relationship between biblical narratives, their historical value, and their theological purpose. It is a persuasively presented study that can stimulate further research. This, of course, is precisely what a dissertation ought to do.

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Heller's discourse analysis of Biblical Hebrew prose narrative is built on insights of Thomas O. Lambdin (Introduction to Biblical Hebrew [New York: Scribner, 1971] 162-65) and Robert E. Longacre's treatment of direct discourse (Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence; A Text Theoretical and Textlinguistic Analysis of Genesis 37 and 39-48 [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1989; 2nd ed., 2003]). H.'s basic thesis is this: (1) that the basic narrative story line is expressed by chains of wayyiqtol clauses and that non-wayyiqtol clauses provide various types of nonsequential "background" information or else mark "episode boundaries"; (2) that five distinct types of direct discourse can be discerned (narrative, predictive, expository, hortatory, and interrogative) by their "limited set of possible verbal/clausal combinations"; (3) that within each text type, the verbal forms and clause types "are consistent in their meaning"; and (4) that his analysis yields "an easily accessible and straightforwardly functional approach" to the verbal/clausal patterns in Biblical Hebrew (pp. 26-27).

Heller begins by reviewing tense-based, historical-comparative, aspect-based, and discourse-linguistic approaches to the Hebrew verbal system. Although a helpful survey, it contains a couple of inaccuracies. First, he states that "[William L.] Moran's work has mainly concentrated on the Amarna correspondence; [Anson F.] Rainey's on the Ras Shamra tablets" (p. 7 n. 20), a statement that is, at the least, misleading considering his accompanying list of Rainey's Amarna studies—although the list neglects Rainey's most important recent work on the subject: Canaanite in the Amarna Tablets: A Linguistic Analysis of the Mixed Dialect Used by the Scribes from Canaan (4 vols.; HO 25; Leiden: Brill, 1996). Second, he mistakenly attributes Bo Johnson's theory of the Hebrew verbal system (Hebraisches Perfekt und Imperfekt mit vorangehendem we [ConBOT 13; Lund: Gleerup, 1979]) to Bo Isaksson (Studies in the Language of Qoheleth, with Special Emphasis on the Verbal System [Studia Semitica Upsaliensia 10; Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1987] 15-16).

The bulk of H.'s book contains a layout and statistical tabulation, with commentary, of the Joseph novella (Genesis 37, 39-47) and narrative of David's court (2 Samuel 9-20; 1 Kings 1-2). H. is to be commended for demonstrating his argument through close analysis of specific texts, and doing so in a fairly reader-friendly format. There are only a few claims of his with which I take issue. The first is his analysis of the several examples of wayyiqtol-qatal clause sequences (Gen 40:23; 2 Sam 13:19; 1 Kgs 1:9-10). In each instance, H. argues that the qatal clause provides off-line information while the wayyiqtol provides on-line information (pp. 93, 281, 406). However, in these instances the events expressed by the two clauses are complementary or opposing in some sense such that it
seems unmistakable that both clauses express on-line information. In light of such examples, it seems best to argue for a privative marking between wayyiqtol and non-wayyiqtol forms: wayyiqtol marks foreground material, while other verb forms may mark either foreground or background information (see John A. Cook, “The Semantics of Verbal Pragmatics: Clarifying the Roles of Wayyiqtol and Weqatal in Biblical Hebrew Prose,” JSS 49 [2004] 247-73). Likewise, I was unsatisfied with H.’s explanation of the three instances of a qatal following a wayhi clause in his data (pp. 448-50). The qatal clauses in these examples appear to express events just as much on-line as those examples of wayyiqtol clauses following wayhi (cf. Gen 39:5; 40:1; 2 Sam 13:36 with Gen 37:23; 39:7; 40:20; 2 Sam 10:1; 11:1; 15:7, etc.).

In the final analysis, there are some features of H.’s discourse analysis that are troubling. First, his portrayal of the relationship between his discourse approach and other approaches to the Hebrew verb is unclear. Although his sometimes polemical survey of the various approaches may lead one to think of them as mutually exclusive, H. assures us that they are not (p. 24). In his concluding chapter, he appears to underscore this point when he states that his study has been interested in the “functional roles” the verb forms play “in addition to the normal aspectual connotations” (pp. 428-29). Having stated this, though, H. never takes a clear position on tense and aspect in the Hebrew verbal system. In one place he mentions “the normal aspectual connotations that the various Hebrew verbal forms imply”—a statement that lacks linguistic precision and begs for elaboration (p. 428). In another place, H. explains with respect to four clauses with unexpected verb forms that the interpretations are “related to their [i.e., the verbs’] inherent semantic and aspectual meanings, since discourse pragmatics and the semantic fields of the verbs work together to provide the sense of the clauses” (p. 439). However, H. fails to address how the semantic and discourse pragmatic meanings contribute to the interpretation of the clauses in question. H. makes no comment about two of the examples (2 Sam 13:18; 15:30), and he provides discussions of the other two only in footnotes without reaching any clear conclusion about the choice of verb (p. 311 n. 44 and 324 n. 48).

Second, because of this apparent absence of a semantic foundation, H.’s study, like the bulk of discourse studies of Biblical Hebrew, fails to provide real explanations of what is going on with the verbal system. For instance, H. claims that a chain of wayyiqtol clauses “consistently implies sequentiality of action in the narrative” (p. 430). But since narrative, by its very character, presents events in temporally successive order, this appears a rather weak claim. In other words, his claim merely begs the question of why this particular verb form is preferred in narrative over, say, qatal; he never addresses whether there might be a semantic explanation to this conundrum.

H. is to be commended for a clear and detailed explication of discourse analysis of Biblical Hebrew. There are many valuable observations concerning the range of pragmatic significations for which the Hebrew verbal forms and clausal patterns may be employed. It is unfortunate, however, that he has not incorporated a semantic theory into his discourse analysis, which could propel such a study to more significant claims about the Hebrew verbal system in prose narrative.

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