public personalities. The places where the two spent time during their lives are merely coincidental. Seneca was born at Cordoba in Spain and taken to Rome aged five through the initiative of his maternal step-aunt. He spent thirteen years with this aunt and her husband L. Gallicus in Egypt for reasons of his precarious health. On his return to Rome with his uncle and aunt, he survived shipwreck in which his uncle perished (*Helv.* 19.4). Back in Rome with his father, Seneca began to practise law in the Forum from the time of Caligula’s reign (*Helv.* 19.2). Under Claudius, he was exiled to Corsica for eight years. Recalled from exile, Claudius permitted him to remain in Rome where he lived and died like the Roman elite of his time (*Helv.* 20.1; *Polyb.* 2.1).⁵

³ V. Rudich, *Political Dissidence under Nero: The Price of Dissimulation* (London: Routledge, 1993), xviii-xix.

⁴ The proof of Hellenistic education of the author of *B.J.* may be seen not only in the command of literary Greek, but more fundamentally in his acquaintance with the classical writers, poets and historians, and in the astute use of the structures proper to the genres. More about this is presented in the main part of this Dissertation.

⁵ See also A. J. Boyle, *An Introduction to Roman Tragedy* (London and New York: Routledge, 2006), 190-91.

Josephus was born in Judaea, probably at Jerusalem (*Vita* 5). There is no evidence of his travels outside Judaea until 64 C.E., when he went to Rome on a short visit as part of a diplomatic mission (*Vita* 13-17). After his surrender to Vespasian at Jotapata and his appointment as the official interpreter to Titus and negotiator, on behalf of the Romans, with the Jewish rebels at Jerusalem, he travelled to Egypt with the Roman army (*Vita* 414-17). Subsequent to the fall of Jerusalem, he accompanied Titus to Rome and witnessed the Flavian Triumph. He continued to live at Rome until he died, probably in the reign of Trajan.

Political achievements of the two historical figures once again lack any type of related development. Seneca's initial involvement with the imperial household was through the alleged sexual misdemeanour with one of Caligula's sisters, Julia Livilla, and with Agrippina before her marriage to Claudius (Tacit. *Ann.* 13, 14; Dio, 60.8.5, 61.10.1). At Agrippina's insistence, Claudius recalled Seneca from exile and appointed him tutor to young Nero (Tacit. *Ann.* 12.8). With Nero succeeding Claudius as *Princeps*, Seneca's political status rose until, with A. Burrus, he became a 'minister of state', administering the empire on Nero's behalf.

Josephus, on his part, has a few minor claims in terms of political achievements. In 64 C.E., at the age of twenty-six, he went to Rome as part of a diplomatic mission to Nero to secure the release of Jewish priests whom Felix the Procurator of Judaea had sent for trial. Unlike Seneca, Josephus was a citizen-soldier. The Council at Jerusalem designated him to lead the Jewish army against the Roman forces at Jotapata. As commander of Galilee during 66 C.E. he claimed to be successful in establishing control over the region for the Council even though he failed to defend it against Vespasian. Thus the political

achievements of the two were different and seemingly placed them in social positions where they could not establish any meaningful relationship with each other.

Beyond their unrelated political achievements, both Seneca and Josephus are known in history for their literary achievements. Seneca is renowned for his extant seven *Dialogues*, three *Consolations*, two Treatises, a hundred and twenty four *Letters*, *Natural Questions*, *Apocolocyntosis* in prose and eight or nine tragedies in verse, while all of his many orations are lost.⁶ His nine tragedies dramatise malevolent tyranny in many shapes with the underlying theme of madness. The essays, on the other hand, are an attempt to confront the same issues, all done apologetically, for the benefit of the author's public standing.⁷ Josephus, on the contrary, has written four works in prose, all having to do either with Jews in Judaea or with the detractors of Josephus and Jews, and each with seemingly apologetic intent.⁸ Seneca and Josephus have a coincidental political and cultural context for their works. Both were authors and they wrote their works at Rome, except *Consolatio ad Polybium* and *Consolatio ad Helviam Matrem*, written during Seneca's unhappy sojourn in Corsica. Both had to accommodate "the constraints of the empire" in terms of the imperial expectations of those in

⁶ Seneca's essays and philosophical writings are: Dialogues: *De Otio*, *De Ira*, *De Vita Beata*, *De Providentia*, *De Constantia Sapientis*, *De Brevitate Vitae*; Consolations: *Consolatio ad Marciam*, *Consolatio ad Helviam Matrem*, *Consolatio ad Polybium*; Treatises: *De Clementia*, *De Beneficiis*; A Menippean Satire: *Divi Claudii Apocolocyntosis*, Philosophical writings: *Naturales Questiones*; Letters: A hundred and twenty four *Epistulae Morales*. Seneca's tragedies are *Hercules Furens*, *Phoenissae*, *Thyestes*, *Agamemnon*, *Oedipus*, *Hippolytus*, *Medea*, *Troades*, *Hercules Oetaeus* and *Octavia*. Senecan authorship of *Hercules Oetaeus* and *Octavia* is now rejected. See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy*, 191-92.

⁷ All of Seneca's works are polytelic; one of the aims is invariably apologetic. For example, while offering sympathies to Polybius in *Polyb.* Seneca wishes to plead with Claudius for his recall from exile. While insulting the dead Claudius in *Apocol.* he is aiming to please Nero.

⁸ Josephus' writings in the order of publication are: *The Jewish War* (B.J.), *The Jewish Antiquities* (A.J.), *Against Apion* (C. Ap.), and *Life* (Vita).

their positions. More to the point, in their writings both had to address the same audience of the educated Roman elite.

To all appearances, then, there is no evidence of an external, much less of an internal link between the personal lives of these two contemporaries, one an erudite Roman politician and the other an erudite Jewish politician and general, both outstanding personalities in their respective communities. Much less is such evidence readily available in their literary achievements. Any parallel relationships that might exist give the impression of being no more than coincidental. It is proverbial, though, that appearance can deceive.

2.2 EXPERIENCES IN COMMON

A second look at the coincidences allows other possibilities to emerge, possibilities of common experiences and acquaintances. The presence of Seneca and Josephus at Rome in 64 C.E. makes them aware of the Great Fire and its aftermath, particularly of the emotions of the terrified City (Dio, 62.16-18). On his mission to Rome Josephus claims to have met Poppea Sabina, if not Nero himself (*Vita* 16). Being so close to the centre of political power, Seneca knew Nero's wife Poppea Sabina, even though he did not cultivate a close association with her.⁹ In addition to being a politically significant person at Rome, Seneca was also generally recognised for his cultural interests like oratory, his many philosophical writings and plays. Possibly Seneca had heard of the Jewish actor, Aliturus, "a favourite of [Poppea and] Nero" (*Vita* 16).¹⁰

⁹ Tacitus implies that Seneca was opposed to Poppea Sabina because he could not prevent her rise at the court (*Ann.* 13.45).

¹⁰ One of the reasons why Agrippina had Seneca recalled to Rome from exile was to "please the public on account of his fame and learning..." (Tact. *Ann.* 12.8). Whether Seneca knew Aliturus personally remains speculative since it is not generally agreed that the tragedies of Seneca were composed for the stage, while they could certainly be read aloud. As a playwright, it is not impossible that he at least heard of the Jewish actor, Aliturus. Josephus claims that it was Aliturus

More than the awareness of the Great Fire and access to the imperial household, both Seneca and Josephus knew the same emperors and what life under them could be like, albeit in different personal capacities. Seneca entered public life as *questor* under Caligula, became *praetor* under Claudius, and appointed tutor to young Nero. It was Nero who ordered him to die in 65 C.E. Seneca's experience of the imperial connections was tragic.

Josephus, on the other hand, was born in 37 C.E., the year in which the reign of Caligula began, and educated during the reign of Claudius. As an adult after his mission to Rome, Josephus led the Jewish rebels against Nero's rule in Judaea and Galilee. His surrender to Vespasian, the pardon granted to him, and his friendship with Titus gave Josephus, unlike Seneca, a more positive experience, if not entirely so, of the imperial connections during the "Vespasianic thaw" as Rudich prefers to describe it.¹¹ Life under Domitian's reign in its final years, however, was no different from the one under the tyrants of Seneca's later life, in fact arguably much worse (Tacit. *Hist.* 4.1.4). It seems reasonable to conclude that both Seneca and Josephus variously experienced life under imperial tyranny that was initiated under Augustus and progressively made worse and all encompassing under his successors up to Domitian.¹²

The experience of imperial connections, whether during the tyranny or the "Vespasianic thaw," had similar consequences for Seneca and Josephus. It had increasingly significant impacts on their lives, some with positive effects, the

who introduced him to Poppea. Such an episode suggests that an exceptionally close friendship between Aliturus and Poppea Sabina and between Aliturus and Nero existed, as the comment "a special favourite of Nero" (*Vita* 16) implies. Such a relationship enables one to appreciate a near impossible mission of Josephus was made successful.

¹¹ V. Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature under Nero: The Price of Rhetoricization* (New York and London: Routledge, 1997), 7.

¹² So called "Vespasianic thaw" was no more than a brief interlude from 69-80 C.E. before Domitian reinstituted the reign of terror until his murder in 95 C.E.

others being quite destructive. It is worthwhile to consider the effects on the major aspects of their lives, namely, the financial, the social, the political, the moral, the religious and the psychological effects.

Financial implications for both Seneca and Josephus of the imperial connections were the most positive and personally rewarding. Seneca is reported to have amassed enormous wealth so that his contemporaries accused him of usury and greed, in addition, possibly, making him an object of envy for Nero (Tacit. *Ann.* 13.42). Josephus lost his property within the walls of Jerusalem but Titus compensated for it with a gift of land outside the City (*Vita* 422, 426). At the end of the war he received a pension from the imperial treasury and lodgings in Rome under the auspices of the Flavians (*Vita* 422-23).

Socially, Seneca was adversely affected. His friendship with Julia Livilla earned him Messalina's hatred and a term of exile in Corsica (Dio 61.10). His access to the imperial household made him a suspect to the Romans in public life, and to the Senators an affront, being an interloper from outside their social class (Tacit. *Ann.* 14.52-53).¹³ To the contemporary satirists like Petronius Arbiter he became an object of fun.¹⁴ Josephus, too, was ostracised as a traitor among his fellow Jews for his surrender to the Romans, for going over to the enemy, for fraternising with the Flavians to the extent of being adopted into the Imperial family (*Vita* 423, 428-29). Seneca and Josephus paid the same price for the imperial favours, of being shunned as social outcasts.

¹³ Tacitus notes the damaging opinion of Seneca's critics, envious of his wealth and influence, in *Ann.* 14.52. However, in the following chapter Tacitus quickly presents what seems like a refutation in suggesting that Seneca thought of the allegations against him as *criminantium*, "slanders," (*Ann.* 14.53).

¹⁴ See Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 342, note 11, for a discussion of *Satyricon*, and whether Petronius parodied Seneca's writings. Rudich narrowly limits a *conscious* criticism of Seneca only to parody and travesty in the *Satyricon*. Such criticism is possible in other practices like "echo, innuendo, allusion, ironic expression, borrowing, imitation, emulation..." 222.

In a political sense, the years of imperial tyranny brought Seneca promotions. From being appointed *questor* under Caligula and *praetor* under Claudius, he became ‘minister of state’ under Nero. These favours finally trapped Seneca into a corner he could not escape even through his phased retirement (*Epist.* 68.2, 8; *Tacit. Ann.* 14.56, 15.45). He won his freedom only in death. Josephus too benefited in being trusted to advise Vespasian and Titus, to be appointed an official interpreter for the Romans, and an intermediary between the opposing sides. He, however, lost the respect of his Jewish compatriots and, given the evidence of *Vita*, he could not entirely escape their vengeance through a lifelong exile at Rome.¹⁵

Additionally, there was a grave moral price to pay for the benefactions received through the imperial connections. Seneca lost his freedom of choice and freedom of speech. He was forced to compromise the ethical principles of Stoicism. For one as gifted as Seneca, for an orator, he was silenced into compliance over atrocities he witnessed and even those in the process of being planned against the innocent and the noble (*Tacit. Ann.* 14.12). What was worse, Seneca, driven to renege his debt of favours he enjoyed from Agrippina, possibly betrayed her through participation with A. Burrus in matricide for Nero’s benefit if one were to make sense of their cooperation after the event. At this point in his life, what benefited Nero was inextricably bound with Seneca’s own welfare.¹⁶

¹⁵ Mason is of a different view that “Josephus wrote [his *Vita*] because he wished, positively, to present his own life as an example of the culture and tradition he was presenting to his eager audience.” See S. Mason, ed. *Flavius Josephus: Translation and Commentary*, Vol. 9, *Life of Josephus*, S. Mason, trans. and comm. (Leiden: Brill, 2001), xxvii-xxiv. It seems more likely that Josephus found it necessary to portray himself as better than he was perceived by others. Whether Justus was a real character who opposed him or a fictional persona whom Josephus set up to initiate the autobiographical encomium is an interesting topic for scholarly discussion.

¹⁶ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 100. It is interesting to note the manner in which Tacitus relates the possible involvement of Burrus and Seneca in Agrippina’s murder. Nero knows that his mother has at last been killed. But then he is shocked to realise what forces he has unleashed on himself and is unable to contain them. Predictably he consults Burrus and Seneca on what

Josephus did not fare better. He was driven to follow his self-interest and probably self-preservation contrary to his ethical principles. This is evident in the deceptive casting of lots at Jotapata, if it actually happened, causing the deaths of his companions, not to mention the deaths of so many others, fighters and civilians alike (*B.J.* 3.387-91).¹⁷ The integrity of the defence of the fortified town is under a cloud contrary to his claims for it (*B.J.* 3.316-22). His posing as God's emissary to Vespasian rates less of a falsehood as compared to his attempts at minimising Roman crimes in the war and placing much of the blame for it on the Jewish rebels (*B.J.* 6.408).¹⁸

If moral consequences were serious the cost to the religious beliefs, or to what amounted to them, was equally dear. Under Caligula, Seneca was converted to strict vegetarianism with no apparent religious implications in his mind. Yet Caligula had it banned as an "alien superstition", a religious crime with unpredictable consequences, including capital punishment (*Epist.* 108.22). The elder Seneca intervened and quickly persuaded his son to change his mind and revert to normal dietary practices. The ease and speed with which Seneca yielded to the persuasion of his parent, highlight flexibility and pragmatism, the traits of his character displayed through his public life until moments before his suicide.

measures to undertake to check the backlash against Agrippina's murder. Tacitus uses his subtle style in saying no more than they "possibly were already in the secret," *incertum an et ante ignaros*. To paraphrase Tacitus, "It is uncertain whether they were ignorant of the murder of Agrippina including the plan to murder her." In Latin *et* may be a conjunction "and" or an adverb "also, even", here rendered as "including". By raising the doubt, Tacitus seems to suggest they could have been involved in Nero's matricide.

¹⁷ It helps to keep in mind that these claims are of Josephus, the historical person, who as the author of *B.J.*, makes of Josephus, the character, in the narrative. Therefore, the claims may or may not be factual. One needs to note that the "narrative history" and "narrative five-act tragedy" do not rule out the historical facts while allowing for the use of fiction and the fictitious. The fictional and the fictitious are used 'in addition' to the facts rather than 'instead' of facts.

¹⁸ Josephus does consistently condemn all the Jewish rebels as corrupt, but he does spare the common citizens and Jerusalem from the blame. Romans as a whole are not condemned explicitly but indirectly for their involvement in the death of the City. In this cautious distinction, the Roman army by itself gets more explicit criticism.

Josephus, on the other hand, paid a far greater price. If Caligula's attempt at desecrating the Temple with his images was offensive, Josephus was condemned to silently watch, as if to condone, Titus offering sacrifices to the Standards in the sanctuary (*B.J.* 6.316). The destruction followed the desecration of the Temple; then the City burned in a ball of fire. Lastly, he was a helpless witness to the incredible sufferings and humiliation of his countrymen taken captive and massacred to entertain their sworn enemies in the triumphal tour of the ancient middle-east. It would have been impossible for Josephus to absolve himself for the failure of whatever strategy he might have had in mind to save the Jewish nation, instead, he witnessed its catastrophic finale (*B.J.* 6.363-69).

Of all the effects of their imperial connections on Seneca and Josephus, the most far reaching would be the psychological, fear being the dominant emotion that coloured their attitudes and behaviour. Living under the tyrannical emperors, Seneca would have been in constant fear of losing the favour of the emperors Gaius Caligula, Claudius and Nero and those close to the seat of imperial power. Such a fear of loss would have extended to his political status, his wealth, and even his physical survival. As it turned out, those threefold losses predictably were realised.

Josephus too would have known what it meant to be associated with imperial power. Despite the "Vespasianic thaw," the danger of reversal to the brutality, for which the erstwhile Julio-Claudians were notorious, was ever present. Titus displayed the potential to turn into a Caligula or a Nero.¹⁹ The Domitianic reign of terror could not have come to him as a surprise even though the emperor's

¹⁹ See Suetonius' *The Life of Titus*, for the suspicion of Vespasian that Titus was a rebel against him, (5.5) or the murders of Titus' opponents real or imaginary including the manner of assassination of Aulus Caecina (6.1-2), and his riotous life not far removed from Nero's luxuriousness (7.1-2).

friendship and goodwill continued to reward Josephus (*Vita* 429). The fear of loss would have altered the attitudes of people close to the imperial power in at least three ways. It would have made them openly servile, or openly rebellious or openly servile but secretly rebellious.²⁰ Both Seneca and Josephus reveal that they cultivated the third attitude, an attitudinal disjunction of being servile in public while hiding their rebellion.²¹

2.3 ATTITUDINAL DISJUNCTION IN ACTION

The conviction that attitudinal disjunction existed in the first century is more than a result of reflection in hindsight. It is true no contemporary thinkers have critically considered that it was operating in their time.²² Much less have they systematically analysed its nature, what levels of reality it encompassed, how it affected the thinking of the writers as they deliberately planned their literary works, what strategies they had to use to execute their works, what types of audience they had to communicate with and what skills were needed for competent reading and interpreting the works. Yet attitudinal disjunction is present in the extant works of the first century. Subsequent historians like Tacitus, Suetonius and Cassius Dio, reflecting on the period, confirm that dissidents did exist in the first century.²³ Of these, Dio explicitly charges Seneca with covert

²⁰ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 1-16. Rankin notes, "The pressures upon the individual to dissimulate his thoughts, and to present a conformist front, became more and more intense under the Principate, though conformity did not always safeguard its practitioners from the fury of the *Principes* and the greed of *delatores*." See H. Rankin, *Petronius the Artist: Essays on the Satyricon and its Author* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1971), 37.

²¹ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 2, defines this attitude as the "Rhetorized Mentality" which both consciously and unconsciously affected the political and intellectual elite of the Julio-Claudian period, including, among others, Seneca, Lucan and Petronius.

²² Quintilian mentions that it was common for his contemporaries to write "ironically" and he also gives occasions when such a figure of speech was extensively used as a strategy in a text (*Inst.* 9.2.65-7).

²³ Tacitus, *The Annals of Imperial Rome*, trans. Michael Grant (London: Penguin, 1996), supplemented by Suetonius, *Works*, trans. J. H. Rolfe, vol. 1-2 (The Loeb Classical Library, 1914), K. R. Bradley, *Life of Nero. A Historical Commentary* (Brussels, 1978), and Cassius Dio, *Roman*

dissidence when he claims, as “so many trustworthy men have said,” he misguided Nero “to lead [him] on to a career of unholy bloodguilt that should bring about most speedily his destruction by gods and men alike” (Dio, 61.12.1).

A dissident, as Rudich defines, is “an individual suffering from a conflict between personal ideals and the political realities of the time.”²⁴ It is other than a whistle blower who is outraged with what is experienced in an organization as ethically or socially unacceptable and publicly speaks up against it at the time. But dissidents could be more than the above definition. They could also include those motivated to avenge a personal loss of wealth or public humiliation, as was the case with Lucan.²⁵ Once under pressure to resolve the conflict between the public stance and inner rejection of the same, a dissident is compelled by external restrictive circumstances to an attitudinal disjunction.

The main reason for such an attitudinal disjunction was that times did not permit one, in various ways, to speak one’s mind frankly (Tacit. *Hist.* 4.1.4).

When such a disjunction is revealed in action one openly tries to please the very persons who are being secretly undermined.²⁶ The necessity to hide the truth from

History, ed. and trans. E. Cary and H. B. Foster, vols. 1-9 (The Loeb Classical Library, 1914-27). Some of the prominent dissenters were Cassius Longinus, Cordus L.Cremutius, Lucan, Petronius Arbiter, Seneca, Rufus and Thrasaea Paetus. Dio points to Seneca and Rufus who with “some other prominent men formed a plot against Nero, for they could no longer endure his disgraceful behaviour, his licentiousness and his cruelty” (Dio, 62.24.1).

²⁴ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, ix.

²⁵ Nero humiliated Lucan during the recitation of the first books of *Bellum Civile* when the emperor, for no known reason, is said to have abruptly called a meeting of the Senate and left the room. Lucan was then banned from publishing or reciting his works in public as well as pleading cases in the court. This episode marks the end of their mutual admiration and friendship. See Tac. *Ann.* 15.49; Suet. *Luc.* 11-12; Dio, 62.29.4.

²⁶ The necessity to pretend through one’s life transfers theatricality into every aspect of life. See S. Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience: Theatricality and Doublespeak from Nero to Hadrian* (Cambridge, Mass and London, England: Harvard University Press, 1994) 31. Bartsch notes, “The theatricality as a descriptive model for Nero’s reign thus reveals itself as tendentious and schematic even at the site of its origin, the theatre, where it occurs most consistently in our sources. Yet Tacitus chose to extend it into the political realm as well, using the idea of actors in the audience as a paradigm for imperial politics from Tiberius on in general, and particularly so under Nero.” Just as Nero, “a stage-playing emperor” (Pliny, *Paneg.* 46.4), is claimed to have transformed his life and reign into theatre, so it equally seems probable that Seneca did his public

the informers did drive the secret political rebels, now turned literary dissidents, to quite imaginative and bizarre stratagems defying logic and extending to distortions of literary conventions of a variety of genres.²⁷

The attitudinal disjunction creates clashes, among others, between one's words and actions, as well as between one's words themselves as they keep changing their meaning in the same narrative or across one's literary works.²⁸ This may be supplemented through exaggerations, contradictions, and opportunistic change of opinions. One may add to it, lying about 'facts', *adulatio* or flattery of the powerful, much display of *amicitia* or friendship true or pretended with those around the seats of power, and arguments *a contrario*. Deliberate silence on relevant and important issues, use of the fictional and the fictitious,²⁹ become as important as "strategic irony" or "ambivalence generic [sic] in menippean satire."³⁰ It becomes quite normal when appeals to fate, fortune and the divine are overdone as if to absolve human responsibility for wrongs

and private life. For example, consider the theatricality of Seneca's suicide described by Tacitus (*Ann.* 15.63-4).

²⁷ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 109, mentions that difference between truth and falsity vanished, the need for verisimilitude no longer existed, logical plausibility was made redundant and the contrived disarray of thought and imagery became the practice. Seneca expressed his dissidence through his essays and plays, Lucan through his epic poem *Bellum Civile*, Petronius through his novel, *Satyricon*, Josephus through his history of the Flavian war, *Bellum Judaicum*, and Tacitus four decades after the Julio-Claudian era, through the *Annals*. Genre-bending is more than accidental strategy. It is rather a matter of deliberate choice.

²⁸ This is an exciting and rewarding line of research into Seneca and Josephus but outside the scope of this Dissertation. However, it is a matter of interest to peruse Ellen O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading in the Annals of Tacitus* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 4-7. In this monograph, the author argues how Tacitus, after the reign of terror of Domitian and into the relative freedom under Trajan, continued to use a unique type of disjunction through "a distinctive sentence structure." The syntactic disjunction was expressed in three ways: "The first is the relationship and respective weight of main clauses and subordinate clauses... The second element ... associated with the first, is the shift from one kind of syntactical construction to another between clauses which in classical Latin would appear under the same construction... The final element of sentence structure is asyndeton, the juxtaposition of clauses without explicit conjunctions."

²⁹ In this study, as defined earlier, 'fictional' refers to what is humanly possible or even probable, while 'Fictitious' here refers to what is humanly impossible. For a different expression of these two concepts see *Poetics* in which Aristotle writes of "probable impossibilities" and "improbable possibilities" (1460 a) and of "convincing impossibility" and "unconvincing possibility" (1461 b).

³⁰ See Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 39. Menippean satire would also include the use of parody and travesty. See also Petronius Arbiter, *Satyricon*, and Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis* for the extant examples of menippean satire of the classical times.

perpetrated. Excessive use of emotions, particularly of *furor* or the theme of madness associated with tyranny, apparently reckless use of “polyphony”³¹ or multiple voices which makes it nearly impossible to identify which is the author’s voice and which belongs to the protagonists in the narrative only mimics the confusion of the situation. Forms of irony like those of expression,³² of structure and of situation, even “Polytely”³³ or multiple authorial intents for a given work indeed seem appropriate to a situation out of control.

The dissident approach to literary creation must necessarily affect the matter as it does the form. The textual content would be a reconstituted pre-textual matter. The facts would not be reproduced but changed to suit the political agenda. Positivistic or scientific history would be quite out of the question.³⁴ It may even be constituted so that it has no relation to what actually occurred. Fictional and fictitious material would easily find a place in the imaginative history. Even within the text, the dissident would be driven to include a subtext,³⁵ and, more radically, another text in a different genre.³⁶ In such a strategy, what

³¹ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 39.

³² Quintilian records this phenomenon in his *Institutio Oratoria* when he remarks that it was common for the writers of his time to resort to “irony”, in the sense of writing about one subject while having some other subject in mind, to appear to mean one thing in their writing while they really meant something else, even something contrary (*Inst.* 9.2.77).

³³ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 39.

³⁴ Briefly, “pretextual-matter” in the narrative history would be “facts” or what actually happened or is documented as having occurred. The “textual content” is transformation of the “facts” in as much as they are profoundly affected through the conventions of the genre in which they are cast. The genre is clearly more than style. It affects the “pre-textual matter” through its specific demands. In this sense style and genre are not mere literary embellishments. They are constituent elements of a text.

³⁵ A ‘subtext’ is the meaning “which is implied but not directly or overtly stated” like the motif of increasing intensity of madness in *B.J.* “The term [subtext] typically also implies a certain consistency in implied meaning.” See P. Goring et al., *Studying Literature: The Essential Companion* (London: Arnold, 2001), 303. One may also add that a subtext is an integral part of a text distinct from the conventions of a genre.

³⁶ This may be termed as ‘genres disjunction’ in which the same matter is presented in accordance with two different sets of literary conventions. It is the genre or the form that becomes the key to grasp the meaning of a text. This may be explained with a simple reasoning. An author in the planning stage of his work needs to make a conscious choice of the genre and accept the implications of the conventions cognate to the genre. In this process, the authorial intent becomes

actually happened is of little practical importance. What the writer makes of it as the textual content is of the highest significance. When a subtext and a second text through genres disjunction is added, then the meaning, twice removed, is what the author intends for those of like mind.

The complexity of the matter, the textual content and the genres disjunction are indeed the offshoot of the loss of simple audience. The loss of simple audience and the presence of attitudinal disjunction suggest the presence of undefinable loose groups of readers. Tacitus mentions two general groups that had to be kept in mind in taking a public stance: the *multi bonique* and the *pauci et validi* (Tacit. *Hist.* 4, 43 and *Dialog.* 15, 25-27).³⁷ These two groups would stand at opposite ends with regard to any literary work. The first generally held positive views of the work and applauded the author for the achievement. They would be conservative, passive and moral traditionalists as they would readily perceive what is customary. The latter group would spend much time in discussion to find actual or even imaginary material offensive to their imperial master. They were the dynamic opportunists, with contempt for traditional values, cynically active in politics.³⁸

A third group, *pauci bonique*, adapted from Tacitus, needs to be added to the two he proposed. The group of those who read a text on the surface level cannot be the primary target audience of the writers who are serious literary dissidents. These readers could look for the pre-textual matter and be concerned with the factuality of the material and if it is faithfully recorded or reproduced in the

bound up with the genre, giving the readers a sure access to it through its conventions. See Conclusions at the end of this study for further discussion on the topic.

³⁷ See Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 7, for further elaboration. The groups were in fact the two factions in the senate, one still holding on to conservative values and the second, the despised but powerful imperial collaborators. A similar grouping is conceivable among the reading public.

³⁸ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 108.

textual content. They could be busy with the consistency of the text with the recognised genre. If the *multi bonique* type of audience could be enthusiastic in supporting the author, the danger could then lie with the *pauci et validi*, as it could have been with the publicly identifiable *delatores*.³⁹ The complex strategies were aimed at protecting the author from *interpretatio prava* from this group, making denial of accusation of *seccesion*, or rebellion, more plausible. The third group, *pauci bonique*, then, have to be those who entertain friendly disposition towards the author and his text, able to read the text on the surface and also recognise the subtext and the second text in genres disjunction, if available, and agree with it. It is for this reason that the presence of the complex strategies in literary works serves as a pointer to the authors' literary dissent, writing for *pauci bonique*, a select like-minded audience.⁴⁰

2.4 SENECA AND JOSEPHUS AS LITERARY DISSENTERS

The wide-ranging consequences of imperial connections do not explain why the attitudinal disjunction of dissidents could have occurred. Nor does an analysis of the nature of dissidence and the related issues in its literary manifestation go far enough to explain the cause of dissidence, let alone if it was inevitable. Fear associated with dissidence is a symptom rather than the cause. The answer probably lies with Tacitus who, on the one hand, had the opportunity of being born in Claudius' reign and of growing up in Nero's and of living under the tyranny of Domitian when Romans could not communicate by speaking or listening to each other (*Agr.* 2. 2-3). He knew the generation before him that lived

³⁹ The three groups: *multi et boni*, *pauci et validi* (by Tacitus) and *pauci bonique* (mine) are not to be taken as solidified into fixed groupings, rather as representing varied reactions in a community fearful of the presence of *delatores* in its midst.

⁴⁰ It is a moot question who among the readers of Seneca and Josephus could have belonged to the *pauci bonique*.

under the Julio-Claudians, while, on the other hand he also had the privilege of writing about it in the happier times of Nerva and Trajan.

Tacitus seemingly compliments Nerva Caesar in *Agricola* (3.1) for reconciling “the once incompatible, Principate and liberty” and Trajan for continuing to realise the hopes and prayers of the public for peace. Tacitus leaves the concept of liberty unclear. One needs to turn to his *Historiae* (4.1.4) where he repeats the phrase *felicitatem temporum* from *Agricola* and specifies it as *rara temporum felicitate* as “when one may feel what one wishes and say what one feels”, (*ubi sentire quae velis et quae sentias dicere licet*). The operative words are *sentire* and *dicere*. This saying, to us two millennia later, sounds like a common saying. It meant much more to Tacitus and the Romans of his time. *Sentire* is an inclusive word, which means to feel, to experience, to observe, to think and to decide.⁴¹ The same holds true of *dicere*, which can mean to say, to speak in public, to plead in the courts of law, and to celebrate in poetry.⁴² It suggests joy of communication. Liberty, beyond the understatement of Tacitus, is the joyful freedom of every person to express the innermost self without hindrance. Total absence of communication and the necessary presence of doublespeak are proof that liberty, as Tacitus understood it, did not exist.⁴³

While the actual, hidden dissidence of Seneca can be shown, it seems close to impossible to prove that Josephus himself was a covert dissident. As the evidence in the *Vita* (428-29) and the explicit pro-Roman bias in the whole of *B.J.* imply

⁴¹ *A Latin Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), 1672-73.

⁴² *A Latin Dictionary*, 570-71.

⁴³ See S. Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, 65-6. “It is only when an audience registers that a given speech or verse contains a meaning other than the one dictated (in public life) by political convention or (in literature) by the additional factors of fictional context and literary precedent, that doublespeak is born. Its subversive content may result from an intentional effort on the author’s part, as Pliny claims his did; it may arise from a statement’s fortuitous potential for political application, as was often the case at the theatre; but in practical terms it was the audience’s reaction that transformed a given statement into an act of opposition or an ad hominem slur.”

that Josephan scholars, on seemingly good grounds, have rejected that Josephus ever could have been a secret dissident.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that in the same century, they lived under the Principates which were incompatible with liberty and it involved immense loss for them. Both being talented communicators, it cannot come as a surprise that they, more than the others, experienced constraint not to feel what they wished and to say what they felt. Their public status made dissidence inevitable and doublespeak a necessity if criticism was to be given a voice. The urgency and the possibility of employing survival mechanisms were anchored in what they had in common: both were historically significant individuals, outstanding in their respective communities; they had a high *dignitas* or public standing.⁴⁵ They had earned, and in the case of Josephus he wanted to claim that he had an *existimatio* or good name in their respective communities to uphold;⁴⁶ they were quite capable of bearing an *animus nocendi* or a desire to punish the actual or the potential oppressors.⁴⁷ What is more important, they were intelligent enough to outwit the *interpretatio prava* or the recognition of the reality beyond the masking appearances,⁴⁸ from the *delatores* or the Imperial informers or prosecutors, despite the fact that Seneca did die under Nero.⁴⁹

Seneca is known to have used at least some of the above strategies in his writings. It is not widely known, much less proven that Josephus also indulged in

⁴⁴ See for example, M. Beard, "The Triumph of Flavius Josephus", in Boyle and Dominik, eds. *Flavian Rome*, 542-47.

⁴⁵ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 6, 9-10.

⁴⁶ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 10-11. See B. J. Preface 1.1-16. For Josephus, his public standing would have depended on the Roman associates and on his countrymen and admirers in Judea, specially those who survived the war.

⁴⁷ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 12-14.

⁴⁸ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 10-14.

⁴⁹ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 17-18.

the strategies of dissidence.⁵⁰ Seneca's choice, as revealed in his works, seems to make a radical attempt to secretly undermine the tyrannical Principate for the sake of liberty. It is possible to argue that he began, to all appearances, to work with the Principate as the tutor of Nero⁵¹ but from the start in that position he began to undermine it, continuing the effort in exploiting his position as the 'minister of state' in association with A. Burrus.⁵² That he was a dissident becomes yet more evident, especially, in the literary endeavours of his prose works.

Consistent with his choice, Seneca is unrelenting in undermining the status and the fictions through which the Julio-Claudians ruled. Julius Caesar, and for that matter Cnaeus Pompey are indirectly condemned. Yet Marcus Porcius Cato is praised for refusing to compromise in his stand against both Pompey and Caesar (*Epist.* 104.32). Similarly, Marcus Brutus is exonerated from the charge of being *ingratus* towards Caesar for sparing his life. This is on the grounds that Caesar had no right either to take away a human life, or to give it back. However, Brutus is condemned for his tyrannicide that caused so much loss of life and property, in other words for being inept. Conversely, had it been different, the tyrannicide would have been praiseworthy (*Ben.* 2.20.1-3). Seneca, next, directly condemns both Julius Caesar and Pompey. Caesar is accused of self-aggrandisement, ambition and never letting others outshine him (*Ben.* 5.16.4). Similarly, Pompey comes under sharp criticism for letting "insane love of false greatness," (*insanus*

⁵⁰ J. Barclay, among others, implies the possibility that Josephus could have been a literary dissident. See below notes 58 and 59.

⁵¹ See O'Gorman, *Irony and Misreading*, 144-75. In Chapter 7 O'Gorman argues that ghost-writing for Nero had the effect of rendering him a ghost, invisible and inaudible. This argument may be extended to the whole of Seneca's own public life. The real Seneca was in a way invisible and inaudible. But again to pursue this angle of inquiry is beyond the scope of this study.

⁵² Note the charges of corruption that Suillius Rufus brought against Seneca and the mockery in the *Satyricon* of one in the position and with the scandalous reputation of Seneca. This makes one suspect Seneca was dramatising in his own life the disjunction of dissidence in thought, word and action. Scholarship is yet to consider Seneca's entire life as a dramatised disjunction of dissidence.

amor magnitudinis falsae), rule him beyond everything valuable like success in wars, peace at home or rational behaviour (*Epist.* 94.64-65).

Against Augustus there are repeated implied criticisms. To begin with, there is not a mention of the fashionable contemporary politically correct jargon of *Pax Augusta* in any of Seneca's extant writings. In *De Beneficiis* Seneca proposes that the best form of government, according to Stoic doctrine, is "under a just king" or *sub rege iusto* (*Ben.* 2.20.2), yet to none of the Romans, including Augustus, is this title ascribed.⁵³ In *Res Gestae*, Augustus makes an unequivocal claim that he "transferred the republic from his authority to the control of the senate and the Romans" (*RG* 34). In practice, it continued to be an autocracy of Augustus euphemistically described in *Clem.* (1.26.5) as absolute happiness to provide the welfare of many, to recall one to life from the jaws of death and to earn public acclaim for clemency, while book burnings and exiles of the kind Ovid experienced were the reality. More explicitly, Tacitus, half a century after Seneca, confirms this view of the Augustan one-man rule in *Annales* (1.2-4; 6.48). Augustus boasted as *princeps* that he was "first among equals" surpassing his peers only in "prestige" (*auctoritas*), rather than in "power" (*potestas*). Yet in *Clem.* (1.1.2) Seneca presents to Nero the Augustan image of a ruler who is above the laws, even above the natural law (1.19.1-2) and the divine law (1.7.1), both of which are reduced to mere metaphors. Further, in *Clem.* (1.11.1-2) Seneca rejects the pretentious claims for the moderation and mercy of Augustus by bluntly stating, "Truly, I do not call clemency which was nothing but cruelty exhausted," (*Ego vero clementiam non voco lassam crudelitatem*). The distinction between Octavius, the man of blood, and Augustus, the benevolent ruler, is rejected, with

⁵³ In *De Clementia*, *rex* and *princeps* are used repeatedly as if they were interchangeable terms, while *rex iustus* is notably absent.

Seneca going as far as repeating the common gossip that he was a murderer and a traitor (*Clem.* 1.9-10, 11.1-2). In *Brev.* (5.16) he is one of the implied *ingrati* coming after the likes of Coriolanus, Catiline, Marius, Sulla, Pompey, Caesar and Antony. The conclusion one is expected to draw about Augustus is that he was ungrateful, duplicitous and cruel.

Seneca's condemnation of Tiberius is brief but telling. He is held responsible for the universal madness of bringing the charge of treason for the flimsiest reasons like jokes and babble of drunks. Indeed, the Senators suffered more from the savagery of Tiberius than from the civil war. No matter how grave or trivial the charge, those accused all ended with the inevitable execution (*Brev.* 3.26.1). There was no doubt whatsoever about Gaius Caligula's depravity in the minds of the Romans. Seneca, therefore, finds no need for irony of statement. As the abundant references in his essays testify, Seneca considered Gaius as "the ruin and ignominy of human race" (*Polyb.* 17.3).⁵⁴

When it comes to Claudius, Seneca has two contrary positions. His *Consolatio ad Polybium*, from the Corsican exile, is addressed directly to Polybius, the powerful freedman of Claudius, and indirectly to Claudius. It is overtly intended to please the freedman with condolences on the death of his younger brother, and covertly to persuade Claudius through praise to let Seneca return from exile. But the author's true feelings towards the Princeps emerge in *Apoc.*, written after Claudius died. It corrects *Polyb.*, as Rudich points out, in at least four different areas. First, the apotheosis of Claudius in *Polyb.* (12.5) is hopeful of glory, while in *Apoc.* Augustus condemns him to hell to be a slave of Caligula and then become a freedman of another freedman, Menander. Second, Claudius' mercy

⁵⁴ Also see *Helv.* 10.4; *Const.* 18.1-2; *Tranq.* 11.10-11, 14.4-6; *Ira* 2.33.3-5, 3.18.3-5; *Brev.* 18.5; *Bene.* 2.12.1, 4.31.2, 7.20.3; *N.Q.* 4 Praef. 15.

made much of in *Polyb.* (13, 16, 17) is ridiculed for “killing people as easily as a dog squats on its haunches” in *Apoc.* (10, 11). Third, the praise heaped on the eloquence of Claudius as “words as if issued by an oracle” in *Polyb.* (14.2) is turned into an insult, “neither Greek, nor Roman, nor of any other known race” and “the voice not of any terrestrial animal” in *Apoc.* (5). Finally, the public lament on Claudius’ death “lists personal traits that were conspicuously absent” (*Apoc.* 12).⁵⁵ The contrary attitudes towards Claudius expressed in *Polyb.* and in *Apoc.* strongly suggests that Seneca was openly against Julio-Claudians including Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula and Claudius. It remains to be discussed if he was also at least secretly against Nero.

With regard to Nero, Seneca is careful not to be discovered as a dissenter. He praises Nero in *De Clementia*, for being a worthy successor to Augustus (*Epist.* 73.1, 4, 10). This is an instance of clever doublespeak. The conclusions drawn from the image of the founder of the dynasty, discussed above, is that he was ungrateful, cruel and duplicitous. And Nero is his worthy successor! Seneca is accused of corrupting young Nero sexually (Dio, 61.10) which Tacitus describes as “permissible pleasures” (*Ann.* 13.2).⁵⁶ After the murder of Britannicus, Nero’s innocence is praised as of one so young (*Clem.* 1.9.1.). When Agrippina is despatched through a gruesome slaughter, Seneca writes a letter justifying the crime, which Nero reads to the Senate to have thanksgivings voted to commemorate the matricide (Tacit. *Ann.* 14.12; Dio, 62.15). If the claims and innuendoes of the contemporaries like Rufus, Petronius, Tacitus and the sources of Dio may be taken to have some element of truth, then Seneca was seriously involved in the criminality of Nero, first as tutor and later as ‘minister of state’

⁵⁵ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 41-43.

⁵⁶ One needs to be cautious not to take the pleasures as “permissible” to Tacitus. To take the term as an instance of sarcasm would be more appropriate.

despite all his lofty thoughts to the contrary in his essays, and convoluted attempts at hiding his dissidence. Faced with death, Seneca at long last drops the mask of a secret dissident and indicts Nero. “Once mother and brother had been killed, there was nothing left to him but the murder of teacher and preceptor” (Tacit. *Ann.* 15.62). The final will and testament of Seneca makes one strongly suspect that he had constrained himself from open hostility towards Nero, which he had secretly nursed all through his public career. During the years of long and intimate association with Nero, Seneca probably inflicted the fatal wound on the regime in more subtle ways than Brutus and Cassius did on Julius Caesar. Within two years of Seneca’s death, the rule of the Julio-Claudian house came to an end with the suicide of Nero. In a way, Seneca’s unspoken agenda⁵⁷ and the goal of his literary dissidence, that of destroying the Julio-Claudians, came to be realised sooner than he could have imagined.

Although less virulent than Seneca’s attitudinal disjunction, as it is proper to the Flavian age, Josephus still displays the signs that are indicative of its presence in his writings. Josephan scholars have been aware of the attitudinal disjunction from as early as 1853. They preferred to identify it as a personal shortcoming of the author of *B.J.* Even the scholars covered in the literature review of the current period note the presence of these strategies. Cohen mentions that there are lies,⁵⁸ excessive praise, exaggeration, and contradictions in the works of Josephus. Rajak finds that truth and falsehood are indistinguishable in the same,⁵⁹ as well as excessive praise, emotions overdone, and substitution of fiction for facts. Sterling

⁵⁷ For this study, the secret ambition of Seneca to undermine the Principate must remain possible as was his involvement in the Pisonian Conspiracy. See E. Champlin, *Nero* (Cambridge, Mass. and London: Harvard University Press, 2003).

⁵⁸ S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 200; 86; 91, 92-9, 212, 230, 239; 182, 184, 190, 198, 201-02.

⁵⁹ T. Rajak, *Josephus*, 159; 7, 63; 79; 145.

and Feldman highlight the peculiarity of the period, without expressly noting it as such, that Josephus tends to emphasise style.⁶⁰ It is Barclay who pointedly highlights the difficulties Josephus might have faced in writing history of the Jewish war in Flavian Rome, in that he had “to enter highly sensitive terrain in which Judean pride and imperial self-image were at stake and potentially in conflict.”⁶¹ While being fully aware of the difficulties every writer faced in the Principate, Josephus, as Jewish writer, had an added personal tension to resolve as a former prisoner of the Jewish war and a beneficiary of Flavian largess. As McLaren puts it, “Josephus may have been conquered but that does not mean he was submissive.”⁶²

2.5 CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of the settings in which Seneca and Josephus lived and wrote yields varied results. It does not reject Josephus’ debt to his literary predecessors both Greek and Roman.⁶³ The cultural backgrounds of the two public figures were quite different and their political achievements were unrelated. The places with which they were associated show no more than coincidental connections. In their literary achievements they used different types of writing, with Seneca showing greater variety than Josephus. However, the political and

⁶⁰ Sterling, *Historiography*, 290-95; Feldman, *Interpretation of the Bible*, 62. Sterling believes that the style does not affect the “truth” of the content. It is an ambiguous claim and must remain such until the complex meaning of “truth” has been clarified.

⁶¹ J. M. G. Barclay, “Judean Historiography in Rome: Josephus and History in *Contra Apionem* Book 1,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 29; Mason, “Contradiction or Counterpoint?” 144-88, and “Figured Speech and Irony in T. Flavius Josephus,” in *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, J. Edmondson, S. Mason and J. Rives eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243-88, as also his “Of Audience and Meaning,” 71-100.

⁶² J. S. McLaren, “Josephus on Titus,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 295.

⁶³ Take for example the thoroughgoing debt to Polybius in the following studies among others: S. J. D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*; H. Attridge, *Interpretation of Biblical History* and F. Walbank, *Polybius, Rome, and the Hellenistic World: Essays and reflections* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002).

cultural context in which they wrote was similar. It includes acquaintances and experiences they had in common.

Both Seneca and Josephus were acquainted with the same political events and people connected to the imperial household. The impact of the imperial connections varied on the two contemporaries. Although the social outcomes were not similar, there was much in common in all other respects. The financial consequences were positive for both. Politically Seneca benefited at first, while negative effects of the benefits soon followed. For Josephus political advantages continued even after the war. Moral, religious and psychological consequences, however, were devastatingly similar for the two. The dominant psychological consequence of fear of discovery as covert dissidents significantly affected the writings of Seneca and Josephus.

The fear of discovery resulted in the attitudinal disjunction of dissidents in both. The effects of such a disjunction can be noticed in their writings both in the form they take and in the matter they cover. At this point in the study it is at least valid to conclude that Seneca openly demonstrates signs of dissidence in his writings against past emperors but is cautious with Nero. Josephus too is highly critical of the past emperors like Gaius and Nero but needs care not to offend the Flavians. What Josephus does can be taken as stylistic quirks of his professed bias towards the Flavians. An open link is not yet proven between the two contemporaries.

Josephus, writing in a relatively liberal decade of the Flavian dynasty, seemingly had less reason than Seneca to be a dissident. His claims of continued good will and friendship with Domitian in *Vita* (429) only strengthens this line of reasoning. Nevertheless, it does not deny the link between Seneca and Josephus

in an area yet to be identified. It is proposed in this study that a literary connection between the two literary contemporaries exists. It is a connection of dependence of Josephus on the eight Senecan tragedies both in borrowing specific details from them and generally in modelling his work on them. The last issue is explored in the following chapter and through the rest of this study.

CHAPTER THREE

SENECAN TRAGEDIES AND *BELLUM JUDAICUM*

*"The palimpsestic world imaged
is the world of the play."*

A.J. Boyle, on Seneca's Tragic Theatre
in *An Introduction to Roman Tragedy*, 206.

3.1 STATE OF THE QUESTION

Investigation thus far reveals that the possibility of relationship between Seneca and Flavius Josephus cannot rely exclusively on appearances. On the other hand, shared experiences between the two enjoying significant status in their respective communities, suggest similar opportunities and dangers through the many coincidences in their lives. The well known literary peculiarities of the works of both authors indicate that they reflect the characteristics common to all other works of the period.¹ Such a shared literary phenomenon encourages the suggestion that Josephus might or might not have read Seneca. The suggestion becomes more positive if Seneca and Josephus shared the same attitudinal disjunction towards the Principate.

While it is evident that Seneca nursed an attitudinal disjunction of a political dissident against the Julio-Claudians, there is no downright undisguised act that Josephus too cultivated such a disjunction. Yet he had weighty reasons to nurse resentment against the Romans and the Flavians. As is to be argued in the following chapters, he held the Romans responsible for interfering in the domestic affairs under the Hasmoneans, for imposing the dreaded rule of Herod and for the early incompetent and later vicious administration of the Procurators in Judaea. The

¹ Some of the other authors of the period in the alphabetical order are Apuleius, Aulus Gellius, Juvenal, Lucan, Martial, Petronius, Phaedrus, Pliny the Younger, Statius, Suetonius, and Tacitus.

devotion to Flavians was bound to be thin. Their crimes against the Jews were not a matter of racial memory. Josephus experienced them in his person and witnessed them helplessly. Among these are to be counted the devastation of Judaea which grieved him immensely, the insufferable desecration and destruction of the Temple, the massacre of the priests, the burning of Jerusalem and the humiliating cruel abuse of the most vulnerable captives in the arenas of the ancient middle-east for entertainment. Given his self-esteem and standing in the community, he certainly was a covert dissident. As such, if he was looking for ways to express his dissidence, then in Seneca he had a ready-made model. Like Seneca he also could engage with much literary finesse in complex ambiguity that ‘informed readers’ of his time, namely, some of his intended readers, if not all of his historical readers, understood his dissidence. A necessary step on the road for this line of argument is to study the more than coincidental links between Seneca’s nine tragedies and *B.J.* to determine how Seneca could have been a model for Josephus as a literary dissident.

3.2 THE CONTEXT OF SENEKAN TRAGEDIES

For an authentic historical critical analysis, the context of the literary works is of utmost importance. Not only does the context help to understand the historical literary background of the text itself, it can take the analyst beyond the text into the mind of the author whose intention may not be as explicit in the text as one would like to have it. In the case of the nine tragedies of Seneca, the context is political and literary, which doubtless is the case with every writer.

3.2.1 POLITICAL CONTEXT

As discussed in the previous chapter, the political context in the reign of Julio-Claudians overlapped with the social standing of individuals. The political favours shown by the Prince had social consequences, as in the case of Lucan shrouded in mystery. What is known is his close friendship with Nero opened the political career as a senator for a promising young genius. The loss of the same friendship led to the loss of Lucan's position as a senator, drove him to embrace the Pisonian conspiracy, to isolation in his social status and finally to his death sentence.² The political context of Seneca's tragedies lies in his deep involvement in what became viewed as the madness of Nero's reign (Suet. *Nero*, 31.93; Dio, 62.29). He either witnessed the atrocities or participated in planning them as well as in presenting them as legitimate activities for a Princeps (Tacit. *Ann.* 13.3, 11, 20, 14.7, 11; Dio, 61.3). As discussed in the previous chapter, Seneca was no passive conformist. He was a dissident but one who kept his dissidence hidden for as long as he could until the last moment before his death. Not only did he express his dissidence in his prose works, but it can be argued that he extended it to include his nine tragedies.³ Rudich states that, "the tragedies present the face of evil. The essays try to engage with the evil in its form of tyranny."⁴

² See Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 76, 106-07, 160, 289, on dangers of *amicitia* leading to political vagaries of patronage in Imperial Rome. Also see Rudich, *Political Dissidence*, 94-96, for Lucan's open rebellion against Nero.

³ Boyle considers the relationship between the prose works of Seneca and his plays as enigmatic. See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy*, 192-208. The 'enigma,' it must be admitted, lies in Seneca's silence on the relationship. In studying the writings, though, it is not hard to recognise the relationship. What Seneca writes in prose has to do with his reflections on his own life situations and what he dramatises in the plays is the same reflections using classical plots, themes and imagery while making relevant adjustments in them to suit his intentions. Just as Seneca's life was indeed palimpsestic, so was the mode of his writings.

⁴ Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 86.

3.2.2 LITERARY CONTEXT

It is a well attested historical reality that the absolute dictatorship of the Julio-Claudians led to socially and politically uncontrolled tyranny. It went beyond the two areas and expressed itself in the artistic sphere as well.⁵ R.M. Frazer argues that Nero was an “artist-criminal.”⁶ He was a man who dramatized his crimes to match those of the stage and who “sometimes thought of himself as an actor off stage as well as on.”⁷ Frazer supports this claim with such examples as the firing of Rome in emulation of Priam, the murder of Agrippina as Orestes does, Nero’s nocturnal wanderings in disguise, and the murder of his step-son Rufrius Crispinus based on Naupilus’ murder of his son in the myth.⁸ “Nero was guided by ‘theatre’ to dispose of his kin.”⁹ Not only the manner in which the kin were thus disposed of, but even punishment meted out to condemned criminals followed the theatrical mode. “During Nero’s reign *fabula* and *poena* coincided.” Sometimes accidentally and at other times deliberately fatal charades were enacted.¹⁰

Nero consciously fused the political and the artistic. Dio states, if his report is to be believed, that the emperor “wore masks modelled after himself, not masks modelled after the drama’s male characters, but that all the masks of women showed

⁵ “It is likely that Seneca also wrote tragedies during [early 50’s], and possibly in later years, when it was said by his enemies that he composed poetry with greater assiduity at a time when Nero as emperor was captivated by the art.” See M. Coffey and R. Mayer, eds. *Seneca Phaedra*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 3. The term “poetry” (*carmina*) is used in Tacit. *Ann.* 14.52.2-3, for the tragedies of Seneca.

⁶ R. M. Frazer, “Nero the Artist-Criminal,” *CJ* 62 (1966), 17-20. More importantly see Champlin, *Nero*, and M. Roller, *Constructing Aristocracy: aristocrats and emperors in Julio-Claudian Rome* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2001).

⁷ Frazer, “Nero” 18. Suet. *Nero* 12.28-36, 13.37-40.

⁸ Frazer, “Nero” 61.

⁹ Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, 60.

¹⁰ Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, 55, 57.

the likeness of his dead wife, Poppaea Sabina” (63.9.5). This must be after her brutal death in 65 C.E. Suetonius further adds:

Tragoedias quoque cantavit [Nero,] personatus herorum
deorumque, item heroidum ac dearum, personis effectis
ad similitudinem oris sui et feminae, prout quamque
diligere. Inter cetera cantavit Canacen parturientem,
Oresten matricidam, Oedipodem excaecatam, Herculem
insanum. In qua fabula fama est tiruculum militem
positum ad custodiam aditus, cum eum ornari ac vinciri
catenis, sicut argumentum postulabat, videret, accurrisse
ferendae opis gratia.

[Nero] sang tragedies too, wearing the masks of heroes
and gods, as also of heroines and goddesses, with the
masks resembling his own face or of whatever woman he
was in love with at the time. His other singing roles
include that of Canace in labour, Orestes the matricide,
Oedipus blinded, mad Hercules. And in this [last] play,
as the story goes, a newly drafted soldier, posted to guard
the entrance, saw him adorned and bound in chains, in
accordance with the plot, he ran up to protect him (Suet.
Nero, 21.3).¹¹

Faced with such a contradictory political and literary situation, it is plausible that Seneca wrote his nine tragedies reflecting the current political reality cast in the mode of a tragedy. Seneca, it seems, incorporated Nero’s crimes *post factum* into the nine tragedies. Rudich makes the above connection between the two quite clear when he gives an overall assessment of the nine tragedies of Seneca:

No character there resembles stately or royal heroes, such
as Sophocles’ Oedipus. Seneca’s Oedipus is at best
pitiable, and at worst a caricature. Similarly, compare the
chivalrous Theseus in Euripides’ *Heracles* with his pale
shadow in Seneca. There is no need to speak about the
scoundrels in Senecan drama. They fit well into the

¹¹ Suetonius’ story of the recruit defending Nero acting Hercules on the stage confirms that the uninitiated could not tell the difference between reality and fantasy.

world that Lucan and Persius, no less than Seneca himself, deplored.¹²

Seneca anticipates the above observation in *Thyestes*.

ATREUS: Maximum hoc regni bonum est,
quod facta domini cogitur populus sui
tam ferre quam laudare.

ATREUS: The greatest benefit of autocracy is this:
The populace is forced equally to bear and to praise
The actions of their ruler (*Thyestes*. 205-208).

Again,

ATREUS: Laus vera et humili saepe contingit viro,
non nisi potenti falsa. quod nolunt velint.

ATREUS: True praise often befalls the lowly man too,
Feigned praise only the powerful.
Let them like what they don't! (*Thyestes*. 211-212).

Yet more impressively Seneca makes a telling comment in *De Ira* on a line in Accius' tragedy *Atreus* – “Let them hate, so long as they fear” – saying that, “you would know it was written in the time of Sulla” (*Ira*, 1.20.4). Bartsch adds, “For his own play he offers a different formulation, as if to suggest, in an overturning of the public transcript of his own day, that ‘you would know it was written in the time of Nero’: the wish of Seneca’s Atreus [in *Thyestes*] is to let them hate, so long as they *praise*.”¹³ Rudich supports this view when he states that, “Old stories like that of

¹² Rudich, *Dissidence and Literature*, 70.

¹³ Bartsch, *Actors in the Audience*, 176.

Seneca's *Thyestes*, could be perceived as topical in these circumstances, and Rome itself was founded by a fratricide."¹⁴

A similar observation may be made on another Senecan play. Nero apparently delighted in acting the Euripides' version of *Heracles* (Suet. *Nero*, 21.60).¹⁵ It is just possible that Seneca's *Hercules Furens* is more than a rendering of *Heracles* in Latin. The play could be seen, on the indirect evidence from Suetonius, as mimicking the emperor Nero both in his theatre performance and in his life of crime.¹⁶ Such a possibility suggests that for Seneca's nine tragedies to be read intelligently, they might be perceived as a critique of the contemporary political situation, particularly

¹⁴ Rudich, *Political Dissidence*, 9.

¹⁵ Suetonius mentions "Canace in Labour", "Orestes the Matricide", "The Blinding of Oedipus" and "The Frenzy of Hercules" among Nero's favourite plays in which he took great pleasure in acting (Suet. *Nero* 21.3).

¹⁶ The similarity of material and the manner of its structure between Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and Suetonius's *The Life of Nero* are so striking that it could not come as a surprise that Suetonius's history reflected Seneca's play. Seneca proposes, as explained below under 3.2.1., four general signs of madness in Hercules: discord, crime, impiety and error, and four particular signs of madness: distortion of perception, horrible imaginings, megalomaniac fantasies and failure to recognise intimates. There are two signs of healing from madness: shame and rage against self. For each of the signs there are parallels in *Nero* except the healing signs. Here appropriate references are given to Suetonius's *Nero*. Discord (or uncontrollable emotions): 26.1; 34.4; Crime (or passion of the soul for criminal acts): 27.1-3; Impiety (or lack of pity and manly courage): 28. 1-2, 29, 47-49; Error (or blindness to consequences of one's choices and actions): 15.1-2, 30.1-3, 31.1, 40.3; Distortion of perception: 19.1, 20.2, 31.4, 37.3, 40.4-42.2, 46.1-2, 53, 55; Horrible imaginings: 23.3, 24.1, 38.1, 43.1-2; Megalomaniac fantasies - of a potentate: 9-13, 37.1; - of an artist: 20.1, 21.3, 22.3, 23.1-2; - of an athlete: 22.1-2, 24.2, 25.1; Failure to recognize intimates - Father: 33.1, Mother: 6.4, 34, Wife: 35.1-2, 35.3-4; Children: 35.4; Siblings: 33; Aunt: 7.1, 34.5; Relations and acquaintances: 35.4, 36.1, 37.2. As for the healing signs, Suetonius points to Nero's shamelessness 19.3, 39.3 and 51 and his rage against himself is revealed in his despair at the end of his life 47.3, 48.1-4 and his fear of death and his stabbing in the throat to avoid worse pain and humiliation of execution as an enemy of the state: 47.1, 49.1-3. In *Hercules* shame and rage against self are signs of his healing whereas in depriving Nero of these healing signs, Suetonius seems to imply that unlike Hercules, the last of the Julio-Claudians never recovered from madness. This is similar to the end of Herod's life and death. For a detailed discussion see the following chapter on *Herc. fur.* and the Herod Narrative. E. Fantham states that it was common in Seneca's prime to use what Quintilian calls "*emphasis*" or "*figurata oratio*" or "*schema*" or writing in the ironic mode. That was in Neronian period. Based on *Inst.* 9.2.64-65, it is an indirect evidence that covert dissidence in writing was quite prevalent in Quintilian's youth. See further E. Fantham, *Seneca's Troades: A Literary Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), 9-14.

under Nero.¹⁷ They, like the essays of Seneca, are possibly statements of his dissidence.¹⁸ If this can be pressed to its fullest sense, in Seneca's hand his Roman tragedy, with complete deliberation, becomes the dramatised tragedy of Rome.¹⁹

3.3 THE MORE THAN COINCIDENTAL LINKS

The Greek classical plays precede Seneca by over three hundred years. By the time Seneca wrote his tragedies, the Greek tragedians were well known for their plots, the myths used, the structures of plays into three, five or seven acts and the techniques they employed to create the tragic emotions of pity and fear in the audience. Aristotle's analysis of what constitutes a tragedy and comedy is based on his readings of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, with particular emphasis on the second.²⁰

It is likely that Seneca depended, not exclusively, on the three Greek classical playwrights for his thematic tragedies.²¹ There were a number of Latin variations of

¹⁷ J. Fitch, "Sense-Pauses and Relative Dating in Seneca, Sophocles and Shakespeare," *AJP* 102 (1981), 289-307. In his study of diction or versification of Seneca's plays, Fitch makes a persuasive case for the following sequence of the eight tragedies: *Agamemnon*, *Phaedra*, *Oedipus* in the first group; *Medea*, *Troades*, *Hercules Furens* in the second group; and *Thyestes*, *Phoenissae* in the last. If these plays were written within a decade, from 54 to 64 CE, they would confirm the claim of Tacitus about Seneca's "*carmina*" (*Ann.* 14.52.2-3). Quintilian also suggests that Seneca was writing tragedies in the early 50's (*Inst.* 8.3.31).

¹⁸ M. Von Albrecht, *A History of Roman Literature from Livius Andronicus to Boethius*, 2 vols, (Leiden, New York, Köln: Brill, 1997). Von Albrecht notes, "...we do not know if Seneca wrote these plays for Nero's private theatre – with the Emperor as protagonist.... Seneca's plays belong to the 'diagnosing' not the 'healing' type of literature" (1191).

¹⁹ This phenomenon may be seen also in the fragment from Accius' *Atreus*, and in Lucan's *Bellum Civile*.

²⁰ Aristotle bases most of his observations on *Oedipus* of Sophocles. *Poet.* 1448 a, 1452 a-b, 1453 a-b, 1454 a-b, 1455 b, 1456 a.

²¹ See H. H. Chapman, "By the Waters of Babylon," in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 121-46. Chapman, in the chapter claims to "explore in more detail specific allusions to different types of Greek poetry popular at the time Josephus wrote the *Bellum*" (126), and covers Homer, Pindar, Sophocles and Euripides. It is the specific angle of this dissertation that in keeping Seneca's plays as his models, Josephus could still be indirectly indebted to the classical poets for the themes and directly for the quotes of words and phrases including imagery. See Boyle, *Roman*

Thyestes, for instance, including Seneca's play.²² Of the remaining eight tragedies *Hercules Furens*, *Thebaid*, *Phoenissae*, *Troades*, *Medea* have Euripides as the model, *Oedipus* and *Hercules Oetaevus* follow Sophocles,²³ and *Agamemnon* is based on Aeschylus' play of the same name.

All the Greek classical plays and those of the Senecan period follow the basic plot structure of *Prologos* (Introduction) of at least three characters and initiate the action of the plot. This is followed by the *Parodos* (Entrance) of the Chorus to present the background of the story and/or to add the emotional tone peculiar to the play. The third element is the *Episodos* (Incident) in which the dramatic action begins, is complicated, and reaches the climax and the reversal of fortune begins. The fourth and the last element is the *Exodos* (Close) which comes after the last *Stasimon* (Intervention) of the Chorus and includes a speech from a messenger and the problem is solved in a variety of ways including using *deus-ex-machina* (contrived providential intervention).²⁴ When stated as Acts in a play, *Prologos* and *Parodos* form Act One, *Episodos* may be spread from one to five Acts and the final Act is always the *Exodos*. The five Acts in the nine Senecan tragedies, however, without exception have *Prologos* and *Parodos* as Act One, followed by three *Episodoi* from

Tragedy, 205, "Beneath each Senecan tragedy are a host of subtexts – Greek and Roman, Attic, Hellenistic, republican, Augustan, and early imperial – clarifying and informing their discourse."

²² Aristotle does note the presence of a Greek version of *Thyestes* in his *Poet.* 1453 a. and 1454 b. Among the Latin versions of *Thyestes*, readily available, are texts from Cassius of Parma, Ennius in the time of Cicero, Sempronius Gracchus and Varius Rufus in the time of Augustus, Mamercus Aemilianus Scaurus in the time of Tiberius, Pomponius Secundus not to mention Seneca in the reign of Nero. See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy*, 302, and R. J. Tarrant, *Senecan Thyestes*, (Atlanta, Georgia: Scholars Press, 1985) 40-43.

²³ *Herc. oet.* and *Oct.* are of doubtful Senecan authorship. Boyle describes the first as the "Senecanesque drama" and the second as "Senecanesque *fabula praetexta*". See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy*, 141 and 189.

²⁴ For examples see P. H. Harsh, *A Handbook of Classical Drama* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 14-20.

the second to the fourth Act which then is rounded off with an *Exodos* as the fifth Act.

The Senecan tragedies are prior in time to the composition and publication of *B.J.*. The links between Senecan texts and *B.J.* would necessarily lie in areas in which the latter consists of details found in the tragedies. Lacking any other contemporary source for such similarities, it seems reasonable to assume that it is likely Josephus borrowed them from Seneca. Such details for convenience are classed under what are roughly termed as minor Senecan elements and the major ones. The minor Senecan elements are those that appear to be mere passing comments in the tragedies, which are also found in *B.J.* The major Senecan elements are those expressed with consistency and development both in the nine tragedies and in *B.J.* The discussion begins with the minor elements as they suggest a more distant resemblance of *B.J.* to Senecan plays. In contrast, the major elements, like the *motif* of madness and the stylistic elements of Senecan tragedy, reveal a more pronounced and thorough influence on the text of Josephus.²⁵

3.3.1 MINOR SENEKAN ELEMENTS

The least significant of the minor Senecan elements with one like it in the *B.J.* would be the boasting of Pyrrhus about the warlike achievements of his father, Agamemnon. What was allegedly like “a thunder’s blast” is understated by Pyrrhus as no more than “the deeds upon the way” (*Troad.* 229-33). Similarly, implied modesty is attributed to Vespasian in the midst of a litany of grand achievements

²⁵ This follows the method Josephus uses in structuring his *B.J.*, from the more remote, through the proximate, to the actual, keeping the Fall of Jerusalem as the goal of the narrative. The stylistic elements of Senecan tragedy are discussed in Chapter 4 below.

through the voice of the narrator (7.63-74) and Titus' praise for the father's compassion (6.340-42) is offered with no less impressive humility.

A more eye-catching group of ideas from the Senecan tragedies to find a place in *B.J.* relates to suicide and after-life. Associated with these are thoughts on despair, courage to face death, slavery versus freedom and religious sacrifice. In this Seneca is not unique. He builds on Plato and Cicero.²⁶ To die by suicide is brave and not to know how to die by suicide is to live in a "wretched state" (*Aga.* 611). When faced with despair, suicide is the way forward (*Aga.* 146; *Med.* 159, 163). In like manner, when confronted with certainty of slavery, one ought to choose the freedom of suicide (*Troad.* 790-91). There are times when suicide gets a religious sanction if undertaken as an act of sacrifice (*Med.* 805-07). Suicide is not an end of everything that we value in life. The "spirits live on when bodies have been buried" (*Troad.* 371).²⁷

In *B.J.* the harangue of Josephus to his comrades against suicide gives the impression that the above ideas from the tragedies are being contradicted. Josephus rejects suicide as against both the "natural law" (3.370) and the divine law (3.369). The context of such a rejection is that one "seeks certain death [by suicide] to avoid uncertain death [by surrender to the Romans]" (3.366). Clearly, such a suicide is pointless. In fact, it is shown to be cowardly and foolish, similar to the act of "a pilot

²⁶ Plato does not approve of suicide unless an individual is morally corrupt beyond rehabilitation, or is subject to judicial capital sentence, or is under disgrace or suffers some major calamity (*Laws* IX 854 and 873). Cicero too does not approve of suicide unless one cannot live true to one's nature either through material or social or political hardships (*De off.* 1.122, 3.60-61). Seneca widens Cicero's approval of suicide to *any* overwhelming situation which one needs to control. Seneca's position is closer to the Stoic stance on suicide. For further discussion see T. Hill, *Ambitiosa Mors: Suicide and Self in Roman Thought and Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2004), 146-79.

²⁷ In *Herc. fur. furor* (rage) and *pudor* (shame) do not lead to suicide. The responsibility for the crimes of the Hero does not belong to the inner person of Hercules but to Juno. His experience of rage and shame become the signs of the recovery of his sanity, and with it of his humanity.

who for fear of a tempest deliberately sinks his ship before the storm” (3.368).²⁸ In his motivational oration to persuade his comrades to commit suicide, Eleazar, fully concurs with the tragedies. He believes that suicide is a death of the brave (7.378, 387-88). It is preferable to slavery (7.324-26, 334-35, 341, 372, 382, 386). It is a religious act of atonement (7.327-29, 333, 359). It is a way to realise the eternal life of the soul, as it were, a natural thing to do (7.344-47, 349-50).²⁹

Another group of minor elements of connection deals with the many portents that occur customarily prior, or subsequent, to a catastrophe. In *Oedipus* there are three occurrences of unnatural portents (133-201, 350, and 709-63), two in *Troades* (166-99, 353-59) and two in *Thyestes* (813-74, 938-69). These portents are either premonitions of the cosmic tragic event or signs after the event of the magnitude of the evil perpetrated. Similar but extensive examples of portents signalling a cosmic tragedy of the fall of Jerusalem precede its description in *B.J.* (6.288-315).

One more interesting focus of comparison is the various parallels between the destruction of Troy and of Jerusalem. In *Troades* there are three specific descriptions of the fall of Troy. The first (*Troad.* 15-27) describes the burning of Troy and the looting of the stricken city. It is similar to what befalls Jerusalem and how the Romans despoil the City (*B.J.* 6.407-08). The second notes the five destructive assaults on Troy, including the two by the Greeks and two by Hercules (*Troad.* 132-37). Jerusalem too has been captured five times but destroyed twice (*B.J.* 6.435-42). Lastly, what the Trojans will remember of their fatherland, “where the smoke curls

²⁸ In the first speech on suicide, Josephus takes a stance that is similar to Plato’s. Mere possibility of execution is not a major calamity. Suicide in this circumstance is inexcusable. For further discussion see D. Ladouceur, “The Language of Josephus,” *Journal of Jewish Studies* 14 (1983): 18-38.

²⁹ Eleazar’s position on suicide is similar to Seneca’s view noted in note 26 above. Suicide is a way to achieve control over one’s destiny, which may involve depriving someone else of that control.

high to heaven and where the foul vapours hang” (*Troad.* 1053-54) is similar to the memories of the remains of Jerusalem that Eleazar recalls in his speech for his audience before their death (*B.J.* 7.375-77).³⁰

One of the more impressive groups in this category is the story of Mary’s cannibalism. It has a number of literary parallels with the tragedies. Of particular interest are Seneca’s *Medea* and *Thyestes*. As Medea charges into her infanticide with “Away from womanish fears” (*Med.* 42), Mary taunts the rebels for the same (*B.J.* 6.211). Medea brags, “Greater crimes become me, now that I am a mother.” (*Med.* 159). The narrator describes Mary’s crime as “outrage upon nature” (*B.J.* 6.205). Medea in a sacrilegious ritual prepares the poison to kill Creon and Creusa (*Med.* 670-739, 750), so is Mary’s infanticide executed in a religious rite as an “avenging fury” (*B.J.* 6.206-08, 211). Just as Medea has her revenge on Jason in hurting him through the killing of his children (*Med.* 549-50), so Mary takes revenge on the male rebels in killing her son to their horror and disgust (*B.J.* 6.207). In *Thyestes*, Tantalus is accused of killing the little son “that thou mightst spread a banquet for the gods, thy guests” (*Thyes.* 145-48). In *B.J.* 6.210 a reference is made to a cannibalistic banquet which serves as a precedent for Mary’s own cannibalism.³¹

³⁰ Other minor parallels may be found in the following: Fickleness of Fortune, Fate and the gods (*Aga.* 606; *Herc. fur.* 2, 123, 385; *Hip.* 978-88; *Med.* 176, 219, 1126-7; *Troad.* 2); Responsibilities of a victor (*Troad.* 258-69); Anti feminism (*Hip.* 559, 828); Treason (*Hip.* 598, *Troad.* 166); *Hero* as function (*Med.* 924, 932, *Troad.* 524-55, 659, 1169); Catharsis denied (*Aga.* 1012, *Thyes.* 973-75).

³¹ Chapman sees Mary as “a conflation of several Euripidean mothers: Agave, Andromache, and Medea,” and that “Josephus’ audience could clearly read Mary as a woman from Greek tragedy” as well as in general the scene to be “tragic.” See H. Chapman, “By the Waters of Babylon,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 143. To this one may add, that the Greek connotations of Mary’s cannibalism are clearly present, while the Senecan link through his *Medea* is more immediate, not merely in the mere mention of “sacrifice” but in what sacrificial desecration means in triggering the onset of madness. In *B.J.* it is not merely the madness inherent in Mary’s infanticide and cannibalism that is of interest, but it serves as the trigger for the madness on a cosmic scale (like the cataclysmic signs and their placement in Book 6) as Titus and his army desecrate the Temple, destroy the City and massacre the *hero-victim*.

In the process of marshalling the minor elements with increasing use in *B.J.*, it is becoming clearer that Josephus has not merely shared with Seneca a literary technique. It is plausible that he may have borrowed even more from the famed contemporary's tragedies. The likelihood is further strengthened in the major elements.

3.3.2 MAJOR SENECA ELEMENTS

There are two related major Senecan elements with similar occurrences in *B.J.*, namely, criminal behaviour and madness.³² Of the two, the latter is developed with impressive complexity both in the tragedies and in *B.J.* In addition, madness is the guise in which tendency to criminal behaviour is displayed. It is for this reason that madness is here chosen for a fuller study. Being complementary to madness, criminal behaviour is necessarily integrated into it.³³

Furor or madness, as Juno defines it in *Herc. fur.*, is to be "bereft of reason" (110). It is more than a theme or a leading idea in Seneca's tragedies. It is a *motif* with multiple expressions of it running through all his tragedies.³⁴ The importance of the *motif* can be judged, at first glance, by its omnipresence. As a word, *furor* recurs with varying frequency in each of the plays. It occurs six times in *Troades* (34, 94, 281-85, 940, 1001-03), eight times in *Medea* (157, 174, 396, 425, 673, 850, 930, 940), *Oedipus* (60, 103, 893, 925, 932, 961, 970, 1060), *Thyestes* (23-67, 250, 254,

³² A third major element, namely, the stylistic devices specific to the Seneca mode, is to be discussed below in Chapter 4.

³³ Criminal behaviour is dramatised in *Aga.* 151, 242-43; *Herc. fur.* 91-99, 288-90, 506-07, 1200-01; *Hip.* 143-44; *Med.* 428, 563; *Oed.* 680, 1024-38, 1042-46, 1058-60; *Phoen.* 298-302, 663-64; *Thyes.* 65-66, 102, 136; *Troad.* 1002. *Herc. oet.* Continues the Senecan theme 199-200, 330-31, 886-87.

³⁴ See Holman, *A Handbook*, "Theme [is] the central or dominating idea in a literary work" 443. "In literature recurrent images, words, objects, phrases, or actions, that tend to unify the work, are called *motives*" 279.

302, 449, 556, 682, 732-43), and *Phoenissae* (21, 163, 291-92, 302, 353, 420, 427, 557), fourteen times in *Agamemnon* (127, 131, 144, 151, 189, 199, 244, 552, 724, 734, 775, 869, 899, 1012), eleven in *Hercules Furens* (27-29, 98, 108-09, 110, 288-90, 397, 938, 1002-08, 1009, 1100-1134, 1220), and seventeen times, in *Hippolytus* (93-98, 184, 195, 246-49, 263, 278, 361, 486, 567, 584, 641, 711, 736, 824, 1082, 1155, 1164).³⁵

Besides its frequent use, madness is the dynamic source of the tragic action and is the medium through which the tragic plot is constructed. Such importance given to the *motif* of madness in the tragedies strongly implies that Seneca viewed the world around him, particularly the political dimension of it, as deeply flawed through irrationality.³⁶ It goes without saying that the irrationality of the Julio-Claudians has been supported in the histories of Tacitus, Suetonius, and later, of Dio Cassius. Seneca, himself, in his public and in private life, as Nero's preceptor, senator, writer and stoic philosopher had to learn to cope with the insanity of the principate.³⁷

Seneca further adds complexity to the use of the *motif* by placing the initiator of madness either within the human subject, or without, or both.³⁸ If it were caused through one's moral defect, madness as the result of immorality is plain enough to understand. When super human agencies become the cause of it, human

³⁵ *Furor* occurs ten times in *Hercules Oetaevus* (273, 275, 309, 429, 439, 671, 823-25, 906-07, 1002-24, 1461-62) even though this play is no longer considered a Senecan composition.

³⁶ This observation is concluded from the premise that the eight tragedies reflect Nero's time as the emperor. See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy* for the section on "Roman Palimpsests" 205-08. Suetonius, Tacitus and Dio Cassius, as noted above, agree that the *ludi* and the *Neronia* in the time of Nero were political charades, in which real life merged with the theatre, with cruelly real consequences for the participants.

³⁷ See M. Billerbeck, *Seneca Hercules Furens: Einleitung, Text, Übersetzung und Kommentar* (Leiden, Boston, Köln: Brill, 1999), for the section "Der *Hercules Furens* und seine Interpretationen," 30-38. The author discusses a variety of interpretations including the influence of stoicism on the play.

³⁸ Madness in Seneca can spread to the beasts (*Phaed.* 344 to the bucks, and 1070 to the horses) and the elements (*Phaed.* 351 to the sea).

responsibility is nullified and madness as a phenomenon moves into the realm of the inexplicable and the mysterious. Madness originates within human subjects as part of their moral failure in *Troades*, *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Agamemnon*, *Hercules Oetaevus*, and *Phoenissae*. In two plays, *Hercules Furens* and *Oedipus*, it is induced in the human subjects by the super human or divine agents. Being free from responsibility, the heroes in these two tragedies are the innocent victims when they commit acts of impiety against their kin. Only in *Thyestes* is the agency both human and super human so that the fury Megaera, Atreus and Thyestes share responsibility with the divine agents as participants in the madness and the ensuing impiety.

Seneca overlays *furor* with further complexity by varying its types with the different psychological disorders it represents in the plays. In *Troades*, it is the madness of the Greeks who feel insecure because Hector, whom they already have killed, is seen as now living in his young son, Astyanax (*Troad.* 524-55, 1165-77), and threatening them. Medea's madness is due to her tendency to overreact to situations, now overwhelmed by anger at her husband Jason's infidelity and by her uncontrollable jealousy of the second wife, Creusa (*Med.* 380-96, 447-89, 494-95). *Hippolytus* is the first of Seneca's plays to focus on the madness of incestuous lust and the implicit adultery it involves. To save herself from being caught and punished, Phaedra adds the revenge motive as well and increases the tragedy three fold (*Hip.* 1159-200). *Agamemnon* deals with the madness of his wife, Clytemnestra's adulterous relationship. To cover it up, the wife decides to have the husband killed. It so happens, the husband himself adds to the madness in his infidelity with the mistress, Casandra, he wants to introduce to his household (*Aga.* 108-24, 173, 253,

867-80). This leads to further intrigue of the wife's jealousy of the new woman in the household.³⁹

The madness of refusal to forgive develops into sibling rivalry in *Phoenissae*. It is also the tragedy of the madness of abuse of absolute power. This play dramatizes the belief that sins of the fathers visit upon the second and third generations (*Phoen.* 290, 363, 643-51, 664). *Oedipus*, the third play, deals with incestuous relationships. Oedipus is predestined to incest before his birth. Madness arises from his inability to rationally weigh up his guilt, or a lack of it, for the immorality with which he is charged. His reaction is disproportionate to the cause (*Oed.* 619-58, 915-75). Only in *Thyestes* human and super human agents work together to bring about an unusual human tragedy. Fury and the ghost of Tantalus set the forces into operation. The human agents add further incentive through alleged adultery with a sister-in-law, whose husband, Atreus, is driven to madness of revenge through an exemplary punishment of the alleged perpetrator, Thyestes, who is tricked into cannibalizing his three sons (*Thyest.* 1-121, 223-25, 260-65, 1053-68).

Hercules Furens, with *Oedipus*, has the cause of tragedy outside the human agents. In *Hercules Furens* it is the divine agent who sets the tragedy into motion against the *hero* (1-124). He is driven to madness (895-954) and to a major domestic disaster (1016-31). Being the only play in which no human moral failure is the cause of tragedy, it allows an insight into what madness in its essence, as it were, meant to

³⁹ In this tragedy, the villains escape retribution. It is an indication that the tragedy lacks a closure. "To deny closure means that everything will happen again and again, that repression will know no end...the force of regressive repetition which can be seen as the [*Thyestes*] tragedy's driving dynamic. Indeed, regression, at different levels and in different guises, is arguably the single most relevant operating principle of *Thyestes* – and of Senecan tragedy." See A. Schiesaro, *The Passions in Play: Thyestes and the Dynamics of Senecan Drama* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 189.

Seneca.⁴⁰ Juno is the originator of madness. Before “Alcides may be driven on” (107), she begs of “the handmaids of Dis” (100) that she be the first to be driven to madness so she can “plan some deed worthy of a step-dame’s doing” (111-12). In her prayer she defines what madness means to her: it is to be “bereft of reason” (110). This definition is confirmed in Hercules: “by mighty fury smitten” (108) would for him mean that he “is robbed of all sense” (107).⁴¹

Seneca next proceeds to dramatize signs of madness. Hercules suffers from distortion of his sense of perception. He sees darkness when it should be the brightness of noon and looks at the sky “with troubled gaze” (973-74). This is followed by “horrible imaginings” (975). Hercules has megalomaniac fantasies of subduing all the powers of heavens and of the whole of nature so that his “proud heart is no longer sane” (955-73). He cannot recognize even the intimate past. He sees his sons as fathered by Lycus (987-90) and his wife, Megara, as his persecutor, Juno (1017-20).

In addition to definable effects of madness on its subject, there are more general signs or distortions. Mad Hercules is affected by “discord,” “crime,” “impiety,” and “error” (98). Later as Hercules massacres his family, Amphytrion returns to the four effects with mad passion of the soul for the “crime,” destroying the *hero*’s pity and

⁴⁰ Being of super human in origin, it is easy to see madness in *Herc. fur.* in ‘pure form’, as it were, that is to say, with no admixture of human contribution to it in the form of moral or mental weaknesses. One may be tempted to question the validity of this statement in recalling the notorious *hubris* of Hercules. In this context it is worth noting the comment Schiesaro makes about Hercules. “From the very moment of [Hercules’] conception – when Jupiter, eager to prolong the night he was spending with Alcmena, prevented the dawning of a new day – the hero [Hercules] symbolizes the disruption of the natural order which will be especially evident in his trampling of the thresholds of the underworld.” Hercules, in his person, is both the symbol of a disordered universe and its innocent victim. See Schiesaro, *The Passions in Play*, 215.

⁴¹ Seneca in *De ira* (1.5-6) maintains that the condition of anger is not in harmony with human nature. It is worst when the disorder of human condition is out of control in various forms of madness.

manly courage for “impiety,” stirring his mind with uncontrollable emotion in “discord,” and letting blind “error” mislead him into fatal consequences (1002-08). Madness makes Hercules “rage against himself” as he becomes suicidal (1219-20). It “quenches shame,” but Hercules, as he recovers his sanity, realizes shame returning to him and he pleads with Theseus to return his weapons to turn them on himself (1240). Hercules summarizes the effect of madness on him when he reflects on the nightmare just lifted off his mind. “All that was dear to me I’ve lost: reason, arms, honour, wife, children, strength – and madness too!” (1258-61). Now he descends into despair. “No power could purge a tainted spirit; by death must sin be healed” (1262).

If this is the effect on the subject of madness, then its repercussion on the world at large is equally devastating through a five-fold destruction of values. The nine tragedies of Seneca testify to the ravages wrought on people and nature in the destruction of life and property through war and crime; through violence on rationality and emotional equilibrium; through social damage in domestic and national catastrophes; through destruction of moral values of goodness and humanity; finally, through desecration of the sacred and the divine leading up to the denial of gods.⁴²

Seneca certainly holds that *furor* mostly arises from the moral failures of human beings. As such, it is self-induced. Since it is defined as ‘loss of reason,’ moral failures begin with the loss and the consequences are wide ranging as seven out of nine plays demonstrate. Self-induced ‘loss of reason’ is a cardinal Stoic sin as it

⁴² An encapsulation of the five-fold destruction of values on the human and the divine through madness can be found in the command of Fury to the Ghost of Tantalus in *Thyestes*. 23-67.

perverts the universal order of the cosmos.⁴³ It is not difficult to find the underlying moral principles of the tragedies in Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*. Read against these, the nine tragedies share their authorial intent with that of the *Epistulae*, to be “the forcible and eloquent presentation and advocacy of moral principles conducive to the benefit of the individual and of society.”⁴⁴ While the *Epistulae* discuss the moral principles and their place in society and in the life of the individual, the nine tragedies dramatise the effects on a society where these principles are absent and where the individuals flout them with apparent impunity.⁴⁵

Whether Seneca seriously believed in madness induced through the agency of the super human forces is debatable. However, there is a clue at the end of *Medea* of what Seneca might have thought about the super human forces. As Medea escapes in a winged chariot after killing her children, Jason calls after her, “Go on through the lofty spaces of high heaven and bear witness, where thou ridest that there are no gods” (1126-27). The argument is based on the popular assumption that gods will ensure that the criminal receives adequate retribution. But many crimes do go

⁴³ In Senecan Stoic Ethics, virtue is perfect reason, and it is living according to such reason (*logos*). If morality is rational behaviour, then immorality is behaviour contrary to reason (*alogos*). ‘Loss of reason’ then takes one out of this equation of morality and immortality. It is an ontological disorder. In his Letters to Lucilius 76. 2, “What then is peculiar to man?” asks Seneca. “Reason. When this is right and has reached perfection, man's happiness is complete... and if man's peculiar good is reason, then, if a man has brought his reason to perfection, he is praiseworthy and has readied the end suited to his nature. This perfect reason is called virtue, and is likewise that which is honourable.” See also Seneca's *Epistulae Morales*: Letters to Lucilius 92 and 124.

⁴⁴ Teuffel quoted in F. J. Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, Vol. 1, (London: Heinemann, 1953), viii.

⁴⁵ There is little research done investigating if Seneca saw madness as a uniform stage of derangement or if there were grades in its manifestation. There is some evidence in *De Clem.* 1.25.2, and *Bene.* 7.19.5, that Seneca was aware of increasing levels of madness when he accuses Thebaid's of expressing their madness as *malus*, *ferus* and *immanis* (bad, uncivilised and savage). Josephus himself ‘displays’ the stages of madness rather than ‘defines’ the meaning of the term ‘madness.’ In his narrating strategy, ‘showing’ is always preferred to ‘telling.’

unpunished. Jason's conclusion thus seems to be also that of Seneca. Each crime that goes unpunished is proof against the reality of the gods.

Just as in Seneca's tragedies, the *motif* of madness is present throughout *B.J.*⁴⁶ In using seven synonyms for madness about 120 times, Josephus has shown a more complex understanding in using Greek terms which allow for greater nuance in their meanings.⁴⁷ Seneca focuses on madness in its wide range of manifestations, while Josephus approaches it from the angle of intensity. The first dramatises madness in its variety, and Josephus fathoms its depth. Both writers focus on madness as allowing modalities, for one extensively and for the other intensively. The following analysis is intended to prove that treatments of the *motif* in Seneca's and in Josephus' works as completing each other.

For Josephus, in its simplest form, madness is no more than stupidity (ἄνοια), at worst or a lack of judgement (ἀφροσύνη), at best. Antony's "folly" lets Caesar gain Herod as friend (1.391). Similar "folly" is attributed to God's people. It ensures them many calamities (6.310) and destruction (6. 315). When the Germans are forced to reconsider their "folly" in the surprise attack of Petilius Cerealius (7.83), it is not stupidity but a lack of judgement that leads to a revision of a wrong assessment of their military strength and strategy. Ananus attempts to bend "infatuated Zealots" to a better policy in a situation similar to the German lack of judgement (2.651).

⁴⁶ There is no implication here at all that Josephus owes the *motif* of madness in *B.J.* exclusively to Seneca. Madness has wider applications to the moral, social and political spheres in classical literature. Madness in the tragedies of Seneca, in the epics like Lucan's *Bellum Civile*, and Statius' *Thebaid*, in the histories of Dionysius Halicarnassus and Tacitus and in the *Satiricon* of Petronius are literary reflections of life under the Principate.

⁴⁷ In giving a wider angle to the treatment of madness in *B.J.* Josephus does not necessarily repudiate links with Seneca's concept of *furor*, rather he builds on it.

For a level higher than ἄνοια and ἀφροσύνη, Josephus uses χολή or θυμός. Both terms are synonyms for ‘pent up anger’, which is just short of an outburst. Χολή is used twice (7.34, 332) and in each instance it refers to God’s wrath at the many transgressions of the Jewish rebels against the people who will be divinely avenged. The more frequently used term for ‘pent up anger’ is θυμός. It means “resentment” (1.94; 4.116), “vindictiveness” (5.372), “temper” (2.135), “passion” (2.401, 518; 3.15, 153; 6.138, 257), “animosity” (6.231), “indignation” (2.293), “wrath” (1.230, 444, 480, 493, 590; 4.540, 591; 7.384), “rage” (2.377; 4.310, 654, 6.159, 263, 284, 327; 7.1) and “fury” (1.636, 2.199, 492; 3.261; 4.78, 314; 5.489; 6.79, 204, 234, 245).

Josephus uses ὀργή to mean more than pent up anger. It involves outbursts of the same violent emotion of anger in various forms.⁴⁸ Even though the terms are identical, in context they need to be read as indicating a higher phase of the emotion. The terms used by Thackeray are “resentment” (1.61, 320, 393, 445, 484, 558; 3.340; 4.15, 222; 7.431), “indignation” (1.58, 479, 571; 2.135, 337; 4.70, 540; 5.329; 7.34), “wrath” (1.449, 501, 504, 507; 2.642; 3.438; 591; 7.239), “rage” (1.210, 212, 252, 325, 565, 655; 2.9, 534, 599; 3.62, 350, 405; 4.80, 82, 384, 416, 535; 5.9, 451) and “fury” (1.97, 214, 526, 654; 2.71; 3.156; 4.198, 302; 6.204, 256; 7.48, 50).

In the nine English synonyms for ἄνοια - ἀφροσύνη and for χολή - θυμός there is a perceivable growing three stage intensity. The first three, “resentment”, “vindictiveness” and “temper” suggest retention of feelings of being injured, of revenge leading to a habitual hostile disposition of mind. The second three, “passion”, “animosity” and “indignation” reveal the presence of emotion of anger

⁴⁸ Thackeray renders the Greek term mostly with the same English equivalents as above so that a reader familiar only with English would miss the finer meaning of the term.

increasing the pressure on the injured subject so that inability to act becomes a suffering. The final three, “wrath” and “rage” bring the subject under intense pressure to break the bounds to act and in “fury” the line seems to have been crossed into action. The frequency of the use of the terms also suggests their importance either to inspire the tragic action or to impel it forward.⁴⁹ Josephus is quite consistent with “wrath”, “rage”, and “fury”, the three higher forms of anger. He uses the three terms more frequently, yet of them only “fury” is found in every book, except Book 5, of *B.J.*

With the next pair of words οἷστρος- λύσσα, Josephus takes the reader a step closer to madness. Οἷστρος is found only once, when Antiocheans rush on the Jews accused of setting fire to the public buildings “like maniacs in a wild frenzy” (7.57). Λύσσα is the other word used in Books 2, 4, 5 and 6. In Book 2, λύσσα appears twice and in both cases it applies to the Roman soldiers who act like the mad men attacking the Patricians they had earlier supported (2.213) and later threaten Berenice, Agrippa II’s sister, who had been in Jerusalem for her religious duties (2.312). The last three uses of λύσσα apply exclusively to the Jewish rebels. They perish by their own hands, courting death they “rave” against each other (4.371). Similar fratricidal attack takes place when “factions breed factions”, like a “raving” beast that preys upon its own flesh (5.4). When stricken with hunger and famine, “like mad dogs” the ruffians stagger and reel into homes in quest of food. While the Romans show unpredictability

⁴⁹ For definitions of the terms animosity, fury, indignation, passion, rage, resentment, temper, vindictiveness, and wrath see *OED*, J. A. Simpson and E. S. Weiner, eds. (Oxford: Clarendon, 1998), and K. Feyerabend, *Greek Dictionary: Classical Greek – English* (Berlin and Munich: Langenscheidt KG, 1999).

in the madness peculiar to them, the Jewish rebels are self-destructive in their specific madness.

For full-blown madness, Josephus exclusively uses *μανία*, a term which denotes mental derangement. Its first appearance has to do with Pheroras who, because of *μανία*, pleads for pardon from Herod, for plotting against Mariamme's son, Alexander (1.506). Pheroras implies that because of *μανία* he had lost reason and with it culpability for his calumny to put the life of a prince at risk. The second use of *μανία* applies to the quarrel between Aristobulus and Hyrcanus, which created the reason to invite Pompey to Jerusalem (5.396). One cannot fail to appreciate the gravity of the situation implied by the word, how thoroughly Josephus condemns the national betrayal by two leaders who could not settle a domestic feud. *Μανία* is used a third time against an attempt of the Jewish rebels of casting God in their own image, by expecting God to treat the just and the unjust equally (5.407). Here Josephus is condemning blasphemy in the strongest possible terms. *Μανία* is used a fourth time in Book 6 when Albinus dismisses the prophet, Jesus son of Ananias, as afflicted with madness (6.305). The fact that the prophecy was fulfilled and Jesus died in its fulfilment suggests that it was Albinus who could not recognize reality and so had lost his reason. The significant use of *μανία* suggesting a final judgement from the Roman point of view on the Jewish rebels is at the moment when Titus accuses the tyrants of madness in losing the people, the City, the Temple, and themselves.⁵⁰

The Josephan concept of *μανία* as the final stage of madness is similar to Seneca's. Both would agree that it is an extreme form of loss of one's reason or an

⁵⁰ In part two of Book 7 the use of *μανία* refers to the madness of the irreligious Idumaeans for trying to harm religious worship in murdering the priests and in introducing utter lawlessness (7.267).

extreme form of mental derangement. If real, it excuses the subject from guilt and responsibility. It points to a complete lack of awareness of the consequences of one's action. It deprives one of ability to weigh up what is of value and what is not. It does, however, deny the subject respect and standing with the community. For Josephus under the Flavians, as for Seneca under the Julio-Claudians, madness is a diagnostic term to describe the condition the contemporary political world. Madness, as the two authors employ it in their writings, is an energizer of tragic action. It sets the preconditions of tragedy, initiates the action and carries it to the catastrophic consequences for the victims.

For Josephus without exception madness is self-induced through moral failures in the Romans and the Jewish rebels alike. It is not blamed on some super human forces as sometimes Seneca does. This difference could be due to the differing views of the divine between Seneca and Josephus. God in *B.J.* has no share in madness unless through the active human participation in it. Therefore, responsibility for madness rests with the so-called "mad" for the wrongs perpetrated.

3.4 CONCLUSION

On the parallel presence of minor and of major Senecan elements, various observations may be made. These occurrences in general between works of two different authors of different yet proximate times suggests more than coincidence. In the case of Josephus and Seneca they strongly point to dependence of the later work on that of the earlier author. When what seems like coincidences of minor Senecan elements are consistently reinforced through a major common *motif*, these cannot simply be termed as the *topoi*, literary common practices dating back to the time of

Virgil and earlier. Nor is it satisfactory simply to claim that both Seneca and Josephus shared in the common literary tradition that involved Greek and Latin literature.⁵¹

When one closely focuses on the major Senecan *motif* of madness, as developed in the tragedies and in *B.J.*, the parallels cease to be coincidences. In *B.J.* the concept of madness is more than a reflection of what occurs in the tragedies. While the *motif* is parallel, its treatment marks advance on the tragedies. It is as it should be with an author like Josephus who is not a mere passive copyist. Josephus subsumes the literary achievements in the Senecan tragedies and builds on them to an impressive degree of complexity.

Further, to put it negatively, it is impossible for us to trace any other example, since Seneca's tragedies are "the only examples of the genre to survive."⁵² Of the extant works contemporary to Josephus, in addition to Seneca's prose writings and his tragedies, are Lucan's *Pharsalia* or *Bellum Civile*,⁵³ *Satyricon* of Petronius,⁵⁴ *Argonautica* of Valerius Flaccus,⁵⁵ *Punica* of Silius Italicus⁵⁶ and *Thebaid* of Statius.⁵⁷ *Bellum Civile* and *Satyricon* do not treat madness as a *motif*. It serves only as an underlying theme for the plot of each work. *Bellum Civile* was published in its incomplete form after the death of Lucan in 65 C.E. and *Satyricon* after the death of

⁵¹ Mason proposes five "considerations" to argue that *B.J.* was written for "an elite audience in the capital city." What is fundamental to the five "considerations" is the common literary tradition in Latin literature shared among Seneca, Josephus and their audiences. See S. Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning" in J. Sievers and G. Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 78-100.

⁵² G. Kennedy, *A New History of Classical Rhetoric* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 176.

⁵³ Lucan, *The Civil War*, trans. J. D. Duff, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1928).

⁵⁴ Petronius, *Satyricon*, Seneca, *Apocolocyntosis*, trans. M. Heseltin, W. H. D. Ronn, rev. E. L. Warmington, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1913).

⁵⁵ Valerius Flaccus, *Argonautica*, trans. J. H. Mozley, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1928).

⁵⁶ Silius Italicus, *Punica*, trans. J. D. Duff, (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press; London: William Heinemann, Ltd., 1934).

⁵⁷ Statius, *Vol. 2: Thebaid, Books 1-7; Vol. 3: Books 8-12*, trans. D.R. Shackleton Bailey, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

Petronius in 66 C.E., more likely, given the references to Nero's profligacy, after his death in 68 C.E. The status of madness in these works and the time of publication, being too close for *B.J.*, make it unlikely that these works had any influence on the text.⁵⁸ Statius uses madness as a *motif* in his *Thebaid*. However, he composed his work in 80-92 C.E., and published it in 95 C.E., a year before his death. The times of the composition and publication of *Thebaid* make it too late to influence *B.J.*

There still remains yet another major parallel to investigate beyond the shared minor and major elements in the works of the two authors. A case can be made that there are direct links beyond the above common elements. If it can be shown that *B.J.* has at least a section of the text modelled on a specific Senecan tragedy, then it would be persuasive evidence that Josephus had read at least one play of the foremost Roman author in contemporary Latin literature. If the presence of minor elements and the major *motif* in Seneca's and Josephus' works makes the parallels seem more than a coincidence, then, the further evidence to be investigated in the following chapter from the Herod narrative makes a strong case for its clear dependence on one of Seneca's tragedies, *Hercules Furens*.

⁵⁸ The detail and the complexity of the *motif* of madness in *B.J.* make the presence of 'assistants' in the planning its structure and executing its composition more plausible.

CHAPTER FOUR

HERCULES FURENS AND THE HEROD NARRATIVE

... so that the whole of Judea
and the household may mourn for me.
Flavius Josephus *B.J.* 1.660.

4.1 STATE OF THE QUESTION

Through Chapters 2 and 3 the focus of investigation has moved from the remote possibilities of contacts between Seneca the Younger and Flavius Josephus to more substantial points of contact. The evidence presented thus far does not confirm the presence of an actual link between the tragedies of Seneca and *B.J.* It will be argued in this chapter that such a link is to be found between one of Senecan tragedies and a section of *B.J.* More specifically, it will be argued that the Herod narrative is modelled on *Herc. fur.*

Discussion of this issue proceeds in three stages. First, the difference between *Heracles* of Euripides and *Herc. fur.* of Seneca is established. This will assist negatively in ruling out the Herod narrative being based on *Heracles*. Second, similarities and differences between *Herc. fur.* and the Herod narrative are discussed to show that for *B.J.* Josephus draws on Seneca's tragedy. Third, structurally at least, the Herod Narrative shows its independence from the biography of Herod for which Nicolaus of Damascus is credited as the author. From the three-step analysis it is argued that the whole of *B.J.* is worth reading not merely as a tragedy rather as a Senecan five-act tragedy.

4.2 HERACLES AND HERCULES FURENS

Seneca's tragedy *Herc. fur.*, a close reflection of Euripides' Greek play *Heracles*, has some similarities with and many significant differences from the original model.¹ There are two common elements. The first is the five-act format. Prologue opens the first Act and parade with choral entry concludes it. The first episode and the first choral interlude mark the second Act. The second episode and the second choral interlude are the third Act. The third episode and the third choral interlude constitute the fourth Act. Finally, exode is the end of the five-act tragedy as Seneca has it. Catastrophe and *catharsis* are aspects of the final act.² The second similarity is in the characters. With the exception of Iris, the daughter of the night, King Creon and his son, who are merely mentioned in *Heracles*, all the others are common to both plays. These are: Amphitryon, Hercules / Heracles, Juno, Lycus, Megara, her three sons, and Theseus. The third similarity is the two part symmetry in the plays. In *Heracles* the hero rises to the height of triumph when he visits retribution on Lycus, while in the second part he descends into despair and depression. In *Hercules Furens* the first

¹ For structural, conceptual and verbal parallels between *Heracles* of Euripides and Seneca's *Hercules Furens* see Billerbeck, *Hercules Furens*, 11-24.

² The first Act has come to be known as the *Exposition*, the second Act as the *Complication* or *Rising Action*; the third Act as the *Crisis-Climax*, the fourth Act as the *Falling Action*; and the fifth Act as *Resolution* or *Denouement*. The terms *Exposition*, *Rising Action*, *Crisis-Climax*, *Falling Action* and *Catastrophe* are of more recent development. The 'acts' are named after Freytag's Pyramid. See G. Freytag, *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863, rep. Darmstadt, 1969) s. 93, s. 102, s. 170-71. According to Aristotle's terminology (*Poet.* 1452 b) *Exposition* includes "prologue" and "parade" while "episodes" would cover the *Rising Action*, (with *Complication*, *Crisis-Climax*) and *Falling Action*, (with *Reversal* and *Discovery*) and "exode" would probably have *Catastrophe* or "calamity". For the purposes of this Dissertation, Freytag's concepts are used purely as a matter of convenience. See also Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, vv 526-36 and Holman, *A Handbook*, 142-43.

part dramatises the alleged greatness of Hercules, who is little more than a braggart, and the second focuses on his madness.

The easily identifiable differences are the language in which the plays were composed, Greek and Latin respectively, and the titles of the tragedies. *Heracles* puts the stress on what the hero mainly represents, namely, his positive qualities like courage and nobility, while *Hercules Furens* emphasizes the shortcomings of the hero, his brashness and the madness. In *Heracles* the hero is totally at the mercy of the gods; he has no choice to be otherwise. In *Hercules Furens* the hero's weaknesses in character are used to bring about his downfall by divine agents. The more significant differences between Euripides and Seneca are in the matter, the emphasis and the stylistic devices. Seneca reconstitutes the content of Euripides' *Heracles* by greatly emphasizing the step-motherly jealousy of Juno and her revenge for some perceived grievance focused on Hercules (1.122). She drives Hercules to madness and murder, including infanticide. In *Heracles*, Juno is mentioned without giving her an explicit role on the stage, and the chief villain is Lycus. Unlike Euripides, Lycus' villainy is not the main cause of tragedy for Seneca. Lycus is only a tool in the hands of Juno for her gruesome purposes (118-222). Further, the angle that Seneca takes on the character, the motive and the action are different. The characters are stock characters like the "hero," Hercules, the "villain," Lycus, the "faithful companion," Amphytrion and the "faithful woman," Megara. The motive is either jealousy leading to revenge fanned by suspicion, or retribution in repairing a wrong done. The action consists of unnatural crimes like adultery real or alleged,

infanticide, murder and cruelty. In fact, the *motif* of madness binds the characters and dramatic action together.

The other important Senecan feature is the use of stylistic devices. Whereas Euripides develops his play with sober dignity and controlled description, as is proper to noble tragedy, Seneca tends to be highly rhetorical. This can be demonstrated through Seneca's use of hyperbolic expressions, detailed descriptions, exaggerated comparisons, aphorisms and epigrams, stichomythia and apostrophes.

Hyperbolic expressions, not to be taken literally, are spread throughout the play. The eagerness of Hercules (40-62), the arrival of dawn (132-38), and Megara's wish for Hercules to come and save her and the children (279-308) are some of the outstanding examples. Detailed and lengthy descriptions abound in *Hercules Furens* as Juno's extravagant description of the sky held by the harlots (1-122), of the vicissitudes Hercules faces (207-78), Amphitryon's description of the sons of Hercules (1022-26) or Theseus' description of *Hades* (662-96). Consistent with these, Seneca frequently uses exaggerated comparisons. The constancy of Megara's rejection of Lycus (373-78), Hercules' movement in Hades and the superhuman power of Hercules (258) are highly blown up so is the lawyer's mercenary attitude as he sells his talents (173-75). Seneca's play is spiced throughout with pithy sayings. Aphorisms are found in every Act, like the common saying decrying the success of the criminals, "Once again, prosperous and successful crime goes by the name of virtue; good men obey the bad, might is right and fear oppresses law" (251-53). Similar are the comments on 'fortune' (325-26). Hand in hand with aphorisms, Seneca uses epigrams like the ones on calamity and fortune (328), or the racist

individual (340-41), or on vengeance (1187). Exclamations and Apostrophes are equally part of Senecan stylistic devices. Thus Amphitryon uses personification as he urges Thebes, “a land fertile in gods,” to return to its ancient honour and glory (254-68). Megara calls on the absent Hercules to “burst through the darkness slivered by (his) hand” soon to protect his family (279-308). The chorus calls on the absent hero to overcome the “laws of cruel Styx and the relentless distaff of the Fates” (558-59). Another stylistic device less lavishly used in the Senecan genre is Stichomythia, a short and sharp dialogue. This may be seen illustrated in the brisk dialogue between Lycus and Megara (421-38), or when Amphitryon and Lycus have an argument about the honour of Hercules (447-70), or again when Amphitryon is dissuading Hercules from committing suicide (1125-1301). *Hercules Furens* is a remarkable example of Seneca’s nine tragedies in as much as it illustrates every characteristic proper to the Senecan tragedies.³ However, it is from *Hercules Furens* that Josephus largely borrows for his Herod narrative.

4.3 *HERCULES FURENS* AND THE HEROD NARRATIVE

An awareness of the changes Seneca makes to the play of Euripides is helpful to appreciate how Josephus, in the Herod narrative, incorporates the Senecan version. In this Josephus does not merely passively copy Seneca. The Herod narrative creatively takes on the details of *Herc. fur.* as well as the structure and advances with them. It is here argued that the Herod narrative absorbs in a variety of ways the characteristic

³ See Miller, *Seneca’s Tragedies*, x. Miller summarises the characteristics of Senecan genre. He writes, “they are indeed open to criticism from the standpoint of modern taste, with their florid rhetorical style, their long didactic speeches, their almost ostentatious pride of [mythological] lore, their over-sensationalism, which freely admits the horrible and uncanny, their insistent employment of the epigram and, finally, their introduction of situations which would be impossible from the standpoint of the technique of practical drama.” See also D. Sutton, *Seneca on the Stage* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986). Sutton and others contradict the last point with evidence of hidden staging clues in the body of the text and the Renaissance experience of staging these tragedies.

Senecan details from the sequence of the Acts, crimes of passion, unnatural crimes, characters, tragic themes, above all, the Hercules myth and the five-act tragedy structure

4.3.1 DETAILS FROM THE SEQUENCE OF THE ACTS

A number of Senecan details used in Josephus' Herod narrative may be traced in different ways. The sequence of the acts in *Herc. fur.* is the basic frame of reference.⁴ In the *Prologue* the successful labours of Hercules are the proximate reason why Juno has decided to destroy him (19-75). Similarly, in *B.J.* the successful labours of Herod are given as the proximate reason why Fortune has decided to destroy him (1.431, 628). In replacing Juno with Fortune, Josephus opts out of Greek mythology and resorts to the fictitious literary *topos*. Just as Hercules can be conquered by his own hand (84-85) so Herod can be by his own weaknesses (1.224-26, 246-51, 255). Hercules' heart shall be filled with madness and in madness do deeds which shall make him long for death (100-22). Herod is filled with jealousy (1.437-44). He does not long for death because of his deeds of madness rather for being "overpowered by his tortures" (1.662).⁵ It rules out any regret for the evil Herod has done through his life. The *Parode* contrasts city and country, where the country is the idyllic image of

⁴ At this juncture it is important to acknowledge that Aristotle's *Poetics* was available to Josephus by way of theory on the plot of a Tragedy. Aristotle defines, "Tragedy, then, is a representation of an action that is worth serious attention, complete in itself, and of some amplitude; in language enriched by a variety of artistic devices appropriate to the several parts of the play; presented in the form of action, not narration; by means of pity and fear bringing about the purgation of such emotions" (*Poet.* 1450 a). Of the six constituents, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song, the most important are plot, character and thought (*Poet.* 1450 a). The plot is "the ordering of the incidents" which has "a beginning, a middle and an end" (*Poet.* 1450 b). The action itself is "complex", "one in which change is accompanied with a discovery or reversal, or both", developed "out of the very structure of the plot" (*Poet.* 1452 a). The structure of the plot is threefold, "prologue, episode and exode" with the "choral song" (further divided into *parode* and *stasimon*) breaking the action into sections (*Poet.* 1452 b). Action is mainly in the "episode" consisting of "reversal, discovery and calamity" (*Poet.* 1452 a).

⁵ Herod is punished for impiety and for unnatural sins in *C. Ap.* (643-45). Herod referred to is the private person rather than the public persona of *B.J.*

homely tasks for humans and animals and birds are astir with new life at each dawn (125-58). The city is the image of a greedy quest for gold and power with sordid rounds of toil (159-201). Josephus reverses the values placed on the country and the city in Seneca's play. Herod punishes the country with taxes (1.428) and builds lavish cities and fortresses (1.401-26).

In the first episode, Amphitryon grieves for Hercules' heroic sufferings for Juno (205-78) and Megara grieves for her absent Hercules (279-308). Mariamme grieves, not for Herod, but for the deaths of her grandfather, Hyrcanus, and of her brother, Jonathan (1.432). For Seneca, Lycus is the villain usurper of the kingdom of Creon (332-44), the seducer of Megara for political advantage (355-51, 357-71) and the destroyer of the family of Hercules (501-10). For Josephus, Herod is the villain usurper of the kingdom of the Hasmoneans (1.433-37), exploiter of Mariamme in a marriage of political convenience (1.241, 344) with the identical motivation as that of Lycus, and a destroyer of his own family like mad Hercules (1.438-44, 445-551, 663-64). In the first choral interlude Fortune is unjust to Hercules (524-610) and the theme is introduced through Megara (325-27). Josephus too introduces Fortune as fickle and unjust (1.431, 628).

In the second episode, Hercules is informed of Lycus' usurpation of the throne (629) and his plans to destroy Megara and the children (630). In the Herod Narrative domestic feuds in Herod's household are detailed with plots and schemes against each other (1.432-551, 567-69). The second choral interlude celebrates Hercules' world-wide victories (830-74) and his deliverance from recent woes (875-92). Herod's world-wide victories are praised (1.293-94, 303-304, 320-21, 342-57, 362,

387-89, and 399). He is also proclaimed as the deliverer and protector of the Arabs (1.385).

The third episode associates madness of Hercules with the sacrifice of thanksgiving for Lycus' death (920-24, 939-54). Herod is meted out with physical (1.647), domestic (1.665) and political (1.648) punishment for impiety. The third choral interlude intercedes with prayer for Hercules that his sanity may be restored (1054-1121). Josephus overturns such sentiments for Herod. There are no prayers for Herod's recovery. Instead there is universal longing among Herod's subjects for his death (1.648).

The exode presents Hercules wishing to kill himself in grief and in shame (1202-1218, 1240-1245). He goes to Athens to lead a life of penance (1321-1344). Herod, on the other hand, wishes to commit suicide not in grief and shame but as an act of arrogance in trying to defy death (1.659-62). The general impression is clear. For Seneca, Hercules is a figure of pity, while in *B.J.*, Herod is an object of contempt despite his achievements. It is increasingly apparent that between *Hercules Furens* and the Herod narrative parallels do exist in similarities and contrasts. When Josephus reconstitutes the image of Herod in contrast to Hercules, the significance of the changes he makes can be better appreciated when set against the details in Seneca's *Hercules Furens*.

4.3.2 CRIMES OF PASSION

Seneca, as noted above, introduces his play with Juno riven with jealousy announcing revenge for the successes of Hercules. Similarly, Josephus introduces the domestic problems of Herod after narrating his achievements in public life. Fortune,

like Juno, adversely reacts to Herod's successes, "...in revenge for Herod's public prosperity, fortune visited him with troubles at home" (1.431).⁶

Herod, like Hercules who kills Lycus and Megara, is stirred to an all-consuming jealousy and rage at the alleged infidelity of Mariamme with Joseph, his brother-in-law. Mariamme and her alleged lover are murdered (1.437-44). Like Megara, Mariamme too was probably innocent of the charge. There are two instances of Juno type step-motherly jealousy, one of Mariamme when she has Antipater put out of the palace and the other of Doris retaliating against Mariamme's children (1.473).

4.3.3 UNNATURAL CRIMES

Another common element is the presence of a variety of unnatural crimes, either alleged or actually committed. Hercules, in Seneca's play, murders his wife Megara for perceived adultery, and commits infanticide of his three sons under the false impression that they are the offspring of his enemy, Lycus. When Hercules recovers sanity and the horror of the reality dawns on him, in despair of his unnatural crimes he attempts suicide. Similarly, Herod is driven to unnatural crimes through mistaken perceptions. The merely alleged adultery of Mariamme and Joseph (1.443) is sufficient reason for Herod to murder his beloved wife Mariamme and brother-in-law Joseph (1.444). His political insecurity drives him to assassinate Mariamme's brother Jonathan (1.437) and her grandfather Hyrcanus (1.433). The reports of plots of parricide to usurp his throne urge him to kill his two sons by Mariamme (1.445-551, 537-664). Antipater's alleged treason and planned parricide (1.663) are unnatural

⁶ Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, vv 1-122.

crimes for which he is executed. The attempted suicide of Herod (1.662) is also another unnatural crime of which he himself is the object.

4.3.4 CHARACTERS

Senecan character types also people the Herod Narrative. The main protagonist of the tragedy is Herod. Josephus has added complexity to the role of Herod. In addition to being in the mould of Hercules, who turns insane, Herod is also cast partly in the role of Lycus, the “villain” of the tragedy. Lycus lives up to his role in two ways. He is the usurper of the throne in killing Creon and his son and heir.⁷ He also seeks legitimacy through marriage to Megara, the daughter of Creon.⁸ Herod is accused of similar villainy. The Jews consider Herod as a usurper of the throne (1.265). He is alleged to have had a hand in bringing about the death of Aristobulus II. He has a direct hand in the murder of Hyrcanus (1.433) and Jonathan (1.437). Herod also seeks legitimacy to the throne through a politically helpful marriage (1.241) with Mariamme (1.344), “the daughter of Alexander” (1.432).⁹ In addition to Herod, Antipater, his eldest son too is a “villain” in the tragedy in the image of his father. Thus, in the domestic tragedy of Herod one finds two “villains” playing major roles.

The “faithful companion” is Nicolaus who defends Herod against Antipater at the final trial. The roles of the “jealous stepmother” and the “wronged wife” alternate between Doris and Mariamme. The murdered innocent sons, and “the ghosts” of these murdered sons (1.599, 608) the presence of an “evil genius” (1.628) are all the

⁷ Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, “I lack noble ancestry and high titles, but power I unquestionably possess” (vv 338-39).

⁸ Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, “The kingdom is hardly firm while surrounded by hostile elements; but Megara could firmly set our forces by combining symbols of royalty and marriage” (vv 344-47).

⁹ The significance of the fusion of the roles of the “hero” and of the “villain” in the character of Herod becomes clearer in the final Act of the tragedy.

stock *dramatis personae* in the nine tragedies of Seneca and are active in the Herod Narrative.¹⁰

4.3.5 TRAGIC THEMES

The use of tragic themes is a further common element in Seneca's tragedy and the Herod Narrative. Although tragic themes are not unique to Seneca in kind,¹¹ their unparalleled gruesome developments that flood the Senecan plays are indeed distinctive. The slaughter of the helpless like Megara, Astyanax and Thyestes, the deaths of the innocent like the sons of Medea and Hercules, sexual excesses of Agamemnon and Deianira, the sufferings of the powerless like those of Amphytrion and Theseus, the ruthlessness of the absolute ruler like Atreus and Lycus and the destructive power of the evil forces like Juno and the Fate are all found in the Herod Narrative. Seneca has pity for the young and the innocent, not for the adults who are "never predominantly good in their motives, never free from the miasma of egotism."¹² Josephus follows Seneca in closely presenting Aristobulus and Alexander as the objects for our "pity and fear." Their dramatic return as ghosts more than punishes Antipater. It heightens "pity and fear" in the readers for the wasted lives of the young princes.

¹⁰ Briefly, without labouring the point, one could recall the ghost of Tantalus and infanticide in *Thyestes*, the wronged wife, maddened out of an urge to seek vengeance, and infanticide in *Medea*, adulterers and murderers in *Agamemnon*, and the incestuous Oedipus. *Hercules Furens* itself, it has been discussed, has a collection of the unsavoury characters who find a place in the Herod Narrative of Josephus. See note 41 below.

¹¹ See Miller, The Introduction to *Seneca's Tragedies*, for the extensive reliance of Seneca on Euripides for, among others, the tragic themes. It must be noted that tragic movements like the reversal and catastrophe may be found in all historians from Herodotus down to Livy, but that does not necessarily make them narrative three-act or five-act tragedies.

¹² D. Henry and E. Henry, *The Mask of Power: Seneca's Tragedies and Imperial Rome* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1985), 160.

Josephus once again does not slavishly follow Seneca. He reconstitutes Herod as his own version of Hercules. He presents Herod in a more wretched state than the Senecan Hercules who recovers his sanity and is repentant. Herod has no recovery or healing.¹³ He is shown to be pathologically unstable through his credulity, suspicion and cruelty (1.645, 647, 656). As his body disintegrates, so do his personality and his kingdom. One who was ‘the Great’ once is now the object of contempt, one accursed of God and of all people for his many unnatural sins.¹⁴ The capping insult to a life of public successes is the insurrection of Herod’s Jewish subjects on the news of his long-awaited death. Unlike Seneca and breaking from him, Josephus presents his readers with the harshest judgement on Herod, when the tragic “hero” turns out to be a moral degenerate. It is at this point that the significance of the fusion of the roles of “hero” and “villain” in Herod becomes apparent. As the “hero,” Herod should have created in the audience the cathartic emotions of “pity and fear”. Instead, Josephus allows Herod to be punished. His suffering is made to seem justified. The end of his reign apparently is a relief for his subjects. Herod deserves the death of a “villain.”

It needs to be noted that the difference between Seneca’s Hercules and the Herod of Josephus in *B.J.* does not undermine the connection. In the fusing of the two roles, the *villain* and the *hero* in Herod, Josephus shows his mastery of the tragic *genre*. What seems like a subversion of the *genre* is in fact a close adherence to it in that Josephus adapts the conventions of the *genre* in a creative way, casting Herod in the

¹³ The peculiar turn Josephus gives to the Herculean myth in its application to Herod raises the possibility, for one thing, that the writer is quite in control of the material and is able to make changes as he thinks fit. For another, one can only surmise that had Nicolaus presented the story of Herod modelled on the Hercules Myth, then this change would have been a ‘correction’ Josephus introduced into the story. The change would then highlight Josephus’ rejection of Herod, as a hero, as truly significant.

¹⁴ This change in Herod is reflected by the narrative and is also a reflection that grows out of reading the narrative.

combined role of Hercules - Lycus, the author's intention of mocking Herod and his propagandist, Nicolaus of Damascus, becomes quite clear. Herod is just a mock *hero*, a 'Hercules' who never recovers his sanity.

4.3.6 DETAILS FROM THE HERCULES MYTH

Yet another important common element between Seneca's *Hercules Furens* and the Herod Narrative of *B.J.* is the extensive and methodical use of the Hercules myth. Josephus introduces the Hercules myth gradually, only to develop it extensively with reference to Herod. The first hint is Herod's "triumph over nature" (1.410) that suggests a link with Herculean achievements.¹⁵ The two statues, one of Caesar rivalling "Olympian Zeus" and the other of Rome, "rivalling Hera" suggest Hercules, who is the son of Zeus and Hera. This gains further support from a phrase in which Herod's "filial devotion" being mentioned as one of the motives for the large enterprise of building memorials. In the case of Hercules too it is the "filial devotion" that drove him to undertake his twelve labours.¹⁶ These hints are the prelude to the more elaborate use of the Herculean myth in the second part of the Herod narrative (1.431-673).

It is evident that Josephus maintains symmetry in the narrative.¹⁷ While in the first half Josephus narrates Herod's achievements, in the second he delves into his

¹⁵ It is true there are real-life exploits of Xerxes (*Hist.* 7.22-24, 33-36, 37, 117, 122) and of Julius Caesar (*Bella Gallica* 4.10, 19, 7.63-87). Josephus, however, places Herod's exploits in relation to the myth of Hercules without any evidence of denying the others.

¹⁶ Miller, *Seneca's Tragedies*, (vv 40-2), "I have no more monsters left and it is easier for Hercules to carry out my commands than for me to issue them; he gladly fulfils my orders."

¹⁷ See Pere Villalba I Varneda, *The Historical Method of Flavius Josephus* (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986), 81. Varneda's criticism of Josephus for failing to keep to the requirements of symmetry in this context is difficult to sustain.

domestic and personal tragedy.¹⁸ The first part, if seen as Herod's Herculean achievements, strikes the reader by the number. Herculean achievements are twelve, so are Herod's, except that these may be seen as four groups of three types of activity.

The first group can be described as Herod's achievements as a member of a family.

1. He proves himself a loyal son and a brother in avenging the murder of Antipater, Phasaelis and Joseph.
2. Herod shows that he is a caring husband and a grandfather, in the way he provides for both groups of dependants.¹⁹
3. As a dynamic head of the family, he founds a royal dynasty.

The second group belongs to Herod as the warrior.

1. He unifies Galilee and Judaea by defeating his adversaries.
2. He purges the region of the bandits and criminals.
3. He becomes the terror of his Arab neighbours.

The third group praises Herod's generosity in making benefactions.

1. He is the restorer of Jerusalem and the Temple.
2. Herod founds cities, builds fortresses and palaces.
3. He is the benefactor of foreign cities and the patron of Quinquennial and Olympic games.

¹⁸ It is helpful to note that what is termed as the labours of Hercules may also be taken as his achievements. They involve not merely strenuous effort, but also the glory of success. In Herod's case there is less of the physical effort, more of the glory of success. The parallel is not suggested as being exact in every respect. The Twelve Labours of Hercules, well known in classical mythology, are specifically referred to in *Herc. fur.* are: First, 46, 224; Second, 46, 224, 529, 780, 1195; Third, 222; Fourth, 228; Fifth, 247; Sixth, 244; Seventh, 230; Eighth, 226; Ninth, 245, 542; Tenth, 231, 487; Eleventh, 239, 530; and Twelfth, 46, 760.

¹⁹ The omission of Herod's sons from the list of the beneficiaries is significant as it highlights the father's antipathy towards his sons and heirs.

The fourth group lauds Herod's ability to relate to others.

1. He is described as "favoured of God" as a beneficiary of at least two miracles.
2. Herod was shrewd to appease Queen Cleopatra and outlive her.
3. As a friend and confidant of Cassius, Mark Antony and Octavius he ensured that he would remain king to the end of his days.

The incorporation of Hercules Myth into the Herod Narrative needs to be seen not in isolation but in conjunction with the fusion of the "hero" and "villain" roles into one. Presenting Herod as the "hero-villain" makes him a personification of contradiction. The Herod narrative, then, is not a passive mirror of Hercules myth. It now seems a parody of that myth since it is more an imitation of the myth used with satirical intention to mock the new "hero-villain." As such Herod becomes the butt of the author's mockery.

4.3.7 THE HEROD NARRATIVE (1.203-673) AS A FIVE-ACT TRAGEDY

In addition to and inclusive of the Senecan details, Josephus has designed the whole of Herod narrative as a five-act tragedy, similar to *Herc. fur.*, while at the same time without making it a mere copy of the Roman play in the arrangement of characters and events.²⁰ If from the angle of the Hercules myth, Herod as mock

Hercules is an object of ridicule, then, as a protagonist of his self-inflicted tragedy, he

²⁰ Josephan scholars are yet to resolve definitively the difference between the Herod narratives in *B.J.* and *A.J.* Laqueur focused on the sources for the textual matter of Herod narratives in *B.J.* and *A.J.* He held the view that Nicolaus was the source for *B.J.*, which in turn was the source of *A.J.*, notwithstanding some minor corrections in the former text based on the change of author's view in the latter text. See chapters 9, 10, 13, 14 in R. Laqueur, *The Jewish Historian*, 171-200. The present study is primarily and directly on the genre of Herod narrative in *B.J.*, and not on the source/s of matter for it. In published works Cohen and Landau have made their positions clear. Cohen has acknowledged that he does not know why the difference in matter exists. See Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee*, 58. Landau recognizes that Josephus has made changes to material from Nicolaus of Damascus on Herod but does not tell which version is the result of the change. See Landau, "Power and Pity" in Sievers and Lembi, 164. Rajak during the reading of an unpublished paper at Australian Catholic University, Melbourne, noted that the issue needed further research. To identify the genre of the Herod narrative as a tragedy in the five-act structure seems to be one way to begin to resolve the issue.

comes across as an object of contempt. This is discussed in the following brief analysis.

The detailed structure of the two parts shows that the first part of the Herod narrative, with Herod's public life (1.226-430), has three Acts of a classical tragedy and the second part with his domestic life consists of the remaining two Acts (1.431-673). Exposition extends from Herod's initiation into the political life of Galilee to the day he is named "king of the Jews" (1.285). In this section the facts necessary for the narration are presented. One is the active role the Romans play on behalf of Herod: Cassius (1.221-25), Octavius and Antony. The last two persuade the Roman Senate to name Herod "King of the Jews" (1.225, 282-85). The second element is the rebelliousness of the Jews, who do not accept Herod as a legitimate ruler, and continue to menace him. One of the elements necessary for the Exposition is the character of the protagonist. Josephus paints Herod as precocious (1.203), highly energetic (1.204), prudent (1.211) and willing to listen to counsel (1.214). He is a brave warrior in battle (1.253) and a passionate lover of Mariamme (1.156), with limitless credulity in being controlled by her. Herod is loyal to his family with single-minded persistence (1.263-64, 274-75).²¹

Herod's character is also shown to have flaws, a necessary element in a tragic *hero*. He is vindictive with a great deal of guile and brutality.²² Malichus, the killer of Herod's father, is punished with the cunning and cruelty of Thyestes towards Atreus in one of the Senecan Tragedies. Equally numbing is his revenge on the Jews

²¹ The single-minded persistence in loyalty is undermined in the second part in at least in two ways: the family fails Herod and he fails the family.

²² The evil suggested through the *flaw* implies that Herod will not be the noble tragic *hero* as accepted in the Greek classic tradition.

who killed his garrison at the Temple (1.251-52). Given to rage (1.245), Herod easily turns into a ruthless killer (1.246-50). As an administrator too, Herod is presented with two sides. He is prudent (1.211), politically astute with Hyrcanus (1.215) and enters into a politically helpful marriage alliance with Mariamme (1.241).²³ Herod is an efficient ruler as he restores peace and possessions of those in his care (1.205). He maintains the welfare of the state even “in violation of the (Jewish) law” (1.209). He is commended as a military strategist (1.239-41). On the debit side, Herod is suspicious of the foreigners (1.255). He easily resorts to murder as a solution to problems (1.224, 226). This sketch of Herod explains that while it is his positive qualities that help him to achieve all the gains of his long career and it is the negatives in his character which bring about his tragedy. Additionally, the greater are Herod’s achievements, the more catastrophic is his downfall.

The “atmosphere” of this section is suffused with fear, death and simmering discontent. It is caused by envy in Hyrcanus (1.208-12), by the menacing Jews (1.265) and the disloyal Arabs (1.279). Herod needs to tread with care, if he is to survive as a leader of the Jews. Naturally, the “tone” of the section is complex in keeping with the situation. There is admiration for Herod’s personal qualities. There is cautious understanding for what Herod is prone to use as a solution.

Rising Action begins with Herod’s nomination as “king of the Jews” by the Roman Senate (1.285), which is the “exciting force” that triggers opposition to Herod. Josephus divides this section into two parts. In the first, Herod “gains mastery

²³ “Politically helpful marriage alliance” clearly carries its own seeds of disintegration. In keeping with Senecan *genre*, the human actions that lead to tragedy are free, not imposed by powers external to the agent. The madness brought about by the gods has its roots in human vice. To that extent humans must bear the consequences of their freedom of choice.

over his enemies” and in the second he “gains mastery over his foreign allies” (1.354). In the first part, the reader is presented with Herod’s conflicts with individuals like Antigonus (1.317) and Pappus (1.342) followed by smaller groups like “brigands” (1.311) and the defectors (1.323-27). There is only one larger group the Galileans who oppose him (1.316). Herod’s resolution of the conflict is described as “high-handed and abusive” (1.317). This confirmed later with the term “carnage” (1.142).

Against this conflict, we find Herod with supportive allies. Individuals like Ventidius (1.290), Mark Antony (1.320) and Sossius (1.342) with the second Mariamme, his wife (1.344) supporting him and/or his cause. Large and small groups of people stand by him like the Jewish country folk (1.293) or “multitudes of Jews” (1.335) or his soldiers (1.308), including the Syrian auxiliaries (1.342). The overall impression is that Herod is overcoming his enemies with many more friends and allies. The narrative goes beyond what is humanly observable to engage the Myth of Cosmic Providence. Herod is reputed to be “a special favourite of heaven” (1.331),²⁴ saved from lesser physical conflicts like being crushed by collapse of a building (1.332) or being injured by a javelin (1.332) or by the escaping enemy soldiers at a bath where Herod appears unarmed (1.341). In this Rising Action it is Herod who is rising.

In the second part, in which Herod “gains mastery over his foreign allies” (1.354), conflicts are also evident. These involve individuals like Cleopatra (1.363) or her general Athenion (1.367, 369) or the nation of Arabs (1.371). Herod overcomes them

²⁴ The equivalent of Senecan *prudentia* is ‘divine providence’. Herod, affirmed as a ‘special favourite of heaven’, could be taken as ironic, compared with his status ‘on earth’. He maintains himself in power through armed force, the help of Romans and the mercenaries.

all. In this Herod has the support of the Roman soldiers, whom he lavishly entertains (1.355) and his own soldiers, whom he rewards (1.373–79). The Arab population chooses him as their “protector” (1.385). His friends stand by him. Antony’s loyalty to him is unflinching despite Cleopatra’s snares (1.358). Octavius apparently finds his victory over Antony at Actium incomplete without Herod’s friendship (1.387). Herod meets Octavius at Rhodes and is confirmed as King of the Jews with his realm extended (1.396). Herod is “next after Agrippa in Caesar’s affection” (1.400). In all this Herod’s Jewish subjects do not get a mention. Rising Action is marked by naming Herod as a King by the Roman Senate and by being confirmed as King by Octavius. Herod personifies stability and continuity as the narrative progresses to the Climax.

The third Act, Climax of the Herod narrative, is confined to 1.401–30. The readers are led to identify two distinct parts. The first part deals with “Herod’s genius” (1.429). It is also described as displaying Herod’s “gifts of (the) soul” (1.430). The second part is about “Herod’s physical constitution:” (1.429) or the “gifts of his body” (1.430). Herod’s genius is revealed in two different ways. The first is through the ‘memorials’ and the other is through the “bounties.” The “memorials” are for two groups of people: friends (1.403, 404, 407, 410) and family (1.408). Herod also builds memorials for individuals: for God and for himself. For God, the Temple in Jerusalem is restored. “The Temple itself bore no comparison” to the palaces

(1.401).²⁵ The other memorial is for Herod himself which he names Herodium (1.419).²⁶

The other way in which Herod's "genius" or "gift of the soul" is displayed is through 'bounties' to eighteen individual communities outside Herod's realm and to the world community. The bounty to the world community is by sponsoring the Olympic Games and by endowing Elis, through it Hellas and the world (1.426), while his own subjects gain no more than reduced taxes in Phaselis, Balanea and Cilicia (1.428).

The final section is devoted to the "gift of (Herod's) body" (1.430), to his "physical constitution" (1.429) with focus on Herod's hunting skills, and his fighting skills.²⁷ The reverses in battle are all made to seem as the failure of Herod's soldiers or to traitors. Herod himself was blessed with "good fortune" and "public prosperity" (1.430). The obvious bias here is in keeping with the need of the genre as the "hero" is on the rise.

The third act ends with 1.429-35, where Herod's physical prowess and athleticism are described with yet another Herculean trait. This, in fact, is the Crisis, the "turning point." After the Climax the protagonist, Herod, does not improve.

Josephus next structures the fourth Act and executes Falling Action through the domestic troubles of Herod. Without delay, the "tragic force" is announced in the marriage to Mariamme, "the daughter of Alexander" (1.432) and the granddaughter of Aristobulus. This is where Herod's "ill fated career originates" (1.431) as

²⁵ The *narrator* is critical of Herod's attempts at self aggrandisement through his palaces against the refurbishments of the Temple which come a poor second to those palaces.

²⁶ Thakeray, *Josephus*, 199 note b.

²⁷ Images of hunting, fighting and physical exertions are echoes of Herculean myth in general and as they are particularly in Seneca. See *Herc. fur.* and the twelve labours above.

Mariamme brings “in his house the discord” (1.432).²⁸ This discord includes a fourfold tragedy: her own murder, the murder of her two sons, Alexander and Aristobulus, the murder of Antipater and the catastrophic end to her husband’s life and career. Since Herod is the protagonist, the Falling Action coincides with the falling fortunes of the “hero”. The demands of the genre are that the falling fortunes of the protagonist must somehow antithetically be linked to the successful efforts of the antagonists.²⁹ Josephus follows this requirement closely when he sets two sets of antagonists in opposition to Herod: one is the women of the royal house-hold; the other is the men, also of the royal house-hold. Josephus uses irony when he turns the success of the antagonists against themselves only to make the failing fortunes of the “hero” seem much worse.

The first group of antagonists is made up of Mariamme and Doris, Herod’s first two wives, the mother of Herod, and Salome, his sister. Mariamme’s fortune rises as she gets Doris and her son, Antipater, dismissed from the royal household (1.432-433) and then targets Herod for the murder of her grandfather, Hyrcanus and her brother Jonathan (1.437). Herod’s fortunes begin to fail as he cannot retaliate “paralysed by infatuation” (1.438) for Mariamme. But then her insulting attacks on Herod’s mother and Salome turn them against her. Her success becomes the means of her undoing when the two women “seething in indignation” accuse her of sending her picture to Mark Antony (1.439), then of exhibiting herself to a sex fiend (1.440) and finally of adultery with Joseph, the husband of Salome (1.443). “Mad with sheer

²⁸ This comment could easily suggest Josephus’ notorious anti feminist sentiments. In the context, Herod needs to be presented as the victim of Mariamme. His contribution to the tragedy could then be that he loved her too much: he let emotion take charge of his reason.

²⁹ Holman, *A Handbook*, 143.

jealousy” (1.440)³⁰ Herod orders instant execution of Mariamme and Joseph. Herod’s fortunes fail further when remorse “follows rage” and newer signs of his madness become apparent as he begins to “address Mariamme as though alive” (1.443).

A worse downfall for Herod begins with the two “sons of Mariamme [who] inherit her resentment” (1.445) and their “antagonism grows with their years” (1.446). Actions and reactions of Alexander, Aristobulus (1.447-49) and Archelaus, Alexander’s father-in-law (1.501-03), on the one hand, and Antipater, Salome, Pheroras and Glaphyra, on the other, bring about the execution of Mariamme’s sons. Herod is shown as “drugged with ...calumnies” (1.448).³¹ Antipater “stage manages” (1.471) his father’s emotional disequilibrium, irrationality and his tyrannical power, among others in the miscarriage of justice against Mariamme’s two sons (1.451-559). For an absolute ruler, Herod capitulates too easily to his conniving son. That sets the stage for the final Act of Herod’s tragic narrative.

The Resolution begins with 1.567. The fifth Act starts with the apparent invincibility of the “villain,” Antipater, with his “prospects securely anchored” (1.567), he adds “assurance...to villainy”, becomes “insufferable” and finds “security in intimidation” (1.567). His associates, Pheroras and his wife and a “gang of women at court” including his mother Doris, hold “clandestine meetings and nocturnal carousals” (1.569). To facilitate his plot on Herod’s life he conspires to be sent to

³⁰ This is an oblique reference to the Herculean type of madness. Josephus presents Herod’s loss of rationality as synonymous with madness revealed as the Falling Action. Herod is not excused for it, even though “fortune” like Juno in *Herc. fur.* drives him to it. Landau’s view differs in that she states, “Herod’s misconduct is not a result of an understandable, human shortcoming, nor of temporary madness driven by higher causes.” See Landau, “Power and Pity,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 179. On the use of emotions in classical histories an important study is by J. Marincola, “Beyond Pity and Fear: the emotions of history,” *Ancient Society* 33 (2003): 285-315.

³¹ Once again Josephus stresses irrationality or of reason having lost control of the subject as suggested by the image of drugged intoxication.

Caesar's court with Herod, the son of Mariamme II. The conspiracy now begins to unravel. Herod, kept informed by his sister, Salome, (1.569) banishes Pheroras and his wife (1.578) to the tetrarchy where Pheroras dies by poisoning (1.580). Josephus records the retribution for "one of the murderers of Alexander and Aristobulus" (1.581). The freedman of Pheroras helps to expose the "villain," "the real perpetrator of that crime" (1.583). Under torture, the plot to poison Herod is revealed and the conspirators are Doris, Pheroras and his wife, Antipater and the women of the court, holding clandestine meetings and carousing in secret (1.585). It is left to the slave girls, tortured separately (1.586), to give corroborative evidence with identical details that Antipater considered Herod "the ferocious beast" (1.586), senile (1.588), and "a blood thirsty beast" (1.589).³² Antipater is accused of planning to kill Herod (1.587) and all his rival heirs to the throne (1.589).

Once his opponents are identified, Herod acts swiftly. He dismisses Doris from the court a second time (1.590). He tortures anyone suspected of conspiracy (1.591). Pheroras's wife, terrified of torture in addition to the injuries she sustained in her failed attempt at suicide, tells all (1.595-98) as the ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus patrol the palace (1.599), as the Senecan convention demands.³³ Mariamme II is denounced and banished with her son, Herod, who is now cut off from the will (1.600).

³² The bestial imagery is consistent with Senecan *genre* when the tyrants descend to the sub human levels. Critics recognize it as a comment on the contemporary Age of Nero by Seneca. See Henry and Henry, *The Mask of Power*, 169.

³³ Of the tragedies attributed to Seneca, only *Hippolytus* lacks ghosts. The others have ghosts referred to, spoken to, or speaking to the characters. Indeed, the *Exodos* of *Thyestes* is a monologue by the ghost of Tantalus. The ghosts are generally referred to in *Hercules Furens* (vv 720, 765). The rest of the tragedies have ghosts of known individuals as follows: *Troades*: Achilles (v 170) and Hector (v 443); *Medea*: Absyrtus (v 963); *Oedipus*: Laius (v 582) and Amphion (v 612); *Agamemnon*: Thyestes (vv 1-56); *Phoenissae*: Laius (v 39). *Hercules Oetaeus* is no longer ascribed to Seneca. See Boyle, *Roman Tragedy*, 221-22.

Josephus reinforces the credibility of the story when he brings in Antipater's freedman, Bathyllus, to corroborate with his voluntary witness, what the slave girls have confessed under torture. This relates to the second "noxious drug" if the first should fail (1.601). A new major piece of evidence of a forged letter is added by Antipater to injure Archelaus and Phillip and his plan to play their champion only makes matters worse for them (1.602-05).

The ghosts of Alexander and Aristobulus are active as *nemesis*, a second time, in keeping Antipater ignorant of the developments in Judaea as Herod cajoles him to return to Judaea (1.608). On his way back, at Calenderis, Doris warns Antipater (1.610) of the danger he is in, using the conventional necessity of the tragic mode of giving the "villain" a chance to make good his escape, only to be frustrated.

Antipater's advisers unknowingly give him the wrong counsel. As he had his half-brothers implicated by conscious deception, so now he is driven inexorably to his doom by an unconscious error. Antipater enters the palace gates alone. The "villain" is finally trapped. He has the premonition of the fate that awaits him as he feels "dead with the fright at the bottom of his heart" (1.615). Herod welcomes him with, "Perdition take thee, the most impious wretch" (1.619), a father's curse.

With the death or banishment of his opponents, with the exposure and capture of the "villain," the narrative is now focused on the dramatic satisfaction, or *catharsis*. At first Josephus tries to offer "satisfaction by logical conformity"³⁴ when Herod indicts Antipater by accusing himself for his own failure to love and protect

³⁴ Holman, *A Handbook*, 143. In the logical conformity an attempt is made to establish a causal link between the crime in question and its antecedent cause. In the apparent acknowledgement by Herod of being the cause of Antipater's crimes, Josephus suggests that Herod's crimes make him the guiltier.

Alexander and Aristobulus (1.625).³⁵ Next he confesses to being over generous to Antipater (1.625). Finally, he charges Antipater as a “parricide” (1.625) and “traitor” (1.626), more unnatural crimes, while he was his “buckler” and “body guard” (1.627). With a reference to Juno, in *Herc. fur.*, Herod remarks, “Some evil genius is bent on desolating my house” (1.628), and he wishes to weep on his “unjust destiny”, “his forlorn state” (1.628).³⁶

These emotional words of Herod lead to the alternative way of achieving “satisfaction by gratification of sympathies.”³⁷ Antipater resorts to this method. “These ejaculations accompanied by moaning and tears moved all to compassion, including Varus” (1.636).³⁸ Josephus has chosen to counter this method through the *hero* who “remains dry-eyed, furious and knowing that the evidence was true” (1.636). It is the evidence about the “tragic flaw” in the “hero.” The “villain” is now further accused by Nicolaus with “evidence of infecting the whole palace with pollution” (1.637-38).³⁹ Antipater cannot defend himself against the force of the truth

³⁵ The self-accusation does not amount to redemptive repentance. It underscores the height of Herod’s benevolence towards Antipater and the depth in proportion of Antipater’s ingratitude to his father.

³⁶ The self-pity, so obvious here, is a trait of the egotism that characterizes Senecan tyrants. There is a parallel between the narrator’s comment, “in revenge for his public prosperity, fortune visited Herod with troubles at home” (1.431) and Herod’s remarks, “Some evil genius is bent on desolating my house” (1.628). Josephan “Fortune”, “evil genius” and Senecan “Juno” suggest a three step progression in the personification of the source of villainy. “Some evil genius” is not explicitly Juno, but seems a euphemism for her.

³⁷ Holman, *A Handbook*, 143.

³⁸ “Moaning and tears” are what is left after rationality is destroyed. Excess of emotion, as noted above, is a Stoic sin. For Stoic Philosophy and Senecan Tragedy see M. Coffey and R. Mayer, *Seneca: Phaedra*, 22-25.

³⁹ Even though Josephus does not acknowledge dependence on Nicolaus for *B.J.* as he does for the *Antiquities*, given this reference to the intervention of Nicolaus against Antipater, we could do more than indulge in ‘guesswork’ in hypothesizing that Josephus obtained this information from Nicolaus’ *Histories* for both accounts. However, he could not have passively reproduced it in matter, point of view and the structure of the narrative. Josephus takes on board Nicolaus but reshapes the material into his own story as a five-act tragedy. Landau accepts that “The Jewish historian must have made changes at least in one of the narratives.” This clearly is more apparent in the Herod Narrative in *B.J.* because of its dependence on *Herc. fur.* See Landau, “Power and Pity” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 164. There is no conflict in the views Josephan scholars have held of the

and calls on God blasphemously to be his “witness” and falls silent (1.638). He is sentenced and put in irons. Herod claims this as the “catastrophe” (1.640) in his letter to Augustus, but Josephus does not see it that way. He, instead, reverts to “satisfaction by logical conformity”.

Herod receives another letter allegedly written by Salome but in fact forged by Antipater, insulting Herod, with a second letter by Acme, Empress Livia’s maid servant, conniving with Antipater (1.641-43). It finally dawns on Herod that the letters incriminating Alexander were also Antipater’s forgeries. The “villain’s” fate is now sealed, awaiting Caesar’s ratification. The “hero” continues to succumb. Herod changes the will and testament naming Antipas king, passing over Archelaus and Phillip. He makes what seems like parting presents to the Imperial Family and his many friends (1.646). As Herod rapidly slides into old age and despondency (1.647), he faces “insurrection of the populace” (1.648) “to avenge God’s honour” by removing the golden eagle from the Great Gate.

The succumbing “hero” does not show “final nobility.”⁴⁰ Instead Herod turns obnoxious and metes out swift and cruel punishment to the leaders of the insurrection (1.654-5). Even his body begins to abandon him as it shows signs of putrefaction (1.650). Despite his generosity to the soldiers and generals (1.658), Herod is morally

contribution of Nicolaus to the Herod narrative and on the demonstrated adaptation of details Josephus has made following the Senecan model. It would be problematic if it can be proven that the dependence on Nicolaus was exclusive both in matter and in form. In other words, it is evident enough that Josephus did not passively borrow from Nicolaus the content with the adulatory point of view and the structure of the biography. The tragedy structure of the Herod narrative in *B.J.* implies that Josephus did not follow Nicolaus in the point of view and the structure of the narrative. Josephus focuses on Herod the public *persona* in *B.J.* and that he has reconstituted the matter to fit into the Senecan tragedy genre. The focus on Herod in *A.J.* is on the private person. See B. Z. Wacholder, *Nicolaus of Damascus* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1962); R. J. H. Shutt, *Studies in Josephus* (London: SPCK, 1961).

⁴⁰Holman, *A Handbook*, 143.

outrageous when he has all the notables of Judaea kept under guard in the hippodrome to be massacred on the occasion of his death so that the Jews might mourn for him “vicariously” (1.660). In a fit of depression at his personal woes, he attempts suicide (1.662). Alas, that is not to be. Herod is inexorably driven to yet another unnatural sin almost encouraged by Caesar’s letter giving a free hand to him (1.661) of having his son Antipater executed (1.663).

A final change of will brings the “hero-villain” within days of his long awaited death. The real Catastrophe seems to lie in the twist made to the demands of the genre in denying *Catharsis* to the readers. Instead of a noble “hero” who inspires pity and fear in the audience Herod is presented as one who turns out to be an ignoble criminal, and a moral degenerate. This is the catastrophe of a man whose life was as brilliant as a commoner “blessed by fortune” while in his family “no man more unfortunate” (1.665) as the eulogy would have it.⁴¹ The narrator now reverts to the requirements of the genre by giving the readers a glimpse of the restored order.⁴² Salome and her third husband, Alexas, stage-manage the release of the notables before Herod’s death is made public (1.666).⁴³ The tragic plot winds down with the reading of the will and testament and Herod’s burial at Herodion. The tragic saga of Herod’s life and death ends with the bland statement: “So ended Herod’s reign”

⁴¹ Landau comments that “Herod’s portrait ... bears some resemblance to that of a tragic hero,” that “the expectation Josephus the narrator creates for his narratees and their readiness for emotion remain unfulfilled and hence, in retrospect, retain yet another dramatic irony;” that “Herod does not stir the readers’ empathy as an ordinary tragic hero would do. Why is that?;” that the portrait of “Herod as a private man [is] opposed to Herod the King,” and that Herod’s character is “static”. See Landau, “Power and Pity,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 174-77. These are important issues which can be satisfactorily dealt with through an analysis of the genre and the literary conventions in which the Herod narrative is presented.

⁴² The restored order, ironically, is also based on deception of some sort.

⁴³ Even though the text does not use the term ‘stage-manage,’ it is consistent with an earlier clue to see the text as a play.

(1.673), as if all of Herod's greatness as a public persona came to nothing.⁴⁴ It is also a clear-cut end of a preparatory phase in the history of the Jews, as the narrative history moves towards open war against the Romans.⁴⁵

4.4 CONCLUSION

The comparison of *Heracles* with *Hercules Furens*, on the one hand, and of the latter play with the Herod narrative, on the other, leads to the conclusion that Josephus modelled the unit on Herod in *B.J.* on Seneca's Latin play rather than on the Greek tragedy of Euripides. The conclusion is based on the presence of common details in the Senecan and Josephan texts. Lacking any other extant model, it is reasonable to argue that the intrinsic links between these two texts are probably exclusive to them. In addition, the conclusion is supported in the manner in which Josephus modifies specific details and adapts them to his text and for his authorial purposes which are not necessarily identical to Seneca's aims. Just as in composing *Herc. fur.* Seneca could have criticised Nero, as discussed in Chapter 3, so it would be quite appropriate if Josephus did the same in condemning the destroyer of the

⁴⁴ There is much to be said in support of the view that the Herod in the narrative is the historical person. See M. Grant, *Herod the Great* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1971); P. Richardson, *Herod: King of the Jews and Friend of the Romans* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1999); N. Kokkinos, *The Herodian Dynasty* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998). However, every historical person has at least two facets: the private person and the public persona. In *B.J.* Josephus deals with the public persona of Herod who cannot differentiate between his function in the public role as an autocratic king of the Jews and of his private role as husband, father and brother. Such confusion of roles in a person inevitably leads to tragedy to all concerned. Historical examples of the times would certainly include the Julio-Claudians, in particular Nero. Such phenomena have been claimed to be responsible for the attitudinal disjunction in the writers of the first century C.E. as Rudich extensively argues in his *Dissidence and Literature*. More importantly, it cannot be ignored that Josephus takes Herod the historical person and fictionalises him as a mock Herculean character.

⁴⁵ See Landau, "Power and Pity," in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*, 162. "Herod's reign was in many ways the beginning of the end of the existence of the Judean state, culminating, of course, with the defeat of Jerusalem and the destruction of the Second Temple... It seems that for Josephus, the story of Herod was a necessary preface, archaeology of the revolt, without which it would have been much more difficult to understand and empathise with the tragic fate of Judea."

Hasmonean dynasty, Herod the Great, the friend of the Romans. One cannot look at the praises heaped on Herod in the first part. They seem as foil for his subsequent fall. The contrast between the “hero” of the narrative history and the “hero-villain” of narrative five-act tragedy is indeed noteworthy.

In structuring the Herod narrative as a five-act tragedy, Josephus conveys his perception that the Herodian period was part of the tragedy of the Jewish nation. He does not make Herod a tragic hero. Rather, he is degraded to a pathetic villain who deserves contempt. Again, the parody of the Hercules myth and the manner in which it is applied to Herod’s life and achievements supports the conclusion that Herod was no Hercules but he certainly was mad. Indirectly, this implies a criticism of the Romans who befriended Herod as their lackey, and benefited from his brutality against the Jews to keep them in subjugation. It thus seems that the Herod narrative is one of the first suggestions of possible covert dissent of Josephus against the Romans. It raises doubts about the view held by some scholars that Josephus was doing the bidding of the Romans in general, and of Flavians in particular, in writing about the Jewish war. This will be further discussed in the following chapters.

There seems no reason to doubt that Josephus borrowed the historical material on Herod from the biography which Nicolaus of Damascus wrote in appreciation of his royal friend. As the material is shaped for the Herod narrative, it seems reasonable that Josephus introduced changes in the point of view and in the structure of the narrative. The point of view of Josephus is critical of Herod as against the adulation in Nicolaus. The structure, modelled on *Herc. fur.* is of a five-act tragedy rather than

of a biography. The genre of tragedy, as discussed above, is capable of carrying a critical point of view against the protagonist.

Discussion of the use of Seneca's plays for the Herod narrative demands that Josephus' claim of relying on "assistants for style" be given a thoughtful consideration. It is hard to imagine that Josephus, given his historical commitments in Judaea and Galilee, had the time, opportunity and the literary expertise to make scholarly use of the Latin plays so fresh from the pen of Seneca. Literary assistants seem a reasonable option for Josephus to employ them for his work. However, more seems to be required than their literary expertise. The literary assistants had to have been sympathetic in the covert dissidence of Josephus towards the Flavians. Who these literary assistants might be must, for the time being, remain subject to speculation.⁴⁶ Nevertheless, the use of five-act tragedy in the Herod Narrative opens the way to accept the help of these literary assistants in the planning and execution of the whole of the *B.J.* as a five-act tragedy.

A connection between Seneca and Josephus is not only plausible it is also tangible. Turning to *B.J.* as a whole, such connection might at first glance appear odd. *B.J.* is clearly a narrative. It has characters, there is an identifiable conflict, and the story line which emerges from the conflict among the characters is structured into a plot with a beginning, middle and an end.⁴⁷ It also has preface and coda, which are in addition to the narrative. These are to be placed in their textual context. In addition, it is necessary

⁴⁶ If it is more than a fiction that Josephus had 'assistants,' then they would have to be Jews of his own social class with Hellenistic education, who were his political associates and who lived in Rome long enough to be well acquainted with Latin and Seneca's writings both in prose and in verse. The collaborators mentioned by Josephus (*C. Ap.* 1.50) are allegedly used "for the sake of the Greek." Given the demands of covert dissidence, it is acceptable that the collaborator/s were of help in more than improving Greek.

⁴⁷ See Holman, *A Handbook*, 335-37.

to examine in what way *B.J.* is a particular kind of narrative, and in what way it can be seen as two different kinds of narrative, or narrative in two different genres. If so, these genres ought to be identified and their presence demonstrated.

CHAPTER FIVE

SENECAN TRAGEDY

A MODEL FOR *BELLUM JUDAICUM*

“The necessary knowledge is
that of *what* to observe.”
Edgar Allan Poe
in *Great Tales and Poems of*, 104.

Any attempt at reading the *B.J.* as a literary work must be governed by the literary conventions which are incorporated into it. That means the reader, both the historical and the implied,¹ respects the text as the author intended it in terms of the types of composition and the genres in which it is composed.² Such a strategy ensures that the reader is in a position to explore the meaning that the author has embedded in the text through the types of composition and the genres.³ In seeking to read *B.J.* for meaning, it is essential to remember how the work has been constructed. It is easily recognised that *B.J.* is made up of a preface (1.1-30), with a preparatory period from the invasion

¹ A few important definitions of the terms are essential at this point. The ‘historical reader’ is the *extra-textual reader* whom the author had in mind in writing the work and any other unintended reader contemporary with the author. The ‘real reader’ includes the above and all those who happen to read the text outside the original time frame. The ‘implied reader’ is the *intra-textual function*, or *narratee*, to whom the text is addressed. It is a ‘fictional reader’. In relation to Josephus as the author of *B.J.* a few appropriate distinctions need to be made. Josephus has two *extra-textual roles*. He is the historical person and an author of the narrative on the Jewish war. He also has two *intra-textual functions*. He is the implied author and a character. The ‘implied author’ is the *narrator*, or a function within the text telling the story. He is also the ‘character’ or an ‘actant’ in the narrative. The implied author or narrator has a voice of his own while other voices may be taken up when the opinions expressed are alien to the implied author.

² There are four ‘types of composition’ or ‘forms of discourse’: argumentative, descriptive, expository and narrative. See Holman, *A Handbook*, 35, 123, 177 and 283. A ‘Genre’ is a group of formal or technical characteristics which define a group of works regardless of place of composition, author, or subject matter. “The traditional sense of genre as a literary type or class survives in the present day, with the term FORM sometimes confusingly used interchangeably with that of genre. Generic [sic] debates have become less heated during a time in which it is more generally accepted that genres have a CONVENTIONAL rather than an intrinsic justification, but the role of genres in forming audience and READER expectations and responses has been considered by a number of recent theorists and critics.” See Goring et al, *Studying Literature*, 248. A combination of traditional and modern examples would include the tragedy, comedy, epic, lyric, pastoral, novel, short story, essay and history. See Holman, *A Handbook*, 199-200.

³ The ‘meaning of a text’ is what the author intends to convey through the genre in which the text is composed, whereas the ‘interpretation of the text’ is what the reader makes of the text beyond what the author has intended. What the reader obtains from the interpretation of the text is ‘significance,’ which is distinct from the ‘meaning of the text.’ These definitions are partially based on E. D. Hirsch, *The Aims of Interpretation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1976), 8-31.

of Judaea in 171 B.C.E. up the time of the procurators. The account of the war proper is followed by the aftermath of the war, including the triumphal tour of Titus of the eastern parts of the empire, his return to Rome for the Flavian Triumph (1.31-7.162), the mopping up operations at Masada, the disturbances in Egypt (7.163-453) and a coda (7.454-55). These units are not homogeneous narratives, rather a mix of the expository and narrative of different types.⁴ Before launching into an examination of the five-act tragedy of the Jewish war, it is relevant that various units are identified and focus of the study is fine-tuned.

5.1 EXPOSITORY MODE IN *B.J.*

5.1.1 THE PREFACE

While *B.J.* is one work, it is neither single type of composition nor is it according to a single genre. The preface and the coda are expositions.⁵ They are prior to and follow on the narrative text of the Jewish war, respectively. While the study is focused on Books 1 to 7, the preface (1.1-30), the second part of Book 7 (7.163-453) and the coda (7.454-55) are not formally part of the text as five-act tragedy. As such, their roles are discussed in the analysis below.

The preface (1.1-30) serves as an introduction to a historical work in the voice of the historical author. Given its aim, it is an expository type of writing which strictly

⁴ For tragic elements in ancient histories the following studies are most rewarding. C. Fornara, *The Nature of History in Ancient Greece and Rome* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983) and *Greek Historians* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001); T. Luce, *The Greek Historians* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997).

⁵ B. K. Britton and J. B. Black, eds. *Understanding Expository Text: A Theoretical and Practical Handbook for Analyzing Explanatory Text* (Hillsdale, N.J. and London: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers, 1985) 142-45. In this collection of studies, an attempt is made to demonstrate inductively what constitutes expository mode of writing. There is no evidence of any similar study in ancient times, nor is there a systematic presentation of this mode of writing. The most one can find is an awareness of the general characteristic of expository writing, namely, objectivity in the manner of writing history claimed by Polybius, Josephus and Lucian. Nevertheless, it is surprising to discover in *B.J.* such a mode of writing. It is true that the theory of expository writing and its criteria are made more precise in modern times. However, its conventions and practice, as shown from *B.J.*, are indeed ancient.

conforms to the conventions of an exposition in presentation. Its content is set out in two sections. The first covers the nature of history and historical truth, the professionalism of a historian, and the context of the Jewish war. The second section contains the summary of *B.J.*

The presentation of the first part of the preface strictly follows the conventions of the expository type of writing.⁶ It identifies the subject (1.1), defines the genus and species with the scope (1.1, 7, 8), classifies the text both negatively (1.2) and positively (1.3), uses illustration from other texts, (1.3, 6), compares the common elements among the text with similar subjects (1.1, 14, 15, 16), contrasts the differences among similar texts (1.6-9, 11, 13-18). Finally, it includes analysis (1.1-16) of how *B.J.* is a correction of other histories of the Jewish war, the obligation which truth imposes on being told, why authentic history ought to be written, why causes of the war are to be made known, how *B.J.* is a tragic history and how it has claimed personal involvement of the author, why false historians ought to be censored and how Josephus is a worthy historian.

The second part of the preface (1.17-30) gives the summary of *B.J.* as it appears at the surface. The summary includes the context for the beginning of the Jewish war, the actual execution of the war and its formal end leaving out the second part of Book 7 (7.163-455). When looked at more closely, one notices that the narrative discourse, as summarized, is well planned even though it has not yet a common interpretation. The summary shows a unity of action which begins at a point in history (1.19-20), and rises up (1.21-23) to a turning point (1.24) and begins to fall (1.25-26, 27-29). Such a movement is indicative of a structured plot of a narrative. Given the focus on the dramatic action of two nations at war, in which one will be exterminated and the

⁶ Holman, *A Handbook*, 177.

other victorious, it is open to the possibility of surmising that Josephus has chosen the frame of a dramatic tragedy. It is reasonable to assume that if he chooses such a framework it is because he considers it legitimate to do so for a historian (1.15).⁷

A closer inspection confirms the insight. The summary of the Books which follows indicates the five-act arrangement. Exposition is made up of Books 1 and 2, Complication in Book 3, Crisis/Climax in Book 4, Reversal in Book 5 and Catastrophe in Books 6-7. The second part of Book 7 (7.163-455) is not covered in the preface, with the implication that it is not part of the five-act tragedy.

5.1.2 THE CODA

The coda (7.454-55) also does not contribute to the narrative five-act tragedy. It is in the expository mode like the preface and is the least complex of all the expositions in *B.J.* The history of the Jewish-Roman war ends in the voice of the actual author whose identity is acknowledged a few sentences above (7.448). In the expository mode it explains why the history was written, that is, “for the information of those who wish to learn how this war was waged” (7.454). While emphasising the cognitive objective, the narrative on “how the war was waged” brings in affective objectives as well. The war is described as “waged by the Romans on the Jews” where the Jews are the victims and the Romans, the aggressors. This is how the war developed from the initial stages. The first impression, also in the voice of the actual author, was of a war “the Jews waged against the Romans” (1.1) where the Romans are the victims. The inversion of the roles is an accurate statement of the difference

⁷ Josephus is not unique in using the tragedy format for *B.J.* He has had models in the *Histories* of Herodotus, among others. For example one could cite the whole of Croesus logos, including the Atys Story (1.34-45), the Gyges Story (1.81-132), the Birth of Cyrus (1.108-22), the Periander and Lycophron Story (3.50-53), and the Death of Polycrates (3.120-25). Immerwahr adds, “We have here a sequence which is truly organic in the sense of tragedy, i.e. each part derives its meaning from the exact place it occupies.” See H. Immerwahr, *Form and Thought in Herodotus* (Cleveland, Ohio: Western Reserve University, 1966), 71. See J. L. Myers, *Herodotus: Father of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1953), 27, 137-38; F. W. Walbank, “History and Tragedy,” in *Historia*, 9 (1960), 221.

between the impression and the reality, as between the beginning and the end of the war. The narrative is about how and why the roles changed. The change of title is one of the indicators of the presence of the ironic mode in *B.J.*

The author next mentions his “style”, which the readers are left to judge. If the narrative voice alone reveals so much complexity, the other elements of the style, including the genre will expose the true reality of the *B.J.* as a Josephan masterpiece. The term “style” is wider than what it usually denotes, as the linguistic devices which embellish the presentation of a text. Here “style” is to be taken as the presentation of the text in its holistic sense with conceptual design proper to a genre or genres, as well as with the linguistic devices which go beyond mere decoration to affect the expressed and implied meanings of the text itself.⁸

The final topic of consideration is “truth.” The author mentions it twice, to begin and to end the paragraph. He recalls his “promise to relate with perfect accuracy” at the beginning of the work (1.9, 12, 22, 26, 30). Now at the end, in the final sentence, he confesses “boldly and without hesitation” that he has achieved the “truth throughout the entire narrative” (7.455). The “truth,” of which the author speaks, from the claims in the preface of *B.J.* is partly made up of his convictions about people and events expressed either explicitly or implicitly, without fail. Part of this “truth” is how it is expressed. This becomes clearer as the narrative five-act tragedy reaches its conclusion in *B.J.* 7.162. The imaginative rendering of “truth” has allowed him to be truthful while adding beauty and elegance to it through various further kinds of complexities. The covert dissidence which drives him in his “pathetic” narrative seems to hold him back from being too explicit about the

⁸ There is no word in Greek for “style” used by Thackeray and Whiston. The Greek word γραφίς would stand for the writing style, which is ambivalent to mean the manner of writing and the manner of presentation. For want of a definitive English equivalent, “style” in *B.J.* 7.455 is taken to mean the manner of presentation of the textual content.

narrative truth. In addition to the “truth,” the historical author has been constant in his objective to lead his readers into a heartfelt experience of the tragedy of his people.

There is a genre-related issue here. The preface and coda with *B.J.* 7.163-453 are part of overarching genre of narrative history. That fact should not affect the presence of the genre of narrative five-act tragedy from *B.J.* 1.31 to 7.162. the proposition that *B.J.* is one work with plurality of genres in it remains constant and valid.

5.2 NARRATIVE MODE IN *B.J.*

B.J. is easily recognisable as more than a “narrative.”⁹ Josephan scholars have identified the war narrative of Josephus as a “history” or as a “narrative history,” even if there is no consensus as to the nature of its genre. Assuming that this identification is correct, *B.J.* as a “narrative history” begins with 1.31 and ends with 7.453. The “narrative history” proceeds in three steps. The first step in Books 1 and 2 gives the preparatory context for the Jewish war. The second step deals with the war with the Romans in Books 3 to 7 (1-162). The third constitutes Book 7 (163-453), with its units strung together paratactically. To all appearances, the subject of this part is the aftermath of the tragic Jewish war with mopping up operations which begin in Judea and end in Egypt. The formal end to the war is the Triumph of the Flavians at Rome (7.132-57) which comes before the second part of Book 7 begins. In as much as it lacks the “conceptual design” peculiar to the first two steps of the “narrative history,” it gives the impression of being an after-thought, and merely

⁹ For sake of clarity, and at the risk of appearing too committed to categories, it must be added that *B.J.* is a “narrative” taking the word only in the sense of a genus. *B.J.* in a specific sense is a “narrative history” and a “narrative five-act tragedy.” It is not satisfactory to label *B.J.* as a “history” pure and simple. “History” is not identical to “narrative history,” since it also includes “expository history” of Polybius and “narrative histories” with individual variations of Herodotus, Thucydides, Dionysius of Halicarnassus, Livy and Josephus, to name but a few.

added on to the earlier part of the text.¹⁰ Nevertheless, it remains integral to the text of *B.J.* as “narrative history.”

Doubtless, further analysis can prove that *B.J.* is indeed in the genre of “narrative history.” However, it does not exhaust all that can be said about this text as a “narrative.” It is the contention of this study, that *B.J.* as a “narrative” is also in a second genre, that of “narrative five-act tragedy.” It is argued, that *B.J.* 1.31-7.162 is structured according to the “conceptual design” of a “narrative five-act tragedy” in the Senecan mode. The Senecan mode, in addition to the characteristics described and applied to the Herod Narrative in Chapter 4, enjoys specific conventions in the plays. For one thing, each of the eight Senecan tragedies is structured as a five-act play, with each Act incorporating specific dramatic requirements.¹¹

5.3 *HERCULES FURENS* AS A FIVE-ACT TRAGEDY

Seneca’s *Herc. fur.* is a good example to identify the conventions, and to appreciate how those specific to each Act of the five-act tragedy are applied in a play. The following analysis helps to argue that, probably, *Herc. fur.* had a wider use for Josephus than being only a model for the Herod Narrative. However, the scope of this section is strictly limited to discuss what conventions are to be found in each of the five Acts. In this *Herc. fur.*, as a familiar text, merely serves as a convenient model.¹²

¹⁰ There are other literary outcomes for the second part of Book 7, which gives the impression of being no more than an add-on like an epilogue. In passing, it may be noted that, among other things, for the narrator it is a hidden war played out among the two narrative voices, pro-Roman and pro-Jewish, in which the losers appear to win and the winners appear to lose.

¹¹ Senecan tragedy genre is a development from the Greek classic tragedies. The elements found in it are not unique to it. They together are consistently found in Seneca’s plays as if he follows a template.

¹² It is not necessary that *Herc. fur.* be an exemplar of Senecan plays. Each of Seneca’s eight plays has common characteristics of a five-act tragedy while he does make slight modifications as required by the plot and the requirements of the stage. He prefers a commentator on the stage, for example, to describe gruesome crimes against Hercules’ children and Megara, the burning of Troy or of Hercules when he chooses to depart this earth, or when Medea escapes in a chariot into the heavens. He does modify the role of a hero. He may split the role of an individual into that of a hero and of a victim as in *Herc. fur.*, or he may have multiple heroes as in *Troades* (524-55, 659, 1169) and *Medea* (924, 932).

5.3.1 ACT ONE – EXPOSITION (*HERC. FUR.* 1-331)

Seneca identifies the first Act as Prologue with the Parode or Chorus Entry marking its end. In the dramatic action, Juno complains in a soliloquy that she is almost driven out of heaven by a host of mortal women, partners in Jove's adulteries, and their offspring whom he has deified. She plans revenge especially on Hercules, who by his twelve labours has defeated her and almost reached divine status. Her plan is to drive Hercules mad and compel him to destroy himself. In the Parode a vivid picture of pastoral life is contrasted with life in the city of toil and greed for riches to conclude that "in lowly state comes hoary age" and "from a lofty height ambitious courage falls" (198-200).

In this Act, Seneca meets six different requirements of the first Act. First of all, he identifies the main characters: Juno, the godly "villain" (1,109); Hercules by name, the "hero-victim" (41, 72, 115, 120), Hercules by other titles like Alcides (84, 107) and son of Jove (119); Megara as the faithful wife of Hercules (203); and his earthly parent, Amphytrion (204). Jove is mentioned only in passing (2, 47, 79, 122).

The dramatic clash is next given. It is the leitmotif of the play and is primarily between Jove and his divine wife Juno, which is extended to Juno and Hercules. What initiates the clash is the adulterous behaviour of Jove that drives Juno to jealous rage. She feels slighted by "harlots" who are supplanting her in heaven (1-5). Among these women is Alcmena, the mother of Hercules (22). Juno's rage turns to an overwhelming desire for vengeance on Jove and vicariously on Hercules (121-22).

The third requirement is the *protasis*, or what occurred prior to the dramatic action. Juno mentions that she was banished from the heavens as the harlots held the

sky. She recounts “ancient wrongs” (9-20), and, above all, the successes of Hercules in the twelve labours which she considers as her own defeat (30-62).

The setting is the fourth convention to be observed. The setting consists of place and time of dramatic action and the atmosphere in which the action takes place. The place is at the front of the palace of Hercules at Thebes (202-04), and the time is the day Hercules returns from the underworld (123-31, 591-93). The atmosphere is created in the invocation to the five infernal shapes, Discord, Crime, Impiety, Error and Rage (75-99) giving them a free hand to wreak havoc on Hercules.

The fifth convention is to suggest the mood for the play. The mood is the attitude of the playwright to the subject in hand.¹³ Seneca presents Juno as contemptible. She is filled with hatred with an obsessive desire for vengeance. She is cruel and unjust to Megara and the children who die at the hands of Hercules (112-22). In this she openly acknowledges that she chooses to be “bereft of reason” (109). Hercules himself is no paragon of virtue. Seneca paints him as arrogant, as he displays his pride in the successes in the twelve labours (74).

The last requirement for the first Act is the tone or the playwright’s attitude to the audience. This is deftly achieved in the Chorus when pastoral life of the country dweller is praised (139-59) and the acquisitive city dweller is criticised (159-90). The humble country is preferred and the arrogant city, which is more like proud Hercules, is rejected (192-201).

5.3.2 ACT TWO – COMPLICATION (*HERC. FUR.* 332-591)

The second Act consists of the First Episode and the First Choral Interlude. In the dramatic action Megara is bewailing the fresh woes, at the bidding of Juno, awaiting Hercules after a life of hardship (279-308). Lycus has taken advantage of the absence

¹³ See Holman, *A Handbook*, 277.

of Hercules and killed her father and brother to seize the throne. Amphytrion tries unsuccessfully to comfort her with the hope that Hercules will save her with his strength. The arrival of Lycus on the stage forms the “exciting force.” He boasts of his power and desires to marry Megara to make up for his lack of royal descent. Should she refuse, he threatens to ruin the house of Hercules. Megara, the faithful wife, is unmoved by arguments and threats to acquiesce to the wishes of Lycus. At the end of his patience, he orders a pyre to be built for Megara and her children. Amphytrion prays for help and is incredulous when he hears the familiar steps of Hercules.

The second Act presents a variety of clashes which are part of the dynamics of a play. They may be natural or human or superhuman obstacles, challenges and conflicts which protagonists and antagonists encounter. Amphytrion is a worried old man. He is fretting over the continuous toils of his son, Hercules, for which he gets no recognition, much less rewards (207-09). He is also fearful for what is in store for Hercules, Megara and the children (309-10, 316). Lycus, the human “villain,” has his concerns too. He is troubled with social expectations that do not allow him to usurp royalty without royal descent (338-39). As a king he has to defend himself from the envy of rivals (353). He finds in Megara an implacable opponent to his ambition to legitimise his usurpation of her father’s kingdom (372-96). Finally, Hercules is his greatest challenge. The near certainty of Hercules punishing him for his crimes is fully recognised (274). Megara, in her turn, has to cope with mighty tribulations. The murder of her father and brother (256), the loss of Thebes to a villainous usurper (258-68), the rule of Lycus (274), the temptation of infidelity to her husband (329, 358) and above all the absence of Hercules, when she needs him most to protect herself and her children (279-80), depress her.

Hercules, the “hero-victim,” is beset with interminable obstacles, challenges and conflicts. Juno is his implacable enemy from infancy (214). In his twelve labours which she imposed on him, he faced monsters (215, 241, 528), serpents (218, 529), mythical animals like the hind and the boar of Maenalus (222, 229), the lion of Nemea (224), the Bistonian herd (226), the Cretan bull (230), Geryon the shepherd (232, 487), the dragon with the golden apples (240, 530), and the Stymphalian birds (244). He struggled with Thermedon’s virgin queen, Hippolyte (246, 542), and successfully cleansed the Augean stalls in a day (248). He overcame the obstacles of Peneus River (284), the sea of Syrtes (323), the weight of boundless earth (424) and the darkness of the netherworld (282). He had to check with all his might the irreversible Time itself (286, 292), and resist the unrighteous fortune (326, 524, 558-66). Not least was his ability to survive the injustice of being banished from the world which he defended against immorality (249-50). Thus, it is clear, that the litany of conflicts which the main characters in *Herc. fur.* face touch upon a whole range including the natural, the human and the superhuman.

5.3.3 ACT THREE – CRISIS (*HERC. FUR.* 592-894)

Seneca constructs the third Act with the Second Episode and the Second Choral Interlude. Hercules is glad to be back into the daylight after his labours. He is quite taken aback to find his family in funereal garments with hostile guards at the portals of the sacred shrine. Amphytrion explains the murderous deeds of Lycus on Creon and the heir to the throne and what the “villain” has planned for Megara and the children. Hercules promptly leaves his home, parent, wife and children and goes looking for Lycus to despatch the tyrant. Theseus, the friend of Hercules, who shared the labours in Hades, is left with Amphytrion to recount the operations in the lower

world. The chorus links with Theseus' account and dwells on the fruits of Herculean labours.

The third Act should, by Senecan custom in other tragedies, build the "Crisis" up to a "Climax." In *Herc. fur.* the two are separated. The "Crisis" *develops* off-stage as Hercules slaughters Lycus. The "Climax" occurs on-stage when the interest of the audience is heightened through the heroic deeds of Hercules which Theseus describes to Amphytrion. Through a rare literary manoeuvre, Hercules as a "hero" is celebrated on-stage, while his "victim" role starts off-stage with the shedding of blood. It is the blood of Lycus that will trigger madness in Hercules in the following Act.

On-stage Theseus describes how Hercules enters the land of no return (671-85), of ill omens (687), and where Sleep, Hunger, Shame, Dread, Fear, Pain, Grief, Disease, War and the ravages of Age hold sway (690-96). The *hero* defeats the tyrants of the underworld, Pluto and Proserpina, and re-establishes the foundations of justice (762-829). From now onwards, "upon its author the crime comes back" (735) and the just ruler will reach "Elysium's joyful land and sit in judgement there" (739-47). The Choral Interlude celebrates the fruit of justice which is peace. People may now see "the spectacle in some new theatre" (838), participate in "the sacred games" (841), in "Ceres' secret rites" (845), age may go slow (850), and the young marry and bear children (852-55). "Thebes' joyful day is here. Peace reigns by the hand of Hercules from the land of the dawn to the evening star ..." (875, 882-84). As the "hero" rises, so does the "climax" of the play, with the interest of the audience being enhanced.

5.3.4 ACT FOUR – REVERSAL (*HERC. FUR.* 895-1034)

Seneca constitutes the fourth Act with the Third Episode and the Third Choral Interlude. Hercules returns to his house after slaying Lycus. Against the advice of

Amphytrion, he proceeds to offer thanksgiving sacrifice to Jove without cleansing his blood stained hands. In the process, Hercules suddenly becomes mad, as planned by Juno, and kills one child. He next drags two others from the scene and a distressed Megara follows them. From a distance Amphytrion describes what happens off-stage as the children and Megara are killed. Hercules re-enters while exulting that he had killed Lycus' family and sinks down in a deep faint. The Chorus calls upon heaven, earth and sea to mourn for Hercules in the new disaster. It prays to have his sanity restored. In a long apostrophe to Sleep, the Chorus pleads for soothing influences to keep Hercules subdued until the former mind returns to him. As Hercules continues to suffer and toss about, the Chorus watches with grief and closes with a pathetic lament over the dead children.

The "tragic force" is engendered when Hercules is roused to excessive flattery of self (895-917) and refuses Amphytrion's advice to cleanse the blood stained hands before offering sacrifice to Jove (918-24). With the onset of madness the fortunes of the *hero*- "victim" begin to fail. Hercules is disoriented as he finds himself in darkness at midday with stars and constellations in turmoil (939-52). His self-identity begins to change as he thinks of himself as the liberator of the heavenly bodies from the "lawless sway" of Jove (955-73). He begins to hallucinate that Giants are taking arms (973), Tityos is escaping the netherworld and reaching the heavens (974), the mountains are quaking (979), Tempe is turning ugly (980) and the Erinys volcano is erupting all around him (982). In the final phase of madness, he considers his children to be "the abominable spawn of Lycus" (988-89) and kills one with an arrow and drags the others from the shrine (999-1002) and rushes off-stage.

This offers an extra impetus to the play with a change of scene, as it were. Amphytrion now begins his commentary of what he sees off-stage. He adds details

that cannot be shown on the stage of how brutally the children are killed (999-1015). Once again a change is made and interest is not allowed to flag. The audience hears the voice of Megara begging for her life and Hercules replies off-stage that she is his “stepdame” and must “pay [him her] debt, and free o’ermastered Jove from a degrading yoke” (1116-21). Amphytrion has seen and suffered enough. He seeks relief through death at the hands of Hercules (1022-26). The Chorus is almost lost for words. It questions Amphytrion why he wishes to die when he can “save Hercules from the one crime left” (1032-34). Hercules, still under the spell of insanity, offers to Juno the deaths of Lycus, Megara and the children with “vows worthy of thee have I paid right joyfully” (1038), and goes into a deep sleep (1050-52). It is left to the Chorus to excuse the guilt of insane Hercules, with “Next best to guiltless hands is ignorance of guilt” (1099), and to grieve for the innocent children, “the ill-fated brood ... not destined to be partakers of his praise” (1135-37). By repeatedly shifting the intense emotions and changing the locus of stage dynamics, Seneca makes this Act a relentless tragic experience for the audience. It offers them no emotional relaxation.

5.3.5 ACT FIVE – RESOLUTION (*HERC. FUR.* 1035-1344)

The fifth Act in *Herc. fur.* is the *Exode*. Hercules wakes up and finds the children murdered but does not recognise them as his own. He misses the weapons hidden away from him. When he finally recognises his family, he finds Theseus and Amphytrion turn away from him. Through questions and surmise, Hercules realises the perpetrator of the deed is himself. He is utterly distraught and begs for death. In response, Amphytrion threatens to kill himself first. Hercules is persuaded to live and take refuge in Athens with Theseus. He is welcomed to Athens where he may find asylum and be able to cleanse himself from sin.

The final Act of Resolution includes the Catastrophe in the death of the “hero-victim.” It also exposes the “villain” and then records the deaths of the opponents of the “hero-victim.” Through these theatrical conventions, satisfaction by gratification of the emotional sympathies, or by logical conformity or by final nobility of the succumbing “hero” is achieved. In *Herc. fur.* the actual “villain,” Juno, is not punished but is exposed when Hercules wishes to burn his “cursed hands, [his] stepdame’s tools” (1235-36). The crime of Hercules is excused by the Chorus, yet he is repentant. This process begins through shame and then moves to a sense of despair, “All that was dear to me I’ve lost: reason, arms, honour, wife, children, strength – and madness too!” (1260-62). Next, suicide becomes the only option (1270-72) until Amphytrion dissuades him from it as unworthy of him (1302-20). Hercules, in his final act of nobility, decides to go into exile, to hide and be buried in any land that wants him (1322-38). Theseus welcomes him to Athens the “land which can free the immortals from their stains” (1341-44).¹⁴

5.4 CONCLUSION

The present study assumes as given, that *B.J.* is a ‘narrative’ as well as a ‘history’. Scholars are far from reaching consensus with regard to what these terms, applied to the war narrative of Josephus, really mean. A serious impetus to develop the consensus is given in this study in considering *B.J.* as a ‘narrative five-act tragedy’. By confirming that this new aspect is relevant and applicable to the text in hand, it will go some way in appreciating it as a ‘narrative’ and as a ‘history’.

¹⁴ For important studies in Senecan tragedy see A. J. Boyle, *Tragic Seneca: An Essay in the Theatrical Tradition* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), and his *Roman Tragedy*; M. D. Griffin, *Seneca* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976); D. Henry and E. Henry, *The Mask of Power: Seneca's Tragedies and Imperial Rome* (Warminster: Aris and Phillips, 1985); R. J. Tarant, “Greek and Roman in Senecan Tragedies,” *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 97 (1995): 215-30.

In this chapter the narrative section in *B.J.* is identified and distinguished from the expository sections of the Preface and the Coda. The characteristics of a narrative are applicable to two types: first, to ‘narrative history’ and second, to ‘narrative five-act tragedy’. It has also been argued that the five-act structure is similar to what is found in all the plays of Seneca. *Herc. fur.* has been analysed because it is familiar to the readers of this study to illustrate what conventions constitute each of the five Acts.

The following analysis of the seven books focuses on the exercise of reading *B.J.* as a ‘narrative of five-act tragedy’ in the Senecan mode. More specifically, it is argued in Chapter 6 that *B.J.* 1-2 constitute Exposition of the Tragedy of *B.J.* including the dramatic practices exemplified in Act 1 of *Herc. fur.* (1-331). In Chapter 7 *B.J.* 3 is discussed as Complication based on the conventions used in Act 2 of *Herc. fur.* (332-591), while in Chapter 8, *B.J.* 4 is Climax resembling Act 3 of *Herc. fur.* (592-894). Chapter 9 covers *B.J.* 5 as Reversal like Act 4 of *Herc. fur.* (895-1034) and Chapter 10 deals with *B.J.* 6 -7.162 as the Resolution, with conventions similar to Act 5 of *Herc. fur.* (1035-1344). While similarities are in the essentials, some diversity is allowable. The parallels do not make *B.J.* a passive mirror of any of Seneca’s plays. As the following discussion proceeds, ample examples will be given from every Senecan play that correspond to details in *B.J.* They would include the roles of the hero-victim, the villains and the champions of the hero, the place of the image of fire, the theme of madness, and the use of signs. Where Josephus uses the tragedy mode creatively, it will be noted. It will help to confirm that Senecan plays did not go missing after the playwright’s death in 65 C.E., but were available to Josephus and/or his assistants to become familiar with how Seneca used tragedy. The “tone” and the “mood” are also part of the literary

conventions of a tragedy. They will be commented upon in the analysis of each of the five Acts.

CHAPTER SIX

ACT ONE

EXPOSITION OF A TRAGEDY (B.J. 1-2)

*The war of the Jews ...the greatest ...
well nigh of all that ever broke out ...
Flavius Josephus B.J. 1.31.*

Bellum Judaicum is so designed as to lead the reader from the distant horizon gradually into the centre of narrative action by assuming an emotional bonding with one group of characters. As presented in the Preface, the process begins with a panoramic view of the field of narrative action. The focus of the narrating moves gradually closer, until the reader is irrevocably immersed in the torturous turmoil of Book 6. It is the task now in hand to demonstrate how it is textually achieved. In this chapter it is achieved in two steps. First, the conventions which constitute the Exposition are explained. Second, an analysis follows of the two books as Exposition.

6.1 CONVENTIONS OF AN EXPOSITION

In the dramatic structure, as previously noted, in the Senecan tragedy genre Exposition introduces the play in controlled conventional manner.¹ Strictly speaking, it gives the necessary data to understand the play that is about to follow. There are a few essential functions it has to perform as Exposition. The most obvious task is to present the setting which includes the place, the time and the circumstances of the action of the play. The main characters are identified. They are the “hero-victim,” “the champions of the hero,” and the “villains.” The “hero-victim” is the Jewish nation that is the core of the Jewish people to whom the implied author displays loyalty and with whose sufferings is in sympathy. As the analysis of the whole text progresses, it will become clear who constitutes the core and who does not. The “champions of the hero” are those leaders of the Jewish nation who try to promote its welfare, even if not necessarily with success. These leaders, in putting the interests of

¹ See Chapter 5, pages 125-34, for the conventions at work in Seneca’s play, *Herc. fur.*

the Jewish nation above their own, tend to be persecuted and even killed. The “villains” are those Jews and non Jews who damage the Jewish nation deliberately or do not desist in their nefarious activities when the harmful consequences to the “hero-victim” are ignored.

The *protasis* precedes the play and enables the audience to recognise the conflict, to understand its nature and seriousness and why it may be expected to aggravate. Part of the geographic and chronological setting is the emotional atmosphere. In a tragedy it is predictive of what to expect in the play, hence it tends to be suffused with a mood of frustration, desire for revenge and an overall sense of doom. The language of the characters in the Exposition carries a “tone” of anger and bitterness. In a narrative, if the narrator is naïve or biased, the voice will carry the same “tone” as the characters. If the narrator stands apart from the characters he may faithfully reflect their “tone” or choose to be critical of their actions and motivations. In Books 1 and 2 it is to be discussed not only what characteristics proper to the Exposition are present but how they are operating. While both Books 1 and 2 constitute the Exposition, they do it in the temporal order, from the remote to the proximate, respectively.

6.2 BOOK 1 AS REMOTE SETTING FOR A TRAGEDY

The narrative of *B.J.* begins in the middle of the dated period of Jewish history, “At the time when Antiochus, surnamed Epiphanes, was disputing with Ptolemy VI the suzerainty of Syria, dissension arose among the Jewish nobles” (1.31). The process of emotionally involving the readers with the protagonist, the Jewish nation, begins with a panoramic view of the field of narrative action. The following analysis of Book 1 is of the Hasmonean and the Roman phases offering the remote setting for the war.

6.2.1 THE HASMONEAN PHASE (1.31-200)

The narrative content follows the chronological sequence of the Hasmonean phase which begins with the intervention of the Seleucid, Antiochus IV. The geographic focus is firmly on Judaea (1.32). Historically, Hasmonean rule should begin with the rebellion of Matthias against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and end with the deaths of Hyrcanus II, Aristobulus II and Jonathan. Textually, though, the phase has been altered for the thematic purpose of depicting the rise and fall of rivals for personal power. First, the rivalry of Onias and the sons of Tobias prepare for the arrival of Hasamoneans (1.31-35). Second, the Hasamonean narrative ends with Queen Alexandra (1.36-199). Third, the end of the dynasty with the deaths of Aristobulus II, Hyrcanus II and Jonathan occur with the rise of Roman power in the Herodian period (1.184, 433, 437).

The context for the rise of the Hasmoneans is given through the arrival of Antiochus IV, whom the sons of Tobias invite to oust Onias from his high priestly office “as no individual of rank could tolerate subjection to his peers” (1.31). The *motif* of conflict is thus presented in the first sentence. The rationale for the conflict is personal rivalry for “supreme power” between Onias, “one of the chief priests,” and the sons of Tobias. There is no distinction made of political and religious power, suggesting that the two facets are effectively fused into one. Every attempt to resolve the inseparable twin problem, through soliciting assistance from aliens, therefore, must be judged as misguided.

Seeking intervention into Judaeian affairs from a Syrian Seleucid, Antiochus IV Epiphanes, is demonstrated to be utterly foolish. He is known to have had a “long cherished design ... for an invasion of Judaea” (1.32). The foreign intervention itself, as the narrator expects it, now becomes the source of greater problems for the Jewish

nation, undermining their political as well as their religious identity. They are pressured “to violate the code of their country” in not circumcising the infants and in desecrating the altar (1.34). The narrative voice changes from being detached, it becomes partisan. The “mood” is of growing anger against “the extravagance of [Antiochus’] crimes” (1.35). The “atmosphere” is heavy with a sense of foreboding.

The nature of the conflict does not change when Onias goes into exile in Egypt. It is again political and religious. Onias seeks refuge with Ptolemy and initiates a schism for his personal advantage (1.33). It is personal rivalry which gets enlarged into a national calamity. The characters in this burgeoning tragedy quickly assume their literary roles of the “villain,” the “hero-victim” and the “champions of the hero.” The role of the “villain” is realised in a group of self-serving individuals, both Jewish and non-Jewish. These are Onias (1.31, 33), sons of Tobias (1.31.32), Ptolemy (1.31) and Antiochus IV Epiphanes (1.31-39). The “hero-victim,” the Jewish nation, is rent apart through the schism (1.33), persecuted “with every excess of iniquity,” (1.35) it must bear the consequences of the “villainy” of others, and for the champions of the hero one must await the “victims [of Antiochus] to venture on reprisals” (1.35). The “tone” is highly critical of the sons of Tobias and Onias.

The main narrative of this phase begins with the subsequent attempts of Antiochus at forcibly Hellenising the Jews and their rebellious reaction under the priest Matthias, the son of Asamoneus (1.36). The uprising leads to the founding of the Hasmonean Dynasty (1.37). Having established the context for the founding of the dynasty, the narrative continues to follow the achievements of the sons, Judas (1.38-39), John (1.47), Jonathan (1.48-49) and Simon (1.50-54), as they assume leadership from Matthias in rapid succession. Judas and Jonathan promote the

sovereignty of the Jewish nation and, equally importantly, both enter into alliance with Rome without appreciable help to fend off their enemies (1.38, 48).

In the first two generations of the Hasmoneans, Matthias alone stands out as the “champion of the hero” in its best sense. His devotion to duty as priest and his political perspicacity enable him to realise that the religious identity of the nation cannot be held safe without political action with military implications (1.36-37). Of their generation, Judas and Jonathan prove to be not traitors to the nation, but flawed “champions of the hero” in as much as they, like Onias and the sons of Tobias, rely on the help of foreigners but unlike Onias and the sons of Tobias they do not intentionally undermine the commonwealth. However, the two Hasmonean brothers unwittingly sow the seeds of destruction of what they had achieved for the nation. The interactions of the new “villains,” the Romans, and the flawed “champions of the hero” lead to the national catastrophe. As the narrative unfolds, the initiative of Judas and Jonathan to seek the Roman alliance turns out to be the core of the *protasis* for the Jewish tragedy.

Under John Hyrcanus, the third generation Hasmonean, the Jewish nation reaches the peak of political power since the Exile (1.55-68). He achieves much in the face of continued conflicts with the neighbours, the Samaritans (1.63-66), the Macedonians (1.53), the Idumeans (1.63) and the Syrians (1.62). In his person, the narrator eulogises, John Hyrcanus joined “three of the highest privileges: the supreme command of the nation, the high priesthood, and the gift of prophecy” (1.68). For one who achieved so much for the nation, the title “champion of the hero” is well deserved. Despite his greatness, the narrator does not fail to note his inner conflict, that he was rather undecided in matters affecting his family. He was unable to successfully free his mother and brothers from Ptolemy, his brother-in-law (1.57-60),

and to prevent the decline of the nation, which he anticipated, under his two elder sons, Aristobulus I and Antigonus (1.69). The “tone” of approval, even admiration, is apparent only in the accounts of Matthias and John Hyrcanus, while the “mood” is celebratory in recounting the achievements of John Hyrcanus (1.67-69).

The decline of the nation, or the sufferings of the “hero-victim,” begins to accelerate with the fratricidal fourth generation when the elder son Aristobulus (1.70-84) has his brother Antigonus murdered (1.72-77), in addition to killing his mother (1.71). Fratricide and matricide replicate the crimes of the Senecan tragedy mode.² The crimes not merely tarnish a family, they also are a desecration of the nation of the Jews. The crimes demand to be seen in the larger context: it is the story closely associated with the Jewish nation as Josephus repeats them under Herod and later during the civil war with the addition of infanticide.

The fifth generation continues the fratricide. Alexander Jannaeus has his brother murdered (1.85). He continues to drain his nation’s resources, fighting Ptolemy of Egypt (1.86), Theodorus of Jordan (1.87, 89), Demetrius the Unready (1.92), Antiochus XII (1.99-102), the Arabian king Obedas (1.90) and Aretas (1.103). His personal life is dissolute (1.97). What is even worse, he fights his people and is guilty of genocide (1.96-98). In the line of “villains,” Alexander Jannaeus epitomises the essence of villainy. He is utterly self-serving, without moral qualms and a hater of his own nation. He is the forerunner of Herod the Great.

On the death of Alexander Jannaeus, his wife Alexandra, a “frail woman” (1.108), “firmly [holds] the reins of government,” not with her ability to rule, but with “her reputation for piety” (1.108). Her lack of political skills is seen in her poor choice of her successor (1.109) and in allowing the Pharisees undue influence in the running of

² See Seneca’s *Oedipus* for matricide and the Atreus’ vicarious killing of his brother in making him cannibalise his sons in *Thyestes*.

the nation, “If she ruled the nation, the Pharisees ruled her” (1.112). Her rule of nine years cements the anomalies which bring about the setting of the Hasmonean Age and the dawning of the Roman Age. Her eldest son Hyrcanus II, “too lethargic to be troubled about public affairs,” and her younger son Aristobulus II, “a hot-head” “confined to a private life” (1.109), the sixth generation Hasmoneans succeed her. They do not augur well for the nation. They are more the “villains” undermining the Jewish nation. The “tone” of the narrative is now pessimistic. The root of dissension is alive and the enemies of the “hero-victim” are ready to exploit the situation. With an “atmosphere” of imminent doom, the “mood” of the narrative is fearful and expectant.

The narrative movement is circular. It ends the way it begins. To Onias – sons of Tobias, Hyrcanus II - Aristobulus II are parallel figures, as far as the final outcome of the mediation is concerned. The repeated decisions to invite outsiders to solve internal difficulties are seen as problematic both to the characters involved and to the whole nation. The outsiders do solve pressing problems; in so doing new ones arise for the individuals involved and to the nation at large. The root of the problem lies in the character faults. The sons of Tobias and Onias are led to rivalry through intense desire for power that comes from the political and religious position of the High Priesthood. The Hasmoneans are drawn by what resembles a passion for independence to recreate the past glory of Israel without much thought for developing an appropriate leadership to maintain and build on it. The common people do not share the vision of their leaders. They are even envious of the success of their ruler (1.67). The “hero-victim” does have tragic flaws. The moral corruption, first revealed in fratricide, goes on to matricide and ends in the slaughter of innocent bystanders under Alexander Jannaeus. The Hasmoneans of the first three generations, presented

as idealistic, create a dream for a nation, which the Hasmoneans of the later generations, antithetically painted as corrupt, distort it into a nightmare.

The roots of the civil war are presented as innate to the Jewish people, both to leaders and to commoners. Outsiders do not intrude upon the Jews on their own initiative but are pressed to intervene on behalf of one party to the dispute. This happens even when there is no need for any intervention, as in the case of Judas and Jonathan making an alliance with the Romans. Once the outsiders intervene, they begin to exploit the very weaknesses that led to their invitation and to victimize the Jews. The circular movement is more than indicative of what the Greeks do first, and the Romans repeat later. It points to the shortcoming in the Jewish community, which seems to prevent them from learning from their historical experiences.³

Events are narrated in the perspective of the fall and the greater fall of the Jewish nation. Each event increases in gravity of danger or in the intensity of heinousness. Onias and Tobias cause their personal rivalry to have consequences that are far more serious than personal; it leads to loss of national sovereignty. Judas and Jonathan enter into an alliance with Romans for no immediate help. It only softens the nation to submit willingly to future invasion. The wrongdoings of Aristobulus I and Alexander Jannaeus are so scandalous that they open the text to the Senecan mode to add literary flavour to the crimes. The “tone” changes from exultation to pessimism. The “mood” too undergoes transformation from being joyful to being anxious, as the “atmosphere” of a greater fall for the nation weighs down upon the narrator and the audience.

³ This observation is rhetorically repeated in later speeches of Agrippa II (2.351-401), and of Josephus (5.361-420).

6.2.2 THE ROMAN PHASE (1.201-673)

In the Preface, the Romans replace the Seleucids in relation to the descendants of Hasmoneans, who as the locals, dominate Judaea having “expelled [Antiochus] from the country” (1.19). In the Roman phase the descendants of Hasmoneans “dragged the Romans and Pompey upon the scene” (1.19). Antiochus IV was eager to intervene in the Judaeian affairs even before he was invited to do so, the author stresses the opposite was the case with the Romans. The conflict is made to appear as familial and internal to the Jews: it is “their quarrel for the throne” (1.19). The cycle of motivation and response repeats itself from Onias and the sons of Tobias. The solution for an internal problem is again sought in the intervention of aliens into Judaea. However, once in, the aliens aggravate internal problems.

The Roman phase marks the next movement in the betrayal of the nation. It follows a chronological order of intervention, of Scaurus (1.128-30, 159) Pompey (1.131-58, 183-85), Gabinius (160-78), Crassus (1.179-80), and Julius Caesar (1.187-203). The geographic focus is primarily on Judaea. The narrative is about the final curtain fall on the Hasmonean House. In bringing it about the Romans initially play a direct role in hastening it. The narrative is unified through the theme of pursuit. Pompey, who favours Hyrcanus II with Antipater pulling the strings behind the scenes, pursues Aristobulus II and his sons, Alexander and Antigonus around Judaea.

The narrative consists of three parallel sequences that criss-cross one another. The first is the Hasmonean sequence with Aristobulus II and his sons as the main interest. The second is of the Roman sequence from Scaurus to Julius Caesar and the third sequence belongs to Antipater. The Roman sequence consists, in addition to the deeds of six leading persons, also the minor players, Sisenna, Antony and Servianus and others rendering service to one or the other of the leaders. Each of the leading

Romans is shown to act consistent with his character. Pompey is imperious. His demeanour is generally contemptuous of the king and of the pretender. Towards the sacred he is not reverent (1.148-58). Scaurus is corrupt, bent on enriching himself through blackmail and bribery (1.128-30). Gabinius is conciliatory but is realistic in ensuring that the Hasmoneans do not have a spot to hide from the Roman might (1.160-78). Crassus combines the worst of Pompey and Scaurus when he sacks the Temple and later suffers the fate of the former in Parthia (1.179-80). Cassius executes Peitholaus, the last of the partisan leaders of Aristobulus II, thus isolating him in a military vacuum (1.181-82). Julius Caesar might have changed the situation for Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II in returning to what was at the beginning of the narrative. Once again the circularity in the narrative technique comes into play. The supporters of Pompey, and probably of Antipater, murder Aristobulus II, which leaves Hyrcanus II with little change either in his status as high priest or in the loss of political power. The actions of Cassius and Caesar ensure that the Jewish nation is deprived of any form of leadership to rally the people against the Romans.

Of the two remaining sequences, the Hasmonean one has greater presence in the narrative than that of Antipater, which suggests that the Hasmonean role in the Jewish tragedy is the more significant. With the departure of Hyrcanus with Antipater to seek help from Aretas (1.123-24), the Hasmonean sequence is entirely of Aristobulus, and sons, Alexander and Antigonus. These three continue to resist the Roman might, and behave in a way that shows their contempt for Rome (1.133-40, 1.160-63). Their persistent opposition is highlighted through repetitive actions. Apparently they cease to be a problem to the Romans only when both Aristobulus II and his son Alexander are murdered (1.184-85). Their deaths seem politically expedient.

The sequence on Antipater is the least impressive as a narrative. Nonetheless, it is about a significant interloper in as much as he undermines the “happy compromise” between Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II and paves the way for the Roman acquisition of Judaea. The Roman patrons appreciate his efforts on their behalf in keeping Hyrcanus II satisfied with the high priesthood, and reward Antipater with power and patronage. Antipater shows he has dynastic ambitions too, when he promotes his young sons to positions of political leadership in Jerusalem and Galilee. Antipater’s quiet single mindedness benefits only him and his family, while the Hasmoneans of some ability lose out. Hyrcanus II is reduced to political impotence and the Jewish Nation, by becoming a tributary of Rome, is set to lose its sovereignty.

The sequences trace the losing struggle of the last Hasmoneans, unable to resist the open aggression of the Romans. Even though their motivation is flawed, Aristobulus and Alexander at least present the love of freedom common to all the Jewish people of their time. Again, one sees that the nation is ill served by claimants to leadership when they place personal advantages over those of the country. They lose for themselves and for the nation. Theirs is the unintended “villainy.” The Romans expand their imperial claims and enforce them with every means available, diplomatic or military, good or evil. Antipater the Idumaeon, truly the outsider, is the schemer. He undermines what is for the benefit of the Jewish nation. Hyrcanus is guaranteed to lose nothing but gain nothing either. He desired nothing more than the high priesthood and Antipater uses influence with Pompey and Julius Caesar to keep him satisfied.

The narrative intention lies in consistently showing the Hasmoneans bringing about their own ruin. Both Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II lack the ability to read the signs correctly and they lack also the intelligence to undertake appropriate action.

Antipater comes across as a more cunning survivor in difficult times. The fact that the Romans acquired a new province for their empire with his intervention, and without serious struggle, shows that the real weakness of the Jewish nation was lack of internal unity. The leaders fail the people. Finally, the authorial intent that one cannot expect much good from Antipater and his sons, given the manner of their rise to power, becomes quite apparent when he promotes Phasael and Herod to powerful positions.

As Exposition this part of the Roman Phase, as noted above, is about the betrayal of the nation through exploiting the weaknesses of Hasmoneans to promote the interests of the Romans and their lackeys. On the part of the Hasmoneans, that they choose to indulge their own weaknesses is by itself the necessary condition for the mischief. The narrator's tone is critical of all the players in less than subtle ways. Such open stance makes the narrator at least an implied partisan of the Jewish national cause. Among the personalities, there are no champions of the "hero-victim." Everyone turns out to be enemies of the nation, or literary "villains," in various ways. The internal enemies are the Hasmoneans, a house divided against itself. The external enemies are the Romans and Antipater who is explicitly identified as "an Idumaeon by race" (1.123). They are united among themselves and working in concert. Of these enemies the more dangerous is Antipater, who pretends to be concerned for the welfare of Hyrcanus II, only to wean him away from his brother Aristobulus II, who is left to fight a lone, losing battle.

Aristobulus II, Alexander and Antigonus, as well as Hyrcanus II, are involved in events only to promote either personal good or to settle a grudge even contrary to the common good. In this they are literary "villains." So are the Romans, who reveal their duplicity. In supporting Hyrcanus II they give the impression of preserving the

religious values of the nation. Their patronage for Antipater is an effort to rob Hyrcanus II of the political power and the nation of its sovereignty. Finally, Antipater intervenes eight times in the narrative. Each time he intervenes, the Romans come off stronger and the Jewish cause weaker. It underscores the significance of his role as a “villain” in the tragedy.

The narrator displays the “tone” of hostility towards the Hasmoneans and the hostile Romans. Hasmoneans are ridiculed for their futile pride, for their lack of judgement as with Aristobulus II and Alexander or for incompetence, as with Hyrcanus II. The Romans are put down through highlighting their arrogance and corruption as with Pompey, Scaurus and Crassus. Antipater is shown to be foxy. The weakness of his foes is his strength. The “tone” of the narrative displays a sense of patriotism in being critical of the Hasmoneans, the Romans and Antipater, all of them literary “villains.” The “mood” builds on the anxiety from the previous phase as it gets worse. The events are so structured as to present a gradual loss with catastrophic consequences for the Jewish nation. The loss grows in proportion to the rising careers of Antipater and of his sons, particularly Herod as the Herodian Period soon demonstrates. As the *protasis*, this phase of the narrative, like the earlier phase, gives a foretaste of the main action of the tragedy to come.

6.2.3 THE HEROD PERIOD (1.204-673)

The whole of the Herod narrative (1.204-673) has already been analysed in its relation to *Herc. fur.* of Seneca. Here the focus is on how the Herod narrative relates to the whole of *B.J.* as a five-act tragedy. In this perspective the Herod narrative is part of the Exposition within the remote setting.

The narrative of the Herodian Period deals with Herod’s “public prosperity” and the “troubles at home” (1.431). As already noted it is part of the Roman Phase. The

narrator here maintains the fiction of a witness when rumours are quoted as if to supplement what cannot be witnessed (1.209, 271, 272, 657), or pure guesses are added (1.235).

On the surface the narrative displays thematic arrangement as the period of disasters follows the one of impressive achievements. The sequence is presented as if it were chronological. In more specific terms, the narrative develops along the four milestones in Herod's public life. The first is his term as Governor of Galilee (1.203) and his governorship of Coele-Syria and Samaria (1.213). It is followed by the second, his time as Prefect and, the third, as the Procurator of the whole of Syria (1.243, 399). The fourth, and the lengthiest, narrative period is when he is appointed King of the Jews (1.282-85) until the end of "Herod's reign" (1.673).

The reign of Herod is divided into two themes, "prosperity" and "troubles." They are presented as chronologically sequential. The theme of "prosperity" is seen in three aspects: personal, regional and international. The first is his personal achievements beyond the positions of power he held. These are his miraculous escapes from sudden deaths (1.331, 340) and his award of honour as the Protector of Arabia (1.385). The second list consists of his many regional and national achievements. These include his advance on Jerusalem (1.214) and relieving of it with help from Sossius (1.342-57), the well-planned revenge on Malichus (1.227-35), the defeat of all his adversaries (1.238-40) and the taking of Joppa (1.293) and of Masada (1.294). His successful winter campaigns in Idumaea and Galilee (1.303) and against Pappus (1.335-38) and the final overthrow of the Hasmonean dynasty are as important to him as his buildings and restorations of the Temple (1.401), his palaces (1.402-07), and of Caesarea (1.408-11, 416-21). Herod's international achievements are no less significant in his career. His attempts to win the friendship and gratitude of Cassius

(1.221-24) and of Antony (1.320-22) as well as his successful effort at appeasing Cleopatra, his relentless foe (1.360), further underpin his success as the ruler of Judaea. His shifting of friendship and loyalty from Antony to Octavius (1.422) would be the crucial factor, to keep him in power to the end of his days, and thus increase the sufferings of the Jewish nation. His endowment of Olympic games (1.426-27), compared to other exceptional achievements, would be of lesser significance but enormously flattering to his self-perception on the world stage, at enormous cost to the Jewish people.

The second theme of “troubles” seems to have an explanatory function in highlighting the intrinsically flawed personality of Herod. What evil he does to his family as a private person is not essentially different in nature to the evil he does as the literary “villain” to his nation. His villainy is engendered through his moral corruption. The “troubles” may also be seen in three aspects: regional, domestic and personal. The regional problems are the frequent seditions (1.648). He finds the Jews “even more troublesome than the Parthians” (1.265). “The country-folk [rally] to him” (1.293), as he marches triumphantly through Galilee, Joppa, Masada and Rhesa, and the city-folk are in rebellion (1.296). Ironically, it is the country folk that bear the brunt of taxes while the cities enjoy his beneficence. At the end of his life the golden eagle incident in the Temple stirs sedition and is put down with exceptional brutality (1.648-51). The domestic discords overwhelm Herod. These include the murder of Hyrcanus (1.429), of Jonathan (1.437), of Mariamme (1.438-44), the quarrels with his sons Alexander and Aristobulus (1.445-551) and the heir to the throne, Antipater (1.569-664). The personal problems are the ones that touch his person, body and soul. In his younger days he is the hunted as he flees to Parthia (1.451) to Arabia (1.262), to Egypt (1.271) and Rome (1.279). In his old age he is hounded by suspicion: he

becomes lonely, fearsome in his madness, infected with noisome incurable sores (1.645, 647, and 656). The rumoured common belief that Herod was punished for his cruelty (1.657) suggests that his sufferings were well deserved. His sense of despair seems the worst of Herod's "troubles" as he unsuccessfully attempts suicide (1.662).

A further analysis of the sequence of the narrative reveals that the narrative movement superficially touches on personal details, like his parentage, his siblings, marriages, care for his wives and grand children and a general statement of how he wanted to be perceived. The bulk of the narrative follows Herod, the public persona. Even his personal achievements are offered as of a public persona. His "domestic troubles" are seen as the flipside of his "public prosperity". The chronological sequencing of the narrative suggests that the positive and the negative phases of Herod's life are so closely connected that they seem like a continuum.

The narrative movement embodies a narrative intention. The intimate links between the positive and the negative phases in Herod's life suggest an inevitability that he could not resist. It was built into his personality, "energetic by nature, at once [he] found material to test his metal" (1.204). Challenges pursued relentlessly lead either to successes or to disasters. Herod apparently loved a challenge hence he could not be free of "prosperity" and "troubles". Further, the narrative sequence points constantly to what matters for Herod is what will benefit him personally. He seems to have easily slipped from the public persona into the private person.⁴ Such confusion does guarantee the subject "troubles" as may be judged by contemporary examples from Julio-Claudians to Domitian.

⁴ Such confusion of private person with the public *persona* does guarantee the subjects, and the others in their circle, "troubles" as may be judged by contemporary examples from Julio-Claudians to Domitian.

The narrative apparently is about Herod's "public prosperity" and "troubles at home" but, as seen in the perspective of the Exposition, it is about the tragic outcome for the Jewish nation of Herod's long rule in Judaea. The narrative "tone" is openly critical of Herod with the Jeremiad judgements on his sins through a long term as an autocratic ruler. Although the Romans are not openly condemned, without their patronage Herod could not have indulged in his known excesses.

Herod's character is perfectly tailored for the role of a "villain" in the tragedy so that outcome of his long rule is integral to the Exposition. It necessarily involves personalities and events to be seen as Herod sees them. As it happens, they are his doing. He creates them in his own image. Herod is the principal actant, the central and exclusive focus of the narrative. Every person who comes into Herod's sphere of influence is either a friend or an enemy shown in the way he treats them. In this sense, Herod has only four friends, all of them Romans, beginning with Sextus Caesar, whose favourable impression of Herod bodes well to the young man (1.206). It is Cassius, quite taken up with Herod's prompt payment of 700 talents, who soon rewards him with the position of Prefect of Syria (1.225). Mark Antony is a highly valued friend who appoints him Tetrarch (1.244). Later, because of Herod's support at Samosata (1.320-22), Antony rewards him with the kingship of the Jews (1.358). The last of the Roman friends, and yet the greatest, is Octavius. Not only does he confirm Herod as king (1.387-90), through the long struggle with his sons, he becomes a firm friend, counsellor and guardian of Herod and his interests. Eurycles, the Athenian, is an exception. "Considered a saviour", he turns out to be "a bane of [Herod's] house" (1.530). The friendship and trust offered to Eurycles are so blatantly misplaced as to seem the measure of how far Herod has mentally deteriorated.

Among his enemies, Herod has individuals and groups. Among the individuals one counts Hyrcanus (1.208), later executed (1.433); Malichus, the murderer of Antipater (1.226), massacred in revenge (1.227-33); Marion (1.238), Antigonus, the second son of Aristobulus II, an unrelenting enemy (1.239) put to death through Antony (1.357) and Fabius and Ptolemy (1.239) – all pay with their lives. Malichus is disloyal (1.276); Pappus who hounds Herod's family, is defeated and beheaded (1.342). Cleopatra escapes the fate of the others (1.367-85). But for Antony, it is not hard to speculate what her fate would have been at the hands of Herod, the great hater. The individuals who are enemies are Jews, Arabs and Greeks, while groups of enemies are either Jews or Arabs. The brigands (1.310-13), the Galileans (1.316), the Arabs 1.365-85), the Jerusalemites (1.333-35) and the people in general who hanker for a change after years of fear and of enduring Herod's tyranny (1.466) are mentioned. The final group of enemies is Herod's family, particularly Mariamme and her sons Aristobulus and Alexander, Doris and her son Antipater, and Herod's brother-in-law Joseph. As Herod mistakes Eurycles for a friend, so he does with Salome as his confidante. She fails to follow his intentions in the will (1.665) to ensure universal mourning after his death "whether they will or no" (1.660). The survey of Herod's friends and enemies once again demonstrates how he sees everything and everyone in terms of his own personal gain or loss. He is portrayed as quite incapable of altruism.

Just as the personalities are contrasted antithetically as friends or enemies, so are the events narrated. It may be noted the international admiration is balanced against the national hatred of Herod. His unbridled political autocracy is weighed down by the domestic humiliations. The youthful athleticism and physical prowess is a foil to highlight the ailments of his old age. The rise and fall of personal fortunes of so many

is centred just on one person, Herod. When he departs the scene, he leaves the nation with a sense of deliverance, achieved after a long period of suffering under a mad king. Yet the sense of deliverance is false. Herod leaves the Jewish nation much weakened economically, without an enlightened political and religious leadership, and a prey to the Roman predators.

6.2.4 CONCLUSIONS FROM BOOK 1 AS REMOTE SETTING

In general, the remote setting of the Jewish war in Book 1 is more than a chronological account of events that occurred before the main events. Much less is it a gimmick for merely filling in the gap for the period prior to the time of the historical author's witness to the narrated series of events. In drawing the threads together at the end of the analysis of Book 1, it is possible to identify the characters of the tragedy, the nature of the conflict and what constitutes the remote setting. The Jewish nation consistently realises the role of a tragic "hero-victim." It is flawed with faults of its own but none so grave as to deserve the sufferings heaped upon it. Other than the priest Matthias and his son John Hyrcanus, there are no "champions of the hero." Even the "champion" can be weak, as dramatised in the indecision of John Hyrcanus in letting his mother be murdered. In contrast to the two characters noted, the narrative is full of "villains" with the Hasmoneans, the hostile Romans, Antipater and Herod, who directly or indirectly harm the "hero-victim." Their actions help pinpoint the tragic conflict: it is between individual good and the common good. It is self-seeking with no thought for the nation. It is expressed in a variety of failures of leadership. In the Hasmonean phase such failures are crudely obvious, while in the Roman phase it is more subtle. The Romans deprive the Jewish nation of leadership through the "villainy," first of Antipater, and later of Herod. Such a strategy ensures that there will not be anyone to spearhead the opposition against Rome.

6.3 BOOK 2 AS PROXIMATE SETTING FOR A TRAGEDY

Consistent with the Exposition in the five-act tragedy, Book 2 is set out to pinpoint the conflicts, the fountainhead of dramatic action. In this process the variety and nature of the conflicts in the respective periods of Archelaus and the Procurators, with their complexity, is laid bare in a two phase development. It is the place, time, circumstances along with the “tone” and the “mood” that build up the “atmosphere” as the emotional setting to the proximate stage for the tragic action to begin.

6.3.1 THE RULE OF ARCHELAUS (2.1-111)

The political upheaval in Judaea is gradual and expanding. It is marked by the rejection of Archelaus as king, accompanied by frequent seditions against the Judaeans (2.5, 10, 55-60, 101), and the Roman (2.16, 39-72) authorities. Conflicts spread from Judaea to Idumaea (2. 56, 76), thence to Perea (2.57). The turmoil is initiated within the royal household in the rival claim for the throne from Antipas (2.20) and complaints against Archelaus from Antipater, son of Salome (2.26). Unrest spreads beyond the royal kin as revolts of Simon (2.57), Athrongaeus (2.60), and Pseudo Alexander (2.101) provide direction and incentive. What is simply a sibling rivalry quickly turns into a political unrest. It is Judas the Galilean who explicitly links political rebellion against “the Romans” and “mortal masters” as incompatible with having “God for ... lord” (2.118). Underpinning a political situation with a religious dimension is not necessarily a logical development. In the Judaeans circumstances, Judas adds fuel to the fire and the unrest is bound to intensify as an anti-Roman movement.

If the contribution of Judas to shift the popular rejection of authority from the secular necessity to a religious duty is significant then what the Jewish leaders do is to reinforce indirectly the claims of Judas. They put an official stamp on what began

in the dying days of Herod (2.4), when they led an official delegation to Augustus with a demand for an autonomous Judaea (2.80). Their speech to Augustus supporting their demand for autonomy is highly meaningful both for the rumours about Jews being “factious and always at war,” and for their claim that they “knew how to obey equitable rulers” (2.91). Nicolaus of Damascus directly contradicts the Jewish delegation in claiming that it is the “national character” of the Jews that they are “impatient of all authority and insubordinate towards their sovereign” (2.92). The direction of the narrative in Book 2 rather suggests that the rumours of Jews being “factious” were correct and the claim of “obeying ... [the] rulers” was stretching the truth. That implies that Nicolaus was being truthful about the Jews. Augustus does not give any indication of being aware that the burgeoning rebellion in Judaea was more seriously religious than purely political, of which only the narrator is aware (2.118) and the speech of the Jewish delegation does not openly admit it. This determines the “tone” of this section of the narrative, of a realisation of an unspecified danger to the nation from those who claim to speak for it. That Augustus is persuaded to accede, at least partially, to the delegation through division of the kingdom into two tetrarchies (2.94-95) and later through exile for Archelaus (2.112) proves that the situation in Judaea has been officially recognised as political unrest needing some sort of remedy from Rome. It also implies that the actions of Augustus are an acknowledgement that the complaints made to him are valid, whatever the motivation for making them. The “tone” and the reaction of Augustus create the “mood” of anxiety for the Jewish nation, the “hero-victim,” now alone with no “champions” to protect it as the “villains” bay about pretending to champion its cause. The general “atmosphere” in Judaea is one of confusion, that the nation is

vaguely aware of some sort of inevitable but painful option ahead. In the next section the option becomes clear but not its consequences.

6.3.2 THE REGIME OF THE SIX PROCURATORS (2.167-652)

The section of the narrative devoted to the procurators tells the tale of how each of the Roman administrators of Judaea plays the role of pressing the “hero-victim” to an unacceptable yet unavoidable option. Under Tiberius, Pilate shows that he is aware of the religious dimension of the unrest among the Jews in Judaea. He makes the first assault on it as he attempts to introduce standards into the Temple. He also confiscates the Temple treasury to pay for the aqueduct. The Jews protest against both and succeed in stopping the greater evil, the desecration of the Temple, but fail to stop the lesser, the confiscation of Temple money for a public project (2.168-76).

Gaius Caligula seriously intends to desecrate the Temple with his own statues (2.184-86). His plans go far beyond Pilate’s as he orders that his personal images be placed in the Temple. The Jews take deep offence and make a petition to the legate Petronius to desist. Fate, God and Petronius, with a blend of the fictitious and the factual, prevent further inflaming of the situation. But the weakness of Petronius is perhaps his humanity suggested in his empathy with the Jewish sense of outrage. The death of Caligula is necessary for his command to be ignored (2.192-205).

While Claudius is favourable to the Jewish people (2.206-21, 245-46), it is the Procurator Cumanus who fails to punish indecent exposure from the battlements of the Antonia to the worshippers in the Temple complex (2.223-24). Once again, the Romans are aware of the religious sensitivities of the Jews and seem to realise that to offend them on that score would be a sure trigger for a serious clash. The near revolt on this occasion grows far worse when a Roman soldier profanes the scroll of the Torah. Cumanus has no choice but to deliver the soldier to the Jews for execution

(2.228-44). This is the first success for the Jews and the second sign of weakness, after Petronius, among the Roman administrators. The capitulation of Cumanus marks a step in the growing intensity of Roman and Jewish hostility towards each other.

With Nero's reign the mounting aggravation of the Jews under the four Procurators takes off dramatically. Felix freely crucifies anyone declared an outlaw or a brigand. He is also single minded in persecuting the common people, the "hero-victim." The *sicarii*, the brigands, the false prophets and the Egyptian impostor are quick to exploit the widespread disorder. The virulence of the breakdown of law and order is made much worse with simultaneous conflict with the Syrian neighbours (2.247-70).

Festus, the next Procurator, enforces calm with intimidation of the public through merciless brutality on anyone who can be targeted as a "brigand" (2.271). It is a calm charged with tension like calm before a storm. Albinus, the fifth Procurator, exercises his authority to indulge in his corruption. He steals and plunders property, imposes extraordinary taxes, sells freedom for a ransom even to the criminals (2.272-76). An oppressed people are further pressed down. "None could speak his mind," laments the narrator, "with tyrants on every side" (2.277). This is tinder for a conflagration.

Florus, the worst of the "villains," arrives on the scene. He is depicted as malevolent and cunning as he plans an extensive persecution of the Jews as he relentlessly drives them to rebellion (2.278-332). Cestius Gallus does his duty to restore peace in an impossible situation which Florus has created. He leads his troops into Judaea but the Jewish rebels succeed in routing him (2.499-551). As Cestius leaves for Rome to report to Nero (2.557), "eminent Jews" realise the danger for themselves and leave Jerusalem (2.256). Immediately, war preparations begin with

Josephus in charge of Galilee, Eleazar son of Simon in Jerusalem and other leaders in other arenas. Judaea is at war with Rome. Yet John of Gischala does not appreciate the looming national calamity as he tries to undermine the leadership of Josephus (2.614-26). Simon ben Gioras seems quite oblivious of the progress of events in Judaea as he pursues his personal goals in raiding Samaria and Idumaea (2.652).

6.3.3 CONCLUSIONS FROM BOOK 2 AS PROXIMATE SETTING

As the latter part of the Exposition, the historical author attempts to sensitise the readers by exposing them to events, with an ominous feeling of a headlong plunge into the War. The analysis lays bare the part the inhabitants of Judaea played and what the outsiders contributed to the onset of war. It is now opportune to discuss how the elements of Exposition are at work. In stepping into the working of the elements of Exposition, one is in a position to recognize that the theme of Book 2 is entrapment of the Jewish Nation into waging the war against the Romans. The manner in which it is accomplished is through exploitation of the weaknesses in the Jewish leadership like personal rivalry, pursuance of individual agenda, and a lack of a commitment to the national good. The narrative voice is in sympathy with the Jewish nation, the “hero-victim,” while being aware of its weaknesses. It is overtly critical of the Jewish leaders like Archelaus, Judas the Galilean, and the viceroy of Agrippa II, Menahem ben Judas, John of Gischala and Simon ben Gioras; of Jewish groups like the so-called ‘brigands’, ‘false prophets’, the ‘revolutionary party’, and the more identifiable groups like the *sicarii* and the Egyptian charlatan and his dupes. From those among the Romans, the narrative voice is condemnatory of Gaius Caligula, of the Procurators, Pilate to Florus, of the Roman Army and of Cestius. The neighbours, like the Samaritans (2.232-40), the Greeks (2.487-98) and the Syrians (2.457-61, 477), are also criticised for their hostility towards the Jewish nation while

minimising the aggressive Jewish actions as if they were necessary for survival (2.51, 284-92, 320, 517, 546-551). These are the literary “villains” of the tragedy who are hostile to the Jewish nation. On the other hand, the narrator is appreciative of fair-minded Romans like Claudius, Petronius and Quadratus, the Governor of Syria. With the exception of these three fair-minded Romans, the Jewish leaders Ananus, Agrippa II and Josephus are the “champions of the hero.” Both Agrippa II and Josephus stand out not merely as champions of the Jewish cause but typically now as powerless.

Like the personalities, the events in each group are subjected to a pattern. Either the Jewish leaders cause the events and the Romans exploit the situation or the Romans cause them and the Jewish leaders react. Archelaus creates a power vacuum in seeking the intervention of Augustus to settle his succession against the rival claimants. Sabinus and Varus exploit the situation. Jewish rebel leaders too use the confusion for their own ends, fictional or real. Next, Caligula, Cumanus and Felix push the disaffection with the Romans a degree further when with malice they create serious unrest so that good order breaks down. Furthermore, Albinus and Florus goad the Jews to general insurrection. The Jews react predictably. They organise themselves under specific revolutionary leaders. Now Cestius, through incompetence as a general, is routed, giving the Jewish revolutionary leaders false confidence in their invincibility. Finally, the three seriously deluded Jewish leaders, independently of the Romans, initiate the civil war at a critical time for the Jewish Nation. Their attack on the apparently realistic Jewish leaders, like Ananus, Agrippa II and Josephus, gives the situation an aura of a national calamity. These events constitute the *protasis* of the tragedy.

The above events have a dual set of factors, internal and external, as in Book 1. The internal factors weaken the nation to spawn tyranny of the Jewish rebels, through

stealth and violence of various kinds. The external factors encourage the Romans to go beyond mere threats. They actually attack the religious, political and cultural reality of the Jewish nation as Antiochus IV did two centuries back. It is the predictable Jewish responses that seem to make the manipulative Romans more successful. Events with these dual factors, working on each other, immediately lead to the war.

The narrative voices are consistent with those in Book 1. The “tone” towards the Jewish rebels and the Roman trouble makers is contemptuous. The subjects of such negative perceptions are the classic “villains” as noted above. The narrative “tone” is favourable to only two Jewish individuals, Agrippa II and Josephus. The Romans, who are individually perceived, stand as the norm to judge how far the “villains” fall. The narrative voice is always in favour of the Jewish nation, being the long-suffering, classic “hero-victim.”

The narrative maintains the thematic perspective of greater and faster fall of the Jewish nation. These may be traced through five steps. First, Archelaus sets the stage for the Roman intervention and the origin of the Jewish rebel movements. Second, Caligula, Cumanus, and Felix unite the Jews, who are both friendly and hostile to the Romans, for a common cause. This becomes further encouragement for the growth of brigandage, the *sicarii*, the emergence of the Egyptian charlatan and his dupes, and the false prophets. Third, through their outrageously provocative behaviour, Albinus and Florus make the Revolutionary Party and the “ruffians” seem like respectable patriotic defenders of their nation. Fourth, the military failure of the campaign of Cestius is a major encouragement to the Jewish militants to consider themselves as potential victors, their cause as blessed with divine approval. This view helps the common people to sharply define the leaders and colour their anti-Roman activities as

of genuine national importance as well as of religious obligation. Fifth, with this mindset, with no further stimulus from the Romans, the Jewish rebels act on the momentum already generated to impose the civil war on a troubled and gullible nation. It makes good tragic sense that the three dominant leaders of the factions at civil war target for attack the two surviving Jewish leaders, Agrippa II and Josephus. The failure of the last two now makes the failure of the Jewish nation seems more assured. Such failure is an indispensable element of the proximate setting in the Exposition.

6.4 CONCLUSION

Books 1 and 2 as the Exposition of the five-act tragedy of *B.J.* share the characteristics peculiar to the first Act and, as such, complement each other. The first characteristic of the Exposition is to introduce the characters with their specific dramatic roles. The “champions of the hero” vary from Matthias the priest and his indecisive son, John Hyrcanus in Book 1 to Josephus in Book 2. Likewise, the “villains” are a varying group. In the first Book it is sons of Tobias and Onias, the Seleucids from Antiochus I to VIII, the Romans under the leadership of Pompey, the Hasmoneans with particular severity, Aristobulus I down to Aristobulus II and Hyrcanus II, not to mention Antipater and Herod. In Book 2, two individuals rate as “villains,” Archelaus and Caligula. The others are groups of Jewish rebels and the Roman Procurators from Pilate to Florus including the Roman general, Cestius.

Exposition also presents the *protasis*. In Book 1, every event of the Hasmonean and the Roman phases, including Herod’s period under the latter, constitutes *protasis*. Book 2 is made up of the anarchy on the accession of Archelaus and the spread of disorder through Idumaea and Perea, as well as the offences of the Roman Procurators with the reactive events from the Jewish antagonists constitute *protasis*.

Only Book 2, as noted earlier, touches on events that occur in Rome with effects extending to Judaea. These too are *protasis*.

The third characteristic of an Exposition is to define at least the conflict intended to dominate the whole narrative action. Integral to the main conflict there may be also other subsidiary conflicts. In both books, the primary and overarching conflict is the one between the Jewish society as a force and its enemies, both internal and external to it. In Book 1 the external enemies are the Seleucids and the Romans, whereas the internal enemies are the Hasmoneans, with the exception of Matthias the priest and John Hyrcanus. Antipater, as an Idumaeen, and Herod the Great are more appropriately external enemies. The external enemies in Book 2 are Caligula and the Roman Procurators with the Jewish rebels as internal enemies. The subsidiary conflicts in both books are the familial quarrels. These include rivalries between siblings, quarrels between spouses or between parents and sons.

In addition to the conflict, Exposition specifies the setting of the narrative action. The setting includes time and place of narrative action as well as the “atmosphere,” which overshadows it. The time of the narrative action is historically identifiable in *B.J.* Book 1 begins with the rivalry among the nobles, opening the door to the Seleucid intervention and ends with the death of Herod in 4 B.C.E. The period between 4 B.C.E with the accession of Archelaus and 67 C.E., when Simon ben Gioras takes control of Jerusalem are covered in Book 2. It is reasonable to conclude that the main action begins with Book 3. The place or the arena of narrative action is mainly Judaea. The “atmosphere” of the two books is of a growing sense of national calamity. It has the function of involving the reader affectively in the narrative through the “tone” and the “mood.” The “tone” of Book 1 is a sense of foreboding of some undefined distant calamity. This sense of foreboding is intensified and made

more definite with what seems like a headlong plunge into a fatal war with Rome. The “mood” in both Books is of increasing anxiety for the nation’s future. The anxiety gets intensified with the implied author’s barely concealed anger towards the Roman trouble-makers and the reckless Jewish rebels.

The act of Exposition, though spread across two Books, is carefully unified with four strategies. First, the form suggests the principles of complementarity and of progression at work. While the subject of Book 1 is the remote stage chronologically and causally, Book 2 is about the proximate stage of the same main tragic action.

Second, the authorial intention is twofold. On the one hand, it is to present the roots of the civil war in Book 1 and of the war with the Romans in Book 2 are innate to the Jewish people, with a difference. In Book 1 the Jewish people are absorbed in self-promotion, which ends in self-destruction. In Book 2 the tendency of the Jewish people to act predictably makes them playthings, as it were, in the hands of their Roman enemies. On the other hand, the authorial intention is to express the author’s anti-Roman dissidence. It is built up progressively. In Book 1 the Romans are shown to be indirectly responsible for the calamities that befall the Jewish nation in the way they pull strings of their political puppets, like Antipater and Herod. In Book 2, satin gloves disappear and the iron fist of Roman power becomes progressively more perceivable in the time of the Procurators.

Third, the theme also shows complementary elements with minor variation. In Book 1 the theme is acquisition of personal power at any cost, including the loss of the national sovereignty. In Book 2, the price of acquisition of personal power is not only national sovereignty. It is immeasurably more. The cost is the very identity of the nation as Jewish. Romans play along with the ambitions of the Jewish leaders in

both books and are single minded in achieving their objective of incorporating Judaea into the empire. This is achieved within two generations, from Pompey to Augustus.

The fourth strategy of achieving unity in the Exposition is the use of symbolism. The two books together focus on the symbols of fall and greater fall. In Book 1 the actions of rivalry, betrayal and murder symbolise the fall. Actions in Book 2 present the greater fall through murder, humiliation and violent abuse of religious, political and cultural icons which define the “hero-victim.”

CHAPTER SEVEN

Act Two

COMPLICATION OF A TRAGEDY (B.J. 3)

*The Romans showed no lack of fortitude,
nor yet the Jews of resourcefulness.*
Flavius Josephus *B.J.* 3.276.

As *Bellum Judaicum* is set out, Book 3 marks the second Act, Complication. It is the beginning of the Rising Action, if not the actual beginning of the war. If the text is read as no more than a narrative history, the rout of Cestius marks the onset of the war. The basis of textual meaning changes when the text is read as a narrative five-act tragedy. In a general sense Book 3 presents the view that the ultimate conflict is between reality and its appearance, between what is and what seems to be. This is illustrated in the manner in which Josephus is contrasted against Vespasian. As part of the five-act tragedy, Book 3 fulfils the function of the Complication. It initiates the dramatic action which will develop in the following act.¹

7.1 CONVENTIONS OF A COMPLICATION

As Complication, the second act of the five-act tragedy has a dual function. It shows the “exciting force” serving as the trigger for the dramatic action. Next, it demonstrates that the action consists of a range of conflicts which need to be resolved in the fifth act.² These may be social tensions which affect individuals and groups of individuals of the same ethnic community. They may include cultural conflicts when different ethnic groups act in opposition to others treating them with hostility. Conflicts may exist when individuals have to overcome nature’s obstacles or those which humans create as in war times. There are psychological conflicts within

¹ Books 3 and 4 together constitute the Rising Action according to Freytag’s Pyramid discussed in Chapter 4.

² Holman, *A Handbook*, 95.

individuals as there are between them. Conflicting ethical values may have both individual and group implications. These may extend to the religious sphere when the divine and the supernatural are seen as inimical to the protagonist.

7.2 BOOK 3 AS *COMPLICATION*

The analysis of Book 3 is designed to follow two steps. First, the “exciting force” will be identified. Second, various conflicts involving personalities and events will be discussed as they constitute Act 2.

7.2.1 THE EXCITING FORCE

The “exciting force” is what starts the conflict of opposing interests of individuals and groups of individuals. Book 3 points to three factors constituting the “exciting force”. The first is the defeat of Cestius at the hands of the Jews described in Book 2. The consequence of this Roman rout is noted in Book 3. The military disaster of Cestius caused great embarrassment to, and confusion in, Nero (3.1). The second is the appointment of the most successful Roman military strategist and field general of the times, Vespasian, to lead the campaign to “punish the Jewish rebels” and to forestall a revolt of the neighbouring nations “catching the contagion” (3.4-8). His very arrival at Antioch creates terror among the Jews in Galilee. The third factor, intimately related to the first two, is Vespasian’s strategy used extensively, to divide and conquer the Jews. He begins with support from Agrippa and the city of Sepphoris (3.29-33) and successfully exploits the terror against Gabara (3.133-34) to turn a city like Tiberias (3.135) against Jerusalem. He sets group against group through encouraging desertions (3.134, 487-502), in using old enmities of Arabs and Syrians against the Jews (3.169, 211), and individuals against their community like the

woman who informs on the hideaway of Josephus (3.343), and above all Josephus, the General of the Jews, against his own nation.

7.2.2 CONFLICTS IN THE NARRATIVE ACTION

These conflicts are only partly, not exclusively, caused through the military campaign of Vespasian. They also include old enmities among individuals and groups, rivalries between cities, political opposition from interested parties, and tensions and stresses experienced within individuals, physical hardships which people face, and the beliefs which set the supernatural forces against the human.

7.2.2.1 *Mutually Exclusive Societies*

The group of conflicts with the widest ambit involves a struggle for survival among mutually exclusive societies. There are three such communities in Book 3. The smallest community is the Samaritans. The Roman troops under the command of Cerealius surround the armed Samaritans assembled on Mount Gerizim. When they refuse to surrender they are massacred (3.307-15). The second, a larger group, is the Galileans. The conquest of Galilee is the main story of Book 3; in particular the submission, the capture and destruction of its cities, Sepphoris (3.30), Gabara (3.132), Japha (3.305), Jotapata (3.328), Joppa (3.427), Tiberias (3.461), and Tarichaeae (3.502) attract much attention. The third group is the whole community of the Jews who are fighting a losing battle for their political and religious survival against the Romans. In the narrative of *B.J.* the most important groups of antagonists are the Romans and the Jews. This specific struggle is the theme of *B.J.* as a whole (1.1, 7.454).

The antagonism of the Romans and the Jews as being racially based is explicitly noted towards the end of Book 3. The Jews are the target when the friends of Vespasian persuade him to allay his scruples of impiety and renege on his assurance of safety to the Jews of Tiberias. They advise him to have the Jews killed, because “against the Jews there could not be question of impiety, and that he ought to prefer expediency to propriety when the two were incompatible” (3.536). That Vespasian, without delay, follows the above advice with much ruthlessness is enough proof that Josephus was not deflecting the blame for the war from the Roman rulers.³

For the Jews anti-Roman antagonism is, first of all, physically focused into setting Jerusalem as “the navel of the country” (3.52) suggesting a rivalry with Rome, the capital of the Empire. Racial antagonism is clearly highlighted when the Romans, without distinction, are dubbed as “murderous foes” (3.294) and their atrocities described with much detail, while the Jewish atrocities are glossed over, as perpetrators they are made to look the hapless victims. This is particularly true of the clashes between the Greeks and the Jews in Caesarea (3.409-11). The Greeks, as the Roman allies, carry the same anti-Jewish prejudices as the Romans do. The inveterate hatred of the Jews drives them towards Ascalon (3.11). The Romans exploited bad blood among the Jews, on the one hand, and the Arabs and the Syrians, on the other, in accepting these as “auxiliaries of the neighbouring kings” (3.9) to fight in the War

³ It is important to keep in mind how Josephus is formulating his implied judgement on Vespasian. Against the Jews impiety and impropriety have no holding value. It suggests that it is consistent with piety and propriety to treat the Jews unjustly. This is much more than anti-Jewish sentiment. It is a positive value to kill the Jews and Vespasian can use any means at his disposal to do it. So Josephus is charging Vespasian with much more than mere verbal ambiguity. For a different view, see J. Rives, “Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple,” in J. Edmondson, S. Mason and J. Rives, eds., *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 151..

as archers and slingers (3.212). The most hurtful conflict for Josephus is that the Jews of Sepphoris prefer to give “active support against their countrymen” (3.30) to the “murderous foes” (3.294).

The antithetical conflict between the Romans and the Jews begins on the psychological level. The Jews who feel isolated, ashamed of being routed and of having lost thousands of their fighters and generals, are contrasted against the confidence displayed in the Roman ranks of outnumbering the enemies, of being indefatigable with only a few wounded (3.18-20). This view is confirmed through the positive perception of the Roman army (3.72-109) in contrast to Titus’ view of the Jewish fighters, “however dauntless and reckless of life they may be, are yet undisciplined and unskilled in war and deserve to be called a mere rabble, rather than an army” (3.475). The narrative voice confirms the way Titus sees the Jews. Thus, the narrator describes the “prowess and daring” of the Jewish fighters as “emboldened by despair”, with “recklessness for its armour and passion for its leader” (3.152-54).

The clash of societies can also be noticed in the state of mind of the antagonists that are spelled out in two ways. First, the many successes of the Romans are contrasted against the few and minor successes of the Jews, and second, the few failures of the Romans are set against the many disasters of the Jews. Among the Roman successes the narrator notes the submission of Sepphoris (3.30), the ravages in Galilee (3.59), the capture and destruction of Gabara (3.132), the capture of Japha (3.289), the routing of the pirates (3.414-26), the razing of Joppa (3.427), the reduction of Tiberias (3.445-61), the capture of Tarichaeae (3.485-92) with the punishment of the rebels in that city (3.532-42), and the naval battle which destroys

the Jewish fleet (3.522-31). These are minor successes when compared to the siege and blockade of Jotapata (3.178), the application of battle-field technology and strategy to successfully mount the final assault on Jotapata (3.141-328) and the capture Josephus, the commanding general of the Jews (3.391-98). In comparison, the Jews are able to repel Placidus (3.110) for a while, win the first fight at the walls of Jotapata (3.149) and succeed in a few sallies (3.205). Roman failures are the few successes of the Jews.

The failures of Jews at Ascalon (3.9-22), at Sepphoris (3.61), at Tiberias (3.127), at Jotapata (3.438) are indeed the successes of the Romans. The gravity of the Jewish failures increases as one finds among them desertion (3.61), lack of provision of necessities of life (3.181-90), unwillingness to fight (3.190-204), betrayal (3.244), suicides (3.355-91) and the questionable surrender of the Jewish Commander (3.392) considered as betrayal of the nation (3.438).

7.2.2.2 Groups in conflict with Individuals

Two individuals whom groups oppose are Agrippa II and Josephus. Agrippa II has already been rejected by his fellow Jews (2.345-401) and banished from Jerusalem (2.406) for favouring Rome. Sepphoris follows Agrippa's example in placing its interests above those of the Jewish nation (3.29-31). Agrippa now openly supports the Romans against his countrymen. He warmly welcomes the enemy of the Jewish nation, Vespasian, at Antioch (3.29) and offers him and the troops his hospitality after the fall of Jotapata (3.443). In return, so it seems, Agrippa II is rewarded with enslaved prisoners of war (3.540). His persuasive speech in Book 2 to the Jewish leaders to submit to the Romans as a realistic option is valid. However,

here he has clearly aligned himself with the Romans. Accordingly, his role in the tragedy changes from the “champion of the hero” to the literary “villain.” Josephus once again uses actions of the characters to ‘show’ rather than ‘tell’ his judgements on them.⁴

Josephus, on his part, also faces opposition from his fellow Jews. A Jewish woman betrays his presence to the Romans (3.343) and his comrades oppose him in his decision to surrender to Vespasian (3.536-59). The woman favours the Romans, implicitly against the Jews. The comrades of Josephus favour the Jews against the Romans. As the harangue on suicide develops, Josephus favours the Romans, and as his ruse on drawing lots progresses he is shown to be against the Jews. Further elucidation will support this observation on Josephus in analysing both the surrender sequence and the speech of Josephus and its aftermath.

The sequence, which describes his surrender to the Romans, is made up of twelve units.

1. Search begins for Josephus in hiding (3.340).
2. Josephus is in hiding “aided by divine providence” with “40 persons of distinction (3.341).
3. A woman betrays his whereabouts to the Romans on the third day (3.343).
4. Vespasian sends the tribunes Paulinus and Gallicus, offering security to Josephus and urging him to come up (3.344).
5. Josephus is reluctant to accept the offer due to a sense of “wrong doing” (3.345). It is not clear if the wrong doing is towards the Romans or the Jews. It seems

⁴ The narrative strategy of ‘showing’ rather than ‘telling’ also applies to Vespasian and Titus as will be discussed in the subsequent chapters.

probable that Josephus has his countrymen in mind. If that is the case, then Josephus seems to be aware of his “betrayal” of the Jewish cause.⁵

6. Vespasian sends Nicanor, a known friend of Josephus, “to persuade” him (3.347).

7. Josephus still hesitates, but he is stirred as he feels the effects of the anger of the Roman soldiers (3.350), and of recalling the nightly dreams (3.351-51). He prays God for guidance (3.353). He realises that Fortune has wholly passed to the Romans; that God has chosen him to announce tidings of the events to come (3.355). The attempt to shift the responsibility for his actions to God and Fortune is becoming more noticeable as a rationalisation of an action that he himself does not seem to approve.

8. Jews reproach Josephus and urge him to die either willingly or unwillingly at their hands (3.356-59).

9. Josephus’ oration follows in which he apparently accepts the decision reached by the Jews.⁶ He adds his own manner of doing it by lots (3.362-90). Josephus survives but unsure if “by fortune or by the providence of God” (3.391).

10. Nicanor brings Josephus to Vespasian. Curiosity is all around. Titus is touched by Josephus’ fortitude. Vespasian orders the prisoner to be guarded until sent to Nero (3.398).⁷

⁵ The term ‘betrayal’ (προδοσία) implies reflection before action (προ-) that it is a deliberate decision to damage the welfare of the Jewish nation. If it can be argued that Josephus probably had no such intention, that he more likely had nothing but the welfare of the nation in mind in surrendering to Vespasian, and that what in fact happened was beyond his control, then the term ‘betrayal’ can be taken as a misreading of the situation by the comrades of Josephus, after the fall of Jotapata. This opinion will be discussed in Chapter 8.

⁶ See below for an analysis of the harangue of Josephus to his comrades.

11. On hearing of Nero, Josephus seeks a private interview with Vespasian, with Nicanor and Titus present, and predicts the future of the Flavians (3.399-407). If the truth of the imprisonment is doubtful, then equally questionable is the so-called prophecy about Vespasian. What at first sight is a major personal conflict for Josephus the character, is subtly undermined in the narrator's suggestion that it did not in fact occur.

12. Vespasian treats Josephus "with kindness and solicitude," Titus warmly supports the Jewish general. (3.408).

The twelve narrative units can be further arranged into three groups: the Roman (1, 4, 6, 10, and 12), the Jewish (3 and 8), the Josephan (2, 5, 7, 9, and 11). The pairing of units 1-2, 4-5, 6-7, 9-10 and 11-12, is suggestive of a dialogue between Josephus and the Romans.

The surrender of Josephus to the Romans, with its elaboration, appears as the high point in Book 3. By convention, *Complication* is about conflicts. Josephus has clearly contrived the opposition between him and the Romans. Yet in reality, there is no such perceivable opposition. The opposition between Josephus and his comrades is not at all significant for the outcome. In light of this the significance of the speech of Josephus becomes less than the narrating space devoted to it might suggest. Additionally, the narrative with such a happy finale for Josephus, the character, is too contrived as a comedy to be factual. The comic element undermines the alleged conflict between Josephus and the Jews. Even the role of the woman, who is alleged

⁷ In passing it may be noted that if Nicanor, an emissary of Vespasian, and Titus, the son of Vespasian, were involved in "persuading" Josephus to go over to the Romans, it hardly makes sense that Vespasian really ordered to put Josephus in chains.

to have betrayed Josephus, minor as it is, favours the Romans openly and Josephus covertly.

There is a lavish use of divine interventions, which is the third indicator of the contrived nature of Act 2. The implied author claims that the Romans are more anxious to win Josephus over to them than he is to surrender to them. The very implausibility of the Romans pleading with their enemy to surrender to them, in real terms makes the episode fictional. What finally persuades Josephus to live and to surrender to the Romans (3.353-54) is his perceived mission to deliver God's message to Vespasian (3.361-62). More importantly, God's intervention on behalf of the Romans and through the instrumentality of Josephus proves that all interested parties are united against the common enemy, the Jewish rebels. Finally, the second entry of Nicanor in the narrative confirms his close alliance with Josephus prior to the hostilities at Jotapata.

The speech of Josephus follows the visit to him of Paulinus, Gallicus (3.343-44) and Nicanor (3.346-47). He presents five reasons why he should accept Vespasian's offer. First, the Romans are generous to those they subdue (3.348). Second, his valour has made him an object of admiration, not of hatred, to the Roman commanders (3.348). Third, Vespasian is anxious not to punish him but to save a brave man (3.348). By implication, he would not have been saved, had Vespasian seen him as a coward, and, more to the point, as an opponent. Fourth, Vespasian will not entrap Josephus as he values "friendship," "the fairest of virtues" and shuns "perfidy," "the foulest of crimes" (3.349). Last, Nicanor would not have come "to deceive a friend" (3.349).

The four arguments in favour of suicide and their refutations are interesting and worth consideration. First, the comrades claim that in the circumstances in which Josephus finds himself, it is insulting to God “who implanted in Jewish breasts souls that scorn death” (3.356) to which the response is that suicide is a “betrayal of God’s commands (3.362), that it is against “nature’s law” (3-370) and that it is “an act of impiety towards God who created us” (3.369). Secondly, the argument states that not to commit suicide is to prefer slavery to death (3.358) and it is also to contradict Josephus’ own advice to others that one ought to “die for liberty” (3.359). In response, Josephus affirms that the Romans are “the best of masters” (3.373) should they enslave. Besides, he denies the supposition behind the choice between liberty and slavery, in questioning if the Jews are truly free as they suppose they are. Thirdly, the Jewish comrades accuse Josephus of false bravery not to commit suicide and false sagacity to expect to be forgiven and to expect life from the Romans. Josephus goes even further in questioning the presupposition that Romans would kill those surrendering to them. It is foolish “to seek certain death to avoid uncertain death” (3.366) and, cowardly to boot, to act like “a pilot who for fear of a tempest he deliberately sinks his ship before the storm” (3.368). Lastly, the Jews put it to Josephus that in not committing suicide he is failing to care for the country’s honour. He should die willingly as a general of the Jews or die unwillingly as a traitor (3.359). Josephus is left little choice. He sidetracks the argument and launches into Platonic thought about the immortality of the soul, that it is “a portion of divinity housed in our bodies” (3.372), that one ought not to sully the soul through suicide but ensure that it “returns to find in chaste [body] a new habitation” (3.374). All in all, one ought

not to fly from God through impiety (3.373). The suicide incurs divine punishment (3.376).⁸

In these arguments and refutations, the conflict between Josephus and his Jewish opponents has shifted to philosophical and theological plains. Josephus, the character, contradicts the repeated assertions of the narrator that the Romans are the implacable foes of the Jews. The assertions are backed up through the description of Roman atrocities against the Jewish citizens and the anti-Jewish undercurrent in the manner in which Vespasian is advised to deal with them. Josephus, the character, as discussed in his speech to his Jewish comrades, suggests that the Romans are anything but the implacable enemies of the Jewish nation. In this the narrator and the character Josephus are apparently at loggerheads. What underpins the opposition between the narrator and the character is the more essential conflict between reality and appearance in *B.J.*

7.2.2.3 *Individual in conflict with Individual*

In the third category of conflicts, the contrast between Vespasian and Josephus is highlighted. The narrative concentrates on Josephus as the protagonist and Vespasian as the antagonist, as the two major characters in the Complication of the tragedy of *B.J.*. The role of Josephus as the protagonist is an extension from Book 2. He is here cast as one notable for his toughness (3.135), for his loyalty to the Jewish nation (3.137), and for his competence as an administrator (3.138-40) and leader (3.142). The narrator places extraordinary value on the capture of the Jewish commander when the deserter informs Vespasian to secure Josephus, whose capture “would

⁸ This diversion of appealing to the “fictitious” divine punishment suggests that the whole exercise of the controversy between Josephus and his comrades is probably more “fictional” than factual.

amount to capture of all Judaea” (3.143). Indeed, Vespasian considers him superior to all his enemies as “the most sagacious” (3.144). Thus Josephus is made out to be a great adversary, worthy of Vespasian’s attention.

The military manoeuvres, discernible in the narrative structure presented through the strategy of the military campaign, tend to support the claim. The conquest of Galilee begins with the Romans winning over Sepphoris (3.39), capturing Gabara (3.132) and end with the assault on and then a siege of Jotapata (3.160, 171, and 178). The second phase begins with the capture of Japhra (3.305), and Mount Gerizim (3.315) and the third is the capture of Jotapata (3.328). Only after this do the three other conquests occur in rapid succession, Joppa (3.427), Tiberias (3.464) and Tarichaeae (3.502). If the fall of Jotapata is central to the narrative, then it makes the conquest of Galilee synonymous with the conquest of Jotapata, which in turn is synonymous with the surrender or capture of Josephus (3.340). Thus the superiority of Josephus is implicitly supported from two different angles: that of Vespasian’s opinion of him and from the narrative structure of the process of capturing the city.

The surrender itself is made to appear as a victory, so that the conquerors over land and sea “persuade” Josephus to surrender (3.354, 362, 399-408). The hyperbolic irony reverses the roles of the victor and the victim.⁹ Unlike Vespasian who has only an external enemy to fight, Josephus fights on two fronts: the Romans from without, and the Jewish opponents from within. This suggests that Josephus is a warrior of a higher order. He also tastes a two-fold victory. As his surrender to Vespasian is a victory of Josephus because it is what he deigns to grant the Roman general, so is his

⁹ See Mason, “Figured Speech and Irony in T. Flavius Josephus” in Edmondson, Mason and Rives, eds. *Flavius Josephus*, 267.

survival through the ruse of death-by-lots.¹⁰ In terms of the conflict of individual versus individual, Josephus and Vespasian are worthy antagonists. Vespasian may stand for a great and powerful nation. Josephus does not represent a “puny people” either. In the narrative it is a vicarious battle being fought between equals.

While the apparent authorial intention is to give due credit to Vespasian’s leadership in the military campaign in Galilee, what is implied subverts the apparent in as much as it projects Josephus as a general on par with Vespasian, even superior to him in winning on two fronts. Josephus wins not through strength of arms but with clever manoeuvres of his Jewish opponents. Vespasian recognises the cleverness of his “antagonist” when he describes Josephus with equivocation as “the most sagacious of his enemies” (3.144).¹¹ Such subversion of the role of Vespasian does not minimise the complication proper to Book 3. Rather it enhances it by raising the significance of Josephus as a worthy antagonist to Vespasian. It also covertly suggests that the implied author saw Vespasian, the benefactor of Josephus, at least as a rival if not worse. Here the implied author is a dissenter against the Flavians.

7.2.2.4 *Humans against the Non-Human*

Conflicts in this category are those which people encounter as obstacles both of nature and of human creation. These are physical hardships the antagonists had to endure in addition to those already discussed. As a feature of the tragedy, physical obstacles have an echo-effect, as they seem to reflect the human predicaments or to

¹⁰ This subversive narrative angle is reminiscent of the encounter between Aristobulus II and Pompey in *B.J.* 1.133-54.

¹¹ Thackeray translates συνετός as “sagacious”. The *OED* gives a variety of meanings which make the word ‘sagacious’ rather equivocal. It may mean wise, intelligent and it may also mean shrewd and cunning. If Vespasian knew Josephus personally with friendly sentiments, then sagacious would have positive meaning. If not, it carries a pejorative connotation. However, the narrator seems to be hinting at the positive meaning, with the understanding that Josephus and the Flavians, Vespasian and Titus, were well acquainted and entertained good will towards each other. See also note 8 above.

add to them.¹² Among the first group of obstacles there is the geographic position of Jotapata. It is described as “almost entirely built on precipitous cliffs being surrounded on three sides by ravines” like fathomless abyss (3.158). It is a city almost invisible, being concealed behind mountains (3.160). The city was accessible from the north, but Josephus had so fortified it that even the ridge opposite the city was so enclosed that it was out of reach to the enemy. Within the city the streets were narrow and the incline was slippery (3.330-31). Added to these physical obstacles were the lethal weapons which inflicted bodily injuries, like the earthworks (3.162), the palisades (3.163), the projectiles (3.166, 214, and 220), the artillery engines (3.167) and flaming bitumen, pitch, sulphur, dry wood (3.229). Further, one may add nature’s obstacles like darkness of the night (3.240-52), lack of water and salt (3.181-82). The battle for Jotapata was as much against these handicaps as against the Jews “bent on death” (3.207).

7.2.2.5 *Inner Conflict*

Book 3 as *Complication* pays special attention to ‘internal conflict’ of individuals and groups. This conflict consists of a struggle between rationality and irrationality. To the latter category belong excess of emotions. To this kind of conflicts can be added worries and psychological tensions brought about in bellicose situations and human relationships. There can be mental and emotional stress involved in pretentious exterior to cover the fearful interior of the person. Even anxiety regarding doubtful outcomes, a sense of powerlessness from being crushed through overwhelming odds, and such like phenomena can be part of inner conflict.

¹² The ancient belief in the organic unity of human and non-human facets of reality seems behind this literary convention which also underpins Platonic thought.

Nero is described as facing “secret consternation and alarm” as “reverses are sustained in Judaea” (3.1). The narrator notes that one who showed “lofty contempt” at the “black tidings” and appeared “to possess a soul superior” was indeed experiencing “inward perturbation ... betrayed by anxious reflection” (3.2-3). Nero was embarrassed. Implicitly, the Jewish rebellion was a matter of great concern for the empire.¹³

Vespasian is shaken in his confidence to fight the persistent Jews and his duty to lead his army to victory. He is “provoked” when the Jewish fighters use clever stratagems and audaciously sally against the Romans in guerrilla fashion (3.176-77). He is forced into defensive caution when he advises his army “to shun attacks by men bent on death” driven through “despair” and “impetuosity” (3.207-10). His feelings are also described as of having been “besieged” (3.213) when the Jews attack “prodigal of life and limb, one party after another” (3.212).

Josephus, himself, is torn between his loyalty to his nation and to the Romans. The narrative of his surrender and his harangue to the comrades urging him to suicide show how Josephus tries to resolve the conflict. Indeed, he fails to do so, and opts for friendship with the Romans. As an author, he must have faced a deal of inner tension to say what he wanted to say and not appear to say it, to be loyal to the Jewish nation and not seem disloyal to his Roman benefactors.

The narration also focuses on a high degree of emotions the groups experienced, which cannot be subdued. When “elated,” the Jews “could not restrain their ardour, as though “stirred by [the] gust of fortune,” they march on Ascalon (3.9-11). They

¹³ This implication supports Josephus’ bravado that the Jews were not a “puny people” (1.8), but that the Romans did consider the Jewish revolt with a deal of concern.

quickly feel depressed and isolated, ashamed of being routed and for losing fighters and generals (3.18-20). The narrator repeats that emotionally the Jews were out of control, as “discomfiture redoubled their audacity” (3.22); they were “lured by the memory of former triumphs to a second disaster” (3.23). Antonius does not see them as an army, but “novices”, mere “infantry in ragged order”, “casually armed”, “men driven by passion rather than policy” (3.13-15). That the roots of the causes of the war are innate to the Jewish people, raised in Books 1 and 2 is now repeated in Book 3. The observation gets added significance at this juncture, as the implied reader stands between the preparatory stages of the war and its move to Judaea, where the main action is to be staged.

Like the Jews, their antagonists, the Roman army also succumbs to overpowering emotions. They can be excessively self-confident when they consider themselves as “veterans”, armed with skilled “cavalry”, “serried ranks”, “fully equipped and disciplined”, as “outnumbering their enemies”, and “indefatigable” (3.13-20). This view is corrected when Vespasian warns the army to let Jewish “impetuosity be extinguished like fire for lack of fuel” (3.210). He advises his army to be more rational and think of safety as well as victory, and to understand the nature of their fight. “Not from necessity,” he reminds them, that they “wage the war but to increase the empire” (3.211).¹⁴ Despite all their self-confidence, at the moment when

¹⁴ The claim of Vespasian is ironic given the gap between the appearance and the reality. It is doubtful that the Jewish war was only “to extend the empire” and “not out of necessity”. If the Jewish revolt had succeeded, it would have spelt the beginning of disintegration of the empire from Gaul and Germany (7.75-77) to Mesopotamia. Josephus himself claims that he wrote the early version of *B.J.* in Aramaic to dissuade the Jews in Mesopotamia, “the barbarians in the interior” (1.3), from revolting against Rome. If Josephus’ claims about Gaul, Germany and Mesopotamia are factual and not fictional, then the failure of Romans in Judaea would have had empire-wide disastrous consequences, contrary to Vespasian’s boast. Vespasian, it needs to be remarked, is about appearances while Josephus presents the reality behind the appearances. In the ironic reading, hidden reality in the

Vespasian is hurt in the sole of the foot, the narrator notes that “vast commotion” overwhelms the Roman army; there is a “consternation and terror” and they are “agitated” at Titus’s grave fear for his father (3.236-39). The Roman army was as vulnerable to emotional onslaughts as the Jews were.

7.2.2.6 *Conflict with the Supernatural*

In the whole text of *B.J.* the supernatural includes superhuman forces, the mysterious and what is not humanly explicable. These are fate, fortune, destiny and the divine. In general, it includes the fictitious. In Book 3 as *Complication* there are three references to the superhuman. The first is to fortune when the “ardour” of the Jews is “stirred by the gust of fortune” (3.9-10). The second reference is to the part the Roman army played in the empire. “This vast empire of theirs has come to them,” notes the narrator, “as the prize of valour and not as a gift of fortune” (3.72). Once again, Josephus uses irony in suggesting the opposite of what he is saying. In setting “prize of valour” in contrast to “gift of fortune” he is affirming explicitly that the empire was acquired through human effort. However, the role of fortune is not ruled out absolutely. If such was the intention of the author, he would not have mentioned “gift of fortune” at all. Given the disjunction between “prize of valour” and “gift of fortune”, the author is allowing a role to fortune, and implicitly to the fickleness of fortune, with a slight twist. Fickleness of fortune may mean that it rewards the undeserving and the deserving inequitably. The “gift of fortune” underscores that the Romans did not have to work for the empire with as much dedication as Vespasian would have them. It was inequitably given to them. Josephus is apparently affirming

background is preferred over appearances in the foreground. See the Conclusion of this study for further discussion.

what he is denying. The rest of the digression attempts to explain what makes the army such an efficient instrument.

The last conflict with the supernatural deals with the part God plays in the defeat of the Galileans. God “may have moved” Vespasian, as the divine “was already shaping the destiny of the empire” (3.6). Josephus’ return to Jotapata is interpreted as a godsend “regarding it as by God’s providential ordering that the man who was reputed to be the most sagacious of his enemies had thus deliberately entered a prison” (3.144). The explicit charge is levelled against God after the double walled city of Jopha is taken.

God, and no other, it was who made a present to the Romans of the wretched Galileans; it was He who now caused the population of the town to be excluded by the hands of their own people and delivered them to their murderous foes, to be exterminated to a man (3.294).

The bitter affirmation reveals the highly charged emotional state of the narrative voice, the “tone” of condemnation and the “mood” of anger against the divine. Yet it is this God, “the creator and breaker of the Jewish nation” (3.353), whom Josephus invokes to guide his decision to surrender to the Romans, to whom “fortune wholly has passed,” to witness that he goes “not as a traitor, but as [His] minister” (4.354-55). The narrator is confused about God’s role in this tragedy, yet the seriousness of the condemnation of God’s perceived role in the Jewish national tragedy is further enhanced as the narrative moves on to Crisis / Climax in Book 4 and the loyalty of the divine definitively shifts from the Jews to the Romans.

7.3 CONCLUSION

The fundamental characteristic of Complication is to present what conflicts are active in the narrative that trigger the action and develop it. The conflicts do not cease with the Act, but continue to stimulate the action until they are resolved at the end of the narrative. They do make an entry in the narrative in this Act. It has been argued in this chapter that Book 3 has exhaustively presented every kind of conflict available and active in *B.J.*

Act 2 begins with a threefold “exciting force” involving the rout of Cestius, the arrival of Vespasian in Galilee and his strategy of setting Jews against each other. There are six different kinds of conflicts at work. First, it is between mutually exclusive societies like the Samaritans, the Jews and the Romans. Second, groups are in conflict with individuals like the Jews reject Agrippa II and Josephus is opposed by his comrades. Third, an individual is in conflict with another individual. Vespasian is ironically set in conflict with Josephus the character. At one point, the narrator himself contradicts Josephus the character. Fourth, humans have to overcome non human obstacles like the near impossible fortifications of Jotapata, the lethal weapons and projectiles, even the physical necessities. Fifth, there are inner conflicts the characters experience. Nero, Vespasian and Josephus as individuals and Jewish rebels and the Roman army face psychological stress and irrational impulses. Sixth, the supernatural forces present their own challenge. Fortune indirectly and God overtly, in the narrator’s claim, play a part in making the “hero-victim” suffer.

Individuals and groups involved in the conflict are thus identified as are the impersonal elements that feed the human conflicts. It has been demonstrated in Books

1 to 3 through the frequency of struggles, particularly the inter-personal struggles, that the root cause of conflicts in *B.J.* is innate to the Jewish people. It makes them playthings in the hands of the exploitative Romans. Furthermore, the implied author has so designed the text to show that the textual reality of Book 3 as *Complication* is not necessarily the verifiable objective reality. It is a reality that is imaginatively reconstituted both in its textual content and the tragedy genre in which it is constructed.

CHAPTER EIGHT

ACT THREE

CLIMAX OF A TRAGEDY (B.J. 4)

*They spared not even infants,
But...slung them over the citadel.*
Flavius Josephus *B.J.* 4.83.

B.J. traces the gradual approach of the Jewish nation to its predictable resolution in each of its five Acts. In it what seems to be a death march of the Jewish nation, Book 4 is Act 3 or the Climax of the five-act tragedy. As such it plays an exceptional role both in dramatising the crucial events that lead to it and in heightening the emotional impact of those events on the readers. To achieve this effect, the emphasis is placed on the civil war in Jerusalem as the Roman forces are openly targeting the City as the next arena of war. The readers are well prepared to appreciate the danger to the Jewish nation as they share with the implied author the anxious period of waiting, while the Jewish rebels, engaged in their mutual destruction, seem utterly oblivious of it.

8.1 CONVENTIONS OF *CLIMAX*

Act 3 presents in a dramatic way the Crisis, the “turning point” and the Climax. The Crisis consists of a series of actions “at which the opposing forces that create the conflict interlock in the decisive action[s] on which the plot will turn.”¹ It is more than a single incident. It is rather a concatenation of incidents. In this chain of systematically organised events, only one is the “turning point” after which, in a tragedy as against the comedy, the protagonist grows worse. Crisis and the “turning point” are, therefore, to be seen as elements of the structure of the plot. The “turning

¹ Holman, *A Handbook*, 106.

point” is the first significant event or incident which propels the flow of Crisis on its path as it builds up to the Climax. The Climax is not part of the Crisis; it is “the point at which the reader makes the greatest emotional response” to the highest level of “intensity of interest” which the developing Crisis has created.² The Climax is the audience response to the Crisis.

8.2 BOOK 4 AS *CLIMAX* OF A TRAGEDY

The conventions of a Climax described above, found in any tragedy, as in the Senecan, are incorporated in Book 4. The tragic narrative of the Crisis begins with an account of how Galilee is “wholly subdued,” “affording the Romans a strenuous training for the impending Jerusalem campaign” (4.120). This account in the first chapters of Book 4 (4.1-119) covers the period after most of Galilee has surrendered to the Romans. It includes the fall of Gamala to Vespasian (4.11-83) and of Gischala to Titus (4.84-119). The “turning point” in Book 4 lies at the beginning of the Crisis, when the citizens of Gamala repel Agrippa’s seven month long concerted attack (4.3-11). According to the conventions of classical tragedy the hero-victim grows worse. The residents of Gamala are happy at their surprise success (4.49-50). Immediately, though, realism dawns on them and they feel depressed. From this moment onwards, “the citizens,” the tragic hero-victim, suffer repeated calamities at the hands of “villains” who are the “Brigands” (4.135, 174), John son of Dorcas (4.138), the Zealots (4.161), John of Gischala (4.208), the Idumaeans with their chief, Simon (4.231, 282), Vespasian (4.368), the *sicarii* (4.398), Placidus (4.425), Cerealius (4.545), and Simon ben Gioras (4.503, 556). These create twelve incidents of the

² Holman, *A Handbook*, 84.

Crisis with diverse impacts on the Jewish nation, the hero-victim. The Jewish rebels, the Romans and others who support them are the villains. The twelve crimes against the “hero-victim” may be discussed from two perspectives, the first from that of the villains at work and the second, from the angle of the sufferings of the “hero-victim.” In both perspectives, an ascending order to the Climax becomes apparent.

8.2.1 THE VILLAINS AT WORK

The “villains,” individuals or groups of them, are bent on hurting the “hero-victim” in various ways. The first is the group of “villains,” the “Brigands,” who flock to Jerusalem “from hatred of the nation.” This sudden influx of bandits bodes ill to the City, which is without leaders to withstand them. They set about the City and eventually wreck it (4.135-37).

John son of Dorcas is a second “villain” with his own following. He arrests and executes the notable citizens, the “champions of the hero” like Antipas, Levias and Syphas. The “citizens of Jerusalem”, who are the “hero-victim,” are reduced to “abject prostration and terror” (4.138-41).

The “Brigands” return and intervene, in grave violation of the law. They reject the chosen high-priest and propose to elect one from among “the accomplices in their impious crimes.” The impact on the “hero-victim” is such that the narrator describes it metaphorically as “with polluted feet they invaded the sanctuary” (4.174-50). The gravity of the evil perpetrated is comparable to the desecration of the “Holy of Holies” in the Temple.

The fourth group is the Zealots. They elect Phannis as the high-priest. The “champions of the hero,” Gorion, Symeon, Jesus, and Ananus, help focus “an insurrection of the populace” to attack the Zealots (4.151-61).

The fifth individual “villain” is John of Gischala. Ananus sends him as a legate to negotiate with the Zealots. Instead, he betrays the trust placed in him and “shackles them into an irreversible decision” to side against Ananus and seek outside help. The Zealots seek the help of Idumaeans and the citizens are duped (4.208-27).

The sixth group of “villains” consists of the Idumaeans and their chief Simon. They are uncontrollable. They “race around the nation like mad men” recruiting twenty thousand fighting men. Jesus bars them entry into Jerusalem, while Ananus fails to stir the sentries to action. The Zealots open the gates of the City for them, and they in turn murder the weak “champions of the hero,” Ananus, Jesus, Gorion and Niger. The narrator voices despair for the City: God has condemned it (4.323).

The seventh individual “villain” is Vespasian. He takes the high ground of a politician, on non-interference in the internal affairs. It works well for the Zealots. They commit “barbarity on the poor” and let the rich bribe them to escape to the Romans (4.368-70). Vespasian’s “villainy” is to be found in his abandoning of the “hero-victim” to the Jewish “villains.”

The *sicarii* next enter the fray against the common people. They occupy Masada and raid Engeddi. It is the signal for banditry. The whole of Judaea is rendered lawless (4.398-407).

The ninth “villain” is Placidus. He captures many *sicarii* but he is not the “champion of the hero.” Placidus pursues and kills the citizens trying to escape the atrocities of the *sicarii* (4.425-37).

The tenth “villain” is Simon ben Gioras. He attacks the Zealots and the Idumaeans. He captures Hebron. He is insane with rage at the capture of his wife. The danger to the Jewish nation rises significantly as the worst can be expected from Simon in the grips of his predictable virulent paroxysms. The danger to the “hero-victim” magnifies as even good citizens are misled to join him (4.503-38). This incident bodes ill for the future of the citizens of Jerusalem.

The eleventh “villain” to intervene is Caerealius. He captures the cities around Jerusalem. From this moment “Jerusalem is the one object before the Romans” (4.545-55). His “villainy” consists of clearing the deck for the final onslaught on Jerusalem in laying waste to the countryside and towns around the Holy City.

The twelfth, and the last, is again Simon ben Gioras. His ferocity is not abated with the return of his wife. He drives people to Jerusalem. They, in their confusion and weakness, choose him as their “saviour and protector”. He perversely lives up to his role. He joins John of Gischala and the Zealots and terrorises the very people of Jerusalem who chose him as their leader. The citizens in the fashion of a true tragic “hero-victim” are trapped. The narrator indulges in scathing condemnation of God for siding with the “villains,” as he “perverted [the citizens’] judgement” to choose Simon as their protector. Simon has a free hand to plunder property and to attack the Temple. This is the ultimate “villainy” (4.556-78).

The twelve events with which the “villains” are identified, involve an increase in the intensity of violence on individuals and the effect on the Jewish nation. The first four events in which the “Brigands”, John son of Dorcas and the Zealots are involved peaks in the undermining of the high-priesthood. The second set of four events, in which John of Gischala, the Idumaeans, and *sicarii* actively participate and Vespasian stays aloof, leads to the elimination of all the notable leaders. The natural outcome for the Jewish nation is that without its champions, it is left leaderless, hence powerless and without direction. The last four events end in the leaderless and powerless people, in their desperation, choosing Simon, a tyrant. The height of tragedy hits home, as the narrator explains the significance of the choice of Simon, that “God perverted their judgement” (4.573). God is a character actively involved in the destruction of the Jewish nation. He aids and abets the enemies of the Jewish nation, the literary “villains.” One who shares in the villainy is a villain too. Vespasian, through his action, and God, with hostile action attributed to him, come under the narrator’s silent condemnation.³

8.2.2 THE TRIALS OF THE HERO-VICTIM

Just as the twelve interventions of “villains” create havoc on the Jewish nation, the sufferings of the “hero-victim” are structured through twelve trials (4.1-485). The first two affect the residents of Gamala and Gischala, both in Galilee. The remaining ten are confined to Judaea. Of these, four touch Masada and its environs, Jericho and

³ See S. Mason, “Figured Speech” in Edmondson, Mason and Rives, eds. *Flavius Josephus*, 267. Mason, reflecting on the use of flattery of the Flavians in *B.J.* as an instance of irony, notes, “It seems more likely to me that Josephus, who otherwise shows himself skilled in figured speech, used his favoured position to engage in a ‘safe criticism’ that also strove to defend his people from post-war hatred.” As often is the case with Josephus, he also uses meaningful silence for ‘safe criticism’ as he has in structuring the *B.J.* as a five-act tragedy. The implications of such a strategy will emerge as the Dissertation progresses to its conclusion.

its surrounding region, Jerasah and Hebron with its neighbourhood. The remaining six trials repeatedly target Jerusalem.

Two groups of antagonists, the Romans and the Jewish rebels, are at work against the “hero-victim.” The Romans are actively hostile four times (4.62-83, 419-39, 487-90, and 550-55). Only once under the leadership of Titus, do the Romans appear humane in the treatment of the citizens of Gischala (4.112-20). The Jewish antagonists are markedly more brutal to their countrymen and more often than the Romans. They bring about a great deal of suffering of every kind on the Jews in eight out of twelve trials (4.84-111, 121-34, 135-50, 151-397, 314-48, 398-418, 559-69, 570-84).

The suffering of the Jews, the “hero-victim,” begins at Gamala. The Romans, after an initial defeat, undermine the defences of the town (4.62) and take it (4.69). There is a great deal of death and bloodshed (4.70-3) but more citizens self immolate “in rage outstripping Roman rage” (4.80). This can be seen as an act of despair and of anger against “the miraculous storm” that helped the Roman archers (4.76).

The second adversity for the Jewish people is at Gischala. John and his henchmen intimidate them from responding to the offer of peaceful capitulation to Titus (4.97-104). John’s escape on the Sabbath night helps to ease the distress of most of the citizens while of those who are forced to go with him 6000 die and 3000 return, having greatly suffered overnight (4.106-115).

John’s arrival at Jerusalem is the third trial of the citizens. He sets Jews against the Romans (4.126-7), the young against the old (4.128), and sets off party strife in

Judaea (4.129). “Every city agitated and in civil war,” notes the narrator (4.131-4). This brings the Roman aggression closer to Jerusalem (4.129).

As John sows division and brings the Roman threat closer to Jerusalem, more serious suffering begins with the arrival of the “brigands” (4.135). They begin arrests and murders of the eminent persons (4.138) and reduce people to “abject prostration” (4.147). The “brigands” do worse. “Raised to heights of madness” they elect Phanni as a high-priest, contrary to the traditions (4.156-57).

The Zealots unleash the fury, which is the fifth plight of the “hero-victim.” The author deals with this phase extensively and in great detail, accounting for about a third of Book 4. Among their activities, the narrator mentions, violation of the Temple (4.151), support for the illegitimate High-Priest, Phanni (4.155), and invitation of the Idumaeans into the city (4.360) with all the crimes they committed in Jerusalem. Finally, the invitation of Simon ben Gioras, to stop their unceasing assaults on the citizens of Jerusalem is due to “the Zealots”.

The sixth hardship begins with the arrival of the Idumaeans. The slaughter of the high-priests, Ananus and Jesus (4.314-18), and the torture and death of the nobility (4.326) are their contribution to the sufferings of the people. The crazed Idumaeans are more shocked at perversities of “the Zealots” and decide to return home and make amends for their crime (4.352).

The seventh trial begins with the *sicarii*. The focus shifts from Jerusalem to Masada and Engeddi and the surrounding region. They indulge in banditry and murder and seek recruits from the young. The narrator describes the condition of Judaea at this time as of a “sick person” (4.407).

The Romans now come on the stage. Placidus is a violent person and a thorough exterminator. Sent to capture and punish the *sicarii* who murdered Dolesus, he goes about burning every village and pursues the fleeing populace down to the Jordan and even into the Dead Sea (4.419-39).

Lucius Annus inflicts the ninth trial on the Jews. He helps Vespasian set up camps at Jericho and Adida and then takes Jerash. He kills a thousand youths and takes women and children prisoner and gives licence to soldiers to plunder and burn (4.487-88). It is Annus who brings war closer to Jerusalem (4.488) by cutting it off from the rest of Judaea. At this point Simon ben Gioras is introduced into the narrative of the sufferings of the “hero.” He becomes the scourge on the Jews later after his initial hostility towards “the Zealots” (4.514).

The tenth trial of the “hero” is in the part the fourth Roman, Cerealius, plays in the narrative. He lays waste to upper Idumaea, seizes Capharabis and above all burns down Hebron, the city where the Patriarchs are buried (4.550-54). The narrator notes that only Masada, Herodion and Macherus remained. He helps to set the focus exclusively on the City, a metaphor for the “hero-victim.” In the words of the narrator “Jerusalem is the objective before the Romans” (4.555).

The Galileans bring about the eleventh trial of the “hero,” with licence from John of Gischala to do what they please. The Galileans are the worst to indulge in every conceivable perversity against the people of Jerusalem. Driven through “insatiable lust for loot” they murder men and violate women (4.560). The narrator uses cannibalistic imagery to describe their atrocities as they “caroused on their spoils with blood to wash them down” (4.561). This is followed with images of the Roman

Bacchanalia when they “indulged in effeminate practices with unlawful pleasures wallowing as in a brothel” (4.562). “Those who fled from John [could expect] bloodier reception from Simon” (4.564). “Every avenue of escape was thus cut off from those desirous to desert to the Romans” (4.565). The Romans, about to destroy the City, are ironically seen as the protectors. The entrapment of the “hero” is total at this point. The narrator using the Senecan elements has created this scenario for the Climax of the five-act tragedy which is about to befall.

In the context of unbearable suffering and humiliation to invite Simon, the violent and self-centred son of Gioras, seems like liberation to the trapped citizens of Jerusalem. In fact, the high-priest Matthias (4.573), on behalf of the people, invites Simon as “their saviour and protector” (4.575) “a remedy more disastrous than destruction” (4.572). This, in fact, is a catastrophe in anticipation. As the narrator puts it, to invite Simon is to “introduce a second tyrant” in addition to John of Gischala (4.570). He becomes “master of Jerusalem” “in the third year of the war in the month of Xanthicus” (4.577). The significance of the event is highlighted like a historic milestone. With this tyrant the final disintegration of Jerusalem has begun to accelerate. The narrative of the Crisis quickly reaches the Climax as Simon tightens his hold on the City and indulges in plundering the wealthy and in attacking the Temple. John and the Zealots also get a taste of his frenzy.

8.3 SPECIFIC TEXTUAL FEATURES

In addition to the events that lift the Rising Action to the Climax, there are other elements in Book 4 which feed into the narrative to support either directly or indirectly the meaning of the Crisis and the Climax. They enable the implied author

to convey to the reader a meaning that is specific to the Jewish ethos.⁴ These are the descriptions of six places, current events in Rome, the geographic markers in Judaea, the role of the narrator, and the characters in the narrative action. They enhance the elements of the tragedy genre.

8.3.1 GEOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS

8.3.1.1 *Gamala*

Gamala is described first (4.4-10). The city's name is linked with "camel" and the physical features are described which resembled that animal's hump, the difficult geographical position, the manner of building houses "against the steep mountain flank and astonishingly huddled together," and the supply of water within the citadel. With these natural advantages, human effort had endowed it with fortifications. The combatants were fewer than at Jotapata but in bravery no inferior to them as the ensuing narration confirms. The real difficulty seems to be the presence of refugees overcrowding into the city. The terrain itself, with its ruggedness and the preparedness for attacks from without the city walls, makes Gamala a metaphor for Galileans who are hard to subdue.

Gamala withstood Agrippa's army for seven months. When Placidus joined in the attack, he was repulsed. It is Vespasian, with three legions with orders to "savagely attack, shrink from no excess of cruelty towards the aliens and enemies" (4.16) who presses the siege. What is worse, given the conviction of the people of Gamala that their time had come because with Vespasian there was an "interposition of divine

⁴ One needs to resist the temptation that the audience in this book is mainly, much less exclusively, Jewish. There is no reason to believe that non Jewish readers were uninterested in the Jewish cultural details. See S. Mason, "Of Audience and Meaning," in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 71-100.

providence” (4.26), the city of Gamala becomes more vulnerable. Yet, the narrator is keen to suggest that even Vespasian was repulsed (4.17-43). The success which the Romans can claim is not through combat, but through cunning they roll away the chief stones of a tower. As the tower collapses it causes panic among the guards and people run in confusion (4.54-62). The Jewish fighters do not give up as they continue to fight from an elevated position, their ‘rage’ in self-immolation outstripped the Roman ‘rage’, but then it is divine providence which seems to intervene on the Roman side with “a miraculous storm” (4.63-80). The Romans take the city, and “spared not even infants, but time after time snatched up numbers of them and slung them over the citadel” (4.83). The fight for Gamala and the manner of taking it is paradigmatic of what will befall Jerusalem. Significantly, the fall of Gamala is the first adversity in the chain of *Crisis* and its people worthily constitute what will happen to the *hero-victim* of the tragedy.

8.3.1.2 *The Neighbourhood of Jericho*

The description of the neighbourhood of Jericho, the Great Plain, the Spring of Elisha and the Dead Sea (4.485, 451-58) take up a significant part of the text. The description is introduced with the meeting of Vespasian’s and Trajan’s forces in the neighbourhood of Jericho. What follows reads more like a tourist itinerary than history. However, a close look at the passages before and after the descriptions suggests a purpose that is not apparent at first glance. For one thing, the descriptions follow a lull in the Roman military action. Vespasian hears of the revolt of Vindex in Gaul which urges him to attempt an early pacification of Judaea (4.440-41). Next, the army is rested for winter (4.442). In spring, Vespasian leads the army from Caesarea

to Antipatris, to Thamna, Lydda, and Jamnia, to Ammaus and Bethleptenpha, and Idumaea where many inhabitants are slaughtered. Thence he returns to Ammaus, and Neapolis and arrives at Corea. The following day he is at Jericho to meet Trajan (4.440-50).

Interest in the narrative has perceptibly flagged. One of the reasons for introducing the descriptions is that they give a lift to audience interest, which is the core element of the Climax.⁵ Second, the places described have immense significance in the national consciousness of the Jews. Jericho, “which was the first in the land of the Canaanites to fall to Joshua son of Nun, “Jesus the son of Naue, the general of the Hebrews”, now in an historical irony, has fallen to the new pagan “Canaanites”, under the General of the Romans, Vespasian. If so, this comment is possibly an instance of covert or safe criticism of Vespasian, the conqueror of Judaea. Third, the places described highlight divine interventions on behalf of the God-fearing Jews, in the capture of Jericho, in the conversion of undrinkable bitter water to the potable necessity of life with the miraculous power of Elisha. This act reminds the informed reader of the water from the rock in the desert through the intervention of Moses.⁶ What has it all come to? The people have fled to the mountains. They are exiles in their own land! Fourth, the reference to Sodom and the Dead Sea suggests that God does intervene in human history to punish the wicked. The author does remind the reader during the whole of *B.J.*, more so from this section onwards, that God has handed over the Jewish nation to the Romans for its many transgressions. Here is a

⁵ See above Section 2 for *Conventions of a Climax*.

⁶ Exodus 17:1-7. This would be of interest to the Jewish audience. The author is also suggesting that the events are a re-enactment of the biblical legends in the Book of Exodus.

legendary precedent to what is to befall the Jewish nation. Indeed, it does more. The sufferings of the “hero-victim” are the signs of God’s judgement on the transgressors within the Jewish community. In terms of the narrative, it is a prophetic voice warning of the catastrophe to befall the virtuous and the wicked alike in the City and the accompanying fire storm would be no different from that which razed Sodom. Thus, these descriptions prepare the readers, both Jewish and non-Jewish, for what is to come and how to understand the events as they build up to the Climax. It lies not in the punishment of the transgressors, but in the unjust sufferings of the innocent who are the “hero-victim.”

8.3.1.3 *Hebron*

The description of Hebron (4.530-33) brings out its significance in the Jewish ethos. The readers are reminded of Abraham, “the progenitor of the Jews”, of his tomb and those of his descendants, of the ancient terebinth tree a living link with the patriarchal times, and the little town “of greater antiquity not only than any other in the country, but even than Memphis in Egypt.” It is such a rich place of ethnic and religious symbolism to the Jews, that Simon, an insane renegade Jew, loots for corn and booty. He causes widespread ravages like the plague of locusts “so in the rear of Simon’s army nothing remained but a desert” (4.535). The pejorative image of Simon is gradually built up, like one of the plagues of Egypt, as the ultimate villain of this five-act tragedy.⁷ It is Simon who leads this act to the Climax of the narrative. If he is

⁷ The reference to the plagues of Egypt is yet another instance of recalling the Biblical legend of the Exodus.

one of the plagues of Egypt, then he is not leading the Jewish nation to freedom, but into a new slavery.⁸

8.3.2 THE ROMAN POLITICAL EVENTS

The Roman political events make a separate strand of narrative. These events deceptively seem unrelated to the Judaeen events in Act 3. A close look provides a different perspective on what happens in the Roman empire. The first event is the Gallic revolt of Vindex against Nero (4.440). The narrative voice informs the reader that Vespasian foresaw the impending civil dissension and the perils to the empire, casting him, as it were, in the role of the guardian of the empire. The news has an immediate impact on Judaea in as much as Vespasian feels the urge “to prosecute the war [in Judaea] more vigorously.” His success in the east “would allay the anxiety of Italy.” Who in Italy would be encouraged and how is not stated. It seems unlikely that the narrative interest is in Nero’s anxiety. It rather seems that Vespasian may be the beneficiary if he succeeds in Judaea with “an early pacification” (4.441). There is more to this, as discussed below.

The second event is the death of Nero (4.491-97). The wrongdoings of Nero, his suicide and the fate of those who brought about his downfall are merely summarised. In the narrative, it is Vespasian who is now to be the likely winner, with Nero out of the way. The civil war in Rome among Galba, Otho and Vitellius is briefly described

⁸ The final group of geographical descriptions includes Egypt with particular reference to Alexandria and Pharos (4.607-15). The physical description, by itself, is of little importance for the narrative. The political significance of Egypt and Alexandria for Vespasian is offered as being primary for his claim to Principate. Vespasian “realized the supreme importance of Egypt to the empire as its granary” and as the key “to force Vitellius to surrender.” “To secure a hold upon Alexandria” was crucial “to annex the two legions” quartered in that city (4.605-606). As the narrative voice prompts it, the true emphasis of the description of Egypt, Alexandria and Pharos, lies not in their geographic features but in their contribution to the Roman political events. The relevance of Egypt to Act 3 is only indirect. As Vespasian moves out of Judea, a new phase in the tragedy of the Jewish nation is about to dawn.

while Mucianus and Antonius Primus, on behalf of Vespasian, put an end to it (4.545-49). Once again, the events confirm that Vespasian is the actual winner in the political turmoil in Italy.⁹

Next, Vitellius' claim to the imperial principate is repeated (4.585-87) to put in context why Vespasian secured Egypt for himself (4.616-17), and more importantly, that his troops choose him, unlike the other contestants (4.622-29). The election of Vespasian has the veneer of the resuscitated ghost of the Republic and seems a parody of *vox populi*. The successful Vespasian now sends Mucianus to Rome to put an end to Vitellius, hands over the Judaeian command to Titus (4.656-63), and departs for Rome via Egypt. The sequence has Vespasian at the centre of the narrative. Additionally, the fact that Vespasian was in Judaea when the historic events took place, does not make the region in the east significant through projecting it on to the world scene. Neither does Josephus claim it to be the case. Rather, it seems that Judaea can take comfort in that civil disturbances and uprisings are not unique to it. The war was a Judaeian national revolt against Rome. Even Romans Vindex, Galba, Otho, and Vitellius revolt against Rome. Judaeans, therefore, do not deserve to be condemned as the only ones to revolt.¹⁰ The *voice* of the descriptions is pro-Jewish, and the "tenor" is persuasive to win the readers over to sympathise with the Jews. This strategy has a direct bearing on the Climax as the highest point of interest in the "hero-victim." Only in assimilating the implied author's intent through the "voice" and the "tenor," can the readers fully experience the intensity of the Climax both

⁹ Note the three-step progression of Vespasian to the imperial position.

¹⁰ See Mason, "Figured Speech" in Edmundson, Mason, and Rives, eds. *Flavius Josephus*, 268, for a different reading of these events.

intellectually and emotionally. The Roman events, seemingly irrelevant to the Judaeian events, serve the author's apologetic purpose in the narrative. If revolts are endemic to the Roman Empire, then it is the implied claim of the author that Judaea does not deserve the obloquy of a rebellious province.

8.3.3. CENTRALITY OF JERUSALEM IN THE NARRATIVE SEQUENCE

Despite the frequent references to the events in Rome, Josephus has consistently maintained the centrality of Judaea and of Jerusalem in it throughout the narrative sequence. He uses geographical markers and movement to show that Judaea is the main interest of the narrative and Jerusalem is the primary geographical focus. The movement towards Jerusalem is in five steps. The suggested upward movement of the descriptions helps focus on Jerusalem where Climax is located.

The first step is Gamala (4.4-83). It is described in its physical features as a formidable enterprise to capture it and the battles for it confirm that the implied claims of the narrator are realised in the failures of Agrippa, Placidus and Vespasian himself.

The second step is Gischala (4.84-113). The description underscores along the way, John's craftiness, and the naivety of Titus. Implied in showing of the roles in action is the criticism that Titus was not up to the task, given his youth and his gullibility. This has consequences for what Josephus might have had in mind for his nation.

In the third step, the narrator briefs the readers to give them a view of what is happening in Jerusalem. The situation is clearly deteriorating (4.121-384). With the arrival of John of Gischala at Jerusalem (4.121-24), the "brigands" flock to "poor

Jerusalem” which is without a commander and tied to “hereditary customs” (4.135-37). Notable citizens like Antipas, Levias, Syphas and others are arrested and murdered (4.138-46), and people are “reduced to abject prostration” as the “brigands” are “raised to heights of madness,” choosing their own high-priest (4.147-50). Insurrection against the Zealots is underway under the leadership of Ananus until John betrays him (4.151-223). Idumaeans intervene on behalf of the Zealots and make matters much worse (4.224-300). The Zealots commit barbarity on Gorion and Niger and the poor citizens (4.354-84). “Divine providence” becomes a partner with the Romans, turning Jew against Jew (4.367). Jerusalem is ripe for the Roman attack (4.366).

The fourth step leads the reader to Masada, now in the possession of the *sicarii*, a refuge for the Zealots, and, more importantly, a hideaway for Simon ben Gioras to scheme the final unleashing of his madness over Jerusalem (4.398-513).

The fifth and final step is back to Jerusalem. The City further deteriorates, with Simon as the tyrant and his collaborator John of Gischala and the Zealots split from them (4.578-84). The Climax, as discussed under 2.1-2 above, is reached in this step as Jerusalem is steadily transformed into a dynamic symbol for the “hero-victim” as the City endures the sufferings of the Jewish nation.¹¹ Thus, the whole of Act 3 is structured at different levels with Jerusalem as the final destiny of the increasingly tragic events.

¹¹ The concept of *hero-victim*, as explained above, is not a static concept. It includes everybody who constitutes the authentic Jewish identity or Jewish nation as the narrative progresses to its resolution. It excludes everybody who undermines and betrays Jewish nation, and seeks personal good against the common good. The well intentioned Jewish leaders who fail to successfully defend and promote the Jewish identity are the flawed *champions of the hero*.

8.3.4 THE CHAMPIONS OF THE HERO-VICTIM

The narrative sections on Judaea deal, first of all, with those who may be termed as the four respected leaders of the nation. Ananus is acclaimed as “a man on every ground revered and of the highest integrity, ... with all the distinction of his birth, his rank and the honours to which he had attained, yet delighted to treat the very humbles as his equals” (4.319). Jesus, the high-priest, “though not comparable with Ananus, [he] stood far above the rest” (4.323). Gurion, “a person of exalted rank and birth, and yet a democrat and filled with liberal principles, if ever a Jew was” (4.358) and Niger, “a man who had shown exceptional gallantry in his battles with the Romans” (4.359). Each of these has the good of the Jewish nation, the “hero-victim,” at heart. However, for reasons not entirely under their control, they fail to protect the nation from increasingly serious disasters.

Of the four leaders, Ananus enjoys a distinctly superior position in the narrative as evident in his speech to the people of Jerusalem (4.163-92) and in the encomium on him (4.319-25). The poor choice of John of Gischala as his spokesman to negotiate an alliance with the Zealots is a typical weakness in the “champions of the hero-victim.” Nonetheless, his speech is significant for the flaws of the “hero-victim” which he highlights. Among the criticisms he levels against the people, the principal ones are that they tend to be “insensible to calamities,” and lack “the will to grapple with the troubles on their hands” (4.165). These flaws are spelt out in other manifestations, like their silence, inaction, forbearance, negligence, long suffering, loss of the desire for liberty, and being in love with slavery. As outcomes of these flaws, the innocent have been robbed and killed, and the sanctuary is desecrated.

Ananus pointedly remarks that “to surrender to villains of one’s own country argues a base and deliberate servility” (4.179).

The encomium in the narrator’s voice begins listing the eminent qualities of Ananus (4.319-20) and then veers into a crucial insight into what might have been.

In a word, had Ananus lived, they [the citizens of Jerusalem] would undoubtedly either have arranged terms - for he was an effective speaker, whose words carried weight with the people, and was already gaining control even over those who thwarted him - or else, had hostilities continued, they would have greatly retarded the victory of the Romans under such a general (4.321).

In this eulogy on Ananus, three valuable insights into how to deal with the Romans are offered. First, had Ananus lived, he would have conducted the struggle more skilfully either by arranging terms or by greatly retarding the victory of the Romans (4.320-21). This was not just a possibility. Ananus “undoubtedly” would have done it. Second, Ananus mourns the massacre of the landed gentry, whom he describes as “the nobility of the metropolis” (4.181), and that the Romans would have spared them. That implies that Ananus, “the nobility,” and, implicitly, Josephus belong to the same party. The policy purported to be of Ananus would then be the policy which every member of the group upheld. What Ananus says in the third actually corrects the second. In the second insight, the Romans appear to be friendly. In the third Ananus warns of what it could actually mean to those who seek succour from the Romans, as a close reading of the oration reveals.

At least four observations on the Ananus unit are possible. First, the oration of Ananus and the eulogy on Ananus make for a better understanding of the Climax. It is the failure of Ananus and his companions to forestall the activities of the Jewish

rebels which ensures that the narrative reaches the given Climax in the manner it does. Second, the enthusiasm of the “tone” and “mood” of disappointment that the plans of Ananus could not now be brought to fruition suggest that the implied author fully concurs with the course Ananus is alleged to have had in mind.¹² Third, going a step further, the surrender of Josephus at Jotapata would have been undertaken with the same intent, to find an accommodation with Vespasian. Fourth, taking another step back, it is not unreasonable to speculate, as discussed above in Chapter 6, that Josephus and the Romans, given the brief time span between 64 and 67 C.E., through the imperial connections had an understanding of collaboration even before the war began. The unit on Ananus is essential to the understanding of the Climax, as it shows how the narrative reaches its apex through the failure of Ananus and his companions to forestall the activities of the rebels

8.4 CONCLUSION

The subject of the third act, the Climax, as discussed in this chapter, can be seen from a double narrative angle. The Roman affairs seem to be more distant yet they do have implications for the Jewish revolt but the events leading to and culminating in the civil war in the City have the primary focus. Act 3 is carefully structured to

¹² See J. S. McLaren, “The Coinage of the First Year as a Point of Reference for the Jewish Revolt (66-70 CE)” in *Scripta Classica Israelica*, Vol. 22, (2003), 135-52, in particular pages 150-51. This happens to be the second and final instance of the failure of the good intentions of Ananus. In 2.647-51, he is first noted for his unsuccessful efforts at controlling the Zealots. The situation that Josephus seems to be presenting is that Ananus is clearly leading the moderate faction, while the ferocity and/or the numbers of the radicals ensure them success. There is no textual evidence to reject the view that some aristocrats were not part of the radical group, nor that some others were wholly loyal to the Romans. Ananus and his faction stood in-between the two extremes. For the citizens, however, it is cause enough for “open lamentation” so that “the city before the coming of the Romans wore the appearance of a place doomed to destruction” (2.650). McLaren describes the situation differently with evidence from the first issue of the “Shekel of Israel.” He claims that to mint such a coin of high silver content, “points to some of the aristocratic priests as prime movers in the events that led up to the outbreak of the war and the initial direction it took.” This precisely is the fair account by Josephus, rather than “a substantial distortion of what happened.”

achieve a telling impact. The “villains” are clearly identified as are their targets; all associated with the hero-victim. There are four groups of “villains”: the brigands, the Zealots, the sicarii and the Idumaeans. There are two groups of three individual villains each. Among the Jews are to be numbered John son of Dorcas, John of Gischala and Simon ben Gioras. The three villains among the Romans are: Vespasian, Placidus and Cerealius. The one who has the most significant part in the Climax is God.

The crimes of “villains” are twelve, as are the trials of the “hero-victim.” They methodically undermine the high-priesthood, eliminate the leaders and make it inevitable that Simon is chosen as the leader of the leaderless common people. The twelve trials of the “hero-victim” are also balanced. Six of them occur outside and around Jerusalem and the remaining six are focused on the City. As the narrative of the trials reaches the Climax, the common people, in a dramatic irony, see the Romans about to destroy Jerusalem as their protectors.

In the Exposition the “tone” of the narrative has a sense of foreboding. The “mood” is expressed in anxiety for the future of the nation. At the Climax foreboding has changed to a sense of inevitability of a catastrophe. The “mood” is of being terrified, of one caught up in a nightmare. For the narrator to turn on God and blame him for the imminent national tragedy seems both spontaneous and understandably human.

The narrative intention in this Act reaffirms that the deeper causes of the Jewish war are internal to the Jewish people, that they are the shortcomings as a people. In addition, they lack capable leadership as a nation. In Act 3 this basic claim is

reinforced through the many leaders of the civil war and the many Jewish groups recklessly at odds among themselves. The dynamic leaders tend to be “villains” who have their own interests at heart rather than the good of the Jewish nation. The positive leaders have the good of the nation uppermost yet are unable to serve “the hero-victim” effectively. Their flaws as leaders undermine their own welfare as that of the Jewish nation.

The civil war in Jerusalem is a repeat of earlier such wars with the same causes but driven by different motivations. The Romans are also involved in a civil war of their own, with a difference. The difference lies in the quality of leadership Vespasian displays, which is far superior in determination and the singleness of purpose to the chaotic mob rule which Simon, John, the Zealots and the many faceless others, like the “war party” and the “brigands” offer.

CHAPTER NINE

ACT FOUR

REVERSAL OF A TRAGEDY (B.J. 5)

*Old men and women pray
for the Romans to liberate them.
Flavius Josephus B.J. 5.28.*

As the third Act of the five-act tragedy, *B.J.* 4 introduced readers to the various antagonists, both individuals and groups, with particular emphasis on the Jews. It also highlighted what drove these characters to the actions they undertook and what flaws affected the Jewish nation as the “hero-victim.” The account ended in giving a foretaste of the calamity of the civil war about to befall Jerusalem. *B.J.* 5 continues as Act 4 and shows how the civil war progressed, who the perpetrators were, and who their victims. For the “hero-victim” this Act spells the Reversal.¹

9.1 CONVENTIONS OF A *REVERSAL*

Just as the Complication in the Senecan tragedy mode dramatises an increase in the stress and anxiety in the “hero-victim” through a variety of conflicts, so the Reversal presents falling fortunes of the protagonist as the outcome.² The trigger for the Reversal is the “tragic force.” It may be an event identified with the Climax, as in *Herc. fur.* where madness of Hercules is directly linked with his wish to make a thanks offering for the death of Lycus with blood soaked hands (920-24, 939-54), or a separate event consistent with the theme. While Reversal is about the irrevocably failing fortunes of the “hero-victim,” it may not always be brought about through the “tragic flaw” in the tragic protagonist. It may be caused through successful efforts of

¹ Reversal in Freytag’s Pyramid is known as the Falling Action.

² Reversal is also known as “peripety” which in tragedy means a change of fortune for the protagonist for the worse and in comedy a change for the better. See Holman, *A Handbook*, 327. This is similar to Aristotle’s concept of *peripeteia* which is defined as “a change from one state of affairs to its opposite” *Poet.* 1452 a.

the counter players, the villains. These may be supplemented with new antagonists or new forces. After an intensely emotional Climax, the reader's interest may flag. A skilled writer may use suspense to stimulate interest in making an inevitable end seem uncertain. Or when the intensity of the action begins to take its toll through emotional fatigue, an imaginative writer may use relief scenes, not to distract the readers but to provide them with relaxation. This calls for considerable skill to achieve it without undermining the final dramatic effect.³

9.2 BOOK 5 AS *REVERSAL* OF A TRAGEDY

In terms of the text as narrative five-act tragedy, Book 5 presents the falling movement of the Jewish nation as it heads towards the catastrophe that is predictable according to the genre. It appears not like a march, rather a headlong rush to the destined doom. The indecent haste of the factions in undermining each other is described. They are unable or unwilling to pause and take account of whatever chances there might have been of their own survival, intrinsically melded as they were with what touches the Jewish nation as a whole. In this Act, rationality appears to be in thrall to insanity, choice to fate.

The fourth Act commences after noting that Titus arrives in Caesarea to assist his father “to establish the empire which God had recently committed to their hands” (5.1). This helps to underscore both the chronological sequence of ‘events’ as well as their religious significance with divine providence in control. The notion of divine control becomes increasingly important to make sense of ‘events’ that appear to be out of control.

³ Holman, *A Handbook*, 143, 180-81. Some of the other strategies Seneca uses are: the lively iambic tri-meter, the fast moving *stichomythia* and the memorable descriptions wherever he gets the opportunity to delight his audience.

9.2.1 THE TRAGIC FORCE

The “tragic force,” which begins the Act, is stated in the following sentence with the comment that civil strife in Jerusalem was “a triangular affair” (5.2) and that the discord between the criminals was “a blessing and a work of justice,” “the first step towards the City’s ruin” (5.3). What follows is an identification of the three factions: of Eleazar ben Simon (5.5-8), John of Gischala (5.9-10), and Simon ben Gioras (5.11-20). With naming the factions and their leaders, the narrative presents a description of the balance of terror among the factions and how they cause the “hero-victim” to suffer (5.21-37). In the course of this account, clues are given as to what/who constitutes the “hero-victim.” It is the Temple (5.25), the City (5.26), and the people (5.27-37).⁴ The “tragic force” is not a separate event but one that is already identified with the Climax, namely, the discord between the Jewish “criminals” (5.3).

9.2.2 THE ANTAGONISTS

Having introduced the Jewish factions at war against each other as the first of the antagonists (5.5-8) in conflict with the “hero-victim” (5.21-38) the counter players, the Romans (5.47-97) are then presented. Titus, too, is set against his army. Single-handedly, in a literary *topos*, Titus saves his army repeatedly (5.82-96, 121-28, 266-79). The army, on its part, fails him again and again (5.54, 85, 115-17, 122, 284, 295, 342, 489). Titus and the Roman army admire the Jews for their martial spirit (5.121-22). The ambivalence seems intended as the implied author places the words on the lips of Titus, more to express the author’s own anti-Roman bias than the Jews are superior to their mortal enemies than Titus’ admiration for the Jewish factions.

⁴ The same threefold sequence will be followed in the Denouement in *B.J.* 6.220-442 and 7.1-163.

9.2.3 FORCES SUPPORTING THE ANTAGONISTS

Two new forces are introduced that complement or support the antagonists. The first is the famine that ravages the people, both of the poor classes and of the upper classes (5.427-39). At first glance, famine appears to do the destructive work of the Jewish factions. But it also plays an indispensable part in the Roman strategy of assault on Jerusalem. Famine heightens the rapacity of the rebels and weakens the resolve of the common people to resist and survive their adversity. Famine can thus be seen as an ally of the Romans.

The second new force, clearly allied with the Romans, is Antiochus Epiphanes and his men assuming the airs of “Macedonians” but in reality lacking the good fortune of Alexander the Great (5.460-65). The lengthy description of the City (5.136-83), the Temple (5.184-227) and the priesthood (5.228-37) has multiple functions. As mimetic of a pilgrim’s progress, the description expresses pride in the cultural achievements of the Jewish nation. Its pathos is highlighted by an underlying mood of sorrow seen from hindsight. While in a sense the description is a break in the narrative, it serves the rhetorical function of indirectly delving into the emotional turmoil in the narrative. The massive magnificence of the Temple, seen through the Jewish eyes, makes its destruction by the Romans that much more wasteful.

9.2.4 FAILING FORTUNES OF THE HERO-VICTIM

The failing fortunes of the “hero-victim,” one of the core elements of the act, are elaborately traced through the whole of Book 5. Given the structural position between the emotionally intense acts of Crisis-Climax and Denouement-Catastrophe, the Reversal demands a remarkable degree of creativity to stimulate and maintain the

interest of the audience. This challenge is addressed by the use of a patterned sequence.

The text of Book 5, from the point of view of the failing fortunes of the “hero-victim,” is divided into three parts. In the first part (5.1-135) the focus is placed on the movements of Titus as he approaches Jerusalem. In the second, (5.136-247) the memories of Josephus the character, who has accompanied Titus, are used to undertake what seems like a final pilgrimage to the Temple before it is razed to the ground. It is the sense of finality that adds such sombre dignity to the description. The third part (5.248-572) consists of the assaults on the two walls of the City.

The first part is structured in noting the movement of Titus in four phases as he arrives in Caesarea (5.1), advances on Jerusalem (5.39-46), camps at Mount Scopus (5.67-70) and prepares the ground for the assault (5.106-107). In each phase, the locus of the action is given alternating twice between “within the walls” first and “outside the walls” next. Further, in each phase the perpetrator is first described and next the victim is identified with the effects of suffering.

In the first phase, “within the walls” (5.1-48), the three factions of Eleazar (5.8), John (5.10) and Simon (5.20) in the process of causing civil strife, rob the City of its supplies (5.24), destroy the environs of the Temple (5.26), and the people “like some huge carcase [are] torn to pieces” “beset by battling conspirators and their prey” (5.27). In the second phase, “outside the walls” (5.49-53), the orderly advance of the Romans (5.47-49) stirs the brigands to action (5.50-51). The common people, ironically, are hopeful of deliverance through the Romans but the insurgents and brigands overawe them and reduce them to impotent passivity (5.52-53) when they

notice the Roman incompetence in protecting Titus (5.54-66). In fact, Titus twice intervenes to save his troops single-handedly (5.82-96) from damage to their morale through Jewish skirmishes (5.71-81).

The third phase moves “within the walls” (5.98-108) as Eleazar and John terrorize the people at Passover (5.98-101). The people, Jews and gentiles, residents of the City and the visitors for the festive celebrations, are injured, robbed, and indiscriminately slaughtered (5.102-105). The fourth phase is “outside the walls” (5.106-35). The Jews trick the Romans of rank and file and kill many. They jeer at the Romans “with vulgar abuse of their good fortune” (5.120). Titus intervenes a third time to save his army. But the outcome is that he plans to avenge himself on ‘the Jews’ (5.128).⁵

The second part (5.136-247) is devoted to Jerusalem (5.136-83), to the Temple (5.184-237) and to the Antonia (5.238-47). The use of past tense through the narrative description and the awareness that the objects of affection and admiration were later burnt and razed to the ground add to the pathos. In the description emotions are not explicitly noted, rather a discerning reader readily perceives their presence. Being a description of understated emotion, it is one of the more poignant passages of the whole narrative. Understatement serves the rhetorical purpose of encouraging the readers’ imagination to supply what is missing and to respond to the suggestion in the text.

The final part (5.248-572) resumes the action and parallels the first part in twice alternating the locus within the City and outside it. The three factions reorganize

⁵ The generic term “the Jews” presumably includes insurgents and citizens alike.

themselves into two (5.248-56) in the first section ‘within the City’ (5.248-58). The improved efficiency is put antithetically to greater injustice for the people (5.257) while what the Romans do to them seems like justice in comparison.

In one packed sentence (5.257) the author presents the sentiments of the City under siege from within and without. He notes that the City experienced no novel calamity under the Romans, in fact, “her more cruel disaster preceded her fall, and the relief which her captors brought her outweighed her loss.” It is the “sedition which subdued the city, the Romans the sedition ... a foe far more stubborn than her walls.” He goes on to add, “All the tragedy of it may properly be ascribed to his own people, all the justice to the Romans.” But Josephus is aware of getting carried away in his grief when he adds a cautionary note about what he says may not be politically correct, “but let every one follow his own opinion whither the facts may lead him.”

In the second section, “Outside the City”, Titus plans the attack on Jerusalem (5.258-95). As the Roman earthworks progress, people are affected positively as if the inevitable end seems remote. They “take heart”, hoping for respite from and revenge on the factions (5.265). The factions attack the Romans. It is they, rather than the people of Jerusalem, who bear the brunt of the faction onslaught. Titus intervenes and saves his army for a fourth and a fifth time (5.266-79) from a lasting sense of defeat (5.280, 284-90, 291-95).

The third section is unusually lengthy, as the narrator enters the City progressing with the Roman army. The narrative follows the sequence of the battle front movements forward, retreat, lulls, recaptures and even crimes of passion. The narrative (5.258-501) is set in fifteen stages of the action in a chiasmus:

- | | |
|--|----|
| 1. Titus plans attack (5.258-95) | A |
| 2. Titus attacks first wall (5.296-302) | B |
| 3. Factions attack Titus at Camp of Assyrians (5.303-16) | C |
| 4. Titus captures second wall (5.331-41) | D |
| 5. Titus ejected from second wall– recaptures it (5.342-47) | E |
| 6. Titus suspends siege (5.348-55) | F |
| 7. Titus reorders earth works (5.356-74) | G |
| 8. Famine (5.420-45) | H |
| 9. Titus continues with earth works (5.446-51) | G' |
| 10. Titus suspends punishment for the captives (5.452-59) | F' |
| 11. “Macedonians” ejected (5.460-65) | E' |
| 12. Titus builds embankments (5.466-72) | D' |
| 13. Factions attack earth works (5.473-85) | C' |
| 14. Titus returns from the Antonia to the first wall (5.486-90) | B' |
| 15. Titus holds the war council for the final attack (5.491-501) | A' |

The Romans suffer hardships, as in stages 1, 3, 5 and 7, along with the people. Positive effects are on the insurgents, generally, but the Romans benefit as well,

alternating with the rebels as in stages 2, 4 and 6. Famine enters at the centre of the narrative at the eighth stage and affects only the common people. It tilts the balance in favour of the Romans against the Jews. In being placed at the centre of the events, famine is the most valuable ally of the Romans, helping to make the campaign a success. The famine affects the citizens of Jerusalem in different ways. The wealthy sell or swallow what they own and desert to the Romans despite the dangers (5.422). Others are accused of conspiracy to desert to the Romans and are either fleeced (5.439) or put to death (5.424). Some others among them barter possessions for wheat, and forestall attacks from the factions and eat half-baked food or consume raw corn (5.425-28).

The lower classes suffer in ways that resemble the Senecan tragedy mode. The strong prevail over the weak. Shamelessly food is snatched from those eating. The doors are broken down, old men beaten, women dragged by the hair and children dashed to the ground with food still in their hands. Those who gather herbs at night are robbed as well (5.429-39). The factional gangs want for nothing, as their depredations on the rich and the poor keep them well provided. In fact, Josephus notes that their only thirst was “for villainy” (5.441).

Consistent with the conventions of *Reversal*, Josephus gives a highly emotional description of the sufferings of the “hero-victim,” which he calls the “degradation of the Jewish race.” “No other city ever endured such miseries” (5.442). This is followed by the author’s condemnation of the Jewish factions of John and Simon. “Since the world began there has [not] been a generation more prolific in crime, [which] disparaged the Hebrew race.” Those are “slaves of themselves, the dregs of

society, the bastard scum of the nation.” (5.443). It is those “[who] overthrew the City”, “compelled the Romans to register a melancholy triumph”, “attracted to the temple the tardy flames” (5.444). Josephus recalls that when the temple burnt, those rebel factions had “no grief, no tear” for it, while the Romans did (5.445).

In effect, without the famine the contest between the two groups of combatants would have been unresolved, which is to leave the acclaimed Roman superiority in arms very much in doubt. Stages 9 to 15 follow on with negative effects equally on the insurgents and the Romans. The narrative draws to a close as the counter players are antithetically balanced and Titus calls a war council to plan the final attack on the City. The “hero-victim” suffers from famine, the brigands and the Romans. The deserters are driven back as the Arabs and the Syrians look for swallowed silver and gold in the refugees. Titus is presented as helpless to stop the crimes against the fleeing Jews. The fortunes of the “hero-victim” continue to grow worse beyond imagination.

9.3 SPECIFIC TEXTUAL FEATURES

9.3.1 THE VILLAINS

The Reversal is well structured for meaning, in terms of personalities. Jewish rebel leaders are presented negatively. Thus Eleazar (5.5-8, 22, 98), John of Gischala (5.23, 38-9, 100) and Simon ben Gioras (5.24) are put down as aggressors against the Jewish Nation. The Romans also are similarly censured. In general, the Romans are seen through people’s eyes (5.15-19, 28), and the Roman army (5.54-5, 72-6, 78-9, 85) with Titus, whose praise is undermined (5.605, 97, 121-29), are perceived as aggressors. An opposite perception presents the City (5.141-83), the Temple (5.189-

235) and the people as victims of aggression, whenever the rebels attack or the refugees unsuccessfully seek shelter with the Romans.

God is allocated the responsibility for the suffering of the Jewish people: for opting to side with the Romans (5.412), as if divinely sanctioning their atrocities. God is also blamed for being the force behind the rebel atrocities against the Jewish people (5.559). Jewish powerlessness is further reiterated, being entrapped within the walls, surrounded by the rebels, caught between the factions and the Roman assaults, so that even the alleged good intentions turn against the people. Josephus, the character, on the other hand, is not one of the “villains.” In his own words he is proclaimed as the true defender of his people. He is a “champion of the hero” offered to the readers’ admiration (5.375-419).

9.3.2 MALEVOLENCE AS MADNESS

The Reversal is also carefully patterned in terms of the events constituting it and with the dynamics of motivation governing the events themselves. Malevolence motivates both the rebels and the Romans. This is interpreted as criminal insanity, not as accidental, but deeply ingrained and quite advanced. The physical targets of madness are the City, the Temple and the people. These become metaphors for the Jewish national culture and the religious and social community. Together they define the Jewish identity. Together they are the “hero-victim” of the tragedy.

Ironically, there is a progression and a direction in insanity, in what essentially is regressive and mindless. Literary presentation that helps to dramatise it in all its

horror shows a close resemblance to Statius' *Thebaid*.⁶ Even though the elaborate depiction of criminal insanity found in the *Thebaid* is not available in any of Seneca's nine tragedies, the theme itself, as discussed earlier, is integral to the Senecan mode. In his epic, Statius dramatizes the propensities of a beast of prey, a tigress, in contrast to a human, Theodamus, who is criminally mad. A beast of prey, a natural predator, once glutted, is sickened by the slaughter. Theodamus, on the other hand, in his madness kills recklessly and is stirred to more energy and more slaughter. In this sense one who is criminally insane is an unnatural predator. The rampaging Jewish rebels and the Romans, with their auxiliaries, closely resemble Theodamus in his madness.⁷

The literary presentation offers the Reversal of Book 5 in six stages of madness, a *motif* running through every tragedy ascribed to Seneca. The first stage consists of a balance of terror (5.1-34). The three factions are described as evenly vicious as they abuse the worshippers and increase the misery of the populace as the City heads for famine. The second stage is the attack of the factions on each other (5.95-105, 177-183). In this John at Passover gains entry into the Temple by a ruse, Eleazar is defeated and killed. The remaining two factions merge into one as the brigands burn

⁶ See D. Hershkowitz, "Patterns of Madness in Statius' *Thebaid*" in *JRS*, Vol. 85 (1995), 53-64. It is worth noting that Statius, born in 50 C.E. and dead in 96 C.E., published his epic modelled, among others, on Virgil's *Aeneid* between 90 and 92 C.E. Given the date of publication of *B.J.* was a decade earlier than of *Thebaid*, Josephus would have based his presentation of madness on some other work than of Statius. It is quite admissible that Statius used a variety of sources for his study of madness in *Thebaid*. These sources include works such as those of Homer, Pindar, Callimachus, Apollonius, Ennius, Lucretius, Catullus, Livy, Propertius, Horace, Ovid, Martial, Lucan and Valerius Flaccus. At least some of these sources could have been used by Josephus too.

⁷ Here madness is seen as evil, both rationally and morally because it is born of human deliberation. However, there are other forms of madness that are not evil. "Beneficent madness has at least four forms: the inspiration of prophets like the prophetess of Apollo at Delphi, rites of purification such as those of Dionysius, poetic inspiration from the Muses, and the madness of love." See G. A. Kennedy, *Classical Rhetoric and its Christian and Secular Tradition from Ancient to Modern Times* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1980), 54.

the palace down. The third stage is of indiscriminate slaughter of bystanders (5.424-42). The factions conduct house-to-house search, persecute the wealthy Jews and degrade the Jewish race. The fourth stage is vengeance on each other (5.446-90). The Romans crucify the Jewish prisoners, and the Jews in turn reject Titus' admonitions to surrender. Antiochus the "Macedonian" and his gang are routed and John and Simon burn up a portion of the completed earthworks of the Romans. Titus repels the Jews from the Roman camp. The fifth stage is slaughter that could be accomplished on the innocents (5.512-26). Jewish mortality increases in leaps and bounds so that burial is neglected. The sixth stage is slaughter for its own sake and more of it (5.527-65). Simon murders Matthias and his sons. He discovers a plot to surrender to Romans and makes it an excuse for more murders. John sacrilegiously plunders the Temple while the Syrian and Arab auxiliaries commit vivisection on the Jewish refugees for the hidden gold. To highlight the theme of madness, the historical author has designed the first stage (5.1-34) itself into six stages of madness. A balance of terror (5.1-13) is followed by attack on each other (5.14-16). This leads to indiscriminate slaughter of innocent bystanders (5.17-19) and vengeance on each other (5.20-27). It flows on to slaughter that could be accomplished (5.28-30); and finally, to slaughter for its own sake and more of it (5.31-34).

Thus, the treatment of the Reversal of the five-act Jewish tragedy, as an expression of the fullness of madness, is highly meaningful. It makes the falling fortunes of the "hero-victim" more than merely gratuitous and irrational. What is irrational is meaningless. Ironically, it is meaninglessness that defines the meaning of the text.

9.3.3 SENECA'S STYLISTIC DEVICES

In addition to the motif of madness, the use of Senecan stylistic devices, discussed earlier in Chapter 3 as natural concomitants of a tragedy, adds significant literary finesse particularly to the Reversal. These can be seen in the sacrilege and massacre of priests and worshippers (5.15-19); the use of bestial imagery (5.4, 27, 34); the killings around the altar (5.99, 100, 102). There is a consistent absence of reflection and moral qualms throughout this text both among the rebels and the Romans and their auxiliaries. To these the application of blind fate to the divine, also a vengeful force (5.377) and the claim that the divine causes blindness in the protagonist (5.572) may be added. The presence of *stychomythia* (5.557-59) and the absence of *catharsis* (5.567-79) as in the Herod Narrative and *Thyestes* are also found in the Reversal of Book 5. These reflections of the Senecan mode strengthen the bonds between Josephus in *B.J.* and Seneca's tragedies.

9.4 CONCLUSION

To all appearances, the Romans continue to be praised and the rebels unreservedly criticised. Famine and God work in concert with the rebels and the Romans to increase the sufferings of the Jewish nation. The four forces: the rebels, the Romans, God and famine, are the common foe ranged against a trapped people. Josephus, the character, alone comes off as fully aware of what is at work. He is made to seem as the only defender of his people. The truth of this conclusion may be uncertain historically, yet textually it is presented as such.

Book 5 perceived as the Reversal adds further considerations. Malevolence motivates both the Jewish rebels and the Romans. The implied author interprets it as

criminal insanity, not as accidental, but deeply ingrained and quite advanced. Literary presentation helps to dramatise it in depth. The physical targets of madness are the City, the Temple and the people. The systematic and comprehensive development of the theme of insanity highlights not the diminishing responsibility of the perpetrators among the counter players. It is the narrator's judgement on their criminality against the common people as committed deliberately. The implied criticism of the Romans stands out as the covert condemnation of the author's much publicised friends and benefactors, the Romans.

The narrative of the Reversal mimics a battle scene in which the antagonists are ranged on two sides and they make tentative moves against each other. Now one is successful and now the other, followed by a lull and then the final struggle takes place. The Reversal does not reach a decisive stage in the tragic story. It leaves room for the Catastrophe of the fifth Act. Furthermore, the eight identifiable instances of the use of the details peculiar to the Senecan mode and the six steps of madness stylistically emphasise more than a logical conclusion. They enable the narrator to present an emotional response to what is witnessed. The "mood" of Act 4 is a mixture of anger and deep sorrow. The narrator is patriotism personified. His overt condemnation of the Jewish rebels sets him decisively against his countrymen. His covert criticism of the Romans makes him a secret dissenter against the Romans in general, and against the Flavians in particular. The "tone" is equally remarkable. The narrator is constantly aware of his audience. His strong emotional language drives his stance like a spear at the rebels and the Romans. The grief about the destruction of the Jewish race is meant to be shared with the audience, which apparently is assumed to

be sympathetic to the Judaeian cause. Finally, the elaborate use of the tragic genre in Book 5, as Reversal of the whole of *B.J.*, is consistent with the structure textual content, which presses the narrative to proceed to the final Act.

CHAPTER TEN

ACT FIVE

CATASTROPHE OF A TRAGEDY (B.J. 6-7.162)

*...signally discern at once
the power of God over unholy men
and the fortune of the Romans.
Flavius Josephus B.J. 6.399.*

The first five books of *B.J.* have systematically prepared the readers, through Acts 1 to 4, for what is to occur in the final Act. It is the ultimate Catastrophe for the Jewish nation, traced with exceptional care for detail. What has been narrated of the Jewish rebellious factions as their share in creating the national calamity in Book 5, under the *motif* of madness, fades into insignificance as the Romans complete their alleged divine mission in *B.J.* 6.1-7.162. The discussion of the fifth Act follows the sequence beginning with the conventions of Catastrophe followed by an analysis of the content as a fully constituted fifth act of the tragedy.

10.1 CONVENTIONS OF A CATASTROPHE

The Catastrophe is the natural outcome of the “tragic failure” of the “hero-victim” arising out of the “tragic flaws.” There is a logical conformity in all this as causal connections between the flaws and the end of the “hero-victim” are consistently maintained. The “tragic failure” is usually the death of the “hero-victim.” The logical conformity also demands that the “villains” too are identified and punished. As has been noted in this study, in the Senecan tragedy mode “villains” are not always punished as is the case with Juno in *Herc. fur.* or Atreus in *Thyestes*. Emotional sympathies of the audience with the “hero-victim” are, therefore, intensified with “villains” getting off free without retribution. It is the satisfaction withheld that

enables to rouse ‘pity and fear’ in the audience, “pity” for the “hero-victim” and “fear” for themselves in a world where, without retribution for the crimes, the law of justice has failed. Hence, for *Catharsis*, logical conformity is essential as far as the punishment of the “villains” is concerned. When the villains escape their due penalty, rendering them immune to commit further atrocities, the tragedy loses its nobility and becomes as cruel and bizarre as the Senecan mode tends to be.

Yet the dying “hero-victim” is not a whimpering coward. He presents for the last time his innate nobility. In addition to the noble “hero-victim” and the logical conformity, a third element which elevates classical tragedy is the “glimpse of the restored order” which follows the *Catastrophe*. In the Senecan tragedy mode instead of the restored order, as in *Thyestes*, more suffering and greater chaos may be offered. Such tragedy is not noble; it clearly turns ignoble. Senecan tragedy continues to hurt the audience without comfort in their grief.¹ The following discussion analyses the manner in which *Catastrophe* is achieved in *B.J.*

10.2 *B.J.* 6.1-7.162 AS *CATASTROPHE* OF A TRAGEDY

10.2.1 THE HERO-VICTIM DIES

The fifth Act begins with preparations for the death of the “hero-victim.” In the very first sentence it is announced: “The sufferings of Jerusalem grew worse” (6.1). Next comes the naming of the three “villains,” the agents of those sufferings: the rebels with “fury intensified,” famine, now reaching rebels themselves, and the Romans whose earthworks are completed with great loss of the environs of Jerusalem and Judaea (6.1-8).

¹ Holman, *A Handbook*, 69, 143. Aristotle defines *Catastrophe* or “calamity” as “an action of a destructive and painful nature, such as death openly represented, excessive suffering, wounding and the like” (*Poet.* 1452 b).

Through narrowing the focus to finer details, the hero-status is extended from the people to inanimate things associated with or valuable to them. The inanimate subjects include the general region, which is the arena of the Jewish war, the Antonia, the Temple with its surrounding buildings and the City in its lower and upper sections. The wider region includes Judaea and districts around Jerusalem. The “death” of this area is described as reduction to utter desert for ninety furlongs. All the trees and parks, the old “marks of beauty” (6.7) have been so destroyed that one familiar with the area could have “suppressed tears or a sigh” (6.8): both are gestures of mourning.

The Antonia has been much admired as a fortress for its architecture and its strength. Its endurance under repeated assaults seems to reflect the Jewish spirit under constant attack from within and without. The rebels use it as a fall back position, should the wall be demolished (6.15). The Romans batter it with siege engines but cannot dislodge its foundations without divine intervention (6.24-28). A part of the Antonia falls on its own at night to the great consternation of the rebels and the Romans (6.29-32).

The “hero-victim” treasures the Temple and its surrounds. The whole plot is built up to peak at the sanctuary. The burning of the Temple, which the rebels start and the Romans happily continue and extend, marks its “death.” More than the fire, the final desecration of the sanctuary, when Titus and his army offer sacrifices to the Roman standards signals the absoluteness of the tragedy of the “hero-victim.”

The City is the other inanimate object associated with the “hero-victim.” Book 6 begins with, “the sufferings of Jerusalem grew daily worse” (6.1). The personification

of Jerusalem is not sustained.² Nonetheless, when speaking of Jerusalem, or the City, the metaphor is ever present to the reader. The City “dies” on two levels: the first when the Romans set ablaze the lower City (6.363-64) and the second is the upper City (6.374, 408).

The continuing sufferings of the common people are dealt with in 7.1-162, as the third phase of *Catastrophe*. The three-phased *Catastrophe* begins with the burning of the Temple, grows into the enormity of the razing of Jerusalem, and continues into the sufferings of the Jewish people. The human sufferings are described either in terms of the Jews who are captives and those who are not. The sufferings of the first group begin when Titus spends “a considerable time” at Caesarea where Jewish prisoners perish in the shows (7.23-24). This is repeated on Domitian’s birthday, celebrated in splendour at the cost of 2500 Jewish lives (7.37-38). The Roman cruelty is tellingly underscored when the Romans are quoted as saying that the Jewish deaths were “too light a penalty” when they died by wild beasts, by fighting one another or by fire (7.39). Vespasian’s birthday follows with Titus at Berytus for a longer sojourn, greater magnificence and more deaths of multitudes of captives (7.40). The Greek citizens of Antioch take the cue from the Romans and begin persecuting the law abiding Jewish citizens through false accusations of arson on the marketplace, the magistrates’ quarters, the record office, and the basilicae (7.41-42, 54-62). Titus takes no action against the Jews of Antioch, however, when he next visits Syria he offers costly spectacles with more Jewish captives perishing for the entertainment of their enemies. This seems to be the ultimate humiliation of the Jewish nation the “hero-victim” before their enemies.

² Compare 6.1, 408 where Jerusalem is personified with 6.6, 364, 435 where it is merely a city.

The true subjects as “hero-victim” by now become more specific. They are the common people (6.271), the priests (6.322) and the eminent persons murdered by the rebels and Romans. The aristocracy (6.111-16) and the “citizens” (6.118, 229, 379-86) are excluded from the honour as they seek and find refuge with the Romans. As the inanimate subjects metaphorically “die” the readers are drawn into the suffering associated with their loss. However, when the common people die, as is proper to the fifth Act, suffering is shared widely among the subject, the narrator and the audience. The suffering of the common people is multifarious. They die of starvation, are slaughtered by the rebels and the Romans, and are even reportedly cannibalised.³ They are terrorized, misled and exploited. In death they are as much deprived of dignity as they are in life when their bodies are piled up, trampled upon, robbed, thrown to dogs and denied burial. Clearly, the “hero-victim” is not a ‘saviour or deliverer’.⁴ Even God of Israel is not a “hero” in this sense, for it is the false prophets who are aware of this when they choose to deceive the common people with promises to reveal the signs of their divine deliverance. Nor does Josephus conceive of the “hero” as a “king who lives and dies for his nation,” incorporating the death-and-rebirth archetype. Again, God abandons the Jews and sides with their enemy. He is a God who betrays or one who is a pagan god. He is transmogrified into Jupiter of the Romans, because he acts like one.⁵

³ References to cannibalism in Seneca’s plays may be found in *Aga.* 27; *Thy.* 56-57, 65-66, 102, 136, 145-48, and *Herc. oet.* 199-200.

⁴ W. L. Guerin et al. *A Handbook of Critical Approaches to Literature*, 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1979), 162-63.

⁵ Juno accuses her husband Jupiter of adultery with mortal women, who as a result become her rivals in the heavens almost displacing her. See *Her. fur.* Prologue 1-17.

The conception of the “hero” in the text of Book 6 is of the “sacrificial scapegoat,” one with whom the welfare of the tribe or the nation is identified. It is a “sacrificial scapegoat” that must die to atone for people’s sins.⁶ The narrative, as noted above, begins with the worsening of the “sufferings of Jerusalem” (6.1), both the City and the people who live in it. Without people, the City may not be appropriately described as “suffering.” The other reference is to the feminised Jerusalem in flames. She would have been enviable if her blessings were as many as her calamities. The narrator continues this conceptual thread when he claims that Jerusalem did not deserve the end but for “producing a generation such as the one that caused her overthrow” (6.408).⁷ The narrator uses the feminine personal pronoun to stress the personification of the City as mother. While Jerusalem is a “sacrificial scapegoat,” the theme has a further twist which is incorporated in the last section of this Act, that is, she is not a “sacrificial scapegoat” with a promise of rebirth and regeneration to the Jewish nation. She is the victim of her unworthy children. The Jewish rebels are, implicitly, matricides for killing their City.

10.2.2 THE VILLAINS EXPOSED

The “villains” are exposed through a variety of crimes against the “hero-victim.” There are two groups of criminals who deserve the supreme opprobrium of being named as “villains” in the narrative: the Jewish insurgents and the Romans. The Jewish insurgents include the rebels under the leadership of the Zealots, John of Gischala and Simon. Bandits are named once (6.195) as acting independently. The crimes of the insurgents are directed at the common people mostly, sometimes at

⁶ Hero as scapegoat is the role in which Seneca has cast Hercules in *Herc. fur.* Juno punishes him vicariously for the alleged adulterous crimes of Jupiter, her husband. See *Herc. fur.* Prologue 19-75.

⁷ Seneca refers to maternal wrong-doings in *Med.* 50, 549-50; *Aga.* 146.

eminent persons, with threats to their life and property. Against the common people, there are attacks on the living, like robbing them of food, indiscriminate slaughter, misleading them or terrorizing them into silence and inaction. Crimes against the dead consist of robbing the corpses, trampling upon them, casting them to the dogs or denying them burial (6.2, 195, 201-11, 258, 279, 285, 366).

The insurgents are also accused of violating the integrity of the sacred precincts of the Temple, being the first to set the fire.⁸ Despite their intentions, the fire gets out of control and gradually consumes the Temple and the City (6.121, 165, 167, 177, 251, 387, 390). In addition to the insurgents, Jesus, son of Thebuthi (6.387), and Phineas, the treasurer of the Temple (6.390), reveal the wealth of the Temple to gain favours for themselves from Titus.

Only the insurgents are named as “villains” (6.395) with a generic label. However, a close scrutiny of Book 6 shows that crimes against the “hero-victim” by the Romans are extensive. They destroy the beauty and the fertility of the land (6.5-8), batter and finally overthrow the foundations of the Antonia (6.24-29, 149). They deliberately set fire to the Temple and desecrate the sanctuary (6.166, 191, 228, 233, 243, 251, 263, 271, 281, 316). The Romans, under the orders of Titus, sack and burn the lower City and the upper City (6.353, 363, 374, 408). Finally, recklessly and cruelly, they murder the common people, the most helpless and those who had taken shelter from the mayhem of the battles (6.358, 406, 408). For all their atrocities against the “hero-victim,” the Romans are not named “villains”. Their actions,

⁸ Respect for the sacredness of the temple may also be noted in three plays of Seneca: *Troad.* 668; *Thyes.* 696-702; and *Herc. fur.* 506-07.

however, show rather than tell that they deserve the opprobrium, as much if not more than the Jewish rebels.

In their villainy, the Romans have had help. Famine has been their ally (6.195). The author has shown through a chiasmus in Book 5 how central famine is to the Roman strategy of battle for Jerusalem. Even the God of Israel has been a helper of the Romans. It is he who sentenced the Temple to the flames, claims the narrator (6.250).⁹ Titus is ever so gently painted as the arch “villain.” It is on his orders that the Roman army commits the atrocities. He is the only one of the six historical invaders of Judaea with the notoriety of capturing as well as destroying Jerusalem (6.435-42). On his triumphant marches in the eastern provinces of the empire, Titus indulges in cruelty apparently in order to terrorise the neighbours of Judaea so as to discourage them from any attempt at rebellion against the might of Rome (7.23-98). On his way to Alexandria he revisits Jerusalem. The narrator notes that Titus recalls the grandeur of the City, but blames “criminal authors of the revolt” (7.112-14). Covertly, the reader is informed that Titus does not accept any responsibility for his role in the devastation of Judaea.¹⁰ The narrator thus explains how what Titus did is significant on the historical, economical, political and on the religious levels. Compared to the crimes of Titus against the *hero-victim*, what the Jewish insurgents do appear to diminish in gravity.

Having identified and exposed the “villains,” the narrator in the final Act must, by convention of classical tragedy, describe their punishment. The Jewish insurgents are

⁹ Seneca in four different plays considers crime as divine failure: *Med.* 1126-27; *Aga.* 1012; *Herc. oet.* 330-31, 886-87; and *Herc. fur.* 1200.

¹⁰ Seneca sees it proper for the perpetrator to accept responsibility for the crime: *Hip.* 143-44; *Herc. oet.* 330-31, 886-87; *Herc. fur.* 1200.

punished with death in the mines, around the Temple, in the lower and the upper City. They kill each other too and some of them kill themselves. Their leaders are captured: John of Gischala is shown famished, pleading for his life and he is sentenced to lifelong servitude (6.433-34); Simon is captured with two-fold historical irony. He “spontaneously exposed himself to punishment for which he had put many to a cruel death” (7.26-32). In this the narrator sees the hand of God who delivers Simon “into the hands of his deadliest enemies” (7.33). The God who failed the Jewish nation is active as retribution is at work. Now the logical satisfaction is reached as the reader is informed, that “Villainy escapes not the wrath of God” (7.33). The second historical irony is when Simon gets a taste of the justice he had denied to his victims. The narrator remarks that justice is not weak; it tracks down in due time the sinners for “the more severe chastisement” (7.34). Simon is to be taken to Rome to be executed at the Triumph (7.36). But Titus and the Romans must await their turn. Here is an instance when silence can speak.

The degree of appropriateness of the retribution determines the level of *Catharsis* for the audience. The punishment of the Jewish insurgents seems at first sight to satisfy logical conformity. But these rebels are only one group of “villains” and the *Catharsis* at this phase is incomplete. The audience is meant to be filled with “pity” for the “hero-victim” and “fear” in a world bereft of morality of which justice is the foundation. In such a world of pure tragedy there is no “glimpse of restored order” but only its corollary, disaster and chaos. The Flavians and the Roman army do not receive retribution. On the contrary, they are rewarded. The army is rewarded with praise, awards and banquets (7.5-17). The Flavians are rewarded too with all the

wealth from the Temple and the palaces as well as the renown which the successful completion of the long war in Judaea brought to the new dynasty. In this sense, the audience of *B.J.* have been allowed only a partial *Catharsis*. Technically, the Jewish war narrative is a tragedy without a closure.

10.2.3 CONSTRUCTING THE CATASTROPHE

The Catastrophe need not be sharply localised in one incident. A series of incidents may build up with increasing intensity. As proper to a complex plot, it is built up in three steps across *B.J.* 6.1-7.162. The essential ingredients in working up to it are the personalities with the manner in which they interact, the events in which they are involved and the use of the image of fire. The narrator adds cosmic dimension to this phase of the five-act tragedy with a variety of signs.

10.2.3.1 *Through Personalities*

Personalities are both contrasted in their characteristics and behaviour which is either antithetical or common. There are nine antithetical behaviours in *B.J.* 6. First, the rebels hack people and build them into piles of corpses within the City (6.2-4) so high that they are forced to climb over them. The Romans hack the forests and gardens into a desert around Jerusalem (6.5-6). This seems to anticipate an image of the end of the battle for Jerusalem. Second, John and his party are seen as “a rabble” (6.17-18) in contrast to Titus and the Roman army “drawn up in stouter array” (6.19). Third, Titus assesses the rebels as notable for valour, desperation, and greater numbers and for being Jews (6.20) while he judges his army as notable for craft, arms, experience and for being Romans (6.20). Fourth, again it is Titus who claims that God is “wroth with the Jews” (6.40) while the same God is an ally of the Romans

(6.41). Fifth, Alexas, Gypthaeus, Malachias, Judes, James, Simon, Judas and the Zealots, succeed presumably without supernatural help (6.92). On the Roman side only Julianus succeeds “with Destiny’s help” (6.82). Sixth, John is declared guilty of impiety when he claims, “Let God defend God’s city” (6.96). Apparently, Titus lives by his religious piety when he asks John and the rebels to offer the interrupted sacrifices (6.95). Seventh, John sins against God and the Temple (6.99-102) and the Romans are instruments of God’s punishment (6.110). Eighth, the rebels persecute the aristocracy (6.113) whereas the Romans support them (6.113). Finally, the rebels accidentally help set fire to the Temple (6.253). In contrast, the Romans deliberately destroy the Temple (6.122, 249-50, 255). Titus, nevertheless, is not explicitly judged guilty of impiety (6.99, 110, 127, 263-64, 266). However, his deeds do speak when his lips are silent.¹¹

The personalities on both sides reveal at least five common behaviours. First, the rebels are dejected at the completion of the earthworks (6.9-10) with the realization that the destruction of the City is certain. The Romans too are dejected at the completion of the earthworks (6.11-12) and think that the destruction of the City may not be certain if the earthworks are destroyed. Second, the rebels victimize the common people (6.271-73, 358, 363, 366, 373) as do the Romans during the battle for Jerusalem (6.405-08, 414-16) and after the war (6.417-20). Third, the rebels (6.165, 253) and the Romans (6.166, 228, 252) both help to destroy the Temple. Fourth, the rebels are happy to see the City burn (6.364) as are the Romans (6.363-

¹¹ For a discussion on how responsible Titus was for the destruction of the Temple see F. Millar, “Last Year in Jerusalem: Monuments of the Jewish War in Rome,” 101-28, T. Barnes, “The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus,” 129-44, and J. Rives, “Flavian Religious Policy and the Destruction of the Jerusalem Temple,” 145-66, in Edmondson, Mason and Rives, eds. *Flavius Josephus*.

65).¹² Fifth, Titus charges that the rebels are driven by madness (6.327) while ironically, the Josephus demonstrates Roman madness in the manner he structures the events.

In the behaviour of the counter players one may also discern common characteristics. Both groups of antagonists let emotions rule their actions. Emotions vary from excess of pessimism that comes from fear of defeat to excess of optimism which results from a belief in one's invincibility with support from the fictitious Destiny. The levels of irrationality are structured under the *motif* of madness and the manner in which madness is revealed is presented in the extensive use of the image of fire to be discussed below. Through the antithetical and common characteristics of the "villains" the narrator holds both the Jewish rebels and the Romans responsible for the Catastrophe.

10.2.3.2 *Through Events as Stages of Madness*

As discussed in Chapter 3, the *motif* of madness is central to each of the nine tragedies of Seneca.¹³ It has dramatic application here in Act 5. The events leading up to and including the final national calamity are organised into six stages of madness, so that the final act becomes the height of insanity. The counter players exhibit cruelty and an absolute denial of moral and religious sense in that they victimise the common people, help burn the Temple and destroy the City. The Romans, however, indulge in excess of cruelty and love of destruction.

In the first stage of madness, terror from the antagonists against each other is balanced: the Romans and the rebels share a sense of dejection (6.9-14). Advantages

¹² The burning of Jerusalem has a precedent in Seneca's *Troad*. 15-27, 43, 132-37, 1053-54.

¹³ See above 10.3.3.2.

and disadvantages of each party are balanced against the other (6.17-22). Potential violence of the counter players is enacted, as it were in miniature, in the defeat of Sabinus and his party with the Jewish victory (6.54-67), in the unresolved battle for Antonia (6.73-80), in the success of Julianus and his party with the Jewish defeat (6.81-91), and in the naming of notable warriors on both sides (6.91-92).

The second stage involves attacks on each other. The four minor contests are described (6.130-48; 6.149-56; 6.157-60; 6.161-63). “Parties sally out continuously upon each other” (6.168). Jonathan’s single combat ends in personal disaster (6.169-76) and Rebels are attacked in the Temple (6.177-92).

Indiscriminate slaughter of bystanders is the third stage of the madness. As famine causes people to “drop in countless numbers” (6.194), brigands search “even those expiring”, “like mad dogs” (6.195-200). Mary, in despair, is driven to consume her child (6.201-13).¹⁴

In the fourth stage the antagonists take vengeance on each other. Titus declares his own innocence but vows vengeance to “bury this abomination of infant-cannibalism in the ruins of the country” (6.214-19). The crude rationalisation on the part of Titus of his plans for the City is itself part of madness in as much as he fails to realise that Mary’s cannibalism has little to do with his foregone decision to destroy Jerusalem.

Slaughter that could be accomplished, particularly on the innocents, is the penultimate stage of madness. “While the Temple blazed the victors plunder and

¹⁴ Mary’s cannibalism and her mockery of the horrified rebel witnesses are somewhat similar to the meal Atreus serves of his young nephews’ flesh to his brother, the boys’ father, Thyestes. At the conclusion of the meal, Atreus too mocks Thyestes, “You have banqueted on your sons in a sacrilegious feast” (*Thyestes*. 1034).

slaughter without pity and without reverence for rank, children, aged, laity, priests, every class, suppliants for mercy or resisting” (6.271, 274, 281). Priests who surrender are executed. “It behoved priests to perish with their temple,” claims Titus, underlining his bloodthirsty behaviour (6.320-22).

Slaughter for its own sake is the sixth and the ultimate stage of madness. The rebels “through habit yet itched for slaughter” (6.366). The bodies of those who “got killed were thrown to the dogs” (6.367). If the Romans had not captured the rebels, claims the narrator, “they would, in their excess of savagery, have tasted the very corpses” (6.373). The Romans sell women and children “creating a glut in the market” (6.385). They massacre the survivors of both the famine and the savagery of the rebels (6.406-07, 414-25).

Both the pro-Roman narrative voice and Titus describe only the Jewish rebels as “mad” while the analysis demonstrates that the motif of madness applies equally to the Romans and the Jewish rebels. While what the Jewish rebels do to the common people is unconscionable, the atrocities of the Romans on their hapless victims are worse, in number, in kind and in duration when Titus is on his triumphal tour. In addition, the Romans make financial gain through slavery. Titus accuses the Jewish rebels of “bestial savagery” (7.8) towards the Jewish citizens. Again his deeds contradict his words. He practises on the Jewish prisoners what he accuses the rebels of doing. Each of the celebrations of birth is accompanied by many deaths, as when the Flavians have a splendid birthday, the Jewish prisoners die. The torture and deaths of the Jewish captives is suffering for its own sake and more of it. The sixth stage of madness ends only with the return of Titus from the eastern part of the

empire. On his triumphal tour Titus is the personification of the ultimate in madness. Covert criticism of the Romans is discernible in the narrative, which, for all appearances, is focused on the Triumph in Rome, yet the revolts by the Germans, the Gauls and the Scythians undermine the public image of the all-conquering Romans (7.75-95). Furthermore, the destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem is ironically set against the building of the Temple of Peace in Rome.

10.2.3.3 *Through the Image of Fire*

As well as the *motif* of madness, the image of fire is used to reinforce the motif as an expression of madness.¹⁵ The image of fire works in twelve stages. At stage one the Jewish rebels begin the fire at the Temple by burning a portion of the northwest portico connected to the Antonia (6.165). The narrator comments that it was “to save the Temple from the mortifying body” as if it was unintended in its ultimate destruction. At stage two Romans set alight the adjoining portico, two days later “on 24th of the month of Panemus” (6.166). Significance is attached to the Roman action in assigning a historical date to it, while the narrator sees the Jewish action as less significant. Rebels, instead of putting the fire out, cut away the roof as fire spreads to fifty cubits (6.167). Rebels show more concern for the works of art than saving themselves. Cultural and aesthetic values are stressed, which is unexpected, given the implied author’s constant condemnation of rebel activities.

¹⁵ The image of fire is one of the essentials in the Stoic philosophy to understand reality. The other is that of water. “Water and fire rule the earth; they are its source and its destruction” *Ques. Nat.* 3.28.7. For Seneca fire is both destructive and creative as exemplified in the uncontrolled passions of Deianira and in the deification of Hercules, respectively. The destructiveness of fire is associated with the irrational nature and action of passions. See N. T. Pratt, *Seneca’s Drama* (Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina, 1983), 28, 32, 33, 90, 128. Josephus uses fire in Book 6 exclusively as the destructive force expressing the progressively insane actions of both the rebels and the Romans.

At the fourth stage, the rebels “on 27th of the month of Panemus” set a trap for the Romans by filling the space between the rafters and the ceilings under with dry tinder and bitumen (6.177-82). Rebel action is considered significant for the first time with the date given. The Roman “inconsiderate legionaries” are trapped and the rebel plan achieves its objective.¹⁶ The “tone” suggests that the narrative voice is anti-Roman, and the Roman army is taken as the common enemy of the rebels and the implied author. At the fifth stage, flames consume John’s tower as the Romans burn down the northern portico in its entirety down to the Kedron (6.191-92). The Romans take revenge for the humiliation in the Temple. At the sixth stage, Titus orders to set the Temple gates on fire (6.228).¹⁷

At the seventh stage, fire from the gates engulfs the porticoes “on the 9th of the month of Lous” (6.233-36). This marks the second phase of the battle for Jerusalem. The War council is summoned. “Moved by some supernatural impulse,” a Roman soldier sets fire to the priestly chambers, at the eighth stage, “on the 10th of the month of Lous” (6.250-53). The supernatural impulse is a euphemism for madness. Jews give a poignant cry “as poignant as the tragedy” (6.253). Titus and the staff of his generals have lost control of the legionaries. “The impetuosity of the legionaries, when they joined the fray, neither exhortation nor threat could restrain; passion was, for all, the only leader” (6.254-59). Madness, at the ninth stage, spreads from one Roman soldier to all the legions with the suggestion of an infectious disease. With the failure of reason, all power structures have collapsed.

¹⁶ “Inconsiderate” is used by Thackeray for ἄσκεπτοι. A more precise term would be “impetuous” legionaries.

¹⁷ This is proof, as noted above under 10.2.3.2, that there is a dichotomy between not only the words and actions of Titus but between his words themselves.

At the tenth stage, Liberalius who is directed to stop the soldiers from further arson. When Titus is outside, a soldier rages with hatred of the Jews, lust for battle and moved by hope of plunder, throws a firebrand into the darkness of the sanctuary (6.263-66). All constraints of fear or favour are now thrown away and there is mourning for the most marvellous edifice and marvelling at the exactness of the cycle of Destiny (6.267-69). At the eleventh stage, soldiers burn the buildings around the Temple, like the treasury chambers, the portico of the outer court with 6000 women and children refugees (6.281). “The Temple hill boils over,” notes the narrator as if he were viewing through a tilt-down cinematic shot. Here is a typical fusion of images of fire and storm, as in Seneca’s *Medea* (392). It also suggests the intensity of sorrow now overpowering the narrator. It is capped through the final atrocity in the twelfth stage. Titus offers “sacrifice to the standards” in the former Temple sanctuary (6.316). The fire aspect of a typical Roman sacrifice would be the burning of incense.

The image of fire is cognate to madness in Seneca’s plays in two ways. First, it could purify the sinful arrogance and thus heal from the spiritual “madness”, as in *Herc. oet.* where Hercules finds liberation in self-immolation. Second, it could express the perpetrator’s “madness” through indiscriminate destruction, as in *Herc. fur.* In this play, his decision to pour the blood of Lycus on the fires at the altar of Jupiter marks the beginning of madness. In *B.J.* 6 it is both. The City is purified of its spiritual pollution and it expresses the criminality of the counter players. The fury of madness is concentrated on the Temple. The twelve stages suggest that the fire, which destroyed the Second Temple, is the last of the final times.¹⁸ Of all the burnings at the Temple, the final burning, at which Titus officiates at stage twelve, is offered as the

¹⁸ See Thackeray *Josephus*, 409, for a similar comment.

worst and the ultimate act of impiety. The twelve stages of the fire at the Temple coincide with the Six Levels of Madness discussed under 10.2.3.2 above.

10.2.3.4. *Through the Signs*

That the events of *B.J.* 6 are fundamentally seen as cataclysmic and cosmic, inclusive of the natural, the human and the supernatural, becomes clear when a range of “signs” are concentrated at the height of “madness” stages 5 and 6 and of “fire” stages 11 and 12 (6.289-316), as if to give a wider dimension to the madness and greater depth of gravity to the events.¹⁹ There are twelve such “signs” or “manifest portents that foretell the coming desolation” and “the plain warnings of God” which the Jews fail to heed (6.288). The first two signs are cosmic. A star resembling a sword stands over the City (6.289) and a comet continues for a year (6.289). A preternatural sign, a brilliant light around the altar, follows (6.290). Two unnatural signs are noted next: Babel of interpretations cannot read the signs correctly, indicating a spiritual blindness, a failure of prophetic gift resulting in general confusion (6.291); a cow gives birth to a lamb (6.293). A mysterious sign appears when the massive outer gate opens of its own accord (6.293) as if to invite the enemy into the City. Next, two supernatural signs are given. Chariots are seen in the air with armed battalions hurtling about, described as “a miraculous phenomenon” (6.296-98) and at Pentecost a voice of a host announcing the departure from the Temple is heard suggesting the departure of the presence of the Deity (6.299-300). A prophetic sign recalls the words of Jesus repeated over four years that the City would be destroyed (6.300-309). Next, a set of three signs two of them oracular and a final symbolic

¹⁹ Portents before a tragedy are also employed in Seneca’s plays: *Troad.* 169-99, 353-59; *Oed.* 133-201, 350, 709-63; *Thy.* 813-74, 938-69. For the use of portents, magic and cosmic disturbances in Seneca, see Henry and Henry, *The Mask of Power*, 26-38.

action, complete the portents. The two oracles refer to when the Jews reduce the Temple to a square (6.311), and when one from the region becomes the ruler of the world (6.321-15), the Temple would cease to exist. The symbolic action is the sign fulfilled when Titus sacrifices to the Standards in the Temple court and has the priests executed, since without the Temple they would be irrelevant (6.316-25). The end of the Temple is both signified and achieved in the same act.

First of all, the “manifest portents” are built up to the apex as a *topos*, in the numerically impressive twelve steps.

1. Cosmic sign: A star resembling a sword stood over the City.
2. Cosmic sign: A comet in the sky for the duration of a year.
3. Preternatural sign: A brilliant light around the altar.
4. Unnatural sign: Interpretations contradict the signs.
5. Unnatural sign: A cow gives birth to a lamb.
6. Mysterious sign: The massive gate on the eater gate opens of its own accord.
7. Supernatural sign: Chariots seen in the air with armed battalions hurtling about, “a miraculous phenomenon” (6.296).
8. Supernatural sign: At Pentecost – a common, a din, a voice of a host announcing the departure from the Temple.
9. Prophetic sign: Prophecy of Jesus for four years, prior to the events, is recalled.
10. Oracular sign: Oracle 1. The Jews reduce the Temple to a square.
11. Oracular sign: Oracle 2. One from the region would become the ruler of the world.

12. Symbolic action fulfils what is signified: Romans sacrifice to the Standards in the Temple court. Priests are executed.

The first six steps consist of two sets of pairs alternating with singles arranged thematically. They move from the cosmic through the preternatural, the unnatural to the mysterious. The generic meaning of “sign” has undergone a fourfold change. The four types of “sign” embody a more remote meaning of the word, more like omens or portents as in divination. They are pointers to distant coming events, such that they would be more familiar to the Greco-Roman audience. The other six “signs” consist of two sets of pairs alternating with two singles, repeating the earlier pattern. The meaning of “sign” progresses to the supernatural and the prophetic. The last three “signs” are legendary referring to the Temple, biblical prophecy, and to the alleged actual event of the desecration of the sanctuary. In this sense, these “signs” are closer to the reality as they direct attention to the signified reality.

10.3 SPECIFIC TEXTUAL FEATURES

10.3.1 THE NARRATIVE VOICES

The interaction of narrative voices is a feature of the linguistic construct of *B.J.* 6.1- 7.162. First of all the narrative voices are multiple, each carefully identified with own “mood” and “tone.” The analysis is here restricted to 7.1-162. It is worth noting that it is one way to read the apparent clashes in language.

The section (7.1-20) begins with a pro-Roman voice recalling that Titus ordered the razing of the whole City and the Temple and gives the reasons, partly self-congratulatory and partly of convenience for sparing the three towers and a portion of the west wall (7.1-2). The same voice continues as Titus leaves Legion X as a

garrison (7.5) and rewards the soldiers commending them for obedience, personal courage and Roman valour (7.6) against the great odds they faced in vanquishing the Jewish revolutionaries (7.7-8). Finally, he commends his troops for choosing the very best candidate to be emperor (7.9). Awards, applause, sacrifices and banquets continue until Titus leaves for Caesarea on the sea. The dominant tone is of exultation in a celebratory mood.

Lurking behind the Roman boast is a pro-Jewish voice that sets a contrary train of thought in motion. It notes, as if in passing, that “the frenzy of the revolutionaries brought Jerusalem to this end” (7.3). If that is the case, then the vast majority of the Jewish population in the City was innocent. It then raises two separate issues. First, “the frenzy of the revolutionaries”, later described in detail through words placed on the lips of Titus (7.7-8), make the Jewish rebels worthy antagonists to display the Roman valour. This is equivocal as the Jewish frenzy matches the Roman frenzy; the Jewish valour matches the Roman valour. The irony is in the silence: Jewish valour is not mentioned, nor is the Roman frenzy. Second, the repeated massacre of the Jewish populace in the Roman celebrations says a deal more about Titus. If most of the Jewish citizens are innocent, then “the bestial savagery” Titus alleges against the Jewish revolutionaries in battle situation is what he himself practices on the innocent captives in peacetime. The pro-Jewish voice is critical of the Roman army and of Titus. The mood is of grief over the undeserving suffering of the compatriots displayed to entertain the hostile crowds.

Even when the pro-Roman voice continues to lavish undeserving praise on the army, the narrator is not in agreement. The distance is marked three times as a

reported speech by the repeated “he said” (7.7, 8, 10). The magnanimity of Titus to his soldiers is set alongside his vengefulness towards the Jewish captives, so that by contrary association the readers may see the whole picture. It is no less important to note that of the four reasons given for rewarding the soldiers the last one, almost glossed over, is the highly suggestive one. It is to reward the soldiers for the favour of electing Vespasian as emperor (7.9). A suggestion of political bribery is an implied signal to draw attention to the corruption endemic to Pax Romana, also confirmed in a passing comment that delinquencies were overlooked (7.12).

After a brief detached summary statement of Vespasian’s route back to Rome, the pro-Roman voice resumes the narrative of Simon’s capture. Simon is cast as personifying madness, as an actor in a theatrical show like Hercules emerging from Hades. The anti-Simon pro-Jewish voice, the voice of his victims who survived, takes over as it recalls that Simon “spontaneously exposed himself to punishment for which he had put many to a cruel death” (7.32). After noting the historic irony, the pro-Jewish voice introduces the fictitious element assuming an omniscient point of view that the rebel leader Simon was “delivered by God into the hands of his deadliest enemies” (7.33). To add verisimilitude, the narrator supports the claim of divine retribution through proverbial sayings on divine justice (7.34, 35) in a mood of logical and emotional satisfaction.

The pro-Roman voice begins the next unit with the celebration of Domitian’s birthday “in splendour”, which cost the lives of 2,500 Jewish captives (7.37). Domitian’s entry is dramatic but lacks narrative justification. It is the presence of the Jewish voice behind the Roman, which helps make sense of it. The celebrations are

meant to increase the suffering of the Jewish captives. Confirmation of this is provided by the Roman view that to die by wild beasts fighting one another and by fire was “too light a penalty” (7.39). The pro-Jewish voice continues with what Titus does at Berytus with yet another celebration of a birthday, that of Vespasian, and a multitude of Jewish prisoners perish (7.40). The tone is critical of Titus and of the Romans, while the repetition of the deaths and sufferings of the Jews underscores the mood of grief for them and the hapless frustration at their persecutors.

The pro-Jewish voice continues barely suppressing the wrath against the Antiochean persecution of the Jews on top of the Roman. In an apologetic tone, the narrator presents the background for the persecution from Antiochus I Soter to the present Antiochus, a Jew with a Greek name, turned traitor against his own people (7.41-61). The Jewish voice is appreciative of Gnaeus Collega, the consul, who intervenes and saves the Jews while finding the real culprits (7.62).

As Titus rejoices at the welcome and reception accorded his father the pro-Roman voice is fulsome in praise of Vespasian (7.65-71). The propagandist tone and a celebratory mood increasingly become obtrusive as the army; the Senate and the people of Rome join the new emperor in offering thanksgiving sacrifices (7.72-3). That “Rome rapidly advanced to great prosperity” (7.74) was a climactic statement of undiluted propaganda becomes clear as the Roman voice of a naïve narrator describes the German and the Gallic revolts (7.75-88) as well as the Scythian outbreak against the Romans (7.89-95). The narrative persona seems oblivious that the repeated accounts of revolts contradict earlier exaggerated praise of Vespasian. Narrator’s naiveté is again revealed in the unrealistic admiration of young Domitian who “duly

settles all affairs in Gaul” (7.85) endowed as he is with ability “surprising at his age and befitting his father” (7.88).

The pro-Roman voice continues to narrate how Titus pursues his tour to Zeugma for more entertainment and adulation. He returns to Antioch and welcomes the delegation he had earlier refused to meet (7.100-104). His comment that the Jews belong to the empire since they have no country of their own deceptively sounds statesmanlike. His visit to Jerusalem and his recall of the grandeur of the City and its destruction seem to reveal stirrings of remorse for the vandalism of the cultural symbol when he blames “the criminal authors of the revolt” (7.112). The Roman soldiers reward themselves with the spoils of war (7.115). The pro-Jewish voice in the shadow offers clues for a correction. In his actions Titus shows a lack of due respect to “the senate and the people” of Antioch whose delegation he avoids, if not spurns. His ‘statesmanlike’ decision about the Jews is empty. The Jews are reduced to virtual nomads if they have no country to call their own. Titus is the author of that enormity against the ancient nation. At Jerusalem, where Titus blames the rebels for the destruction of the City, he fails to accept responsibility for his own decisions (7.112-14). In each case actions of Titus contradict his words. The final statement of further looting of the buried wealth only confirms how irrelevant the religious and cultural preoccupations of the Jews are to the Roman soldiers.

The pro-Roman voice then takes over the account of Titus’ arrival in Alexandria, his administrative decisions for the Legions and his return to Rome (7.116-22). It is an enthusiastic Roman voice, which describes the morning of the Triumph (7.123-24), the ritual before the procession (7.125-31), the Triumphal March (7.132-53), the

execution of Simon (7.154) and the conclusion of the Triumph with sacrifices and festive banquets (7.155-57). After a lengthy war, Vespasian is presented as an emperor who preferred peace as he builds a Temple of peace and who admires the Jews and their traditions. It is again the pro-Jewish voice of the narrator that needs to be heeded for a different perspective. During the Triumphal March, the spoils from the Jerusalem Temple were carried “in promiscuous heaps” (7.148) with other profane objects, being yet one more instance of desecration of the sacred vessels, the Menorah and the Book of Law. The procession ends at the Temple of Jupiter Capitolinus, ironically at the temple where the God of the Jews, after abandoning his people, has taken refuge. The theme of divine infidelity so strongly highlighted in Book 6, now gets its penultimate statement. The final word is reserved for the second part of Book 7. Simon’s scourging and execution are the final elements of the *Catharsis* missing in Book 6. He receives the proportionate retribution for his crime against his nation. The final act of disrespect to the Book of Law is its public display, denying it the traditional veneration due to a sacred object, and to the Temple with the purple hangings from the sanctuary now decorating Vespasian’s palace (7.158).

As discussed, the narrator has two contrary voices, the pro-Roman and the pro-Jewish. While the first is naïve and propagandist, the other is penetrating, questioning, criticising and far from complimenting the Flavians. It thus emphasises the disjunction displayed in the use of two voices. Because the pro-Jewish voice in the background corrects the pro-Roman voice in the foreground, by the principle of irony it is the pro-Jewish voice which the implied author favours. Act 5 in *B.J.* lacks *Catharsis* through explicit logical satisfaction as the Roman “villains” are not

punished. This is similar to *Herc. fur.* in which Lycus is punished while Juno continues to enjoy her status as the consort of Jove. However, the covert victory of the pro-Jewish voice offers a vicarious and implied logical satisfaction. As it presents a substitute *Catharsis* it also serves as an instance of safe dissidence against the Flavians. For, it is the Flavians: Vespasian, Titus and Domitian, who are rewarded with a Triumph in Rome for their crimes against the “hero-victim,” the Jewish people. The real intent of the author then is to grieve for the human tragedy of countless Jewish prisoners put to death with customary Roman brutality. By extension, the author wishes to condemn the Flavians as the greater perpetrators of “bestly savagery”. At the Triumph, the overt “mood” is celebratory, but the implied “mood” is of deep sorrow for a fallen Jewish nation.

10.3.2 DISTORTION THROUGH LANGUAGE

The events presented are distorted through contradictions, paradoxes, grotesque exaggerations, hallucinations, shifting frontiers between the rational and the irrational, and through myth freely mixed with the factual in the incidents.²⁰ Put simply, Josephus does not distinguish the factual, the fictional and the fictitious from each other. The lavish praise heaped on the undeserving soldiers of Titus (7.6-17) is not just repulsive to one’s sense of propriety but is reminiscent of the Senecan hyperbole, which does not merely exaggerate but in the process shocks the audience with the implied injustice.²¹ The claim in the pro-Roman propaganda, that the “frenzy

²⁰ See Henry and Henry, *The Mask of Power*, 12. These authors speak of Seneca directly. However, the analysis of *B.J.* has shown that it is true also of Josephus’ war narrative. Both Seneca and Josephus faced similar situations and responded to them artistically in similar fashion in their respective writings.

²¹ The sentiment is also well expressed in *Med.* 563; *Aga.* 151; *Thyes.* 180-88; *Phoen.* 298-302 and *Herc. fur.* 91-99. Murder itself is sacrilegiously presented as a sacrifice in *Med.* 670-739, 750, 805-07; *Thyes.* 691-94, 696-702; *Herc. fur.* 918-19.

of the revolutionaries brought Jerusalem to this end” (7.3), is shown to be fictional when the fallen Jewish nation is described by Titus as the favoured of Fortune (7.8).²² The mythical rendering of the appearance of Simon, like Hercules from Hades, is probably fictitious (7.26-33). In this it echoes other uses of *Herc. fur.* in *B.J.* The intervention of God in delivering Simon into the hands of his deadliest enemies (7.33) is rendered in an omniscient point of view. The claim that young Domitian’s very name terrified the Gauls is both a ridiculous hyperbole and at least fictional (7.85-88). Finally, the term “bestial savagery” (7.8) echoes the horrors in the nine Seneca’s plays. The practices of implied tortures on the Jewish prisoners by wild beasts, by fighting one another and by fire, which to the Romans seemed “too light a penalty” (7.39), may not be fictional, despite the hyperbole, but they are in the Senecan mode so that facts may be rendered stranger than fiction. Titus accuses the Jewish rebels of “bestial savagery” while he and the Romans practise it. This disjunction between word and deed is used repeatedly in *B.J.* It is the actions, as noted above, that bear testimony to the truth of the words in the Herodotean and Thucydidean tradition as it is in the accepted conventions of social discourse.

10.4 CONCLUSION

Observations from *B.J.* 6.1-7.162 may at first seem to be repetitive. In reality, as discussed with much detail, they are more profound in conviction. Additionally, they sustain an evolution of themes across the whole text. There is a greater insistence on historical and chronological in this Act. The factual is the foil for the plainly fictional and the fictitious, both of which are lavishly used. Famine, God, the Romans and the

²² In each of the eight Senecan tragedies fortune consistently plays an active part in determining that the good suffer and the wicked prosper. Ironically, it is Titus and the Roman army who are suggested as the favoured of Fortune.

rebels, the explicit “villains,” continue to be ranged against the Jewish nation whose identity is once again reaffirmed in *B.J.* 6.1-7.162. The “citizens” who make timely exit to seek refuge with the Romans are presented as seeking only personal benefit rather than the welfare of the nation. To this extent they cannot be part of the image of the Jewish nation as the “hero-victim.”²³

The Deity in *B.J.* appears more like the Roman Jupiter, vengeful and cruel. He punishes the Jewish nation relentlessly. He is an ally of the Romans not only in helping them win, but also in first breaking the will of the people through famine and disease - not to mention the slaughter at the hands of the rebels - and finally, in handing them over to the ultimate destruction at the hands of the Romans.

The *motif* of madness, which makes its appearance throughout *B.J.*, is developed in *B.J.* 6.1-7.162 as a complement to Act 4. Madness is boldly applied to the Romans as it is to the rebels. Despite a hint of suggestion in this book, that the narrator is gentler in his censures on the rebels than he is on the Romans, the overwhelming evidence supports the author’s condemnation of the insurgents. They continue to play the role of literary “villains” first introduced in Book 1 with Onias and the sons of Tobias. They are repeatedly shown to be the enemies of the Jewish nation, as are the Romans.

The image of fire emphasises the *motif* of madness as a cognate image. They function supporting each other and intensifying the impact of the tragedy on the audience. The concentration of the twelve signs at the *Catastrophe* helps to highlight the immense importance of the fictitious events structured as integral to the fifth Act

²³ There is again a dichotomy here between Josephus the character, who had also joined the Romans earlier as the “citizens” are doing now, and Josephus the narrator of the five-act tragedy.

of the tragedy. Together, these literary elements add heightening gravity to *Catastrophe*, in the Senecan literary context.

The denial of *Catharsis* in *B.J.* 6 prepares the readers for *B.J.* 7.1-162, only to be further frustrated. Such frustration, as noted a number of times in this study, is integral to Seneca's tragedies.²⁴ Seen from the side of the Jewish rebels and the punishment meted out to them, the tragedy has a closure. From the Roman side, as "villains," a different picture emerges. The Roman Triumph, which follows unmitigated sufferings of the "hero-victim," denies the tragedy a closure.²⁵ The Flavian reign, then, is open to interminable tragedy. In this the historical author seems prophetic.

²⁴ See *Med.*, *Thyestes*, and *Herc. fur.* as examples among others of Senecan plays where *catharsis* is denied..

²⁵ See Schiesaro, *The Passions in Play*, 65-69, 95-97, 173, 189. Schiesaro comments in a recent monograph on the lack of closure in one of the Senecan plays. He explains that the five acts of *Thyestes* reveal five levels of tragedy and he claims that at the earlier levels the tragedy has closure, but not at the end. As discussed across this study, the levels of tragedy and the presence or absence of closure are both applicable to *B.J.*

CONCLUSION

*I spoke of this upheaval
as one of the greatest magnitude.*
Flavius Josephus *B.J.* 1.4.

In the concluding sentence of *B.J.* Flavius Josephus concedes the readers the privilege to judge the appropriateness of the “style” of his work or “how [the story of the war] has been told” (7.455). In the present study the author’s offer has been taken up for an investigation not merely into the presentation of the work, as the term “style” suggests, but also into the textual content. Faithfully and with much caution the investigation has followed a road less travelled and has reached a destination with many surprises. It is the task now to set out as conclusions from the research what has been discovered by the end of the journey. They are set out in three sections. The first offers what pertains to *B.J.* as a literary work. The second section develops an argument on how the work is to be read. The final section brings together observations on the creator of the text.

1 *B.J.* as a Literary Work

At the outset, the specific developments from recent contributions of scholarship has to be recognised, namely, that *B.J.* is a literary work, and that it is a narrative, and a historical narrative. Furthermore, recent scholarship has pointed out that *B.J.* was written within the “constraints of empire” similar to what Seneca experienced, and that it contains tragic elements including the three-act structure of classical tragedy in at least one unit in which Eurycles befriends Herod. Each of these insights is foundational for this study.

Indeed, *B.J.* is more than a narrative and a historical narrative; it is a fully constituted narrative history of the Jewish war (1.31-7.453) with a preface (1.1-30) and a coda (7.754-55). Being fully constituted in terms of the conventions proper to the genre of narrative history, with characters, conflict, and a plot with a beginning, middle and end, *B.J.* is a literary text of narrative history.

From such a basis this study has argued that *B.J.* is also fully constituted in terms of the conventions proper to the genre of narrative five-act tragedy not identical to narrative history. While narrative history extends from 1.31 to 7.453, the narrative five-act tragedy is from 1.31 to 7.162 only. As a narrative five-act tragedy, *B.J.* is also a literary text in a second sense. Since the genre of narrative history is essentially distinct from the genre of narrative five-act tragedy, it is logical to conclude that *B.J.* is a work with two distinct literary texts in two distinct genres.

As a text of narrative five-act tragedy *B.J.* displays signs that its reputed author, Josephus, employed Seneca as his model. The detailed links between the Herod Narrative and *Hercules Furens* in particular, and between *B.J.* and the nine Senecan tragedies in general, support the view that the second Josephan text, that of the narrative five-act tragedy of the Jewish war, replicates the conventions and a host of details in the Senecan dramatic texts. The Herod narrative closely resembles the tragedy of *Hercules Furens* in characters, events, the Hercules myth and the five-act structure. Beyond the Herod narrative, the resemblance with all the nine plays of Seneca also may be recognised throughout *B.J.* in the minor elements of imagery, signs, events and the major elements, like the *motif* of madness and the five-act structure of tragedy. The dominant *motif* in both texts of *B.J.* is of madness. In the

text of narrative history it applies explicitly to the Jewish rebels indirectly to Romans. In the second text of narrative five-act tragedy it applies to the Jewish rebels as well as the Romans, including Vespasian and Titus.

2 Reading B.J. as Dual Texts

2.1 Through Genres Disjunction

A text is a context for communication between the implied author and the implied reader. What is communicated is the meaning which the historical author intends to transmit to the actual reader through the medium of the text. This is simple enough in theory. In practice it becomes complex when there are two texts as in *B.J.* The two texts hold autonomously two distinct meanings. If the text of narrative history is in the foreground, because the actual reader encounters it first, then its meaning is within easy reach of the reader. If the text of narrative five-act tragedy is in the background, since it demands a deal more literary expertise to access it, then its specific meaning is reached later with some effort. Both meanings are equally authentic or “valid and relevant,” given their fidelity to the conventions of their respective genres.

This extraordinary literary phenomenon, named “genres disjunction” in this study, raises a crucial question to the readers, as to which of the two authentic meanings is the author’s preferred meaning. This depends on which of the two texts is endowed with the preferential status. If both texts are of equal status, it is bound to confuse the reader as to the definitive authorial intention. Two primary meanings both “valid and relevant” in two legitimate texts in conflict with each other would make it quite impossible to make sense of any literary work. Therefore, there can be only one

preferred text in a literary work. The way to determine the preferred text is to discover the author's choice of the one over the other. The author can convey his choice in two ways. He can either state it explicitly or he can use a strategy which will indirectly, yet clearly, indicate his preferred meaning. The author of *B.J.* has not explicitly stated his preferred meaning, but he has used a strategy known at the time of writing the war narrative. It is the use of the ironic mode of writing, especially as described by Cicero and Quintilian. In theory this is simple enough.

Yet, evidence must be sought in the work of *B.J.* that Josephus did actually intend it to be in the ironic mode.

Irony understood as “the recognition of reality different from the masking appearance”¹ is a commonly used literary device even if less effective in written works than in speech. The author of *B.J.* has lavishly used a whole range of irony in his work. Each use of hyperbole, understatement and sarcasm including dramatic or tragic irony is an example of verbal irony. There are other kinds of irony too, like the ones of event, of situation and of structure. Josephus has used an entire genre of the narrative of five-act tragedy in the ironic mode.²

An extensive and systematic use of these forms of irony implies that Josephus created *B.J.* as an exceptionally self-conscious ironic work. Additionally, Wayne C. Booth offers five clues of conscious use of irony in a text. These consist of “overt

¹ Holman, *A Handbook*, 236. For helpful considerations on the use of irony in *B.J.* see S. Mason, “Of Audience and Meaning,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 71-100.

² Holman, *A Handbook*, 236-37 and Mason, “Figured Speech and Irony in T. Flavius Josephus” in J. Edmondson, S. Mason, J. Rives, eds., *Flavius Josephus and Flavain Rome* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 243-288.

warnings”, “historical inaccuracies”, “conflicts of fact within the text”, “clash of style” and “conflicts of belief.”³

Among “overt warnings” one may note the title in conflict when the work begins with reference to “the war the Jews waged against the Romans” in the preface (1.1) and ends with “the war the Romans waged against the Jews” (7.454) in the coda. The second title may be read as a correction of the first and as carrying the actual authorial intent. In the preface the historical author, in expository type, claims that he is aware of the understanding of historical truth, as the practising historians perceive it, and pleads that he be allowed to express it as he experienced it, with emotion. That need not necessarily undermine the truth of *B.J.* Yet it shifts truth to another plain and makes it subjective.⁴ This is a warning to the readers not to read the work exclusively at surface level. In the coda the historical author, again in expository type, asserts that he has been unflinchingly faithful to truth with the suggestion that it is objective without a hint of emotions. Again the author is cautioning the readers not to take statements only at face value but look for the literary contexts in which they are placed.

There are also various “direct contradictions”. For example, when Aristobulus makes a game of following the orders of Pompey, the all conquering Roman General; Herod’s idealistic “prosperity” is set against more realistic domestic “troubles”; Vespasian’s acclaimed humanity is contradicted with his irrational brutality to the

³ W.C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Irony* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1974), 54-75.

⁴ In common parlance, ‘objective’ suggests the basis for the truth taken as it is *in se*, while ‘subjective’ implies the basis for the truth is somehow tampered with. Josephus seems to suggest that the historical truth, or the objective truth, and emotionally coloured truth, or the subjective truth, may not be identical, yet they remain credible. He must admit by implication some form of tampering, but that does not seem to mean falsifying the historical truth. He needs to perceive truth more analogically than univocally.

citizenry of Gamala; the lavishly praised Titus, the young General of divine predilection, is repeatedly demonstrated to be indecisive and incompetent. The explicit contradicts the implicit, as in the repeated opprobrium against the Jewish rebels called “villains” and worse for their atrocities. It is inconsistent with the silence about the brutality of the Romans on the helpless and the weak, even to the point of outdoing their Jewish antagonists.

There are “historical inaccuracies” such as, the coincidence of Titus’ burning of the Temple with the earlier one under Nebuchadnezzar to the very day, or of describing Titus as the first to destroy the City and then the Temple while Nebuchadnezzar had done the same things earlier. These inaccuracies draw the reader’s attention to what the author might have intended for the text. To these one needs to add all uses of the fictional and the fictitious that freely supplement or reconstitute the factual. Reality and fantasy flow into each other with ease.

The third group of clues deals with the “conflicts of fact within the text”. The implied author in the narrative history is by and large detached in the narrating. The implied author in the narrative tragedy takes on the role of the tragedian and is openly biased in favour of the Jewish nation and repeatedly undercuts the Roman conquerors. This is best seen in the complex use of narrative voices in Book 7, where, in a vicarious battle as it were, the pro-Roman voice is undermined through the corrective of the pro-Jewish voice. The orations of Agrippa II, of Josephus the character, of Ananus and of Eleazar at Masada in subtle ways contradict the main propositions, attempting to say to some what they are not saying to all. The most significant is the contradiction between the words of Titus with regard to the

destruction of the Temple and his deeds. The common literary principle of reading for meaning is that if the actions of a character contradict the words, then one ought to trust the actions as true.

The fourth group of clues points to a “clash of style”. The use of humour to mock the subjects is one of the simplest to note when Eleazar, moved more by zeal than common sense, is killed crushed by the elephant he had stabbed from under its belly (1.43), or when Pompey the Great is pursuing Aristobulus in and out of his fortresses to force him to obey orders (1.133-37), or when Titus is kept busy by his soldiers in trying to save them from the sticky situations they incompetently get into (5.82-96), or when Simon foolishly emerges from the safety of his cave, looking like mad Hercules, only to be captured by the Romans (7.26-33). The more complex example is when the eloquence and passion of the narrator in Book 6 is soon repeated in the oration of Titus to his soldiers. The narrator, in fact, is parodying the style of Titus with a suggestion of mockery through mimicry. The narrator uses the expository mode to discuss the lifestyle and the virtues of the Essenes but in fact with a subtle twist the author attacks the Romans who fail to acknowledge those virtues and punish the Essenes as if they were common criminals.

The final set of clues Booth puts forward involve “conflicts of belief.” Awe and reverence for the God of Israel may be assumed to be the normal relationship of a devout Jew who also claims to be a priest, as Josephus the historical author does. Yet the implied author, as narrator of the narrative history, is critical of divinity. In the ironic mode it lies hidden only to be found after a careful search. In the foreground God is a fictitious creation as an amalgam of contrary qualities. He is the Biblical

deity who created the Jewish nation and who broke it. He is also the Divinity who sides with the Romans and takes refuge in Rome, presumably at the Capitolium. He is as ruthless as the famine. Besides, the role of deity in the narrative history is equivocal in that without divine intervention, it is implied, the mighty Romans could have lost to the Jews.⁵ In the background text, God is an actor in the tragedy. The tragedian identifies God of Israel turned a Roman god with the “villains” against the “hero-victim” of the five-act tragedy.⁶ If expressed openly it would be considered blasphemous. The ironic mode thus allows the historical author to convey indirectly what is offensive to state openly.

The other “conflict of belief” is between the Jewish recognition of divine providence and the Creator’s active and wise involvement in history. He is also one who controls human history in as fickle a fashion as Fate and Fortune. The implied author gives a free play to fate, fortune, and destiny, almost replacing the provident God or making him act as recklessly and fatuously as these three pagan superhuman mythical forces.

From this study one more insight can be added to the list of five clues. A sixth group of clues may be found in the structural differences. These may be between extrinsic genre of the foreground text and the intrinsic genre of the background text. In other words, a work may be structured in “genres disjunction,” that is, in the ironic mode of presentation of the whole work in which the same matter is designed in accordance with the conventions of two different genres as two different textual contents.

⁵ Note in this context the biting irony of *B.J.* 1.8.

⁶ Villains are understood in two senses, as literary “villains” and as villains in a popular sense.

A few examples will further help to illustrate how the preferred meaning is conveyed through the ironic mode in *B.J.* In the foreground text Titus is praised as a brilliant young general and as a loyal friend of Josephus, the character in the narrative. Yet in the background text Titus is consistently portrayed as the persecutor and the annihilator of the “hero-victim.” One who is hostile to the “hero-victim” in the five-act tragedy genre is a “villain.” By reading the *B.J.* in the ironic mode one comes to the conclusion that, despite appearances, Josephus the historical author, and most probably the person too, did not approve of Titus. Indeed he thought of his alleged friend as a “villain.” Similar readings may be obtained about Romans in general, about individuals like Pompey the Great, Vespasian and about significant events like the razing of the Temple and the City. It is also available in the repeated massacre of the Jewish captives in the arenas in the East, and the Flavian Triumph in Rome which now seems an undeserved reward for the crimes against the Jewish nation.

It seems persuasive at this point in the discussion that *B.J.* is a work consciously structured in “genres disjunction,” which calls to be read in the ironic mode. More specifically, of the two texts the narrative five-act tragedy being hidden in the background enjoys the privilege of the preferred text over the narrative history. The same approach based on the Roman principle of irony can be extended to the truth of the text as well. There are two truths in the literary work *B.J.* Both are imaginative and equally “valid and relevant.” Only one of them can enjoy the preferential status to make the work intelligible to the reader. Such a preferred imaginative truth belongs to

the narrative five-act tragedy in *B.J.* A further implication from this study is that any reading of *B.J.* as history needs to pay heed to the “genres disjunction.”

2.2 THROUGH NARRATIVE VOICES

In addition to the presence of “genres disjunction” in *B.J.*, another important strategy employed to convey meaning is the presence of multiple narrative voices. It is also through a skilful shifting of narrative voices that Josephus conveys the “tone” and “mood” throughout the text of the narrative five-act tragedy. The creative use of multiple narrative voices enables the reader to decide how to respond to the speakers in the text. The following seven clues are of help in keeping track of the reliable voice in the narrative polyphony.

First, when praising and describing what befalls “Jerusalem”, the narrative voice is the reliable voice of the implied author. “Jerusalem” stands for the common people and the priests who are true to their calling, and the Temple and the City, the symbols of the Jewish religious and political identity. It does not stand for those who change sides when it suits them and desert to the Romans for refuge. Secondly, when apparently praising the Jewish rebels, the narrative intention is not to praise them, but to criticise the Romans. Thirdly, when openly criticising the Jewish rebels, the narrative intention generally is to criticise them. Fourthly, when the objects of criticism in the earlier parts of the narrative later change into objects of narrator’s admiration, then the last sentiment is reliable. This is the case with *sicarii* (2.254 and 7.410-19). Fifthly, when seemingly praising the Romans, including Titus, the narrative intention is not to praise them. The narrator invariably leaves clues to implied observations that are different from the expressed statement. Sixthly, when

criticising the Roman soldiers, the narrative intention is to criticise them. Seventhly, when criticising Titus, it is always done indirectly by showing him losing control of his subordinates, or by displaying a contradiction between his words and his actions, or by making him seem impulsive and less rational.

3 THE CREATOR OF *B.J.*

Josephus is more than the creator of *B.J.* The literary work attributed to Josephus reveals one personal identity with three different roles as the historical author, the implied author and a character in the texts. When such differences are ignored, confusion tends to become common. The preceding study points to the following conclusions regarding Josephus as an actual person and the three roles he plays in relation to his work.

3.1 THE HISTORICAL PERSON

Josephus, the historical person, is claimed to be of a Jewish aristocratic and priestly family. He has presumably enjoyed a traditional Jewish upbringing. There is no explicit evidence of his Hellenistic education allowing him familiarity with Greek language and literature. His facility in writing the *B.J.*, the *A.J.*, the *Ap.* and the *Vita* implies that he had some level of Hellenistic training. The evidence in *B.J.* conditionally supports the view that Josephus was well-versed in Latin language and literature as well, provided that the work was planned and executed exclusively by him and no one else.⁷

Scholars have only recently touched upon a vital aspect of the life of Josephus. It is coming to be acknowledged that he lived his public life under the constraints of

⁷ The claims of S. Schwartz with regard to Josephus' knowledge of Greek, the Greek classics, the Greek historians, and his knowledge of Latin and Latin Literature cannot be sustained with the evidence discussed in this study. See Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeon Politics*, 35-39, 43-45, 232.

empire. As experienced by Seneca and the other contemporaries of Josephus, fear of imperial censorship and of the fatal consequences was one of the constraints. It prevented them to feel as they wished and to say what they felt. In human terms, it is not hard to imagine how it could affect a person's way of thinking, and more so of communicating. It seems that, unlike Quintilian's claim that communication through writing in the ironic mode was fashionable at the time, it was more likely that it was a necessity. It was part of the strategy of survival. Josephus, as a historical person and a public figure, had to have cultivated and exercised extreme caution in all forms of communication. Given his tragic experiences in Judaea under the Flavians, it must be acknowledged that Josephus laboured under constant fear of discovery that he was at heart a patriot and hostile towards his patrons, the Flavians.

Given the reading methods available up to the present, it has been alleged that Josephus, the historical person, was unreliable, corrupt and mendacious.⁸ These assessments assume that Josephus was unwavering in his allegiance to the Flavians and to the Jewish aristocratic class to which he belonged.⁹ With a different approach in reading *B.J.*, as advocated in this study, it is possible to review such assessments of Josephus. Even if it could be proven from sources other than his literary work that Josephus was unreliable as a person, with or without ideological bias, it would not necessarily affect the reliability of the texts. Textual reliability rests on the text, that is

⁸ H. Graetz, *Geschichte Der Juden*, G. Hölscher, *Die Quellen des Josephus*, Y. Halévy, "Generations of Old," H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus*, S.J.D. Cohen, *Josephus in Galilee and Rome*, M. Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea*, S. Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeae Politics* and U. Rappaport, "Where Was Josephus Lying," have in different terms either questioned the historical person's and the author's veracity or directly accused him of mendacity. Schwartz alleges that "Josephus' writings prove [sic] that he was more gifted as flatterer than classicist." See Schwartz, *Josephus and Judaeae Politics*, 209.

⁹ T. D. Barnes asserts that Josephus deflects the blame for the Jewish war from the Roman rulers and the Jewish elites. See T. D. Barnes, "The Sack of the Temple in Josephus and Tacitus" in Edmondson, Mason, Rives, eds., *Flavius Josephus and Flavian Rome*, 129-44.

to say, on its genre-specificity rather than on the extra-textual person who happens to be the historical author.

No definitive conclusions can be drawn about the historical person of Josephus from the text of *B.J.* The five claims he makes of his origin and credentials in the preface (1.3) are part of the expository type of writing and not of the narrative to which the text proper belongs.¹⁰ They stand or fall on their own merit as the essence of expository is to state the facts as they are, without embellishment. Whatever their historical reality, taken on its own, is irrelevant to the meaning of the text.

3.2 THE ROLE AS THE HISTORICAL AUTHOR

The role of the historical author is what Josephus the actual person assumes as and when he composes his literary work. Josephus' personal background and his literary expertise clearly come into play when he assumes the mantle of an author. From the use of the genre of narrative history, the author emerges as a historian who has modelled his text more demonstrably on Greek and Latin histories.¹¹

The command and use of the genre of narrative five-act tragedy in shaping the content of *B.J.* as a background text, demands an expertise of a level which is more than linguistic facility. The author would need a mastery of Latin. The extensive use of the Senecan mode and stylistic devices, the sophisticated application of the six stages of madness, and the 'customised blend' of the narrative modes point to an author who has more than a basic command of Latin language. He is well read in

¹⁰ The five claims are that he is "Josephus, son of Matthias, a Hebrew by race, a native of Jerusalem and a priest" (*B.J.* 1.3).

¹¹ Mason acknowledges, with other Josephan scholars, Greek influence on the historical author as far as the *Judaeen Antiquities* is concerned. He also concedes, "Josephus knew some Latin histories at first hand." See Mason, "Flavius Josephus in Flavian Rome" in Boyle and Dominik, eds., *Flavian Rome*, 566.

Latin literature from Virgil, Cicero, to Livy and Seneca the younger, and Quintilian. The use of the genre of the five-act tragedy in the Senecan mode for the text in the background makes the author a tragedian in the Senecan mould. Since it was not likely that any of the nine Senecan tragedies were translated into Greek before 70 C.E., it is reasonable to assume that the author of *B.J.* read them in the original, keeping himself up-to-date with the literary developments of his time. Such scholarly pursuits are possible only if the author lived at Rome during that time. The detailed use of Seneca's plays and of works on rhetoric, confirmed through the genres disjunction based on the development of the concept of irony in Cicero and Quintilian, requires that the author was a rhetorician as well as a historian and a tragedian. Such expertise raises a crucial question: did Josephus, with his commitments in Judaea and Galilee before and during the war, have the time and the opportunity to keep in close touch with literary developments in Rome? The answer is, that it is doubtful, which suggests that his claim of having help from assistants (*Ap.* 1.50) is credible.¹² However, looking at the situation in a practical way, their help must extend beyond the presentation of the work, to the structuring of the content with exquisite nuance. Given the unity of *B.J.* as a work with two texts, it is more probable than possible, that a lone 'assistant' composed the final work. Josephus would have a crucial part to play. He would have needed to minutely oversee the execution of his project from his notes and drafts and with personal input. The oversight would not be passive, but called for planning together, sharing the same

¹² The author's claim that in Rome he had 'persons to assist him in Greek' may mean that they taught him the Greek language, or how to write in Greek. He does claim the authorship of *B.J.* to himself. See *Ap.* 1.9. However, the sophistication of *B.J.*, as compared with the relative simplicity of other works of Josephus, suggests that the so called 'assistants' also had a hand in planning and writing the war narrative. See 113, n. 47 above.

point of view, including the covert dissent against the Romans in general, and Flavians in particular. It leads to the conclusion that the ‘assistant’ was of Jewish origin with a high level of Hellenistic education, with a mastery of Greek and Latin literatures and shared the anti-Roman ideology with Josephus.¹³ The presence of the ‘assistant’ is conditional on the premise that Josephus lacked the literary expertise displayed in *B.J.* Since the condition cannot be proven definitively or denied absolutely, this question calls for further research.

The damaging accusations against Josephus, the historical writer, that he was a Roman lackey and that he betrayed his nation to the Romans are not easy to sustain as Josephus has used the tragedy genre.¹⁴ The foreground text may suggest a Roman propagandist but the use of the narrative in the tragedy genre subverts the historical reality of the Jewish rout and the Roman absolute victory by sublimating the rout. It

¹³ C. P. Jones claims that Josephus stood aloof from the Greek and Latin culture of the city. See C. P. Jones, “Josephus and Greek Literature in Flavian Rome” in J. Edmondson, S. Mason, J. Rives, eds. *Flavius Josephus*, 207.

¹⁴ See W. Weber, *Josephus und Vespasian: Untersuchungen zu dem Jüdischen Krieg des Flavius Josephus* (Berlin: Kohlhammer, 1921, rep. Hildesheim: Olms, 1973); G. Alon, “The Burning of the Temple,” in *Jews, Judaism and the Classical World*, I. Abrahams, trans. (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1977), 252-68; Y. Halévy, *Generations of Old*, Moshe Auerbach ed., (Benei Beraq: Neẓah, 1964); H. Graetz *Geschichte Der Juden Von Den Altesten Zeiten Bis Auf Die Gegenwart*. Vol. 3.2. (Breslau: Schottlander, 1853-1875); Z. Yavetz, “Reflections on Titus and Josephus,” *Greek, Roman and Byzantine Studies* 16 (1975): 411-32; P. Vidal-Naquet, *Du Bon Usage De La Trahison*, in *Josephus’ De Bello Judaico*, P. Savinel, trans. (Paris: Bayard, 1977); U. Rappaport, “Where Was Josephus Lying - in His Life or in His War?” in *Josephus and the History of the Greco-Roman World*. F. Parente and J. Sievers, eds., (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 279-89; H. Montefiore, “Sulpicius Severus and Titus’ Council of War.” *Historia* 11 (1962): 156-70; A. Lettofsky, “The Jewish War against the Romans According To Josephus Flavius and Talmudic Sources [Heb.],” Senior Honours, (Brandeis University, 1959); C. Thoma, “Die Weltauschauung Des Josephus Flavius: Dargestellt Anhand Seiner Schilderung Des Jüdischen Aufstandes Gegen Rom (66-73 N. Chr.),” *Kairos* 11 (1969): 39-52; A. Schalit, “Destruction of Jerusalem,” [Heb.], in *The Book of Jerusalem*, Michael Avi-Yona, ed., (Jerusalem and Tel-Aviv: Mosad Bialik and Dvir, 1956), 252-63; I. Weiler, “Titus Und Die Zerstörung Des Tempels Von Jerusalem: Absicht Oder Zufall?” *Klio* 50 (1968): 139-58; H. St. John Thackeray, *Josephus: The Man and the Historian* (New York: JIR, 1929, rep. New York: Ktav, 1967), among others, who have labelled the historical author as a Roman lackey. This charge is plausible only if one reads the foreground text, and that at no deeper than the surface level. This study has pointed out the repeated and quite unexpected attempts at subverting the Roman power.

is this sublimation that redounds to the humiliation of the Roman victors. Such subversion is not consistent with being a full-fledged Roman propagandist.

The above argument does leave another question unanswered, namely, whether the ironic mode was accessible to all the readers or only to some. On either count, Josephus would have risked detection by the Romans that his loyalties were indeed anti-Roman.¹⁵ As the historical author, he does demonstrate that he had the courage of his convictions or at least that he felt safe to speak his mind, albeit, obliquely.¹⁶ Living in the time of Julio-Claudians and the Flavians, Josephus was subject to the same pressures as Seneca, Lucan and Petronius to pretend to be what he was not, namely, to be loyal to his imperial benefactors while he was inwardly hostile to them. While the three notable Romans let down their guard sometime in their lives, Josephus, the historical author, maintained it so well, possibly because he was not in the public eye.

3.3 THE ROLE AS THE IMPLIED AUTHOR

Distinct from the historical person and author, the implied author is the intra-textual *persona* who narrates. He stands for the author and functions as the narrator. In this he becomes the mouthpiece to express the authorial mind. Given the “genres disjunction” in *B.J.* of the dual texts, the implied author assumes matching attitudes to the differences in the texts.

¹⁵ This comment once again leads to the speculation, that *B.J.* could have undergone different editions during the time of Vespasian and Titus to begin with and later during the reign of Domitian. It is also another reason to resolve the question of multiple editions of *B.J.*

¹⁶ J. Barclay, “Judaean Historiography in Rome,” in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, and J. S. McLaren, “Josephus on Titus” on Josephus and ‘safe criticism’ of the Flavians in Sievers and Lembi, eds., *Josephus and Jewish History*.

In the text of narrative history, the implied author is respectful towards Vespasian and Titus, friendly towards his Roman friends. When critical of Pompey in Book 1, of Vespasian or Titus in Book 6, the implied author is cautious and follows the method of indirection, using the actions of protagonists to contradict praise which the narrator expresses verbally. Actions of protagonists also reveal their characters when the implied author chooses silence over open criticism. The Jewish rebels, with their followers, and some of the Hasmoneans and certainly the Procurators and the Roman army come under overt censure and through the confirmation of the truth of the words in the repetitive actions of these targets of criticism. As noted in the analysis, frequent use of multiple narrative voices adds further complexity to the function of the implied author. These narrative voices represent individuals of rank and significant groups in the narrative. At times the voices anticipate the opinions of protagonists and at other times they merely echo them. In any case, the implied author leaves hints in the narrative when he accepts or rejects the opinions the narrative voice expresses.

In the background text of the narrative five-act tragedy, the implied author is the voice of a fearless tragedian. He expresses great sympathy for the common people and grieves for the well-intentioned but weak leaders. Their inevitable martyrdom is formally highlighted with encomium to make their death the touchstone of the authenticity of their heroism and of their commitment to the Jewish nation, the *hero-victim*. The aristocrats, or the “eminent citizens”, are criticised indirectly through their inappropriate behaviour. The condemnation of the Jewish rebels is explicit; they

are called “villains” and much else even in the foreground text. Titus is severely censured in the background text.

3.4 THE ROLE OF THE CHARACTER

Josephus the historical person has a second intra-textual role in *B.J.*, that of the character in the narrative who participates in the narrative action. Within the two narratives, he has a dual role as the character. In the narrative history he is the unsuccessful general of the Jewish forces in Galilee, but successful in saving himself from his comrades in arms and in surrendering to the Romans. He is a witness to and an observer of historical events and a go-between for the Romans in their attempts at negotiating with the Jewish rebels. He reveals his desire to be rated as an ideal general, friendly towards the Romans, particularly individuals like Nicanor and Titus. He is clever in somehow turning the threatening situations in his favour. He comes across as a realist in changing sides, and objective in reporting the assessment of his surrender to the Romans as treason by his former Jewish superiors in Jerusalem.

In the narrative five-act tragedy, Josephus, the character, comes across quite differently. He aligns himself, not with those playing the “villain” of the five-act tragedy but with those who play the “champion of the hero-victim.” While those of the latter group die, Josephus alone survives.¹⁷ In the eulogy for Ananus, Josephus commends the strategy both of Ananus and Jesus to shorten the conflict and find an accommodation with the Romans. It is plausible that Josephus had the same or similar strategy ruined through the untimely death of Nero, the elevation of Vespasian to the Principate and Titus assuming the command in Judaea. As a “champion of the

¹⁷ Once again by associating himself with leaders like Ananus, Josephus, through the character, possibly is giving some indication of what he, the historical person, might have planned to do for his nation.

hero-victim,” Josephus does not see himself as a traitor or a turncoat, but as one who failed in his intended goal.

4 THE READER-RESPONDER OF *B.J.*

In writing his literary work in the manner he did, Josephus determined both the intended readers of his texts and the manner of reading them. The text of narrative history is available to any average Jewish, Greek, Roman or other historical readers with a working knowledge of Greek. To appreciate the finer points marking the distinction of the text from the histories available at the time, the readers would be familiar with the well-known classical histories from Herodotus to Livy. Such readers could be expected to be well-versed in Greek and Latin, given that Livy was not available in Greek. Such historical readers of *B.J.* are generally incorporated in the texts as the Greco-Roman citizens of the Empire. These readers do not belong to any one political class or socio-cultural level.

The issue of the intended reader becomes quite complex when the second text is considered. The difficulty of finding a narrative text as a five-act tragedy in the background is clearly immense. This is proven by the fact that hitherto *B.J.* has been read as a narrative history with no more than tragic elements in it. A reader with advanced literary expertise would be required to read the two texts and construct the preferred meaning of the work. Such a reader would benefit from being literate in Greek but highly literate in Latin, especially familiar with Livy, Cicero, Quintilian, and, most importantly, with Seneca the younger.¹⁸

¹⁸ Mason comes to a similar but a tentative conclusion that the audience of *A.J.* was Greek but particularly Roman, given the “concepts, images and values that would have suited a Roman audience particularly well.” See S. Mason, “Of Audience and Meaning” in Sievers and Lembi, eds. *Josephus and Jewish History*, 71-100.

Moreover, it seems certain that Josephus would have placed higher premium on a reader who had the skills to have access to the two texts and to the preferred meaning of the second. Furthermore, Josephus would have very much preferred a reader to be in his confidence to whom he could say what he did not say to all. It would be a reader who could recognise and appreciate the structural irony of *B.J.* and share with the historical author his antipathy towards the Flavians. One can only speculate, who among Josephus' historical readers might have been so privileged. These would be the exceptional readers whom Phaedrus Augustus Libertus describes collectively as the "*rara mens*" in his *Fabulae* (4.2.6).

The manner of reading the texts is the other aspect determined in them. First, to read any text for meaning is to enter the world created in it and to lock oneself within it. This image helps the reader to realise that the meaning is that which is found within the text and all extensions of meaning such as significance, explanations, comparisons and relationships with the contemporary texts, even others of the historical author, are outside and irrelevant for the purpose in hand. The two aspects of the text, the inside and the outside of it, are distinct and it helps to be keep them separate for a reading of a text without overlaps of other works. Secondly, if the text is written in the ironic mode, then it needs to be read in the ironic mode. If the implied author sees the events witnessed and participated in from hindsight then that is that point of view to be kept in mind. If one were to develop a reading model, it needs to reflect the genre/s of the text. In the last thirty years, only three scholars have attempted to develop a reading model.¹⁹ The present study is offering yet another

¹⁹ Three scholars who have attempted to develop a reading model are: S. Mason *Flavius Josephus on the Pharisees*, M. Goodman, *The Ruling Class of Judaea*, and J. McLaren *Turbulent Times? Of these*

model. It is of ironic structural mode, of “genres disjunction,” not hitherto attempted, based on the literary analysis of the double genres of the war narrative of Flavius Josephus.

Where to from here? From the study of *B.J.* as a narrative five-act tragedy, a few issues have emerged which call for further research. First, given the presence of the five-act tragedy structure in the Herod narrative, in the Eurycles episode and in the seven books as a whole, a detailed examination is called for to establish how the same structure is again used in *B.J.* The implications of further use of the five-act structure need to be recognised for the fuller meaning of Josephus’ work. Secondly, *B.J.* as a narrative history is merely touched upon in this study, due to the constraints of the study. There is much to reveal when *B.J.* as a narrative history is set against its classical forebears from Herodotus down to Livy. Finally, Josephus uses a rare rhetorical logic in his narrating. It needs to be analysed against the practice of the classical historians. With it and the “genres disjunction” Josephus’ authorial intent in the various stages of the narrative comes within easy reach.

This study comes to a close as it began with the quote of Gaius Julius Phaedrus, Augustus Libertus, from his *Fabulae* 4.2.5-7.

Non semper ea sunt quae videntur: decipit
Frons prima multos, rara mens intellegit

Mason and Goodman approach *B.J.* as an expository work. Mason, as indicated in Chapter 1, inappropriately follows empirical study design for literary studies. McLaren agrees with the others on the need to reach the pre-textual facts in the text. It cannot be done, as the author expects to do it, by going without the framework of the text. Such framework is the textual structure subject to the conventions of a genre.

Quod interiore condidit cura angulo.

Things are not always what they seem:
First impressions do mislead many;
Rare mind, though, discovers what
Fear has placed out of sight.

Phaedrus, the freed slave of Augustus, having a mind of his own, knew the secret of living under the tyrannical Principate, earlier than Seneca did. Fear of discovery must have dominated his life. What was true for a freedman could not have been too different for a freeman like Josephus, with a mind of his own. The common reaction to the fear of discovery under tyranny would have led most to hide their light under a bushel. For Flavius Josephus it was a challenge. He certainly measured up to it in *Bellum Judaicum* with extraordinary creativity as a literary artist.

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