LITERARY JOB  PART 2

OLLI Spring Term 2016

- Tom Manteuffel
Job and His False Comforters
Jean Fouquet, c 1460
Job Mocked by His Wife
Georges de la Tour, 1630s
Structure of Job

Prologue (1,2)

FIRST CYCLE
Job (3)
   Eliphaz (4)
Job (6, 7)
   Bildad (8)
Job (9,10)
   Zophar (11)

SECOND CYCLE
Job (12-14)
   Eliphaz (15)
Job (16,17)
   Bildad (18)
Job (19)
   Zophar (20)

THIRD CYCLE
Job (21)
   Eliphaz (22)
Job (23,24)
   Bildad (25-26:14?)
Job (26:1-4?)
   [Zophar ??]

Wisdom Hymn (28)
Job (29-31)
Elihu (32-37)
Yahweh Speaks (38-41)
Job (42:1-6)

Epilogue (42:7-17)
Biblical Poetry

- Most important element
  - Parallelism
    - Semantics
    - Syntax
    - Rhythm (stress)

All is in *couplets* (or ‘hemistichs’, ‘colons’, ‘versets’)
- or occasionally *triplets*

➢ *But the effect is just as often an asymmetry as pure balance…*

Biblical poetry is not repetitive so much as *intensifying.*
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements
  • Stress (not meter)

“By rule no two stresses are permitted to follow each other… [therefore] each stress dominates a group of two three or four syllables; there are two, three or four such groups in a verset; and two, three or four parallel versets in a sentence.”
  - Benjamin Hrushovski (Harshav)

• Mitchell uses three stresses per line
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements
  • Intensification
  • Often of degree, or quantity or ‘sophistication’

An implied “How much more so…”

An invariable rule is that if you introduce a number in the first couplet, you have to go up in the second.

Six things are there that the Lord hates,
and seven He utterly loathes.

- Proverbs 6:16
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements
  • Intensification via ‘sophistication’

“The predominant pattern of biblical poetry is to move from a standard term in the first verset to a more literary or highfalutin term in the second verset.”


*Look, Wisdom calls out, and Discernment lifts her voice.*

- Proverbs 8:1
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements
  • Intensification via concretization

Your granaries will be filled with abundance,
With new wine your vats will burst.
- Proverbs 3:10

She weeps on through the night,
And her tears are on her cheek.
- Lamentations 1:2
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements

• Chiasm

  • Parallelism either of ‘syntax’ or ‘semantics’

  • Simplest form is A, B, B, A
Biblical Poetry

• Subsidiary elements
  • Chiasm
    • Can be quite complex

Chiastic analysis of Proverbs 31

A: High value of a good wife (v. 10)
B: Husband benefited by wife (vv. 11-12)
C: Wife works hard (vv. 13-19)
D: Wife gives to poor (v. 20)
E: No fear of snow (v. 21a)
F: Children clothed in scarlet (v. 21b)
G: Coverings for bed, wife wears linen (v. 22)
H: Public respect for her husband (v. 23)
G*: Sells garments and sashes (v. 24)
F*: Wife clothed in dignity (v. 25a)
E*: No fear of future (v. 25b)
D*: Wife speaks wisdom (v. 26)
C*: Wife works hard (v. 27)
B*: Husband and children praise wife (vv. 28-29)
A*: High value of a good wife (vv. 30-31)

Duane A. Garrett, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, The New American Commentary 14
(Nashville, Tenn.: Broadman Press, 1993), 248
Biblical Poetry

Gordon Wenham’s Chiastic Analysis of Genesis Ch 6-9

Chiastic structure of the Genesis Flood Narrative

A: Noah and his sons (Gen 6:10)
B: All life on earth (6:13:a)
C: Curse on earth (6:13:b)
D: Flood announced (6:7)
E: Ark (6:14-16)
F: All living creatures (6:17–20)
G: Food (6:21)
H: Animals in man’s hands (7:2–3)
I: Entering the Ark (7:13–16)
J: Waters increase (7:17–20)
X: God remembers Noah (8:1)
J: Waters decrease (8:13–14)
I’: Exiting the Ark (8:15–19)
H’: Animals (9:2,3)
G’: Food (9:3,4)
F’: All living creatures (9:10a)
E’: Ark (9:10b)
D’: No flood in future (9:11)
C’: Blessing on earth (9:12–17)
B’: All life on earth (9:16)
A’: Noah and his sons (9:18,19a)
Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
  - Shared verbs between versets (a form of ellipsis)

  *He found him in a desert land,*
  *in an empty, howling waste.*

- from Moses Valedictory Song, Deut 32:10

The ellipsis frees the poet to elaborate and sharpen meaning.
Biblical Poetry

• Other elements
  
  o Use of concrete imagery to indicate general concepts
  
  o Quoting of another’s words
  
  o Extreme conciseness (usually)
  
  o Rhetorical questions
  
  o Many subtypes:
    ▪ Victory songs
    ▪ Laments *(individual, communal)*
    ▪ Hymns of praise
    ▪ Love poetry or wedding songs
Biblical Poetry

- And flexibility!
Biblical Poetry

Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.” So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him.

- Judges 4:19 (NRSV)

He asked water and she gave him milk, she brought him curds in a lordly bowl.

- Judges 5:25 (NRSV)
Biblical Poetry

On to Job...

“When we move from the prose frame story of chapters 1 and 2 to the beginning of the poetic argument in chapter 3 we are plunged precipitously into a world of what must be called abysmal intensities.”

- Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*
Job 3: His Malediction

Cursed be the day when I was born;
Let the day when my mother bore me not be blessed.
Cursed be the one who brought my father news saying
‘A son, a male, has been born to you,’
Bringing him such joy.
May this man be like the towns
That YHVH overthrew without mercy;
May he hear alarms in the morning,
The war cry in broad daylight,
since he did not kill me in the womb;
My mother would have been my tomb
while her womb was swollen with me.
Why ever did I come out of the womb
to live in toil and sorrow
and to end my days in shame!

- Jeremiah 20:14-18