Narrative Appraisal as a Linguistic Approach to Evaluation in Text: The Case of Pronouns

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Abstract

Unlike modern narrative, which often goes into great detail in order to develop characters and themes, the narrator in the Old Testament is reticent, and the narrative is typically terse. There are many ambiguous passages involving actions of dubious propriety, resulting in readers being uncertain how to assess characters and draw ideological conclusions from their actions. It is too easy for modern readers to filter interpretive decisions through their presuppositions and values. Appraisal theory, an area of systemic functional linguistics, acts not to eliminate but to constrain the subjectivity of the interpreter and increase the transparency of the process by looking for specific linguistic signals in the text that can be presented as evidence. These instantiations are drawn mainly from the interpersonal metafunction, but also involve the textual and ideational metafunctions. J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White developed a system network through which text is processed in order to identify evaluative language; however, their work is based primarily on contemporary English texts of a rhetorical nature, such as political speeches and reviews. This article presents a modified system network, the "Narrative Appraisal Method," adapted for Hebrew narrative texts. It operates not only at the level of the clause but also at higher levels of discourse. It takes into consideration the characteristics of narrative and the point of view of the evaluator. The article provides specific examples of the results the methodology yields from the book of Judges, focusing on situations in which pronominal forms play a relevant role.

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Introduction

Unlike modern narrative, which often goes into great detail in order to develop its characters and themes, the narrator in the Old Testament is reticent, and the narrative itself is typically terse. There are many ambiguous passages involving actions of dubious propriety, resulting in readers being uncertain how to assess characters and draw ideological conclusions from their actions. The book of Judges in particular is full of ambiguous characters and events. For example, were Ehud and Jael devious assassins or valiant deliverers? Is the reader intended to view the slaughter of Benjamin as justifiable? What is normative and what is aberrant? It is far too easy for modern readers to filter interpretive decisions through their own presuppositions and values. With the fading of modernity and the advent of postmodern thinking, we have realised that objectivity is difficult to attain and that all knowledge is situated. It is naïve to think that subjectivity can be totally eliminated, but the awareness of—and the limiting of—interpretive bias can assist in understanding the text more effectively in its original context.

Evaluation theory, also called appraisal theory, is an application of Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics or SFL. It is beyond the scope of this essay to even begin to explain SFL; suffice it to say that this approach focuses on language in use rather than abstract cognitive theories, and views language as a system of resources for construing meaning (see Halliday and Matthiessen 2014; Thompson 2013).[1] J.R. Martin and P.R.R. White (2005) have developed a methodology based on SFL, appraisal theory, that attempts to use linguistic criteria, specific evidence, and a thoroughly systematic approach to limit the reader's subjectivity and clarify the intent of the implied, or actual, author/speaker.

This essay gives an overview of a modified system network, the "Narrative Appraisal Method," which I have adapted specifically for Hebrew narrative texts.[2] It operates not only at the level of the clause but also at higher levels of discourse and takes into consideration the characteristics of narrative and the point of view of the evaluating characters in the world of the story. This essay will also provide specific examples of the results the methodology yields from the book of Judges—including the narratives of Ehud, Gideon, and Samson—focusing on situations in which analysis of pronominal forms plays a relevant role and contributes to an understanding of the text. I argue that narrative appraisal is a valuable tool for evaluating characters and their actions, as well as for drawing conclusions about the ideology of the text that are based on characteristics of the text itself.

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1 A journal article is of inadequate length to adequately explain the SFL theory on which appraisal theory is based. Thompson's monograph is the most accessible and useful introduction to this area.

2 For a much more detailed analysis and application of narrative appraisal theory, see Conway (2020).

Method

Martin and White's Original Appraisal Theory

Language is used for many purposes, including instructing, describing, commanding, and negotiating social interaction. Another important use of language is appraisal. Appraisal considers issues such as authorial stance (the attitude of the author/speaker to the subject matter), the expression of affect (emotional expressions and responses which indicate attitude), and judgments made in the text of people and behaviours. This is an issue even in contemporary society, where words and meanings are often misunderstood between people of the same language and culture, and is much more difficult in understanding narrative from an ancient culture in an unfamiliar language (Martin and White 2005, 1).

Appraisal theory acts not to eliminate but to constrain the subjectivity of the interpreter and increase the transparency of the interpretive process by looking for specific linguistic signals in the text—lexical and syntactic data as well as ideational tokens—that can be presented as evidence. These instantiations are drawn mainly from the interpersonal metafunction, but also involve the textual and ideational metafunctions of language.[3]

In their book *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*, Martin and White present a methodology that attempts to approach this problem in a systematic manner, based on evidence in the text, not on purely subjective opinion. Their intent, as stated in their introduction, is worth quoting in full:

> This book is concerned with the interpersonal in language, with the subjective presence of writers/speakers in texts as they adopt stances towards both the material they present and those with whom they communicate. It is concerned with how writers/speakers approve and disapprove, enthuse and abhor, applaud and criticise, and with how they position their readers/listeners to do likewise. It is concerned with the construction by texts of communities of shared feelings and values, and with the linguistic mechanisms for the sharing of emotions, tastes and normative assessments. It is concerned with how writers/speakers construe for themselves particular authorial identities or personae, with how they align or disalign themselves with actual or potential respondents, and with how they construct for their texts an intended or ideal audience. (Martin and White 2005, 1)

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3   A metafunction is a very general function intrinsic to language in construing human experience. See Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 30–32). Thompson (2013, 30) refers to them as "different sets of choices that are available to language users. … The first (using language to talk about the world) is the experiential; the second (using language to interact with other people) is the interpersonal; and the third (organizing language to fit in its context) is the textual."

Their specific purpose is to "develop and extend the SFL account of the interpersonal by attending to three axes along which the speaker's/writer's intersubjective stance may vary" (Martin and White 2005, 1). Consequently, they have developed a system network through which text is processed in order to identify evaluative language in various categories (Martin and White 2005, 38).[4] They consider first, ATTITUDE,[5] the positive and negative evaluations inherent in affect; second, ENGAGEMENT, which includes modality, especially epistemic modality and evidentiality, and which considers the impact of status and authority and how voices position themselves in regard to other voices; and third, GRADUATION, the force of these voices of evaluation (Martin and White 2005, 2). They then focus on the way that these factors are encoded in the text. Martin and White (2005, 7) locate their method within SFL, which is a "holistic model of language and social context." Figure 1 is a generalised representation of their view of the system of functional grammar:[6]
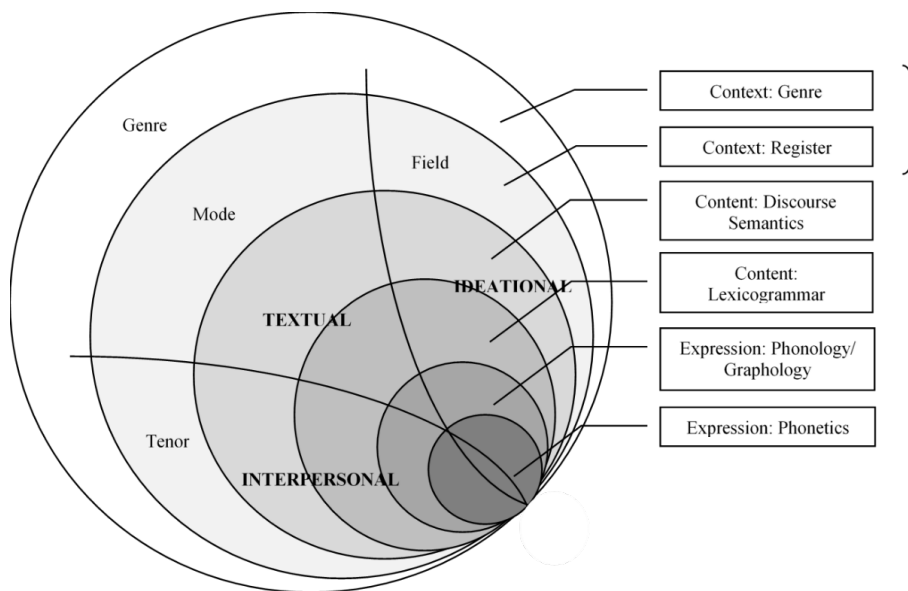

Figure 1: Functional Grammar

Interpersonal meaning is realised in different ways and at different levels of abstraction. In written text this moves from graphology to lexicogrammar, the level of words and

4   Martin and White's illustration gives only the basic framework of the system. Components are explained in detail throughout the book. Matthiessen, Teruya, and Lam (2010, 57), however, give a composite version. Martin and Rose (2007) modify the original network somewhat. My network is a modification of Martin and White's.
5   It is a convention in SFL to use all capitals for names of system networks and subsystems.
6   This is a composite diagram based on those in Martin and White (2005, 32) and Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 25; see also p. 30). The result is Martin and White's own interpretation and adaptation of Halliday and Matthiessen.

structures, to discourse semantics, the level of meaning beyond the clause. Martin and White (2005, 9) emphasize that each subsequent level is not "made up" of elements of the previous level, but "realized" through them at a more abstract level of organisation. They place evaluation within discourse semantics for three reasons: first, "the realization of an attitude tends to splash across a phase of discourse, irrespective of grammatical boundaries," second, an attitude "can be realized across a range of grammatical categories," and third, it involves grammatical metaphor, which involves "tension between wording and meaning" (Martin and White 2005, 11).[7]

Halliday's level, "context," which implies the extra-linguistic context of situation, is redefined and subdivided by Martin and White (2005, 27, 32) into two levels: "register," which consists of patterns of discourse patterns, and "genre," "a system comprising configurations of field, mode and tenor selections which unfold in recurring stages of discourse—a pattern of register patterns."[8] According to Thompson (2013, 40), "what is being talked about and the role of language in the activity that is going on" is the **field**, "the relationships between the people involved in the communication, both in general and moment-by-moment" is the **tenor**, and "how the language is functioning in the interaction" is the **mode**. Halliday and Matthiessen (2006, 320) explain further that field is "the culturally recognized repertoires of social practices and concerns" and tenor is "the culturally recognized repertoires of role relationships and interactive patterns." These role relationships include institutional roles, power, familiarity, speech role, valuation ("the assignment of positive and negative value loadings to different aspects of field") and affect ("the role adopted by the interactants in terms of emotional charge") (Matthiessen, Teruya, and Lam 2010, 217). Mode concerns "the part language is playing in any given context … [or] how the linguistic resources are deployed" (Halliday and Matthiessen 2006, 321). According to Martin and White (2005, 32), appraisal is located "in discourse semantics as a pattern of lexicogrammatical patterns construing evaluation."

Representation of APPRAISAL in System Networks

The semantic network of APPRAISAL is represented in diagrammatic form as a system network, so that the relationships of the component parts are evident. Multidimensionality is indicated by brace brackets and indicates a logical "and". Choices are represented by straight brackets and indicate a logical "or" (Martin and White 2005, 14).[9] Thus, ENGAGEMENT, ATTITUDE, and GRADUATION will all apply

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7   Martin and White's notion of context differs from that of Halliday, whose textual context is often referred to as the co-text.

8   See Halliday and Hasan (1985, 12–13) for a description of the three features of the context of situation.

9   See Berry (1975, 1.144–84) for a discussion of the properties of systems, and also disjunctive and simultaneous systems.

simultaneously, but only one of Heterogloss or Monogloss may apply to one particular instantiation of evaluation. Martin and Rose explain that "the enclosed options for APPRAISAL are all selected at the same time, since when we express an attitude we also choose how amplified it is, and what its source is" (Martin and Rose 2007, 28). According to Painter (2003, 184), "Within systemic-functional linguistics (SFL), the idea that a speaker always adopts a position in relation to the addressee and a stance in relation to what is said is a longstanding and fundamental one, modeled in terms of an 'interpersonal' linguistic resource that is always in play when the parallel 'ideational' one construes meaning." Thus, the entry condition for the network is very broad; all language is potentially evaluative and can be processed through the system.

When the original author(s)/redactor(s) composed a text such as Judges, they would—unconsciously, of course—have followed a semantic network in order to choose the realisations that best reflected their semantic idea. For example, if the author wanted to instantiate the semantic concept of insecurity in the text with regard to Gideon, he/she would have to make lexicogrammatical choices in Hebrew to inscribe this evaluation or include ideational tokens to evoke it. The hypothetical networks involved would start with the semantic concept and move, left to right, toward the realisation in the text. A partial and very simplified sample network appears as Figure 2.
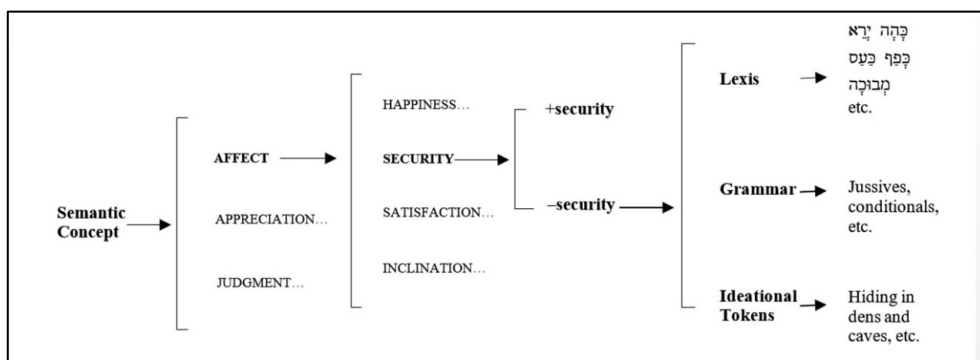

Figure 2: Partial Realisation Network

This realisation network does not include a comprehensive final column, since the options for realisation, although finite in any given text, are large enough that the network would become too complex to display. Instead, representative examples of realisations have been included in my method in the form of instantiations from the text (see Table 1 for a sample). The reader must be well-versed in the historical and cultural context of the available texts in order to identify the possible variations and their significance.[10] The interpreter, however, is retracing the author/redactor's steps from right to left, beginning with the instantiation in the text and decoding the process by

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10   Language is not ossified and is by nature creative; it varies over time and by location, and even from person to person. This is even evident in different sections of the Hebrew Bible.

which the author/redactor has arrived at this choice. Thus, an APPRAISAL network is actually a reversal of the process and moves from the realisation on the left to the semantic concept on the right, reflecting the interpretive process.

Table 1: Examples of Realisation

HAPPINESS	
−happiness	
misery (undirected mood: 'in me')	וַיִּשְׂאוּ הָעָם אֶת־קוֹלָם וַיִּבְכּוּ And the people lifted up their voices and they wept. (Judg 2:4) וַיֵּצֶר לָהֶם מְאֹד They were severely distressed. (Josh 2:15)
antipathy (directed feeling: 'at you/it')	וַיִּחַר־אַף יְהוָה בְּיִשְׂרָאֵל וַיִּתְּנֵם בְּיַד־שֹׁסִים וַיָּשֹׁסּוּ אוֹתָם The anger of Yahweh burned against Israel and he gave them into the hand of plunderers and they plundered them. (Judg 2:14) כִּי־יִנָּחֵם יְהוָה מִנַּאֲקָתָם מִפְּנֵי לֹחֲצֵיהֶם וְדֹחֲקֵיהֶם Yahweh was sorry because of their groaning on account of those who tormented and those who oppressed them. (Judg 2:18) וַיַּעַזְבוּ אֶת־יהוה So they forsook the Yahweh (Judg 2:13) בְּכֹל אֲשֶׁר יָצְאוּ יַד־יהוה הָיְתָה־בָּם לְרָעָה Wherever they went, the hand of Yahweh was against them for evil (Judg 2:15)
+happiness	
cheer (undirected mood: 'in me')	וַיְהִי כִּי טוֹב לִבָּם וַיֹּאמְרוּ קִרְאוּ לְשִׁמְשׁוֹן וִישַׂחֶק־לָנוּ וַיִּקְרְאוּ לְשִׁמְשׁוֹן מִבֵּית הָאֲסִירִים וַיְצַחֵק לִפְנֵיהֶם וַיַּעֲמִידוּ אוֹתוֹ בֵּין הָעַמּוּדִים It so happened when they were in high spirits, that they said, "Call for Samson, that he may amuse us." (*Samson is not the target of their mood of happiness, although tormenting him is a side effect of it*) (Judg 16:25) וַתִּשְׁקֹט הָאָרֶץ אַרְבָּעִים שָׁנָה Then the land was at rest for forty years. (Judg 3:11) וַיִּיטַב לֵב הַכֹּהֵן The priest's heart became glad. (Judg 18:20)
affection (directed feeling: 'at you/it')	וַיָּקָם אִישָׁהּ וַיֵּלֶךְ אַחֲרֶיהָ לְדַבֵּר עַל־לִבָּהּ לַהֲשִׁיבוּ Then her husband arose and went after her to speak to her heart in order to bring her back.[11] (Judg 19:3) וַיְהִי אַחֲרֵי־כֵן וַיֶּאֱהַב אִשָּׁה בְּנַחַל שֹׂרֵק וּשְׁמָהּ דְּלִילָה After this it came about that he loved a woman in the valley of Sorek, whose name was Delilah. (Judg 16:4)

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11 Reading לַהֲשִׁיבָהּ with the *qere*.

Figures 3 and 4 (below) are my version of the APPRAISAL network.
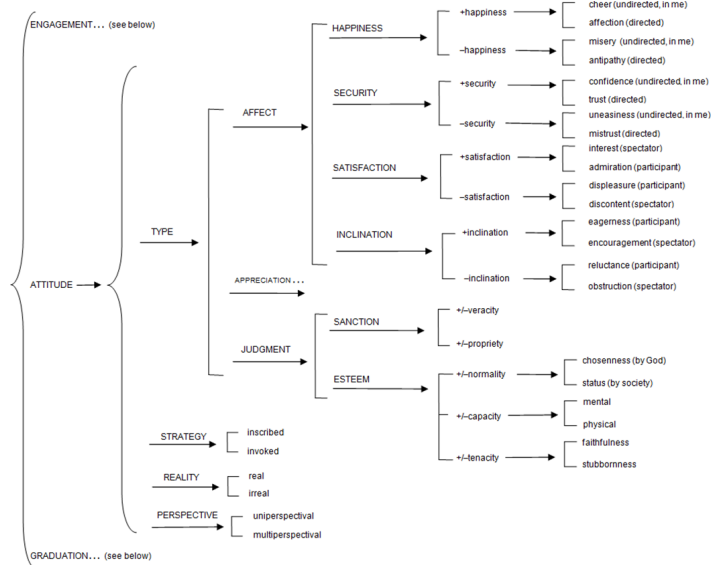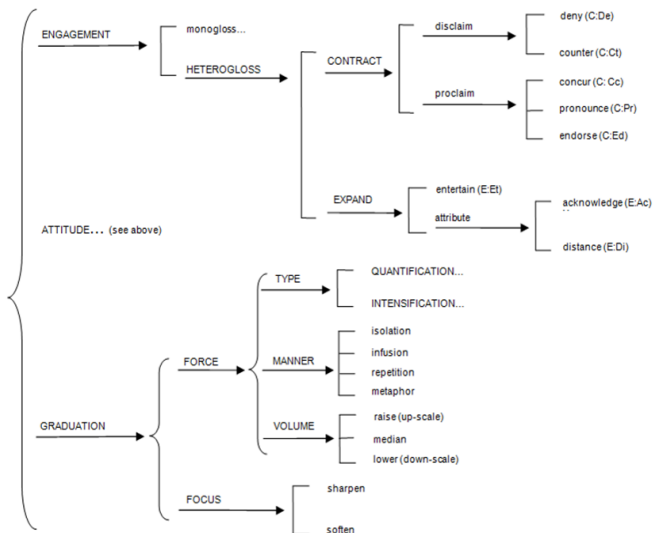

Figure 3: Narrative APPRAISAL Network Part A

Figure 4: Narrative APPRAISAL Network Part B

In my study I consider two components of attitude: affect and judgment. Appreciation is the evaluation of things, and the emphasis in Judges is clearly people and their actions. Since evaluation in Judges is concerned almost exclusively with assessing people and

processes, rather than things, I decided not to use the appreciation subsystem in this particular case.[12]

Martin and White (2005, 42) define affect (traditionally called "emotion") as "concerned with registering positive and negative feelings." The feelings of people—and especially Yahweh—in Judges are very relevant to determining the acceptability of behaviours, since inappropriate behaviours often cause negative feelings in those who observe or are affected by them, just as appropriate behaviours result in positive feelings. Judgment "deals with attitudes towards behaviour, which we admire or criticise, praise or condemn" (Martin and White 2005, 42). It involves assessment of character and behaviour which may be divided into social esteem, which deals with admiration and criticism, "typically without legal implications" (Martin and Rose 2007, 68), and social sanction, which has to do with praise and condemnation, "often with legal implications" (Martin and Rose 2007, 68; see also Martin and White 2005, 52). According to Martin and White (2005, 135), "a defining property of all attitudinal meanings is their gradability." This applies to all aspects of ATTITUDE in that they "construe greater or lesser degrees of positivity and negativity" (Martin and White 2005, 135). Of course, all evaluative decisions must be made within the socio-historical context of the ANE.

Martin and White's appraisal theory provides a helpful way of identifying evaluative stances of an author/speaker; however, their model was designed and tested primarily on non-literary works with a clearly rhetorical purpose such as contemporary journalistic articles, reviews, and political speeches. In these cases, the author/speaker is known, the audience is known, and the text represents an attempt to influence more or less directly the evaluative opinions of the audience. It is the real author's stance that is primarily in view and the interpersonal engagement between the author/speaker and the audience that is of major interest.

Narrative has unique characteristics. It contains many evaluative perspectives other than that of an author, although, of course, all these perspectives are filtered through that of the implied author as he/she uses the interplay of evaluative stances to accomplish his or her ultimate thematic or ideological goal.[13] One of appraisal theory's shortcomings is that it was not designed for the multiple points of view that appear in narrative texts but focuses almost entirely on the direct engagement between the author/speaker and the audience, that is, authorial stance. In order to overcome this difficulty, I am

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12 This elimination is specific to the text I am using; the subsystem could easily be reinstated if necessitated by a text in which APPRECIATION is relevant.

13 Note that only a few attempts have been made by other scholars to apply appraisal theory to literature, including biblical literature. See Dvorak (2012); Rodrigues-Júnior, Sebastião, and Barbara (2013).

incorporate the idea of narrative perspective or point of view into my version of the model.[14] As Bar-Efrat (1989, 16) rightly comments,

> The point of view is one of the means by which the narrative influences the reader, leading to the absorption of the implicit values and attitudes. … On the whole, the reader identifies less with the characters of the narrative than with the author, seeing the characters through the author's eye and adopting that stance towards them. … The effectiveness of the narrative is, therefore, dependent to a considerable extent on the technique of the viewpoint.

Although the real author of Judges is unknown, this applies equally well to the implied author.

In spite of their inclusion of a few short excerpts from literary narrative texts, Martin and White do not do full justice to the other levels of evaluation that contribute to the author's stance, and thus do not explore the full potential of the narrative form (see 2005, 71–72). In not pursuing the issue of point of view further, Martin and White do not take into consideration the fact that different characters in the story may have different perspectives on appraisal, albeit with differing degrees of reliability, and the fact that the implied author can use this interplay of perspectives to achieve an overall evaluative and ideological goal.[15]

In Martin and Rose (2007, 49–58), the ENGAGEMENT system has been clarified somewhat to address these concerns. I take the concept further, however, by including ideational content and levels of reliability. In any narrative there are various perspectives from which the events and characters can be evaluated; these are also associated with various levels of reliability. As Gunn and Fewell (1993, 54) note, "In practice, some such scale of reliability is a helpful rule of thumb in reading biblical narrative." Within the world of the story, the individual characters or groups have differing assessments of other characters or groups and the actions in which they engage. An example of this would be the Moabite oppression of Israel in the time of Ehud. Whereas the oppression may be deemed unethical from the perspective of the Israelites (−**propriety**), it is ethical from the point of view of Yahweh who is using the Moabites to discipline Israel for their sin (+**propriety**). Similarly, Gideon's reduced troop of 300 men might appear weak to him (−**capacity**), but the fact that Yahweh is the one who

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14 For a more fully developed explanation of this issue, see Conway (2020).

15 Alter (1981, 116–17) discusses different levels of reliability in a reader's understanding of the author's characterisation of participants. Characterisation based on inferences from actions and appearances have the lowest reliability. The direct speech of participants which allows the reader to weigh a character's claims about themselves and others is more reliable, and most reliable are the narrator's explicit statements which give the reader certainty. See also Amit (2001, 75–76); Revell (1996, 43–44).

will win the battle for Israel makes God's evaluation of **+capacity** for the Israelite army possible.

However, these characters may be honest or deceptive, fair or biased, good or evil, wise or foolish, and thus their evaluations may have a relatively low level of reliability. A character's evaluations may be countered or corrected by the narrator, who may have a different point of view. Thus a character may esteem himself highly for performing a certain action, but the narrator, and ultimately the implied author, may undermine this opinion by the way the projected speech is introduced, by the comments of others, or by the outcome of the character's actions (see Fokkelman 1999, 65–67).

The role of Yahweh as character and evaluator is a unique one; although to many readers he is the ultimate author of the text, he is also a speaking character within it.[16] In spite of his status as a character, his evaluative authority exceeds that of other characters, and even the narrator. Paradoxically, he is quoted and portrayed as the ultimate authority within the world of the story, even beyond that of the narrator, and even above the implied author who controls the text (see Bar-Efrat 1989, 19, 54). It is true that the authority of Yahweh is filtered through the implied author and the narrator, and yet the implied author construes Yahweh in such a way as to yield authority to him (Gunn and Fewell 1993, 59–61).

After the individual appraisals have been identified in the text, the implied author's stance can also be inferred by the overall patterns of appraisal in the narrative, for example, in evaluative prosodies, when the appraisal of a character or by a character changes, or when evaluations of or by characters are set in contrast to each other. Thus, there are different "levels" of evaluation, with different degrees of reliability.[17] Taking a "bottom up" approach, within the world of the story the evaluations of characters have a limited and situated reliability,[18] high ranking characters that serve as spokespeople of Yahweh have a more dependable reliability although they are not infallible, and the narrator is consistently reliable but defers to the character of Yahweh who has ultimate reliability. Outside the world of the story, however, the implied author has the ultimate authority, since we only know of Yahweh from him/her, and yet the implied author also willingly subsumes his/her authority under that of Yahweh whom he/she depicts (Polzin 1993, 23). Because of these levels of evaluation, assessments may be construed not only by different appraising items in the text, but also by different perspectives on the same event or person at the same time. I call these evaluations multiperspectival, and they are designated as such in the APPRAISAL tables.

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16 For other opinions on Yahweh as a character in a narrative, see Amit (2001, 73–74; 82–84); Fokkelman (1999, 58–59); Polzin (1993, 20–24); Webb (2012, 71).
17 See Alter (1981, 116–17), for more on levels of reliability, which he terms "a scale of means."
18 See Gunn and Fewell (1993, 69–75) for factors that can affect the reliability of a character's speech.

The issue of narrative perspective necessitates an adaptation of Martin and White's model. I term my variation of the model "Narrative Appraisal" to distinguish it from the original. I can only give the briefest introduction to the model here, but it is developed in far greater detail in my book, *Judging the Judges: A Narrative Appraisal Analysis*, in the LSAWS series (Conway 2020). It is due to the multiple perspectives inherent in a complex narrative, as well as the fact that the narratives of the book of Judges are the product of an ancient culture and written in an ancient language, that makes the construction of a revised model and methodology necessary and significant. It is my hope that this model can be fruitfully applied to other OT biblical narratives since it takes their unique nature into consideration. Interestingly, Rodrigues-Júnior and Barbara (2013) use appraisal theory to examine evaluation in the original English version of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray* and also some Portuguese translations and adaptations of the book. They conclude, "The analyses have revealed that the linguistic resources of appraisal carry different meanings in each language and, consequently, in each text (original, complete translation and adaptations). … These constructions reveal specific semantic contours of evaluation in English, which was not accurately captured in the translations" (Rodrigues-Júnior and Barbara 2013, 282). This study illustrates the difficulty of conveying evaluative meaning to a different language and culture, a challenge also experienced in translating the original Hebrew text into modern English. A better understanding of evaluative language in the original is essential for effective translation.

The data derived from processing the narrative through the APPRAISAL network is compiled in tables which make discourse trends more visible. I have included a sample table as Table 2 that relates to my Ehud example below.[19]

Table 2: Sample of an APPRAISAL Chart

	Text			Implied Author		Grad	The World of the Story			
	Appraising Items (Hebrew)	"Lexical" Syntactic Token	Appraising Items (English: NASB modified)	C/E/M	POV		Who is Appraised / Trigger	Appraiser/ Emoter	AFFECT	JUDGMENT
3.18	וַיְהִי כַּאֲשֶׁר כִּלָּה לְהַקְרִיב אֶת־הַמִּנְחָה וַיְשַׁלַּח אֶת־הָעָם נֹשְׂאֵי הַמִּנְחָה׃	--	And it happened that just as he finished presenting the tribute, he sent away the people who had carried the tribute.	M	Narr					
3.19	וְהוּא שָׁב	"turn back"	But he himself turned back	M	Narr		Ehud	Narrator		+propriety
	מִן־הַפְּסִילִים אֲשֶׁר אֶת־הַגִּלְגָּל	*Invoked evaluation.*	*from* the idols which were at Gilgal.	M	Narr		Ehud	Narrator		t, +propriety
	וַיֹּאמֶר דְּבַר־סֵתֶר לִי אֵלֶיךָ הַמֶּלֶךְ	*Invoked evaluation.*	*and said, "I have a secret/private word/thing for you, O king."*	M	Ehud		Ehud	Ehud		t, +propriety
				M	Ehud		Ehud	Eglon		t, +propriety
	וַיֹּאמֶר הָס וַיֵּצְאוּ מֵעָלָיו כָּל־הָעֹמְדִים עָלָיו׃	--	And he said, "Keep silence." And they went out from before him, all those who stood in attendance on him.	M	Narr					

	Text			Implied Author			The World of the Story			
	Appraising Items (Hebrew)	"Lexical" Syntactic Token	Appraising Items (English: NASB modified)	C/E/M	POV	Grad	Who is Appraised / Trigger	Appraiser/ Emoter	AFFECT	JUDGMENT
3.20	וְאֵהוּד בָּא אֵלָיו וְהוּא־יֹשֵׁב בַּעֲלִיַּת הַמְּקֵרָה אֲשֶׁר־לוֹ לְבַדּוֹ וַיֹּאמֶר אֵהוּד דְּבַר־אֱלֹהִים לִי אֵלֶיךָ וַיָּקָם מֵעַל הַכִּסֵּא׃	*Invoked evaluation.*	Ehud came to him. Now he was sitting in his cool roof chamber/privy that was for him alone. Then Ehud said, *"I have a word/thing from God concerning you."* And he arose from the seat.	M	Narr		Ehud	Ehud		t, +propriety
				M	Ehud		Ehud	Eglon		t, +propriety
3.21	וַיִּשְׁלַח אֵהוּד אֶת־יַד שְׂמֹאלוֹ וַיִּקַּח אֶת־הַחֶרֶב מֵעַל יֶרֶךְ יְמִינוֹ וַיִּתְקָעֶהָ בְּבִטְנוֹ׃	*Invoked evaluation.*	Then Ehud stretched out a hand, his left, *and he seized the sword from against his right thigh and thrust it into his belly.*	M	Narr		Ehud	Narrator		t, +propriety
3.22	וַיָּבֹא גַם־הַנִּצָּב אַחַר הַלַּהַב וַיִּסְגֹּר הַחֵלֶב בְּעַד הַלַּהַב כִּי לֹא שָׁלַף הַחֶרֶב מִבִּטְנוֹ וַיֵּצֵא הַפַּרְשְׁדֹנָה׃	*Invoked evaluation*	*And it went in, the hilt after the blade, and the fat closed over the blade, for he did not draw the sword out of his belly; and the feces came out.*	M	Narr		Eglon	Narrator		t, – normality: status
	[הַחֵלֶב]	"fat"	[*fat*]	M	Narr		Eglon	Narrator		~normality
3.23	וַיֵּצֵא אֵהוּד הַמִּסְדְּרוֹנָה וַיִּסְגֹּר דַּלְתוֹת הָעֲלִיָּה בַּעֲדוֹ וְנָעָל׃	?	Then Ehud went out the vestibule/porch/privy and he shut the doors of the roof chamber behind him, and he locked them.	M	Narr					?
3.24	וְהוּא יָצָא וַעֲבָדָיו בָּאוּ וַיִּרְאוּ וְהִנֵּה דַּלְתוֹת הָעֲלִיָּה נְעֻלוֹת וַיֹּאמְרוּ אַךְ מֵסִיךְ הוּא אֶת־רַגְלָיו בַּחֲדַר הַמְּקֵרָה׃	*Invoked evaluation*	Now he went out, and his servants came in, and they looked, and behold, the doors of the roof chamber were locked. *So they said, "Surely he is covering his feet in the cool chamber/privy."*	M	Narr		Eglon	Servants		t, – normality: status
3.25	וַיָּחִילוּ עַד־בּוֹשׁ וְהִנֵּה אֵינֶנּוּ פֹתֵחַ דַּלְתוֹת הָעֲלִיָּה	"embarrassment"	They waited to the point of embarrassment but behold, he was not opening the doors of the roof chamber.	M	Narr		**Eglon's delaying**	**Servants**	–happiness: misery	
	וַיִּקְחוּ אֶת־הַמַּפְתֵּחַ וַיִּפְתָּחוּ וְהִנֵּה	"behold"	Therefore they took the key and opened them, and behold,	M	Narr		**Eglon's body**	**Servants**	–security: shock	
	אֲדֹנֵיהֶם נֹפֵל אַרְצָה	"fallen"	their lord was fallen to the ground,	M	Narr		Eglon	Narrator	–capacity	
	מֵת	"dead"	dead.	M	Narr		Eglon	Narrator	–capacity	
3.26	אֵהוּד נִמְלַט עַד הִתְמַהְמְהָם וְהוּא עָבַר אֶת־הַפְּסִילִים וַיִּמָּלֵט הַשְּׂעִירָתָה׃	*Invoked Evaluation*	Now Ehud escaped during their delaying, *and he passed by the idols* and he escaped to Seirah.	M	Narr		Ehud	Narrator		
	[וְהוּא עָבַר אֶת־הַפְּסִילִים]	Repetition; Inclusio (See v. 19)	[*and he passed by the idols*]	M	Narr	force > raise				t, +propriety
3.27	וַיְהִי בְּבוֹאוֹ וַיִּתְקַע בַּשּׁוֹפָר בְּהַר אֶפְרָיִם וַיֵּרְדוּ עִמּוֹ בְנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵל מִן־הָהָר	*Invoked Evaluation*	And it happened that when he came and he blew on the ram's horn in the hill country of Ephraim, *the Israelites went down with him* from the hill country.	M	Narr		**Ehud's summons**	**Israelites**	t, +inclination: eagerness	
	וְהוּא לִפְנֵיהֶם	*Invoked Evaluation*	*Now he [went] before them.*	M	Narr		Ehud	Narrator		+normality: status

Although complete objectivity is impossible, the passing of all the text through the network and the transparency of the data that results serves to constrain subjectivity and improve interpretation of the narrative.

Examples Involving Anaphoric Pronouns

I have only provided a brief overview of the theory behind narrative appraisal. However, I will give several examples of how the method, when applied, can be integrated into an evaluative exegesis of passages, specifically those in which the syntactical function of anaphoric pronouns plays a role, in conjunction, of course, with other factors.

Ehud

Ehud's two encounters with the idols (הַפְּסִילִים) at Gilgal that form an inclusio around his attack on Eglon are ethically problematic to many interpreters.[20] Some interpret the idols innocuously as boundary markers, others more definitively with the worship of foreign gods.[21] If indeed the stones are merely boundary markers, then the double reference to them is likely a geographical clarification or an organisational strategy for the narrative. In fact, however, this interpretation is unlikely considering that every other use of the lemma פסיל in the Hebrew Bible is clearly a reference to carved images with a cultic purpose, and this interpretation fits the context.[22] The implied author may have been criticising the Israelites and their leader for tolerating foreign idols in the land that Yahweh gave them, or may have been implying even greater condemnation on them for setting up their own images of false gods. O'Connell (1996, 84), for example, states, "The predominant Deuteronomic concern, that of cultic disloyalty, remains implicit in Ehud's failure to remove from the land the twice mentioned idols that frame the portrayal of Eglon's assassination (3:19a and 3:26b)." In fact, he blames Ehud's failure for the apostasy that followed his judgeship and resulted in oppression by King Jabin of Hazor (4:1–2).

The evidence is indeed strongest that the stones are idolatrous images; however, this need not reflect negatively on Ehud because another interpretation is quite possible. Verse 19 states that Ehud "turned back from the idols" (וְהוּא שָׁב מִן־הַפְּסִילִים). The Hebrew root שׁוּב is Deuteronomistic terminology used for repentance and turning away from evil and toward Yahweh;[23] thus, as well as or instead of a possible role in geographical clarification,[24] the implied author may be suggesting that Ehud rejected

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20 Kotter suggests that the name "Gilgal" means "circle (of stones)," and that this may be the same place where Joshua set up a memorial of stones after crossing the Jordan into the Promised Land in Josh 4:20. The site became an important cultic centre and, still later in the writings of Hosea and Amos, a symbol of apostasy (Kotter 1992, 2.1022–23).

21 For a variety of views, see Block (1999, 163–64); Brettler (1995, 191 n. 10); Butler (2009, 71); Lenzi (2008, 225 n. 25); Polzin (1993, 160); Webb (1987, 131. 246 n. 29); Younger (2002, 116–17).

22 Deuteronomy 7:5, 25; 12:3; 2 Kgs 17:41; Isa 10:10; 21:9; 30:22; 42:8; Jer 8:19; 50:38; 51:47, 52; Hos 11:2. For some reason, Sasson's detailed footnote on these explicates the word מַצֵּבָה ('standing stone'), which does not appear in these texts Sasson (2009, 576–77 n. 15). However, see Sasson (2014, 230–31).

23 In phrases such as "to return to Yahweh with all the heart" and "turn from the evil way." See Weinfeld (1992, 51, 335).

24 Perhaps a deliberate *double entendre*. The Ehud narrative has many of these.

the apostasy of Israel and the idolatry of Moab. According to Polzin (1993, 160), his "decisive actions for Israel begin with a characteristic 'turning away from the idols (*šûb min happᵉsîlîm*),' as one 'turns away from the evil way (*šûb midderek harāᶜāh*)' (1 Kgs 13:33; 2 Kgs 17:13) and 'returns to Yahweh' (Deut 30:10)." Verse 26, which is typically translated "he passed by the idols" (וְהוּא עָבַר אֶת־הַפְּסִילִים), could merely describe his return route, but in conjunction with v. 19 could also metaphorically portray his rejection of idols since he passes by them without giving them any obeisance or recognition. Polzin (1993, 160) goes so far as to suggest the possible translation "he transgressed or broke the idols," implying a "narrative recuperation and restoration from the apostasy of Israel."[25] He sees clear Deuteronomistic overtones in the language; however, I am not claiming that עבר in v. 26 is typical use of Deuteronomistic vocabulary, but that the language is metaphorical.[26]

Interestingly, in both phrases the pleonastic anaphoric pronoun (וְהוּא) is expressed, something that is not required by the grammar, suggesting that the appropriate understanding might be an emphatic "he himself,"[27] effectively contrasting Ehud's own appropriate behaviour in rejecting idols with the majority of Israelites who were doing the evil thing, apostasy, in the eyes of Yahweh (3:12). The fronted and expressed pronoun in וְהוּא שָׁב מִן־הַפְּסִילִים (v. 19) does not function here to break the sequence of *wayyiqtol*s for a change of scene or an off-line comment. According to van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze (2017, §47.2.1.1.a, italics original), however, the expressed pronoun can be used in a situation in which "(Re-)activated characters (or entities) are *compared (#a)* or *contrasted (#b–c)*."[28] It can also be used for "*modifying* the identity, features, or extent of (the referent of) a constituent of an explicit or implicit discourse active proposition" such as "confirming the identity in the sense of restricting it to a particular entity" (2017, §47.2.1.2.b, italics original). Therefore, the pronoun may stress the distinctiveness of Ehud in his rejection of the idols, contrasting him with the general apostasy in Israel. In v. 26 it is clear that the fronted proper noun subject וְאֵהוּד serves to break the sequence of *wayyiqtol*s for a change of scene, but less clear that the

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25 Polzin, however, suggests that Ehud may actually perform these positive symbolic actions unknowingly. See also Boda (2012b, 1107 n. 19); Stone (2012, 240–41, 246).

26 Weinfeld (1992, 340) only notes that the term עבר is Deuteronomistic in the sense of transgressing the covenant of Yahweh.

27 Muraoka (1985, 48) states: "The personal pronouns with verbum finitum serves to express an intense concern with, special interest in, or concentrated, focused consciousness of, the object referred to by the pronoun on the part of the speaker or writer. And moreover, sometimes the speaker or writer wants a listener or reader to share his concern, interest, or consciousness, which derives from the very nature of linguistic activity." See also Stone (2012, 240–41).

28 See also Joüon and Muraoka (2006, §146a.1): "The pronoun is added to bring out antithetical contrast; one member of a set is highlighted to the exclusion of the others. Usually there are two parts to the statement, one being cast in affirmative form and the other in negative form. … In some cases the contrast is only implicit, only one of the two contrasting members being explicitly mentioned." Waltke and O'Connor (1990, §16.3.2.d) note: "In other cases the antithesis is only *implicit*; the other, contrasting party is not mentioned."

expressed וְהוּא immediately following is merely there as "a necessary formal prop for an inserted circumstantial clause" (Muraoka 1985, 31). Muraoka (1985, 31 n. 73) uses Driver (1874, 205) to support his argument, who states: "Judg. iii. 26 and Ehud escaped וְהוּא עָבַר *he having passed over* etc. (not the mere addition of a fresh act like וַיַּעֲבֹר, but the justification of the preceding נִמְלָט)." It is more logical in the light of the previous use of the pleonastic pronoun in v. 19, which also concerns the הַפְּסִילִים, that the use is emphatic: "Now Ehud escaped while they were delaying, and *he himself* passed by the idols." The verbs "escaped" and "passed by" follow each other logically, so the pronoun is used emphatically, not in order to break the verbal sequence. This would result in a positive evaluation of Ehud.

In sum, the term פְּסִיל consistently refers to idols used for cultic purposes; there is no evidence that Ehud allowed, set up, or condoned the idols, the lexis (עבר, שוב) and context imply that he repudiated idolatry, and the pleonastic pronoun emphasizes Ehud's distinctive role in dealing with the idols that contrasts with the apostasy of Israel. Ehud's attitude to idols also contrasts with the eagerness of Eglon to engage with foreign deities (Judg 3:20, דְּבַר־אֱלֹהִים לִי אֵלֶיךָ, reading "the gods" instead of "God" for אֱלֹהִים from Eglon's perspective, a deliberate play on words). When all the evidence is considered, it seems most likely that the implied author is suggesting that Ehud is acting with +**propriety** in the two idol incidents that frame the assassination of Eglon.[29] The reason for this subtle inference instead of a forthright ideological statement regarding Ehud's orthodoxy—aside from the usual reticence of the narrator— is a literary one: the *double-entendres* not only enhance the satirical quality of the narrative by mocking the enemy, but they also further the plot since they serve as the basis for intrigue which will result in Eglon's death.

Gideon

My second example involves Judges 8:4–5, which constitute a major—and negative—turning point in the character of Gideon,[30] in spite of the fact that Stone (2012, 297) states, "Interpreters making a facile connection between Gideon 'in the Spirit' (7:1–8:3) and Gideon 'motivated by self' (8:4–21) perpetrate anachronistic exegesis. The narrator offers no critique of Gideon in 8:4–21. This episode of the story presents as exemplary a portrayal as the earlier portion."[31]

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29 See also Webb (2012, 172–73).

30 See Webb (1987, 151): "In this first movement then, Gideon is a reluctant conscript, who distrusts his own competence and relies wholly upon Yahweh. … A rather different Gideon appears in the second movement, beginning in 8.4." Boda (2012b, 1161) states: "Here is the beginning of a trend of self-interest and revenge among the later judges." See also Block (1999, 287); Butler (2009, 218); Klein (1988, 61); Webb (2012, 251).

31 In fact, Stone argues vehemently that Gideon's behaviour is commendable until he mistakenly refuses the offer of kingship as superior to charismatic leadership, a theme of what he identifies as the third redactional level. Stone identifies three primary stages in the diachronic formation of the text: first, the

Previously, in Judges 6 and 7, Yahweh has worked—through the visit of the messenger of Yahweh, the destruction of the altar to Baal, the sign of the fleece, the reduction of his troops, and the night-time visit to the enemy camp—to cultivate a desirable attitude of +**security: trust** in Gideon. In Judges 8:4, Gideon, along with his 300 chosen men, set out to pursue the kings of Midian, Zebah and Zalmunna, who have so far escaped the net thrown out by the Israelites to ensnare the escaping enemies. The implied author sets the scene through the narrator: the company and its leader, Gideon, cross the Jordan "weary yet pursuing" (עֲיֵפִים וְרֹדְפִים).[32] Both terms are plural and refer to both "him" (Gideon) and "the 300 men who were with him" (הוּא וּשְׁלֹשׁ־מֵאוֹת הָאִישׁ אֲשֶׁר אִתּוֹ עֲיֵפִים וְרֹדְפִים). In v. 5, however, Gideon asks the people of Succoth for food and gives his own perspective on the situation: "for they are weary, and *I* am pursuing" (כִּי־עֲיֵפִים הֵם וְאָנֹכִי רֹדֵף, emphasis added; see McCann 2002, 68–69) using the expressed pronoun אָנֹכִי. The implied author allows a counter voice to emerge (**C:Ct**),[33] the voice of arrogance and self-confidence. The change in wording indicates that Gideon differentiates himself from his men and implies that only they are weary (−**capacity**), but he is strong enough to determinedly pursue his goal (+**security: confidence**) (see Joüon and Muraoka 2006, §146a.1; van der Merwe, Naudé, and Kroeze 2017, §47.2.1.1.a; §47.2.1.2.b as discussed above). The contrast with v. 4 makes this use of the expressed pronoun conspicuous, and after it two changes are clearly apparent in the narrative in vv. 7–19: Gideon acts on his own and in his own interests, and Yahweh disappears from the account. Webb argues that Gideon does not follow the requirements for a legitimate "avenger of blood" as an agent of Yahweh's justice, but acts out a personal vendetta (Webb 2012, 260–61). From v. 7 on Gideon has apparently left his companions behind, as indicated by numerous first person singular verbs and pronouns in his own speech ("into *my* hand," "*I* will thrash," "when *I* return safely," "*I* will tear down," "you taunted *me*," "*my* brothers, the sons of *my* mother") and third person singular verbs in the narrator's account ("*he* went up," "*he* spoke," "*he* attacked," "*he* pursued them," "*he* captured,"

Storyteller's version, which celebrates the exploits of outstanding, but often violent, individuals (Stone 2012, 197–98); second, the Moralist's version (Stone argues against a Deuteronomistic redactor), which recontextualises the "heroic tradition [which] was becoming an unusable past" (Stone 2012, 201) in order to serve the purpose of clan or tribal order; and third, the Monarchist's edition, in which "the editor achieves this decentering of the heroic ideal by framing it as something that worked in its era, but ultimately failed and had to be replaced by something else, that something else being the Judean, Davidic monarchy" (Stone 2012, 203). It is interesting that although Stone ultimately argues that the purpose of Judges in its final form is to support the monarchy, in discussing Gideon's violent punishment of Succoth and Penuel and in exacting revenge for his brothers he seems to resort to an earlier stage of redaction, that of the heroic Storyteller or the tribal Moralist, to justify Gideon's actions (see, for example, Stone 2012, 292, 294, 296–97).

32 In fact, the act of "crossing the Jordan" may be symbolic of Gideon's trespass into impropriety since עבר can have the sense of "overstep" or "contravene" (*HALOT*, 779; see Judg 2:20). See Butler (2009, 218); Younger (2002, 197).

33 Countering is a strategy that occurs when an opposing voice to that of the implied author is presented through a character or group in order that it might be contradicted (C:Ct). This is part of the ENGAGEMENT system. Later, circumstances will force Gideon into a moment of self-awareness, and he will be obliged to act more humbly (8:22–23).

"*he* routed," "*he* came," "*he* took," "*he* disciplined," "*he* tore down," "*he* killed," "*he* said"). The identity of "he" is clarified in v. 11 ("Gideon") and v. 13 ("Gideon the son of Joash"), lest the reader forget. Interestingly, in v. 11 the narrator recounts that וַיַּךְ אֶת־הַמַּחֲנֶה ("*he* attacked the camp"). Since there has been no mention of his men since the comment that they were weary and Gideon was pursuing, and as far as the narrative is concerned Gideon appears to have left them behind, it seems remarkable that he attacked an enemy camp alone, even if it was "unsuspecting," and later not only captured the two kings but also routed the whole army (v. 12). It is likely, of course, that Gideon had companions with him all along, but since the narrator does not mention them, or Yahweh, and attributes all the actions to Gideon himself, the implication is that he accomplishes the deeds in his own strength and initiative. Certainly the nature of narrative requires that the main participant be referred to on a regular basis, but the concentration of references to Gideon alone in this section is striking, and an indication that the implied author is construing him as arrogant (+**security: confidence**). Surely these techniques, focusing on the contrast created by the expressed use of אָנֹכִי, but including other pronominal references, constitute more than Stone's (2012, 297) "facile connection"; they construe the character of Gideon, and his transition from being trusting—a positive trait—to being aggressively self-confident—a negative trait in the context.

Samson

The use of pronouns is also crucial to Samson's self-evaluation in the final scenes of his narrative. The implied author carefully sets the scene for Samson's final act (v. 25), recounting the high spirits of the Philistines (+**happiness: cheer**), the degradation of Samson as he entertains his captors (−**normality: status**), and the thousands of spectators looking on from the top of the temple to enjoy his humiliation (+**satisfaction: interest**).[34] Samson manages to position himself next to the supporting pillars and, for only the second recorded time, calls out to Yahweh. The implied author presented his first prayer as a self-serving and arrogant demand for water, and presents his second as a self-serving and arrogant demand for personal revenge (**C:Ct**).[35] Those who expect Samson to finally express humility and reverence towards God as a result of his setbacks will be disappointed. Thus, the actual text of his prayer deserves closer inspection (vv. 28, 30): אֲדֹנָי יהוה זָכְרֵנִי נָא וְחַזְּקֵנִי נָא אַךְ הַפַּעַם הַזֶּה הָאֱלֹהִים וְאִנָּקְמָה נְקַם־אַחַת מִשְּׁתֵי עֵינַי מִפְּלִשְׁתִּים ... תָּמוֹת נַפְשִׁי עִם־פְּלִשְׁתִּים ("O Lord God, please remember me and please strengthen me only this time, O God, that I may at once be avenged of the Philistines

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34 Boda (2012b, 1235) notes that the large number of people on the roof of the temple would probably weaken its structure.

35 Contra Amit (1999, 305–06), who claims, "Now, as at Enhakkore, the prayer expresses the deliverer's dependence upon God. Samson wreaks vengeance upon the Philistines through the power of prayer and not through the power of his hair. … The wording of Samson's prayer alludes to the recognition of his sin and his consciousness of his destiny."

for my two eyes.[36] … Let my life die with the Philistines!") Whereas Samson addressed Yahweh merely as אַתָּה ("you") in his first prayer, here he does use the covenant name of God, and later, אֱלֹהִים ("God"). However, it is difficult to overlook the fact that there are no less than five references to Samson in the prayer: four personal pronoun suffixes (נַפְשִׁי, עֵינַי, וְחַזְּקֵנִי, זָכְרֵנִי) and one 1cs cohortative verb (וְאִנָּקְמָה). Younger (2002, 323) concurs: "This is a truly egocentric prayer. Although ostensibly addressed to Yahweh, it is dominated by first-person pronouns, which occur five times in this short prayer."[37] Here Samson definitely construes himself as **+normality**; his status and his reputation the focus and point at issue although the double use of נָא, according to Christiansen (2009, 391), perhaps "nullifies the bald directness and face-threatening aspect of the imperative." Most striking, however, is the content: Samson explicitly states that he wants personal revenge for the harm done to him: "remember *me* … strengthen *me* … that *I* may be avenged … for *my* two eyes" (**−happiness: antipathy**). Samson makes no mention whatsoever of the shame brought on the reputation of Yahweh by the Philistines' treatment of Samson and wanting revenge for that.[38] He is unable to rise above the personal and immediate to see the significance of the situation, which is a contest between two "gods" for sovereignty, indeed, reality. This is not the first time in Judges that the implied author has brought the divine contest into focus; in the Ehud pericope it is implied by the *double entendre* inherent in אֱלֹהִים ("God/gods"), in the Gideon narrative the dispute is between Yahweh and Baal, and in the Jephthah episode between Yahweh and Chemosh (see Webb 1987, 167–68). The central issue here is whether Yahweh or Dagon is the true god. Samson's final words, "Let me die with the Philistines" (v. 30), are again focused on himself. Block (1999, 467) points out, "In his plea for God to remember and strengthen him, he seems totally oblivious to the national emergency and unconcerned about the divine agenda he was raised up to fulfill." Once again, the use of pronouns—in this case a cluster of 1cs references—is effective in evaluating a participant's character.

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36 The wording here is interpreted in different ways. Schneider (2000, 225) translates this to mean "to take revenge on the Philistines if only for one of his two eyes." Galpaz-Feller (2006a, 317–18) suggests that Samson is moderating his revenge, and that "he will be content with the revenge coming to the enemy for putting out one of his eyes, and not the revenge they truly deserve for putting out both of them." See also Galpaz-Feller (2006b, 222). Galpaz-Feller's suggestion that "Samson acknowledges his vengeful nature. This time, he decides to channel it wisely," is not convincing. As Webb (2012, 414) states, "It is not a cry of repentance, and there is nothing noble about it. All Samson wants is vengeance for the personal wrongs he has suffered."

37 Younger (2002, 322) is apparently referring to his English translation, "And let me revenge [*nqm*] myself," following Boling (1975, 251), and viewing the verb as reflexive.

38 Exum (1983, 42), referring to the work of Mendenhall (1973, 76–77), asserts: "Nevertheless, it would be unfair to accuse Samson of thinking only of retaliation. More likely … *nqm* is not vengeance which asserts the self as arbiter, but rather vindication, the legitimate exercise of force where the normal legal institutions of society are obstructed. Thus, Samson acts as the legitimate agent of Yhwh's punishment." This may be so in the sense that Yahweh is indeed using Samson to vindicate his name, but the text indicates that Samson himself is primarily concerned with his personal vindication, revenge for the loss of his two eyes.

Conclusion

In conclusion, appraisal analysis is a valuable method of evaluating characters and actions in the context of the narrative. Its transparency and thoroughness encourage the interpreter to consider all available evidence, and subjectivity is constrained, if not eliminated. Even the unassuming pronoun provides fruitful material for the method and yields meaningful results.

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