

Yael Leibowitz

God's oracle is not only lexically ambiguous but also syntactically ambiguous. The rules governing Hebrew syntax allow for two entirely opposite readings. Within the oracle itself one finds the word order following the pattern subject-verb-object which, while natural in English, is unnatural in Hebrew. According to Gesenius (GKC §142), Hebrew verbal syntax can occur with five differing word orders, yet in each of the potential syntactical arrangements he outlines, none replicate the order found in 25:23. A Hebrew sentence may be constructed according to the following syntax: (a) verb-subject-object; (b) object-verb-subject; (c) verb-object-subject; (d) subject-object-verb; (e) object-subject-verb.⁵¹ The only ordering Gesenius offers with a verb between two nouns is object-verb-subject, which would require the final line of the oracle to be translated "the lesser will serve the greater." Gesenius also, however, notes that the subject may precede the verb for emphasis. Such a construction, he maintains, describes a "state" or "circumstance."⁵² If br is indeed the subject of the sentence, Gesenius seems to imply that this ordering names a certain condition or, given a possibility raised in our lexical discussion in the previous section, perhaps a status. Could the Hebrew grammar itself contribute to an understanding of the two titles, br and ry[c, as connoting the status of the twins in some ambiguous way? Grammatically, this line is an anomaly, diverging from conventional Hebrew word order; its unique syntax contributes to its ambiguity.

(John E Anderson: *Jacob and the Divine Trickster: A Theology of Deception and YHWH's Fidelity to the Ancestral Promise in the Jacob Cycle*)

1. בראשית י"ב: Avraham deceives Paraoh
2. בראשית כ': Avraham deceives Avimelech
3. בראשית כ"ו: Yitzchak deceives Avimelech
4. בראשית כ"ד: Rivka/Yaakov deceives Yitzchak
5. בראשית כ"ט: Lavan deceives Yaakov
6. בראשית ל"א: Yaakov deceives Lavan
7. בראשית ל"א: Rachel deceives Lavan
8. בראשית ל"ד: Sons of Yaakov (Shimon and Levi) deceive the people of Schem
9. בראשית ל"ד: Sons of Yaakov deceive Yaakov
10. בראשית ל"ח: Yehuda deceives Tamar / Tamar deceives Yehuda
11. בראשית מ"ב-מ"ד: Yosef deceives his brothers
12. שמות א': Midwives deceive Paraoh
13. שמות ג': Moshe (God's command) deceives Paraoh
14. יהושע ב': Rachav deceives the King of Yericho
15. יהושע ח': Yehoshua/Israel deceive the people of Ai
16. שופטים ג': Ehud deceives Eglon
17. שופטים ד': Yael deceives Siserah
18. שופטים ז': Gideon (and his men) deceive the people of Midian
19. שופטים ט"ז: Shimshon deceives his *na'ar*
20. שמואל א' ט"ז: Shmuel (God's command) deceives Shaul's loyalists
21. שמואל א' י"ט: Michal deceives Shaul and saves David
22. שמואל א' כ"א: David deceives King Achish of Gat
23. שמואל א' כ"ז: David deceives King Achish a second time (continually)
24. שמואל א' כ"ח: Shaul deceives the seer of En-Dor

25. שמואל ב': י"ב: Natan the Navi deceives David
26. שמואל ב': י"ג: Amnon deceives David/Tamar
27. שמואל ב': י"ד: Woman from Tekoa deceives David
28. שמואל ב': ט"ו: David convinces Chushai to deceive Avshalom
29. מלכים א': כ"א: Izevel deceives (and cause the murder of) Navot
30. מלכים ב': י': Elisha (with *sanverim*) deceives the Arameans
31. מלכים ב': י': Yehu deceives the worshippers of Ba'al

CONSCIOUS REALM: whatever crosses one's field of awareness, consisting of those psychic contents that one has knowledge of

UNCONSCIOUS: psychic contents which one is unaware of

PERSONAL UNCONSCIOUS: It is particular to each individual. It consists of events of one's life that are deemed insignificant, are forgotten, or are repressed due to their distressing nature.

COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS: Consists of 'psychic structures' or 'cognitive categories' which are not unique to the individual, but rather are shared by all; influencing our thoughts, behaviors, and the way we look at the world.

"From the unconscious, there emanate determining influences....which, independently of tradition, guarantee in every single individual a similarity and even a sameness of experience, and also of the way it is represented imaginatively.

Carl Jung

Whenever we speak of [symbolic] contents we move in a world of images that point to something ineffable. We do not know how clear or unclear these images, metaphors, and concepts are in respect to their transcendental object....[However] there is not doubt that there is something behind these images that transcends consciousness and operates in such a way that the statements do not vary limitlessly or chaotically, but clearly all relate to a few basic principles or archetypes."

Eric Neumann

No figure in literature, oral or written, baffles us quite as much as trickster. He is positively identified with creative powers, often bringing such defining features of culture as fire or basic food, and yet he constantly behaves in the most antisocial manner we can imagine.

In the majority of his encounters with men, he violates rules or boundaries, thereby necessitating escape and forcing himself to wander aimlessly.

Barbara Babock-Abrams, "A Tolerated Margin of Mess: The Trickster and His Tales Reconsidered"

