

How neatly do we give one onely name  
 To parent's issue and the *sunne's* bright starre!  
 A *sonne* is light and fruit; a fruitful flame  
 Chasing the father's dimnesse. . . .

One could doubtlessly find many more examples throughout English literature, but it is nevertheless interesting to note the moderate frequency of sound pairs in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*,<sup>33</sup> even though they do not occur in the kind of parallelism found in the Bible. Although some of these pairs resulted from the desire to rhyme, others do not. Like the biblical pairs, they employ repeated words as well as consonant words (cf. "fruit" and "fruitful" in "The Sonne"), and occur in similar patterns.

*abab*

*Churl*, upon thy eyes I *throw*  
 All the power this *charm* doth *owe*.  
 [act 2, sc. 2, lines 78–79]

The will of man is by his *reason sway'd*;  
 And *reason says* you are the *worthier maid*.  
 [act 2, sc. 2, lines 115–116]

And I in *fury* hither *followed* them,  
*Fair Helena* in fancy *following* me.  
 [act 4, sc. 1, lines 162–63]

That *hatred* is so *far* from jealousy,  
 To sleep by *hate*, and *fear* no enmity?  
 [act 4, sc. 1, lines 144–45]

I *frown* upon him; yet he loves me *still*.  
 O that your *frowns* would teach my smiles such *skill*!  
 [act 1, sc. 1, lines 194–95]

*abba*

*Farewell*, sweet *playfellow*; *pray* thou for us;  
 [act 1, sc. 1, line 220]  
 [Note also *farewell* and *fellow*.]

I *followed fast*, but *faster* he did *fly*.  
 [act 3, sc. 2, line 416]

This is he, my master said,  
 Despised the Athenian *maid*;  
 And here the *maiden*, *sleeping* sound,  
 On the dank and dirty ground.  
 [act 2, sc. 2, lines 72–75]

## VI PARALLELISM AND THE TEXT

### THE VARIETY OF PARALLELISMS

For heuristic purposes we have isolated four aspects of language, the grammatical, the lexical, the semantic, and the phonologic, in order to show how these aspects of language are activated in parallelism. But one should be aware that these aspects usually occur in combination; for example, a parallelism may contain equivalences and/or contrasts in its grammar and in its semantic content (this is quite usual). We have also cited verses that show tension among the aspects (cf. pp. 81–88) such that grammatical equivalences may be patterned in one way while lexical or phonologic equivalences may be arranged in a different pattern. With so many aspects of language capable of being activated (there may be more than four), and so many possibilities for types of equivalence or contrast in each, it would seem that the number of possible parallelisms for any given line is enormous—perhaps infinite. In support of this statement I list here eleven parallelisms from the Book of Psalms containing the idea of God's hearing the psalmist's prayer. All of the verses employ at least one of several verbs meaning "to hear" and/or the noun "prayer" or one of its synonyms. This is such a common theme in Psalms that one might expect the expression of it to have become a standardized formula, but, surprisingly, it did not. Not only is the wording of "God, hear my prayer" varied extensively, but in all of the twenty-nine cases that I have found,<sup>1</sup> no two parallelisms are identical.

Ps 54:4

אלהים שמע תפילתי  
 האזינה לאמרי פי

God, hear my prayer;  
Harken to the words of my mouth.

Ps 61:2                      שמעה אלהים רנתי  
                                    הקשיבה תפלתי

Hear, God, my song;  
Harken [to] my prayer.

Ps 66:19                      אכן שמע אלהים  
                                    הקשיב בקול תפלתי

Indeed God heard;  
He harkened to the sound of my prayer.

Ps 84:9                      ה' אלהים צבאות שמעה תפלתי  
                                    האזינה אלהי יעקב סלה

YHWH, the God of Hosts, hear my prayer;  
Harken, God of Jacob, Selah.

The differences among these four verses result mainly from varying the lexical pairs, the word order, and the ellipsis. There is a slight grammatical contrast in Ps 54:4 and 66:19, where the second line contains a prepositional phrase making the object of the verb indirect instead of direct. (This is usually dependent on the verb—some verbs take direct objects and some do not—but notice that הקשיב can be used with either. Ps 61:2 uses it with a direct object.)

Ps 102:2                      ה' שמעה תפלתי  
                                    ושועתי אליך תבוא

YHWH, hear my prayer;  
And may my cry come to you.

Ps 88:3                      תבוא לפניך תפלתי  
                                    הטה אונך לרנתי

May my prayer come before you;  
Incline your ear to my song.

Ps 88:14                      ואני אליך ה' שועתי  
                                    ובבקר תפלתי תקדמך

As for me, to you, YHWH, I cry;  
And at morning my prayer greets you.

These verses speak of the prayer reaching God. Ps 102:2 and 88:3 contain subject-object alternation: "my prayer" is the grammatical subject in one

line and the object in the parallel line. Yet again, because of word choice and arrangement, they are different. Ps 88:14 is a more complex form involving the transformation of the verbal phrase "I cry" into the nominal "my prayer."

Ps 4:2                      בקראי ענני אלהי צדקי  
                                    בצר הרחבת לי  
                                    חנני ושמע תפלתי

When I call, answer me, my righteous God;  
In dire straits you eased [things] for me;  
Be gracious to me and hear my prayer.

Ps 71:2                      בצדקתך תצילני ותפלטי  
                                    הטה אלי אונך והושיעני

According to your righteousness save me and rescue me;  
Incline your ear to me and deliver me.

Ps 119:149                      קולי שמעה כחסדך  
                                    ה' כמשפטך חיני

Hear my voice as befits your loyalty;  
YHWH, as befits your justness preserve me.

Ps 143:1                      ה' שמע תפלתי  
                                    האזינה אל תחנוני באמנתך  
                                    ענני בצדקתך

YHWH, hear my prayer;  
Give ear to my pleadings in your steadfastness;  
Answer me in your righteousness.

These four verses are more complex because their semantic content is greater, and this provides more potential elements to be paralleled. I have grouped them together because they all contain the idea of God's justice or loyalty. There is more syntagmatic equivalence here than in the previous examples, such as Ps 119:149: "Hear my voice" and the consequence, "Preserve me."

Given such variety, with the potential for much more, it is no wonder that attempts to define parallelism by limiting it to one form or another have failed. All of the foregoing examples contain parallelism, but it is exceedingly difficult to write a single formula that would account for all of them. The purpose of this book has not been to reduce parallelism to a simple linguistic formula, but rather to show the enormous linguistic complexity of parallelism. It is certainly not just a matter of repeating a

thought in different words, or repeating the same syntactic structure; and "A, what's more B" is so nebulous as to be useless as a definition. Parallelism is, rather, a matter of intertwining a number of linguistic equivalences and contrasts.

By the same token it is impossible to evaluate parallelisms. There are no "better" or "poorer" parallelisms, and there are no "complete" or "incomplete" parallelisms. Needless to say, the practice of emending the text in order to create "better" parallelism has no basis, and even deriving the meaning of an unknown word from its word pair is fraught with danger. We must adopt a broader view of parallelism, taking into account the wide range of linguistic possibilities for its construction. I have tried in this book to indicate some of these possibilities, to suggest some guidelines for explaining how parallelism works from a linguistic perspective. But this "grammar of parallelism" is still very primitive. As in the case of other generative grammars, we are still a long way from a complete set of rules for generating all and only acceptable parallelisms in biblical Hebrew.

#### PERCEPTIBILITY AND INTERESTINGNESS

In order for parallelism to serve the poetic function—to focus on the message for its own sake—it must be perceptible (cf. chapter 1, p. 10). But since perceptibility is to some extent subjective, it is never easy to decide what is perceptible and why or how it is perceived. This was one of the weak points in Jakobson's argument; Jakobson seems to have felt that any linguistic equivalence was potentially perceptible, and hence meaningful, but his critics were hesitant to grant all equivalences equal status and chided Jakobson for his own selectivity in interpreting them. Jakobson's problem was, first of all, that he perceived equivalences that others before him had not, and, secondly, that once the equivalences were perceived he felt constrained to make them relevant to the interpretation of the meaning of the poem. Let us separate these two issues: the perceptibility of parallelism (which I will discuss here), and the effect of parallelism (which I will discuss in the following section).

Unlike many of the examples that Jakobson and his colleagues analyzed, and despite the element of subjectivity involved in matters of perception, the Bible contains many obvious parallelisms. When it comes to biblical parallelism involving two or more consecutive lines there is ample evidence that others besides the present writer perceive it (even though we

may not agree on how to define it). What is it that makes biblical parallelism perceptible to a modern, if not to an ancient, reader?<sup>2</sup> In other words, what allows us to recognize that parallelism exists, to recognize the equivalences present in the two lines? This is a problem for psycholinguists. But since, to my knowledge, there are no cognitive studies on the perception of parallelism, I would venture, however tentatively, to propose several formal principles which *may* make parallelisms perceptible to a reader. These principles are the result of personal experience and logical deduction; they represent an untested hypothesis about the cognitive processing of parallelism.

The most obvious kind of parallelism, it seems to me, is total equivalence repeated many times, as in *כי לעולם חסדו*, "For his loyalty is forever," at the end of every verse in Ps 136;<sup>3</sup> or *הללוהו*, "Praise him," at the beginning of almost every verse in Ps 150. But this kind of identical repetition is rare; most cases of biblical parallelism are not so obvious, but are nevertheless easily recognized as parallel. There are four principles which may account for this—four principles which tend to make parallelisms more perceptible: proximity of the linguistic equivalences, the similarity of their surface structures, the number of linguistic equivalences involved, and the expectation of equivalence.

#### A. Proximity

Jakobson's analyses uncovered linguistic equivalences scattered throughout a text, but biblical parallelism usually involves equivalences in close proximity—adjacent words, phrases, or sentences. The less intervening material there is between the parts of the parallelism, the more perceptible it will be. This may be true even when identical repetition is involved; thus the repetition of

ישראל / בית אהרן / יראי ה' / בטח[ו]ן בה'  
עזרם ומגנם הוא

Israel / House of Aaron / Fearers of YHWH trust in YHWH;  
He is their help and shield.

in Ps 115:9–11 would be more immediately perceptible than the repetition of *איך נפלו גבורים*, "How heroes have fallen" in 2 Sam 1:19, 25, 27. It is my impression that the Bible often goes out of its way to place parallelisms close together. It does this by paralleling each part of a sentence

rather than the sentence as a whole. For example, 2 Sam 1:20 could have read

אל תגידו בגת\*  
פן תשמחנה בנות פלשתים  
אל תבשרו בחוצת אשקלון  
פן תעלזנה בנות הערלים

but instead it reads

אל תגידו בגת  
אל תבשרו בחוצת אשקלון  
פן תשמחנה בנות פלשתים  
פן תעלזנה בנות הערלים

Don't tell it in Gath;  
Don't announce it in the environs of Ashkelon,  
Lest the daughters of the Philistines be happy;  
Lest the daughters of the uncircumcised be glad.

To be sure, there are many parallel lines arranged in the pattern designated here by the asterisk (*abab*), but I would claim that the parallelism in the *aabb* pattern (as in 2 Sam 1:20) is more easily perceived than the *abab* pattern. An *abcabc* pattern would be still less perceptible. This is not to suggest that the *aabb* pattern is always preferable, however, for there are other factors at work in a text besides ease of perception.<sup>4</sup>

The greatest distance between parallel parts is found in *inclusios*, and, in fact, these are less readily perceived than parallelisms in consecutive lines. *Inclusios*, however, serve a slightly different function from other parallelisms; by framing the text they provide cohesion and unity for the text as a whole.

### B. Similarity of Surface Structure

Lines with similar surface structures are more readily perceived as parallel than lines with different surface structures. This suggests that parallelisms using repeated words are more perceptible than those using word pairs, and that those with the same syntactic surface structure are more perceptible than those with different surface structure (even though the deep structure is the same). An example with repeated words, sounds, and syntactic surface structure is

Gen 27:36b

את בכרתי לקח  
והנה עתה לקח ברכתי

My birthright he took;  
And look, now he took my blessing.

A parallelism like

Ps 61:2

שמעה אלהים רנתי  
הקשיבה תפלתי

Hear, God, my song;  
Harken [to] my prayer.

would be more perceptible than

Ps 102:2

ה' שמעה תפלתי  
ושועתי אליך תבוא

YHWH, hear my prayer;  
And may my cry come to you.

since in the former the surface structure is the same while the latter involves a transformation.

### C. Number of Linguistic Equivalences

The more linguistic equivalences present, the greater the perceptibility of the parallelism. A parallelism with only syntactic equivalence is less perceptible than one with syntactic and semantic equivalence. The use of word pairs and/or sound pairs heightens the perceptibility. In Ps 105:17, even though the deep structure of the lines is the same, there are few linguistic equivalences:

שלח לפניהם איש  
לעבד נמכר יוסף

He sent before them a man;  
As a slave was Joseph sold.

whereas

Ps 105:35

ויאכל כל עשב בארצם  
ויאכל פרי אדמתם

It ate all the grass in their land;  
It ate the fruit of their ground.

whose deep structure is different, has a similar surface structure: one repeated word, two lexical associates, and a semantic equivalence. Ps 105:35 is therefore more easily perceived as parallel than is Ps 105:17.

#### D. Expectation of Parallelism

In a text formally structured on binary sentences, or on any form of pervasive parallelism, one tends to find parallelism even in lines which have few or no linguistic equivalences. For instance, in a nonparallel context a verse like

Ps 94:11

ה' ידע מחשבות אדם  
כי המה הבל

YHWH knows the thoughts of man  
That they are futile.

would probably not be thought to contain a parallelism, but in its present context, surrounded by parallelistic verses, the tendency is to read this verse, too, as a binary sentence. Just as syntactic equivalence promotes the perception of semantic equivalence, so here, too, equivalence in one area spills over into other areas. When parallelism becomes the constructive device of the text as a whole, then all of its parts begin to be viewed as participating in some way in the parallelism.

Again, for heuristic purposes, I have isolated four principles which do not occur in isolation. They are all at work together in greater or lesser measure. Nor should the order in which I have listed them be taken as their rank of importance. Proximity, for example, may or may not be more significant than similarity of surface structure in making parallelism perceptible.

I have used "perceptibility" as a rough equivalent of "ease of processing," that is, ease in recognizing the existence of a parallelism. But ease of cognitive processing is not always the highest desideratum of literature, especially poetry. For, as textlinguists have noted, something processed easily, which matches the reader's knowledge or expectation perfectly, possesses low "informativity" and is therefore devoid of "interest" (cf. de Beaugrande and Dressler, 9, 213). Informativity may relate to factual knowledge of the world or to linguistic expectation. When a poem reverses normal syntax, its level of informativity rises, and it becomes correspondingly more interesting. If we apply this to parallelism we see that, for in-

stance, changing the surface structure of a parallel line makes it more interesting, so that while Ps 61:2 may be more perceptible, Ps 102:2 is more interesting.<sup>4</sup> For this reason the principles that I have enunciated here are often violated: exact repetition and identical surface structure are avoided in favor of a variety of equivalent forms of expression. In the most interesting parallelisms even the deep structure of the lines may be different. It is also my feeling that the lack of correspondence among aspects of parallelism (illustrated on pp. 30, 62) and the resulting tension is calculated to raise the level of interest. The extra bit of effort required to process such parallelisms is rewarded by their higher level of interest. A text must create a balance between informativity and ease of processing.

#### THE EFFECT OF PARALLELISM

To perceive parallelism is not necessarily to understand the effect it has in a text. Most of us are aware that, say, Ps 61:2 contains a parallelism, but we would be hard pressed to describe what effect that parallelism has on our reading of the psalm. Let me make clear at once that parallelism in itself does not have meaning. The analysis of the parallelism in Ps 61:2, the fact that it uses the lexical pair שמע // הקשיב and that the syntax of the two lines is the same, tells us nothing about the meaning of the verse. As J. Culler said: "Linguistics is not hermeneutics. It does not discover what a sequence means or produce a new interpretation of it. . . ." (*Structuralist Poetics*, 31). But parallelism, like other formal features in a text, *does* help to structure the text and thereby has an impact on how its meaning is arrived at.

Parallelism sets up relationships of equivalence or opposition between two propositions. Sometimes the effect of the equivalence or opposition is striking. For instance, when Esau says in

Gen 27:36

הכי קרא שמו יעקב  
ויעקבני זה פעמים  
את בכרתי לקח  
והנה עתה לקח ברכתי

Truly he is named Jacob;  
and he has deceived me ["Jacobed me"] twice now:  
my birthright he took;  
and look, now he took my blessing.

he and the reader suddenly see the relationship between two separate narrative sequences. Jacob's acquiring of the rights of the firstborn (Gen 25) is equated with his acquiring the blessing in Gen 27. Furthermore, Jacob's name is now understood as relating to his actions; his name is equivalent to his nature.

Two different narrative sequences are joined in

Ps 114:3

הים ראה וינס  
הירדן יסב לאחור

The sea saw and fled;  
The Jordan turned backward.

This parallelism operates on two levels: it utilizes the common associated pair ים // נהר,<sup>6</sup> *sea // river*, but, by specifying the river as the Jordan, it makes the connection between the splitting of the Reed Sea (Ex 14, 15) and the splitting of the Jordan (Josh 3), two comparable events which frame the Exodus narrative.

Opposition, not equivalence, is promoted when Naomi contrasts her former and present states in

Ruth 1:21a

אני מלאה הלכתי  
וריקם השיבני ה'

I went out full;  
and YHWH brought me back empty.

This parallelism captures an important opposition in the story: emptiness vs. fullness (so well explicated by D. F. Rauber).

Sometimes we can see how a particular *form* of parallelism has a particular effect. For instance, varying the syntactic surface structure of a parallel line may create an additional effect, just as any stylistic feature may inject nuances of meaning. The verse just cited, Ruth 1:21a, is a case of subject-object parallelism; the "I" of the first line becomes "me" in the second (cf. chapter 3, p. 57). As a result, the second line has a different grammatical subject from the first, and this adds a dimension to the meaning that is conveyed. For besides the opposition between "then-fullness" and "now-emptiness" there is also an opposition between "I" and "YHWH." This, too, is an important opposition in the story which is reconciled at the end: "Blessed be YHWH who has not withheld from you a *goel*" (Ruth 4:14).

Other forms of parallelism may have other effects. The *qtl-yql* alternation may have the effect of a merismus in

## PARALLELISM AND THE TEXT

Ps 26:4

לא ישבתי עם מתי שוא  
ועם נעלמים לא אבוא

Translations generally equate the tenses of the two lines:

*I do not* consort with scoundrels;  
And with hypocrites *I do not* associate.

But it is possible that the verse suggests something stronger:

*I have never* consorted with scoundrels;  
And with hypocrites *I will never* associate.

Isa 54:7 expresses comfort by the opposition between the smallness of God's abandonment and the greatness of his gathering in of the people.

Isa 54:7

ברגע קטן עזבתיך  
וברחמים גדלים אקבצך

For a small moment I abandoned you;  
But with great mercy I will gather you up.

The contrast is present semantically in the words "small" and "great," but it is reinforced grammatically by the opposition of the singular of "small" and the plural of "great."

The choice of a word pair can also have an effect on meaning. In chapter 4, I discussed word pairs as the products of normal lexical association, but one should not conclude from this that the pairing of terms in parallel lines is a kind of reflex action. An author always has options when it comes to pairing words, and it is important to note which one of the possible associates he chose and what difference an alternative choice would have made. For example, in Isa 1:3b "Israel" is paired with "my people."

Isa 1:3b

ישראל לא ידע  
עמי לא התבונן

Israel does not know;  
My people does not understand itself.

I would suggest that the choice of "my people," instead of another associate for Israel (e.g., "Ephraim," "House of Jacob," etc.) has an impact on the meaning of the verse. This phrase adds an emotional tone, a closeness to God, and the irony that God's people does not realize that it is God's people.

These have been examples of specific parallelisms in specific contexts. I am not suggesting that parallelism always equates two separate narrative sequences, or that the *qtl-yql* alternation always produces a merismus, and so on. As these examples show, and as I suggested toward the end of chapter 4, parallelism must be viewed in light of its context. Each parallelism is designed to fit into its own context, to partake of the meaning of the text as a whole and to contribute to it. Parallelism itself does not have meaning; but it structures the meaning of the signs of which it is composed. I have commented at various points throughout the book on how this structuring of meaning is achieved; I noted how semantic relationships can be superimposed on syntactic relationships (chapter 2, p. 23), or on phonologic relationships (chapter 5, p. 112), and I observed how parallelism may provide ambiguity or disambiguation or serve a metaphoric function (chapter 4, pp. 96–102).

Thus far I have been discussing specific effects of specific parallelisms, but what of the effect of parallelism *per se*? I inquire here not about the effect of individual parallelisms, but the more diffuse effect of a text employing pervasive parallelism—a text whose constructive device is parallelism. With this we return to the issue with which we began: the relationship between parallelism and poetry, or, more precisely, the poetic function.

Drawing again on Jakobson's concept as elaborated by Waugh (cf. chapter 1, p. 11), we can define a poetic text as one that manifests a predominance of the linguistic equivalences that we call parallelism—that is, a text that is constructed on linguistic equivalences. These linguistic equivalences work toward promoting thematic or conceptual equivalences as the text is read. The result is that the elements in the text, which of necessity occur in a linear sequence (contiguity), are then perceived as equivalent or contrasted (similarity). This is vividly exemplified in Ps 136, which is a narrative turned into a poem. The psalm preserves its narrative sequence (the list of events in the order in which they occurred), but the poetic function has been superimposed on it. The poet has taken a linear sequence and restructured it as a series of equivalences. A few verses suffice to make the point:

Ps 136: 10–15

למכה מצרים בכוריהם  
כי לעולם חסדו  
ויוצא ישראל מתוכם  
כי לעולם חסדו  
ביד חזקה ובזרוע נטויה

כי לעולם חסדו  
לגזר ים סוף לגזרים  
כי לעולם חסדו  
והעביר ישראל בתוכו  
כי לעולם חסדו  
ונער פרעה וחילו בים סוף  
כי לעולם חסדו

Who struck Egypt through their firstborn;  
For his loyalty is forever;  
And brought Israel out of their midst;  
For his loyalty is forever;  
With a strong hand and an outstretched arm;  
For his loyalty is forever;  
Who split apart the Reed Sea;  
For his loyalty is forever;  
And made Israel pass through it;  
For his loyalty is forever;  
Who hurled Pharaoh and his army into the Reed Sea;  
For his loyalty is forever.

The psalm is almost entirely composed of a chronological list of God's actions during creation and the exodus and settlement. The list is broken up into clauses or phrases, many of which contain parallelism;<sup>7</sup> and additional parallelism of a more obvious nature (exact repetition) is inserted after each item on the list. This repetition causes the end of every verse to sound and mean the same. It superimposes similarity (of an extreme type) upon contiguity. The effect then spreads to the first parts of the verses, which already have a certain amount of similarity from their own parallelisms. As a result, the actions enumerated in the list appear to be equated: smiting the Egyptian firstborn is like splitting the Reed Sea is like leading the Israelites through the wilderness, and so forth.<sup>8</sup> In what sense are all these actions alike? In the sense that they result from God's eternal loyalty, *כי לעולם חסדו*. All of the actions derived from one actor for one purpose. The poet has "made sense" out of "history."<sup>9</sup> Through a set of linguistic equivalences he has concisely organized a series of discrete events into a meaningful pattern. Although Ps 136 is admittedly an extreme example, since all of its verses are parallel, the same effect in varying intensity can be felt wherever parallelism is the constructive device.

I have been speaking here of poetry, but of course poetry is not the only genre, ancient or modern, that employs parallelism as its constructive device. In the Bible, one finds it also in legal passages, proverbs, prophetic speech, speculative thought (e.g., Ecclesiastes), and even some sections of

narrative. It is not a question of forcing all of these texts into one genre called "poetry," but rather that there may be several types of texts which are structured on relationships of equivalence or opposition. What all of these texts have in common is the dominance of the poetic function. These texts all focus the message on itself; they draw attention to the relationships which they impose on their linguistic signs. They organize, or reorganize, the world into equivalences and oppositions by their form of expression. It should not surprise us that the Bible contains so much parallelism, for in the ancient near eastern milieu from which it emerged most formal verbal expression was parallelistic. This was, and still is, a most effective way to give heightened awareness of the message to its receivers.

Let me conclude by summing up what I have shown parallelism to be. Following Roman Jakobson, I have accepted that parallelism is to be equated with the poetic function, which "projects the principle of equivalence from the axis of selection into the axis of combination" or, in other words, that "similarity is superimposed on contiguity." This book has provided extensive illustration of how this is accomplished in biblical parallelism. Similarity in morphology consists of drawing on words of the same word class; or of different word classes that serve the same syntactic function. Syntactic similarity consists of clauses with the same deep syntactic structure. Lexical similarity consists of words which are lexically associated, either paradigmatically or syntagmatically. Likewise, semantic similarity consists of expressions which are either close in meaning or are syntagmatically related in meaning. Phonological similarity consists of repeating the same or similar group of sounds. All of these types of similarity, and perhaps others which I have not investigated, are brought into play in biblical parallelism. Two or more similar elements are combined in contiguous expressions; that is, similarity is superimposed on contiguity.

"Similarity" implies "equivalence." I have used "equivalence" in the sense of "belonging to the same linguistic category or paradigm, or to the same sequence or syntagm." Parallel elements (words, sounds, grammatical constructions, etc.) are linguistically equivalent in some way. However, in addition to the equivalence that underlies all forms of parallelism there is often a contrast. For after all, equivalent elements are not identical, and their lack of identity—i.e., their difference—shows up all the more clearly when they are placed in contiguity. Thus one can conclude with L. Waugh that parallelism manifests a "strong linkage of contrast with equivalence."<sup>10</sup> In biblical parallelism this contrast can be seen in lexical associates, in

morphological alternations (e.g., singular // plural; definite // indefinite, etc.), in syntactic transformations, in the semantic relationships of parallel lines, and in the rearrangements and substitutions of phonemes in sound pairs.

Parallelism, then, consists of a network of equivalences and/or contrasts involving many aspects and levels of language. Moreover, by means of these linguistic equivalences and contrasts, parallelism calls attention to itself and to the message which it bears. Parallelism embodies the poetic function, and the poetic function heightens the focus on the message.