Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Although the book of Judges is sometimes viewed as a wonderful collection of stories about Old Testament heroes, to others it seems to be a shocking account of apostasy, murder, and mayhem. Ehud is viewed both as a heroic deliverer and as a devious assassin, and although the text itself praises Jael as "blessed among women" (Judg 5:24), commentators do not hesitate to deem her vicious or deviant. Gideon is variously evaluated as a hero and a failure, and Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter is at odds with his role as a valiant warrior who repels the Ammonite invasion. Although Samson seems to be driven by passion and revenge, he has nevertheless been viewed as a type of Christ. Other participants are often equally difficult to assess. How are we to evaluate these characters and the actions in which they engage?

Exegesis of the Hebrew Bible is a complex task and is heavily dependent not only on our grasp of the ancient social context but also on our understanding of Hebrew grammar and narrative. Too many grammars devote their entire attention to levels at or below the clause, and commentaries often fail to take into consideration the nature of Hebrew narrative. It is essential that exegetes look at Hebrew grammar at the level of discourse and incorporate into their study new insights into the way that language works and especially into the way that Hebrew language and narrative work. One area that is of great significance to interpretation is the language of appraisal and evaluation—the terms tend to be used interchangeably. As Sarangi (2003, 166) points out, "The view that language functions at both descriptive and evaluative levels is a long-standing one. Different scholars have captured these functions under different categories—which can roughly be labeled *informational* and *affective*—and have debated their inter-relationship. It makes sense to see these functions not as two separate entities but as intricately intertwined along a communication continuum, very much like a double helix." Appraisal involves such issues as authorial stance, expression of affect, and judgments made in the text of people and behaviors.

This is what Powell (1990, 23–24) calls "the *evaluative point of view*, which governs a work in general. This refers to the norms, values, and general worldview that the implied author establishes as operative for the story. To put it another way, evaluative point of view may be defined as the standards of judgment by which readers are led to evaluate the events, characters, and settings that comprise the story."

There are many well-known episodes in the book of Judges that raise questions of this type, such as Jephthah's sacrifice of his own daughter in fulfillment of a vow or Gideon's use of signs to determine YHWH's will, but the issue pervades the discourse of the entire book. In exegetical terms, it is important to understand which words and deeds are considered ethical and which are condemned, which characters are role models and which are censured, and which statements are to be taken at face value and which may be influenced by the speakers' perspective.[1] In order to understand the text's ideology—the norms, values, and general worldview that are operative for the story—the reader must take into account the evaluative strategies that the implied author uses.

Hebrew narrative is multiperspectival;[2] evaluations are occasionally given by a narrator who directly addresses the audience but are more often expressed through the actions and dialogue of various characters, including YHWH himself (Tate 1997, 95). It is widely accepted that in the biblical texts, the narrator is reliable and omniscient, accurately reports events and dialogue, and develops character, even if he/she does occasionally indulge in irony.[3] Indeed, there are few if any indications in the text of Judges that the narrator functions as anything other than the mouthpiece of the implied author. It must nevertheless be acknowledged that the narrator is in some sense part of the "world of the story" and that the ultimate perspective is that of the implied author himself/herself.[4] As Chatman (1990, 75) rightly notes, "The source of a narrative text's whole structure of meaning—not only of its assertion and denotation but also of its implication, connotation, and ideological nexus—is the implied author." Since

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1. Thompson and Hunston (2000, 6) give three general reasons why evaluation is important: "1. to express the speaker's or writer's opinion, and in doing so to reflect the value system of that person and their community; 2. to conduct and maintain relations between the speaker or writer and hearer or reader; 3. to organize the discourse."

2. More will be said about this important issue in section 3.3.2.

3. See Alter (1981, 157–58); Powell (1990, 24–25); Tate (1997, 87–88, 94–96). For relevant cautions, however, see Gunn and Fewell (1993, 54–55). For a stronger critique of the idea of the strict reliability of the narrator, see Gunn (1987, 70–72), who rightly considers the role of irony. For a discussion of differences in reliability between the narrator and a character, see Chatman (1990, 149–54). Note that this study is not an attempt to establish the authorial intent of the historical author/redactor or to argue any particular view of authorship/redaction. I am concerned with the perspective of the implied author, a construct of the text itself.

4. "The narrator is a character who tells the story while the other characters enact it" (Gunn and Fewell 1993, 53).

the historical author/redactor(s) of Judges is/are unknown, I will use the term *authorial stance* to refer to the implied author.[5] In addition, each individual character within the narrative world has their own evaluative perspective or stance in regard to people and events.[6]

Although some interpreters choose to read resistantly, against the grain of the narrative, for the purpose of this study, I am assuming a compliant reading—the one expected of the implied reader by the implied author—since the text must be understood on its own terms before it can be accepted or rejected (Powell 1990, 24). The book of Judges is deeply interested in what is right or wrong in the eyes of YHWH, as opposed to what is good in the eyes of humanity.[7] As Younger (2002, 124) notes, "Canonically, the Law (esp. as expressed in Deuteronomy) serves as the filter for evaluating the actions of the individuals within the stories. While it is easy to fall into the trap of moralizing these stories, it is also easy to underestimate their didactic value, for they are not mere chronicles."[8] However, even if the narrator's direct commentary and his representation of events and dialogue can be trusted as reflecting that of the implied author, it is not always clear just what this implied author's commentary, or the speeches and situations that he/she recounts, implies about the appropriateness of various actions or the uprightness of various characters. This may be in part because, within the original culture, understanding and acceptance of the evaluative stance were simply assumed,[9] or the evaluation is subordinated to the dominant idea or the plot. Thompson and Hunston (2000, 9) argue that "the less obtrusively the evaluation is placed in the clause, the more likely it is to successfully manipulate the reader." It may also be due to the terseness of Hebrew narrative or simply because modern readers are unfamiliar with the methods used by the authors/ redactors to encode evaluation in Hebrew narrative. Consequently, many exegetes have relied on their own moral instincts to draw conclusions about evaluative issues, but the criteria used in such judgments are often slanted by their own religious and cultural upbringing.

Consideration of the original historical-social context is absolutely necessary, but even this does not help to decide every case. Literary criticism has made progress in using characteristics of the text itself to search for clues, but as valuable as its insights often are, its methodology is often based on moral and aesthetic opinions or impressions rather than data, and different literary critics

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5. For an excellent discussion of the role of the implied author, see Chatman (1990, 74–108).

6. See Gunn (1987, 72), who states, "The narrator is but one voice of several, and none is immune from undermining (and irony is a classic mode of undermining)."

7. See Judg 2:11; 3:7, 12 (x2); 4:1; 6:1; 10:6, 15; 13:1. Compare Judg 14:3, 7; 17:6; 21:25.

8. See section 4.3 for more on the role of Deuteronomistic thought in Judges.

9. This would be more obvious to an ancient Hebrew-speaking reader/listener than to a modern English-speaking one.

offer differing judgments based on their own interpretive lenses.[10] In recent years, however, linguists have begun to look for indications of evaluative stance in the vocabulary and grammar of the text itself.[11] Work has been done in English that considers the role of both syntax and lexis, in addition to ideational content, in realizing the semantics of evaluation in text (Hunston and Thompson 2000; Macken-Horarik 2003a; Martin and Rose 2007; Martin and White 2005; White 2003, 2006).

The purpose of this study is to further this work by presenting a model of appraisal that is particularly suited to biblical narrative.[12] I apply aspects of J. R. Martin and P. R. R. White's appraisal theory,[13] which has been designed for use in English, combined with an understanding of perspective or point of view from narrative criticism, one form of literary criticism. This results in a new model—what I call *narrative appraisal*—which I then apply in a test case to the Hebrew text of portions of the book of Judges. As Thompson and Hunston (2000, 8) explain, "Ideologies do not exist in silence, but neither are they usually expressed overtly. They are built up and transmitted through texts, and it is in texts that their nature is revealed. . . . Because ideologies are essentially sets of values—what counts as good or bad, what should or should not happen, what counts as true or untrue—evaluation is a key linguistic concept in their study." Rather than intuitively deriving the ideology of the narratives in Judges, the narrative appraisal model—a combination of elements of linguistics and narrative criticism—yields evidence that, when used in conjunction with social

10. For example, Mieke Bal's feminist agenda has a significant impact on her interpretation of the narratives in Judges (e.g., Bal 1988a).

11. "The subsystems identified in APPRAISAL analysis are less concerned with structural features and instead emphasize semantic criteria. This is helpful as a move towards examining a different dimension in the construction of a speaker's opinion, but given the levels of subjectivity involved, the categorization is rather less determinate and cannot be carried out without close attention to contextual factors" (Page 2003, 213).

12. My focus is specifically on appraisal in narrative, not narrative theory itself; I draw on aspects of narrative theory as they are relevant to this goal. There are many worthwhile monographs on narrative theory, narratology, and specific aspects of biblical narrative. To name but a few: Amit (2001); Bal (2009); Bar-Efrat (2004); Berlin (1983); Chatman (1990); Fokkelman (1999); Genette (1980, 1988); Gros Louis, Ackerman, and Warshaw (1974); Gunn and Fewell (1993); Kawashima (2004); Marais (1998); Miller (1995, 1996); Powell (1990); Sternberg (1985); Watt (2001).

13. The terms *evaluation theory* and *appraisal theory* tend to be used interchangeably. The term *attitudinal stance* is also sometimes used. There is some overlap here with point of view in literary analysis as well. Thompson and Hunston (2000, 5) prefer the term *evaluation*, since it expresses a "user orientation" and "allows us to talk about the *values* ascribed to the entities and propositions which are *evaluated*." For more on the varied terminology and the different branches of evaluation theory, see Thompson and Hunston (2000, 2–5). As in any developing area of study, the terminology and emphasis are varied and inconsistent. Without trying to explain all the variants, this study will adopt Martin and White's terminology for simplicity's sake and because this is the model that forms the basis of narrative appraisal, the model that will be implemented here.

and historical analysis of the text, provides a more robust basis for drawing exegetical conclusions.

By developing a rationale for the narrative appraisal model and applying it as a test case to the major judges, I intend to show that although this methodology does not eliminate subjectivity, it constrains it and at least provides the evidence for the conclusions made, thus making the interpretive process more transparent. I have focused on the six major judges, since they are represented in the core narratives of the book and integrate most of the cyclic elements of the evaluation paradigm in Judg 2, which, as will be demonstrated, forms the evaluative baseline for these judges. The major judge narratives offer excellent fodder for testing the model, since they provide not only examples of what modern interpreters might consider clearly exemplary or reprehensible behavior but also many examples of dubious, ambivalent, and confusing behavior that have been subject to contentious discussion in the literature. In addition, the characters in them are—especially in the later narratives—well developed and dynamic. Their stories provide sufficient data to put the model to a meaningful test. I have not included the Abimelech narrative here, since most of what he does, as an upstart king instead of a judge, is clearly intended to be interpreted negatively. Judges 5 is poetry, not narrative, and requires a modified methodology. The narratives of the so-called minor judges do not provide enough data for conclusive evaluation. The balance of the double introductions and conclusions contains much that is ethically ambivalent; however, in this study the emphasis is on narratives with a well-developed main character at the center of events, who constitutes a clear focus for the evaluation and a meaningful test of the method.

I argue that the narrative appraisal model consistently provides clearer insights into the implied author's evaluation of the characters and their actions, based not merely upon ethical presuppositions and preferences but on actual syntactic, lexical, and ideational evidence in the text, interpreted in the light of the historical and literary context. I contend that the model is superior because it constrains subjectivity even though it cannot eliminate it and presents transparent and relatively comprehensive evidence for the conclusions drawn.

1.2 Previous Approaches to Judges

1.2.1 Historical-Critical Approaches

Approaches to the book of Judges after the advent of historical-critical research were initially dominated by an emphasis on source criticism. Scholars not only examined the compilation and arrangement of the individual narratives into the

composite structure of the book as a whole but also analyzed the internal content of the episodes for clues to their origin and history. Martin Noth, in his *Deuteronomistic History*, argued that the Deuteronomistic editor used earlier sources to create the period of the Judges in order to fill the historical gap between the conquest and the monarchy and "composed for each story of deliverance a framework that validated the viewpoint presented in the introductory overview" (O'Brien 1994, 236, 238). According to Noth (1981, 6, see also 89), the Deuteronomist's approach was ideologically motivated: "The programmatic statement for the book of Judges in Judg. 2:11ff. . . . presents an anticipatory survey of the cyclic nature of the course of history. . . . [It reflects] the concern throughout to depict and interpret the historical process showing clearly how God's retributive activity takes its course against the whole people." Noth's emphasis was continued, although extensively modified, in subsequent years by scholars such as Wolfgang Richter (1963), Walter Dietrich (1972), Rudolf Smend (1971), and Frank Moore Cross (1973). The concept of the Deuteronomistic History still has much to contribute to an understanding of Judges, although many of its conclusions have been rendered more nuanced.

In 1988, Baruch Halpern criticized source and redactional approaches to the Deuteronomistic History because they overemphasized the ideological factors that influenced the Deuteronomist but neglected the historiographic factors (O'Brien 1994, 247). Halpern (1988, 138) concluded, "A realistic contribution of the editors of Judges must recognize their intent to construe history—history, to be sure, on a broad horizon, but history whose first frame of reference is the events and causes being narrated." Thus, the narratives of Judges were not merely traditional fables and hero stories that were conscripted to serve ideological purposes but had a historical basis—theologically motivated history, but history nonetheless.

Historical-critical approaches to the study of Judges operated, however, more at the level of redaction and its overall Deuteronomistic ideology than at the level of narrative. O'Brien (1994, 248) claims that the methodology neglected the individual stories in its pursuit of this goal. Consequently, a reaction set in that changed the way that many scholars studied the book and encouraged them to view Judges from a more literary perspective. Gradually, approaches other than historical-critical analysis of the Hebrew Bible gained currency.

1.2.2 Literary Criticism

1.2.2.1 Rhetorical and Narrative Criticism

In 1967, J. P. U. Lilley published a seminal article that advocated a new approach to the study of Judges based on the assumption that the book is a unified literary

whole with an organized structure. In his view, Judges represents a deteriorating situation, "one of increasing failure and depression," in which Israelite society, especially its relationship with God, degenerates from a relatively ideal state (Lilley 1967, 102). This social and spiritual decline is paralleled by a literary fragmentation in which the individual episodes deviate further and further from the paradigm set up in Judg 2:11–21 (O'Brien 1994, 249). Thus, the structure of Judges is not merely cyclic but a spiral progression in which the stories of the judges reflect more and more confusion and disarray (Lilley 1967, 101). Although Lilley's article does not venture into detailed exegesis, a number of scholars have since taken up his challenge and published monographs that apply literary criticism to Judges.

One common literary approach to the Bible is rhetorical criticism. Phyllis Trible based her classic study of Jonah on a long tradition of rhetoric that began with Greco-Roman rhetoric and culminated in the well-known proposal of James Muilenburg (1969). She explains that rhetoric can have two different overlapping meanings: the art of composition, which includes structure and style, and the art of persuasion (Trible 1994, 32, 41). Trible herself uses this approach in her study of Jephthah's daughter and the Levite's concubine in *Texts of Terror* (1984, 65–118). Rhetoric focuses on the surface structures of the text and "disavows the separability of form (structure), content, and meaning" (Trible 1994, 66).[14] A number of interpreters of Judges have used a similar methodology. For example, Robert O'Connell (1996, 1) defines rhetoric as "the ideological purpose or agenda of the Judges compiler/redactor with respect to the implied readers of the book." O'Connell illustrates this rhetoric primarily by the redactor's use of plot development and characterization in the narratives (3).

A distinct but related approach is narrative criticism, the significance of which was brought to the attention of the interpretive community by Robert Alter in *The Art of Biblical Narrative* (1981). According to Bowman (1995, 18), in this synchronic approach "interpretations are based on empirically observable data within the text, not on the speculated intentions of the author, the hypothetical reconstructions of the historian, or the ideological agenda of the reader. By focussing on the narrative itself, the reader discovers the dynamics of the story itself."[15] Narrative criticism also considers plot, characterization, and various points of view, all of which can point to the ideology of the text. Appropriate actions result in success, whereas sinful ones bring suffering; admirable characters are blessed, but evil ones are punished; prophets praise faithful kings

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14. Trible's method includes an analysis of structure and boundaries, repetition, discourse, plot development, characterization, syntax, and vocabulary (Trible 1994, 102–5).

15. Admittedly, it is unlikely that the ideological agenda of the reader is ever entirely absent.

and condemn immoral ones.[16] Overall, however, the "dominant and evaluative perspective belongs to the narrator" (29). In his book *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading*, Meir Sternberg has completed an intensive study of the characteristics of narrative and their contribution to meaning. Although he considers the narrator reliable, he admits that the narrator does not tell the complete truth. He thus asks, "Considering the scarcity of evaluation on the narrator's part—far less in evidence than the fragmentary but ongoing representation—how can a mixed audience be expected to form the proper attitude to the action and the agents, with God at their head?" (Sternberg 1985, 54; see also Alter 1981, 158). Although narrative criticism is extremely important, interpreters must utilize all the resources available in order to accomplish their task.

In an attempt to better understand the book of Judges, a number of studies that use variations on a literary approach have recently been completed.

1.2.2.2 Literary Approaches to Judges

Robert Polzin's three-volume work, *A Literary Study of the Deuteronomic History* (1980–1993), takes a unique heteroglossic approach to literary criticism, in addition to considering structure and rhetorical factors. The first volume, *Moses and the Deuteronomist*, includes the book of Judges. Polzin's study is based on the approach of the Russian structuralist-formalists such as M. M. Bakhtin (1973), V. N. Voloshinov (1973), and especially Boris Uspensky (1973).[17] Polzin (1993b, 20) considers the changes in perspective or point of view in the text and identifies a significant problem of the Deuteronomistic History: "*Wherein does the ultimate semantic authority of this complex lie?*" Polzin defines "the ultimate semantic authority" as the ideological and evaluative point of view, the unifying ideological stance of the implied author. He questions whether it is located in the narrator, in the reported words of others in the narrative, in God's prophets, in the words of God himself, or in some fusion of these sources. According to O'Brien (1994, 253), "In Polzin's view, the combination of reported speech and narrative in Deuteronomy establishes a subtle dialogue between the 'authoritarian dogmatism' voiced by Moses and the 'critical traditionalism' of the narrator." Polzin (1993b, 164) argues that in Judges, the narrator acts in two very different ways: as an omniscient narrator, who knows even the thoughts of God himself, and also as a limited narrator, who only relates what

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16. I am not assuming a mechanical theory of retribution and reward here. See section 4.5.1.

17. Note that Bakhtin and Voloshinov may be the same person publishing under different names. Barbara Green's *How Are the Mighty Fallen? A Dialogical Study of King Saul in 1 Samuel* (2003) is an example of the application of Bakhtin/Voloshinov's theories to Old Testament biblical studies.

could have been observed by one of the characters or by an observer present at the time. This results in both stability in God's point of view and instability in that of the participants. Polzin concludes, "The distanced and estranged viewpoint of the body of the stories about the judges, as opposed to the evaluative utterances that form the framework, puts the reader into the very experiencing of chaos and ambiguity that is portrayed as the inner experience of Israel during this period" (166). In his three-volume work, Polzin attempts to put Judges into the context of the entire Deuteronomistic History. Although I do not endorse all of Polzin's conclusions, his valuable insights into the multiple perspectives inherent in Hebrew narrative will be integrated into the narrative appraisal model.

In *The Book of the Judges: An Integrated Reading*, Barry Webb (1987, 36, 39–40) utilizes rhetorical analysis, which he defines as "a detailed literary analysis of the book in its final form" and which includes an examination of factors such as structure, characterization, literary technique, and point of view. His method takes account of the narrative nature of the text, which is "more properly to be described as history-as-plot rather than as history-as-chronicle" (36). Webb concludes that the primary theme relates to the failure of YHWH to give Israel the land due to "their persistent apostasy, and the freedom of Yahweh's action over against Israel's presumption that it can use him" (208). Webb rightly disagrees with Noth's understanding of retributive justice and a simplistic relation of repentance and forgiveness, and he argues that "Yahweh does not so much dispense rewards and punishments as oscillate between punishment and mercy" (209). In his study, Webb raises some interesting questions about normative voice and authorial stance in Judges: "Do the characters express views or attitudes which are contrary to ones expressed elsewhere in the story, either by the characters or by the narrator himself? . . . Where different points of view are expressed, which find wider endorsement in the work and which are implicitly rejected?" (40). He attempts to answer these questions by applying literary methodology.

Lillian Klein claims to stop short of interpretation in her monograph *The Triumph of Irony in the Book of Judges* and conducts a narrative literary reading of Judges that focuses on irony as its primary literary technique and structuring device.[18] Her premise is "that the book of Judges is a structured entity in which elements are shaped to contribute to the integrity and significance of the whole" (Klein 1988, 11). Klein also deals with questions of normativity and ideology, however: "The narrator is 'absent,' but the omniscient narrator is indeed present, despite the apparent detachment. The narrator's is practically the only reliable voice in the book, verified by the narrator's function as spokesman. I do

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18. According to Klein (1988, 7), "Rather than proposing an interpretation of Judges, I have attempted to set forth the ironic and literary structure of the book and to show how they function in the text."

not therefore assume Yahweh's sanction when unprincipled and undependable characters claim divine support, even when they act on behalf of Israel" (12). The determination of YHWH's attitude toward events may be both clarified and complicated by the utilization of irony. She concludes, "As each of the judges—major and minor—discloses new limitations for ethical judgment, it becomes increasingly clear that Yahweh is the only judge in the book of Judges" (190–91). Given this conviction, it is essential that the reader be aware of all the literary and linguistic techniques that the text offers for assessing the narrator's, and YHWH's, perspective on people and events.

In *The Book of Judges: The Art of Editing* (Hebrew, 1992; English, 1999), Yairah Amit's stated goal is to avoid engaging in "speculative reconstruction of the book's sources" and to demonstrate that, with few qualifications, the episodes that constitute the book are "significant in their present combination and reworking" (1999, 360). In her view the redactor/editor is not merely a collector and assembler of parts but is a creative contributor to the overall purpose of the work (16–17). In the tradition of the implied reader and implied author, Amit posits an implied editor: "implied editing emphasizes the multi-faceted and multi-layered, but nevertheless single-minded, entity which stands behind any biblical work" (17). She sees the primary purpose of biblical historiography as education and views many of the characters in the history as role models whom target audiences, both naive and sophisticated, should emulate. Thus, since "all of the events related are a means of understanding the past, of guiding the present, and of shaping the future" (10), the message of the story must be clear and understandable. She uses the example of David in 2 Samuel to illustrate this point:

> It is not surprising that the criticism directed against David in 2 Samuel 11 is not only conveyed in an oblique way, or by means of a sophisticated process of reading that fills in the gaps; it also appears explicitly at the end of the story: "But the thing that David had done was evil in the eyes of the Lord" (v. 27b). On the other hand, it is reasonable to assume that the sophisticated reader will already feel the criticism implied in the irony of the opening verse ("In the spring of the year, the time when kings go forth to battle . . . and David remained at Jerusalem"), which is also interwoven throughout the story. (Amit 1999, 12–13)

Unfortunately, such helpful editorial comments by the narrator are few and far between in Judges. Israel is frequently indicted for "doing evil in the eyes of YHWH" by committing apostasy, but specific evaluations of the individual characters and actions in the narrative are often conspicuous by their absence. For example, whether Jephthah was right to sacrifice his daughter must be adduced by the application of more subtle techniques.

O'Connell (1996, 1) presents a coherent reading of the final form of Judges by examining the rhetoric of the book, which he defines as "the ideological purpose or agenda of the Judges compiler/redactor with respect to the implied readers of the book." After an examination of plot structure, characterization, and narrative strategies, he concludes that the "rhetorical purpose of the book of Judges is ostensibly to enjoin its readers to endorse a divinely appointed Judahite king who . . . upholds such deuteronomic ideals" (343). O'Connell evaluates the appropriateness of actions and the uprightness of characters by means of techniques of characterization (e.g., 186–87) but also by detailed plot analyses that include consideration of the consequences of actions. For example, he argues, "Ironically, the performance of Jephthah's vow in 11:34–36, 39a, in the aftermath of the resolution of Plot A, only dissolves the situational stability that would have resulted had Jephthah not made the vow. The vow turns Jephthah from a deliverer of Israel into but another oppressor" (181). Thus, Jephthah's sacrifice of his daughter is evaluated negatively on the basis of pragmatic rather than moral considerations. The act is deemed "pathetic" because the "vow achieves nothing toward his success against the Ammonites" (185). O'Connell does, however, give some consideration to issues such as covenant fidelity and social justice (e.g., 322–23).

Gregory Wong gives an interesting overview of these four key monographs and the conclusions that they reach about the rhetorical purpose of Judges:

> Thus, for Webb, the answer to Israel's repeated apostasy is YHWH's surprising mercy to preserve an undeserving people out of his freedom. For Klein, however, the rapid disintegration of the nation exacerbated by the leadership of flawed judges represents an implicit call to return to YHWH and to YHWHistic values and judgments. For O'Connell, the solution is more political in nature as the author prepares his readers to endorse a divinely appointed Judahite king who would uphold deuteronomic ideals. For Amit, however, while the book's author may see the advantage of continuous leadership, monarchy is at best a less-than-desirable compromise solution. (Wong 2006a, 16–17)

Wong points out the curious fact that all four scholars use similar literary approaches but arrive at distinctly different suggestions as to the theme of Judges and the message that it conveys about the apostasy and failure of Israel. This, and perhaps also Greger Andersson's (2001) critique of synchronic literary criticism,[19] suggests that there may be a need for other relevant methodologies if

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19. Andersson challenges the validity of synchronic literary studies such as those of Amit (1999), Klein (1988), O'Connell (1996), Polzin (1993b), and Webb (1987). Andersson (2001, 191)

deeper insight into the message of Judges, both as a whole and in its component narratives, is to be attained.

In *Representation in Old Testament Narrative*, Jacobus Marais uses Benjamin Hrushovski's (1982, 59–88) theory of integrational semantics to construct a possible framework for representation in biblical narrative, which he then uses to structure a "dialogue between the theoretical framework and the text of the narratives of the book of Judges" (Marais 1998, 6). Marais comments on the change in interpretive circles from regarding the judges as heroes and positive examples to viewing them as antiheroes who are examples of a downward moral spiral (59). After focusing on paradox, perspective, and juxtaposition, he concludes that the book's mode of representation is narrative, not mimesis or historiography: "Each Old Testament narrative creates an internal field of reference, and therefore, each has to be read in terms of that particular field of reference" (171). Thus, the text must be read on its own terms, not from the perspective of dogmatism or historicism. According to Marais, this means that the text must be accepted as paradox—the judges are both heroes and nonheroes—and "the mode of representation in Judges is that it lets the paradoxes be" (60).

Whereas many other major monographs simply assume that the book of Judges should be read as a literary whole, Wong (2006a, 19–20) sets out in *Compositional Strategy of the Book of Judges* to "justify this assumption of unity on the basis of significant relationships between narratives." He examines narrative structure, recurring themes and motifs, allusions, wordplays, points of view, plot, and characterization (22). Wong concludes that the prologue and epilogue are related thematically and serve as a "paradigmatic introduction and evaluative conclusion" to the central portion of the book and that the book's attitude toward kingship is a complex link that connects all three sections (226). However, he also argues that there is no reason that the introduction and conclusion cannot have been post-Deuteronomistic additions inserted when the Deuteronomistic History was divided into separate books (227). Early on, he makes a significant comment about the Judges narratives: "The narratives in Judges are surprisingly devoid of direct evaluative statements. Consequently, divergent interpretations are to be expected as interpreters have to sift through each narrative looking for subtle contextual clues to help them evaluate the events and characters involved" (18–19). If interpreters wish to take advantage of all existing indications of evaluative stance in Judges, it may be necessary to look

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says, "An important reason behind the endeavours to find a consistent larger text seems to be that scholars are searching for some kind of coherent message or theme in the book or in the DH [Deuteronomistic History]. However, in this study the significant observation has been made that the form of the book resists such an interpretation. This is so both because the larger unit contains autonomous narratives and because of the non-didactic character of the individual stories." Wong (2006a, 18), however, considers Andersson's thesis "fundamentally flawed and unsustainable."

beyond traditional literary strategies for determining them. One possible methodology that has received significant attention and development in recent years is linguistic criticism, to which approach we will now turn.

1.2.3 Linguistic Approaches to Evaluation

1.2.3.1 Theoretical Linguistic Context

Many linguists who study evaluation—or appraisal theory—take a "broadly functional approach" (Thompson and Hunston 2000, 2).[20] Their work is based on the systemic functional linguistics (SFL) of M. A. K. Halliday,[21] although they modify it in a number of respects. Evaluation theory constitutes an overlay on SFL or perhaps a distillation of its theory that is applied to a specific purpose. Because SFL is a highly comprehensive and complex linguistic approach, only those aspects that are relevant to evaluation will be introduced here. Evaluation is related to, although distinct from, the study of modality (the likelihood and obligation of events) and evidentiality (the evidence for making claims) in that all these approaches consider the writer's opinion about entities (expressed by nominal groups) or propositions (expressed by clauses) (Thompson and Hunston 2000, 3). Halliday gives a great deal of attention to modality (including modalization and modulation) but less to considerations of attitudinal meaning, although he does include them in his discussion (e.g., Halliday and Matthiessen 2014, 375). Martin and White (2005, 7) focus on interpersonal meaning in written discourse.[22] In recent years, evaluation theory, as a subset of SFL, has received increased attention in the literature.

1.2.3.2 Evaluation and Appraisal

As early as 1972, the general issue of evaluative language was raised by linguists, such as William Labov (1972, esp. 366–75) in his study of Black English Vernacular.[23] Labov argues that "perhaps the most important element in addition

20. See the detailed discussion of modal assessment in Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 183–93, 676–85).

21. See, e.g., Halliday and Matthiessen (2004, 607–25) or the more recent Halliday and Matthiessen (2014, 679–98).

22. Martin and White (2005) view the structure of context and register within the model somewhat differently than Halliday and Matthiessen (2014).

23. Labov's theory has recently been adapted in Cotrozzi (2010). Chapters 5 (Evaluation in Narrative) and 6 (Evaluation in Old Testament Narratives) in Cotrozzi's book apply the model to biblical narrative, with insight from Longacre, among others. As Cotrozzi (2010, 110) himself admits, however, "Martin and White's paradigm is quite different from the Labovian one used as a basis for this research."

to the basic narrative clause . . . is what we term the *evaluation* of the narrative: the means used by the narrator to indicate the point of the narrative, its raison d'être: why it was told, and what the narrator is getting at. There are many ways to tell the same story, to make very different points, or to make no point at all" (366). Labov refers to this as the "So what?" of a narrative (370). Labov's work, however, is more concerned with narrative form than with linguistic evidence of the characters/author as evaluators (see also Bednarek 2006, 24–25; Page 2003, 213).

The year 1989 was a significant milestone in the development of evaluation theory. Biber and Finegan (1989, 94) lamented the fact that there had been so little work on attitudinal stance in English, whether in evidentiality or in affect. Their own study, which implemented quantitative corpus-based multidimensional analyses, was an attempt to correct this deficiency and examined "the extent to which different kinds of texts employ different grammatical categories for the marking of stance" (95). Biber and Finegan's study was published in a special issue of the journal *Text* that focused on the semantics of affect and investigated the ability of language to express different emotions (Martin 2003, 171). As Martin explains, "At about this time, a group of functional linguists in Sydney began work on developing a comprehensive framework for analysing evaluation in discourse" (171). The term *appraisal* was chosen since the theory examined not only affect but also various types of judgment not directly tied to emotion. These scholars worked within the more qualitative framework of systemic functional linguistics (172).

Writing more than a decade later, Thompson and Hunston (2000, 5) defined the term *evaluation* as "the broad cover term for the expression of the speaker or writer's attitude or stance towards, viewpoint on, or feelings about the entities or propositions that he or she is talking about. That attitude may relate to certainty or obligation or desirability or any of a number of other sets of values." Martin (2003) divided his APPRAISAL system into three subcategories: AFFECT, JUDGMENT, and APPRECIATION.[24]

1.3 Overview of This Study

Since issues of authorial stance and evaluative perspective are both complex and subtle, every available resource should be utilized in order to maximize the accuracy of interpretation. This is especially true in dealing with narrative text from an ancient culture and language. Traditional historical-critical and literary approaches to the text have much to contribute but nevertheless fall short

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24. Note that in SFL, small capitals are used for the names of systems and subtypes.

in some respects, as in sections 1.2.1 and 1.2.2. A successful methodology must incorporate the best understanding of Hebrew grammar and syntax, narrative structure, and the sociohistorical context, as well as techniques for realizing evaluative stance. To this end, I will adapt appraisal theory to Hebrew and revise the model to incorporate the nature of Hebrew narrative before applying it to the stories of the major judges.[25] In chapter 2, "The Background to Appraisal Theory," I will give a detailed overview of Martin and White's original appraisal theory and the reasons why I have chosen to modify it. In chapter 3, "The Narrative Appraisal Model," I explain the adaptations and modifications that I have made to their model in order to apply it more effectively to Biblical Hebrew narrative, thus creating a new model. I also give a detailed explanation of the model and its components, as well as the procedure for applying the model. Chapter 4, "The Second Introduction," deals with the evaluative paradigm, including the paradigmatic judge, Othniel. The narrative appraisal method is applied to the text to determine the authorial stance. In chapters 5 through 9, the model is applied to the major judges—Ehud, Deborah and Barak, Gideon, Jephthah, and Samson—and evaluative conclusions are drawn about the characters and their actions. Finally, in chapter 10, the narrative appraisal model is assessed, and interpretive conclusions are drawn in regard to the major judges.

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25. An earlier foray of mine into evaluation theory, focusing on the Gideon narrative, has been published as Conway (2016).