

## Local Incoherence, Global Coherence? Allusion and the Readability of Ancient Israelite Literature

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### ABSTRACT

*Does a lack of coherence always render a text "unreadable" or "unintelligible"? In this essay, I explore the relationships between three of De Beaugrande and Dressler's standards of textuality: cohesion, coherence, and intertextuality (considered more narrowly here in the form of allusion). I consider examples of textual allusion that readers have considered surprising, incongruous, or incoherent. I conclude that in some cases, there is reason to believe ancient Israelite writers employed allusion in such a way as to create incongruity and incoherence at local text-segment levels while creating a coherent argument at larger text-segment levels. In these cases, at least, the text is still "readable."*

KEYWORDS: allusion; cohesion; coherence.

### A INTRODUCTION

What makes a written composition readable or unreadable? According to De Beaugrande and Dressler, a "text" by definition must fit certain standards. When a written work fails to meet these standards, communication becomes difficult or even impossible, and such a written work cannot be considered a "text."<sup>1</sup> Ancient Israelite writings form a particularly interesting case study for exploring issues of textuality and readability, since their composite nature and the conventions in which they were written have posed challenges to ancient and modern readers alike. Indeed, some scholars have asserted that the Pentateuch and/or parts of the Pentateuch are "unintelligible" or "unreadable" because

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<sup>1</sup> Robert de Beaugrande and Wolfgang Dressler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics* (London: Longman, 1981), 3: "A TEXT will be defined as a COMMUNICATIVE OCCURRENCE which meets seven standards of TEXTUALITY. If any of these standards is not considered to have been satisfied, they text will not be communicative. Hence, non-communicative texts are treated as non-texts." These standards (pp. 3–12) are cohesion, coherence, intentionality, acceptability, informativity, situationality and intertextuality.

expectations of coherence during the reading process are frustrated.<sup>2</sup> To be sure, these scholars are referring to their perceptions of reading composite, editorially complex Pentateuchal texts. If they are correct, most of the other ancient Israelite writings we possess are also potentially "unreadable" because these too are typically composite works resulting from editorial activity.

However, does a lack of coherence *always* render a text "unreadable" or "unintelligible"? Why would ancient writers have produced texts lacking coherence? Could at least some instances in which cohesion or coherence are lacking be the result of a deliberate compositional or redactional strategy of allusion? In this essay, I will examine a set of texts as test cases for exploring the relationships between three of De Beaugrande's and Dressler's standards of textuality—cohesion, coherence, and intertextuality (considered more narrowly here in the form of allusion).<sup>3</sup> More specifically, I will explore the possibility that

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<sup>2</sup> Joel S. Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch: Renewing the Documentary Hypothesis* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 30, "The literary analysis of the Pentateuch is grounded in the basic inability to read the text as a whole"; 115, "When P is isolated and removed from the Pentateuch, however, what remains is equally unreadable." In idem, "Why Is the Pentateuch Unreadable? Or, Why Are We Doing This Anyway?" in *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Israel, Europe, and North America* (ed. Jan C. Gertz et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 250–251, he says, "Our text is sick, and that illness is exclusively the literary contradictions on the level of plot... What makes the Pentateuch unreadable is its thorough-going internally contradictory plot." Walter J. Houston, *The Pentateuch* (London: SCM, 2013), 89 says, "We have already noticed disruptions, gaps, and contradictions in the narrative of the Pentateuch and inconsistencies in its laws. The effect in narrative study, as we have seen, is to make the narrator appear unreliable; more strongly put, they make the text unreadable." For Jeffrey Stackert, "Pentateuchal Coherence and the Science of Reading," in *The Formation of the Pentateuch: Bridging the Academic Cultures of Israel, Europe, and North America* (ed. Jan C. Gertz et al.; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 253, "the Pentateuch's incomprehensibility is well established, having been demonstrated repeatedly and in its various parts." See also Baruch J. Schwartz, "Does Recent Scholarship's Critique of the Documentary Hypothesis Constitute Grounds for Its Rejection?" in *The Pentateuch: International Perspectives on Current Research* (ed. Thomas B. Dozeman, Konrad Schmid and Baruch Schwartz; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2011), 6, 10 who refers to "the literary unintelligibility of the work as a whole: the discrepancies and contradictions, the duplications and inconsistencies, the discontinuity and disruption, and the terminological, stylistic, and ideological multiformity" and to "the doublets, contradictions, and narrative discontinuities that make this text unintelligible in its given form."

<sup>3</sup> For De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 10, intertextuality "concerns the factors which make the utilization of one text dependent upon knowledge of one or more previously encountered texts"; cf. 182, "We introduced the term INTERTEXTUALITY... to subsume the ways in which the production and reception of a

ancient Israelite writers employed allusion in such a way as to create incongruity and incoherence at local text-segment levels in order to create a coherent argument at larger text-segment levels.

## B DEFINITIONS

Before presenting examples, some definitions are in order. By "allusion," I refer to instances in which a writer has borrowed locutions from an earlier text, or has patterned characterisation and plot sequences after those in an earlier text, without referring to the name of the earlier work, the putative author of the work, or the act of borrowing.<sup>4</sup> By "cohesion," I mean lexical repetition or morpho-syntactic connections at the surface structure of a text, and by "coherence," I mean the conceptual connections in one's mental model formed during the reading process.<sup>5</sup> While cohesion is a property of texts, the notion of coherence

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given text depends upon the participants' knowledge of other texts." While this does include allusion (13), they place more emphasis on the creation and recognition of literary genres: "intertextuality is, in a general fashion, responsible for the evolution of text types as classes of texts with typical patterns of characteristics" (10).

<sup>4</sup> For other definitions of allusion, see Ziva Ben-Porat, "The Poetics of Literary Allusion," *PTL: A Journal for Descriptive Poetics and Theory of Literature* 1 (1976): 105–128; Udo J. Hebel, "Towards a Descriptive Poetics of Allusion," in *Intertextuality* (ed. Heinrich F. Plett; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 135–164; Earl Miner, "Allusion," in *The New Princeton Handbook of Poetic Terms* (ed. Terry V. F. Brogan; Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 13–15; William Irwin, "What Is an Allusion?," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 59/3 (2001): 287–297.

<sup>5</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 3–4: "COHESION . . . concerns the ways in which the components of the SURFACE TEXT, i.e., the actual words we hear or see, are *mutually connected within a sequence*... COHERENCE . . . concerns the ways in which the components of the TEXTUAL WORLD, i.e., the configuration of CONCEPTS and RELATIONS which *underlie* the surface text, are *mutually accessible and relevant*" (see further 48–112). For other treatments of cohesion and coherence, and of how readers construct coherent mental models out of texts, see Michael A. K. Halliday and Ruqaiya Hasan, *Cohesion in English* (London: Longman, 1976); Gillian Brown and George Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 190–99, 223–271; Michel Charolles, "Text Connexity, Text Coherence and Text Interpretation Processing," in *Text Connexity, Text Coherence: Aspects, Methods, Results* (ed. Emel Sözer; Hamburg: H. Buske, 1985), 1–15; Lita Lundquist, "Coherence: From Structures to Processes," in *Text Connexity, Text Coherence: Aspects, Methods, Results* (ed. Emel Sözer; Hamburg: H. Buske, 1985), 151–175; Nils E. Enkvist, "From Text to Interpretability: A Contribution to the Discussion of Basic Terms in Text Linguistics," in *Connexity and Coherence: Analysis of Text and Discourse* (ed. Wolfgang Heydrich et al.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1989), 369–382; Robert F. Lorch, Jr. and Edward J. O'Brien, eds., *Sources of Coherence in Reading* (Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995); Walter Kintsch, *Comprehension: A Paradigm for Cognition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), esp. 93–120, 167–214; Sanna-Kaisa Tanskanen, *Collaborating*

is more complex. Strictly speaking, texts do not "have" coherence any more than they "have" meaning; coherence, like meaning, is something that exists in the heads of authors and readers.<sup>6</sup> Nevertheless, the way texts are (or are not) constructed by the writer necessarily relates to the coherence (or the lack of it) in a reader's mental model.<sup>7</sup>

The notion of coherence is complicated by several factors. First, coherence operates on every level of textuality, including causality, referentiality, time, space, and so on.<sup>8</sup> Second, while coherence and incoherence might form a simple binary opposition when one is reading a single clause or small cluster of clauses, it is unlikely that this would be the case for a larger text. For larger text-segments, coherence and incoherence exist on a spectrum; the mental model that one constructs during the reading process can have greater or lesser *degrees* of coherence.<sup>9</sup> Moreover, coherence can be experienced (or not) at either local or global levels.<sup>10</sup> Additionally, a reader might have difficulty in coherently constructing, for example, causal relationships in a particular text segment, but no difficulty in constructing referential, spatial, and temporal relationships.<sup>11</sup> Alternatively, it might be the case that the reader *could* create coherence in one of these areas, but only by making a significant number of

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*Towards Coherence: Lexical Cohesion in English Discourse* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2006); and Isabelle Tapiero, *Situation Models and Levels of Coherence: Toward a Definition of Comprehension* (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2007).

<sup>6</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 6 says, "Coherence is clearly not a mere feature of texts, but rather the outcome of cognitive processes among text users."

<sup>7</sup> Tanskanen, *Collaborating towards Coherence*, 7, 15–29.

<sup>8</sup> See Charles R. Fletcher et al., "The Role of Co-occurrence, Coreference, and Causality in the Coherence of Conjoined Sentences," in *Sources of Coherence in Reading* (ed. Robert F. Lorch, Jr. and Edward J. O'Brien; Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1995), 203–218. Paul van den Broek and Anne Helder, "Cognitive Processes in Discourse Comprehension: Passive Processes, Reader-Initiated Processes, and Evolving Mental Representations," *Discourse Processes* 54/5–6 (2017): 364 list "causal, referential, logical, and spatial" as "types of coherence." See also De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 5–6, 84, 95–97; Tapiero, *Situation Models*, 3–4, 183–188; Kirsten Adamzik, *Textlinguistik: Eine einführende Darstellung* (Niemeyer: Tübingen, 2004), 58–59.

<sup>9</sup> See De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 34–35.

<sup>10</sup> See Gail McKoon and Roger Ratcliff, "Inference during Reading," *Psychological Review* 99/3 (1992): 440–466; Arthur C. Graesser et al., "Discourse Comprehension," *Annu. Rev. Psychol.* 48 (1997): 163–189 (esp. 178); Tapiero, *Situation Models*, 95–96, 140–141.

<sup>11</sup> See Van den Broek and Helder, "Cognitive Processes," 364: "Standards of coherence... encompass both the types of coherence (e.g., causal, referential, logical, spatial) and the strength of the coherence for each type that is needed for adequate comprehension." [my emphasis]

inferences. This complexity should caution us against a simplistic equation of “incoherent” with “unreadable.”

## C POTENTIAL EFFECTS OF ALLUSION ON THE READER

To repeat the goal of this study, I am exploring whether ancient Israelite writers employed allusion in such a way as to create incongruity and incoherence at local text-segment levels in order to create a coherent argument at larger text-segment levels. To understand this strategy properly, it is important to recognise that the ways allusion is employed and the resulting effects of allusion on the reader can be placed on a continuum. These effects range from *surprise at the unexpected* to *incongruity* to *incoherence*. I will now consider each of these in turn.

### 1 Allusion and surprise at the unexpected

Perhaps the best-studied example of allusion that produces surprise in the reader is the case of chiasmic inversion (“Seidel’s Law”; “inverted quotations”).<sup>12</sup> Beentjes defines the technique and effect as follows:

[I]n an existing formulation (a sentence, a colon, an established expression, a rare combination of words) the author reverses the sequence. And by this *deviating* model he attains a moment of extra attention in the listener (or the reader), because the latter hears something else than the traditional words.<sup>13</sup>

The occurrences and effects of chiasmic inversion in allusion are widely recognised in scholarship.<sup>14</sup> For example, note how Hag 1:10 is inverted and reversed in Zech 8:12 or how Jer 51:58b is inverted in Hab 2:13:

<sup>12</sup> See Moshe Seidel, “Parallels between Isaiah and Psalms” [Hebrew], *Sinai* 38 (1955–56): 149–72, 229–40, 272–80, 335–55, repr. in *הקרי מקרא* (Jerusalem: Mossad Harav Kook, 1978), 1–97; Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Textual Study of the Bible: A New Outlook,” in *Qumran and the History of the Biblical Text* (ed. Frank M. Cross and Shemaryahu Talmon; Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), 358–378; Pancratius C. Beentjes, “Inverted Quotations in the Bible: A Neglected Stylistic Pattern,” *Biblica* 63 (1982): 506–253; idem., “Discovering a New Path of Intertextuality: Inverted Quotations and Their Dynamics,” in *Literary Structure and Rhetorical Strategies in the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Lénart J. De Regt, Jan De Waard and Jan P. Fokkelman; Assen: Van Gorcum, 1996), 31–50.

<sup>13</sup> Beentjes, “Inverted Quotations,” 523 [emphasis in the original].

<sup>14</sup> Beside the studies noted above, see Bernard M. Levinson, *Deuteronomy and the Hermeneutics of Legal Innovation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), 18–20, 35, 118; Isaac Kalimi, *The Reshaping of Ancient Israelite History in Chronicles* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2005), 232–274; Michael A. Lyons, “Marking Inner Biblical Allusion in the Book of Ezekiel,” *Biblica* 88/2 (2007): 245–250.

כלאו שמים מטל והארץ כלאה יבולה

The heavens have withheld dew and the earth has withheld its produce (Hag 1:10).

והארץ תתן את־יבולה והשמים יתנו טלם

And the earth will give its produce, and the heavens will give their dew (Zech 8:12).<sup>15</sup>

ויגעו עמים בדי־אש ולאמים בדי־אש ויעפו

And the peoples weary themselves for nothing, and the nations exhaust themselves for fire (Jer 51:58b).

וייגעו עמים בדי־אש ולאמים בדי־אש ויעפו

And the peoples weary themselves for fire, and the nations exhaust themselves for nothing (Hab 3:13).<sup>16</sup>

Note also how Lev 26:4b is inverted in Ezek 34:27a:

ונתנה הארץ יבולה ועץ השדה יתן פריו

And the land will give its produce, and the tree of the field will give its fruit (Lev 26:4b).

ונתן עץ השדה את־פריו והארץ תתן יבולה

And the tree of the field will give its fruit, and the land will give its produce (Ezek 34:27a)<sup>17</sup>

In these examples, the alluding text is cohesive and the inversion does not threaten coherence, but to the degree that the earlier text is well known, the deviation from it produces surprise. While these inversions may have a specific contextual function with respect to the semantic content of the shared material,

<sup>15</sup> Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations," 513–514. Most identify Zechariah as the borrowing text; see Michael R. Stead, *The Intertextuality of Zechariah 1–8* (New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 239.

<sup>16</sup> On the direction of dependence, see James Nogalski, *Redactional Processes in the Book of the Twelve* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1993), 132.

<sup>17</sup> See also the inversion and modification of Lev 26:5–6 (וישבתי לטוב) (וישבתי חיה־רעה מן־הארץ וישבו) (בארצכם...והשבתי חיה רעה מן־הארץ במדבר לטוב). On the composition and dating of the material in Ezek 34 and its relationship with Lev 26, see Michael A. Lyons, "Extension and Allusion: The Composition of Ezekiel 34," in *Ezekiel: Current Debates and Future Directions* (ed. William A. Tooman and Penelope Barter; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 138–152. On the direction of dependence, see also August Klostermann, "Beiträge zur Entstehungsgeschichte des Pentateuchs," *ZLThK* 38 (1877): 430; Samuel R. Driver, *An Introduction to the Literature of the Old Testament* (New York: Charles Scribner's, 1891), 140–141; Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23–27* (New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2348–2349. Beentjes, "Inverted Quotations," 510–511, took Lev 26:4 as the alluding text.

it seems likely that the attempt to provoke surprise itself serves to call attention to the fact that allusion has occurred.

## 2 Allusion and incongruity

Greater difficulties for the reader are posed by allusions that create *incongruity*—the perception that something is “out of place” or does not fit well in its context, a feeling produced by a gap between expectation and reality.<sup>18</sup> While in some cases (as I will demonstrate below) the incongruity of the borrowed material is what allows the reader to discern that allusion has occurred, it is important to note that not all allusion produces incongruity.

### 2a Allusion and incongruity due to syntactic incohesion

The kinds of incongruity produced by allusion vary widely. In some cases, an alluding author has not fully adjusted the borrowed material to fit its new context. The result can be a lack of syntactic cohesion, which is perceived as incongruous by the reader.<sup>19</sup> For example, MT Ezek 6:5a contains an additional clause ( ונתתי את־פגרי בני ישראל לפני גלוליהם ) borrowed from Lev 26:30, in which the *third*-person suffix on “their idols” (v. 5a) breaks up the flow of the surrounding *second*-person address in vv. 3–7.<sup>20</sup> Likewise, Ezek 34:26 ( והורדתי הגשם בעתו ) (גשמי ברכה יהיו ) displays an incongruous shift from singular (“rain in *its* time”) to plural (“rains of blessing *they* will be”)—a lack of syntactic cohesion.<sup>21</sup> This is because the writer is alluding to Lev 26:4, which contains plural forms ( ונתתי גשמיכם בעתם , “And I will give your rains in *their* time”).<sup>22</sup> Here, incongruity is the *result* of allusion, but in these cases, it would be difficult to demonstrate that it was intended to serve as a *marker* of allusion. Yet it seems likely that

<sup>18</sup> Bruner and Postman describe incongruity as “perceptual events which occur when perceptual expectancies fail of confirmation”; see Jerome S. Bruner and Leo Postman, “On Perception of Incongruity: A Paradigm,” *Journal of Personality* 18 (1949): 208.

<sup>19</sup> This syntactic incohesion could be considered under Plett’s rubric of “interference.” See Heinrich F. Plett, “Intertextualities,” in *Intertextuality* (ed. Heinrich F. Plett; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1991), 11.

<sup>20</sup> This addition was likely motivated by the existing allusions to Lev 26:25, 30, 33 in Ezek 6:3–8, and represents an attempt to specify the identity of the “mountains of Israel” (Ezek 6:3) as referring to their human inhabitants.

<sup>21</sup> On the substantial differences between the textual witnesses to Ezek 34:26, see Walther Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2: A Commentary on the Book of the Prophet Ezekiel, Chapters 25–48* (trans. James D. Martin; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1983), 210.

<sup>22</sup> On the composition and dating of the material in Ezek 34 and its relationship with Lev 26, see the footnote above on Ezek 34:27.

incongruity can indeed function as a marking device, as the examples below illustrate.

## 2b Allusion and incongruity in Judges 19:24–25

Incongruity may be perceived not only at the syntactic level, but also at the level of plot and characterisation, and here its function as a marker of allusion seems to be quite deliberate.<sup>23</sup> For example, the story of the outrage in Gibeah (Judg 19) is recognised widely as being patterned after the account of attempted gang rape in Gen 19, the story of Lot's guests in Sodom.<sup>24</sup> Here, Lot (the host) offers to give his two daughters to the mob to be raped rather than give up his guests (Gen 19:8); and in the Judges account, the old man in Gibeah (the host) suddenly has a hitherto unmentioned "virgin daughter" that he could offer to the mob with the Levite's concubine (Judg 19:24)—but once the offer is spoken, the daughter vanishes from the story. The composer of the story in Judg 19 required the presence of *two* women in order to fit the pattern of Genesis 19, his source text. As Lasine notes, the Levite's host "follows Lot's example so precisely that it is almost as though he were following a "script." The "script" calls for two women to be offered to the mob."<sup>25</sup> The next verse (Judg 19:25), which describes the Levite forcing his concubine alone *out* of the house, is an inversion of Gen 19:10, which describes Lot's guests pulling him *into* the house. The incongruous "virgin daughter" of the Judges account, then, serves as a marker and reinforcing element in the series of allusions to the Genesis account.

## 2c Allusion and incongruity in 1 Kgs 19

Additional examples of incongruity can also be found in the story of Elijah's flight in 1 Kgs 19. First, if the author simply wished to show Elijah's desire to

<sup>23</sup> See Cynthia Edenburg, "How (not) to Murder a King: Variations on a Theme in 1 Sam 24; 26," *SJOT* 12/1 (1998): 68, "The foreignness of the marker breaks the rules of the text's narrative grammar and serves as a stumbling-block to the reader seeking to understand the overt significance of the text. The "ungrammaticality" perceived in the text thus signals the presence of the marker. The ungrammaticality of the marker may provoke the reader to seek another text in which the marker is well integrated, and to create a link between the two (or more) texts." See her further comments, 72–73.

<sup>24</sup> For the dependence of Judg 19 on Gen 19, see Julius Wellhausen, *Die Composition den Hexateuchs und der historischen Bücher des alten Testaments* (4th ed.; Berlin: De Gruyter, 1963), 231; Charles F. Burney, *The Book of Judges* (2d ed.; London: Rivingtons, 1920), 444–445, 469; Stuart Lasine, "Guest and Host in Judges 19: Lot's Hospitality in an Inverted World," *JSOT* 29 (1984): 37–59; Uwe Becker, *Richterzeit und Königtum* (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1990), 262; Sara J. Milstein, *Tracking the Master Scribe: Revision through Introduction in Biblical and Mesopotamian Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 176.

<sup>25</sup> Lasine, "Guest and Host," 39; cf. Milstein, *Master Scribe*, 176, who remarks that, "the daughter is never mentioned again, betraying her role as a blind motif."

flee Jezebel (v. 3a, itself an incongruity, in light of the previous two chapters!), why is it necessary to depict him fleeing so far south, and to these particular locations—first to Beersheba (v. 3), and then to Horeb (v. 8)? Second, why is there oddly a specific reference to Elijah sitting down “under one broom tree” (vv. 4, 5, תחת רתם אחד), and to the “thin crushed sound” (v. 12, קול דממה דקה)? As has long been recognised, these incongruities arise from a series of networked allusions to the Hagar and Moses stories.<sup>26</sup> The references to the Hagar story (Gen 21) underscore God’s provision,<sup>27</sup> and the references to the Moses-at-Sinai story depict Elijah as a “prophet like Moses” who nevertheless fails to intercede as Moses did.<sup>28</sup> Incongruously specific elements, then, can serve as markers alerting the reader to the presence of a larger network of allusions.

<sup>26</sup> Parallels between 1 Kgs 19 and Gen 21: in each story the main character goes to the “wilderness” near “Beersheba” (1 Kgs 19:3–4//Gen 21:14); a character is under a single bush (1 Kgs 19:4, תחת רתם אחד; Gen 21:15, תחת אחד השיחם); an angel provides encouragement (1 Kgs 19:5–7//Gen 21:17–18); a character receives sustenance (1 Kgs 19:5–8//Gen 21:19); a character makes a statement about death (1 Kgs 19:4//Gen 21:16); God asks what the character is doing (1 Kgs 19:9, פה אליהו//Gen 21:17, מה-לך הגר). Parallels between Elijah and Moses: both Elijah and Moses go to “the mountain of God” (1 Kgs 19:8//Exod 24:13); both eat, then go without food “forty days and forty nights” (1 Kgs 19:8//Exod 24:11, 18; 34:28; Deut 9:9, 25); both are in a cave (1 Kgs 19:9//Exod 33:22); both are told to present themselves before God on the mountain (1 Kgs 19:1 //Exod 34:2, 4–5); God “passes by” (1 Kgs 19:11//Exod 34:6); there is cloud or wind, earthquake, and fire on the mountain (1 Kgs 19:11–12//Exod 19:16, 18–19; Deut 5:22); Elijah hears a קול דממה דקה (1 Kgs 19:12), while Moses and Israel hear a קול גדול (Deut 5:22. Cf. Exod 19:16, 19); Elijah covers his face *before* speaking to God (1 Kgs 19:13) while Moses covers his face *after* speaking to God (Exod 34:33–34); Elijah complains about the people (1 Kgs 19:10, 14) while Moses intercedes for the people (Exod 32:11–14, 30–32; Deut 9:25–29).

<sup>27</sup> See Hermann Gunkel, *Elias, Jahve und Baal* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1906), 22: “Von einem Busch in der Wüste, nicht weit von Beersheba, bei dem der Engel erscheint, redet auch die Erzählung von Hagars Verstoßung (1. Mose 21,15); beide Male ist wohl derselbe Busch gemeint.” In *Bereshit Rabbah* 53, R. Meir identifies the bush (השיח) under which Hagar put Ishmael (Gen 21:15) as a רתם. See also Russell Gregory, “Irony and the Unmasking of Elijah,” in *From Carmel to Horeb: Elijah in Crisis* (ed. Alan J. Hauser; Sheffield: Almond Press, 1990), 91–169 (esp. 140–141).

<sup>28</sup> Georg Fohrer, *Elia* (2d ed.; Zürich: Zwingli, 1968), 55–58; Eckhard V. Nordheim, “Ein Prophet kündigt sein Amt auf (Elia am Horeb),” *Biblica* 59 (1978): 153–173; Gregory, “Irony and the Unmasking of Elijah,” 144–146; Jerome T. Walsh, *1 Kings* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1996), 284–289; Steven L. McKenzie, *1 Kings 16–2 Kings 16* (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 2019), 145–151.

Another example from the history of reception shows that the unusual labelling of Joseph's garment as a כַּתְנַת פְּסִים (Gen 37:3, 27) has been perceived as highly salient. In 2 Sam 13:18, the same garment (now identified as female clothing!) shows up again on Absalom's sister Tamar, an allusion that alerts the reader to the presence of other intertextual connections between Gen 34, 37–38 and 2 Sam 13.<sup>29</sup> An additional example can be seen in Jonah 4:6, where the reference to the קִיקִיּוֹן that grows up over Jonah is not only oddly specific, but even highly superfluous in context, since Jonah is *already* sitting under a shelter (v. 5). Yitzhak Berger explains Jonah's departure to the "east" and the name קִיקִיּוֹן (Jonah 4:5–6) as wordplay on and allusions to the earlier expulsion of Jonah (וַיִּקְא אֶת־יֹנָה, Jonah 2:11) and to the eastward expulsion of Cain (קַיִן; Jonah 1:3 + 4:5//Gen 4:16).<sup>30</sup> This forms part of a larger network of allusions to the primeval stories that Berger has identified in Jonah. Yet another example can be seen in Isa 7:2, where the fear of the Judean royal house is oddly depicted as the "waving of the trees of the forest from before a wind" (וַיִּנַּע לִבְבוֹ וּלְבַב עֲמוֹ כְּנוּעַ) (עֲצֵי־יַעַר מִפְּנֵי־רוּחַ). This seems to be an allusion to Jotham's parable about monarchy in Judg 9, where the olive, fig, and vine refuse to go "to wave over the trees" (לִנְוֹעַ עֲלֵיהֶם, Judg 9:9, 11, 13). There are in fact a number of allusions in Isaiah to Judges 6–9; these allusions are part of an editorial strategy in which

<sup>29</sup> A woman is raped (Gen 34:2; 2 Sam 13:11, 14); "done נבלה... such a thing is not done" (Gen 34:7; 2 Sam 13:12); a relative is very angry (Gen 34:7; 2 Sam 13:21); the raped woman's sibling(s) trick and kill the offender (or order him to be killed) (Gen 34:13–17, 23–27; 2 Sam 13:28–29); someone has a כַּתְנַת פְּסִים and is hated by siblings (Gen 37:3, 4; 2 Sam 13:15, 18); a character says "make every man go out from me" (Gen 45:1; 2 Sam 13:9). In Gen 38:2, 12 Judah marries the בַּת of שׁוּעַ, while in 2 Sam 11:3, 27 David marries בַּת־שׁוּעַ (1 Chron 3:5 spells her name as בַּת־שׁוּעַ!); in Gen 38:3, 7 Bat-Shua's first son dies, while in 2 Sam 12:18–19 Bat-Sheba's first son dies; in Gen 38:11 Tamar "resides as a widow in the house of her father," while in 2 Sam 13:20 Tamar "resided and was desolate in the house of Absalom her brother"; in Gen 38:12 Judah goes up to the sheep-shearers, while in 2 Sam 13:23–24 Absalom invites his brothers to sheep-shearing; in Gen 39:7 Potiphar's wife says to Joseph "lie with me," while in 2 Sam 13:11 Amnon says to Tamar "lie with me." See Gary A. Rendsburg, "David and His Circle in Genesis XXXVIII," *VT* 36/4 (1986): 438–446; Craig Y. S. Ho, "The Stories of the Family Troubles of Judah and David: A Study of Their Literary Links," *VT* 49/4 (1999): 514–531; Heath Dewrell, "How Tamar's Veil Became Joseph's Coat: The Meaning of כַּתְנַת פְּסִים (ה)," *Biblica* 97/2 (2016): 161–174.

<sup>30</sup> See Yitzhak Berger, *Jonah in the Shadows of Eden* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2016), 14. I would interpret the depiction of Jonah in terms of Cain as an analogy; both desired the death of others.

the Gideon-Abimelech story has been coordinated with Isaian material to create a contrast between Ahaz and Hezekiah.<sup>31</sup>

### 3 Allusion and incoherence

What then happens in the case of incoherence? For narrative texts, the importance of causal connections for plot creates a high demand for coherence.<sup>32</sup> This accounts for our frustration when we find ourselves unable to create a coherent mental model out of what we are reading. However, did ancient writers ever deliberately intend to frustrate readers' demands for coherence, at least to some extent? The following examples suggest that they did. My argument here is not simply that there are allusions which are incoherent apart from readers' knowledge of the source text,<sup>33</sup> but that in some cases, writers employed allusion in such a way as to create incoherence *deliberately* at local text-segment levels in order to create a coherent argument at larger text-segment levels.

#### 3a What does Aaron make at Sinai (Exod 32)?

One of the most remarkable examples of strategically created incoherence through text-referencing is the statement of the people in Exod 32:4, "These are your gods, O Israel, who brought you up from the land of Egypt" (אלה אלהיך)

<sup>31</sup> See Jacob Stromberg, "Figural History in the Book of Isaiah: The Prospective Significance of Hezekiah's Deliverance from Assyria and Death," in *Imperial Visions: The Prophet and the Book of Isaiah in an Age of Empires* (ed. Joachim Schaper and Reinhard Kratz; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2020), 81–102. On the use of the Gideon-Abimelech material for crafting narrative analogies in 1 Samuel, see Moshe Garsiel, *The First Book of Samuel: A Literary Study of Comparative Structures, Analogies and Parallels* (Jerusalem: Rubin Mass, 1990), 97–99; Robert H. O'Connell, *The Rhetoric of the Book of Judges* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), 286–293.

<sup>32</sup> See Baden, "Why Is the Pentateuch Unreadable?" 249–251, for his emphasis on plot coherence. Note however that local incoherence may be more easily tolerated in some genres than others; poetry is often characterised by the juxtaposition of images which may be perceived as strikingly incompatible (e.g. Isa. 14:29; 31:4–5), and readers may account for incoherence in apocalyptic texts as a genre feature. On the latter, see Alison McQueen, *Political Realism in Apocalyptic Times* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 55: "Revelation's rich but incoherent riot of images gives the book tremendous affective power." This impression is created in part by the density of allusions in Revelation.

<sup>33</sup> See for example, Ps 144:6, where the antecedents of the 3mp suffixes on ותפיצם and ותהמם lack a plausible antecedent in context (surely not the "mountains" of v. 5!). They presume the antecedent of the source text (2 Sam 22:15), which is "my enemies" (2 Sam 22:4; cf. the parallel Ps 18:4, 15). See also Ezek 7:12–13, which does not make sense without a knowledge of the source text Lev 25:25–28 (that is, what is being bought and sold and why mourning or rejoicing?).

(ישראל אשר העלוד מארן מצרים).<sup>34</sup> Why, when Aaron has made a *single* golden calf (vv. 4a, 8a, 20, 24, 35), do the people refer to it in the *plural* (אלה ... העלוד)? This is both a lack of cohesion and coherence.<sup>35</sup> The incoherent reference appears again in v. 8: "they bowed down to *it* and they sacrificed to *it*, and said, 'These are your gods...'" It is interesting to note that when Neh 9:18 alludes to this text, it changes the plural אלה to the singular זה—perhaps as an attempt to eliminate the incoherence. However, why was the plural reference created in the first place?

It is widely accepted that this incoherence is due to a deliberate editorial strategy. Here, the writer is alluding to Jeroboam's fabrication of *two* golden calves in 1 Kgs 12:28–29, and the words of Jeroboam are placed in the mouths of the people at Sinai.<sup>36</sup> The apostasy by which the Deuteronomist accounted for the fall of Samaria (cf. 2 Kgs 17:16, 21–23) is thus depicted on analogy with the apostasy at Sinai.<sup>37</sup> As Greenstein notes, "In the present shape of the narrative Jeroboam must look like an apostate for having repeated—twofold—the fateful error of Aaron."<sup>38</sup> However, while the reason for the incoherence is revealed

<sup>34</sup> While the MT attributes the statement to the people in both v. 4 and v. 8, the LXX attributes the statement in v. 4 to Aaron.

<sup>35</sup> This is not to deny the cohesion and coherence that *can* be seen; the people's statement in Exod 32:4 ("these are your *gods*") picks up the plural language of their request in 32:1 ("make for us *gods* who will go before us"). And the reader is likely to evaluate both the people's request and following statement in light of Exod 13:21 ("and YHWH was *going before* them") and 20:2–4 ("I am YHWH *your God*... you shall have *no other gods*... you shall not *make* for yourself an image").

<sup>36</sup> The writer has actually heightened the incoherence by slightly modifying his source text's הנה אלהיך (1 Kgs 12:28) into אלה אלהיך (Exod 32:4, 8), making a subtle but explicit gesture to the plural referent of the source text.

<sup>37</sup> Martin Noth, *A History of Pentateuchal Traditions* (trans. Bernhard Anderson; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1981), 142–145; Jacques Vermeulen, "L'affaire du veau d'or (Ex 32–34): Une clé pour la «question deutéronomiste»?" *ZAW* 97.1 (1985): 1–23; Thomas B. Dozeman, *Exodus* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009), 687–699; Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2012), 118–119. For the analogical presentation of Israel's emergence from Egypt and the rise of the Northern kingdom, see Moses Aberbach and Leivy Smolar, "Aaron, Jeroboam, and the Golden Calves," *JBL* 86/2 (1967): 129–140; Stuart Lasine, "Reading Jeroboam's Intentions: Intertextuality, Rhetoric, and History in 1 Kings 12," in *Reading Between Texts: Intertextuality and the Hebrew Bible* (ed. Danna N. Fewell; Louisville: WJKP, 1992), 133–152; James Nohrnberg, *Like unto Moses: The Constituting of an Interruption* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 280–295.

<sup>38</sup> Edward L. Greenstein, "On the Genesis of Biblical Prose Narrative," *Prooftexts* 8 (1988): 352.

when the reader becomes aware of the connection between the two stories (thus revealing the writer's coherent argument at the macro level), the incoherence at the local level remains unresolved; a single entity is referred to with plural language.

### 3b Who takes Joseph to Egypt (Gen 37)?

Readers have long struggled with the lack of coherence in the story of Joseph's betrayal in Gen 37:18–36.<sup>39</sup> The problems are easily summarised: first, who takes Joseph to Egypt—Ishmaelites (39:1; cf. 37:25, 27, 28b) or Medanites (37:36)?<sup>40</sup> Second, why does the writer suddenly introduce Midianites (37:28a) and Medanites (37:36) into the story, given that we have already been introduced to Ishmaelites as making up the caravan (37:25–27)? Third, is the antecedent of the verbs in v. 28b–e the Midianites (v. 28a), or is it Joseph's brothers (v. 27b)?<sup>41</sup> If it is the former, why are they (rather than the brothers) presented as pulling Joseph out and selling him, given that this was the brothers' plan (vv. 26–27)?<sup>42</sup> However, if it is the latter, why are the Midianites mentioned at all? These are by any means not the full extent of the difficulties.<sup>43</sup> While some readers have attempted to remove the incoherence either by filling gaps in the story (e.g.

<sup>39</sup> For the history of interpretation, see Baden, *The Composition of the Pentateuch*, 4–12; Matthew C. Genung, *The Composition of Genesis 37: Incoherence and Meaning in the Exposition of the Joseph Story* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2017), 1–24.

<sup>40</sup> The textual witnesses are divided in v. 36. The MT and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan have "Medanites," while LXX, Samaritan Pentateuch, and Targums Onkelos and Neophyti have "Midianites." If "Medanites" is original (it is perhaps the more difficult reading, since this gentilic is never elsewhere mentioned), the reading "Midianites" is a harmonisation to v. 28. If "Midianites" is the original reading, "Medanites" represents an additional level of reference to Gen 25:2 (see below).

<sup>41</sup> The nearest antecedent of וימשכו (v. 28b) is the immediately preceding אנשים מדינים סחרים, therefore, the problem here is not a lack of syntactic cohesion.

<sup>42</sup> A reader might attempt to fill the gap by creating a scenario where the brothers moved far away from the pit to have lunch (v. 25a), so far away that they did not see Midianites taking and selling Joseph. However, this is contradicted by Joseph's words to his brothers in Gen 45:4–5, "you sold me"!

<sup>43</sup> When and why did Reuben leave, and where did he go (v. 29; cf. vv. 22, 24)? Why did Reuben not know that Joseph was sold (vv. 29–30)? See the list of difficulties in Genung, *Genesis 37*, 27–30, and the assessment by Baruch J. Schwartz, "How the Compiler of the Pentateuch Worked: The Composition of Genesis 37," in *The Book of Genesis: Composition, Reception, and Interpretation* (ed. Craig A. Evans, Joel N. Lohr, and David L. Petersen; Leiden: Brill, 2012), 263: "A close reading of the text reveals that the account contains no fewer than four functionally equivalent, competing doublets, six irreconcilable contradictions, and eight inexplicable disruptions in the narrative, rendering it unintelligible in its canonical form."

postulating multiple sales; inventing reasons to explain Reuben's absence)<sup>44</sup> or by harmonising elements of the story (e.g. equating the Midianites with the Ishmaelites),<sup>45</sup> these attempts actually re-write the story into a text other than the one that has been composed.

The incongruous and incoherent elements of the story can be attributed to an editorial decision regarding the combination of earlier source material, a decision to allow tensions to stand,<sup>46</sup> as well as to a redactional addition in v. 28a (introducing the Midianites) and a modification in v. 36a (replacing Ishmaelites with Medanites; cf. 39:1). At least some of the incoherent elements seem to be due to a deliberate strategy of allusion, namely, the references to the Ishmaelites, Midianites, and Medanites.<sup>47</sup> The writer attributes to the Midianites the removal of Joseph from the pit and his subsequent sale (even though this was the brothers' plan), and attributes to both the Ishmaelites and the Medanites the transport of Joseph to Egypt (though logically only one group would have done this), in order to involve *three* people groups who are the disfavoured offspring of Abraham (Gen 21:9–21; 25:1–2, 5–6). Whether one sees this as a "measure-for-measure" strategy<sup>48</sup> or an inversion strategy,<sup>49</sup> it is unlikely to be accidental. The

<sup>44</sup> See Rashi on Gen 37:28–29 in *Mikra'ot Gedolot 'Haketer': Genesis, Vol. 2* (ed. Menachem Cohen; Ramat Gan: Bar-Ilan University Press, 1999), 102. On Reuben's absence, see also Josephus, *Ant.* 2.31–34.

<sup>45</sup> See Ibn Ezra (who cites Judg 8:24 in support) on Gen 37:28 in Cohen, *Genesis*, 102. Josephus (*Ant.* 2.32–33) eliminates all references to any named group other than "Arabians of the race of Ishmael" (cf. Gen 37:25) and represents the brothers selling Joseph to "merchants" (ἐμπόροις; cf. LXX Gen 37:28).

<sup>46</sup> See Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37–50* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 42: "Whatever one does to unite the two versions conceptually, two different presentations remain, and the narrator has made them quite clear."

<sup>47</sup> It is possible that other instances of plot level incoherence arise from the subordination of plot to structural design.

<sup>48</sup> Yair Zakovitch argues that the Ishmaelite's act of purchasing and selling Joseph to an Egyptian corresponds to the treatment of Ishmael and Hagar the Egyptian in Gene 16 and 21; see Yair Zakovitch, *'And You Shall Tell Your Son . . .': The Concept of the Exodus in the Bible* (Jerusalem: Magnes, 1991), 31–32. See also Joel Rosenberg, *King and Kin: Political Allegory in the Hebrew Bible* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1986), 95, 237 n. 69.

<sup>49</sup> S. Nikaido, "Hagar and Ishmael as Literary Figures: An Intertextual Study," *VT* 51/2 (2001): 37–38: "Nevertheless an important yet odd detail about this rescue in the wilderness is the *explicit identification of the caravan as being Ishmaelite-Midianite*... It is a strange turn of fate that those who arrive to 'save' Joseph are descendants of the same one who had earlier been targeted for such treacheries by the same family—but survived." John T. Noble, *A Place for Hagar's Son: Ishmael as a Case Study in the Priestly Tradition* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2016), 42: "Joseph's rescue comes by way of Ishmaelite (J) or Midianite (E) traders (Gen. 37:25, 28, 36). Whether or not such details are considered anachronistic, it seems clear that the specificity is given for the

disfavoured offspring of Abraham are essential to the rescue of Joseph from his brothers, thereby, ensuring the eventual survival of *all* regional parties through Joseph's later preparations for famine. Ironically, the offspring of Hagar the Egyptian slave brings the favoured son Joseph to Egypt as a slave, and in doing so saves both Jacob's family and all Egypt. The local incoherence created in Gen 37:25–28, 36; 39:1 by the allusions to earlier texts is essential for creating a large-scale argument across the book, an argument that is tied to themes of sibling rivalry and reconciliation.<sup>50</sup>

## **D TEXT-PROCESSING, INCOHERENCE AND DIRECTIONALITY OF ALLUSION**

From an editorial (i.e. text-production) standpoint, any text-segment may be linked to another text-segment; a writer can make an intervention, for example, in Genesis or Exodus based on Joshua, Samuel and Kings or vice-versa. From the standpoint of the reader who encounters narrative text-segments sequentially, however, these allusions are experienced in somewhat different ways. In the first instance, the reader may encounter material which can be explained only by a knowledge of prior material in the plot line (e.g. Gen 37 in light of Gen 21 and 25, or 1 Kgs 19 in light of the Hagar and Moses stories). Here the alluding text-segment is positioned later than the source text-segment, and the rationale for the incoherence is comprehensible once the reader recalls the previously-read material. In the second instance, the reader may encounter material, the significance of which is unknown until they reach a later text-segment in the plot line (e.g. why the calf at Sinai is referred to in the plural). In these cases, the reader must tolerate the lack of rationale for the incongruity or incoherence for a considerable period of time. Once the later text-segment (from a text-production standpoint, the source text) is read, the reader may see the connection between the two text-segments and conclude that the incongruity or incoherence was the result of a meaningful strategy. In both cases, the reader's mental model may become coherent at a global level, even though the local-level incoherence remains.

## **E CONCLUSION**

In this essay, I have sought to inform our understanding of ancient Israelite literature by bringing to bear theoretical and empirical studies of text processing

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purpose of joining Abraham's sons with Joseph for a particular cause. The reason could be that the forefathers of the Ishmaelites and Midianites were sent away by their common father, Abraham."

<sup>50</sup> The heavy emphasis on inclusion and reconciliation at the end of the book (Gen 41:45; 45:4–8; 48:5; 50:19–21) suggests that previous hostilities might be resolved. See further Jonathan Huddleston, *Eschatology in Genesis* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2012), 202–205.

and comprehension, by exploring the various effects of allusion on the reading process, and by providing an alternative to the assumption that incoherence necessarily implies unreadability. I have explored the relationships between three of De Beaugrande’s and Dressler’s standards of textuality—cohesion, coherence, and intertextuality (considered more narrowly here in the form of allusion). My goal has been to suggest that *in certain cases*, ancient Israelite authors and editors created and tolerated local incohesion, incongruity, and incoherence by their use of allusion in order to create coherent arguments at larger text-segment levels.<sup>51</sup> The surprise created by inversion can draw attention to the fact that allusion has occurred, and incongruity and incoherence can function as “triggers” to prompt the reader into searching for an explanation—possibly resulting in the discovery of further intertextual links.

This essay, of necessity, has been suggestive. I cannot prove that the earliest Israelite readers of these texts experienced incoherence in precisely the same way that some later readers did or that some modern readers do.<sup>52</sup> However, as I have noted above, one simply cannot equate “incoherent” with “unreadable.” The phenomenon of (in)coherence is complex, operating in multiple areas and on multiple levels. Furthermore, readers have different standards of coherence<sup>53</sup> and experience incoherence in different ways. Nevertheless, as De Beaugrande and Dressler point out, “text users normally exercise tolerance towards products

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<sup>51</sup> On the other hand, perhaps more precisely, they *attempted* to create incoherence. As I noted above, research has demonstrated that (in)coherence is not itself a property of texts, but is a perceptual phenomenon experienced by readers that is nevertheless necessarily tied to the form and content of a text.

<sup>52</sup> The experience of coherence or incoherence is tied to culturally based expectations. On these matters, see the essays in David A. Teeter and William A. Tooman, eds., “Standards of (In)coherence in Ancient Jewish Literature,” in *HeBAI* 9/2 (2020).

<sup>53</sup> See van den Broek and Helder, “Cognitive Processes,” 364: “Standards of coherence have several important properties... Second, there are individual and developmental differences in standards. Third, standards can also vary within an individual as a function of the reader’s goal for reading—for example, superficial or deep comprehension—a particular text, his or her motivation of interest in the topic, the presence of distractors or secondary tasks, and physical factors such as fatigue. These factors themselves may depend on properties of the text (e.g., topic, clarity of structure) and of the reading situation (e.g., instructions, perceived or real task). Fourth, standards of coherence and the attention-allocation and reading-comprehension strategies used in the service of attaining the standards can be acquired through practice and study. Moreover, with practice standards and strategies can become more automatized.” See also Paul van den Broek et al., “When a Reader Meets a Text: The Role of Standards of Coherence in Reading Comprehension,” in *Text Relevance and Learning from Text* (ed. Matthew T. McCrudden et al.; Charlotte: Information Age, 2011), 123–139.

whose conditions of occurrence make it hard to uphold cohesion and coherence altogether."<sup>54</sup>

While not all incoherent texts may be readable, at least some, including the ones surveyed above, are likely to be so, because the production of incongruity and incoherence using allusion can be accounted for as a deliberate compositional or editorial strategy. Empirical evidence suggests that the perception of local-level incoherence can function as an impetus for readers to review global-level information in an attempt to create coherence.<sup>55</sup> This being the case, it is not difficult to see how writers might deliberately exploit this cognitive process. After all, incongruity is essential to many forms of humour,<sup>56</sup> and incoherence is essential to the success of so-called "Garden-Path" jokes.<sup>57</sup>

Not only is the deliberate use of incongruity and incoherence widely attested in modern literature,<sup>58</sup> the use of allusion to create these effects is also

<sup>54</sup> De Beaugrande and Dressler, *Text Linguistics*, 7.

<sup>55</sup> See McKoon and Ratcliff, "Inference during Reading"; Jason E. Albrecht and Edward J. O'Brien, "Updating a Mental Model: Maintaining Both Local and Global Coherence," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 19/5 (1993): 1061–1070; Jerome L. Myers et al., "Maintaining Global Coherence During Reading," *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Learning, Memory, and Cognition* 20/4 (1994): 876–886; Jason L. G. Braasch et al., "Readers' Use of Source Information in Text Comprehension," *Memory and Cognition* 40/3 (2012): 450–465; Tapiero, *Situation Models*, 62.

<sup>56</sup> See Rachel Giora, "On the Cognitive Aspects of the Joke," *Journal of Pragmatics* 16 (1991): 465–485; Giovannantonio Forabosco, "Cognitive Aspects of the Humor Process: The Concept of Incongruity," *Humor* 5 (1992): 45–68; Noël Carroll, "Humour," in *The Oxford Handbook of Aesthetics* (ed. Jerrold Levinson; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 344–365; Elliott Oring, *Engaging Humor* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 1–12; idem., "Parsing the Joke: The General Theory of Verbal Humor and Appropriate Incongruity," *Humor* 24/2 (2011): 203–222.

<sup>57</sup> For example, "Time flies like an arrow; fruit flies like a banana"; see Anthony Oettinger, "The Uses of Computers in Science," *Scientific American* 215/3 (September 1966): 168; Frederick J. Crosson, *Human and Artificial Intelligence* (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970), 15. See, additionally, Marta Dynel, *Humorous Garden Paths: A Pragmatic-Cognitive Study* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars, 2009), 14, 51; idem., "Garden Paths, Red Lights and Crossroads: On Finding Our Way to Understanding the Cognitive Mechanisms Underlying Jokes," *Israeli Journal of Humor Research* 1/1 (2012): 6–28; Bastian Mayerhofer and Annkathrin Schacht, "From Incoherence to Mirth: Neuro-cognitive Processing of Garden-Path Jokes," *Front. Psychol.* 6/550 (2015): 1–19.

<sup>58</sup> See Claudio Galderisi, Gilles Polizzi and Pierre Jourde, eds., *L'incongru dans la littérature et l'art: Actes du colloque d'Azay-le-Ferron, mai 1999* (Paris: Kimé, 2004); Bernard M. Dupriez, *A Dictionary of Literary Devices: Gradus, A-Z* (trans. Albert W. Halsall; Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), 230–231.

attested.<sup>59</sup> As a well-known example, we may consider T. S. Eliot's poem *The Waste Land*.<sup>60</sup> It seems clear that readers are not only able to tolerate difficulty, but actually appreciate it.<sup>61</sup> The idea that ancient Israelite writers deliberately created incongruity and incoherence in their compositions should therefore not come as a complete surprise.<sup>62</sup> While readers have grappled with these difficult texts for centuries, they have nevertheless considered them readable.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>59</sup> As Genette notes, the incongruity produced by allusion is an essential element in the production of parody. See the discussion of "distortion" in Gérard Genette, *Palimpsests: Literature in the Second Degree* (trans. Channa Newman and Claude Doubinsky; Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 17, 25, 31–35.

<sup>60</sup> See *The Waste Land*, lines 307–311, which juxtapose allusions to Augustine (*Confessions* 3.1; 10.52) with an allusion to "The Fire Sermon" (both source texts are concerned with desire, the parts of the body, and asceticism). These allusions are thematically integrated into the poem as a whole via its focus on desire and lust, though locally they are incoherent; see Lawrence Rainey, ed., *The Annotated Waste Land with Eliot's Contemporary Prose* (2d ed.; New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 66, 73, 113–115.

<sup>61</sup> Conrad Aiken remarked on Eliot's *The Waste Land*, "We reach thus the conclusion that the poem succeeds—as it brilliantly does—by virtue of its incoherence, not of its plan; by virtue of its ambiguities, not of its explanations"; see Conrad Aiken, "An Anatomy of Melancholy," *New Republic* 33 (7 February 1923): 294–295. For reviewer's responses to *The Waste Land*, see Jewel S. Brooker, ed., *T. S. Eliot: The Contemporary Reviews* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

<sup>62</sup> On the deliberate use of ambiguity as a compositional strategy, see Meir Sternberg, *The Poetics of Biblical Narrative: Ideological Literature and the Drama of Reading* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), esp. chapters 6–8; Gail A. Yee, "'Fraught with Background': Literary Ambiguity in II Samuel 11," *Interpretation* 42/3 (1988): 240–253; Paul R. Raabe, "Deliberate Ambiguity in the Psalter," *JBL* 110/2 (1991): 213–227; Gary A. Rendsburg, "Confused Language as a Deliberate Literary Device in Biblical Hebrew Narrative," *JHS* 2/6 (1999): 1–20; Karolien Vermeulen, "Mind the Gap: Ambiguity in the Story of Cain and Abel," *JBL* 133/1 (2014): 29–42; Suzanna R. Millar, "When a Straight Road Becomes a Garden Path: The 'False Lead' as a Pedagogical Strategy in the Book of Proverbs," *JSOT* 43/1 (2018): 67–82.

<sup>63</sup> This is even true of modern readers. See Seth L. Sanders, "What If There Aren't Any Empirical Models for Pentateuchal Criticism?" in *Contextualizing Israel's Sacred Writing: Ancient Literacy, Orality, and Literary Production* (ed. Brian B. Schmidt; Atlanta: SBL, 2015), 298: "The result is that Genesis is radically incoherent, yet still strangely readable because of the way it was interwoven." Cf. John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 43–44: "However, the fact remains that the finished text of a work as complex, 'incomprehensible,' genre-less as the Pentateuch does now exist and must presumably have been assembled by *someone*: it is not a natural phenomenon. And the person who assembled it (like the people who collected the Psalms or edited the books of the prophets) no doubt intended to produce a comprehensible work and had some notion of its genre."

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