

THE CREATION MOTIF IN JOB

THE CREATION MOTIF IN THE
BOOK OF JOB

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ABSTRACT

The Hebrew version of Job (BH³) is the authoritative text in this investigation of the creation motif in the book. Although the authenticity of the many textual and other problems with which this book is replete is not disputed, nevertheless it is legitimate to treat the work as a unit since it has existed as such for many generations. The proper appreciation of the role and significance of the creation motif in Job provides a convincing explanation of the book taken as a whole.

The nature of the creation motif in Job is complex. It includes notions of kingship, temple-building, conflict with chaos and with mythological monsters. These ancient Near Eastern notions of creation are adapted in this book to meet Hebrew requirements. The motif as it appears in Job also contains reflections on Genesis 1 and 2 and on other sources of creation thought in the Bible. The essence of the motif is the relationship of God to man in creation. It is this relationship which provides the subject matter for the poet's speculation.

The function of the creation motif in Job is to assert the poet's belief in the potency and significance of the divine self-disclosure in the realm of creation. Job, who is deprived of all that could then be expected to make life tolerable, is also robbed of the comforts contained in the proper observance of conventional morality and correct religious behaviour. The source of true religion

is the fulfilment of the Law, as the friends repeatedly assert. Because Job suffers the friends assume that he has sinned. But Job is convinced that he has not transgressed the Law. Consequently, he is forced to look elsewhere for an explanation of his adversity. His search eventually meets with success when Yahweh reveals himself to Job in the final scenes of the book. In them Job's relationship to God is restored. He recognizes his part in the divinely ordered creation. Job's belief that it is possible to know God outside the pale of the Law is vindicated. Creation provides the milieu for that knowledge. However, as the terms of the theophany indicate, that knowledge is not attained solely by individual effort, but is partly revealed by God himself to persons suitably prepared.

The book has many functions, but chief among them must be counted the stress on the importance of the creation as a source of revelation as distinct from that of the Law. The book may also be seen as an elaborate polemic against contemporary creation myths and their protagonists. Job is a celebration of the belief that existence is ordered by a benevolent and knowable God and is not subject to the control of chaos. In that existence the filial relationship between the creator and the created is confirmed. The association of man with God in creation offers countless possibilities for wisdom. The same opportunities may not exist for a life circumscribed by the directives of the Law. In sum, the function of the creation motif in Job is to explore the significance of the divine-human relationship as it is revealed in creation.

The conclusion of this investigation is that the proper

appreciation of the creation motif in Job makes tolerable sense of the whole work. Creation is important to Job because it provides him with a means of relating to God which was not possible under the Law. It follows that the poet has a higher regard for the usefulness of creation as a source of relation than for the Law itself. The notion of God's acting in history (Heilsgeschichte) also takes second place to his belief in the importance of creation. It is conceivable that the poet is emphasizing the revelatory content of creation at a time when other notions of the nature of God were in decline or disrepute. Alternatively, and more probably as far as Job is concerned, the poet regarded creation as the supreme scenario in which revelation takes place.

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PART ONE -- INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER ONE

THE PURPOSE OF THIS INVESTIGATION

Section 1 -- The Importance of the Investigation

This investigation confirms a growing recognition that the role of the creation motif in biblical literature is of much greater significance than has hitherto been acknowledged. This recognition is apparent in recent biblical scholarship in which the importance of the theme of creation is taken into account.¹ Consequently, no longer can a scholar maintain without question that creation is only a later and a secondary biblical theme.² However, such a conclusion

¹See, for example, A. E. Combs, The Creation Motif in the "Enthronement Psalms" (Columbia University. Ph.D. diss., 1963); J. Crenshaw in a forthcoming article, "The Function of Creation Theology in Wisdom Literature"; D. J. McCarthy, "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry", CBQ 29 (1967), 393-406; L. R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", VT XV (1965), 313-324; M. Fishbane, "Jeremiah 23-26 and Job 111 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern", VT XXI 2 (1971), 151-167; C. Stuhlmueller, Creative Redemption in Deutero-Isaiah (Rome, 1970).

²Cf. G. von Rad, "The Theological Problem of Old Testament Doctrine of Creation", in The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (London, 1966), 131-143, and especially pp. 142-143. Cf. also von Rad's Old Testament Theology, Vol. I (New York, 1962), pp. 136ff. In these writings von Rad is largely concerned with the occurrence of the creation theme in Gen. 1 and 2. However, the influence of his thought is such that it has exercised a determinative influence on many writings on the subject of creation in the whole of the Old Testament, e.g., B. D. Napier, "On Creation-Faith in the Old Testament: A Survey", Interp. XVI (1962), 21-42. Von Rad maintains that the "doctrine" of creation only became acceptable when it was subsumed under the saving-history (Heilsgeschichte) theme (Old Testament Theology, p. 136). Until that time the theme was too readily con-

should not be unexpected in view of the fact that the theme of creation also figures prominently in many of the sacred writings and rituals of Israel's neighbours.³

Whatever the actual history of the texts of the Bible may be, it is to be noted in connection with this study that the authors of these writings regarded the theme of creation as sufficiently significant to merit the first priority in their ordering of the texts.⁴ Consequently, the probability is that, if creation were indeed a theme of purely secondary religious importance, it would not be given so distinctive a position in their scriptures. It follows that the theme of creation must have been of much greater religious significance than has previously been recognized. Because this theme does

fused with Canaanite religious thought and behaviour to be acceptable. The lack of reference to creation in the so-called cultic credos confirms his belief that the "doctrine" of creation is both late and secondary.

³Cf. p. 1 n. 1 above; T. H. Gaster, Thespis (New York, 1961). N. Sarna's interpretation of the early chapters of Genesis, in Understanding Genesis: the Heritage of Biblical Israel (New York, 1966), indicates the biblical tendency to adapt common religious themes to suit Israelite requirements. Also, in terms of the chronological origins of Gen. 1-11 and Job, Gen. 1-11 is usually thought to have been composed between the ninth and sixth centuries B.C. (Cf. J. K. West, Introduction to the Old Testament: "Hear, O Israel" (New York, 1971), p. 40. Job is usually recognized as belonging to the Exilic, or post-Exilic, period (Cf. West, op. cit., p. 393).

⁴J. L. Crenshaw, in "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel", ZAW, 380-395, p. 391, is mistaken when he insists that Israel required some kind of "crisis of meaning" for a treatment of the subject of creation to be meaningful to her. Thoughts about the origin of the universe, and about its good, bad, or indifferent ordering, and of the bases for human and divine relationships, do not depend on such calamities for their articulation. It would be difficult to point to such a crisis among Israel's neighbours as the cause for their thoughts on creation.

indeed receive substantial treatment elsewhere, for example, in Deutero-Isaiah, Psalms and Job, the argument for the importance of this biblical theme to these authors is confirmed.⁵ Furthermore, the key role of the creation motif in Job provides conclusive evidence of the general importance of this theme for biblical thought.

The specific importance of this investigation is that it advances the mode by which Job may be comprehended. This mode has the merit of paying close attention to the motifs of the book, and especially to that of creation. With such a preparation in hand such speeches as those of Yahweh in the concluding chapters of the book can be seen as other than a meaningless divine vituperation against Job.⁶ From this perspective the divine speeches to Job stress the divine involvement in creation and affirm the existence of a meaningful divine-human relationship which Job strove for throughout his ordeal. At the conclusion of these speeches Job both knows and perceives that the universe is not the product of chance as it appeared to him, but that it is divinely created and ordered for the good of man. The graphic descriptions of creation are the means by which this information is conveyed to Job during the theophany. Thus, an appreciation of the significance of the terminology and

⁵Throughout this thesis Job signifies the book and Job the man.

⁶Hermann Tennessen, "Book of Job: Masterpiece of Blasphemy", Humanist in Canada, 24 (Feb., 1973), 30-33, largely ignores such motifs as creation to the detriment of his appreciation of the meaning of this book. However attractive Tennessen's thesis might be his contention is atypical of biblical affirmations.

motifs employed by the author of Job are instrumental for a comprehension of the work as a whole.

Section 2 -- Validity of this Project

The validity of this project is attested by the fact that a complete study of the use and importance of this motif in Job has not been made available. Also, the significance of the poet's use of this motif has yet to be established and examined for its contribution to the appreciation of the poem as a whole. A recent article by J. Crenshaw refers to this remarkable lack of a comprehensive treatment of the role of creation within the wisdom literature:

Astonishingly, to this day no one has devoted a full scale essay to this problem despite the constant refrain in scholarly works that wisdom thought and creation theology are inseparably bound together.⁷

Since the creation motif has been shown to occur significantly in certain Psalms and in Deutero-Isaiah, quite apart from its locus classicus in Genesis, it seems not unlikely that it may occur elsewhere, and especially in literature emanating from a similar time or origin.⁸ The actual recognition of such an occurrence within Job confirms the validity of the hypothesis. Its occurrence in a variety of forms, together with the recognition of its centrality for the poem, further warrants the enterprise.

⁷"The Function of Creation Theology in Wisdom Literature", a private communication from Professor Crenshaw of the Divinity School, Vanderbilt University, received in January, 1974.

⁸Cf. Stuhlmueller, op. cit.; Combs, op. cit.

In sum, the recognition of many of the prominent features of the creation motif in Job in significant arrangement and with great frequency is indicative of the importance of this motif for a comprehensive appreciation of the poem and its meaning.

Section 3 -- Statement of Problem

Job has always been problematic with reference to the question of its meaning.⁹ Some scholars see the book as concerned with the plight of the innocent sufferer; others think of it as a kind of biblical epic of Prometheus; still others contend for diverse possibilities. The problem then is to determine precisely the subject of this enigmatic and complex work which has stimulated such intense interest and varied comment in the course of its lifetime.

The problem of interpretation is compounded by textual, linguistic and other difficulties which abound in the book. Also, the controversy over the composite nature of the book, specifically on the issue which sources comprise the original text, has contributed even further to an already complicated problem.¹⁰ Finally, certain terms and motifs occur in Job which, unless the present suggestions

⁹For a variety of opinions about the book and its subject matter see, for example, N. Glatzer, The Dimensions of Job: A Study and Selected Readings (New York, 1969); R. E. Hone, ed. The Voice out of the Whirlwind: The Book of Job (San Francisco, 1960); Paul S. Sanders, ed. Twentieth Century Interpretations of the Book of Job: A Collection of Critical Essays (New Jersey, 1968).

¹⁰The source problem has been well documented by N. Snaith in his monograph, The Book of Job: Its Origin and Purpose (London, 1968). Cf. also J. Barr, "The Book of Job and Its Modern Interpreters", BJRL, 54 (1971), 28-46.

about their use and significance be accepted, appear otherwise to serve no useful purpose.

A few further observations may be made on these difficulties. First, the question of the book's meaning is frequently determined, wittingly or unwittingly, on the basis of a selection of sources deemed essential to its original composition. By 'original' is usually meant the essential or most preferred text. It is assumed that the discovery of this text will provide the clue to the meaning of the book. The selection of original sources is often determined by an a priori notion of the book's wholeness and meaning.¹¹ Thus certain limitations are imposed from the outset on this approach to Job.

The other part of the quest for the original source is the search for the ipsissima verba of the text. Such an endeavour has obvious merits, especially in a text as difficult as that of Job; however, the characteristic of commentaries which concentrate on such matters is that they become preoccupied with them to the detriment of the issue of meaning and purpose.¹² Such studies tend to be distracting for those readers who hope to find in these 'official' commentaries a compendium of views on the subject matter of the book,

¹¹ See Fohrer's comment, "literary analysis is...in large measure determined by a prior interpretation of the book", with reference to Job (Introduction to the Old Testament [New York, 1968], p. 326).

¹² Dhorrie's classic work on Job — A Commentary on the Book of Job (London, 1967) — is typical of that kind of commentary which provides voluminous information on literary and other aspects of the book, but very little assistance to that student who seeks extensive comment on the work's religious content.

specifically on the whys and wherefores of its composition. The reasons for such practices are probably many and various and are quite beyond the scope of this investigation.¹³

However, the focus of this thesis is on only one of those areas which relate to the question of the book's meaning, namely, what is the use and importance of various references to creation which occur so frequently within the text, and what bearing do they have on the interpretation of the whole book? It would seem that unless the recognition and analysis of the motif of creation here proposed is adopted, all references to it must otherwise be regarded as of ornamental, or secondary, value only. In the view of the latter the motif itself is not a motif but a sub-theme which, at best, functions as a distraction with the intention of increasing or decreasing the dramatic or other effects of the poem.

But the occurrence of the imagery and terminology of creation is so pervasive throughout the poem, especially in certain chapters, that it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that it has some special

¹³It is not intended to disparage such studies, only to draw attention to what seems to be an obvious lack of detail on the issue of the book's meaning. The reason for this omission may not be hard to find. It may often be the result of an implicit assumption that the subject matter of the book is too obvious to require much comment. In this view *Job* is about the plight of the innocent sufferer. However, such an interpretation fails to account for all the many ramifications of the book. H. H. Rowley, for instance, has observed that if this were indeed the subject of the book then it is strange that it is not more obvious that this is so ("*The Book of Job and its Meaning*", *BJRL*, *XLII* [1958-9], 167-207, pp. 194f.). It is perhaps even stranger that the conclusion does little to resolve the dilemma of the unfortunate sufferer.

significance.¹⁴ Indeed, if this postulate of the importance of the motif in the book be denied, then the conclusion is inescapable that, for example, Yahweh's replies to Job are indeed harangues which employ for the purpose a language not wholly apposite. Such a conclusion would, to say the least, be unusual in view of the almost universal appreciation of the poet's skill. But, if the present hypothesis be well-founded, then this same motif is explicative of the work in a way which not only accords with the spirit of the biblical tradition, but which also renders a plausible explanation of the book.

In sum, the poet's use of the creation motif forms an important part of his work. An appreciation of it contributes substantially to the effort to comprehend the meaning of the work.

Section 4 -- Limitations of this Investigation

The scope of this investigation is limited to a detailed examination of Job's opening address (ch. 3) and Yahweh's responses (chs. 38-42). A less detailed analysis of Job's other speeches, the speeches of the friends and those of Elihu is also included. However, the latter do not receive the same degree of scrutiny as the former because of the length of the book and the complexity of its language. The investigation is also intended only to draw attention to the use and importance of this motif in Job. It is not

¹⁴The creation motif is observed to figure particularly prominently and significantly in the final chapters of the book, namely, in chapters 38-42. They therefore receive especial consideration in the analysis below.

intended to comment on its each and every occurrence in this thesis.

Since Job is a work of both eminence and antiquity, the amount of critical comment on it is very considerable. Consequently, it is necessary to limit reference to the secondary literature to those works which are directly pertinent to this study. However, a brief résumé of related literature is provided. This résumé is intended to illustrate a few of the various approaches to Job which have been adopted at different times and for various reasons. At the risk of seeming redundant the résumé is taken up again in Part III with specific focus on selected interpreters whose failure to attend sufficiently to the motif of creation limits, if not misdirects, their understanding of the work. This focus provides a directive whereby the entire range of secondary literature may be assessed.

Finally, not every aspect of creation can come within the scope of a single investigation. For example, the poet's use of certain words often associated with creation, namely אָלַל 'to create' and פָּעַל 'to make', is not included in this study. Also, all the theological implications of creation in Job, on which a religion scholar is tempted to dwell, are not fully considered in this study.

The intention of this thesis is to isolate the motif in Job and to articulate its significance. A secondary result is to demonstrate the importance of creation to biblical thinking.

Section 5 -- Theoretical Framework of Investigation

1. Basic Assumptions

The first and basic assumption of this investigation is that

the book of Job may legitimately be regarded as a whole for the purposes of this study. For example, the Elihu speeches (chapters 32-37), which duplicate much of the friends' argument and anticipate Yahweh's replies to Job, are regarded as integral to the present canonical Job, although they may be regarded as a later appendage. The assumption of the essential unity of the book facilitates the quest for its meaning, but does not deny a history of meanings insofar as textual development can be convincingly documented.¹⁵

A second assumption, which is somewhat similar to the first, is that, despite the academic circumstance that the questions of the date of the book's composition, its textual integrity and its original sources have not yet been fully or universally answered, a scholar may pursue the question of its meaning as the text now stands.¹⁶ Consequently, those studies of Job which assume the essential unity of the book are especially worthy of consideration.

The first assumption represents a somewhat unorthodox approach to the book if Snaith or Rowley's works be taken as normative.¹⁷

¹⁵The textual development of the book is discussed in such works as, R. H. Pfeiffer, The Books of the Old Testament (New York, 1957); N. Snaith, op. cit.

¹⁶It follows from this assumption that such classical scholars as Maimonides, Calvin, Luther and others should be equally informative on the meaning of the book as their modern successors in biblical study. Yet, the work of the former is seldom considered by the latter. Unfortunately, it is also impossible to consider their studies in Job in this thesis, again for reasons of space.

¹⁷Snaith, op. cit.; Rowley, Job, The Century Bible (hereafter referred to as CB [London, 1970]). Dhorme's monumental work (op. cit.) is rather ambiguous on this point. He speaks of the separate authorship of each part of the composition, and declares that "each part of it was written in view of the totality. No part existed separately"

However, support is growing for the view that it is not only feasible, but academically respectable, to investigate the book as a whole.

Northrop Frye writes:

I am trying to make sense of the meaning of the Book of Job as we now have it, on the assumption that whoever was responsible for its present version had some reason for producing that version. Guesswork about what the poem may originally have been or meant is useless, as it is the only version we know that has had any influence on our literature.¹⁸

James Barr, in a general article on Joban scholarship, adopts the same premise, with the caveat that this approach may not be "entirely decisive for any study of the book in its oriental and Israelite context".¹⁹ At any rate, it should be sufficient to note that it is the present book, and not those which rely on substantial emendation for their authenticity, which has had such a religious impact in its lifetime.²⁰ Hence, for the purposes of this investigation the book in its present form is accepted as the working text. As such it possesses a unity which is intrinsically related to its meaning.

(lxii). But, later on the same page he writes, "the question of unity does not arise in regard to each part, but in regard to the whole, and it has been variously resolved"(?).

¹⁸Anatomy of Criticism (Princeton, 1957), p. 189.

¹⁹"The Book of Job and Its Modern Interpreters", BJRL, 54 (1971), 28-46, p. 30. John Gray's article, "The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature" (ZAW, 82 [1970] 2, 251-269), denotes the kind of comparative study to which Barr refers. A more recent analysis of Job, which adopts the structuralist method of investigation, also assumes the unity of the book. Cf. R. Polzin, "The Framework of the Book of Job", Interpretation, XXVIII, 2 (1974), 182-200.

²⁰Pfeiffer refers to some of Job's more eminent critics (op. cit., pp. 184-185).

ii. Terms

Various terms are used throughout this study to refer to certain portions of the book of Job. These terms are. Prologue, Dialogue, Elihu speeches, Yahweh speeches and Epilogue. They refer to the following chapters and verses respectively: 1-2; 3-31; 32-37; 38-39 and 40-42:6; 42:7-17. These designations are terms of convenience rather than precise descriptions of the passages concerned. Consequently they should not be pressed for their accuracy. For instance, the term 'Dialogue' is misleading when strictly used with reference to chapters 3-31, for it is never very clear that there is dialogue between Job and his friends. All that is apparent is that Job is addressing someone, directly or indirectly, in these speeches. Similarly, the Yahweh speeches are not precisely so termed because in them Job makes brief responses to the divine addresses.²¹

iii. The Nature of the Creation Motif in Job

According to the dictionary, a motif is the "dominant feature or idea in a literary, musical, or other artistic composition".²² It is sometimes used as a synonym for 'theme'. In this thesis it is used in the senses of dominant literary feature or idea. However, although creation is regarded as the dominant motif in Job, it is by no means the only motif. In keeping with the above definition of

²¹ Cf. P. R. Ackroyd, "Job the Agnostic", Context, 1, 195 (1968), 15-26 who quotes L. Koehler's Hebrew Man (London, 1956) concerning the kind of discussion in Job. Ackroyd says, "the speakers do not substantially develop their argument; they state and re-state a case" (p. 16).

²² Cassell's English Dictionary (London, 1969).

a motif, the function of this particular one is thought to be central to the attempt to grasp the meaning of this ancient poem.

The second point to be established at the outset is that the creation motif as found in the book of Job is not necessarily identical to its occurrences elsewhere, especially as it is found in some parts of the Ugaritic literature.²³ The results of this study indicate that the Hebrew poet has exercised licence in his adaptation of the motif in order to meet his own requirements and those of Yahwism. In other words, the creation motif in Job is not restricted to notions of kingship, temple-building, conflict with chaos, judgment or conflict with mythological monsters.²⁴ Rather, the poet is often content with a variation of the motif. For instance, chaos, as represented by Leviathan or the sea, has nothing of the vitality of its counterpart in the Ugaritic mythology. Indeed, in Job Leviathan is intimidated by Yahweh.²⁵ Also, the motif of temple-building, which is a subsidiary theme of the creation motif, takes the form of the construction of the universe in one instance in Job.²⁶ In this instance the terminology of the building of a house or a temple is employed with reference to the creation of the universe.²⁷ Furthermore, the only reference to kingship

²³Cf. L. R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", VT, XV (1965), 313-324, p. 316.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵40:25ff.

²⁶38:4f.

²⁷But, see Fisher's comment to the effect that Baal's temple

in Job is to be found in 40:10-14 in which Job's ability to assume the role of king is questioned. The lordship of Yahweh over creation is also attested in the Yahweh speeches. It would amount to a distortion of the evidence to conclude that this divine lordship should be understood as a kingship ritual of the order of the Mesopotamian Akitu festival.

In short, what is indicative of the creation motif in Job is sometimes no more than a variation on it. Consequently, the mythological associations of the Ugaritic or Mesopotamian creation stories are not always involved in this book. In fact, the poet's indifference to the mythological content of these stories indicates his scepticism about the significance of these myths and his confidence in the superiority of Yahwism. Thus, in addition to the actual story of Job, there occurs a polemic against Canaanite and Mesopotamian forms of religious belief. This polemic takes place by means of a subtle adaptation of creation mythology.

Whereas the creation motif in the Canaanite cosmology is intimately involved with the natural cycle of the year, such does not seem to be the case for Job. Also, whereas in the Canaanite and Mesopotamian myths a conflict of some sort is frequently a major part of the myth itself, such is not typical of Job. Thus, in this sense, Job is not a myth of the Chaoskampf variety in which a struggle between opposing forces is central.²⁸ No such dualism is apparent

is a microcosm (op. cit., p. 320).

²⁸Cf. D. J. McCarthy, "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry", CBQ, 29 (1967), 393-406, p. 396 n. 12 "This, of course, is

in Job.

The role of chaos in Job is largely a passive one. When Job seeks refuge from his afflictions he longs for Sheol. He seeks a shelter outside the scope of the divine control, a place where the divine creative ability has not yet exercised its influence:

Let me alone, that I may find a little comfort
before I go whence I shall not return,
to the land of gloom and deep darkness,
the land of gloom and chaos;
where light is as darkness.²⁹

Thus Job sees chaos as providing a haven from God and not as a power of equal proportions to God. That chaos is not that potent would seem evident from such dramatic metaphors as that of Leviathan, the traditional symbol of a powerful chaos, "led by the nose."³⁰ In short, the poet's thesis seems to be that unless a meaningful relationship exists between God and man, chaos reigns in a deadly and inhuman way. Thus Job in ch. 3 wishes to escape from God's presence to chaos, not because he believes chaos offers a desirable alternative abode set in opposition to God's creation, but because it is a place of undifferentiated existence until such a time as "God's wrath be passed". Then, in that future time, the terms of meaningful rela-

the basic idea behind the Chaoskampf concept: the representation of the annual vegetation cycle in the guise of a divine battle against the ruin which threatens when the vegetation dies....".

²⁹10:20b-22. The hebrew of these verses conveys the notion of the lack of order לְאֵלֹהִים and other indications of primordial chaos. Order (לְאֵלֹהִים) is established when the acts of creation are accomplished.

³⁰40:25-32. Cf. Fisher, op. cit., 317f. Fisher's suggestion of a battle with Leviathan in connection with Genesis 1:14 is hard to justify from the text.

tionship between God and man can be re-established as they first were at the first creation in terms of the complex metaphor by which man is depicted as made in the image of God.

In the concluding chapters of the book the existence of a divine order in the universe is affirmed. God is in his heaven, so to speak, and Job is a part of a divinely ordered creation. He is not cut off from God but close to him. This proximity is illustrative of the divine benevolence towards man. Job is rewarded for his integrity in a theophany in which Yahweh forcefully reminds Job of his humanness and thereby of his relationship to God within a divinely ordered existence. Thus the creation motif in Job reasserts the good of creation for mankind. Furthermore, the creation motif asserts the existence of a good and providential order, the precise nature and extent of which may not be entirely apparent to man, not even to Job.

God asks Job where he was when the universe was being made, not so much to belittle Job's knowledge, as to promote in Job an awareness of the essential mysteriousness of the nature of the divine involvement in the process of creation. Job, of course, cannot hope to possess knowledge sufficient to duplicate the creation because he is man and not God. But he can hope for some signs of meaningful relationship between God and man. Such signs are made evident to Job in his new appreciation of the creation. This new appreciation is the product of the theophany in which the divine involvement with the creation is stressed. In this light Job's final confession of a new perception, or vision, makes sense when it is seen as indicative

of a new awareness of the effects of deity, and not chaos, in creation.³¹

iv. The Function of the Creation Motif in Job

The function of the creation motif in Job and of its variations is to assert the poet's express belief in the potency, meaningfulness and human relevance of divine involvement in creation. God in Job is manifest to man principally by means of creation. Hence Job differs radically from those biblical works which stress history as the principal arena of divine self-disclosure.³²

The question of the date of the book relates to this issue of the function of the creation motif. There are certain occasions on which a work such as this might be regarded as particularly apposite. For instance, the post-Exilic period marks such an occasion when the Hebrews were especially familiar with the religious beliefs of their Near Eastern neighbours. The poet's implicit references to their myths, his polemic against them and his assertion of the superiority and beneficence of Yahweh, are all especially appropriate responses in a time when considerable social and religious disorientation occurred. Certain similarities in style and content between this book and parts of Jeremiah and Isaiah would also suggest such an occasion.³³ Given this disorientation there may have been many who wondered whether in fact Marduk, or Baal, was not in reality

³¹ 42:1-6.

³² e.g. Exodus, Deuteronomy, Joshua.

³³ Cf. S. L. Terrien, "Job et Dt. Esaie", SVT, XV (1965), 295-310; Stuhlmüller, op. cit. A comparison of Job 3 and Jer. 20 suggests either a common source, or a strong dependence of one on the other.

more potent than Yahweh. The poet's confidence in the superiority of Yahweh is consequently appropriate in such a context. However, as noted above, it is not essential that Job be placed in this period.³⁴ The framework of the story and its content would also suggest an earlier date of composition. Also, many of the psalms and other biblical works demonstrate a keen sensitivity among the Hebrews towards contemporary mythology.³⁵

Another function of the creation motif is to describe the redemptive process of God.³⁶ That is, Job is redeemed from meaninglessness and the lack of a perceptible relationship to Yahweh. He is restored to his original felicity insofar as it arose from the promise of a moral order discernible to human intelligence by virtue of the theophany. He is thereby freed from infelicity or despair which arose from the collapse of that premise under the weight of human experience from which intelligible meanings could not be gained by autonomous thinking. What Job must know can be granted only by theophany or revelation. The central affirmation of the author is that the proper foundation to man's knowledge is not human experience, nor the visible working of nature, as such, but the metaphysical directives of a lovable Eternal. The proper foundation is revealed law, not reason. The revelation, in the sense of that from which

³⁴Cf. above, p. 2 n. 2.

³⁵Cf. for example, L. E. Toombs, "Psalms", The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible (New York, 1971), 253-303, p. 254; A. E. Combs, op. cit.

³⁶Cf. Stuhlmeuller, op. cit.

divine disclosures are possible, is creation. By bringing things into being God, as it were, steps from behind Nothingness into the presence, however veiled, of Somethingness. By recollecting the memory of God as creator the author of Job restores to his protagonist thinking under the restraints of revelation, within which knowledge contributive to felicity is determined. This knowledge does not consist in a resignation to tragic necessity, as in Lucretius, but in an affirmation of divine volition or freedom, out of which purpose or meaning may be posited.

Just as in the Prologue the story opens with Job performing his religious and familial duties in an orderly and methodical fashion, as emphasized by the repetition of its performance, the conclusion restores Job to this ordered state of existence from which he was removed by the events of the Dialogue. In this sense he is redeemed back to a state of sustained relationship with Yahweh. His twofold restitution would suggest that something has been added to his existence that was not there previously. His final restoration permits him to continue his acts of praise of Yahweh in recognition of his providence as creator. As Combs says of this Creator:

Yahweh is not adored merely because he is the only God. He is the object of praise because as the Creator he has successfully proven himself superior to all other gods who, theoretically, at least, could have performed the creative work.³⁷

Thus, the book of Job ends on a quiet note of praise for Yahweh as Creator illustrating thereby his wisdom, power and concern

³⁷Op. cit., p. 201.

for mankind. Such a conclusion is obviously appropriate in the biblical context. It is even more fitting when the integrity of a righteous man is at stake. This recognition of Yahweh's power and grace has all the more force if it be seen as a description of Yahweh vis-à-vis all other gods and natural forces. Thus, the use of the motif heightens the polemical effect of the work. The poet utilises it to give voice to his belief in the complete superiority of Yahweh over all other gods. He sees Yahweh not as indifferent to man but as devoted to his welfare, such that he has ensured a place for him within his creation. Job's final praise of Yahweh is token recognition of his awareness of this comforting fact. In essence, the poet sees Yahweh as the controller of the universe, the one responsible for the ordering of existence.

Finally, in the view of this thesis, Job is not a theodicy in the strict sense. A theodicy would require a "vindication of divine justice in respect to the existence of evil".³⁸ Although the book does indeed begin with some such issue, Job's interest in it diminishes as the story progresses. In the end, the issue of theodicy is left largely unanswered in favour of that issue which is of the greatest importance to Job namely, what, if any, is the nature of the divine-human relationship and how may a man live in this universe.³⁹ It is this relationship with Yahweh which is the

³⁸ Cassell's English Dictionary.

³⁹ Cf. M. H. Pope, "Job, Book of", IDB, Vol. II (New York, 1962), 911-925, especially pp. 922-924. S. N. Terrien, in Job: Poet of Existence (New York, 1957), p. 21, argues strongly and convincingly that Job is not a theodicy.

burning question for Job. He is not satisfied until he has been confronted and addressed by Yahweh. When Yahweh compares Job with himself and with his creation, and when he compares Job's knowledge and power with his own, then Job admits in awe his own unworthiness of such a comparison. He has spoken of "things too wonderful"

(תִּמְלִיךְ) for him to comprehend or emulate. His final act of repentance in dust and ashes is thoroughly apt, for it describes a sense of unworthiness of form, or creation, in the face of incomparable creation.

Thus the creation motif functions throughout the poem to describe in various ways Job's relationship to God in all of its different dimensions. At the conclusion of the poem it serves to elicit praise from a humble, but happy, Job.

CHAPTER TWO

THE SCHOLARLY APPRECIATION OF JOB

Section 1 -- General Considerations

The dominant tendency in recent biblical scholarship on the text of Job has been to emphasize the composite nature of the book and to concentrate on such problems as the linguistic, textual and contextual difficulties which indubitably abound in the book.¹ The result of such emphases has often entailed the neglect of the thematic considerations of the book as a whole. This implicit or explicit denial of the possibility of a thematic unity for the whole work has serious consequences for an investigation of its central religious purpose.² Since the unity of the book is questionable, any argument about its meaning based on this unity must be suspect. Thus, this method precludes certain possibilities for the book from the beginning. It is therefore not surprising that contemporary scholarship on Job has not, on the whole, been noted for its impressive contributions to the quest for the meaning of the book.³

¹ e.g. Dhorme, op. cit.; Snaith, op. cit.; Rowley, op. cit.

² It is, of course, not intended to gloss over the many and serious difficulties of the book. Such difficulties include, for example, the apparent dislocation of certain speeches, textual problems, source problems and so on. But the assumption of an overall unity of the book, whatever its original form, is a reasonable assumption in a study devoted to isolating and articulating a leading motif.

³ Obviously there are many books on Job whose primary concern is the discernment of the book's meaning. The collections of Hone

The reasons for this rather remarkable omission are complex and can only be guessed at. It may be that many scholars feel reluctant to pronounce on the central concerns of the book at length in fear that their contributions will be dismissed on the grounds that there is as yet insufficient agreement among scholars on the identity of the original text and the nature of its compilation. Sensing this lack they indicate e silentio that lengthy expositions on the book's meaning are unwarranted given the lack of tangible evidence. There is also the view that this kind of endeavour is basically unscholarly and is better left to the priest.⁴ Yet another reason might be seen to lie in the assumption that the meaning of Job will be manifest when the methods of all of the different branches of scholarly endeavour in biblical science have been applied to Job and the results collated. In this view no single biblical science is sufficient of itself to produce the answer.⁵

A variation of the first two assumptions rests on the belief that eventually the various biblical sciences will be perfected, and all the lost documents pertaining to the Bible found and deciphered.

and Glatzer mentioned above contain excellent examples of such works (above, p. 5). However, it is the standard commentaries on the biblical books which are the primary tools of the biblical student and they are frequently notably lacking in extensive commentary on the religious content of these books.

⁴W. C. Smith in The Meaning and End of Religion (New York, 1964) neatly summarizes the prevalent opinions on what is scholarly and respectable and what is not (p. 12).

⁵The different divisions into which Terrien separates critical comment and interpretation in the Interpreter's Bible (New York, 1954) provides a clear illustration of the point.

When this happens, so this assumption infers, then true knowledge of every detail of Job will obtain. Consequently every effort must be made to prepare the way for this realisation. This belief clearly attaches more importance to the retrieval of the ipsissima verba of the text than to anything tradition or subsequent comment might have to say on the text. This belief is confirmed by various archaeological discoveries at Ras Shamra-Ugarit and elsewhere which show works of a comparable nature to that of Job.⁶ Unfortunately, there is as yet no discernible unanimity among scholars on the issue of the identity of the original text of Job, nor does the likelihood of such unanimity seem any less remote.

Finally, another reason why extensive discourses on the meaning and purpose of the work are not generally found in the standard commentaries may possibly be of the following order. That is, there is no profound problem in the book to be resolved.⁷ The work simply concerns the dilemmas which beset the righteous sufferer.⁸ Job is merely a paradigm for all who suffer apparently needlessly and innocently. In this view there is no real solution to the sufferer's problem. He can never hope to discern the reasons for his plight, for its causes are divine and therefore inscrutable. Thus the object of the work is merely to illustrate the plight of Job

⁶Cf. John Gray, op. cit.

⁷Such a view is expressed in John Paterson's The Wisdom of Israel (London, 1961), p. 24.

⁸Ibid.

and to comfort those similarly afflicted by means of arousing a sense of empathy with the sufferer. From this perspective Job's fortunate restitution at the end of the tale only testifies to the greatness and goodness of Providence — how, it is not known — but offers no humanly comprehensible explanation for his afflictions. Job's restitution simply confirms the suspicion of the reader that there is in fact no absolutely sufficient explanation for human suffering.⁹

The latter explanation is attractive, for it expresses a common human response to the problem. It is therefore not remarkable that some scholars readily endorse this explanation. Perhaps they are predisposed to accept this solution since it reflects their own conviction that suffering is often apparently meaningless. It is felt that the most that can be done to alleviate its effects is to endure it manfully in the hope that it will soon cease and to trust that despair will not overtake the individual in the meantime.

However, the problem with the latter kind of interpretation of Job is that frequently it is based on a priori assumptions about the book and often relies on substantial alteration and truncation of the text to support its case. Such explanations tend to ignore such verses as 42:7 in which God commends Job for having spoken "what is right". This verse makes little sense if Job's suffering is truly meaningless, or incapable of human comprehension. If this verse is disregarded then the cessation of his sufferings is, at best, fortuitous. By the same token, his lengthy arguments in the Dialogue

⁹Cf. J. Schofield, Law, Prophets and Writings (London, 1969), p. 312; P. R. Ackroyd, "Job the Agnostic"; M. Pope, "Job, Book of".

and the extensive divine replies must necessarily be regarded as tedious, verbose and repetitious. They are a harangue rather than a reply to anything Job may have said or done, and they leave little scope for any kind of progression within the book.¹⁰ In sum, this view of Job leaves little room for the possibility that Job might have something definite and distinctive to say, and not necessarily about the problem of suffering or its consequences. It assumes that Job is no more than a reservoir of ideas from which every man may pick and choose as he thinks fit. It does not permit Job to be specifically concerned with a particular problem.¹¹

~~In sum, recent biblical scholarship on Job has frequently~~ permitted itself to be sidetracked into issues other than that of the meaning and purpose of the book with the expectation -- often unfulfilled -- that the study of these other issues will illuminate the meaning of the whole. That is, the practice implies the assumption that only a full appreciation of the context of Job can explain Job fully and in a way that meets all scientific standards of procedure. However, it is not always obvious that these studies succeed in achieving their objectives. For, however helpful in a general way additional information on the context of Job is, it cannot be

¹⁰ Cf. G. B. Shaw, The Adventures of the Black Girl in Her Search for God (New York, 1933), pp. 13-15.

¹¹ Ackroyd comments:

It is tempting to read into it our own theological uncertainties and problems of language and expression; so indeed it has been throughout the history of interpretation, and the title of this study indicates a point at which the book may be found to speak now. We may see in it the contemporary situation... (op. cit., p. 26)

held responsible for the elucidation of the book's meaning.¹² For, the book as it now is, has existed as such for a very long time and as such has provided fundamental thinking for those inside and outside the Jewish and Christian traditions. Thus, those studies which assume the unity of the book in their considerations of its meaning are worthy of attention in any attempt to derive its meaning.

Furthermore, those other studies of Job which see in it possibilities for every kind of concern are in danger of being exclusive by their very liberality. For, by virtue of their openness they preclude the possibility that Job may concern a specific issue.

The next section of this chapter contains a brief review of recent scholarly literature on Job. It is not intended to be a comprehensive evaluation of that literature, but only to provide a sampling of the kind of approaches to Job which are common among scholars.

Section 2 -- Selected Studies of Job

The preceding pages provide some general comment on Joban scholarship. In this section some specific studies will be examined for their contributions to the interpretation of the work. It will be obvious that no single approach to Job is free from defects and that it is virtually impossible to present a totally objective and scientific account of its origins, transmission and purpose. Never-

¹² Despite the fact that the significance of this investigation relies heavily on the contributions of scholarship on Ugaritic and Mesopotamian literature and religion, the latter can only be of secondary importance in determining the meaning of Job.

theless, in the interests of understanding this book an attempt must be made to interpret its significance despite the many difficulties.¹³

Because of the vast amount of secondary literature on Job, comments on it are restricted to those portions of it which actually deal with the question of the book's meaning or purpose.¹⁴ This survey is further limited to an examination of a few selected works the interpretation of which has a direct bearing on the perspective of this thesis.

Fohrer himself believes that the subject matter of Job -- an elusive topic given the lack of unanimity among scholars -- is essentially that of how the sufferer should conduct himself in his suffering.¹⁵ His understanding of the conclusion of the book is that:

Proper conduct for the sufferer is humble and devout silence with trust in God -- based on the insight that suffering derives from God's mysterious and inscrutable but nevertheless meaningful action, and on assurance of fellowship with God, beside which all else pales into insignificance.¹⁶

This conclusion does not differ radically from that given elsewhere

¹³Fohrer's remark that the method of literary criticism is often determined by a prior understanding of the book is indicative of the difficulty (Introduction, p. 326).

¹⁴While the intimate relationship between meaning and form cannot be ignored without loss, nonetheless, it is necessary for the sake of space to avoid as far as possible overmuch entanglement in this complex issue.

¹⁵Op. cit., p. 334.

¹⁶Ibid. His arrangement of the essential Job is given on p. 330.

in Fohrer's writings on Job:

Angesichts dessen erklärt Hiob seinen Verzicht und findet die Lösung aller Fragen in der durch die persönliche Begegnung gegründeten Gottesgemeinschaft (40, 3-5; 42: 1-6).¹⁷

It should be noted that Fohrer's view is not dependent on an opinion of the importance of ideas of creation for the author of Job, but is rather a variation of a common interpretation of the book, namely, that it is primarily concerned with the problem of suffering, not in relation to theodicy, but with reference to what is proper human conduct.¹⁸

Fohrer's view differs little from that of H. H. Rowley as indicated in his latest work.¹⁹ In it the latter argues that:

To sufferers in all ages the book of Job declares that less important than fathoming the intellectual problem of the mystery of suffering is the appropriation of its spiritual enrichment through the fellowship of God.²⁰

Rowley also presents an edited version of the text *as*, of course, do a great many scholars.²¹ His interpretation is, naturally, based on his edition. In it he argues that the book is not concerned with the problem of suffering per se because, he concludes, no solution

¹⁷Studien zum Buche Hiob (Göttersloh, 1963), pp. 69-70.

¹⁸"His [the poet's] concern is...with a vital problem: the problem of human existence in suffering, the question of how a sufferer should conduct himself" (Introduction, p. 334).

¹⁹CB.

²⁰Op. cit. p. 21.

²¹Op. cit. p. 17.

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is presented in the book.²² Rowley is misleading when he asserts that Job finds God in his suffering.²³ This view infers that Job has previously not known God. This conclusion violates the terms of reference in the Prologue and makes nonsense of that continuing trust in God which Job displays so forcefully throughout the Dialogue. That Job understands God in some new sense, or that he relates to him in a new dimension, is confirmed by an analysis of 42: 1-6. That Job has been completely cut off from God, or to suggest that he did not know him in the first place, is not grounded in the evidence. Job believes that he has been estranged from God, which situation he hopes will soon be rectified. The Dialogue conveys a strong impression of the continuing proximity of God to Job throughout his ordeal. What is missing between Job and God is a means of re-establishing a relationship, meaningful or otherwise. Job's great cri de coeur in 19:25-27, in which he implores the help of his 'redeemer' (גֹּאֲלִי), the one who recognizes the duties imposed by relationship, indicates his belief in the proximity of his God, even though he has no proof of that proximity.²⁴ For Job it is not suffering, physical or mental, that matters to him so much as a

²²Op. cit. p. 20. See also Terrien's Job: Poet of Existence, p. 21. Cf. also Rowley's article "The Book of Job and its Meaning".

²³"It is of the essence of its message that Job found God in his suffering, and so found relief not from his misfortunes, but in them. God was to him now far more precious than he had ever been." CB.

²⁴It is not intended to gloss over the many textual problems with which this celebrated passage is replete. The present concern is to emphasize the notion of relationship connoted by the term גֹּאֲלִי.

divine confirmation of his trust in the existence of a meaningful relationship of some kind.

Terrien's recent article on the book of Job, specifically on the Yahweh speeches and Job's responses, concludes that the role of the poem in the Hebrew tradition is largely ritualistic and dramatic:

The dramatic enactment of the poem appears to fulfill a direly needed function in the context of the cultural Weltschmerz of the exile in Babylon. The "turn of the year" becomes the occasion for the presentation, in proto-dramatic form, of a poetic discussion of the theology of grace.²⁵

By means of this drama the poet proclaims:

the inanity of self-justification (40:8), faith without calculation, service without hope or reward, the sense of theological sinfulness, and the participation of the destitute man in the gratuitous acts of the Creator.²⁶

The whole action takes place among the Jews in exile as part of the New Year festival.

While such a hypothesis is very attractive in many respects, especially in that it recognizes the dramatic potential of the poem, the question remains whether there was in fact a New Year festival among the Hebrews.²⁷ Also, it remains to be established that Job

²⁵S. L. Terrien, "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses", RE, LXVIII, 4 (1971), 497-509, p. 509. Terrien earlier explored this interpretation of Job as a para-ritual drama in "Le Poème de Job: Drama Para-rituel du Nouvel-An?", SVT, Congress Vol., Rome, 1968 (Leiden, 1969), pp. 220ff.

²⁶Terrien, op. cit., p. 509.

²⁷Cf. H-J. Kraus, Worship in Israel (Oxford, 1965), pp. 7ff., and especially pp. 205ff. Kraus also refers to Nowinckel's stress on the importance of drama in the cult (Psalmenstudien II, p. 21) p.9.

is in fact disparaged by Yahweh for the crimes Terrien lists.²⁸ Indeed, Job is commended by Yahweh for having spoken correctly (42:7). The accusations of self-justification, calculation etc., do not ring true of Job whose description in the Prologue, and whose behaviour in the Dialogue, preclude the possibility of truth in such allegations.

Further, the kind of expiatory role which Terrien posits for Job would seem to be more applicable to Deutero-Isaiah than to Job. For, as Dhorne says, "Job in no way expiates a personal or collective guilt".²⁹ The interpretation of Job by Terrien is closely related to his thesis of a close connection between Job and Deutero-Isaiah.³⁰ In these writings Terrien argues that a major reason for considering the priority of Job over Deutero-Isaiah is that the former never uses the notion of vicarious suffering as an explanation for his afflictions.³¹ But such an interpretation of Job is unwarranted for several reasons. First, insofar as the poet of Job deals with suffering his argument would appear to be that some sufferers are both virtuous and innocent. Secondly, it has not yet been established that vicar-

²⁸ While it is possible that Job's repentance in 42:1-6 might refer to such crimes, yet a closer analysis of the Yahweh speeches seems to preclude such a possibility. Further, since the friends are afforded no opportunity for repentance, nor the experience of the theophany, such an interpretation of Job's repentance seems unjustified.

²⁹ Dhorne, op. cit., oliv.

³⁰ This thesis is found in his commentary on Job in IB (New York, 1954), 881ff, and in his article, "Job et Dt.-Esaie".

³¹ IB, p. 890; "Job et Dt.-Esaie", p. 309.

ious suffering is indeed the theme of Deutero-Isaiah.³² Further, it is not evident that suffering, innocent or deserved, is the key theme of Job.

Neither can the charge be sustained that Job is deluding himself into "self-deification", if his arguments to the contrary in chapters 29-31 are to be taken seriously.³³ Thus it is difficult to accept Terrien's contention that the poet of Job is the "theologian of pure grace".³⁴

Furthermore, if it is conceded that Terrien is correct in his analysis of Job, then it follows that some of the arguments of the friends against Job's beliefs in his innocence and orthodoxy are valid. Then too, Elihu's attack on Job must also be seen as valid, at least to a degree. But it is difficult to accept this interpretation for several reasons. First, the words of 42:7 argue to the contrary. Second, if the objections of the friends were valid then the theophany would be robbed of much of its significance. Third, that the theophany does not deal with their denunciations and accusations contributes to the suspicion that their remarks are of little real worth in the poet's final analysis.

E. Dhorme has written what is still recognized as a classic

³²Cf. N. Snaith and H. Orlinsky, Studies in the Second Part of the Book of Isaiah, SVT, XIV (Leiden, 1969); Stuhlmeuller, op. cit.

³³"The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses", p. 501.

³⁴Ibid., p. 498.

commentary on the book of Job.³⁵ He maintains that the "leitmotif" of the work is that "misfortune is not necessarily the fruit of sin".³⁶ However, while such a motif can indeed be found within the book, it is nonetheless difficult to conceive of it as the predominant one. It was scarcely a universal belief among the Hebrews that all suffering entails sin. The oft-quoted examples of Abel, Uriah and Naboth illustrate pointedly a belief in the existence of innocent suffering humanly caused.³⁷ The Binding of Isaac in Genesis 22 illustrates the belief that anguish can be divinely inflicted on an individual who is renowned for his piety and uprightness. It is simplistic to suggest that the Hebrews were incapable of making such distinctions.

Dhorme later refers to the "uselessness of discussions about problems which surpass the range of human understanding" which he understands to be the thrust of the Yahweh speeches.³⁸ While it is true that overmuch speculation about insoluble matters can be inimical to the religious life, yet it is surely a human characteristic -- and one which is endorsed in various biblical writings -- to try to understand and to know God.³⁹ What Job is warned against, it is

³⁵A Commentary on the Book of Job (London, 1967). First published in Paris in 1926, the book was thought to be so significant as to merit re-publication in English. Cf. Rowley's prefatory note.

³⁶Ibid., lxxxi.

³⁷Cf. Rowley, CB, p. 17; K. M. Yates, "Understanding the Book of Job", RE, LXVIII, 4 (1971), 443-455, p. 453

³⁸Op. cit., lxxvii.

³⁹Cf. Ecclesiastes.

suggested, is in relying too heavily on his own abilities to comprehend totally the workings of divinity. He is not prohibited from speculating about God's relationship to man and the universe, as God's commendation of Job's speech in 42:7 would indicate. Further, Fohrer's observation that the actual words of a theophany have a particular point is relevant here.⁴⁰

Dhorme stresses this belief in the absolute inscrutability of God when he says that Job is "wrong to discuss a mystery beyond his knowledge".⁴¹ But, while it is evident that Job was reminded of his place within the universe, yet that reminder should not be taken for a complete rejection of Job's aspirations to know God.⁴² For, Moses and Abraham, among others, typify this questioning attitude towards God -- an attitude which frequently serves to distinguish them from their contemporaries. The description of man as made in the image of God in Genesis 1 testifies to the biblical belief that there is a meaningful relationship between man and God which it is man's privilege, perhaps even obligation, to investigate. An excess of intellectual inquisitiveness is almost what is required of the pious Hebrew.⁴³ Indeed, the descriptions of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 would appear to be no less than an attempt to explain to man

⁴⁰ Introduction, p. 327.

⁴¹ Op. cit., xci.

⁴² 38:2ff.

⁴³ The traditional Jewish respect for scholarship preserves the notion of the importance of continually reflecting on their religious beliefs.

the nature of the divine-human relationship (and especially that there is such a relationship) in all of its complexity in a subtle and sensitive way. The obliqueness of the metaphor preserves an element of essential mysteriousness unfathomable to man.

Later Dhorme remarks that the typical feature of Job is that it "passes through the crucible of a critical and penetrating mind orthodox, accepted ideas", such as individual retribution and reward versus communal.⁴⁴ Again, while it is indubitable that Job does indeed raise and discuss these issues, yet it is difficult to conceive of them as the focal points of his work, for they rarely stand out in clear relief as the central issues. If they are central, as Dhorme urges, then they might be expected to appear convincingly as such. Given the acknowledged skill of the author it is strange that he does not give them the prominence they deserve, if indeed they are as important as Dhorme suggests.

Dhorme also suggests that another theme of the book is to show "how the supreme justice of God which must one day be manifested is not subject to the narrow laws of the human mind".⁴⁵ Certainly this theme too is evident in the book, especially in the later chapters. But it may not have quite the significance which Dhorme's remark suggests. Job does not aspire to dominate the "supreme justice of God", but merely to understand its relationship to man's estate.

⁴⁴Op. cit., cxxxv. This notion of a multiplicity of themes for Job is central to Dhorme's thesis.

⁴⁵Ibid., cli.

If the theme were as Dhorme describes it then Job would indeed be guilty as the friends and Elihu contend.

Finally, Dhorme argues that the problem of evil is also a dominant theme and centers on the issue of the prosperity of the wicked.⁴⁶ According to Dhorme, Job's solution of the problem is traditional: the happiness of the wicked is short-lived.⁴⁷ However, if this is indeed the chief among many themes in Job it is scarcely obvious that this is so. Again, if this theme does really deserve this primacy it is remarkable that the poet's vaunted ingenuity could not make it more obvious. Of more importance is the fact that the poet does not offer any conclusive thoughts on this subject not already found elsewhere in the Bible.⁴⁸

In sum, while Dhorme's commentary on Job enlightens many of the key problems in Job, it does seem to centre on the crucial issue, namely, that of the relationship between the divine and human spheres. This central concern is observed by J. W. Wevers in his short study on the Psalms and Wisdom literature.⁴⁹

Wevers states:

The basic problem of Job, then, is the relation of finite man to an infinite God. Job had to be cowed into repentance. Job's struggle was based on a

⁴⁶Op. cit. cliv.

⁴⁷Ibid., clxiii. The reference is to Ps. 73, but the point is intended to cover Job as well.

⁴⁸Cf., for example, Ps. 92: 5f; 94; 101.

⁴⁹The Way of the Righteous: Psalms and the Books of Wisdom (Philadelphia, 1961).

refusal to come to terms with finitude...

Of course the problem of the innocent sufferer is discussed. But that is not the point of the book. The point of the book is to place doubt in the proper context; it is to lead the man of doubt into the presence of the Almighty. And so Job repents in dust and ashes. Finally he accepts his own finitude and has learned that it is good to be near God. The problem is not that of suffering. It is, rather, that of human limitation, of human existence...⁵⁰

This statement sums up much that is central to the poem. However it still omits serious mention of the terms in which the story unfolds. Such an omission is important given the significance attached to this terminology in the present study. From the perspective of the latter only a full appreciation of the terminology of the book can explain to Job his role and significance in creation. It is by means of this terminology that God comforts him through his demonstration that the universe is both divinely ordered and inclusive of man's interests. Thus Job is made aware that in his world, although chaos, or meaninglessness, can be omnipresent, yet it is never dominant because of the divine participation in the universe.

In the following pages an examination is made of certain studies which deal specifically with creation and Job. They are here examined for their contributions to the discussion of the importance of creation thought and terminology in this book.

Section 3 -- Selected Studies of Job and Creation

A brief article by M. Sekine is one of a very few works which deal directly with the question of the importance of creation thought

⁵⁰Op. cit., p. 75.

(Schöpfungsgedanke) in Job.⁵¹ Although Sekine recognizes the importance of creation thought for understanding Job, he makes no specific reference to the poet's use of the creation motif. In fact, his thesis requires only a rather general appreciation of the importance of creation thought and terminology in Job and is not very satisfactory in its explanations of the poet's specific use of this motif or its significance.

Sekine's basic thesis is that the problem of suffering is central for Job.⁵² This suffering is the context for a discussion of an issue of even greater significance, namely "...der Einheit von Schöpfungs- und Erlösungsgedanken".⁵³ In this discussion Sekine understands Job to be guilty of hubris, especially as indicated to his mind in Chapters 19 and 29-31. Job's wish is not so much to find salvation as to justify his own righteousness in which he eventually discovers no salvation.⁵⁴ The vindication of Job's righteousness would, in Sekine's view, dispense with revelation (Offenbarung) which must come from above.⁵⁵ Job must find meaning in his own righteousness for he has observed the meaninglessness of creation

⁵¹"Schöpfung und Erlösung im Buche Hiob", BZAW, 77 (1958), 213-223.

⁵²"Das zentrale Problem des Hiobbuches ist anerkanntermassen das Problem des Leidens", op. cit., p. 214.

⁵³Ibid., p. 213.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 216.

⁵⁵Op. cit., p. 218. Cf. above p. 21.

in his suffering.⁵⁶ This righteousness he maintains defiantly, especially as indicated in Chapter 21. Because of it he is led to deny the Creator and thereby to believe himself equal to God.⁵⁷ Accordingly, the thrust of the first Yahweh speech is to prove to Job that he is in no position to make such a judgment about creation.⁵⁸ Job has spoken on behalf of creation when in fact he had nothing to do with it. The result of Job's hubris is that he is ejected from creation. The second Yahweh speech repeats the first but in stronger terms. However, on this occasion Job is restored to creation as Job "redivivus".⁵⁹ He is born again in the new creation. He is shown to be part of the primordial world like the primordial creatures, Leviathan and Behemoth.⁶⁰ It is precisely this new creation which Sekine sees as Job's salvation.⁶¹ Accordingly, Job submits to his Creator.⁶² Sekine concludes that this view of God demonstrates "das nun die Welt der Schöpfung mit der Erlösung vereinigt worden ist".⁶³

While there is much in Sekine's article that is useful for

⁵⁶Sekine calls it the "Nihil" of creation, p. 216. Cf. also p. 217.

⁵⁷Ibid., p. 219.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 220

⁵⁹Ibid., p. 221

⁶⁰Ibid.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²42:3-6.

⁶³Op. cit., p. 222.

understanding Job, it is difficult to comprehend how he understands redemption, or salvation (Erlösung), to be unified in the manner he suggests. Undoubtedly Job benefits from the theophany. Undoubtedly, as this investigation maintains, creation thought is important throughout the book and especially in the Yahweh speeches. But how creation and salvation are unified significantly for Job is a problem which it is difficult to discern from Sekine's article.⁶⁴

There are some further serious difficulties with his thesis. First, Job's strenuous protests of innocence may be difficult to accept -- given their length and verbosity -- but nonetheless such over-protestation is a mark of the poet's style. Yahweh himself is at pains to convince Job fully of his points, as are the friends. Therefore it is difficult to agree with Sekine that Job is indeed guilty of hubris. Second, if he is guilty then Elihu's arguments, or those of one of the friends, are correct in their judgment. But no such recognition is given them by Yahweh. Third, if Sekine is right, what is it that Job has correctly spoken of which Yahweh says distinguishes him from his friends?⁶⁵ Finally, Sekine's thesis would seem to demand that man should not aspire to understand God. But such a view of biblical man is hard to reconcile with the descriptions of Job, or Moses or Abraham. Further, the human attempt to understand

⁶⁴The solution to this problem is that creation is to some unknown extent revelatory of the nature of God. The means by which this revelation is understood is, as is indicated in Gen. 1-11, through right knowledge. Hence Job's profound desire for a confrontation with God.

God, and the partial gratification of that attempt, does not pre-empt the function of revelation as Sekine suggests.⁶⁶

However, Sekine has been helpful in drawing attention to what does appear to be a distinctive feature of Job, namely, the importance of the role of creation thought in interpreting the whole.⁶⁷ Moreover, his observations about the relationship between Israelite and Canaanite thought corroborate the view here adopted that Israel did not hesitate to appropriate from Canaan, or Mesopotamia, certain aspects of their culture. Most notably Israel did not refrain from utilising creation thought and terminology whatever the risks involved in so doing.

A review of some other studies on the importance of the creation motif for biblical and other ancient Near Eastern literature assists in substantiating the claim that creation thought and terminology are key elements in Job.

In 1936 G. von Rad wrote a short article on the role and significance of the O. T. doctrine of creation.⁶⁸ This article has long exercised a dominant influence on much scholarship on the subject.⁶⁹

⁶⁶ Op. cit., p. 218

⁶⁷ Ibid., pp. 214 and 224.

⁶⁸ "Das Theologische Problem des alttestamentlichen Schöpfungsglaubens", in Werden und Wesen des Alten Testaments (Berlin, 1936). The references here are to the article as it appears in his later collection, The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays (London, 1965), pp. 136-143.

⁶⁹ Cf., for example, B. D. Napier, op. cit.; Sekine, op. cit., although he barely admits its influence for him (Cf. p. 214n); W. Harrelson, "Creation", The Chr. Sch. XXXIX, I (1956), 45-49; R. W. Gleason, "Creation in the Old Testament", Thought 37 (1962), 527-542.

Although von Rad subsequently revised his thoughts on creation, he still maintains his thesis of the subordinate role of creation within Hebrew religion.⁷⁰ It therefore merits special attention in any study which deals with the influence of creation thought in biblical literature.

In the article mentioned, von Rad was at pains to demonstrate his thesis of the inferiority of the so-called doctrine of creation even in those passages which are most clearly saturated with creation thought and terminology.⁷¹ His explanation as to why creation never attained independent status is "because of the exclusive commitment of Israel's faith to historical salvation".⁷² The reason for this secondary position of creation is that

the doctrine of redemption had first to be fully safeguarded, in order that the doctrine that nature, too, is a means of divine self-revelation might not encroach upon or distort the doctrine of redemption, but rather broaden and enrich it.⁷³

Thus von Rad explains the "really quite slight significance of the doctrine of creation".⁷⁴ However, it must be noted that von Rad does recognize the centrality of the doctrine of creation in the Wisdom literature. He observes that:

⁷⁰ Old Testament Theology, Vol. I, pp. 136ff. It is subordinate to the theme of saving history (Heilsgeschichte).

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 134f.

⁷² Theology of the Old Testament, Vol. I, p. 142.

⁷³ Ibid., p. 143.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

In it [the Wisdom literature] Creation was in reality an absolute basis for faith, and was referred to for its own sake altogether and not in the light of other factors of the faith. The clearest case is Job xxxviii ff., but compare also Prov. iii. 19f., viii. 22ff., xiv. 31, xx. 12, etc.⁷⁵

However, he subsequently qualifies this statement with an ambiguous reference to the priority of "saving history" for later "attestations".⁷⁶ Later, he observes in connection with Job 38, that in the Wisdom literature a "new way" is shown that leads "from intelligent contemplation to adoration".⁷⁷ But even this way is connected -- how, it is not quite clear -- with the saving history:

It [the theological thinking of Wisdom] stood before the world as Creation, and its task was to find a connexion from there/with the saving history, that is, with that revelation of Yahweh's will which was pre-eminently turned towards Israel.⁷⁸

Furthermore, his earlier statement about Job 38 is subtly qualified much later in the same volume of his O. T. Theology with the following comment:

There too ["the divine utterances in the Book of Job"] the glory and the power, that is, the divinity of Yahweh, which no doubt is to assail, proves itself from Creation, though admittedly from a Creation which right from the beginning was probably understood as a saving work of Yahweh.⁷⁹

In a recent work on the Wisdom literature, von Rad devotes

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 139.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Op. cit., p. 151.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 450. Cf. also p. 451.

⁷⁹Ibid., p. 452.

about twenty pages to an exposition of Job.⁸⁰ This exposition is remarkable for the fact that, although he has many times referred to the importance of the so-called doctrine of creation in Job, in reality it receives very little attention and hardly seems to merit the eminent position he accords it. Rather, he sees the doctrine of creation as explicative mainly of Job 38f, and in a way that does not do justice to the many and various references to creation which abound throughout the whole book of Job.

He notes that the function of creation in Chapter 38 is "to refer man back to the mystery of creation and of divine guidance".⁸¹ Furthermore, "what creation says is understood not as praise ascending to God (although this is also mentioned, 38.7), but as a word which turns towards the human mind".⁸² In a sense, creation in Job serves only to refer Job back to God and is not in any strikingly obvious way explicative to Job of his predicament. He is simply stunned by the self-manifestation of God in his creation and would not appear to have understood his own dilemma any the better for it. From the point of view of this investigation, Job has both learnt and understood, and is given recognition for this understanding by God in 42:7.⁸³

Another difficulty with von Rad's work is his tendency to

⁸⁰ Wisdom in Israel (New York, 1972), pp. 206-226.

⁸¹ Ibid., p. 225.

⁸² Ibid. The precise meaning of the last phrase is ambiguous.

⁸³ Von Rad quotes Karl Barth's Church Dogmatics, IV 3, 1st half, ET 1961, p. 496 to the effect that this verse refers to Job's confessions in the Prologue and not to anything he has said in the Dialogue.

designate references to creation and other topics as 'doctrines'. It is difficult to visualise the author of Job as sitting down to write his version of the tale of the innocent sufferer and deliberately selecting the doctrine of creation as the means for the dénouement in Chapters 38-42. Such an intention requires a very rigid view of Israel's religion and leaves little scope to the poet to exercise his imagination. Furthermore, von Rad's designation of 'doctrine' to refer to various references to creation is reminiscent of his cultic credos and of later formulations of religious beliefs.

Von Rad's preoccupation with the thesis of 'saving-history' (Heilsgeschichte) as the fundamental and exclusive means of divine self-manifestation makes it difficult for him to give credence to other mediums by means of which the Hebrews came to know and to understand their God.⁸⁴ His constant concern to relegate references to creation to a secondary and inferior position in Israel's religion prevents him from fully appreciating their significance. Finally, his understanding of Job's repentance and restoration is manifestly dependent on his presumption of Job's guilt. Nothing Job might have said could possibly merit his restoration except his total self-denial in the Prologue.

Other recent writings on the subject of creation and Job merit attention at this point, for they have a bearing on what von Rad has said about creation and on the interpretation of Job,

⁸⁴Cf., for example, James Barr, "The Interpretation of Scripture II: Revelation Through History in the Old Testament and in Modern Theology", Interp. XVII (1963), 193-205.

specifically the role of creation in that book. Among these writings are two articles by J. Crenshaw.⁸⁵

Like von Rad, Crenshaw regards creation "theology" as a doctrine of secondary biblical importance.⁸⁶ He differs in regard to what is secondary. For him, creation theology is secondary to the belief in the justice of God whereas, for von Rad, it is secondary to the saving-history:

Whereas he [von Rad] thinks of creation as subservient to saving history, we believe creation belongs under the rubric of justice. The function of creation theology, in our view, is to undergird the belief in divine justice...creation belongs to the fundamental question of human existence, namely the integrity of God.⁸⁷

Furthermore, in connection with the interpretation of Job, Crenshaw is convinced that the central issue in this book is that of theodicy -- albeit theodicy with a slightly different definition.⁸⁸ Consequently, in interpreting Job he explains all references to creation as subservient to the theme of the justice, or integrity, of God, that is to theodicy. The particular cause for the emergence of creation theology as significant within Israel's theological spectrum is that

⁸⁵"Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel", ZAW, 82 (1970), 380-395, and a private communication, "The Function of Creation Theology in Wisdom Literature", 1-12.

⁸⁶He refers to von Rad's article discussed above.

⁸⁷"The Function of Creation Theology in Wisdom Literature", p. 11.

⁸⁸"Job pays heed to the revelatory word of the Creator [as opposed to reason], while the Babylonian sufferer trusts in the religious experience of past generations. In a word, the appeal to revelation or tradition falls far short of a theodicy, the resolution of the problem by human reason", "Popular Questioning...", p. 381.

of crisis. In such a situation, Crenshaw asserts, "reflection upon the implications of a final judgment" produce "the necessity to postulate a doctrine of creation as central to Yahwism".⁸⁹

While Crenshaw's contributions seem to have much in common with the findings of this investigation, yet there are a few issues on which disagreement must be registered. The main issue concerns his belief that Job is essentially a theodicy of Crenshaw's definition, and that, "wisdom thought functions primarily as defense of divine justice".⁹⁰ However, from the perspective of this thesis, Job is not a theodicy, not even of Crenshaw's variety. The central purpose of Job is essentially that of establishing the existence of a meaningful relationship between God and man for Job's sake rather than proving the justice and integrity of God as a theodicy would require. Also, Crenshaw's work suggests, perhaps unintentionally, that Qoheleth and Job have similar aims, whereas here the opposite view is taken.⁹¹ However, his thoughts on the importance of the notion of the "orderliness of creation" as the fundamental premise of the wise man accords well with the hypotheses of this thesis.⁹² This notion of the orderliness of creation as a key theme of the Wisdom literature

⁸⁹"Popular Questioning...", p. 391.

⁹⁰"Creation Theology...", p. 3 and Cf. p. 8 for further remarks on theodicy.

⁹¹Ibid., p. 6. That is, Job does not despair of life.

⁹²Cf. p. 10 (Ibid.), "Creation...assures the wise man that the universe is comprehensible, and thus encourages him to search for its secrets. Furthermore, creation supplies the principle of order that holds together the cosmic, political and social fabric of the universe."

is echoed by H. H. Schmid in speaking of Job:

Sein Leiden wird nicht rational erklärt, wie es von den drei Freunden und Elihu versucht wird, sondern Hiob wird angehalten, sein Geschick im Horizont der kosmischen Ordnung zu sehen und anzunehmen. Denn dies ist Grundvoraussetzung weisheitlichen Denkens: Es gibt eine Ordnung. Wie sie im einzelnen zu beschreiben ist, ist zunächst offen. Jedenfalls ist sie so umfassend, dass alles, was dem Menschen begegnen kann, in ihr seinen Ort haben muss.⁹³

It is a basic argument of this investigation that Job is happy to observe this order in creation as a token of God's proximity to man, or his concern for man, and as an indication that the universe is not governed by chaos.

Certain other difficulties with Crenshaw's interpretation of Job deserve consideration because their recognition and examination assists in substantiating the differences between his understanding of Job and that of this study. For example, Crenshaw refers to the "Titanism" of Job in connection with 37:18:

Can you, like him, spread out the skies,
hard as a molten mirror?

This verse occurs in a passage in which numerous references are made to the wonders and intricacies of the creation.⁹⁴ Job is asked disbelievingly if he has the expertise to emulate the Creator. Thus, this passage suggests that the poet's foremost thought is the depic-

⁹³ Wesen und Geschichte der Weisheit: Eine Untersuchung zum Altorientalischen und Israelitischen Weisheitsliteratur (Berlin, 1966), pp. 180-181. Crenshaw acknowledges the importance of Schmid's work for his views. Cf. "Creation Theology...", pp. 2-3.

⁹⁴ 37:14-24. Cf. also Gen. 1:14f. in which the making of the 'firmament' (U'p'7) is discussed.

tion of Job's limitations in terms of creative power and wisdom rather than, as Crenshaw suggests, his "absurdity" as a Titan.⁹⁵

It is a difference largely of emphasis, but it is important as indicative not only of the divergencies in interpretation between his thesis and this one, but also of his basic beliefs about Job.

Crenshaw notes, in connection with the same verses, that "by excluding Job from the original creation God impresses upon him the sheer absurdity of Job's attempt to be God".⁹⁶ But, while it is true that the divine intention is indeed to force Job to recognise his own shortcomings, it does so, not so much to suppress an impudent Titan, as to explain to Job the reasons why he should not expect to comprehend fully the totality of the creation. Nonetheless, creation is intelligible to him following the theophany to a degree previously inconceivable. Thus the divine remark is intended to be a cause of comfort to Job, rather than a harsh rejection, for it indicates precisely, and generously, to him the realities of his situation.⁹⁷

The conclusion of Crenshaw's investigation is that "creation theology functions in Job to undergird the cogency of the argument for divine justice despite strong and convincing evidence to the

⁹⁵"Creation Theology...", p. 8.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 9.

⁹⁷The similarity between this aspect of Elihu's speech and the thrust of the Yahweh speeches is remarkable. It may suggest a deliberate premonition of the conclusion of the tale with the intention of making that conclusion all the more forceful.

contrary". In the view argued in this thesis creation theology functions to demonstrate to Job the existence of an intelligible and benevolent -- even if largely inscrutable -- God. The relationship between this God and Job forms the foundation of an assurance that the universe is to be known finally as a moral order, not as indifferent chaos.

In short, the function of creation theology as it appears in Job, is not so much to provide "a defense of the justice of God", as to demonstrate a belief in the existence and meaningfulness of the proximity of God to man in the face of an omnipresent chaos however conceived.⁹⁸

A few other articles, already mentioned, also bear directly on the subject of the meaning and use of creation thought in Job.⁹⁹ It is not necessary to dwell on them at length here since, with the exception of Fishbane's article, they have received substantial comment above.¹⁰⁰ But it may be useful to draw attention to a few points at issue in these articles at this stage of the review.

Perhaps the most remarkable feature of both Fisher's and

⁹⁸Crenshaw, "Creation Theology", p. 10. In the other article mentioned Crenshaw uses the term 'creation faith', e.g. p. 390. Presumably he understands it to be synonymous with 'creation theology'.

⁹⁹Cf. above, "The Nature of the Creation Motif in Job", pp. 14ff. L. R. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", VT, XV (1965), 313-324; D. J. McCarthy, "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry", CBQ, 29 (1967), 393-406; M. Fishbane, "Jeremiah IV:23-26 and Job III:3-13: A recovered Use of the Creation Pattern", VT, XXI, 2 (1971), 151-167.

¹⁰⁰Cf. n.2 above. Fishbane's article receives attention in the textual analysis of Job 3 below.

McCarthy's articles is their almost total omission of any reference to Job despite the fact that so much of what they say finds direct confirmation or refutation in this book. The omission is all the more astonishing when, particularly with reference to Fisher's article, it is found that almost all the features he finds to be descriptive of creation occur in Job and often with the implications he finds elsewhere.

Fisher and McCarthy have much in common, principally a recognition of the importance of creation for an appreciation of ancient Near Eastern religions. Both recognise the unity of creation and redemption, but what they understand by these terms, especially by creation, is the subject of the dispute. For the present purposes only those aspects of their discussion which deal specifically with the Old Testament are considered here.

Fisher's definition of creation is intended to show that:

conflict, kingship, ordering of chaos, and temple building are all related to an overarching theme that...[he] would call "creation". However this is not a theogony or a creation of the E1 type.¹⁰¹ Rather it is cosmogonic and is of the Baal type,

Creation so conceived has a mythical function. For instance, the "ordering of...[the] temple resembles the creation of the cosmos".¹⁰²

Fisher also maintains that it was creation of the Baal type, or cosmogony, which was important to the Hebrews such that they incor-

¹⁰¹ Op. cit., p. 316. ~

¹⁰² Ibid., p. 319.

porated it in their thought.¹⁰³ Creation of the El type, or theogony, was obviously of no use to them. The reason for this priority is that "order [was] more important than ultimate origins".¹⁰⁴ Fisher then produces textual evidence to substantiate his claims about the various components which together comprise his notion of creation.¹⁰⁵

McCarthy questions Fisher's use of the word 'creation'. He maintains that creation must mean "some sort of absolute beginning of our world, or we equivocate".¹⁰⁶ For this reason he disputes the appropriateness of the label of creation, or creation motif, as applied to certain Old Testament and Ugaritic texts because, "they do not speak of creation by progressive emanation...".¹⁰⁷

Thus McCarthy's basic contention seems to be that what is commonly called creation in the Old Testament is not in fact correctly so termed. For him, so-called creation is in reality cosmology, or that which concerns the ordering of the universe and the laws by which it is governed. Consequently, he thinks of Israel as concerned not with the origins of the universe, but with "political and social" origins.¹⁰⁸ The latter constitute for McCarthy what is creation in the Hebrew Bible. Its function is to declare to man his redemption:

¹⁰³Op. cit., p. 321

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵E.g. Ps. 93, Ibid., p. 322.

¹⁰⁶Op. cit., p. 88.

¹⁰⁷Ibid., pp. 88-89.

¹⁰⁸Ibid., p. 99.

the centre of attention is the order of things, not their origin...one should speak of the order of things, cosmology in the root sense, if one will.¹⁰⁹

McCarthy regards the ancient poetic sections of the Bible as the most likely source of imagery denoting Chaoskampf.¹¹⁰ From his examination of certain representative texts he concludes that:

Yahweh is indeed spoken of, in terms which, in one way or another, refer to the coming to be of things, and this vocabulary is the same as that of the Ugaritic texts when they speak of origins. However, the Old Testament gives the words a particular focus.¹¹¹

This focus he understands to be that of a "saved and chosen people".¹¹² What is created then is a social or political order.¹¹³ As far as he is concerned, the point of the borrowed elements is that they are "demythologized...because early in its history Israel is so free from seeing any reality in the Chaoskampf theme that it has become a mere source of figures of speech".¹¹⁴

McCarthy concludes from his investigation that what matters is, "the maintenance of the world of Syro-Phoenicia, not its origins".¹¹⁵

¹⁰⁹Op. cit., p. 91.

¹¹⁰ McCarthy cites Gen. 49; Ex. 15: 2-18; Dt. 32: 1-43; Jgs. 5; 2 Sam. 22: 2-51; Pss. 29 and 68 as "materials which bring us back close to Israel's beginnings", Ibid., p. 91.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 93.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 94.

¹¹³Ibid.

¹¹⁴Ibid., p. 95. It is remarkable that in his references to the appearance of God in the storm McCarthy makes no reference to Job 38-42 (Ibid., pp. 97-98).

¹¹⁵Op. cit., p. 97. Cf. also H. H. Schmid. op. cit., pp. 180-181.

The sole

origins which counted for Israel were political and social, ultimately religious because these things were seen to be the mighty work of Yahweh...¹¹⁶

He also observes that because Israel was "interested in historical, not cosmic origins...it could use the mythic themes without hazard".¹¹⁷

Finally, McCarthy understands creation of this kind to be subsumed within a divine plan of redemption, "They [the political and social origins] speak of God's saving Israel, and it may be misleading to seek more from them".¹¹⁸

The results of the present investigation of Job suggest that elements of both cosmology (McCarthy) and cosmogony (Fisher) occur within this book. Consequently, it is difficult to maintain, as Fisher observes, that the question of the origins of the universe did not concern the Hebrews.¹¹⁹ However, McCarthy's observations about the demythologized aspects of creation fragments in the Bible is partially true for Job.¹²⁰ Nonetheless, it is difficult to conceive of Job, granted the existence of the creation motif, as only an extensive cosmology as McCarthy's thesis requires. The

¹¹⁶ McCarthy, op. cit., p. 99.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p. 100.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Op. cit., p. 321.

¹²⁰ However, if these elements are indeed demythologized as McCarthy claims, then it also follows that they are robbed of some of their significance. This disembodiment would then deprive the poetry of some of its impact.

question of Job was not the proper discernment of the laws which govern the universe -- that is, a cosmology -- but the recognition of some intelligible signs of belonging within this universe and evidence of the existence of a divine-human relationship of some kind. This evidence was conveyed to Job ~~through~~ his perception of the nature of the origins of the universe, or its ordering -- that is, through cosmogony.

The essence of Job's problem is not the acquisition of knowledge of a technical kind which the strict definition of a cosmology requires, but knowledge of the divine involvement in creation not usually denoted by cosmology.¹²¹ Thus, in the present view, what Job is said to have discerned in 42:7 is neither cosmology nor cosmogony but right knowledge (דעת) in the sense of knowledge whereby proper and peaceful relation to God is sustained. Finally, the juxtaposition of creation and redemption in the final chapters of Job confirms the suggestion that creation contains certain qualities which are recognizably redemptive for man.¹²²

In sum, both Fisher and McCarthy have been helpful in drawing attention to the need to define carefully the terms which are applied to Job, especially terms denoting creation. But they have been singularly unhelpful in their deliberate, or inadvertent, omission

¹²¹ The author's M.A. thesis (Wisdom, Justice and Knowledge in the Book of Job [McMaster, 1970]) contends that the different kinds of knowledge referred to in Job have special significance. Thus דעת would denote the kind of technical knowledge that is connoted by cosmology. דעה refers to a knowledge of God, or ultimate knowledge.

¹²² Cf. above, p. 45 and n.2.

of consideration of those references to creation which occur throughout Job. These references obviously require consideration in any analysis of creation in the Bible. Without them a study of biblical creation is incomplete. Also, the relationship between creation and redemption -- a subject which concerns both scholars -- is involved in the final chapters of Job. Unfortunately they make no reference to them.

Summary and Conclusions on Recent Job Scholarship

In the first part of this necessarily brief and selective review of recent Joban scholarship several different attitudes towards Job and his problems were observed and criticized. Certain shortcomings in interpretation suggested the need for a different kind of evaluation of this book, specifically one which took seriously the unity of the work and also its terminology. While it was not the purpose of this review to cover every trend and aspect of recent Joban scholarship in view of the immensity of such a task, it was intended to select a few of the better known commentaries and other works and to present from their analysis a general picture of contemporary scholarly attitudes towards Job.

The result of this analysis has shown a need for further exploration along these lines, particularly into the question of the role of creation in this book. While several studies have been made on this subject, both in Job and in the Wisdom literature as a whole, few have commented on this subject at length and in a manner which accomodates satisfactorily its various functions. Other studies

have noted a similarity in conception between Job and certain ancient Near Eastern stories of a similar nature and also the importance of creation within their religions. A review of these studies confirms the need for great caution in assessing the worth of such comparisons because of the hints of uniqueness in Job.

One general conclusion derived from this review is that many scholars have been puzzled by these references to creation in Job and have sought to explain their significance in various ways. However, given the results of this investigation, they fall short of a full and sufficient realization of their purpose. This purpose, it is suggested, can only be accomplished when the role and function of the creation motif in Job receives the recognition it merits.

PART TWO
ANALYSIS OF TEXT

Introduction

This part of the thesis contains an analysis of certain sections of Job in which the creation motif figures prominently. Because a complete examination of each and every occurrence of the motif in the book would require a project quite beyond the scope of this thesis, only a synopsis of other important occurrences and usages of the motif elsewhere in Job, and especially in the latter's speeches, is provided in a subsequent chapter. Its function is to substantiate the argument for the general importance of the motif for an appreciation of the book as a whole, and also to note a few of the various adaptations of the motif which occur in these chapters. This chapter is followed by a brief examination of the friends' contributions to the debate. There follows a more comprehensive examination of the last chapters of the book (38-42). Chapters 3 and 38 to 42 have been selected for especial consideration because, in them, the creation motif is observed to figure particularly prominently. Also, since these chapters begin Job's argument and provide the book's conclusion, they can reasonably be expected to be worthy of the closest scrutiny.

The Massoretic text of the Hebrew Bible is the source of the following quotations.¹ Frequent reference is also made to the

¹R. Kittel's Biblia Hebraica (3rd. edition, Stuttgart, 1962)

standard English versions, particularly the Revised Standard Version and the New English Bible.²

The examination of the text is intended to be strictly exegetical of the contents of the particular text. However, there are occasions when the exegesis obviously borders on the eisegetical. Such an occurrence is unavoidable in seeking to recognise every possible nuance which may be reflective of creation. The pursuit of such nuances under such a line of inquiry has been fruitful in producing a great variety of references to creation. Taken together these reflections on creation corroborate the general importance of creation for the book. This importance is subjected to further scrutiny in the detailed analysis of chapters 3 and 38 to 42.

The analysis of the text is divided into the following chapters:

Chapter One -- Job 3

Chapter Two -- Job 6-31

Chapter Three -- Job 4-5, 15, 22; 8, 18, 25; 11, 20; 32-37

Chapter Four -- Job 38-39

Chapter Five -- Job 40-41

Chapter Six -- Job 42

In the course of the exegesis of these chapters pertinent textual difficulties are noted. However, no attempt is made to provide a

is the version used here. Occasional reference is made to the critical apparatus of this edition where applicable.

²Hereafter referred to as the RSV and the NEB respectively. RSV, New York, 1952; NEB, Oxford and Cambridge, 1961 and 1970.

complete account of all the textual difficulties involved because such a task would comprise another thesis in itself. Besides, they are well documented in many of the standard commentaries on the book.³ The intention here is to deal only with the more troublesome areas in the chapter under examination and to indicate various possible interpretations, especially those particularly concerned with creation.

The exegesis of those passages of the text which are seen to concern creation in various ways follows an account of the main themes of the text involved. While the recognition of many of these themes is not novel, in many instances, yet their exegesis has often resulted in shedding a new light on their contents, particularly on the motif of creation.⁴ Thus the exegesis draws out the full significance of the references to creation which have often previously received only minimal recognition.

³H. H. Rowley's Century Bible commentary on Job is the source of many of the following textual comments.

⁴Again, Rowley's work has provided a useful analysis of many of the topics in the texts concerned. However, he has frequently failed to pursue the references to creation and to perceive their importance for the whole work.

CHAPTER ONE -- JOB 3

The chapter itself is roughly divisible into three sections.¹ However, the divisions are somewhat artificial, for there is a continuity of thought apparent between its parts and also a considerable over-lapping of themes. The three sections are:

Section 1 -- Vss. 1-10. In these verses Job curses the day of his birth and deplores its creation;

Section 2 -- Vss. 11-19. In this section Job laments his own birth and desires the comfort of death;

Section 3 -- Vss. 20-26. In this part Job disparages the goodness of light (day), and life (birth) and further deplores his own situation.

Section 1 -- Vss. 1 - 10

In these verses Job denounces the day of his birth. His specific request, which is apparently addressed to God, demands that the distinguishing characteristics of day be obliterated. He refers, not to any day, but to "his day" (*YOM-YOM*), that is, to his birthday.² He specifically requests that this day become total

¹ Cf. D. N. Freedman, "The Structure of Job 3", *Biblica*, 49 (1968), 503-508. Freedman defends the tripartite division of the chapter adopted here on metrical and other grounds.

² While the Hebrew does not say explicitly 'his birthday', the phrase *YOM-YOM* obviously intends this interpretation. Both the *RSV* and the *NEB* adopt this translation.

Verse 2 is usually abbreviated to "and Job said" in translation. But the whole phrase *YOM-YOM* "and Job answered and said"

darkness, that it might be indistinguishable from a night without light of any kind (vss. 4-5). In fact, this day is to be so far removed from the possibility of dawning that God (Eliah), the creator of day and night, is implored to remove the "bright light" (לְיָמִים)³ far from it, thereby preventing its birth (vs. 4). Indeed, the day, or as it is in its incipient state, primordial darkness, is to become blacker than black.⁴ Both 'gloom' (טֹמָה) and 'deep darkness' (לַיְלָה) are to be its fate (vs. 5).⁵ Rowley argues that

is important because it accurately describes the change of tone between this chapter and the previous ones. In them Job accepted patiently the news of each fresh disaster with complete equanimity. The thought of rebellion against God as the source of his afflictions is not to be considered. But, here the choice of this phrase indicates a change of some kind. The verb אָנַח means to 'answer' and also 'to howl', 'sing out' (cf. W. L. Holladay, ed., A Concise Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament [Grand Rapids, 1971]). The latter sense seems to be included here at the least, for the spirit of calm acceptance of the first two chapters is here exchanged for one of urgent protest. Therefore the retention of this word, and some acknowledgment of its meaning in translation, is important for understanding the poet's thought at this stage.

³Rowley notes that this word is a hapax legomenon (op. cit., p. 45), and offers no further comment on its significance. That significance may be derived from a comparison with Ps. 34: 4-5 in which those who seek (שָׁאוּ) the LORD find him and are 'radiant' (לְיָמִים). Here, by contrast, Job implores Yahweh to withhold that light precisely because it does not contain any radiance for him that he now desires. That is, Job wants to escape from an existence in which the erstwhile signs of hope are in fact meaningless to him.

⁴It must become completely black because night is not without illumination. Hence, night too must, as the following verses show, be totally deprived of light. That light must be extinguished because it presages despair and not hope for Job. The divinely organized lights of Genesis 1:14ff. are here disparaged by implication.

⁵Cf. M. Pope, Job, The Anchor Bible (New York, 1965), hereafter referred to as AB, p. 29 who refers to the fearsome and mysterious nature of darkness which is connoted by the many semitic words for its expression.

instead of the present נִמְלָץ,

most modern scholars prefer the view that the word should read שַׁלְמֻט, and that it is an abstract noun from the root שִׁלַּם 'be dark' (so KB and Dhorme).⁶

But the emendation is both unnecessary and misleading, because the notion of death, which the present form of the word contains, is important in this context. Job wants to prevent life at all costs. Thus, נִמְלָץ here means literally, 'shadow of death' as well as 'deep darkness'. The death wished for is that of the embryonic day. So repulsive to Job is the thought of the day's birth, that he pictures it in its least attractive garb, that is, as it might appear during a daytime storm (vs. 5c).⁷

Even the night is to be deprived of any kind of creative distinctiveness if it is to conform to Job's requirements (vs. 6f.). It is to become זֶדֶק 'thick darkness', that is, it is to provide total obscurity. The same word is used in Jos. 24:7 to refer to the deep darkness which completely obscured the Israelites from the pursuing Egyptians. In this instance, the darkness is to provide

⁶Op. cit., p. 43. The same rare form of the word also occurs in Ps. 23:4, but in that context, the psalmist asserts the proximity of God to man even in "the valley of the shadow of death", whereas here Job infers that in 'deep darkness' he will be safe from, instead of with, God. This same 'deep darkness' also suggests that pre-created existence which Job longs for.

⁷Cf. Pope, (AB, p. 29) who notes that the phrase כְּמַרְרֵי יוֹם which the RSV renders as 'the blackness of the day', is probably descriptive of an eclipse of the sun. Thus, the writer is referring to the darkness which is caused by an eclipse. It is an unnatural darkness because it is unusual. But even this unnatural darkness is more welcome to Job than the misleading light of day because it shelters him from God. The notion of 'bitterness' in כְּמַרְרֵי יוֹם has demonic overtones as Ibn Ezra and Rashi note (cf. Pope, *ibid.*). Nonetheless, Job still finds it more preferable to day, such is his despair over the meaninglessness which day signifies to him.

a protective veil against God, whom Job believes to be the source of his afflictions. Thus, day and night are merged into an ever-deepening darkness which recedes further and further from light or life.

The distinctiveness of night is further disparaged by Job's request that it might not be 'united', or 'counted', among the days of the year.⁸ That is, it is to be totally deprived of all distinctive characteristics. In other words, it is to revert to the chaos that preceded the creation. Furthermore, night, which is implicitly described as fertile, is now to be rendered barren.⁹ In other words, it cannot even possess the hope of creation which might have existed in the chaos (תהו ובהו) which preceded existence as described in Genesis 1. Instead, that night is to be totally deprived, even as a barren woman (גלמל) is without hope of producing life.¹⁰ It shall not be broken even by the sound of a 'happy cry' (חן חן). Thus it will be completely devoid of anything denotative of that creation which Job presently regards as illustrative only of hope-

⁸The RSV renders תהו ובהו as "let it not rejoice" deriving the verb from the root תהו. But a derivation of this form of the verb from the root תהו preserves the continuity of thought with the third part of the verse, in addition to emphasizing the idea of creationlessness.

⁹Vs. 7. Cf. also Speiser's translation of the first few verses of Gen. 1 in which he argues that creation derives from a pre-existent formlessness (Genesis, The Anchor Bible [New York, 1964], pp. 3 and 5ff.).

¹⁰Rowley comments that this "is not the usual word for 'barren'; it means 'stony', 'as unproductive as a rock'" (QB, p. 44). Its use in Isa. 49:21 signifies the sorrow, or hopelessness, of a barren woman. But to Job it is the epitome of happiness precisely because in it there is no life or hope. It is devoid of any 'joyful cry' (חן חן) as the next line corroborates.

lessness.

In vs. 8-9 Leviathan, the very symbol of chaos itself, is summoned to exert himself.¹¹ If D^{y} 'day', may be construed to refer also to Yam, the counterpart of Leviathan in the Ugaritic pantheon, then he too is here summoned to participate in the destruction of creation.¹² Apophis, who was also frequently involved with destruction, may here be included in this call to arms, if the mythological potential of the phrase עַפְעַפ־יָמִים 'eyelids of the dawn' is acknowledged.¹³ Rowley observes in connection with Leviathan that,

it is probable that eclipses were believed to be due to its [Leviathan's] swallowing the sun or the moon.¹⁴

Apophis, like Leviathan, was also concerned with destruction,

¹¹Cf. C. H. Gordon, "Leviathan: Symbol of Evil", in Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations, ed. A. Altmann (Cambridge [Mass.], 1966), pp. 1-9; T. Gaster, Theopis (New York, 1961), pp. 202f.; M. Fishbane, op. cit., p. 160; M. K. Wakeman, God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery (Leiden, 1973), pp. 62-68. These works discuss the role of Leviathan in Israel and in the ancient Near East.

¹²G. R. Driver confirms the translation of yam for yom in "Problems in the Hebrew Text of Job", SVT, III (1960), edd. M. Noth and D. Winton-Thomas (Leiden, Brill), 72-93, p. 93. Pope (AB, p. 30) asserts the reality of the mythological allusions for the passage. But his suggestion that Job's intent here is to summon the aid of the "master curser" to curse his conception and his birth misses the point of the passage which is to undo creation itself.

It is not clear whether לְפָקֵק is from the root לָפַק 'to curse', or לָפַק 'to pierce'. Possibly both meanings are intended, but the latter is convincing because of its suggestion of violently awakening by piercing, or jabbing. The latter sense also accords with the arousing of Leviathan.

¹³Vs. 9b.

¹⁴QB, p. 45.

specifically with the prevention of the dawn's birth.¹⁵ Obviously, the function of all of these references is to describe the depths of despair to which Job has been reduced by his belief in the hopelessness of the creation. His anguish is so great that he must summon these agents of destruction to annihilate the creation in order that he might live in peace. It is, of course, a blasphemous cry, but it clearly depicts the intensity of Job's anguish which has led him to denounce the works of creation itself in such strong terms. His cri de coeur denotes his recognition at this early stage of the Dialogue that, creation must somehow be explicable to him to be worthy of credence. That is, creation must be illustrative of the divine-human relationship in a manner that is humanly comprehensible for him to want to live in it.

Thus, verses 1-10 describe Job's plea for the obliteration of his birthday in terms which recall the primordial state of creationlessness in which light had not yet been created, nor day yet separated from night.¹⁶ The appropriateness of such imagery can

¹⁵Cf. J. B. Pritchard, Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament (Princeton, 1955), pp. 6-8.

¹⁶As indicated, certain of these themes refer to Canaanite and Mesopotamian religion, particularly to those aspects of it which deal with origins of various kinds. The poet's concern with creation can be further established from comparisons with certain psalms, e.g. Pss. 8, 19, 93, 96-99, 104. Cf. also, A. E. Combs, op. cit. N. Glatzer ("The Book of Job and its Interpreters" in Biblical Motifs: Origins and Transformations, 197-220) has also drawn attention to the connections between Genesis and Job:

The combination of the Job theme with one or another motif of the biblical Adam story appears too frequently in the Job literature to be dismissed as a coincidence. The nature of the relationship between the two complexes and its relevance to the interpretation

be recognized when a comparison is made between Job's former state and his present one.¹⁷ In his former state he is at the pinnacle of creation, just as man appears to be in Genesis 1, Psalm 8 and elsewhere. But, in his reduced state, the discrepancies between his former glory and his present condition cause him to consider whether the conception of man as the crown of creation is in fact well-founded.¹⁸ Clearly, in this chapter he regards creation as confining in the worst sense.

The point of Job's remarks in these opening verses can be

of the Book of Job would require a separate study.
(p. 200n.)

...Equally significant...is the remark that the Book of Job corresponds to the Book of Genesis; both teach the creation of the world and providence; both refer to God predominantly as 'elohim' thus emphasizing the attribute of divine justice. (p. 207n.)

¹⁷M. Fishbane, and others (e.g. Pope, AB, p. 30), have noted the similarity between Job's imprecations and an incantation ("Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13: A Recovered Use of the Creation Pattern", VT, 21, 2(1971), 151-167). Fishbane's thesis is attractive in that it recognizes the presence of creation references in this chapter. But it is hard to accept that its thrust is, as he maintains: to provide a systematic bouleversement, or reversal, of the cosmicizing acts of creation described in Gen. 1-11 4a. Job, in the process of cursing the day of his birth (v. 1), binds spell to spell in his articulation of an absolute and unrestrained death wish for himself and the entire creation. He assumed that the world both centered around and depended upon him. (p. 153)

The difficulty lies in acknowledging several factors, but pre-eminently that Job is an incantation of Fishbane's description. A more plausible explanation of this chapter, which takes cognizance of the creation references in the light of the whole book, is that it contains no more than a strongly-worded entreaty to God to explain to Job the reasons for his present predicament. The nature of Job's speeches requires that his trust in God be vindicated. He therefore cannot be satisfied with standard explanations which he feels to be inapplicable in his case. Still less can he avoid the issues which his dilemma poses for him through recourse to incantations.

¹⁸Of. Gen. 1:26f. and Ps. 8.

even more readily appreciated were the consequences of his wishes to be realized. The result of their fulfillment would be the return of chaos and the complete absence of any sign of order that might provide an indication of hope to man. Under such circumstances Job apprehends the likelihood of happiness.

The reason why Job resorts to such extreme measures is that creation has proved meaningless to him at this point. In fact, he fervently believes that chaos is more likely to provide a haven of hope. Such a contradiction in terms emphasizes the lack of meaning discernible by Job in his world of severe adversity. But he has not completely succumbed to despair for, if he had, he would then have taken seriously his wife's advice and perished.¹⁹

Section 2 -- Vss. 11-19

In these verses Job moves from a denunciation of the day of his birth to question the significance of its creation. The dominant theme of these verses seems to be the idea of containment within a womb which Job extolls because, like Sheol, it offers shelter from the world of creation which at the moment is anathema to him.

First, Job's mother's womb failed to contain him prior to his birth (vs. 10). After birth, it failed to deny him the necessary sustenance of life and love without which he now maintains he would be that much happier, that is, in the care of death.²⁰ Death, by

¹⁹2:9-10.

²⁰vs. 11 מִן הַבֶּטֶן 'from the womb'. The NEB translates the phrase as "why was I not still-born?", but the idea of death at birth, whether by strangling or some other means, is foremost. The

contrast, offers a most pleasant alternative where, contrary to expectations, and as distinct from the nature of a restless child, there is peace and freedom from anxiety in the best company (vss. 13-14).

Secondly, the earth, or the grave, is depicted as a womb in whose environs Job pictures himself dwelling contentedly. It is just like the womb in that it is a haven of warmth and protection from the dangers of life, full of good company and yet without any of the hazards of existence such as the social and physical distinctions, and the continual struggle for survival, with which life is beset.²¹

In these confines, the theme continues, even the confined (מִתּוֹן) are unrestricted in their confinement.²² It is a place of quiet, of freedom from the 'restlessness', or 'trouble' (יָגוֹן), which literally agitates Job.²³ It is used in Ps. 4:5 to describe the state of the righteous man beset with the problems of the ungodly

notion that suffocation is involved is confirmed by the word אָנֹכִי 'I shall expire'. Thus life is deprived at the outset of the essential breath (רוּחַ) of creation. So Job questions implicitly the wisdom of the creation which received the divine 'breath of life' (cf. Gen. 1:2 and 2:7).

²¹Vs. 14 מְרִיבֹת This word, which is translated as 'ruins' by the RSV and as 'palaces' by the NEB, is, as Rowley notes (QJ, p. 47), difficult to understand. But the idea of formlessness, or, more exactly, of the destruction of form, harmonizes with Job's longing for the annihilation of creation.

²²Vs. 18. Rowley observes (p. 47) that these are not "persons in confinement, but captives set to forced labour and brutally ill-treated". However, the notion of confinement is dominant here.

²³Cf. vs. 26, also, Gen. 42:24 and especially Ps. 4:5.

to encourage him to bear up under his duress. He is to be 'agitated' and to offer the 'right sacrifices' and to 'trust'.²⁴ In so doing he will escape his affliction. But here Job indicates by implication that no such release is forthcoming for him. Whereas he offered the right sacrifices and trusted in the LORD more than was required of him, his only reward is a greatly distraught existence (vs. 26). His present agitated life contrasts sharply with the tranquillity of his previous existence and also with the note of undisturbed order which pervades the descriptions of creation in Genesis 1.²⁵ Consequently, for Job, the virtues of non-existence are very fair indeed. That is, he would be happy, either in the pre-created stage, in the womb, or in the post-created stage, that is, in the womb of the grave. The charm of both alternatives is that they denote an existence in which all the distinctions and characteristics of creation are nullified. Such an existence is best typified by the description [חלל] [חלל] 'null and void'.

Thus, Job's wish for extinction can be interpreted as a desire to escape from his present woeful existence, in which he is

²⁴Ps. 4:5-6.

²⁵The phrase [וַיֵּשֶׁב] 'and it was so', or, 'and it was established' in Gen. 1 which follows the accounts of various acts of creation denotes the ease and the success with which these acts are accomplished. There is no hint of opposition to the divine endeavours which might disturb the ease with which they are effected.

The acts of creation in Gen. 1 are described as acts of 'division'. That is, God 'divides', or 'separates', the light from the darkness (Gen 1:4). Cf. also Gen. 1:6-7, 14, 18. The notion is that the hitherto undistinguished mass of chaos receives form and distinctiveness as a result of the divine acts of creation.

afflicted with 'restlessness' (יָלַל), to a situation in which he would be free of all that distinguishes him from that total chaos for which he feels a complete empathy. The reason for this feeling is his lack of perception of the relationship of God to him, or to his universe. He therefore cannot participate in this universe because it lacks the kind of form and meaning which would be comprehensible to him. Consequently, he considers himself better off in chaos proper. For this reason Job castigates light, the first act of creation.

Thus, the importance of creation in this section is indicated by such words and phrases as those mentioned, especially יָלַל and חֲרָבוֹת. The idea of the destruction of form, or creation, which חֲרָבוֹת 'ruins' connotes, harmonizes with the theme of the desirability of the destruction of creation. Again, the shapelessness of a disintegrating body in the grave appeals to Job because it denotes to him the collapse of all recognizable distinctions characteristic of creation and life. Thus, life returns to pre-existent chaos. Creation's undoing is, paradoxically, for Job the beginning of hope, for he can see in it the possibility of redemption from his present woeful existence.

Section 3 -- Vss. 20-26

In these concluding verses of the chapter the author combines the basic themes of the first two sections. That is, light, or day (vss. 1-10), and life, or birth (vss. 11-19) are parodied in a concluding psalm to their antitheses, namely, darkness and non-existence. Vs. 20 establishes the tone of this passage:

Why is light given to him that is in misery,
and life to the bitter in soul?

'Light' (אור) and 'life' (חַיִּים) are, of course, two of the main characteristics of the creation accounts of Genesis.²⁶ Light is the first act of creation in Genesis 1 and human life is the first product of creation in Genesis 2. However, whereas in Genesis these acts are extolled here they are subjected to an almost blasphemous criticism. Job evidently does not agree that light is 'good' (טוב) as Genesis 1:4 maintains. Rather, the anticipation of death is enhanced by the fact that its fulfillment is the end of light and life.²⁷

Job keenly anticipates the benefits of death. This delight is denoted by the absurd notion of someone dancing on the grave.²⁸ Death, or non-existence, is more desirable than hidden treasure.²⁹

Vss. 23-24 refer somewhat obliquely to a strangled existence in the womb. The possibility of birth, or exit from the womb, is

²⁶ Cf. Gen. 1:3f. and 2:7.

²⁷ Vs. 21. the word אִשְׁתִּי is translated by the RSV as "who long for...". The same word is used in Ps. 33:20 to describe the soul of the righteous man which "waits for the LORD" who is its "help and shield". Here, by contrast, death is longed for as the source of comfort. Thus this word is an implicit criticism of Yahweh.

²⁸ Rowley notes the suggestion "who rejoice over the grave heap" which preserves the parallelism better than 'who rejoice exceedingly' (RSV), QE, p. 48.

²⁹ Ch. 28 is a long hymn in praise of wisdom which is described therein as a treasure of great worth. However, it is solely within God's disposition (vss. 23f.). In vs. 21 of this chapter death is extolled as a treasure of greater worth than anything else. Since wisdom is often described as involved with creation (e.g. Prov. 8:22ff.), it is evident that an implicit castigation of its merits is intended here.

out off. But, because he has been born, existence is thrust upon him. Consequently, his life lacks ease (the life of the grave), quietude (the absence of the signs of life), and freedom from agitation, or struggle (117).

Thus, this third section of the chapter describes Job's weary acknowledgment of the futility of his previous wishful thinking. For he cannot be free of life because he has been born, or created, and does exist, even if that existence is, to his mind, fitful and purposeless:

I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
I have no rest (יָנוּחַ) but trouble comes.³⁰

In sum, these verses compose an almost prayerful entreaty that he might be free of light and life which, instead of blessing, are indicative to Job only of hopelessness and the absence of God in any sense comprehensible to him.

Summary of Creation References

In this chapter it has been shown that Job's basic desire is to abandon the created order in which he can find no rest or meaning. To convey this point, the poet has employed numerous different references to creation of both an implicit and an explicit

³⁰ Vs. 26. Variations of the word יָנוּחַ 'rest' occur in Psa. 23:3; 31:4; 73:24 and elsewhere. In these psalms they refer to the divine guidance available to man in times of trouble, and in life generally. But here Job announces that he has no such guidance, or comfort, which creation might normally be expected to afford. Noah epitomizes in his name the kind of rest Job desires (Of. Gen. 6-9). Job desires that kind of rest which Noah achieved following the flood. In both instances the creation was undone as a necessary prerequisite to that stage of being.

nature.

The major reference is, of course, that of the theme of the book itself, namely, the undesirability of the created order. It is undesirable because it is not explicative to Job of his predicament. Instead, Job would prefer the shelter of Sheol over existence in creation. This preference involves an outright denunciation of creation and all that it signifies because it does not contain the signs of hope Job believes it should. In sum, Sheol, and not creation, has redemptive potential for Job.³¹

Other themes which denote the author's concern with creation include Job's castigation of the day and light in the first and third sections, of his own birth, or creation, in the second section; the explicit references to Leviathan, and possibly also to Yam and Apophis (vss. 8-9); the explicit praise of the virtues of chaos in the second section. Consequently, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the poet's imagination is preoccupied with themes and variations on creation.

Summary

Job's opening speech not only laments the day of his birth, but it does so in terms which question the goodness and meaning of creation. These terms recall the descriptions of creation in Genesis and elsewhere, and simultaneously express Job's preference for the

³¹This preference contrasts sharply with the exultation over creation in, for example, Psalms 8, 19, and 104 which is here implicitly questioned.

resuscitation of chaos. On consideration, Job is convinced that he would be happiest outside the ambit of creation within which he can find no resolution to his problems.

CHAPTER TWO -- JOB 6-31

The object of this chapter is to provide a summary account of the more outstanding references to creation which occur in these chapters. It is hoped therefrom to demonstrate both the frequency with which this motif occurs throughout the book, especially in Job's own thought, and also to derive from an analysis of these references their significance for the interpretation of the book. Some of the references to creation have already been observed in connection with Chapter 3. But they re-appear in the subsequent chapters in a variety of forms.

For the sake of convenience, the chapters of the text under discussion are arranged into sections. These sections normally contain one or more chapters of the book and are almost entirely Job's own speeches. These sections do not contain an exhaustive analysis of all creation references in the texts concerned, but only some of the more prominent ones.

Section 1 - Job 6-7

In 6:9 Job requests God to 'crush him' ('יִדְּבֶהוּ').¹ This plea echoes Job's cry for the annihilation of his self, and for

¹The fate of opposition to Yahweh is often death by 'crushing'. Rahab meets with such a fate in Ps. 44:20 in the context of a discussion of God's power over creation. Rahab, as Wakeman observes (op. cit., p. 61), is a synonym for Egypt, especially as she was when overcome in the desert and crossing the sea. Here Job wishes upon himself the same fate in order that he might escape the divine domain.

his return to that nothingness from which he was formed.² In the bliss of non-existence Job believes he will be safe from the ravages of his creator.³

Verses 24ff. contain Job's request of his friends that he might be instructed in the error of his ways so that he might understand the reason for his affliction. The word 'למדני' 'teach me' is instructive about the book's meaning. In 38:3 and 40:7 Job is required to 'teach' ('למדני') God. The verb למד (from which the noun תורה Torah, derives) may refer to the kind of traditional knowledge which the friends represent to Job. In this understanding, Job is here requesting God to explain to him in terms of the tradition where his short-comings lie. The verb ידע indicates a kind of knowledge that is not quite so easily gained, as the references in the Yahweh speeches would indicate.

In sum, Job expects to be able to comprehend with some facility the reasons for his plight. He is prevented from doing so only because God withholds this information. This knowledge simply has not yet been imparted to him. Given the different words for knowledge and wisdom and their significance, Job has much to learn

²The same word is used in Ps. 106:15 with reference to God's satisfaction of the Israelites' demands in the wilderness. Their gratification resulted in the destruction of many of them by a 'wasting disease' (דָּבַח), literally, death by de-fleshing. It is the same end which Job anticipates in Chapter 19. But, whereas the Israelites survived their experiences in the desert, Job's expectation is that death alone can offer him hope.

³Pope (AB, p. 51) refers to the similarity of vs. 9 to Isa. 53:10. But, there is more of a contrast than a similarity of thought, for, in Isaiah's case, the bruising results in deliverance, whereas, for Job there is only destruction.

about the acquisition of that wisdom which he believes would be explicative of his adversity.

Chapter 7:4ff. describes the gradual destruction of Job's body. The result of this annihilation is not the hope which he had believed would be consequent upon such a fate.⁴ For, his body is invaded by worms (vs. 5) and his skin melts away (DHY⁵), but all to no avail. That is, whereas in Chapter 3 he had fervently believed that the destruction of his body would result in the emergence of hope, he now observes that such an outcome is not being realized. That is, death does not produce or preserve hope.⁵

Consequently (vs. 11), he resolves to speak out. If he is to become as dust, or nothingness, he might as well espouse its cause and oppose God whose creation has become meaningless to him. But again, he is perplexed as to why such adversity is heaped upon him since he simply cannot threaten God in the same way as the sea (D'), or a sea-monster (J'JN) does.⁶

⁴ Cf. ch. 3 above.

⁵ The same realization is further articulated in 17:15-16.

⁶ Vs. 12. Rowley comments on this verse (QB, p. 80):
In the thought of OT creation was the work of God, who was supreme over all powers and over all elements. He controls the sea (38:8ff.) and all the monsters of mythology...

Wakeman discusses the significance of Tannin (op. cit. pp. 68-72) and concludes that the implication of this passage is, "that the monster survives under guard" (p. 73). In Ps. 74:13 God defeats Tannin and Leviathan and establishes light. His defeat of this opposition and consequent acts of creation are all signs of the operation of Providence and contain salvific content. But, for Job by contrast, there is nothing to be gleaned from his persecution, only the absence of any similar sign that might constitute hope for him. He therefore loathes life (vs. 16) and questions the truth of Ps. 8 (vss. 17f.).

All of these problems lead Job to question why he is the source of so much affliction. Obviously he is not to be equated with the sea, or the sea-monsters, in such a way that he might merit this divine attention. Given these facts Job questions the veracity of the psalmist's assertion of the godly status of man.⁷ By implication, the importance of man in Genesis 1 and 2 is also impugned. The lack of any divine reason for his affliction confirms Job's belief that righteousness does not pay. Therefore he will seek refuge in decay, or uncreation, for there the malevolent power of God is not evident.

Thus, it is clear that Job does not derive from providence the comfort it supposedly contains. Instead, he would prefer the shelter of chaos, or non-being, where he could rejoice in his nothingness (חבל).⁸ He does not even possess the status of a sea-monster (תנין) that he might revel in the conflict. His affliction is therefore all the more inexplicable to him. Consequently, he calls down upon himself the fate of these monsters that he might be banished to the safety of their abode.

Section 2 - Job 9-10⁹

In response to Bildad's suggestion (8:20) that God does not

⁷Vss. 17f. Rowley mentions the common view that these words are "almost certainly a parody of Ps. 8:4f..." (Ibid., p. 81).

⁸7:16.

⁹Again, it must be stressed that only some of the more prominent references to creation have been selected for comment. The number of such references, and their variety, prevents a more extensive coverage.

reject the righteous nor facilitate the lot of the wicked, Job asserts his familiarity with such knowledge, אָמֵן יִדְּוֹנִי כֵן 'truly, I know that this is so'.¹⁰ The term יָכַן ('truly' in the RSV) may be understood to refer to 'what is established', or 'created'.¹¹ Thus, in this context, Job stresses his belief that justice and equity have been 'established' from the beginning. Hence his anguish over the inexplicable nature of his own case, for he cannot comprehend a creator who makes such apparent nonsense of his own creation.¹²

In 9:3ff. Job acknowledges his familiarity with various descriptions of God's power and might in creation. But, the acknowledgment is more like a quotation from traditional lore, than it is indicative of Job's own thoughts on the subject in his present circumstances.¹³ Consequently, these verses should be seen as ironical comment on Job's part because they do not convey to him the signs of providence they are normally supposed to illustrate.

Verses 5-13 of this chapter contain an extensive account of God's specific powers and wisdom as they are demonstrated in creation and over all forces opposed to them. The divine ability to destroy the creation is contrasted with the same power which sustains

¹⁰9:2. The translation is that of the RSV.

¹¹Of. 42:7. Considerable importance is attached to this meaning of the word in the exegesis of 42:7.

¹²This question of Job's is taken up by Yahweh in 40:8 in which the former is shown that the world is not governed according to human determinations.

¹³The RSV uses quotation marks to acknowledge the difficulty posed by these words of Job's.

it.¹⁴ What Job is saying here constitutes a familiar theme in Hebrew religion. In Psalms 46:3 and 93:1, for instance, the same acknowledgment of the divine power to overcome all opposition -- which, on occasion has considerable power -- occurs. Thus, Job here is probably parodying this common theme because of its apparent irrelevance to his own dilemma. So great and awesome is God's power and wisdom that he does גְּדוֹלוֹת 'great things', and נִפְלְאוֹת 'marvellous deeds' beyond Job's comprehension. But, even so, Job cannot understand him, or perceive his nature (vs. 11). He literally does not see (רָאָה), or perceive (חָבִין) him. It is this inability, or deficiency, which is overcome in the theophany.¹⁵ It is fundamental to Job's appreciation of God's role in creation and constitutes the subject matter of much of the Yahweh speeches.

Thus, Job admits his incomprehension of God's power and knowledge, especially as they are illustrated in creation, because of his lack of perception and understanding.¹⁶ But this admission is not premature in the story, because what Job acknowledges of God's power in creation appears, at this stage, to have no more significance for him than hearsay.

9:13 is also a quotation. Again, its theme is the omnipotence

¹⁴vs. 6. Wakeman (op. cit., pp. 108f.) observes that Eres at times possesses divine qualities. If Eres has that stature here, then the extent of Yahweh's power is all the more enhanced by virtue of his control. This tremendous divine power is contrasted with the apparent divine inability to explain to Job why he suffers so.

¹⁵cf. 42:5.

¹⁶9:11.

of the divine power. The reference to Rahab denotes both Israel's desert origins and also Yahweh's intervention on her behalf against Egypt. The association of Rahab with Leviathan suggests that even the mythological significance of this creature is subordinate to Yahweh.¹⁷ Thus the power of God over all enemies and in creation receives further stress. However, for Job, such divine power does not denote hope for him (vss. 14ff.). He maintains that inequity persists despite this great divine power. He therefore cannot hope for justice (vss. 15-24).¹⁸ Consequently, he loathes life (vs. 21) and longs for non-existence. In short, he finds no comfort in the traditional veneration of the divine rulership.

In 9:25 Job says that his days 'see no good' (לֹא רָאָה טוֹב). In Genesis 1:4f. God separates the light from the darkness, thereby creating day and night. This act of separation is not followed by the description 'good' (טוֹב), nor the phrase 'and it was so/established' (וַיְהִי כֵן). The omission of these words may be understood to imply that this aspect of the creation was not so firmly fixed as some of the other acts. The fact that chaos possesses some considerable force, especially in the poetic sections of the Bible, and in Job

¹⁷Wakeman (op. cit., p. 60) says that Rahab is synonymous with Egypt. She also observes that:

Egypt is as impotent as the monster Yahweh crushed in the beginning. That Rahab should be Egypt makes sense, as Rahab is the proto-type of the defeated-by-God; it is by God's defeat of Pharaoh that Israel was created.

The connection between the themes of creation and redemption is evident then in this reference to Rahab. Cf. also, Isa. 51:9-10; Ps. 89:10-11.

¹⁸This theme is stated strongly in vss. 22-24.

and the Psalms in particular, corroborates the suggestion that the subjugation of chaos was never actually completed for some divine reason.¹⁹ The absence of the ascription 'good' to this act of creation may mean that while it was not good as were some of the other acts of creation, it was somehow necessary, perhaps for man's sake. In Job 9:25 the poet expressly declares that Job's days are not 'good'. In fact, they 'flee away' (ברחו). The choice of the last word (ברחו) recalls the description of Leviathan in 26:13 in which he is described as the 'fleeing serpent'. Thus, Job's days are far removed from the benevolent light of creation and are, in fact, associated with the evil, or chaos, of darkness. They literally 'see no good'. That is, by means of them Job's understanding of creation is not enhanced. They do not provide Job with the necessary time and illumination to see and understand his predicament and the way of escape from it. Under normal circumstances, as the thrust of the passage indicates, the evidence of God's handiwork in creation may be expected to provide such a means of perception.

Among the creation references of the next chapter are those of the potter (vss. 3 and 8ff.), of the new-born (vss. 18-19) and of brooding darkness (21-22). In vs. 3 Job inquires whether it is 'good' (טוב) in God's estimate to oppress his own creation and to favour, literally to 'shed light upon', the designs (תכנן) of the wicked. The imagery of a potter is involved in this verse as well

¹⁹The word טוב 'good' may be understood to mean 'complete' in this connection.

as in verses 8-9.²⁰ The idea of a benevolent divine light is also present. In Genesis 2:7-8 the description of man's creation employs the verb *73* 'to form', 'fashion'. The nouns 'creator' and 'potter' are also derived from this root. The following verses in *Job* contain further accounts of Job's creation and preservation.²¹ It is God who is responsible for everything that Job is, for it is he who has given him 'life' (*717*), 'love' (*707*), and 'breath' (*717* [vs. 12]). All of these terms are descriptive of man's creation in Genesis 1 and 2 which unequivocally asserts that the origins of man are not the result of chance, but are the product of deliberate and purposeful divine effort such that they merit the divine ascription of 'good'. However, in Job's case, the purposelessness and chaos of his existence causes him to query the assertion that God was in fact involved in his creation and to what end. Job's questioning of the veracity of such beliefs derives from the chaos of his present condition (vs. 14-17).

In the concluding verses of the chapter Job reiterates his desire, first stated in Chapter 3, that he might have expired at

²⁰ Of. Isa. 45:9 where Yahweh is described as the potter and man as the vessel.

²¹ Pope (AR, p. 78) notes that these verses contain a metaphorical description of "man's conception and pre-natal development": Semen, poured like milk into the womb, is coagulated like cheese, and finally bones and muscles are formed. Pope also refers to Ps. 139:13-16. These verses describe man's creation in terms similar to those of *Job* 10-11, but there the divine involvement in the creative process is extolled whereas here it is disparaged by implication.

birth (vs. 18).²² His premature death would have prevented anyone from rejoicing over his life, that is, from witnessing the manifestation of the divine nature evident in his personal creation. His non-existence would be the most reliable testimonial to his life, for it would mirror accurately the chaos which presently overwhelms him.

Vss. 21-22 describe how this chaos is composed of total darkness on which the light of creation has not yet been shed. It is a 'land of gloom and deep darkness' (ארץ חשך ועלמות). It literally has no order (סדרים) to it, and light is indistinguishable from the darkness (vs. 22). In Genesis 1 the same kind of conditions prevail before creation. There 'darkness' (חשך) and total chaos (תהו ובהו) dominate the scene and no order has yet been established.²³ It is this state of pre-creation which the poet evokes in these few verses. This suggestion is confirmed by the reference to the inter-mingling of light and darkness in the last phrase of vs. 22 תפע כח אפל 'and it shone like darkness'. Only in Genesis 1:4 is the light separated from the darkness, suggesting that the two are hitherto

²²The expression is literally that he might have been 'breathless' (אנע). In Gen. 1 the moving force of the creation is the רוח-אלהים 'spirit of God' which hovers over the 'face of the deeps' (פני-תהום) prior to the creation. Job is here asserting that his world would have been better without the benefits of such a 'breath'.

²³Vs. 2. The expression ולי סדרים 'and no order' further establishes the poet's emphasis on the situation prior to creation. Order is established when God's acts of creation take place.

somehow inter-mingled.²⁴ Here Job affirms that chaos is the confusion of light and darkness. For him it is like a womb from which he mistakenly and unwillingly emerged. For him the darkness shines like a light of hope.²⁵

Section 3 -- Job 12-14

Prominent among the references to creation in these chapters is the continuing theme of the inapplicability of the manifestation of providence in creation which Job is unable to discern as relevant to his predicament. A variety of other themes elaborate the centrality of this issue for Job.

In 12:4 Job describes himself as a 'just' (D'TS) and 'righteous' (D'TN) man. That description recalls the account of Noah in Gen. 6:9.²⁶ Both men are subjected to a severe testing of their righteousness. In Noah's case, the divine creation is destroyed to purge it of evil. For Job, creation is robbed of its traditional signs of hope (vss. 7-25). Thus, creation is central

²⁴ The idea is clearly conveyed by Milton's phrase in Paradise Lost (quoted by Pope, AB, p. 79):

The light in that region is no light
but rather darkness visible.

²⁵ Job's situation is contrary to that of Amos 4:13 also. There the creative power of God, as exercised over all opposition, is praised. Here, by contrast, whereas Job is familiar with such beliefs he can take no comfort in them.

²⁶ Cf. Rowley, CB, p. 112. There is, of course, a difference in the nature of their testing. Noah's obedience is put to the test in Gen. 6-9. Job is forced to examine his basic convictions about God and man in a way that Noah is not. Noah is famed for his obedience; Job for his perseverance in the face of adversity.

for both men in their pursuit of righteousness and knowledge.

In 12:7f. Behemoth (**בְּהֵמוֹת**) and other creatures are mentioned.²⁷ Although the RSV renders **בְּהֵמוֹת** as 'beasts' yet the word probably means both Behemoth and beasts. As such it functions similarly to 40:15ff. That is, its purpose is to impress Job of the power and wisdom of God, not only in the establishing and maintenance of creation, but also in subjugating all opposition, natural and divine. The meaning 'beasts' as it is used here in conjunction with the 'birds of the air' (**עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם**), the 'vegetation', or 'plants of the earth' (**שִׁחַ לְאֶרֶץ**), and the 'fish of the sea' (**דָּגֵי הַיָּם**) recalls Gen. 1:26 in which man is given dominion over the 'fish of the sea' (**בְּדָגַת הַיָּם**), the 'birds of the air' (**וּבְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם**), the 'cattle' (**וּבְבֵהֶמָּה**), and 'every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth' (**וּכְלֹמֶרֶס הָאֲדָמָה**). As verse 9 establishes, Job is aware of the view that all these creatures traditionally testify to God's power over creation and his ability to sustain it (vs. 10). This view is common knowledge (vs. 12) and Job is conversant with it but not convinced by it of its relevance for him.²⁸

Verses 13-25 continue the inventory of God's skill and power in creation, with which description Job asserts his familiarity.²⁹

²⁷Behemoth is discussed at length in 40:15ff.

²⁸Pope observes the irony of these verses (7-10), "the profound wisdom which the friends have been giving out is knowledge common to the lowliest of creatures" (AB, p. 88).

²⁹Cf. especially vss. 22 and 25. Vs. 24b employs the word **תִּהְיוּ** 'void', or 'chaos', in which a man is forced to wander if God should choose to remove his control over creation. The result would be a blinding confusion in which man would be completely lost.

Pope notes the many connections between these verses and Psalm 107.³⁰ That psalm concerns Israel's desert origins, God's providence towards her and also his control over chaos, as represented by Egypt, or Rahab.³¹ Thus, origins, creation and redemption are all involved in these verses.³²

In 13:1 Job again insists that he is fully aware of these divine attributes, but clearly he is not convinced of their significance for him, because he still persists in his desire to speak directly to God (vs. 3). That is, he has seen through the falsehoods of the friends who misrepresent God with their misunderstanding of traditional arguments which are inapplicable to Job's situation (vss. 7ff.). He sums up his estimate of their significance by pointing to the futility of human existence (vs. 28).

Chapter 14 continues Job's theme of the brevity and absurdity of human existence (vss. 1-3). Even nature has within itself the seeds of its regeneration. But man has no such hope. Consequently, Job again implores God to hide him in Sheol until his inexplicable wrath is over (vs. 13). Only within the confines of non-existence will he be safe from the despair of creation. Vss. 18-19 compare the destruction of the earth with the annihilation of man's hope. Just as the former is destroyed beyond recognition so man is deprived

³⁰ AB, p. 89.

³¹ Cf. 9:13 and above, p. 28n.

³² Cf. Isa. 44:24-28 which also establishes a connection between the creative and redemptive aspects of God. Cf. also Stuhlmüller, op. cit.

of all hope (**תקת אנוש**), that is, of human hope. Again, these verses contrast sharply with the hopefulness of man in creation as illustrated in Gen. 1 and 2, Psalms 8 and 19 and elsewhere. Thus, Job does not believe that creation contains the signs and means of hope for which he craves.

Section 4 -- Job 16-17

The principal references to creation in Chapter 16 concern Job's own physical destruction, or annihilation (vss. 6-17), and his plea that earth might testify on behalf of his innocence (vss. 18-22). So severe is Job's personal and physical distress that total collapse seems imminent. The proximity of his extermination is related in verses 16-17 especially. In vs. 16 he declares that such is his woeful condition that on his "eyelids is deep darkness" (**ועל עפעפי צלמות**).³³ Here again the notion of the confusion of light and darkness occurs. This confusion recalls the prevailing chaos and darkness of existence before the creation which is summed up in the phrase **תהו ובהו** "waste and void".³⁴

In defence of his innocence, Job summons earth to testify on his behalf (vss. 18f.). This call is reminiscent of Abel's

³³Pope (AB, p. 117) has failed to note that the reference is to the gloom of pre-created light and darkness when he suggests that the darkness "refers to the blackness around the eyes of the sick man". It may refer to both, but the primary reference must be to the former.

³⁴cf. 10:21-22. The presence of darkness (**חושך**) is also characteristic of pre-creation (cf. Gen. 1:2f.).

innocent blood crying for vindication from the earth in which it lies.³⁵ Job's reply comes in response to Eliphaz' penetrating question whether Job existed prior to creation and is therefore worthy of especial divine consideration (15:7f.). Job's reference to Abel's cry is his sympathetic acknowledgment of the plight of the first innocent sufferer who was so unjustly slain. It also indicates his belief in the necessity of a sufficient divine explanation of its cause. Job's summons also indicates his conviction that earth (עֲרֶב) has sufficient power of itself to make effective testimony on his behalf.³⁶ Like Abel, who was slain without his knowledge of its cause, Job, in the belief that he is unjustifiably afflicted, summons earth to witness on his behalf. Thus, Job in trouble calls upon earth for assistance, instead of resorting to the heavens, the traditional repository of help in time of trouble.³⁷

The same theme recurs in the final chapters of Job's address.³⁸ In 30:19 Job describes his condition as one who has become indistinguishable from the dust and ashes (אֶפְרַיִם וְאֶשֶׁן). If he is indeed guilty of wrong-doing he summons his friends and relatives to speak

³⁵ Gen. 4:10. Cf. also Deut. 32:1ff.

³⁶ Wakeman (*op. cit.*, pp. 108-112) notes the distinctiveness of Eres as a divinity in certain texts. On p. 108 she observes that, "...erg is the underworld, as it is often...in the Ugaritic texts and the Bible, and is practically synonymous with mt". (p. 108). Cf. also p. 110 in which she further demonstrates earth's divine status.

³⁷ Cf. for example, Ps. 19:1. In Ps. 104:2 the heavens are compared to a tent. That is, they provide security for man.

³⁸ Chs. 29-31.

up for him. Finally, he requests the earth to produce evidence of his guilt if it can (31:38-40). Thus, Job looks for vindication of his innocence to the earth and to those dependent on it, for he cannot find justice, or hope, in the heavens. In Gen. 1:2 the earth is described as 'without form and void' (תהו ובוהו). Thus, Job is here calling on chaos and everything identified with it to defend his cause since creation is incapable of so doing.

In Chapter 17 Job describes the destruction of his spirit (נפש) in suffering. This description contrasts with the account of his physical degeneration in Chapter 16.

In vs. 7 Job refers to the disintegration of his self נפשי 'and all my members are like a shadow' (RSV). Pope mentions the fact that נפשי 'my members' occurs only here.³⁹ But that fact should not be allowed to diminish its importance, for it is singularly appropriate in the context. The root meaning of the word is to 'form', 'fashion' like a potter. Thus, the idea is that what is formed, or fashioned, has disintegrated into chaos, or formlessness. It has, in other words, returned to the original clay, or dust, from which it was formed. It is now only a shadow (צל) of its former being. Clearly, the imagery of creation and chaos is directly involved in this reference. The importance of this choice of imagery is heightened by the observation in the first half of the verse that light, or sight, has diminished. That is, the gloom of primordial chaos is approaching.

³⁹AB, p. 121.

In vss. 15-16 Job queries whether his hope (תִּקְוָה) will become one with him in the 'dust' (עָפָר) of Sheol. He despairs because he knows that the annihilation of his spiritual and physical self is concomitant with his descent into Sheol, or formlessness (עָפָר). Job's condition at this point is a far cry from that of the psalmist of Psalms 19 and 104 who exult in the good of creation.

The note of imminent destruction is further clarified by Job's reference to the 'worm' (חֲמִיל) and the 'pit' (בֹּר) whom he describes as his parents (vs. 14). They are the agents of decay and corruption and dwell in the nether regions. As such they make fit companions for Job because they precipitate the process of decomposition. Thereby they hasten Job's escape from the tyranny of creation to the safety of the earth, or dust.

Section 5 -- Job 19

The most apparent references to creation in this chapter concern the demolition of Job's person and the complex issue of his belief in the final vindication of his righteousness with the assistance of a 'redeemer' (גֹּאֲלִי) (vss. 23-29).

The chapter begins with Job's acknowledgment that it is God who 'crushes' (תִּדְכֶנִּי) him with words (vs. 2). As noted above, this verb (דָּכָא 'to crush') is often employed in connection with divine battles in which God is always the victor.⁴⁰ By implication, Job cannot hope to survive a contest with so formidable an

⁴⁰Cf. Job 6:9 and p. 21n. above.

opponent against whom the forces of chaos are impotent.⁴¹

In vss. 8f. Job describes the deprivation and humiliation he suffers as a result of the divinely appointed creation. Vss. 9-10 describe the process⁴ by which Job is stripped of all the marks of distinction which distinguish him from the dust and other humans. The further estrangement of his family and friends elaborates the notion of his increasing diminution (vss. 13-19). In response to this situation Job again inquires why God is not satisfied with his flesh (vs. 22).⁴²

Realizing the impermanence of his flesh Job desires that his words (דבר) had fixity that they might testify to his integrity and righteousness.⁴³ That is, they could be seen as the visible proof of his rectitude. Job's belief in the eventual vindication of his righteousness is further indicated in vs. 25. There he asserts that his goel ('redeemer') lives and will in the 'end' (אחרי)

⁴¹ Cf. Ps. 44:20.

⁴² These verses probably also contain a play on 'skin' and 'bones' which relates to 2:4-5 in which the Satan is given permission to penetrate beyond the superficiality of Job's skin in order to test the righteousness of the essential Job. Job here asserts that this quintessential self will be found blameless.

⁴³ BDB says that this word (דבר) occurs mainly in the poetic section of the Bible and principally in Job. Of the few references outside this book those of Psalms 19 and 139 are particularly apposite here and were probably in the poet's mind. Ps. 19:5 refers to the 'words' of the heavens and firmament which are continually extolling God's praise which is manifest in themselves. Ps. 139 is also a paean of praise to Yahweh in terms of creation. Job, by contrast, is far from charmed with creation for it contains no signs of hope for him.

'arise from the dust' (קוּם עוֹלָם).⁴⁴ Literally, he will 'stand over the dust'. That is, he will make chaos subservient to him. In other words, Job here again expresses his belief in his eventual acquittal through the admission of earth's testimony on his behalf.⁴⁵ Thus, even as his body disintegrates into dust in adversity, even so will his innocence testify to his righteousness. That is, Job believes that his innocence will be evident in the earth and will eventually 'arise' (קוּם) in his defence. Nature will testify on his behalf. Hence vs. 26 can be understood to mean that when Job finally perishes his righteousness will be his testimonial.

In sum, the outer and inner selves of Job, which formerly were distinguished by happiness, social esteem and prosperity and due piety, have now become indistinguishable in Job's present state. But the reduction of his self to a state of chaos will, Job believes, result in the exposure and recognition of his real self, despite the ravages which currently torment and disfigure him. Consequently,

⁴⁴Rowley says of goel that (CB, p. 172):
The Hebrew word is used for the next-of-kin, upon whom the duties of avenger of blood, or of levirate marriage, or of redeeming property in danger of sequestration, fell. The word 'Redeemer' evokes wrong ideas, since what Job wanted was not deliverance from Sheol, but the vindication of his name before men.

Rowley discounts Pope's suggestion that this goel may refer to Job's 'umpire', or 'witness', in 9:33 and 16:19 (CB, Ibid.; AB, p. 134). Pope suggests (AB, pp. 134-35) that this 'umpire' serves the "same function as the personal god of Sumerian theology, that is, act as his advocate and defender in the assembly of the gods". But, the primary notion of this very complex section is that the testimony of Job's innocence will of itself vindicate him when he has finally disintegrated.

⁴⁵Cf. 16:18 above.

Job warns his friends to beware of the sword for, even as the sword hacks away the flesh, it exposes the inner, or essential, self. From this self Job expects nothing but hope, but the superficiality of the friends would then be evident to all. Thus, from chaos, and not from creation, Job believes his redemption will emerge.

Section 6 -- Job 21

In this chapter Job requests his friends to 'face him' (פָּנֵי-אֵלַי) and to be ashamed at the sight of the effects of his condition (vs. 5). This theme continues that of Chapter 19 in which the deterioration of Job's self was stressed. By contrast, the prosperity of the wicked continues unabated (vss. 7-26).⁴⁶ It is evident, Job claims (vss. 17f.), that the 'lamp of the wicked', that is, their light, or illumination, is never extinguished. In other words, it is they who prosper in the light of creation and not the righteous. Therefore, Job concludes that light is synonymous with corruption.

Vss. 23-26 convey Job's belief that the only justice to be found is not, as might be expected, in the realm of light, but in the darkness, or gloom, of Sheol. There the worms (רֶמֶס), the agents of destruction, do not distinguish between the rich and the poor. Thus, in the realm of chaos, or non-being, justice is more likely to be found than in the light of creation.

⁴⁶In vs. 13 the prosperity of the wicked is indicated in their pleasant existence. They 'spend their days in prosperity' (יָבִל בְּטוֹב יָחִיד), that is, their days are indeed 'good' (טוֹב) for them, whereas, for Job, they are as nights. 'Days' and 'good' indicate the poet has Gen. 1 in mind.

Section 7 -- Job 23-24⁴⁷

Chapter 23 continues Job's lament and his call for vindication. He now stresses his yearning for a confrontation with his creator and is less interested in seeking the shelter of Sheol.⁴⁸ Job assumes that if he could accomplish this object his wisdom would certainly increase (vs. 5). At this stage Job admits that the presence of the creator would render meaningful his plight (vs. 6), because an upright man (ישר) could expect justice there. But Job admits that although he has searched everywhere, he cannot find God, literally, 'perceive' (אבין) him (vs. 8). That is, Job cannot understand the evidence of God's presence in the creation. The reason why he cannot find God is that the latter has 'hemmed him in' with 'darkness' (חשך). He is covered with 'thick darkness' (אפל [vs. 17]). In short, Job is in the realm of chaos and far from the light of creation.

In Chapter 24 the theme of the prosperity of the wicked is continued.⁴⁹ The poor are relegated to the wilderness -- the place

⁴⁷N. Snaith, *op. cit.*, pp. 55f., stresses the problems associated with the arrangement of these chapters and refers to various solutions proposed. But the present order of the text is followed here, although the difficulties are not glossed over.

⁴⁸Job would hasten to God's 'seat' (אִתּוֹ) vs. 3. The word 'seat' (אִתּוֹ) means 'that which is established'. In Gen. 1 and in certain psalms, e.g. Ps. 93, the world and certain aspects of the creation are described as 'established' -- וַיֵּשְׁבֶן 'and it was so/established' in Gen. 1, and אֶת־תְּבוֹנַת־בַּל־תִּמּוֹצָא 'the world is established, it shall not be moved' in Ps. 93:1. Thus, this reference to God stresses his creative aspects.

⁴⁹In connection with vs. 2 Pope remarks (AB, p. 159) that the Targum refers to "the generation of the Flood" as the subject

where the abundance of creation is least evident.⁵⁰ Yet, if the poor are equated with the righteous; then it is also the place of Israel's origins. It was there that they were created a people of God. Thus, the desert signifies both deprivation and plenty, creation and chaos.

Vss. 13ff. are rather uncharacteristic of Job, yet they may be understood as a sceptical quotation by Job of one of the friend's speeches.⁵¹ In this part of the speech, darkness is seen

of this sentence. Such a theme accords well with the general thrust of the chapter which is, so prosperous are the wicked that chaos, and not God, must be on the throne.

⁵⁰In 38:26-27 the providence of God is illustrated by his cultivation even of the desert. God is present even there for those who want to perceive him.

⁵¹Vss. 14-17 show how chaos is really dominant given the prosperity of the wicked. It is the time of evil enlightenment when the powers of darkness assert themselves (Cf. especially vs. 17). But, Job does not fully despair, as his continued search for vindication proves. If he did despair then he would probably have cursed God and died as the story indicates (2:10). G. P. Grant (in Lament for a Nation [Toronto, 1970], p. 3) says of despair:

One cannot argue the meaninglessness of the world from the facts of evil, because what could evil deprive us of, if we had not some prior notion of the good? The situation of absolute despair does not allow a man to write. In the theatre of the absurd, dramatists like Ionesco and Beckett do not escape this dilemma. They pretend to absolute despair and yet pour out novels and plays. When a man truly despairs, he does not write; he commits suicide. At the other extreme there are the saints who know that the destruction of the good serves the supernatural end; therefore they cannot lament. Those who write laments may have heard the proposition of the saints, but they do not know that they are true. A lament arises from a condition that is common to the majority of men, for we are situated between despair and absolute certainty.

In relation to Job, Grant's remarks would suggest that Job does indeed possess a notion of the good which notion requires further examination. Hence Job's intense pursuit of an understanding of God which will do justice to his knowledge and experience.

as providing the necessary cover for the activities of the wicked. That is, darkness provides them with light (vs. 15). Vss. 18f. describe how good eventually triumphs over evil. But, Job disputes the friends' claim that the wicked are swiftly purged as by a flood (על־פני־מים), the traditional means by which the wicked are removed from the face of the earth and creation is regenerated.⁵²

Section 8 -- Job 26-27⁵³

Chapter 25:5f. contains details of God's power in creation. Contrary to Job's earlier expectations (ch. 3), Sheol too comes within the orbit of divine control (25:6). Consequently, shelter in Sheol from the wrath of God is no longer a viable alternative for Job. He must therefore look for release and vindication elsewhere.⁵⁴

26:7 contains a direct reference to this omnipotent sover-

⁵²Cf. Gen. 6-9.

⁵³As mentioned earlier (above, p. 44), certain aspects of these chapters appear to reflect the opinions of the friends rather than Job (Cf. Rowley, CB, pp. 213f; Snaith, op. cit., pp. 55f.; Pope, AB, xviii and p. 170.) But, the thought of 25:6 is similar to Job's speeches. The 'maggot' (מִשְׁמָנִי) and the 'worm' (תוֹלַעַד) are symbolic of the corruption which Job experiences both in his person and in his beliefs. The worm devours the dead (Isa. 14:11) and is also the symbol of complete insignificance (Cf. Ps. 22:7). The worm is an 'earth-worm' and, as such, signifies the lowliest estate to which a man succumbs. Job views them with hope because of their love of equality (Cf. 21:26).

⁵⁴In Chapters 29-31 Job summons earth to be his witness. He defies God to the utmost because at that stage he has nothing more to lose. Any alternative would be preferable to a situation cut off from God.

eighty of Yahweh.⁵⁵ Everything is subject to God's rulership (vss. 7-14). The list of God's abilities are descriptive of his creative and sustaining power in creation. Even the powerful sea (ד') is 'stilled' (לע) at his command.⁵⁶ Rahab, the persecutor of Israel, symbolic of Egypt and synonymous with Leviathan, is 'smitten' (מחץ) but not destroyed, at his 'behest' (תבנתו).⁵⁷ That is, the whole world of nature and of other gods is entirely subject to God's dominion. He is the king par excellence.⁵⁸ All of this divine ability is the product, not of haphazard artifice, but of 'understanding' (תבנתו) and 'power' (כוח [vs. 12]).

In Chapter 27 Job persists in maintaining his integrity

⁵⁵The phrase is נטח צפן על רוח 'he stretches the north over the void'. Thus, the 'void' (חלל) is said to be controlled by Yahweh. Baal was enthroned on Saphon (Cf. Rowley, CB, p. 218). Although Rowley discounts the mythological significance of the reference, it nonetheless appears that the threats to Yahweh's power which this mountain represents are taken care of in his organization of the limits of chaos. Rowley refers to Ps. 48:2 in which the seat of Yahweh is associated with this mountain. Again, the significance of this remark is to emphasize the omnipotence of Yahweh's sovereignty.

⁵⁶Rowley says (CB, p. 219), "what the author has in mind is the control of the primeval waters in creation".

⁵⁷Leviathan is represented in Job as supreme in the realm of chaos. Job's earlier wish to become one with chaos indicates his empathy with chaos. But chaos can also mean "social sterility" and "natural sterility" as Frye observes (Anatomy of Criticism, [Princeton, 1971], p. 189) with reference to Leviathan's significance in Job.

⁵⁸The kingship of Yahweh is a key element of the 'Enthronement Psalms'. Cf. Combs, op. cit. It is intimately connected to the theme of God's power in creation. Hence, those parts of Job which emphasize the kingship of Yahweh are primary sources of the creation motif.

(תַּמְתִּי).⁵⁹ In vss. 1-6 Job again states his determination to stand fast despite the attacks on his righteousness. He cannot throw in his lot with the wicked because they are entirely without hope (vs. 8). The lot of the wicked is described at length in vss. 13-23, but in terms which contradict Job's earlier remarks on their good fortunes. However, if these verses are regarded as a derisive quotation on Job's part, their function in this chapter can be appreciated.⁶⁰ That is, at this stage of the Dialogue Job is left virtually speechless at the contumacy of the friends. His last resort is to quote disbelievingly their own thoughts so that they might see for themselves the emptiness of their words. Thus Job resorts to sarcasm in defiance of the friends' facile understanding of his cause.

Section 9 -- Job 29-31

These chapters contain Job's final address to God in which he implores divine recognition of his righteousness and the restoration of his former ease. He admits his shortcomings insofar as he is aware of them. He no longer seeks the shelter of Sheol, because he realizes that it too is within God's reach and control.

⁵⁹ Many scholars are of the opinion that 27:2-6 reflect Job's views while the rest of the chapter should be attributed to one of the friends (Cf. Rowley, CE, pp. 215 and 221). The lack of creation content in this chapter confirms this view. However, the suggestion mentioned below, that these verses constitute sceptical quotation on Job's part, obviates the need to assign the chapter to one of the friends.

⁶⁰ The RSV acknowledges the difficulty by enclosing these verses in quotation marks.

In 29:3 the theme of light and darkness recurs. Job here associates his former days with light and happiness. Under such conditions he prospered.⁶¹ God's light (אור) illumined his passage through the darkness. However, a note of scepticism about the halcyon times creeps into the mention of his 'autumn days' (בְּעֵי חַרְפִּי) in vs. 5. The word חַרְפִּי can mean 'reproach', 'disease', 'uncircumcision' as well as 'autumn'. Although Job's days prior to his times of affliction were blissful, yet they were also times of ignorance. In other words, in those days, although he did all that was required of him and more, yet he was never really close to God because of his essential lack of wisdom.⁶² Indeed, those were the days of his 'uncircumcision' (חַרְפִּי) "when Eloah sheltered... his tent" (בְּמִדְ אֱלֹהִים עָלַי אֹהֶלִי).⁶³ That is, in that time Job was protected, not only from the Satan but also from God. Thus, this

⁶¹Cf. Ps. 23:4 and Gen. 1. In both sources the presence of God is signified by his control over the darkness and evil.

⁶²Maimonides describes Job's lack of wisdom as follows: In the same manner, as there is a difference between works of nature and productions of human handicraft, so there is a difference between God's rule, providence, and intention in reference to all natural forces, and our rule, providence, and intention in reference to things which are the objects of our rule, providence, and intention. This lesson is the principal object of the whole Book of Job; it lays down this principle of faith and recommends us to derive a proof from nature, that we should not fall into the error of imagining His knowledge to be similar to ours, or his intention, providence and rule similar to ours. (The Guide for the Perplexed, tr. M. Friedlander [London, 1904], p. 303).

⁶³EDB. Both Rowley and Pope ignore the notion of imperfection, or uncircumcision, present in the word חַרְפִּי.

reference (**חַרְפִּי**) probably contains both the notion of former blissful times and also the idea of blissful ignorance. Here Job expresses his longing for those times because they provided him with shelter from 'the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune'. By implication, his knowledge of existence and of himself is now so changed as to make such a return impossible. But, it is nonetheless desirable for the protection it afforded him from the hazards of life.

Vss. 5-30 describe further the bliss of Job's previous existence. In vs. 5 he refers to his former enjoyment of Shaddai's (**יְטו**) company. The name Shaddai denotes the power, justice and majesty of Yahweh.⁶⁴ These aspects of Yahweh are indicated in his rulership of creation.⁶⁵ Through this mention of Shaddai Job implicitly refers to these divine qualities. The mention is particularly appropriate at this juncture of the Dialogue for Job now fully realizes the significance of the loss of this protection. Formerly

⁶⁴Cf. 19:19 in which justice is referred to as **יְטו**. Then Job not only enjoyed the bliss of the divine blessing, but justice was also concomitant with it. In 19:19 there is also a play on the words **יָדַעְתָּ** 'you shall know' and **יְטו** 'justice'. This play indicates the connection between 'right knowledge' and justice.

⁶⁵The name Shaddai implies the power and majesty of God as it is realized over all opposition and especially in creation (Cf. Gen. 49:25 and Ps. 91:1). B. W. Anderson (IDB, Vol. 1, 'Almighty', p. 86) comments on the meaning of Shaddai:

The name **[El Shaddai]** was eventually reinterpreted by the content of 'Yahweh'...except in the Book of Job, where it is used to emphasize the power and majesty of deity.-

The reference to El Shaddai in Gen. 49:25 stresses God's power over the forces of chaos. His connections with the mountain indicate his aloofness and power.

he prospered under this divine shelter when his righteousness was universally acclaimed (vss. 7ff.), and his counsel (עצה) invoked a responsive silence (vs. 21).⁶⁶

In Chapter 30 Job contrasts his present condition with his former ease. No longer does the sight and sound of him provoke a respectful response. Rather, men are abhorred at the sight of him and keep their distance from him (vs. 10). They no longer see the evidence of providence in him, only the presence of chaos and corruption. This condition has evolved precisely because he has been cut off (כִּי יִתְּרֶם) from God (vs. 11). Job has been rendered into dust (vs. 19). He no longer possesses the form and design of creation. He has been de-created.⁶⁷ He is consumed during the night (vs. 17), that is, when chaos and darkness reigns. He knows that the 'storm' will eventually destroy him.⁶⁸ It will literally render him into the dust from which he was created. The desert, or chaos, will reclaim its own.

Yet, even in this ruinous condition Job implores God for help.⁶⁹ Vss. 26f. describe his rapidly deteriorating condition.

⁶⁶In the Yahweh speeches Job is reduced to a whisper in the presence of Yahweh (40:3-5 and 42:1-6). He is awed at the spectacle of God's wisdom and power as they are indicated to him in the divine control over, and maintenance of, the creation.

⁶⁷Cf. Gen. 2:7.

⁶⁸The word for 'storm' here is תִּשְׁוָה. It means 'devastation', 'ruin' (EDB). The usual word for storm in Job is סֶעֱרָה 'storm', or 'whirlwind'. תִּשְׁוָה is particularly appropriate here because it represents Job's state of near annihilation.

⁶⁹The idea of ruin, or destruction of form, is also contained in the word בִּלְעִי in vs. 24. EDB renders this word as 'heap

This description contains various references to the blackness and non-existence of chaos in which the light of creation has not yet penetrated (vss. 26-31). Vs. 27 may be seen as an extensive play on the 'agitation' (**רר**) which seizes Job's bowels.⁷⁰ Dhorme's rendering is:

My bowels seethe continually with agitation,
and I am confronted with days of affliction.⁷¹

The imagery is that of a boiling cauldron of the deep which can no longer be contained. In short, Job is the embodiment of chaos and completely ravaged by it. This condition is corroborated by vs. 26 in which Job bewails the loss of 'good' (**טוב**) and 'light' (**אור**), and the presence of 'evil' (**רע**) and 'darkness' (**אפל**). Vs. 28 continues the theme of Job's ruination. He is 'blackened, but not by the sun' (**קדר בלא זמח**).⁷² That is, Job is blackened by the darkness of an existence unilluminated by the light of creation.

His condition is similar to that of the 'jackals/sea monsters' (**תנינ**), and the 'ostrich' (**ענה**).⁷³ The jackals are creatures

of ruins' from the root **ענ** 'to bend', 'twist'. That is, Job is completely distorted, such that his former self is unrecognizable.

⁷⁰The RSV translation of this verse is euphemistic.

⁷¹Dhorme, op. cit., p. 447.

⁷²**קדר** 'blackened'. The same root is used in Pss. 35:14; 38:7; 42:10; 43:2 to mean 'mourning'. It acutely describes the deathliness and drabness of Job's life, and also the sadness it induces in him.

⁷³Dhorme (op. cit., p. 447) regards the wailing of the jackal and the ostrich as the reason for their mention here. But, their connections with night, their colours, and their diets are all part of the imagery which the poet draws upon in this reference. The ostrich sticks its head in the earth and thereby cuts off the

of the night who "eat carrion and other refuse" and prowl "around ruins and desert-like areas".⁷⁴ The ostrich is omnivorous, lives in uninhabited areas, and is famed for its stupidity.⁷⁵ That is, Job is situated in the darkness of an unilluminated chaos, surrounded by the creatures of the night who are reputed for their dependence on death. In vs. 30 his skin is described as becoming black (שחור) and falls away, because of his exposure to chaos and the absence of the beneficent light. The note of mourning, first mentioned in vs. 28, is taken up again in vs. 31 in which the notion of weeping as over a lost soul is explicitly conveyed. That death is Job's, for his former identity perished when creation no longer was the sustenance of his existence.

Chapter 31 continues the account of Job's righteousness emphasizing his purity before God and men. The themes of wisdom and understanding are also involved in this chapter.

Vs. 1 refers both to Job's virtue and also to his purity of vision. But the verse is also important because it provides the keynote to the chapter, namely, Job's inability to perceive that humanity, the world, specifically the earth and man, cannot

light available to it in its scavenging for food.

⁷⁴W. S. McCullough, "Jackal", *IDB*, Vol. II, p. 781. The significance of the sea-monsters (תנינ) is also involved in this reference.

⁷⁵Cf. W. S. McCullough, "Ostrich", *IDB*, Vol. III, p. 611. In Job 39:13-18 the ostrich is depicted as stupid. The 'children' (מלד) of the ostrich are synonymous with destruction because of the stupid placement of the eggs from which they were hatched (Cf. 39:13-18).

be the measure of God, or even of man. A woman, even a virgin (בחורה), signifies in a word the imperfection of this world by which Job sets his standards in this and the preceding chapters of his address.⁷⁶ A further implication of this verse is that Job is arguing that, since his eyes have never hitherto failed him, therefore they are unlikely to do so now. That is, there is no hope in creation for him to perceive, otherwise he would have noticed it long ago.⁷⁷

Several other features of this chapter corroborate the notion that central to Job's contention is his belief in the capacity of his friends, his family, his purity, the earth, that is, those people and things which surround him -- as distinct from what is above and removed from him -- to testify to the reality of his 'integrity' (תמידי vs. 6).

Job believes that God, the creator (vs. 15), must respond to the needs of the created, literally 'the established' (יָסָד), especially given the righteousness of his servant (vss. 16-34). In vs. 33 Job refers to the duplicity of Adam (אִם כִּסִּיתִי כְאָדָם כַּעֲשֵׂר). Job believes that Adam 'hid his iniquity in his bosom' (לִמְצוֹתָיו בְּחִסְיוֹ).

⁷⁶ To indicate the seriousness of his attention to propriety the hithpolel form of the verb בִּיַּן 'to consider diligently' is employed. In Ps. 37:10 the same form of the same verb is used to describe the brevity of the prosperity of the wicked. In this passage Job implicitly questions the veracity of the psalmist's belief and infers that the wicked in fact prosper, while the innocent perish.

⁷⁷ Job is eventually able to derive comfort from a new perception of providence at work in creation. Cf. 42:5-6. There Job's powers of understanding and insight are appreciably altered.

That is, Adam tried to cover up his iniquity when it was discovered.⁷⁸ The choice of the word 'Adam' (אָדָם) as distinct from other words for man, for example, אָנָשׁ and אִישׁ, indicates its importance. That importance lies in its connection with the word for 'ground' (אֲדָמָה), and also in its reference to the story of Adam in Genesis. The verbs כָּסָה 'cover' and הָסִי' 'hide' convey the idea of burying something in the ground. That is, Adam relied on the earth, or its produce, to hide him from God, whereas Job believes that it will produce the proof of his innocence.⁷⁹ The earth will witness on his behalf because it contains his innocent blood which, like Cain's, cries out for vindication of its unjust treatment.⁸⁰ Thus, Job believes his eventual acquittal will come by means of earthly testimony on his behalf. However, both men are deceived.

The final verses (38-40) conclude Job's case. They also contain a hint of Job's shortcomings from the divine perspective, as the Yahweh speeches demonstrate. Again, in them Job relies on the earth to corroborate his innocence. If he has indeed erred, then he calls upon earth to produce the evidence of that wrongdoing (vs. 40). The signs of this imperfection will be 'thorns' (קַלְחִים) and 'foul weeds' (בְּאֵשׁ). Thus, Job looks to the earth, to himself, and to his righteousness for his vindication. But, since

⁷⁸Cf. Gen. 3:10f. The RSV renders אָדָם as 'men' with a marginal note on the literal translation.

⁷⁹Cf. 16:18f; 19:25f.; 31:38-40.

⁸⁰Cf. vss. 38-40.

earth, woman (vs. 1), and humanity all have the seeds of corruption in them, then justice cannot emanate from such a source. For, as the Yahweh speeches prove, understanding God, justice and true knowledge cannot derive from an anthropocentric world. Rather, justice and wisdom derive from the heavens and, as it were, move downwards to man.⁸¹ Whereas earlier (16:18 and 19:25f.), and also in this chapter, Job had stressed his belief in his eventual acquittal through his goel who would 'arise' (DIP^{19:25}) and defend his cause, he now believes that earth will accomplish this task for him. But, in the Yahweh speeches, Job is forced to change his perspective and to behold the evidence of God in creation.⁸² There he exchanges his horizontal referent for a perpendicular one. In sum, wisdom derives, not from man or the world of nature around him, as some of Israel's neighbours believed, but from God. Job acknowledges this fact in 42:5-6 when he finally declares that his perception of God in creation has been enhanced beyond understanding.

Summary of Creation References

The principal occurrence of creation references in these chapters involves Job's identification with all that opposes creation. At first, he longs for the safety of Sheol and all that it represents, but he soon realizes that Sheol is not the haven from God that he had imagined it to be (7:4ff.; 17:13-16). Con-

⁸¹ Cf. Ps. 19:1 and Job 38-42.

⁸² Cf. 42:1-6.

sequently, he resolves to fight his case in the hope of vindicating his righteousness (**וַיִּתְּנֵהוּ**).

In articulating his case against creation, Job frequently parodies certain assertions in various psalms (e.g., 8; 19; 104), Genesis 1 and 2 and other biblical passages whose subject is creation (7:17f.; 14:1-3, 18-19; 17:15-16). He often identifies his lot with that of various creatures symbolic of chaos, e.g. Tannin (7:12), Rahab (9:13); Behemoth (12:7). He summons earth to testify to his innocence (16:18f.) and believes that the wicked alone prosper in the light of creation (ch. 21). Consequently, he concludes that justice only exists in Sheol (21:23-26) where the worms do not distinguish between the wicked and the good.

Certain words and phrases stand out as singular. In 10:3 and 17:7f. the metaphor of a potter and his vessel is employed. This favourite biblical theme is utilised to emphasize the creator's responsibility towards his creation and also to recall the account man's creation in Gen. 2:7. Various words for darkness and gloom also occur frequently with reference to the nature of chaos (e.g. 10:21-22). Chaos and darkness represent the opposite of creation and light. Their distinguishing characteristic is that they lack 'order' (**וְלֹא עֶרְכָּה**).

In the final chapters of his address to God (29-31) Job strongly asserts his innocence. Although he longs for the bliss of his former existence, yet he recognizes its uselessness in his present condition. He summons earth and all that is about him to bear witness to his integrity. In so doing he identifies himself

with the realm of nature and all that is not God-centered. This perspective is radically altered in the Yahweh speeches.

CHAPTER THREE
JOB 4-5, 8, 11, 15, 18, 20, 22, 25, 32-37

CREATION AND THE SPEECHES OF
ELIPHAZ, BILDAD, ZOPHAR AND ELIHU

Section 1 - Introduction

Perhaps the most striking characteristic of Job's friends is their common assumption -- it might almost be called a belief -- that Job has sinned.¹ Coupled with this damning assertion about Job's innocence is their equally pronounced emphasis on the worthlessness of man as contrasted with the majesty and incomparability of God. Despite the fact that the Prologue stresses the innocence and moral impeccability of Job the friends hold unswervingly to their views throughout their speeches.² Furthermore, even if they can be excused for their ignorance of Job's past -- although they should have known of it if they were indeed his friends -- his integrity in the face of adversity should at least have led them to question the rightness of their conclusions as to the causes of that adversity. Instead they remain firmly convinced as to the causes of suffering and have no difficulty in identifying the righteous from the wicked. What then is the source of this certainty and why are they finally

¹H. J. Iaks, in "The Enigma of Job: Maimonides and the Moderns" (JBL, 83 [1964], 345-364) points to the then prevalent conviction that all who suffer are guilty of sinfulness as the source of their belief.

²Cf. especially 1:1 and 2:3. Job's almost excessive precautions in case his children should have sinned is proof positive of his concern for religious propriety.

disparaged by Yahweh in 42:7?

The final authority to which the friends implicitly refer is that of the Law. For them the Law would appear to be the source of revelation. Although Job conscientiously obeys every dictate of the Law, as the Prologue emphasizes, yet that obedience is insufficient to sustain him throughout his separation from God. That estrangement is only overcome when he finally apprehends the revelation of God in creation during the theophany.³ In the final scene the friends are denounced by God because they have failed to observe correctly this manifestation of God in creation which Job has successfully achieved.

Thus, at issue between Job and his friends is the sources of revelation and man's relationship to them. For the friends there is only one source namely, the Law. For Job, the Law has every appearance of being secondary to the divine manifestation in creation. Hence, it is not remarkable that the friends make little reference to creation, nor that Job is preoccupied with it. The issue is crystallized in the different attitudes towards man which are evident in the friends' speeches and in those of Job. The former emphasize their conviction that man is a 'worm', or a 'maggot'; the latter believes that because man is made in the image of God he contains a divine resemblance that is informative about God.⁴ Thus, Job may be seen as a rejection of a then prevalent view of the frailty and worthlessness of man, and as an assertion of the hopefulness

³Cf. 42:1-7.

⁴Chapter 25 contains the most explicit exposition of this view.

which the divine-human relationship connotes.⁵ This relationship is, for him, most clearly demonstrated in creation, specifically in the creation of man.

From beginning to end the friends emphasize their belief in the innate corruptibility of man. Eliphaz opens the discussion on this subject and Bildad concludes their addresses with a brief, but damning, condemnation of man.⁶ While it is a repugnant doctrine to hold without reservation, given that there are always individuals who appear to have suffered for no just cause, nonetheless this teaching has the merit that it makes evil explicable in a religion which emphasized the omnipotence of God and which had no developed doctrine of the afterlife. Given the belief of the friends that those who suffer must have sinned, it is not surprising that there should be an extensive body of legal material to determine precisely the nature of sin and how its effects might be overcome. Consequently, these three men go to great lengths to demonstrate the nature of Job's sinfulness in order that he might be restored to his former prosperity. In their view the only way to overcome his suffering is for Job to recognize it as the fruit of sin. They harp on this theme because they are incapable of understanding otherwise the suffering and estrangement of Job. They display an inability to question their basic convictions and an almost idolatrous belief

⁵It is, of course, important to add that the friends probably misrepresent the spirit of the Law and that they should probably not be thought of as eminent representatives of orthodoxy.

⁶4:7-9 and Ch. 25.

in the capacity of the Law to cover every contingency. They appear to have forgotten the fact that man once lived without the Law and unwilling to recognize the merits of such an existence. Job, on the other hand, wishes to assert that for some individuals an existence without law and covenant, but under the aegis of creation, could constitute a truly religious life. For Job such a situation is eminently conceivable. He is deprived of his family, estranged from his wife and bereft of his possessions. Without these accessories he is then able to contemplate man's relationship to God, for he is alone with God. Under these conditions Job considers the nature of man and his role in the creation.⁷

In sum, the friends represent the view that man is basically sinful. This attitude is given considerable emphasis throughout their speeches and especially in their final address by Bildad in which he stresses his belief in the similarity of man to the worm. Job represents an opposing view, namely, that because man is made in the image of God there must be some part of that resemblance which can give meaning to life. His view is upheld by Yahweh in the conclusion of the book when he commends Job for having spoken "what is right", that is, of what is 'established', or 'created', or 'just so'.⁸ That is, Job has spoken correctly of that which conforms to perfection, but the friends have not.

⁷Cf. especially 7:17f.

⁸Cf. Robert Sacks, The Lion and the Ass; unpublished manuscript, available in private distribution, provided by Dr. A.E.Combs.

The contrast between Job and his friends can also be observed in the importance they each attach to sight and hearing. The friends repeatedly instruct Job in conventional wisdom, which is the product of reflection on the meaning of the Law. Eliphaz explicitly advises Job to accept God's Torah (תורה).⁹ The Law is known through hearing and understood through obedience.¹⁰ On this subject Sacks writes:

Hearing fundamentally means obeying. If hearing is crucial we must be told things that we could not know for ourselves...The desire to see is the desire to eliminate any medium between the knower and the known and hence implies desire for knowledge.¹¹

Job, by contrast with the friends, desires most ardently to see God.¹² This wish is finally granted to him in the theophany. In his final response Job acknowledges that what he has seen surpasses what he had previously heard:

I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
but now my eye sees thee...¹³

This vision is sufficient to cause Job to 'despise' himself and to "repent in dust and ashes".¹⁴ That is, he takes shelter in the haven of the innocent, like Abel.¹⁵ Again, like the latter Job does not

⁹22:19.

¹⁰Cf. Deut. 28f.

¹¹Sacks, op. cit., 111-7.

¹²E. g. 19: 23-27.

¹³42:5.

¹⁴42:6.

¹⁵Cf. Gen. 4:8f.

live by the Law in the sense that the friends do, or in the sense that Cain is restricted by his activities.¹⁶ Rather he is freed by virtue of his vision of God which he has perceived in the presence of creation. This emphasis is acknowledged by God in his commendation of Job in which he refers to the perfection of creation.¹⁷ Job takes refuge in de-creation because he considers himself to be unworthy of the creation. That is, creation is worthy of veneration because of the evidence of God which it contains.

In short, Job differs from the friends in his views of the creation and of man. He apprehends God primarily by means of creation, rather than by the Law. Job emphasizes the human potential to see God because man is made in the image of God. The friends' low estimate of man prevents them from according him the kind of eminence which Job attributes to him. These differences are illustrated in the following brief scrutiny of their remarks.

Section 2 - Eliphaz

Eliphaz' denunciation of Job begins in 4:7-9 and continues throughout his speeches. His view of the nature of justice and righteousness is remarkably similar to that of Deuteronomy, especially to Chapter 28 of that book, in which the paths of the wicked and the righteous are clearly defined.

¹⁶ Cf. Sacks, op. cit. Chapter IV refers to the burdens which Cain's lifestyle and possessions imposed on him.

¹⁷ 42:7. Cf. above, p. 4.

In vs. 17 Eliphaz questions man's potential for righteousness and in the following verses suggests man's unworthiness of comparison with God. However, Eliphaz has missed Job's point. The latter does not wish to compare man with God. His concern is to penetrate the mystery of man's likeness to God and to discover its significance for himself. Job has a much higher estimate of man than has Eliphaz, as V. E. Reichert notes:

The revelation that comes to Eliphaz is that man is imperfect and dare not vindicate himself before God. It is a presumption for him to imagine that he can be pure before his Maker.¹⁸

Eliphaz' low opinion of man is reiterated in 5:7:

...but man is born to trouble
as the sparks fly upward.

In other words, Eliphaz' basic understanding of man is that he is essentially sinful.

In 5:8f. Eliphaz urges Job to seek divine forgiveness for his sins in the manner of Exodus and Deuteronomy. If Job is obedient as Eliphaz understands the Law to require, then he will be restored to his former prosperity (vss. 7-27). This advice is the essence of Eliphaz' wisdom.

In his second speech Eliphaz stresses his belief that Job himself is guilty of sin.¹⁹ He questions the authority of Job's wisdom with all the undermining force of a Grand Inquisitor.²⁰

¹⁸ Job: Hebrew Text and English Translation with an Introduction and Commentary, Soncino Books of the Bible (London, 1946), p. 16

¹⁹ Chapter 15

²⁰ 15:7.

In vss. 14-16 he once more relates his belief in man's innate corruption. His view of man is not that he is simply capable of corruption, but that he is essentially corrupt ab initio. This estimate of man is in sharp contrast with that of Genesis 1 and Psalm 8 as well as with that of Job himself. For Eliphaz, man is so low that he describes him not as made in the image of God, but as "born of a woman", and "abominable and corrupt" (vss. 14-15). This association of man with woman and with corruption recalls the Fall and everything connected with it. Eliphaz clearly feels that such reminders should propel Job into submission and admission of guilt. In vs. 17 he urges Job to listen to him. That is, he, Eliphaz, will provide Job with the necessary instruction to enable him to escape his dilemma. He urges Job to rely on hearing and obedience in order to overcome his suffering and all that it entails for him.

In his final speech (Chapter 22) Eliphaz inquires whether God has anything to gain from man and concludes that he has not. On this occasion he accuses Job of specific charges.²¹ In vs. 6 he accuses him of having "exactd pledges", and "stripped the naked of their clothing". Both of these deeds are clean contrary to the Law as Ex. 22:25f. and Deut. 24:10f. unambiguously affirm.²² In vss. 19-20 he indirectly alludes to the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah. He warns Job (vss. 21ff.) that neglect of the Law invites such a disaster and advises him to accept 'instruction' (תורה). In so

²¹Vss. 5f.

²²Cf. Reichert, op. cit., p. 116.

doing he actually employs the word 'Torah' which, Beichert asserts, is its only occurrence in Job.²³

In sum, Eliphaz warns Job to accept the Law and to cease from his foolish questionings. He cannot hope to succeed in the latter because of the corrupt nature of man. If he practices righteousness then the blessings of creation will again be his (vss. 28-30). Thus Eliphaz emphasizes the practice of righteousness as the key to Job's salvation.

Section 3 -- Bildad

Bildad differs little from Eliphaz and Zophar in his analysis of Job's case. His basic contention is that God does

not reject a blameless man,
nor take the hand of evildoers.²⁴

Because Job appears to suffer like an evildoer, and to be rejected by God, then he must be considered guilty of some offence. All that remains for Bildad to do is to determine the nature of that offence.

Vss. 11-19f contain the essence of Bildad's contribution. Like Eliphaz, he maintains that the wicked eventually perish. However, wickedness must have some ground in which to thrive (vss. 11f.). Job is suffering because either he or his children (vs. 4) have provided the space for wickedness to flourish. If, however, Job is indeed 'blameless' (DN), then he can expect soon to be relieved of his suffering (vs. 20). The neat classifications of right and

²³Ibid., p. 119.

²⁴8:20.

wrong recall, as Reichert notes in connection with vs. 8, the terminology of Deut. 4:32 and the dispensation of the Law.²⁵

Bildad's second response to Job (ch. 18) is less considerate of his feelings than his first. He reminds Job in no uncertain terms of the fate of the wicked among whom he now classifies Job. He regards it as his duty to warn Job of the fate of the wicked in order that Job might repent of his wickedness before it is too late. The sole reference, which might be construed as indicative of creation, is to the 'light of the wicked' (vs. 5). However, the fate of that light is to be extinguished.

The remainder of this chapter concerns the fate of the wicked. The references to the destruction of his name and his memory in vss. 17 and 19 recall Deut. 28:62 in which the punishment of the wicked is to be decimated in number. There is thus no doubt in Bildad's mind as to Job's guilt. His only question is whether Job can be persuaded to turn aside from his evil ways.

The final address by Bildad (Chapter 25) concludes the speeches of the friends.²⁶ In this brief chapter Bildad summarizes the friends' belief in the utter corruption of mankind and of the great distance fixed between man and God. Bildad elaborates on Eliphaz' notion of the lowliness of man.²⁷ In his view man is a

²⁵ Op. cit., p. 35.

²⁶ Reichert, op. cit., p. 132, notes the textual difficulties of these chapters.

²⁷ Cf. above, p. 8.

'worm' (**רֶמֶס**) and a 'maggot' (**תוֹעֵלָה**).²⁸ That is, man is of the order of corruption and incapable of righteousness.²⁹

In this short chapter Bildad questions the human potential for good, especially as it is indicated in the notion of man's creation in Genesis 1 and as it is celebrated in Ps. 8 and elsewhere. This low estimate of man underlines the need for Law in order to compensate for human inadequacy. Thus Bildad indirectly questions the usefulness to man of notions about creation and simultaneously stresses the necessity of Law to govern all his actions. It is implicit in his view that it is only the dispensation of the Law which has enabled man to survive the consequences of the Fall. Clearly any notion of man's likeness to God is anathema to Bildad. Such a notion appears to him to be tantamount to idolatry.

In sum, Bildad believes implicitly in the utter fallenness of man and of his incapacity for regeneration without the Law. He gives no credence to the idea that something of the human resemblance to God might have survived the Fall. Job argues to the contrary based on his conviction of the goodness and potential of creation to be revelatory of God. Hence Job's stress is on creation while friends' disregard it.

Section 4 — Zophar

Zophar begins his speech (ch. 11) with an indictment of Job. He is convinced of Job's guilt and considers that the latter

²⁸ Vs. 6.

²⁹ Vs. 4.

escapes lightly for his sins (vs. 6). In vs. 3 he accuses Job of having "denied the doctrine of retributive justice", as it is outlined in Deut. 28 and elsewhere.³⁰ He asserts that the wicked will be deprived of light, but he misunderstands Job.³¹ The latter's quest is not for that light under which the wicked prosper, but for that light which illuminated creation.³²

In vs. 13ff. Zophar dwells on the subject of righteousness and evil. The way to overcome evil is to "set your heart right" (vs. 13), and to put away iniquity (vs. 14). Zophar's response to Job is the same kind of neat equation of good and bad which typifies the answers of Eliphaz and Bildad. It may have its genesis in the calculations of right and wrong determined in the Law, but it neglects entirely the spirit of the Law which is to cover every contingency of human experience and not just minor infringements of the rules.

Zophar's second and final speech (ch. 20) adds nothing distinctively new to the debate. He merely repeats his assertion that Job suffers because he is guilty and then lists the various fates which await the guilty. In vs. 16f. he declares that the guilty

...will suck the poison of asps;
the tongue of a viper will kill him
He will not look upon the river,
the streams flowing with honey and curds

As Reichert notes, the similarity of thought between these sentiments

³⁰ Reichert, *op. cit.*, p. 51.

³¹ Bildad echoes the same theme in 18:5f.

³² Zophar continues this theme in ch. 20.

of Zophar and those of the protagonists of the Law are remarkably similar.³³ ~~A concern for the maintenance of the Law is paramount~~ in both instances.

Despite the textual difficulties posed by the arrangement of the third cycle of speeches it is not surprising that Zophar is not given the opportunity of a third reply.³⁴ He has nothing essential to add to the debate. Besides, Bildad ably sums up the contributions of the Friends as a whole in Chapter 25. Zophar is quiescent then because he has nothing which will improve on this statement.

Section 5 -- Elihu

As is generally acknowledged the speeches of Elihu contribute little to the work as a whole.³⁵ Indeed, if anything they are a distraction because they repeat much of the friends' remarks and pre-empt Yahweh's addresses. In both cases Elihu misunderstands the issues at stake. Therein may lie the reason for their inclusion. That is, Elihu's contributions are retained because they present a clearly garbled version of both the friends' replies and those of Yahweh and Job. He also totally ignores the significance of the

³³Reichert, op. cit., p. 104, quotes Ibn Ezra's observation to the effect that, "the poison of the asps (Cf. Deut. xxxii. 33) is contrasted with the flowing streams of honey and curd (verse 17), and both expressions are by way of a metaphor".

³⁴Ibid., p. 115.

³⁵Cf. Reichert, op. cit., p. 165; Rowley, CB, pp. 262-263. Snaith, op. cit., pp. 72-85, notes that Elihu's speeches may have been written by the same author who wrote the rest of the book (p. 85), although on a subsequent occasion. Consequently, there are good grounds to include a brief discussion of these chapters here.

theophany. His contribution is retained because in it Elihu appears to pay tribute to the importance of the Law and simultaneously to acknowledge the revelation of God in creation. However, in reality he pays tribute to neither, for his sole authority is his own wisdom in which he takes a profound delight. A few examples of his rhetoric will illustrate Elihu's real concerns.

In 32:8 Eliphaz says, with reference to his former reluctance to speak, that:

...it is the spirit in a man,
the breath of the Almighty,
that makes him understand.

He no longer refrains from speech because he now knows that age is not the guarantor of wisdom. It is noteworthy in view of the importance of creation thought in this book, and also of the significance attached to the metaphor of man's creation in the image of God of Genesis 1:26, that Elihu here utilises this notion, not in order that he might reflect on the wisdom, or manner, of God's creation, but that he might indulge himself in speech.³⁶ In 33:4 Elihu asserts:

The spirit of God has made me,
and the breath of the Almighty gives me life.

and, in vs. 6:

Behold, I am toward God as you are;
I too was formed from a piece of clay.

In drawing this parallel he neglects to mention that the image has other connotations than those to which he makes reference. That is,

³⁶Reichert mentions the Targum's understanding of the phrase 'breath of life' as indicative of the "'speaking (i.e. rational) spirit'" (op. cit., p. 167). This speech typifies human endeavour.

he neglects the divine reflections contained in the notion of man's resemblance to God. His mention of man as made from the clay suggests that he has Gen. 2 rather than Gen. 1 in mind. Given the complementary nature of Genesis 1 and 2 it is important that Elihu consider both accounts of man's creation.

In 33:23 Elihu suggests that an 'angel' (מלאך), or someone else, should instruct Job in "what is right" (ישר). It is noteworthy that the phrase for this expression is not יכון, as in 42:7, but has the kind of moral overtones which Job's initial description in 1:1 and 2:3 carried. This fact corroborates the contention of this thesis that יכון 'what is right' in 42:7 refers specifically to creation rather than to moral integrity. It also suggests that Elihu is chiefly concerned with the kind of righteousness which is fostered by the strict observance of the Law. This interpretation of Elihu's use of the phrase 'what is right' is corroborated in 34:4 in which the word צו 'commandment' is explicitly used. The legalistic connotations of this word are primary. In the second part of the verse Elihu proposes to determine with his friends 'what is good' (טוב). Whereas Job recognizes the necessity of God to make this distinction known to man in the context of creation, Elihu proposes to determine this fact among his friends. This attitude is typical of Elihu's arrogance and explains why there is no mention of him elsewhere in the book.

Elihu's misunderstanding of the whole issue is again illustrated in 35:5ff. in which he challenges Job to look to the skies for evidence of the divine power in creation. However, the point

of this directive is to convince Job of the might of the divine power and therefore of the foolishness of sin and rebellion. Job is not encouraged to look to creation for the kind of comfort and joy for which he longs.

Elihu continues the same theme in Chapter 36. He exhorts Job to worship God and to repent in view of the greatness of God as manifested in creation (vss. 24-33). Elihu's understanding of creation is that it should be the means of eliciting submission, rather than praise, from Job. For him creation is not celebratory as it is for the author of Ps. 19.

In the final chapter of his tirade (37) Elihu questions Job's knowledge of creation and suggests that it is deficient. His apparent objective is to emphasize the distance between man and God. His concern contrasts with that of Job who wishes to bridge the gap if at all possible.

In sum, Elihu confuses the speeches of Job, the friends and Yahweh. It is not then remarkable that he is omitted from further consideration in the book. His garbled version of their arguments together with his arrogance have resulted in his exclusion from the dénouement of the book in Chapters 38-42.

Section 6 - Summary

The difference between Job and the friends revolves around their divergent evaluations of human significance. For the friends and Elihu man is a fallen creature who could not survive without the Law. Job's estimate of human worth is vastly different. He continues to look to man as the sign of hope because of the semblance of God

which is connoted by the description of his creation in the image of God. He is hopeful that this image will be the means of his beginning to understand man's relationship to God and the nature of the divine involvement in creation. For him, the Law is an insufficient guide to explain the mysteries of his condition. The almost complete lack of reference to creation in the speeches of the friends indicates the comparative unimportance of this locus of divine revelation in their considerations.



CHAPTER FOUR -- JOB 38-39

The Yahweh speeches have been selected for a close scrutiny because of their importance within the whole work. Not only do they contain the dénouement of the work and Job's final responses to Yahweh, but they also contain extensive references to creation. These references concern the nature of the divine wisdom and power as they are related to creation. In fact, the unfolding of the tale's meaning centers on the relationship between wisdom, power and creation and Job's aspiration to comprehend them. Consequently, these chapters are of especial importance within the book.

The essence of these chapters is a demonstration of Job's inadequacies in comparison with Yahweh's omnipotence and omniscience. The comparison covers various effects of the created universe as well as the creation itself. Certain animals, noted for their characteristics of cunning, pride, power, mobility, far-sightedness and lack of restraint, are employed in this illustration.

Rowley places these chapters under three headings: i. "The LORD's opening challenge 38.1-3"; ii. "A survey of the mysteries of earth and sky that surpassed Job's understanding (verses 4-38)"; iii. "A survey of the mysteries of animal and bird life that surpassed his understanding (38.39 - 39.30)".¹ This chapter of the thesis will follow these divisions, although their content differs

¹CE, p. 308.

somewhat from Rowley's.

Section 1 — 38:1-3

These first few verses constitute a challenge to Job to join in a contest in which he and God are the protagonists.² This notion of a contest is corroborated by the choice of the word אִישׁ for 'man' instead of the more usual אָדָם or בָּרִא.³ In the contest Job is required to prove his superiority over his opponent by means of a demonstration of his superior wisdom. The need for such a combat arises from Job's ignorant speech (vs. 2).

The terms in which this challenge to Job is couched are important for the light they shed on the poet's use of creation imagery. The word 'whirlwind' (מְבִיל) often occurs in contexts in which Yahweh's control of the universe is either assured or threatened.⁴ Frequently it is mentioned in connection with God's control over the sea, or the deeps.⁵ The central idea in such references in which this word occurs is usually to assert the rulership of Yahweh in establishing and maintaining creation, despite the threats of the whirlwind and other subversive forces.

Irreligious behaviour is also threatened with a whirlwind,

²C. H. Gordon, in "Belt-Wrestling in the Bible World" (HUCA, XXIII, Part 1 [1950-51], 131-136), has noted that the terms of the challenge refer to a belt-wrestling bout.

³The basic idea is 'strong man', 'warrior'.

⁴Cf. Isa. 40:24; Psa. 74:12f., 77:17, 107:25, 29.

⁵E.g. Psa. 77:17, 107:25, 29, 148:8.

presumably because it threatens the stability of the moral order.⁶
 In Job 9:17 the sufferer protests that he is being unjustly overwhelmed by a whirlwind. Such oppression makes it appear that Job is guilty of some offense. But, Job is protesting precisely because he feels that he is unjustly afflicted. In his view, creation has run amok when the innocent are regarded as guilty and the wicked prosper. But, in this chapter, the mention of the divine appearance in the storm is intended to confirm God's rulership in creation and that the wicked do not prosper by virtue of the creation.

In vs. 2 God accuses Job of guilt. He maintains that Job 'darkens counsel by words without knowledge' (מחשיך עצה במלין בלי דעת). Each of the words in this indictment is significant for they refer to creation in different ways.

מחשיך 'darkens' suggests the resurrecting of chaos and the obscuring of light.⁷ The poet has deliberately chosen this word to convey his belief that it is Job, and not God, who threatens creation and the moral order with his loose and ignorant words (מלין בלי דעת). Von Rad has observed the special connection which עצה 'counsel' has with creation:

⁶Cf. Jer. 23:19, 30:23; Isa. 29:6. D. J. McCarthy in "'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry", understands the Hebrew notion of creation to be exclusively concerned with moral and social origins (p. 99). Although such a view of Hebrew notions of creation is too narrow (Cf. above, pp. 14ff.), yet the association of morality and order with creation rings true of Job. For Job, creation to be meaningful has to embrace wisdom and justice. When it does not appear to do so, then Job asserts his preference for the world of chaos.

⁷Dhorme, op. cit., p. 575, would appear to have missed this point.

[It means here] the planning of God in relation to his creation and also includes what we understand by providence. The question is asked ironically, for one cannot 'darken' a plan if it deserves this name at all, certainly not a divine one.⁸

The unusual expression for 'words' (דְּבָרִים) means specifically 'taunt', or 'byword'.⁹ That is, Job has mistaken gossip, or superficial knowledge, for wisdom. That wisdom concerns the role of God in creation. As God says, Job does not possess this knowledge, for he speaks 'without knowledge' (בְּלִי דַעַת). In Genesis 1 and 2 man does not speak until woman is created and only then to declare the nature of the relationship between himself and the woman.¹⁰ He is, apparently, silenced at the spectacle of the creation. The same reaction is true of Job following the divine speeches from the whirlwind, with the exception of a few verses in which he asserts his complete insignificance in comparison with God's creation. But, by contrast, in the Dialogue Job has not hesitated to speak at great length about the creation and his relationship to it, and also of the inequities with which, in his opinion, it is filled. Now God declares that these words of Job's were essentially empty of knowledge. The NEB translation of this verse corroborates the contention that creation is its subject:

Who is this whose ignorant words
cloud my design in darkness?

⁸ Wisdom in Israel, p. 224.

⁹ Cf. 30:9.

¹⁰ Gen. 2:23.

4
Wisdom (חכמה or תבונה) is clearly associated with creation in Proverbs 8, especially in verses 22-31. There God's firm control over all opposition, particularly the forces of chaos, is clearly attested. This divine control and involvement is the subject of these chapters of Job. The ubiquitous divine control is affirmed when Job is questioned whether he pre-empted wisdom at creation (38:4f.).

However, the thrust of these chapters is not to exclude Job completely from the creation, only to restore his perspective on the nature of creation to proper proportions. Hence, the divine speeches are intended not only to remind Job of his position within the creation, and of his unworthiness of comparison with God, but also to increase his understanding with an explanation why he is unworthy and how his knowledge is shallow in comparison with divine wisdom. At the end of these speeches Job is convinced that he belongs within creation. Just as the animals, the birds, the constellations and other facets of the creation are all shown to conform to certain divinely ordained patterns and laws, so, by implication, Job is convinced that he too belongs within this universe, which is governed, not by chance or chaos, but by design (דעת). Thus, creation and wisdom are intimately associated in these chapters.

Section 2 -- Vss. 4-38

In these verses Job's knowledge of creation is put to the test. Whereas in previous chapters Job appeared to understand God's

role in creation fully, such an assumption is here severely questioned.¹¹

In the first part of this section (vss. 4-18) Job is questioned whether he actually possesses a comprehensive knowledge of the extremities of the earth, of life and death and also of chaos and the powers it represents. To have been present at these universal limits, and to possess such power would, in the poet's estimate, indicate Job's great wisdom.

Verses 4-7 refer specifically to the creation of the earth, while vss. 8-11 are concerned with the limitations imposed on the sea. The description of the creation of the earth -- as distinct from that of the sky, or the heavens -- employs the imagery of construction, in this instance the building of a house.¹² In these verses Job is summoned to relate the exact details of the construction, just as an onlooker might describe the nature and extent of a building in progress.¹³ And, just as a good report would require considerable familiarity with construction techniques, so Job is asked whether he possesses the requisite knowledge to report on

¹¹E.g. 12:7-12, 26:5-14.

¹²Vs. 18 emphasizes the fact that the earth is the subject of vss. 4-18. The building of a structure for a deity is frequently a part of the creation motif. Cf. Fisher, "Creation at Ugarit and in the Old Testament", p. 316; A. E. Combs, *op. cit.*, pp. 129, 137.

¹³Vs. 7 suggests that man was not present at the creation. Rowley says of this verse (CB, p. 310):
When the foundation of the Second Temple was laid, there was music and song (Exr. 3.10, 11). So here the laying of the foundation of the world is represented as accompanied by song. But since man was not yet created, it was the stars and the angels who sang. In Gen. 1.16 the stars are represented as created after the earth.

creation. Since only someone who was actually present at creation would be in a position to possess this knowledge, it follows that Job is necessarily ignorant (אֵי-לֹא).¹⁴ Thus knowledge and creation are associated in the context of a comparison between divine and human wisdom and power. The fact that Job has not erected a structure similar to Yahweh's, and that he is not endowed with the abilities requisite for such a task, indicates Job's insufficiency as a creator and also that God and creation are the subject matter of this chapter.

Certain other important implications also derive from these divine questions to Job. First, since Job obviously was not, and could not have been, present at creation, it follows that he does not possess such knowledge as Yahweh requires of him. Second, in relation to his final response to Yahweh (42: 1-6), the connection between perceiving and knowing is here intimated.¹⁵ That is, Job is here required to prove both his knowledge of creation and that he was an eye-witness to it. Thus the importance of the visual means of perception, or knowing, is here emphasized. Right recognition and understanding receive even further stress in vs. 18:

Have you comprehended (הִתְחַבַּנְתָּ) the expanse of the earth?
Declare, if you know (אִם-יָדָעַתָּ) all this.

It is this final proper recognition by Job of his status vis-à-vis

¹⁴It is tempting to understand אֵי-לֹא as knowledge of a rather technical variety. That is, it may be understood as a kind of early scientific appreciation of the nature of the structure of the universe. Cf. the author's M.A. thesis, especially pp. 68-83. Vs. 4b would then mean that Job is lacking in this technical ability.

¹⁵See especially 42:5.

the creation, and the manner in which he acknowledges it, which gains him the divine commendation of 42:7. There he is commended by God for having spoken 'what is right' (יִשְׁרָאֵל), literally, 'what is established'. That is, he has spoken correctly of the foundation of things, specifically of the creation.¹⁶

Thus, the basic question asked of Job in vs. 4-7 is whether he was present at creation and if he possesses the kind of knowledge and power employed in the creation.¹⁷ By implication he is deficient in these attributes.

The second part of this series of questions about the creation of the earth refers to the containment of the sea (vs. 8-11). The sea is the traditional symbol of opposition to Yahweh and is variously personified in Canaanite and Mesopotamian religion.¹⁸ As a deity it is variously referred to as Tehom, Yam, Yammu, and even as Baal.¹⁹ Here the sea is described as confined within certain limits of Yahweh's making following its birth (vs. 8).²⁰ The suggestion that the sea

¹⁶ These ideas receive further elaboration in the analysis of Chapter 42 below.

¹⁷ Wisdom's presence at creation is indicated in Prov. 8. Cf. also Job 28:23-28, and especially vs. 28 in which the 'fear of the LORD' is equated with wisdom. That is, righteousness and wisdom are identified in proper religious behaviour.

¹⁸ Cf. Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 86ff., especially p. 101. Cf. also 3:8 and pp. 8f. above

¹⁹ Cf. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 101.

²⁰ On the phrase 'and he enclosed the sea with doors' (וַיִּסְגֹּר יְהוָה בַּדְלֵתִים בַּדְּלֵתִים) Rowley comments (CB, p. 310): 'burst forth': the turbulent sea is likened to a child breaking out of the womb. Two figures are used, therefore, in this verse: the sea as a child bursting from the womb,

must 'burst forth' (**בג'זון**) from the womb may be a response to Job's wish in Chapter 3 that he might remain forever in the security of the womb.²¹ Here he is assured that what comes forth from the womb of the earth is subject to strict divine controls for the benefit of man. This containment of the sea within certain boundaries recalls Gen. 1:6,9 in which God first separated the seas and then "gathered them together into one place".²²

However, the major theme of these verses is clearly that of the birth of a child. Like the sea, it needs to be carefully protected by certain limits. Both need limits in order to preserve what is created:

...Thus far shall you come, and no farther,
and here shall your proud waves be stayed.²³

The last phrase of this verse, 'and here shall your proud waves be stopped' (**וּפֶאֱ-שִׁתּוּבְאֵן גִּלְיָד**), should literally be translated as 'and here your waves shall stop in pride'.²⁴ The primary notion is the severe divine curtailment of sea's ambition. The similarity between this verse and Jer. 5:22 is striking.²⁵ In both cases,

and as an unruly flood needing to be securely controlled.

²¹Cf. above pp. 69f.

²²Gen. 1:9.

²³Vs. 11.

²⁴The NAB misses the mythological significance of this phrase when it renders it as, "and here your waves shall stop in pride".

²⁵Do you not fear me? says the LORD;
Do you not tremble before me?
I placed the sand as a bound for the sea,
a perpetual barrier which it cannot pass;

chaos, symbolized by the unruly waters, is a very active agent and needs to be strictly controlled. Otherwise creation is threatened with subversion. To prevent such an outcome God has set firm boundaries to the sea. This divine act should be indicative to Job of Yahweh's solicitude for his people and the creation as a whole.

Vss. 12-15 convey the impression that the poet is commenting on various aspects of Job's first outcry against misfortune. In these verses he considers the creation of day, or dawn.²⁶ He reminds Job that part of the day's function is to expose wrong-doers who prosper under the cloak of darkness (vs. 13).²⁷ By implication, night is the embodiment of evil and Job should therefore take comfort in the fact that night, like the sea, is subject to certain divinely ordained limits.²⁸ In Gen. 1:4 God separates the light from the darkness. The light (אור) is called 'good' (טוב), whereas the 'darkness' (חשך) receives no such description. Presumably, therefore, it is less good. This identification of light with good and darkness with evil is corroborated in vs. 15:

From the wicked their light is withheld,
and their uplifted arm is broken.

though the waves toss, they cannot prevail,
though they roar, they cannot pass over it.

²⁶ Cf. 3:3f., and pp. 62ff. above.

²⁷ This view of the lot of the wicked contradicts Job's own estimate of their fortunes in, for example, 24:13-17.

²⁸ The phrase in vs. 14 is, תתהפך כחמר חותם: it is changed like clay under the seal (NEB: "to bring up the horizon in relief as under a seal"). That is, dawn reveals anew, or creates, the identity of things, particularly the world.

That is, the wicked are condemned to perpetual darkness and obtain no relief from the domain of chaos.²⁹ The phrase 'uplifted arm'

(**תְּרִמַּת יָדָא**) recalls the account of Israel's deliverance from the Egyptians in which God is said to deliver by the power of his arm, or hand.³⁰ Rowley thinks that the reference is to "the arm of violence which is active in the darkness and is paralysed in the daytime".³¹ But the phrase has a more comprehensive reference than Rowley's interpretation allows. The reference to Israel's escape from the Egyptians connects this passage with that account of her origins in the desert. On that occasion, Yahweh routed her enemies just as he overcame the forces of darkness and chaos in the creation.³²

The key to vs. 12-15 is the first word **הֲמִימֶיךָ** 'is it from your days', that is, 'is it from your beginning?' (vs. 12). God's absurd question to Job is whether it is he who is responsible for the creation of light. The implicit answer is, of course, that

²⁹ Again, such a belief contrasts with Job's earlier assertions about the lot of the wicked.

³⁰ Cf. Ex. 15:6, 12, 16. Many verses in this chapter of Exodus could also be understood to refer to creation. Yahweh employs the sea (Yam) to fulfill his will (vss. 4-5), with the result that the Egyptians are destroyed by the floods (**תְּהוֹמֹת**) (vs. 5). These events all occur within the context of Yahweh's creation (vss. 16-17).

³¹ CB, p. 312.

³² The terms of the overthrow of the Egyptians at the Sea of Reeds involve creation imagery. On the significance of the water-separation motif cf. F. E. Eakin, The Religion and Culture of Israel (Boston, 1971), pp. 64f.

Job had no such powers at his disposal. Yahweh's question implies that Job's speaks as if he did.

Vss. 16-18 conclude this section on the earth and Job's real lack of knowledge of its 'expanse' (רחבי). In them he is asked whether he has perceived the farthest limits of the creation, specifically whether he has penetrated to the 'springs of the sea' (עד־נביים), or is familiar with the 'recesses of the deep' (בְּקֶדֶר תְּהוֹם). Both ים 'sea' and תְּהוֹם 'deep' have been connected with their respective Ugaritic and Mesopotamian divine counterparts, that is, Yam, or Yammu, and Tiamat.³³ It is probable that Yahweh here infers his superiority over both the watery expanses and their mythological connections. He questions whether Job can match such knowledge and power as would be required in such a feat.

Yahweh next inquires whether Job has reached the 'threshold of death' (שַׁעַר מוֹת) and whether he has 'seen' (תִּרְאֶה) the 'gates of deep darkness' (שַׁעַר צִלְמוֹת).³⁴ It follows from Yahweh's questions that if Job has indeed accomplished these tasks then he is worthy of a different kind of divine respect, for clearly he possesses knowledge beyond the normal. In the light of Prov. 8 his claims would then merit serious consideration. The possibility that Job might possess extraordinary knowledge is further indicated

³³Cf. T. H. Gaster, Thespis, pp. 125-126. Gray disagrees with Gaster's interpretation of Sea's (Yam's) role in his Legacy of Canaan (Leiden, 1965), pp. 21f. Cf. also, Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 37f.

³⁴Vs. 17. 'Sight' is emphasized here and in 42:5 as of primary importance in understanding God's role in creation

by the divine command to Job to demonstrate that knowledge, 'declare if you know all this' (וְהוֹדִיעַ אִם יָדָעְתָּ כָּל־זֶה).

Thus, in these few verses Job is questioned whether he in fact possesses a comprehensive knowledge of the expanses of the earth, of the nature of life and death, and of the extent of chaos and its protagonists.³⁵ The possession of this power, and the wisdom that would necessarily accompany it, would, in the poet's estimate, entitle Job to a different kind of divine evaluation and respect. In such a situation Job would undoubtedly possess extraordinary knowledge.

In sum, vss. 4-18 discuss Job's knowledge of the earth and its contents, mythological, natural and otherwise. By implication, Job is deficient in his knowledge of these things and matters, whereas, it is inferred, Yahweh is by contrast both omnipotent and omniscient.

Vss. 19-38 concern the heavens and their various functions. Again, Job's task is to prove his ability to equal God in his creation and control of their functions.

Vss. 19-21 continue the divine investigation of Job's knowledge and power in creation. These verses pursue a theme first briefly mentioned in Job's opening speech.³⁶ On this occasion

³⁵In vs. 16 the word וַתֵּלֶכְתְּ (RSV "walked") conveys the notion of 'familiarity', or 'intimacy', as the Satan's traversings of the earth illustrate his knowledge of it ways. It is the earth which is covered with chaos (תְּהוֹל לְבָחַן) in Gen. 1. By implication, even if Job were fully cognizant of the earth and its contents, such knowledge would be of an inferior kind.

³⁶Cf. 3:3-10, 20, 23.

Job is questioned whether he knows the location of the sources of 'light' (אור), and 'darkness' (חושך).³⁷ In Gen. 1:4 the first act of creation involved God's separation of the 'light' (אור) from the 'darkness' (חושך). Thus the question inquires directly of Job's knowledge of creation. The question also requires him to demonstrate his knowledge, or wisdom, for light is often a synonym for wisdom. If Job were able to satisfy these divine demands then he would undoubtedly possess extraordinary wisdom. The other two verses of this section emphasize Job's deficiency in knowledge. In vs. 21 he is directly required to show evidence of his wisdom, for 'he was born then' (כי-אנתולד). That is, if Job possessed the kind of knowledge Yahweh requires of him, then he would be equal to wisdom itself, as Prov. 8:22f. indicates. Thus, knowledge of creation and the possession of wisdom are intimately related in this passage.

In the following verses Job is repeatedly asked to provide an exact description of the origins and characteristics of various aspects and creatures of the creation.³⁸ In each instance Job's knowledge and power are seen to be deficient by implication.³⁹ Job simply has not traveled far enough -- to the 'storehouses of the

³⁷vs. 17.

³⁸McCarthy's contention that creation must deal exclusively with origins "or we equivocate" (*op. cit.*, p. 88) is easily satisfied in these verses -- despite his belief that creation of this kind does not appear in the Bible. However, he fails to comment on Job at all in his article and thus misses much material relevant to his thesis.

³⁹Again, Job's silence before the barrage of divine questions contrasts with his earlier loquaciousness. This silence may be seen as indicative of his new perception of the mystery and power of creation.

snow', or example (vs. 22) -- to possess the kind of knowledge that would meet the divine requirements. He clearly does not have the power and knowledge necessary for such feats.

He also cannot equal God in providing water for irrigation and fertilization (vss. 26f.). This reference to God's care for the desert may be seen to refer also to his preservation of the Hebrews from destruction, as well as to his creation of man from the dust of the earth.⁴⁰ Another implication of these verses is that Yahweh, unlike the Canaanite gods, Baal³, Mot and Yam, is not circumscribed by his creative deeds.⁴¹

Finally (vss. 28-29), it is indicated by implication that Job is unfamiliar with the sources of rain and ice, and that he lacks the power and knowledge which would enable him to establish the constellations which show signs of conforming to some carefully conceived plan (קצו).⁴² Job's essential lack of power and knowledge is summarized in vs. 33:

⁴⁰ Gen. 2:7. The reference to 'grass' (חֵבֶרֶת) recalls Gen. 1:11 and simultaneously affirms the divine ability to foster creation.

⁴¹ For the Hebrew, the watering of the desert represents, not divine folly, but that superabundance which is typical of God's solicitude for his people. In addition, not only is God's power over apparently inert matter completely successful, but the land is satisfied with the irrigation -- unlike the land of the Canaanites over which their gods fight incessantly in order to ensure its fertility. Thus, Yahweh's complete sovereignty is indicated in this connection.

⁴² קצו 'ordinances'. The constellations, like the sea (vs. 10), are bounded by divine constraints. The seas and the deeps in Gen. 1 are contained within strict limits of divine origin. Thus, the notion of ordering is typical of creation.

Do you know the ordinances of the heavens?
Can you establish their rule on the earth?

In sum, Job is incapable of emulating the divine acts of creation and preservation because of his insufficient power and knowledge.

Job's insufficiencies are further illustrated in vs. 34 in which his inability to cause a flood, or lightning, is indicated. Obviously, it is not he who has organized the clouds and the mists (vs. 36) which both possess wisdom (חכמה) and understanding (בִּינָה).

Thus, in this second part of the chapter (vss. 19-38), Job's inadequacies are illustrated in terms of the heavens and their contents. This demonstration parallels the account of his limitations in relation to earth and its properties provided in vss. 4-18. Both parts of the chapter deal with issues initially raised by Job in Chapter 3 in which he denounced creation. Job is forced to conclude that he is no fit competitor for God in the matters of creation and wisdom.

Section 3 -- 38:39-39:30

The theme now changes to a consideration of the various functions of animal life (38:39ff.). Again, the intention is to prove Job's total insufficiency in terms of wisdom and power, particularly in connection with creation. The theme is briefly illustrated in the concluding verses in Chapter 38 in which Job's deficiency in power and wisdom is indicated by his inability to provide for the wild animals.

Gen. 1:20ff. provides an account of the creation of the various forms of animal life. From this account it appears that

the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, the cattle and all creeping things are all created and sustained by virtue of the divine acts of creation. In addition, their creation and preservation is described as good. Man's specific task in the creation is to 'have dominion over' (1771) all of these creatures.⁴³ Hence, the point of the lengthy account of animal life in this section of Job is again to indicate Job's lack of creative wisdom and power to order and make provision for these animals as God himself did at the creation. Whereas it is true that man was placed in charge of animal life in Gen. 1:28, it is here inferred that that status does not place Job on a par with his creator. He too is a part of the creation as are the animals and is not distinct from it.

In 39:1ff. the poet lists an inventory of Job's lack of wisdom and power in connection with the creation and preservation of certain animals and birds. The chief point of similarity between these animals is that, although many of them are wild and completely free of human restraints, yet they all conform to certain natural laws and belong within a grand design of divine origin.⁴⁴ Job is challenged to demonstrate his power and knowledge in such matters since his questions beg such a demonstration.

⁴³Gen. 1:28.

⁴⁴Cf. Gen. 1:20-31. The provision for the creatures of the universe is related in vs. 30. The preservation of the various forms of animal life from the destruction of the flood (Gen. 6-9) indicates the providential aspect of creation. They are not subject to the rule of chaos symbolized by the waters of the flood. The agent of their preservation is Noah, the personification of righteousness.

A brief examination of some of the highlights of the chapter illustrates further the poet's method and concerns. In vss. 9-12 the 'ox' (𐤁𐤓) is mentioned. This animal represents unbridled strength and virility.⁴⁵ In the Ugaritic texts from Ras Shamra El is described in terms of his creative power and virility.⁴⁶ He is also described as the king of the gods, and as "the Bull", tr' el".⁴⁷ Thus, he symbolizes in his person the characteristics of royalty, virility, strength and cunning. Such attributes would obviously induce respect for him in any ordinary mortal. If it be granted that the wild ox of Job has some connections with this deity, then the reference has all the more force to it. Clearly Job would not be willing to tackle it as, it is implied, Yahweh has successfully done.

The 'ostrich' (𐤁𐤓𐤓) is referred to in vss. 13-18. She is notorious for her stupidity, yet somehow her young survive. They survive by virtue of providence.⁴⁸ The ostrich is witless precisely because she is not endowed with 'wisdom' (חכמה) and 'understanding'

⁴⁵He is the object of terror to the suppliant of Ps. 22:22. The psalmist is terrified of this creature because of the apparent absence of God. Thus, this creature poses more than a physical danger to man. Cf. also Num. 23:22.

⁴⁶Cf. John Gray, The Legacy of Canaan: The Ras Shamra Texts and their Relevance to the Old Testament (Leiden, 1965), pp. 158-159, and by the same author, "Exodus", The Interpreter's One-Volume Commentary on the Bible (New York, 1971), 33-73, p. 63. His creative qualities are indicated in his title bnw bnwt "Creator of Created Things" (Gray, The Legacy of Canaan, p. 159).

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 158.

⁴⁸Cf. 30:29 and p. 105f. above.

(בִּינָה [vs. 17]).⁴⁹ Because she lacks these attributes her life is chaotic (vs. 16). Leaving her eggs on the ground not only indicates her apparent carelessness, but can also be thought of as consigning them to the abode of earth, which, in some instances, can be equated with mt, or death.⁵⁰ Thus they are rescued from the oblivion of non-existence by a providential creator.

The poet's reason for mentioning these wild animals is primarily to illustrate how, despite their natures, they are provided for in a world that can consequently only be understood as carefully constructed.⁵¹ There is a note of comfort for Job in the fact that all these animals are subject to divine control, for, in Gen. 1:26-31 and 2:19-20 all the animals are shown to be subservient to man. Hence, any animal which does not submit to some kind of human constraint must seem symptomatic of chaos resurgens to man. But in this mention of these animals Yahweh shows Job how they are still subject to his control and that their lives follow divinely ordained patterns. In other words, their provision is not a matter of chance, but is rather the result of deliberate divine design (נִסְיוֹן). These facts should convince Job that, not only has he a place and a

⁴⁹Cf. Rowley, CB, p. 322 who quotes an Arabian proverb on the stupidity of the ostrich.

⁵⁰Cf. Wakeman, op. cit., p. 108, "...arg is the underworld, as it is often in the Ugaritic texts and the Bible, and is practically synonymous with mt".

⁵¹All the animals mentioned are wild. Their freedom from the restraints of domestication emphasizes their essential freedom and sole dependence on nature -- which is sustained and governed by providence.

function within creation, but even that which is apparently typical of chaos is also a part of Yahweh's created order. Thus Job is convinced of his limited understanding of creation and, simultaneously, of its benevolent and meaningful nature.

This note of the benevolent aspect of creation is elaborated upon in vs. 18-25. In them the theme of creation is enlarged upon in connection with the creation and redemption of the people of Israel at the crossing of the Red Sea. In Ex. 14 and 15 Yahweh's deliverance of the Hebrews from the Egyptians is regarded as a magnificent act of redemption on Yahweh's part, as well as illustrative of his wisdom and might.

In vs. 18 the phrase 'horse and his rider' (לסוס ולרכבו) occurs. This phrase is used deliberately -- as Miriam's refrain indicates -- to illustrate not only Yahweh's great delivery of his people, but also the significance of his intervention on their behalf.⁵²

In other words, the forces of chaos, which are represented by the Egyptians, are not permitted by Yahweh to destroy his creation.⁵³

The identification of Egypt with Rahab, who is also synonymous with Leviathan, as well as with the forces of chaos, confirms the belief that Yahweh's deliverance is also his preservation of the creation.⁵⁴ Thus, in this reference Job is forcefully reminded of the providential salvation and origins of his people. The poet thereby reminds Job that

⁵²Ex. 15: 1, 21.

⁵³Cf. Eakin, op. cit., pp. 60-67.

⁵⁴Cf. above pp. 66f., and Wakeman, op. cit., p. 60.

meaning and providence are united in creation. Furthermore, there may also be a connection with Baalism intended in the water-separation motif of Exodus 14 and 15.⁵⁵ In this case, this reference may also be seen to assert Yahweh's complete control over all opposition, both divine and human.

The mention of the horse and its rider elicits from the poet a lengthy eulogy on the speed and fierceness of the mighty war-horse (vss. 19-25). Yet, despite its awesome qualities it can be domesticated by man for the purposes of the protection of Yahweh's creation, namely, Israel. But Job is not capable of constructing such a wonderful animal because he lacks the kind of skill and knowledge necessary for such a task.

The final stanza (vss. 26-30) again refers to Job's deficiencies in wisdom and power.⁵⁶ The conclusion of the comparison is again the same. It affirms that it is by God's knowledge and power alone that creation and its creatures are ordained and sustained. Job, by implication, is like the eagle in his fondness for heights. But, like the eagle, he must return to earth for his sustenance -- however far-sighted he may be. Again, like the eagle who from his eyrie lords it over creation but sits among his refuse, so Job dwells among the ashes and aspires towards the kingship of creation without a thought for his nature.

⁵⁵ Eakin, *ibid.*

⁵⁶ Vs. 26: 'Is it by your wisdom...' (החכמה); vs. 27: 'Is it at your command?' (אם על פיך).

Section 5 -- Summary of Creation References

The preceding analysis and exegesis of these chapters have shown that the prime consideration for the poet is to present his theme, in all of its variations, of the ordering and providential nature of God's creation. This ordering embraces: earth (38:4-18); sky, heavens and outer space (38:19-38); wild animals, their functions and sustenance (38:39-39:18); the ostrich (39:13-18); the war-horse (39:19-25); the birds of the air (39:26-30). They are all shown to belong in the divine plan (תבנית) and to have a place within the created universe. In constant company with this ordering of creation is wisdom, who was present at, and dominant over, the creation. Consequently, Job is repeatedly summoned to demonstrate his wisdom which, if he were successful, would prove his creative ability and thereby his worthiness of the status of a competitor with God.

Specific references to creation are connected with the following:

- i. 'whirlwind' (38:1); ii. 'darkness', 'counsel', 'ignorance' (38:2);
- iii. possession of wisdom (חכמה) (38:3); iv. the construction of a building (38:4-7); v. the containment of the sea, or chaos (38:8-11); vi. the control of light and darkness (38:12-15); vii. comprehensive knowledge of, and control over, the sea (Yam), and the deep (Tahom) (38:16-18); viii. knowledge of primordial origins (38:19-24f.); ix. ability to create out of the desert (38:25-27); x. ability to father rain and conceive ice (38:26, 28-29); xi. power to establish the position and courses of the constellations (38:31-33); xii. power to cause floods and lightning (38:34f.); xiii. to create through fertilizing the earth (38:37-38); xiv. to

provide for and to control the movements of the wild animals (38:39-39:18);
xv. to equal providence in every respect and to provide for the comfort
and protection of mankind through the suppression of chaos and the
maintenance of order (39:18-25).

Summary

The thrust of this Yahweh speech is to indicate to Job both his basic unworthiness in comparison with the creator, and also the signs of hope and meaning evident in the creation. Job cannot be compared with the personification of wisdom, because he lacks the kind of power and wisdom which are involved in the creation. Consequently, he must be prepared to recognize his human limitations.

The divine demonstration of the nature of creation reveals to Job its providential aspects which, if properly recognized, can be a source of comfort and insight. They are comforting because they reveal to Job that he belongs within the created world and that he is somehow related to God -- perhaps through his ability to comprehend, or perceive, the nature of God's ordering of the universe as manifested in the final creation. If he correctly observes he can see these signs of God.

CHAPTER FIVE -- JOB 40-41

It is tempting to regard this second Yahweh speech merely as a repetition of the first, and to conclude therefrom that there is nothing new in these chapters.¹ However, such a conclusion does a disservice to the text, for these chapters contain several distinctive features which serve to elaborate significantly and substantially the poet's concern with creation. This interest is discernible in his illustration of the principal feature of this speech namely, the power of God as it is manifested by his control over certain extraordinary animals, namely Behemoth and Leviathan.

The speech itself is comprised of a summary question by God to Job accusing the latter of contentiousness (vss. 1-2, 8-9), a brief response by Job (vss. 3-5) which is followed by a divine summons to him to assume royal status and to demonstrate his power and wisdom (vss. 7, 10-14). These short passages are then followed by extensive descriptions of Behemoth (40:15-24) and Leviathan (40:25-41:26 [ET, 41:1-34]).

The organization of this chapter of the thesis follows these natural divisions of the speech. That is, Section 1 is comprised of Yahweh's second challenge to Job and the latter's first response (vss. 1-14). The second section deals with the account of Behemoth (vss. 15-24), while the third section is concerned with

¹Cf. Rowley, CB, pp. 326-327.

Leviathan (40:25-41:26 [ET, 41:1-34]).

Section 1 -- 40:1-14

In vs. 1-2 Yahweh brusquely inquires of Job whether a disputatious man, or even an impartial judge, or 'umpire' (מוֹכִיחַ), shall indeed contend with him (vs. 2).² Job is quickly convinced by God that such a confrontation is out of the question.³ That Job recognizes this fact is indicated by the precise words with which he replies. In them he admits his basic unsuitability for such a contest on the grounds that he is only a 'lightweight' (קֶלֶתִּי) in comparison with God.⁴ It is this idea of a lightweight pitted against the Almighty (יְהוָה) which sets the tone of the speech. In the latter the incomparable power and majesty of Yahweh are

²This rendition of the second part of vs. 2 is based on 9:32-33 in which Job had requested the aid of an 'umpire' (מוֹכִיחַ) in his contention with the Almighty (Cf. Pope, AB, pp. 74-75). Such an interpretation also emphasizes the great gap of inequality and incomparability which exists between God and Job. It is this difference which nullifies Job's hope of 9:32-33, for no 'umpire' could be permitted to make judgments on God's justice (Cf. Pope, *ibid.*).

³In vs. 2 the divine names 'Shaddai' (יְהוָה) and 'Eloah' (אֱלֹהִים) occur. The use of both of these names for God following the mention of Yahweh in vs. 1 indicates that the poet is deliberately intending by their juxtaposition to establish a connection between them. Thus, Yahweh embraces the qualities of Shaddai and Eloah. Whatever the origins of these various appellations they are all subsumed within Yahweh.

⁴Dhorme (op. cit., p. 615) notes that the basic sense of the verb קָלַח is "to be light". From this sense he derives the interpretation of 'thoughtless speech'. However, the other sense of lightness, that is of physical lightness, is more appropriate here for it best accommodates the terms of a contest referred to in vs. 7. In other words, Job considers himself to be physically and mentally unsuited for competition with Yahweh.

demonstrated in the nature and function of certain extraordinary animals.⁵ However, the point of their reference is to show how, despite their magnificence and their capacity to demand complete human respect, they are totally subject to Yahweh's control (41:3 [ET, 11]). They are not permitted to destroy Yahweh's creation, although they pose a severe threat to it at times.

Job's response (vss. 4-5) to Yahweh's inquiry is that henceforth he will be silent (vs. 5). That is, he will speak no more because he has heard enough to convince him of the shortcomings of his speech and of the inappropriateness of his protest.⁶ All that remains to be done is for him to be convinced visually, as it were, that this deed has been accomplished in his final response in 42:2-6 when he indicates that he now sees, or perceives, in a manner not previously possible.⁷ Thus, the achievement of right

⁵The name 'YH' 'Almighty', denotes power and majesty and has some connections with Ugaritic divine names. He is associated with a mountain, storm and fire. Cf. Ex. 19 and 1 Kgs. 19 and B. W. Anderson's comments in "God, Names of", IDB, Vol. II, 407-417, especially p. 412. Anderson says that:

The author of Job favored this name, for evidently to him it was free from the specifically Israelite connotations of "Yahweh" and expressed the majesty and omnipotence of deity. (*ibid.*).

It is doubtful, however, whether the poet's reason for using this name is as Anderson suggests. Its connections with power and majesty, particularly as they apply to creation, provide a more probable reason for its selection, as the latter part of Anderson's remarks suggests.

⁶The word אנישׁ 'I shall answer' can also mean 'I shall protest', 'sing out' (Cf. above, p. 62n.2.). Thus, Job here means that he will protest no more. This interpretation of this word negates the usefulness of Kittel's emendation אנישׁ 'I will [not] repeat'.

⁷Cf. especially 42:5.

perception, or vision, is a foremost consideration of this speech. That is, at this point Job has yet to be convinced visually and perceptibly of the signs of God's presence in, and control over, the creation. Consequently, from this perspective the second Yahweh speech has a valuable contribution to make to the argument.

Yahweh's question continues with a repetition of his first response to Job in which the latter is challenged to prepare himself for the contest (vs. 7).⁸ On the first occasion, the issue was primarily that of knowledge, or understanding.⁹ In this speech the central question is Yahweh's power and control over creation. Yahweh is angry with Job because he attempts to 'justify' (PTYN) himself at his expense (vs. 8). What is at issue is Job's intent to justify himself in the biblical sense of justification. That is, he seeks divine recognition of his 'piety' (NNN) and his 'righteousness' (NPTS) in a manner comprehensible to, and perceptible by him. He requires divine confirmation that righteousness is both meaningful and desirable.

An alternative interpretation of Job's first reply to Yahweh is that the latter believes the contest to be unfairly weighted in Yahweh's favour. Consequently, his response in vs. 4-5 must be taken as an indignant protest on his part against the grossly unfair disparity between the two protagonists.¹⁰ Thus, what Job means

⁸Of. 38:3 and p. 130 above.

⁹Of. 38:4 and pp. 133ff. above.

¹⁰Of. 9:16-17.

here is that, having said his piece, he will not repeat it for fear of further divine repression.

However, if the latter interpretation is the correct one, then Yahweh's words in vs. 8-9 have all the more force. That is, Job must see that he cannot possibly justify himself at God's expense. He may not do so because, compared with God, he is incomparable. Hence God explains to Job why he may not do so by means of a demonstration of his power as it is manifested in his control and maintenance of the creation. But this demonstration does not thereby exclude Job from God's company for it can be seen by Job to contain redemptive qualities of great human significance.

Of the two interpretations of Job's reply, the former is preferable primarily on the grounds that there is a progression in Job's appreciation of the divine speech rather than a duplication. That is, at the end of the first divine speech Job's understanding of God's role in creation has increased immeasurably. At the conclusion of the second speech his perception or vision has been utterly transformed by his experience in witnessing the divine demonstration of control over creation and all opposition to it.

An early indication that God's power in creation is the theme of this speech is provided in vs. 9. The latter contains various suggestions both of the absolute power of God in creation and also of the redemptive nature of that power.¹¹ The phrase 'arm

¹¹Cf. Ps. 74:10-11:

How long, O God, is the foe to scoff?

Is the enemy to revile thy name for ever?

Why dost thou hold back thy hand,

like God' (זרוע סל) refers primarily to the strength of God, both in creation and in the act of saving his people from their enemies. The second half of this verse (9), 'and can you thunder with a voice like his?' (בְּקוֹל כְּחֹזְקוֹתָם) distinctly recalls certain images of God's control of chaos and maintenance of creation.¹² The divine question to Job is whether he can equal this ability to maintain order and propriety when threatened by the forces of disorder and unrighteousness. Thus, what Yahweh requires of Job is proof of his understanding and acceptance of the divine responses to the questions he has raised in the course of the Dialogue. In particular, God requires of Job a full acknowledgment of his comprehension of the divine power and its redemptive qualities as illustrated in creation.

In vs. 10-14 Job is commanded to assume royal prerogatives. He is to dispense justice like a king (vs. 12). He is to clothe himself in the vesture of royalty (vs. 10), and to exercise power like God (vs. 11). The actual terms of these commands to Job corres-

why dost thou keep thy right hand in thy bosom?
Cf. also, Ex. 15:16; Dt. 26:18; Pss. 77:15, 98:1, 104:7.

¹²Yahweh's domination of chaos, and his maintenance of creation, is clearly attested in many places. Cf., for example, Amos 1:2; Pss. 29, 93:4, 97:1-5. Ps. 104:7 clearly establishes the connection between God's thundering and his abilities as a creator:

At thy rebuke they [the waters, or the deeps] fled;
at the sound of thy thunder they took to flight.
In Ex. 15:6 the 'enemy' (אֹיֵב) is terrified at the sight of the divine power. At the end of this speech Job (אִיּוֹב) is convinced of the reality and effectiveness of this same power. In both instances Yahweh's subjugation of chaos marks a new beginning of religious awakening. The people of Israel emerge from the chaos of oppression. Job arises from the ashes of despair.

pond so closely to the description of God's power and wisdom in Ps. 104 that the conclusion is inevitable that the subject of these chapters is indeed God's control of creation and chaos. The introduction of the notion of royalty in these verses links them with the Enthronement psalms in which the kingship of Yahweh is central.¹³ Furthermore, as Fisher indicates, the ascension of the king is a primary characteristic of the creation motif.¹⁴ In these few verses Job is commanded to occupy this divine role. Thus, these few verses contain a very important summary of some of the main themes of the book. That is, the royal nature of Yahweh, his concern with justice and morality, specifically with the punishment of evil, the subjugation of chaos and the preservation of the creation, are all matters which are illustrated in these few verses. These concerns all relate to Yahweh's role in creation.

The terms in which Job is commanded to assume regal status confirm the centrality of the creation motif in the poet's imagination. In vs. 10 Job is told to clothe himself with 'majesty and dignity' (חוד חוד תלבש). The same phrase occurs in the description of Yahweh in Ps. 104:1. The use of this phrase in the psalm occurs in the context of a description of Yahweh's creative majesty. In vs. 11 Job is invited to exercise judgment on the wicked. He is to 'abase' (חשפִּילָהֶם) the proud, literally, to trample them

¹³ Cf. A. E. Combs, *op. cit.*, pp. 119ff. and the extensive literature cited therein.

¹⁴ *Op. cit.*, p. 316.

into dust. In vs. 13 he is again instructed to annihilate the proud.

On this occasion, he is to 'bury them in the dust' (בְּאֶמְצָאֵם).

Rowley interprets בְּאֶמְצָאֵם 'in the dust' as "probably meaning 'in the grave'".¹⁵ But the idea of returning matter to its primordial state is dominant in this context and again emphasizes the centrality of the creation motif in these speeches and in the book as a whole.

Thus, in these divine commands to Job the latter is instructed to assume the roles of king and creator which are typical of Yahweh himself. The connections between creation and moral order are stressed in the choice of words involved in these instructions.¹⁶

The notion of redemption from chaos and moral disorder is contained in the final verse of the section (vs. 14). There, the instrument of Job's power will be his 'right hand' (יְמִינִי) which will 'give him victory' (תְּחַשְׁבֵּהוּ).¹⁷

In sum, the wicked are to be reduced to a state of chaos in which they will be unable to behold creation, and thereby to derive benefit from that spectacle. Job is summoned to be the arbiter of their fortunes in terms which bespeak kingship, justice, and creation. In summoning Job to adopt this role, the poet not only refers to the

¹⁵ *OB*, p. 326.

¹⁶ E.g. בְּמָוֶן, חֹשֶׁךְ, חֹשֶׁךְ, חֹשֶׁךְ. Rowley suggests that בְּמָוֶן 'in the hidden place' probably means, "in the dark recesses of Sheol" (*OB*, p. 328). However, the notion of 'hiddenness', or 'obscurity' is important and should be preserved, because it indicates the importance of being prevented from seeing correctly which is fundamental to the whole passage.

¹⁷ Again, cf. Ex. 15:6 and pp. 139f. above.

divine creative ability, but also to its providential, or redemptive aspects. The underlying theme of the passage is Job's need to witness the manifestation of divine power in creation and to derive insight from that perception.

Section 2 -- 40:15-24

The account of Behemoth in these verses has the general purpose of convincing Job of the absolute power of God as it is manifested in one of his creatures, albeit no ordinary creature. The actual identification of Behemoth has been the subject of some dispute among scholars.¹⁸ However, whether Behemoth is a mythical monster, or a hippopotamus, or some combination of both, is not a matter of great significance to this understanding of Job. What is important is the role he occupies in the poet's illustration of the creation motif.

Behemoth's foremost characteristics are his enormous power (vs. 16), which is recognizable in his prodigious physical and

¹⁸ Rowley maintains that most scholars regard Behemoth and Leviathan as "real animals...By most Behemoth is identified with the hippopotamus, but G. R. Driver identified it with the crocodile" (CB, p. 328). But Pope, among others, believes otherwise:

The juxtaposition of Behemoth and Leviathan in Job and in the post-biblical texts...suggests that Behemoth, like Leviathan in the Ugaritic texts, had a prototype in pre-Israelite mythology and that the monsters were connected in some ancient myth or played similar roles in different myths. (AB, p. 269).

However, the identification of the original meaning of Behemoth is irrelevant, except insofar as it informs an appreciation of his function in this passage. That function certainly has mythical overtones to it.

sexual feats, and also the fact that he is not amenable to human control.¹⁹ In vs. 15, both Behemoth and Job are described as the products of Yahweh's 'making' (עֲשִׂיתִי). That they are both 'made' by Yahweh immediately asserts the primacy of the divine control over both creatures. This assertion is necessary because Behemoth may be thought to possess autonomy.²⁰ In Gen. 1:24 'cattle' (בְּהֵמָה) are described as the product of the 'earth' (אֲדָמָה). They are not the result of a separate act of creation in which the verb בָּרָא 'to create' is employed. They may therefore be regarded as in some sense inferior to other aspects of the creation which merit the use of the verb בָּרָא. In this passage both Job and Behemoth have been made by Yahweh and are therefore subject to him. The use of verbs in the singular in this passage of Behemoth indicates, as Pope has observed, that:

a single beast is intended and that the plural form here must be the so-called intensive plural of majesty, The Beast, par excellence.²¹

In vs. 19 Behemoth is described as 'the chief of God's ways' (רֹאשׁ דְּרָכֵי-אֱלֹהִים). In Gen. 1:24 'cattle' (בְּהֵמָה) are described as the first product of the earth.²² Prov. 8:22 has very

¹⁹Of. Pope, AB, p. 271.

²⁰Of. Wakeman, op. cit., pp. 113-117.

²¹AB, p. 268. Pope also emphasizes the mythological connections of Behemoth. He argues that Behemoth belongs in "pre-Israelite mythology and...is connected with Mesopotamian myth" (ibid., pp. 269-270).

²²Of. Rowley, OB, p. 329.

similar terminology to that of this verse in Job, with the exception that wisdom (חכמה) there is accorded primacy at the creation.²³ Both Proverbs and Job appear to have been in the poet's mind. His point is to stress both the primacy of Behemoth on earth and also his connection with creation. In both cases, Behemoth is superior to man, whose creation was simultaneous with his own. Thus, Behemoth attests the power of God in creation and, simultaneously, that there are aspects of creation which are beyond man's ability to comprehend. Both Behemoth and wisdom existed prior to man and know more about creation than man can ever aspire to. The fact that Behemoth belongs within the divine plan of creation indicates that there is an order to creation. This fact should be comforting to Job who has formerly believed that creation was actually devoid of hope for the righteous man.²⁴

Again, in vs. 20 another reflection on Genesis appears. The mountains provide food for Behemoth. The divine connection with mountains and creation in the form of 'Elyon' 'Almighty' has already been mentioned.²⁵ The association with creation and Genesis is confirmed in the second half of vs. 20. In it, the "wild beasts"

²³חָכְמָה קִדְּמָה לִּי וְאֵתֵּן לִּי יְהוָה הָאֵלֹהִים הָאֵלֹהִים הָאֵלֹהִים 'The LORD made me the first of his ways'. Both חָכְמָה and עֵלְיוֹן occur in Job. There is also an implicit connection between 'first' (חָכְמָה) and 'in the beginning' (בְּרֵאשִׁית) of Gen. 1:1. The association suggests that primacy in creation is the central theme. Since Job does not enjoy such primacy, he is therefore of lesser significance than those aspects of creation which do possess it.

²⁴E.g. 27:7-23.

²⁵Of. above, p. 103 n.65.

(חַיַּית הַשָּׂדֶה) are said to 'sport about' (שִׁחֲקוּ) in the mountains.²⁶ The phrase 'beasts of the field' (חַיַּית הַשָּׂדֶה) recalls Gen. 2:19 in which the animals are said to be subject to man. But, in this reference, they exist away from man's charge and are clearly subject to Behemoth. It follows that Behemoth is superior to man in many respects. As the following verses (21-24) indicate, he is supreme on the earth. He is also sagacious, for in vs. 24 he is shown as too subtle for man's ingenuity.

In sum, Behemoth is a great and mighty creature who is endowed with extraordinary strength and cunning. His awe-inspiring characteristics should instill in Job a profound respect for God's power and skill in creation. Not only does God provide for such a creature, but he also is able to control him. While Behemoth is free from human interference, yet he is so closely controlled by Yahweh that the 'beasts of the field' (חַיַּית הַשָּׂדֶה) are able to 'play' (שִׁחֲקוּ) unharmed in his vicinity. Thus, creation is not only ordered but also providential.

Section 3 -- 40:25 - 41:26 (ET, 41:1-34)

The primary function of Leviathan in these verses is analogous to that of Behemoth. He is to elicit from Job a recognition of the greatness and subtlety of creation and an awareness of its providential aspects. But whereas Behemoth was shown to be supreme on earth, Leviathan is extolled for his superiority over the terrifying waters, or deeps. Both creatures are vastly superior to man, and

both reign supreme within their respective domains, yet, by virtue of their creation, they are subject to divine control. Consequently, the powers of chaos which they represent are severely curtailed.²⁷

Like Behemoth, Leviathan cannot be domesticated by man (vs. 28 [ET, 41:4]).²⁸ That is, he is not subject to human control. However, despite his autonomy in the sea, he is controlled by God. It is the fact of this divine control which lies behind the comparison of Leviathan with man in these verses.²⁹ The description of Leviathan sporting in the sea in Ps. 104:26 stresses the fact that he is confined to certain limits determined by God. Nonetheless, it is the apparent freedom of Leviathan which Yahweh demonstrates to Job. The point of the illustration is that, despite the fact that chaos, represented by Leviathan, might appear to have free rein to destroy what is divinely created, yet, that appearance is

²⁷ Cf. Ps. 104:26.

²⁸ Wakeman understands the function of Leviathan in Job in the following way:

Now it is generally understood that the author of Job, in describing Behemoth and Leviathan, is speaking of the buffalo or some such large beast, and the crocodile. The mythical allusions and the names are poetic hyperbole. Therefore, we can draw conclusions from this passage about Leviathan's characteristics only with the help of confirming evidence from a less ambiguous source; the distinction between crocodile and mythical serpent cannot, in the nature of things, be firmly drawn. Read with an eye to possible allusions to the myth, the passage leads us to picture Leviathan pleading with his captor who makes him a slave, plays with him, divides him among the merchants. (op. cit., p. 65). "Poetic hyperbole" scarcely does justice to the use, and forcefulness of that use, of Leviathan in these verses.

²⁹ Cf. Pope, AE, pp. 277f.

only an illusion, for Yahweh is always in control. Even Leviathan's movements are limited by him.

The power of Leviathan is illustrated in vs. 30 (ET, 41:6). Job is asked whether Leviathan could be divided up among the traders and 'merchants' (כְּסֻלִּים).³⁰ This notion of the division of Leviathan corresponds well with the account of his nemesis in Ps. 74:13f., and in the Ugaritic literature.³¹ It also invokes a certain image of creation in which its basic acts are the results of certain deeds of separation wrought by Yahweh out of chaos (תָּהוּ וּבְהוּ).³² Here Leviathan, the symbol of opposition to God and of the chaos of the waters, is offered up for division by Job to see whether the latter possesses the powers of creation.³³

In vs. 32 (ET, 41:8) Job is challenged to do battle with this monster which brooks no human interference. A double entendre is implicit here in which the real challenge to Job is to emulate Yahweh's creative activity. That is, he is required to prove to Yahweh that he too is capable of doing battle with this monster and

³⁰This word can also mean 'Canaanites'. This sense of the word is also important because it suggests that the Canaanites trade in chaos. Their lives are therefore futile.

³¹Cf. J. Gray, Archaeology and the Old Testament World (New York, 1962), p. 109 and n. 1.

³²In Gen. 1 the light is separated from the darkness and creation is distinguished from the chaos. The notion of a disentanglement of opposites prevails throughout the account. Before creation, all is confusion (תָּהוּ וּבְהוּ).

³³The fate of Tiamat is division of her body. The world is created from its parts. Cf. "The Creation Epic" (tr. E. A. Speiser), ANET, pp. 60-72. It is probable that the poet had Tiamat's end in mind.

of achieving the same results. Those ends are the establishment of creation and order and the curtailment of the activities of chaos. However, as the following verses indicate (41:1ff. (ET, 9ff.)), only the foolhardy would engage lightly in such a conflict.³⁴ This specific challenge is completed by an assertion of the complete sovereignty of God over creation and chaos:

מי הקדיחני ואשלם
תחת כל השמים לי-הוא :

Who has given to me, that I should repay him?
Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine.³⁵

This verse sums up the central thrust of the chapter which is to ridicule attempts to compare human efforts to create with divine accomplishments. Even Leviathan, whose might is awesome and whose ability to destroy man along with creation is terrifying, is subject to divine restriction (תחת כל השמים לי-הוא).

In vss. 10f. (ET, 18f.) the descriptions of the crocodile far exceed those applicable to an ordinary beast, even in the most

³⁴The emendation לִפְנֵי 'before him' has been suggested for לִפְנֵי 'before me' (Of. Rowley, OB, p. 335). However, the point of the challenge is to stress, not so much the foolishness of engaging in conflict with Leviathan, as the stupidity of comparison with God.

³⁵Vss. 3f. (ET, 11f.). The above translation is that of the RSV. The phrase מִי הִקְדִּיחַנִּי 'who has confronted me' (RSV, "who has given to me"), or, literally, 'who has faced me?', indicates the foolishness of a comparison between divine and human abilities. Rowley changes 'me' to 'him', because he thinks the reference is to Leviathan. But, again, the change is unnecessary because the subject in these verses is God. Cf. Rowley, OB, p. 335.

exalted poetic vision.³⁶ Besides, the advantages in giving cognizance to the mythological contents of the reference are many. Their recognition substantiates the belief that a subtle polemic against other forms of religious belief, particularly Canaanite and Mesopotamian religion, is embedded in this book. The function of such a polemic is to indicate to the Hebrews the superiority of their God over all other gods, not only as he is manifest in their history, but especially as he is discernible in establishing and maintaining creation. These mythological connections are less horrifying to man if their significance can be seen to be controlled by God.³⁷

A further indication of Leviathan's apparent ability to threaten creation with subversion occurs in vs. 15 (ET, 23). The account of Leviathan's firmness and stability in this verse is reminiscent of the description of Yahweh's sound creation in Ps. 104:5.

³⁶Rowley, as indicated, believes otherwise, Cf. QB, p. 337. His explanation of the fire-breathing dragon with reference to vs. 10 is more than a little tenuous. Cf. Pope, AB, p. 276.

The phrase וְעֵינָיו כִּדְמָה לַדָּגָל 'and his eyes are like the eyelids of the dawn' recalls 3:9. The Egyptian god Apophis held back the dawn and personified the powers of darkness (Cf. Wake-man, op. cit., p. 15). That is, Apophis tried to prevent the birth of a new day and represented the powers of darkness and chaos. Thus, both Leviathan and Apophis are opposed to order, light and creation. Hence their association in this reference.

³⁷vs. 17 (ET, 25) provides a good indication of the use and importance of mythological references in Job. The phrase וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁתָּקֵץ 'when he raises himself up the gods are afraid'. Rowley (QB, p. 339) is ambiguous about the meaning of this phrase, but Pope is quite definite that the reference is to the cowering attitude of the Mesopotamian gods as depicted in the Epic of Gilgamesh, and also to the frightened response of the Ugaritic deities to a threat (AB, p. 286). Pope's willingness to give credence to the mythological content of the passage is justified by vs. 17b (26b) which refers to the 'crashings' (וְהָיָה כִּי יִשְׁתָּקֵץ) which supposedly refer to the sea, the symbol of chaos.

Both Yahweh's creation and Leviathan are referred to as 'immovable' (בְּלִי-לֵךְ and בְּלִי-חַיָּת) respectively).³⁸ That is, both creation and Leviathan are not susceptible to the threat of chaos. This notion of firmness, or stability, is emphasized by the repetition of בָּיִשׁ 'firmly cast/established' in vs. 16-17 (ET, 23-24). Thus, the passage as a whole extols the strength and imperturbability of Leviathan. He is supreme on earth (vs. 25 [ET, 31]).³⁹

In sum, the purpose of the extensive account of the might of Leviathan is to indicate to Job that, although the threat to divine order and creation is great indeed, as great as Leviathan himself, yet God is greater than Leviathan and all that he represents. Leviathan too is a creature and as such is subject to divinely imposed restrictions. In a well-ordered creation, chaos, in the form of Leviathan, must be subdued. In essence, and in response to Job's many questions about the efficacy and relevance of God's creation, the divine reply means that chaos is not only confined by Yahweh but is also subject to his creative imperative. This interpretation is corroborated by the final verse of Yahweh's address (26 [ET, 34]) in which Leviathan is accorded primacy in his domain, namely, the dust (עָפָר), or chaos. He is 'king over all the sons of pride'

³⁸ Cf. also Ps. 93:1 whose subject matter is also the divine control of creation.

³⁹ אֵין-עֹלָם-מִשְׁלֹ 'there is not in the dust his like'. In Gen. 2:7 man is described as created from the 'dust' of the earth. By implication, man is incomparable to Leviathan. He therefore needs divine assistance to combat this creature whose realm he shares. That is, creation, symbolized by man, must abide with chaos but, by virtue of providence, he is not dominated by it.

(חֲוֵה מֵלֶךְ עַל-כֵּי-שָׁחַץ) whose fate, as indicated in 40:12, is to be levelled, or annihilated, in the dust. That is, they are to be deprived of the blessings of creation and existence. In short, Yahweh is supreme and is in complete control of his creation, to the discomfit of his enemies and for the benefit of humanity, and of Job in particular. This theme is summarized in Ps. 93:

Yea, the world is established; it shall never be moved;
thy throne is established from of old;
thou art from everlasting.

The floods have lifted up, O LORD,
the floods have lifted up their voice,
the floods lift up their roaring.

...

mightier than the waves of the sea,
the LORD on high is mighty.⁴⁰

Summary of Creation References

The dominant reference to creation in these chapters is Yahweh's control of chaos as it is symbolized in the extraordinary creatures Behemoth and Leviathan. That which belongs within the realm of chaos does so with the express permission and direction of Yahweh himself. Job is encouraged to take comfort from the fact that even the lords of chaos are subject to his imperative and are part of the divine plan.

At the beginning of this speech Job is commanded to assume royal status and to exercise the control of creation and chaos as Yahweh himself does. If he can accomplish this ~~order~~ then he will be eminently worthy ~~of~~ a different kind of divine respect. But the impossibility of carrying out the duties of such a role is indicated

⁴⁰ Vss. 1b, 2-3, 4b.

to Job in the accounts of Behemoth and Leviathan. Behemoth is shown to be dominant on earth and Leviathan is clearly in control of the sea and all that it signifies. Together they symbolize power and cunning beyond human comprehension. But both creatures can be seen to belong within Yahweh's creation. They are part of a divinely ordered whole.

Even the characteristics of Behemoth and Leviathan contain evidence of divine craftsmanship. Yet, both animals, despite their grandeur and apparent autonomy in the universe, are totally subject to Yahweh's jurisdiction. Not even their connections with Canaanite and Mesopotamian religious beliefs are able to free them from his overarching control. In fact, these connections only serve as an indication of the inconsequence of these religions.

Specific references to creation include the following: the 'arm of God' (40:9); the associations with Ps. 104 (40:10); kingship and judgment and the royal divine role in creation (40:10-14); Behemoth's connections to Gen. 1 and 2 (40:19-20); Leviathan (40:25-41:26); Job's quest for justice (40:8); references to the priority of Behemoth over man at creation (40:19); further references to Pss. 104 and 93 (e.g. 41:15).

Summary

An investigation of the chief features of these chapters reveals that they not only form an integral part of the whole work, and of the Yahweh speeches in particular, but also that they contain specific references to creation. Whereas the first Yahweh speech outlined Yahweh's involvement in creation largely in terms of his

wisdom and its role, the second speech deals specifically with that manifestation of Yahweh's power illustrated in his control over both creation and chaos. The purpose of the latter is to convince Job of the existence and viability of a readily available visual proof of God's presence in creation.

Thus, what Job says in 40:4-5 after the first Yahweh speech and concerning his previous experiences requires, in Yahweh's mind, the second speech. The latter proves that what Job has heard and understood, he can also see and observe the significance of. These observations on the Yahweh speeches are fundamental to the evaluation of 42:1-6. In these verses Job declares himself to be fully satisfied in terms of knowing, understanding and primarily in perceiving the lordship of Yahweh in and over creation and that which threatens it. Consequently, Job can justly feel proud and unworthy to belong therein.

CHAPTER SIX -- JOB 42:1-9

This chapter contains Job's final response to God (vss. 1-6), Yahweh's address to the friends in which he commends Job for his integrity and right speech (vss. 7-9), and an account of the restoration of Job (vss. 10-17). Since the description of Job's restoration does not add significantly to the understanding of the book's meaning it is not included in the analysis of this chapter. Instead, the analysis is limited to an investigation of vss. 1-6 (Section 1), and vss. 7-9 (Section 2).

Section 1 - 42:1-6

Rowley connects these verses with 40:1-4, having dismissed the remainder of Chapter 40 and Chapter 41 as secondary.¹ However, as indicated above, not only should Yahweh's second speech be retained but it is also necessary to the appreciation of these verses. Not only do these verses contain other matter not present in Job's first response to Yahweh, but they also refer to the central intentions of Yahweh's second speech, and indeed to the book as a whole.

In vs. 2 Job acknowledges the powerful dimension of Yahweh's nature. These words are a direct response to Yahweh's second speech, as his choice of the word תוכל 'thou canst do', or 'you are able' indicates. That is, Job appreciates the intent of the second speech

¹Op. p. 341. Cf. also, Fohrer, Introduction, p. 328.

with an acknowledgment of Yahweh's supreme power in creation.² The second half of this verse elaborates the notion of the complete sovereignty of Yahweh's power: **וְלֹא יִבְצֵר מִמֶּנּוּ מוֹצֵלָה** which the RSV renders, "and that no purpose of thine can be thwarted".³ Furthermore, Job recognizes in his reply that God's activity in creation is not haphazard, but is rather the result of careful planning. That is, God's power is subsumed within a divine 'plan' (**מִצְוָה**).⁴ This plan brooks no human, or chaotic, interference or competition. In other words, Job, Behemoth, and Leviathan are all part of a divinely ordered plan although, to man, their co-existence would appear to preclude the possibility of planning and ordering. But in this speech by Job he declares his belief that nothing is too great for Yahweh to accomplish. Like gold which is almost inaccessible to man so, by contrast, are the most precious commodities of wisdom and power totally within God's reach. In sum, everything is within God's plan. This fact is precisely the information Job sought in his first and subsequent speeches.

² **יָדַעְתָּ** 'thou knowest'. The versions and the Gersa read **יָדַעְתִּי** 'I know' (Of. Kittel). This reading is preferable in the context.

³ The niphal of the verb **יָצַל** is 'to be inaccessible', 'impossible'. The word **יָצַל** means 'gold ore'. That is, gold is an almost inaccessible substance. The point is that even that which is impossible for man is easily within God's power.

⁴ In Job 21:27 the same word occurs in the plural number to refer to human schemes. The notion of careful planning is essential to the word. That is, Yahweh's creation is the product of intricate design. The account of the unfolding of the acts of creation in Gen. 1 has all the characteristics of careful planning and inimical ease.

The next verse (3) is in part a quotation of Yahweh's indictment of Job's essential ignorance.⁵ The rest of the verse describes Job's account of the nature of his deficiencies vis-à-vis God's wisdom and power. Job admits that he is 'without knowledge' (בְּלִי דַעַת). That is, he is essentially ignorant. He acknowledges that he lacks certain skills of a technical nature: 'and I did not understand' (וְלֹא אָבִין).⁶ Moreover, there are certain 'wonderful things' (נִפְלְאוֹת) quite beyond his capacity to comprehend.⁷ In sum, he lacks a real appreciation of his own basic ignorance: 'and I did not know' (וְלֹא אָדָע). In essence, Job admits his failure to appreciate the evidence of God's providence manifest in his creation.

In vs. 4b Job again quotes the divine words of 38:3b and 40:7. He refers to these words of Yahweh because he is shocked at his own temerity in that he has spoken rashly when his proper response should have been silence. That silence would compare with the respectful silence of Adam and Eve when faced with the

⁵Of 38:2. The quotation is complete with the exception of the words בְּחִלִּין 'with words', and מְעִילִים 'hides' for מְחַשְׁדִּים 'darkens'.

⁶The use of the different verbs for understanding indicates that Job's ignorance is variously composed. In Gen. 2:17 man is forbidden to eat from the tree of 'the knowledge of good and evil' (עֵץ הַדַּעַת). From this and other references, the word דַּעַת 'wisdom' and its verb form יָדַע 'to know' would appear to denote a form of knowledge superior to that of בִּינָה 'understanding'.

⁷In Job 9:10 the word נִפְלְאוֹת 'marvellous deeds' occurs in the context of an account of Yahweh's mighty acts in creation. From this interpretation of the word it would appear that Job is here acknowledging his deficiency in comprehension of the nature of Yahweh's direction of the creation. A. E. Combs (op. cit., p. 149) observes that the word "not only denotes the objects of creation, but also the nature of the creative act".

spectacle of the creation. It also compares with the sense of unworthiness which is typical of those confronted with a theophany.⁸ The participation of an individual in such a scene results in an overwhelming sense of human inadequacy before the plenitude of divine being. But, the knowledge, or awareness, of that individual is also greatly increased as a result of the encounter. Job is acutely aware of his enormous ignorance and lack of perception, as the following verses indicate. Furthermore, this awakening of the self produces in him a profound sense of the futility of his previous addresses in which silence was marked by its absence. Hence the disavowals of his former arrogance in the following verses.

In vsa. 5-6 Job repudiates his former assertiveness, especially with regard to his pretensions to knowledge. He now recognizes the foolishness of his earlier estimates of the nature of the divine relationship to creation. That is, he now notices, for the first time as it were, the evidence of divine handiwork in the heavens and perceives its true significance for him. This recognition results in a profound sense of his insufficiency. Consequently, he deprecates his own significance, which gesture provides a hint of his new realization of the enormous gulf fixed between himself and Yahweh, particularly in terms of wisdom and power.⁹

⁸ Cf. Ex. 3 and Isa. 6.

⁹ G. G. Harrop, in "But Now Mine Eye Seeth Thee" (CJM, XII, 2, [1966], 80-84), explores the meaning of this verse (5). On p. 83 he observes that the theophany is "strangely so called when God does not seem to appear...". But, the reason for the non-appearance of God is that the poet wants to draw attention to the fact, and to Job, that God is manifest in his creation. The term theophany is

The terms of Job's denunciation of his presumption to knowledge relate to the discussion of creation. By means of them he admits his essential ignorance. In vs. 5 he declares that whereas he 'has heard of...[God] by the hearing of the ear' (לשמע-אוזן), he now 'perceives him with his sight' (ועתה עיני ראתך).

What Job sees and understands is the sight of God as revealed in his creation. In Ex. 3:3f. Moses turns aside to 'see the great sight' (וירא את-המראה), that is, to behold the theophany. The marvel of the 'sight' is that the bush is not consumed by fire. That is, the presence of God implies preservation of the creation and not its destruction. Thus, sight is a key to right perception in the appreciation of theophanies.

Again, Isaiah experiences a great sense of unworthiness and distress when he is confronted with a theophany.¹⁰ He is particularly upset because his 'eyes have seen the King, the LORD of Hosts' (כי את-י' חזו צבאות ראו עיני [vs. 5]). But, he too is not destroyed by this sight (vs. 6ff.).¹¹ On the contrary, he is renewed by

therefore rightly applied to these speeches since God can be seen by Job if he will only perceive him. Thus Job is blessed with the opportunity of discerning directly the evidence of God's involvement in creation. His remarks in these verses would indicate that he has taken advantage of the theophany and is pleased with, and humbled by the results.

¹⁰ 6:3f.

¹¹ In 6:9f. Isaiah is commissioned by Yahweh. He is commanded to say: שמועו ואל תבינו וראו ראו ואל תדעו: 'Hear and hear, but do not understand; see and see, but do not perceive'. In this and the following verse a connection is established between sight and understanding. The people have the opportunity to see and know God, but they fail to take advantage of it. They can see God in his creation of the world and in the preservation of his people.

his vision to take up his prophetic mission (vss. 8f.).

Furthermore, in Gen. 1 and 2 the sight of the creation elicits divine approval. The divine response to certain acts of creation is 'and God saw that it was good' (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב).¹² The association between creation and sight is again confirmed, from a human perspective, in Eve's description of the 'tree in the midst of the garden' (הָעֵץ אֲשֶׁר בְּתוֹךְ הַגָּן). Not only is the tree 'a delight to the eyes', but it is also associated with the possession of wisdom.¹³ Thus, God's self-manifestation elicits not only divine approval, but human admiration and desire also. In sum, God's role in the effecting and maintaining of creation is to be both understood and perceived. Its proper observation renders Job speechless. Its neglect means that sight and understanding will be misdirected. Eve and Adam look down at themselves and observe their nakedness.¹⁴ That is, their perspective has been radically altered by their willfulness. They are no longer able to behold creation properly. Job, by contrast, has hitherto been unable to comprehend God's role in creation, but now, by virtue of his righteousness, he is granted

¹²E.g. Gen. 1:4, 12, 18.

¹³The tree was to be desired to make one wise' (וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב). However, the kind of wisdom (לְחֵשֶׁבֶל) that is involved here does not appear to be of a very elevated nature, if the following actions of Adam and Eve are any indication.

¹⁴They also engage in the seemingly futile activity of covering their nakedness, instead of in the pursuit and practice of righteousness. Job, by contrast, has constantly maintained his integrity and is consequently granted the theophany, the blessings of which he does not abuse.

that vision.

In vs. 6 Job declares that he is unworthy of creation in his own person. Whereas in Chapter 3 he had longed for annihilation of his self as an escape from a tyrannous creation in which he saw no hope for a righteous man, he now desires escape from creation because of a profound sense of unworthiness of it. He announces that he is only suitable for the state of formlessness, or chaos (עוֹמָלָהּ).¹⁵

Job's repentance and self-denunciation in vs. 6 indicate that he has gained what he sought so earnestly throughout his

¹⁵The same phrase occurs in 30:19. In that context Job expressed his keen sense of separation from God through the use of this phrase. In that situation, his life is so chaotic that it seems as if creation had never happened. But, here he recognizes that he has been created by God for a purpose and feels himself to be unworthy of that distinction.

Abraham uses the same phrase (עוֹמָלָהּ) in Gen. 18:27 to express his unworthiness in relation to God:

Behold, I have taken upon myself to speak to the LORD,
I who am but dust and ashes. (RSV)

That is, man in the presence of God feels totally unworthy of that distinction. The idea that one should compare oneself with God is totally repellent to those who have had such experiences.

M. Foster, in Mystery and Philosophy (London, 1957), p. 28, understands these verses of Job in the following way:

Just as to apprehend God's Holiness is to repent ('Now mine eye seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor myself and repent in dust and ashes'); so belief in a divine Revelation seems to involve something like a repentance in the sphere of the intellect. Certainly it cannot be meant that we, with an unbroken intellect, are somehow privileged to talk about God. Talking about God is one of the things which the Bible hardly permits us to do. When Zechariah says, 'Be silent all flesh before the LORD', this is not wholly different from Wittgenstein's 'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent'...

Job's final condition appears to be very much as Foster describes it. It should be emphasized, however, that Job now fully believes in the significance of the divine revelation in creation, whereas formerly he had doubted its relevance to his situation.

trials.¹⁶ The terms of this response provide a clear indication of his firm conviction of the proximity of God to him in creation and of the meaningfulness of that providence. They also establish the centrality of the creation motif in the book for, in Job's expression of his great insignificance, he declares his own unworthiness of creation. This deferential gesture indicates his belief in the providential nature of creation and, simultaneously, his sense of unworthiness of redemption from the realm of chaos.

Section 2 -- 42:7-9

In vs. 7 Job is commended by God for having "spoken of me what is right" (דברתם אֱיִתָּנָה).¹⁷ This interpretation of the word נִכְנָח does little justice to its real meaning.¹⁸ The root

¹⁶The two verbs in vs. 6 (נִכְנָח and נִחַם) are deliberately employed by the poet for their several meanings. The usual translation of נִכְנָח is 'I despise' from the root נָכַח 'to refuse', 'reject'. This interpretation is followed by the RSV. But, the NEB renders the verb as "I melt away" from the root נָחַם 'to make ice melt'. But neither interpretation should be excluded, for Job both rejects his former assertiveness about creation and expresses his contempt for his former brashness with a desire for his own melting away, or annihilation, which is the perfect response in a divinely created universe for one who feels unworthy of it as Job does.

Similarly, נִחַם means both 'I repent' and 'I take comfort'. That is, Job repents of his previous state in which he asserted the importance of his self, but he now takes comfort in the signs of a providential creation newly apparent to him. It is important that the poet be permitted the use of double-entendres since to do otherwise is to limit the possibilities of his work. L. J. Kuyper's interpretation of this verse is limiting in this way ("The Repentance of Job", *VT*, IX (1959), 91-94).

¹⁷RSV.

¹⁸The NEB rendition, "as you ought" also fails to do justice to the many-sided significance of this expression.

meaning of the verb is 'to establish'. The poel form of the verb means 'to set up', 'to establish' a city, 'to beget', 'to fashion' men, 'to set up firmly'.¹⁹ By extension of the basic meaning of the word it can also mean 'what is true', or 'what is right'. But, the basic idea of the word is 'what is established'. This meaning is most appropriate in the present context, primarily because it corroborates the belief that Job has correctly perceived the divine involvement in creation. However, the other meaning, namely, 'what

¹⁹Pope (AB, p. 290), who notes the difficulty in determining the source to which this expression refers, thinks the commendation applies specifically to Job's integrity. J. G. Williams, in "You have not spoken Truth to Me: Mystery and Irony in Job" (ZAW 83 (1971), 231-255), understands לְיָהוָה to refer to Job's disparaging remarks about God himself:

It [Yahweh's commendation] very clearly may be understood as a condemnation of God -- by God! Job, after all, has spoken 'what is right of me'. (p. 236. Cf. also, p. 247).

Williams' interpretation owes much to a Jungian and post-Jungian perspective, as he acknowledges (p. 235). Furthermore, he sees irony as the key to the final chapters of the book:

It seems to me that in the God-speeches we are confronted with a riddle, a riddle whose theme, in keeping with the dialogue, is irony. (p. 241).

He also notes the centrality of the divine human relationship (p. 249). But Williams consistently fails to understand correctly the role of creation in the book, although he acknowledges its presence (p. 249). Consequently, he fails to appreciate what is essential in the book, and particularly in the Yahweh speeches. He writes:

It is precisely this second aspect of creation faith, the affirmation of the world as creation for man, as the gift of divine grace, that is absent from the theophany. Man's nothingness is affirmed; his worth, his place in the cosmos, is not even mentioned. (p. 249).

However, as the analysis of the Yahweh speeches has shown, Job's place within creation is very clearly demonstrated to him in these chapters. Job perceives from this demonstration that he belongs in what is clearly a carefully and divinely ordered universe. In the light of this revelation Job perceives his own worthlessness, not in a sense of utter frustration, or irony, as Williams suggests, but in grateful acknowledgment of his new insight into the nature of reality manifest to him in the workings of creation.

is right' is also possible. In fact, neither interpretation need exclude the other, but the notion of 'firmly established' is pre-eminent. The importance of this interpretation of **יָכֵן** is apparent on examination of other passages in which this verb is utilized.

The verb is frequently used with reference to creation in Gen. 1 and in certain psalms noted for their interest in the theme of creation. In Gen. 1 some of the acts of creation are followed by the expression **וַיִּכֶן** which is usually translated as 'and it was so'.²⁰ But, this word **יָכֵן** can also mean 'established'. Thus, what is established also conforms to a certain divine rectitude, given the sense of 'right', 'true', connoted by this verb. Hence, creation is both established and is in accordance with a divine plan. Both of these connotations of **יָכֵן** are implied in the divine commendation of Job in 42:7. Thus, what Job is recognized for is his correct perception of the divinely established and ordered creation, the nature of which he rightly comprehends.

Similarly, in Ps. 93:1f. the psalmist praises Yahweh under whose rule the "world is established...and shall never be moved" (**אֵלֹהֵינוּ יָכֵן תֵּבֵל בְּלִי-תַמוּזָה**).²¹ In these verses the creation reflects the glory and majesty of Yahweh whose 'throne is established from of old' (**יָכֵן מִלְּאָדָם**).²² Yahweh is sovereign over all creation.

²⁰ E.g. vs. 7, 9, 11. Cf. RSV and NRS which adopt this or a similar interpretation of **יָכֵן**.

²¹ RSV.

²² Ps. 93:2. The theme is the same as that of Ps. 19.

The same theme of Yahweh's dominion is echoed in Ps. 104:5-9 in which the earth is described as 'firmly established' (על-חִכּוֹנִיהָ).²³ In other words, the creation and all its contents are firmly established under divine sovereignty. Yahweh is king over creation and chaos.²⁴ Thus, 'established' refers not only to what is created, or what is right, but primarily to Yahweh's complete sovereignty over creation and all opposition to it. Its use in Job 42:7 confirms the belief that Job is divinely commended for both his integrity and his realization of God's providential role in creation.

In view of this interpretation of עַל-חִכּוֹנִיהָ in vs. 6 may be rendered 'concerning what is established', or, 'regarding creation'. That is, Job rejects his former comments on the undesirability of creation in view of his new awareness of its significance for him.

Finally, the importance of חִכּוֹנָה as a creation word has been recognized by Stuhmüller.²⁵ He observes that the verb

חִכּוֹנָה occurs in creation texts from the pre-exilic age (i.e. Ps. 24; possibly Ps. 8 and 65) into the more frequent occurrence in the post-exilic age (i.e. Job 31:15; Prov. 3:19; 8:27; Ps. 119:90).²⁶

In sum, חִכּוֹנָה ('what is established' and 'what is right') refers primarily to Job's apprehension of God's participation in the

²³Vs. 5.

²⁴Yahweh's domination of chaos is stressed in Ps. 29.

²⁵Op. cit., pp. 225-227.

²⁶Ibid., p. 226

government of the creation for the benefit of man. It is by virtue of this providence that chaos in its many forms is not permitted to control existence.

Job's rectitude is further established by the title 'my servant' which Yahweh confers on him.²⁷ This ascription implies that Job is distinguished above ordinary men. The description is used sparingly in the Bible. In Jos. 1:1-2 Moses is twice referred to as Yahweh's servant. Clearly the title implies distinction. Consequently, its use in Job may be taken as a further indication of Job's propriety and wisdom. This fact also corroborates the view that Job's final response is a genuine reflection of his final state of acquiescence and satisfaction.

In short, Yahweh commends Job both for his piety and integrity in the pursuit of wisdom. In his final response to Yahweh Job has acknowledged his new understanding of the role of God in creation. Job has recognized the signs of hope for man evident in this divine involvement and has declared himself to be unworthy of them, so overwhelming is his apprehension of their significance. Job's wisdom has increased dramatically as a result of his perception of the role of God in creation.

Summary of Creation References

The passage as a whole (vss. 1-9), and in its individual parts, is dominated by the motif of creation. In these verses Job

²⁷ Vs. 7. The title also serves to distinguish between Job and his friends.

explicitly acknowledges the wisdom and power of Yahweh as they are vested in creation. This acknowledgment does not denote simple intellectual assent to an idea, but reflects Job's conviction of the good of the reality which he has perceived. His own lack of wisdom is related to his former inability to perceive correctly the nature of the divine role in creation and to apprehend its significance for himself. But when his vision is correctly adjusted Job is able to see properly what previously was not evident to him, namely the evidence of God's handiwork in creation. The importance of a proper perspective is emphasized as essential in the attempt to know God.

In Job's self-denunciation certain terms are denotative of creation, for instance, **יָסַד** and **בָּרָא**. Furthermore, the term **יָסַד** 'what is established/right' is observed to refer directly to Yahweh's sovereignty over creation. Finally, the restoration of Job (vss. 10-17) confirms the premise that creation is the motif par excellence of the book, for, in that restoration Job is suffused with blessings, which state is consonant with Adam and Eve's state of blessedness and sovereignty in Gen. 1:28.

Summary

Job's final speech and the Epilogue contain references to creation, the recognition of which is essential to the understanding of the poet's purpose. In dealing with creation the poet calls attention to its providential aspects and insists that, although it may appear that the wicked alone triumph, yet that is not the case. The wonders of God's creation indicate his concern for the universe and for the maintenance of order and righteousness. To

those persons to whom it appears that creation is in reality devoid of significance, the poet answers that such is not the case. In his opinion, while it may appear that the wicked always prosper and chaos is more representative of the way of the world, such is in fact not the case for him who practices righteousness. He believes that the righteous man will in due course be recognized by God for his rectitude. In the interval he should seek wisdom in his adversity as Job successfully did.

Conclusion

In this brief survey of Job special attention was paid to the role of creation in the book. The following variations of the motif were observed:

1. Job's lament on the fact of his birth, and his consequent impassioned plea for release from an oppressive existence, are couched in terms which are recognizably distinctive of creation in a great variety of ways. These terms themselves provide the scenario for Job's basic inquiries into the nature of God's relationship to man, particularly as it affects the creation. These inquiries meet with a response in the concluding chapters of the book in which existence is shown to be divinely ordered in a humanly comprehensible way.

2. The terms of Yahweh's long replies to Job speak to the specific issues raised by the latter in Chapter 3 and subsequently. The first Yahweh speech, which deals with the relationship between creation and wisdom, asserts emphatically Yahweh's involvement with his creation, and also with man who is a part of that creation. The ordered existence of the wild animals and birds confirms the goodness

of providence and not its indifference.

The second divine speech, which largely concerns Behemoth and Leviathan, affirms the ultimate power of God again in terms which specifically denote creation. These mighty beasts, which are kings of earth and sea respectively, are shown to be contained within their particular domains by means of the divine control exercised at creation and subsequently. If it be true that these animals also represent certain mythological forces, or contemporary religious beliefs, then they too are to be considered as subject to Yahweh's dominion.

3. In Job's final response to Yahweh, his new appreciation of God's involvement in creation is evident. From his new perspective Job declares himself unworthy of personal creation, and simultaneously acknowledges that he now perceives what he had hitherto only dimly understood. His new understanding is not the result of rational argument, but of a newly acquired insight, or wisdom. This insight, or wisdom, is somehow involved with an appreciation of the divine relationship to the universe not previously apparent to Job. In this speech, Job gratefully and sincerely acknowledges the meaningfulness of this new awareness for himself.

4. Finally, in Yahweh's address to the friends, Job is commended for having recognized what is essential, namely, that the world is not the product of chance, but of deliberate and benevolent design. Job speaks correctly when he recognizes that for creation to be good and meaningful God must be involved in it.

In sum, what Job has recognized as comforting to him, and intellectually and otherwise gratifying, is that his initial doubts

about the goodness of creation in Chapter 3 and subsequently are in fact groundless. Creation, as the result of divine action, is ordered -- the animals have their specific functions and are safeguarded from want. Chaos, though powerful, is yet contained. Behemoth and Leviathan, though supreme in their respective domains, are yet subject to certain divinely imposed constraints. God and his creation are not completely beyond human comprehension. But, neither are they subject to human limitations. Man cannot hope to equal God, as a full response to certain of Job's questions would require. Job should be happy in the realization that chaos is controlled and with the blessings provided in creation. Job's final state confirms the impression that he has accepted God's response as sufficient for him. Clearly, like his ancient Near Eastern neighbours, Job knows the proximity of chaos, or meaninglessness. He is now gratefully confident of the divine nature of creation and of its providence.

PART THREE

CONCLUSIONS, CRITIQUE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

CHAPTER ONE

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF INVESTIGATION

Section 1 -- The Exegesis

This investigation of Job demonstrates the hypothesis that the creation motif is the primary means by which the poet conveys his intent. By illustrating the effects of adversity on an individual and on his most cherished religious convictions, the poet seeks to convince his readers of the significance of the divine participation in creation. It is this divine involvement which he believes can render even the most troubled existence tolerable. The poet's purpose and method is briefly recounted in the following pages.

In the analysis of Chapter 3 a close scrutiny was made of the changes in Job's situation and attitudes.¹ In the course of his transition from a life of blissful ease to one of turmoil and question Job has been given reason to reflect on the causes for the upset in his life, particularly on the question of the divine role in these events.

In this chapter Job questions the good of creation and concludes from his analysis of it that he would prefer the confines

¹Above, pp. 62-76.

of Sheol to his present existence in a world which appears to be devoid of meaningful divine presence. To convey the significance of this preference to his readers the writer has Job curse vehemently the day of his birth and vilify various aspects of the creation which are traditionally venerated. Job's disenchantment with creation, particularly as it relates to his existence, quickly becomes evident.

In order to express even more strongly his disavowal of creation and all that it presently signifies to him, Job challenges the inhabitants of chaos to arouse themselves, for it is obvious to him that the time for their dominion has arrived. In short, at this stage of the drama Job welcomes the demise of creation as truly representative of his situation.

These themes are continued in the following speeches of Job. In them he re-affirms his requests for his own destruction.² The reason for these requests is that their fulfillment would, at least, provide a comforting sign of the existence of God, however minimal that comfort might be.

In pursuing the reason for his affliction Job inquires in various ways whether he poses such a threat to creation as to require such a vehement response.³ He further implores God to end his affliction because he (Job) is a divine creation. In fact, he is like Adam in that he is the work of God's own hands.⁴ Obviously,

²E.g. 6:8f.; 10:18.

³E.g. 7:12.

⁴Cf. 10:8f.

both here and elsewhere, the poet has Genesis 1 and 2 in mind. Indeed, many of the poet's references to creation are best understood as comments on these chapters of Genesis, or on other portions of biblical literature noted for their interest in creation. Taken together these references denote the central question of the book, namely, the nature of the divine involvement in creation and its significance for human thought.

It is clear from 12:7 and elsewhere that Job himself is familiar with the belief in divine involvement in creation, yet there is a measure of his knowledge of that belief which is deficient in some manner. This shortcoming is rectified in the Yahweh speeches in which Job declares that his knowledge possesses a new significance for him. This new apprehension concerns the role of God and man in creation.

Thus, the gist of Job's own speeches is to question the nature of the divine role in creation to determine whether it is humanly relevant and comprehensible. These are the issues which receive attention in the Yahweh speeches.

The situation at the end of the first Yahweh speech (Chapters 38 and 39) is that Yahweh has demonstrated his concern for the creation by means of an elaborate explanation of his ordering of the three domains of earth, sky and sea and their contents. The well-being of the wild animals and the birds is shown to be the result of careful planning. The observation of this divine solicitude for their welfare constitutes evidence of the workings of providence. It should be clear, therefore, that incomparable divine wisdom is the

source of this harmonious existence. Even the fierceness of the sea and the deeps is shown to be clearly subject to divine jurisdiction. That is, the forces of opposition to creation, which the sea and the deeps might be thought to represent, can be seen to be severely curtailed by divine fiat.

These facts, which are not unfamiliar to Job, should prove to him his essential unworthiness as a potential rival to God. In response to his earlier questions they explain to him why he cannot know and understand as God does. He is limited because he is human and not divine. Thus Job is reminded not only of his human susceptibilities, but he is also shown how creation can, if he will permit it, function creatively for him. It can function as his 'redeemer' (382).

The second Yahweh speech (40-41) reiterates many of the points of the first one, but it emphasizes the lordship of Yahweh in and over creation principally in terms of his power. On this occasion Yahweh's power is demonstrated in his control over the mighty and mysterious creatures of land and sea, namely, Behemoth and Leviathan respectively. What Job is required to observe in their mention are indications of the supreme divine control evident in all aspects of creation and also over the kind of chaos they may be thought to represent. The fact that these creatures symbolise cunning and might beyond human comprehension, and yet that they are totally subject to Yahweh's command, should indicate to Job by analogy the futility of the implicit comparisons of himself with God. Thus Job is forced to recognize that God cannot address him as an equal, as the full

satisfaction of his questions would require. Therefore, Job must be content with less satisfaction and derive hope and fulfillment from the signs of providence evident about him. These signs, properly observed, contain a redemptive quality. The supreme nature of Yahweh's power and wisdom is even further demonstrated if the mythological connotations of these creatures are recognized. The superiority of Yahweh is then enhanced by the proof of his ability to control them.

Finally, the first Yahweh speech illustrates Job's increased awareness as a result of his new understanding of the role of wisdom and God in creation. The second speech confirms the reality of this enlightenment and adds another dimension to it. This other dimension concerns Job's right perception and observation of the nature and significance of these facts about God and creation. Consequently, Job announces his complete satisfaction in terms of his understanding and perception in his final reply to Yahweh.

That final response to Yahweh (42:1-6) contains his explicit acknowledgment of the reality and meaningfulness for him of the power and wisdom of God as vested in creation, and of the full satisfaction he derives from this recognition. He admits that his previous appreciation of these facts was limited. But, it is now so enhanced that he feels himself to be totally unworthy of the benefits it yields to him.

In sum, Job raised the question of the good of creation, specifically of his own making. He was familiar with traditional answers to this problem, but satisfied with none of them. However,

in the course of the theophany it is explained to him, in a manner comprehensible to him, the nature of God's relationship to the creation insofar as Job is able to understand that explanation. That answer is that creation can only be understood in a limited way by man. But its ordering, when properly perceived by the righteous man who searches for its meaning, can yield evidence of providence which will constitute more than a sufficient explanation for even the most despairing of men. Essentially that explanation conveys the message that creation is good and meaningful to man, and that chaos is strictly limited for man's benefit by divine imperative.

Section 2 — The Relevant Secondary Literature

It has been shown that the motif of creation is a key element in the make-up of the work and provides the latter with a coherence explicative of its meaning.

The inadequacies of contemporary secondary literature with respect to observing and articulating the centrality and significance of the motif of creation gave rise to and evoked the primary focus of this thesis. A brief summary recollection of the main features of that literature, while risking a degree of seeming duplication, juxtaposed beside the summary of the exegesis, documents the originality and importance of this study.

Prominent among those works was that of Georg Fohrer,⁵ who argues that the central issue of Job is essentially the question of

⁵See above, pp. 28ff.

how the sufferer should conduct himself in his suffering.⁶ He concludes that the answer to this problem is that:

Proper conduct for the sufferer is humble and devout silence with trust in God -- based on the insight that suffering derives from God's mysterious and inscrutable but nevertheless meaningful action, and on assurance of fellowship with God, beside which all else pales into insignificance.⁷

However, while much of what Fohrer says of Job's final condition is accurate, nonetheless Job is not left quite so destitute as Fohrer's remarks would suggest. In the theophany Job is enlightened as to his precise situation in the universe in terms of creation. He is forcibly reminded of his human limitations, specifically in the dimensions of wisdom and power. But, he is also guaranteed that chaos is completely contained within strictly controlled limits of divine origin. Thus Job is fully satisfied that creation is the result of deliberate and benevolent divine design.

In short, Yahweh's answer provides Job with an appreciation of the limitations of his knowledge not hitherto recognized by him. But of greater importance for Job is the proof that divine answer provides for Job of the proximity of God to man and of the essential meaningfulness of that proximity. That is, Job has discerned from his new perception of creation something of the nature of the divine involvement in it. From that recognition he has derived positive comfort and knowledge.

Rowley's estimate of Job's predicament differs little from

⁷Introduction, p. 334.

that of Fohrer.⁸ He too emphasizes as primary the "spiritual enrichment" which Job derives "through the fellowship of God".⁹ Again however, while Rowley's estimate of Job's situation is accurate to some extent, it does not do justice to Job as a whole. Given the significance of creation in the book as documented in the Exegesis, Job's final situation is not to be considered as one of unrelieved patience from which he inexplicably escapes by virtue of the theophany. Rather, Job is fully satisfied precisely because his questions have been answered. He now knows and perceives a divine order that is established and sustained for human benefit. Such knowledge nullifies his physical and mental anguish. It has disappeared presumably because its cause has also disappeared. That cause was chiefly the fear that creation might indeed have little to do with God and even less so with man.¹⁰

⁸CB, p. 21 Cf. above, pp. 29f.

⁹Ibid., p. 17.

¹⁰PP. 94ff. The differences between Job and his counterpart in Ludlul bel Nemeqi (in W. G. Lambert, Babylonian Wisdom Literature, [Oxford, 1960], pp. 21-56) may illustrate something of the poet's purpose. If it be recognized that Job may be in part intended as a polemic against foreign gods then this book, and specifically the Yahweh speeches, may be seen as a refutation of their significance. In the Babylonian tale, which has many similarities with the biblical poem, the sufferer is suddenly and inexplicably relieved of his sufferings just as he was mysteriously afflicted with them in the first place. In Job, by contrast, his restoration is carefully explained to him in terms of creation. And, Job does not simply acknowledge his gratitude for his relief from his ordeals, but responds in terms which convey his complete understanding and satisfaction following the divine speeches. Such a contrast between two works of considerable similarity strongly suggests that the poet of Job was deliberately adapting his work to stress the differences between Yahweh and Marduk and the lot of man in their respective societies.

Terrien notes the dramatic and ritualistic potential of the poem.¹¹ But the chief purpose of the work, he believes, is intended to proclaim:

the inanity of self-justification (40:8), faith without calculation, service without hope of reward, the sense of theological sinfulness, and the participation of the destitute man in the gratuitous acts of the Creator.¹²

Terrien's descriptions of the poet's endeavour are indeed frequently true of many devout men; however, they do not fully describe Job's condition. Job does try to plumb the depths of faith, to justify himself and to hope for reward of a kind. In each of these endeavours, he is at least partially successful. God rewards him with a theophany in which he explains certain matters to Job in terms of creation. He commends Job for having spoken "what is right" (**נִתְּנָה**). In response, Job humbly announces his satisfaction with this explanation and his new perception. Finally, the Epilogue confirms the belief that Job is rewarded, rather than simply restored to his former status, for his various activities and insights.

A key point of Dhorme's analysis of Job was observed to be his conviction that the poem's intent is to convince men of the "uselessness of discussions about problems which surpass the range of human understanding".¹³ Dhorme states this belief more directly when he says that Job is "wrong to discuss a mystery beyond his

¹¹Pp. 31f. above. "The Yahweh Speeches and Job's Responses".

¹²Ibid., p. 509.

¹³Op. cit., lxxxvii and pp. 34f. above.

knowledge".¹⁴ Job is severely reprimanded for his pretensions to knowledge in the Yahweh speeches, but it is not evident that the reason for his chastisement is his attempt to gain some knowledge of God. Rather, any indication that Job might inadvertently give of his aspiration to equal God in some dimension is what is rejected by God in these speeches. Otherwise many notable biblical figures would surely fall foul of this indictment. For example, Abraham's intercession on behalf of the righteous men of Sodom surely exceeds the kinds of limits of subservience which Dhorme's remarks require.¹⁵ Thus, it seems reasonable to argue that Job is not simply castigated for his efforts to comprehend God, but only for his failure to realize the limits of his own human power and understanding. It is these human limitations which constitute the subject matter of the Yahweh speeches to some considerable extent. Yahweh demonstrates their existence and significance to Job in terms of creation.

Finally, the divine commendation of Job's rectitude in 42:7f. is scarcely simply the divine reward for due submissiveness. Rather, it would seem apparent from the results of this investigation, that Job is rewarded precisely because he has well understood his human limitations and clearly perceived the nature of the divine relationship to the world and to man in a manner and to a degree that was previously unthinkable, even for a man of his exemplary stature. Thus, contrary to Dhorme's opinion, Job is divinely commended for his

¹⁴Ibid., xci.

¹⁵Gen. 18;22-33.

efforts to know and understand despite the obstacles which threatened to overwhelm him. In conclusion, this argument of Dhorne's, which has much in common with the friends' explanations of Job's predicament, is not helpful in understanding the Yahweh speeches.

Sekine's thesis is of special interest here for he indicates an awareness of the centrality of 'creation thought' (Schopfungsgedanke) in Job.¹⁶ However, his recognition of its importance is too general to be helpful. Furthermore, his accusation that Job is guilty of hubris, and his contention that the central problem of Job is that of suffering, cannot be sustained by the text, as demonstrated in the Exegesis. He rightly recognizes that creation and redemption are intimately involved, especially in the closing chapters of the book, but fails to demonstrate convincingly their relationship.

Sekine's accusation that Job is guilty of hubris is suspect because the terms of the Prologue require that Job try to vindicate himself of the charges laid against him by every means available to him. The central issue for Job until the revelation in the Yahweh speeches is the absence of any sign of moral and intelligible divine involvement in creation. It is this absence which causes Job to lament his existence and to question the meaning and relevance of all human actions, moral and otherwise. In his desperation to find some sign of divine concern in creation Job explores every possible explanation for his present situation. It is this search which

¹⁶Cf. above pp. 38f.

leads Sekine to accuse him of hubris, for, according to the latter, it is Job's belief in his own righteousness that leads to his downfall.¹⁷ But, it is not the belief in his own righteousness that propels Job into action, but the fear that creation might indeed be without moral intelligibility. Thus Sekine has failed to perceive correctly the role and importance of creation in the early stages of the book.

Furthermore, it is hard to follow Sekine's argument that Job is ejected from creation in the first Yahweh speech and restored to a new creation in the second.¹⁸ For the point of the creation references in the first speech is to explain to Job why he is an unworthy competitor for Yahweh and not, as Sekine maintains, to provide a complete disparagement of Job. Again, the function of Behemoth and Leviathan is not, as the results of this investigation show, to demonstrate how Job "redivivus" is made a part of the primordial world.¹⁹ Rather, their function is to prove to Job his innate limitations which contrast with the divine omnipotence, particularly as it is manifested in Yahweh's control over creation and its fiercest inhabitants. In sum, while Sekine is helpful in drawing attention to the importance of creation in Job, his analysis of that importance requires further substantiation. In addition, he fails to elicit from particular references to creation, such as

¹⁷Op. cit., pp. 216f.

¹⁸Op. cit., pp. 220f.

¹⁹Ibid., p. 221.

"an arm like God", the intimations of creative redemption they contain.²⁰

Gerhard von Rad maintains that the topic of creation was regarded as secondary to the Heilsgeschichte.²¹ The reason for this relegation of creation to an inferior position was that:

the doctrine of creation had first to be fully safeguarded, in order that the doctrine that nature, too, is a means of divine self-revelation might not encroach upon or distort the doctrine of redemption, but rather broaden and enrich it.²²

However, such a statement tends to ignore the fact that creation contains redemptive qualities of its own. The exegesis of Chapters 38 to 42 demonstrates Yahweh's concern to convince Job that, provided he adopts the right perspective on creation, he will see in it the assurance of his redemption from thinking which premises the unintelligibility of existence.²³ The exegesis of the creation references in Job further shows how creation is the result of deliberate divine action on man's behalf. It is for his benefit that chaos has been subdued and subjected to divinely imposed controls. Thus von Rad is misleading when he suggests, by implication, that "nature", by which he means 'creation', did not contain redemptive qualities of its own. Although he later acknowledges the

²⁰40:9.

²¹von Rad refers to the subject of creation as "the doctrine of creation" (op. cit., p. 143).

²²Ibid., p. 143.

²³Pp. 24-104.

centrality of creation for the Wisdom literature, he fails to note the redemptive qualities which have been observed in Job.²⁴

Finally, in a recent work specifically concerned with the Wisdom literature, von Rad fails to explore fully the creation references delineated above.²⁵ As far as von Rad is concerned the chief references to creation in Job occur in Chapter 38 of the book. Their function therein is "to refer man back to the mystery of divine guidance".²⁶ He does not see the divine response to Job as explicative to him in a way that would be comprehensible by the latter on visual, rational or other grounds. For von Rad, Job is simply overwhelmed by the divine self-manifestation. The results of this investigation suggest that Job's understanding has in fact increased dramatically as a result of the theophany and the divine words to Job that it contains.

Crenshaw believes that the key to Job lies in the proper appreciation of the role of creation theology.²⁷ He understands its function to be:

to undergird the belief in divine justice. Consequently, we agree with Schmid that creation belongs to the fundamental question of human existence, namely the integrity of God.²⁸

²⁴Op. cit., p. 139 and cf. pp. 59ff.

²⁵Wisdom in Israel.

²⁶Ibid., p. 225 and cf. p. 45 above.

²⁷"The Function of Creation Theology in Wisdom Literature".

²⁸Ibid., p. 11.

Consequently, Crenshaw believes that Job is essentially a theodicy of a kind.²⁹ But, as indicated above, Job is not a theodicy sensu stricto because the central issue of the book is essentially that of the nature of the divine involvement in creation and not, as a theodicy would require, that of the nature of divine justice.³⁰ While it is true that Job seeks vindication of his righteousness, yet the justice he seeks is not what is usually thought of as a theodicy.³¹

Crenshaw is essentially correct when he asserts that:

creation...assures the wise man that the universe is comprehensible, and thus encourages him to search for its secrets.³²

In sum, creation does not function in Job in quite the manner in which Crenshaw describes it. That is, its purpose is not so much "to undergird the cogency of the argument for divine justice despite strong and convincing evidence to the contrary", as to convince Job of the proximity and redemptive nature of God, evidence of which can be observed in the creation.³³

Finally, Fisher's and McCarthy's contributions are, as mentioned, remarkable for their omission of reference to Job in which many of their assertions could be either corroborated or

²⁹Ibid., pp. 10-11.

³⁰Cf. above, p. 48.

³¹Cf. 40:8.

³²Ibid., p. 10.

³³Op. cit., p. 10.

subjected to qualification.³⁴ Insofar as McCarthy's claim about the demythologization of borrowed fragments is concerned, it is difficult to concede, for example, that Behemoth and Leviathan are as tame as his argument requires. For, their impact in the book derives in part from their reality for the book's readership. That reality probably includes a polemical reference to, and acknowledgment of, the religious beliefs and practices of Israel's neighbours.³⁵ It is even more difficult to agree with McCarthy that Leviathan in Job is a mere figure of speech.³⁶ The contrary interpretation of this reference seems more probable in fact. The conclusion to the book has even more force if the reality of these mythological references be admitted. This interpretation of the Yahweh speeches is further substantiated by the evidence for the claim that their central thrust is to prove to Job the complete control of Yahweh over all opposition, and of the total unworthiness of all potential rivals, be they men of Job's calibre, fierce animals, raging seas, mythological monsters, or unneighbourly deities and the forces they represent.

Furthermore, since a key issue for Job was to know and perceive that he belonged in a divinely ordered universe that was comprehensible to man, Job can be seen as a cosmology of a kind. That is, Job has discerned not the actual means by which the universe

³⁴Cf. above, pp. 56-57.

³⁵Cf. above, p. 66.

³⁶Op. cit., p. 95.

functions, but a modus vivendi by means of which he discerns that the world is governed according to a divine plan (עצה), in which man has a place, and to which he conforms by means of appropriate religious behaviour. Thus, Job's knowledge is of a specifically religious variety, which is perhaps better signified by 'wisdom' (דעת) than 'knowledge' (בנה or חכמה).³⁷ That is, Job's wisdom represents knowledge of ultimate reality and of the nature of the divine-human relationship.

In sum, the works cited make valuable contributions to the study of Job. But the general failure to take seriously the importance of creation for the whole book has frequently led to a misinterpretation of its significance. Of those studies which do consider creation few seem to pursue it sufficiently to discern its role and significance throughout the whole work. Prior notions of the importance, or otherwise, of reflection on creation in early Hebrew religion seems to be responsible for some of the omissions and shortcomings.

³⁷Cf. O. A. Piper, "Knowledge" (IDB, III), pp. 42f.; C. C. Settlemyre, "The Meaning, Importance and Original Position of Job 28" (Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, 1969), p. 53;

Hochmah is usually understood as the ability to comprehend successfully what one undertakes. Sometimes it refers to wisdom as a body of precepts handed down by way of tradition. Binah indicates an ability to discern or make a proper distinction.

H. N. Glatzer, op. cit., p. 6 says, "the key words [in the argument between Job, the friends and God] are knowledge, wisdom and understanding, and their verbal forms".

CHAPTER TWO

IMPLICATIONS OF RESULTS FOR FUTURE STUDIES IN JOB

The implications of this research are that a general re-appraisal both of the role of creation within Hebrew religious thought as a whole, and within Job in particular, is necessary.

In terms of Hebrew religion the role of creation thought has for some time been subjected to re-examination. Stuhlmüller's work in Deutero-Isaiah, Combs' work in Psalms, together with Crenshaw's and other contributions, all indicate a new attitude towards this aspect of Israel's religion. This new approach may be due, at least in part, to the impact of Ugaritic and Mesopotamian studies on biblical scholarship. Also, von Rad's appreciation of creation is no longer as influential as once it was. The result of these studies and influences is that creation can no longer be relegated to a secondary position in a responsible evaluation of early Israel's religious traditions.

The import of these references to creation, outside of its locus classicus in Genesis, is that reflection upon its significance was more widespread than is usually recognized. That creation figured prominently among Israel's earliest religious traditions can be verified from such facts as the early origins of many of the psalms in which references to creation have been noted.¹ More-

¹Cf. M. Dahood, Psalms, 3 Vol. (New York, 1966-70).

over Stuhlmüller's work in Deutero-Isaiah not only demonstrates the importance of creation for the author of this book, but also the importance of certain key words denotative of creation.² Among these words, the root kūn (כ) has been shown to belong both in Israel's earliest traditions, and also to occupy a key position in Job.³ Consequently, creation cannot be regarded as a late and inferior addendum to the Heilsgeschichte.⁴

All the ramifications of a new perspective on creation cannot, of course, be considered here. Nevertheless, it is immediately obvious that such ramifications could have a considerable impact on traditional estimates of Israel's religion. One result might involve a re-evaluation of the notion of Israel's supposedly exclusive commitment to the idea of God's acting in her history as the primary locus of his redemption.⁵ Rather, it now seems that she adapted the common notion of the involvement of God in nature to suit her own religious requirements.⁶ Just as it is to be expected that Israel's neighbours had some religious beliefs analogous to hers, so it should come as no surprise to discover

² Op. cit., pp. 209-229, and especially pp. 225f.

³ Cf. 42:7 and pp. 179f.

⁴ Cf. the discussion in Stuhlmüller, op. cit., p. 7n.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Albrektson's recognition (History and the Gods: An Essay on the Idea of Historical Events as Divine Manifestations in the Ancient Near East and in Israel [Lund, 1967]) that the notion of God acting in history was not exclusive to Israel provided a break-through on the nature of the uniqueness of Israel's faith.

that Israel had her own form of creation mythology which, while it had much in common with ancient Near Eastern thought on the subject, contained certain unique features. Part of that uniqueness may be seen to lie in the Hebrew refusal to deify nature, or to give cognisance to its deification, as happened frequently among her neighbours. Instead, while she stressed the fact that nature was very wonderful indeed (*תמל*), especially in that it was obviously the result of God's handiwork, yet the function of that evidence was only to direct the worshipper's attention to God himself, and not to the object of his activity.⁷ The results of this investigation further substantiate the belief that creation played an important role in Hebrew religion insofar as the book of Job is concerned.

Moreover, in Israel's adaptation of creation thought she managed to preserve an appreciation of the wonders of nature in common with her neighbours, and simultaneously to imply, and sometimes to state categorically, her belief in the complete supremacy of Yahweh both over the world of nature and over all gods and forces involved with nature. Thus, Yahweh was seen to be at once evidently concerned with human welfare, capable of the most marvellous works in creation, and superior to all other gods whose functions were often circumscribed by nature.⁸

In sum, the world of nature was viewed in Israelite religion

⁷Cf. Gen. 1 and 2; Pss. 19:1, 104; Job 38-42.

⁸Cf. the exegesis of the passages on Behemoth and Leviathan above, pp. 160ff.

as filled with signs of the divine redemptive process.⁹ It was filled with redemptive potentiality in that, properly perceived through revelation, it could indicate to man that the world is governed, not by chance, or chaos, but by God, the outlines of whose control can be observed by the righteous beholder.

Another implication of the results of this investigation, which follows from the previous considerations, concerns the belief that the subject of creation was taboo among the Hebrews. Certain parts of Deuteronomy, Kings and Hosea may be largely responsible for this view, together with some more recent critics.¹⁰ However, the vociferous denunciations of these writers might also be understood to be indicative of the widespread interest in the role of Yahweh in nature. Of course, the dangers of general confusion arising between Israel's formulations on creation and those of her neighbours was likely to lead many Hebrews to apostasy. But such dangers did not prevent Israel's religious writers from conveying their appreciation of the divine providence in terms of their understanding of the divine role in creation. That role embraced a perception of the significance of certain signs of God evident in the perception of the wisdom and power of God as vested in creation. This perception could, and often did produce in the religious man a profound sense of the awe and mystery of God. Such an approach to an understanding

⁹This estimate of the importance of creation in Hebrew religion seems especially true of Job.

¹⁰Cf. von Rad, "The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation", p. 132.

of Yahweh did not, of course, have to rely on an appreciation of a knowledge of his acting in history to prove its authenticity. Indeed, since creation itself, especially in Job, often embraced redemptive qualities, it was therefore quite independent of the 'doctrine' of the Heilsgeschichte.

Another possible implication of the results of this investigation -- albeit one that is fraught with theological difficulties -- is that creation can be seen not only to elicit the wonder and praise of the worshipper for his God, but also to convey his appreciation of the opportunities which such a manifestation provides for the discernment of the nature of his God. That is, creation provides a means by which man can come to know, understand and perceive God, although perhaps not in any complete sense. Although the phrase 'image of God' is replete with theological possibilities of various significance, yet its connotations of a rational, intuitive or perceptive nature seem to be dominant in it. Similarly, Job's understanding of God's role in creation seems to imply increased possibilities for him of understanding both that role and also something of the nature of God himself. This statement implies a belief that Job's final condition is not entirely the product of a gratuitous divine act but is, in some measure, due to his own efforts of some kind. This interpretation of the last few verses of the book is supported by the exegesis of the divine commendation of Job in 42:7 when God commends Job for having spoken "what is right" (נכון).¹¹

¹¹ Cf. exegesis above, pp. 179f.

Thus, it may be tentatively asserted that, in Job, creation is believed to provide the chief directive whereby man may become more cognizant of the significance of God's presence in the universe. Thus the poet provides his version of the nature of the divine involvement in creation in which he offers his estimates of the significance of contemporary views of creation and chaos. The purpose of his work is to provide a Hebraic version of the role of the divine involvement in nature, and to offer to man a means to appreciate nature without becoming ensnared by it. His work also indicates his awareness of the proximity of chaos for many men, especially those faced with inexplicable adversity, and his desire, despite such circumstances, to prove that there is a discernible order to creation, or existence, which properly perceived, indicates the means of confronting chaos, of restoring perspective and of securing the benefits of providence.



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