The Language of Creation and the Construction of a New Concept of Theodicy:
Job 38-42

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Abstract

The purpose of this thesis is to examine the way in which Job 38-42 develops and defends a new theodicy through language of creation and of the created order. This thesis will posit that through the course of the divine speeches, divine justice is shown to be an element of divine rule where chaos is limited and confined to specific boundaries, but not entirely eliminated or defeated. Inherent in this justice is compassionate divine care for all parts of creation, including the farthest reaches of the cosmos and uninhabited lands of exile. The social, political and economic conditions of the fifth century B.C.E. are examined as the context for this critique of retributive justice and the singularly juridical understanding of justice that is represented by Job and his friends. The theodicy presented in Job 38-42 defines for Israel a divine justice, which is boundless, and provides a model for human action that upholds empathy and compassion for the outcasts of society.

Résumé

L'objectif de cette thèse est d'examiner la façon dont le langage de Job 38-42 conçoit et défend une nouvelle théodicée à travers l'utilisation d'expressions visant à démontrer la création et l'ordre de l'univers. La thèse suivante démontrera, qu'à travers les discours divins, la justice divine est représentée comme un élément d'ordonnance divine où tout ce qui est en état de chaos est limité et contenu dans un périmètre précis, mais n'est pas entièrement éliminé ni vaincu. Inné dans cette justice est la compassion divine pour chaque partie de sa création incluant les plus lointains horizons de l'univers et les terres inhabitées et expatriées. Les conditions sociales, politiques et économiques du cinquième siècle Avant-J.C. créent le contexte nécessaire pour une critique approfondie d'une justice réparatrice et d'une compréhension particulièrement judiciaire qui est représenté par Job et ses camarades. La justice divine présentée dans Job 38-42 définit pour Israël, une justice divine infinie qui fournit un parangon, pour les actions humaines, basé sur la sympathie et la compassion envers les parias de la société.

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Introduction

The book of Job has long been acclaimed as one of the greatest literary masterpieces in the biblical corpus, indeed, as one of the unique masterpieces of the ancient world. Not only does the book deal with some of the most difficult problems of the human predicament in terms of seeming divine injustice, the problem of evil, the nature of creation and its order, but in addition these problems are presented through the various literary forms of poetry, prose and moral dialogue. These forms are found throughout the book insofar as the text begins with a prose narrative prologue (1.1-2.13), moves into didactic poetic dialogue (3.1-42.6) and concludes again with a prose narrative epilogue (42.7-17). At each stage of the book, forensic language and creation motifs emerge and can be seen to help organize major components of the book.[1] Cosmological images are evident within the first few verses of the poetic dialogue, for Job's opening speeches speak of the dualities of night and day and creation and chaos. Images of creation continue through the book, climaxing in the theophany where the speeches of God use the language of cosmology and the animal kingdom to respond to Job. The continuous use of the images and language of creation suggest that the book is intently concerned with the way in which the world is ordered and governed.

Whereas the core of the book, the poetic dialogue, might seem to contain the major theological thrust, the argument of the book can only be deciphered when addressing the book as a whole, narrative and speeches included. The difference in style has been variously argued as evidence for diverse authorship and origin, the Prologue-Epilogue being part of an originally independent ancient folk tale that provided the author

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[1] Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary* (London: SCM Press, 1985), 54.

of the Dialogue with the departure point for the poetic discourse on suffering.[2] More

recent scholarship, however, has tended to examine the book as a structural unity, arguing

that the two elements should be considered a single artistic work.[3] The works of Carol

Newsom[4] and Norman C. Habel[5] have examined the book as a literary whole, finding that

the tension that is present between the prose tale and the wisdom dialogue is integral to

giving meaning to the book as a whole. That is, it remains important for the reader to

know that Job's suffering is the result of a cosmic wager and not the result of some

forgotten or unnoticed sin. On the surface, the book addresses the problem of innocent

suffering, yet, if the book as a whole is examined, it becomes evident that one of the chief

issues at stake is God's justice, and thus the nature of the moral order of the universe he

created; specifically, a dedicated critique of the doctrine of retribution emerges.

The purpose of this thesis will be to examine attitudes towards God's justice that

are espoused in Job 38-42 with specific focus given to the way in which language of

creation and of the created universe is used to defend these ideas. The approach will be a

close textual study of the language of creation in Job 38-42 which will employ historical

critical method when discussing the way in which the language of creation aids in the

development of a new theodicy, one that was understandable and defensible in the post-

exilic period. The first task will be to examine the social and religious environment of the

state of Judah under the Persian Empire in the fifth century BCE, positing that a critique

of retribution, as it is found in Job 38-42, is the result of this period. Important in the

discussion of the development of a new concept of theodicy is the use of myth and

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[2] Ernst Sellin, *Introduction to the Old Testament*, ed. Georg Fohrer (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1968), 325.
[3] Yair Hoffman, "The Relation between the Prologue and the Speech-Cycles in Job : A Reconsideration," *Vetus Testamentum* 31, no. 2 (1981): 165-70.
[4] Carol A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford Univ Pr, 2003).
[5] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary.*

metaphors. Thus, the second task will be to investigate the way in which myths and metaphors of creation are reused and reshaped and the significance of this in the newly emerging ideas about theodicy.

This thesis will attempt to demonstrate that through the course of Job 38-42, ideas of theodicy, including the doctrine of retribution, and Job's own idea of theodicy as it is found in his responses to the divine speeches, is destabilized, and, seen in the creation language of the divine speeches, a new concept of theodicy is presented.

I

The Book of Job and its Social Milieu

Social Setting of Wisdom Literature

A cursory look at the theories proposed by scholars for the possible life settings for the origin, application and conservation of "Wisdom" literature will expose the fact that there exists much disagreement. Scholars such as Claudia Camp[1] and Carol R. Fontaine[2] argue for the family or tribe as a possible life-setting for Wisdom literature. Although there is no definitive textual evidence indicating the official operation of the sage within the family or tribe, Fontaine argues that if the basic unit of the Israelite community is understood as the patriarchal family, then texts that suggest teaching, counselling, planning of economic resources and of settling disputes are evidence of roles associated with a sage that might have been carried out by householders, elders or tribal leaders.[3] It is probable then, she suggests, that these roles in the private and public spheres of the community come to influence the more formalized role of the sage in the royal court.[4]

It is in such a setting, that of the Solomonic royal court, that scholars such as Gerhard von Rad suggest that an intellectual shift occurred, an "enlightenment," whereby the officials of the newly established court shaped the way in which the world was

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[1] Claudia V. Camp, *Wisdom and the Feminine in the Book of Proverbs* (Decatur: Almond Press, 1985), 239-54.
[2] Carole R. Fontaine, "The Sage in Family and Tribe," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 155-64.
[3] Ibid., 156-57.
[4] Ibid., 164.

perceived.[5] This idea is followed to a degree by Walter Brueggemann who argues, not

that the historical account should be considered accurate, but rather that the introduction

of the Solomonic reign brought about political and social change, both of which required

theological justification that resulted in a shift in intellectual perspective. He argues that

there is a high sociological probability that court officials, scribes and teachers were

required to provide religious and social policy regarding the new monarchy, as well as

educate those who were expected to continue the tradition.[6] This is of course disputed:

Crenshaw concludes that there is no significant evidence that historically connects

Solomon to the generation of Wisdom literature. Rather, the biblical traditions should be

considered late legends that, based on the belief in wisdom theology that wealth was the

natural result of wisdom, Solomon's untold wealth came to be associated with his great

and legendary wisdom.[7] Further disagreement comes from R.N. Whybray who argued

against using the term (חָכְמָה) "wise" to describe court officials.[8] Instead, Whybray asserts

that Hebrew wisdom literature awards the term "wise" to those of superior intellectual

ability, indicating that the group responsible included educated individuals not necessarily

confined to aristocratic circles or the royal court.[9]

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[5] Gerhard von Rad, *Old Testament Theology,* trans. D. M. G. Stalker, vol. 1 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1962), 429. See also, Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel, Weisheit in Israel. English* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1972).

[6] Walter Brueggemann, "The Social Significance of Solomon as a Patron of Wisdom," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East,* ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 124-25. Katherine J. Dell, arguing from a literary-historical perspective, also believes the origins of the Wisdom tradition to be in the pre-exilic period. See further, Katharine J. Dell, "How Much Wisdom Literature Has Its Roots in the Pre-Exilic Period?," in *In Search of Pre-Exilic Israel* (London; New York: T & T Clark Intl, 2004), 251-72.

[7] James L. Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom : An Introduction* (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 42-54.

[8] R. N. Whybray, *The Book of Proverbs : A Survey of Modern Study,* vol. 1, *History of Biblical Interpretation Series* (Leiden ; New York: Brill, 1995), 22.

[9] R. N. Whybray, "The Sage in the Israelite Royal Court," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East,* ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 133.

Date and Social Setting of the Book of Job

Placing the book of Job within the history of wisdom tradition is no less

confusing. Not only does the book combine what seems to be a number of literary forms

such as lament, court drama and sapiential disputation,[10] but the very existence of both

poetry and prose in a single volume has led some scholars to believe that the book is not a

composition of a single historical time but that the book has undergone a lengthy literary

history and is therefore the result of many authors. The book itself offers no overt

historical reference and so tracing the literary history remains difficult. While one might

decide not to date the book with Habel in favour of reading it for its universal and

timeless features,[11] questions of context and social setting do help to illuminate aspects of

the book. Possible dates for the book in its present form often fall into one of two

periods: the Babylonian exile or the Persian period. Samuel Terrien argues in favour of

the former, locating the Dialogue and Yahweh speeches in the sixth century among the

Jerusalemites in the Babylonian Diaspora. He suggests that the poetic dialogues first

surfaced orally sometime between Ezekiel's reference to the "righteous" man Job (14.14)

and the work of Deutero-Isaiah. [12] The emergence of this book in a time without cultural

or cultic framework would then explain the lack of reference to major Israelite theological

themes such as election, covenant and law.[13]

Yet an exilic date is not without problems. Gordis argues that the writer must

have known of the texts of Deutero-Isaiah, for in the book of Job the idea that suffering is

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[10] Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation : The Theology of Wisdom Literature* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 124.

[11] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 40-42.

[12] Unless otherwise noted, all quotations of the biblical text in this thesis are taken from the JPS translation, *The Jewish Study Bible : Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation,* (Oxford ; New York: Oxford University Press, 2004).

[13] Samuel L. Terrien, "Job as a Sage," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 239-40.

not necessarily the consequence of sin is transformed from being the lot of a nation to the

destiny of individual.[14] A compromise can certainly be found in the suggestion offered

by Perdue and Gilpin who suggest that the folk tale of chapters 1-2 and 42.7-17 should be

regarded as the oldest, originating around the time of the monarchy (1000-587 BCE).

The poetic dialogues of 3-42.6 are best located during the social upheaval created by the

Babylonian exile (587-538 BCE), while the wisdom poem of chapter 28 and the Elihu

speeches of 32-37 might have origins in the restored state of Judah under the Persian

Empire (538-332 BCE).[15] And yet again, it also seems likely that this idea of

"restoration" after the exile, a concept that Terrien cites as being absent from the book of

Job, may have sparked the author's interest in the first place. Rainer Albertz in fact refers

to the "thwarted" restoration of the original monarchic state of Judah during the time of

the Persian Empire as being the impetus behind social inequalities and social division, the

concern for which prompted much of the discussion in the book of Job.[16]

Albertz begins by drawing attention to the leading circles of the Babylonian exile

that endeavoured to return the state of Judah to its pre-exilic state, in particular to restore

the Davidic monarchy. Hopes for such a restoration began with King Darius I of Persia

who, in attempts to secure allies during the rebellions throughout Persia sparked by his

assumption of the throne, appointed Zerubbabel, the last of the Davidic line, as governor

in charge of remigration and rebuilding the province of Judah.[17] By awarding Zerubbabel

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[14] Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1965), 216.

[15] 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 Pr, 1992), 12-13.

[16] Rainer Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," in *Yahwism after the Exile : Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*, ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 1-17.

[17] Ephraim Stern, "The Persian Empire and the Political and Social History of Palestine in the Persian Period," in *Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1984), 71-72.

the title פֶּחָה (governor) (Hag 1.1), Darius seemed willing to acknowledge the hereditary right of the Davidic line to leadership in the re-organization of the Judean state. In turn, this seemed to confirm nationalistic hopes of leading circles of returning Babylonian exiles that the restoration of a pre-exilic monarchic Judah was within reach.[18]

Such a restoration, however, was decidedly unsuccessful. With the onset of temple construction in 520 B.C.E. and Darius' continued efforts against rebellions throughout Persia, the prophets Haggai and Zechariah started proclaiming worldwide havoc that would result in "all the precious things of all the nations" being brought to the temple of Jerusalem (Hag 2.6-9) and the horns of the nations being cut off (Zech 2.1-4). There is also evidence that both prophets believed Zerubbabel would be crowned the new king and restore the monarchy. Haggai sees Zerubbabel as having the power of the divine king through being appointed "as a signet" of God after the earth is shaken and the "might of the kingdoms of the nations" destroyed (2.20-23). Zechariah describes a vision which Zerubbabel and Joshua are "sons of oil," (4.14), anointed in order to reign with God in His universal rule.[19] Darius, interpreting these nationalistic hopes of salvation as dangerous instability in the region, had Zerubbabel removed from power thus ending national hopes of monarchic restoration.[20]

Although Zerubbabel was no longer in leadership, temple construction was allowed by Darius to continue under the management of groups such as the reform priests and influential laymen who did not find necessary the promise of a restored Davidic

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[18] Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 5-7.

[19] Ibid., 7-8. W.H. Rose has argued that the messianic expectations in Haggai and Zechariah are unfounded. He suggests rather that Haggai is promising special protection to Zerubbabel in order that he not suffer the same fate as any other political leader while Zechariah is inferring that Zerubbabel will have the status of a priest and not that of a king. See further, Wolter H. Rose, "Messianic Expectations in the Early Postexilic Period," in *Yahwism after the Exile: Perspectives on Israelite Religion in the Persian Era*, ed. Rainer Albertz and Bob Becking (Assen: Royal Van Gorcum, 2003), 168-85.

[20] Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 8.

kingdom. Of particular interest is the latter group, laymen that had remained in Palestine during the exile and saw the destruction of Judah as the opportunity to realize Deuteronomistic reforms. Following Jeremiah's decree that no sons of David would ever rule Judah (Jer. 22.24-30), this group was pushed aside when the groups proclaiming messianic hopes in Zerubbabel gained power. Nevertheless, they were able to continue exercising power in the community by serving as the "council of elders" alongside the priests thus forming two councils of Jewish self-government under the Persian governor. In exchange, they promised acceptance of Persian rule as well as full loyalty and cooperation from the community. Sitting under the guidance of Persian rule but with full local political and cultic autonomy, it was therefore to the advantage of both the Persian government and the local government of Palestine to prevent any type of monarchic restoration. It so followed that when the attempt to restore the monarchy failed, these two councils of government were then able to retain this power with Persian sanction and maintain autonomy in all areas of local judicial, political and religious affairs.[21]

The social and political liberty obtained, however, proved to be fiscally costly to the community insofar as the Judeans had to accept and implement Persian economic and taxation laws. These laws, for the most part, increased the hardship of the poorer people of the Judean community. It is this situation of increasing disparity between the rich and the poor, a time that Albertz characterizes as the "crisis of the fifth century," that the book of Job is addressing. The increasing social stratification was exacerbated by Persian taxation laws which necessitated loans on part of those that couldn't afford the dues; as Nehemiah points out, those groups that the Persians had bestowed with power further benefited by profiting off of loans the poor had to obtain in order to pay the high prices of

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[21] Ibid., 9-14.

Persian taxation (Neh 5.1-13). The instrument of the crisis was thus the laws governing

these loans: ancient laws of credit allowed the creditor to seize the property and family of

the debtor should he be unable to pay. The children and family of the debtors as well as

the crop, that is, the workforce and the food needed for sustenance, were then taken by

the creditors, dragging the poor further and further into debt.[22] Yet this course of action

was not condoned by all members of the upper class, for what appears to be evident in the

book of Job is the splitting of the upper class into at least two groups: those that saw right

to take advantage of those in debt without concern for the social repercussions, and those

that remained unified with the impoverished lower class, seeking to protect them through

financial aid.[23] The independence the Persians awarded came at a high price that

included a deepening economic rift in the community, and as is evident in the book of

Job, a split not only between the rich and the ever growing poor, but also between the rich

themselves.[24]

It can thus be posited that the poet intended Job's friends to represent the latter

group, or what could be considered the pious upper class whose religious beliefs and

practices stood in sharp contrast to others of the aristocracy, those classified as the wicked

that were reaping the benefits of Persian taxation laws.[25] The friends' preoccupation with

social inequality becomes clearer when examining their theological orientation,

specifically through a "materialist" reading of the text as has been suggested by Walter

Brueggemann. He argues forcefully that the subject of theodicy, specifically the ideas of

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[22] Rainer Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, V Ii : From the Exile to the Maccabees*, trans. John Stephen Bowden (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1994), 495-96.
[23] Ibid., 497-99.
[24] Albertz, "The Thwarted Restoration," 17.
[25] Rainer Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job : The Friends' Perspective," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 248.

theodicy upheld by Job and his companions, should be understood in such a way that takes into consideration God's justice as it is experienced throughout the social process.[26] He argues for a focus on "social evil" in addition to Crenshaw's theodicy categories of "moral evil," "natural evil," and "religious evil"[27] because such concerns would be of critical importance to those on the margins of society or where questions of God were directly connected to the access and distribution of social goods. In this type of reading, all statements regarding God's justice are filtered through a "social reality" by voices that are actively a part of that social reality, that is, by voices that are acutely aware of the way in which social processes enrich or worsen life. Treatment of theodicy must therefore take into consideration the way in which divine justice is mediated through social realities and social interests, for there is no understanding of justice that does not also involve material, earthly arrangements.[28]

Thus, when land issues are raised in the book of Job, Brueggemman suggests that not only is God's justice being questioned, but also the way in which land is portioned, distributed and taxed. The book itself centers on what is lost and restored and, in the words of Zophar, the wicked are barred from the rewards and fortunes of society. Although the wicked have taken houses by force, their land will equally be taken from them: "His household will be cast forth by a flood, spilled out on the day of His wrath. This is the wicked man's portion from God, the lot God has ordained for him" (20.28-29). The friends understand the possession of land in accordance with the laws of retribution: the wicked "will not be rich, and his wealth will not endure" (15.29). Similarly, Job is

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[26] Walter Brueggemann, "Theodicy in a Social Dimension," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 33 (1985): 4-5.
[27] James L. Crenshaw, "Introduction: The Shift from Theodicy to Anthropodicy," in *Theodicy in the Old Testament*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), 2-4.
[28] Brueggemann, "Theodicy in a Social Dimension," 5-10.

seen as one that deserves to lose his land because his behavior must have somehow warranted it: "The land belongs to the strong, the privileged occupy it. You have sent away widows empty-handed..." (22.8-9). For the friends, those who demonstrate social responsibility possess land and those whose public deeds are honorable are rewarded. Thus the judgment of God and the order of society operate hand in hand, never one without the other.[29]

Job too speaks of the portion of the wicked man, asserting that the ruthless should expect the loss of sons, food, riches and clothing: "He may lay it up, but the righteous will wear it, and the innocent will share the silver" (27.17). Job even understands himself to be a pious champion of the poor, using his station and resources to improve the well-being of the impoverished: "I was eyes to the blind and feet to the lame. I was a father to the needy, and I looked into the case of the stranger" (29.15-16). Job thus agrees with his friends regarding the inequitable distribution of land; however, his experience does not correspond with the ideology of his friends. In Job's view, the friends' system of reward does not function in any way: "The earth is handed over to the wicked one; He covers the eyes of its judges" (9.24). As Brueggemann points out, the mention of judges is significant insofar as it recognizes divine as well as human agency in distribution.[30] Job wonders again, "How seldom does the lamp of the wicked fail, does the calamity they deserve befall them, does he apportion (יְחַלֵּק) their lot in anger!" (21.17). Again, it is the distribution (חָלַק) or the apportioning of goods that concerns Job. His concern is with

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[29] Ibid.: 13-18.
[30] Ibid.: 16.

social distribution and *loss*, for in his observations the social system of reward and punishment has failed.[31]

And so, it can be seen that both Job and his friends are representative of the pious upper class that maintain a concern for social equality and distribution and participate in a defensive battle against the segment of the ruling class, the wicked (רָשָׁע) that exploit the poor for their own economic gain. Unfortunately, the efforts and sacrifices made by the pious upper class were not effective. God was not returning their piety with reward; instead, they were being overwhelmed by the others in their class that were denying any social or religious responsibility and instead amassing economic wealth by manipulating the social system. In the book of Job, the wicked are rich (21.28), his face "is covered in fat" (15.27), he is wicked yet he continues to "prosper and grow wealthy" (21.7) only because "he crushed and tortured the poor" and seized their property "by force" (21.19).[32] For the poet of the book of Job, this was illogical and religiously problematic. The author thus used the arguments of the friends to illustrate the personal wisdom theology of the pious upper class, that of the doctrine of retribution, in order to contrast this with real world experience through the character of Job and therein demonstrate how a faith based on the rigid doctrine of retribution was insufficient and could only result in a piety that was strictly utilitarian.[33]

Wisdom and Job in the Persian Period: A Theological Shift

Accepting the premise that the book of Job was written and assembled in the Persian period, it will be useful to understand briefly how Wisdom literature as a whole

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[31] Ibid.: 15-18.
[32] Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, V Ii : From the Exile to the Maccabees*, 499-501.
[33] Ibid., 514-15.

was changing with respect to its understanding of the relationship between social and cosmic order and justice. Creation language and imagery is one of the main vehicles through which the implications of this theological reflection is visible, so an understanding of the relationship between Wisdom literature and creation theology is first necessary.

Creation language in the Hebrew Bible is far ranging and complex insofar as "creation" refers not only to nature and the world. To speak of creation is to speak of the cosmos that *is created* by God.[34] In other words, creation is God's creative action. In the Hebrew Bible creation language is governed by strong verbs of transformation or verbs explicitly concerned with the tangible action of God such as בָּרָא (creates), עָשָׂה (makes), דָּבַר (speaks) and יָצַר (formed). The central verb בָּרָא uses Yahweh, the God of Israel, as its exclusive subject while other verbs of creation with similar meaning to בָּרָא such as נָטָה (stretch out), רָקַע (spread out) and נָתַן (gives) are used in parallel, often in their participial form, to indicate Yahweh's continuing action. It is thus Yahweh who creates the heavens, conquers the deep, forms the earth and governs the universe.[35]

While Brueggemann would argue that creation language stands at the centre of Israel's testimony of God, the role of creation has been de-emphasized in modern

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[34] Terence E. Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament : A Relational Theology of Creation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2005), 3-4.
[35] Walter Brueggemann, *Theology of the Old Testament : Testimony, Dispute, Advocacy* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1997), 145-49.

theological reflection in favour of God's action in history.[36] To a large degree the focus

of the study of creation theology and its place in the Hebrew Bible has been influenced by

Gerhard von Rad's article, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of

Creation."[37] Von Rad proceeds on the premise that the faith of Israel was built primarily

on the notion of the election of a people, the primary point of interest being that of

historical redemption.[38] Language of creation was used early in Canaanite history and

played a large part in the pre-Israelite cult insofar as it provided mythical representations

of the struggle against primeval chaos. Israel was able to take in and recognize these

mythological aspects; however, because of the "exclusive commitment" the Israelite faith

had in regards to historical salvation, von Rad maintains that the "doctrine of creation was

never able to attain independent existence in its own right."[39] The question to be asked of

creation is how "[is] the idea of Yahweh as Creator a relevant and immediate conception,

over and against his redemptive functions?"[40] In the examination that follows, von Rad

questions if creation is in itself a motive for faith, if Yahweh as Creator ever exists as a

theme by and for itself or whether it is part of and therefore a supporting theme of

redemption. He begins with Deutero-Isaiah and the Psalms and continues with Genesis 1,

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[36] Scholars such as Walter Brueggemann have pointed to Karl Barth's commentary on Romans published in 1933 as one of the most influential works in the area of creation theology preceding von Rad's article insofar as it significantly affected the way in which Old Testament theologians approached the theme of creation. As Brueggemann suggests, Barth proposed a distinct separation between what he called "faith," as it is found in the Christian Gospels, and "religion," so defined as the culturally distinct practices and customs in order to provide the Confessing German Church with a means of distinguishing themselves from National Socialism. See comments in his article, Walter Brueggemann, "The Loss and Recovery of Creation in Old Testament Theology," *Theology Today* 53 Jl (1996): 177-90. In particular, as James Barr has discussed, Barth's program sought to eliminate what was termed "natural theology," or the idea that there was a special revelation or theological system of any kind that was developed subsequent to anything other than the revelation of God in Jesus Christ. See further, James Barr, *Biblical Faith and Natural Theology, Gifford Lectures* (Oxford: Clarendon Pr, 1993), 6-11.

[37] Gerhard von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation," in *Creation in the Old Testament, Issues in Religion and Theology;* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 53-64.

[38] Ibid., 53.

[39] Ibid., 63.

[40] Ibid., 53.

finding that the text invariably advances past the notion of creation without lingering on it

and forms the climax of the poem around the saving acts of God.[41] In his conclusions,

von Rad finds that creation theology is always subordinate to soteriology, and is only

found independent for the first time through the influence of Wisdom literature. He

suggests that for the first time statements of faith are found concerning the doctrine of

creation within Wisdom literature, thus quite late in the development of Israel's history;

the reason being that such theological statements were only officially recognized in the

tradition once salvation history had been adequately protected.[42]

Von Rad's thesis continues to be influential today, yet scholars such as Walther

Zimmerli have challenged the idea that creation theology is necessarily subordinate to

soteriology.[43] Zimmerli takes Wisdom literature as his starting point and convincingly

argues that there is no relation in these texts to the history between God and Israel. He

uses Proverbs an as example, arguing that wisdom has to do with humankind (אָדָם), and

although Proverbs speaks about people (עַם), it is always in relation to their sociological

factors and not about people as the elect people of God. He then draws creation theology

in as the predominant theological framework of Wisdom literature claiming, "Wisdom

thinks resolutely within the framework of a theology of creation."[44]

H.H. Schmid continues this thesis in an essay where he categorically argues

against von Rad's thesis that creation theology is a late, secondary addition to the Israelite

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[41] Ibid., 55-62.

[42] Ibid., 63. Norbert Lohfink confirms that von Rad's reflection regarding the doctrine of creation, following that of Barth's, should be understood primarily within the context of the social-political history of the German Church. See further, Norbert Lohfink, "God the Creator and the Stability of Heaven and Earth: The Old Testament on the Connection between Creation and Salvation," in *Theology of the Pentateuch: Themes of the Priestly Narrative and Deuteronomy* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1994), 118.

[43] Walther Zimmerli, "The Place and Limit of the Wisdom in the Framework of the Old Testament Theology," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom: Selected, with a Prolegomenon, by James L. Crenshaw*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (New York: Ktav Pub. House, 1976), 314-26.

[44] Ibid., 315-16.

faith.[45] Instead, Schmid argues that, along with her Near Eastern neighbours, Israel's

creation faith was not primarily concerned with the origin of the world, but with the order

of the present and natural world that houses humanity. He finds that works that speak of

creation do not in fact subsume creation to themes of soteriology; rather, where ideas and

views of creation are presented, they act instead as the frame around which assertions of

history are made.[46] Creation theology is thus seen as the "broad horizon" through which

all of biblical theology is to be understood. Israelite religion understood her particular

experiences, her particular history and her experiences with God in light of her creation

faith, for the process of ordering creation is God's will played out in history and found in

the framework of creation.[47]

This idea is further developed by Loe G. Perdue in his book entitled *Wisdom and

Creation* where he suggests, following Zimmerli, that the theological tradition of the

sages rests in the creation tradition.[48] Perdue outlines the general paradigms of Wisdom

literature that were used by the sages to develop their construction of reality: the

paradigms of order and conflict.[49] For the sages, order emerged at creation and continued

to permeate reality in all its spheres: the cosmos, society and human nature. Since order

was self-evident and established by Yahweh, it could be observed empirically and

apprehended through the observation of phenomena; the fundamental task of the sages

was to understand the nature of reality through the observation of the orderliness of

creation. Although direct knowledge of God was not considered possible in Wisdom

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[45] H.H. Schmid, "Creation Righteousness, and Salvation: 'Creation Theology' as the Broad Horizon of Biblical Theology," in *Creation in the Old Testament*, ed. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Issues in Religion and Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1984), 102-17.
[46] Ibid., 108.
[47] Ibid., 111.
[48] Perdue, *Wisdom & Creation : The Theology of Wisdom Literature*, 34-48, 123-92, 325-42.
[49] Leo G. Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," in *Sage in Israel and the Ancient near East*, ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 458-60.

literature,[50] evidence of indirect divine revelation was available through knowledge of His

creation, as well as knowledge of God's *action* in the world, that is, God's retributive

action that was evident in the blessings he bestowed on the wise or the punishments he

inflicted on the wicked.[51] The cosmological order was also understood as being held

together by the right and appropriate deeds of members of society; general society as well

as the individual were thus expected to act in accordance with this principle, and could

conversely expect that honorable deeds would be rewarded.[52] It was thus through the

paradigm of order that the sages interpreted the experiences of reality; knowledge was the

pursuit and examination of the order behind the world and cosmos, society and human

nature.[53]

This order, however, was always in constant struggle and under threat by the

forces of chaos; therefore, verses of creation also speak of a God who can change an

event of chaos into one of order. This element of chaos has a direct correlation with

human action, for actions that were not right or appropriate were thought to introduce an

element of chaos into the universe; hence these actions were deserving of punishment.[54]

Wisdom literature, where the intent was to provide instruction, cause deliberation and

promote intellectual reflection for the purpose of the individual's self-betterment, had an

underlying belief that human actions had cosmic consequences. Human behaviour,

insofar as a wrong word or act threatened the harmony of nature with impending chaos,

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[50] Leo G. Perdue, "Wisdom in the Book of Job," in *In Search of Wisdom : Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, ed. Leo G. Perdue; Bernard Brandon Scott and William Johnston Wiseman (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1993), 78-80.

[51] James L. Crenshaw, "Prolegomenon," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom*, ed. James L. Crenshaw (New York: Ktav, 1976), 33-34.

[52] James L. Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 82, no. 3 (1970): 383.

[53] Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," 458-60.

[54] Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," 383.

was therefore the subject of highest importance because it affected God's promises of reward and threats of punishment.[55] Such an idea of God's justice is certainly not limited to Wisdom literature: understanding of reward and punishment permeates the Deuteronomistic history and much of the rest of the Hebrew Bible. However, it is interesting to note that the way in which the sages presented their view of creation and of God's action in the world served to express a direct defence of divine justice in the universe. God could remain blameless for the hardships experienced by mankind, for suffering was merely the result of incorrect actions. And so, behind the belief in the ability of human action to affect the order of the universe, there lay an inherent loss of human dignity: in the attempt to absolve God from the blame of innocent suffering, affliction was attributed to the victims' wickedness. This theological rationalization signifies a shift in the understanding of theodicy: the notion of theodicy was abandoned and anthropodicy, where suffering is attributed to sinfulness rather than a malicious act of God, became the more dominant belief.[56]

This belief in the efficacy of right action was sure to bring about a crisis of faith, for order seemed to dissolve completely when this system of reward and punishment gave way. Thus, the experience of catastrophic historical events followed by the dissolution of social order and political power brought under attack the very paradigms of order and chaos that had heretofore served as the foundation of cultural and religious traditions. With the significant disruptions in the social order and justice, radical questioning of the justice of God emerged, especially in times when it appeared that God failed to act, that is, when the righteous seemed to suffer and the wicked continued to prosper. With the

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[55] Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom : An Introduction*, 19-20.
[56] Crenshaw, "Introduction: The Shift from Theodicy to Anthropodicy," 5.

seeming disintegration of old traditions, radical questioning of old traditions took place

and new traditions were found necessary in order to save the discourse from a false or

naïve worldview.[57]

This type of questioning led to what Crenshaw often characterizes as the "birth of

skepticism" in the community of ancient Israel.[58] For Crenshaw, skepticism includes

both the negative "doubting thought" of a theological affirmation and the positive

affirmation of a "hidden reality."[59] Through skeptical deliberation the inconsistencies

between the theological assertion and the contemporary experience of existence are

revealed with the hope that it will be rectified. It is a necessary part of religious reflection

insofar as it prevents belief from becoming hollow testimony.[60] It should be noted that

skepticism was not confined to the intellectual class or to times of historical crisis;

however, in the context of a crisis of faith, skepticism was able to address the theological

situation. The theological certainty that the universe was orderly could remain a certainty

as long as God's goodness was assured. The need for a radical paradigm shift comes to

the fore with the book of Job wherein the righteousness and justness of the deity are

seriously in question.[61] It was thus during the Persian period that the study of creation

was intended to reveal not only the nature of the cosmos, but also to bear witness to the

power and nature of its Creator.[62] It was during the times when order appeared to

dissolve that the sages again appealed to creation theology, but instead of pointing to

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[57] Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," 469.

[58] James L. Crenshaw, "The Birth of Skepticism in Ancient Israel," in *The Divine Helmsman : Studies on God's Control of Human Events, Presented to Lou H Silberman*, ed. James L. Crenshaw and Samuel Sandmel (New York: Ktav Publishing House, 1980), 1-19.

[59] Ibid., 1.

[60] Ibid., 2-3.

[61] Ibid., 9-12.

[62] Hartmut Gese, "Wisdom Literature in the Persian Period," in *Cambridge History of Judaism*, ed. W.D. Davies and Louis Finkelstein (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1984), 206-09.

ideas of retribution, writings such as the book of Job developed a new paradigm: a model

of conflict that posited that it was only through the repeated conquering of chaos that

order was maintained. Jon D. Levenson argues that Israel's account of chaos and its

place in creation is not one where chaos is a defeated enemy of the ordered world, but

includes the continuing presence of chaos in creation.[63] In Job 38.8-11 the sea is found

"closed...behind doors" (38.8) and is kept there by the continuing commitment of God; as

Levenson points out, the passage retains the sense that without God's command the sea

might once again rush forward again and engulf the earth.[64] To an even greater degree,

the portrayal of the Leviathan in the following passages confirms the enduring existence

of chaos in creation as the primordial monster is presented as a toy available for God's

amusement. "Can you draw out Leviathan like a fishhook? Can you press down his

tongue by a rope? [...] Will you play with him like a bird and tie him down for your

girls?" (40.25, 29). Here the monster of chaos is caught like a fish and played with by

God; once again, chaos is seemingly confined rather than eliminated from creation.[65] The

survival of chaos points to what Levenson suggests is a generally overlooked tension in

these types of passages. The passages reaffirm God's exclusive power to conquer His

enemy and the fact that this power remains unchallenged; but at the same time, the

passages circuitously admit that the enemy might rise up and overturn his defeat.[66] It then

follows that the initial act of creation and the establishment of order provide evidence of

the justice of God: God infused His creation with order and maintains order through the

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[63] Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1988), 14-25.
[64] Ibid., 15-16.
[65] Ibid., 16-17.
[66] Ibid., 17-18.

constant defeat of chaos.[67] And so, in the book of Job, traditional ideas of theodicy are examined, challenged, and because the sages refused to totally abandon their philosophy, a new paradigm for understanding the nature of God and the idea of theodicy was created.

Such interpretation was intended to guard against the theological threat of disinterested righteousness. E.W. Nicholson suggests that the question by the accuser "Does Job not have good reason to fear God?" (1.9) sets the stage for the dialogues in the book of Job as it raises exactly the questions of disinterested righteousness, theodicy and the ideas of retribution.[68] If viewed through the lens of exact retribution, this question would be answered with a firm negative: God upholds and rewards the righteous, so clearly Job's riches are due to his righteousness and piety. Yet, as Nicholson points out, in the opening verses of the prologue, while Job is in the midst of catastrophe, Job is able to maintain his loyalty to God while at the same time issuing statements that seem to contradict the theory that God rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked: "Should we accept only good from God and not accept evil?" (2.10). This, Nicholson suggests, introduces what the author presents as one of the most prominent issues of the book: the notion of theodicy and its defence and denunciation by various characters in the book.[69]

The poet uses the friends to introduce the dominant theodicy of the pious upper class in order to later move away from these understandings and present a new theodicy and a new conception of God's justice. The friends present three different models for understanding innocent suffering, all three of which are found in the opening speech of

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[67] Perdue, "Cosmology and the Social Order in the Wisdom Tradition," 469-70.
[68] E. W. Nicholson, "The Limits of Theodicy as a Theme of the Book of Job," in *Wisdom in Ancient Israel*, ed. John Day; Robert P. Gordon and H.G.M. Williamson (Cambridge: Cambridge Univ Pr, 1995), 71-72.
[69] Ibid., 72-73.

Eliphaz.[70] The first theodicy presented is the well-known theory of reward and punishment; however, from Eliphaz it is cloaked in the guise of comfort. Eliphaz begins tentatively in his attempt to console Job in his time of suffering, wondering "will it be too much?" (4.2), and continues his speech using the language of retributive justice and its order in the created world. He uses this theory, not as a way of explaining the basis for Job's suffering, but rather, by comparing Job with the wicked, he claims God's power to reverse fortunes, thereby offering a source of hope and comfort to Job. The wicked are described by three verbs of the harvest: they "plow evil," "sow mischief" and "reap" the consequences (4.8). Using the metaphor of the field, he reveals a resemblance to the sapiential principle of natural law and retribution that consequent human transgressions (cf. Prov 6.27).[71] In doing so, he attempts to encourage Job with the hope that no innocent man has ever been left to suffer. Yet in his comparison, Eliphaz reveals his theology to be uncompromisingly deterministic. Humankind and their Creator do not have any freedom. Evildoers are certain to receive punishment and the righteous are certain to receive rewards; God is bound to deliver both.[72] Eliphaz takes this farther with imagery of the lions, claiming that the lions are as susceptible to the laws of retribution as mankind (4.10-11). A direct correlation between lions and the wicked is not made in the passage; however, lions are repeatedly compared to the wicked in the Psalms (Ps 17.12; 22.41). Juxtaposing the lions with the wicked reveals the lions to be equally as likely to encounter the effects of divine retribution: "The lion may roar...But the teeth of the king of beasts are broken" (4.10-11). Just as the lions are struck with disaster, the future of the

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[70] Ibid., 74.
[71] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 126.
[72] David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20*, vol. 17, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 125.

wicked is also already established.[73] Thus Eliphaz's efforts to ease Job's misery and

demonstrate support, "Think now, what innocent man ever perished?" (4.7), only points

to a theoretical theology of retribution and reveals a moral order constructed within

narrow categories. When applied to Job's situation and those of innocent sufferers,

sympathy is completely absent, for according to this doctrine any type of misery must be

the result of a wrongdoing. Here, the shift from theodicy to anthropodicy is fully

represented: God is limited but absolved from blame for the suffering of individuals.[74]

The second argument Eliphaz proposes in his opening dialogue, which is then

carried through the remaining dialogues, is the claim that all humans are flawed by very

nature of being human. God's own heavenly servants cannot be trusted: He "casts

reproach on His angels" (4.18) and consequently, how much less can He trust "those who

dwell in houses of clay, whose origin is dust" (4.19).[75] Here the standard division in

Wisdom literature that separates humans into camps of righteous and wicked is somewhat

amended with Eliphaz's suggestion that terms like "righteous" and "innocent" are only

general guidelines to the types of behaviour expected from humanity; they do not

correspond to reality in which God is the only one who is genuinely "righteous."[76]

This idea is not simply left; there is a visible intensification of the arguments

presented in the course of the dialogues.[77] Humans that are at first "clay" and "dust" are

described with much more contemptible language: Eliphaz goes on characterize

humankind as "loathsome" and "foul" creatures who "drink wrongdoing" as easily as if it

were water (15.16). Job is here included along with the rest of humanity in its

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[73] Ibid., 127-28.
[74] Nicholson, "The Limits of Theodicy as a Theme of the Book of Job," 76.
[75] Ibid.
[76] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 132.
[77] Nicholson, "The Limits of Theodicy as a Theme of the Book of Job," 76.

incapability of remaining sinless.[78] The description of humanity's propensity to sin

reaches a climax in Bildad's speech. Human beings are not only "born of woman" and

susceptible to sin, but are in fact one and the same with symbols of death and decay,

being "maggots" or "worms" in the eyes of God (25.6). Humanity, including Job, is

sinful and therefore incapable of standing before God completely blameless.[79]

The third theodicy put forward by Eliphaz is the notion of suffering as a tool or

method of divine discipline.[80] This alternative explanation for Job's suffering is still at its

core a theodicy of retributive justice; however, it assumes a different tone. Here suffering

is not negative or mechanistic, as Eliphaz had suggested earlier. Rather, suffering is a

positive act of God that seeks to amend human inadequacies and shortcomings and help

proceed towards greater piety (5.17-27). There is hope that this suffering will not last

long, for all discipline can only last for a short time: "He will deliver you from six

troubles; in seven no harm will reach you" (5.19).[81] Suffering is no longer the

perfunctory and unavoidable consequence of human shortcomings; it is no longer an act

of natural law. Here, suffering is a personal act of God akin to that of a father-son

relationship: "He injures, but He binds up; He wounds, but His hands heal" (5.18). Thus

the man under duress can be truly "happy" (5.17), for suffering is not a gulf that separates

man and God but rather a force that brings them together.[82]

With this as his counsel, Job finds himself under attack: he is the "lion's prey"

(10.16), the victim of his friends' attack (6.14-25). Job rejects all these forms of theodicy

because his experience has led him to believe that this attack comes not only from his

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[78] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 353-54.
[79] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 370.
[80] Nicholson, "The Limits of Theodicy as a Theme of the Book of Job," 77-78.
[81] Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job : The Friends' Perspective," 259.
[82] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 148-49.

friends but also from an immoral God and an unjust creation. Job's understanding of

theodicy reveals the cosmology as a divine "cosmic injustice."[83] He cries out that he was

led to believe that the earth, once established, was immovable (Ps 96.10) with its

foundation resting on solid pillars (Ps 75.4). Yet he finds it shaken from its place by God

"Till its pillars quake" (9.6) and the mountains "overturned" in His anger (9.5).[84] Bound

up with the disordered, chaotic cosmos is the social world that God attacks with equal

vengeance. God "deprives trusty men of speech, and takes away the reason from elders"

(12.20); he exalts nations "then destroys them" (12.23). Nature as well bears witness to

the instability of the cosmic order: human existence is fleeting and "withers" like the

blossom of flower (14.2); God will "harass a driven leaf" and decree "bitter things"

(13.25-26). Job does not accuse God of acting arbitrarily; rather, God is seen executing a

precise plan that seeks to destroy natural life and society. God is angry and clearly

misusing His power by contravening the elements of creation, society and justice: for Job,

God initiates chaos and remains morally unaccountable.[85]

Carol Newsom examines the significance of the clash of moral worldviews

between Job and his friends, finding that this clash results in the irruption of Job's moral

worldview. She understands the different discourses as "narratives"; the friends'

narrative derive "good" from the structure of creation itself and evil is bound to

deteriorate into nothingness because it has no root in the order of creation. This is

contrary to Job who draws his examples from the realm of creation. The narratives told

by the friends assume (rather than explain) these particular values of the world, *drawing*

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[83] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job*, 80.
[84] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 190.
[85] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 320.

them from the moral culture of tradition: wisdom, psalms and prophetic writings.[86] The

friends' narratives ring true not because they are empirical truths describing the ways of

the universe, but because they have a "mythic truth" – a truth that draws its power from a

previously assumed moral culture.[87] The narratives illustrate the concrete principles and

institutions of the moral world; they are not just about reward and punishment, but are

about the nature of the moral order. And so, when Job suggests from his own experience,

that is from *nature itself*, a narrative that is the absolute antithesis of the narratives of the

friends, Job is actually attacking the reality of the entire moral world; not only the moral

world of the friends, but also the moral world in which Job must participate.[88] For Job,

evil has certain roots in creation: it is the intention of God. Job's innocence, which he

resolutely maintains, crumbles the foundation on which the ordered moral society is built,

since a morally ordered universe would never allow for Job's situation of innocent

suffering. Job's innocence thus implies that the cosmic order is essentially immoral.

It is important to note though, that in all of this dialogue and dissent, the friends

themselves do not exactly uphold the idea of a utilitarian piety: Eliphaz reveals objection

to this premise, asking "Can a man be of use to God, a wise man benefit Him? Does

Shaddai gain if you are righteous?" (22.2-3).[89] Here Eliphaz is calling attention to the

inappropriate assumption that human action could in any way cause God to do something

or be a benefit to God in any way and therein necessitate a response from God. There is

no benefit to God if a person is perfect in every way. The deity is and remains all

powerful; His justice can not be affected by human power or wisdom. With this assertion

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[86] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 121-23.
[87] Ibid., 122-23.
[88] Ibid., 124.
[89] Albertz, *A History of Israelite Religion in the Old Testament Period, V Ii : From the Exile to the Maccabees*, 515.

Eliphaz attempts to protect God from any allusion of weakness that would threaten His power and rule over the universe.[90]

Yet, as was shown above, according to the friends, God puts into action the mechanistic laws of retribution and is thereby bound and limited by these laws. This double assertion of the nature of God imprisons Him in a system controlled by human action. The nature of the conflict appears to lie in the dissonance between two theories regarding God's nature that were for the sages essentially important: God's divine freedom and the capacity of the righteous to assure themselves a prosperous life through good deeds.[91] This contradiction comes to a head when, seen in the example of Job, theological affirmations about God and personal human experience in the world do not coincide. It is this insufficient theodicy that the character of Job argues against and it is this issue that the book of Job addresses.

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[90] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 337.

[91] James L. Crenshaw, "The Concept of God in Old Testament Wisdom," in *In Search of Wisdom : Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie*, ed. Leo G. Perdue Perdue, Bernard Brandon Scott, and William Johnston Wiseman (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Pr, 1993), 5-7.

II

Metaphor and the Book of Job

Theories of Metaphor: Black, Frye, Soskice, McFague

The use of metaphor and intertextual references are the primary way in which the

author constructs and addresses issues of theodicy in the book of Job. As was discussed

in the previous chapter, discussing theodicy is an implicit discussion of the nature of

God.[1] Thus, the importance of metaphor is no less diminished by the fact that some

scholars claim that all language of God is metaphorical and perhaps only the word "God"

could be considered the exception.[2] Understanding the way in which metaphor works is

then a step towards understanding how metaphor as a persuasive tool is used by the

author in creating an alternative theodicy in the divine speeches of Job 38-42.

Efforts to understand and define metaphor date back to Aristotle who offered what

remained the predominant idea regarding metaphor until the 19th century: that what

metaphor says can in fact be said in another way.[3] Since then, however, this

"substitutable" idea of metaphor came under question, and new proposals of metaphor as

"unsubstitutable" were developed.[4] For example, Max Black begins with the substitution

view of metaphor, arguing that there are in fact metaphorical words or expressions that

are used within a literal frame in order to convey an idea that might otherwise have been

said literally. Such a phrase, "The chairman plowed through the discussion" should be

understood as "substitution" because the reader is required to decipher the fairly simple

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[1] See pages 13ff.

[2] Terence E. Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective, Overtures to Biblical Theology* (Philadelphia: Fortress Pr, 1984), 5.

[3] Aristotle, *Poetics : Translated and Introduced by Kenneth Mcleish* (New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1999), 30.

[4] Sallie McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1982), 37.

literal equivalent.[5] Yet for Black, the more impressive metaphor is one that "has the power to bring two separate domains into cognitive and emotional relation by using language directly appropriate to the one as a lens for seeing the other."[6] That is to say, the "interaction" metaphor is one that demands awareness of two subjects at the same time. The "subsidiary subject" advances insight into the "principal subject," and acts as a "filter" through which the reader comes to a new understanding of the principal subject. A new meaning emerges when the metaphor is understood; however, this new awareness can not be reduced to any comparison between the two subjects.[7] The central importance of metaphor to religious or theological language cannot be underestimated and a basic definition of metaphor is therefore in order.

Northrop Frye argues that the starting point of metaphor is the "ecstatic metaphor," which he defines as an identification between a consciousness with some part of the natural world.[8] When thought of in relation to religious metaphors, this type of metaphor can take on the form of the naming of a godhead, such as "Neptune is the sea" as it links together a divine personality with an aspect of nature in which the godhead functions or is particularly interested. The moment of this "ecstatic union," is the extension into life of religious meaning.[9] The ecstatic metaphor thus becomes a bridge between consciousness and nature and therein can be understood as a microcosmic representation of language itself. If the function of language is to enable the understanding of how a subject relates to its object, then language can be understood as a

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[5] Max Black, *Models and Metaphors; Studies in Language and Philosophy* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1962), 31-33.
[6] Ibid., 236.
[7] Ibid., 46.
[8] Northrop Frye, *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974-1988*, ed. Robert D. Denham (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 111-12.
[9] Ibid., 16-17.

singularly large metaphor that brings together the consciousness with the things it is conscious of.[10]

Beyond the initial link of ecstatic metaphor, the task becomes understanding how the subject of the metaphor relates to its object, or as Black states it, how two subjects relate. As Janet Soskice has pointed out, Black's definition, regardless of the fact that it claims not to reduce the two subjects to a comparison, still employs comparison insofar as it requires the formula "A is B" to function. This structure demands two distinct subjects where the metaphor explains the relationship by analogy, not through interaction.[11] Soskice instead follows I. Richards, who coined the terms "tenor," the underlying idea or principle subject, and "vehicle," the figurative part of the expression,[12] arguing that these terms do not require two distinct subjects. In this "interanimative" theory, the metaphor involves a single meaning that emerges from the interaction of the entire system of thought associations of the tenor and vehicle. In other words, the tenor and the vehicle have one true subject that together they illuminate.[13] By establishing that meaning derives from the interaction of the entire utterance and context, that is, all thoughts and words associated with the tenor and vehicle, the metaphor is not limited to the words themselves in isolation.[14] This then opens the possibility for the tenor or principle subject

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[10] Ibid., 115.

[11] Janet Martin Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language* (Oxford; London; New York: Clarendon Press; Oxford University Press, 1985), 42-44.

[12] I. A. Richards, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1950), 96. Black's terms, "primary subject" and "secondary subject," were developed after Richard's terms "tenor" and "vehicle." The significant difference between the two is Black's assertion that the "secondary subject" serves as a filter through which the reader understands the principal subject.

[13] Soskice, *Metaphor and Religious Language*, 47.

[14] Ibid., 45-46.

matter to be implied and not explicitly stated, and for a single metaphorical term to interact with an underlying model.[15]

Similarly, Sallie McFague's understanding of metaphor uses the idea of networks of associated meaning and neatly connects this to the topic of religious language. She understands metaphor as "an assertion or judgment of similarity and difference between two thoughts in permanent tension with one another, which redescribes reality in an open-ended way but has structural as well as affective power."[16] Instead of focusing on the names of the "fields" that are brought into tension, that of "tenor" and "vehicle" or "subsidiary" and "principle," McFague instead insists that there are two active thoughts that are constantly in tension or interaction with one another.[17] By preserving the tension between these two fields and realizing that there are two active thoughts in play, one realizes that these two fields are similar while at the same time dissimilar. She suggests that while the metaphor does not fully match the subject, the subject both "is" and "is not" similar to the other subject.[18] She points out that the deeper semantic implications of metaphor is not just that there is belief that one subject is or is not like another, but that in bringing the two in tension with one another, both fields undergo change by the very fact of being thought of in relationship to the other; new meaning is created through this re-description of reality.[19]

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[15] Ibid., 47-48. Soskice uses the example: "A stubborn and unconquerable flame creeps in his veins and drinks the streams of life." In this example, the tenor is the idea of a fever, though it is not mentioned in the passage. In the interanimative theory, the interaction of ideas gives meaning to the metaphor. Shorter examples include "the writhing script" where "script" is the vehicle and "writhing" the tenor, including all the associations with writhing. It is not limited to one particular association one would have with "writhing" such as paper on a fire or a snake. There is no explicit second subject in this metaphor.

[16] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*, 42.

[17] Ibid., 37.

[18] Ibid., 38.

[19] Ibid., 39-40.

While the precise *meaning* of a metaphor is often difficult to determine, Donald

Davidson argues for the examination of the *function* of metaphors. Instead of focusing on

the impossible task of positing metaphorical or figurative meanings, he argues that

instead attention should be given to what the words are used to do and how they are used

in discourse.[20] McFague pays particular attention to how metaphor is used in theological

and scriptural discourse and argues that its importance lies in the fact that metaphorical

thinking consistently refuses identity. That is, when thinking metaphorically or of

subjects in relation, the subject itself can never be collapsed; it can only be known

indirectly and therefore there is always distance between the subject and what is known

about the subject.[21] The danger in the process of metaphorical thinking is for a metaphor

to become a dead metaphor, that is, to see the metaphor *as* the other subject, or to think of

it as a solidified metaphor, a symbol where the tension between subjects is lost and one

subject is *a part of* another.[22] Instead, in thinking metaphorically, the metaphor does not

have to be interpreted in one single way and can remain open ended and ready for new

interpretation; no metaphor is absolute or final.[23]

The significance of McFague's ideas relating to subjects in metaphorical relation

will be discussed further in the following chapters.[24] At this point however, it will be

useful to take a preliminary look at how creation metaphors are used by Job in his initial

lament to express his feelings of abandonment and harassment.

Job believes himself to be like the poor and unwanted, living "in the gullies of

wadies, in holes in the ground...braying among the bushes, huddling among the nettles"

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[20] Donald Davidson, "What Metaphors Mean," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 31.
[21] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*, 54.
[22] Ibid., 15-16, 40-41.
[23] Ibid., 39.
[24] See especially ch. 5, pages 103ff.

(30.6-7). While in his first speech Job wishes to be left alone to die (3.11), here jackals and ostriches, the animals often found in the lament due to the absolute lack of civility and morality (cf. Mic 1.8; Ps 44.19), stand as symbols of his hopeless situation. Exiled to the wilderness, Job feels forced to live in subhuman conditions with the creatures which are the subjects of social ills and lawless cruelty as well as the human outcasts of society. These are the people that do not contribute to society by cultivating land and providing themselves with food but instead "flee to a parched land" and then suffer "from want and starvation" (30.3). To Job these people are contemptible, they are men "whose fathers I would have disdained to put among my sheep dogs" (30.1). Language about them is similar to that used of the wicked: they are "scoundrels" and "nobodies," "stricken from the earth" (30.8). Job pities them but cannot escape the fact that he too shares their fate and has become "a brother to jackals, a companion to the ostriches" (30.29).[25]

Metaphor and its Context: Syreeni

Metaphor does not just engage tensive reflection between the two subjects of the metaphor itself, it also involves the tension created by the speaker and hearer: metaphors can not be judged without reference to a context. Kari Syreeni suggests a three-fold relationship between the text, the concrete world and the symbolic (metaphorical) world of the author; these correspond respectively to the vehicle, the tenor and the intermediary.[26] In this understanding, the text-world as the vehicle is the subject from

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[25] William P. Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1999), 335-36.

[26] Kari Syreeni, "Metaphorical Appropriation: (Post) Modern Biblical Hermeneutic and the Theory of Metaphor," *Literature and Theology 9* S (1995): 326. The idea that metaphor plays a part in forming societal conceptions and therefore can not be understood apart from the culture in which it was created, is an idea fully developed by Lakoff and Johnson in their "conceptual theory." See further, George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). and George Lakoff and Mark Johnson, "Conceptual Metaphor in Everyday Language," *The Journal of Philosophy* 77, no. 8 (1980).

which attributes are borrowed to lend meaning to the concrete world; yet at the same time, the concrete world extends and lends meaning to the text-world. What is important to note in telling the story using metaphorical language to suggest things of the concrete world that might otherwise have been told without metaphor, is that the author places an *intermediary* between the text world and the concrete world: the author's own symbolic universe. In bringing the concrete world (tenor) and the text-world (vehicle) together, the author interprets both of them and so informs how the text is to be read and interpreted in order for the concrete world and the text world to join together as an understandable metaphor.[27] The typical biblical author might be thought just such an example, for the biblical author often has a message to communicate. The historical and cultural situation will affect the assumptions that are made and the ideology that is reflected in the message: "as artists they create the vehicle (a piece of art); as real persons they are created by the tenor (the historical situation); and as hermeneutical beings they make sense of their creation and createdness."[28]

As was discussed in the previous chapter, Job's friends are thought to represent the pious upper class, and whereas the friends continue to believe that the system of reward and punishment is strong standing and in effect, the poet presents Job as a member of the pious upper class who similarly wants to alleviate the suffering of the poor through economic aid and social influence (cf. 29.16), but has observed that this sacrifice is not being rewarded; the social system of reward and punishment has certainly failed.[29] The poet draws much of the imagery that shapes Job's moral understanding from experience

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[27] Syreeni, "Metaphorical Appropriation: (Post) Modern Biblical Hermeneutic and the Theory of Metaphor," 327-38.
[28] Ibid.: 328.
[29] See pages 13ff.

in nature, though Job's centre of moral understanding is the household and the familial circle, which then supplies further evidence of the proposed social status that the poet represents through Job and his friends.

Job recalls a time when he thought he might "end my days with my family" (30.18), living out life in a community where "lads surrounded" him (29.5) and his role as leader in the community was virtually akin to royal status. "Elders rose and stood" in his presence, "Nobles held back their words" (29.8-9).[30] He then contrasts his current situation as an outcast of society with his former status of "king among his troops" (29.25). It is this hierarchy with which he was once accustomed that is no longer in effect; the relationships where he once found comfort have abandoned him and instead he finds himself as one of the exiled underlings of society in "sunless gloom" (30.28) and "desolate wasteland" where his unanswered cries for justice have "given [him] over to mourning" (30.31).[31] Job has revealed the heart of his worldview to rest not only in the familial societal complex but also in the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked, the cultured and the outcast, the protected and the abandoned.[32]

Inasmuch as the author's situation and symbolic world influences the text, so too, readers interpret and understand the author's creation in and through their own lives by evaluating, questioning or accepting what the metaphor offers. Both the author and the reader have preconceptions as to how basic metaphors are organized and through these interpretive frameworks they judge what the text means.[33] As Frye points out, the author

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[30] R. N. Whybray, *Job, Readings, a New Biblical Commentary* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998), 126.
[31] Ibid., 128-31.
[32] Carol A. Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," *Princeton Seminary Bulletin* 15, no. 1 (1994): 12-15.
[33] Syreeni, "Metaphorical Appropriation: (Post) Modern Biblical Hermeneutic and the Theory of Metaphor," 329.

is connected to the reader through the historical relationship of the literary tradition. The

history of the author that might appear to be unreachable and removed in both time and

space is in fact within reach if present time is understood as the continuation of the

history of literature. A "current" of that history is still available today through the

continued history of literature.[34] The study of metaphor therefore requires reference to a

context, for it is the context or society that produced the metaphorist.[35] The reader then,

upon reading the metaphor is not faced with whether or not to judge the metaphor, but as

Wayne Booth argues, "to *understand* a metaphor is by its very nature to *decide* whether to

join the metaphorist or reject him. In accepting the metaphorist and thus take into

consideration both the author and context is to decide to be shaped by the metaphor."[36]

Metaphorical study includes the author, the context and the reader.

Intertextuality: Bakhtin

The "current" of literature that enables metaphorical understanding is similar to

the idea of intertextuality understood by Mikhail Bakhtin. Mary Shields calls attention to

the similarities in the functional approach to metaphor that takes the author, the context

and the reader into consideration and Mikhail Bakhtin's view of dialogism and

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[34] Frye, *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974-1988*, 86.

[35] Wayne C. Booth, "Metaphor as Rhetoric: The Problem of Evaluation," in *On Metaphor*, ed. Sheldon Sacks (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979), 67.

[36] Ibid., 63. David A. Aaron argues that part of the process of deciding and evaluating metaphor is not just in determining whether there is metaphor or not, but rather, how metaphorical a phrase is intended to be understood. He argues for a "metaphorical continuum" wherein the concept of metaphor is understood as a series of points on a line that represent the gradient continuum of meaning. The continuum accounts for ambiguity and meaning, so that as ambiguity increases, the non-literal meaning also increases. The judgment as to the degree of clarity or obscurity a group of words is ascribed is not a linear judgment – the judgments are constantly in flux and are changed as more linguistic units are deemed relevant to the meaning of the statement. This distinction is important as it removes the binary figurative/literal classification of a text and allows for the fact that sometimes a decision either way is not possible. Furthermore, it confirms that a degree of understanding of authorial intent is necessary when studying metaphorical texts as it is through understanding authorial intent that one can establish incongruence and therein assert the presence of a metaphor. David H. Aaron, *Biblical Ambiguities : Metaphor, Semantics, and Divine Imagery, The Brill Reference Library of Ancient Judaism, 1566-1237 ; V. 4* (Leiden ; Boston: Brill, 2001), 101-24.

intertextuality.[37] For Bakhtin, dialogism suggests the open-ended dynamic exchange between the text of the sender (subject) and the text of the addressee (object). Language is inherently dynamic: no word relates to its object in a single or univocal way.[38] There is, between the word and its object, a whole environment of other words about that same object. The subject has to negotiate these other "alien" words, for these other words are constantly influencing and changing the object. Once the subject has been directed at the object it enters "a dialogically agitated and tension-filled environment of alien words, value judgments and accents."[39] The word is constantly interacting with all words that have come before it and stands not just in a relationship with other texts, but is also in relationship with its subject, its rivals and its readers, sometimes disagreeing, sometimes merging and sometimes intersecting with others.[40] In other words, the use of metaphorical language sometimes implies a critique of rival metaphors in the attempt to assert the new metaphor over and against the old metaphor. Then, once born and shaped, this word forms a concept of its own, yet again "in a dialogic way."[41]

Metaphor and Intertextuality in the Dialogues

Inasmuch as a metaphor relies on cultural conventions as well as participates in influencing individual or societal understanding of reality, so too can a metaphor critique and inform other metaphors. Michael Fishbane argues that Job's first speech necessitates just such a dialogical understanding of text. Job's lament is cast in dual form, contrasting the day of his birth and the night of his conception; however, Job curses the day on which

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[37] Mary E. Shields, *Circumscribing the Prostitute: The Rhetorics of Intertextuality, Metaphor, and Gender in Jeremiah 3.1-4.4* (London; New York: T & T Clark International, 2004), 77.
[38] M. M. Bakhtin, *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays*, ed. Michael Holquist, trans. Caryl Emerson and Michael Holquist, *Voprosy Literatury I Stetiki. English.* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981), 276.
[39] Ibid.
[40] Ibid., 278.
[41] Ibid., 279.

he was born (3.3), and pleads for "day [to] be darkness" (3.4) and for "darkness and deep gloom [to] reclaim [the light]" (3.5). Fishbane argues that Job, in the process of cursing the day of his birth, calls for a systematic reversal of the cosmic act of creation in Genesis 1-2.4 with a "counter-cosmic incantation."[42] Job's call for the reversal of the divine word in Gen 1, and thus the "text-in-mind" of the readers, is the anguished appeal of one who sees his own creation as the exact opposite of good.[43] He thus construes his death as the mode through which creation is annihilated.

Job continues the notion of an anti-cosmos by appealing for someone "prepared" or skilled in the magical control of this Leviathan to rouse the terrifying creature and bring it back into action (3.8). This verse brings to a head Job's wish for the day of his birth to have remained in darkness for the rousing of the Leviathan is often associated with the mythical image of a celestial dragon swallowing either the sun or moon.[44] The figure of the Leviathan is seen in mythological histories as chaos personified and therefore having an anti-cosmological force powerful enough to leave the world in utter darkness.[45] As was discussed above, the imagery used of the Leviathan is later used in the divine speeches.[46] This time the intertextual reference is within the book itself; nonetheless, the reference again serves to make a statement about the perceived order of the cosmos.

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[42] Michael A. Fishbane, "Jeremiah 4:23-6 and Job 3:3-13 : A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," *Vetus Testamentum* 21, no. 2 (1971): 153.

[43] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 84.

[44] While the JPS offers the translation "Those prepared to disable (עֹרֵר) Leviathan" (3.8), the *Po'l* infinitive of עוּר, the preferred translation reads עֹרֵר as "rouse" in order to make explicit the intertextual reference with 41.2 which contains the *Qal* imperfect 3ms form of עוּר.

[45] Fishbane, "Jeremiah 4:23-6 and Job 3:3-13 : A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern," 158-61.Contra Clines who argues that Job does not at any time wish to destroy the order of creation. He does not, however, deny the fact that rousing the Leviathan that might swallow the moon would have placed the universe totally in the realm of the underworld, making Job's conception impossible. See further, Clines, *Job 1-20*, 87.

[46] See pages 20-22. See also ch. 4 and 5.

It is only in the aftermath of chaos and death that Job finds serenity and peace. In the peace of death "there rest those whose strength is spent" (3.17); it is these images of the anti-cosmos Job finds as a place of rest and comfort for it is in chaos that all life and community are eradicated and thus provide the new way to a new freedom.[47] The devastating destruction of his familial universe can only mean the same destruction of his conception of the ordered and moral universe. And so he longs for the order found in death insofar as it offers a place of solitude, reprieve, inactivity, and the eradication of earthly relations.[48] The destructive loss of all he values has left only the frightening creatures of the darkness and the Leviathan; his peace is only in death because in no other place does there appear any order in his moral universe.[49]

The use of metaphorical and mythical elements is one that is constant throughout the book of Job, particularly in the divine speeches of 38-42.[50] Frye argues that myths and collections of myths can be understood as performing societal function: they generally begin with a creation myth that then introduces subsequent myths that, as a whole, provide a rendering of the cosmos centered on human concerns. It is possible that myths are controlled by groups in power or those wishing to assert and illustrate their interests and can therefore be used in the task of justifying various social authorities. At the same time, a myth such as the creation myth is not intended to relate how the order of

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[47] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 323-24.

[48] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 105.

[49] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 110-11.

[50] Returning to Frye's understanding of the ecstatic metaphor, the metaphor that names a god as "Neptune is the sea" both reflects the culture in which it is conceived and also confirms that it is a socially stable metaphor insofar as the culture demonstrates its acceptance with temples or prayers that confirm this metaphor. The next stage in the social process of stabilizing ideas of a deity involves creating myths or narratives associated with the god and associating events and activities with the deity in order to offer the society the core body of essential facts about its god, history and community. Thus, groups of myths that are collected together to form a mythology, often beginning with a creation myth, serve to provide the society with a shared experience, adding history and tradition to a society's shared culture. See further, Frye, *Myth and Metaphor: Selected Essays, 1974-1988*, 108-18.

nature came into being. The mythology stands as an integrated collection of metaphors, and in that fact is a cosmology which might include or imply scientific or technically erroneous assertions, for the myth is a structure of human concern and is built specifically for those concerns. The myth does not present a history where the past is presented as the past; instead myth presents the past as present. As Frye sums up, "What the metaphor does to space the myth does to time." Like the metaphor, the myth conveys two opposing ideas: the myth both "is" and "is not" the record of what happened.[51]

With these ideas of myth and metaphor we might again recall the general scholarly ideas of Israel's mythic accounts of creation and God's relationship with the world. Theological inquiry into God's relationship with the world, following von Rad, has focused on God's relationship with Israel's history, and ideas of creation have been consistently subordinated to soteriology. God's relationship with the world is discussed in terms of God's sovereignty, freedom and radical transcendence. As was discussed in the previous chapter,[52] the sages thought in categories far differently, understanding the created order as something that is not secondary to God's redemptive acts: redemption occurs so that the *already* created order can enter into a *new* creation.[53] Such a relationship is integral to the sages' way of thinking regarding the paradigms of order and chaos, for order was in part influenced by human behaviour. However, the significance of order as a category for understanding creation goes beyond the insistence of human safety; as Fretheim argues, creation is necessarily in relation with God. This is an "organismic" image of God, one that displays continuity and intimacy between God and the world, and is the more predominant view espoused in the Hebrew Bible. In this view,

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[51] Ibid., 252.
[52] See pages 17ff.
[53] Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament : A Relational Theology of Creation*, 10-13.

it is not that the world alone depends on God, but that God also depends on the world. God is transcendent but does not stand in isolation from the world; there is rather integration and relationship with the world.[54] God is both the ground of reality and universally present in reality and so far as God is constantly in the world-order, he is constantly in contact with world and works within the world order. It is precisely because of God's all-pervading presence that God is in relation with creation. Fretheim points to passages such as Jer. 23.24 where God asks "Do not I fill heaven *and earth*?" which suggest that God's domain is not restricted to a specific place, not the heavens or any single place within the world. As well, the passage suggests that God does not work on the world from the outside, but that his continued work occurs from within (cf. vv. 30, 32, 43, 49 etc.).[55]

The close relationship between the creator and created also has implications for the quality of the world-order. In this relationship, the world order appears good and righteous because these qualities are present in the world as its creator. Because God creates, sustains and confirms the ongoing existence and presence of the cosmic order after its initial creation through the goodness and unity of the creator, and because of God's presence in the world-order, the world-order was considered intact; the fact of this intact and integral experience of nature was intensely perceived insofar as it revealed God's presence in the world.[56]

It is therefore not surprising that when Job felt that he was no longer experiencing the world as an ordered universe, his first speech begins by calling for a reversal of his creation and continues with the agonizing distress of a man who finds himself in what he

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[54] Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, 34-35.
[55] Ibid., 38-39.
[56] Rolf Knierim, "Cosmos and History in Israel's Theology," *Horizons in Biblical Theology* 3 (1981): 88-89.

perceives to be an evil and immoral universe. As Carol Newsom argues, the wisdom

dialogues that ensue in the book of Job are the vehicle through which the moral order in

the cosmos is explored.[57] Job's friends can be understood as adhering to the principle that

nature was designed in an orderly way and, as was discussed in the previous chapter, the

dialogue maintained with the friends deals quite specifically with three different types of

perceived retributive justice.[58] God's retributive action presumes that there is a creation

and a world deserving and in need of justice: God's action in history is for the sake of the

world.[59] This order carries over into the social world and thus allows for analogies

between nature and the social world to stand as truth because it is understood that the

principles governing the cosmos and those governing the social order are consistent. In

order to perceive the reality of God at work, Israel relies on the ordered and structured

process of the cosmos. The different accounts of retributive justice discussed in the

previous chapter certainly employed the use of creation language; however, the use of

creation metaphors serves a purpose greater than the embellishment of a particular

argument: they indicate the understanding that nature and the social world are connected

through principles that have a common origin in their creator.[60]

Eliphaz opens his dialogue with the proverb "those who plow evil and sow

mischief reap them" (4.8) and continues, pointing to the lion as one that perishes for lack

of prey because of its ferocious impulses (4.10-11).[61] What is striking about much of the

imagery of creation in the dialogues is that they are often used to challenge the same

principles they are thought to uphold. Job too refers to the lion, but instead, he is the

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[57] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 79.
[58] See pages 21ff.
[59] Fretheim, *The Suffering of God: An Old Testament Perspective*, 34.
[60] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 57.
[61] Ibid.

victim and God is the one who proudly 'hunts [him] like a lion" and uses Job as a tool to demonstrate His cunning wonder "time and again" (10.16).[62]

Plant imagery is also employed by the author to demonstrate how interpretations of reality, often times having to do with one and the same object in creation, can differ and often openly contradict one another. Eliphaz likens Job's potential for numerous offspring, claiming "your descendants like the grass of the earth" will flourish (5.25); Bildad uses the metaphor of "rushes" and "papyrus" (8.11) to exemplify the consequence of not taking deep root and he likens them to the wicked that do not look to their past as a source of wisdom and knowledge of God (8.8). Job, however, cannot agree. Yet instead of asking "the generation past" (8.8) as Bildad encourages, Job does not use the human tradition. Instead he appeals directly to the natural world for his evidence. Job sees human life to be short lived and filled with trouble: "he blossoms like a flower and withers" (14.1); Job himself feels this trouble in the form of harassment, the same as is experienced by "a driven leaf" (13.25), and sees his life as ready to decompose "like a rotten thing" (13.28). Nature is in fact better off than humankind for there is hope for regeneration in nature: the tree that is cut down "will renew itself; its shoots will not cease" (14.7), yet "mortals languish and die" (14.10). Even for Job, the examples of nature can be modified and reinterpreted, for later he changes the analogy of the tree from one of hope to one of despair. God is the one that "uproots my hope like a tree" (19.10).[63]

Meteorological elements are also used in opposing arguments: clouds may represent the fleeting nature of human life. For Job, "as a cloud fades away" (7.9), human

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[62] Ibid., 57-58.
[63] Ibid., 58.

life is also fleeting and irreversible.[64] Yet for Eliphaz, the clouds are but one of the "marvels of God" (37.14). The shine of lightening on the clouds is evidence of the wonder of God's work (37.16) and their "expanse" is beyond human contemplation (36.29). Clouds that are so seemingly delicate have the capacity to envelop great volumes of water while sustaining this weight so that "no cloud burst under their weight" (26.8). At the same time, clouds provide a mask that "shuts off the view of His throne" (26.9).[65]

Habel suggests that the use of the same entity in nature is a particular poetic technique designed to show the ambiguity of interpretations of nature and the possibility for multiple interpretations of the same reality.[66] William P. Brown adds to this, suggesting that Job's use of the same imagery as that of his friends is not simply a satirical restating of the argument or a reinterpretation of reality. Brown highlights that Job does not, as the friends do, refer to the traditional witness of wisdom passed along through generations (cf. 8.8). Job instead refers to his own experience, particularly his experience of nature and the evidence it provides through plants and animals, therein showing his catalogue of reference to be distinctly different from that of the friends.[67] The implication of Job's decidedly different frame of reference suggests that part of Job's critique includes an assessment of traditional wisdom as far as it is found in the argument of the three friends as being excessively preoccupied with the human tradition while excluding the evidence that nature can and does provide. It is not that Job's suggestion is a novel approach; instead, it might be looked on as a rescue of the correct realm for receiving and interpreting wisdom as it is found in the proverbial sayings such as, "go to

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[64] Ibid., 161.
[65] Ibid., 58.
[66] Ibid., 58-59.
[67] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 330-31.

the ant; study its ways and learn" (Prov 6.6).[68] For Job, nature is stocked with wisdom:

nature operates as instructor to humankind (12.7), and perceives directly that "the hand of

the Lord" is used for destructive purposes (12.9). Nature is thus able to witness to the

erratic and illogical cosmic and social order for all of creation is affected: "whatever He

tears down cannot be rebuilt…when He holds back waters, they dry up; when He lets

them loose, they tear up the land" (12.14-15).[69]

This is not to say that the content of the dialogue between Job and his friends is

limited to a discussion of where the origin of wisdom is to be found. Newsom suggests

that the dispute in the dialogue goes to the heart of humankind's relationship with God.[70]

Both Eliphaz and Bildad talk of the relationship between God and humans, Eliphaz

wondering, "Can mortals be acquitted by God? Can man be cleared by his Maker" (4.17)

and then building on this argument giving the examples from greatest to least – not His

servants, angels, much less humankind, are guiltless (4.18-19). Later on, Eliphaz asks a

similar question using especially emotive vocabulary to describe human nature, such as

"loathsome" (נִתְעָב) and "foul" (נֶאֱלָח), which seem almost to suggest divine revulsion

toward human beings (15.16). Similarly, Bildad counts humans as "worm" (רִמָּה) and

"maggot" (תּוֹלֵעָה) in the eyes of God (25.6). Newsom suggests that at the heart of these

claims is a sense of radical otherness, that Eliphaz's rhetorical question in 4.17 is

specifically addressing the difference between humans and God and wondering whether

humans can be pure "*in relation to*" God and finds that the claim of human inferiority is

based on human mortality (4.19-21).[71] Eliphaz's comparison begins with the perfection

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[68] Ibid., 331.
[69] Ibid., 332.
[70] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 138-50.
[71] Ibid., 139-40.

of God and moves to His servants and angels and ends with humans "whose origin is

dust, who are crushed…shattered…perishing forever, unnoticed…they die, and not with

wisdom" (4.19-20). Because the human body is breakable, this brittleness must be

regarded as some type of flaw, a flaw that extends to the moral core of humanity and thus

denotes an impurity that stands in stark contrast to the pure, incorruptible nature of God

and confirms the inescapable otherness of the deity.[72] Yet what for Eliphaz and Bildad is

such a strong qualitative difference between humans and their creator actually points to

continuity and shared capacity with the divine: the ability to make moral decisions.[73]

Job, again parodying his friends' words, takes up the notion of God's otherness

and, not wishing to agree with the belief that the individual is of no value and demands to

be dominated, Job singles out this motif in his friends' argument saying, "Indeed I know

that it is so: but how can a mortal be just (יִצְדַּק) before God?" (9.2). Job is here being both

deeply ironic and sincere at the same time, and he continues by describing what a trial

before God might entail, employing the language of hymnic praise (9.5-10), and moving

into depictions of violent torment designed to destroy the victim (9.17-18). He uses

features of the human anatomy as the imagery to depict the torture: his own mouth turns

and gives testimony against him, "Though I were innocent, my mouth would condemn

me" (9.20) and for those reasons he knows of his tormentor, "He destroys the blameless

and the guilty" (9.22). Job's awareness of the human/divine relationship is not the same

as Eliphaz. For Job the relationship is one characterized by violence, suffering and divine

loathing.[74] What Job finds is that in order for humans to exist as moral beings, "like

gods" in a small way, and for God to be God, any human claim to moral integrity or

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[72] Ibid., 140.
[73] Ibid., 145.
[74] Ibid., 144.

uprightness must be twisted by God into its opposite, into a being of corruptness and unseemliness through violent methods of torture and expressions of extreme revulsion.[75] Job is intensely aware of himself as being radically different from God, but unlike Eliphaz and Bildad who see the gulf of separation impossible to span, Job believes the way to bridge the gulf is precisely the point of continuity between the divine and humanity that Eliphaz and Bildad attest to while at the same time ignore as being a viable connecting point: the common moral nature of the creator and the created.[76]

Knierim asserts that God's governing principles are found rooted in the created world and are those of "justice" (מִשְׁפָּט) and "righteousness" (צְדָקָה).[77] Using Psalm 33 as an example, he shows how Yahweh's love for "what is right and just" serve as the guiding principles for His action in creation and are found in "the earth [that] is full of the Lord's faithful care" (Ps 33.5). Here, justice and righteousness are fully connected with the ongoing existence of the created world and are therein embedded in the stable ongoing process of the world itself and human history.[78] It is therefore particularly interesting that Job sees the way to establish a common moral ground on which both parties can meet is through the vehicle of justice. The following chapters will seek to determine how God meets Job through this vehicle of justice and how language of creation, as it has so far been Job's evidence of a chaotic and immoral world, is in fact evidence of the opposite.

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[75] Ibid., 146.
[76] Ibid., 150.
[77] Knierim, "Cosmos and History in Israel's Theology," 96-97.
[78] Ibid.: 97.

III

God Answers from the Whirlwind

The Divine Speeches: Job 38.1-42.6

God's responses from the whirlwind are considered to be some of the most breath-taking poetry in the Hebrew Bible, consisting of "theological profundity,"[1] and its importance reckoned as the "climax of the poetic book."[2] Yet, as a response to Job's claim against injustice, responses have varied. God's speeches are claimed to be "magnificently irrelevant,"[3] "at best, enigmatic"[4] and "semi-ironic"[5] with the main reason for the dissatisfaction being the fact that God himself does not provide a suitable solution to the problem of injustice and the suffering of the innocent.

Nevertheless, authors have found in these speeches the solution to the book as a whole. Gustavo Gutiérrez sees the theophany as the "mysterious meeting of two freedoms" with the purpose being the demonstration of Yahweh's "gratuitousness of divine love."[6] Some scholars find opposing meaning in the divine speeches: André Lacocque argues that although there is chaos in the world, God has the freedom to maintain order and justice as he sees fit;[7] while Athalya Brenner suggests the opposite, arguing that God has created evil and is able to control it, but unable to totally conquer and eliminate it from the earth. For Brenner, God's power is limited, leaving him fallible

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[1] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 526.

[2] Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, Bible and Literature (Sheffield: JSOT Pr, 1991), 196.

[3] Marvin H. Pope, *Job, The Anchor Bible* (Garden City: Doubleday, 1965), lxxv.

[4] Athalya Brenner, "God's Answer to Job," *Vetus Testamentum* 31, no. 2 (1981): 129.

[5] Hoffman, "The Relation between the Prologue and the Speech-Cycles in Job : A Reconsideration," 169.

[6] Gustavo Gutiérrez, *On Job : God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1987), 72.

[7] André Lacocque, "Job or the Impotence of Religion and Philosophy," *Semeia*, no. 19 (1981): 41.

before Job.[8] In an article by David Clines, the "meaning" behind the divine speeches is not questioned but rather the issue is raised as to whether God's response should be criticized as an ethically irresponsible response insofar as the question of injustice is never answered and the tone in which God speaks to Job is ironic and scornful.[9]

These solutions are not necessarily mutually exclusive for it is possible to see them all as different components of the whole. God's speeches function in the book of Job the same way that the book of Job functions in relation to the biblical text as a whole – providing a highly developed collection of the various ideas of justice.[10] The reader is not obliged to pick a single answer; the very aspect of the unanswered question lends a dialogical nature to the text and therefore affords more than one possible interpretation, thus adducing further the innovative nature of the book of Job.

Structure and Theme

The basic structure of the whirlwind scene is well outlined by Perdue who divides the two divine speeches (38.1-40.5; 40.6-42.6) into 5 parts. The first speech opens with a combination of rhetorical questions and hymnic illustrations of God's creation and rule of the universe (38.4-18). This is followed by a second segment of questions and hymnic descriptions relating to meteorological wonders such as light and dark and constellations (38.19-38). The speech then moves to the origins and rule of creation including God's providential care and feeding of the animals (38.39-39.30). God's second speech

[8] Brenner, "God's Answer to Job," 135.
[9] David J. A. Clines, "Job's Fifth Friend: An Ethical Critique of the Book of Job," *Biblical Interpretation* 12, no. 3 (2004): 242-44.
[10] Yair Hoffman, *A Blemished Perfection : The Book of Job in Context*, vol. 213, *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament. Supplement Series* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1996), 248.

includes two hymnic speeches: one of the Behemoth (40.6-24); the second exalting the

Leviathan and challenging Job to engage him in combat (40.25-41.26).[11]

The speeches themselves, while dealing with a variety of topics and using the

language and imagery from discourses such as wisdom, mythic and legal discourse, both

follow a similar structure that reveals a response to Job's question of divine justice. Each

speech opens with the introduction from the whirlwind (38.1//40.6),[12] followed by

challenges to Job (38.2-3//40.7-14) that contain corresponding orders for Job to "Gird up

your loins" (38.3//40.7). James Crenshaw shows that in these challenges to Job, the main

themes of the speeches address the two charges Job lays before God, those of having

created a faulty and corrupt universe and of governing unjustly.[13] In the first speech, the

theme is established as the design of the universe or God's divine "counsel" or "plan"

(עֵצָה) with the question, "Who is this who darkens counsel (עֵצָה), speaking without

knowledge" (38.2). In the second speech, God's justice (מִשְׁפָּט) is laid out as the central

theme with the question, "Would you impugn My justice (מִשְׁפָּט)? Would you condemn

me that you may be right?" (40.8).[14]

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[11] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 203-38.

[12] Luc argues that as an element that is common to both speeches, the storm motif provides a strong metaphor for God's design and control of the universe. See further, Alex Luc, "Storm and the Message of Job," *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament* 87 Mr (2000): 111-23.

[13] 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: Catholic Biblical Assoc of America, 1992), 75-76.

[14] Clines argues that the theme of justice is greatly disregarded in the speeches. As evidence he points out that the language of morality is conspicuously sparing in the divine speeches. "Right/Righteousness" (תִּצְדָּק) is used only in 40.8; "Wicked/Criminal" (רָשָׁע), including its derivative forms is found in only three verses: 40.8; 40.12; 38.15, and "Justice" (מִשְׁפָּט) is found only in 40.8. See further, David J. A. Clines, "Does the Book of Job Suggest That Suffering Is Not a Problem?," in *Weisheit in Israel : Beiträge Des Symposiums "Das Alte Testament Und Die Kultur Der Moderne" Anlässlich Des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard Von Rads (1901-1971), Heidelberg, 18.-21. Oktober 2001*, ed. David J.A. Clines, Hermann Lichtenberger, and Hans-Peter Müller (Münster: Lit, 2003), 101-02.

The Rhetorical Questions

These overarching themes are also confirmed when examining the literary form of the speeches. Although the speeches seem to combine a mixture of forms, they predominantly take the form of the disputation, characteristic of which is the use of challenges and imperatives as well as the use of rhetorical questions.[15] The rhetorical questions in the divine speeches are of the type where both the questioner and the auditor know the answer to the questions asked.[16] Fox calls this the "circle of knowing," meaning that the questioner knows that his auditor knows the answer to the question, and the auditor knows he knows. This circular knowledge elicits a certain intimacy in the communication in that both the auditor and speaker know that they share, to a degree, a certain body of knowledge.[17] When the speaker makes a claim the speaker and auditor are brought closer together, for the auditor accepts the speaker's claims by the will of his own consciousness and not by any outside force.[18] By this process, the rhetorical questions in the divine speeches draw Job in, albeit by reminding Job of the limitations of his human wisdom, but reminding him that this is wisdom that he already has. When God asks in the first speech, "Who is this who darkens counsel (עֵצָה)" (38.2), God is implying

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[15] Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, Esther* (Grand Rapids: W.B. Eerdmans Pub. Co., 1981), 44.

[16] The other type of rhetorical question is where the speaker asks a question and immediately answers it himself. See further, Michael V. Fox, "Job 38 and God's Rhetoric," *Semeia*, no. 19 (1981): 58.

[17] Ibid.

[18] Ibid.: 59. Fox goes on to show that if turned into statements in the indicative, the tone of the speeches from the whirlwind change dramatically. Said in the indicative, "I set its measures, as you know, and I stretched a line over it," the speeches no longer require Job to participate in the knowledge but just emphasize Job's own mortal weakness.

that the plan is already essentially known and Job is blamed for obscuring or darkening a truth of which he already has knowledge.[19]

The intimacy of the "circle of knowing" also adds to the underlying theme in the dialogues between Job and his friends: though Job questions the reason for his suffering, his primary concern is the nature of the relationship between God and humankind. Rowold shows how the form of the rhetorical questions addresses this in a unique way. He argues that the rhetorical questions are characteristic of the disputation, but the form of these particular questions are "challenge-questions," similar to those found in the disputation speeches with the idols of the nations in Deutero-Isaiah (41.7; 42.17; 44.9-20) where the function of the questions is to not seek information but instead to challenge these gods and idols that stand as rival deities for the people of Israel. In basic form, the challenge questions consist of the pronominal subject ("who," though sometimes "I" or "he"), combined with a verb that describes God's creative actions (create, measure, enclose) and objects, grouped together by phenomenon, used to demonstrate the extant of God's design such as the outer reaches of the universe (38.12-21) and the sources of meteorological phenomena (38.22-30).[20] What is unique to the divine speeches in Job as compared to those in Deutero-Isaiah, is the presence of a purpose/result clause that gives special significance to the rhetorical subject/verb/object assertions by providing insight

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[19] Ibid.: 60. Rhetorical criticism became prominent in biblical scholarship with the essay by James Muilenburg, "Form Criticism and Beyond," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969). For examples of rhetorical criticism as it is applied to biblical texts, see Stanley E. Porter and Dennis L. Stamps, *The Rhetorical Interpretation of Scripture : Essays from the 1996 Malibu Conference, Journal for the Study of the New Testament* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Pr, 1999). For an in depth analysis of the poetical arguments of the book of Job, see Pieter van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job* (Leiden: E J Brill, 1995). Though rhetorical criticism is not normally concerned with the historical context of the writer, studies of the prophetic tradition have found a close connection between the text's rhetoric and the historical context. See further, John Barton, "History and Rhetoric in the Prophets," in *The Bible as Rhetoric : Studies in Biblical Persuasion and Credibility*, ed. M. Warner (London: Routledge, 1990).

[20] Henry Rowold, "Yahweh's Challenge to Rival : The Form and Function of the Yahweh-Speech in Job 38-39," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 47 (1985): 207-11.

into the *motivation* for God's actions. The earth was founded and the cornerstones were laid after which "the morning stars sang together and all the divine beings shouted for joy" (8.7); water is brought to the desert so that "the earth melts into a mass and its clods stick together" (38.38). These purpose/result clauses provide insight into God's design (עֵצָה) as well as the purpose of His design (עֵצָה) which is to find joy and well-being in the created universe.[21] Thus the rhetorical questions of the divine speeches highlight the *nature* of the relationship between God and the universe, and in being a part of the rhetorical questioning of the divine speeches, God is calling Job to participate in that relationship. As will be discussed further below, these questions call Job to re-establish this relationship, one that is properly built on the care and well-being that Yahweh has already established in His creation.[22]

Justice in the Design: Job 38.1-40.5

Returning now to the first speech from the whirlwind, the theme established at the outset, that of God's design (עֵצָה), is closely related to those of divine justice and rule. As Norman Habel points out, forensic language and the legal metaphor can be seen to organize major portions of the book and further, the court of justice is seen by Job as the place in which he might settle his dispute with God.[23] Yet the speeches of God seem to shift the focus from Job's questioning to the realm of creation. Instead of answering Job's questions, God talks about the extreme reaches of the universe. Scholnick argues

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[21] Ibid.: 203, 11.

[22] Ibid.: 211. Rowold further argues that inherent in the rhetorical questions is an affirmation of God's ability and Job's inability. The speeches from the whirlwind thus present the extent of God's lordship while at the same time asking whether Job has similar power or can do similar deeds. For Job to answer these questions in any other way other than "You, Yahweh, have the power" would be to challenge God as a rival. The rhetorical questions record God's creative and governing power, challenge Job's capacity to assume the position of a rival and therein show that Job's understanding of the relationship between himself (and therefore humanity) and God is greatly misguided. See further, Rowold, "Yahweh's Challenge to Rival : The Form and Function of the Yahweh-Speech in Job 38-39," 207-11.

[23] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 54-55.

that there is no doubt that the speeches of ch 38-42 should be considered as God's

testimony in the lawsuit brought on by Job, and finds this confirmed in God's challenges

for Job to "Gird up (אֱזָר) your loins like a hero (גֶּבֶר)" (38.3//40.7).[24] The meaning of this

idiom is traced to a Nuzi tablet where the phrase is used to refer to a wrestling ordeal

wherein opponents in a court case involving contradictory testimony wrestle with belts

that are linked together. Used in conjunction with the verb אָזַר "to gird," which retains

the forensic meaning of preparing or equipping oneself for a challenge, the belt-wrestling

metaphor expresses God's challenge to continue the lawsuit in order to find a solution to

the problem of justice through litigation.[25]

It is important to note, however, the way מִשְׁפָּט (justice) is used and understood by

Job and the way מִשְׁפָּט is employed in the divine speeches is decidedly different.

Scholnick draws attention to the fact that מִשְׁפָּט derives from the verb שָׁפַט which is used

both forensically to refer to judging or jurisprudence (Is 28.6; Deut 17.8), and as well to

refer to governance or kingly sovereignty (1 Sam 8.9).[26] Whereas Job and his friends use

the word only in the juridical sense to refer to "divine judgment" and the process of

litigation in a court or law (9.19; 22.4; 23.4 etc.), it is used exclusively by God as term for

divine rule of the universe (40.8).[27] Job appeals for an explanation of how God can

punish an innocent human being, God answers with visions of His rule over the universe.

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[24] Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "The Meaning of Mispat in the Book of Job," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 101 (1982). Habel points out that though גֶּבֶר is usually translated as "man", the suggested textual emendation גִּבּר, which is translated as "warrior" or "hero," might reflect the real sense of the word and not a different textual tradition. That is, גֶּבֶר might suggest the meaning "mighty man" or "hero" as it is found with such connotations in Judges 5.30; II Sam 23.1, and is used interchangeably with גִּבּר in Psalm 18.26 and II Samuel 22.26. See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 520-21.

[25] Scholnick, "The Meaning of Mispat in the Book of Job," 527.

[26] Ibid.: 522.

[27] Ibid.: 522-23.

Upon entering the courtroom, God shows Job how justice operates from the divine

perspective, a justice where human judicial categories are no longer central.[28]

Intertextuality in Establishing Justice

Divine understanding of justice is described with the use of both intertextual and

intratextual references. While some of these intertextual references will be outlined, it is

important to note that the central clue to understanding the divine speeches is the unique

way in which the divine speeches re-format and reshape old traditions and the ideas found

in the dialogues to form a new understanding of divine justice.

Significantly, the speeches open with a decidedly intertextual reference, for God

answers Job "from the storm" (מִן הַסְּעָרָה), a meteorological event often associated with

theophonic events in which the judgement of the wicked or the salvation of the people of

Israel takes place. In the historical narratives, the only instance of the "storm" (סְעָרָה)

occurs in the story of Elijah as the descriptor of how he is taken up into heaven (2 Kings

2.1-12). In the prophetic oracles, סְעָרָה is often used in conjunction with God's final

judgment in the form of condemning false prophets (Ezk. 13.11, 13; Jer. 23.19) or in the

destruction of national rulers (Amos 1.14; Isa. 40.24) and is thus a common vehicle for

divine anger or rebuke.[29] More significantly, the author has the actual voice of God

coming from the storm itself and thus evokes the vivid images of a theophany (Jud. 5;

Hab. 3; Ps. 18.7-16), an event in biblical history often associated with salvation and

divine approval, such as the founding event at Sinai (Ex. 19.16-19). Yet unlike the

description of other biblical theophonic events, the description of the theophany in Job is

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[28] Sylvia Huberman Scholnick, "Poetry in the Courtroom: Job 38-41," in *Directions in Biblical Hebrew Poetry* (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Pr, 1987), 186-87.

[29] Thomas F. Dailey, "Theophanic Bluster : Job and the Wind of Change," *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* 22, no. 2 (1993): 189.

noticeably lacking any description of complementary acts of nature. Instead it is simply and briefly described by a single element of nature, "from the storm" (הַסְּעָרָה).[30] The straightforward description conveys the poet's wish to enter into a symbolic world and, as the words of introduction, the storm provides a context through which the speeches are to be interpreted. While on a literal level it is a common meteorological event, at the symbolic level it is the venue of the theophany, and in using a concrete meteorological phenomenon, God is anchored in space and time. Yet the lack of further description of the storm suggests that the power of the revelation will lie not in God's destructive power, but in the revelatory words.[31] Furthermore, as was discussed above, this particular storm is decidedly different from other types of biblical storms and this departure suggests that specific associations with historical or prophetic traditions is likely problematic. It remains evocative of past theophanies that brought salvation, but in its distinctiveness the storm as it is found in Job suggests that a unique message is about to be issued.[32]

The unique nature of the description of the storm also suggests that it should be examined in the context of other storm-like events in the book of Job.[33] Job's home was ruined by "a mighty wind" (רוּחַ) (1.19) and he later fears that even if God appears to him, He would pay him no heed as "He crushes me with a storm (שׂערה); He wounds me much for no cause" (9.17) providing what some consider a foreshadow of the theophany to

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[30] Ibid.: 189-90. Though translations of הַסְּעָרָה range from "whirlwind" (Perdue), "storm" (Luc), "rotating-whirl" (Dailey), the word seems to indicate be some type storm-wind. See further, Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 704.

[31] Dailey, "Theophanic Bluster : Job and the Wind of Change," 190-92.

[32] Ibid.: 190-91.

[33] Luc, "Storm and the Message of Job," 119. Dailey argues that because הַסְּעָרָה is unique to the speeches from the whirlwind and has no lexical equivalent in the book of Job it should not be translated as an equivalent to the "whirlwind" Job is frightened God will use to crush him (9.17), or examined in the context of other storm imagery in the book of Job. See further, Dailey, "Theophanic Bluster : Job and the Wind of Change," 188-90.

come.[34] Job goes on to describe himself as being harassed by God's mighty wind, likening himself to a "driven (נִדָּף) leaf" (13.25). For Job, the destructive nature of the wind stands as a powerful metaphor for his pain and suffering.[35]

Looking forward, the use of storm images provides a clue as to the distinctiveness of God's speeches to Job where the element of the storm is presented as a meterological force under His control. God cuts a "path (דֶרֶךְ) for thunderstorms (לַחֲזִיז קֹלוֹת)" of torrential rain (38.25). He sets the "way" (דֶרֶךְ) for the "east wind" (קָדִים) (38.24). Although these meteorological events are destructive, they affirm the existence of order in the universe – they are dispersed at the appropriate time and follow the correct path. Furthermore, they are not intended as vehicles of punishment for humans but these stormy forces are used to "saturate the desolate wasteland, and make the crop of grass sprout forth" (38.26).[36] Pervading these metaphors is the impression of divine care. As a unique "storm" reference in the book of Job, הַסְּעָרָה stands as a powerful metaphor for the positive aspect of God's design and control in the universe, including the way in which God enacts justice.[37] As the introduction to the divine speeches in the book of Job, the storm motif serves as a way to continue reading and understanding the speeches.

Of course, biblical parallels are not limited to the image of the storm, but continue throughout the speeches. While Westermann argues that God's speeches are an

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[34] Following the Targum and Peshitta, Clines argues for שׁערה to be translated as 'hair/trifle'. See further, Clines, *Job 1-20*, 218. Habel suggests that a double entedre might be intended, where שׁערה read as "whirlwind" would foreshadow the whirlwind in which God later appears or if rendered as "hair" it would act as a hyperbole similar to humans being crushed by moths (4.19). See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 193.

[35] Luc, "Storm and the Message of Job," 112-15.

[36] Ibid.: 120-21.

[37] Ibid.: 122-23.

adaptation of a priestly oracle designed to give indirect praise to God,[38] Jamieson-Drake

argues that chapter 38 is not a hymn of praise, though it does take up creation themes

common to biblical hymns. He looks at Psalms 104 and 147 in parallel to Job 38 and

finds that a significant number of verbal parallels and hence corresponding themes

appear. In general, the order of topics is similar in the two passages: both begin with a

description of founding cosmic events (Psalm 104:1-9//Job 38.4-38) and continue with

accounts of God's care for animals (Psalm 104:1-9//Job 38.39-39:30). Of the animals

used in the Psalm, four of the six are also found in Job and the motif of the lion seeking

food from God is unique to these two passages. Furthermore, these general parallels

extend to verbal parallels that follow the same chronological order. God "lays the earth's

foundations (בְּיָסְדִי-אָרֶץ) (Psalm 104.5//Job 38.4); the sea is "clothed" (לְבֻשׁוֹ) (Psalm

104.6//Job 38.9); and the desert is "saturated" (לְהַשְׂבִּיעַ) (Psalm 104.13//Job 38.27).[39]

Yet as with the inter-biblical references to the storm, there is a significant

departure from what is generally found in hymns of creation. In Psalm 104.13-14 God

causes the grass and plants to grow *for humans* in order that they might be sustained and

later goes on to describe how the earth is intended to produce that which "cheers the

hearts of men" (104.15). Alternatively, mention of humans is almost completely lacking

in the Joban passages. In Job 38.26-28 the rain is intended to water and satisfy

uninhabited land; God mentions humans directly only in reference to the wicked (38.13)

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[38] Claus Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job : A Form-Critical Analysis*, trans. Charles A. Muenchow (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1981), 108-10.

[39] David W. Jamieson-Drake, "Literary Structure, Genre and Interpretation in Job 38," in *The Listening Heart : Essays in Wisdom and the Psalms in Honor of Roland E Murphy, O Carm*, ed. Kenneth G. Hoglund; Elizabeth F. Huwiler and J T. Glass (Sheffield: Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Pr, 1987), 225-31.

and to the place where humankind is absent: the wilderness "where no man is" (38.26).[40]

Whereas the speeches of Job and his friends were permeated with references to humans

and their relationship with creation, this particular departure in the divine speech suggests

a particular didactic purpose wherein creation also bears witness to the relationship

between humans and God. According to the divine speeches, a significant difference is

understood with respect to the place of humans in God's creation.[41]

Justice and Design Considered: Procreation, Violence, Freedom and Community

The divine speeches continue to redefine how the relationship justice and the

design of the universe are to be understood. Specifically, the way in which images of

creation are manipulated and changed as compared to other biblical texts as well as

compared to references in the book of Job will have significant bearing on the way in

which justice in the universe is to be understood. This can be directly seen in the opening

words of God's first speech that begin with a description of the basic elements of

creation: the earth, sea and light. Yahweh is confirmed as the divine architect, measuring

the earth "with a line" (Job 38.4-6//Prov 9.1-6), securely setting its cornerstone (Job

38.6//Ps 188.22). The earth that Job was so sure God was shaking from its pillars (cf. 9.6)

is assured to be stable and beautiful (38.7).[42]

The scene quickly shifts to another long-established symbol of Wisdom literature,

the sea, being the traditional symbol of chaos (Job 38.11//Prov 8.29). Juxtaposing these

two units brings Job's attention to the vastness of the universe, and, more significantly,

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[40] Ibid., 226-27. Janzen argues that though humans are not significantly present in the divine speeches, the fact that a human is the recipient of the divine address suggests that humans are not insignificant but part of God's creation that he actively addresses. See further, J. Gerald Janzen, *Job, Interpretation Bible Commentary* (Atlanta: John Knox Pr, 1985), 229.

[41] Jamieson-Drake, "Literary Structure, Genre and Interpretation in Job 38," 228.

[42] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 206-07.

serves to illustrate the boundaries and limits of the cosmos.[43] In taking Job from the edges of the earth to the bottom of the sea, Job is dislocated from his earthbound location and brought to view the cosmos through the divine lens. Job was not there at the time of its inception (38.4) but through the visual description he is brought there and made to witness the divine actions. It is through the process of displacing Job's frame of reference through which he constructed his understanding of reality that Job's understanding of how the universe is designed and ordered begins to expand.[44]

The sea that threatens the order of the cosmos is described in terms of limits imposed on it: God has "made breakers My limit (חֻקִּי) for it," he "set up its bar," and it is "closed (יָסֶךְ) behind doors" (38.8-10). The act of limiting has a twofold purpose in the book of Job. The first is to make clear that the order that is enforced in the universe has been in effect since the beginning of creation for the benefit and safety of the earth. "Limit" (חֹק) retains the meaning of the law or juridical statutes and therein underscores the fact that it is a governing force in the universe, a tool used in the administration of God's justice.[45] Second, the idea of limiting as it is found in the passage about the sea is used in conjunction with the verb "to hedge" (סוּךְ), the same as used by Job to describe how God is torturing him (3.23). The verb is nowhere else used in the Hebrew Bible to describe how the sea is closed in, but it is used in the sense of enclosing in order to provide a protective shelter (cf. Psalm 139.13). Although God is blocking off the sea, it is done with a sense of care and nurturing, expressing the paradox of God's creation. The forces of chaos are constrained but in a manner that is caring and continuous, for these forces also sustain creation. While Job only supposes that God "hedges" in the good and

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[43] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 241-42.
[44] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 347.
[45] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 539.

does not limit evil, he is shown how chaos is kept in check with compassionate, yet sustaining action.[46]

The sense of care and nurture in limiting the sea is extended even farther with the use of the metaphor of procreation. Creation imagery works on two levels as a birth metaphor is used to describe the traditional restraint of the sea. The sea is depicted being "swaddled" (38.9) as a baby would be wrapped to prevent any movement. Here, God's role in binding the deep is described in ways truly unique when compared to other accounts of creation. He is not cast as the battling opponent of the sea (cf. Ps 74.13-14), but is described as the caretaker or even the midwife who births the sea and "swaddles" it in a blanket of clouds (38.9). Now associated with the images of birth and infancy, the sea as a battling enemy and hostile alien power is transformed and instead associated with new life. By describing the waters of chaos as "gush[ing] forth out of the womb" (38.8), the metaphor indicates that God has created chaos, while at the same time limited the place in which it can exist; chaos is not permitted to overwhelm the earth.[47] In this hymn, the sea is not only limited by the divine but also presented as the object of divine care and justice is presented being administered with gentleness and compassion.[48]

Birthing imagery continues as the speeches move from the sea to the stratosphere where light and darkness, as well as snow, hail, wind and rain originate, though it is permeated with the language of violence. The snow and hail is "put aside for a time of adversity, for a day of war and battle" (38.22); a specific path is cut "for the thunderstorms, to rain down on uninhabited land" (38.25-26). The wilderness, like the sea, is seen in biblical literature as a place of chaos (cf. Jer 51.42-43) and the wild is often

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[46] Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry* (London: T & T Clark, 1985), 100.
[47] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 207.
[48] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 243-44.

identified as the "other" over and against which human society defines itself. References to the desert are often characterized as hostile and dangerous (Deut 32.10) and as a symbol of chaos: divine punishment is often seen in the transformation of a city into an uninhabited wasteland (Ps. 107.33-38; Isa. 34.8-15).[49] Indeed for Job it is the site of abandonment, the home to the uncivilized outcasts of society (30.6-7) and the place where God withheld water for destructive purposes (12.15). Conversely, God shows Job that the wilderness is in fact a site worthy and receiving of divine care. Life-giving water is sent to "saturate the desolate wasteland" and to "make a crop of grass sprout" (38.27).[50] Furthermore, insofar as water brings life, it also brings community. Harnessing water is essential for the creation and maintenance of community and this prerequisite for communal living is mirrored in the poetic image at the end of the passage. The way God "tilts the bottles of the sky" suggests the deliberate act of bringing rain to the earth in order that the earth might "stick together" and "melt into a mass" (38.37-38). God is active in the formation and sustenance of community and this is seen in His unsolicited provision of water; even in the desolate desert, through water, God forms a community.[51]

The metaphor of procreation is taken up again in the following four rhetorical questions: "Does the rain have a father? Who begot the dewdrops? From whose belly came forth the ice? Who gave birth to the frost of heaven?" (38.28-29). While the majority of rhetorical questions in the divine speeches seem to demand the answer, "You did it, Yahweh," Vall performs a rhetorical study of these four questions and finds they

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[49] Carol A. Newsom, "The Book of Job," in *The New Interpreter's Bible : General Articles & Introduction, Commentary, & Reflections for Each Book of the Bible, Including the Apocryphal/Deuterocanonical Books* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994), 607.

[50] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 542.

[51] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 349-50.

require a different answer.[52] The first question begins with the phrase הֲיֵשׁ meaning "Is

there" and begins only five other rhetorical questions with this same phrase, three of them

occurring in the book of Job (Job 5.1; 6.30; 25.3; Isa 44.8; Jer 14.22). In all these

instances, the answer always appears to be "no."[53] Vall argues that had the poet wanted

to elicit the answer "yes," the common formula "הֲלֹא" meaning "Is there not?" would have

been used. It follows that the answer to the first question in this series is "no, the rain has

no father." The next three questions begin with "who," and given that they appear in a

series that seems to demand a consistent set of responses, as well as the fact that two of

the five הֲיֵשׁ questions listed above are followed by "who" questions that demand the

answer "no one," it would appear that the answer that follows the who questions should

be "no one begot the dewdrops, gave birth to the ice or the frost."[54] Yet this answer

seems contradictory in light of the previous verses (38.25-26) where the argument is

made that God *is* the one "who cut a channel for the torrents and a path for the

thunderstorms." That the questions of the father of the rain and mother of the dewdrops

follows these verses must indicate that God is responsible for the rain, but the mode by

which they come about is in no way analogous to human methods of procreation. Human

analogies are insufficient.[55] As Alter points out, this poem pushes the limits of human

imagination: whereas Job could only see and imagine watery tears (3.24), God points to

the beneficial and destructive power of water (38.25).[56] It has the capacity to renew life

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[52] Gregory Vall, ""From Whose Womb Did the Ice Come Forth?" : Procreation Images in Job 38:28-29,"
Catholic Biblical Quarterly 57 (1995): 504-13.
[53] Ibid.: 510-12.
[54] Ibid.: 512. This conclusion is supported by Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 101. and Fox, "Job 38 and
God's Rhetoric," 58.
[55] Vall, ""From Whose Womb Did the Ice Come Forth?" : Procreation Images in Job 38:28-29," 512-13.
[56] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 101-02.

and destroy it; both powers are the created product of God (38.28-29), though not created or governed by human ideals of justice.

The passage describing the movement between light and dark (38.19-21) that precedes the images of rain and snow also enhances understanding of God's justice in the universe and as argued by Alter, shows significant connection with Job's initial lament in chapter 3. In this lament, Job expresses the agonizing state of his suffering, cursing the day of his birth, calling for a reversal of the cosmic act of creation and imagining the only possible relief to be in death and the darkened enclosure of burial. In direct opposition to Job's calls for darkness and death, the divine speeches affirm light and life as well as the place of darkness by alternating between these two states throughout the first speech.[57] God opens with the question of who is it that "*darkens* council" (38.2) and then moves to the dramatic image where "the morning stars sang together" (38.7). This is followed by the birth of the sea (38.8-11), the lightness of day break (38.12-15), and the return to the sea and the "gates of deep darkness" (38.16-18). This movement between images of light and dark signal that that this is a characterization of Job's initial speech, while making clear that his understanding is entirely distorted. Job's lack of understanding is made clear in the final reference to light and dark when God asks Job if he knows "which path (הַדֶּרֶךְ) leads to where light dwells, and where is the place (מְקֹמוֹ) of darkness, that you may take to its domain and know the way to its home" (38.19-20).[58] The balance maintained between these two elements is delicate and integral to the proper function of the rest of the cosmos; the emphasis on the "path" (הַדֶּרֶךְ) and "place" (מְקֹמוֹ) of light and darkness demonstrates the carefully delineated locus of operation for these two phenomena. Like

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[57] Ibid., 96-97.
[58] Ibid., 97-99.

the use of "limit" with reference to the sea, divine activities evidence a precisely planned and controlled design (עָשָׂה). The limits and boundaries of this design are intended to be celebrated, an act performed by "the morning stars [who] sang together and all the divine beings shouted for joy" (38.7). Further to offering creation as a something to be celebrated, these images also interpret creation as God's temple. The laying of foundational stones marked a liturgical occasion where singers and musicians were joined by the people in music and shouts of heavenly praise (cf. Isaiah 66.1-2; Ezra 3.10-11; 2 Chron 5.11-14). [59] These cultic references assure that the earth is a place of safety, much like the temple is a place of refuge from harmful forces (Ps. 23.6). [60]

Light and dark imagery is also more directly associated with Job's doubts regarding cosmic justice, for Job clearly associates evildoers with darkness and uses evidence drawn from his life as part of his critique of God's creation. Rebels and murderers commit all their crimes at night and find the pleasure of day and night reversed: "For all of them morning is darkness" (24.17) and it is only in darkness that the "wicked cease from troubling" (3.17). Yet in God's speeches, light is the instrument by which God exposes evil-doers by having the newly assigned dawn seize "the corners of the earth and shake the wicked out of it" (38.13). By combining the imagery of light, and the morality of justice and limiting, God provides evidence that He is not operating according to the conventional methods of justice so expected by Job and his friends. [61] The coming dawn not only regulates the passage of day and night, but it also limits the

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[59] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 601-02.
[60] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 341-42.
[61] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 98.

activity of the wicked. Although the wicked are not eradicated, they are contained daily, their violence exposed with the daily dawn and once again limited.[62]

It becomes clear that the universe is not chaotic, but it is neither the case that retributive justice is the law determining order. Instead, the metaphors show God locating intrinsic value in nature. The chaos and immoral order of the universe that Job thought so evident is reoriented in the divine speeches and in doing so, Job's own worldview is being reshaped. To this point, God's speech has shown that the "design" of His creation includes carefully set boundaries, paths and ways in which creation is intended to operate. His speech recognizes intrinsic worth in places, such as the desert, as a site of meaningful goodness, but human categories, such as procreation images associated with rain, are not sufficient for understanding the way this design operates and distributes justice. Destructive forces are still present, though they are the recipients of divine care; the wicked are exposed with each breaking dawn but not eradicated. Furthermore, there is no hierarchical structure by which creation is organized. The earth's foundations, the deep recesses of the sea and the wicked that are shaken out are not relayed in terms of better or worse: there is dependence but no hierarchical structure. This radical view of relational theory in the universe is essentially different from Job's categories of orderly and chaotic. Job is challenged to reconsider his moral ordering of the universe and accept this new understanding of the natural world.[63]

The next section of the divine speech moves quickly from the realm of meteorology and the inanimate forces of nature to the actors in the universe, the members of the animal kingdom. Animals are listed in pairs of two: the lion and the raven (38.39-

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[62] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 540.
[63] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 16-19.

41), the mountain goat and the hind (39.1-4), the wild ass and the wild ox (39.5-12), the ostrich and the horse (39.13-25), and the hawk and eagle/vulture (39.26-30).[64] Their groupings all center on common traits: the appetite of the lion and raven, the procreative cycle of the mountain goats and hinds. The wild ass and ox display their freedom, the ostrich and horse possess speech as well as irrational courage.[65]

In addition to the pairs of animals being grouped by similar characteristics, Miller shows that there is a chiastic structure to the discourse that reveals further similarities between the animals.[66] The poem begins with the lion and raven, a beast of prey and a scavenger searching for food for its young. The poem ends with the war horse, another creature that is depicted in the context of war and death, followed by another scavenger bird, the vulture, or possibly eagle, feeding on dead corpses and bringing its young their blood. This inclusio frames the discourse and leads into the second part of the chiastic arrangement: the mountain goat and hind which follow the raven, and the ostrich which comes before the war horse, form the second part of this structure and are linked through the common act of procreation.[67] Indeed, procreation seems to be a strong feature of the entire speech, being featured as well in the speeches about the sea, rain, ice and frost, the raven and the vulture; however, here with the mountain goat and the ostrich there is a connection with the abandonment of the young. In the case of the hind, its young leave the parent, while in the case of the ostrich she leaves her eggs unprotected on the ground providing another example where there is seeming lack of parental bond. At the centre of

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[64] נֶשֶׁר can be translated as "eagle" or "vulture." Considering that it is described in the context of scavenging for food and feeding on the bodies of dead corpses, understanding this animal as a vulture seems most appropriate. See further, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 214.

[65] Ibid.

[66] James E. Miller, "Structure and Meaning of the Animal Discourse in the Theophany of Job (38:39-39:30)," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 103, no. 3 (1991): 418-21.

[67] Ibid.: 420.

the chiasm, are the wild ass and the wild ox that are both characterized by their freedom

from the bonds of human service. This seems significant, in that at the centre of the

chiastic structure the role of humankind in the catalogue of the animal kingdom is

superfluous and mentioned only in the negative.[68] These themes of violence and freedom

from human service brought out by the chiastic structure of the poem deserve more

attention.

Violence in the passage is linked to many of the animals: the lion, raven, hawk

and vulture all hunt prey, while the ostrich, more passive in her aggression, leaves her

eggs on the ground in danger of being trampled.[69] The horse, whose description follows

that of the ostrich, seems at first to be on a hunt to capture her, for the ostrich "scoffs at

horse and rider" (39.18) as they fail to ensnare her. The scene then moves to the setting

of the battlefield and here, the pairing of the horse with a rider seems to draw attention to

the way in which the *human rider* brings violence into the scene.[70] Found at the end of a

description of animals that exist and prosper in a world unaffected by human influence,

this is a jarring report of human involvement in the most intentional types of violence:

war. And as Odell points out, this intentional allusion to violence brought about by

humans seems to mock the traditional moral standards the friends put on display.[71]

Yet in this battle scene of horse and rider, the physical description of the horse, as

well as its auditory and internal sensations, is the focal point. The horse is associated

with power: he is introduced as an animal with great strength (גְבוּרָה) (39.19), his neck,

generally associated with images of force, is covered in a mane (רַעְמָה), a derivation of the

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[68] Ibid.
[69] Ibid.: 419-20.
[70] David Odell, "Images of Violence in the Horse in Job 39:18-25," *Prooftexts* 13 (1993): 165.
[71] Ibid.: 169.

word for thunder (רַעַם).[72] There is no mention of the way in which this energy is channelled by the rider, for good or for evil, or how the rider restrains and controls the horse. The horse is described acting independently and the images are presented from his point of view. He paws the ground (39.21), he quivers at passing arrows (39.23) and trembles with excitement (39.24). Once again, the role of the human is inconsequential. Violence is certainly central to the scene, indeed violence and chaos are integral to the created order; however, the horse is depicted participating blindly in the battle, unaware and uncaring if the violence is justified. Job is here shown the type of violence and the same type of senseless battle into which he felt himself thrown, one in which the moral position of the participants will not influence the outcome. While the horse, even the ostrich, lion, raven, hawk and eagle are a part of images of suffering and violence, it is a violence that is part of their existence in creation. It is a violence with which God is intimately aware, however it is not on account of retributive justice that these animals suffer or prosper. The language of creation is here used most effectively to show that the retributive order upheld by the friends is entirely inappropriate to describe the way in which the universe is governed. Like the violent images regarding the snow and hail that are set aside by God "for a day of war and battle" (38.22), this speech on the animals of creation does not defend or excuse violence, but rather shows that human attempts to explain or control violence are ineffective and suggestions that it finds its origin in human guilt are certainly erroneous.[73] Creation is not a predictable mechanism.

Furthermore, though these animals are presented as aggressive and a part of active violence, they are not portrayed as the wild and wicked "other" that Job has assumed all

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[72] Ibid.: 166.
[73] Ibid.: 170-71.

such beings are. The importance for Job to understand these animals as true subjects is revealed in a study performed by Othmar Keel.[74] He examines biblical and Near Eastern references to the specific pairs of animals in the divine speeches and finds that the animals mentioned in the divine speeches were all hunted by Near Eastern kings and therefore found in places outside of and beyond the human social sphere. Keel argues that there was a distinct sense of separation between the cultured and the wild, between the sphere of wild animals and the sphere of humans; by killing these animals that were seen as symbols of chaos, order could be restored to the community. Furthermore, as outside symbols of the wicked and chaotic, the wild animals, like the wild and deserted places where they dwelt, represented the "other" against which civilized and moral society defined itself.[75] Job himself said as much when he marked himself as one of the despised: a "brother to the jackals, companion of the ostriches" (30.29) and thus beyond the boundary of human contact. Their function in God's speech of ch 39 however is markedly different. Although the imagery of these animals includes violence and chaos, these animals are not presented as the despised "other." Instead, they are the recipients of divine providential care. Job, whose community was so sharply disengaged from the community of the wild for it was a form of wicked, is shown that these animals, the epitome of "other," are important subjects of contemplation.[76]

The wild ass is presented as just such a subject. Traditionally in biblical literature, the wild ass is the symbol of everything that is hostile and unsympathetic toward the human world of order. It is associated with ruined and abandoned cities (Isa 32.14) and

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[74] Othmar Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: Eine Deutung Von Ijob 38-41 Vor Dem Hintergrund Der Zeitgenössischen Bildkunst* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1978), 63-81.

[75] Ibid., 71-87. See above discussion regarding the use of animals of the wilderness in Job's initial lament, pages 33 ff.

[76] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 245.

Ishmael is called a "wild ass" because he is to live in a hostile relationship with the rest of

humanity (Gen. 16.12). For Job, the ass is a primary character in the wilderness (30.7),

synonymous with the outlaws and thieves that live in the wasteland (24.5) and therefore

symbolic of all that is opposed to human society and civility.[77] In the divine speeches, the

common characteristics of the wild ass are used: its home is the "salt-land" of the

"wilderness" (39.6), places traditionally considered uninhabitable places of punishment;

yet here they are the "home" and "dwelling-place" of the wild ass (39.6). Ironically, the

domesticated and cultured city is presented as the place of chaos and "tumult" (39.7).

God presents what Job could only understand as a place of exile and punishment as a

peaceful home and a place of freedom.[78]

In presenting these animals as important subjects, they are depicted living freely;

as we saw earlier, the wild ass and the wild ox stand at the centre of the chiastic poem as

beings that are free from the burden of human control. Both animals have equivalents in

human society, but the focus of this passage becomes the contrasting freedom

experienced by these animals compared to their domestic counterparts. The wild ass or

onager is set free, liberated from "bonds" (39.5) and "shouts of the driver" (39.7). The

poem of the wild ox that follows presents the subject in the opposite manner and mocks

Job's understanding of domestication. God challenges Job to attempt to domesticate and

dominate the animal, "hold the wild ox by ropes to the furrow" (39.10), and asks whether

Job could "trust" the domesticated wild ox as he would trust a dependable servant to

"bring in the seed and gather it in from your threshing floor" (39.12).[79] Job once had

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[77] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 610.
[78] Ibid.
[79] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 546.

servants that he claimed to treat well (cf. 31.13-15),[80] yet as God's speeches make clear, the core of this relationship is based on domination. These themes of social domination and segregation that were characteristic of Job's relationship in his former life, are here argued against.

A similar example of freedom is the ostrich, which for Job is associated with mourning and isolation (Job 30.31) but is here in the divine speech the image of pure mindless joy (39.39).[81] To be sure, the ostrich is the absence of "wisdom" and "understanding" (39.17), terms associated with order in creation (Prov 3.19-20). Yet even though "God deprived her of wisdom" (39.17), and her young are sure to be "trampled by a wild beast" (39.15), she is nevertheless given speech in the form of laughter. God does not offer an explanation for the seeming absurdity of the ostrich; she is presented as beating her wings gladly and laughing "at the horse and its rider" having been given freedom in a land otherwise hostile to human existence (39.18).[82] Once again, just as God's presentation of the sea, rain, desert and darkness do not conform with Job's understanding of the universe, God's challenging questions to Job do not present the animals in a way that might be expected.

When speaking of the lion, God does not speak of his ferocity, rather the poem speaks of the lion's dependency on God to "satisfy the appetite of the king of beasts"

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[80] Neville argues that Job's willingness to listen to his servants' complaints is not a novel or revolutionary ethic regarding the treatment of his servants. The fact that he hears and answers their grievances does not suggest that he believed in the fundamental equality of all humans, but rather that his as members of his household, he was obliged to provide them with protection. See further, Richard W. Neville, "A Reassessment of the Radical Nature of Job's Ethic in Job Xxxi 13-15," *Vetus Testamentum* 53, no. 2 (2003): 181-200.

[81] Walker-Jones argues that the *hapax* רְנָנִים is better translated as "sand-grouse" rather than "ostrich" as is common in most commentaries, arguing that the context of the passage suggests such an identification. As there is no textual support for this translation in either the manuscripts or the Greek translations, the translation of "ostrich" is maintained here. See further, A. Walker-Jones, "The So-Called Ostrich in the God Speeches of the Book of Job (Job 39,13-18)," *Biblica* 86, no. 4 (2005): 494-510.

[82] Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations*, 247.

(38.39). For Job and his friends, lions are compared to the wicked (cf 4.10-11). The destructive nature of these creatures should, through the logic of divine retribution, lead to their defeat. However, God contradicts this by giving focus to the lion as a centre of meaning and value and therein renders the lion as a true subject worthy of divine care. Thus the wilderness proves to be a home to creatures of dependence and resourcefulness, and of creatures with wisdom and those without. Animals previously associated with fear and chaos are shown to be recipients of divine care and dignity. [83]

In compelling Job to consider these animals as genuine fellow creatures, God is exercising Job's imagination to the fullest. As was shown in the chiastic structure of the passage, humankind is hardly a part of the progression except to train the war horse in order that he might be killed in war and serve as part of the food chain.[84] Violence is a part of the universe, certainly. But the forces behind the violence and generating powers of the universe are not based on humanly constructed categories of justice; in this is the realization that humans are not central to the universe. Whereas the starting point for Job was decidedly anthropocentric: he looked to his familial and social world to understand how the universe is ordered, the moral horizon presented by the divine speeches is nothing less than the farthest reaches of the cosmos and the desolate planes of the wilderness where outcast creatures of the wilderness and chaos are creatures of dignity and dependence. The contrast is striking and the necessity of an extended moral horizon is acutely drawn by God. Once Job looks beyond his limited worldview and understands that hierarchies and strict legal and moral categories are not sufficient for understanding the universe, he is able to see how God's design does in fact speak to the questions he had

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[83] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 23.
[84] Miller, "Structure and Meaning of the Animal Discourse in the Theophany of Job (38:39-39:30)," 421.

of justice in the universe. Just as Job is brought on a rapid tour of the cosmos to see how

it functions though divine benevolence, the animals are brought to Job in order for Job "to

see" what they see.[85] Job is faced with a worldview that is essentially different from his

dichotomous understanding of the righteous and the wicked, the cultured and the wild.

Though there is no retributive action in the way the universe is designed, God shows Job

that the world is intimately related. It is not connected in a deterministic way, but in a

way that allows for both order and disorder to participate in the formation of a

community. Community and the aspect of nurturing are far more pervasive than Job

initially imagined.[86]

Tsevat argues that there is no evidence of divine justice in the book of Job and that

this absence renders the universe as "amoral."[87] However, it is not that creation is amoral

or non-moral, it is that justice and morality are not understood in terms of retributive

justice. Far from merely suggesting that the universe does not operate under the rules of

retributive justice, Job is asked to accept these metaphorical images as a model after

which his life and actions are intended to be patterned.[88] The questions posed by Yahweh

are reminiscent of a journey and thus imitate Job's journey towards a new worldview:

"Have you walked...seen...cut a path..." (38.16, 22, 25). Before this, Job was incapable

of viewing the world in such a way. Now he is given access to this omniscient standpoint

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[85] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 365.

[86] Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament : A Relational Theology of Creation*, 245-46.

[87] Matitiahu Tsevat, *The Meaning of the Book of Job and Other Biblical Studies : Essays on the Literature and Religion of the Hebrew Bible* (New York; Dallas: Ktav Publishing House; Institute for Jewish Studies, 1980), 30.

[88] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 10. Though Clines agrees with Tsevat and argues that there is no evidence of justice in the book of Job, he further maintains that this does not mean that the universe is atheistic or immoral. Rather, God is not responsible for maintaining moral justice; justice can be upheld and maintained at the human level. It is a human, not a divine responsibility. See further, Clines, "Does the Book of Job Suggest That Suffering Is Not a Problem?," 102. It seems however that his reference to "moral justice" does in fact align with "retributive justice," in which case the position adopted above is still valid.

and is invited to view the vast reaches of the world, opening and broadening his horizon.[89]

This idea of community provides the basis for understanding how the divine speeches employ metaphorical language to establish a new model of justice for Job. Within this creation, all things are intimately connected and equally under divine care. If animals like the raven, ostracised in the hostile environment of the wilderness, are under God's care, than Job, in a similar state of abandonment, is also under God's protection. Furthermore, these creatures that were only understood as the "other," outcast and ignored, are shown to be a fruitful community capable of support, particularly in times of suffering. In God's view of the world there are no outsiders. All are worthy of receiving comfort and all are capable of reciprocating it; all parts of nature affect and can be affected by other parts of nature. And, as God's appearance in the storm confirmed, God is concretely a part of the world which He values, for He is found continuously acting in it.

The realization of creational interdependence reveals that God's design of the universe does in fact expose a system of justice, for if there is intrinsic value in the universe, than the universe can be the source of values.[90] God's affirmation of all creatures and parts of creation as well as God's continuous involvement and connection to all parts of creation, including those of violence and chaos, reveals that the creation is essentially right and good. The justice in this creation is founded on the mutual participation in a universe that is known to be good and orderly and serving a common purpose. This justice is not predicated on the expulsion of wicked or evil, but, through an

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[89] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 342-44.
[90] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 16-17.

integrated and mutually dependent community, chaos is continuously suppressed and the

wicked in the community are exposed in order that they might recover *within* the

community. The wicked are "shaken out" each morning, not to ensure that they receive

just punishment, but so that the community can re-integrate them in order that they might

regain their footing. By the process of continuing the interconnected and relational

patterns set out and upheld by God, justice is evident and upheld in the community.[91]

However, this creation continues to be good only so long as God allows it to be

what it was designed to do and be. If justice in creation is based on the notion of

creaturely freedom and interconnectedness then this implies that all creatures and aspects

of creation are capable of affecting other aspects. This indicates that safety and

protection of righteous human beings is *not* guaranteed. God's committed relationship

with the world does not imply that he will intervene, but that he will uphold the structure

that is inherently good. God is not bound to mechanically respond with rewards and

punishments, but to the basic structures of creation by limiting the forces of chaos. This

relationship implies that God does not act with complete freedom, but from within a

commitment that guarantees reliability and stability.[92]

The idea of creational and divine interconnectedness also serves to encourage the

re-evaluation of the primacy of how justice is to be valued.[93] Clines rightly points out

while Job pursues and values justice above all else, the divine speeches put forward a

number of competing principles that are equally, if not more, important.[94] If the theme of

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[91] Ibid.: 19-21.

[92] Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament : A Relational Theology of Creation*, 244-45.

[93] Clines, "Does the Book of Job Suggest That Suffering Is Not a Problem?," 103.

[94] Ibid. Although Clines does not explicitly highlight what these alternative values might be, he notes British philosopher Stuart Hampshire who argues for the primacy of the principle of "hearing the case of the other side" which Clines also briefly suggests is well illustrated in the book of Job. See, Clines, "Does the Book of Job Suggest That Suffering Is Not a Problem?," 103 n. 38.

creational interdependence is understood to be indicative of an additional value by which to understand and participate in the world, then the divine speeches can be understood as promoting the importance of a new relationship with God and creation, one based on the mutuality and empathy. As the use of rhetorical questioning suggests through the "circle of knowing," Job was already aware of this knowledge, he only had to engage it correctly.

Job's First Response

Job's response to this first speech is one of submission. He identifies himself as small, the opposite honourable (כבד): "See, I am of small worth" (הֵן קַלֹּתִי) (40.4). He does not confess to any wrong-doing, or renew his challenge to God, but submits to the ideas in God's speeches.[95] By equating himself with that which is small, he engages in an act of self-humiliation and then goes farther to "clap my hand to my mouth" (40.4), a gesture that is reserved as a sign of respect for elders in the community, a gesture that Job himself was the recipient of at one time.[96] Job, who saw himself as a "king among his troops" (29.25), ready to stand before God with "an account of my steps" (31.37) is here admitting that God is indeed the greater power, and that such a pursuit was inappropriate.[97]

Yet, as we will soon see, God's actions are not meant to silence Job, for Job does speak again.[98] The speeches are intended for him to reorient his worldview by providing him with a new vision of God's design (עֵצָה) and then offering him a new model for

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[95] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 549.

[96] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 613. Janzen shows that there is ambiguity in Job's response, for הֵן, used to introduce his response, can also mean "if" indicating that Job's answer is merely supposing he can not answer (39.4a), and then resigns to retain his original opinions, this time in silence (39.4b). See further, Janzen, *Job*, 243.

[97] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 549.

[98] Samuel E. Balentine, "'What Are Human Beings, That You Make So Much of Them?' Divine Disclosure from the Whirlwind : 'Look at Behemoth'," in *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann*, ed. Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 1998), 274.

understanding how justice (מִשְׁפָּט) is a part of this universe and is intended to be practised.

Just as the first speech used the animals to convey the existence of chaos and the

importance of empathy towards outcast creatures and areas associated with otherness and

chaos, the second speech focuses in on two creatures to develop these ideas further and to

show that God is not merely concerned with the civilized world of humans, but with the

wild and untamed parts of creation – animate and inanimate. God is present and

connected in all parts of the universe, guaranteeing that he is present in all times and

places of creation. As Scholnick points out, מִשְׁפָּט in Job is not properly understood if it is

only understood as a judicial category. For God, it has to do with ruling.[99] When God

exercises מִשְׁפָּט it is not only His right as ruler and a sign of His complete control, but also

a sign that He is intimately aware and connected with every part of His creation.

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[99] Scholnick, "The Meaning of Mispat in the Book of Job," 523.

IV

God's Answer Continues

The Second Divine Speech: Job 40.6-41.26

Although Job has just clapped his hand to his mouth as a sign of self-humiliation and acknowledgement of God's far greater power, the speech from the whirlwind does not end. After asking a multitude of questions, God refuses to accept Job's submission and his promise not to speak again remains unacknowledged as God continues His speech (Job 40-41) regarding His creation. This time, however, the format changes. While in 38.2-3 God asks Job the theme setting question first and then challenges Job to prepare himself second, here in 40.7-8 the order of the question and challenge is reversed. Using the same command given in 38.3, God first orders Job to "Gird your loins like a man; I will ask, and you will inform Me" (40.7) and then asks Job the theme setting question second. By first issuing the order for Job to pull himself together, God rejects Job's attempt to be silent and submit. What follows is the question that provides the rhetorical platform for the rest of the speech: "Would you impugn My justice (מִשְׁפָּט)?" (40.8a).[1]

The subject matter has now moved from discussion of God's cosmic design (עֵצָה), which Job had understood to be entirely chaotic, to the subject of justice (מִשְׁפָּט), Job's issue being that he had been deprived of litigation (מִשְׁפָּט) (27.2). In the context of the divine speeches, justice encompasses far more than Job's juridical understanding insofar as it also includes the notion of divine governance and is not limited to the rigid laws of

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[1] Edwin M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990), 353.

retribution.[2] The question that follows in 40.8b highlights how inappropriate Job's definition of justice is when considering divine מִשְׁפָּט: "Would you condemn Me that you may be right?" (42.8b). This question points to the inherent flaw in Job's way of thinking: in order for Job and his understanding of מִשְׁפָּט to hold true, one of the two players, Job or God, must be right and the other must be wrong. This does not dismiss Job's charge that God must be unjust (cf. 27.5), for this challenge is directly taken up by God when he dares Job to prove divine guilt. By locating the conflict in their relationship in the same arena of justice that Job understands and upholds, God challenges Job to preserve his simple juridical system of right and wrong in order to prove his own innocence. But the setting is no longer Job's home and social community: by extending the challenge to exercise justice at the cosmic level, God moves the definition of justice away from its strict forensic sense and into one of divine governance.[3]

At the outset then, Job's legal paradigm is shown to be insufficient in understanding the מִשְׁפָּט of the universe, for it is not a simple system based on righteousness and wickedness. מִשְׁפָּט, when extended to the level of cosmic governance, is far more complex. Job is nevertheless presented with a challenge to assume control of divine rule. If Job is to continue to accuse God of misrule, the offer is then to take up the throne and manage the universe under the law of exact retribution, as Job would have the universe run. In the details of this challenge, Job, who declared himself the enemy of God currently under attack (16.9-14), is given the following challenge: "Have you an arm

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[2] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 562. Good argues for מִשְׁפָּט in 40.8a to be translated as "order," as a way of including "order," "custom" and "justice" and "judgment" under a single heading. See further, Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 353. However, it seems appropriate to retain the reading as "justice" since what follows in 40.8b is a statement outlining the flaw in Job's understanding of justice: the need to "declare guilty" (תַּרְשִׁיעֵנִי) (cf. 9.20, 10.2), and "declare innocent" (תִּצְדָּק) (cf. 9.15, 20).
[3] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 562.

(זְרוֹעַ) like God's? Can you thunder (בְקוֹל) with a voice like His?" (40.9). For Job, the "arms" of his friends were powerless and failed to deliver him (26.2), and so here he is challenged to prove his own arm is strong enough, carrying the strength and power of a god in order to administer the universe justly. In the Psalmic tradition, the arm (זְרוֹעַ) of God is often a symbol of God's power and fair rule (Ps. 89.14).[4] Terms such as strong arm (זְרוֹעַ) and thunder (בְקוֹל) are also used in the description of the storm god who exacts judgment through battle with forces of chaos. This process implicitly refers to divine justice, for it is through defeating the enemies of chaos that creation is renewed and God's reign over the earth is established. Job is being challenged to prove he has equal capabilities; without question God possesses sole power to conquer such an enemy.[5]

The tone moves to one of taunt and irony as God commands Job to put on royal garments of splendour, to "Deck yourself now with grandeur and eminence; Clothe yourself in glory and majesty" (40.10).[6] Terms of "majesty" (גָּאוֹן) and "grandeur" (הוֹד) are typical symbols of divine authority and sovereignty (Isa 24.14; Ps. 96.6), an authority that Job is tauntingly told he does not have.[7] Furthermore, following the use of terms characteristic of a storm god, the command for Job to "clothe" himself is similar to mythic accounts where enthronement and other ritual practices typically follow the defeat of monsters of chaos. Job is not only asked if he has the strength, but is also challenged to assume the royal role to administer justice as he sees fit. Since Job wants to suggest that his own ideas of just rule are preferable and he implicitly argues for God to abdicate

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[4] Ibid., 562-63.

[5] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 219-20.

[6] Ibid., 218.

[7] J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "Return to the Problems of Behemoth and Leviathan," *Vetus Testamentum* 25, no. 1 (1975): 5. Wilson goes on to argue that Job does take up the role of a god. The speech of the Behemoth is Job's temporary attempt to act as a creator god, and the speech regarding the Leviathan reveals his attempt to be a hero god. Job fails at these equally absurd tasks, a factor which the author intends to highlight.

His throne, then he must prove he is capable of assuming the throne, being equipped with the power necessary to defeat chaos.[8]

While it is clearly unfair to present such a challenge to a man in agony sitting in mourning on an ash heap,[9] the purpose of this challenge is not solely to humiliate Job into realizing his own limitations or to reveal the obvious power disparity between Job and God, something which Job himself has acknowledged all along. Rather, it denies the fact that Job's innocence is contingent on God's guilt. Justice, in the context of divine rule, has to do with maintaining the order of creation, and the structures that support life.[10]

Behemoth and Leviathan: The Boundary between Real and Mythic

With the challenge of cosmic governance in place, God introduces Job to two giant creatures, the Behemoth and the Leviathan, whose description take up the remainder of the divine speech.[11] The precise identity of these two creatures has been the subject of some debate: some scholars such as G.R. Driver associate these creatures with real animals such as the hippopotamus and the crocodile,[12] while others argue that they do not correspond with any known type of real animal and are instead representations of ancient mythical monsters. Bernard F. Batto suggests that they are representative of two

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[8] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 220.

[9] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 563.

[10] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 219.

[11] The authenticity of this speech has been called into question: commentators such as Driver and Gray claim that Job's answer in 40.4b releases God from further comment since Job has abandoned his case. While they agree that there is a fresh subject introduced in the second speech, they argue that it does not retain a distinct purpose. Linguistic and stylistic differences between this speech and the remaining portions of the book also suggest that it is secondary: the description of the two beasts is considerably longer than the previous animal accounts and the rhetorical style of questioning so prominent in the first divine speech is used in the second speech to a much lesser degree. See further, S. R. and George Buchanan Gray Driver, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job, Together with a New Translation*, vol. 18, *International Critical Commentary on the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.* (New York: Scribner, 1921), 351-52.

[12] Ibid., 352-53. See also, Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job*, 301.

traditional chaos monsters, the dry wasteland and the unformed ocean;[13] whereas Pope

argues that the Leviathan of Job should be associated with the Ugaritic seven-headed

dragon.[14] Claiming this as an "either/or" situation, seems to misread the purpose of this

speech, for the language used of the Behemoth and the Leviathan describe them both as

terrifying monsters *and* as part of the created realm. The Behemoth (בְּהֵמוֹת) means

literally "Beast," "animal" or "cattle," but as a proper name means "great beast."[15] It is

similar to the hippopotamus in that it "eats grass" (40.15), is exceptionally strong (40.16)

and would likely be found lying in the lotuses and willows of the swamp seeking shade

and comfort while water rushes past (40.21-13). But the hippopotamus does not have

thighs that are "knit together" (40.17) or bones "like tubes of bronze" and "limbs like iron

rods" (40.18).[16]

Similarly, the Leviathan is described in ways that resemble a crocodile: it has

"barred teeth" that inspire terror and its "protective scales [that]...are interlocked so they

cannot be parted" (41.7-9) resemble the back of a crocodile. However, the "depths" of

the "sea" (41.23) are not a likely habitat for a crocodile; nor is a crocodile prone to have

"Firebrands stream from its mouth" (41.11). In fact, unlike the Behemoth who does not

have a known equivalent mythic counterpart, the Leviathan is known in several Canaanite

and Israelite traditions as a cosmic enemy of God and it is unlikely that a description that

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[13] Bernard Frank Batto, *Slaying the Dragon : Mythmaking in the Biblical Tradition* (Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1992), 47-48.

[14] Pope, *Job*, 277.

[15] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 222.

[16] Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 358.

invokes images of a creature with a fire-breathing mouth would be associated otherwise.[17] As Alter points out, pinpointing these animals as either mythical or natural creatures misses the poetic development of the divine speeches from the general example to the figurative and hyperbolic.[18] The first speech offers a catalogue of paired animals, the tame counterpart of which was perhaps a part of daily ancient Israelite experience. The author then moves to two extraordinary animals that originate from the banks of the Nile, likely beyond the experience of any Israelite audience, including Job. Furthermore, the distinction between reality and mythology may not have been as distinct as it is to the modern. The fact that exotic animals were not easily observed or accessed, might account for the fact that larger-than life qualities were ascribed to them. What could not be easily observed could be exaggerated: the lines between what was real and mythical might have been easily blurred.[19]

This play on boundaries between the mythic and the real has further significance, for in the previous chapter 39, the pairs of animals that are presented are all symbolic of the boundaries between cultured and wild and thereby serve as examples of the beauty and dignity of the "other." While this aspect of the theme in the first speech might have gone unnoticed by Job, the use of created and of mythic language in chapters 40-42 suggests that these creatures reside on the boundary of real and fantasy in order to present the realm of the chaotic as the extreme "other" in detail.[20] The paired animals of the first

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[17] In the book of Isaiah the chaotic force of the "Leviathan," the "twisting Serpent" or "Dragon of the Sea" (Is. 27.1) is slain by God in the final days, thus terminating the forces of chaos in the universe. So too, the Leviathan is one of the primordial forces of chaos in the Psalmic tradition whose multiple heads God "crushes" at the beginning of time (Ps. 74.14). In Psalm 104 the Leviathan appears as a tamed water toy of the deity, accompanying the ships of the sea but still a creature "that You formed to sport with" (Ps. 104.26). See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 558-61.
[18] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 107.
[19] Ibid.
[20] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 22-23.

speech that are used to confront Job's understanding of the created order are matched in mythic proportions in the second speech in order to contradict traditional expectations: divine praise is attributed to both creatures and pride is a pleasing attribute. What then becomes significant to note is that the Behemoth and Leviathan *are* a part of the created order: the Behemoth is the one "whom I made" (40.15) and the Leviathan is "made as he is without fear" (41.25) to be "king over all proud beasts" (41.26). The poet plays with these creatures of enormous size and primordial origins to sharply draw Job's attention and provide Job with a larger than life demonstration of divine justice through descriptions of power and beauty, praise and pride.

Divine Justice and Creatures of Power and Beauty, Praise and Pride

The first of the two monsters of chaos, the Behemoth, is the recipient of unequalled power within God's creation, therein deserving of divine praise: "He is the first of God's works; Only his Maker can draw the sword against him" (40.19). Habel cites 40.19b as evidence that Behemoth represents chaos[21] that is created,[22] then conquered and controlled. He reads this passage as a prelude to God's subjugation of the

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[21] Evidence for this begins in the first half of the verse where the Behemoth is called the "first (רֵאשִׁית) of God's works." "First" (רֵאשִׁית) has a temporal meaning, as in the "earliest created," and a meaning of primacy, as in the "best in creation." See further, Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 362. Perdue argues that this attribute of Behemoth echoes the description of Woman Wisdom in Proverbs 8.22, while still maintaining that it is chronologically prior to Wisdom and therefore the first of God's creation. See further, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 222. Habel, on the other hand, distinguishes between Wisdom as the first *principle* that is acquired in the process of "making" the created order, and the Behemoth as the first created *design*. See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 566.

[22] The claim that the Behemoth, as a representation of chaos, is created by God suggests that God creates evil. A similar claim is found in Isaiah 45.7 where God is said to "form light and create darkness, I make weal and create woe." Fishbane argues this passage presents Yahweh as the one and only God who formed the primordial chaos. This passage then argues against cosmological dualism by saying that primordial matter never existed previously as an unformed chaos. See further, Michael A. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* (New York: Oxford Univ Pr, 1985), 325. Deroche argues that Is 45.7 does not contain any idea about the cosmos not already found in the Hebrew Bible, namely that the cosmos is binary in structure (light and dark of the physical world; well-being and evil of the ethical world) and that the verse rather points to Yahweh's control of events shaping the world. See further, Michael DeRoche, "Isaiah Xlv 7 and the Creation of Chaos," *Vetus Testamentum* 42, no. 1 (1992): 20-21.

monster in 40.24, an act that underscores the fact that Job can not hope to conquer such

an animal. While the subjugation of chaos is certainly alluded to in 40.19b, the verse

literally reads, "His Maker brings near (יַגֵּשׁ) his sword." With this translation it is clearer

how the Hebrew leaves ambiguous the identity of the one that holds the sword, and

allows for the possibility that the sword belongs to the Behemoth, given to him by God to

indicate his dominance over the other animals.[23] Job 40.24, which is also cited as

evidence of God's subjugation of chaos and enmity between God and the Behemoth,[24] is

a misreading of the text. God does not slay or destroy the animal. God *can* take him "by

his eyes" and can pierce "his nose with hooks" (40.24), *but does necessarily do this.* As

O'Connor points out, "If the ancient combat myth of creation lurks here, it has been

seriously defanged,"[25] for the passage does not present God engaging the animal in the

battle. The Behemoth possesses great power, but a conflict of power between God and

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[23] E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (London: Nelson, 1967), 621. Furthermore, the consonants of הָעֹשׂוֹ suggest that the word is "made," not "his maker." With the emendation of יַגֵּשׁ to נִגַּשׁ, the phrase can read "made to dominate his companions." The text is nevertheless similarly understood without the emendations, but the possibility does caution against interpreting the passage as an account of the *Chaoskampf.* See further, Newsom, "The Book of Job," 619.

[24] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 566-68. Habel advocates such a reading and presents 40.24 as evidence of God defeating and subjugating the Behemoth, as in a chaos battle myth. His translation reads: "El takes him by the mouth with rings, He pierces his nose with hooks." To come to this translation Habel takes אֵל־פִּיהוּ from verse 23 to serve as subject of verse 24. What is generally translated as a rhetorical question directed at Job, "Can he be taken by his eyes? Can his nose be pierced by hooks?" is then turned into a declarative statement in order shorten verse 24 so that it might adhere to expected metric pattern. To maintain expected parallelism he translates בְּעֵינָיו as "rings" instead of "eyes' in order to establish parallelism with "hooks," the other tool used to subdue Behemoth. See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 553-54. These emendations are not considered necessary as the text remains clear without them. Drawing on these allusions to the subjugation of chaos, Mettinger argues that the description of the Behemoth parallels an Egyptian chaos myth in order to present both the Behemoth and the Leviathan as enemies of chaos and struggle that God the creator must overcome and subdue. The overarching theme of justice is then addressed by first pointing out that Job would be totally unable to defeat this monster, and therefore even more unlikely to rule and administer justice in the universe. More importantly, for Mettinger, the passage defends God against the charge of being a criminal and presents him dealing with evil, not only threatening it with a sword, but defeating and holding it in check. Tryggve N. D. Mettinger, "The God of Job : Avenger, Tyrant, or Victor?," in *Voice from the Whirlwind : Interpreting the Book of Job*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon Pr, 1992), 45-47.

[25] Kathleen M. O'Connor, "Wild, Raging Creativity: The Scene in the Whirlwind," in *A God So Near: Essays on Old Testament Theology in Honor of Patrick D. Miller*, ed. Brent A. Strawn and Nancy R. Bowen (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 176.

the Behemoth is nowhere acted out: the Behemoth is a creature found peacefully grazing in the fields and lounging in the shade. He "lies down beneath the lotuses," (40.21), and as a peaceful herbivore, "He eats grass, like the cattle" (40.15).[26] What this description presents instead is even more problematic concept for Job. The fact is that the Behemoth, as part of the collective wicked and chaotic in the universe, is not eliminated; rather, he is kept under control. Strikingly, this giant monster is the recipient of divine praise and is considered beautiful and peaceful within creation.

The physical strength of the Behemoth is affirmed by comparing his bones to "tubes of bronze" and his limbs to "iron rods" (40.18). This is then set as a compliment to his sexual power which is described as strength "in his loins," mighty "muscles of his belly" (40.16) and perhaps more playfully stated in the euphemistic phrase, "He makes his tail stand up like a cedar" (40.17).[27] While these parallels echo the strength and procreative powers of the list of animals in chapter 39,[28] it is nevertheless praise of chaos, which would normally be considered idolatrous.[29] All the same, praise of the Behemoth serves to undermine the Deuteronomistic theory of retribution as being central to universal governance, and the theory of the friends' as being unequivocally correct.[30]

Themes of power and dominance expressed in terms of combat metaphors as well as the praise of chaos and the beauty of this creation continues with the Leviathan. A hunting metaphor bridges the description of the Behemoth and Leviathan: "Can you draw out Leviathan by a fishhook? Can you press down his tongue by a rope (חֶבֶל)?" (40.25). The combat metaphor this time introduces an animal that is of even greater strength more

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[26] Ibid.
[27] Habel suggests that "tail" is a euphemism for "penis." Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 553.
[28] Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 108.
[29] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 226.
[30] Ibid.

capable of resisting capture than the Behemoth, the theme being again the fact that Job

could not hope to tame, let alone capture or defeat this beast. Keel shows that according

to iconographic images, ropes or chords (חֶבֶל) were used in the hunt and capture of the

hippopotamus, and Herodotus reports that crocodiles were captured by baiting hooks with

meat.[31] A "hook" (חַח), closely related to the "fishhook" (חַכָּה) used in Job 40.25, is

described by Ezekiel 29.4 as catching the dragon Tannin: "I will put hooks (חַחִיים) in your

jaws," from the depths of the Nile.[32] The use of a rope to capture the Leviathan seems to

suggest that capture and control of the animal, not a kill, is intended by this hunt. This

parallel to the suggested capture of the Behemoth raises again the question whether Job

has an "arm" like El's capable of defeating chaos. That Job is incapable of doing such a

thing is made explicit in 40.32: "Lay a hand on him, And you will never think of battle

again."[33]

Description of the power of the Leviathan continues in the speech: Job could not

hope to have the Leviathan "make an agreement" to become his slave (40.28), or have the

Leviathan "plead with you at length" (40.7) for his freedom. As to the extent of the

Leviathan's power, there is contest over how to understand 41.2. Gordis argues for the

translation, "No one is fierce enough to stir him up, and who can stand up to him in

battle?" in order to highlight the unequalled strength of the Leviathan and the

impossibility of a man such as Job standing against the crocodile or mythical monster.[34]

Rowold argues for an alternative reading, "Is he not fierce when one arouses him? Yet

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[31] Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: Eine Deutung Von Ijob 38-41 Vor Dem Hintergrund Der Zeitgenössischen Bildkunst*, 134-42.

[32] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 569.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Gordis concludes the phrase: "Who has confronted him and emerged unscathed? Under all the heavens there is no one!" (41.2-3) See further, Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job*, 303. This translation follows the Mss in reading "stand against him" as a third-person reference; however, the text of 41.2 is in first person speech, making this first-person reference likely.

who is he that he will take his stand over against Me?" (41.2).[35] Beginning with the

translation of 41.2a, Rowold argues that the import of this passage is found in the fact that

the Leviathan serves as a comparison point for God: if Job can not stand against the

Leviathan, how much less would he be able to stand against God. By using the verb

"rouse" (יְעוּרֶנּוּ) as part of the comparison, this passage recalls Job's initial lament wherein

he calls for those that curse the day and rouse (עוּר) the Leviathan to come to his aid and

assist him in reversing the act of creation (3.8). With the Leviathan as a point of

comparison, along with the intertextual reference, this passage has a twofold purpose.

First, it responds to Job's cry by placing him before this powerful creature and

challenging Job to exercise his power and defeat the forces of chaos. Second, by

addressing the relationship between Leviathan and God, it demonstrates that the

Leviathan exists inside and not outside of God's control, a point confirmed by the second

half of the passage, 41.2b-3.[36]

Job 41.2b confirms the status of the Leviathan as one under God's control by

asking, "Who is this (וּמִי הוּא) that can stand up to Me (לְפָנַי יִתְיַצָּב)?" (41.2b). Again,

intertextual relationships suggest that there is more happening here than pointing out

Job's weakness and God and Leviathan's strength. Though Job remained "terrified at His

presence (מִפָּנָיו)" (literally "His face") (23.15), he remains insistent in his wish to find

where God resides in order to confront Him and present his case before Him, or literally

"to His face" (לְפָנָיו) (23.4). Asking in 41.2b how Job can stand up to God's "face" if he

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[35] Henry Rowold, "Mī Hū' - Lī Hū' : Leviathan and Job in Job 41:2-3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no. 1 (1986): 104.

[36] Ibid.: 105-06.

cannot do the same to the Leviathan, recalls Job's request to present his case before God.[37]

As well, 41.2b echoes the thematic question God raises at the outset of the divine speeches: "Who is this (מִי זֶה) that darkens counsel/plan (עֵצָה)?" (38.2). 41.2b then asks this same question of the entire creation, and by implication, Job and Leviathan, thereby juxtaposing the two members of His creation that would stand up against God.[38] The question is asked again in 41.3 in a way that parallels the previous "Who is this" in verse 41.2b and heightens the tension between God and His creatures, "Whoever confronts Me (הִקְדִּימַנִי) I will require" (41.3). The use of "confronts me" (הִקְדִּימַנִי) retains a forensic context laid out by Job who wanted to "approach" or "draw near" (אֲקָרֲבֶנּוּ) to his opponent at law and present his case (31.37).[39] To these forensic questions God answers in a way that significantly addresses Job's case and questions of justice: "For everything under the heavens is Mine!" (41.3). Here, God is affirming His control over creation and in doing so speaks directly to the issue of divine justice. The Leviathan is introduced as the quintessential example of what it is to be powerful and fierce, strong enough to attempt a stand against God. But contra Job's claim that the Leviathan operates outside of God's realm and therefore needs to be summoned (3.8), the Leviathan and Job are together under the jurisdiction of God's creation. Though its methods are not explicit, God's ultimate governance over the universe is certain.[40]

It should be noted again, that what characterizes this speech is not a sense of direct conflict, but of direct praise. As was seen in the speech regarding the Behemoth, God

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[37] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 570-71.

[38] Rowold, "Mī Hū' - Lī Hū' : Leviathan and Job in Job 41:2-3," 106-07.

[39] Here following Habel's translation and understanding of אֲקָרֲבֶנּוּ. See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 571.

[40] Rowold, "Mī Hū' - Lī Hū' : Leviathan and Job in Job 41:2-3," 107-09.

does not attempt to control or contain the Leviathan. The Leviathan is clearly under God's jurisdiction, and in the verse following the affirmation of God's universal authority and the Leviathan's ferocity and boldness in confronting God, God affirms, in what is perhaps the most provocative part of this speech, that he is pleased with the Leviathan. While Perdue translates 41.4 as "I will not keep silent about his limbs,"[41] Newsom translates: "I will not silence his boasting (בַּדָּיו)."[42] Though this verse is difficult to translate, it appears that God is offering the Leviathan praise. The Leviathan is permitted to boast under the heavens and is confined therein, but his pride is not demeaned: God too takes pride in the features that the Leviathan flaunts.

The occurrence of pride at this juncture in the divine speech is significant in that it is intimately connected with the Leviathan's power. The theme of pride begins when Job is challenged to bring down the proud and crush the wicked: "Scatter wide your raging anger; See every proud man and bring him low. See every proud man and humble him, and bring them down where they stand" (40.11-12). Hebrew terms for pride (גֵּאָה) are often related to, or derive from terms used for height or "rise up" (גָּאָה).[43] It can have positive associations, such as the powerful waves that are set behind closed doors (38.11). Literally, the waves are described as being high (גָּאוֹן), a term that is rendered as "surging"[44] or "majestic."[45] But it also has negative connotations: Job believes God's

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[41] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 227.

[42] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 623. She is here reading בַּדָּיו with Pope as "his boasting." Pope, *Job*, 283. This reading follows the use of בַּדָּיו in 26.6, 44.25 etc. where it is understood as boasting or haughtiness. While Pope and Habel translate this as Yahweh *silencing* the Leviathan: "Did I not silence his boasting?" the passage also allows for a declarative statement as it is not marked as a question in the text. See further, Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 551.

[43] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 616.

[44] Cf. *The Jewish Study Bible : Jewish Publication Society Tanakh Translation*.

[45] For further possibilities, see Francis Brown, S. R. Driver and C. Briggs, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic* (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 2003), 144-45.

practice of hunting Job like a lion is something God is surely "proud of" (גָּאָה) (10.16). In

the second divine speech it is the "proud" (גֵּאֶה) whom God challenges Job to defeat, "See

every proud man and bring him low. See every proud man and humble him, and bring

them down where they stand" (41.11-12), in order to enact the retributive justice that Job

values. The act of bringing the proud (גֵּאֶה) "low" (כָּנַע) is to literally make them the

opposite of anything high. Pride is not strictly positive or negative, but is a quality

appropriate within proper limits: those who are thought to be too "high," will be "abased"

(41.12).[46] As an attribute of God, it is something worthy of praise: "Ascribe might to

God, whose majesty (גַּאֲוָה) is over Israel" (Ps. 68.35), but in humans it is acceptable only

to a certain extent. As monsters of chaos, the Behemoth and Leviathan are then presented

as the ultimate example of pride and power that Job cannot hope to overcome or control,

whether under his own power, or under the power of a god. Thinking of pride and power

in terms of limits is certainly contrary to Job's understanding of absolute retributive

theory. Yet even more counterintuitive, is that God does not subjugate these animals.

Like the description of the Behemoth, there is a noticeable lack of conflict between God

and the Leviathan. The animal of terror is also a prided creature of beauty and worthy of

praise.[47]

The Leviathan's body is graceful but well built: his jaws are described as "doors"

(41.6), so strong that they cannot be opened. It is compared to a suit of armour with

scales that "are interlocked so they cannot be parted" like a protective mail, so effective

that "His protective scales are his pride" (41.7).[48] From his face and protective shields,

the poet moves upwards to his neck, a source of strength and power (41.14), the underside

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[46] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 616.
[47] O'Connor, "Wild, Raging Creativity: The Scene in the Whirlwind," 177.
[48] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 230.

of which reveals "layers of flesh," that are nevertheless "cast hard" (41.15).[49] It is as though he is made of material stronger than metal; indeed, metal as a weapon against the Leviathan is ineffectual, "No sword that overtakes him can prevail, Nor spear, nor missile, nor lance. He regards iron as straw, Bronze, as rotted wood" (41.18-19). He remains unafraid of weapons of warfare; however, he is never described as an enemy in battle with God or the one to answer Job's wish to toss the world into blackness (cf. 3.8). He is the creature God designed to "play with...like a pet bird" (40.29), and as such is as harmless to God as the Behemoth who "watches all the beasts of the field play" (40.20).[50]

The final description of the Leviathan, once again resumed after cataloguing the weapons that are unsuccessful against him, is one of increasing beauty and decreasing violence as the transformation of the sea and shore is described as the Leviathan moves through them.[51] The fact that his home is in the deep (מְצוּלָה) and the sea (יָם) (41.23), as well as his capability of stirring up the deep "like a cauldron" again suggest he stands a symbol of the chaotic. The "ointment-pot" that is likened to the sea is an image suggesting disturbance, but not one of violence or danger (41.23). As Newsom points out, the diminutive nature of the pot leads into the image of the receding view of the Leviathan's wake as he swims away. The wake is "luminous" and leaves the "deep" (תְּהוֹם) that was previously considered chaotic, as peaceful and as non-violent as the "white-hared" (41.24).[52]

Through the process of describing the Leviathan in such careful detail, Job is once again forced to view the "other" in new light. Similar to his tour of the cosmos, the

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[49] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 624.
[50] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 573.
[51] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 624-25.
[52] Ibid., 625.

description of these animals brings Job into the presence of chaos and domination, freedom and pride in a categorically new manner. The way in which pride and domination are presented is deliberately confusing, for these qualities are at the same time praiseworthy and beautiful. First, God mocks Job for being so proud as to impugn his justice and then he celebrates the Leviathan as the one that "is king over all proud beasts" (41.26). In this speech the Leviathan is the proudest of the proud, the king of all kings in Yahweh's created world; however, the pride of the Leviathan is not associated with anything morally negative, and his governance is in no way aggressive. As king, the Leviathan ensures governance by towering above creation and appraising it: "He sees all" (41.26), and his gaze "like the glimmerings of dawn" (41.10) is sufficient. This is in contrast to Job who, at God's challenge, would govern the world with "raging anger" (41.11).[53] *By doing this the language of pride is taken out of its moralizing context and thrown into confusion.*[54] The Leviathan is not the symbol of the wicked that Job previously claimed him to be (3.8), nor is his pride deserving of negative implications. God's presentation of the universe that began with the cosmos and all its grandeur, moving to the animal kingdom and climaxing with the Leviathan, the beautiful and praiseworthy king of the proud, has effectively disrupted Job's moralizing context and his easy dichotomy between the wicked and the righteous.

Behemoth and Leviathan as a Paradoxical Key: A Model for Job

Job's worldview is tossed into turmoil, and this is not lessened by the paradoxical way in which the Leviathan and Behemoth offer Job a solution to his problem regarding divine justice. On the one hand the beasts are presented as the extreme and untouchable

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[53] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 372.
[54] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 25.

"other," placed in Job's immediate vicinity in order to show him a demoralized sense of pride and power. On the other hand, the divine speeches seem to compare Job to these archetypal creatures. Beginning with John G. Gammie, the Behemoth and the Leviathan have been understood as "mirrors" through which Job is invited to understand his own situation of suffering and questions of justice.[55] The first invitation to compare Job and the Behemoth comes in God's opening phrase regarding the massive animal: "Take now Behemoth, whom I made as I did you" (40.15). While this statement is generally understood as proof that the Behemoth must be a living creature, Gammie argues further that this provides Job with a challenge for Job to compare himself to the creature whose description follows.[56] Gammie then suggests that the statement that Behemoth as the "first of God's works" (40.19) responds to Job's claim that acts of subjugating Rahab (26.12) and creating the heavens with a sweeping breath (26.13) are "glimpses (קְצוֹת) of His rule." While it is here translated as "glimpses," קְצוֹת generally carries the meaning of "end," "far" or "remote," suggesting that these acts of creation are "far" removed from human ability to understand. In contrast, the Behemoth is presented as the closest, the "first" of God's creation and the major object lesson that Job is invited to consider.[57]

The clues that point to the Leviathan as an example for Job begin with Job's own words when he curses the day of his birth by attempting to rouse the Leviathan: "May those who cast spells upon the day damn it, those prepared to disable Leviathan" (3.8). The Leviathan is described in the divine speech as having no equal "on the land (עַל־עָפָר)"

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[55] John G. Gammie, "Behemoth and Leviathan : On the Didactic and Theological Significance of Job 40:15-41:26," in *Israelite Wisdom: Theological and Literary Essays in Honor of Samuel Terrien*, ed. John G. Gammie; Walter A. Brueggemann; W. Lee Humphreys and James M. Ward (Missoula: Scholars Pr, 1978), 217-31. Although Gammie argues that Behemoth and Leviathan must be understood as real and not mythical creatures for this argument to hold, the argument that the Behemoth and Leviathan have both mythical and earthly qualities allows for his comparisons between Job and these beings.
[56] Ibid., 221.
[57] Ibid., 221-22.

which can also be translated as "on the dust (עָפָר)" a phrase which seems to compare

Job's previous statement regarding his perception of God: "He has regarded me as clay, I

have become like dust (עָפָר) and ashes" (30.19). With this phrase in mind, Job seems to

be not only taunted by the fact that no one on earth can equal the Leviathan, let alone a

man of "dust and ashes" like Job, but also invited to make the comparison between

himself and the Leviathan.[58] Furthermore, the Leviathan is described in regal terms,

being the "king over all proud beasts" (41.26), a language similar to that which Job uses

to describe his status in the community as well as to describe the heights from which he

has fallen. Job speaks of kings (3.14; 12.18) and princes (29.9-10), comparing himself to

royalty in his final lament, first as the king ruling his people: "I decided their course and

presided over them; I lived like a king among his troops" (29.25), and again at the end of

the lament as a prince or commander, willing to offer up an account of his innocence,

"Offer it as to a commander" (31.37).[59]

To understand what is "mirrored" for Job by these two beasts, Gammie points to

the themes of pride and power in the divine speeches. Like the Behemoth where pursuit

of an enemy is alluded to: "Only his Maker can draw the sword against him" (40.19), Job

believes he is hunted by God (10.13-17; 16.7-11). But the better part of the speech is

reserved for praise of the Behemoth's ability to *withstand* forces of oppression (40.23), as

well as having strong powers of reproduction (41.16-17), two attributes that are ascribed

to Job. Job is unrelenting in his pursuit of a trial with God (31.35-37), and even though

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[58] Ibid., 224.
[59] Ibid., 224-25.

his family is killed and his friends abandon him, his willingness and ability to begin a

new family is what provides him with comfort (42.11-15).[60]

Balentine pushes the comparison between Job and the Behemoth further, arguing

that the description of the Behemoth as the "first" of the acts of God recalls Eliphaz's

rebuke that Job should compare himself to the "first man born" (15.7) because it implies a

royal, or even divine status comparable to Wisdom as the "first of His works of old"

(Prov 8.22). Yet the divine speeches seem to invite such a comparison with the

Behemoth, who is "made" as Job was made (40.15). As king, the Behemoth rules

peacefully: the mountains "yield him produce" (40.20), nature provides protection (40.22)

and animals play contentedly under his dominion (40.20). When under assault by the

forces of nature, the Behemoth is able to resist, confident "the stream will gush at his

command" (40.23). The Behemoth is then the example of what it is to stand before the

creator, complete with divine prerogative and the strength and ability to withstand

oppression. As such the Behemoth is an example of correct action in the universe that is

perhaps the "closest" to what humans are able to comprehend. As Balentine suggests,

when imitated, this example is closer to God's *intended* primordial, or "first," design for

creaturely existence, again, one that is "closer" than any other model in creation.[61]

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[60] Ibid., 222. Good argues that while the divine speeches do not provide a definitive answer regarding retribution or the existence of evil in the universe, the consolation and community of Job's family and friends does address the problem of evil, in that the community that they offer provides the comfort necessary to solve the alienation Job felt while enduring the time of suffering. See further, Edwin M. Good, "The Problem of Evil in the Book of Job," in *Voice from the Whirlwind : Interpreting the Book of Job*, ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin (Nashville: Abingdon Pr, 1992), 68-69.

[61] Samuel E. Balentine, ""What Are Human Beings, That You Make So Much of Them?" Divine Disclosure from the Whirlwind : "Look at Behemoth"," in *God in the Fray: A Tribute to Walter Brueggemann*, ed. Tod Linafelt and Timothy K. Beal (Minneapolis: Fortress Pr, 1998), 271.

As was discussed above, the Leviathan is also praised for his strength and power (41.4-24),[62] qualities that are particularly evident when considering what issues from the Leviathan's mouth: his strong "tongue" (40.25), his impenetrable jaw (41.5) and sharp teeth (41.6) are all subjects of praise. Furthermore, what does not issue from his mouth, that is, soft words of acquiescence (41.27), or a willingness to "make an agreement" (41.28), are valued. Praise of the Leviathan's numerous defence mechanisms extends to his bodily armour (41.7-9, 14-16) and his fiery breath (41.10-13), the final strophe praising the Leviathan's ability to withstand oppression (41.17.21, 22-26).[63] The use of the imagery of fire, smoke, light and flames is further suggestive of divine-like power. The Leviathan, like God, commands respect: "one is prostrated by the very sight of him" (41.1), and is not intimidated: "made as he is without fear" (41.25). If, like the Behemoth, the Leviathan is intended as a model of instruction for Job, then it is one of courage to utter forceful words that demand attention.[64]

These allusions to royalty are made more explicit throughout the divine speech, complimenting the Leviathan's strength and the ability to defend as was seen previously in the description of the Behemoth. He is portrayed as the most powerful of all creatures in that "there is no one so fierce" (41.2); indeed, God is the only one that can control him, which might suggest that the power of the Leviathan is as close to divine power as is possible in the universe. His royalty is expressed in terms of his methods of governance: the Leviathan "sees all that is haughty; He is king over all proud beasts" (41.26). Job,

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[62] See pages 90ff.

[63] Gammie, "Behemoth and Leviathan : On the Didactic and Theological Significance of Job 40:15-41:26," 222-23.

[64] Balentine, ""What Are Human Beings, That You Make So Much of Them?" Divine Disclosure from the Whirlwind : "Look at Behemoth"," 271-73.

who has been called to put on the robes of "glory and majesty" (40.10), is here given the example of how to bring the proud low through the example of the Leviathan as king.[65]

In addition to Gammie and Balentine, Janzen agrees to these intended royal overtones as well as to the deliberate comparison of Job to these two animals of royalty. He argues throughout his commentary on the divine speeches that Job is being called to resume the humanly status of royal ruler. Although the divine speeches never speak of Job's role in the world, the speeches are directed to him. Through the initial question of "Who are you?" Job is identified as the subject and thus as the recipient of the message, which is proposed with the second question: "Where are you?" This question, Janzen argues, is a question of human vocation in creation. Through the portrayal of God's divine rule over the pairs of animals (38.39-39.30) and the Behemoth and Leviathan (40-41), Janzen argues that Job is challenged to re-conceive the human royal commission to lordship over the animal kingdom in a new way.[66] Job's dilemma throughout the dialogues has been the tendency to apply human categories of justice, exact retribution, to God and his divine rule. Re-conceiving the royal vocation of humanity is to accept and embrace the world in all its blemishes and chaos, to accept that humanity will suffer unjustly and that inherent in the world is both order and freedom. [67]

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[65] Ibid., 273.

[66] Janzen, *Job*, 225-59. Janzen draws evidence for this reading from the commission of Genesis 1 for humans to rule over the animals. He reads this as a benign commission in that humans are at the same time directed to eat only vegetation from the trees, thus implying that humans were not carnivorous until it is explicitly stated in Gen 9.2. This royal and benevolent commission finds its eschatological counterpart in Isaiah 11.6-9 where the rule of the Messianc king is similarly wise and peaceful. Humans do not compel animals into labour, but are lead "by a little boy" (Isa. 11.6). The vision expounded in the first divine speech of ch. 38-39 is a similar call for humans to take up a royal rule. The second speech again points to the theme of royal rule and is seen effectively in the double exclamation of the Leviathan's royal rule found in 41.25-26. Through the speeches, God then challenges Job to reconsider himself as one made in the image of God, but in such a way that human royal rule is accepting of the freedom of the wild kingdom. See further, Janzen, *Job*, 240-46.

[67] Janzen, *Job*, 257-58.

Janzen is correct, the speeches address human vocation, and Job is challenged to take up and carry out this new understanding of action in the world. But it is not through the re-affirmation of a royal appointment.[68] The key to the model of Behemoth and Leviathan is the fact that the issues of pride and hierarchy are deliberately made ambiguous. It allows Job to see the quality of pride and the value of social hierarchy in a light unlike anything to which he was formally accustomed. Furthermore, it allows for him to take these newly "confused" qualities and understand them in light of the previous speech. As models, the Behemoth and Leviathan present royalty as a quality possessed by the animal kingdom and not the sole entitlement of human beings. While their strength under duress and powerful speech is certainly an affirmation of Job's actions, praise of their royal qualities is not praise of their royal vocation, but how they, as royalty, act in the universe.[69] Job, who would exercise rule with "raging anger" (41.11), is shown the Leviathan who "sees" the proud but does not rule in fury (41.26). The pride and power of the Behemoth and Leviathan parallel the wild ox and the wild ass: they are not "brought low" or tamed to pull a plough. Their freedom from human control is just and deserved, but is nevertheless contained in a universe with limits and boundaries. Their activity and place within creation has purpose and is responsive to other facets of creation; human activity is likewise the same. The place for this purposive activity is set

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[68] Janzen's argument that Genesis 1 is a similar appointment to royal rule over the animals is likewise problematic. Monarchical associations with Genesis are derived from the creation of humans in the "image of God" (1.26-27). Fretheim argues against this understanding by pointing out that the democratization inherent in this statement is in the fact that every human being is created in God's image. By democratizing the monarchical language, anti-monarchical tendencies appear more dominant. Furthermore, the "dominion" given to humans over the animals is likewise a democratized dominion, allotted to each person regardless of class or social situation. See further, Fretheim, *God and World in the Old Testament : A Relational Theology of Creation*, 47-53.

[69] This point is argued in a similar way by Fretheim who contends that the anti-monarchical imagery in Genesis 1 suggests that the passage be read in light of what a king *does* rather than who the king *is*. Ibid., 51. Although Janzen defines this new royal rule in Job as one embraces the "wildness" of creation and the existence of inexplicable suffering, it is with his insistence of human lordship over animals that this critique takes issue. See further, Janzen, *Job*, 240-41.

and respected, human place and vocation as well as those of the animal and inanimate kingdom.[70]

By addressing vocation in this way, the divine speeches take up the issue of morality and therein divine justice insofar as the way one understands ones vocation or identity is fundamentally based on how one perceives the world to be ordered.[71] Job began with a narrow understanding of the world. He limits his definition of justice to his regional surroundings and thus perceives the world as a place of chaos and his place in it as one under attack. By presenting the Leviathan in this unique way and in forcing Job to "see" the Leviathan by describing him in such meticulous detail, Job sees himself anew and thus reformulates his own place in the created order.[72] That is, Job's previous place of pride led him to believe he could call God's justice into question but with this new image set before him, he is no longer in any position to claim such authority. The Leviathan is the one who reigns supreme over all, including the proud, of which Job is certainly one.[73] However, this is no certain conclusion until Job's final words are taken into consideration.

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[70] Newsom, "The Moral Sense of Nature : Ethics in the Light of God's Speech to Job," 19.
[71] Ibid.: 16.
[72] Ibid.: 24-25.
[73] Brown, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of Moral Imagination in the Bible*, 371-72.

V

Job's Words of Conclusion

Job's Second Response: A Translation of Job 42.1-42.6

The exact interpretation of Job's response, particularly of his final words in verse

6, is unclear and interpreted in widely different ways that all lead to divergent

understandings of the passage itself and the book as a whole. Because this portion of the

text is so problematic, a translation is provided here to aid in the analysis.

42.1   Job said to the LORD:

42.2   I know (יָדַעְתָּ)[1] that you can do everything,
       And that no purpose (מְזִמָּה)[2] of yours can be withheld from you.

42.3   [You said,] "Who (מִי)[3] is this who obscures (מַעְלִים) design (עֵצָה) without
       knowledge (דָעַת)?"

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[1] The text is here written as a *Kethib/Qere* verb: the consonantal (K) text (יָדַעְתָּ) indicates a 2ms reading while the Masoretic emendation (Q) suggests a 1cs reading (יָדַעְתִּי). The majority of commentaries (Habel, Perdue, Gordis) do not follow the K version יָדַעְתָּ "you know" but instead accept the emendation and follow the Q version, יָדַעְתִּי "I know." Van Wolde argues for an ambiguous subject and translates the passage as "I know/you know" following James Barr's argument regarding K/Q system. See further, E. J. van Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," in *Book of Job*, ed. W.A.M. Beuken (Leuven: Leuven Univ Pr : Uitgeverij Peeters, 1994), 228-29. James Barr argues that the K/Q system does not necessarily represent differing "manuscript" tradition, but rather reading traditions that were different from the accepted manuscript. James Barr, "A New Look at Kethibh-Qere," in *Remembering All the Way : A Collection of Old Testament Studies Published on the Occasion of the Fortieth Anniversary of the Oudtestamentisch Werkgezelschap in Nederland*, ed. B. Albrektson ... [et al.], *Oudtestamentische Studien* (Leiden: Brill, 1981), 35-36. The translation provided above follows the Q version in keeping with the alternative reading tradition. Furthermore, as it is argued below, the text provides explicit differentiation between what Job "knows" and what he understands as divine knowledge, which then suggests that the translation follows the Q version.

[2] מְזִמָּה also carries the meaning of "discretion," "device." See further, Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, 272. As well, it can be translated further as "scheme" (Habel), or "plan" (Perdue). The above translation is preferred as it seems to include the idea of a "plan" while not suggesting that it is translating "plan" in the sense of עֵצָה.

[3] Some commentators such as Pope, *Job*, 288-90. and Dale Patrick, "Job's Address of God," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 91, no. 2 (1979): 278 n.41. argue that verse 3 and 4 are insertions and should not be considered part of the words spoken by Job to God. The phrase begins with the interrogative particle מִי "who," making it unclear who might be the subject, though it is clear that it is an indefinite 3rd person. As מַעְלִים is 3ms, this phrase is certainly an interruption in the direct speech between Job and God, however, the resemblance between this verse and 38.2 suggest that this phrase is a quote of the word's spoken by God. By following this with לָכֵן, the speaker refers to the quoted phrase, making a connection with the preceding words, but also with יָדַעְתָּ of 42.2 which suggests this section is not an insertion. As van Wolde suggests, an ellipsis at the beginning of 3 and 4 is appropriate given that there is an interruption of the 1st person speech and the fact that a quote is taking place. See further, Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 229-30. Furthermore, the verbal modifications throughout 42.3-4 suggest that the quote is

Therefore (לָכֵן), I spoke without understanding (אָבִין)
Of things too wonderful (נִפְלָאוֹת) for me which I did not know (אֵדָע).

42.4   [You said,] "Listen now, and I will speak.
I will question you and you will inform me (וְהוֹדִיעֵנִי)."

42.5   By hearing of the ear, I hear you;[4]
But now with my eye I see you.

42.6   Therefore (עַל־כֵּן) I retract (אֶמְאַס) and I am comforted (וְנִחַמְתִּי) concerning
dust (עַל־עָפָר) and ashes (וָאֵפֶר).

Analysis

As the majority of conflict revolves around the interpretation and meaning of

verse 6, this analysis will begin with those textual complications. The numerous

translations and interpretations of meaning of verse six are plentiful, and its ambiguity

pales that of the preceding verses. Perhaps rightly so, seeing as the whole of the divine

speeches and the preceding poetic dialogue seems to rest on its interpretation. By

understanding the problems facing the reader in verse 6, clues for understanding verse 6

that are provided in verse 2-5 become more visible.

The difficulty in this translation begins with the two verbs, אֶמְאַס and וְנִחַמְתִּי. The

first verb, אֶמְאַס can derive from either מאס I, which generally leads to interpretations that

indicate a change of mind or change in attitude such as: "I repudiate,"[5] "I recant"[6] or "I

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not a scribal insertion, but rather a deliberate use of previous phrases by the author. See Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 576.

[4] Concerns regarding this verse revolve around two major issues. The first has to do with the translation of the conjunction (וְ). Since its meaning is derived from the context, a decision has to be made whether Job is contrasting past and present actions, in which case it is translated "but," or whether past and present situations are considered similar, in which case the translation would read "and." Second, even though both verbs in the Hebrew are in the same tense (*qatal*), there is debate regarding the English tense that should represent this phrase. It might be translated: "I *have heard* of you with my ears, But now my eyes see you" as in Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 575. Alternatively, Campbell translates: "My ear *hears/heard* you, but now my eye sees you" in Antony F. Campbell, "The Book of Job: Two Questions, One Answer," *Australian Biblical Review* 51 (2003): 20-21. The above translation is preferred (against Campbell) because there does appear to be sufficient evidence in the text (see below) to suggest that Job is contrasting what he once knew and what he knows now.

[5] Dale Patrick, "Translation of Job 42:6," *Vetus Testamentum* 26, no. 3 (1976): 369.

[6] David A. Robertson, *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1977), 51.

repent."[7] The second possibility, מאס II, which holds the meaning "to flow" or "run," is found in translated texts of the LXX "I despise myself and I melt"[8] and 11QtgJob: "I am poured out."[9] The similarity between the LXX and 11QtJob seems to reflect a different manuscript tradition than that of the MT, though similarities with the MT are such that the difference can be attributed to translation technique.[10] Nevertheless, the majority of scholars employ מאס I following the pointing in the MT and analyse the verb as a *qal* 1cs.

Whether מאס is a transitive or intransitive verb leads to a second question. מאס is normally found as a transitive verb and in Job it appears sixty-six times with an indicated object; however, there are three exceptions in the book in addition to 42.6 where the object is not explicit (7.26; 34.33; 36.35).[11] Curtis argues for an intransitive reading and, based on similar occurrences elsewhere in the book, translates מאס intransitively as "feel loathing and contempt."[12] While it can not be argued that מאס is nowhere found without a direct object, Morrow draws attention to the fact that 34.44 and 36.5 have their own textual problems,[13] including concerns of transmission errors, making it questionable as to whether these verses are intransitive examples of מאס I. Furthermore, 7.16 is also

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[7] Thomas F. Dailey, "And yet He Repents--on Job 42,6," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 105, no. 2 (1993): 207.

[8] Translation of the LXX taken from *The Septuagint with Apocrypha : Greek and English*, ed. Lancelot C.L. Brenton (Peabody: Hendrickson Publishers, 1986).

[9] Translation of 11QTgJob taken from *The Dead Sea Scrolls : A New Translation*, ed. Michael Owen Wise; Martin G. Abegg; Edward M. Cook (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 2005).

[10] William S. Morrow, "Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42:6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 105, no. 2 (1986): 212-13.

[11] Ibid.: 214.

[12] John B. Curtis, "On Job's Response to Yahweh : (Job 40:4-5; 42:2-6)," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 98 (1979): 504-05.

[13] It should be further noted that these two examples derive from the Elihu speeches (Job 32-37), and are considered to be additions to the book, written after the dialogue between Job and his 3 friends was completed. See further, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 80-85. With this in mind, the argument that 34.44 and 36.5 offer evidence that 42.6 is intransitive is problematic.

suggested to be an example of מאס II, "to melt," again removing evidence that 42.6 might be intransitive.[14]

If מאס is read as a transitive verb, the question is then what to read as its object. The RSV translates the verb reflexively, "Therefore I despise myself." Good argues that the object is shared with וְנִחַמְתִּי, giving the reading "Therefore I despise and repent of dust and ashes,"[15] while Morrow draws attention to a third possibility, suggesting that the object is implied in verse 5, "Wherefore I reject it."[16]

As an object of one or both of the verbs, "dust and ashes" occurs only 6 times in biblical Hebrew (Gen. 18.27; Job 30.19; 42.6; Sir. 10.9; 40.3; 1QH 10.5), and appears to have two main metaphorical meanings, both possibilities being equally as likely in the case of Job 42.6. When read alongside a text such as Gen. 18.27 and 1QH 10.5 and Sir. 10.9 which reads: "How can he who is dust and ashes be proud? Even in life the human life decays,"[17] the phrase dust and ashes refers to human mortality as it is experienced before God. Alternatively, Job 30.19 and Sir. 40.3, which reads, "From him who sits on a throne in pride, to him who is clothed in dust and ashes," seem to point to a different understanding. Here "dust and ashes" is not a condition applicable to all of humanity, but is used as a comparison for those of great wealth experiencing "social degradation."[18]

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[14] Morrow, "Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42:6," 214-15.

[15] Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 375.

[16] Morrow, "Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42:6," 212, 20.

[17] Translation of Sirach taken from *The Harpercollins Study Bible : New Revised Standard Version, with the Apocraphal/Deuterocanonical Books*, ed. Wayne A. Meeks and Jouette M. Bassler (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).

[18] This interpretation is defended by Muenchow who argues that Job does not just position himself "upon dust and dirt," but actually falls down to the ground as a meaningful gesture, paralleling 40.4 where he claps his hand to his mouth. He points to anthropological studies of Mediterranean societies where honour is the primary reward, a claim of precedence, and shame is a penalty incurred when ones primacy is rejected. Here 42.6, Job falls to the ground, mimicking the act of hiding or sinking in order to express his shame. See further, Charles Muenchow, "Dust and Dirt in Job 42:6," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 108 (1989): 597-611.

Job makes a similar contrast when he charges God with a vicious attack: "He regarded me as clay, I have become like dust and ashes" (30.19).[19]

Finally, וְנִחַמְתִּי which can be translated in either the *pi'el* form: "to feel compassion," "to comfort," "to have mercy" or the *niph'al*: "to be sorrowful," "to regret," "to hurt." Parunak presents a survey of the root נחם and finds that 53 of the occurrences of נחם in the *pi'el* and *pu'al* support the emotive translation of "comfort" or "console."[20] When considering the *niph'al* form, its translation is more complicated, and can include meanings of "suffer emotional pain," "be comforted," "comfort oneself," "execute wrath," and "retract" or "repent."[21]

With these textual difficulties in mind, we turn to the verses that precede Job's enigmatic last words, taking particular note of the intertextual references, a common tool throughout the divine speeches, and the way in which they lend meaning and clarification to this complicated passage.

Job's speech opens with יָדַעְתָּ "to know" (42.2), a theme that continues throughout the speech. יָדַע is mentioned twice in verse three and again in verse 4, each time in order to highlight the disparity between Job's knowledge with God's knowledge. This is first emphasized by the contrasting use of first and second person throughout the address: Job repeats a number of times the difference between what "I (Job) know" and what "you (God) know," what "I say" and what "you say."[22] These contrasts are highlighted by parallelisms involving יָדַע throughout the passage: "you can do everything" (42.2) is set

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[19] Morrow, "Consolation, Rejection, and Repentance in Job 42:6," 216-17. Other interpretations such as that offered by Habel, reads the entire phrase to represent the ash heap on which Job is sitting. Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 582. This alternative remains less likely given the fact that Job sits "in ashes" (2.8) and the phrase of 42.6 is presented as a set phrase. Cf. Newsom, "The Book of Job," 629.

[20] H. Van Dyke Parunak, "Semantic Survey of Nhm," *Biblica* 56, no. 4 (1975): 516-17.

[21] Ibid.: 517-25.

[22] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 231.

opposite to "I did not know" (42.4); "I will question you" (42.4) is contrasted with "you

will inform me" (42.4). To contrast differing levels of knowledge, the word מִן (from) is

used in parallel: "no purpose of yours can be withheld from you (מִמְּךָ)" (42.2) is set

opposite with "things too wonderful for me (מִמֶּנִּי) which I did not know" (42.3).[23]

That there is a difference between God and Job's knowledge is of course not new

to either party; in 38.3 Job is accused by God of being one that "darkens counsel,

Speaking words without knowledge," words that Job now use in 42.3 as part of his

response to God. What is unique in this address is that beginning in verse 2, Job speaks

of divine knowledge in a new way. By first stating what he now knows in 42.2 and then

quoting God's words in 42.3, emphasizing what he did not know at opening of the

speeches from the whirlwind, Job appears to agree with God's statement of 38.3. This

effectively reverses Job's statement of 40.4-5 by admitting he now knows that he does not

understand or know how God's universe operates. Additionally, by referring to God's

design and works as "wonders" (נִפְלָאוֹת) Job appears convinced that he is ignorant of

God's powers.[24] נִפְלָאוֹת indicates an event or object that is "incomprehensible" or

"marvellous";[25] in this situation it refers not to the exact features or quality of an object,

but to the nature of human comprehension. In combination with מִן that follows (מִמֶּנִּי), a

comparative relationship is identified: in relation to Job, something is too wonderful for

comprehension. At this time it is possible to conclude tentatively that God's speeches

have deconstructed significant pillars to Job's worldview. By using God's words, Job

realizes that human efforts to reduce divine design and justice to humanly intelligible

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[23] Ibid., 238.
[24] Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 371.
[25] See further, Brown, *The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon with an Appendix Containing the Biblical Aramaic*, 810-11.

categories are fruitless: things of the divine are things "I did not know."[26] But they are

nevertheless wonderful. The divine speeches have also dismantled Job's allegations of

God's deliberate plan to reduce creation to chaos; creation is filled with נִפְלָאוֹת, wonders

that are unknowable but worthy of praise.[27]

This response, however, can also be read to affirm the opposite: Good shows that

Job's response can either support a sincere acknowledgement of God's powers if read as

"I know You can do everything," or as an ironic embellishment of God's great powers if

read as "You know You can do everything," thus admitting that although God's powers

are great, He is uncaring and does not use His powers to protect humanity.[28] The tone of

Job's response is further dictated by his following words.

The reference to God's words in 42.3 is followed by another quotation in 42.4: "I

will ask, and You will inform me." Both quotes come from the opening of the divine

speeches. 42.3 quotes the question that that lays out the theme of the first divine speech

(38.2a) and begins the re-characterization of Job's worldview, while 42.4 repeats an

introductory sentence from both the divine speeches (38.3b//40.7b). However, neither of

the phrases when quoted by Job are exact replicas of God's words; it is the changes that

Job implements that provide further insight into the character of his response. In 42.3 Job

omits "speaking" (בְמִלִּין) from his quote, thereby showing that it is not just through words

that man tries to limit and make knowable God's plan, but is a worldview, a way of living

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[26] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 240.
[27] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 236.
[28] Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 370-71. An exception is Janzen who argues that the K version "you know," in fact provides a stronger indication of agreement with God's words in that it eliminates any sense of the speaker's own sense of understanding (as is implied in the "I know"). By saying "you know," the phrase indicates that "knowing" something of the Infinite is not grounded in Job as a finite creature. Job's "knowing," his frame of reference, is grounded under God's knowledge, that which is exceedingly greater than his. See further, Janzen, *Job*, 251-52.

and thinking that enables the belief that God's design and rule are reducible to human categories of understanding and justice.[29]

Job's second quote (42.4) is from God's challenge issued at each of the divine speeches for Job to answer questions about His creation and divine justice, yet Job chooses to add words not spoken by God, even using the personal pronoun "I" (וְאָנֹכִי) to refer to God though the words are still spoken from Job's mouth: "Listen now, and I (וְאָנֹכִי) will speak" (42.4). Gordis finds it "strange" that Job would put these words in God's mouth,[30] yet as van Wolde points out, placing these words in God's mouth is an attempt to see, if only briefly, through God's perspective. Job gives up his own perspective in place of God's in order to confirm audibly his belief that God forms the context through which the universe is to be understood. Job then returns in 42.4b to the play on knowledge. God knows and Job does not; God asks and makes known and Job must listen. As a whole then, verse 4 provides an accurate summary of what takes place in God's speeches to Job. God hurls questions at Job, and does not wait for Job to reply. Job is made to listen.[31] Furthermore, the command to "listen" (42.4a), presents Job with the opportunity to "hear" God, about which Job comments in verse 5. This relationship between verses 4 and 5 confirms that Job *did* hear what God said, the result of which is that Job "sees" God.[32]

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[29] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 241. Perdue shows another intertextual reference in Genesis 11.6, the last story in J's primeval history that recounts how mankind's hubris leads them to build a tower to the heavens so that "nothing they propose to do will be out of their reach." As an example of humanities attempt at self-rule, it is referred to in Job to show Job's agreement with God's verdict of Gen. 11.6 that divine rule, not human rule is what governs the universe. See further, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 234-35.

[30] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job*, 372.

[31] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 240-41.

[32] Newsom, "The Book of Job," 628.

What it is that Job sees is not made clear. Pope argues that Job metaphorically sees God, being convinced that God cares for him and has vindicated him.[33] Habel believes the experience of the theophany enables Job to "see" God. Seeing God, for Habel, is not a mystical experience in which Job obtains new knowledge. Job experiences God intimately and personally.[34] Though the physical act of "seeing" God is not permitted in the biblical text (Ex. 33.20), it is reported by key figures at monumental times.[35] It is not necessary, however, to make this an either/or situation since the way Job "sees" God is not made specific. The connection with verse 4 is helpful in understanding what else might be intended by this statement. If the quote (and mis-quote) of verse 4 is considered to include a change in Job's point of view, that is, Job again considers the actions of humanity and himself by speaking God's words and therefore by "seeing" the problems of humanity through God's eyes, then the troubling idea of "seeing" in verse 5 is better explained as the way Job's point of view changes regarding God. Reading verse 5 in light of the previous verse, it can be supposed that the transformation that begins in verse 4 is made visible in verse 5. Job understands that questions of divine justice and order can not be reduced to human methods of understanding and that the universe under God is not chaotic, but wonderful.[36] Such a change in perception is also supported by verses 2 and 3 where Job admits to the limits of his own knowledge and the fact that he previously did not have understanding. With the quotations of verse 3 and 4, Job grasps a momentary vision of the world through God's eyes, enabling what begins in verse 5 as his

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[33] Pope, *Job*, 289.

[34] Habel, *The Book of Job : A Commentary*, 582.

[35] Moses sees God's back (Ex. 33.23), Isaiah sees the Lord "seated on a high and lofty throne" (Isa. 6.1) and of course, at the covenant ceremony on Sanai, Moses, Aaron and his sons and seventy of the elders "saw the God of Israel" (Ex. 24.9-11). See further Good, *In Turns of Tempest : A Reading of Job, with a Translation*, 373-74.

[36] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 242.

revolution in thought. It is not just an acknowledgement of the fact that God and His

justice are irreducible to human categories. It is "seeing" that also includes a new way of

perceiving and "seeing" God, the nature of which is explained in verse 6.[37]

How one chooses any of the above mentioned examples, is not only based on the

metaphorical and intertextual references of the text, the concrete world of which the texts

speaks and the intermediary symbolic world of the author, but also the *language* itself

which possesses its own conceptual system that alters with cultures and language groups.

Certain forms correspond to certain meanings that are then used in turn by the speaker or

writer to create a text. While Indo-European language groups largely presuppose the

logic of Greek and Latin thinking, that of highly differentiated vocabulary with different

words for different concepts, the Semitic language groups operate under a different

conceptual system and are not necessarily as binary as their Indo-European counterparts.

All this is to say that the Biblical Hebrew paradigm is broader and less precise than the

English translations given to the text.[38]

It is the reader who makes the final decision concerning meaning, discerning the

clues and markers in the text, noting the different elements and deciding how they are to

be applied and understood. It is important, nonetheless, particularly with the section of

Job 42.2-6, not to dismiss alternative readings or interpretations, for it is part of the

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[37] Ibid. Campbell disagrees, arguing that Job could not literally "see" God because as there is no reference to vision or "seeing" in the text, though he does not acknowledge the times Job expresses the wish to "behold God" and "see with my own eyes" (19.26-27). He then argues that there is no indication that this text is meant to be read metaphorically though he goes on to argue that Job's claim to "see" is to an activity outside the text, to an activity or "way of knowing without words." He leaves it unclear how this differs from a metaphorical interpretation. Campbell, "The Book of Job: Two Questions, One Answer," 21-25.
[38] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 235-37. With the specific example of Biblical Hebrew, the number of words in the textual corpus is small, about 10,000 according to the Brown-Driver-Briggs lexicon and the number of roots from which these words derive is even less. The roots are nevertheless theoretically derived from the words that appear in the text, and given that a word may trace back to more than one root implies it might carry multiple meanings.

semantic structure of the language itself that derives these alternate readings.[39] The sheer number of semantic ambiguities in the text makes a translation into English very awkward and always certain of missing or mistaking a nuance of the text. In that same vein, however, the text is ambiguous enough as to suggest an appropriate reading for all readers, as can be seen in the following examples.

1. Gordis argues that Job finds deepest satisfaction in the fact that God has appeared before him and answered him, showing him that the universe is largely unknowable but balanced and under God's control. Job repents for questioning the terms of God's justice and then reconciles with God, saying: "Therefore I abase myself and repent in dust and ashes."[40]

2. Patrick's analysis of 42.6 argues that Job does not show remorse for his previous words; rather, Job's lament is changed to words of praise that are uttered in the verses leading up to verse 6, at which time he physically removes himself from the position of mourning in dust and ashes, exclaiming "Therefore I repudiate and repent of dust and ashes."[41]

3. Robertson argues that Job confesses his wrongdoing, but it is a "tongue-in-cheek" response, in line with the entire book as a series of ironic speeches. Job predicts in 9.20 that his own mouth "would condemn me"; then, when God appears in the whirlwind, He responds as though threatened by Job's accusations and turns on Job as the guilty party (cf. 40.2, 8). God reveals he is unjust and unwise, just as Job suspected, and it is

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[39] Ibid., 236-37.
[40] Gordis, *The Book of God and Man; a Study of Job*, 304-05.
[41] Patrick, "Translation of Job 42:6." In a response to this paper, Kaplan reminds scholars that the same conclusion was drawn 800 years earlier by the Jewish jurist and philosopher, Maimonides. L. J. Kaplan, "Maimonides, Dale Patrick, and Job 42:6," *Vetus Testamentum* 28, no. 3 (1978): 356-58.

only in the attempt to calm God's angry attack from the whirlwinds that Job replies, "So
I recant and repent in dust and ashes."[42]

4.Curtis sees Job's final words as a bitterly sarcastic retort to the God who refused to
answer the question. Though he realizes the limitations of his knowledge, Job
renounces God and sees him as he really is: arrogant, remote and unconcerned with the
small problems of humanity. Job rejects God completely and says to him, "Therefore I
feel loathing contempt and revulsion toward you, O God; and I am sorry for frail
man."[43]

Though these translations are in many ways similar and make similar decisions
regarding verb choice,[44] the interpreted meaning is significantly different in each, a
difference influenced by the way in which the previous verses and indeed the entire book
is read. In light of the present analysis, including the divine speeches and the analysis
presented of Job's words in 42.2-6, the following understanding is possible. Job indicates
in verse 2 that he knows that God can do everything, and by reciting back God's words in
42.3a, he demonstrates that he now understands the futility of trying to reduce ideas and
categories of the divine to a humanly understandable idea or quantity. He thus takes back
what he previously said, realizing that the order of the universe is indeed too great for his
comprehension (42.3b). Here is Job's first transformation. But far from being a
statement of how Job knows he can know nothing, he goes on to quote God again, this
time referring to the way divine and human knowledge is contrasted throughout the

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[42] Robertson, *The Old Testament and the Literary Critic*, 51-53. Whedbee argues further that Job's
response is evidence of the comic nature of the book in that Job repents because he paradoxically "sees"
that as a mortal he does not see. J. William Whedbee, *The Bible and the Comic Vision* (Cambridge ; New
York: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 256.
[43] Curtis, "On Job's Response to Yahweh : (Job 40:4-5; 42:2-6)," 497-505.
[44] All choose מאס I as the root for the first verb and use *niph'al* form of נחם; while 3 of the 4 read "dust and
ashes" as the object of both verbs.

speeches from the whirlwind (42.4), engaging for a moment God's perspective and

"seeing" briefly from God's point of view (42.4b), coming to a second conclusion in 42.5

by "seeing" God in a new way. In Job's first realization, his perspective regarding

humanity changes; in the second realization, Job's perspective regarding God changes.[45]

Based on the עַל־כֵּן in 42.6, an indicator that signifies what is about to follow is based on

what has been said before, Job concludes with another change.[46] While the

transformations of 42.3 and 42.4-5 suggest that 42.6 also includes a transformation, it is

here in 42.6 not a new realization of limitations of knowledge or an appreciation of divine

perspective. Here it is a change in attitude, in the way of living and thinking.[47] Reading

אָמְאַס as מאס I, indicates a change in mind or attitude and in the ni'phal it includes the

meaning "change of mind" as well as "to be comforted." Furthermore, of the 17 times the

construction וְנִחַמְתִּי עַל occurs in biblical Hebrew, in 4 of these מאס refers to finding

comfort out of mourning. Job engages in a transformation whereby he changes his mind

regarding "dust and ashes" or regarding the human condition.[48] Whereas he previously

thought the world to be chaotic, and human suffering to be the result of a God that

deliberately attacked the innocent, God challenges Job to view the world in a new light,

but providing him with conflict as the metaphor around which Job is expected to organize

this new worldview.[49] Job takes up this challenge, now understanding the universe as a

place where chaos is contained, though never completely eradicated. Job recognizes that

his previous moral world left him in isolation, but conceding humility and surrendering

his pride and his pain teaches him to see past the hierarchy of the cultured and wild and

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[45] Wolde, "Job 42,1-6 : The Reversal of Job," 247-48.
[46] Ibid., 248.
[47] Ibid., 242.
[48] Ibid., 249-50.
[49] Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job*, 236.

the polarity between the righteous and the wicked. Instead, he understands compassion and empathy.

The Divine Speeches as a Model: A New Concept of Theodicy

This understanding of the text, however, is contingent on the fact that God's speeches *did* in fact provide a new way of understanding the universe, that a model by which Job might begin to construct a new worldview was presented.

It is important at this stage to present a brief study of what makes a model. An analysis of models, as understood by McFague, is continuous with the discussion of metaphor. For McFague, a model is a "sustained and systematic metaphor" with interpretive power, the model being a mix of metaphorical and conceptual language.[50] Models aim to discern the relationship between some part of reality and the unfamiliar that it is trying to describe. At the outset, it is important to note that models are not used for talking *about* a particular thing or being; rather, models are primarily designed to talk meaningfully and appropriately about the relationship *between* beings. Models of God must speak of the relationship between God and His creation, for speaking about God is only possible by speaking of God in relation.[51]

In order to capture such a complex relationship, metaphorical and conceptual language are intrinsically linked in the process of forming a model: metaphors alone or concepts alone are not sufficient because the relationship is too multifaceted. This is significant because it recognizes the fact that models are not literal pictures of an object or simply a usefully imaginative idea.[52] Models are both, at the same time imaginative

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[50] McFague, *Metaphorical Theology: Models of God in Religious Language*, 67, 117.
[51] Ibid., 125.
[52] Ibid., 91.

and discovered, for at all times they keep the "is" and the "is not" in tension.[53] For this reason, it is necessary for language about God and God's relationship with creation, the model, to arise out of experiences and natural events and for the empirical evidence advanced as the model to be appropriate to these experiences.[54]

The model therefore includes secondary (conceptual) language in order to provide the interpretive words necessary in order that one might return to the primary event or object one is attempting to discuss.[55] Models that seek to describe God's relationship with the world require an image, such as "wisdom," to act as a screen through which God can be metaphorically understood, as well as a conceptual qualifier, such as "infinite," to prevent the model of God's "infinite wisdom" from charges of anthropomorphism.[56] The systematic, conceptual language is necessary to provide language by which to interpret. Thus, models are both process oriented and dynamic in nature in that they interpret relationships, but are also descriptive in that they seek to illustrate and give description to divine nature.[57]

With this underlying criterion for a model, the theological model acts principally as a "grid" or "screen" through which the relationship between the human and the divine is interpreted, actively using metaphorical and conceptual language of models in interpreting this relationship. By describing reality through a "screen" or "grid" the model expresses something fresh; the model re-describes reality and therein presents a new way of living in the world.[58] If indeed the speeches of the Behemoth and Leviathan are exaggerated examples of the wild ox and the wild ass, then presented is an emphatic

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[53] Ibid., 101.
[54] Ibid., 122-24.
[55] Ibid., 119.
[56] Ibid., 123.
[57] Ibid., 125.
[58] Ibid., 133-34.

statement regarding the relationship between God and creation, with a focus on the place of chaos and the care and pride God takes in the free and untamed world, *as well as* the challenge for Job to take up and live by this new presentation of reality.

The second divine speech begins by rejecting Job's silence and submission of 40.1-6 and then points out the logical flaw of Job's retributive theory: according to retributive justice, God must be guilty for Job to be innocent. To demonstrate this, there is a shift in the speech from rhetorical questions to descriptive praise and from the general example of the paired animals to the hyperbolically large Behemoth and Leviathan. It follows that human categories of order and justice, including theories of retribution, are not sufficient for defining the ways of divine justice. With this understanding, divine justice is also no longer relegated to moral categories of evil and righteous, but is presented in terms of just rule. The forces of nature, the Leviathan and the Behemoth are not defeated and neither are the wicked. But they are exposed and kept in check. By extending the discussion of justice to the cosmic level God moves the definition away from its strict forensic sense and into one of governance. As well, this demonstrates that justice is not a value that should take priority over all other values. The ability to identify with and sympathize with those that are different, the ability to appreciate the "other" is more valuable in the created universe than the ability to expose the wicked. Divine justice is encompassed by a divine rule where natural untamed forces are allowed to remain free. Strength and power are praised and lack of fear, in the face of death or in the face of ones creator is commended.

Out of this defence of divine justice and the tour of the cosmos, there comes an understanding of human "vocation." Job at one time prided himself on his status in the community (cf. ch 29) and his morally upright position where he "broke the jaws of the

wrongdoer" (29.17) and vanquished them to the wilderness like the lawless ostrich and jackal. Yet these values were undermined when he was himself expelled from the community and forced to commiserate with the lawless and unproductive people and animals of the wilderness as his own family and friends treated him with that same contempt (31.1). Then through language of creation, God's speeches present Job with a different view of both the supposed chaotic universe and the wicked outcasts. Job is shown a universe where all four corners are touched by unsolicited divine care and where animals on the outcasts of society are worthy of divine attention and praised for their freedom. For this to pervade, humans can not assume lordship over the animals. Instead, they are to recognize equality and diversity, thus working empathically to integrate those that are socially exiled. Neither hierarchy nor human royal rule is highlighted in this declaration; in fact, it is the reverse: like the creatures of the wild, the Behemoth and the Leviathan are not limited by the will of humans. Job is shown that hierarchy is not morally right or wrong, but with respect to the universe, humans are not called to rule supreme.

The divine speeches are presenting something "new," particularly in view of the way in which the "old" way of thinking is presented alongside through the speeches of Job and his friends. Job, who draws from his own personal experience and the three friends who draw from the moral culture of tradition, present theories of theodicy intending to explain the way in which the universe is ordered. Speaking from the crisis of the fifth century where Persian tax and credit laws led to increasing social stratification, the theodicies presented by the poet of the pious upper class through Job and his friends reveal themselves insufficient. From the moral culture of tradition, Eliphaz presents three distinct theodicies that culminate in the anthropodic theory that the inherent flaw of

unrighteousness or the fact of human error itself brings about suffering. From Job's own personal experience, that of life and nature, Job presents an alternative theodicy, one saturated with ideas and visions of chaos and divine corruption. The theodicies of the three friends are socially based: they maintain a concern for social equity and as such represent the personal wisdom theology of the pious upper class. When contrasted with Job's experience, they reveal a mechanistic piety, one that expects reward to accompany wrongdoing and assumes that human action can have cosmic consequences. The theodicy presented by Job that is similarly based on social class relations and experience of family and village is likewise exposed and shown to be narrow in scope; the nature of divine justice as it is presented in the divine speeches takes creation in its entirety as basis for defining community. Relationship extends to include all things reaching from the far corners of the cosmos.

Such universalizing tendencies are not without precedence. The late texts of Second Isaiah speak of foreigners in decidedly unique ways. As Israel returns from exile, Isaiah opens the possibility that relations with foreigners need not always be hostile: "I raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the survivors of Israel: I will also make you a light of nations, That My salvation may reach the ends of the earth" (Is. 49.6). Foreign kings and queens are presented walking in processions carrying the children of the Israel: "As for the foreigners who attach themselves to the Lord, to minister to Him, and to love the name of the Lord…who hold fast to My covenant – I will bring them to My sacred mount and let them rejoice in My house of prayer…For My house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples" (Is. 56.6-7). Though there are similarly negative views of foreigners being humbled before the Israelites, "Your gates shall always be open; day and night they shall not be shut, so that nations shall bring you their wealth, with their kings

led in procession" (Is. 60.10-11), the exilic texts of Isaiah present what appears to be the beginnings of a universalizing theology in which all the nations of the world are welcome to the salvation of the God of Israel.[59] In the book of Jonah, universalizing tendencies extend farther as Jonah is sent, perhaps as a symbol of the people of Israel themselves, to a foreign nation in order to bring about the repentance and transformation of an enemy of Israel after a period of imprisonment (exile).[60]

The universalized care and salvation that in Isaiah and Jonah is offered to the nations, is extended in the book of Job to include the whole of the universe, the outcasts of society and the monsters of chaos included. Though salvation is not the issue, divine care, relationship between creator and created, is the entitlement of all aspects of creation. In this relational theology, a necessity in the Persian era where social exploitation was the norm and retributive theology proved to limit the deity, a theodicy modeling equity and empathy is presented using conflict and its limits as the starting point, and laughter and commensality as the climax. Pride, power and chaos are celebrated as the creatures of the wild laugh: from the onager who laughs at the tumult of the city (39.7), to the ostrich that beats her wings joyously and laughs at the horse and rider (39.18); from the horse in battle who laughs at fear (39.21), to the Leviathan that laughs at the quivering javelin (41.21), creation is not under the limitations of human control or retributive theory. Divine justice is not simply a juridical category, but the prerogative of the divine ruler and a mark of his control and intimate connection with all parts of nature. Through divine justice, creation is carefully confined to its proper but nonetheless, joyous place.

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[59] Daniel L. Smith-Christopher, *A Biblical Theology of Exile* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002), 125-30.
[60] Ibid., 130-35.

Conclusion

This thesis has explored the concept of theodicy as it is presented through language of creation in Job 38-42. It has been argued that during the Persian period, theological questioning of the nature of God and the inherent order in creation became uncertain. The standard in effect understood order as a state preserved by human right action and good deeds in the world insofar as right action was understood to elicit divine favour and reward. Divine justice was assured as long as reward and punishment was perceived as being in effect, and through the theory of retribution, divine justice was defended by way of an anthropodicy that understood divine punishment to be the result of human misdeeds. When this system of reward and punishment was seen to have disintegrated, which in the book of Job can be understood as happening consequent to the economic and social crisis of the fifth century, a new paradigm was necessary to understand the relationship between God and His created order.

As the study of metaphor in chapter 2 revealed, the metaphors used to express the need for a paradigm shift are informed and affected by the historical and cultural world of the author. In the book of Job, the social climate is revealed through the concern Job and his friends maintain for the social inequality of the day. The dominant moral theory is put forward by Job's three friends who draw from the culture of tradition to present and defend retributive justice as the principle that guides order in the universe and thereby the way in which Job is to interpret and understand his suffering. Job, however, draws from his own experience in the world, where his only possible conclusion is that the universe is evil, and chaos derives from creation itself. What emerges from Job's assertion that God's creation is deliberately rooted in chaos is an implicit critique of the entire moral

order of society, thus exposing the need for a new paradigm by which to understand the structures that uphold the universe.

This is primarily provided in the divine speeches of Job 38-42 through a tour of the cosmos in which many of the models and metaphors Job uses in defining the world as chaotic and evil are critiqued and replaced. This is a decidedly dialogical process, in that the new metaphors for understanding the universe are not simply provided; instead, the metaphors that Job uses as examples for understanding the universe as chaotic are taken up and reorganized to present a new theodicy where chaos is integrated and a part of the created and interconnected order, fully under God's jurisdiction. Justice, as Job would understand it, has strict juridical implications; yet as the divine speeches show, legal categories are insufficient, for justice at the divine level has to do with ruling. Symbols of chaos such as the sea are shown to be contained within specific limits, but in ways that are compassionate. Places of hostility such as the desert are shown to be worthy of divine care; wild animals that were symbolic of the extreme other are likewise recipients of divine care. Creation is revealed to be inherently good, but not inherently safe. The wicked are brought out into the open, but not driven from the earth or punished with divine anger. Instead, monsters of chaos are praised for their beauty, strength and pride. In this theodicy, God upholds the already good and created order, but not at the level of human categories of retribution.

The process of modeling divine justice also serves to provide a model for human action in that it provides a new worldview exemplifying right relationships in the world. Insofar as Job is asked to compare himself to the Behemoth and the Leviathan, these animals are offered as models through which order in the universe is newly expressed. In re-describing reality, these chaotic creatures also provide Job with a new way of living.

Job's ability to withstand oppression and his power to speak with strong language is affirmed, but his hierarchical view of the human and created kingdom, as well as his strict differentiation between good and evil, wicked and righteous are rejected. Living rightly requires empathy and compassion for those outside of the immediate familial and social population, recognizing equal worth in all of creation and not assuming human rule over the earthly kingdom. Human categories of hierarchy are inappropriate in a world where community extends to the farthest reaches of the cosmos.

The findings of this study have implications beyond the social and cultural setting of the Persian period, for the study of Job can reveal powerful insights useful in modern theology. In a study by Miroslav Volf that explores how exclusion and "otherness" participate in the cycle of violence in the modern world, he argues that it is only by opening the self up in an "embrace" of the other that world conflict that is rooted in memory of past horrors can find reconciliation.[1] Through the action of embrace, there are necessary implications for how justice in the world is to be understood. In this understanding, there is not a single universal justice appropriate for all; there are rather mutual agreements between traditions and communities. Justice between communities is reached by actively opening up and receiving the other through the attempt to establish justice from the point of view of those previously excluded and wronged.[2] Though Volf does not use the book of Job in the defence of his argument, from what has been presented here, just such an understanding is indeed advocated in the book of Job. Without doing damage to the text, this reading of Job finds that the justice of the created order is in the mutual recognition of the others right of place. The universe is created

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[1] Miroslav Volf, *Exclusion and Embrace : A Theological Exploration of Identity, Otherness, and Reconciliation* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996).
[2] Ibid., 193-231.

with chaos, but it is also created with boundaries. Just as there is a proper place for chaotic elements, so too is there a proper and delineated place for humans that can not be transgressed. This application of justice is only possible through reciprocating respect. It is only in "embracing" the other, even when they are perceived as the criminal offender,[3] that justice is possible and rightly conceived in the created order. It is just such an understanding of justice that Job is challenged to accept and take up and his acceptance is seen in his final words. By momentarily "seeing" through the divine perspective, Job changes his mind regarding the human condition, of "dust and ashes," and sees past the dichotomy between the righteous and the wicked to understand empathy and embrace.

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[3] See this also worked out in Ibid., 85, 122.

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