Yaqob's Ladder and the Logic of Magic, Metaphor and Metaphysics

Narratives of the Unconscious, the Self, and the Assembly

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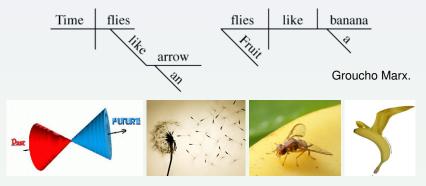
This Presentation

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Polysemy, Paronomasia and Syllepsis

- Polysemy: Capacity of a sign to bear multiple meanings.
- Syllepsis: Understanding of the same word(s) in two different ways at once*. Same (or similar) expressions simultaneously refer to a proximal/immediate & to a remote/alternative context.



 Paronomasia (similar sounding words) is a mechanism that can be used to induce sylleptic effects.

Riffaterre (1980, p.625-626, p.637-638).

Some Remarks on Overinterpretation

If we fail to perceive the subtle indicators of individuation and the exquisite twists and turns of character development that often lie 'hidden in plain sight', we do not simply fail to add a speculative layer of overinterpretation to the history, or prophetic message, or plot. We risk ignoring the center stage and focus of this subtle work of divine anthropology.

Ultimately, whether the claim of implicit subtext to any given verse will be judged as a literary reading, as creative midrash or... as overinterpretation, will depend on the resonance of the subtext with the literary whole and upon the further contextual indications of the subtext.

A Word about Close Reading, Overinterpretation and Bean Counting: One persons's close reading is another's overinterpretation... Klitsner (2006, p.16, 20, 26).

 A sacred text speaks to its reader according to his/her virtues and vices, wishes and needs.

Biblical use of Paronomasia and Syllepsis

- Semitic languages' triliteral root system plus inflection by vocalization stimulates using effects based on Paronomasia.
- Pervasive use in classical literature, Noegel (2013, p.24,178).
- Emphatic or poetic function: Genesis 1:1 & Ecclesiastes 7:1
 At the beginning created God...

Better a good name than good perfume.

טוב שם משטו טוב

- Name captures essence of an entity (etymologically or not).
- Name exegesis function: Genesis 25:26

[he] hold the heel of 'esau and was called by the name Yaqob.

- 'eqeb = Heel, step, footsteps, trail; to track; following, due-to, because-of, in-consequence-of \to 'egapha
- $oseh = to do, to make \rightarrow esau$.

Klein (1987, p.481, 488), Casanowicz (1879).



Syllepsis for Mantic Prophecy and Magic Sympathy

 Mantic or Prophetic function: Amos 8:1,2 & Amos 7:5,7 פָּה הַרְאַנִי אֲדֹנָי יָהוֶה וְהַנָּה כְּלִוּב קָיִץ: אַלִּי בַּא הַקַץ אַל־עַמֵי

I see: A basket of summer (fruit) = The end of my people. gays; ges. = summer; ruin, end (of life-cycle). Schorch (2000, 215) וָאֹמַר אֲדֹנֵי יְהוָהֹ חֲדַל־נָּא מִי יָקוּם יַעֲלֶב כִּי קָטָן הְוּא:

בָּה הָרְאַנִי וְהָנָּה אֲדֹנָי נָצָב עַל־חוֹמַת אֲנֶדְ וּבְיָלַו אֲנֶדְ:

By whom shall Yagob arise? for he is so small. Thus God showed me a vertical wall; In His hand, a plumb-line. $\partial_{anak}(y) = \text{Lead}$, plumb line; Ego (pronoun), Self-Identity token. Klein (1987, p.40, 577, 588), Jaynes (2000, p.295-6, 372).

 Sympathetic magic / semiotic function: Numbers 21:8,9 Copper snake/magic (*nehaš*): As/on a miracle/pole \sim sign (*nes*) nehaš nehošet vaysimehw (al hanes נַחָשׁ מַרָנִישְׁמָהוּ עַל־דַעָּנָס Klein (1987, p.412, 418), Hurowitz (2004).

Magical & Ungrammatical Transformations & Rituals

- Naming gives (or captures) the identity (essence) of an entity.
- Renaming implies a change of identity! (a,b)
 ex: Genesis 32:28,29,32

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שׁמְדֹּ כִּי אִם יִשְׂרָאֵל כִּי שְׁרָיֹתָ עִם־אֲלֹדֶים וְעִם־אֲנָשִׁים וַתּוּכֵל:
וִיִּשְׁאַל יַעֲלָב [ יִשְׂרָאֵל ] וַיֹּאמֶל הַגִּידָה־נָּא שְׁמֶּדְ וַיְּאמֶר
לָמָה זָה תִּשְׁאַל לִשְׁמֵי וַיְבָרֶדְ אֹתָו שָׁם:
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עַל־בַּן לְא־יאׁכָלוּ בָנֵי־יִשְׂרָאֵׁל אֶתּ־גִּיד הַנָּשָׁה

...and your [Yaqob] new name shall be Yśra'el, for you have struggled with 'elohim & with men and prevailed. (c) And Yaqob [Yśra'el] asked him: Tell (d) me thy (e) name! and he (e) said:

- Standard: For what reason do you ask my name?
- Syllepsis: "Why-is-it-like-this?" this is what my name asks! And there he^(e) [Lama-ze] blessed him [with his new name - Yśra'el]. Hence, Yśra'el-ites don't eat the sciatic^(g) sinew.^(f)

Yaqob to Yśra'el Transformation (notes)

- (a) Hebrew *Dabar* means Word & Thing ($\& \Rightarrow magical\ thought$) Buber (1927), Rabinowitz (1993), Shands (1968), Stern (2007).
- (b) No entity without identity!(Pun intended, see W. van O. Quine's celebrated aphorism)
- (c) The identity of an entity is forged:
- by the words used in its / his / her attributed name;
- by the narrative explaining the naming process;
- by renaming, hence changing the name(ed) (of the) entity.
- "I" am my name condensating the tales told* about me!
- (d) Yaqob 'becomes' Yśra'el by asking (actively inquiring or demanding) an understanding about the world, by searching for causal relations explaining the way it is and how it works.
- (e) He^(e) must be the angel of Metaphysics, concerned with why things are the way they do (Aristotle's causal explanations)

^{*} mostly by myself; Jaynes (2000), Bruner (2002).

Yagob to Yśra el Transformation (notes)

- (d,f,g) Hag(y,a)dah = tell, story; <math>gyd = sinew, vein, penis;našeh = to forget; sciatic (hapax legomenon).*
- Standard reading: Ritualized eating taboo.
- Murky sexual innuendo induces strong sub-text polarization, marking the possibility of syllepses and alternative readings.
- Alternative reading: Avoid the "tale of oblivion"! Do not forget (the tale told)! Remember (the lesson learned)!
- At many temporal scales (daily vigil / sleep cycle, individual birth / death, raise / fall of civilizations) we are always learning/ forgetting, finding/loosing/(re)creating knowledge & wisdom.+

^{*} See Klein (1987, p.91, 97, 136, 138, 428, 634, 681).

Riffaterre (1980, p.637), paraphrases Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit: Natural consciousness, too, is always learning from experience what is true in it [and then] it is always forgetting it and starting the movement all over again.

Human Ontogeny: Thought, Language and Inference

- Revisit Amos 8, Gen 25, Amos 7, Gen 32, Eccl 7; Gen 28:12.
- For me, these examples suggest parallel evolutionary ladders for acquisition of linguistic skills and rational/intellectual abilities, for individual human ontogeny and/or species phylogeny:
- (7?) Formal relations as mathematical demonstration / proof.
- (6) Hermeneutics, formal relations ⇒ Legal system; (tools for) communal agreement, but also stereotypification, melancholy;
- (5) Do not forget, remember! (?)⇒ Oral to written tradition;
- (4) Causal relations ⇒ Why explanat., insight, responsibility;
- (3) Recursive relations: Self-reference ⇒ Complex metaphors and narrative structures; Ego, conscious teleological planning;
- (2) Consequence relations ⇒ Simplest narrative structures;
- (1) Magical relations ⇒ Mantic visual/aural pattern resonances;

Human Ontogeny: Thought, Language and Inference

- From relatively free, uncontrolled or ungrammatical associations based on visual/aural form/pattern matching; to progressively more controlled, grammatical and complex chains of relations; to long, formal and rigorous argumentation.
- This seems to be our road of development: Yagob's Ladder.
- This path seems to (unavoidably) take us closer to God...*
- Talmudic logic includes deductive, inductive, probabilistic, recursive, circular (hypersets), etc. rules for argumentation; Ex: Yšma'el ben Eliša 13 mydot (hermeneutic inference rules);
- Dorsal spine of mainstream (rabinic) Judaism after II CE;
- Modern mathematical models for such forms of inference.
- Ich fürchte, wir werden Gott nicht los,* weil wir noch an die Grammatik glauben. F. Nietzsche, Götzen-Dämmerung (1889).
- Yaqob's ladder's bottom/archaic steps' permanent importance: Any? No? Rationalistic trap? Shallow/ unfulfilling form of life?

Human Ontogeny: Thought, Language and Inference

- For ideas and approaches related to the previously suggested development path for thought and language, see:
- Ontogeny: Lev Simkhovich Vygodskii, Jean Piaget, etc.
- Phylogeny: Julian Jaynes (Kielmeyer's recapitulation law);
- At the *top* of the evolutionary ladder we find inference chains with logical rules represented by powerful algebraic properties (associativity, commutativity, transitivity, fixed-points, etc.), refs.
- I am more interested in the *bottom* of this evolutionary ladder, with relatively free / ungrammatical association mechanisms!
- Weak(er) properties, ex. *limited range* inference rules.
- Scarce work at this extreme of the scale, see Franks (2012).
- Could such models benefit from Statistical Analysis tools for probabilistic association & pattern-matching mechanisms? (where longer, size s, chains have probability $e^{-\alpha s}$)

Permanence of Archaic Forms of Association

- King *hizeqiya*, the iconoclast (2 Kings 18:4, 700 BC), destroyed the *Nehuštan*, the copper snake of Num 21:9 (1400 BC).
- Contemporary monotheistic religions have banned any form of manipulative magic, M.Weber (1919), G.Bateson (1987).
- It is a *Roš Hašanah* (new year's) costume to invent, prepare, "say" and eat new culinary pun-dishes, like: *To a Peas*-ful year! *Raisin* salaries! *Lettuce* go, *Thyme* to *Beet* our obstacles! etc.
- Contemporary psychotherapy recognizes the importance of using ontogenically archaic forms of association and thought.
- Demarcation criteria for acceptable use of magical thought?
- Can the use of such archaic inference chains be modeled?
- Are the Freudian cathexis (Besetzung) mechanisms of displacement (Verschiebung) and condensation (Verdichtung), or the Lacanian poetic functions of Metaphor (drawing a structural similarity) and Metonymy (drawing a contiguity) examples of good or valid logical operators?

Causal Explanations and Logical Positivism

- Auguste Comte (1798–857), Wiener Kreis (Schlick 1922–36):
- Science = Observational sentences + Logical structure.*
- Ontology & metaphysics have the status of mere auxiliaries.*
- The notion of cause itself has no firm place in science.
- Mark of progress: Disappearance of causal terminology.
- Max Planck (1950): Positivism lacks the driving force to be a leader on this road... Progress, advancement, requires new associations of ideas and new queries... toward such things the fundamental attitude of Positivism is one of aloofness.
- Metaphysics concerns causal explanations telling why things are the way they do. These are the narratives and metaphors, often intertwined with abstracts symbolic statements, we use to build our understanding, to gain insight or intuition about objects in our world and the way they work, see Stern (2011).*
- Hence, ontology and metaphysics must have their place at the center stage of scientific drama, see Stern (2014, 2015).*

Yagob's Ladder: New & (very) Old Pavements

- Gen 28:10-19 Symbol of human development & evolution.
- Time honored idiom: Do not throw away the ladder after having climbed up on it!
- Positivist hubris impairs intuition, creativity & evolution.
- Yagob's ladder is not a one way lift, we must climb it up and down, all the time, and all the way!
- Life requires conscious rigor, but also dreaming, new insights and creative associations; visiting new and (very) old pavements.
- Is this one of the roles of religion? and art? and some other old ways almost forgotten in modern society?





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FAQ1: Ariadne's Clues in Linguistic Clews









Weak links between words $(\mu v \theta o \varsigma)$ derived from etymology, pseudo-etymology, paronomasia, contextual syllepsis, etc. can be used to build (spin) threads $(\mu \iota \tau o \varsigma)$ of meaning.

- The intrepid explorer can then try to use such threads as Ariadne's clews (or clues) in the labyrinths of implicit meaning, in hope of not loosing himself in his way to (and from) paradise.
- Can we expect etymological and pseudo-etymological links of a natural language to encode (real, reliable, etc.) knowledge?
- Can we expect *sacred / revealed* texts to encode multiple narrative structures making use of such association chains?
- Can such messages, lying hidden in plain sight, (re)present objective / inter-subjective archetypes?

FAQ2: Promethean fire: Tool for freedom, not for free

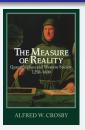






- Brothers Yagob & (eśau parallel $\pi \rho o \mu \eta \theta \epsilon v \varsigma \& \epsilon \pi \iota \mu \eta \theta \epsilon v \varsigma$.*
- Genuine science is an active intellectual enterprise (\neq passive learning) and promotes dynamic worlds (\neq static status quo).
- Mankind has(d) ambivalent feelings for its benevolent Titan.
- Unavoidable consequence: Strong reactionary currents.
- Technology (in our times, software) is a productivity amplifier.
- Good: Promotes interdisciplinary research, allows processing big data, accelerates scientific discovery, frees creativity in art...
- Bad: Can bypass intellectual skills, may avoid acknowledg. of context/ boundary conditions, narcotic automation effects, etc.
- * $\mu\alpha\theta\epsilon\nu$ think; *pra-mantha shake/ take by force.

FAQ3: Integrative Individuation vs Narcissistic Hubris









- Western culture (Wissenschaft) progressively, but unevenly, intertwined and integrated art, science and philosophy.*,+
- Integration of mythological and religious archetypes is very important, but requires soft, non-doctrinaire approaches.
- Dangers of integration breakdown are underestimated.#
- Ontogeny: Mythological themes: Echo & Narcissus, ...
- Reaction / collateral damage: It is all around us...
- * C.P. Snow (1959). Two Cultures. + J.M. Stern (2014). Cognitive-Constructivism, Art & Ontology: Living Forms of the Active Logos. MuBE, São Paulo.
- # Failed program of the Enlightenment (Siècle des Lumières, Aufklärung); Jean-François Lyotard's Postmodern condition.

FAQ4: Cultural / Linguistic Turning Points

- Figs. at p.1 & 20 make reference to historical personalities emblematic of (emphasis) transitions on relational couplings: magical ⇒ metaphoric/ allegorical ⇒ causal/ formal* -relations
- Rav Yehošu(a ben Yoseph, Galilee, 0 33 CE. Known as the master of *hagada* (tale, narrative, allegory) & nicknamed *hagadya* (the lamb, good heart). Spoken language: Classical Hebrew had been replaced by Aramaic (Greek, Latin).
- Allegorical teaching: Was widely accessible & translatable.
- Talmudic halaka (walk, way): Hermeneutical mydot*+ II-V CE
- Sir Francis Bacon, England, 1561 1626. One of earliest empiricists, he promoted: *Inductive method**+; Scientific inquiry; The Royal Society (natural knowledge) 1660.
- After the development of quantitative methods & technology over three millennia, scientific models and language become the dominant system in human knowledge.
- *At that time, non-mathematical, but well regimented inference rules; *Current research for best axiomaic systems.

FAQ5: Return(s) to the Sources of Life

Ecclesiastes 1:9, he states: ve^jeyn khal-hadash tahat hashamesh, וְאֵין כְּלֹ־חָדְשׁ תַּחַת הַשְּׁמֶשׁ, 'there is nothing new under the sun'.

Ecclesiastes 12:11, see also Casanowicz (1894, ex.78), דְּבְרֵי חֲכָמִים כַּדְּרְבֹנוֹת וּכְמַשְּׂמְרוֹת נְטוּעִים בַּעֲלֵי אֲסָפּוֹת, dibrey hakhamym kadarebonoth ukemasmerot netuym ba'aley 'asupoth, 'the words of the wise [are like] spikes and nails, fastened by the masters of assemblies'.

Ecclesiastes 12:1, Casanowicz (1894, ex.58) uzekhor יet-bor eikha bymey behurotheykha, וּוְלר אֶת בּוֹרְאֶיךְ בִּימֵי בְּחוּרֹתֶיךְ, 'remember the creator [present] on the days of your youth';

FAQ6: Metaphysics and the Letter Lamed

- Name: from verb lomed = I learn. Value: 30.
- Grammatical functions as a prefix: Infinitive verbal form. Ex: Dabar = word; ledaber = to speak. Preposition: to, for. Ex: *lama* = why, *l-ma*, for-what (por-que).
- The angel lama-ze is subordinated to the letter lamed, either grammatically or conceptually, for a why-question can only be answered if the following conditions for learning are satisfied:
- (1) In the pertinent universe or relevant domain of the question there is some kind of order (to be learned), not only chaos.
- (2) It is possib. to establish (partial) correspondences between the internal organization of the individual (organism, system) asking the question and the external order of the universe, based on potentially available structural similarities.



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 The lamed makes this link! Peace, goodbye, farewell...

Caetano Veloso (1984), Lingua:

Se você tem uma ideia incrível, É melhor fazer uma canção; Está provado que só é possível, Filosofar em alemão.

Tom Jobim e Vinicius de Moraes (1958):

Velho caminho por onde passou, Carro de boi, boiadeiro gritando ô ô; Velho caminho por onde passou, O meu carinho chamando por mim ô ô.

Caminho perdido na serra, Caminho d pedra onde não vai ninguém; Só sei que hoje tenho em mim, Um caminho de pedra no peito também.

Hoje sozinho não sei pra onde vou, É o caminho que vai me levando ô ô...

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Jacob's Ladder, A.Houthuesen







Sede paciente, pois a paciência é também caridade! Deus vos salve, e sede feliz!

Exportar é o que importa! (Delfim Netto)

Com tais premissas, ele sem dúvida leva-nos às primícias. (Padre Antônio Vieira)

Sagres sagrou então a Descoberta, E partiu encoberto a descobrir. (Miguel Torga)

א בגד הו ז חטי כ/ך ל מ/ם
$$\rho/N$$
 ל σ/S ל מ/ס א ב ג ד הו ז חטי כ/ך ל מ/ס א ב ג ד הו ז חטי כ/ך ל מ/ס א ב ג ד הו ז חטי כ/ך ל מ/ס ב/ף צ/ץ ק ר ש ש ת מון ס א פ/ S S / S S / S S S S / S S S