

A QUEST FOR COHERENCE:
A STUDY OF INTERNAL QUOTATIONS IN THE BOOK OF JOB

by

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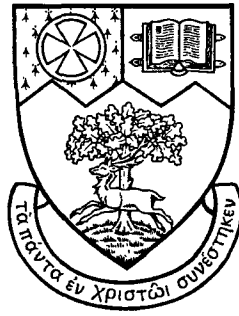
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ABSTRACT

“A Quest for Coherence: A Study of Internal Quotations in the Book of Job”

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The book of Job is well-known for its internal tensions. The major challenge of interpreting this work is to provide a coherent reading of the whole narrative while giving the conflicting elements their due. The purpose of this dissertation is thus twofold. First, this study seeks to defend the intrinsic cohesiveness of the book of Job. Second, it attempts to demonstrate that a reading guided by these internal verbal and thematic connections is able to produce a coherent meaning of this literary masterpiece.

This dissertation offers a section-by-section reading of the book of Job. In each section, I conduct a two-phase analysis. In the first phase, I identify the literary connections between the passage under study and those which come before it, and reflect on the way the antecedent texts are being reused. In the second phase, I discern the impact that the insights from the first phase of analysis make upon the reading process of the passage under study and examine how the resulting interpretation contributes to the development of the story up to that point.

In order to facilitate the discussion, I borrow some insights from literary critic James Phelan, who views narrative as rhetoric. Phelan argues that the author of a narrative cultivates the interests of the reader by means of two types of unstable relations.

The first, called instabilities, are those occurring within the story, conflicts between characters, created by situations, and complicated and resolved through actions. The second, called tensions, are conflicts of value, belief, opinion, knowledge, expectation between the author and the reader. The development of tensions and instabilities in turn guide the reader to establish a coherent configuration of the narrative. This dissertation demonstrates that a satisfactory reading experience of the book of Job can be attained at both the narrative and the rhetorical levels. The analysis reveals that the central problem of the book is appropriate religious expressions in the context of suffering.

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time. What she did not realize was that this was only the beginning of a new journey for me.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The book of Job is full of apparent tensions.¹ In terms of form and structure, the framework (1:1—2:13, 42:7–17) is a simple prose account whereas the dialogue (3:1—42:6) is a sophisticated poetic masterpiece comprising difficult vocabulary and striking imagery.² Within the dialogue, there exist other peculiar stylistic and structural issues. Job's provocative lament (ch. 3) sparks a debate with his three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. This verbal exchange forms a regular and symmetrical pattern for two cycles (chs. 4–21), but appears to collapse in the third (chs. 22–27), which contains an exceptionally short speech by Bildad and none by Zophar. A different genre then appears in Job 28, which seems to lack the pointed language of the previous debate.³ Unlike his previous speeches, which primarily address his friends, the bulk of Job's closing testimony (chs. 29–31) is without a specific addressee.⁴ Another human character, Elihu, then abruptly appears and speaks for six chapters without any interruption (chs. 32–37). The poetic dialogue comes to an end with the two divine speeches (38:1—40:2; 40:6—41:34) and Job's corresponding responses (40:3–5; 42:1–6).

Aside from form and structure, the characterization of the protagonist is another aspect often noted for its inconsistency. Job is conventionally understood as pious in the

¹ PENCHANSKY'S comment is representative: "Elements of Job come from different genres; and the juxtaposition of parts produces obvious seams and gaping fissures in the text, in style, in characterization, and in theological concern" (*The Betrayal of God*, 9).

² Newsom, "Job," 320.

³ Westermann, *Structure*, 135.

⁴ Job addresses God directly only in 30:20–23.

prologue, rebellious or even blasphemous in the dialogue, and submissive in his response to YHWH.⁵ Moreover, in the third cycle of debate, what Job utters in parts of chs. 24, 26, and 27 appears to contradict his own previous speeches and expound opinions which seem more at home with his friends.⁶ Although Job 28 flows naturally from the previous chapter as far as the story is concerned, its form and content seem to be foreign to Job.⁷

The third area where scholars often find dissonance is the way different portions of the book articulate various religious issues. For instance, the doctrine of retributive justice, which seems to dominate the debate between Job and his three friends, appears to be utterly ignored in the divine speeches, but surprisingly reaffirmed implicitly in the epilogue.⁸ Similarly, the proper conduct of a person in suffering is also evaluated differently in different portions. Whereas Job's apparent praise of YHWH's sovereignty is affirmed by the narrator as the appropriate response in the prologue (1:22; 2:10), a similar pious attitude suggested by the three friends to Job in the first cycle of dialogue (chs. 4–14) is refuted by YHWH in the epilogue (42:7–9). In the same vein, whereas the “tonality”⁹ of the divine speeches implies that Job's provocative way of speaking

⁵ See, e.g., Moore, “The Integrity of Job,” 17–31; Penchansky, *The Betrayal of God*, 28; Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 14.

⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 496.

⁷ Regarding Job 28, Habel (*The Book of Job*, 38) states, “This poem differs significantly from the speeches that precede and follow. It is not addressed to God or the friends but has the earmarks of a self-contained and coherent poem on access to primordial wisdom.”

⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, xxxix–xlvi; *idem*, “Deconstructing,” 66–73.

⁹ Clines (“Job's Three Friends,” 199) first used the term “tonality” to refer to “[t]he mood, or tone, of each of the speakers” in Job.

throughout the three cycles of debate is seriously challenged by YHWH, the final divine verdict against the three friends approves indirectly what Job has said.¹⁰

The recognition of tensions, inconsistency and dissonance is a direct result of the violation of readerly expectations. As readers process a text, they form various kinds of expectations. Structural tensions arise because of the presence of expectations about continuity in form. The discontinuity of similar forms or structures in the same work causes some readers to consider the text as incoherent. Similarly, the portrayal of a character in a story is often expected to be consistent unless a rationale for a certain change is explicitly or implicitly offered.¹¹ An abrupt change in the characterization of an actor gives an impression to some readers that the story is incoherent. In processing a story, a reader normally forms expectations of continuity and consistency in the authorial purpose. Contradictions in the implied author's presumed proposition(s) inevitably contribute to the incoherence perceived by some readers. All these expectations can thus be grouped under the general category of coherence, a term which "has been difficult to define, in part because it occurs along so many literary axes."¹² For a working definition of the term in literary studies, I will adopt the one espoused by Ellen van Wolde: "Coherence refers to the linguistic quality which is created by the reader's interpretation of a text as a meaningful whole."¹³ When readers process a piece of writing, they long for a grip on the phenomena with which they are confronted. Being informed by textual

¹⁰ Similarly, Moore ("The Integrity of Job," 21) states, "The juxtaposition of Job's repentance and exoneration seems, on the surface at least, to present a clash."

¹¹ Chatman, *Story and Discourse*, 30–31.

¹² Robinowitz, *Before Reading*, 142.

¹³ Van Wolde, "The Creation of Coherence," 168–69.

cohesive features, a reader constructs coherence in order to produce a meaningful representation of the text as a whole. Taken as such, in addition to finding possible ANE parallels, text-critical problems, and issues pertinent to the language and vocabulary of the book of Job,¹⁴ a major stream of the history of its interpretation may be perceived as the quest for attaining a coherent reading experience of the entire work.

One approach to smooth out certain local dissonance is to ascribe the cause to extrinsic factors. Regarding the third cycle of wisdom dialogue, the difficulty is sometimes explained as a displacement in the original manuscript during scribal transmission.¹⁵ Even Norman Habel, who is a fervent defender of the integrity of the book of Job, has to re-distribute Job 26:5–14 to follow Job 25:1–6 as part of the third speech of Bildad, and attribute Job 24:18–24 and 27:13–23 to Zophar as his final speech.¹⁶ Marvin Pope even suggested that the rearrangement is not accidental but deliberate.¹⁷ He believed that the scribes intentionally put some of Bildad's and Zophar's words into Job's mouth "in order to confuse the issue and nullify Job's argument."¹⁸ While many have interpreted the oddity of the third cycle as resulting from intentional or unintentional displacement in the manuscript, Norman Snaith suggested that the phenomenon was a result of erroneous transmission of an incomplete manuscript.¹⁹ He

¹⁴ For a convenient survey, see, e.g., Williams, "Current Trends," 6–11.

¹⁵ See, e.g., Barton, "Composition," 66–77; Rowley, "Meaning," 187–89; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 37–38; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 24–26; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 589, 626, 643–44, 661.

¹⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 37–38. In addition, he also suggested that Job 28 is an independent poem on wisdom (38–39).

¹⁷ Pope, *Job*, xx.

¹⁸ Pope, *Job*, xx.

¹⁹ Snaith, *The Book of Job*, 62. Westermann (*Structure*, 131–34) held a similar view. He even argues, "The exegesis of these chapters 24–27 shows how an interpretation which hold fast to the transmitted text at all

argued that the so-called third cycle never existed. The author, who wrote the rest of the book, began to fit these fragments into the project, but did not finish it.²⁰

Besides the third cycle of debate, the local discord with respect to the wisdom poem in ch. 28 and the Elihu speeches is sometimes removed by arguments appealing to the transmission process. For instance, Edward Greenstein suggested that Job 28 originally followed the Elihu speeches, but “the pages of papyrus on which the ancient text was probably written ... were pasted together—or came apart and were recopied—out of sequence.”²¹ While David Clines agreed with Greenstein regarding the sequential order of the wisdom poem in ch. 28 and the Elihu speeches, he, nevertheless, argued that it was the sheet containing the Elihu speeches that had been sewn or pasted in the wrong order.²² Needless to say, the major weakness of the “displacement” theory is its conjectural nature and the arbitrariness of the attempted reconstruction. Even if the local incongruity is reduced or removed by the resulting rearrangement, the struggle to give a coherent reading of the entire work remains.

A more common approach to tackle the perceived tensions intrinsic to the book of Job is to construct a coherent history of its composition. Since the dawn of historical-critical scholarship, scholars have interpreted the dissonant elements mentioned above as evidence that the book actually developed by stages. For instance, the prose framework

cost and wishes to deny the presence of disruptions, flaws, and disorder is forced into hypotheses which are often wide of the mark and harmonizations based in the exegete's own imagination” (134 n.3).

²⁰ Snaith, *The Book of Job*, 61–62.

²¹ Greenstein, “Poem on Wisdom,” 269.

²² Clines, “Putting Elihu,” 252.

was believed by some as adapted from an ancient folk tale about the pious hero Job.²³ The discrepancies between the framework and the dialogue can thus be satisfactorily explained. On the other hand, the wisdom poem in Job 28 and the Elihu speeches were sometimes argued individually as later interpolations.²⁴ The secondary nature of these two passages to a certain extent justifies the dissonance felt when one attempts to read them as integral parts of the story.

New hypotheses to construct a coherent history of composition have never ceased to appear. David Penchansky, for instance, conducted an ideological analysis of the book as a disparate text.²⁵ The work was seen as a site where various societal groups struggled to control the story of Job, resulting in tensions and contradictions in the text. Being reluctant to reconstruct a detailed compositional history of Job, Penchansky concluded that “the modern historical inquirer finds it difficult if not impossible to determine precisely which political or social group performed the final redaction of the text. On the contrary, the text resists the attempt to identify it with any group.”²⁶

Similarly, Bruce Zuckerman attempted to reconstruct a polyphonic history of deliberate misreading in the development of the “patient sufferer” tradition.²⁷ The author of the poetic section (with the exception of chs. 28, 32–37) deliberately presented the resulting version as a parody which complains against the traditional stereotype of the

²³ Pope, *Job*, xxiii–xxvi; Fleming, “Tale of Patient Faith,” 468–82; Pinker, “Core Story.” For a good survey of related literature, see also Williams, “Current Trends,” 13–15.

²⁴ See, e.g., Driver-Gray, *Job*, 1:xxxvii–l; Rowley, “Meaning,” 173–77, 191–92; Pope, *Job*, xxvii–xxviii.

²⁵ Penchansky, *The Betrayal of God*, 9.

²⁶ Penchansky, *The Betrayal of God*, 66.

²⁷ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*.

righteous sufferer patiently and silently accepting whatever God brought to him.²⁸ Having misunderstood the parody, the author of the wisdom poem and that of the Elihu speeches respectively attempted to defuse and disprove this dangerous poetry.²⁹ In commenting on Zuckerman's book, Carol Newsom said it best: "In a sense, of course, Zuckerman also restabilizes the meaning of the book of Job by constructing a coherent and integral narrative account of its production. What is contradictory in a synchronic reading becomes dialogical in a diachronic reading."³⁰ The diachronic and synchronic approaches to biblical research have often been seen as contrasting endeavours. The two approaches in fact have much in common. As John Barton asserted, "in both cases the mental processes involved are literary. Both are concerned with the *Gestalt* of the text, with the attempt to grasp it as a comprehensible whole."³¹

Both Penchansky and Zuckerman have provided a fascinating imagining of the composition of the book. I must admit that each of their hypotheses is not totally impossible, though highly conjectural. In fact, the validity of such a theory of counter-argument similar to those proposed by Penchansky and Zuckerman have long been called into question:

In ancient times, a far more effective device was available for countering unorthodox doctrine: since manuscripts of any given work were few, it was easy to suppress the material completely...That ancient readers would employ large-scale interpolations to counter the main thrust of literary works to which they were opposed is a theory of doubtful validity and should be invoked only as a last resort.³²

²⁸ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 47.

²⁹ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 138–58.

³⁰ Newsom, "Considering Job," 94.

³¹ Barton, "Historical Criticism," 7; italics his.

³² Gordis, *God and Man*, 110.

In addition to renewed hypotheses of the history of the composition of the book, literary interests in the book began to bloom in scholarly circles during the 1960s.³³ The popularity of this trend was well testified in the quantity of works applying literary methods to the book in the 1980s.³⁴ In 1993, in concluding her survey of Joban scholarship from the early 1980s to the early 1990s, Newsom observed that “the most significant trend is the emergence of increasingly sophisticated literary approaches to Job.”³⁵ She reiterated a similar remark in her most recent survey on the field since her last review: “Recent strategies for reading Job continue the trajectory of the 1980s and early 1990s in attempting to find a model that allows for reading the book as a whole, while still giving the dissonances or contradictions their due.”³⁶

One way to give a coherent account of the seemingly contradictory literary phenomenon was to attribute the tensions to the authorial intention. Yair Hoffman, for example, classified Job as “anthological” literature in which a plurality of perspectives was catalogued by an author-collector who did not intend to resolve the tensions among them.³⁷ The book’s anthological structure thus made it “a ready-made vehicle capable of absorbing more material than it already contained, and perhaps even inviting additions.”³⁸ Applying elements of Mikhail Bakhtin’s criticism and philosophy to the book of Job, Newsom suggested that the book is best understood as a type of “polyphonic text” in

³³ Williams, “Current Trends,” 12–22.

³⁴ For a good survey, see, e.g., Newsom, “Considering Job,” 87–118.

³⁵ Newsom, “Considering Job,” 112.

³⁶ Newsom, “Re-considering Job,” 156.

³⁷ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 109–14.

³⁸ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 291.

which different genres and voices are deliberately juxtaposed so as to create a dialogue with one another.³⁹ Following the discourse that Newsom had initiated, T. Stordalen also recognized the dialogic nature of the book of Job.⁴⁰ While Newsom emphasized the dialogue between genres, Stordalen focused more upon the actual dialoguing voices and the poetics of polyphony in Job.⁴¹ In order to strengthen its argument, this line of interpretation often attempted to give similar weight to every voice in the book. For example, Stordalen explicitly stated, “no single voice in the Book of Job seems to make statements that are all either entirely salient or completely unacceptable.”⁴² Although it is not the mandate of a polyphonic text to propound any particular view, both Newsom and Stordalen made an extra effort to ratify the voice(s) of Job’s three friends, whose arguments are doubtlessly being rejected by Job, Elihu, and God respectively, not to mention almost all modern interpreters too.⁴³ The forced nature of this type of interpretation in fact made the polyphonic approach less appealing.

To me, the anthological or polyphonic model serves as a means to provide a coherent reading experience by shrewdly shifting the burden of inherent tensions from the text back onto the author. What is contradictory at the textual level becomes completely acceptable at the authorial level for the juxtaposition of different genres and/or voices within the same work is at the heart of the author’s intention, which the

³⁹ Newsom, “Bakhtin,” 290–306; *idem*, “Job and His Friends,” 239–53; *idem*, “Polyphonic Text,” 87–108; *idem*, *Moral Imaginations*; *idem*, “Dialogue and Allegorical Hermeneutics,” 299–305.

⁴⁰ Stordalen, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” 18–37.

⁴¹ Stordalen, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” 22–23.

⁴² Stordalen, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” 34.

⁴³ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 90–129; Stordalen, “Dialogue and Dialogism,” 34.

reader is never able to “divine.” The impossibility of resolving the tensions within the text is assumed to be the purpose of the text. This approach appears to rely on an extra-textual presupposition which is only in the eye of the beholder. Moreover, although the polyphonic approach may be able to attain a coherent interpretation of the text, it certainly fails to provide a coherent reading of the book of Job as a narrative. By the term “narrative,” I mean “a telling of some true or fictitious event or connected sequence of events, recounted by a narrator to a narratee ... [It] consist[s] of a set of events (the story) recounted in a process of narration (or discourse), in which the events are selected and arranged in a particular order (the plot).”⁴⁴ The book of Job, which is recounted by a narrator and underlined by a continuous narrative plot, certainly fits this definition.

According to Northrop Frye, “The primary understanding of any work of literature has to be based on an assumption of its unity. However mistaken such an assumption may eventually prove to be, nothing can be done unless we start with it as a heuristic principle.”⁴⁵ Both of the remaining two approaches began with this principle and attempted to provide a coherent synchronic reading of the text in its entirety. The first is what I call a “transformation” model.⁴⁶ To a certain extent, this represented the conventional understanding which considers God as possessing one of the privileged voices in the work.⁴⁷ Robert Gordis serves as a good representative of those who

⁴⁴ Balrick, *Literary Terms*, “narrative.” The term here has a slightly different connotation than what is typically understood in biblical studies as a genre in “prose” as distinguished from “poetry” (e.g., Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*). Alter even labels biblical narrative as “prose fiction” (24).

⁴⁵ Frye, “Literary Criticism,” 63.

⁴⁶ MacKenzie (“Transformation of Job,” 51–57) was perhaps the first scholar who used “transformation” as a motif in guiding the reader throughout the book of Job. He observed that there exists a “transformation” pattern in some Hebrew narratives which include the book of Job.

⁴⁷ In biblical narratives, the voice of God is commonly assumed to be normative. See, e.g., Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 19, 54; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 322–25.

espoused this view. He was perhaps one of the earliest critical scholars who focused attention on the unity and meaning of the book of Job as a whole. For Gordis, the divine speeches from the whirlwind (38:1—40:2; 40:6—41:26) served as the climax of the book. The author arrived at the basic conclusion through the divine speeches as follows: “*just as there is order and harmony in the natural world though imperfectly grasped by man [sic], so there is order and meaning in the moral sphere, though often incomprehensible to man [sic]*.”⁴⁸ As the divine speeches have enlightened Job, he becomes truly satisfied and replies to God contritely. After Job’s repentance, the deity declares that the friends have not spoken the truth about God as Job has done. Gordis interpreted this verdict as the oblique but clear authorial voice saying “that Job’s courageous and honorable challenge to God is *more acceptable* to Him than conventional defenses of God’s justice that rest upon distortions of reality.”⁴⁹ This way of toning down the tension between this verdict and God’s confrontation of Job in the divine speeches was typical among the arguments offered by scholars embracing the transformation view. In commenting on 42:7, Francis Andersen, for example, shrewdly stated, “Job is clearly pronounced to have had the *better* of the debate.”⁵⁰ Habel similarly relativized the absoluteness of the judgment by saying “[t]he blunt and forthright accusations of Job from the depths of his agony are *closer* to the truth than the conventional unquestioning pronouncements of the friends.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Gordis, *God and Man*, 133; italics his.

⁴⁹ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 494; italics mine.

⁵⁰ Andersen, *Job*, 293; italics mine.

⁵¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 583; italics mine.

Like the transformation model, the last approach, which may be called a sceptical model, also sought to offer a coherent synchronic reading of the book. Proponents of this view, however, argued that Job serves as the unequivocal voice of the author. James Crenshaw, for instance, cast doubt over the normativity of the divine voice and asserted that the ancient audience should have affirmed Job's bitter lament and thus could have recognized Job as speaking for the author.⁵² He put the book under the category of sceptical literature which sought to provide a viable option to orthodox Yahwism.⁵³ Katharine Dell followed suit and labelled the book of Job as sceptical literature.⁵⁴ She believed that "the character of Job is clearly born of the author's own experience."⁵⁵ In commenting on Job's final responses to God, she suggested that they represent "the author's experience—that often one does not receive a satisfactory answer but all one can do before such a God is to bow down and repent."⁵⁶

James Williams pushed the limit further and interpreted God as the object of irony in the book.⁵⁷ He viewed the author as portraying the deity as possessing amoral caprice. He understood the book of Job as representing "a radical crisis for Israelite wisdom and a break-down of the ancient Near Eastern understanding of the world as a coherent and just order."⁵⁸ Williams saw the content of the divine speeches as ironic and even daringly

⁵² Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 108.

⁵³ Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 184–204.

⁵⁴ Dell, *Sceptical Literature*, 1–4.

⁵⁵ Dell, *Sceptical Literature*, 171.

⁵⁶ Dell, *Sceptical Literature*, 208.

⁵⁷ Williams, "Mystery and Irony," 231–55.

⁵⁸ Williams, "Mystery and Irony," 252.

stated that “God appears as a divine version of the friends ... writ large.”⁵⁹ He interpreted the last response of Job as a cunning move by him to deal with someone who fails to observe covenants. When God eventually pronounces Job as right in what he has spoken, God is in fact condemning himself. The poet together with Job wins the victory.⁶⁰ Similarly, David Robertson offered almost exactly the same interpretation as Williams.⁶¹ The only difference is the way Robertson understood the meaning of the book. He saw that what actually comforts someone who is in the midst of suffering is the fact that one has a higher integrity than the deity.⁶²

Another interesting reading along the same line was offered by Jack Miles, who traced a biography of God through the Hebrew Bible.⁶³ What he added is the possibility of an unrepentant Job at the end.⁶⁴ After discussing the difficulty and ambiguity of the text in 42:6, he took the liberty and translated the verse as “I shudder with sorrow for mortal clay.”⁶⁵ There is no repentance of Job at all, not even a “tongue-in-cheek” one as understood by Williams and Robertson. God in the epilogue yields to Job’s characterization of himself, forfeits his wager with the adversary and atones for his mistreatment of Job by doubling Job’s initial possessions. “After Job, God knows his

⁵⁹ Williams, “Mystery and Irony,” 247.

⁶⁰ Williams, “Mystery and Irony,” 247.

⁶¹ Robertson, *Literary Critic*. It is difficult to determine who came up with the idea first since Williams (“Mystery and Irony,” 241 n.42) acknowledged the presence of an unpublished paper on a similar topic by Robertson at his time of writing.

⁶² Robertson, *Literary Critic*, 54.

⁶³ Miles, *God: A Biography*.

⁶⁴ Miles, *God: A Biography*, 325.

⁶⁵ Miles, *God: A Biography*, 325. Curtis (“On Job’s Response,” 497–511) also proposed a similar interpretation of Job’s final response many years before the publication of Miles’s monograph.

own ambiguity as he has never known it before.”⁶⁶ In other words, for Miles, there is a transformation of God in the book of Job.

As Gary Morson put it, “To take a verbal text as a literary work ... is to assume in principle (1) that everything in the text is potentially relevant to its design, and (2) that the design is complete in the text that we have.”⁶⁷ Those who argued for the sceptical nature of the book, however, often failed to demonstrate the relevance of certain components of the book to its overall design. Regarding the prose framework, for example, Miles wrote, “Obviously, one cannot take the frame story, the fable of the Book of Job as seriously as we are taking it without giving full weight to its conclusion.”⁶⁸ Another deficiency was the inability to explain satisfactorily how the content of the divine speeches fits into the overall design of the book. The absence of an answer to Job was often considered as the answer to the reader. The content of the speeches was rarely explored in depth, even though they were often claimed to serve as the climax or anticlimax of the work.

From the above overview, it seems that a satisfactory coherent reading of the book of Job has not yet been offered. This dissertation may be seen as another attempt to provide such a reading. As mentioned earlier, coherence is constructed by a reader who is guided by textual cohesiveness in order to produce a meaningful representation of the text as a whole. This corresponds to the twofold purpose of my project. On the one hand, this dissertation will place heavy emphasis on the interconnectedness between different

⁶⁶ Miles, *God: A Biography*, 328.

⁶⁷ Morson, *Boundaries of Genre*, 41.

⁶⁸ Miles, *God: A Biography*, 310.

parts of the book of Job. It is my hypothesis that the apparent dissonances or contradictions of the work are the result of not paying due attention to how words, phrases, images and motifs are being used and re-used throughout the story. The structural and thematic tensions can be explained by exploring the manner by which a character alludes to the utterance spoken by previous speakers. On the other hand, this dissertation will seek to demonstrate that a reading guided by these internal verbal and thematic connections is able to produce a coherent meaning for this literary masterpiece.

CHAPTER 2

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The first goal of my dissertation is to demonstrate the intrinsic cohesiveness of the book of Job. The examination of literary connections within Job is not something novel. This subject is sometimes related to the study of the presence of a particular literary phenomenon in the book. In handling the verbal exchange between Job on one hand and his friends and God on the other, Gordis, for instance, brought in the concept of “quotation.”¹ He defined the term “quotations” as “words which do not reflect the present sentiments or situation of the speaker, but have been introduced by the author to convey the standpoint either of another person or of another situation.”² While his primary agenda in introducing the concept was mainly to explain the occurrence of passages that seem to be out of place in their context, others have picked up the notion of quotation as evidence of literary connections between the speeches.³

Apart from quotation, irony is another literary device which has often been noted in the book of Job. In his unpublished dissertation, William Power explored the incidence of different types of irony in Job.⁴ In his examination of verbal irony, which he defined as a literary phenomenon in which the author creates a meaning opposite to the literal sense, he used the term “ironic interplay” to denote the various ironic connections which, he

¹ Gordis, *God and Man*, 169–89.

² Gordis, *God and Man*, 174. This is nevertheless not the definition that I will be adopting for the term in this dissertation.

³ See, e.g., Course, *Speech and Response*, 5; Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 21–23.

⁴ Power, “Irony.”

argued, exist between the speeches.⁵ Similarly, John Holbert, in his dissertation under the supervision of Power, focused on the incidence of formal and verbal irony which may be found in those passages influenced by the genre of complaint (*Klage*).⁶ Of particular interest is the attention he gave to “verbal irony” which he defined as “a description of those instances where words and/or phrases occur in the mouths of different participants in the book to comment, usually ironically, on one of the other participant’s use of the same word and/or phrase.”⁷ Although the dissertations of Power and Holbert have made a significant contribution toward an appreciation of the internal literary connections within the book of Job at a deeper level, each study only examined those passages in which the author claimed to have detected the presence of irony.

Literary connections between certain portions of the book of Job have also been investigated. Robert Forrest, for instance, suggested that a line of continuity between the prologue (chs. 1–2) and Job’s beginning lament (ch. 3) can be discerned by examining certain key words and phrases in the former, which, he believed, are semantically connected to the latter.⁸ He elaborated on the significance of the imagery created by terms related to “cursing” and “integrity” and argued that “Job’s vehement rejection of his situation in chap. 3 has noteworthy antecedents in the prologue.”⁹ Similarly, Willem Beuken demonstrated that numerous semantic lines of connection exist between Job’s

⁵ Power, “Irony,” 20–26.

⁶ Holbert, “*Klage*.”

⁷ Holbert, “*Klage*,” v.

⁸ Forrest, “Two Faces,” 385–98.

⁹ Forrest, “Two Faces,” 385.

beginning lament, Eliphaz's first speech (chs. 4–5) and Job's initial reply (chs. 6–7).¹⁰

Whereas Forrest did not provide any explicit criteria for identifying semantic correspondences, Beuken adopted a methodology which was strictly limited to the reuse of similar words and roots. He raised the question of the potential narrowness of this type of word search in semantic studies by asking, "Are we not, in this way, placing a large number of profound thematic correspondences outside our purview?"¹¹ Beuken, nevertheless, left his own question unanswered at the end of his article.

In an attempt to address the question of how Job and his friends can be said to be responding to one another through their speeches, John Course thoroughly examined the introductory section of each speech in Job 4–24.¹² He cast a net wider than that of Beuken by allowing thematic correspondences to be one of the legitimate criteria for identifying literary connections. Nevertheless, he classified different types of connections in a hierarchy:

A specific word or root repetition will, in general, be viewed as the strongest evidence for a response as it is the clearest. The term "allusion" will be used to denote a synonym which appears to tie two passages together. Unless fairly strong, an allusion will usually be accorded less weight than word repetition. The least weight will be given to a thematic connection, the term which will be used to indicate a link between two passages on the basis of similar subject matter rather than by shared vocabulary or through the employment of synonyms.¹³

In a work unlike the above, Yohan Pyeon, in his revised dissertation under James Sanders, also investigated the literary connections within the book of Job.¹⁴ His primary

¹⁰ Beuken, "Job's Imprecation," 41–78.

¹¹ Beuken, "Job's Imprecation," 70.

¹² Course, *Speech and Response*.

¹³ Course, *Speech and Response*, 14–15. This is not the way the term "allusion" will be understood in this dissertation.

¹⁴ Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*.

methodology, however, was intertextuality, one level of which, according to him, is verbal correspondences within a literary work. In order to keep the project to a manageable size, Pyeon limited his study to Job 3–14. There were two major problems in his work. First was Pyeon’s reliance on the premise of his supervisor regarding the theological problem which the book of Job was addressing. Sanders argued that the book of Job stood as a major exilic or postexilic statement refuting the effort of Job’s friends to apply pre-exilic, prophetic, and corporate views of sin to Job as an individual.¹⁵ Even in his methodology section, Pyeon stated upfront that this was the position he would adopt in what follows.¹⁶ As a consequence, he included those connections which enhance this belief and dismissed those which prove otherwise. Second was his claim on certain key issues of the book in his conclusion such as the tension between the divine speeches and God’s final verdict, as well as the ultimate purpose of the entire book, given the fact that his research was only limited to the study of Job 3–14.¹⁷

Another study that is worth mentioning is Robert Alter’s article on the poetry in the divine speeches.¹⁸ His primary focus was to establish the link between the divine speeches (chs. 38–41) and Job’s beginning lament (ch. 3). Alter understood Job 38–41 as one speech of God from the storm which “is finely calculated as a climactic development of images, ideas, and themes that appear in different and sometimes antithetical contexts earlier in the poetic argument.”¹⁹ In his argument he took liberty to draw associations

¹⁵ Sanders, “Intertextuality and Canon,” 324–26.

¹⁶ Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 62.

¹⁷ Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 213–24.

¹⁸ Alter, “Voice,” 33–41; republished as a chapter in his later monograph *The Art of Biblical Poetry*.

¹⁹ Alter, “Voice,” 34.

between the divine speech, Job 38–39 in particular, and Job’s opening lament by connecting key-terms, images and themes inherent in both passages.

Finally, I must bring back Habel, who was to my knowledge the only scholar who has spilled so much ink on literary connections within Job in writing a commentary on the book. On this subject he wrote,

We have argued above that the underlying narrative plot of Job provides an integrating framework for the book as a whole. To this argument can be added evidence from the author’s technique of verbal allusion and motif repetition. The artist’s way of integrating materials does not reflect a pedantic, point-for-point correspondence between argument and rebuttal, or between challenge and response. The approach is tangential; verbal associations are made by indirect allusion; and literary connections are often playful.²⁰

Since it was not the primary task of Habel to examine all possible “verbal allusion and motif repetition” within Job, he dismissed some potential literary connections out of hand when they did not fit his interpretive paradigm. Moreover, as mentioned in the previous section, since he could not make sense of the present arrangement of the speeches in the third cycle of debate (chs. 24–27) and the wisdom poem (Job 28), he did not provide a reading on these chapters as presented in the final form of the book.

From the brief overview above, it appears that a comprehensive study of literary connections within the entire book of Job as represented by the Masoretic Text is long overdue.²¹ This dissertation will be an attempt to fill this lacuna. Although many possible literary connections have been studied by the above scholars, I do at times disagree with their verbal associations or the implications they draw from those associations. I have also discovered some connections which have been overlooked by others. For the sake of

²⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 51.

²¹ This of course does not dismiss the importance of other textual traditions, which will be consulted as needed.

clarity, it is imperative to first define two important related terms—“quotation” and “allusion”—and distinguish their difference.

Quotations, in the broadest sense, pervade every utterance, for all texts are compelled to draw on previous vocabulary, expressions, images, and ideas.²² A special type of quotation, called *attributed quotation*, consists of words that are intended to be taken as belonging to a subject other than the primary speaker, regardless of their actual source, and only repeated by the latter. I will reserve the name “attributed citation” for this type of quotation. Whether the attributed citation expresses the sentiment of the precedent voice truthfully is not a matter in question. Most important is the distance that the primary speaker sets in relation to that voice. In attributed citations, the voice may change significantly, even in total opposition to that of the primary speaker, especially in disputation.

An attributed citation can be marked by a *verbum dicendi*, an explicit verb of speaking or thinking, such as אמר. Moreover, it can sometimes be signalled by virtual markings. The main indices for marking a quoted discourse are suggested by Michael Fox as follows:

- (a) There is another subject besides the primary speaker present in the immediate vicinity of the quotation,...
- (b) There is a virtual *verbum dicendi* – a verb or noun that implies speech.
- (c) The switch to the perspective of the quoted voice is signalled by a change in grammatical number and person. The presence of this last sign is largely dependent on the content of the quotation and may unavoidably be lacking, but when present it is often the clearest of the three signals.²³

²² As Julia Kristeva (*Desire in Language*, 66) puts it, “any text is constructed as a mosaic of quotations; any text is the absorption and transformation of another.”

²³ Fox, “Quotations,” 423.

Recently, Edward Greenstein has also suggested that the presence of (d) “a deictic (pointing) pronoun that draws attention to the quoted discourse” is another indicator of attributed citation.²⁴ Of course, not all attributed citations necessarily contain all of the four virtual markers noted above. The number of signs, however, is directly proportional to the probability of a cited speech being present. I adopt the criteria suggested by Fox and Greenstein, and define an attributed citation as marked when it contains some of the signs discussed above. In this dissertation, I will identify such a marked attributed citation when it is present, and utilize this data to inform the interpretation of the pericope under study.²⁵

A quotation, in a more conventional sense, may refer to words that are intended to be recognized as originating from another source but are “reused” as the words of the speaker. The words uttered, however, are meant to be heard as the voice of the primary speaker, even though the voice of the precedent text is also simultaneously invoked. The current voice may have different types of relationship to the precedent voice, ranging from absolute alignment to total opposition. In what follows, I will use the term “allusion” when referring to this type of quotation.²⁶

The study of allusion can be further classified into two major streams in biblical scholarship. First is the study of the literary reuse between two independent biblical texts. This phenomenon has been widely scrutinized under the rubrics of “inner-biblical

²⁴ Greenstein, “Truth or Theodicy,” 247.

²⁵ Gordis and many others have used the hypothesis of unmarked attributed quotations in Job to smooth out interpretive difficulties in the text. This position, however, will not be adopted in this dissertation.

²⁶ I am aware of the fact that the term “allusion” in literary studies often refers to the “tacit reference to *another* literary work, to another art, to history, to contemporary figures, or the like” (italics mine; Miner, “Allusion,” 18). See also Ben-Porat, “Literary Allusion,” 105–28. The nuance that I am adopting here is a more literal, not literary, sense of the word.

exegesis,” “echo,” “allusion,” “quotation/citation” and “intertextuality” in biblical studies.²⁷ Discussion on the appropriate methodology in conducting this type of research is also relatively abundant. In her monograph on Job, Newsom argues that both Job and his friends at times quote traditional sayings in order to enhance their own arguments.²⁸ Whereas the friends often cite authoritative tradition in agreement and support, Job at times alludes to the hymnic tradition in order to parody them.²⁹ Unless it is crucial to the interpretation of the passage under study, the discussion of this type of inner-biblical allusion will not be the focus of the present project. The second stream of allusion study, in contrast, is concerned with the repetition of words, phrases, images and motifs within the same literary work. To be more precise, I am interested only in those allusions, which enrich the interpretation of the alluding text. Sommer’s concept of “echo” may be helpful here. He differentiates echo from allusion based on the criteria that in the former “no utilization of the source material” is recognizable “for rhetorical or strategic end.”³⁰ Although the recognition of echo will enhance the cohesiveness of the work, allusion, not echo, will be the principal object of investigation in this dissertation.

²⁷ For “inner-biblical exegesis,” see, e.g., Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 1–43; for “intertextuality,” see, e.g., Willey, *Remember the Former Things*; for “allusion,” see, e.g., Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*; for “echo,” see, e.g., Hays, *Echoes of Scripture*. One must take caution that not all scholars define the above terms in exactly the same way. For example, at one end of the pole, Hays appears to use the terms “citation,” “allusion,” and “echo” interchangeably without clear distinction (pp. 14–29). At the other end of the pole, Sommer takes pain in defining “allusion,” “echo,” and “exegesis” as terms associated with different emphasis even though he admits that the boundaries between them may at times be blurred (pp. 10–18).

²⁸ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 130.

²⁹ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 130–31.

³⁰ Sommer, *A Prophet Reads Scripture*, 15.

In biblical scholarship, the study of allusion or repetition within a literary work falls naturally in the realm of rhetorical criticism.³¹ The book of Job, which is a story or narrative comprising primarily speeches of different characters, is unique in the sense that repetition—be it verbal or thematic—can be perceived at two levels. At the textual level, just like any other texts, repetition is one of the many rhetorical devices at the author's disposal. At the narrative level, however, this technique becomes part of the repertoire of a character used to launch his argument in response to another. Since every narrative possesses a temporal dimension called “narrated time” in which characters interact with one another, the methodology employed in the study of inner-biblical allusion may thus be applicable to this type of research with appropriate adjustments. In this regard, the works of Richard Schultz and Mark Boda are most relevant to the present project.

Schultz, in his revised dissertation under Brevard Childs, gives a thorough study on the phenomenon of quotation in general, with a special emphasis on verbal parallels in prophetic material.³² With the exception of his strict adherence to verbal correspondence, his definition of “quotation” comes close to what I define as “allusion” above. He introduces a twofold (diachronic and synchronic) analysis in the study of quotation. According to Schultz, the diachronic phase of analysis examines the “historical factors which may have produced or influenced the use of quotation.”³³ This phase demands attention to the identification of the source and its context and also the determination of the historical context which prompted the quotation. His synchronic phase shifts attention

³¹ For a good overview of rhetorical criticism in Hebrew Bible scholarship, see, e.g., Tribble, *Rhetorical Criticism*.

³² Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 10.

³³ Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 229.

to the function of the repeated language within texts to examine its literary impact on the reading process.³⁴ For Schultz, “[t]o analyze quotation synchronically involves interpreting it within the context of the entire book or books in which it is located.”³⁵ In short, he promotes an approach which incorporates both diachronic and synchronic analyses.

Building on the methodology suggested by Schultz, Boda conducts a twofold intertextual analysis on Zech 11:4–16.³⁶ In the diachronic phase of analysis, Boda identifies the inner-biblical connections between Ezek 34:1–13 and 37:15–28 on the one hand and Zech 11:4–16 on the other, studies the larger contexts of the texts, and reflects on the way in which the antecedent texts in Ezekiel are being reused within the later text in Zechariah. Whereas Schultz’s synchronic phase of analysis has more to do with the impact that the presence of the verbal parallels makes upon the reading process of the final canonical form of the prophetic books as a collection, Boda’s synchronic phase of analysis of Zech 11:4–16 focuses exclusively on how the intertextual insights influence the reading of the final form of Zech 9–14.

Following the lead of Schultz and Boda, I am going to conduct a twofold analysis on the book of Job section by section. In the first phase, I will identify the literary connections between the passage under study and those which come before it, and reflect on the way the antecedent texts are being reused. Instead of calling this phase “diachronic analysis,” I will refer to it as “Repetition Analysis,” “Allusions Analysis,” “Attributed

³⁴ Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 232–33.

³⁵ Schultz, *Search for Quotation*, 233.

³⁶ Boda, “Reading between the Lines,” 277–91. Boda’s conception of “intertextuality” resembles my notion of “allusion.”

Citation Analysis,” or “Internal Quotation Analysis,” depending on the types of literary connections found.³⁷

It appears evident that the first logical step in any study on literary connections is to establish the criteria for detecting textual reuse.³⁸ In a recent article, Leonard proposes eight principles as methodological guidelines for evaluating evidence for inner-biblical allusions:

- (1) Shared language is the single most important factor in establishing a textual connection.
- (2) Shared language is more important than nonshared language.
- (3) Shared language that is rare or distinctive suggests a stronger connection than does language that is widely used.
- (4) Shared phrases suggest a stronger connection than do individual shared terms.
- (5) The accumulation of shared language suggests a stronger connection than does a single shared term or phrase.
- (6) Shared language in similar contexts suggests a stronger connection than does shared language alone.
- (7) Shared language need not be accompanied by shared ideology to establish a connection.
- (8) Shared language need not be accompanied by shared form to establish a connection.³⁹

Although these principles are helpful, one must heed the warning of Boda, who cautions against limiting the search for textual connections to “lexical data,” noting that “evaluation limited in this way will not always yield results.”⁴⁰ Michael Stead, in his recent revised dissertation, goes further and suggests that the selection bias built into a method which only allows strict verbal parallels may even give distorted results.⁴¹ After

³⁷ In the case when a pericope contains both attributed citations and allusions, I will use the term “internal quotations” as an umbrella term for them.

³⁸ For a recent survey of different methodologies, see Miller, “Intertextuality,” 294–98.

³⁹ Leonard, “Identifying Inner-Biblical Allusions,” 246–57.

⁴⁰ Boda, *Praying the Tradition*, 2–3.

⁴¹ Stead, *Intertextuality*, 29–30.

all, detecting an allusion is both an art and a science. D. Muecke, in his article on the discussion of “irony markers,” makes an insightful remark. He writes, “in any particular case of irony the irony-marker can be *confirmed* as such only retrospectively, that is when one has understood the irony. But in this the interpretation of irony is not different from interpretation in general.”⁴² The same holds true for the identification of allusion. Even if one adopts a minimalist approach which allows only exact equivalence, one cannot completely avoid the danger of over-interpretation. I echo Course, who rightly states, “every language has a limited vocabulary at a given time and biblical Hebrew has a relatively restricted number of words.”⁴³

The cohesiveness of a text is a necessary but not sufficient condition for coherence. As van Wolde puts it, “The cohesive information is present in the text, but the mental representation of coherence is the result of an inferring process by the reader.”⁴⁴ It is therefore also imperative to demonstrate that a coherent reading experience can be attained by following the guidance of the cohesive elements in the text.⁴⁵ This will be the second goal of my dissertation, which I will call, “Impact on the Reading.” In this phase of analysis, I will discern the impact that the insights from the “Repetition/Allusion/Attributed Citation/Internal Quotation Analysis” make upon the reading process of the passage under study and examine how the resulting interpretation contributes to the development of the story up to that point. It should be noted that the

⁴² Muecke, “Irony Markers,” 374; italics his.

⁴³ Course, *Speech and Response*, 12.

⁴⁴ Van Wolde, “The Creation of Coherence,” 171–72.

⁴⁵ As Miller (“Intertextuality,” 299) puts it, “Recognizing relationships between texts is merely the first step in the process of intertextual reading. Equally important, if not more so, is identifying what hermeneutical significance the proposed similarities have for one or both of the related texts.”

book of Job is not only a text but also a particular type of text, namely, a narrative.⁴⁶ A satisfactory reading experience of the work thus includes coherence at both the story level and the rhetorical level. To facilitate this discussion, I will borrow some insights from literary critic James Phelan, who views narrative as rhetoric, which has “the purpose of communicating knowledge, feelings, values, and beliefs.”⁴⁷

A crucial concept that Phelan introduces is narrative progression, which he defines as “the synthesis of the narrative’s internal logic, as it unfolds from beginning through middle to end, with the developing interests and responses of the audiences to that unfolding.”⁴⁸ In examining progression, the audiences are thus compelled to be involved in considering narratives as developing wholes. As they engage with the story, they seek to establish a coherent configuration of the story by developing interests in the mimetic, thematic, and synthetic components of the narrative and generate corresponding responses.⁴⁹ The way in which these interests are cultivated is through the author’s use of conflicts, the focus of the audience’s interests. Phelan defines two main types of unstable relations within narrative:

In general, the story-discourse model of narrative helps to differentiate between two main kinds of instabilities: The first are those occurring within the story, instabilities between characters, created by situations, and complicated and resolved through actions. The second are those created by the discourse,

⁴⁶ See my definition of “narrative” in Chapter 1.

⁴⁷ Phelan, *Narrative as Rhetoric*, 18.

⁴⁸ Phelan, *Living to Tell*, 19.

⁴⁹ According to Phelan (*Living to Tell*, 20), “Responses to the mimetic component involve an audience’s interest in the characters as possible people and in the narrative world as like our own. Responses to the thematic component involve an interest in the ideational function of the characters and in the cultural, ideological, philosophical, or ethical issues being addressed by the narrative. Responses to the synthetic component involve an audience’s interest in and attention to the characters and to the larger narrative as artificial constructs.”

instabilities—of value, belief, opinion, knowledge, expectation—between authors and/or narrators, on the one hand, and the authorial audience on the other.⁵⁰

Phelan assigns the term “instabilities” for conflicts within the story and the term “tensions” for those created by the discourse. The importance of paying attention to a narrative’s progression is that it allows one to grasp the way in which the text invites readers to construct a coherent reading experience of the story as rhetoric.

Thus, in contrast to the emphasis of the synchronic phase of analysis introduced by Schultz or Boda, the focus of the second phase of analysis in this dissertation will be on the impact that the relevant data from the first phase of analysis may have made upon the perception of the development of the instabilities and tensions inherent in the story. Hypotheses regarding the configuration, that is, “the direction and purpose of the whole narrative,”⁵¹ may be formulated at this point. As the reading process continues, the insights from the “Repetition/Allusion/Attributed Citation/Internal Quotation Analysis” may help to resolve ambiguities as well as to confirm or to revise hypotheses formed earlier regarding the configuration.

In addition to the first two chapters, this dissertation will consist of seven chapters. In Chapters 3 through 8, I will examine each pericope of Job, following the twofold analysis outlined above, i.e., “Repetition/Allusion/Attributed Citation/Internal Quotation Analysis” and “Impact on the Reading.” For the very first pericope of the book of Job, since there is no antecedent text, the repetition of key words, phrases, and motifs will be discussed instead in the first phase of analysis. The division of chapters will be in

⁵⁰ Phelan, *Reading People*, 15. The story-discourse model of narrative is also espoused by many renowned literary critics such as Chatman (*Story and Discourse*) and Booth (*Rhetoric of Fiction*). I find Phelan’s works most helpful for the discussion of his concept of narrative progression serves as a heuristic channel through which the two levels of a narrative can be navigated.

⁵¹ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 19.

accordance with the progression of the story as I perceive it. They are the beginning (chs. 1–3), the first cycle of dialogue between Job and his friends (chs. 4–14), the second cycle of dialogue between Job and his friends (chs. 15–21), the third cycle of dialogue between Job and his friends (chs. 22–31), the Elihu speeches (chs. 32–37), and the ending (chs. 38–42). The beginning of a pericope in the so-called framework (Job 1–2; 42:7–17) will be determined by the exposition component, which provides information about the narrative, the characters, the setting, and events of the narrative. On the other hand, the beginning of a pericope in the dialogue (Job 3:1—42:6) will be marked by the explicit narration of the opening of a new speech. Finally, the last chapter will contain a conclusion which summarizes all the major arguments of the study. Some implications of the results will follow.

CHAPTER 3

THE BEGINNING (JOB 1–3)

Chapters 1–3 of the book of Job contain what is typically referred to as the prologue (chs. 1–2) and Job’s opening “lament”¹ or “outburst”² (ch. 3). In this chapter of the dissertation, I will identify the repetitions in each pericope of these chapters and examine their impact on the reading of the corresponding pericope. The first pericope under examination is Job 1:1—2:10. Since this section has no antecedent text, discussion will be focused on the repetition of key words, phrases and motifs within the pericope. The second and third pericopae under examination are Job 2:11–13 and Job 3 respectively.

I. The Prologue—Part One (Job 1:1—2:10)

A. Repetition Analysis

A cursory reading of the passage in question reveals a few recurring phrases and terms. First of all, at the very beginning of the story (1:1), the narrator characterizes Job, the protagonist, with two pairs of parallel terms/phrases: “blameless and upright” (תם וישר) and “one who feared God and turned away from evil” (ירא אלהים וסר מרע). The same description is then picked up by YHWH almost verbatim twice in his dialogue with the satan (1:8; 2:3). The root רע is repeated two more times, one in the narrator’s description of the nature of Job’s disease (2:7) and the other in Job’s verbal response after

¹ Dhorme, *Job*, xxxvi; Gordis, *God and Man*, 11; Westermann, *Structure*, 4.

² Newsom, “Job,” 362. Similarly, Habel (*The Book of Job*, 102) refers to Job 3 as “Job’s opening cry.”

he has been afflicted with such a disease (2:10). Moreover, the root תמם occurs two more times in the construction עד חזק + בתמה, “still maintaining one’s integrity,” one from the mouth of YHWH (2:3) and the other from that of Job’s wife (2:9).

The verb חטא, “to sin,” appears three times in this section. The narrator first uses this verb to refer to the potential transgression that Job’s children might have committed in the thought of Job. The narrator then uses this term to describe what Job has refrained from doing after each round of catastrophes. Although חטא is a common term, the relative importance of the narrator’s evaluation in narrative text suggests that the repetition is significant.³ The most frequently used key word in this section is ברך, the root of which appears six times in the beginning section (1:5, 10, 11, 21; 2:5, 9). Most translations and commentators adopt the euphemism theory and translate the term as a form of the verb “to curse” in 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9.⁴ Moreover, the repetition of the term חנם, “for nothing,” within the pericope (1:9; 2:3) has evoked the attention of most commentators.⁵ This adverb appears 32 times in the Hebrew Bible, four of which come from Job.⁶ The repetition of this relatively rare term within this pericope underscores its significance. In addition to key terms and phrases, motifs may be repeated to show emphasis. In the beginning section, “death” is such a motif that comes up consistently.

³ Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 1–2; Alter, *Biblical Narrative*, 116; Berlin, *Biblical Narrative*, 43; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 51.

⁴ Among commentators, one notable exception is Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 51), who translates the verb in 1:5 as “have blessed.” Nevertheless, he still interprets the verb euphemistically in 1:11; 2:5, 9 and translates it as “curse” (51, 53).

⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 94–95; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 80; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 198; Newsom, “Job,” 354; Balentine, “For No Reason,” 360–61; *idem*, *Job*, 59.

⁶ Aside from 1:9 and 2:3, the adverb חנם also appears in Job at 9:17 and 22:6.

1. תם וישר וירא אלהים וסר מרע (1:1, 8; 2:3)

The narrator embarks upon the story by describing the character of Job in two pairs of parallel words (1:1), both of which are common in proverbial wisdom as well as in the Psalms.⁷ The first pair, תם וישר (“blameless and upright”), places primary focus on the ethical dimension of Job’s piety, whereas the second pair, וירא אלהים וסר מרע (“he feared God and turned away from evil”), emphasizes simultaneously the religious and the moral aspects of it.⁸ YHWH reiterates this characterization of Job almost verbatim twice in his conversation with the satan (1:8; 2:3). Even the satan, who typically functions as an accuser,⁹ does not question the validity of this characterization. At best, he only casts doubt on the reason or motivation for Job’s piety (2:9).¹⁰ The repetition of this key phrase seems to establish the extraordinary piety of Job as a fact “that require[s] no further verification or analysis.”¹¹ This is the foundation upon which the entire account is built.

2. חטא (1:5, 22; 2:10)

The verb חטא, “to sin,” first occurs in the context of the so-called “preemptive sacrifice” Job offers regularly for his children in 1:5.¹² Most interpreters adopt the

⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 11–12. Apart from Job, תם and ישר also appear in parallelism in Prov 2:7, 21; 28:10; 29:10; Pss 25:21; 37:27, whereas ירא אלהים / יהוה and סר מרע appear in parallelism in Prov 3:7.

⁸ Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 49) understands the second pair quite differently and he translates Job 1:1 as “Once there was a man in the country of Uz named Job, a man scrupulously moral, religious, one who avoided evil.”

⁹ As Newsom (“Job,” 347) puts it, “Elsewhere in the OT the word *satan* is used to describe both human (1 Sam 29:4; 1 Kgs 5:4 [18]; Ps 109:6) and heavenly beings (Num 22:22; Zech 3:1), who act as adversaries or accusers” (italics hers).

¹⁰ According to Newsom (“Job,” 349), “[t]he *satan* shifts the focus to the question of what motivates Job’s behavior” (italics hers).

¹¹ Balentine, *Job*, 43.

¹² Brenner, “Job the Pious,” 44.

euphemistic sense of בָּרַךְ in this verse, thus understanding the *waw* in אֹלֵי חַטָּאוּ בְּנֵי וּבְרָכוּ (“perhaps my children have sinned *and* בָּרַךְ-ed God in their hearts”) as epexegetical.¹³ According to this reading, the hypothetical sin that Job fears his children might have committed, according to the narrator, is explicitly elaborated in the latter part of the same sentence, i.e., “they cursed God in their hearts.”¹⁴

As Clines rightly notes, “It is somewhat strange then that Job should fear that they may have committed the gravest sin of all, to ‘curse God’ (a sin punishable by death; cf. 2:9; 1 Kgs 21:10).”¹⁵ Moreover, it is equally strange that Job would have thought that this gravest sin is remediable by a mere burnt offering (עֹלֹת).¹⁶ Consequently, some have attempted to lighten the load of Job’s “sin” in one way or another by interpreting the phrase אֹלֵי חַטָּאוּ בְּנֵי וּבְרָכוּ only as an extreme illustration of a certain type of sin one could have committed. For example, Driver and Gray understand the type of wrongdoing as “unintentional sin” while Clines takes it as “secret sin.”¹⁷ Alternatively, one may argue

¹³ *IBHS* §39.2.4.

¹⁴ Reading against the norm, Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 50–51) takes the two verbs חַטָּא and בָּרַךְ as a hendiadys, thus translating “have blessed Elohim sinfully.”

¹⁵ Clines, *Job*, 1–20, 16. Similarly, Cheney (*Dust, Wind and Agony*, 72) observes that in the immediate preceding context (vv. 2–4), Job’s children are portrayed as blessed with “opulence and enjoyment.” He goes on to argue, “Blaspheming appears to have been something reserved for those in the kind of dire straits Job finds himself in 1:15–22 and 2:7–10, for those who have felt threatened or attacked by God, for those who were rebelling against their family traditions, or for those who were forced by circumstance or conviction to betray their former religious affiliation, not for those who saw themselves as blessed with a life of enjoyment.”

¹⁶ Cf. Iwanski (*Job’s Intercession*, 137–38), who argues, “The author places the story of Job somewhere in the East, at the time resembling that of the patriarchs. This gives the author great flexibility when characterizing Job and his customs. Consequently, as for Job’s offerings we observe that the author does not have any interest in facts, customs, circumstances that his pious Hebrew audience might have been interested in (e.g., number, kind or generosity of the sacrificial victims; exact sacrificial place [altar?]; detailed sacrificial rites etc.). He focuses rather on the fact that Job offered holocausts.”

¹⁷ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:9; Clines, *Job* 1–20, 16.

that the hyperbolic portrayal of Job's piety serves to indicate his pathetic character to avoid misfortune by all possible means.¹⁸

Another equally possible reading strategy is to understand בָּרַךְ in its primary sense. By imputing to בָּרַךְ a meaning "to bless," the sentence, "they have blessed God in their hearts," may be understood as the hope that is in Job, i.e., they have blessed God in their hearts even though they might have sinned.¹⁹ If the *waw* between the two sentences in 1:5 indeed denotes a causal relationship, the second sentence may be interpreted as a reason for the sin they have committed, i.e., they might have sinned by blessing God inwardly only. Job thus completes the outward sacrifice as a complement for them.²⁰ At any rate, the focalization of the verse is the connection between sinning and blessing/cursing God.

In concluding the first round of disaster and Job's corresponding response, the narrator states, "In all these, Job did not sin and he did not give unseemliness (תפלה) to God" (1:22).²¹ Many understand the term תפלה as describing Job's perception of the appropriateness of God's behaviour, and thus translate the sentence as something like "and he did not ascribe unseemliness to God."²² Although this is syntactically plausible, it is preferable to take the word as a description of the nature of Job's utterance, since the concern seems to be what Job would say to the face of God after the loss of all his

¹⁸ Oosthuizen, "Divine Insecurity," 299; Cooper, "Sense," 232; Goodchild, "Job as Apologetic," 153; Ngwa, "Ethics of Piety," 363.

¹⁹ Cheney, *Dust, Wind and Agony*, 73. Linafelt ("Undecidability," 163) also offers a similar reading and he even takes חטא to mean "have missed."

²⁰ Oblath, "Job's Advocate," 197–98.

²¹ Similarly, Habel, *The Book of Job*, 77; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 2; HALOT 2:734.

²² So Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:20; Dhorme, *Job*, 14; Pope, *Job*, 3; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 18; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 75; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 53.

material possessions and his children.²³ Again, in concluding the second round of disaster and response, the narrator states, “In all these, Job did not sin in his lips” (2:10c). His concern again appears to be the relationship between speaking and sinning.

3. בָּרַךְ (1:5, 10, 11, 21; 2:5, 9)

The term בָּרַךְ is undeniably one of the most important words in this opening section, due to its intense usage.²⁴ In its first occurrence, Job’s children are the subject and God the object of the verb (1:5). As mentioned above, the action depicts either the hypothetical sin that Job’s children might have committed (euphemistic sense) or their attitude toward God even though they have sinned (primary sense).

In the context of its next occurrence, the satan taunts YHWH regarding YHWH’s confidence in Job’s piety and suggests that Job is a God-fearer because YHWH has blessed (בָּרַךְ) everything Job has done (1:10). As Pyper rightly observes,

Already in this verse we meet the paradox that it is God’s blessing of Job which becomes the point at issue between God and Satan. If Job had not been saddled with this status, he would never have figured in the conversation in heaven. God’s blessing is what lands Job in trouble.²⁵

Next, the satan proposes to YHWH that if YHWH lays his hand upon all that Job has, Job will surely בָּרַךְ him to his face (1:11). Recognizing the satan’s expression as an oath formula with a protasis introduced by the particles אִם לֹא and an unstated apodosis, Edwin Good argues that the satan is uttering a seriously intended self-curse: “If he does

²³ As Habel (*The Book of Job*, 94) rightly notes, “The closure of the opening episode points to a fundamental question in the overall plot of Job. Do Job’s vehement speeches in the subsequent dialogue constitute “contempt” (*tiplā*) for God? And if so, are they equivalent to the supreme sin of “cursing” God?”

²⁴ Weiss (“Job’s Beginning,” 81) argues that the root בָּרַךְ functions as a *Leitwort*.

²⁵ Pyper, “The Reader in Pain,” 245.

not curse you to your face—[may something horrible happen to me].”²⁶ Tod Linafelt rightly refutes Good’s argument by pointing out that if this oath is self-imprecatory, the unspoken curse of the oath fails to fall upon the satan after his defeat in the first challenge.²⁷ To Linafelt, the sentence may still be taken as an oath, but the recipient of the implied curse is God. He reads the verb בִּרַךְ, “to bless,” as in the primary sense and interprets the oath as follows: “If he does not bless you to your face—[may something horrible happen to you].”²⁸ I find it unnecessary to be too adamant on the soberness of the satan’s oath. After all, the formula may only be a conventional expression indicating the confidence of the speaker.²⁹

Aside from Linafelt’s proposal, there are other, perhaps more satisfactory, readings that can still take בִּרַךְ non-euphemistically in 1:11 (and 2:5). For example, Joüon suggests that אִם לֹא can be understood as an indicator of indirect question, and that Job 1:11b can thus be translated as “(we will see) if he will bless you to your face.”³⁰ Another approach is to take the phrase אִם לֹא as an emphatic marker,³¹ signifying the ironic character of the satan’s statement (“surely he will bless you to your face!”). Even if one adopts the euphemistic interpretation, the phrase can be understood as a marker for the presence of a rhetorical question (“will he not curse you to your face?”).³²

²⁶ Good, “Literary Task,” 475; also *idem*, *In Turns of Tempest*, 50.

²⁷ Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 164.

²⁸ Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 164–65.

²⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 349.

³⁰ Joüon §161f.

³¹ GKC §149e. So *Driver and Gray*, 2:7; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 15.

³² See the usage in Job 17:2 and 30:25. Most commentators understand the function of the phrase in each sentence as either showing emphasis or indicating a rhetorical question.

The root בִּרַךְ is used again in the response of Job after the first round of catastrophes (1:21). At first glance, the statement “Blessed be the name of YHWH” is doubtlessly a declaration of praise. This statement is almost a verbatim repetition of the first opening exhortation (v. 2) in Ps 113, which is clearly a hymn of praise and testimony.³³ Consequently, Job’s attitude may be interpreted as an expression of deep faith that affirms the sovereignty of YHWH.³⁴ However, the immediate context may suggest another possible function of the statement. Job offers his response through both physical and verbal activities. He arises, tears his robe, shears his head, falls to the ground, and bows down (1:20). The action of arising implies that he has been sitting.³⁵ There is not much dispute over the next two actions, namely, the tearing of his robe and the shearing of his head, as connoting the ritual acts of mourning.³⁶ The final two actions, namely, falling (נָפַל) to the ground and bowing down (*hitpa’el* of שָׁחָה),³⁷ when taken together, are far more ambiguous though most interpret them as a sign of adoration, or to a less degree, an act of submission prompted by awe.³⁸ It is certainly true that שָׁחָה can carry the secondary or extended sense of “worship”; its primary or postural sense, however, should take precedence because of its juxtaposition with another act of

³³ Goldingay, *Psalms*, 3:316.

³⁴ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 78. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 93; Balentine, *Job*, 57.

³⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 34.

³⁶ Pham, *Mourning*, 24–25. So Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 58; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 93; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 34–35; Balentine, *Job*, 56.

³⁷ BDB, 1005; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 4 n.20.a. Alternatively, the verb may be derived from the root חָוָה. So HALOT 1:286; Pope, *Job*, 16; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 18.

³⁸ See, e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 12–13; Pope, *Job*, 15–16; Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 58; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 6; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 93; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 77; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 35; Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 57; Balentine, *Job*, 56; Wilson, *Job*, 26.

movement, גַּפּל, in the context.³⁹ Nevertheless, even if the postural sense of the verb is to be preferred, it does not dismiss the possibility that the extended sense of adoration can be present at the same time. The sequence of actions may denote a sense of progression, after all. Perhaps the true nature of Job's actions will be revealed through the words of his that follows.

After this series of actions, Job speaks up, and his words are worth further examination. A wooden translation of Job 1:21 may be rendered: "Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. YHWH has given, and YHWH has taken away. Blessed be the name of YHWH." A similar version of the first sentence also appears in Eccl 5:14 [ET 15]: "As [a man] came from his mother's womb he shall go again, naked as he came." Whether one author is quoting another or both of them are drawing from a common proverbial source is not a concern.⁴⁰ What is important is that the statement in Eccl 5:14 "is an expression of nihilistic resignation."⁴¹ Moreover, the reality of death is clearly in view.⁴² As noted by some, the particle שָׁמָּה, "there," in Job 1:21b ("Naked I came out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there") is a reference to the womb of Mother Earth, that is, a place for burial.⁴³ Clines even asserts, "Job feels himself now already as good as dead; stripped naked of his possessions, he is as if he were already prepared for burial. His words simply verbalize the psychological

³⁹ Gruber, *Nonverbal Communication*, 1:97.

⁴⁰ Ogden (*Qoheleth*, 84), for instance, argues that Qohelet is consciously evoking Job.

⁴¹ Weiss, *Job's Beginning*, 59.

⁴² Seow, *Ecclesiastes*, 221; Longman, *Ecclesiastes*, 166–67.

⁴³ For the imagery of the earth as womb and grave, see Ps 139:13–15. So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 18; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 93; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 36–37; Vall, "Enigma," 325–42.

identification with the dead that he has already made by his ritual acts of mourning.”⁴⁴

The second sentence, “YHWH has given and YHWH has taken away,” is perhaps another proverbial saying associated with death.⁴⁵ The sentiment is expressed similarly in 1 Sam 3:18 and the Arabic formula, “His Lord gave him, his Lord has taken him away.”⁴⁶

However, the saying can connote a pious affirmation of divine sovereignty or a defiant complaint of one’s disastrous fate.⁴⁷ What then is a formula of praise doing in a context of mourning in Job 1:20–21? Walter Vogels argues that Job’s first verbal response is a combination of “stereotyped, pious formulas,” which do not reflect how Job really feels.⁴⁸ An alternative approach is to understand the statement “Blessed be the name of YHWH” as ironic in the form of sarcasm.⁴⁹ It sounds like saying “Thank you so much!” to the police after receiving a speeding ticket.

The use of בָּרַךְ in 2:5 is the same as that in 1:11 as discussed above. The satan challenges YHWH again and suggests that he strikes Job’s bones and flesh so as to see if Job will בָּרַךְ God to his face. Again, the meaning of the satan’s challenge does not differ much whether one adopts the primary or euphemistic sense of בָּרַךְ. Most importantly,

⁴⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 36.

⁴⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 37.

⁴⁶ According to Musil (*Arabia Petraea*, 3:427), the saying “His Lord gave him, his Lord has taken him away” is a proverbial formula uttered by some Arab tribesmen upon the death of a kinsman. See also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 37; Vogels, “Empty Pious Slogans,” 370.

⁴⁷ As Guillaume (“Job’s Intercession,” 464) argues, “The problem is that YHWH gave and then took back, and it is all the more problematic since YHWH took back for naught (Job 2,3).”

⁴⁸ Vogels, “Empty Pious Slogans,” 371.

⁴⁹ Embracing an ironic sense of the declaration is not the same as taking the verb בָּרַךְ as a euphemism for curse. For the latter understanding of this verse, see, e.g., Guillaume, “Rhetorical Questions,” 13–15.

“[t]he *satan*’s challenge makes Job’s *speech* about God the decisive factor in the drama.”⁵⁰

The last occurrence of בָּרַךְ in this opening section comes from the mouth of Job’s wife. The translation and thus interpretation of the second statement of Job’s wife is hotly disputed. For those who entertain the euphemistic understanding of בָּרַךְ, her admonition can be interpreted as a further “temptation” to Job or a humane suggestion of committing euthanasia theologically.⁵¹ It is however not necessary to translate בָּרַךְ euphemistically in 2:9.⁵² The juxtaposition of the concepts of blessing and death is not completely novel in the beginning section. The admonition of Job’s wife is simply a reiteration of Job’s verbal response after the first round of disaster (1:21). Perhaps she has taken the words of her husband (too) literally, and thinks that Job should bless God again for his bodily disease so that he can then die in peace.⁵³

As Linafelt rightly argues, the audience has to negotiate the meaning of בָּרַךְ each time the word is encountered in Job 1–2.⁵⁴ His conclusion is “that the prologue sets up the tension of what constitutes blessing or curse by means of the semantic undecidability

⁵⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 349–50.

⁵¹ See the discussion of Clines, *Job 1–20*, 50–53 on this verse.

⁵² So Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 167; O’Connor, “Bless God and Die,” 48–65.

⁵³ For some recent attempts to cast more positive light on the characterization of Job’s wife, see, e.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, xlvi, 51–53; West, “Hearing Job’s Wife,” 107–31; Gitay, “Visual Arts,” 516–26; van Wolde, *Mr and Mrs Job*, 18–27; Penchansky, “The Satan’s Handmaid,” 223–28; McGinnis, “On Job’s Wife,” 121–41; Magdalene, “Job’s Wife as Hero,” 209–58.

⁵⁴ Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 168.

of בָּרָךְ, which the rest of the book then functions to explore.”⁵⁵ To be more precise, the appropriateness of one’s speech to and/or about God becomes the central issue.⁵⁶

4. חֲנָם (1:9; 2:3)

In the first divine council scene, in his response to YHWH’s boasting of his servant Job, the satan raises a crucial question, which sets the following drama in motion. He asks, “Is it for nothing (חֲנָם) that Job fears God?” (1:9). The term חֲנָם here refers to the causal link between prosperity and piety,⁵⁷ as the satan explicates further in 1:10. In other words, he suggests that Job’s piety is conditional upon God’s blessings. Job fears God because the latter makes the former prosperous.

In the second divine council scene, YHWH concedes to the satan that the plight that Job has experienced thus far has happened because the satan has incited God against Job, destroying Job for nothing (חֲנָם; 2:3). The adverb חֲנָם could be used to describe “actions that are ‘in vain’ because they could not accomplish the intended results.”⁵⁸ If this is the intended sense, YHWH might mean that the satan’s effort to discredit Job had failed.⁵⁹ “[T]he trial had not been severe enough” to determine “the question of the causal nexus between piety and prosperity.”⁶⁰ More likely, however, the deliberate repetition of

⁵⁵ Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 169.

⁵⁶ Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 3.

⁵⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 25.

⁵⁸ Balentine, “For No Reason,” 360.

⁵⁹ Andersen, *Job*, 90.

⁶⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 42.

this term functions as an ironic marker for the absence of a legitimate reason for the calamities that have befallen Job.

5. The “death” motif (1:15–17, 19–21; 2:4, 6, 9)

As Bruce Zuckerman puts it, “verse-for-verse, no book in the Bible is more death-oriented than Job.”⁶¹ Needless to say, the first round of catastrophes that have befallen Job is filled with the image of death. First, the death of the servants who take care of the oxen and she-asses is reported by a messenger, who is the sole survivor of the disaster (1:15). Similar reports are brought back to Job regarding his shepherd servants (1:16), his caravan servants (1:17), and finally, his children (1:19). As mentioned earlier, Job’s first physical reactions are ordinary ritual acts of mourning in response to the destruction of his possessions and the death of his family members (1:20). Both the first and the second statements of his verbal response (1:21) further bring forth the death motif (see 3. above).

In the second divine council scene, after YHWH has confirmed the persistence of Job’s integrity even in the midst of the loss of his possessions and his children, the satan utters another proverbial saying to support his proposal for a further test. He says, “Skin up to skin. All that a man has he will give, up to himself” (2:4). Contrary to the conventional translation of נַפְשׁוֹ as “his life,”⁶² I take the term to mean the essence of the person, i.e., “himself.”⁶³ As it will become evident, the satan is going to target at Job’s

⁶¹ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 118. For more discussion on “death” as a controlling motif in Job, see Mathewson, *Death and Survival*.

⁶² So Dhorme, *Job*, 16; Pope, *Job*, 18; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 6; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 3; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 53.

⁶³ Fredericks (“נַפְשׁוֹ,” 133) notes, “[The] identity of *nepeš* with the entire person gives the word its frequent function as a reference to the self.”

body, not his life. Moreover, I follow Good (and Newsom) and take the preposition בעד to mean “up to” instead of the more common “for.”⁶⁴ Although the proverbial saying, “skin up to skin,” that the satan cites, is obscure, his point appears to be that a man is willing to trade for some precious item up to his own being.⁶⁵ This offers a more logical understanding to the argument of the satan, who suggests to YHWH to strike Job’s *body* in the immediately following context (2:5).⁶⁶ Accepting the satan’s proposal, YHWH places Job in the hand of the satan (2:6a–b). In alluding to the words of the satan, YHWH reminds him to keep Job’s *life* by emphasizing another nuance of the term נפש (2:6c). In other words, Job cannot die in the course of the satan’s physical attack. Finally, the words of Job’s wife conclude the death motif in this pericope (2:9). Interestingly, death is only alluded to in the preceding context but it is Job’s wife who first makes this motif explicit by using the verb מות, “to die.” The excessiveness of the death motif in this section thus anticipates its further development throughout the rest of the book.

6. עד חזק בתמה (2:3, 9)

In the second heavenly dialogue between YHWH and the satan, YHWH begins by presenting his evaluation of Job’s response to the loss of his children and all his material possessions with the phrase עד חזק בתמה (“he is still maintaining his integrity”; 2:3). As Newsom astutely observes, the word תמה “and its cognates denote a person whose conduct is completely in accord with moral and religious norms and whose character is

⁶⁴ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 52, 198; Newsom, “Job,” 354.

⁶⁵ Similarly, Newsom, “Job,” 354.

⁶⁶ For a radically different understanding of the meaning of “his bone and his flesh,” see Shepherd, “Strike His Bone,” 81–97. He interprets the expression to mean “his wife.”

one of utter honesty, without guile.”⁶⁷ Both the social and the personal dimensions of the term seem to be present in YHWH’s judgment regarding the appropriateness of Job’s response.

A few verses down the page, Job’s wife picks up the same phrase when she begins to speak to her husband (2:9). Most translations and commentators render the first statement of Job’s wife as a mocking question: “Are you still maintaining your integrity?” (v. 9a).⁶⁸ There is not enough reason to do so for an interrogative particle is present in the beginning section more than once (1:8, 10; 2:3) when a rhetorical question is intended.⁶⁹ An equally defensible translation would be “You are still maintaining your integrity,” a comment which echoes YHWH’s praise of Job in 2:3.⁷⁰ Thus said, her comment may be interpreted as an affirming or a sarcastic one.

As mentioned earlier, the words of Job’s wife are subject to different interpretations. This ambiguity thus invites the audience to re-examine the two nuances of תָּמָה, “integrity.” In speaking of Job’s wife, Newsom offers an interesting reading:

More hauntingly, one could hear her words as recognition of a conflict between integrity as guileless honesty and integrity as conformity to religious norms. If Job holds on to integrity in the sense of conformity to religious norm and blesses God as he did before, she senses that he will be committing an act of deceit. If he holds on to integrity in the sense of honesty, then he must curse God and violate social integrity, which forbids such cursing.⁷¹

⁶⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 356.

⁶⁸ NJPS is one of the rare exceptions that translate the first statement of Job’s wife as an exclamation.

⁶⁹ For a similar argument, see Ngwa, “Ethics of Piety,” 377 n.58.

⁷⁰ As Ngwa (“Ethics of Piety,” 377) argues, “if one reads Yahweh’s words in 2.3a as praise for Job, then there is no reason to read the first part of 2.9 as a challenge on Job by his wife.” See also Seow, “Job’s wife,” 371–73.

⁷¹ Newsom “Job,” 356.

Whether one is able to recognize the conflict between the two dimensions of תמה in the words of Job's wife as described by Newsom is open to question. The repetition of this term, however, at least indicates that one of the concerns of the story is the relationship between "integrity" and "speech about God."⁷²

7. רע (2:7, 10)

In addition to the characterization of Job, the narrator also uses the root רע, "evil," to describe the nature of Job's disease in 2:7, which is unmistakably an allusion to Deut 28:35.⁷³ The two passages are connected by the three elements "smote" (נכה), "with evil sores" (בשחין רע) and "from the sole of his/your foot to the crown of his/your head" (מכף רגלו עד קדקדו). The purpose of this allusion is to direct the reader's focus to the curses associated with disobedience.

Moreover, Job's second response in 2:10 also contains the term "evil" (רע), which is a correlative of what is "good" (טוב) as given by God. Job's statement in the latter half of 2:10 is almost unanimously taken as an unmarked rhetorical question and thus translated as "Indeed, shall we receive good from God, but evil we shall not receive?"⁷⁴ For some, Job's response may thus imply his "total submission to God for good or for ill."⁷⁵ For others, the shift from positive declarative statements in 1:21 to a negative

⁷² Some even argue that "integrity" is the central theme of the entire book. So Steinmann, "Structure," 85–100; Caesar, "Job: Another New Thesis," 435–47.

⁷³ Ticciati, "Does Job Fear God," 354; *idem*, *Disruption of Identity*, 61; Wilson, *Judaism*, 99. Newsom ("Job," 355) also recognizes this connection. However, she only refers to the allusion as "a strong echo" and does not draw any implication from the connection.

⁷⁴ A few notable exceptions include Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 53), Guillaume ("Job's Intercession," 462–63), and Ngwa ("Ethics of Piety," 379). They all translate the line as a statement.

⁷⁵ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 84. Similarly, Habel, *The Book of Job*, 96; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 54; Newsom, "Job," 356.

rhetical question in 2:10 may reveal “the beginning of the loss of confidence in objectifying language” within Job.⁷⁶

Since no interrogative particle is present in Job’s statement, the sentence may simply be understood as an indicative: “We receive good from Elohim and do not receive evil.”⁷⁷ Taken as such, Good proposes two possible meanings of Job’s declarative statement: (1) we do not receive evil from God, since evil comes from somewhere else, or (2) we do not receive evil from God since everything he gives us, even suffering, is good.⁷⁸ To these, I add another possible reading: “We *should* receive good from God but *should not* receive evil.”⁷⁹ Job is lamenting the cruel reality that they have received the “evil,” which is typically associated with disobedience, even though he has been demonstrating a lifestyle that deserves the opposite.⁸⁰ Interestingly, Job’s words appear to be a playful response to the narrator’s perception as presented in 2:7.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrative begins with the exposition introducing the main character, Job.⁸¹ He is portrayed as a pious person who is blameless, upright, God-fearing, and evil-shunning.

⁷⁶ Janzen, *Job*, 52. Similarly, Vogels, “Empty Pious Slogans,” 374.

⁷⁷ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 53.

⁷⁸ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 200–201.

⁷⁹ Reading the verb נקבל as a *non-perfective of deliberation*, denoting “the speaker’s or subject’s deliberation as to whether a situation should take place” (*IBHS* §31.4.f).

⁸⁰ Similarly, Guillaume, “Job’s Intercession,” 462–63. He states, “The Psalms display no ready acceptance of evil from the hand of God and suggest that humans should respond to evil with lament rather than with praise. From chapter 3 onwards, Job displays no such attitude of praise, no stoical acceptance of his fate. The mistranslation of Job 2,10 as a rhetorical question erases the narrative progression intended.”

⁸¹ Phelan defines “exposition” as the aspect that provides necessary information, such as characters, settings and events, about the narrative (*Experiencing Fiction*, 17).

He is also depicted as a wealthy man who possesses many livestock. His piety is further described by the sacrifices he offers regularly for his children. The narrator interprets Job's religious practice by disclosing Job's internal discourse: "Perhaps my children have sinned and בִּרְךְ-ed God in their hearts" (1:5b).⁸² At this point, the authorial audience has to make an interpretive judgment: Should בִּרְךְ in 1:5 be interpreted as "bless" or "curse"? As indicated above, either rendering will make sense. This interpretive judgment is in fact partially interwoven with the authorial audience's ethical judgments of Job too.⁸³ Among those who endorse the euphemistic meaning of בִּרְךְ, some argue that the characterization is not as straightforward as it might have appeared. For example, Joseph Heckelman interprets Job's routine sacrifice as some "surface mechanic acts of a smug observer," who fails to impart crucial religious values to his children.⁸⁴ Van Wolde follows suit and sees Job as an incompetent father who only inclines to pick on his children's mistakes. She argues for the ambiguity in the piety of Job, who "gives the impression of a believer who thinks that he must not make any mistakes and has to be in control of everything; he implicitly knows precisely what is good and what is wrong, or what God approves or disapproves of."⁸⁵ Similarly, M. J. Oosthuizen, who also sees Job in a negative light, suggests that it is at least possible to perceive Job's practice as "motivated by the quite materialistic desire to protect the blessings which he receives from God's hand."⁸⁶ Ngwa even argues that Job's regular sacrifice was geared toward

⁸² Since this is no specific address in the context, it is reasonable to understand the verb אָמַר in 1:5 to mean "he thought." Cf. Ska, *Hebrew Narratives*, 68.

⁸³ According to Phelan (*Experiencing Fiction*, 9), the authorial audience makes "ethical judgments about the moral values of characters and actions."

⁸⁴ Heckelman, "Liberation," 130.

⁸⁵ Van Wolde, *Mr and Mrs Job*, 14.

pre-empting physical disaster, which belongs to one of his fourfold characterization by the narrator in 1:1.⁸⁷

Not all who adopt the euphemistic sense of בָּרַךְ have to shed negative light on Job. For example, Clines, being fully aware of the above line of reasoning, offers a more balanced argument: “But to some degree, as patriarchal head of a household, even of grown sons and daughters, it is reasonable enough for him to regard himself as responsible to God for their behaviour, and to take the initiative in guarding against any sin on their part.”⁸⁸ However, as noted above, in order to salvage Job’s piety, Clines has to tone down the hypothetical sin that Job believed his sons might have committed.

An alternative way to handle this issue is to interpret בָּרַךְ in 1:5 in the primary sense. This reading understands Job as a father who is optimistic about his children. Just as Job’s prosperity is described in an exaggerated fashion (1:2–3), his piety is illustrated with a hyperbolic religious act he performs regularly.

The scene then shifts to the divine council where the sons of God and the satan are presented before YHWH. The deity begins the verbal exchange with the satan by asking where he comes from. The satan in turn replies that he comes from the earth but he has nothing to report. YHWH then puts his servant Job in the spotlight and boasts about Job’s extraordinary piety. In response, the satan raises an interesting question, which introduces the first instability to the story. He does not deny the genuineness of Job’s piety but calls into question the relationship between such piety and God’s blessings. The satan

⁸⁶ Oosthuizen, “Divine Insecurity,” 299.

⁸⁷ Ngwa, “Ethics of Piety,” 363. See also Good, “Problem of Evil,” 51–54.

⁸⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 15–16

contends that Job's piety is dependent upon the blessings bestowed by YHWH and suggests that Job would openly repudiate God if God removes all of Job's possessions. YHWH accepts the satan's suggestion and lets him destroy all that Job has. The scene ends with the departure of the satan from the presence of YHWH.

After the conversation in the heavenly realm, the scene is back to the earthly sphere. Four messengers report back to back on the sudden destruction of Job's material possessions and servants, and eventually the death of his children. Although the satan is not mentioned in causing any of these catastrophes, this causal link appears to be a logical deduction from the narration. This catastrophic experience of Job introduces another instability to the story. As is the case with other sapiential didactic narratives,⁸⁹ the authorial audience is inclined to sympathize with Job.

Having received this disastrous news, Job responds in both posture and words. The authorial audience again has to make interpretive judgments on the ambiguous physical and verbal responses of Job. As discussed above, Job's responses can signify a pious affirmation of divine sovereignty or a defiant complaint of one's disastrous fate. Perhaps the authorial audience needs to keep these options open. The narrator concludes this earthly scene with his evaluation of Job's reaction, "In all this, Job did not sin and he did not give unseemliness to God" (1:21). This narrator's comment thus partially resolves the former instability introduced by the satan as Job has not uttered anything inappropriate.

⁸⁹ Hans-Peter Müller ("Die weisheitliche Lehrerzählung," 77–98) identifies a genre which he calls the "sapiential didactic narrative," to which he ascribes the framework of Job, the Joseph story, the narrative that frames the Aramaic "Tale of Ahiqar," parts of Daniel, Esther, and Tobit. To these, Perdue (*Wisdom in Revolt*, 78) also adds the Egyptian "Protests of the Eloquent Peasant," the Akkadian "Poor Man of Nippur," and the Hittite "Tale of Appu."

The story continues with the reconvening of the divine council with a similar introductory description as the first one. YHWH again begins the conversation with the satan by asking where he comes from. The satan in turn replies that he comes from the earth and he has nothing to report. The deity once again taunts the satan by putting his servant Job in the spotlight and boasting about his extraordinary piety. YHWH adds further that his servant Job has maintained his integrity even though the satan has incited him to destroy Job for nothing. In response, the satan does not deny that Job has survived the trial but suggests that if God stretches his hand and strikes Job's body, Job would not continue to exercise the same piety. This challenge of the satan thus introduces another instability to the story. Again, YHWH hands Job over to the satan, and cautions him to spare Job's life. The divine council scene ends with the departure of the satan from the presence of YHWH; the next earthly scene begins immediately with the satan smiting Job with grievous sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head.

Job responds to the second round of his plight again both physically and verbally. While sitting on the ash-heap, Job takes a potsherd and scrapes himself (2:8). The authorial audience has to make another interpretive judgment on the precise nature of his action. It may simply be a way "to relieve or distract his attention from the itchiness of his skin."⁹⁰ It may also be a way to prevent himself from venting a rebellious outburst against God.⁹¹ The meaning of Job's verbal response (2:10) is not anything less ambiguous than that of his physical reaction. To further complicate the matter, his utterance is a response to his wife's saying (2:9), the meaning of which is itself

⁹⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 50.

⁹¹ Weiss, *Job's Beginning*, 69.

controversial. No matter what Job's wife actually says, it appears to be clear that Job disagrees with her.

If Job's response is taken as a rhetorical question directed to his wife, the implied answer should be, "No, we shall not receive evil from God." If the rhetorical question is more directed toward himself, he might be raising important questions regarding their situation. If his response is taken as a statement instead of a question, he might in fact be complaining that the misfortune should not have befallen them. Again, perhaps the authorial audience should not eliminate any of these possibilities at this stage of the reading experience. The narrator concludes this opening section with his evaluation of Job's response a second time: "In all this, Job did not sin with his lips" (2:10). This narrator's comment partially resolves the former instability introduced by the satan as Job has not uttered anything inappropriate.

In addition to stabilities, tensions in the story also sustain the interest of the authorial audience in the reading experience. One such tension surrounds the depiction of the heavenly realm in this section and YHWH's characterization in it. The conversation between YHWH and the satan in the beginning section happens in the context of a council in the heavenly realm.⁹² It is therefore imperative to give an excursus on the standard convention of a typical divine council scene.

⁹² For detailed analyses of the divine council scenes, see, e.g., Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*; Fleming, "Divine Council"; Korpel, *Rift in the Clouds*; Handy, *Syro-Palestinian Pantheon*; Neef, *Gottes himmlischer Thronrat*; Page, *Cosmic Rebellion*; Smith, *Biblical Monotheism*; Lopez, "Divine Council Scene"; Heiser, "Divine Council"; Kee, "Heavenly Council," 259–73.

Excursus: Divine Council Scenes

In ancient Near Eastern literature, one of the characteristics of this scene is the appearance of the high god in the centre surrounded by its members.⁹³ The primary functions of the assembly are judgement of heavenly and earthly beings, as well as decision making concerning human affairs.⁹⁴ In some divine council scenes, the members of the assembly also act as worshippers of the high god.⁹⁵ In Mesopotamian documents, the divine beings take a more active role in reaching the decision of the council.⁹⁶ Similarly, in Ugaritic texts, a decree is usually reached after a lively discussion among the participants of the assembly.⁹⁷ Moreover, the high god at times is portrayed as weak in a modern sense and may be being challenged by a lesser deity.⁹⁸ The depiction of the divine council in the Hebrew Bible in general deviates remarkably from that in the Mesopotamian documents, although they share a basic structural framework and common vocabulary.⁹⁹

In the Hebrew Bible, the assembly of the divine beings is sometimes alluded to in various ways.¹⁰⁰ Some passages simply mention one of the titles of such a council (e.g.,

⁹³ Lopez, "Divine Council," 1.

⁹⁴ Jakobsen, "Primitive Democracy," 166; Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 114–15.

⁹⁵ Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 196–99; Neef, *Gottes himmlischer Thronrat*, 14, 16.

⁹⁶ Jakobsen, "Primitive Democracy," 157–170.

⁹⁷ Fleming, "Divine Council," 22–23.

⁹⁸ For instance, in the Ba'l-Môt cycle (*KTU* 1.3–1.6), 'Anat is described as challenging the power of the high god 'El by threatening to attack him if he does not comply with her request (Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 62–70).

⁹⁹ Fleming, "Divine Council," 5–29; Lopez, "Divine Council Scene," 1–2. To a lesser degree, Mullen points out that 'Israelite traditions of the council break with those of the Canaanite and Phoenician religions' after the Exile (*Assembly of the Gods*, 280).

¹⁰⁰ I have adopted the list of scriptural references from Kee, "Heavenly Council," 260–62.

Isa 14:13; Jer 23:12, 22a; Amos 8:14; Pss 25:14; 49:20, 73:15; Job 15:8). Some merely acknowledge the existence of a multitude of divine beings alongside YHWH (e.g., Exod 15:11; Deut 4:19; 17:3; 32:8; 33:2-3; Judg 5:20; Isa 14:13; Jer 8:2; Zech 14:5; Pss 96:4-5; 97:7, 9; 148:2-3; Job 38:7; Neh 9:6; 1 Chron 16:25). Others further imply an event in the divine council (e.g., Gen 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Pss 29:1-2; 58:1-2; 89:6-9). Aside from Job 1-2, the divine council type-scene graphically appears in Isa 6:1-13, Ps 82, Zech 3 and 1 Kgs 22:19-22/2 Chr 18:18-22.

Isaiah 6 opens with Isaiah's first-person vision report in which he is situated among the divine council. "Whether it represents an authentic account of his experience at the beginning of his career or is the result of later reflection is irrelevant" to our present discussion.¹⁰¹ In the assembly, YHWH sits on a throne and one of the seraphim calls to another and gives praise to YHWH.¹⁰² In response to the revelation, Isaiah confesses that he is a man of unclean lips who lives in the midst of a people of unclean lips. One of the seraphim then flies over to Isaiah and cleanses his lips with a live coal. After that, Isaiah hears YHWH asking, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" (v. 8). There is no definitive evidence that any discussion happens in the council. In the narrative, Isaiah responds and volunteers himself for the mission. The vision ends with a further dialogue between YHWH and Isaiah regarding the content and duration of the message.

Unlike the divine council scene in Isa 6, the one in Ps 82 presents God as pronouncing judgment against some divine beings. Despite the presence of other divine

¹⁰¹ Sweeney, *Isaiah 1-39*, 136.

¹⁰² I follow the MT and read only one of the seraphim called to another. However, it is also possible to take וְקָרָא to mean "each called" (e.g., Oswalt, *Isaiah*, 170) and this understanding will not affect the overall picture of the vision report.

beings in the scene presented in this psalm, God is the only character who speaks. He is characterised as judge and “is clearly in charge, presiding over the meeting.”¹⁰³ Of particular interest to this study is the divine council scene in Zech 3. This is the fourth of the prophet’s eight night visions and the only one in which both YHWH and the satan are both present.¹⁰⁴ In this vision, the high priest Joshua stands before the heavenly council in filthy clothes about to be prosecuted by the satan. YHWH, however, interrupts the proceedings by rebuking the satan and elucidating the condition of Joshua. The angel of YHWH, who acts on behalf of YHWH to preside over the council, rectifies Joshua’s condition by commanding the angelic beings to remove the filthy clothes and replace them with festal apparel.¹⁰⁵ After the angel of YHWH interprets this clothing act as a symbol of guilt removal, Zechariah interjects, requesting that a clean turban be placed on Joshua’s head.¹⁰⁶ Those who are standing before the angel of YHWH follow what the prophet has requested. The vision ends with the angel’s solemn charge and further revelation to the high priest.

Aside from Job 1–2, the most vivid depiction of the divine council in the Hebrew Bible is 1 Kgs 22:19–22/2 Chr 18:18–22, which records Micaiah’s claim of his prophetic vision. In the vision, YHWH initiates the conversation with the heavenly hosts and asks

¹⁰³ Tate, *Psalms 51–100*, 334.

¹⁰⁴ Although it is almost unanimously agreed that the object of the verbal action “he showed me” (v. 1) is the prophet himself, there is dispute over the subject of the verb. For interpretive options, see, e.g., Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 179–80.

¹⁰⁵ As Petersen (*Haggai and Zechariah 1–8*, 191) has noted, the angel of YHWH “is, quite simply, the supreme authority in the council. He acts in place of the normal supreme authority, Yahweh.”

¹⁰⁶ Both Vulgate and Syriac have a third-person verb instead of a first-person one. If this is the case, the speaker is the angel of YHWH instead of the prophet. However, the MT reading also makes good sense. Perhaps the abrupt intervention of the prophet intends to highlight his “active and direct involvement ... in transmitting the will of God as it emanates from the Divine Council” (Meyers and Meyers, *Haggai, Zechariah 1–8*, 191).

for a volunteer to entice Ahab so that he will march and fall at Ramoth-gilead. After some discussion, a spirit comes forward and accepts the mission. YHWH then inquires for more information on the method which would be employed. The spirit replies, saying that he will be a lying spirit in the mouth of all the prophets of Ahab. YHWH approves, ensures his success, and sends forth the spirit. Micaiah's portrayal of the divine council scene is almost universally taken as his sincere vision report of what has happened in the divine realm.¹⁰⁷ Intellectual energies have often been devoted to the ethical dimension of YHWH for sending out such a deceptive spirit or to the issue of true and false prophecy. What has been overlooked is the rhetorical function of this passage in light of the immediate literary context. It is worth noting that in Micaiah's first response to Ahab (1 Kgs 22:15/2 Chr 18:14), the prophet uses the covenant name of the God of Israel and ensures the success of Judah-Israel over Aram in order to deceive the king. As the story unfolds, both Ahab and the reader know that Micaiah in fact has been speaking ironically. The divine council scene presented by Micaiah may thus be interpreted as an ironical parable that functions to deride Ahab on his seeming desire to seek the will of God despite his resolve to go to battle against Aram. Thus said, even if the vision is to be taken at face value, YHWH at best invites involvement of his celestial court in providing only the method of execution of his will.

Apart from the problematic passage recording Micaiah's vision (1 Kgs 22:18–22/2 Chr 18:18–22) and the passages under study (Job 1:6–12; 2:1–7a), the primary characterization of YHWH in the divine council texts is as heavenly king and judge who

¹⁰⁷ Consult any recent commentary on First Kings or Second Chronicles.

has absolute supremacy over the assembly.¹⁰⁸ On the contrary, all divine beings, including the satan, are an assembly of creatures subservient to YHWH.¹⁰⁹ They are either mere agents whose duties are to follow what YHWH has commanded or are the guilty party whom YHWH rebukes. It is also important to notice that whenever YHWH initiates a conversation, he always has a purpose in mind. Sometimes he opens with a question but the question simply invites the participation of a volunteer. When a judgment is made by YHWH, no heavenly host dares to challenge the verdict of the Almighty.

When we turn our attention to the beginning of Job, a quite different picture of the divine council scene is depicted. In each of the two occurrences of the scene, after the exposition of such a setting and the introductory verbal exchange between YHWH and the satan (1:6–7; 2:1–2), YHWH starts with a rhetorical question boasting the piety of his servant Job (1:8; 2:3). This hyperbolic beginning lacks the solemnity of a typical divine council scene in the rest of the Hebrew Bible. Moreover, unlike the heavenly beings in other divine council scenes in the Hebrew Bible, the satan dares to challenge the evaluation of YHWH by questioning the integrity of Job (1:9–10; 2:4). In the first divine council scene, the emphatic “you” (אַתָּה) in 1:10 suggests that the real target of the satan’s accusation is not Job but YHWH.¹¹⁰ This obviously violates the expectation of a typical biblical divine council scene, in which all heavenly beings show respect and submission to God. Furthermore, in order to prove his point, the satan also suggests to YHWH what YHWH could do to determine whose judgment is correct.

¹⁰⁸ Mullen, *Assembly of the Gods*, 120; Whybray, *Heavenly Counsellor*, 34–48.

¹⁰⁹ Whybray, *Heavenly Counsellor*, 47.

¹¹⁰ Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 45.

The characterization of YHWH in these scenes also goes against the norm. The testing of Job is sometimes compared to that of Abraham in Gen 22.¹¹¹ Unlike Isaac, who is spared by God at the last moment, Job's children are forever gone for they are mere pawns in the game. If the conversations between YHWH and the satan in the divine council are understood literally, we are left with an image of a deity of alacrity and cold-bloodedness (*Schnelligkeit und Kaltblütigkeit*).¹¹² As Crenshaw puts it, "To be sure, the prologue depicts a God who permits wanton destruction of innocent victims just to prove a point."¹¹³ The most ironic sentence which comes from YHWH's mouth appears in Job 2:3. After winning the argument for the first round, YHWH admits to the satan that he had been incited by the satan to destroy Job for nothing. Contrary to the norm in other divine council scenes in the Hebrew Bible, YHWH is depicted as a "manipulated and controlled" deity who purposelessly afflicts some blameless, upright and God-fearing human.¹¹⁴ Perhaps the most ridiculous element is that even when YHWH is fully aware that he has been incited by the satan in the first round, YHWH is willing to be incited by the satan a second time! In concluding the second divine council account, YHWH reminds the satan to preserve Job's life. As Habel points out, the verb שמר is often used of God's providential care of mortals.¹¹⁵ However, their roles are reversed in Job 1–2 in which

¹¹¹ See, e.g., Shapiro, "Trial of Abraham," 210–20; Japhet, "How Do They Differ?" 153–72; *idem*, "Abraham et Job," 9–20; Weinberg, "Job versus Abraham," 281–96; Strauß, "Gen 22," 377–83; Michel, "Ijob und Abraham," 73–98; Van Ruiten, "Intertextual Relationship," 58–85; Veijola, "Abraham und Hiob," 127–44; Wiley, "They Save Themselves Alone," 115–29.

¹¹² Duhm, *Hiob*, 8; cited in Clines, "Job's Fifth Friend," 235 n.9.

¹¹³ Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom*, 94.

¹¹⁴ Miles, *God: A Biography*, 309.

¹¹⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 95.

YHWH is responsible for causing Job's calamities whereas the satan is reminded to act as Job's protector. If we go along with Habel's observation, this role reversal indeed intensifies the irony in the prologue of Job. The characterization of YHWH and the satan is so atypical that the divine council scenes are best to be interpreted as parodic.¹¹⁶

According to Phelan, the authorial audience makes not only interpretive and ethical judgments but also aesthetic judgments on the artistic quality of the work.¹¹⁷ He also contends that individual reader's aesthetic judgments might have an impact on their ethical judgments.¹¹⁸ The fable-like outlook of the prologue of Job is almost unanimously recognized. Modern biblical scholars who champion a diachronic approach to the book of Job have typically elucidated the seeming simplicity of the prose framework as evidence that the entire work developed in stages.¹¹⁹ The belief is that another sophisticated writer adapted the prose framework from some folktale with minimal alteration as a springboard to launch the writer's own argument. The theology expressed in the prologue is thus believed to originate in the ancient story, which is meant to be ultimately refuted by the poetic dialogues. At the other end of the pole, those who favour a synchronic approach have often treated the prose prologue as a mere setup for what follows in the poetic

¹¹⁶ As Booth (*Irony*, 67–73) suggests, one of the clues to the recognition of the presence of stable irony is whenever a speaker's style departs remarkably from the norm of expression or the way normal for this speaker. He adds that the most obvious use of this kind of clues is found in parody (71).

¹¹⁷ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 9.

¹¹⁸ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 14.

¹¹⁹ For a counterargument based on the genre of Job, see Cheney (*Dust, Wind and Agony*, 24–46), who argues that Job belongs to an ANE genre "frame tale," in which the relationship between the frame and the core can be "antithetical," "synonymous" or "synthetic."

dialogues.¹²⁰ Both of the above interpretive directions have recently been seriously challenged by Newsom, Clines, and Brenner.

As discussed in the previous chapter of this dissertation, Newsom pioneered a dialogic model in which different genres and voices are juxtaposed. According to her, the prose frame is “best understood as a *type* of didactic tale, specifically a story of character and virtue.”¹²¹ Naivety is intentional because it is one of the distinguishing features of such a genre. Although she at times acknowledges the textual ambiguity of the prologue, she prefers to suppress all alternative interpretations and limit herself to a simple reading of the prose frame as a pure form of the didactic tale genre.¹²²

Clines similarly recognized the simplicity of the prologue to Job. However, he took a radically different stand and ascribed to it the description “false naivety”—a strategy that “exploits the appearance of artlessness to convey a subtle message.”¹²³ He contends that the pseudonaive nature of the prologue was the device through which the author presented the book’s initial case for a reversal of the doctrine of retribution.¹²⁴ The narrator, who is supported indirectly by YHWH, is seen to be giving a reliable account of the circumstances behind the plight of Job. Elsewhere, Clines even states that the

¹²⁰ For instance, Fox (“Job the Pious,” 357) claims, “The prologue lays down what, within the world of the text, are facts, and it premises them in an unquestioned, authorial, and authoritative voice. In so doing, it orients the readers to the world of the drama. We do not stumble upon an argument between angry and confused men. Instead, we enter by way of the heavenly reality and from that standpoint watch the experiment unfold.”

¹²¹ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 41; italics mine.

¹²² For example, in discussing the possibility of reading Job’s second response as undermining the image of his unconditional piety, Newsom states, “Within the conventions of a simple didactic tale, however, such a subversive reading cannot be valid” (*Moral Imaginations*, 61).

¹²³ Clines, “False Naivety,” 127. He elaborated this concept further in his later commentary (*Job 1–20*).

¹²⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 65.

narrator's view is the one closest to that of the implied author.¹²⁵ Although Clines appears to have presented a better case than Newsom, I believe that he has not exhausted the impact of the false naivety of the prologue.

Brenner took a step further than Clines and suggested that the characterization of Job in the prologue is "an ironic exaggeration of the concept of conventional piety" that is then discredited by the dialogues.¹²⁶ She did not pay much attention to the ambiguity of the text, and chose to focus on the implied author's purpose behind the hyperbolic depiction of the extraordinarily pious Job.¹²⁷ Following the discourse that Brenner has initiated, James Watts argued that the prologue is intended to be refuted by the theophany through the device of an unreliable narrator.¹²⁸ He accepts the conventional understanding of the divine speeches as the privileged voice of the book of Job and contends that the real purpose of the work is to "undermine any claim to omniscient human narration" which attempts "to reveal the secrets of the cosmos."¹²⁹ Both Brenner and Watts thus understood Job 1–2 as subversive even though they disagree on the precise topos of the parody.¹³⁰

Watts' study is suggestive since it brings the concept of the narrator's reliability in Job to the surface. According to Phelan, the main roles of narrators include reporting,

¹²⁵ Clines, "Job's God," 50.

¹²⁶ Brenner, "Job the Pious," 37.

¹²⁷ For instance, Brenner ("Job the Pious," 44) contends that the characterization of Job as exemplified by his responses in 1:21–22 and 2:9–10 is unquestionably "positively saintly." Nevertheless, I have argued earlier that Job's responses in the prologue are far more ambiguous than what she has suggested.

¹²⁸ Watts, "Unreliable Narrator," 168–80.

¹²⁹ Watts, "Unreliable Narrator," 176.

¹³⁰ Stordalen ("Dialogue and Dialogism," 28) also reads the prose tale of Job as a parody but he does not argue for any specific topos.

interpreting, and evaluating. A narrator is unreliable if he “deviate[s] from the implied author’s views in one or more of these roles.”¹³¹ In Job 1–2, the narrator first performs the interpreting role in 1:5. He uses the conjunction כִּי to interpret for the authorial audience the rationale behind Job’s regular sacrifice for his children. As discussed above, much ink has been spilled on blaming Job for his so-called preemptive sacrifice. Perhaps one can legitimately transfer the blame to the narrator since this is how he has interpreted for the authorial audience. After all, the sacrifices that Job offers are עלוֹת, ordinary “burnt offerings,” and not the more technical חַטָּאוֹת, “sin offerings.”¹³² The religious rituals that Job performs for his children may be merely regular purification routines.

Besides, the narrator is most overt when he exercises his evaluating function each time after Job’s reactions (1:22; 2:10c). Vogels contends that the narrator’s comments are both negative statements; he takes them as an indication of “his lack of enthusiasm for Job’s reaction.”¹³³ It is equally reasonable to argue that the narrator’s evaluations give the impression that he expresses interest only in the legitimacy of Job’s responses. As the implied author typically makes his point at the expense of the narrator in a parody, the authorial audience should perhaps exercise ethical judgments on not only the content but also the attitude of the narrator’s evaluations.

At this stage of the reading experience, the authorial audience is compelled to form an initial hypothesis about the “configuration” of the story.¹³⁴ Based on the

¹³¹ Phelan, *Living to Tell*, 50.

¹³² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 16.

¹³³ Vogels, “Empty Pious Slogans,” 372.

¹³⁴ Phelan (*Experiencing Fiction*, 19) defines “configuration” as “the direction and purpose of the whole narrative.”

instability introduced by the satan in the first divine council scene, a possible configuration of the narrative can be a discussion on the possibility of disinterested piety. In other words, is human piety conditional upon divine blessing? Since Job has answered this question once for all, it cannot be functioning as the leading interest in the reading experience. A more promising direction is the reversal of this logical consequence: Is prosperity a result of piety? The juxtaposition of the descriptions of Job's piety and his prosperity in the exposition (1:1–3) seems to imply such a causal relationship, though it need not be read so.¹³⁵ The generalization of this principle is commonly known as retributive doctrine. As Clines puts it,

The primary ethical problematic of the book is ... the act-consequence nexus. In the dialogues that problematic will appear as the question whether suffering is brought about by sin; in the prologue as the question whether prosperity is brought about by piety. The two are but two sides of one coin.¹³⁶

Again, if the book is primarily concerned about the validity of retributive theology, the case seems to be closed since the reader knows that Job is innocent and yet suffers severely. The crafty play on the term חַנּוּם by YHWH in 2:3 seems to suggest that the piety-prosperity nexus is already broken in this beginning section.¹³⁷ Many thus widen the net and understand the book as a general discussion on the moral order of the world. For instance, Alan Cooper argues that the prologue to Job introduces three possible reading positions regarding the divine management of the world: "One reading concludes that there is, after all, predictable causality in God's dealings with humanity; one finds

¹³⁵ See Cooper, "Reading and Misreading," 69, for a convincing argument against the necessity to read the statements in Job 1:1–3 as temporally and causally linked.

¹³⁶ Clines, "False Naivety," 133.

¹³⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 43.

causality but no predictability; and one finds neither causality nor predictability.”¹³⁸ He suggests that the readers’ empathy with the viewpoint of the satan, Job or God will ultimately determine their interpretive inclination. Although whether one is willing to accept Cooper’s interpretation in full is open to question, his conclusion that the prologue is by design meant for multiple readings should be taken seriously.

Another possible configuration, which is commonly embraced in Joban scholarship, is the reason for innocent suffering. Interestingly, if the divine council scenes are taken at face value, the problem seems to be solved because the heavenly accounts have already provided such a reason.¹³⁹ Clines shrewdly argues that this solution is only offered to the naive readers. For more perceptive readers, however, the prologue “is to offer no reason for any suffering at all—except Job’s.”¹⁴⁰ Perhaps a stronger case may be argued if the reader interprets the divine council scenes as parodic.

As Yairah Amit puts it, “there is not a single commentator or reader who is not convinced that the story is concerned with an event of testing.”¹⁴¹ According to her, the author of Job appears to be applying the technique of hidden polemics:

A polemic is hidden when its subject is not explicitly mentioned, or when it is not mentioned in the expected, conventional formulation. Through various hints, the reader is left with the feeling that a double effort has been made within the text: on the one hand—to conceal the subject of the polemic, that is, to avoid its

¹³⁸ Cooper, “Reading and Misreading,” 73.

¹³⁹ As Greenstein (“Problem of Evil,” 349) notes, “It is worth remembering at this point that, as we read the book as a whole, Job’s suffering is not a mystery to us. The cause is set forth in the narrative that opens the book. The source of Job’s suffering remains a mystery only to the other human characters in the story.” So Hoffman, “Irony,” 19; Geeraerts, “His Embarrassed God,” 52; Wilson, *Job*, 12.

¹⁴⁰ Clines, “False Naivety,” 134. Shields (“God’s Character,” 262) even argues that “whatever the reason for Job’s continued suffering beyond Job 2:10, it is apparently *not* directly related to proving or disproving the point in dispute between Yahweh and the Satan in the prologue” (*italics his*).

¹⁴¹ Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 244.

explicit mention; on the other—to leave certain traces within the text ... that through various means will lead the reader to the hidden subject of the polemic.¹⁴²

The impression felt is that the “testing” motif is deliberately alluded to for the reader to ponder on one’s own.¹⁴³ If the author is using the technique of hidden polemic in the heavenly council scenes, then the argument that divine testing is the definite explanation for innocent suffering becomes the object of criticism.

The satan’s challenge also leads to another possible configuration, namely, the appropriate response amidst suffering.¹⁴⁴ The key words חטא and בִּרְךְ, as well as the recurring phrase עַד חֹזֶק בַּתְּמָה reinforce the central importance of this issue. Every time the verb חטא is used, the context is always speech to or about God. Moreover, the phrase עַד חֹזֶק בַּתְּמָה is used by YHWH and Job’s wife individually to refer to Job’s pious response to his plight. Whether the verb בִּרְךְ is taken ordinarily or euphemistically in 1:5, 11; 2:5, 9, the concern is still on how to speak to and/or about God in the midst of suffering. The undecidability of בִּרְךְ “may even be a part of the artistry of the story.”¹⁴⁵ Linafelt explains the phenomenon of the standard euphemism theory as a “fear of the effective power of the words.”¹⁴⁶ Perhaps, what is at stake is the mentality behind such a belief. Hoffman brilliantly argues that it is unnecessary for the plot of the story to have the satan require “blasphemy,” rather than other less extreme physical crimes, as the sole

¹⁴² Amit, *Hidden Polemics*, 93.

¹⁴³ I hold a common assumption that the book of Job was composed when the Aqedah story as presented in the MT was already well-known.

¹⁴⁴ There is a growing number of scholars who recognize “language” as a central theme in Job. See, e.g., Gutiérrez, *On Job*; Vogels, *Job*; Downing, “Voices,” 389–404; Gitay, “Failure of Argumentation,” 239–50; Greenstein, “Truth or Theodicy,” 238–58; Gruber, “Anthropodicy,” 59–72. Nevertheless, these interpreters understand the meaning of the book as a whole radically differently.

¹⁴⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 346.

¹⁴⁶ Linafelt, “Undecidability,” 157.

criterion for determining Job's disinterested piety. By shifting "the centre of gravity from deeds to words," the Joban author "gave himself enough room for manoeuvring with the words which can be put in Job's mouth."¹⁴⁷ Although the narrator's comment after each round of calamities appears to have resolved the instability, the ambiguity of each response of Job in fact suggests its resistance to closure. This again raises the question whether the implied author agrees with the narrator.

II. The Prologue—Part Two (Job 2:11–13)

A. Repetition Analysis

רעע (2:11)

The root רעע, which has been used extensively in the preceding pericope (1:1, 8; 2:3, 7, 10), reappears in 2:11–13.¹⁴⁸ The disaster (רעה) that has befallen Job is the catalyst that urges the three friends of Job to come (2:11). The entire phrase כל הרעה הזאת הבאה עלי ("all this evil that has come to him") appears to be a standard expression that refers to the curse associated with covenantal disobedience.¹⁴⁹ This allusion is reinforced by the use of the same root in 2:7 where a similar connotation is found.¹⁵⁰ Through this deliberate allusion, the authorial audience is invited to interpret how the three friends might have perceived the origin of Job's plight.

¹⁴⁷ Hoffman, "Prologue and the Speech-Cycles," 166–67.

¹⁴⁸ Ngwa ("Ethics of Piety," 364) also recognizes the significance of רע in the prologue: "It is a word that not only frames the story but also haunts the reader through the scenes of the narrative."

¹⁴⁹ 1 Kgs 9:9; 2 Chron 7:22; Neh 13:18; Dan 9:13. A similar phrase occurs in Jer 16:10; 32:23, 42.

¹⁵⁰ See I.A.7 in this chapter.

B. Impact on the Reading

This section provides further exposition by introducing a few more major characters into the story. They are Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite—the three friends of Job. After they have heard of “all this evil (רעה) that has come to” Job, they schedule to meet together to console and comfort Job (2:11). This conventional expression invites the authorial audience to interpret that the three friends might have perceived Job’s plight as a consequence of disobedience. The narrator continues, “They lifted their eyes from afar and did not נכר him.” (2:12a) The authorial audience has to make an interpretive judgment at this point. Most understand נכר here to mean “recognize.”¹⁵¹ However, if they fail to recognize Job, it makes no sense for them to raise their voice and weep. This leads some to remedy the situation by softening the negative particle to convey the sense of “hardly” in either their translations or interpretations.¹⁵² Whereas this semantic difficulty can reasonably be overcome when one permits the hyperbolic fashion of narration, the presence of the particle מרחוק, “from afar,” poses another problem, as Clines has rightly observed. He raises a legitimate question, “But this rendering of course implicitly says that ‘from a distance’ they *did* recognize him; so why then is the distance mentioned? Would it not be much more to the point to say that even when they came close to him they could hardly recognize him?”¹⁵³

¹⁵¹ The only exception, to my knowledge, is Clines, *Job 1–20*, 61. Surprisingly, he translates the verb as “hardly recognized” in the translation section (3).

¹⁵² Andersen, *Job*, 95; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 86; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 3 (in his translation); Newsom, “Job,” 358; Balentine, *Job*, 67; NIV.

¹⁵³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 60; italics his.

An alternative way is to take נכר to mean “acknowledge,” that is, an external act resulting from visual or mental recognition (cf. Gen 31:32; Dan 11:39).¹⁵⁴ Thus taken, the authorial audience may interpret the three friends’ attitude as their reluctance to acknowledge Job as their close friend. After all, to be acquainted with someone being cursed by God is considered to be a dangerous act.¹⁵⁵ The friends’ action can thus be read as their first level of alienation or even self-defence. If this line of interpretation is adopted, the coming of the three friends introduces yet another instability to the story. The authorial audience would expect the conflict between Job and his friends to be resolved by the end of the narrative.

After exhibiting the gesture of alienation, the three friends perform some kind of mourning rituals by tearing their coats and throwing dust over their heads toward the sky (2:12b).¹⁵⁶ Putting dust upon one’s head at a time of tragedy was a widespread custom in biblical times while throwing dust over one’s head was not.¹⁵⁷ Given the fact that the former practice was a well-attested biblical custom for mourning (Josh 7:6; 1 Sam 4:12; 2 Sam 13:19; 15:32; Ezek 27:30; Lam 2:10), the deliberate variation in the present context demands the audience to look for its significance. Gordis understands their action “as an apotropaic rite, in order to ward off the evil from themselves.”¹⁵⁸ Weiss suggests that the ritual in question may allude to the magical act performed by Moses in Exod 9:8, in which the two terms “sprinkle” (זרק) and “toward the heaven” (השמימה) are being used

¹⁵⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 61.

¹⁵⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 56.

¹⁵⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 97.

¹⁵⁷ Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 75–76.

¹⁵⁸ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 24.

together.¹⁵⁹ He interprets the action as “a magical act of self-defense: in order to ensure that the sores with which Job is afflicted ‘from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head’ will not fall from heaven on them as well.”¹⁶⁰ Although we cannot be certain about the meaning of the ritual, an interpretation in line with that of Gordis or Weiss may well be correct.

The prologue ends with the presumed silence of the friends for seven days and seven nights (2:13). What seems crucial is the explanation for their apparent silence. While some have attempted to offer some psychological interpretation of their silence,¹⁶¹ others have suggested that it is related to some conventional custom in Hebrew mourning.¹⁶² The evidence for any of these interpretations is not textually strong though. To be precise, the text never says that there is silence; it only says that none of them speaks a word to Job. In the context, their lack of speech is clearly explained as a consequence of their recognition of the severity of Job’s pain (כאב). Perhaps they have interpreted Job’s great pain as a consequence of his sins and thus they are reluctant to offer any word of consolation. This is nevertheless a highly ironic expression for their mission is first and foremost to console and comfort Job.

¹⁵⁹ Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 76.

¹⁶⁰ Weiss, *Job’s Beginning*, 76.

¹⁶¹ E.g., Weiss (*Job’s Beginning*, 77) interprets the silence of the friends as their “sincere sympathy for the sorrow and trouble of their comrade, complete identification with his situation.” See also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 64–65 for further discussion.

¹⁶² Lohfink (“Klageriten,” 260–77) argues that a period of silence was a part of the Hebrew mourning ritual. He supports his claim by citing a passage from Musil, *Arabia Petraea*, 3:413, which describes a similar period of silence as an appropriate Arab custom in the context of visiting the sick in the early 20th century (264). Similarly, Pham (*Mourning*, 29–31) contends that a moment of silence was a part of the mourning ritual for a terrible event.

The coming of the friends seems to support one of the initial hypotheses that the story is about appropriate response in the context of suffering. Whereas the rationale for their visit is to become Job's comforter, their behaviour typifies the way people react to a person who is undergoing extreme suffering. As the phenomenon of misfortune is often tied with the concept of divine cursing, there is a certain fear to be associated too closely with someone who is under God's curse.

III. Job's Opening Outburst (Job 3)

A. Repetition Analysis

Job 3, which contains the protagonist's provocative outburst, marks the beginning of the poetic section of the book. Despite the clear difference in the style of writing, this speech repeats a few terms and themes from the prose prologue. As argued above, the major concern of the story so far focuses on what will come out from the mouth of Job. This "speech" motif is immediately repeated by the narrator as he continues his narration in this chapter (3:1). Another closely related theme, namely, the "blessing/cursing" motif also occupies a key position in the first strophe of Job's imprecation (3:1, 8). In the prologue, when Job responds to the loss of his possession and children, he mentions the "birth" and the "death" motifs. All these themes are present again in his opening lament. This phenomenon is hardly coincidental. Two other words, סוֹךְ, "to hedge," and עֶבֶד, "servant/slave," also seem to strengthen the verbal correspondence between this speech and the prologue.

1. The “speech” motif (3:1)

Both פה, “mouth,” (3:1) and שפה, “lip,” (2:10c) are human organs of speech. At the end of section I (1:1–2:10), the narrator concludes with his evaluation that Job did not sin with his lips (2:10c). As the story unfolds, the narrator employs the phrase “Job opened his mouth (פה)” to describe the breaking of silence.¹⁶³ Most importantly, he chooses to use פה, a term which, by association, recalls שפה in 2:10c, to introduce the opening of Job’s provocative lament.¹⁶⁴ This deliberate link draws the reader’s attention to ponder whether Job is going to sin in his speech to come.

2. The “blessing/cursing” motif (3:1, 8)

The root בִּרַךְ, which has occupied such a prominent position in the beginning exposition, never reappears in the current pericope. To take its place, three other verbs, קלל, קבב and אָרַר, all which could mean “to curse,” show up in ch. 3.¹⁶⁵ The narrator begins with an explicit statement that Job cursed (קלל) his day, apparently, his day of birth (3:1). By recalling this motif, the narrator intensifies the tension established in the prologue regarding the nature of Job’s speech. As Newsom puts it, “Only with the last word of the sentence does the narrator apparently resolve the tension: ‘he opened his mouth and cursed *his day*.’”¹⁶⁶ In the script of Job’s opening lament itself, the verb קבב appears in conjunction with another verb אָרַר, a term which falls within the same

¹⁶³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 78.

¹⁶⁴ Balentine (*Job*, 80–81) also recognizes this connection.

¹⁶⁵ Forrest (“Two Faces,” 387–88) also recognizes that the “curse” motif “plays a central role in both the prologue and in chap. 3 of the dialogue.”

¹⁶⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 366; italics hers. Wilcox (*The Bitterness of Job*, 51–70), however, argues that Job does curse God in his words.

semantic domain as קבב, in the same line (3:8). Job imagines himself urging those who curse (אָרר) the day/Sea (יָם)¹⁶⁷ and those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan to curse (קבב) the night of his conception. Many have argued that in calling up the forces of chaos Job intends to destroy the created order.¹⁶⁸ However, it seems more likely that Job is only interested in his own situation.¹⁶⁹ After all, “his malediction related only to one particular day and one particular night.”¹⁷⁰ Job’s curse of his day of birth and his unrestrained use of terms to mean “to curse” are in stark contrast to the narrator’s reluctance to use the word explicitly in relation to God in the prologue. Again, this strongly suggests that the appropriateness of one’s speech is the focalization of the story.

3. The “birth” motif (3:1–19)

Two relevant concepts that are related to the “birth” motif are “the day of birth” and “the womb of the mother.” After the first round of catastrophes had befallen Job, he already mentioned that he came from his mother’s womb without bringing anything (1:21). In ch. 3, he reiterates this motif, which, in fact, forms the bulk of the images

¹⁶⁷ Some retain the MT and read “day” (Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:33; Dhorme, *Job*, 29–30; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 101 n.8a; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 90; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 71 n.8.b; Newsom, “Job,” 368), while others emend to יָ (Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, 59; Pope, *Job*, 30; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 34–35; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 54; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 92–93 n.8; Althann, “Job 3,” 131–32; Wikander, “Job 3,8,” 265). I do not intend to argue for either reading. Seow (“Orthography,” 74–76), however, argues that the text originally had יָ based on the assumption of the use of the contracted diphthong in Job. Thus the noun יָ is a double entendre. On the initial reading, the reader would interpret the word as “day.” Yet the second line (3:8b) forces the reader to reread the word as “Sea.”

¹⁶⁸ Fishbane, “Jeremiah IV 23–26,” 153; Cox, “Desire for Oblivion,” 42; *idem*, *The Triumph of Impotence*, 43; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 108–109; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 205; Perdue, “Job’s Assault on Creation,” 295–315; *idem*, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 97; *idem*, “Metaphorical Theology,” 145; Pettys, “Let There Be Darkness,” 89–104; Balentine, *Job*, 86.

¹⁶⁹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 94; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 87; Wilson, *Job*, 37.

¹⁷⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 87.

used.¹⁷¹ The narrator introduces the content of Job's lament as the cursing of his day, that is, the day of his birth (3:1). Job's lament consists of three parts (vv. 3–10; vv. 11–19; vv. 20–26), the first two of which contain this motif. In alluding to the creation account in Gen 1–2, Job expresses an impossible wish that the day of his birth and the night of his conception be erased from the calendar (vv. 3–9).¹⁷² He concludes the first part of his lament by providing the rationale for this provocative wish: “because it did not shut the doors of my mother's womb, and hide trouble from my eyes” (v. 10). In the second part of his lament Job tackles the issue from a different angle. He asks in a rhetorical sense why he did not die at birth (v. 11, 16). He further strengthens the imagery by describing the knees to receive him and the breasts for him to suck as being unwanted (v. 12). This verbal connection not only strengthens the cohesiveness of the story but also establishes a continuity in the characterization of Job from the prose prologue to the poetic dialogue.¹⁷³

4. The “death” motif (3:11–22)

The “death” motif, which is one of the key concepts in the beginning exposition, recurs again as the most important idea in Job's opening lament. Job uses the root מוּת recurs again as the most important idea in Job's opening lament. Job uses the root מוּת twice. He complains that he did not die (מוּת) at birth (3:11). Otherwise, he would be enjoying peace. A few lines later, he generalizes his bitter experience and laments that

¹⁷¹ Hoffer (“Illusion,” 97) also recognizes this connection and argues that Job 1:21a “anticipates the imminent outpouring against his day of birth (ch. 3).”

¹⁷² Most interpreters note the connection between Job 3 and Gen 1–2. Among the most aggressive is Fishbane (“Jeremiah IV 23–26,” 153), who states, “The whole thrust of the text in Job iii 1–13 is to provide a systematic *bouleversement*, or reversal, of the cosmicizing acts of creation described in Gen. 1–ii 4a.” (italics his).

¹⁷³ Cf. Moore, “The Integrity of Job,” 16. He argues that “the poetic lament of Job 3 is a step-by-step rebuttal of Job's manifesto of faith in 1:21.”

life is given to the sufferer who longs to die (מות) and search for the grave (3:20–21). For Job, “death” is a deliverance from his present position.¹⁷⁴ He wishes to die because the grave would be a better place for him to reside.¹⁷⁵ This motif repetition appears to clarify what Job is longing for during the week of silence in 2:13.

5. עבד (3:19)

Job brings in the concept of slavery in the midst of his beginning lament. He pictures Sheol as the place where the slave is free from his master (3:19). The term אֲדוֹן, “master,” in 3:19 again is perhaps intentionally ambiguous.¹⁷⁶ This noun is commonly used to refer to God as “the Lord,” but it can also be used in a general sense of a human lord.¹⁷⁷ Interestingly, in the prologue YHWH refers to Job as his עבד twice (1:8; 2:3). According to Balentine, “God’s perspective is that Job has a place of honor among those (like Moses), who have distinguished themselves by serving God faithfully.”¹⁷⁸ From Job’s perspective, his desire would be to get away from his master-slave/servant relationship if what it means to be a servant/slave is to suffer from the Divine Master’s oppression.

¹⁷⁴ Basson, “Death as Deliverance,” 66–80.

¹⁷⁵ For “death wish” elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, see Gen 27:46; 1 Kgs 19:4; Jer 20:14; Jon 4:3. See also Wohlgelehter, “Death Wish,” 131–40.

¹⁷⁶ Balentine, *Job*, 92.

¹⁷⁷ *DCH* 1:119–22.

¹⁷⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 92.

6. סוּךְ (3:23)

In the first heavenly dialogue, the satan taunts YHWH about the piety of Job: “Have you not hedged (שׁוּךְ) him in, him and his household, and all of his possessions?” (1:10). The satan uses the verb שׁוּךְ to express the action of God’s protective care to Job. In this opening lament, Job uses the term סוּךְ, a variant of שׁוּךְ, here to express his existing situation.¹⁷⁹ He says, “Why does he give light to the one whose way (דֶּרֶךְ) is hidden, whom God has hedged in (סוּךְ)” (3:23). Since דֶּרֶךְ can be a metaphor “for the conduct of life, personal destiny, and the underlying principle of order,” Job may be expressing his loss of life direction because God has created a perverse and chaotic world for him.¹⁸⁰ On the other hand, in the preceding context, Job makes use of the image of a “treasure hunter,” who is seeking death as his valuable target (vv. 21–22).¹⁸¹ The one longing for the grave is compared with an image of the hunter’s enthusiasm and jubilant delight at the discovery of the treasure.¹⁸² So דֶּרֶךְ can also be taken more literally as a path. Job sees himself as someone who desires to seek rest and comfort by going to the grave, but God has sustained his life by fencing him about. The repeated use of the term שׁוּךְ/סוּךְ heightens the reversal occurring in Job’s world. God’s previously caring protection has become hostile restriction experienced by Job.¹⁸³

¹⁷⁹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 112), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 99), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 101), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 207), Newsom (“Job,” 370), Balentine (*Job*, 92–93) also recognize this connection.

¹⁸⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 111–12.

¹⁸¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 111. So Clines, *Job 1–20*, 100; Newsom, “Job,” 370; Balentine, *Job*, 94.

¹⁸² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 111.

¹⁸³ Andersen, *Job*, 109; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 101.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator presents Job, the protagonist, as speaking again with two introductory sentences: “After that (אַחֲרֵי כֵן) Job opened his mouth (פִּה) and cursed (קָלַל) his day. And Job answered (וַיֹּאמֶר) ... (וַיַּעַן ...)” (3:1–2).¹⁸⁴ The phrase אַחֲרֵי כֵן in the first verse establishes a firm connection between this chapter and the preceding events in the prologue.¹⁸⁵ The repetition of the “birth” and the “death” motifs in Job’s present outcry further supports the view that the Job in ch. 3 is best to be interpreted as the same Job in chs. 1–2.

The “speech” and the “blessing/cursing” motifs elicited by the terms פִּה and קָלַל respectively in the narrator’s introduction prepare the authorial audience to make ethical judgments of what Job is going to say. What has been in Job’s mind all along? For a coherent reading experience, the authorial audience is compelled to respond to the mimetic component of the character and make interpretive judgments accordingly.¹⁸⁶

In the first strophe (3:3–10) of Job’s opening outburst, he uses the form of a curse to express his impossible desire that he had never been born. While the word “curse” is almost forbidden in the prologue, Job is not shy to use different Hebrew terms (אָרַר, קִבַּב) [v. 8]) directly to convey this sense within his malediction. This again confirms that (im)proper speech is the central concern of the narrative. Despite the provocative nature

¹⁸⁴ Although the construction וַיֹּאמֶר ... וַיַּעַן may be used to introduce direct speech in response to a spoken word or an occasion elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Course, *Speech and Response*, 3–4; see also BDB 772–73), its usage in Job appears to indicate the initiation of a speech. See also HALOT 2:852.

¹⁸⁵ As Clines, *Job 1–20*, 78 rightly notes, the phrase אַחֲרֵי כֵן (“after that”) carries “its usual significance as a conjunctive rather than a disjunctive expression.” Similarly, Course, *Speech and Response*, 3.

¹⁸⁶ For instance, Balentine (*Job*, 96) writes, “The silence is a way of connecting with the reality of suffering and of searching for some wider truth than he has previously grasped that will make sense of that reality ... It is when silence gives way to speech that sufferers begin a journey that advances faith to a new level.”

of Job's words, his imprecation is not without parallel in the Hebrew Bible. Jeremiah the prophet has uttered something very similar in form and content (Jer 20:14–18).¹⁸⁷ Both passages share the four basic motifs of cursing the day of birth (Job 3:3; Jer 20:14), announcement of a male child (Job 3:3; Jer 20:15), blocking the womb (Job 3:10; Jer 20:17) and seeing trouble (Job 3:10; Jer 20:18).¹⁸⁸ Although the authorial audience may not be able to decide on the literary dependence of the two passages in view, the presence of the Jeremiah passage at least reveals that Job's malediction originates in a known Hebrew tradition.¹⁸⁹ A close comparison between the two passages also suggests that the Joban author appears to push this tradition to the extreme.¹⁹⁰ Whereas Jeremiah only curses the day of his birth,¹⁹¹ Job tries to eliminate the day of his birth from existence.

In the next strophe (3:11–19), Job's chain of thought progresses from his wish that he had never been born to his desire to have died at birth. He offers a reminiscent

¹⁸⁷ Westermann (*Structure*, 60 n.12) notes, "The two passages are remarkably similar to one another, coinciding in almost every respect." Zuckerman (*Job the Silent*, 124) even claims, "It could even be said that Job 3 and Jeremiah 20:14–18 are two of the most structurally parallel passages in the Bible."

¹⁸⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 83.

¹⁸⁹ Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 46–47 n.1; Clines and Gunn, "Form," 406; Carroll, "Confessions," 129; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 41, 103; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 88 n.2; Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 124; Hoffman, *Blemish Perfection*, 429–30.

¹⁹⁰ Zuckerman (*Job the Silent*, 127) argues that Job intends to subvert the "curse-of-the-day-of-birth" lament tradition that Jeremiah endorses. According to Zuckerman, while Jeremiah's curse of his day of birth is an outcry of utter despair on the surface, the expression deep down is a tacit appeal to elicit the response of God. He writes, "The function of such a lament must have been well known and well recognized by ... ancient audience: to portray a sufferer's distress in the most nihilistic terms possible for the purpose of attracting God's attention and thus leading to the rescue of the sufferer from affliction" (125–26). Zuckerman's interpretation of Jeremiah's curse is, however, open to question. For instance, Boda ("Uttering,") argues that Jeremiah's lament in 20:14–18 is an outcry of utter despair, revealing the prophet's distancing himself from God. Thus, it is preferable to interpret the protagonist's curse in Job 3 as the Joban poet's attempt to push the "curse-of-the-day-of-birth" lament tradition to its limit.

¹⁹¹ Contra Greenstein ("Jeremiah as an Inspiration," 103), who argues that in calling the day of his birth accursed (אָרוּר), Jeremiah may be merely describing rather than cursing that day. Greenstein's argument is weakened when one realizes that the same verb אָרוּר is applied to the man who brought the news to his father (20:15), whom Jeremiah curses in the following verses (vv. 16–17).

description of the underworld and expresses his desire to reside there. He first imagines the netherland as an ultimate resting place for those who in life enjoyed prosperity like him (vv. 14–15). Then he turns to describe two contrasting groups of persons who will inhabit Sheol in pairs (vv. 17–19). “In each case the relationship between these groups is characterized by inequality and oppression.”¹⁹² Surprisingly, Job appears to identify himself with those at the bottom of the social ladder.¹⁹³ If we are allowed to understand Job’s complaint more literally, his suffering is more of a social than of a physical nature.¹⁹⁴ In his complaint, Job says, “There the wicked cease to rage (רגז)” (v. 17a). As discussed in the previous section, the gesture of Job’s three friends may have already disclosed their deliberate alienation from him. If Job’s opening complaint is a response in view of his circumstances, these words indirectly address his friends, who have been raging against him through their gestures. Moreover, through the re-use of the word עבד (v. 19), the implied author contrasts God’s and Job’s perceptions of the term, thus underscoring the ironic nature of being a “slave/servant” of God in the narrative.

¹⁹² Balentine, *Job*, 90.

¹⁹³ Balentine, *Job*, 90.

¹⁹⁴ Girard even argues that Job “is the scapegoat of his community” (*Victim of His People*, 4). By “scapegoat,” she means “the innocent party who polarizes a universal hatred” (5). Girard writes, “It is true that Job complains of physical ills, but this particular complaint is easily linked to the basic cause of his lament. He is the victim of countless brutalities; the psychological pressure on him is unbearable” (6). In a later article (“Job as Failed Scapegoat”), she articulates in a similar fashion and says, “stating the problem of evil in general leads to not distinguishing two types of evil that the book of Job requires us to distinguish: evil that comes directly from human beings (the ostracism Job suffers) and evil comes directly from God (the loss of children, the accidental loss of goods, the skin disease). The book of Job speaks almost exclusively of the evil that come from humans and that are the evils par excellence for the victims” (204). Although Girard’s argument is intriguing, she fails to acknowledge the fact that it was YHWH who caused Job’s bodily disintegration in the first place. Similarly, Basson (“Just Skin and Bones,” 287–99) draws on various cultural studies and argues that Job’s bodily disintegration has caused his repulsion from society. Nevertheless, at the end of his essay he writes, “Job’s lament about his physical affliction is therefore not just a complaint about the pain caused by aching wounds but a desire for a whole and pure body, for only then will he be allowed access into the realm of kin relations in which his identity is embedded” (297). Nowhere in the book does Job express his wish to have “a whole and pure body.” The vivid description of his disintegrated body is only a means to advocate his grievous personal misery (7:1–6; 30:20–31) or to delineate the cause of his public mockery (17:6–7).

In the last strophe (vv. 20–26), Job laments the brutal reality that God continues to sustain the vitality of those sufferers who prefer to choose death over life.¹⁹⁵ He compares the one longing for the grave with an image of the hunter's exceeding joy at the discovery of the treasure (vv. 21–22). The imagery of digging a passage to Sheol is continued in v. 23: "[Why does he give light] to one whose way is hidden, whom God has hedged in (סוד)?" Through the repetition of the term *סוד/סוד*, the authorial audience realizes that a conventional term which can denote protective care (cf. 1:10) can be turned into part of the vocabulary of complaint. More importantly, what has often been overlooked is that the way which God has fenced in is the passage to the underworld.¹⁹⁶ This active restricting action of God is likely an allusion to Job 2:6, in which YHWH explicitly requests the satan to keep the life of Job. In terms of structure, this sentence forms a neat parallelism with Job 1:12, in which YHWH requests the satan not to lay a hand on Job. In terms of content, however, this remark is rather redundant, because if Job happens to die in the midst of the satan's second attack, how Job would have responded will continue to remain a mystery. The "death" motif in Job's double responses in the prologue reveals that he expects to die soon. The continuation of this very motif in this chapter strongly suggests that Job's outcry is a response to YHWH's prolongation of his suffering through sustaining his life. Seven days and seven nights have passed, but he is still alive! Job's death wish should perhaps be taken both literarily and literally.

¹⁹⁵ Some translations and commentators render Job's rhetorical question in v. 20 in the passive: "Why is light given ...?" So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 30; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 96; NIV; NRSV. Dhome (*Job*, 37), however, rightly asserts that "it is obvious that the implied subject is God."

¹⁹⁶ Although Clines (*Job 1–20*, 101) is able to grasp this imagery, he does not draw the connection between 3:23 and 2:6.

At the conclusion of his opening lament, Job speaks in the first person again and utters a rather perplexing statement, “For what I feared has befallen me, all that I dreaded has come upon me” (3:25). The assertion portrays some internal fear of Job that has become a reality. The authorial audience has to make an interpretive judgment again. It is plausible that Job here refers to his fear of certain unknown misfortune. The reference to Job’s regular sacrifices in 1:5 is often taken as a proof text that he “was aware that calamity was a possibility even for the most exemplary person.”¹⁹⁷ If we can legitimately infer from the preceding verses that Job is speaking of his ongoing experience since God has blocked his way to Sheol, the fear that has become a reality may refer to the coming of his friends and their attitude toward him. This is supported by the last sentence in his opening lament, “I had no repose, no quiet, no rest. But it came (בוא) רגז” (v. 26). The term רגז, which may mean “trouble” or “rage,” is used earlier in the same chapter as denoting the evil action of the wicked (v. 17). For those who have no repose, no quiet, and no rest, what they need is certainly not trouble or rage, but consolation. Interestingly, at the end of the prologue, those are the friends who come (בוא) and visit Job.

The provocative lament of Job introduces another unstable situation to the narrative. This becomes one of the instabilities that the authorial audience expects to be resolved. More importantly, unlike the ends of ch. 1 and ch. 2, the narrator, notwithstanding his questionable reliability, no longer presents his evaluation on what Job has spoken.¹⁹⁸ The authorial audience is compelled to pass ethical judgments on Job

¹⁹⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 103. Similarly, Andersen, *Job*, 110; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 39; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 100.

¹⁹⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 80. Regarding the conversations between Job and his friends that follow, Balentine says, “There will be no third party who steps into the middle of these vexed conversations to interpret or critique them for us. In effect, the dialogues now invite the reader to become a third party participant in this drama. It is now our responsibility to listen to ponder, to discern. If we are to enter fully into this part of Job’s

on the one hand and to determine the implied author's various judgments of Job on the other hand. The author's judgment of Job's provocative language becomes the greatest tension which sustains the audience's interest until the very end of the story. According to Phelan, "authors typically guide their audiences toward particular ethical judgments about their characters' actions."¹⁹⁹ Authors who do not provide such guidance put their audience in a situation that entails the risk of misevaluating the aesthetic value of their works. However, "effectively executing the transfer of responsibility for ethical judgment to the authorial and flesh-and-blood audiences can not only challenge those audiences but provide them with extremely rich reading experiences."²⁰⁰

What does the authorial audience have to say about the aesthetic quality of the narrative up to this point? How does this aesthetic judgment affect the ethical judgment as a whole? No one would fail to recognize the drastic stylistic difference between this chapter and the previous two chapters. Job's opening lament is composed in sophisticated poetry full of striking images whereas the fable-like prologue is written in simple prose. Through responding to this shift in literary style, the authorial audience realizes that the work is not a typical didactic narrative. Even if the prologue might have given the false impression to some members of the audience that they have entered a fantasyland of order and simplicity, the opening lament should prepare them for the complex world of competing core religious values in the rest of the book.

journey, the dialogues suggest, we, like Job, must learn to grapple with issues that will not be resolved simply by pronouncement or fiat."

¹⁹⁹ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 52.

²⁰⁰ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 54.

IV. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified and examined key terms, phrases, and motifs that have been repeated in the beginning section (chs. 1–3) of the narrative. I have also demonstrated how the recognition of these repetitions contributes to the reading experience of the story.

In the first section of the prologue (1:1—2:10), the protagonist, Job, is repeatedly described as “blameless and upright” (תם וישר) and “one who feared God and turned away from evil” (ירא אלהים וסר מרע; 1:1, 8; 2:3). This fourfold characterization underscores the extraordinary piety of Job. The root רעע is repeated two more times, one in the narrator’s description of the nature of Job’s disease (2:7) and the other in Job’s verbal response after he has been afflicted with such a disease (2:10). The expression “smote ... in evil (רע) sores from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” in 2:7 is clearly an allusion to the curses associated with disobedience in Deut 28:35. Job’s words in 2:10, which utilize the same root רעע, appear to be a playful response to the narrator’s perception as presented in 2:7. Job laments that he and his wife have received the רע, which is typically associated with disobedience, even though he has been demonstrating a lifestyle that deserves the opposite. Moreover, the root תמם occurs two more times in the construction עד חזק + בתמה, “still maintaining one’s integrity,” one from the mouth of YHWH (2:3) and the other from that of Job’s wife (2:9). Both YHWH and Job’s wife use this expression to refer to Job’s pious response to his plight.

The verb חטא, “to sin,” which is repeated three times (1:5, 22; 2:10) in the prologue, appears to be another important term. The narrator first uses this term in the context of his interpretation of the rationale behind Job’s regular sacrifice for his children

(1:5). The narrator also uses the verb חטא to describe what Job has refrained from doing after each round of catastrophes (1:22; 2:10). In each case, the concern of the narrator is always the relationship between speaking and sinning. Most importantly, he expresses interest only in the legitimacy of one's verbal expressions. The most frequently used key word in the prologue is בָּרַךְ (1:5, 10, 11, 21; 2:5, 9). The audience has to negotiate the meaning of בָּרַךְ each time the word is encountered. The repeated use of this key word reveals that the appropriateness of one's speech to and/or about God is the central issue of the story.

In addition, the rare term חֲנֹם, “for nothing,” is used twice in the prologue (1:9; 2:3). The deliberate repetition of this term seems to function as an ironic marker for the absence of a legitimate reason for the calamities that have befallen Job. Apart from key terms and phrases, the “death” motif also comes up consistently in chs. 1–2. The overwhelming presence of this motif in the prologue anticipates its further development throughout the rest of the book.

In the second section of the prologue (2:11–13), the root רָעַע is repeated one more time in the context of a standard expression that refers to the curse associated with covenantal disobedience (v. 11). Apparently this is how Job's three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—have perceived the origin of Job's plight.

Since the major concern of the prologue focuses on what will come out from the mouth of Job, the “speech” motif is again present in Job's opening outburst (ch. 3). The narrator uses פִּה, a term which, by association, recalls שִׁפָּה in 2:10c, to introduce the opening of Job's provocative lament. This deliberate link draws the reader's attention to ponder whether Job is going to sin in his speech to come. Another closely related theme,

namely, the “blessing/cursing” motif also occupies a key position in the first strophe of Job’s imprecation (3:1, 8). The narrator begins with an explicit statement that Job cursed (קלל) his day, apparently, his day of birth (3:1). By recalling this motif, the narrator intensifies the tension established in the prologue regarding the nature of Job’s speech. Moreover, Job uses two terms that can connote “curse,” ארר and קבב, in the context of his imaginary curse (3:8). Job’s curse of his day of birth and his unrestrained use of terms to mean “curse” are in stark contrast to the narrator’s reluctance to use the word explicitly in relation to God in the prologue. This suggests that the appropriateness of one’s speech is the focalization of the story.

The “birth” and the “death” motifs, both of which are present in Job’s verbal responses in the prologue, reappear in Job’s opening lament. They help establishing a continuity in the characterization of Job from chs. 1–2 to ch. 3. Moreover, the repetition of the “death” motif clarifies what Job is longing for during the week of silence in 2:13. The repetition of two other words, סוּךְ, “to hedge,” and עֶבֶד, “servant/slave,” further strengthens the verbal correspondence between the prologue and Job’s opening outburst.

Contrary to what is commonly believed, there is much continuity between the prose prologue (chs. 1–2) and Job’s opening outburst (ch. 3). Job’s verbal responses in the prologue (1:21; 2:10) need not be regarded as his pious affirmation of divine sovereignty or his recital of conventional slogan. The deviant character of Job may already have been revealed through his responses at the very beginning. Moreover, Job’s provocative curse and lament in ch. 3 may be seen as his response to God’s prolongation of his suffering on the one hand and the alienation of the three friends on the other.

The central issue of the narrative so far appears to be appropriate religious expressions in the context of suffering. The heavenly council scenes in the prologue are best to be interpreted as parodic. In the case of a parody, the voice of the narrator should not be regarded as normative. As the idea of divine testing is sometimes used in a religious community to address the problem of innocent suffering, the author criticizes this theory by exposing its inherent weakness. On the other hand, the author has put the most provocative language in the mouth of Job. Similar curse language may belong to the repertoires of some known Hebrew tradition, which a lamenter can embrace to express one's utter despair. The author, however, pushes this tradition to its limit and concludes Job's opening lament with a sombre death wish.

CHAPTER 4

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS – THE FIRST CYCLE (JOB 4–14)

Chapters 4–14 of the book of Job contain the first cycle of dialogue between Job and his three friends. Eliphaz the Temanite, Bildad the Shuhite, and Zophar the Naamathite speak to Job in turn, and each of their corresponding speeches is followed by Job's response to them. In this chapter, I will identify the internal quotations in each of these speeches to preceding materials and examine their impact on the reading of the corresponding speech in terms of narrative progression. Since only Zophar's first speech (ch. 11) contains an attributed citation, the focus of attention for the other speeches will be on allusions alone.

I. Eliphaz's First Speech (Job 4–5)

A. Allusion Analysis

Out of the three friends of Job, Eliphaz the Temanite is the first one to break the silence. The narrator indicates the initiation of Eliphaz's speech by applying the same phrase to him as he does to Job. Eliphaz answered (ויען ... ויאמר), presumably, to Job. As in any other ordinary conversation, one normally responds to the words last spoken. It appears to be most logical first to look in this speech for possible allusions to Job's preceding outburst. First, the "speech" motif, which partly establishes the link between the prologue and Job's opening outburst, shows up again in Eliphaz's first speech. Eliphaz uses different terms associated with speaking and listening in strategic positions throughout his response. Second, a particular form of speaking, namely, cursing (קלל), is

how the narrator summarizes what Job is doing in his opening cry. Eliphaz picks up this thematic thread and uses another verb, קבב, to allude to the curse uttered by Job. Third, the “death” motif, which permeates Job’s opening outburst, continues to be one of the themes being developed in this speech. Fourth, פחד, “dread,” one of the concluding themes in Job’s lament (3:25), is also picked up by Eliphaz in this speech. Having established the connections between these two speeches, the authorial audience seems to be justified in searching for other possible verbal connections. I propose to add to the list תקווה (“hope”), עמל (“trouble”), שאגה (“roar”), and the “darkness” motif.

In addition to Job’s beginning lament, this speech of Eliphaz appears to connect verbally to the prose prologue (1:1—2:10). Three of the four defining virtues of Job, as affirmed by the narrator and YHWH (1:1, 8; 2:3) are repeated by Eliphaz in his opening exhortation to Job (4:6). As these virtues are the underlying factors that set the entire story in motion, it is reasonable to consider the allusions as deliberate too.

1. The “speech” motif (4:2, 4, 16; 5:8, 27)

Eliphaz, in his first speech, uses a cluster of terms that are related to the “speech” motif. He begins his response with a couple of rhetorical questions: “Can we lift up a word (דבר) to you?¹ You will be unable to bear it. But to hold back words (מליץ), who can endure?” (4:2). As he continues to develop his arguments, he recounts Job’s past piety in underscoring the words of Job: “Behold, you have taught (יסר) many, and slack hands

¹ I follow Clines (*Job 1–20*, 108 n.2.a) and take הנסה as an “orthographic variant for הִנָּשָׂא (interrogative הִנָּ + 1 pl. impf. of נָשָׂא).” Dhorme (*Job*, 43) thinks that נָשָׂא is behind הנסה too, but due to “an error in audition.” Nevertheless, the meaning of the verse does not change much if we adopt the conventional parsing of the term as interrogative הִנָּ + 3 sg. *pi’el* pf. of נָסָה, “to attempt, venture.” So, Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:23; Cotter, *Job 4–5*, 153 n.1.

you have strengthened. The stumbled your words (מליד) have raised, and tottering knees you have made firm” (4:3–4). Moreover, much of the foundation of Eliphaz’s first speech is built on the secret word he received from the vision of the night and the voice he heard therein: “But there came to me a word (דבר) in stealth, and my ear caught a whisper of it ... There stood a figure which I could not recognize its appearance, a form before my eyes, I heard a still, low voice (קול)” (4:12, 16). Later Eliphaz tells Job that he would have addressed his speech (דברה) to God if he were in the shoes of Job (5:8).² At the end of his speech, he concludes by urging Job to listen (שמע) and accept his words (5:27).

Although not every occurrence of the “speech” motif in this speech can be considered an allusion to some words used earlier, two instances are particularly noteworthy. First, when Eliphaz and the other two friends first came to comfort and console Job, no one spoke (דבר) a word (דבר) to Job for seven days (2:13). The silence of the friends is conventionally understood as an expression of sympathy. As discussed in the last chapter, I have posited the possibility that perhaps more lies behind the week of dead air. Suppose we take the verbal connection between 4:2 and 2:13 as intentional, then Eliphaz here offers his version of the rationale behind their silence. No one has lifted up a word (דבר) to Job because Eliphaz believes that Job could not have bore it if anyone had done so. What is implied is that the nature of the words he plans to offer is not consolatory but confrontational. What is most ironic is that after Job has opened his mouth to curse the day of his birth, Eliphaz is not shy to admit that he cannot endure holding back his torrent of words anymore.

² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 116 n.8.b.

Second, in his opening complaint, Job describes Sheol as a resting place where the prisoners would not hear the voice (קול) of the taskmaster (3:18). Beuken argues that “Job is equating God with ‘the taskmaster’” here and is describing God as “the one who constitutes an oppressive power in Job’s own life as such.”³ His argument can be strengthened by noting the subtle allusion of the terms “slaves” and “lord” in the following verse (3:19) to the prologue in which YHWH describes Job as his servant (1:8; 2:3).⁴ As Beuken puts it, “A God who continues to let himself *be heard* in this form is too much for Job.”⁵ Eliphaz attempts to counter Job’s bitter comment by highlighting the voice (קול) as a source of revelation (4:16). When he summons Job to listen (שמע) to him at the end of his speech, Eliphaz is in fact identifying his words as those of God (5:27).

2. ירא, תם, and ישר (4:6–7)

As Habel rightly observes, “The words ‘fear’ (*yir’ā*); ‘integrity, blamelessness’ (*tōm*); and ‘upright’ (*yāšār*), which the poet puts in Eliphaz’ mouth, are direct allusions to the opening narrative description of Job’s character, a description familiar to the poet but unknown to Eliphaz.”⁶ Both the narrator and YHWH affirm that Job is a man who is “blameless (תם) and upright (ישר), who fears (ירא) God and turns away from evil” (1:1, 8; 2:3). Moreover, YHWH (and perhaps Job’s wife too) affirms that Job is still maintaining his integrity (תמה) after he has lost all his possessions and children (2:3, 9).

³ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 53.

⁴ See III.A.5 in Chapter 3.

⁵ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 53; italics his.

⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 121. Similarly, Holbert “Klage,” 122–23; Course, *Speech and Response*, 23; Newsom, “Job,” 376; Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 110; Balentine, *Job*, 106.

In this speech Eliphaz unknowingly repeats some of these key terms used to characterize the defining virtues of Job at his own disposal (4:6–7).

A growing number of interpreters have recognized the presence of ambiguity in Eliphaz's opening speech.⁷ A word-pair that has received much attention is *יראה* / *בסלה* in 4:6a. The term *יראה*, “fear,” may be an ellipsis for “fear” of God, i.e., piety or religion,⁸ or it may denote the unpleasant emotion induced by anxiety or potential threat. Depending on the context, the term *בסלה* may mean “confidence” or “stupidity.”⁹ Consequently, the rhetorical question posed by Eliphaz can be interpreted quite differently. Does he intend to ask “Is not your fear of God your confidence?” or “Is not your fear your stupidity?” The latter interpretation is supported by the immediate context in which Eliphaz questions why Job is terrified (*בהל*) when misfortune strikes him (4:5). Moreover, Job, at the conclusion of his preceding cry, has mentioned that the situation he dreaded (*פחד*) and feared (*יגר*) most has come to him (3:25). It would then be quite natural for Eliphaz to respond to Job regarding his “fear” in the beginning strophe of his speech.¹⁰

On the other hand, the parallelism with the unambiguous pair “blamelessness” (*תם*) / “hope” (*תקוה*) strongly suggests that *יראה* / *בסלה* should be read as “fear (of God)” / “confidence.”¹¹ Instead of choosing one interpretation over the other, perhaps it is best

⁷ See, e.g., Fullerton, “Double Entendre,” 320–74; Hoffman, “Equivocal Words,” 114–19; Harding, “Spirit of Deception,” 137–66.

⁸ Dhorme, *Job*, 44; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 47; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 125; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 109 n.6.a.

⁹ DCH 4:444.

¹⁰ Some interpreters suggest that this is a possible reading. So Hoffman, “Equivocal Words,” 115; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 210; Harding, “Spirit of Deception,” 155.

¹¹ Most interpreters prefer this reading. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 113; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 105; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 106; Newsom, “Job,” 376; Balentine, *Job*, 106.

to understand יראה / כסלה as cases of double entendre.¹² Eliphaz's rhetorical questions in 4:6 serve as a bridge between his description of Job's personal situation (4:2–5) and his portrayal of the supposed foundation of Job's confidence and hope (4:7–11).

In the following verse (v. 7) Eliphaz uses the term ישר, “the upright,” in its plural form, to classify those who would not be annihilated, and introduces another term, נקי, “the innocent,” which falls into the same semantic domain of תם, “the blameless,” to describe those who would not perish. As Habel puts it, “Eliphaz apparently assumes that since Job has not yet perished (*ʿbd*), he can look forward to restoration.”¹³

The verbal connection between 4:6–7 and the prologue at least highlights Eliphaz's lack of doubt regarding Job's virtues, which has been affirmed by both the narrator and YHWH. More importantly, the allusion draws the audience's attention to the role that Eliphaz plays in the story. He reminds Job that his own piety should be the source of his confidence and hope.¹⁴ However, the audience knows well that whether Job endorses this belief was exactly the agenda item in the heavenly council. If Job accepts the “friendly reminder” offered by his friend, then the satan would have been right and both Job and YHWH would be on the losing side.

¹² Hoffman, “Equivocal Words,” 115; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 210; Harding, “Spirit of Deception,” 155.

¹³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 125.

¹⁴ As Balentine (*Job*, 106) observes, “But whereas Job has challenged the notion that piety and integrity secure one's fortunes, Eliphaz continues to press the case that these virtues remain the key to Job's future. Indeed, in his view there is a direct and immutable link between piety and ‘confidence’ and between integrity and ‘hope,’ a link that may be tested by suffering but will not ultimately be broken.”

3. תקוה (4:6; 5:16)

The root קוה draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding outcry (ch. 3).¹⁵ Eliphaz uses the noun תקוה, "hope" two times in his first speech. In the introduction he reminds Job that the integrity of his ways is his hope (תקוה; 4:6). Then, in modelling for Job how to seek God, Eliphaz praises God for being the one who brings hope (תקוה) to the poor (5:16). Job also has hope as presented in his opening outburst. However, what he hopes for (קוה) is that the light in the day of his birth be frustrated (3:9). As Course points out, "For Job this is a hopeless situation. In contrast, Eliphaz is given a response to this wish (4:6b) which advises Job not to give up but to 'hope' for restoration (cf. 4:7)."¹⁶

4. עמל (4:8; 5:6, 7)

The noun עמל, "trouble," also draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding outcry (ch. 3).¹⁷ Eliphaz uses the word pair עמל and און two times (4:8; 5:6), and עמל alone (5:7) one more time in his first speech to Job. Apart from the book of Job, עמל and און also appear together elsewhere in Num 23:21; Pss 7:15; 10:7; 55:11; 90:10; Isa 10:1; 59:4; Hab 1:3. Depending on the context, עמל can mean "trouble, hardship, misfortune" or "harm, mischief, wrong"¹⁸ while און can connote "misfortune, trouble" or

¹⁵ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 125), Course (*Speech and Response*, 22), and Beuken ("Job's Imprecation," 75–77) also recognize this connection.

¹⁶ Course, *Speech and Response*, 22.

¹⁷ Dhorme (*Job*, 46), Fullerton ("Double Entendre," 332–33), Power, ("Irony," 42–43); Holbert ("*Klage*," 120–21), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 126–27), Course (*Speech and Response*, 27–28), Beuken ("Job's Imprecation," 48–49), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 107) also recognize this connection. Although Habel (*The Book of Job*, 121) acknowledges the repeated use of the term עמל in 3:10, 20 on one hand and 4:8 on the other, he does not draw any inference from the connection.

¹⁸ DCH 6:481.

“iniquity, evil, sin.”¹⁹ Eliphaz emphasizes that the evildoers will reap what they sow (4:8)²⁰ and trouble does not originate in the earth or ground but in humans themselves (5:6–7).²¹

Job also talks about toil or trouble (עמל) on earth and he characterizes life in its totality with this concept (3:10, 20). Eliphaz picks up this concept and associates עמל with און. This inevitably brings human iniquity into a causal relationship with suffering.²² The move made by Eliphaz can thus be understood as his attempt to correct Job’s outlook on life.²³

5. שאגה (4:10)

The noun שאגה, “roar,” draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding outcry (ch. 3).²⁴ After describing the fate of the evildoers, Eliphaz uses “lions” as a metaphor to strengthen his point (4:10–11). He states that שאגה, “the roar,” of the

¹⁹ DCH 1:154.

²⁰ As Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 49) rightly observes, the allusion of Eliphaz’s declaration in 4:8 to Job’s lament in 3:10 (explicitly) and 3:20 (implicitly) is further strengthened by the re-use of another verb, ראה, “to see.” For Job, he wishes that he was buried like an infant who never has the opportunity to see the light (3:10), for the ability to see light only increases the misery to those who are in trouble (3:20). On the contrary, for Eliphaz, his ability to see refers to his own experience concerning the infallibility of retributive theology, and such experience grants him the authority to instruct Job.

²¹ I follow Dhorme (*Job*, 61) and many others in revocalizing יולד, “is born,” to יולד, “begets,” in 5:7 because it fits the flow of Eliphaz’s argument better. See Clines, *Job 1–20*, 116 n.7.a for a list of interpreters adopting this emendation. Consequently, I take the prep. ל before עמל in the same verse as the sign of the accusative. So Dhorme, *Job*, 61.

²² Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 48.

²³ Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 48) considers this as one of the possible inferences. On the contrary, some have argued that the repeated use of עמל in 4:8 in fact reveals the striking insensitivity of Eliphaz for what Job has said. So Fullerton, “Double Entendre,” 332–33; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 126–27. Given the numerous allusions in this speech to Job’s opening outcry, it is preferable to interpret Eliphaz as intentionally replying Job using Job’s own words.

²⁴ Terrien (*Job*, 70), Holbert, (“*Klage*,” 121), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation, 49–50), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 108) also recognize this connection.

lion is put to an end as they perish for lack of prey. In his opening outcry, Job complains that his sighs are like his bread and his groans (שאגה) pour out like water. Clines recognizes the repetition of the term שאגה in 4:10 but is reluctant to see it as a reference back to 3:24.²⁵ According to him, the allusion would inevitably include Job among the evildoers.²⁶ Even Beuken, who acknowledges the connection between the two speeches, believes that such an explicit comparison in the early stages of the dialogue would seem to be out of place.²⁷ The validity of this argument, of course, depends on how one construes the attitude of Eliphaz to Job in his first speech.

Beuken argues at length that “[t]he term ‘roaring’ does not constitute a *punctum comparationis*, [but] a sign.”²⁸ According to him, the word refers to Job’s distress and powerlessness when coming from Job’s mouth in 3:24 while it connotes the wild and frightening nature of lions from Eliphaz’s perspective. I do not find Beuken’s explanation convincing in light of the presence of other intentional allusions in Eliphaz’s speech as demonstrated above. Moreover, the reference to the “prey” in 4:20 also creates a semantic parallelism with the “bread” in 3:24.²⁹ It is thus preferable to regard Eliphaz’s deliberate allusion as a critique of Job’s groaning. In other words, the act of groaning is considered as an inappropriate behaviour, comparable to that of the evildoers; it should be put to an end. After all, this is the very reason why Eliphaz speaks up in the first place.

²⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 128.

²⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 128.

²⁷ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 50.

²⁸ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 50; italics his.

²⁹ Burnight, “Reversal and Response,” 328.

6. פחד (4:14)

The root פחד, “dread,” draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding outcry (ch. 3).³⁰ In his first speech, Eliphaz reports that a “dread” (פחד) has come to him and the multitude of his bones “dreaded” or “trembled” (פחד; 4:14). As Beuken notes, “[t]he word ‘dread’ (פחד) is not simply an incidental expression of emotion but stands for a fundamental existential experience, and one often brought about by confrontation with the divine.”³¹ For Eliphaz dread is the accompaniment to his nocturnal vision.

The same root also appears twice in one verse in Job’s opening lament, in which he reports that the dread (פחד) that he dreaded (פחד) has come to him (3:25a). As discussed earlier, there are different speculations on what the precise nature of Job’s fear was.³² At any rate, it has to be his internal emotion in relation to his catastrophes.

The repetition of this root in such a close proximity indicates that Eliphaz intends to compare his dreadful experience with that of Job. If Eliphaz claims that he has received revelation through this terrifying encounter with a being in the heavenly realm, perhaps he is urging Job to reconsider his dreadful experience not as a reason for despair but an opportunity to hear a message from the divine.

³⁰ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 127), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 54–55), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 108) also recognize this connection.

³¹ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 54.

³² See III.B in Chapter 3.

7. The “death” motif (4:21; 5:20, 26)

The “death” motif draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding outcry (ch. 3). Although Eliphaz uses various verbs such as אבד, “to perish,” בחד, “to destroy,” כלה, “to vanish” and דכא, “to crush,” to convey the termination of the life of a living being, he first uses the verb מות, “to die,” to describe the vulnerability of human beings: “Their tent cord, could it not be loosened in a day? And they may die (מות) without gaining wisdom” (4:21). Later he uses the root מות in another context. In listing the potential blessings if Job accepts the discipline from God, Eliphaz claims that God will deliver him from death (מות) in the midst of famine (5:20).³³ Another term that is closely related to מות is קבר, “grave.”³⁴ Eliphaz uses this word once near the very end of his first speech, in which he assures Job that he “will come to the grave (קבר) in full vigor, like the raising of a sheaf at its time” (5:26).

As shown in the previous chapter, “death” is a prominent motif in Job’s beginning cry.³⁵ For Job, death is a better form of existence than life. He even fantasizes that death possesses a salvific function. Eliphaz picks up Job’s arguments and points to the fact that death should never be a favourable option. Although death is inevitable for mortals, one should avoid it as much as one could and seek to go to the grave in the proper timing, that is, in ripe old age.

³³ Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 109) also recognizes the connection between the two speeches through the root מות.

³⁴ Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 55) also recognizes the connection between the two speeches through the term קבר. He writes, “In both texts Job himself is the subject of burial. Furthermore, two contrasts accompany the ‘grave’ theme: the contrast in temporal aspect between ‘undesired postponement of the journey to the grave’ and ‘being carried to the grave at the proper time’ and that between the sentiments of ‘longing for the grave in bitterness’ and ‘coming to one’s end satisfied by the fulness of life’.”

³⁵ See III.A.4 in Chapter 3.

8. The “cursing” motif (5:3)

The “cursing” motif draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding outcry (ch. 3).³⁶ The verb קִבַּב, “to curse,” appears only once in Eliphaz’s first speech.³⁷ He claims that once he saw a fool becoming prosperous and flourishing, and he impulsively “cursed” (קִבַּב) his dwelling (5:3). There is some discussion about the precise nuance of Eliphaz’s reaction. Some argue that Eliphaz should not possess the ability to curse and so translate the term אֶקֻּב as “I declared to be cursed.”³⁸ Recognizing the fact “that hiph and piel are much more common as declaratives,” Clines makes an innovative suggestion and interprets the term as “I despised as cursed.”³⁹ The most intuitive reading of אֶקֻּב as “I cursed” is equally defensible, however. Beuken is probably correct, noting that “it would be difficult to interpret 5,4–5, given the verb forms, as anything other than an explanation of the curse found in v. 3.”⁴⁰

In Job’s preceding outcry, he expresses his wish that those who curse (אָרַר) the day/Sea (יָם) and those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan may curse (קִבַּב) the night of his conception (3:8).⁴¹ Although Job uses the “cursing” motif only in relation to his own situation, Eliphaz appears to have perceived Job’s wish as a desperate attack on the created order. In response, Eliphaz is eager to curse the dwelling of the fool in order to

³⁶ Course (*Speech and Response*, 28), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 56–57), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 109) also recognize this connection.

³⁷ For an alternative understanding of the term אֶקֻּב in 5:3, see Seow, “Poetic Closure,” 437 n.15.

³⁸ See, e.g., Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 52–53; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 117.

³⁹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 115 n.3.d.

⁴⁰ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 56–57; so Dhorme, *Job*, 58–59.

⁴¹ See III.A.2 in Chapter 3.

speed up the operation of the retributive system, which is intrinsic to the moral order of the world. He is not shy to see himself as a contributor to the stability of this order.⁴²

9. The “darkness” motif (5:7)

The “darkness” motif draws a connection between Eliphaz’s words in 5:7a and Job’s preceding outcry (ch. 3).⁴³ The text of Job 5:7b, which reads *ובני רשף יגביהו עוף*, is conventionally translated as “just as sparks fly upward.”⁴⁴ The expression “sparks fly upward” is often taken as a simile for the certainty of the toilsome fate of humanity in 5:7a. In a recent dissertation, John Burnight has convincingly argued that the traditional translation of Job 5:7b is highly speculative.⁴⁵ He proposes to take *רשף* as the name of the Canaanite god Resheph and retain the literal meaning of *בני*, “sons of.”⁴⁶ He also understands the inf. cstr. *עוף* as deriving from another root, with the same spelling, meaning “to darken,” and translated *יגביהו עוף* as “exalt gloom.” Since the two parts of the verse are joined by a simple *ו*, but not an unambiguous particle of comparison such as *כ* or *כמו*, 5:7b can reasonably be translated as “and the sons of Resheph exalt gloom.”⁴⁷

The concept of “darkness” plays a crucial role in Job’s earlier malediction. It is the agent by which he activates his cursing of his day of birth: “Let that day be darkness

⁴² Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation, 57.

⁴³ In addition to 5:7b, the “darkness” motif is also present in 5:14. Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 51–52) even argues that “the text of 5,14 sounds like an allusion to 3,4–5, all the more so since the imagery of 5,14 (darkness at the noonday) is borrowed from the same curse genre under which ch. 3 falls.”

⁴⁴ See, e.g., NRSV; NJPS; NIV (“as surely as sparks fly upward”).

⁴⁵ Burnight, “Reversal and Response,” 394–414.

⁴⁶ Burnight, “Reversal and Response,” 411. Burnight’s translation of the phrase *בני רשף* as “sons of Resheph” is preceded by Pope (*Job*, 43) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 114).

⁴⁷ Burnight, “Reversal and Response,” 410–11.

(חשך)! ... Let darkness (חשך) and shadow of death (צלמות) claim it” (3:4–5). Since Job has attempted to invoke a variety of “darkening” agents to black out the day of his birth, it is therefore reasonable to interpret Eliphaz’s expression as a sarcastic way to liken Job to the sons of Resheph who exalt darkness in the midst of suffering.⁴⁸

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator presents Eliphaz as the first friend who takes up the lead in responding to Job (4:1). The analysis in the above section reveals that Eliphaz frequently re-uses the words of Job in order to nullify his protesting language. In a series of rhetorical questions, Eliphaz justifies the ongoing silence of him and his two other friends, and legitimizes his compulsion to speak up (4:2). He reminds Job of his previous ability to use his powerful words to help others who were agitated so as to contrast the inappropriate expression of terror Job has been displaying through his provocative outburst arising from his own misfortune (4:3–5). Using double entendre, Eliphaz describes Job’s fear as evidence of his folly and emphasizes that his piety should be the foundation of his hope of restoration (4:6). This introductory strophe of Eliphaz’s speech complicates the instability introduced by Job’s outburst in the previous chapter. In Job 3, this unstable relation surrounds Job’s inner struggle, or at best between the conflict between Job and God. Eliphaz’s response to Job develops this instability into a social problem. The initial intended consolation has now turned into a disputation.⁴⁹ In using first person plural as self identification (4:2; also 5:27), Eliphaz sees the conflict as not

⁴⁸ Burnight, “Reversal and Response,” 411–13.

⁴⁹ Westermann, *Structure*, 10.

only between Job and himself alone but also between Job and the three friends or even the group of people who hold a similar view as Eliphaz's.

Eliphaz's rhetorical questions to Job (4:6) also reveal the foundation of Eliphaz's own theology: those who fear God and live a blameless life will eventually receive God's favour and deliverance. He substantiates his claim by prompting Job concerning the moral order of the world, a system that he believes Job should have shared (4:7–11).⁵⁰ Whereas Job uses the term עֲמַל to summarize what life is about, Eliphaz corrects Job's conception by bringing עֲמַל into a causal relationship with אָן. In Eliphaz's moral world, the wicked reap what they sow.

Eliphaz next picks up Job's description of his dreadful feeling near the end of his preceding lament and re-contextualizes it to express his revelatory encounter of a nocturnal vision and audition. In so doing, Eliphaz suggests to Job that perhaps his fearful experience may also be a source of revelation from God. Eliphaz claims that the moral implications of human frailty are revealed to him through the vision and the accompanying voice (4:12–21).⁵¹ Unlike the image we have in Genesis where humankind, the pinnacle of creation, was empowered to dominate the world, the createdness of human beings, according to Eliphaz, exemplifies not only their vulnerability but also moral deficiency.⁵²

⁵⁰ Newsom, "Job," 375.

⁵¹ Some have argued that 4:12–21 is Eliphaz's quotation of Job's words. Therefore the vision therein belongs to Job. So Tur-Sinai, *Job*, 89–91; Ginsberg, "Job the Patient," 88–111; Smith, "Job's Vision," 453–63; Greenstein, "Jeremiah as an Inspiration," 106; Gruber, "Human and Divine Wisdom," 92–93. For a response to Greenstein's arguments, see Ho, "Unmarked Attributed Quotations," 706 n.15.

⁵² Balentine, *Job*, 114–15.

Eliphaz appears to switch back to the topic of the fate of the fool in the following strophe (5:1–7). Adapting the “cursing” motif, he rejects Job’s attack on the created order and presents himself as a stabilizer of this order.⁵³ He rebukes Job for invoking the agents of darkness and reiterates once again that trouble does not come naturally but is begotten by human beings.

Eliphaz moves on to suggest to Job what he would do if he were in the shoes of Job (5:8–16). Eliphaz claims that he would seek God and address his speech to him.⁵⁴ He even models for Job a doxology in praise of God who maintains the natural and moral order of the world through his power and providence.

In the last strophe (5:17–26), Eliphaz interprets suffering as a form of divine discipline (v. 17) and proceeds to describe the protection and bliss that God will effect for Job if he will devote himself to the praise Eliphaz has modelled (vv. 18–26). Eliphaz’s speech ends with an affirmation of the truthfulness of his words and a final call for Job to listen and acknowledge his insight (5:27).

As the authorial audience responds to the mimetic component of this character, a relevant question needs to be addressed is the “tonality” of Eliphaz toward Job. As discussed in the above section, the ambiguity of Eliphaz’s first speech has been widely discussed. For instance, Hoffman has recognized the apparent ambiguity of the verb, יסר, “to discipline, chasten, admonish” in 4:3. According to his interpretation, if Eliphaz intends to say that Job used to “strengthen” the weak and feeble, Eliphaz would be

⁵³ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 57.

⁵⁴ Most translations render דברתי in 5:8 as “my cause,” “my case” or “my plea.” Fullerton (“Double Entendre,” 360) convincingly argues that Eliphaz would be unlikely to concede that Job had any “case,” legally speaking, to argue. According to Clines (*Job 1–20*, 116 n.8.b), “it would be better to regard דברה as semantically equivalent to אִמְרָה ‘utterance, speech.’ ”

praising and encouraging Job by reminding him that he himself could be helped.⁵⁵ On the other hand, if Eliphaz means to say that Job used to “chastise” the distraught, he would be blaming Job for hypocrisy.⁵⁶ I find Hoffman’s argument rather extreme. Taking Job’s former words as exercising positive influence to the sufferers does not necessarily imply that Eliphaz is paying tribute to Job. After all, the reason why Eliphaz has brought up Job’s previous piety rests on Eliphaz’s unease with Job’s provocative outburst. By the same token, even if Job used to chasten others in the past, this still does not automatically make Job a hypocrite when he cannot measure up to that standard. It is more balanced to see יסר as “both sympathetic and confrontational.”⁵⁷ To favour one end over the other is more of a choice exercised by Job, and perhaps the audience, than a decision dictated by the sense of the word used.

Others have tried to discern the tonality of Eliphaz based on the wider context. Clines argued that the exordium and conclusion of Eliphaz’s speech suggest that he is deferential and sympathetic to Job: “The hesitant opening (4:2), the positive assessment of Job’s former life (4:3–4), the affirmation of his present piety and integrity (4:6), and the concluding note of advice (5:27), all show Eliphaz as well-disposed and consolatory toward Job.”⁵⁸ The analysis above, however, yields a contradictory result. The apparent respectful attitude of Eliphaz at best illustrates his tact to get his words across.

In addition to the mimetic dimensions of Eliphaz, the authorial audience is compelled to respond to the thematic dimensions of this character. In other words, what

⁵⁵ Hoffman, “Equivocal Words,” 114.

⁵⁶ Hoffman, “Equivocal Words,” 114.

⁵⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 376.

⁵⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 121.

kind of person does Eliphaz typify?⁵⁹ One foundational element of Eliphaz's philosophy of life is clearly exemplified in the second (4:7–11), fourth (5:1–7) and last (5:17–26) strophes of his speech. He appears to endorse a strict retributive system in which the pious prosper and the evildoers perish in the long run. To account for the occasional misdeed of a pious person, he draws from another source of revelation, namely, a vision he claims to have received, to argue that no mortal can be absolutely righteous before God (4:12–21). All God-fearing people should thus treat suffering as a form of divine discipline (5:17). Fullerton correctly summarizes the thematic dimensions of Eliphaz in a helpful way:

[H]e is ... thought of as a type of a certain kind of dogmatic theologian whose presuppositions are supposed to be divine revelations—Eliphaz claims to have received his doctrine through an oracle—and whose eyes are therefore blind to all that does not fit into the preconceived pattern. Now the difficulty with such persons is that they are *unintentionally* cruel. Confident of the final authority and universal applicability of their divinely revealed dogmas, they are unable to put themselves into the situation of another man [sic] and look at his problems from his point of view.⁶⁰

Many have correctly noticed that it would be a mistake to see that the retributive theology by itself is the ideology under attack.⁶¹ From the vantage point of the narrative up to this point, what makes Eliphaz's speech problematic is not so much the worldview he expresses. The real issue is the context in which he applies his philosophy to life situations. To be more precise, Eliphaz is characterized as a person who uses conventional religious language to respond to a friend whom he thinks is facing a crisis in

⁵⁹ According to Phelan (*Reading People, Reading Plots*, 12), the thematic dimensions of a character are "attributes, taken individually or collectively, are viewed as vehicles to express ideas or as representative of a larger class than the individual character."

⁶⁰ Fullerton, "Double Entendre," 336–37; italics his.

⁶¹ See, e.g., Andersen, *Job*, 123–24; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 125; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 129; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 133; Newsom, "Job," 383.

faith. The provocative outburst of Job in ch. 3 deeply disturbs Eliphaz and incites him to speak up. Newsom says it best, “The person who behaves ‘inappropriately’ or who rejects the traditional formulas is seen as a threat to the community’s worldview, even if no one would be comfortable in admitting it.”⁶²

There are a few instances where Eliphaz appears to take issue with Job’s provocative language. As discussed above, while Job uses the motifs of “hope,” and “death,” and “darkness” subversively, Eliphaz rehabilitates these same motifs to their proper functions. Moreover, the mention of the “roar” of the lion in 4:10 may be interpreted as an allusion to Job’s groaning in 3:24. The proverb “vexation kills the fool, and jealousy slays the simple” recited by Eliphaz in 5:2 also strongly suggests that his accusation against Job focuses on the impatience expressed through Job’s unrestrained complaint.⁶³ Otherwise, Eliphaz’s statement would appear to be out of place in the present context.⁶⁴ Another relevant passage is Job 5:8–16, which contains Eliphaz’s hypothetical confession and model doxology. Eliphaz uses “to seek God,” an expression commonly “used of inquiries addressed to God in the midst of crisis situations,” to summarize what his response would be if he should suffer similar calamities.⁶⁵ In fact, under the circumstances, a prayer of lament would perhaps be an appropriate response.⁶⁶ Eliphaz, however, unexpectedly models for Job a doxology in praise of God’s power and

⁶² Newsom, “Job,” 382.

⁶³ Fullerton, “Double Entendre,” 336.

⁶⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 379.

⁶⁵ Balentine, *Job*, 116.

⁶⁶ Clines’s comment is apt: “Particularly striking is Eliphaz’s failure to reproduce a prayer of lament or appeal or implicitly to recommend such a prayer to Job” (*Job 1–20*, 143).

providence. This may be interpreted as Eliphaz's boasting of his extraordinary faith.⁶⁷ A better explanation is that "Eliphaz seeks to counter the dissembling curse-lament of Job with words of affirmation and praise of God whose power, wisdom, and justice maintain the equilibrium of the created order."⁶⁸

In terms of narrative progression, the intervention of Eliphaz further intensifies the instability introduced by the satan. Should Job accept Eliphaz's counsel, he would have sought restoration through his own piety (his praise of God). This would in turn fulfill the satan's prediction that Job in fact does not fear God for nothing. Hartley captures it well, "Eliphaz sides with the Satan against God in offering this counsel, for he seeks to motivate Job to serve God for the benefits that piety bring."⁶⁹ This is perhaps the ethical judgments the implied author would like the audience to make. The irony and innuendo in Eliphaz's speech further strengthens this negative ethical judgments of Eliphaz. As Fullerton writes, "But these are not the irony and innuendo of Eliphaz at the expense of Job but the irony and innuendo of the author at the expense of Eliphaz and of the orthodox reader whose position he represents."⁷⁰

II. Job's First Response (Job 6–7)

A. Allusion Analysis

Like before, the narrator uses the phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, "answered" to indicate the resumption of Job's speech, which is a response primarily to Eliphaz. Therefore, it makes

⁶⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 116.

⁶⁸ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 111.

⁶⁹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 129.

⁷⁰ Fullerton, "Double Entendre," 340.

sense to look first for possible verbal connections between this speech and Eliphaz's preceding one. Some of the terms and motifs that have been repeated by Eliphaz also reappear in the present speech. They include "the 'speech' motif," "the 'fear' motif," תקוה ("hope"), "the 'death' motif," and עמל ("trouble"). The reference to כעש, "anger/grief," which forms part of Job's opening statement (6:2), is clearly an allusion to Eliphaz's earlier use of the same word in his fourth strophe (5:2).

As Good rightly notes, it is Eliphaz who first raises the issue of justice explicitly in chs. 4–5, and this topic continues to receive much attention in the dialogue.⁷¹ Two words that are closely related to this theme—עולה ("injustice/deceit") and צדק ("righteousness/rightness")—are repeated by Job in this present speech.

As analyzed in the preceding section, the first speech of Eliphaz alludes to not only Job's opening outburst but also the prologue. In a similar vein, it would be suggestive to examine possible verbal connections between Job's present speech and the prologue. I propose to view the "consolation" motif and the term חטא ("to sin") as drawing such connections.

1. כעש (6:2)

The noun כעש appears to form a verbal correspondence between this speech and Eliphaz's preceding one.⁷² The term is a variant of כעס, which can mean "anger,

⁷¹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 213.

⁷² Power ("Irony," 46), Holbert ("Klage," 132), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 144–45), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 132), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 213), Course (*Speech and Response*, 37), Beuken ("Job's Imprecation," 60–61), Newsom ("Job," 386), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 130), Balentine (*Job*, 124) all recognize this connection. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 169), however, is reluctant to draw any firm connection between the two speeches through this term.

irritation, provocation” or “grief, vexation.”⁷³ Job describes his situation with the words כעש and הוה (“destruction”)⁷⁴ in imagery of a set of scales (6:2–3). The details of the image are somewhat ambiguous. For example, Driver and Gray suggest that Job complains that if his anger (כעש) could only be set in one pan of the scales, and the disaster he has suffered from his misfortune could be weighed against it, then the latter would be heavier than all the sands of the sea.⁷⁵ This would imply that Job is protesting that his anger does not match up to his suffering. However, it is more likely that Job’s intention is to convey that his grief (כעש) and his destruction (הוה) should be placed in the same scale-pan and yet it would outweigh all the sands of the sea, a metaphor for the heaviest object in the world.⁷⁶ The purpose of this imagery is to justify the rashness of his words (6:3b). Moreover, as Clines observes, the metaphor of overwhelming weight that cannot be borne is a subtle allusion to the opening words of Eliphaz (4:2) in which he “showed some awareness that speech itself might be felt as a further burden, and that what had been befallen Job was something he was too weak to bear.”⁷⁷

Eliphaz also uses the word כעש to characterize the fools who let their negative emotions exercise control over them (5:2). It is unimportant whether Eliphaz intends to number Job among that group or offer just a friendly warning to him against falling into

⁷³ DCH 4:449–50. See also HALOT 2:491.

⁷⁴ Reading *gere*, והוה. On the other hand, equally defensible is the *kethiv* reading, והיח, which would come from the root היה, “to happen,” (See Dhorme, *Job*, 75).

⁷⁵ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:59.

⁷⁶ Dhorme, *Job*, 75; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 70; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 131–2; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 169; Newsom, “Job,” 386–87; Balentine, *Job*, 125.

⁷⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 170.

such a snare.⁷⁸ In the current speech, Job picks up the term but gives it a twist. His focus is rather on “the inner sorrow, grief which weighs down or oppresses people” due to external catastrophes.⁷⁹ Balentine’s comment is helpful: “The lament tradition recognizes vexation as one of the burdens of life that compels the supplicant to cry out to God for relief ... The wisdom tradition, however, warns that the expression of *ka’as* is not only foolish (cf. Prov 12:16) but also dangerous. Its counsel is to refrain from excessive outbursts of pain and misery.”⁸⁰ Perhaps Job intends to criticize Eliphaz and the wisdom tradition he unconditionally endorses as inapplicable to his present situation.

2. The “speech” motif (6:2–3, 25–26, 28–30)

Eliphaz has raised the issue of “word” and “speech” in his first speech. This theme is extensively developed by Job in this present speech. In ch. 6, he addresses his friends both indirectly (vv. 1–20) and directly (vv. 21–30). Job begins with a defence of the intensity of his words (vv. 2–3) and concludes with an oath on the truthfulness of them (vv. 28–30). His rebuke against his three friends is also concerned with “words”: “How painful are honest words (דברי ישר)! What kind of correction will you offer? Do you devise words to correct, but regard the words of a despairing person as wind?” (vv. 25–26). There is disagreement about what Job refers to by the “painfulness” of “honest words.” Clines, for instance, thinks that the “honest words” belong to the friends and

⁷⁸ For instance, Newsom (“Job,” 379) takes 5:2 as a veiled rebuke of Job’s unrestrained outburst in ch. 3, while Clines (*Job 1–20*, 138) insists that Eliphaz’s intention serves only to remind Job of the danger of anger. I am inclined to side with Newsom.

⁷⁹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 170.

⁸⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 124.

renders דברי ישר as “words of right judgment.”⁸¹ He understands the expression to mean “the sentences that any wrongdoer flinches from hearing.”⁸² Newsom, on the other hand, argues that Job is using “an alliterative phrase” to refer “to the painfulness of straight talk.”⁸³ Job’s intention is to mock the sugar-coatedness of the words of Eliphaz, who strived to avoid laying blame with either God or Job. Nevertheless, it is more likely that Job is referring to his own words as honest. As Habel rightly recognizes, vv. 25–26 constitute a chiasmic structure.⁸⁴ Whereas v. 25b and v. 26a are concerned with the corrections that the friends offer, the honest words in 25a are in parallelism with the words of a despairing person in v. 26b. In this reading, the three friends have been distressed by Job’s honest words. They regard their own words as corrections to Job and his words of despair as empty as wind.

Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, reminds Job of the educational dimension of his words he used to administer to others in distress (4:3–4). In offering words to Job with similar intention, Eliphaz appears to have assumed the role of an instructor. In ch. 6, Job responds to Eliphaz in alluding to the “speech” motif. He rejects “correction” as the primary function of words and argues that honesty should be a core ingredient in proper speech.

⁸¹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 181.

⁸² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 181.

⁸³ Newsom, “Job,” 389. Similarly, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 140–41.

⁸⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 150. Both Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 215) and Balentine (*Job*, 129) also regard the honest words as Job’s.

3. The “fear” motif (6:4, 14, 21; 7:14)

The “fear” motif has been a favourite theme that the author loves to manipulate so far. In this speech of Job in question, four instances of this related idea are present. First, Job complains that בעוֹתֵי אֱלֹהִים, “the terrors of Eloah” are arrayed against him (6:4c). Terrors (בעוֹתֵי) here refer to the “agents of destruction” sent by the deity.⁸⁵ Second, Job applies the same root בעַת, “to terrify,” to describe God’s hostile action against him by means of dreams and visions (7:14). These two instances of the “fear” motif “might be read as an allusion to Eliphaz’s criticism of Job’s horror (*bāhal*) in 4:5b.”⁸⁶ The purpose of such an allusion is to justify Job’s fear in light of the hostile acts of God. He is horrified because God has become his opponent. As Clines puts it, “It is neither the physical pain nor the mental anguish that weighs him down, but the consciousness that he has become God’s enemy.”⁸⁷

The other two instances of the “fear” motif deal with Job’s relationship with his three friends. Job begins his reproach with a proverb-like expression in 6:14. Unfortunately, the text of the verse is unintelligible without emendation or addition of extra-textual sense. Despite the ambiguity of the text, the meaning of the first line is clear: loyalty is a fundamental quality in friendship.⁸⁸ Another quality that Job mentions is found in the second line: “the fear of God.” Whether these two qualities are meant to be compared or contrasted is however unclear. One major option is to take “the

⁸⁵ This rare plural noun is found only here and in Ps 88:17 [ET 16], in which God dispatches an entourage of troops against his opponents (Habel, *The Book of Job*, 145). So Course, *Speech and Response*, 38.

⁸⁶ Course, *Speech and Response*, 37–38.

⁸⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 171.

⁸⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 176; Newsom, “Job,” 388.

despairing” (סמ from מסס) as the subject of the two cola and render the sentence similar to the NIV: “A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty.”⁸⁹ In other words, Job expects a radical loyalty from his friends to the point even when he commits apostasy. This reading will however contradict the ordinary expectations that Job explicitly asks of his friends later in his speech (6:24–30).⁹⁰ Another, perhaps more likely, option is to take “the one who withholds or rejects” (emending למס to מנע or מאס) as the subject of the two cola and translate the statement similar to the RSV: “He who withholds kindness from a friend forsakes the fear of the Almighty.”⁹¹ In this reading, Job equates “failure to meet the claims of friendship with a failure of piety.”⁹²

At the conclusion of the very same section, Job complains directly against his friends as people who see misfortune and shrink with fear (6:21). Job’s re-use of the “fear” motif is an allusion to Eliphaz’s earlier ambiguous use of the same theme (4:6).⁹³ In so saying, Job denies that Eliphaz, and perhaps his other two friends in general, “can lay claim to ‘the fear of God’ as his own religious attitude.”⁹⁴ Their reaction shows rather a fearful mentality of experiencing the wrath of God if they get too close to Job, who is involved in serious misfortune. The ambiguity of the “fear” motif expressed by Eliphaz in 4:6 is picked up by Job, who skilfully applies each nuance separately back to Eliphaz.

⁸⁹ For instance, Pope (*Job*, 49), Habel (“Only the Jackel,” 230), and Balentine (*Job*, 127) adopt this option.

⁹⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 388.

⁹¹ For instance, Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 136), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 63), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 59), and Newsom (“Job,” 388) adopt this option. Although Clines (*Job 1–20*, 156) offers a totally different translation, the resulting interpretation of the verse is similar to this option.

⁹² Newsom, “Job,” 388.

⁹³ Beuken (“Job Imprecation,” 58–60) also recognizes this connection.

⁹⁴ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 59.

Another possible allusion that is related to the “fear” motif is formed by the term חזיון, “vision.”⁹⁵ Job complains that his bed would not provide comfort to him for God would harass him with nightmares and visions (חזיונות; 7:13–14). Interestingly, Eliphaz has used similar imagery to describe his nocturnal vision (חזיון) through which he receives revelation (4:13). For Job, the phenomenon was enfeebling rather than revelatory.

4. תקוה (6:8)

In his opening lament, Job has already hoped (קוה) that light by the day of his birth be frustrated (3:9). This is obviously an impossible wish. For the first time in his words, Job explicitly declares a more realistic hope (תקוה) in 6:8.⁹⁶ This is no ordinary desire, but one that requires God to crush him (6:9). This alludes to the topic of “hope” that Eliphaz has brought up.⁹⁷ Eliphaz understands hope (תקוה) as a prosperous future (4:6) or as a reversal of fortune (5:16). In the words of Newsom, “In Eliphaz’s moral world, hope is the openness of life to a future; Job’s only ‘hope’ is to close off the future through a quick death.”⁹⁸ Restoration of his misfortune is not what Job hopes for at least

⁹⁵ Power (“Irony,” 54) and Holbert (“*Klage*,” 146–47) also recognize this connection.

⁹⁶ Job uses the root קוה two more times (7:2, 6) in this speech, but neither of them appears to form an allusion to an earlier passage.

⁹⁷ Power (“Power,” 46–48), Holbert (“*Klage*,” 134–35), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 146–47), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 134), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 213), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 75), Newsom (“Job,” 387), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 131) all recognize Job’s “hope” in 6:8 as an allusion to Eliphaz’s words in 4:6 and 5:16.

⁹⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 387.

at this very moment. Through this allusion, Job appears to argue that what the future is expected to bring cannot compensate for the present misery of existence.⁹⁹

5. The “death” motif (6:9; 7:7–10, 15)

So far, every voice has mentioned the “death” motif. In this present speech, Job uses the verb דָּכָא, “to crush,” which is closely related to “death,” to express his present hope for God to terminate his life (6:9). The same verb has been used by Eliphaz twice earlier, both resulting in an undesirable outcome. It is used to denote the destiny of fragile humanity (4:19) as well as the fate of the sons of the fool (5:4). Job, however, does not share Eliphaz’s perception but sees “crushing” as a way to bring relief to him.¹⁰⁰

In his later complaint to God, Job appears to believe that he will descend to Sheol soon (7:7–10, 21). Most importantly, he does not take this as a threat. For if he were given a choice, he would pick strangling and death over his deteriorating body (7:15). To a certain extent, Job’s re-use of the “death” motif is an indirect response to Eliphaz, who sees premature death as the lot of the fool (5:2) and deliverance from tragic death as a sign of divine acceptance (5:20).¹⁰¹

6. The “consolation” motif (6:10; 7:13)

In the course of his ongoing complaint, Job anticipates a temporary consolation regarding his situation (6:10). The reason for his comfort is subject to different

⁹⁹ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 75.

¹⁰⁰ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 135–36) and Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 213) recognize this connection.

¹⁰¹ Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 64) also recognizes this connection.

interpretations, due to the ambiguity of the text that seems to explain what constitutes his consolation. A less critical issue is whether the verb סלד, a *hapax legomenon*, means “jump (for joy)” or “draw back, recoil, tremble” in the second phrase.¹⁰² Taken either way, the first two phrases together still describe Job’s claims of finding consolation in unrelenting pain. The real problem lies in the third phrase in which Job spells out the rationale for his comfort. Clines, for instance, translates v. 10c as “that I have denied (*piel* of כחד) the ordinances (אמר) of the Holy One.”¹⁰³ He compares Job with a prisoner under torture, at the edge of breaking down and eventually cursing God. His perseverance to be loyal to God thus becomes his consolation.¹⁰⁴ The main challenge for this line of reasoning is that the *pi’el* of כחד does not normally mean “to deny.” Its usual meaning is rather “hide, conceal.”¹⁰⁵ Moreover, the noun אמר may refer broadly to the decrees and ordinances of God that govern human affairs.¹⁰⁶ In this reading, Job’s consolation, even amidst his unrelenting pain, refers to the knowledge that he has not concealed the truth about the God who has decreed his affliction.¹⁰⁷ This latter reading seems to fit the context of Job’s complaint better.

Later in his speech (7:13–14), Job reiterates his deepest longing as a need for “comfort.” He entertains for a moment that his bed might serve as a source of comfort (v. 13), perhaps since he could not find any from his friends. However, sleep only provides

¹⁰² DCH 6:159. See also Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 72, for a detailed discussion of the two translation options.

¹⁰³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 156. Similarly, Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 64.

¹⁰⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 174.

¹⁰⁵ HALOT 2:469. So DCH 4:382.

¹⁰⁶ Dhorme, *Job*, 82.

¹⁰⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 147; Newsom, “Job,” 388; Balentine, *Job*, 126.

God with additional opportunities to harass and terrify Job with nightmares and visions (v. 14).

The consolation motif is also present in the prologue.¹⁰⁸ The mission of the three friends is first and foremost to comfort and console Job (2:11). In raising the topic of consolation again through the mouth of Job, the author reminds the authorial audience that Eliphaz and the other two friends have failed to bring to Job the appropriate consolation.

7. עולה (6:29, 30)

The noun עולה, which Eliphaz employs once in 5:16, reappears in this speech two times in 6:29–30.¹⁰⁹ Depending on the context, this term can mean “injustice,” “wrong, evil” or “dishonesty, deceit.”¹¹⁰ The text of 6:29–30 is ambiguous at certain points, and consequently, is subject to various translations.¹¹¹ First, the phrase אל תהי עולה can be translated “let there be no עולה” if one takes the jussive תהי as indicating an order or request.¹¹² This reading implies that the friends are the subject liable for injustice. On the other hand, the phrase can be translated “there is no injustice (עולה)” if one understands the jussive in conjunction with the negative particle אל indicates absolute certainty.¹¹³

This reading implies that Job’s self-declaration of lack of injustice (עולה) in his life is in

¹⁰⁸ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 137–38) also recognizes the connection between Job’s words in 6:10 and the prologue through the “consolation” motif.

¹⁰⁹ Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 61–62) also recognizes this connection.

¹¹⁰ DCH 6:298.

¹¹¹ The text of 6:29–30 is שבו נא אל תהי עולה ושבי עוד צדקי בה היש בלשוני עולה אם חכי לא יבין הוות.

¹¹² So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 139; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 140; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 65.

¹¹³ Dhorme, *Job*, 95. So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 78; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 162 n.29.b.

view. Since the emphasis of the following line (6:29b) is clear on Job himself, the latter reading, which focuses on his own quality, is preferable because it better maintains the parallelism. As the context is about honest speech (6:25, 28), the term עולה is better understood as “injustice of speech,” i.e., deceit.¹¹⁴

Second, the term בה in 6:29b literally means “in it.” Some interpret it to mean “in the matter under question,” thus translated “at stake.”¹¹⁵ Others understand it to mean “in itself,” thus translated “intact.”¹¹⁶ Since צדק can mean “righteousness” in the moral sense, “rightness, integrity” in the behavioural sense, or “innocence, vindication” in the legal sense,¹¹⁷ the whole phrase בה צדקי can be translated quite differently.¹¹⁸ Since Job does not introduce the legal metaphor until ch. 9, the moral sense of צדק is not appropriate here at this point of the narrative. Again, since the context implies that honesty in speech is the matter in question, I understand the entire phrase as another of Job’s self-declaration of his “rightness” in speech (cf. Ps 52:5; Prov 8:8; 12:17; 16:13), and thus translate as “my rightness is still intact.”¹¹⁹

Third, the term הוות in 6:30 can mean “destruction, ruin, wickedness” or “wind, bluster, boast.”¹²⁰ On the one hand, Job could be asserting that he is able to tell the truth

¹¹⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 150; Newsom, “Job,” 390.

¹¹⁵ See, e.g., Good, *In Turns of Temptest*, 64–65; NIV.

¹¹⁶ Dhorme, *Job*, 95; so Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 78; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 156.

¹¹⁷ Cf. HALOT 3:1004–5; DCH 7:80–85.

¹¹⁸ For instance, “my righteousness is still intact” (Dhorme); “my integrity is still intact” (Gordis; Clines); “I am still in the right” (NJPS; Habel); “my integrity is at stake” (NIV); “my innocence is at stake” (Good); “my vindication is at stake” (NRSV).

¹¹⁹ So Newsom, “Job,” 390.

¹²⁰ DCH 2:502–3.

about his situation since his own tongue and palate are able to discern injustice (עולה) and destruction (הוות) when he tastes it.¹²¹ On the other hand, he could be claiming that he is not lying to his friends since his own tongue and palate can detect deceit (עולה) and boast (הוות).¹²² The latter reading is preferable as it fits better the flow of Job's argument, but it is also possible that he intends to convey both senses at the same time, as some have claimed.¹²³

In his preceding speech, Eliphaz concludes his doxology with the statement “injustice (עולה) shuts her mouth” (5:16). To “shut the mouth” is an idiom indicating a mark of astonishment (Isa 52:15) or abject silence (Ps 107:42).¹²⁴ Job appears to play on a similar image about עולה, but he rejects the idea that showing adoration to the Maker will necessarily shut his own mouth. Most importantly, Job does not see himself as speaking deceit, but the truth about God.

8. עמל (7:3)

In this present speech, Job uses the word עמל, “trouble,” again to describe his despairing situation (7:3).¹²⁵ He laments that he has been made to inherit months of futility, and nights of trouble (עמל) have been apportioned to him. This is a response to Eliphaz, who claims that trouble (עמל) does not spring from the ground but is begotten by

¹²¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 150–51; Balentine, *Job*, 192.

¹²² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 183.

¹²³ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 142; Newsom, “Job,” 390.

¹²⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 147.

¹²⁵ See also I.A.4 in this chapter.

humans (5:6–7).¹²⁶ Job rejects Eliphaz’s argument and declares that he is not an originator of but an heir to “trouble,” which is initiated by the deity.

9. אָח (7:20)

The verb אָח, “to sin,” which is a recurring motif in the prologue, reappears at the end of Job’s present speech.¹²⁷ In his first-time direct address to God, Job asks the hypothetical question: “If I sin (אָח), what do I do to you, you watcher of humanity?” (7:20). Although the Hebrew does not contain the conditional particle “if” here, it is still grammatically possible to supply the word “if” provided that the context allows such a sense.¹²⁸ Andersen does not believe this is the case and insists that the word should not be supplied. He argues that Job confesses that he himself is a sinner: “[It] makes Job’s speech rather insolent, implying that human sin makes no difference to God.”¹²⁹ I believe Andersen’s argument is misguided for he has placed too much focus on salvaging Job from his speech. In fact, the absence of the conditional particle is perhaps intentional. Neither does Job intend to confess his sin nor is he concerned to delineate that his transgression is only a hypothetical reality. He simply wants to emphasize that his sin is not consequential to God due to his transiency and insignificance.¹³⁰ As Good puts it, “If Job is so ephemeral, his guilt must be very light as well.”¹³¹

¹²⁶ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 143–44) and Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 48) also recognize this connection.

¹²⁷ Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 43–44) also recognizes this connection.

¹²⁸ GKC §159hh; also Clines, *Job 1–20*, 193–94.

¹²⁹ Andersen, *Job*, 138.

¹³⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 396.

¹³¹ Good, *In Turns of Temptest*, 217.

In the prologue the narrator is preoccupied with the relation of “sinning” and appropriate speech to God.¹³² He uses the concept of sin as the definitive measure to evaluate the appropriateness of Job’s response after each round of catastrophes (1:22c; 2:10). In this speech, however, Job uses this concept in a nonchalant manner. In using the verb חטא again and putting it in Job’s mouth, the author forces the authorial audience to re-evaluate the (un)importance of the concept of sin in this narrative.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator presents Job as responding again in chs. 6–7. The analysis in the above section reveals that Job frequently re-uses the words of Eliphaz in order to refute his arguments. Although there is no direct addressee in 6:2–13, the speech is hardly a monologue.¹³³ Job begins with a defence of the vehemence of his words (vv. 2–3), which were the primary reason why his friend Eliphaz had spoken up in the preceding chapters. Job uses the imagery of a set of scales to justify the rashness of his words in light of the weight of his anguish (כעש), the same word that Eliphaz used previously to describe the destructive anger of fools (5:2). Job appears to call into question the practical value of Eliphaz’s wisdom teaching with regards to his present situation. For the first time, Job identifies God as the source of his calamity.¹³⁴ He describes his experience through images of God as warrior, armed for hostile engagement against him (v. 4). He thus justifies his fear as a natural reaction to the “terrors” of God and refutes Eliphaz’s earlier claim that humans beget trouble (cf. 5:7).

¹³² See I.A.2 in Chapter 3.

¹³³ Contra Clines, *Job 1–20*, 167.

¹³⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 170.

Job appears to switch to another topic, namely, his rejection of life, in vv. 5–13.

Based on the many allusions to Eliphaz's preceding speech, however, the audience at least can interpret this speech as Job's indirect response to Eliphaz, and his two other friends in general. Job asks two sets of proverb-like rhetorical questions (vv. 5–6), followed by a reinforcing statement, which explains his point (v. 7). The affirmation implied in the first set of questions is that no one would complain as long as one receives the appropriate "food."¹³⁵ The second set of questions builds on the "food" metaphor and affirms "that there are substances too unappetizing to be eaten."¹³⁶ I follow Habel and interpret the "food" as the "comfort" that his friends are supposed to offer to him.¹³⁷ "If Job is the hungry, searching animal, then the food he desires to ease his anguish is 'comfort' from his friends."¹³⁸

Job continues to express his hope for God to crush him or cut him off (vv. 8–9). To him, the prosperous future promised by Eliphaz cannot offset the misery of existence. As Newsom rightly observes,

Job's wish for death (v. 9) turns the language of prayer upside down. It is not just death but specially death by divine violence that Job desires, parodying other

¹³⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 171.

¹³⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 172.

¹³⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 145–46. This understanding is further strengthened by the "consolation" motif in v. 10 and Job's extended complaint against the unreliability of his friends in vv. 14–27. This is, however, only one of the possible readings. The embedded meaning for "food" is also subject to other decipherings. Suppose one takes this section as a continuation of Job's defence for speaking unrestrainedly, the inedible food expressed in the images becomes the undeserved suffering he has been experiencing from God (so Clines, *Job 1–20*, 171–72; Course, *Speech and Response*, 35–36; Balentine, *Job*, 126.) However, if one understands Job's sayings as foreshadowing what he is going to elaborate. The "food" that he finds disgusting could be interpreted as "life," which is so unbearable to him (so Newsom, "Job," 387.) This line of reasoning is supported by his immediately following wish for God to end his life (vv. 8–9). Each reading makes good sense of the images used. Therefore, the topic that the audience privilege would perhaps greatly influence their interpretive judgment.

¹³⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 146.

psalmist who pray for God's hand to be lifted from them (Pss 32:4; 39:10[11]), who pray not to be cut off (Ps 88:5; Isa 38:12), and who pray for relief from being crushed by God (Ps 38:2, 8[3, 9]).¹³⁹

Job sarcastically claims that he would find comfort in the fact that he had not concealed that God is the one who has decreed his affliction. This strophe concludes with Job's lament about his lack of strength, both physically and mentally, to wait for death (vv. 11–13).¹⁴⁰

In the next strophe (6:14–20), Job complains against the unreliability of his friends. First, he sets forth loyalty as an expected quality in true friendship in v. 14.¹⁴¹ Despite the obscurity of the text, it is clearly the lack of demonstration of loyalty that is central to Job's argument, for he proceeds to characterize the failure of companionship as the "treachery" of a seasonal wadi of Palestine.¹⁴² The metaphor depicts "a stream that has abundant water when it is least needed but dries up during the heat of summer" (vv. 15–17).¹⁴³

Another textual difficulty obscures the first line of v. 18. Some treat this verse as a continuation of the stream imagery, and thus interpret it as a description of the eventual disappearance of the water in a wasteland.¹⁴⁴ Others, however, understand the verse as commencing the imagery of caravaneers, who desperately seek water and end up perishing or getting lost in the desert.¹⁴⁵ The above indeterminacy fortunately does not

¹³⁹ Newsom, "Job," 387. See also Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 118–35.

¹⁴⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 174.

¹⁴¹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 176.

¹⁴² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 178.

¹⁴³ Newsom, "Job," 388.

¹⁴⁴ See, e.g., Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 75; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 149.

¹⁴⁵ See, e.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, 179; Newsom, "Job," 388; Balentine, *Job*, 128.

affect the clarity of the image in the next two verses in which the disappointment of the caravaneers is vividly described (vv. 19–20). Job likens himself to the caravaneers with two unusual verbs of social relations in v. 20: בּוֹשׁ, “to be ashamed” and חָפַר, “to be ashamed.”¹⁴⁶ As Newsom puts it, “They connote the shame experienced by those who have lost status or the respect with which they were formerly treated.”¹⁴⁷ For Job, disloyalty in friendship brings shamefulness to the ones in need.

In the next strophe (6:21–30), Job speaks to the friends in the second person. He finally confronts the friends directly in v. 21. Despite the textual difficulty of the first line of this verse,¹⁴⁸ the overall sense of Job’s complaint is clear: his friends have seen his calamities and were afraid. Would Job’s judgment over his friends as a group be overcritical, as neither Bildad nor Zophar has spoken a word to him up to this point? This may as well be an allusion to what has happened in the prologue. They are afraid because they have seen Job’s misfortune, which is exemplified through his great pain (2:13).

Job continues to disclaim any excessive demands upon his friends in a series of rhetorical questions (vv. 22–23) and sarcastically requests them to point out his errors so as to silence him (v. 24). In another series of rhetorical questions, Job chides his friends for their unfriendly reactions toward his honest words (vv. 25–26). He rejects “correction” as the primary function of speech and prizes “honesty” as the fundamental quality of proper speech. He also likens them to those who cast lots for an orphan or sell out a friend (v. 27).¹⁴⁹ Job concludes this section with a solemn declaration of the

¹⁴⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 388–89.

¹⁴⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 389.

¹⁴⁸ For discussions of related textual issues, see Dhorme, *Job*, 89–90; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 76.

¹⁴⁹ The comparison is strange. Newsom (“Job,” 389) suggests that what the two scenarios have in common is that “one who is vulnerable is devalued and treated as less than a person” in each case.

truthfulness of his own words (vv. 28–30). He insists that he does not shut his mouth because he has been speaking the right thing, not deceit.

Chapter 6 continues to develop the conflict between Job and his three friends. The second person plural used by Job implies that he responds to his friends as a group. Since Bildad and Zophar still have not spoken a word, this suggests that Job has also interpreted the behaviour of the three friends as presented in 2:11–13 as a gesture of alienation. Honesty in speech becomes the central topic at issue. Job claims the truthfulness of his own words and accuses his friends of not taking his words seriously. This chapter also reveals that his friends' alienation from him is one of the sources of Job's suffering.

Job's addressee appears to shift from his friends to God in ch. 7.¹⁵⁰ Job begins in depicting human life as “forced labour,” “day-labourer,” and “slavery” (vv. 1–2). He then moves on to describe the misery and hopelessness of his own situation (vv. 3–6). Unlike Eliphaz, who claims that trouble is begotten by humans, Job identifies God, the implied oppressive overseer, as the source of trouble.¹⁵¹ For the first time, he appeals to God directly¹⁵² and asks God to leave him alone in light of his fleeting life (vv. 7–10).

Job's tonality turns sharper in the final section of this speech (7:11–21). He acknowledges that his speech is unrestrained because he is deeply grieved (v. 11). He complains that God has been giving him too much attention and reiterates his preference of death over life (vv. 12–19). As a conclusion to this present speech, Job declares a

¹⁵⁰ There is no direct addressee in 7:1–6, but the content suggests that God is the implied audience. So Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 175; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 183.

¹⁵¹ Course, *Speech and Response*, 42.

¹⁵² As Habel (*The Book of Job*, 159–60) notes, “The cry ‘Remember’ (*zēkōr*) is Job's first direct address to God in his speeches thus far, and even here he only identifies God tangentially. Previously all Job's references to God have been in the third person.”

confession of hypothetical sin, followed by a mock plea for God's forgiveness (vv. 20–21). His point is that neither his sin nor the forgiveness of his sin would be of much consequence to God in light of the ephemeral nature of his life.

While ch. 6 develops the conflict between Job and his three friends, ch. 7 intensifies the conflict between Job and God. Job extracts fragments of psalms of lament, and forms expressions of sarcasm and parody against God.¹⁵³ As Newsom puts it, "The bitterness Job expresses through his savage parody of the language of psalms arises from his sense and the image of God that seems necessary to account for Job's recent experiences."¹⁵⁴ In terms of narrative progression, Job adopts Eliphaz's suggestion to seek God in prayer and addresses himself directly to God (cf. 5:8), but only in an ironic fashion.¹⁵⁵ The third person language of lament in ch. 3 has now become the second person face-to-face accusation in ch. 7.

The authorial audience continues to feel the compulsion to form ethical judgments of Job. Job's poignant words indeed defy all the conventions of traditional religious language. He exposes the inadequacy of this language to express the sense of betrayal. Newsom's comments deserve to be quoted in full:

Savaging the words of a traditional prayer or hymn can often be a way of expressing the painful sense that God has betrayed the relationship. The old familiar words expressed who one had understood God to be; they were the promises of God's love and presence. Now it is God who seems to make a mockery of everything upon which one has relied. Like a betrayed lover, one feels a fool for having been taken in. Flinging the shreds of that language of prayer and praise back at God is a way of protesting such treatment.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵³ Newsom ("Job," 398) even calls the form that Job uses in this speech as "anti-psalms."

¹⁵⁴ Newsom, "Job," 397.

¹⁵⁵ Cf. Beuken, "One among the Prophets," 309. Beuken contends that Eliphaz's suggestion is a positive one.

¹⁵⁶ Newsom, "Job," 398.

To a certain extent, Job has invented another religious discourse, which is more provocative than any existing protest in Israelite prayer tradition. In so doing, he implicitly calls into question the assumption behind the language of lament. If the motivation of using this language is to ask God to reverse the psalmist's fortune after all, perhaps the satan is correct and human beings do not fear God for nothing. Of course, the major tension remains whether the implied author considers Job's new religious language as a legitimate expression of faith. This in turn will sustain the reader's interest until the end of the book.

It is also interesting to note that various words and motifs in this speech hearken back to the prologue. Through the "consolation" motif, the author reminds the authorial audience what the despairing one needs most.¹⁵⁷ For those readers who too easily have turned this existential narrative¹⁵⁸ into an ideological debate, they would have joined the company of the friends, who are no doubt the object of irony.¹⁵⁹ Through the word *חטא*, "to sin," the author also bifurcates the readers. For those readers who have been contemplating all along whether Job has sinned in his speeches, Job's playful mention of the concept of "sin" turns their reading expectation upside down.

¹⁵⁷ Westermann (*Structure*, 8) even contends that "the dialogue [between Job and the friends] is conditioned simply by the situation of consolation."

¹⁵⁸ According to Westermann (*Structure*, 2), the book of Job primarily deals with "an existential question." The theoretical question is only a derived one.

¹⁵⁹ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 260) makes a similar comment: "And we, his [the author's] readers, inasmuch as we find the book 'instructive,' have also deflected our attention from the religious and physical extremity of the man Job to our own theological extrapolations."

III. Bildad's First Speech (Job 8)

A. Allusion Analysis

The second friend of Job to speak up is Bildad the Shuhite. The narrator uses the same phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to indicate the entrance of Bildad's voice into the conversation. As is the case with the other speeches in this cycle, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible allusions. In the previous section, I have demonstrated that Job's accusation primarily focuses on his friends in ch. 6 and God in ch. 7. The beginning of Bildad's present speech appears to respond to the endings of these two sections. The words *צדק*, “right/righteous” (6:29; 8:3); *חטא*, “to sin” (7:20; 8:4); and *פשע*, “transgression” (7:21; 8:4) all form verbal connections between the two speeches. The word *צל*, “shadow, shade,” which appears at the beginning (v. 2) of Job's extended complaint against God in ch. 7, also recurs in Bildad's speech (8:9). Furthermore, the “speech” motif, which has previously been used to form verbal connections, reappears in this speech.

Since all speeches so far allude to the prologue, it is suggestive to investigate any possible correspondence. The two terms *ישר*, “upright,” and *תם*, “blameless,” which describe the defining virtues of Job in the prologue, reappear in Bildad's present speech (8:6, 20).

1. The “speech” motif (8:2, 21)

The appropriateness of one's speech appears to be a key theme in the book so far. The Satan, the narrator, Eliphaz and Job all talk about the “speech” motif. Bildad also begins his first speech in bringing this topic to the fore. He says, “How long will you

speak thus, the words of your mouth a mighty wind (רוח כביר) (8:2).¹⁶⁰ It seems clear that what motivates Bildad to speak up is the provocative speeches uttered by Job earlier.

As many have noted, Bildad's expression רוח כביר in 8:2 is an allusion to the words of Job in 6:26.¹⁶¹ There Job complains that the friends have considered what he said as mere wind (רוח; 6:26).¹⁶² The primary meaning of רוח is "breath," "wind" or "spirit."¹⁶³ When used metaphorically, it can connote the sense of emptiness or destructivity, depending on the context.¹⁶⁴ In other words, Job implies that they have treated his words as insignificant and meaningless.¹⁶⁵ In response, Bildad describes Job's words as a "mighty wind" (רוח כביר), which is "tempestuous and devastating."¹⁶⁶

2. צדק (8:3)

The root צדק draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding one.¹⁶⁷

After a brief rebuttal of Job's words, Bildad uses this root in the context of a pivotal

¹⁶⁰ The "speech" motif does not cease to be a topic in this present speech. Near the end, Bildad mentions two terms, "mouth" (פה) and "lips" (שפה), both of which are organs of speech or sound (8:21). He assures Job that God will fill his mouth with laughter and his lips with shouts of joy, presumably, if Job would listen to his advice.

¹⁶¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 174; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 217; Newsom, "Job," 400; Course, *Speech and Response*, 49–50; Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 145–46; Balentine, *Job*, 148.

¹⁶² רוח with a different application: 7:7.

¹⁶³ DCH 7:427.

¹⁶⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 202; Newsom, "Job," 400; Balentine, *Job*, 148.

¹⁶⁵ Newsom, "Job," 389; Balentine, *Job*, 129. See also van Pelt et al. *NIDOTTE* 2:1074.

¹⁶⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 202. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 148) calls it "forceful and potentially destructive." Course (*Speech and Response*, 51) attempts to strengthen this line of interpretation by comparing the phrase רוח גדולה to רוח כביר ("a great wind"), a phrase that underscores the destructive nature of the wind that kills Job's children in 1:19.

¹⁶⁷ Course (*Speech and Response*, 50–51) and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 146) also recognize this connection.

question, which he will continue to elaborate in the rest of his speech. He asks rhetorically, “Can El pervert justice (משפט)? Can Shaddai pervert the right (צדק)?”

(8:3).¹⁶⁸ The terms משפט and צדק are frequently used in combination to denote the core values in which God maintains the order of the world (Ps 33:5; 89:15; 97:2; Hos 2:21 [ET 19]).¹⁶⁹

When Job mentions צדק in 6:29, it is likely that he intends to refer to his rightness in speech.¹⁷⁰ From Bildad’s perspective, however, Job’s assertion of his צדק, together with his complaint about God’s unjustifiable hostility towards him, is an implicit charge against God with injustice. The allusion indicates that Bildad has transformed Job’s personal declaration and protestation into his challenge against the foundational way to speak about the character of God.

3. חטא and פשע (8:4)

The verb חטא, “to sin,” and the noun פשע, “transgression” appear in both the conclusion of Job’s preceding speech (7:20–21) and the opening of Bildad’s response (8:4). The close proximity of this repetition of both terms together strongly suggests that Bildad intends to respond to Job by alluding to his words.¹⁷¹ Job said to God, “If I have sinned (חטא), what do I do to you, O Watcher of Humans? Why have you set me up as your target? Why have I become a burden to you? Why do you not pardon my

¹⁶⁸ Bildad also uses the root צדק in 8:6, in which he assures Job that God would restore his rightful (צדק) abode. See Newsom (“Job,” 401) for more discussion.

¹⁶⁹ Scullion, “Righteousness (OT),” 727, 731. So Newsom, “Job,” 400; Balentine, *Job*, 148–49.

¹⁷⁰ See II.A.7 in this chapter.

¹⁷¹ Course (*Speech and Response*, 50) also recognizes this connection.

transgression (פֶּשַׁע) and remove my iniquity?” (7:20–21b).¹⁷² There Job has made a hypothetical confession of sin in preparation for his mock demand for the forgiveness of his transgression. The purpose for bringing up such a hypothetical context is to taunt God to act before it is too late. In other words, “[t]he basis of Job’s plea for forgiveness is an ironic reminder to God ... that Job will soon disappear from the face of the earth and will therefore be inaccessible to the elusive mercy of the Maker” (7:21b).¹⁷³

While Job used the two terms playfully in the context of a taunt, Bildad takes the concepts seriously and emphasizes the consequence of sinning. He suggests that Job’s sons, not Job, could have sinned (חטא) against God and their transgression (פֶּשַׁע) has resulted in their tragic death (8:4).

4. יֵשֶׁר (8:6) and תָּם (8:20)

Besides the action of “seeking earnestly” (8:4) and “making supplication” (8:5), the exemplification of behaviour that is תָּם, “pure,” and יֵשֶׁר, “upright,” is another prerequisite for Job’s restoration, according to Bildad. Again, both the narrator and YHWH have affirmed in the prologue that Job is an upright (יֵשֶׁר) person (1:1, 8; 2:3).¹⁷⁴ Although Job has not claimed for himself this virtue up to this point in the story, the audience for sure remembers this affirmation and realizes that this virtue, together with “blameless,” fearing God,” and “shunning evil,” is precisely the reason why Job is

¹⁷² For discussion of the interpretation of 7:20, see II.A.11 in this chapter.

¹⁷³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 166.

¹⁷⁴ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 175), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 156–57), Course (*Speech and Response*, 52), and Balentine (*Job*, 151) also recognize the connection between this speech and the prologue through the term יֵשֶׁר.

singled out by YHWH and the satan for a test. Bildad's ignorance of this fact is again best to be interpreted as ironic on his part.¹⁷⁵

Bildad has already employed the term ישר, "upright," a word which denotes one of Job's defining virtues in the prologue, to describe one of the prerequisites for Job's restoration (8:6). Near the end of his speech, Bildad uses תם, "the blameless," a second term that denotes another virtue of Job in the prologue, to identify the category of people whom God does not reject (8:20).¹⁷⁶ Again, Bildad's declaration is highly ironic, for the audience knows that Job is blameless and yet he has been treated like a person rejected by God.¹⁷⁷

5. צל (8:9)

The noun צל draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding one.¹⁷⁸ The term can mean "shadow" or "shade," depending on the context.¹⁷⁹ When Job first uses this term, he refers to the relief that a slave longs for after a day of hard labour (7:2). For Job himself, his situation is even worse for evenings are no relief and all he can anticipate are "nights of trouble" (7:3).¹⁸⁰ Therefore, צל is associated with the misery of human existence in Job's worldview. Bildad picks up the noun צל and uses it as a

¹⁷⁵ Balentine's assessment is less critical. He writes, "While he [Bildad] does not explicitly deny that Job possesses these qualities, he seems far less certain than God that Job is who he claims to be" (*Job*, 151).

¹⁷⁶ Power ("Irony," 59–60), Holbert ("Klage," 158–59), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 178), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 210), Newsom ("Job," 403), Balentine (*Job*, 155) also recognize the connection between this speech and the prologue through the term תם.

¹⁷⁷ Holbert ("Klage," 159).

¹⁷⁸ Newsom ("Job," 402) and Balentine (*Job*, 153) also recognize this connection.

¹⁷⁹ See *DCH* 7:119–20.

¹⁸⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 184.

metaphor for the transitoriness of human life: “For we are of yesterday and know nothing; our days on earth are a shadow (צל)” (8:9). He draws a different implication from the association of צל with human life. For Bildad, the transitoriness of human life implies that every mortal needs to be humbled because one can only acquire limited knowledge during an ephemeral lifespan.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator describes Job’s second friend, Bildad, as joining the conversation (8:1). The analysis in the above section reveals that Bildad frequently re-uses the words of Job in order to nullify his protesting language. Whereas Job has accused his friends of treating his word as insignificant as wind (רוח), Bildad begins his verbal assault in referring to Job’s words as destructive as “great wind” (רוח כביר; 8:2). This verbal battle further intensifies the conflict between Job and his three friends. Although the technique of decrying the opponent’s arguments as mere words is common in wisdom disputation in the ANE, the unusual frequency of such remarks in the book of Job strongly implies that “proper speech” to and about God is itself the issue at stake.¹⁸¹ Bildad begins the first part of his speech with a set of rhetorical questions, which aims to spell out the axiom that governs his whole understanding (8:3). The implied answer to those questions affirms “justice” (משפט) and “the right” (צדק) as the intrinsic character of God. Bildad re-contextualizes the root צדק, which Job uses in a personal context to claim the truthfulness of his words, in the setting of a theological axiom. Following from this general principle, Bildad deduces from the violent and premature deaths of Job’s children

¹⁸¹ Newsom, “Job,” 400.

that they must have sinned (8:4). For Bildad, the concepts of “sinning” (חטא) and “transgression” (פשע) are serious business, not matters that one can joke about.

Concerning Job, Bildad lists two conditions for him to fulfill in order to receive God’s restoration (8:5–7). The first criterion is that “he must approach God in the spirit of true piety,” seeking (*pi’el* of שחר) God and imploring favour (*hitpa’el* of חנן) from him (v. 5).¹⁸² The terms Bildad uses may refer to general expressions of worship and prayer.¹⁸³ The same terms may also denote an act of repentance (cf. Hos 5:15) and a request for forgiveness (1 Kgs 8:33, 47 / 2 Chr 6:4, 37).¹⁸⁴ Either way, Bildad appears to encourage Job to appeal to the traditional motifs such as petition and confession of sin in the psalms of lament in order to secure his prospect restoration.¹⁸⁵ The second criterion, according to Bildad, is that Job must be morally “pure and upright” (v. 6a). Bildad assures Job that God would rouse (עור) himself for Job and restore his rightful abode as long as Job satisfies all these prerequisites.¹⁸⁶ As Clines rightly notes, the verb עור, “rouse,” is typical of the language of psalmody, in which the psalmists lament the absence and inactivity of God and call upon him to wake up.¹⁸⁷ Bildad’s frequent use of the terminology of lament may be seen as a deliberate correction to Job’s excessive misuse of the same language. Like Eliphaz’s suggestion, Bildad’s teaching implicitly

¹⁸² Newsom, “Job,” 401.

¹⁸³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 204.

¹⁸⁴ Balentine, *Job*, 151.

¹⁸⁵ Brueggemann, *Message*, 54–55; see also Westermann, *Praise and Lament*, 64–71.

¹⁸⁶ For the interpretation of נֹת צִדְקָךְ as “your rightful abode” in 8:6c, see Newsom, “Job,” 401. Alternatively, the phrase can mean “your righteous abode” (so Habel, *The Book of Job*, 167; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 197).

¹⁸⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 204.

affirms the piety-prosperity nexus, which is the issue at stake in the heavenly conversation between God and the satan. The intervention of Bildad thus continues to complicate this previously established conflict between Job and his friends.

Bildad then introduces the second part of the speech by appealing to the ancient tradition (8:8–10).¹⁸⁸ Through the re-use of the term צל, “shadow, shade,” Bildad attempts to reorient Job’s perspective on life. Instead of being an associated image of human misery, צל should remind one of the ephemeral nature of human life so that one cannot acquire all necessary knowledge. Since both Job and Bildad only possess limited knowledge, Bildad instructs Job to inquire into the findings of the ancestral tradition, which possesses authoritative understanding. The wisdom that Bildad prepares to convey is formulated in the form of a proverbial saying, “concerning the relation of cause and effect” (8:11).¹⁸⁹ He then proceeds to expand the proverb with a parable of two plants (8:12–15, 16–19). The first plant is an apparently flourishing and uncut one, which withers and dies unexpectedly. Through analogy, God is implicitly compared to the water essential for life, whereas “those who forget God” and “the godless” correspond to the plants. Bildad continues to describe a second plant, a well-watered one that first thrives under the sun. At this point, the authorial audience has to make an interpretive judgment. Does the image in vv. 16–19 serve as a continuation of the description of the godless who initially thrive but ultimately perish?¹⁹⁰ Alternatively, does it provide a contrasting comparison of the blameless person who endures despite adversities and ultimately

¹⁸⁸ For the seminal study of this genre, see Habel, “Appeal to Ancient Tradition,” 253–63.

¹⁸⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 402.

¹⁹⁰ For example, Fohrer (*Das Buch Hiob*, 193), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 209–10), and Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 219–20) favour this reading.

thrives?¹⁹¹ Either reading will make sense due to the ambiguity of the meaning of the term אחר (v. 19), which may be translated as “another” (a noun), “other soil” (an adjective), or “later” (an adverb).¹⁹² Fortunately, this interpretive judgment will not have significant impact on the overall message of Bildad.

Bildad closes his speech with a comparison of God’s relation to the blameless and to the evildoer (8:20). This contrast summarizes his preceding lecture and reaffirms his opening axiom about divine justice.¹⁹³ Bildad’s speech comes to an end with a prediction of the blissful prospect in store for Job and the disgraceful denouement of his enemies (8:21–22). The language in v. 21 is verbally very close to Ps 126:2a, the setting of which is associated with deliverance from calamity.¹⁹⁴ Moreover, the depiction of the destruction of the psalmist’s enemies is another common motif in lament.¹⁹⁵ Ironically, the enemies, like Bildad and his other two friends, are sometimes described as persons who turn against the one who suffers, because they take such suffering as proof of sin (Pss 35:11–15; 109:29).¹⁹⁶ Again, Bildad appears to supply Job with the missing elements of a standard lament so as to rehabilitate his friend from his crisis of faith, as Bildad sees it.

¹⁹¹ For example, Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 521), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 177–78), Janzen (*Job*, 85–86), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 161–63), Newsom (“Job,” 402–3), and Balentine (*Job*, 154–55) favour this reading.

¹⁹² Newsom, “Job,” 403.

¹⁹³ Newsom, “Job,” 403.

¹⁹⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 210.

¹⁹⁵ Westermann, *Structure*, 85–86.

¹⁹⁶ Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 194; so Clines, *Job 1–20*, 211; Newsom, “Job,” 403; Balentine, *Job*, 156.

As is the case with Eliphaz, the authorial audience is compelled to respond to the mimetic component of Bildad and ask what kind of person he typifies. From the strict adherence to the axiom in which he firmly believes, the poet depicts him as a “prisoner of tradition.”¹⁹⁷ Alternatively, as Newsom puts it, Bildad “is presented as the type of the rigid, doctrinaire moralist who loses his humanity in his desire to perceive the world according to a set of rules.”¹⁹⁸ Like Eliphaz, he espouses the doctrine of retribution in the most extreme sense and allows no individual exception to the rules.

The authorial audience would also negotiate how the author would have judged Bildad ethically. From the two instances of dramatic irony present in this speech,¹⁹⁹ it is evident that the author does not side with Bildad. Perhaps the mentality underlying the character of Bildad is the object with which the author intends to take issue.

IV. Job’s Second Response (Job 9–10)

A. Allusion Analysis

As before, the narrator uses the phrase ויען ... ויאמר, “answered,” (9:1) to introduce Job’s second response after his initial outburst in ch. 3. The opening topic statement of Job in 9:2 is clearly an allusion to Eliphaz’s rhetorical question in 4:17, for it repeats some of the key terms including “mortals” (אנוש), “to be right/righteous” (צדק), and God (אלוה/אל). Moreover, the reference to the root צדק in the same verse also hearkens back to Bildad’s opening axiom that God does not pervert “the right” (צדק) in

¹⁹⁷ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 164. Habel (*The Book of Job*, 170) similarly labels Bildad as “a traditionalist who not only appeals to the ancient fathers to substantiate his doctrine but also reads history and nature in terms of a rigid application of that doctrine.”

¹⁹⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 401.

¹⁹⁹ Refer to A.4 above.

8:3. Therefore, Job responds to not only Bildad, who is the preceding speaker, but also Eliphaz. Consequently, one should look into both speeches for possible allusions.

Another unmistakable connection between this speech and Eliphaz's previous speech is drawn by the "doxology" motif. The leading statement of Eliphaz's doxology in 5:9–16 has become the concluding statement of Job's parodied doxology in 9:4–10. Once the verbal correspondence of these two speeches is firmly established, I propose to add the "divine anger" motif as well as the terms חָלַף, "to pass by"; and שָׁחַל, "lion" as other points of contacts. The rarity of the verb חָלַף, which occurs only 28 times in the Hebrew Bible, perhaps can strengthen the deliberateness of the allusion.

The key advice that Bildad gave to Job in his previous speech is the prospect of his possible restoration as long as he fulfills certain conditions (8:5–6). Some of the key verbs used in Bildad's counsel including חָנַן, "to seek favour"; and זָכַךְ, "to purify" reappear in this present speech of Job (9:4, 15, 30). These instances should be considered as Job's intentional response to Bildad.

Since all speeches so far allude to the prologue, it is suggestive to investigate any term that may create a point of contact. As the particle חֲנֹם, "for nothing," has been recognized as a repeated term that creates irony in the prologue, it seems natural to explore its significance when Job uses the same word in this speech. Besides, I suppose to include the terms תָּם, "blameless" (9:20–21); בָּלַע, "to destroy" (10:8); and שָׁמַר, "to keep watch" (10:12, 14), all of which have been recognized by others as point of contacts between this speech and the prologue.²⁰⁰

²⁰⁰ See, e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 193–94, 198; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 177, 186; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 224–25, 228; Balentine, *Job*, 170, 174.

1. צדק (9:2, 15, 20; 10:15)

When Job resumes his response to his friends in ch. 9, he uses the verb צדק again in the setting of a rhetorical question, which is almost a paraphrase of Eliphaz's earlier challenge to Job (4:17).²⁰¹ Job says, "I know that this is so. How can a mortal צדק before God?" Whereas Eliphaz's rhetorical question may leave room for various interpretations,²⁰² Job's question is unambiguously clear. He uses the root צדק in the nuance of "to be innocent" in a legal sense. He shifts the focus from Eliphaz's emphasis on the morality of human beings to a judicial context, which sets the stage for the rest of his speech.

Job uses the verb צדק again three more times in this speech, all with a forensic connotation. When he considers the difficulties of litigation, he realizes the problem of defending himself and says, "Even though I am innocent (צדק), I cannot defend myself. I could only implore favour of my adversary" (9:15). Further down in the same context, he complains, "Though I am innocent (צדק), my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless, it would prove me guilty" (9:20). Later, when Job rehearses a case against God, he envisions the assault and harassment he would face: "If I am guilty, woe is me; but even if I am innocent (צדק), I dare not lift my head, I am filled with shame and so satiated with my affliction" (10:15).

²⁰¹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 189), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 166), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 227), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 221), Course (*Speech and Response*, 61), Newsom ("Job," 409), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 163–64), and Balentine (*Job*, 164) also note the similarity between the two verses. Moreover, Magary ("Answering Questions," 295) argues that the prefacing interrogatives in both verses "help establish connection and progression within the speeches."

²⁰² The syntax permits the question to be translated as one of the following: (1) Can a mortal be righteous before Eloah? (2) Can a mortal be righteous in relation to Eloah? or (3) Can a mortal be more righteous than Eloah? For a list of interpreters adopting each translation, see Whitekettle, "Overstatement," 445–46 n.2–4.

On the other hand, the reference to the root צדק in 9:2 is also an allusion to the opening questions of Bildad's preceding speech: "Can El pervert justice (משפט)? Can Shaddai pervert the right (צדק)?" (8:3).²⁰³ Taken as a direct response to Bildad's rhetorical questions, Job's words in 9:2a "should be understood as an answer to 8:3 in which he replies with a resounding, 'Yes, truly I know that God perverts justice.'"²⁰⁴

2. The "divine anger" motif (9:5, 13)

Both Job and Eliphaz talk about "divine anger."²⁰⁵ In this speech Job characterizes God as the mighty one. He opens and closes the list of God's activities with the "divine anger" motif: "He is the one who moves mountains and they know not, who overturns them in his anger ... God does not restrain his anger, beneath him the cohorts of Rahab grovel." (9:5, 13). Job finds himself under the same situation as the mountain, which remains ignorant of what God is doing and why. Even the cohorts of Rahab, the chaos dragon whom God defeated in primordial combat, are humbled by the deity who was motivated by his anger. For Job, the divine anger is the driving force behind his adversary who purposelessly replaces order with chaos.

When Eliphaz uses the "divine anger" motif, however, he follows the tradition that God punishes the wicked in his anger (4:9). In other words, God's fury is the divine motivation to maintain the just ordering of the world. Job picks up Eliphaz's concept of

²⁰³ Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 221), Course (*Speech and Response*, 61), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 163–64) also recognize this connection.

²⁰⁴ Course, *Speech and Response*, 61.

²⁰⁵ Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 164–65) also recognizes the connection between this speech and Eliphaz's previous speech (chs. 4–5) through the "divine anger" motif.

divine anger, but uses it to illustrate the unfathomable nature of God's destructive activities against him.

3. The “doxology” genre (9:10)

In 9:10, Job says, “who does great deeds past human reckoning and marvellous things beyond all numbering” (עשה גדלות עד אין חקר ונפלאות עד אין מספר). This is almost a verbatim citation of the introduction of Eliphaz's model praise in 5:9: “who does great deeds past human reckoning and marvellous things beyond all numbering” (עשה גדלות (ואין חקר ונפלאות עד אין מספר).²⁰⁶ Although the wordings are nearly the same, Job “quotes” the words of his friend in quite a different context. For Eliphaz, his declaration in 5:9 is a summary statement of God's majestic power, which is one of the incentives for human's praise. For Job, the same line presents the incomprehensibility of God in his suffering. God is invisible and his “elusive character prevents Job from confronting him in person and challenging his *modus operandi* as ruler of earth.”²⁰⁷

4. חלף (9:11)

The verb חלף, “to pass by,” as applied to God, appears both in this speech and in Eliphaz's previous speech.²⁰⁸ After picking up Eliphaz's summary statement about God's mysterious power and making it his own, Job elaborates on the elusive character of God

²⁰⁶ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 191), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 172), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 232), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 223), Newsom (“Job,” 411), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 165–66), and Balentine (*Job*, 167–68) also note the similar wording in these two verses.

²⁰⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 191–92; italics his.

²⁰⁸ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 191), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 223–24), and Balentine (*Job*, 168) also recognize this connection.

in his complaint: “Behold, he passes over (אבר) me, I do not see him; he passes by (חלף), I do not discern him” (9:11).²⁰⁹ According to Balentine, both אבר and חלף “are used elsewhere to describe revelations in which God’s presence is made available in extraordinary ways.”²¹⁰ This is precisely how Eliphaz has used the verb חלף in his speech where he claims to his visionary experience of an anonymous divine messenger (4:15). For Job, the “passing by” of God reveals nothing to him except that God snatches things away at will (9:12).

5. חנן (9:15)

The *hitpa‘el* form of חנן, “to implore favour,” appears both in this speech and in Bildad’s preceding speech.²¹¹ In this speech Job declares that when he and God appear in court, he can do nothing but implore favour (חנן) of his adversary (9:15). In the context, Job’s adversary is clearly God himself. Bildad has also urged Job to implore favour (חנן) from God (8:5). This is one of the conditions Job must fulfill in order to secure his restoration.

Job appears to have adopted Bildad’s recommendation, but in a sarcastic tone. As Newsom puts it, “Having to ‘plead for mercy’ (*hānan*) with an adversary when one is in the right is an intolerable perversion of what should be.”²¹² From Job’s perspective, חנן is the only thing that he will do, but not according to his own will. This is perhaps what he

²⁰⁹ חלף with another application in this speech: 9:26.

²¹⁰ Balentine (*Job*, 168) notes, “The first describes God’s appearances to Moses (Exod 33:18–23) and Elijah (1 Kgs 19:11–12), the second, the visionary encounter with God claimed by Eliphaz (4:15).”

²¹¹ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 234), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 224), Newsom (“Job,” 411), and Balentine (*Job*, 169) also recognize this connection.

²¹² Newsom, “Job,” 411.

means by “his mouth would condemn him” (9:20). In his despair, “he must simply speak the words that he is given, whether they adequately reflect the truth of his situation or not.”²¹³ To Job, Bildad’s traditional word of pious appeal is not applicable to his personal situation.

6. חנם (9:17)

The term חנם, “for nothing,” a key word that marks the irony of Job’s misfortune (1:9; 2:3), reappears in the mouth of Job.²¹⁴ When Job presents his reason why he cannot believe that God will concern himself too seriously with his interrogations, he says, “He crushes me בשערה, and increases my wounds for nothing (חנם)” (9:17).²¹⁵ The consonantal text, שַׁעְרָה, can mean “hair” or “tempest.” To translate בשַׁעְרָה as “for a hair” would provide a better parallelism with חנם, and the emphasis of the sentence would then be the irrationality of God’s attack to Job.²¹⁶ On the contrary, to translate בשַׁעְרָה as “with a tempest” would strengthen the link between Job’s statement and the speeches of his friends, who also speak of the “wind” imagery.²¹⁷ Eliphaz claims that in his vision, a “wind” (רוּחַ) glided over his face and a “tempest” (שַׁעְרָה) made his flesh quiver (4:15). In

²¹³ Balentine, *Job*, 169.

²¹⁴ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 165–66), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 193), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 176), Newsom (“*Job*,” 411), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 166), and Balentine (*Job*, 169) also recognize this connection.

²¹⁵ Job’s description of divine violence against him in 9:17–18 is open to different interpretations. Some take it as a continuation of his imagination of the violence that would disrupt the lawsuit (e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 193; Balentine, *Job*, 169). Others see it as a reference to Job’s former experience, which leads him to doubt God’s sincerity in participating in a human-divine lawsuit (e.g., Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 176; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 235; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 224). I incline to adopt the latter interpretation, though the effect of the allusion is similar in both readings.

²¹⁶ So Dhorme, *Job*, 136; Pope, *Job*, 72; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 106; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 214, 235.

²¹⁷ So Fullerton, “*Chapters 9 and 10*,” 323, 331; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 174; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 73.

Bildad's preceding speech, he opens by criticizing Job's words as "mighty wind" (כביר רוח; 8:2). Perhaps a double entendre is intended in 9:17.²¹⁸

The allusion of Job's present speech to the prologue through the term חנם suggests to the reader "that Job's intuitions are accurate for God has already admitted to Satan that he had been incited to destroy Job 'all for nothing' (2:3)."²¹⁹ Moreover, the legal overtone of the speech of Job in ch. 9 intensifies the significance of this allusion. Balentine's comments are noteworthy: "In the prologue, it is Job who is on trial. Now Job reverses the charges. When God assaults the innocent without reason, it is divine justice, not human fidelity, which must be put on trial."²²⁰

7. תם (9:20–21)

Job declares himself to be תם, "blameless," twice in this speech. He first uses this term parallel with צדק, "innocent" in 9:20. As he continues, he says, "I am blameless (תם). I do not know myself. I loathe my life" (9:21). The meaning of the middle phrase is uncertain. It could be a medical idiom for the loss of consciousness.²²¹ It could be a description of the transformation his life has undergone in light of this crisis.²²² It could be equivalent to the phrase "I do not care about myself," which forms a nice parallelism with "I loathe my life."²²³ Least likely is that it expresses the doubt Job has regarding his

²¹⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 193. Similarly, Newsom ("Job," 411) notes, "The emendation improves the parallelism with 'for no reason' in 17b, ... [yet] there may be an ironic foreshadowing here, since God will speak to Job 'from a tempest' in 38:1."

²¹⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 193.

²²⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 169.

²²¹ Paul, "Unrecognized Medical Idiom," 545–47.

²²² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 194.

²²³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 237.

own integrity.²²⁴ Job's self-declaration of his "blamelessness" echoes the narrator's and YHWH's assessment of his integrity in the prologue (1:1, 8; 2:3).²²⁵ This perhaps reveals to the reader that Job actually knows himself more than his friends know him.

8. זכך (9:30)

The root זכך provides a semantic correspondence between this speech and Bildad's preceding one.²²⁶ After talking about God in the third person in 9:2–24, Job addresses God directly in 9:25–31. In this direct address, Job pictures himself in an imaginary situation: "If I wash myself in snow,²²⁷ and purify (זכך) my hands with lye, you would plunge me into a pit, and my clothes would abhor me" (9:30–31). In the preceding speech, Bildad has specified זך, "pure," cognate with זכך, as one of the conditions that Job must fulfill in order to be restored by God (8:6). For Job, however, even if he literally fulfills this condition, he still believes that God would plunge his naked body into a filthy pit so that even his clothes would shun him. As Clines puts it, "The savagery of the image reflects the bitterness of Job's feeling that no matter how he strives to gain vindication, it is in vain (v 29b), since God will not give up accounting him guilty."²²⁸

²²⁴ Dhorme, *Job*, 139.

²²⁵ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 193–94), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 177), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 224), Newsom ("Job," 412), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 167), and Balentine (*Job*, 170) also recognize this connection.

²²⁶ Holbert ("Klage," 166), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 195), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 167) also recognize this connection.

²²⁷ See the comment in Clines, *Job 1–20*, 220 n.30.b, for related discussion.

²²⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 242.

9. בלע (10:8)

The verb בלע links this speech back to the prologue.²²⁹ The primary meaning of this verb is “swallow, devour, engulf.”²³⁰ When Job lays specific charges against God in the midst of a rehearsal for his legal disputation, he says, “Your hands shaped me and made me, and you turned and בלע-ed me” (10:8). In the context, the verb means “destroyed.” This statement recalls what God has acknowledged that he was incited by the satan to destroy (בלע) Job for nothing (2:3). As Clines puts it,

We may well wonder whether the poet, in choosing for ‘destroy’ the term בלע (lit. ‘swallow, engulf’; also at 8:18), intends—at this critical point of Job’s attack on the perverseness of God’s destruction of his handiwork—to refer us to 2:3 where Yahweh uses the same somewhat unusual term in a very similar context.²³¹

Although Job was not given the privilege to hear the heavenly conversation, it appears that this allusion highlights that Job is closer to the truth than his friends are.

10. שמר and the “divine watching” motif (10:12, 14)

In the speeches of Job, the “divine watching” motif first appears in ch. 7. Job asks God to lift his gaze away from him (v. 19) because he has made Job a target upon which he fixes his concentration (v. 20). Job thus gives God the designation “the Watcher of Humans” (v. 20). In this present speech, Job continues to use this motif in two different ways. First, when he reminds God of his past providence, he says, “You bestowed upon me life and kindness, and your providence watched over (שמר) my breath” (10:12). Next, he accuses God of his hidden agenda in giving birth to him: “Yet these things you hid in

²²⁹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 198), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 186), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 247), Balentine (*Job*, 174) also recognize this connection.

²³⁰ DCH 2:179.

²³¹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 247.

your heart, I know this was your purpose: If I sinned, you would be watching (שמר) me and would not acquit me of my guilt” (10:13–14).

Interestingly, the verb שמר is also used in the prologue.²³² After God has agreed that the satan can touch the body of Job in the second round of heavenly dialogue, he says to the satan, “Behold, he is in your hand; only keep (שמר) his life” (2:6b). The reader is invited to reconsider the real intention of this last remark. Perhaps Job is correct. For the test to be continued, the satan, on behalf of God, must שמר Job’s life so that God is able to find out whether Job would commit sin or not.

11. שחל (10:16)

The noun שחל, “lion,” provides another verbal link between this speech and Eliphaz’s earlier one. There are some textual and semantic difficulties in 10:16, which I render, “And if I lift myself up, like a lion you would hunt me, you show marvellous things repeatedly against me.” For the first word יגאֵה in the verse, I follow Clines and many others in emending it to וַאֲגִאֵה, “and I lift myself up,” in order to make sense of it within its context.²³³ Another controversy is concerned about the imagery of the lion. Some argue that Job is portrayed as the hunted lion. For example, Habel contends that the tradition of the lion as a proud beast which lifts itself up, together with Job’s earlier complaint of being unable to lift his head (v. 15b), suggests that Job is the lion.²³⁴ Similarly, Newsom believes that “[t]he tradition of royal lion hunts in the ancient Near

²³² Holbert (“*Klage*,” 170–71) and Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 228) also recognize this connection.

²³³ See Clines, *Job 1–20*, 222 n.16.a.

²³⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 184.

East as manifestations of the king's prowess suggests that God is here depicted as the hunter of Job, the lion."²³⁵ In the Psalter, "lions" are a common metaphor for the persecutors of the psalmists (Pss 7:3 [ET 2]; 10:9; 17:12; 22:14 [ET 13]; 35:17; 57:5 [ET 4]).²³⁶ In light of the strong parallels, it is more likely that God is the lion that fiercely hunts for Job, his prey.²³⁷

If this interpretation is adopted, Job may be alluding to Eliphaz's earlier use of the image of the "lions" in 4:10–11. There, Eliphaz used the destiny of lions as an object lesson to teach Job that unforeseeable calamity can strike the wicked at any moment. One can thus learn from the lions that God maintains the moral order of the world. To Job, however, the image of lions can only arouse the association that God has been behaving like Job's enemy, hunting him down relentlessly for no reason.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction, Job speaks up again. The analysis in the above section reveals that Job frequently re-uses the words of Bildad and Eliphaz in order to refute their arguments. Job's present speech begins with an ironic rhetorical question about the possibility of a mortal to be צדק before God (9:2). Job adopts the legal nuance of צדק and contends that the impossibility of being "innocent" before God is not a result of human moral deficiency but the unfairness of the legal processes. On the one hand, Job's question is a response to Eliphaz, who has claimed that no one is righteous before

²³⁵ Newsom, "Job," 415; so Balentine, *Job*, 175.

²³⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 250.

²³⁷ So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 189–90; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 250.

God (cf. 4:17). On the other hand, it is also a response to Bildad, who has asserted that God does not pervert the right (cf. 8:3). Building on the sentiment in his rhetorical question, Job explores the idea of a lawsuit with God, only to realize that such a lawsuit is almost impossible because of God's superior power and wisdom to himself (9:3–4).²³⁸ He mimics the doxology genre suggested by Eliphaz (cf. 5:9–16) only to demonstrate the terror one will face when God becomes one's opponent in court (9:5–10).²³⁹ When Job applies Eliphaz's suggested reasons for praising God to his own situation, he maintains that God can neither be comprehended nor be opposed (9:11–13).²⁴⁰ Job cannot discern what God is doing when God "passes by" (חָלַף), a word that Eliphaz has used to describe his revelatory experience. The instabilities in the story are further developed when Job introduces the concept of "divine anger." Unlike Eliphaz who sees the anger of God as the divine motivation to maintain the just ordering of the world, Job uses this motif to illustrate the unfathomable nature of God's destructive activities against him. Although Job has previously depicted himself as if he were God's enemy who is suffering from the

²³⁸ Many have noticed the ambiguity of the Hebrew pronouns in 9:3. So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 167; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 228; Newsom, "Job," 409; Balentine, *Job*, 165–66. According to Newsom (op. cit.), Job's words in 9:3 can be understood in one of the following three ways: "(1) 'if God wished to dispute with one, one could not answer him one in a thousand'; (2) 'if [one] wished to dispute with [God], one could not answer him' (cf. NRSV); (3) 'if [one] wished to dispute with him, [God] would not answer' (cf. 33:13).'" I echo Newsom, who favours the first option because God appears to be the one bringing charges in the legal metaphor Job uses in this speech. Moreover, Job's reiteration of his inability to respond to God in 9:14 further supports the first alternative.

²³⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 185; Newsom, "Job," 410. Many interpreters noticed that Job is subverting traditional doxologies in 9:5–10. So Fullerton, "Chapters 9 and 10," 330–31; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 188; Dell, *Sceptical Literature*, 127. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 229), however, argued that there is no irony in this passage since "similar language to Job's in these verses occurs in praises in the Psalter where irony cannot be suspected." Similarly, Newsom ("Job," 410–11) contended that there is no overt parody in this passage. On the one hand, both Clines and Newsom have rightly pointed out that by depicting God as violent and destructive in a hymn does not automatically make it parodic. On the other hand, however, it seems to me that both scholars have adopted a rather narrow sense of "irony" or "parody." In 9:5–10, it is clear that Job is contextualizing a traditional hymnic praise into another setting with a sentiment that is contrary to that in its original setting. Understood as such, the hymn should be qualified as a parody.

²⁴⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 168.

divine attack (cf. 6:4; 7:12), to claim that his affliction is a result of the anger of God implies that he has been treated the same way as God usually punishes the wicked and the oppressors of God's people.²⁴¹

Job turns next to contemplate the cross examinations that would take place in the imaginary courtroom (9:14–24). Due to God's might and anger, Job would not be able to defend charges brought against him (v. 14).²⁴² Even though he is innocent, Job fantasizes that he would be forced to implore divine favour, which is precisely what Bildad had recommended him to do, only in an ironic fashion (v. 15; cf. 8:5). When Job further ponders the prospect of interrogating God, he can hardly believe that God will concern himself too seriously with the questions of Job (v. 16).²⁴³ Job's next ironic description of divine violence against him "for no reason" (חנם), a significant thematic word from the prologue (1:9; 2:3), explains why he cannot believe God would take his lawsuit as a serious matter (vv. 17–18). Job conjures up two possible resolutions: "a trial of strength and a trial at law" (v. 19).²⁴⁴ Neither is it possible for Job because of God's devastating power. Job envisages his own mouth speaking a lie against his own innocence (חם; v. 20).²⁴⁵ He loathes his own life because he knows that he is innocent (חם; v. 21). God's failure to respect the innocence of Job's own life leads him to generalize that the

²⁴¹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 229.

²⁴² The prefacing phrase כִּי הֵא (‘‘how much less’’) in 9:14 suggests that Job is comparing himself with the helpers of Rahab in the preceding verse. As Balentine (*Job*, 169) puts it, ‘‘If the primordial forces of chaos are humbled into submission before the withering anger of his adversary, ‘how then’ (v. 14) can a mere mortal like Job stand up to God’s questions?’’ So Clines, *Job 1–20*, 233. Alternatively, one can take הֵא as an emphatic interrogative particle (Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 106).

²⁴³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 234.

²⁴⁴ Newsom, ‘‘Job,’’ 411.

²⁴⁵ Contra Habel (*The Book of Job*, 193), who regards the meaning of 9:20 as ‘‘whatever Job said would be held as evidence against him and that he would be found guilty.’’

governance of God denies fundamental distinctions between the righteous and the wicked (v. 22).²⁴⁶ Job identifies God as an uninvolved spectator of calamity and even an active agent hindering the rectification of social chaos (vv. 23–24).²⁴⁷ For the first time, Job accuses God of injustice, albeit indirectly.²⁴⁸ This again further intensifies the conflict between Job and God.

Job appears to abruptly shift back to lament about the brevity of his own life (9:25–26).²⁴⁹ The awareness of the shortness of life motivates him to seek diligently for resolution.²⁵⁰ He considers three imaginary options that might offer some measure of relief. First, he could change his expression and response, but he immediately realizes that this would neither relieve his suffering nor restore his innocence (9:27–29).²⁵¹ Second, Job could take Bildad's suggestion in 8:6 literally and washes himself and purifies (זכך) his hands with potent cleansing agents, but God would plunge him into a filthy pit so that his clothes would consider him too disgusting to be near (9:30–31).²⁵²

²⁴⁶ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 236) rightly notes that “Job extrapolates from his own experience to large statements about God and the world.” So Newsom, “Job,” 412.

²⁴⁷ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 195) interprets Job as charging God as “the source of social disorder” here. Similarly, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 177; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 226; Newsom “Job,” 412. The text does not explicitly state that God is the initiator of the chaotic situation. Therefore, it is preferable to see “the nub of Job’s resentment” only as “the divine aloofness” (Clines, *Job 1–20*, 238).

²⁴⁸ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 238) states, “Nothing in Job’s speech comes so close as this sentence [v. 24] to a direct accusation of injustice on God’s part.”

²⁴⁹ As Clines (*Job 1–20*, 239) observes, vv. 25–26 serve as “the transition from the monologue of 9:2–24, in which God is a distant figure, referred to generally simply as ‘he,’ to the personal address that is sustained, with the exception of vv 32–35, to the end of the speech.”

²⁵⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 412.

²⁵¹ I follow Habel (*The Book of Job*, 195), who regard Job’s despair of futility in v. 29 as referring to his efforts in vv. 27–28. So Balentine, *Job*, 171. Newsom (“Job,” 412), on the contrary, argues that Job’s statement of futility refer to his efforts in vv. 30–31. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 241) takes a middle approach and claims that v. 29a links to what precedes while v. 29b links to what follows.

²⁵² The image here may also be “[a]n allusion to the practice of clothing an acquitted defendant in clean garments” (Pope, *Job*, 76).

Third, Job fantasizes the existence of an independent and impartial arbiter, who could mediate the differences between God and him fairly (9:32–35).²⁵³ Nevertheless, from the outset Job realizes that no such arbiter exists (v. 33).²⁵⁴

Job goes on to declare once again that he abhors his life and so he dares to speak boldly (10:1).²⁵⁵ He imagines what he would say if he could confront God. Job would ask God not to declare him guilty but to give him a statement of the indictments (10:2).²⁵⁶ He would press God regarding the irrational nature of God's actions toward him (10:3–7).²⁵⁷ He would also complain that God cautiously created him only to find faults in him (10:8–14).²⁵⁸ Even if Job were innocent, he would still be the victim of God's ruthless aggression (10:15–17). Unlike Eliphaz, who uses the image of lions to elicit the association of God's just ordering of the world, Job depicts God as a lion, which, in the context of the lament language, represents the enemy of the innocent psalmist.

Job concludes this speech by returning to the language of lament in ch. 3 and ch. 7, however, with a heavier sense of despair.²⁵⁹ Whereas Job simply lamented the conditions of his birth in his opening outburst, he now decries his birth as actively

²⁵³ Dick ("Legal Metaphor," 79) points out that the arbiter figure that Job envisions is a recognized part of Israelite legal procedure.

²⁵⁴ Since the phrase $\psi \text{ } \aleph$ does not occur elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, some interpreters emend \aleph to \aleph or \aleph , "would that." So Pope, *Job*, 76; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 111; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 220 n.33.a. This reading is also supported by some MSS, LXX, and Pesh. Even if the emendation is adopted, the context suggests that Job's wish is a futile one.

²⁵⁵ As Habel (*The Book of Job*, 197) puts it, "Since life is not worth living, Job is ready to risk all and present his case against El, no matter how outrageous they may appear to his listeners."

²⁵⁶ Balentine, *Job*, 173.

²⁵⁷ Newsom, "Job," 413.

²⁵⁸ As Newsom ("Job," 414) puts it, "What appeared to be loving creation was only a cover for God's true intention of inspecting for sin."

²⁵⁹ Balentine, *Job*, 176.

orchestrated by God (10:18a).²⁶⁰ He previously spoke of the impossible wish of never having seen the light (3:16b), here he speaks of his desire of not having been seen by any eye, which, by allusion, includes the divine “Watching Eye” (10:18b).²⁶¹ In light of his short-lived life, Job asks God to leave him alone (10:19–20). His longing for death, which is described with multiple images of the darkness of Sheol, ends his speech (10:21–22).²⁶²

Job’s present speech occupies a critical point in the story.²⁶³ The major progression of the narrative in this speech of Job is his introduction of the legal metaphor.²⁶⁴ In the Hebrew Bible, God at times enters into litigation with his people (e.g., Isa 3:13–14; Mic 6:1–2) or argues the case of his people (e.g., Isa 49:25b; Jer 50:34).²⁶⁵ There are also cases where God is said to enter into judgment with a person (e.g., Ps 143:2; Eccl 11:9) or to argue the case of the psalmist (e.g., Ps 119:154a).²⁶⁶ The only instance in which a human being is depicted as pondering to initiate litigation against God is found in Jer 12:1: “You will be in the right, O YHWH, if I litigate against

²⁶⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 200.

²⁶¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 200–201.

²⁶² Contra Newsom (“Job,” 415), who argues that Job’s attitude toward death has changed from positive (as in chs. 3 and 7) to negative here.

²⁶³ Egger-Wenzel (*Die zentrale Rolle*) regards Job 9 and 10 as the central chapters of the book. To a lesser extent, Köhlmoos (*Das Auge Gottes*, 150) claims that both Job 9 and Job 4–5 are decisive for the whole book of Job. Similarly, Westermann (*Structure*, 53) and Cox (“Rational Inquiry,” 628) consider these chapters as a high point in Job’s lament.

²⁶⁴ For a study of legal terms and procedure in the Hebrew Bible, see Bovati, *Re-Establishing Justice*. On the use of the legal metaphor in the book of Job, see Scholnick, “Lawsuit Drama”; *idem*, “Meaning of *Mišpat*,” 521–29; *idem*, “Poetry in the Courtroom,” 185–204; Dick, “Legal Metaphor,” 37–50; *idem*, “Oath of Innocence,” 31–53; *idem*, “Neo-Assyrian Lion Hunt,” 243–70; Magdalene, *Scales of Righteousness*.

²⁶⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 410.

²⁶⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 410.

you; yet I would present my charges to you.”²⁶⁷ As Zuckerman rightly notes, “as soon as Jeremiah contemplates making a case against God ... the prophet withdraws the motion, preferring instead to plead to God that He act to punish evildoers (12:3).”²⁶⁸

In adopting the basic idea of the legal metaphor, Job attempts to explore a novel religious language to respond to his own situation. As soon as he picks up this forensic language, he realizes its intrinsic “logical weakness.”²⁶⁹ In the legal metaphor elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, God “is both an interested party in the lawsuit and the judge!”²⁷⁰ To initiate a litigation against God is to ask God to “step down on this occasion from His conventional role as judge and instead take on the role of a colitigant—in fact, a defendant in a court case.”²⁷¹ Moreover, for an impartial trial between Job and God to exist, a third party other than God is needed to adjudicate Job’s dispute with God.²⁷²

The legal metaphor introduced in this speech of Job thus complicates the tensions in the narrative. The challenge before the authorial audience is whether the author endorses or rejects Job’s wild language as an appropriate response in suffering. Through the ample allusions in this speech to the prologue,²⁷³ the author reminds the authorial audience of the irony of Job’s affliction. Job is also depicted as closer to the truth than his three friends are regarding his integrity. Can the severity of Job’s calamity justify his

²⁶⁷ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 258 n.339.

²⁶⁸ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 258 n.339.

²⁶⁹ Roberts, “Job’s Summons to Yahweh,” 163.

²⁷⁰ Roberts, “Job’s Summons to Yahweh,” 164.

²⁷¹ Zuckerman, *Job the Silent*, 111.

²⁷² Roberts, “Job’s Summons to Yahweh,” 165.

²⁷³ Refer to A.6, A.7, and A.9 above.

provocative language? This question will continue to sustain the audience's interest until the end.

V. Zophar's First Speech (Job 11)

A. Internal Quotations

1. Attributed Citations

Zophar the Naamathite, the third friend of Job, finally opens his mouth. As before, the narrator uses the phrase ויען ... ויאמר, "answered," (11:1) to indicate the entrance of Zophar's voice into the conversation. Zophar's present speech contains a citation attributed, presumably, to Job (11:4). The citation is explicitly marked by the *verbum dicendi*, ותאמר, "you say."

"My teaching is pure and I am clean in your sight" (11:4)

The words that Zophar attributes to Job are "My teaching (לקח) is pure, and I am clean in your (God's) sight" (11:4). So far, Zophar is the only person who cites from another speaker. Job has not said anything close to that. As Newsom rightly asserts, "They are not literally Job's words, however, but a representation of what Zophar has heard Job say, filtered through his own understanding of what is at stake."²⁷⁴ The term לקח is "a frequent term in Proverbs for the 'precepts' or 'doctrines' of the sages that are handed on, studied, and accepted as truth (Prov 1:5; 4:2; 9:9; 16:21, 23)."²⁷⁵ From the

²⁷⁴ Newsom, "Job," 419.

²⁷⁵ Balentine, *Job*, 185.

agonized speeches uttered by a friend who is undergoing extreme tragedy, all Zophar can hear is theology.²⁷⁶

2. Allusions

In addition to the above attributed citation, many instances of allusion can be found in this speech. As is the case with previous speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible allusions. Crucial to Job's argument in chs. 9–10 is his introduction of the legal metaphor. Some forensic terms such as *אנה*, “to answer” and *צדק*, “in the right,” which Job used in the preceding speech, are picked up by Zophar at the beginning of his present speech. Moreover, the “darkness” motif, with which Job concludes his preceding speech, is repeated by Zophar with a different application in 11:17. Another clear connection between the two speeches is the repetition of the cluster of terms: *חלף*, “to pass by”; *מי ישיבנו*, “who can restrain him”; *ראה*, “to see”; *בון*, “to discern.” Job uses these terms in 9:11–12 whereas Zophar re-uses these terms with a different overall meaning in 11:10–11. Having established the connection between ch. 11 and chs. 9–10, other terms such as *לאג*, “to mock”; *חכמה*, “wisdom”; and *שכח*, “to forget” may provide further points of contact.

The terms *עולה*, “injustice”; *אמל*, “trouble”; *תקוה*, “hope,” as well as the “fear” motif, all of which have been used to form verbal allusions by at least one other speaker, reappear in this speech. Besides, as some have suggested, Zophar's expression in 11:13–20 appears to integrate specific terms and motifs in Job's previous speeches to construct innuendos to various elements of Job's complaints.²⁷⁷ Apart from the terms already listed

²⁷⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 260; Newsom, “Job,” 419.

²⁷⁷ Holbert, “*Klage*,” 175–81; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 205–206; Balentine, *Job*, 189–92.

above, the terms חפֿר, “to search for” and שִׁכַּב, “to lie down,” seem to be among this category. Finally, I would suggest that the terms חרֶשׁ, “to be silent, to silence” and פֿראַ, “wild ass,” might also constitute verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s previous sayings.

i. אָנָה (11:2a)

The verb אָנָה draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding one.²⁷⁸ In opening his response to Job, Zophar chides Job for his boastful words (11:2–3). He uses a rhetorical question to assure Job that his “multitude of words” would surely be answered (*nip^{al}* of אָנָה) (11:2a). The verb אָנָה is a common term. Each time within the dialogue between Job and his friends, the narrator uses this term to indicate the initiation of a speech by a new speaker. Nevertheless, in the preceding speech, Job used this verb exclusively in the forensic sense.²⁷⁹ He states either that he could not answer (אָנָה) God (9:3, 14, 15, 32) or that God would not answer (אָנָה) him seriously (9:16) in a legal setting. In this present speech, Zophar picks up Job’s judicial language and is prepared to prove Job’s words to be in the wrong.²⁸⁰ Implicitly, Zophar has taken up Job’s legal challenge on behalf of God and is prepared to “answer” Job.

²⁷⁸ Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 229–30) and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 179) also recognize this connection.

²⁷⁹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 229–30; Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 179.

²⁸⁰ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 259) argues that the *nip^{al}* of אָנָה in the legal sense can mean “‘rebutted,’ proved to be in the wrong.”

ii. צדק (11:2b)

The root צדק draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding one.²⁸¹ One of the key terms that Job used in his preceding speech is צדק.²⁸² Job repeatedly used this word in the judicial sense to declare his own innocence on four occasions (9:2, 15, 20; 10:15). In this speech, Zophar uses another rhetorical question to deride Job's futile endeavour to seek vindication (צדק) with his superficial talk (11:2b).²⁸³ As Newsom notes, "Following Job's use of the word in a forensic sense, one immediately hears a legal nuance."²⁸⁴ She, however, argues that "Zophar is primarily interested in the sapiential and religious sense of *šdq*, the sense of the right order of the world established by God's wisdom and maintained by God's oversight of the world."²⁸⁵ Given the strong legal overtone of Zophar's beginning rhetorical question in 11:2a (see i. above), it is more likely that the verb also carries a forensic connotation here.²⁸⁶

iii. חרש (11:3a)

The verb חרש, "to be silent, to silence," draws a connection between this speech and Job's earlier speech in chs. 6–7. Previously, when Job accused his friends of their disloyalty, he taunted them to teach him where he had erred so that he could be silent

²⁸¹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 206), Course (*Speech and Response*, 66), Newsom ("Job," 419) and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 179–80) also recognize this connection.

²⁸² See IV.A.1 in this chapter.

²⁸³ I follow Clines (*Job 1–20*, 259) and interpret יצדק here to mean "win legal acquittal." Alternatively, the verb may mean "be innocent." So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 193; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 77.

²⁸⁴ Newsom, "Job," 419.

²⁸⁵ Newsom, "Job," 419.

²⁸⁶ So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 194; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 259; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 230; Balentine, *Job*, 184.

(*hip'il* of חרש; 6:24). Obviously, Job strongly believes that he would not be silent because his friends would surely be unable to bring his non-existing transgression to light. In return, Zophar employs the causative sense of this verb and rebukes Job for reducing others, presumably, Eliphaz and Bildad, to silence (*hip'il* of חרש) with his babbling (11:3). Perhaps, Zophar is still sticking to the legal language.²⁸⁷ In re-using the same verb חרש, Zophar attempts to uncover Job's camouflage behind his taunt in 6:24. Job has no intention to be silenced by his adversaries, but will keep on babbling until they are silenced by him.

iv. לאג (11:3b)

The verb לאג, to mock,” draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding one.²⁸⁸ In this speech, Zophar also chides Job that he may “mock” (לאג) without rebuke (11:3b). The verb לאג has no explicit direct object, which may be human or divine. Perhaps the ambiguity is intentional. For Zophar, defending God's honour is as important as defending his own. The direct object may be human beings or the ideology endorsed by them, as the context may suggest that the conflict, which Zophar has in view, is between Job and the friends.²⁸⁹ On the other hand, the direct object may also be God.²⁹⁰ In the preceding speech, one of the accusations that Job has made against God is that God

²⁸⁷ According to Hartley, “In ancient times the silencing of an opponent in a verbal dispute was tantamount to proving one's own case” (*The Book of Job*, 194). Clines also offers a similar comment: “The whole process of legal argument is that the disputants should continue talking until one or other concedes the issue. If Job has not conceded the points of Eliphaz and Bildad, but has gone on speaking, he must be attempting to reduce *them* to silence, putting them in the wrong” (*Job 1–20*, 259; italics his).

²⁸⁸ Course (*Speech and Response*, 66) also recognizes this connection.

²⁸⁹ So Newsom, “Job,” 419; Balentine, *Job*, 184.

²⁹⁰ So Clines, *Job 1–20*, 260.

mocks (לֵאָג) the despair of the innocent victims in tragedies (9:23). As God's mockery against rebellious nations or parties who oppose the pious psalmist reveals divine justice,²⁹¹ the same behaviour against the innocent indicates injustice on the part of the deity. If Zophar intends to allude to Job's preceding speech through the verb לֵאָג, he may regard Job's accusation of God's injustice as evidence of Job's engagement in mockery against God. From Zophar's perspective, Job, not God, is the one who mocks.²⁹²

v. חָכָם (11:6)

The root חָכָם draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding one.²⁹³ In concluding the opening strophe of his speech, Zophar refers to wisdom (חִכְמָה), a term that "refers to the principles of order by which God creates and sustains the universe."²⁹⁴ One aspect of the secrets of wisdom (חִכְמָה) that he reveals to Job is that God has already overlooked part of Job's iniquity (11:6).²⁹⁵ In Job's preceding speech, he also uses the same root חָכָם to express his conviction that God is wise (חָכָם) in heart (9:4). In the context of Job's speech, this divine attribute is associated with divine violence and anger. Zophar takes over the motif of God's wisdom but reverses Job's mental image from divine hostility to God's mercy.

²⁹¹ Cf. Pss 2:4; 59:9[ET 8].

²⁹² Course, *Speech and Response*, 66.

²⁹³ Course (*Speech and Response*, 66–67) and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 181) also recognize this connection.

²⁹⁴ Balentine, *Job*, 185. See also Wilson, "Wisdom," 1278.

²⁹⁵ The Hebrew text in 11:6b is somewhat ambiguous. I follow some, including Pope (*Job*, 83) and Clines (*Job 1–20*, 254 n.6.d), who understand the verb יָשָׁח to be from the root נָשָׁח, meaning "to forget, overlook." Others, such as Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 118) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 202), however, believe the verb to be from a root, with the same spelling, meaning "to lend, become a creditor." The NRSV, e.g., adopts the latter sense and translates 11:6b as "Know then that God exacts of you less than your guilt deserves." Nevertheless, the overall meaning of Zophar's expression is similar in either reading.

vi. חלף; מי ישיבנו; ראה; בון (11:10–11)

Zophar's description of God's operations in 11:10–11 is the most obvious allusion in this speech to Job's preceding one.²⁹⁶ Zophar says of God, "If he passes by (חלף), imprisons (סגר) and summons an assembly (קהל), who can restrain him (מי ישיבנו)? For he knows lying (שוא) men. When he sees (ראה) evil, can he not discern (בון) it?" (11:10–11). The terms סגר, קהל, and שוא all belong to the vocabulary used in legal procedures.²⁹⁷ Balentine rightly contends that Zophar intends to direct Job to renounce his earlier challenge of God's irrational and violent behaviour by explicating God's proper legal procedures for convicting the guilty.²⁹⁸ Earlier, Job has accused God of "passing by" (חלף) while he cannot "see" (ראה) or "discern" (בון) what God is doing (9:11). In response, Zophar agrees with Job that God indeed passes by (חלף), but only to "see" (ראה) and "discern" (בון) what evil humans such as Job have done.²⁹⁹ Job has also complained that God uses power abusively to snatch away, and there is no one "who can restrain him" (מי ישיבנו) (9:12). Zophar, on the other hand, argues that God uses his power to maintain the just order. What no one can hinder is the God who uses proper procedures to make a legal judgement on the guilty.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁶ Holbert ("Klage," 173–75), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 208–9), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 264–65), Newsom ("Job," 420–21), and Balentine (*Job*, 187) also recognize this connection.

²⁹⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 187.

²⁹⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 187.

²⁹⁹ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 209. He writes, "Zophar shrewdly turns Job's complaints about God's surveillance tactics into veiled indictments of Job. What Job interpreted as the insidious work of a malicious celestial spy (7:8, 20; 10:14) is viewed by Zophar as the legitimate and necessary discernment of the hidden sins harbored by brash mortals like Job."

³⁰⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 187.

vii. פרא (11:12)

The noun פרא, “wild ass,” links this speech with Job’s earlier one (chs. 6–7). Zophar concludes his second strophe (11:7–12) with a proverb: “A hollow man will get understanding when a wild ass (פרא) of the steppe land is born a domesticated donkey” (v. 12).³⁰¹ A hollow man is an “empty-headed fool who lacks wisdom.”³⁰² The point of the comparison is clear: for a foolish man to attain understanding is as impossible as for a wild ass born tame. Earlier, Job has compared himself to a wild ass (פרא) in the context of justifying his complaint against God’s unreasonable attack (6:5). Job argued that one simply does not complain if what is given is appropriate.³⁰³ Whereas Job uses the analogy of the wild ass to validate his provocative speech, Zophar uses the image of the wild ass to mock the foolishness and futility of Job’s mission to contend with God.

viii. עולה (11:14)

Both Eliphaz and Job have employed the term עולה. While Eliphaz uses the word to refer to wickedness in general (5:16), Job uses it as a synonym for lies (6:29–30).³⁰⁴ According to Zophar, one of the conditions that Job should fulfill in order to secure his restoration is to avoid עולה from dwelling in his tent (11:14).³⁰⁵ The context alone cannot

³⁰¹ I follow the arguments of Pope (*Job*, 86) and thus render the verse as such. However, other common understandings of the verse do not alter the basic thrust of the proverb. For a good discussion of the related textual issues, see, e.g., Balentine, *Job*, 188.

³⁰² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 209.

³⁰³ See II.B in this chapter.

³⁰⁴ See II.A.7 in this chapter.

³⁰⁵ Fohrer (*Das Buch Hiob*, 230) notes that elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 9:27; 1 Chr 5:10; Ps 78:55), “to dwell in the tent” of someone means to take over that person’s property. The implication is that Job must not let עולה become the master of his life. So Balentine, *Job*, 188–89. Alternatively, the phrase may only imply that עולה “lodges” in Job’s tent. So Clines, *Job 1–20*, 268.

determine whether עולה means “wickedness” or “deceit.” If Zophar’s exhortation is alluding to Job’s words in 6:29–30,³⁰⁶ עולה would denote “deceit” and Zophar’s words can be seen as a direct refutation to Job’s bold claim in 6:29 that there is no “deceit” (עולה) in him.

ix. The “fear” motif (11:15)

The “fear” motif recurs in this speech.³⁰⁷ Zophar assures Job of future security and deliverance from fear as long as Job fulfills all the conditions that Zophar has set out (11:15b). Zophar’s promise is an allusion to Job’s continual complaints of God’s terrors against him.³⁰⁸ Job has used the terrors of God as a personification of the destruction befallen him (6:4). He has complained that God has frightened him with visions and dreams (7:14). For Job, the divine terror also hinders him from having a fair trial with God in the setting of a lawsuit (9:34–35). In response to Job’s complaints, Zophar wants Job to understand that his fear originates not in the character of God, but the sinful nature of humans.

The use of the term גשא, “to lift up,” further strengthens the link between this speech and Job’s preceding one.³⁰⁹ Zophar tells Job that if he fulfills all the conditions required for his restoration, he will “lift up” (גשא) his face without blemish (מום)

³⁰⁶ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 175–76) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 209–10) also recognize this connection.

³⁰⁷ See also I.A.2 and II.A.3 in this chapter.

³⁰⁸ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210) and Balentine (*Job*, 190) also recognize the connection between 9:35 and 11:15 through the “fear” motif.

³⁰⁹ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 176), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210), Newsom (“*Job*,” 421), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 184), and Balentine (*Job*, 189) also recognize this connection.

(11:15a). The term מוֹם, which primarily denotes physical disfiguration,³¹⁰ is probably chosen to strengthen this connection. The figurative sense of this word carries “a moral connotation of ‘shame’ or ‘disgrace.’”³¹¹ Previously, Job complained that his shame and affliction have pronounced him guilty even if he is innocent (10:15). Even if he dares to “lift up” (נָשָׂא) his head, Job fears that God would hunt him down like a lion (10:16). Taken as such, Zophar’s expression in 11:15a can be interpreted as an indirect response to Job’s concern in 10:15–16.

x. אָמַל and שָׁכַח (11:16a)

The terms שָׁכַח, “to forget,” and אָמַל, “misery, trouble,” link this speech with Job’s previous speeches. After mentioning the promise of security and freedom from fear, Zophar declares to Job another blessing that would come as a result of his renunciation of evil: he will forget (שָׁכַח) his misery/trouble (אָמַל; 11:16a). Misery will no longer have power over him, as he will recall the terrible passing of floodwaters only as a calamity of the past (11:16b).³¹² Job has also used the verb שָׁכַח in his preceding speech. When he contemplated various options that will provide him with some measure of temporary relief, forgetting (שָׁכַח) his complaint and twisting his countenance from sadness to cheerfulness had been part of his thoughts (9:27). However, Job does not believe that by changing his response or expression would relieve his sufferings since God has already

³¹⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 421.

³¹¹ Balentine, *Job*, 189.

³¹² Seow (“Poetic Closure,” 442) notes that “the passing of waters always refers to life-threatening cosmos-endangering floods.”

decided that he is guilty (9:28). In reply, Zophar answers Job that he must forget his provocative complaint and God will cause him to forget his אַמל in return.³¹³

Earlier, Job has continually complained that misery (אַמל) is the lot of his life (3:10, 20; 7:3).³¹⁴ Eliphaz has already argued that trouble originates in humans (5:6–7).³¹⁵ In a more subtle way, Zophar agrees with Eliphaz on the causal relationship between sin and אַמל, and asserts that renunciation of evil would surely relieve the person from אַמל.³¹⁶

xi. The “darkness” motif (11:17)

The “darkness” motif draws a connection between this speech and Job’s preceding one.³¹⁷ Along with the blessings Zophar promises Job that he would receive, he adds, “Then your life will be brighter than the noonday, darkness³¹⁸ will be like morning” (11:17). In concluding his preceding speech, Job has once again expressed his desire to go to Sheol. According to Job, light is like darkness in Sheol (10:22). As a response, Zophar deliberately reverses the imagery used by Job and wants him to understand that darkness is not something Job should seek after.

³¹³ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 176) also recognizes this connection.

³¹⁴ See II.A.8 in this chapter.

³¹⁵ See I.A.4 in this chapter.

³¹⁶ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 176), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210), and Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 185) also recognize this connection.

³¹⁷ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 176–77), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 202), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 269), Newsom (“*Job*,” 422), and Balentine (*Job*, 192) also recognize this connection.

³¹⁸ I follow most in revocalizing תַּעֲפֹךְ, “to be dark,” to תַּעֲפֹךְ, “darkness.” So Dhorme, *Job*, 166; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 125; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 203; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 200 n.6; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 256 n.17.b.

xii. תקוה (11:18a, 20)

Job, Eliphaz, and Bildad all have mentioned תקוה, “hope,” although they do not share the same perception of it.³¹⁹ Near the end of Zophar’s present speech, he also uses this noun two times. On the one hand, Zophar promises Job that he will be confident (בטח) that there is hope (תקוה; 11:18a). On the other hand, he states that the only hope (תקוה) of the wicked will be despair (11:20).³²⁰ As expected, Zophar’s perspective on hope is in line with that of Eliphaz and Bildad. Like Eliphaz, who asserted that hope is reserved only for the pious (4:6; 5:16), Zophar claims that there is hope for Job as long as he renounces his wickedness. Like Bildad, who spoke of the fragile hope of the godless, which he compared to a spider web (8:13–14), Zophar ends his speech in pronouncing the unsubstantial nature of the hope of the wicked. Again, this is in stark contrast to Job’s conception of hope.³²¹

xiii. חפר and שכב (11:18b)

The verbs חפר, “to search for,” and שכב, “to rest, lie down” link this speech with Job’s previous speeches. Zophar promises Job that if he renounces his wickedness, he would be able to find a restful place to lie down (שכב) when he searches for (חפר) it (11:18b).³²² Previously, Job expressed his desire for death as those who “search for”

³¹⁹ See also I.A.3 and II.A.4 in this chapter.

³²⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 271.

³²¹ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 177–78, 180–81), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210–11), Pyeon (*You Have Not Spoken*, 185), and Balentine (*Job*, 192) also recognize this connection.

³²² Most consider the meaning of verb חפר as “search” to be problematic here. See Clines (*Job 1–20*, 256 n.18.b) for a discussion of various emendation options. Nevertheless, I follow Habel (*The Book of Job*, 203) in retaining the text in MT and see Zophar’s expression as an intentional allusion to 3:21.

(חֵפֶר) hidden treasure (3:21).³²³ In the same speech, he wished that he would die at birth so that he could “lie down” (שָׁכַב) in peace (3:13). He also further developed this idea and anticipated that he would soon “lie down” (שָׁכַב) in grave (7:21). At best, God would torment him with sleepless nights when he lies down (שָׁכַב) in the days of his life (7:4).³²⁴ In alluding to Job’s previous words that symbolize his desire for death as a relief, Zophar wants Job to understand that a restored relationship with God is the ultimate rest for which he should have searched.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator describes Job’s third friend, Zophar, as joining the conversation (11:1). The analysis in the above section reveals that Zophar frequently re-uses the words of Job in order to nullify his protesting language. Zophar begins with the conventional language of disputation in which the previous speaker’s words are criticized as pointless. Yet his sharp rhetoric further complicates the instabilities in the narrative. Eliphaz only implicitly suggested that he could not hold back his words because of Job’s opening provocative outcry. Similarly, Bildad only pronounced himself offended by Job’s destructive words. Zophar considers it a “moral duty” of anyone to shame Job by answering him (11:2–3).³²⁵ In adapting the forensic terminology Job used in his preceding speech, Zophar takes up Job’s legal challenge on behalf of God and derides Job’s futile endeavour to seek vindication with his superficial talk. Zophar argues that Job

³²³ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 178–79) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210) also recognize the connection between 3:21 and 11:18b through the verb חֵפֶר.

³²⁴ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 179–80) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 210) also recognize the connection between 3:21/7:4, 21 and 11:18b through the verb שָׁכַב.

³²⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 259.

has no intention to be silenced by his adversaries, but will keep on babbling until they are silenced by him. From Zophar's perspective, Job's earlier accusation of God's injustice represents Job's engagement in mockery against God. Zophar goes on to contrast Job's erroneous self-assessment with the profound knowledge God would reveal (11:4–6). He apparently quotes Job's words in order to refute them. Zophar's attributed citation is, however, a "misrepresentation of what Job has actually spoken."³²⁶ More importantly, these words reveal how Zophar has interpreted Job's previous speeches. Job's agonized cry is merely "a doctrine of grief" to Zophar.³²⁷ At this point, the authorial audience is compelled to respond to the thematic components of the character Zophar. What kind of person does Zophar typify? Clines aptly likens Zophar to "the professional theologian who uses human misery as the raw data for academic point-scoring."³²⁸

As Zophar continues, he puts his focus on the mystery of God's wisdom. The exceeding wisdom of God should remind Job of divine mercy instead of hostility. The manifestation of God's mercy is best recognized in the fact that God has overlooked part of Job's iniquity (v. 6). For the first time, Job is explicitly accused of sin by one of his friends.³²⁹ Zophar uses the vastness of the cosmos as a metaphor to reinforce his claim that God's wisdom far exceeds human comprehension (11:7–9). The implication of Zophar's comparison is that God's surpassing knowledge is able to identify evil unmistakably (11:10–11).³³⁰ In adopting the vocabulary of Job's complaint against

³²⁶ Balentine, *Job*, 184.

³²⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 185. So Clines, *Job 1–20*, 260; Newsom, "Job," 419.

³²⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 260.

³²⁹ Carmy, "Zophar's First Speech," 53.

³³⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 264.

God's irrational and violent behaviour toward himself, Zophar presents another image in which God uses proper procedures to make a legal judgement on the guilty (v. 10). He ends this strophe with a proverbial saying, mocking the foolishness and futility of Job's mission to contend with God (11:12).

Zophar turns next to assure Job of his future restoration if he will reorient his entire person to God and reform his moral behaviour (11:13–14). The four conditions that Zophar specifies are “directing his heart” toward God, “spreading out his palms to God” in prayer, “putting away wrongdoing from his hand,” and “letting no deceit (עוֹלָה) reside in his tent.” The last condition can be seen as a direct refutation of Job's earlier claim that there is no deceit (עוֹלָה) in him (6:29). Clines rightly notes that Zophar uses the language of wisdom tradition to counsel Job regarding remedy of sin: “Sin is not something to be covered up or cleansed or forgiven, but to be avoided, departed from, disassociated from.”³³¹ Zophar's opinion about the appropriate behaviour in suffering further develops the tensions in the narrative. Although Job has been addressing God directly, Zophar presumably does not consider Job's words as legitimate prayer.³³² The authorial audience is induced to negotiate the validity of the theological tradition endorsed by Zophar.

If Job complies with the above criteria, according to Zophar, the disgrace and troubles Job has undergone will no longer have power over him, and Job will experience a blessed and secure future (11:15–19). Zophar alludes to several words and motifs that

³³¹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 268. See also, Boda, *Severe Mercy*, 359–76. In concluding his survey of the concept of sin and its remedy in Proverbs 1–9, Boda writes, “*forgiveness is strikingly absent* from this vision of wisdom in Proverbs 1–9. Although the wisdom teachers constantly exhort the audience to move from folly to wisdom, the wise in Proverbs 1–9 never speak about remedying past folly and failure” (374; italics his). Boda, however, does not draw the same conclusion for the book of Job.

³³² Newsom (“Job,” 398) also notes that “Job does not use conventional forms of prayer or compose his emotions into those traditionally shaped by psalmic prayers.”

Job has used in his ongoing protestation. “Shame” and “fear,” two of the concepts that Job has employed in his complaint, will no longer be his concern. God will also cause Job to forget his misery, a reminder that Job should also forget his complaint. Moreover, the restored life will include the distancing from darkness, a concept that Job has used to express his desire. For Job, the words *שָׁכַב*, “to rest,” and *חָפַר*, “to search for,” are associated with his desire to die in his opening lament. For Zophar, the same terms refer to the ultimate security that Job will obtain. Unlike the imaginary hope that Job has sought in his speeches, this depiction of prosperous future should be his genuine hope.

Zophar concludes his speech with the remark of the loss of security and hope of the wicked (11:20). On the surface, his final word resembles Bildad’s concluding promise about the destruction of Job’s enemies (cf. 8:22). Whereas Bildad uses the designation “the wicked” in parallelism with “your enemies” to denote Job’s opponents, Zophar does not identify “the wicked” explicitly with Job’s enemies. It is certainly true that the enemies of the lamenter in Psalms are at times identified as the wicked.³³³ Without such an explicit context, the final word of Zophar is intentionally ambiguous. It can be a word of warning as much as a word of assurance.

In terms of narrative progression, the authorial audience should not fail to notice the gradual intensification of the conflict between Job and his friends. Whereas both Eliphaz and Bildad conclude their speeches with absolute and unequivocal assurance of Job’s good end (5:17–26; 8:19–22), Zophar makes Job’s prospect secure and blessed future conditional and qualified (11:13–20).³³⁴

³³³ Westermann, *Structure*, 85.

³³⁴ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 120.

VI. Job's Third Response (Job 12–14)

A. Allusion Analysis

As before, the narrator uses the phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to introduce Job's present response. The opening criticism of Job in 12:2–3 regarding the topic of *חכמה*, “wisdom,” and *לבב*, “understanding,” is clearly a response to Zophar's claim of possession of the “wisdom” of God. Moreover, several terms and motifs such as *צדיק*, “in the right”; *חרש*, “to silence”; *שחק*, “laughingstock,” that Zophar uses to begin his speech, are picked up by Job in this present speech. Consequently, one should look into Zophar's speech for more possible allusions. I suggest that *עמק*, “deep”; *עולה*, “deceit,” and *נשא* + *פנה*, “to lift up the face,” are also points of contact between this speech and Zophar's preceding one.

Besides these, the “doxology” genre and the “hope” (*תקוה*) motif, both of which have been used earlier to form verbal connections, reappear in this speech. Finally, the rare nouns *יונקת*, “fresh shoots,” and *שרש*, “roots,” occur together in this speech as well as in Bildad's previous speech. All these clues invite further exploration for possible allusions.

1. The “wisdom” motif (12:2; 13:5)

The “wisdom” motif draws a connection between this speech and Zophar's preceding one.³³⁵ Job begins his speech with the nouns *חכמה*, “wisdom,” and *לבב*, “understanding,” both of which come from the wisdom tradition. He mocks his friends as

³³⁵ Course (*Speech and Response*, 75–76) also recognizes the connection between the two speeches through the roots *חכם* and *לבב*. Habel (*The Book of Job*, 218), Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 234), and Newsom (“Job,” 426) note the connection between through the noun *חכמה*, while Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 206) and Balentine (*Job*, 199) note the connection between 11:12 and 12:3 through the root *לבב*.

“people with whom wisdom (חכמה) will die” and refutes their exclusive claim to the possession of understanding (לִב; 12:2–3).³³⁶ Job reiterates his criticism of the lack of wisdom of his friends in 13:5 and mocks that for them to remain utterly silent would be the best way to exhibit wisdom (חכמה). In the preceding speech, Zophar claims to possess the secrets of wisdom (חכמה) about Job’s guilt as well as God’s lenient treatment toward him (11:6). He also likens Job to a wild ass so as to mock him for his lack of understanding (*nip’al* of לִב; 11:12). In response to Zophar’s bold claim, Job asserts that there is no need to appeal to special revelation in order to know how God (mis)manages the order of the world, a topic that Job expounds in 12:14–25.

2. שחַק (12:4)

The noun שחַק / שחוק, “laughingstock,” constitutes a semantic correspondence between this speech and Zophar’s preceding one.³³⁷ Job uses this term two times to describe how he is being perceived by his friends (12:4). Course rightly points out that “the root *šḥq* is occasionally used with the root *l’g* as a word pair (Pss 2:4; 59:9; Prov 1:26; and 2 Chron 30:10).”³³⁸ As Zophar has accused Job of engaging in mockery (לַעַג) in 11:3, Job’s self-derision as a “laughingstock” (שחַק) echoes this charge but shifts the blame to his friends. His three friends, who have treated Job as a “laughingstock,” are the ones guilty of “mockery.”

³³⁶ I follow Davies (“Job XII 2,” 670–71) and take the second line as “a paratactic relative clause” of the first line of 12:2. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 213; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 278–79 n.12.2a.

³³⁷ Course (*Speech and Response*, 77) also recognizes this connection.

³³⁸ Course, *Speech and Response*, 77.

3. צדיק and תמים (12:4)

When Job counters the arguments of his friends, he describes how he is perceived in their eyes with stock phrases such as “a laughingstock to his friends” and “one who would call upon Eloah and he answers him” (12:4).³³⁹ Some believe that the phrase “a just (צדיק) and perfect (תמים) one” also belongs to one of these phrases.³⁴⁰ Taken as such, it would be another deriding epithet used by his friends for mocking Job’s false piety. Nevertheless, it is equally possible to understand the phrase as Job’s self-declaration of moral blamelessness.³⁴¹ Perhaps it makes little difference in taking the verse in either way. Zophar, at the beginning of the preceding speech, refutes Job’s eloquence as evidence that he is necessarily in the right (צדק; 11:2).³⁴² Job’s reference to the term צדיק may hearken back to Zophar’s questioning of Job’s claim.³⁴³ More likely, the author uses the two terms צדיק and תמים together to remind the audience of the surpassing virtues of Job as presented in the prologue (1:1, 8; 2:3).³⁴⁴

³³⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 426. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 136), however, understands the term “his friend” as “God’s friend,” an epithet applied to the three friends. He also takes the phrases “I who called upon God and was answered” and “a just and perfect one” as two further epithets applied to the friends. His argument is not convincing.

³⁴⁰ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 218; Course, *Speech and Response*, 77; Newsom, “Job,” 426.

³⁴¹ So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 207; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 290.

³⁴² See V.A.2.ii in this chapter.

³⁴³ Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken*, 202.

³⁴⁴ Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 207), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 290), Course (*Speech and Response*, 77–78), and Balentine (*Job*, 200) also recognize this connection.

4. The “doxology” genre (12:13–25)

In his previous speech (9:4–10), Job has already parodied the doxology genre, which is the religious language suggested by Eliphaz to approach God (cf. 5:9–16).³⁴⁵ In this speech, Job again offers a satirical version of praise to disclose the destructive intent of God’s involvement in sustaining the natural, social, political, and religious order of the world.³⁴⁶ There are a few instances that show Job’s intentional echo of Eliphaz’s model doxology in 5:9–16.³⁴⁷ For example, to Eliphaz, rainwater is the means through which God sustains nature (5:10). Nevertheless, to Job, God withholds and pours out rainwater to cause destructive phenomena such as drought and flood respectively (12:15).³⁴⁸ Moreover, Eliphaz earlier claimed that God would cause the crafty caught in their own wiles (5:13). For Eliphaz, the devious meet with darkness (חשך) in the daytime and grope (משש) at noonday as in the night (5:14). In this speech, however, Job re-uses the terms משש and חשך in the same strophe: “They [the leaders] grope (משש) in darkness (חשך) without light; he makes them stagger like a drunkard” (12:25).³⁴⁹ For Job, however, those who are appointed to lead with wisdom and clear judgment are the ones left deranged and disoriented (12:25).³⁵⁰

³⁴⁵ See IV.A.3 in this chapter.

³⁴⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 220.

³⁴⁷ Balentine (*Job*, 205) notes, “In one sense, his [Job’s] praise continues to parody what the friends urge on him.” See also, Newsom, “Job,” 429.

³⁴⁸ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 221; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 299.

³⁴⁹ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 222; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 235.

³⁵⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 222.

5. עמק (12:22)

The adjective עמק, “deep,” in various forms, appears 17 times in the Hebrew Bible, two times in Job. The term draws a connection between this speech and Zophar’s preceding one.³⁵¹ In the present speech, Job says of God, “He uncovers the ‘hidden things’ (עמקות) out of darkness, and brings shadow of death to light” (12:22). Since the abstract content of the verse does not fit well into the list of concrete examples of God’s destructive behaviour mentioned in the context (12:14–21), some choose to delete or omit it.³⁵² A close look at the wording suggests that it may be seen as a response to the speech of his friend. Zophar has expressed his wish that God would reveal the secrets (תעלמות) of wisdom to Job (11:6). He also challenges Job’s ability for finding out the mystery of God, which is more “deep” (עמקה) than Sheol (11:7–8). In response, Job argues that he knows God’s deep wisdom since God himself uncovers it out of darkness. God’s chaos-creating acts in the world are clear evidence that God brings shadow of death to light.³⁵³

6. חרש (13:5, 13, 19)

The verb חרש, “to silence” draws a connection between this speech and Zophar’s preceding one.³⁵⁴ This term seems to play an important role in ch. 13. It appears three times, the first two of which apply to the friends (vv. 5, 13) while the third occurrence applies to Job himself (v. 19). For Job, his friends could best exhibit their wisdom by keeping silent (חרש; v. 5). According to Prov. 17:28, even fools who keep silent are

³⁵¹ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 302) also recognizes this connection.

³⁵² See, e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 178–79; Pope, *Job*, 94.

³⁵³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 302; so Balentine, *Job*, 207.

³⁵⁴ Course (*Speech and Response*, 82–83) also recognizes the connection.

considered wise. If this is the wisdom tradition behind Job's barb, he would be likening his friends to fools.³⁵⁵ A few lines down, Job describes the rhetoric of his friend as clay and ashes, images of what can be easily shattered completely (v. 12).³⁵⁶ He requests that his friends keep silent (חרש) so that he might speak (v. 13). In the preceding speech, Zophar has criticized Job for his attempt to silence (חרש) Eliphaz and Bildad with his babbling (11:3).³⁵⁷ In this speech, Job willingly accepts Zophar's accusation but argues that it is for their own sake that they should keep silent because their speeches expose their folly. As his friends are unable to teach him so that he may be silent (חרש; cf. 6:24), Job turns to present his case to God, his ultimate adversary. His wish is that he would eventually be silent (חרש) and die if anyone, including God, dares to accept the legal challenge (v. 19).³⁵⁸

7. עולה (13:7)

The noun עולה draws a connection between this speech and Zophar's preceding one.³⁵⁹ In fact, "false speech" is one of the central motifs concerning which Job addresses to his friends. Job labels his friends as "smeared of falsehood (שקר)" (13:4).³⁶⁰ He also accuses the friends of speaking deceit (עולה) and treachery (רמיה) for God (13:7). Since Job uses the term רבנות, "pleadings," to elicit the legal metaphor again in 13:6, it follows

³⁵⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 223.

³⁵⁶ Balentine, "Job," 209.

³⁵⁷ See V.A.2.iii in this chapter.

³⁵⁸ A similar formula of challenge as in 13:19a is used in Isa 50:8 to express the speaker's confidence (Habel, *The Book of Job*, 231). Cf. Clines, *Job 1–20*, 315.

³⁵⁹ See also II.A.7 and V.A.2.viii in this chapter.

³⁶⁰ Hays ("Friends," 394–99) translates טפלי שקר as "blatherers of lies."

naturally that his accusation that the friends have spoken deceit and treachery for God amounts to a charge for perjury in a trial.³⁶¹ Zophar had previously asked Job to keep עולה away from his tent (11:14). In return, Job argues that his friends, not him, are the real liars. Since bearing false witness is a serious crime (Deut 19:16–19), Job argues that the friends are thus subject to God’s terror (13:9–11).³⁶²

8. פנה + נשא (13:8, 10)

The expression פנה + נשא (literally, “to lift up the face”) can possess the “sign of good conscience” or can connote “show partiality (towards),” depending on the context.³⁶³ Job uses it two times in this speech to describe his friends’ favourable partiality toward God in a legal proceeding (13:8, 10).³⁶⁴ Earlier, Zophar has promised Job that he would be able to “lift up his face” without shame after he is restored by God (11:15).³⁶⁵ Job adopts this idiom and uses it with a twist. From his perspective, he cannot “lift up the face of” himself because the friends continue to “lift up the face of” God.

³⁶¹ Newsom, “Job,” 433.

³⁶² Newsom, “Job,” 433–34.

³⁶³ BDB (670) cites 1 Sam 2:22 and Job 11:15 as support for the former sense and Deut 10:17; Lev 19:15; Mal 2:9; Job 13:8, 10; 34:19; Prov 18:5; Ps 82:2 as support for the latter sense. See also Gruber, “Many Faces,” 252–60. Gruber, however, claims that the phrase תשא פניך ממום in Job 11:15 means “you will disregard shortcoming” (259).

³⁶⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 228–29.

³⁶⁵ See V.A.2.ix in this chapter.

9. The “hope” motif (13:15; 14:7, 19)

All speakers in the debate thus far have talked about “hope” (תקוה).³⁶⁶ Job continues this theme in this speech in various contexts.³⁶⁷ First, he insists on arguing his case before God even if God will kill him and he does not have hope (יחל; 13:15).³⁶⁸ Job uses the negative particle לא, with יחל, a synonym of קוה, cognate with תקוה, to intensify his certainty that God will slay him.³⁶⁹ Second, in his direct address to God, Job applies the concept of “hope” to a personified tree and states that there is “hope” (תקוה) for a tree because it can regenerate after it has been cut down (14:7–9). This is in stark contrast to the hopelessness of human beings. When a human dies, the person will be forever gone (14:10–12). Third, Job accuses God directly face-to-face that it is God who destroys the “hope” (תקוה) of mortals (14:19). If “hope” is the “hidden capacity to face disaster with confidence,” as Habel puts it,³⁷⁰ the gap between Job’s and the friends’ conception of “hope” is further widened. Whereas the friends conceive “hope as the horizon of a future open to change” (5:16; 11:18), Job “raises the objection that death puts an end to hope and so renders talk about hope empty.”³⁷¹ Moreover, the friends have always been

³⁶⁶ For the development of the narrative through the “hope” motif, see I.A.3, II.A.5, and V.A.12 in this chapter.

³⁶⁷ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 241, 244), Beuken (“Job’s Imprecation,” 76), and Newsom (“Job,” 444–45) also recognize the connection between this speech and the previous dialogue through the “hope” motif.

³⁶⁸ The textual problem in 13:15 is famous. The *kethiv* has לא, “not,” whereas the *qere* has לו, “in him.” I have adopted the *kethiv* reading since it is more consistent with the contents of Job’s previous speeches. His “salvation” in v. 16a thus refers to his self-confidence that he has been true to his conviction. However, the *qere* reading is also defensible if Job’s “hope” and “salvation” refer to his belief “that he will be vindicated, since his integrity will be attested by the very fact of his daring to come before God (v. 16b)” (Newsom, “Job,” 435.) While Habel (*The Book of Job*, 230) and Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 237) independently adopt the *kethiv* reading, they interpret יחל as “wait.”

³⁶⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 435.

³⁷⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 241.

³⁷¹ Newsom, “Job,” 444.

arguing that only the wicked are hopeless (8:13; 11:20), Job refutes this claim and states the bare fact that the same despairing fate in fact applies to every mortal.

10. יונקת and שרש (14:7–8)

The noun יונקת, “fresh shoot,” appears six times in the Hebrew Bible, three times in Job. Another noun שרש, “roots,” occurs 33 times in the Hebrew Bible, nine times in Job. Both nouns contribute to the tree imagery that Job uses to contrast the hopeless fate of mortals. In addressing his complaint to God, Job points out that fresh shoots (יונקת) may grow from a cut-off tree as long as the dry roots (שרש) are able to approach water (14:7–9). The audience should not find the plant imagery foreign. Bildad had previously distinguished between the godless, whose hope perishes, like the water-deprived plant (8:11–13), and the pious, whose shoots (יונקת) will grow and whose roots (שרש) are “able to ‘look within the stone,’ presumably to find water” (8:16–17).³⁷² Job shrewdly adapts Bildad’s imagery but rejects the implication suggested by Bildad. To him, plants and humans are different. Whereas plants can regenerate, even when they are cut down, and even when their roots grow old and die, human beings die and cannot come back to life.³⁷³

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (12:1), Job speaks up again. The analysis in the above section reveals that Job frequently re-uses the words of the friends, and Zophar

³⁷² Seow, “Hope in Two Keys,” 502. See also III.B in this chapter.

³⁷³ Seow, “Hope in Two Keys,” 502.

in particular, in order to refute their arguments or criticize their characters. Job's initial address to his three friends is framed in an *inclusio* in which he claims that his understanding is not inferior to theirs' (12:2–3; 13:1–2).³⁷⁴ In the form of a rhetorical question (v. 3c), he refutes Zophar's bold claim that one needs to appeal to the secrets of wisdom in order to figure out how God operates the world (cf. 11:6). Instead of being a person who mocks (cf. 11:3), Job claims that he is a victim of mockery (12:4). From his own experience as a laughingstock mocked by the complacent (12:5) and the observation that the wicked are untouched by calamity (12:6), Job learns wisdom and understanding, which are comparable to his friends'.³⁷⁵ He continues to argue that if his friends are willing to examine consciously the created order, then the natural world itself will teach them what they have failed to grasp (12:7–12).³⁷⁶ The major lesson that they will learn is that every living creature is indeed in the hand of YHWH (vv. 9b–10). This knowledge leads Job to subvert Eliphaz's hymn of praise (cf. 5:9–16) and turn it into an anti-doxology that discloses the destructive intent of God's involvement in sustaining the natural, social, political, and religious order of the world (12:13–25). According to Job, the "deep" wisdom of God that Zophar mentions (cf. 11:6) is clearly revealed through God's own chaos-creating acts in the world (12:22).

³⁷⁴ Ho, "Unmarked Attributed Quotations," 709.

³⁷⁵ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 289) rightly argues that 12:4–6 "present the *reason* why Job is 'not inferior' in wisdom to his friend (v 2b)" (italics his).

³⁷⁶ Some understand 12:7–12 or a portion of it as unmarked attributed quotations. So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 128; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 212; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 275; Balentine, *Job*, 201–4. It is, however, preferable to read the words as representing the sentiment of Job (Ho, "Unmarked Attributed Quotations," 708–9).

Regarding the instabilities in the narrative, the conflict between Job and his friends is further intensified by Job's claim of the superiority of his wisdom over his friends'. As Clines astutely observes,

[Job] does not here speak of his feelings about [the friends] (as in 6:14, 20), but contrasts himself with them on the intellectual plane ... he has abandoned the idea of them as friends and he is treating them as conversation partners, colleagues at a theological seminar.³⁷⁷

Beginning with 13:3, the tonality of Job's speech alters sharply. Job concedes his intention to bring his friends to silence, an accusation that Zophar has previously made of him (cf. 11:3). However, he argues that since their speeches expose their folly, to keep silent would be for their own good (13:4–5). Job picks up the legal metaphor, which he left off at his preceding speech, to address his friends in 13:6–19. He re-uses the term עולה and the idiom נשא + פנה, which Zophar used earlier, to accuse them of bearing false witnesses on God's behalf and showing partiality toward God (vv. 7–8). Job also warns them of the horrific divine rebuke awaiting them (vv. 9–11). As he continues, he admonishes his friends once again to be silent and to listen carefully to his words (vv. 13, 17). He contemplates the urgency of bringing his lawsuit before God and expresses his resolve to do so (vv. 13–19).

In the next strophe (13:20–28), Job initiates his direct address to God.³⁷⁸ His strategy is first “to negotiate pretrial preliminaries with God” (vv. 20–21).³⁷⁹ Subsequently, he brings his case to God as though a legal proceeding were in fact under way (vv. 22–23). Job's direct legal challenge to God again complicates the instabilities in

³⁷⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 338.

³⁷⁸ As Newsom (“Job,” 438) rightly observes, “Each of his [Job's] three speeches in the first cycle concludes with an extended address to God (7:7–21; 10:2–22; 13:20–14:22).”

³⁷⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 231.

the narrative. This time the conflict between Job and God is intensified. Whereas Job only speaks of God in the third person in his imaginary courtroom in his preceding speech (chs. 9–10), in this speech “he unequivocally calls on God to provide the evidence on which God would justify his severity toward him.”³⁸⁰ Almost as soon as Job has begun to imagine speaking to God directly in the courtroom, however, he switches back to confront God with the disproportionate divine treatment of him (vv. 24–28).³⁸¹

Job turns next to invite God to consider the ephemerality and trouble of human life in general (14:1–6).³⁸² In the rest of his speech, “Job struggles with the tension between mortality and hope.”³⁸³ Adapting Bildad’s plant imagery, Job contrasts the hope of a tree with the hopelessness of mortals (14:7–12). Whereas plants can regenerate, even when they are cut down, and even when their roots grow old and die, human beings die and cannot come back to life. For Job, the finality of human death makes the friends’ enthusiastic discussion of the topic of hope futile. Job turns next to explore the possibility of Sheol as a place for hope (14:13–17).³⁸⁴ However, in reality God dashes the hope of every human being, just as the relentless erosion of water can destroy the most solid and resilient objects of nature (14:18–19).³⁸⁵ Job concludes his speech with the despairing note about the utter isolation accompanying death (14:20–22).³⁸⁶

³⁸⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 337.

³⁸¹ Newsom, “Job,” 424.

³⁸² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 239.

³⁸³ Newsom, “Job,” 424.

³⁸⁴ Cf. Crenshaw (“Flirting,” 6–13, 201–3), who argues that Job’s words in 14:13–17 are far more bitter than what is conventionally understood.

³⁸⁵ Balentine, *Job*, 221.

³⁸⁶ Newsom (“Job,” 443) states, “Job’s concluding images of death are governed by the figure of separation.”

With this longest speech uttered thus far, the author concludes the first cycle of verbal interchange between Job and his three friends. The major tensions still surround the sentiment of Job's provocative language about and to God. Job has proceeded from lament about his personal plight to direct accusation against God's violent and disproportionate treatments on him. His speeches have almost violated all the religious conventions attested elsewhere in the Hebrew canon. Although at time Job uses fragments of lament to express his anguish and to file his complaint, his intention is rather to undermine the underlying conviction of this genre. Whereas a typical lament is often used to motivate God to rectify the lamenter's situation,³⁸⁷ the version of lament that Job utters always points in the direction of death. On the other hand, the author clearly imposed his negative ethical judgments on Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar through his skilful employment of dramatic irony. The sharp contrast between Job and his friends could be a guidance on the part of the author to the authorial audience that the empathy of the author sides with Job.³⁸⁸ The reference to the blamelessness of Job in 12:4, which is an allusion to the prologue, reinforces this understanding.

VII. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the internal quotations to preceding materials in each of the speeches in the first cycle of dialogue. I have also examined the impact of the these internal quotations on the reading experience of the narrative.

³⁸⁷ Brueggemann, *Message*, 54.

³⁸⁸ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 52.

In his first speech (ch. 4–5), Eliphaz tells Job that no one has lifted up a word (דבר) to Job because he could not have bore it if anyone had done so (4:2). At the end of the prologue, the narrator says that no one spoke (דבר) a word (דבר) to Job for seven days (2:13). The verbal connection between 4:2 and 2:13 implies that the nature of the words Eliphaz plans to offer is not consolatory but confrontational. The words יראה (“fear”), תם (“blameless”), and ישר (“upright”) that Eliphaz utters in 4:6–7 also allude to the prologue (1:1, 8; 2:3). The allusion draws the audience’s attention to the role that Eliphaz plays in the story. He suggests to Job that his own piety should be the source of his confidence and hope.

Eliphaz appears to respond to Job indirectly by alluding to the words that Job had used. Whereas Job used the verb קוה (“hope”) subversively to refer to his impossible wish that the light in the day of his birth be frustrated, Eliphaz re-uses תקוה, cognate with קוה, two times (4:6; 5:16) in a positive sense. Whereas Job characterized life in its totality with עמל (“toil, trouble”; 3:10, 20), Eliphaz associates עמל with און, thus bringing human iniquity into a causal relationship with suffering (4:8; 5:6–7). Whereas Job spoke of his שאגה (“groans”), Eliphaz claims that שאגה (“the roar”) of the lion, a metaphor for the evildoers, is put to an end (4:10). Whereas Job described Sheol as a resting place where the prisoners would not hear the voice (קול) of the taskmaster, both human and divine (3:18), Eliphaz attempts to counter Job’s bitter comment by highlighting the voice (קול) as a source of revelation (4:16). Whereas Job mentioned that the dread (פחד) that he dreaded (פחד) had come to him (3:25a), Eliphaz reports that a “dread” (פחד) has come to him and the multitude of his bones “dreaded” or “trembled” (פחד; 4:14). The implication

is that Job should reconsider his dreadful experience not as a reason for despair but an opportunity to hear a message from the divine.

Moreover, Eliphaz re-contextualizes a few motifs in Job's preceding lament in order to respond to Job. Eliphaz picks up the "death" motif, which Job had used extensively in his opening lament, and points to the fact that death should never be a favourable option (4:21; 5:20, 26). Eliphaz also responds to Job through re-using the "cursing" motif. Eliphaz appears to have perceived Job's preceding curse of his day of birth as a desperate attack on the created order. In response, he curses the dwelling of the fool in order to speed up the operation of the retributive system, which is intrinsic to the moral order of the world (5:3). Whereas Job attempted to invoke a variety of "darkening" agents to black out the day of his birth, Eliphaz criticizes Job by comparing him to the sons of Resheph who exalt darkness (5:7).

Job, in his first response, also appears to allude to the words of Eliphaz in order to counter his arguments. Whereas Eliphaz used the word כַּעַשׁ to characterize the fools who let their negative emotions exercise control over them (5:2), Job applies the same term to himself (6:2), thus rejecting the wisdom tradition that Eliphaz endorses. Whereas Eliphaz reminded Job of the educational dimension of his words he used to administer to others in distress (4:3–4), Job picks up this "speech" motif (6:2–3, 25–26, 28–30) and argues that honesty should be a core ingredient in proper speech. Whereas Eliphaz used the "fear" motif in an ambiguous fashion (4:6), Job re-uses this motif to justify his own fear in light of the hostile acts of God (6:4; 7:14) and to criticize the character of Eliphaz and the other two friends (6:14, 21). Whereas Eliphaz used the expression "injustice (עוֹלָה)" shuts

her mouth” (5:16) to conclude his model doxology, Job re-uses the term עֹלָה to reaffirm his conviction that he has been speaking the truth, not deceit (עֹלָה), about God (6:29, 30).

Whereas Eliphaz used the word תְּקוּהָה (“hope”) to refer to a prosperous future (4:6) or a reversal of fortune (5:16), Job re-uses the same term to express his wish to be crushed by God (6:9). The implication seems to be that what the future is expected to bring cannot compensate for the present misery of existence. Similarly, whereas Eliphaz used the “death” motif to refer to an undesirable outcome, Job continues to use this motif in a subversive sense and argues that “death” is what he desires (6:9; 7:7–10, 15). Moreover, whereas Eliphaz claimed that trouble (עָמַל) does not spring from the ground but is begotten by humans (5:6–7), Job rejects Eliphaz’s argument and declares that he is not an originator of but an heir to “trouble,” which is initiated by the deity (7:3).

In addition, the author also uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job speaks of his desire to seek “consolation” (6:10; 7:13). In raising the topic of consolation through the mouth of Job, the author reminds the authorial audience of the failure of Eliphaz and the other two friends, who are supposed to comfort and console Job (2:11). The verb חָטָא is another term that establishes a link between Job’s first response (ch. 6–7) and the prologue. In contrasting Job’s nonchalant use of חָטָא (7:20) and the narrator’s preoccupation with חָטָא (1:22; 2:10), the author forces the authorial audience to re-evaluate the unimportance of the concept of sin in this story.

In his first speech (ch. 8), Bildad also alludes to Job’s previous words to criticize him and nullify his claims. Whereas Job complained that the friends have treated his words as insignificant as mere wind (רוּחַ; 6:26), Bildad picks up this “speech” motif and describes Job’s words as a “mighty wind” (רוּחַ כְּבִיר), which is destructive (8:2). Whereas

Job insisted on his own rightness (צדק) in speech (6:29), Bildad regards Job's claim as an implicit charge against God of perverting the right (צדק; 8:3). The implication is that Bildad has transformed Job's personal declaration and protestation into his challenge against the foundational way to speak about the character of God. Moreover, whereas Job used the terms חטא and פשע playfully in the context of a taunt to God (7:20–21), Bildad takes the concepts seriously and suggests that Job's sons could have sinned (חטא) against God and their transgression (פשע) has resulted in their tragic death (8:4). Whereas Job used the term צל to refer to the misery of human existence (7:2), Bildad re-uses the word as a metaphor for the transitoriness of human life. The implication is that every mortal needs to be humbled because one can only acquire limited knowledge during an ephemeral lifespan.

In addition, the author also uses the words of Bildad to allude to the prologue. Bildad uses the term ישר, “upright,” to describe one of the prerequisites for Job's restoration (8:6) and the term תם, “the blameless,” to identify the category of people whom God does not reject (8:20). Both terms are, however, used to denote the virtues of Job in the prologue. The dramatic irony set up by these allusions indicates that the author judges Bildad in a negative light.

Job, in his second response (chs. 9–10), also alludes to the words of Bildad and Eliphaz in order to refute their arguments. Job re-uses the root צדק, which both Eliphaz and Bildad had used (4:17; 8:3) independently in an important way, to refer to his own innocence in the legal sense (9:2, 15, 20; 10:15). Whereas Eliphaz used the “divine anger” motif to underscore God's motivation to maintain the just ordering of the world (4:9), Job re-uses the same motif to illustrate the unfathomable nature of God's

destructive activities against him. Whereas Eliphaz used the “doxology” genre to praise God’s majestic power (5:9–16), Job mimics this genre to underscore God’s incomprehensibility in his suffering (9:4–10). Whereas Eliphaz used the verb **הִלֵּל** to refer to his revelation (4:15), Job re-uses the same verb to argue that God only reveals to him that he snatches things away at will (9:11–12). Whereas Eliphaz used the destiny of lions as an object lesson to teach Job that unforeseeable calamity can strike the wicked at any moment (4:10–11), Job uses the image of lions to complain that God has been behaving like his enemy, hunting him down relentlessly for no reason (10:16).

Job alludes not only to the words of Eliphaz but also to those of Bildad. Whereas Bildad urged Job to implore favour (**חֲנֹן**) from God (8:5), Job adopts Bildad’s recommendation in a sarcastic fashion (9:15). From Job’s perspective, **חֲנֹן** is the only thing that he will do, but not according to his own will. Whereas Bildad used the word **טָהַר** (“pure”) as one of the conditions that Job must fulfill in order to be restored by God (8:6), Job uses the verb **זָכַךְ**, cognate with **זָךְ**, in the context of an imaginary situation where he purifies (**זָכַךְ**) his hands with lye only to be plunged into a pit by God (9:30–31).

In addition, the author also uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job claims that God increases his wounds for nothing (**חֲנָם**; 9:17). In the prologue, the term **חֲנָם** marks the irony of Job’s misfortune (1:9; 2:3). The allusion reveals that it is divine justice, not human fidelity, which must be put on trial. The term **תָּם**, “blameless,” is another term that establishes a connection between Job’s second response (chs. 9–10) and the prologue. In comparing Job’s self-declaration of being **תָּם** (9:20–21) with the characterization of Job in the prologue (1:1, 8: 2:3), the authorial audience realizes that Job actually knows himself more than his friends know him. Similarly, Job accuses God

of destroying (בלע) him (10:8). This reminds the audience of God's acknowledgement that he was incited by the satan to destroy (בלע) Job for nothing in the prologue (2:3). This allusion again underscores that Job is closer to the truth than his friends are. The term שמר is yet another term that links Job's words in chs. 9–10 to the prologue. Job uses this term and the "divine watching" motif to contrast God's past providence to him and God's present treatment of him (10:12, 13–14). The term שמר reminds the audience of God's ironic remark about keeping Job's life during the test (2:6).

In the first cycle of dialogue, Zophar is the only person who cites from another speaker. The words that Zophar attributes to Job are "My teaching (לקח) is pure, and I am clean in your (God's) sight" (11:4). This distorted citation reveals that from the agonized speeches uttered by a friend who is undergoing extreme tragedy, all Zophar can hear is theology.

In addition to the above attributed citation, Zophar also alludes to Job's previous words to criticize him and nullify his claims. Whereas Job used the verb אנה ("answer") exclusively in the forensic sense in his preceding response (9:3, 14, 15, 16, 32), Zophar picks up Job's judicial language and is prepared to prove Job's words to be in the wrong (11:2). In the same vein, whereas Job used the word צדק ("be innocent") repeatedly in the judicial sense to declare his own innocence on four occasions (9:2, 15, 20; 10:15), Zophar derides Job's futile endeavour to seek vindication (צדק) with his superficial talk (11:2b).

Whereas Job taunted the friends to teach him where he had erred so that he could be silent (*hip'il* of חרש; 6:24), Zophar uncovers Job's camouflage behind his taunt by rebuking him for attempting to reduce Eliphaz and Bildad to silence (*hip'il* of חרש) with his babbling (11:3). Whereas Job accused God of mocking (לאג) the despair of the

innocent victims in tragedies (9:23), Zophar regards Job's accusation of God's injustice as evidence of Job's engagement in mockery against God (11:3). Whereas Job used the term חכם ("wise") to refer to the divine attribute in an ironic sense (9:4), Zophar speaks of God's חכמה ("wisdom") in order to reverse Job's mental image from divine hostility to God's mercy (11:6). Whereas Job used the cluster of terms including חלף ("pass by"), מי ישיבנו ("who can restrain him"), ראה ("see"), and בון ("discern") to underscore God's irrational and violent behaviour (9:11–12), Zophar adopts the same cluster of terms to explicate God's proper legal procedures for convicting the guilty (11:10–11).

Whereas Job used the analogy of the wild ass (פרא) to validate his provocative speech (6:5), Zophar uses the image of the wild ass to mock the foolishness and futility of Job's mission to contend with God (11:12). Whereas Job claimed that there is no "deceit" (עולה) in him (6:29–30), Zophar rejects his claims by exhorting him to avoid עולה from dwelling in his tent (11:14). Whereas Job used the "fear" motif in the context of his complaints, Zophar re-uses this motif to argue that Job's fear originates not in the character of God, but the sinful nature of humans (11:15). In a similar vein, whereas Job used the words שכח ("forget") and אַמל ("misery, trouble") in the context of his complaints (3:10, 20; 7:3; 9:27), Zophar re-uses these words to argue that Job must forget his provocative complaints and God will cause him to forget his אַמל in return (11:16).

Whereas Job used the "darkness" motif to express his desire to go to Sheol, where light is like darkness (10:22), Zophar adopts the same motif and reverses the imagery used by Job (11:17). Whereas Job used the concept of "hope" subversively in his previous speeches, Zophar's perspective on hope is in line with that of Eliphaz and Bildad (11:18, 20). Whereas Job used the words חפר ("search") and שכב ("lie down") to

express his desire for death as a relief, Zophar re-uses the same terms to argue that a restored relationship with God is the ultimate rest for which Job should have searched (11:18).

Job, in his third response (chs. 12–14), also alludes to the words of Zophar, the preceding speaker, in order to criticize the character of the friends and refute Zophar's arguments. Whereas Zophar claimed to possess the secrets of wisdom (חכמה) about Job's guilt as well as God's lenient treatment toward him (11:6), Job adopts the "wisdom" motif and criticizes the lack of wisdom of his friends (12:2–3; 13:5). Whereas Zophar accused Job of engaging in mockery (לעג; 11:3), Job's self-derision as a "laughingstock" (שחק) echoes this charge but shifts the blame to his friends (12:4). Whereas Zophar expressed his wish that God would reveal the secrets (תעלמות) of wisdom to Job (11:6) and challenged Job's ability for finding out the mystery of God, which is more "deep" (עמקה) than Sheol (11:7–8), Job argues that he knows God's deep wisdom since God himself uncovers it out of darkness (12:22). Whereas Zophar criticized Job for his attempt to silence (חרש) Eliphaz and Bildad with his babbling (11:3), Job willingly accepts Zophar's accusation but argues that it is for their own sake that they should keep silent (חרש) because their speeches expose their folly (13:5, 13). Whereas Zophar asked Job to keep עולה ("deceit") away from his tent (11:14), Job accuses the friends of speaking deceit (עולה) and treachery (רמיה) for God (13:7). Whereas Zophar promised Job that he would be able to "lift up his face" (פנה + נשא) without shame after he is restored by God (11:15), Job argues that he cannot "lift up the face of" himself because the friends continue to "lift up the face of" God (13:8, 10).

Job alludes not only to Zophar's words but also to those of Eliphaz and Bildad. Job mimics again the doxology suggested by Eliphaz (cf. 5:9–16) to disclose the destructive intent of God's involvement in sustaining the natural, social, political, and religious order of the world (12:13–25). Similarly, whereas Bildad used the terms יונקת ("fresh shoot") and שרש ("roots") in the context of the "plant" imagery to illustrate the hope of the pious (8:16–17), Job re-uses the same term (14:7–8) to argue that Bildad's comparison is faulty simply because plants and humans are different. Moreover, both Job and the friends speak of "hope." Job continues to use this motif subversively to underscore his own hopelessness (13:15) as well as the hopelessness of every mortal (14:7, 19).

In addition, the author also uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job describes himself as "a just (צדיק) and perfect (תמים) one" (12:4). The two terms צדיק and תמים together remind the audience of the surpassing virtues of Job as presented in the prologue (1:1, 8; 2:3).

In their speeches the three friends—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar—display their disapproval of the words uttered by Job. In response, each of them defends a rigid system of retributive justice and suggests that Job return to God and urges him to adopt appropriate religious expressions in his address to God. In contrast, Job continues to protest against God through subversion of various traditions. He re-uses the words of the friends to refute their arguments and criticize their characters. He also takes the fault of the friends as a failure of the demonstration of loyalty in friendship. By the end of this cycle, Job begins to treat them as mere conversation partners in a wisdom disputation.

My analysis of the first cycle of dialogue appears to support the initial hypothesis that the central problem of the book is appropriate religious expressions in the context of suffering. Job's opening outburst and his subsequent speeches have brought disturbance to his community, which the three friends represent. The presumed supportive community is portrayed as turning its back against the one who is undergoing extreme suffering. The author's frequent use of dramatic irony at the expense of the friends reveals that the author does not side with the friends. The practice of coercing dissenting voices to conform to cultural norms within a religious community thus seems to be the object of criticism.

Chapter 5

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS – THE SECOND CYCLE (JOB 15–21)

Chapters 15–21 of the book of Job contain the second cycle of dialogue between Job and his three friends. Similar to the pattern in the first cycle, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar speak to Job in turn, and each of their corresponding speeches is followed by Job's response to them. In this chapter, I will continue to identify the internal quotations of preceding materials in each of these speeches and examine their impact on the reading of the corresponding speech in terms of narrative progression. Since only Job's speech in chs. 16–17 contains an attributed citation, the focus of attention for the other speeches will be on allusions alone.

I. Eliphaz's Second Speech (Job 15)

A. Allusion Analysis

With the voice of Eliphaz, the second cycle begins. The narrator uses the same phrase **ויען ... ויאמר**, "answered," to indicate the entrance of Eliphaz's voice into the conversation the second time. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible allusions. It is quite evident that the "wisdom" motif, which Job uses in the first part of his preceding speech (12:2–13:2), is picked up by Eliphaz in his speech (15:2, 8–10, 18). Moreover, the terms **שפתים**, "lips," (13:6; 15:6b) and **עון**, "iniquity," (13:23; 15:5a), both of which are used by Job and Eliphaz in a legal context, appear to form verbal correspondences between the two speeches.

Moreover, Eliphaz seems to allude to words spoken by Job earlier in the dialogue, other than those in chs. 12–14. For instance, both Job and Eliphaz use the noun פה, “mouth,” in conjunction with the verb רשע, “to condemn,” in a legal context (9:20; 15:6a). Both of them use the term חילה and its cognate to describe the experience of suffering (6:10; 15:20a) and the term מרמה and its cognates to refer to deceitful speech (6:25, 29–30; 13:7; 15:35b). Both of them also speak of שיוח, “complaint, meditation,” but they refer to different nuances of the term (7:13; 9:27; 10:1; 15:4b).

Apart from shared words, shared motifs and images also link Eliphaz’s present speech with Job’s earlier utterances. For instance, the “fear” motif, which runs through Job’s speeches (3:25; 9:28, 34–35; 13:21) re-appears in this speech of Eliphaz (15:4, 21–24).

Eliphaz alludes not only to the words of Job but also to his own words in his first speech. He appears to re-use the rare word ערום, “crafty,” in a different context in this speech (15:5b; cf. 5:12). Finally, the “divine council” motif in his speech recalls the heavenly dialogue in the prologue (1:6–12; 2:1–6).

1. The “wisdom” motif (15:2, 8–10, 18)

The “wisdom” motif, which Job uses to begin his preceding speech (12:2–3; 13:2), re-appears in this present speech, in which Eliphaz uses the root חכם three times.¹ Eliphaz begins his speech with a series of rhetorical questions, discrediting Job’s claims to be a sage (חכם; 15:2).² He regards Job’s previous words as דעת רוח, “knowledge of wind”

¹ Course, *Speech and Response*, 93.

² Course (*Speech and Response*, 93) erroneously states that it is Eliphaz who describes himself as a sage in 15:2.

(15:2a), “east wind” (15:2b),³ דְּבַר לֹא יִסְכּוֹן, “words without profit” (15:3a), and מִלִּים לֹא יוֹעִיל בָּם, “words without benefit in them” (15:3b), terms and phrases that describe the destructive, as opposed to constructive, nature of Job’s utterances.⁴

When Eliphaz further addresses the authority of Job’s knowledge, he derides Job for behaving like the sole proprietor of wisdom (חֲכָמָה; 15:8b).⁵ Whereas Job has said, “What you know, I also know” (כִּדְעַתְכֶם יִדְעָתִי גַם אֲנִי; 13:2a), Eliphaz paraphrases Job’s words to launch a counterclaim: “What do you know that I do not know?” (מָה יִדְעַת וְלֹא) (נִדְעָ; 15:9a).⁶ Whereas Job has mocked the “old age” (אֶרֶךְ יָמִים) of the friends as a sign of their wisdom (12:12), Eliphaz responds by re-affirming their authority for wisdom based on their association with the “gray-haired” (שֵׁב) and the “old aged” (יָשִׁישׁ; 15:10).⁷ Subsequently, Eliphaz reiterates his claim that the sages (חֲכָמִים) and the ancestors are the sources of his own knowledge (15:18).⁸

In alluding to the “wisdom” motif, Eliphaz regards Job’s preceding speech as an implicit invitation to participate in a wisdom disputation. These verbal correspondences also reveal that Eliphaz takes Job’s claim to superior wisdom seriously and that one of the main purposes of his speech is to demolish Job’s boast.⁹

³ Balentine (*Job*, 232) takes קָדִים as “an allusion to the khamsin that blows in off the desert, leaving everything in its path scorched and withered.”

⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 449; Balentine, *Job*, 232.

⁵ As Habel (*The Book of Job*, 253–54) rightly states, “Eliphaz is accusing Job of playing ‘First Man’ and presuming to have a monopoly on wisdom through his privileged access to the council of God.”

⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 450.

⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 351; Newsom, “Job,” 450.

⁸ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 355) even states that Eliphaz “has sold his soul to tradition, and has so ensured that he will never have any experience that runs counter to it; everything that happens to him will be interpretable in wisdom categories, for he will perceive everything from its viewpoint.”

⁹ Similarly, Clines, *Job 1–20*, 346–47.

2. שִׁיחַ (15:4b)

The root שִׁיחַ, “meditation, complaint” provides a verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s previous speeches.¹⁰ Eliphaz uses the noun שִׁיחָה to refer to meditation, an appropriate religious activity, to which Job’s provocative words show disrespect (15:4b).¹¹ In his ongoing struggle with God, however, Job always uses שִׁיחַ, the masculine counterpart of שִׁיחָה, to refer to his complaint against God (7:13; 9:27; 10:1).¹² At the narrative level, through this allusion, Eliphaz warns Job that what he offers as meditation to God destroys proper reverence for God.¹³ At the rhetorical level, the allusion invites the reader to ponder on the two different meanings of שִׁיחַ: Can Job’s complaint (שִׁיחַ) be an appropriate form of devotion (שִׁיחָה) to God?¹⁴

3. עֵוֹן (15:5a)

The noun עֵוֹן, “iniquity,” which both Job and Zophar have used earlier, reappears in this speech.¹⁵ Eliphaz uses עֵוֹן to refer to Job’s “sin of speaking blasphemously and

¹⁰ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 242; Balentine, *Job*, 232–33.

¹¹ As Clines (*Job 1–20*, 347) states, “The term [שִׁיחָה] describe[s] the contemplative activity of the pious wise man.”

¹² Job appears to have used the verbal form of שִׁיחַ twice in his previous speeches (7:11; 12:8). The verb clearly carries the nuance of “complain” in 7:11. Regarding 12:8, either the text is corrupt (Dhorme, *Job*, 172) or the verb means “speak” (Clines, *Job 1–20*, 279 n.8.a).

¹³ Balentine, *Job*, 233.

¹⁴ As Balentine (*Job*, 233) puts it, “In the prologue, God commends Job for his patience and his submission, hence readers are encouraged to understand this mode of faith as proper and exemplary. In the dialogues, however, God is silent, and readers must ponder for themselves whether Eliphaz’s assessment of what constitutes true piety is correct or not. The issue may be framed with a question. If God does not permit speech like Job’s, then what kind of God is God? If God is open and receptive to speech like Job’s, then what are the dogmas of ‘true theology’ that require reexamination, modification, or elimination.”

¹⁵ Course, *Speech and Response*, 93–94.

destructively” (15:5a).¹⁶ Although Job has used the same noun a few times in his previous speeches, Eliphaz appears to be responding particularly to Job’s taunt in 13:23, in which he asked God to show him the number and nature of his iniquities (עוֹנוֹת) and sins (חַטָּאוֹת) in the setting of his imaginary lawsuit. The forensic terminology Eliphaz uses in the immediate context, such as רָשַׁע, “to condemn” and עָנָה, “to testify” (15:6), further strengthens the allusion of this verse to Job’s previous words. Job’s unrestrained speeches are themselves clear evidence of his guilt, as Eliphaz sees it. Moreover, by responding to Job’s mocking request to God, Eliphaz again assumes the role of God’s spokesperson.

4. עָרוֹם (15:5b)

The noun עָרוֹם, “crafty,” occurs 11 times in the Hebrew Bible, two times in Job. Both instances come from the mouth of Eliphaz (5:12; 15:5b). In the present speech, Eliphaz chides Job for choosing the tongue of the עָרוֹם, “crafty” (15:5b). In his previous speech, Eliphaz uses the same designation to identify those who “use their wisdom for evil ends” (5:12).¹⁷ The context in which Eliphaz uses עָרוֹם is the hymnic praise of God’s power and wisdom that he models for Job in order to encourage him. Eliphaz’s repeated use of the same term in this speech indicates that his attitude toward Job has shifted. Although he does not equate Job with the עָרוֹם, he clearly regards Job as adopting the route of the “crafty.”

¹⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 449. The noun עֵץ appears a second time in this speech in another context (15:16).

¹⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 348.

5. רשע + פה (15:6a)

The term פה, “mouth,” in conjunction with the term רשע, “to condemn,” draws a connection between this speech and Job’s previous one (chs. 9–10).¹⁸ Eliphaz ends the first strophe of this speech with a sarcastic declaration to Job: “Your mouth (פִּי) condemns you (יִרְשִׁיעַךְ), not I” (15:6a). In his previous speech, Job charges God for forcing him into a false confession of guilt. He says, “Even if I am innocent, my mouth (פִּי) would condemn me (יִרְשִׁיעֵנִי)” (9:20a). The point of Eliphaz’s allusion is “that Job’s protests and charges against God are in themselves sinful and tantamount to self-incrimination.”¹⁹

6. שפתים (15:6b)

The noun שפתים, “lips,” provides a verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s preceding one.²⁰ In parallel to the statement “Your mouth condemns you, not I” (15:6a), Eliphaz also declares to Job that “Your lips (שפתים) testify (ענה) against you” (15:6b). Job, in his preceding speech, requests that his friends listen to “the pleadings (ריב) of his lips (שפתים)” (13:6). By re-using the term in a similar forensic context, “Eliphaz maintains that listening to Job’s lips works against him as they only affirm his guilt.”²¹

¹⁸ Pope, *Job*, 115; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 349.

¹⁹ Pope, *Job*, 115. Similarly, Clines (*Job 1–20*, 349) writes, “As 9:20 ... [Job] was thinking that he would misspeak himself, terrified by God’s majesty; here Eliphaz says that Job has already erred against his own best principles of behavior and has put himself in the wrong, by setting himself up as an opponent of God even though it is in the sober environment of a (metaphorical) law-court.”

²⁰ Course, *Speech and Response*, 94.

²¹ Course, *Speech and Response*, 94.

7. The “divine council” motif (15:8a)

When Eliphaz undertakes the issue of Job’s presumed sources of wisdom, he invokes the “divine council” motif. In a rhetorical question, he asks Job if he has listened in the council of God (15:8a). The “divine council” motif naturally leads the reader to recall the heavenly dialogue between YHWH and the satan as presented in the prologue (1:6–12; 2:1–6).²² Although Job may not be able to answer Eliphaz’s question with the affirmative, the authorial audience, who had the privilege to “listen in the council of God,” for sure can. Given such a privilege, the audience knows that the real reason behind Job’s plight is not what the friends have been asserting. Through the employment of dramatic irony, the author once again puts words in the mouth of one of the friends in order to discredit his role as God’s reliable spokesperson.

8. חול (15:20a)

Holbert suggests that Eliphaz’s description of the fate of the wicked in 15:20–25 is geared toward Job, as demonstrated by the use of verbal irony.²³ Building on Holbert’s observation, Habel further claims that the list of allusions extends to v. 35.²⁴ Although not all instances argued by Holbert and/or Habel are equally compelling, a few stand out as quite evident. For example, as Eliphaz commences to depict the fate of the typical wicked person, the very first adversity such a person faces all his days is “writhing in pain” (*hitpo‘el* of חול; 15:20a). Job, in his earlier speech, also uses חילה, cognate with

²² Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 242–43.

²³ Holbert, “*Klage*,” 194–99.

²⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 251. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 239), who appears to endorse Habel’s findings.

לָחַל, to refer to the “writhing” that he has been undergoing (6:10). The allusion, together with other possible ones, “reflect[s] verbal irony and barbed innuendo designed to expose how Job testifies to characteristics in himself that are typical of the wicked man.”²⁵

9. The “fear” motif (15:4, 21–24)

The “fear” motif, of which Job, Eliphaz, and Zophar have previously spoken, resurfaces in this speech.²⁶ Eliphaz describes vividly the ongoing “psychology of fear” of the wicked person in his present life in 15:21–24.²⁷ Such a person imagines every sound he hears to be a herald of destruction awaiting him even in the midst of apparent peace (v. 21).²⁸ He despairs of returning from “darkness” (v. 22a), a symbol for misfortune (cf. Ps 112:4).²⁹ He imagines that somewhere a sword is raised to kill him (v. 22b), and he is like carrion to vultures (v. 23a).³⁰ The wicked person realizes that his ruin is certain (v. 23b).³¹ His life is overwhelmed by terror, distress, and anguish, as if he is vulnerable to the attack ordered by a mighty king (v. 24).³²

²⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 251–52.

²⁶ See also I.A.2, II.A.3, and V.A.2.ix in Chapter 4.

²⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 258. Similarly, Clines (*Job 1–20*, 357) uses “neurotic fear” to depict the mental state of the wicked.

²⁸ I agree with Newsom (“Job,” 451) and many others, and understand this verse “as depicting the subjective state of the wicked person.” So, Clines, *Job 1–20*, 357; Balentine, *Job*, 238.

²⁹ Dhorme, *Job*, 217; Pope, *Job*, 117.

³⁰ I follow the lead of LXX and revocalize הַיָּדָה, “where?,” to הַיָּדָה, “vulture,” and לֶלֶחֶם, “for bread” to לֶלֶחֶם, “for bread of.” For a list of versions and commentators who adopt these emendations, see Clines, *Job 1–20*, 342–43, n. 23.a.

³¹ Again, I follow the lead of LXX and emend וְיָדָהּ, “in his hand” to וְיָדָהּ, “his ruin.” For a list of commentators who adopt these emendations, see Clines, *Job 1–20*, 342–43, n. 23.b.

³² Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 252.

Job also speaks of his “fear” from time to time. In his opening outcry, he mentions that the dread that he dreads has come to him (3:25). Subsequently, he admits that he is afraid of his suffering (9:28). He also fears that the dread of God will terrify him (9:34–35; 13:21). Eliphaz’s depiction of the neurotic state of the wicked person appears to correspond to Job’s claim to his ongoing fear.³³ Again, the allusion suggests that Job has the tendency to follow the destiny of the wicked, as Eliphaz believes it.

When Eliphaz, in his previous speech, asks Job the question, “Is not your fear (יראה) your confidence/folly?” (4:6a), his question is ambiguous.³⁴ The nuances of “piety” and “dread” are both present in the word יראה. As Eliphaz invokes the “fear” motif again in this speech, he refers to both nuances of the word separately. On the one hand, Job’s provocative words, according to Eliphaz, undermine יראה, “the fear of God” (15:4a). On the other hand, the wicked person lives in a mental state of “fear” at all times. These repeated yet varied uses of the “fear” motif indicate that Eliphaz’s attitude toward Job has now become less ambiguous.³⁵

10. מרמה (15:35)

The term מרמה, “deceit,” at the end of this speech also elicits semantic association with Job’s earlier speeches. In the concluding statement of this speech, Eliphaz reiterates his earlier claim that the godless conceive trouble and breed evil (15:35a; cf. 4:8; 5:7a). He further adds that “their belly (בטן) nurtures deceit (מרמה)” (15:35b). The issue of

³³ Holbert, “*Klage*,” 196–97; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 258–59. Cf. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 357), who also recognizes the “close correspondences between [Eliphaz’s] picture and what Job has said of his own experience” but denies the allusion as deliberate.

³⁴ Refer to I.A.2 in Chapter 4.

³⁵ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 135–36.

honest and deceitful words has occupied a place of central importance in Job's arguments.³⁶ He claims that his words are honest (6:25) and free from deceit (6:29–30). According to Job, the friends are the liars, for they falsely testify for God (13:7). This semantic association indicates that Eliphaz has Job in mind when he concludes the fate of the wicked. The argument is strengthened by noting the *inclusio* framed by the term בטן, and the “theme of incongruous and improper speech” (15:2–5, 35b).³⁷ Again, this strongly suggests that Eliphaz is less sympathetic to Job in this speech.³⁸

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction (15:1), Eliphaz commences his second speech. The analysis in the above section reveals that Eliphaz sometimes re-uses the words of Job in order to counter Job's claims and compare Job to the typical wicked person. Eliphaz sees himself as accepting Job's invitation to participate in a wisdom disputation and begins with an exordium that demolishes Job's boast. Job's provocative words, according to Eliphaz, are not constructive, but destructive (15:2–3). They also undermine יראה, an abbreviation of the expression “the fear of God” (15:4a) and destroy שׂיח, “devotion,” that is, proper reverence for God (15:4b). Whereas Job has asked God to show him the number and nature of his iniquities (עוֹנוֹת; 13:23), Eliphaz, who sees himself as God's spokesperson, replies to Job that his iniquity (עוֹן) teaches his mouth and he chooses the tongue of the crafty (עָרוֹם; 15:5). Moreover, Job has earlier claimed that

³⁶ See II.A.7 and VI.A.7 in Chapter 4.

³⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 261. So Balentine, *Job*, 241.

³⁸ Contra Clines (*Job 1–20*, 346), who insists that the “tonality” of Eliphaz's speech “is sympathetic but firm.”

his own mouth would condemn himself in the setting of an imaginary lawsuit, in which God coerces him to confess his non-existing guilt (9:20a). In another context, Job has requested that his friends listen to the pleadings (רִיב) of his lips (שִׁפְתָּיִם; 13:6). Eliphaz re-uses Job's words to argue that Job's mouth condemns himself and Job's lips testify against himself (15:6). In other words, Job's provocative speech is evidence of his guilt and it works against him in his lawsuit.

As the authorial audience compares the two speeches of Eliphaz, one should notice the change in tonality.³⁹ For instance, Eliphaz, in the first speech, has used the term “fear” in an ambiguous fashion, that can invoke the sense of “terror” or “piety” (4:6). In this speech, he uses the same term unambiguously to refer to “piety,” which is undermined by Job's words (15:4). Besides, Eliphaz has previously used the term עָרוֹם to identify those who use wisdom for evil ends (5:12). The context in which Eliphaz uses עָרוֹם is the hymnic praise of God's power and wisdom that he models for Job in order to encourage him. In the present speech, Eliphaz regards Job as choosing the tongue of the “crafty.” Eliphaz's repeated uses of the same terms in different contexts indicate that his attitude toward Job has shifted.⁴⁰

As Eliphaz continues, he mocks Job of his presumed sources of knowledge in a series of rhetorical questions (15:7–9) before defending the solid foundation of the friends' arguments in an affirmative statement (15:10). Here, Eliphaz invokes the “wisdom” motif again. He derides Job as behaving like the sole proprietor of wisdom

³⁹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 242, 244–45; Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 128, 135–36; Balentine, *Job*, 229.

⁴⁰ Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 245) even asserts, “It appears that Eliphaz has given up on Job's rehabilitation.”

(חכמה; 15:8b). Eliphaz also adopts some terms and concepts such as “know” and “old age,” which Job has used to boast his superior wisdom, to launch a counterclaim.

In another series of rhetorical questions, Eliphaz humiliates Job for his provocative words (15:11–13). He asks, “Is God’s consolation (תנחמות אל) too little for you, and the word (דבר) that deals gently with you?” (15:11). Most would agree that both the “consolations of God” and the “word” refer to the words of the supernatural audition which Eliphaz has recounted in 4:17 or even his whole speech in chs. 4–5.⁴¹

Subsequently, Eliphaz reiterates the basic insight he offered earlier about the inherent corruptness of human nature (15:14–16; cf. 4:17–19). In contrast to Job’s defective knowledge, Eliphaz delineates what he claims to be reliable knowledge (15:17–19).⁴² Again, Eliphaz continues to see himself as God’s spokesperson. He equates his own words with God’s consolations and repeats his insight from the nocturnal vision he claimed to have received. However, through the employment of dramatic irony, the author signals to the authorial audience that Eliphaz is an unreliable spokesperson of God. When he asks Job whether Job has listened in God’s council (15:8a), the authorial audience is compelled to recall the heavenly dialogue in the prologue. As a result, the author exposes Eliphaz’s ignorance regarding the real cause for Job’s suffering.

In the rest of the speech, Eliphaz presents a vivid description of the fate of the wicked (15:20–35). According to him, the wicked person suffers terrifying anxiety in all his days (vv. 20–24) because he engages God in combat (vv. 25–26). Despite his initial success (v. 27), the wicked person will end up with a miserable future (vv. 28–30a),

⁴¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 254; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 246; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 351; Newsom, “Job,” 450.

⁴² Newsom, “Job,” 448.

depicted further in images of failed vegetation, futile commerce, barrenness, and blaze (vv. 28–34). As discussed above, Eliphaz uses terms and motifs that Job has used to describe his suffering experience to depict the life and behaviour of the typical wicked person.⁴³ I will expound the significance of these allusions in a moment. Eliphaz concludes his speech by reiterating another claim that he made in his previous speech. The wicked are those who give birth to his own miserable plight (v. 35; cf. 4:8; 5:7a). Tellingly, Eliphaz uses the term בֶּטֶן, “belly” and the theme of improper speech (15:35b), which he uses in relation to Job in the opening section (15:2–5), to give a final description of the wicked.

In terms of narrative progression, Eliphaz’s present speech is distinct from the previous speeches of the friends in that there is no single word of encouragement.⁴⁴ The bulk of his speech consists of an extended depiction of the fate of the wicked. Although each of the friends has spoken of this topos (4:8–11; 5:2–7; 8:4, 12–15; 11:20) in the first cycle, the fact that Eliphaz gives this topos so much attention in this speech invites the authorial audience’s interpretive judgment of Eliphaz’s rationale. On one end of the pole, some argue that Eliphaz uses the topos of the fate of the wicked to accuse Job of wickedness.⁴⁵ On the other end of the pole, however, Clines contends that the topos functions as an encouragement to Job “since the experience of the wicked in vv 20–35 is so alien to Job’s own experience.”⁴⁶

⁴³ Refer to A.8 and A.9 above.

⁴⁴ Contra Clines (*Job 1–20*, 345), who, in a strained manner, states, “The *function* of the speech as a whole may be said to be encouragement” (*italics his*).

⁴⁵ Holbert, “*Klage*,” 194–200; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 255; Greenberg, “Reflections on Job’s Theology,” 344–45.

⁴⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 346.

Arguing from a different perspective, Newsom claims that the primary concern of Eliphaz, as well as Bildad and Zophar, in the second cycle is rather on the moral order of the world.⁴⁷ She sees the issue as “more a struggle over religious ideology than an accusation against Job.”⁴⁸ Building on Newsom’s observation, Balentine offers a somewhat moderate approach. On the one hand, he agrees with her and understands Eliphaz’s attention as primarily “on abstract principles of divine retribution whose inviolable truth places them above the fray of Job’s particular circumstances.”⁴⁹ On the other hand, he reads the similarity between Eliphaz’s depiction of the fate of the wicked and Job’s own words about his suffering as an indication that Job is dangerously close to becoming just like the wicked.⁵⁰

From the flow of the narrative, Eliphaz’s depiction of the destruction of the wicked appears to be a response to Job’s brief description of the lack of punishment for the evildoers in his preceding speech. There, Job asserts that “the tents of the robbers are at peace, and those who provoke God are secure” (12:6a–b). This assertion belongs to part of Job’s knowledge, which, he claims, everyone should know. Eliphaz thus offers a counterclaim, which is founded on *his* special revelation (15:14–16; cf. 4:12–17), *his* own observation (15:17), and *his* knowledge from past traditions (15:18–19). In light of this context, Eliphaz’s rationale for the depiction of the destruction of the wicked seems to be

⁴⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 446; *idem*, *Moral Imaginations*, 115–25.

⁴⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 446.

⁴⁹ Balentine, *Job*, 238.

⁵⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 238. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 251–52.

as much a defence of his own wisdom as an argument for the abstract moral order of the world.⁵¹

As Westermann suggests, the sentiments in 15:20–35 resembles that of the “end of the transgressor” motif in Psalms (cf. Pss 11:6; 14:5; 21:9–11 [ET 8–10]; 37:20; 49:11–21 [ET 10–20]; 53:6 [ET 5]; 63:10–11 [ET 9–10]; 64:8–9 [ET 7–8]; 73:17–20; 75:9 [ET 8]; 92:8 [ET 7]).⁵² In those Psalms, recalling this motif always serves as a means to elicit trust in God and response in righteous living. Taken as such, Eliphaz’s depiction of the destruction of the wicked may still be considered as a veiled attempt to redirect Job to place his trust in God and to amend his life.

From the allusion analysis above, the striking similarities between how Job speaks of his experience and how Eliphaz depicts the life and behaviour of the wicked cannot be dismissed as merely coincidental. This phenomenon reveals that the author at least wants the authorial audience to interpret Eliphaz’s words in 15:20–35 as a warning to Job. Perhaps the authorial audience is not compelled to choose from the above options regarding Eliphaz’s purport. After all, they are not mutually exclusive. It is even preferable for the audience to interpret Eliphaz’s rhetoric as his attempt to fit Job’s experience into his own theological paradigm. This becomes the negative ethical judgment the author invites the audience to pass on Eliphaz.

⁵¹ Hoffman (*Blemish Perfection*, 136) makes a similar comment: “Eliphaz’s motivations were egocentric. His anger and wrath stemmed from the rejection of his doctrine by Job, thereby upsetting his faith by denying him its rational facade.”

⁵² Westermann, *Structure*, 82–87.

II. Job's Fourth Response (Job 16–17)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

1. Attributed Citations

As before, the narrator uses the phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to introduce Job's fourth response. His present speech contains a citation attributed, presumably, to Eliphaz (16:3).⁵³ The citation is signalled by three markers in the immediate context: (1) another party (“you” [pl.]/“comforters” in v. 2); (2) change in grammatical number (second person singular in v. 3 but second person plural in v. 2 and v. 4); and (3) a deictic pronoun (“many like these” in v. 2).⁵⁴

ענה + דברי רוח (16:3)

The attributed citation appears to allude to Eliphaz's opening rhetorical questions in the preceding speech.⁵⁵ Job says, “‘Is there any end to words of wind (*דברי רוח*)?’ Or ‘what ails you so that you must answer (*ענה*)?’” (16:3). Although Job's words are not verbatim quotations of any of the friends', he seems to have picked up some key terms from Eliphaz's opening mocking questions. In the preceding speech, Eliphaz refers to the words of Job as *דעת רוח*, “knowledge of wind” (15:2) and *דבר לא יסכון*, “word without benefit” (15:3).⁵⁶ He also uses the verb *ענה*, “to answer, respond” to refer to how Job has

⁵³ Newsom, “Job,” 457; Greenstein, “Truth or Theodicy,” 247; Balentine, *Job*, 268 n.1. To a lesser extent, Clines (*Job 1–20*, 379) takes this verse as Job's imagined address by the friends to himself.

⁵⁴ Greenstein, “Truth or Theodicy,” 247. So Ho, “Unmarked Attributed Quotations,” 705 n.9.

⁵⁵ Although Course (*Speech and Response*, 100–101) recognizes the connection between the two speeches, he fails to identify 16:3 as an attributed quotation.

⁵⁶ Course, *Speech and Response*, 100.

reacted in speech (15:2).⁵⁷ By alluding to Eliphaz's words and re-framing them in an attributed quotation, Job aptly summarizes how the friends have interpreted his words of pain.

2. Allusions

In addition to the above attributed citation, a number of allusion can be found in this speech. The opening of this present speech, in which Job calls the friends “comforters of trouble” (16:2) is clearly an allusion to Eliphaz's “consolations of God” in 15:11. Since the topic of the qualification of a חכם, “sage,” is raised by Eliphaz in the opening of his address (15:2), Job appears to respond to this topic in 17:10, in which he uses the same epithet חכם. The adjective “wicked” (רשע) also seems to draw a connection between the two speeches (15:20; 16:11). Moreover, the image of a warrior (גבור) running (רוץ) against the opponent is present in both speeches (15:25–26; 16:14). Besides alluding to Eliphaz's preceding speech, Job may also be responding to Zophar's speech through the shared adjective “pure” (זך / זכה; 11:4a; 16:17b).

i. The “consolation” motif (16:2)

The “consolation” motif links this speech with Eliphaz's preceding one. In opening his speech Job ascribes the epithet מנחמי עמל to his three friends (16:2). The title, however, is ambiguous.⁵⁸ On the one hand, it can be translated “comforters of trouble,” that is, comforters for those who are in trouble.⁵⁹ On the other hand, the phrase can also

⁵⁷ Course, *Speech and Response*, 101.

⁵⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 457.

⁵⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 457.

be translated “troublesome comforters,” that is, so-called comforters who create trouble for the sufferer.⁶⁰ The former is certainly how the friends see themselves. This is expressed in Eliphaz’s previous speech, in which he equates his own words with תנחמות אל, “the consolations of God” (15:11). On the contrary, Job undoubtedly refers to the latter sense. Job’s critique of the inadequacy of the friends’ conventional consolatory words in the following context (16:3–6) suggests that their speeches increase his trouble (עמל).⁶¹

The presence of the noun עמל reminds the reader of the gap between the focus of Job and that of the friends.⁶² Here, Job uses עמל to refer to his suffering. This is consistent with how Job has used the word earlier (3:10; 7:3). However, Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, concludes with the statement “They [the godly] conceive trouble (עמל) and breed evil (און)” (15:35a). The term clearly carries more of a moral connotation, and refers to “the necessary consequence of unrighteousness.”⁶³ This is also consistent with how the friends have used the pair עמל / און earlier (4:8; 5:6–7; 11:14, 16). Clines recognizes the proximity of the presence of the term עמל in this speech and Eliphaz’s preceding speech, but he denies the connection between the two speeches through this word simply because the sense of עמל is different in each of the occurrence.⁶⁴ His

⁶⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 457.

⁶¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 270; Balentine, *Job*, 250.

⁶² Course (*Speech and Response*, 100) also recognizes the connection between 15:35a and 16:2b.

⁶³ Beuken, “Job’s Imprecation,” 48.

⁶⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 378. Habel’s interpretation is thus to be preferred: “Job’s retort flings back in Eliphaz’s face the closing comment of his previous speech that conceiving ‘evil/trouble’ (‘*āmāl*, 4:8) begets sin, by calling him a ‘trouble-making comforter’ who adds evil to Job’s life” (*The Book of Job*, 270–71).

argument is unconvincing for it is rather common that Job and his friends use the same word to express different, or even opposing, ideas.

ii. רשעים (16:11)

The adjective רשע, “wicked,” together with its plural form רשעים, draws a verbal correspondence between this speech and Eliphaz’s preceding one. After Job derides the words of the friends (16:2–6), he turns to complain to and about God. He first addresses the violence of God against him (16:7–9) and then describes how others have joined in to assault him (16:10).⁶⁵ Job calls those human adversaries עוֹל, “the godless” and רשעים, “the wicked” (16:11).⁶⁶ As some have correctly noted, Job’s depiction of the human enemies resembles that of the psalmist in lament.⁶⁷ Up to this point in this speech, Job adheres to the conventional language of lament. Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, also talks about רשע, “the wicked person.” Such a person, according to Eliphaz, writhes in torment all his days (15:20). As argued earlier, Eliphaz may be offering a veiled warning to Job not to follow the path of the wicked person.⁶⁸ When Job, in this speech, picks up the adjective רשע and expresses it in its plural form, he distances himself from this category of people.

⁶⁵ As Clines (*Job 1–20*, 382) puts it, “human hostility is the direct consequence of divine attack.”

⁶⁶ I follow Clines (*Job 1–20*, 370–71) and read עוֹל, “godless” for עוֹלִיל, “child,” in order to preserve the parallelism to רשעים. Nevertheless, even if one adopts the suggestion of Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 177), who claims that the term is a variant for עוֹלִים, the impact on interpretation the difference makes is minimal.

⁶⁷ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 383; Newsom, “Job,” 458.

⁶⁸ Refer to I.A.8 in this chapter.

iii. גבור and רוע (16:14)

The image of a warrior running against his opponent connects this speech with Eliphaz's preceding one.⁶⁹ Job uses various striking images to depict the divine violence against him. He pictures himself as a besieged city and God, like a warrior (גבור), runs (רוע) against him and breaches him breach upon breach (16:14).⁷⁰ Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, has also used the verbs גבר (cognate with גבור) in conjunction with רוע (15:25–26). There, the wicked person is described as the one who displays arrogance (*hitpa'el* of גבר)⁷¹ and runs (רוע) against God. Although Eliphaz does not explicitly declare Job to be the wicked person, the allusions in Eliphaz's depiction of the fate of the wicked person certainly invite Job to take Eliphaz's warning personally. In response, therefore, Job counters Eliphaz's charge and argues that Eliphaz has mixed up the roles.⁷² According to Job, it is God who is running like a hostile warrior against him.

iv. זכה (16:17b)

The adjective זך (m.) / זכה (f.) links this speech with Zophar's previous one (ch. 11). After his extended complaint regarding God's violence against him, Job abruptly concludes his weeping with a reason for his grief: "Because (על) there is no violence in

⁶⁹ Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 245) and Balentine (*Job*, 253) also note the terms רוע and גבור in this speech as allusion markers to Eliphaz's preceding speech. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 385) also recognizes the verbal correspondences but he is hesitant to draw any decisive conclusion regarding the connection.

⁷⁰ For the imagery, see also Pss 80:13 [ET 12]; 89:41 [ET 40]; Amos 4:1; 1 Kgs 11:27; Isa 5:5; Neh 3:35 [ET 4:3].

⁷¹ DCH 2:313.

⁷² Balentine, *Job*, 253.

my palms and my plea (תפלה) is pure (זכה)” (16:17).⁷³ This verse marks the turning point of Job’s language from that of lament (16:7–16) to that of legal discourse (16:18–22). In a forensic setting, the noun תפלה, which normally means “prayer,” can connote the sense “plea/right to be heard.”⁷⁴ Job’s point is that he is innocent and his plea is “legitimate.”⁷⁵ Earlier, Zophar uses the adjective זך in the context of an attributed quotation to Job. He says to Job, “For you say, ‘My teaching is pure (זך)’” (11:4a). Although Job has never made such a claim in his speeches, this is how Zophar has perceived Job’s intention.⁷⁶ In re-using the same adjective (in feminine form), Job refutes Zophar’s distorted citation of his words.

v. חכם (17:10)

The noun חכם, “wise man,” links this speech with Eliphaz’s preceding one. In the context of his sarcastic rebuke to the friends for treating him as the godless, Job mockingly taunts them to return and come back to him, presumably in launching more arguments (17:8–10a).⁷⁷ Even if the friends dare to accept the challenge, Job argues that he will not find a wise man (חכם) among them (17:10b). The same noun חכם is the very first word Eliphaz uses in his preceding speech (15:2). In the form of a rhetorical question, Eliphaz casts doubt on Job’s credential as a wise man (חכם). In a similar vein,

⁷³ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 387) rightly interprets the conjunction על as indicating a causal relationship between Job’s lament and his declaration of innocence: “His (Job’s) weeping results from God’s refusal to acknowledge his innocence.”

⁷⁴ Scholnick, “Lawsuit Drama,” 27 n. 37. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 265 n.17b.

⁷⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 274.

⁷⁶ Refer to V.A.1 in Chapter 4.

⁷⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 462. Cf. Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 270), who thinks that Job is inviting his three friends to change their minds and take a more sympathetic approach to him.

Job turns the tables on them and denies their qualification as wise men either. The interplay of the term חכם suggests that Job continues to regard his three friends as dialogue partners in a wisdom disputation.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction, Job speaks up again. The analysis in the above section reveals that Job sometimes re-uses the words of the friends in order to refute their arguments. Imitating what the friends have done to him (cf. 8:2; 11:2–4; 15:2–6), Job begins with criticism of their words (16:2–6). He gives them the sarcastic epithet “comforters of trouble” (v. 2). Whereas Eliphaz uses the consolation motif to liken his own words to God's consolation (cf. 15:11), Job sarcastically uses the same motif to acknowledge the role of the friends as comforters, but those who bring trouble, rather than relief, to the sufferer. In the form of an attributed quotation, Job correctly points out that the friends have likened his outcry to arguing with destructive wind. In an ironic manner, he tells them that if they were in his place, he could give the same response as they do, and their pain would be soothed (16:4–5). This kind of conventional consolatory speech will have no effect on Job, for he claims that his pain cannot be soothed, regardless of whether he applies those words to himself or not (16:6).⁷⁸

Job turns next to express his conviction of God's unrelenting antagonism to him (16:7–14). His depiction, which comprises a series of images of violent assault and humiliation, further develops some concepts and images that he has used earlier. For

⁷⁸ Contra most commentators (e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 271; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 380; Newsom, “Job,” 458; Balentine, *Job*, 251), who see Job as talking about his present situation. The re-use of the terms אִדְּבָרָה (15:4, 6) and יִחַשֵׁךְ (15:5, 6) in the context strongly suggests that Job is still referring to the hypothetical situation in which he takes over the role of comforter from the friends.

instance, Job states that God has caused his personal exhaustion (v. 7; cf. 6:11–13). He refers again to God's anger, now in the form of personification (v. 9; cf. 9:5, 13; 14:13). He envisions God as a beast tearing him as prey (v. 9; cf. 10:16). He also uses military images to present God's violent attack against him (vv. 12–13; cf. 6:4).

On the other hand, Job introduces new images in his expressions. For example, he declares that God has yielded (*hip'il* of סגר) him to the wicked (רשעים) and the ruthless (v. 11). Whereas Eliphaz intends to use the topos on the fate of the typical wicked man (רשע) as a warning to Job, Job re-uses the adjective רשע in its plural form to refer to his enemies, thus distancing himself from this category of people. The closest parallel of the description in v. 11 is found in Lam 2:7, in which YHWH is said to have given (*hip'il* of סגר) the walls of the palaces of Jerusalem into the hand of his enemy.⁷⁹ Interestingly, the image of “walls” is further developed by Job in the following context, in which God is pictured as a warrior running against and breaching Job, as a city wall (v. 14). This is the reverse image that Eliphaz has used to describe the hostile action of the wicked person against God. Although Eliphaz does not equate Job with the wicked person explicitly, Job appears to have taken Eliphaz's word as a personal attack. Job's depiction of God as גבור, “mighty warrior,” against him is striking. As Clines observes, “In every other passage where God is called a ‘mighty warrior’ (גבור), it is his salvific power that is being hymned (Isa 42:13; Jer 20:11; Zeph 3:17; Ps 24:8; 78:65).”⁸⁰ The divine גבור, however, now fights against the one who laments.

⁷⁹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 383.

⁸⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 385. Similarly, Newsom, “Job,” 459; Balentine, *Job*, 253.

Job ends his lament with the rationale for his grief: “Because there is no violence in my palms and my plea is pure (זכה)” (16:17). Whereas Zophar has earlier interpreted Job’s words of pain as if Job was saying that his teaching is pure (טז; 11:4a), Job rectifies Zophar’s interpretive error and continues to use legal language to launch his protest.

As Job puts an end to his language of lament, he abruptly shifts his discourse into legal terminology once again (16:18–22). After Job calls upon the earth not to cover his blood (16:18), he looks for help from heaven in the form of a witness who will advocate for him (16:19). Many have attempted to argue that God is the best candidate for this heavenly witness.⁸¹ Given that there is no indication of a change of mind in Job’s conception of God, the context does not allow such an interpretation. Similar to what he has done in 9:33, Job imagines a third party who can speak for him before God.⁸² Some have likened this figure to the angel of YHWH in Zech 3, in which this heavenly being intercedes for Joshua the high priest.⁸³ If Job is alluding to a similar figure as part of the Israelite religious tradition, it is more likely that he is parodying such an image. Unlike Joshua the high priest, who is accused by Satan, Job now has God as his opponent. In his case, therefore, the lesser deity will surely side with God.⁸⁴

⁸¹ Dhorme, *Job*, 239; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 292; Andersen, *Job*, 183; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 264; Kummerow, “Hopeful or Hopeless,” 1–40.

⁸² Pope, *Job*, 125; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 274–75; Newsom, “Job,” 460; Wilson, “Job’s Arbiter,” 245–49; Balentine, *Job*, 259. On the other hand, Curtis (“Job’s Witness,” 549–62) and Clines (*Job 1–20*, 390) have independently argued that the figure is neither God nor an imaginary heavenly witness. Without drawing the connection between 9:33 and 16:19, Curtis argues that the witness refers to Job’s personal god, in contrast to the remote, transcendent God. From a different perspective, Clines, exaggerating the functional difference between Job’s imaginary arbiter in 9:33 and the heavenly witness in 16:19, contends that it is Job’s “affirmation of innocence that stands as his witness in God’s presence.”

⁸³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 275; Newsom, “Job,” 460; Balentine, *Job*, 259.

⁸⁴ Cox, “Rational Inquiry,” 639.

Job's awareness of his imminent death urges him to reflect further on his situation (17:1, 7). He reiterates his complaint that his misfortune has caused him to become the object of mockery to others (17:2, 6). "Sandwiched in between this account of grief and abuse is a brief address to God (17:3–4) coupled with a proverbial saying (17:5)."⁸⁵ The text here is unfortunately obscure. Perhaps "Job's statement [in 17:3] is best understood as a claim that he is willing to place his own life in pledge in order to come before God and clear his name."⁸⁶ Apparently, Job accuses God of acting as the active agent who shuts the minds of the mockers against him (17:4).⁸⁷ The resulting foolishness of those mockers is exemplified in a proverbial saying about a "boastful man who calls his friends to a banquet when his larder is so empty that his children are starving."⁸⁸ With regard to the development of instabilities in the narrative, this speech further intensifies the conflict between Job and God.

In a sarcastic tone, Job ridicules his friends for regarding him as a godless man while perceiving themselves as "upright," "righteous," "innocent," and "those whose hands are clean" (17:8–9). In response to Eliphaz's discrediting him as a sage, Job declares that neither do they qualify for such a title (17:10). His speech again concludes with the topic of death and the consequent loss of hope (17:11–16)

Even if there may still be room for doubt regarding Eliphaz's purpose in launching his preceding speech, Job has definitely interpreted Eliphaz's words not as a

⁸⁵ Balentine, *Job*, 260.

⁸⁶ Newsom, "Job," 461. Similarly, Habel, *The Book of Job*, 276–77; Balentine, *Job*, 260–61.

⁸⁷ As Clines (*Job 1–20*, 394) puts it, "The motif drawn upon is that of God's blinding the eyes or hardening the heart or otherwise depriving people of their natural sense (cf. Isa 6:10; 44:18; Job 39:17)."

⁸⁸ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 395.

pure argument in an abstract wisdom debate over the moral order of the world but as a pointed personal attack directed against him. More importantly, Job does not engage in an ideological dispute with Eliphaz but continues to use fragments of lament and the legal language to proceed with his complaint. As Clines puts it,

The *function* of this speech is to urge a prompt response from God to the demand for a lawsuit made in Job's previous speech (chaps. 12–14). On the trajectory of Job's developing argument, this speech adds no new matter to his complaint against God, but serves—in the absence of any divine reply to his summons in 13:22—to stress the urgency of a reply. “Sleepless I wait for God's reply,” he says (16:20b).⁸⁹

Although there is no major forward movement in terms of narrative progression in this speech, the further development of the idea of an intermediary between God and Job stands out. As Phelan explains, the authorial audience often forms expectations as part of the reading experience.⁹⁰ Perhaps, on the narrative level, the repetition of the “intermediary” motif anticipates a similar figure who will step in and perform a similar role for Job.

III. Bildad's Second Speech (Job 18)

A. Allusion Analysis

The narrator uses the same phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to indicate the entrance of Bildad's voice into the conversation the second time. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible allusions. The verb *טף*, “to tear,” in conjunction with the term *אפו*, “his anger,” (16:9; 18:4a) draws a connection between these two speeches. Moreover, the

⁸⁹ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 377; italics his.

⁹⁰ Phelan, *Experiencing Fiction*, 5.

parallel terms “wicked” and “evildoer” (16:11; 18:5, 21), and the “light” metaphor (17:12; 18:5–6) all contribute to the literary correspondences between the two speeches. Besides, Bildad’s present speech also appears to allude to Job’s previous speech in chs. 12–14. The clearest example is Bildad’s expression, “the rock is removed from its place,” in 18:4b–c. The whole statement is almost a verbatim repetition of what Job said in 14:18. Moreover, the word בהמה, “cattle,” which Bildad uses in the opening of this speech, is likely an allusion to Job’s earlier use of the same term in 12:7.

Apart from shared words, shared images and motifs also link Bildad’s present speech with Job’s earlier utterances. For instance, the image of “arrested movement” links Bildad’s description of the wicked with Job’s earlier complaint (13:27; 18:7–10). Besides, the “fear” motif, which permeates Job’s speeches (3:25; 9:28, 34–35; 13:21), reappears in this speech of Bildad (18:11). Finally, the “bodily disintegration” motif, of which Job speaks occasionally (7:5; 17:7), also appears in this speech (18:13).

1. בהמה (18:3)

The noun בהמה, “cattle,” provides a verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s previous speech (chs. 12–14).⁹¹ In the form of a rhetorical question, Bildad, presumably also on behalf of Eliphaz and Zophar, asks Job why he regards them as stupid as cattle (בהמה; 18:3). Although Job never explicitly called them בהמה, he has told the friends to ask the cattle (בהמה) so that they would impart wisdom unto them (12:7). In so saying, Job derided the wisdom of the friends as inferior. This allusion draws the reader’s

⁹¹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 285) also recognizes this connection.

attention to the intent of Bildad's present speech. His primary purpose is to defend the honour of himself, and the friends in general, not as comforters, but as wise men.

2. אָפּוּ + טרף (18:4a)

The term *טרף*, “to tear,” in conjunction with the other term *אָפּוּ*, “his anger,” appears both in this speech and in Job's preceding one.⁹² Without addressing Job directly in person, Bildad calls him “the one who tears (*טרף*) himself in his anger (*אָפּוּ*; 18:4a).” However, when Job speaks of God in his preceding speech, Job claims that his [God's] anger (*אָפּוּ*) tears (*טרף*) him in a way similar to how a beast tears its prey (16:9). Bildad's name calling is a critique directed to Job. According to Bildad, Job's present situation is a result of anger of his own, not God's.⁹³

3. ויעתק צור ממקמו (18:4c)

Addressing Job as “the one who tears in his anger,” Bildad asks Job rhetorically, “Is it for your sake that the earth shall be forsaken and the rock shall be removed from its place?” (*ויעתק צור ממקמו*; 18:4b–c). The phrase *ויעתק צור ממקמו* is almost a verbatim repetition of part of what Job said in 14:18: “But the mountain falls and crumbles away, and the rock is removed from its place” (*וצור יעתק ממקמו*).⁹⁴ There, the agent that causes this natural phenomenon is the torrent of water (14:19). In the context of the present

⁹² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 285; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 411; Good, *In Turn of Tempest*, 252; Course, *Speech and Response*, 107–8.

⁹³ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 286) even asserts, “Bildad is indeed accusing Job of wanting to play God, to express anger comparable to God's, and to overturn the cosmic order as if he were lord of chaos. Bildad is accusing Job of projecting onto God what is a trait within Job himself.”

⁹⁴ Good, *In Turn of Tempest*, 252. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 412) also notes the parallel, but he refuses to make any connection between the two passages.

speech, on the contrary, the agent is Job's torrent of words (מליץ; 18:2). In adopting the same phrase that Job has used, Bildad demonstrates to Job that his knowledge is comparable to Job's, rather than that of cattle.

4. אור and חשך (18:5–6)

The first image that Bildad uses to depict the fate of the wicked is that of light and darkness. He takes up a conventional proverbial saying, “the light (אור) of the wicked will be distinguished” (18:5a; cf. Prov 13:9; 20:20; 24:20), and expands on it. Light, in this context, is more of a metaphor for the quality of life⁹⁵ than just a symbol for clinical life, as opposed to death.⁹⁶ In the elaboration, Bildad signifies the concept of “light” with terms such as “the flame” (אש; 18:5b) and “the lamp” (נר; 18:6b). Moreover, he describes the concept of “darkness” or the extinction of light with verbs and phrases like “will shine no more” (18:5b), “will become dark” (18:6a), and “will be quenched” (18:6b). Job, in his preceding speech, also talks about the polarity of “light” and “darkness.” He “describes the hope of his heart as an expectation that the night of his despair will turn to day and that a light will dawn in the darkness of his misery” (17:12).⁹⁷ In the context of Job's lament, light is also a symbol for the quality of life. As Habel rightly observes, “Bildad twists the language of Job's hope by asserting that the ‘light’ of the wicked inevitable fades (18:5–6).”⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:158. Similarly, Dhorme, *Job*, 260.

⁹⁶ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 286; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 413; Newsom, “Job,” 468.

⁹⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 278. This verse is subject to different interpretations. I agree with Habel, who adopts the suggestion of Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 184), in understanding this verse as a subordinate clause modifying “desires” in the preceding verse.

⁹⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 278.

5. רשעים and עול (18:5, 21)

The nouns רשעים, “the wicked,” and עול, “evildoer,” provide a verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s preceding one. The bulk of Bildad’s argument in this present speech is concerned with the fate of the unrighteous (18:5–21). He frames the graphic descriptions of their disastrous plight with two statements, one about the certainty of the extinguishing of the light of the wicked (רשעים; v. 5), and the other about the sureness of the destruction of the dwelling of the evildoer (עול; v. 21). Job, in his preceding speech, uses עול and רשעים in parallel, to refer to his enemies, to whom God has yielded him (16:11).⁹⁹ Bildad re-uses the parallel terms in an *inclusio* so as to redirect Job to contemplate on the moral connotation of the two terms.

6. The “arrested movement” imagery (18:7–10)

In addition to the light/darkness polarity, Bildad invokes the picture of “arrested movement” to depict the fate of the typical wicked person (18:7–10).¹⁰⁰ The leading image is the “shortening of steps” (v. 7), followed by terms denoting body parts that are responsible for walking (רגל, “feet” [v. 8a]; עקב, “heel” [v. 9a]) and six different nouns for traps that hinder proper movement (רשת, “net” [v. 8a]; שבכה, “lattice” [v. 8b]; פח, “trap” [v. 9a]; צמים, “snare” [v. 9b]; חבל, “rope” [v. 10a]; מלכודת, “trap” [v. 10b]). Job has also talked about his experience using the image of “arrested movement.”¹⁰¹ In addressing his complaint directly to God in 13:27, Job states that God has set his feet in

⁹⁹ For the reading עול for עויל, see n.66 above.

¹⁰⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 469.

¹⁰¹ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 284, 286–87) also notes the connection between 13:27 and 18:7–10, but he argues that the associated image is that of “hunter/hunted.”

the stocks so that his movement would never fall outside the surveillance of God the Watching Eye. In the present speech, Bildad alludes to this imagery in order to show Job that his sense of “arrested movement” resembles the feeling of the wicked person.

7. The “fear” motif (18:11)

The “fear” motif re-appears in this speech, in which Bildad states that Terrors (בלהות), agents of personified Death, frightens (בעת) the typical wicked person on every side (18:11).¹⁰² Unlike the psychological fear that Eliphaz mentions in his second speech (ch. 15), the terrors “are rather the evident signs of the encroachment of death, namely, hunger and disease (vv 12–13).”¹⁰³ As mentioned above, Job speaks of the feeling of being frightened from time to time (3:25; 9:28, 34–35; 13:21).¹⁰⁴ Similar to Eliphaz, Bildad alludes to this “fear” motif in order to enlighten Job that he is showing the sign of the wicked person.

8. The “bodily disintegration” imagery (18:13)

Closely associated with the “fear” motif is the “bodily disintegration” imagery. Bildad claims that the typical wicked person is frightened partly because his skin (עור) is consumed by Disease and his body parts (בדים) are consumed by the firstborn of Death (18:13).¹⁰⁵ Job has also previously talked about the disintegration of his body in graphic

¹⁰² The noun בלהות, “Terrors,” is best taken to mean the servants of “Death.” See Tromp, *Primitive Conceptions of Death*, 74; Pope, *Job*, 134; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 287; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 416; Newsom, “Job,” 469.

¹⁰³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 416.

¹⁰⁴ See I.A.10 in this chapter.

¹⁰⁵ There is some dispute over the interpretation of this verse. I follow Driver and Gray (*Job*, 2:119) and many others in revocalizing בָּדִי to בְּדִי, “by Disease,” and the first occurrence of יֵאָכֵל to יִאָכֵל, “is

terms. He has mentioned that his flesh is clothed with worms and dirt, and his skin (עור) hardens and oozes (7:5).¹⁰⁶ He has also complained that his eyes grow dim in grief and his body parts (יצרים) are all like a shadow (17:7). On top of these, the reader should not fail to recall the narrator's description of Job's bodily disease in 2:7–8. Once again, Bildad picks up the graphic images of bodily disintegration to convince Job that his present situation is typical of that of the wicked. Perhaps, this is also an ironic echo to Job's self-declaration that the leanness of his body testifies against him (cf. 16:8).¹⁰⁷ Bildad is certainly in agreement with Job on this matter.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction (18:1), Bildad opens his mouth and offers his second speech. The analysis in the above section reveals that Bildad sometimes re-uses the words of Job in order to respond to him and bring Job into comparison with the typical wicked person. Curiously, Bildad does not begin to address Job in the second-person singular form as expected but uses the second-person plural in 18:2–3 instead. Since Bildad consistently uses the first-person plural forms to refer to himself and the

consumed." Moreover, I also follow their suggestion to take the term בָּדָי as "his parts," i.e., his body parts. In this reading, "Disease" and כּוֹר קָיִת, "the firstborn of Death," are both agents of the personified Death. There is, however, another line of interpretation initiated by Sarna ("Mythological Background," 315–18). This alternative reading renders both בָּדָי and בָּדָי as "with his two hands," an expression found in an Ugaritic text. Building on Sarna's mythological reading, Pope (*Job*, 135) renders כּוֹר קָיִת as "First-born Death" and suggests that it is another name for the god Death. The textual problems and grammatical ambiguities in this verse make both readings plausible. Fortunately, as far as this dissertation is concerned, the impact on interpretation the difference between the two readings makes is minimal.

¹⁰⁶ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 163) suggests that the first line refers to a medical condition of some sort and translates "My flesh is covered with pus and scabs." This rendering fits well with the second line. With either reading, it remains clear that Job's physical pain, like his general existence, is an endless cycle of unrelieved misery.

¹⁰⁷ Reading כּוֹר as "leanness." So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 176; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 370 n.8.b.

other two friends in these verses, he cannot be addressing Eliphaz and Zophar, as argued by some.¹⁰⁸ Of course, the simplest solution, which is adopted by some commentators, is to emend the plural forms to the singular.¹⁰⁹ Even Clines, who has taken this approach, has to admit “that it is very difficult to see why the presumed corruption of the text would have occurred.”¹¹⁰ I echo Balentine, who suggests that “it is preferable to accept the ambiguity in the text as a *clue*, not an *obstacle*, to interpretation.”¹¹¹ Perhaps Bildad’s purpose is to deride Job’s interpretation of his exceptional personal experience as only being one out of many.¹¹² Interestingly, although Bildad shifts back to the singular form in 18:4, his first line in the verse is in the third-person. As Good puts it, “It is as if Bildad must push Job into third-person distance before he can allow himself the second-person pronoun in the second line.”¹¹³ Even in the second line of v. 4, he only barely refers to Job with a possessive pronoun, “in *your* sight.” Nowhere in his speech does he address Job directly in the typical second-person singular subjective pronoun, as used elsewhere in the previous speeches of the friends. This oddity invites the authorial audience to regard Bildad’s rhetorical move as an attempt to objectify Job’s personal experience.¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁸ Fohrer (*Das Buch Hiob*, 300) argues that it is not Job, but the friends, whom Bildad addresses in 18:2–3. Dhorme (*Job*, 257–58), nevertheless, contends that Job address the Eliphaz and Bildad in v. 2, but the “audience” in v. 3.

¹⁰⁹ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:116; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 410; Newsom, “Job,” 467.

¹¹⁰ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 410.

¹¹¹ Balentine, *Job*, 271; italics his.

¹¹² Pope (*Job*, 133) points out that “it has been suggested that Bildad’s intent is to ignore Job as an individual and address him as belonging to the class of the impious.” I believe it is preferable not to narrow down how Bildad classifies Job at this point in his speech.

¹¹³ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 252.

¹¹⁴ Balentine (*Job*, 271) claims that Bildad’s oblique address to Job in vv. 2–4 imply “that Bildad regards Job’s arguments as too insignificant to be addressed directly.” Similarly, Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 252) suggests that this indicates “the friends’ inability and unwillingness to come directly to grips with his [Job’s] reading of reality.”

Regarding the content of Bildad's exordium in 18:2–4, he first uses a series of rhetorical questions to object to Job's words (v. 2) and to rebuke Job for putting them down (v. 3). Bildad asks Job rhetorically why he considers them as stupid as "cattle" (בהמה), a term that Job has used earlier (12:7) in the context of his challenge to the friends' presumed wisdom. The allusion gives the impression that Bildad now identifies his role as a contester in a wisdom disputation, rather than a consoling friend. Moreover, for the first time, Bildad, on behalf of the friends, see Job's words as demeaning, thus regarding the disputation between Job and themselves as personal confrontation. The conflict between these two parties in the dialogue is once again intensified. As Bildad continues, he calls Job "the one who tears (טרף) himself in his anger (באפו)" (18:4a). Job, in the preceding speech, uses the same terms טרף and אפו to accuse God of letting his anger (אפו) tear (טרף) him (16:9). Bildad's allusion functions as a correction to Job. According to Bildad, Job's present situation is a result of anger of his own, not God's. Bildad also mimics the language that Job used earlier and mocks the futility of his words to change anything (18:4b–c; cf. 14:18). In so doing, Bildad demonstrates to Job that his wisdom is comparable to Job's.

The rest of Bildad's speech comprises a lengthy depiction of the fate of the wicked (18:5–21), framed by the asseverative particles גם and אך, as well as the parallel terms רשעים and עול. His purpose is to redirect Job to contemplate on the moral connotation of the two terms, which Job, in his preceding speech, has used to refer to his enemies. Bildad's description revolves around various striking images and motifs. First, Bildad adapts a common proverbial saying, which uses the image of extinguished light, to assert the certainty of the ultimate termination of good fortunate of the wicked (vv. 5–

6). His image of light and its turning into darkness is the reverse version of Job's expression of hope in his preceding speech (17:12). The association warns Job of the fact that if he belongs to the wicked, his hope would certainly be dashed.

Bildad turns next to employ the images of "arrested movement" to buttress "[t]he notion that the evil planned by the wicked eventually causes their own ruin" (vv. 7–10).¹¹⁵ Since Job has used similar imagery to refer to his own experience (13:27), Bildad's purposeful allusion brings Job to the awareness that his sense of "arrested movement" resembles the feeling of the wicked.

Bildad goes on to use the images of a prey pursued and devoured by hunting predators to illustrate the violent and unexpected death experienced by the wicked (vv. 11–14). He uses the "fear" motif, which Job has repeatedly used to describe his situation (3:25; 9:28, 34–35; 13:21), to highlight the threat experienced by the wicked (v. 11). He also employs the "bodily disintegration" motif, which Job has also used in several instances to describe his physical status (7:5; 17:7; cf. 2:7–8), to depict the devastating nature of the death of the wicked (vv. 12–13). All these allusions testify to the fact that Bildad is bringing the plight of Job and the fate of the wicked into comparison.

The final set of images that Bildad uses is that of the annihilation of all traces of existence of the wicked (vv. 15–19).¹¹⁶ Their possessions, memorial, and progeny will perish together with them. Bildad concludes the description with a universal reaction of horror (18:20) and his summary appraisal (18:21).¹¹⁷

¹¹⁵ Newsom, "Job," 469.

¹¹⁶ Balentine, *Job*, 276.

¹¹⁷ Newsom, "Job," 470.

The many instances of similarity between Bildad's depiction of the wicked and Job's earlier utterances suggest that the correspondences are not coincidental. If the authorial audience is not sure about Eliphaz's intent in giving the vivid depiction of the destruction of the wicked (15:20–35), this speech of Bildad provides a further evidence that part of the purpose of the speeches of Eliphaz and Bildad is to warn Job of his proximity to these people. Although there is no major progression of the narrative in this speech, the fact that Bildad attempts to objectify Job's personal claim in the exordium suggests again that the friends intend to fit Job's experience into their universal ideological framework.

IV. Job's Fifth Response (Job 19)

A. Allusion Analysis

As before, the narrator uses the phrase ויען ... ויאמר, "answered," to introduce Job's fifth response. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Bildad, for possible allusions. Two motifs stand out as possible links between the two speeches. First, both Bildad and Job speak of the "bodily disintegration" motif (18:13; 19:20, 22, 26). Second, while Bildad employs the "posterity" motif to depict the lack of progeny of the wicked, Job envisions the emergence of his *gō'ēl*, who will continue the family's solidarity, to rise up for him. Besides, the verb עוֹת, "to pervert," in conjunction with the noun מִשְׁפָּט, "justice," appears to draw a connection between this speech and Bildad's first speech (8:3; 19:6–7). Finally, the noun יָד, "hand," in conjunction with the verb נָגַע, "to touch," also seems to suggest a verbal correspondence between this speech and the prologue (1:11; 2:5; 19:21).

1. משפט + עות (19:6–7)

The verb עות, “to pervert,” which appears only 12 times in the Hebrew Bible, links this speech with Bildad’s first speech (ch. 8).¹¹⁸ After the typical exordium (19:2–5), Job declares to his friends that it is God who has perverted (*pi’el* of עות) him (19:6). Job does not explain what exactly he means by that. Balentine’s understanding seems to be a fair assessment based on Job’s previous speeches: “God has declared Job guilty even though he is innocent (cf. 9:20). Beyond that, God has blocked all his efforts to obtain vindication through a fair and just hearing of his case (cf. 9:1–2, 19, 32; 13:13–28).”¹¹⁹ Therefore, in the context of this present speech, Job goes on to complain that there is no litigation (משפט; 19:7).¹²⁰ Interestingly, Bildad has used עות in conjunction with משפט in his first speech. In the form of a series of rhetorical questions, Bildad affirms that God neither perverts (עות) justice (משפט) nor perverts (עות) the right (8:3). Job, in his present speech, picks up Bildad’s abstract concept of the “perversion of justice” and applies it to his personal situation. As Habel rightly remarks, “Job, unlike Bildad, is not interested in justice in the abstract, but with the legal suit he wishes to press against God.”¹²¹

2. The “bodily disintegration” motif (19:20, 22, 26)

The “bodily disintegration” motif, which is present in Bildad’s preceding speech, re-appears in Job’s present speech. In ch. 19, the graphic image of physical disintegration first shows up in v. 20, which Clines aptly calls “one of the most problematic verses of

¹¹⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 299–300; Newsom, “Job,” 475.

¹¹⁹ Balentine, *Job*, 288.

¹²⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 300; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 443.

¹²¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 300.

the whole book.”¹²² As he observes, the verb דבק, “to cling,” always refers to “one thing sticking or clinging to another, or depending on another, the weaker to the stronger or the less significant to the more significant.”¹²³ In our text, his bones are said to cling to (דבק) his skin and his flesh (v. 20a). This is the reverse description of a healthy body, in which the skin and flesh should cling to the bones.¹²⁴ For the second half of the verse, which may be literally rendered, “I escape by the skin of my teeth,” I also follow Clines and interpret it as an ironic expression of the despair of the absence of any real escape.¹²⁵

After a brief sarcastic appeal to the friends to have pity on him (19:21), Job asks them rhetorically why they persecute him in a manner similar to what God does to him (19:22a). The image Job uses is still of the disintegration of his body: “Why do you not satisfy with my flesh?” (19:22b).

The last instance of the “bodily disintegration” motif appears in the context of a much controversial context in 19:26. Because of the overwhelming interest in the identity of Job’s גאל in 19:25, much critical ink has been spilled on the interpretation of 19:23–27 as a semantic unit.¹²⁶ It should be noted, however, 19:26 is apparently connected to the

¹²² Clines, *Job 1–20*, 450. He conveniently summarizes the oddities of the verse: “The initial difficulty is that after speaking for seven verses about his isolation from his fellow humans it is strange that Job should suddenly be concerned about his physical distress ... Second, it is curious that he should complain that his bones are ‘cleaving to his flesh,’ since that seems to be a very satisfactory situation anatomically. Third, the first half of the line seems overlong ... Fourth, it is strange that Job should say that he has ‘escaped (מלט hithp), since that seems to be the last thing he would claim has been his experience.”

¹²³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 450.

¹²⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 450; Newsom, “Job,” 477; Balentine, *Job*, 291.

¹²⁵ According to Clines (*Job 1–20*, 452), the statement means, “The only escape I have achieved is to have lost everything.” So Newsom, “Job,” 477; Balentine, *Job*, 291.

¹²⁶ See, e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 297; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 435–36.

preceding context (vv. 20–22) by the “bodily disintegration” imagery.¹²⁷ Anatomical terminology such as “skin” (v. 20) and “flesh” (v. 22) is repeated in v. 26. Moreover, given that the friends are said to be not satisfied with Job’s flesh in v. 22, the third person plural subject of the term נקפו (*pi’el* perfect of נקף) in v. 26 may indicate that the friends are the agents who have flayed off the skin of Job.¹²⁸ This reading also connects better to the following context, in which Job recalls again his feeling of persecution by the friends (19:28). If the above suggestion is a reasonable one, the two phrases ואחר עורי נקפו, “but after they have flayed off my skin,” and ומבשרי, “and from my flesh,” which are often taken as signifying the realm of death and life respectively,¹²⁹ may still belong to the metaphorical language of “bodily disintegration,” a language that Job has been using since v. 20.

Bildad, in his preceding speech, also uses the “bodily disintegration” motif. According to him, the skin and the body parts of the wicked will be devoured (18:13). Similar images are being picked up by Job in this present speech. Whereas Bildad employs this metaphorical language to intensify the association of Job with the wicked, Job adopts the same language to express the feeling of alienation, which is clearly the context of 19:13–22.¹³⁰ Interestingly, it is exactly because of the friends’ identifying him as showing the signs of the wicked that heightens his sense of alienation.

¹²⁷ Seow (“Job’s *gō’ēl*, again,” 689–709) is one rare exception who recognizes this connection. Habel (*The Book of Job*, 302, 303) also says of the “flesh motif” in 19:20, 22, but surprisingly does not elaborate on its significance in 19:26.

¹²⁸ Seow (“Job’s *gō’ēl*, again,” 704) also considers this as one of the possible readings.

¹²⁹ See, e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 307, 309; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 461; Balentine, “Job’s Redeemer,” 275–76; *idem*, *Job*, 299–300.

¹³⁰ Clines (*Job 1–20*, 451–52) also argues for the connection between 19:20 and the preceding verses. He writes of Job, “The absence of his friend and relations and the deprivation of human intimacy have not of

3. יד + נגע (19:21)

The noun יד, “hand,” in conjunction with the verb נגע, “to touch,” in this speech clearly hearkens back to the prologue. In a sarcastic tone, Job begs the friends to have pity on him and to recall their status as his comrades (19:21a). The reason for such a tongue-in-cheek appeal is that the hand (יד) of Eloah has touched (נגע) him (19:21b). The reader should be quick to identify the allusion to the heavenly conversation in the prologue in which the satan taunts YHWH twice to stretch out his hand (יד) to touch (נגע) Job (1:11; 2:5). The major rhetorical effect of this allusion is to remind the authorial audience about the origin of Job’s suffering before one forgets.

4. The “posterity” motif (19:25)

One of the major controversies in the book is the identity of the אֱלֹהִים of Job in 19:25. Those who argue that the figure refers to God often have called attention to those biblical passages (Isa 41:14; 43:14; 44:6, 24; 47:4; 48:17; 49:7, 26; 54:5, 8; 59:20; 60:16; 63:16; Jer 50:34; Pss 19:15; 78:35), in which God is explicitly called the אֱלֹהִים of the psalmist or the people.¹³¹ As Habel forcefully argues,

A major argument against identifying God as the *gō’ēl* is that it would mean a complete reversal in the pattern of Job’s thought ... Job has portrayed God consistently as his attacker not his defender, his enemy not his friend, his adversary at law not his advocate, his hunter not his healer, his spy not his savior, an intimidating terror not an impartial judge.¹³²

course induced some recurrence of his malady, but have weakened his spirit and sapped his vigor. The psychic sense of isolation has been experienced as an interior loss of structure.”

¹³¹ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:171–74; Dhorme, *Job*, 283; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 204–6; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 292–95; Gibson, “My Redeemer Liveth,” 53–59. See also Holman, “Does my Redeemer Live,” 377–81; Michel, “Confidence and Despair,” 157–81. Both Holman and Michel interpret the adjective חַי in 19:25 to stand for “the Living God.”

¹³² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 306. The same quotation is cited by Clines (*Job 1–20*, 465).

Even if Job intends to call to mind the figure of God as his **גאל**, at best he is doing it in an ironic fashion. As Seow suggests, “The intent of this anonymous reference, one may surmise, is to remind the deity of a role abandoned that must be taken up again.”¹³³

More likely, the term **גאל** refers to an imaginary figure similar to the “arbiter” (**מוכח**) in 9:33 and the “witness” (**עד**) in 16:19.¹³⁴ When used to signify the role of a human being, the term **גאל** designates the male next of kin, who was responsible to maintain the rights or preserve the continuity of the family when that individual was unable to do so.¹³⁵ The **גאל** is thus the embodiment of family or clan solidarity.¹³⁶ In the situation where the progeny of the person is cut off, the **גאל** steps in and protects the interests of the individual.

Bildad, in his preceding speech, also uses the “posterity” motif. According to him, there will be no progeny for the wicked (18:19). Job, in this present speech, craftily picks up this motif and applies it to himself. Even if he is going to have no descendents, which is certainly true up to this point of the story, Job claims that his **גאל** lives (19:25a). The term **גאל** is suitable also because of its legal connotation,¹³⁷ which is the immediate context of the preceding verses (vv. 23–24). The setting invites the reader to understand

¹³³ Seow, “Job’s *gō’ēl*, again,” 701.

¹³⁴ Pope, *Job*, 146; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 306; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 258–59; Newsom, “Job,” 479; Wilson, “Job’s Arbiter,” 249–51; Balentine, “Job’s Redeemer,” 274–75; *idem*, *Job*, 297.

¹³⁵ Ringgren, “**גָּאֵל**; **גָּאֵלָה**,” 351. For some recent proposals to take **גאל** in Job 19:25 as an earthly figure, see Magdalene, “Who is Job’s Redeemer,” 292–316; Suriano, “Job’s Kinsman-Redeemer,” 49–66. Based on a comparative study with “Neo-Babylonian litigation records of the late seventh to fifth centuries BCE,” Magdalene suggests that “Job’s redeemer is his hoped-for second accuser in his case against God, one who never appears, despite Job’s pleas” (295). On the other hand, Suriano interprets Job’s **גאל** as his kinsman-redeemer, who “will perform the proper rituals on his behalf in order to preserve Job’s name and patrimony for posterity” (50).

¹³⁶ Johnson, “Primary Meaning,” 67–77; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 304; Newsom, “Job,” 478.

¹³⁷ Ringgren, “**גָּאֵל**; **גָּאֵלָה**,” 352–53; Hubbard, “**גָּאֵל**,” 789–97.

the verb קום, “to rise,” in the second half of v. 25 in a legal sense too.¹³⁸ The usage is similar to the one at 16:8, in which Job’s gauntness is said to rise up (קום) as a witness to testify against him.¹³⁹ Thus, in a veiled fashion, Job uses Bildad’s idea as a springboard to express his desire using legal language again.¹⁴⁰

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction, Job speaks up again. The analysis in the above section reveals that Job sometimes re-uses the words of the friends in order to refute their arguments. Job begins with the typical exordium, in which he accuses the friends for tormenting and crushing him with their words (19:2–5).¹⁴¹ He turns next to elicit the friends’ attention that it is God who has perverted (עוּת) him (19:6a) and there is no litigation (מִשְׁפֵּט) for him (19:7b). Whereas Bildad’s claim that God does not pervert justice (8:3) indicates that his interest lies in the abstract concept of God’s justice, Job’s re-use of the same terms here suggests that he is more concerned with his personal lawsuit against God. As Job continues, he uses imagery and motifs in a typical lament to depict God’s violent aggression against him (19:6b, 8–12).

¹³⁸ Pope, *Job*, 146; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 293; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 460; Newsom, “Job,” 478.

¹³⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 305; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 460.

¹⁴⁰ I have not discussed the term ואחרון and the phrase על עפר in 19:25, both of which are subject to radically different interpretations, because they are not directly relevant to the allusion under study. For a good survey of opinions, see Seow, “Job’s *gō’ēl*, again,” 701–3. I am inclined to take אחרון as a substantive, meaning “the last,” presumably the last one to speak in a forensic setting (Budde, *Das Buch Hiob*, 108; Driver, “Hebrew Text and Language,” 46–47). Moreover, I understand על עפר as a prepositional phrase signifying the realm of the dead (Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:173–74; Day, *Adversary in Heaven*, 99; Suriano, “Job’s Kinsman-Redeemer,” 63). This usage has clear parallels elsewhere in the book (17:13; 20:11; 21:26; 34:15).

¹⁴¹ There is much dispute over the interpretation of 19:4, which reads, “Even if it is true that I have erred, it is *with myself* (אִתִּי) where my error lodges.” The emphatic position of the term אִתִּי suggests that the focus is placed on the physical extent of Job’s sin. I am inclined to read the verse as Job’s declaration that if he sins, he would be the only one who knows about it (cf. Pope, *Job*, 140).

The next topic he addresses is the alienation of his friends and his community from him (19:13–19). At this point, he abruptly shifts to use images of “bodily disintegration,” a motif that Bildad has previously used to elicit the association of Job with the wicked (18:13), to depict how the friends pursue him like a prey (19:20, 22). The allusion suggests that Job regards the friends’ pointed language as their tactic to harm him. The metaphor shifts again for a moment to a legal one, in which his plea is said to be preserved in a permanent medium (19:23–24).¹⁴² He also believes that his *gō’ēl* will rise up to take up his case after he is dead (19:25). His concept of a *gō’ēl* is perhaps inspired by Bildad, who previously used the “posterity” motif to describe the hopelessness of the wicked (18:19). As his speech comes to an end, he switches back to the “bodily disintegration” imagery to express his desire to behold God in his own eye (19:26–27). His gauntness would now bear witness to the persecution that the friends had done to him, which will result in God’s judgment against them (19:28–29). For the first time since his opening outcry, Job does not end his speech with a meditation on death.¹⁴³

Throughout the entire speech, Job does not address God in the second person a single time.¹⁴⁴ His speech “seems primarily to be directed towards the friends, who are explicitly addressed in vv 2–6, 21–22, 28–29.”¹⁴⁵ His attitude toward the friends has also

¹⁴² The imagery in vv. 23b–24 is not clear. It is legitimate to interpret all three lines as depicting the inscription of words on stone. So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 204; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 292; Clines, *Job 1–20*, 456–57. Alternatively, it is also defensible to interpret Job as describing three materials—scroll, lead tablet, engraved rock—on which his words might be recorded. So Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:171.

¹⁴³ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 437–38; Newsom, “Job,” 479.

¹⁴⁴ Some (e.g., Clines, *Job 1–20*, 381; Newsom, “Job,” 458) suggest to emend the two verbs in 16:7b–8a from the second-person to the third-person. If this is accepted, then Job has stopped addressing God directly in his last speech.

¹⁴⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 437.

become increasingly hostile. While Job began to deride the words of the friends in the exordium of his preceding speech (16:2–6), he exposes the malicious intent of them and their speeches in the opening of this speech (19:2–5). At the end of this speech, rather than a typical contemplation of death in despair, Job issues a threat of divine judgment upon the friends (19:28–29). As far as the instabilities in the narrative are concerned, this speech further intensifies the conflict between Job and the friends.

Although the primary concern of this speech is Job's relationship with the friends and his community, Job has not abandoned his lawsuit. His renowned hope for a *gō'ēl* to take up his legal dispute with God again invites the participation of the authorial audience to assume that mediating role. By putting the words “for the hand (יד) of Eloah has touched (נגע) me” in Job's mouth, the author skilfully alludes to the heavenly dialogue in the prologue (1:11; 2:5) one more time. This allusion reminds the authorial audience of the incident behind the plight of Job, thus urging the audience not to side with God too easily.

V. Zophar's Second Speech (Job 20)

A. Allusion Analysis

The narrator uses the same phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to indicate the entrance of Zophar's voice into the conversation the second time. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible allusions. In the beginning of this present speech (20:3), Zophar uses *בלמה*, a term cognate with the verb *בלם*, a word that Job uses in the opening of the preceding speech (19:3). A closer look also reveals that there are literary correspondences

between Zophar's present speech and Job's previous speech in chs. 16-17. For instance, the image of an arrow piercing through the gallbladder is present in both speeches (16:13; 20:24-25). In both speeches, the word pair "heaven" and "earth" also appear together in a legal context (16:18; 20:27).

1. בלם (20:3)

The root בלם links this speech with Job's preceding one.¹⁴⁶ In the exordium of his reply to Job, Zophar states that he is compelled to speak up because he has heard מוסר בלמתי, "an instruction that insults me," presumably from Job (20:2-3).¹⁴⁷ In the beginning of the preceding speech, Job uses the verb בלם, a cognate of בלמה, in the context of an accusation against his friends who, Job claims, have repeatedly insulted (בלם) him (19:3). Zophar thus uses the allusion to signal to Job that the real victims of insult are the friends, not Job.

2. עפר + שכב (20:11)

The expression "lie down in the dust" (עפר + שכב) connects this speech with Job's earlier one (chs. 6-7). The term עפר, which literally means "dust" or "dirt," can metaphorically refer to the grave.¹⁴⁸ Although the expression "lie down in the dust" appears at first glance very ordinary, it appears in the Hebrew Bible only three times, all of them in Job (7:21; 20:11; 21:26). In this speech, Zophar claims that the wicked person

¹⁴⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 315; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 483; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 260; Course, *Speech and Response*, 121.

¹⁴⁷ Reading the term בלמתי as an appositional genitive (Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 214). So Clines, *Job 1-20*, 483.

¹⁴⁸ Wächter, "עפר; עפר; עפר," 264-65; Hayden, "עפר," 472.

lies down (שכב) in the dust (עפר) in the prime of his life (20:11). Job, however, has used the expression in the context of a complaint, in which he suggests to God that he will soon lie down (שכב) in the dust (עפר; 7:21). Given the rarity of this expression, Zophar appears to interpret Job's prediction of his fate as a virtual admission that Job is close to becoming one of the wicked.

3. מררה + קשת (20:24–25)

The image of קשת, “an arrow,” piercing through מררה, “the gallbladder,” provides a thematic correspondence between this speech and Job's previous one (chs. 16–17).¹⁴⁹ Near the end of his depiction of the fate of the typical wicked person, Zophar states that even though such an individual may flee from a weapon of iron, a bronze arrow (קשת) will pierce him through (20:24). When he pulls the arrowhead out of his back from his gallbladder (מררה), terrors come upon him (20:25). Earlier Job has used a similar imagery to express the divine violence against him. His image is that God orders his archers (רבים) to pierce his kidneys and spill his gallbladder (מררה) on the ground (16:13). The noun מררה appears only five times in the Hebrew Bible, four times in Job.¹⁵⁰ The rarity of this term adds weight to the argument that the allusion is deliberate. Moreover, the noun רבים is connected to the other noun קשת by association under the image of archery (cf. Jer 50:29). Like Eliphaz and Bildad, Zophar re-uses the terms and images that Job has previously used in order to show Job that his misery is not far from that of the typical wicked person.

¹⁴⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 319. Both Clines (*Job 1–20*, 496) and Balentine (*Job*, 316) recognize the similar imagery in the two speeches but neither of them draws any connection between them.

¹⁵⁰ The MT vocalizes the noun as מִרְרָה in Job 16:13 but elsewhere (Deut 32:32; Job 13:26; 20:14, 25) as מִרְרָה.

4. שמים + ארץ (20:27)

This present speech of Zophar is also linked to Job's previous speech in chs. 16–17 through the parallel terms שמים, "heavens," and ארץ, "earth."¹⁵¹ According to Zophar, the heavens (שמים) and the earth (ארץ) will function as witnesses to uncover (גלה) the iniquity of the wicked person and to rise up, presumably to testify, against him (20:27).¹⁵² Although some commentators point to the fact that שמים and ארץ are sometimes called to take on a similar function (Deut 32:1; Isa 1:2; Mic 6:1–2) elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible,¹⁵³ their role as attested in those passages are all passive, as opposed to the active one in the verse under study. The closest parallel in fact is found in Job's previous speech in which he asks ארץ not to cover (כסה) his blood (16:18). Moreover, he affirms that he has a witness, one who will argue for him, in שמים (16:19). I echo Holbert that the juxtaposition of the verbs גלה, "to uncover," and כסה, "to cover," increases the likelihood of the deliberateness of the allusion.¹⁵⁴

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction (20:1), Zophar gives his second, and, as the reader will soon see, his final speech. The analysis in the above section reveals that

¹⁵¹ Holbert, "Satire," 177–78; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 319–20; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 263. Newsom ("Job," 486) also recognizes the similar imagery in the two speeches but she does not draw any connection between them. On the other end of the pole, Clines (*Job 1–20*, 497–98) warns against drawing any connection between these passages too easily based on the similar language they share.

¹⁵² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 319.

¹⁵³ Newsom, "Job," 486; Balentine, *Job*, 317.

¹⁵⁴ Holbert, "Satire," 177. Clines (*Job 1–20*, 498) is certainly correct in pointing out that "[in 20:27] it is *heaven* that discloses the wicked's *iniquity* whereas in 16:18 it was *earth* that was summoned not to cover Job's *blood*" (italics his). However, this poetic variation in allusion should be defensible.

Zophar sometimes re-uses the words of Job in order to respond to him and compare Job to the typical wicked person. Zophar begins with the classic exordium, in which he defends his necessity to reply (20:2–3). In addition to finding Job’s words offensive, Zophar characterizes them as מוסר בלמתי, “an instruction that insults me” (v. 3). This expression is an allusion to the opening of Job’s preceding speech, in which he complains that the friends have repeatedly insulted (בלם) him (19:3). Zophar thus uses the allusion to signal to Job that the real victims of insult are the friends, not Job. In calling Job’s word as מוסר, which is clearly part of sapiential vocabulary, Zophar intellectualizes Job’s complaints as if they were words in a wisdom disputation.¹⁵⁵

The rest of Zophar’s speech again comprises a vivid depiction of the fate of the wicked (20:4–29). He first appeals to ancient tradition (v. 4) for the truthfulness of his claim that the joy of the wicked is impermanent (v. 5). He continues to substantiate his assertion by describing the fleeting nature of the wicked person who ends up dying prematurely (vv. 6–11). Zophar uses the expression “lie down in the dust” (עפר + שכב), which Job has previously used to describe his imminent future, to depict the premature death of the wicked person. The next theme being explored in this speech is the self-destructive nature of the wicked person’s obsession with evil (vv. 12–23). The metaphors that Zophar uses are all related to overeating or its effect on the greedy.¹⁵⁶

Zophar turns next to describe the inescapability of the destruction of the wicked (20:24–28). He first uses the image of a battle in which the wicked person is pictured as a defeated warrior who avoids one weapon directed at him only to succumb to another (vv.

¹⁵⁵ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 483.

¹⁵⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 484.

24–25b). As he sees what he has done to himself, terrors of death come upon him (v. 25c). Most striking is Zophar’s employment of the archery imagery, together with the image of the piercing of the gallbladder. Job has used a similar image to refer to his own suffering experience (16:13). The allusion suggests that Zophar, like Eliphaz and Bildad, uses the topos of the wicked to warn Job against following the trajectory of this category of people.

As Zophar continues, he uses darkness as a metaphor for death, which, he claims, seizes what the wicked person has concealed (v. 26a).¹⁵⁷ An “unfanned fire” comes next to destroy any survivors in his tent (v. 26b).¹⁵⁸ The metaphor then changes to a legal one, in which heaven and earth are said to take on the role of witnesses and accusers against the wicked person (v. 27). This description directly contradicts the hope of Job, who has previously asked “earth” not to cover his blood and declared that he has a witness in “heaven” (16:18).

As Zophar’s speech comes to an end, he mentions that the “devastating flood” would carry out the sentence in the day of God’s wrath (v. 28).¹⁵⁹ Zophar concludes his speech with a summary appraisal underscoring that this destruction is God’s decree (20:29).¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁷ Clines, *Job* 1–20, 496; Newsom, “Job,” 486.

¹⁵⁸ As Newsom (“Job,” 486) rightly argues, “An ‘unfanned fire’ (v. 26b) is not necessary a divine fire. In the context of the poetic imagination in this section, it is simply one of the active forces of nature intent on destroying the wicked person.”

¹⁵⁹ Clines, *Job* 1–20, 498.

¹⁶⁰ As Balentine (*Job*, 318) puts it, “The one who established and sustains the moral order the way it has always been is God. Zophar has made this assertion twice before (vv. 5, 23 [“his anger”]). Now he presses the argument with two final references. The portion comes from God (’ēlōhīm); the heritage is ordained by El (’ēl).”

With regard to the progression of the narrative, Zophar, like Bildad, does not contribute much. He basically re-iterates what the other two friends have articulated. He regards Job's words as insulting and the whole speech appears to be a rhetorical defence of their reputation. Zophar, like Eliphaz and Bildad, uses the topos of the destruction of the wicked to re-affirm their own religious proposition. Since the experience of an innocent sufferer that Job has been articulating is not compatible with their theological standpoint, Zophar deliberately uses images and words that Job has used to describe his own situation to depict the ultimate destruction and hopelessness of the wicked. In so doing, the experience of Job fits comfortably into their theological paradigm.

VI. Job's Sixth Response (Job 21)

A. Allusion Analysis

Most would agree that "Job's disputation on the wicked [in ch. 21] is a calculated refutation employing both major themes and key emotive language used by the friends in their portraits of the wicked."¹⁶¹ Motifs such as "progeny," "terror," "possession," "happiness," "death," "the extinguishing of the lamp of the wicked," "calamity," "habitation," and "remembrance," all of which have appeared in one form or another in the topos on the fate of the wicked as articulated by the friends, are present in this speech. Apart from these, the noun חַיִּי, "complaint, meditation," appears to draw a connection between this speech and Eliphaz's second speech (15:4b; 21:4), whereas the term אַפִּי, "his anger," in conjunction with the root חָלַק, seems to form a correspondence between this speech and Zophar's second speech (20:28–29; 21:17c).

¹⁶¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 325. So Newsom, "Job," 492; Balentine, *Job*, 322; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 521–22.

1. שׂיח (21:4a)

The root שׂיח, “complaint, meditation” provides a verbal correspondence between this speech and Job’s previous speeches. Job uses שׂיח to refer to his complaint, which he claims to be directed not to another human, but presumably to God (21:4a).¹⁶² This is consistent with the usage elsewhere in his speeches (7:13; 9:27; 10:1). Earlier, Eliphaz uses the noun שׂיחה, the feminine counterpart of שׂיח, to refer to meditation, an appropriate religious activity, which Job’s inappropriate words disrespects (15:4b).¹⁶³ Again, the allusion invites the reader to contemplate on the significance of this ambivalent term.

2. The “progeny” motif (21:8, 19)

In support of his counterclaim, Job refers to several motifs that the friends have used. First, he recounts the security of descendants of the wicked (v. 8). On the one hand, this description is similar to the one Eliphaz uses to illustrate Job’s prospect future in his first speech (5:25).¹⁶⁴ On the other hand, it is exactly opposite to the depiction Bildad and Zophar employ for the wicked. Bildad asserts that the wicked person has no offspring (18:19), while Zophar claims that the children of the wicked will become impoverished (20:10). Job’s assertion is a direct refutation of the claim of the friends.

Job continues to bolster his argument by appealing to the notion that God stores up the iniquity of a wicked person for his children (21:19a). Many take Job’s statement as

¹⁶² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 326.

¹⁶³ See I.A.2 in this chapter.

¹⁶⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 492; Balentine, *Job*, 327.

an unmarked attributed quotation of the speeches of the friends.¹⁶⁵ I have argued elsewhere that this line of interpretation is not well founded.¹⁶⁶ On the opposite pole, Fox argues that the idea contained in Job 21:19a does not originate from the speeches of the three comforters: “The friends have nowhere argued that children suffer *instead* of their fathers; they see the suffering of the children rather as an additional element in the punishment of the fathers (5:4; 20:10) ... Nor have the friends said something sufficiently similar in idea or wording that the verse could be taken as a distortion of their words.”¹⁶⁷ I do not find Fox’s deliberate distancing of Job’s sentiment in this verse from the friends’ previous arguments convincing or necessary. Job is twisting an argument presented earlier by his friends and using it as a springboard to make his own point in what follows (21:19b-21): God violates justice by deferring the retribution, which the evildoers themselves deserve, until the following generation. Thus, it appears to be more appropriate to understand Job 21:19a as an allusion, rather than an attributed quotation. After all, Job is in agreement with the sentiment of this sentence, from which he constructs his argument.

3. The “terror” motif (21:9, 11–12)

Both Job and the friends employ the “terror” motif extensively in the second cycle of dialogue.¹⁶⁸ Job envisions peaceful houses, which are free from “terror” (פחד) or

¹⁶⁵ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 224; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 321; Janzen, *Job*, 156; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 316; Newsom, “Job,” 493; Balentine, *Job*, 330.

¹⁶⁶ Ho, “Unmarked Attributed Quotations,” 709–10.

¹⁶⁷ Fox, “Quotations,” 429; italics his.

¹⁶⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 492; Balentine, *Job*, 327.

divine punishment, for the wicked (21:9). He also illustrates the lack of terror surrounding the wicked with “the carefree frolicking of children and general festivity” (21:11–12).¹⁶⁹

On the contrary, the friends repeatedly assert that the wicked live in fear of the terrors that await them. For instance, Eliphaz argues that the wicked person hears the sound of terrors (קול פחדים) all the time (15:21), and distress and anguish terrify him (בעת; 15:24).¹⁷⁰ Similarly, Bildad claims that terrors (בלהות) frighten the wicked person on every side and chase him at his heels (18:11). Zophar also adds that even when the wicked person thinks that he has escaped the devastating injury of an arrow, he would in fact find out terrors (אמים) of death come upon him (20:25). Job reverses the images depicted by the friends regarding the terror awaiting the wicked in order to refute their claim.

4. The “possession” motif (21:10)

In his speech, Job calls to attention the material prosperity of the wicked as exemplified by the multiplication of their herds (21:10). In the speeches of the friends in the second cycle, both Eliphaz and Zophar assert that the wicked cannot keep what they possess. Eliphaz argues that the wealth of the wicked person will not endure, and his possession will not spread over the land (15:29). Similarly, Zophar uses the “eating” metaphor to illustrate that the wicked person must vomit up the wealth that he swallowed

¹⁶⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 492.

¹⁷⁰ See I.A.9 in this chapter.

(20:15, 18).¹⁷¹ Job re-uses this “possession” motif to disprove the claims of the friends regarding the material prosperity of the wicked.¹⁷²

5. The “happiness” motif (21:12, 13, 16)

Zophar, in his preceding speech, begins his major argument with the topic of the ephemerality of the happiness of the wicked. He asserts that the joy (רִנָּה) of the wicked and the gladness (שְׂמֵחָה) of the godless does not last (20:5). Job picks up this “happiness” motif and contends that the wicked sing and “rejoice” (שָׂמְחוּ) to the sound of musical instruments (21:12). He also speaks of the wicked’s טוֹב, “good, prosperity, happiness,” a term in the semantic domain of רִנָּה and שְׂמֵחָה (21:13). According to Job, the wicked spend their days in טוֹב before they die in peace.¹⁷³ Job’s words in these verses thus appear to be “a direct repudiation of Zophar’s claim that the joy of the wicked is fleeting.”¹⁷⁴

6. The “death” motif (21:7, 13)

In the depiction of the wicked in the second cycle of dialogue, the friends repeatedly assert that the wicked are subject to premature death. For instance, Eliphaz uses the plant metaphor to illustrate that the wicked person will wither before his time

¹⁷¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 317.

¹⁷² Newsom, “Job,” 492; Balentine, *Job*, 327.

¹⁷³ Job also mentions the טוֹב of the wicked in 21:16, which is a well-known crux. See Clines, *Job 21–37*, 508–9 n.16.a for a discussion of interpretation options.

¹⁷⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 325.

(15:32).¹⁷⁵ He is compared to a vine that will drop its fruit before it is ripe and to an olive tree that will shed all its blossoms without producing any fruit (15:33). The image here is that of premature death.¹⁷⁶ Similarly, in Bildad's depiction, the agents of death devour the wicked person (18:13), who is being torn from the domain in which he feels most secured (18:14). His death is thus violent and unexpected.¹⁷⁷ Zophar also contributes to the topic. In his description, the wicked person dies prematurely, even though his bones are still full of vigor (20:11).¹⁷⁸

In this speech of Job, he picks up this "death" motif and offers an opposite picture. The wicked, Job argues, live on and reach old age (21:7). They enjoy a life of prosperity concluding with a peaceful death (21:13).¹⁷⁹ This portrayal directly contradicts the violent and premature death of the wicked as articulated by the friends.

7. נר רשעים ידעך (21:17a)

The proverbial saying "the lamp of the wicked will be extinguished" appears in both Bildad's second speech (ch. 18) and his present speech of Job.¹⁸⁰ Bildad uses this

¹⁷⁵ I follow the lead of LXX and understand this verse as a continuation of the plant metaphor beginning from 15:30. So, I read תִּמָּל, "it will wither," for תִּמָּלָא, "will be paid in full" (Dhorme, *Job*, 225). Alternatively, the MT word may be "a metaplastic form for the geminate" (Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 166).

¹⁷⁶ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 363. Dhorme (*Job*, 225) even points out that the expression בְּלֵא יוֹמוֹ, "not in its day," (15:32a) corresponds to a similar Assyrian phrase that conveys the notion of a premature death.

¹⁷⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 275.

¹⁷⁸ The first clause of 20:11 should be read as concessive (Clines, *Job 1–20*, 488).

¹⁷⁹ Job also uses the "death" motif exclusively in 21:23–26. He does not appear to explicitly counter any argument made by the friends in that strophe, the topic of which seems to be "the apparent randomness of fate and the common end awaiting all persons" (Newsom, "Job," 491).

¹⁸⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 328; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 269; Newsom, "Job," 493; Balentine, *Job*, 329; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 528.

proverb to express the certainty of the punishment for the wicked (18:5–6).¹⁸¹ Job re-uses the words of Bildad with a minor variation (אור in 18:5a; נר in 18:6b; 21:17a), but prefixes it with the prepositional interrogative particle כמה, “how often?” (21:17a). Job’s rhetorical question is thus a direct denunciation of Bildad’s claim.

8. אִיד (21:17b)

The noun אִיד, “calamity,” provides a verbal correspondence between this speech and Bildad’s second speech (ch. 18). Job claims that the calamity (אִיד) designated for the wicked seldom comes upon them (21:17b). Bildad, on the contrary, insists that no matter what the wicked do, calamity (אִיד) will find them and bring them down (18:12). This allusion reveals that Job is responding to Bildad’s claim.

9. חֶלֶק and אַפּוֹ (21:17c)

The term אַפּוֹ, “his anger,” in conjunction with the root חֶלֶק link this speech with Zophar’s preceding one. Job insists that rarely does God apportion (חֶלֶק) pains in his anger (אַפּוֹ) to the wicked (21:17c). Zophar, in his preceding speech, however, claims that on the day of his anger (אַפּוֹ), God will decree punishment to the wicked and they will receive their portion (nominal form of חֶלֶק; 20:28–29). Again, the allusion indicates that Job has been paying attention to Zophar and is using his vocabulary to respond to him.

¹⁸¹ See III.A.4 in this chapter.

10. The “habitation” motif (21:9a, 28, 30)

The “habitation” motif connects this speech with those of the friends in the second cycle.¹⁸² Job speaks of the peace (שָׁלוֹם) of the houses (בָּתִּים) of the wicked (21:9a). Moreover, of the four points that Job raises in ch. 21, the last one (21:27–33) revolves around the dwellings of the wicked on earth and after death. Job uses key terms such as בֵּית, “house,” and מִשְׁכְּנוֹת, “tents,” to refer to the places of habitation. He cites a possible objection of the friends who may ask him to show them the house (בֵּית) of the great one or the tents (מִשְׁכְּנוֹת) of the wicked” (21:28). Job claims that, by implication, the fact that their abodes are firmly established indicates that the evil one is spared from the day of calamity and delivered from the day of wrath (21:30).¹⁸³

On the contrary, the friends repeatedly assert that the establishments of the wicked will not survive the destruction God has prepared for them. Eliphaz claims that the wicked will eventually dwell in empty houses (בָּתִּים) and heaps of rubble (15:28), and their tents of bribery (אֹהֶל־שָׁחַד) will be annihilated by fire (15:34). Similarly, Bildad states that fire dwells in the tent (אֹהֶל) of the wicked person and brimstone is scattered over his habitation (נוֹה; 18:15). For Bildad, the desolated dwellings (מִשְׁכְּנוֹת) are clear evidence of the iniquity of the wicked (18:21). Zophar also asserts that everything in the wicked person’s tent (אֹהֶל) will be consumed by fire (20:26) and his house (בֵּית) will be washed away in a flood (20:28). Again, Job picks up the “habitation” motif in order to refute the claim of the friends.

¹⁸² Newsom, “Job,” 494; Balentine, *Job*, 327, 333

¹⁸³ Newsom, “Job,” 494.

11. The “remembrance” motif (21:32–33)

The “remembrance” motif ties this speech with Bildad’s second speech (ch. 18).¹⁸⁴ Job argues that when the evil person dies, he “achieves a perpetual memorial” (21:32–33).¹⁸⁵ A grand funeral procession will accompany the burial (v. 32).¹⁸⁶ A contradictory image appears in Bildad’s previous speech, in which he claims that the memory of the wicked will be obliterated from the world (18:17). The difference in opinions between Job and his friends regarding the wicked even extends to their fate after death.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (21:1), Job speaks up again. He begins with the typical exordium, requesting that the friends pay attention to his words (21:2–6). He emphasizes that his complaint (תִּשְׁעָה), the same word that Eliphaz uses to refer to devotion (15:4b), is not meant to be directed to another human (21:4a). The allusion invites the reader to contemplate on the significance of this ambivalent term one more time. At the end of the second cycle of dialogue, the issue of whether Job’s provocative complaint constitutes a form of legitimate religious language still remains as the major tension in the narrative.

¹⁸⁴ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 533.

¹⁸⁵ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 533.

¹⁸⁶ Contra Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 321), who understands the image as referring to the finality of death for everyone.

The rest of this speech of Job consists of three objections to the arguments put forth by the friends.¹⁸⁷ The first critique that Job articulates is concerned with the “prosperity of the wicked” (21:7–16).¹⁸⁸ The wicked, Job argues, live on and reach old age (v. 7). In support of his claim, Job refers to several motifs that the friends have used. First, he recounts the security of descendants of the wicked (v. 8). On the one hand, this description is similar to the one Eliphaz uses to illustrate Job’s prospect future in his first speech (5:25). On the other hand, it is exactly opposite to the depiction Bildad and Zophar employ for the wicked. Their offspring is neither cut off (18:19) or impoverished (20:10).

In a similar vein, Job envisions a peaceful household, free from fear or divine punishment for the wicked (v. 9). Again, the description is the reverse of what the friends say (15:28; 18:14–15; 20:26, 28). Another blessing for the wicked, according to Job, is the increase in possession, exemplified by the multiplication of herds (v. 10). The friends, however, argue that the possession of the wicked do not endure (15:29; 20:15, 18). Job also calls to attention that carefree and joyous lives are characteristic of the wicked (vv. 11–12). According to the friends, the happiness of the wicked does not last (20:5) and they live in fear of the terrors that await them (15:21, 24; 18:11; 20:24–25). Finally, the wicked, Job argues, enjoys a life of prosperity concluding with a peaceful death (v. 13). On the contrary, the friends claim that the wicked are subject to violent and premature death (15:30, 32–33; 18:13–14; 20:11).

¹⁸⁷ Contrary to Newsom (“Job,” 491), who sees Job’s argument in 21:22–26 as a separate one from that in 21:17–21.

¹⁸⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 327.

The next problem that Job tackles is the “lack of punishment for the wicked.”¹⁸⁹

He re-uses the words of Bildad, who affirms that “the lamp (אור in 18:5a; נר in 18:6b; 21:17a) of the wicked will be extinguished” (18:5–6), but prefixes it with the prepositional interrogative particle כמה, “how often?” (21:17a). Bildad insists that no matter what the wicked do, calamity (איד) will find them and bring them down (18:12). Job, however, claims that their calamity (איד) seldom comes upon the wicked (21:17b). Similarly, Zophar claims that on the day of his anger (אפו), God will decree punishment to the wicked and they will receive their portion (nominal cognate of חלק; 20:28–29). On the contrary, Job insists that rarely does God apportion (חלק) pains in his anger (אפו) to the wicked (21:17c). Job also refutes the popular saying that the wicked are like chaff blown off by the wind (21:18; cf. Pss 1:4; 35:5).

Job continues to bolster his argument by appealing to the notion that God stores up the iniquity of a wicked person for his children (21:19a). According to Job, God violates justice by deferring the retribution, which the evildoers themselves deserve, until the following generation (21:19b–21). As Balentine puts it, “God’s judgment of the wicked is too slow and too indirect to be effective. If it is reserved for a later generation, then it is impossible to make a clear connection between the sin and the judgment.”¹⁹⁰ Job turns next to expound “the apparent randomness of fate and the common end awaiting all persons” (21:22–26).¹⁹¹ The picture he offers is consisted of two individuals, one with a lifelong prosperity and the other with misery all his life (vv. 23–25). Both, however, cannot escape the destiny of death (v. 26).

¹⁸⁹ Balentine, *Job*, 329.

¹⁹⁰ Balentine, *Job*, 332.

¹⁹¹ Newsom, “Job,” 491.

The last critique that Job gives revolves around the “habitation” of the wicked” (21:27–33).¹⁹² Job argues that the security of the house (בית) of the great one and the tents (משכנות) of the wicked indicate the evil ones are spared from the day of calamity and delivered from the day of wrath (21:28–30). The friends, however, repeatedly assert that the inhabitation of the wicked will not survive the destruction God has prepared for them (15:28, 34; 18:15, 21; 20:26, 28). Moreover, Job argues that when the evil person dies, his death is marked with “honour and public acclaim” (21:32–33).¹⁹³ A contradictory image appears in Bildad’s second speech, in which he claims that the memory of the wicked will be eradicated from the world (18:17).

Job ends the speech by returning to the motif of consolation, which he uses to begin his speech. There he mentions that the best comfort the friends could offer him would be to listen to his words (21:2). Here he claims that their consolations are “emptiness” (הבלי) and what the friends have offered him is “unfaithfulness” (מעל; 21:34). This *inclusio* suggests that Job has not lost sight of his suffering and the hope to be consoled, though the bulk of this speech comprises an extended rebuttal of the universality of the destruction of the wicked as articulated by the friends. Job takes pain to dismantle the ideology advanced by the friends because the validity of the doctrine of retribution would automatically imply that he is a sinner.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹² Balentine, *Job*, 332.

¹⁹³ Balentine, *Job*, 333.

¹⁹⁴ As Clines (*Job 21–37*, 520) puts it, “The *function* of the speech is to support in a more logical fashion the view of the doctrine of retribution that Job has already arrived at more instinctively. In previous speeches he had denied the validity of the doctrine in that he, as a righteous man, was suffering; now he denies the doctrine by arguing that the unrighteous do *not* suffer. In a wider horizon, then, we could say that the function of the speech is to further defend his innocence” (*italics his*).

With regard to the progression of the narrative, Job enlarges his concern from the personal dimension to the broader topos of the prosperity and lack of judgment for the wicked. Although he has made a similar observation earlier in passing (12:6), his primary argument there is the contradiction he was experiencing between his integrity and the way he has been treated as a laughingstock (12:4–5).¹⁹⁵ Now he offers a thorough investigation of the problem of the prosperity of the wicked and the lack of judgment for them. As some have noted, Job is not a pioneer in the study of this topic.¹⁹⁶ “The psalmists knew it was true, and they complained about it and asked God to stop it being true.”¹⁹⁷ In this speech, Job asks, “Why do the wicked live on, reach old age, and grow mighty in power?” (21:7). He also asks, “How often is the lamp of the wicked extinguished?” (21:17a). These are disturbing religious questions, which the psalmists at best touch peripherally. As Newsom puts it, “In the psalms there may be a certain nervousness about raising such questions and a too hasty attempt to put the lid back on.”¹⁹⁸ The authorial audience is therefore invited to pass ethical judgments on Job, who dares to raise these questions in such an extreme form.

Thus, at the narrative level, Job’s present speech invites the authorial audience to see that “Job and the friends have now reached a point of total conflict in their interpretation of Job’s plight.”¹⁹⁹ At the rhetorical level, this speech broadens the issue

¹⁹⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 427.

¹⁹⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 494; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 536.

¹⁹⁷ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 536.

¹⁹⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 494.

¹⁹⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 326.

from appropriate responses amidst suffering to legitimate religious expressions in the community of faith.²⁰⁰ Perhaps, the latter is what the author is really after.

VII. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the internal quotations of preceding materials in each of the speeches in the second cycle of dialogue. I have also examined the impact of these internal quotations on the reading experience of the narrative.

Eliphaz, in his second speech (ch. 15), continues to allude to Job's previous words to criticize him and nullify his claims. Whereas Job used the "wisdom" motif (12:2–3; 13:2) to mock the friends for their lack of wisdom, Eliphaz picks up this motif (15:2, 8–10, 18) and regards Job's preceding speech as an implicit invitation to participate in a wisdom disputation. Whereas Job repeatedly used the term *שיח* to refer to his complaint against God (7:13; 9:27; 10:1), Eliphaz uses *שיחה*, the feminine counterpart of *שיח*, to refer to meditation, an appropriate religious activity, to which Job's provocative words show disrespect (15:4). Whereas Job asked God to show him the number and nature of his iniquities (*עוונות*) and sins (*חטאות*) in the setting of his imaginary lawsuit (13:23), Eliphaz re-uses the term *עון* to refer to Job's sin of speaking blasphemously and destructively (15:5). Whereas Job used the term *פה* ("mouth") in conjunction with the term *רשע* ("to condemn") to charge God for forcing him into a false confession of guilt (9:20), Eliphaz re-uses the two terms together to argue that Job's protests and charges against God are in themselves sinful and tantamount to self-incrimination. Whereas Job requested that his friends listen to the pleadings of his lips (*שפתיים*; 13:6), Eliphaz

²⁰⁰ Newsom ("Job," 494–95) also suggests that this is one of the issues raised in Job's present speech.

maintains that listening to Job's lips (שפתיים) works against him as they only affirm his guilt (15:6).

In depicting the fate of the typical wicked person, Eliphaz uses motifs found in Job's previous speeches, such as "writhing in pain" (the root חול; 6:10; 15:20) and "fear" (3:25; 9:28, 34, 35; 13:21; 15:21–24), to expose how Job testifies to characteristics in himself that are typical of the wicked person.

Eliphaz alludes not only to the words of Job but also to his own words in his first speech. His repeated use of the rare word ערום ("crafty"; 5:12; 15:5) reveals that his attitude toward Job has shifted. On the other hand, the author also uses the words of Eliphaz to allude to the prologue. Eliphaz asks Job rhetorically if he has listened in the council of God (15:8), a motif that recalls the heavenly dialogue between YHWH and the satan as presented in the prologue (1:6–12; 2:1–6). Through the employment of dramatic irony, the audience is invited to judge Eliphaz negatively.

Job's fourth response (chs. 16–17) contains an attributed citation (16:3), which repeats terms found in Eliphaz's opening rhetorical questions in the preceding speech (15:3). By alluding to Eliphaz's words and re-framing them in an attributed citation, Job aptly summarizes how the friends have interpreted his words of pain.

Moreover, Job continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to criticize their character and refute their arguments. Whereas Eliphaz used the "consolation" motif to equate his own words with "the consolations of God" (15:11), Job picks up this motif but calls the friends "troublesome comforters" (16:2). Whereas Eliphaz used the term רשע to refer the typical wicked person, Job re-uses the same term but distances himself from this category of people. Whereas Eliphaz likened Job to the typical wicked person

who displays arrogance (*hitpa'el* of גבר) and runs (רוץ) against God (15–25–26), Job counters Eliphaz's charge and argues that it is God who is running like a hostile warrior against him (16:14). Whereas Eliphaz cast doubt on Job's credential as a wise man (חכם; 15:2), Job turns the tables on them and denies their qualification as wise men either (17:10).

Job alludes not only to the words of Eliphaz but also to those of Zophar. Whereas Zophar used the adjective זך in the context of charging Job for claiming that his teaching is pure (11:4), Job uses זכה, the feminine form of זך, to argue that his plea is legitimate, thus refuting Zophar's distorted citation (16:17).

Bildad, in his second speech (ch. 18), continues to allude to Job's previous words to criticize him and nullify his claims. Whereas Job told the friends to ask the cattle (בהמה) so that they would impart wisdom unto them (12:7), Bildad asks Job why he regards them as stupid as cattle (בהמה; 18:3). The implication is that Bildad's primary purpose is to defend his self-honour. Whereas Job used the term טרף ("to tear") in conjunction with the other term אפו ("his anger") to express God's violence (16:9), Bildad uses these two terms together to argue that Job's present situation is a result of Job's own anger, not God's (18:4). Whereas Job used the expression "the rock is removed from its place" to describe a natural phenomenon that is caused by the torrent of water in order to bolster his argument (14:18), Bildad repeats the phrase almost verbatim in the context of a critique of Job's torrent of words (18:4).

In depicting the fate of the typical wicked person, Bildad also uses a variety of words and images found in Job's previous speeches, such as the polarity of "light" and "darkness," the word pair רשעים ("the wicked") and עול ("evildoer"), the "arrested

movement” imagery, the “fear” motif, and the “bodily disintegration” imagery. As is the case with Eliphaz, Bildad uses these allusions to compare Job to the typical wicked person.

Job, in his fifth response (ch. 19), continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to criticize their character and refute their arguments. Whereas Bildad affirmed that God neither perverts (עוֹת) justice (משפט) nor perverts (עוֹת) the right (8:3), Job picks up Bildad’s abstract concept of the “perversion of justice” and applies it to his personal situation (19:6–7). Whereas Bildad employed the “bodily disintegration” motif to intensify the association of Job with the wicked (18:13), Job adopts the same language to express the feeling of alienation (19:20, 22, 26). Whereas Bildad used the “posterity” motif to speak of the lack of progeny for the wicked (18:19), Job picks up this motif and claims that his גַּל lives even if he is going to have no descendants (19:25).

In addition, the author uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job declares that the hand (יָד) of Eloah has touched (נגע) him (19:21), a statement that recalls the heavenly conversation in the prologue in which the satan taunts YHWH twice to stretch out his hand (יָד) to touch (נגע) Job (1:11; 2:5).

Zophar, in his second speech (ch. 20), continues to allude to Job’s previous words to criticize him and nullify his claims. Whereas Job claimed that the friends have repeatedly insulted (בלם) him (19:3), Zophar uses the expression מוֹסֵר כְּלִמְתִּי (“an instruction that insults me”) to argue that he is the real victim of insult (20:3).

In depicting the fate of the typical wicked person, Zophar also uses expressions found in Job’s previous speeches, such as “lie down in the dust” (עפר + שכב), the image of “an arrow piercing through the gallbladder,” and the word pair שָׁמַיִם (heavens) / אֶרֶץ

(earth) to expose how Job testifies to characteristics in himself that are typical of the wicked person.

Job, in his sixth response (ch. 21), continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to criticize their character and refute their arguments. Whereas Eliphaz used the term שיחה to refer to meditation, an appropriate religious activity, which Job's inappropriate words disrespects (15:4), Job uses שיח, the masculine counterpart of שיחה to refer to his complaint (21:4). The allusion underscores the significance of this ambivalent term.

In refuting the friends' arguments concerning the fate of the evildoers, Job re-uses expressions and motifs used by the friends in their portraits of the wicked. These include the expression אפו ("his anger") + the root חלק ("apportion" / "portion") and motifs such as "progeny," "terror," "possession," "happiness," "death," "the extinguishing of the lamp of the wicked," "calamity," "habitation," and "remembrance." The allusions indicate that Job is in total disagreement with the friends.

In the speeches the three friends continue to exhibit their displeasure with Job's ongoing complaints. As a response, each of them offers a vivid depiction of the destruction of the wicked. On the surface, their words can be seen as a defence on behalf of God to Job's accusation of the divine aloofness in rectifying the chaos in the created order. At a deeper level, however, their arguments stem from a concern to guard their own honour. From the allusions they make to Job's earlier speeches, they intend to fit their suffering friend into their rigid ideological framework.

As for Job, he continues to protest against God throughout his speeches. The legal metaphor that he started using in the first cycle becomes the major element of his

language. For two more times Job contemplates the possibility of having a mediator between God and him. The role of such an imaginary figure is either to argue for him or to testify on behalf of him after he is dead. In his last speech in this cycle, Job extends his concern from a personal desire to seek vindication to the general injustice in the world. On the other hand, Job continues to re-use the words of friends to refute their arguments and to criticize their characters. He raises the concept of consolation more than once to emphasize the fact that this is what he desires from his presumed supportive community.

My analysis of the second cycle of dialogue continues to support the thesis that the central concern of the book focuses on appropriate religious expressions in the context of suffering. The author appears to have broadened the topic of suffering from an individual setting to the general injustice in the created order. The speeches of the friends are used as a ploy to criticize the majority voice in the religious community. While this voice often claims to defend the moral order of the world on God's behalf, the underlying motivation is in fact a defence of self-honour.

Chapter 6

THE DIALOGUE BETWEEN JOB AND HIS FRIENDS – THE THIRD CYCLE (JOB 22–31)

In the first two cycles of dialogue, the sequence of speakers follows a regular and symmetrical pattern. This expectation is violated with the absence of Zophar's speech and an exceptional short speech of Bildad (ch. 25) in the third cycle. Moreover, the content of the speeches in this cycle presents interpretive difficulties. Whereas the speeches of Job and the friends in the first two cycles exhibit clear distinctive standpoints, the speeches attributed to Job in this cycle contain materials that appear to be more at home with the friends.

Many scholars begin with the assumption that the third cycle originally contained the same sequence of speakers as the first two cycles.¹ "The present state of disarray is presumed to be the result either of unintentional scribal error or a deliberate attempt by a concerned copyist to put some traditionally pious words into the mouth of Job, borrowing them from the speeches of Bildad and Zophar."² There is, however, no clear evidence that the original text was any different from what the Masoretic Text has preserved.³ Those who assume that the third cycle has been disturbed have made a bewildering variety of proposals for reconstructing the original cycle.⁴ Without resorting to "textual

¹ For example, Habel (*The Book of Job*, 37) states, "Following the pattern of the first two cycles, we would have expected speeches of approximately equal length for each of the three friends as they alternate with Job in the preceding dialogue."

² Newsom, "Job," 497.

³ As Newsom ("Job," 497) notes, "The earliest translations, the targum of Job from Qumran and the Septuagint, exhibit the same distribution of speeches that one finds in the MT."

⁴ For a survey of proposals suggested by various scholars on Job 24, see Clines, *Job 21–37*, 589–90. For another survey of proposals on Job 25–27, see Balentine, *Job*, 382.

surgery,”⁵ the reader may infer from the disarray of the third cycle that the dialogue between Job and the friends has reached an impasse. The strangeness of Bildad’s short speech and the absence of Zophar’s may be the author’s signal to the reader that the dialogue has eventually broken down.⁶

Another well-known problem in these chapters is concerned with the speaker and function of Job 28. Although the position of the text and the absence of another heading for this chapter suggest that it is a continuation of Job’s words, the abrupt change in tonality, topic, and imagery in this chapter make most scholars think that this speech cannot come from the mouth of Job.⁷

In this dissertation, I will adopt a reading strategy that takes the text as it stands. Therefore, I will not rearrange the texts in this cycle, and will regard Job 28 as the words of Job. According to the divisions suggested by the narrator’s brief introductory markers (22:1; 23:1; 25:1; 26:1; 27:1), I see the following sequence of speakers in the third cycle:

Eliphaz (ch. 22)

Job (chs. 23–24)

Bildad (ch. 25)

Job (ch. 26)

Job (ch. 27–28)

In what follows, I will continue to identify the internal quotations of preceding materials in each of these speeches and examine their impact on the reading of the corresponding

⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 497.

⁶ Andersen, *Job*, 214; Janzen, *Job*, 171–86; Newsom, “Job,” 497; Balentine, *Job*, 339.

⁷ For a convenient survey of the problems on Job 28, see Lo, *Job 28 as Rhetoric*, 1–15.

speech in terms of narrative progression. Since only Eliphaz's third speech in ch. 22 contains an attributed citation, the focus of attention for the other speeches will be on allusions alone. Moreover, for the sake of convenience, I will also examine chs. 29–31, which contain Job's last legal discourse, in this chapter of the dissertation.

I. Eliphaz's Third Speech (Job 22)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

1. Attributed Citations

With the voice of Eliphaz, the third cycle begins. The narrator uses the same phrase *וַיֹּעַן ... וַיֹּאמֶר*, "answered," to indicate the entrance of Eliphaz's voice into the conversation the third and last time. Eliphaz's present speech contains a citation attributed, presumably, to Job (22:13–14). The citation is explicitly marked by the *verbum dicendi*, *וַיֹּאמֶר*, "you said" at the beginning of v. 13.

"What does God know? Can he govern ..." (22:13–14)

The words that Eliphaz attributes to Job read "What does God know? Can he govern through heavy clouds? Thick clouds veil him, and he cannot see as he walks about on the vault of heaven" (22:13–14). Eliphaz's words are clearly a distorted citation of Job's rhetorical question in 21:22, which contains shared vocabulary (*אֵל*, "God"; *דַּעַת*, "knowledge," in 21:22 / *יָדַע*, "to know," in 22:13; *שָׁפַט*, "to govern").⁸ For Eliphaz, Job's exclamation that no one can teach God knowledge implies that God does not know what is happening on earth. Moreover, Eliphaz perhaps interprets Job's assertion that God

⁸ Contra many (e.g., Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 274; Balentine, *Job*, 346; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 558), who claim that Job has not said anything close to Eliphaz's attributed quotation.

governs those on high as Job's saying that the capacity of God's governance is only limited to the heavenly realm. Of course, this cannot be the sentiment of Job's words in 21:22. Interestingly, Eliphaz also imposes on Job the claim that God cannot "see" (ראה) through the thick clouds. Instead, Job has complained that God "'sees' all too much and too constantly" (7:19–20; 10:14; 13:27; 14:3, 6; 16:9).⁹ Read in this light, Eliphaz's distorted citation becomes highly ironic.

2. Allusions

In addition to the above attributed citation, a few instances of allusion can be found in this speech. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible quotations. Eliphaz's words in 22:17 and 22:18b are unmistakably an allusion to Job's words in 21:14–16, which use similar terminology.

Since this is the last speech of Eliphaz, he appears to allude to previous speeches of Job too. For instance, he uses legal terminology such as יכח, "to arraign," and בוא + משפט, "to enter into judgment," (22:4) to draw connections to Job's earlier uses of the legal metaphor in 9:32; 13:3 and 14:3. In addition, the word חנם, "for nothing," in 22:6 seems to form a link with Job's words in 9:17. Eliphaz also employs the "light shining on one's way" imagery (22:28b) to allude to Job's words in 19:8. It is also instructive to compare Eliphaz's different usage of the same terms such as תמים, "blameless," דרך, "way," and יראה, "fear," in his speeches (4:6; 15:4a; 22:3b–4a). If it is possible to make

⁹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 274.

multiple allusions with one word, the terms **תָּמַם**, **יִרְאָה** and **חֲנֹם** may all draw connections to the prologue too (cf. 1:1, 8; 2:3).

i. **יִרְאָה** and **דֶּרֶךְ** + **תָּמַם** (22:3b–4a)

The opening of Eliphaz's present speech contains many terms that he used in the exordiums of his previous speeches. As Good observes, "He [Eliphaz] wonders how a deed may be of 'use' or 'benefit' (*skn*, 22.2a–b and 15.3a), he refers to an 'argument' or 'charge' (*ykh*, 22.4a and 15.3a) and to religion (*yir'ah*, "fear," 22.4a and 15.4a), and he notes Job's 'guilt' or 'misdeeds' (*'awōn*, 22.5b and 15.5a)."¹⁰ Moreover, Eliphaz speaks of Job making blameless (*hip'il* of **תָּמַם**) his ways (**דֶּרֶכֶיךָ**, "your ways"; 22:3b), an expression which recalls the one he used in 4:6 (**תָּם דֶּרֶכֶיךָ**, "the blamelessness of your ways").¹¹ There he also speaks of Job's fear (**יִרְאָה**).

A progression in Eliphaz's thought can be traced through the repeated uses of these terms. In his first speech, Eliphaz refers, albeit ambiguously, to Job's fear (**יִרְאָה**) and the blamelessness of Job's ways as the foundation of Job's confidence and hope.¹² In his second speech, he derides the words' of Job as undermining religion (**יִרְאָה**).¹³ In his present speech, Eliphaz uses Job's fear (**יִרְאָה**) and his attempt to make blameless his ways in the context of a series of rhetorical questions. The ultimate purpose is to convict

¹⁰ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 271.

¹¹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 553.

¹² See I.A.2 in Chapter 4.

¹³ See I.A.9 in Chapter 5.

Job of his great wickedness (22:5).¹⁴ Eliphaz's attitude toward Job has definitely become unfriendly.¹⁵

Moreover, the terms תָּמַם and יִרְאָה allude not only to Eliphaz's previous speeches but also to the prologue.¹⁶ The adjective תָּם (cognate with תָּמַם) and the verb יִרָא (cognate with יִרְאָה) are used repeatedly to refer to the virtues of Job (1:1, 8; 2:3). When Eliphaz asks, "Is it חָפֵץ to Shaddai if you are righteous? Does he gain if you make your ways blameless?" (22:3), his question is purely rhetorical and the implied answer is "no."¹⁷ The noun חָפֵץ can connote "pleasure" or "benefit," depending on the context.¹⁸ As Clines reasonably argues, the term חָפֵץ should be understood to mean "benefit" here in light of the verb סָכַן, which also means "to profit, benefit," in the preceding verse (v. 2).¹⁹ However, when one recognizes the other meaning ("pleasure") for the term חָפֵץ, Eliphaz's question becomes highly ironic. In the heavenly dialogue in the prologue, God appears to derive a certain amount of "pleasure" (חָפֵץ) by boasting the blamelessness of Job to the satan.²⁰ The author thus uses the technique of irony to expose the ignorance of Eliphaz once again.

¹⁴ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 271.

¹⁵ According to Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 325), "A complete turnabout has taken place in Eliphaz's attitude toward Job." To a lesser extent, Clines (*Job 21–37*, 549) takes Eliphaz's opening words as "severely critical of" Job.

¹⁶ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 338), Course (*Speech and Response*, 134) and Balentine (*Job*, 343) also recognize this connection.

¹⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 342.

¹⁸ DCH 3:288.

¹⁹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 552.

²⁰ Course, *Speech and Response*, 134.

ii. משפט + בוא and יכח (22:4)

The verb יכח, “to arraign,” and the expression משפט + בוא, “to enter into judgment” are legal terms.²¹ In a rhetorical question, Eliphaz asks Job, “Is it because of your piety that he arraigns (יכח) you, and enters into judgment (משפט + בוא) with you?” (22:4). Job has declared his wish to enter into judgment with God (9:32; 14:3). He has also expressed his desire to argue with God in a courtroom (13:3). Although the friends have been avoiding the forensic language in the first two cycles of dialogue, Eliphaz eventually responds to Job using the legal vocabulary that Job has consistently been using.²² Eliphaz corrects the false perception of Job, who regarded himself to be the one who initiated the lawsuit.²³ “Not so, says Eliphaz; it is not you who have been summoning God to court, it is he who has summoned you ... and has, moreover, already judged you guilt and set in train your punishment.”²⁴

iii. חנם (22:6)

The adverb חנם draws a connection between this speech and Job’s earlier speech (chs. 9–10). After convicting Job of great wickedness, Eliphaz begins to enumerate the crimes that he believes Job must have committed. The first wrongdoing, according to Eliphaz, is that Job has taken pledges from his brothers “for no cause” (חנם), stripping off the garments of the naked (22:6). In the Hebrew Bible, the seizing of pledges for repayment of debts was strictly regulated to protect the poor and the vulnerable (Exod

²¹ Scholnick, “Lawsuit Drama,” 225, 289. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 338.

²² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 338.

²³ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 554.

²⁴ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 554.

22:25–26 [ET 26–27]; Deut 24:6, 10–11).²⁵ Although it is not clear what Eliphaz precisely means by “exacting a pledge for no cause,” the expression seems to suggest a particular cruelty on the part of Job, who is the wealthiest man in the East (1:3).²⁶

Job, in his earlier speech, also employs this rare adverb חנם (31 times in the Hebrew Bible) in the context of his imaginary lawsuit against God, who, Job claims, would be acting cruelly towards him: “He would crush me with a whirlwind and increase my wounds for no cause (חנם)” (9:17).²⁷ Taking this allusion into consideration, Eliphaz rejects Job’s claim and asserts that it is Job, not God, who is behaving unreasonably hardheartedly.

At another level, the adverb חנם also recalls the prologue, in which YHWH admits that he was incited by the satan to destroy Job for nothing (חנם; 2:3).²⁸ As Clines puts it, “it would be ironic if the man who is being made to suffer gratuitously should come to grief on an allegation on gratuitous behavior himself.”²⁹

iv. “They said to God ...” The counsel of the wicked is far from me. (22:17–18)

Eliphaz’s words in 22:17 and 22:18b are unmistakably an allusion to Job’s words in 21:14–16.³⁰ The statements in 22:17a, which reads, האמרים לאל סור ממנו, “They said to God, ‘Leave us alone,’” and in 22:18b, which reads, ועצת רשעים רחקה מני, “The counsel

²⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 500; Balentine, *Job*, 344.

²⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 339; Newsom, “Job,” 500; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 555–56.

²⁷ See IV.A.6 in Chapter 4.

²⁸ Clines (*Job 21–37*, 556) also recognizes this connection.

²⁹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 556.

³⁰ Dhome, *Job*, 334; Newsom, “Job,” 501–2; Balentine, *Job*, 347; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 560.

of the wicked are far from me,” are almost exactly the same as those in 21:14a (וַיֹּאמְרוּ) instead of הָאֲמָרִים) and in 21:16b (without the *waw* conjunction) respectively. Moreover, the question in 22:17b, which may be rendered, “What can Shaddai do for us?”³¹ is also a reasonable paraphrase of the questions in 21:15, which may be translated, “What is Shaddai that we should serve him? What gain shall we have if we pray to him?”

In the preceding speech, Job has cited the words in 21:14–15 as evidence of what the wicked are saying. He juxtaposed this citation with the conviction that the wicked have no control over their own prosperity (21:16a). The implication is that God apparently listens to their request to be left alone and so does not interfere. Job consequently responded with “a personal disclaimer” (21:16b).³² In the words of Habel, “The counsel of the wicked is so revolting to Job he cannot imagine being linked with them.”³³

In this present speech, Eliphaz picks up similar expressions and ideas from Job but sets them in the context of the certainty of the punishment of the wicked (22:16–20). He even admits that God filled the houses of the wicked with good things (22:18a). However, all these statements about the speech and the prosperity of the wicked are framed with assertions that speak of their definite destruction (22:16, 19–20). As Dhorme

³¹ I follow the lead of Qumran Tg., LXX and Syr., and read לָנוּ, “for us,” for לָהֶם, “for them.” So, Dhorme, *Job*, 334; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 248; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 333; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 543 n.17.c. Nevertheless, the MT still makes sense if one assumes “v 17b has changed into indirect speech” (Clines, *Job 21–37*, 543 n.17.c).

³² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 328. Contra Newsom (“Job,” 492), who claims that in 21:16 Job is mimicking a conventional pious cliché.

³³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 328. So Balentine, *Job*, 329.

rightly notes, “Eliphaz repeats the very words of Job in order to show that those whose good fortune he has vaunted are the very ones who are victims of the catastrophe.”³⁴

v. The “light shining on one’s way” imagery (22:28b)

The image of “light shining on one’s way” draws a connection between this speech and Job’s previous speech in ch.19.³⁵ In his present speech, Eliphaz ensures Job that light (אור) will shine on his ways (דרך; 22:28b) if he repents. The metaphor is one of prosperity and success.³⁶ In an earlier speech, Job complains that God has walled his way (ארוח) and covered his paths (נתיבה) with darkness (חשך; 19:8). The meaning of the imagery is obscure. Most likely, it is connected with the deprivation of one’s options in life (cf. Hos 2:8 [ET 6]).³⁷ In offering a reverse image, Eliphaz attempts to address Job’s concern and enlightens him with the good fortunes in store for him.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (22:1), Eliphaz delivers his third and last speech. Instead of the typical introductory complaint about Job’s provocative words, the opening of his speech consists of a series of rhetorical questions leading to the conclusion that Job’s wickedness is great (22:2–5). Eliphaz fires back at Job with legal terms such as “to arraign” (יכח) and “to enter into judgment” (משפט + בוא; v. 4). His point is to let Job come to the awareness that it is God, not Job himself, who summons the lawsuit.

³⁴ Dhorme, *Job*, 334.

³⁵ Holbert (“*Klage*,” 249) and Clines (*Job 21–37*, 567) also recognize this connection.

³⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 343; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 567.

³⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 475.

From the opening words of this speech of Eliphaz, the authorial audience is able to discern a progression in thought of this character, and the friends in general. As Newsom notes, “Eliphaz begins without the customary introductory complaint about windy words, lack of wisdom, or insulting speech.”³⁸ Instead, he chooses to focus on “the divine self-sufficiency and detachment” with respect to human’s morality and pragmatic values (vv. 2–3) and on the reality of Job’s wickedness and God’s disapproval of it (vv. 4–5). Moreover, the change of Eliphaz’s attitude toward Job can also be shown by his repeated use of some key terms such as “fear,” “blameless” and “way.” In his first speech, Eliphaz appears to believe in Job’s piety and blamelessness. In his second speech, he accuses Job, whose provocative words undermine religion. Now, in the third speech, he calls into question Job’s piety and blamelessness.³⁹ Most importantly, for the first time, Eliphaz explicitly accuses Job of great wickedness. In terms of the instabilities in the narrative, the conflict between Job and the friends is now intensified to the extreme. Perhaps, this is the first signal to the authorial audience that the dialogue is going to break down soon.

In support of this accusation, Eliphaz enumerates the crimes Job must have committed (22:6–9). As Good rightly observes, “this series of accusations is structured exactly like certain oracles of the prophets.”⁴⁰ In a typical prophetic judgment speech (e.g., Hos 2:7–8 [ET 5–6]; Isa 8:6–7), the accusations are introduced by “because” (כי),

³⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 500.

³⁹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 272. Contra Clines (*Job 21–37*, 553), who unconvincingly insists that “Eliphaz has not changed his view of Job since chaps 4–5.”

⁴⁰ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 273. So Newsom, “Job,” 500; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 557. See also Westermann, *Basic Forms*, 129–94.

and the resulting punishments introduced by “therefore” (על כן).⁴¹ The same form is used here (vv. 6, 11). Job’s first wrongdoing, according to Eliphaz, is that he has taken pledges from his brothers “for no cause” (חנם), stripping off the garments of the naked (v. 6). The rare adverb חנם recalls Job’s earlier complaint, in which he accuses God of afflicting him cruelly “for no cause” (חנם). Eliphaz thus rejects Job’s claim and asserts that it is Job, not God, who is behaving unreasonably hard-heartedly. In addition to this charge, Job is also accused of not showing compassion to the weary, the hungry, widows and orphans (vv. 7–9). This strophe ends with Eliphaz’s assertion that Job’s misfortune is the result of his misconduct (22:10–11).

Eliphaz turns next to indict Job of mocking God’s knowledge and proper governance (22:12–14). Using a distorted citation of Job’s words in 21:22, Eliphaz says more than Job would have admitted. This deviant thought of Job, as Eliphaz sees it, implies that Job is following the path of the wicked (22:15). As Eliphaz continues, he re-uses expressions and ideas that Job employed in his preceding speech in order to come up with his insight that the wicked will eventually receive their punishment in due course (22:16–20). In so doing, Eliphaz corrects the perception of Job, who argues that the wicked prosper at all times even though their success is not in their hands.

Despite his conviction that Job’s behaviour is characterized by great evil, Eliphaz concludes his speech with an appeal. He itemizes a few stipulations with which Job must comply and elaborates on the prospective blessing in store for him (22:21–30). Job must “agree with” God and “be at peace.” (v. 21); he must also “receive” what God gives and “take it to heart” (v. 22). Once Job is willing to accept these preconditions, if he “returns

⁴¹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 273.

to” (עָד + שׁוּב) God, he will be restored (v. 23a).⁴² After stating this summary statement, Eliphaz goes into the specifics. He suggests that Job should remove wickedness from his tent (v. 23b).⁴³ Job must also return what is precious, symbolized by gold, to the places where it properly belongs so that God will become his most treasured possession (vv. 24–25).⁴⁴

Eliphaz guarantees Job that his repentance and reorientation to God will bring him a delightful and intimate relationship with God (vv. 26–27).⁴⁵ His decisions will be marked with success and whatever he does will prosper (v. 28).⁴⁶ For the last point, Eliphaz uses the metaphor of light shining on one’s path as a response to Job’s earlier complaint that God has walled his way and covered his paths with darkness (19:8). Eliphaz ends his speech with an assurance that Job will even become a resource of help to others. (vv. 29–30).

⁴² Clines (*Job 21–37*, 564) believes that the verb שׁוּב should be translated as “turn,” not “return.” He cites Prov 1:23 as a parallel and argues that the meaning of the sentence is that Job should ‘turn’ himself and his attention to God as a pupil does to his teacher when receiving instruction.” His argument is unconvincing since the construction עָד + שׁוּב is not used in Proverbs at all, but is commonly used to convey the connotation of repentance in prophetic literature (Isa 9:12; 19:22; Hos 14:2; Joel 2:12; Amos 4:6, 8, 9, 10, 11).

⁴³ Most (e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 332; Newsom, “Job,” 502; Balentine, *Job*, 350) regard this colon as a continuation of the conditions set out by the conditional particle אִם at the beginning of the line. Since the flow is already interrupted by the term תִּבְנֶה, “you will be restored,” it is preferable to understand the verb תִּרְחִיק as a “non-perfective of obligation” (*IBHS*, §31.4g) and translate as “you shall remove.” Clines (*Job 21–37*, 545 n.23.e) takes תִּרְחִיק as a 3 fem. sg, “it will be far,” instead of 2 masc. sg, “you make far,” thus making “wickedness” the subject of the verb. His argument is weak, for the verb, when used in this sense, usually takes a person as its subject.

⁴⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 342; Newsom, “Job,” 502; Balentine, *Job*, 350. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 250) understands the image as a token for security: “Job will be able to leave his gold unguarded.” His argument breaks apart as the cliff of the wadi in v. 24b is not a convenient place for one to place the gold.

⁴⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 502–3.

⁴⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 343; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 567.

As the authorial audience responds to the thematic component of the character Eliphaz, the audience examines once again the kind of people Eliphaz typifies. As discussed earlier, after convicting Job of great wickedness, Eliphaz uses the language of a prophetic judgment speech to declare that Job's misfortune is the apt punishment for his misconduct (vv. 6–11). In order to follow the form of the prophetic language, Eliphaz "is willing to invent the crimes that justify the punishment."⁴⁷ As Hoffman puts it, "he was portrayed as the archetype of a dogmatic, doctrinal believer, who is unable to sustain his faith without rationalistic support."⁴⁸ The strict theological paradigm that he endorses forces him "to distort and falsify reality" so that his faith would stand.⁴⁹ To quote from Hoffman one more time, "His is the exact antithesis of the figure of Job, who is unwilling to blur facts, and certainly not to distort them, and who maintains his faith in God despite the uncertainties and questions for which he cannot find any answers."⁵⁰

As noted above, the repetition of terms like תָּמַם / תָּם, יִרְאָה / יִרָא, and חֹנָם, all of which are key words in the prologue, intensifies the ironic nature of Eliphaz's speech. To be more precise, this is the irony the author employs at the expense of Eliphaz. Moreover, in light of Eliphaz's intentional distortion of Job's earlier words (22:13–14), the authorial audience would inevitably pass negative ethical judgments on Eliphaz. Therefore, the ideology represented by Eliphaz is likely to be the author's object of ridicule.

⁴⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 351. On a similar vein, Whybray (*Job*, 104) states that "Eliphaz manufactures 'facts' to fit his theory."

⁴⁸ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 138. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 353) says, "In his [Eliphaz's] estimation, it is more important that one's theology be *right* than *credible*" (italics his).

⁴⁹ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 139. So Balentine, *Job*, 353.

⁵⁰ Hoffman, *Blemished Perfection*, 139.

II. Job's Seventh Response (Job 23–24)

A. Allusion Analysis

As before, the narrator uses the phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, “answered,” to introduce Job's seventh response. There are a few instances where Job appears to allude to Eliphaz's preceding speech. First, the noun *משפט*, in conjunction with the root *יכח*, draws a connection between Job's words in 23:4, 7 and Eliphaz's words in 22:4a. Second, the phrases *מצות שפתיו* and *אמרי פיו* in 23:12 together form a link with Eliphaz's words in 22:22. Third, Job picks up the “oppressed” motif (24:2–11), which Eliphaz has initiated in 22:6–9. Fourth, the “light” and the “way” metaphors, which Eliphaz employs in 22:28b, are adapted by Job in 24:13–17. Job's present speech alludes not only to Eliphaz's preceding speech but also to the prologue. The latter allusion is established through the “testing” motif (1:6–2:10; 23:10).

1. *יכח* + *משפט* (23:4, 7)

The noun *משפט*, in conjunction with the root *יכח*, draws a connection between this speech and Eliphaz's preceding one.⁵¹ Job opens his speech with a wish to find God in his dwelling (23:3). His intent is to set out his lawsuit (*משפט*) before God and speak to him with arguments (*תוכחת*, from the root *יכח*; 23:4). In this imaginary lawsuit, Job envisions that both parties will pay respectful attention to one another (23:5–6).⁵² At the end of this surprisingly optimistic legal setting, he asserts that he, as an upright man in dispute with (*nip'al* of *יכח*) God, should successfully bring forth his lawsuit (*משפטי*, “my

⁵¹ Course (*Speech and Response*, 141–42) also recognizes this connection.

⁵² Reading *ישם בי* as elliptical for *ישם לבו בי*, “pays attention to me,” in v. 6 (Clines, *Job 21–37*, 576 n.6.e.).

case”; 23:7).⁵³ However, his fantasy is immediately shattered when he comes to a realization of the elusiveness of God (23:8–9).⁵⁴

Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, also uses the noun *משפט*, in conjunction with the root *יכח*, in the forensic context. He points out that it is God, who arraigns (*יכח*) him and enter into judgment (*משפט*) with him (22:4).⁵⁵ In response to Eliphaz’s claim, Job reiterates once again that he is the initiator of the lawsuit. Besides, according to Job, God does not seem to be interested in engaging into a legal disputation with him.

2. The “testing” motif (23:10)

Job has previously spoken of God’s testing (*בחן*) of human beings every moment (7:18). Now, when he expresses his self-confidence regarding his integrity, he asserts that he would come forth like gold even if God tests (*בחן*) him (23:10b). As Habel rightly notes, “The image in Job is not one of refinement but of assaying to ‘test’ the quality of the gold.”⁵⁶ After all, according to Job, God knows Job’s way (23:10a), which is so pure that there is no dross to be refined. Newsom correctly recognizes the connection of this verse to the prologue.⁵⁷ She says, “Ironically, Job has unwittingly described the scenario of the prose tale in which God’s knowledge of Job’s way is coupled with God’s

⁵³ I follow many (e.g., Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 363 n.7 b; Pope, *Job*, 172; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 345; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 112), and revocalize *מִשְׁפָּטִי*, “from my judge,” to *מִשְׁפָּטִי*, “my case.” This reading is also supported by LXX and Vulgate. Moreover, I agree with Tur-Sinai (*Job*, 355), who understands *פֹּלֵט* (as in 21:10) to mean “bring forth,” rather than the usual meaning “deliver” or “escape.” So Pope, *Job*, 172; Janzen, *Job*, 166; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 112.

⁵⁴ As Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 277) notes, “Discouragement returns in force, as Job boxes the compass in search of the god in 23.8–9. The search in all directions is unsuccessful.”

⁵⁵ See I.A.2.ii in this chapter.

⁵⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 350.

⁵⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 509.

assurance that Job will prove as good as gold when tested ... Job, however, does not pursue the possible connection between suffering and testing.”⁵⁸ Her last remark deserves reconsideration. It is more likely that Job’s words here should be interpreted as the author’s criticism of the “testing” motif as presented implicitly in the prologue. Just because God should have already known the outcome of the test, Job’s suffering becomes more unjustified.

3. אמרי פיו + מצות שפתי (23:12)

Both Eliphaz and Job use various expressions to refer to the commands of God (22:22; 23:12).⁵⁹ Eliphaz, in his preceding speech, urges Job to receive instruction (תורה) from God’s mouth (פה) and lay up in his heart God’s words (אמר; 23:22). Job, however, declares that he has not departed from the command (מצות) of God’s lips (שפה) and has treasured the words (אמר) of God’s mouth (פה; 23:12). Job’s assertion is a clear refutation of Eliphaz’s suggestion because the words of God have never departed from his heart.

4. The “oppressed” motif (24:2–11)

The “oppressed” motif appears to form a thematic connection between this speech and Eliphaz’s preceding one. Earlier, Eliphaz has accused Job of lack of compassion to the weary (22:7a), the hungry (22:7b), the widow (אלמנות; 22:9a), and the fatherless (יתמים; 22:9b). His crimes also include seizing pledges (חבל) for no cause (22:6a),

⁵⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 509.

⁵⁹ Dhorme (*Job*, 350) also recognizes this connection. Clines (*Job 21–37*, 599) also notes the similarity between 23:12 and 22:22, but is reluctant to draw any connection between them.

stripping naked the garments of his debtors (22:6b), and withholding food and water from the needy (22:7). Similar terminology and imagery recur in the second part of Job's present speech. In ch. 24, Job sets out to describe the injustice of society (vv. 2–11). Some are said to drive away the donkey of the fatherless (יתומים) and seize as a pledge (חבל) the ox of the widow (אלמנה; v. 3). They even snatch the fatherless child (יתום) from the mother's breast and seize as a pledge the infant of the poor (v. 9).⁶⁰ The poor are said to be naked without garments (v. 7, 10a). Their affliction also includes suffering from hunger (vv. 5, 10b) and thirst (v. 11b). Once the thematic connection between this strophe and Eliphaz's words in 22:6–9 is established, one needs to explore its significance. This, however, cannot be done without looking closely into the context of 24:1–11.

Job 24 begins with an ambiguous exclamation: “Why are times (עתים) not reserved by the Almighty, and those who know him cannot see his days (ימיו)?” This verse is almost unanimously understood as Job's lamenting of the delayed judgment of the wicked.⁶¹ Some translations and commentators even supply the word “judgment” or an equivalent term when translating עתים and ימיו.⁶² The root עת is used elsewhere in Job to mean “moment” (27:10; 38:23; 39:1–2, 18), “season” (5:26; 6:17; 38:32), or “appointed time of death” (22:16). Where the term יום is used in conjunction with אף in 20:28 to denote the day of God's wrath, it is expressed in the singular as opposed to the plural in the verse in question. In the plural, the term is most frequently used elsewhere in

⁶⁰ Reading על-פני, “infant of the poor,” for על-פני, “over the poor.” So Dhorme, *Job*, 355; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 354; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 585 n.9.d.

⁶¹ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 358; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 345; Newsom, “Job,” 510; Clines, “Quarter Days Gone,” 246; idem, *Job 21–37*, 601; Balentine, *Job*, 366–67.

⁶² For example, NIV; NJPS; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 254; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 351; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 573.

Job to refer to the days of human life (e.g., 7:6, 16; 8:9; 9:25; 10:5, 20; 14:1, 5; 17:1; 27:6; 29:18; 38:12, 21). Depending on the context, those days may denote not only times of affliction and trouble (e.g., 15:20; 30:16, 27; 38:23) but also times of fortune and prosperity (e.g., 21:13; 29:2, 4; 36:11). At any rate, it appears fair to say that how one understands the two terms depends heavily on the reader's construal of the focus of the passage that follows.⁶³

The presence of another term וידעו, “and those who know him,” in 24:1 suggests that the central concern is the innocent, rather than the wicked. To my knowledge, there is no dispute that the deity is the subject to which the pronominal suffix refers. The notion “to know God” is used elsewhere in Job only at 18:21 in which the ungodly are described in parallel with those who do not know God.⁶⁴ If the times and days in 24:1 refer to the moments or seasons of fortune and prosperity, rather than judgment, it follows logically that Job is complaining that the godly cannot see or experience those good days.

For those who take the statement in 24:1 as Job's lament over the delayed punishment of the wicked, the remaining strophe in 24:2–12 is a logical elaboration of the reason for his complaint. The emphasis of these lines is then on how the wicked exploit the poor. Interestingly, the subject never appears in these verses, and some translations and commentators again supply the word “the wicked” or “wicked men”

⁶³ The use of the same word pair “times”/“days” in 38:23, in which YHWH speaks of the “times of trouble” and the “days of battle and war,” might give the impression that the times/days in 24:1 also refers to moments of judgment or disaster. This is, however, not conclusive for the speakers in the book often allude or even distort what another person has spoken. See, e.g., Ho, “Unmarked Attributed Quotations,” 711.

⁶⁴ Clines (*Job 21–37*, 602) notes that “to know God” is a rare expression in wisdom literature. Besides Job, it only occurs in Prov 2:5; Pss 36:11 [ET 10]; 79:6; and perhaps 87:4.

without strong textual justification.⁶⁵ It seems clear that the focal point of this passage is, rather, on the suffering of the oppressed. Since almost all lines in vv. 2–4 are expressed with impersonal third person plural verbs, Wolfers reasonably suggests that they “may properly be understood as being in the passive voice, with the victims as the subject rather than the object.”⁶⁶ This reading is reinforced by the use of a *pu‘al* perfect of חָבֵא (“they are forced to hide themselves”) at the end of v. 4.⁶⁷

Beginning with v. 5, the theme is unquestionably the plight of the afflicted. The metaphor depicts the poor “as ‘wild asses’ forced to live as scavengers of the wilderness.”⁶⁸ As the imagery continues to develop, the description greatly resembles the curses associated with the disobedience of the covenant by God’s people in Deut 28. The exploitation mentioned there includes serving the enemies in hunger and thirst, in nakedness and lack of everything (v. 48). Most striking is the vivid depiction of the devouring of children in the midst of unbearable suffering (vv. 53–57). The plight of not being able to enjoy the toil associated with olive trees and vineyards is also stated (vv. 39–40). Similar images are elaborated in Job 24:5–11.⁶⁹ Although there is not enough evidence to draw the conclusion that Job 24 alludes to Deut 28, the fact that the

⁶⁵ For example, NRSV; Dhorme, *Job*, 354; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 254–56; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 573–74.

⁶⁶ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 228. Cf. GKC §144 g.

⁶⁷ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 228.

⁶⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 359.

⁶⁹ Almost all scholars believe that the subject in v. 9 is again the wicked. In order to explain this abrupt switch from the victim to the culprit, some (e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 355; Pope, *Job*, 174–75) suggest relocating the verse after v. 3. Others (e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 354; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 607), on the contrary, see the shift between the oppressor and the oppressed as a deliberate poetic interplay and thus retain the verse in its present position. Instead of taking the subject in v. 9 as the wicked, it is equally probable to interpret the verse to mean that people are snatching children from one another in order to devour or to serve as a pledge in midst of extreme suffering.

focalization in the former is the afflicted appears to be undeniable. To be fair, the adjective רשע, “wicked” does appear at 24:6, in which the term refers to the owner of those vineyards the oppressed glean to be fed. Nevertheless, neither the “wicked” nor their evil behaviours are being foregrounded. The function of the word רשע in 24:6 is similar to that of the term איבִּיךְ, “your enemies” in Deut 28 (vv. 7, 25, 31, 48, 53, 55, 57, 68), who serve only as the correlative of the afflicted.

Verse 12 concludes the strophe by first describing the oppressed as asking for help: “From the city the dying groan, and the throat of the wounded cries for help.”⁷⁰ This description is then followed by a statement expressing Job’s perception of God’s evaluation: ואלוה לא ישִׁים תּפִּלָּה. The MT vocalization suggests that either God does not impute wrong, presumably, to the wicked⁷¹ or God does not consider the scenario as wrong.⁷² A slight revocalization of the term תּפִּלָּה, “folly, wrongdoing,” to תְּפִלָּה, “prayer,” gives another plausible meaning.⁷³ In this alternative reading, the sense is that God does not pay attention to the prayer of the afflicted.⁷⁴ Either way, Job claims that God is indifferent to social wickedness.⁷⁵

⁷⁰ I follow the Syriac and the suggestion of many (e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 361; Pope, *Job*, 177; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 267; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 586; Balentine, *Job*, 368; Wilson, *Job*, 270–71) in reading מִחַיִּים as the plural participle of מוֹת, “dying,” to establish a parallelism with “wounded” in the next line. Nevertheless, the interpretation will not be impacted in a significant way if the MT reading is adopted.

⁷¹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 349; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 609–10.

⁷² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 360; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 279; Balentine, *Job*, 368.

⁷³ This reading is supported by two Hebrew MSS.

⁷⁴ Dhorme, *Job*, 361; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 369 n.12 d.

⁷⁵ Newsom (“Job,” 511) even claims, “Both translations are required for one to hear the text in all the fullness of its meaning.” Her suggestion is, however, open to question.

What is the purpose of Job's allusion to Eliphaz's accusation against him? If the focus of 24:2–11 is the crimes committed by the wicked, then Job probably intends to say to Eliphaz that those are the crimes committed by the wicked, not him. However, it is equally, if not more, probable that Job is using the words of Eliphaz as a springboard to present another accusation against God's aloofness to the injustice in the world.

5. The “light” and the “way” metaphors (24:13)

“Light” and “way” are both metaphorical concepts in the Hebrew Bible. In the preceding speech, Eliphaz uses a combination of the two concepts in his final appeal to Job. He assures Job that light will shine on his ways if he repents (22:28).⁷⁶ In this present speech, Job also employs these two metaphorical concepts together in 24:13, which can be translated, “They are those who rebel against light; they do not know its ways and they do not dwell in its paths.”

Few would disagree that the train of thought expressed in Job 24:1–12 continues in vv. 13–17.⁷⁷ For those who take the wicked to be the subject of the chapter, this strophe further explores another aspect of wickedness committed by this category of people.⁷⁸ As a result, במרדי אור (“among those who rebel against the light”) in v. 13 is interpreted as a metaphorical way of describing the wicked who express hostility toward the moral order of creation.⁷⁹ Although the word “light” may be used as an image that

⁷⁶ See I.A.2.v in this chapter.

⁷⁷ Fohrer (*Das Buch Hiob*, 373) is a rare exception, who takes 24:13–17 as an independent poem.

⁷⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 360; Balentine, *Job*, 369; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 611.

⁷⁹ Pope, *Job*, 178; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 267; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 360–61; Newsom, “Job,” 511; Balentine, *Job*, 369; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 611.

carries a moral connotation in the Hebrew Bible,⁸⁰ its usage elsewhere in Job never carries such a connotation. Throughout the book, the metaphor of “light” is used to denote a symbol of life (e.g., 3:16, 20; 18:5–6, 18; 33:28, 30) or a sign of success and divine favour (e.g., 22:28; 29:3; 30:26). It is certainly possible to argue that the “light” in 24:13 is the only instance for which it is used to convey a moral sense in this book. The emphatic personal pronoun, הֵמָּה, “they,” in v. 13, however, speaks against this reading. The most intuitive reading suggests that the referent of הֵמָּה is not the wicked, for the antecedent of this pronoun is most logically the dying and the wounded in the preceding verse.⁸¹

The term בִּמְרֹדֵי in 24:13 is prep. ב + cstr. of *qal* pl. ptc. of מָרַד, “to rebel.” In the Hebrew Bible, מָרַד is used in a metaphorical sense only in this verse.⁸² Elsewhere, it normally refers to attempted but unsuccessful rebellion against a king or God.⁸³ If “light” is taken as a metaphor for life, the image in 24:13 would be that of the afflicted who seek to escape their miserable life. A similar picture appears in Job’s opening lament (ch. 3), in which a person in despair is described as seeking death but does not succeed (vv. 20–23). Therefore, it is preferable to understand the ones who rebel against the light in 24:13 as the dying and the wounded mentioned in v. 12, if the MT is intact.

A still better alternative is to emend בִּמְרֹדֵי to בִּמְרוּרֵי, prep. ב + cstr. of מָרַר, a derivative of מָרַר, “to be bitter.” Although this reading is not supported by any manuscript or ancient version, a parallel situation can be found in the Damascus

⁸⁰ Ryken et al. (ed.), *Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, 509–12.

⁸¹ Wolfer, *Deep Things*, 229.

⁸² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 611.

⁸³ Knierim, “מָרַד,” 684–86. Cf. Clines, *Job 21–37*, 611.

Document. Whereas 4QD^a 3 iv.2 contains מוררים, the corresponding term in CD 8.4 reads מורדים. In fact, the root מרר, together with its derivatives, appears to be one of the favourite terms of the character Job (e.g., 3:20; 7:11; 9:18; 10:1; 13:26; 21:25). Moreover, the emendation would take into account the prefix prep. ב, which would otherwise be quite strange if the root of the term is מרר. If the proposed emended reading of Job 24:13a is a reasonable one, the line may be translated as “They are in bitterness of light.” As life, which is signified by light, is so unbearable to the afflicted, they are bitter about being alive. A comparable idea can be found in 3:20, which contains a question comprising two parallel lines: “Why does he give light to the sufferer, life to the bitter in soul?” In this synonymous parallelism, light is used metaphorically to denote life whereas the sufferer is described as the bitter in soul.

The use of “light” as a metaphor for life in 24:13a is reinforced by the next two lines, “they do not know its ways (דרך) and they do not dwell in its paths (נתיבה)” (24:13b–c). A similar word pair “way” (ארח)/“path” (נתיבה) occurs in Job’s earlier complaint at 19:8, “He has walled up my way so that I cannot pass, and he has set darkness upon my paths.” There, the way/path metaphor may signify the “normal course of life (cf. 13:27; Ps 139:3).”⁸⁴ The use of “light” in conjunction with “way”/“path” in 24:13 also serves as a signal by which the verbal allusion to Job’s beginning lament in ch. 3, and vv. 20–23 in particular, is established. There, the context is concerned with suffering, life, and death. Therefore, it seems more likely that Job is still sticking to the same idea in using the words “light,” “way,” and “path” in the verse in question.

⁸⁴ Clines, *Job 1–20*, 443.

There is much debate on the arrangement of vv. 14–16a and the precise actions performed by the murderer, the thief, and the adulterer.⁸⁵ What is relevant to the discussion is that the “poor and needy” (v. 14) are never being lost sight of here. Moreover, the phrase “no one shall see me, and He puts a veil over His face” is commonly translated to mean that the adulterer puts a veil over his own face.⁸⁶ Wolfers, however, notes that the sentence, and perhaps even the whole section, alludes to Ps 10, in which the context is similar.⁸⁷ One key theme of that psalm is the absence of God in the midst of oppression by the wicked. Verse 11 depicts the inner thought of the wicked: “He thinks in his heart, ‘God has forgotten, he has hidden his face, he will never see it.’”⁸⁸ The referent of the third person plural in v. 16b–c, “By day they shut themselves in; they do not know the light,” is often taken to be the aggregate of the “murderer,” the “thief,” and the “adulterer” in the preceding context. If we continue to adopt the “light” metaphor for life, the third person plural can logically refer to the oppressed who do not experience God’s favour. The combination of the noun “light” and the verb “know” takes the reader naturally back to v. 13, in which those who are “in bitterness of light” or “among those who rebel against the light” are said to not know its ways. The statement in v. 17a thus further describes the internal turmoil of the oppressed: “To all of them the morning is the same as the shadow of death.” In other words, life is a scary and unpleasant journey for those who suffer. Interestingly, the horror of the curses is described in a similar fashion in Deut 28 (v. 67).

⁸⁵ See, e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 362–65; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 612–13.

⁸⁶ Dhorme, *Job*, 363; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 256; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 352; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 574; NRSV; NIV.

⁸⁷ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 230.

⁸⁸ Goldingay, *Psalms* 1:169.

A wooden translation of v. 17b may be rendered, “For he is acquainted with (נִכְרַ) the terrors of the deep darkness.” The question before us is: Who is the “he” in this line? Most take the wicked to be the referent of the verb נִכְרַ.⁸⁹ Nevertheless, I follow the lead of Good and Wolfers and suggest that this singular subject is God, who was last referred to implicitly in v. 15.⁹⁰ In other words, Job takes up again his complaint against the cruelty of God who is familiar with the terrors of deep darkness.⁹¹ If the above reading on 24:13–17 is adopted, Job appears to have picked up the “light” and the “way” metaphors from Eliphaz in order to launch a counterargument. From Job’s perspective, darkness enshrouds the afflicted, including him, because God has set it up in the first place.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (23:1), Job resumes his speech. Job’s opening words express his acknowledgement that his complaint is deviant (23:2).⁹² He quickly moves to contemplate again the possibility of engaging in a legal disputation with God if he can find his way to God’s presence (23:3–7). In response to Eliphaz’s claim, Job reiterates once again that he is the initiator of the lawsuit. The imaginary lawsuit that Job envisions this time enables both parties to pay respectful attention to their corresponding adversary (vv. 5–6).

Job’s optimism does not last long for he immediately comes to the realization that he is unable to find God (23:8–9). According to Job, God is elusive because he knows

⁸⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 361; Newsom, “Job,” 511; Balentine, *Job*, 370; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 614.

⁹⁰ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 234; cf. Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 280.

⁹¹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 280.

⁹² The term מְרִי, “my deviance, rebelliousness,” comes from the noun מֵרָה, not מָרָר (*DCH* 5:485).

full well that Job is innocent (23:10–12).⁹³ Job asserts that if God tests him, he would come forth as gold (v. 10b). Moreover, whereas Eliphaz has urged Job to receive instruction from God’s mouth and lay up God’s words in his heart, Job insists that God knows that he has not departed from the commands of God’s lips and treasured the words of God’s mouth in his bosom (v. 12; cf. 22:22). Job’s assertion is a clear refutation of Eliphaz’s suggestion because the words of God have never departed from his heart. At the rhetorical level, the author criticizes the “testing” motif as presented implicitly in the prologue through the words of Job. Just because God should have already known the outcome of the test, Job’s suffering becomes more unjustifiable.

Job ends the first part of his speech with a note of despair once again. From Job’s perspective, God insists on making him suffer according to the divine will (23:13–14). Job finally returns to the theme “of the terror and dread that has plagued him every time he has attempted to consider what confrontation with God really means” (23:15–16).⁹⁴ As Job believes it, God’s terrifies him because he is not silenced by the misfortune, which is signified by the concept of darkness (23:17).⁹⁵

As discussed in the Allusion Analysis above, the meaning of ch. 24 is hotly disputed. Depending on how one understands the opening verse, the focalization of the chapter can be interpreted differently. For those who take v. 1 as Job’s lament over the

⁹³ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 597.

⁹⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 509.

⁹⁵ The verse is a *crux interpretum*. Its difficulties revolve about (a) the function of the conjunction כִּי, (b) the meaning and scope of the particle אֲלֵ, (c) the meaning of צִמְחָה, and (d) the relationship between the first and the second cola. See Clines, *Job 21–37*, 580–81 for a thorough discussion of related issues. I understand the first colon as conveying Job’s reason for God’s terror against him, and the second colon as a concessive clause. Thus I come up with the translation, “For I am not silenced by darkness, even though thick darkness covers my face.”

delayed judgment of the wicked, the first strophe (vv. 1–12) enumerates the types of oppression the wicked exercise upon the vulnerable. On the other hand, if v. 1 is understood as Job’s lament over the lack of good days experienced by the innocent, the strophe highlights their misfortunes and God’s aloofness in rectifying the situation. In terms of the second strophe (vv. 13–17), one may identify the “rebels” in v. 13 as the wicked or the afflicted. The outcome of the former interpretation is that this strophe is about the crimes of the murderer, adulterer, and perhaps the thieves. On the contrary, if the latter reading is adopted, the emphasis of the strophe is placed on the misfortune, which is signified by darkness, that the afflicted experienced and God’s approval of it.

Job 24:18–24 is widely recognized as being problematic if it were to come from the mouth of Job. Most interpreters understand the wicked to be the subject of this passage, and regard the arbitrary shift of pronouns between singular and plural as stylistic. As a consequence, this passage is interpreted as speaking of the ultimate punishment of the wicked—a theme that seems more at home with the friends than with Job. In addition to removing the passage as a pious gloss, different proposals have been advanced to explain this dissonant phenomenon. One way to resolve this incongruence is to attribute the passage in question to one of Job’s friends.⁹⁶ Another approach is to consider those orthodox sayings within 24:18–24 as Job’s quotation of the friend’s position.⁹⁷ By reading most of the verbs as optative, some take the strophe as an imprecation against, instead of a statement about, the wicked.⁹⁸ Yet others have explained the deliberate

⁹⁶ For example, Dhorme, *Job*, 386–93; Pope, *Job*, 187–96; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 351–63; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 651–77.

⁹⁷ For example, Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:211; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 269–72, 531–34; Janzen, *Job*, 169.

⁹⁸ For example, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 350–54; Newsom, “Job,” 511–12; Balentine, *Job*, 371–73; Wilson, *Job*, 275–79.

juxtaposition of contradictory sayings within Job 24:1–25 as a technique on the part of Job and/or the author for attaining a certain rhetorical effect.⁹⁹ Each of the above resolutions has its corresponding deficiency, and thus none has gained considerable support.¹⁰⁰ I believe that the kernel of the interpretive difficulty in Job 24:18–24 lies in the identification of the focal point of the passage. The problem arises because the wicked is assumed to be the subject of the passage.

Good provides a minority voice, arguing that Job 24 in its entirety is about divine absence and that the singular pronoun in vv. 18–24 always refers to God.¹⁰¹ Another dissenter is David Wolfers, who took the theme of this chapter to be “the fate of the poor and oppressed, and with God’s tolerance of and responsibility for that fate.”¹⁰² Although I share the general interpretive direction of Good and Wolfers, their failure to bridge satisfactorily the two sections (vv. 1–17 and vv. 18–24) of the chapter make their interpretations less appealing.

⁹⁹ For example, Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 165–67; Lo, *Job 28 as Rhetoric*, 120–26. While Newsom favoured the optative interpretation in her earlier commentary, she seems to have adopted another approach in her later monograph, in which she viewed the words of Job as possessing a disorienting quality. She writes, “[Job] forces those who listen to him into a painful cognitive dissonance, a loss of mastery, that is an echo, however faint, of what Job has experienced of the world” (167). Newsom’s “disorienting” understanding is a clever interpretive move to juxtapose contradictory materials without resolving the tension between them. Similarly, Lo understands the juxtaposition of contradictory positions in each of chs. 23–24, 25–26, and 27 as deliberate on the part of the author. It serves a rhetorical function to effect certain impacts upon the audience. She interprets 24:18–24 as the theology embraced by Job while 24:1–17 as the reality experienced by him. However, she does not provide the textual criteria for this distinction. She further argues that there is a series of contradictions in Job 23–24, and takes 23:3–7 and 23:10–12 as Job’s positive hope in God in contrast to 23:8–9 and 23:13–16 as his negative despair. Her interpretation is hardly defensible, for the formula *מי יתן*, which appears in the beginning of 23:3–7, always introduces a hopeless wish elsewhere in Job (6:8; 11:5; 13:5; 14:13; 19:23; 29:2; 31:35). Moreover, instead of being a statement of hope in God, 23:10–12 is better understood as Job’s “assertive expression of his self-consciousness of a righteous man, such as we have heard on several occasions before (e.g., 9:20–21; 13:16, 18)” (Clines, *Job 21–37*, 597).

¹⁰⁰ Since the deficiency of each position except the last is extensively discussed by Lo (*Job 28*, 108–18) and Clines (*Job 21–37*, 667–69), I am not going to rehearse the debate in this dissertation.

¹⁰¹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 280–81.

¹⁰² Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 234–40.

Starting with Job 24:18, the most extreme and apparently random alternations of number occur. Nevertheless, I believe that it is still possible to distinguish between the singular and the plural referents in a close reading. For those who associate the emphatic third person singular pronoun to the wicked, the statement in v. 18a is commonly interpreted as a metaphor expressing the nature of the wicked as light or fleeting.¹⁰³ Earlier in the book, Job compares the swift nature of his life to a reed carried away (9:26a). Outside the book, the closest parallel is Hos 10:7, in which the fleeting nature of Samaria's monarchy is compared to "a twig on the face of the waters" (בִּקְצֵף עַל פְּנֵי מַיִם). The sentence in question cannot legitimately be a simile since the subject lacks an object of comparison, without which the phrase "on the face of the waters" makes no sense.¹⁰⁴ It appears preferable to interpret the waters in a literal sense because the land, vineyards, drought, heat, and snow waters in the immediate context should be understood as natural phenomena. Most have noticed the pun between קל ("swift") and קלל ("cursed") and the antithesis between "waters" and "land" in this verse. A more reasonable alternative, then, is to understand God's swift action "on the face of the waters" as associated with the curse taking place in the land. Earlier in his complaint, Job has said something similar: "If he withholds the waters, they dry up; if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land" (12:15). The statement in 24:18a–b can thus be understood as a complaint against God's active involvement in causing agricultural disaster, and that in vv. 18c–19a as being

¹⁰³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 361; Newsom, "Job," 512; Balentine, *Job*, 372; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 669–70.

¹⁰⁴ Both Good and Wolfers believe that God is the subject of the poetic line in question and understand the phrase "on the face of the waters" as an allusion to the creation event in Gen 1:2. While Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 280) interprets the image here depicting the deity as the perpetrator of chaos, Wolfers (*Deep Things*, 234) takes the reference as conveying a deity who is swift "in combating evil in the sea-monster," but unable to rectify "the injustice of those whose suffering takes place on the dry land."

about God's intentional negligence in protecting the life-giving natural resources: "He is swift on the face of the waters; their portion is cursed in the land. He does not turn toward the vineyards; drought and heat snatch away snow waters."

The two clauses in v. 19 have widely been interpreted as comparative clauses.¹⁰⁵ The effect of drought and heat on snow waters is often assumed to be compared to the effect of Sheol on sinners. The second line is thus regarded as a verbless sentence, with Sheol as the subject and חטאו the noun-object.¹⁰⁶ This construal is problematic, for חטאו is neither a noun nor a participle, but a verb in the third person plural perfect *qal* form. Besides conveying the sense of "sin," חטא can also mean "miss."¹⁰⁷ Wolfers notes that "[i]n the book of Job the passage to שְׁאוֹל is invariably expressed without a preposition between the verb of motion and the destination" (7:9; 17:16; 21:13).¹⁰⁸ As mentioned above, there is strong indication that Job 24 alludes to Job 3, which also pictures the sufferer striving to get to Sheol by digging a passage but eventually failed (vv. 21–23). Taken together, שְׁאוֹל חטאו can be translated literally as "They have missed Sheol." The point of the image is that death is not granted to those who are experiencing extreme suffering. The plural subject here refers to "the same entity whose portion is accursed" and "the same souls in torment as those of v. 12."¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁵ GKC §161a.

¹⁰⁶ Most do not see this as a problem and so do not offer any explanation. Clines (*Job 21–37*, 655) is a rare exception and he states that the relative pronoun is to be understood before חטאו. Unfortunately he does not give any compelling reason for this odd grammatical construal.

¹⁰⁷ *HALOT* 1:305; *DCH* 3:194.

¹⁰⁸ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 236.

¹⁰⁹ Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 237.

Four puzzling images are presented in v. 20. The accusative pronoun in each of the first two images and the unreferenced subject of a passive verb in the third are all in the singular. Clines refers to these images as “random,” “incoherent,” “unrelated,” and “clumsily lumped together.”¹¹⁰ Nevertheless, he attempts to link the images in a coherent manner and translates the accusative pronoun and the unreferenced subject in the plural, which is a collective reference to the wicked. I see the randomness as intentional and the use of the singular number for the passive recipients as an indication that each of the referents is not meant to be taken as the same entity. The pronoun in *ישכחו רחם* (“the womb forgets him”) refers metonymically to someone who is dead before birth. This image alludes to the beginning lament of Job, who wishes that this could have happened to him (Job 3:10–12, 16). Most interpret the womb as a metonymy for life. In the book of Job, the womb always carries the primary metonymic sense of birth.¹¹¹

The pronoun in *מתקו רמה* (“the worm finds him sweet” or “the worm sucks on him”) is a simple reference to someone who has been granted the destiny of the grave. This again alludes back to ch. 3, in which Job complains that death never comes to the sufferer who wants to bring one’s own life to an end (vv. 20–23). The subject in the third phrase, *עוד לא יזכר*, “he is no longer remembered,” may refer to someone who is not remembered by God since he has reached Sheol. In the protest tradition, Sheol is sometimes portrayed as a place in which the dead are no longer remembered by God (e.g., Ps 88:5). But if this image is distinct from the previous one, the pronoun may as well

¹¹⁰ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 670.

¹¹¹ Although the “womb” in Job 1:21 is closely associated with “death,” its primary referent is still the “womb” of Job’s mother who gives birth to him. The concept of “death” is rather alluded to through the word *שמה*, “there.”

refer to someone who is no longer singled out by God for his careful examination. The remembering motif is at the heart of Ps 8 (v. 5), which is widely recognized as being parodied in Job 7:17–19. Whereas the psalmist in the former perceives the remembering of human beings by God as evidence of their exalted status, Job in the latter views this privilege as God’s fixing his attention upon humans in order to find fault in them. The fact that this divine watching motif in Job 7:17–19 recurs in Job 24:20c further supports this interpretation.

Each of these three images depicts what Job, as the ultimate representative of the sufferer, hopes for but never receives. The frustration of Job is summed up by the last image, which can be translated “and injustice is shattered like a tree” (24:20d). The image of a tree being destroyed in this present line is not completely novel. Earlier in 19:10, Job uses the image of the uprooting of a tree as a simile for the destruction of his hope. Even earlier, in 14:7–9, Job uses the cutting down (not uprooting) of a tree to express the desirable quality of trees over those of humans. Whereas a human dies and expires, a tree revives its life when water reaches its roots. In 24:20d, Job may be employing the image of a tree to refer to the perseverance of injustice. This picture is reinforced by the imagery of water (v. 19a), the lack of which revives injustice.

It is certainly correct that Job 24:21 would appear to be irrelevant to the context if the strophe is about the ultimate fate of the wicked.¹¹² I follow Clines and many others by emending the beginning term from רעה (“he devours”) to הרע (“he wrongs”), which is the third person masculine singular *hip’il* form of רעע I, to maintain the parallelism with יטב

¹¹² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 671.

in the following line.¹¹³ Again, the logical reference for the third person singular subject is God, whose presence and absence have caused the disasters mentioned in vv. 18–19a.

There is little doubt that Job 24:21–24 form a unit with a series of parallels and contrasts. The first pair is the barren and the widow (v. 21) on the one hand and the mighty (v. 22a) on the other. The term *וּמִשָּׁךְ* can mean either “and he drags down” or “and he prolongs.” If one adopts the former sense, the point of these parallel descriptions would be the arbitrariness of God, who afflicts both the weak and the strong. If one takes the latter sense, the second line is a reason for the first. In other words, the weak are afflicted by God, who prolongs the life of the strong in his power. I believe the second understanding fits better with the context that follows, which I will explain shortly.

Another pair of contrasts is *יָקוּם* (“he arises” [v. 22b_α]) and *וַאֲיָנֻסוּ* (“and he is gone” [v. 24a_β]). These two actions unmistakably belong to the same entity. In the psalms of lament, the verb *קוּם* is usually associated with the psalmist’s call to God for help. Since the deity is the only third person singular subject in view here, these actions may refer to the temporality of the help that God offers to the afflicted. This line of interpretation is reinforced by another antithesis, *רִימוּ מַעַט* (“they are exalted for a while”) and *וְהִמְכּוּ* (“they are bought low”), in v. 24. Again, this is an image of the ephemeral nature of God’s help to humanity. Although we are not sure about the plant in the first simile of the last line, these two similes clearly depict the humiliation of humans because of the absence of God again.

As mentioned earlier, the divine watching motif appears in v. 23b, which can be rendered, “and his eyes are upon their ways.” The presence of such a motif further

¹¹³ See Clines (*Job 21–37*, 656 n.21.b) for a sample list of interpreters who adopt this emendation.

supports that the strophe comes from the mouth of Job, as none of his three friends ever uses the same imagery in his argument.¹¹⁴ On the contrary, this image is repeated by Job several times as a token of God's "unjustified prying and probing of human lives," including Job's (e.g., 7:17–20; 10:4–6, 14; 13:27; 14:6; 16:9).¹¹⁵ This point is exemplified in v. 22bβ, which may be translated, "but he does not believe in life." Even though God does not put his trust in humans, when he arises, "he grants life the security upon which it depends" (v. 23a).¹¹⁶ To summarize this section, Job 24:21–24 may be translated, "He wrongs the barren woman who does not give birth, and he does no good to the widow. He prolongs the life of the strong in his power. He arises, but he does not believe in life. He grants life the security upon which it depends, but his eyes are upon their ways. They are exalted for a while, and he is gone. They are bought low, and shrivel like a mallow; they wither like the heads of grain."

Contrary to the common belief that Job 24:1–17 express Job's complaint about the delayed judgment upon the wicked, a close reading of the text suggests that the focus of attention is not the human evildoers, but rather the oppressed and the divine oppressor. Chapter 24 can thus be interpreted as another of Job's complaints about God's aloofness to and active involvement in the chaotic status of the created order.

As the authorial audience makes an interpretive judgment on the chapter in view, a legitimate question to be raised is the rationale for the subtlety of the identification of the referents in vv. 13–17 and vv. 18–24. It is fair to say that if one believes that 24:1–12

¹¹⁴ Elihu uses this motif once (34:21).

¹¹⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 165.

¹¹⁶ Since חיים is an abstract plural, I take this term as the antecedent of the singular pronoun in לו and the reference of the singular subject in וישען.

is concerned with the delayed judgment of the wicked, the following strophe (vv. 13-17) can be read as a continuation of the topic. The alternating singular and plural subjects in vv. 18-24 can also be understood to refer to the wicked, with one eye closed to the syntactic and semantic difficulties in some lines. Newsom describes the language in the passage in question as possessing a “disorienting quality.”¹¹⁷ She argues that the dissonance originates in the juxtaposition of conflicting viewpoints expressed by a single consciousness.¹¹⁸ Perhaps in imputing a disorienting quality to his own words Job attempts to mislead his audience—be it his friends or the reader—to contemplate for a moment that he might have been converted by the friends.

Job ends his speech with a pair of rhetorical questions affirming the strength of his argument: “If this is not so, who can prove me a liar? Who can reduce my argument to nothing?” (24:25). Even this closing remark is ambiguous. As Clines observes, “We would use Job’s formulation, ‘If that is not true, who will prove me a liar?’ only when what we have said is open to question but we cannot see how we can be refuted.”¹¹⁹ The ambiguity of Job’s words in this whole chapter may thus be a catalyst for the breakdown of the dialogue between the friends and him.

¹¹⁷ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 166.

¹¹⁸ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 166.

¹¹⁹ Clines, *Job 21-37*, 614-15.

III. Bildad's Third Speech (Job 25)

A. Allusion Analysis

The narrator uses the same phrase ויען ... ויאמר, “answered,” to indicate the entrance of Bildad's voice into the conversation the third and the last time. As is the case with other speeches, the most logical move is to look into the speech of the preceding speaker, i.e., Job, for possible quotations. The term פחד in Bildad's opening line (25:2) appears to draw a connection with Job's preceding words in 23:15–16. Other than this allusion, Bildad's words concerning the status of a mortal before God in 25:4 clearly hearken back to Eliphaz's similar words in 4:17 and 15:14 and Job's exact words in 9:2b.

1. פחד (25:2)

The term פחד, “dread,” draws a connection between this speech and Job's preceding speech.¹²⁰ Bildad begins his short speech with the topic sentence about God, “Dominion and dread (פחד) are with him; he makes peace in his heights” (25:2). It is likely that “dominion” and “dread” should form a hendiadys, which means “a dominion of dread.”¹²¹ Bildad's point is that God rules through dread, and his making peace in the heavenly realm is one such illustration.¹²² Job, in his preceding speech, also speaks of the dread that God generates in him (23:15–16). In alluding to Job's concept of “dread,” Bildad wants Job to accept the bare fact that this is how God works to make peace with him.

¹²⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 368.

¹²¹ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 276; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 282; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 631.

¹²² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 631.

2. ומה יצדק אנוש עם אל ומה יזכה ילוד אשה (25:4–5)

As most scholars have noted, Bildad's words in 25:4, which reads, ומה יצדק אנוש עם אל ומה יזכה ילוד אשה, "How can a mortal be righteous before God? How can one born of woman be pure?" are very close to what Eliphaz said in 4:17 and 15:14.¹²³ Bildad's next statement that the moon and the stars are not pure before God (25:5) is also an extension of Eliphaz's similar deduction about the status of angels before God (4:18). Moreover, the first colon in 25:4 is exactly the same as Job's words in 9:2b, in which he sets the question in a forensic context. Two points can be deduced from the allusions. First, the allusion of Bildad's words to Eliphaz's very first speech suggests that the friends have run out of words. Balentine says it best, "Between 4:17 and 25:5, the friends have spoken at Job for nearly 200 verses. As Bildad now prepares to speak the last words we will hear from him and his colleagues, the best he can do is to return to page one and begin reading again from the same script."¹²⁴ Second, Bildad's verbatim repetition of Job's words in 9:2b cannot be dismissed as coincidental.¹²⁵ Habel argues that in repeating Job's words Bildad probably "takes into account Job's demand for legal acquittal."¹²⁶ Since there is no legal connotation in the entire speech of Bildad, it is more likely that he alludes to Job's words in order to lead him away from the idea of having a lawsuit with God.

¹²³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 369; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 282–83; Newsom, "Job," 517; Balentine, *Job*, 384; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 633.

¹²⁴ Balentine, *Job*, 385. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 283) offers a similar observation.

¹²⁵ Clines (*Job 21–37*, 633) recognizes the connection and attempts to distance the association of Bildad's words with Job's.

¹²⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 369.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction (25:1), Bildad delivers his third and last speech. In fact, this would be the last words the audience will hear from the friends. Like Eliphaz in 22:2, Bildad begins without the customary introductory remarks that have characterized the speeches of the friends in the first two cycles. The first few words he says express the theme of his short speech: God's dominion of dread (25:2a). The reference of "dread" is an allusion to Job's preceding speech, in which Job complains about the dread that God generates in him. In response, Bildad insinuates that this is the typical style of God's governance. To further illustrate his point, Bildad claims that God imposes peace in the heavenly realm, presumably in a dreadful fashion (25:2b). He supports his argument in a rhetorical question asserting the effectiveness of God's rule through his innumerable troops (25:3).

Bildad turns next to recite the concept of the incomparability of humanity to God and its moral implication, a motif of which Eliphaz has previously spoken (25:4–5; cf. 4:17; 15:14). On the one hand, his wording is very close to that of Eliphaz, perhaps implying that the friends have run out of ideas. On the other hand, his question in 25:4a is a verbatim repetition of Job's in 9:2a, in which Job places the emphasis on his vindication in the setting of a lawsuit with God. Bildad's deliberate re-use of Job's words can be seen as his attempt to move Job away from using the legal language. The most distinctive feature of Bildad's speech is its abrupt ending. His speech comes to an end with a statement equating a human with a worm or a maggot (25:6). For the first time, Bildad does not address Job directly in his speech.

The major interpretive problem confronting the authorial audience is the exceptional shortness of Bildad's present speech. This is one of the reasons many scholars append part of what belongs to Job in ch. 26 to this speech.¹²⁷ Those who accept the text as is usually argue that the brevity of Bildad's speech is one of the indications that "the friends have run out of fuel"¹²⁸ or that his speech is interrupted by Job.¹²⁹ These are attractive reading strategies, though they cannot satisfactorily account for the relatively calmness of the tonality of the speech. There is no criticism of Job in Bildad's speech at all. Another alternative, I would suggest, is to understand that Bildad is not sure about what Job actually said in ch. 24, and vv. 18–24 in particular. Suppose the strophe can legitimately be interpreted as a declaration of the divine judgment upon the wicked, perhaps Bildad understands the words as such and believes that Job has finally come to agreement with the friends.

IV. Job's Eighth Response to His Friends (Job 26)

A. Allusion Analysis

As before, the narrator uses the phrase ויען ... ויאמר, "answered," to introduce Job's eighth response. The rare noun שמץ, "whisper," in conjunction with the noun דבר, "word," appears to draw a connection between this speech and Eliphaz's first speech (chs. 4–5).

¹²⁷ Dhorme, *Job*, 370–76; Pope, *Job*, 180–86; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 276–81; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 364–75; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 363–68; Newsom, "Job," 517–19; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 619–41.

¹²⁸ Andersen, *Job*, 241. Similarly, Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 283–84) argues that the friends have no more new points to make at this stage of the dialogue.

¹²⁹ Janzen, *Job*, 177; Balentine, *Job*, 385–86. Newsom ("Job," 517) also claims that Job interrupts Bildad in 26:1–4. Bildad, nevertheless, resumes his speech in 26:5.

שמען דבר (26:14)

The noun שמען, “whisper,” in conjunction with the noun דבר, “word,” draws a connection between this speech and Eliphaz’s first speech (chs.4–5).¹³⁰ Job concludes his speech with a summative statement, followed by an exclamation and a rhetorical question: “Behold, these are the outskirts of his way. What a whisper of a word (שמען דבר) do we hear of him! Who can understand the thunder of his might?” (26:14). The first two cola aptly summarize the preceding description of the creative works of God (26:5–13). According to Job, they only reveal a fraction of God’s sovereign acts. He compares the faintness of God’s revelation to שמען דבר, “a whisper of a word.” The noun שמען, “whisper, echo” appears only two times in the Hebrew Bible, both in Job. The other occurrence appears in the context of Eliphaz’s vision in 4:12. There Eliphaz claims, “there came to me a word (דבר) in secret; my ear received a whisper (שמען) of it.” There is good reason Job alludes to Eliphaz’s vision at this point. In the preceding speech, Bildad has borrowed ideas from the content of Eliphaz’s vision to end his speech (25:4–6). In alluding to Eliphaz’s vision, Job thus aims to dismantle the friends’ claim to special revelation.¹³¹ Moreover, Job uses this allusion to mock the friends for trying “to write the full report about the way creation works” merely based on the whisper of a word from God.¹³²

¹³⁰ Janzen, *Job*, 178; Balentine, *Job*, 392.

¹³¹ Janzen, *Job*, 177–78.

¹³² Balentine, *Job*, 392. Similarly, Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 286.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator's brief introduction (26:1), Job speaks up again. In a series of exclamations, Job addresses his response to Bildad.¹³³ The syntax of 26:2–3 is ambiguous.¹³⁴ On the one hand, Job's emphasis may be on Bildad's lack of abilities to be a counsellor. For instance, Habel adopts this approach and renders the verses, "How well you helped when you had no strength! How well you saved with a powerless arm! How well you counseled without having wisdom! And offered your advice so freely!"¹³⁵ On the other hand, the phrases that describe Bildad's advice could be taken to refer to Job. For instance, the NRSV gives the following translation, "How you have helped one who has no power! How you have assisted the arm that has no strength! How you have counseled one who has no wisdom, and given much good advice!"¹³⁶ Those who adopt this approach usually believe that Job's self-derision is a deeply satirical response to Bildad.¹³⁷ In a pair of rhetorical questions, Job ends the exordium in 26:4 with a challenge to the origin of Bildad's so-called wisdom.¹³⁸

¹³³ The verbs עזרת, "to help"; הוֹשַׁעַת, "to save"; יַעֲצֵת, "to counsel"; הוֹדַעַת, "to offer"; and הִגִּידָהּ, "to utter" in 26:2–4 are in the form of second personal masculine singular.

¹³⁴ Newsom, "Job," 517; Balentine, *Job*, 386.

¹³⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 375. Translated similarly by the NJPS, the NEB, and the TNK.

¹³⁶ Similar translations are given by the NIV and Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 119. Clines (*Job 21–37*, 619) offers a similar translation, but he believes that the words belong to Bildad, not Job.

¹³⁷ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 284; Newsom, "Job," 517; Balentine, *Job*, 386. Cf. Redditt ("Reading the Speech Cycles," 209), who argues that Job's words are in earnest, and they are a genuine confession of his powerlessness.

¹³⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 386. Cf. Redditt ("Reading the Speech Cycles," 209), who takes v. 4 as Job's genuine question, which "is answered in vv. 5–14 with a hymn in celebration of God as creator."

In the next strophe, Job abruptly turns next to contemplate God's power in the created order (26:5–13).¹³⁹ He begins with the terror with which the netherworld responds to God's appearance (vv. 5–6). In the form of a hymn, he then recounts God's powerful acts in creation (vv. 7–9). As Job continues, he praises God for having set a circle as a boundary to divide the upper world of the cosmos from the underworld (v. 10). In the next few verses, Job turns his focus to the myth of the primordial battle in which God smote the cosmic sea monster Rahab and pierced the fleeing serpent (vv. 11–13). God's power and understanding caused even the pillars of heaven, which are personified as the bystanders, trembled and astounded (v. 11).

Job concludes his speech with a summative statement, followed by an exclamation and a rhetorical question: "Behold, these are the outskirts of his way. What a whisper of a word (שִׁמְעָ דְּבָר) do we hear of him! Who can understand the thunder of his might?" (26:14). The first two cola aptly summarize the preceding description of the creative works of God (26:5–13). According to Job, they only reveal a fraction of God's sovereign acts. For those who attribute 26:5–13 to Bildad, the last colon is usually taken as an unqualified praise to "God's majesty," which "is beyond human comprehension."¹⁴⁰ Even among those who regard these verses as Job's, some understand this last colon as "his meditation on God's majestic power"¹⁴¹ or his confession of his own limitedness.¹⁴² So, it is syntactically plausible to interpret the speaker's tone in 26:5–11 as positive.

¹³⁹ Many believe that the strophe belongs to Bildad. See Dhorme, *Job*, 370–76; Pope, *Job*, 180–81; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 273–75; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 364; Newsom, "Job," 517; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 619–20.

¹⁴⁰ Newsom, "Job," 519. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 374; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 639.

¹⁴¹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 368.

¹⁴² Andersen, *Job*, 218–19. Cf. Balentine (*Job*, 387–93), who believes that Job is completing Bildad's speech for him in 26:5–14. He states, "For Job, the question [in v. 14] marks a stage in a journey that is not yet complete" (393).

On the contrary, suppose one takes Job as the speaker and insists that his attitude toward his friends has not changed, it is equally likely that 26:14 marks a turnabout of the apparent praise language in 26:5–13, just as was done in 9:4–13 and in 12:13–25. Job, in 26:14, compares the faintness of God’s revelation to שִׁמְעָן דְּבַר, “a whisper of a word,” a phrase that alludes to Eliphaz vision in 4:12. As Good puts it, “That whisper is but a ghost of the real ‘thunder.’ Those who are privy only to a tiny corner of the god’s power cannot draw conclusions from what is beyond understanding.”¹⁴³ In so saying, Job dismantles the friends’ claim to special revelation.

The ambiguity of Job’s words in 26:5–14 once again invites the authorial audience to make interpretive judgments. Perhaps the praise of God’s majestic power in this strophe is another of Job’s tactic to disorient the friends.¹⁴⁴ This strategy in turn contributes to the dissolution of the dialogue between Job and them.

V. Job’s Final Response to His Friends (Job 27–28)

A. Allusion Analysis

As the friends have ceased speaking, Job speaks up again. The most obvious allusion appears in 27:13, which is almost a verbatim repetition of Zophar’s words in 20:29a. Moreover, the phrase “to take delight in Shaddai” (עַל שִׁדַּי + *hitpa’el* of עָנַג) in 27:10 draws a connection with Eliphaz’s words in 22:26. Besides, the root חָקַר constitutes a semantic connection between 28:3 and the words of the friends (5:27; 8:8).

¹⁴³ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 286.

¹⁴⁴ Similarly, Newsom (*Moral Imaginations*, 167) states that “Job continues his dialogue-ending strategy of taking the friends’ words into his own speech. Indeed, the theme of divine power is quite compatible with Job’s perspective.”

In terms of motif, the concept of the “first human” forms a link between 28:28a and Eliphaz’s word in 15:7–8.

There are additional allusions between this speech and the prologue. The phrases “fear of the Lord” and “turning away from evil” at the end of this speech (28:28b–c) are clearly associated with the description of Job in 1:1, 8; 2:3. Finally, the term תמה, “integrity,” in conjunction with the other term חזק, “to maintain,” also appears to draw a connection between this speech (27:5–6) and the prologue (2:3, 9).

1. תמה and חזק (27:5–6)

The terms תמה, “integrity,” and חזק, “to maintain,” both of which are key terms in the prologue, re-appear in this speech.¹⁴⁵ Job begins this speech with an oath establishing the truthfulness of his words (27:2–4). To strengthen his claim, he adds a second oath formula to confirm his own integrity (תמה) for refusing to declare the friends as being in the right (27:5). Moreover, he asserts that he maintains (חזק) his righteousness (צדקה) and will not give it up (27:6a). In the context, “his righteousness is his guiltlessness of anything for which his suffering could be a recompense, rather than a claim to absolute perfection.”¹⁴⁶ In the prologue God uses the phrase “he still maintains (חזק) his integrity (תמה) to refer to his appraisal of Job for responding appropriately to the loss of possessions and the death of his ten children (2:3). Even his wife reiterates the same appraisal of him (2:9). Through the allusion, the author unfolds what he means by

¹⁴⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 378; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 287; Newsom, “Job,” 523; Balentine, *Job*, 402.

¹⁴⁶ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 647.

maintaining one's integrity. It entails the courage to adhere to the truthfulness of one's claim even at the expense of violating the social norm.¹⁴⁷

2. ענג + על שדי (27:10)

The phrase “to take delight in Shaddai” (על שדי + *hitpa'el* of ענג) draws a connection between this speech and Eliphaz's third speech (ch. 22).¹⁴⁸ In a series of rhetorical questions, Job declares the hopelessness of the typical godless person in 27:8–10. According to Job, this kind of impious person will not take delight in Shaddai (על שדי + *hitpa'el* of ענג) and he will not call upon Eloah at all times (v. 10). Eliphaz, in his previous speech, assures Job that if he repents, Job will take delight in Shaddai (על שדי + *hitpa'el* of ענג) with the result that God will hear his prayers (22:26–27). In repeating the words of Eliphaz and turning them into a rhetorical question, Job exposes the contradiction inherent in them. As Wilson puts it,

Job is reminding his friends that, according to their own words, the wicked (among whom they now include Job) have little interest in God, nor do they expect God to intervene in their affairs. Therefore, the wicked will not turn to God or “call upon” him. Job, however, continues to “call upon God at all times,” seeking him even during his great suffering, and yet he receives no more response than the wicked.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷ Greenstein's remark is insightful: “To speak what may seem unseemly concerning God is not blasphemy if it is true, that is ... if one believes it is true” (“Truth or Theodicy,” 255). See also, Gutiérrez, *On Job*, 102.

¹⁴⁸ Wilson, *Job*, 293.

¹⁴⁹ Wilson, *Job*, 293.

3. זה חלק אדם רשע עם אל (27:13a)

Job's words in 27:13a are almost a verbatim repetition of the first colon of the closing line of Zophar's second speech (20:29a).¹⁵⁰ The similarity between these two verses is one of the reasons many scholars chose to assign 27:13–23 in its entirety to Zophar.¹⁵¹ It is, however, intelligible to read 27:13a as Job's. For some who adopt this reading strategy, the verse serves as an indication that Job intends to preempt Zophar from speaking by completing his speech for him.¹⁵² Even Newsom, who belonged to this camp, had to admit, "This approach is not without its own difficulties, however, for it depends on recognizing literary techniques that are somewhat different from those used in earlier parts of the dialogue."¹⁵³

In the context, the line in 27:13 opens Job's topos on the destruction of the wicked (27:13–23). The whole passage is connected to his imprecation at 27:7 in which he curses his enemy and his adversary to receive the fate of the wicked. Taking the allusion to Zophar's words in 20:29a into consideration, the text invites the reader to understand Job as using the language of the friends to issue a warning to them. According to Job, if the friends continue to behave as his opponent, they should expect to receive the fate of the

¹⁵⁰ The only difference is that the colon ends with *עם אל*, "with God," in 27:13a, but *מאלהים*, "from God," in 20:29a. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 289) argues that this subtle difference is significant because the former indicates a reward and the latter a punishment. Balentine (*Job*, 409) similarly recognizes the difference between the two verses. For him, Job means to "suggest that inasmuch as God, his 'enemy,' behaves 'like the wicked' (v. 7), then God deserves to experience the same fate as the wicked." It is, however, more likely to see the difference as a poetic variation. After all, the preposition *עם* can mean "in the presence of, laid up with" (Clines, *Job 21–37*, 653 n.13.c).

¹⁵¹ Dhorme, *Job*, 386–98; Pope, *Job*, 187–95; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 291–96; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 383–87; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 651–77.

¹⁵² Janzen, *Job*, 174; Newsom, "Job," 524; Balentine, *Job*, 399, 406–7.

¹⁵³ Newsom, "Job," 497. She, nevertheless, adopted a slightly different approach in her later monograph (*Moral Imaginations*, 168).

wicked like the one they themselves had vividly described.¹⁵⁴ In fact, Job has issued a similar warning to the friends at the end of ch. 19 (v. 29).

4. חקר (28:3)

Most would agree that the central theme in ch. 28 is concerned with the quest for wisdom.¹⁵⁵ As van Hecke points out, “In the description of this quest, the Hebrew verb *hāqar* ‘search out, to explore’ plays an important role.”¹⁵⁶ The verb חקר first appears in this chapter at v. 3, the beginning of a passage (vv. 3–11) that is filled with obscured images.¹⁵⁷ There is some dispute over the subject of vv. 3–11. While most ancient readers understood God as the subject of these verses,¹⁵⁸ the majority of modern scholars are inclined to take a human being to be the subject of them.¹⁵⁹ It is undeniable that some of the activities mentioned in 28:3–11 are typically associated with the divine.¹⁶⁰ However, as the opening verses of the chapter (vv. 1–2) direct the reader’s attention to the location of precious metals, it is more likely that the metaphorical language in vv. 3–11 should be related to the human’s expedition for treasury, rather than the divine activities in creation. Therefore, the divine overtones of this passage are best understood as a description of the

¹⁵⁴ Similarly, Andersen, *Job*, 221; Wilson, *Job*, 295.

¹⁵⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 395–401; Newsom, “Job,” 528–33; Balentine, *Job*, 415–29; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 908–25.

¹⁵⁶ Van Hecke, “Searching,” 139–62.

¹⁵⁷ The verb חקר appears a second time later in the chapter at v. 27 with a different application.

¹⁵⁸ See Greenstein, “Wisdom in Job 28,” 269; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 70–71.

¹⁵⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 395–97; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 291; Newsom, “Job,” 529–31; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 909–15; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 62–87. Cf. Greenstein, “Wisdom in Job 28,” 267–69; Balentine, *Job*, 421–22.

¹⁶⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 397; Newsom, “Job,” 529–31; Greenstein, “Wisdom in Job 28,” 267–69; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 911–15.

godlike abilities of the human explorer in mythological terms.¹⁶¹ The emphasis is the effort one is willing to make in order to obtain the treasury.

When the reader approaches 28:12, in which the central question of the chapter is raised, one then realizes that the preceding eleven verses are in fact a foil. The real object of the quest is actually wisdom. The point of 28:1–12 becomes: No matter how hard and successful a person is able to search for treasure, one cannot know the location of wisdom. Stephen Geller helpfully distinguishes two levels of meaning in vv. 1–11. He writes,

(1) there is a “realistic,” narrative plane comprising a description of how jewels are found and mined; (2) there exists also the poetically dominant plane of metaphor and associations. The poet, then, constructs his real meaning from the flow of complementary and contrasting images.¹⁶²

Therefore, on the realistic plane, the subject of the verb חקר in 28:3 is the human explorer.¹⁶³ On the poetic or symbolic plane, however, the subject of חקר becomes the one who tries hard to probe wisdom but does not succeed.¹⁶⁴

The verb חקר also appears in 5:27 in a comparable context. Eliphaz concludes his first speech by urging Job to pay attention to what they have searched out (חקר). The verb is thus used as an appeal for authority. In a similar vein, Bildad uses the noun חקר in his first speech to refer to the source of knowledge of the ancestors (8:8). If we adhere to the view that Job is the speaker of ch. 28, he may be using the verb חקר, and the “search”

¹⁶¹ Jones (*Rumors of Wisdom*, 71) writes, “superhuman feats are part and parcel of ancient Near Eastern epic patterning.” See also Newsom, “Job,” 529–31; Balentine, *Job*, 421–22; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 911–15.

¹⁶² Geller, “Where is Wisdom,” 158. Similarly, Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 30–31.

¹⁶³ Geller, “Where is Wisdom,” 158–59. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 396; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 43–44.

¹⁶⁴ Geller, “Where is Wisdom,” 159–61. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 396; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 67–68.

metaphor, to allude to the friends' words in 5:27 and 8:8.¹⁶⁵ Taken as such, "Job 28:1–11 may be understood as Job's implicit critique of his friends' clambering after wisdom by searching out the tradition."¹⁶⁶

5. The "first human" motif (28:28a)

The wisdom poem in ch. 28 ends with the divine address to humanity/the human (אָדָם). There is some dispute over the identity of the addressee. The MT vocalization suggests that the addressee is 'ādām with the definite article. Most interpret the definite article as marking a class and the term 'ādām as referring to the human race.¹⁶⁷ Tur-Sinai, nevertheless, suggests that the addressee in v. 28 refers to Adam, the first human in Genesis.¹⁶⁸ To buttress his claim, he argues that ch. 28 "seems to stem from an elaborate poetical account of the Creation and the first steps of man."¹⁶⁹ I echo Jones' assessment of Tur-Sinai's proposal:

This view is particularly attractive in light of the temporal time to distant days in which God engaged in creative acts of chaos-ordering. Verse 28 is also set during this time frame. Immediately following these skilful acts of building and ordering, God turns to address "the first man," Adam.

The "first human" motif also appears in Eliphaz's second speech (ch. 15). In a mocking question, Eliphaz asks Job if he was the "first human born" (אָדָם תּוֹלֵד) who has "listened in on the council of God" (vv. 7–8). This "first human," according to Eliphaz,

¹⁶⁵ Müllner, "Der Ort des Verstehens," 78; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 103.

¹⁶⁶ Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 103.

¹⁶⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 389; Newsom, "Job," 533; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 125; Clines, "Fear of the Lord," 57; idem, *Job 21–37*, 894.

¹⁶⁸ Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 395.

¹⁶⁹ Tur-Sinai, *The Book of Job*, 409.

represents an ideal with regard to the knowledge of wisdom (v. 9).¹⁷⁰ In this speech, Job uses the “first human” motif that Eliphaz initiated to claim the superiority of his wisdom. As Job knows what God said to the first human, his wisdom is no less than that of the ideal that Eliphaz has ever envisioned.¹⁷¹

6. סור מרע and יראת אדני (28:28b–c)

Most interpreters see the connection of the concluding cola of this chapter (28:28b–c) to the prologue through the phrases יראת אדני, “fear of the Lord,” and סור מרע, “turning away from evil.”¹⁷² In the very opening of the story, the narrator describes Job as one “who fears God” (ירא אלהים) and “turns away from evil” (סר מרע; 1:1). These virtues are subsequently affirmed twice by YHWH (1:8; 2:3). In the context of this present chapter, according to Job, God declared to the first human that the fear of the Lord and turning away from evil were qualities that exemplify wisdom and understanding (28:28b–c). In putting these words into the mouth of Job, the author reminds the authorial audience that Job is the character who has been exhibiting wisdom in the three cycles of dialogue.¹⁷³ More importantly, in light of his provocative languages in chs. 3–27 and his

¹⁷⁰ Gordis, “Paradise Myth,” 86–94; *idem*, “Good and Evil,” 123–38; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 254; Newsom, “Job,” 449–50.

¹⁷¹ Jones (*Rumors of Wisdom*, 207) offers a similar argument. He says, “It is quite possible that Job claims antiquity by taking on the persona of the ‘first man’ in response to Eliphaz’s rhetoric in 15:7. After constructing a parable of his friends’ failed search for wisdom from the tradition in Job 28:1–11, he appeals to his friends’ own means of legitimating authority through antiquity, but he outstrips them. As the first human, he now has unrivalled claim to antiquity, and this also unparalleled access to wisdom.”

¹⁷² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 393; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 292; Newsom, “Job,” 533; Balentine, *Job*, 428; Clines, “Fear of the Lord,” 79; *idem*, *Job* 21–37, 924; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 103–4, 209.

¹⁷³ Jones (*Rumors of Wisdom*, 104) offers a similar argument. He says, “As words to Job as the primal man, v. 28 reflects YHWH’s own evaluation of Job in the prose tale and thus serve to re-affirm Job’s status throughout the dialogues as a righteous man” (*italics his*).

affirmation of this traditional cliché of what embodies wisdom in 28:28, Job redefines the meaning of the phrases “fear of the Lord” and “turning away from evil.”¹⁷⁴

B. Impact on the Reading

For the first time, the narrator uses a different formula to introduce the words of a speaker. He says, “Job again lifts up his discourse (נשא + משל) and said” (27:1). The authorial audience is confronted with two interrelated oddities in this introduction. First, the speaker that comes up is Job, not Zophar, whom the audience should be expecting. Second, if Job is the speaker, why does he need to be introduced again? Newsom argues that the unusual heading in 27:1 (and 29:1) implies that Job’s discourse has been interrupted.¹⁷⁵ She regards this as evidence that 26:5–14 belong to Bildad and that ch. 28 is an interlude from an independent voice. I find her argument unconvincing. If the formula in 27:1 and 29:1 is a marker for interrupted speech, perhaps the reader should expect one between 26:4 and 26:5, for Bildad’s speech has too been interrupted by Job, according to Newsom’s theory.

Alternatively, as Good suggests, the formula in 27:1 may reflect Job’s pause as he waits in vain for Zophar’s response.¹⁷⁶ Taken as such, his reading strategy can account for both oddities as mentioned above. Good’s argument can moreover be complemented by Habel’s observation. Habel points out that the expression, “to lift up a discourse” (נשא + משל), elsewhere denotes an idiom, referring “to the formal oath and imprecation

¹⁷⁴ Cf. Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 103–4. He argues that the emotive aspect of the phrase “fear of the Lord” also recalls the numinous dread that has characterized Job’s response to God in chs. 3–27.

¹⁷⁵ Newsom, “Job,” 516, 522.

¹⁷⁶ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 286. See also Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 368.

character of the speech which follows.”¹⁷⁷ Thus understood, the idiom in 27:1 may refer to the solemn oath that Job is going to take in 27:2–6.

Job begins with a series of oaths in which he defends the honesty of his speech, his integrity, and his determination not to declare his friends right (27:2–6). He confirms his own integrity (תמה) for refusing to declare that the friends are in the right (27:5) and asserts that he maintains (חזק) to his righteousness (צדקה) and will not give it up (27:6a). The term תמה, in conjunction with the other term חזק, hearkens back to the prologue in which both YHWH and Job’s wife use the construction חזק + תמה (2:3, 9) to refer to their appraisal of Job’s response. The allusion reveals that the author considers integrity as the courage to “speak truth to power.”¹⁷⁸

Following these oaths, Job invokes a curse against his enemy and his adversary: “May my enemy be like the wicked person (רשע); may my adversary be like the unrighteous one (עול)” (27:7). There is much dispute over the identity of Job’s enemy (איבי, “my enemy”) and adversary (מתקוממי, “my adversary”) in 27:7.¹⁷⁹ Some contend that God must be in view because Job has referred God as his foe (צר; 16:9) and he has described God as counting him as his foe (צר; 19:11) and his enemy (אויב; 13:24).¹⁸⁰ As Newsom rightly argues, “The content of the curse makes no sense on that supposition.”¹⁸¹ Others have suggested that the curse should be interpreted as generic with no specific

¹⁷⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 379.

¹⁷⁸ Greenstein, “Truth or Theodicy,” 255.

¹⁷⁹ The problem is of another sort for those who transpose this verse to the words of one of the friends. See, e.g., Clines, *Job 21–37*, 663–64.

¹⁸⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 381–82; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 287–88; Balentine, *Job*, 405–6.

¹⁸¹ Newsom, “Job,” 523. So, Clines, *Job 21–37*, 652 n.7.c.

object in mind.¹⁸² In the words of Dhorme, “Instead of saying: ‘May I not suffer the fate of the wicked!’ he says: ‘May my enemy suffer the fate of the wicked.’”¹⁸³ Although this reading is a reasonable one, it is more likely that Job’s words are double-edged. On the surface, the curse is generic with no named enemy. At a deeper level, the friends should not fail to regard themselves as Job’s enemies and adversaries.¹⁸⁴ Habel contends that the friends cannot be in view here since both *איבי* and *מתקוממי* are singular in form.¹⁸⁵ This argument is not conclusive. In psalms of lament, it is common for the psalmist to refer to his opponents collectively as “my enemy” (*איבי*; Pss 13:3, 5 [ET 2, 4]; 18:18 [ET 17]; 41:12[ET 11]) or “the enemy” (*אויב*; Pss 7:6 [ET 5]; 31:9 [ET 9]; 42:10 [ET 9]; 43:2; 64:2 [ET 1]; 143:3). Therefore it is possible for Job to adapt terminology from standard formulae found in lament psalms and use it as an innuendo for the friends.¹⁸⁶ Similar practice is employed by the friends in the second cycle to insinuate that Job is becoming the “wicked.” Job seems to be applying what the friends have done to him to themselves.

To end this strophe, Job moves on to describe the hopelessness of the typical godless person before God (27:8–10). His tone continues to be ironic.¹⁸⁷ As Job, who is righteous, receives no response from God, his hope seems to be no different from that of the godless one.¹⁸⁸ Moreover, Job picks up the phrase “take delight in Shaddai (על שדי +

¹⁸² Dhorme, *Job*, 382; Newsom, “Job,” 523.

¹⁸³ Dhorme, *Job*, 382.

¹⁸⁴ Similarly, Andersen, *Job*, 221; Wilson, *Job*, 292.

¹⁸⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 381; see also Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 287–88; Balentine, *Job*, 405.

¹⁸⁶ Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 370–71) also thinks that the term “enemy” in 27:7 may be adapted from standard formulas found in individual psalms of lament.

¹⁸⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 523–24; Wilson, *Job*, 292.

¹⁸⁸ Wilson, *Job*, 292.

hitpa'el of עננ) and the motif of answered prayer, which are two of the incentives for Job to submit to God according to Eliphaz (cf. 22:26–27), but sets them in the context of a pair of rhetorical questions in v. 10. In so doing, Job exposes the contradiction inherent in the words of Eliphaz. As Job argues, the godless one simply demonstrates no interest in God or calling upon him. If Job is one of the impious, according to their assessment, then Eliphaz's assurance that he will "take delight in Shaddai" and his prayer will be answered would be no incentive to him at all.

Job appears to change his style in the next two verses as he addresses the friends directly (27:11–12). He declares his intention to instruct the friends in the true nature of God's power and criticizes them for the inanity of their speeches. To conclude the first part of his speech, Job declares the judgment awaiting his opponent (27:13–23) by first repeating the first colon of the closing line of Zophar's second speech (v. 13a; cf. 21:29a). In adapting the language of the friends, Job warns the friends that if they continue to act as his opponent, they should expect to receive the fate of the wicked like the one they themselves had vividly described.

Job's second part of his speech is an extended poem on wisdom (ch. 28). Because of the unique style and tonality of this poem, most interpreters do not attribute this speech to Job.¹⁸⁹ The majority regard this chapter as an independent poem—composed by the same author of the preceding wisdom dialogue or inserted by a later scribe—which serves as a reflective interlude between the dialogue between the Job and the friends and

¹⁸⁹ Clines' remark is representative, "chap. 28 is almost universally denied to Job ... The consensus of scholarly opinion is that chaps. 28 is an independent poem, not set in the mouth of any of the speakers of the book of Job" (*Job 21–37*, 908).

the latter part of the work.¹⁹⁰ Another suggestion, which comes independently from Greenstein and Clines, is to attribute this poem to Elihu.¹⁹¹ Both of them buttress their corresponding proposals by showing linguistic and thematic correspondences between ch. 28 and chs. 32–37.¹⁹² In light of prevailing allusions in this book, affinities in language or motif between two passages do not necessarily imply that they belong to the same speaker. It seems to me the meaning of the poem changes according to the context, which the interpreter supplies for ch. 28. Therefore, if one believes that it is an independent poem or part of the speeches of Elihu, the poem does make sense accordingly.

Since there is no separate heading for ch. 28, my reading strategy is to take it as a continuation of Job's speech.¹⁹³ The opening lines of the poem place its focus on the certainty of the attainability of precious metals (vv. 1–2).¹⁹⁴ The mention of the "source" and "place" of these metals establishes the leading imagery through which the following section (vv. 3–11) is to be interpreted.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁰ Dhorme, *Job*, li; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 298–99; Andersen, *Job*, 222–24; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 26–27; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 391–94; Newsom, "Job," 528–29; *idem*, *Moral Imaginations*, 169–82; Fiddes, "Riddle," 186.

¹⁹¹ Greenstein, "Poem of Wisdom," 269–72; "Clines, "Fear of the Lord," 80–85; *idem*, "Putting Elihu," 243–53; *idem*, *Job 21–37*, 908–9.

¹⁹² Greenstein, "Poem of Wisdom," 269–72; "Clines, "Fear of the Lord," 80.

¹⁹³ So Janzen, *Job*, 187–201; Geller, "Where is Wisdom," 176 n.1; Lo, *Job 28 as Rhetoric*; Balentine, *Job*, 415–29; Wilson, *Job*, 299–320; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 290–93) suggests that it should be treated as Job's even if it was not intended as such.

¹⁹⁴ Reading the beginning particle כִּי as asseverative. So Dhorme, *Job*, 399; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 304; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 389; Geller, "Where is Wisdom," 177 n.4; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 373; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 894 n.1.b; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 117–23. On the contrary, Greenstein ("Poem on Wisdom," 265) has cautioned against imputing the asseverative sense to the particle כִּי too easily. His concern is extensively addressed by Jones (*Rumors of Wisdom*, 119–23).

¹⁹⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 395; Geller, "Where is Wisdom," 158; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 39.

As discussed in the Allusion Analysis section, it is best to interpret vv. 3–11 along the realistic and symbolic planes in parallel. On the realistic plane, this section describes the heroic human’s quest to find and obtain the hidden treasury. On the symbolic plane, it depicts the failure of the acquisition of wisdom despite one’s heroic attempt. The description of the “search” in v. 3 may be seen as an allusion to the words of the friends in 5:27 and 8:8, in which they also used the root חקר to refer to the manner they employ to acquire wisdom. Whereas some have argued that the mythological language in this section indicates a critical condemnation of the human explorer,¹⁹⁶ others, however, have contended that the language rather represents a celebration of his grand achievements.¹⁹⁷ Interestingly, no matter which position one adopts, the impact on the interpretation of the section is minimal. These verses only serve as a foil to the following section, in which the inaccessibility of wisdom becomes the focus (vv. 12–14).

Job continues to praise the value of wisdom, which surpasses the worth of the most precious metals and jewels (vv. 15–19). He turns next to describe the ability of God to find and obtain wisdom (vv. 20–27). The poem ends with God saying to the first human that the “fear of the Lord” and “turning away from evil” are the embodiment of wisdom and understanding (v. 28). Whereas Eliphaz has used the “first human” motif as a sarcasm to Job for laying exclusive claim to the possession of wisdom, Job picks up this motif and boldly claims that he knows what God said to the first human. The implication is that his wisdom is no less than that of the ideal that Eliphaz has ever envisioned.

¹⁹⁶ Geller, “Where is Wisdom,” 167; Jones, *Rumors of Wisdom*, 66–87, 234.

¹⁹⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 397; Newsom, “Job,” 530–31; Balentine, *Job*, 422. While Geller (“Where is Wisdom,” 167) certainly recognizes the “negative overtones” in vv. 3–11, he surprisingly concludes that the section’s “overall effect is positive.”

Moreover, the phrases “fear of the Lord” and “turning away from evil” in v. 28 recall the affirmation of Job by the narrator and by YHWH in the prologue (1:1, 8; 2:3). Since these two qualities encapsulate what it means to be a person of wisdom, the author reminds the authorial audience that Job is the character who has been exhibiting wisdom in the three cycles of dialogue. More importantly, in light of his provocative languages in chs. 3–27 and Job’s affirmation of this traditional cliché of what embodies wisdom in 28:28, Job gives a refined definition for “fear of the Lord” and “turning away from evil.”

Regarding the progression of the narrative, this speech of Job pushes the conflict between the friends and him to the extreme. With the implicit imprecation against the friends in 27:7, 13–23 and the subtle ridicule for their lack of wisdom (28:1–28), Job successfully brings the dialogue between the friends and him to a close.

VI. Job’s Testimony (Job 29–31)

Job stops addressing the friends in Job 29–31.¹⁹⁸ Officially, the three cycles of dialogue have come to an end at ch. 28. For the sake of convenience, I also include the discussion of this speech in this chapter of the dissertation.

A. Allusion Analysis

No allusion to the preceding dialogue is detected in this long speech of Job. Perhaps, this is not totally out of the reader’s expectation since Job has ceased responding

¹⁹⁸ Holbert (“Rehabilitation,” 229–37) regards chs. 29–31 as secondary. According to his analysis, “The author of 29–31, obviously conversant with the liturgy of the *Klage*, and shocked by the blasphemies of Job, now uses the *Klage* to prepare the blasphemer to meet his God” (236).

to the friends. Nevertheless, the word pair טוב (“good”) / רע (“evil, disaster”) appears to establish a connection between this speech and the prologue.

רע and טוב

In lamenting his present humiliation, Job declares that evil (רע) had come to him when he had hoped for good (טוב; 30:26). In the prologue, Job uses the same word pair טוב / רע in the context of his second verbal response (2:10b). Newsom argues that Job’s words in 30:26 “stand in considerable tension with” those in 2:10b.¹⁹⁹ Her argument is predicated on the assumption that the words in 2:10b are meant to be understood as an unmarked rhetorical question.²⁰⁰ However, as I have argued, Job’s words in 2:10b should rather be understood as a statement: “We should receive good (טוב) from God but should not receive evil (רע)” (2:10).²⁰¹ Read in this light, Job has not changed his position since the misfortune had first befallen him. He still adheres to the belief that God’s affliction of him is unjustified. In addition, the allusion further strengthens the cohesiveness between the poetic dialogue and the prose framework.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator opens this section with the same formula as he did in 27:1, “Job continues to lift up his discourse and said” (29:1). Again, this perhaps implies that Job has waited in vain for the friends to respond. Job opens his speech by expressing a

¹⁹⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 547.

²⁰⁰ For related discussions, see I.A.7 in Chapter 3. Although Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 309) interprets 2:10b as a statement, he also claims that Job’s words in 30:26 directly contradict what he said to his wife in the prologue.

²⁰¹ Refer to I.A.7 in Chapter 3 for this translation.

longing for a return to the past when God had been his friend and had lavished his blessings on him (29:2–6). He turns next to describe his former standing as leader of his community (29:7–10). Job elaborates the reason why he was treated with such respect by his people (29:11–17). He then moves to focus on the hopes for his future that he had entertained in the days of his prosperity (29:18–20). In bringing the first part of his speech to a close, Job returns to the reason why he was respected by his community (29:21–25).

Chapter 29 provides a window through which the authorial audience can view the inner world of the protagonist.²⁰² Job's memory often invites the audience's ethical judgments of him. Many interpreters take Job's words in ch. 29 as a form of self-praise of an arrogant person.²⁰³ However, if one examines the function of his words in the context of the narrative as a whole, and his testimony in chs. 29–31 in particular, one may not want to be too harsh on Job. On the one hand, the sentiment expressed in this chapter represents the blessedness of Job as described in the prologue. As Wharton argues,

The question is whether I will allow these and other observations to obscure what I take to be the poet's intention to provide a vivid and detailed picture of the kind of person described by God in Job 1:8 ... The alternative is to enter into the poet's intention with all my powers of imagination, suspending disbelief where necessary, conspiring with the poet to conjure up a vision of human blessedness and integrity worthy of Job 1:1–5, 8 and 2:3.²⁰⁴

²⁰² Dating the book of Job in the Achaemenid period, Hamilton ("Elite Lives," 69–89) claims that Job's soliloquy in chs. 29–31 "opens a window onto the values, styles of self-display, and social relationship of landed elite groups in ancient Israel" in that period (69–70).

²⁰³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 406; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 294–303; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 192.

²⁰⁴ Wharton, *Job*, 121. So Balentine, *Job*, 441; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 1037–38.

On the other hand, chapters 29 and 30 form a “diptych.”²⁰⁵ Together they resemble the complaint portion of an individual lament, reciting the two contrasting periods of Job’s life in extreme terms.²⁰⁶

With a series of identical introductory phrase, “but now,” (ועתה; 30:1, 9, 16), Job sets off to describe his present misery, after he has expressed his longing for his former life lived under God’s blessing in ch. 29. He begins to depict the mockery to which he is subjected (30:1), and gives an excursion on the description of the contemptuous character of his mockers (30:2–8). He continues to describe his mockery and ill-treatment by this rabble (30:9–15). Worst of all, “[b]oth Job and the rabble understand the catastrophe that has overtaken him as God’s own aggression against and humiliation of Job.”²⁰⁷ In the next section, Job turns from the social dimension of his degradation to its physical and psychic counterpart (30:16–23). For the only time in this speech Job addresses his complaint to God directly (vv. 20–23). As Job moves on, he declares that he had compassion for those in distress (30:24–25) and reiterates his outraged sense of having received evil in the place of good (30:26). He uses the word pair רע / טוב, which he had used in the prologue (2:10b), to reaffirm that he has not altered his position. He concludes the second part of this long speech with striking images of his alienation from a world that has no place for him (30:27–31).

²⁰⁵ Whybray, *Job*, 125.

²⁰⁶ Westermann, *Structure*, 38–42; Cox, “Final Challenge,” 59; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 385; Whybray, *Job*, 125.

²⁰⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 546.

Regarding the progression of the narrative, it is important to note that the first two parts of Job's final testimony is focused solely on the reversal of his social status. As René Girard rightly points out,

The contrast between past and present is not from riches to poverty, or from health to sickness, but from favour to disfavour with the very same people. The Dialogues are not dealing with a purely personal drama or a simple change of circumstance, but with the behaviour of all the people towards a statesman whose career has been destroyed.²⁰⁸

This gives the authorial audience a strong hint that the book is about the social alienation a person feels when one is not living according to the cultural norm.

Job opens the third part of his present speech in recalling a covenant he had made not to contemplate lustfully for a young woman (31:1). In a series of rhetorical questions, he asserts his conviction that God scrutinizes human's behaviour and allots to persons according to their conduct (31:2–4). Some argue that Job's conviction of God's active reinforcement on the moral order of the world is his rationale for adherence to such a strict code of ethics.²⁰⁹ If this is true, then the satan would have been right since Job would have admitted that he feared God *not* for nothing (1:9). There is, however, no compelling reason to impose a causal relationship here. A more reasonable alternative is to understand Job's words in 30:2–4 as his own belief "by which he has lived his life, though all the evidences are against it now."²¹⁰

In the rest of the speech, Job compiles a comprehensive inventory of sins of which Job is claiming to be guiltless (31:5–34, 38–40) and another appeal to God for a hearing

²⁰⁸ Girard, *Victim of His People*, 12.

²⁰⁹ Newsom, "Job," 552; Balentine, *Job*, 479.

²¹⁰ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 1015. Cf. Habel (*The Book of Job*, 432), who unnecessarily distinguishes Job's belief before and after his affliction.

(31:35–37). The topics to which the sins are related appear to form groups. As Newsom conveniently summarizes, “The general issues covered are (1) sexual and general morality (vv. 1–12), (2) justice and social obligation (vv. 13–23), (3) proper allegiance (vv. 24–28), (4) social relations (vv. 29–34), and (5) land ethics (vv. 38–40).”²¹¹ Through these self-imprecatory oaths, Job utters his declaration of innocence in the most elaborate shape.²¹²

The function of Job’s oaths in ch. 31 is disputed. Michael Dick argued that Job’s oaths in ch. 31 are similar to the well-attested legal practices in the ancient Near East by which an accused person compels his accuser, who refuses to produce evidence for the accusation, to come to court.²¹³ Those who endorsed a similar thesis as Dick’s believed that one the primary functions of this chapter is Job’s formal attempt to coerce God into answering his case.²¹⁴

Others, however, have been reluctant to read the legal metaphor too much into this chapter.²¹⁵ Part of the reason for this reservation is that the behaviours of which Job claims to be innocent are largely matters not covered by human laws, but are concerned with the attitudes and motivations of the person taking the oath.²¹⁶ This led some to look

²¹¹ Newsom, “Job,” 552.

²¹² Westermann, *Structure*, 99; Holbert, “Rehabilitation of the Sinner,” 235–36; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 427–31; Newsom, “Job,” 551; Balentine, *Job*, 471–73; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 987.

²¹³ Dick, “Legal Metaphor,” 37–50.

²¹⁴ Dick, “Legal Metaphor,” 45–49. See also *idem*, “Oath of Innocence,” 31–32; Good, “Literary Task,” 475; *idem*, *In Turns of Tempest*, 314; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 431; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 408; Balentine, *Job*, 474; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 979.

²¹⁵ Janzen, *Job*, 210; Newsom, “Job,” 551–52.

²¹⁶ Fohrer, “Righteous Man,” 13; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 339, 542–46; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 430; Dick, “Oath of Innocence,” 31–53; Newsom, “Job,” 551.

elsewhere for the function of the oaths of innocence. For instance, Janzen argued that Job's oaths in ch. 31 reveal his sensitivity to "primal sympathy," a pathos that is prior to and generative of the "social customs and rules of conduct which in time take the form of abstract norms and principles."²¹⁷ Job's awareness of primal sympathy thus lays the foundation for his appeal to God, who, he hopes, also possesses such conscience.²¹⁸ From a different perspective, Hartley, despite his sensitivity to the legal metaphor, contended that Job's oaths reveal his "conviction that God, being true to his nature, will act justly" in litigation.²¹⁹ The oaths also indicate "that his understanding of justice is moving away from a mechanical view based on the doctrine of retribution to a personal view rooted in confrontation with God."²²⁰ Both Janzen and Hartley thus attempted to uncover the inner transformation which Job is undergoing through the oaths he utters in ch. 31.

Yet others have tried to unmask the underlying motives of Job's rhetoric through his series of oaths in ch. 31.²²¹ For example, Newsom argued that "Job assumes that the same morality governing relations between persons, according to God's command, will also govern his relation with God."²²² In some of the oaths Job utters, he even refers to God's passion for these moral values as the motivation for his own seriousness in ethics.²²³ Job's rhetoric thus provides an opportunity for God to resolve the conflict between them. In Newsom's own words,

²¹⁷ Janzen, *Job*, 212.

²¹⁸ Janzen, *Job*, 212–16; *idem*, "Job's Oath," 603.

²¹⁹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 408. See also *idem*, "From Lament to Oath," 94–97.

²²⁰ Hartley, "From Lament to Oath," 97.

²²¹ Newsom, "Job," 551–55; *idem*, *Moral Imaginations*, 194–98; Balentine, *Job*, 471–98.

²²² Newsom, "Job," 553.

²²³ Newsom, "Job," 551.

By keeping the focus of the audience upon the judgment to be rendered on his own character, the oath allows Job to negotiate his grievance against God and his community in a way that results in the preservation of the honor of all parties rather than honoring of one at the expense of the shaming of the other. In modern terms, it allows Job to frame things as a win/win situation rather than a win/lose one.²²⁴

Building on Janzen's and Newsom's works, Balentine, who also recognized the importance of the forensic context of ch. 31, suggested that Job's oaths are deeply rooted in the principles which govern covenantal relationship.²²⁵ As "the legal metaphor insists that justice is not a disposable virtue in covenant relationships, either for God or for human beings," the rhetoric of Job's oaths thus compels God to declare Job to be innocent.²²⁶ According to Balentine, Job hopes and expects that the honour of both parties to the covenant will be enhanced when God recognizes Job's fidelity in this relationship.²²⁷

The above interpreters appear to have overlooked the nature of Job's wish in 31:35–37, which begins with the phrase *מי יתן*, "Oh that." As some have correctly noted, Job has always used this phrase to refer to his hopeless wish (6:8; 13:5; 14:13; 19:23; 23:3; 29:2).²²⁸ These scholars, however, failed to further expound the implication of this observation. Consequently, almost all interpreters considered 31:35–37 as the climax of this speech.²²⁹ Some even rearranged the text so that these verses go to the climatic

²²⁴ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 195.

²²⁵ Balentine, *Job*, 477–78.

²²⁶ Balentine, *Job*, 494–95.

²²⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 495.

²²⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 438; Newsom, "Job," 551; Clines, *Job 21–37* n.31.e; Wilson, *Job*, 352.

²²⁹ One rare exception is Newsom ("Job," 551), who goes so far as to suggest that these verses are "something of an afterthought." Given the prevailing legal metaphor in the speeches of Job, it seems far-fetched to regard Job's desire for a hearing as merely peripheral.

position, that is, the end of the speech.²³⁰ Perhaps Job's wish for a hearing in these verses should be read as the pseudo-climax of his speech. After all, Job does not believe that the lawsuit is going to take place. It is a futile wish! This also explains why he keeps on uttering another oath (31:38–40b) after expressing this impossible wish. It is certainly true that “[f]rom the point of view of the controlling metaphor of the lawsuit, what is happening in this movement of the speech is that Job is summoning God to a lawsuit.”²³¹ However, to argue that Job has suddenly gained confidence that God must answer his litigation is to undermine the hopelessness of Job's rhetoric in vv. 35–37.²³²

If the above argument is a reasonable one, it is preferable to interpret Job's oaths merely as his protestation of innocence. In fact, this is part of his ongoing practices throughout his earlier speeches (9:21; 12:4; 13:15–16; 16:17; 19:25–27; 23:10–12; 27:2–6). The emphasis of the oaths on his inner attitudes and motives recalls the doubt which the satan raises regarding Job's motivation for piety and morality in the prologue (1:9–11; 2:4–5). Moreover, these oaths are also rhetoric of “barbed provocation.”²³³ As Habel puts it, “The hidden agenda in Job's glowing self-portrait seems to be that his adversary at law, the mighty Shaddai, had not matched the consistency of Job's righteousness.”²³⁴

²³⁰ Dhorme, *Job*, liii; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 545; Pope, *Job*, 230; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 422; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 933.

²³¹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 1012.

²³² Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 309–311) rightly recognizes that Job at times raises the hope to have a trial with God but Job appears to have rendered this notion impossible. Good, nevertheless, thinks that Job still wishes to inaugurate the legal procedure with his oaths of innocence in ch. 31.

²³³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 431. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 314–15) believes that Habel's wording is too weak and prefers to use the adjective “blunt” rather than “barbed.”

²³⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 430–31.

Chapter 31 concludes with the narrator's voice, saying "The words of Job are ended" (31:40c).²³⁵ It sounds as if the narrator has had enough of Job's words and abruptly interrupts his further protestation of innocence. Regarding the instabilities in the narrative, this long speech of Job's testimony pushes the conflict between God and Job to the climax. As argued above, there is no reason to believe that God is compelled to respond to Job's legal rhetoric. At least Job does not think that this would happen. However, the authorial audience should form expectation on how the narrative is going to come to a proper closure. This continues to sustain the audience's interest in finishing the thought-provoking story.

VII. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the internal quotations of preceding materials in each of the speeches in the third cycle of dialogue as well as in Job's final testimony in chs. 29–31. I have also examined the impact of these internal quotations on the reading experience of the narrative.

Eliphaz's third speech (ch. 22) contains a distorted attributed citation (22:13–14), which repeats terms found in Job's rhetorical question in 21:22. According to Eliphaz, Job's exclamation that no one can teach God knowledge implies that God does not know what is happening on earth because he cannot see through the thick clouds. Ironically, Job has complained that God sees all too much and too constantly" (7:19–20; 10:14; 13:27; 14:3, 6; 16:9).

²³⁵ Many compare this statement with Jer 51:64 and Ps 72:20 and consider it as an editorial addition. So Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 442; Pope, *Job*, 239; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 356; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 425. On the other hand, Clines (*Job 21–37*, 1036) regards this statement as "the author's formal conclusion." It is, nevertheless, best to distinguish between the narrator's voice and the author's voice in Job.

Moreover, Eliphaz continues to allude to motifs found in Job's previous speeches in order to criticize Job and nullify his claims. Whereas Job expressed his wish to enter into judgment with God (9:32; 14:3) and to argue with God in a courtroom (13:3), Eliphaz uses legal terms and expressions such as יבֹח ("to arraign") and מִשְׁפֵּט + בּוֹא ("to enter into judgment") to argue that God is the one who initiates the lawsuit (22:4). Whereas Job employed the rare term חֲנוּם to express God's cruelty against him (9:17), Eliphaz rejects Job's claim and asserts that it is Job, not God, who is behaving unreasonably hard-heartedly toward others (22:6).

It is evident that Eliphaz's words in 22:17 and 22:18b are an allusion to Job's words in 21:14–16. According to Eliphaz, those whose good fortune Job has vaunted are the very ones who are victims of the catastrophe. Whereas Job complained that God has walled his way (אֶרֶחַ) and covered his paths (נִתְיַבָּה) with darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ; 19:8), Eliphaz attempts to address Job's concern and ensures Job that light (אֹר) will shine on his ways (דֶּרֶךְ; 22:28b) if he repents.

In addition, Eliphaz also repeats the terms תָּמַם, דֶּרֶךְ, and יִרְאָה (22:3–4) that he used in the exordiums of his previous speeches (4:6; 15:4). The repeated use of these terms reveals that Eliphaz's attitude toward Job has definitely become unfriendly. Moreover, the terms תָּמַם and יִרְאָה allude not only to Eliphaz's previous speeches but also to the prologue. The author thus uses the technique of irony to expose the ignorance of Eliphaz once again.

Job, in his seventh response (chs. 23–24), continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to refute their arguments. Whereas Eliphaz used the noun מִשְׁפֵּט, in conjunction with the root יבֹח, in the forensic context to argue that God is the initiator of

the lawsuit (22:4), Job re-uses the same terms to reiterate once again that he desires to meet God in court but God does not seem to be interested in engaging in a legal disputation with him (23:4, 7). Whereas Eliphaz urged Job to receive instruction (תורה) from God's mouth (פה) and lay up in his heart God's words (אמר; 23:22), Job refutes Eliphaz's suggestion by declaring that he has not departed from the command (מצות) of God's lips (שפה) and has treasured the words (אמר) of God's mouth (פה; 23:12). Whereas Eliphaz used the "oppressed" motif to accuse Job of lack of compassion to the oppressed (22:6–9), Job uses Eliphaz's idea as a springboard to present another accusation against God's aloofness to the injustice in the world (24:1–12). Whereas Eliphaz used the "light" and the "way" metaphors together to assure Job that light will shine on his ways if he repents (22:28), Job adopts these metaphors but uses them subversively to express his bitterness in life (24:13).

In addition, the author also uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job asserts that he would come forth like gold even if God tests (בחן) him (23:10). Just because God should have already known the outcome of the test, Job's suffering becomes more unjustified. The allusion reveals the author's criticism of the "testing" motif as presented implicitly in the prologue.

Bildad, in his third speech (ch. 25), continues to allude to the words of Job in order to respond to him. Whereas Job spoke of the dread that God generates in him (23:15–16), Bildad adopts the concept of "dread" and explains to Job that this is how God works to make peace with him (25:2). Moreover, Bildad also repeats the same words that Job used in 9:2, in which he sets the question in a forensic context. When Bildad asks,

“How can a mortal be righteous before God?” (25:4a), his intention is to lead Job away from the idea of having a lawsuit with God.

Job, in his eighth response (ch. 26), continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to refute their arguments. Whereas Eliphaz used the rare term שִׁמְעַן (“whisper, echo”) in conjunction with the term דְּבַר (“word”) in the context of his claim to special revelation (4:12), Job re-uses these terms to illustrate the faintness of God’s revelation, thus rejecting Eliphaz’s claim indirectly (26:14).

Job, in his ninth response (chs. 27–28), continues to allude to the words of the friends in order to refute their arguments. Whereas Eliphaz assured Job that if he repents, Job will take delight in Shaddai (עַל שַׁדַּי + *hitpa’el* of עִנַּג) with the result that God will hear his prayers (22:26–27), Job repeats the words of Eliphaz but turns them into a rhetorical question, thus exposing the contradiction inherent in them (27:10). Whereas Eliphaz asked Job if he was the “first human born” (אָדָם תּוֹלֵד) who has “listened in on the council of God” (15:7–8), Job picks up the “first human” motif and claims that his wisdom is no less than that of the ideal of the “first human” that Eliphaz has ever envisioned (28:28). Moreover, whereas Eliphaz and Bildad used the verb חָקַר and its cognate to refer to their source of wisdom (5:27; 8:8), Job uses the same verb to mock the friends regarding their failure to attain wisdom despite their efforts (28:3).

Job alludes not only to the words of Eliphaz (and Bildad) but also to those of Zophar. The words of Job in 27:13a are almost a verbatim repetition of Zophar’s words in 20:29a. The allusion indicates that Job adopts the language of the friends to issue a warning to them. According to Job, if the friends continue to behave as his opponent,

they should expect to receive the fate of the wicked like the one they themselves had vividly described.

In addition, the author also uses the words of Job to allude to the prologue. Job confirms his own integrity (תמה) for refusing to declare the friends as being in the right (27:5) and asserts that he maintains (חזק) his righteousness (צדקה) and will not give it up (27:6a). The terms חזק and תמה recall the words of YHWH and those of Job's wife in the prologue (2:3, 9). The allusion indicates that maintaining one's integrity entails the courage to adhere to the truthfulness of one's claim even at the expense of violating the social norm.

In Job's final testimony (chs. 29–31), the author uses the word pair רע / טוב to allude to the prologue (2:10b; 30:26). The allusion indicates that Job has not changed his position since the misfortune had first befallen him. In addition, the allusion further strengthens the cohesiveness between the poetic dialogue and the prose framework.

The dialogue between Job and his friends appears to break down in the third cycle of dialogue. Like before, Eliphaz delivers a speech of considerable length. Unlike his previous two speeches, in this last speech he eventually accuses Job explicitly of great wickedness. On the other hand, Bildad's speech is exceptionally short and its tonality is not as pointed as before. Perhaps the ambiguity of Job's words in the preceding speech has confused Bildad to the point that he might begin to believe that Job has begun to change his stand. The disorienting power of Job's speech in ch. 26 even keeps Zophar from delivering his third speech.

As for Job, he continues to complain against God and argues against his friends by alluding to their words. His engagement with the friends comes to an end as he utters

an imprecation against them and uses a sapiential poem to deride their lack of wisdom. Subsequently, Job delivers a lengthy testimony, which consists of a diptych that recounts the two contrasting periods before and after his calamities and a declaration of innocence in the form of oaths. The major function of this cycle is to intensify the conflict between Job and the friends on the one hand and that between Job and God on the other. This in turn prepares the audience for approaching the ending of the narrative.

CHAPTER 7

THE ELIHU SPEECHES

It is commonplace in Joban scholarship that the Elihu speeches (chs. 32–37) are regarded as a later interpolation.¹ Even Newsom states that while her own interpretive framework “could accommodate either an analysis of the Elihu speeches as original or as secondary,” she “remain[s] persuaded by the classical arguments for the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches.”² As Andersen conveniently summarizes, “The reasons for rejecting the Elihu speeches as an unwarranted interpolation are structural, theological, stylistic and linguistic.”³

In terms of structure, the entry of the character Elihu into the story is abrupt. The narrator does not introduce him in the prologue. The preface to his speeches (32:1–5) supplies a reason why he speaks but gives no explanation why he is present. “Neither Job nor the friends take the slightest notice of Elihu’s attacks on them, or of his arguments; his speech is of greater length than any that have gone before, but no one interrupts him while he is speaking, no one has a word to say of or to him when he is done.”⁴ Yahweh’s speeches out of the whirlwind (38:1—40:2; 40:6—41:34) and Job’s two corresponding

¹ There are, however, a growing number of interpreters who argue for the Elihu speeches as an integral part of the original composition of the book. See, e.g., Bakon, “The Enigma of Elihu,” 217–28; Habel, “Design,” 81–88; *idem*, *The Book of Job*, 36–37, 443–47; Janzen, *Job*, 217–18, 221–25; Wolfers, “Elihu,” 90–98; *idem*, *Deep Things*, 65–66; Curtis, “Elihu Speeches,” 93–99; Wilson, “Role,” 81–83; Althann, “Elihu’s Contribution,” 9–12; Waters, “Authenticity,” 28–41; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 708–9. See also Andersen, *Job*, 49–52; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 28–30; Wilson, *Job*, 357–58. Gordis (*God and Man*, 104–16) and Snaith (*The Book of Job*, 72–75) independently argue that the Elihu speeches were written by the author of the rest of the book at a later stage of his life.

² Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 201.

³ Andersen, *Job*, 50.

⁴ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xli.

responses (40:3–5; 42:1–6) make it clear that in those speeches Yahweh is addressing Job, not Elihu, who is the preceding speaker. When God speaks his final word in the epilogue, he indirectly commends Job, directly condemns Job’s three friends, and utterly ignores Elihu. In short, there is no reference, direct or indirect, in any other part of the book to Elihu. In terms of the overall structure of the book, “if chapters 32 to 37 were to be removed, no-one would suggest that there was a lacuna.”⁵

In addition to the structural peculiarity, the Elihu speeches have been treated as differing stylistically from the rest of the book. First, it is claimed that “[t]he introduction of Elihu is couched in a ponderous, redundant, and obviously scribal style (32:1–6).”⁶ Second, the style of the content of what Elihu said has been argued as “prolix, laboured, and somewhat tautologous.”⁷ The poetry of Job 32–37 is said to be inferior to the rest of the book.⁸ Third, the strategy of Elihu’s argumentation differs from Job’s and that of his friends. For instance, according to Dhorme, in the preceding dialogue “each speaker expounds his point of view and doctrine without really troubling to confute previous arguments.”⁹ Elihu, however, is the only character who refutes Job by citing his words.¹⁰ He is also the only speaker who addresses Job by name.¹¹ “Thus one feels that the Book

⁵ Wilson, “Role,” 83.

⁶ Terrien, “Job,” 890.

⁷ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xlvi.

⁸ Nichols, “Composition,” 106; Gibson, *Job*, 269.

⁹ Dhorme, *Job*, c.

¹⁰ Dhorme, *Job*, ci. So Westermann, *Structure*, 140.

¹¹ Dhorme, *Job*, ci.

of Job is already in existence, that it is in the hands of a reader who can single out, from among the words which Job utters, certain assertions liable to criticism.”¹²

There also appears to be a significant linguistic difference between the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book. It has been argued that the Elihu speeches seem to favour a distinctive vocabulary. The preference for *אֵל*, which is a favoured term in later biblical literature, over *אֱלֹהִים* is also evident in the Elihu speeches.¹³ Several words or verbal forms which are not found in the previous dialogue are present in these chapters.¹⁴ There is also a possibility that Elihu used many Aramaic words; such usage has been used by many to support a later date for the work.¹⁵ As the most aggressive in this camp, Driver and Gray even appeal to the preference of the divine name *אֵל* and distinctly less use of certain rarer forms of particles and pronominal suffixes by the author of the Elihu speeches as evidence that the chapter should be attributed to a second author.¹⁶

Those who question the authenticity of the Elihu speeches usually also support their claim by appealing to the apparent lack of originality of these chapters. They appear to have added nothing substantial to what the three friends have said.¹⁷ In addition to the repetition of the friends' arguments, the Elihu speeches anticipate in part what Yahweh will say in the first divine speech (38:4–38).¹⁸ A plausible explanation is that the author

¹² Dhorme, *Job*, ci.

¹³ Dhorme, *Job*, civ; Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xliii–xliv.

¹⁴ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xlvi; Dhorme, *Job*, civ–cv.

¹⁵ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xlvi–xlvii; Dhorme, *Job*, cv.

¹⁶ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xlii–xliv.

¹⁷ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xli.

¹⁸ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xli.

of the Elihu speeches “had before him or in his mind the whole book, the speech(es) of Yahweh equally with those of the friends.”¹⁹ All these have been argued as evidence of the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches.

The absence of Elihu from the prologue may not be as problematic as it first appears. Habel’s explanation is insightful:

It is typical of the Joban narrator that he introduces and discards his characters as appropriate to the plot. In Job 32.1–5, which is also part of the narrative framework of the book, the designer introduces Elihu with the same precision as he did the three friends (2.11–13) and Job himself (1.1–5).²⁰

Moreover, the lack of reference to Elihu in the rest of the book can also be adequately explained by the literary role he plays in the narrative.²¹

Many have noted the subjectivity of the arguments based on style.²² Even Dhorme, who is a proponent of the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches, writes, “The argument from style must be presented with the greatest caution ... the character of the person speaking dictates the nature of his style. The same author may well have given to the young Elihu a style different from that of the older speakers.”²³

The linguistic evidence regarding the Elihu speeches is hotly disputed. Scholarly opinions vary to the extent that no consensus can possibly be reached. Even Dhorme

¹⁹ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xli.

²⁰ Habel, “Design,” 93.

²¹ I will present my own view on the function of the Elihu speeches shortly. For now, it is suffice to say that the structural argument depends largely on how one construes the book as a whole. For instance, Andersen (*Job*, 51) argues that Elihu plays the role of “an adjudicator” and so other protagonists do not need to respond to him. On the other hand, Curtis (“Elihu’s Speeches,” 98) sees Elihu as a defender of traditional theology, “who is so muddle-headed and ridiculous that no character nor even the narrator will deign to acknowledge his presence, either before or after his appearance.”

²² Andersen, *Job*, 51; Habel, “Design,” 93; Waters, “Authenticity,” 40.

²³ Dhorme, *Job*, ciii. Similarly, Andersen, *Job*, 51; Waters, “Authenticity,” 40; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 709.

cautions that the use of a particular divine name and certain prepositions in preference to others proves nothing either for or against the secondary nature of the speeches.²⁴ The so-called statistical preference for *אני* over *אנכי* in the Elihu speeches is also relatively insignificant to warrant any real conclusion.²⁵ Adopting the principle that a word can only legitimately be called an Aramaism if the root is not found in any other Semitic language, Snaith finds virtually no Aramaisms at all in the Elihu speeches.²⁶

As for the theological argument, it is equally subjective and depends entirely on how one understands these six chapters of material. Many interpreters have reasonably contended that Elihu has his own distinctive message to proclaim in his speeches.²⁷ Yet some others argue that the literary role Elihu plays is as important as the points he makes.²⁸

Since there is no compelling evidence for the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches, I will interpret them as a continuation of the narrative. The beginnings of the four speeches are marked by the narrator's introduction in 32:1; 34:1; 35:1; and 36:1. In what follows, I will continue to examine the internal quotations in each of these speeches and their impact on the reading.

²⁴ Dhorme, *Job*, ciii–civ.

²⁵ Snaith, *Origin and Purpose*, 81–82.

²⁶ Snaith, *Origin and Purpose*, 104–12.

²⁷ Wilson ("Role," 86) argues that Elihu, unlike the three friends, "ignores Job's previous life, and focuses instead on the words that Job uttered in the debate." So Althann, "Elihu's Contribution," 11. On the other hand, Clines (*Job 21–37*, 709) claims that the author of the Elihu material (whom he thinks is the same as that of the rest of the book) "argues that suffering, rather than being a punishment sent from God, is best regarded as God's means of communicating his will to humans."

²⁸ McKay, "Proto-Charismatic," 168; Habel, "Design," 81; Wilson, "Role," 88.

I. Elihu's First Speech (Job 32–33)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

As mentioned above, one of the distinctive features in Elihu's style of argumentation is that he cites the words of Job in order to refute them. In this speech, Elihu attributes citations to Job in 33:9–11 and 33:13b. Moreover, there are allusions in Elihu's words to earlier speeches. First, the "age" motif in 32:4, 6, 7, 9 recalls what Bildad and Eliphaz said in 8:8–10 and in 15:10 respectively. Second, the verb יָבַח, "to argue, confute," in 32:12 draws a connection with Job's words in 9:33 and 16:19–21. Third, the noun רוּחַ, "wind," in conjunction with the noun בֶּטֶן, "belly," in 32:18 hearkens back to Eliphaz's words in 15:2. Fourth, the term אִימָה, "terror," in conjunction with the term בָּעַת, "to terrify," links Elihu's words in 33:7a with Job's words in 9:34 and 13:21. Fifth, the term חֲלוֹם, "dream," in conjunction with the phrase חֲזִיוֵן לַיְלָה, "vision of the night," links Elihu's words in 33:15 with Job's words in 7:14 and Eliphaz's words in 4:13b. Sixth, the noun מַלְיָץ draws a connection between Elihu's words in 33:23 and Job's words in 16:20.

1. Attributed Citations

- i. "I am clean, without transgression; I am pure, and there is no iniquity in me. Look, he finds occasions against me, he counts me as his enemy; he puts my feet in the stocks, and watches all my paths" (33:9–11)

Elihu's words in 33:9–11 are a long citation attributed to Job. His attributed quotation consists of a combination of paraphrases and nearly direct quotes. The first two lines (v. 9) are paraphrases of what Job has expressed in 9:20–21; 10:7; 13:18; 16:17;

23:7, 10–12; 27:4–6; and 31:1–40,²⁹ while the third line (v. 10a) represents the sentiment of Job’s utterance in 9:11–22 and 10:13–14.³⁰ On the other hand, the fourth line (v. 10b) and the fifth and sixth lines (v. 11) are almost verbatim repetition of Job’s words in 13:24b and 13:27a–b respectively.³¹

Elihu cites Job’s words in order to refute them. He regards the content of Job’s cries as if they were theological propositions and so simply declares to Job that he is not right (33:12a). The statement “God is greater than any human” (33:12b) is Elihu’s basis for his refutation.³² Elihu’s logic seems to be that God’s greatness should serve as an adequate justification for his action, and no human should accuse God of unjustly harassment.

ii. “He will answer none of my words” (33:13b)

Elihu’s words in 33:13b is another quotation attributed to Job: “He will answer none of my words.” This statement represents the sentiment of Job’s words in 9:16; 19:7; 30:20;³³ and perhaps 9:3b.³⁴ Again, Elihu cites Job’s words in order to refute them. For

²⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 466; Newsom, “Job,” 568; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 728. Some have accused Elihu of misrepresenting Job. For example, Andersen (*Job*, 248) claims that “Job has often admitted to being a sinner.” Similarly, Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 440) argues that “Job is confident that he has followed God’s way faithfully (23:11–12; cf. 10:7; 27:4–5), he never asserts that he has not sinned.” However, throughout his speech Job has always claimed to be without fault. The *sins* that Job talks about in 7:21; 10:6; 13:26 and 19:4 are only hypothetical.

³⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 466; Balentine, *Job*, 542; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 729.

³¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 466–67; Newsom, “Job,” 568; Balentine, *Job*, 542; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 729.

³² Contra Habel (*The Book of Job*, 467), who strangely understands “God is greater than humans” as part of Elihu’s citation of Job’s arguments and interprets the statement as a conditional sentence by prefixing it with the conjunction “if” in his translation. According to his reading, if Job himself acknowledges that God is great and that God refuses to answer his charges, why does he bring a lawsuit against him?

³³ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 730.

the bulk of the rest of this speech (vv. 14–30), Elihu elaborates how God communicates to humans through two different ways—dreams/visions and suffering.

2. Allusions

i. The “age” motif (32:4, 6, 7, 9)

Both the narrator’s preface and the opening of Elihu’s self-introduction speak of the “age” motif. The narrator explains that Elihu waits to speak because Job and the three friends are older than he (32:4). The first words Elihu uses to describe himself are also related to his young age (32:6b). When he refers to the old age of Job and the friends, he associates it with wisdom, but only in a sarcastic fashion (32:7, 9). For Elihu, age is no guarantee for wisdom.

The friends have earlier argued that wisdom and knowledge belong to the aged. For instance, Bildad urges Job to appeal to ancient tradition for guidance (8:8–10). Eliphaz also uses old age as an argument for claiming superior wisdom (15:10). In alluding to the “age” motif, the author characterizes Elihu as representing a different tradition than that of the friends. In Elihu’s own words, “But truly it is the spirit in a mortal, the breath of Shaddai, that makes for understanding” (32:7).

ii. יכח (32:12)

The verb יכח, “to argue, confute,” establishes a connection between this speech (32:12) and Job’s words in 9:33 and 16:19–21. In the speech that he first introduces the

³⁴ Since Elihu’s words in 33:13a may be an allusion to Job’s words in 9:3a, some believe that Elihu’s attributed quotation in 33:13b refers to Job’s words in 9:3b. See Habel, *The Book of Job*, 467; Newsom, *Job*, 569; Balentine, *Job*, 543.

legal metaphor, Job envisions the presence of an arbiter (*hip'il* ptc. of יכח), who can restrain God's rod on Job and mediate between God and him (9:33). Later, he speaks of a witness in heaven, who is able to argue (*hip'il* ptc. of יכח) on behalf of a mortal with God (16:19–21).

In this speech, after Elihu has provided a reason for his late entry into the conversation (32:6–10), he underscores his attentiveness to the arguments of the friends (32:11). He goes on to blame the friends for their failure to confute (*hip'il* ptc. of יכח) Job and answer (ענה) his words (32:12).³⁵ The interpretation of the last verse is, however, disputed. For those who believe that Elihu is using legal language here, the last two lines of the verse can legitimately be translated, “But behold, there is no arbiter for Job, no one among you to answer his charges.”³⁶ Even if one understands Elihu's words in a legal sense, it does not necessarily imply that he endorses what Job requested earlier in 9:33. As Balentine rightly points out, “It is not certain that Elihu accepts Job's forensic definition of the arbiter's role, that is, one who insures impartiality in a legal case, but it is clear that he knows that sufferers who raise questions like Job need answering.”³⁷

A better alternative is to understand Elihu's words in 32:12 as an allusion to the “arbiter” figure that Job has envisioned in 9:33 and revised in 16:21. Although Elihu steps in and to a certain extent assumes the role of an arbiter, he “does not point Job

³⁵ Reading the preposition ל before the proper noun “Job” as the indicator for the object (cf. Prov 9:7; 15:12; 19:25). So Dhorme, *Job*, 479; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 686 n.12.b.

³⁶ Habel, “Design,” 82; *idem*, *The Book of Job*, 441. See also, Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 137, 322–323.

³⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 522.

toward a solution by using legal categories but by showing how they have confused and misled Job.”³⁸

iii. רוח and בטן (32:18)

The noun רוח, “wind,” in conjunction with the noun בטן, “belly,” draws a connection between this speech (32:18) and Eliphaz’s second speech. As Elihu expresses his urgent need to answer (ענה; 32:17, 20), he vividly describes himself as full of words and the wind (רוח) in his belly (בטן) compels him (32:18). He further likens his belly (בטן) to a wineskin full of fermenting wine and ready to burst (32:19).³⁹

Eliphaz, in the opening of his second speech, has used the image of “wind in the belly” in a sarcastic remark to Job: “Should a wise man answer (ענה) with a ‘mind of wind (רוח),’ and fill his belly (בטן) with an east wind?” (15:2). The author has humorously put the terminology that Eliphaz used in a negative sense into the mouth of Elihu, who employs it to justify his urgency to give his answer. As Habel puts it, “Unwittingly Elihu characterizes himself as a windbag and a fool in the very terms Eliphaz has used to taunt Job. Elihu is thus identified as a brash fool—intelligent, respectable, and articulate, maybe, but nevertheless a fool.”⁴⁰ Some have refuted the claim for irony in the characterization of Elihu in these verses by calling attention to the

³⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 569.

³⁹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 722, rightly points out the compressed-ness of 32:18–19: “Elihu says in v 18 that the *wind* of his ‘belly’ (בטן) compels him, but he means that the unexpressed *words* that are ‘within’ him ... are forcing themselves out of him. Then he says in v 19 that his ‘belly’ is like wine, but what he means is that the *words* in his belly are like wine. And he says that his belly will burst like *new wineskins*, when he means like wineskins (probably old wineskins) with *new wine* in them” (italics his).

⁴⁰ Habel, “Design,” 91. See also *idem*, *The Book of Job*, 444–45, 453–54; Lynch, “Bursting at the Seams,” 353–54.

experience of Jeremiah, who similarly speaks of the fire of God's word burning in his bones (Jer 20:9).⁴¹ This is nevertheless not an appropriate comparison. As Boda argues, it is not necessary to regard the words of Jeremiah in Jer 12–20 as normative.⁴² Even if one is not persuaded by Boda's arguments, it is preferable to side with Habel, who writes, "The inner compulsion to speak, which was experienced by Jeremiah as the fire of God's word burning within (Jer. 20:9), is transformed by Elihu into a need to relieve himself of the wind building up in his belly."⁴³

iv. **אימה** and **בעת** (33:7a)

The term **אימה**, "terror," in conjunction with the term **בעת**, "to terrify," draws a connection between Elihu's words in 33:7a and Job's words in 9:34 and 13:21. As Elihu invites Job into a disputation (33:5), he aligns himself with Job by asserting that both of them are mere mortals, created equally by the same God (33:6). Consequently, no terror (**אימה**) of Elihu should terrify (**בעת**) Job (33:7a). This statement is an allusion to Job's fear in 9:34 and 13:21.⁴⁴ In both instances, Job begs God not to terrify (**בעת**) him with his terror (**אימה**) so that a fair trial is made possible. The allusion strengthens the characterization of Elihu as one who regards himself as God's spokesperson.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Newsom, "Job," 564; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 722–23.

⁴² Boda, *Severe Mercy*, 242–46.

⁴³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 444.

⁴⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 465; Newsom, "Job," 568; Balentine, *Job*, 541; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 727.

⁴⁵ Dahood ("Hebrew-Ugaritic Lexicography I," 293) argues that **אכפי** in 33:7 is a variant form of **כפי**, "my hand." If this reading is adopted, Elihu also alludes to Job's words in 13:21a, in which he requests that God not oppress him with his hand. So Habel, "Design," 92; Newsom, "Job," 568.

v. חלום and חזיון לילה (33:15)

The term חלום, “dream,” in conjunction with the phrase חזיון לילה, “visions of the night,” links Elihu’s words in 33:15 with Job’s words in 7:14 and Eliphaz’s words in 4:13b.⁴⁶ The first way of divine communication, Elihu proposes, is dreams and visions (33:15a). God speaks to humans through them when deep sleep (תרדמה) and slumbers (תנומות) fall on them (33:15b–c). Elihu’s words in 33:15a–b are almost a verbatim repetition of Eliphaz’s utterance in 4:13b, indicating that Elihu apparently picks up the idea of visions as a means of divine communication from Eliphaz.⁴⁷ Since Job has earlier complained in 7:14 that God terrified him with dreams (חלמות) and visions (חזיונות), “Elihu reinterprets these phenomena as the attempts by God to turn a person away from wrongful deeds or pridefulness (v. 17).”⁴⁸

vi. מליץ (33:23)

The noun מליץ establishes a connection between Elihu’s words in 33:23 and Job’s words in 16:20. According to Elihu, the second form of divine communication is illness (33:19–22). He introduces a hypothetical situation in which a messenger (מלאך), an interpreter (מליץ), is present “to tell the human what is right for him” (להגיד לאדם ישרו) (33:23).⁴⁹ It is true that the syntax of the verse allows for the phrase להגיד לאדם ישרו to mean “to declare for the human his righteousness,” thus understanding the role of the

⁴⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 569; Balentine, *Job*, 543–44; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 731.

⁴⁷ Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 544) states, “Elihu now picks up the thread of truth that Eliphaz has grasped but could not adequately convey to Job.”

⁴⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 569.

⁴⁹ Dhorme, *Job*, 501; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 325; Newsom, “Job,” 570; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 736.

messenger-interpreter as defending the sufferer.⁵⁰ The overall context, however, suggests that Elihu is rather concerned with “the inability of a person to perceive the divine message.”⁵¹ Most understand מלאך as a reference to an angelic being.⁵² Nevertheless, it is also defensible to argue that this figure is like a human prophet, who interprets for the human on the one hand and appeals to God on the other. In fact, since Elihu is interpreting the meaning of his suffering for Job, he may be implicitly assuming the role of the messenger-interpreter himself.⁵³ This reading is further strengthened by the prophetic overtone of his characterization.⁵⁴

Job has earlier envisioned a witness in heaven (16:19), who is also a mediator (מליץ) for him (16:20). The primary function of such a being is to argue his case with God in a forensic context (16:21). Elihu adapts the term מליץ from Job but specifies a different role for this being. His purpose is again to direct Job away from contemplating a lawsuit with God.

B. Impact on the Reading

After his interruption at 31:40c, the narrator continues to report that the friends have ceased answering Job (32:1a) and explains to the audience that they stopped talking

⁵⁰ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 377; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 469–70. The following context (vv. 24–26) seems to support this reading.

⁵¹ Newsom, “Job,” 570.

⁵² For a sample list of modern versions and interpreters adopting this understanding, see Clines, *Job 21–37*, 700 n.23.c.

⁵³ For a similar view, see Nichols, “Composition,” 119–20; Beeby, “Elihu—Job’s Mediator?” 45; Wolfers, “Elihu,” 92; *idem*, *Deep Things*, 295–99.

⁵⁴ Janzen, *Job*, 217–24; Wolfers, “Elihu,” 90–98; *idem*, *Deep Things*, 295–99; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 327; Caquot, “Elihou, le prophète,” 4–8.

because Job was righteous in his own eyes (32:1b). Abruptly, the narrator introduces another character, whose name is Elihu, into the scene, and repeatedly uses the term “angry” to describe him. The audience gets to know how Elihu feels before the audience is told why Elihu needs to be mentioned. “Then Elihu, the son of Barachel, the Buzite, of the family of Ram, became very angry” (וַיֵּחַר אֵף, “and his anger became hot”; 32:2a). The narrator informs the audience that Elihu is very angry with Job and also with the three friends (32:2b, 3, 5). As many have noted, when Elihu later uses the emphatic idiom “Yes, I will” (אֲנִי הָאֵל) to express his self-assertion (32:10, 17[x2]), he re-iterates his anger (הָאֵל) through this double entendre.⁵⁵

After the narrator’s introduction, Elihu explains for himself why he had not interrupted earlier (32:6–10). He explains that he was afraid to declare his knowledge because he is younger than they (v. 6). Newsom defends Elihu’s wordiness as “part of the rhetoric of politeness.”⁵⁶ She likens Elihu’s reference to his youth to similar self-deprecating remarks uttered by other biblical characters who were singled out for special divine missions (cf. Judg 6:15; 1 Sam 9:21; Jer 1:6).⁵⁷ Newsom’s comparison is forced because Elihu is certainly using his own youth as a springboard to mock the traditional belief that wisdom resides in the aged (vv. 7, 9). His real point is that understanding only belongs to the one who has the spirit, the breath of Shaddai (v. 8). Later in the same speech, Elihu refers to himself as one who possesses the spirit of God and the breath of Shaddai (33:4). There is dispute whether Elihu refers to a general knowledge available to

⁵⁵ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 443–44; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 321; Newsom, “Job,” 563–64.

⁵⁶ Newsom, “Job,” 562. Similarly, Clines, *Job 21–37*, 716.

⁵⁷ Newsom, “Job,” 562. So Balentine, *Job*, 520; Habel (*The Book of Job*, 449) also recognizes this tradition but rightly sees Elihu as “self-designated” rather than “divinely chosen.”

all⁵⁸ or a special inspiration.⁵⁹ The two positions are not completely incompatible. As Perdue rightly observes,

Elihu draws on the tradition of the creation of humanity that presents God as the artisan who shapes the clay into human form and breathes into the nostrils the ‘breath’ (נְשִׁמָּה) of life ... He takes this general ‘vital principle,’ this ‘breath of Shaddai’, and makes it a prophetic charisma.⁶⁰

It is certainly this special prophetic revelation that allows him to declare his knowledge (עַד) **boldly** (32:6, 10).⁶¹

In the second section of his self-introduction (32:11–14), Elihu establishes his necessity to speak. Having underscored his attentiveness to the words of the friends (vv. 11–12a), Elihu asserts that he is going to answer Job because none of them were able to confute Job with their arguments (vv. 12b–14). The third section of Elihu’s self-introduction (32:15–22) emphasizes his urgency to speak. He describes himself as “full of words” and ready to explode if he does not speak (vv. 18–20).

Elihu turns next to summon Job to hear by addressing him by name (33:1). He underscores the sincerity of his speech (33:2–3), along with a claim that he, as a mortal, is on the level ground with Job (33:4–7). Elihu summarizes Job’s complaints by citing his own words (33:8–11). The central concern of Job, according to Elihu, is that God has treated him as an enemy even though Job is blameless. Elihu asserts that Job is not right because God is greater than humans (33:12).

⁵⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 451; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 322; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 718.

⁵⁹ Janzen, *Job*, 218; McKay, “Elihu—A Proto-Charismatic?” 168; Newsom, “Job,” 563.

⁶⁰ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 248–49. See also Balentine, *Job*, 521.

⁶¹ Janzen, *Job*, 218.

For the bulk of the rest of his speech (33:13–30), Elihu focuses on another complaint of Job, namely, God’s refusal to answer the words of a person (v. 13). The main argument of Elihu is that God communicates to humans through various means. One means through which God speaks is dreams and visions (vv. 15–18). Elihu picks up the idea that God speaks to humans through visions from Eliphaz’s personal claim (cf. 4:13b). Elihu also alludes to Job’s complaint in 7:14 that God terrified him with dreams (חלמות) and visions (חזיונות) and reinterprets these phenomena as God’s attempted communication to Job.

Elihu uses a considerable number of words in making his point that God also speaks to humans through suffering, and illness in particular (vv. 19–28). Whereas the friends have described suffering as punitive (e.g., 4:8–9; 8:4; 11:20) and Eliphaz alone has suggested the disciplinary nature of affliction (5:17–26), it is Elihu who underscores that suffering may be “transformational” or “educational.”⁶² Most notably is Elihu’s suggestion that confession is not a prerequisite to but a consequence of restoration.⁶³ A concluding call to Job to hear and reply (33:31–33) brings this part of Elihu’s first speech to an end.

The abrupt entrance of the new character Elihu prompts the authorial audience to consider the role Elihu plays in the narrative. Unlike Eliphaz, Bildad or Zophar, the narrator does not describe Elihu as a friend of Job.⁶⁴ Many interpreters have argued that

⁶² Newsom, “Job,” 570; *idem*, *Moral Imaginations*, 207–16; Balentine, *Job*, 554; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 742.

⁶³ Terrien, “Job,” 1138; Ross, “The Phenomenology of Lament,” 38–46; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 737.

⁶⁴ Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 449) notes, “[Elihu] is not a friend who is bound by loyalty to seek his restoration.”

Elihu understands himself as the “adjudicator” or “arbiter” of the debate in chs. 3–31.⁶⁵

The allusion analysis above, however, reveals that Elihu calls attention to Job’s legal language only to undermine its appropriateness. For example, in 32:12 Elihu re-uses the term מוכיח, which Job used in 9:33 (and 16:20) to refer to an arbiter, in order to expose the inadequacy of Job’s legal rhetoric. In the same vein, in 33:23 Elihu re-uses the term מליץ, which Job used in 16:20 to refer to a legal mediator, in order to buttress his point that there is no need for God to speak to Job in a legal setting. Elihu thus volunteers to step in and take up the messenger-interpreter role for Job. It is perhaps unimportant to determine whether Elihu sees himself in a forensic context or not. After all, he does not believe that Job has any legitimate case. The primary aim of his speech is rather to impart wisdom to Job (33:33).⁶⁶

As some have correctly noted, Elihu is characterized as an “answerer.”⁶⁷ In ch. 32 alone, the root ענה appears nine times (vv. 1, 3, 5, 6, 12, 15, 16, 17, 20).⁶⁸ His self-confidence makes him believe that he can answer Job on God’s behalf. He regards himself much like a prophet who is inspired by God to interpret Job’s suffering for him. Even his name itself reminds one of the great prophet Elijah.⁶⁹ Elihu’s allusion to the

⁶⁵ Dennefeld, “Les Discours d’Élihou,” 170; Andersen, *Job*, 51; Habel, “Design,” 82–85; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 322–23; Wilson, “Role,” 90; McCabe, “Elihu’s Contribution,” 50–51; Althann, “Elihu’s Contribution,” 10.

⁶⁶ As Clines (*Job* 21–37, 707) puts it, “The *function* of the speech as a whole is to instruct Job, to enable him to consider truths he has not fully recognized previously, truths that the friends have failed to convince him of” (*italics his*).

⁶⁷ Balentine, *Job*, 511. Habel (“Design,” 82), however, takes ענה and its derivative as technical juridical terms and thus reinforces his thesis that Elihu sees himself playing the role of an arbiter.

⁶⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 445, claims that he has found ten.

⁶⁹ Gordis, *God and Man*, 115–16; McKay, “Elihu—A Proto-Charismatic?” 167–68; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 320; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 713.

friends' appeal to age for wisdom (32:4, 6, 7, 9) suggests that he sees himself as coming from another tradition, namely, the class of prophets.

As the authorial audience passes ethical judgments on the character Elihu, one should not fail to notice the difference between the narrator's presentation of him and his self-introduction. The narrator has identified anger as the primary motivation of Elihu to enter into conversation with Job and the three friends. Elihu himself, however, explains that he speaks up late because he is young in age. The discrepancy between these two rationales warns the audience against interpreting Elihu's self-presentation at its face value.⁷⁰ I agree with many who take this as a clue that the character Elihu is meant to be interpreted in a negative light.⁷¹ The anger of Elihu prompts Habel to convincingly argue that the author of Job characterizes Elihu as a "brash fool" (אִוִּיל).⁷² The reference to Elihu's anger recalls Eliphaz's earlier quotation of a proverbial saying that vexation (כַּעַשׁ) kills a fool (אִוִּיל; 5:2). The book of Proverbs describes brash fools as "garrulous" (Prov 10:8, 14), "impulsive and hotheaded" (Prov 12:15; 14:17, 29).⁷³ According to Habel, "Elihu fits the image of the brash but intelligent young fool, even though he does not formally bear the epithet אִוִּיל. He is passionate, prone to anger, self-opinionated, assertive and loquacious."⁷⁴

⁷⁰ Contra some, who claim that Elihu's self-presentation in 32:6–10 exhibits a gesture of humility and politeness. See, e.g., Habel, *The Book of Job*, 449; Newsom, "Job," 562; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 716.

⁷¹ Wilson, "Role," 87; McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 66–67; Lynch, "Phonetic Rhetoric," 349–50.

⁷² Habel, "Design," 88–92.

⁷³ Habel, "Design," 90.

⁷⁴ Habel, "Design," 90.

Some allusions identified in the previous section also strengthen this negative characterization of Elihu. For instance, Elihu describes himself as full of words and the wind (רוח) in his belly (בטן) compels him (32:18). The description explains the urgency of his need to answer (ענה; 32:17, 20). Eliphaz, in the opening of his second speech, has used the image of “wind in the belly” as a sarcastic remark to Job: “Should a wise man answer (ענה) with a ‘mind of wind (רוח),’ and fill his belly (בטן) with an east wind?” (15:2). As Lynch puts it, “Whereas Eliphaz used the belly full of wind (רוח) image to parallel the notion of ‘useless talk’ (15.2–3), Elihu inadvertently characterizes himself as a windbag, though evidently wishing to describe himself as the possessor of wisdom.”⁷⁵ Moreover, Elihu’s assurance to Job that his terror shall not terrify Job also underscores Elihu’s self-important character. Whereas Job has begged God not to terrify (בעת) him with his terror (אימה) so that a fair trial is made possible (9:34; 13:21), Elihu re-uses the same language as if he is in the place of God.

Some have rightly observed that Elihu is different from the three friends in that he is not interested in the sins of Job’s former life but focuses exclusively on the words Job spoke amidst his suffering.⁷⁶ The fact that Elihu is the only speaker who extensively cites the words of Job strengthens this observation.⁷⁷ As the analysis of Elihu’s citations of Job (33:9–11 and 33:13b) indicates, Elihu’s purpose is to extract theological propositions from the words of Job, though he summarizes the sentiment of Job’s words with

⁷⁵ Lynch, “Phonetic Rhetoric,” 353 n.37.

⁷⁶ Wilson, “Role,” 86; Althann, “Elihu’s Contribution,” 11.

⁷⁷ Zophar and Eliphaz have also cited the words of Job in their speeches (11:4; 22:13–14). Contra Habel (*The Book of Job*, 94), who interprets Elihu’s citations as part of “court procedure.”

reasonable accuracy.⁷⁸ In terms of the configuration of the narrative, the appearance of the character Elihu helps to crystallize the concept of appropriate religious discourse as central to the reading experience. Moreover, the narrator's description of Elihu's attitude toward Job and the friends aptly encapsulates the feeling of a typical member of the audience at this point of the narrative. The audience is likely to be dissatisfied with the arguments made by the friends and be offended by the provocative complaints uttered by Job. Although Elihu's idea of suffering as a form of divine communication in this speech is more profound than the theology of retribution suggested by the friends,⁷⁹ Elihu's negative characterization holds the authorial audience back from interpreting Elihu's voice as that of the author's.⁸⁰ This tension continues to sustain the interest of the audience in reading the remaining chapters of the book.

II. Elihu's Second Speech (Job 34)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

1. Attributed Citations

The narrator uses the same phrase *ויען ... ויאמר*, "answered," to introduce Elihu's second speech (ch. 34). This speech contains two citations attributed to Job (vv. 5–6 and v. 9). The first citation is explicitly marked by the *verbum dicendi* in conjunction with

⁷⁸ Wilson ("Role," 91) offers a similar observation. She writes, "He regards Job's problems as intellectual rather than existential, and fails to perceive that Job's bold words during the debate were ultimately a cry for the presence of a seemingly-absent God."

⁷⁹ Gordis, *God and Man*, 105; Bakon, "The Enigma of Elihu," 222–23; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 449; Newsom, "Job," 567–68; Waters, "Elihu's Theology," 143–59; *idem*, "Categories of Suffering," 405–20; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 742–43.

⁸⁰ For a similar view, see Wilson, "Role," 88; McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 64–67.

Job's name (אמר איוב, "Job said") at the beginning, while the second one is marked by the *verbum dicendi* אמר, "he said," alone at the beginning.

i. צדקתי ואל הסיר משפטי על משפטי אכזב אנוש חצי בלי פשע. (34:5–6)

The first words that Elihu attributes to Job (34:5–6) read, "I am innocent, and God has denied my justice; for the sake of my justice I have to lie; my wound⁸¹ is incurable, though I am without transgression." The first half of Elihu's citation is clear. Job certainly has repeatedly asserted that he is innocent (9:15, 20; 10:15; 13:18; 27:6).⁸² He has also claimed that God has denied his justice (הסיר משפטי, "denied my justice") in 27:2.⁸³ What Elihu intends to say in the next two cola (v. 6) is, however, obscure. If Elihu means that Job argues that he must lie in his lawsuit with God (v. 6a), then Elihu probably refers to Job's words in 9:20. There Job claims that his mouth would condemn him even though he is innocent.⁸⁴ Although the last colon does not seem to correspond to any specific words of Job, it is fair to say that "the language may be the language of Elihu, the thoughts are identifiably the thoughts of Job."⁸⁵ This time Elihu does not cite Job's words in order to refute them; rather, he characterizes them as "derision" (לעג; 34:7a).

⁸¹ Reading מחצי, "my wound," for חצי, "my arrow." So Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:253; Dhorme, *Job*, 511; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 464; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 747 n.6.c.

⁸² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 481; Newsom, "Job," 576; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 769.

⁸³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 481; Newsom, "Job," 576; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 769.

⁸⁴ Alternatively, one may read the *pi'el* of כזב as declarative, thus translating the colon as "concerning my judgment, I declare it a lie" (Clines, *Job 21–37*, 746 n.6.b.)

⁸⁵ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 770. So Newsom, "Job," 576.

ii. לא יסכן גבר ברצתו עם אלהים (34:9)

After a brief evaluation of Job's character (34:7–8), Elihu resumes his citation attributed to Job: "It is of no profit to a man to take delight in God" (34:9). Again, Elihu is not quoting any specific words of Job. At best, Job has complained that God destroys both blameless and wicked persons (9:22) and that he has received evil instead of good despite his righteous behaviour (30:26).⁸⁶ Interestingly, what Elihu attributes to Job is closer to the words Job had attributed to the wicked in 21:15.⁸⁷ Perhaps this is why Elihu judges that Job goes in company with evildoers and walks with the wicked (34:8).

2. Allusions

In addition to the above attributed citations, allusions to earlier speeches are also found in these words of Elihu. First, Elihu's words in 34:3, which reads, "For the ear test words as the palate tastes food," allude to Job's adaptation of a proverbial saying in 12:11. Second, Elihu's words in 34:12b, which reads "Shaddai does not pervert justice," are a paraphrase of Bildad's rhetorical question in 8:3.

i. בי און מלין תבחון וחד יטעם לאכל (34:3)

Both Job and Elihu refer to a proverbial saying, which calls for discernment (12:11; 34:3). In the form of a rhetorical question, Job asks the friends, "Does not the ear test words as the palate tastes its food?" (הלא און מלין תבחון וחד יטעם לו; 12:11). According to Job, although the function of the ear is to test words, the friends fail to test

⁸⁶ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 481; Newsom, "Job," 576; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 771.

⁸⁷ Newsom, "Job," 576; Balentine, *Job*, 568.

the words they hear regarding how God operates (cf. 12:13–25). In his speech, Elihu cites the proverb used by Job almost verbatim, but replacing the introductory negative interrogative הלא with the conjunction כי: “For the ear tests words as the palate tastes food” (כי און מלין תבחון וחד יטעם לאכל) (34:3). As many have rightly noted, Elihu’s speech in ch. 34 is mainly concerned with God’s nature and governance of the world.⁸⁸ Through the allusion, Elihu signals to Job, and perhaps his three friends, that he attempts to correct Job’s miscomprehension of the divine governance of the world.⁸⁹

ii. שדי לא יעות משפט (34:12b)

As many have noted, the major purpose of Elihu in this speech is to defend God’s just governance of the world.⁹⁰ His assertion in 34:12b that “Shaddai does not pervert justice” (שדי לא יעות משפט) is key to his argument. Interestingly, the statement is almost a paraphrase of Bildad’s rhetorical questions in 8:3, in which he asks, “Does God pervert justice? Does Shaddai pervert the right?” (האל יעות משפט ואם שדי יעות צדק). Although Elihu has earlier claimed that he will not use the arguments of the friends to refute Job (32:14b), he appears to repeat Bildad’s argument in a more elaborate fashion in his speech.⁹¹

⁸⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 476–78; Newsom, “Job,” 575; Balentine, *Job*, 565; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 765–66.

⁸⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 477–78.

⁹⁰ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 476–78; Newsom, “Job,” 575; Balentine, *Job*, 565; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 765.

⁹¹ As Balentine (*Job*, 581) notes, “Elihu’s arguments in chapter 34 may be more polished and sophisticated than those of his friends, but they are not substantially different.”

B. Impact on the Reading

With the narrator's introduction, ויען אליהוא ויאמר, "Elihu answered," (34:1), the audience realizes that neither Job nor the friends have responded to Elihu. In the first part of his present speech (34:2–15), Elihu does not address Job directly. He calls his addressee "wise men" (חכמים) and "those who know" (ידעים) in v. 2 and "men of understanding" (אנשי לבב) in v. 10. If Elihu is referring to the three friends, he must be using the terms in an ironic fashion, for it seems clear that Elihu does not consider them as wise.⁹² Alternatively, the terms may denote Elihu's "imaginary audience."⁹³ He thus uses these titles as a rhetorical device to deride those who do not agree with him.⁹⁴ Either way, it avoids the need to assume the presence of additional bystanders, whom the story does not explicitly mention.⁹⁵

Following the call to hear (34:2), Elihu repeats a proverbial saying (34:3), which Job has subverted in 12:11 to introduce his criticism of God's moral governance. The allusion signals to his audience that he is going to correct Job's perception on this topic and authorizes his appeal to discern what is just and good (34:4). In the following section (34:5–9) Elihu begins to set out his case against Job. He first cites Job's own accusations against God with reasonable accuracy (vv. 5–6), and then evaluates Job's character as

⁹² Contra Clines (*Job* 21–37, 768), who argues that Elihu *flatters* the three friends as wise and learned men here (*italics mine*).

⁹³ Newsom, "Job," 575; Balentine, *Job*, 566.

⁹⁴ Newsom ("Job," 575) sees the reverse of my suggestion. She writes, "This device serves as an appeal to readers who may assume the title of wise by agreeing with Elihu's judgment."

⁹⁵ Some understand Elihu's audience as including some bystanders. See, e.g., Terrien, "Job," 1140; Andersen, *Job*, 252; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 450. Arguing for the legal sense of the verb ידע, "know," Habel (*The Book of Job*, 480) even interprets Elihu's audience as his peers acting as "judges" of Job's case. Whybray (*Job*, 145) shares a similar view. The parallelism of ידעים to חכמים, however, weakens Habel's and Whybray's forensic reading.

reflected in those words (vv. 7–8). He buttresses his argument by adding another citation of Job’s obviously impious words as evidence against him (v. 9).

Repeating his summons to “men of understanding” (אנשי לבב), Elihu introduces his assertion that it is impossible for God to do evil (34:10, 12a) and that God operates a policy of strict retribution (34:11). He adapts Bildad’s claim that God does not pervert justice (34:12b). The allusion strengthens the negative characterization of Elihu. While Elihu has declared in his opening apology that he will not use the arguments of the friends to refute Job (32:14b), apparently this is what he is trying to do in this speech.⁹⁶ He turns next to underscore God’s sovereignty and the complete dependence of all human beings on him (34:13–15). If these verses are meant to support his assertion in vv. 10–12, Elihu may mean “that if some humans are rewarded and some are punished, that is God’s implementation of his ruling principle of retribution.”⁹⁷

As Elihu’s call to hear is expressed in the singular in 34:16, he appears to turn to Job in the next section (34:16–34).⁹⁸ In the form of a rhetorical question, Elihu argues that one who hates justice cannot govern (v. 17a). As Newsom puts it, “If God chooses to govern, it must be because it is the nature of God to love justice. It would be self-contradictory for God to choose to do what God hates.”⁹⁹ In another rhetorical question,

⁹⁶ Similarly, Janzen, *Job*, 220. He writes, “When Elihu, therefore, advances the assertion to the friends that ‘I will not answer [Job] with your speeches’ (32:14b), this assertion is undercut by the way in which his speeches do repeat theirs. If this is the case, then the reader is warned that Elihu is being presented as someone who does not understand himself or his role in the dramatic context. This means that Elihu is presented in the mode of dramatic irony.”

⁹⁷ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 774. Contra Newsom (“Job,” 576), who argues that there is no compelling motive for a sovereign God to do evil or pervert the right. The idea of the divine “motive” is not explicitly present in the context.

⁹⁸ Contra Newsom (“Job,” 576), who claims that “it is more likely that Elihu is addressing each member of the audience who ‘has understanding.’ ”

⁹⁹ Newsom, “Job,” 576.

Elihu declares Job to be in the wrong since Job has condemned God, who is righteous and mighty (v. 17b). In vv. 18–20 Elihu attempts to buttress his case by giving illustrations of how God uses his authority to judge human rulers, thus displaying his impartiality. As Elihu continues, he argues that it is impossible for the wicked to conceal themselves in order to escape God’s judgment, because God’s eyes observe the actions of all human beings (vv. 21–22). There is no need for anyone to set a time to go before God for judgment (v. 23). Since God knows the deeds of any evildoer and he has no need to investigate the case, he can proceed to sentence immediately (vv. 24–27). “This overthrow of the wicked also serves as Elihu’s evidence that the cry of the oppressed comes before God and is acted upon (vv. 28, 30).”¹⁰⁰ Although God’s governance of the world may not be as visible as one may wish to see (v. 29), Elihu argues that God is constantly at work.¹⁰¹

The text of 34:31 makes little sense as it stands. I follow many and read the first few words as *בִּי-אֱלֹהִים אָמַר*, “Indeed, say to Eloah,” for *בִּי-אֱלֹהִים אָמַר*.¹⁰² Thus understood, Elihu urges Job to repent and to humbly appeal to God (34:31–32). He also asks Job to decide for himself whether he will persist in nagging God for repaying him in his own terms or he will acknowledge his fault (34:33). This speech concludes with Elihu’s appeal to his imaginary audience to concur his judgment that Job has spoken without knowledge (34:34–37).¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ Newsom, “Job,” 577.

¹⁰¹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 781.

¹⁰² Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 393; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 476; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 459 n.1; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 759–60 n.31.b–c.

¹⁰³ It makes essentially no difference if one takes vv. 36–37 as Elihu’s own words or his attributed quotation of that of the “men of understanding” / “wise man” in v. 34. After all, Elihu means that they

Regarding the progression of the narrative, there is no major movement in this speech. Concerning the characterization of Elihu, however, this speech further intensifies the negative ethical judgments the authorial audience is likely to exercise on Elihu. From the citation Elihu attributes to Job in 34:5–6, it is evident that what matters to Elihu is the appropriateness of Job’s complaints. Since Elihu does not consider them as acceptable religious discourse, he immediately judges that Job is in the company of the wicked. From the citation Elihu attributes to Job in 34:9, the authorial audience should not fail to see the distortion therein. Job has never raised the issue of the potential benefit of his piety. The citation suggests that the relation of piety to prosperity rather resides in the mind of Elihu.

III. Elihu’s Third Speech (Job 35)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

1. Attributed Citations

The narrator uses the same phrase ויען ... ויאמר, “answered,” to introduce Elihu’s third speech (ch. 35). This speech contains three citations attributed to Job (v. 2b, v. 3 and vv. 14–15). Each citation is explicitly marked by the *verbum dicendi* אמרת, “you said,” (v. 2b) or תאמר, “you say,” (vv. 3, 14).

should be in agreement with him. Contra Clines (*Job 21–37*, 784), who unconvincingly argues that Elihu holds a different opinion from that of the men of understanding.

i. אמרת צדקי מאל (35:2b)

The first words that Elihu attributes to Job (35:2b) read אמרת צדקי מאל. The syntax allows the statement to be rendered “I am innocent before God” or “I am more in the right than God.”¹⁰⁴ Job has certainly repeatedly asserted that he is innocent (the former sense; 9:15, 20; 10:15; 13:18; 27:6). Although Job has never claimed that he is more in the right than God (the latter sense), he probably implies it when he says that God has denied his justice (27:2). Elihu sets this attributed quotation within the context of a rhetorical question directed to Job, “Do you consider this to be justice when you say אמרת צדקי מאל” (35:2)? As Clines rightly argues, the question is “a denial that the issue of one’s own vindication is the proper or the primary question about justice.”¹⁰⁵ Elihu’s words appear to be a criticism of Job’s self-centredness and arrogance.

ii. מה יסכן לך מה אעיל מחטאתי (35:3)

Elihu’s words in 35:3 are another citation attributed to Job. The first colon is an indirect quotation, “How does it profit you?”¹⁰⁶ and the second one is a direct quotation, “How am I better off than if I had sinned?”¹⁰⁷ Job has never said anything close to this.

¹⁰⁴ Some have argued that the text in 35:2b can also mean “I am more righteous than God.” See, e.g., Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 400; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 329; Newsom, “Job,” 580; Balentine, *Job*, 585; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 788 n.2.e.

¹⁰⁵ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 796.

¹⁰⁶ Some (e.g., Dhorme, *Job*, 531; Pope, *Job*, 262) take this colon as a direct citation, understanding the second person pronominal suffix in לך as referring to God. Although this reading is syntactically plausible, it is preferable to read the “you” as a reference to Job since Elihu appears to be challenging Job’s self-interest here.

¹⁰⁷ Taking the *mem* in מחטאתי as comparative, thus reading “more than my (hypothetical) sin = more than if I had sinned” (Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:267). Alternatively, one can take the *mem* in מחטאתי as a *mem* of separation, that is, as meaning “without” (Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 400). The resulting meaning is similar.

Similar to what Elihu has done earlier in 34:9, he seems to be misrepresenting Job here.¹⁰⁸

iii. לא תשורנו דין לפניו ותחולל לו ועתה כי אין פקד אפו ולא ידע בפש מאד. (35:14–15)

The text in 35:14–15 contains Elihu’s indirect citation attributed to Job.¹⁰⁹ The statements can be translated, “How much less when you say that you cannot see him, that your case is before him and you are waiting for him, and further that his anger does not punish anything, and that he does not know much about transgression.”¹¹⁰ Although Elihu’s citation does not correspond to any specific words of Job, it reasonably represents the sentiment of what Job has expressed in his speeches. Job has complained that he cannot see God (23:8–9).¹¹¹ He has stated that he has a lawsuit ready to be resolved (13:18–23; 23:4; 31:35–37).¹¹² He has also implied that God does not care much about wrongdoings (12:6; 21:17–26; 24:14–18).¹¹³ Through this indirect citation, Elihu emphasizes the inappropriateness of Job’s words. As Clines puts it, “if God does not respond to the misery of the oppressed merely because they have omitted to address themselves explicitly to him (vv 9–13), “how much less” (אף כי) can Job expect to be

¹⁰⁸ Balentine, *Job*, 585.

¹⁰⁹ Some think that v. 15 represents Elihu’s own voice. See, e.g., Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 398; NRSV. It is preferable to take this verse as a continuation of Elihu’s citation. As Clines (*Job 21–37*, 802) reasonably argues, “It seems unlikely, however, that Elihu should be giving Job advice at this point, since his whole effort in this speech has otherwise been to argue through the theological view taken up by Job.”

¹¹⁰ The Hebrew of v. 15 is obscure. For discussion of related textual issues, see Dhorme, *Job*, 536–37; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 403–4; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 792–93 n.15.a–e. My translation mainly follows the reading of Dhorme.

¹¹¹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 801.

¹¹² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 801–2. Unlike Clines, I do not regard 10:2 as one of the references to Job’s words.

¹¹³ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 802. I also include 24:14–18 as one of the references.

heard when he treats God with insolence and denigrates his governance of the world (vv 14–15).¹¹⁴

2. Allusions

In addition to the above attributed citations, Elihu's present speech also contains an allusion. His reference to the "animals of the earth" (בהמות ארץ) and the "birds in the sky" (עוף השמים) in 35:11 recalls Job's words in 12:7.

עוף השמים and בהמות ארץ (35:11)

Both Job and Elihu refer to a common proverbial saying that animals and birds can teach wisdom to humans (12:7; 35:11). In his taunt to the three friends, Job asks them to consult the animals (בהמות) and the birds of the air (עוף השמים) and they will teach them about God's arbitrary ways of working (12:7–9). In this speech, "Elihu attempts to reclaim a traditional saying from Job's ironic subversion,"¹¹⁵ in calling God the one "who teaches us by means of the animals of the earth (בהמות ארץ) and makes us wise by means of the birds of the air (עוף השמים)" (35:11).¹¹⁶ The allusion serves two purposes. On the one hand, Elihu makes God the teacher and the created order mere vehicles of divine communication.¹¹⁷ On the other hand, the lesson to learn is that one in distress should cry

¹¹⁴ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 802.

¹¹⁵ Newsom, "Job," 581.

¹¹⁶ The syntax of this verse allows it to be translated, "who teaches us *more than* the animals of the earth, makes us *wiser than* the birds of the heavens." As Newsom ("Job," 581) puts it, "It seems odd, however, that persons suffering from oppression would congratulate themselves that god has made them wiser than animals and birds." It is therefore preferable to take the מן in מבהמות and מעוף as denoting the instrument. So Dhorme, *Job*, 534; Pope, *Job*, 265; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 464 n.8.

¹¹⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 492.

to God like animals and birds, rather than the arbitrariness of God's behaviours, as claimed by Job.¹¹⁸

B. Impact on the Reading

After the brief narrator's introduction (35:1), Elihu speaks up again. He appears to address two specific issues in this speech (35:2–16). As Newsom rightly observes, "The body of the speech is enclosed by a rhetorical question at the beginning, which asks whether Job's evaluation of himself is correct (v. 2), and by a statement of judgment at the end, which declares Job's words to be empty and ignorant (v. 16)."¹¹⁹ Elihu introduces the first issue which he wants to tackle with a citation of Job's words (v. 3) and an assertion of his intent to address his error therein (v. 4). According to the citations Elihu attributes to Job in 35:2b and 35:3, Elihu perceives Job's concern of the moral order as an exemplification of his own self-centredness.¹²⁰ From Elihu's perspective, "piety should not even be focused on the question of its values to God," but rather the accompanying benefits to others (vv. 6–8).¹²¹

The second issue that Elihu deals with is related to God's reluctance to address the cries of the afflicted. Elihu begins to explain that the cries of some oppressed people go unanswered because of their own pride (vv. 9–13). In v. 11, he adapts the proverbial saying which Job has used ironically in 12:11. Whereas Job suggests that the animals and the birds can teach humans about God's arbitrariness, Elihu makes God the teacher and

¹¹⁸ Pope, *Job*, 265; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 492.

¹¹⁹ Newsom, "Job," 580.

¹²⁰ Newsom, "Job," 581; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 795.

¹²¹ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 795.

the animal and birds vehicles of divine communication. Humans in distress should imitate them to cry to God for help. Elihu then applies the same principle to Job's particular case with a citation of Job's boastful words (vv. 14–15). Elihu's summary judgment on the emptiness of Job's words brings his speech to an end (v. 16).

Similar to what he has done in his preceding speech, Elihu cites the words of Job in a distorted fashion at times. For example, although the wording in the alleged citation in 35:2b is a fair representation of Job's position, Elihu interprets Job's thinking as utterly self-centred. Moreover, Elihu's alleged citation in 35:3 is clearly a misrepresentation of Job. Job has never said anything close to this. Elihu's distortion of Job's words again contributes to the negative ethical judgments the authorial audience will exercise on Elihu. Good's comment is representative, "It is hard to reconstruct the thought that produced these words. Perhaps it is distant from commonsense reality. It almost seems that Elihu has a unique mental structure that does not correspond to ordinary reason."¹²²

Elihu's alleged citation in 35:14–15 appear to be a faithful representation of Job's position. However, Elihu's purpose is to disqualify Job's cry as a legitimate form of speaking to God. As Newsom puts it, "Although sincerely believing himself to serve God, Elihu arrogantly attempts to usurp God's role, declaring what language God finds acceptable."¹²³ After all, Elihu may represent the voice of a typical reader of this literary work. The tension remains whether the author endorses Elihu's judgment or Job's protest.

¹²² Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 329.

¹²³ Newsom, "Job," 583.

IV. Elihu's Fourth Speech (Job 36–37)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

No internal quotation to the previous speeches is found in this long speech of Elihu. In the next section, I will continue to examine how these chapters contribute to the story in terms of narrative progression.

B. Impact on the Reading

After a brief narrator's introduction (36:1), Elihu gives his final speech. Like what he has done in his first speech, he opens with a commendation of his own words again (36:2–4). Most notably is his self-description as one who is “perfect in knowledge” (תמים; v. 4). Some have attempted to redeem Elihu from his arrogant outlook by toning down the phrase תמים דעות to mean “‘sound,’ ‘whole-some’ knowledge”¹²⁴ or even “sincere in his ideas.”¹²⁵ Although these readings are syntactically defensible, the fact that Elihu uses an almost identical phrase later in the same speech to describe God (תמים דעים; 37:16) implies that he equates his knowledge with God.¹²⁶ As Habel suggests, “Thus the poet seems to imply that Elihu, in attempting to vindicate God, falls into the trap of playing God.”¹²⁷

¹²⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 585.

¹²⁵ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 806.

¹²⁶ Clines (*Job 21–37*, 855) argues that it is not problematic to use the same phrase to describe both humans and God. In buttressing his argument, he states, “no one is scandalized by the term ‘just’ being applied both to humans and to God.” Ironically, he translates the phrase תמים דעים as “perfect in knowledge” in 37:16 (808).

¹²⁷ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 506. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 600) writes, “Moreover, before this speech is over, Elihu will have come very close to suggesting that the perfection he claims for his knowledge is the *equivalent of*, perhaps even a worthy *substitute for*, the knowledge of God (37:16)” (*italics his*).

After the exordium, Elihu presents God as all-powerful and as a just sustainer of the moral order of the world (36:5–15). According to Elihu, God destroys the wicked who do not repent but he delivers the righteous and restores those who heed his warnings. The text of the next section (36:16–21) is extremely obscure, and has been considered as unintelligible by some interpreters.¹²⁸ The general thrust of this section appears to be Elihu's warning to Job not to stubbornly seek resolution through his own means or to turn to iniquity amid his affliction.¹²⁹ If one follows the lead of the Syriac and revocalizes בַּחֲרָתָּ to בְּחִירָתָּ (*pu'al* of בָּחַר in v. 21,¹³⁰ then Elihu is the only character who correctly points out that Job “has been *tested* with affliction.”

Elihu turns next to remind Job that God has unattainable power and that God is an incomparable teacher (36:22–23). Elihu urges Job to join in the communal chorus of praise to God for his work of creation, which is observable by all people (36:24–25). In the next section (36:26—37:13), Elihu celebrates God's involvement in the natural wonders, introduced by a statement praising the divine greatness and incomprehensibility (36:26). The topics covered include the cycle of rain (36:27–29), thunderstorms (36:30—37:5), winter storms (37:6–10), and rain clouds (37:11–12). Most telling is his concluding statement that God brings forth the rain, or perhaps the natural phenomena in general, for moral purposes (37:13).¹³¹ For Elihu, even though humans cannot fully comprehend the

¹²⁸ The translators of NAB are representative. They simply give up the task of translating 36:13–20 (Noted in Clines, *Job* 21–37, 864.)

¹²⁹ It is instructive to compare the different understandings of Habel, *The Book of Job*, 508–9; Newsom, “Job,” 586–87; Balentine, *Job*, 604–8; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 862–64.

¹³⁰ So Dhorme, *Job*, 550; Pope, *Job*, 272; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 499; Clines, *Job* 21–37, 823 n.21.c.

¹³¹ Newsom, “Job,” 591; Balentine, *Job*, 614–15.

working of the created order, they should be able to perceive God's moral governance of the world through these natural phenomena.¹³²

Elihu begins the final section of his speech (37:14–24) with direct summons to Job to consider the marvellous works of God (v. 14). In a series of rhetorical questions, he mocks Job's pretensions of being equal to God (vv. 15–18).¹³³ He also sarcastically appeals to Job to teach his audience on how to speak to God (v. 19), while Elihu himself admits that God will not be informed even if he speaks up (v. 20).¹³⁴ The meaning of vv. 21–22 is obscure. If the text of v. 21 refers to the brightness of the sun upon which humans cannot look directly,¹³⁵ then Elihu may be implicitly comparing this phenomenon with the impossibility of confronting God face-to-face.¹³⁶ On the other hand, if the meaning of v. 21 is that the sun cannot be seen because it is overcast with clouds,¹³⁷ then Elihu may be asserting that “the dramatic changes in the sky are orchestrated by God.”¹³⁸ As Elihu concludes his monologue, he states that since mortals cannot find God, their proper response is to fear him (vv. 23–24).¹³⁹

¹³² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 878–79.

¹³³ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 514.

¹³⁴ Understanding the verb בִּלַּע in v. 20 to mean “to inform.” *HALOT* 1:135; *DCH* 2:180. So Dhorme, *Job*, 571; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 431–32; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 848 n.20.f.

¹³⁵ Understanding the adjective בְּהִיר to mean “bright.” So Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 484; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 432.

¹³⁶ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 515–16; Newsom, “Job,” 591; Balentine, *Job*, 617.

¹³⁷ So *HALOT* 1:111; Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:295–96; Dhorme, *Job*, 571–72; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 848–49 n.21.e.

¹³⁸ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 884.

¹³⁹ Revocalizing יִרְאֶה, “he sees,” to יִרְאֶה, “they fear,” and taking לֹא as asseverative: “Therefore mortals fear him, and the wise in heart surely fear him” (v. 24). So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 434; Clines, *Job 21–37*, 851–52 n.224.c.

As Clines conveniently summarizes, “The *function* of the speech is to invite Job to ‘stop’ his complaint against God and marvel rather at the divine justice and self-revelation.”¹⁴⁰ In terms of the progression of the narrative, this last speech of Elihu contributes little to the forward movement. Some have argued that the discourse of Elihu in 36:22—37:13 is different from that of the friends, and Eliphaz in particular (cf. 5:8–16), because Elihu’s is contemplative and aesthetic, rather than argumentative and rational.¹⁴¹ While there is a certain kernel of truth in this observation, it appears to me that Elihu has never lost sight of the argumentative aspect of this discourse. After all, what he wants to achieve is to drive home the moral implication of the natural phenomena (37:13).

As Clines rightly observes, Elihu’s “conviction that the workings of the universe are a channel of divine communication” is probably a quite original element in his thinking.¹⁴² Nevertheless, it is unlikely that Elihu is able to bring any enlightenment to Job. Throughout his speeches, Job himself has noted the marvellous nature of the created order (9:4–10; 26:5–14), and yet he complained that he does not understand what God wants to convey to him.

¹⁴⁰ Clines, *Job 21–37*, 853; italics his.

¹⁴¹ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 231–32; Balentine, *Job*, 620. Similarly, McKay (“Elihu—A Proto-Charismatic?” 170) argues that the purpose of the Elihu speeches “is to lift the sufferer into a healing confrontation with the Almighty.” He states, “The argument is important, but equally important is the mood of wonder and praise.”

¹⁴² Clines, *Job 21–37*, 888.

V. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the internal quotations of preceding materials in each of the speeches uttered by Elihu. I have also examined the impact of these internal quotations on the reading experience of the narrative.

Unlike the speeches of Job and those of the three friends, the Elihu speeches (chs. 32–37) establish connections with the preceding dialogue frequently through the use of attributed citations (33:9–11; 33:13b; 34:5–6; 34:9; 35:2b; 35:3; 35:14–15). The accuracy of Elihu’s citation forms a spectrum. Sometimes Elihu’s words are almost a verbatim repetition of Job’s words (33:10b–11). Sometimes they reasonably represent the sentiment of Job’s utterance (33:9–10a; 33:13b; 34:5–6; 35:2b; 35:14–15). Sometimes they do not appear to correspond to any specific words of Job (34:9; 35:3).

When Elihu “cites” from Job, he has different purposes in mind. Sometimes he cites the words in order to refute their content (33:9–11; 33:13b). Sometimes he cites the words in order to criticize the character of Job and his provocative language (34:5–6; 35:2b; 35:14–15). Sometimes he “invents” the words as a springboard to launch his arguments (34:9; 35:3).

In addition to attributed citations, allusions to preceding materials are also present in the speeches of Elihu. In Elihu’s first speech (chs. 32–33), he uses the “age” motif to allude to the words of friends, who claimed that wisdom and knowledge belong to the aged (8:8–10; 15:10; 32:7). Through this allusion, the author characterizes Elihu as representing a different tradition than that of the friends.

More often, Elihu alludes to the words of Job in order to respond to him. Whereas Job used the verb יָכַח to refer to his imaginary arbiter in a lawsuit (9:33; 16:19–21), Elihu

re-uses the same verb to show how the legal language might have confused and misled Job (32:12). Similarly, whereas Job envisioned a witness in heaven (16:19), who is also a mediator (מליץ) for him (16:20), Elihu adapts the term מליץ from Job but specifies a different role for this being. His purpose is again to direct Job away from contemplating a lawsuit with God. Moreover, whereas Job begged God not to terrify (בעת) him with his terror (אימה) so that a fair trial is made possible (9:34; 13:21), Elihu claims that no terror (אימה) of Elihu should terrify (בעת) Job (33:7a). The allusion strengthens the characterization of Elihu as one who regards himself as God's spokesperson. Furthermore, whereas Job complained that God terrified him with dreams (חלמות) and visions (חזיונות; 7:14), Elihu reinterprets these phenomena as the divine attempts to dissuade a person from committing wickedness (33:15–17).

The author also uses the word of Elihu to allude to Eliphaz in order to shed light on his characterization of Elihu. Whereas Eliphaz used the image of “wind in the belly” in a sarcastic remark to Job (15:2), Elihu ironically picks up Eliphaz's words and applies a similar description to himself (32:18).

In his second speech (ch. 34), Elihu continues to allude to the words of Job to respond to him. Whereas Job made use of a proverbial saying to underscore the friends' failure to discern God's operation in the world (12:11), Elihu re-uses the expression to introduce his correction of Job's miscomprehension of the divine governance (34:3). Elihu alludes not only to Job but also to Bildad in this speech. His assertion that “Shaddai does not pervert justice” (34:12b) is almost a paraphrase of Bildad's rhetorical questions in 8:3. This allusion is ironic for Elihu has earlier claimed that he will not use the arguments of the friends to refute Job (32:14b).

In Elihu's third speech (ch. 35), he continues to allude to the words of Job.

Whereas Job asked the friends to consult the animals (בהמות) and the birds of the air (עוף השמים), which will teach them about God's arbitrary ways of working (12:7–9), Elihu re-uses similar terms to counter Job's subversive language.

In these chapters a new character—Elihu—is introduced. He is not satisfied with the incapability of the three friends on the one hand and is irritated by Job's provocative language on the other. He assumes the role of “answerer,” attempting to interpret for Job the meaning of his suffering. These descriptions aptly encapsulate the feeling of a typical member of the audience at this point of the narrative. The audience is likely to be dissatisfied with the arguments articulated by the friends and be offended by the provocative complaints uttered by Job. However, through allusions, Elihu is characterized as a brash fool whose words are meant to be undermined. The author thus intends to criticize the members of the audience who share a similar view with Elihu regarding the appropriateness of Job's words. As Elihu's attention appears to focus exclusively on the words Job uttered in the midst of his suffering, these six chapters of speeches also crystallize the idea of appropriate religious expressions as crucial to the reading experience.

CHAPTER 8

THE ENDING

The eventual appearance of YHWH in a tempest indicates that the narrative is coming to an end. According to the narrative sequence, YHWH speaks twice (38:1—40:2; 40:6—41:34) and each of the divine speeches is immediately followed by a brief response from Job (40:3–5; 42:1–6). The final section of the narrative, which is commonly known as the epilogue, comprises YHWH's final verdict (42:7–9) and the narration of Job's restoration (42:10–17). In what follows, I will continue to examine the internal quotations of preceding materials in each pericope and their impact on the reading. Since these chapters are devoid of attributed citations, the focus of attention will be on allusions alone.

I. YHWH's First Speech (Job 38:1—40:2)

A. Allusion Analysis

A few allusions to the previous speeches of Job can be identified in this section. The “tempest” imagery that Job has used a number of times re-appears in the beginning sentence of this section. Second, the terms *חֶשֶׁךְ*, *עֶצָה* and *גִּבּוֹר* that YHWH uses in his opening challenge to Job hearken back to Job's own words in ch. 3 and ch. 12. Third, the “creation” motif, which is one of the main themes in YHWH's first speech, also recalls Job's use of the same idea in his opening outcry.

On the other hand, there seems to be a few instances where the author deliberately directs the audience's attention back to what Elihu has said. For example, the phrase *בְּלִי*

דעת, “without knowledge,” which Elihu used to describe Job, re-appears in this speech as YHWH’s evaluation of Job’s words. Moreover, the “rhetorical question” form and the “meteorology” motif, which are part of Elihu’s rhetoric in his last speech, are picked up by YHWH in his speech.

1. The “tempest” imagery (38:1)

The “tempest” imagery in 38:1 recalls Job’s earlier uses of the same imagery in his speeches. The narrator describes YHWH answering Job out of the tempest (סערה; 38:1).¹ In Job’s earlier speeches, he has already revealed his expectation that God will appear in a tempest. The first such reference that links Job’s suffering to a storm appears in 9:16–17.² Job laments that even if God appears to him in response to his request, God would not listen to his voice; rather, God would crush him with שַׁעֲרָה “a storm”³ and multiply his wounds without cause.⁴

In addition to 9:17, Job has used the image of a powerful wind to describe how God has harassed him physically in 13:25. Job portrays himself as a tiny leaf or dry chaff, which is being actively chased after by God, who is portrayed as a powerful wind. A

¹ Clines (*Job* 38–42, 1052 n.1.b) suggests that it is more proper to translate as “tempest” or “storm,” rather than “whirlwind,” which is equivalent to “tornado.”

² Robertson, *Literary Critic*, 48; Williams, “Deciphering the Unspoken,” 65; *idem*, “God of Victims,” 219; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 527; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 338–39; Luc, “Storm,” 111–23.

³ שַׁעֲרָה is a variant of סַעֲרָה as in 38:1 and 40:6. This is “supported by LXX and Vg. and by the use of the same form שַׁעֲרָה elsewhere in Nah. 1.3 for a whirlwind” (Luc, “Storm,” 112).

⁴ Some commentators (e.g., Clines, *Job* 1–20, 218; Pope, *Job*, 72; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 1978, 106; Dhorme, *Job*, 136–37) revocalize the term שַׁעֲרָה and interpret as a derivative of שָׁעַר “hair.” But I agree with Luc that “[g]iven the frequent uses of metaphorical language throughout the speeches, the act of ‘crushing’ (שָׁנָה) fits equally well with ‘whirlwind’ as with ‘hair’” (“Storm,” 112 n. 2). This interpretation is also espoused by others: Driver and Gray, *Job* 1:93; 2:57; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 174; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 138–39; van der Lugt, *Rhetorical Criticism*, 111; and Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 327.

similar metaphor is given by Job to depict the fate of the wicked (21:18; 27:20b–21). The irony here is Job thinks that God is treating him the same way as God treats the wicked. The storm image for Job's experience is amplified to an extreme in its next occurrence in Job's cry in 30:22–23. Job describes his suffering as being tossed about by a storm from God.⁵ Therefore, when YHWH actually does appear in a storm, Job (and the reader) is not surprised, but disappointed.⁶

2. גבר and עצה, חשך (38:2–3)

Many have noted the connection between YHWH's opening question in 38:2 and Job's opening cry (ch. 3).⁷ YHWH asks, "Who is this (זה) that darkens (*hip'il* ptc. of חשך) the scheme (עצה) with words without knowledge?" (38:2). Wilcox argues that the adjective זה refers not to Job but Elihu.⁸ He notes the apparent mismatch of the third-person question "Who is this?" in v. 2 with the second-person summons "Gird up your loins" to Job in v. 3 and concludes that the line in v. 2 represents YHWH's immediate dismissal of Elihu and his opinions.⁹ Although Wilcox's argument is syntactically

⁵ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 416) follows the *qere* (תושיה) and translates it as "success, wisdom" in order to fit the verb מוג, "dissolve, melt," it is however more convincing to follow the *kethiv* (תשויה) to read the term as a variant of תשוה, "tempest." The latter reading fits well with רוח, "wind," in the parallelism. Citing Nah 1:3, 5 and Ps 107:25–26 to support his argument, Luc argues that "[t]he picture of one being 'dissolved/melted' [מוג] by the power of a storm is consistent with the metaphorical uses of this verb in the Hebrew Bible" ("Storm," 115).

⁶ Contra Luc ("Storm," 111–23), who argues that the "storm" imagery serves as a positive portrayal of God's design and control and thus elicits the reader's trust in God.

⁷ Alter, "Voice," 35; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 342; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 92.

⁸ Wilcox, "Job 38:2," 85–95.

⁹ For a response to Wilcox's proposal, see Bimson, "Response," 125–28. For a refutation of Bimson's argument, see Brinks, "Who Speaks," 197–207.

defensible, it is preferable to interpret the phrase “Who is this?” as an expression which means to mock “at the status and power of a challenger,” which, in the context, is none other than Job.¹⁰ After all, the content of the rest of the first divine speech—the addressee of which is clearly Job—is an elaboration of YHWH’s scheme.¹¹

In Job’s opening outburst, he calls upon darkness to swallow up the light on the day of his birth (3:4–6).¹² The same root חשך is used two times there (vv. 4, 6). According to Perdue, “Job’s language is destroying God’s life-sustaining plan by returning creation to the darkness of chaos.”¹³ It is this subversive language that YHWH is rebuking in 38:2.¹⁴ The connection between the first divine speech and Job’s opening cry is further strengthened by the noun גבר, “man,” which occurs in 3:2 and 38:3. Whereas Job has indirectly identified himself as a גבר in his curse of his day of birth in 3:2, YHWH challenges Job to gird his loins like a גבר in 38:3.¹⁵ As Alter puts it, “It is as though God were implying: you called yourself man, *géver*, now gird up your loins like a man and see if you can face the truth.”¹⁶

YHWH’s opening question also alludes to Job’s words in ch. 12. In Job 12:13, Job states that wisdom, might, scheme (עצה), and understanding belong to God. He then elaborates his idea further by charging God with disorienting the world with darkness

¹⁰ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203. Similarly, Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1095.

¹¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 530–33; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1089.

¹² Alter, “Voice,” 35; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 342; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 92.

¹³ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203.

¹⁴ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203–4.

¹⁵ Alter, “Voice,” 36; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 342–43.

¹⁶ Alter, “Voice,” 36.

(vv. 14–25). Most telling is Job’s accusation that God uncovers deep things from darkness (חשך) and brings deathly shadow (צלמות) to light in 12:22. YHWH’s question in 38:2 may thus be interpreted as a response to the accusation of Job in 12:13–25, whose words, according to YHWH, are without knowledge.¹⁷

3. בלי דעת (38:2)

The phrase בלי דעת, “without knowledge,” appears in the first divine speech at 38:2 and the third speech of Elihu at 35:16. In his opening question, YHWH mocks Job, his challenger, for speaking with words “without knowledge” (בלי דעת; 38:2). This exact same phrase is used by Elihu, who judges Job as multiplying words “without knowledge” (בלי דעת; 35:16). In fact, Elihu also uses similar phrases to describe the words of Job in 34:35, “Job speaks without knowledge (לא בדעת), and his words are without insight (לא בהשכל).”

As Newsom suggests, the allusion gives the impression that “God is endorsing Elihu’s judgment.”¹⁸ For her, it is the later author of the Elihu speeches, who is responsible for creating such an impression. However, as suggested in the preceding chapter, there is no compelling evidence for the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches. Given the negative characterization of Elihu, it would be equally defensible to argue that YHWH’s endorsement of Elihu’s judgment suggests that the author is inviting the authorial audience to hold reservation on YHWH’s judgment as well.

¹⁷ Janzen (*Job*, 231) writes, “It is to the charge implicit in many of Job’s words, and explicit in 12:22, that 38:2 is a direct rebuttal. In characterizing God’s creative purpose as a design of darkness, Job has obscured God’s creative intent; and therein Job’s words are devoid of knowledge.” Newsom (“Job,” 601) also notes the connection between 38:2 and ch. 12.

¹⁸ Newsom, “Job,” 581.

4. The “rhetorical question” form (38:2—40:2)

One distinctive of the first divine speech is the use of rhetorical questions.

According to the counting of Clines, 47 lines out of a total 68 lines in the first divine speech are in the form of a rhetorical question.¹⁹ “Ten of [the remaining] 21 lines are descriptive elaborations of the material of the rhetorical questions, and could be regarded as syntactically part of the questions they follow.”²⁰

Although rhetorical questions are also part of the repertoire of Job and the three friends,²¹ Elihu is the only speaker who uses them extensively, especially near the end of his last speech (37:15–18). There Elihu challenged Job for his lack of knowledge of God’s activities regarding meteorology and his lack of ability to manipulate the weather like God. Similarly, YHWH in the first divine speech also challenges Job for his lack of knowledge and ability to sustain the created order.²² The similarity in form between the first divine speech and Elihu’s words in 37:15–18 has prompted many to explore its significance in relation to the function of the Elihu speeches.²³ What has seldom been examined is the impact of this allusion on the interpretation of the words of YHWH. For those who argue for the secondary nature of the Elihu speeches, they often see this

¹⁹ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1087.

²⁰ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1087.

²¹ For studies of rhetorical question in the book of Job, see Selms, “Motivated Interrogative Sentences,” 28–35; Koops, “Rhetorical Questions,” 415–23; Rensburg, “Wise Men,” 227–47; de Regt, “Functions and Implications,” 361–73; *idem*, “Implications of Rhetorical Questions,” 321–28; *idem*, “Discourse Implications,” 51–78; Magary, “Answering Questions,” 283–98.

²² Fox (“God’s Rhetoric,” 59) claims, “Through these rhetorical questions God does speak of his own wisdom and power and Job’s relative weakness and ignorance, but he does so with compassion and gentleness, albeit a stern gentleness.” I do not find Fox’s reading convincing. Nothing in the first divine speech gives the reader the impression of God’s “compassion and gentleness.”

²³ As Clines (*Job 21–37*, 881) notes, “Many have compared the style of Elihu’s questions here (and in vv 16, 18) with the ironic divine speeches (e.g., 38:4–6, 12, 16–18; 39:1), some seeing them as a prelude or anticipation or foreshadowing or even an undercutting of the divine questions.”

phenomenon as evidence that the author of the Elihu speeches imitates the divine speeches.²⁴ However, since the divine speech logically follows the Elihu speeches in a synchronic reading, it is equally possible to argue that YHWH endorses Elihu's arguments (see 3. above) and continues the discourse that Elihu has initiated.

5. The "creation" motif (38:4–21)

Alter has convincingly demonstrated the literary connection between the first divine speech and Job's opening malediction.²⁵ First, Job in 3:5 prays for shadow of death (צלמות) and clouds (עננה, a rare feminine form of ענן) to envelop the day he was born. These terms reappear in a new context in the first divine speech. Clouds (ענן) become the matutinal garment for the primordial Sea (38:9) and "deathly shadow" (צלמות) forms "part of a large cosmic picture not to be perceived with mere human eyes" (38:17).²⁶ Second, Job in 3:7 wishes that no sound of joy be heard on his night of conception and in 3:9 prays for the darkening of the stars of the twilight (כוכבי נשפו). YHWH, however, portrays a reverse image as he describes the presence of the stars of the morning (כוכבי בקר) and their songs and joyous exclamation (38:7).²⁷ Third, Job in 3:10 laments that the doors (דלתים) of his mother's womb (בטן) were not shut to disallow his birth and in 3:11 wishes that he had died right after he came forth from his mother's

²⁴ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:xli; Viviers, "Garrulous but Poor Rhetor," 148–49.

²⁵ Alter, "Voice," 34–38. Both Crenshaw ("Form and Content," 73 n.12) and Balentine ("What Are Human Beings," 266 n.24) endorse Alter's argument.

²⁶ Alter, "Voice," 36. So Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 94.

²⁷ Alter, "Voice," 36. So Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 93.

womb (רחם). In this section, YHWH invokes a cosmic womb (רחם) and cosmic doors (דלתים) so as to allow the chaotic Sea to be born and contained (38:8, 10).²⁸

As many have noted, Job's opening outburst is a subversion of the "creation" motif in Gen 1–2.²⁹ Taking this into consideration, the "cosmogony" section of the first divine speech (38:4–21) may be seen as YHWH's correction to Job's subversive language.³⁰

6. The "meteorology" motif (38:22–38)

Many have noted the similarity in content between the words of YHWH in 38:22–38 and those of Elihu in 36:22–37:13.³¹ In both passages, the topic in view is God's control in meteorology. Key meteorological terms such as שלג, "snow" (37:6; 38:22); עב, "clouds" (36:29; 37:11, 16; 38:34); ענן, "clouds" (37:11, 15; 38:9); קרח, "ice" (37:10; 38:29); and מטר, "rain" (36:27; 37:6; 38:26, 28) are repeated.³²

Taking the Elihu speeches as a later interpolation, Newsom argues that the author of the Elihu speeches attempts to remedy "the lack of any apparent connection between God as creator and the moral dimensions of creation."³³ Nevertheless, she appears to have over-exaggerated the difference between the two passages. In fact, YHWH's words

²⁸ Alter, "Voice," 36. So Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 93–94.

²⁹ Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV 23–26," 153–55; Perdue, "Job's Assault on Creation," 295–315; idem, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 91–98; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 205.

³⁰ Alter, "Voice," 34; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 203–6; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 92–95.

³¹ Freedman, "Elihu Speeches," 56–57; Johns, "Literary and Theological Function," 169–80; McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 78–79; Waters, "Authenticity," 41.

³² McCabe, "Elihu's Contribution," 78–79.

³³ Newsom, "Job," 589.

in 38:22–38 largely resemble the concept of God as sustainer of his created order in the words of Elihu in 36:22—37:13. Some have noted that the words of YHWH occasionally place the emphasis on the broader context of all of his created order, rather than on humanity alone.³⁴ While this is true, in light of the similarity between the last speech of Elihu and the first divine speech, it is preferable to interpret that YHWH agrees in principle with Elihu.³⁵

Again, since Elihu is being characterized negatively, the close association between Elihu and YHWH perhaps is the author's signal to the authorial audience that the words of YHWH need not be interpreted as normative as one would expect in most biblical narratives.³⁶

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator introduces the first divine speech with the clause, “YHWH answered Job from the tempest” (סערה; 38:1). The imagery of a storm occurs elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible often in the context of a theophany, associated with either the judgment of

³⁴ As Whybray (*Job*, 160) puts it, “Yahweh performs many of his activities in ways that appear to human beings to be sheer waste, but which demonstrate the unimaginable scope of his concerns and, by implication, the insignificance of purely human concerns in his sight.” So Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1110.

³⁵ Johns (“Literary and Theological Function,” 181) argues that the Elihu speeches and the divine speeches complement one another: “Elihu emphasizes that God has purposes in the natural order which relate to mankind. The Lord’s speech, even in the meteorological section, places his purposes within a much broader context. Since God’s actions in the speech are not specifically directed toward mankind, the argument is presented on a higher, more subtle level. Both levels are valid and indeed necessary.” Waters (“Authenticity,” 39) also contends that God’s silence concerning Elihu is another indication that God does not disagree with Elihu.

³⁶ E.g., Balentine (*Job*, 512) claims that the words of God are “surely privileged in important ways.” See also Bar-Efrat, *Narrative Art*, 19, 54; Sternberg, *Poetics*, 322–25. Thus said, I am fully aware that not all interpreters share the same assumption. See, e.g., Crenshaw, *Whirlpool of Torment*; Whybray, “Immortality of God,” 89–120; *idem*, “God’s Oppression,” 1–20; Penchansky, “God the Monster,” 43–60; Steussy, “Problematic God,” 127–61; *idem*, *Samuel and His God*.

the wicked or the salvation of the people of God.³⁷ Nevertheless, as the above analysis has shown, the same imagery also recalls many negative experiences of Job. Most telling is Job's belief as expressed in 9:17 that God would crush him in a tempest if he wants to confront God in a lawsuit. Earlier in the same speech, Job has expressed his expectation that God will ask him many questions that he is not able to answer (9:2–4, 14–15). This appears to be what exactly YHWH is doing in the first divine speech.

The first divine speech is filled with rhetorical questions. YHWH's leading question to Job is "Who is this that darkens my scheme with words without knowledge?" (38:2). The question is followed by a direct challenge to Job to gird up his loins like a man and answer the impossible questions in the rest of the speech (38:3). As shown in the analysis above, the words of YHWH in 38:2–3 allude to Job's earlier utterances. On the one hand, they refer back to Job's opening outcry in which Job uses the "darkness" motif to subvert the language of creation. On the other hand, they also recall Job's words at 12:12–25 in which Job accuses God of disorienting the world with darkness. The tonality of YHWH's first speech is more of condemnatory³⁸ than affirmative.³⁹

³⁷ Westermann, *Structure*, 108; Gowan, "God's Answer to Job," 93–94; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 202; Dailey "Theophanic Bluster," 189–90; Niehaus, *God at Sinai*, 22–23, 330; Luc, "Storm," 118.

³⁸ Hartley, (*The Book of Job*, 491) calls YHWH's words as the "divine rebuke." Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 341) argues that the divine "invitation must have some sarcasm in its tone." Clines (*Job 38–42*, 1088) states that "the tone of Yahweh's speech tends more toward the severe, if not the savage, than toward the gracious."

³⁹ Janzen (*Job*, 232) argues that the purpose of YHWH's words in 38:2–3 is to let Job find out who he is in relation to God. Similarly, Rowold ("Yahweh's Challenge to Rival," 211) contends that "the Yahweh-speech is a call, an invitation to Job, toward the restoration of a proper relationship between himself and Job, a relationship built on the same care and open rust that operates in the rest of the universe." Comparing Job 38:2–3 with Jer 1:17, Balentine (*Job*, 645) claims that "God invites Job to gird up his loins, in advance of what is coming, not because he is destined to be defeated, but because the victory is his for the taking, if only he will make the necessary preparations, which is what God wants and expects."

The bulk of YHWH's first speech is concerned with cosmogony (38:4–21), meteorology (38:22–38), and zoology (38:39–39:30). In the cosmogony section, YHWH talks about the structuring of the earth (38:4–7), the control of the sea (38:8–11), the renewal of the day (38:12–15),⁴⁰ the place of the abysses of sea and death (38:16–18), and the dwellings of light and darkness (38:19–21). Although this section is mainly concerned with YHWH's showcase of natural phenomena, some have been able to draw moral lessons by reading between the lines. For example, regarding the strophe on the control of the sea (38:8–11), Newsom argues that the strophe suggests that “[t]he chaotic waters have a place in God's design of the cosmos, yet one that is clearly circumscribed. They are the object not only of divine restriction but also of divine care.”⁴¹ Similarly, Balentine writes, “In sum, when Job looks upon the surging waters of the sea, God invites him to understand that when any part of creation threatens to exceed the limitations of what is permitted, it may be *constrained*, but it is not *condemned*.”⁴² Unfortunately, not all strophes in this section have such an overt moral application.⁴³ The function of this section in relation to the previous dialogue is still an open question. The authorial

⁴⁰ The term רשעים, “wicked,” in vv. 13b and 15a is written abnormally, with the middle letter suspended above the line, a signal that the Masoretes thought there was something unusual about the word. Recognizing that the term רשעים is out of place in the context, Driver (“Two Astronomical Passages,” 210–12) suggests that the term refers to the constellation Canis Major and Minor, of which Sirius is the brightest. Moreover, the strange phrase “high arm” (זרוע רמה), used of the “wicked” in v. 15, according to his theory, refers to the line of stars in the shape of a crooked arm, known formerly as the Navigator's Line. His suggestion is noted by Andersen (*Job*, 276) and followed by Clines (*Job 38–42*, 1103–5); NEB; REB. On the other hand, if the conventional understanding of רשעים as “wicked” is adopted, the thrust of this strophe would then be that God “contains and limits but does not eliminate the wicked from the world” (Newsom, “Job,” 603). So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 540; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 497; Balentine, *Job*, 647–48. The former reading yields a better consistency in terms of structure while the latter reading implies a moral emphasis that is consistent to that of the preceding strophe (38:8–11). Depending on the reader's privilege, either reading makes good sense.

⁴¹ Newsom, “Job,” 602.

⁴² Balentine, “Job,” 647; italics his.

⁴³ See n.38 above for another instance where a moral application can be drawn.

audience is thus invited to complete the meaning of the text by filling in the gap.⁴⁴ Since the language YHWH uses in this speech alludes to Job's opening outburst, it is reasonable to conclude that YHWH's speech is an indirect rebuke of the subversive language Job uses throughout his speeches. As Perdue puts it,

the sages attributed great significance to both the creative and destructive power of language. For the wise, language was not an inert tool merely describing proper behavior, but an order-creating, life-sustaining power when used correctly and well and a destructive force when formulated by the fool.⁴⁵

In the meteorology section, YHWH speaks of the course of rain (38:25–27), the origin of rain, dew, ice, and frost (38:28–30), and the control of clouds and rain (38:34–38). As discussed above, YHWH's judgment of Job as one speaking with "words without knowledge," YHWH's use of rhetorical questions, and YHWH's description of the meteorological phenomena all suggest that God is mostly in agreement with Elihu. Given the negative characterization of Elihu, the authorial audience should pause before endorsing without reservation the divine speech as normative.

In the zoology section, YHWH displays before Job five pairs of animals: (1) the lions and the ravens (38:39–41); (2) the mountain goats and the hind (39:1–4); (3) the wild ass and the wild ox (39:5–12); (4) the ostrich⁴⁶ and the war horse (39:13–25); and (5) the hawk and the vulture (39:26–30). Each pair is characterized by the common feature they share: "the ravenous appetites of lions and ravens, the reproduction of mountain goats and hinds, the freedom of the wild ass and wild ox, the speed and

⁴⁴ Patrick and Scult (*Rhetoric and Biblical Interpretation*, 101) argue that in view of the ambiguous ending of the book of Job "the author forces us to complete the meaning of the work."

⁴⁵ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 44.

⁴⁶ For a recent argument against identifying רֶנְנִים in 38:13 as an "ostrich," see Walker-Jones, "So-Called Ostrich," 494–510. Walker-Jones argues that the animal should rather be understood as a "sand grouse."

irrational courage of the ostrich and horse, and the wisdom that preserves the hawk and vulture.”⁴⁷ What these animals have in common appears to be “that they are all not *tamed* or domesticated.”⁴⁸ At the primary level, as Clines rightly argues, “The purpose of this section of the divine speech seems ... to expound the diversity of life forms brought into being by Yahweh.”⁴⁹ If moral lessons are intended to be drawn from this section, the animals may also symbolize chaotic and destructive forces.⁵⁰ Thus understood, another purpose of this section is to affirm that chaos is nurtured and sustained in the world.

With the narrator’s brief introduction again (40:1), the first divine speech concludes with YHWH’s accusation of Job as the one who contends and argues with him and YHWH’s challenge to Job to respond to his questions (40:2). Comparing YHWH’s taunt here with a similar divine challenge to the prophet Jeremiah in Jer 12:1–4, Janzen argues that the purpose of Yahweh’s rhetorical questions is not to put down Job but to challenge him to a deeper understanding.⁵¹ His argument is not convincing because YHWH’s taunt to Job is clearly set in the context of a legal disputation.⁵² This closing section forms an *inclusio* with the opening section (38:2–3), underscoring one of the main purposes of YHWH’s speech is to disqualify Job from pursuing his lawsuit against God.⁵³

⁴⁷ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 214.

⁴⁸ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1128.

⁴⁹ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1121.

⁵⁰ Keel, *Jahwehs Entgegnung an Ijob*, 71–125; Nel, “Cosmos and Chaos,” 214–16; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 214–15; Newsom, “Job,” 608.

⁵¹ Janzen, *Job*, 241–42. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 667) argues that “God’s tone may convey to Job a genuine invitation to respond.” For an alternative view on YHWH’s attitude toward the prophet in Jer 11–20, see Boda, *Severe Mercy*, 240–46.

⁵² Habel, *The Book of Job*, 528–30, 548–49; Scholnick, “Poetry in The Courtroom,” 187; Newsom, “Job” 613; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1133–34.

⁵³ Greenstein, “Forensic Understanding,” 241–58.

What is the contribution of the first divine speech to the narrative as a whole? On the surface, it is fair to say that YHWH is challenging Job for his lack of knowledge in terms of the natural order of the cosmos.⁵⁴ The authorial audience, however, has to construct the relevance of this piece of information to the resolution of the conflict between God and Job. Aside from the characterization of God in the rest of the Hebrew Scriptures, the image of God in the book of Job up to this point comes close to a capricious tyrant.⁵⁵ For those who incline to salvage YHWH from looking as such, they sometimes claim that the purpose of the first (and perhaps the second) divine speeches is to bring Job into enlightenment.⁵⁶ It is not my intention to put down this line of interpretation as inferior. My point is rather that such a reading finds its support not from the internal context (the book of Job) but from the external (the rest of the Canon) context. Given the frequent practice of subversion in the book of Job, perhaps this wider canonical context may not function as a reliable guide for interpretation.

A more important issue to address is how the first divine speech corresponds to the preceding dialogue. This issue is in turn closely tied to how one construes the configuration of the narrative. For Gordis, two implications can be drawn from the first divine speech:

The first is that the universe was not created exclusively for man's [sic] use, and therefore neither it nor its Creator can be judged solely by man's [sic] standards and goals. The second is even more significant. The natural world, though it is beyond man's [sic] ken, reveals to him its beauty and order. It is therefore

⁵⁴ Gordis (*God and Man*, 297) claims "that the universe is a mystery to man" is the "basic theme" of the first divine speech. Similarly, Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 517) writes, "Job is not knowledgeable enough to discover why things take place on earth as they do."

⁵⁵ Robertson, *Literary Critic*, 54; Williams, "Mystery and Irony," 247; Miles, *God: A Biography*, 308–28; Kee, "Ridiculing the God," 246.

⁵⁶ So Janzen, *Job*, 241–42; Balentine, *Job*, 667; Wilson, *Job*, 420–21.

reasonable for man to believe that the universe also exhibits a moral order with pattern and meaning, though it be beyond man's [sic] power fully to comprehend.⁵⁷

While Gordis focused on the incomprehensibility of God's creation, Habel placed his emphasis on the paradoxical nature of God's design. He stated, "In his [God's] design there is a measure of the comic with the controlled, the bizarre with the beautiful, the serendipitous with the serious. Yahweh challenges Job to show the discernment necessary to keep this paradoxical world in balance."⁵⁸ Hartley also followed this line of reasoning but he put his stress on God's intention to elicit Job's trust in him. For him, YHWH forces Job to make "a decision—either to trust Yahweh, believing that he wisely rules his created world, or to pursue his complaint that exalts himself above Yahweh."⁵⁹

At the other end of the pole, Tsevat argued that the world is "amoral" according to the book of Job.⁶⁰ For him, the first divine speech means: "No retribution is provided for in the blueprint of the world, nor does it exist anywhere in it. None is planned for the non-human world and none for the human world. Divine justice is not an element of reality."⁶¹ Yet others, without denying the moral order of the world, contended that YHWH's words underscore divine sovereignty, which is not restricted by the rigid retributive system.⁶²

⁵⁷ Gordis, *God and Man*, 297.

⁵⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 535. See also *idem*, "Defense," 33–38.

⁵⁹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 517. Similarly, Wilson ("Job 38–39," 137) asserts, "God uses creation examples to broaden Job's understanding so that he will persevere in faith." Nicholson ("Limits of Theodicy," 82) also states, "God rouses himself to speak from the whirlwind—not to assert himself like a bully against Job, coercing him into humiliating submission, but to declare his mastery in and over creation, and so to renew his ancient pledge and in this way reawaken faith."

⁶⁰ Tsevat, "Meaning," 102.

⁶¹ Tsevat, "Meaning," 100.

⁶² Keel, *Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob*, 156–57; Kubina, *Gottesreden*, 143–58; Fox, "God's Rhetoric," 53–61.

While the above interpreters focussed on how the first divine speech addresses the question of the moral order of the world, others have drawn their attention to the mere appearance of YHWH as the key. For example, MacKenzie argued that the divine speeches underscore the divine “attributes of mystery and love.”⁶³ He wrote,

The content of the divine speech, which totally ignores any question of justice or retribution, and stresses instead the divine mystery ... The mystery cannot fully be made clear in human language and concepts; but at least God’s justice, as men conceive it, is not the complete explanation of His dealing with them. The relationship of such a man as Job to God transcends rules of justice and retribution.⁶⁴

Similarly, Gowan contended that it is the religious experience in the theophanic encounter that matters.⁶⁵

At the narrative level, each of the above interpretations can make sense. Depending on one’s own preference, the individual reader supplies the missing information and helps bring the story to a proper closure. At the rhetorical level, the most important question to consider is whether YHWH speaks for the author. This question is usually taken for granted because God is assumed to be a normative character in biblical texts. Perhaps no such assumption can be made without examination in a work like the book of Job with “subversion of tradition” as the “hallmark” of its author.⁶⁶

At this point, the authorial audience is invited to pass thematic judgments on YHWH. If God is regarded as a mere character in the narrative, what does he typify? Drawing from the ideas of Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca on techniques of

⁶³ MacKenzie, “Purpose,” 442.

⁶⁴ MacKenzie, “Purpose,” 442.

⁶⁵ Gowan, “God’s Answer to Job,” 89.

⁶⁶ Greenberg, “Job,” 297.

argumentation,⁶⁷ Viviers suggests that the technique the author uses in the divine speech is the “argument from authority.”⁶⁸ According to his analysis, “this kind of argument is often used and readily accepted by audiences.”⁶⁹ I believe that this attitude of unconditional submission to authority is exactly what the author of Job is attacking. As Newsom rightly observes, “When God speaks, it tends to bring conversation to an end.”⁷⁰ Perhaps, the character YHWH in 38:1–40:2 may be interpreted as the embodiment of monologic discourse in a religious community.

II. Job’s First Response to YHWH (Job 40:3–5)

A. Internal Quotation Analysis

No internal quotation is found in this section. In what follows, I will continue to examine how this section contributes to the development of the instabilities and tensions in the narrative.

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (40:3), Job offers his first brief response to YHWH (40:4–5). Job uses the verb ילך, “I am small,” to depict himself and admits that he is not able to answer God (v. 4a). He also describes his silence figuratively with the

⁶⁷ Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca, *The New Rhetoric*.

⁶⁸ Viviers, “How Does God Fare,” 121.

⁶⁹ Viviers, “How Does God Fare,” 121.

⁷⁰ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 234. Similarly, Morrow (*Protest against God*, 145) argues, “YHWH’s revelation to Job does not promote dialogue; it ends it.”

“hand-on-the mouth” symbol.⁷¹ To my knowledge, all interpreters see Job as responding with the gesture of laying his hand over his mouth. It is, however, equally likely that Job is using the “hand-over-the mouth” symbol as a figurative way to express his silence since ch. 32. Job has already shut up. This fits well the following context in which he declares that he has already spoken and has nothing to add (v. 5).⁷² Some understand the response of Job as an indication of his self-humiliation.⁷³ According to this reading, the divine honour has overwhelmed Job to recognize his own smallness in status.⁷⁴ Nevertheless, this is neither the only nor the best reading. The prefacing particle *וְ* in 40:4 can be interpreted as “if” or “since,” introducing a fact upon which a conclusion or action is based.⁷⁵ Moreover, as Perdue rightly observes, “In each use of the Qal form the verb clearly means ‘to be held in contempt’ by another person or group (Gen. 16.4, 5; 2 Sam. 1.23; Jer. 4.13; Hab. 1.8; Nah. 1.4). It does not indicate personal remorse, repentance, or self-deprecation.”⁷⁶ Therefore, Job’s wording may express his assessment of how God evidently regards him, rather than his self-evaluation.⁷⁷ Besides, as Gruber points out, the hand-over-the mouth gesture itself signifies no more than silence, and that

⁷¹ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 549; Newsom, “Job,” 613; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 352; Glazov, “Hand on the Mouth,” 30–41; Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1139.

⁷² Some even interpret Job’s words in 40:5 as his affirmation of what he has previously spoken. So Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 518; Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1139.

⁷³ Muenchow, “Dust and Dirt,” 608–9; Newsom, “Job,” 613.

⁷⁴ Tsevat, “Meaning,” 91; Muenchow, “Dust and Dirt,” 608–9; Newsom, “Job,” 613.

⁷⁵ Joüon §167-1. Similarly, Janzen, *Job*, 243; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 216; Dailey, “Divine Disputation,” 113 n.33; Balentine, *Job*, 678 n.60.

⁷⁶ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 216–17. Similarly, Habel (*The Book of Job*, 73) argues, “The mood is one of complaint not of confession in these text.” So Balentine, *Job*, 667–68.

⁷⁷ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 216–17; Balentine, *Job*, 667; Clines, *Job* 38–42, 1139.

any connotations such as reverence or astonishment are supplied by the context.⁷⁸ Taking everything into consideration, Job's first response is at best an ambiguous one.⁷⁹ The conflict between Job and God still remains, and this makes room for the second divine speech.

III. The Second YHWH's Speech (Job 40:6—41:34)

A. Allusion Analysis

לִיָּתָן and עֹר (40:25 [ET 41:1])

The term לִיָּתָן, "Leviathan," in the second divine speech at 41:1 [ET 40:25] recalls Job's earlier mention of the same mythic monster in 3:8. In this speech, YHWH introduces two creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan, into the picture. There is some dispute over whether they are realistic animals or mythological beings. For those who regard them as natural creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan are often identified as the hippopotamus and the crocodile respectively.⁸⁰ Others have interpreted Behemoth and Leviathan as the primordial monsters, with which the deity does battle in the course of creation.⁸¹ Indeed, apart from Job 40:25 [ET 41:1], the term "Leviathan" appears in the Hebrew Bible as the name of a mythological creature in Job 3:8; Ps 74:14 and Isa 27:1.⁸² Yet others have taken a "middle" approach and have suggested that it is unnecessary to

⁷⁸ Gruber, *Nonverbal Communication*, 1:289–90 n.1. So Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1139.

⁷⁹ Janzen, *Job*, 243; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 352–53; Dailey, "Divine Disputation," 115.

⁸⁰ Dhorme, *Job*, 618–25; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 569–72; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1183–86. See, Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1185–86 for other minority views.

⁸¹ Pope, *Job*, 329–32; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 218–32; Mettinger, "The God of Job," 45–47; *idem*, "The Enigma of Job," 11–14; Patton, "Beauty," 142–67; Schifferdecker, "Out of the Whirlwind," 87–95.

⁸² The same sea monster, called "Lotan," another name for "Leviathan," also appears in Ugaritic mythology (*KTU* 1.5.1.1 and 1.3.III.4–42).

make such a distinction.⁸³ As Newsom puts it, Behemoth and Leviathan “are liminal creatures, betwixt and between the categories of ordinary animal and mythic being.”⁸⁴

The more important question to ask is the purpose of YHWH’s introduction of these two creatures in his speech, though the answer may also be dependent on whether they are realistic or mythological. Those in favour of the “realistic” interpretation usually see in Behemoth and Leviathan two massive creatures, which are not useful to humans.⁸⁵

The purpose of introducing these creatures is to celebrate the diversity of God’s creation⁸⁶ and/or to refute the assumption that humanity is the measure of all things.⁸⁷

The theme of the second divine speech is thus a continuation of that of the first. Those in favour of the “mythological” interpretation or the “middle” approach, on the other hand, usually see an advance in thought from the chs. 38–39. YHWH has not only created the wonders of nature but chaotic creatures which he alone is able to subdue.⁸⁸ Taken as such, Behemoth and Leviathan are symbolizations of “chaos” or “evil forces.”⁸⁹

Since the term “Leviathan” also appears in 3:8, it is almost impossible to ignore the connection between the two texts. The use of the verb עור, “to rouse” in 41:2 [ET 10] further strengthens the allusion.⁹⁰ In his opening outcry, Job urges those who can rouse

⁸³ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 521; Newsom, “Job,” 615; Balentine, *Job*, 683.

⁸⁴ Newsom, “Job,” 615. So Balentine, *Job*, 683.

⁸⁵ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 467; Clines, *The Book of Job*, 1184.

⁸⁶ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 467; Clines, *The Book of Job*, 1184.

⁸⁷ Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 467.

⁸⁸ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 221–32; Mettinger, “The God of Job,” 48–49; *idem*, “The Enigma of Job,” 13–14; Patton, “Beauty,” 155–59.

⁸⁹ Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 522 n.3) further notes, “Apocalyptic literature, concerned with the cosmic dimensions of conflict between good and evil, also employs the terms Behemoth and Leviathan to represent primordial cosmic forces in conflict with God (1 Enoch 60:7–9; 4 Ezra 6:49–52; 2 Bar. 29:4).”

⁹⁰ Illman (“Job’s Radicalism,” 54) also recognizes this connection.

(עוֹר) Leviathan to curse the day of his birth. This mythological monster⁹¹ symbolizes the chaotic force Job wants to bring forth in an imaginary past.⁹² In the present divine speech, YHWH recalls this monster from Job's malediction in 3:8 only to claim that he is able to cohabit with chaos.⁹³

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator introduces the second divine speech in the same manner as he does the first divine speech: "YHWH answered Job from a tempest" (40:6). God opens with a repetition of the same challenge statement of 38:3 to Job, "Gird up your loins like a man. I ask you, and you tell me" (40:7). In a series of rhetorical questions, YHWH rebukes Job for accusing him so as to justify himself (40:8), and mocks Job for his lack of power like God (40:9).⁹⁴ As YHWH continues, he challenges Job to show his ability to bring down the proud with his anger (40:10–13). If Job can demonstrate that he is able to do so, then YHWH will recognize Job's ability to win the legal dispute (40:14).⁹⁵

⁹¹ Interestingly, even Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 34–35) and Clines (*Job 1–20*, 86–87), both of whom espouse a "realistic" interpretation of Leviathan in the divine speeches, regard the same term as a reference to a mythological monster in 3:8.

⁹² As Habel (*The Book of Job*, 108) puts it, "Here, as in the Baal myth of Ugarit, Yam and Leviathan are companion deities identified with the forces of chaos. Leviathan is the violent sea monster with whom Baal does battle (cf. Isa. 27:1) and who represents the forces of chaos overcome by Yahweh in a primordial battle (Pss. 74:13–14; 89:10–11)."

⁹³ As Newsom (*Moral Imaginations*, 249) rightly notes, "there is little or no reference to enmity or hostility between God and these creatures [Behemoth and Leviathan]."

⁹⁴ For a more positive interpretation of YHWH's words to Job in 40:8–9, see Balentine, *Job*, 680.

⁹⁵ For Brenner ("God's Answer to Job," 133), YHWH's taunt to Job for overcoming evil with his own ability in 40:10–14 serves as an indirect divine admittance of God's failure. She states, "God is in fact conceding that he cannot dispose of the wicked and of evil, at least no more than Job can." Similarly, LaCocque ("Deconstruction," 83–97) argues that the divine speeches reveal that there are flaws in the created universe. This line of reasoning, nevertheless, has not attracted many followers.

In the rest of the speech, YHWH introduces two creatures—Behemoth and Leviathan—to Job (40:15—41:26 [ET 34]). The name “Behemoth” does not appear elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible. Lexically, the word is the “intensive plural”⁹⁶ of the ordinary term for “animal” or “cattle,” meaning “the supreme beast.” YHWH describes in details its status of being created like Job (40:15a), its herbivorous nature (40:15b), its strength (40:16), its body frame (40:17–18), its superiority over other beasts (40:19–20), its habitat (40:21–22), and its imperturbability (40:23). In concluding this section with a series of rhetorical questions, YHWH underscores the difficulty of capturing Behemoth or piercing his nose (וְהִנֵּה; 40:24).⁹⁷ According to the flow of the argument, the concluding rhetorical questions certainly serve as a challenge to Job.⁹⁸ YHWH’s taunt can thus be paraphrased as: “If you do not have the ability to capture Behemoth, do you think you have the ability to dispute with God?”

After giving a presentation on Behemoth, YHWH provides an even lengthier description of another creature, Leviathan, in 40:25—41:26 [ET 41:1–34]. The passage on Leviathan deals with the lack of ability of Job and others in capturing it (40:25—41:3 [ET 41:1–11]), a description of its physical character (41:4–16 [ET 12–24]), and a description of its movement out to deeper water with emphasis on its defiance of attack (41:17–24 [ET 25–32]). The section ends with a concluding summary about Leviathan as king over all the proud (41:25–26 [ET 33–34]).

⁹⁶ *IBHS* §7.4.3a.

⁹⁷ Reading 40:24 as rhetorical questions without the interrogative particle. So Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1156 n.24.b. Alternatively, the phrase מִי־הוּא, “who indeed?” may be understood as fallen out following the similar פִּיהוּ, “its mouth,” in v. 23 (Dhorme, *Job*, 624–25; Pope, *Job*, 327; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 480).

⁹⁸ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 559) claims that this is “one aspect of the message.” Similarly, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 526.

Similar to the section on Behemoth, YHWH's rhetorical questions directed to Job in 40:25—41:3 [ET 41:1–11] indicates that one level of meaning of this section is a challenge to the ability of Job.⁹⁹ The confrontation comes to a climax when YHWH compares Job's incapability to subdue Leviathan to Job's daring to stand before God in 41:2b–3 [ET 10b–11].¹⁰⁰ Nevertheless, as Habel rightly notes, "The figure of Leviathan has obvious mythological associations in Canaan and Israel. It is difficult to imagine that an Israelite audience would have heard the name Leviathan without making these associations."¹⁰¹ Moreover, as the above section reveals, the allusion of this passage to Job 3:8 further suggests that Leviathan is a symbolization of chaos. Surprisingly, YHWH does not display any hostility against Leviathan or Behemoth.¹⁰² As Newsom puts it, "God describes them with evident admiration."¹⁰³ YHWH's praise of the beauty of this sea

⁹⁹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 560; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 531–32; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 367; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 228–29.

¹⁰⁰ Without emendation the text of 41:2b–3 [ET 10b–11] makes perfect sense: "Who is he who can stand before me? Whoever confronted me, I repaid (וְאָשַׁלְתִּי). Everything under the heavens is mine." Habel (*The Book of Job*, 551, 570–71) gives a similar reading though he gives a moral connotation to the verb אָשַׁלְתִּי, which he translates as "I requite." The reading of Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 527, 532) is also very close, but he translates 41:3a [ET 11a] as "Who could confront me that I must repay." Yet some have changed the first-person reference in 41:2b–3 [ET 10b–11] to third-person speech and understood the verses as God's describing the inability of anyone to confront Leviathan. So Dhorme, *Job*, 630–32; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 483; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1146. Less probable is the reading that takes 41:3 [ET 11] as Leviathan's reply to God (Rowold, "Leviathan and Job," 104–9; Newsom, "Job," 623).

¹⁰¹ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 560.

¹⁰² The only possible obstacle to this understanding is Job 40:19b, which reads הָעֵשׂוּ יָגֵשׁ בְּחֶרֶב. The clause may be translated, "yet his maker can approach it with his sword." Because of the oddity of this reading in the context, many slightly emend to הָעֵשׂוּ נִגְשׁ חֶבְרִי ("made to be a tyrant of his companions"). So Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:356; Dhorme, *Job*, 621; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 522. Even if one retains the MT, the clause only underscores God's capability to subdue Behemoth and needs not to be interpreted as God's showing hostility against Behemoth. So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 567.

¹⁰³ Newsom, *Moral Imaginations*, 249.

monster thus implies that God not only controls chaos¹⁰⁴ but also takes delight in the beauty of these chaotic forces in the created order.¹⁰⁵ This is the second level of meaning.

Since the major tension in the narrative revolves around Job's protest, it is not out of place for the authorial audience to expect that the author would speak further on this topic. Interestingly, there are words and motifs in the second divine speech that appear to relate to this leading theme. Both Eliphaz and Bildad have raised the issue of Job's anger, which gives rise to his provocative speeches (5:2; 18:4). In YHWH's challenge to Job in his second address, the anger (אָפּ) of Job is also the centre of attention (40:8, 11). Interestingly the closing line of the Behemoth passage (40:24) also contains the term אָפּ ("nose, anger"). As Gammie points out, "In view of the prominence given to 'āp ("[human] anger") in the introduction to the second discourse (Job 40:8, 11) it would be gratuitous to see no connection between it and the 'āp in the Behemoth pericope where 'āp is given considerable poetic stress."¹⁰⁶

According to Gammie, Behemoth is a "didactic image" put forth to instruct and console Job.¹⁰⁷ The bombastic style of YHWH's opening challenge (40:6–14), however,

¹⁰⁴ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 559–66; Gibson, "On Evil," 399–419; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 228; Mettinger, "The God of Job," 48–49.

¹⁰⁵ As Nel ("Cosmos and Chaos," 222) puts it, "One is obliged to conclude from the representation of the *behemoth* and the *leviathan* that the primary concern is not a battle directed by God against them. It might be inferred that God has control over them by the way they are rhetorically presented as creatures beyond human subjection. But, more strikingly, they are described in a positive sense as being part of the creation of God and supreme in their power in comparison with the abilities of humankind. God's order does not exclude these powers of chaos, but they are part of his design." (*italics his*). See also Schmidt and Nel, "Rhetoric," 79–95. Similarly, Patton ("Beauty," 159) states, "The care with which the author depicts Leviathan denotes that the reader is supposed to pause and appreciate these creatures as an act of God's creative activity. The beasts are presented as beautiful examples of God's creation. Job is not just supposed to see a mythic creature, but, even more, he is supposed to appreciate it as the handiwork of God. In this sense, then, one can argue that the text presents these monsters as examples of God's beauty in creation."

¹⁰⁶ Gammie, "Behemoth and Leviathan," 219. Similarly, Habel, *The Book of Job*, 568.

¹⁰⁷ Gammie, "Behemoth and Leviathan," 221–22. Similarly, Balentine (*Job*, 686) states, "God commends Behemoth to Job as a model for what it means to be a creature worthy of the Creator's pride and praise."

makes this line of interpretation less persuasive. I propose to take the connection between Job on the one hand and Behemoth and Leviathan on the other as the author's use of irony at the expense of the character God. The author puts into the mouth of God words that may be used to justify Job's complaints. Thus understood, the closing rhetorical questions of the Behemoth passage in 40:24 can be re-read as "Who *shall* capture it by its eye?"¹⁰⁸ Who *shall* pierce its anger with hooks?" The implied answer is "no one." These words seem to justify Job's anger, and by extension his provocative speeches.

Moreover, the description of Leviathan underscores the tongue of this creature as well as what comes forth from his mouth.¹⁰⁹ Terms that elicit the "speech" motif are plenty. They include "its tongue" (לשנו; 40:25 [ET 41:1]), "its jaw" (לחיו; 40:26 [ET 41:2]), "to make many supplications" (תחנון + רבה; 40:27a [ET 41:3a]), "to speak" (דבר; 40:27b [ET 41:3b]), "soft words" (רכות; 40:27b [ET 41:3b]), and "its mouth" (פיו; 41:11, 13 [ET 19, 21]). As some have noted, the text of 41:4 [ET 12] is subject to different translations and interpretations. From the material that immediately follows, the verse introduces YHWH's praise of the body and Leviathan and thus can be translated: "I will not keep silence about its limbs, as regards the strength and grace of its structure."¹¹⁰ Once the verse's connection with the "speech" motif is established, it can now be re-read as YHWH's affirmation that he will not silence the boastings of Leviathan (Job): "I will

¹⁰⁸ For discussion on the interpretive options regarding פיהו, "with/by its eyes," see Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1157 n.24.c.

¹⁰⁹ Gammie, "Behemoth and Leviathan," 223, 225; Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 106.

¹¹⁰ The MT reads לא אחריש בדיו ודבר גבורות וחין ערכו. Dhorme (*Job*, 623–33) considers the above rendering as a possible reading of the verse without emendation.

not keep silence about its babblings, his mighty word and his persuasive case.”¹¹¹ Thus understood, the reading implies that the author endorses the deviant religious language of Job through the mouth of YHWH.

IV. Job’s Second Response to YHWH (Job 42:1–6)

A. Attributed Citation(?) Analysis

Job’s words in 42:3a and 42:4 are always universally regarded as his citations of YHWH’s former words.¹¹² According to this understanding, 42:3a is a semi-quotation from 38:2 and 42:4b from 38:3b (or 40:7b). However, no obvious marker for an attributed quotation can be found in either case. Since attributed quotations are always marked elsewhere in the book, it is preferable to read these verses rather as allusions or echoes.¹¹³ Since taking these two verses in question as Job’s own words is almost considered as reading against the grain in Joban studies, I will discuss them in this section even though I do not think that either of them are qualified to be called a citation.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Newsom, “Job,” 623. Some others such as Rowold (“Leviathan and Job,” 104–9), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 555), Gibson (“Job 41.1–4,” 129–39), and Mettinger (“The God of Job,” 39–49) offer a similar translation but all of them take the verse as an unmarked rhetorical question.

¹¹² See Ho, “Unmarked Attributed Quotations,” 707 for a list of modern commentators adopting such a reading.

¹¹³ See Chapter 2 of this dissertation for the definition of “echoes.”

¹¹⁴ The following is adapted from my recent article, “Unmarked Attributed Quotation,” 712–14.

1. “Who is this ...” (42:3a)

Although Job’s words in 42:3a and YHWH’s words in 38:2 look similar, a close comparison of 38:2 and 42:3a shows that there are at least two major points of deviation. First, the term *מחשיך*, “to darken,” is used in 38:2, whereas the term *מעלים*, “to conceal, to hide,” is used in 42:3a. Second, the term *במלין*, “with words,” only appears in 38:2 but not in 42:3a. Although the verb *חשך* may sometimes mean “to hide or conceal,”¹¹⁵ it appears elsewhere in Job with the connotation of “darkening” (3:9; 18:6). Thus Job 38:2 may legitimately be translated, “Who is this that darkens the scheme with words without knowledge?”¹¹⁶

In his final response, Job shrewdly chooses the verb *מעלים*, which falls within the same semantic domain of the word *מחשיך*, and hurls the question at YHWH, “Who is this that hides scheme(s) without knowledge?” In addition to 38:2 and 42:3, the noun *עצה* appears seven more times in Job (5:13; 10:3; 12:13; 18:7; 21:16; 22:18; 29:21) and always carries a negative connotation, with the exception of 29:21, in which Job refers to his own wise counsel.¹¹⁷ The schemes that Job refers to in 42:3a may belong to the wicked. In his earlier speeches, Job complains to God that God is oppressing and despising him while favouring the scheme (*עצה*) of the wicked (10:3). Job also declares that he knows the thoughts of his friends and their schemes (*מזמות*) to harm him (21:27). On the other hand, the schemes may belong to YHWH himself, as suggested in 42:2, in which Job says, “I/You know that you can do everything. No scheme (*מזמה*) of yours can

¹¹⁵ BDB cites Ps 139:12 as a support for the nuance “to hide, conceal” (365), but the meaning of “darkness” fits the context well.

¹¹⁶ For the interpretation of 38:2, see I.A.2 in this chapter.

¹¹⁷ Although Job speaks of the *עצה* of God in 12:13, his intent is to undermine rather than praise this quality. See VI.A.4 in Chapter 4.

be thwarted.”¹¹⁸ As indicated earlier in his speech, Job realizes there are schemes God hides (צִפֵּן) in his heart (10:13). These include nurturing Job in order to find fault in him. Even though Job is innocent, God will still harass him with this might (vv. 6-17). Taking the question in 42:3a as Job’s own, Job is thus challenging God in his very last speech. The implied answer is obviously God himself. The word בַּמַּלִּין is deliberately not taken up by Job here. After all, it was God’s silence, not his eloquence, which was the means through which he concealed the schemes.

If Job 42:3a is taken as an unmarked attributed quotation, the half verse that follows inevitably has to be understood to be Job’s humble submission of having spoken ignorantly earlier. If so, the beginning conjunction לָכֵן will have to take on an unusual sense such as “indeed” or “truly.” In addition to 42:3, this conjunction occurs five more times in the rest of the book (20:2; 32:10; 34:10, 25; 37:24), and it functions to introduce either the real consequence or a logical inference of what precedes in every instance.¹¹⁹ The context of each occurrence thus allows the usual sense of the conjunction “therefore” to be conveyed. Taking Job 42:3a as Job’s own question, the usual sense of לָכֵן can be preserved without difficulty, and v. 3b can be translated as “Therefore, I spoke up, as I did not understand, wondrous things far from me, as I did not know.”

¹¹⁸ Either the *kethib* or the *qere* fits the context, and therefore I do not intend to argue for or against any one reading. See below.

¹¹⁹ The usage of the conjunction is straightforward in each occurrence except in Job 20:2 and 34:25. For Job 20:2, the verse opens Bildad’s second speech, and so nothing immediately precedes the conjunction. This idiomatic usage of לָכֵן is nevertheless appropriate “in conversation, in reply to an objection, to state the ground upon which the answer is made” (BDB, 487). In the case of Job 34:25, the verse belongs to part of the arguments presented by Elihu in his second speech. Nothing precedes the conjunction to which it can be reasonably attached. The conjunction לָכֵן here functions to introduce a logical inference from the immediately preceding context.

Most commentators interpret Job 42:3b as Job's confession of speaking out of ignorance.¹²⁰ They commonly translate *וְלֹא אָדַע* and *וְלֹא אָבִין* as circumstantial clauses describing Job's state of mind when he previously spoke, relative clauses referring to the "things" of which Job has spoken, or a combination of both. In any case, the use of *waw* in these parallel verbal clauses of negation appears to be unusual and non-intuitive. It seems fair to say that how one construes the syntactical relationship between the term *הַגְדָּתִי* and these two clauses depends almost exclusively on how one understands the purpose of the statement as a whole. Thomas F. Dailey rightly notes that "explicit reference to the «things» which Job has said is actually an interpolation on the part of the translator."¹²¹ Without both a direct and an indirect object, the verb *נָגַד* in the *hip'il* may be understood to mean "to speak up" or even "to testify." Moreover, the *waw* in each of *וְלֹא אָדַע* and *וְלֹא אָבִין* can reasonably be taken as a disjunctive-*waw* indicating causality.¹²² Unlike most translators, I do not take the phrase *נִפְלְאוֹת מִמֶּנִּי* as the accusative of the term *הַגְדָּתִי*, but that of *וְלֹא אָדַע* and *וְלֹא אָבִין* only. This understanding is consistent with the tonality of Job's earlier utterance in the dialogue, for the term *נִפְלְאוֹת* comes from the root *פָּלַא*, which always has a negative connotation when coming from the mouth of Job (9:10; 10:16). Putting everything in context, Job spoke up, for he did not know or understand the schemes hidden by YHWH, which were too wondrous for Job.

¹²⁰ See, e.g., Gordis, *The Book of Job*; Habel, *The Book of Job*; Hartley, *The Book of Job*; Jansen, *Job*; Wolfers, *Deep Things*.

¹²¹ Dailey, "Wondrously Far from Me," 263.

¹²² *IBHS* cites Gen 24:56 and Exod 23:9 as examples. See also GKC §158a; Joüon §170a. I deliberately translate both instances of the disjunctive-*waw* with the word "as" in English in order to retain the parallelism of the Hebrew text.

2. “Listen and I will speak” (42:4a)

Taking Job 42:4 as an unmarked attributed citation is also both unnecessary and problematic. Since allusion is a predominant mode of argumentation in the book of Job, the phenomenon of identical phrases cannot function as evidence of the presence of a citation. Moreover, the existence of 42:4a (שמע נא ואנכי אדבר), when taken as a citation, poses another problem, as this sentence never appears anywhere in YHWH’s former speeches. Most critics do not even try to explain 42:4a, while accepting both 42:3a and 42:4 as quotations.¹²³ On the contrary, the statements, when taken as Job’s own utterance, make good sense and can thus be translated as “Hear, and I will speak. I ask you, and you teach me.”¹²⁴

B. Impact on the Reading

After the narrator’s brief introduction (42:1), Job offers his final response to YHWH (42:2–6). The textual ambiguity of v. 2 gives way to multiple interpretations. Regarding the leading term, the *kethiv* is יָדַעְתָּ “you know” and the *qere* is יִדְעָתִי “I know.” If one takes the *kethiv* reading, the tonality of the statement can indeed be outrageous (“Why are you hassling me like this? You know that you can do anything you

¹²³ For those who attempt to explain the presence of Job 42:4a, they have to argue from a semantic viewpoint, but their arguments are usually unconvincing. For example, van Wolde (“Reversal,” 232–33) argues that the reader is invited to switch one’s focus from Job’s eyes in v. 3b to God’s eyes in v. 4. Therefore, “verse 4a is an introduction to this quotation and is essential in this situation since it exactly marks the syntactic reversal brought about by the switch in point of view.” Similarly, Newsom (“Job,” 628) argues that 42:4a is “a poetic expansion of 42:4b.” Neither of them, however, substantiates her claim by showing similar “introduction” or “expansion” elsewhere in Job or the Hebrew Bible when an attributed citation is meant without distorting the intent of the original speaker.

¹²⁴ Instead of translating אֲשַׁלַּךְ as “I will ask you,” as most translations and commentaries do, I translate the imperfect as “I ask you.” This usage of שָׁלַךְ is common in conversations (e.g., Gen 32:30; 1 Sam 28:16).

want.”).¹²⁵ On the other hand, if one adopts the *qere* reading, which is espoused by most scholars,¹²⁶ the statement may constitute Job’s affirmation of YHWH’s greatness. Nevertheless, the term ידעתי has previously appeared a number of times in Job’s speeches. Whenever Job says he knows something related to God, his statement is always expressed in a protesting attitude (9:2, 28; 10:13; 30:23). Therefore when Job affirms that he knows YHWH can do all things and that no scheme (מְזִמָּה) of his can be thwarted (יִכָּצֵר), he may be in fact complaining rather than praising God.¹²⁷ Of course, it can also be argued that Job’s attitude has changed sharply even though he uses similar language here.¹²⁸

As discussed in the Attributed Citation(?) Analysis section, Job’s words in v. 3a and v. 4 are almost universally regarded as his citations of YHWH’s former words. Taken as such, v. 3b is conventionally understood as Job’s humble confession of having spoken inappropriately. On the contrary, if both v. 3a and v. 4 represent Job’s own sentiment, his tone is still in the protesting mode. Most have argued that v. 5 represents a contrast between Job’s previous and present knowledge. I echo Good that the argument of Job’s “speaking of his past experience of hearing at secondhand” or by hearsay is

¹²⁵ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 370.

¹²⁶ One of the rare exceptions is van Wolde (“Reversal,” 228–29), who understands this as a deliberate way to preserve both readings. At any rate, the two readings do not necessarily contradict one another.

¹²⁷ For example, Westermann (*Structure*, 125–29) understands the structure of 42:1–6 as a declaration of praise.

¹²⁸ Fishbane, observes that the masculine verb יִכָּצֵר, “to be thwarted” is applied to a feminine noun מְזִמָּה, “scheme” in 42:2 (“Inner-Biblical Discourse,” 90–91). He argues that the verb is a frozen form, being borrowed from the Tower of Babel story in Gen 11:6 and is carried over to Job 42:2. In Gen 11:6 the two terms are used to convey divine judgment. However, according to Fishbane, Job in 42:2b is praising God for his ultimate power by transforming “the echo of God’s ancient judgment ... into a humble confession” (91). Greenstein (“Job’s Face/Facing Job,” 312), on the contrary, contends that Job’s statement can be understood as “a parody of what God himself had said in Gen. 11:6b concerning the builders of Babel.”

unconvincing.¹²⁹ Both verbs are in the perfect in Hebrew and can be translated as past or present tense in English depending on the context. Moreover, the *waw* can be a usual conjunction or a contrast between seeing and hearing.¹³⁰ I intend to take the first phrase to mean “Hearing by the ear, I have heard you.” I also understand the עתה “now” as an emphasis on the consequence of seeing YHWH. Job has heard YHWH in his speeches and now he wants to highlight the embedded danger when a person meets with YHWH. In the Hebrew Bible any personal encounter with God brings certain risk, even to the point of death (Exod 33:20; Judg 13:22). And so 42:5b can be translated as “And now my eye has seen you.” In fact, from his speeches earlier (13:15, 19; 19:25; 23:15–17), Job is aware of the fact that he will die when he contends with God. And “now” he really sees him.¹³¹ However, in association with meeting God face-to-face, Job believes that God is going to put his life to an end.

Finally, we come to the most intriguing verse, in which almost every word raises questions. The Hebrew text of 42:6 reads, על כן אמאס ונחמתי על עפר ואפר. As Tilley puts it, “at crucial points, the text of the book is so indeterminate that the ‘text’ of Job is, to a significant extent, made, not found.”¹³² The verb אמאס can derive from the root מאס I (“to reject”) or the root מאס II, a byform of מסס (“to flow, to melt”).¹³³ If one assumes the first meaning, one needs to supply the object of “rejection,” for this verb is normally

¹²⁹ Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 373.

¹³⁰ See Clines (*Job 38–42*, 1216–17) for a thorough discussion on the problem of understanding the two halves of the verse as contrastive.

¹³¹ Contra Savran (“Seeing is Believing,” 320–61), who argues that Job’s words in 42:5 are meant to depict an appreciation of the divine that he did not possess prior to the theophanic encounter.

¹³² Tilley, “Silencing,” 258.

¹³³ *DCH* 5:121.

transitive in the *qal* form.¹³⁴ According to the counting of Morrow, “With four exceptions (Job 7:16; 34:33; 36:5; 42:6), the object is always indicated (sixty-six times).”¹³⁵ The question now is which object belongs to אָמַס. For some, the verb is used reflexively so that “myself” is the implicit object;¹³⁶ for others, the object of the verb is clear from the context and is Job’s former utterances;¹³⁷ for Habel, the implicit object is Job’s case against God which Job “retracts” based on the broader context;¹³⁸ for Patrick and others who follow his reading, עָפַר וְאָפַר in 6b, which grammatically belongs to וְנָחַמְתִּי, is also the object of אָמַס;¹³⁹ for Morrow, almost all terms in 42:6 are intentionally ambiguous, which of course includes אָמַס.¹⁴⁰ One option he offers is to take the implicit object as the implied “rumor” in the preceding verse.¹⁴¹ If אָמַס in this verse means “I reject,” I would take “my life” as the implied object.¹⁴² Job has used the same verb to explicitly declare that “he loathed his life (אָמַס חַיִּי, “I loathed my life”) in 9:21 and another verb קוּט , “to loathe,” to express a similar idea in 10:1 (נִקְטָה נַפְשִׁי בַחַיִּי, “I loathe my life”).

¹³⁴ Morrow, “Consolation,” 214; Krüger, “Did Job Repent,” 218; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1207 n.6.b. Based on the four occurrences in Job (7:16; 34:33; 36:5; 42:6) of אָמַס without a direct object, Curtis (“Job’s Response to Yahweh,” 497–511) proposes another meaning, “to feel loathing contempt,” for the verb אָמַס when used intransitively. Similarly, Greenstein (“In Job’s Face,” 311) and Fox (“Job the Pious,” 365) take אָמַס in 42:6 to mean “to be fed up.”

¹³⁵ Morrow, “Consolation,” 214.

¹³⁶ See, e.g., NRSV; NIV. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 492) also considers this as a viable option.

¹³⁷ See, e.g., Kuyper, “The Repentance of Job,” 94; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 534–36; Pope, *Job*, 290; Whybray, *Job*, 171. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 492) also considers this as a viable option.

¹³⁸ Habel, *The Book of Job*, 576.

¹³⁹ Patrick, “Translation,” 369; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 376.

¹⁴⁰ Morrow, “Consolation,” 211–25.

¹⁴¹ Morrow, “Consolation,” 220.

¹⁴² Clines (*Job 38–42*, 1207 n.6.b) also considers this as one of the options. He even notes, “One MT ms (Kenn 601) actually reads אָמַס חַיִּי.”

Moreover, it is possible to argue that Job has also used the same verb **אָמַס** without an explicit object to say the same thing in 7:16.¹⁴³

Alternatively, if one assumes **אָמַס** in 42:6 derives from **מָאס** II, Job can mean that “he melts away.” The implication of this understanding may be that Job either abases himself¹⁴⁴ or submit.¹⁴⁵ Another possibility is “to understand the verb in the sense of ‘become weak’ or ‘waste away.’”¹⁴⁶ If **אָמַס** in this verse means “I waste away,” I echo Thomas Krüger and read Job’s expression as his anticipation for death after encountering with the deity.¹⁴⁷ This interpretation does not differ much from taking **אָמַס** as deriving from **מָאס** I as I have suggested above.

The next term in 42:6 that we need to consider is **נָחַמְתִּי**, the *nipʿal* pf. of **נָחַם**, which can mean “to repent, to be sorry” or “to be comforted.”¹⁴⁸ The assumption that Job has undergone certain changes after the theophanic encounter has led many to adopt the first meaning for **נָחַמְתִּי** in this verse.¹⁴⁹ According to the counting of Curtis, out of the 48 times that the *nipʿal* of the root **נָחַם** occurs in the Hebrew Bible, in “34 of these cases the

¹⁴³ The implied object is perhaps the noun in the preceding verse, namely, his bones, which serve as synecdoche for the entire person (Clines, *Job 1–20*, 165–66 n.16.a). Similarly, Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:72; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 153.

¹⁴⁴ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 535 n.4.

¹⁴⁵ Morrow (“Consolation,” 215) argues that “‘melting’ likely serves as a metaphor for capitulation or retreat.” Similarly, Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1218–20.

¹⁴⁶ Krüger, “Did Job Repent,” 225. So O’Connor, “Job’s Final Word,” 193–94.

¹⁴⁷ Krüger, “Did Job Repent,” 222, 225.

¹⁴⁸ *HALOT* 2:688; *DCH* 5:663.

¹⁴⁹ Most translate the verb as “repent.” So Dhorme, *Job*, 646; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 491; Pope, *Job*, 288; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 575; Patrick, “Translation,” 280; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 171; Dailey, “And Yet He Repents,” 208. Janzen (*Job*, 251) translates it as “change my mind,” while Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 535) translates it as “recant.”

subject (expressed or implied) is God.”¹⁵⁰ As for the remaining 14 occurrences, some human agency or personified object is the subject of the verb.¹⁵¹ The meaning “to be comforted” appears in over half of these cases.¹⁵² This at least indicates that the nuance of “to repent” or the sort is not the most intuitive meaning of the root נחם in 42:6.¹⁵³ A closer look at the usage of the root נחם in the book of Job reveals that it is always in the *pi’el* and has the connotation of “to comfort, to console” (2:11; 7:13; 16:2; 21:34; 29:25; 42:11). This understanding is also consistent with the rest of the book in which the “consolation” motif constitutes “one thematic thread.”¹⁵⁴

Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, when a verbal form of the root נחם means “comfort” and is followed by the preposition על, this preposition indicates for what a person is comforted or comforts another person (2 Sam 13:39; Jer 16:17; 31:15; Ezek 14:22; 32:31; 1 Chr 19:2).¹⁵⁵ This usage is further reinforced when one compares 42:6 to 42:11, in which the same idiom (נחם + על) is used in the description that all relatives and former friends of Job come to *comfort* him *over* all the evil that YHWH had brought on him.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁰ Curtis, “Job’s Response,” 499.

¹⁵¹ Curtis, “Job’s Response,” 499–500.

¹⁵² Curtis, “Job’s Response,” 500.

¹⁵³ Some interpreters do understand נחם in Job 42:6 not as “repent” but “be comforted.” So O’Connor, “Job’s Final Word,” 181–97; Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 232; Janzen, “Lust for Life,” 160; Krüger, “Did Job Repent,” 217–29; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1220–21.

¹⁵⁴ Krüger, “Did Job Repent,” 223. So Westermann, *Structure*, 8–12; O’Connor, “Job’s Final Word,” 190–91.

¹⁵⁵ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1221–22. Similarly, Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.2.

¹⁵⁶ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.2; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1221–22.

Finally, we come to the phrase עפר ואפר. There is little dispute over the primary meanings of עפר and אפר.¹⁵⁷ The term עפר, “dust,” usually denotes the matter from which human beings are formed (Gen 2:7; 3:19). “In Job עפר may mean ‘dust’ sprinkled upon the head in a lament ritual (Job 2:12), ‘mortality/death/the grave’ (Job 4:19; 7:5, 21; 10:9), the ‘earth’ (Job 8:19; 30:6), or ‘soil’ (Job 22:24; 39:14).”¹⁵⁸ The term אפר, “ashes,” means the by-product of burning. When an animal or human being is consumed by fire, the remains are described as אפר (Num 19:9–10; Ezek 28:18; Mal 4:3). In Job “אפר may mean ‘ash-heap’ (Job 2:8) or indicate ‘worthlessness’ (Job 13:12).”¹⁵⁹

The word pair עפר ואפר appears two other times in the Hebrew Bible (Gen 18:27 and Job 30:19) in addition to Job 42:6.¹⁶⁰ In Gen 18:27 Abraham admits to YHWH that he is “dust and ashes.” The context suggests that he is referring to his “worthlessness”¹⁶¹ or “utter frailty before the divine.”¹⁶² In Job 30:19, the protagonist complains that God has thrown him into the clay so that he is showing himself like (*hitpa’el* of משל) “dust and ashes.” Although “dust and ashes” may still signify “worthlessness” here, the word pair refers to how others, including God, might perceive him in light of the hostile divine treatment of him. This passage is particularly relevant to our present discussion. If the

¹⁵⁷ Muenchow (“Dust and Dirt,” 597–611) argues that אפר is actually a by-form of עפר. His concern is to refute the argument that the term אפר in 42:6 along with 2:8 refers to Job’s seating “throughout his ordeal on the ash-strewn *mazbalah*, or rubbish heap, typically found near the entrance to Palestinian villages” (609; italics his). In the interest of this dissertation, his suggestion does not contribute to the argument.

¹⁵⁸ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.3.

¹⁵⁹ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.3.

¹⁶⁰ As Muenchow (“Dust and Dirt,” 609 n.51) notes, the two terms appear in synonymous poetic parallelism in Ezek 27:30 too.

¹⁶¹ Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.3.

¹⁶² Curtis, “Job’s Response,” 501.

word pair carries a similar sense in 42:6, it may denote Job's misery, especially in terms of God's severe affliction against him.¹⁶³ This expression also echoes Job's first response to YHWH, in which he claims that he is light (קלל; 40:4).¹⁶⁴ Job is light because he has been treated as if he were dust and ashes. Alternatively, if the word pair עפר ואפר is not a fixed idiom, the phrase may signify the ritual of "lamenting or mourning."¹⁶⁵ Either way, the expression עפר ואפר על נחמתי indicates that Job sees himself as eventually receiving consolation, albeit ironically, as he approaches death.¹⁶⁶ Job 42:6 can thus be translated as "Therefore I loathe [my life] *but* I am comforted over dust and ashes."

If one allows the preposition על to be interpreted apart from the verb נחם in 42:6, the preposition may be understood as functioning locatively.¹⁶⁷ Taken as such, the expression "dust and ashes" may symbolize the place of the dead, or even death.¹⁶⁸ Then Job 42:6 may be translated as "Therefore I will melt away and will be comforted upon dust and ashes."¹⁶⁹ Perhaps the vagueness of the verse should permit this double entendre.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶³ Krüger ("Did Job Repent," 224) also understands the word pair as a reference to Job's misery. Unfortunately, he does not indicate how he arrived at this interpretation.

¹⁶⁴ See II.B in this chapter.

¹⁶⁵ Patrick, "Translation," 370. So Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 237 n.3; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1021.

¹⁶⁶ Wolters ("Child," 116–19) proposes repointing the term על to על and translates the term as "a child of." His suggestion is not necessary for the MT as it stands makes good sense.

¹⁶⁷ *IBHS* §11.2.13b.

¹⁶⁸ Those who understand על as functioning locatively in 42:6 usually see "dust and ashes" as a reference to the ash-heap on which Job was sitting in 2:8. So Driver and Gray, *Job*, 1:373; Dhorme, *Job*, 647; Pope, *Job*, 349; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 492; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 537. I rather see the grave or the netherworld as Job's perceived location.

¹⁶⁹ Krüger ("Did Job Repent," 219) notes that this is a viable translation of the verse.

¹⁷⁰ Morrow ("Consolation," 211–25) is even able to construct three meanings out of the words in 42:6.

In his opening outburst (ch. 3) Job expresses his desire to go to the netherworld, in which he would find rest. Throughout his dialogue with the friends, he repeatedly asserts his desire to seek consolation, which his friends have offered him none (6:8–10; 7:13–14; 16:2; 21:2). Job also frequently ends his speech with a note on death (7:21; 10:18–22; 14:7–22; 17:11–16). After hearing YHWH's speeches and seeing him face-to-face, Job once again declares his desire to die. YHWH after all has fulfilled Job's expectation in appearing in a tempest. Now Job anticipates YHWH to end his life. As far as the instabilities in the narrative are concerned, the conflict between Job, God, and the three friends has not been resolved. The decisive factor now becomes YHWH's final verdict as presented in the next few words.

V. The Epilogue—Part I (Job 42:7–9)

A. Allusion Analysis

This short section is filled with dramatic irony. The ideas of the divine rebuke of the friends, Job's intercession, and YHWH's lifting of Job's face are anticipated by speakers in the earlier dialogue.

1. The divine rebuke (42:7)

YHWH tells Eliphaz that he is angry with him and his two friends (42:7b). The mention of the divine anger indicates that the following words serve as a rebuke. Job has earlier told the friends that when God examines them, he will rebuke them if they show partiality in secret (13:10). Although Job's words are more of a rhetorical move than a

prophetic prediction, the presence of the divine rebuke in YHWH's final verdict contributes a sense of dramatic irony to the reading experience of the narrative.¹⁷¹

2. Job's intercession (42:8–9)

YHWH instructs Eliphaz and his two companions to take seven bulls and seven rams and ask Job to pray for them (42:8). They do as instructed and YHWH shows favour to Job (42:9). Eliphaz has earlier exhorted Job to turn to God so that he will be restored (22:23). Moreover, according to Eliphaz, Job will be able to intercede for those who stumble and God will listen to his prayer (22:27–30). Ironically, this is exactly what is happening here and those who stumble are none other than Eliphaz and his two other companions.¹⁷²

3. פנה + נשא (42:8–9)

The idiom “to lift the face” (פנה + נשא) draws a connection between this speech and Zophar's first speech (ch. 11). YHWH tells the friends that only to Job whom he will “lift his face” or show favour (פנה + נשא; 42:8).¹⁷³ After the friends have followed what YHWH required them to do, YHWH does “lift the face” (פנה + נשא) of Job (42:9). Zophar has earlier assured Job that God will “lift the face” of him, free from blemish, if he turns to God (11:15a). Ironically, God's lifting of Job's face at the end brings benefits to the

¹⁷¹ Clines (*Job* 1–20, 309), Newsom (“Job,” 434), Wilson (“Preknowledge,” 252), and Balentine (*Job*, 210) also note the irony.

¹⁷² Newsom (“Job,” 503), Wilson (“Preknowledge,” 252), Balentine (*Job*, 351), and Clines (*Job* 21–37, 567) also note the irony.

¹⁷³ Reading the compound prep. כִּי אִם as meaning “only.” See *DCH* 4:389. So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 494.

friends instead of Job. This is another instance of dramatic irony that the author employs to poke fun at the friends.

B. Impact on the Reading

The narrator describes the resuming of the words of YHWH in a strange opening statement, “After YHWH has spoken these words to Job, he spoke to Eliphaz the Temanite” (42:7a). As Clines rightly notes, “It is as if the Yahweh of v 7 is ignoring what Job has said in his speech in vv 2–6.”¹⁷⁴ Perhaps this is what the narrator wants to direct the narratee to believe for the narrator feels the pointed nature of Job’s final response.

YHWH tells Eliphaz that he is angry with him and his two friends (42:7b). The mention of divine anger indicates that the following words serve as a rebuke. The Hebrew text of YHWH’s verdict is *כי לא דברתם אלי נכונה כעבדי איוב* (42:7c). There is dispute over the meaning of the prepositional phrase *אלי* as well as the term *נכונה*. The most common meaning of the preposition *אל* is “to.” “This is indeed its meaning used with the verb *דבר* in 2:13; 4:2; 5:8; 13:3; 42:7a; and 42:9.”¹⁷⁵ However, occasionally, it can convey the meaning of “concerning” (cf. 1 Sam 3:12; 1 Kgs 16:12).¹⁷⁶ As Ngwa notes, this word, “when used with words that depict verbal communication, sometimes carries the sense of ‘concerning’ or ‘with regards to’ (e.g., Gen 20:2; Is 23:11; 29:22;

¹⁷⁴ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1231.

¹⁷⁵ Ngwa, *Ending*, 12.

¹⁷⁶ Driver and Gray, *Job*, 2:348.

37:21, 33; Ezr 19:4; 1 Sam 4:19; 2 Sam 7:19; Ps 2:7; 69:27).”¹⁷⁷ In fact, לֵאל and עַל appear to be used interchangeably at times.¹⁷⁸

Some, however, have argued that the conventional sense of the preposition לֵאל, meaning “to” should be retained in 42:7c.¹⁷⁹ The contrast between the three friends and Job will thus be that Job spoke to God from time to time in his speeches while the friends never spoke directly to God in their speeches.¹⁸⁰ Although this interpretive move is clever and apparently avoids the contradiction between YHWH’s bombastic challenge to Job in the two divine speeches and his indirect commendation of Job in this verse, it fails to acknowledge that the bulk of Job’s speeches are best described as words about God rather than words to God. Moreover, this reading does not adequately address the central concern of the narrative. As Ngwa rightly argues, “To focus on the direct address to God alone is to miss an important aspect of the book, namely, the human struggle to articulate a theology in the midst of one’s own suffering or about the suffering of others.”¹⁸¹ At best, the sense “to me” can be part of the meaning of the prepositional phrase לֵאֲלִי in 42:7c, but it cannot be its only meaning.¹⁸²

¹⁷⁷ Ngwa, *Ending*, 12. A similar usage is also found in Jer 40:16 in which the verb דָּבַר is used in conjunction with the preposition לֵאל (Dhorme, Job, 648; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1227 n. 7.b).

¹⁷⁸ BDB, 41. Dhorme also notes that one has עַל פְּנֵיךְ (“to your face”) in Job 1:11 where one would expect to find לֵאל פְּנֵיךְ as in 2:5.

¹⁷⁹ Oeming, “Gottes Schlußwort,” 103–16; Moore, “Raw Prayer,” 35–48; van Hecke, “Conversation,” 115–24; Phillips, “Speaking Truthfully,” 39–40.

¹⁸⁰ Although Patrick (“Job’s Address to God”) does not comment on the interpretation of the prepositional phrase לֵאֲלִי in 42:7c, he notes, “An examination of chapters three through twenty-seven will demonstrate that Job’s three companions never address God. They speak a great deal about him, but he is not spoken to. Job, on the other hand, addresses 54 verses to God in the dialog and four verses in his concluding peroration” (269).

¹⁸¹ Ngwa, *Ending*, 104.

¹⁸² So Ngwa, *Ending*, 104. In concluding his essay, Moore (“Raw Prayer”) also suggests that “talking *about* God and talking *to* God come together so intimately that a single term (like לֵאֲלִי in the Hebrew!) could refer to them both at the same time!” (italics his).

Another term which elicits attention is נְכוֹנָה, which is the *nip'al* ptc. of כָּוַן. The root כָּוַן when used in the context of spoken words has to do with being truthful or right.¹⁸³ Deviating from the norm, Duck Woo Nam argues that נְכוֹנָה means “constructively” in 42:7c.¹⁸⁴ He claims that the term refers to the manner of Job’s speech and Job’s direct address to God is what marks his discourse as constructive.¹⁸⁵ Such a sense for נְכוֹנָה, however, can hardly be justified from the Hebrew.¹⁸⁶

At this point, the authorial audience is confronted with the contradiction between YHWH’s condemnation of Job’s words in the divine speeches on the one hand and YHWH’s indirect commendation of Job’s words here on the other. One option is to state that the words of Job God commends is a subset of all of Job’s speeches in dialogue with his friends. Janzen, for example, maintains that the words are limited to Job’s “expressions of hope” and “enactments of free self-binding” by oath.¹⁸⁷ For Clines, “what Yahweh can and does accept is [Job’s claim] that he does not govern the world according to the dictates of retributive justice.”¹⁸⁸ An interpretive approach such as that of Janzen or Clines is problematic for there is no evidence in the divine verdict to indicate such a fine distinction.

¹⁸³ Greenstein, review of *Talking about God*; Ngwa, *Ending*, 13; Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1227 n. 7.c.

¹⁸⁴ Nam, *Talking about God*, 81.

¹⁸⁵ Nam, *Talking about God*, 81.

¹⁸⁶ Greenstein, review of *Talking about God*. On the other hand, Pope (*Job*, 350) notes, “Some interpreters attempt to explain this difficulty by taking the word in the Hebrew to mean ‘sincerity,’ but the word nowhere has this sense.”

¹⁸⁷ Janzen, *Job*, 264.

¹⁸⁸ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1231.

Another option is to divert the attention to a certain aspect of Job's speeches.

Pope, for instance, places the emphasis on Job's integrity. He interprets 42:7 as signifying "that God values the integrity of the impatient protester and abhors pious hypocrites who would heap accusations on a tormented soul to uphold their theological position."¹⁸⁹ This line of interpretation of 42:7 is a reasonable one. However, if there is much to be commended in Job's speeches in dialogue with his friends, God's bombastic challenge to Job in the divine speeches seems to be out of place, an object of irony, which is contrary to the transformation view. Burton Z. Cooper, on the other hand, focuses on Job's questioning attitude as the key. He states,

Job acted correctly in raising the question of divine justice. In this view, Job's friends erred in allowing an ideology—only the guilty suffer—to override the experience of undeserved suffering. Job knows that his suffering is undeserved. What he does not know is how it is possible for undeserved suffering to exist. That question remains unanswered.¹⁹⁰

Cooper's solution seems to be another effort at harmonization. It is clear that Job has not only raised questions about divine justice but also accused God of injustice in his dialogue with his friends.

There are yet a handful of scholars who argue that the words of God in 42:7 refer to Job's response(s) to God near the end of the story. Fohrer believes that only Job's words in 40:4–5 and 42:2–6 may be judged correct, whereas Whybray maintains that God's declaration in 42:7 applies only to Job's retraction in 42:2–6.¹⁹¹ This way of resolving the tension in the book is not attractive since the contrast is made between Job

¹⁸⁹ Pope, *Job*, 350. Similarly, Phillips, "Speaking Truthfully," 42–43.

¹⁹⁰ Cooper, "Two Sufferers," 420. So Porter, "Message," 302.

¹⁹¹ Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 539; Whybray, *Job*, 172–73.

and his friends, whose three cycles of debate constitute the major portion of the book. It is thus more logical to suppose that these words should be considered in the first place. Moreover, Job's final response, according to the understanding of the transformation view, is not different enough from the respectful attitudes suggested earlier by Job's friends, who are being pronounced in the wrong.

Regarding the interpretation of 42:7–8, Wolfers insightfully states, “It is open to every interpreter to state his own opinion as to what it was that Job said which drew this remark from the Lord.”¹⁹² At the narrative level, the openness of YHWH's verdict allows each member of the authorial audience to supply the necessary information to fill the gap in order to bring a proper closure. At the rhetorical level, the author shrewdly affirms once again the rightness of the words of Job. Interestingly, the construction of the divine verdict in 42:7–8 is comparable to that of the Deuteronomist's evaluation of some of the kings of Judah in the book of Kings. Just as the conduct of the Judean kings are judged using David as the standard (1 Kgs 11:6, 33; 15:11; 2 Kgs 14:3; 16:2), the words of the three friends are judged using those of Job as the norm.

VI. The Epilogue—Part II (Job 42:10–17)

A. Allusion Analysis

The presence of dramatic irony is also obvious in this last section. The narrator's description of Job's latter blessedness and his death in old age is anticipated by Bildad and Eliphaz respectively in the dialogue.

¹⁹² Wolfers, *Deep Things*, 462.

1. Job's latter blessedness (42:12)

The narrator describes YHWH as having blessed the end (אחרית) of Job more than his beginning (ראשית; 42:12). The numbers of Job's sheep, camels, oxen and she-asses are exactly double of what he possessed in the prologue. Bildad has earlier assured Job that if he seeks and makes supplication to God, his end (אחרית) will be very great with compared with his beginning (ראשית; 8:5–7). Ironically, Bildad's prediction of Job's future blessedness comes true even though Job has not followed his counsel.¹⁹³

2. Job's death in old age (42:16–17)

The narrator further describes Job as living for 140 years after the incident and he is able to see his children and their children to the fourth generation (42:16). The depiction of the death of Job as an old man full of days concludes the story (42:17). Eliphaz has also declared to Job that he will go to his grave in ripe old age (5:26).¹⁹⁴ This is another instance of dramatic irony, the recognition of which increases the pleasure of the reading experience.

B. Impact on the Reading

In this final section, the narrator concludes the story with the restored state of the life of Job. YHWH restores the fortunes of Job and gives him twice as much as he used to possess before (42:10).¹⁹⁵ The authorial audience is invited to pass interpretive judgments

¹⁹³ Habel (*The Book of Job*, 175), Clines (*Job 1–20*, 205), Newsom (“Job,” 401), Wilson (“Preknowledge,” 247), Balentine (*Job*, 151) also recognize this connection.

¹⁹⁴ Wilson (“Preknowledge,” 246–47) also recognizes this connection.

¹⁹⁵ Guillaume (“Dismantling the Deconstruction of Job,” 493) contends that Job's health is not recovered. So Schipper (“Healing and Silence,” 16–22), who argues that Job's disfigurement in the end indicates that

on the significance of the twofold restoration. For those who privilege the action of God, they usually regard this as his sovereignty at work and Job's restoration as an exemplification of the divine grace and freedom.¹⁹⁶ This is a legitimate reading because there is no explicit marker for a connection between Job's piety and his restoration.¹⁹⁷ On the other hand, it is equally plausible to regard the divine doubling of Job's fortunes as YHWH's compensation to Job. According to the Mosaic laws, the one who steals an ox or a sheep must make fivefold or fourfold restitution respectively if the stolen animal is not recoverable and twofold otherwise (Exod 21:37–22:3 [ET 22:1–4]). The recognition of the twofold compensation as parallel in the legal resolution of theft implies that God concedes that he wronged Job in some way.¹⁹⁸ At the narrative level, the restoration of Job's fortunes brings the story to a proper closure. At the rhetorical level, this action of God undermines the normativity of the divine voice in the work. Perhaps it also undermines the normative voice, which dominated the religious context faced by the author.

The rest of this section provides the details of Job's blessedness. His supportive community is restored (42:11). His livestock is doubled (42:12). He has another group of children (42:13–15). Finally, he dies as a blessed old man full of days (42:16–17). This

there is no connection between disease and wrongdoing. Although the restoration of Job's physical health is not explicitly stated, this should be implied for Job is said to die as an old man full of days in 42:17.

¹⁹⁶ So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 584; Ngwa, *Ending*, 21.

¹⁹⁷ Contra Good (*In Turns of Tempest*), who claims that "Job's restoration and the doubling of his fortune by the deity's manipulation are explicitly related to Job's intercessory prayer" (384–5). He goes on to argue that "the deity's doubling of Job's fortunes as a result of his praying for the friends certainly seems to confirm the friends' theory of the relation between religious excellence and personal well-being" (385).

¹⁹⁸ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1237. Andersen (*Job*, 293) recognizes the parallel but considers this only as a "wry touch" by the Joban author.

last section recalls a few instances in the earlier dialogue in which the friends predicted the future blessed state of Job. The recognition of these connections enhances the cohesiveness of the entire work and adds to the pleasure of the reading experience.

VII. Chapter Summary

In this chapter I have identified the allusions to preceding materials in each of the pericopae of the ending section. I have also examined the impact of these allusions on the reading experience of the narrative.

The “tempest” imagery that Job has used a number of times re-appears in the beginning sentence of YHWH’s first speech (Job 38:1—40:2). In Job’s earlier speeches, he has already revealed his expectation that God will appear in a tempest. When YHWH actually does appear in a storm, Job (and the reader) is not surprised, but disappointed.

In the first divine speech, YHWH alludes to the words of Job in order to challenge him. Through the re-use of the terms *חשך*, *עצה* and *גבר*, YHWH’s opening question in 38:2 recalls what Job had said in ch. 3 and ch. 12. On the one hand, YHWH rebukes the subversive language that Job used in ch. 3. On the other hand, YHWH responds to Job’s accusation in 12:13–25 and declares Job’s words as those without knowledge. In a similar vein, YHWH’s words in 38:4–21 also allude to what Job had said in ch. 3. In responding to Job’s subversion of the “creation” motif in Gen 1–2, YHWH once again rebukes Job’s provocative language in his opening outburst.

On the other hand, there seems to be a few instances where the author deliberately directs the audience’s attention back to what Elihu has said. The phrase *בלי דעת*, “without knowledge,” which Elihu used to describe Job (35:16), re-appears in YHWH’s first speech

as YHWH's evaluation of Job's words (38:2). The allusion gives the impression that God endorses Elihu's judgment. Moreover, the "rhetorical question" form (38:1—40:2) and the "meteorology" motif (38:22–38), which are part of Elihu's rhetoric in his last speech, are picked up by YHWH in his first speech. The impression felt is that YHWH continues the discourse that Elihu has initiated.

The term לוֹיִתָּן ("Leviathan") in the second divine speech (40:6—41:34) at 41:1 [ET 40:25] recalls Job's earlier mention of the same mythic monster in 3:8. The use of the verb עוֹר, "to rouse" in 41:2 [ET 10] further strengthens the allusion. As Leviathan symbolizes the chaotic force Job wants to bring forth in an imaginary past, YHWH recalls this monster from Job's malediction in 3:8 only to claim that he is able to cohabit with chaos.

Job's words in 42:3a and 42:4 are always universally regarded as his citations of YHWH's former words. Since attributed quotations are always marked elsewhere in the book, it is preferable to read these verses rather as allusions or echoes.

The epilogue (42:7–17) is filled with dramatic irony. The ideas of the divine rebuke of the friends (13:10; 42:7), Job's intercession (22:23; 42:8–9), and YHWH's lifting of Job's face (11:15a; 42:8–9) are anticipated by speakers in the earlier dialogue. Moreover, the narrator's description of Job's latter blessedness (42:12) and his death in old age (42:16–17) is anticipated by Bildad (8:5–7) and Eliphaz (5:26) respectively in the dialogue.

The primary function of the divine speeches is to disqualify Job as a competent partner in a lawsuit. At a second level of meaning, YHWH admits that he not only controls but also takes delight in the chaotic forces in the cosmos. As YHWH adapts terms and

forms that Elihu has used previously in a positive sense, this implies that YHWH is in agreement with Elihu. However, the negative characterization of Elihu reveals that the author does not view God the character in a positive light. This character represents the dominant voice in the author's religious community, which is the object of the author's polemic.

Both of Job's responses indicate that he has no intention to take back his words and that he is still in the complaining mode. After all YHWH has fulfilled his expectation and he anticipates YHWH to end his life.

At the end of the story, YHWH rebukes the friends as not speaking rightly about him as Job has. This final divine verdict confirms the normativity of the words of Job. YHWH then restores the fortunes of Job and blesses him twofold. This twofold restitution in the epilogue implies God's admittance of wronging Job, whom, by contrast, is the only hero in the story.

CHAPTER 9

CONCLUSION

This dissertation begins with the realization of the presence of numerous apparent tensions in the book of Job. The sharp contrast of literary forms between the framework (1:1—2:13, 42:7–17) and the dialogue (3:1—42:6) has led many to conclude that the two parts originated from different hands. These interpreters generally believed that the author of the dialogue adapted an existing folktale with minimal alterations in order to launch his own argument. From the many allusions between the framework and the dialogue, the two parts of the work are essentially inseparable. It is preferable to interpret the difference in forms between the two parts as the author's deliberate exhibition of his literary skills. In the shift from simple prose in chs. 1–2 to sophisticated poetry in ch. 3 onwards, the author gives the impression that what the authorial audience is going to read is not as naive and orderly as the form of the prologue might have suggested.

The order of speeches in the third cycle of debate (chs. 22–28) is another area in which interpreters have not reached a consensus. The apparent oddities of parts of the content of chs. 24, 26, and 27, all of which are attributed to Job according to the Masoretic Text, have led many to believe that some or all of these speeches originally belonged to the friends. The exceptional shortness of Bildad's speech in ch. 25 and the absence of the third speech of Zophar further bolster this hypothesis. As argued in this dissertation, the meaning of each of chs. 24, 26, and 27 is open to different interpretations. Job's words in 24:18–24 may be seen as another of his complaints against the arbitrary nature of God. Although the bulk of ch. 26 appears to be concerned with the rule of God in the cosmos, the final line (v. 14) subverts the

preceding doxology and raises the challenge again that an average human cannot perceive what God is doing. The sentiment of this speech thus fits comfortably with the rest of Job's utterances. As for 27:13–23, the ideology of the imprecation therein indeed reflects what the friends have been propounding in their speeches. However, if the reference to the “wicked” in v. 13 is an allusion to the friends, the entire imprecation may be seen as Job's verbal assault against the friends through the use of their own arguments. I thus conclude that the shortness of Bildad's third speech and the absence of Zophar's are further indications of the breakdown of the dialogue between Job and the friends. The subtlety of Job's words in the third cycle may have even confused the friends to the point that they begin to wonder if Job has changed his position.

Regarding the wisdom poem in ch. 28, its unique form and tonality differentiate it from the preceding dialogue. Many thus treat it as an independent poem, which gives an evaluation of the debate between Job and the friends. As argued in this dissertation, this poem may have a different meaning if it does not belong to any of the preceding speakers. However, since no new heading is present between ch. 27 and ch. 28, the most logical conclusion is that the poem is a continuation of the words of Job, who is the preceding speaker. Taken as such, the poem can be interpreted as Job's hidden polemic against the friends, who claimed to have possessed wisdom. Chapter 28 thus concludes Job's engagement with the friends and prepares him for his final testimony in chs. 29–31.

The abrupt appearance of Elihu and the negligence of his words by all speakers have long motivated interpreters to find possible explanations. The most common solution is to regard the Elihu speeches in chs. 32–37 as secondary. They were added by a later scribe who wanted to improve the arguments of the earlier version of the work. Nevertheless, the

linguistic evidence that used to be the strongest support for this theory is now proven unconvincing. Regarding the characterization of Elihu, I am inclined to side with Habel and see him as a brash fool. This character successfully encapsulates the members of the audience who show a similar frustration to the three friends on the one hand and display a similar disgust to Job's provocative language on the other. Elihu sees himself as a prophetic figure who can mediate between God and Job. Unfortunately, in the course of his prophetic counselling, his arguments are proven no better than those of the three friends. One of the major functions of these six chapters of speeches, however, is to prepare for the divine speeches that come immediately after them. As some have argued for the "preparatory" function of the Elihu speeches, the way I see it is quite different. Since the first divine speech has much in common with the last speech of Elihu, who is characterized negatively, I conclude that the divine speech is best interpreted in a negative light.

Aside from form and structure, another area that has often been noted for its inconsistency is the characterization of Job. Job is conventionally understood as pious in the prologue, rebellious or even blasphemous in the dialogue, and submissive in his response to YHWH. As argued in this dissertation, the conventional interpretation of the responses of Job in the prologue is called into question. For the first round, both the physical and the verbal responses of Job are ambiguous. They need not be seen as Job's confession of God's sovereignty over his plight. For the second round, the typical interpretation of Job's verbal response as an unmarked rhetorical question is unwarranted. Taken as a statement, his response may be seen as his first lament, which in turn anticipates the more provocative language in the speeches to come. Therefore, the Job in the prologue is consistent with the Job in the dialogue.

Although the final response of Job in 42:1–6 has long been interpreted as his act of submission after the theophanic encounter, there are a growing number of scholars who dissent from this traditional position. According to my observation, one of the reasons for the majority view is that 42:3a and 42:4 are almost universally taken as Job's unmarked attributed quotations of YHWH's words. This inevitably sets the tonality of Job's response as self-condemnatory. As allusions are the prevalent mode of literary technique the author uses, it is more reasonable to take 42:3a and 42:4 as pointed allusions. Moreover, when an attributed quotation is meant in the preceding chapters, it is always signalled by one or more markers. My conclusion is thus that Job is still in the complaining mood until his very last word. There is no reversal of Job of any sort in 42:1–6.

Throughout this dissertation, I have catalogued the internal quotations of preceding materials in each section, thus showing that the entire work is a cohesive text. The remaining question is: Is a coherent reading of the book of Job as narrative possible? This dissertation has also demonstrated that a satisfactory reading experience of this literary masterpiece can be attained at both the narrative and the rhetorical levels. At the narrative level, the story begins with the introduction of a pious person Job (1:1–5). The focus shifts quickly to the heavenly council in which the satan taunts YHWH to put Job on a test to reveal the rationale behind Job's piety (1:6–12). As the narrator directly and YHWH indirectly confirms, Job passes the test (1:13–22). The satan then taunts YHWH again to test Job for a second time, and Job again passes the test (2:1–10). Although the instabilities introduced by the satan are quickly resolved each time, at the end of the second test, Job is still not restored and so the story has not come to an end. Moreover, the verbal response of Job after each round of catastrophes indicates that he is not content with what he has been receiving. The conflict

between Job and YHWH thus becomes one of the instabilities, which the authorial audience expects to be resolved by the end of the story.

The narrative continues with the introduction of the three friends of Job—Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar (2:11–13). Contrary to what is commonly believed, these three friends have already revealed how they have perceived the origin of Job’s calamity at the very beginning. Job’s severe suffering must be a consequence of disobedience. They even demonstrate a sense of alienation when they first see Job from a distance. Their attitude toward Job at the end of the prologue anticipates the fierce verbal battle between them and Job in the conversation to come.

The global instability in the narrative is introduced by Job’s provocative outburst in ch. 3. The language used in his elaborate cry subverts the creation language used in Gen 1–2. It is true that the sentiment in Job’s curse of his day of birth resembles one used in a similar curse uttered by the prophet Jeremiah. Nevertheless, it appears that Job pushes this tradition to the extreme. Moreover, for Job, death is really what he wants.

Job’s bitter outcry sparks three cycles of debate between his three friends and him. In the first cycle (chs. 4–14), all three friends display disgust over Job’s blasphemous words and attempt to silence him. In addition to proffering a strict system of retributive justice, each of them offers him a piece of advice regarding how he should move on. For Eliphaz, doxology, the language used to praise God for sustaining the created order, is the appropriate response. For Bildad, the language of petition or repentance, which is the lacking element in Job’s complaint, is what Job should be using. For Zophar, prayer and righteous living will bring Job back to his former status.

A sense of progression can also be discerned in these three speeches of Job's friends.

Eliphaz only implicitly suggests that he could not hold back his words because of Job's opening provocative outcry (4:2). Similarly, Bildad only pronounces himself offended by Job's destructive words (8:2). Zophar considers it a "moral duty" of anyone to shame Job by answering him (11:2–3). Besides, whereas both Eliphaz and Bildad conclude their speeches with absolute and unequivocal assurance of Job's good end (5:17–26; 8:19–22), Zophar makes Job's prospect secure and blessed future conditional and qualified (11:13–20).

Similarly, Job in his speeches also reveals an increasing degree of resentment toward the three friends. In his first response to his friends (chs. 6–7), Job expresses his disappointment at the loyalty of his friends. He also alludes to Eliphaz's words at various points to offer his counter-argument. Although Job does not explicitly address the friends in his next speech (chs. 9–10), the numerous allusions to the words of Eliphaz and Bildad indicate that Job is criticizing their advices indirectly. When Job further responds to them after Zophar has spoken (chs. 12–14), Job begins to regard Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar as mere opponents in a wisdom disputation more than friends who bring consolation. He does not stop re-using words uttered by the friends to reveal their folly. He even warns them of the horrific divine rebuke awaiting them if they continue to act as false witnesses on God's behalf.

The speeches of Job in the first cycle also gradually intensify the conflict between Job and God. In his opening outcry, Job only refers to God indirectly in the third person. In his bemoaning at ch. 7, however, Job accuses God directly in the second person. When Job further complains in chs. 9–10, he even uses legal language, the traditional language used to describe God's judgment upon the rebellious, to accuse God of injustice. In the speech that

ends the first cycle of dialogue (chs. 12–14), Job even calls on God to provide the evidence on which God would justify his severity toward him.

The three friends continue to exhibit their discontent with Job's provocative language in the second cycle of debate (chs. 15–21). According to Eliphaz, Job's words undermine traditional religious values and compel Eliphaz to rectify them. For Bildad and Zophar, Job's words are demeaning and insulting. All three friends now consider the conversation as a defence of personal honour. Unlike their speeches in the first cycle, there is not a single word of encouragement. The bulk of each of their speeches is concerned with a vivid depiction of the fate of the wicked. Through allusions to Job's own utterance, the friends warn Job that he is at the edge of joining the company of the wicked. The optimism of the friends regarding Job's prospect restoration appears to have vanished in this cycle of debate.

As for Job, he begins to criticize the words of the friends explicitly in his first speech in the second cycle (chs. 16–17). In his next speech (ch. 19), he even accuses the friends of tormenting him with their speeches and issues a threat of divine judgment upon them. Regarding God, Job insists on complaining that he has been violently assaulted by the divine in these two speeches. Two more times Job fantasizes the presence of an imaginary mediator, who will either arbitrate between God and him (16:19) or speak for him after his death (19:25). Job's final speech in this cycle is mainly concerned with a rebuttal of the universality of the destruction of the wicked as articulated by the friends. He re-uses terms and motifs uttered by the friends to counter their claims. The allusions indicate that Job and his three friends are in common disagreement about the origin of Job's plight and God's rule over the created order in general. This speech also reveals that Job has broadened his concern from his own personal misfortune to divine injustice in the world.

The conversation between Job and his friends begins to break down in the third cycle (chs. 22–28). Whereas Eliphaz still offers a speech of considerable length, Bildad's speech only lasts for a few lines and Zophar even ceases speaking. In his last speech, Eliphaz eventually explicitly accuses Job of committing great wickedness. He even invents the crimes that Job must have committed to justify the severe judgment that Job has been experiencing. Eliphaz does not cease to allude to terms and motifs that Job previously uttered so as to rectify Job's apparent obscured perspective on the moral order of the world.

After Eliphaz has delivered his final speech, Job once again contemplates on meeting God in a lawsuit despite the elusiveness of God. Moreover, he continues to complain about God's aloofness to and active involvement in the chaotic status of the world. Near the end of this speech, the meaning of his words is intentionally ambiguous. On the surface, they may imply that Job is beginning to soften his previous position. A closer reading, however, reveals that Job's words can be understood as another of his bitter complaints to God. This ambiguity may also explain why the tonality of Bildad's next speech is exceptionally calm and its content is devoid of any criticism of Job's words. The last piece of advice that Bildad gives is that God's dominion is dreadful.

Job resumes his speech (ch. 26) in addressing Bildad alone. His words are again ambiguous. They may be taken as Job's mockery of Bildad's ability as a counsellor or Job's self-admission of his own vulnerability. The bulk of his speech is concerned with the praise of God's majestic power. His final remark, however, is far from clear. It may denote his humble confession in relation to God or his critique of the friends' claim to special revelation. This ambiguity eventually silences his three friends. To end his engagement with the friends, Job delivers his final speech (chs. 27–28) in this cycle. The first part of the speech comprises

a solemn oath that indicates his resolve to stand by his own words and an imprecation against his opponent, with whom the friends should not have any problem identifying themselves. The second part of Job's speech is a wisdom poem subtly mocking the lack of wisdom of his friends while affirming his own wisdom. The conflict between Job and the friends is still awaiting resolution.

As soon as the conversation with his friends has ended, Job delivers a lengthy tripartite testimony (chs. 29–31) with no specified addressee except 30:20–23, in which he complains to God in the second person. The first two parts of the speech form a diptych, reciting the two contrasting periods before and after his calamities. The third part consists of his final declaration of innocence expressed in the form of oaths and a futile appeal to God for a hearing. Job's rhetoric pushes the unstable relation between Job and God to the climax.

A new character, Elihu, enters the story (chs. 32–37). He is not satisfied with the incapability of the three friends on the one hand and is irritated by Job's provocative language on the other. He assumes the role of "answerer," attempting to interpret for Job the meaning of his suffering. However, through allusions, Elihu is characterized as a brash fool whose words are meant to be undermined. The primary message of his first speech is that suffering is a means of divine communication. Even though no one responds to Elihu, he continues to utter three more speeches. His second speech focuses exclusively on the inappropriateness of Job's previous speeches. In his third speech, Elihu addresses Job's complaint against God's mismanagement of the world and God's reluctance to respond to the cries of the afflicted. In his final speech, Elihu presents God as a just sustainer of the moral order of the world and summons Job to consider the marvellous works of God.

The eventual appearance of YHWH in a tempest indicates the commencement of the ending of the narrative. In the first divine speech (38:1—40:2), YHWH adapts terms and forms that Elihu has used previously in a positive sense. This implicitly suggests that YHWH is in agreement with Elihu. The primary function of the speech is to disqualify Job as a competent partner in a lawsuit. Job's brief response to the first divine speech (40:3–5) reveals that he does not change his mind and has no intention to take back his words.

In the second divine speech (40:6—41:26 [ET 34]), YHWH describes two creatures, Behemoth and Leviathan, before Job. At the narrative level, the speech serves as a continuation of the first divine speech and its function is to decry Job's ability to dispute with God and to argue that God takes delight in chaos. In his final response (42:1–6), Job continues with his complaint. After all YHWH has fulfilled his expectation and he anticipates YHWH to end his life.

After that, YHWH rebukes the friends as not speaking rightly about him as Job has (42:7). YHWH requires them to offer sacrifices and to request that Job pray for them (42:8–9). Although the nature of error in the words of the friends is not specified, the divine verdict partially resolves the unstable relation between Job and the friends on the one hand and between Job and God on the other. Finally, YHWH restores the fortunes of Job and blesses him twofold (42:10–17). Former friends and relatives of Job also come to console him. The conflict between Job and God, his three friends, and his community is completely resolved. This brings the story to a proper closure at the narrative level.

As mentioned above, for the work to be coherent, the reader should also be able to attain a satisfactory reading experience at the rhetorical level. This dissertation argues that the central problem of the book is appropriate religious expressions in the context of

suffering. The prologue is best to be interpreted as a parody in which divine testing as the definite explanation for innocent suffering is called into question. Throughout the speeches of Job, the author subverts various Israelite traditions in order to disclose their intrinsic logical and ethical weaknesses. The author uses the arguments of the three friends as a springboard to criticize the fear generated in a religious community when the words of a member transgresses what is generally considered as acceptable expressions of faith. The unease causes other members in the community to defend a rigid system of ideological beliefs and to marginalize the voice of the outcast.¹

The presence of Elihu crystallizes the concept of appropriate religious discourse as central to the reading experience. He appears to focus exclusively on the words Job uttered in the midst of his suffering. Moreover, the narrator's description of Elihu's attitude toward Job and the friends aptly encapsulates the feeling of a typical member of the audience at this point of the narrative. The audience is likely to be dissatisfied with the arguments made by the friends and be offended by the provocative complaints uttered by Job. The characterization of Elihu, however, reveals the author's negative ethical judgments of this character.

¹ Situating the book of Job in the Axial Age (800–200 BCE), Morrow (*Protest against God*, 129–46) argues that the conflict between Job and the friends reflects “the tension between the transcendental and mundane orders of reality” (135). He states, “The faith tradition reflected in complaint psalms accepted the possibility of inexplicable and even arbitrary absences of divine presence. But Israel's religious imagination required the construction of a less compromised God in the Axial Age. To a certain extent, in the Axial Age YHWH's absence was structured into the universe because of his greater transcendence. But as an imperial deity, ruler of the universe, YHWH had to be portrayed as completely sovereign. Consequently, all of YHWH's absences must be defensible; such a deity's actions were not to be subject to criticism by mere mortals” (137–38). His conclusion regarding the third cycles of dialogue is that some Axial Age thinker were prepared to make such a claim when the alternative was to assent a theology of complaint, which permitted protest against God who could act in arbitrary and unpredictable ways. Morrow also suggests that the wisdom poem in Job 28, the Elihu speeches, and the divine speeches, none of which endorses the protest tradition, are further responses to Job's dilemma. While my own conclusion can accommodate Morrow's hypothetical historical reconstruction regarding the dialogue between Job and the friends, I do not see the wisdom poem, the Elihu speeches, or the divine speeches as a refutation of Job's protest.

Since the voice of YHWH is typically considered as normative elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the parallel in terms and forms between the first divine speech and Elihu's last speech indicates that the author may hold a different view. The subversion of the divine voice may be interpreted as the author's critique of the dominating voice in his religious community. In the second divine speech, the author even implicitly affirms that God can live with Job's angry and provocative words. Moreover, the final divine verdict also reaffirms the normativity of the words of Job. The twofold restitution in the epilogue concludes that Job is the only hero in the story.

This study has raised the issue of the normativity of the voice of God and that of voice of the narrator in biblical narratives. It is not my intention to claim that these voices should not be considered as possessing the authoritative guide in any narrative. If we can make allowance for *Job* as an exception to the retributive system, perhaps we should also be able make allowance for *the book of Job* as an exception to biblical narratives. After all, this literary masterpiece is not a conventional narrative. Otherwise, we may fall into the trap of Job's three friends, who superimpose a rigid system upon every individual case.

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