THE STRUCTURE OF MALACHI:
A TEXTLINGUISTIC STUDY

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I. Introduction

Although English versions of the prophecy of Malachi divide the
book into four chapters, and the MT divides it into only three (4:1-6
counted as 3:19-24), commentators almost uniformly have settled on
a division into six units, referred to as oracles,[1] or disputations,[2]
followed by one or two epilogues or appendices (usually considered
to be later additions).[3] As given by O. Eissfeldt, the units are as
follows:[4]

  1:2-5 Yahweh's love for Jacob
  1:6-2:9 Reproach of the priests
  2:10-16 Condemnation of divorce
  2:17-3:5 Reply concerning divine retributions

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[1] W. Neil, "Malachi," *IDB* 3.228-32.

[2] E. Pfeiffer, "Die Disputationsworte im Buche Maleachi," *EvT* 19 (1959) 546-68.
But cf. H. J. Boecker, "Bemerkungen zur formgeschichtlichen Terminologie des
Buches Maleachi," *ZAW* 78 (1966) 78-79, who prefers the term "discussion speech"
(Diskussionsworte), and A. Graffy, *A Prophet Confronts His People* (Rome: Biblical
Institute Press, 1984) 15-17, 22, who demonstrates that the dialogues in Malachi have a
different structure and aim than the genre "disputation."

[3] B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (Philadelphia: For-
tress, 1979) 495-96.

[4] O. Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament: An Introduction* (New York: Harper & Row,
1965) 441-42.

[5] A few conclude this unit with 3:6. Cf. S. R. Driver, *An Introduction to the
Literature of the Old Testament* (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1913) 356; E. Achtemeier,
Nahum-Malachi (Atlanta: John Knox, 1986) 186; E. J. Young, *An Introduction to the
Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1964) 285; W. C. Kaiser, Jr., *Malachi: God's
Unchanging Love* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1984) 87-88, 116.

3:6-12 Regarding the tithe
3:13-21 Regarding the day of judgment
3:22 Appendix: Exhortation to observe the Law
3:23-24 Appendix: Proclamation of Elijah to precede Yahweh

Though having an appeal on formalistic grounds,[6] such an analysis
fails to appreciate and display whatever unity may exist in the book.
C. F. Keil attempted to indicate some unity by recognizing only three
sections following the introduction: 1:6-2:9 accuses the priests, 2:10-
16 accuses the people, and 2:11-4:6 promises blessings for the repen-
tant and warns the ungodly of judgment.[7] E. J. Young identified only
two principal parts: chaps. 1-2 describe Israel's sin and apostasy, and
chaps. 3-4 the judgment and blessing.[8] While not disputing that all
these units may exist in some sense in Malachi's discourse, I believe
that by subjecting it to a textlinguistic analysis on the model of R. E.
Longacre, a more unified, verifiable, and satisfying structure is pos-
sible.[9]

II. Discourse Classification

The first step in such an analysis is to classify the discourse. This
has been a major emphasis of Longacre's work, who declares that

Characteristics of individual discourses can be neither described, pre-
dicted, nor analyzed without resort to a classification of discourse types.

[6] Each of these units begins with questions and with what I am calling "pseudo-
dialogue," in which the author puts into words the attitudes of the hearers and then
responds to them (except in the third unit which begins with questions but the pseudo-
dialogue does not occur until 2:14).

[7] C. F. Keil, *The Twelve Minor Prophets* (2 vols.; reprinted, Grand Rapjds:
Eerdmans, 1949) 2.427-28.

[8] Young, *Introduction*, 285.

[9] For a historical introduction to the fields of discourse analysis and textlinguis-
tics" cf. T. A. van Dijk, "Introduction: Discourse Analysis as a New Cross-Discipline,"
1.1-10 and R. de Beaugrande, "Text Linguistics in Discourse Studies," 1.41-70 both in
Handbook Discourse Analysis (3 vols.; ed. T. A. van Dijk; London: Harcourt Brace
Jonanovich, 1085). For a theoretical introduction, cf. R. de Beaugrande and W. Dress-
ler, *Introduction to Text Linguistics* (London: Longman, 1981); T. A. van Dijk, *Text
and Context Explorations in the Semantics and Pragmatics of Discourse* (London:
Longman, 1977); G. Brown and G. Yule, *Discourse Analysis* (Cambridge: University
Press, 1983); J. E. Grimes, *The Thread of Discourse* (Berlin: Mouton, 1975). For an
evangelical argument on the importance of textlinguistics for exegesis, cf. J. H. Sail-
hamer, "Exegesis of the Old Testament as a Text," *A Tribute to Gleason Archer* (ed.
W. C. Kaiser, Jr. and R. F. Youngblood; Chicago: Moody, 1986) 280-82. For the
textlinguistic model of Longacre, cf. especially R. E. Longacre, *The Grammar of
Discourse* (New York: Plenum, 1983); "The discourse structure of the Flood Narra-

> It is pointless to look in a discourse for a feature which is not character-istic of the type to which that discourse belongs.
>
> So determinative of detail is the general design of a discourse type that the linguist who ignores discourse typology can only come to grief.[10]

The strength of Longacre's system of discourse typology is its success-ful use in analyzing texts in dozens of contemporary and ancient languages. He classifies discourse on the basis of four pairs of parameters: (1) agent vs. thematic orientation, (2) contingent temporal succession vs. logical succession, (3) future orientation ("projection") vs. present or past, and (4) the presence or absence of tension, manifesting itself in plot, argument, or the overcoming of certain obstacles.[11] The first two pairs of parameters allow a distinction of four basic discourse types: (1) narrative--agent orientation with con-tingent temporal succession, (2) procedural--thematic orientation with contingent temporal succession, (3) behavioral--agent orientation with logical succession, and (4) expository--thematic orientation with logical succession. Each of these categories may be further divided, then, by means of the other parameters. A text, however, must be understood on at least two levels--(l) the surface structures including the author's choice of words and grammar and (2) the notional (deep or semantic) structures including the author's purpose or intention for the text. The classification of a discourse, therefore, must take both levels into consideration, since it is possible for there to be disagree-ment or "skewing" between the surface and notional structures of a discourse. For example, an author may give advice (behavioral) in the form of a story (narrative), or he may explain the nature of something (expository) by describing how it is put together (pro-cedural). There are a variety of reasons for such skewing in a dis-course. Longacre suggests that drama (a surface structure type that is simply an alternative way of telling a story) and narrative are the discourse types ranked highest in vividness, which explains their

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tive," *JAAR* 47 (1979) 89-133; "A Spectrum and Profile Approach to Discourse Analy-sis," *Text* 1 (1981) 337-59; "Interpreting Biblical Stories," *Discourse and Literature* (3 vols.; ed. T. A. van Dijk; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 1985) 3.83-98; *Joseph: A Story of Divine Providence* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, forthcoming).

[10] Longacre, *Grammar*, 1. The term "discourse" is used in this paper to refer to any linguistic utterance longer than a sentence which stands as a complete unified meaningful unit of communication, whether written or oral, dialogue or monologue, e.g., a play, a fairy tale, a sermon, a political speech, a telephone conversation, a TV commercial, or a recipe.

[11] Ibid., 3-10.

popularity as a vehicle for encoding[12] various notional structures.[13] A Sunday morning sermon, for example, tends to be rather dull if it contains only expository or behavioral surface structures without some narrative illustrations. Also, there are certain situations in which an attempt to affect behavior will be more effective or more palatable if it is mitigated, i.e., if it is made indirect by refraining from the use of imperatives or other command forms.[14] The prophet Nathan, for instance, mitigates his rebuke of King David for his sin by the use of a story in 2 Samuel 12.

Just as there are certain characteristic features that define an object such as a chair (e.g., seat, back, legs), there are also features that define a discourse type. According to Longacre, the notional structure of a narrative, for example, consists of exposition, inciting moment, developing conflict, climax, denouement, final suspense, and conclusion.[15] A hortatory discourse (a behavioral discourse type with future orientation) such as the Book of Malachi, consists of the essential features of problem, command, motivation, and authority.[16] A text, that is, that attempts to affect the future behavior of someone must state what situation or behavior needs to be affected (the problem), what action is required or recommended (the command), why that action is necessary (the motivation), and why the addressee should listen to the speaker (the authority). There is no definite order, however, to hortatory structures. They may be, as they are in Malachi, repetitive and recursive.

On the other hand, the classification of the surface structure of a discourse is marked most prominently by the choice of verb forms. The indicative simple past, for example, is the most prominent in an English narrative, though we would expect the most prominent verb forms in a hortatory discourse to be imperatives, jussives (third person commands), and modals such as "should" and "ought." The book of Malachi, however, is offered here as an example of a book clearly hortatory in notional structure, yet in which there are only six command forms--two jussives and four imperatives (except for a jussive in a quote--1:5, and two ironic jussives 1:8, 9). The majority of the

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[12] Linguists, especially sociolinguists, often use the term "code" to describe a language. To "encode" means to express a particular meaning or notional structure by a particular form or surface structure.

[13] Longacre, *Grammar*, 10-13. Note the recent interest in "story theology"; cf. P. W. Macky, "Biblical Story Theology," *The Theological Educator* 33 (1986) 22-32 and other articles in the same issue, and G. Fackre, *The Christian Story: A Narrative Interpretation of Basic Christian Doctrine* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978).

[14] R. E. Longacre, "Exhortation and Mitigation in First John," *Selected Technical Articles Related to Translation* 9 (1983) 3.

[15] Longacre, *Grammar*, 22.

[16] Longacre, "Exhortation," 3.

verbs in independent clauses (assumed to carry the major argument) are perfects and imperfects. Much of the book, then, consists of mitigated commands which serve to identify the text as hortatory.

III. Structure

The hortatory structure, authority of speaker, is encoded in Malachi by the much repeated אמר יהוה צבאות, "says Yahweh of Hosts," alternating with אמר יהוה in four cases and יהוה אלהי ישראל אמר "says Yahweh the God of Israel," in one. The structure of the book, however, may be analyzed by observing the hortatory structures of problem, command, motivation, resulting in three chiastic movements or embedded discourses[17] (cf. Structural Chart which follows)

STRUCTURAL CHART OF MALACHI

	First Movement	
	¶MOTIVATION: Yahweh's Love	1:2-5
PRIESTS EXHORTED	¶PROBLEM: Failure to Honor Yahweh	1:6-9
TO HONOR	COMMAND: Stop Vain Offerings	1:10
YAHWEH 1:2-2:9	¶PROBLEM: Profaning Yahweh's Name	1:11-14
	¶MOTIVATION: Results of Disobedience	2:1-9
	Second Movement	
	¶MOTIVATION: Spiritual Unity	2:10a, b
	PROBLEM: Faithlessness	2:10c-14
JUDAH EXHORTED	COMMAND: Stop Acting Faithlessly	2:15-16
TO FAITHFULNESS	¶PROBLEM: Complaints of Yahweh's	2:17
2:10-3:6	Injustice	
	MOTIVATION: Coming Messenger of	3:1-6
	Judgment	
	Third Movement	
	¶COMMAND: Return to Yahweh with	3:7-10a
	Tithes	
JUDAH EXHORTED	MOTIVATION: Future Blessing	3:10b-12
TO RETURN TO	¶PROBLEM: Complacency toward Serving	3:13-15
YAHWEH 3:7-4:6	God	
	MOTIVATION: The Coming Day	3:16-4:3
	¶COMMAND: Remember the Law	4:4-6

¶= Indicates new paragraph.

[17] Longacre, *Grammar*, 13-14.

First Movement

It is only in view of the rest of the movement that the first paragraph (1:2-5) may be seen as motivation. The thesis "I have loved you" is stated first, and then the supporting evidence, consisting of an embedded paragraph[18] that contrasts Jacob and Esau. It is our working hypothesis that the אמר יהוה clauses (including the variants referred to above) are used in the book to mark prominence. In this paragraph, the thesis is marked by this clause. The evidence for the thesis is framed by the author's frequently-used literary device of pseudo-dialogue introduced by ואמרתם, "But you say."

The second paragraph (1:6-10) includes both the problem and the command elements. The problem is expressed in the form of a rhetorical question, "Where is my honor/fear?" in v 6 and is marked by an אמר יהוה clause. We are to understand the problem, then, as Judah's failure to honor/fear Yahweh. This rhetorical question functions as the thesis, followed again by evidence presented in a pseudo-dialogue introduced by ואמרתם. There are two ironic imperatives in this section, "Offer it to your governor" in v 8 and "Appease the face of God" in v 9, both followed by condemning questions which are also marked by אמר יהוה clauses. Furthermore, there is a vocative, "O Priests," in this section which clearly identifies the audience of the first movement and serves to mark off the movement by its recurrence in the final motivation element in 2:1.

The command element, which is naturally the most prominent element in a hortatory discourse, occurs in the center and, therefore, the most prominent part of this first chiasm.[19] It is actually a mitigated

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[18] A paragraph may be simplistically defined as a sequence of sentences marked off by certain grammatical features (i.e., the use of particles, back reference, setting, conclusion, etc.) and exhibiting thematic unity. The sentences within a paragraph will display certain definable logical or temporal relations. To understand those relations it will often be necessary to group sentences into what Longacre calls embedded paragraphs. Cf. R. E. Longacre, "The Paragraph as a Grammatical Unit," *Discourse and Syntax* (Syntax and Semantics 19/12; ed. Talmy Givon; Academic, 1979) 115-34; "An Apparatus for the Identification of Paragraph Types," *Notes on Linguistics* 15 (July, 1980) 5-22. For some information on paragraph marking in biblical Hebrew, though primarily for narrative, cf. F. I. Andersen, *The Sentence in Biblical Hebrew* (The Hague: Mouton, 1974) 64-66; and R. Buth, "An Introductory Study of the Paragraph Structure of Biblical Hebrew Narrative" (M.A. thesis, The American Institute of Holy Land Studies, 1976).

[19] There is a difference between natural and marked prominence. The result element of a sentence, for example, is naturally more prominent than the reason element, just as red is more prominent than green. In the same way, the command element is the most prominent element of a hortatory discourse. In addition, every

command expressed by an imperfect of wish, "O that there were someone even among you who would close the gates!" There is some irony here since this is not really the behavioral change Yahweh is aiming for. The implication is clear that what Yahweh desires is the priests' honor/fear manifested in proper sacrifices from a pure heart. It is interesting to note the discourse strategy of the author in reserving direct commands until late in the discourse. The אמר יהוה clause in this element marks the reason for the command, the existential clause in v 10, "I have no pleasure in you." Its prominence, which does not exceed that of the mitigated command, may result from its use to mark the turning point in the chiasm, a fact indicated by the paraphrase that occurs in the next clause, "and an offering I will not be pleased with from your hand."

The third paragraph (1:11-14) consists of the second problem element which serves to elaborate the first one. Closure is achieved in the paragraph by the repetition of references in vv 11, 14 to the name of Yahweh among the nations. These clauses are marked for prominence by אמר יהוה clauses since they serve as the thesis in a contrast paragraph whose idea is that although Yahweh will be feared among the nations, Judah is profaning him. Proof or explanation is again offered by a pseudo-dialogue introduced by ואמרתם in v 13. The result that Israel's behavior has on Yahweh is also marked as prominent in this paragraph, First, he is enraged, and second, he is not pleased (v 13).

The final slot in the chiastic first movement--the second motivation element--is filled by a rather complex paragraph (2:1-9) introduced by ועתה "and now;" and beginning with the topicalizing clause, "This is my decree[20] for you, O priests." The decree which immediately follows is a conditional sentence in which the consequence of the priests' disobedience is given, "then I will send upon you the curse" (v 2). This must be taken as the thesis of the paragraph, followed by an elaboration in which Yahweh speaks in the first of five

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language has an inventory of linguistic features by which it may mark prominence. Either the naturally prominent element may also be marked for prominence as in this passage, or an element lower in natural prominence may be raised (by a chiastic arrangement, for example, or an אמר יהוה clause) so that it is equal to or almost equal to the naturally prominent element. Cf. J. Beekman, J. Callow, and M. Kopesec, *The Semantic Structure of Written Communication* (Dallas: Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1981) 109-10, 119-20.

[20] "Decree" is a better translation of מצוה in this context than the more customary "commandment" since no explicit commandment is given here; cf. Nah 1:14 for this use. For an explanation of the linguistic feature of topicalization, cf. Grimes, *Thread of Discourse*, 337-44.

הנה ("Behold!") clauses (v 3) that occur in the book, each of which gives prominence to what he is declaring about the future.

> 2:3--"Behold! I am about to rebuke your seed."
> 3:1--"Behold! I am sending my messenger.
> . . . Behold! He is coming."
> 4:1--"For behold! The day is coming. . ."
> 4:5--"Behold! I am sending to you Elijah the prophet. . ."

He then states the results of his future actions, "and you shall know that I have sent you this decree to be my covenant with Levi" (v 4), followed by an elaboration upon the covenant in an embedded paragraph where he contrasts Levi with the contemporary priests (vv 5-9). Note that both the first and last slots of the first movement contain embedded paragraphs where a contrast is made, the scope of the second (contemporary priests and Levi) being more narrow than that of the first (the nation of Israel and the Edomites). The slot is understood as motivation (1) because of the series of grammatical perfects in the thesis expressing the consequences of disobedience and (2) because of the הנה clause which consistently in the book signals motivation based upon the future (occurring each time with a participle). The clauses marked by אמר יהוה are (1) the conditional clause in the thesis in v 2, (2) the result of Yahweh's curse (v 4), and (3) the antithesis in the contrast paragraph, "But you turned aside from my way" (v 8). Though motivation is most prominent in "the paragraph, the initial condition in v 2 is certainly a mitigated command, as is the contrast with Levi whose faithfulness is highlighted in vv 5-7. The dependent כי ("for") clauses which comprise v 7 contain two modal imperfects stating what a priest should do, "For the lips of a priest should guard knowledge, and instruction they should seek from his mouth." Furthermore, there is a reference to the problem in the antithesis in vv 8-9, "But you turned aside from the way." The fact that this paragraph is so notionally "packed," uses the prominent הנה clause, and is so grammatically complex, may indicate that it is the climax, emotional high point, or what Longacre calls the "peak" of the surface structure of the first movement.[21]

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[21] The "peak" of a discourse is the section at which the discourse reaches the highest level of tension or cruciality such as generally occurs at the climax or resolution of a narrative. It is a term that describes the surface structures of the discourse and will be marked by certain surface features peculiar to the language. Longacre has compiled an inventory, however, of the various ways languages mark peak, especially in narrative: (1) rhetorical underlining, (2) concentration of participants, (3) heightened vividness, (4) change of pace, (5) change of vantage point and (6) use of special particles or onomatopoeia. Longacre, *Grammar*, 24-38; "Discourse Peak as Zone of Turbulence," *Beyond the Sentence: Discourse and Sentential Form* (ed. Jessica Wirth; Ann Arbor: Karoma, 1985) 83-98; "A Spectrum and Profile Approach to Discourse Analysis," 347-58.

The theme or "macrostructure"[22] of this first movement must be expressed in terms of the three elements of problem, command and motivation:

> Problem: The failure of the priests to honor/fear Yahweh exhibited by their faithlessness regarding the covenant of Levi, particularly in their careless attitude to the offerings.
>
> Command: Honor Yahweh with pure offerings and upright service.
>
> Motivation: Yahweh's demonstrated love for Israel and the future humiliation of those who refuse to respond.

Second Movement

The first three slots of the second movement are all encoded in one paragraph (2:10-16). It begins with three rhetorical questions, the first two of which fill the motivation slot and serve as the premise on which the third question is based.

> "Is there not one father to us all?"
> "Is there not one God who created us?"
> "Why do we treat faithlessly each his brother?"

The third question is a mitigated command for which the first two are the motivation. It actually introduces the problem slot, however, since it is restated as the declaration in v 11 that "Judah dealt faithlessly." This charge is explained and elaborated upon in the rest of the problem slot (vv 10c-14), including another pseudo-dialogue in v 14. Closure is marked at the beginning and end of the problem slot by repetition of the verb בגד, "treat faithlessly." There is another mitigated command in v 12 expressed as a curse upon those who marry "the daughter of a foreign god."

The beginning and end of the command slot in 2:15-16 are marked by command forms of בגד, preceded by the waw consecutive perfect of שׁמר.

> So *guard yourselves* in your spirit
> and *let him stop treating faithlessly* the wife of your youth
> for He hates divorce,
>> says Yahweh the God of Israel,
>>> and him (who) covers his garment with violence,
>> says Yahweh of Hosts.

[22] I am using the term macrostructure to refer to the "germinal idea" or message of the text, its "overall meaning and plan" which exercises a selective control on what is included and how it is presented; cf. Longacre, "A Spectrum and Profile Approach to Discourse Analysis," 337. There may be a foregrounded or given macrostructure, as in Gen 45:5-7; 50:20; and John 20:30-31, in addition to one that is backgrounded or deduced; cf. van Dijk, *Text and Context*, 143-48.

> So *guard yourselves* in your spirit
> and *stop acting faithlessly*.

The two commands also enclose אמר יהוה clauses which leaves the clause "and him (who) covers his garment with violence" in the center and most prominent position of a chiasm.[23] The structure functions like the paraphrase in the command slot in the first movement in 1:10 to mark the turning point in the whole chiastic second movement.

The rest of the second movement is also found in a single paragraph (2:17-3:6), though here it is pseudo-dialogue and must be analyzed differently than a monologue paragraph. A *simple dialogue* paragraph will begin with an *initiating utterance* (= IU, an utterance being the continuous words of a single speaker), which may consist of a question, a proposal, or a remark. The IU will then be concluded by a *resolving utterance* (= RU) consisting of an answer, a response, or an evaluation, respectively. Most dialogues, however, are not simple. In a *complex dialogue* paragraph the IU is followed not by a R U but by a *continuing utterance* (= CU) which may be a counter-question, a counter-proposal, or a counter-remark, which may be followed by another CU and another, perhaps with no RU at all.[24] According to this model, Mal 2:17-3:6 may be analyzed as a complex dialogue paragraph as follows:

IU (remark):	"You have wearied Yahweh with your words." v 17a I
CU (counter-question):	"How have we wearied (him)?" v 17b
RU (answer):	"When you say
IU (remark):	"'All who do evil are good in the eyes of Yahweh and in them he takes pleasure.' v 17c
(question):	or 'Where is the God of justice'" v 17d
RU (answer):	"Behold, I am sending my messenger. . . and suddenly the Lord whom you seek will come to his temple. . . ." 3:1

Note that the RU of the complex dialogue consists of an embedded simple dialogue. The problem slot of the discourse is filled by all the paragraph except for the RU of the embedded simple dialogue (3:1-

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[23] For an interpretation of tpis difficult clause, cf. Kaiser, Malachi, 73-74; Achtemeier, *Nahum-Malachi*, 183. In addition, note the phonological similarity between בֶּגֶד "garment" and בָּגַד. For an argument in favor of a literal rather than cultic interpretation of 2:10-16, cf. R. Smith, *Micah-Malachi* (Waco: Word, 1984) 322-24.

[24] Longacre, *Grammar*, 43-53.

6), Yahweh's answer, itself an embedded paragraph filling the motivation slot. The motivation for obedience is here declared to be the coming of the messenger of the covenant who will come in judgment "like a burning fire" (3:2). The declaration of his coming in 3:1 is highly marked by the twofold use of הנה ("Behold!") at the beginning and end of the verse, and by the chiastic repetition:

> He will come to his temple
>> the Lord whom you seek,
>> and the messenger of the covenant in which you delight
> behold! he will come.

The declaration is followed, of course, by אמר יהוה צבאות in v 1, which also concludes and, therefore, encloses the motivation section in 3:5 (v 6 is a dependent clause subordinate to the first two clauses of v 5). Because of the highly marked nature of the final slot of the second movement, I suggest that as in the first movement, so here the concluding motivation slot is the peak or climax of the movement.

In summary, the macrostructure of the second movement may be stated thus:

> Problem: Indifferent toward the will of Yahweh (2:17), the men of Judah are treating one another faithlessly, especially their wives, and are profaning the temple by marrying pagan women.
> Command: Stop acting faithlessly.
> Motivation: The spiritual unity of God's people and the fact that the Messenger of the covenant is coming to refine the sons of Levi and the people with fire.

Third Movement

The order of the notional slots in the third movement (3:7-4:6) is rearranged so that the command elements, naturally prominent, are on the outside and the problem element is marked as prominent by being placed in the center of the chiasm. The reason for this is most probably that the prophet wants to conclude his discourse on the naturally prominent note--the command. The very fact that this movement concludes the discourse, as well as its being uniquely arranged and having two command elements make it most likely that it is the peak, or most prominent section of the whole discourse. Furthermore, like the last slot of the first movement, the first slot of the third, which is encoded in a single paragraph, is "packed." All four elements, in fact, are neatly expressed in 3:7 as nowhere else--

> Problem: "Since the days of your fathers, you have turned from my statutes and you have not kept (them).
> Command: "Return to me,

Motivation: "and I will return to you."
Authority: says Yahweh of hosts.

This verse, however, is understood as introducing the command element (vv 7-10a) because of the natural prominence of this first imperative, because it is to this command that the response is made in the following pseudo-dialogue, and because another imperative concludes the paragraph in v 10a, "Bring all the tithe into the store-house." This last command summarizes the sentences in vv 8-9 which elaborate on the command to return. Their return is to manifest itself in bringing to Yahweh the tithes they have been withholding.

The motivation slot in vv 10b-12 looks at first like part of the command because of the imperative in v 10b, "Test me." However, it is clear from what follows that this is only a rhetorical device to introduce what Yahweh will do for Israel if they will return, which is motivation. It is interesting to note that there are three אמר יהוה clauses in each of these final motivation sections. In this first section the positive statement of Yahweh's blessing in v 10 is so marked, then the negative statement of blessing in v 11, "I will rebuke for you the devourer," and finally the result in v 12, "and all the nations (cf. 1:11) shall call you fortunate (אשר)." Note the contrast here with the future of Edom (1:4), which will be called גבול רשעה "the region of guilt" (cf. the use of רשע, in 4:3).

The next paragraph of the book fills the next two slots, in 3:13-4:3. As in each of the other problem slots, this last one in the center of the chiasm (3:13-15) is expressed in pseudo-dialogue (which, there-fore, is not being used to mark a separate oracle but a particular notional structure). The problem is that Judah has responded to their difficulties by concluding that it is vain to serve God (v 14a), since their obedience has brought no בצע "profit'" (v 14b), while it is the arrogantly wicked (עשי רשוה. . . .זדים) who are called fortunate (אשר) in v 15 (cf. v 12), since they have tested God (cf. v 10) and escaped. The final motivation slot (3:16-4:3) is marked as such by the use of waw consecutive perfects expressing the future (e.g.,והיו לי "and they shall be mine," וחמלתי עליהם "and I will take pity upon them" in v 17) as well as the הנה clause with the participle in 4:1, "For behold! the day is coming burning like a furnace. . . ." It is interesting to note at this point that in each of the previous movements the first motiva-tion element is positive, reminding the hearers of the past favor of God. Each of the second motivation elements, however, is negative, warning the hearers of the consequences of disobedience. Similarly, the first motivation element in this final movement is positive, focus-ing though on how Yahweh will reward obedience in the future. This concluding motivation element, also focusing on the future, com-

bines, however, both the positive (3:16-17, 4:2-3) and the negative (3:18-4:1, 4:3), the latter being sandwiched by the former, then the two mixed together in the last verse,

> And you (fearers of Yahweh) shall tread down the guilty ones (רשעים), for they will be dust under the soles of your feet on the day which I am preparing, says Yahweh of hosts.

It is the center of the sandwich, the negative motivation in 3:18-4:1, that is marked by הנה in 4:1 and is, therefore, the most prominent element in the motivation slot. The first of the three אמר יהוה clauses in this final motivation element (see the comment on 3:10b-l2 above) marks a clause in the first positive part, "and they shall be mine," in 3:17. The second one marks a clause in the central negative portion, "and the coming day shall burn them," in 4:1, and the last marks the final sentence in 4:3 quoted above.

The final slot is encoded in a concluding paragraph and is ambiguously marked by both an imperative, "Remember the Law of Moses," and by a הנה clause, "Behold! I am going to send to you Elijah the prophet." Since an imperative is the highest ranking verb in a hortatory text, however, the last three verses must be identified as command, though containing, as does the first slot of the movement, a motivation element as well--in this case the last two verses. Both of the command elements in this movement, then, manifest certain "turbulent" features that may be considered to mark the peak.

The last movement is sandwiched not only by commands, but also by the use of the verb שוב "turn, return" in 3:7 and 4:6. The verb also occurs in 1:4 as does also רשע, a frequent word in the third movement, and זעם "curse," a synonym of ארם in 3:9 and of חרם in 4:6. Another inclusion in the book is the reference to honoring or fearing Yahweh or his name in 1:6, 14, and 2:1, then in 3:16, 4:2. The macrostructure of the third movement may be expressed as follows:

> Problem: Judah's complacency toward obeying and serving God.
> Command: Return to Yahweh by remembering the law of Moses and bringing the tithes.
> Motivation: A day is coming when Yahweh will distinguish between the obedient and the wicked by blessing those who fear him and judging the wicked.

Macrostructure

Considering the macrostructures of the three movements, the particular weight of the third movement, the historical situation as we know it (known sometimes as the "communication situation") and the fact that the prophet begins by addressing the priests and concludes

by addressing the people, the following macrostructure may be sug-
gested for the whole discourse:

Problem: The failure of the priests of Judah to fear Yahweh
during difficult times has resulted in the people's indifference
to the will of Yahweh.

Command: The priests are to begin honoring Yahweh with pure
offerings and upright service and the people are to honor
him by remembering his law, by honoring their marital
commitments, and by bringing their tithes to the temple.

Motivation: Yahweh's demonstrated love for Israel, the spiritual
unity of God's people, and the coming day of blessing for
those who fear him and judgment for those who are in-
different to his will.

IV. Conclusion

The book of Malachi gives us a good example, I believe, of a
hortatory text which, because of the use of mitigation, does not
require many explicit commands. The fact that the commands be-
come more explicit toward the end is what we might expect as
mitigation becomes less necessary as the argument proceeds.

Even more interesting, however, is the demonstration that this
book offers of the validity of the hortatory structures: problem, com-
mand, motivation, and authority of the speaker. Not only are the slots
present in abundance, but they are found in a very intricately arranged
pattern. This also indicates the importance (if such indication is
necessary) of classifying texts, for without an initial tentative clas-
sification of this text as hortatory, this arrangement of structures
would have been missed.

Finally, the results of this procedure indicate the inadequacy of
an analysis of texts based solely on surface features. My own previous
understanding of the structure of Malachi, in accordance with all the
commentaries I have examined, was very different. Though a metho-
dology of text analysis based solely on notional structures would also
be inadequate, both methods may be used together as controls on
each other with fruitful results. Such a textlinguistic approach also
serves as a control on computer studies such as that of Radday and
Pollatschek who argue that chap. 3 (and chap. 4 in English versions)
was originally independent,[25] as well as on form-critical studies that

[25] V. T. Radday and M. A. Pollatschek, "Vocabulary Richness in Post-Exilic
Prophetic Books," *ZAW* 92 (1980) 333-46.

have concluded that 4:3-6 is a later addition.[26] The former viewpoint would destroy the unity of the second movement, and the latter would destroy that of the third.

[26] Smith, *Micah-Malachi*, 340-41 considers the verses to comprise two appendices and declares that 4:4 is "unrelated to anything that has gone before" and is, therefore, "probably an editorial addition by the redactor of the Book of the Twelve." The same evaluation is implied of 4:5-6 based on a different role assigned the coming messenger from that in 3:1 and a different term used of the coming day. But is it not by affecting the hearts of the people (4:6) that the messenger would prepare the way for Yahweh (3:1)? This is how the ministry of John the Baptist is interpreted in the NT (cf. Mark 1:2-8). Furthermore, is it unreasonable to allow the prophet to conclude his book by making explicit the identification of that day he has described simply as "coming" with the well-known day of judgment and vindication, "the day of Yahweh," prophesied elsewhere?