

conventions in Language A, a speaker of the latter is likely to feel that the text in Language B is incoherent or poorly organized -- even though by the standards of Language B it may be quite coherent and even elegant. I believe that certain parts of the Hebrew Bible have suffered such ethnocentric and biased judgment on the part of scholars who speak modern European languages.

To begin with let me voice a negative thesis: I do not believe that participants in a story in Biblical Hebrew are introduced *casually* into the text, if they are meant to be focal even to a small part of the story. Participants are not, as it were, sneaked onto the stage, but come on with a certain amount of fanfare. I except from this certain participants who are comparatively minor and who are simply referred to by social role and brought onto the stage without introduction, e.g., in Gen 43:16 there is abrupt reference to the steward of Joseph's house. He is never properly introduced as such, but simply referred to as the one who was over his house. This man is important in 43:16-44:13 but doesn't have to be introduced. It is simply assumed that everyone who has a large household or estate has such a manager standing by. I also exempt from this role a passing reference to someone(s) who is mentioned but does not become central in following clauses.

Aside from such exceptions, the regular thing in Hebrew is apparently the *multiple initial presentation* of a participant if an episode or a whole story is to integrate around him.¹⁴ Thus, Joseph is mentioned by name three times in 37:2-3 and further described as to his age, occupation, circumstances, and his special relation to his father. He is in similar fashion reintroduced and made central to the story in the opening verses of chap. 39 (after the Judah-Tamar material in 38). Here, again, multiple reference to Joseph is found -- although the sheer multiplicity of references to him by name may partly be due to the fact that we have three third person singular candidates for subject in this passage (Joseph, Potiphar, and Yahweh) so that multiple reference to the same partly serves as disambiguation.

In a brief passage, Gen 37:15-17, an unidentified man answers Joseph's inquiry regarding his brothers and redirects him to Dothan. The role of this participant is brief but crucial. He is first introduced as *ʾiysh*, "a man," "a certain" man. After an intervening participial clause, this new participant is referred again, now as *ha'iysh*, "the man" and subject of the next preterite "and-he-asked- him. . ." After Joseph's reply, *ha'iysh* "the man" is again used with the verb which indicates his next speech act, i.e., telling Joseph where the brothers have gone. In this passage Joseph is referred to only by the object affix *-huw'* and by the *y*-subject prefix of the preterite, but "the man," who is thematic in this sketch is referred to in rather close succession three times. We are not left to guess which verbs he is subject of.

Potiphar is identified in 37:36 by name and presented as "one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard." In the resumption of the story in 39 (again after the Judah and Tamar digression), Potiphar is again presented to us, not only in the phrases used at the end of chap. 37 but also as "an Egyptian man". In 39:2-6, Potiphar is variously referred to as "his master, the Egyptian", "his master", or "the Egyptian". In brief, although