A METHODOLOGY FOR JANUS PARALLELISM

Nathan LeMaster
Ph.D. Candidate, Cambridge University
Faculty of Divinity
Cambridge University

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The Greek god of beginnings and endings had two faces, one looking to the future and the other to the past. This god was known by the name Janus. Thus, the masterful Hebrew literary device used to intentionally exploit a single word with two meanings—one meaning pointing to what has come before, and the other meaning to what has come after—was deemed Janus Parallelism. The conclusions one draws about Janus Parallelism impact a proper understanding of authorial intention and the semantic connections which existed in the mind of the Hebrew writer. The purpose of this article is to establish an initial methodology for identifying Janus Parallelism, as well as to expound the implications of Janus Parallelism for biblical studies. The pertinent question for this study is, how can one affirm that the biblical author purposefully exploited both meanings? While recent scholarship has been insightful on this issue, the danger of presuming upon the intention of the biblical author remains. This article argues that the first step in identifying Janus Parallelism is to prove a case of polysemy or homonymy (not ambiguity) within the Janus word. The second step is to demonstrate previously established semantic connections between both meanings of the Janus word and the immediate context. This initial methodology for determining Janus Parallelism will help to prove the intention of the biblical author, rather than allowing imagination of possible meanings to overshadow sound exegesis.

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Introduction

Janus Parallelism is a masterful literary device that has been used by numerous Biblical Hebrew writers. The term Janus Parallelism hints to the peculiarity of this literary device. Within Greek mythology, the god beginnings and endings is named Janus, who has two faces which look to the past and to the future. So also, Janus Parallelism is the purposeful exploitation of a single word with two meanings, one
meaning pointing to what has come before and one meaning pointing to what comes after. Several examples will shortly be examined.

The study of Janus Parallelism has ramifications beyond the study of literary devices. The conclusions one draws about Janus Parallelism impact a proper understanding of authorial intention as well as the semantic connections which exist in the mind of the Hebrew writer. Therefore, it is necessary to establish a clear methodology for identifying Janus Parallelism, an endeavor which has yet to be completed within Hebrew scholarship. The purpose of this article is to establish a methodology for identifying Janus Parallelism as well as expound on the implications of Janus Parallelism in biblical studies. This will be accomplished by first examining what scholarship has concluded up to this point, and then by solidifying a proper methodology.

**Defining Janus Parallelism**

The term Janus Parallelism was coined by Cyrus Gordon in his 1978 article “New Directions.”¹ Within this article, he explains that Janus Parallelism “hinges on the use of a single word with two entirely different meanings: one meaning paralleling what precedes, and the other meaning what follows.”² He uses Song of Songs 2:12 to illustrate his point.

הַנִּצָּנִים נִרְאוּ בָאָרֶץ ֵ֥ת הַזָּמִ֖יר הִגִּ֑יﬠַ וְק֥וֹל הַתּ֖וֹר נִשְׁמַ֥ע בְּאַרְצֵֽנוּ

“The blossoms appear in the land. The time of צمير has come, and the sound of the turtledove is heard in our land.”

Within this verse, צمير can be understood in two ways. The first, being “pruning,” would refer back to the blossoms appearing, and the second, “song,” would refer forward to the turtledove being heard. The lexeme צمير can be used for both meanings. For instance, צمير is used for “(two) months of pruning in the Gezer Calendar (ירוח צمير).”³ In addition, צمير is often used as “song,” such as in Job 35:10 with זמרות בַּלָּֽיְלָה, “Songs in the night.” Many additional scholars have made use of this definition, making arguments from texts throughout the Old Testament.

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² Ibid., 59.
Scholarship on Janus Parallelism

While Cyrus Gordon was the first to coin the term Janus Parallelism, he was not the first to notice its usage. In 1933, David Yellin discerned a particularly interesting usage in Job 7:6–7.

“My days pass more swiftly than a weaver’s shuttle; they come to an end without hope.

Remember that my life is a breath; my eye will never again see anything good.”

According to the argument of Yellin, Job 7:6–7 uses התקוה as both “thread” and “hope.” “Thread” refers back to the weaver’s shuttle. “Hope” refers forward to Job’s failing hope, in particular, the statement that his eye will never again see anything good. התקוה can clearly refer to both “thread/cord” and “hope.” An example of its meaning as “thread” would be Joshua 2:18 in which התקוה is in construct state with הוץ often understood as “thread.” In addition, in Joshua 2:18 התקוה is modified by עץ.

4 While David Yellin identifies an early example of Janus Parallelism, some scholars have pointed back to identification of Janus Parallelism by medieval commentators, Rashi in particular. Herb Basser notes:

I wonder if Rashi’s comments on Ezek. 20:37 disclose an intuitive grasp of “Janus Parallelism.” … The scepter is the symbol of the king’s authority and his laws—so Rashi reads as if 37a and 37b are parallel—by making you kneel beneath the scepter you are now my subject and bound by my laws. So Rashi’s first comments read במסורה as obligation (the extended meaning of fetter). … Rashi’s wording suggests he sees the preposition ל prefixed to במסורה as carrying a meaning often associated with the preposition ל (i.e. למסורתי), namely identifying obligations as the object of one’s loyalty. In his comments to 37a Rashi paraphrases the entire verse. But then Rashi reads the verse anew: 37b does not mirror back 37a but moves the action ahead: I will bring you [to full redemption] by means of the covenant that I have already delivered to you.

Basser goes on to show that Rashi made use of this reading to argue against the idea of a new covenant in Ezekiel, rather opting for a renewed old covenant. Basser states, “For Rashi, המסורה looks backward in the verse to the ‘scepter of authority’ (שבט) and forward to the ‘eternal covenant’ already in hand.” See Herb Basser, “Did Rashi Notice a Janus Parallelism in Ezek. 20:37?,” Journal of Hebrew Scriptures, 8, no. 14 (2008): 3–4. This is an example of how an argument for Janus Parallelism can directly affect the interpretation of the text, with important theological consequences. Therefore, it is all the more important to ensure a proper methodology for Janus Parallelism.


6 A weaver’s shuttle was a piece of wood that housed the weaving material and would pass through the warp of the weave to create the weft. This weaver’s shuttle could be used by one person or passed/thrown between two people for a wide loom. See Robert Alden, “ארג,” in NIDOTTE, ed. Willem VanGemeren (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 490.

7 HALOT, 1:297. Notice especially the use of ובו in the story of Samson and Delilah. Judg. 16:12 —_delilah took new (ropes), and tied him up with them and shouted, ‘Samson, the Philistines are here!’ But while the men in ambush were waiting in her room, he snapped them off his arms (like a
and paired with the verb קָשָׁר ("to tie"). The use of קְשָׁר for "hope" is well established.

Both Yellin and Gordon argue that the biblical author conveyed both meanings in the text. Gordon explains that when faced with the decision of multiple meanings within a single lexical use, scholars, and especially translators, have historically chosen between one or the other meaning. In contrast, he argues that this "misses the point." According to his argument, the Jobian author purposefully exploited both meanings to stitch the two ideas together.

Walter Herzberg, a PhD student of Gordon, made use of Janus Parallelism in his PhD dissertation "Polysemy in the Hebrew Bible." Within this New York University dissertation, Herzberg referenced multiple occurrences of Janus Parallelism. The primary argument of Herzberg’s work concerns translation methods, in which only one meaning is chosen when the Hebrew author intended a multiplicity of meanings. He gives four examples of Janus Parallelism within his dissertation, one key example being Ruth 1:21.

*I went away full, but YHWH has brought me back empty. Why do you call me Naomi, since YHWH answered me, and the Almighty has afflicted me.*

Herzberg argues that the author intended two meanings with ענה. The first meaning is "answer," used numerous times throughout the Old Testament. The second meaning is "afflict," which is also used frequently, as in the case of Gen. 15:13 in which God says that Abram’s offspring will be "foreigners in a land which does not belong to them; they will be enslaved and עִנּוּ 400 years." The argument from Ruth 1:21 is that Naomi intends both meanings. Not only has YHWH answered her, but the answer was her affliction and current destitution. For this reason, she asks to be called Mara "bitterness.

Duane Christensen, in a 1986 article, makes use of both Herzberg and Gordon’s work to argue for Janus Parallelism in Gen. 6:3.
“And the Lord said, ‘My Spirit will not remain with mankind forever. They are flesh. Their days will be 120 years.’”

Christensen points to בְּשַׁגַּם as meaning both “in that” and also “because of their going astray.” This is different than an example such as Song 2:12 in which the multiplicity of meaning is bound up in a single root (i.e. צָרָה). In this instance, Christensen argues that the Hebrew author has made use of two etymologically and morphologically disconnected words to create the Janus Parallelism.

The methodology which Christensen uses to make his case is of importance. Emphasis is placed upon the prosody of the text. It is worth quoting Christensen at length to understand his methodology for determining Janus Parallelism in this passage:

It is in terms of the number of accentual-stress units that the two lines differ; for here the first line has three and the latter four such units. It is only when the term בְּשַׁגַּם is taken as the conclusion of the first statement that the internal balance of four accentual-stress units in each half of the verse is achieved. This may explain the alternate textual tradition found in a number of Hebrew manuscripts which read בְּשַׁגַּם. The qamats here has been interpreted as the third person plural suffix on the infinitive construct of the root שָׁגַּה, “to go astray, commit sin.” It is also possible to see it as a pausal lengthening of the vowel if the athnach were to be placed here rather than under the term בְּשַׁר. The above prosodic analysis does suggest that the major stress in this verse should be precisely on the final syllable of בְּשַׁגַּם. But of greater interest is the double-entendre that immediately becomes apparent.

Though Cassuto rejects the pointing בְּשַׁגַּם on the basis of his interpretation of the passage, he does remark that such a reading would have the meaning “through their erring,” from the root שָׁגַּה, “go astray, err.” With the major pause after the term in question, the reader would hear this initial meaning. But the following phrase quickly alters that impression, changing the term to the equivalent of באֵשׁ גם “in as much as.” The term באֵשׁ thus functions within a “pivot pattern,” both metrically, in mora-count, and semantically—A striking example of Janus Parallelism.


15 Christensen, “Janus Parallelism in Gen. 6:3,” 21.
Christensen deals extensively with the prosody of the text; however, the only semantic argument is that it is possible to read both גָּֽבְרוּ֙ ﬠַל־בִּרְכֹ֣ת הוֹרַ֔י ﬠַֽד־תַּאֲוַ֖ת גִּבְﬠֹ֣ת עוֹלָ֑ם and באשׁgang also into the text. At this point, the question is raised as to how one can form a conclusion concerning the intention of the biblical author. How can one affirm that the biblical author purposefully exploited both meanings? This question reveals itself with each new discovery of a possible instance of Janus Parallelism.

Gary Rendsburg has also taken up the mantle of Janus Parallelism studies. He points to Gen. 49:26a:

קרקה אַלֹת צֵפֶרֶת עֵדֶם עֵין בֵּיתָה עָלַי

“The blessings of your father are greater than the blessings of וֹרֵי and the bounty of the eternal hills.”

Rendsburg states, “In this tristich, וֹרֵי is to be translated both ‘my progenitors of old’ (when pointed וֹרֵי as in the MT) and ‘mountains of old’ (when pointed וֹרֵי). Its familial connotation resumes אָבִיך in the first stich and its topographic connotation anticipates גבעת in the third stich.”

More recently, Michael Carasik has argued for Janus Parallelism in Job 1:20. He points out that Job performs four actions after hearing of the destruction that came upon him: he tears his garment, shaves his head, falls to the ground, and prostrates himself. The third of these actions, Carasik takes as both reminiscent of mourning and as pointing forward to the act of worship.

The most prolific scholar in the area of Janus Parallelism is Scott Noegel. Though a few scholars have argued for Janus Parallelism in several locations, Noegel has studied the literary device most comprehensively to date. Janus Parallelism occurs throughout the Old Testament; however, Noegel argues that it is especially used in the book of Job. In addition to extra-Jobian examples, Scott Noegel argues for 49 occurrences within the book of Job that have not been dealt with before his

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17 See Michael Carasik, “Janus Parallelism in Job 1:20,” in Vetus Testamentum, vol. 66 (2016): 149–154. He states on page 150: “The first two are recognized as demonstrative of mourning, while the second combine to form an act of worship. (Indeed, the final verb in the sentence is generally translated directly as ‘he worshiped.’) The expression ‘he fell on his face’ presents so little difficulty for understanding that commentators commonly ignore both the phrase and the action entirely. Those who remark on it do so to point out that the verse shifts here from mourning rituals to acceptance of what has happened. What Job says in v. 21, immediately following, makes clear that his prostration is indeed an act of religious submission, not one in which he is attempting to conceal his reaction from God, as when Abraham falls on his face in Gen. 17:17. Yet the reader of the book of Job could be pardoned for assuming that falling to the ground was not the beginning of an act of worship—a complete emotional reversal from the symbolically self-destructive acts that preceded it—but a further act of mourning.”
book, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job.* David Yellin’s example of Job 7:6–7 is a strong argument for the use of Janus Parallelism by the author of Job. The masterful literary device is employed throughout the book. However, while Noegel provides excellent insight and research on these occurrences within Job, the methodology still requires specification. The danger is that the biblical scholar would presume upon the intention of the biblical author and read into the text that which was not originally intended. While many of these aforementioned examples of Janus Parallelism demonstrate insight into the text, a clear methodology for identifying Janus Parallelism is still necessary.

**A Methodology for Janus Parallelism**

Over the last forty years, several scholars have argued for Janus Parallelism in numerous texts throughout the Old Testament. These arguments make use of prosody, particularly found in tristiches of Hebrew poetry. At the prosodic center of a tristich, a word is found with multiple possible meanings that reflects what is seen in the first and third stiches. Not only is this a literary device within biblical Hebrew, but it is also attested in several Ancient Near Eastern cultures, leading one to conclude that this was a valid literary device used by several Old Testament writers.

However, parameters must be placed upon this study. At the center of any argument for Janus Parallelism is a supposition of authorial intention. In a strong case such as Song 2:12, one can reasonably conclude that the biblical author intended both meanings. But not all cases of Janus Parallelism are as clear. An example of this can be the heretofore unexamined case of Lam. 2:1:

אַחֲרֵיהֶם מֵאָרֶץ בְּאָפָּם אֲדֹנָי אֶת־בְּתֵי ציּוֹן הִשְׁלִי כֹּלֵם אַפּוֹ בְּיִוֹהְוָה הֲדֹם לָ֖יו אֵיךְ יָﬠִ֨יב בְּאַפּ֤וֹ ׀ אֲדֹנָי֙ אֶת־בַּת־צִיּ֔וֹן הִשְׁלִ֤י:

“How the Lord has overshadowed Daughter Zion in His anger; He has thrown down from heaven to earth the **תִּפְאֶ֖רֶת** of Israel; He has abandoned His footstool in the day of His anger.”

**תִּפְאֶ֖רֶת** lies at the center, as established by the use of the athnach. **תִּפְאֶ֖רֶת** can mean “radiance,” referring back to “Daughter Zion.” **תִּפְאֶ֖רֶת** can also mean “pride,” referring forward to God’s humbling of Israel by abandoning them. The meaning “radiance” is clearly seen in several other passages, such as Esth. 1:4 in which Ahasuerus displays the splendor of his kingdom. The second meaning “pride” can be seen in Isa. 10:12 in which the Lord promises to punish the king of Assyria for “his arrogant acts and the proud look in his eyes.” Does this then constitute Janus Parallelism? Can one now conclude that the author intended both meanings? If these are the only parameters for Janus Parallelism, then the frequency of Janus Parallelism increases exponentially. Indeed, word flexibility allows for multiplicity of meaning in any word in all languages. A fundamental component of language is the ability of words to adapt and change their semantic range based on contextual requirements.

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Therefore, a more targeted approach is required to identify Janus Parallelism and to prohibit imagination from presuming upon authorial intention.

The First Rule—Ambiguity, Polysemy, and Homonymy

The first step in identifying Janus Parallelism is to identify what the relationship is between the multiple meanings. To accomplish this, one must first understand the relationship between multiple meanings in any given word. The principle of semantic flexibility governs all languages. This universal trait of language allows words to flex and morph to accommodate usage. Most words in any given language have more than one meaning. In fact, it proves difficult to find words that only have one meaning. One is able to find monosemic (i.e. only one meaning) words in specific disciplines, such as silicosis within pulmonology. A more general example would be the English word “lucrative,” which only applies to a money-making context. However, the more frequent a word is, the more likely it is to have multiple meanings. For example, a simple word like “book” might first appear to have only one meaning. However, the verb “book him!” would demonstrate an additional meaning apart from the nominal idea. Janus Parallelism is based upon words that have multiple meanings, these meanings being purposefully exploited. However, multiple meanings within words can be categorized in three ways: homonymy, polysemy, and ambiguity. Janus Parallelism can only make use of polysemy and homonymy.

Homonymy, polysemy, and ambiguity each refer to different types of relationships between word meanings. First, homonymy refers to a coincidental occurrence within language wherein two words with two separate meanings take on the same orthographic and/or auricular form over time. An example of this can be seen in the English word “ear.” “Ear,” as in an “ear of corn,” comes from the Middle English /ere/. This was passed down from Old English /æhher/, from the German /ahre/, from Old Norse /ax/, from Gothic /ah/, and ultimately from Latin /acus/, meaning “husk.” The word “ear,” referring to hearing, comes from Old English /ēare/; cognate with Old Norse /eyra/, German /ohr/, Gothic /auso/, Latin /auris/.

Etymologically, ear (of corn) and ear (of hearing) are homonyms. The meanings developed independently and have remained independent in the mind of the English speaker. Even though these word meanings are unrelated, they are still able to be used in a pun. A simple joke will demonstrate the issue:

Question: Why don’t you tell secrets on the farm?
Answer: Because even the corn has ears.

This corny joke highlights the fact that homonyms can be used within literary devices, especially within puns. Within homonyms, the two meanings are unrelated. This contrasts with polysemy.

While homonyms are coincidental occurrences within language, polysemy is deliberate. This article will not develop a full explanation for polysemy, since this

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would require an additional foray into linguistic studies. However, at the heart of polysemy studies is the argument that additional meanings of words are metaphorically extended to accommodate language use. An example will prove helpful. The linguist Alan Cruise demonstrates how a secondary meaning of a word can cement itself into a language.

Historical processes of semantic change are of course intimately linked to synchronic processes of meaning extension. One possible scenario might run as follows.

(i) Word W has established literal sense S\(^1\).
(ii) Some creative person uses W in new figurative sense S\(^2\) (according to the rules of synchronic extension).
(iii) S\(^2\) ‘catches on,’ and becomes established (i.e. laid down as an entry in the mental lexicons of members of the speech community), so that W becomes polysemous between S\(^1\) and S\(^2\). S\(^1\) is still perceived as literal, and S\(^2\) as figurative.
(iv) S\(^1\) begins to become obsolescent. S\(^2\) begins to be perceived as literal, and S\(^1\) as figurative.

21 The concept of polysemy is intricately tied to Cognitive Linguistics. For further study on Cognitive Linguistics note especially the work which opened the door to Cognitive Linguistics, *Metaphors We Live By*. George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). The 1980 book, *Metaphors We Live By*, introduced metaphor theory as a dominant factor in language use. This book by George Lakoff and Mark Johnson has proven to be transformative in the field of linguistics. Beforehand, metaphor was viewed only as substituting one expression for another, one being the literal expression and one the non-literal. However, in the cognitive model, metaphor is an impetus for meaning extension because of its connection to cognitive functions. Lakoff argues for the “conceptual metaphor” which is understood as an essential component of human cognition. Alan Cruse explains, “Metaphor is not purely linguistic but is conceptual in nature. They are a means whereby ever more abstract and intangible areas of experience can be conceptualized in terms of the familiar and concrete.” See Alan Cruse, *Meaning in Language: An Introduction to Semantics and Pragmatics*. 3rd ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011): 242. In addition, Ronald Langacker’s work *Foundations of Cognitive Grammar*, 2 vols. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991) is a foundational work in this area. Cognitive Linguistics helps to explain polysemy in two ways: its place in mental categorization and its impetus in metaphor/metonymy. Also, of primary importance is a proper understanding of how polysemy relates to prototype studies. Prototype Theory has become a central facet of Cognitive Linguistics. It was developed by the psychologist Eleanor Rosch alongside others in the 1970s (see especially Linda Coleman and Paul Kay, “Prototype Semantics: The English word *lie*,” *Language* 57, no. 1 (1981): 26–44).

Prototype Theory determines mental categories based on similarity to a prototype at the category center (this contrasts with the classical method of categorization which relies on necessary and sufficient features). Prototype theory posits that mental categories are created based on resemblance to a prototype at the center of the category. In addition to a prototype at the center of a category, individual lexemes have prototypical meanings. For example, based on the work of Linda Coleman and Paul Kay, one can see that the prototypical use of LIE contains three properties: (1) the statement is false, (2) the speaker believes the statement to be false, and (3) in uttering the statement, the speaker intends to deceive the listener. An example of polysemy would be “Fabrication,” which was metaphorically created and adopted into the DECEPTION category to emphasize the speaker’s creation of the lie. It is a polysemous use of the verb “fabricate” meaning “to build.”

Polysemy, in the argument of Prototype Theory, occurs in the confines of diversification within a conceptual category. It is within this diversification that words flex to accommodate usage and emphasis. Each category member upholds a particular role within the category. This is based on how developed or under-developed the mental category is. Therefore, the relationship of category members to each other is of central importance to how Prototype Theory understands polysemy.
S\(^1\) is lost, at which point meaning of W has changed from S\(^1\) to S\(^2\). This can be illustrated with English *expire*. First, before there were such things as tickets and licenses with limited periods of validity, this just meant “die.” Then, it was metaphorically extended to mean “come to the end of a period of validity,” which existed as a clear figurative use alongside the literal use. Nowadays the “die” sense is quite uncommon … there is no doubt that the default reading has changed.\(^{22}\)

This is an example of a complete shift from meaning S\(^1\) to S\(^2\) with polysemy occurring medially. In this manner, metaphor can create a case of polysemy over time under the right conditions. Polysemy is one of the most important functions of language, allowing for the language use to adapt language for unique situations and contexts.

It is important to note concerning both polysemy and homonymy that a decision must be made between the two possible meanings. For instance, if one were to say, “I am going to the bank,” the listener would need to make a choice between either the meaning “bank” (of a river) and “bank” (financial institution). Likewise, in the statement, “It expired last night,” the listener would need to decide as to whether “expire” meant “to die” or “to lapse” or even “to breathe.” The language user will purposefully make clear which is intended through contextual clues (i.e. “I am going to the bank to deposit the money”). Janus Parallelism is an example of the language user purposefully intending both meanings. This literary device steps outside the bounds of normal language use and plays upon the expectations of the listener/reader.

In contrast to homonymy and polysemy, the choice between meanings is not required in the case of ambiguity. Again, an example will prove helpful. In the English sentence, “The dog jumped over the fence again,” the word “fence” is ambiguous. While the speaker might be referring to an electric fence, or a split-rail fence, or a chicken-wire fence, the distinction is not necessary. This might be within the context of a dog who is an escape artist or a show-jumping dog, but a decision is not required in the mind of the listener between these possible meanings of “fence.” In this manner, ambiguity, though an important part of everyday language use, is distinct from polysemy and homonymy.

The fascination caused by Janus Parallelism is that it forces the reader to accept two meanings which one would normally need to choose between. Janus Parallelism contrasts with normal language use wherein the listener/reader makes decisions between homonymy and polysemy intuitively, oftentimes without even noticing a decision has been made. Therefore, an intentional feature of Janus Parallelism is that the word being exploited must have either homonymous or polysemous meanings. The language user cannot play upon simple ambiguity, which would not normally force the listener/reader to decide between meanings.

At this point, an important caveat must be made. There is a misunderstanding of Janus Parallelism and polysemy as being synonymous. For example, Scott Noegel specifies, “I will employ both terms [polysemous parallelism and Janus Parallelism] interchangeably.”\(^{23}\) He refers to polysemy often throughout his book on Janus


\(^{23}\) Ibid., 12.
Parallelism. He also defines what he means by “polysemy” in his entry in the *Encyclopedia of Hebrew Language and Linguistics*, “Polysemy is the capacity for a sign, word, phrase, or sentence to bear multiple meanings in a single context.” Based on this definition, all word play which incorporates multiple meanings is to be considered polysemous. Noegel gives the Janus Parallelism example of בּּוּר in Job 9:30–31 in which the phrase can be taken as either “with lye” or “in a pit.” Noegel argues for a polysemous understanding of בּּוּר. However, it still has not been proven that בּּוּר “pit” and בּּוּר “lye/soap” are polysemous. They might, in fact, be homonymous and unrelated in meaning. To assume polysemy over homonymy is to make assumptions on the semantic connections in the mind of the Hebrew writers.

This must be avoided until a case for polysemy can be proven. However, what can be clarified at this point is that Janus Parallelism makes use of either homonymy or polysemy, not ambiguity.

The Second Rule—Contextual Clues

Not only must Janus Parallelism be a case of homonymy or polysemy, but contextual clues must also be evident. This can be difficult to determine, since the Hebrew writer depended upon the reader being a native Hebrew speaker to induce the full weight of Janus Parallelism. However, the Hebrew writer will make use of explicit contextual clues to force the reader to accept both meanings. The Hebrew

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25 Ibid.

26 Ibid. It is clearly stated by Noegel that these derive from multiple roots (“pit” from בּּוּר and “lye” from ברר).

27 When employing the term “polysemy,” we are making a claim about the mental categorization of the Hebrew writer(s). With the example of נֶפֶךְ in Job 7:6–7, to label the meanings of “thread” and “hope” as polysemous, would be to claim that “thread” and “hope” are governed in the Hebrew mind by the same mental category. An argument would need to be made that “thread” was utilized metaphorically to mean “hope” to the point that the language users inextricably linked the meanings. Mental categorization and semantic relationships determine much of how we view the world. These relationships are created through circumstance, cultural influence, and other factors. Unlocking the mystery of these relationships is the key to understanding the worldview of the Hebrew writers. However, determining mental categories based on language use is a daunting task. The work accomplished by Cyrus Gordon, Walter Herzberg, Scott Noegel and others is helpful in identifying the literary feature of Janus Parallelism. Examples such as Job 7:6–7 and Song of Songs 2:12 demonstrate that Janus Parallelism was employed by several biblical writers. However, caution must be exerted when making a case for polysemy. Janus Parallelism might contain two polysemous meanings, but this is not a certainty. To equate Janus Parallelism to polysemy is to make incorrect assumptions on the mental categorization and semantic relationships within the mind of the Hebrew writer.

28 While biblical Hebrew scholars can have an extraordinary command of Hebrew, scholars will not be able to grasp all of the cultural implications and semantic connections of the words. This is an important limitation to recognize. Biblical Hebrew scholars are not able to ask questions of a native biblical Hebrew speaker. This limits the ability to comprehend the social, cultural, and historical effects upon the language. Language operates according to specific rules that are learned through language context and culture. One might be able to study the grammar of a language, but the less one knows about the cultural influences upon the language, the less one can understand the metaphor/metonymy which is at the heart of the language. For further understanding concerning how metaphor, metonymy, and polysemy compel language see: Ravin and Leacock, *Polysemy: Theoretical and Computational Approaches*, 16.
writer is purposefully working against the impulse of the reader to immediately decide between the two meanings. Therefore, the contextual clues for Janus Parallelism must be clearly seen. This is evidenced in the connection between the meanings of the polysemous or homonymous word and what comes before and after that word.

The example of Job 7:6–7 will prove helpful. Within Job 7:6–7, תקוה is used because it conjures up, for the Hebrew reader, the ideas of both “hope” and “thread.” Whether these are polysemous or homonymous is not important. Naturally, the reader would be forced to choose between one or the other meaning (i.e. thereby ruling out a case of simple ambiguity). The Hebrew author works against this impulse by placing key metaphors in the surrounding text. Not only is the picture of ארג (a weaver’s shuttle) used, but also the verb כלה “to come to an end.” This verb can be applied both literally to the weaver’s shuttle and also metaphorically to Job’s days (and thus to his hope). תקוה is closer to the idea of the thread used in a weaver’s shuttle than, for example, the Hebrew word for rope, עב. In addition, Job paints the picture of his eyes never looking upon anything good for the remainder of his days. This reminds the reader of the phrase ובא עבד, which has just come before. The context also paints the picture of Job’s life being like a breath, an idea that is also seen in Job 11:20:

וְאָרֵג רַעַשְׁנִי חֲקֹל הָאָרֶג מָן אָבַד מִנְהֶם וְתִקְוָתָם מַפַּח־נְפֶשׁוֹ וְﬠֵינֵי רְ

“But the sight of the wicked will fail, their way of escape will be cut off; their only hope is their last breath.”

Not only are the ideas of hopelessness and life as a breath connected throughout the Old Testament, this idea is used several times by the author of Job himself. When arguing a case for Janus Parallelism, the biblical scholar must be careful not to see semantic connections where there are none. The tendency to impose the semantic connections in the biblical scholar’s native language onto the text must be resisted.

The argument for Janus Parallelism in Gen. 15:1 demonstrates the point. The argument is that מגן “shield” refers back to Abram not being afraid, and מגן “bestow” refers forward to Abram’s reward.29 The first step would be to establish that the biblical authors made use of both of these meanings. The evidence weakens the further one steps away from Genesis (i.e. the meaning is only used in Malachi, or even the meaning is only attested in a cognate root of another ANE language). Secondly, one must establish that these metaphorical connections have precedent. Simply because an English speaker perceives a possible metaphorical connection between bestowing and rewarding does not mean that these two words (מגן and שוחר) would have elicited a similar mental connection in the mind of the Hebrew reader.30

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29 See Noegel, Janus Parallelism, 13.
30 For example, one might take the English word “solution.” While an English speaker can clearly see the connection between the verb “solve” and a math “solution,” the connection of the verb “solve” and a liquid “solution” is not perceived even though historically these were connected. Semantic connections are created and disposed of over time. Importing English connections onto the understanding of the Hebrew text allows many exegetical errors to creep in.
Therefore, the biblical context must be the rule to demonstrate semantic connections to which the Hebrew writer is appealing.

The First Caveat—Meaning Innovation

Not only are the first two rules important, but two additional caveats are in order, to help guide understanding of Janus Parallelism. The first caveat is that Janus Parallelism does not seek to create new meanings. This principle has been widely acknowledged by those who have written on Janus Parallelism; therefore, this article will not belabor the point. Janus Parallelism, in contrast to metaphor and metonymy, has no ability to create new meaning. As briefly stated above, metaphor allows for semantic extension of words to accommodate language needs. For example, the English word “fabrication,” literally meaning something manufactured, was metaphorically extended to include the idea of an untruthful statement. In addition, metonymy is another tool that language users employ to create meaning extension. Metonymy utilizes a well-understood or prominent aspect of a concept or item to refer to the item. Together, these two tools form the basis for the creation of new meanings extended by metaphor and metonymy.

Metaphor, according to Lakoff, applies a “source domain” onto a “target domain.” An example would be MORE IS UP; LESS IS DOWN (See G. Lakoff, Women, Fire, and Dangerous Things, 276). The source domain is VERTICALITY and the target domain is QUANTITY. In this way, the spatial concept of up and down is applied to a higher or lower quantity. This would yield phrases such as, “The crime rate keeps rising. The number of books published each year keeps going up. That stock has fallen again.” One conceptual category that is concrete is applied to another conceptual category to make sense of what is happening. New relationships are established, which demonstrates itself in the language. However, Lakoff’s view of conceptual metaphors is not without its criticism. Several scholars have argued that Lakoff’s view does not go far enough in accounting for emergence of new meaning after the source domain is applied to the target domain. The sentence, “This surgeon is a butcher,” will demonstrate the issue. The source domain (surgeon, operation, patient, scalpel) is applied to the target domain (butcher, meat market, animal, cleaver). However, the source domain to target domain does not account for new information taken out of the blend of the two concepts (see Joseph Grady, Todd Oakley, and Seana Coulson, “Blending and Metaphor.” http://markturner.org/blendaphor.html. Accessed 23/07/20). The new information would include a conceptual link between butchery and incompetence. This is certainly not true in the BUTCHER domain as it stands by itself. This further understanding of metaphors and their use in language is referred to as “Conceptual Blending.” It was outlined in Fauconnier and Turner’s book, The Way We Think: Conceptual Blending and the Mind’s Hidden Complexities (New York: Basic Books, 2002). The centrality of metaphor within Cognitive Linguistics has caused a great deal of debate over what exactly constitutes metaphor. This has spilled over into Biblical Studies as well. However, the use of metaphor to extend the semantic range of words is a main tenet of Cognitive Linguistics.

Metonymy utilizes literal elements, characteristics, or aspects to refer to the whole entity. Cruse gives the example of, “The ham sandwich wants his coffee now,” in the situation of a waiter in a café. Because the domain included the customer ordering a ham sandwich, the waiter refers to the person in this metonymical manner. In contrast, a metaphor makes use of two separate domains that have commonality such as the ANGER AS BOILING WATER metaphor. There are various components within a single domain that allow for metonymy. These components are known as “referring functions.” (See Geoffrey Nunberg’s PhD Dissertation for New York University [1978] entitled, “The Pragmatics of Reference,” in which he coins this phrase. See also John Taylor, “Category Extension by Metonymy and Metaphor” in
meanings within language. Furthermore, a high frequency of use will cement these new meanings into common use.\textsuperscript{33} In contrast to metaphor and metonymy, the

\textit{Metaphor and Metonymy in Comparison and Contrast}, Rene Dirven and Ralf Porings, eds. (New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 2002): 324.) Several “referring functions” can be exploited in language use. For example, a referring function can link the PRODUCER FOR THE PRODUCED as in the case of, “The Picasso on the wall is worth a great deal of money.” Another example would be CONTAINER FOR CONTAINED such as, “The kettle is boiling.” (See Cruse, \textit{Meaning in Language}, 257). A well-known use of metonymy is synecdoche in which “reference to the whole is made by reference to a salient part.” (See John Taylor, “Category Extension by Metonymy and Metaphor,” 324.) A distinction must be made between meronymy and synecdoche. Meronymy expresses a literal relationship between the whole entity and its parts. For example, “finger” would be a meronym of “hand.” It falls under linear polysemy because one category is clearly a subordinate. However, synecdoche is quite similar, but it is used as a figure of speech. A well-known example is “we need new faces around here.” In this example, “faces” is indeed a literal meronym of “people,” but synecdoche is utilizing “faces” in a non-literal way to refer to people. Synecdoche points to a part of the entity that is prominent or characteristic and utilizes it as a figure of speech.

Finally, for insight into the rules that govern metonymy, see Geoffrey Nunberg, “Transfers of Meaning,” \textit{Journal of Semantics} 12, no. 2 (1995): 109. Nunberg uses the term “predicate transfer,” which he describes as “An operation that takes names of properties into new names that denote properties to which they functionally correspond.” According to Nunberg, for predicate transfer to occur, the two properties used metonymically must correspond in a particular situation and the properties must be noteworthy (i.e. bearing immediate conversational relevance and “having an abiding interest beyond the immediate conversational purposes”). In the PRODUCER FOR PRODUCT example, not just any producer can be substituted for his or her product. Picasso can be substituted for a particular painting that Picasso created. This is due to the noteworthy nature of Picasso’s work. However, an unacceptable example can be seen with, “I sat on John,” with “John” being the carpenter who fashioned a new rocking chair. “John for rocking chair” does not meet the qualifications of being noteworthy since it does not have “abiding interest beyond the immediate conversational purposes.” In addition, both metaphor and metonymy can play a part within a single meaning extension. In fact, it can be difficult at times to distinguish their involvement in semantic extension. Panther and Thornburg give an example of the interaction between metaphor and metonymy:

Metonymy and metaphor interact in complex ways. For example, Lakoff … postulates metonymies such as BODY HEAT FOR ANGER and INTERNAL PRESSURE FOR ANGER that motivate utterances like Don’t get hot under the collar and When I found out, I almost burst a blood vessel, respectively. These expressions exemplify the more general metonymy SYMPTOM FOR CAUSE, which itself is a subcase of the high-level metonymy EFFECT FOR CAUSE. (See Klaus-Uwe Panther and Linda Thornburg, “Metonymy” in \textit{Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics}, Geeraerts, ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 243.)

The complex nature of the interaction of metaphor and metonymy is due to their centrality in cognition and language use. Metaphor and metonymy are based on foundational principles of similarity and contiguity which undergird the formation of relationships, comparisons, and even diversification within mental categories.

\textsuperscript{33} An important aspect to integrate into a proper understanding of categorization is the effect of usage and frequency. The effect of frequency upon categorization has come to the fore in linguistics only in the last several decades. An early proponent of frequency-based linguistic study was Joan Bybee at the University of New Mexico. Her work on frequency, which began in 1975, initially was based in historical linguistics. She explains that the integration of frequency study into grammatical, phonological, and semantic study had been largely ignored for most of the 20th century. She explains,

The other major theoretical factor working against an interest in frequency of use in language is the distinction, traditionally traced back to Ferdinand de Saussure (1916), between the knowledge that speakers have of the signs and structures of their language and the way language is used by actual speakers communicating with one another. American structuralists, including those of the generativist tradition, accept this distinction and assert furthermore that the only worthwhile object of study is the underlying knowledge of language. See Joan Bybee, \textit{Frequency of Use and the Organization of Language} (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 6.
literary device of Janus Parallelism only plays upon pre-existing word meanings. Therefore, the biblical scholar should not transplant the metaphorical picture created by Janus Parallelism into other passages. For example, the biblical scholar cannot assume a semantic connection between תקוה “hope” and תקוה “thread” in all other uses of תקוה in Job solely based on the Janus Parallelism in Job 7:6–7. Just because a picture is drawn between the two in Job 7:6–7 does not mean that the biblical scholar should also read the meanings of “thread and “hope” into תקוה in Job 4:6. Eliphaz is not depicting Job holding onto his hope like someone holding onto a rope. The metaphorical connection of Janus Parallelism cannot be supplanted onto other texts.

The Second Caveat—Prosody Implications

The second caveat concerns prosody. Janus Parallelism has been seen most prominently in poetry, specifically within poetic tristich. However, examples do occur outside of the poetic genre, such as the case of Ruth 1:21. While a tristich is the expected pattern, should Janus Parallelism be limited to this pattern? Indeed, an important question must be asked at this point. Can the use of Janus Parallelism be found in a large context, such as within an entire pericope? Not only can individual words be polysemous, but also larger language chunks? This article will not be able to answer this question, but hopefully this will be an area of study within Janus Parallelism in the future. Therefore, this second caveat is less of a caveat and more of an appeal for further investigation.

Conclusion

Janus Parallelism has proven itself to be a fascinating literary feature within biblical Hebrew. It has even been observed in other Ancient Near Eastern languages and cultures, as demonstrated by the work of Scott Noegel. To date, a clear methodology has not been devised for identifying Janus Parallelism. This article has sought to create an initial methodology, which will most certainly require additional modification and specification as the study of Janus Parallelism progresses. However, in order to prohibit imagination from presuming upon authorial intention, a foundational methodology is required. This article argues that Janus Parallelism is a literary feature which makes use of polysemous or homonymous word meanings, rather than ambiguous word meanings. Therefore, the first step in identifying Janus Parallelism is to prove a case of polysemy or homonymy within the Janus word.


34 וְתֹ֣ם דְּרָכֶֽיךְ תִּ֝קְוָתְּ כִּסְלָתֶ֑הָלֲוֹ֥א יִ֭רְאָתְּ —“Isn’t your piety your confidence; and the integrity of your life

35 While it can be difficult to prove whether a word is polysemous or homonymous, it is much more straightforward to demonstrate that a word is polysemous/homonymous vs. ambiguous. While this article does not address the methodology for distinguishing between polysemy/homonymy and ambiguity, it is
The second step is to provide the contextual data which demonstrates the author’s intentional use of Janus Parallelism. Apart from purposeful literary and poetic features such as Janus Parallelism, clear communication requires that the author distinguish for the reader which meaning is intended. When the author desires to exploit multiple meanings within a word, the contextual clues must be more apparent for accepting both meanings than the natural inclination to choose one meaning over another. Therefore, it is imperative to demonstrate previously established semantic connections between both meanings of the Janus word and the immediate context. For example, in the case of Job 7:6–7 it is imperative to establish the meaning of תַּקְוָה “thread” as conceptually connected to the picture of אָרֶג “a weaver’s shuttle” (i.e. תַּקְוָה is more similar to a weaver’s thread than, for example, a builder’s rope). In addition, תַּקְוָה “hope,” or rather having no hope (אֶפֶס תִּקְוָֽה), must also be conceptually connected to someone’s life being like a breath. The conceptual ties between both meanings of the Janus word and its context must outweigh the natural inclination to select one meaning.

The implications of this methodology upon Janus Parallelism help to prove the intention of the biblical author, rather than allowing imagination of what possible meanings could be intended to rule over sound exegesis. Now that an initial methodology has been determined, it will be necessary to apply Janus Parallelism studies to several areas. First, this must be referenced by translators. The initial work of Gordon, Herzberg, and others was an argument against choosing one meaning over another within translation. The question is whether this is avoidable at all. Is there a proper way to convey Janus Parallelism within translations? Secondly, a study must be conducted on the possible effects of Janus Parallelism outside of its usual use in poetry. Can the intention of Janus Parallelism be seen in other areas, such as discourse analysis? This article suggests these areas for further study as well as a continued re-examination of the methodology as Janus Parallelism studies progress.

important to note that several tests exist for distinguishing polysemy/homonymy and ambiguity. For further study into the separation between ambiguity and polysemy, note Anna Zalizniak, “The Phenomenon of Polysemy and Ways to Describe It,” in The Cognitive Basis of Polysemy, Marina Rakova, Gergely Petho, and Csilla Rakosi, eds. (Frankfurt: Peter Lang, 2007), 93–118. Within a language fragment such as biblical Hebrew, distinguishing between polysemy and ambiguity proves difficult, but certainly not impossible. As always, the key is context, based on the principle that the author, apart from literary devices such as Janus Parallelism, will contextually distinguish which meaning is intended when the word is polysemous or homonymous, thereby purposefully avoiding confusion.

36 For evidence, one does not even have to step outside of Job, as the case of Job 11:20 demonstrates.