

Geller, Stephen A.; Greenstein, Edward L.; and Berlin, Adele. *A Sense of Text: The Art of Language in the Study of Biblical Literature*. Jewish Quarterly Review Supplement, Dropsie College. Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983. 113 pp. Paperback, \$12.50.

Three essays are published in this volume: Geller, "Through Windows and Mirrors into the Bible: History, Literature, and Language in the Study of the Text"; Greenstein, "How Does Parallelism Mean?"; and Berlin, "Point of View in Biblical Narrative." These essays were originally presented at a symposium at Dropsie College on May 11, 1982. All three explore the relationship between basic language and writers' artistry in biblical literature, but they explore it from rather different points of view.

The first essay, that of Geller, is the most difficult to grasp, largely because of its rather philosophical orientation. The first third of his essay draws a rather stark contrast between historical and literary critical study of the Bible, on the one hand, and the aesthetic study of the Bible as literature, on the other. The former approach, according to Geller, has disrupted the unity of the Bible, while the latter holds that the Bible must be studied as a unity in order to be appreciated. The wedge between these two schools of thought has been driven very wide and deep here. Form criticism, canonical criticism, and structuralism also fall by the wayside in the course of the examination of this dichotomy, although Geller seems somewhat more favorably inclined towards structuralism by the end of his essay. Typical of the emphasis that he has placed upon the difference between these two poles of study is his statement that "in truth, objective historical and subjective 'literary' approaches to texts seem to be totally discrete logically" (p. 12).

In the second section of his essay, Geller cites a work from the form critic H. Gunkel to illustrate how this tension has worked itself out in biblical studies. The third and final section of Geller's study is characterized by an imaginary dialogue between the Linguist and the Aesthete. No meeting of the minds is achieved from their confrontation; and, indeed, that is where Geller leaves the matter in the end. That being the case, the final two pages of his essay strike this reviewer as rather discordant with the thrust of his study, because they present an appeal for holding the two divergent types of biblical study together. He presents no concrete suggestions as to just how this can be accomplished.

The second essay, that by Greenstein, is an examination of how the poetic technique of parallelism develops the meanings of the thoughts and words it utilizes in biblical poetry. This is a useful study, with many germane observations on the nature and significance of parallelism. There are a number of different levels or aspects in which parallelism operates, including sense, words, sound, rhythm, morphology, and syntax.

Greenstein especially emphasizes the last of these aspects as being particularly characteristic of biblical parallelism. Classically—from Lowth's time onward—parallelism has been divided into the three main categories of "synonymous," "antithetic," and "synthetic." The last category in particular has drawn considerable criticism, as seeming to be mainly a waste-basket diagnosis for the cases not fitting into the other two categories. By applying transformational grammar to some of these cases, Greenstein has demonstrated that the parallelism present is commonly more direct than has heretofore been appreciated.

There are a few cases in which I would differ from Greenstein's poetic analyses. By following the versification of Cant 5:11-16 too closely, he has inserted an added element here ( $B + B'$ ) which is not necessary. Vs. 11, for example, simply presents two cases of  $A + A'$ , not a case of  $A + A'$  and an additional case of  $B + B'$ . He has also noted the chiasm in the opening tricolon of Ps 1 and the chiasm in its closing bicolon, but he has not noted that these two together create an *inclusio* by form around this poem. Generally speaking, however, Greenstein's categories of the usage of parallelism and his demonstrations of the ways in which meaning is derived from the occurrence of the parallelisms appear to be reasonable and accurate.

The final essay in the volume, that by Adele Berlin on the point of view in biblical narratives, is a model of clarity in its presentation. She has taken a number of biblical narratives and shown how the writing in them develops different points of view from their different scenes. Involved in the narratives are the points of view of the narrator, of the reader, and of the different participants in the stories themselves. The classic case in point here is her treatment of Gen 37. The narration of this story begins and ends from Jacob's point of view. Between these two poles, the narrative shifts to the points of view of the brothers of Joseph. Very little of the chapter is narrated from the point of view of Joseph himself, that point of view being developed to a greater degree in the later narratives about Joseph and his relatives. Berlin not only has shown the different points of view from which different scenes in biblical narratives have been written, but has also categorized the different ways in which these points of view can be used.

Each of the essays in this volume contributes, in its own way, to the goal of understanding the relationship between language and art in biblical literature, but I personally found the last of the three the most illuminating.