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WHERE IS WISDOM? PRIVILEGING PERSPECTIVES  
IN THE BOOK OF JOB

by

Israel McGrew, B.A., M.T.S.

A Dissertation Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School,  
Marquette University,  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Milwaukee, Wisconsin

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ABSTRACT  
WHERE IS WISDOM? PRIVILEGING PERSPECTIVES  
IN THE BOOK OF JOB

Israel McGrew, B.A, M.T.S.

Marquette University, 2021

Job is one of the most difficult books in Hebrew Scripture: in language, poetic rhetoric, subject matter, and literary form. Many scholars understand the book as skeptical literature, as the poetry, the bulk of the book, refutes any justification of God's activity in history. The matter is acute, as these scholars recognize the poetry's parodic allusions to Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions. The poet's protagonist charges God with immoral conduct, judges the human experience morally incoherent, and despairs of vindication in an afterlife. The whirlwind rebukes Job, Job seems to repent, and the epilogue indicates that God in fact does reward Job; but none of these features give a satisfactory answer to Job's problems, and neither is their significance obvious.

In this dissertation, I analyze the juxtaposition of mythological structures in the book's chief perspectives: the friends, Job, the whirlwind, and the prose. The author derives these mythological structures from key source texts in Hebrew Scripture, and his characters thereby represent mutually exclusive Hebrew religious traditions in a parabolic allegory.

The friends allude to Deuteronomy and convenient mythological structures, including their refutation of the storm-god motif as inadequate to divine transcendence. Job uses the motif to negate their sanguine cosmology and to reveal the dark implications of equating history with God's perfect will. Job tries to salvage the cosmos's moral coherence by speculating about a celestial arbiter figure or a post-mortem reward for the righteous. These themes unite in Job's climactic confession of 19:25. Dramatically, Job indicates it must be one or the other. Literarily, the poet alludes to Hebrew Scripture's portrayal of God as creator and redeemer and thereby makes post-mortem reward the necessary condition of affirming those traditions. The Whirlwind affirms creation's goodness and freedom. Divine power respects this freedom, as part of God's creative process: humans' proper use of freedom participates in realizing their potential. The insight adapts Second Isaiah's reflections on divine power. Against Isaiah, the Whirlwind's Leviathan and the prologue's 'the Satan' adapt the divine antagonism theme. Job thus presents proto-apocalyptic cosmology and anthropology as the answer to the riddles of Hebrew Scripture and evil.

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I remain ever grateful for my time at Notre Dame. Notre Dame's theology program provided a rich environment for developing as a biblical scholar, as a theologian, and as a person of faith. In addition to its excellent faculty, the theology department assembled wonderful cohorts, giving me friends who have helped me grow and whose peer I am proud to have been, none more so than my wife. I am particularly indebted to Gary Anderson, for his patience in working with an earnest but sometimes skeptical biblical student. I am grateful to dear Sr. Anne Astell. And I am most especially grateful for John Cavadini, who indulged my presuming on his time.

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A.M.D.G.

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## INTRODUCTION

The book of Job is an enigma. Its topic matter (the meaning of human suffering and the goodness of creation), its obliquely related comments on those topics, its extraordinarily difficult Hebrew poetry, its literary form or lack thereof, and its narrative dynamism all make it a challenge to read even on the surface level. These features have contributed to a prodigious amount of scholarship on the book, which has not yielded any consensus as to the book's meaning or the poet's intentions.

The macro plot is simple enough: Job is a superlatively wealthy and pious Patriarch from the Land of Uz, apparently Edom (cf. Lam 4:21). He suffers catastrophic setbacks, losing his wealth, family, and health (chs. 1–2), before finally being restored and affirmed by God and living happily ever after (42:7–12). The book is thus framed by a prose tale that acknowledges aberrations in the cosmos's rewards for righteous behavior and assignment of suffering to wickedness, but it indicates all will come right in the end.

However, the intervening poetic dialogues (chs. 3–42:6) undermine that ideology. Job's three Edomite friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, appear and offer him sympathy (2:11–13). After a silent week, Job laments the human condition and rejects creation (ch. 3), prompting a debate over the value of creation and the moral coherence of human experience (chs. 4–37). This human debate consists of three cycles, as Job and his three friends alternate contending for their perspectives (chs. 4–27), until the third cycle manifests a breakdown in order. After a chapter reflecting on the limitations of human wisdom (ch. 28), Job soliloquizes, stating his position and finally using self-imprecations to avow his innocence and call God to account (chs. 29–31). God will do so, addressing Job from the whirlwind (chs. 38:1–42:6), but not before the young, brash, and thitherto



unknown Elihu inserts his perspective, defending God and creation and indicting Job for pride (chs. 32–37). All four friends maintain God’s goodness and charge Job with pride, and the first three infer some preexisting guilt that justifies Job’s suffering and vindicates their moral cosmology, despite their previous experience of his virtue. The friends’ inadequacies are evident, and Job’s skepticism vanquishes their orthodoxies. In short, the human dialogues challenge the prose’s affirmation of the cosmos’s moral coherence.

However, the narrative offers several ironies that further complicate the book’s meaning. For one thing, when God does appear, his first task is to humble Job, bringing Job to resign to God’s will and to accept creation again. Thus, like the friends, God implicates Job’s pride and defends creation. However, unlike the friends, God makes no pretense that Job’s suffering was deserved: rather, God indicates not all suffering is to be rationalized as moral recompense. Accordingly, God rebukes their theologizing, though he will restore Job as they predicted, as just recompense for Job’s suffering (42:10–11).

A second, critical irony is the book’s explanation of Job’s suffering as due to a celestial conversation disputing the nature and durability of Job’s piety. The Satan rejects the possibility of unmotivated piety and proposes tests, asserting the conditions which will end Job’s piety: “extend your hand... and he will curse you to your face” (1:11, 2:5). The Satan’s own interest in Job is prompted by God’s boasts in Job’s piety (1:8, 2:3). Job’s exemplary piety, not some imagined sin, is responsible for his suffering. Thus, the entire human discourse is rendered ironic as the prologue offers a perspective on Job’s suffering, wholly unavailable to the humans and indicating a mythological context that implies an entirely different discourse regarding the suffering of God’s servants.

This brief presentation of the book's content indicates two critical considerations for the book's meaning. For one thing, there are several different competing perspectives: between the various humans, the mundane compared to the celestial, and God compared to the Satan. These might be reconciled and privileged according to their narrative logic. On the other hand, we must consider the matter of the book's compositional history. Elihu (chs. 32–37) and the reflection on wisdom (ch. 28) appear to be interpolations, reflecting the perspectives of later contributors. Moreover, the poetry appears to relate to the folktale as a later contribution, as the styles and values so radically diverge and as the present book relates awkwardly to Ezek 14:14, 20. Therefore, any attempt to read Job cannot merely rely on the narrative logic but must account for the poetry's inherent agendas. The very length of the poetry (even excepting ch. 28 and Elihu), indicates it performs an essential task, and the likelihood that it was imposed on an older story requires us to take the poet's perspective seriously, whatever his opinion of the prose.

The second observation is that even a casual reading of Job observes a significant manipulation of cosmological and mythological perspectives. *Prima facie*, the human disputants are ignorant of the heavenly courtroom, rendering their discourse ironic and flawed from the start. The ignorance of the circumstances precipitating Job's suffering and the different cosmological perspectives render the dialogue's presuppositions and preoccupations metaphorical worlds apart from the reality. Similarly, the final address of the whirlwind reveals a God who speaks from the storm. Such a theophany is unsurprising from the perspective of Hebrew traditions such as the Exodus, but it seemed impossible to the friends and was the limit of hope and imagination for Job. Still, even the divine speech does not reveal the cosmic perspective of the prologue.

A closer reading reveals that Job, unlike the friends, makes use of the storm-god, *Chaoskampf* motif. God condescends to address Job, inviting him to reconciliation—even if based on submission without terms. The very fact of God’s address affirms Job to an extent, but the fact that he does so from the whirlwind corresponds obliquely to Job’s previous use of the storm-god motif. Of course, the God who appears in the whirlwind speaks, he does not attack. His description of creation includes the Sea and the Leviathan, but it does not support the traditional *Chaoskampf* motif, as God midwives the Sea (38:8–9) and the Leviathan is created (41:25[33]). The whirlwind speech engages Job’s mythological categories, but pedagogically so: God engages the storm-god motif to transform it. Thus, there are at least four distinct mythological perspectives described in the book which offer competing values and structures of meaning.<sup>1</sup> Finally, they are dramatically woven together, as the various characters hold these various perspectives, and their failed discourse dramatizes these traditions’ fundamental tensions.

A still closer reading reveals two facts that complicate our understanding of how these mythologies function. First, with one suspect exception in 12:9, the human speakers do not use the divine name within the dialogue.<sup>2</sup> Instead they use the Patriarchal equivalent, Shaddai (cf. Ex 6:2–3), or generic terms for God. While this has been cited as evidence of different authorship (analogous to the criterion for differentiating between J

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<sup>1</sup> Prescinding from Elihu and ch. 28, the poem on Wisdom. The interpolations are mythologically bland.

<sup>2</sup> While there is some textual attestation of a more generic term for God (אלוה), C. L. Seow, *Job 1–21* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing, 2013), 633, reports that this evidence is weak, being from few, unreliable, and late manuscripts. Therefore, the variants are most likely the result of copyists recognizing the inconsistency and judging, as modern scholars, that the presence of the divine name was an error. Any proposed emendation must be based on an argument for an early corruption. This may be explicable since the verse nearly quotes Isa 41:20, and an early scribe may have accidentally or deliberately changed the text per Isaiah’s influence. Alternatively, it seems the poet has Job break character here, to jar his readers with his inversion of Isaiah, as his literary concern to evoke Isaiah trumped his literary affectation in portraying Job as ignorant of the divine name. I treat this in chapter 2.

and P), the divine name does appear in 38:1; 40:1, 3, 6; 42:1. These occur at the level of narrative, as the narrator introduces Yahweh's speech. The poet avoided the divine name for literary purposes, not religious or historical ones. Arguably, he avoids the divine name to portray his speakers as ignorant of it. This literary affectation serves his foreign setting, as he portrays the speakers as Edomites from patriarchal times. It also subordinates the human speeches to the divine revelation. The failure of human wisdom, particularly of Edomites—whose wisdom was considered proud and inadequate (cf. Jer 49:7, Oba 1:8) and who share in Patriarchal piety but not the particular advantages of Jacob's heritage—implies the necessity of divine address, the Jewish people's privilege.

The second fact is that our Edomite interlocutors, though ignorant of Hebrew Scripture, nonetheless quote, allude to, and parody it.<sup>3</sup> The characters' dialogue has a deeper significance, as the poet dramatized and brought into dialogue different Hebrew religious traditions. In fact, he brought into religious dialogue what he saw as deep contradictions between Hebrew traditions, most obviously and notoriously the doctrine of retribution and the recognition of unjust suffering. The former is found in the books of Deuteronomy, Proverbs, and the prophets' promises of punishment and restoration. The latter is in psalms of lamentation, the prophets' denunciation of the oppression of the poor et al, Habakkuk, and finally in Isaiah's Suffering Servant. Similarly, the mythological structures the poet's characters describe do not only starkly differ from each other, but they reflect various Hebrew traditions common to the poet and his readers.

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<sup>3</sup> The phenomenon of allusion and parody in Job has been frequently observed. Many authors (e.g., Edward Greenstein, "Parody as a Challenge to Tradition," in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes. [Bloomsbury: New York, 2013] 66–78; Katharine Dell, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature* [New York: de Gruyter, 1991], esp. 125–35, but *passim*; and *idem*, *Job: Where is Wisdom to be Found?* [Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix Press, 2013] 33–50), consider the final significance of these allusions to be that the poet ferociously savages Hebrew piety. No doubt this is true on a level. Nonetheless, the final significance of these parodies is up for debate, as the book is hermeneutically quite complex.

In this dissertation, I evaluate the mythological structures of each major perspective, to evoke their structures of mundane and cosmic justice and to root them in Hebrew Scripture. I observe the poet's literary strategies and narrative logic, as he composed this drama to put these mutually exclusive structures into competition. I treat the various parties and the narration. I consider the friends as a unit, though I also address their individual tendencies. I proceed thus: Job's friends (chapter 1), Job (chapter 2), the whirlwind speech (chapter 3), and finally the narrative's cosmic scenes in the prologue (chapter 4). I will not treat Job 28 or Elihu (chs. 32–37), since both are mythologically uninteresting and Elihu is not adequately integrated into the text.<sup>4</sup>

Analyzing these mythological structures and rooting them in Israel's religious traditions will be an insightful entry into Job. By demonstrating the poet's conscious manipulation of these mythological traditions, we will be able to discern his agenda of commenting on the merits, limitations, and lasting contributions, of Israel's various traditions. I will also thereby demonstrate his case for newer mythological conceptions of divine power and perspectives on suffering. I will analyze the poet's juxtaposition of mythological traditions drawn from Hebrew Scripture as part of his portrayal of the riddle of human suffering, the goodness of creation, and God's treatment of his servants.

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<sup>4</sup> This decision corresponds somewhat to Elihu's and ch. 28's latter inclusion in the book, though it is not motivated by that consideration. Rather, those sections do not manifest the same literary strategies of the rest of the book. Thus, they might distort the poet's purposes. More likely, they would not materially affect my analysis. While ch. 28 adds something to Job's discourse as he seems to reflect on the limitations of human wisdom in a more contemplative tone, he is well aware of this limitation as a character and there is little novel in his description of cosmic spaces compared to other passages. The chapter articulates themes already implicit in the dialogue and in the relationships between the dialogue, the divine address, and the cosmic courtroom. Elihu's perspective has little mythological about it and his speech is so unincorporated in the text that the book offers no control for our reading.

### *Historical Authorship Considerations*

While there is little that can be said with certainty about the history of Job's authorship, an introduction to the matter is a helpful orientation to the issues involved in the work's interpretation. Here is a common and basic theory of the book's history of composition: the prose (ch 1–2, 42:7–17) originates from the monarchic period (ca. 1000–587 B.C.E.), the dialogues (ch 3–27, 29–31, 38:1–42:6) from the upheaval of the Babylonian exile (587–538 B.C.E.), and two sections, a poem on wisdom (ch 28) and Elihu's monologue (32–37), are Persian period interpolations (538–332 B.C.E.).<sup>5</sup> Most scholars accept these basic divisions, and those who do not recognize multiple authors acknowledge the difficulties those divisions present to reading the text coherently.

There are any number of variations on this understanding. One scholar, for instance, recognizing substantial connections between Job 2 and the dialogues, argues that Job 1 and 42:11–17 form the original narrative and that Job 2 and 42:7–10 are the creation of the poet who attached his poem to the existing tale.<sup>6</sup> Others point to the substantial continuity such arguments demonstrate between the prose and the poetry, and reject the premise that the narrative and poetry must have had different authors after all.<sup>7</sup>

The apparent interpolations occasion much discussion. Chapter 28 begins without a heading, leading some scholars to treat it as a continuation of Job's speech.<sup>8</sup> Often,

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<sup>5</sup> Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin, "Introduction," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind: Interpreting the Book of Job*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 12–13.

<sup>6</sup> Cho, Paul K. -K. "The Integrity of Job 1 and 42:11–17," *CBQ* 76 (2014): 230–51; *idem*, "Job 2 and 42:7–10 as Narrative Bridge and Theological Pivot," *JBL* 136, no. 4 (Winter, 2017): 857–877. Of course, others confidently excise large amounts of Job, per its failure to accommodate their literary sensibilities. But I have no interest in such mutilations of the text, and the reader may consult the commentaries for treatments of this brand of scholarship.

<sup>7</sup> Tremper Longman, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2012), 27 for instance, calls arguments such as Cho's "all too convenient," and prefers instead a single author.

<sup>8</sup> Janzen, Gerald, *Job, Interpretation*, (Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 187.

authors recognize a distinct quality to the chapter and accord it a different status. It is seen as offering a rest from the dialogues, as having an authoritative status on the level of the narrative, as bridging the earlier and latter dialogues.<sup>9</sup> Further, its status is judged to have been original, to have been a later addition by the same author, or to have been a later interpolation by a reader who, anticipating the divine speeches, sought to condemn the human speakers' search to know the wisdom of God.<sup>10</sup>

Finding these approaches dissatisfying, some scholars emend the text, making ch. 28 the conclusion of Elihu's speech.<sup>11</sup> Clines argues that Elihu's speech should precede ch. 28, making the theophany (38–42:6) directly follow Job's final speech (ch. 31).<sup>12</sup> He also argues that Elihu's speech is original to the dialogues.<sup>13</sup> Elihu is often understood as the redaction of a later reader, who sought to correct the deficiencies of the dialogues and

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<sup>9</sup> So, Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 38–39, describes ch. 28 as the formal closure of the preceding dialogue and the authorial comment on the futility of the human search to understand God's governance and as a bridge between the dialogue and Job's "court pronouncements" in chs. 29–31.

<sup>10</sup> Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, (Sheffield, England: Almond Press, 1991), 84. Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job*, (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 137 sees the chapter as an original refutation of the friends' perspective, which expresses a theology familiar to the poet wherein wisdom is confidently held to be entirely available to humans. In this construal, Job is not included in ch. 28's refutation, as Job represents a distorted lamentation tradition.

<sup>11</sup> Edward L. Greenstein, "The Poem on Wisdom in Job 28," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, ed. E. J. van Wolde (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 269–271, adduces grammatical peculiarities of 28:1–2 and thematic correspondences between ch 28 and the Elihu speeches. David A. J. Clines, "'The fear of the Lord is wisdom' (Job 28:28): A Semantic and Contextual Study," in *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, 79–80, agrees.

<sup>12</sup> David A. J. Clines, "Putting Elihu in His Place: A Proposal for the Relocation of Job 32–37," *JSOT* 29, no. 2 (Dec 2004): 251–53, points to the Great Isaiah Scroll as an example of stitched texts, and the discombobulation of Ben Sira as evidence for the plausibility of such textual displacement. But there is no evidence for a mistake in the Joban textual history, and Clines acknowledges that this mistake must have happened very early in the tradition, and the other weakness in his theory, that the openings of chs. 28, 32, and 37 must have occurred at the start of separate sheets. *Idem*, *Job 38–42*, WBC 18B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011), 908–9, maintains this position in his commentary.

<sup>13</sup> David A. J. Clines, *Job 21–37*, WBC 18A (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006), 708–710. Clines, *ibid*, refutes arguments that Elihu is secondary and provides arguments for him being original and by the poet. He moderates his discussion, affirming the value of studying Elihu "even if the secondary character of the Elihu material can be maintained." There is no consensus or satisfactory answer as to the status of ch 28. It should be noted that Clines's argument for Elihu (32–37) preceding ch 28—that this placement would less awkwardly fit with the progression from Job's final declamation (29–31) to the LORD's speech (38–42:6)—presumes that Elihu is not an intrusion and originally flowed more naturally.

make the work more orthodox.<sup>14</sup> Alternatively, some authors argue for his proper role in the original text in his present location.<sup>15</sup>

Another common emendation is the reconstruction of the third cycle of the dialogue (chs. 22–27). There are two primary reasons for this.<sup>16</sup> First, the disputation's established form in the first two cycles (ch 4–21) makes the following chapters' formal breakdown conspicuous. Second, Job articulates his friends' position (i.e., retribution theology) in the third cycle, rendering the dialogue incomprehensible to some. Thus, critics cull material from Job's speeches to lengthen Bildad's third speech (25:1–6) and to supply Zophar with one.<sup>17</sup> Both of these rationales are literary judgments as to what the third cycle must look like, rather than empirical, text-based arguments. No manuscript evidence supports these reconstructions, nor any substantial revision of the text.<sup>18</sup>

My position is this. As Ezek 14:20 shows, there was a tale of Job as a righteous man whose intercession was effective, apparently enough to save his children.<sup>19</sup> While Job's effective intercession occurs in Job 42:7–9, much of the book makes the reference surprising: Job's ineffective intercession for his children (1:5, 18–19), Job's alienation

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<sup>14</sup> E.g., Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 198, Westermann, *Structure of Job*, 140–46.

<sup>15</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 37.

<sup>16</sup> A third reason is offered by Weeks: that “the sudden changes of subject and address are too abrupt... to take them simply as a literary effect,” Weeks, Stuart, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 60–61. Weeks does not elaborate on this assertion. Hebrew poetry frequently employs abrupt changes, and the chapter seems to me to be rather effective literarily.

<sup>17</sup> Thus, Perdue and Gilpin, “Introduction,” 14, suggest chapter 24 and affirm 27:13–23 belong to Zophar, and add 26:5–14 to Bildad's speech. See also, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 174. Clines, *Job 21–37*, 619–20, 641, 651–52. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 37.

<sup>18</sup> As Milos Bic, “Le Juste et L'impie dans le Livre de Job,” in *Supplements to Vetus Testamentum*, ed. G. W. Anderson (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 42, writes “Attempts at reconstructing Zophar's third speech are completely unfounded.” See too, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 26–27. Seow, *ibid.*, 6–9 also discusses the textual evidence, which unanimously supports Job's current structure and contents.

<sup>19</sup> John Day, “How Could Job be an Edomite?” in *The Book of Job*, ed. W. A. M. Beuken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994), 398, further argues that the Joban tradition must have been well established before the exile, as Job's status as an Edomite was too well established to be affected by the hostility towards Edom that resulted from the destruction of the Temple (cf. Lam 4:21).



from God (ch 3–31), and the Lord’s judgment that Job speaks without knowledge (38:2), which is the obverse of the Lord’s praise of Job’s confession (42:7), the grounds of Job’s intercession. It seems Ezekiel was unaware of the poetry and the prose’s current form.

We cannot say what existence the prose had apart from the poetry. But the poet made the prose and the poetry so mutually referential as to render the pre-existing tale effectively a new work. I will treat some of these in chapter 4. And I will analyze literary strategies in the prose that are defining features in the poetry (allusions to Hebrew Scripture and the adaptation of mythological traditions) indicating a common author.

I am unconvinced by arguments for reconstructing the third cycle of the poetry. There is no textual evidence of a different arrangement, and both rationales used for that rearrangement are easily answered. For the first, the breakdown in the form of the disputation corresponds well to the book’s theme of the inadequacy of human wisdom. The point is punctuated by ch. 28’s assessment of human wisdom’s limitations immediately following the dialogue’s failure.<sup>20</sup> But the theme is established well before (cf. Job 12). For the second, Job’s use of retribution theology is already present in the second cycle (e.g., 13:4–11, 19:25–29), and its presence in the third cycle is well integrated in Job’s speech and the book, which can be seen through four points. First, Job argues that lying to agree with them would alienate him from any hope in God’s intervention (27:5–9). Second, the speech echoes the narrator’s and God’s indication in the prologue that Job was just (27:5–6; cf. 1:1, 8). Third, Job’s assessment that their lies

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<sup>20</sup> Clines, “‘The fear of the Lord is wisdom’ (Job 28:28),” 84, objects that this theme is irrelevant to the book’s concern, human suffering, and suggests that the change in subject in ch. 28 is itself an injustice. This objection is too sentimental. Moreover, in Job the themes are inseparable. The theme of wisdom and the shared premise that wisdom is necessary to speak intelligently about cosmic justice run throughout the dialogues, including the Lord’s response, and the breakdown of the human process of rationalizing the world and experience corresponds to the disjunction between the cosmic and mundane perspectives. The objection can only be made in the abstract.

warrant God's judgment is corroborated by God in 42:7. Fourth, as I show in chapters 1–2, the friends consistently avoid the storm-god motif, while Job uses it to great effect. The material reassigned to Bildad employs that motif. Thus, the emendation obscures the poet's consistent affectation at the service of scholars' implausible reconstructions.

While ch. 28 seems to be an interpolation, its current placement and role are too effective to attribute them to chance. As it marks the transition from the wisdom dispute (chs. 4–27) to Job's climactic call for redress (chs. 29–31), its comment on the limitation of human wisdom justifies the termination of the dialogue as the character Job and the poet move on. It most naturally lends itself to interpretation as Job's words in its current location. Thankfully, the point is moot for my purposes. It is mythologically uninteresting and would not affect my analysis of the poet's portrayal of Job or any other party.

Elihu I take to be an awkward interpolation. He is inadequately integrated.<sup>21</sup> The LORD's speech from the whirlwind would better follow Job's redress immediately, as the tension builds throughout chs. 29–31 toward a confrontation with God.<sup>22</sup> Scholarly reactions to Elihu range from scorn to praise, and, the text provides no controls on these reactions, as it does not acknowledge let alone criticize or commend him. The reader may appraise Elihu however they wish, regardless of the narrative. Thankfully, Elihu is again mythologically uninteresting and as irrelevant to my analysis as he was to the poet.

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<sup>21</sup> Westermann indicates that this is the deliberate effect of the interpolator. For Westermann, *Structure of Job*, 140, Elihu's speech becomes "a lecture by a teacher of wisdom in a circle of the wise whom he addresses (34:2) and before whom he develops the case presented by Job, of whom he speaks in the third person," and the author invites his audience—not the three friends—to his appraisal of Job's blasphemy.

<sup>22</sup> Pace Seow, *Job 1–21*, 37, who writes that the transition between Job's "passionate and self-righteous asseveration" and "the overwhelming response of the theophany" would be "too jarring" without Elihu. This is a subjective rationalization of the text posed as an argument about literary necessity. Rather, it is reasonable that a theophany should be jarring. It is Elihu who is jarring, as well as intrusive, disorienting, and tediously anticlimactic.

Finally, the poetry and the prose (in its current state) seem to date to the Persian period. As I will argue in chapters 2–3, the poet alludes to Second Isaiah and adopts the post-exilic prophet's insights. The prose, meanwhile, uses terms and constructions which Avi Hurvitz identifies as peculiar to Late Biblical Hebrew.<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, the prose uses the Satan character, who only occurs in the Persian era texts, Zechariah and 1 Chronicles. I will provide my understanding of the Satan's emergence in that era in chapter 4.

### ***Review of Scholarly Literature***

Job has a vast body of scholarship, so I will limit myself to a few texts whose insights and approaches have contributed to my own but also demonstrate the need for a new approach. In, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature*, Katharine Dell recognizes the poet's strategy of alluding to Hebrew Scripture, and she argues that the poet's parody of these passages conveys the book's skeptical message as the character Job misuses these forms and provides unorthodox ideology.<sup>24</sup> Analogous to Job's parodies of Hebrew Scripture, Dell argues that the book is further characterized by the parasitic misuse of other genres, and Dell concludes that the entire book should be understood as parody: the poetry imposes new meaning on the folktale, "thereby spoiling the original and 'parodying' the original form."<sup>25</sup> Dell uses 'parody' in a broad sense, that need not be comical: rather "a mild irony or scepticism is all that is required."<sup>26</sup> Thus, Dell concludes

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<sup>23</sup> Avi Hurvitz, "The Date of the Prose Tale of Job Linguistically Reconsidered," *HTR* 67 (1974): 17–34, argues that elements of the narrative reflect later Hebrew developments, some of which are even post-exilic. For a description and defense of his method, see *idem*, "The Recent Debate on Late Biblical Hebrew: Solid Data, Experts' Opinions, and Inconclusive Arguments," *Hebrew Studies* 47, (2006): 191–210. It is also interesting to note that in their *Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew*, the only lexemes occurring in Job are found in the narrative, Avi Hurvitz, Leeor Gottlieb, Aaron D. Hornkohl, and Emmanuel Mastéy, *A Concise Lexicon of Late Biblical Hebrew: Linguistic Innovations in the Writings of the Second Temple Period* (Boston: Brill, 2014).

<sup>24</sup> Katharine Dell, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature* (New York: de Gruyter, 1991), 125–136.

<sup>25</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 148–53.

<sup>26</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 152–53.

that Job's message is skepticism of traditional answers: the poetic dialogues enjoy decisive privilege.<sup>27</sup> To shore up her position, Dell maintains that the whirlwind speech was originally shorter and less magnificent, as the poet parodied theophany and portrayed God as a buffoon, while the heavenly courtroom scene is a later addition and an attempt to render the book more orthodox.<sup>28</sup>

There are many problems with this approach. *A priori*, such a skepticism is unlikely in ancient Hebrew religiosity. As René Girard put it, moderns are inclined to project "our own centuries of revolt and unbelief" to "see in the author of the central section of Job a precursor of their own vision."<sup>29</sup> Still, Dell correctly identifies the poet's allusive strategy, and she aptly identifies his parody of many Hebrew scriptural passages. However, as I will show in chapters 2–4, many of these allusions are not parodic, but are highly creative adaptations and arguments from Hebrew Scripture. (Even the parodies admit of a more creative effect.<sup>30</sup>) The poet alludes to Hebrew Scripture for multiple purposes and his various strategies and tasks must be recognized. The identification of parody cannot force other allusions into that category and still less the whole book.

In fact, from her correct identification of this strategy Dell argues that the entire book should be understood as parody. But genre cannot be so simply proved from one, however important, literary strategy. Rather, the poet's creative and argumentative allusions—to both Hebrew scriptural passages and mythological complexes—imply a

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<sup>27</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 212, writes that the poet has real faith, but is skeptical toward traditional answers. I agree, but I further understand the poet to offer his own creative solutions to the problems he raises. Her position is difficult to reconcile with her understanding of the whirlwind.

<sup>28</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 199–208.

<sup>29</sup> René Girard, "Job as Failed Scapegoat," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, 186.

<sup>30</sup> As I have argued regarding Job 7:17–18's parody of Ps 8:5–6. Israel McGrew, "'What is 'Enosh?': The Anthropological Contributions of Job 7:17–18 through Allusion and Intertextuality," *CBQ*, forthcoming. Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 126, identifies the same allusion but sees Job as the poet's mouthpiece and grants him decisive interpretive privilege.

more complicated and creative task. Regarding Dell's position on the prologue and the whirlwind speech, I will show in chapters 3–4 that these sections of the book also show the poet's creative allusions to Hebrew Scripture, and the whirlwind speech gives a far more substantial answer than Dell recognizes. In short, I adopt her insights about parody, but I reject her reductionism: her simplistic privileging of Job's parodies, her reducing the book to this theme, her argument for Job's genre, and her neglecting the whirlwind.

Leo Perdue's, *Wisdom in Revolt*, has a certain affinity with Dell's book, though he treats Job's use of mythological metaphors. Perdue typologically models Job on *Enuma Elish* in the outer frame and *Atrahasis* through the middle. The cosmic battle of *Enuma Elish* is reflected in the prologue and God's rebuke of Job from the whirlwind; Job's "assault upon creation" throughout the rest of the book is modeled on the Igigi's revolt. The two metaphors intersect at the theme of "struggle," making this theme fundamental to Job.<sup>31</sup> Perdue analyzes the book portraying the various metaphors of creation (artistry, fertility, word, battle) as being systematically undermined without differentiation. He concludes that Job's heroic struggle forces God to repent: Job helps God realize God's self by calling God to abandon his purportedly demonic ways of the prologue.<sup>32</sup>

Perdue's sensationalist approach does violence to Job. The typological framing vis-à-vis *Enuma Elish* and *Atrahasis* is forced and, more importantly, obscures the more intricate structure of Job. Furthermore, I do not find that the metaphors of creation can all be treated with the same stroke, as though the poet has only one agenda or takes only one tack in his larger agenda.<sup>33</sup> There is a fair amount of deconstruction and parody in Job's

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<sup>31</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 74–75.

<sup>32</sup> Contra Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 239–40, 262.

<sup>33</sup> In my methodology section below, I will revisit Perdue, to show the results of his failure to account for the poet's more precise manipulation of mythological metaphors.

dialogues. But there is also mythologizing that is not subversive or parodic, but creative. Of course, Job's struggle with innocent suffering is the creative impulse of the human dialogues, as I will discuss in chapter 2. But Perdue's imposition of Hegelian dialectic and process theology on the whole book does violence to the book in the meaning of Job's final submission. Rather, as I will show in chapters 3–4, Job's submission realizes Job's human potential, thus participating in his own creation and God's "struggle" with the Satan, the prologue's equivalent to the whirlwind speech's Leviathan. The book's sections and mythologies relate to each other variously and too subtly for Perdue's approach. Like Dell, Perdue's approach does not account for the subtle variety of Job, as his privileging of Job as a Byronic hero leads to a simplistic analysis of the book's deconstructive agenda and reduces the book to that agenda.

Claus Westermann's *The Structure of the Book of Job* gives some indication of Job's formal complexity. Westermann identifies the variety of forms in the book and recognizes the necessity of evaluating where different forms occur and how they relate. Westermann is particularly impressed with Job's use of lament. In fact, he treats Job as a "dramatized lament." Westermann writes that the friends alone advance arguments; for Job, "lament stands in the place of argument," excepting ch. 21.<sup>34</sup> Structurally, the dialogue (4–27) is within the lament (chs. 3, 29–31), which thus "has both the first and the last word."<sup>35</sup> Therefore, Job is a dramatized lament rather than a wisdom dialogue, and we must begin with an existential question rather than take as our "point of departure some problem."<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job*, trans. Charles A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981), 4.

<sup>35</sup> Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 4.

<sup>36</sup> Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 2, 12–13.

Westermann's approach has serious merits. His identification of various forms taken from Hebrew Scripture indicates Job's subtlety and the prolonged attention required to interpret the book. For example, it is critical that Job begins with a lament in ch. 3 and that the friends are responsible for turning the book into a disputation and provoking Job to his defiant charge against God. It also implies the necessity of an approach such as this dissertation's, as he recognizes the poet's dramatizing of various forms, tropes, and traditions from Hebrew piety.

On the other hand, his position that Job is a dramatized lament is reductive, and his structural analysis neglects the content within the forms. His argument that the lament brackets the dialogue fails to do justice to the dynamic qualities of chs. 29–31, let alone to account for chs. 32–42.<sup>37</sup> Coupled with his existential rather than ideological approach, the approach fails to account for the book's intellectual seriousness and speculative creativity. The poet not only engages forms and the lament in his dramatization of Hebrew piety, but, as Dell and Perdue recognize, particular Hebrew passages and mythological metaphors. On the whole, it is difficult not to see Westermann's work on the psalms as overly influencing his treatment of Job. But Job is more complex than any psalm, as the poet draws from the psalter as well as other Hebrew traditions. Further, while Westermann's formal analysis is a valuable exercise, structural analyses must remain penultimate exercises. The content and rhetoric within those forms are decisive.

Carol Newsom's *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* is one of the most sophisticated engagements with the book of Job, as it accounts for both the book's

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<sup>37</sup> Of course, Westermann does treat these passages, and I agree with his position, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 140, regarding Elihu's speeches, chs. 32–37. The more substantial problem is the awkwardness of integrating the theophany (chs 38–42:7), and Job's self-imprecations (ch 31) into the lament.

content and formal variety. Somewhat like Westermann's attention to forms, Newsom analyzes Job's juxtaposed genres, and she recognizes the book's achievement as a whole greater than the sum of its parts. Newsom couples this structural, thematic analysis with strong literary analysis, giving the sections' content a serious role in the book's meaning. Her approach also offers a third way, as an alternative to historical critical approaches disinterested in the full book's significance and to simplistic, unified approaches that fail to account for the real fissures and the plurality of genres in the text.<sup>38</sup>

The animating principle of Newsom's work is her appropriation of Mikhail Bakhtin's concepts of polyphonic texts and dialogic truth. As Newsom presents it, a polyphonic text has three distinctive qualities: "(1) it embodies a sense of dialogic truth; (2) the author's perspective, although represented in the text, is not privileged; and (3) the polyphonic text ends without finalizing closure."<sup>39</sup> "Dialogic truth" vs. "monologic truth" is critical. Monologic truth is "essentially propositional," indicating that truth may be articulated in propositions, equally true or untrue regardless of who speaks them; it seeks unity and gravitates toward a system; and, however complex the system may be, a single consciousness can finally understand it.<sup>40</sup> Dialogic truth, by contrast, cannot be captured within a single consciousness but requires multiple; it is necessarily subjective, requiring personal perspectives rather than propositions to articulate truth; it has "no drift toward the systematic;" and it is "always open," making no attempt at finalization.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 4–11.

<sup>39</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 21.

<sup>40</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 21.

<sup>41</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 22–23.



Thus, Newsom sees Job's various sections and genres as operating analogous to a conversation, wherein the various sections qualify each other, and no section gains final authority. As an entry into her method, Newsom leads her reader through the book of Job as a *Bildungsroman*.<sup>42</sup> The prose tale renders the reader passive and teaches a simplistic view of piety and reward. The dialogue interrupts this worldview: the wisdom dialogue is formally more complex, its discussion is more complex, and the reader is engaged as an active participant. The inadequacies of the wisdom dialogue are indicated by Elihu's response and more substantially by ch. 28's discourse on the limitations of human wisdom and by the address from the whirlwind. For Newsom, the whirlwind speech operates not according to "explicitly moral terms at all" but instead offers an aesthetic experience that would wean Job et al. from their moralistic preoccupations. Thus, the book nearly reads as a *Bildungsroman*, offering us Job's pedagogical transformation.

Newsom argues that this reading is invalidated by the resumption of the prose, however, as the narrative reasserts the simplistic piety systematically demolished throughout the rest of the book. Whereas narrative approaches to the book would naturally privilege God's speech and the narration of reality (rather than the claims of embedded speech), Newsom argues that these two privileged perspectives decisively undermine each other, so that the book defiantly resists closure or synthesis: "The prose conclusion, taken on its own terms, offers a narrative of closure.... Yet when read in the context of the entire book, it prevents closure."<sup>43</sup> The book of Job is thus like a Wisdom

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<sup>42</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 17–20.

<sup>43</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 21.

Dialogue after all. As the Wisdom Dialogue genre invites prolonged questioning after reading, so Job inspires conversation, cannot be finalized, and calls you to read it again.<sup>44</sup>

There is much to commend in Newsom's work. It seems indisputable that the author (the poet at least) consciously juxtaposed and manipulated both forms and genres. Furthermore, the humility implied by the dialogic approach is certainly commended by Job's enigmatic literary quality and the topic of the problem of evil, the mystery of human suffering and divine justice, or the vindication of God's treatment of his servants.

However, these genres are related to each other in a narrative, and the values inherent in the genres enrich that drama. So, the serenity of the folk-tale where Job's success is sure is dramatically interrupted by Job's lament, which yields to a severely flawed wisdom disputation and witnesses Job's desperate self-imprecations and accusation against God, where his success is no longer sure. The generic juxtaposition thus gives the narrative extraordinary dynamism. But there is no reason that attending to the poet's manipulation of genres should void the narrative logics, nor the privileging of perspectives, nor, therefore, the drift toward synthesis.

Thus, Newsom's argument that Norman Habel's treatment of "the dialogue *as a feature of the plot*" is inherently inattentive to genres is a red herring.<sup>45</sup> Narrative coherence and integration are not, in principle, opposed to the recognition of the various contributions of genres. Rather, as amenable as Job is to Newsom's post-modern approach, her argument for Job as a polyphonic text—with no drift toward synthesis or

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<sup>44</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 264.

<sup>45</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 8. Citing Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1985), 26.

privileging of perspectives—relies on the alleged contradictions between the whirlwind and the epilogue, as the narrative is the only perspective that can qualify the theophany.

These objections are easily answered, if frequently advanced. Newsom advances as intolerable contradictions: style, moral perspective, the alleged contradiction between Job 38:2 and 42:7, and the fact that, despite rebuking the friends, God restores Job “just as they had predicted.”<sup>46</sup> The difference in style is obvious but not a substantial contradiction. The difference in moral perspective is somewhat question-begging, as I will argue in chapter 4 that God’s moral discourse is not so amoral as Newsom writes. Furthermore, there is no contradiction between the whirlwind’s rhetorical goal of gaining Job’s submission and relinquishing his charges on the one hand, and the epilogue’s indication that God chooses to bless Job (and that God really ought to) on the other. The epilogue is enriched or purified by the whirlwind’s aesthetics, and the juxtaposition of these values is a creative impetus. But there is no substantial contradiction.

Regarding the supposed contradiction between Job 38:2 and 42:7, in 38:2, God indicates Job has spoken “without knowledge,” and, in 42:7, God indicates to the friends that they have not spoken correctly about God as has Job. She presents this as insurmountable to final-form readers that seek “a unified and coherent reading,” as they “have to overlook the fact that God has just rebuked the way Job speaks.”<sup>47</sup> But Newsom has to overlook the facts that four chapters have passed, and Job has just spoken altogether differently about God. The praise of Job 42:7 need not refer to everything Job has spoken since 3:1 but could refer simply to 42:2–6.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 20–21.

<sup>47</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 20.

<sup>48</sup> Of course, a final form “unified and coherent” reading may still consider how Job’s speech about God has been superior. Indeed, in chapter 2 I will argue that the poet mingles Job’s speeches with truth and

Finally, the suggestion that the friends are vindicated by God's rewarding Job is weak. While God does restore Job as they indicated, it is not through their prescription. And their diagnosis of Job's suffering (i.e., as due to his sin) is denied by every other perspective in the book. God's final blessing of Job may indicate God's justice after all, but it in no way vindicates the friends' pretense that the human experience is infallibly just. Newsom herself provides a distinction that resolves this issue, when she observes that the prose conclusion has been transformed by the intervening poetry, such that it no longer supports the friends' confidence as it might have. Rather, it recognizes the "goodness of life in all its fragility," as Job, like the ostrich, can only embrace his vulnerable existence and relish his daughters.<sup>49</sup>

I would address this dissonance differently and say that the epilogue supports God's just recompense of his servants, despite the poetry's *prima facie* and Job's intermediate experience's invalidations of that claim. But I do not, therefore, accept this as an intolerable contradiction, or un-finalizable polyphony. Rather, I see the book of Job as a riddle that inclines towards a solution, as the poetry itself provides a speculative solution whereby God's justice might be salvaged in Job's considerations of an afterlife. To recognize the interpretive weight of those considerations, it is necessary to analyze Job, not through only one of the poet's literary strategies—whether parody, mythological metaphor, form, or genre—but by recognizing the poet's unique drama that employs all of these strategies. The poet indeed composes a sort of meta-dialogue, but it is not only between genres. Rather, the poet's allusions to Hebrew Scripture and its mythological

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error, as some of Job's speech is only ordered to demolishing his friends' position, whereas some of it is offered as a genuine solution to the issues.

<sup>49</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 258.

traditions dramatize an argument between Jewish religious traditions, as I will explain in my methodology shortly. But first I ought to review one more monograph.

In some ways, the closest equivalent to my project is David Wolfers's *Deep Things Out of Darkness*. Wolfers recognizes Job's pervasive use of allusion and eclectic use of, not only Hebrew wisdom traditions, but "every other Hebrew literary tradition as well."<sup>50</sup> Accordingly, he approaches the book as an allegory from the early 7<sup>th</sup> century BCE, with the characters as ciphers of historical parties. Job and Behemoth are ciphers for Hezekiah and Judah, the ten children for the ten northern tribes, the Chaldean attack and Leviathan for the Assyrian assault and empire, "the wicked" for Sennacherib, etc. Wolfers even suggests that Isaiah ben Amoz may have written the book.<sup>51</sup> The allegorical notion is not new. Pope reports that Rabbi Simeon ben-Lakish (3<sup>rd</sup> cent CE) opined Job never existed, and the Talmud relates the Rabbinic opinion that the story is a parable, a *mashal*.<sup>52</sup> Other modern scholars, too, have identified Job as a typological representative of Judah or Zion, and I will show that Job's laments are Jerusalem's in chapter 2.<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> David Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness: The Book of Job: Essays and a New English Translation* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1995), 50.

<sup>51</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 54–56.

<sup>52</sup> Pope, *Job*, (Garden City: Double Day, NY, 1965), xxx. Paul Dhormê, *Le Livre de Job* (Paris: Gabalda, 1926) xiv, reports the same tradition as represented in the Babylonian Talmud, in the Bereshith Rabba (§ 57), and in Maimonides's *Guide for the Perplexed*, iii.22. The Genesis Rabbah tradition is somewhat confused, but R. Lakish seems to have allowed that Job lived while the book's events are ahistorical. For Bereshith Rabba, § 57, see Jacob Neusner, ed., *Genesis Rabbah*, part 3, vol. 9 of *The Components of the Rabbinic Documents: from the Whole to the Parts*, ed. Jacob Neusner et al. (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1997), 58–60. More relevant is the Babylonian Talmud, *Bava Batra* 15a, relating a debate as to Job's historicity. An unnamed sage opines Job never was but his story is a parable (איוב לא היה ולא נברא אלא משל היה), while R. Shmuel bar Nahmani cites Job 1:1 as evidence Job lived. [https://www.sefaria.org/Bava\\_Batra.15a?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Bava_Batra.15a?lang=bi), accessed March 25, 2021. The positions may be correlated to Lakish's statements, indicating Job's existence but the substantially parabolic character of the story. Pope's citation of Maimonides appears to reflect an edition in multiple volumes. The relevant passage is the *Guide*'s 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> chapters. Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedländer (New York: Dover, 1956), 296–300, believes that Job never existed, insists that, whether Job existed or not, the story is certainly fictional, and refers to the story as an allegory.

<sup>53</sup> For example, Jean Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu: essai d'exégèse et de théologie biblique*, vol 2 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970), 382–85 writes that Job composes a "véritable anthologie" of Lamentations in ch. 19, according to Job's role as "Sion personnifiée."

Wolfers further observes that the narrator describes Job's restoration as God "returning the captivity of Job," and the phrase never refers to an individual, but only to the corporate restoration of the nation.<sup>54</sup>

Despite my affinity for Wolfers's project, my objections to his book are many. For one thing, Wolfers supports his early seventh century dating based on the supposedly "absolutely decisive reference to the book of Job," found in Ezek 14:14, 20, and he argues that Job's life being spared excludes the Babylonian captivity.<sup>55</sup> Of course, I have already observed that Ezekiel hardly indicates familiarity with our book of Job, and it is no more proof of Job's prior existence than of Daniel's. For Seow, the fate of Job's children suggests that Ezek 14:20 indicates familiarity with a significantly different tale.<sup>56</sup> That is, since Job is grouped with Noah and Ezek 14:20 indicates those righteous men's inability to save their children in Ezekiel's context, Ezek 14:20 suggests Job's success in saving his children through his righteousness. Wolfers's own observation about Job's return from captivity nullifies his objection against the Babylonian captivity, and it is one of several of his observations that undermine his position.<sup>57</sup> Finally, I will argue that Job's poetry alludes to Second Isaiah and to Lamentations, indicating a post-exilic date.

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<sup>54</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 103–05.

<sup>55</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 51–54.

<sup>56</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 1, 28, 49–50. Clines, *Job 1–20*, WBC 17 (Dallas: Word Books, 1989) lvii–lviii, acknowledges the likelihood that Ezekiel refers to an older tale and argues that the connections between the prose and the poetry are so thorough that we ought to consider the poet as the *de facto* author of the prose, whatever preexisting story he might have had. On the other hand, Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 84, simply observes that Ezekiel attests "an older folktale" that had "already achieved some notoriety" apart from the poetry. He assumes Job's prose partially preserves the folk tale and does not consider whether the prose has been updated. Similarly, Pope, *Job*, xxiv, speculates that the folktale had probably achieved "a relatively fixed form and content which the author of the Dialogue could not modify in any radical fashion." This is mere conjecture.

<sup>57</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 54. Judah's survival and return from the exile correspond rather well to Job. Wolfers, *ibid*, 75, even observes the congruity of Job's restoration with the "funding of the return from exile." Wolfers, *ibid*, 186–87, also sees a direct allusion to Isa 37:33–34 in the whirlwind speech, describing everything that God would not allow Sennacherib to do to Jerusalem: come against the

I do not wish merely to contend for the accurate historical situation. I disagree with Wolfers's impulse to decipher every element of Job as a pure allegory. His framework leads him to many forced identifications (e.g., Ox as Egypt, Raven and Lion as Ammon and Moab).<sup>58</sup> I would rather posit a more subtle, mythopoeic project rather than merely pronouncing Isaiah's perspective on the Assyrian crisis. The poet ties together many of Israel's traditions, including texts from the Assyrian crisis and Isaiah's hopes for national deliverance, but also including the catastrophe of the Babylonian exile and the post-exilic hope for restoration under the Persians. As I understand it, Job is not a pure allegory to be deciphered with one-to-one referents. Job is an allegorical riddle or a parable that makes a creative case for a solution to the problems these events aggravate: it is a theological exploration and mythopoeic argument from Israel's traditions.

### ***Methodological Considerations***

For the remainder of this introduction, I will make some observations framing the book of Job so that I can conveniently present my methodology and its congruence with the book. I will first address the question: In what sense Job is Wisdom Literature? My point is not to challenge this categorization, but we must approach Job as Job in all its peculiarity rather than merely as peculiar wisdom literature. Thus, I will observe elements that support that identification and elements that undermine the value of wisdom within the book, to qualify this identification. I will then call attention to several distortions that are natural mistakes to make approaching Job. Specifically, I will observe the distortions that result from identifying Job as wisdom literature, categorizing Job as a wisdom

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city, shoot arrows, cast up siege banks, etc. However, the Babylonians do these things, and Job describes his suffering from God's archery (e.g., 6:4a) and his demolition as a city with siege ramp, etc., in 19:10–12.

<sup>58</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 220–22.

debate, and considering the human characters as sages of a wisdom movement. In the process, I will make an argument that we should approach Job as a *mashal*, a parabolic riddle showing the inherent tensions of Hebrew religious traditions, including scriptures and mythological structures. Finally, I will discuss two critical tasks in interpreting Job: the universal challenge in interpreting Job's poetry and this dissertation's concern for the most fitting manner of interpreting the poetry's mythological structures.

### ***Job as Wisdom Literature: Sic***

It is beyond my scope and purposes to define 'Wisdom' or 'Wisdom Literature' and all the more so to engage in the frequently problematic reconstructions of a wisdom movement. Wisdom was a broadly held cultural value, from Egypt to Mesopotamia. However, most of the occurrences of חכמה and its derivatives in the Old Testament refer to wisdom and 'the wise' in a general sense rather than to a distinct and professional class, until Ben Sira.<sup>59</sup> Still, it will be expedient to make some observations about the nature of the book *qua* Wisdom Literature—what is meant and what cannot be understood by that designation—lest we succumb to logical fallacies and anachronisms in our investigation of the Book of Job *qua* the Book of Job rather than *qua* Wisdom Literature. I proceed by a *sic et non*, observing elements of the book that support the intuition Job is Wisdom Literature and observing elements that subvert that judgment.

The intuition that Job is fittingly included in the category of Wisdom Literature is appropriate if potentially misleading. Wisdom is obviously an important theme. Even without the interpolated reflection on wisdom (ch. 28), the themes of human and divine

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<sup>59</sup> See R. N. Whybray, *The Intellectual Tradition in the Old Testament* (New York: De Gruyter, 1974), 17, 31, 43–48. Joseph Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament: The Ordering of Life in Israel and Early Judaism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983) follows Whybray's methodological conservatism in describing the "intellectual tradition."



wisdom and the disparity between them is essential to the book. In the main disputation (chs. 4–27), the root חכם occurs some thirteen times, with another three occurrences in the divine speech (all in the first address, 38:36, 37; 39:17).<sup>60</sup> Wisdom is represented as a cultural value within the book, even if the author shows the limitation and error of his sages. The author evidently considers himself as possessing superior wisdom. The questions he raises and the discussion he creates exemplify wisdom teaching ubiquitous to the ancient Near East, in the friends' defense of the moral intelligibility of the cosmos. Even as he portrays it as inadequate or at least prone to distortion, the author shows his own learning in that wisdom and makes creative use of it. Further, as the author portrays the friends as parochial and inadequate, he does so in terms of wisdom and folly, honesty and falsity. The ideal of wisdom is retained and even accentuated by their shortcoming.

Job and the friends are portrayed as wise men in the general, non-technical sense. They dispute about the moral nature of the cosmos and the nature and possibility of right and effective action. The friends employ proverbs and frequently refer to tradition from the ancestors, including the doctrine of retribution firmly entrenched in the ancient Near East for millennia.<sup>61</sup> Job himself occasionally uses proverbs and is acquainted with the friends' traditions.<sup>62</sup> For all the severity of his indictment of his friends' portrayal of the doctrine of retribution, his own relationship with it is never finalized.<sup>63</sup> While Job (and

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<sup>60</sup> The term occurs fourteen times in the additions: four in ch. 28, and ten in Elihu's speech (chs. 32–37).

<sup>61</sup> Despite our tendency to dismiss the friends, this tendency would not have been the readers' nor even the author's. Rather, as Blenkinsopp, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 1995), 52, and Newsom, *Book of Job*, 116–18, observe, their teaching was widely accepted and highly valued.

<sup>62</sup> Samuel Terrien, "Job as a Sage," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 233–35, sees a hesitance to use proverbs on the part of Job, which he does reluctantly and only out of necessity in his self-defense. Terrien sees Job as a sort of anti-wisdom.

<sup>63</sup> As is evidenced by his continued use of it (13:3–12, 19:25–29, 24:15–25, 27:4–11, ff). Recall that chs. 24, 27 are sometimes reassigned to the friends in reconstructions of the third cycle. Below, I will discuss Job's fitting personal embodying of these paradoxical doctrines, and I will examine the literary problem

perhaps the friends) was not a professional sage or scribe but a Patriarch—a wealthy and respected leader in the community before his ordeals—he was known and sought for his wisdom in counsel and justice (29:7–17, 21–25). Job and the friends, as masters of traditional wisdom, represent the sapiential tradition. They represent ideological currents, and perhaps particular social groups, contemporary to the author.<sup>64</sup>

Formally, the fable and dialogue are both fitting media for wisdom instruction. The bare prose, whatever form the story existed in before the poet's decisive influence, teaches the pious lesson of divine justice righting wrongs and ending aberrations in the human experience of cosmic justice. It encourages the simple to remain steadfast in piety, come whatever setback. The wisdom dialogue is more sophisticated, challenging pupils to consider whether the question can be decided at all. The net effect produces a whole greater than the sum of its parts, as evidenced by the text's lasting power and the amount of scholarly energy and creativity the text has elicited.

God's entrance also appears as a participation in the wisdom tradition.<sup>65</sup> While a theophany is atypical of wisdom literature—often understood as bound to empirical observation—his address resumes the wisdom dialogue, as he challenges Job's reading of creation. God bases his defense of the cosmos and his portrayal of its values on his sapiential discourse on the created world. While God's rhetoric is assertive, it remains a confrontation of persuasion, not brute force. The first speech in particular engages according to sapiential traditions, as God refers to his distribution of wisdom three times

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created by the reconstruction of the third cycle, as it distorts the poet's affectation in making Job the sole representative of the *Chaoskampf* tradition.

<sup>64</sup> For a study on Job himself, see Samuel Terrien, "Job as a Sage," 231–42. For a study on the friends, see Rainer Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job: The Friends' Perspective," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East*, 243–61.

<sup>65</sup> Cf. Norman C. Habel, "In Defense of God the Sage," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, 30–38.

(38:36, 37; 39:17). God's catalogue of animals and places in the first speech is a creative spin on the tradition of *onomastica* from Egypt, as von Rad observed.<sup>66</sup>

Finally, the distinctly non-Israelite setting is attributed to its character as a wisdom text. Job and his friends are apparently Edomites. They mainly use generic titles for God (אל, etc.), though they also use the name, Shaddai (שׁדַּי), corresponding to the Patriarchal name for God (cf. Ex 6:3). As noted, throughout the dialogues the divine name is not used, with the suspect exception of 12:9. The speakers do not formally quote or refer to scripture. The Israelite traditions of covenant, election, and what might be called salvation history are absent, suggesting to many that the author was disinterested in these. Thus, he participated in a distinct wisdom tradition. At any rate, this serves to make their discourse more widely applicable than to Jews who have the advantages of the Mosaic covenant and Hebrew Scripture. The speakers refer to natural observation, the observations of the Fathers, unspecified traditions, and one direct revelation (4:12–16).

### ***Job as Wisdom Literature: Non***

Nonetheless, there are elements that challenge the book's sapiential classification. While the word, wisdom, occurs some seventeen times in our material (chs. 3–27, 29–31, 38–42), the majority of them are used ironically or negatively regarding the prospects of human wisdom (ch. 28 adds four). Job speaks the term, מִשַּׁל, twice, both suggesting the lack of value of 'proverbs.' In 13:12, Job refers to his friends' reminders as "proverbs of

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<sup>66</sup> Gerhard von Rad, "Job xxxviii and Ancient Egyptian Wisdom," in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays*, trans. E. W. Trueman Dicken (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), 281–84. Von Rad refers us to several Egyptian *onomastica* which list items as the creations of Ptah, covering "objects, persons, offices, professions, tribes, Egyptian cities, and so on." Von Rad does not suggest a textual correspondence, but he points to the wide-spread phenomenon amongst Egyptian sapiential literature, and he suggests the poet may have dramatically reworked an *onomasticon*. Moreover, the account of Solomon's wisdom relates Jewish wisdom to Egyptian and includes catalogues of trees and animals (1 Kgs 5:9–14 [4:29–34]), showing that such catalogues were part of the Jewish wisdom tradition and associated with Egypt.

ash,” a harsh indictment of any proverb sustaining the doctrine of retribution. In 17:6, Job refers to himself as a living proverb, as his horrific downfall made him an object lesson, a ‘byword.’ Job as object lesson correlates to Israel in exile becoming a ‘byword’ in Deut 28:37. The verbatim correspondence of Job’s corporal suffering (2:7) to the boils described in Deut 28:35 indicates this correlation is deliberate. Job’s fate suggests just punishment to the Deuteronomic perspective. However, since we know that Job’s piety and moral perfection is the cause-in-fact of his suffering, Job’s object lesson directly inverts Deuteronomy. Terrien rightly recognizes that the verse makes Job a “living exhibit of chaos in the universe” making Job a personification of “non-wisdom.”<sup>67</sup>

Furthermore, Job and his friends are portrayed as ignorant. Job demolishes the sapiential orthodoxy which his friends represent so ardently that they devolve into parochial devotees and parodies of wisdom. Job retains the doctrine of retribution in a desperate attempt to synthesize the paradox between his piety and faith in God’s justice on the one hand and his innocence and experience of radical evil at God’s whim on the other. The wisdom dialogue dissolves into cacophony as Job interrupts Bildad, ending all order and convention, and disallows the violent fool, Zophar, from speaking again. Thus, the dialogue fails formally, dramatically, and ideologically, as the issues elude all the speakers, Job included. The wisdom dialogue is an essential part of the work as I will show in chapters 1–2, and the poet uses it to his creative purposes. But one of those purposes is the demolition of human confidence, pretenses, and assumptions.

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<sup>67</sup> Terrien, “Job as a Sage,” 234–35.

Furthermore, the theophany is astonishing for wisdom literature, as Crenshaw observes.<sup>68</sup> Any sort of divine address is atypical of wisdom literature. God manifesting in a visible medium is jarring. Moreover, however much God imitates the tradition of the *onomastica*, it is a satirical mockery of his presumptuous rival.<sup>69</sup> God does not answer the questions (as asked at least), but he rebukes Job and boasts over his non-human creations. At least the first speech primarily concerns the visible creation. The second speech refers to Behemoth (בהמות, identical to feminine plural “beasts,” but here masculine singular) and to the Leviathan, the chaos monster of old. Some scholars treat these as natural creatures.<sup>70</sup> But the Behemoth’s description is so hyperbolic as nearly to force a mythological interpretation, and the Leviathan’s fire, smoke, and terrorizing the gods (41:10–12, 17 [19–21, 25]) make the naturalistic approach untenable.

Finally, despite the literary affectation of non-Israelites having a naturalistic, universal discourse, this is a Jewish debate. The speakers are portrayed as ignorant of scripture, but they speak a great deal of it, as Dell and others have shown. The poet thus uses fictional Edomites to construct a deeper dialogue between scriptural passages, books, genres, forms, and motifs. He confronts the reader of Hebrew Scripture with a contradiction and a riddle that the initiated cannot un-see.

The failure of the wisdom discourse precipitates the divine address from the whirlwind. This fact would suggest that the poet draws a limit to the potential of the

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<sup>68</sup> James L. Crenshaw, “When Form and Content Clash: The Theology of Job 38:1–40:5,” in *Creation in the Biblical Traditions*, ed. Richard J. Clifford and John J. Collins (Washington, DC: Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1992), 79.

<sup>69</sup> von Rad, “Job xxxviii and Ancient Egyptian Wisdom,” 288–91, refers to a satirical *onomasticon*, *Papyrus Anastasi I*, making this literary adaptation not novel.

<sup>70</sup> E.g., Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1192–1200, Newsom, *Book of Job*, 248. I will treat this issue in Chapter 3, and I address Clines’s argument in some detail in appendix B.

wisdom enterprise and indicates that revelation is necessary.<sup>71</sup> Thus, the Hebrew scriptural traditions and privilege of revelation has something to contribute to *all* cultural sapiential projects. The fact that the failed wisdom discourse is also the riddle of Hebrew Scripture may further reflect the poet's argument that further revelation is necessary to correct the excesses of Job and his friends, of skeptics and the Deuteronomic tradition.

### ***Job as Wisdom Literature***

For all of these qualifications of Job as "Wisdom Literature," it remains appropriate that Job be considered Wisdom Literature. We cannot allow a narrow understanding of it as such to skew our approach, but neither is it useful to exclude Job arbitrarily, considering the book's manifest concern with wisdom and clear links with Proverbs and Deuteronomy. For example, Dell disqualifies Job as Wisdom Literature since it fails to meet her criteria: Job does not use enough proverbs, have Lady Wisdom, or have enough to do with daily, non-religious life.<sup>72</sup> But these criteria and definition of Wisdom Literature are narrow and inappropriate.

More substantially, the poet's creative use of the term מִשָּׁל indicates his sage task. While Job's commentary on his friends' wisdom of ash indicts their parochial defense of the doctrine of retribution, the book's engagement with and qualification of that doctrine

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<sup>71</sup> *Contra* Blenkinsopp's interpretation, *Sage, Priest, Prophet*, 55, that the theophany indicates God's transcendence and the inability of learned debates and schools to circumscribe him, so that "the author reflects the move away from a national deity toward a more transcendent and universalist perspective." This would seem to be a symptom of approaching Job as "Wisdom Literature," and inferring the poet's purpose of exchanging the nationalistic god for the transcendental and universal God, etc. Rather, the wisdom dialogue operates under the auspices of the transcendental and universalist wisdom context. The theophany reflects the transcendental God—now Yahweh by name—making himself immanent, disclosing some important truths, correcting some errors, and inviting Job to a submissive reconciliation. Thus, the theophany seems to reflect the opposite concern, if we approach Job on its own terms. It is telling in this regard that Blenkinsopp, *ibid.*, 52, writes that the "body of the work" was the wisdom dialogue. His interpretation of the whirlwind's contribution seems to derive from making the failed dialogue the main representation of the poet's purposes and the frame of reference relativizing all other materials.

<sup>72</sup> Dell, *Job: Where is Wisdom to be Found?*, 15–18.

does not imply that there is no wisdom to be found in the book. Rather, more and different perspective is necessary. Consider how Job's reference to himself as a מִשַּׁל in 17:6 works on multiple levels. As noted, Terrien observes that Job's use of Deut 28:35, 37 indicates that Job personifies anti-wisdom.<sup>73</sup> Job instantiates the effects of chaos, invalidating the doctrine of retribution. Nonetheless, the cumulative effect is that the poet creates a new object lesson to be learned from Job's suffering. Whereas Deut 28:35–37 indicates that Israel's suffering demonstrates God's justice in abandoning Israel to her just deserts, Job's identical suffering has nothing to do with justice. Job's suffering provides the מִשַּׁל that disproves the doctrine of retribution, inviting the reader to consider a different wisdom. But readers need not embrace Job's nihilism. Surely this is why the poet describes Job's discourse—as Job has disrupted the wisdom dialogue—in 27:1 and 29:1 as Job speaking forth his own מִשַּׁל. Job, in his personal suffering and in his discourse at the end of the failed wisdom dialogue, speaks forth on the riddle of suffering and of cosmic and divine justice, with all the ambiguity of human experience. The conclusion need not be that the poet is skeptical and denies meaning or even finally the doctrine of retribution. Rather, the poet invites us to consider the riddle of Hebrew religious traditions and experience when the inherent tensions have been exposed.

Finally, consider the ambiguity of Job 30:19b. Translations typically treat the phrase as indicating Job's complaint that he has “become like dust and ashes.” The verb's root is מִשַּׁל, and this is the sole instance of it in the Hithpael. Both the qal and piel refer to creating proverbs, while the niph'al refers to a basic likeness (e.g., Ps 49:13, 21; 28:1; 143:7; Isa 14:10), as does the hiphil (Isa 46:10). It is intriguing to consider the poet's use

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<sup>73</sup> Terrien, “Job as Sage,” 234–35.

of this otherwise unattested form. Of course, the fact that we only know it here does not prove it was peculiar to the poet, so we cannot put much weight on this observation. But the poet often uses these peculiar and ambiguous forms to great effect. The translations treat this form as a passive, which is more properly the domain of the niphāl. If the poet meant to say that Job is “like dust and ashes,” it is odd that he did not use a niphāl. But if the poet continues his creative use of the root מָשַׁל, then he again portrays Job as a riddle for dust and ashes, that is, for the human condition considered per its mortal fragility.

Thus, the book not only savages “The Wisdom Tradition,” as represented by the friends, but the book creatively engages with it, inviting the knowing reader to reflect on a fuller wisdom, a synthesis of previous traditions and experience. The whirlwind adds to this purpose, as divine revelation corrects and complicates the riddle developed by the human disputation rather than solving it. This limit reflects the necessity of revelation, as implied by the theophany and as reflected by the deeper level of discourse as the speakers mangle Hebrew Scripture. The theophany excludes any pretense of self-sufficiency on the part of human wisdom (Jewish or otherwise), and likely also on the part of unaided human exegesis.<sup>74</sup> Neither does the address exclude the human agency and exercise of wisdom. Rather, the theophany contributes to the pursuit of wisdom by further developing the riddle of human suffering and divine justice, even while it indicates the limitations of human knowledge and the necessity of a fideistic submission.

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<sup>74</sup> It is not clear that the Israelite wisdom tradition ever actually held such a view of self-sufficiency. Proverbs’ inattention to a great deal of religious concerns found in Hebrew Scripture is sometimes cited as evidence of a distinct set of interests and values. However, Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin (Nashville: Abingdon, 1972), 60–62, 97–98, 188, criticizes moderns for retrojecting our secular enlightenment upon the Israelite tradition, and he offers the likelier scenario that Proverbs’ sages everywhere presume these religious concerns and God’s ordering of the world and history.



Thus, the work may be understood as a sort of parabolic, allegorical riddle, where the various Hebrew traditions are brought into relationship to provoke further reflection and pursuit of wisdom, particularly in a monotheistic context.<sup>75</sup> The friends' defense of the doctrine of retribution represents not only Proverbs, but Deuteronomy (as the poet's allusions confirm) and all prophetic pronouncements of doom. Job's insistence on the Emperor's nakedness is not a skeptical refutation of Hebrew piety or Scripture, but it represents experience and every observation in Hebrew Scripture that the doctrine of retribution cannot account for all experience: from the many psalms of lament to those that observe the prosperity of the evil (e.g., Ps. 73), along with the prophetic indictments of the oppression of the poor and the widow, the agony of Habakkuk, and the explicit teaching of innocent and vicarious suffering in Isa 53. God's contribution includes a profoundly monotheistic mythological recontextualization of the Sea and the Leviathan. As we will see in chapter 3, its nearest analogue is probably Second Isaiah.<sup>76</sup>

### ***Job as Wisdom Literature: Distortions to be Avoided and Questions of Genre***

I will now spotlight some distortions to avoid in treating Job as Wisdom Literature. I select these distortions because they are natural mistakes that result in demonstrably damaging approaches. First, I will discuss approaching Job as 'Wisdom Literature,' and how we must consider Job in the context of other Jewish wisdom literature, lest our typology of wisdom literature obscure Job's peculiarity. Second, I will

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<sup>75</sup> Some scholars argue that monotheism is an inappropriate term for the Hebrew Bible, insisting instead on mere monolatry. Some deny monotheism's presence in Job, though many Job scholars recognize it. I argue that Job frames the problem of theodicy in a basically monotheistic manner. The poet also engages texts that teach God's categorical supremacy. See appendix A.

<sup>76</sup> Gerald Janzen, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power," *CBQ* 56, no 3 (1994), 458–78, has written on the interaction with the storm-god motif in both Job and Isaiah, but he was primarily focused on analyzing the phenomenon in the context of Isaiah. I will build off his work in chapter 4.

discuss treating Job as a ‘Wisdom Dialogue.’ This reductive approach neglects Job’s genius. Third, I will discuss approaching Job and the Friends as ‘Sages.’

I turn to the first distortion, the anachronistic application of a typological analysis to ‘Wisdom Literature’ as a whole and to Job in particular. This mistake weakens Perdue’s book, *Wisdom in Revolt*. Recall that Perdue identifies four major metaphors of creation: artistry, fertility, word, and battle. The first three he describes as united by their portrayal “of reality as an aesthesis, a harmonious and beautiful order,” while the battle metaphor is the odd man out. Nonetheless, he observes, the battle metaphor is “found primarily in Job, though it makes an occasional appearance in more conventional wisdom texts, for example, in the Wisdom of Solomon.”<sup>77</sup> While the other three metaphors are more congenial, the battle metaphor is apparently at home in wisdom literature after all.

The anachronism is extraordinary. Wisdom of Solomon, likely written centuries after Job, is irrelevant to Job’s use of the battle metaphor—if we care about the poet’s purposes. Considering the metaphor’s absence in Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Ben Sira, Wisdom of Solomon reflects a synthesis of the Jewish tradition of the storm-god, battle motif with a ‘Wisdom Tradition’ neglecting and perhaps even opposed to the motif. Job, compared to Proverbs and Ecclesiastes (and Ben Sira), is peculiar *qua* Wisdom Literature for several reasons, but especially for its use of the battle metaphor. If we approach Job first *qua* Job and secondly *qua* Wisdom Literature, we can appreciate Job’s strategic use of the battle metaphor vis-à-vis the Wisdom Tradition. Recall that it is only Job who describes God as the storm deity who vanquishes the Sea and his reptilian allies of chaos. Thus, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Job’s friends—not the whole book—may give a better

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<sup>77</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 58–59.

picture of what was typical of Wisdom Literature. The inclusion of the battle metaphor dramatically challenges the Wisdom Tradition of the friends and whatever historical realities they represent. Of course, the whirlwind speech deflates the *Chaoskampf* motif, so the poet was sensitive to its inadequacies. But he used it to challenge the Wisdom tradition to accommodate itself to Hebrew Scripture's other traditions and to generate a new sapiential synthesis. Thus, Job more than anticipates Wisdom of Solomon: Job demonstrates the necessity of the synthesis Wisdom reflects. Both texts stand in particular relationship to Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and to a lesser extent Ben Sira, as the 'Wisdom Literature' reflects a real tension within the 'Wisdom Tradition.'

It is unfortunate that a book focused on metaphors of creation neglects the precise use of the battle metaphor. Remarkably, Perdue wrote that the friends only use the battle metaphor in "one significant occurrence," Bildad's doxology regarding the Warrior's past victories (25:1, 6; 26:5–14).<sup>78</sup> The problem is that 25:1 merely narrates Bildad beginning to speak, 25:6 merely compares humans to maggots, and 26:5–14 is Job's speech! Thus, Perdue's reconstruction of the third cycle obscures a critical literary strategy. The poet consistently uses Job to present the storm-god motif, which the friends consistently avoid and even polemicize against. Part of the problem, then, is Perdue's acceptance of the scholarly orthodoxy that the third cycle is in disarray. He clearly describes a feature of the text germane to his topic while missing and obscuring its significance. But the larger problem is Perdue's flat approach, discussed above, of treating each metaphor according the same process of deconstruction, as his preconceived framework fails to allow for the poet's more nuanced approach.

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<sup>78</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 261.

The second distortion is Job as a ‘Wisdom Dialogue’ or, worse still, ‘Debate.’ Undoubtedly, Job contains a wisdom dialogue, but strictly speaking this only describes parts of chs. 4–27 and to lesser degrees 32–37 and 38–42:6. A particularly insightful example of this is Tremper Longman’s commentary. Longman rebukes the judgement that Job is *sui generis* by scholars such as Pope, Gladson, and Fyall, even though he admits the overwhelming “variety of genre identifications for the book.”<sup>79</sup> He argues that referring to Job as *sui generis* is a “counsel of despair:” “Our ability to comprehend a literary work depends on our previous reading experience of other similar, though not identical, texts. If Job were truly *sui generis*, then it would be unreadable.”<sup>80</sup> Longman then goes on to discuss “Job as a Wisdom Debate,” in which all voices come to submit to the final voice from the whirlwind: thus, the “message of the book is that wisdom does not come from human beings, but that God alone is wise.”<sup>81</sup>

This discussion warrants multiple criticisms. First, the framework is reductive. Can the book’s message really be reduced to the value that God alone is wise? Granted, the disparity in wisdom pervades the text, but the assertion is untenable. This framework denies much of the text any significance. Is the prose conclusion’s portrayal of God altogether irrelevant to the book? Some would affirm this suggestion, but many would observe that God’s later conduct may reveal more about God’s nature than his aggressive rhetoric and principled refusal to disclose anything. God’s conduct remains apropos, as it reveals God’s desire and intention to bless Job. By extrapolation, God’s reward for the

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<sup>79</sup> Longman, Tremper, *Job*, (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic) 30. Marvin H. Pope, *Job*, xxxi; R. S. Fyall, *Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job*. New Studies in Biblical Theology 12 (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2002), 23; J. A. Gladson, “Job,” in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. L. Ryken and T. Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1993), 232.

<sup>80</sup> Longman, *Job*, 30.

<sup>81</sup> Longman, *Job*, 31–32.

righteous is affirmed. They do not worship God “without reward” (חֲנֹם, 1:10) even if they can be shown to do so “without calculated motive” (חֲנֹם, 1:10).<sup>82</sup> Apparently the poet was not concerned with this question. Indeed, if the sole purpose of the book is to insist on God’s sole wisdom, it is difficult to see the poet as accomplishing anything in the main body of the debate, other than an absurdly tedious if polished buildup. Rather, this framework is reductive and inadequate. Westermann’s and Newsom’s monographs demonstrate a more sophisticated arrangement in the book than Longman allows.

Furthermore, there is a fallacy in Longman’s argument that a judgment of genre precedes understanding. Rather, some degree of understanding precedes any judgment of genre, and the successful judgment of genre facilitates reading. But the judgment of genre remains accountable to its ability to account for the text and so subject to revision. To Longman’s point, as Job uses multiple forms and participates in multiple genres, these are individually recognizable. But their juxtaposition is a unique creation and defies reduction. Thus, we might describe Job as *sui generis a multis aliis generibus*. While most texts participate in a genre and thus can be said to belong to it, Job participates in multiple genres, and can be said to belong to no single genre.

While his purposes were entirely different, Habel’s historical discussion of the platypus in an article on Job is apropos. Habel tells the story of the challenge, even the offense, the platypus caused to taxonomists viewing a stuffed specimen for the first time

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<sup>82</sup> The polyvalent ambiguity of the term is an essential part of the rhetoric, as is clear from its rhetorically superb usage in 1:10, 2:3, 9:17, 22:6, where it neatly encapsulates the various characters’ perspectives. We should reject attempts to insist on one of חֲנֹם’s valences over the other in the first two passages, such as Cho’s, “Job 2 and 42:7-10 as Narrative Bridge and Theological Pivot,” 857–77, and Tod Linafelt and Andrew R. Davis, “Translating חֲנֹם in Job 1:9 and 2:3: On the Relationship between Job’s Piety and His Interiority,” *VT*, 63 (2013): 627–39. These articles observe a rigidity of language unfitting to modern English let alone ancient Hebrew, especially poetry, and even more especially the poetry of Job. In my method section below, I will show the poet’s exploitation of ambiguity, and I will treat חֲנֹם in chapter 4.

in 1799, convinced it was a Chinese fraud, precisely because it defied their experience of classes.<sup>83</sup> Job might be the platypus of the Bible.

On the other hand, we might call the book a riddle. I showed the book's creative use of מָשָׁל (proverb, riddle, parable, or enigma), in Job's characterizations of his friends' reminders (13:12) and of his plight (17:6), and in the poet's description of Job's final speech (27:1, 29:1). Recall that the Talmud's anonymous Rabbi and Maimonides called the story a parable, a *meshal*. Blenkinsopp reports that riddles were used for didactic purposes, though he opines that Job is speculative rather than didactic.<sup>84</sup> The book defies this dichotomy. It didactically leads the readers out of the humans' perspectives to an aesthetic conversion to submit to God in the whirlwind speech.<sup>85</sup> The epilogue yet affirms God's generous reward—the value the aesthetic conversion seems to wean the reader from. Finally, the dialogue includes speculations of a post-mortem reward for the just to affirm God's generosity and solve the riddle of human existence.<sup>86</sup>

While we best know “riddles” as involving a few succinct lines (such as Samson's [Jud 14:14] or the Sphinx's), *meshalim* could describe longer and more involved riddles, parables, allegories, and moral discourses. A. R. Johnson points to Prov 1–9 and Ps 49 as longer *meshalim* (Prov 1:1–6, Ps 49:4[5]).<sup>87</sup> Proverbs's relevance is obvious. Psalm 49

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<sup>83</sup> Norman C. Habel, “The Implications of God Discovering Wisdom in Earth,” in *Job 28: Cognition in Context*, 280–81. Habel was concerned with the cognitive process of classification in the Old Testament. Thus, his analogy of the platypus relates to things within the book of Job, especially the whirlwind speech, such as the onomastic listing of animals in the whirlwind speech (287–94). Habel draws the story from Umberto Eco, *Kant and the Platypus. Essays on Language and Cognition* (London: Vintage, 2000), 242.

<sup>84</sup> Blenkinsopp, *Wisdom and Law in the Old Testament*, 39.

<sup>85</sup> Recall Newsom's discussion of Job as a *Bildungsroman*, Newsom, *Book of Job*, 20–21, 29. Newsom is correct that the epilogue disallows us from thus classifying the book, but the text still performs the function.

<sup>86</sup> As I will show in chapter 2, as I treat Job's longing for post-mortem renewal in Job 10, 14, and 19.

<sup>87</sup> A. R. Johnson, “מָשָׁל,” in *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East, VTSupp 3* (Leiden: Brill, 1955), 165.

has several themes in common with Job.<sup>88</sup> While he uses similes (e.g., Ps 49:13, 21), the psalmist's *mashal* is the whole moral discourse pronouncing on the final fate of the prosperous wicked and the ultimate vindication of the just. Similarly, Ps 78:2 prefaces the following verses as a *mashal*. The moral discourse does not employ allegory or simile but describes God's treatment of Israel. The comparison the psalm offers is not one of simile, but the readers are to extrapolate from history to their situation: God acts consistently, and they can be assured of his blessing and punishment for their virtue and vice.

Johnson also points to the significant uses of the root in Ezek 17:1, 21:5(20:49). In Ezek 17:1, *mashal* indicates the elaborate allegory by which Ezekiel tells the people of their doom. Johnson notes Ezek 21:5 refers to the people's derision of Ezekiel's ministry, suggesting more of Ezekiel's activity was considered *meshalim* than is explicitly named in the book.<sup>89</sup> While the term is not used of Nathan's parable snaring David (2 Sam 12:1–6), the allegory is a similar prophetic strategy to another of Ezekiel's parables (16:4 ff). Nathan's parable starts similarly to Job's fable's beginning.<sup>90</sup> Some scholars have argued Jonah is a parable.<sup>91</sup> Song of Songs at least has allegorical elements.

Considering Job as a *mashal* allegorically dramatizing the riddle of Hebrew traditions will rankle some readers: how helpful is classifying a long, complex book as a riddle? But the objection does not invalidate the classification. Alternatives are narrow

<sup>88</sup> E.g., the demise of the wicked and the folly of humanity (49:14–15, 17–21) corresponds to the friends' wisdom. The redemption of the psalmist corresponds to Job's speculations in chs. 10, 14, 19. The mutual fate of the wise and the foolish (49:11) is similar to Job's stumbling block in 9:22.

<sup>89</sup> Johnson, "מָשָׁל," 168. Note, however, that this derisive comment in 21:5 performs the segue between an allegory (21:2–4[20:46–48]) and its translation into a literal oracle (21:6–12[21:1–7]). So too Jeremy Schipper, *Parables and Conflict in the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: University Press, 2009), 5.

<sup>90</sup> Compare 2 Sam 12:1 "In a certain town there were two men," (שְׁנֵי אָנָשִׁים הָיוּ בְּעִיר) to Job 1:1 "In the land of Uz there was a man" (אִישׁ הָיָה בְּאֶרֶץ-עוּז). The constructions are precisely the same.

<sup>91</sup> See George Landes, "Jonah: A *Māšāl*?" in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien* ed. John G. Gammie, et al. (New York: Union Theological Seminary), 137–58.

and exclude much of what the book includes and does. Reading good literature can be hard. Structures are valuable for facilitating that reading. Job is quite hard, making the identification of the most facilitating framework particularly attractive. But Job resists narrow genre classification or ambitiously simple hermeneutical structures. Job as a *mashal*, allegorically presenting the Hebrew religious traditions it alludes to and setting forth the riddle of Hebrew religion, implies we account for the author's eclecticism, and it primes us for the challenge of understanding the book's literary dynamics. Of course, if we consider Job as a *mashal*, it is a *mashal* unlike any other. But many of its features—its fable, its allegorical representation, its riddling nature, Job's inverting personification of Israel's fate as a *mashal*, proverb, or moral warning (Deut 28:37), Job's explicit *meshalim* or moral discourses on the same themes—correspond to various uses of the term, *mashal*. It is a unique *mashal* of various *meshalim*, again a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

Classifying Job is not my central interest, and the classification of *meshalim* or parables is a field in itself, falling outside the present study. Still, it may be instructive to engage a recent monograph on parables, both to commend further consideration of Job as *mashal* and to clarify how I understand Job to function as a parable. Jeremy Schipper defines parables or *meshalim* “in the Hebrew Bible as short stories from any narrative genre that function as explicit comparisons created by a biblical character rather than the reader.”<sup>92</sup> Schipper offers no rationale for his definition. Neither are all the stories he thus arrives at called *meshalim*, and neither does his definition account for explicitly labeled *meshalim*. Schipper himself does not finally abide by his definition of parable, as he treats two parables found in prophetic discourse (Isa 5:1–7, Ezek 17:1–24) rather than

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<sup>92</sup> Schipper, *Parables and Conflict*, 2.



embedded in narrative.<sup>93</sup> As these are evidently parables, the move is understandable, even as it belies his definition. However, before he widens his scope to evaluate these parables, he argues that parables should be characterized more narrowly. Schipper rejects the general characterization of parables as intended to “evoke a change of behavior or mindset on the parts of their addressees,” arguing instead that parables “help create, intensify, and justify judgements and hostile actions against their addressees.”<sup>94</sup>

This latter function is clear in some parables, but there is no reason to exclude the prior from all parables, let alone *meshalim*. Of his own testcases, only two clearly support his thesis: Jotham’s parable (Jud 9:7–15) and the prophetic statement against Ahab (1 Kgs 20:38–42). Nathan’s fable does preface his pronouncement of judgment against David, but it also effects a change of mindset, if we consider David’s confession of sin at all significant. The woman of Tekoa’s parable convincing David to allow Absalom’s return (2 Sam 14) and Jehoshaphat’s parable inviting Amaziah to return home in peace (2 Kgs 14//2 Chron 25) both defy his thesis.<sup>95</sup> It seems preferable to see parables—whether similes or moral discourses—as articulating moral and theological values and asserting their relevance to the present situation and the hearer. Whether this results in a conversion, judgment (sometimes as a foregone conclusion), or a mixture depends on the

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<sup>93</sup> Schipper, *Parables and Conflict*, 111–22.

<sup>94</sup> Schipper, *Parables and Conflict*, 3–4.

<sup>95</sup> The wise woman of Tekoa’s parable (2 Sam 14) does imply a criticism of David’s previous conduct, but the purpose of the parable is clearly to change David’s conduct toward Absalom. Furthermore, in both the woman’s parable and in Absalom’s situation, the speaker does not blame David’s conduct as unjust, so much as plea for mercy to alleviate strict justice. The focus is less on blaming David—David has already done less than the law calls for—but on achieving greater mercy. Joab explicitly thanks David for changing his course of action. Schipper’s argument about 2 Kgs 14//2 Chron 25 is similarly unconvincing. Jehoshaphat presents Amaziah with a parable implying he should stay home and explicitly tells him to, lest he incur disaster (2 Kgs 14:10//2 Chron 25:19).

hearer and the nature of the situation. But there is no reason to exclude parables' pedagogical utility and the possibilities of repentance and the speakers' desire therefore.<sup>96</sup>

Furthermore, if we are to consider *meshalim* outside of Schipper's narrow definition, it is evident that many *meshalim* are intended pedagogically. The aforementioned examples of Pss 49 and 78 are clear examples. Proverbs 1–9, furthermore, uses a prolonged metaphor, as Lady Wisdom invites her listeners to become her students and suitors. It uses similes within her speech, as the fool goes to his death like an animal (Prov 7:22–23) and young men are urged to be content with their own cisterns (Prov 5:15–18). The foolish adulterer is an object lesson not unlike Israel's fate in Deut 28:37. All of these *meshalim* are pedagogical and earnest in their purpose to effect a change in mindset. Schipper's conclusion relies wholly on his narrow definition and particular interpretations, and it cannot account for many explicitly labeled *meshalim*.

Regarding Job, it will be no surprise that Schipper shows no interest in considering the book. It does not fit his definition. While he acknowledges that Job has been identified as a *mashal* and the possibility "that Job and Jonah functioned to evoke a comparison in some ancient circles," he excludes it from consideration because "one biblical character (a speaker) does not tell these stories to another biblical character (an addressee) within a larger narrative."<sup>97</sup> Again, his criterion is arbitrary, and he does not abide by it himself. Furthermore, he does not take into consideration how the term *mashal* operates within Job itself: how the author portrays Job as a *mashal* in regard to

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<sup>96</sup> Hebrew Scripture always skews our perception of ancient Israelite and Jewish history if we are seeking a balanced portrayal of that culture, simply due to the moral and theological preoccupation of those writings. Proverbs's less fraught setting would seem to be a vital antidote to this phenomenon and should not be ignored in the study of parables.

<sup>97</sup> Schipper, *Parables and Conflict*, 6.

Deut 28:35–37, Job’s speaking forth on the riddle of the problem of evil, and how this discourse corresponds to the whole book’s treatment of the riddle of divine justice.

To put my understanding of Job as a *mashal*—a parable allegorically dramatizing Jewish religious traditions and developments and furthering certain of those developments—in Schipper’s terms, however, the author addresses this parable to his readers. As mutual readers of Hebrew Scripture, the author’s and his readers’ shared commitment to Hebrew religious tradition implies that they are all within the “larger narrative” of the people engaged in God’s service and subject to the vagaries of history. There may be a presentation of judgment against his readers, if they persist in Job’s friends’ errors, but the book is pedagogical, inviting a changed mindset.

The third distortion is Job and the friends as ‘Sages.’ Despite the qualifications made above, they yet represent a wisdom tradition. However, this must not allow us to narrow our understanding of either Job or the friends. They additionally represent and distort other Hebrew scriptural and mythological traditions less associated with wisdom literature. These mythological structures are essential features in the book and cannot be overlooked. Job, as a wisdom text, certainly interacts with Proverbs, but it also interacts with non-wisdom texts, from the psalter and the prophets to Deuteronomy.

The observation that Job’s friends represent Deuteronomic ideology and texts is nothing new. Frost’s 43<sup>rd</sup> chapter to Job, “Masque of Reason,” refers to Job’s role in assisting God “to stultify the Deuteronomist.” Deuteronomy itself is concerned with wisdom and may have been influenced by a wisdom tradition, so I do not mean to posit a

dichotomy.<sup>98</sup> Rather, as Deuteronomists, the friends represent the tradition's value of wisdom amongst others. The speakers are formally ignorant of Hebrew Scripture, but the poet uses covenantal language in the friends,' Job's, and God's speeches (e.g., 5:23, 10:12, 31:1, 40:28). They may be natural theologians, but they are covenantal theologians. These Edomites reflect Jewish ideals.<sup>99</sup> Thus, we should invert Weeks's position that the setting allows the author to investigate his questions apart from the God's and Israel's special relationship, as though his questions are abstract and disinterested.<sup>100</sup> The setting indeed frees the poet to theologize in a manner otherwise too offensive. But the frequent allusions to those scriptures, those mythological traditions, and that special relationship all suggest the poet nonetheless makes claims about that relationship. It is a Jewish argument, if by proxy.

Clines's approach shows the need to insist on the friends as Deuteronomists rather than merely as sages. On the one hand, he observes that the Proverbs and Deuteronomy are the two "most stalwart defender[s] in the Hebrew Bible of the doctrine of retribution." However, he compares Job directly to Proverbs, insofar as "Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are intellectually the nearest neighbors of the Book of Job."<sup>101</sup> This wisdom typology dictates his discussion and flattens his portrayal of the friends as sages, primarily representative of the wisdom tradition, with Deuteronomy as the less relevant text.

However, the friends' mythological structures and polemics are essential features of the text and of the poet's argument. These are best accounted for by seeing the friends

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<sup>98</sup> As observed by Moshe Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomistic School* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 260–61. The difference in injunctions against bribes in Exod 23:8 and Deut 16:9 is a clear example of Deuteronomy's concern with wisdom.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job," 245–46.

<sup>100</sup> Stuart Weeks, *An Introduction to the Study of Wisdom Literature* (New York: T&T Clark, 2010), 50.

<sup>101</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, lxi.

as representing Hebrew traditions outside of the narrow wisdom canon. As I will show in chapter 1, the friends' polemic against the storm-god motif derives from Deuteronomic literature. Their mythological characters are partly drawn from Deuteronomy and play equivalent structural roles, particularly as in the Song of Moses. While Eliphaz's serene tone in chs. 4–5 may reflect the resplendent *apatheia* of a sage, Bildad's mythology of Terrors in ch. 18 and Zophar's grotesque portrayal of the wicked in ch. 20 certainly do not, and even Eliphaz's serenity fails in ch. 22.

Job's portrayal as a sage is more ambiguous. He is portrayed as sage, a wise guy and a master of traditions, and more so as the man who dismantles those traditions. However, in his violent assertion of the storm-god motif, Job turns back the clock of mythological imagination. This turn is ideologically incompatible with his friends. Job is thus an anti-Proverbs and an anti-Deuteronomy. Yet it is not a simple turning back of the clock. Job cannot attribute suffering to any being other than God, as the poet adopts Second Isaiah's monotheistic claims for God's uncontested power. This monotheistic theme guides Job to parody the *Chaoskampf* motif as he portrays God as chaos.

Nonetheless, there is an impulse to heroize Job the sage. Terrien, for example, observes how Job does not deify the constellations, but only presents them "as parts of a sapiential theology of creation, which affirmed the power of a single deity."<sup>102</sup> This statement is true as regards monotheism and the theology of the constellations. But it is false as a part "of a sapiential theology of creation" since Job the character articulates a radically distorted monotheistic *Chaoskampf*. Terrien is right again, when he observes that Job does not see nature as the theater of "cosmic love and hatred acted out by

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<sup>102</sup> Terrien, "Job as a Sage," 235.

anthropomorphic gods;” rather, while Job alludes to the “myths (7:12, 26:12) ... he repudiates the validity of the theomachic rituals, for these qualify a theology of transcendence by confusing nature and God.”<sup>103</sup> But these allusions are not so genteel. Rather, for Job, nature is the theater of hatred and anthropomachy, a *Menschkampf*, acted out by God Almighty, whose transcendence manifests in immanent hostility.

***Poetry, Parallelism and Polysemy: General Difficulties in Reading Job***

Job’s notoriously difficult Hebrew inevitably impacts the scholar’s method. The book’s poetry presents perhaps the greatest challenge in the Hebrew Bible. This is due in part to the greatest concentration of rare terms in Hebrew Scripture. It is also due, in part, to the book’s nature as poetry. Much Hebrew poetry is challenging as it pushes the generous latitudes of Hebrew syntax. Job’s poetry is among the most exploitative.

It is critical to observe that this is not merely a matter of practical necessity resulting from the self-indulgence of poetic genius. Rather, the ambiguity is a deliberate feature that serves the poet’s purposes. For example, Job 42:6, traditionally understood as Job’s confession, is syntactically odd. The syntactic irregularity allows scholars such as Perdue to see an act of continued defiance (cf. Job 40:4–5), while scholars like Michael Fox defend the traditional understanding of pious submission.<sup>104</sup> Taken as but one example of decisive ambiguity, it appears that the poet crafts a sort of Rorschach Test for the reader. The volition in the act of reading Job as either defiant or repentant implicates the reader: would you submit or defy God in Job’s stead? Thus, I submit, we must not only admit the poetry’s ambiguity as a matter of inevitable practicality, but we must

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<sup>103</sup> Terrien, “Job as a Sage,” 235.

<sup>104</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 125–26; Michael V. Fox, “Job the Pious,” *ZAW*, 117, no. 3 (2005): 364–66.

embrace the poet's deliberate ambiguity as a matter of interpretive principle if we are to begin to understand him.

In this context, I should make some observations about the necessity, uses, limitations, and abuses of the principle of parallelism. Parallelism is perhaps the most basic feature of Hebrew poetry. Poetic verses are often divided into two or more stiches, and the latter stich often repeats the idea of the initial stich. However, the latter stich need not reproduce precisely the same idea or syntax or provide the same structure with synonymous terms. Rather, the latter stich can offer qualifications, elaborations, complements, intensifications, or corollaries. Thus, the latter stich adds to the idea partially or wholly laid out in the first stich, and the stiches are to be understood in light of each other. However, they need not be precisely equivalent, and the reader must exercise subtlety in appraising the axis along which stiches are in parallel.<sup>105</sup>

Unfortunately, some scholars spend their subtlety on emendations and dubious linguistic analogues rather than on reading Job as Hebrew poetry. So, as I examine Joban passages in the following chapters, I will address emendations to the text justified solely by the principle of parallelism. These are often without textual evidence, without evidence that the proposed words existed in Hebrew, and at the expense of basic rules of Hebrew grammar. Instead, I will have to evaluate the subtle force of some key parallels.

Another feature that lends to Job's poetry's ambiguity is the poet's use of double entendre. The Hebrew language has an extraordinary capacity for puns, ambiguity, and multiple meanings. The poet was adept at exploiting these, as the example of חָנָם

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<sup>105</sup> For a visual analogy, the lower-case letter "b" mirrors the "d," but they are both symmetrical to the "p" by reflection or rotation. We cannot prove that b's are p's, d's, or even b's per the principle of symmetry. Poetic parallelism is a far freer and more complex phenomenon.

discussed above indicates. Furthermore, the poet created a consonantal text, susceptible to various vocalizations and therefore readings, significantly ambiguous in their context. The issue is particularly pronounced, as our ambiguous MT reflects not only accumulated vowels, but *maters lectionis*, which over-interpret what was a deliberately defective and ambiguous conservative orthography.<sup>106</sup> Whereas context typically helps interpret ambiguous terms (e.g., “bore:” I can bore through wood, and I can bore you, but only one is relevant here), the poet crafted verses and whole chapters whose contexts are decisively unhelpful.

This phenomenon has been widely recognized and variously described. Gary Rendsburg refers to the phenomenon of “double polysemy” in his treatment of Job 3:6, as the verbs תבא and תחד may be rendered enter/desire and be united/rejoice respectively.<sup>107</sup> The context is decisively unhelpful, as Job wishes “that night” neither to enter the company nor to be united with the days and months of the year, nor for there to be desire or joy in it. Both senses are part of the larger context. Job wishes the day and night of his birth to be dissolved and no longer part of the calendar (3:3–5). He further specifies that no sexual pleasure or fecundity should result on that night (3:7). The fact that the preceding and following contexts support opposite readings of the same terms led Scott B. Noegel to describe this phenomenon as Janus Parallelism, as the ambiguous term or phrase is in parallel with both what precedes and what follows along different axes.<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>106</sup> As Seow shows, “Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job,” *JBL* 130, no. 1 (2011): 63–85. Seow, *Job 1–21, passim*, also points to examples of this in his commentary. M. L. Barré, “A note on Job 19:25,” *VT* 28 (1979): 108, presents a strong argument for a significant, more conservative orthography in Job 19:25, as we will see in chapter 2. Both authors build off the earlier work of David Noel Freedman, “Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job,” *Eretz Israel* 9 (1969): 35–44.

<sup>107</sup> Rendsburg, “Double Polysemy in Genesis 49:6 and Job 3:6,” *CBQ* 44, no 1 (1982): 48–51.

<sup>108</sup> Scott B. Noegel, *Janus Parallelism in the Book of Job*, JSOTSup 223 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996).



Janus Parallelism confirms rather than resolves ambiguity. Seow describes this as “Retrospective Patterning,” a term he appropriates from Barbara Herrnstein Smith.<sup>109</sup> Thus, I reiterate the dangers of invoking parallelism, both for emendation and for arguing that one sense of a term is to be preferred. Our poet is too wily for such an approach. Rather, we will frequently have to settle for assessing the relative strengths and weaknesses of interpretations and accept the plural potentials of the text, not only as a matter of practical necessity according to the ambiguity systemic to the text, but as a matter of principle according to the poet’s creativity.

***A Note on Mythology, Culture, and Texts: The Particular Task at Hand***

As I approach the various characters’ mythological perspectives, it is important to maintain focus and not become overly distracted with the fascinating but tangential and limitless inquiries I will cross. Rather, I must be discerning regarding the texts in Job I focus on and economic in my treatment. This is not a commentary, and I will not be able to treat every text or include my rationale for neglecting various interesting passages. Rather, I select passages that seem representative of the various parties’ mythological structures. Occasionally I will engage in a systematic reading of a critical passage, of which the structure and terms are to bear a significant part of the argument. For example, Bildad’s demonic Terrors of ch. 18 and Eliphaz’s use of storm language in ch. 4 will be critical in establishing the mythological tenor of the friends’ perspective. The passages’ difficulties have spawned a great deal of scholarly debate. They require close, systematic scrutiny and occasionally tedious engagement with the finer details of Hebrew grammar, morphology, and syntax. But I will generally be able to engage the text more

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<sup>109</sup> C. L. Seow, “Poetic Closure in Job: The First Cycle,” *JSOT* 34 (2010): 433–46. Barbara Herrnstein Smith, *Poetic Closure: A Study of How Poems End* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968).

economically, as it is not necessary to resolve every interpretive inquiry to evoke the mythological structures and values of a passage.

Similarly, it is neither necessary nor possible to establish the poet's precise sources at every turn. For example, there is some debate as to whether Bildad's Terrors and King of Terrors are drawn from Ugaritic or Babylonian literature, whether we are to read "Firstborn of Death" or "Death, the Firstborn," or to determine that the King of Terrors is Molech, Nergal, Resheph, Mot, or some other chthonic deity. I will enter some of these debates, since observing the neighboring societies' mythological traditions develops our understanding of the traditions which were likely available to our poet. We need not suppose, however, that these were available by text, let alone the particular texts that have survived to our day. But Job indicates at least that they were available in a similar form via oral, cultural transmission. The fact that multiple civilizations over a period of centuries had similar myths making them plausible candidates for sources attests to the broad dissemination and durability of these mythological complexes. Thus, by recognizing these parallels in neighboring cultures, I do not so much seek to establish a textual source, but to evoke a worldview and an imagination. Ultimately, however, I will seek to establish this mythological imagination as presented within Job itself.

While I will treat this issue in detail in its place in chapter 1, here it is convenient to exemplify this methodological consideration by briefly developing a debate regarding whether Ugaritic or Babylonian literature is the more appropriate source for Job. In support of Ugaritic literature, Nicolas Wyatt argued that regional proximity was vital to establish the poet's access to the proposed sources.<sup>110</sup> John Burns, taking Job as exilic or

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<sup>110</sup> Nicolas Wyatt, "The Expression BeKôr Māwet in Job xviii 13 and Its Mythological Background," *VT* 40 no 2 (1990): 207.

post-exilic, replied that temporal proximity was more important, as Job was written centuries after the Ugaritic texts, and the poet well could have had access to Babylonian literature.<sup>111</sup> As the poet appears to make use of Second Isaiah, the poetry appears to be indisputably post-exilic and the poet would have been exposed, textually or orally, to Babylonian culture and mythological traditions.

However, Nergal, Burns's candidate for the King of Terrors (18:14), is never named in Job. The Ugaritic Resheph is the chthonic deity named in Job (5:7). Thus, while Burns provides a superior catalogue of textual correspondences and historical context for the question, Canaanite influence cannot be excluded. Whether textually or orally, Canaanite traditions have been retained in Job. While scholars necessarily lean on texts as the only evidence we possess, we must remember that these debates are limited and have an air of artificiality. Our texts do not account for all the myths the biblical authors were familiar with, nor do they necessarily reflect the version they knew. Thankfully, I need not worry about these interminable debates much, since the mythological structures and these mythological characters' functions as developed in Job remain my primary task.

Resheph is also a good example of the complexity by which these mythological traditions have been transmitted and the functions they play in Job. While Resheph is attested in the Ugaritic literature, it does not follow that the poet had access to that literature. Rather, as I will discuss in chapter 1, Resheph, Canaanite though he was, had a long, varied tenure in the ancient Near East, into the Hellenistic period. But we do not know how many of these traditions were available to the poet.

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<sup>111</sup> J. B. Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal—Down But not Out: A Reply to Nicolas Wyatt," *VT* 43 no 3 (1993): 1.

There is one clear exception to the problems I have been developing. Resheph occurs in several passages in Hebrew Scripture, including the Song of Moses, Deut 32. Our poet frequently alludes to the chapter.<sup>112</sup> While the mythological portrayals of Resheph from the ancient Near East resonate with Resheph in Job 5:7 and with the demonic Terrors and the chthonic deity of ch. 18, the poet surely used Deut 32. Again, I posit no dichotomy. Rather, Resheph was mediated through ancient Near Eastern cultures, including the Deuteronomic author. The reader of Hebrew Scripture living in the ancient Near East knew of Resheph: he knew of him per the nations' myths and cults, and he knew of him in Deut 32's emasculation of Resheph, and whatever traditional oral polemics targeted Resheph. When our poet wrote, he wrote as a reader of Hebrew Scripture for readers of Hebrew Scripture, well aware of their cultural setting and their literary traditions. Thus, while we remain focused on the mythological structures as developed by the poet, we neither can, nor should, avoid processing these structures through their resemblance to Deuteronomy etc., and as a dialogue with those traditions.

I will proceed by close readings to evoke the book's perspectives' mythologies. These structures evoke critically different aesthetics and portrayals of evil and suffering. As suffering is at the center of the book, the various mythologies' portrayals of suffering support my intuition that the poet juxtaposes these mythologies to portray some of these Hebrew traditions as inadequate. I am particularly concerned to evaluate how these structures account for retribution and justice in creation. So, I am not concerned to name the King of Terrors. But I am quite concerned with the function he plays in Bildad's understanding of justice, and in evoking an aesthetic vision of God and the cosmos.

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<sup>112</sup> Greenstein, "Parody as a Challenge to Tradition," 66–78, focuses on parodies in the book of Job "savaging" Deut 32. I will adduce different data and provide another interpretation.

These structures have a subtle relationship to other Hebrew traditions. On the one hand, I am concerned with how the poet constructed and characterized these mythologies within Job. Connections between Job's friends and Deuteronomy, Job and the psalms, or God and Second Isaiah, do not allow us to import every mythological understanding from those source texts. Rather, we must attend to the particular adaptations of those traditions within the Joban context. On the other hand, as allusions to those traditions, the adaptations evoke and comment on the traditions. Therefore, it is neither possible nor appropriate to reflect on Job's mythological structures in the abstract. The poet dialogues with and invites his readers into an existential dialogue with those Hebrew traditions. Thus, I will seek to develop fully the logic of these mythological traditions as present within the book of Job, but I will also reflect on these mythological traditions as a comment on Hebrew scriptural passages and the poet's Jewish interlocutors.

In short, I suggest that Job is a riddle about God, creation, humanity, justice, and suffering, that develops the riddle inherent in the contradictions and creative tensions of Hebrew religious traditions, in the language and mythological structures of Hebrew Scripture. My investigation into the poet's use of these Hebrew mythological traditions and their accompanying aesthetics and values should serve to demonstrate the poet's pedagogy. He invites his readers to consider the riddle of the God who reveals himself in Hebrew Scripture, and whose absolute power and goodness are sure, but are not consistently instantiated in history and remain mysterious.

I proceed from less favored to more privileged perspectives, to follow this tutelage. In chapter 1, I treat the friends, who present the doctrine of retribution taught by Proverbs and Deuteronomy, with their corresponding mythological structures ensuring

cosmic justice and their refutation of the storm-god motif. The chaos motif's qualification of divine power is inadequate to their devotion to God's transcendent power and the inference of unqualified cosmic order (excepting humanity).

I address Job's multiple tacks in chapter 2. Through his distorted resurrection of the storm-god motif, Job casts the divine warrior motif into a sort of *Menschkampf*, as he agrees with his friends' position on God's uncontested power, but he infers God's nature as chaos rather than use God's justice to exclude injustice. This creative adaptation of Israel's storm-god tradition is first a negative rebuttal of the friends' selective and untenable appropriation of Israel's traditions, but it secondly anticipates the whirlwind speeches' mythologizing and ironically relates to the prologue. I then treat Job's speculations attempting to render the cosmos morally coherent, in his considerations of an afterlife and a third party, mediator figure. These address not only Job's experience, but the experiences of the Babylonian exile and the vagaries of living under Persian rule. Accordingly, the poet integrates more recent theological developments, particularly from Second Isaiah, to grant these speculations argumentative force exceeding that of Job's dramatic persona, as an argument from Hebrew Scripture rather than pious postulation.

In chapter 3, I will treat the whirlwind speeches, as God invites Job to an aesthetic conversion. God defends the goodness of creation including his provisions for animal and human freedom despite the potential for abuse in the first speech. In the second, God adapts the traditional metaphor of chaos, the Leviathan, to evoke new conceptions of cosmic antagonism and divine power. There is also the intimation of humanity's peculiar role in this cosmic drama. This portrayal of divine power and humanity's service again

appropriates Second Isaiah, but the portrayal of the Leviathan figure asserts a cosmic antagonist against Second Isaiah's portrayal of God's unqualified power.

Finally, I will turn to the prose in chapter 4. The narrative offers a mythological framework corresponding, in part, to the whirlwind speeches. Both contexts decisively nullify the friends' perspective. Whereas the whirlwind supplies an aesthetic experiential conversion, the reader is invited to consider an alternative mythological perspective on the meaning of innocent suffering. This framework again portrays God's uncontested power, but presents a cosmic antagonist, the Satan, who exploits God's permissive will. This mythological contest implies a role for God's servants in a cosmic drama, which portrays submission to the divine will in suffering as humanity's glorious service to God and provides the most elevated anthropology in the book.

## CHAPTER 1: THE FRIENDS' MONOTHEISTIC MYTHOLOGY: ORDERING EVIL, SUPPRESSING CHAOS, AND EVOKING AN AESTHETIC

### *Job's Friends: Introduction and Plan of Approach*

I begin with Job's friends. They evidently operate as a foil for the author, indicating that other perspectives will be better understood in contrast to theirs. I will begin with Bildad, insofar as his discussion of the "Terrors" in ch. 18 is the clearest and most strikingly mythological discussion of the friends. I will show that Bildad believes in a class of demons known collectively as the 'Terrors,' who effect the destruction of the wicked in accordance with divine, cosmic justice. After that, I will turn to Eliphaz, who not only speaks the most but is the most sophisticated friend. He, too, refers to a similar class of demons, the Sons of Resheph, and uses a synonym for 'Terrors' that less clearly refers to these beings. He further appears to engage in a polemic against Job's use of the storm-god motif. Then, I will evaluate Zophar, who also describes demonic activity in the destruction of the wicked and who, as the least sophisticated and the most violent of the friends, undermines their position.

As this preliminary outlining has suggested, I share the common scholarly assessment that the poet has deliberately portrayed the friends as largely in agreement, but with subtle differentiation, most obviously as regards Eliphaz's superior erudition and more genteel manner compared to Zophar's least impressive presentation.<sup>113</sup> They consistently present variations on the theme of the doctrine of retribution, affirming the

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<sup>113</sup> David Clines, "The Arguments of Job's Three Friends," *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967–1998* (JSOTSup 293. Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), 719–34, documents this standard position pointing to scholars such as Arthur Quiller-Couch and Robert Gordis, as he presents an alternative manner of characterizing their individual, distinguishing characteristics. I disagree with his equivocations and distinctions. I will critique elements of Clines's argument during the treatment of Zophar, after we have seen Bildad and Eliphaz.



moral coherence of the cosmos, but we will find significant nuances between the speeches. For one thing, these characters are dynamic. The poet portrays a building tension, as each friend, from the tactful Eliphaz to the brash Zophar, escalates in hostility. Second, the poet gives each character a distinct voice, with preferred terms and tendencies. Therefore, it will take a subtle hand interpreting one character's perspective through the others. The same poet presumably wrote their speeches, giving them a common pool of textual and mythological sources, and they are part of the same dramatic dialogue, as the speakers react to each other. However, I will not flatten these characters into one mold.

Each of these characters consistently subordinates demonic powers of destruction to the divine will. These personalities, destructive as they are, are part of the cosmic order and agents of just punishment. The poet articulates the doctrine of retribution in a mythological register as opposed to the more mundane discourse of Proverbs. We will see in the speeches of each character allusions to the Song of Moses in Deut 32, as the poet portrays Deuteronomists and an elaborate quasi-Deuteronomistic mythology.<sup>114</sup> Thus, the poet targets not merely sages, but also Deuteronomic traditions in his polemic against a reductionistic doctrine of retribution. The friends, as Deuteronomy, refer to

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<sup>114</sup> Scholars have frequently observed connections between Job and Deut 32, but these analyses of allusions less frequently concern the mythological character of Job. For example, Edward Greenstein, "Parody as a Challenge to Tradition," 69–72, 74–78, recognizes nearly a dozen passages in Job corresponding to Deut 32, and he argues that the poet savages the traditional wisdom of Deut 32. But Greenstein shows no interest in the mythological components of this parody. Nor, in my opinion, does he offer sufficient reflection as to why we should interpret the poet's parody of Deut 32 in Eliphaz's speech as reflecting the poet's definitive perspective on Deuteronomy, rather than as providing a rebuke to certain excesses or distortions to which the tradition and some of his peers were liable; Greenstein, *ibid.*, 77 does, however, note the connection between the narrative (1:2) and Deut 32:4, whereby he suggests that the author—perhaps the poet himself—has suggested that it is Job rather than God who is perfect and upright (יֵשָׁר, תָּם). Ken Brown, "The Firstborn of Death: Monotheism and the Mythology of Death in Job 18" *VT* 69 (2019): 543, 57–60, has written on the monotheistic nature of Bildad's mythological discourse of ch. 18, and he does refer to the allusions to Deut 32.

hostile supernatural beings, which were considered gods in other cultures, but are clearly subordinated to the one God, here 'El Shaddai. The friends' understanding of the cosmos and the doctrine of retribution operates in a thoroughly monotheistic ideological context, though not the less mythological for it.<sup>115</sup>

***Bildad: Demonic Terrors and the Monotheistic Structures of Destruction***

Bildad's first speech contains little that is relevant for our investigation of the characters' cosmologies. He refers to traditional knowledge passed on by ancestors (8:8) and asserts his confidence in retributive justice (8:20–22), but without reference to supernatural structures or beings other than God. However, there is a subtle but critical element of Bildad's discourse, the significance of which will become clearer later. God's agency is expressed in the care for the just (8:6) and his continued companionship (8:20a), while the punishment of the wicked results from God's distance or inactivity. God hands Job's children over to the power of their own guilt (8:4), and God does not take the hand of the wicked (8:20b). Thus, Bildad's rhetoric includes a subtle asymmetry, conducive to an aesthetic that mutes God's implication in suffering.

The second speech is rather different. After some rhetoric that reflects the escalating tension in the dialogue (18:2–4a), Bildad prefaces his affirmation of retributive justice with the rhetorical question, "Shall the earth be neglected on your account or the

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<sup>115</sup> Brown, "Firstborn of Death," appeared after this section had been written. As it agrees with the thesis advanced here and does not add to it materially, it seems unnecessary to accommodate the following discussion to recognize his work. Suffice to say that I agree with his recognition that Job 5 and 18 are highly mythological and that those structures accord with the friends' monotheistic context. Contrast this, for example, with Shaul Bar's desire, "Resheph in the Hebrew Bible," *JBQ* 45, no 2 (2017):124, to purge the Hebrew Bible of embarrassing mythological material at the service of monotheism and despite the tradition's understanding of their demonic character: "As we have seen, in all the documents from the Ancient Near East, Resheph is the personal name of a deity. In the Hebrew Bible, with its monotheistic belief, Resheph is not a deity and has several meanings, such as "pestilence," "arrow," and "fire." In every occurrence in the Hebrew Bible, it bears a connotation of disaster." These disasters remain demonic.

rock (צור) be moved out of its place?” (18:4b). As the following discourse (18:5–20) describes the terrible fate of the wicked and concludes with the dogmatic asseveration of the doom of the dwelling of the impious who do not know God (18:21), it is clear that 18:4b and 18:21 form an *inclusio* emphasizing Bildad’s dogmatic confidence in the just order of the world. The immediate significance of this preface is how it underscores the nature of divine retribution. For Bildad, the punishment of the wicked is not a matter of chance, let alone of systemic injustice as Job experienced. Nor is it a matter of the consistently applied but ultimately arbitrary will of the just and punishing God. Instead, the destruction of the wicked is as necessary as gravity. The cosmological order is no less moral and just than physical. For Bildad, the physical and moral order are inherently bound or even identified.

Secondly, Bildad’s reference to the boulder in 18:4 should be understood dramatically as a response to Job’s reference to a boulder in 14:18. The same three words are repeated, with a single change in word order (וּצֹר יַעֲתֵק מִמָּקוֹמוֹ; 14:18; וַיַּעֲתֵק צֹר מִמָּקוֹמוֹ; 18:4). In ch. 14, Job referred to the heavens (12), to Sheol (13), and to the mountain and boulder (18), establishing a vertical axis and summation of the cosmos. Job also described the human realm as transient, as even the apparently permanent mountain and boulder deteriorate,<sup>116</sup> and he hopelessly speculated as to the possibility of a post-mortem vivification of humans at the passing away of the heavens. Bildad’s insistence on the perdurance of the boulder is a synecdoche for the whole physical cosmos, including the just and immovable fate of humanity, the wicked, and Job in particular. Bildad does not

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<sup>116</sup> As Habel, *Book of Job*, 237, notes, mountains were symbols of permanence, and Job makes humanity’s transience but a part of a decaying cosmos.

engage the fate of the righteous (avoiding Job's central question) but focuses on the fate of the wicked, corresponding to his narrow conceit and his assessment of Job's suffering.

Thirdly, this term must be understood in the larger literary motif surrounding the theme of the boulder, particularly as it engages with Deut 32.<sup>117</sup> The motif extends into Job's reflection on his previous prosperity in 29:6: "When my footsteps were bathed in cream, and the rock flowed with streams of oil" (ברחץ הליכי בחמה וצור יצוק עמדי פלגי שמן). Job's longing for God's past care seems to allude to Deut 32:13b–14a, as Moses refers to God's past care, wherein God gave olive oil from the boulder (ושמן מחלמיש צור) and butter (חמאת בקר). Deuteronomy 32, of course, develops the theme of God as the "Rock" (צור) of Israel (32:13, 15, 30, 31 x2), contrasted with the "rock," the false god, of the stereotypical gentile nation. So, Bildad's comment can be understood in its context as referring to the stable necessity of the present just order. It is further understood dramatically as a direct rebuke to Job's individualistic (and, for Bildad, narcissistic) cry for just mercy in 14:18. Finally, however, the poet's allusions to Deut 32 and the motif of God as the Rock raise the question of whether God (Yahweh, for the Jewish reader) will move for the individual. Bildad implies not, and this demonstrates a critical distortion in the poet's portrayal of the friends as Deuteronomists. Their preoccupation with divine transcendence and justice lacks the qualification of divine condescension and relationship entailed in the covenant.

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<sup>117</sup> See also Job 20:17 and the discussion on Zophar below. While Zophar does not refer to the boulder, his assertion that the wicked will not see streams or torrents of honey or milk seems to allude to this understanding of God's providential care, and it resonates with Job, Deut 32:13–14, and the Ba'al epic, cf. William Irwin, "Job's Redeemer?," *JBL* 81 (1962): 223–24; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 307–08. While the Ba'al tradition contributed to this cultural trope, Deut 32 is the more proximate cultural referent and was textually available, whereas the relevance of the Ugaritic literature to our text is less direct.

To return to the immediate context, Bildad's retributive order, sure and consistent as it is, is not altogether impersonal. The only reference to God in ch. 18 is at the conclusion (those who do not know God suffer the grisly fate he piously describes), and no description of God's activity is given. Yet, as Bildad stated in ch. 8, he intends to defend God's justice, including his action. Recall the asymmetry we saw in ch. 8, as God actively blesses the just and passively allows the punishment of the wicked. The extended reflection on the fate of the wicked in ch. 18 again evidences this asymmetry but in an explicitly mythological register. Immediately after Bildad's reference to the cosmological order in 18:4, he discusses the beginning of the wicked's downfall in passive and reflexive terms (18:5–7). These passive constructions, taken on their own terms, could correspond to an impersonal process inherent in the cosmological order. In this vein, Newsom observes the obscuring of agency in this chapter, as the mechanisms for expelling evil are rooted in the order of creation itself—evil being disorder—and are altogether impersonal.<sup>118</sup> Thus, Bildad supposedly exemplifies “wisdom” sensibilities. Verses 8–10 refer to a series of traps, snares, cords, etc., not explicitly identifying any agents, that is, any trappers. These images are suggestive of intelligent beings laying those traps, but they can be read as mere metaphor. So, Janzen refers to the wicked simply falling into their own traps.<sup>119</sup> This fits the context of the friends as sages who see creation as having its own inexorable and impersonal logic.

Verses 11–18, however, reveal the personalities involved in retribution for Bildad. While Newsom writes that the “language of these poems [chs. 15 and 18] tends to speak of actions while obscuring agents,” her examples from this chapter (18:14, 18) do not

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<sup>118</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 126–27.

<sup>119</sup> Gerald Janzen, *Job*, 129

support her claim on close examination. Rather, they are either atypical of the passage or their translation obscures the agents underlying the passive English rendering.<sup>120</sup> Instead, the passage can be read coherently without emendation only if we recognize that 18:11 introduces ‘Terrors’ as a category of demons who effect the downfall of the wicked. While many scholars recognize the presence of this class of demons, some downplay their presence as Newsom does. As their identification is a rather critical component of this discussion, and as the chapter is fraught with interpretive issues, I will need to attend to the text in gritty detail.

To begin, the mythological reading resolves several difficulties involved in translating the passage. It is, moreover, the only reading that does not require a radical emendation of the chapter’s language or a deconstruction of elementary Hebrew grammar and morphology. The 3fs *t*-preformatives (18:14b, 18:15a) have befuddled commentators. While Nahum Sarna rejects any “facile emendation” of the text, asserting that it can be satisfactorily interpreted as it is, he posits a 3ms *t*-preformative to do so, citing examples of this form in the Amarna correspondence and ascribing all of the verbs to the Firstborn of Death.<sup>121</sup> The Amarna materials notwithstanding, the form’s existence in Hebrew is contentious and anomalous.

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<sup>120</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 126. So 18:14, “They are ‘torn from the tent in which they trusted and brought to the king of terrors’” includes a passive (torn from the tent) which is an exception in this passage, and a translation (brought to) which makes more subtle the implied agent of the one who brings the wicked to the king of terrors, as the wicked is denoted by a 3ms pronominal suffix on a 3fs verb (וַתִּצְעָדֶהָ). The feminine agent is not named in the verse, but the very fact that the verb is feminine militates against reading the verb as merely an example of the Aramaism of effecting the passive with impersonal verbs. Newsom’s translation of 18:18, “driven out of the world,” is another example of the 3ms pronominal suffix, this time attached to a 3cp verb (וַיִּדְפֶּהָ). This verb is a more likely candidate for an Aramaic 3p verb functioning as a passive, but the mythological context makes this reading unlikely.

<sup>121</sup> Nahum Sarna, “The Mythological Background of Job 18,” *JBL* 82 no. 3 (1963): 315–318.

Other scholars have joined Sarna, arguing for a 3m *t*-preformative.<sup>122</sup> Many of these alleged 3ms/p instances are explicable as 2ms/p or 3fs.<sup>123</sup> Others are explicable based on attraction in parallelism (e.g., Ps 42:1[2]), or are the result of emendation, which epitomizes viciously circular argumentation.<sup>124</sup> Nonetheless, not all examples are readily explicable, whether they represent corruptions, nouns dialectically feminine even though we are familiar with them as masculine, or even if Sarna et al. were correct in positing the suspect form.<sup>125</sup> However, even if the case for the anomalous 3m *t*-preformative could be

<sup>122</sup> See, e.g., H. J. Van Dijk, “Does Third Masculine Singular \**taqtul* Exist in Hebrew?” *VT* 19 (1969), 440–47; Mitchell Dahood, “Third Masculine Singular with Preformative *t*- in Northwest Semitic,” *Orientalia*, 48, 97–106. Gary Rendsburg, “Double Polysemy in Genesis 49:6 and Job 3:6,” 50, notes that “many of the examples cited in these articles are subject to varying interpretation, but many are cogent as well (e.g., Hab 3:4; Ps 42:2; Job 18:14–15).” Ps 42:2 may be explained through attraction, as the anomaly strengthens the parallel between the hart’s and the psalmist’s soul’s “thirsting” through the identical morphology. The Job passage is explicable by reference to the 3f.

<sup>123</sup> For example, Van Dijk, “Does Third Masculine Singular \**taqtul* Exist in Hebrew?,” 441, points to Deut 5:23–24. Technically, Van Dijk is correct that the immediate antecedent is the elders of Israel, and so, as Moses addresses the Israelites, a 3mp would be sensible. Nonetheless, this usage reflects the fact that the elders of Israel represent Israel corporally. Thus, Moses can address Israel in the second person to describe the seventy elders’ actions in their stead, as Moses addresses all of Israel (including the elders) insofar as those elders were acting as the representation of Israel before God. This makes the passage highly problematic as a supposed proof of the 3m *t*-preformative. Van Dijk, “Third Masculine Singular \**taqtul*,” 447, also notes probable and indecisive examples such as Deut 32:14. Dahood, “Third Masculine Singular with Preformative *t*-,” 98, doubles down on this passage, noting that “the preceding verbs and suffixes are all third masculine singular.” Nonetheless, this seems to be an example of Hebrew literature seamlessly changing between the third and second person, as Moses recounts the history of the Israelites before them and the heavens in the context of the covenant; thus Moses addresses the heavens (32:1), speaking of the Israelites in the third person and also addresses the Israelites directly in the second person, as in 32:6, 7, 14, 17, 18, 38. As these verses show, Dahood’s claim that “the preceding verbs and suffixes are all third masculine singular” is simply false. Furthermore, it is not merely a matter of the questioned imperfect verbal forms, but other indications of the second masculine exist in the imperative (32:7) and in both direct object and possessive suffixes (32:6, 7, 17, 18, 38).

<sup>124</sup> So van Dijk, “Does Third Masculine Singular \**taqtul* Exist in Hebrew?,” 441, emends Nahum 1:5 (בָּהּ וְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵי וְהַבֵּל וְכָל־יֹשְׁבֵי) from “*w<sup>e</sup>tēbēl*” to “*wattibōlū*.” He invents the 3mp preformative he uses in his argument. Not only is this without textual grounds, but the phrase “the earth and all who dwell therein” is an idiom occurring elsewhere in nearly identical structures and contexts (e.g., Ps 24:1, 98:7), making its emendation pointless. The only possible argument in support of this emendation is an assumption as to the structure of parallelism, as the first stich has two verbs for its two nouns and the second stich has one verb for three. This is a prime example of the abuse of parallelism, discussed in the introduction. This structure is virtually identical to Ps 24:1 and 98:7, with the exception of Nahum’s “before him” (מִפְּנֵי) replacing “its fullness” (מְלֹאָה) from the psalms. The psalms have four nouns. This ties the second stich more closely to the first in Nahum 1:5, as all of the geographical features quake, melt, and tremble “before” God.

<sup>125</sup> So Antoon Schoors, “A Third Masculine *Taqtul*?” in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C. Fensham*, ed. W. Claassen, JSOTSup 48 (Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1988), 193–197, ably refutes van Dijk’s and Dahood’s alleged examples of the *t*-preformative masculine. Schoors does, however, observe that Eccl 10:15 pairs a *t*-preformative with the normally masculine עָמַל. Considering the

made decisively, it still would not justify forcing the interpretation of passages which read quite intelligibly according to the more conventional 2m or 3f senses of the forms. Such should be a last resort—even beyond facile emendation.

Sarna's approach also cannot explain why the 3ms *y*-preformative occurs throughout the passage and especially in 18:13, the only verse that names "the Firstborn of Death," or "Death, the Firstborn," as its subject. We would expect 3ms *t*-preformatives to occur in clusters if authors were familiar with and disposed to use such forms. Alternatively, if we take 18:11 to introduce the Terrors' activity as a group and the following verses to describe their activity individually, we can easily recognize the rationale behind the 3fs verbs without named subjects: an unnamed terror is understood. The fact that individual terrors have masculine names (e.g., רעב, *Famine or the Hungry One*) and corresponding masculine verbs does not preclude their inclusion in the feminine category of Terrors.

This reading also resolves an issue in 18:15a. Recent translations (e.g., NIV, NABR) and some commentators follow Dahood's emendation of the text to refer to a fire dwelling in the wicked's tent.<sup>126</sup> This solution is based on (1) a rigid parallelism, as 15b refers to sulfur being scattered above the wicked's habitation, (2) the difficulty of the Hebrew (מבלי-לֹ, literally "without his"), a feature nonetheless characteristic of the book's poetry, and (3) the otherwise absent subject, although some versions take the particle of negation to be the subject (i.e., "nothing will dwell in his tent," e.g., OJB, NRSV). Seow observes, however, not only do the ancient versions corroborate the MT,

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absence of clear evidence of a masculine *t*-preformative, he concludes that the verse entails either a corruption or a dialectally feminine עמל.

<sup>126</sup> E.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, 404, 407, 419–20. Clines, *ibid.*, 407, suggests that we should expect a parallel with brimstone, observing that it is unreasonable for anyone to dwell in a tent sprinkled with brimstone.



but (1) Dahood's suggested *mabbēl* does not otherwise exist in Hebrew, (2) while the word is conjectured as a cognate to Akkadian *nablu* and Ugaritic *nblat*, the verb indicates a feminine here while the alleged cognates are all masculine, and (3) Dahood rather freely ignores consonants to arrive at his emended text.<sup>127</sup> Rather, Seow observes, we should understand the verb as referring to one of the unnamed terrors individually dwelling in the wicked's tent.<sup>128</sup> This solution not only respects the text we have, but it also satisfies the legitimate concern for parallelism, as brimstone either cohabitates or is identified with a terror. Further, while Clines argues that a human likely would not dwell in a place laced with brimstone to support Dahood's emendation, the same consideration need not be made for a demonic being.<sup>129</sup> A demon's cohabitation with brimstone might even be expected, especially if we recognize the passage's character as a holistic description of these terrors' activity, as they dispatch the wicked and wreak vengeance upon his posterity.

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<sup>127</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 787–88. In this regard it should be noted that Dahood's position, that there is a 3ms *t*-preformative in Hebrew, makes the gender of his amended *mabbēl* not problematic within his larger position.

<sup>128</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 787. KJV translates literally, "It shall dwell," leaving the subject ambiguous. The Jewish Study Bible takes "Terror" as the subject marching the wicked to "the king" in 18:14b, apparently taking the plural as an emphatic matched with the singular verb, and not referring to "the king" as the "king of terrors." This indicates that the "it" of 18:15 is Terror itself, who dwells in the tent. While this is close, it distorts the passage. Taking the plural form as an intensive singular is undercut by the plural terrors with a plural verb in 18:11; it also renders the identity of "the king" ambiguous. This translation, while capturing the reference to a terror in 18:15, obscures the mythological complex.

<sup>129</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 407. Note that the form *הַשִּׁכֵּן*, could be 2ms or 3fs. Thus, Clines's consideration addresses interpreting the verb as a 2ms, as though Job should inherit the habitation of the wicked even though it is destroyed by God's brimstone, indeed a peculiar sentiment. Nonetheless, the 3fs handily resolves the incongruity without emending the text. Methodologically, we should note here that emendations based on parallelism are often question-begging, as parallelism can be more or less complete and along different axes. We can agree that the stiches are in parallel, but the precise axis and extent of the parallel remains a point for investigation and debate. In other words, while parallelism is often invoked as grounds for emendation, more precisely it is often a particular axis of parallelism or a particularly rigid sort of parallelism that is assumed. However, Hebrew poetry often uses parallels which are less extensive to great effect, such as when the second stich does not merely reiterate but complements the first, bringing further nuance or comment. So here, rather than merely repeating fire and brimstone as practical synonyms, the poet includes brimstone as a mythological actor or effect and indicates that a palpable terror (perhaps to be identified with brimstone) will be present in the place devoid of the wicked's posterity.

Finally, the combination of singular and plural verbs supports seeing 18:11's "Terrors" as a category which includes the following agents. While NJPS translates בִּלְהוֹת as a plural in 18:11 according to its plural verb, it treats the same form as a singular in 18:14 to match the 3fs verb, rendering "Terror marches him to the king." While this interpretation has the merit of making the subject Terror (we should prefer "a terror") it is problematic for two reasons. Firstly, it is suspect to treat the plural form as a singular a mere three verses after the plural form takes a plural verb. Secondly, the phrase seems to refer to the "King of Terrors," as the word order suggests, and as the Masoretic punctuation affirms. "The king" in NJPS is unidentified—it could be God—and indefinite. To which king should Terror or a terror or the Terrors be marching the wicked? The plural form and the singular verb further support the interpretation of בִּלְהוֹת as the *nomen rectum*, the governed noun, of the construct chain rather than as the verb's subject. The 3fs verbs of 18:14b and 15a should both be understood as referring to unnamed terrors, subjects of the King of Terrors and agents of the wicked's destruction. These unnamed terrors cooperate in the wicked's destruction with named terrors, including Famine or the Hungry One (רָעֵב, 18:12a), Disaster (אִיד, 18:12b), and the Firstborn of Death or Death, the Firstborn (בְּכֹר מוֹת, 18:13b).<sup>130</sup>

At this point we should examine the passage's flow, characters, and details. As observed above, Bildad's speech gradually turns from passive and reflexive constructions (5–7), to a series of references to traps, snares, and the like (8–10), to a description of the

<sup>130</sup> Commentators frequently emend 18:13a to introduce a second terror who eats the victim's skin in addition to the Firstborn of Death. See, e.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, 406, who emends to בְּדִי, "by disease." This seems altogether unnecessary, as the verse reads easily enough as it stands, and the first stich's lack of a subject dramatically delays the reference to the Firstborn of Death, part of the rhetorical buildup in the terrors' progressing assault against the wicked. Nonetheless, even the typically conservative Seow emends the MT's בְּדִי to בְּדִי, suggesting a cognate with the Ugaritic *dw*, disease, though admitting it is otherwise unattested in Hebrew, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 785.

Terrors personally responsible for the wicked's destruction (11–15). Burns, comparing the Firstborn of Death and the Terrors to the Mesopotamian deity Namtaru and his retinue, observes that those demonic characters are frequently depicted as pursuing their prey with nets and other hunting implements.<sup>131</sup> The trope, of course, occurs frequently in Hebrew Scripture.<sup>132</sup> The progression, therefore, is not only one from syntactical passivity to activity, from absent to implicit to explicit agents. The middle stage referring to nets additionally foreshadows Bildad's attention to the terrifying hunting party.

After introducing the Terrors in 18:11, Bildad refers to some of them by name. The NABR translates 18:12 as "His strength is famished, disaster is ready at his side." The first exegetical quandary in this line is the significance of "his strength" (אָנֹה) and "at his side" (לְצִלְעוֹ). Some commentators take these as familial references. Robert Gordis, for example, translates v. 12 as "His child will go hungry and disaster awaits his wife." In support of this rendering of אָנֹה, he points to Genesis 49:3, where Jacob describes Reuben as his *בְּכוֹרִי...כְּחֵי וְרֵאשִׁית אֹנִי*.<sup>133</sup>

However, Gordis's equivalence of Job 18:12 with Gen 49:3 is oblique, as the cases, where אָנֹה clearly refers to progeny, use the construction רֵאשִׁית אָנֹה (Gen 49:3, Deut 21:17, Ps 78:51, 105:36). Thus, אָנֹה, power, is not simply used to refer to progeny as is

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<sup>131</sup> J. B. Burns, "The Identity of Death's Firstborn (Job XVIII 13)." *VT* 37 no 3 (1987): 362–64; idem, "Namtaru and Nergal," 1–9.

<sup>132</sup> E.g., 2 Sam 22:6, Ps 18:6, 116:3, Prov 13:14, 14:27. It may be significant to observe that the proverbs here indicate the ability to avoid the snares of death through the teachings of the wise (13:14) and the fear of the LORD (14:27), a perspective easily reconciled with Bildad's prognosis of the wicked. However, the proverbs reflect no mythological component, making Bildad's characterization of the snares rather unlike Proverbs. The psalms, on the other hand, while referring to the salvation of the LORD from those snares, nonetheless do not attribute those dangers to any wickedness on the individual's part. The psalmist's piety can be assumed and even stated (Ps 18:21–31). Therefore, Bildad's perspective forms the corollary to only half of the psalter's perspective.

<sup>133</sup> Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies* (New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 192.

כח, but functions in a particular idiom (ראשית און) to refer specifically to firstborn (בכור), with which it is paired in these instances. The KBL's definition of און in these contexts as referring specifically to "regenerative power" makes the best sense of this idiom, and would refer to progeny by metonymy, rather than directly.<sup>134</sup> The fact that און occurs apart from the idiomatic construction weakens the resonance of this valence of the term. These connections, then, are more suggestive than certain, but they are well within the range of the poet's rhetoric.

Against the familial metaphor, Clines considers this change of subject from the wicked to his family in 18:12 "most improbable."<sup>135</sup> The passage in fact reads well as a linear progression, treating first the wicked (18:8–14) and then his family (18:15–17, 19–20). A reference to wife and child in 18:12 could anticipate the fate of the wicked's posterity, but Clines's argument certainly has merit. Thus, צלע, could refer simply to the wicked man's side, indicating Disaster's immediate presence, intimate accompaniment, or even literal, physical affliction in the side. Nonetheless, Gordis's observation that these terms could refer to the wicked's family is commended in retrospect by the subsequent explicit references to the wicked's posterity. This, then, is an example of polysemy and retrospective patterning in Job's poetry. While the passage's linear logic does not support the familial references, the poetry's ambiguity invites reconsideration.

The verses preceding 18:12 that shape the reader's initial encounter are more relevant to the present discussion. As Clines and Seow argue (and KBL indicates), we may take the term צלע to refer to a stumbling (עָלָה) rather than the rib or side (צִלְעָה).<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>134</sup> KBL, s.v. 'און', 1:22.

<sup>135</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 406.

<sup>136</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 406, 416; Seow, *Job 1–21*, 785; KBL, s.v. 'צִלְעָה', 2:1030.

This interpretation is grounded in 18:7's reference to the vigorous steps, literally his "steps of power" (צעדי אונן). The term for power is the same term Gordis takes as offspring in 18:12 (און). Thus, the repetition of the term recalls the discussion of the wicked's steps. Furthermore, the wicked's strides are constricted by a series of traps, which seize his foot or heel (18:8–9), cooperating with the Terrors (18:11). As the Terrors set these traps and harry his steps, we expect them to be present at his fall. Seow also observes a connection with Ps 38:18, where the Psalmist is "ready to stumble" (לצלע) (נכון) compared to Bildad's Disaster, who is ready for the wicked's stumbling (נכון (לצלעו).<sup>137</sup>

The ambiguity and debates around these terms exemplify the difficulty of establishing a correct reading of Job's poetry per the poet's creative use of double entendre. Recognizing this practice of polysemy or retrospective patterning liberates the interpreter to entertain both readings. Nonetheless, the uxorial reading adds relatively little to the verse. On the other hand, the stumbling reading participates in the chapter's extended imagery of demonic harassment and persecution, revealing the chapter's tight logic and rhetoric and accentuating the Terrors' role.

A similar ambiguity affects the characterization of the Terrors of 18:12. There are multiple possibilities for rendering יהי רעב און in 18:12a. The NABR follows the MT's vocalization, רָעַב, translating, "his strength is famished." This stative verb functions as an adjective complementing the jussive copulative, "let him be," and suggests that the

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<sup>137</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 785. Bildad associates the psalmist's language with the wicked, making Bildad's relationship to the psalter analogous to his relationship to Job's situation. Whereas Job, his children, and the psalmist all experience suffering/stumbling despite their lack of deserts, Bildad incorporates that suffering and stumbling as part of his view of the cosmos's mechanisms for ensuring the wicked get their just deserts. If this particular connection could be shown to be a deliberate allusion, it would make a good case study for his rhetorical use of Hebrew Scripture.

wicked's power will be diminished by hunger. In this interpretation, the verb, "let him be," is superfluous, as Bildad could simply conjugate רעב, even using a jussive.

Alternatively, רעב can be taken as a noun. This nominal approach accounts for the presence of the jussive, יהי, as Bildad expresses his volition that רעב be present. The common noun, famine, would require repointing (רָעַב) and would yield a meaning tantamount to the NABR. Alternatively, רעב may be personified. It may be taken as Famine (רָעַב) or The Hungry One (רָעַב). The mythological context supports our seeing רעב as one of the personal Terrors.

Both vocalizations have mythological precedents in the OT. Regarding The Hungry One, Death and Sheol are frequently characterized as having voracious appetites in ancient Near Eastern literature, including the biblical corpus.<sup>138</sup> Nicholas Tromp observes that Ra'eb functions as an epithet of Death when it appears in parallel with מות in Ps 33:19, and suggests that we read "the Hungry One" (i.e., Death) in Job 18:12.<sup>139</sup> Were we to follow this translation, we should not read this as an epithet of Death, since a number of diverse characters feature in 18:11–13, and Death appears to be either "the Firstborn" of 18:13 or "the King of Terrors" referred to in 18:14.<sup>140</sup> Thus, we could read

<sup>138</sup> E.g., Hab 2:4–5, Isa 5:14; Nicholas Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Netherworld in the Old Testament* (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 105; Umberto Cassuto, *The Goddess Anath: Canaanite Epics of the Patriarchal Age: Texts, Hebrew Translation, Commentary and Introduction by U. Cassuto*, trans. Israel Adams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, 1971), 62–63.

<sup>139</sup> Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions*, 109.

<sup>140</sup> This identification is widely held by the commentators and, as Seow writes, *Job 1–20*, 787, "The notion of Death as king of the underworld is well attested in Canaanite mythology, Phoenician Mot, deified Death, being the equivalent of Pluto in Greek mythology." So also Habel, *The Book of Job*, 288; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 416–19; Pope, *Job*, 136; Sarna, "Mythological Background of Job 18," 318; Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions*, 119. Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 3, identifies Nergal with Mot. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 192, however, observes that the King of Terrors "may or may not be identical with Mot," but his identification of the בכור מות as the Firstborn of Death supports that identification. Alternatively, Paul Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, (Paris: Gabalda, 1926) 241, identifies "Le roi des terreurs" as "le chef du royaume infernal," namely, Moloch rather than Mot.

Ra‘eb as an epithet of Disaster, lending him an ominously hungry characterization, or as a proper name, making Ra‘eb Disaster’s comrade.<sup>141</sup>

Meanwhile, Famine is sometimes paired with other personified elements of destruction, as in Deut 32:24, “Consumed by Hunger, warred upon by Resheph.”<sup>142</sup> In Deut 32, Resheph loses his status as an independent deity, reduced to one of Yahweh’s punishments for the wicked’s idolatrous worship of false gods.<sup>143</sup> Thus he plays a role similar to Bildad’s Terrors. Famine is often paired with the sword, plagues, destruction, etc., though in most of these contexts famine is not clearly personified.<sup>144</sup> But in Job 18:12, after introducing the Terrors in 18:11 who harry the wicked’s feet, Famine destroys his power (cp. 18:7) and Disaster is ready for his fall (cp. 18:7–11). Thus, we should see mythological persons here rather than merely literary personifications.<sup>145</sup> Whether Hungry Disaster, the Hungry One and Disaster, or Hunger and Disaster, Bildad envisions supernatural beings as the primary agents of the wicked’s destruction.

<sup>141</sup> Thus, Seidle, TDOT, 13:537, takes רעב to characterize the disaster as especially menacing. Note that either reading uses parallelism and invoking the principle for interpretation is unhelpful.

<sup>142</sup> The sense of the phrase, מִי רֵעֵב, is clear enough, as one in a list of God’s afflictions: מִי refers to a debilitating characteristic or effect of Famine the Hungry One. The precise meaning of מִי, however, is unclear. KBL, s.v. ‘מָזָה’, 1:564, translates this phrase, “weakened through hunger,” but this appears to be the only place where this word appears. KBL points us to Isa 5:13 and the phrase מִתִּי רֵעֵב, suggesting that the Isaiah passage could reflect a corruption of the Deuteronomic phrase. The fact that the phrase occurs in a list of demonic beings makes the potential nuances of מִי rather immune to inference. “Weakened” is a fine guess, but less banal nuances are possible.

<sup>143</sup> So Duane L. Christensen, *Deuteronomy 21:10–34:12*, WBC 6B (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2002), 804, observes, “[t]he center of this structure is ‘ravaging plague’ (לַחֲמֵי רֶשֶׁף), in which the curses are personified in an allusion to Resheph, the god of pestilence, who is clearly under YHWH’s control when all these evils are gathered against Israel.”

<sup>144</sup> E.g., Job 5:20, Jer 5:12, 11:22, 14:13–18; Jer 14:12, 1 Chron 21:12, 2 Chron 20:9; Isa 51:19.

<sup>145</sup> Contra Nicolas Wyatt, “The Expression BeKôr Māwet in Job xviii 13 and Its Mythological Background,” *VT* 40 no 2 (1990): 213, who writes of Hunger and Distress: “So far as their reality in the writer’s mind is concerned, that is whether they are simply literary figures or are to be understood as having a reality like that of the gods, we may retain an open mind so far as the biblical usage is concerned; but it is fair to say that the background to the usage is a cosmology where they are real.” Wyatt is too hesitant regarding the biblical usage. The poet portrays Bildad as believing in these Terrors as real characters.

The next verse describes the activity of בכור מות. There is no need to supply a second agent in the first stich, as both stiches can describe the same consumption of the wicked, the first stich dramatically anticipating the terrible appearance of בכור מות in the second. Most authors read with the MT's punctuation, "Firstborn of Death."<sup>146</sup> While Wyatt seeks to read the terms in apposition (the Firstborn, Death), arguing that Firstborn is an epithet of Death, El's offspring,<sup>147</sup> Seow and Burns observe that there is no attestation of Mot being 'El's firstborn.<sup>148</sup> In my judgement, the Masoretic tradition has been strongly defended and Wyatt's argument sufficiently deconstructed.<sup>149</sup> But the debate is beside our main purpose. The mythological structure and values are equivalent either way, as the בכור מות is clearly the preeminent Terror and represents the climax their activity in the world.<sup>150</sup> He consumes the flesh of the wicked (18:13), apparently as a

<sup>146</sup> E.g., Sarna, "The Mythological Background of Job," 316; Burns, "The Identity of Death's Firstborn," 363; *idem*, "Namtaru and Nergal," 1–9; Seow, *Job 1–21*, 785.

<sup>147</sup> Wyatt, "The Expression BeKôr Māwet in Job xviii 13" 207–16; Habel, *The Book of Job* (1985), 287–88.

<sup>148</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 786. Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 3.

<sup>149</sup> Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 2, additionally observes the lack of resemblance between this passage and instances in Hebrew literature where a figure is named and the epithet "the firstborn" does occur. Specifically, the poet could have reversed the word order and included the name of the Father (thus, מות אל (בכור אל) as is the case in texts where בכור is clearly apposite (e.g., Gen 22:21, 38:7). The poet further could have used the definite article to exclude the construct chain and force the apposite reading (הבכור מות), as, indeed, Wyatt's translation implies. Still, it is not insensible to have Death as the preeminent Terror, who is responsible for snatching the wicked from this world, bringing the wicked below. Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 4–5, writes that this was not characteristic of Mot in the Ugaritic literature: "the description of Mot in the Ugaritic texts is of a sluggish monster with gaping jaws" who "lies in wait rather than stalking..." further, "Mot is not a death-inflicting agent, but a personification of death" whose "sole excursion from the underworld is to search for Baal with whom he finally does battle, a struggle between life and death personified." Nonetheless, this "sole excursion" belies Burns's insistence on Mot's sluggishness, as his vitality is precisely equal to Ba'al's, (cf. "The Ba'alu Myth," *COS*, 1.86:272). Furthermore, there is at least one example in Hebrew literature where Death had a more active role (Jer 9:21), and the Firstborn's activity resembles the Jeremiah passage where death snatches souls from their home. The active characterization of Death may be supported by Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions*, 107, who observes that the Israelites personified Death less frequently than did the Canaanites, and Sheol often fulfills Mot's more passive role.

<sup>150</sup> Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 2, and Seow, *Job 1–21*, 786, take the "Firstborn" as functioning as a superlative, i.e., the deadliest thing, analogous to the case of Isaiah 14:30's "firstborn of the poor. No doubt this is functionally accurate, but the mythological valence of the personified firstborn must be preserved.



flesh-eating disease precipitating death.<sup>151</sup> The wicked is snatched from his tent, and a terror (indicated by the 3fs verb; וַתַּצְעֲדֵהוּ) marches him to the King of Terrors (18:14).

Wyatt and Burns also debate whether Ugaritic or Mesopotamian literature is the more appropriate frame of reference for the material. Wyatt argues for a Ugaritic background per regional proximity and Burns argues for Mesopotamian per temporal proximity. Although the details of this debate cannot occupy us, it is worth noting that Wyatt's preference for regional proximity is irrelevant if Job is exilic or post-exilic. When the Jews were exiled to Mesopotamia, they were exposed to Mesopotamian literature and mythology. The post-exilic Jews would not have suddenly become ignorant of those traditions upon returning to Judea. More importantly, Burns's appeal to Mesopotamian literature adduces convincing parallels with this passage.<sup>152</sup> Nergal rules the underworld as king, having subjugated Ereshkigal as his queen.<sup>153</sup> Namtaru, Ereshkigal's and later Nergal's emissary, is associated with mortal sickness in *Atrahasis*.<sup>154</sup> He is described as devouring without prejudice in *Gilgamesh and the Land*

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<sup>151</sup> So Seow suggests leprosy the flesh-eating disease that carried stark societal implications and fear, *Job* 1–21, 786.

<sup>152</sup> Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 6, chronicles the rise of Nergal as King of the underworld dominating the older queen of the underworld, Ereshkigal, by the first millennium BCE. Burns, *ibid.*, 6, points, too, to a 7<sup>th</sup> cent. Assyrian tablet, "A Vision of the Nether World," wherein Nergal refers to Ereshkigal courteously but dominates the scene. The rise of Nergal is somewhat critical as a response to Sarna's earlier argument, "Mythological Background," 315, that the chthonic deity's masculinity precludes a Babylonian context.

<sup>153</sup> There are two extant accounts of this accession. The standard Babylonian version of "Nergal and Ereshkigal," trans. Stephanie Dalley, *COS* 1.109:384–89, tells of the gods' tryst and Nergal's violent seizure of his impregnated lover's throne. The Amarna version, "Nergal and Ereshkigal," trans. Stephanie Dalley, *COS* 1.110:389–90, foregoes the prior rendezvous, makes the accession more brutal, and includes a demonic retinue in Nergal's coup.

<sup>154</sup> Namtar is responsible for the plague that initially checks humanity's population in *Atrahasis*, as evidenced by Ea-Enki's advising Atrahasis to propitiate Namtar with a grain offering at his temple in order to "shame him to withdraw his hand." The relevant passage is omitted in "Atra-hasis," trans. Benjamin R. Foster, *COS* 1.130:451. The story of the plague staved off by Atrahasis at Enki's advice (1.vii–viii.352–416) refers to Namtar specifically (1.vii.380; 1.viii.401, 407). See W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970), 67–71.

of the Living.<sup>155</sup> Nergal's rule and entourage, including Namtar, are associated with terror.<sup>156</sup> Nergal's demonic entourage hunts with nets. Accordingly, Burns identifies the Firstborn of Death with Namtaru and the King of Terrors with Nergal.<sup>157</sup>

Nonetheless, the King of Terrors remains unnamed, and Nergal is never named in the Book of Job. Alternatively, the Canaanite deity Resheph is named (5:7). In fact, the Sons of Resheph of 5:7 appear to play a similar role as Bildad's Terrors in ch. 18, supporting Resheph's candidacy for the King of Terrors. However, the "sons of Resheph" may refer conventionally to a class of *reshephim* without literal parentage, as in the "sons of God." Thus, the occurrence of "sons of resheph" does not prove that the poet intended his personal reference. If we take them as literal offspring, Resheph's identification with this King of Terrors remains unsure: Resheph himself could serve the King of Terrors, whether Nergal, Mot, or otherwise. Finally, most commentators intuit that Mot is the King, but there are further exceptions, ranging from agnosticism to naming Molech instead. Regardless of which ancient deity the poet models the King of Terrors on, the chthonic deity's role is clear and the essential point.

The mythological structure of Job 18:11–15, then, presents a class of beings designated as the Terrors. These are generally personifications of natural forces and general experiences (e.g., Famine, Disaster), but the unnamed Terrors (11, 15a) along

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<sup>155</sup> "Gilgamesh and the Land of the Living," trans. Samuel N. Kramer (*ANET*, 49). Enkidu appears to fear that Gilgamesh's proposed mercy to Huwawa would offend Namtar, who was also associated with fate.

<sup>156</sup> As emphasized in the Amarna version of "Nergal and Ereshkigal," *COS* 1:110, 89, and in "A Vision of the Underworld," trans. E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 109–110). "Nergal and Ereshkigal," insofar as it describes Nergal's accession, portrays Namtar as Ereshkigal's emissary. "A Vision of the Underworld" reflects the newer order in which Namtar retains his status as preeminent vizier, but in the context of Nergal's rule. The poem, "Erra and Ishum," trans. Stephanie Dalley (*COS* 1.113:405–06), refers to the Sebitti, a group of seven demons born to Anu and Mother Earth. These Sebitti serve Erra/Nergal subduing human society when it gets too numerous and noisy, similar to Atrahasis. They are associated with terror and death.

<sup>157</sup> Burns, "Namtaru and Nergal," 5–7.

with the Firstborn of Death and the King of Terrors ensure that the figures represent mythical personalities as opposed to conceptual abstractions. The passage crescendos as the Terrors' activity builds up to the activity of the *מֶלֶךְ הַמּוֹת* who consumes the wicked's limbs. The following verse refers to the actual moment of the wicked's demise as he is plucked from his tent (18:14a). Thus, the passage's progression outlines the wicked's fate and follows a linear progression.<sup>158</sup>

The crescendo then climaxes in the wicked's presentation to the King of Terrors. The designation, "King of Terrors," is more evocative than simply naming the chthonic deity, and it has two additional literary effects. Firstly, it relates the King of Terrors directly to the demonic terrors serving his will. Secondly, it allows the discourse to accommodate disparate myths and their respective chthonic deities. Thus, whether the readers are familiar with Nergal, Mot, or Resheph, or even Hades or Pluto, the various associations are readily appropriated by this reference to the archetypal chthonic deity. The following verses, 18:15–20, detail the falling action that follows the wicked's destruction. His habitation becomes uninhabitable (18:15). His posterity—name, memory, progeny—is obliterated (18:16–19). The 3fs indicates that a terror is at work in 18:15, as a demon paired with brimstone attends to the wicked's posterity, perfecting the wicked's punishment. The verses thus decrescendo. The King of Terrors cedes to an

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<sup>158</sup> Thus, verses 11–13 refer to the wicked's sufferings, 14 to the wicked's death, 15–19 to the destruction of his posterity, and 20 with the people's shock at the wicked's fate. Verse 18 would seem to break this flow, as NABR reads: "He is driven from light into darkness and banished from the world." While this translation indicates that the wicked's death is again presented, breaking the linear temporal progression, the 3ms verb's antecedents in 18:17 are the wicked's memory and name: thus 18:18 refers to the destruction of the wicked's name and memory. The preceding and following verses refer to memory and progeny respectively: the wicked is so completely ripped from the world that all trace of him—genetic and memorial—is cut off from the living.

unnamed demon, defined characters are displaced by implied agents, and the implied agents revert to intransitive and passive constructions.

Thus, there is a rough chiasm as the falling action reverses the building action through several literary features.

- 4b Assertion of the cosmological order against Job
  - 5–7 Intransitive, Passive, and Reflexive Constructions
    - 8–10 Implied Agents
      - 11 Terrors/Unnamed Agents
        - 12 Named Agents
          - 13–14 Firstborn of Death and King of Terrors
            - 15b Named Agents
              - 15a (18?) Terrors/Unnamed Agents
                - 18\* Implied Agents (?)
                  - 16–17, (18?), 19 Intransitive and Passive Constructions
                    - 20–21 Assertion of the cosmological order against Job

This schema illustrates a formal imperfection in the chiasm that is nonetheless literarily explicable. Verse 18a uses a 3cp verb with a 3ms object (יהדפּהו) suffix to describe the wicked's departure from the world. Morphologically, the term fits the level of unnamed agents. However, insofar as Aramaic uses 3cp verbs to signify the passive, 18a could also be understood as indicating implied agents or as belonging to the intransitive/passive construction level of the chiasm. The second stich uses a passive, completing the shift. The verse's awkwardness corresponds to the chiasm's imperfection.

This imperfection can be accounted for per the chapter's climactic revelation of the demonic Terrors, the בכור מות, and the King of Terrors. Since the crescendo reveals the agencies behind the intransitive constructions, the identity of the agents behind the traps, and unnamed agents in clauses without subjects, the decrescendo need not match the crescendo perfectly. Furthermore, the ambiguity of v. 18 reflects the marriage between two perspectives joined throughout this chapter. Analyzing the verse as a

passive supports the sapiential perspective of reflecting on the dispensation of justice as inherent to the cosmological order. Recognizing the mythological agents who drive the wicked away incorporates the mythological perspective.

I now summarize my findings on the poet's portrayal of Bildad as traditional sage and mythologist. Bildad's first inclination is to take the sapiential stance of pronouncing on the nature of the world through observation and the traditional wisdom handed on from the ancestors (ch. 8). He also believes in a class of supernatural beings (ch. 18). These beings are functionally the enforcers of his doctrine of retribution. This doctrine permeates his cosmology. When Bildad refers to the boulder's foundation (18:4) to assert the moral foundations of the cosmic order, he implies that the physical and moral orders of the cosmos are equally inherent and unchangeable. Each supports the other's stability.

Similarly, the mythological personages of 18:7–15 enforce the cosmic moral order. These Terrors pose no threat to the cosmos. Rather, they are incorporated into its fabric. The King of Terror is not the enemy of God Almighty.<sup>159</sup> There is no analogy to Ba'al and Mot here. Rather, the chthonic deity and his retinue merely play their parts in meting out divine justice. There may be an analogy with the relationship between 'El and Mot, as the supreme deity's ordering of the world—including especially the dispensation of justice—incorporates the latter's menacing roles. Note in this regard Bildad's preference for the generic title 'El, which he uses six times, compared to the proper name, Shaddai, which he uses only twice, both as parallel flourishes to 'El.<sup>160</sup>

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<sup>159</sup> Bildad does, however, make the claim that even the heavenly bodies, the Moon and stars, are unclean in God's sight, 25:5. While there is no indication of rebellion—the stars are likely his own troops (25:3)—there is clearly some celestial tension. Compare this to our discussion of Eliphaz's latter speeches below.

<sup>160</sup> Bildad uses 'El in 8:3, 5, 13, 20, 18:21, 25:4, and Shaddai in 8:3, 5, both times in parallel and not using the actual construction, God Almighty (אל שדי). The point, here, is not to suggest that Bildad is unique. Indeed, I will show that the other friends tend not to use Shaddai. Rather, I only suggest that all three friends may neglect Shaddai out of pious reticence and a focus on God's transcendence. However, the data

The mythological characters reinforce a dynamic of God's administration of cosmic justice in ch. 8. God cares for the righteous in active terms, whereas the punishment of the wicked is phrased passively. God rises for the just (8:6) and fills their mouths with laughter (8:21), while the wicked are left in the power of their sin (8:4). The more or less symmetrical comment in 8:20 that God will not cast away the righteous nor take the wicked's hand is similar. That both statements are expressed in a negative indicates the justice and stability of the status quo as unchanging and evidently just. Yet the righteous, being in God's hand, are in the realm of God's attentive activity, whereas the wicked, not in God's hand, suffer in the realm of divine neglect. The personages of ch. 18 fill this void of divine agency. God's passive abandonment leaves the wicked to the King of Terrors et al. But this lower divinity only enacts the dictates of the supreme God. This demonic activity remains an expression of God's just cosmological order, while creating an aesthetic buffer between violence and God's implication in it.

Thus, Bildad expresses conventional wisdom in a mythological register. While stasis is perhaps too strong a word, he sees the cosmos and its mechanisms of justice as constant. Job's sin, virtue, and freedom are the only possible variables causing his suffering, blessing, and reversals. The point is made in the abstract by controlling passive and active constructions portraying God's will, at the material cosmological level by

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is too limited to press any intuitions, so this is only a suggestion. Nonetheless, the poet is conscious of his use of divine names, as he uses the tetragrammaton precisely once in the dialogue (12:9). Even the whirlwind speech does not speak the divine name, although the poet introduces God by the divine name. The poet most likely had some design, if it cannot be wholly discerned. Eliphaz has a conspicuous distribution of Shaddai. Eliphaz only uses the term once in each of his first two speeches (5:17, 15:25), while he uses it five times in his third speech (22:3, 17, 23, 25, 26). If we combine generic titles for God in Eliphaz's speeches, the ratios are dramatically different: the first speech is 6:1, the second speech is 5:1, and the third speech is 5:5. This is Eliphaz's most impassioned and intemperate speech, as he foregoes his sage repose and portrays God in his most engaged and violent manner. This correlation between Eliphaz's use of Shaddai and his intemperate portrayal of an immediate and violent God corroborates the suspicion that the  $\text{--}\aleph$  titles for God participate in the sapiential theme of transcendence. See further below.

associating the physical cosmic order with Job's suffering and blessing (i.e., the physical cosmic order with the moral cosmic order), and at the mythological level in the characters who punish the wicked. The portrayals of divine agency as active or passive and of celestial or infernal spheres of activity both create an asymmetry in Bildad's discourse. As the cosmos and demonic forces ultimately serve the divine will, the implication is slight as God remains ultimately responsible. But the implication is significant. This asymmetry provides Bildad with a particular aesthetic, critical to his monotheistic perspective. He portrays God as beneficent by blunting or redirecting every attribution of maleficence. We find a similar effect in Eliphaz's mythology.

***Eliphaz, Suppressing Chaaskampf and Defending God's Order: The First Discourse***

In his first speech, Eliphaz provides the language most supportive of storm-god imagery among the friends.<sup>161</sup> In 4:9, he says that the wicked are destroyed by the נשמת and consumed by his רוח אפו. The "breath of God" and "wind of his nose" destroy the wicked, but this is a highly subdued trope. There is no suggestion of *Chaaskampf*, none of the other characters or drama of that myth. The language seems to be deliberately employed as a vestigial remnant of the myth. Here it functions as a dead metaphor for God's punishment of the wicked through the ordination of the cosmos.

Eliphaz's preface to his vision (4:12–15) has several ambiguities, making use of terms capable of meteorological meanings without requiring those significations. In 4:15, the term generally translated as "hair," שערת, is treated as a construct (שערת בשרי). The Vulg (*pili*) and LXX (τρίχες) attest to this understanding, rendering the phrase as "the

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<sup>161</sup> Recall that Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 261, writes that the only "significant occurrence" of the battle metaphor used by the friends is in Job 25:1, 6, 26:5–14. As noted, Job 26:5–14 is Job's speech. Otherwise, the present passage (4:12–15) has the most storm language of the friends' speeches.

hair of my flesh bristled.” Dahood, however, observes that the word, סערה, “storm,” can be spelled with a *sin*, and he argues that this is an absolute form with a final *tav*. Thus, Dahood renders “a storm bristled my flesh.”<sup>162</sup> The verb, in fact, is spelled with a *sin* in Job 27:21. The noun is spelled both with a *samekh* (38:1, 40:6) and with a *sin* (9:17) in Job, although with a final *heh* rather than *tav* each time. Shalom Paul adduces examples from Akkadian literature of supernatural, “hair raising,” beings in support of the traditional translation, but ultimately suggests that the poet may have intended a double entendre.<sup>163</sup> We should be unsurprised to see the poet exploiting such polysemy.

However, the construction שערַת בשרי most intuitively reads as “hair of my flesh,” and the context readily admits of this sense. As neither spelling (cf. 38:1, 40:6) nor context (cf.

<sup>162</sup> Mitchell Dahood, “סערה ‘Storm’ in Job 4,15.” *Bib* 48 (1967) 544–45. Dahood’s argumentation is circular. Dahood supports this reading by pointing to examples in Job of terms in the absolute with a final *tav*, נחלת in 27:13 and חתאת in 41:26. Both of these examples are problematic. Job 27:13 is a peculiar example of this, as the term appears to be in the construct at first glance, נחלת עריצים, reading “inheritance of the tyrants,” in parallel with the first stich’s חלק אדם רשע, “portion of the wicked man.” However, the full stich adds the verb and source, indicating that “they receive” it “from Shaddai.” Thus, the construct chain fits the stich awkwardly, as the *nomen rectum*, tyrants, becomes the subject of the verb, receiving the *nomen regens*, inheritance. Granted, the phrase is awkward, but it is no difficulty to supply the subject, “the tyrants” for the verb and have tyrants receiving “the inheritance of tyrants from God.” Considering Job as poetry and the poet’s habitual stretching of syntax (e.g., Job 42:6), the argument is weak. Job 41:26, meanwhile, does not attest Dahood’s form, חתאת, but חת. Dahood, “Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography II,” *Biblica*, 45, no. 3 (1964) 410, attaches the את- which the MT has at the beginning of the following line, and which currently acts as a direct object marker. The MT’s “made without fear” is perfectly intelligible, and Dahood’s preferred “made without flaw” is completely unnecessary. Thus, Dahood’s own stated purpose of eschewing “the adventurous alteration of the text” (*ibid*, 396), supports not his creative emendation, but the MT’s organization. Furthermore, while the MT’s חת for “terror” is quite rare (KBL, s.v. ‘I, II, חת’, 1:363, lists Gen 9:2 and Jer 46:5), Dahood’s חתא is solely conjecture based on Ugaritic, although KBL, s.v. ‘חתא’, 1:363, conjectures an occurrence per an emendation in Hab 3:6/7.

<sup>163</sup> Shalom M. Paul, “Job 4:15 — A Hair Raising Encounter,” *ZAW* 95 (1983), 119–21. Also at issue, is the precise usage of the verb, תסמר. The verb is a dislegomenon, with its only other occurrence being in Ps 119:120: “My flesh shudders with dread of you; I fear your judgments.” The passages are furthermore similar as the three terms from the psalm’s first stich (סמר מפחדך בשרי) all have their roots present in Job 4:14–15 (פחד twice in 14; סמר and בשר in 15). The MT points סמר as a qal in Ps 119:120 and as a piel in Job 4:15. Thus, whereas the Psalm is intransitive, with the psalmist’s flesh bristling from God’s dread, the piel in Job 4:15 could be taken as supporting a transitive, and thereby supporting reading שערַת as a storm that shakes Eliphaz’s flesh rather than as a the hair of his flesh shaking intransitively. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 401, simply states that “The Pi. is probably factitive.” Nonetheless, one must not overstate the significance of the piel insofar as (1) the morphological difference between the piel and the qal is merely pointing and not consonantal, (2) the piel does not always change an intransitive qal to a transitive or factitive, but it can merely intensify or make no perceptible difference whatsoever, and (3) the root is a dislegomenon and the qal’s intransitive sense is the only conjugation whose sense is clear.



9:17) require “storm,” and the poet could have indicated storm clearly by a *samekh* rather than a *sin*, a *heh* rather than a *tav*, or a change of word order, we should read ‘hair.’ We should, however, also consider the poet’s creative purpose in this intentional ambiguity.

Of course, the being causing this trepidation is a רוח. The LXX and Vulgate translate πνεῦμα and *spiritus*, and both terms capture the dual pneumatic connotations of the Hebrew. It would be mistaken to choose one connotation to the exclusion of the other. This is certainly an intelligent being and not mere wind, even a mere divine expiration.<sup>164</sup> This is not the judgment of 4:9, but a mediatorial spirit. On the other hand, “spirit” was not so abstracted from the physical sense of the word as to present a dilemma to early readers. Eliphaz’s encounter with this supernatural intelligence likely starts with a draft.

Perhaps the most critical term for characterizing Eliphaz’s vision is the דממה וקול, usually treated as a hendiadys and translated along the lines of a “quiet voice,” (4:16).<sup>165</sup> The term, דממה, is rare, occurring three times in the MT (Job 4:16, 1 Kgs 19:12, Ps 107:29). At issue is whether to derive דממה from דמם I, to be silent or murmur, or דמם II, to wail. The term is traditionally understood to refer to the former. This understanding suggests something more subtle than a quiet voice, even a “silent voice,” a fitting paradox for a supernatural communication (NABR, “in silence a voice”). Clines prefers the latter, following Johan Lust, translating the phrase as “a roaring voice.”<sup>166</sup> This latter would

<sup>164</sup> This might be relevant to the peculiarity of רוח taking a masculine verb (יחלף).

<sup>165</sup> Gary Smith, “Job IV 12–21: Is It Eliphaz’s Vision?” *VT* 40 (1990), 453–63, argues that Eliphaz describes not his own, but Job’s “lost vision.” Smith’s argument rests on dubiously alleged contradictions and tendentiously distorted interpretations, requires him to invent many implicit allusions within the friends’ discussions, not to mention a lost vision Job must have related, and is generally unconvincing.

<sup>166</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 112, citing Johan Lust, “A Gentle Breeze or a Roaring Thunderous Sound? Elijah at Horeb: 1 Kings xix 12,” *VT* 25 (1975): 110–15.

emphasize the stormy nature of the revelation here, but Lust's analysis does not hold up to scrutiny.<sup>167</sup>

Additionally, several details suggest a hushed, furtive experience. Eliphaz refers to the time of night when deep sleep (תרדמה) falls upon mortals (4:13). The word can be

<sup>167</sup> Lust, "Gentle Breeze," discusses the three occurrences of דממה in the MT, 1 Kgs 19:12, Ps 107:29, and Job 4:16. Of course in all three instances, his proposal inverts the traditional understandings of those passages. In the Kings passage, his treatment of דממה is somewhat plausible, though it seems to me highly improbable and the result of a failure to recognize the text's sophistication. Lust, *ibid.*, 114, sees the wind which rends the mountain and crushes the rocks and the earthquake as heralding God's arrival, and suggests that we should read, יהוה לא ברוח, as "The Lord was not yet in the wind." Hebrew of course has a particle for "not yet" (טרם, cf. Gen 2:5), and the traditional understanding divorces God's presence from terrifying phenomena, yielding a more sophisticated understanding of God's presence: God controls the storm and earthquake, but his presence is not to be identified with them. Lust's observations of 1 Kgs 19's relationship to the Moses Sinai traditions merely underscores the point. Still, Lust's portrayal of 1 Kgs 19 is coherent if unlikely (another weakness will be treated below). Lust's presentation of the psalm passage, however, clearly distorts the sense of the verse and the structure of the psalm. Lust, *ibid.*, 112 asks us to "accept an antithesis between the two versehalves in Ps cvii 29." However, not only does this fundamentally change the nature of the parallel here involved (not an impossibility, *a priori*), but it overlooks the flow of the passage and jars with the literary effect of the psalm overall. Psalm 107:23–27 describes the mariners' enterprise and the rise of a gale threatening their lives. They call out for deliverance in 28, and 29–32 describes God's mercy and their praising him for safe passage. Lust asks us to see in verse 29a God's continued torment of the sailors. However, Ps 107 includes 4 scenarios (4–9, 10–16, 17–22, 23–32), each calling humanity to the praise of God (8, 15, 21, 31; cp. 1–3, 43) and to wisely observing piety (33–42). Each scenario describes a plight (4–5, 10–12, 17–18, 23–27), the refrain: "in their distress they cried to the Lord, who brought them out of their peril," (6, 13, 19, 28), and each cry for assistance results in the total and immediate reversal of their negative circumstances presented as cause for gratitude for God's mercy (7–9, 14–16, 20–22, 29–32). Lust's antithesis, then, can only be "accepted" by ignoring the structure of the psalm, as it is only in this instance (v 29) that God would not immediately respond to their prayer, but continues to threaten their lives. Rather, the psalm's use of דממה is the clearest use of the three passages and supports the traditional sense of silence or a very gentle sound. As for the passages from Qumran Lust mentions, *ibid.*, 111, 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 33:3's attestation (מרוממתך) may make better sense as "roar" compared to "silence," but it also makes good sense as a *resh* mistaken for a *daleth*, as MT reads מרוממתך, "from your rising" (cf. Vulg *ab exaltatione tua*; LXX ἀπὸ τοῦ φόβου). The occurrence of דממה in 1QIsa<sup>a</sup> 47:5 (MT, דומם) describes the virgin Babylon's mourning in darkness, and the context could accept either silence or wailing; however, Habakkuk's polemic against idolaters calling on silent stones, אבן דומם (Hab 2:19) shows that דומם indicates silence and that the understanding of Isa 47:5, a virgin in shocked silence, is on firm ground. The LXX is not especially helpful, as she is "pierced" (κατασπινγμένη), but the Vulg reflects the traditional understanding of the virgin sitting silently (*tacens*). While it is not impossible that the Qumran text could reflect a different understanding, neither is it likely: the burden of proof remains upon Lust and the traditional understanding remains the simpler and more compelling solution. Beyond Lust's treatment of דממה, his case for the interpretation of 1 Kgs 19:12 is weak on other grounds when he addresses the meaning of דקה, the second qualifier for voice (דקה קול דממה). Lust, *ibid.*, 111–12, acknowledges that דקה can mean thin, and that a "thin" voice would make sense, but objects that it "has this meaning nowhere else." Rather, we should understand קול דקה to mean a "crushing voice," based on Ps 93:3, the only other place where דכה is connected to קול. Lust's argument is misleading. The form attested, דכים, is not in the attributive position, but functions as a substantive, indicating an entirely different object. The verse reads: "The rivers have lifted up, O LORD, the rivers have lifted up their voice (קולם), the rivers have lifted up their breakers (דכים)." The rivers make noise, and they have crushing waves. In no way can this verse be cited as evidence of דכה, let alone דקה, describing a "crushing voice."

used for less obviously supernatural sleep (Prov 19:15), but it usually indicates supernatural sleep or trances, as for Adam, Abraham, and Saul (Gen 2:21, 15:12, 1 Sam 26:12).<sup>168</sup> Eliphaz refers to visions of the night (4:13), more suggestive of nightmares or silent brooding horror than of terrifying storms. In another note, Lust asserts that nightmares' terrifying nature precludes this episode being quiet.<sup>169</sup> The assertion is baffling. Still more suggestive, Eliphaz describes the word as having been stolen to him (יִגְבַּ; 4:12). The root גִּבַּ generally describes furtive activity, ranging from stealing to moving stealthily.<sup>170</sup> The idiom "stealing the heart," i.e., deceiving (cf. Gen 31:20, 26), may support seeing here the poet's ironic suggestion that Eliphaz has been deceived by his revelation. But the sense of a stealthy spirit is the sense intended by Eliphaz, who would not know of his deception. Finally, Eliphaz heard the word brought to him as a שִׁמְרָ (4:12). The word is traditionally translated as a whisper, although Lust argues on the

<sup>168</sup> The Proverbs passage is so unusual as to suggest that we consider it an element of divine justice and perhaps supernatural after all, cf. Prov 19:14–17.

<sup>169</sup> Johan Lust, "A Stormy Vision: Some Remarks on Job 4,12–16," *Bijdr*, 36 (1975), 308–11.

<sup>170</sup> Lust, "A Stormy Vision," 309, observes that the root also occurs in Job 21:18 and 27:20, where storms "snatch" men away. Lust thereby argues that גִּבַּ describes a violent snatching rather than a furtive stealing, asserting that the qal of 21:18 and 27:20 has the same sense as the pual of 4:12. This equation is question begging. Job 24:14 also uses the root to refer to a "thief in the night," as an example of unpredictable catastrophe, where secrecy and surprise is essential (cp. Ob 1:5, Jer 49:9). The argument is also far too simplistic an approach to the book of Job. It fails to account for the difference in voice between Job and Eliphaz. Job uses the storm-god frequently, Eliphaz only this time to the extent that he does. Job's moral cosmos is full of violence and chaos, Eliphaz's moral cosmos is defined by order, especially in this first speech. Finally, and crucially, Job employs Eliphaz's language in subversive ways, exploiting language's ambiguities and polysemous potential to underscore the differences in their perspectives. Furthermore, V. Hamp, 'גִּבַּ', TDOT, 3:41–42, writes that, while the distinction is somewhat "fluid," the roots גִּבַּ and גָּזַל generally correspond to "steal" and "rob," wherein the former implies secrecy and stealth and the latter violence. There are many examples of such stealing in the qal, including legal literature (e.g., Josh 7:11, Jgs 17:1–4, 2 Sam 21:12 [cp 1 Sam 31:12], Prov 6:30). If we are to look to other roots as evidence, the hithpael clearly evidences the sense of "stealing away" in 2 Sam 19:3(4). The hithpael's reflexive use in 2 Sam 19, where the people enter the city stealthily compares to the pual's passive use in Job 4 precisely as we should expect if the author intended the word to be "brought stealthily" here. The pual occurs twice elsewhere, both of which passages (Gen 40:15, Ex 22:6[7]) entail secrecy, although Joseph's sale in Genesis may have entailed force. In short, Lust's argument for גִּבַּ meaning a violent seizure runs against the grain in the word's usage. While Job 21:18 and 27:20 run against the grain, 24:14 does not, and the sense of 4:12 cannot be so simply proved.

basis of Sirach 10:10 and 18:32 that we should understand שִׁמְךָ to mean something extensive. The argument is methodologically gratuitous in its deference to Sirach's Greek and implausible in the context of Job 26:14.<sup>171</sup>

On balance, the revelation's preface uses terms sometimes associated with storms and puns on others, yet so as to dissociate them from storms and the storm-god myth. The muted reference to the wind of God destroying the wicked (4:9) is a dead metaphor, and there is no language that requires a notable meteorological phenomenon. The spirit of 4:15, if it is felt at all, may be felt as a draft.<sup>172</sup> With the smallest stretches, the bristling hair of Eliphaz's flesh could be a storm that shakes his flesh.

The term, דָּמָה, however, always indicates a silence contrasted with the storm.

The term thus anchors the otherwise ambiguous passage to suppress its storm-god

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<sup>171</sup> Lust, "A Stormy Vision," 309, tells us that the LXX's translation of Job 4 is confused and unhelpful, and points us instead to the occurrences in Sirach (10:10, 18:32), where the LXX understands שִׁמְךָ to indicate something extensive (μακρὸν, πολλή). Regardless, Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander A Di Lella, O.F.M., *The Wisdom of Ben Sira*, ABC 39 (New York: Doubleday, 1987), 59, report that the Greek evidences a fair amount of confusion in translating the Hebrew. Lust, *ibid.*, 309, acknowledges that the Targumim, Peshitta, and Rabbinic tradition support the traditional understanding of "a little." While both passages from Sirach make good sense with either the LXX rendering or the traditional understanding of שִׁמְךָ, the traditional understanding is rhetorically superior, as an apparently innocuous illness suddenly slays the king, underscoring human frailty (10:10) and the indulgence of over-eating or drinking is a passing pleasure that results in perduring poverty (18:32). The disparity is lesser with the latter passage, as Sira could be making a point about the excess of pleasure in drunkenness rather than its ephemerality. Still, Job 26:14 is more relevant for two reasons. First, insofar as it is the same book, we should be sure to give the Joban passage due consideration. (Lust argues thus regarding the root גָּב when convenient to his thesis, but that argument has other flaws as we saw above.) Secondly and critically, is that Job 26:14 gives the best context of any of the four occurrences of שִׁמְךָ in determining its rhetorical punch. The term makes most sense as indicating a diminutive since Job allows that we hear a שִׁמְךָ of God's ways (26:14b) but contends that no one can understand God's power (26:14c). If, as Lust tells us, we hear the "fullness" of God's ways, the following contention is a rhetorical *non sequitur*. Still more decisively, שִׁמְךָ is in parallel with קִצֹּת in 26:14a (LXX μέρη), telling us that the theological reflections of Job 26:2–13 are but the "edge," "tip," or "fringe" of God's ways. Finally, we should attend the LXX translation of Job 26:14b. The LXX attests ἰκμάδα, "moisture," or apparently here, a "drop," probably translating the diminutive sense of שִׁמְךָ into the metaphorical "drop" under the influence of thunder (רעם, βροντῆς) in 26:14c. What Job has described is the mere tip of God's ways, all human impression of the divine is but a whisper, and, *a fortiori*, no one can claim to understand the fullness of God's power.

<sup>172</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 401, translates רוח על פני יחלף as "a wind passed me by," but suggests that Eliphaz may have "felt the presence, literally, upon his face." This is possible, but unnecessary. The preposition and use of פָּנָה are capable of several understandings, such that spirit may have passed before or upon Eliphaz.

potential. In 1 Kgs 19:12 the term plays a decisive role in the Deuteronomic historian's larger, anti-storm-god polemic.<sup>173</sup> The poet, therefore, models Eliphaz's demythologizing of the storm-god tradition on the Deuteronomistic historian's polemics.<sup>174</sup> This modeling corresponds to my thesis that the poet dramatized competing traditions within his contemporary social and traditional literary contexts, including mythological traditions.

This analysis is further corroborated by the correspondence between Eliphaz's rhetorical strategy and Job's in ch. 3. We will see that Job used a host of ambiguous terms suggestive of mythological complexes in ch. 3, while the term for the traditional *Chaoskampf* enemy, Leviathan (3:8), anchors the mythological framework supporting those resonances throughout the chapter. Eliphaz's reply is both rhetorically symmetrical, as he replies with his own ambiguities and anchor, and mythologically inverted, as he rejects the *Chaoskampf* myth. The fact that the storm-god motif does not otherwise feature amongst Job's friends while it dominates Job's early speeches supports reading this ironic passage as a near exception that proves the rule.

Eliphaz's demythologizing also uses a catalogue of theophanic language. The spirit, the trance, and the silent voice all have significant traditional roles in theophanies, and the latter two primarily occur in such a context. Most suggestive of all is the תמונה.

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<sup>173</sup> Elijah's experience at the cave in 1 Kgs 19 of course follows his decapitation of the prophets of Ba'al in 1 Kgs 18. Thus, the traditional understanding of the term and the more nuanced sense of the chapter better fit the larger context. Elijah shows that the LORD is God, not Ba'al in ch. 18. In ch. 19, Elijah recognizes that the LORD is not simply an anthropomorphic storm-god like Ba'al, or the preferred name of essentially the same deity. The LORD God is in control of the storm, fire, and earthquake, and he is not to be confused with these phenomena. God is something rather more sophisticated, revealing himself in the paradox of a silent voice, or in a quiet voice, despite his omnipotence. See Max Rogland, "Elijah and the 'Voice' at Horeb (1 Kings 19): Narrative Sequence in the Massoretic Text and Josephus," *VT* 62, no 1 (2012): 94; Dan Epp-Tiessen, "1 Kings 19: The Renewal of Elijah," *Direction* 35, 1 (2006), 38.

<sup>174</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 403, suggests that Eliphaz "may be deliberately evoking that tradition of a revelatory word amid the lull after the storm." Seow does not reflect on the significance of this suggestion. Any such reflection would likely differ from the reading offered here, since Seow follows Lust and Clines, translating שער as "the storm-wind," per his judgment that the piel is factitive, undermining the more obvious translation of "hair." Alternatively, this reflection might cause him to reconsider following Clines and Lust.

The word describes the appearance or form of God (e.g., Num 12:8, Ps 17:15). In fact, Lust tells us that a “*temunah* in the bible is always a form or representation of God,” and Clines agrees that we are meant to suspect the appearance of “God himself.”<sup>175</sup>

Nonetheless, it is too simplistic to refer to this as a theophany for two reasons. First, consider the narrative context. A theophany would be dissonant with Eliphaz’s own perspective on the vast distance between God and humanity (cf. 5:1). Furthermore, the reference to God in the third person in 4:18 makes this unlikely, as the verse apparently continues the spirit’s discourse. Additionally, as noted above, the valences of deception surrounding the root גנב (cf. Gen 31:20, 26) suggest that Eliphaz has been deceived by this spirit (cf. 1 Kgs 22:20–23).<sup>176</sup> Finally, Eliphaz’s vision’s perspective on humanity is more congruent with the Satan’s perspective than with God’s in the prologue, and Eliphaz is found in the end to have spoken incorrectly regarding God (42:7).<sup>177</sup>

Second is the parody of the theophanic language. The author juxtaposes and distorts various motifs surrounding divine communication. Habel aptly writes, “The poet’s bizarre collage of disparate allusions borders on a parody of traditional modes of revelation.”<sup>178</sup> Additionally, the key term, תמונה, is highly irregular in this passage. While Lust and Clines are correct to argue that the term pertains to the form of God, only in two occurrences does it indicate seeing God, in Moses’s unique privilege (Num 12:8) and the psalmist’s hope (Ps 17:15). Deuteronomy, however, directly refutes Numbers, when it denies that Moses saw the תמונה of God (Deut 4:12, 15). This denial, in fact, undergirds

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<sup>175</sup> Lust, “A Stormy Vision,” 310. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 131.

<sup>176</sup> So Habel, *The Book of Job* (1985), 122, “The oracle received has no identified origin and is delivered by no known messenger.” Eliphaz’s credulity has no warrant.

<sup>177</sup> As noted by Seow, *Job 1–21*, 389; Janzen, *Job*, 73.

<sup>178</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job* (1985), 121.

the prohibition against images attempting to produce a תמונה of God (Deut 4:16, 23, 25, 5:8; Ex 20:4). Of the term's nine occurrences beyond this one, then, only two indicate any possibility of seeing God, and the psalm is either metaphorical or eschatological hope (cf. Ps 17:14–15). Rather, seven affirm that God's form cannot be seen and indicate that any pretense of seeing it is idolatry. Eliphaz's claim to have seen such a form evokes idolatry and suggests that he has been deceived by the spirit.

The ironic misapplication of theophanic language and the suggestion of a misleading spirit correspond to Eliphaz's shortcomings in his general perspective and in his particular acceptance of this revelation. The language underscores the disparity between Eliphaz's calmer discourse and supposedly more sophisticated cosmology compared to Job's more desperate discourse evoking *Chaoskampf*. Eliphaz's best claim to an authoritative and sophisticated theology is the paradoxical collocation, דממה וקול, shared with 1 Kgs 19:12 (קול דממה), but his claim to have seen the תמונה ensures his inadequate representation. While Job has only referred to Leviathan thus far (3:8), Eliphaz's rebuttal against the storm-god motif will prove prescient, as Job will continue to exploit that motif (e.g., 7:12).<sup>179</sup> By contrast, Eliphaz's spirit "silently speaks" only of God's transcendent power and holiness. Having found Eliphaz to refute and subvert the storm-god motif as 1 Kgs 19 does, we should examine the characters inhabiting Eliphaz's cosmos, as they show further agreement with Deuteronomic ideology, particularly with the Song of Moses (Deut 32).

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<sup>179</sup> Dramatically, Eliphaz's subtle chiding provokes Job's unqualified resurrection of that myth in the following speech. This fits a larger pattern that I will develop somewhat in chapters 2–4. Specifically, consider that Eliphaz brings up the idea of mediators in order to deny it (5:1), and Job only later speculates regarding that possibility, at first wholly agreeing with Eliphaz (9:33) but then moving on to various speculations and degrees of hope (16:19, 19:25). Similarly, Job's shift from lament in ch. 3 to legal challenge in the dialogue can be seen as resulting from the friends' provocation. Thus, the poet uses the friends to plant ideas, which Job then develops to creative or destructive effect.

Eliphaz's cosmos is populated by diverse celestial beings. There are servants (עבדים; 4:18), messengers (מלאכים; 4:18), and holy ones (קדשים; 5:1). Eliphaz invokes these celestial beings to demonstrate *a fortiori* the disparity between Job and God. In 4:18, the servants and messengers are invoked with the assertion that God puts no trust in them (לֹא יֶאֱמִין) and attributes fault (תְּהִלָּה) to them to amplify humanity's lowly status. Eliphaz is confident that no heavenly being would attend to Job's protest, amplifying the absurdity of Job protesting the created order. The names of the angelic beings may refer to distinct classes, but the text does not demonstrate specific taxonomies. The poet does not appear to be overly interested in taxonomy, but he is interested in function and value. All three complement the spirit's voice of 4:15–16. Both the spirit's terrifying presence and message indicate the inferiority and frailty of humanity. The spirit itself invokes the servants and messengers as *a fortiori* argument (4:18). Eliphaz replicates the argument referring to the holy ones in his own discourse (5:1).

The supernatural characters in Eliphaz's discourse demonstrate humanity's lowliness. There is a noetic mediation, as a celestial spirit reveals knowledge to Eliphaz. But even in this regard, the knowledge is paltry and indicates how little has been revealed. This noetic mediation primarily accentuates the absence and impossibility of ontological mediation. The ontological gap is massive (4:17), and there is no indication of structure or personnel to mitigate it (5:1). These characters are not intermediaries increasing humanity's connection to God, but, rather, serve only to mediate the aesthetic of an unbridgeable abyss—ontological and noetic—separating Job and God.

The most striking mythological part of Eliphaz's discourse is his reference to the “sons of Resheph” in 5:7. These have been interpreted as arrows, birds, sparks, demons,



pestilence, and even pollen.<sup>180</sup> Excepting pollen, these possibilities can be derived from Resheph's complex history in the Mediterranean world and Hebrew Scripture. Resheph was a deity associated with pestilence widely worshipped from Ugarit to Egypt. In the Ugaritic corpus, he enjoys the epithet, 'Lord of the Arrow,' and he is identified with Nergal, lord of the underworld and god of pestilence.<sup>181</sup> For some, Resheph was an important god, ranked third behind Hadad and El in one Ugaritic list.<sup>182</sup> He is paired with Ba'al in a Phoenician inscription.<sup>183</sup> In Egypt, Resheph was identified with Horus and Montu. Horus was associated with hawks and falcons, and the war god Montu a war was represented as a man with a falcon head. All three were identified with Apollo in the Hellenistic period, also associated with archery and plague.<sup>184</sup> Lipiński argues that the association of Resheph with birds derives from Resheph's Egyptian adaptation and that the LXX translation of Job 5:7, "vulture chicks" likely follows that association.<sup>185</sup>

Resheph retains mythological resonances in Hebrew Scripture. Mulder writes that the theophany of Hab 3:3–15 resembles an account of Ba'al defeating the Sea, wherein Resheph aids Ba'al.<sup>186</sup> Song 8:6 describes love in mythological terms, using "reshephs of fire" along with Death, Sheol, and a mighty flame of the LORD (שלהבתיה). Nonetheless, Resheph is subordinated to God. In Hab 3:5, Resheph is mentioned in parallel with דבר, and they are taken as pestilence and plague. Both are thereby depicted as divine agents of

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<sup>180</sup> So, continuing the plant sprouting metaphor from 5:6, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 93, 438.

<sup>181</sup> M. J. Mulder, רשף, TDOT 14:11–13; Marvin Pope, *Job*, ABC 15 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973), 42.

<sup>182</sup> Mulder, רשף, TDOT 14:12.

<sup>183</sup> Bar, "Resheph in the Hebrew Bible," 120.

<sup>184</sup> Edward Lipiński, "R<sup>c</sup>šāfīm: From Gods to Birds of Prey," in *Mythos im Alten Testament und seiner Umwelt: Festschrift für Hans-Peter Müller zum 65. Geburtstag*, ed. Armin Lange et al. (Berlin: De Gruyter, 1999), 257.

<sup>185</sup> Lipiński, "R<sup>c</sup>šāfīm: From Gods to Birds of Prey," 255–56.

<sup>186</sup> Mulder, רשף, TDOT 14:14.

punishment. In Deut 32:24, Resheph, Qeteb, and Ra‘ab are likewise cast as punitive agents of God sent in response to the people’s provocation (32:21) with “no gods” (לֹא אֱלֹהִים) and empty idols (הַבִּלִּי). The allusions to Resheph, Qeteb, and Ra‘ab in Deut 32 are not incidental.<sup>187</sup> Rather, the three are emasculated as God’s weapons or personal agents to accentuate the vanity of worshipping false gods. Both Hab 3:9 and Deut 32:23 also portray the LORD as the archer, denying Resheph his status as “Lord of the Arrow.”

With this context in mind, we may consider the possible translations listed above. We can safely exclude “birds,” dominant among the ancient versions (OG, Symm, Aq, Vulg, Peshitta), since Lipiński makes a compelling argument that the tradition stems from the LXX, driving the other ancient translations. Apart from that influence and the verb עוֹף, there is no reason to support it. As Resheph either means “arrow” or indicates a “flashing” arrow in Ps 76:4(3), “sons of the arrow” may be entertained.<sup>188</sup> But it seems unlikely considering that arrows are cast by humans whereas humans themselves act spontaneously.<sup>189</sup>

<sup>187</sup> KBL, s.v. ‘קטב’, 2:1091–92, indicates that Qeteb refers to a demon already within the OT, as well as beyond.

<sup>188</sup> KBL, s.v. ‘רשף’ 2:1298, refers the term, רשפי קר, to “flames (or lightning flashes) from the bow, meaning arrows,” thus not simply equating the word רשף with arrows, but navigating the gap between the basic sense (if flame is sound) and the sense required by the context by metaphor. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 438, writes that in Ps 76:4(3) and Song 8:6 “רשף is simply ‘arrow’ or ‘missile.’” It is doubtful whether arrows are intended in Song 8:6 whatsoever, and it is uncertain whether רשף “simply” means arrow anywhere. The KBL’s presentation of the verse is more compelling considering the absence of רשף literally meaning arrow elsewhere. However, none of the other evocations of war listed in the verse (shield, sword, battle) are metaphorical, supporting the possibility that רשף could have expanded its semantic range to refer to literal arrows if poetically. Still, had the author simply meant arrow without intending any metaphorical flourish, his word choice was peculiar.

<sup>189</sup> The phrase “sons of the arrow” is an oddly loquacious way to refer to arrows. Further, if 7b is in parallel with 7a, then the analogy is poor, as arrows’ flight is a poor analogue to the necessity of human behavior stemming from human nature. Humans are agents, acting spontaneously in accordance with their nature; arrows’ nature is to remain stationary until put into motion by an agent. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 438, is circular and unhelpfully convoluted. He argues that “offspring of Resheph” can refer to arrows, and, since arrows “may be a metaphor for one’s progeny (Ps 127:4–5),” sons of Resheph (i.e., arrows) can actually refer to Resheph’s progeny (i.e., “the deadly issues of pestilence”)! It takes Seow two metaphors to find himself back at the literal sense of Resheph’s issue, which he then relates to the deity Resheph’s associations with pestilence. It is more advisable to cut straight to this sense.

The traditional English translation of “sparks” (KJV, NIV, NRSV, NABR, etc.) makes for good rhetoric as an analogy between the nature of flames compared to human nature. It makes good sense of the phrase, if Resheph is to be taken as flames or fire.<sup>190</sup> However, it is doubtful that the poet merely meant to form an analogy between two subjects inevitably acting according to their natures. That is, the sons of Resheph flying upward may not be a mere rhetorical flourish, suggesting by analogy the necessity of humans perpetuating or suffering trouble or turmoil. Rather, as Clines observes, 7b may be the consequence of 7a rather than analogous to it. The flight of the Sons of Resheph may result from humanity’s relationship to trouble.<sup>191</sup>

The context supports this understanding, but there are significant translational challenges. In 5:2–5, Eliphaz announces the fate of the wicked. In 5:8, he commends seeking God and proceeds with a hymn, praising God’s justice enacted in the world. Verses 6–7 both begin with כִּי, as Eliphaz believes 5:6 substantiates his claims in 5:2–5 and 5:7 substantiates his claims in 5:2–6. Verses 6 and 7 are corollaries. In 5:6, Eliphaz asserts that iniquity (אִין) does not come from the dust (מַעַפֵּר), nor trouble (עֲמַל) from the soil (מֵאֲדָמָה). Rather, Eliphaz says, כִּי אָדָם לַעֲמַל יוֹלֵד, and the Sons of Resheph fly.

The nature of the flight of the Sons of Resheph is bound to the interpretation of 5:7a. In the MT, 5:7a reads, “humans are born to trouble,” vocalizing the verb as a pual, indicating the lamed prefix marks the dative: ‘to trouble.’ This interpretation matches the humans to iniquity and trouble semantically. The subjects who sprout or are begotten

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<sup>190</sup> While Song of Songs 8:6 supplies a context wherein Resheph is associated with fire, it is not clear that Resheph should actually be understood as flame. Rather, insofar as Resheph was a god of plague and therefore associated with fever, Songs 8:6 is quite intelligible if the poet is commenting on the “feverish pangs” of love which are as “of fire, a divine conflagration.” This consideration notwithstanding, the understanding of fire for Resheph could have developed from Songs 8:6 and could be meant here in Job.

<sup>191</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 142.

change from the dust and trouble (5:6) to humans (5:7a). Seow, however, argues that the lamed prefix marks the direct object, and he takes the verbal form as a defective hiphil, thereby denoting humans siring trouble.<sup>192</sup> This reading strengthens the connection between 5:6 and 5:7a, as it is not from soil (מֵאֲדָמָה), that trouble is begotten, but humanity (אָדָם) begets it. Yet, the poet could have matched the previous constructions, making trouble the subject and using a מִן prefix (מֵאֲדָם) to secure this sense. That the poet crafted 5:7a to be more ambiguous than 5:6 should warn us against imposing a strict dichotomy.

Seow's reading, though possible, is unnecessary, unlikely, and too narrow. The hiphil allows only one valence and solidifies the dichotomy (i.e., humans cause trouble). The pual, on the other hand, while most naturally occupying the opposite side of the dichotomy (humans are born *to suffer* trouble), is open to both senses.<sup>193</sup> That is, humans being "born to trouble" is ambiguous enough to allow the miserable fate of suffering trouble and the pernicious fate of committing it. This polyvalent reading includes the merit of Seow's revision, such that his argument equally supports the pual.

In fact, this polyvalent reading corresponds to the context still better. Since 5:7a can support humanity's responsibility for trouble—whether as one sense of the pual or as the only sense of the hiphil—the stich makes an excellent corollary to 5:6. All three stiches of 5:6–7a cooperate to assert the anthropological rather than the geological source

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<sup>192</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 436–7, Clines, *Job 1–20*, 142. If Seow is correct in accepting the witness of some manuscripts that lack the *vav* altogether, the verb can be parsed in still more ways. Recall, in this regard, the likelihood of a more conservative orthography. Seow also points us to this sentiment in 15:35, where, nonetheless, the *lamed* and *vav* are missing. Thus, Eliphaz is certainly open to articulating this idea, but the morphological dissimilarity as well as the latter passage's contextual difference limit the value of this verse as an authoritative analogue.

<sup>193</sup> David Wolfers, "Sparks Flying? Job 5:7," *JBQ* 23 (1995): 3–4, observes these two possibilities of the phrase, referring to the fate of suffering trouble and the vocation of causing it. I prefer to describe both as fate. Wolfers, *ibid*, 3–4, adamantly opposes treating יִלְדָּ as a hiphil and is committed to the vocalization of the MT, but he also observes that the "solution" is entirely unnecessary as being born to give trouble is much the same as giving birth to trouble.

of trouble and iniquity. Note, however, that in this context the stich says something more substantial and specific about the nature of evil and suffering. It makes not merely the anthropological claim that humans are responsible for trouble and/or bound to suffer it, but the cosmological claims as to exactly what is and what is not responsible for trouble, and why humans are bound to suffer it.

In this context, consider the logical correspondence between 5:7a and 5:7b. If 5:7a was only making an anthropological claim, a non-mythological understanding of the Sons of Resheph (i.e., sparks, etc.), might be sufficient, as the parallel could simply establish an analogy: humans cause trouble as sparks rise. On the other hand, since this anthropological datum occurs in the larger context of responsibility and cosmic justice, the flight of the Sons of Resheph forcefully reads according to its literal sense. The Sons of Resheph, according to their father's nature (cf. Deut 32:24), afflict sinful humanity.

Therefore, we should accept Clines's opinion that this parallel provides more than an analogy. The iniquity humans cause results in the flight of these hostile, demonic characters. But even this characterization is too narrow. While 5:7a causes 5:7b, since human generation of trouble (pernicious fate) causes the punitive flight, it is equally true that 5:7b causes 5:7a, insofar as the punitive flight visits trouble justly upon humanity (miserable fate). Thus, the verse's stiches correspond in a reciprocal causation.<sup>194</sup> The stich exploits the polysemy of the phrase "born to trouble," evidencing the strategy of janus parallelism. 5:7a corresponds to both 5:6 and 5:7b, and both correspondences activate alternate valences of the phrase.

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<sup>194</sup> Even this reciprocal causation can be complemented with a more nuanced understanding. Whereas reading the parallel as an analogy merely between humanity and sparks leaves much to be desired, there is an analogy between the human and Resheph natures (humans : born to cause/suffer trouble :: Sons of Resheph : ascend [to afflict]).

Thus, it is not the dust nor the earth that spontaneously brings forth trouble. That would be a cosmological comment on the value of the earth as inherently disordered and evil. Rather, humanity's being "born to trouble" absolves the cosmological order. It is directly related to these demonic figures rising and bringing trouble. The two negations (5:6) are followed by two affirmations (5:7), but all four comments bear on the nature of evil. The two negations are only paraphrases, where the affirmations are complementary. There is an anthropological and cosmic economy of trouble, where the sons of Resheph punish humans with trouble, complementing both the human responsibility and liability for trouble. These beings, then, in light of Resheph's roles in Hebrew Scripture (esp. Deut 32:24) and the structure of these two verses, are equivalent to Bildad's Terrors, as demonic beings ascend from below to effect the just punishment for human trouble.<sup>195</sup>

The allusion to Resheph is noteworthy for several reasons. Thinking abstractly and reductively in terms of beneficence or maleficence, Resheph may seem a paradox, since he is responsible for plagues yet is worshipped and his appeasement sought for their relief.<sup>196</sup> But this is no paradox, as the god who controls plagues is both feared and honored, as the presence or absence of plague corresponds to his pleasure and displeasure.<sup>197</sup> Indeed, when Resheph is reduced to an implement of the LORD for punishing unfaithful Israel for breaching the covenant (Deut 32:24), this very dynamic obtains regarding the LORD's stance toward the people.

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<sup>195</sup> Burns, "The Identity of Death's Firstborn," 363, suggests that Resheph would be a better Canaanite candidate for the *Bekôr Māwet* than Mot, although, of course Burns prefers Namtaru.

<sup>196</sup> Mulder, רשף, TDOT 14:13. See also Maciej Münnich, *The god Resheph in the ancient Near East* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2013), 8, 42, 44, 115–19, 149–50.

<sup>197</sup> E. Theodore Mullen, *The Divine Council in Canaanite and Early Hebrew Literature*, HSM 24 (Missoula, MT: Scholars, 1980), 181, makes the same observation of the sensibility of the superficial paradox, and he reports that Canaanite and Phoenician religion typically brings together opposites in mythological figures.

This dynamic is distorted in Job. Rather than attributing beneficence and maleficence to the same character, Eliphaz attributes maleficence to Resheph and exhorts Job to appease 'El for his beneficence (5:8). This must be nuanced, as Eliphaz does attribute reproof and discipline to 'Eloah and Shaddai (5:17; cf. 4:9). Nonetheless, Resheph's offspring doom the fool (5:3–4) while God Almighty's correction is a happy (אשר; 5:17) condition. This is remarkably different from Job, who attributes both beneficence and maleficence to God but denies any pretext for maleficence and, therefore, any possibility of appeasement or expectation of beneficence.

A second tension in the character of Resheph is his reputation for aiding Ba'al in his fight against Yamm on the one hand, and his consideration as a chthonic deity identified with Nergal or Namtaru on the other.<sup>198</sup> As we have seen, both of these traditions are present in Hebrew Scripture. Resheph is the LORD's implement in Deut 32:24, and Resheph's accompaniment of the LORD in Hab 3:3 resembles the account of Ba'al's contest with the Sea. On the other hand, the textual and thematic connections between Job 5:7 and ch. 18, along with the fact that Resheph's sons' ascent is apparently from the underworld, suggest the chthonic tradition in Job. The tension would appear to be a real contradiction were we to consider it in terms of Resheph's alignment between the storm-god or the forces of chaos. As aid to Ba'al (or YHWH or Shaddai), we would expect Resheph to be a force against chaos. As lord or deputy of the underworld, Resheph readily identifies with or serves Mot, Ba'al's greatest enemy.

Were we to assume the author's knowledge of both traditions, we could reconcile this paradox to Eliphaz's perspective. His chthonic nature notwithstanding, Resheph's

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<sup>198</sup> Mulder, רשף, TDOT 14:12–14; Burns, "The Identity of Death's Firstborn," 363.

offspring merely fulfill divine justice, and so assist 'El Shaddai. Resheph grants Eliphaz a very comfortable religion. He avoids the awkwardness of attributing the “trouble” that plagues humanity directly to God (*contra* Job) and avoids any consideration of disordered evil. Resheph plays his ordered role. Alternatively, we may be tempted to bracket the tradition of Resheph's assistance to Ba'al and enemy to chaos, as Job 5:7 supports the chthonic tradition exclusively. We would conclude that Resheph is not an enemy to the traditional opponents of life and creation but is identified with them. This option, however, belies the all-important point: Resheph is evidently chthonic and associated with death, but he is not portrayed as a force of chaos. Rather, the chthonic deity's offspring play their ordered role in meting out divine justice to the wicked.

Thus, the Sons of Resheph, as Bildad's Terrors, provide a mythological structure and function as the proximate cause of punishment. This punishment accords with divine and cosmic justice and with a sort of monotheism, since they are subordinated to the supreme God's just order. Nonetheless, by focusing on these classes of demons in the description of the wicked's punishment, the friends protect the asymmetrical aesthetic and avoid construing God as the proximate cause of human suffering.

It may be that Resheph's relationship to God in Job is better understood by analogy with Resheph's relationship to 'El rather than to Ba'al, especially as Resheph's sons are equivalent to the Terrors. 'El has no need of Resheph's aid. The defeat of the Sea and Mot are not 'El's primary concern. They have roles to play in his scheme. Ba'al, lord of life and fertility, opposes Yamm and Mot. However, all three deities—Ba'al, Yamm, and Mot—stand in ambiguous relationship to 'El in the Ba'al cycle. While 'El accepts Ba'al's victory over Yamm, ensuring a stable order, his acceptance follows initial



reluctance. Further, 'El's simultaneous acceptance of Ba'al's reign and delight in Mot, "'El's beloved," is responsible for the final order.<sup>199</sup> Ba'al and Mot have their respective rules, ensuring a cycle between life and prosperity and famine and death.<sup>200</sup>

There are several considerations that support this latter option. First, is this more fitting typology. Second, is Eliphaz's and the friends' eschewal of the storm-god motif, in preference for God's transcendence and lack of direct intervention. Third, is the poet's and Eliphaz's preferred divine titles. Nowhere does the poet use Ba'al. In Eliphaz's first discourse, he uses אֵל twice (5:5, 8), אֱלֹהִים three times (4:9, 17; 5:17), and even אֱלֹהִים once (5:8). He uses שְׁדַי only once (5:17) and only in parallel with אֱלֹהִים. A similar spread is in the second discourse, and only the third discourse uses Shaddai multiple times.<sup>201</sup>

The literary purpose of this shift is unclear. It may correspond to Eliphaz's loss of serenity, as he inveighs against Job. Perhaps in his passion, he relaxes his reticence to use the deity's name. Still, his theology remains unchanged, and the two instances of Shaddai that occur out of parallel are an invitation to repentance and a promise of restoration (22:23, 25). The poet might use Shaddai to evoke God's beneficent and reactive interactions creation, compared to the more static and otiose connotations of 'El.<sup>202</sup>

<sup>199</sup> Mot is occasionally referred to as 'El's beloved in the Ba'al cycle, see, e.g., "The Ba'alu Myth," *COS* 1.86:263. The Sun, Šapšu, intervenes when Mot and Ba'al join battle after Ba'al's resurrection, warning Mot that he risks 'El's anger and his own throne by fighting Ba'al, *ibid*, 1.86:273.

<sup>200</sup> Some scholars understand this irresolution in the Ba'al cycle to correspond to an annual rhythm, as each year has its rainy and dry seasons, with the latter obviously being the less conducive to life. Cyrus H. Gordon, *Ugaritic Literature: a Comprehensive Translation of the Poetic and Prose Texts*, (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1949), 4–5, rejects this understanding, arguing that there was no indication of an annual death of Ba'al even if it was celebrated annually, and that Ba'al's failure was associated not with annual dry seasons, but with longer, deadlier droughts, indicated by the span of seven years of misfortune. Gordon's observations seem to be correct, but the structural comparison made here is apt regardless of the timeline and rhythm of their alternating dominance.

<sup>201</sup> In the second cycle: אֵל 4 times (15:4, 11, 13, 25), אֱלֹהִים once (15:8), and שְׁדַי once, also in parallel (15:25). In the third cycle: אֵל 3 times (22:2, 13, 17), אֱלֹהִים twice (22:12, 26), and שְׁדַי 5 times (22:3, 17, 23, 25, 26).

<sup>202</sup> Koch, "Šaddaj," *VT* 26, 3 (1976) 316, suggests that Shaddai is portrayed as more immediate, direct, and personal, compared to 'El, who is more transcendent. The idea is intriguing, but it is difficult to argue much from the poem. Contrast this perspective with Jean Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu: essai d'exégèse et de*

### *Conclusion of the First Discourse*

Eliphaz's cosmology confirms the cosmos's stability and justice, including the horrific elements of human experience. His suppression of the *Chaoskampf* storm-god motif denies any challenge to the deity. It underscores the just stability of the cosmos as the expression of the deity's transcendent, omnipotent will. This order grants humans no hope for redress of grievances, since they cannot have any legitimate ones. There is also an unbridgeable ontological and communicative gap between humans and Eliphaz's celestial figures. *A fortiori*, humanity cannot appeal to God.

Bildad's Terrors and Eliphaz's Sons of Resheph merely express divine justice. These characters correspond to deities (and their entourage) worshipped by Israel's neighbors but reduced here to God's agents of punishment. Whatever suffering humanity may endure at the hands of the chthonic deity is not a challenge to the divine order but merely the operation of the natural order as humans generate trouble. In Eliphaz, then, we have a claimant to the tradition of human wisdom who acknowledges mythological personages and even incorporates the least savory sort in his notions of cosmic order and justice. These are incorporated analogously to Deut 32, a motif seen in Bildad's speech (and, as we will see, in Zophar's). Thus, Job's friends espouse a mythology aligned with the monotheistic doctrine of retribution encoded in the Deuteronomic tradition.<sup>203</sup>

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*théologie biblique*, vol 1 (Paris: J. Gabalda, 1970), 173–74, who argues that the evidence indicates that the poet did not attach “any special theological value” to the particular titles, since “les mêmes perfections et les mêmes actions sont attribuées à El, Eloah, et Šadday.” Lévêque's argument only shows that the poet refers to the same deity with these titles and the titles cannot demonstrate sources. Furthermore, Lévêque's own chart shows that El and Eloah are together far preferred to Shaddai. Koch's intuition cannot be proved, but it seems to be the more appropriate consideration. I suggest that an alternative aesthetic obtains, as the first two cycles manifestly attest more reticence to use the patriarchal divine name.

<sup>203</sup> In both Deut 32 and 1 Kgs 18, Israel's monolatrous imperative is based, not only on the covenantal obligation to serve the LORD alone as their particular God and inheritance, but on the LORD's categorical superiority to the invalid alternatives. The people sacrifice to demons and ‘not-god’ or ‘gods they knew not’ (לשדים לא אלהים לא ידעום; Deut 32:17), and the non-gods are reduced to God's implements of

The structure provides aesthetic comfort to the monotheist confronted by evil and suffering, as Eliphaz attributes suffering directly to these chthonic, demonic forces. While they serve the one God's will and order, they provide cognitive dissonance between God's direct action and human suffering. Thus, Eliphaz's discourse is asymmetrical, similar to Bildad's, as he consistently refers to God as a force of blessing and he attributes suffering to those other powers. This mythological structure will crack as the dialogue continues. But it represents an attempt to reconcile suffering and a beneficent monotheistic God, by appropriating demonic forces to fill the gap.

### ***Three Addenda from Eliphaz's Latter Speeches***

I now address three themes from Eliphaz's latter speeches, to develop the texture of Eliphaz's mythology. It is not necessary to treat these latter speeches in as much detail. First, I will address a counter argument regarding Eliphaz and the *Chaoskampf* tradition. Second, I will draw out Eliphaz's class of demonic terrors, showing his commonality with Zophar and Bildad. Third, I will address a development in Eliphaz's portrayal of divine punishment in his third speech.

The counter argument concerns the interpretation of Eliphaz's reference to God's attitude towards his holy ones and heavens (שמים, קדושים) in Job 15:15. God, Eliphaz asserts, "trusts not his holy ones, and the heavens are not pure (לא זכו) in his sight." The verb, "to trust," represents the hiphil of the root אמן, critical in the Hebrew Bible and its New Testament reception. The heaven's alleged impurity corresponds to Eliphaz's

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destruction. Elijah directs Israel to worship either the LORD or Ba'al, whichever one is God (אם־יהוה; 1 Kgs 18:21, 24), not whichever one is their covenantal partner. The people recognize the sense of this empirical test and accept its result. In these places, monolatry is predicated on an impulse of monotheism. Furthermore, the passages both illustrate the semantic flexibility of the term, as applying to any number of beings but also as indicating the sole divine being in his own exclusive category. See further appendix A.

insinuation that humanity cannot be pure (15:14) by *a fortiori* reasoning. His argument requires only that God be not impressed with his angels or heavens.<sup>204</sup> The argument continues and amplifies the same argument made in his first speech.

There is an ominous note here. Perdue even finds here an echo of “the revolt of gods and people,” and compares this passage to Gen 6:1–4, as “the members of the divine assembly are not trusted because of their evil.”<sup>205</sup> But we should not overestimate the significance of this motif. Still less should we accept Pope’s suggestion that the “culpability of the angels may refer to the myth of a theomachy in which the defeated gods are punished,” comparing this theme to 2 Pet 2:4.<sup>206</sup>

In fairness, Pope and Perdue suggest a mythical background wherein lower gods rebel and are defeated. They do not discern a reference to a myth where the younger gods impose their order on the cosmos against the older gods’ authority, such as in Marduk’s defeat of Tiamat. Still, Pope and Perdue exaggerate the tension. The text does not warrant identifying any myth of overt rebellion.<sup>207</sup> Even referring to the “members of the divine assembly” as “evil” goes beyond the text, as Perdue projects the revolt of the Igigi from *Atrahasis* onto the text.<sup>208</sup> Even Habel, who carefully rejects any theomachy, exceeds the passage’s warrants comparing it to the “fallen angels” of Isa 14.<sup>209</sup> There is no indication that one of these “holy ones” would seek to dethrone God. Rather, the text only supports

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<sup>204</sup> It seems an inappropriate dichotomy to consider whether this includes a comment on the literal purity of the physical heavens themselves or refers by metonymy to the inhabitants thereof and their ethical purity. Rather, as Clines, *Job 1–20*, 353, notes, the earth and sun themselves are apparently personified in 25:5, suggesting that the physical bodies are not amoral.

<sup>205</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 169.

<sup>206</sup> Pope, *Job*, 116.

<sup>207</sup> As Clines, *Job 1–20*, 353, observes, it is an *a fortiori* argument which offers “little reason to see here an allusion to a fully developed myth of a primeval rebellion.”

<sup>208</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 30, 118.

<sup>209</sup> Habel, *Job*, 256.

Hartley's subdued observation that the angels are created beings and liable to error and fall.<sup>210</sup> Furthermore, the friends' constant portrayal of demonic forces serving at the pleasure of divine justice and supporting the moral cosmic order excludes any traditional theomachy or overt rebellion.

This verse, then, is no exception to my observation that Job's friends avoid the traditional mythological tropes of the storm-god or *Chaoskampf* motifs. It provides no evidence of a myth of rebellion or theomachy. Eliphaz simply argues *a fortiori* for the transcendence of the one God, whose holiness makes the holy ones look impure. He may hint that these lesser gods might err or reject God's absolute rule according to their lack of trustworthiness. Were this the case, we should understand this as a subtle dissonance in their cosmology, a hole in the dike that might compromise the structure. Nonetheless, this likelihood is muted by the portrayal of chthonic forces, from Resheph's Sons to the King of Terrors, as fulfilling God's justice in accord with their cosmological roles.

I turn now to examine of Eliphaz's references to these Terrors. Eliphaz does not use Bildad's term for Terrors, בלהות, preferring the term, פחד. The poet gave each friend his own preferred term (so Zophar, אימה), while Job uses them all in addition to בעות and חת/חתת.<sup>211</sup> *Pachad* appears to be the least mythologically suggestive term, inclining towards the merely psychological. It is the preferred term of Proverbs, where it likely

<sup>210</sup> John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1988), 247.

<sup>211</sup> While Bildad and Eliphaz both use the verbal forms of בעת, and Eliphaz uses a verbal form of בהל in 22:10, the friends are consistent in their use of nominal forms. The single exception is Bildad's use of פחד in 25:2, which is not a demon but an attribute of God in parallel with dominion (המשל). Thus, we can state more precisely that the friends are consistent in their word choices when describing demonic entities. Job uses each term nominally, also introducing חתת and בעת: פחד, (3:25, 13:11, 21:9), בעת, (6:4), חתת, (6:21), אימה, (9:34, 13:21), בהל/בלהות, (24:17, 27:20, 30:15). The whirlwind speech uses three roots, פחד, (39:16, 22), חת/חתת, (39:22 [verb], 41:25), אימה, (39:20, 41:6), but these only appear to refer to terror in a psychological sense rather than to demonic forces. I will revisit this in chapter 3.

refers to fear.<sup>212</sup> This preference suggests Eliphaz's portrayal as the premier sage.

Eliphaz's use of the term, however, is dynamic, exploiting the term's capacity for psychological and mythological connotations.<sup>213</sup>

In Eliphaz's first speech, the effect is ambiguous. *Pachad* as psychological terror carries the connotation of trembling, and its use in 4:14a in parallel with רעדה confirms this connotation of trembling and psychological terror, especially as 4:14b uses the hiphil of פחד. The term could be read as solely psychological. But the following verse (4:15) introduces the רוח that affects Eliphaz's body, presents a form (4:16), and speaks (4:17). This psycho-somatic experience, then, is caused by a supernatural being, whether itself a Terror or not. This passage does not demonstrate Eliphaz's belief in a class of Terrors, but its supernatural imagery makes it obliging to that interpretation. Still, this frightening mediator is a far cry from Bildad's punitive, demonic entourage or the Sons of Resheph.

Eliphaz uses the term again in 15:21. The speech begins the second cycle, and Eliphaz anticipates the highly mythological discussions of Bildad's Terrors in ch. 18 and Zophar's in ch. 20. Eliphaz states that the sound/voice of Terrors (קול פחדים) is in the ears of the wicked. Resuming the torment of the wicked (15:20), the psychological valence is present, but this does not settle the nature of that voice or the causes of the torment.

Some scholars reduce the term to its psychological potential. Pope refers to the terrors as solely psychological. They are "the product of his own imagination." He refers us to Prov 28:1: "the wicked flee when none pursue."<sup>214</sup> Similarly, Hartley refers to

<sup>212</sup> As in 1:26, 27, 33, 3:25. Terror is the fate of those who refuse instruction (1:26–27), which the instructed need not fear (1:33), and the fate of the wicked the pupil need not fear (3:25). אימה also occurs once (Prov 20:2), where it is the effect of the offended king, and therefore natural and psychological.

<sup>213</sup> Of course, the dichotomy between mythology and psychology is asymmetrical. Mythical Terrors cause psychological terror in their patients; psychological terror may but need not entail the mythical characters.

<sup>214</sup> Pope, *Job*, 117.

“terrifying sounds,” arguing that the wicked “imagines a marauder.”<sup>215</sup> Müller is more explicit, asserting that the plural merely has “an intensifying function” and that פחד in Job (15:21, 21:9, 22:10) suggests a solely psychological significance.<sup>216</sup>

These assessments are flat and unsatisfactory. We should see here a more explicitly mythological use of the term פחד compared to 4:14. Rather than assert that the plural is an emphatic abstract, we should agree with Clines that we have “personified spirits of vengeance, denizens of the underworld, whom we meet in 18:14.”<sup>217</sup> In fact, Eliphaz already introduced them as the Sons of Resheph. That “Terrors” are here in parallel with the Destroyer, the שודד, is enough to prove this perspective. Hartley’s suggestion that the wicked imagine this “marauder” is baseless. Habel and Clines are surely correct in seeing here another reference to demonic powers, though Habel’s suggestion that we identify “the spoiler” with Death himself, is off-track.<sup>218</sup> The suggestion collapses the friends’ more developed mythological hierarchy.

A final detail suggesting a mythological destruction is the supernatural fire in 15:30. We have seen the presence of demons and brimstone in the tent of the wicked in Bildad’s discourse (18:15), and Zophar will refer to an unfanned flame (20:26). We have a similarly supernatural conflagration here. Each speech in the second cycle uses this trope. Some, however, argue otherwise. Hartley treats the word as “burning heat.”<sup>219</sup> Clines argues that this refers not to a supernatural, divine punishment as in Ezek 21:3, but merely to the scorching sun in keeping with the vegetative metaphor.<sup>220</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Hartley, *Book of Job*, 251.

<sup>216</sup> Müller, פחד, TDOT, 11:519–20.

<sup>217</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 357.

<sup>218</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 357; Habel, *Job*, 259.

<sup>219</sup> Hartley, *Book of Job*, 253.

<sup>220</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 362.

Nonetheless, this conflagration has supernatural significance. Not only does Eliphaz introduce the second cycle's mythological tenor, but the term suggests the supernatural. The term used in 15:30, *שלהבת*, is rare, occurring only in Ezek 21:3, Job 15:30, and Song 8:6—the last instance in the compound construction, “conflagration of the LORD” (*שלהבתיה*). Recall, Song 8:6 uses Death, She'ol, Resheph, and this term in close proximity. The comparison to Ezekiel is more telling. With respect to Clines, the passages are similar. Both use the term to refer to judgment of the wicked using a botanical allegory. In Ezekiel, the oracle refers to Jerusalem as a forest and foretells an unquenchable fire that will consume trees, dry and green indiscriminately. Ezekiel thus treats the community of Israel as Job treats the individual. The Job passage is more elaborate, beginning with the singeing of the early growth by the *שלהבת* (30a), followed by the loss of blossoms (30b), premature withering and loss of greenness (32), loss of fruit and blossoms as vines (33), and finally the ultimate consumption by fire (34).

The rarity of the term, as well as the poet's habit of applying Israel's prophetic oracles to the individual human being, suggests that the poet alludes to the Ezekiel passage, activating that oracle in his portrayal the wicked's fate.<sup>221</sup> To Clines's point, the metaphor would work with a natural fire. Yet the term's evocative powers are greater than the literal basic metaphor. Given the term's supernatural and mythological resonances and the friends' habitual conflation of nature and demonic agency, we must also recognize the metaphor's fuller resonance. As Habel puts it, this is not some drying East wind, but “the fire that rises as an agent of death to consume life.”<sup>222</sup>

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<sup>221</sup> I will examine the application of Israel's prophetic traditions to the individual in chapter 2.

<sup>222</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 253.



Eliphaz refers to פחד again in his third speech in 22:10. Having attributed sins to Job, he asserts, “therefore snares (פחים) are round about you, sudden terror (פחד פתאום) frightens you.” The reference to snares recalls Bildad’s portrayal of the activity of the בלהות in 18:7–12, particularly as Bildad uses the same word (פח; 18:9), and the verb Eliphaz uses for “frightens” (ויבהלך) has the same root (בהל) as Bildad’s Terrors.<sup>223</sup> Thus, Eliphaz’s description of Job’s plight employs Bildad’s theme concerning the plight of the wicked, though Eliphaz maintains his preferred term for these terrors. Müller also sees an allusion to the alliterative curse formula, “terror, pit, and snare upon you” (פחד ופחת ופח ) (עליך) found in Jer 48:43 and Isa 24:17, wherein the “forces of doom” were invoked.<sup>224</sup> Eliphaz does not utter a curse so much as he implies that it has been partly fulfilled. But the allusion strengthens the connotations of the powers invoked by that curse.

I should note that the precise collocation Eliphaz uses, פחד פתאום, also occurs in Prov 3:25, where it does not have an obvious mythological tenor. The verse encourages the instructed not to fear at the wicked’s sudden terror and destruction. The destruction confirms the teaching of the wise and offers no threat to the pupil. Job accused his friends of such fear when they saw his plight (6:21), as the suffering of the innocent offers an existential threat to the sage. But Eliphaz overcomes this fear. The dialogue’s progression dispels any doubt of Job’s guilt, confirming his moral vision of the cosmos. Eliphaz retains and commends the validity of the inference that suffering proves guilt (22:29). The proverb holds. Thus, while Eliphaz is no less mythological than his friends, he seems to represent the best of the wisdom tradition. He keeps the most serene tone (at least in his first two speeches) and evokes the rhetoric and vocabulary of Proverbs.

<sup>223</sup> Understanding בלה as resulting by metathesis from בהל. Cf. KBL s.v. בלה, 1:132.

<sup>224</sup> Müller, פחד, TDOT, 11:521–22. Müller also sees allusions to the curse in Lam 3:47 and Sir 9:13.

Finally, Eliphaz's third speech includes a significant development from his previous two speeches. Those portray divine justice according to the asymmetrical aesthetic as Bildad does. In Eliphaz's third speech, however, he affirms that God has entered directly into judgment with Job (22:4–5) and that God is directly responsible for the demonic assault on Job (22:10–11). This reflects the drama's escalation in hostility and is intoned by Eliphaz's freer use of the deity's name, Shaddai. This inconsistency would seem to invalidate the asymmetrical aesthetic I have developed above. I submit, however, that this shift is a dramatic device that the poet uses to demonstrate the untenability of Eliphaz's position and to cue the dissolution of the dialogue. We will be in a better position to consider the merit of this literary judgment after treating Zophar's speech in ch. 20 that arguably moves Eliphaz in this direction.

### ***Summary of Eliphaz's Perspective***

In my treatment of Eliphaz, we have seen a highly mythological proponent of the doctrine of retribution. He refers to several categories of spiritual beings: a Spirit (רוח; 4:15), Servants (עבדים; 4:18), Angels (מלאכין; 4:18), the Holy Ones (קדושים; 5:1, 15:15), the Heavens (שמים; 15:15), Terrors (פחד; 4:14, 15:21, 22:10), a Destroyer (שודד; 15:21), and the Sons of Resheph (בני רשף; 5:7). These terms function primarily to prove the disparity between the transcendent God and mortal humanity, insofar as the immortal, celestial holy ones are impure by comparison to God's holiness. This is both the force of Eliphaz's rhetoric and the message of the Spirit itself (4:17–21).

The more frightful of these incorporeal beings, the Terrors, the Destroyer, and the Sons of Resheph, are directly responsible for human suffering. Thus, Eliphaz provides a mythological structure whereby blessing is attributed directly to God, while suffering is

attributed to other supernatural beings, whose piety is not to be cultivated. Eliphaz thus agrees with Bildad, providing the same asymmetry we found in Bildad's syntax, rhetoric, and portrayal of the Terrors (בלהות) in ch. 18. The resulting mythological structure should be understood as an attempt to reconcile suffering with monotheism, a point underscored by the incorporation of Resheph modeled on Deut 32. The structure protects the aesthetic of a beneficent presentation of God despite his absolute power by incorporating demonic beings, who are directly responsible for suffering but wholly subordinate to God.

God's transcendent supremacy is also reflected in Eliphaz's rejection of the storm-god, *Chaoskampf* motif. He implies no demonic forces acting upon humanity in any way contrary to God's will. Rather, the doctrine of retribution rules demonic activity and that rule is undistinguishable from God's just management of the cosmos. The wicked suffer because the Sons of Resheph visit their trouble upon them as God has ordained. There is no qualification of God's will's efficacy. The mythological characters are extensions of that will and do not challenge it, let alone frustrate it. The references to divine distrust in his angels and holy ones create an *a fortiori* argument and do not belie the friends' consistent monotheism. Compared to the Creator, created celestial beings are akin to created humans. This indicates not rebellion, but impurity and unreliability. We turn now to Zophar, who serves as a foil to Eliphaz, and whose violence and grotesque delight satirizes his associates and the textual traditions they represent.

### ***Zophar: The Violent, Foolish, and Candid Sage***

Zophar stands out amongst the friends. He has only two speeches compared to Eliphaz's full three and Bildad's interrupted third. He is also the most hostile. Where in the first cycle Eliphaz only implies that Job should repent (5:8–27) and Bildad assumes

that Job's children deserved their fate (8:4), Zophar asserts that God overlooked some of Job's sin (11:4–6). Hostility builds within each cycle, as the subsequent friend is less tactful or crueler than the previous friend, and between each cycle, as each friend's subsequent address to Job becomes harsher. By the time the narrative gets to Zophar's second speech, we expect his harsh discourse.<sup>225</sup> Still, Zophar's grisly description of the fate of the wicked is jarring and grotesque. The overall effect of this speech is a savage satire of the Israelite wisdom tradition's reflection on the fate of the wicked.<sup>226</sup>

Furthermore, Zophar's disturbing account of the fate of the wicked describes a greater degree of divine agency than any other speech of the friends. As Seow notes, this makes Zophar a peculiar representative of the wisdom tradition, which portrays the

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<sup>225</sup> Contrast this presentation with Clines's in "The Arguments of Job's Three Friends." Clines, *ibid.*, 732–33, asserts that Eliphaz presumes Job's innocence in the first speech, and he asserts that this should serve as a hermeneutical control on reading Eliphaz's following speeches. This is simply question-begging, and it leads him to the awkwardness of construing Eliphaz's second speech as articulating the fate of the wicked in order to describe "what Job's fate is certainly not," and his third speech of simultaneously presuming "Job's righteousness—which Eliphaz fully recognizes" and the sins which lead Eliphaz to assert "Job's 'great wickedness.'" Eliphaz never affirmed Job's absolute innocence, and his blunt inference of Job's guilt by his suffering only grows throughout the dialogue until he commends precisely this logical inference in the climax of his final speech (22:29). Clines, *ibid.*, 730–31, sought to justify the three friends' existence, lest we judge the book "long-winded and flabby," by making them represent distinct positions vis-à-vis Job's guilt and their diagnosis: Eliphaz concedes Job's piety and offers consolation; Bildad affirms God's restoration of the just and suggests Job's introspection; Zophar asserts God's knowing and punishing Job's sin. Clines, *Job 1–20*, xl, maintains these distinctions in his commentary some ten years later. These distinctions are too neat and not accountable to the text: his treatment of Eliphaz's speeches in the commentary demonstrates at once the pains he is willing to take to support these neat distinctions and his cognitive dissonance in treating material that belies them. Clines's, *ibid.*, 148–49, discussion of Eliphaz's indication that God's punishments of Job in 5:17 are educational, does not address the relevance of this passage to his simplistic characterization of Eliphaz; Clines's, *ibid.*, 347–48, discussion of 15:4–5 admits Eliphaz's assessment of Job's wickedness in the second cycle (contra *idem*, "The Arguments," 732), but he takes pains to assert that 15:5, "rightly nuanced... is still partly affirmatory of Job," emphasizing that the wickedness teaches Job to sin, mitigating his blame, and rather ignoring Job's choosing the tongue of the crafty (תבחר לשון ערומים). Clines's, *Job 21–37*, 555–67, treatment of Eliphaz's third speech is full of mental gymnastics, forced by his commitment to this reading as he downplays Eliphaz's accusation against Job.

<sup>226</sup> J. C. Holbert, "'The Skies Will Uncover His Iniquity': Satire in the Second Speech of Zophar," *VT* 31, 2 (1981): 171–79, argues that the whole chapter is satire, as Zophar seeks to satirize Job's previous comments, but Zophar's ignorant perspective renders him the butt of the joke in the final analysis. I find the case for correlating Zophar's comments to Job's compelling. But I am unconvinced that Zophar the character's rhetorical strategy is properly characterized as satirical. I do, however, agree that the poet satirizes Zophar, his friends, and the sages they represent.

doctrine of retribution in terms of natural law without reference to divine intervention.<sup>227</sup>

While the friends have exemplified this trait to this point, we must not forget Eliphaz's Sons of Resheph (5:7) or Bildad's Terrors (18:14–18). Thus, intelligent beings actively punishing the wicked are nothing new from Job's friends. It is specifically God's role that sets Zophar's speech apart. But God's role is not clearly related to the natural law in Zophar's speech. Rather, he blurs the lines between divine agency, demonic agencies, and natural law. This can be seen from the two verses where אל or אלוהים occur (20:15, 29), and in the verses where translators supply "God" (20:23, 28) as the implied subject. It will be worthwhile to look at these passages in some detail.

The occurrence of 'God' (אל; 20:15) describes God's role in punishing the wicked as he drives out the wealth the wicked had swallowed up. The chapter uses the metaphor of tasting, eating, and the wicked's stomach (20:12–25), to relate the wicked's activity, its natural consequences, and God's vengeance. His phrase, "evil tastes sweet to his mouth" (20:12), responds to Job's earlier claim to be able to discern evil and injustice (6:5–7, 30). Zophar implies Job's taste is undiscerning after all. Rather, he asserts, the wicked (including Job) have an appetite for evil, particularly consuming the wealth of the poor (20:10, 14). This wealth, he promises, God will disgorge from the wicked (20:15).

The disgorging, however, is also natural. As the wicked swallows up the poor's wealth, he perceives the evil as sweet. But as he swallows evil, indigestion naturally follows. Thus, the food is turned to gall or venom (מְרוֹרֶת) in his stomach (20:14). The poet exploits the valences of מררה to equate the poison the wicked imbibe and the indigestion they experience, identifying act and consequence. Zophar describes the

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<sup>227</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 847.

wicked's activity with no little *schadenfreude* in 20:16, using the grotesque image of the wicked sucking on viper heads, again connecting the wicked's activity and punishment. While God disgorges the wicked (20:15), the poet describes that disgorging as the natural consequence of indulging an appetite for evil.<sup>228</sup> Divine, serpentine, and human agency are indistinct. The poet need only mention God again in 20:29, where Zophar summarizes the previous destruction of the wicked as the portion and inheritance allotted by God.

We should also consider the intervening material where commentators supply God as the subject. In 20:23a, Zophar envisions the completion of the wicked's feeding, culminating with his destruction in the following lines. In 20:23b–c, Zophar uses two third person masculine verbs whose implied subjects are readily identified as God. “He” sends forth his burning wrath (חרון אפו) and “rains down upon the wicked” with לחומו (וימטר עלימו בלחומו). The latter term poses an interpretive challenge. It may be understood as deriving from לחם I or II, bread or battle. As the previous verses use the metaphor of eating and the following verses refer to implements of war, the term is a Janus parallel.

Reading לחומו as “his bread,” the reference to raining down לחם evokes the Exodus traditions of mana and quail, especially Ex 16:4, where God announces that he will “rain bread” for the Israelites (הגני ממטיר לכם לחם). The iteration of that tradition in Numbers combines the theme of over-eating and its natural consequence (Num 11:20, 33) with God's burning wrath for those with wicked appetite (Num 11:1, 33).

Reading לחומו as “his battle,” the following description of the implements of war in 20:24–25 support understanding לחומו as “his weapons.” Hence, NABR's “missiles.”

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<sup>228</sup> In a similar vein, Hartley, *Book of Job*, 306, writes that God activates the punishment contained in the wicked deeds: “in this manner of reasoning no clear distinction is maintained between primary and secondary causes.”

The verses thus evoke the divine warrior motif, as the 3ms subject uses his armament against the wicked. These arms include an iron weapon and a bow of bronze, and Zophar describes the wicked's piercing. Habel suggests that Zophar satirizes Job's "portrayal of Shaddai as the Archer who fires his poisoned arrows into Job in the style of the Canaanite god Reshef."<sup>229</sup> The connection to Resheph is strong, as Deut 32:24 refers to the לְחֵמֵי רֶשֶׁף, or "bitter pestilence" (NABR), which can be read as the "missiles of Resheph."

If the poet portrays God as the Archer, that would distinguish Zophar from Eliphaz and Bildad. However, Zophar also includes "Terrors" in this assault. These Terrors appear to be hostile beings akin to Bildad's in ch. 18.<sup>230</sup> The word is different here (אֲמִים), and we have less to go on, as there are neither feminine verbs nor an obvious "King of Terrors" to anchor so mythological a reading. Nonetheless, there are several reasons to support seeing mythological persons here.

First, this is the third speech of the second cycle. Eliphaz's reference to Terrors, the Destroyer, and the conflagration, and Bildad's reflection on the Terrors established the motif. Second, the passage is structurally similar to Bildad's speech. Chapter 18 and 20:23–25 feature a series of verbs with implied subjects leading up to the introduction of the Terrors. Third, they are functionally equivalent to Bildad's Terrors. Both sets of verbs with implied subjects and Terrors effect the destruction of the wicked, indicating their roles as mythical beings tasked to enforce divine justice. Fourth, as Zobel notes, אֲמִים refers to mythological persons in other passages.<sup>231</sup>

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<sup>229</sup> Habel, *Job*, 319.

<sup>230</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 496, agrees but does not offer any arguments for thus identifying them beyond their occurrence in the plural making them less abstract compared to the singulars of 9:34, 13:21, and 33:7. Each of those passages feature possessive suffixes, referring to them as a personal effect. In Job's speeches they are God's effect and describe Job's desire for reprieve. In Zophar's speech, the term is in the absolute.

<sup>231</sup> Zobel, אֲמִים, TDOT, 1:220, lists Exod. 23:27; Ps 88:16[15]; Job 9:34; 13:21; 33:7. I would add Deut 32:25.

Fifth, there is significant lexical and topical overlap between the Zophar's speech and the others' speeches. Eliphaz refers to a flame (שלהבת; 15:30), a fire (אש; 15:34), and the sterilizing of the wicked and his offspring (15:34). Bildad refers to supernatural brimstone (גפריית) in the wicked's tent (18:15), ensuring no survival of his posterity (18:16–19). Similarly, Zophar here describes the unfanned fire (אש לא נפח) that consumes the wicked and the destruction of any survivor in his tent (20:26). The fire being “unfanned” implies its supernatural origin and is usually taken to indicate God's direct agency.<sup>232</sup> But it fits well with the just allotment from God (cf. 20:29) effected and mediated by the Terrors. Additionally, both Bildad and Zophar refer to the destruction of the wicked and their posterity specifically “in his tent” (באהלו; 18:14, 15, 20:26). Finally, Zophar states that “every darkness is hidden” for the wicked (טמון; 20:26) as Bildad had referred to the traps hidden for the wicked in 18:10 (בארץ חבלו טמון).

Sixth, the description of the wicked sucking on vipers' heads evokes several mythological and prophetic traditions, suggesting their mythical significance here. In the ancient Near East, the *Chaoskampf* story typically entails both a watery and a serpentine monster, and they can be accompanied by an army of lesser serpentine monsters. So, in *Enuma Elish*, Tiamat is described as watery chaos and she generates an army of serpentine monsters, including Kingu, her general and new consort.<sup>233</sup> So too, in the

<sup>232</sup> Pope, *Job*, 153, refers it to lightning, known as “the fire of God.” Similarly, Tremper, *Job*, 270. Habel, *Job*, 319, refers to the fire as “a direct act of divine intervention,” and suggests that Zophar may be alluding to Job's earlier catastrophe in 1:16. Seow *Job 1–21*, 845, similarly writes that the fire is “of divine origin,” but does not see “a cruel allusion,” but only the typical association between God's wrath and fire. This seems over charitable. Considering Bildad's and Zophar's affirmations of Job's and his children's deserved fates, and specifically their deaths correspondence to the wicked's loss of posterity, the allusion is surely meant to sting. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 496, discusses at some length the trope of God's fire, and exaggerates the frequency with which the chapter refers to God: “God is involved directly or indirectly in the fate of the wicked at several points in Zophar's speech (vv 15, 23, 28b, 29).” God is not mentioned in 23 or 28b.

<sup>233</sup> “Epic of Creation,” trans. Benjamin R. Foster, (*COS* 1.111:392–93).



Ba'al cycle, Ba'al dispatches Prince Sea (Yammu) along with Lotan, a seven-headed dragon, described as a twisting, fleeing serpent.<sup>234</sup> In the Hebrew appropriations of the motif, the Sea or the Deep is often paired with the serpentine monster.<sup>235</sup> Ps 74 refers to God's stirring up the Sea, and his crushing of the "heads of the dragons" and "the heads of the Leviathan" (74:13–14). Thus, the many-headed Leviathan is accompanied by the dragons, the *tannînîm*, as Israel appropriated this element of the *Chaoskampf* story.

More often, however, Hebrew Scripture refers to vipers, etc., as animals bearing ominous, even demonic characters, corresponding to a negative moral situation.<sup>236</sup> While some terms for serpent can be neutral or occur in positive contexts (e.g., Gen 49:17), Zophar's terms always bear negative connotations. The term in 20:16, אֲפֵסָה, has two other occurrences in Isa 30:6 and 59:5. Isaiah 59 describes the crimes of the wicked as alienating the people from God's providence. These crimes are responsible for the people's suffering, both insofar as they alienate God and as the evil act carries its own consequence. Isaiah 30:6, meanwhile, refers to the snakes in the wilderness, to which the people expose themselves as they seek assistance from Egypt rather than God. The exposure to adders naturally results from the journey. However, the adders are parallel with flying Seraphs (וְשָׂרָף מְעוֹפֵף), and God describes Egypt as "Rahab-do-nothing" (רַהַב הֵם שְׁבֹת) in 30:7. Thus, the oracle blends the natural and mythological. The wilderness between Judah and Egypt is the location of the lesser forces of chaos, and Judah's reliance on Egypt is tantamount to reliance on Rahab, the instantiation of chaos defeated

<sup>234</sup> "The Ba'lu Myth," trans. Dennis Pardee (*COS* 1.86:249, 252, 265).

<sup>235</sup> So, for example: Sea and Rahab (יָם and רַהַב) are paired in Job 26:12 and Ps 89:10–11; the Deep and the *Tannînîm* (תַּנִּינִים and תְּהוֹמִים), although in a demythologized context, are associated in Genesis 1:2, 21; Leviathan is referred to as a serpent (נָחָשׁ), the *tannîn* in the Sea whom God will slay, in Isa 27:1.

<sup>236</sup> Compare with the Egyptian, Arabic, Babylonian, and Assyrian belief in the embodiment of demons in animal forms, especially serpents and scorpions. See Edward Langton, *Essentials of Demonology* (London: Epworth Press, 1949) 12, 20, 37–38.

long ago (cf. Exod 15, Ps 89). Judah's reliance on Egypt is an inversion of the Exodus. Isaiah describes this as an inversion of creation, as Judah chooses the personification of chaos rather than God. Thus, while Zophar uses "adder" metaphorically, all three occurrences of אִפְעָה function similarly. The authors describe both the mythical and the natural indistinctly as natural consequences and supernatural agencies punish the wicked.

The other term Zophar uses in 20:14 and 16, "vipers" (פִּתְנִים), is also fraught with moral and mythological significance in its other four instances in the Hebrew Bible.<sup>237</sup> In Ps 58:5, the wicked are likened to a viper that will not be charmed. The psalm refers to the injustice committed by gods against the children of men (אֱלֹהִים ... בְּנֵי אָדָם; 58:2), relying on God to destroy the wicked, apparently including humans and gods alike (58:7). The psalm refers to both as vipers. Psalm 91:13 sets פִּתְנִים in parallel with תַּנִּין, as the righteous, guarded by angels, need not fear Terror (פֶּחַד; 91:5), pestilence (דָּבָר; 91:6), or the wicked (91:8), but will instead tread upon lions, vipers and the dragon (91:13). It too, then, discusses natural and mythological animals along with demonic forces without clear distinction. In Isaiah 11:8, the eschatological vision depicts the young child (יִוֹנֵק) playing carelessly and unharmed by the פֶּתֶן, with obvious mythological significance.<sup>238</sup>

Most significant for our purposes, however, is Deut 32:33. We have seen the similar functions of Resheph and Famine in Deut 32:24a in Eliphaz's Sons of Resheph and Bildad's Terror, Famine. In Deut 32:24b, God further describes his punishment for Israel's idolatry, sending the tooth of beasts (שֵׁן בַּהֲמוֹת) and the venom of animals gliding

<sup>237</sup> The term also occurs in Sirach 39:30.

<sup>238</sup> This final context is undoubtedly positive, but the rhetoric is compelling because of the animal's negative characterization. The mythological vipers accentuate the eschatological harmony portrayed in the Isaian oracle.

in the dust (חמת זחלי עפר).<sup>239</sup> Next comes the sword into the street and Terror (Zophar's term, אימה) into the home to destroy everyone (32:25). Deuteronomy 32 goes on to describe God's purpose in using the foreign nations to punish Israel and his eventual relenting from Israel's punishment, turning instead on the punitive nations. God thereby displays his singular divinity. Deuteronomy 32:32–33 associates these nations with Sodom and Gomorrah, using the metaphor of the “vine of Sodom,” to indicate their evil. The wine they produce, however, is characterized as the venom (literally “heat and cruelty”) of serpents and vipers, specifically “the head of vipers” (ראש פתנים; 32:33b) as in Job 20:16.<sup>240</sup> These two passages are the only places in Hebrew Scripture where this collocation is used, again suggesting Deut 32 as a source for the poet. In Deuteronomy, the idolatrous peoples who worship strange gods and punish Israel for worshipping strange gods (32:16) are described as mythically evil. Thus, the chapter aligns the activity of God, the strange gods (e.g., Resheph, 32:24), and the heathen peoples who worship those strange gods. It blends history and mythology, the agencies of the one supreme God with both the lower gods and their wicked peoples who fulfill God's will.

There is another substantial connection between Job 20 and Deut 32. Zophar describes the wicked's fate of seeing no streams of honey or cream (נחלי דבש וחמאה; 20:17). Irwin argues that Zophar here responds to Job's allusion to the Ba'al epic in 19:25, following the scholarly convention of amending 20:17 to include oil.<sup>241</sup> However, there are surer candidates for our poet's sources and textual tradition that do not require

<sup>239</sup> Note the presence of Behemoth in this verse. The participle, “gliding,” is rare. According to the KBL, s.v. זחל, 1:267, the Targum uses the term to refer to locust grubs. The participle also occurs in Micah 7:17 in parallel with נחש, but this instance is of limited value as evidence for snake as the axis of comparison is things that lick the dust. Here, however, the fact that the animals have venom indicates a slithering snake.

<sup>240</sup> Habel, *Job*, 317, directs us to Deut 32 when treating Zophar's earlier metaphor of eating (20:14–16).

<sup>241</sup> Irwin, “Job's Redeemer,” 223–24. Similarly, Habel, *The Book of Job*, 307–08. See “The Ba'lu Myth,” COS 1.81:271.

the suspect emendation adding oil.<sup>242</sup> For example, the child and remnant of Isa 7:15, 22 are sustained on these foods, albeit in the opposite order (חמאה ודבש). As both passages concern God's salvation—given or not—the oracle is a good candidate for a source.

Deuteronomy 32:13–14 also uses this pair of terms, though at first glance the correlation is weaker than the correlation with Isaiah. Cream and honey occur in a longer list (honey, oil, cream, milk, and grape juice). Each food has its own clause, as opposed to using tight parallels. However, the theme of eating and indigestion closely unites these chapters well beyond the occurrence of cream and honey. The wicked suckle (יִינֵק) from vipers' heads (Job 20:16), whereas God had suckled (יִנְקֶהוּ) the people with honey from the rock and oil from the boulder (Deut 32:13). Zophar describes wickedness as an insatiable appetite (Job 20:12–16). In Deuteronomy, Israel's fattened satisfaction (Deut 32:15) leads to their wickedness and punishment. Zophar's key term מררה, gall or poison, occurs in the characterization of the wine of Sodom (32:32). The connection between Deuteronomy's vine of Sodom and the wicked's suckling vipers' heads is therefore but one of the poet's appropriations of Deut 32 revolving around the *topos* of eating.

Evaluating Zophar's understanding of the cosmic structures of justice shows both a great deal of continuity and distinction compared to his friends. Zophar's personality is distinct. He is grotesque, violent, and less sophisticated. Ideologically, Zophar elides to a greater degree the agencies of God and the demonic enforcers of divine justice with each

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<sup>242</sup> The emendation of “oil” strengthens the connection to the Ba'al epic and it offsets the peculiarity of having three consecutive terms for canal, river, and wadi (בפלגות נהרי נהלי), all of which may be in construct and which are not divided by *vavs*. Dhorme, *Livre de Job*, 269, reads יצהר for נהרי, translating “huile.” Gordis, *Book of Job*, 217, alternatively argues for recognizing נהרי as a new noun meaning oil deriving from נהר, “to shine,” analogous to יצהר, “oil,” derived from צהל, “to shine.” Seow, *Job 1–21*, 854, observes, however, that none of the scholars proposing the first solution provide an explanation as to how the “putative error might have occurred” and that there is no evidence נהר had this meaning in any semitic language.

other and with inherent natural law. The weapons—wielded by God or demons—include bow and blade.<sup>243</sup> Thus, Zophar’s ambiguity allows the more militant conception of God, which Job articulated as early as Job 6:4 and Eliphaz and Bildad continued to avoid. Zophar’s attack maintains a role for the Terrors (אֲמִים), similar to Eliphaz’s Sons of Resheph and Terrors (פְּחָדִים) and to Bildad’s Terrors (בְּלִהוֹת). But their agencies and God’s are syntactically and ideologically indistinct.

The poet no doubt intended this ambiguity. Job succeeds in destabilizing the friends’ neat cosmic structures. Zophar’s ambiguity reflects their collective inability to retain it in view of Job’s critique. Zophar is arguably to be commended as the most candid of the friends. His violent character brings him the closest to acknowledging Job’s more plausible assessment of the cosmos, where Eliphaz and Bildad seek to maintain the fig leaf of an asymmetrical aesthetic. To Zophar, God is involved in the destruction of the sufferer, regardless of whatever machinations he created to participate in that cosmically ordered destruction. Of course, Zophar concedes neither Job’s conviction of God’s arbitrariness nor of innocent suffering. But Zophar’s loss of sage serenity reflects Job destabilizing their position, thereby anticipating the dissolution of the dialogue.

Yet, regardless of even this grotesque concession, Zophar does not indulge in a description of God establishing the storm-god motif. The fact that missiles (לְחֻמִּים) “rain down” on the wicked does not establish this trope. If anything, that the bow may belong to either God or the Terrors conflates Zophar’s god with Resheph, whose offspring are those Terrors, and who wields those missiles in Deut 32:24 (לְחֻמֵּי רֶשֶׁף). Zophar’s God is therefore not the traditional storm-god, Ba‘al, Shaddai, or Yahweh. Zophar, after all, does

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<sup>243</sup> On the ambiguity of the term for ‘iron blade,’ נֶשֶׁק בְּרִזָּל, see Seow, *Job 1–21*, 859.

not know the name of the Lord, Yahweh, and he uses Shaddai only once (11:7), and only in poetic parallel after using the more generic אלה three times in consecutive verses (11:5–7).<sup>244</sup> Of course, Zophar would not admit this association with Resheph. But the poet satirizes his straw man representative of the Deuteronomistic tradition.

### ***Conclusion of the Friends' Mythological Perspective***

The friends present a mostly consistent mythology supporting their common monotheistic understanding of cosmic justice. Each affirms the just management of the cosmos in fidelity to the doctrine of retribution. Job and the friends understand every charge against the cosmos as a charge against God. This position is to be distinguished from various wisdom literatures' simple commitment to the justice and ordering of the cosmos itself. Rather, the ideology is to be understood as an attempt to account for evil in a monotheistic theological context, using sapiential and mythological traditions.

Each friend supports the asymmetrical aesthetic attributing beneficence directly to God and maleficence to other forces. The asymmetry is established semantically by the friends' rhetoric, portraying God as actively blessing the pious and passively allowing the wicked to suffer their just desserts. It is confirmed by and of a piece with the physical structures of the cosmos (18:4). Finally, it is confirmed mythologically, as the demons' activities complement God's passivity in destroying the wicked. The aesthetic enables the friends to have it both ways. Suffering is just. This justice confirms God's justice and omnipotence in his cosmic ordering. God is basically beneficent. The other agents' direct responsibility for suffering blunts God's implication in suffering.

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<sup>244</sup> Thus, Zophar shares a similar spread with his friends' use of the name Shaddai compared to the use of the more generic terms for God.

Despite his relative thematic consistency, the poet makes the friends distinct, giving each his own voice and rhetoric. Eliphaz's evident superiority and initial serenity acknowledges the doctrine of retribution's more refined portrayal. Nonetheless, the poet indulges in straw-manning with Zophar. The poet makes Eliphaz guilty by association. He also implies a more substantial point. Whatever aesthetic restraint the sage may maintain, innocent suffering exposes the doctrine of retribution's cruel implications.

The characters are also dynamic. The poet portrays building hostility especially in the more pronounced articulation of demonic activity. "The sons of Resheph take wing" in 5:7 yields to the hunting party of Terrors, the Firstborn of Death, and their King in ch. 18 and to the wicked suckling vipers and being attacked by the missiles—of God, Resheph, or the demons—in ch. 20. As the hostility builds, so does a certain ambiguity. Zophar renders the cause of suffering ambiguous by conflating divine, demonic, and natural agencies. He thus undermines the carefully crafted asymmetry. Even Eliphaz surrenders this asymmetry in his third speech. He asserts that 'El Shaddai has entered directly into judgment with Job (22:2–5) before segueing to the demonic assault (22:10–11). Job has pushed the sages until they have abandoned their asymmetrical aesthetic and instead relish in God's assault. The dissolution of the dialogue in the third cycle reflects, therefore, not only a comment on the limitations of the genre and wisdom literature in general, but the deconstruction of the friends' aesthetic, exposing the *schadenfreude* that follows from their assumptions about suffering.

Still, this aesthetic is peripheral. The ideology at its core is the poet's primary target. Whatever his opinion of Job's cosmology, one of the poet's essential tasks was to use Job and the storm-god motif to deconstruct the friends' ideology. Their ideology

includes the universally recognized doctrine of retribution. The poet also implicates the mythological structures inherited from Deuteronomy as inadequate to the mysteries of God's relationship with humanity and of suffering.

We saw ideological similarities with Deuteronomy in the subordination of foreign gods to the superior deity, and their incorporation along with natural and demonic forces as God's implements of punishment. These themes were well represented in allusions to Deut 32. We saw an allusion to the Deuteronomistic history's Elijah cycle's refutation of the storm-god motif. These appropriations of the Deuteronomic tradition show that the poet portrays the friends as its representatives. Despite their dramatic ignorance of Hebrew Scripture and the divine name, the poet uses them to lambast proponents of the doctrine of retribution as taught by the Deuteronomic literature.

As the poet nowhere questions monotheism—which would be the easiest solution to the problem of evil—his critique of this Deuteronomic tradition is a critique of this particular approach to the problem of reconciling suffering with benevolent monotheism. He recognized that the asymmetrical aesthetic was a red herring distracting from God's implication in human suffering. While he could likely concede that no one was perfect, the abstract and universal nature of this claim makes it a tautology. It has no way to account for the significance of individuals' moral disparity. These Deuteronomists had little to say. A different ideology, a different mythological framework, was necessary.

The effect of using fictive foreigners to deconstruct Deuteronomy is a subtle matter. We saw in the introduction the tendency to characterize Job as Wisdom literature and the effect of the whirlwind address as repudiating any advantage to particular groups—national or more narrowly particular schools—in favor of a more universal



conception of God. And undoubtedly, Job is aptly considered wisdom literature and the book does commend its theology for universal application. But the wisdom dialogue fails and the whirlwind speech—where Yahweh speaks for himself, rather than Job and the friends arguing about 'El or even Shaddai—is critical in Job's reconciliation with God and the cosmos. Therefore it seems more appropriate to consider that the poet insists that revelation is necessary. Hebrew revelation has something vital for universal application: it speaks to the riddle of human existence authoritatively. Simultaneously, Hebrew Scripture and tradition stood in need of further revelation and reflection: Job speaks to this riddle of Hebrew revelation.

The aesthetic feature of the friends' mythology that bears on this need for revelation most directly is the unmediatable ontological gap most clearly discussed by Eliphaz. The revelation he described was an anti-revelation: a simple message declaring the impossibility of communion with God, emphasizing the ontological insignificance of humans. As he explains, even the lower celestial beings would not assist Job. Not only did the poet parody the theophanic elements of this revelatory episode, but the message itself is trite, contributing nothing. Thus, Eliphaz disallows any noetic, juridical, or ontological mediation. This is part of the friends' aesthetic, as the transcendence of God is exalted at humanity's expense. This aesthetic of God's disinterest in humanity is thoroughly refuted by the book's portrayal of God in the introduction, by Job's longing for communion with God, by the address from the whirlwind, and finally by God's restoration of Job in the epilogue.

The aesthetic therefore includes a drastic departure from Deuteronomy, as the premise of that tradition is God's special interest in Israel: his noetic self-disclosure, his

entrance into quasi-juridical obligation, and his exaltation of Israel's ontological status. Thus, while the friends represent the Deuteronomic tradition, their universalist context and their lack of a revelatory and covenantal relationship with God removes the foundation that makes Deuteronomy desirable or even tolerable. Therefore, they not only parody individual passages and themes, as has been noted by other scholars and been shown here, but they satirically demonstrate that God's goodness and his judgment's justice can only be upheld if he further enters into relationship with humanity, including his self-disclosure and self-obligation in his commitment to humanity's growth.

## CHAPTER 2: JOB'S MONOTHEISTIC MYTHOLOGIES: STANCES ON SUFFERING

### *Introduction*

Job requires a subtle hand. The statuses of his various mythological perspectives are less clear than the friends' perspectives. While the friends are manifestly a foil, it is not clear *a priori* which elements of Job's speeches the poet desires us to accept and which he only uses to undermine the friends' position. Job uses several different and even mutually exclusive mythological structures as he takes distinct stances assessing the moral nature of the cosmos. Therefore, it is evident that the poet did not intend that we accept everything Job says (as the narrative and divine speeches confirm). But he clearly intended us to appropriate some of Job's speech. It will thus be expedient to organize the investigation of Job thematically, to evaluate the various mythological structures Job employs and the stances they correspond to, and how these structures and stances bear on the dialogue and book. I will partly follow the book's order, since dramatic progression is part of the poet's strategy. But I will prioritize theme over chapter progression, as the character spends several speeches (9–10, 12–14, 16–17, 19) developing three different mythological motifs as alternative perspectives on cosmic and divine justice.

First, I will treat the Job of the prologue. This will be direct and brief. Indeed, it is so simple that it hardly seems to merit its own section, but this simplicity should not be scorned.<sup>245</sup> As Fox observes, the prologue's simplicity establishes the fundamental

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<sup>245</sup> As Clines, "False Naivety in the Prologue of Job," in *On the Way to the Postmodern: Old Testament Essays 1967–1998*, vol 2, JSOTSup 293 (Sheffield: Academic Press, 1998), 735–44, has argued at length. I find the framework of "false naivety" unhelpful and several of Clines's arguments unsatisfactory, but I agree with his larger position that the prologue is more subtle than its critics recognize and that it both establishes the essential themes of the book as discussed in the dialogues and offers an exemplar for the meaning of human suffering, as being somehow "for God," Clines, *ibid.*, 744.

presuppositions of the following dialogue in lucid detail, without being simplistic or naive.<sup>246</sup> This is of course critical regarding Job's innocence. It is no less true of Job's personal theological perspective. Thus, I will briefly analyze Job's theological presuppositions that control his following theological discourse.

Second, I will treat the mythological discourse in Job's lamentation. Job laments most vehemently in ch. 3, but he resumes this stance later in the dialogue, most notably in ch. 29 *after* the debate has terminated. I will focus my analysis on ch. 3, since God's reply from the whirlwind engages it directly, and this lamentation reflects Job's initial reaction and assessment of creation. This poetic speech is not part of the debate. It is Job's soliloquy, revulsion at creation, and lamentation for humanity. While it provokes the dialogue and Job's subsequent laments indicate this attitude remains within Job, its temporal priority reflects a logical one. Job's latter stances are alternative consequences of his evaluation of the human experience in ch. 3 and partly provoked by his friends.

The third section will treat one of these alternatives: Job's accusatory stance regarding the cosmos as chaos and God Almighty as sponsor of chaos. I will discuss Job's extensive use of the divine warrior motif throughout the dialogue, but I will be especially interested in Job's use of the storm-god, *Chaoskampf* motif. Job uses the traditional mythological motif in stark contrast to his friends' more sanguine perspectives. Indeed, I will show that Job's distorted resurrection of that motif dramatically contests the friends' mythology and aesthetics, and the distorted myth's greater explanatory power for the human experience undermines their position.

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<sup>246</sup> Fox, "Job the Pious," 357.

Finally, the fourth section will treat the second alternative: Job's speculative stance seeking to render the cosmos morally coherent and just. This speculative approach alternates between a third party who will guarantee just reward for the righteous, or a post-mortem just reward for the righteous freely given by God. This section will require delicate care. I will have to analyze these themes according to their place in the drama, according to their implications for the theological problems raised and left unanswered in the book, and according to the significance carried by the latter's allusive character. Job's speculations engage Hebrew writings of which the persona Job is ignorant. But the poet expected his audience to recognize these allusions. The speculations are therefore either parodic comments on or speculative arguments from those passages.

These different frames of analysis will be in various relationships to each other, but I will argue that the poet's allusions move Job's speculative hope from the realm of speculative but abandoned hope to speculative argumentation insisting on that hope. The poet asserts that the validity and fulfillment of Job's desires for an afterlife—potentially solving the problems of cosmic and divine justice—is the necessary condition for acknowledging the validity of Hebrew Scripture's revelation of God's character. While some see such allusions as parodies of scriptural piety, I submit that this argument, correlating Hebrew Scripture and piety to the post-mortem reward of the righteous, is the poet's constructive contribution through his main character's persona.

### ***The Prose on Job's Monotheistic Piety (Ch. 1–2)***

Job's personal cosmology in the narrative prologue is undeveloped and simple. He fears God, namely Yahweh (it appears to be a literary device that the Job of the

narrative knows of God's revealed name, but the Job of the dialogue does not).<sup>247</sup> He hopes that his piety can protect his children in the world, indicating his understanding of God's power, direct involvement, punitive justice, and mercy. His piously stoic response confirms his basic theological perspective on God's power and direct involvement. All mundane experience can be attributed to God's active will. While Job's disposition and stance before God will radically change, and his cosmology will become much more developed, this monotheistic perspective on God's irresistible will is never questioned. It remains a critical first premise for Job largely in common with his friends. And it is the root of Job's problem. God's power nullifies any possibility of shifting the blame for Job's suffering elsewhere. Human morality and divine reaction are bilateral. God gives; God takes away. This is affirmed in ch. 2 and never questioned through ch. 37, even as the values attending that basic fact are radically questioned and reframed.

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<sup>247</sup> Recall, there is a disputed instance of the divine name in Job's speech in 12:9. This is the only instance of the divine name in the dialogues. Authors frequently emend to אֱלֹהִים, citing some manuscripts which attest it. Below I will treat more scholarly arguments about the relationship between 2 Isaiah and Job and the details of this reading when I offer my own interpretation of the passage. For now, it suffices to mention two scholars and state the textual issues. Frank Moore Cross, אֱל, TDOT, 1:259, is not atypical when he simply writes that "the textual evidence is divided." However, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 633, reports that there are only five manuscripts that attest אֱלֹהִים, and they are all late and unreliable. Thus, we cannot use those manuscripts' attestation as evidence of a separately maintained preservation of the original reading. Rather, they evidence scribes making the judgment that the text ought to read אֱלֹהִים rather than יְהוָה. Thus, the late MT outliers reflect the earliest evidence of commentators seeking to correct a perceived error in the tradition they received. While this judgment cannot, therefore, point to manuscript evidence according to the principles of text criticism seeking an authentic tradition maintained in parallel with the corruptions of the Leningrad, Aleppo, and the majority of texts, the judgment might be argued on literary rather than textual grounds. Job 12:9 (וַיֹּדְעוּ... כִּי יְדַע בְּכָל אֱלֹהִים כִּי יְדַע בְּכָל אֱלֹהִים עֲשֵׂתָהּ זֹאת) and Isaiah 41:20 (וַיֹּדְעוּ... כִּי יְדַע בְּכָל אֱלֹהִים עֲשֵׂתָהּ זֹאת) are nearly identical and there is evidently a historical relationship in their authorship. I take Job as written after Second Isaiah, and the allusion in Job 12:9 to Isaiah 41:20 fits a rhetorical pattern ubiquitous in Job. Nonetheless, the diachronic direction of influence is indecisive for this question. The synchronic relationship could explain an original reading of אֱלֹהִים being changed for יְהוָה as the later scribe's familiarity with the Isaian passage could result either in a scribe's memory completing the line with the more familiar passage's word choice, or in a deliberate modification to strengthen the relationship to the source text. The practice of counting consonants would not catch such an error, as both titles have four letters. Qumran does not attest this verse, unfortunately. Neither can the LXX be used to posit a Hebrew *Vorlage*, as the LXX compares to the MT quite inconsistently in the translation of divine titles. While the LXX translates κυριου here, it also translates κυριος from אֱלֹהִים in 3:4 and 5:17, and from שְׁדֵי in 6:4.

### *Job's Lament and Cosmic Aesthetic of Fury/Rogez (Ch. 3)*

Chapter 3 extensively develops Job's cosmological perspective. The chapter is fundamentally a critique of creation in the form of (1) a curse on Job's day of birth and night of conception and (2) a reflection on the plight of humanity in general. The chapter's relationship to Gen 1–2:3 has been frequently observed, most famously by Michael Fishbane. Fishbane lays out a schema wherein he observes parallels with every day of the creation week in Job 3. While not every connection is compelling, Fishbane makes strong connections between Job's speech and the beginning and the end of Genesis 1.<sup>248</sup> Job's malediction, "let it be dark" (יהי חשך; 3:4) directly contrasts with Day One's creation of primordial light, "let there be light" (יהי אור). Job's conclusion (3:26) uses three verbs falling in the semantic range of peace, ease, and rest, (שקט, שלה, and נוח), to indicate that there is no sabbath rest. This suggests that the poet avoids the root from Gen 2:2 (שבת) to enhance the disparity. Rather, for Job, the only real rest (ישן, שקט, שכב) is the gift of death as one escapes the created order. Before then, all human experience is *rogez*, nervous agitation, fury, or existential chaos (רגז; 3:17, 26).

The passage's ideological relationship to Gen 1 warrants further comment. On one level, Job's discussion is a complete rejection of Genesis's perspective on creation.

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<sup>248</sup> Michael Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23–26 and Job III 3–13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *VT* 21 (1971), 154. Weaker connections include referring God above (ממעל) in Job 3:4 to the waters above (מעל) in Gen 1:7 and contrasting humanity's creation with Job's wish for death. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 81, criticizes Fishbane's discussion, acknowledging the neat reversal of Job 3:4 and Gen 1:3, but arguing that the Leviathan "is not a *reversal* of the creation of sea monsters... and the rest Job longs for in the grave is no kind of parallel to God's rest on the seventh day." These criticisms are pedantic and superficial. While invoking the Leviathan does not reverse its own creation, the invocation of the chaos monster—not the creature of Gen 1—opposes creation, and it recalls the *Chaoskampf* tradition which Genesis 1 displaces. It is very much a reversal. Regarding the sabbath, "no kind of parallel" is indefensible language. Rather, the reversal of Genesis's ideology is patently clear. According to Job: creation is not good, Job longs for death and rejects fertility, and the only rest for humanity is not a participation in God's rest, per the image of God and the goodness of creation, but it is an oblivion found in death and the escape from the created order.

Creation is not good, there is no rest, and Job rejects the fertility that led to his life and the filling of the earth. As Seow has observed, Job's perspective on fertility is a reversal of Jewish creation ideology, which itself is a reversal of ANE myths, such as *Atrahasis*, wherein the gods are responsible for human infertility.<sup>249</sup> On a deeper level, however, Job's rejection of "creation as it is" does not reject Genesis's idealization of the world, nor does Job's second reversal ally him with *Atrahasis*. Rather, Job's critique of the actual world presupposes the ideals of Gen 1. Job regrets his existence precisely because the world fails to manifest those ideal standards, values, and aesthetics. *Mutatis mutandis*, whatever criticism Job directs at the creator is based on the creator's own revealed ideal. In short, creation is not as it ought to be, and it would appear that the creator is at fault, but both indictments follow from the creator's own revealed standard.

Job's critique of human experience, then, is intensely Jewish and apparently complicated by the Priestly tradition. Job does not simply explain the way things are, blithely deferring to the gods' indifference to humans (as *Atrahasis*), though he will wrestle with this notion. Nor can he have recourse to the paradoxically reassuring resurgence of chaos to shift blame from God, though he will appropriate tropes from the *Chaoskampf* tradition as he blames God. Rather, Job's difficulty lies in a premise he shares with Gen 1–2, of God's unrivaled mastery over the world. Thus, Job uses a semantic structure modeled on Genesis and is in close dialogue with it. Job's problem therefore is fundamentally, profoundly, and consciously a Jewish problem.

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<sup>249</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 323. We should nuance this observation, insofar as Genesis 1 (particularly in its current position) describes an ideal state, indicating God's desire and plan for creation, rather than explaining why it is as it is. *Atrahasis*, on the other hand, describes not an ideal state, but the world as it is. Thus, the contrast is not direct. Further, God's activity in Genesis 3 is not so dissimilar from *Atrahasis*. While conceptions increase, the difficulty and danger increase as well, creating an etiology of the actual world's circumstances as opposed to a reflection on the ideal cosmos.



And it is a big problem. The severity of Job's reaction calls for more than lament. Rather, Job's lament incorporates a curse. The curse reflects the correlation between language and reality. The class of professionals who curse the Day and rouse the Leviathan (3:8) imply this correlation. Curses are a participation in or exploitation of the creative powers of divine language. Job's language is a parodic imitation of the creative act, suggesting that Job intends a similar but un-creative effect. The point is underscored by בָּרַךְ's six occurrences in chs. 1–2 completed by a dissonant “seventh” occurrence of קָלַל in 3:3, coming after seven days of silence.<sup>250</sup>

Recognizing the context of Gen 1 brings the significance of Job's curse into relief. The passage is rife with meteorological phenomena: day and night, darkness and light, gloom (צִלְמוֹת), cloud, darkening of day (כְּמַרְרֵי יוֹם), stars, twilight, and the dawn.<sup>251</sup> On its

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<sup>250</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 316, describes this structural seven, observing that the presence of six occurrences of בָּרַךְ sets the reader up to expect a decisive seventh occurrence. The presence of קָלַל is therefore doubly troubling, as it disrupts the septimal sequence, corresponding to Job's undermining of creation. There is furthermore an exchange of ambiguities. The root בָּרַךְ of course may be used in its literal sense, to bless, or euphemistically for cursing. Both uses are present in chs. 1–2. The root קָלַל removes all ambiguity regarding the use of the verb and corresponds to Job's unambiguous stance. However, ch. 3 gains the ambiguity of the object of Job's curse. Strictly, the narrator tells us that Job curses his day. Job explicitly targets his day and night. By extension, Job rejects all creation and human existence, aligning himself with the forces of chaos who would undo all of creation, not merely his day. By extension, Job implies a radical indictment of the creator. Despite these ramifications, which will be confronted dramatically throughout the dialogues, this cursing does not explicitly condemn God to the face. Thus, this verb is both anticlimax and rising action. Job's situation has changed and become much more dangerous. However, it is not yet the expected moment of crisis. The scene is thus set for the following dialogues, where the relationship between Job's suffering and God's justice will become more explicit and Job's temptation more subtle and nuanced. As J. B. Burns, “Cursing the Day of Birth,” *Proceedings*, 13 (1993): 17, observes “he will come perilously close” to cursing God. Valerie Forstman Pettys, “Let There be Darkness: Continuity and Discontinuity in the ‘Curse’ of Job 3,” *JSOT*, 98 (2002): 94, makes the insightful observation that בָּרַךְ occurs for the seventh time in the epilogue, as God blesses Job at the end. It is God's initiative and blessing that resolves the ambiguities surrounding the seventh occurrence, simultaneous with resolving the dramatic tension, regarding Job's reconciliation with God and the relationship of mutual blessing. Finally, Perdue, “Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job: Theological Anthropology in the First Cycle of Job's Speeches,” in *The Book of Job*, ed. W. A. M. Beuken, (Leuven: Leuven University, 1994): 144–45, writes that Job begins the chapter with seven curses. However, he did not account for his numeration and the septimal structure is unclear. I will revisit this heptad in chapter 4.

<sup>251</sup> I here follow definitions provided by KBL, but the precise meaning of some of these words is uncertain. For example, KBL, s. v. ‘כְּמַרְרֵי,’ 1:482, acknowledges its definition as conjecture. Alternatively, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 344–45, takes the noun as referring to “bitterness,” breaking the sequence of meteorological imagery.

face, Job merely curses the day of his birth and the night of his conception. However, in so doing he assaults the foundations of creation. The hallmark of creation in Gen 1 is the introduction of distinctions, the imposition of order. Job's wishing darkness upon the day is an introduction of confusion, an imposition of chaos. Significantly, Job does not wish for the triumph of Night over Day, but specifically of Darkness. Night itself is created in Gen 1, as the ordered complement to Day. Here, Job wishes for the destruction of Night itself. Job's wish for the absence of the stars of twilight and the coming day (3:9) take away the defining conclusion of Night. Thus, Job's wish for darkness is for the triumph of primordial darkness, that which preexists God's initial creative act of light.<sup>252</sup>

Similarly, his wish for his day and night to have no place in the calendar (3:6) corresponds to Day Four's creation of times and seasons governed by the sun, moon, and stars. Even if Job targets his birthday and conception night, all creation would be undone in either moment envisioned by his curse.<sup>253</sup> Day and Night alike would end in perpetual darkness, leaving no possibility of any day or night to follow. The cosmos is vulnerable, as a single day's dissolution into chaos would discontinue the calendar. Thus, Job's personal experience of injustice challenges the whole cosmic order.<sup>254</sup>

Darkness, of course, is associated with death, the grave, and the underworld.

Multiple elements in Job's curse accentuate these chthonic connotations. The cosmic oblivion Job desires in his curse (3:3–9) corresponds to the personal oblivion Job desires in his lament (3:11–26). Job seeks this oblivion in death (מֵוֶת) and the grave (קֶבֶר).

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<sup>252</sup> Following the trend amongst scholars taking Gen 1:1 to refer not to some initial, *ex nihilo*, creative act, but as a heading preceding the account of creation. Creation thus understood is the creation of light and life and the imposition of order on the chaotic and dark watery world.

<sup>253</sup> Some scholars, however, limit Job's destructive purpose to the single day and night. See, e.g., David Clines, *Job 1–20*, 87; Jean L  v  que, *Job et son Dieu*, 1:336).

<sup>254</sup> As Burns, "Cursing the Day of Birth," 17, observes, the poet "means Job's predicament to be that of everyman and to be laden with cosmic ramifications."

The noun frequently translated as gloom, צלמות, has also been taken as “the shadow of death” in the tradition following the MT’s vocalization (*šalmāwet*). This sense of the consonants must be considered, given the chapter’s orientation to death and the presence of the mythological Leviathan (3:6)—corresponding to Lotan, ally of Yamm, the Sea, precursor to Mot, Death, in the Baal Epic. This is especially the case if Seow is correct in arguing that “gloom” was more likely to be pronounced *šalmôt* rather than *šalmût*.<sup>255</sup> In this case, the word would sound precisely like ‘shadow of Mot,’ even if a generic “gloom” or “pall” was the common sense of the word. Furthermore, Barr has argued that צלמות likely means “shadow of death” in Job 38:17, since “the Gates of Death” (שערי מות) are in parallel with “the Gates the Shadow of Death” (שערי צלמות).<sup>256</sup> Notably, Barr did not intend to establish the “right” or original sense of צלמות, but to argue that the interpretation of צלמות as “shadow of death” appears to have been understood and intended by the time of Job’s final stages of composition.<sup>257</sup> Further, Barr believes Job’s finalization was not too much earlier than the translation of the LXX, which translates צלמות as ἀσὰς θανάτου multiple times.<sup>258</sup> Therefore, it is nearly certain that the author intended this connotation to come across in Job 38:17.<sup>259</sup> The author was

<sup>255</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 342.

<sup>256</sup> J. Barr, “Philology and Exegesis: Some General Remarks, with Illustrations from Job,” in *Questions disputées de l’Ancien Testament: Méthode et théologie. XXIII<sup>e</sup> session des Journées Bibliques de Louvain*, ed. C. Brekelmans, BETL (Leuven: Leuven, 1974), 52.

<sup>257</sup> Thus, Barr allows for the possibility that Job 38 and 3 were written by different authors, complicating the use of Job 38:17 as evidence for the sense of צלמות Job 3:5. I do not see strong reason for positing multiple authors behind Job’s poetry, excepting chapters 28 and 32–37. In fact, Job 3 and 38, particularly 3:23 and 38:8, have too many compelling rhetorical correspondences to suppose an incidental relationship between them. While it is possible that a later author used 38:8 to counter 3:23, the text works so well as it is, that the burden of proof lays on those who would posit multiple authors of the poetry, and, even in that event, we would have to consider the achievement of the latter author in addressing Job 3.

<sup>258</sup> Barr, “Philology and Exegesis,” 51, refers to this translation occurring in Job, the Psalms, Isa 9:1 and Jer 13:16, amounting to “about 10 or 11” of the total “18 or so cases in the Hebrew.”

<sup>259</sup> Thus, if H. Niehr, צלמות, TDOT 12:397, is correct in his assertion that *tsalmāwet* reflects a folk etymology deriving from Midrashic explanation, it is nonetheless a very early folk etymology. Barr, “Philology and Exegesis,” 52, disputes the rationality of Niehr’s position, arguing that it is unlike typical

not the first to make the association, and he would have expected the connotation to be caught by the reader. Indeed, in six of the word's ten occurrences in Job, the association between צלמות and death is unavoidable. Another, 24:17a, shows the author deliberately exploited the polysemic potential of צלמות, per its clearly morbid use in 24:17b.<sup>260</sup>

Other meteorological elements also potentially refer to mythological personages. The sequence of Night preceding Day and the logical destruction of the latter following the former discussed above evoke mythological cosmogony. For example, Seow has observed that Day was considered to be the offspring of Night.<sup>261</sup>

Dawn (שחר, 3:9) also has mythological overtones.<sup>262</sup> Here it has a conspicuous correspondence to *Shahru*, the Ugaritic deity. According to Seow, *Shahru* resided in the underworld and cast spells “against (someone’s) days.” Thus, Seow argues that those who “curse the day” (3:8) are not some imagined caste of sorcerers but more likely

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Midrashic-etymological explanations which “were not generally accompanied by a systematic change of the pronunciation of words for the sake of conformity to the explanation.”

<sup>260</sup> The ten occurrences are: 3:5, 10:21, 22, 12:22, 16:16, 24:17(x2), 28:3, 34:22, and 38:17. Instances where the association is unavoidable are 3:5, 10:21, 22, 16:16, 24:17b, 38:17. In 24:17a, Job describes the perspective of the wicked. It appears at first that the word refers to darkness to evoke the secrecy and shame of the wicked’s actions. However, the wicked then recognize the Terrors (בלהות) of the צלמות. As we have already seen the significance of the Terrors as a class of demons associated with their King, perhaps Mot himself, the intonations of this verse are obvious. The author exploits the senses of the word as the wicked at first see צלמות as “darkness,” an opportunity for secrecy, and only then recognize צלמות as the “shadow of Death,” with its accompanying Terrors. Thus, the more mundane sense of the word is trumped by the more mythological, per to the poet’s use of retrospective patterning or Janus parallelism. Job 12:22 is an example of a non-compelling occurrence, but refers to God’s unique ability to bring צלמות to light. Job 28:23 is vaguely cosmological in its context of mining, though Edward L. Greenstein’s argument, “The Poem on Wisdom in Job 28,” in *Cognition in Context*, ed. E. J. van Wolde (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 269, that the chapter describes God’s activity in creation implies a more cosmological context. On the other hand, Niehr, צלמות, TDOT, 12:398, sees the human miners as indicating that “human intellect is able to penetrate even into the depths of the underworld. Job 34:24 is the sole occurrence neither directly associated with death nor in a cosmological context. Nonetheless, even this passage *could* be read as “shadow of death” as it would indicate that neither darkness (חשך) nor צלמות can hide the wicked, suggesting, perhaps, Elihu’s perspective that even death does not protect against God’s judgment! This would be particularly relevant per Job’s desire to escape God’s gaze in death. Regardless, this last point is probably moot since Elihu is certainly later and by a different hand. Elihu may even be demythologizing the word. Thus 28:23 as well.

<sup>261</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 323.

<sup>262</sup> E.g., Cant 6:10, Job 41:10, Ps 139:9, Isa 14:12–15. See Ruppert, שחר, TDOT 14:579–580.

“fallen astral deities who invoke spells to ensure eternal darkness.”<sup>263</sup> I see no reason that such deities need be fallen.<sup>264</sup> But the correlation between the chthonic Dawn and cursing days is compelling. It seems, though, that Dawn’s relationship to Day need not invalidate the supposition that Job envisions a class of human sorcerers. Rather, we should expect to find human sorcerers corresponding to deities’ activities, as humans’ magical practices gain their power through imitation, cooperation, or manipulation of deities’ powers.<sup>265</sup>

The stars (כוכבים; 3:9) are also frequently associated with celestial beings, even the Sons of God in Job 38:7 (כל בני אלהים... כוכבי בקר), who appear in the prologue (1:6, 2:1). As part of physical creation, a source of light, and an element of calendrical and luminous order, their extinction in 3:9 counters creation as in Gen 1 and Job 38:7. If we consider the possibility of their identification as mythological personages, then there is the further significance of wishing these beings’ extinction. Job repudiates creation and

<sup>263</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 349–50, 323–24. While Seow notes that this text is relatively late, the interpretation offered here is a natural reading of the text and only corroborated by the extra details supplied by the other text. This is to be preferred to N. H. Tur-Sinai’s theory, *The Book of Job: A New Commentary* (Jerusalem: Kiryath Sepher, 1957), 57, where Job invokes a myth wherein he wishes that ancient “heroes,” (עֲתוּדִי, cf. MT עֲתִידִי) had cursed his night of conception, which heroes had been roused by Leviathan in their war against the “light-god.” Tur-Sinai acknowledges that this element of the myth “is not known in this form from any other source,” but asserts that this passage is quoting from “an ancient epic on Leviathan’s war against the light-god.” Tur-Sinai does point to grammatical difficulties in the verse (pairing an infinitive with an adjective, “ready to curse”), to Isaiah 14, and two other passages in Job referring to rebellion against the light (15:24 *seq.*, 24:13–26). However, the grammar does not seem to be insurmountable (or at least no more so than much of Job’s poetry!); while there are undoubtedly parallels to Isaiah 14 in the passage, the עֲתוּדִי of Isa 14:9 are not functionally equivalent to the עֲתִידִי of Job 3:8; and both the passages from Job 15:24 ff and 24:13–26 are quite intelligible apart from this proposed mythological complex.

<sup>264</sup> Although, see in this regard Ruppert’s discussion of שָׁחַר in the context of Isaiah 14. While the story speaks of the fall of the morning star (הַיֵּלֶל), it is called the Son of the Dawn. The morning star and the dawn would be associated closely, as concurrent phenomena that rise and seem to be obliterated by the day.

<sup>265</sup> This is what we find in cultic prostitutes’ or priestesses’ ritual sexual intercourse correlating to the fertility of the deities in the fertility cults. The understood relationship between the ritual and the deities would have been that of sympathetic magic. While the extent of this practice is debated, it is clear that there was a fertility rite in early Mesopotamia wherein the *entu* priestess and the King had ritual intercourse as part of her impersonation of the goddess Inanna, whether upon her installation or as part of an annual rite for prosperity. See, Douglas R. Frayne, “Notes on the Sacred Marriage Rite,” *BO* 42 (January): 5–22. Edwin M. Yamamauchi, “Cultic Prostitution: A Case Study in Cultural Diffusion,” in *Orient and Occident: Essays Presented to Cyrus H. Gordon*, ed Harry A. Hoffner (Neukirchen-Verluy, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1973), 213–22.

the intelligent beings associated with its illuminated and ordered continuation. This further resonates with the *Chaoskampf* allusion in 3:8, as Perdue notes the identification of the stars with “the cosmic army of the creator.”<sup>266</sup>

Regarding the allusion to the *Chaoskampf* myth, the discussion has thus far treated Job 3:8a as Day, following the MT’s יָד, and not yet considered the frequent emendation to Sea (יָם). While the MT’s *mater* indicates ‘Day,’ a more conservative orthography might have read יָד, leaving either reading possible.<sup>267</sup> The presence of Day as the object of cursing throughout ch. 3 would dispose the reader to read ‘Day’ as the object of cursing, or piercing (נָקַד) in 3:8a. However, the Leviathan in 3:8b suggests to many commentators and translators that the traditional elements of chaos, Yamm, the Sea, and Leviathan, the sea monster, are in parallel here: thus, they render Sea. At first blanche, this results in the curiosity of Job calling on “those who curse the Sea,” a less intuitive ally in his rejection of creation. However, we need not take the construct as an objective genitive. These could be the Sea’s allies, who curse others on his behalf. Thus, Seow compares the phrase “cursers of the Sea” to “helpers of Rahab.”<sup>268</sup>

The polysemic ambiguity of the phrase is likely deliberate, as the presence of Leviathan naturally makes the reader reconsider the significance of יָד, giving us a fine example of Janus parallelism.<sup>269</sup> Nonetheless, some caveats ought to be observed when considering the emendation. First, comparing “cursers of the sea” with “helpers of Rahab” is somewhat limited, as the verbs “help” and “curse” are so different. For helpers,

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<sup>266</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 105.

<sup>267</sup> As Seow notes, *Job 1–21*, 349.

<sup>268</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 324.

<sup>269</sup> Fishbane likewise sees both senses at play in the passage, which he describes as participating in the phenomenon of *paranomasia*. He observes the prophetic, oracular, and magical implications of this sort of language, Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23–26 and Job III 3–13,” 161–62.

the objective genitive hardly differs from the possessive. With the objective, the agents assist Rahab; with the possessive, the helpers are his. Thus, the phrase's meaning is clear however we parse the genitive. Cursors, however, as objective or possessive, indicate separate and opposed groups. It is only the emendation that suggests the possessive genitive. Secondly, the turn to a second meaning in Janus parallelism does not invalidate the first. The reader is primed to read "Day," *mater* or not. Yamm is a secondary sense. This is not to invalidate the secondary sense. It is to retain the first impression. Thirdly, the rationale used to justify the emendation, parallelism, is specious. While the Sea and the Leviathan could certainly form a parallel, "cursing the Day" and "rousing Leviathan" are both wishes for the destruction of creation and form an effective parallel. Sea and Leviathan can be in parallel as a complementary pair; Day and Leviathan can be in parallel as rousing Leviathan is a specification or intensification of cursing Day.<sup>270</sup> The MT's consonantal tradition of יום and the LXX's translation of ἡμέρα are understandable and satisfy the concern for parallelism. They cannot be discounted.

From one perspective, the point is moot. Job refers to the Sea (e.g., Job 7:12) in parallel with *Tannîn*, the Dragon. The poet clearly has the myth in mind. On the other hand, most of the lexemes, excepting Leviathan, can be read as describing cosmological, meteorological phenomena without reference to mythological personalities. Nonetheless, Job's terms' connotations, ambiguities, and mythological valences grant his speech a certain tension, as they evoke without confirming a mythological register. But Leviathan unambiguously anchors the mythological register.<sup>271</sup> The passage is clearly cosmological

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<sup>270</sup> Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (New York: Basic Books, 1985), esp. 3–32, discusses at length some varieties, nuances, and effects of parallelism, including specification and intensification.

<sup>271</sup> Thus, Eliphaz's reply in ch. 4 mirrors Job's rhetoric here. As we saw, Eliphaz's polemic against the storm-god motif makes puns on and evokes the motif while anchoring his polemic with the "silent voice"

as Job dialogues with Gen 1 and repudiates creation. Job's reference to Leviathan explicitly recalls the combat myth Gen 1 displaced, establishing the older mythological complex. Job's ambiguous language (the Sea, Mot, etc.), retrospectively evokes the larger pantheon of that mythological complex. The Leviathan's conspicuous role in anchoring the mythological potential of ch. 3 anticipates his climactic role in God's rebuttal from the whirlwind. In both contexts it is the central symbol.

Critically, Job does not begin the debate in this chapter. Eliphaz does that in response to this lament and curse. Here, Job only articulates the human experience. Furthermore, this assessment is not denied in the book except by the friends. When Job is restored—when the hedge returns, when Job has rest, wealth, and family—his assessment of the injustice systemic to the human experience has not been denied. Rather, Job's stance passes from lament, questioning, and rejection to submission. It is the friends' arguments that move Job to an intermediate phase of defiant challenge. Having surveyed Job's initial lament and rejection of creation with its mythological tension and stewing chaos, I turn to Job's use of the chaos myth, as the poet responds to the friends' ideology.

### ***The Divine Warrior Motif and Chaoskampf***

Job's use of the Divine Warrior motif, especially the *Chaoskampf* storm-god tradition, sets him apart from the friends, especially by its distortions. Job describes God's warfare throughout the debate (4–27) and in his final speech (29–31).<sup>272</sup> Job's

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(4:16). Eliphaz's polemic against the storm-god motif thus engages Job's evocation of the storm-god, *Chaoskampf*, motif by emulating his rhetorical strategy. I will treat a similar rhetorical emulation in Job's chiasmic treatment centered on 19:25 in response to Bildad's King of Terrors in ch. 18.

<sup>272</sup> Reference to God's warfare is made in nearly every one of Job's speeches, but it is missing from Job's sixth and seventh replies. These atypical speeches are literarily effective as such. Job's sixth reply (ch. 21) is his reply to Zophar in ch. 20 which is itself an exceptional chapter as we saw last chapter. Zophar had referred to the day of wrath (20:30) and to God's angry allotted destruction for the wicked. In ch. 21, Job reflects on the fact that the wicked do not receive just recompense according to the friends' assertions. Thus, insofar as Job is strictly engaging and deconstructing their argument rather than giving his own



reference to the particular, storm-god *Chaoskampf* myth is noticeably narrower. In addition to Leviathan in 3:8, explicit citation of that myth occurs only in Job's first two replies in the debate (6–7, 9–10) and in his final, summary reply (26–27).<sup>273</sup> In this section, I will analyze the poet's use of the myth in each particular passage, as he distorts the myth to refute the friends' theological aesthetic. I will also analyze the role the myth plays in its literary and historical context, as the placement of the *Chaoskampf* myth nuances the dramatic shape of the dialogue, and as the resurgence of the myth is significant in Israel's religious history.

I begin with Job's first reply. Chapter 6 is dominated by two metaphors for Job's ability to assess his situation and his friends' inadequacy (sense of taste, 5–7, 30), and the friends' failure (wadis deadly for their unreliability, 15–20). In between, Job complains of his suffering at the hands of God (4, 8, 9), Shaddai (4, 14), the Holy One (10).

Job's characterization of "God Almighty" and his persecution in 6:4 is significant. As Job replies to Eliphaz's first discourse (chs. 4–5), he formulates the verse to address him in two ways. Eliphaz's claims that God injures but heals and that God's chastising is beneficial are rejected by the severity of the wounds. Job is pierced by God's arrows and

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perspective on his own suffering, perhaps we can understand the rationale for this more restrained rhetoric. It is significant, in this regard, that Job gives his most measured portrayal of God and mundane injustice immediately after Zophar's speech, which had accepted Job's violent portrayal of God. Job has flipped the script. Job's seventh reply reflects his disengagement, as he longs to speak with God (ch. 23) and laments human evil as enabled and emboldened by the delay of divine justice.

<sup>273</sup> Job will refer to God's tormenting of Job as driving him before the wind and tossing him about with the tempest in his final speech after the debate (30:22–23). Thus, God's hostility and the reception of the storm-god motif are present here, too. Here, I am observing the significance of the explicit references to the *Chaoskampf* myth. These three passages specifically refer to the chaos monsters as the traditional opponents of God and creation, even as the traditional roles are distorted. While other passages describe God's hostility, use of storms, archery and other implements, and demonic forces of destruction, these three passages are distinct and dramatically suggestive, particularly insofar as God's appearance from the storm makes such elaborate use of the Sea and Leviathan.

their poison consumes his spirit.<sup>274</sup> Presumably these wounds correspond to Job's sores.<sup>275</sup> Second, Eliphaz introduces the term Shaddai (שַׁדַּי), and Job replies with the same. This name for the deity lends to the Patriarchal setting and affect and is part of the poet's control on perspective, as the speakers' non-use of the divine name portrays their discourse's limitations. This is clear if we consider Exod 6:3, where the Patriarchs are said to have been ignorant of the LORD's name and only to have known him as Shaddai.

Job's characterization of Shaddai is strikingly different from Eliphaz's. The analogical relationship between Shaddai and Yahweh as the divine names of different epochs, along with the battle and archery terms in 6:4, show Job characterizing Shaddai as the traditional storm-god. As we have seen, the friends specifically avoid this.

Additionally, Job attributes elements to Shaddai the friends attribute elsewhere, as part of his strategy of making God the agent of chaos and destruction. First, Job does not discuss a chthonic King of Terrors and his retinue of Terrors acting independently from God's immediate orders if in harmony with his just purposes. Job states Shaddai himself sets his Terrors (בַּעֲוֹתָיִם) in battle array against Job.<sup>276</sup> Seow notes that this precise form,

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<sup>274</sup> Translations generally agree with the NABRE: "For the arrows of the Almighty are in me, and my spirit drinks in their poison," (6:4). The spirit drinking poison is the more intuitive way to interpret the nouns רוּחַ and שָׁתָה with the verb שָׁתָה, and there is an analogical usage in 21:20. Note, however, the word order: "their [the arrows'] poison drinks my soul." As both spirit and poison are feminine singular, either may be the subject. While word order is not decisive, in this case it suggests the poison as the subject of the verb. Quite possibly, the poet suggests a mutual drinking, as the spirit's consuming of poison is obviously deadly and the poison's consumption of the spirit suggests still more malignant agency. Seow notes, *Job 1–20*, 470, the word order suggests the poison/wrath drinks the spirit and the OG and Vulgate have wrath as drinking Job's blood or spirit respectively, but he prefers to have spirit as the subject.

<sup>275</sup> As suggested by Seow, *Job 1–21*, 470. Seow also thereby relates these sores to Resheph, whom we have treated in the last chapter, and Eliphaz brought up in the speech preceding Job's. Since Resheph (5:7) is an allusion to Deut 32 and the sores are taken from Deut 28, the poet's use of Deuteronomy is encoded in this narrative dynamic.

<sup>276</sup> While they are different terms, they are synonyms and the root from Job's noun in 6:4, בַּעַת, is present in verbal form Bildad uses in 18:11: Terrors (בַּלְהוֹת) terrify (בַּעֲוֹתָהוּ). Compare this with Perdue's observation, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 122, that the "‘terrors’ most likely refer to the entourage or awesome warriors who accompany the Divine Warrior to battle." I agree that the Terrors are here pictured as accompanying the Divine Warrior in battle, but we should consider the association of terror with the forces of chaos, as the chthonic deity in Job 18 and in the Babylonian literature about Nergal or *Enuma Elish*.

בַּעוֹת, only occurs elsewhere in Psalm 88:17, identifying Job with the most desperate and theologically challenging psalm in the psalter.<sup>277</sup> The different mythological structures correspond to the different characterizations of divine agency in actively persecuting the innocent for Job and in passively allowing the punishment of the wicked for Bildad. Second, the verse responds to Eliphaz's reference to Resheph. As Resheph was "Lord of the Arrow," Job's description of Shaddai's deadly arrows again translates aspects of the chthonic deity to Shaddai. The Sons of Resheph do not arise because of humanity's wickedness (cf. 5:7), but 'El Shaddai arranges his own Terrors in battle array according to his arbitrary pleasure, here and elsewhere.<sup>278</sup>

Job takes another, complementary tack in ch. 7, as he exploits the *Chaoskampf* motif. However, here he is not content to shift the responsibility for chaos to the storm-god, but Job asks whether he himself is the Sea or Dragon (תנין) in 7:12. The rhetorical question is absurd and demands a negative answer. But the question's absurdity corresponds to Job's situation. The god responsible for vanquishing chaos and sponsoring order is the god whom Job holds responsible for vanquishing order and sponsoring chaos. God watches, not the forces of chaos (7:12), but humanity (7:20), to punish, not protect, causing, not subjecting, chaos. God wages not *Chaoskampf*, but *Menschkampf*. If Job aligns himself with the traditional forces of chaos (ch. 3), it is because God assumed their role (6:4) and treated Job as a threat to his arbitrary rule (ch. 7). Job is neither agent of chaos nor is he capable of any significant cosmic influence, being a mere mortal (7:16, 20) rather than a mythical monster.

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<sup>277</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 470.

<sup>278</sup> So in 16:13, 19:12, 24:17, 27:20, 30:15; cf. also 9:13.

The rhetorical questions of 7:16, 20 abstract a general anthropological principle from Job's particular situation. Job is aware that he has been singled out for divine caprice. He is also aware that humanity is generally subject to divine abuse. By insisting on the radical ontological disparity between humanity and the mythological persons the Sea and the Dragon, Job insists on the radical incongruity of the divine attention he suffers. He wishes that the mythological and the mundane were divided, that the God of heaven did not concern himself with earth.<sup>279</sup> Thus, Job's use of the storm-god motif runs across the grain of the traditional understanding of cosmic order, where heavenly order ensures mundane order.<sup>280</sup> Job attributes mundane chaos, not to cosmological forces of chaos, but to the traditional agent of cosmic order, 'El Shaddai.

God's watch constitutes an anti-liturgy. The roots *שמר* (7:12) and *נצר* (7:20) have a positive connotation, especially the former term. Israel's relationship with God can be summed up by mutual watches. God 'guards' Israel, ensuring her survival and prosperity (e.g., Ps 121). Israel must fear God and 'keep' his commandments (Deut 6:2). Job 7's use of the terms is wholly negative. Janzen discusses the hostile uses of *משמר*, particularly in the context of sieges (Jer 51:12, 2 Sam 11:16), but also in a more general sense, as Saul's men watched David to kill him (1 Sam 19:11).<sup>281</sup> The more general sense obtains here.<sup>282</sup>

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<sup>279</sup> Clines, "False Naivety," 737, observes that the prologue hints at the dissolution in order in the breach between heavenly and earthly realms.

<sup>280</sup> Richard J. Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," *Orientalia* 53, no 2 (1984), 183-201, shows how the creation myth works as a foundational myth for the city-state in Canaan. *Enuma Elish* supports the Babylonian Empire's rule. Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), pp. 188-91, makes an intriguing argument for the myth's details' correlating to Babylon's defeat of particular neighbors. See also J. Gerald Janzen, "Creation and the Human Predicament," *Ex Auditu* 3 (1987): 45-46.

<sup>281</sup> Janzen, "Another Look at God's Watch Over Job," *JBL* 108, 1 (1989): 111.

<sup>282</sup> *Pace* Janzen. Job describes himself as a city under siege in his third reply (ch. 16:12-13) as Janzen observes, "Another Look at God's Watch," 111. Still, Job does not describe himself as a city in this speech, and his discourse reflects his individual condition: his skin is cracked, etc. (7:5), and his sleep torturous (7:4, 13-15). There is no reason to insist on a siege rather than a personal, hostile surveillance here.

This use of the *Chaoskampf* motif is specifically anti-liturgical if we consider the passage in contrast with psalms 74 and 89. These psalms are two of the more striking examples of *Chaoskampf* in the OT, and both follow the destruction of the Temple. Thus, they attest to the impulse to invoke the past defeat of primordial chaos deriving from the experience of mundane chaos.<sup>283</sup> These latter experiences reflect the tenuousness of creation and the ever-present threat of chaos's resurgence. Job's monotheistic perspective, however, disallows the myth in its original form, and he attributes this chaos directly to God, who alone "takes away." Thus, Job's experience leads him to use the primitive mythological tradition to assert the cosmos's chaotic nature against his friends' more serene monotheistic perspective. Nonetheless, it resurges in mutated form, as God has become chaos, waging his terrible warfare against humanity.

Whereas Job's reference to *Chaoskampf* in ch. 7 focuses on God's incongruous attention to humanity, in ch. 9, Job describes God in relation to creation and more clearly portrays God as chaos. Indeed, Job blends the themes of creation and chaos in describing God, whereas we expect those to be directly opposed. Job's describes God's wisdom and might (9:4) using the trope of the prerequisites for rule and creation, whether divine (e.g., Ea and Marduk) or human (e.g., David and Solomon, Romulus and Numa). But as Job continues, power is decisive (as Marduk's rule and imperial domination suggest). This corresponds to Job's intuition of violent chaos as the true nature of the cosmos.

Job speaks of God's ability and habit of undoing creation, as God overturns the mountains and shakes the earth to her pillars (9:5–6). To be sure, God's destabilization of

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<sup>283</sup> Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 17–19, 132, discusses these two psalms at some length. He also reports that the same appears to have been the case in Babylon's *Enuma Elish*, which appears to date from a period of national weakness and was recited as part of the city's annual liturgy in the *Akitu* festival.

the physical order is not peculiar to Job. It is a common element of theophanies, in God's dramatic intervention to his people's benefit (Judg 5:4–5, Ps 18:8) or harm (Isa 13:4 ff). Still, Job's description of God's autocratic power to command the Sun not to rise is a more direct uncreation, resuming the anti-creation motif of Job's lament in ch. 3. Chaos results from God's autocratic fiat. Whereas Job had wished that the stars would not give twilight on his birthday (3:9), now God seals up the stars (9:7). Thus, whereas Job had not explicitly targeted God in his desire that creation be uncreated in ch. 3, he now accuses God of managing creation in perpetually uncreative fashion. This uncreation is juxtaposed with more typical descriptions of creation in 9:8–9, as God stretches the heavens,<sup>284</sup> treads on the Sea, and makes constellations.<sup>285</sup> Nonetheless, these verses describe God's ongoing and destabilizing assault on the present physical structures of the world, rather than a past defeat of chaos resolved in the present order.<sup>286</sup> Job transforms the language of *Chaoskampf* into *Kosmoskampf*.

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<sup>284</sup> Note that the precise phrase, “alone stretching out the heavens” (נֹטֵה שָׁמַיִם לְבַדּוֹ), occurs only in Job 9:8 and Isa 44:24. We will discuss the relationship between Job and Isaiah below. While the phrase describes a gentler conception of creation in Second Isaiah, that does not bear on its usage here. Thus, Janzen, “On the Moral Nature of God's Power,” *CBQ* 56, no 3 (1994): 466–67, 475–76, is surely correct in identifying this metaphor with spreading tents in Second Isaiah along with a superior conception of divine creation and God's power, while recognizing that the same phrase in Job's speech merely complements the distorted reception of the *Chaoskampf* tradition. I will interact with Janzen's article in some detail chapter 3.

<sup>285</sup> The identification of the stars/constellations is beside the present study's interests. For further reading, see Seow, Job 1–21, 559–60; Herz, “The Astral Terms in Job IX, XXXVIII 31–32,” *JTS* 14, (1913): 575–77; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 231–32; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 135–36.

<sup>286</sup> As the tenses suggest. Verses 9:5–7 begin with the definite article attached to participles, which cannot be understood otherwise. The *mem* prefixes combined with the *heh* in 5–6 require us to read these as hiphil participles. The *heh* at the beginning of 9:7 makes best sense according the MT's vocalization as a definite article insofar as (a) this approach reflects the sequence of three verses beginning with three definite participles and (b) alternatively positing a defective hiphil perfect is highly unlikely insofar as the form is very rare and would be nonsensical here. Verses 8–10 begin with participles in the MT's vocalization, but they do not use the definite article. Thus, one could re-vocalize these verses as perfects, although we would have to drop a *mater lectionis* in 8b to do so. Nonetheless, the LXX also translated these lines participially, including definite articles in 8–10 no less (ὁ τανύσας, etc.). The Vulg uses *qui* and mostly present verbs (excepting the perfect *transtulit* in 9:5), indicating the same reading. The verbs in 8–10 are a complementary balance to 5–7, and the qal participles are to be retained. Contra Clines, *Job 1–20*, 230, who acknowledges the participles but seeks to refer God's treading on the Sea to “primeval times.” Likely the poet alludes to that myth, but the poet applies it to the present in his parody of traditional piety.

These mythological formulations of uncreation have their mundane counterpart in 9:22–24, as God destroys the innocent and wicked and is directly responsible for the failures of human judges. The final stich in these verses, “if not (him), then who?,” underscores the problem monotheism poses for Job. Because he believes in no alternative deity who can rival God—and thus cause chaos—God assumes responsibility.<sup>287</sup> Job may resurrect the more primitive myth, but he does not turn back the clock to the myth’s polytheism. The monotheistic adaptation of the myth bluntly states God’s responsibility for suffering and characterizes that suffering as *rogez*, chaotic fury, against the friends’ mythological structures and aesthetics that would order and sanitize that suffering.

Having seen the poet’s distortions of the myth in Job’s first two replies, and considering that he does not explicitly refer to the myth again until ch. 26 at the end of the debate (which reply ends the debate), consider the significance of the poet locating these two passages in Job’s first two replies. While the mythological character of these passages is undeniable and supports focusing on Job’s mythical material, they remain peculiar in the book. We must take care not to miss the poet’s point in using the myth. There is no trace of the chaos monsters in the narration or in the friends’ perspective, and the divine speech characterizes the Sea as receiving divine care and the Leviathan as

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<sup>287</sup> Contrast this approach with Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt* (131–36). Perdue also sees here Job’s likening God to chaos, per God’s destructive actions. Thus, Perdue sees the deliberate deconstruction of the battle metaphor and the “language of faith.” But recall Perdue’s failure to recognize the significance on the one hand of Job’s use of the battle metaphor compared to its absence from Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, and on the other hand of the character Job’s use of it compared to its absence in the friends. Thus, the poet asserts through Job’s speech the distorted language of faith against a tradition (represented by the friends and Deuteronomy) which sought to do away with it altogether. The fact that Job’s speech is distorted, is a rebuke to the tradition as seen in Pss 74 and 89; nonetheless, the proximate effect of Job’s speech here is to lambast the friends’ and Deuteronomists’ more refined mythology. In other words, the poet has a more particular task than Perdue’s general characterization of deconstruction, etc.; the poet is ultimately constructive. Perdue also does not reflect on the relevance of monotheism to Job’s distortions of the myth.

created. The only perspective to use these characters according to their traditional role as the agents of chaos is Job.<sup>288</sup>

Job himself discontinues using this myth in ch. 12. He continues to use the divine warrior motif throughout the debate, but he no longer specifically recalls the *Chaoskampf* myth. As Job turns from this myth in ch. 12, he instead evokes exile, using mundane language and images. Thus, he reveals the mundane context underlying Job's re-appropriation of the *Chaoskampf* myth. This evocation is worth examining in some detail.

Job refers to God's wisdom and power again in 12:13, as in 9:4.<sup>289</sup> He discusses God's irresistible power and irreversible destruction (12:14–15). Job repeats the semantic pairing of strength and understanding in 12:16a with more synonyms (ותושיה עמו עז), and the following verses (12:16:b–24) reflect the failures of society's leaders, developing the theme of failed human wisdom, etc. Critically, their failure is due to God withholding that insight (16b, 17, 19b, 20, 24). (Job's reference to God's possession of wisdom in 12:13 confirms the judgement that Job refers to human wisdom in 12:12 only to mock a proverb representing his friends' perspective.) Thus, God's power and monopoly on wisdom are equally disastrous. In a sense, Job examines the corollary to the well-worn adage that wisdom is from God and given to his favored ones (e.g., Prov 2:6). Humans fail because God deprives them wisdom. Still more, God is responsible for these fools being misled, as the misleaders are his own and divinely deprived of insight (12:16b).

<sup>288</sup> Even as Job radically distorts the myth making God the agent of chaos, it is their traditional character that he rhetorically assumes (7:12) and the Sea's victimhood that he recalls (9:8, 26:12).

<sup>289</sup> So, 12:13, חכם לבב ואמץ כח and 9:4, עמו חכמה וגבורה לו עצה ותבונה. Thus, 12:13's first stich corresponds directly to the pairing in 9:4, while its second stich focuses entirely on God's superior insight. This accords with the chapter's progression as it focuses on God's sole possession of wisdom.



While many of the verses reflect the particular failures and punishments of society's leaders, the passage describes the destruction of nations and dissolution of peoples (12:23). This destruction is presented as a universal truth, but the post-exilic Jewish reader would recognize a description of the Babylonian captivity. Job's next two speeches reveal the poet's purpose for evoking this captivity, as Job resumes the divine warrior motif (16:9–14, 19:6–12). The latter is particularly telling. Much of ch. 19 applies to Job as an individual, but several details liken Job to a city besieged and destroyed by God. Job's reference to God seizing him with a net evokes Bildad's Terrors (ch. 18) and concerns Job's person. Capture by net is also a metaphor for military conquest in Hebrew Scripture (e.g., Hab 1:15) and the wider ancient Near East.<sup>290</sup> More suggestive, God "breaks down" Job and he "is gone" (יִתְּצֵנִי סִבִּיב וְאֵלֶךְ; 19:10). This applies to Job as poetic hyperbole.<sup>291</sup> However, it literally describes a city's walls' systematic demolition, as Job "goes away," standing for captive Jerusalem. Verse 12 refers to God's troops arrayed against Job (cf. 6:4), and now they build a siege ramp, besieging Job's tent with obscenely inordinate attack.<sup>292</sup> Finally, Job's reference to God stripping the crown from his head (עֲטַרְתּוֹ רֹאשִׁי) in 19:9 evokes Jer 13:18 and Lam 5:16, particularly as the latter uses the same construction (עֲטַרְתּוֹ רֹאשִׁנוֹ).<sup>293</sup> Indeed, Lévêque writes that Job composes a

<sup>290</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 795–96, provides the example of a Sumerian king of Lagash, Eannutum so ensnaring the people of Umma in a stela from the third millennium BCE.

<sup>291</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 798, recognizes both literary aspects as valid, and observes that the verb "tear down" (19:10a) can refer to the destruction and uprooting of a tree as in Ps 52:7, thus corresponding to the uprooting of the tree in 19:10b. This is surely deliberate polysemy.

<sup>292</sup> As Seow notes, *Job 1–20*, 815, the phrase to build up a road can be more neutral, as in Isa 62:10, though he recognizes the siege described here. Note that the noun derived from סָלַל simply means an assault ramp (2 Sam 20:15, 2 Kgs 19:32, Isa 37:33, Jer 6:6, Ezk 4:2, 17:17, 21:27, 26:8 Dan 11:15; and in the plural in Jer 32:24, 33:4). Isaiah 62:10 refers instead to הִמְסִלָּה. Job 30:12 again uses the phrase "build up a ramp against me" (וַיִּסְלֹוּ עָלַי אֲרָחוֹת) in a hostile manner, but without the fully developed siege imagery.

<sup>293</sup> In this regard, Irwin, "Job's Redeemer," 221, sees here an allusion to Ishtar's stripping at the door of the underworld, cf. "The Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld," trans. Stephanie Dalley, *COS* 1.108:381–84. Clearly, the image is basic, and it is unsurprising that we should find crowns being stripped in any number of cultures, tales, and discourses. Recognizing such a basic parallel cannot of itself establish a source.

“véritable anthologie” of Lamentations in ch. 19, according to Job’s role as “Sion personnifiée.”<sup>294</sup> The Rabbis already recognized the connections between Lamentations and Job.<sup>295</sup> It seems, then, that Job shifts from using the mythological descriptions of God’s hostility in his early speeches (chs. 7, 9) to describing himself hyperbolically according to the literal lot of Judah (chs. 12, 16, 19).<sup>296</sup>

To return to the first of these speeches, in 12:9—the sole occurrence of the divine name in the dialogue—Job conspicuously quotes Isa 41:20.<sup>297</sup> In Isa 41:20, God claims his unqualified responsibility for Israel’s imminent renewal, and his responsibility for her

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However, given the poet’s repeated use of Hebrew Scripture, the relevance to Job of the captivity about which Jeremiah and Lamentations are concerned, and that the poet would have known that his audience would be familiar and concerned with these texts—whether or not they knew of Ishtar—we can safely infer the relevance of Jeremiah and Lamentations and note Ishtar with passing curiosity.

<sup>294</sup> Jean Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu*, 382–85. Lévêque’s chart (384) conveniently overviews the parallels.

<sup>295</sup> Joanna Weinberg, “Job Versus Abraham: The Quest for the Perfect God-Fearer in Rabbinic Tradition,” in *The Book of Job*, ed. W.A.M. Beuken (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1994.): 284, points to the *Echa Rabbati*, a 5<sup>th</sup> cent. commentary on Lamentations, which reports R. Joshua of Siknin’s identification of Lamentations’s *geber* with Job, as the character suffers according to Lamentations’s portrayal of Zion’s suffering.

<sup>296</sup> Trygve N. D. Mettinger, “Intertextuality: Allusion and Vertical Context Systems in Some Job Passages,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of Sages*, ed. H. A. McKay and D. J. A. Clines, JSOTSup 162 (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1993), 272–74, similarly recognizes that Job’s riddle of unwarranted suffering corresponds to the paradox of Zion’s destruction, considering her promises from God that she would never be destroyed, and he describes “the metaphorical use of a conventional genre” in Job’s use of Lamentations’s description of siege and destruction. Unfortunately, Mettinger does not go beyond observing that Job’s sufferings are still more paradoxical than Zion’s (ibid., 274), and the larger irony that God will counter Job’s portrayal of God as the conventional enemy in the Lament with God’s assertion that he in fact does punish the wicked, thereby insisting on the laments’ convention (ibid., 274–75). Mettinger is more concerned with proving the legitimacy and fruit of recognizing Job’s allusions and their creative potential and he only scratches the surface regarding its implications for the book.

<sup>297</sup> Job’s quotation of Isa 41:20 seems certain to me, as both passages have the identical phrase, “כִּי יֵד יְהוָה זֹאת עֲשֵׂתָהּ זֹאת,” and the proposed allusion fits the pattern of Job’s parodies of Hebrew Scripture. Scholarship is divided over the relationship between Job and Second Isaiah, though it seems a majority accept Second Isaiah’s priority. There are two recent dissertations that treat this issue, whose major positions are worth presenting here. First, Christina Brinks-Rea’s dissertation, “The Thematic, Stylistic, and Verbal Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2010), 53–67, 170–77, surveys the history of this issue and the basic positions, she analyzes this particular textual relationship, and she recognizes Job’s parodic use of 2 Isaiah in keeping with Job’s parodic use of other texts such as Pss 8 and 107. Second, Jiseong James Kwon, *Scribal Culture and Intertextuality* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2016), 40, 62–69, repeatedly makes the baffling argument that the difference in context between Job and Second Isaiah in reputed allusions and common phrases (even those where Job and 2 Isaiah alone use the phrase) undermines the possibility of textual borrowing, offering instead the vagary of a common cultural tradition. Despite himself, his discussion repeatedly reveals the neat inversion between Job’s and Isaiah’s themes, according to Job’s parodic rhetorical strategies.

past suffering is understood (e.g., Isa 40:2–3, 45:7). Job uses the same monotheistic perspective without hope of renewal to assert God’s violent treatment of himself and humanity generally against the friends’ perspective. All human existence is “drudgery” without end (a sense of צָבָא found only in Job 7:1, 14:14 and Isa 40:2).<sup>298</sup> Furthermore, Job 12:15’s description of God’s environmental desolation inverts Isa 41:17–19’s description of God’s providing water to the afflicted and environmental restoration.<sup>299</sup> Job’s focus on the irreversibility of God’s destruction (12:14) contrasts with God’s rebuilding of Jerusalem in Isa 44:26–28. Therefore, this sole use of the divine name should not be explained away as a lapse or a corruption on the basis of five late and unreliable manuscripts that attest אֱלֹהֵי. Rather, the poet breaks character in a sort of

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<sup>298</sup> According to KBL, s. v. ‘צָבָא,’ 2:995, the term refers to “compulsory labor” in only these two books, and only in these passages: Isa 40:2; Job 7:1; 10:17; 14:14. However, Job 10:17 refers not to drudgery, but to troops, the usual sense of the term. Notably, both allusions to Isa 40:2 are in Job’s speech. The poet appears to seize on a peculiar usage of the term by the prophet of Second Isaiah. Job defines the whole of human existence according to the exile, a period the prophet of Second Isaiah saw as concluded. Compare this to Levenson’s observation, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 32, that “Apocalyptic eschatology grew and flourished in an era in which the afflictions of the laments seemed endless and structural rather than temporary and isolated.” The Joban poet anticipates this flourishing, likewise insisting on the systemic extent of evil and on a supra-historical solution.

The fact that the allusions to Isa 40:2 are both Job’s speech confirms Brinks-Rea’s suggestion, “Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job,” 237, that the poet concentrated his allusions to 2 Isaiah in Job’s speeches. Finally, we should address Janzen’s claim, “On the Moral Nature of God’s Power,” 469, that the term occurs “derivatively in Dan 10:1” connoting “suffering servitude or troubled life.” Daniel’s passage seems to refer specifically to warfare. Furthermore, considering Daniel’s late dating, the term’s distinct usage would be peculiar to Job and Isaiah at the time of their composition.

<sup>299</sup> Frequently, these passages are discussed along with Ps 107. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 297, in fact, sees Ps 107 as a source for the poet. He does not consider the Isaian passage here in 12:15, corresponding to his rejection of the citation of Isa 41:20 in 12:9. That Job 12:9, 15 (and 14) correspond so neatly to Isa 41:18–20 (and 44:26–28) belies this tendenz. Brinks-Rea’s discussion, “Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job,” 170–75, puts all three passages in conversation, wherein she characterizes Job as exposing Isaiah’s tendentious reception of the psalm, focusing solely on God’s beneficence. Job inversely focuses on the psalm’s portrayal of God’s punishment, and drives the reader to recognize the harsh implications of Isaiah. Of course, this is explicit in Isaiah (e.g., Isa 40:2, 45:7), if not the focus. For our purposes, note that Job again absolutizes the punitive aspects of God without hope of divine relent, perpetuating the experience of captivity and speaking up for the generations that do not receive God’s restoration. Thus, the turn to the individual in Job some scholars discern in fact applies to whole generations of Israelites. For the Joban poet, if God is to be justified whatsoever, it cannot be solely in the context of some second Exodus. God’s justice must answer for his treatment of the faithful who suffered, the innocent with the guilty (cf. Gen 18:23), in the Babylonian holocaust. Thus, Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, trans. Carlyle Witton-Davies (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 188–89, recognizes the ‘I’ in Job refers to the ‘I’ of Israel.

narrative “ungrammaticality,” an “undramaticity.”<sup>300</sup> He thus uses the divine name to evoke decisively the context of Israel’s suffering and a recent theological attempt to reconcile with that experience.<sup>301</sup>

A final detail of ch. 12 identifying Job with Israel’s captivity is yet another connection to Deut 28. Recall Job’s representation of Israel’s suffering, in Job’s reference to becoming a proverb (17:6; cf. Deut 28:37) and Job’s being covered by boils (2:7; cf. Deut 28:35). Each allusion implies a creative alternative to the friends’ and Deuteronomy’s understanding of suffering.<sup>302</sup> Furthermore, the preceding verses (Deut

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<sup>300</sup> Daniel Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1990), 57–58, borrows the term from Michael Riffaterre’s work on the Midrash, *Semiotics of Poetry* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1978), to describe “the awkwardness of a textual moment,” which forces the reader to consider the text per its oddities, in addition to gaps in the present text’s logic. The verbatim quote combined with the jarring break in character strongly support identifying this allusion. We may also note another use of a fixed form, a more literal “ungrammaticality,” in Job 42:6’s grammatical error. Michael Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner Biblical Discourse,” in *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, ed. Leo Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 90–91, notes that this verse’s pairing a masculine verb with a feminine noun uses a fixed form from Gen 11:6, supporting its identification as an allusion. Indeed, Job’s final confession neatly inverts and confirms the themes of Babel, indicating that Job’s final stance is enriched by and performs a midrash on the story.

<sup>301</sup> So Pope, *Job*, xxxix, 91, and Hartley, *Book of Job*, 208–9, point to the alternative attestation of אֱלֹהִים to justify their emendation. Cross, א, TDOT 1:258, states that the textual attestation is “divided” in his support for אֱלֹהִים. Habel, *Book of Job*, 214, observes that it is either a poetic lapse or a corruption. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 157, believes that אֱלֹהִים was the more primitive reading and that Isa 41:20 suggested the tetragrammaton to a later scribe, although he notes that only five manuscripts, 3 in Kennicott and 2 in Rossi, attest this reading. Dhorme’s analysis would be compelling if there were stronger manuscript evidence. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 624, 633, however, reports that the vast majority and the superior manuscripts attest the divine name. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 138, sees Job 12:9 as an unconscious reminiscence and argues, rightly in my opinion, that this supports recognizing the poet’s familiarity with Second Isaiah. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 295, is ambivalent about the reading, suggesting that it may be a scribal slip, but is apparently of the opinion that it is original, as the poet uses the fixed phrase: “the reason must be that ‘hand of Yahweh’ is a fixed phrase while ‘the hand of God’ (Elohim) is very rare.” Nonetheless, Clines himself, *ibid.*, 294, observes that the poet uses the phrase, “hand of Eloah” in Job 19:21 and “El” in 27:11, undermining his own speculation. There is no indication that the poet is averse to the “very rare” or distorting fixed phrases. Much the contrary. The fact that we have an entire phrase from Isa 41:20 indicates either that the poet cited the passage to evoke it strongly, or that a later scribe corrected to the same effect. The latter is highly unlikely, given the textual evidence. Longman, *Job*, 202, and Alter, *The Wisdom Books: Job, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes: A Translation with Commentary* (New York: Norton, 2010), 55, simply accept the MT’s reading.

<sup>302</sup> Job 2:7 reads: וַיִּכָּה יְהוָה בְּשַׁחֲתֵי רֶגֶל עַד וְעַד קִדְקֹדַי; Deut 28:35 reads: וְעַל הַשָּׁקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא תוּכַל לְהַרְפֹּא מִכַּף רֶגְלְךָ וְעַד קִדְקֹדְךָ. Thus, Job skips “knees and legs which you cannot heal,” but otherwise begins and ends the afflictions with exact correspondence, excepting first Job’s *vav*-consecutive form displacing Deuteronomy’s imperfect, and second, Job making the subject of the “striking” ambiguous. The context clearly supports understanding the Satan as the one striking Job, as the

28:29b–34) describe Job’s trials.<sup>303</sup> The detail that now concerns us is 12:25’s correspondence to Deut 28:29a.

The correlation is moderate, with one shared word, the rare “groping” (יִמְשֹׁשׁ/יִמְשָׁשׁ).<sup>304</sup> Both passages describe people groping in darkness or gloom (Job 12:25, חֹשֶׁךְ; Deut 28:29, בְּאִפְלָה) at God’s doing. Accordingly, commentators refer not to Deut 28, but to Eliphaz in Job 5:14.<sup>305</sup> This is fitting as Job replies to Eliphaz, and both use the same term for darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ). However, Eliphaz refers to groping during the noonday (צֹהָרִים), as does Deut 28:29, and the collocation is unique to these passages.<sup>306</sup> Thus, the poet’s portrayal of the captivity in ch. 12 dialogues with Eliphaz, whose speech evoked Deut 28:29a’s description of Israel’s captivity and affirmed its justice. Eliphaz serves as a proxy for Deuteronomy, and Job 12:25 replies to both. Thus, Job’s suffering stands for Israel’s. His description of God’s injustice refers to Israel’s captivity.

The upshot of this shift is that the poet has Job relinquish the myth after it serves his purpose, because the poet does not actually wish to resurrect the myth. Rather, the

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consecutive continues his string of activity begun by leaving the presence of the Lord and he acts upon God’s permission granted in 2:6. However, God’s name immediately precedes the striking (cf. Deut 28:35 where God’s name immediately follows), and the Satan strikes with God’s permission. The syntactical ambiguity matches the theological ambiguity of the attempt to nuance supernatural agencies responsible for suffering in a monotheistic context. Thus, whereas the character Job accentuates the grimmer aspects of Deuteronomy, the narrator offers an alternative nuance to the suffering described in Deut 28. This dissertation is broadly concerned with Job as a *mashal* alternative to that described in Deut 28:37. I will revisit this allusion in chapter 4, and the theme of God’s permissiveness is critical in chapter 3.

<sup>303</sup> As Susan Ticciati, *Job and the Disruption of Identity: Reading beyond Barth* (London: T&T Clark, 2005), 61–62, observes specifically of Job’s livestock and children (Deut 28:31, 32) and his boils (Deut 28:35). She also observes that the Satan’s charge in Job 1:10 of God’s favoritism corresponds to God’s promise of generosity in Deut 28:12.

<sup>304</sup> See KBL, s. v. ‘יִמְשֹׁשׁ,’ 1:653. Of the piel’s six instances, two are in Job (5:14, 12:25, [KBL lists Job 28:29, which verse does not exist]), two in Deut 28:29 (which likely explains the errant Joban entry), and two in Gen 31:34, 37. As Laban explores Jacob’s baggage with his fingers for what he cannot see (as he feels about in the bags and because the idols are not there), the use of this suggestive term in that rather ordinary context can be understood. The qal occurs twice (Gen 27:12, 22), describing Jacob’s deceiving Isaac, who again cannot see. The hiphil occurs twice, referring to the plague of palpable darkness (Exod 10:21) and to Samson feeling pillars after losing his eyes (Judg 16:26).

<sup>305</sup> So, Pope, *Job*, 95; Hartley, *Book of Job*, 215.

<sup>306</sup> Job 5:14 reads: יוֹמָם יִפְגְּשׁוּ חֹשֶׁךְ וּכְלִילָה יִמְשֹׁשׁוּ בְּצֹהָרִים; Deut 28:27 reads: מִמְשֹׁשׁ בְּצֹהָרִים כְּאִשֶּׁר יִמְשֹׁשׁ הָעוֹר בְּאִפְלָה.

poet uses Job to characterize God as the cause of chaos rather than the just orderer of an economy of Trouble (5:7). At least, humans experience the world as essentially chaotic, as *rogez*. The *Chaoskampf* myth has greater explanatory power than the friends' perspective, making it more intuitive and plausible. Job's *Chaoskampf* thus challenges and deconstructs the friends' position, as their hostility implies in the end of the dialogue. However, Job can recall this myth only in distorted fashion per his monotheistic perspective. Without outsourcing chaos to some primordial monster, Job's resurgent myth attributes that chaos to God. Having demonstrated these dual claims—the world and human experience are chaotic and morally incoherent, and God is responsible—the poet abandons the myth for the real issue, God's treatment of Jerusalem.

Thus, Job stands in a subtle typological relationship to Pss. 74 and 89. Likely he reacts to them.<sup>307</sup> The poet adopts the psalms' impulse to reach back for the *Chaoskampf* myth in times of societal chaos, and he, too, is concerned with God's treatment of Judah. However, his parody of that myth reveals the inability to turn back the clock, as it does not reconcile with monotheism and merely distracts from the problem of evil. Job's cathartic use and abandonment of that myth thereby tutor his reader regarding the myth's inadequacy. This tutelage will continue in the speeches from the whirlwind.<sup>308</sup>

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<sup>307</sup> The poet likely had access to these psalms, but it would be distracting to pursue this. The typological comparison is especially interesting since the psalms show the myth's application to historical enemies, transposing the divine warrior motif and patronage of order out of *illo tempore* to contemporary political events. See Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 19. In Job, by contrast, the poet only uses a mutilated form of the myth, criticizing the trope's absolution of God. Psalm 74 (74:1, 10–11), meanwhile, discusses God's role in passively allowing Jerusalem's destruction (like Job's friends), but the destruction is performed by God's enemies (74:4) rather than God himself. Thus, Job's parody of the psalm cuts two ways, as he rejects the friends' aesthetic by the *Chaoskampf* motif and the psalm's generous portrayal of God by distorting it and undermining its absolving God of direct culpability. Psalm 89 rather more directly blames God for his unfaithfulness (84:39–46).

<sup>308</sup> Thus, I nearly agree with but must adapt Janzen's observation, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power," 469, that "Deutero-Isaiah may be said to stand in relation to Psalm 74 as the divine speeches in Job stand in relation to the preceding dialogues." I agree with the analogy between the whirlwind and Deutero-Isaiah in relation to the psalm, but the poet's portrayal of Job does not finally support the psalm's perspective.

The interpretation offered here has a significant challenge in Job's use of the *Chaoskampf* myth in ch. 26. This speech marks the dissolution of the third cycle, as Job cuts Bildad off after five verses (25:2–6) and Zophar gets no third speech. While scholars reconstruct the third cycle, these reconstructions cause more problems than they solve.<sup>309</sup> First, there is no textual evidence of such structural corruption (as in, e.g., Jeremiah). Second, the dissolution of the wisdom dialogue is literarily effective—formally and dramatically—as the formal dissolution corresponds to the failure of human wisdom itself, a theme throughout the book and punctuated by the chapter on wisdom (28) and Job's turn to God. Third, while scholars point to Job's use of the doctrine of retribution in ch. 27 to prove the third cycle's corruption, this is not Job's first time using it (cf. 13:4–16, 19:21–29). Fourth, the doctrine is well integrated into Job's perspective, as he warns them of their danger in trading in falsehoods and maintains his integrity against their false representation of God (27:4–10). Fifth, the reconstructions assign Bildad the *Chaoskampf* material of ch. 26. Thus, they violate a consistent literary affectation at the service of an inconsistent, alleged one.<sup>310</sup> The arguments are too simplistic and neglect Job's subtlety.

I should make some structural observations regarding this speech (ch. 26–27). The introduction to the speech (26:2–4) is critical for discerning the poet's purposes in the rest of the speech. Job mocks his friends for their parochial and commonplace speeches. They have shown that Job has nothing to learn from them. Thus, we should not be surprised if the following speech is rhetorically ordered as much to quiet them as to

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<sup>309</sup> There is a contingent of hold-outs who are unimpressed with the arguments for the third cycle's mutilative reconstruction. Reconstructionists of the third cycle include: Clines, Alter, Pope, Gordis, Habel, Dhorme, Perdue. Integralists include: Seow, Hartley, Janzen.

<sup>310</sup> Recall that Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 261, cf. 174–82, observes that this is the sole instance where a friend has a significant use of the *Chaoskampf* motif, though the exception results from his emendation.

advance his own ideas. This purpose is explicit in 27:12, where Job challenges them to save their breath rather than repeat commonplaces he too has mastered. The following verse (27:13) is, in fact, a paraphrase of Zophar's conclusion (20:29).<sup>311</sup> Of course, as he demonstrates his mastery of the doctrine of retribution (27:2–23), he does so for his own purposes, insisting on the friends' errors, falsehoods, and resulting danger (27:5, 8–10), which are confirmed by God in 42:7. It is impressive by how effectively Job appropriates the doctrine. Finally, if Job stands for Israel and for the paradox of receiving Israel's religious traditions, then his articulation of the doctrine here—despite his experience of its invalidity—stands for and personifies the paradoxical riddle of Hebrew piety.

With this context, I turn to the use of *Chaoskampf* in ch. 26. As Job launches into his grim doxology (26:5–13), it is easy to see Job as stealing Bildad's words, especially in the beginning (26:5–9). He signals to his friends that he has mastered their perspective and judged its value. Rather than prove the text's disorder, this establishes the speech's logic, as Job sets out to prove the elementary level of their trite knowledge. Bildad set out to praise God's power; Job does so better and does not give Zophar another chance.<sup>312</sup> But Job's reference to trembling pillars, the Sea, Rahab, and the heavens (26:11–13) are all distinctly his own, recalling the *Chaoskampf* myth from his discussion in 9:6–8, 13.

The distinct and critical quality of this reference to the *Chaoskampf* myth is that for the first time the myth is not distorted. Whereas Job formerly evoked it either to show himself as an inappropriate target of divine wrath (*Menschkampf*, 7:12, 20) or transposed

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<sup>311</sup> Janzen, *Job*, 174, observes the rhetorical effect of Job quoting Zophar's previous speech's conclusion, as Job picks up where Zophar had left off to preempt Zophar from doing so.

<sup>312</sup> It is remarkable that so much scholarly productivity could be spent regarding the poet's parodic use of Hebrew Scripture and that the extensive allusions and quotations between characters throughout the dialogue could be so widely acknowledged, and this approach to the third cycle be so casually dismissed as special pleading.



it to a present assault on the cosmos (*Cosmoskampf*, 9:5–8), here (26:12–13) he refers to the victory *in illo tempore*, as the perfects refer to the past stilling of the Sea (רגע הים), crushing of Rahab (מחץ רהב), clearing of the sky (שמים שפורה), and piercing of the twisting serpent (חללה ידו נחש בריה).<sup>313</sup> This reversion to the myth in its pure form does not negate the poet's purposes in the first two passages. Job's chaos has already triumphed over his friends' order, and even here Job does not abandon his focus on the specific, monotheistic problem of evil. Rather, the poet portrays Job as portraying himself as the master of the various traditions in Hebrew Scripture. He thereby shows the inadequacy of these perspectives. Hence Job's disinterest in continuing the dialogue, preferring to demand God's account, and hence the poet's turn to an alternative.

This alternative solution, I suggest, is hinted at in the divine speeches and in Job's speculations for a structure which would render the cosmos just and coherent, vindicating the creator. I will turn to Job's speculations after summarizing my findings in this section.

First, there are significant commonalities between the friends' perspective and Job's despondent reflections. They both have a low view of humanity, and none concede any responsibility for mundane chaos to the traditional mythological personifications of chaos. However, the manner in which these commonalities manifest could hardly differ more. The friends' low view of humanity makes Job's complaints and desires stink of deluded narcissism (e.g., 5:1, 18:4). Job, however, agrees with their low anthropology

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<sup>313</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 635, argues that the participles of 26:7–10 refer to the past primordial event. It is remarkable that he could find it necessary to make this argument without acknowledging the shift to perfects in 12–13 or recognizing the distinction between the verses' content, as these two latter verses refer specifically to the *Chaoskampf*, whereas the previous verses readily apply to placid ongoing cosmic support. Commentators' translations that reflect this shift in tense in 12 include: Pope, *Job*, 180, 85–86; Gordis, *Book of Job*, 274; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 364; Longmann, *Job*, 315. Gordis, *ibid*, 280, explicitly distinguishes between the current and past creative activities of God. Dhorme, *Le Livre de Job*, 341, puts the shift at v. 10. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 364, meanwhile, agrees with Clines in his translation.

and uses it to amplify his complaint of divine sadism. The friends' suppression of the storm-god, *Chaoskampf* tradition is joined by the transformation of the chthonic deity into an implement of cosmic order, of divine justice. Job's suppression of the agency of the traditional sponsors of cosmological and mundane chaos attributes that sponsorship directly to God Almighty. Thus, like premises result in opposite conclusions, employing convenient mythological complexes. All parties agree on humanity's lowliness and the lack of a cosmic threat to God. But God is either just or sadistically capricious, and mundane justice is either cosmically inherent or negated by divine caprice.

Second, Job's distortion of the *Chaoskampf* myth delegitimizes the divine rule. As Levenson points out, Marduk's reign is democratic in origin, as the pantheon gives its unanimous consent to his autocratic order. The decision is not perfectly free, as Tiamat's threat leaves them no alternative, but the bargain's value is not questioned.<sup>314</sup> In Job, the divine autocrat, whose rule should be legitimated by his sole provision of order, causes this evil and chaos. Thus, in an older, polytheistic context, this divine rule would be entirely illegitimate. The other gods would have no benefit from or cause to accept it. It would be based entirely on Marduk's brutal imposition, largely indistinct from Yamm's or Tiamat's. In Job's monotheistic context, it is based on God's supreme power and wisdom. There is no democratic background to the divine order, no peers or older gods who might object to or challenge the divine warrior. Rather, God Almighty reigns as capricious autocrat, simultaneously the creator and source of chaos. The speculations to which we now turn seek to salvage the moral coherence of the cosmos, either within or

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<sup>314</sup> As Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 131–33, observes, however, the gods' later ratification of Marduk's hegemony after his battle against Tiamat offsets this qualification. Cf. "Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:394–400. Levenson, *ibid.*, 140–43, observes this same theme in the less-than-free offer of the covenant to Israel in Exodus.

despite that reign, as Job posits either a hidden reward for those devoted to the just God, or an alternative principle of justice which will force 'El Shaddai's hand.

***Job's Speculations: Theoretical Structures of Justice—Introduction***

This section on Job's mythological perspective requires the most hermeneutical subtlety. The function of his speculative structures is subtle and more central to the poet's purposes than the friends' foil or Job's deconstruction via the storm-god motif. I use 'speculations' deliberately. The term typically refers to conjecture, a thought experiment based on but going beyond the data. While its root sense, 'hope,' is not connoted in this typical usage, that etymology is reflected in stock market speculation, wherein the hope of gain based on conjecture is central. Thus, I refer to Job's hopeful thought experiments.

The plural is also significant. It reflects the fact that four of Job's speeches (chs. 9–10, 12–14, 16–17, 19) develop such speculations. It more reflects that Job speculates about two distinct themes: a third party who might ensure justice for Job (chs. 9, 16, 19), and a post-mortem reconciliation with God and afterlife (chs. 10, 14, 19). These motifs come together in the climactic, "I know my *go'el* lives," passage. The ambiguities that create contentious scholarly dichotomies in the passage correspond to these themes. I submit that this is deliberate, and the poet climaxes the debate with a polysemous crux. He confronts the interpreter with a Rorschach test similar to the book's climax in 42:6. The reader can look for a Redeemer in God who will restore Job or for a Vindicator who will rise on the account of "dust," mortal humanity, to ensure justice on Job's part.

These speculations are theoretical solutions or mythological structures, ordered to rendering the cosmos morally coherent. Job longs for this just coherence, but God's relationship to it is not finalized. God might freely redeem Job in an afterlife, proving

himself just, or God might fail justice, indicating that a true vindicator should arise. Job's commitment to the cosmos's moral nature, though no longer sure, commends one of these possibilities to him. Thus, Job desires to retain the values his friends existentially defend, as ultimate cosmic and divine justice is the premise and end guiding his speculations. But his speculations reflect potential syntheses with his experiences of the radical, mundane evil his friends cannot admit.

Before getting into the details of the texts, it is convenient to begin with some reflection on the climactic nature of 19:25 and on this section's hermeneutical challenges. First, literary analysis confirms the intuition that Job's statement in 19:25 is climactic. The verse is at the center of a chiasm (19:21–29). As the protagonist's second reply of the second cycle of speeches in a dialogue that ought to be three cycles of three speeches, the speech is formally centered. After this passage, Job no longer speculates regarding structures that would render the cosmos coherent. Job's following speeches (21, 23–24, 26–27) reflect his growing disengagement with the friends and his desire to call God to account. Thus, 19:25 is the summit of Job's mythological speculation and marks a transition from engaging humans to preparing to challenge God. When Job calls God to justice in chs. 29–31, he tries to force the issue and to make God show his hand (which God does not do), revealing whether God will play the Redeemer or refuse, giving way to the Vindicator. The passage is thus both climax and hinge.

The interpretive challenge regarding these speculations is immense. The position that the character Job is simply the poet's mouthpiece is simplistic and inadequate, as belied by God's assessment and Job's own abandonment of his *Chaoskampf* motif. Nonetheless, Job evidently plays a central role in the poet's purposes. While Job appears

to abandon his hope of a post-mortem reconciliation with God at every turn, I submit that this abandonment is for different purposes than that of the *Chaoskampf* motif. That motif was a distortion of a primitive, inherited mythological tradition. Job simultaneously deconstructs his friends' perspective with the *Chaoskampf* motif and that tradition through parodic distortion. Job's speculations are a more subtle matter. While Raymond Brown, John Day, et al., point to the character's despair at the prospect of an afterlife as unequivocal evidence of the poet's refutation of an afterlife, the poet's agreement with Job is not evident *a priori*.<sup>315</sup> The poet might have a more sophisticated approach.

We have also seen the poet's creative use of Hebrew Scripture in creating an allegorical dramatization of Hebrew religion. This allegory confronts his fellow adherents with the riddle of divine justice and covenantal faithfulness in light of Israel's inordinate suffering. The friends represent the Hebrew tradition of retributive justice and Job's refutation of their perspective employs the form of lament taken from the psalter. Their argument exposes tensions inherent to Hebrew Scripture and piety. Any reader who—as the poet's understood audience—takes authoritatively the psalms praising divine justice and lamenting divine negligence, or the Deuteronomic corpus and the lamentations of the prophets, cannot escape their impasse. When Job appropriates both impulses without synthesizing them (13:7–16, 19:21–29, chs. 26–27), he embodies the tension inherent in Hebrew Scripture. The poet thus offers a profound challenge, not necessarily to orthodoxy, but to orthodox piety: not *whether* but *how* can the pious affirm God's righteous reward of the faithful when they lament without earthly reversal? Thus, he

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<sup>315</sup> Raymond Brown, *The Critical Meaning of the Bible*, 16–20; John Day, "The Development of Belief in Life After Death in Ancient Israel," in *After The Exile: Essays in Honour of Rex Mason*, ed. John Barton and David J. Reimer (Macon, GA: Mercer University Press, 1996), p. 248, 250–51. So do many of the commentators, e.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, 464.

poses a riddle without explicitly providing the solution. But this is rather different than asserting that there is no answer.

This argument corroborates Newsom's and Westermann's analyses elucidating the juxtaposition of genre and form. The poet also cites Hebrew Scripture as he demonstrates particular texts' ideological antitheses. Critically, these allusions give the poetic disputation greater purchase for theological readers of Hebrew Scripture than the language carries within the debate. Sometimes these allusions are deconstructive parody, as we saw in Job's friends and Job's use of the *Chaoskampf* motif.<sup>316</sup> However, in the case of Job's speculations, their purpose is much more constructive.

These speculations occur among Job's oscillations between hope and despair. Usually, Job's hope is fleeting speculation or a desperate wish, and it yields to his dourer realism. As Habel notes well of ch. 14, there is a "brilliant dialectic between pessimistic orthodox tradition and a bold new theme of hope."<sup>317</sup> This dialectic should have kept Brown from asserting that the poet simply denied an afterlife. Nonetheless the character Job despairs in ch. 14. Brown treats Job's speech as absolute, propositional truth claims, free of context rather than as dramatically embedded and relative. Hence, he infers that the poet only raises the hope of afterlife to dash it.

However, Job's speech is not free of context. It belongs to a limited character with a particular place in the dialogue. The speech (chs. 12–14) develops from Job's previous

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<sup>316</sup> Even some of the most distorted allusions are potentially highly creative. For example, I treat Job 7:7–18 as a creative parody of Psalm 8:5–6, wherein the allusion immediately contradicts the psalm, but the book's larger context confirms and elevates the psalm's high anthropology, Israel McGrew, "'What is 'Enosh?': The Anthropological Contributions of Job 7:17–18 through Allusion and Intertextuality," *CBQ*, forthcoming. See also, Will Kynes, "Job and Isaiah 40–55: Intertextualities in Dialogue," in *Reading Job Intertextually*, ed. Katharine Dell and Will Kynes (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013) 94–105; *My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping: Job's Dialogue with the Psalms*, BZAW 437 (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012).

<sup>317</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 237–38.

nihilistic comment in 9:22, that the cosmos is morally incoherent as God kills the just and unjust alike. Job tries to solve this problem by positing a post-mortem reward for the righteous from God or a recourse against God. To put it in the reverse, Job's position that the indifference of death makes piety pointless requires the premise that there will not be a post-mortem reward of the righteous. The poet and Job question this premise. Job's questioning ends in despair, leading him to pursue the alternative, juridical solution. However, it need not follow that the poet despaired or intended his reader to do so. Rather, several factors in the book obliquely commend the hopeful speculation. The conclusion affirms God's generosity. The narrative rejects juridical recourse. The third party turns out to be unnecessary. In fact, the only relevant third party, the Satan, renders Job's juridical speculation ironic and absurd. Thus, the hopeful speculation is obliquely commended by the book. It remains the poet's critical and creative contribution.

Most importantly, each of Job's speculations include allusions to passages in Hebrew Scripture pertaining to God's interaction with humanity and especially Israel. The poet thereby correlates those passages' portrayal of God with Job's speculation. The character's speculative dialectic turns in the mud since Job lacks revelation. His theologizing relies solely on intuition and his sense of justice. However, the poet's allusive discourse gains purchase from Hebrew Scripture. He *suggests* to the reader that the God of Israel—if he is who the scriptures claim—*must* support his speculations. Critically, the dramatic context, the speeches' speculative nature, and the book's qualifications of human wisdom in the whirlwind speech soften the force of this “must,” such that the speculations submit to the whirlwind's magisterial aesthetic.<sup>318</sup> Nonetheless,

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<sup>318</sup> This is critical, as the poet can form and plead the logic without quite resorting to argument, demand, or juridical stance. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 149–56, well describes the dynamic here

the logic implies that God *must* redeem if he is Yahweh of the scriptures. Alternatively, Shaddai *must* acknowledge a Vindicator. The poet *suggests* this logic to the reader and submits himself to God, formulating the riddle of Hebrew piety while acknowledging humanity's limited capacity to do so.

This analysis will be in three parts. First, I will observe that the dual themes of post-mortem fate and vindication and of third-party vindicator are seeded in chs. 9–10. This seeding responds to Job's desperate conclusion in 9:22 that the great absurdity, death, renders piety vain. Second, I will show how Job first develops the hope of revivification in chs. 12–14, and then the possibility of a third-party witness in 16–17. Third, I will show how the poet constructs his climax to admit of either theme. We will see that the passage's details, that lead scholars to assume rigid dichotomies and contend for "the right reading," correspond to the poet's strategic ambiguity. Job asserts some mythological structure—whether God's self-vindication in a post-mortem reward or the third-party's juridical vindication of Job at God's expense—but leaves to be decided whether God will redeem or admit the necessity of a Vindicator.

Thus, it will be critical to view these passages in light of each other, but without homogenizing them. While the poet shows a fair amount of continuity in thought, he portrays these ideas developing dynamically, the debate facilitating.<sup>319</sup> I turn now to the texts.

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in his description of the dialectic between "Argument and Obedience." Levenson observes the radical affirmation of human logic and conceptions of justice in their capacity to argue with God and win, as evidenced in Gen 18, and the opposed affirmation of divine prerogative and human submission in Gen 22. He observes that this dialectic is brought out "in the most painful way" in Job, namely in the tension in the whirlwind's affirmation of divine prerogative and the prose's reward of Job's righteousness. I submit that this same dialectic animates the poet's speculation.

<sup>319</sup> Hartley, "From Lament to Oath: A Study of Progression in the Speeches of Job," in *The Book of Job*, ed. W. A. M. Beuken (Leuven: Leuven University Press), 79, reports a shift in scholarship. Whereas earlier studies focused primarily on linguistics and redactional history, and "by their very nature" did not attend to



*Job's Speculations: Theoretical Structures of Justice—Part One*

The poet introduces these motifs in Job's reply to Bildad in chs. 9–10. These speculations germinate from Job's lamentation in 9:22, that "all is one" as God destroys the perfect (תם; cf. Job 1:1) and the wicked alike. As much as the book concerns suffering, it is the apparent finality of death and the indistinct fate of the perfect and the wicked that render God's rule and human suffering absurd. In response to this critical datum, Job refers to the possibility of an arbiter (9:33) without hope and questions God's purpose in creating humanity only to consign them to oblivion (10:3 ff).

Regarding the 'arbiter,' translations vary, but its essential function as a third-party who could 'make right' between God and Job is universally recognized.<sup>320</sup> The operative word is 'could.' There is a peculiar construction, *לֹא יִשְׁ*, suggesting "there is no" and manuscript attestation of *לֹא יִשְׁ*, indicating "would that there was" an arbiter between us.<sup>321</sup> The oddity of MT<sup>L</sup> can be explained by the poet's play on "there is no man" (*לֹא אִישׁ*), in 9:32, but it is unimportant to insist on one sense over the other.<sup>322</sup> Job's affirmation that such a character does not exist laments that reality. Job's wish that such a character would exist is not matched with belief. The ambiguity could betray the poet's intent to develop the theme as Job passes from simple negation in ch. 9 to progressively more

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"the development of ideas in the Book of Job," more recent scholarship focuses on the development of ideas in the text. While Job's text evidently manifests historical stages in its development, we should be suspicious of the source critical approach's lack of restraint, as subtle nuances too readily become unacceptable contradictions, and the critic's assumptions regarding the limited sophistication of ancient authors are the chief criteria in vivisectioning genius works of art.

<sup>320</sup> Thus Arbiter (Gordis, Hartley, Habel, Alter), Arbitrator (Clines), Umpire (Pope, Janzen, Longman, Rowley), "one who effects right" (Seow).

<sup>321</sup> *לֹא יִשְׁ*, of course, most naturally suggests "there is no." However, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 571, reports that *לֹא יִשְׁ* does not occur elsewhere in Hebrew; further, as we would expect rather, *אִישׁ*, or even the rare *יִשְׁ* (1 Sam 21:9, Ps 135:17), Seow follows some manuscripts, including the OG and Peshitta reading, *יִל*, thus, "would that there were," and he points us to the Ketib of 2 Sam 18:12, 19:7, *אִל*, which has both a Qere and manuscripts supporting *יִל*.

<sup>322</sup> As Seow, *Job 1–21*, 571, observes, despite his preference for reading, "would that."

confident statements in the latter speeches. The fact that Job returns, not to the motif of the third-party advocate, but to the speculation of a post-mortem reconciliation with God in the next speech underscores Job's present disinterest in the possibility.

The most critical thing to observe of this מוֹכִיחַ is its hypothetical function. As Lindsay Wilson dryly observed, "little detail is given of his identity, almost as if that is not meant to be the focus."<sup>323</sup> Neither should we quibble over nuances of how strong the connotation of "reprove" is, as in, whether the מוֹכִיחַ is Job's advocate who reproves God or is an arbiter who is neutral.<sup>324</sup> What we must recognize is that the figure Job imagines would have sufficient standing as to make God act justly, since God has failed to do so.

There seem to be two possibilities for this "standing." Theoretically, another deity in the same class as El Shaddai might rebuke him for his injustice. This possibility is belied by the book's monotheistic perspective and cannot be the case here. The second possibility would be a counterpart to the Satan figure in the prologue, one whose concern is for Job and for justice, not for the regardless vivisection of the human creature. Such an arbiter could not engage with God by threat of power or coercion, but by an appeal to an agreed upon standard of fairness, an acknowledgement of justice *per se*.

Thus, such an arbiter requires as its premise the exclusion of any voluntarist notion of divine will and justice. The arbiter's premise supports a natural law perspective wherein created justice must relate to God's own nature and justice.<sup>325</sup> This exclusion and

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<sup>323</sup> Lindsay Wilson, "Realistic Hope or Imaginative Exploration? The Identity of Job's Arbiter," *Pacifica* 9, 3 (1996): 245.

<sup>324</sup> But we must reject Ticiati's attempt, *Job and the Disruption of Identity*, 120–22, to remove the valence of "reproving" from the participle, מוֹכִיחַ, arguing that this figure is intercessory rather than accusatory, per a dubious discussion of Amos 5:10 and a problematic interpretation of Ez 3:26 that ignores Ez 3:27.

<sup>325</sup> Which Thomas would describe as the natural law's participation in the divine law, ST I-II.91.2. Recall the dialectic Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 149–56, discusses in the contexts of Gen 18 and 22 and of Job's whirlwind speech and narrative affirmation of God's rewarding Job's righteousness. I submit that the dialectic is uneven in both contexts, as Gen 22 tests Abraham's obedience without

support may seem to be undermined by (1) Job's disbelief in such a character or structure here, (2) Job's assessment that God is acting contrary to Job's perspective on justice, and (3) by the whirlwind speech's apparent insistence that human conceptions of justice cannot challenge God's judgment (40:8).<sup>326</sup> The third point will wait for the next chapter. To the first two points, Job's disbelief in a third party and his belief that God acted arbitrarily do not in themselves establish a voluntaristic theory of divine will and justice. Rather, Job's entire discourse is bent on retaining the validity of humanity's perspective on goodness and justice *per se*. This is true on the personal level, as Job insists on his proportional response (e.g., 6:2–3) given his unjust calamities. God concedes they were undeserved, though he assumes his prerogative (2:3). It is also true on the general and theoretical level. Job insists on the validity of his perspective in keeping with the Jewish creation and sapiential traditions.<sup>327</sup> Job's assessment (2), then, drives him to indict God based on a natural law. Job is not always sure of this understanding of the relationship between divine and natural justice, but it is a critical premise underlying his entire discourse and speculation.

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indicating a voluntarism which could actually affirm the sacrifice, and the whirlwind's affirmations need not be understood as final affirmations of reality, but as rhetorically ordered to gaining Job's submission, thereby securing his vindication of God in the wager. Thus, the natural law theory of justice is generally affirmed, while the voluntaristic aesthetic of absolute submission to God is asserted to the point of transgressing the integrity of the natural law but without actually doing so.

<sup>326</sup> Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "The Meaning of *mišpat* in the Book of Job," *JBL* 101 no. 4 (1982): 521–27 is particularly apropos here. She argues that the book exploits two senses of the term, *mishpat*, relating to jurisprudence and sovereignty, the latter modeled on Samuel's description of Saul's *mishpat* in drafting and appropriating property at will. Thus, Scholnick argues, the human disputants refer to "judgement," but God asserts his sovereign dominion using the same term. While God undoubtedly asserts his sovereignty in the whirlwind, it seems that the speech indicates a more synthetic understanding of the term's two senses in this context. Despite the trend describing the God of the whirlwind as amoral if not immoral, this reading is unnecessary and there is much in the speech that makes it unlikely. I treat this in chapter 3.

<sup>327</sup> Creation's goodness results from and manifests God's goodness. If humanity is made in the image of God, then the factors that distinguish humanity from animals—the capacities for rationality, moral goodness, personal relationship, etc.—indicate our likeness to God, resulting in God's partial similarity and knowability. If wisdom is among God's distinctive traits and God creates in wisdom, humans' growth in wisdom is a created participation in the mind of God given by God.

In short, the theoretical premise of this arbiter is a morally coherent cosmos, one that is really just, and a principle of justice to which humans have access and to which God is accountable. Whether this accountability is extrinsic to God as an assertive arbiter implies or intrinsic as the participatory theory of natural law implies is critical but beside the present point. Rather, the foundation of this desire and hypothetical character is the reality of justice *per se*, as a reality available to humans, which governs human activity and to which divine activity is conformed (or more properly vice versa). Thus, Job's habitual adherence to the sapiential premise of a just, ordered cosmos undergirds his speculations over character or structure by which God is limited. Put in the reverse, this character occurs to Job as a possibility for salvaging cosmic moral coherence.

Such a character, however, Job does not believe in, and he merely refers to this juridical hypothetical in one verse. Furthermore, this idea is not Job's invention. Rather, he answers and agrees with the impossibility of a third-party advocate introduced by Eliphaz in 5:1. This may be a hermeneutical cue, as this motif of the juridical third-party prompts Job to his hazardous declamation against God (chs. 30–31), and Job's friends' arguments may be seen as Job's most subtle test. But for now, I turn with Job to his natural stance, his lamentation and reflection on humanity's lot, wherein he first attempts to salvage the moral coherence of the cosmos in his appeal for divine inattention.

While Job spent a mere verse on the possibility of a third-party, he laments the human lot for a chapter. The poet's allusions to Hebrew Scripture lend the lament more purchase than Job's rhetoric implies. In Job 10:3, Job imagines appealing to God, observing the incongruity of the creator sadistically turning on his creation: "Does it seem good to you (הטוב לך) to oppress and turn on the work of your hands?" The

question, “is it good for you” indicts God by evoking Gen 1, as the God who found creation good delights in its destruction. The chapter is full of anthropological creation *topoi*. Job describes himself as the intimate “work of God’s palms” (10:3), “shaped and made” by God’s hands “like clay” (10:8–9) and describes the process of gestation as making cheese (10:10–11), capped with the final gift of life and devotion (חסד; 10:12).

While such accounts of God’s previous care generally result in either praise or an appeal for help, as in psalms of thanksgiving or lament, Job’s reflection here is largely too despairing to follow suit. Rather, as Perdue observes, “Job destabilizes the metaphor of artistry,” as Job looks not to the divine artisan for providential care but complains of God’s destruction.<sup>328</sup> As we have seen, later in the chapter Job turns to the mythological *topos* of *Chaoskampf* to characterize God’s treatment of him, as God keeps a vigilant watch over him, hunts him, and sends his hosts against him in waves (10:14–17).<sup>329</sup> The chapter is a great distortion of the lament, as Job has no sure hope of God’s—in this case unjust—punishment ending. Job focuses on the absurdity of the creator God’s violence rather than God’s role in creation as the premise for petition.

Yet there is petition in the chapter. Notably, in 10:9a, Job uses the softened imperative, “remember” (זכר־נָא), at home in laments (e.g., Ps 25:6–7), as he invokes God’s creation of Job “like clay” (כִּי־כַחַמֶּר עָשִׂיתָנִי). Verses 8–9 juxtapose the facts of God’s creation with God’s destruction, emphasizing the incongruity of the situation, and their rhetoric is significant. Reading 8a and 9a in English, the reader recognizes the anthropological tradition of Gen 2. While the poet appears to have known Gen 2 and

<sup>328</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 140.

<sup>329</sup> These verses do not explicitly recall the *Chaoskampf* myth, but their use of the divine warrior motif follows the myth as explicitly cited earlier in this speech in 9:8, 13.

participates in the same tradition here, none of the language in fact corresponds, though there are synonyms proper to the topos.<sup>330</sup>

More telling is the language in Job 10:8–9 regarding God’s incongruous punishments. In 10:8b, Job refers to God’s destruction, literally “swallowing up,” of Job, his creation. Perdue observes how shocking this language is, as Job describes God as “the cannibalistic parent who now like Sheol devours his own offspring.”<sup>331</sup> This is a strong reading of the character’s speech, but the poet has a more subtle design. As Clines observes, the poet alludes to Job 2:3, where God describes his destruction of Job with the same term: swallowing Job without cause (לבלאו חנם).<sup>332</sup> Note that “swallow up” occurs immediately next to “without cause” or “gratuitously” in 2:3, which Job had also echoed earlier in this speech (9:17). Both echoes have the same ironic agreement with God.<sup>333</sup> Thus, Job is nearly correct. But the narrative points to a God who does not viciously destroy his creation but recognizes the injustice and even sympathizes with Job, affirming human notions of justice.<sup>334</sup> Further, as Seow observes, Job here *de facto* agrees with Bildad’s principled insistence on God’s freedom to destroy as he pleases (8:18).<sup>335</sup> Bildad

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<sup>330</sup> Thus, Gen 2:7 uses the root יצר, to form, and God forms humanity, האדם, “dust from the ground,” עפר מן האדמה. Job 10:8–9 uses the roots עצב and עשה, and Job was made “like clay,” כחמר. Genesis 2:4, however, does refer to the larger process of creation as making, עשית. Similarly, God announces his intention to make a suitable helper for Adam (אעשה; 2:18), which making is then described as building up (יבן; 2:22). The key terms fall within the same topos, as is clear in Isa 45:9 and Jer 18:4, both of which employ the terms from Gen 2:7 and Job 10 interchangeably.

<sup>331</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 142–43.

<sup>332</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 247.

<sup>333</sup> Job refers to receiving wounds from God “for no reason” (חנם) in 9:17, which corresponds to God’s assessment in 2:3. The poet uses the echo to develop the motif and to capture the irony of the disjunction in heavenly and earthly perspectives, indicating that what appears to be divine caprice and cruelty can be accounted for in a manner preserving God’s delight in humanity by providing an alternative mythological complex. The dual echoes of 2:3 in 9:17 and 10:8 are complementary, as they offer the same hermeneutical potential, and they confirm that this is a deliberate device. Of course, the reader may still see here an ironic subversion of the human perspectives, as Fox describes, or, with Dell, the poet’s vicious parody of a pre-existing narrative, but any approach will have to account for the poet’s use and adaptation of the prose.

<sup>334</sup> So, Clines, *Job 1–20*, 247.

<sup>335</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 580.

may have led Job to this errant, voluntarist formulation of reality. This narrative irony further supports the alternative understanding of cosmic justice.

The poet's purpose in 10:9b is still more subtle. Job refers to God's inevitable sending him back to the dust (וּאֶל-עָפָר תִּשְׁיבֵנִי). Even in English, the phrase obviously evokes God's dictum in Gen 3:19, "to dust you will return" (וּאֶל-עָפָר תִּשְׁוּב), but the Hebrew is virtually identical.<sup>336</sup> Excepting the 1cs object suffix ("me") in Job, the sole graphical difference is the *mater, yod* in Job or *vav* in Genesis. As the poetry used a more conservative orthography, it is likely that the *mater, yod*, was originally absent the text, meaning that the poetry would have conformed still more closely to Genesis. (Even a *plene* spelling might be hardly distinguishable, depending on the script used.<sup>337</sup>) Therefore, it is likely only Job's "me" that changes the qal to a hiphil, the subject from humans to God, God's authoritative pronouncement on corrupt humanity to God's destruction of the just individual. The morphology encapsulates the theme. Job redirects Genesis's anthropological etiology to the problem of theodicy.

Job 10:8b and 9b are not formally questions. Translations and commentators are divided in translating them as questions or statements.<sup>338</sup> The plethora of questions in the surrounding verses (3, 4a, 4b, 5–7, 10, 18, 20) likely grounds the decision to treat them so. Either translation is rhetorically effective as both emphasize the incongruity of God's

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<sup>336</sup> Habel, *Job*, 198, writes that the "expression 'return to the dust' restates the mortality formula of Genesis 3:19," and he infers Job's creation is meant carry all the "same meticulous care as the first human being."

<sup>337</sup> Aramaic scripts such as that in Qumran's Isaiah Scroll hardly distinguish the *vav* and *yod*. Nonetheless, Frank Moore Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic: Essays in the History of the Religion of Israel* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1973), 345, reports that Job is the only book outside the Pentateuch to have survived in Paleo-Hebrew at Qumran and that Orlinsky (source not cited) argues that the Old Greek translation was based on a Paleo-Hebrew text. We cannot know whether this indicates a conservative tradition maintaining the autograph's original script or the copyists' reverence and aesthetic preference.

<sup>338</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 588, characterizes the tendency to translate these as questions as "unnecessary and awkward." Also against treating 10:9b as a question are Clines, Hartley, Habel, Gordis, Dhorme. Translating 10:9b as a question are Pope, Janzen, Longmann.

creation with his destruction of Job. Nonetheless, translating 10:8b and 9b as questions indicates that their negation is the goal of the petition, that Job's chief desire is that the effect not be true, whereas translating them as statements heightens the accusation as part of the premise of the petition. Verse 8b "and you destroyed me," uses a converted imperfect, like "and fashioned me" in 8a, continuing the sequence of God's past activities and agreeing with Job 2:3 that God has already "destroyed" him. (If the hyperbole suggests a destruction beyond what Job has received, God has used the same hyperbole.)

Verse 10:9b, meanwhile, uses a simple imperfect, indicating a future, "you will bring me to dust," and Job obviously has not decomposed. As a question, we would read this as though Job were desiring that God would allow him not to die. Yet there is no indication of such a desire within the book. Rather Job recognizes the inevitability of death and uses it as a premise to plead for God's gentler treatment during life (cf. 10:20). Job's—humanity's—mortality is part of the content Job wishes God to "remember" to reproduce the treatment Job knew in days past (cf. 10:10–12).<sup>339</sup> If humans are to die like beasts, also being mere dust, then God should neglect them rather than persecute them as though they are of cosmic significance (10:16–17; cf. 7:12, 17–21).

So, then, within the human dialogue, Job laments, hopes and despairs, continues to shock his friends, and flirts with the idea of taking a case before God. In the larger narrative, the prose indicates that Job is correct about his unjust destruction, indicating

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<sup>339</sup> Clines also recognizes that the lines here are not interrogative and that Job does not object to human mortality *per se*; however, Clines argues that 10:9b is not subordinate to "remember" in 10:9a, based solely on his assertion that Job complains that "God is reducing him to his native earth (cf. 1:21) before he has lived out his life," Clines, *Job 1–20*, 248. Clines's reading is possible but not cogent. There is no reason to dissociate 10:9b from 10:9a; 10:9b is an effective datum for Job's argument; Clines's comparisons to 1:21 and 5:26 are not evidently relevant; and the shift in tense from perfect to imperfect easily accommodates a future rather than a present, thus describing Job's fate to die ultimately rather than his suffering in the present. Indeed, this is the more natural translation, and Clines's position is needlessly tedious importing dubious nuances to a simple line. Seow translates as I do, *Job 1–20*, 575.



that there is a real incongruity between the ideology of creation and the fact of its management: God has already confirmed that Job's destruction was unwarranted. While Job's view of this is incomplete, his recognition of the moral absurdity of death in 9:22 has brought him to this perspective. On the subtler level of the poet's creative use of Hebrew traditions, he not only uses general creation topoi to characterize death and suffering as unfitting for the creator, but he uses the lament and the language of Genesis to do so. Essentially, the poet creates a drama where the just man's suffering exposes the absurdity of death, so he can demonstrate that the Hebrew tradition results in a perplexing riddle, demanding that the creator, in his loving-kindness (707; 10:12) answer that absurdity. If returning to dust is the ultimate fate of humanity (Gen 3:19/Job 10:9b), then God ought to neglect humanity. Put in reverse, God's chastisement logically indicates that the return to dust is not final. While the character oscillates between hope and despair, the poet uses this oscillation to present the reader with a conundrum: recognize the limitation of Gen 3 and look for hope beyond it or forsake piety in despair.

***Job's Speculations: Theoretical Structures of Justice—Part Two***

The second round of these speculative themes involves a progression in each. First, Job revisits the theme of human mortality and speculates as to the finality of death (ch. 14), as we have just seen (ch. 10). Second, he affirms his confidence in a witness that will attest to his righteousness (ch. 16). I take them in turn.

While the majority of the material that concerns us is in ch. 14, the speech's structure and introduction are important. The speech spans three chapters, beginning with the description of God's destruction of humans, peoples, and nations evoking the captivity, including 12:9's quotation of Isa 41:20, as the "hand of the LORD" is

responsible for human suffering. In ch. 13, Job shifts to rebuking his friends (13:1–13; including Job’s use of the doctrine of retribution and the characterization of the friends’ use of ashy maxims) and then to imaginatively and implicitly addressing God (13:14–28). This hypothetical and implicit address evokes a quasi-juridical setting, but it is more pleading in its tone than demanding. Job laments and offers this as his argument for God’s redress. The tone is decidedly different from later in ch. 31.

This pleading lament has two parallel descriptions of humanity’s frailty (13:25, 28).<sup>340</sup> These anticipate the fuller review of humanity’s transience in the following chapter. Seow notes the unique verbal affinities between Job 13:25 and Lev 26:36, and he implies that Job alludes to Leviticus, when he argues that Leviticus resolves scholars’ struggles with Job.<sup>341</sup> The solution is further attractive, as the Leviticus passage describes God’s punishment of Israel by and among their enemies for their sin: the poet again describes Job according to Israel’s suffering. The parallel, Job 13:28, evidences the same rhetorical allusion, and it is more important for our purposes, since it appears to allude to Isaiah. It thus resumes the allusive register (cf. Job 12:9) which he will continue to exploit two verses later (14:2) and throughout ch. 14. This Isaian register will give Job’s discourse significant purchase well beyond the character’s intent.

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<sup>340</sup> As Clines, *Job 1–20*, 323, observes, the section is composed of tricolons, with 13:23–25 in parallel to 13:26–28. This helps explain the peculiarity of the shift to the third person with the masculine pronoun, while the only antecedent otherwise has been Job speaking in the first person. Thus, the “leaf,” which stands for Job, is the 3ms antecedent. Thus, Seow’s suggestion, *Job 1–21*, 665–66, that the 3ms reflects Job’s dissociation from his own person in view of his imminent death can be accepted with the major qualification that the reference to the leaf accommodates this dissonance. The majority of scholars move 13:28 into the following chapter, as the following verse (14:1) begins Job’s reflection on “humans born of women,” indicating the 3ms subject. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 146, observes that this association is fair, but the emendation is unnecessary, as 13:28’s 3ms pronoun anticipates the subject named in 14:1.

<sup>341</sup> Specifically, Seow, 649–50, describes the assessment that the “blown leaf... seems like a *non sequitur*,” and the “precise idiom of the ‘blown leaf’ in fact occurs only” in these two passages, and only in these two passages are “blow” (ndp) and “persecute” (rdp) in parallel. Thus, not only is there a conspicuous rarity in language, but the Joban passage has a “gap” to recall Boyarin’s work on Midrash, as Job is better understood through the Leviticus passage and hardly otherwise.

Job's phrase in 13:28b, "like a garment the moth has eaten," strongly evokes Isa 50:9 and 51:8, using the same three-word phrase as Isa 51:8 and the same four words in different order as Isa 50:9.<sup>342</sup> Fohrer sees "the second colon as derived from the psalm-style phraseology" found in Isaiah and other passages.<sup>343</sup> But otherwise commentators do not generally consider the possibility of an allusion. Brinks-Rea, who argues that Job alludes to 2 Isaiah, indicates that this phrase is unique to Isaiah and Job, but she does not revisit the passage.<sup>344</sup> Taken alone it could hardly prove borrowing let alone direction. However, taken in parallel with 13:25's rhetorical use of Lev 26:36 and in the context of bridging Job 12:9's quotation of Isa 41:20 and Job 14's frequent allusions to Isaiah, it appears the poet activates his literate reader's ear for the following chapter's discourse.

As Job's plea to God continues in ch. 14, he uses humanity's transience, comparing humans to fading flowers (14:2, cf. Isa 40:6–7<sup>345</sup>), to argue that God should leave us alone (14:1–6), much like in ch. 10. However, he then contrasts humanity's mortality with the image of a tree, cut down and dehydrated, coming back to life, as a contrast with humans who die and pass into non-being (14:7–10). The use of natural images continues as even the lifegiving water passes away (14:11) and, as Habel

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<sup>342</sup> The longer line in Job 13:28 must be viewed, as the final word in 13:28a is in common with Isa 50:9. Job 13:28b uses the same string of three words as Isa 51:8. The only differences between the lines are Isaiah's 3ms imperfect with a 3mp object suffix (כבגד יאכלם עש), compared to Job's 3ms perfect with a 3ms object suffix (כבגד אכלו עש). Job's use of the singular is understandable, as Job focuses on his individual person as we are used to the poet individualizing phenomena described in Hebrew Scripture, although Isaiah refers to the Suffering Servant's enemies, not to the Servant's or Israel's own sufferings in this passage. Thus, the allusion conflates the two and is particularly biting, indicating that God does not distinguish between his servants and their tormentors, which both Job and Isaiah acknowledge as apparent but finally deny. Isaiah 50:9's line uses a different word order and semantics, but actually has the same four words (כבגד יכלו עש יאכלם) as Job 13:28 ends with (יכלה כבגד אכלו עש). It is interesting if enigmatic to note that Isa 50:9 is the servant's speech whereas 51:8 is God's speech confirming it, and the Joban poet seems to have incorporated both into one parody.

<sup>343</sup> As reported by Clines, *Job 1–20*, 324.

<sup>344</sup> Brinks-Rea, "Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job," 137.

<sup>345</sup> Brinks-Rea, "Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job," 115, correlates these passages along with Job 13:28 and Isa 50:9 in her comparison of the works' common view of human transitoriness.

observes, the “mountains, popular symbols of the enduring and eternal,” also crumble (14:18), making humanity’s transience part “of a decaying cosmos.”<sup>346</sup>

The operative logic in ch. 14 is the dependence of divine justice upon the correlation between divine chastisement in this life on the one hand and the existence of an afterlife wherein the chastised pious are rewarded for their trouble on the other. Only that reward can justify that chastisement. The character, Job, recognizes his undeserved chastisement and longs for an afterlife to render it rational and bearable (14:13–15), to indicate that God’s chastisement was purposeful and not gratuitously cruel. His despairing of that afterlife forces him to run the logic the other way: God should, in view of humanity’s passing vanity, leave them alone. Thus, in this chapter, the poet develops the corollary to the reflection from ch. 10. If neither circumstance—post-mortem reward of the just or the merciful neglect of the transient—should result, God’s justice should fail. Thus, the character, Job, oscillates between hopeful desire for God’s post-mortem friendship and desperate desire for God’s pre-mortem inattention.

Again, however, the poet provides elements creating a more subtle dialogue. Per Habel’s observation of mountains’ symbolic significance of cosmic durability and their transience as part “of a decaying cosmos” in this chapter, we may wonder whether the poet seriously experiments with the idea of a cosmic renewal. Indeed, heavens (v. 12), Sheol (v. 13), and the mountains and boulders (v. 18), all feature in ch. 14, creating a vertical summary of the cosmos. We can add to Habel’s characterization of mountain the equivalent cosmic significance of “boulder,” in comparison to Bildad’s assertion that the cosmic order is steadfast and will not change, as he uses the synecdoche, “will the

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<sup>346</sup> Habel, *Job*, 237.

boulder be moved from its place for you?” (18:4). Indeed, Bildad uses the same three words as Job (14:18, ויצור יעתק ממקמו; 18:4, ויעתק־צור ממקמו), rebuking Job’s narcissism and asserting the cosmos’s impassibility.

While this claim to the instability of the human realm (and by implication the entire cosmos<sup>347</sup>) violates his friends’ sensibilities and seems to entertain oblivion, it also invites the reader to reconsider 14:12. The NABR inexcusably reads, “never to rise.” But the negated imperfect is followed by the condition, “until the heavens are not” (ולא־יקום). Thus, whether Job said the phrase with any hope or not, the poet raises the possibility for a cosmic renewal or re-structuring to the benefit of mortals. Of course, this theme is dominant in Second Isaiah and occurs in immediate proximity to Isa 51:8. The earth will wear out like a garment (כבגד תבלה), but God’s salvation will remain (Isa 51:6). While Isaiah uses this as an embellished celebration of God’s power, the Joban poet uses the idea to more particular effect. Paradoxically, the poet puts mortals’ final hope in the heavens passing away. As the cosmos is characterized by systemic injustice—human and divine—Job looks for divine initiative to restructure the cosmos to human benefit.

In the following verse (14:13), Job attributes a positive role to Sheol, as it offers protection until that renewal, when God’s anger has passed. It is there, not in this life nor in the heavens, that Job locates his proximate hope. He longs for God’s “remembering,”

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<sup>347</sup> When Job characterizes the mountain and boulders as passing away, it is possible that he only intends the part of the cosmos in which living humans abide and does not mean to imply that the abodes of the dead, Sheol, or of the gods, Heaven, will pass away. However, this distinction is belied by Bildad’s insistence on the constancy of the earth and on its value as a feature of the cosmos and its moral order (18:4, 5–21). Rather, it is more likely that Job shares with his interlocutors the valuation of the human realm as part of the cosmic order and all parts as equally inherent and lasting if not equally desirable. Furthermore, at least some mountains are liminal structures, accessible to humans but being the proper domains of the gods, from Olympus to Zaphon (Job 26:7), to Carmel (1 Kgs 18:19 ff) to Sinai and Zion. The classic work is Clifford’s, *The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1972). Levenson’s book, *Sinai and Zion: An Entry into the Jewish Bible* (Minneapolis: Winston Press, 1985), engages the developments within Hebrew Scripture.

resuming his rhetoric of lamentation from 10:9, as he wishes that God would grant him new life wherein his justice is acknowledged and rewarded (14:14–16). The precise phrase, “set for me a time that you will remember me” (תשיית לי חק ותזכרני; 14:13), does not use any language in common with Gen 1, but the concept of setting a time, given the references to the heavens and Sheol, indicates a similar sort of cosmological ordering as the establishing of the sun, moon, and stars as signs in Gen 1:14, though this ordering is not reflected in the heavens. Indeed, the lack of such an order in Gen 1 corresponds to the necessity for the heavens to pass away, so that God may set a new time. Job also resumes his interplay with Gen 3:19 from 10:9, as he looks for God’s wrath to turn aside (עד-שוב; 14:13), and he imagines God longing for the work of his hands (14:15) rather than sadistically destroying it (14:13, 16, 19, cf. 10:3). Effectively, Job participates in the Jewish cosmological tradition and recognizes the inevitability of Gen 3:19 as God turns man to dust, but Job looks for a time, after his days of ‘service’ (צבא; 14:14, cf. Isa 40:2) in this life and after he has turned to dust in Sheol, when God will turn his wrath and allow Job to rise (14:12–14). Thus, Job longs for God’s redemptive character, revealed in the restoration of Judah (Isa 40:2), to apply to his corporal resurrection. Job hopes that humanity can live again as the tree, whose death *in the dust* (14:8) is temporary.

The use of tree imagery also has significance beyond the immediate context. Here, it merely serves in a thought experiment as Job longs for a similar privilege without ground for hope, and it contrasts with Job’s simile, comparing humanity’s brief life to a blossom (14:2).<sup>348</sup> However, the floral metaphor is shared with Isa 40:6–7, and the

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<sup>348</sup> This “thought experiments without hope” motif is the subject of Lindsay Wilson’s article, “Realistic Hope or Imaginative Exploration? The Identity of Job’s Arbiter,” but Wilson neither accounts for the Book of Job’s allusive character nor for the possibility that the poet has a more subtle design than his protagonist’s.

arboreal image of revivification is used in Isaiah 10:33–11:1.<sup>349</sup> Isaiah 10's antedating Job is sure.<sup>350</sup> Thus, this pair of vegetative metaphors both appear to be drawn from Isaiah, lending the poet's argument further cogency.

As the Joban poet pleads the case of inordinate suffering, the rhetoric is fitting, as Isa 10–11 portrays severe divine punishment of Judah, which will be brief and witness God's wrath ending (אַפִּי; Isa 10:25, cf. Job 14:13). Assyria's destruction of Judah and the surrounding region is likened to the felling of a forest (Isa 10:33–34), with Assyria playing the axe to the Lord's hand (10:15). The revivification of the tree concerns the resurgence of the Davidic dynasty to the benefit of the kingdom of Judah, as Isaiah looks to Hezekiah's reign to restore justice, Israel's unity, and Judah's regional hegemony.

Of course, Isaiah himself eventually knew that Hezekiah's reign would disappoint. The poet further knew the imagined restoration never happened and the partial restoration was short-lived. The poet creatively uses the image, no longer to revivify a failed political expectation, but to argue for a non-political solution to Israel's woes, or, rather, a solution to Israelites' woes. As Isaiah had used the tenacity of trees to illustrate the miraculous recovery of the Davidic dynasty and the Jewish people, so the poet suggests to his readers that God can work a miraculous recovery of individuals. As in Job 10:9, the poet adapts the scriptural passage to concern, not humanity in general, nor the kingdom of Judah or the Davidic dynasty, but the individual and by extension humanity in general. If there is no post-mortem existence, it might follow that the

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<sup>349</sup> The greatest concentration of shared language comes from Isaiah 11:1, including stump, גזע, roots, שֵׁרֶשׁ, and a closely corresponding pair of verbs, blossom, יִפְרֹחַ, in Isa 11:1, and the sprout, יִפְרֹחַ, in Job 14:9.

<sup>350</sup> Indeed, it would seem that Job's use of Isa 10–11 alongside his apparent use of Second Isaiah with the same rhetorical strategy and effect makes for an even stronger argument that Job uses Second Isaiah and not the reverse, unless scholars are of the opinion that Job was written before Isa 10–11, a very rare position in current scholarship.

individual is unimportant and one's nation is of the greatest importance, as one's family, name, and memory continue there. Job has been disillusioned of these values, and he insists on the necessity of the individual's reward to vindicate divine justice.<sup>351</sup> The poet insists on the value of the individual, not merely of the kingdom. Thus, there is some correspondence to Second Isaiah's democratization of the Davidic covenant (Isa 55:3).<sup>352</sup> The poet broadens the application of previous oracles of blessing and restoration.

Job, then, longs for a post-mortem beatitude but despairs and pleads that the logic at least benefit him the consolation of divine neglect. There is also a subtle indication that the cosmos could be re-ordered to the benefit of humanity, underscored by Bildad in ch. 18. Job's oscillation also confronts the reader with a logic that does not dissipate with Job's despair. Divine justice depends on either God's post-mortem reward of the righteous or God's inattention to humanity. Considering human suffering, especially of the faithful, and the Jewish tradition of divine friendship and covenantal loving-kindness, the latter is unthinkable, and the former is logically necessary. Thus, ch. 14 continues ch. 10's argument from Gen 1–3 supplementing it with Isa 10–11, 40, 50–51, as the poet invited his readers to adapt their largely frustrated national, political, and historical hope to a personal and eschatological one.

As we transition to the second phase of the third-party motif, I should note a dramatic device the poet uses in this transition: namely, Eliphaz's rebuke in 15:7, 11. We cannot examine Eliphaz's speech. I only want to observe that Eliphaz's question in 15:7,

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<sup>351</sup> It seems that this value corresponds to Job's treatment of his daughters in the epilogue where they receive inheritances compared to the prologue where they rely on their brothers' patriarchal provision.

<sup>352</sup> Or perhaps Third Isaiah, depending on the theory of Isaiah 55's relative dating. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary*, AYB 19A (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 368–69, argues that Isa 55 takes a distinct tone from what has preceded and is familiar with Isa 40–54 and 56–66, if not in their final form. Blenkinsopp himself, *ibid.*, 370, sees here the recollection of God's acts of faithful love to David being “democratize[d]” and transferred “to the people of Israel as a whole.”



asking Job whether he is the first man and preexisted the hills, corresponds to Job's references to Gen 2–3 in ch. 10 and to his reflection on humanity's fate vis-à-vis the cosmos in ch. 14. His question in 15:11, whether the consolations of God are not enough for Job, Job and the poet would answer in the negative. But Eliphaz's defense of the present order—of whatever consolations for humans who are punished and doomed to return to dust without hope of new life—may provoke Job's shift from lamentation and speculation in ch. 14 to calling for a supporting witness in ch. 16.

As usual, there is a fair amount of ambiguity or vagueness in the passage of Job's "witness." The most divisive interpretive issue is who this hypothetical witness is. The major fault-line lies between those who find here a paradoxical appeal to God against God, as God will testify to Job's innocence despite God being the one who has unjustly punished Job, and those who see a sure reference to a third party.<sup>353</sup> The issue is insoluble. Pope argues that this is not God against God, but rather the umpire of 9:33 and the vindicator of 19:25.<sup>354</sup> However, the argument presumes that Job's thought does not materially develop and begs the question that God is not understood in 19:25.<sup>355</sup> Further, there seems to be the assumption against the level of sophistication involved in paradox.<sup>356</sup> But the Hebrew Bible is animated by such paradoxes, and the poet is a subtle

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<sup>353</sup> Preferring the paradoxical approach are Dhorme, Fohrer, Rowly, and Gordis; insisting on some third-party structure, meanwhile, are Pope, Terrien, Clines. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 390, sees Job's cry itself (16:18) as the testimony (16:19).

<sup>354</sup> Pope, *The Book of Job*, 125.

<sup>355</sup> Indeed, Hartley, "From Lament to Oath," 79, cites Pope as an example of scholarship focused on linguistics and disinterested in tracking literary development in the book. Pope, *Job*, LXXV, dubiously opines that "it is scarcely appropriate to call this section of the book a dialogue" as there is no "give and take of the philosophical disputation," each side reiterates their partisan view *ad nauseum*, and "there is no real movement in the argument." While it is appropriate to distinguish Job from the Socratic dialogues, Job rather obviously develops lines of thought. Even if we were to accept Pope's equation of the three theoretical third parties, creating a mosaic and assuming that the various nuances of each validly apply to all, we would still have to admit that the picture develops.

<sup>356</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 804, alternatively, explicitly cites this paradox in the *Babylonian Theodicy* and affirms that "such a dialectical tension could have been entertained in Job's mind," but he denies that the character

thinker.<sup>357</sup> In support of this paradox, we might consider Job's assertion that God will reprove the friends (הוכח יוכיח; 13:10) as an 'arbiter' (מוכיח; 9:33). On the other hand, Gordis's assertion that "no other figure appears on the horizon or is contemplated by Job" begs the question regarding 9:33 and 19:25 and ignores the power of suggestion by Eliphaz in 5:1.<sup>358</sup> Further, Ticciati's overstatement of Gordis's argument, that the failure of authors such as Pope to identify this third party, results in a "tendency to accept an unacceptable vagueness" is an attractive criticism but cannot be granted.<sup>359</sup> It is an argument from silence that cannot apply to ancient texts. Vagueness is often unavoidable, and approaches that never acknowledge vagueness necessarily go beyond the evidence. The same applies *ad fortio*rem to inventing a personal deity here.<sup>360</sup>

Rather, this vagueness ought to be acknowledged and considered. The major fault-line just discussed, in fact, already assumes too much, taking for granted that the witnesses are personal. Clines and Seow, however, take the witness (16:19) as referring specifically to Job's outcry (צעקתו; 16:18; רוע\*; 16:20).<sup>361</sup> This interpretation is plausible.

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Job would have held it in 19:25 as Job consistently portrayed God as his enemy. This argument is belied by the chiasm's shift. To be sure, the issue is inconclusive, but neither can the paradox be excluded. The poet preserves the ambiguity to dramatic and rhetorical effect.

<sup>357</sup> Especially as regards the presence and nature of God, as harsh and generous, just and merciful, deadly and life-giving, as is stated most bluntly in the formulation in Ex 34:6–7. The passage evidences this paradox more subtly in Moses's inversion of God's logic in 34:9 compared to Ex. 33:3. The ark manifests a similar paradox of values as the life-giving God is deadly (2 Sam 6:1–10). The failure to navigate the subtleties of this paradox results in mistranslations (e.g., NABR Ex 34:9) and in historical critics positing multiple contradictory sources to accommodate their narrow theological imaginations and assumption that the ancient authors were so narrow. Gordis, "The Lord out of the Whirlwind: The Climax and Meaning of Job." *Judaism* 13 (1964): 59–60, not only holds the paradoxical view as noted above, but he further adduces examples of the paradoxical nature of God as portrayed in Hebrew Scripture as corresponding to humanity's changeability and perversity and God's constancy and trustworthiness.

<sup>358</sup> Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 526–27.

<sup>359</sup> Ticciati, *Job and the Disruption of Identity*, 133–34.

<sup>360</sup> John Briggs Curtis, "On Job's Witness in Heaven." *JBL* 102 (1983): 550; "On Job's Response to Yahweh." *JBL* 98 (1979): 497–511, argues for a personal god here, corresponding to his previous article's position that Job originally rejected the transcendent God. The argument is no more than an assertion coupled with vocalic repointing and definitional pleading, as he himself acknowledges.

<sup>361</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 390, points to 16:18. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 748–49, points both to 16:18 and 20, but has to amend "friend" (רעי) to "outcry" (רוע) in order to read 16:20 in this way. Other scholars (e.g., Tur-Sinai,

Alternatively, it is plausible that Job hopes something in heaven to witness to his cry.

Also possible is an appeal to Job's right conduct itself, as early interpreters understood.<sup>362</sup>

The passage's language requires an abstract approach. I refer to "witnesses" since it is doubtful that the parallel term, שֹׁהֵד, adds any nuance to עֵד. "Advocate" (NABR) and "record" (KJV) are too precise, indicating a personal or impersonal witness. The term, שֹׁהֵד, is hapax and an Aramaic loanword. The more obviously Aramaic form, שְׁהִדוּתָא, occurs in Gen 31:47, also hapax and in parallel with עֵד. In Genesis, Laban speaks the Aramaic term and Jacob the Hebrew. The dialects correspond to their cultural characters in their patriarchal context, as in Job's affectation. Job 16:19 therefore has a close affinity with Gen 31:47. Genesis refers to the pile of stones as the witness or memorial of their covenant. The comparative passage illustrates how broadly the terms עֵד and שֹׁהֵד can apply and thus how enigmatic our present line is.

I echo Wilson's observation that the witness's identity is not the point. I further suggest that the ambiguity is a deliberate and meaningful 'gap,' as can be seen in two ways.<sup>363</sup> First is the deductive nature of the passage. This may be a surprising way to characterize the passage, as it seems to be a spontaneous confession of faith. However, it follows from the logic in Job's previous speeches.<sup>364</sup> If cosmic moral coherence is to be preserved—which Job doubts but continues to attempt—then some structure must exist to

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Irwin, Pope, Gordis) retain "friends," reading that they are Job's scornors מְלִיצִי, from the root לִיץ. While Clines, *ibid.*, 371, opines that the immediate context better fits "spokesman" than scornors.

<sup>362</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 739.

<sup>363</sup> Boyarin, *Intertextuality and the Reading of Midrash*, 41, discusses a "gap" as "any element in the textual system of the Bible which demands interpretation for a coherent construction of the story." These gaps are clearly deliberate in Job, as the poet gives the reader a disconcerting amount of power to interpret the text.

<sup>364</sup> Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu*, vol 2, 461, suggests that the prayer follows from Job's "runaway mention" of his pure prayer in 16:17, as the reference to his pure prayer reveals to himself, "a certitude too long constrained." Thus, the immediate train of thought results from Job's sincere conviction of his own innocence, and there is a dramatic spontaneity in Job's arrival at this statement. However, the larger context and premise is the framework of a just cosmos we have been discussing, particularly for the poet.

witness and to witness to his unjust suffering, from the catastrophes of chs. 1–2 to the provocations of chs. 4–25 (and 32–37). In such a deductive framework, it is not immediately important what structures or agents fulfill that function. Nor can Job have any idea. But it is critical that some person or thing do so.

Second, it seems that the ambiguity as to whether this witness is God or some other being or structure is poignantly significant. Job does not know whether God will yet be his witness or whether he must rely on another. Clines’s challenge, “Whence comes this confidence in Job?” is only partly relevant.<sup>365</sup> Strictly speaking, if the confidence is there, it does not exactly matter “whence it comes.” We might answer with the aforementioned deductive reasoning along with remnants of Job’s faith from days gone by. To take Clines’s challenge more seriously, however, Job offers declarations about God’s vindication that resonate with this passage and manifest these fragments of faith. For example, Job invokes God (27:2), and he refers to his hope in his own integrity, as opposed to the impious whose “cry” God will not hear (צַעֲקָתוֹ; 27:9, cf. 16:18). Thus, Job asserts that God attends to the innocents’ cries and punishes the wicked after all.

Additionally, we should consider this vagueness through the irony of Job’s limited perspective. God has already witnessed to Job’s integrity (1:8) and to the injustice of his suffering (2:3), and God will witness to Job’s right speech and the friends’ folly (42:7). God sees, attests, vindicates, and restores. Of course, Clines is well aware of this narrative irony, and he is specifically concerned with the character’s perspective. However, the poet’s deliberate and extensive alignment of the poetry and the prose indicates that this can hardly be the final frame of reference for the poetry. Rather, the

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<sup>365</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 389.

poet constructs Job's personal speech to be ambiguous, reflecting an ambiguity fitting the character's perspective and ironically open to the narrative.

For these practical and theoretical reasons, I submit that ch. 16 contains a logical development in Job's attempt to rationalize the moral coherence of the cosmos, asserting (if only for a moment) the existence of some structure (personal or not) that would shore up the manifest failures in that coherence. The vagueness corresponds to the deductive nature of this speculation and to Job's ambivalence about God's true nature. The vagueness also exacerbates the tension in the text as to the nature of God, as Job and the poet again force God to react to their logic and to justice: will God himself attest according to his intrinsically just nature, or will he yield to an extrinsic witness and principle of justice, the arbiter of 9:33? These textual gaps capture the heart of the drama and offer the reader an exegetical crisis corresponding to Job's dramatic one. This interpretive dilemma is still more profoundly presented in the third cycle.

***Job's Speculations: Theoretical Structures of Justice—Part Three***

I begin with a structural observation. As Habel shows, Job 19:21–29 forms a chiasm.<sup>366</sup> Job admonishes his friends (vv. 21, 29), indicts them (vv. 22, 28), expresses hopes (vv. 23–24, 26–27), and states a conviction (v. 25). The chiasm confirms Job's confession's climactic status. The chiasm has a decisive shift in the center creating an asymmetrical imbalance, answering Bildad's asymmetrical chiasm in ch. 18. Thus, Job's hope in the *go'el* of 19:25 answers Bildad's King of Terrors in 18:14.

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<sup>366</sup> Habel, *Job*, 296–97. I adapt Habel's schema slightly, as he makes 26a an element of the central conviction, where it seems more apt to keep it with the latter hope. Still, given the shift in 25 the latter hope is decidedly different from the previous hopes and has the confident force of the conviction in 25.

In Job's first admonition and indictment, the rhetoric depends on God's injustice, as Job demands their pity per God's unjust punishment (v. 21), and he likens their predation to God's persecution (v. 22). In the latter, however, the rhetoric depends on cosmic justice, as Job rebukes their persecution and warns them of their comeuppances (vv. 28–29). This cosmic justice may be indicative of either God's justice, if he redeems, avenges, or vindicates as the *go'el* of 19:25, or the vindication of the third party. Either way, the center of the chiasm effects the shift from 21–22 to 28–29. The *go'el* sustains (in some way) the doctrine of retribution to the friends' peril. Thus, the surrounding verses cannot blandly be compared to 19:25 as though they are homogenous. Rather, the poetic shift of 19:25 indicates a dramatic shift akin to Janus parallelism, and that logic is key.<sup>367</sup>

The expressions of hope are also asymmetric. The first hope (vv. 23–24) expresses a wish without any expectation of fulfillment. Commentators are divided on translating the second hope (vv. 26–27) as a simple future and expectation (Seow, Dhorme, Pope) or as a subjunctive and a desire without expectation (Clines, Habel), while one translates them in the present (Gordis). In 19:26–27, the hopes are expressed with simple imperfects, as opposed to the idiom of longing used in 19:23–24 (...מִי יִתֵּן; cf. 6:8). Only a presumption about Job's static perspective stance can support equating the rhetoric. Rather, the center of the chiasm again underlies the shift in rhetoric. Job asserts that he knows—the redundant pronoun (אֲנִי יָדַעְתִּי; 19:25) emphasizes Job's personal

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<sup>367</sup> Contrast this approach with Clines, *Job 1–20*, 457, who admits “it is theoretically possible that here he should break with what he has said previously and make a great leap of faith into the unknown,” but sees as more likely that there is no change and that Job still “knows or believes... that God is his enemy.” Perhaps we should reply that it is most likely that Job's speeches should develop somewhat, but Clines consistently commits to forcing the characters into stasis. We will see the continued implausibility of this approach in his treatment of 19:26–27. Rather, the chiasm's rhetoric demonstrates a profound shift, though the rhetoric is ambiguous as regards God's relationship to Job's confidence in cosmic justice.

confidence—he just knows that his *go 'el* will *go 'el* him.<sup>368</sup> There is, then, a shift from uncertainty and desire to certainty and expectation at the chiasm's center.

With this chiastic structure in mind, I turn to the passage's key terms, which are thoroughly and meaningfully ambiguous. The term *go 'el* has a wide range of nuances, from the best-known theological sense of redemption deriving from a (1) kinship member who redeems family members or their property (Ruth 2:20, etc.), to a (2) kinship member who advocates for a family member in a lawsuit (Prov 23:11), to an (3) avenger of blood who slays those who commit manslaughter (Num 35: 12, 19, 21).<sup>369</sup> All three valences can work in this passage and are relevant to the book's themes. Further, each valence can be reconciled to God or a third party. Job may be calling (3) on an avenger who will punish his friends for their persecution (19:28–29), as God will in fact threaten the friends (42:7).<sup>370</sup> Job may be calling (2) on an advocate, either pressing his case against God and taking 19:26–27 not as an intimate vision of reconciliation but as Job finally getting his day in court, or pressing his case against the friends, as God will in fact declare Job's speech in the right compared to the friends (42:7). Job can be calling (1) on

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<sup>368</sup> We should comment more on the force of Job's claim to "know." As the passage is widely celebrated, a great deal of weight is often attached to Job's word choice here, and the analysis of the chiasm above supports this approach. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 292, similarly writes that Job makes his "conviction firm and decisive," noting that Job had just been "speaking hypothetically" and here shifts. Nonetheless, recognizing that Job's continued discourse does not conform to this statement of faith, other scholars qualify Job's claim. Seow, *Job 1–21*, 803, for example, observes that Job has asserted, "I know," a several times, including contrary ideas (9:2, 28, 13:18); rather, Job is not "offering a confession of profound inner conviction," but is "lifting up a conceit for consideration." This argument is uncharacteristically weak for Seow. If the character Job is consistently too confident in asserting his opinion, we should be all the readier to accept his sincere conviction in this moment, even if he lapses from this hope in the next speech. Furthermore, none of the parallels Seow cites (9:2, 28; 10:13; 13:18; 21:27; 30:23) come close to matching the rhetoric of 19:25 (וְאֵנִי יֹדְעִי גְאֻלִּי הִי), let alone the structural significance of this chiasm's center, as Job passes from "conceits for consideration" in 19:23–24 to genuine expectation in 19:26–27. This passage is not only the climax of Job's hope, but it is the climax of the poet's argument in the previous three speeches that there will indeed be a final post-mortem vindication of the just.

<sup>369</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 823.

<sup>370</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 825, reports that Rashi understood the friends as the subject of the verb in 19:26, such that the friends are those who "flay" Job's skin. In this interpretation, Job already anticipates his scapegoating, and God's resulting role as avenger is clear.

a redeemer who will restore him to his flesh and grant him audience before God, whether God himself restores Job to intimacy and friendship or a third party restores Job to life and vindication. The narrative thus supports seeing God as the *go'el*, but Job's immediate context is quite ambiguous. Finally, however, even though God's role in cosmic justice is indefinite, the paradox presented here (the assessment of divine injustice juxtaposed with the assertion of cosmic justice), is anticipated by Job's emphatic assertion in 13:7–12 that God will justly rebuke the friends (הרובה יוכיח; 13:10; cf. מוכיח; 'the arbiter,' 9:33).<sup>371</sup>

This *go'el*'s chief activities are to live (חי) and rise (יקום), or make alive (יחי) and raise (יקים). In a 1978 article on Hos 6:2, Barré shows that these two terms constitute a “fixed formulaic pair,” and he writes that all “of the OT passages in which the pair occurs are concerned with rising from death.” However, he overlooked Job and surprisingly argues that Hosea is an exception, referring to “healing from sickness rather than resurrection.”<sup>372</sup> In 1979, Barré treats Job 19:25, recognizing the fixed pair and arguing that we do not have “my redeemer lives” but “my redeemer makes alive.”<sup>373</sup> The absence of the preformative *yod* could be explained by haplography, or, as he prefers, by shared consonants, a phenomenon evidenced throughout Northwest Semitic.<sup>374</sup> Barré follows

<sup>371</sup> The failure to acknowledge this results in inexcusable incoherence and reductionistic readings. The inconsistency is quite bald in Balentine's recognition, “Who Will be Job's Redeemer?” *PRS* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1999): 272–73, of Job's warning the friends of God's correction in 13:7–12, next to his confidence a few lines later that God's “silence on these matters seems to be an established fact,” and that Job looks not to God for justice, but “seems to expect that it will have to come from some other source.”

<sup>372</sup> M. L. Barré, “New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2,” *VT* 28 (1978): 130–134, 137, 141. Barré pointed specifically to Isa 26:14a, 19a and 2 Kgs 13:20–21, arguing that Hosea likely was familiar with the Elisha story, as both belong to a Northern context and participated in the anti-Ba'al polemical tradition. Barré's surprising pivot, wherein he argues that the prognosis suggests a medicinal and sickness context rather than the supernatural context of resurrection is both a false dichotomy and a surprising argument. His insistence, *ibid.*, 138–39, that Hosea does not relate to the mythological tradition of resurrection is also curious. It would seem rather significant if Hosea prognosticated that the true God does not resurrect, being supreme and incapable of death, but instead so restores Israel upon repentance and devotion.

<sup>373</sup> Barré, “A Note on Job XIX 25,” *VT* 29 (1979): 107–8.

<sup>374</sup> Citing W. G. E. Watson, “Shared Consonants in Northwest Semitic,” *Biblica* 50 (1969): 525–33; *idem*, “More on Shared Consonants,” *Biblica* 52 (1971): 44–50. Many of Watson's biblical examples are less



Freedman's observation of Job's systemically defective spellings.<sup>375</sup> He suggests that the MT's יָקוּם interprets a conservative orthography, יָקֻם, which he reads as a hiphil.<sup>376</sup> Seow adduces the OG, ἀναστήσαι, to support the original text's conservative orthography.<sup>377</sup>

This proposed conservative orthography's potential warrants consideration, particularly since the potential interpretations are apropos to the poet's themes. As Seow observes, Job's poetry is visual. It uses homographs and requires constant retrospective interpretation.<sup>378</sup> We should therefore consider that the poet deliberately left the reader with an ambiguous text, critically vulnerable to various interpretations at its interpretive cruxes. The same ambiguities that create scholarly dichotomies should undermine them.

As הָיָה, the *go'el's* living status is an odd affirmation of faith. Scholars see here an allusion to the Ba'al myth, where the grain deity's revivification carries the hopes of all society.<sup>379</sup> This mythological connection would establish the register of some sort of resurrection as found in the following stich. As a reply to Bildad's chthonic deity, with its

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than sure, but noticeably he points to 30:17a, which may involve a shared *yod* in a manner very similar to Job 19:25. The 1cs possessive on "my bones" precedes the verb, "pierces" which the MT treats as a perfect (עֲצָמַי נִקְרָה). The ongoing nature of the persecution combined with the parallel verb in the imperfect, Job's sinews' corresponding lack of rest (וְעֵרְקִי לֹא יִשְׁכָּבוֹן) in 30:17b, support Watson's argument for the imperfect and shared *yod* in 30:17a. The latter stich could not share a *yod* as it is interrupted by the negation.

<sup>375</sup> Freedman, "Orthographic Peculiarities in the Book of Job," 35–44.

<sup>376</sup> Barré, "A Note on Job XIX 25," 108.

<sup>377</sup> Thus, the Greek attests not misunderstanding, but a valid interpretation of the more conservative orthography, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 824. Idem, "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job," 64–66, also builds on Freedman's thesis. Whereas Freedman depended on the Leningrad codex via *BHK*<sup>3</sup>, Seow adduces more examples of defective spellings in the MT of Job, evidence from Qumran's 4QPaleoJob<sup>c</sup> showing still more defective spellings than the MT, and other Masoretic texts including Aleppo.

<sup>378</sup> Seow, "Orthography, Textual Criticism, and the Poetry of Job," 83–84.

<sup>379</sup> E.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 308, who neutrally provides the following lines: "I know the Victor Baal lives (*hy*) The prince, the lord of earth exists." Irwin, "Job's Redeemer," 224, chides scholars' hesitance and argues that the allusion here is but one of many running throughout the poem, as in Zophar's reference to salvation with "streams of oil" in 20:17. As we saw, these connections are tenuous at best, the presence of "oil" is highly suspect in 20:17, being the result of emendations or conjectured words, and the poet had closer parallels available to him in Isaiah and Deuteronomy. Those parallels themselves relate to the Ba'al cycle, polemicizing against it and therefore shaped by it, such that it remains appropriate to consider their larger cultural relevance and "intertextuality" in the sense of cultural exchange. But considering them to be a "source" in the traditional sense as Irwin argues exceeds the evidence. Rather, the Hebrew Scripture available to the poet offers closer parallels, more congruent perspectives, and greater rhetorical effect.

reference to Mot (18:13), and to the friends' 'El-centric piety, this evocation of Ba'al can be seen as affirming the life-giving and philanthropic value of that deity compared to the transcendent El or the chthonic Mot. Still, the poet never refers to Ba'al, and it is highly unlikely that any post-exilic author would desire to resurrect that syncretic experiment. Rather, a more proximate and theologically acceptable source is more likely, even if that source is itself shaped by and mediates the Ba'al tradition, as Deut 32 mediated Resheph. Alternatively, יָי could be the divine epithet, as in "the Living God," (cf. Job 27:2).<sup>380</sup> This connection can support the reader identifying this *go'el* with God, whether Job's dramatic character does or not. Furthermore, the previous references to Job's desire for a lasting, impersonal material witness to his unjust suffering (19:23–24) could satisfy his desire for a witness (16:19) conceived impersonally. However, the confidence in the living redeemer in 19:25 marks another chiastic shift, as Job asserts a personal ally, not merely a structural witness. Finally, allowing for a shared *yod*, the reader can read יָחִי, "makes alive." This interpretation supports the redemptive valence of *go'el* and makes for a tighter syntactic parallel with יָקֵם in the next stich.

The intransitive and transitive forms of קָוֶה partly correspond to reading *go'el* as avenger or advocate on the one hand, or redeemer on the other. An avenger's very presence "upon the earth" or rising "concerning dust" (metonymy for mortal humanity), makes sufficient sense of the confession. The redeemer's rising is comforting, but the verb's potential as "raising" precisely aligns with the redemptive connotations of *go'el*. The fixed formulaic pairing Barré catalogued certainly supports this interpretation, but

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<sup>380</sup> This phrase occurs with the longer term, יָיִם (Deut 5:26; 1 Sam 17:26, 36; Jer 10:10, 23:36), but often with יָי (e.g., mostly with אֱלֹהִים: Josh 3:10; Ps 42:3, 84:3; Dan 6:21, 27; Hos 2:1; but also with אֱלֹהִים in the story of Sennacherib's siege of Judah: 2 Kgs 19:4, 16; Isa 37:4, 17).

the ambiguities of the line and the first half of the chiasm's pessimistic view qualify it.

While the second half of the chiasm's optimistic perspective in turn undermines the pessimistic qualification, the optimism is too vague to dismiss it decisively.

There is also the decidedly ambiguous prepositional phrase “over the dust,” על עפר. Most commentators (Seow, Clines, Pope, Gordis, Hartley, Habel) take the preposition על locatively, as in ‘upon,’ ‘above’ or even ‘up from’ (Barré). Janzen, meanwhile, takes the preposition to describe cause or advantage, as “the last one” rises on the dust's behalf (cf. Job 8:6).<sup>381</sup> The noun, עפר, literally ‘dust,’ is taken to refer to the earth (Clines, Gordis) to the underworld (Barré) to human mortality by metonymy (Janzen), or ambiguously left as the dust (Seow, Pope). Accordingly, the majority of these commentators see here the *go'el* taking his stand upon the earth or dust in order to vindicate Job in a juridical register (Clines, Pope, Gordis, Hartley, Habel, Dhorme, Rowley). Seow, however, writes that עפר never refers to the ‘earth’ in the sense of the world, but only in the sense of soil, undermining this reading somewhat.<sup>382</sup>

Furthermore, there are two notable alternative ways to understand the phrase. Barré argues that עפר can refer to the netherworld (cf. Job 17:16, 20:11, 21:26) and על can “have a separative sense in Hebrew as in other North-West Semitic languages.” Thus, Barré contends that the guarantor will raise Job “up from the underworld.”<sup>383</sup> Barré's position remains intact even if one prefers to leave dust as dust rather than understand it

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<sup>381</sup> Janzen, *Job*, 141.

<sup>382</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 825 writes that the only occurrence of עפר that scholars argue the term means ‘earth’ in this sense is 41:25, where, Seow, contends, it means earth as in the ground as opposed to “the earth opposed to heaven.” As the context is God's assertion that there is none like the Leviathan, the aquatic monster, upon the עפר, the passage would be rhetorically effective with either sense of earth. Seow's position may, therefore, be the more likely, but the position of scholars such as Clines, *Job 1–20*, 433, that ‘dust’ can refer to the earth at large is possible as well.

<sup>383</sup> Barré, “A Note on Job XIX 25,” 109.

as a euphemism for the underworld.<sup>384</sup> Janzen, meanwhile, translates “the last one in behalf of the dust will arise,” pointing to cases in the book where עפר “functions to characterize earthlings as frail mortals while they live and as destined in death to return to dust.”<sup>385</sup> Such a rising on the behalf of mortal humanity could correspond to either of the juridical or afterlife themes. It inclines toward the latter, however, since the theoretical rise for the sake of mortal humanity has a wider application than Job’s sole vindication. In fact, this use of ‘dust’ resumes the poet’s motif in 10:9 and 14:8 concerning human mortality and the possibility of new life. It also continues the general motif of referring to the burial of the dead as Janzen notes, but Job’s specific attention to his own embodiment and ultimate redemption evokes the more specific motif of the afterlife. However, this resumption does not settle the question of 19:25’s particular take on that motif.

Surprisingly, the opaquest term, אחרון, is the most insightful. Seow’s discussion of the term is lucid and invaluable.<sup>386</sup> Job’s reference to “the last” (אחרון) in 25b is rarely treated literally. Most often and famously, the adjective is treated adverbially, “at the last” (אחרונה).<sup>387</sup> This temporal phrase makes Job’s confession eschatological. But as the

<sup>384</sup> The passages that Barré cites as evidence that עפר means the underworld, demonstrate that עפר occurs in parallel with She‘ol (בְּדִי שְׂאֵל; 17:16), but the term need not be rigidly equated with the underworld. The physical interment of a corpse and subsequent decomposition are enough to explain the correlation. With this qualification, Barré’s position can be allowed regarding 19:25. Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death*, 89, is undoubtedly correct that dust’s “local meaning [of] grave” should not “be rigidly separated from the nether world.” Still, the significance of literal “dust” sufficiently explains its placement along with literally mythological terms, even as it gains mythological coloring or can refer to the underworld by metonymy.

<sup>385</sup> Janzen, *Job*, 141. Specifically, 2:12, 4:19, 7:21, 10:9, 14:8, 19, 16:15, 17:16, 30:19.

<sup>386</sup> I am even more deeply indebted to Seow’s treatment here than usual, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 823–24.

<sup>387</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 305, argues against seeing “the last” as a divine epithet as in Isa 44:6, where “the last” is also in near parallel with *go‘el*: he responds that “the last” is “not a standard epithet for God, and unless there are cogent reasons to the contrary the term should be retained as an adverb.” Habel misstates the issue and misplaces the burden of proof here: the adjective should be treated as an adjective if possible. That alone is cogent reason enough. Furthermore, his criterion of “standard epithet” is inappropriate and irrelevant. Rather, the rarity of the epithet, combined with Isa 44:6’s use of these terms in near parallel, and with the firmer parallel achieved in Job 19:25 by taking אחרון literally—as a substantive adjective, not an adverb—all commend this approach and support seeing an allusion to Isa 44:6.

adjective is not used as an adverb elsewhere, scholars treat the substantive adjective as a noun, a “guarantor.” Thus, Pope appeals to the Mishnaic and Talmudic אֶחָרָי, “guarantor,” firming up the parallel with the *go’el* as “vindicator” in 25a.<sup>388</sup>

There is, however, biblical usage of ‘the Last’ which fills the intelligibility ‘gap’ of the term’s use here. As Seow and others observe, the term occurs in loose parallel with *go’el* in Isa 44:6: “Thus says the Lord, Israel’s king, its redeemer, the Lord of hosts: I am the First, I am the Last; there is no God but me.”<sup>389</sup> Thus, there is precedent referring to a *go’el* as “the Last,” indicating an ultimate redemption by virtue of the redeemer’s eternal perdurability. This precedent obviates the need for emendations, grammatical liberties, or anachronisms. Given the unusual pairing, Job’s interpretive gap, and the poet’s like usage of Isaiah elsewhere, the poet likely alludes to Isaiah here, though the force of the allusion is not *a priori* clear. It might be either a pious if oblique affirmation of God’s redemption or a parodic subversion of that pious language, supporting the vengeance of a third party.

We should acknowledge and insist on the passage’s ambiguity as deliberate for the following reasons. First is the insoluble ambiguity of the passage. Second is the poet’s habit of creating such ambiguities. Third, the poet creates these ambiguities in other interpretive cruxes and climaxes (e.g., 1:21, 2:10, 42:6), making them practical Rorschach tests. Fourth, this passage is the crowning assertion of confidence in some structure of justice, whether the speculation of a human post-mortem reconciliation with God per his inherent justice and generosity, or the speculation of the intervention of a third party who enforces a justice with its own integrity apart from God. Fifth, the poet thereby asserts cosmic justice but leaves the precise structure underlying it vague. This

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<sup>388</sup> Pope, *Job*, 146.

<sup>389</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 824; Pope, *Job*, 146; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 305.

corresponds logically to the deductive nature of the speculations and dramatically to the character's ambivalence about God. We must consider, however, the rhetorical and persuasive effect of the passages the poet seems to allude to: Hos 6:2 and Isa 44:6.

Indeed, the verse may be best understood an amalgamation of those sources.

As discussed, Barré's articles demonstrated the formulaic word pair "live/make alive" and "rise/raise." The passages other than Hosea and Job unequivocally speak of the revivification of corpses (Isa 26:14a, 19a; 2 Kgs 13:21). The story of Elisha's bones told in 2 Kings is likely the oldest and speaks of the literal resurrection of an individual. Whether Isa 26:19a looks forward apocalyptically to a literal resurrection or uses the metaphor to prophesy the recovery of the nation is irrelevant for my purposes. The language literally describes the revivification of corpses (מתִּיךְ, נְבִלָתִי). Hosea's use of the pair is clear, referring to the restoration of the people, a corporate healing or resurrection. Barré argues that Hosea was at least orally familiar with the Elisha tradition.<sup>390</sup> If so, then Hosea's restoration applies an individual's fate to the nation. Thus, Job's application of national hope to the individual inverts Hosea's adaptation.

On the other hand, Barré insists that Hosea's hypothetical allusion to resurrection "would most probably *not* be to resurrection in a *mythological* milieu" but rather the *Sitz im Leben* of the medical field's practice of prognosis.<sup>391</sup> The insistence is neither clear nor cogent. Hosea was obviously familiar, concerned with, and exploited the Ba'al myth, and a polemical appropriation of that mythological motif to Yahweh is analogous to Hosea's other diatribes.<sup>392</sup> Barré's *Sitz im Leben* argument is tenuous and neglects these

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<sup>390</sup> Barré, "New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2," 137.

<sup>391</sup> Barré, "New Light on the Interpretation of Hosea VI 2," 137.

<sup>392</sup> Hosea's insistence on Yahweh's superior divinity and relationship to Israel exploits details of the Ba'al cult and language: God, not Ba'al, is Israel's husband, which her theological language will reflect (2:18);

important contexts of Hosea's tendencies and polemical target. Still, my concern is with Job's use of the motif, which is mythological and potentially refers to Job's personal resurrection.

I cannot pursue the larger relationship between Job and Hosea here at length, but there are good reasons to suppose that the poet makes use of Hosea: (1) taking Job as post-exilic means Hosea was likely available to our literate poet, (2) the synchronic relationship between Job 19:25 and Hos 6:2 has a similar rhetorical relationship between Job's poetry and other source texts, (3) the use of these allusions are thematically integrated into the book according to my understanding of the book as an allegory, (4) Hos 6:1 resembles Job 5:18, and, (5) critically, there is another strong candidate for Job's developed use of Hosea in the motif of hedging, developed through Job (1:10, 3:23, 38:8) as a commentary on Hosea's description of God hedging in Israel (2:8), where she is allegorically described as an adulteress.<sup>393</sup> If, as is likely, Job 19:25 includes an allusion to Hos 6:2, we would have another example of the poet's application of Israel's oracles to

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Yahweh, not the grain god, blesses her with grain and every material good or punishes her by withholding them (2:10–11). A similar logic obtains in Hos 6:2. Yahweh is God, and as such is not the dying and rising grain-god. Rather, as the true God, he does not die and rise, but wounds and heals (6:1; cf. Job 5:18!), makes alive and raises up (6:2). The passage thus stands in a nuanced relationship with the Ba'al myth, as God's true divinity exempts him from the myth's cycle, but the conception of resurrection—as the marital language of Ba'al and his status as the grain god—is appropriated to characterize the transcendent God's treatment of his creation and spouse. Day, "The Development of Belief in Life After Death in Ancient Israel," 245–46, has also observed that Ephraim's death following his apostasy with Ba'al in Hos 13:1 should be regarded "as deliberately ironical," especially considering Israel being "in the grip of death" in Hos 13:14–15 and the "resurrection" following Israel's repentance in Hosea 14. By seeking Ba'al, one seeks Death and forsakes the true Lord of life who is found in repentance and who grants life.

<sup>393</sup> Seow, *Job 1–21*, 257, 275, 370, 797, observes the relationship between Job and Hosea in the relevant sections. Notably, Seow, *ibid.*, 275, discusses the variation in Job's spellings, where 1:10 uses שָׁךְ/שֹׁךְ compared to the use of the sister form, סָךְ/סֹךְ, in 3:23 and 38:8; Seow observes that the term only occurs in the Hebrew Bible with the *sin* in Job 1:10 and Hosea 2:8. Also, Job 3:23 captures the ambivalence of Hos 2:8 semantically, as the person (Israel, Job) and her/his way are both hedged, and thematically, as Hosea's hedging is both constrictive and protective, compared to Job 1:10 which is completely protective, 3:23 which is completely constrictive, and 38:8 which is protective of creation precisely by being constrictive of the Sea. Finally, God's addressing Job from the whirlwind is itself a "hedge" on Job's way, his manner of conduct, as divine address and persuasion becomes the hedge that grounds piety rather than earthly blessing (1:10), and Job is thereby safeguarded from the catastrophe of cursing God.

Job as her allegorical representative, in order to apply notions of God's redemptive activity for the nation to the individual. If Job stands as a type of Israel, he implies that Israel stands as a type for god-fearers everywhere.

The return to the individual in Job's adaptation of Hosea has a corresponding inversion in the trope's remythologizing. While Barré's demythologized medicinal *Sitz im leben* is unlikely, Hosea surely demythologized the resurrection theme, applying it to the nation's restoration. John Day similarly notes that Isa 26, Isa 53, and Ezek 37 all use the same trope, while "Dan 12:2 remythologised the imagery to refer literally to life after death."<sup>394</sup> Having shown the Joban poet to be experimenting with and arguing from Israel's mythological traditions, I conclude that the poet consciously remythologizes the theme of resurrection to concern the righteous individual. Job's speculative argument paves the way for Daniel's dogmatic statement (and 2 Maccabees's popular ones) of faith in the resurrection.

The connection to Isa 44:6 has the same implications as 19:25's relationship to Hosea and as the several allusions to Isaiah we discussed regarding chs. 10, 12–14. If God is the good creator, why does he stop at Gen 3:19, or if he stops at Gen 3:19, should he not at least leave humanity alone? If God is the God who can restore Judah as the tree, can he not so restore individual humans? If God will not restore, why not at least neglect them as the flower? Since God does not neglect but chastises humanity, it follows that he is intensely concerned with human morality, Gen 3:19 cannot be final, and humanity

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<sup>394</sup> Day, "The Development of Belief in Life After Death in Ancient Israel," 247.



must be more like the tree than the flower. Here, too, the poet coordinates the previous oracle with God's bodily redemption of the individual's life.<sup>395</sup>

The rhetorical significance of this allusion is especially meaningful, however. As Isa 44:6 refers to God's distinct status ("beside me there is no God") and 44:7 rhetorically challenges any hypothetical party who would contend with God, the poet not only conflates the two speculative motifs in 19:25, but he alludes to a passage which bears on each motif. Thus, the allusion carries an implicit but direct challenge to its source: God can either raise Job eschatologically as the redeemer or acknowledge the just, rising third party. The poet has made Job's personal corporal resurrection the necessary condition of affirming God's righteousness and the validity of Hebrew Scripture's, especially 2 Isaiah's, portrayal of God's character and refusal to acknowledge any third party. The poet has taken Abraham's stand, applying God's redemptive character to the reward of the righteous: "Will the judge of the earth not do judgement?"

### ***Conclusion***

Analyzing Job's discourses on the world, suffering, and divine justice, reveals a consciously monotheistic and sophisticated engagement with Israel's past mythological traditions. The topic and monotheistic premise were established concisely in the prologue's stoic aphorism, "The LORD gives, the LORD takes away." The poet's

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<sup>395</sup> Contra Clines, *Job 1–20*, 464: "Against any view of bodily resurrection it need only be noted that it contradicts everything the book has said previously about the finality of death (7:9, 10:21, 14:10, 12)." Similarly, John Day, "The Development of Belief in Life After Death," 251. Against Clines's peremptory claim, it "need only be noted" that Clines accounts neither for the character's dramatic oscillations and the passage's climactic nature, nor for the purchase the poet claims by coordinating these speculations' validity and conclusions with Hebrew Scripture's defensibility. Clines's argument could hold if Job were a propositional catalogue of dogmatic theology, wherein every statement made unequivocal truth claims. Far more appropriate to the book's character is Gordis's approach, *Book of Job*, 111, 205, wherein he sees a dramatic unfolding, as Job attains deeper levels of faith until he finally beholds God "as his vindicator and redeemer." Gordis nonetheless rejects the idea of a bodily resurrection.

assessment of the human experience in Job's lament in ch. 3 counters the friends' sapiential aesthetics, and this assessment of the human experience of *rogez* will not be denied from the Whirlwind. Rather, Job's lament remains valid, though the corresponding aesthetic rejection of creation's goodness will be challenged (38:2).

It is a stammering lament (cf. 6:3) and distorted, as it does not address God, let alone express any hope for restoration (there is precedent for such despair in Ps 88). Job articulates the stage of grief that can see no hope as Ps 88 does, and he will model the cathartic processing of that grief. However, Job further stands and speaks for all those whose circumstances do not improve, as is especially clear in his perpetuation of the language of exile as in Lamentations and as in his universalization of the *צבא*, the drudgery, that Isaiah announced was over (Job 7:1; 14:14; Isa 40:2). Scholars frequently observe that Job's contribution is to insist on the validity of experience in theologizing compared to the friends' rigid tradition or the deference to revelation.<sup>396</sup> I go beyond this epistemological reflection to say that the particular experience of God's covenantal people, particularly the just, brutally suffering and perishing, is the particular datum which the covenantal faith must account for. The Deuteronomic insistence on the proportional justice of that punishment is unintelligible. Defaulting to the adage that all have sinned (Ps 14:3) would render human morality meaningless, justifying Job's nihilistic stance and charge against God (9:22). The poet sought to persuade his readers that their shared religious traditions and commitment to divine justice required his

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<sup>396</sup> As early as Kemper Fullerton, but it has since become a truism. Fullerton, "On Job, Chapters 9 and 10," *JBL* 53, 4 (1934), 321–49. Compare to Levenson's, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 23–24, portrayal of the author or redactor of Ps 74 as refusing "to choose between faith and realism," as the "contradiction between the God of the myth and the God of current historical experience has risen to the level of consciousness." The poet is entirely conscious of this polarity and Job personifies the tension.

solution of a post-mortem reward. Furthermore, while Job might agree with Isa 57:1–2 that death is preferable to suffering, this neither rationalizes nor justifies God’s management of the world for Job. Rather, it only proves the inadequacy of the world and seemingly God’s plan for humanity since Job has no hope beyond the world.

As the dialogue proceeds, the poet uses the other characters to provoke Job to particular tasks. Job’s extensive resurrection of the *Chaoskampf* motif follows Eliphaz’s first discourse and effectively demonstrates that the sapient Deuteronomists’ own mythological perspective is too tidy. It cannot account for reality and must yield. Rather, Job asserts the more primitive myth as more intuitive, as human experience is frequently chaotic and suffering is not proportionate to guilt. This must have been disconcerting for Job’s friends and the poet’s readers: could the poet actually mean to affirm the Ba‘al tradition the covenantal Yahwists had refuted? This had caused the exile. Could the poet actually be conceding that the Babylonian mythological formulation—or other, later imperial mythologies—is correct? In that case, the temptation to defect to Marduk, Ahura Mazda, or Zeus would be only greater. By every earthly and political indication, Marduk, et al., were stronger than Yahweh and the greater enforcers of societal order, however brutal. The poet will provide his answer for these specific questions of the nature of God’s power in the whirlwind and perhaps the prologue, but he acknowledges the challenges facing Jews in and following the exile in Job’s speech.<sup>397</sup>

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<sup>397</sup> Indeed, Frank Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 344, writes similarly regarding the Deuteronomic tradition as I have regarding Job’s friends, but goes further (and too far I would say), in saying that Job’s argument “repudiated the God of history... whose delight is to lift up the poor and to free the slave.” I take especial issue with Cross’s argument that God speaking “from the storm cloud,” is “the language of Ba ‘l,” and thus indicates the poet’s choice against “The Lord of history,” in favor of “‘El or Ba‘l, the transcendent creator.” The facts that (1) the entire *failed* dialogue (excepting 12:9) refers to El Shaddai, that (2) it is precisely when Yahweh reveals himself from the whirlwind without violent assault and speaking of a created Leviathan, and that (3) the myth is always distorted (excepting 26:12–13), make Cross’s assessment untenable. I will address Cross at greater length next chapter.

Of course, the book's monotheistic perspective results in the distortions of the myth, such that the poet redirects these impulses to a greater challenge: accepting the God whose absolute power and control proves his responsibility for all human suffering, innocent and guilty, without evident discrimination. Thus, the poet uses rather than simply resurrects the myth. This use is at least two-fold. First, the poet uses the myth to assert the existence of real, radical, and irrational evil against the friends' aesthetic and mythological structures of justice. Neither can this evil be considered aberrant. Innocent suffering is the norm. The poet distorts the myth indicating his agreement with those monotheists that God is in control, but he forces them to recognize that monotheism aggravates rather than resolves the problem of evil. Secondly, as we have seen Job's allusive and typological nature, there is likely a conscious decision to retain this mythological tradition and a rebuke to those Jews who would neglect or exclude it. Regardless of the temptations Ba'al, Marduk et al. provide, the *Chaoskampf* myth was a part of Israel's religious traditions. The poet models the necessity for Israel to adapt her traditions to creative effect rather than discarding them.

Finally, the poet presents the reader with two hypothetical ways of salvaging the cosmos's justice and moral coherence, a guiding principle of the friends which the character Job desperately sought to retain. While the friends' mythological structure's unaccountability to experience could not sustain this principle, Job's mythological speculations creatively sought an alternative that could. On the one hand, the vague hope of some principle of justice by which God must abide operates according to the doctrine of retribution in a juridical register and the logic of right. On the other hand, the vague hope of a post-mortem reconciliation and reward from God would satisfy the doctrine of

retribution, but according to the logic of God's just and preexisting but mysterious plan to reward the righteous. Both pertain to justice and the goodness of creation from a humanistic perspective. But the aesthetic difference between gratuitous and trusting versus calculated and coercive devotion is a critical theme, established explicitly in the prologue (1:10) and implied throughout. Indeed, that the Satan raises this question supports reading the dialogue as the third test. Thus, Job's oscillation between these two speculations tensely portrays Job operating within the friends' and the Satan's understandings of the dynamics governing human and divine relationships or escaping to a just generosity.

The poet thus offers a theologically existential challenge to the reader with these themes. The fact that Job's two most climactic utterances (19:25, 42:6) can be read according to either logic and present the reader with Rorschach tests shows that the Satan's question is no mere hook irrelevant to the book's major concerns.<sup>398</sup> Rather, the question applies not only dramatically through the dialogues, but existentially to the reader. Readers are confronted with an ambiguous text vulnerable to either interpretation, allowing them to see their own values confirmed. Humanistic readers can insist on their dignity, on Job's defiance in 42:6, and on the right to demand a third-party avenger (19:25). Or readers can accept the dignity of being God's servant, by submitting to the

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<sup>398</sup> So Bill Thomason, *God on Trial: The Book of Job and Human Suffering* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1997), 3–4, characterizes the prologue, and many authors who justify their fragmentary approach to the book based on its putative stages of authorship would agree. It is telling, however, that Thomason, *ibid.*, 87–88, thus excludes the particularly Jewish liturgical and apocalyptic contribution to the problem of evil before cavalierly pronouncing on the inadequacy of the Jewish perspective in favor of supposedly more sophisticated Greco-Roman philosophical tradition. Indeed, his dichotomy between the prologue as a “morality tale whose theme is disinterested religion” and what he sees as the real topic of the book (i.e., the poetry) as why the innocent suffer, reflects his modern humanistic perspective and preferences. The dichotomy corresponds to the heavenly and earthly perspectives in the book, which is a feature of the narrative irony, but is a more subtle dialectic in the book. Thomason's dichotomizing closes the book to him.

traditional understanding of these passages as reflecting Job's pious submission and hope in an eschatological redemption. The text's polyvalent nature requires not only retrospective interpretation, but also introspective interpretation.

However, these two themes are not juxtaposed in a vacuum. Rather, the significance of the poetry is in relation to the whirlwind speech and the narrative. One can consider the book according to its present shape and logic, its history of authorship notwithstanding, or one can side with the poetry's most skeptical statements against the narrative logic. This is not only a preference for the poetry over the prose, however. This hermeneutical framework requires the reader to reject, mutilate, or excise the whirlwind speech, as is done to reductive effect.<sup>399</sup>

However, I have also shown that Job's own speeches make this approach still less likely. Job's speculations lend to the dramatic tension, as his attempts to rationalize the cosmos alternatively lead him to reject the gratuitous devotion to God in favor of juridical demand or to consider the possibility of the post-mortem reward. The speculations are both existential and pedagogical for the reader, as they challenge the reader to reflect on their own sense of right, and they lead the reader to consider the possibility of the post-mortem reward as a logical consequence of Hebrew Scripture and piety. Thus, while many of Job's allusions to Hebrew Scripture are indeed parodic, not all are, and the final effect of those parodic allusions cannot be taken for granted. Such parodies demonstrate the implausibility, but not necessarily the impossibility, of Hebrew Scripture's claims about God's nature and disposition to humanity, given the state of the world and human

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<sup>399</sup> E.g., Williams, "You Have Not Spoken Truth of Me: Mystery and Irony in Job," 236, 247, argues that the poet merely uses the whirlwind speech to expose God as a bully. Dell, *The Book of Job*, 207, argues that the whirlwind speech was originally an anticlimax, and she reconstructs the speech to fit her theory.

suffering.<sup>400</sup> Thus, if God's loving-kindness is to be affirmed (Job 10:12), then God must exercise that loving-kindness in a decisive manner outside the present human experience.

The book's nature as an allegory consciously synthesizing Israel's scriptural and mythological traditions puts it in a remarkable relationship to scholarship on the book and its themes. John Day described the development of belief in an afterlife using a Hegelian structure. Proverbs provides the thesis of cosmic order and just reward. The antithesis of "undeserved suffering" appears in Ecclesiastes and Job. The synthesis of a post-mortem vindication arises in Ps 49, 73, and the Wisdom of Solomon, the last positing an explicit immortality of the soul.<sup>401</sup> We should say, rather, that the entire structure is contained in Job, as a commentary on and argument from Hebrew Scripture. The friends obviously posit the thesis of a just order, to which Job's use of *Chaoskampf* plays the antithesis. Job himself provides the speculations which can potentially synthesize these commitments to divine and cosmic justice on the one hand and the reality of chaos and suffering on the other. What scholars of religion describe historically, the poet argued theologically and scripturally. Jewish religion eventually accepted the argument (excepting the Sadducees).

Finally, the parodic allusions converge with the speculative allusions in the poet's allusive argument for the post-mortem reward of the righteous. The poet's parodies rebut any attempt to vindicate God's treatment of humanity in a historical context. As the apocalyptic movement, the poet points to a "supra-historical" solution.<sup>402</sup> Job's lament

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<sup>400</sup> I argue for such an approach to Job 7:17–18's parody of Ps 8:5–6, Israel McGrew, "What is 'Enosh?' The Anthropological Contributions of Job 7:17–18 through Allusion and Intertextuality," *CBQ*, forthcoming.

<sup>401</sup> Day, "The Development of Belief in Life After Death," 248.

<sup>402</sup> Compare again, to Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 50, who observes that the "central affirmation of apocalyptic" is that historical evil is a symptom of a "supra-historical disequilibrium" that requires a "supra-historical correction." This theme will be represented in the whirlwind speech and the prologue. The poetry provides a corollary, however, in that history manifests the necessity of a supra-

over humanity's plight in ch. 3, Job's assessment of God's chaotic treatment of humanity in this world in his distortion of the *Chaoskampf* motif, and Job's parody of Hebrew Scripture paint the pious reader into a corner. Job's speculations desiring an afterlife show him groping in the darkness, feeling for a door to escape this corner. The poet's coordination of Hebrew Scripture's portrayals of God's redemption with this hope makes Job's climactic confession a firm assertion that such an escape must exist. Thus, Job's various stances converge on this goal. The poet has woven a tapestry of Hebrew traditions, formulating a riddle as to the secret of creation's goodness and coherence, and proposing that the sole solution to this riddle is a blessed afterlife, wherein God proves that the just do not serve him for nothing.

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historical solution corresponding to the correction. Whatever cosmic victory is to come, humanity must participate in it.



### CHAPTER 3: THE WHIRLWIND AND THE MYSTERIOUS GOODNESS OF CREATION

#### *Introduction*

The whirlwind discourse presents distinct hermeneutical challenges. No longer are we met by a human character, whose limited perspective potentially renders their discourse ironic and inadequate, but by God whose perspective we might presume is absolute. While some authors treat the whirlwind speech as though the poet was presenting God as a tyrant or buffoon, guiding the reader to accept Job's most skeptical comments and to condemn the power play of the whirlwind, I will not take that approach. My analysis of Job's speeches shows the poet's subtle and creative contribution compared to these scholars' skeptical deconstructions, undermining the primary rationale for such an analysis of the whirlwind.

Furthermore, the speech is not amenable to this approach for several reasons. First, its magnificence is the poet's crowning achievement, suggesting that it is climactic, decisive, and authoritative so far as it goes. Indeed, Dell posits an emasculated original version to reconcile with her approach.<sup>403</sup> Second, the aesthetic conversion it provokes—apparently in Job and certainly in many readers—is for many a profound if incomplete answer to the book's challenges to orthodox piety. Third, this level of skepticism is more akin to Voltaire's *Candide* and the European Enlightenment's values than to anything

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<sup>403</sup> Dell, *of Job as Sceptical Literature*, 205–7, insists that the Divine speech is to be read ironically and suggests that only the first speech was original, with the second being added “by an orthodox editor who wished to reinforce the point about God being all-powerful to counteract the limitations on God imposed by Job in the dialogue.” This rationale is curious. Job has never expressed any limitation of God's power, but he insisted that God's omnipotence is misanthropic. If a later author added the Leviathan speech to correct this limitation, his strategy was ineffective. At any rate, Dell's exclusion of the whirlwind demonstrates her framework's inability to account for the text.

found in Hebrew Scripture.<sup>404</sup> Even the Preacher of Ecclesiastes would not so mock the inscrutable God. Such an attitude toward a theophany—wherein Yahweh, not Shaddai, speaks no less—would commend not skeptical cynicism but nihilistic apostasy.

So grant the theophany's authority for now. What of its content? The chief objection regarding the whirlwind speech is that God does not solve the human discourse's problem. In Dell's words, "God does not answer the questions posed by Job and apparently has no intention of doing so. He merely stresses his power."<sup>405</sup> This assertion accords well with Dell's presentation of the speech as an anticlimax and with her argument that the speech is offered ironically. But the assertion is imprecise. It is true that God does not answer the question of retribution *as* posed by Job et al., but God's discourse addresses the more fundamental issue of creation's goodness, reframing theodicy in a cosmological context. This is not avoiding the question but exposing the logical and mythological fallacies of the question as formulated.<sup>406</sup>

Furthermore, God's power is not the predominant theme, particularly in the first speech which is the material Dell takes as original. Rather, the theme is creation's

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<sup>404</sup> Indeed, *Candide* is amenable to the skeptical approach to the book of Job. In *Candide*, one can read the setting and conclusion, and only need know that the vast majority of the book describes one absurd misfortune after another. Voltaire's prolonged deconstruction of the "best of all possible worlds" is tedious. The book of Job, if it were merely a work of skepticism, would similarly be tedious in ch. 3–31. It is not. René Girard, "Job as Failed Scapegoat," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, ed. Leo Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 186, aptly observes that moderns project "our centuries of revolt and unbelief" to "see in the author of the central section of Job a precursor of their own vision."

<sup>405</sup> Dell, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature*, 207.

<sup>406</sup> Contra Sidney Breitbart, "Implications of the Wager in the Book of Job," *JBQ* 28 (2000): 123, who simply sees God's questions as "irrelevant to Job's desire for an explanation" and as "an evasion of explanation." Breitbart is nearly right, but the assessment is reductive. Compare it to the classic example of the fallacy of too many questions: "have you stopped beating your wife yet?" Technically, it is a yes or no question, but it hides the question whether the man has in fact beaten his wife. The answer, "I have never beaten my wife," does not technically answer the question; it answers a more fundamental question and exposes the inherent fallacy of the question as asked. In Job, God does not answer the question as asked, for several reasons. These include the dramatic necessity of not answering it vis-à-vis the prologue, perhaps the poet's own intellectual humility, and the poet's opinion that the human discourse has been critically deficient in its parodic adaptation of Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions.

goodness and refusal to submit to the logics of human utility, economics, and politics. Granted, the rhetoric indicates God's wisdom and power as creator. But the praise of creation directly addresses Job's rejection of creation's goodness, and it reframes his sapiential perspective so as to reconsider humanity's place in the cosmos. This panoramic doxology is impressionistic rather than propositional, giving rise to a wide variety of interpretations. But the skeptical approach is to be rejected as narrow, reductive, and even unfounded; even more so scholars' impulse to reject the speeches' originality.<sup>407</sup>

Closely related is the limitation of the discourse vis-à-vis the epilogue and the prologue. According to Newsom, the book very nearly reads as a *Bildungsroman*, as the progression of perspectives—naïve prologue, more sophisticated but ultimately inadequate wisdom dialogue, theophany—leads to an aesthetic conversion. This approach to the book, according to Newsom, is undermined by the resumption of the prose tale bringing contradictions and reasserting the friends' refuted perspective on retribution.<sup>408</sup> The latter history is the only perspective which can qualify the authoritative divine discourse, according to her understanding of the text as polyphonic. These contradictions are critical in supporting her Bakhtinian approach to the book. But they are simplistic critiques and easily answered even if frequently advanced.

First, the claim that God's assessment of Job's right speech in 42:7 is irreconcilable with his assessment of Job's ignorant speech in 38:2 is facile. While these verses might correspond to different stages of authorship, they readily reconcile in their

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<sup>407</sup> The rationales offered for dismissing the content can be extraordinarily cavalier. See, for example, Millar Burrows, "The Voice from the Whirlwind," *JBL* 47 (1928): 117–23, whose own opinion is lukewarm but who ably rebuts several facile arguments. Of particular note is his observation, *ibid.*, 123, that many authors problematically begin with the dialogues and allow them to be the criterion (in some way) for determining the whirlwind speech's legitimacy rather than taking both together to see if some common purpose can explain them. This latter approach is more literarily sensitive and appropriate.

<sup>408</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 18–21.

present literary contexts. Newsom writes that such approaches “have to overlook the fact that God has just rebuked the way Job speaks” in 38:2. But Newsom must overlook the facts that four chapters have passed and Job has just spoken altogether differently. Job 38:2 and 42:7 easily reconcile in their narrative logic, if the latter is taken to refer to Job’s immediately preceding speech rather than forced on the whole dialogue. Such forcing may render the book incoherent, but it is not necessary or literarily intuitive.

Secondly, while Newsom is correct that the prose resumption surprises and disappoints many readers, she overstates both the whirlwind’s dissonance with the doctrine of retribution and the prose’s affirmation of the friends’ perspective. It is true that God restores Job much as the friends had predicted, but the whirlwind never denied God’s desire to bless Job. As Fox observes, there are many details that (1) indicate God’s universal blessing, (2) suggest his generosity towards humanity in accordance with typical formulations of Hebrew scriptural piety, and (3) even affirm the doctrine of retribution’s position on the punishment of the wicked.<sup>409</sup> Regarding the alleged affirmation of the friends’ perspective, Newsom solves her own objection when she characterizes the book’s conclusion as embracing the “goodness of life in all its fragility,” rather than according to the reliable mechanisms of the doctrine of retribution.<sup>410</sup>

Furthermore, the whirlwind speech’s insistence on God’s freedom to operate the cosmos as he pleases leads Job to relinquish the case for his just desserts (however much one may agree with his case), and God’s self-portrait as lavishly generous to all of creation indicates that Job’s blessings were given gratuitously rather than according to the demanding logic of retribution. Once Job relents and submits, he demonstrates that he

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<sup>409</sup> Fox, “God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” *Biblica* 94, 1 (2013), 1–23.

<sup>410</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 257.

fears God for nothing (without current blessing or calculation of future blessing) allowing God's blessing to be uncalculated (not to secure Job's piety). Yet, Job does not fear God for nothing, as God will freely bless Job. This, then, is the effect of the whirlwind speech on the conclusion. The epilogue does not reflect the strict logic of the doctrine of retribution as the friends teach, but gratuitously (if justly) given blessing. The whirlwind and Job's submission change the nature of that blessing: it secures Job's renunciation of his claim, for God has given everything already; the epilogue indicates that God desires to give more. There is here no contradiction. Rather, the book's fundamental question, the story's very premise, of the gratuity (חנם; 1:9) of human devotion and divine blessing navigates the relationship between the whirlwind and the epilogue.

With these interpretive issues in mind, I introduce this chapter's approach. It will be necessary to reflect on the fact and circumstances of the theophany before attending to its content. Some scholars focus on the fact of divine address and revelation to the exclusion of the content. The message is the immediate experience of the *mysterium tremendum*, and the content only vaguely confirms it, if it is intelligible at all.<sup>411</sup> Other scholars contend for their reading of the content without considering the hermeneutical implications of the fact and circumstances of the divine address. We should attend to both.<sup>412</sup> As Tsevat puts it, the idea that the discourse's ideology is irrelevant is incongruous with the poet's conceptual effort throughout the book.<sup>413</sup> Furthermore, there

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<sup>411</sup> For example, Thomas Dailey, "Theophanic Bluster: Job and the Wind of Change," *SR* 22, (1993): 189, 194, emphasizes the theophanic nature of the address and sees the discourse as intuitive rather than discursive, evoking a spiritual and mystical growth rather than offering an intellectual answer.

<sup>412</sup> Athalya Brenner, "God's Answer to Job," *VT*, 31 (1981): 131, observes that God's aloofness has been part of the problem, indicating that his appearance is already a partial answer to Job's problem. The length of the theophany complementarily guarantees that the substance is relevant. See Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 196–99, who surveys these dichotomous approaches and provides examples. He also accounts for both fact and content of the address.

<sup>413</sup> Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," 81–82.

are too many details of the discourse that directly challenge the humans' perspective to neglect the speech's content. On the other hand, the fact and circumstances of the address commend particular understandings of the speeches' significance. Specifically, Yahweh speaks from the whirlwind and brings a human to reconciliation. This condescension affects how we understand the elements of the speech which qualify the wisdom and mythological traditions' anthropocentrism.

The speech itself blends mythology and natural imagery. While the sea is personified and dangerous, the myth has no inkling of battle. Instead, the context is an ordered cosmogony. The dominant metaphor is divine wisdom in construction, not power in battle. The following shift to meteorology continues the theme of wisdom. While the snow and hail are stored up for anticipated battle (38:22–23), lightning is not a battle implement but personified as God's emissaries (38:35). The following zoological discourse in Job 39 manifests God's wisdom in ordering his cosmos and includes a challenge to Job to read the cosmos wisely. But the poet returns to the mythological outlook ambiguously in Behemoth and decisively in Leviathan. It is critical that Job only repents when confronted with a mythological antagonist as the logic of the cosmos is necessarily supra-mundane. That is, the physical world can be finally understood and affirmed only within a metaphysical framework. Job must consider humanity's cosmic place in relation to inanimate physical structures, animals, and a mythological context.

The blending of the natural and mythical worlds has important implications. It implies that cosmological realities are reflected in mundane realities. Thus, the poet coordinates the visible with the invisible and the wisdom tradition with the mythological or even the apocalyptic tradition. This observation accords well with my understanding of

the book as a conscious synthesis of Jewish traditions. It also validates wisdom theologizing, while indicating its limitations. The mundane cosmos is coherent and good, but it must be read accurately (ch. 38–39), and it must be read as reflecting cosmic realities (40–41) to be understood and to be good. The continuity of the themes of freedom, wisdom, and pride from the mythological Sea to the natural physical structures and from the natural animals to the mythological Leviathan underscores the point. Thus, the author commends an analogical approach, as the faithful are led to reason from mundane realities to cosmic ones. The author presents a cosmic vision, wherein earthly realities cohere with cosmic realities, no longer according to the myth of *Chaoskampf* or the friends' tidy system of coercive divine power, but according to an understanding of God's absolute power and wisdom where God allows himself to be resisted.

This divine self-limitation is central to the book's theodicy and doctrine of creation. The poet asserts the goodness of a cosmos wherein freedom exists to destructive and glorious effect, as God persuades rather than attacks, and as he recasts Job's moral perspective to recognize the importance of pride—from Job himself, to the Sea, to the wicked, to Leviathan—so that Job might resume his proper posture as creature before creator. For these reasons, it will be necessary to evaluate natural images in the speech to understand the significance of the mythological elements such as the Sea and the Leviathan. The images are too enigmatic, the speech too tightly related, to analyze the explicitly mythological parts apart from the cosmological whole.

Finally, I will observe how the whirlwind speech's monotheistic, mythological reflection is not only distinct from the friends' and Job's perspectives, but how it corresponds most closely to a theological conception from Second Isaiah. Specifically,

the whirlwind speech's disjunction with the humans' perspectives adapts Isaiah's insight regarding the nature of God's power. This adaptation of Isaiah's understanding of divine power is in turn synthesized with *Chaoskampf* in the Leviathan figure. The poet adapts Isaiah's perspective on God's power operating in history, while retaining a cosmic theater of contest Isaiah seems to have rejected.

### ***The Fact and Circumstances of the Theophany***

The fact of the theophany itself is remarkable, especially considering the book of Job as 'Wisdom Literature.' A stereotype of wisdom literature and values is the attitude that revelation itself is superfluous, per the perspicuity and sufficiency of nature. The failure of the wisdom dialogue and the sapiential and mythological traditions within the book make this divine address necessary, but revelation is alien to the genres of the didactic tale (e.g., the Joseph cycle) and the wisdom dialogue.<sup>414</sup>

More importantly, the address is shocking to the human disputants' perspective. The friends assertively presume that God and the gods are insufficiently interested in humanity to engage in dialogue: humans are irrelevant even in their morality and wisdom (e.g., 5:1, 22:2). Even Job oscillates between desire for engagement, despair of the possibility, and despair that God would use the occasion to assault him. The fact that God

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<sup>414</sup> Revelation is alien to the genres, but the Joseph cycle demonstrates that such stories need be no less religious or lacking in a substantial doctrine of providential guidance for it. Rather, true wisdom comes to the same theological conclusion of God's active involvement in creation (Gen 50:20). As far as 'wisdom literature' is concerned, so goes the stereotype, but we have no direct access to the sages' attitudes regarding revelation. *A priori*, it is equally possible and more plausible that these ancient Hebrews affirmed the value and necessity of revelation in their prophetic and legal traditions though they might have been suspicious of contemporaneous claimants to mantic authority. Nonetheless, the fact that sages were not the vehicles of such revelation does not prove their prejudice against it any more than a biblical scholar's subject matter indicates any prejudice against systematic theology or chemistry. Contrast this with Crenshaw's proposal, "When Form and Content Clash," p. 79, n. 28, to "acknowledge different forms of wisdom, in one of which present revelation plays a significant role," compared to the predominant sort, in which "wisdom literature normally limits itself to observable phenomena" because "revelation took place at creation." Crenshaw begins with a caveat, "If critics are right in assuming that wisdom literature . . .," but he allows this premise, and the entire analysis is awkward and *a posteriori*.



bothers to address Job indicates that humanity and human piety are of significant interest to God. More precisely, God brings Job to submission and reconciliation. One can interpret this ‘bothering’ cynically, as if God only seeks to win the prologue’s wager or to denounce an impudent creature. One can also see it generously, indicating God’s condescension to win his servant’s reconciliation. In fact, in Job 42:7–8, God affirms Job as “my Servant, Job,” four times. If the prologue and epilogue may be considered, God’s manifest affirmation of Job in both and his free restoration of Job in the latter support the generous interpretation. While the whirlwind speech might qualify humanity’s significance, the fact of the address in turn qualifies this qualification.<sup>415</sup>

The circumstances are also significant. On the one hand, Dell writes that the speech “presents a picture of God which is in contradiction to the rest of the Old Testament and confirms Job’s worst fears about the impossibility of communion with him.”<sup>416</sup> I might note with Fox that there is nothing in this speech any more disconcerting than Isaiah’s “insistence that God creates light and darkness, well-being and evil” (Isa 45:7).<sup>417</sup> I might suggest that this speech as an address validates Job as a subject, a “Thou,” as Buber describes the affirmation of human personality in God’s self-gift and self-limitation.<sup>418</sup> I must at least object that the speech does not confirm the worst of Job’s fears. Job feared being crushed, wounded, and unable to draw breath from God’s confrontation from the storm (9:17–18). While Job does not enjoy the legal standing he desired (9:32) and he lacks an arbiter (9:33), God addresses Job without wielding his rod

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<sup>415</sup> Thus, the narrative provides a simple and coherent way to synthesize the whirlwind speech and the epilogue, in contrast to Newsom’s post-modern, Bakhtinian approach.

<sup>416</sup> Dell, *The Book of Job*, 207.

<sup>417</sup> Fox, “God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” 11.

<sup>418</sup> Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, 195–96.

or his terror terrifying Job (ואמתו אל תבעתני; 9:34): there is no violent altercation, nor is there any insinuation of demonic terror in all the divine speech (here, terror results from freedom's abuse, not divine ordination).<sup>419</sup> The whirlwind is the locus of address, not assault. It is persuasive, not brutal nor coercive. It is ordered to reconciliation, not litigation. Granted, the forceful rhetoric evokes a sublime aesthetic and demands submission, but it commits no violence against Job's person.

The speech's rhetorical character warrants two comments. First, the speech is rhetorically ordered to Job's submission. God's appeal to the majesty and the partial inscrutability of creation (and *ad fortiolem* his own) secures Job's submission without rationalizing Job's suffering or promising its limitation or Job's restoration. While this refusal to answer the questions of the human dialogue dissatisfies many readers, its necessity is obvious within the book's logic. If Job's submission is to mean anything vis-à-vis the prologue's wager, Job must submit "for nothing." Rationalization, resolution of the problem of evil, disclosure of the heavenly premise of Job's suffering, or hope for remediation would effectively concede the wager to the Satan.<sup>420</sup>

Secondly, while the poet might have offered a discursive lecture, the use of rhetorical questions with mostly knowable answers dignifies Job and human wisdom. As

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<sup>419</sup> This alone is a striking contrast with the human discourse, as 'terror' is always a psychological phenomenon and never personified in the whirlwind speech. The ostrich (פחד; 39:16), horse (פחד; 39:22), and Leviathan (חתה; 41:25) are all free from terror, while the horse spreads terror (אימה; 39:20) and the Leviathan has teeth of terror (אימה; 41:6). I will show that both of these figures operate as examples of the abuse of freedom and creation's responsibility for evil. It seems, then, that the motif of demonic agents as divinely ordained Terrors is displaced by the theme of creation's abuse of freedom and responsibility for suffering and evil, including the experience of terror. The Leviathan's mythological character might allow for his teeth to be given significance beyond the merely psychological experience of Terror, and this might incline one to interpret the reign of the King of the Proud (41:25) as similar to the King of Terrors (18:14). In this case, the critical distinction to observe is the Leviathan's nature as potential chaotic antagonist rather than as member of the ordered pantheon.

<sup>420</sup> As is frequently observed by scholars not *a priori* opposed to the book's logic. Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 23, for example, exercises a healthy objectivity, acknowledging that the book's resolution may in fact be unsatisfactory to us while allowing Job to be "as his author made him."

Fox observes, such rhetorical questions imply that the hearer knows the answer, the speaker knows that the hearer knows the answer, which the hearer knows ... ad nauseum. This "circle of knowing" sets up a "special intimacy of communication."<sup>421</sup> Further, the participation in this sapiential mode of discourse, while including its limitation of human wisdom through the unknowable (e.g., 38:22), affirms the validity of human wisdom. Part of the problem is that Job has failed to live "up to the potentials of his own wisdom."<sup>422</sup> This point applies to the first speech. The second speech implies a renewed adaptation of myth to provide some sort of supra-rational perspective.

Beyond the speech's rhetorical ordering to Job's submission, the panoramic view of the wilder elements of creation evokes an aesthetic and implies a new sapiential frame that better accounts for the cosmos. That the speech is not discursive contributes to scholars' objections that the speech does not answer the friends' disputation. As my analysis of the humans' various mythological complexes shows, these mythologies are loaded with presupposed values. God will provide yet another value-laden mythological framework. God not only demands submission to the grandeur of the creation and the Creator as the *Bildungsroman* approach implies, though this is included and dramatically essential. God further addresses the mythological presuppositions and worldview that have thus far controlled the humans' discourse on the question of evil. God's mythologizing does not evade the question but corrects and sharpens it.

That this speech is from the whirlwind is also significant. As we have seen, the friends neglect and even suppress that mythological tradition while Job recalls it. God mythologically engages with Job specifically. God reveals himself from the storm where

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<sup>421</sup> Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," *Semeia* 19 (1981), 58.

<sup>422</sup> Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," 59.

Job had expected but not as Job had expected. This whirlwind experience is not a battle, but the mythological tradition is transformed. All parties, furthermore, engage the tradition with monotheistic concerns. While the friends jettisoned the tradition in favor of their monotheistic, placid worldview, and Job distorted it to evoke a dark monotheism, God's adaptation is to more creative effect.

This engagement with Job also engages with Israel's and Canaan's traditions. We should reflect on this significance. Frank Moore Cross has argued that the poet rejected Israel's traditions in favor of resurrecting the Ba'al tradition. The passage is worth producing here:

“[Job] repudiated the god of history whose realm is politics, law, and justice, whose delight is to lift up the poor and to free the slave. The God who called Israel out of Egypt, who spoke by the prophet, the covenant god of Deuteronomy, did not reveal himself to Job. It is true that God spoke, but note that he spoke from the storm cloud. It is true that he revealed transcendent wisdom and power, but they were revealed in the thunder and lightning, in the language of Ba'al. He was revealed in the defeat of the dragon of chaos, in the myths of creation. There is a sense in which Job brought the ancient religion of Israel to an end. History to Job was opaque. Job viewed the flux of history in despair; he detected no pattern of meaning there. History was a riddle beyond man's fathoming. The Lord of history failed to act. 'El or Ba'al, the transcendent creator spoke. Only He lived. Job saw Him and bowed his knee.

“It is not enough to set Job in contrast to wisdom clichés. He represented more profound mythic strains, transmitted in circles of court wisemen and preserved in royal ideology and cult. He repudiated not only a simplistic Deuteronomistic view of historical process in which the mighty acts of God are transparent and history's theme is a simple one of blessing or curse, the way of life or the way of death. He recalled the patriarchal god, 'El the creator. The ancient myths regained their meaning in Job.”<sup>423</sup>

This magisterial prose manifests a remarkable mixture of insight, conflation, assertion, and *non sequitur*. I wholly agree that the poet deconstructed the friends' perspective and rendered history opaque to traditional covenantal understandings. More,

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<sup>423</sup> Cross, *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, 344.

he dismantled traditional cosmologies and sapiential understandings of retribution. However, even the human dialogue provides a potential solution to this opaque riddle in a post-mortem, supra-mundane vindication of divine justice and reward for the righteous. In turn, the whirlwind speech points to a cosmic rather than mundane context. Both are in this sense proto-apocalyptic.<sup>424</sup> I agree that “it is not enough to set Job in contrast to wisdom clichés” or “simplistic Deuteronomic view(s),” but it is untenable to see in Job an earnest resurrection of the *Chaoskampf* myth: the poet is too subtle, the mere citation of allusions to the myth too facile. Rather, the dialogue and the whirlwind both critically adapt the traditional *Chaoskampf*.

Cross’s argument regarding Ba‘al and ‘El is not precisely coherent nor is it answerable to the book of Job. Can we really conflate the two as “the transcendent creator” as he does here? Rather, ‘El reflects the transcendence of deity, and Ba‘al reflects immanence and philanthropy.<sup>425</sup> These two themes may be juxtaposed and conflated in the Hebrew Scriptures’ portrayal of God, but this observation undermines Cross’s argument entirely.<sup>426</sup> It is true that God speaks from the whirlwind in Job, but this is no less apropos to the Yahwistic traditions. It is untrue that God speaks the language of thunder and lightning. The poet offers no characterization of God’s speech, and he personifies lightning as God’s emissaries (38:35). While the Leviathan evokes the

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<sup>424</sup> Cf. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 50.

<sup>425</sup> Recall the position of Koch, “Šaddaj,” 312–16, that Shaddai indicates God’s greater proximity in the book of Job, compared to El and its larger forms. The same distinction obtains in the Ugaritic corpus. El’s transcendent role in the Ugaritic pantheon runs throughout the Ba‘al epic, but it is perhaps most clearly reflected in Shapshu’s rebuke of Mot, revealing that El has allotted their respective reigns. Mot is forced to acknowledge Ba‘al, the Lord of Life, lest he lose his sphere of authority, “The Ba‘lu Myth,” *COS* 1.86:273.

<sup>426</sup> A most famous juxtaposition is Gen 1’s portrayal of the transcendent God and Gen 2’s portrayal of the immanent LORD. The Elijah tradition of 1 Kgs 18–19 portrays the LORD as freely acting in the storm (ch. 18) while he transcends that storm (ch. 19), as seen in chapter 1. Mullen, *The Divine Council*, 153–56, observes both themes are united at Sinai, as the LORD’s power is demonstrated both by terrifying phenomena and by the ultimate authority of divine decree, corresponding to Ba‘al and ‘El respectively.

“ancient myths,” he is transformed. There is no portrayal of a battle, only the indication that God is dominant over the Leviathan and no one else could engage it (40:25–41:3 [41:1–11]). There is no indication that Leviathan’s defeat began the ordered cosmos as in *Enuma Elish* or began the LORD’s reign as in the Ba’al cycle, but the Leviathan himself is created (41:25 [33]) and subject to the LORD, his creator. Therefore, we should rather say, “the ancient myths were given entirely new purpose and meaning in Job.”

Finally, Cross’s judgment that Job recalls the patriarchal god is ironic as the patriarchal affectation of the human dialogue encapsulates the characters’ shortcomings. It is true that the book has a patriarchal setting and that Job adapts a more primitive myth. Nonetheless, this patriarchal wisdom disputation fails, and the failure of the dialogue is underscored by the literary affectation that the human disputants do not use the divine name, excepting 12:9. As Edomites, their discourse can demonstrate history’s unaccountability to the covenant’s portrayal of God without directly challenging the covenant itself. Because they lack the intimate and generous vision of God affirmed by revelation, the divine name, and the promises of covenantal faithfulness, their theology cannot escape this dead end. It is at just this point that God—and we should say Yahweh by name as the poet does—speaks from the whirlwind. The divine name’s appearance supports Habel’s judgment, that Job “has provoked the *deus absconditus* into becoming the *deus revelatus*,” though we might doubt whether it is really “Job’s heroic faith” rather than his climactic gauntlet-throwing in his self-imprecation of ch. 31 and invocation of Shaddai (31:35) that catalyzes God’s involvement.<sup>427</sup> Cross’s analysis might have been improved had he heeded his advice, that the “pattern of use of divine names in Job

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<sup>427</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 528.

actually warrants a separate study.”<sup>428</sup> The speech from the whirlwind is properly a theophany of Yahweh, setting it apart from the wisdom dialogue generically and the patriarchal discourse on Shaddai authoritatively. While the previous poetic dialogues have included constructive material and are not to be discarded, the poet’s literary affectation complements the narrative logic in confirming this section’s authority.

***First Speech, Part One: Cosmogony***

The whirlwind speech begins with a challenge to Job as one who has ‘darkened counsel.’ The phrase, *מהשיך עצה*, is tantamount to ‘obscuring knowledge’ or ‘plans,’ and it indicates Job’s assault on the cosmos’s rationality, as the creature, Job, challenged the creator’s counsel. Since Job directly rejected the creation of primordial light to begin his harangue against creation (Job 3:4, cf. Gen 1:3), God’s phrase explicitly takes up Job’s challenge. Indeed, God answers ch. 3 at length, particularly in this opening section. Alter observes that God’s response to Job’s lament is a matter both of practical feasibility (it would be tedious for God to reply to every element of Job’s speeches) and of substantial significance: “God chooses for His response to Job the arena of creation, not the court of justice, the latter being the most insistent recurrent metaphor in Job’s argument after Chapter 3.”<sup>429</sup> Significantly, ch. 3 is Job’s initial response, while the rest of the Job’s discourse is conditioned by his friends. God responds to the issue as raised by his servant rather than as by the litigant who has been provoked by his friends’ insinuations. Thus,

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<sup>428</sup> Frank Moore Cross, לך, TDOT, 1:259. Material in his *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic* is found verbatim in his article in TDOT.

<sup>429</sup> Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 104.

the poet indicates the proper context and disposition for theodicy: it is properly sapiential and cosmic, not juridical and humanistic; it better laments than charges.<sup>430</sup>

The speech proceeds with two strophes of four verses on the creation of the earth (4–7) and the sea (8–11). The order is intriguing. Often, the earth is understood as being founded after and even on the waters (e.g., Ps 24:2).<sup>431</sup> However, the order here gives the earth priority. This accords with the poet’s portrayal of the Sea as not primordial: it comes into existence and is certainly not prior to God as Tiamat was to Marduk. This priority accords with the poet’s sophisticated portrayal of the earth as founded on nothing (על בלי־מה ... על תהו; Job 26:7).<sup>432</sup> It is possible that the primordial abyss is understood as supporting the earth, but the poet is silent about any watery existence before the earth’s foundation, and he proposed an alternative. Regardless, the metaphor for the earth’s creation is not battle, but construction (with no corpse). God is architect and builder,

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<sup>430</sup> Thus, I partially agree with Westermann’s focus on lament, *Structure of Job*, 4, but this is only part of the picture. Job is frequently characterized as eviscerating wisdom traditions, and no doubt the poet does. However, this turn to wisdom and cosmology from a merely mundane theodicy or a litigious approach affirms the sapiential commitment to the intelligibility of creation. Against inadequate wisdom traditions, it corrects willful and accidental mis-readings of the visible order and calls attention to humanity’s negative impact on the visible order. It also indicates that the mundane order must be interpreted according to a higher, cosmic logic, indicating that wisdom naturally available to humanity must be supplemented by a supernatural perspective. Still, the poet makes extensive and cogent use of the created order in these chapters (as he had in the dialogues), and he thereby supports the sapiential project to a degree in principle.

<sup>431</sup> In *Enuma Elish* the creation of the earth comes after the defeat of the Deep, Tiamat, “Epic of Creation,” COS 1.111:398–99. Even in Gen 1:9 the land appears from the waters of the Deep. The Ba’al cycle, meanwhile, does not portray Yamm’s defeat as the temporal antecedent of the cosmos’s creation; the defeat of aquatic chaos is more about the sustained ordering than the origination of the cosmos. Of course, this distinction ought not to be over drawn. Marduk’s victory over Tiamat had to be liturgically reinforced and Ba’al’s victory over Yamm was a primordial act and the necessary condition of a stable cosmos conducive to human flourishing. Cf. Isa 51:9, and the formula, “like in days of old” (כִּי־מִי קִדָּם), as the primordial act is liturgically remembered to provoke divine intervention.

<sup>432</sup> Clines, *Job 21–37*, 622, seems to accept this understanding of Job 26:7. So Gordis, *Job*, 279. Pope, *Job*, 184, alternatively uses Job 38:6–7 to exclude the more sophisticated interpretation of 26:7, although he does not offer an explanation of 26:7. Hartley, *Job*, 366, simply glosses, עַל־בְּלִי־מָה as, “i.e., over the vast ocean depths.” This deference to pre-existing mythological traditions is simply inadequate to the poet’s method and speculative creativity, and it does not account for the term’s most obvious meaning. Habel, *Job*, 371, much more aptly observes that the poet departs “from the major Israelite tradition,” treating עַל־בְּלִי־מָה literally and differentiating the ‘nothing’ תְּהוֹ of 26:7a from the watery abyss. It is perhaps worth noting that both the LXX (ἐπ’ οὐδέν... ἐπὶ οὐδενός) and the Vulgate (*super vacuum... super nihilum*) attest this understanding.



whose wisdom and strength are uncontested. The lack of contest allows for a portrayal of more serene and absolute divine power in creation.<sup>433</sup> Finally, as Habel indicates, this portrayal corrects Job's claims in 9:5–7 that God destabilizes the cosmos.<sup>434</sup>

The earth's creation is marked by joy, the joy of the sons of God. This is not the joy of the Babylonian pantheon at the death of chaos (i.e., their mother, etc.).<sup>435</sup> Rather, it is joy in the goodness of the creation, indicating creation's quality and creatures' fitting reaction. The image implies that Job should so react, as the following discourse on natural phenomena invites him. It thus neatly responds to Job's rejection of joy and life in 3:7.<sup>436</sup>

Little more can be said from this passing reference to them, but they may have an important hermeneutical implication. The human disputants are well familiar with the idea of such celestial beings, so their existence is not significant. But their title may be, as the phrase "sons of God" only occurs in God's speech (38:8) and in the prologue (1:6, 2:1).<sup>437</sup> God's discourse corresponds to the narrative's terminology rather than to the human characters'. This correlation supports reading the book coherently and recognizing this subtle literary affectation as part of the poet's privileging of perspectives.

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<sup>433</sup> Cf. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 27, who observes that the mythical imagination correlates battle with power, as the power of God's rival attests to his own power. Undoubtedly, this correlation is manifested in the primitive myths including some psalms, but power need not be brutal. Rather, Gen 1 indicates real power is gentle. It is contested power that needs to resort to violence. The poet mythologically reimagines the nature of God's power, following, I argue, Second Isaiah's insight.

<sup>434</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 530.

<sup>435</sup> Cf. "Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:399.

<sup>436</sup> The term for joy in 38:7, וִירֵצוּ, does not have the same root as the term in 3:7, רִנָּה. It seems deliberate, however, that joy in creation is paralleled with unity (יחד) in both passages, as Job's rejection of joy calls for the isolation of his birth night (3:6) while the sons of God rejoice together.

<sup>437</sup> Recall, for example, that Eliphaz referred to a spirit (רוח, 4:15), servants (עבדים, 4:18), messengers (מלאכים, 4:18), the holy ones (קדשים, 5:1) and he even personified the heavens (שמים, 15:15). That the poet used such a variety of terms to refer to these celestial beings and only allowed the whirlwind speech to use the term from the prologue is conspicuous. Recall also the various terms for demonic Terrors used throughout the dialogue.

The Sea is not static as the earth and the metaphor here is first birth rather than artistry, as the Sea bursts forth from the womb (38:8). Scholars disagree about whose womb is imagined, but the issue is indeterminable and irrelevant. The metaphor does not rely on or support elaborating such a myth.<sup>438</sup> The poet's undermining of myths and refusal to name Tiamat here (but cf. 38:16) support seeing the birth as a demythologized metaphor. While the Sea retains its character as an embodiment of chaos, the Sea qua chaos now has a fundamentally different character involving several paradoxes.

First, as indicated, the Sea's bursting forth is ambiguous. It is described without elaboration as to the source or agency preceding it, perhaps as a spontaneous event. On the other hand, it clearly comes into being and is not strictly primordial.

Second, God's activities towards the Sea are thematically paradoxical. God's midwifing the Sea and swaddling suggest quasi-parental care. This is surprising if the *Enuma Elish* is our primary lens for interpreting the Sea. It fits somewhat better the Ba'al Cycle, as Yamm was the son and beloved of 'El.<sup>439</sup> However, the Sea's proud waves abide by God's command in Job 38:11, whereas Yamm arrogantly does not reverence 'El

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<sup>438</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1102, should have maintained his suggestion that the phrase likely means nothing more specific than “when it was created.” Clines, *ibid.*, 1102, dismisses Dhorme's position, *Livre de Job*, 527, that the earth was the Sea's mother in favor of his opinion that the more likely candidate would be “the cosmic abyss.” However, the sequence indicates that an earth-mother is not implausible, perhaps analogous to Gaia's maternity in Hesiod's theogony. This is especially possible, since the cosmic abyss is not named here (although *tehom* does occur in 38:16, in the context of cosmic panorama rather than cosmogony). To be sure, there is biblical warrant for seeing the abyss as preexisting the earth and the gathered seas in Gen 1, and the bursting from the womb can be seen as analogous to the opening of the fountains of the abyss in Gen 7:11. Nonetheless, the poet is subtle in his manipulation of Hebrew mythological traditions, and his neglect of *tehom* with her mythological baggage and apparent eternal quality speaks loudly: particularly since the Canaanite term features here rather than the Babylonian one and the Sea decisively comes into existence after the earth and after God. We cannot assume that the poet conforms to older mythological types. Clines's following line, *ibid.*, 1102, is thus also to be rejected: “Whatever its mother is, it is not depicted as God's handiwork at creation, but as an independent being.” But the “mother” is not depicted at all! It is not clear that the poet intended us to infer such a mythological mother. Indeed, the book's manipulation and deconstruction of previous mythologies makes this assumption highly inappropriate.

<sup>439</sup> “The Balu Myth,” *COS*, 1.86:246, 252.

but asserts his own hegemony and makes brazen demands—to which 'El accedes in fear.<sup>440</sup> Still less does the Sea relate to the LORD in the whirlwind as Yamm does to Ba'al. Further, God does not beget but midwives the Sea, removing at least this anthropomorphism from the creator. The paradox accords best with Gen 1:10, where the waters are only named 'Sea' after they have been assigned their proper place and are called 'good.' Further, Gen 1:20–22 and Ps 104:25–26 both portray the Sea, not as hostile, but as part of the good creation sustaining life. (The psalm was likely a source for the poet.<sup>441</sup>) The Sea being born both negates its primordial independence from God (unlike *Enuma Elish*) and includes it in the economy of life in God's creation (unlike *Enuma Elish* and the *Ba'al Cycle*). On the other hand, the Sea is violent, and God constrains its violence. This constraint is described both as swaddling, which implies tender care as infants are both soothed and physically protected by their constraint, and as shutting in with doors and bars, which suggests firm opposition. Indeed, this opposition does evoke the *Chaoskampf* tradition, as scholars note Marduk's barring Tiamat's corpse.<sup>442</sup> However, the absence of battle and the Sea's loss of priority do not produce a merely "enfeebled version of the myth."<sup>443</sup> The poet casts the trope into an altogether different mythological structure.

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<sup>440</sup> "The Balu Myth," *COS*, 1.86:246.

<sup>441</sup> The extensive amount of overlap makes coincidence an indefensible explanation. The poet's use of Ps 104 rather than the reverse is supported by his ubiquitous and similar use of other Hebrew Scripture and by the greater rhetorical effect of this direction. Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 8, agrees with the psalm's priority and further argues that the psalm's priority compared to Job "is assured by [the psalm's] dependence on the Greater Hymn to the Aton." Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 60–63, surveys some similarities between the hymn and the psalm and comes to the same conclusion regarding the psalm and the Egyptian hymn.

<sup>442</sup> E.g., Pope, *Job*, 293. Cf. "Epic of Creation," *COS* 1.111:398–99.

<sup>443</sup> Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1102.

Third, in this new mythological context, the Sea is not killed, but partially pacified and given its paradoxical domain of chaos. The architectural metaphor of cosmic construction absorbs the Sea. The mythological traditions of *Enuma Elish*, the Ba'al Cycle, and the storm-god traditions of the Hebrew Bible speak of the primordial victory of God over chaos and invoke those past memories in hopes that God will renew his victory over present evils (e.g., Ps 74:10–23, 89:10–11, 39–48, Isa 51:9–10). Job 38, however, describes the Sea, not as some slain-but-surgent evil, but as a vital-but-constrained force. The displacement of the battle motif allows this more coherent, less mythological, metaphorical formulation. By making the Sea a structured part of the cosmos, it is no longer cosmic or cosmogonic chaos, chaos in the stricter sense. Rather, it accounts for the human experience of chaos, what has been called “kratogenic chaos” or what we might instead call existential chaos.<sup>444</sup> One might thereby conclude that existential chaos’s proper place in the cosmic order implies that human suffering has a specific telos in the divine plan. At least this existential chaos is no longer a threat to the

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<sup>444</sup> Karen Sonik, “From Hesiod’s Abyss to Ovid’s *rudis indigestaque moles*: Chaos and Cosmos in the Babylonian “Epic of Creation,” in *Creation and Chaos: A Reconsideration of Hermann Gunkel’s Chaoskampf Hypothesis*, eds. JoAnn Scurlock and Richard H. Beal, (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013), 4. Sonik follows Jan Assman’s distinction between cosmogonic and kratogenic chaos: the former being anti- and pre-cosmic and the latter existing within the present cosmos. The distinction is valuable, necessary, and entirely appropriate in Job. However, Sonik’s position, *ibid.*, 18, that the *Enuma Elish* lacks cosmogonic chaos and only has kratogenic chaos, requires special pleading in the rehabilitation of Tiamat, as Sonik neglects and downplays the disorder of Tiamat and Apsu and the fact that no meadow can form amongst their aqueous mixing, and as she argues that Tiamat’s own bodily coherence makes chaos an invalid descriptor. While Tiamat is quite distinct from Hesiod’s chasm and Ovid’s ball of confusion, her existence is anti- and pre-cosmic, and we should say therefore cosmogonic chaos. Her death and the brutal imposition of Marduk’s order upon her corpse are the necessary conditions of the present order and the cosmos’s habitability. While subjective post-moderns such as Sonik might observe that her body has its own coherence and can be called an order, there is no doubt that ancients accepted the normative authority of their own subjective perspective. Sonik’s positive spin on kratogenic chaos, *ibid.* 18–19, demonstrates her disinterest in the ancient worldview. Whereas we are inclined to see a positive role for challenges and cultural exchange, I doubt the liberality of ancient Babylonians or their capacity to be grateful for the forces of chaos, as hypostatized in Assyrian or Persian conquerors, checking the Babylonian civilization’s decadent “descent into stagnation or moribundity.” Doubtless, Babylonians would have their decadent imperial order perpetuated indefinitely, however stagnant. Sonik’s reading is literarily forced, considered in the abstract, and still less likely considered historically as cultural legitimation and imperial propaganda.

cosmic order, being part of it. This cosmogony thereby removes the chief motive for the friends' denial of innocent suffering.

Thus, the Sea's place affirms Job's observation that innocent suffering and injustice, existential chaos, are inherent to the cosmos. However, the affirmation has a major caveat. Since God constrains the Sea to its place, its destructive force is limited. Therefore, the cosmic order includes existential chaos, but God limits that existential chaos, lest all human flourishing perish.<sup>445</sup> The speech thus affirms Job's critique of sapiential serenity, but it corrects his pessimistic condemnation of creation and return to *Chaoskampf*. Finally, it realigns God's activity vis-à-vis chaos and humanity. These points are underscored by the language of Job 38:8, and they are repeated in the following cosmogonic portrayal of light and darkness.

Job 38:8 uses a key term, ויסך, "and he hemmed," describing God's constraining the Sea. This term is identical to Job's complaint in 3:23, that God has hemmed in "man" (גבר; also in 38:3). This precise morphological equivalence is particularly conspicuous, since it is only achieved through God referring to himself in the third person, and it only briefly interrupts God's more natural speech in the first person.<sup>446</sup> That is, God's rhetoric takes an unusual turn for the sake of corresponding precisely to 3:23. Job's complaint in 3:23 is itself an ironic distortion of 1:10, the Satan's objection that God has to this point

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<sup>445</sup> D.L. Tönsing, "The Use of Creation Language in Job 3, 9 and 38 and the Meaning of Suffering," *Scriptura* 59 (1996), 445, similarly observes that "Chaos," (i.e., the Sea) "is no coeternal power," and neither is "God identical with it or allowing it unchecked reign. Rather, Chaos is a creation of God assigned its specific, restricted place in the scheme of things. This allows for some truth in Job's assertion that God is the source of disorder, but also limits the truth by embedding it in a deeper order." Unfortunately, Tönsing does not reflect on that deeper order or on the function of 'chaos' in light of its place in that order, beyond the observation that freedom is necessary for gratuitous love and beauty, and that freedom and chaos "seem to be interlinked," *ibid.*, 446. Thus, chaos is only an unfortunate, concomitant result of the necessary conditions for love. Rather, the book implies a creative role for existential chaos.

<sup>446</sup> The 3ms verb assumes the reference to God in the phrase, "Sons of God," of 3:7, and God continues to describe his creative activity in the 1cs in 3:9–11.

“set a hedge” (שכח) around Job and all his house. Job 3:23 reflects the newer circumstances and a desperate human perspective.<sup>447</sup>

Job 38:8, then, resumes this motif and can hardly be understood apart from both passages. Whereas the Satan complained of God’s beneficial hedge and Job complained of God’s oppressive hedge, God affirms his “hedge” that both beneficially pacifies and oppressively constricts the Sea. Thus, God semantically blurs the distinctively positive and negative connotations of the previous occurrences. Again, whereas the Satan had described God as hedging things out, i.e., keeping harm from Job, and Job had described being hedged in, God’s rhetoric is like Job’s in describing a “hedging in,” but it reflects a hedging that is for humanity’s benefit, as the Satan observed and God tacitly conceded. Semantically and morphologically, then, God’s speech corresponds more closely to Job’s language as God addresses Job according to his idiom. But God guides Job closer to the prologue’s ideology of God’s protection of human prosperity and limitation of chaos’s harming humanity. While the character Job has no idea of the events of the prologue, the attentive reader will recognize the correspondence, as the term signposts the theme and encapsulates the various perspectives of the book’s sections.

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<sup>447</sup> Whereas Job 3:23 and 38:8 use a *samekh* (סך/סכך), Job 1:10 uses a *sin* (שך/שכך). Arguing that these are different terms (as does the NRSV study bible) is tantamount to arguing that ‘realise’ and ‘realize’ are different words, that happen to be homophones and homonyms. Rather, Seow, *Job 1–21*, 275, aptly describes the terms as “by-forms,” and he observes that 1:10 along with Hos 2:8[6] are the only instances where the root is spelled with a *sin*. This correlation may explain the poet’s use of the uncommon form, as we have observed both the poet’s penchant for visual poetry and I have argued for the poet’s use of Hosea in the last chapter. It may be that the poet chose to use the less common spelling to signpost a source text, yet another sort of “ungrammaticality.” Notably, as Seow, *ibid.*, 275, observes, the Hosea passage, much like Job 38:8, carries both connotations of constriction and protection, as Israel is constricted on her way (cf. Job 3:23), lest she continue to incur guilt and punishment through her idolatry. Finally, insofar as these three passages firmly establish the motif as the poet’s deliberate literary strategy, God’s address is a new sort of hedge on Job, as divine address has become the “hedge” turning Job from proceeding along his self-destructive path (cf. 3:23, Hos 2:8), and as this address has displaced the protective hedge of material blessing (Job 1:10) as the new grounds for Job’s piety. The book of Job offers a profound midrash on Hos 2:8.

The portrayal of the heavens more precisely describes light and its effects (38:12–15). God’s challenge to Job regarding the morning and the dawn not only draws out the disparity between God and Job according to its immediate rhetorical effect, but it also recalls Job’s desire that the dawn, twilight, etc., should be seized by darkness (3:3–9) and pass into non-existence. Job’s experience of *rogez*, existential chaos, led him to reject creation and desire its dissolution into cosmic chaos. This included an anthropological assessment of universal suffering, but it also included tacit indications of the harm humans cause each other in the juxtapositions of the wicked and the weary, captives and overseer (שגג; 3:18; cf. 39:7 and see the onager below), small and great, servant and master (3:17–19). Thus, Job tacitly conceded that humanity is complicit in the lack of rest in creation, but he charged the cosmic order as fundamentally at fault.

God replies here that the dawn and the morning have the structural function of limiting the wicked, as the metaphorical trope of light exposing the guilty is incorporated into the defense of the cosmic order. Thus, the cycle of day and night is similar to the place God allotted the Sea. The cosmic order allows for some chaos and evil in the Sea’s place and night’s cover, but God has included structures in the cosmos for the limitation of chaos and evil in the Sea’s hedge and the light’s illumination, contrary to Tsevat’s attempt to prove an amoral God and cosmos.<sup>448</sup> Moreover, while the verses only

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<sup>448</sup> As Perdue observes, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 210, this conception of God’s cosmic ordering and limitation of evil disproves Tsevat’s argument that the whirlwind discourse presents a God who is neither moral nor immoral, but merely “God.” Tsevat’s argument, “The Meaning of the Book of Job,” 99, regarding this verse defies belief, indicating the validity of Perdue’s critique, as Tsevat was evidently aware of the problem and set out to make the passage mean the opposite of what it says. After acknowledging that 38:12–15 contain a “teleological proposition” in the dawn’s provision for the wicked being destroyed, Tsevat asserts, “This can mean one thing only: there is no provision for retribution, nor any manifestation of it in the order of the world. The dawn of every day provides an occasion to punish the wicked, but this possibility is not in practice realized and is therefore not in the plan of the world. ‘Consider this fundamental fact,’ Job is told: ‘The sun rises over the righteous and the sinners alike. Can you change that?’” When scholars are willing to assert that a passage means literally the opposite of what it says and

explicitly refer to morning, dawn, and light, the absence of light is also indicated, describing the final destruction of the wicked (38:15). Thus, while the passage's rhetoric focuses on light and God's punishment of the wicked and proud, the passage also acknowledges the ambivalence of God allowing evil the domain of night. Even here, however, darkness has a just metaphorical significance, as the wicked and proud will be deprived of light and life. God thus indicates that Job's revulsion at the calendar rejects the structures that both allow evil and ensure its just punishment. Finally, the ambivalent quality of the diurnal cycle confirms elements of Job's and his friends' speeches without allowing the dialectic to collapse into either of the sapiential or skeptical orthodoxies.<sup>449</sup>

Finally, the following verses describe the cosmological feature opposed to the heavens, the depths of the abyss and the realm of Death. The withholding of light from the wicked (38:15) segues to these locales, as the springs of the sea and the depths of the abyss are naturally dark, the gates of death and of צלמות are apparently located in these depths, and the poet puns on the ambiguity of צלמות as "shadow of death" or "deep darkness" (38:17, cf. 24:17). Rhetorically, the immediate significance is obvious. Job cannot journey there at will. As a mortal, his later journey will be irreversible by all earthly indications. However, the passage is silent on the fate of the righteous in this context. It is, rather, the wicked who are deprived of light and consigned to the darkness of the abyss and death. Considering the poet's intense interest in a post-mortem escape from She'ol for the righteous, the silence about the fate of the righteous is highly

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can "rephrase" a passage to the same effect, they can "prove" anything. They cannot expect to convince a critical reader, however sympathetic. While Tsevat is certainly correct that not every dawn results in every wicked deed being exposed and every wicked person being punished, a great many deeds are exposed and punished. Thus, if we advert to reality to interpret the significance of the divine saying, it does not mean its opposite, but it correlates the judgement of the wicked to the containment of the Sea. Both are partial but real, as God has structured the cosmos to limit but not eradicate evil.

<sup>449</sup> Of course, this dialectical tension was embodied by Job at times in the dialogues as seen last chapter.



conspicuous. The passage leaves open the possibility that the righteous will not be consigned to the darkness of the shadow of death.

***First Speech, Part Two: Meteorology***

The theme of light and darkness from the Heavens and subterranean cosmological discourse transitions into meteorology in 38:19–38. The section begins with light and darkness (19–21) passing to the weather (22–30) astronomy (31–33) and back to the thunderstorm (34–38). The relationship between this meteorological section and the traditional storm-god is ambiguous. On the one hand, there is an explicit reference to the “day of battle” for which the snow and hail are stored up (38:23). Perdue asserts that the constellations (38:31–32) are to be understood as the vanquished titans, as might be the case in Job 9:9.<sup>450</sup> Finally, God speaks from the whirlwind and is proud of his control over the waters and lightning (38:34–35).

On the other hand, the only clear reference to battle is the storehouses, which look forward to a battle, whether in God’s historical or eschatological activity, rather than back to primordial combat. The waters are at God’s command rather than his antagonists (38:34). The lightning bolts are personified as God’s emissaries rather than imagined as arrows or spears (38:35). The explicit theme of God’s wise counsel in creation and the order which all creation follows (38:2) better explains the description of the constellations orderly procession and the mysterious purpose of lightning bolts.<sup>451</sup>

Perhaps the most important verses in this section are the description of God irrigating the wilderness where no humans are in 38:25–27. The majority of scholarship

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<sup>450</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom Literature*, 121.

<sup>451</sup> Habel, *Book of Job*, 530–32, 542–544, well illustrates this theme’s ubiquity in the first speech in his schema and comments.

emphasizes the passage's refutation of sapiential anthropocentrism, continuing with the descriptions of the animals in ch. 39.<sup>452</sup> The phrase (על ארץ לא איש מדבר לא אדם בו; 38:26) emphasizes the absence of humans, and it thus indicates—as does the following attention to the animals—that God cares about things other than humans. But the theme can be over-stated or distorted in at least two ways. First, the idea that God cares for things other than humans does not support the inference that God does not care for humans. Rather, the spatial metaphor in the phrase, 'the center of attention,' is inadequate to God's attention. The foundation of the earth is a proper occasion for joy. God cares for all the animals of the wilderness and for the desolate ground itself. This latter construal is equally valid *a priori*, and far more likely *a posteriori*, (i.e., considering the biblical context, God's boasting over Job in the prologue, God's blessing of Job before and after the book, and the fact that God addresses this human being). Second, despite God's rhetoric and post-modern scholarly impulses, rain in the wilderness is not useless to humanity. The book of Job itself and the poet's literary tradition require us to take God's rhetoric with a grain of salt.

It is worthwhile to critique some scholarship overemphasizing the non-anthropocentric elements of this trope. Tsevat's larger position can be encapsulated by his characterizations of God and piety. Regarding God, Tsevat concludes: "He Who speaks to man in the Book of Job is neither a just nor an unjust god but God."<sup>453</sup> This apophatic and nihilistic moral transcendentalism goes with Tsevat's understanding of the poet setting out to establish "the purest moral theory in the Bible," one which seeks to

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<sup>452</sup> E.g., Samuel Terrien, "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses," *RevExp*, 68, no. 4 (1971): 502. Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," 99–100.

<sup>453</sup> Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," 105.

make piety finally unmotivated: “If you decide to do what is good, do it because it is good.”<sup>454</sup> Regarding the rain itself, Tsevat “paraphrases” God to say that “precious rain, that would be so beneficial to human beings, is wasted on land uninhabited and uninhabitable.... Man is not as central as you fancy.” Thus, rain “is shown not to be a vehicle of morality at all,” and Tsevat again paraphrases God: “No retribution is provided for in the blueprint of the world, nor does it exist anywhere at all.”<sup>455</sup>

The problem with Tsevat’s interpretation of the rain is more subtle than his treatment of the dawn. God does state that the land is uninhabited, but it does not follow that it will remain so, is uninhabitable, or is useless. In fact, *מדבר* refers neutrally to wilderness, and thus names pastureland essential to pastoral communities (e.g., 1 Sam 17:28).<sup>456</sup> After all, Job dwelt in a tent and held flocks, and a nomadic pastoralist would be constantly moving to lands where no other humans are and none establish permanent dwellings. Such rainfall is useful to more than pastoralists, however, as exemplified by the desolate Wadi Qelt’s irrigation of Jericho and by Job’s own description of caravans’

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<sup>454</sup> Tsevat, “The Meaning of the Book of Job,” 104, 102. Of course, the question and ideal of unmotivated piety is an important theme in the book, but it is not as absolute as Tsevat writes. Whether Job serves God *הנח* is paradoxically yes and no according to the ambiguity of the phrase: Job can submit to God *הנח*, without calculation of personal benefit, but God can still reward the righteous, as he does in the epilogue, such that their service to God is meetly rewarded and not *הנח*. Both truths are offered according to the book’s poetic and narrative nature rather than discursively analyzed. In other words, Job’s faithful devotion is tested, but God also reveals himself to be faithfully devoted. It should also be noted that Tsevat locates the book of Job in the 6<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BCE, in a period when, according to him, the corporal hope of retribution had failed and the individual hope of resurrection had not yet arisen (101). Thus, I nearly agree with his construal of Job’s place in the intellectual history of Hebrew piety, Judaism, and Christianity. However, I firmly disagree with Job’s role in that history, as I argue that Job creatively participates in the transition from the national hope of retribution to the individual hope of resurrection compared to Tsevat’s position that Job occupies a middle, nihilistic term. That idea is may be found in Job 9:22, but it is not the poet’s position.

<sup>455</sup> Tsevat, “The Meaning of the Book of Job,” 99–100.

<sup>456</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1111, and Fox, “God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” 5, both observe the significance of *מדבר* as grazing land. The passage’s relevance to agrarian and pastoral societies, the urban and the rural, the imperial and the patriarchal, further seems critical.

reliance on wadis (6:15–20). God’s rhetoric emphasizes that humans are not God’s sole preoccupation, but the phenomenon nonetheless benefits humanity.

The parallel description of this wilderness, desolation (שָׂאָה וּמִשְׁאָה; 38:27), has a more negative connotation, as indicated by the term’s modern use, describing the Holocaust, ‘the Shoah.’ The term, שְׂוֹאָה, is alternatively derived from שָׂוָה, ‘worthless’ (e.g., Jer 4:30), or שָׂאָה, to be or become desolate.<sup>457</sup> Isaiah’s call narrative uses the latter to refer to the cities and land becoming desolate (Isa 6:11). The collocation occurs in Zephaniah’s oracle describing Judah’s punishment (שָׂאָה וּמִשְׁוֹאָה; Zeph 1:15). The term’s reference, not to mere wilderness but to previously inhabited land being destroyed, would certainly seem to support the position that God celebrates elements of creation hostile to humanity here. Job’s personification of Judah’s suffering lends particular poignance to this evocation of destruction.

It may be tempting, then, to see here God’s unapologetic insistence on the justice of his destruction. However, there is no indication of God’s role in desolation as in Isaiah. Neither is there any reference to destruction whatsoever. Rather, in parallel with מְדַבֵּר, the verse evokes a barren landscape. Perdue even sees here an allusion to Gen 2:5, which implies a desolation that has not resulted from God’s destruction of formerly habitable land, but God’s creative transformation of primordial chaos.<sup>458</sup> At any rate, the rain potentially reverses or at least mitigates the previous desolation.

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<sup>457</sup> KBL, s.v. ‘שְׂוֹאָה’, 2:1427; ‘שָׂוָה’, 2:1425; ‘שָׂאָה’, 2:1367. The former, שָׂוָה, can also indicate destruction as in Isa 30:28, as one’s fate of becoming ‘nothing’ or one’s existence turning out to be ‘in vain’ is accomplished by destruction. The meanings are not neatly disentangled, as indicated by the KBL’s description of the roots as “interchangeable,” s.v. ‘שָׂאָה’, 1367.

<sup>458</sup> Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 211.

This verse clearly responds to Job's use of same collocation in 30:3. The passage describes Job's fall, as he laments being the object of scorn of the "rabble," whose fathers he would not have even considered for hire (30:1–12). Said rabble lived in exile from the community "only yesterday," dwelling in desolation and scratching a meager existence on shrubs and roots (v. 3). God affirms that he provides for this sorry existence. Since Job shares the community's assessment of these characters' moral worth, it is possible to see God's response as a boast in his equal provision for the good and wicked alike. Thus, one might recognize Tsevat's amoral God or Jonah's regrettably merciful one. Nonetheless, Job's reversal has deconstructed the traditional association between virtue and prosperity. Whatever the moral worth of Job's rhetorical rabble, God's rainfall—worthless as it appears to be to those who enjoy the benefits of the dominant local society—provides for any who are forced into such desperate circumstances. Regarding the wicked, this can be seen as a small mercy. Nonetheless, Job shares in their suffering, the innocent among the wicked, the abhorred of the abhorrent (30:9–12). This rainfall is not only a mercy for the wicked, but a vital provision for those who have been wrongly deemed wicked.

I will more substantially engage with Newsom's work regarding the animals below, but I should note now her portrayal of the desert and animals as symbols representing the realm of chaos and hostility towards humanity. Critically, her analysis seems to be overly influenced by Babylonian texts and the fundamental opposition between the wilderness and the "city as the quintessential place of human culture."<sup>459</sup> Nonetheless, the urban and agrarian is but one form of human culture. The wilderness was used in Hebrew prophetic literature to evoke an ideal time in Israel's history prior to

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<sup>459</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 244–46.

the seduction of decadent immorality amidst urban luxury and idolatry (e.g., Ezek 16; Hos 2). Furthermore, the wilderness had a central position in reflection on the reprieve from the oppression of enemies, particularly political: from idealistic nostalgia (the Exodus), to the utterly practical (1 Sam 23), the flight from the Babylonians (Jer 48:6), to the second exodus (Isa 35, 40). Newsom's granting normativity to the urban perspective and her reliance on Babylonian literature are dubious. For this reason (and others below), it seems rather that the speech's non-anthropocentric dynamics more pointedly critique the specifically utilitarian and egocentric perspective of the city state, that defines order and chaos according to its own, particular cultural building project.

If this perspective is accepted, one can readily appreciate how the whirlwind speech directly refutes the imperial legitimations of the traditional *Chaoskampf* myth. While the city state may consider the wilderness beyond its control as a threat, the wilderness turns out to be a bastion of freedom against imperial domination and its taskmasters' (cf. Job 3:18, 39:7) disfigurement of human personality. Thus, there is an inversion of values as the wilderness, the traditional realm of chaos associated with the Sea, turns out to be the "hedge" about the chaotic Sea of oppressive political projects (cf. Dan 7). Put differently, the Hebrew literary tradition has both positive and negative associations with the wilderness, compared to Newsom's strictly negative account, and the positive alternative to the enemy's oppression arguably obtains here. The donkey and his "driver" make this dynamic clearest, but I cannot yet leave the wilderness.

Abigail Pelham's position is somewhat more restrained but nonetheless distorting. For Pelham, the fundamental paradigm is the opposition between change and stasis. Whereas the friends held a worldview wherein nothing changed—the righteous are

always blessed and the wicked always punished—and Job recognized a cosmos wherein negative reversals were the rule, God agrees with Job regarding the reality of change. God’s statement is the obverse of Job’s perspective. Job emphasized God withholding rain (12:15 cf. 6:15–20), and both together amount to the Hebrew perspective on divine weather control (e.g., Ps 107:33–36, 1 Kgs 17–18). However, Pelham denies the beneficent implications of God’s claim. Since the reality of change means wilderness can revert to inhabitability, she portrays this verse as having the same net negative effect as Job’s. Since the rain is supposedly useless to humans, creation is not necessarily hostile, but at least “weird.”<sup>460</sup> God’s rhetoric and the relative irrelevance of this rain to the polis and agrarian society notwithstanding, however, this rain is neither useless nor weird.

It is much more connatural and constructive to analyze the passage positively than negatively. As Clines writes, the animals are beneficiaries of the rain. Even if an agrarian perspective fails to recognize the human benefits of such rain, the supposed waste reflects God’s larger perspective and concerns and indicates our incapacity to take in God’s considerations.<sup>461</sup> This is no threat, nor indication that God cares less for humanity. It would take an odd sort of narcissist to demand that all rain benefit himself directly. Rather, as Fox notes, Ps 104:10–11 invokes God’s care for animals as a motive for blessing God.<sup>462</sup> This reference to God’s superior perspective and wider considerations, furthermore, directly applies to Job’s inability to see the forest for the trees, and thus to understand his own situation. While God hardly refers to humans in the whirlwind speech, by evoking the larger cosmic plan, the poet invites humans to consider their place

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<sup>460</sup> Abigail Pelham, *Contested Creations in the Book of Job: The-world-as-it-ought-and-ought-not-to-be* (Leiden: Brill, 2012), 122–24.

<sup>461</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1110.

<sup>462</sup> Fox, “God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” 6.

within it, to yield to a cosmic vision and a mysterious, higher logic than their own political programs or personal mundane designs.

Nonetheless, it would be a mistake to analyze the rain solely in terms of use, particularly human. As in Ps 104, God's care of animals is grounds for praise, reflecting his universal generosity. Fox is probably right when he further intuits that "the watering of the desert evokes a sheer delight that goes beyond the practical," in Ps 107 and Isa 35.<sup>463</sup> Still, a society so close to its agricultural foundation and vulnerably dependent on rainfall will undoubtedly retain its focus on the practical, only intensifying the delight. For this reason and the book's theme of gratuity, scholarly focus on the extravagant generosity of God in this image of apparent waste is well founded.<sup>464</sup> Indeed, this glimpse of the sheer generosity of God should be understood as an invitation to Job to rejoice over the simple goodness of creation, as the Sons of God did over the earth's foundation.

Still, the passage's implication of human benefit can be stated much more strongly in its historical and literary contexts, within the book of Job and Hebrew Scripture. In the biblical account of Israel's history, of course, the tradition of water in the wilderness goes to the beginning of her existence as a nation in the Exodus account (Ex 15, 17, Num 21).<sup>465</sup> In Ps 104 the psalmist encourages his soul to praise God (104:1, 35) according to his universal generosity, including the Leviathan and the wadis that water the wild ass (104:10–11; cf. Job 30:6–7). Nonetheless, as the psalm shows, humanity benefits from this universal divine generosity. It is valid to analyze the whirlwind

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<sup>463</sup> Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 6.

<sup>464</sup> E.g., Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 6, Habel, *Job*, 542, Janzen, *Job*, 238, Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 1998), 71–72.

<sup>465</sup> Hagar's survival in Gen 21 includes a similar divine provision of water.



speech's departure from this aesthetic vision, but there is no substantial contradiction between the speech and the psalm. The speech's dissonance with the psalm can be entirely accounted for by the rhetorical necessity of refusing to entice Job's submission and by the narrative affirmation of God blessing Job.

The most significant literary and historical significance for the speech comes from the portrayals of Israel's restoration in Ps 107 and Isaiah (e.g., 35, 40–41, 43:20, 44:1–5, 48:20–21, 49:10–11, etc.). The Second Isaiah material is particularly relevant as its explicit historical and literary context is the return from the Babylonian captivity as a second exodus (e.g., 48:20–21), and Zion, as Job, was convinced God had irreversibly forsaken her (e.g., 49:14–18). We saw last chapter how Job 12:15 inverts Isa 41:17–19, exchanging environmental restoration for desolation and return from captivity for the captivity itself. I also noted Brinks-Rea's argument that Job critiqued Isaiah's overly positive reception of Ps 107, which refers to God's ecological desolation and restoration. We should further observe, however, that the book of Job includes both themes as the whirlwind speech's addition of the restoration theme complements Job's focus on desolation. These themes are not logically contradictory, but God's speech exposes Job's distortion of the traditional trope.

Still, the proposed positive interpretation of the divine speech is not obviously necessary. One can deny the relevance of the prologue's rationale for God's rhetoric and the epilogue's affirmation of God's generosity, and therefore insist that the poet parodies and distorts each of the proposed sources above. However, Job's role as type of Zion decidedly supports my position. Recall that Job's personal suffering was portrayed as the destruction and captivity of a city (19:10) in what Lévêque describes as a "véritable

anthologie” of Lamentations.<sup>466</sup> As Wolfers observes, the narrator describes Job’s restoration as God “returning the captivity of Job,” and the phrase never refers to an individual, but to the corporate restoration of the nation.<sup>467</sup> This detail alone demonstrates the profound thematic and literary continuity between the poetry and the prose’s current state, supporting the synthetic approach to the book. Therefore, the book’s structure affirms the positive aspects of the trope of ecological transformation against Job’s distortion, even as they are ambiguously evoked by God’s necessarily restrained rhetoric.

### ***First Speech, Part Three: Zoology***

There are two methodologically fallacious, reductive tendencies that are particularly problematic in this section of poetry. The first can be illustrated by Newsom’s analysis, as she attempts to reduce the animals to a single theme. Newsom tells us that “the crucial context” (note the singular) “for establishing their proper interpretation” escaped everyone until Othmar Keel demonstrated the “symbolic significance” of these creatures as “the Other against which human culture defined itself,” or “an anarchic force.” Thus, the animals are like the Sea, representing chaos, and “God’s provision for these creatures (38:39–41; 39:5–8) destabilizes the customary binary oppositions of order and the chaotic, culture and nature.... More disturbingly, it seems to associate God in a positive fashion with these creatures of the fearful beyond.”<sup>468</sup> This theme can certainly be found in God’s care for the lion, for example, but Newsom’s attempt to reduce all of the animals to this logic (e.g., the hind), is a stretch for

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<sup>466</sup> Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu*, 382–85.

<sup>467</sup> Wolfers, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 103–05.

<sup>468</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 245.

the most generous reader.<sup>469</sup> Rather than force the various animals into a single logic and point—however convenient that idiosyncratic reading is to our thesis—we should allow the various animals their particular textures, as the poet uses the different animals to evoke different themes.<sup>470</sup>

The second methodological tendency is another reductive impulse, this one exemplified by Clines. While treating the ostrich, Clines warns against “over-interpretation” and “thinking too laterally.” He includes as an example Newsom’s treatment of the ostrich according to her association with “the demonic, the sense of exclusion from human society... and the opposition between culture and nature.”<sup>471</sup> I agree that Newsom’s thesis has “laterally” or eisegetically influenced her treatment of the ostrich, etc. On the other hand, Clines rejects Andersen’s suggestion that the ostrich

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<sup>469</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 246, writes that, while the goats and deer “are not fearsome or traditionally despised animals, they are the counterimage to domesticated sheep and goats.” This is true, but hardly supports forcing the passage into her monologic mold. Her approval of Burke’s analysis, *ibid.*, 242–43, is also telling: “Burke’s own analysis... in relation to the sublime is particularly subtle, for he shows that not only are the images of violent animals capable of engendering sublime terror but also that those animals whose control eludes human capacity create the anxiety of human powerlessness.” Burke may use “anxiety” in an idiosyncratic way as he gave an account of the Sublime such that “human powerlessness” leads to a respect he describes as anxiety to simplify his account. Nonetheless, I doubt many readers feel anxious in any recognizable sense of the term at being unable to control mountain goats and deer, of being ignorant of their gestation periods, or even of the ostrich’s escape from hunters. Rather, one is more likely to warmly imagine cute fawns and, with Fox, “God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” 9, “to appreciate the flight to freedom of one of God’s zanier creatures.” This appreciation is a further conformation to the Sons of God in their joy over the earth’s foundation. The flight to freedom—particularly as Newsom well notes the function of royal figures in hunting—indicates God’s positive sponsorship of freedom against oppressive political powers. Indeed, Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 247, may therefore be right to consider the ostrich’s joy as anarchic—insofar as it refuses to be dominated by brutal polities—but there is more cause to share in God’s celebration than to be “unnerved” by it.

<sup>470</sup> There may be some analogy to Job 6:2–3 and what might be called a subtle shifting of axes, as the poet refers to weighing Job’s reaction (6:2a) against his suffering (6:2b), to indicate that he has not responded in an incommensurate fashion (contra Eliphaz), and to weighing Job’s suffering (or reaction? Cf. 6:3b) against the sand of the seashore (6:3a). Contra the NABRE, “they” are not weighed against the sea’s sands, but “it,” apparently Job’s calamity, is weighed (יכבד) ... (היה/היה). This shifting of axes is a subtlety similar to the poet’s use of Janus parallelism or retrospective patterning, but it does not rely on the ambiguity of terms. It only involves shifting axes in a forward leaning parallelism. The various animals achieve at times nearly identical purposes, but the point of each pair generally complements the surrounding pairs (with some interior complements of course), and the axes continue to shift.

<sup>471</sup> Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1125.

might be reminding Job that his own behavior might look as silly as the ostrich's and Habel's recognition that "the ostrich's lack of discernment" (בִּינָה; 39:17) bears on Job, per God's challenge to him to demonstrate discernment (בִּינָה; 38:4) in matters he cannot hope to discern.<sup>472</sup> Clines instead insists that the only legitimate approach is to focus "on what is central," apparently the animal's paradoxical nature as a non-flying bird and whose speed allows it to thrive despite its stupidity and neglect of its young.<sup>473</sup> Clines' approach is reductive, and such lateral thinking is exactly what Job's self-referential poetry demands, particularly in such highly evocative passages. The poet's conspicuous and deliberate use of key terms as signposts supports Habel's analysis, and Andersen's intuition is sapiential. The book of Job, and this speech in particular, is nothing if not "lateral-thinking."

If one were to attempt to generalize the zoological lesson under one or two themes, it would have to be the mysterious goodness of creation and the surprising wisdom of the creator.<sup>474</sup> Nonetheless, the goodness and wisdom of the creator are refracted through the prism of creation's variety. This variety attests to the surprising nature, the degree, and the transcendence of God's wisdom, and its mystery defies our tidy frameworks. Indeed, it is a credit to the poet and a function of the evocative poetry to defy critics' neat frameworks, as the poetry and *ad fortiolem* the reality of creation defy

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<sup>472</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1124–25. See Habel, *Book of Job*, 547; Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary* (Leicester: Tyndale Press, 1976), 282.

<sup>473</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1124–25.

<sup>474</sup> From this one might extrapolate the importance of faith in this unknown goodness of God's plan and it is a short and natural jump to the biblical teaching of faith. Athalya Brenner, "God's Answer to Job," *VT* 31, 2 (1981): 132–33, argues that this is implied in the "duality" of God's appearance in the storm, a simultaneously ominous and potentially life-giving phenomenon, as well as in Job's inability to comprehend the animal world.

establishing a single “crucial context.”<sup>475</sup> Rather, each (set) of the animals must be allowed their own logics and their relationships must be explored subtly.

God’s care for the lion (38:39–40) supports Newsom’s identification of God with the traditional symbols of chaos, as does his swaddling the Sea. This association is further supported by the passage’s relationship with Eliphaz’s comment in 4:9–11. Eliphaz refers to lions metaphorically to comment on the fate of those who sow trouble (4:8), with a traditional trope. But God’s assertion of his provision for the lions is an oblique rather than a direct answer to that trope. Eliphaz’s concern was not with lions per se, but he evokes God’s sure moral recompense. God’s comment expresses concern with lions themselves and does not directly bear on the wicked or chaos. God cares for lions. The statement is literal and to be taken sapientially, not as moralistic metaphor.

The lions and the ravens, in fact, are in parallel, and the pair of carnivores (38:39–41) are in parallel with a pair of herbivores (39:1–4). If we were to focus on their ‘main point,’ we would say that they reflect the surprising and profound wisdom of God’s creation in the balancing of carnivores’ and herbivores’ survival. Lions and ravens must eat to survive, and that requires their food to die. For the herbivores, God focuses on their ability to reproduce (39:1–4). Their ability to reproduce in sufficient numbers allows their species to survive, even while being hunted. Implicit in this progression from predators preying and prey procreating is the understanding that the prey’s procreative power results in the survival of the predators, too. We may wonder to what extent the poet understood predators’ roles in maintaining a healthy herd and mitigating large herds’

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<sup>475</sup> The reader is thereby addressed as a subject and invited to participate subjectively in the poet’s and God’s creativity, developing their reflections, and marveling at the poetry’s and creation’s testimony to the baffling wisdom of the creator.

impact on the land. Together, these pairs of animals illustrate a well-balanced cosmos, in which the survival of various species are guaranteed through different dynamics, which include amoral suffering and attest to God's superior and surprising wisdom.<sup>476</sup>

Since Job is a part of this cosmos, the implication inheres that humanity's role in the cosmos may likewise be surprising. Further, since Job cannot account for the roles of lower creatures, he should not pretend to account for his own lot. Newsom's point can be affirmed in part, since God's defense of the physical world as good and part of his plan aligns him with those elements of the created order harmful to humanity. However, the herbivores disallow reducing the discourse to this theme. They imply a more rounded if more enigmatic reflection on the curious goodness of creation and the mystery of humanity's role within it. Of course, deer and goats do not care for being eaten, and neither does Job care for the implication that his suffering might be rationalized away as part of some cosmic balance or scheme. Hence, his rejection of the first speech, as he believes God confirmed his contempt for human suffering (40:4).

The onager (39:5–8) and the wild ox (39:9–12) are significant in part because they are the cousins of domesticated animals but stubbornly defy human utilitarian domination. Hence God refers to the roles humans would subject them to. This, after the reference to rain where humans are not (38:26), is the most explicit challenge to humans' anthropocentrism. Newsom's treatment requires close engagement here. She adduces the

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<sup>476</sup> Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 7, notes Aristotle's "belief in the providence of the species in the animal kingdom" rather than the individual, as embraced by Maimonides, and he sees the doctrine contained in several psalms (14:21, 145:16, 147:9) and the present passage. The presence of lions and God's unapologetic provision for their diet indicates that amoral suffering is inherent in the cosmos, contra Sidney Breitbart, "Implications of the Wager," 123, who holds that "God did not actually affirm that there is suffering without sin." While God does not say so directly, God's provision for the Lions presumably includes such suffering, particularly if Eliphaz's trope is taken into consideration. The later description of cavalry charges and the slain to be discussed below make this point emphatic; while cavalry charges themselves result from failures in morality, those slain are not consistently at fault.

Babylonian Theodicy's claim that the lion's and wild ass's flourishing are "evidence of the moral disorder of the world," and she infers that "the wild ass... is often a symbol for the moral outlaw" citing Gen 16:12, Job 24:5, 30:7, 39:7. God's care for the ass presents "an inversion of the values of human culture," and his barren habitat—traditionally "an image of punishment"—is contrasted with "the city, the quintessential place of human nature... as a locus of noise and oppression."<sup>477</sup> Thus, Newsom assumes that Job's portrayal of God shares the Babylonian Theodicy's paradigm and she concludes that the poet aligns God with the chaotic.

I have already addressed the Hebrew ambivalence about the wilderness compared to Newsom's paradigm.<sup>478</sup> There is a similar ambiguity regarding the ass in Genesis, as God's blessing describes Ishmael's fierce independence from other nations, even as that independence comes at the cost of ubiquitous strife. Those nations might consider Ishmaelites as chaotic or even moral outlaws, since nomadic peoples are frustratingly difficult to conquer or control. However, they are their own people, not merely "other," and offer an alternative to the particular cultural building projects of agrarian societies and their empires. God affirms alternatives.

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<sup>477</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 246.

<sup>478</sup> God uses still more terms for the wilderness in 39:6, ערבה, מלחה. The first, ערבה, could actually refer to a willow (KBL, s.v. 'ערבה', 1:879), but the more common significance of 'desert' or 'steppe' is certainly evoked here (KBL, s.v. III 'ערבה', 1:880), although a donkey certainly might take shelter in a wadi's willow. ערבה can describe the territory belonging to a city or people, indicating its status as pasturage (e.g., Jos 4:13; Deut 34:1), and the term sometimes occurs in parallel with מדבר, perhaps most significantly in Isa 40:3, 41:19, and 51:3. The Isaian passages describe God's restoration of the people and the land. Thus, the theme again corresponds to this source. The second term, מלחה, 'salt-flat,' more decisively evokes unproductive ground. As Newsom, *Book of Job*, 246, notes, it is used as an image of punishment for the people in Jer 17:6 and Ps 107:34. Nonetheless, Ps 107:35 describes God's ability to reverse the process of desertification described in Ps 107:34. This reversal corresponds to his irrigation of that land in Job 38:25–27. The term is very rare, occurring only these three times in the Hebrew Bible and once in Sir 39:23. The poet almost certainly alludes to the psalm here. Recall the arguments of Clines, *Job 1–20*, 297, and Brinks-Rea, "Similarities Between Isaiah 40–55 and the Book of Job," 170–75, that the poet made use of the psalm.

Neither does the onager of the dialogue precisely support Newsom's characterization. Job 24:5 stands not for a moral outlaw, but its habitat images the desperate circumstances of the poor, orphans, etc. The poet describes at length their wretched existence in the wilderness in 24:5–12 after referring to the wicked's affliction in 24:2–4. It is only in 24:13 that the wicked become the subject again. With this passage's usage in mind, God's insistence on his provision for the onager indicates that he simultaneously provides for the orphans' meager existence.

Job 30:7, meanwhile, does not refer explicitly to a פֶּרָא, but it refers to the outcasts who 'bray'.<sup>479</sup> As we saw, in this latter passage Job refers to the rabble (30:12), those whose fathers Job would not have hired (30:1) and who have been ostracized from the community (30:5). These outcasts lead a similar existence to the orphans of 24:4–12. The circumstances of the rabble and of the orphans, created justly by the community (30:5) or unjustly by the wicked (24:4), are indistinct. The repetition of the image, then, offers a microcosm of Job's rejection of the cosmos's lack of intelligibility. Furthermore, in the latter passage Job describes himself as the outcast of outcasts, the one reviled by the vile, making the same point. This self-description belies any pretense of distinguishing between those who suffer justly or unjustly. The three passages taken together indicate that God's provision for the onager in the nearly inhabitable wilderness provides for all the outcasts of society. This indiscriminate structure provides for the guilty and innocent alike. One ought not to object, then, that God's structures provide for the guilty, when those structures sustain the innocent and oppressed.

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<sup>479</sup> יִנְהֶק; cf. Job 6:5, הִינֵהק פֶּרָא. The term only occurs in these two verses in the Hebrew Bible, so the identification is strong.



Newsom, then, is surely right that there is an “inversion of the values of human culture,” but one must further ask, “whose culture?” An ass or ox offers no threat to human society itself, but they might irritate humans who seek to bring everything into their own orbit. Newsom’s attempt to make these animals support God as the sponsor of chaos against human culture *per se* misses the point. Rather, the passage indicates that God cares for the animals’ freedom, that God frustrates the oppressive ambitions of the utilitarian state against weaker peoples, and that God provides for individuals oppressed by their own peoples. The onager reiterates and benefits from the wilderness’s function as a hedge against the capricious rule of the city state’s politic. The ass scoffing at the taskmaster attests to God’s structures in creation limiting the destructive forces of the city, and it portrays that limitation as an occasion for joy—not anxiety.

The particular term used for taskmaster, *שגב*, dramatically underscores the theme of liberty from political and especially imperial oppression. Lipiński observes that the root is pejorative, according to both etymology and usage in its 22 occurrences.<sup>480</sup> More strongly, the participle always refers to a “taskmaster” exercising an incongruous authority over the people, usually as part of a political enterprise and generally that of a foreign oppressor. These ranged from the Egyptian taskmasters, to the King of Babylon, to the tax collectors of a puppet king doing evil in God’s sight and attempting to survive in international politics (2 Kgs 23:35, 37). The verb occurs in contexts wherein the “exacting” is either forbidden (Deut 15:2) or condemned (Isa 58:3) in reference to either the seven-year release or the Sabbath.<sup>481</sup> In reference to the nation’s greatest historical

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<sup>480</sup> Lipinski, “שגב,” TDOT, 9:213.

<sup>481</sup> In addition to the usages in Job 3:18, 39:7, most famously, the Egyptian taskmasters were thus called (Ex. 3:7, 5:6, 10, 13, 14). Isaiah uses it to refer to the oppression of Judah’s failed leaders (3:12) and more harshly to Israel’s oppressors (14:2, 4). Notably, in Isa 14:2, while Israel will take captive their captors

enemies and most oppressive times of suffering, to Israel's ideals of her own polity and social justice, and as a critique of her own rulers' and elites' abuse of power, the term consistently reflects the unjust abuse of political power. It particularly bears on the oppression of the poor, a significant ethical consideration in Job.<sup>482</sup>

Job itself uses the term twice, in 3:18 and 39:7. In Job 3:18 the term is part of a series of complementary pairs of humans (3:17–19), indicating imbalanced power. In death, the prisoner is freed from voice of the taskmaster. As observed last chapter, Job 3's commentary on creation avoids the root of Sabbath, שבת, while exploiting the creation tradition of Gen 1. His search for rest is only imagined in the grave, She'ol, the ominous "there" of 3:17. Considering the significance of the root, נגש, particularly its relevance to imperial cultural building projects and Israel's distinctive focus on the rest and freedom of the Sabbath, we can further appreciate the rhetorical impact of Job 3:18. Job laid the poet's vision of the chaotic cosmos directly at God's hands, including the abuse of political power. This is self-undermining, as it tacitly admits humanity's role in its own suffering. But the taskmasters' freedom and ability still remain part of God's cosmos.

God responds by celebrating his onager's freedom. The word choice for 'driver' cannot be accidental for the following reasons. First, this is the only time the root applies to a human's interaction with an animal. Second, the whirlwind extensively engages with Job's lamentation in ch. 3. Third, the root occurs only these two times in Job. Fourth, the term denotes human, political oppression. While Job incidentally acknowledged

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(והיו שבים לשביהם), they are to rule over their oppressors (ורדו בנגשיהם). That these phrases occur in parallel and the prophet uses the same roots in the former but different roots in the latter indicates the impropriety denoted by this root. Isaiah 14:4 applies the term directly to "the king of Babylon." Zechariah uses it to refer to the oppression of foreign invaders (9:8), though 10:4 more vaguely refers to the injustice of Judah's leaders, perhaps of their tax collectors. Daniel 11:20 shows that the term came to mean as much.

<sup>482</sup> For both the friends (e.g., 5:16, 20:10) and for Job, especially in his account of his previous righteousness, (29:12, 30:25, 31:16).

humanity's culpability in causing human suffering and restlessness, God insists that his created wilderness—if a traditional image of chaos in Babylonian literature—limits the harm humans cause.<sup>483</sup> The speech literally describes the onager, but it dramatically engages Job, and the rhetoric evokes Israel's history and theological ideals.

There is, then, an inversion of values, but very different from Newsom's analysis. If the reader's textual and cultural context is the Babylonian theodicy and the devotion to the city state "as the quintessential place of human culture," then Newsom's analysis hardly needs to be qualified. God is on the wild ass's side. The ass is annoying, perhaps a challenge, maybe even a cause for anxiety. God's sympathy with the ass and his collusion in its freedom indicates that he is not sympathetic with (such) human culture.<sup>484</sup>

However, the Hebrew literary tradition has on balance a positive perspective on the wilderness and much critical to say of Babylon's program on existential, politico-philosophical, and theological levels. God's celebration of the ass's freedom and vicarious scoffing at the נִגְגִי puts him in fundamental agreement with the biblical perspective on freedom from oppressive overseers, from the Egyptian taskmasters to the Jews of Isa 58:3 who oppress their neighbors. The Sabbath is the biblical response to these situations and is poignantly absent from Job 3, according to Job's patriarchal character as ignorant of and not participating in the Mosaic covenant. The wilderness

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<sup>483</sup> As Karl-Johan Illman, "Did God Answer Job?," in *Lasset uns Brücken bauen*, ed. Matthias Augustin (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1998), 279–80, observes, God's reply to Job's assessment of the drudgery of creation is that "nature abounds in images of freedom." He follows Alter, *Art of Biblical poetry*, 104, here. Alter's longer quotation also addresses Newsom's perspective: "this, God's rejoinder implies, is a civilization bound, hobbled perception of reality, for nature abounds in images of freedom."

<sup>484</sup> The theme can be confirmed in Job 42:2's citation of Gen 11:6. As Fishbane, "The Book of Job and Inner Biblical Discourse," 90–91, observes, Job 42:2 pairs a feminine noun (מַזְמָה) with a masculine verb (יָבַצַר) as a "frozen form," in order to adapt Gen 11:6's construction (לֹא־יָבַצַר מֵהֶם/מִמֶּךָ) to the present context. The ungrammaticality signposts the allusion. Job's concession to divine prerogative cites a locus classicus on Israel's critique of the city state, confirming the speech's motif.

here has an analogous function to the Sabbath and the Exodus, since it similarly limits the oppression of the city state.

The upshot is a more nuanced defense of God's creation. The speech does this *prima facie*, of course, but bringing the overseers of Job 3:18 and 39:7 into relief, along with the term's oppressive denotation and historical significance, reveals a deeper apologetic. The limitations on human political ambition may traditionally be identified with cosmic chaos, but in Job the natural order's limitation of human ambition is God's provision, safeguarding humanity from itself. The point is not that God is unnervingly identified with the powers of chaos. The point is that God limits human-caused chaos. The egocentric polis identifies itself with order and all else with chaos, regardless of its brutal imposition of its chaotic order upon other humans. The polis thus fails to recognize or tolerate the freedom of the wilderness and may fear other polities resisting its program. This fear justifies all manner of brutal aggression. In fact, God's providing the wilderness turns out to be analogous to his hemming in the Sea, as a limitation of human-caused chaos. It is only when one remains committed to the ideology of the city state—as contained, for example, in the legitimization claims in the *Chaoskampf* myth, *Enuma Elish*—that others' freedom itself can be identified as chaos. Thus, the typical scholarly position that this speech constitutes a rebuke to the sapiential anthropocentric worldview should be adjusted and directed more properly at imperial ambition.

The ostrich (39:13–18) offers an intriguing if somewhat enigmatic test case. Newsom's characterization of God's celebration of the ostrich's flight as "unnerving" has little to do with Job and everything to do with the Babylonian Theodicy's paradigm and Keel's framework. Insofar as it does relate to the trope of hunting as a royal activity

corresponding to the warfare against the emblems of chaos, it undermines the royal propaganda inhering in the trope. If this were the hippo and the crocodile—animals who pose a real threat to humans and associated with Seth in Egypt—then the analysis would be compelling. But those animals are treated mythologically in the second speech. The natural ostrich, on the other hand, is a silly animal. Her flight is no threat. Instead, God celebrates the failure of human hunters—mounted symbols of royal, political power—to dominate and slaughter his creation. In Newsom’s attempt to make the ostrich an “emblem of the chaotic,” she observes that the ostrich is named, not by her usual term (יענה), but by “cries of joy” (רננים), which Newsom characterizes as “anarchic joy.”<sup>485</sup> If joy threatens a city state, probably no more need be said about its moral value. Still, it is doubtful that this joy is best presented as anarchic. Recall instead Job’s use of the same term (רננה) in 3:7 to refer to the joyful cry of sexual climax.<sup>486</sup> Creation properly occasions joy and life, not brutality. Such is God’s preference, as he affirms the ostrich’s joy and ensures her offspring’s survival.

Of course, the ostrich’s flight is one of her six verses, indicating that she offers more than a critique of human aggression. Habel’s observation of the ostrich’s and Job’s respective shortcomings in understanding indicates an implicit challenge to Job to reflect on the limitations of human wisdom and his shortcomings heretofore.<sup>487</sup> This is well and

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<sup>485</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 247.

<sup>486</sup> As observed by Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 100. Of course, fascistic and totalitarian societies have had complex roles regulating sex or tolerating sexual libertinism, from Sparta to the French Revolution and Nazi Germany, so it is conceivable that such a joy might be recognized as anarchic and some threat to the city-state. Augustine’s critique in *City of God*, 6.9, that the oppressive powers of the City of Man could not leave the bedroom alone but had to corrupt the sexual act comes to mind. A similar critique of royal power and affirmation of marital privacy might be found in the enigmatic *Song of Songs*. Of course, the introduction of strife, power dynamics, and shame between the sexes in Gen 3 contrast with the intimacy of Gen 2 and humanity’s shared regency over nature in Gen 1.

<sup>487</sup> Habel, *The Book of Job*, 524, 47.

good, but the ostrich offers more to Job than self-aware humility. Clines's observation of the ostrich's paradoxical nature, as a non-flying bird and as one who prospers despite her lack of wisdom and care for her young, is a good starting point. The paradox reflects the surprising wisdom of the creator. The ostrich's folly manifests the creator's wisdom, as God created a creature whose success is granted despite her negative reputation.<sup>488</sup>

This additional consideration reveals the fuller significance of Andersen's and Habel's observations. It is not just a matter of considering how silly oneself might be (Andersen), nor of the humiliation of being compared to an ostrich without understanding (Habel). Rather, Job need not despair at not understanding his plight and humanity's status in the cosmos, for the same God who sees to the ostrich's success is Job's creator as well. While human wisdom is understood as the divine provision allowing humans to prosper (e.g., Prov 2:6, Job 12:16), God indicates that divine wisdom's providence is the critical factor, however insufficient one's own wisdom might be. The correlation between Job's and the ostrich's lack of understanding presents an invitation to trust in God's providence rather than rely on human wisdom, which theme is confirmed by the wisdom dialogue's failure and the theophany's provision. This is clear, as the ostrich segues to the warhorse, a symbol of political ambition, human self-provision, and distrust in God.

Hebrew prophetic and legal literature refers to multiplying horses as human wisdom, self-provision, and therefore forbidden royal excess (Isa 30:16, Deut 17:6, 1 Kgs 5:6). My framework explains the shift to the warhorse pericope here (39:19–25). Some scholars are baffled by its inclusion, leading them to excise it on account of the thematic shift from the previous, non-domesticated animals and its greater length. These problems

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<sup>488</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1124–27, and others report ancient zoologists' limited understanding of ostriches' behavior, which are thoroughly negative, reflecting her stupidity and carelessness.

are easily answered. Such a shift is typical of the poet. The image of mounted hunters' unprovoked aggression segues admirably to cavalry. The introduction of human warfare anticipates the feasting of the eagle on those slain in battle (39:30). The elevated rhetoric and hyperbolic description of the horse's power anticipates God's mythical discussion of the Behemoth and the Leviathan. Its length, furthermore, attests to God's delight in the fierce animal and is the climax of the consistently lengthening pericopes.<sup>489</sup>

Others explain the shift away. For example, Clines distinguishes between tamed or domesticated on the one hand and trained on the other: the horse may be trained and therefore bent to human purposes, but it is not therefore tamed or domesticated.<sup>490</sup> Thus, he attempts to salvage 'untamed' as a category applicable to all the animals. But this attempt lamely neglects the horse's unique status here. Newsom more subtly argues that God celebrates the horse's "ecstatic delight in battle, a characteristic that is no product of domestication but comes from its own unfathomable nature." Thus, she makes battle-lust itself essential to the horse, whose "desire for battle with all its violence, noise, and confusion—is a kind of lust, as a stallion would scent a mare in heat."<sup>491</sup> The horse may be unique as trained, but he is no less essentially hostile to human existence for Newsom.

There seems to be here a willful confusion of nature and nurture and a misdiagnosis of the object of God's praise. Strictly speaking, God celebrates the horse's nature. The horse is fearless, powerful, and terrifying.<sup>492</sup> God made the horse thus, not

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<sup>489</sup> The lion receives two verses (38:39–40) while the raven receives one atypically long verse (39:41). The goats and deer share four verses (39:1–4), while the donkey and ox each get their own four verses (39:5–8, 9–12). The ostrich's six (39:13–18) and the horse's seven (39:19–25) are thus the climax of a long progression, as the hawk and eagle's five verses decrescendo, indicated by the briefer treatment, by the rhetoric, and by the fact that they eat of the scraps provided by the horse's activity.

<sup>490</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1128.

<sup>491</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 247.

<sup>492</sup> Alter, *Art of Poetry*, 106, describes this well: "a terrible beauty is born and an awesome energy made manifest in the heat of war." God celebrates his awesome creation, if he is not exactly apologetic for the

Job (39:19–20). These God-given characteristics are exemplified in human battle, wherein they are exploited by humans through training. The delight in battle cannot be said to be as elemental as breeding, but it is the result of training, the application of God's terrific creature to humanity's terrible ends. Thus, God's claim, that he and not Job gave the horse its essential qualities, tacitly charges humanity with the purposes to which we put horses. It is we, not God, who guide horses to partake in human slaughter. Thus, the only animal which is domesticated or trained if you prefer—that is, which is described as being incorporated into human purposes according to the anthropocentric perspective—is the horse, and it is only the horse who is pictured as harming humanity.

This rhetorical purpose is in evident continuity with the political significance of horses in Israel's historical texts. Israel's kings were forbidden multiplying them (Deut 17:6). This may have been partly a response to the idea that multiplying horses was an attempt at self-reliance rather than relying on God (e.g., Isa 30:16). It should also be read in contrast to the economic hardship of Solomon's kingdom-building, as his cavalry contributed to the onerous economic burden resulting in Israel's political division (1 Kgs 5:6–8). These later developments in Israel's historical narrative are all in stark contrast to her early days, when her infantry overcame foreign chariotry etc., through divine providence (e.g., Judg 4). Most significantly, however, the empires that most oppressed Israel had cavalry as a major component of their military dominance.<sup>493</sup>

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terrible application. If the reader considers the phenomenon itself, however, God is directly responsible for the “awesome energy,” while we direct it to the terrible end. This phenomenon retains a sort of sublimity, lending to God's non-apology, but the stanza nonetheless carries an accusation against human violence.

<sup>493</sup> The Egyptians' chariotry was considered unstoppable in Exod 14, as were the Canaanites' in Judg 1:19, 4:3. Sennacherib's general taunted Judah insofar as they had more spare horses than Judah had infantry, and he referred specifically to the vain hope in Egyptian cavalry for deliverance (Isa 36, 2 Kgs 18). Finally, Jer 8:16 and Ezek 23:23 describe Judah's imminent destruction by the Babylonians by the snorting of their horses.



These historical and ideological backgrounds form the relief against which Job 39:19–25 should be read. If the poet merely wanted to exult in an animal who was terrifyingly strong and deadly, the lion, not the horse, would be the climax of the poem: after all, “what is stronger than the lion?” Horses may be dangerous, but they are not aggressive toward humans, and it is only human domestication that provides sufficient contact for them to pose any danger. Even so, mere domestication does not render horses threatening. Rather, trained cavalry is far deadlier than lions. It is precisely because the horse’s deadliness results from human training and aggression that God reminds Job of what God has done—create a marvelous creature—and what humans have done—train a murderous one. The warhorse pericope complements the other animal pericopes, as all attest to the goodness of God’s creation and as several critique human, especially imperial, cruelty. Of all the natural animals, this one both receives the most attention, is the only one bent to human purposes, and is the only one portrayed as directly harmful to humans. Even the eagle feasting on the slain (חללים; 39:30), gruesome as it is, presumes violent battle and human responsibility. God feeds lions, and ravens eat their leftovers, but humans use horses to feed carrion birds in mass.<sup>494</sup> The horse and eagle thus form an *inclusio* with the lion and raven with this critical difference.<sup>495</sup>

Thus, God defends the goodness of his creation, while acknowledging its vulnerability for abuse. He allows for pain and death (predators’ preying), and he makes

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<sup>494</sup> As Clines *Job 38–42*, 1133, observes, the term חלל only refers to humans. Clines further observes that nothing is said here regarding the “food of the eagles being provided by Yahweh,” though he concedes that it may be implied. The omission along with the preceding image of battle disqualify this inference.

<sup>495</sup> James E. Miller, “Structure and Meaning of the Animal Discourse in the Theophany of Job,” *ZAW* 103, 3 (1991): 419–20, observes the *inclusio*. He only refers, however, to the dark humor that “the place of man in the animal discourse” is to become food in the food-chain, to conclude that Job’s suffering is proper to the animal kingdom. Miller makes a good beginning. But since he neglects evaluating the themes developed throughout the larger discourse, he fails to discern the more subtle structure and meaning of the animal discourse.

no apology for awesome and terrifying creatures (lion, horse), but he ensures life's perdurance (prey's procreation). Nature's resistance to human domination indicates God's preference for rest and freedom and his merciful frustration of human ambition (ass, ox, ostrich), but human freedom and ingenuity bend the more terrific elements of creation to their own purposes and each other's destruction. God thus emphasizes humanity's role in causing suffering, tacit in ch. 3. God is responsible for creation's grandeur of freedom and power that make this human violence possible and so detrimental, and he does not altogether shift blame for suffering to humanity as the lion concedes. Nonetheless, the speech highlights human evil and its divine limitation.

The zoological speech corresponds extensively to the preceding cosmological discourse. The Sea that God allowed its place corresponds to natural elements in the world that are harmful to humanity (e.g., the sea itself, storms, lions), but it also corresponds to the still more harmful natural element of human freedom, as portrayed in the diurnal cycle. This latter correlation, along with the observation that the Sea has its proper place in creation implying some role in the divine plan, activates the various questions regarding human freedom essential to the problem of evil: if human freedom is responsible for suffering, why should we be free? The question is basic to the problem of evil and profoundly implicated in Gen 2–3. It can hardly be considered in Job apart from the prologue's question of how Job will use his freedom. Regardless, the divine speech exposes human responsibility for the majority of existential chaos. Human responsibility mitigates divine culpability, and it undermines humanity's standing for condemning God. But it does not answer the question or exonerate God. The Sea and lions are there whether humans mobilize cavalry or not. Granted, then, human culpability and

complicity in human suffering, the speech still aggravates the basic question, why does God allow suffering?

Therefore, the question remains and is presented as valid, but it is qualified. It should be considered sapientially; it may not be inveighed juridically. Even as God hedged in the Sea and the diurnal cycle reflects the mundane order's capacity to check the evil of wicked humans, so the wilderness, donkey, and ostrich reflect God's limitation of human designs. There is an inversion of the city state's values, but the inversion does not portray God as the sponsor of chaos so much as condemn the imperial city-state as its greatest cause. Thus, nature's resistance to the state's programs reveals God's de-centering of the state in preference for the freedom and prosperity of the individual, of weaker peoples, and of animals. God's first discourse has in fact illuminated creation's goodness and structures that support justice and freedom, exposing and refuting Job's obscuring (38:2). While this does not answer the question according to the humans' later discourse on retribution from chs. 4–27, it does address Job's more fundamental commentary on creation, as found in his lament in ch. 3. I turn now to the second speech.

### ***The Second Speech: Mythological Monsters and Divine Justice—Introduction***

The significance of the second speech, and especially the Leviathan, for the meaning of the book of Job can hardly be overstated. Eric Ortlund's article's title, "The Identity of Leviathan and the Meaning of the Book of Job," accurately states the correlation.<sup>496</sup> God's invocation of Leviathan recalls Job's in 3:8. The poet exploits the themes of creation and *Chaoskampf* throughout the dialogue. The Leviathan is the climax

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<sup>496</sup> Eric Ortlund, "The Identity of Leviathan and the Meaning of the Book of Job," *TJ* 34, no. 1 (2013): 17–30.

of the divine speech and of the book, rhetorically, dramatically, and mythologically. The Leviathan secures Job's submission after the first speech fails.

Nonetheless, the Leviathan's nature is more enigmatic than Ortlund indicates, and its invocation rather aggravates the book's enigmatic quality. This enigma confirms Ortlund's judgment about the significance of the Leviathan for the book, but it betrays the difficulty of leveraging the Leviathan to interpret the book. Ortlund takes the Leviathan as the traditional chaos monster without qualification.<sup>497</sup> However, the reader must assess the Leviathan's nature and significance per the poet's manipulation of mythological traditions and the themes running throughout the book, especially the whirlwind speech. In the last two chapters, I demonstrated the poet's manipulation of mythological traditions and Hebrew Scripture. God's speech engages the humans' limited perspectives and further creatively adapts mythological and prophetic traditions. Thus, the humans' perspectives and the poet's traditional sources are the backdrop against which the Leviathan has his proximate rhetorical significance.<sup>498</sup> Nonetheless, since the poet is so creative and freely manipulates mythological traditions, the Leviathan must

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<sup>497</sup> Ortlund, "The Identity of Leviathan," 17–18 argues for Leviathan's status as chaos monster against the position that the Leviathan is merely a crocodile. I agree with his rejection of the naturalistic position, but he does not adequately attend to the poet's manipulation of the mythological tradition. Specifically, Ortlund does not address the significance of the poet's decision to make the Leviathan God's creature. Instead, he argues, *ibid.*, 19–23, for the basic continuity of Job 41 with the Ba'al epic, Isa 27, Ps 74, and Job 3:8. This approach might explain his rather unclear criticism, *ibid.*, 27, of Habel (*Book of Job*, 66) for concluding that the second speech's point is "that God runs the world in such a way that allows for unjust suffering and death," apart from the "strict notion of retributive justice." Ortlund, *ibid.*, 28–29 instead insists "most crucially," on the significance of the hint of future battle, even though he offers no substantial or logical contradiction to Habel and in fact concurs that God's management allows for the existence of evil and that Job's suffering does not result from sin. The focus on battle and the Leviathan's traditional antagonistic nature is certainly taken up in the Apocalyptic movement and it is fair to say that there is some hint of it in the whirlwind speech and in the prologue. So the author of Jubilees understood it. However, Ortlund's focus and criticism of Habel distract from the Leviathan's created status and its implications: the consciously monotheistic adaptation of the myth; the subtlety of the tension between the Creator and the creature in a monotheistic dualism, preceding the full-blown rebellion of the later traditions; and the creative purpose of unjust suffering and evil.

<sup>498</sup> His final literary significance in Job includes the prologue's cosmic court as well.

first be examined per the speech's themes and rhetoric. Simply looking at the Leviathan's personal descriptions will not suffice.

For the remainder of this introduction, I offer a preliminary, *prima facie*, exegesis of the Leviathan figure. It will set forth valuable premises for the latter analysis and demonstrate the necessity of evaluating the Leviathan through the speech's themes and mythology.

Many scholars evaluate the Behemoth and the Leviathan as being natural beasts, the hippo and the crocodile. This would indicate a tighter continuity from the first speech's natural animals to the second speech's animals. Any progression would be slight. Gordis, for example, sees a progression in the refutation of anthropocentrism, as the first animals are those which "are not under the sway of man" (apparently including the horse), while the second set of animals are not only useless, but ugly.<sup>499</sup> Human utility and aesthetics are equally irrelevant in assessing the cosmos. Newsom, meanwhile, makes all into natural animals and symbols of evil and chaos, taking the Behemoth as either a hippo or water buffalo. The second speech merely reiterates the first: "The second divine speech says nothing new. Since Job appears to be hard of hearing, God simply repeats the message, louder and more slowly."<sup>500</sup>

However, taking the beasts as natural animals is untenable. It requires an embarrassing amount of explaining away that can only be explained as embarrassed eisegesis, *a priori* committed to a demythologized reading. The poet tells us no less than

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<sup>499</sup> Gordis, "The Lord out of the Whirlwind," 50–51.

<sup>500</sup> Newsom, *The Book of Job*, 248. Newsom, *ibid.*, 249 notes that the Behemoth can be modeled on either the water buffalo or the hippopotamus, corresponding to either Semitic or Egyptian mythology. In the latter, Seth takes the forms of both hippo and crocodile. Thus, even if the Leviathan were not taken according to his usual mythological character, the trope of the royal hunting of these animals as a sort of *imitatio dei* secures a symbolic significance exceeding the previous animals.

seven times of the light, fire, and smoke that the Leviathan emits (41:10–13). His rising frightens the gods (אֱלִים; 41:17), in a manner evoking Yamm and his emissaries, Tiamat and her brood, terrorizing their respective pantheons. He dwells in no waterhole, but he stirs up the Sea (יָם; 41:23) and the Deep (תְּהוֹם; 41:24). While these terms might be explained away as demythologizing, the Leviathan’s luminous and kindling emissions and his frightening the gods cannot be.<sup>501</sup> Rather, the God who speaks from the storm-cloud answers Job by referring to the storm-god motif, *Chaoskampf*, monster Job referred to in 3:8. This monster is a mythical deity: its eyelids of the dawn (כַּעֲפֵי־יֶשְׁחַר; 41:10) recall Job 3:9, and each description of the fiery emissions (41:11–13) contains language corresponding to the wrathful theophany of Ps 18:9 (par. 2 Sam 22:9).<sup>502</sup>

Still, the myth has not been resurrected in its integrity. Rather, the myth is again adapted to the book’s monotheistic premise. The Leviathan, though clearly a mythological monster, a god terrifying the gods, is created (41:25).<sup>503</sup> He is neither primordial as Tiamat is to Marduk, nor coeval as Yamm is to Ba’al. Thus, he is largely

<sup>501</sup> For a strained but determined attempt to identify the Leviathan as the natural crocodile, see Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1190–1200. I address some of Clines’s difficulties in Appendix B.

<sup>502</sup> Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1197, notes these passages only to acknowledge that the Hebrew Bible contains this “picture of the deity.” Habel, *Book of Job*, 572, observes the similarity of this trope with theophanies, from Marduk to the psalm, to support the Leviathan’s identification as a mythological monster. Newsom, *Book of Job*, 251, is right to observe the Leviathan’s uncanny resemblance “of the theophanic depictions of God,” but I reject her inference that God is thereby identified with the Leviathan. Similarly, Newsom, *ibid.*, 251–52, is right to contrast this passage with “the expectations... of the *Chaoskampf*,” but her position that the passage omits the Leviathan’s defeat and humiliation and instead celebrates the Leviathan’s pride as “rightful pride, based upon its terrifying strength and violence,” again goes too far. The implication that God humiliates the Leviathan (40:27–28) and the negative theme of pride running throughout the speech (e.g., 40:12; see below) invalidate this approach.

<sup>503</sup> Pace Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 49. Levenson does not address Job 41:25 (33) when he claims that the Leviathan is not created. The form, הָעֵשׂוּר, is either a misspelling or an archaic spelling of הָעֵשׂוּרִי, the qal passive participle. Some manuscripts attest the usual spelling. Gordis, *Book of Job*, 490, argues that the archaic form is attested elsewhere in the *Kethib* four times, where the *Qere* indicates the longer spelling, and he also finds the current form in Hos 2:10: so, “gold used for Ba’al.” While translations (e.g., NABR) typically take the verb as a 3cp perfect, “they used the gold for Ba’al,” the subject has been the 3fs Israel in the context (2:4–19), although there are instances of the 3mp as the children are discussed along with their mother (2:6, 7, 20). Gordis’s proposal is eminently plausible.

analogous to the Sea of 38:8–11. He remains a symbol of (kratogenic/existential) chaos, and as a creature indicates God's final if not proximate responsibility for suffering. However, the Sea's personification was limited, and its sphere of activity secured by God's establishment of boundaries in creation. Per its animal nature and capacity for pleading, the Leviathan adds to this the presence of a will which might, in its pride, transgress its place or role. The risk is less than the *Chaoskampf* myth, per Leviathan's creatureliness (41:25), the clear indication that Leviathan is less formidable than God (41:2) and the implication that Leviathan would plead with God if not Job (40:27–28). Nonetheless, the resurrection of the *Chaoskampf* motif suggests the potential insurrection of the Leviathan figure. Thus, the speech provides “the King of the proud” as the cosmic analogue to the mundane proud, the wicked (40:11–12).

If this is the case and if the poet uses Ps 104, then the poet has partly reversed the psalmist's demythologization. The psalmist made the Leviathan part of the panorama of God's good creation (104:26). The only wrinkle in the psalm's view of creation is wicked humans (104:35).<sup>504</sup> While the poet also makes Leviathan a creature, he regains a mythological, supernatural character, including an ominous tension in its relationship to God. Like humanity, the Leviathan is both creature and potentially enemy to creation.

There are two additional literary features that support this approach. First, is the effect of the Behemoth. Proponents of the mythological approach sometimes too readily assume that he is a chaos monster.<sup>505</sup> Clearly, he is dangerous, and he is discussed so

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<sup>504</sup> See Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 53–54, 57–58. I follow Levenson regarding Ps. 104. He misses the poet's subtle relationship to the psalm, per his position that the Leviathan is uncreated in Job and his inattention to the poet's manipulation of mythological traditions through parody and dramatization.

<sup>505</sup> E.g., Tönsing, “The use of Creation Language in Job,” 445, simply states that “Behemoth and Leviathan [are] both symbols of chaos.”

hyperbolically that he does not appear to be a merely natural animal. Even if he is modeled on the hippo or water buffalo, his cedar-like tail, impenetrable armor, terrific strength, and invulnerability against all but “his maker,” indicate that he is not exactly mundane.<sup>506</sup> Further, while his name, *בהמות*, literally means “beasts,” feminine plural, he is grammatically masculine singular. Nonetheless, neither is there any mythological monster of this name. More likely is Alter’s reading, that the Behemoth is discussed so hyperbolically to begin the transition from natural beasts to the more clearly mythological Leviathan.<sup>507</sup> The Behemoth’s ambiguous nature owes to his place in this transition. Some ambiguity remains in Leviathan’s mythological character as being created.

Secondly, the Leviathan thereby achieves a deeper symmetry with the Sea. The first speech began with a somewhat demythologized Sea and cosmology and then filled that cosmos with natural phenomena and animals. The second speech begins with natural evil (41:11–14) and begins to remythologize with the Behemoth. The Leviathan is clearly mythological, but, as created chaos, his mythological significance has been altered.

In this reading, the poet provides a creative adaptation of the *Chaoskampf* motif in the divine speeches, the necessity of which he indicated in Job’s use of the theme against the friends. Nonetheless, to make the argument for this interpretation satisfactorily and to explore its fuller implications, it is necessary to approach the Leviathan from various angles. I will consider (1) the significance of judgment, *mišpat* (משפט; 40:8), in God’s

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<sup>506</sup> The term, *העשו*, is somewhat awkward, at first seeming to be double defined, having an object suffix and the definite article. However, the participle can take a definite article and an object suffix, which then has an accusative relationship to the participle acting as a verb, Jouon-Muraoka, §66, 1:179; §121k, 2:414. Cf. Isa 9:12 (המכה), Ps 18:33 (המאזני). The different forms of the 3ms object suffix found in Job 40:19 and Isa 9:12 is of no consequence. Jouon-Muraoka, Paradigm 3, 2:660, indicates that verbs may take object suffixes of either form. The gloss in BHS, *qui fecit eum*, accurately reflects the appropriate parsing, excepting the perfect, *fecit*, for the participle.

<sup>507</sup> Alter, *Art of Biblical Poetry*, 107.



second defense, (2) the theme of pride, and (3) the significance of the Arm of God (40:9), before returning to reflect on the Leviathan and humanity's cosmic status.

***The Second Speech, Angle One: Mišpaṭ***

God frames the first speech to address Job's obscuring God's counsel in creation (38:2). The paradigm is wisdom. God's defense of the goodness of creation and the checks on evil illuminate Job's obscuration. Job 40:2 bookends the speech, allowing Job to respond but not altering the topic. Job's response reflects not repentance but taciturn submission: Job complained the entire dialogue that humanity was of no significance to God, and his statement that he is of "no account" (קלתי) is not humility but bitterness confirmed by God's refusal to engage Job on anthropocentric terms. Job likewise refuses to engage God's perspective.

In the second speech, God not only demonstrates the counsel and the goodness of creation's design, but he insists on the validity of his judgment (משפט) and challenges Job's implicit claim to his own righteousness at God's expense (תרשיעני למען תצדק; 40:8). Thus, the speeches progress from a sapiential defense of the goodness of creation to a juridical register.<sup>508</sup> This progression corresponds to the shift from ch. 3 where Job laments creation to the dialogue's closely related debate of God's justice (e.g., chs. 9, 12). Perhaps, had God addressed Job immediately after the lament, the first speech would have sufficed. The friends, however, have introduced the juridical register (as early as 4:17). God addresses the situation accordingly.

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<sup>508</sup> Terrien, "Yahweh's Speeches and Job's Responses," 502–03, goes further, seeing the shift to specifically "covenantal terminology," pointing us even to Jeremiah's new covenant and (Jer 31:31 ff) and the annulment of judgement.

In what sense do the Behemoth and Leviathan have anything to do with divine ‘judgement?’ The first step in considering this question is to consider the meaning of the term משפט itself. Sylvia Scholnick argues that the term has two significantly distinct senses. Its primary sense refers to judgement in the context of justice, a natural law with its own integrity which is the standard for a judgement’s legitimacy. Theologically, the most significant example of this sense is Abraham’s challenge in Gen 18:25: “will the judge (השפט) of the earth not perform judgement (משפט)?” Scholnick’s less frequent sense is sovereignty, a potentially arbitrary decision that enjoys unquestioned authority. Her critical example is Samuel’s warning to the people of the kings’ absolute authority with its potential for abuse.<sup>509</sup>

The term’s alleged ambiguity would indicate, then, that God either asserts his sovereignty and Job’s serf-like inability to question God’s fiat, that God defends the justice of his judgment, or an ambiguous combination resulting in a tension analogous to Gen 18 and 22. At any rate, the proposed ambiguity corresponds to the questions of natural law and voluntarism raised in the last chapter by the arbiter, etc. Scholnick thinks that the “executive category” obtains in Job 40:8a despite its juridical use everywhere else.<sup>510</sup> While Job 40:8b uses language relating to inherent justice, Scholnick argues that God merely defends his divine prerogative.

The applicability of the sovereignty reading is obvious. The discussion of indomitable monsters would indicate that Job is no freer to refuse to submit to God than the divine pantheon of *Enuma Elish* or the cultists of Babylon were free to deny Marduk’s sovereignty. Job, lacking an arm like God’s, cannot thunder like God (40:9),

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<sup>509</sup> Scholnick, “The Meaning of Mišpaṭ in the Book of Job,” 522.

<sup>510</sup> Scholnick, “The Meaning of Mišpaṭ in the Book of Job,” 523.

draw near to the Behemoth (40:19), or stand before the Leviathan, let alone God (41:2–3). Since only God can match the Leviathan, Job has no viable alternative. God’s power and the other relevant actors’ threat would force Job to submit to the divine despot.

This reading is possible and certainly rhetorically effective. It is also brutal. It would confirm Job’s cynical assessment as to God’s arbitrary power and unaccountability to justice. God’s voluntaristic exercise of arbitrary sovereignty, in fact, would be scarcely distinct from Marduk’s authority. But the reading has severe hermeneutical challenges.

First, what would this framework indicate for Job’s submission? Some scholars see here a clever evasion.<sup>511</sup> Some argue the speech portrays God as a buffoon.<sup>512</sup> But it is difficult to imagine the poet suggesting that God is a buffoon and fooled by such dissimulation. The rhetoric is too profound, and, as Tsevat argues, the book’s intellectual seriousness undermines the evasion and buffoon approaches.<sup>513</sup> Neither is Tsevat’s

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<sup>511</sup> Thus, Robertson, “The Book of Job: A Literary Study,” 466, argues that Job speaks “tongue in cheek,” based largely on his translation of Job 9:13–15, 20, that “though innocent, I could not reply ... though guiltless, my mouth would declare me guilty,” and on his observation that “Job in 42:2 confesses to nothing that he has not already admitted several times.” Apparently, there is no difference between hearing rumors and seeing a theophany. As Fox, “God’s Answer,” 20, observes, however, it is odd that the Job who was convinced of God’s demand for honesty should so “become shifty and evasive.” Robertson’s *tendenz* is manifest in his argument, *ibid.*, 463, that God speaking from a storm might seem awesome to us, but Job’s earlier prediction of that stormy appearance makes God seem “not awesome but blustery.” This effect is not at all manifest and is nothing but a weak justification of Robertson’s foregone conclusion. Rather, God’s appearance from the storm cloud is significant, not per any spurious framework we might arbitrarily apply to the book, but per the poet’s perspicuous manipulation of mythological traditions. Furthermore, Job had specifically “prophesied” that this storm appearance would involve physical violence (9:17). If Job’s prophecy determines the whirlwind speech’s significance, then we must conclude that God reasonably addresses Job and invites him into an interpersonal relationship Job could not have imagined.

<sup>512</sup> So Williams, ““You have not spoken truth of me:’ Mystery and Irony in Job,” 233, observes that Job 42:3 “could be construed as ironic,” from which he proves that “it is a mistake to correct the epilogue tightly to the theophany.” This connection, in turn, would prove his ironic construal of Job 42:3. This is merely circular reasoning, wherein a subjunctive possibility is taken to prove an indicative reality, the latter in turn proving its premise. Job’s confession that he spoke of things beyond his capacity in 42:3 is most obviously a pious sentiment that easily reconciles with 42:7. Williams, *ibid.*, 243, 246–47 identifies irony and parody throughout the book and argues that God is to be identified with the Satan, the chaos monsters, and the friends; he thereby concludes that God is the alazon to Job’s eiron, the Divine Blowhard and buffoon who does not realize he has been exposed. Williams does not attempt to prove his reading at any point, but he evokes a framework that is dubious at every point.

<sup>513</sup> Tsevat, “The Meaning of the Book of Job,” 82. makes this observation against approaching the dialogue from a sheerly aesthetic perspective, but it applies even more against a deconstructive, cynical approach.

position, that God praises Job for accepting God's amoral nihilism, tenable.<sup>514</sup> The first speech offers too profound a defense of the cosmos's goodness. Job's earnest speculations in the dialogues also undermine Tsevat's approach. Rather, it seems unavoidable that the poet intends an alternative moral lesson and spiritual conversion.

Second, then, what new perspective might God's speech provide according to this position? It hardly seems possible that God's insistence on his sheer amoral power and sovereign authority can effect any change in Job. Job has been all too aware of this power and aesthetic throughout the dialogue. He, unlike the friends, makes extensive use of the *Chaoskampf* motif. He does not need God to remind him of it and the implications for divine power and unaccountability. It is just possible that God makes the same claims regarding his power, authority, etc., that Job has hitherto known, but that the sheer experience of God speaking it from the whirlwind makes it acceptable. But this experience cannot exactly be shared by the reader, and we should look for a substantial difference rather than posit a solely experiential one. The poet consistently used Job's speech in intellectually creative rather than merely deconstructive or sentimental ways. It is virtually inconceivable that God's speech not be intellectually creative.

Third, Job's submission would not be "for nothing." Granted, Job has not been bribed. He has been threatened, however, and the corollary to a threat is the possibility of benefit, if only neglect. The consideration is quite significant if we consider the prologue, but it applies to any reading that would preserve the value of Job's submission.

Fourth, however, the greatest challenge to this position is the fact that the Leviathan is created. Whether *לִישָׁן* is taken as judgment or sovereignty, the Behemoth

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<sup>514</sup> Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," 103–06.

and Leviathan indicate that God has made hostile elements of creation insurmountable by human resources. There is no practicable alternative to God's sovereign protection. But the poet's adaptation of the myth challenges the notion of 'judgment' that the myth can support. If the Leviathan is primordial or coeval, his existence is a given. As such, a divinity can understandably insist on his prerogative of sovereignty as savior. Such sovereignty might not be above criticism, but its necessity and legitimacy can be granted as in the *Enuma Elish* per the threat Tiamat poses, as can Saul's per the Philistines. However, since God also made the Leviathan, this claim to legitimacy is inescapably problematic. God has to insist on his sovereign decision to make the Leviathan before validating his sovereignty on the ability to restrain the monster. It would be akin to a person resuscitating a victim he had just drowned, expecting to be thanked for his mercy and praised for his skill, while justifying the drowning based on that mercy and skill.

Thus, if God's 'judgment' refers solely to his sovereign authority, it indicates the complete immolation of the human person's dignity and allows the most abusive conception of God imaginable. Of course, these themes are not absent from Job. The question of whether they are true animates the human discourse and goes to the book's heart. Since the term's typical usage as 'judgment' and Scholnick's understanding of the term as 'sovereignty' evoke these essential themes, the term is an interpretive crux.

However, Scholnick's proofs of *mišpaṭ* as referring to a sovereignty apart from a concern for justice have serious limitations. Even her example from the Ba'al cycle correlates authority with justice, as Mot risks losing his rule precisely because he transgresses his proper jurisdiction, attempting to slay the Lord of Life, Ba'al,<sup>515</sup> The

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<sup>515</sup> Scholnick, "Meaning of Mišpaṭ," 522. "The Ba'lu Myth," *COS*, 1.86:273. Mot's sovereignty is inextricable from his proper sphere, his jurisdiction. He would lose that sovereignty should he insist on

crucial example of 1 Sam 8:9, 11, meanwhile, certainly describes a משפט which is arbitrary and independent of just judgment (1 Sam 8:11–17). But the usage is bitterly ironic. God and Samuel communicate to the Israelites their perversity in rejecting God's sovereignty, his judges, and their judgments, seeking a king, whose "judgment" is unaccountable to justice. Samuel sarcastically abuses the term, with a bitter irony rivaling the poet's parodies. Therefore, this departure does not indicate an alternative sense of the term but relies on the typical sense, judgment. One might read Job 40:8 as involving the same bitter abuse, but 1 Sam 8:9–11 does not support an alternative definition: the proper sense of just judgment must be maintained to appreciate the historian's rhetoric.

Furthermore, there are several indecisive literary considerations that support seeing here an insistence on God's just judgment rather than merely his sovereignty. First is the theme of justice as raised in Job's speculations about the arbiter, etc. It is possible that God's rhetoric is designed only to nullify these speculations by insisting on his autocratic power. However, it is also possible that the poet simultaneously offers a creative defense of the just exercise of that sovereignty. This dual purpose would correspond in part to the poet's creative use of Job's language in his speculations and to Job's dual speculations.<sup>516</sup> Second is the juridical language of Job 40:8b. It is just possible that God merely insists on his right to do what is not right, but this is not evident.

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transgressing its proper limitations. His attempt to slay the Lord of Life, who has already come back from the dead, is more than just an attempt to infringe on the sovereignty of a rival: it is, as an imposition of death upon life, an attempt to defy and reconstitute the natural order, the just arrangement of El. The mythological account of these powers' sovereign jurisdictions belies the distinction Scholnick attempts to prove.

<sup>516</sup> That is, Job's desire for a juridical recourse and Job's desire for a post-mortem reward making his earthly sufferings bearable and his piety intelligible. God's mere insistence on his sovereignty would only apply to the former, as God denounces any juridical motion by fiat and show of power. God's insistence on the justice of his created order would apply to both of Job's speculative themes, as God makes his case (however unintelligible to Job or us) preempting any need for an arbiter (as Job drops his complaint) and affirms Job's instinct of locating humanity's suffering in the broader context of a cosmic drama.

Rather, the language can hardly establish God's self-defense in a juridical register more explicitly. The only rationale for denying that register is our inability to account for God's justice in the speech's remainder. Third, the position that Job has suffered unjustly permeates the book, from God's own statement in 2:3 throughout the dialogues and into the epilogue. It is just possible that the poet should renounce all human claims to justice in a sort of *resignatio ad infernum* here, but this solution should be the last resort. Even if God's rhetoric is susceptible of this interpretation, the poet's concerns and creativity, along with the book's broader perspective, indicate that we should look for a creative solution reconciling divine sovereignty and justice with the cosmos. Fourth, God accepts and even affirms Job's position on wickedness as regards humanity at least (cf. 38:13; 40:12). God is the one who has created the diurnal cycle to hold the wicked in check (רשעים; 38:13). It is hard to see his rejection of Job's condemnation (תרשיעני; 40:8) apart from his affirmation of Job's perspective on the reality of justice and evil.

Most importantly, the second speech complements rather than contradicts the first speech. The first speech's illumination of Job's obscurity defends creation as a cosmos, whose order and goodness manifest the creator's wisdom. For God to abandon this defense and merely insist on his prerogative would be a concession of cosmic disorder, folly, and evil. The challenge in 40:7–8 translates the challenge in 38:2 from solely sapiential to juridical, but the inherent goodness of the cosmos remains the topic.

This continuity allows the Leviathan's creation to be framed appropriately. Theoretically, if God can defend his creation's inherent goodness, the Leviathan's creation must be defensible. No such defense is obvious, but its inclusion implies that God's mysterious wisdom has a creative purpose for this cosmic monster who causes so

much existential chaos.<sup>517</sup> It may be as irrelevant to humanity as ravens or as inherently harmful as lions. It also may have a surprising benefit to humanity as the water in the wasteland. It might be potentially beneficial or deadly as the horse. The problem is challenging, but hardly more so than God's affirmation that he has given the Sea its proper place and role in the cosmic order.

These considerations provoke the question, why would God make the Leviathan, or, to return to the reductive terms of the philosophy of religion, why has God created a world allowing suffering? No answer is offered. However, the poet locates the Leviathan—who is created but retains his character as embodiment of the experience of chaos—in the defense of the inherent goodness of the cosmos and of the wisdom and justice of the creator. He thereby implies that there is an answer which might satisfy our concerns for justice if we knew it and acknowledged God's wisdom and prerogative. No doubt this would be as surprising to our expectations as the ostrich's survival. There is also the hint that this purpose is not relevant to the sapiential occupation with this world's success, and it implies a renunciation of the assertion of right according to the friends' and Job's humanistic conceptions. However, this renunciation might lead to a vision of cosmic justice and goodness. Thus, human dignity need not be destroyed, but reimagined and recontextualized. After all, God addresses a human. Such a mystery seems to be asserted, and it seems that Job allows that there is such a mysterious answer.

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<sup>517</sup> Cf. Terrien, "Yahweh's Speeches and Job's Responses," 504, who agrees that the poet disallows "cosmic dualism," i.e., attributing a divine nature or "pre-existent status" to the creatures of chaos, but recognizes that the "mythopoetic language" allows "a certain agnosticism of reverence" regarding the relationship between God and cosmic evil. It seems that we can more precisely locate this reverence in God's mysterious and good purpose in creating and allowing those destructive creatures.



### *The Second Speech, Angle Two: Pride*

The speech indicates Job's problematic pride. It is most explicit in the challenges: "who is this ... ?" (38:2), and "will you condemn me ... ?" (40:8). The mocking sarcasm does so as well: "You know, for you were born then!" (38:21). The entirety of the speech, though offering legitimate insight, is rhetorically ordered to humbling Job. In this way, the entire speech is ordered to Job's submission in 42:6, both insofar as it offers insight and insofar as it reminds Job of his appropriate stance. The references to pride within the speech therefore apply on two levels, in suggesting an important moral consideration in the cosmos and in intimating to Job the implications of his current stance.

After the initial challenge, the first reference to pride is God telling the Sea how far the pride of its waves may come (גֹּאֲוֹן גִּלְיָד; 38:11). The term, גֹּאֲוֹן, almost always refers to eminence, pride, or presumption. A handful of times the term refers to height.<sup>518</sup> The term's reference to human eminence has a severely negative implication for human pride, often anticipating a fall. It is, however, a proper attribute of God (e.g., Isa 2:10, 19, 21). God mockingly challenges Job to adorn himself with such 'splendor' (40:10). Thus, for humans, it is properly hubris, superbia. Considering the Sea's traditional role as a cosmic rival to the creator, the image of high waves integrates the rare application to literal height with the dominant, moral sense of the word.

Secondly, God's creative structure holding back the pride of the Sea (38:8–11) is in parallel with the diurnal structure keeping the wicked in check (38:12–15). Within the

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<sup>518</sup> KBL, s.v. 'גֹּאֲוֹן,' 1:169, in fact, only includes Job 37:4 and 38:11 along with an expression the "heights of Jordan," in this sense. The phrase is taken to refer to a thicket, although it would seem that the hills and plateaus above the Jordan would be sensible enough in the passages, Jer 12:5, 49:19, 50:44, Zech 11:3. Job 37:4 refers to God "thundering with the voice of his heights," and should not be taken to refer to literal heights.

stanza, the wicked (רשעים; 38:13, 15) are referred to by synecdoche as their “arm of pride” (זרוע רמה; 38:15). This arm serves as a contrast to the arm of God (40:9) and Job’s hand (40:14). The motif implies the dramatic tension as to whether Job will maintain his pride or yield to God, associating himself with the Sea and the wicked or with God.<sup>519</sup>

The term itself, רמה, derives from רום and has similar senses of height and pride as גאון. The song of Moses imagines the gentiles denying God’s role in subjecting Israel, as they imagine their own ‘high hand’ has done it (ידינו רמה; Deut 32:27). The passage unites pride, presumption against God, and wickedness. The connection is slight and the collocation too common to warrant identifying an allusion with certainty, though the poet uses the chapter regularly. Elsewhere, sinning with a ‘high hand’ (ביד רמה; Num 15:30) is contrasted with inadvertent sin; no sacrifice atones, and the offender is to be cut off from the congregation.<sup>520</sup> The phrase clearly evokes human hubris. Alternatively, Ps 89 recalls God’s past cosmic victories and creation, celebrating God’s mighty arm and his strong, raised right hand (לך זרוע עם גבורה תעז ירך תרום ימינך; Ps 89:14). Job 38:15’s phrase thus supports a similar understanding of divine prerogative and human pride as גאון in 38:11. There is a deep correlation between the pride of wicked humans and that of the Sea.

The Behemoth is not called proud. But his entire description (40:15–24) is of his sheer power and lack of concern. Such animals are cultural images of pride or lustiness when they are feeling their oats (e.g., Deut 32:15; Jer 5:8). He is also called ‘the first of God’s ways’ (40:19). The animal is invoked to humble Job by indicating what only God

<sup>519</sup> Recall Newsom’s argument, *Book of Job*, 252, that God celebrates the Leviathan’s “rightful pride.” This accounts for neither God’s domination of the Leviathan nor for the book’s consistent indication that pride is proper to God alone, and it leads to his creatures’ faults.

<sup>520</sup> A more innocent passage is in the Exodus. The Israelites leave Egypt with a high hand (ביד רמה; Exod 14:8). The passage indicates openness rather than secrecy, and it may additionally indicate a spirit of ‘triumph’ (NABR) or pride about to be humbled by Pharaoh’s onslaught.

can accomplish, and in this way is in parallel with the wicked and proud (40:19; cf. 40:9–14). Still, he is rhetorically effective without taking any explicit moral value.

These considerations apply to an even greater degree to the Leviathan. That the Leviathan regards iron and bronze as chaff and rotten wood (41:19) while the Behemoth's bones and sinews are made of them (40:18) encapsulates their relative power. That the Behemoth is undisturbed in the Jordan is negligible compared to the Leviathan's disturbing the Sea, not to mention his breathing fire and terrifying the gods.

But the theme of humiliation and pride is far more pronounced in the Leviathan speech. Whereas God spends a single verse asking whether Job can subject the Behemoth (40:24), God spends seven on the Leviathan's theoretical subjection (40:25–31). While not explicit, there are several reasons to see in these verses a description of what God can do or has done already. First is the continuity with the first speech's rhetoric, where God's questions remind Job constantly of God's own wisdom and power. Second is the parallel with God's assertion that God alone can approach the Behemoth (40:19). Third is the *a fortiori* rhetoric of 41:2, where God indicates his obviously superior power to Leviathan's. Fourth, considering the speech's defense of God's creative wisdom and power and the monster's mythological role as antagonist to creation, the covenant of 40:27–28 quite possibly refers to an arrangement allowing for the status quo. While he is not slain as Lotan or Yamm, Kingu or Tiamat, his submission to the storm-god's rule similarly indicates the subjection of cosmic chaos as the necessary condition for prosperity and life. Leviathan has continued existence and vitality experienced as existential chaos according to God's sovereign cosmic judgment, but he must abide by certain limits, as the Sea.

Finally, the climax of the poem names the Leviathan as the ‘King of the sons of pride’ (מֶלֶךְ עַל כָּל בְּנֵי שָׁחַץ), who oversees all the haughty (אֵת כָּל גִּבְהַת יִרְאָה).<sup>521</sup> The Leviathan oversees and rules the proud. As pride has been a motif throughout the speech, from the Sea, to the wicked, to Job, the speech climaxes with the proud king of the proud. Thus, the whirlwind speech poses pride as one of the more, if not the most, fundamental moral categories in the cosmos.

As a creature subordinate to, and perhaps in covenant with, God, it is possible that the Leviathan has the ordained role of inspecting or overseeing, of dominating or leading the proud. This rule is ambiguous: are they compatriots in pride or does he have the task of dominating them? Likely it is both. Insofar as the Leviathan is creature subject to God, he may be somewhat analogous to Bildad’s King of Terrors: he scrutinizes the proud and dominates them upon finding guilt. However, since he retains the character of proud chaos rather than being an orderly member of the pantheon, the comparison fails: he leads the proud he oversees.

### *The Second Speech, Angle Three: Arms, Hands, and the Arm of God*

It may seem curious to have a section devoted to arms. The usage is restrained and prosaic enough that it might seem insignificant. God, not Job, has arranged for the arm of pride (38:15) to be broken in the diurnal cycle (38:12–15). Accordingly, Job does not have an arm like God’s (40:9) and his own hand cannot save him (40:14). However, the terms, arm and hand, are obviously not literal, but figuratively indicate power. These

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<sup>521</sup> The term שָׁחַץ is rare, occurring only here and in 28:8. In Job 28:8 it refers to proud animals (בְּנֵי שָׁחַץ) in parallel with other natural animals, including the lion (שִׁחַל). The similarity in terms likely explains the term’s use in 28:8. However, the parallel term for proud in 41:26, גִּבְהַת, ensures the traditional understanding of שָׁחַץ as pride. The Leviathan oversees and rules the proud. While 28:8 applies the phrase בְּנֵי שָׁחַץ to natural animals, there is no reason to apply the phrase so narrowly here. Rather, insofar as pride has been a motif throughout the speech, from the Sea, to the wicked, to Job, the speech climaxes with the proud king of the proud.

passages can readily be read as indicating solely an *a fortiori* sort of argument, as Job lacks the quantity, the degree, of power necessary. If the Leviathan had his primordial character, this understanding might suffice. But the Leviathan is created, and the Sea is swaddled. The poet has clearly been adapting the myth and manipulating its implications. Similarly, God does not attack from the storm, but he speaks; he does not brutalize, but he persuades. Therefore, it seems necessary to consider the quality, the kind, of power indicated in this passage. To do so, I will again have to locate the poet within his literary tradition and argue for a key allusion.

Janzen's article, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power: Yahweh and the Sea in Job and Deutero-Isaiah," is critical in this regard, though he does not explore enough the implications in Job. As Janzen observes, Ps 89 focuses on God's arm, as indicating the power by which God stills the Sea and kills Rahab (vv. 10–11), and by which God creates (vv. 12–14).<sup>522</sup> This creation includes the physical order (v. 13), and it is characterized as just, etc. (v. 15). Janzen further notes that this same arm strengthens David's rule.<sup>523</sup> Furthermore, God places David's hands on the Sea (v. 26), indicating David's *imitatio dei*, through his just exercise of political power including his destruction of enemies (v. 24). Thus, the arm of God and the king's hand in Ps 89 correspond to the politico-mythological understandings of *Enuma Elish*. God's power is rather like Marduk's, even if the myth has been altered in the psalm.<sup>524</sup>

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<sup>522</sup> Janzen, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 464.

<sup>523</sup> Janzen, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 464.

<sup>524</sup> The psalm does not prove the survival of the pagan myth in its full integrity. Particularly, there is no theogony or indication of the dragon's eternality. But it remains similar. At any rate, I am only concerned to observe its agreement with the myth as regards its understanding of political and cosmic power, its theory of divine right in its coordination of divine and political rule, and its portrayal of God's power as violent and coercive.

The psalm is particularly relevant considering Job's occupation with Judah's fate. The psalm uses the *Chaoskampf* myth as its premise for remediation—that is, the psalm is properly liturgical—as it seeks God's restoration of Judah's political fortunes. The character Job and, *prima facie*, the poet reject the psalm's mythological premises, cynically charge God with direct responsibility, and despair of remediation. In other words, 'the arm of God' never did destroy Rahab but it created the Leviathan. On the other hand, the arm of God does not wage battle as David, but it made subtle, natural structures such as the diurnal cycle to limit the harmful activity of the proud wicked. The character Job, therefore, exposes the inadequacy of the myth per God's absolute power and de facto responsibility for chaos. The whirlwind speech nuances and accentuates God's responsibility in creating the Leviathan itself. However, the whirlwind speech also indicates that Job remains fixated on an inadequate understanding of divine power as found in Ps 89 and *Enuma Elish*.

This development is explicit in Second Isaiah, and the poet seems to have taken this cue from the prophet. As Janzen observes, Isaiah's dominant portrayal of God's creation is architecture, "devoid of any conflict with the sea."<sup>525</sup> The reader will likely reject this assertion, recalling Isa 51:9: "Awake, awake, put on strength, arm of the Lord! Awake as in the days of old, in ages long ago! Was it not you who crushed Rahab, you who pierced the dragon?" (NABR). The verse is an explicit citation of the *Chaoskampf* myth, a liturgical cry in the mold of Ps 89. But, as Janzen argues, the prophet evokes the myth not to condone it, but to portray the problematic mindset of his community.<sup>526</sup>

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<sup>525</sup> Janzen, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 471.

<sup>526</sup> Janzen, "On the Moral Nature of God's Power," 474–76 makes clear that Isa 51:9 reflects "the community's use of the motif of creation battle," resulting from their failure to understand the nature of God's power and judgment. Blenkinsopp, *Isaiah 40–55*, 102–09, tentatively places the composition of the

Though unmarked, it is indirect speech. The prophet quickly makes clear that they, not the arm of the Lord, are the ones slumbering and who need to awake (Isa 51:17, 52:1). As such, God replies, rebuking them for fearing mere mortals, when he is the one who created, not through violence, but as simply as stretching a tent (51:12–13; cf. Job 26:7).<sup>527</sup> The inadequacy of the perspective in 51:9 could hardly be more explicit: God challenges the people to awake, having drunk of the Lord's wrath (51:17), rather than having suffered from resurgent primordial chaos.<sup>528</sup>

Isaiah 51 also re-orientes the community's attention from one etiological narrative to another. The indirect speech of Isa 51:9–11 evokes the Exodus explicitly. The Sea is dried up and Rahab (i.e., Egypt, cf. Isa 30:7) is crushed, so that the redeemed can go to Zion. Indeed, Exod 15 refers to God's hand and arm destroying Egypt (vv. 6, 12, 16). The oracle, however, directs the community not to the Exodus narrative, but to Abraham and Sarah (51:1–2). It is not through signs and miracles, but it is through God's word and the

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majority of Second Isaiah in Babylon, and illuminates other correlations between Isai 40–55 and the Babylonian *akitu* festival and creation epic, *Enuma Elish*, with which the Jewish residents would have been familiar. However, when Blenkinsopp, *ibid.*, 330–33, treats Isa 51:9, he does not reflect on the poet's rhetorical purpose in invoking the myth's liturgical language, but simply describes the trope's face value.

<sup>527</sup> Contrast this approach with Habel, "He Who Stretches Out The Heavens," *CBQ* 34, no 4 (1972): 418–19, who cites Isa 51:9–10 emphasizing its continuity with Ps 89 in order to prove Isaiah's fundamentally conservative perspective on God's might. Habel acknowledges the possibility of seeing a "creation by word *Tendenz*" in Isaiah, but he argues that "Deutero-Isaiah himself summons this powerful primordial arm" exactly as Ps 89. By failing to recognize the indirect speech of Isa 51:9–11 and the prophet's following unequivocal rejection of that perspective, Habel fundamentally distorts the prophet's perspective.

<sup>528</sup> Considering the trope of "waking" the divine warrior or his arm, Job's wish that the cursers of the Day would "rouse the Leviathan" in 3:8 can be seen as still more significant. Apart from that context, Job obviously desires the resurgence of chaos and God replies accordingly. Illman, "Did God Answer Job?," 281, observes that God refers to the lunacy of stirring up the Leviathan, per its ferocity and irresistible power, specifically as a reply to Job's complaint in 3:8. However, considering the traditional "rousing" trope, the rejection of creation is a keen parody of the traditional *Chaoskampf* tradition as found in Ps 89 and criticized in Isa 51:9. The Joban poet may have been inspired by Isaiah as he appropriates and adapts Isaiah's position. Isaiah's correction is direct and explicit (it is you, O Israel, who needs to wake up). The character Job's stupor subverts the traditional myth in 3:8, presuming like Isaiah that God is at fault in so ordering the cosmos. Job 3:8 thus appropriates and *prima facie* criticizes Isaiah's complacency with divine punishment. The whirlwind speech thus has the task of defending Isaiah's insights as to divine omnipotence and the inadequacy of the traditional myth, while accounting for Job's assertion of the reality of evil in excess to the just purposes described in Isaiah.

obedience of his servant to that word that the community will be called out of Babylon. Abraham becomes the type of God's servant, including Israel (e.g., Isa 41:8) and apparently the prophet (e.g., Isa 49:5–6).<sup>529</sup> Zion must awake and put on strength (Isa 52:1), for the arm of the Lord is revealed not through brutality, but through the efficacious suffering of redemptive obedience (Isa 52:10, 53:1).

The connections between Job and the suffering servant have been noted.<sup>530</sup> The servant of Isaiah certainly refers to Israel at times and apparently refers to an individual who ministers on Israel's behalf at times. The words of the servant are identified with the prophet's message (Isa 44:26), and he appears to operate as a typological representative of Israel in his service. Thus, Job's character, as an individual who stands as a type of Israel corporately and who intercedes for his friends, makes his correspondence to the servant particularly apt. Furthermore, the poet has incorporated into his drama Isaiah's insight as to the necessity to adapt the community's perception of divine power. Nowhere in the poetry does the *Chaoskampf* myth receive unqualified affirmation.<sup>531</sup> Job recognizes that God's power is uncontested, and the whirlwind affirms that the Sea is allowed its place and the Leviathan is created. Together, they affirm Isaiah's position that God is responsible for created weal and woe (Isa 45:7).

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<sup>529</sup> The difficulty establishing which parties are identified as the Servant is famous, going back to the Ethiopian Eunuch's question to Philip in Acts 8:34. Philip agrees with the rest of the New Testament, of course, applying the passage to Jesus (Acts 8:35). But the historical referent is often Israel and at times an individual, who serves on Israel's behalf and who guides Israel to her service on the world's behalf. In this sense, the prophet, as an Israelite, personifies and fulfills Israel's vocation of dispelling idolatry, teaching God's will and justice, and bringing peace to the nations. The prophet as the ideal representative of Israel obviates the perceived need to establish one as servant over the other. Of course, the historical referents of the passage are not essential to the present task, but the Joban poet's use of the oracles is. However, my understanding of the prophet as the ideal representative of Israel makes him a particularly fitting model for the poet's Job, whom the poet perspicuously makes into Israel's individualized personification.

<sup>530</sup> This is often done in a framework arguing for Joban priority. See appendix C for a brief critique of this position.

<sup>531</sup> Recall that ch. 26 is the only place the myth is articulated without severe distortion, but that Job includes it among the traditions he has mastered but which he recognizes as inadequate.



Accordingly, God's power is not seen in crushing a mythical monster. It is seen in calling and persuading his servant, Job, the ideal human and God-fearer, the typological representative of ideal Israel. God exercises his power in restraint rather than brutality, per his commitment to nature's freedom, integrity, and potential for abuse. As such, God exercises his power vulnerably, allowing Job the ability to reject him and the opportunity to curse him to the face. As Janzen observes, God exercises the same vulnerability in creation and in his persuasive plea to Job as in the prologue: "Yahweh staked the divine reputation, and the vindication of the divine image in humankind, upon how Job would answer the Satan's accusation."<sup>532</sup> Job, by yielding to this rhetorical address, accepts God's cosmos and thereby accepts and fulfills his own vocation.

Job's vocation, furthermore, is redemptive. As God's servant, he makes atonement for the friends, as the prophet was called to call Israel, as Israel is called to witness to the nations, and as Abraham was to bless all nations. Thus, Job's submission to God's persuasion allows for a participation in God's cosmic ordering, according to the more subtle dynamics of persuasion and telic fulfillment as opposed to the brutal coercion of the *Chaoskampf* myth as in Ps 89:26. Job's suffering and submission are the premise of liturgy, as Abraham's. Job's efficacious prayer is the most obvious way Job participates in this cosmic ordering. Job's role in settling the heavenly wager is a still more significant, cosmic, liturgical role. The whirlwind discourse does not and cannot disclose this role, but the discourse obliquely corresponds to the role by reimagining divine power and human participation in world-ordering. There is a certain irony to the question, whether Job has an "arm like God," as Job in fact participates in God's creation,

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<sup>532</sup> Janzen, "Creation and the Human Predicament in Job," 53.

not like David, but by submitting to God and accepting his created order. Job thereby becomes God's servant and intermediary, an agent of God's redemption.<sup>533</sup>

***Conclusion: Am I the Dragon? The Whirlwind on the Leviathan and Humanity***

In view of the preceding observations, I can summarize my understanding of the Leviathan. He retains his essential character as a divine antagonist to the creator, and he remains a symbol and agent of destructive chaos. While not the traditional, coeval or primordial chaos monster, he still terrifies the gods, and his rule over the proud (41:25) coordinates him with the wicked (40:11–12). The poet thus re-imbues him with the negative moral character Ps 104 had removed. As a supernatural being, he indicates that humanity cannot hope for a human solution to evil or for an ultimate, historical solution.

But as a creature, his traditional role is qualified. He is not cosmogonic chaos. He cannot be used to rationalize chaos as a limitation of the storm-god, but he can play his traditional role as the proximate cause of human and societal suffering. As created source of existential chaos, the Leviathan is like the Sea. The facts (1) that he is created, (2) that the creator provided his terrible potential, and (3) that he, like the Sea, is given his place, all suggest a positive role for chaos in the cosmic plan. However, unlike the Sea, there is the suggestion that the Leviathan's pride might lead him to transgress his bounds: (1) his animal agency, (2) his rising against the gods, (3) his pride coordinating him with the

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<sup>533</sup> Janzen, "Creation and the Human Predicament in Job," 52, thinks that these "supposedly rhetorical questions ... function ironically, initially masking and then disclosing genuine questions." Janzen pursues this instinct by arguing that the first speech's praise of the animals' freedom evokes the portrayals of human dominion over animals in Gen 1 and Ps 8, neither of which "involve violence." As Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," 58–60, has observed, the majority of questions God asks are known by Job or knowable in principle. The rhetoric is designed to put Job in his place, but most of the questions do so by presuming that Job does know the answer. There seems to be a still more subtle dynamic in the question of having an arm like God's, insofar as the first step is to reconsider what sort of arm God has and, once Job submits to that cajoling, to become a participant in that alternative vision of divine creativity.

wicked, and (4) his pleading with God, all support the possibility of a supernatural agent abusing its freedom as humans do by marshalling cavalry.

Thus, there is a sort of dualism adapted to monotheism, as evil is hypostatized and personified, but as a proud creature tensely related to its creator. On the one hand, then, the created role and function of human suffering is a legitimate sapiential consideration, as God's cosmic counsel (38:2–11) and judgement (40:8) have allowed it. On the other hand, particular suffering is not to be morally rationalized, and the friends' perspective is demolished. The Sea is aptly experienced as chaos, not moral retribution. Furthermore, the Leviathan has his own proud agency, indicating a potential transgression of the place allotted to chaos and suffering, an excess that could only be called real, cosmic evil.

Critically, the final rebuttal to the friends' perspective is supernatural. Perhaps their critical error is attempting to rationalize the cosmos within a historical framework. It is true that they know of demons who punish the wicked, and these beings are a part of God's just cosmic order. They punish the wicked within history and beyond. Critically, however, the friends defend God's treatment of the just (i.e., the doctrine of retribution) specifically within historical experience (e.g., 5:11–27), and they react with shocked horror at Job's demolition of that framework (e.g., 15:11, 18:4). On the other hand, Job's speculative solutions—both juridical demand and post-mortem reward—are supra-historical. He seeks to justify God and God's treatment of the just outside of history, because Job recognizes that history cannot vindicate divine justice as a closed, self-contained system. Instead, to be morally rational, the historical experience must be lodged in a larger, supra-historical context. History must be transcended if it is to be

good. God's final apologetic affirms Job's premise by pointing to a supra-historical source of evil, supporting this proto-apocalyptic impulse.<sup>534</sup>

The Leviathan confirms the presence of real evil, both mundane and cosmic. Job's revulsion at history and his deconstruction of the 'consolations of God' (15:11) follow from mundane evil. As shown, historical evil indicates that God must have a supra-historical structure in place to vindicate his historical treatment of the just and to reward them.<sup>535</sup> The cosmic implications are enigmatic. By substantially adapting the ancient myth, the whirlwind's implication of real, cosmic evil indicates the necessity of further mythological reflection or revelation without providing an answer to this riddle. The Leviathan indicates some corollary cosmic drama, as the whirlwind speech again agrees with Job. The *Chaoskampf* myth captures an essential dynamic in the cosmos, even as its dualism is adapted to a monotheistic context. The correspondence is oblique, but the agreement of the whirlwind speech and Job's speculations against the friends' position is deliberate. The poet hints through God's turn to the Leviathan that Job is on the right track: in Job's clearly problematic adaptation of dualism from the *Chaoskampf* myth, in his turn to a supra-historical cosmic drama as the necessary context for theodicy, and in his longing for a supra-historical reward of the righteous.<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> Cf. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 50

<sup>535</sup> Strictly speaking, this post-mortem vindication only makes restitution for past suffering. The decision to allow that suffering in the first place must be vindicated by lodging humanity in a larger cosmic context, that not only compensates the righteous, but indicates some purpose for their innocent suffering. The prologue indicates such a purpose.

<sup>536</sup> This turn to the mythological and supra-historical also obliquely corresponds to the drama of the prologue, as I will investigate further next chapter. The relevance of this for the poet depends, of course, on the history of the book's authorship. Similarly, those interested in the book in its final form might approach it from a coherent narrative perspective or a parodic one where the poetry satirizes the prose. However, it must be recognized that the whirlwind speech vindicates Job's turn to a supra-historical context, and the prologue agrees with this orientation. If the poet knew the prologue in its present form—or adapted it as seems necessary—this fundamental opposition of Job, the whirlwind, and the prologue against the friends demonstrates a cogent literary strategy on the poet's part. If the Satan's role is a later addition, then a later writer provided an answer to the poet's riddle posed by Job and the whirlwind speech.

The Leviathan retains its socio-political significance. The deep criticism of the imperial city-state in the animals suggests the poet's adaptation of the Leviathan's role in political legitimations in the *Chaoskampf* myth. Imperial city-states identify themselves with order, their rule with the benevolent god's, and rival polities with chaos.<sup>537</sup> God, however, prefers the freedom of animals and exiles to imperial cultural building projects. These empires present themselves as imitating God, participating in divine world ordering (cf. Ps 89:26), with their arms of pride (Job 38:15).<sup>538</sup> God here presents them as proud imitators and agents of chaos, their cosmic analogue, the Leviathan. The traditional mythological complex justifies the dominant regime's claim to instantiate and participate in the preeminent god's order. God, however, indicates that his power is not revealed in political brutality. Rather, royal and imperial pretenders in general are forces of chaos and instantiations of the Leviathan as they hunt ostriches and muster cavalry.<sup>539</sup>

The arm of God is qualitatively different. The question, "do you have an arm like God" (40:9), is ironic, most obviously eliciting a negative response but also admitting an affirmative one. On the one hand, the Hebrew religious writings certainly include God's

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<sup>537</sup> Most obviously *Enuma Elish* supports the Babylonian Empire's rule. See also Clifford, "Cosmogonies in the Ugaritic Texts and in the Bible," 183-201, who shows how the creation myth works as a foundational myth for the city-state in Canaan. See also J. Gerald Janzen, "Creation and the Human Predicament," 45-46; idem, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 460-63; Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness*, 188-91.

<sup>538</sup> Janzen, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 464, observes Ps 89's continuity with the older mythological conception of divine power. He recognizes, *ibid.*, 465 the ambiguity as to what degree "the Sea and Rahab... fully retain" their primordial power. Be that as it may, the conception of divine power as the violent suppression of chaos is the essential point Janzen and I make.

<sup>539</sup> This critique of the state is more general and universal than Wolfers' identification, *Deep Things Out of Darkness*, 175-78, of the Leviathan with Assyria specifically, in his approach to Job as an allegory relating to the time of Hezekiah. The Babylonian empire seems to be a nearer historical referent at any rate, per my identification of the poet's allusions to Isaiah and Lamentations, and the typical observation that Ezekiel 14:14 does not seem to know the book of Job as it exists. Still, its symbolic nature aptly applies it to the principle rather than specifically targeting the singular, even if Babylon operates as the ideal type of the evil empire. The point is corroborated by Job 42:2's relationship to Gen 11:6, as Job confesses the divine prerogative to do all things that God denied of the humans building the tower of Babel. See Fishbane, "The Book of Job and Inner Biblical Discourse," 90-91.

control over politics and history. Even with the acceptance of suzerains and the relinquishment of the dreams of the Davidic dynasty, God's control over history and his punishment of proud empires was not finally denied. God continued to punish each iteration of Leviathan, each monster from the Sea. Job, however, cannot vanquish evil through coercion: he lacks an arm like God.

On the other hand, in Job, God's 'arm' is revealed in the whirlwind not through brutality, but through persuasion. As Janzen observes, God's creation allows for freedom, with its potential for use and abuse, for virtue and for vice, for human good and evil.<sup>540</sup> Accordingly, God does not assault Job, but God seeks to persuade him according to his free nature and as God's servant. When, without comprehension, Job confesses in faith the creator's wisdom, power, and goodness, he uses human freedom virtuously, fulfilling the human potential for piety. Furthermore, his humility renounces the kingdom of pride and the methods of coercion as he drops his suit and confesses his inability to speak with final authority on the cosmos's value.

Job thereby participates in God's creation through this dialogue, in God's respect of and Job's proper use of human freedom. Humanity's place in creation runs throughout the book. The whirlwind, Job at times, and the prologue all treat humanity as significant, compared to the friends' base anthropology. God addresses Job, an I to a Thou, as Buber writes.<sup>541</sup> If the larger question is the goodness of creation, humanity's value within it is a critical component. The value of humanity's freedom is central, not only in the prologue,

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<sup>540</sup> Janzen, "Moral Nature of God's Power," 465, 467–68.

<sup>541</sup> Buber, *Prophetic Faith*, 195–96. Note, however, that Buber somewhat overstates the case when he focuses "not on revelation in general ... but the particular revelation to the individual: the revelation as an *answer* to the individual sufferer concerning the question of his suffering, the self-limitation of God to a person, answering a person." This emphasizes the fact of revelation as an interpersonal gift to the neglect of its content. The speech clearly offers too much content for this imbalance to be accepted.

but in considering the evil wrought by taskmasters, imperial city-states, and cavalry charges. Job's free submission, despite his unjust suffering—which is not denied from the whirlwind—speaks to humanity's potential, and it vindicates the wisdom of God's decision to create humanity with such awesome and awful potential.

It is for this reason that God calls Job "my servant." It not only affirms Job's integrity against the friends or recalls Isa 53, where the servant reveals God's arm (52:10, 13). Rather, it indicates Job's participation in God's peculiar creation, humanity. Job participates in his fulfillment of the human person's potential: for growing into freedom, for annulling the friends' and the Satan's understanding of *quid pro quo* piety, for gratuitous love, and for vindicating God's decision to make the cosmos free and dangerous. Job thus participates in God's more subtle and profound manner of creation and demonstrates God's strong arm. This participation indicates that Job in fact has an arm like God's. The *imitatio dei* is not in military dominance, but in the mutual glorification of God and humanity through superlative devotion or gratuitous love.<sup>542</sup>

Job's submission results simultaneously in the shaming and forgiveness of the friends. We might casually consider Job's submission and God's pronouncement against the friends as essentially unrelated. Indeed, the friends' perspective is folly regardless of Job's performance. On the other hand, Job's submission renounces his claim on his just reward, thus giving up the logic of retribution and demonstrating their folly. But it is more than a matter of demonstrating their error. Rather, Job's success also realizes God's creative intention for humanity, which potential exceeds their theological imagination,

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<sup>542</sup> Recall Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 238–40, 262, who sees Job's struggle against God as his participation in divine creativity as he makes God repent and realize divine potential. Perdue's process theology is foreign to the book and his conception of struggle has failed to escape the *Chaoskampf* myth's obsession with brutal coercion.

and this realization deeply participates in God's redemptive intentions. There is a profoundly substantial relationship. His following intercession for them is efficacious not only because they have wronged him, but because of his superlative merit. The demonstrative dynamic is analogous to Abraham's obedience undergirding the Temple's efficacy in Gen 22.<sup>543</sup> The Suffering Servant's atonement for those who wronged him (Isa 53:4–6) may be related to both the demonstrative and participative dynamics. The cosmic significance of Job's submission is implied by the whirlwind speech, but not explicitly stated, let alone given mythological elaboration.

The whirlwind thus provides premises for new mythologizing. It clearly negates the previous mythological traditions by adapting the familiar mythological complex: from the friends' self-contained cosmic system of worldly retribution free from evil, to the classic *Chaoskampf* mythological complex, to Job's distortion of the same. It also offers a creative beginning for a new synthesis, especially with the created Leviathan. Suffering is part of God's counsel, a critical element in humanity's telic glorification. Nonetheless, pride leads to real wickedness especially including imperial devastations, and wicked humanity has its cosmic counterpart in the proud Leviathan. Evil is thus real and active, though not primordial. The nature of this antagonist and the purpose of suffering is not clear from the whirlwind's speech. But the values advanced here are largely deductive in nature even as they are offered mythologically, similar to Job's speculations.

The book in its present form, of course, offers a mythological elaboration of how these values might be instantiated. The Satan and the Leviathan naturally correspond in

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<sup>543</sup> Buber, *Prophetic Faith*, 196, also notes that the phrase, "my servant, Job, will pray for you," 42:8 uses "the same phrase," as Gen 20:7 where Abraham prays for Abimelech. The similarity is actually only one word, תפלל, and Abraham's status as prophet, not servant let alone innocent sufferer, is the occasion.



their mythological functions: from causing suffering and existential chaos, to their potentially beneficial functions, to being creatures whose pride puts them in tense relationship to the creator. The precise historical relationship between the Satan and the poetry is uncertain. What this analysis does preclude, however, is the common position that the poetry simply satirizes the prose tale. Rather, the whirlwind speech creatively offers a profound defense of the goodness of creation against the friends and supports the mythological values of the prologue.

Finally, this Leviathan mythologizing must be seen as a reaction to and synthesis of Israel's previous traditions, as the whirlwind speech engages the human speakers. The friends' Deuteronomic representation of the doctrine of retribution was couched in a monotheistic mythology that suppressed the storm-god, *Chaoskampf* motif. All supernatural powers were effectively agents of God's direct justice, as in Deut 32. They allowed no other explanation for suffering than just punishment in proportion to sins.

Job's resurrection of the storm-god motif involves a distortion of the myth, as he shares their monotheistic perspective and therefore could not use the chaos monster as an etiology for evil. He invoked the monsters primarily as rhetorical flourishes to convey the incongruity of God's attention (e.g., 7:12). Job used this myth to portray the cosmos as fundamentally chaotic and to attribute chaos directly to God. He thus used Israel's language of lament to subvert the Israelite theology of covenant in a politico-historical context. Job also used the language of Israel's anthropological and covenantal devotional traditions, from Genesis to Isaiah, to explore the possibility of a supra-historical vindication of those traditions and solution to the problem of divine justice. His use of

exilic and post-exilic literature was particularly poignant, as he characterized all human, historical experience as the exile of Isa 40:2 (Job 7:1, 14:14).

God's response includes the monotheistic premise, excluding the simple dualism of the traditional storm-god myth. However, against the friends and like Job, God adapts the storm-god myth and acknowledges the reality of chaos and evil. Unlike Job, however, God emphasizes the continued power and reality of this divine antagonist, created though it is. Job had merely asked whether he was the dragon (7:12) to evoke the incongruity of God's attention to his person. God insists on the Leviathan's enduring mythological significance and indicates that proud and wicked humans are in the Leviathan's service. God thereby intimates to Job the danger of his pride despite his otherwise impeccable moral status. By maintaining his proud contention against the Creator, Job imitates the Leviathan and participates in his reign. Job's humbling results in his reconciliation with God, his disavowal of the forces of chaos, his eventual restoration, and most importantly his glorification as God's servant, his participation in the Creator's vision. He might not yet rejoice over creation's goodness as the sons of God (38:7), but he acknowledges that he was ignorant in rejecting it.

This submission is of profound cosmic significance, as the poet explores the meaning of innocent suffering. The poet follows Isaiah's lead, reconsidering the nature of divine power and identifying the "arm of the LORD" with an innocent and obedient suffering servant. The poet thereby defends the divine counsel (38:2) and justice (40:8) in creating a cosmos allowing freedom and room for evil (38:4–11), as the necessary conditions of a profoundly meritorious human piety. By pointing to cavalry and the Leviathan, however, he indicates that our proud abuse of freedom results in real evil, not

directly willed, but permitted in the divine plan for creation. That evil in turn results in tragedies which can be sublime in their tragic beauty or terror, as evidenced in God's apparent praise of the warhorse and the Leviathan's sheer power. Goodness can come from this evil, as humanity's potential for merit increases in the context of superfluous evil. But it remains an excess, for which humans and the Leviathan are directly responsible and which results from God's permissive will, not his perfect will. Thus, the poet preserves the tradition of the antagonist against the Deuteronomic tradition, as represented by Job's friends, and also against Second Isaiah, but he makes the antagonist of a different sort.

## CHAPTER 4: GOD AND THE SATAN ON HUMAN PIETY AND DIVINE JUSTICE

The prologue's mythological perspective is defined by the divine council, by the Satan's role and relationship to God, and how they affect Job. The material is shorter than the last three chapters' materials, and it is prosaic narrative rather than highly polished, poetic rhetoric. However, the material is subtle and requires careful treatment. Also, it potentially enjoys the most privileged perspective, since it works at the level of celestial, narrative reality compared to the humans' misperception and God's omissive discourse. This potential privilege makes the prose's significance critical. Accordingly, I will attempt not only to assess this perspective's theology but to evaluate its relationship to the poetry to establish its privilege. The thematic, terminological, and ironic relationship between the poetry and the prose will serve both to develop their relationship and to evoke the prose's full force. We are in a strong position to evaluate this relationship per my previous examination of the poet's allusive rhetoric and mythological manipulation.

***The Scene: The Divine Council***

The prologue's celestial setting is a type-scene, widely attested from Canaan to Mesopotamia.<sup>544</sup> As a type-scene, it retains several features found among Israel's neighbors. This includes the beings denoted by, "the sons of the gods" (בני האלהים; 1:6, 2:1), identified as angels by the later tradition (perhaps the poet himself, cf. Job 38:7).<sup>545</sup> As stock phrasing corresponding to the type scene, their title does not necessarily indicate

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<sup>544</sup> See Min Kee, "The Heavenly Council and its Type-scene," *JSOT* 31 (2007), 259–73, and Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods*.

<sup>545</sup> As the poet identifies the sons of the gods with the stars in the context of creation, it may be that he thus indicates their created status, per Gen 1 where the stars are explicitly created. Recall Fishbane's position, "Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern" 153–55, that Job is familiar with the creation account of Gen 1, and my comments on Job 3 and 38 in the last two chapters.

theogony, divine begetting, or polytheism.<sup>546</sup> Rather, the term should be understood as a fixed form similar to Ps 82:1's "council of 'El," which is tantamount to divine council or the council of God despite its polytheistic mythological background.<sup>547</sup>

With this term so understood, the passage's simplicity and theological orthodoxy from the monarchical Yahwist's perspective are striking, compared to the Hebrew Bible's other passages evoking the divine council. I now review three such passages picturing or alluding to the divine council in the Hebrew Bible: Ps 82, Deut 32, and Dan 7.

Psalm 82 no doubt would have been interpreted similar to the Hebrew Bible's tendency to collapse the themes proper to 'El and Ba'al into the one deity, the supreme and transcendent storm-god, the LORD God.<sup>548</sup> That is, the bulk of the Hebrew Bible conditions us to see precisely two parties in the psalm: the God of Israel and the other "sons of the gods," i.e., mere angels. Nonetheless, the chapter is susceptible to and even inclines towards a binitarian or polytheistic reading.<sup>549</sup> God, or Yahweh,<sup>550</sup> takes his stand in the council of 'El (אל; Ps 82:1). The verb, נצב, even suggests that God is not presiding, but presenting himself at 'El's council, since the type-scene

<sup>546</sup> Seow, *Job*, 271, reports that the precise phrase occurs only 5 times: Job 1:6, 2:1, 38:7 (בני אלהים), Gen 6:2, 4. It is perhaps significant that Job uses this term from Gen 6, considering the negative role of the Sons of God in Gen 6 and its legacy in apocalyptic literature as the predominant etiology of evil. Variant forms establish the phrase as typical of the divine council type-scene: בני אלים occurs in Pss 29:1, 89:7; בני אלוהים occurs in Deut 32:8 per 4QDeut<sup>i</sup>, col. XII; and בני עליין occurs in Ps 82:6.

<sup>547</sup> Gordis, *Job*, 13–14 also sees this passage in contrast to Gen 6:2, where the "pagan mythological background... is still palpable," and he points to the "sons of God" as the heavenly bodies in Job 38:7 and the Hebrew Bible's habit of referring to angels as such to substantiate his reading.

<sup>548</sup> E.g., Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods*, 156, describes the unification of the themes corresponding to 'El and Ba'al in the Lord at Sinai, as God is the transcendent lawgiver who appears in the storm.

<sup>549</sup> Cf. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 6–7, 135–36.

<sup>550</sup> Kee, "The Heavenly Council," 264, suggests that we replace אלהים with יהוה in Ps 82:1, since the psalm belongs to the so-called Elohist psalter (Pss 42–83), where the divine name is habitually signified by the generic title for God. The argument is particularly strong here, given the psalm's evident usage of the term, אלהים, to refer to the singular God (v 1) on the one hand and the larger class of gods (v 6) on the other.

typically portrays the reigning deity as seated, while his attendants stand.<sup>551</sup> It seems to be God who addresses the gods as the sons of the Most-High (אֲנִי־אֵמַרְתִּי אַתֶּם אֱלֹהִים וּבְנֵי עֲלִיּוֹן) (כלכם; Ps 82:6), potentially differentiating God from this other deity, 'El 'Elyon.

Deuteronomy 32 reflects a strong monotheistic impulse. Israel's monolatry is predicated not only on the covenant, but on the categorical supremacy of Yahweh vis-à-vis the false or so-called gods of the nations, whatever supernatural beings the author had in mind (e.g., Deut 32:16–18, 21, 30–31, 37–43). We saw in chapter one how the poet alludes to these dynamics in portraying the friends' mythology with emasculated deities serving God's just order. Nonetheless, Deut 32:8–9 also conceptually associates Yahweh with the other 'sons of God' (בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים) since he too inherits his own people.<sup>552</sup> In this reading, Yahweh and the other 'sons of God' receive their peoples from the Most-High (עֲלִיּוֹן; Deut 32:8). The chapter's monotheistic bent pushes us to a kosher interpretation of the phrase and title, such that the Most-High is Yahweh who retains Israel as his own, entrusting the nations to lesser beings. But that bent may come from a later hand. If we read Deut 32 as a unified composition (whether for historical or literary reasons<sup>553</sup>), the categorical superiority of Yahweh to the other 'sons of God' leaves his relationship to the Most-High undefined.<sup>554</sup> That the chapter bequeathed an uncomfortable legacy is clear,

<sup>551</sup> Cf. 1 Kgs 22:19 where Yahweh sits and the heavenly host stands at ready (יְהוָה יֹשֵׁב ... צֹוֵא הַשָּׁמַיִם עֹמֵד), Isa 6:1–2, where Yahweh again sits while the seraphim stand above (שֹׁרְפָהִים עֹמְדִים מִמַּעַל לוֹ), Ps 29 where Yahweh sits enthroned (29:10) while the בְּנֵי אֱלֹהִים attend him with worship (29:1–2), and Dan 7, where the Ancient of Days sits (v 9), myriads minister to the Ancient of Days, standing before him (קְדֻמוֹהֵי יְקוֹמוֹן; v 10), and the Son of Man is presented to the Ancient of Days (וְקְדֻמוֹהֵי הַקְּרִבּוּהִי; v 13). See also Carol L. Meyers and Eric M. Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, vol. 25B of *The Anchor Bible Commentary Series* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1987), 182–83, for a discussion of עֹמֵד in the heavenly council type-scene.

<sup>552</sup> Following the famous Qumran reading 4QDeut<sup>f</sup>, col. XII, supported by the LXX (ἀγγέλων θεοῦ).

<sup>553</sup> Cf. Christensen, *Deuteronomy*, 784–94 for a detailed treatment of the song's intricate structure.

<sup>554</sup> Pace Mullen, *The Assembly of the Gods*, 204, who considers “the preservation of such a view most remarkable,” i.e., implausible, the possibility that Yahweh could be distinct from 'Elyon in this passage, and who adduces other passages wherein they are clearly identified to conclude that it is “most probable that the writer here equates” the two. Of course, the passage is quite remarkable, and this does not settle its interpretation. It is perhaps most remarkable that the writer did not clearly identify 'Elyon and Yahweh,



name, is head of the divine council and appears in the storm underscores the synthesis.<sup>559</sup>

The book's portrayal of God as transcendent (exercising his power through decree, serenely distant, and seemingly detached like 'El) and immanent (exercising his authority in the storm, immediately involved, and personally invested like Ba'al) supports my understanding of Job as a synthesis of Hebrew traditions. The book's most privileged perspectives—God's speech and the prose's narrative level of reality—form a synthesis contrasted with the humans' theses.

Therefore, the book's portrayal of Yahweh does not seem to support a binitarian, *Mamre* theology. One might call the book modalistic. But it seems most fitting simply to see Yahweh as the transcendent God who freely initiates immanent contact with Job to win his servant's submission. Finally, the fact that God calls Job his servant from heaven (1:8, 2:3) and from the whirlwind (42:7–8; four times!) underscores God's synthetic portrayal. The transcendent, cosmic God is the personal God who affirms his servant.

Thus, the hypothetical third party turns out to be superfluous. We saw the creative purposes for which the poet developed this line of thinking, and those arguments still obtain. However, ultimately Job does not need the umpire of 9:33. As the poet's ambiguous speech allowed in 16:19 and 19:25, God witnesses to Job's righteousness, and God vindicates and restores Job. The functions and purposes of this third party, personal God, are taken up by Yahweh who is both transcendent and immanent. There is an irony to Job's speech, and the poet does refute the tradition of the personal god as an intercessor before the transcendent God, but it is not because there is no personal deity as

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<sup>559</sup> The human speakers' variety of terms for God all refer to the same deity, reflecting this historical phenomenon. The variety of the terms indicates that the poet was conscious of his own religious texts' eclectic background.



Peggy Day argues.<sup>560</sup> It is because the transcendent God is personal. This literary motif must be examined, of course, in relation to the only specific celestial third party whose existence is portrayed in the prologue (or at any narrative level), the Satan.

The Satan's role is only explicitly described in these first two chapters. Accordingly, it would be tempting to comment on each verse in a linear progression. However, the text is too ambiguous for this to suffice. Rather, in keeping with this dissertation's approach, I will consider the Satan as the author's creative adaptation of Israel's scriptural traditions and historical experience. Accordingly, I will review the term's background, evaluate the passages in which 'satan' occurs as a celestial function or character and locate Job amongst those texts, and I will evaluate the dialectic and irony the author establishes between the poetry and the prose. Then I will conclude with some observations about the Satan in the prologue.

### ***The Satan: Lexical and Historical Front Matter***

The term, השטן, is variously derived from שוט, 'to roam, or rove,' or שטן, 'to be an adversary' or 'to accuse.' The latter is the more intuitive and obvious, and there is no doubt that earthly 'accusers' well pre-dated the celestial Satan (e.g., 1 Sam 19:22, Ps 109:6). Some scholars, however, argue that the Satan's activity as "roaming" is the likely root of his title, and that his name shifted as he came to be viewed as enemy and accuser.<sup>561</sup> The former seems the more likely to me, though the argument seems interminable. Thankfully the argument is irrelevant to our purposes. If the Satan himself was initially "the rover," it does not lessen his early associations with opposition and

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<sup>560</sup> Peggy Day, *An Adversary in Heaven* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1988), 103–05. We will examine Day's arguments in more detail below.

<sup>561</sup> See Pope, *Job*, 10.

accusation (Zech 3:1, Num 22:32); if he was an adversary from his first emergence in Hebrew religion, it does not lessen Job's portrayal of him as a hostile rover (מְשׁוֹט; 1:7). Job clearly portrays the Satan as accusatory adversary and as demonic rover even if the latter was associated by pun.<sup>562</sup>

The noun, שָׁטָן, occurs in five passages describing earthly figures. At times, the term clearly refers to adversaries in a non-judicial context (1 Sam 29:4, 1 Kgs 5:16–20). Other times it potentially admits of a juridical sense, but it is not necessary (2 Sam 19:17–24, 1 Kgs 11). These passages carry an effect of accusation, even if the actions are not intended by the adversaries as such.<sup>563</sup> In one passage, Ps 109:6, a juridical context is clear (Ps 109:2–7), as the psalmist wishes for an 'accuser' who will ensure that David's enemy will be found guilty at court (Ps 109:7); David's enemies themselves have slandered him, accusing him (יִשְׁטָנוּ; 109:4) with falsehoods (109:2–4). Finally, in every case the accuser is adversarial.

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<sup>562</sup> See Day, *An Adversary*, 17–21, for a lengthier attempt to resolve the term's etymology, before she acknowledges the legitimacy of folk-etymologies for interpretation. Day, *ibid.*, 20–21, rejects the argument made by Pope and Tur-Sinai, that the shift from שָׁ to שָׁטָן would be negligible as a mere diacritical mark in the Masoretic tradition, arguing that the sound itself is enough to guarantee it derived from a different root. This argument does not seem tenable, as the Shibboleth episode of Judg 12:6 demonstrates a fair amount of contemporaneous regional dialectic variation in the same term.

<sup>563</sup> Day, *An Adversary*, 26, argues that David refers to Abishai as fulfilling a royal court function, not an office, as an accuser against Shimei's previous offenses. This is a thoroughly defensible understanding of the text, but there seems to be a viable alternative. David might not refer to Abishai as accusing on David's behalf, but as an adversary to himself personally. Since David has survived and received his kingdom back due to divine mercy, he may consider it dangerous to refuse that same mercy to Shimei. As such, Abishai's advice would be to David's destruction. The satans of 1 Kgs 11 are political adversaries, who arise as a result of Solomon's transgression. Accordingly, Gerhard von Rad, "διαβολος," TDNT 2:73, argues that their accusation presumes the Deuteronomic legal view of covenantal law, and that they are implicitly accusers. Day, *ibid.*, 29–30 observes that they imply a breach but are not accusers per se. The symmetry between 1 Kgs 5:16–20 and 1 Kgs 11 confirms her qualification. In the alternative reading about Abishai as an adversary described above, Abishai would perform such an implicit accusation: if David fails to extend mercy, he would offend the mercy which restored his kingdom. Of course, David's career is defined by mercy at critical points, as his confession precedes his forgiveness (2 Sam 12:14) and contrasts with Saul's excuses (1 Sam 13:11–14, 15:24), and as he is remembered in Ps 51.

### *The Celestial Satan: Four Passages and a Historical Consideration*

The celestial Satan features prominently in three Persian era texts, 1 Chron 21, Zech 3, and Job 1–2, and the term is applied to the Angel of the Lord in Num 22. It will be expedient to review these passages briefly, and then to look more closely at the Satan’s likeliest origin in Judah’s experience. I am especially concerned to examine what ‘satanic’ themes these texts include. I hazard the anachronistic term ‘satanic’ to evoke the challenge modern readers have in approaching the term’s early occurrences. On the one hand, I agree in principle with Peggy Day’s thesis in her dissertation, *An Adversary in Heaven*, that “there is no satan in the Hebrew Bible,” by which she means: that the archdemon of later tradition is not described in these earlier texts, that we cannot retroject those traditions in our historical inquiry as to the character’s role, and that the latter themes are not present in the early texts “in utero,” as though the later traditions were genetically encoded and unfolded with telic necessity. On the other hand, I find Day’s treatment profoundly problematic. Day is but an example of scholars who seek to counter the fundamentalist approach that reads too much into the Satan figure but who err in their minimalist accounts trying to exonerate him altogether.<sup>564</sup> I will try, therefore, to take a

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<sup>564</sup> Job may have no arbiter in heaven, but the accuser lacks not for advocates on earth. Tellingly, such arguments go from providing an alternative reading, taking providing as proving, and proceeding to jettison data that does not correspond to the reading. No less a figure than Clines, *Job 1–20*, 22–27, will do for an example. Clines provides his rather unconvincing, apologetic interpretation of the Satan (22–23), and argues that the Satan’s question is in earnest and not rhetorical (25–26); he recognizes God’s boast in Job, but excludes it as provocative per his prior rehabilitation of the Satan (24); most astonishingly, he acknowledges the Satan’s “damned if he won’t” and peremptory language, but he chalks this up to the prologue’s “false naivety,” arguing that “nothing consequential can be inferred from the Satan’s language” (26–27). Clines uses his notion of “false naivety” to acknowledge and dismiss as irrelevant any data that does not fit into his reading. While his article, “False Naivety in the Prologue of Job,” 127–36, well observes the subtlety of the text that evades scholars, he might have simply observed that the text is too subtle for casual reading. His use of ‘false naivety’ is vicious, as he, *Job 1–20*, 25 dismisses inconvenient data and subtleties as “too sophisticated” a reading for the text, and insists on his reading, lest you “fall prey to the artful naivety of the narrative.” Minimalist, as maximalist, hermeneutics must be avoided.

more moderate approach, neither retrojecting later traditions nor advocating for the Satan's neutral character.

Apparently the term's earliest application to a celestial being occurs in Num 22. This passage has the Angel of the Lord come out against Balaam as a *satan* (אֱנוֹכִי יִצְאָתִי; Num 22:32). As with the majority of earthly satans, the Angel of the Lord takes an adversarial stance to Balaam, and his role directly results from Balaam's fault. So, the angel's presence carries both themes as most earthly satans: opposition with implicit accusation. Here the term indicates a function. There is no indication of a proper office, let alone a particular character who holds it. The three Persian texts are rather different.

In 1 Chr 21:1, a *satan*, or Satan (שָׂטָן), incites (וַיִּסֶּח; cf. Job 2:3, וַתְּסִיתֵנִי) David to take a census of Israel, which census angers God (v 7) and David confesses as sin (v 8). The figure is absent in the same story's parallel account in 2 Sam 24, where God's anger burns and moves David to have a pretext for punishing Israel.<sup>565</sup> Thus, Satan is generally understood as cleaning up God's portrayal in 1 Chr 21. The celestial Satan is both adversarial, as his provocation results in the partial destruction of God's people, and implicitly accusatory, as he exposes David's lack of faith or resolve in faith.<sup>566</sup> Finally,

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<sup>565</sup> Grammatically, the subject of the verb 'to incite' may be either the Lord or his wrath. While the Lord is the most intuitive subject, it is possible to read the Lord's anger itself as the subject, whether hypostasized or as synecdoche.

<sup>566</sup> The primary purposes of such a census would be evaluating the country's military strength or for establishing a tax basis. The former seems to have been the primary focus here (v 5), though the latter is relevant for Solomon's later kingdom building. See further, Jacob Myers, *1 Chronicles*, vol. 12 of *The Anchor Bible Commentary Series* (New York: Doubleday, 1965), 146–47. Solomon's program is of course deeply problematic. Joab seems to indicate that David ought to trust God to continue multiplying Israel, making it militarily stronger, and providing for David's military success. Day, *An Adversary*, 134–36, offers an alternative but incredible exegesis of the passage. Day argues that the chronicler is not concerned with cleaning up God's image, based on the lying spirit's deception of Ahab at God's bidding and on God causing Rehoboam to ignore the good advice. Neither of these scenarios pose the same problem 2 Sam 24 does: both Rehoboam and Ahab are wicked kings, and their deception leads them to effect their own punishment, fulfilling earlier oracles; 2 Sam 24 portrays God desiring to punish David and looking for a pretext, so that God can attack Israel. Day, *ibid.*, 136, also argues that the chronicler seeks to excuse David, not God, and she locates the fault in Joab's failure to count everyone rather than in David's initial

there is a pun, as the satan ‘incites’ David (וַיִּסֵּת; 1 Chr 21:1). We will see that all three dynamics obtain in Job.

In Zech 3:1, ‘the Satan,’ stands at Joshua’s side to accuse him (הַשָּׂטָן עֹמֵד עַל יְמִינוֹ (לְשׁוֹנוֹ). It is irrelevant whether the Satan accuses Joshua of personal faults or, per Joshua’s representation of Judah, rejects the resumption of Temple worship at Jerusalem.<sup>567</sup> Either way, the Satan represents the principle of unmitigated punishment or justice exclusive of mercy, per his challenge to mercy and his adversarial accusation against God’s people and their restoration.<sup>568</sup> Furthermore, the Satan’s hostility toward Joshua shows tension in his standing before God. The Angel of the Lord invokes the Lord to rebuke the Satan. By opposing Joshua, the Satan opposes the Lord’s will to have mercy and restore his people.

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command (v 6–7). Her argument ignores many details of the text, such as David’s confession of guilt (v 8), God’s offer to punish David and not Joab (v 10–13), and David’s comment that his census was a great evil and the cause of Israel’s destruction (v 17). Far from exonerating David and blaming Joab, the story ironically makes the immoral Joab superior to David on this occasion, as he prophetically warns David (v 3), and he abhors the command that will attract God’s wrath (v 6): Joab abhors “the word of the king” (דְּבַר הַמֶּלֶךְ; v 6), and same this thing (עַל־הַדְּבָר הַזֶּה; v 7) was evil in God’s eyes.

For better treatments of the episode, see Roddy Braun, *1 Chronicles*, vol. 14 of the *Word Biblical Commentary* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1986), 216–18, who recognizes that 1 Chr 21 actually emphasizes David’s guilt through several features, including Joab’s ironic superiority, and Myers, *1 Chronicles*, 147–48, who observes the Chronicler’s accentuation of David’s confession of guilt compared to 2 Sam 24:17.<sup>567</sup> Meyer, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 185 acknowledges the inability to answer even this question, although they consider it more likely that the office rather than the individual is being scrutinized. There is no explicit indication of any moral shortcoming on Joshua’s part in any post-exilic material; some such sin is the conjecture of scholars (e.g., Day, *An Adversary*, 121), though it remains possible. On the other hand, the latter is clearly at least part of the situation, as Zech 3:2 refers to God’s continued election of Jerusalem. As generally concerned as Zechariah is with the restoration of the Temple and the legitimate resumption of its services, it is only natural that the legitimacy of high priesthood should require addressing. Of course, Zech 3:7 seriously urges Joshua regarding his future conduct, but this need not reflect on some past gross sin of his, so much as recall the failure of Joshua’s ancestors.

<sup>568</sup> Day, *An Adversary*, 125–26, rejects this reading as anti-semitic and concludes instead that the Satan is merely a mythological assurance against communal objections to Joshua’s fit. Of course, there is no evidence of communal objections against Joshua, but even if such lies behind the Satan, she does not treat his significance seriously. Her reference to anti-semitism is a red-herring but worth addressing. Day, *ibid.*, 125, suggests that the Satan “interpreted as the champion of law over grace may present us with a vestige of the medieval notion that equated the devil and the Jew,” per the polemical charge that Judaism is more concerned with strict observance of law rather than the primacy of divine grace. There is a tragic irony to the discussion. First, she would remove from this passage (and by her logic, from the Hebrew Bible) the theme of divine grace’s primacy over strict application of just punishment, thereby supporting the caricature of a legalistic Judaism. Second, it is Day who equates the Satan with Jews, as she makes the Satan the mythological personification of Jews who accused Joshua of being unworthy of the priesthood.

While there is no overt demonic revolt in this passage, the Satan has clearly been called to change his stance vis-à-vis law, mercy, God's people, and God himself. In other words, the Satan has not fallen but must repent. Of course, conflict is not culturally or biblically foreign to the divine council scene (e.g., Ps 82).

Finally, in Job the Satan roams and patrols the earth (משוט בארץ ומהתהלך בה; 1:7), he has an adversarial and accusatory role towards God's servant, Job, and God charges the Satan with inciting God against Job (ותסיתני; 2:3). The significance of these themes will become clearer when I analyze the dialectic between the prose and the poetry. His indictment of Job's piety is a cynical indictment of God's *modus operandi* with his servants, a cynical rejection of the value God attributes to the relationship. The wager,<sup>569</sup> particularly considering the Satan's repeated self-imprecatory language (...אם־לא; 1:11, 2:5), accentuates the Satan's pride vis-à-vis God, lending still further to the tension between him and the Lord.

I will attend to Job's description of the Satan more thoroughly below, but here I want to summarize what this brief survey of the Satan texts has shown. With Day, I agree that the Satan is no archdemon in overt rebellion against God, let alone a dualistic counterpart equal to God. However, I reject Day's advocacy for the Satan: he is not a neutral spirit or even merely a principle of justice. Rather, in all three texts he incites or seeks the punishment of God's people and the frustration of God's intention to bless them. In Gordis's words, the Satan is "the adversary *par excellence*, the superhuman

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<sup>569</sup> As it is traditionally called. It is somewhat fashionable to criticize this term. One scholar claims to be ignorant of any wagers in the Hebrew Bible, but there are clear examples (e.g., Jud 14:12–19, Isa 36:8). More commonly, scholars object that no terms are set, but this is pedantic. It is typical in English usage of the word, "bet," to wage nothing more than bragging rights. Isaiah 36:8, furthermore, while including terms really only makes the point that Assyria has more spare horses than Judah has infantry. Such bragging is what we seem to have in Job. The Satan stakes his and the Lord's claim to insight into Job and humanity on this test. Furthermore, the unspoken apodosis of the Satan's self-imprecation is a term of the wager.

opponent.”<sup>570</sup> In Zechariah and in Job there is more than a hint of tension between the Satan and Yahweh: in Zechariah, the Satan is rebuked for resisting God’s will in restoring Judah (whatever point he might have had); in Job, his confidence in Job’s piety’s limitations brings him to dispute with Yahweh about Job’s piety using language of self-imprecation. The type-scene of the divine council, in both Ugaritic and biblical contexts, has no shortage of proud offense and rebellion against the high god and his legitimate rule (e.g., Yamm’s emissaries, Isa 14:12–15, Ps 82). Textually and culturally, there is every reason to see the Satan’s conduct as hubris in the fullest sense.

At this point, I want to consider the historical origin of the Satan figure. A. L. Oppenheim has written on “The Eyes of the Lord,” arguing that the biblical trope originates from Israel’s experience of the “eyes and ears of the King,” a network of informants who report to the king, giving him “godlike omnipresence and, hence, omniscience.”<sup>571</sup> According to Oppenheim, the trauma of such surveillance results in the “demonization” of the political institution, that is, the process in which a human, political entity is mythologized as a demonic one.<sup>572</sup> Uncoincidentally, the trope and associated language occur in our three Persian texts that present the Satan.

The phrase, “the eyes of the Lord” occurs in Zech 4:10, as the Angel’s interpretation of Zechariah’s vision of the lampstand. These eyes “rove” throughout the earth (משוטטים בכל־הארץ; 4:10). While these eyes might be interpreted as merely symbolic representations of divine omniscience, the other examples clearly present mythological

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<sup>570</sup> Gordis, *Job*, 14.

<sup>571</sup> A. L. Oppenheim, “The Eyes of the Lord,” *JAOS* 88 (1968): 173–75.

<sup>572</sup> Oppenheim, “The Eyes of the Lord,” 175–77. The Zechariah passages are themselves enough to validate this process. Oppenheim, *ibid.*, 177–79 also provides two examples from cuneiform, wherein he documents the historical progression from obnoxious political entity to mythological hypostasis.

personalities reporting to God. The cavalry of ch. 1 and the chariotry of ch. 6 reflect the Persian system most clearly. The vision of the horsemen in Zech 1:7–11 dates itself to the second year of Darius’s reign (520 BC), which saw Darius end a civil war that had threatened the very survival of the Persian empire. The cavalry report that all the earth is at rest, and the Angel of the Lord laments that the Persian empire has not fallen according to the prophet’s hope for Judah’s restoration (1:12–17).<sup>573</sup> The language is particularly significant as the Lord sends out the cavalry to patrol the earth (שְׁלַח יְהוָה לְהַתְּהַלֵּךְ בָּאָרֶץ; 1:10). The chariotry of Zech 6:1–8 go out after presenting themselves to the Lord (יִצְאוּת; 6:5), when they are sent out to patrol the earth (הַתְּהַלְכוּ; 6:7).

For the example of the “eyes of the king” trope in Chronicles, we have to cast more broadly. The trope occurs in 2 Chr 16:9, as the “eyes of the Lord roam about throughout the earth” (יְהוָה עֵינָיו מְשַׁטְטוֹת בְּכֹל הָאָרֶץ) to strengthen those who are faithful. Rhetorically, the prophet Hanani refers to the eyes’ benevolent aspect, but the passage is a negative judgement on Asa’s distrust and a promise of his future suffering.

Of course, in Job the Satan presents himself to God (לְהִתִּיצֵב; 1:6) and accounts for his own activity as roaming and patrolling in the earth (מִשּׁוֹט בָּאָרֶץ וּמִהַתְּהַלֵּךְ בָּהּ; 1:7). Considering that all three books that include the Satan also include a mythological adaptation of the “eyes of the king” trope, it seems that both tropes entered into the Hebrew tradition at once, and their connection in Zechariah and Job is not coincidental. That Zechariah’s historical context is Judah’s relationship to the Persian empire, that he perspicuously models the trope on the Persian empire’s network of informants, and that

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<sup>573</sup> And, apparently, Haggai’s (cf. Haggai 2:20–23). See Joseph Blenkinsopp, *David Remembered: Kingship and National Identity in Ancient Israel* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2013), 79–83.



he makes such extended and various use of the trope all make Zechariah the likeliest candidate for its introduction into Hebrew Scripture.

Job likely modeled his character on Zechariah's.<sup>574</sup> This corresponds to my understanding of the book as an eclectic dramatization of Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions. It is possible that the poet no longer alludes and adapts here but creates whole cloth. However, Job unites in one character, the Satan, themes spread out over four chapters and attributed to different parties in Zechariah, suggesting the Joban poet's synthetic integration of those themes.<sup>575</sup> The particularly creative adaptation in this synthesis is that the Joban poet attributes to the Satan the "roving" that Zechariah and Chronicles apply to God's eyes, while God's knowledge of Job is simple and without mythological mediation. I will revisit the significance of this adaptation as I treat the dialectic between the poetry and the prose below.

In Zechariah, of course, the Satan is not described as roving, patrolling, or presenting himself to God. Also, all the roving "eyes and ears" of the Lord have no negative portrayal. They do not accuse; they only report to God, the Angel of the Lord, and the prophet. It is desirable, therefore, to consider what historical experience might have prompted this synthesis. I submit as a likely solution the experience of the real "eyes and ears" of the Persian emperors. Regardless of the timing of the finalizations of Ezra, Zechariah, and Job, Ezra reports the experience of the post-exilic Jews being reported upon and accused by their neighbors to the king. Ezra 4:4–5 reports that such

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<sup>574</sup> Of course, we cannot be certain about this historical question. The theory offered here, however, is plausible and the simplest explanation. Furthermore, since Job clearly post-dates Second Isaiah (540's–30's BCE), its post-dating Zechariah (520 and later) is likely.

<sup>575</sup> I.e., the cavalry of Zech 1 and the chariotry of Zech 6 present themselves to God and patrol the earth, whereas the eyes of the Lord are said to rove in Zech 4, and the Satan appears in his own right in Zech 3.

denunciations resulted from spite regularly into the reign of Darius. Ezra 4:6–7 somewhat awkwardly reports two such events, and 4:6 specifically refers to these slanderers as sending a written accusation (שטנה) to the emperor.

***The Satan Through the Poet's Looking-Glass: Dialectic, Irony, and Commentary***

At this point, I turn to the poet's rhetorical effect as he established key motifs relating the prose to the poetry. Habel has called attention to this literary strategy, applying Alter's principle of "signals of continuity," as he traced key terms (*Leitwörter*) relating the prose and the poetry. As Habel notes, these terms establish a profound literary unity to the book of Job.<sup>576</sup> This suggests that either: (1) the poet crafted his contribution to exploit the prose in an extraordinarily nuanced way, (2) another author updated the prose and/or poetry to correspond better to the poetry and/or prose, or (3) that the poet himself crafted the prose (whatever material he began with) for his rhetorical purposes. This last explanation is the simplest and seems the most likely for several reasons. The rhetorical strategies relating the prose to the poetry are very similar to the rhetorical strategies at play within the poetry. The dialectic established between the prose and the poetry bears directly on the book's themes and goes to the book's heart. If the second option were entertained, it would be an extraordinarily tedious process, and it would so transform the book as to make the editor responsible for a far more meaningful book. Finally, both seem to date to the same era, since the poet uses Second Isaiah and there is no evidence that 'the Satan' existed before the Persian era.

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<sup>576</sup> Habel, "The Narrative Art of Job: Applying the Principles of Robert Alter," *JSOT* 27 (1983): 101–111. While Habel only calls attention to the phenomenon here, the dynamics are more extensively pursued in his 1985 commentary, e.g., idem, *Job*, 83.

Of course, literary unity does not itself settle the question of meaning. A skeptical poet could have updated the pious tale to be more rhetorically effective, and he could have refuted his contemporaries' experimentation with the Satan character. There are, however, two major considerations that militate against this possibility.

First, the creative purposes of the poetry invalidate reducing Job to skeptical literature. Job's speculative argument for a post-mortem vindication appears to be one of the poet's chief creative tasks. Recall, that speculation is presented as the only viable alternative to the third-party, personal god solution. The prose's portrayal of an adversarial third party and the whirlwind's *de facto* representation of the LORD as the transcendent and personal God undermine the third party, personal god, solution. Finally, the whirlwind itself provides too earnest a defense of God's good creation.

Secondly, the skeptical reading reduces the Satan character to a deconstructive role. For Day, for example, the ironies between the prose portrayal of the Satan and the poetic commentary on the personal god merely serve to undermine the personal god motif.<sup>577</sup> It seems *a priori* unlikely that the Satan would be introduced only to refute the third-party, personal god motif. More likely the Satan serves a substantial creative purpose. Recall in this regard God's portrayal of Yamm and Leviathan in the whirlwind as created antagonists and forces of chaos, who are responsible for human suffering and who manifest (especially the latter) an ominous relationship with God. Since God secures Job's (and implicitly the ideal reader's) submission by making himself personally available and by indicating to Job that there is an antagonistic third party, the speech obliquely commends the Satan's importance as an etiology of suffering.

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<sup>577</sup> Day, *An Adversary*, 88–106. Critically, Day's argument is based on the correct observation of irony and on the error of accepting Tsevat's indefensible reading of the whirlwind. See further just below.

Now I will turn to several of the key terms that carry the book's motifs throughout the sections. These terms encapsulate the ironic misperception of the human speakers, reveal the full significance to the whirlwind's hints about evil and suffering, and thereby comment on the Satan's cosmic significance.

The first example I will evaluate here is the motif of God's "hedging," occurring in 1:10 (... שכת בעדו), 3:23 (ויסך אלוה בעדו), and 38:8 (ויסך). While I treated this last chapter considering the whirlwind, it is necessary consider its implications for the prologue. Day identifies the correlation between 1:10 and 3:23 to warrant her identification of irony as a critical theme in the text.<sup>578</sup> Day also accepts Tsevat's portrayal of the amoral deity in the whirlwind. Between the theme of irony and the supposedly amoral character of God, Day concludes that the book undermines the theme of the personal god.<sup>579</sup> This is the Satan's sole purpose: he ironically undermines the personal god motif and renders the classic, just worldview of the primitive fable absurd. Of course, I addressed the morality of the whirlwind speech in chapter 3, and I offered an alternative function of the third-party motif that accounts for far more of the book in chapter 2.

Here, we need to recall the effect of all three passages. Day only considers the ironic relationship between 1:10 and 3:23. This axis suggests one of two interpretations: per the book's skeptical interpretation, 3:23 can be an earnestly bitter satire of the prologue's representation of divine sponsorship and protection; alternatively, per the book's narrative logic, 3:23 can be seen as a tragically ironic and inadequate—even if sympathetic—misperception of nature of human suffering and God's role in it. The book can be pious or skeptical, and these verses' dialectic encapsulates Job's potential.

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<sup>578</sup> Day, *And Adversary*, 72–74.

<sup>579</sup> Day, *An Adversary*, 88–106.

However, as God repeats the motif in 38:8, the skeptic cannot simply wield the poetry against the prose, as the whirlwind complicates the simple axis. I will not repeat last chapter's analysis, but recall that God's hedging of the Sea is a limitation of chaos, a necessary condition for human prosperity. In the prologue, the Satan states that God has protected Job, and we have no reason to disbelieve him. Thus, the prologue's premise corresponds to God's testimony. Furthermore, God continues to restrict the prologue's antagonist and the chaos he effects, as God sets precise limits on the Satan. While Job perceives the Satan's attacks as God's, in fact God restricts Job's constrictor.

A second example with tight and cogent rhetorical usage is the term, *לֵנִם*, occurring four times (1:9, 2:3, 9:17, 22:6) representing all four major dramatic perspectives. The term may be literally translated "for nothing" and subtly captures the various perspectives.<sup>580</sup> The first use is the Satan's rhetorical question in 1:9: "does Job fear God for nothing?" The question indicates that Job's piety is motivated by the expectation of reward. Thus, the Satan asserts that if God takes away the reward, he will remove the motive and Job's pious fear will follow. Of course, the adverb, *לֵנִם*, can refer to effects, and not just motivation. Thus, in another context, the question can articulate the basic challenge of theodicy: are the pious rewarded? The fact that the first question cannot be tested without making the second appear to be answered in the negative is the book's fundamental problematic.<sup>581</sup>

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<sup>580</sup> There have been attempts to seize on the subtleties of the term's variances as proof of various authors, etc. Such literary rigidity is inappropriate for any literature, but especially for poetry, for Hebrew, for Hebrew poetry, and profoundly so for Job, whose poet lived on the ambiguity of terms as we have had seen. See, for example, Cho, "The Integrity of Job 1 and 42:11–17," 230–51; idem, "Job 2 and 42:7–10 as Narrative Bridge and Theological Pivot," 857–77.

<sup>581</sup> It is not the only example in the Hebrew Bible of using at least the pretense of evil to expose truth and test virtue. Abraham's temptation in Gen 22 and Solomon's command to divide the baby in 1 Kgs 3:25 both threaten evil never intended by the commanding party in order to expose the truth of the matter. While moderns are uncomfortable with and condemn this dynamic in the book of Job, Hebrew religiosity and

The second usage is God's challenge to the Satan in the second interview (2:3). Significantly, God repeats his first challenge (cf. 1:8) before alluding to the Satan's previous failed prediction (cf. 1:10). The translation, "you incited me to ruin him for nothing" (NABR) captures the phrase's ambiguity well, as "for nothing" can refer to either cause or effect. Both nuances are true and false in different senses.

Considering חנם as cause, there is a reason for the destruction: God and the Satan want to settle a question. But there remains an obvious and more important sense in which there is no cause: there is no just cause, no reason Job should suffer. Idle celestial curiosity is neither reason nor justification.<sup>582</sup> God's language can indicate as much.

Considering חנם as effect, Linafelt and Davis argue that the first test lacked "a clear result" leading "God to complain to the Adversary in 2:3 that their efforts have so far been חנם."<sup>583</sup> The argument is wildly problematic. For one thing, God's speech in 2:3 is manifestly not complaint but boast and challenge. For another, Linafelt and Davis have to misconstrue the test, arguing that the desired result is to expose Job's interiority and that the first test has been inadequate to this purpose.<sup>584</sup> Apparently, one's exterior

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culture nonetheless allowed for it, whatever its discomfort. This thematic similarity correlated Abraham and Job to a great extent, nowhere more conspicuously than in Jubilees' translation of Job's heavenly scene to Abraham's testing.

<sup>582</sup> Contra Linafelt, "Translating חנם," 636. Linafelt and Davis indicate that the reason (testing Job) excludes the 'no cause' understanding of חנם to force the 'no result' interpretation. The argument is pedantic. Further, the understanding of 'no effect' can also be affirmed and denied, as I discuss presently.

<sup>583</sup> Linafelt, "Translating חנם," 634.

<sup>584</sup> Their entire argument revolves around this mischaracterization of the wager. For example, they write that "The tests to which Job are subjected... are designed to force him to say what he really thinks, to manifest his inner life via speech," Linafelt, "Translating חנם," 632. Not only is this design entirely their imagination, it implies that the harangue of Job 3 has been his "inner life" all along, rather than being the result of Job's suffering. To be sure, 2:10 subtly foreshadows Job's effusion in ch. 3, so the distinction between interior disposition and exterior action does get introduced. To reduce the prose to this theme, however, is absurd. Furthermore, this position drives them to other incoherent arguments. They repeatedly confuse the nuances of purpose and result: for example, they distinguish between origins and ends, attributing "causes, motivations, reasons" to the former and "effects, results, purposes" to the latter, 630–31. Thus, they draw a temporal dichotomy, rather than attending to motivation (including purpose) as opposed to mere effect or result. Rather, the language of ends and purposes indicates cause, motivation, and reason. It is precisely because Job can reasonably expect the result of reward to continue that his piety can

reaction to being deprived of all material possessions and children reveals nothing about one's interior disposition. More importantly, the Satan's assertion is not about already existing, latent hate in Job. It specifically regards a development in Job's piety, an exterior reaction to his new circumstances: the Satan predicts that Job will curse God to his face. Job does not do so. Job disproves the Satan's thesis. In this sense, Job's ruin is not 'to no effect.' In fact, God amplifies his boast in Job, as not merely one who is statically perfect, etc., but as one who dynamically clings to his perfection despite his gratuitous destruction. On the other hand, if we consider the Satan's desired end, then the Satan's incitement and Job's destruction have not produced the Satan's desired effect.

This brings us to the related question of what is without cause or effect in 2:3. So far I have treated the 'destruction' as חָנַם, but it is possible that the incitement itself is חָנַם. The phrase is ambiguous: וַתְּסִיתֵנִי בֹּ לְבַלְעוֹ חָנַם. The proximity between חָנַם and destruction naturally associates them closely. But in the three-word, adverbial phrase, בֹּ לְבַלְעוֹ חָנַם, each term can apply directly to the main verb, "you incited me" (וַתְּסִיתֵנִי), so that the incitement is gratuitous. Considering the poet's subtlety, we should consider the phrase's dual meanings rather than make decisive assertions based on word order.<sup>585</sup>

There are several reasons to entertain the 'gratuitous incitement' sense of God's phrase. First, precisely because the destruction lacks just cause, the question naturally arises why the Satan would incite God. Second, the Satan's incitement has no real cause,

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be said to be motivated by it. It is because I expect and desire the light to come on that I flip the switch resulting in the light coming on. Their failure to distinguish ends from results coherently results in further confusion. They set out to argue that both 1:9 and 2:3 should be translated as referring to results (e.g., 627), but they cannot help themselves but to describe 1:9 as motivation (e.g., 632). In the same sentence they refer to its errant understanding as referring to "results" and therefore a "mere quid pro quo" (630), equating the valences they set in opposition.

<sup>585</sup> E.g., Linafelt, "Translating חָנַם," 630, n. 10. Seow, *Job*, 301, calls attention to this ambiguity and allows it to refer to both. Seow is far more aware of the author's habit of exploiting vagueness than most scholars appear to be.

God's initial comment notwithstanding. It can only stem from a cynicism about human nature and an assumption of Job's personal character. But there is no reason to attempt to destroy Job's piety rather than allow it to be what it is. Third, since God's rhetoric in 2:3 manifestly challenges the Satan and boasts in Job, it is fitting that God should imply the lack of just cause, not only for Job's destruction, but for both of the Satan's roles in that destruction. God points to the Satan's exercise of his free will, his arbitrary decision to move the discussion to Job's destruction. Fourth, the verb puns on the Satan's title and should be considered with 'accusation' and 'roaming' in Job's characterization of the Satan. Fifth, the verb is nearly always very negative.<sup>586</sup> It refers to enticing people to idolatry, injustice, and folly, through human and supernatural enticement and deception. Most notably, the verb occurs in 2 Sam 24:1 and 1 Chr 21:1, as the anger of Yahweh or Satan incite David to the census.<sup>587</sup> Such incitement is portrayed as arbitrary and destructive, and the reference to the Satan's arbitrary incitement provides an etiology for gratuitous human suffering. The irrationality of evil and suffering calls for an irrational cause, an arbitrary catalyst to set the laws of the cosmos to harmful effect, and the poet introduces the Satan whose arbitrariness answers to the absurdity of human suffering.

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<sup>586</sup> There is one real exception, the account of Achsah "enticing" her husband, Othniel, to ask her Father, Caleb, for a field, Josh 15:18/Judg 1:14. In this account, the verb is entirely neutral. A second sort of exception is an ironic rhetorical device similar to Samuel's ironic usage of 'judgement' I treated in the last chapter. In Job 36:16, Elihu refers to God's enticement of Job from distress and to a broad place of plenty, before describing the danger of allowing anger at injustice to 'entice' him and lead him astray in 36:18. Thus, the irony of the use in 36:16 is clear from the more typical use in 36:18. The verb has a similar usage in its three occurrences in 2 Chr 18, as Ahab entices (the people? Jehoshaphat?) to go up in battle (v 2), as the lying spirit entices Ahab (v 21), and God finally entices the Syrian chariot captains to quit pursuing Jehoshaphat (v 31). Thus, the Chronicler uses the term ironically to contrast God's enticement with lying spirits and wicked kings; the technique is similar to Elihu's. G. Wallis, ספר, TDOT 10:208–210, goes so far as to call the verb "always negative" and he reads Job 36:16 as an example of God being portrayed anthropomorphically and deceiving Job through prosperity. Wallis, *ibid.*, 209, well observes the theme of such enticement throughout the book of Job. However, his entirely negative assessment of the term accounts for neither the Achsah episode, nor for the rhetorical effect in the portrayals of divine enticement.

<sup>587</sup> See also: Deut 13:7; 1 Kgs 21:25; 2 Kgs 18:32//Isa 36:18//2Chr 32:11; Jer 38:22; 1 Sam 26:19; Jer 43:3.



Taken together, these considerations strongly commend this valence of God's rhetoric. Consider that the challenge of Job 1:8 and 2:3, "have you set your heart upon my servant Job?," implies that the Satan has something to learn from Job. The book does not only test the potential of human piety, as the Satan hopes to expose its limitations, but God and Job expose the gratuitous and proud cynicism of the Satan. (Cf. Zech 3:1–2, where the Satan's insistence on Joshua's punishment is rebuked.) That is, God's opening challenge suggests his intentions, and Job's passing the first test indicates that God's end has been achieved for the moment. This understanding of the verse will be further commended by the dialectic established with the term's occurrences in the poetry.

In Job 9:17, Job refers to God's unwarranted harm to his person, envisioning an attack from the storm. While Job refers to hypothetical future suffering, it is based on his previous experience of being targeted by divine malice without cause. The context (9:15–22) shows that the gratuity he laments is the lack of concern for just cause (recall that Job introduces the arbiter in 9:33). In this sense, Job is rather in agreement with God, though his perspective is narrow and skewed. On the one hand, Job and God's rhetoric both correspond to the prose indicating that Job's suffering lacked just cause. On the other hand, Job has no idea of the incitement that caused his suffering. Nor does he have any idea of the agent who actually attacked him, and God's final appearance from the whirlwind will be wholly different. Thus, both the prologue and the whirlwind indicate Job's narrow and skewed perspective: he can only conceive of *הַנֶּגַע* suffering from a humanistic concern for justice while we see the divine council; he fails to account for the cosmic antagonist in the Satan or the Leviathan.

Finally, Eliphaz refers to Job seizing pledges from the poor “for nothing” in 22:6. Because Eliphaz cannot conceive of gratuitous suffering, he deduces Job’s wickedness (22:5) and lists several oppressive social injustices that Job must have committed (22:6–9). The only gratuitous or arbitrary evil for Eliphaz is human. The term encapsulates Eliphaz’s ironic failure to allow for irrational suffering as he irrationally deduces that Job is not the pious man he knew at the start of the dialogue (4:6). His attributing arbitrary evil to Job contrasts profoundly with God attributing arbitrary hostility to the Satan, and this contrast supports recognizing the portrayal of the Satan’s gratuitous incitement as central to the prose’s theology. The term also coordinates Eliphaz with the Satan as both assume from opposite perspectives the *quid pro quo* nature of piety and prosperity, while Job and God recognize that at least some human suffering is not merited. Whatever cause might exist must come apart from just deserts.

A complementary dialectic obtains in the frequent key term ‘perfect’ (תם; e.g., 1:1, 1:8, 2:3, 2:9, 4:6, 8:20, 9:20–22, 22:3, 27:5–6).<sup>588</sup> This term captures the ironic relationship between the prose and the dialogues well, but its effect is more subtle than simply establishing a parodic denunciation of the prologue.<sup>589</sup> The term features most prominently in the narrator’s praise of Job in 1:1 and in God’s precise confirmation of that praise in his boast of 1:8. Job is perfect (תם) as well as upright (ישר), fearing God (ירא אלהים) and avoiding evil (סר מרע).<sup>590</sup> The prose attributes to the highest possible

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<sup>588</sup> Most of these instances are reported by Habel, “Narrative Art of Job,” 103, and some of them are variants of the form (verbal, adjectival, nominal). These will more than suffice to give an impression of the subtleties and texture Job’s author accomplishes with the term.

<sup>589</sup> So Day, *An Adversary*, 86, recognizes the ironic relationship between the prologue and the dialogues, per the use of תם in Job 8:20, but does not offer any literary analysis to justify her sense of the ironic effect. The treatment is precisely analogous to her treatment of the ‘hedging’ motif as she treated 1:10 and 3:23 but ignored 38:8.

<sup>590</sup> It would be worthwhile tracing out each of these terms in all of their occurrences, but for the present purposes, it will mostly suffice to limit myself to treating תם. I will, however, make some reference to ישר

authorities—narrator and God—the fundamental premise and problem of the book: the patient's superlative piety.

The term features three times in ch. 2. In 2:3, God both repeats his initial boast of Job as one who is perfect, etc., and God amplifies his boast as Job continues to cling to his perfection (מחזיק בתמנו) despite his senseless suffering. Finally, Job's wife unknowingly quotes God's amplification and the Satan's prediction to entice Job to stop clinging to his perfection and to 'curse God and die' (2:9). As Habel observes, the wife thus serves to transition the conflict from the heavenly to the earthly realm.<sup>591</sup> She establishes within the prose the thematic continuity of the key terms from heavenly to earthly dialogues and thereby from the prose to the poetry.

If the wife explicitly invites Job to fulfill the Satan's prediction, the friends entice him through their parochial provocations. They are the third test, as Job's faith is challenged, no longer through loss of possessions and family or personal suffering, but by a theological account, the distortions of which might drive the believer to despair. We saw the poet's creative use of this dynamic as he satirized the inadequate (roughly Deuteronomic) perspective and had Job provide alternative theodicies. These dynamics can be traced out in the poet's use of תם.

In 4:6–7, Eliphaz encourages Job to hope in his fear and perfection of life (תם; דרכיך; 4:6), and he urges him to acknowledge that the innocent and 'upright' (ישרים; 4:7) are never destroyed. Eliphaz is both right and utterly wrong. In the long run, Job's perfection is his hope, and God will vindicate his servant. Also, Job longs for this to be

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in my treatment of the friends below, as the term is in parallel in the prose and functionally equivalent and as the term plays a critical role in the friends' speeches.

<sup>591</sup> Habel, *Job*, 80–81.

realized post-mortem. But the reader knows that Job is both perfect and upright and has nonetheless been ‘destroyed.’ More, his perfection is the chief cause for his destruction. Eliphaz’s well-intended encouragement and invitation to patient conciliation (cf. 5:8–27) carries the back-handed implication that Job’s suffering has been deserved, and Eliphaz promptly introduces this provocation into the discourse.

The provocation escalates in ch. 8, as Bildad becomes more accusatory than exhortatory. The chapter begins and ends with ironic portrayals of Bildad’s piety. In 8:3, Bildad’s rhetorical questions imply that God does not pervert judgment (משפט) or justice (צדק), and in 8:5–6 Bildad indicates that, if Job will make himself blameless and upright (ישר), then God will surely restore Job. Bildad reinforces the *quid pro quo* piety the book abolishes. More subtly, Bildad associates the upright man’s destruction with God’s perversion of justice. The association is intuitive, and the friends understandably take Job’s affirmation of his unjust suffering as a challenge to divine justice. However, we should recognize Bildad’s role in pushing this logic and introducing the language of judgment and justice. It is just this language God uses to rebuke Job in 40:8, and I will discuss in a moment how Job’s language shifts towards this juridical context.

First, however, note the ironic implication of Bildad’s language in 8:20, that “God will not cast away the innocent (תם).” Bildad is ironically correct. Job is perfect and has not been cast away. Of course, Bildad understands Job’s destruction as being cast away, proof that Job is not innocent. Therefore, this passage taken with the prologue challenges the reader to reconsider what it looks like to be ‘not cast away’ by God. Apparently, it looks like Job’s literary arc at times: intense and irrational suffering, concluded by an ultimate vindication and blessing that remains shrouded in mystery. This ironic dialectic

supports my understanding of the book as building a case for a post-mortem reward for the innocent and upright.

The immediate dramatic result, however, is to push Job toward a litigious framework. Job's intuition of his innocence despite his existential ignorance in 9:20–21 (תם־אני לא אדע נפשי) leads to his insight in 9:22, that God indiscriminately and amorally destroys both the innocent and the wicked (אחת היא ... תם ורשע הוא מכלה). This claim is evident if we equate earthly experience with divine activity as Job and his friends do. The prologue complicates this perspective, providing a third party who assumes some responsibility for human destruction and indicating that God is not indifferent. Still, Job rightly observes against Bildad that human suffering is not doled out according to moral merits. As dangerous as this insight's potential implications are, the insight itself is affirmed by every perspective in the book excepting that of the friends.

The problem in Job's perspective is his assumption—intimated by Bildad and nearly universal in the ancient Near East—that this amorality indicates God's immorality. Prompted by Bildad, Job begins to consider the arbiter in 9:33. The poet applies the theme of perfection from the prologue throughout the dialogues to portray the friends as tempting Job towards a litigious stance towards God. Job is right to maintain his innocence and the absurdity of his suffering; the friends manage to move Job's awareness of his innocence to a juridical context, absent from the prologue.

The irony builds in the final speeches. Eliphaz's rhetorical questions in 22:2–5 betray profound misunderstanding, and these misunderstandings accentuate the prologue's theology. In 22:5, Eliphaz indicates that Job's wickedness is great, as his moral view of suffering requires, but for which he has no evidence. The reader knows

Eliphaz is precisely wrong. In 22:4, Eliphaz asks whether it is for Job's 'fear' (המיראתך) that God reproves (יכיהך; cf. the arbiter, מוכיח; 9:33) Job and enters into judgment with him (יבוא עמך במשפט). Of course, it is precisely because of Job's fear that he has suffered, God is not yet reproving Job or entering into judgment with him, and the friends are responsible for casting the issue in juridical terms. In 22:3, Eliphaz asks whether God is pleased with Job being righteous (תצדק) or profits from Job's perfect ways (תתם דרכיך). While the prologue does not use the juridical term, God clearly is pleased with Job's innocence. The dialectical relationship to the prologue in 22:2–3 implies that Job not only pleases God, but God even profits in Job's perfection. Eliphaz's speech ironically commends the prologue's loftiest anthropological implications.

Finally, Job's language in 27:2, 5–7 develops these motifs further. Job takes the bait, articulating his plight in God's 'turning aside' Job's 'judgement,' i.e., the justice due him (חִי־אֵל הַסִּיר מִשְׁפָּטִי; 27:2). Job also indicates he will not turn aside his innocence from himself (לֹא־אֲסִיר תַּמְתִּי מִמֶּנִּי; 27:5). The phrase indicates Job's continued insistence on his perfection but in such a way that now challenges God's justice. Job no longer clings only to his innocence, but he clings to his righteousness (בְּצִדְקָתִי הַחֲזַקְתִּי; 27:6). These subtle variations from the prologue's language indicate Job's litigious turn, prompted by the friends and anticipating his decisive declamation in 29–31 and God's rebuke in 38–41. Still, there is also a constructive implication here. By maintaining his innocence and condemning his friends' position, Job supports the ironic implications of Bildad's and Eliphaz's criticisms and anticipates God's rebuke of the friends. The innocent suffer in accordance with the prologue, and those who pretend otherwise such as Job's friends are

liable to judgement (27:4–5, 7–10). Even the doctrine of retribution retains its place in the poet's riddle, as the simplistic champions of retribution merit punitive retribution.

The foregoing analysis reveals Job's turn from lamentation of senseless suffering to litigation. This turn results in both the danger of Job's charging God with injustice and the charge against the friends for their folly. The development also reflects Job's being carried further from the book's narrative reality in the prologue's portrayal of the innocent who suffer, and whose suffering is understood apart from juridical framing. God's whirlwind speech will re-affirm such amoral suffering. In other words, the entire book affirms and accentuates the prologue's portrayal of the innocent's suffering: the innocent suffer, suffering is often amoral, and suffering does not mean divine displeasure. Rather, God is pleased with the innocent and boasts in their clinging to their integrity.

The next motif to treat is 'hand.' Recalling the conspicuous reference to the 'hand of the LORD' in 12:9 and the use of 'hand' and 'arm' in the whirlwind speech, it should be no surprise that the term 𐤇 occurs seven times in the prologue to significant effect. It is a common term, occurring dozens of times in Job, but the careful rhetorical use of the term in the prologue warrants some attention to the motif in the poetry as well, as the poet continues to use the term to (mis)characterize the nature and activity of divine power.

The prologue's setting of the heavenly council is particularly well suited for the treatment of divine agency. The will of the assembly is typically identified with the supreme deity's.<sup>592</sup> There are, however, also the traditional outliers to this pattern. Characters such as Yamm and Anath make violent demands on 'El, and the gods of Ps 82 are condemned for their injustices.

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<sup>592</sup> Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 177–78, observes how the will of the divine assembly is functionally equivalent to 'El's or Marduk's in their respective cultures.

Here,  $\gamma$  complicates God's responsibility for evil by distinguishing between God's and the Satan's agency. In Job 1, the term occurs five times: four characterize divine responsibility for Job's status, and three of those regard his suffering.<sup>593</sup> The Satan speaks the first two, referring to God blessing Job and the work of his hands (1:10) and predicting that, should God but "extend his hand," Job will curse God (1:11). God replies with two more, allowing Job to fall into the Satan's hand, but insisting that the Satan not "extend his hand" against Job's person (1:12). Thus, the prologue makes two clear distinctions: God blesses Job rather than strikes him; not God, but the Satan strikes Job.

Of course, the Satan's activity depends on God's permission, so God is not off the hook.<sup>594</sup> Still, we cannot pretend that the prologue does not complicate the issue. Somewhat like the friends' apologetic, the prologue acknowledges God's ultimate authority and responsibility while introducing a celestial figure more directly responsible for human suffering. There are critical differences, however. The Satan is not an expression of the simple or perfect will of God, as the Terrors were the mechanisms of the Almighty's natural law. Rather, the Satan arbitrarily incites an amoral destruction of the innocent, exploiting God's permissive will.

We can better appreciate the theme of divine implication and the Satan's decisive role in complicating divine responsibility in the rhetoric of Job 2:5–7. In 2:5–6, the Satan

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<sup>593</sup> Two of the five are rather prosaic occurrences, in the Satan's indictment of Job's piety, per God's blessing the work of Job's hand in 1:10, and the donkeys' eating at the oxen's hands, i.e., sides, in 1:14. One might be tempted to read into the former, considering: (1) the motif, (2) that God will later bless Job again in the epilogue, (3) that God confirms that Job is his servant in both prose sections, and (4) the identification of the 'arm of the LORD' and God's servant in Second Isaiah and its relevance to Job as discussed last chapter. Considering the book's deconstruction of the doctrine of retribution and the prosperity gospel of Deuteronomy and Proverbs, it might be better to see this as a foil, where God's blessing the work of his servants' hands is reapplied to immaterial blessing.

<sup>594</sup> Indeed, God nearly acknowledges his implication in Job's destruction in 2:3. However, the line does not actually state that God destroyed Job, only that the Satan incited him to.



proposes a second test using the same invitation for God to extend his hand, and God again allows the Satan to extend his hand against Job. When the Satan goes out from the Lord to strike Job in 2:7, the divine name immediately precedes the ‘striking.’ The narrative and the Satan as the subject of ‘going out’ make a cogent case for his remaining the subject of striking. But the Lord’s name occurs immediately before ‘striking,’ potentially making him the subject and suggesting divine implication in Job’s destruction.

To appreciate the rhetorical genius here, recall that Job 2:7 alludes to the fate of unfaithful Israel in Deut 28:35. Excepting “the Satan went out from before” and “Job,” all of Job 2:7’s language derives from Deut 28:35. In Deuteronomy, God strikes Israel for her unfaithfulness to the covenant: there is no other grammatical subject, character, or logic, and the divine name follows the verb (יַכְכָּה יְהוָה; Deut 28:35), indicating the subject unequivocally. In Job, of course, Job is innocent, and another agent changes the etiology of suffering. The author switches the word order and converts the imperfect to a waw consecutive, to leave the divine name next to the verb (יְהוָה וַיַּךְ), while removing the logical relationship and syntactically associating the verb with the Satan.<sup>595</sup> This creative use of Deuteronomy mirrors many of the allusions found within the poetry, showing the book’s literary integrity. The allusion further underscores the critical role the author gives the Satan. Proponents of Job as skeptical literature recognize the poetry savaging the Deuteronomic perspective and the prose. But the prose itself points to the Deuteronomic deficiency, while also hazarding a non-Deuteronomic solution.

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<sup>595</sup> This allusion alone demonstrates the poet’s hand in the prologue, as his creative rhetorical manipulation demonstrates so much continuity with the poetry. For the reader’s convenience, I include each verse in full.  
 Deut 28:35: יַכְכָּה יְהוָה בְּשַׁחֲיוֹן רַע עַל־הַבְּרִכִּים וְעַל־הַשְּׁקִים אֲשֶׁר לֹא־תוּכַל לְהִרְפָּא מִכָּף רִגְלְךָ וְעַד קִדְקֹדֶךָ  
 Job 2:7: וַיֵּצֵא הַשָּׂטָן מֵאֵת פְּנֵי יְהוָה וַיַּךְ אֶת־אִיּוֹב בְּשַׁחֲיוֹן רַע מִכָּף רִגְלוֹ עַד קִדְקֹדּוֹ

The poetic dialogues use the term **יָד** to nearly identical rhetorical purposes as our previous motifs. The friends' usage is predictable, per my treatment of them in chapter one and the dialectics I have treated. Eliphaz asserts that God saves the innocent from the hand of the mighty (5:15), making God the sponsor of justice against unjust powers. He also portrays God as wounding those who need correction, with God's hands healing the supplicant (5:18). Bildad refers to Job's children dying since God left them in the 'power' of their guilt, again deflecting blame from God and evoking the mythological powers of the doctrine of retribution. Similarly, Zophar asserts that 'every hand of turmoil' (**כָּל־יָד** **עַמָּל**; 20:22) will be upon the wicked.

The friends, therefore, introduce other agencies using the term to blunt God's implication in Job's suffering. This reflects the same impulse as the prologue's attribution of Job's sufferings to the Satan's hand. But the friends' mythological construction has primarily an aesthetic effect, as they introduce other characters effecting God's justice: the structure remains God's entirely, as in Deuteronomy. While the prologue too provides another agent, the Satan is not an executor of divine justice but the arbitrary inciter.

Job, unsurprisingly, uses the motif to multiple and more nuanced purposes, according to the agendas encountered in chapter 2. The first major use of the 'hand' motif, we might refer to as God's calamitous activity, corresponding to Job's stance of lamentation. Job laments that God's hand is heavy upon him (23:2), pleads for sympathy since the hand of God has struck him (19:21), and wishes that God would put forth his hand to finish the job (6:9). This calamitous portrayal rebuts the friends' theodicies, negating their structural defenses of God as empirically indefensible (the innocent do suffer) and as red herrings (regardless of mythological beings).

A second theme is God's sponsorship of evil agencies, creatively inflecting God's calamity. In 9:24, Job states that the earth is given into the hand of the wicked, and he challenges the friends to identify anyone else responsible for this state of affairs. Job reiterates this point strikingly in 12:6, 9–10. He objects that the wicked are in God's 'power' and yet are safe (12:6). In 12:9–10, Job not only uses the language from Isa 41:20 as discussed in chapter 2, but he adapts the theme of God's control over the world. As in Isaiah, God's power is absolute, but it is predominantly calamitous. Finally, Job complains that God has given him into the hand of the wicked and the impious (16:11).

The theme has a striking dialectic with the prose. Job's recognition in 16:11 that God has made him fall into the hands of the wicked has two mundane candidates. It can refer to the earthly Sabeans (1:15) and Chaldeans (1:17) who attacked him. It can also apply as an accusation against his friends who afflict him still. However, the reader also knows whose hand God let Job fall into—and whose agents the Sabeans, Chaldeans, and friends are. Indeed, the calamitous references to God's hand miss the mark—at least as far as the prologue is concerned—as there is another 'hand' directly involved in innocent human suffering. Considering the allusion to Isa 41:20, it seems the poet saw the direct reference of all human experience to the perfect will of God as inadequate. Rather, another hand that exploits the permissive will of God seemed necessary.

A third theme that the poet uses 'hand' to develop, then, is the fact or necessity of a third party. In 9:33, Job refers to the hypothetical arbiter as one who would lay his hand on Job and on God. Of course, no being has God 'in hand' in Job. More significant is the speculation's irony, since the third party who exists has already laid his hand on Job. Job 19:21 is similarly ironic. It is no coincidence that, just before articulating his most

confident expression about his ‘redeemer’ in 19:25, Job specifically misapprehends whose hand has struck him in 19:21. The same dynamic obtains in 30:21, as Job refers to God’s hand as attacking him.<sup>596</sup> It seems beyond cavil that the poet means this passage to apply to the Satan ironically: Job describes God’s hand as attacking him, using the verb, תִּשְׁטַמְנִי, the root of which (שָׁטַם) is a by-form of ‘satan’ (שָׁטָן).<sup>597</sup>

For a final, fourth theme, Job considers God’s hands in the context of divine creativity. Job is within God’s hand (10:7), and it is more fitting that God should redeem than destroy the work of his hand (10:8). Job longs that God would call for the work of his hand (14:15). These recollections of creation characterize God’s hands as potentially redemptive, serving Job’s health and prosperity as in the prologue. Recall that chapters 10 and 14 were arguments for a post-mortem reconciliation with God.

Per this analysis, it is clear that the author used the term to nuance his portrayal of divine power. The prose uses the term to complicate the etiology of innocent suffering, introducing a second ‘hand’ who exploits God’s permissive will. The friends’ uses of the term reflect their various shortcomings. Job’s uses reflect his misperception of God’s power especially in relation to the hypothetical third party, the poet’s qualification of Isaiah, and the poet’s speculative attempts to salvage the creator’s redemptive nature.

Finally, recall the discussion about the Arm of the Lord in the whirlwind. As the prologue distinguishes between God’s and the Satan’s agency and between God’s perfect

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<sup>596</sup> 30:24 also refers to a hand, but the verse’s sense is unclear, and the translations provide a bewildering number of guesses. See Clines, *Job 21–37*, 957 for a discussion of the verse’s challenges.

<sup>597</sup> Clines, *Job 1–20*, 20 suggests the use of this form “may represent an intentional differentiation from שָׁטָן,” since it describes God’s hostility to Job. Habel, *Job*, 272, sees instead a possible “veiled allusion to the Satan.” I prefer to see a conscious allusion to the third party’s hostility in both 16:9 and 30:21, considering the irony I have identified throughout the poetry, the clear delineation of agencies in the prologue compared to its confusion in the poetry here in 30:21, and that the theme of the third party resurfaces in 16:18–21. I will revisit this pun below.

and permissive wills, the whirlwind portrays God's creativity and governance to similar effect. God's perfect will creates a free cosmos permitting abuse. God provides limits on chaotic agents (the Sea's place, the wicked's diurnal cycle, and Leviathan's covenant), but God prefers to cajole Job into not abusing his freedom: God invites his creatures to realize his perfect will freely rather than exploit his permissive will. God's cosmos is participatory and organic rather than coercive and mechanical. God restrains his power to give the cosmos a measure of autonomy and responsibility in realizing his creative vision.

Both the prologue and the whirlwind speech portray divine power as creative and life giving. In its most basic sense, God's 'blessing the work of Job's hands' corresponds to God's articulation of creation as supporting life and curbing chaos. But there may be a more profound implication in God blessing the work of Job's hands if we consider Job's possession of an 'arm like God's.' As discussed, the whirlwind indicates a different quality of divine power compared to the traditional politico-mythological complex (e.g., Ps 89). Job freely submits to his creator, resigning himself to the creator's designs. Furthermore, Job's submission effectively undermines the Satan's *quid pro quo* view of the cosmos, demonstrating that there is more to human freedom and piety than the Satan had allowed. Job's participation in his own creation through his submission to the creator thereby participates in God's cosmic court intrigues: he participates in God's contest with the cosmic antagonist, and he is the arm with which God wrestles with the cosmic antagonist. God will bless the work of Job's hand, since Job's great work is God's work.

The final motif I want to treat is a nexus of terms punning on the Satan's name. Recall, the likeliest etymological candidate for the Satan is the root, שָׁטַן, and 'accusation' is a frequent theme in satans in the Old Testament. Additionally, the prologue refers to

the Satan's activity as roaming (1:7, 2:3), indicating that the author intended us to appropriate the root, שׁוּט, into the Satan's character as a hostile roamer. Since this term synthesizes the Satan and the "eyes of the King" roaming in the earth found in Zechariah, it seems further appropriate to treat God's surveillance of Job in 7:17–18, as God "sets" his heart upon humanity (תָּשִׁית אֵלָיו לִבְךָ). Habel has noted that the root, שׁוּט, portrays this surveillance as demonic, considering its resemblance to the Satan's activity in the prologue.<sup>598</sup> Finally, the variant of שָׁטַן, שָׁטָם, occurs in 16:9 and 30:21.

I begin with the variant, שָׁטָם. In 16:9, Job complains that God's wrath (אַפּוֹ) ferally tears him apart and 'attacks' him. In light of the prologue's precise delineation of God's vs. the Satan's agencies and the dialogue's consistently ironic portrayal of the 'hand of God' harming Job, Job's use of a variant form of the Satan's name captures the same irony by pun. Because Job does not know of the third party who has attacked him, he attributes "satamic" attack to God. While we cannot be sure of the historical relationship between Job and 1 Chr 21, it is worth recalling that Satan in 1 Chr 21:1 displaces the wrath of Yahweh (אַף־יְהוָה) in 2 Sam 24.<sup>599</sup>

The connection between the hand-agency theme and the root, שָׁטָם, is still more explicit in 30:21. Job precisely misstates reality here. Job charges God's hand with attacking him cruelly (בְּעֶצֶם יָדְךָ תִּשְׁטַמְנֵנִי; 30:21). Thus, Job attributes his suffering to God's hand rather than accounting for the second hand in heaven.<sup>600</sup> It follows that God's hand is satanic in aggression. KBL treats the adverbial construct, בְּעֶצֶם, as belonging to I עֶצֶם,

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<sup>598</sup> Habel, *Job*, 165.

<sup>599</sup> Thus, it would be quite attractive for my thesis if the Joban poet was exploiting the Chronicler's adjustment to the story, to heighten the tragic irony of Job's misperception. On the other hand, the tragic irony of Job does not rely on this connection, and it is more likely that the Chronicler seized on Job's insight.

<sup>600</sup> Recall that Perdue's focus, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 238–40, on "struggle" and portrayal of God's unjust, demonic conduct are decisive in his distorted portrayal of the book.

‘strength, might;’ thus Job complains that God strikes him with great power. However, it can be considered as I עָצָם or its by-form, II עָצָם, such that God strikes ‘on the bone.’<sup>601</sup> Such a double entendre is just what we should expect in Job. At any rate, the allusion to the Satan’s proposition to strike Job ‘to his bone’ in 2:5 is unmistakable. Each term in the stich alludes to the heavenly court scene, underscoring Job’s tragic ignorance.

The poet’s use of שׁוֹט, ‘scourge’ or ‘whip,’ has been taken as an allusion to the Satan’s roaming for centuries, as Rashi and Berechiah observed regarding Job 5:21.<sup>602</sup> The ‘scourge of the tongue,’ recalls the Satan’s speech and its adverse results. His title’s suggestion of accusation further corresponds to this theme. Recall too the juridical reference to slanderers in Ps 109:6.<sup>603</sup> The irony of this passage is that, not only has God not hidden righteous Job from the lash of the roamer’s tongue, but God has held Job up to the roaming accuser to be scourged. When Job refers to God’s indifference to the plight of the innocent in ch. 9, he refers to the ‘scourge’ who slays suddenly (אִם-שׁוֹט יָמִית פֶּתְאִם; 9:23) and God’s scoffing indifference.

Even for Job this demonic agent introduces some dissonance between suffering and divine agency. Eliphaz maintained that God would protect from this scourge. Job insisted on God’s allowance of, and indifference to, the scourge’s activity. Of course, both are partly right and mostly wrong from the prologue’s perspective. However, when Job describes God’s destructive activity, he challenges his friends to identify who else

<sup>601</sup> KBL, s.v. ‘I עָצָם,’ ‘II עָצָם,’ 869–870.

<sup>602</sup> Seow, *Job*, 445.

<sup>603</sup> Seow, *Job*, 445, discusses the possible mythological context of Mot’s voracious appetite as an alternative to this slanderous interpretation, to conclude that “The ‘scourge of the tongue’ is not, therefore, merely a reference to gossip or slander. Its effects are decisively more devastating, indeed, more deadly.” This mythological interpretation may well be, particularly considering the friends’ highly mythological perspectives. However, the discussion of “mere” slander does not account for the deadly results slander may have. False witness is proscribed and Ps 109:6–20 curses his slanderer so vehemently because false legal accusation could be deadly. Cf. also 1 Sam 24:10.

could be responsible for the destruction and injustice that dominate earthly experience (אם־לא אפוא מִי־הוא; 9:24). Ironically, he stumbles on the answer, nearly naming the office and activity of the numinous ‘roamer!’<sup>604</sup>

The final poetic comment on satanic activity I will treat comes from 7:17. Job 7:17–18 rather famously parodies Ps 8:5–6, and the correspondence between Job 7:17 and Ps 8:5 is particularly tight. While the narrative sense of Job 7:17–18 is despair at God’s unfitting attention to Job and humanity in general, the verses’ language admits a wholly positive sense, potentially commending the highest anthropology of the psalm and of the book’s prologue.<sup>605</sup>

Considering the relationship between Job 7:17 and Ps 8:5, the poet’s introduction of the idiom, “you set your heart upon him” (תָּשִׁית אֵלָיו לִבְךָ; 7:17) is conspicuous. While the verb of choice differs, the verse echoes God’s use of the same idiom in 1:8 and 2:3, as he questions the Satan whether he has set his heart upon Job (הֲשָׂמַת לִבְךָ עַל עַבְדִּי אִיּוֹב). It is particularly significant, as the poet uses the verb, תָּשִׁית, from the root, שָׁיַת, rather than the functionally equivalent root, שָׁם. Of course, the idiom readily uses either term, and the verb itself is prosaic enough not to support a significant interpretation in itself. Still, the term echoes the Satan’s self-description of his activity in 1:7 and 2:2. Moreover, the thematic connection is so compelling as to indicate this as a deliberate allusion to the

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<sup>604</sup> Rashi even takes the Satan as the subject of each verb in 9:23–24, “Rashi on Job,” [https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi\\_on\\_Job?lang=bi](https://www.sefaria.org/Rashi_on_Job?lang=bi), accessed February 4, 2021. Satan is: the scourge who slays, the one who scoffs at the innocent, the wicked one whose hand has the earth, and he who covers the faces of the judges. Of course, the dramatic persona of Job has no knowledge of the Satan, so this interpretation is literary violence on the literalistic sense from a strict narrative perspective. However, the poet’s allusions and the ambiguous potential of the lines suggest such a creative reading.

<sup>605</sup> Particularly when the passages are triangulated. Note especially that Job 7, Ps 8, and Job 1–2 all portray the question of what the human is, relative not only to God, but to a third party: the Sea or dragon in 7:12, the gods in Ps 8:6, and the preeminent son of the gods, the Satan, in Job 1–2. See my article, “‘What is ’Enosh?’ The Anthropological Contributions of Job 7:17–18 through Allusion and Intertextuality,” *CBQ*, forthcoming.



Satan's activity. Accordingly, Habel writes that "Job is again alluding to God's almost demonic surveillance tactics."<sup>606</sup>

To appreciate the depth of the thematic connection, it is necessary to recall the chapters' mythological outlooks. Job refers to the *Chaoskampf* myth, referring to God placing a watch over him (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) as though he were the Sea or dragon (יָם; 7:12). For Job, the cosmic antagonist plays no real function other than rhetorical flourish, highlighting the incongruity of the strictly bilateral relationship between God and humanity. The prologue, by contrast, creates a new third party who complicates the surveillance theme. Job's reference to "God's almost demonic surveillance tactics" underscores Job's ignorance of the demon whose surveillance he inadvertently describes. Furthermore, his reference to God's oppressive watch (מִשְׁמֶרֶת) ironically alludes to God's command that the Satan protect Job's life (וַיִּשְׁמְרֵהוּ שָׂטָן; 2:6), misconstruing God's concern.

We should further reflect on the prologue's portrayal of divine surveillance, considering the historical cultural context of the "Eyes of the King." Recall, in Oppenheim's language, how the king's intelligence network report to him, giving him "godlike omnipresence and, hence, omniscience."<sup>607</sup> This mediation of divine omniscience is portrayed mythologically in the "Eyes of the LORD" in 2 Chr 16:9 and Zech 4:10 and more colorfully in the cavalry of Zech 1:10 and the chariotry of Zech 6:5. In Job's prologue, by contrast, God's omniscience is not mediated or mythologically described whatsoever. God simply knows Job, better than the being who patrols and presents himself to God. This dynamic again shows the prologue's mythological restraint and its portrayal of Yahweh's categorical supremacy. It also underscores that God is not

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<sup>606</sup> Habel, *Job*, 165.

<sup>607</sup> Oppenheim, "The Eyes of the Lord," 173–75.

seeking knowledge of Job in questioning the Satan but challenging the Satan in his view of humanity and piety. God implies that the Satan has something to learn, to take to heart, from Job. God knows and praises Job, while the Satan scrutinizes and persecutes him.

To summarize this section's findings, the prose and poetry are intricately rhetorically related. Whatever the history of Job's authorship, the book is self-referential, coherent, and cogent (excepting chs. 28, 32–37). Furthermore, the ironic relationship between the embedded speech of the dialogues and the prologue is highly creative. At first glance, the positions staked out by proponents of skeptical readings of the book of Job by scholars such as Dell (where the poetry 'savages' the prose) and by proponents of the integrity of the book's narrative logic such as Fox (where the poetry's comments are simply ironically inadequate) seem to be at an interpretive impasse.<sup>608</sup> However, the preceding analysis demonstrates the highly creative poetic commentary on the prose and still more the implausibility that the poet satirizes the prose.

Rather, the poetry confirms the need for the prologue's use of the Satan as an etiology for unjust suffering. The ironic usages of 'hand,' the terms punning on the Satan's name, the gratuity of innocent suffering, and the irony of Job's hypothetical third parties, all confirm the need to posit a new antagonist to complicate the simplistic ideologies of Job, Job's friends, and many of the poet's contemporaries. The necessity of a created antagonist was affirmed in the whirlwind according to the myth familiar to Job, lest all mundane experience be related directly to God's perfect will, as in Job's *Menschkampf* and the friends' equation of demonic agencies and God's natural law.

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<sup>608</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, *passim*, e.g., 152–53; Fox, "Job the Pious," 357–8. I do not mean to indicate that Fox would resist a more developed analysis of the creative effects of the poetry, only that his reply to proponents of the skeptical reading does not take up this necessary task.

While the Satan is not explicitly said to be created, his subordination in power is clear, and he seems to be categorically subordinate as well. Thus, the poet posits an antagonist whose antagonism is in court and not in battle, exploiting God's permissive will per the question at hand rather than matching power as a proper rival. Modern philosophers of religion in the humanistic vein may reject God's permissive conduct, but this is part of the book's theological solution.

This permissive will allows God's power to remain absolute (a consistent premise in Job), while nullifying the humans' conclusions. God permits innocent suffering, even if he perfects the wicked's punishment as the friends argue and God implies (38:12–13, 40:10–14). The full significance of God's permitting the innocent to suffer will become clearer when I reflect on the prose's anthropology below. For now, note that the friends' discussions ironically confirm God's delight in pious humans.

Since the innocent suffer, it follows that an amoral or non-judicial cause must lie behind that gratuitous suffering. When Job considers his suffering juridically, he comes to a nihilistic conclusion that God assaulted him 'for nothing' and observes no distinction between human righteousness and evil. However, the prose offers a non-judicial reason—or a proximate cause, whatever its irrationality—for Job's suffering. There is no just desert for Job's destruction. But the Satan, as the roaming and accusatory inciter, arbitrarily moves the heavenly conversation toward Job's destruction. It is not quite unprompted, as God brings Job up and even admonishes the Satan to account for Job's piety. But this challenge does not explain or justify the Satan's proposition: it can only be explained as a commitment to a cynical view of the human creature and a profound indifference to justice. This will be still clearer as I treat the Satan's rhetoric.

### *The Satan's Case*

So far, I have adduced a great deal of evidence suggesting the Satan's negative portrayal. From earthly accusers in the monarchical period, to the trauma of being slandered by the 'eyes of the king' in the Persian period, from the type-scene of the divine council where lesser gods act with hubris, to the poetry's constant underscoring of Job's ironic misperception of the supernatural agency at work in his suffering. There is a great deal of historical, cultural, linguistic, and literary evidence indicating that we should grant the Satan his traditionally negative character, if not as dramatic as in later traditions.

Now I will focus on the prose's portrayal apart from those other considerations. I have already observed God's charge that the Satan incited God 'for no reason.' That is, God charges the Satan with gratuitously destructive behavior. Additionally, recall that the Satan's striking Job, though conceded by God, reflects his free activity. But I will now attend to the Satan's conduct and rhetoric in the heavenly court.

It is critical to evaluate the effect of the Satan's speech as self-imprecation. Obviously, cursing is a critical element of the prose and the longer narrative. The term בִּרַךְ occurs six times in the prologue, alternating between the literal sense of bless (1:10, 21) and the euphemistic sense of curse (1:5, 11, 2:5, 9). As Seow notes, the expected climactic seventh occurrence comes in 3:1, as the narrator refers to Job cursing (וִיקַלֵּל) the day of his birth.<sup>609</sup> There is an exchange of ambiguities. Whereas the first six uses of בִּרַךְ indicate either 'bless' or 'curse,' the 'seventh' is univocally 'curse.' On the other hand, Job curses his 'day' rather than God, but the castigation of creation implicates the creator of such a systemically harmful order. Job does not curse God, but he comes close in his

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<sup>609</sup> Seow, *Job*, 316–18.

categorical rejection of the creator's handiwork. The climactic seventh is anti-climax: it is both narrative retardation and escalation. The book also pivots from the narrative world where, as Newsom notes, the very word for 'curse' is barred from the text and Job's success is sure.<sup>610</sup> In the poetry, language is freed and Job's success unsure. Since the reader is primed to expect the third test in 3:1, this plot twist indicates the third test goes closer to Job's soul (cf. 2:6) in the form of intellectual and religious persecution.

Considering this well-structured theme, we cannot pass over the significance of the Satan's speech as self-imprecation.<sup>611</sup> The Satan's oath formula uses the imprecatory protasis (אִם-לֹא; 1:11, 2:5) and omits the apodosis, the calamity to be brought upon him should his oath fail.<sup>612</sup> As Sheldon Blank observes in his systematic treatment of curses, oaths, etc., in the Hebrew Bible, this omission was typical—nearly universal—due to the taboo around uttering such destruction per the creative power of language.<sup>613</sup> Job's anti-creative rant reflects this power of language, especially in his emulation of Gen 1:3 in Job 3:4. It is also reflected in the dialogue's use of double entendre, as the characters pun to show off and as the poet ironically makes more profound truth claims.

Critically, the Satan utters this self-imprecation twice, once in each heavenly audience. The repetition should be seen not only as an example of folktale redundancy,

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<sup>610</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 55

<sup>611</sup> This is remarkably passed over by many commentators without acknowledgement. Others, such as Clines, *Job 1–20*, 26 and Seow, *Job*, 276, observe the imprecatory formula but do not consider its significance in their analysis, though Clines, *ibid.*, 27, feels obliged to insist that one cannot infer anything significant from the speech. On the other hand, Gordis, *Job*, 15, points to Job 17:2 as an example where the phrase, אִם-לֹא, has no imprecatory sense. Even if the phrase were taken as merely a strong assertion, it would indicate remarkable brass for a creature—even the highest angelic being—to address God in such a way. However, between the author's habit of exploiting the ambiguity of language, the structured theme of cursing in the prose, and the assertion form's derivation from the oath formula (cf. Joüon-Muraoka, § 165c, 619), it seems necessary to consider the phrase as self-imprecation.

<sup>612</sup> These two curses thus offset the two benedictive uses of בָּרַךְ in 1:10, 21. The prologue provides two hexadic structures: six occurrences of בָּרַךְ and six curses or references to cursing.

<sup>613</sup> Sheldon H. Blank, "Curse, Blasphemy, Spell and Oath," *HUCA* 23 (1951): 89–91.

but as an amplification of the Satan's pride and the absurdity of his conduct. For a creature, even a son of the gods, to tell God the nature of Job and human piety a single time is brazen enough. But after the Satan uses the imprecatory form in his assessment of Job's character and his prediction of Job's reaction, he does so again despite being decisively proved wrong in the first test. The fitting thing to do after the first test on the Satan's part would be an acknowledgement of error at the very least. Considering the assertion as self-imprecation, prudence would further dictate an apology and supplication lest the results of that imprecation come upon him. Finally, he ought to be humbled and to acknowledge that he does in fact have something to learn, to take to heart, about the human creature. While the later testing will come closer to the Satan's prediction and purposes, the second cosmic interview should have gone entirely differently.

Furthermore, since Job never curses God to the face even when given the opportunity in the whirlwind, the Satan's prediction fails in the second test and the implicit third. In short, whatever the validity of the Satan's cynicism regarding humanity and whatever limitations there are to Job's piety, the Satan's only sensible reaction to Job's performance at each stage would be to repent of his pride and to concede God's boast. The second, and still more the third test, ought not to have happened. Finally, Job's refusal to fulfill the Satan's prediction grants Job's performances—however imperfect—cosmic significance of higher quality and degree.

While the Satan is not yet the full-blown apocalyptic figure, he embodies a sort of hermeneutic of suspicion, as Newsom notes.<sup>614</sup> Whatever limitations to human nature and piety the Satan might expose, his commitment to his perspective is irrational and

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<sup>614</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 55.

reductionistic. He refuses to recognize the full meaning of Job's piety. In turn, Job exposes the Satan's pride and his irrational commitment to his perspective.

We have seen that the theme of culpable pride runs throughout Job.<sup>615</sup> The Satan's pride furthers his analogy to the Sea and the Leviathan as cosmic antagonist. If we compare this to the hubris of Yamm in the Council of 'El in the Ba'al cycle, we can appreciate Job's continued mythological de-amplification. The Satan's hubris necessarily manifests in a subtler way, exploiting the principle of doubt and the language of self-imprecation rather than asserting his power, terrifying the council, and thus exacting concessions. There is nothing "naïve" about the scene's economic simplicity, but the author portrays only the essential detail to portray his mythological structure clearly.<sup>616</sup>

Finally, the Satan's pride and self-imprecation form a deliberate contrast with Job's self-imprecations in ch. 31—a second 'seventh' occurrence, this one purely climactic. Job's discourse stems from despair and the friends' provocations but still manifests pride, as he recklessly calls God to account and will be rebuked accordingly. Job's self-imprecations span 31:5–40 and include both protases and apodoses. As Blank notes, we must realize that Job's inclusion of the apodoses here is entirely unconventional to appreciate the climactic nature of the chapter.<sup>617</sup>

This transgression of convention underscores the contrast between Job's and the Satan's speech. Job's reckless self-imprecation and recanting condemn the Satan's calculated rhetoric and refusal to acknowledge the implications of his failed prediction.

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<sup>615</sup> Recall, the friends charge Job with monstrous pride, and God's whirlwind is ordered to humbling Job. God's rebuke addresses their own pride. More importantly, God correlates the wicked with pride in their raised arm (38:15), and he refers to the hubris of the Sea (38:11) and to the Leviathan as the King of the Proud (41:26 [34]).

<sup>616</sup> Contra Clines, *Job 1–20*, 26–27.

<sup>617</sup> Blank, "Curse, Blasphemy, Spell and Oath," 91–92 reports that apodoses only occur in two other passages, Ps 7:4 f and 137:5 f.

Job is ready to accept just suffering, while the Satan arbitrarily inflicts suffering upon Job with no concern for Job's justice nor for his own braggadocio. Furthermore, Job's apodoses echo curses from Genesis, the covenant (underscored by ברית in 31:1), and Hosea.<sup>618</sup> These echoes indicate that Job is not only confident in his integrity, but he is willing to accept retribution and the full force of the covenantal curses, if only it were just.

Like the Satan's, Job's self-imprecation has the immediately desired effect. Saying that the Satan's and Job's imprecations force God's hand is overstated, but Job puts God in an awkward spot. Since Job is innocent, the curses must not come to pass; if Job's curses do not come to pass, he would seem to be right in his denunciation of divine conduct per the humans' presuppositions. God's intervention both vindicates Job, since the curses are not fulfilled and God attests to Job's innocence, and it invites Job to drop his charges, allowing Job's innocence to be maintained without faulting God.

Finally, Job's claim to glory in his adversary's indictment (31:35–37) underscores Job's glory to be gotten by passing the test. Job overstates his ability to “approach [God] like a prince” (31:37), but he will be exalted as God's servant. Furthermore, the referent of Job's “approach *him*,” need not be God. The antecedent can be the Almighty (שדי; 31:35b) or Job's prosecutor (איש ריבי; 31:35c). While Job's limited perspective suggests their identification, the verse conveys the book's typical irony. Therefore, Job's rhetoric

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<sup>618</sup> Job's “let me sow and another eat” in 31:8 echoes Lev 26:16; Job's allowance for his wife's unfaithfulness in 31:9–10 has a predecessor in Hos 4:14, where men's sexual and cultic infidelities result in God's allowance of brides to adulterate without consequence; Job's “let thorns grow instead of wheat” in 31:40 echoes Gen 3:18; the curse upon the psalmist's hand and tongue in Ps 137:5–6 is the closest equivalent I know for Job 31:22. The terms used for “weeds” (באשה) or “thorns” differ between Job and Genesis, but the involvement of the earth (אדמה) sprouting in each curse makes the connection rather compelling. Gordis, *Job*, 354, observes that Job's באשה corresponds to the parable of the vineyard's “stinking weeds” (Isa 5:4). This observation might explain the departure from Genesis's language and would make for an interesting literary study.



can be seen both as folly, answered in the whirlwind, and as implication of the prose, since Job's ultimate submission and vindication assure his glory against his adversary.

***The Prose on the Trilateral Nature of the Suffering of the Righteous***

For all the qualifications made above about God's role in suffering, the offensive fact remains that God not only allows but provokes Job's suffering. God's boast over Job passing the first test acknowledges Job's senseless suffering (and God will give Job due recompense in 42:10–17). But, immediately at any rate, God is less concerned with Job's suffering than he is interested in Job's success, vindicating their relationship and God's creation, and in the Satan's capitulation or at least the demonstration of his error.

This cosmic conflict is modified to acknowledge God's supremacy (no dualism or primitive *Chaoskampf* here) and corresponds somewhat to the whirlwind. As the Leviathan was a proud creature, terribly strong but wholly subordinate to the storm-god, so the Satan is proud and of significant standing, but mostly deferential to God. The Satan formally defers to God, God does not engage the Satan with brute force, but he allows the Satan's perspective to be tested. These dynamics correspond to the whirlwind's portrayal of God's self-limitation in engaging creation and of the goodness of the cosmos as free with the potential for freedom's abuse. The Satan, as the Leviathan, is cosmic antagonist, etiology of chaos and suffering, and free to transgress his creaturely allotment. One may see a parallel between the whirlwind and the prologue, as God not only cajoles Job but gives the Satan space and data to bring him to renounce his proud claim and to acknowledge the goodness of creation. Job functions as 'the arm of God'

which demonstrates the Satan's error, inviting him to capitulate in humility or be condemned in his pride.<sup>619</sup>

The Satan and Job have a potentially symbiotic relationship, illuminating the positive role for chaos within the cosmos intimated by the Sea and the Leviathan in the whirlwind. The Satan's testing amplifies God's boast and refines Job's piety (cf. 7:18, 23:10). Humanity's full potential for merit and steadfast love is only realized through suffering (cf. Sea), and the Satan's culpable role in excess suffering (cf. Leviathan) amplifies both suffering and merit. Job's successes, meanwhile, indicate to the Satan the need to acknowledge humbly the deeper meaning and greater value of the cosmos. Both the Satan and Job might grow through this story, provided they humbly accept God's vision of the cosmos. Of course, Job does. The narrative is silent on the Satan's final position, though his conduct in the interviews and his tenacity in the third test forebode the later apocalyptic traditions. Still, the poet's disinterest in pursuing this strand reflects his speculative nature and greater interest in the human condition.

The prologue's 'solution' to the problem of evil as developed throughout the book is a thoroughly theological and religious one, as humanity's submission to suffering has the dual functions of realizing human potential and of condemning the Satanic critique of piety.<sup>620</sup> Human piety is to be understood in its cosmic context, and the prologue offers a perspective that indicates suffering potentially cultivates rather than destroys meaning and value for humanity. Attempts to find a humanistic or merely philosophical solution within the book are doomed to failure, and it seems a foregone conclusion that readers

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<sup>619</sup> This dynamic relates directly to the portrayal in Zech 3:2.

<sup>620</sup> This seems to be Dostoevsky's answer to the problem of evil, as Alyosha's desire to suffer is his response to Iago's Grand Inquisitor's critique of creation. Similarly, Dimitri's momentary embrace of his own innocent suffering in his Hymn reflects his imitation of Alyosha's piety.

seeking such a solution will either reject the book outright or judge it to be merely skeptical literature. Regardless, the poetry undermines humanistic theodicies working within history as a closed system and seeks to escape that system. The whirlwind indicates that the question cannot be treated adequately from a humanistic perspective, but that humanity must give itself to a higher cosmic perspective, in order to fulfill its own place within that cosmos. The prose provides just such a context.

### ***Summary and Conclusion***

In this chapter, I have tried to demonstrate the Satan's role in the book of Job and the theological and anthropological purposes he serves. Against the Satan's advocates, I maintained his traditionally negative or hostile portrayal without allowing later apocalyptic traditions.<sup>621</sup> Such minimalistic accounts cannot withstand the adversarial and accusatory nature of earthly satans, the poet's punning associations with attacking, inciting, and vicious surveillance, and his portrayal of the Satan as a cynical accuser and adversary. Rather, each of the celestial Satan passages reflect the adversarial sense of the term and the accusatory implications. In each of them, the Satan opposes God's relationship with God's people and frustrates God's intention to bless them.

Furthermore, Zechariah's vision seems to reflect the post-exilic community's experience of the adversarial "eyes and ears of the king" and their slanderous accusations. Job, in its characteristically eclectic and allusive creation of a riddle of Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions, adopts this hostile heavenly figure to develop a new, non-

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<sup>621</sup> Of course, it is possible that some "later apocalyptic traditions" were already known to the poet, but such cannot be known. The author's relatively subdued portrayal of the Satan and disinterest in the cosmic consequences of Job's vindication would seem to suggest Job is the fount of such traditions rather than drawing on them. But it is possible that the Joban poet alluded to a far richer tradition and simply understood that he did not need to elaborate.

juridical, etiology of human suffering. Whereas the Satan may have had a legitimate point in Zechariah about the abrogation of the covenant and in Job about the likely limitations of human steadfastness in piety, Job's perfection and his clinging to that perfection expose the Satan's pride and irrational commitment to his cynical perspective. Between this portrayal of the Satan and his coordination with the Leviathan, Job may be considered proto-apocalyptic, as the mythological riddling and speculating are open-ended and would naturally encourage further speculation.

The *Leitwörter* motifs spanning the prose and the dialogues have significant implications for reading Job. They demonstrate the depth of the book's self-referential nature. Whatever prose materials the poet might have inherited, the prose and the poetry are intricately related, and the poet adapted the prose to his purposes. Furthermore, these terms relate to each other more subtly than Dell's parody or even Fox's narrative irony. Rather, given the ironic inadequacy of the personal perspectives in the poetry, the poet crafted their language so as to articulate simultaneously profound truths corresponding to the prose.

These *Leitwörter* underscore the necessity of introducing the Satan character as a new sort of cosmic antagonist. He is not the expression of God's perfectly willed natural law the friends considered, but, as the second hand in heaven, he introduces an amoral force of chaos. Neither is he an unreal relic of a primordial myth Job referred to. Still less is he, as the third party, a hope of justice and reprieve from God. Rather, like the created Leviathan, he is a subordinate source of chaos who can transgress his proper role in his pride. He has to negotiate his activity on Yahweh's terms as the Leviathan pleads for a covenant and as the Satan can only propose tests and exploit God's permissive will. But

he is the second hand in heaven, who incites gratuitous suffering and effects it with no concern and of whom Job is critically unaware. This ignorance leads Job to mischaracterize God's hand, attributing the Satan's free activity to God's arbitrary will and immediate activity: in "satamic" attack (16:9, 30:21), in exposing the innocent to the "scourge" (9:23), and in demonic, persecutory surveillance (e.g., 7:17–18). What Job wrongly describes as God's activity, he accurately describes as the Satan's, as Rashi observed more than nine centuries ago. Job does not need a third party to aid him before God, but the book of Job uses a celestial adversary to make gratuitous, innocent suffering a trilateral affair.

The *Leitwörter* also thereby affect the delicate question of God's relationship to his servants in their gratuitous suffering. God's perfect will is in his servants' justice and prosperity, but he permits them to fall into other hands with conditions. God's hedge is ideally seen in Job's idyllic beginnings (1:10), but at times God's hedge appears to be gone altogether. Still, God hedges in chaos in the Sea (38:8). God continues to restrict the Satan (1:12, 2:6) even as the Satan constricts Job and Job ascribes this constriction to God (cf. 3:23).

Of course, even as the Satan pushes the matter irrationally and cruelly far, the Sea still has its place in creation and God initiates and re-initiates this affair. God remains very much implicated in Job's suffering. Job's particular suffering has the cosmic significance of shaming the Satan, but it seems that some degree of suffering is part of God's intention as the necessary condition for humanity to realize its full potential.

Whereas the humans' bilateral perspectives either made all suffering the expression of God's justice (the friends) or innocent suffering the proof of God's

injustice (Job), the trilateral inclusion of the Satan makes it possible for Job, the perfect (תם) God-fearer, to suffer without indicating either sin or divine displeasure. The Satan's incitement is an amoral and gratuitous etiology for suffering, so suffering is at least sometimes amoral. However, God's manifest delight in Job's integrity is only amplified by Job's steadfast integrity amidst immense suffering. It is this steadfastness in integrity, piety, and loving devotion to God that allows Job to exceed the theological visions of Job's friends and of the Satan. It is Job's re-resignation, though coupled with sorrow over the human condition.

Critically, the book commends clinging to integrity (מחזיק בתמתו; 2:3) rather than to righteousness (בצדקתי החזקתי; 27:6; cf. 40:8). This is to say nothing negative about the biblical value of righteousness. It is to highlight the trap Job falls into in the dialogue, which he had avoided before the dialogue and escapes after God's address, the trap of approaching God demanding just recompense through a sense of just deserts. Rather, the prose's mythological structure provides an amoral etiology for suffering, a created chaos. Freed from the doctrine of retribution, Job and the reader are invited to cling to integrity and piety, come what may. This resignation allows Job to receive God's later blessing as gratuitous love in turn, rather than as the *quid pro quo* the friends lauded and the Satan cynically assessed.

The prose, as the poetry, manifests developments within Hebrew Scripture from the Persian period, as the author sought to reconcile Hebrew scriptures with each other and more so with Judah's experiences from the Babylonian captivity and the challenges of the Persian period. As Job's allusions deny any historical vindication of God's treatment of the righteous and propose instead a post-mortem vindication, and as the

Whirlwind seizes on Second Isaiah's insight as to the true nature of divine power, so the prologue follows Zechariah's visions, postulating a heavenly adversary analogous to the slanderous "eyes and ears of the King." The poet's dialectic repeatedly underscores the necessity of a trilateral mythological approach to the meaning of suffering as modeled in the prologue.

Furthermore, this section of the book offers an extraordinarily high anthropology. Job's and his friends' perspectives are depressingly negative in their anthropology on the surface level. The friends' language at times and much more often Job's, can be read—doing violence to the narrative logic and force of their arguments—as offering a lofty anthropology. The poet's incontrovertible habit of exploiting language's ambiguous potential and the ironic triangular dialectics between the prose, the human dialogues, and the whirlwind speech provoke such reflections. However, the prose offers the highest anthropology of the book. There, the more positive potential of the poetry is portrayed in simple, stark, and unambiguous terms. Scholars, who seek a humanistic solution to the problem of evil using philosophy and abstaining from revelation, mythology, or the fundamental religious impulse of the radical submission to God's will, will undoubtedly continue to reject the values of the prologue. But that does not affect the prologue's values or its literary and historical significance. The attempt to impose that humanistic perspective upon the book cannot account for the book in its integrity or for its literary dynamics. Neither is it historically plausible. The reading is a rejection of the book's values as conveyed especially by the most authoritative perspectives, the narrative and theophany.<sup>622</sup>

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<sup>622</sup> Recall that Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, 205–7 has to emasculate the whirlwind speech to maintain her reading. At least she acknowledges the problem the whirlwind provides to her position. Attempts to

Rather, the prologue portrays Job as God's servant, God as eminently delighted in Job, and Job as having the further cosmic significance of playing a critical role in settling the dispute between God and the Satan. The solution Job offers for the problem of evil is the offer of cosmic glory through fulfilling this role. For the book's world, this critical role could only be fulfilled by the radical deference to God's will in the face of utter and desperate ignorance of the meaning of suffering and of future prospects. Job maintains this posture as God's servant in 1:20–2:3, and he regains this posture and designation in 42:2–8. The author commended such a posture to his readers, still living with the uncertainties of gentile rule. He also suggested to them that their piety had significance beyond this world's perspective and that God would yet reward his servants. Thus, he gave them more than Job had: he at once evoked the ideal of unmotivated (חנם) piety and acceptance of gratuitous (חנם) suffering for God's sake, but he also argued that that piety would be credited to them and that that suffering would not be for nothing (חנם) as he argued for an afterlife.

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read the Whirlwind speech as buffoonery are even less plausible. I again commend Fox, "God's Answer and Job's Response," 23, for his healthy objectivity, acknowledging that the book's resolution may in fact be unsatisfactory to us while allowing Job to be "as his author made him." Readers may reject these values, but it would be more authentic to acknowledge one's distaste for and criticize the book than to seek to remake Job in one's own image.



## CONCLUSION

In this dissertation, I set out to demonstrate the poet's deliberate juxtaposition of mythological structures and to analyze the ideology implied by those more and less privileged perspectives. The juxtaposition occurs at the surface level, as the differences between the human discourse, the whirlwind address, and the prologue's cosmic court scene all obviously entail different frameworks controlling meaning. More subtly, the poet portrays Job as the only tradent of the storm-god motif, while the friends assiduously avoid and even polemicize against it. These various mythological structures are traditions deriving from Hebrew Scripture, as the poet's rhetoric demonstrates his reference to those passages. Thus, the book's dramatic dialogue simultaneously portrays a religious, theological dialogue, inviting readers into the tensions inhering in Hebrew Scripture.

The friends are not merely sage representatives of Proverbs's doctrine of retribution, but they represent Deuteronomy and its convenient mythological structures, themes, and polemics. They allude to Deut 32 especially, in their portrayal of demonic Terrors as the mediators of divine justice, the mechanisms of punitive retribution. These serve to interpret all suffering as just punishment while simultaneously creating an aesthetic buffer between God and that punishment: God actively blesses the just and he passively allows the wicked to fall into the natural and mythological structures ordered to their punishment. While the prologue similarly distinguishes between God's perfect and permissive wills and provides a demonic agent to fill the gap, it uses an amoral logic. The friends insist on the moral logic of the situation and only provide an aesthetic to blunt God's involvement in cruel suffering. Their last speeches implicitly acknowledge the limitations of this aesthetic.

This aesthetic and insistence on the divine will's unqualified realization in moral experience is matched by their refutation of the storm-god motif. This is primarily effected by their refusal to use it and most directly by Eliphaz's parodic theophany that undermines the trope. The motif's traditional presentation of a primordial or coeval rival to God is inadequate to the book's consistent portrayal of God's incontestable, superior power. Each perspective relates God's omnipotence, supremacy, and transcendence to the storm-god motif in some way, but the friends' solution is to deny it outright and to abandon the theme of divine antagonism altogether. Humanity alone is capable of gratuitous evil. The cosmos cannot entail chaos as that would contradict the power and goodness of God Almighty.

Finally, their pessimistic view of humanity lacks any hope of divine mediation, whether noetic, ontological, or moral. This lack removes from the Deuteronomic perspective the divine availability—in revelation, relationship, and atonement—that made the covenant palatable let alone desirable in the first place. Their ideology is a reductive parody and truly *quid pro quo*, as they affirm punishment and reward, with none of the self-disclosure, intimacy, or availability.

Job shares their conception of absolute divine power, but his experience of moral chaos leads him to appropriate rather than expunge the *Chaoskampf* motif. According to his shared belief in God's uncontested power, he parodies the storm-god motif so as to portray God Almighty as the cause of chaos. As Job shifts from *Chaoskampf* images to those of exile and alludes to passages describing Judah's exile as in Lamentations and Isaiah, the poet comments on the exile. He challenges the Deuteronomic ideology's account of the exile and its ability to answer for God's treatment of just individuals.

We also saw that the poet shifts away from this negative task and stance of lamenting accusation towards a creative task and stance of speculative experimentation. He develops the cousin mythological structures of the third-party arbiter/witness/go'el (9:33, 16, 19) and the post-mortem reward for the righteous (10, 14, 19) as theoretical solutions, salvaging the moral coherence of the cosmos and of human existence. These alternatives allow either for God to reveal his justice, vindicating his treatment of the just in an afterlife, or for the third party to reveal himself as the true and just deity, vindicating the just despite 'El Shaddai's indifference.

These two themes develop separately until they are joined in the climactic but ambiguous, "I know my redeemer lives" passage of Job 19. My framework accounts for the poet's ambiguous evocation as the passage admits of both themes. The interpretive dilemma corresponds to Job's dramatic one and to the reader's existential one. This would be especially true of the poet's original readers, who would not necessarily have believed in such a post-mortem reward but would have recognized the need for some such solution. But the passages' allusions to Hebrew Scripture do not leave this dilemma in a vacuum. The poet grounds Job's afterlife speculations in Hebrew Scripture's portrayal of God as creator (Job 10, cf. Gen 2–3) and as Israel's distant past and recent sponsor (Job 14, 19, cf. Isa 10–11, 44). Thus, while Job's speculations are groundless on the dramatic level, they enjoy argumentative force on the parabolic level: the poet brings his knowing readers into dialogue with the fundamental contradictions within Hebrew Scripture and between Hebrew Scripture and Israel's experience.

God's address to Job defies the friends' assumptions against divine condescension in noetic and personal mediation. As God appears in the whirlwind, he affirms Job to a

degree as the sole sage who appropriates this mythological conception. The whirlwind discourse's ideology, along with the fact of address rather than assault, adapt this mythological perspective substantially. But the whirlwind retains the immanent conception of God engaging with his creation, with his challenger, Job.

God's first speech from the whirlwind does not directly answer the problem of evil as couched in the human disputation. But it offers a profound defense of the goodness of creation and God's decision to make creation free. This freedom is key but allows abuse. God intimates humanity's far greater harm in the imperial city-state's cavalry compared to God's lions and in God's limitations on human-caused chaos. God responds more to Job's lamentation and revulsion at creation than to the theodicy disputation Eliphaz et al. provoked. The first speech maintains creation's goodness, defends God's decision to make free creatures capable of real harm and virtue, describes God's limitations on especially human-caused chaos, and thereby invites Job to accept the goodness of creation and admit his limited perspective. Far from being a non sequitur or an abusive refusal to engage Job's existential problems, God's reply defends the goodness of creation, points to human harm, and indicates that human suffering must be framed in a larger, cosmological context, which Job cannot expect to comprehend.

In the second speech God evokes a mythological register. The turn to cosmic threats, especially the rival Leviathan, obliquely affirms Job's intuition that theodicy must have a supra-historical, supra-natural context. However, God indicates to Job that the cosmic antagonist is not the uncreated rival, whose vanquishing furnished the cosmos. Rather, the Leviathan itself is created and his role in the question of human suffering and chaos remains in the present. On the one hand, then, the Leviathan being created and

wholly subject to God indicates God's categorical supremacy and incontestable power, in keeping with the human disputants' view of God's power. On the other hand, this amplifies the first speech's challenge, that God chose to make a free and dangerous cosmos. It also indicates that Job's proper use or abuse of his own freedom more urgently bears on a larger cosmic drama—confirming the first speech's implication Job cannot know the full picture. Job, as the Leviathan, is a creature capable both of submitting to his creator's intention for him and of proud defiance.

The Leviathan's significance must be considered per the Satan figure in the prologue and per the poet's appropriation of Second Isaiah's reflections on divine power. The Satan and the Leviathan are coordinated through several themes: as cosmic antagonists, as eminent but categorically inferior to God, as harmful to humanity, as having their activity limited by divine authority, and as manifestly proud. With Isaiah, the poet rejects the traditional *Chaoskampf* portrayal of divine power vis-à-vis an uncreated or coeval dragon monster, instead portraying God as all powerful and assessing that fact's implications for God's operation in history. Accordingly, both portray the Arm of the Lord in his address and persuasion, as he invites his Servants—Job and the exilic prophet, and both as typological representatives of Israel—to fulfill their vocations. They participate in God's larger concerns, and they themselves are identified with his Arm. However, despite their shared monotheistic premise, Job adapts rather than excludes the theme of divine antagonist. Job's vocation gains a cosmic significance vis-à-vis the antagonist foreign to Second Isaiah. The whirlwind and the prologue both provide for this proto-apocalyptic ideology as a synthesis, adapting Israel's mythological traditions of cosmic contest to Isaiah's insistence on divine transcendence and unqualified power.

Far from being a naive, orthodox tale that the poet savages, the prose provides a mythological framework offering a partial answer to the problems the poetry develops. The prose alludes to Deuteronomy as the poetry, and it agrees with the poetry as it demonstrates the inadequacy of the Deuteronomic perspective to explain Job's and Israel's suffering. It also adapts later theological developments as the poetry. Both sections portray Job as an allegorical commentary on Hebrew Scripture, as he personally embodies God's troubling treatment of Israel. The prose, however, in addition to enjoying the privileged status of narrative reality and analogous correspondence to the whirlwind speech, uses the Satan. We have no evidence of the celestial Satan before 520 BCE. The poet seems to have recognized the dual solution to his riddle of divine justice in Zechariah's vision of the Satan as a subordinate, celestial antagonist to God and God's people, along with the post-mortem reward of the righteous. The prose, no less than the poetry, recognizes the inability of Deuteronomy to justify God's activity in history and offers a creative adaptation of Israel's mythological traditions to address the problem. They employ similar strategies and converge on this concern.

Between the book's allusions to the language and mythological traditions of Hebrew Scripture, it is evident that interpreting Job seriously requires engaging it on this deeper level. Underlying the friends' and Job's argument, the whirlwind's omissive and allusive rhetoric, and the prose's subtle framing, is a dialogue with Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions. This dialogue forces the reader to acknowledge those religious traditions' mutual contradictions and their inability to account for historical experience. Job is a meta-dialogue with Hebrew Scripture: we must treat each form, mythological trope, and much of the language of Job as allusions and interpret those passages as

arguments from and with those traditions. While one has a great deal of latitude in sympathizing with the various elements of the book, the poet simultaneously makes the reader take a stance vis-à-vis various traditions in Hebrew Scripture. As he coordinates Hebrew Scripture's portrayal of God's lovingkindness with Job's desire for an afterlife, he argues that the devotee to Hebrew Scripture must affirm the afterlife.

What we have in Job, then, is a deep meditation on divine transcendence, power, and justice, in a dramatization of the riddle of Hebrew religious, scriptural, and mythological traditions. As the author alludes to these traditions, he both exposes their limitations and contradictions. But he also takes them very seriously as he salvages elements of even the most problematic perspectives. With this *sic et non* adaptation, the poet commends to his readers the necessity of adapting rather than discarding their traditions or clinging to them in their ossified forms. He also thereby offers his own solution to the mystery of God's justice as the logical implication of Hebrew Scripture.

So the friends' commitment to God's justice is affirmed, in part, by the whirlwind, the conclusion, the prologue, and Job himself, even while each of those perspectives negate the uniformity and the defensibility of that commitment within mundane, historical experience. They point to God's justice as being vindicated in the larger perspectives of later experience, post-mortem vindication, and the supra-moral, cosmic glorification of God's servants. The value of gratuitous and superlative devotion makes God's relationship to the human creature not immoral, nor even amoral, but supra-moral, as that relationship is moral but not reducible to moral exchange. The poet advances the values of unmotivated piety and gratuitous love along with God's just

reward for his servants: both are synthesized in the poet's desire for a post-mortem, eschatological communion with God.

Job's resurrection of the *Chaoskampf* motif also exemplifies this theme of adaptation. Job's assertion of the primitive storm-god motif exposes the Deuteronomists' failure to acknowledge and adapt their own religious heritage in their zeal to exclude foreign elements and syncretism and in their rightful recognition that the myth is inadequate to God's power, transcendence, and categorical singularity. The myth's parodic form in Job's speeches acknowledges the myth's shortcomings as there can be no primordial cosmic rival. But Job thus adduces the experience of historical chaos and the moral incoherence of the human condition to show that the friends' identification of history with God's perfect will implies that God himself is responsible for and indistinguishable from evil and chaos. Job's parodic storm-god motif demonstrates the need to retain the theme of divine antagonism.

Like the exilic prophet of Second Isaiah, the Joban poet recognized the need to persuade his readers of a superior conception of divine power to account for Israel's experience and divine justice. God is awake and all powerful, and he does not need to be roused. Unlike Second Isaiah, Job develops the idea of God's painful restraint of his power, thereby giving greater dignity to humanity and developing a theoretical space for a cosmic antagonist in a monotheistic framework. While Isaiah was comfortable saying that God created evil (Isa 45:7), Job was not. The Leviathan is created chaos and has sufficient latitude per God's permissive will to enact real moral chaos, gratuitous suffering, and profound evil. The book of Job thereby complicates the bilateral relationship between God's will and human experience, as found in the friends, Job



himself, Deuteronomy and Second Isaiah. Rather, the mystery of suffering—the problem of evil in its pronounced, monotheistic framework—must employ (1) divine restraint to dissociate evil from God’s perfect will, (2) a cosmic, amoral rationale to dissociate suffering from God’s simple pleasure for his servants, and (3) cosmic glory to make it all worthwhile. Thus, Job even adds something to the Suffering Servant of Isaiah. It is not merely the Lord’s pleasure to crush his servant, Job, but God allows evil to befall his suffering servant. As Isaiah envisioned a post-mortem vindication and glorification of the Servant, so Job looks to post-mortem vindication and cosmic glorification. These three themes are portrayed in the triangular relationship between God, the Satan, and Job in the prologue and hinted at in the whirlwind speech.

Thus, like Dell and Perdue, I have shown that the poet is extraordinarily allusive in his engagement with Hebrew Scripture and mythological traditions. However, the book need not be skeptical parody as Dell argues or deconstruction as Perdue claims. Rather, Job’s and his friends’ parodies and mythological distortions are preliminary tasks serving the book’s larger, creative task of developing a new framework for affirming Hebrew piety. As Dell wrote, the poet had real faith but was skeptical of orthodox answers.<sup>623</sup> But the poet’s new path is not skepticism. The poet himself points to post-mortem resurrection and cosmic glory as new—if heterodox for some—answers to the riddle of divine faithfulness to his servants. What Dell identifies as the poet’s main task is really a preliminary task of negation, excluding alternative solutions and thereby commending the poet’s own solution.

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<sup>623</sup> Dell, *Job as Skeptical Literature*, 212.

The poet's parodies converge with his other literary stratagems. We need not exclude or belittle the whirlwind speech. The whirlwind commends an earnest (and satisfying for many) defense of the cosmos's goodness and of God's decision to restrain his power for the sake of his creation's self-realization. God created the cosmos and especially humanity free so they can actively participate in God's creation. The whirlwind, though obviously not parodic in the sense that Job's friends and *some of* Job's speeches are, does allude to Hebrew Scripture and engage Israel's mythological perspectives as they do. Finally, the prologue itself employs the same sort of allusion to Deuteronomy as Job personifies the riddle of Israel's suffering and vocation.

Still, Job is susceptible to either the skeptical or this constructive interpretation. While the subtle literary dynamics I have observed support the creative interpretation given here, the book remains vulnerable to the reader's inclination. This may owe to the poet's humility in presenting his theoretical solution with measured insistence: Job's submission (42:6) is his own and commended to the reader, despite the poet's strong insistence. More importantly, it likely owes to his decision to make critical passages, from Job's submission to his exclamation of faith (19:25), Rorschach tests that implicate the readers in imposing their values on the text. To put the same thing another way, the poet reveals the full cost of Job's pious confessions and seeks to bring the reader from an unreflective confession as in Job 1:21 to the fuller engagement with the agonizing (and arguably necessarily eschatological) nature of Hebrew religion.

Job is intensely pedagogical and speculative. Recall Newsom's presentation of Job as a *Bildungsroman*: the reader is led from simplistic piety and thinking to progressively more challenging modes of discourse (narrative, wisdom dialogue,

theophany) and to more profound ethical and aesthetics of theology, as the values of the doctrine of retribution are displaced by the whirlwind's more profound perspective.<sup>624</sup> Newsom is correct that Job cannot be reduced to this task, but the book performs it, and it seems clear that it was a major concern. Moreover, along with the aesthetic and existential pedagogies, the poet offers a theologically pedagogical exercise about the nature of God's power, how to account for that power, and how to salvage divine justice. This reflection on divine power, the manipulation of Israel's mythological traditions, and the speculative argument for a cosmic and eschatological context of God's vindication of his servants and of his treatment of them, offer the reader a speculative argument for how Hebrew Scripture and piety must be reconciled with experience. This larger task accounts for Job's final restoration in a more satisfying manner than insisting on superficial contradictions and pronouncing the text's post-modern incoherence.

As in Newsom's work, I understand the poet as recognizing, seizing on, and forcing his readers to confront the ambivalence of their shared religious traditions. As in her work, I understand the poet to have a literary task more subtle than the narrative. But I disagree with her positions that the poet does not privilege perspectives, that the narrative logic does not vitally inform the text's meaning, and that the various perspectives are not to be privileged and synthesized. The poet's allusions, mythological manipulation, and narrative logic can all be seen as converging on his goals I have shown. The poet corrects the deficiencies of Deuteronomic ideologies and of skeptical rejections of that defunct ideology in despairing lamentation. He incorporated Second Isaiah's insights but also complemented those insights with his own creative

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<sup>624</sup> Newsom, *Book of Job*, 18–21.

mythological adaptation of Zechariah and perhaps with early apocalyptic developments. Thus, it is precisely in studying Job's eclectic use of ancient Hebrew religious texts, forms, mythologies, and generic varieties that we see the poet's privileging of perspectives, not only within his own work but within the Hebrew religious tradition. These are joined in a subtle relationship, as he salvaged elements of even Job's friends' perspective. But he used the various mutually exclusive and simultaneously inadequate perspectives to push his reader towards a new synthesis.

I began this dissertation with the simple and non-controversial statement that "the Book of Job is an enigma." The reader should now understand the full force of that claim. Rather than merely acknowledging the book's difficult nature, I have given a meaningful account of that difficulty and provided a framework for recognizing and engaging its complex structure and subtle dynamics. Through the poet's conspicuous uses of the root, מָשַׁל, through his portrayal of Job inverting Israel's fate as a מָשַׁל (Deut 28:35–37, cf. Job 2:7), and through Job's personification of Israel, the poet dramatizes the inherent riddle of God's treatment of Israel.

By constructing this riddle, the poet invites his readers to acknowledge the failure of Deuteronomic nationalistic hopes and to turn towards eschatological ones. While Newsom rightly observes the remaining tension between the aesthetics of the whirlwind and the affirmation of divine justice in the epilogue, we need not infer that the book's lack of thematic closure indicates no solution to the book's problems. Rather, we might consider this remaining dissonance as the grain of sand that festers in a clam. This dissonance, within the book's argument that God can only be vindicated in the post-mortem vindication of the righteous, will continue to fester within the pious reader along

with the poet's critiques of traditional piety. We should appreciate how this literary medium is particularly well suited to the poet's purpose. Even for his contemporary readers ill-inclined to accept his solution, the poet's implicit and suggestive argumentation evokes the poet's desires, logic, and solution to make them the more persuasive. The book evokes the desire for an afterlife, discontent with this world, a reconsideration of God's engagement with history, and a contemplation on divine power, even if the reader does not quite understand or yet agree with the poet's argument.<sup>625</sup> The conclusion's dissatisfactory nature drives the reader back to the poet's solution.

Thus, we should understand Job as standing at the critical moment of Israel's shift from national and historical to individual and eschatological hopes. This is reflected on the surface levels in many ways, from Job's desire for post-mortem renewal to Job's later reveling in his daughters. But the book's deepest literary subtleties also supply an effective argument for this shift. Job both stands at this moment and actively contributes to effecting the shift.

Indeed, it is remarkable how similar the poet's argument is to the assertion of faith by the mother of the seven sons in 2 Macc 7:6. Her confidence in Moses's promise that "God will have compassion on his servants" cites Moses's song (Deut 32:36). The Antiochene persecution demonstrates that this proposed compassion cannot be historical, and she concludes that it must be a post-mortem reward and vindication. The "time of mercy" (2 Macc 7:29) is necessarily a post-mortem resurrection. Job developed this logic and argument at length. She was able to confess it in concise if elliptical form.

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<sup>625</sup> This evocative function may also have implications for the book's pastoral use. The catharsis that the book provides for many readers can be affirmed while also being directed to the poet's argument. The poet intends his readers to be offended by the reality of innocent suffering, but he uses this discontent and offense to redirect their hope.

When we consider Job as wisdom literature, we must do so in a broad sense. The poet certainly sought to offer his readers a pedagogical exercise, and his speakers adduce observations from creation to evoke a sapiential ethic. On the other hand, his task, resources, and targets are far broader, as he weaves a tapestry of various competing sapiential, aesthetic, and mythological religious traditions. Far from being unconcerned with religion or celebrating the mundane order, it is immensely dissatisfied with history and intensely religious in its didacticism and speculation. Insofar as it is universalist in its outlook and implications, what it offers to the universal and general is the implications of Israel's particular religious traditions and experience.

While I set out to demonstrate the poet's manipulation of mythological traditions and to analyze the argument that the poet creates through that manipulation, I have also made an extended argument for identifying Job as a *mashal*, an allegorical riddle or parable. The poet's own creative uses of the term מִשָּׁל (Job 17:6, 30:19b, 27:1, 29:1), and Job's involved and nuanced relationship to Israel's fate as a מִשָּׁל in Deut 28:35–37, make this identification worth further consideration. It agrees with R. Lakish's opinion that the events are not to be taken as literal history and with the ancient interpretation of the anonymous Rabbi from the Babylonian Talmud echoed by Maimonides.

As a riddle, it is certainly one of a kind. Thus, we might continue to call it *sui generis*. But we should recognize how the story includes and coordinates several of the various uses of מִשָּׁל. Job allegorically represents Israel, his sufferings correspond precisely to Israel's that render Israel a מִשָּׁל as an object lesson (Deut 28:35, 37), but his innocent suffering inverts Deuteronomy's ideology offering an opposite object lesson. Job's allusions to Hebrew Scripture dramatize, reveal, and formulate the inherent riddle

of Hebrew religion. To put my understanding of Job as a מִשַּׁל —a parable allegorically dramatizing Jewish religious traditions and developments and furthering certain of those developments—in Schipper’s terms, the author addresses this parable to his readers. As mutual readers of Hebrew Scripture, the author’s and his readers’ shared commitment to Hebrew religious tradition implies that they are all within the “larger narrative” of the people engaged in God’s service and subject to the vagaries of history.

Per Schipper’s contention that parables function to pronounce judgements, the author implies a potential polemical charge against those who refuse later theological developments—whether clinging to indefensible Deuteronomic ideals, renouncing all hope in God’s favor as Job does at his lowest points, or refusing the poet’s proto-apocalyptic solutions in the cosmic antagonist and God’s post-mortem vindication of the just. He also insists on the necessity of adapting rather than discarding Israel’s mythological traditions. Contra Schipper, however, *meshalim* are not merely hostile. The more common position, that *meshalim* invite the hearer to a change in mindset or activity, should be retained. The poet invites his readers to a particular stance and a changed mindset: in Job’s submission modeling the appropriate use of human freedom in piety, in marveling at the cosmic glory of that human piety, and in transitioning from a national to an eschatological hope.

Job is not solely didactic. Rather, this allegorical riddle is also about God’s treatment of the just, using Israel’s experience as its frame of reference. It is speculative in its argument for an afterlife and in its insistence that earthly evil must have a cosmic counterpart and etiology. This *mashal* framework seems the most convenient and

facilitating, not in terms of ease and simplicity of application, but in terms of fittingness and ability to account for the text's complex tasks and subtle strategies.

These observations warrant future research on Job's potential to contribute to our understanding of *mashal*. On the other hand, in view of Job's status as a wholly unique *mashal*, it might be more appropriate to consider the poet's creative coordination of the various sorts of *meshalim* as another example of his eclectic synthesizing of various wisdom traditions and tropes.

For other future research, it seems a monograph dedicated to Job as a riddle, whose components converge on the solution of a post-mortem reward, would be valuable. While I have shown the poetry's components that do so (in negating the friends' Deuteronomic perspective, Job's correlating Hebrew Scripture with a post-mortem reward, and in the whirlwind's hints), these observations should be coordinated with the narrative. For example, the trajectory of the testing (Job 1:12, 2:5–6) naturally indicates the logical final test of Job's faithfulness in death. This logic is indicated throughout the poetry and explicitly in Job 13:15. The too often-brutal death of the faithful in history requires the implication to be taken seriously. The poet affirms God's final vindication in the epilogue, probably according to his received tradition, but also because he could not assert the value of God's reward in the post-mortem context he sought to prove. Job's latter restoration is rather a sign of that post-mortem reward. This seems to be the implication of Job's receiving a second set of ten children, whereas every material possession is meticulously doubled (42:10b, 12–13). It also may explain Job's treatment of his daughters: their value as individuals is celebrated in Job's delight in naming them and in Job's equal provision for their inheritance despite the patriarchal system of



providing inheritances to sons alone. This patriarchal value is reflected in the prologue's portrayal of the daughters' reliance on the sons (1:4), and in the friends' insistence on God's historical blessing of the righteous man's house. But Job's experience negates the communal theodicy that relies on God's blessing of later generations, and it leads him to insist on the (eternal) value of the individual.

The framework developed here might enrich future work on treating Job's allusions. The poetry does not require the skeptical framework that scholars such as Dell and Greenstein assume when treating Job's allusions and parody.<sup>626</sup> Rather, as I have shown, such studies can be reductionistic and tend to neglect the themes' fuller development in the book. A systematic treatment of the poet's allusions to various textual traditions in relation to the book's narrative logic and the nuances of those allusions in the characters' dialogue is desirable.

Finally, Job's place in the historical development of Israel's theology should be reframed. Recall that Tsevat argues Job's final value is disinterested righteousness, and the book falls in the intermediate period, after the "doctrine of collective retribution" had been invalidated by Israel's political catastrophes but before "the doctrine of individual retribution in the world-to-come" had been established.<sup>627</sup> As we saw, not even the whirlwind speech allows for Tsevat's amoral reading. We should further recognize Job's precise agenda as effecting the change between these values, rather than maintaining their opposite. Job applies tropes of "collective retribution" precisely to the then theoretical doctrine of individual retribution. Both in terms of historical, religious development, and in terms of the theological and pastoral application, Job's significance ought to be more

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<sup>626</sup> Dell, *Job as Sceptical Literature*, *passim*; Greenstein, "Parody as Challenge to Tradition," 66–78.

<sup>627</sup> Tsevat, "Meaning of Job," 101–2.

thoroughly re-evaluated. The book of Job's solution to the problem of evil is not God's amorality or even disinterested virtue, though the latter is a theme. Rather, the book of Job offers as the solution to the problem of innocent suffering—or more precisely the problem of God's failure to reward his devoted servants in this world—the hope for cosmic glorification in post-mortem communion with God.

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix A

Discussions about Hebrew monotheism are often muddled by different criteria of monotheism and by the semantic ambiguity of the term ‘god,’ or אֱלֹהִים, etc. For some academics, the mere existence of supernatural beings disproves the presence of monotheism. Thus, for such a perspective, the existence of the Leviathan and the Sea *even as created entities* has been offered as disproving monotheism.<sup>628</sup> Some scholars will often provide monolatry or the often synonymously used henotheism as the preferable terms for the Hebrew Bible, as indicating that Yahweh was seen as the only valid object of worship for Israel, but allowing that he was one among any number of gods.<sup>629</sup> However, the traditionally considered monotheistic religions, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, traditionally teach the existence of any number of supernatural beings; they are powerful and occasionally falsely worshipped as gods but are distinguished from the creator God categorically. This categorical supremacy implies monolatry, as God alone is worthy of worship, but the monolatry owes not to Israel’s being in a specific relationship with one god among others. Some Hebrew Bible passages may be understood in a merely monolatrous sense, with Israel’s sole devotion to Yahweh being predicated on the covenant and past favors, and other deities’ activities are

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<sup>628</sup> When I referred to Job as monotheistic at the SBL national meeting, a questioner suggested that the existence of the Leviathan, even though he is created, precludes a monotheistic understanding of the book. Analogously, R. W. L. Moberly, “How Appropriate is ‘Monotheism’ as a Category for Biblical Interpretation?,” in *Early Jewish and Christian Monotheism*, ed. Loren T. Stuckenbruck and Wendy E. S. North (London: T&T Clark, 2004), 219 offers Mary and the Saints as evidence that “historic monotheisms are in important senses less ‘mono-’ than their adherents sometimes claim.” The argument is a red herring. Re-defining monotheism or ignoring distinctions between created and uncreated, glorified finite beings and the glorious infinite being, etc., is unworthy of serious engagement.

<sup>629</sup> Moberly, “How Appropriate is ‘Monotheism,’” 216; Kwon, *Scribal Culture and Intertextuality*, 52.

frightfully acknowledged (e.g., 2 Kgs 3:27). But other passages clearly indicate the belief in God's categorical supremacy and the invalidity of other nations' cults and gods.

This leads into the semantic issue, as any number of supernatural beings might be worshipped as gods, but the specifically monotheistic commitment at some point insisted that the term, God, applies to the sole, categorically distinct creator. Even Second Isaiah uses the term 'god' in parallel to idols to refer to beings who cannot save (אל אל לא יושיע; 45:20); this despite Isaiah's consistent position that these idols are "nothing" and certainly not God or even gods in any sense intended by religious devotees (e.g., Isa 40:19–20, 41:29, 42:17, 44:9–20, 46:1–2). It is not only a matter of Israel's monolatry predicated on being in covenant with the LORD or being the LORD's peculiar possession, but Israel's monolatry is predicated on God's sole transcendent superiority. I observe a similar monotheistic impulse in Deut 32 in chapter 4. Accordingly, the nations' cults are illegitimate, not only for Israel, but for the nations themselves.

The semantic range of the term, 'god,' and the corresponding awkwardness for religious dialogue remained in the New Testament period. Most enigmatically, John 10:34–36 portrays Jesus as referring to humans as gods in his exegesis of Ps 82. Paul's challenge in 1 Corinthians 10:19–21 seems to stem from a mistaken inference from a monotheistic polemic against idols as in Second Isaiah. Paul agrees with his audience (and Isaiah) that idols are "nothing," i.e., not God or worthy to be called gods, but he rejects their inference that idols are nothing altogether, insisting that even superficial idol worship includes the association with demons.



In Job itself, many scholars recognize the book's monotheistic character.<sup>630</sup> If the reader prefers a different term, I will not argue about it further. What I do insist on, however, is recognizing how the human disputants are all agreed upon the equation of mundane experience with the single, transcendent, categorically superior, all powerful deity's will. This is the fundamental problem Job addresses: the relationship between mundane experience and divine power. It is only a problem because God's omnipotence and irresistible will are presumed, by the characters, by the narrative, by the poet and by his expected readers. The Whirlwind speech and the prologue address this problem by offering rationales complicating that relationship. These do not qualify divine power, but point, instead, to God's permissive will and allowance for others' freedom: his subordinates are responsible for chaos, but they are not rival deities in a polytheistic sense. For this purpose, monolatry, henotheism, and the alternative they provide to monotheism are clearly inadequate. While the ultimate logical corollary of monotheism, *creatio ex nihilo*, is not present in the book, the book clearly makes God *sui generis*, categorically superior, transcendent, and all powerful. This theme is implicit throughout my dissertation, but here I will briefly present its function in the various perspectives.

For Job's friends, there are other supernatural beings who are the immediate agents of the divine will. But they all effect the categorically superior God's justice. The equation between earthly experience and God's will is precisely why they take Job's criticism of earthly experience as a challenge to God's justice. The issue of theodicy is

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<sup>630</sup> E.g., Ken Brown, "The Firstborn of Death: Monotheism and Mythology in Job 18," 546, 557–61, relates Job 18 to Job 5 and Deut 32, as I have done in chapter 1, and he also recognizes the existence of other deities who are nonetheless wholly "subservient to a single high God." Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965) 216 argues for Job post-dating Second Isaiah, as Isaiah argues for monotheism "against the polytheism rampant in Babylonia," whereas "Job takes monotheism for granted."

framed in a monotheistic register, even if the attending mythological structures—which the poet deconstructs—are not satisfying to modern conceptions of monotheism. Furthermore, as I show in chapter 1, Job’s friends frequently allude to the Song of Moses, Deut 32, conforming their mythological structures of justice to the Song. In both contexts, foreign gods are relegated to the punitive agents of God Almighty’s natural law, and in Deut 32, as I observe in chapter 4, Moses denies those gods’ equality to God. Israel’s monolatry is based not only on God’s past favors to or covenant with Israel, but his worship is distinct in kind from the gods of the nations. The worship of other ‘gods’ is illegitimate, as they are non-gods (Deut 32:21). Just as in Paul’s understanding (indeed, it is hard to imagine Paul’s view not being largely shaped by Deut 32), the author exploits the semantic ambiguity to indicate that these gods are not God, worthy of the title, or belonging to the category. Similarly, Eliphaz’s suppression of the storm-god motif (4:12–16) appears to be informed by Elijah’s empirical test as to who, the LORD or Ba‘al, is truly God (1 Kgs 18:21). Elijah’s monolatry is based on the Yahweh’s sole claim to being God. Thus, even the friends—as the most mythologically elaborate and the most inadequate perspective—represent a monotheistic bent native to Deuteronomic ideology.

Job also attributes all earthly experience directly to the hand of Yahweh. His experience of chaos leads him to characterize God as the cause of chaos. The monotheistic bent of this understanding pervades the poetic dialogue but is nowhere more clearly reflected than in Job 12:9’s quotation of Isa 41:20. Whereas Isaiah refers directly to God’s restoration of Israel, God’s simultaneous responsibility for good and evil is stated (Isa 45:7), and the larger historical context presumes God’s punishment of Israel in the Babylonian exile. Job thus redirects Isaiah’s rhetoric to point to the negative elements

compared to Isaiah's positive portrayal of God's complete power. Both contexts, however, presume God's complete control over historical experience, and do not admit any qualification of divine power.<sup>631</sup>

The Whirlwind likewise portrays God as all-powerful and distinct from his creation. The Leviathan is explicitly said to be created. As such, the Leviathan is adduced as an etiology for evil, a hypostasis that complicates Job's, his friends', Isaiah's, and Deuteronomy's discussions of evil. However, his being created accepts the position, shared by those characters and texts, of God's unqualified power and superiority vis-à-vis everything else, from the physical creation to the renewed cosmic antagonist. Similarly, the Sea's "bursting forth" explicitly makes it posterior to God. It is clearly subordinate in power and category. Finally, as the created Leviathan frightens the very gods (אלים; 41:17) but pleads before God, Job clearly uses the terms, Leviathan and gods, to refer to mighty but categorically inferior beings. The whirlwind portrays God as all-powerful but as exercising that power in a deliberately restrained manner. This self-restraint reconciles the understanding of God's omnipotence necessary to monotheism with the experience of real evil as the effect of entities hostile to God's perfect will, as God's free creations exploit God's permissive will to harmful effect.

The prologue makes use of the divine council type scene and the typical language, "the sons of the gods." Kwon blithely refers to this as portraying God as a father.<sup>632</sup>

Nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is God portrayed as participating in any theogony, whether

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<sup>631</sup> As Gordis, *Book of God and Man*, 216, observes, Isaiah had to contend for Yahweh's monotheistic supremacy, due to Babylonian polytheism, whereas the Joban poet can presume it. It does not follow that Isaiah invented monotheism. Rather, his polemics may be explained not as a radical insight or innovation, but merely as an application of previous belief to his present challenges.

<sup>632</sup> Kwon, *Intertextuality*, 53–4. Kwon, *ibid.*, 54–55, further explains away Isaiah's polemics as denigrating other deities, to argue that monotheism should be avoided in discussing both Job and Isaiah.

as child, consort, or parent. Rather, the term remains in Hebrew Scripture as a frozen form despite its polytheistic background and its literal ideological incongruity.<sup>633</sup> As just noted, Job 41:17 clearly indicates the poet's contentment to use the term, לָא, to refer to categorically inferior beings. Kwon himself recognizes the use of the same phrase in Job 38:7 in a demythologized register, but he simply asserts that Job 1:6 is to be taken with gross literalism.

Alternatively, as I argue in chapter 4, the prologue's portrayal of God's superiority is clear and mythologically restrained. There is no consideration of any entity posing any threat to God's power. As eminent and hubristic as the Satan is, there is no threat to his reign or show of force, as in Yamm's demands upon 'El for Ba'al's life. Similarly, as the Satan and the Leviathan are coordinated, God's reference to the Leviathan as created further implies that the Satan's status as one of "the sons of God" is that of a creature. Again, at no point in the Hebrew Bible is God portrayed as begetting the "sons of the gods," or himself being portrayed in any theogonic context. Despite the cosmic scene and the mythological language, there is no reason to try to read this second temple text as uniquely polytheistic compared to the rest of Hebrew Scripture.

## Appendix B

The only positive arguments Clines, offers for his position that the Leviathan is the natural crocodile, are first, that Leviathan is created (41:25) and, second, his assessment that "there is no thought of a battle with God."<sup>634</sup> These arguments are easily

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<sup>633</sup> Of course, some texts within Hebrew Scripture reflect that polytheistic background much more than others, as I analyze Ps 82 and Deut 32 in chapter 4, for example.

<sup>634</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1191.

answered. First, that the Leviathan is created adapts the myth to the book's more sophisticated theological perspective I have developed in this dissertation, but it in no way justifies the inference that the Leviathan is therefore not a mythological creature. The myth is adapted but not discarded. The Leviathan is analogous to the Sea in this regard. Second, the speeches' rhetoric has constantly indicated to Job what Job cannot do and only God can do. Thus, the Leviathan's limitation and pleading vis-à-vis God indicates the adaptation of the mythological conflict.

Some examples of the insurmountable difficulties Clines encounters are in order. Clines, acknowledges the usual meaning of אֱלִים as gods, but directs us instead to "take the word as a variant spelling of אֵיל "ram; chief."<sup>635</sup> This is relatively surmountable but already evidences special pleading. Less plausible is the "absurd picture" of treating the crocodile "as a human captive" in 41:2–4 (40:26–28).<sup>636</sup> Indeed, it is quite absurd to imagine a crocodile pleading and submitting to a covenant, but it is not at all absurd to imagine a version of the *Chaoskampf* monster so pleading with God. Clines has to admit that the fishermen's conundrum in dividing up the Leviathan indicates "at least at this moment not simply the down-to-earth crocodile."<sup>637</sup>

Clines also infers that either the poet was ignorant of humans' ability to hunt crocodiles in the ancient world (including Ezek 29:4's depiction) or that he "does not believe that Job would be capable of it," as though the poet assessed rather than invented Job.<sup>638</sup> Clearly, however, Ezek 29:4 evidences Jewish awareness of crocodile (תנינ) hunting, where God addresses the Pharaoh as a mythologized crocodile, similar to the

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<sup>635</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1169.

<sup>636</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1193–94.

<sup>637</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1194.

<sup>638</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1192–95.

Exodus and Isaian traditions I discussed in ch. 2 (Exod 15; Ps 74; Isa 30:7). Far more importantly, it is not Job's individual capacity, but humanity's that is rhetorically significant.

Most absurd of all, are Clines's attempts to naturalize the Leviathan's luminous and kindling emissions. Clines asserts, "it is no more than a fanciful and amusing hyperbole, which all rests on a single conceit, that the crocodile's breath is hot as fire:" the light that comes from the crocodile's sneezes is no more than sunlight playing on the water; the crocodile's "mictating membrane that sweeps across the eye" can "just conceivably" be "likened to the coming of the dawn."<sup>639</sup> Finally, Clines has to admit that the language of kindling coal is "mythological," but he then insists "that does not settle the question whether the creature described is or is not a mythological creature."<sup>640</sup>

Clines's many difficulties all derive from the single conceit that the Leviathan is the crocodile. The position cannot be maintained. Considering (1) the poet's deliberate manipulation of the *Chaoskampf* tradition, (2) the Leviathan's placement in embedded speech for rhetorical effect, and (3) his correspondence to Job's conspicuous reference to the same character in 3:8, its creative adaptation here is unsurprising and no threat to the book's or even any theologically committed readers' monotheistic perspectives.

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<sup>639</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1195–97

<sup>640</sup> Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1197.

## Appendix C

The position that Isaiah models his suffering servant on Job can be traced from Hartley, to Terrien, to Pope, to Pfeiffer.<sup>641</sup> Only Pfeiffer and Terrien develop arguments for the position. Both Pfeiffer and Terrien point to the absence of vicarious suffering in the book of Job to support their relative dating, and this is the most substantial of their arguments advanced. Terrien holds that the suffering of Job has been deprived of all meaning, while that of the servant is explained as an offering for sin. Accordingly, the prophet answers the questions posed by Job.<sup>642</sup>

However, it is inadequate to claim that Job's suffering has been emptied of "toute signification." Rather, Job's role as a *mashal* (17:6) has the proximate signification of exposing the inadequacy of the doctrine of retribution, thereby seeking to wean pious Israelites from the preoccupation with physical blessing. Considered within the story's world, the epilogue and prologue both indicate a meaning for Job's suffering. His submission "for naught" in the epilogue becomes the merit grounding his friends' forgiveness, much like the suffering servant. His role in the heavenly quarrel arguably gives Job's suffering a more significant meaning, as Job not only achieves atonement, but settles issues of cosmic importance exceeding the human realm. This cannot be blithely ignored by focusing on the poetry as 'the heart of the book.' They are too well coordinated. Furthermore, as Jubilees indicates, the cosmic relevance of Job's suffering was deemed highly significant in the second temple period, as it was co-opted into

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<sup>641</sup> Hartley, *Book of Job*, 14–15; Terrien, "Quelques Remarques sur les Affinités de Job avec le Deutéro-Esaïe," in *Volume du Congrès: Genève 1965*, VTSup 15 (Leiden: Brill, 1966), 308–09; Pope, *Book of Job*, xxxvii; Pfeiffer, "The Dual Origins of Hebrew Monotheism," *JBL* 46 (1927): 206

<sup>642</sup> Terrien, "Quelques Remarques," 308–09.

Abraham's obedience in the Akedah. As Genesis coordinates Abraham's obedience with the Temple's location and therefore efficacy, Jubilees grants this obedience specifically liturgical importance.

Alternatively, J.C. Bastiens examines the specific lexical, syntactical, and thematic correlations.<sup>643</sup> Bastiens seems to support Isaian priority by his habit of referring to Job's reminiscences of Isaiah and by his citation of Gordis, though he is primarily interested in exploring how the two texts shed light on each other as a valuable synchronic exercise.<sup>644</sup>

Regarding the Servant Song itself, Gordis posits an ever so slender connection between Job 17:6b and Isa 53:3.<sup>645</sup> More significant is Gordis's identification of the poet's "unconscious usage... a reminiscence of a phrase from Deutero-Isaiah (41:20; cf. also 66:2)," in Job 12:9.<sup>646</sup> I contend at some length for this allusion in chapter 2. Finally, Gordis points to the wide body of scholarly literature that date Job anywhere from the very end of the sixth century to the end of the third century, as a majority position.<sup>647</sup>

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<sup>643</sup> J. C. Bastiens, "The Language of Suffering in Job 16–19 and in the Suffering Servant Passages of Deutero-Isaiah," in *Studies in Isaiah: Festschrift Willem A.M. Beuken*, ed. J van Ruiten and M. Vervenne (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1997) 421–32.

<sup>644</sup> Bastiens, *ibid.*, 426, 432.

<sup>645</sup> Gordis, *Book of Job*, 182–83.

<sup>646</sup> Gordis, *ibid.*, 138.

<sup>647</sup> Gordis, *Book of God and Man*, 216, 361 n. 35.