Thy Fearful Symmetry:

Order and Disorder in Creation in the Book of Job

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The Tyger

Tyger Tyger, burning bright,
In the forests of the night;
What immortal hand or eye
Could frame thy fearful symmetry?

In what distant deeps or skies
Burnt the fire of thine eyes?
On what wings dare he aspire?
What the hand, dare seize the fire?

And what shoulder, & what art,
Could twist the sinews of thy heart?
And when thy heart began to beat.
What dread hands? & what dread feet?

What the hammer? what the chain,
In what furnace was thy brain?
What the anvil? what dread grasp.
Dare its deadly terrors clasp?

When the stars threw down their spears
And water’d heaven with their tears:
Did he smile his work to see?
Did he who made the Lamb make thee?

Tyger Tyger burning bright,
In the forests of the night:
What immortal hand or eye,
Dare frame thy fearful symmetry?

William Blake
1759-1827
I declare that this thesis is my own account of my research and contains as its main content work which has not previously been submitted for a degree at any tertiary education institution.

..........................................................

Claire Maltas
Abstract

Because of its complexity and profundity, the Book of Job has been many things to many people and few texts can have been more written about. I will argue in this study that it is, first and foremost, about creation and the theology of creation. If “beginning” and “ending” are creation terms, “birth” and “death” are their equivalents for the animate parts of creation. What happens between those two events in time, which is well-being and survival to an expected time, seen as order in creation for its animate constituents, or their opposites which is ill-being and untimely death, seen as disorder in creation, must also belong to creation theology as must measures to be taken to secure the former and avoid the latter. The diversity of views on the subject of order and disorder in creation is explored through the medium of argumentative speeches each of which has persuasion as its goal. Two striking features of the arguments are, firstly, the passion with which they are expressed and, secondly, challenges to their credibility. I suggest that the key to the interpretation of Job as a work about order and disorder in creation is a rhetorical criticism based on precepts which hold that persuasion is achieved through argument, emotion and the credibility of the speaker. Aristotle’s Rhetoric meets those requirements. Since persuasion is not achieved in a void, I look at the Mesopotamian literary context of Job. I look, first, at texts dealing with order and disorder in creation, second, at texts concerned with human suffering, and thirdly, at a small group of texts comprising a literary genre, the dispute poem. I contend that the Joban poet modelled his work on the dispute poem, the better to set out the different strands of thinking on order and disorder in creation.
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**CONCLUSION**

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Some time ago, Dr Sue Boorer asked what I was interested in. I replied that I was a “greenie” who liked poetry. In that case, she said, I should look at the Book of Job. I did and a while later I embarked on a PhD thesis. I learnt early that one does not “do” Job, one journeys with Job because there is a little bit of Job in each of us. He is a demanding companion and there were times when I thought I could tell him a thing or two about trouble. I have come to the end of that journey now and I am glad things worked out well for Job because they have for me too.

There have been many companions on my journey, most notably Sue. I could not have found a better supervisor. Her knowledge of the text is profound and her enthusiasm infectious. She is generous with her time and advice and very tactful when I strayed a little off the track. The fact that I have reached this point is due in no small measure to her.

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Abbreviations

ABD  Anchor Bible Dictionary. Edited by D. N. Freedman. 6 vols. New York, 1992
AJSL  American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literature
BETL  Bibliothea Ephemeridum Theologicarum Lovaniensium
Bib  Biblica
BR  Biblical Research
BO  Bibliothea Orientalis
BTB  Biblical Theology Bulletin
CBQ  Catholic Biblical Quarterly
ExpTim  Expository Times
FRLANT  Forschungen zur Religion und Literatur des Alten und Neuen Testaments
HAR  Hebrew Annual Review
HBT  Horizons in Biblical Theology
HTR  Harvard Theological Review
HTS  Harvard Theological Studies
HUCA  Hebrew Union College Annual
Int  Interpretation
ITQ  Irish Theological Quarterly
JAOS  Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL  Journal of Biblical Literature
JBQ  Jewish Bible Quarterly
JCS  Journal of Cuneiform Studies
JNES  Journal of Near Eastern Studies
JSOT  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JSOTSup  Journal for the Study of the Old Testament: Supplement Series
KAT  Kommentar zum Alten Testament
LCL  Loeb Classical Library
OBO  Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis
OtSt  Oudtestamentische Studiën
QJS  Quarterly Journal of Speech
RB  Revue Biblique
RevExp  Review and Expositor
RQ  Restoration Quarterly
SBL  Society of Biblical Literature
SBLDS  Society of Biblical Literature Dissertation Series
SJT  Scottish Journal of Theology
SR  Studies in Religion
TOTC  Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries
UF  Ugarit-Forschungen
VT  Vetus Testamentum
VTSup  Vetus Testamentum Supplements
WBC  Word Biblical Commentary
WOO  Wiener Offene Orientalistik
ZAW  Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The Book of Job is, most obviously, about a good man suffering undeservedly and so some interpreters have understood it to be a work on innocent suffering.\(^1\) David Clines puts forward two possible arguments in *Job*; the first is an argument about suffering, and the second is an argument about the moral order of the world.\(^2\) Some interpreters have said that it is about the response of a man to his suffering and to his God.\(^3\) Ellen Davis has argued that Job’s integrity is the central issue of the Book of Job.\(^4\) Some have commented on the book’s legal metaphor and language\(^5\) which Norman Habel suggests can be used to provide a structure for the work which is both “creative and dramatic.”\(^6\) Sylvia Scholnick understands the poetic Dialogue to be judicial proceedings against God in which God gives testimony in his defence.\(^7\) Whilst legal language is a significant part of *Job*, the book is about a great deal more than a law suit. I suggest that it has a wider scope and that it is about creation. It is written about, and from the point of view of, a man who sees himself as one of God’s creative works, who had once known God as beneficent when his life was ordered, but believes him to be maleficent now that his life is disordered. His experience leads him to reflect on divine beneficence or order turned

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\(^3\) Henry McKeating (“The Central Issue of the Book of Job,” *ExpT* 82 [1971]: 246) states that *Job* is about faith despite suffering. Andrew E. Steinman (“The Structure and Message of the Book of Job,” *VT* 46 [1996]: 91) says that in addition to faith, the book is about maintaining integrity during times of suffering.


to divine maleficence or disorder at all levels of creation. The book is about Job’s search for answers to questions about the causes of disorder, primarily the disorder in his own life. Job’s friends, who also know themselves to be made by God, are observers of the disorder which has come upon him and which can and does come upon other human beings. They seek ways by which humankind can protect themselves from disorder.

The term “creation” means not only the bringing into being of something by a creator, who, for biblical writers, is God, but also it denotes what is created, but, as Terence Fretheim has observed, “not in the sense of a finished product.”\(^8\) Creation, understood in this second sense, encompasses the whole world of nature, including humankind brought into being and sustained by God.\(^9\) Terms which may be used for creation in both its senses are cosmogony which is about the bringing into being of the cosmos, and cosmology which is about the cosmos after it has begun, a term which has been described as “a blueprint or map, in the widest sense, of the universe as a comprehensible and meaningful place.”\(^10\) The Oxford English Dictionary’s definition is: “The science or theory of the universe as an ordered whole, and of the general laws which govern it. Also, a particular account or system of the universe and its laws.”\(^11\) Creation is, therefore, not only about beginnings and endings, or birth and death which are the terms applicable to animate life, but it is about what happens between these two events, either order, which is well-being and survival for a generally accepted period of time, or it is disorder, which is ill-being and untimely death. This is how I understand the term “creation” in my reading of Job.

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11 *OED* 3: 985.
Creation theology is a relatively recent interest for Hebrew Bible scholars, an interest at least partly occasioned by concerns about the environment. Some books are a response to this concern for they seek in the Bible a way of looking at, and dealing rightly with, earth and its non-human inhabitants.

1.1 Literature Review

There are a number of monographs discussing creation in the Bible in which reference is made to Job. I will limit my review to those which are either solely about Job or at least devote a substantial section to Job. I shall review these works in order of publication.

In a dissertation entitled “The Theology of Creation in the Yahweh Speeches of the Book of Job as a Solution to the Problem Posed by the Book of Job”, Henry Rowold identifies the problem of Job as being relational and he inquires about the basis of the relationship between God and man. Finding the answer in the divine speeches, he establishes that creation is theocentric, mysterious and joyful and that Yahweh contains, rather than eliminates, the evil represented by Behemoth and Leviathan. Suffering is not explained but fellowship is offered to Job, and accepted.

Robert Alter’s work, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, includes a chapter titled “Truth and Poetry in the Book of Job.” He finds in Job a design by the poet to create a work in which the speech from the storm “is a climactic development of images, ideas, and themes that appear in different and sometimes antithetical contexts earlier in the poetic

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argument.”

Although he notes the links between the human speeches and God’s speeches, Alter’s analysis concentrates on the writer’s use of antithesis both in the structure of the poetic dialogue and in its themes, through contrasting its beginning and its end. He describes the divine speeches as “a great diastolic movement, responding to the systolic movement of Chapter 3.” Alter says of the poetry of the Book of Job that it looms above all other biblical poetry in virtuosity and sheer expressive power, the culminating poem that God speaks out of the storm soars beyond everything that has preceded it in the book, the poet having wrought a poetic idiom even richer and more awesome than the one he gave Job. Through his pushing of poetic expression toward its own upper limits, the concluding speech helps us see the panorama of creation, as perhaps we could do only through poetry, with the eyes of God.

Leo Perdue in his book, *Wisdom in Revolt: Metaphorical Theology in the Book of Job,* talks about the significant metaphors used to describe Israel’s creation theology: “fertility, artistry, word, and struggle”, to which he adds slave and ruler metaphors. Their source is ancient Near Eastern mythology. He analyses the poetic dialogue in terms of these six metaphors. Important for his study are the *Atrahasis* myth, *Enuma elish* and the Baal Cycle. He argues that God’s struggle with chaos “is mythically transferred to the struggle with Job, resulting in all-out revolt.” Job’s speeches use battle metaphors to portray El as the destroyer both of creation and Job. Conflict continues in the divine speeches and is partially resolved by a word of restraint to the Sea. The potential for battle remains, however, in the continuing presence of Yahweh’s antagonists, Behemoth and Leviathan, whom only Yahweh can control. God challenges Job’s capacity to deal with evil and to capture and tame Behemoth and Leviathan. The Joban poet has created a new

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14 Ibid., 87.
15 Ibid., 103.
16 Ibid., 87.
18 Ibid., 29.
19 Ibid., 31.
mythos in which “the language of the defiant, accusing, struggling Job is declared right and true. For it is the struggle for justice, initiated by the caprice of an unjust judge, that is the proper way of being human in the world, and in the restoration of Job, there is the redemption of God.”

Observing that many recent interpreters of creation texts are responding to environmental concerns, William Brown in his work, *The Ethos of the Cosmos: The Genesis of the Moral Imagination in the Bible*, focuses, instead, on the moral values of the communities which created these texts, values which shaped their stories of creation, and which could be helpful in reflecting upon the present “crisis of culture.” He looks at five creation accounts, one of which is Job 38.4-41.26, and pays particular attention to the Joban passages dealing with animals.

Brown says of the divine speeches that their pictures drawn from creation function as a “broadening (of) Job’s moral horizons” whilst at the same time “demonstrating his innocence before his detractors.” Job is shown a desert place uninhabited by humans but “teeming with life” sustained by Yahweh who irrigates the wasteland to cultivate a community beyond culture” (38.26-27). He notes that desert can denote chaos but that desert is still the recipient of divine beneficence and that “water is formative of community.” Populating land marginal to Job are a number of animals, including the lion and raven both fed by God, though the lion is a threat to the community, and seen as such by Job and his friends. “Yahweh has transformed an object of fear and disdain to one of compassion.” The wild land is a place where mountain goats and deer produce

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20 Ibid., 272.
22 Ibid., 25.
23 Ibid., 341.
24 Ibid., 347.
25 Ibid., 350.
26 Ibid., 361.
young and which affords to the wild ass and the wild ox a freedom by which is meant freedom from humankind. It is the place of the ostrich and war horse and raptor birds. Descriptions of wild animals are intended to create “empathy” in Job for creatures living in places unfamiliar to him and to point to their “intrinsic worth”.27 “They are presented by God for Job’s moral education.”28 Finally, Job is shown Behemoth, the “archetypal animal, potent yet composed, that confirms as well as guides Job on his way toward archetypal humanity.”29 Leviathan, a “creature of chaos” and a king is “untouchable” and utterly alien”,30 its fire-breathing mouth like Job’s “inflammatory discourse.”31 Job is shown to have characteristics in common with the animals described, all of them free, and Job free to challenge God. Job’s troubles not only changed his status in the community but also the way he saw others, both human and animal.

Concern for the environment has led to the publication of a series of books by the Earth Bible Project one of which is The Earth Story in Wisdom Traditions32. Contributors include Norman Habel, Alice Sinnott, Izak Spangenberg, Dale Patrick and Katharine Dell.

In a chapter entitled “Earth First: Inverse Cosmology in Job,”33 Norman Habel finds in the prose prologue of the Book of Job, two domains – heaven which is God’s and earth where Job lives. The poetic dialogue, beginning with chapter 3, sees a tripartite division of the cosmos – heaven, earth’s surface and the subterranean level – with harassment coming from heaven of a man situated on the middle level where he is accessible and vulnerable, who longs for refuge, rest and safety from trouble on the lowest level, the

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27 Ibid., 365.
28 Ibid., 367.
29 Ibid., 370.
30 Ibid., 373.
31 Ibid., 376.
grave. Earth is seen as his mother, a character in the story and a character valued by Job for her intrinsic worth. Human life comes from earth, ends in earth and is lived on earth. Habel asks whether Job speaks only for suffering humanity or whether, he is also the voice of suffering earth and life on earth who are also victims of divine violence. The divine reply shows Job that earth is ordered and has a place for everything and for all life.

In her chapter, “Job 12: Cosmic Devastation and Social Turmoil,”34 Alice Sinnott reads Job 12 from the perspective of earth, by listening to earth’s voice mediated through a distressed Job. Earth and her creatures are teachers and they teach by direct experience. They, too, are victims of divine misrule (12.7-10), as they can attest. Job, speaking for earth, accuses God of treating earth destructively at the same time as the social order is destroyed (12.15-25), and all to no good purpose. Sinnott asks if Job champions earth because he sees earth as a reflection of himself or because his own troubles have given him the insight necessary to perceive earth’s sufferings. It is not until the divine speeches that Job is able to understand and see that God is not a capricious tyrant but the creator of a world characterized by the interconnectedness of its parts where all are given their place.

In his chapter, “Who Cares? Reflections on the Story of the Ostrich (Job 39.13-18),”35 Izak Spangenberg has observed that, despite charging God with destructiveness on and of earth, Job himself appears to be more concerned with human beings than with earth or its life forms. God, on the other hand, in his first speech, focuses on earth, its animate and inanimate parts, and the sustaining of life on earth. Noting the misrepresentation of ostrich behaviour in Job 39.13-18, he comments on the present-day vulnerability of the species to human demands and subsequent human efforts made to

preserve it. He concludes that the pericope is about reward and retribution. Job had expected to be rewarded for his efforts to care for the weak. The ostrich does not seem to care whether her efforts to reproduce will be rewarded with live young, nor need she, for God is watching over and caring for all creatures, including the unwise and their young. Humans, however, should remember their role as custodians of earth’s creatures.

Dale Patrick’s chapter, “Divine Creative Power and the Decentering of Creation: The Subtext of the Lord’s Addresses to Job,” looks first at the human view of creation, its origin and ordering and the myths surrounding it. Job usually sees God as malevolent and destructive, and so he sees death as an escape from divine attention. The friends have a more favourable view of God and their interest in death is its part in retribution theology. Both acknowledge the power of God in creation and both see its natural phenomena as tools used by God. All the human participants in the dialogue use natural phenomena to illustrate their theologies. Secondly, Patrick looks at the cosmos from Yahweh’s perspective which is that human beings have neither the knowledge nor the power of God and are thus not in a position to criticize. The first speech, with its parallels in the psalms, is a celebration of the cosmos. Patrick draws attention to the language which changes from images of force and violence in the human speeches, to images of building, birthing and flourishing. The non-anthropocentric character of the divine description of the cosmos has the effect of decentering creation whilst showing the interconnectedness of all its parts. The second speech is about power and the limitations on human power. “In the Earth community humans are not created to dominate but to fit within the limits of their ecosystem.”

37 Ibid., 115.
In her chapter, “Plumbing the Depths of Earth: Job 28 and Deep Ecology,” Katharine Dell says of the term “deep ecology” that it “offers the principle of interrelatedness and interaction – i.e. links between human activity and the natural world, an understanding and valuing of the natural world, and an appreciation of the essential goodness of creation, linking up with its divine origin.” She sees in Job 28 evidence of these links and interrelatedness, and of the interaction of God with creation. She proposes a reading of the chapter from the perspective of earth with four aims. The first is to change the focus from a search for Wisdom to a celebration of creation which would, secondly, attend not only to the human search for wisdom but also to the description of non-human creation. Thirdly, she considers the relation between Creator and creation, and, finally, the human response to the Creator. Her reading also looks for the voice of Earth.

Robert S. Fyall in his book, Now My Eyes Have Seen You: Images of Creation and Evil in the Book of Job, is concerned with creation and evil. The key to understanding both is the divine speeches which are the focus of his work. He looks at the figure of Mot in the Baal cycle and finds there links to Behemoth, especially the idea of giving tribute which is done for both. In addition, both have a watery habitat and so he identifies Behemoth with Mot, the god of death. Fyall identifies Behemoth with death and he identifies Leviathan as a guise of Satan. Satan, he argues, has appeared under other guises as Leviathan (3.8), Yam and Tannin (7.12), Sea (9.8; 38.8-11), Rahab (9.13; 26.12) and the serpent (26.13).

39 Ibid., 116-117.
41 Ibid., 137.
42 Ibid., 168.
Terence Fretheim in his work, *God and the World in the Old Testament: A Relational Theology of Creation*, states that God is a “relational being”, a Creator who is in relationship with every part of creation, who has made the world’s creatures to be interrelated, and who is “present and active” in creation which is continually evolving and bringing novelty into being. Part of a chapter, “Wisdom and Creation”, focuses on the Book of Job.

The divine speeches are a response to Job’s claim that the world is chaotic, a claim which is correct. God, however, points out that the disorderliness of creation is intentional on his part, even though it may include suffering. If it were not so, creation would be a machine. God shows Job a world of “boundary”, “law”, and “rule”, of “care”, “nurture” and “freedom” for animals, but also of “wildness” of weather, sea and animals, including Behemoth and Leviathan with whom God is not in conflict though he could defeat them. Creation has “elements of randomness and chaos, of strangeness and wildness” and “[a]mid the order there is room for chance.” Creation has a “communal character”, its parts so connected, that what one does affects others. The result is a dynamic world “in the process of becoming.” God’s relationship with this world is one which allows the world to be what it is. This being so, God must take responsibility for Job’s troubles.

In her book, *Out of the Whirlwind: Creation Theology in the Book of Job*, Kathryn Schifferdecker noting that whilst the divine speeches do not address the problem of undeserved suffering, specifically Job’s, they are a response to Job’s situation.

44 Ibid., 23.
46 Ibid., 199-247.
47 Ibid., 237.
48 Ibid., 239.
49 Ibid., 244.
Furthermore, they offer a theology of creation and humanity’s place in creation, unlike any other in the Hebrew Bible. She sees in the human speeches a “meditation” on the question “what is humanity?”51 which concludes that humanity is “the chief object of God’s attention and the most important of God’s creatures.”52 Her exploration of the divine speeches pays particular attention to “the establishment of creation, procreation and the place of humanity in creation,”53 She finds in them a creation in which humanity is not the centerpiece, a creation “bursting with new life”, life which will continue for all its creatures.54

Abigail Pelham in her book, *Contested Creations in the Book of Job: The-World-as-It-Ought-and-Ought-Not-to-Be,*55 says that the Book of Job is an inquiry about creation, its nature and its Creator, populated by humans who need not ask questions because they know how it should be but, unfortunately, is not, for one of them, and this is God’s doing. God comes to present to Job a vision of a completely different world which Job appears to accept but his last words are so ambiguous that the reader cannot be sure that he does. The Epilogue restores him to the world he once inhabited which once he thought was the right world but it is not God’s world. In so doing, the Epilogue creates uncertainties and raises questions. Pelham explores the questions and difficulties by reading the book to the end and then reading it again knowing what the Epilogue has to say, in her words, a forward and backward reading. Reading forwards the book presents the world-as-it-ought-to-be as the one inhabited by the righteous and the world-as-it-ought-not-to-be as the world of the wicked. God presents, and is present in, the world-as-it-is, quite unlike the human worlds.

51 Ibid., 57.
52 Ibid., 61.
53 Ibid., 66-67.
54 Ibid., 124.
In his book, *Wisdom’s Wonder: Character, Creation, and Crisis in the Bible’s Wisdom Literature*, returning to some of the themes of his earlier work, Brown focuses on the power of wonder created by the evocative images of the divine speeches as the key to an understanding which leads to a transforming of the character, Job. Job’s view of the natural world had been somewhat negative before his encounter with God. Now he is shown the many connections that he has, not only with Behemoth and Leviathan, but also with the other animals of God’s first speech, connections which point to a recognition that something of each of them is present in himself. God’s revelation of creation transforms “Job’s perception and thus his very identity,” and he “discovers himself as a child of the wild.” Believing himself to be close to death, he declares that he is comforted by what has been revealed to him. Job’s “journey” has taken him from “wound to wonder” and is to end with restoration. His trust in himself and his trust that God will meet him have led to this outcome.

Norman Habel, in his recent book, *Finding Wisdom in Nature: An Eco-Reading of the Book of Job*, suggests that a reading of Job begin with the reader’s awareness of being a part of Earth’s community of interconnected and interdependent organisms, with whom the reader identifies, who are present in the text and who have a voice which should be discerned and retrieved. Since Job belongs to the corpus of Wisdom literature, his interpretation focuses on ecology and wisdom, and he takes as his starting point chapter 28, which asks where wisdom, understood as the ‘way’ of God, is to be found. God finds it in nature. Habel says of “way” that it is “innate within each phenomenon of nature . . .

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58 Ibid., 125.
59 Ibid., 129.
a code of information that determines its character and governs its behavior”\textsuperscript{61} and the ways of different phenomena will be seen in the creation set before Job in the first divine speech. The second divine speech showed two masterpieces of creation, Behemoth and Leviathan. Job, who had sought justice found instead wisdom in the “cosmic network” which is creation.\textsuperscript{62}

Brian Doak’s work, \textit{Consider Leviathan: Narratives of Nature and the Self in Job},\textsuperscript{63} situates \textit{Job} in the context of the difficulties experienced by the Israelite community, and individuals within it, of living in post-exilic Israel. He uses plants and animals to shape its debate. Israel, and the individual, were confronted not only by material difficulties but also moral difficulties in the realization that the act-consequence thinking of former times could not, and did not, apply in the lives that they now led. Furthermore, God, the Creator, was involved in “the paradoxes and violence of the natural world.”\textsuperscript{64}

1.2. \textit{The Subject of This Thesis}

As I said at the beginning of this chapter, the Book of Job is about a man whose ordered life has become disordered. Fretheim’s work, which is insightful but brief, has dealt with the disorderliness of creation and also its orderliness. There is room for a longer treatment of the subject. I propose to fill this gap and explore the notion that in creation there is both order and disorder, about which there are three perspectives — the three

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{61} Ibid., 26.
\item \textsuperscript{62} Ibid., 118.
\item \textsuperscript{63} Brian R. Doak, \textit{Consider Leviathan: Narratives of Nature and the Self in Job} (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2014).
\item \textsuperscript{64} Ibid., 287.
\end{itemize}
friends’, Job’s and God’s. These three viewpoints, though different, are connected as I hope to show.

1.3 Methodology

The Book of Job, consists almost entirely of two poetic Dialogues sandwiched between a prose Prologue and Epilogue. The Dialogues are made up of speeches given by Job on the one hand, and his friends on the other, and by Job on the one hand, and God on the other. The speeches are clearly rhetoric, as is the whole book. This being so, a criticism based on the precepts of rhetoric would be a way of exploring the thinking of the speakers on order and disorder. There is not, however, just one kind of rhetoric. There are classical rhetoric and ‘new’ rhetoric, and rhetoric can be further categorized according to its purpose. The dictionary defines rhetoric as “1. The art of using language so as to persuade or influence others; the body of rules to be observed by a speaker or writer in order that he may express himself with eloquence . . . 2. Elegance or eloquence of language.” It may have a persuasive purpose or it may have an aesthetic purpose. Rhetorical criticism, thus, would treat a text, to use Patricia Tull’s words, as either “Literary Artistry” or “Persuasion.” This dichotomy of purpose was also a feature of classical rhetoric about which George Kennedy has said that it was either the “art of persuasion” or the “art of effective expression” with the latter definition covering works whose purpose was aimed at the enjoyment of the hearer or reader through the “imaginative and linguistic skills of the speaker or writer.” Whilst both kinds of rhetoric

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65 In my next chapter, I shall argue for the exclusion of the Elihu speeches from the debate.
68 Ibid., 160.
70 Ibid.
would be concerned with compositional matters, the ‘how’ of expression, the aims of expression differ. Persuasive rhetoric uses style and language to serve an argument whose end is persuasion, but for aesthetic rhetoric, style and language are the end.

A choice on which type of rhetoric is to be used for the interpretation of a text, classical or new, persuasive or aesthetic, depends very much on what the critic sees are the features of the text to be explored and how well the precepts of that rhetoric can contribute to its interpretation. *Job* is an argumentative book consisting almost entirely of speeches each of which aims to persuade its hearer to its point of view. The speeches are expressed with utter conviction amounting to passion, and some of them use emotion as a tool for persuasion. Furthermore, the issue of the credibility of the speakers plays a significant part in the rhetoric of *Job*. The precepts of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* would be useful tools for the interpretation of this text. Aristotle said that persuasive rhetoric used three tools, argument (*logos*), emotion (*pathos*) and the credibility of the speaker (*ethos*). I will argue that not only is each speech a rhetorical unit, but that they, together with the Prologue and Epilogue, make up a single rhetorical unit which is the Book of Job.

There are many articles and book chapters which examine aspects of the composition of *Job*, including word plays, equivocal words and word patterns, the structure of the work, and its strophic patterns, all of which deal with compositional features of *Job*. Larger rhetorical analyses, focusing on the book’s composition have

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71 Fretheim (*God and the World*, 222) has noted the importance of this aspect of Joban rhetoric, saying “evaluation of the perspectives of others” (italics original) becomes a key thread in the book.


come from monographs by John Course\textsuperscript{74} and Pieter van der Lugt.\textsuperscript{75} Fewer are rhetorical analyses of \textit{Job} which treat it as a work of persuasive rhetoric\textsuperscript{76} and none which analyses it using the three tools of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}. This is a gap in interpretation which this thesis aims to fill.

1.4 \textit{Rhetoric}

Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric} is a long work composed to meet the needs of the orators of his day who could find themselves in a judicial or political setting, or who may have a need to make speeches of praise or blame in some other setting. It contains several references to his other works, \textit{Topics,\textsuperscript{77} Analytics\textsuperscript{78} and Poetics\textsuperscript{79}}, and should be read in conjunction with those works, especially where so directed. In this section I will set out only those of his precepts which are useful in my rhetorical criticism of \textit{Job}.

1.4.1 \textit{Definition of Rhetoric}

Aristotle’s opening words are “Rhetoric is the counterpart of Dialectic” and “both alike are concerned with such things as come, more or less, within the general ken of all

\begin{footnotes}
\item[75] Pieter van der Lugt, \textit{Rhetorical Criticism and the Poetry of the Book of Job} (Leiden: Brill, 1995).
\item[76] David Clines (“The Arguments of Job’s Three Friends” in \textit{Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature} (eds. D. J. Clines, D. M. Gunn, and A. J. Hauser; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1982), 199-214) has used three elements of rhetoric – tonality, nodal sentences and topoi – to establish over the three speech cycles the coherence of the arguments of the friends each of which has a distinctive point of view. Norman Habel (“Appeal to Ancient Tradition as a Literary Form,” \textit{ZAW} 88 [1976], 253-272) discusses the role of tradition in the formulation of arguments by two of Job’s friends. In chapter 6, section 6.1.2.4, I will return to the subject of tradition in my discussion of evidence as one of the non-artistic proofs used in rhetoric.
\item[79] Footnote 59.
\end{footnotes}
men and belong to no definite science." He defines rhetoric as “the faculty of observing in any given case the available means of persuasion.” For Aristotle, there was a close connection between the disciplines of dialectic and rhetoric and he refers to the former in several places. There are, however, differences between them and Jacques Brunschwig has described dialectic as private and conversational between two people alternately speaking and listening, whereas rhetoric is an address by one speaker to an audience. Oscar Brownstein sees a “social function” for rhetoric which is “an instrument with which human societies – the social organism in contrast with individuals – confronts contingent reality as it is made accessible within the perspectives provided by different speakers and hearers and through which decisions for appropriate actions are taken.”

There are also terminological differences; induction in dialectic is known as example in rhetoric, and syllogism in dialectic is enthymeme in rhetoric. In the case of the latter, there is also a difference in form, the enthymeme having fewer premises leading up to the conclusion than does the syllogism.

1.4.2 Types of Rhetoric and their Purposes

Aristotle anticipates that his students will need oratorical skills on political, forensic, and ceremonial occasions on which their speeches can be described as deliberative rhetoric, judicial rhetoric and epideictic rhetoric, respectively. He discusses

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81 Ibid., 1.2.1355b.
82 Ibid., 1.1.1355a; 1.1.1355b; 1.2.1356a; 1.2.1356b; 1.2.1358a; 1.4.1359b.
85 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.2.1356b; 1.2.1357a; 1.2.1357b; 2.201393a; 2.22.1395b.
86 Ibid., 1.2.1357a.
the type of audience that a speaker may expect on each of these occasions and the kind of response that will be required of it. The hearer is either a judge or an observer. “A member of the assembly decides about future events, a juryman about past events: while those who merely decide on the orator’s skill are observers” and concerned with the present.87 These three different occasions and the audiences particular to each, and their roles, will determine the main purpose and the content of speeches addressed to them.88 It is possible, however, that a speech, although predominantly of one type and classified as such, may have features of either or both of the other types and this has been noted by Kennedy in his analysis of New Testament texts.89

1.4.2.1  Deliberative Rhetoric

This branch of rhetoric urges its hearers either to do or not to do something, establishing either “the expediency or the harmfulness of a proposed course of action”.90 The subjects of deliberative rhetoric are those matters which human beings can effect, “matters, namely, that ultimately depend on ourselves, and which we have it in our power to set going”.91 Aristotle later adds that “the political or deliberative orator’s aim is utility: deliberation seeks to determine not ends but the means to ends, i.e. what it is most useful to do.”92 The goal of deliberative rhetoric is the achievement of happiness.93

87 Ibid., 1.3.1358b.
88 Ibid., 1.3.1358a-1359a.
89 George Kennedy, New Testament Interpretation Through Rhetorical Criticism (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984). Another example has been provided by D. A. Russell (“Ethos in Oratory and Rhetoric,” in Characterization and Individuality in Greek Literature [ed. C. Pelling; Oxford: Clarendon, 1990], 207) who has made the same point and cited an example of a speech which, though epideictic, had also deliberative and judicial features.
90 Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1.3.1358b.
91 Ibid., 1.4.1359a.
92 Ibid., 1.6.1362a.
93 Aristotle (Rhetoric, 1.5.1360b) defines happiness as “prosperity combined with virtue; or as independence of life; or as the secure enjoyment of the maximum of pleasure; or as a good condition of property and body, together with the power of guarding one’s property and body and making use of them.” He adds, “[f]rom this definition of happiness it follows that its constituent parts are:- good birth,
1.4.2.2 Judicial Rhetoric

Judicial rhetoric has two forms; either it is a speech of Accusation or a speech of Defence in response to accusation.\(^{94}\) Aristotle begins his discussion of this type of address with a definition of wrongdoing as an “injury voluntarily inflicted contrary to law”\(^{95}\) which may be either written, governing the life of a community, or unwritten which are widely acknowledged principles. Later he will label these categories “particular law and universal law”, and the latter is “the law of nature” adding, “for there really is, as everyone to some extent divines, a natural justice and injustice that is binding on all men.”\(^{96}\)

1.4.2.3 Epideictic Rhetoric

This category of rhetoric is about “praise and blame”, not always of “a human or divine being but often of inanimate things, or of the humblest of the lower animals.”\(^{97}\) It does not aim to prove a point but uses amplification (“heightening the effect”)\(^{98}\) based on examples\(^{99}\) as the means of persuading the hearer/reader that praise is merited. Having dealt at length with strategies for praise, Aristotle says “no special treatment of censure and vituperation is needed. Knowing the above facts, we know their contraries; and it is out of these that speeches of censure are made.”\(^{100}\)

Its importance as a genre of rhetoric sometimes downplayed, epideictic speech has been understood as the genre into which whatever is neither deliberative nor forensic

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\(^{94}\) Ibid., 1.3.1358b; 1.10.1368b.
\(^{95}\) Ibid., 1.10.1368b.
\(^{96}\) Ibid., 1.13.1373b.
\(^{97}\) Ibid., 1.9.1366a.
\(^{98}\) Ibid., 1.9.1368a.
\(^{99}\) Ibid., 1.9.1367b.
\(^{100}\) Ibid., 1.9.1367a.
speech may be consigned.  

Recent scholarship, however, has taken another look at the purposes served by epideictic. Consideration of its significance to the art of rhetoric as one of the three forms, and also to the community which hears that rhetoric, must start with the meaning of the word *epideixis* which Kennedy understands to be “demonstration”, Jeffrey Walker “display or showing forth of things”, and Lawrence Rosenfield “to shine or show forth”. Rosenfield goes on to say that the idea of “display” is only part of the meaning, and that the word points to “an exhibition or making apparent (in the sense of showing or highlighting) what might otherwise remain unnoticed or invisible.”

Epideictic has been labeled “Oratory of Display”, “Demonstrative Oratory, Occasional Oratory” and “Ceremonial Oratory”, all of which could be supported by what Aristotle has to say of it. He describes it as “the ceremonial oratory of display” which “either praises or censures somebody” and its purpose is to persuade its hearers to think in a particular way about the orator’s subject. Praiseworthiness and blameworthiness are established through the deeds of the one being praised or blamed. Praise need not only be of “a human or divine being but often of inanimate things, or the humblest of the lower animals.”

A possible effect of praise is to change behaviour, and this will depend on how the praise is phrased. If change through praise is the effect of epideictic rhetoric, there must be questions about its aim. A speech of praise or blame need not change its type from epideictic to deliberative but could make it a precursor of deliberative rhetoric, an effect

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105 Ibid.


108 Ibid., 1.9.1367b.

109 Ibid., 1.9.1366a.
noted by Chaim Perelman and Lucie Olbrechts-Tyteca who have said that “epidictic (sic) oratory has significance and importance for argumentation, because it strengthens the disposition toward action by increasing adherence to the values it lauds.”110 Christine Oravec has seen in epideictic “a special relationship to the deliberative form known as the ‘advisory’. ”111 As a way of changing behaviour, epideictic rhetoric could, therefore, have an educative function, and she says of the rhetor “his illustrations serve as pedagogic exempla for the enlightenment of his audience.”112 Given such a rhetorical purpose, the rhetor would assume the role of teacher, a point noted by Gerard Hauser.113 Closely linked to an educative function, is epideictic’s function as the preserver of social values.114

On the subject of epideictic rhetoric, Aristotle will say in his second book that the hearers are more than observers, as the ones to be persuaded, they, “the ‘onlookers’ for whom such a speech is put together, are treated as the judges of it.”115 Discussing the role of the hearer in epideictic rhetoric, Oravec has argued that the rhetoric has not only an educative function, it has also a judicial function requiring of the hearer both judgment and comprehension. She has defined the word theoroi as “one who looks at, views, beholds, contemplates, speculates, or theorizes”.116 The listener so engaged with a speech is not only its passive hearer, the observer of “theatrical display”,117 but is also involved in its formulation because, in order for understanding to be its outcome, the speaker has

112 Ibid., 170.
113 Gerard A. Hauser, “Aristotle on Epideictic: The Formation of Public Morality,” Philosophy and Rhetoric 29 (1999): 10, 14. Hauser, who situates Aristotle’s Rhetoric in the far from “idyllic” public life of Athens, has suggested that epideictic rhetoric was a tool which could be used to inculcate in its “sometimes cantankerous citizens” an appreciation of the virtues required for a good society (ibid., 17). Perelman and Olbrechts-Tyteca (The New Rhetoric, 51) have said that “by espousing certain values “in epideictic oratory, the speaker turns educator”.
115 Aristotle, Rhetoric, 2.18.1391b. .
116 Oravec, “‘Observation’ in Aristotle’s Theory of Epideictic,” 164.
117 Ibid., 163.
to construct a speech using, as a starting point, notions already held by the hearer. She argues that “epideictic involves speakers and audiences in a reciprocal relationship in which the listener actively supplies materials for discourse and judges the speaker’s abilities to construct illuminating and important statements from those materials.”118 She has said that there are two responses to epideictic rhetoric. The first is the “aesthetic response, a kind of sensual pleasure, (which) is the audience’s reaction to the rhetor’s use of fine language . . . to present the subject of his speech, the honorable or praiseworthy object,”119 and the second is the exercise of the hearer’s intellect which leads to “understanding and comprehension.”120 The second response follows the first because the “process of ‘observation’ which begins with perception and functions through judgment finally ends in heightened appreciation and intellectual insight.”121

1.4.3 **Subjects of Rhetoric**

Aristotle says of the subject of rhetoric, that it is not limited to a “single, definite class of subjects, but is … universal”.122 Secondly, argument should deal in probabilities and Aristotle defines a “probability (as) a thing that usually happens”.123 Thirdly, its subjects concern matters about which there are “alternative possibilities.”124 Fourthly, the starting point of argument should be “notions possessed by everybody”125 a precept which, Aristotle reminds the reader, he had already stated in the *Topics* where he had proposed “to discover a method by which we shall be able to reason from generally

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118 Ibid.
119 Ibid., 171.
120 Ibid.
121 Ibid., 172.
123 Ibid., 1.2.1357a.
124 Ibid.
125 Ibid., 1.1.1355a.
accepted opinions about any problem set before us”. Finally, the speaker should have some knowledge of the subject about which he is talking.

1.4.4 Proofs used in Persuasion

Aristotle distinguished between non-artistic and artistic ‘proofs’ or means of persuasion, the former being available for use by the speaker, and the latter the ‘invention’ of the speaker. Larry Arnhart has noted that the term *pistis* may be translated “belief”, “confidence”, or “trust” and to these meanings, he adds the process of arriving at belief, a process which engages the three methods of persuasion, *ethos, pathos* and *logos* (discussed below).

1.4.4.1 Non-Artistic Proofs

Included in this category are witnesses. Evidence can be taken from recent witnesses, or, more reliably, in Aristotle’s view, from the long dead who cannot be corrupted, whose judgments are well-known and who are part of society’s tradition.

1.4.4.2 Artistic Proofs

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126 Aristotle, *Topica*, 100a. Similar thinking is found in Aristotle’s *Posterior Analytics* (71a) where he observed that “pre-existent knowledge” is the basis of “all teaching and learning that involves the use of reason.” He continues: “Similarly too with logical arguments, whether syllogistic or inductive; both effect instruction by means of facts already recognized, the former making assumptions as though granted by an intelligent audience and the latter providing the universal from the self-evident nature of the particular” (ibid.).


This category, the product of the creative abilities of the speaker, covers three means of persuasion: (1) the character of the speaker (ethos) on which his credibility depends, (2) the feelings of the audience (pathos) which will determine how they receive a speech, and (3) the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself (logos).\textsuperscript{130}

1.4.4.2.1 \textit{The Character and Credibility of the Speaker - Ethos}

Aristotle understood that goodness of character was essential for the credibility of a speaker because

we believe good men more fully and more readily than others: this is true generally whatever the question is, and absolutely true where exact certainty is impossible and opinions are divided ………. (the speaker’s) character may almost be called the most effective means of persuasion he possesses.\textsuperscript{131}

A favourable assessment of a speaker’s character was to come from his speech rather than from his reputation.\textsuperscript{132} He should demonstrate “good sense, good moral character and goodwill.”\textsuperscript{133} From this combination of attributes, it can be seen that for Aristotle, ethos is about both moral and intellectual qualities.\textsuperscript{134} “That the orator’s own character (ethos) should look right is particularly important in political (deliberative) speaking: that the audience should be in the right frame of mind (pathos), in lawsuits”.\textsuperscript{135}

Jakob Wisse has observed that when a speaker portrays himself as not only having those attributes which make him credible, but also those which win the sympathy of the hearer, he is arousing emotion in the audience, albeit not a strong emotion, and there is

\textsuperscript{130} Ibid., 1.2.1356a.
\textsuperscript{131} Ibid., 1.2.1356a.
\textsuperscript{132} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{133} Ibid., 2.1.1378a.
\textsuperscript{134} Jakob Wisse, \textit{Ethos and Pathos from Aristotle to Cicero} (Amsterdam: Adolf M. Hakkert, 1989), 30.
\textsuperscript{135} Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 2.1.1377b.
thus an overlap between the concepts of *ethos* and *pathos*.\textsuperscript{136} As William Fortenbaugh has said, the establishment of her/his “good character” is one of the strategies employed by the speaker to create an emotional response in the hearer. “When the audience is pleased with the speaker and is affected in judgment, then it responds emotionally. It feels sympathy and is partial to the speaker.”\textsuperscript{137}

1.4.4.2.2 *Emotion – Pathos*

The second element of persuasive discourse is emotion, a powerful tool as “persuasion may come through the hearers, when the speech stirs their emotions. Our judgments when we are pleased and friendly are not the same as when we are pained and hostile.”\textsuperscript{138} Effective persuasion requires logical argument together with an understanding of human character and emotions and how they may be “excited”.\textsuperscript{139} Of the several emotions and their opposites described by Aristotle, the most relevant for an interpretation of *Job* are anger,\textsuperscript{140} fear and confidence,\textsuperscript{141} pity\textsuperscript{142} and indignation.\textsuperscript{143}

Aristotle recognized that human emotions begin in the mind where their causes are perceived and analyzed and their objects identified;\textsuperscript{144} anger, for example, is caused by undeserved slights, and they have human objects.\textsuperscript{145} There is a link between a person’s anger and her/his feeling of being the victim of injustice. “Anger is excited by our

\textsuperscript{136} Wisse, *Ethos and Pathos*, 7.
\textsuperscript{138} Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 1.1.1356a; see also 2.1.1377b.
\textsuperscript{139} Ibid., 1.2.1356a.
\textsuperscript{140} Ibid., 2.2.
\textsuperscript{141} Ibid., 2.5.
\textsuperscript{142} Ibid., 2.8.
\textsuperscript{143} Ibid., 2.9.
\textsuperscript{144} William W. Fortenbaugh (“Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* on Emotions,” in *Aristotle: The Classical Heritage of Rhetoric* [ed. K. V. Erickson; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1974], 205; repr from *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 52 [1970]) has found from his study of the *Rhetoric*, that cognition is an “essential element in emotion” and so he argues that emotions are “reasonable”.
knowledge that we are not the wrongers (sic) but the wronged, and that the divine power is always supposed to be on the side of the wronged.”

There is, too, a link between anger and the condition of the person feeling it. “People who are afflicted by sickness or poverty . . . are prone to anger and easily roused: especially against those who slight their present distress.” Some people attract anger more than others. “We are angrier with our friends than with other people, since we feel that our friends ought to treat us well and not badly.”

Turning to fear, Aristotle says it “may be defined as a pain or disturbance due to a mental picture of some destructive or painful evil in the future.” The effect of fear is that it

sets us thinking what can be done, which of course nobody does when things are hopeless. Consequently, when it is advisable that the audience should be frightened, the orator must make them feel that they really are in danger of something, pointing out that it has happened to others.

The opposite of fear is confidence and this is brought about when “we can take steps . . . to cure or prevent trouble.”

Aristotle finds a strong link between fear and pity saying three times that pity is caused by fear; a person understands that the distress of the person pitied could be experienced by the one who pities. He puts forward “the general principle that what we fear for ourselves excites our pity when it happens to others.” This principle is expanded in his definition of pity:

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146 Ibid., 2.5.1383b.
147 Ibid., 2.2, 1379a.
148 Ibid., 2.2.1379a.
149 Ibid., 2.5.1382a.
150 Ibid., 2.5.1383a.
151 Ibid.
152 Ibid., 2.8.1386a. He had earlier said “speaking generally, anything causes us to feel fear that when it happens to, or threatens, others causes us to feel pity (ibid., 2.5.1382b).
Pity may be defined as a feeling of pain caused by the sight of some evil, destructive or painful, which befalls one who does not deserve it, and which we might expect to befall ourselves or some friend of ours, and moreover to befall us soon. In order to feel pity, we must obviously be capable of supposing that some evil may happen to us or some friends of ours.\textsuperscript{153}

Pity is most keenly felt when trouble’s victims are “persons of noble character . . . because their innocence, as well as the setting of their misfortunes before our eyes, makes their misfortunes seem close to ourselves.”\textsuperscript{154}

Aristotle says that the direct opposite of pity arising out of undeserved misfortune, is the indignation which is the response to undeserved good fortune; both feelings are excited by notions of the injustice of the situations of the undeserving good who are distressed and the undeserving bad who are prosperous. “Merited distress”, on the other hand, is pleasing.\textsuperscript{155} He defines indignation as the “pain caused by the sight of undeserved good fortune,” adding that “wealth, power, and the like . . . are deserved by good men”.\textsuperscript{156}

1.4.4.2.3 \textit{Argument - Logos}

The third part of persuasion is the speech itself, \textit{logos}. Aristotle asserts that “proof or apparent proof” can be achieved either through the use of the enthymeme or the example. He adds: “Everyone who effects persuasion through proof does in fact use either enthymemes or examples: there is no other way.”\textsuperscript{157} Epideictic rhetoric, which is about praise or blame, does not need to prove anything and its tools are amplification, or

\textsuperscript{153} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{154} Ibid., 2.8.1386b.
\textsuperscript{155} Ibid., 2.9.1386b.
\textsuperscript{156} Ibid., 2.9.1387a.
\textsuperscript{157} Ibid., 1.2.1356b.
“heightening of effect,” and “vituperation”\textsuperscript{158} using “concrete example” as their materials.\textsuperscript{159}

1.4.4.2.3.1 Examples

Aristotle states that example is “the foundation of reasoning,”\textsuperscript{160} a kind of reasoning which functions in a particular way. “When we base the proof of a proposition on a number of similar cases, this is induction in dialectic, example in rhetoric”.\textsuperscript{161} He says in \textit{Topics}, “induction is the progress from particulars to universals.”\textsuperscript{162} A speaker may use examples “in order to show what is not yet known.”\textsuperscript{163} Gerard Hauser has said that “‘Independent’ induction functions as a method whereby universal premises are \textit{discovered}” (underlining original).\textsuperscript{164} An example may also function as “supplementary evidence” when it follows an enthymeme; used thus, it becomes a “witness”.\textsuperscript{165} When so used, Hauser describes its role as “‘Supportive induction (which) functions as a method whereby universal premises are verified” (underlining original).\textsuperscript{166}

Examples may be presented as “actual past facts” or “facts” invented by the speaker and of the latter, there are two kinds “the illustrative parallel and the fable (e.g. the fables of Aesop)”.\textsuperscript{167} Though it may be easier to provide parallels which are fables, it is

\textsuperscript{158} Ibid., 1.9.1368a.
\textsuperscript{159} Rosenfield, “The Practical Celebration of Epideictic,” 135.
\textsuperscript{160} Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 2.20.1393a.
\textsuperscript{161} Ibid., 1.2.1356b.
\textsuperscript{162} Aristotle, \textit{Topica}, 105a.
\textsuperscript{163} Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 1.2.1357b.
\textsuperscript{165} Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 2.201394b.
\textsuperscript{166} Hauser, “The Example in Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric},” 159.
\textsuperscript{167} Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 2.20.1393a.
preferable for parallels to be drawn from actual events, “since in most respects the future
will be like what the past has been.”

1.4.4.2.3.2  Enthymemes

Aristotle says of enthymematic argument, “when it is shown that, certain
propositions being true, a further and quite distinct proposition must also be true in
consequence, whether invariably or usually, this is called syllogism in dialectic,
enthymeme in rhetoric.” An enthymeme is made up of premise(s) followed by
conclusion, an if . . . then statement, or, if the order is reversed, a conclusion followed
by one or more reasons for accepting it, because of their probability, and, as Kennedy
points out, Aristotle himself often uses this reversed form in his Rhetoric. Eugene Ryan
has defined the enthymeme as

a relatively brief argument, consisting of a statement enunciating some
conviction with regard to human affairs (the conclusion), plus usually one
reason why this conviction ought to be accepted (premise), with the reason
being such that it is (1) a proposition that is generally accepted as true, and
(2) related to the conviction in such a way that the conclusion will ordinarily
be accepted, because it ought ordinarily be accepted, by the hearer.

Though similar to the syllogism, “the enthymeme must consist of few propositions, fewer
often than those which make up the normal syllogism. For if any of these propositions is
a familiar fact, there is no need even to mention it; the hearer adds it himself.”

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168 Ibid., 2.20.1394b.
169 Ibid., 1.2.1356b.
170 George A. Kennedy, Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse: Newly Translated with
171 Ibid., xii.
173 Aristotle, Rhetoric, 1.2.1357a. Theresa Crem (“The Definition of Rhetoric According to Aristotle,” in
Aristotle: the Classical Heritage of Rhetoric (ed., K. V. Erickson; Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow, 1974);
repr. from Laval Théologique et Philosophique 12 (1956), 58-59) has pointed out that “the term
‘enthymeme’ is derived from a word which means “to keep in mind”, “to consider”; and a rhetorical
syllogism is so-called from the fact that only one of its propositions is expressed, whereas the other is
merely understood or kept in mind. Hence, the enthymeme is nominally defined as “an argument
that the starting point of persuasive argument is “notions possessed by everybody”\footnote{174}. Lloyd Bitzer says that “rhetoric must ask for premises – must begin with premises held by the audience – because persuasion cannot take place unless the audience views a conclusion as required by the premises it subscribes to.”\footnote{175} With this in mind, he argues that “enthymemes occur when speaker and audience jointly produce them.”\footnote{176} Because speaker and audience are united in this process, the enthymemes formed from these premises “have the virtue of being self-persuasive . . . (and) the audience itself helps construct the proofs by which it is persuaded.”\footnote{177}

Enthymemes have one of four possible bases: (1) Probabilities, (2) Examples, (3) Infallible Signs, (4) Ordinary (or Fallible) Signs.\footnote{178} The most important for this study are the first two. Aristotle draws attention to his definition of probabilities in Prior Analytics: “A probability is . . . a generally accepted premiss (sic); for that which people know to happen or not to happen, or to be or not to be, usually in a particular way, is a probability.”\footnote{179} Enthymemes based on example proceed by induction from one or more similar cases,

\section*{1.4.4.2.3.3 Refutation}

Refutation of an enthymematic argument may be achieved through a counter enthymeme following the same lines of argument as the original enthymeme, or it may

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\begin{itemize}
\item consisting of only two propositions, an antecedent and its consequent, a syllogism with one premiss (sic) omitted.”
\item Aistotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 1.1.1355a.
\item Ibid., 151.
\item Ibid.
\item Aristotle, \textit{Rhetoric}, 2.25.1402b.
\item Aristotle, \textit{Prior Analytics}, 523.
\end{itemize}
be achieved by raising objections to an opponent’s statement,\textsuperscript{180} either its conclusion or its premise(s).\textsuperscript{181}

\subsection{Narration}\\

One of the strategies for persuasion recommended by Aristotle is narration.\textsuperscript{182} Whilst it may be used in all three types of rhetoric, it is most suitable for epideictic rhetoric, where it functions as amplification, and for judicial rhetoric. It is least suited to deliberative speech except where “past events, the recollection of which . . . help(s) the hearers to make better plans for the future.”\textsuperscript{183} Narratives should be brief and “should depict character”.\textsuperscript{184}

\subsection{Style}\\

For Aristotle, style was important but not an end in itself because it served the argument – “it is not enough to know what we ought to say; we must also say it as we ought.”\textsuperscript{185} A case should succeed “with no help beyond the bare facts”, but because of the deficiencies of the hearers, the “arts of language” are of “real importance” in its intelligibility.\textsuperscript{186} Thus style necessarily becomes one of the “available means of persuasion”\textsuperscript{187} belonging to the art of rhetoric.

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{180} Ibid., 2.25.1402a.  \\
\textsuperscript{181} Ibid., 2.25.1402b.  \\
\textsuperscript{182} Ibid., 3.16.416b-1417b.  \\
\textsuperscript{183} Ibid., 3.16.1417b.  \\
\textsuperscript{184} Ibid., 3.16.1417a.  \\
\textsuperscript{185} Ibid., 3.1.1403b.  \\
\textsuperscript{186} Ibid., 3.1.1404a.  \\
\textsuperscript{187} Ibid., 1.2.1355b.  \\
\end{flushleft}
Relevant to this thesis is Aristotle’s treatment of metaphors which he says are drawn “from things that are related to the original thing, and yet not obviously so related – just as in philosophy also an acute mind will perceive resemblances even in things far apart.”\textsuperscript{188} Arnhart finds the same thought processes in the creation of a metaphor as in the construction of a syllogism; both proceed from the known to the unknown by means of some connection between the two, and he concludes that “all human knowledge is metaphorical because the fundamental characteristic of knowledge is to know one thing through its likeness to something else.”\textsuperscript{189} He concludes that the metaphor, like the enthymeme, is a form of reasoning.

Aristotle recommends the use of metaphors because they give to style “clearness, charm, and distinction as nothing else can”.\textsuperscript{190} They are an arresting way of conveying new ideas; “strange words simply puzzle us, ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh.”\textsuperscript{191} As an example he describes old age as “a withered stalk” because of the notion of “lost bloom which is common to both things”.\textsuperscript{192} Good metaphors are a way of “making your hearers see things.”\textsuperscript{193} It is for the hearers, however, to determine whether they ‘see’ and exactly what it is that they ‘see’. Metaphors experienced through visual imagery may not be experienced and seen in the same way by all listeners or readers, or even as the speaker intended, which creates the possibility of different understandings of the same metaphor.

1.4.6 Arrangement

\begin{footnotes}
\item 188 Ibid., 3.11.1412a.
\item 189 Arnhart, Aristotle on Political Reasoning, 175.
\item 190 Aristotle, Rhetoric, 3.2.1404b-1405a.
\item 191 Ibid., 3.10.1410b.
\item 192 Ibid.
\item 193 Ibid., 3.11.1411b.
\end{footnotes}
Aristotle then goes on to discuss the arrangement of a speech which has two essential parts – Statement and Argument. He says “you must state your case, and you must prove it. You cannot either state your case and omit to prove it, or prove it without having first stated it.”\textsuperscript{194} He conceded that to the two essential parts, may be added an Introduction and an Epilogue.\textsuperscript{195} The Introduction corresponded to the Prologue in poetry and both were “beginnings paving the way, as it were, for what is to follow”,\textsuperscript{196} and giving to the hearers “a foretaste of the theme . . . instead of keeping their minds in suspense.”\textsuperscript{197} The Epilogue is required, first, to make the hearer “well-disposed” towards the speaker and “ill-disposed” towards his opponents; secondly, they must “magnify or minimize the leading facts”; thirdly, they must “excite the required state of emotion in (the) hearers”; and, fourthly, “refresh their memories.”\textsuperscript{198} Peroration complete, the speaker must end with the words “I have done. You have heard me. The facts are before you. I ask for your judgment.”\textsuperscript{199}

1.4.7 \textit{Conclusion}

Aristotle said that in discourse the three most important elements are the speaker, the speech and the hearer, and to these three elements belong the three elements of proof – \textit{ethos}, \textit{logos}, and \textit{pathos}, respectively. Of the three elements of discourse, it is the hearer who is the most important, for whose persuasion the rhetoric is formulated, and who alone can judge whether the speaker is to be believed.

\textsuperscript{194} Ibid., 3.13.1414a.
\textsuperscript{195} Ibid., 3.13.1414b.
\textsuperscript{196} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{197} Ibid., 3.14.1415a.
\textsuperscript{198} Ibid., 3.19.1419b.
\textsuperscript{199} Ibid., 3.19.1420b.
The Applicability of the Precepts of Classical Rhetoric to Ancient Hebrew Texts

Some biblical scholars have asked whether a textual criticism based on the precepts which shape the persuasive discourse of one culture, classical Greek, may be used to analyze the literature of another, ancient Hebrew. Brownstein, however, has drawn attention to Aristotle’s claim that persuasion is natural to human beings and is part of their regular communication saying that “Aristotle claims merely to understand and systematize nature”. William Hallo whose study of the origins of rhetoric in the ancient Near East, has found that, though not formulated as Greek rhetoric came to be, it long pre-dated the rhetoric of ancient Greece. His analysis of a Sumerian poem, “The Exaltation of Inanna,” has divided the text into three rhetorical parts, “exordium, “argument” and “peroration”. He describes Mesopotamian dispute poems as “true exercises in rhetoric”. In one of these poems, though acknowledging that its composition could not possibly have been influenced by Greek or Roman rhetoric, Herman Vanstiphout finds that the author has made use of example and enthymeme as tools for argument by one of the dispute’s protagonist.

200 Alan Hauser (Duane F. Watson and Alan J. Hauser, Rhetorical Criticism of the Bible: A Comprehensive Bibliography with Notes on History and Method (Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1994), 4) would prefer to use “the conventions of literary composition practiced in ancient Israel” as the basis for exploring a biblical text and assessing its impact on its audience. W. M. W. Roth (“Rhetorical Criticism, Hebrew Bible,” DBI 2: 396-399) says that there is a view held by some that if the Bible is divine revelation it should not be scrutinized for its persuasiveness using standards set by human rhetoric. T.H. Olbricht (“Rhetorical Criticism” in Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation [ed. S. E. Porter; London: Routledge, 2007], 327) acknowledging that the precepts of classical rhetoric can be useful tools for analyzing biblical texts, has, nevertheless, reservations about the process and these could be addressed by the creation of a separate classification for religious texts over and above the three (deliberative, judicial and epideictic) put forward by Aristotle. In so doing, “the rhetoric of the ‘biblical’ genre will be generated through scrutiny of biblical texts and their unique features.”


203 Ibid., 115.

204 Ibid., 121. I shall say more about these poems in chapter 3.

The most significant study on the universality of the means of persuasion is that of George Kennedy, whose work on comparative rhetoric, has looked at the persuasive discourse of Greece and Rome which had “the only fully developed system of rhetorical terminology”, and at the writings of the other ancient literate cultures, in the ancient Near East, China and India. He asked whether classical terminology could be used to describe the rhetoric of other societies and concluded that it could. He found the three categories of persuasive speech (deliberative, judicial and epideictic), and also the three tools for persuasion, *ethos, pathos, and logos* in the writings of other ancient cultures. He also found evidence of reasoning using example and enthymeme and evidence of Aristotle’s four-part arrangement of discourse.

Given the findings of the abovementioned scholars, I have concluded that it is possible to use the precepts of Aristotle’s *Rhetoric* to analyze a Hebrew text.

1.6. *Method*

In addition to being a classicist of note, George Kennedy is also a rhetorical critic of New Testament texts. For the practice of rhetorical criticism he has formulated a five-step method which he has used for his own interpretation.

The first step is to determine the rhetorical unit or units to be examined. Units may be small or large and a large unit may be made up of smaller units which should be identified. The second step is to identify the rhetorical situation of the unit in order to discover what occasioned it in the first place, to whom that argument was addressed, and what, in its cultural milieu, shaped its argument. The third step is to establish the purpose

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206 George A. Kennedy, *Comparative Rhetoric*, 5)
of the rhetorical unit or units using Aristotle’s three categories – deliberative, judicial and epideictic rhetoric. The fourth step is concerned with the arrangement of the rhetorical material. This stage should include a careful analysis of the text to discover the strategies used by the author to achieve his persuasive ends. The fifth and final step is a review of the rhetorical unit to determine its success in meeting its rhetorical goals. Implementation of this process should arrive at what Kennedy describes as “The ultimate goal of rhetorical analysis, [which] briefly put, is the discovery of the author’s intent and of how that is transmitted through a text to an audience.”

C. Clifton Black has described Kennedy’s methodological proposal as

the presentation of a distinctive manner of exegesis that is lucid and systematic… and insightfully undergirded by classical erudition. Once its basic concepts and terminology are grasped, Kennedy’s method both invites new ways of pondering old questions and opens modern eyes to neglected dimensions of ancient literature.

Although Kennedy’s intention was to provide a “tool” for the interpretation of the New Testament, his process has been used by Old Testament scholars, Thomas Renz in his work, *The Rhetorical Function of the Book of Ezekiel*, and Charles Shaw in his work, *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis*. Renz aimed to show

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208 Other methods for the rhetorical criticism of biblical texts, based on the precepts of classical rhetoric, have been proposed. Roth (“Rhetorical Criticism,” 398) has proposed a five-stage process for rhetorical criticism, in some respects like Kennedy’s. The stages are: (1) determination of the rhetorical unit, (2) identification of the rhetorical situation, (3) identification of the rhetorical disposition of the text and its structure and the role played by *ethos* and *pathos* in the argument, (4) examination of the *logos* of the text, and (5) review of these four steps to see what they have contributed to an understanding of the passage. T.H. Olbricht (Stanley Porter (ed.) *Dictionary of Biblical Criticism and Interpretation* (London; New York: Routledge, 2007) has suggested an eight-stage process which would require a consideration of (1) the genre of the text, (2) its *stasis* and its non-artistic and artistic proofs of which here are three, *logos*, *ethos* and *pathos*, (3) the deductive and inductive reasoning of the argument, (4) proof based on the character (*ethos*) of the speaker, (5) persuasion through emotion (*pathos*), (6) the arrangement of the text, (7) style, and (8) memory.


213 Charles Shaw, *The Speeches of Micah: A Rhetorical-Historical Analysis* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic
that Ezekiel received its final shape in order to address the second generation of exiles. He approached his topic through a rhetorical criticism in which rhetoric was understood to have a persuasive purpose. He used a five-stage method of rhetorical analysis which follows that of Kennedy. Given that the speeches of Micah appear to have come from different periods, there is considerable disagreement on the historical settings of the different parts of the book. Saying that prophetic discourse was a product of its time, Shaw described it as “a response to a matrix of events, persons, traditions and institutions”,

214 circumstances which could be termed its rhetorical situation. He set out to examine the speeches of Micah using three of Kennedy’s five steps for rhetorical criticism: identification of rhetorical units using thematic unity as a criterion, the rhetorical situation, elements of which are disclosed by each unit, and arrangement under which heading he included strategies for persuasion. He believed that the rhetorical situation of a prophetic unit would provide information on its historical setting.

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1.6 The Approach of this Thesis

Since the Book of Job is, above all, argumentative, as I have already noted, a rhetorical criticism which treats rhetoric as persuasion rather than artistry, is appropriate. I will use the precepts of Aristotle’s Rhetoric, which I have outlined above, to explore the book, both its poetic dialogue and its prose prologue and epilogue. Kennedy’s five-step process for rhetorical criticism will be the basis for structuring my analysis of Job. I will look at the speeches of the human participants in Job’s Dialogue and also the divine speeches to determine the thinking of each on order and disorder in creation. These speeches, together with their prose frame, make up the large rhetorical unit which is Job.

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214 Ibid., 21.
215 Ibid., 22-29.
a unit which by setting out several points of view on order and disorder, aims to provide for the readers of its day an understanding of the place of both in creation.

In my next chapter, I shall identify the rhetorical units of Job. The third chapter will be concerned with the ancient Near Eastern cultural milieu of the book. Since there is no consensus on what occasioned the work, I shall look at it as the story of an ancient sufferer, which is what the book purports to be. My fourth chapter will deal with the arrangement of Job. The fifth, sixth and seventh chapters will analyze the text to identify the different strands of thought on order and disorder.216

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216 Unless otherwise stated, English translations of the text will come from the NRSV. The name Job will be used for the man, and, italicized, Job, will be used for the Book of Job.
The first step in rhetorical criticism is to define the rhetorical units to be investigated and these may be large or small. In *Job*, identification of some of these units is made easier by the fact that the poetic section consists of a succession of speeches each of which is a rhetorical unit with a speaker who has a persuasive goal. There are problems, however, when it comes to considering the whole book as a rhetorical unit and these relate to the question of the authorship of *Job*, long the subject of scholarly conjecture. This chapter will be concerned primarily with the question of the ‘original’ Book of *Job*, which was the work of its ‘original’ author, a necessary preliminary to determining the author’s rhetorical purpose in writing the text. I will argue that prose and poetry in *Job* was the work of one author with the exception of chapters 28 and 32 to 37 which were later interpolations, and probably from the hand of another. Secondly, I will discuss briefly the question of the attribution of speeches in the disturbed third cycle of speeches.

2.1  
*The Rhetorical Unit which is The Book of Job*

Some scholars, for example, Norman Habel,¹ John Hartley,² David Clines,³ and Francis Andersen,⁴ favour single authorship for the whole of *Job*. J. G. Janzen argues that

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³ Clines *Job 1-20*, xxxiv-xxxvii.
the book should be read as a whole, notwithstanding the tension between its parts.\textsuperscript{5} Others, for example, Norman Snaith\textsuperscript{6} and Robert Gordis,\textsuperscript{7} have proposed a single author who composed the work over a long period of time, perhaps a lifetime, which would raise questions about the author’s rhetorical aim and whether it remained the same over that long period. Still others, such as Edwin Good, believe that the present book came about in stages and that over time there were “several different books of Job”, one for each period of its development.\textsuperscript{8} The majority of scholars see more than one hand at work in the text that has come down to us.

Very few parts of the Book of Job have not at some time been deemed an interpolation and the work of another writer, including either, or both, or parts of the divine speeches, but most of these suggestions have been supported by very few.\textsuperscript{9} Questions about Job’s integrity have focused mainly on (1) the book’s division into a prose narrative framework (1.1-2.13; 42.7-17) and poetic dialogue (3.1-42.6), (2) the wisdom poem of chapter 28, and (3) the Elihu speeches in chapters 32-37, and this chapter will address these three questions.

\textsuperscript{5} J. G. Janzen, \textit{Job} (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 24.
\textsuperscript{8} Edwin M. Good, “Job and the Literary Task: A Response,” \textit{Soundings} 56 (1973), 472. He proposes five stages: (1) the prose tale, (2) the poetic argument between the two parts of the tale, (3) the rearrangement of the third cycle, 4) the inclusion of chapter 28, and (5) the addition of the Elihu speeches, a proposal which argues for more than one author. A different hypothesis put forward by H.L. Ginsberg ("Job the Patient and Job the Impatient," \textit{VTSup} 17 (1969)) argues for different strata in our present text – the Book of Job the Patient and the Book of Job the Impatient, with the latter being grafted on to the completed former stratum. Job the Patient consists of 1.1-2.8; 2.9-10; 2.1-13; 27.1-28.28 (portions rearranged or excised); 42.7b-17, with two missing sections – (1) the friends urge Job to repudiate God, and (2) God promises to reward Job’s fidelity. The rest belongs to Job the Impatient. Gordis’ analysis of Ginsberg’s hypothesis (\textit{Book of Job}, 579) has found it “unconvincing”.
\textsuperscript{9} Otto Eissfeldt (\textit{The Old Testament, an Introduction: Including the Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha and also the Works of Similar Type from Qumran, the History of the Formation of the Old Testament} (trans. P. R. Ackroyd; Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1965), 456-461) has provided a useful summary of hypotheses regarding interpolations together with the arguments in support of them.
Questions concerning the links between, and the authorship of, the prose narrative and poetic dialogue often focus on their differences in style and language, including the divine name, and the inconsistencies between the story told in the prose and the story, what little there is of it, in the dialogues, inconsistencies between the theology of prose and poetry, and inconsistencies or differences in the characterization of the speakers, God, Job, and the friends, to be found in the narrative and the dialogue. These differences have tended to point to different authors for prose and poetry and different explanations for their coming together.

Many scholars have said, almost certainly correctly, that an old story of Job existed, a story which predated the poetry and that the prose was earlier than the poetry. This could be an argument for different authors, the later author using it to provide a setting for poetic dialogue. Others have said that the poetic dialogues were earlier than the prose narrative, which, too, is an argument for different authors. Prose and poetry would have been joined by a later redactor. This position, however, is difficult to support as, without the prologue, an independent and pre-existing poetic argument would have had no context and its participants no introduction, and without the epilogue there would have been neither resolution of the debates nor end to Job’s troubles. There is, however, a third

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10 The problems in connecting prose and poetry have been summarized by many, including, for example, Yair Hoffman, “The Relation between the Prologue and the Speech-Cycles in Job: A Reconsideration,” VT 31 (1981): 162.
12 Rowley (From Moses to Qumran, 151-152) has listed these scholars who are R. Simon (seventeenth century), A. Schultens (eighteenth century), S. Lee and G. Studer (nineteenth century), and K. Kautzsch, E. König, M. Battenweiser, K. Fullerton, L. Finkelstein, W.B. Stevenson J. Pedersen, B.D. Eerdmans (twentieth century). Terrien (“The Book of Job,” 885) has a similar list of scholars.
possibility, one supported by a number of scholars, and, in my opinion the most likely, which is that both prose and poetry had the same author, who, for his narrative frame, rewrote an old story shaping it to further his persuasive ends.¹³ What this story was about needs exploration because it is no longer extant.

Although it has not survived, there probably was an ancient story about a good man, named Job in some texts and Tobit in others, of which there are traces in both Old and New Testaments, the Apocrypha and in pseudepigraphical writings. Ezekiel 14.13-14 has

Mortal, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it, and break its staff of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it human beings and animals, even if Noah, Daniel, and Job, these three, were in it, they would save only their own lives by their righteousness, says the Lord God

and Ezekiel 14.19-20 continues

Or if I send a pestilence into that land, and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off humans and animals from it; even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, says the Lord God, they would save neither son nor daughter; they would save only their own lives by their righteousness.

These passages point to a tradition which held that the virtue of Noah,¹⁴ Daniel¹⁵ and Job was such that it could save others less virtuous, including sons and daughters, a tradition preserved in the Joban Prologue (1.5) and Epilogue (42.8). Ezekiel’s exilic composition preceded that of post-exilic Job¹⁶ from which it can be concluded that the prophet had available to him a tradition about a saintly man named Job.

¹⁴ Gen 6.9-822.
¹⁵ Daniel is thought to be a reference to a legend in Ugaritic literature about an ancient and worthy ruler Dan’el whose only son Aqhat was slain and later probably (the tablet is broken at this point in the story) restored to life by El and the goddess Anat (“The Tale of Aqhat,” translated by H.L.Ginsberg [ANET, 149-155]). Scholars have seen this legend as the source for Ezekiel’s Daniel, for example, Gordis (The Book of God and Man, 68-69), Snaith (The Book of Job, 11), R. G. Albertson (“Job and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature,” in Scripture in Context II: More Essays on the Comparative Method (ed. W. W. Hallo, J. C. Moyer, and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 215.
¹⁶ I will discuss the date of Job’s composition in my next chapter.
Further evidence of such a tradition is to be found in the New Testament, where the writer of the Epistle of James (5.11), exhorting his readers to be patient, says “[i]ndeed we call blessed those who show endurance. You have heard of the endurance of Job and you have seen the purpose of the Lord, how the Lord is compassionate and merciful.” The assumption of the writer is that the legend of the endurance of Job was already known to his readers, a legend which could have had nothing to do with the angry Job of the poetic dialogue.

This legend was probably known to the Septuagint’s translator of Job\textsuperscript{17} who had available the Hebrew text\textsuperscript{18} and another text from which he drew material about Job, his family and friends, not available in the Hebrew text, and included it in his translation. The authors of the apocryphal Tobit (fourth to third century BCE) and its later and different Vulgate version (398-407 CE),\textsuperscript{19} and of the pseudepigraphical Testament of Job (first century BCE to first century CE)\textsuperscript{20} would have had the Hebrew text, the Septuagint and other sources available to them, and perhaps, too, their imagination, which could account for variations and embellishments in the story. All these texts show both similarities to, and differences from, the biblical book. Common to all the texts written after the Book of Job and its Septuagint translation, is the story of a virtuous man who, sorely afflicted, accepts his suffering with great patience, maintaining his integrity and remaining faithful to God until, in the end, his wellbeing is restored by God.

Lawrence Besserman’s study of both the biblical and extra-biblical texts has led him to conclude that they “point(s) to the existence of a tradition collateral with and

\textsuperscript{17} Albert Pietersma and Benjamin C. Wright, A New English Translation of the Septuagint and the Other Greek Translations Traditionally Included under that Title (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 667-696.

\textsuperscript{18} Gordis (Book of God and Man, 222) notes that nearly all scholars agree on the originality of the Hebrew text.

\textsuperscript{19} Vincent T.M. Skemp, The Vulgate of Tobit Compared with Other Ancient Witnesses (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2000).

different from the one in the Hebrew Book of Job”.\(^{21}\) He describes it as “a primarily oral folk tradition whose shadow we observe in the allusions to Job in Ezekiel, Tobias, and James, and some scholars think that, in either oral or possibly even in written form, it was a tradition available to the Septuagint translator of Job.”\(^{22}\) His conclusion is supported by the words of Theodore of Mopsuestia who writes of an “outstanding and much esteemed history of the saintly Job, which circulated everywhere orally, in substantially the same form, not only amongst people of Jewish race but also amongst other peoples”.\(^{23}\) Further evidence for the existence of a parallel tradition about saintly Job is provided by Nahum Glatzer who has drawn attention to other texts in the Christian tradition extolling the righteousness of Job (“The First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians” \(ca\). 100 CE), his fidelity to God (the Syriac version of the “Apocalypsis Pauli” at the end of the fourth century CE), and, in the Constitutiones Apostolorum \(ca\). 380 CE), Job appears in a list after the great men of biblical prehistory and before the patriarchs.\(^{24}\)

It seems likely that the Joban poet knew of the tradition of a good man suffering patiently who maintained his integrity and devotion to God until, in the end, his wellbeing was restored.

It is also very likely, as has been argued by some, that the author of Job used this tale as a source\(^{25}\), one from which he pared away all that was superfluous to his purposes,  


\(^{22}\) Ibid., 39. Katharine Dell’s study (The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature [Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991], 17) of the evidence, on the other hand, has led her to conclude that the parallel Joban tradition began with the Septuagint. Such a conclusion, however, would not take account of the Ezekiel references to Job.


\(^{25}\) Rowley (From Moses to Qumran, 151) and Terrien (“Job,” 885) have listed a number of scholars holding this opinion. See also Dhorne, Job, xcvi; Macdonald, “The Original Form of the Legend of Job,” JBL 14 1895: 70; Fullerton, “The Original Conclusion to the Book of Job,” 131 (his comments relate only to the prologue); Gordis, Book of Job, xxx; Hoffman, “The Relation Between the Prologue and the
and to which he added, in order to create a new story to frame the poetic dialogues of Job. The most significant addition to the ancient tale is the introduction of the satan as a character in the narrative in the two celestial scenes (1.6-12; 2.1-6) in which he appears, together with that part of 2.7 which attributes Job’s illness to him. That it is probably an addition, can be concluded, as Dell has pointed out, from the fact that the omission of the celestial council scenes (1.6-12 and 2.1-8) would still leave a perfectly coherent story in the prologue and epilogue. It is worth noting that these two scenes are omitted in the Testament of Job even though many other details from the Joban Prologue are present in this later composition, suggesting that the scenes were the contribution of the Joban author, one which the creator of the Testament did not wish to include in his work, and so suggesting, too, that they were probably not part of a well-known tradition about saintly Job. Peggy Day’s study of the uses of the noun שׂטן (sometimes translated as “Accuser” or “Adversary”) in the Hebrew Bible has found that in texts which are exilic or post-exilic (Num 22.22, 32; Job 1-2; Zech 3.12; 1 Chr 21.130) it refers to a celestial being. Given his late emergence on the Jewish theological scene as a celestial being and divine opponent in argument, the Satan of the prologue could not have been a character in an ancient legend about Job, one which predated Ezekiel. If the Satan’s emergence was exilic or post-exilic, the possibilities are, either that some other writer incorporated him


27 Peggy Day (An Adversary in Heaven, 60, 148) points to recent research which suggests that the story of Balaam and the ass, previously thought to come from the J tradition, was the product of the sixth century BCE or later. She herself favours a date no earlier than the second half of the sixth century.

28 Day does not suggest a date for the composition of Job but see my argument in the next chapter for a late date.

29 Ibid., 128. Day links the figure of the satan to issues being considered by the post-restoration community in Jerusalem.

30 Ibid., 141. Day notes that recent research places 1 Chr 21.1-22.1 in the period 520–400 BCE. Also noting (ibid., 143) that scholarship is divided on whether the satan is a human or celestial adversary, Day decides for the latter, with the satan being an unspecified member of the heavenly council.
and the celestial scenes into the folktale, as has been suggested by James Williams, or that the Joban poet was responsible for their inclusion. Since there is no evidence that the celestial scenes were the contribution of another writer, and Williams does not offer any, and the period (exilic or post-exilic) in which this might have been made before the post-exilic composition of *Job,* was relatively short, it is possible, and indeed likely, that the Joban poet was responsible for their inclusion, particularly if it can be shown that, by so doing, he furthered his persuasive ends.

Without the satan and the heavenly meetings, the Joban prose, and the old story, too, is a simple folktale, one in which the deity has only a peripheral role as both the object of the hero’s devotion and as the remote being who reverses his misfortunes, as in *Tobit* and the *Testament of Job.* It would be about the fortitude of Job, its main character, and his response to suffering. Tawny Holm has said of folk tales that they generally “take place in the simple human sphere and deal with human subjects. When the gods appear in them, they are not the focus, and anything fantastic is merely for adventure and not for reflection.” With the addition of the celestial debates between God and the satan, I suggest that the character of the narrative changes, so that what was once a folktale becomes a myth.

Defining myth is difficult, as many have said, because there are so many definitions to choose from and consensus on the subject is elusive. J.W. Rogerson has described as “impossible” the “task of finding an adequate and all-purpose definition of

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31 James G. Williams (“‘You have not spoken Truth of Me’ Mystery and Irony in Job,” *ZAW* 83 [1971]: 236) argues that “it is not necessary to conclude that the poet introduced the Adversary into the folk tale, he may have already been there at the poet’s disposal, especially if such a figure became more and more important in the popular mythology of the post exilic period.”

32 In my next chapter, I shall propose post-exilic composition for *Job.*


myth” before listing twelve senses in which the term has been understood. It may be easier to say, like J.L. Mackenzie, what myth is not: “Myth is not logical discursive thought…. Neither is myth a substitute or an alternate for discursive thought. It does not really do the work of discursive thought, the work of analysis, organization, and synthesis.” Kirk has said that a “myth is a tale, and that is the basic element of any definition”, but not all tales are myths. Since ‘story’ is also the meaning, by the fifth century BCE, of the Greek word *mythos*, a story that was fictional, there is general agreement on this as the fundamental characteristic of myth.

A long discussion on the nature of myth is outside the scope of this study, and so I will take as my starting point for an understanding of what myth is, the definition given in the *Oxford English Dictionary*: “A purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events, and concerning natural or historical phenomena.” Since they concern the deeds and words of deities often in the supernatural realm, myths enable the human mind to imagine the unknown and unknowable in a way which can explain what is known and experienced in the earthly realm by human beings. Northrop Frye has said of such stories “the propelling force is the link between personalities and events, and this link is typically formed by the actions of gods”, a view shared by Kirk who has said “in myths the supernatural component often produces drastic and unexpected changes in the forward movement of the action”. They are, as Mackenzie has said “symbolic expression” adding that “the necessity for symbolic conception arises…. because myth deals with the unknown.”

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40 *OED* 10: 177.
apprehended through “intuition” rather than “observation”, whose conceptualization in words can only come through “myth as a personal or a personalized reality”.\textsuperscript{44} Notwithstanding the unknowability of its subject, myth, arising out of an intuition expressed in symbol, may nevertheless be a “vehicle of truth”.\textsuperscript{45}

The purpose for which they were created is a way of distinguishing between stories which are myths and stories which are folktales. Myths have a serious purpose because they “tell a society what is important to know”\textsuperscript{46} by “exploring and reflecting problems or preoccupations.”\textsuperscript{47} Frye has described folktales as “profane” and “stories told for entertainment”, whilst myths are “sacred”, and intended to “illustrate a specific social concern”, and even to be used as “concrete illustrations of abstract arguments.”\textsuperscript{48} Kirk has said: “Both genres are to different degrees controlled by the laws of story-telling, which operate more prominently – more crudely, perhaps, - in folktales than in myths. In practice . . . the two often overlap.”\textsuperscript{49} The Joban Prologue with its folktale structure has often, as I have noted above, been described as a folktale, but it would be better categorized as a myth since its two main characters are supernatural beings who break into the lives of human beings to affect them in a calamitous way. The issues which it raises are not those of secular lore, but profound questions concerning loss and suffering in human lives and their cause, and the relationship between human beings and God.

Not only has the Joban poet changed a folktale into a myth he has cut that myth into two and inserted between the parts, dialogues between Job and his friends, and between Job and God. These dialogues are the “discursive thought” lacking in Job’s myth. The

\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., 271.
\textsuperscript{46} Frye, \textit{The Great Code}, 33.
\textsuperscript{47} Kirk, \textit{Myth}, 40.
\textsuperscript{48} Frye, \textit{The Great Code}, 33.
\textsuperscript{49} Kirk, \textit{Myth}, 41.
poet has transformed an edifying tale of patience and piety rewarded into an exploration of the causes of disorder, believed, but not known because unknowable, to originate with God in the supernatural realm. Patient Job is transformed into angry, questioning Job. The dialogues search for answers on the problem of disorder in creation through the expression of three different points of view, the friends’, Job’s and God’s. This search is the poet’s protest against the unquestioning acceptance of inexplicable misfortune. I conclude that the Prologue and Epilogue are the work of the author of the poetry and together with the poetry they form the rhetorical unit which is Job.

Support for this contention is to be found in the many links identified by scholarship between prose and poetry. Arguing for the literary unity of Job, Habel has seen continuity between prose and poetry through the repetition of key terms, citing “blameless (תומ)” (1.18; 8.20; 9.21-22), “blamelessness (תומ)” (4.6) or “integrity (תומ)” (2, 9; 27.5-6), related to which is a play on the word and notion of curse, “hedge” (פֵּשׁ or פֵּשׁ) (1.10; 3.23), “hand” (🅿) (1.11, 12; 2.5-6; 6.9; 9.33; 10.7; 12.9; 19.21; 27.11), “comforter” (תומ) (2.11; 6.10; 7.13; 16.2; 21.34; 29.25; 15.11; 21.2), and “servant” (עבֵד) (1.8; 2.3; 7.2). He finds that

the interplay between key terms or motifs used in both narrative and speeches points to the creation of dramatic irony as a conscious literary technique of the author rather than the accidental juxtaposition of story and poem. Robert Forrest finds that Prologue and dialogue are thematically connected though key words, “skin”, “integrity” and “curse.”

[Day [An Adversary in Heaven 73] also finds in the notion of fencing a connection between prose and poetry.


Ibid., 104.

Yair Hoffman has drawn attention to three points in the prose narrative which establish the connectedness of the prologue to the dialogues. First, the necessity for establishing Job’s blameless character and unique virtue, an unrealistic portrait of a man, is intended to prepare for and to counter in advance, the argument in the dialogues that suffering is the consequence of sin. Second, the Satan’s assertion that suffering will cause Job to commit the heinous sin of blasphemy (a lesser sin would have sufficed to prove his point) in cursing God, a sin involving words. It is words which form the “bridge” between the action of the prose and the speeches of the poetry in which Job reacts to his situation by his words. Third, in the prologue Job offers sacrifices in case his children have “sinned and cursed God in their hearts” (1.5) but they are killed anyway, sowing “seeds of suspicion” in the minds of the readers, and in the dialogues the friends will suggest that their deaths were deserved, a question which requires the readers’ attention. For these reasons he is able to say

It is therefore clear that there are some elements in the prologue which can be intelligible only if we assume that the author of the dialogues is responsible for them. Hence there was no independent existence for the prologue.

I have established single authorship for the prose Prologue and Epilogue and for the Dialogues with the exception of chapters 28 and 32 to 37 which I shall now discuss.

2.1.2 Authorship of Chapter 28

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54 Hoffman, “The Relation Between the Prologue and the Speech-Cycles in Job,” 165-166.
55 Ibid., 167.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 168. cf Rick D. Moore (“The Integrity of Job,” CBQ 45 (1983): 18) thinks it unlikely that the prose and poetry of Job had the same author and that connections between the two are the result either of the poet’s fitting the dialogue to the prose, or, by setting the poetry in a disjunctive relationship with the prose, raising questions about the prose.
Whether or not the Wisdom Poem of Chapter 28 was the work of the original author of *Job*, and whether or not, if it was, the author intended it to be part of *Job* is a question that has engaged many minds. I contend that it was a later interpolation into a completed work. Debate on the subject has focused, firstly, on the style and content of the poem and secondly, on its position in the book.\(^{58}\) The Poem has no connection to what has preceded it in the Dialogues, and says nothing about undeserved suffering or divine justice and injustice.\(^{59}\) Its calm reflection on the search for wisdom is out of place at the end of the angry human dialogue and thus difficult to place in the mouth of Job, in whose speech it is situated, or any of his friends. In this Poem nobody is addressed, except perhaps “humankind” (v.28), who is not addressed elsewhere in *Job*. A work of literary art, the Wisdom Poem is, thematically and structurally, a coherent composition, which makes perfectly good sense on its own. Its removal from its host text, *Job*, makes that text thematically and structurally more, rather than less, coherent. I conclude, therefore, that it is very likely that chapter 28 was added after the composition of *Job*, possibly, as Perdue suggests, by a pious sage,\(^{60}\) and this being so, it is not part of the rhetoric of *Job*.

### 2.1.3 Authorship of Chapters 32-37

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\(^{58}\) Its place and purpose has been commented on by a number of scholars. It has been described as a “musical interlude” (Samuel Terrien, “Job,” 1100), and a “meditation” (Andersen, *Job*, 223), a “meditative interlude” reflecting what has preceded it and anticipating the divine speeches (Carol Newsom, “The Book of Job,” in *The New Interpreter’s Bible* vol 4 [ed. L. E. Keck et al. Nashville: Abingdon 1996], 528), and Edouard Dhorme (*A Commentary on the Book of Job*, [trans. H. Knight; London: Nelson, 1967], xcvii) sees it as authorial judgment on the debate so far, “a pause and moment of rest” and a foretaste of what is to come in the divine speeches.

\(^{59}\) cf. C. L. Seow (*Job 1-21: Interpretation and Commentary* [Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2013], 30-31) contends that Chapter 28, by saying in its last verse that wisdom is fear of the Lord and a departure from evil, is “redefining wisdom according to Job’s own character” described in 1.1 and 2.3 and in so saying the poet, has created “a delectable and elimaetic irony.”

\(^{60}\) Perdue *Wisdom in Revolt*, 84; idem *Wisdom Literature: A Theological History* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2007), 132-133.
The originality of the Elihu speeches has been questioned for one or more of five oft-cited reasons. Many scholars have understood these speeches to be from the pen of another author and a later addition to *Job*. His appearance at the end of the human argument is a disruption in the movement of the story, though some scholars have given him a role in that story. He contributes little to an understanding of the human problem of suffering – one of the five reasons for questioning his originality. The biggest difference between Elihu and the friends is the way he argues. Unlike the friends, he addresses Job by name but also, unlike them, he does not give Job a chance to reply. His first three speeches take up issues raised before using almost near quotations, and his fourth speech anticipates the first divine speech. It is the manner of Elihu’s argument which bespeaks, more cogently than its content, its different and later authorship. Dhorme has said

61 These grounds have been listed and discussed by many, including, for example, Eissfeldt, *The Old Testament*, 457; Rowley, *From Moses to Qumran*, 146-150; Snaith, *The Book of Job*, 73-85; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 708-710.


63 For example, Gordis (*Book of God and Man*, 115-116) sees him as God’s forerunner based on his name which is the same as that of Elijah. For Snaith (*The Book of Job*, 74) he is orthodoxy’s challenge. For Habel (“The Narrative Art of Job,” 105; idem *Book of Job*, 445) he is the arbiter sought by Job (9.33; 16.21). Janzen (*Job*, 217-225) considers the speeches an integral part of the plot of the book, examining long-held religious beliefs expressed by one claiming divine inspiration, a claim subverted in the rest of the book especially by the divine speeches. Edwin Good (*In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job* [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1990], 321) suggests that Elihu’s appearance serves a dramatic purpose in heightening tension for readers awaiting the divine response. J. William Whedbee (*The Bible and the Comic Vision* [Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2002], 244) gives him the role of “comic figure” or “buffoon” whose point of view is held up to ridicule by the author of *Job*. Seow (*Job 1-21*, 37) understands the Elihu speeches to be “a necessary transition from the passionate and self-righteous asseveration of Job (31.40) to the overwhelming response of the theophany.”

64 cf Gordis (*The Book of God and Man*, 114; *The Book of Job*, 550-552) who finds in Elihu’s words a significant contribution to theological argument and one which could not have been expressed by any other participant in the dialogue. Believing that the poet worked on the text of *Job* over a lifetime, he views these chapters as the product of long experience and reflection. George Box (*Judaism in the Greek Period: From the Rise of Alexander the Great to the Intervention of Rome* [333 to 63 B.C.] [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1932], 122-123) had earlier come to a similar conclusion and found in them the only possible solution to the problem of the suffering of the righteous.

65 David Noel Freedman (“The Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job. A Hypothetical Episode in the Literary History of the Work,” *HTR* 61 [1968]: 51-59) considers the possibility that the author once intended to use the first three speeches, placing one at the end of each speech cycle and the fourth after Job’s final speech but did not proceed with his plan. Their subsequent inclusion and placement was the work of a later editor.
one feels that the Book of Job is already in existence, that it is in the hands of a reader who can single out, from among the words which Job utters, certain assertions liable to criticism. The friends of Job have given no adequate reply to these assertions.\textsuperscript{66}

This view is shared by Newsom who, noting the differences in the persuasive strategies of the three friends and Elihu, has concluded that “they strongly suggest(s) the work of an author who knows the written text and is intent on refuting specific statements.”\textsuperscript{67}

Most scholarly opinion finds the Elihu speeches to be the work of a later writer,\textsuperscript{68} an opinion I share. I conclude, therefore, that the rhetorical unit which is Job, which came from the pen of one author, consists of its prose framework and poetical dialogue excepting chapters 28 and 32-37.

\subsection*{2.2 Attribution of Speeches in the Third Cycle}

The poetic section of Job begins with, and consists largely of, dialogue between Job and his three friends (chapters 3-31). The Masoretic text may be divided into 3 cycles of speeches with, in the first two cycles, Job speaking alternately with his friends, first Eliphaz, followed by Bildad, and lastly Zophar. The third cycle differs from the first two in that Bildad has only a very short speech, Zophar has none and Job, even with the removal from it of chapter 28, has a very long speech. If it is supposed, as I do, that the poet intended the third cycle to follow the same pattern as the first two, this last cycle, made up as follows appears to have undergone considerable disarrangement:

\begin{itemize}
  \item Dhorme, \textit{Job}, ci.
  \item Newsom, “The Book of Job,” 558.
  \item Rowley, \textit{From Moses to Qumran}, 150-1; Dhorme [\textit{Job} cvi] who as noted above shares this view, comments that it is the majority view among scholars; Pope, \textit{Job} xxvii-xxviii; Newsom, “The Book of Job,” 558-559; Perdue, \textit{Wisdom in Revolt}, 80-82 and \textit{Wisdom Literature}, 128; Patrick, “Divine Creative Power and the Decentering of Creation,” 106.
\end{itemize}
Evidence of disarray is to be found in inconsistencies in Job’s thinking in parts of the speeches which the Masoretic text attributes to him; he makes statements which propound his friends’ points of view rather than his own.\(^69\) Suggested reasons for disorder in the third cycle have been the poet’s failure to complete his work,\(^70\) accidents,\(^71\) scribal errors in copying, or deliberate attempts by a later editor to tone down some of Job’s rhetoric by placing words in his mouth which reflect the argumentative position of his friends, and in fact were spoken by his friends.\(^72\) The problematic passages are 24.18-24; 26.5-14; 27.7-23.

Some interpreters would leave the third cycle as it is, arguing that it is as the poet intended, perhaps reflecting a breakdown in argument between Job and his friends, and so would not reorder the text.\(^73\) Others have reassigned parts of Job’s speeches to either or both of Bildad and Zophar, and of those others, some have attempted to restore the format of the earlier speech cycles which had the friends, all of them, and Job speaking alternately. The subject of the third cycle has attracted much scholarly attention resulting in many solutions to bring order to its perceived disorder. I will propose speech attributions and an order for the speeches in the third cycle.

\(^{69}\) Andersen (Job, 54) has offered sarcasm as an explanation. Paul Redditt (“Reading the Speech Cycles in the Book of Job,” HAR 14 [1994]: 205) argues that, by the third cycle, Job is “wavering in his convictions, considering whether to adopt the views of his ‘friends’”. Seow (Job 1-21, 30) asserts that, the conversation having reached the point of breakdown, Job is obliged to supply arguments to his friends in order to keep it going.


\(^{71}\) Dhorme (Job, 1) has suggested, for example that 24.18-24 “was torn from its original context and became affixed to the place which it now occupies.”

\(^{72}\) Terrien, “Job,” 888.

\(^{73}\) Andersen, Job, 54; Newsom, “Job,” 497.
Of the three questionable passages, 26.5-14 is the least controversial regarding its attribution. Most scholars ascribe the passage to Bildad, seeing it as a continuation of his very short speech of 25.1-6.\(^74\) Not only would Bildad be given a speech of reasonable length, Habel considers that by uniting the two texts a more coherent speech results.\(^75\) If this speech is given to Bildad, it leaves only Zophar with nothing to say. I would give to him 24.18-24, noting that 24.21 continues his concern for the vulnerable earlier expressed in 20.19, his second speech. I would also give him 27.13-23, which reiterates that the wicked will not retain the spoils of their wickedness (27.16-17), a view he had expressed in 20.15. In 20.29, he speaks of the “portion of the wicked from God, the heritage decreed for them by God” and in 27.13 he speaks of “the portion of the wicked with God, and the heritage that oppressors receive from the Almighty.” The similarities between these two verses, make the passage, 27.13-23, more likely to have come from the mouth of Zophar than from any other speaker.

A rhetorical criticism of *Job* needs to establish the beginning and end of each speech and the identity of the speaker. The attribution of speeches which I propose and the order in which they may once have been written is as follows:

Eliphaz 22.1-30

Job 23.1-24.17, 25

Bildad 25.1-6; 26.5-14

Job 26.1-4; 27.1-12

Zophar 24.18-24; 27.13-23

\(^74\) Pope, *Job*, 180-181. Newsom (“Job,” 497), who would not otherwise tamper with the Masoretic text, says of this passage that a case can be made for attributing these verses to Bildad. Clines (*Job* 21-37, 626) also gives 26.2-4 to Bildad, placing these verses after 25.1.

\(^75\) Habel, *Book of Job*, 38, 366.
There is no compelling reason to suppose that the poet intended to vary the pattern of the first two cycles of speeches.

The rhetorical units which I have identified and which are the work of the original author, are, therefore, a very large unit which is *Job*, excluding chapters 28 and 32-37, and twenty-three much smaller units which are the individual speeches of the poetic section of *Job*, including two speeches from God and two in reply from Job in the dialogue between them, each of which makes a contribution to the rhetoric of the book as a whole. In my next chapter I will investigate the cultural milieu which shaped *Job*. Amongst other texts, I will look at a group known as dispute poems, a literary genre with which *Job* has a strong affinity. I will argue that the Joban author used that form to create her/his work. My fourth chapter, which will look at the arrangement of *Job*, will identify two disputes in the Dialogue, the dispute between Job and his friends and the dispute between Job and God. Each dispute, made up of a number of speeches, is a rhetorical unit. Looking at *Job* in this way, the rhetorical units present in it, from the largest to the smallest, are: the book as a whole, two disputes, and each individual speech.

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76 This speech assignment and its ordering is supported by Terrien, “Job”, 888.
CHAPTER 3

THE RHETORICAL SITUATION

Kennedy’s second step in rhetorical criticism is to identify the circumstances which gave rise to the rhetoric being studied, who the hearers were and what its cultural milieu was, which, together, are its rhetorical situation.

Although it is not known who wrote the Book of Job, there is no doubt that it was a Judean of great erudition. There is also little argument against the supposition that the author was addressing a Judean audience or readership. Scholarship is divided on whether Job is about a community of whom Job is the symbol, or about an individual. For those who suppose that it is the former, the trauma which occasioned a work on suffering is generally thought to be the event of the exile of the Jewish community\(^1\) or difficulties experienced by the community on their return from exile.\(^2\) I will suppose that the book is, what it purports to be, about a suffering individual.

3.1 The Cultural Milieu of the Book of Job

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1 Samuel Terrien (“Job as a Sage,” in The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East [ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 241) has suggested that the work was intended as a drama to be acted out by the exiled community to present “the enigma of suffering in a way that repudiated the dogma of individual and collective retribution.” Perdue (Wisdom Literature, 84) interprets the poetic dialogue in Job (excluding chapters 28 and 32-37) as the poetic response to the theological crisis which was the destruction of Jerusalem and exile to Babylon.

2 Rainer Albertz, (“The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job: the Friends’ Perspective,” [trans. L. G. Perdue] in The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East [ed. J. G. Gammie and L. G. Perdue; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1990], 250) has set the work amongst the social upheavals of the post-exilic period, and seen in it a pastoral purpose which was to comfort members of the “pious aristocracy” experiencing misfortune. So also Doak, Consider Leviathan discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.1.
A great deal more can be known about *Job’s* intellectual environment which is the source of the “notions possessed by everyone”. Much critical attention has been paid to the biblical context of *Job* and its links to other biblical books. Job’s final protestation of integrity in chapter 31 reflects the moral code of the Pentateuch and prophetic books. More attention could be paid to the book’s wider ancient Near Eastern context, and so my thesis, and especially this chapter, will focus on extra-biblical influences on *Job* which are the cultural milieu provided by Israel’s place in the ancient Near East. As a preliminary to discussion of these influences, their temporal and spatial boundaries must be established.

With regard to temporal boundaries, a small minority of scholars have argued for pre-exilic composition, others, including Perdue and Terrien (mentioned above), propose exilic composition, and a larger body of opinion proposes post-exilic composition to which, Habel considers, the weight of evidence points. I will suppose post-exilic composition for *Job* but precise dating is not necessary for this study because the ancient Near Eastern texts to which I shall refer predate the fall of Babylon. The Mesopotamian works which I will put forward could have been, and many very likely were, part of the literary traditions the poet inherited and used to shape his argument, either by their inclusion or modification or rejection. Evaluation of these traditions and their influence on the Hebrew work, has been described by William Hallo as a process of “comparison and contrast, or their combination” which could result in an understanding of how the

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4 For example, Hartley (The Book of Job, 11-12) has listed many parallels, including instances of identical phraseology, between *Job* and other biblical books, not only, but most notably, Proverbs, Psalms, Lamentations and Isaiah. Frequently observed, too, are the links between Job’s soliloquy (3.3-26) and Jeremiah’s cursing of the day of his birth (Jer 20.14-18). A recent book (Katharine Dell and Will Kynes eds., *Reading Job Intertextually* [New York: Bloomsbury, 2013]) has chapters connecting *Job* with the Pentateuch, the Prophets, Wisdom and post-biblical works.
6 Rowley (From Moses to Qumran, 173) lists scholars from the nineteenth and first half of the twentieth centuries who favour a pre-exilic composition from the time of Solomon onwards.
biblical text “reflects that environment, or, on the contrary, is distinctive and innovative over against it.”

With regard to spatial boundaries, I will look at texts coming out of a region of south-western Asia, including Mesopotamia and extending westwards to the Mediterranean Sea, taking in the area occupied by the North West Semitic people, and excluding Anatolia, and will understand the term “Near East” to refer to this area. I do not suggest that other regions, particularly Egypt, did not contribute to the thinking of ancient Israel, including the Joban poet, only that the Asian Near East contributed more to Job, and this contribution, particularly that of Mesopotamia, will be the focus of my investigation of Job’s cultural milieu. Scholars have noted the separate development of ancient Egypt, partly due to geographical barriers of sea and desert, and consequently the greater differences between the cultures of Egypt and the Asian Near East. Israel, as part of the Asian Near East, was influenced by much of its thinking whilst at the same time asserting its own identity and making its own contribution to that thinking.

In my discussion of the traditions shaping Job, I will look at three different types of text. First, since the Joban poet appears to have been familiar with ancient Near Eastern traditions on creation, I shall look at cosmogonic texts and cosmological texts which shed light on ancient thinking on order and disorder in creation. Second, I will briefly look at five texts dealing with the suffering of an individual, to note their connections to Job. Thirdly, because of their formal parallels to Job, I will describe a small group of texts known as dispute poems.

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3.2 *The Cosmos in the Ancient Near East*

Creation mythology in the ancient Near East is a large subject. Therefore, in the following section I shall confine myself to those texts of which there are echoes in *Job*, of its creation thinking, and which are used in the arguments of the divine and human speakers. As a preliminary, I will describe the ancient view of the structure of the cosmos, a view shared by the Joban poet.

### 3.2.1 The Structure of the Cosmos

The ancients believed that the cosmos had a tripartite structure. There were the heavens, the earth and a place below the earth, the netherworld, which was the structure of the natural world observed by human beings, inhabited by them and, in the case of the lowest level, their eventual destination. The earth was thought to be surrounded by ocean.

The supernatural world of the deities had two parts which were inaccessible to humans; these were the upper levels of heaven which were a divine abode, and, below the earth, a watery abyss, the Sumerian Apsu. Order in the cosmos, necessary for the maintenance of human life and society, was maintained by a large pantheon of deities, usually immortal but not eternal since all but one, Nammu, had a beginning.

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10 The netherworld was the place of some deities and myths about them, which reveal something about the place, include: “Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World,” translated by Samuel Noah Kramer (*ANET*, 52-57); “Descent of Ishtar to the Nether World,” translated by E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 106-109); “Nergal and Ereshkigal,” translated by E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 103-104); “A Vision of the Nether World,” translated by E. A. Speiser (*ANET*, 109-110); Samuel Noah Kramer, “The Death of Ur-Nammu and His Descent to the Netherworld,” *JCS* 21 (1967): 104-122.

11 Wayne Horowitz (*Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography* [Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1998], 21) has reproduced the “Babylonian Map of the World” which shows an ocean surrounding the earth, though it also points to regions beyond the ocean.

12 Horowitz (*Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography*, 152) says that the heavens had three tiers, the upper two were the abode of deities and the lowest was the part that could be seen by human beings.

This thesis is concerned with that part of the cosmos which can be known by humans.

3.2.2 Cosmogony in the Ancient Near East

There are a number of cosmogonic traditions some of which begin with Sea. Sumerian tradition has Nammu, goddess of the sea, as the primordial being and also the primordial stuff of creation, and this primordial stuff and this deity seem always to have existed.\textsuperscript{14} It would appear from a Sumerian god list that Sea, or Nammu, gave birth to heaven (\textit{an}) and earth (\textit{ki}) and both were joined together and visualized as a mountain.\textsuperscript{15} The mountain was separated into two parts in order to create heaven and earth which, in turn, allowed further acts of creation. This primordial event is recounted in several texts.\textsuperscript{16} In the Sumerian traditions, separation by Anu and Enlil, or Enlil acting on his own was the act which brought the physical world into being. It was not portrayed as a violent process.

\textsuperscript{15} Ibid., 39. Richard J. Clifford (\textit{Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and in the Bible} [Washington: Catholic Bible Association of America, 1994], 45) quotes from the first line of the dispute poem \textit{Ewe and Wheat} - “when upon the Hill of Heaven and Earth” – which visualizes creation as a single entity after their emergence from sea. So also Frans Wiggermann, “Mythological Foundations of Nature,” in \textit{Natural Phenomena: Their Meaning, Depiction and Description in the Ancient Near East} (ed. D. J. W. Meijer; Amsterdam: Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences, 1992).
\textsuperscript{16} “Gilgamesh, Enkidu, and the Netherworld” (S. N. Kramer, \textit{From the Poetry of Sumer: Creation, Glorification, Adoration} [Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1979], 23) has

\begin{quote}
“When heaven had been moved away from the earth,
When earth had been separated from heaven,
When the name of man had been fixed –
When Anu had carried off heaven,
When Enlil had carried off earth.”
\end{quote}

“The Song of the Hoe,” translated by Gertrud Farber (COS 1.157:511-515) has, “not only did he (Enlil) hasten to separate heaven from earth, (...) and earth from heaven”, he had a purpose in doing so, which was to create humankind in the manner of germinating seed, the text saying he “will make the seed of mankind rise from the earth.” The myth “Enki and Ninmah: The Creation of Humankind” (Samuel Noah Kramer and John Maier, \textit{Myths of Enki, the Crafty God} [New York: Oxford University Press, 1989], 31) has “in those days once heaven and earth [were split apart], in those nights once heaven and earth [were severed].”
In contrast, in the later Akkadian myth, *Enuma elish*, separation was also the means of creating earth and heaven, but it followed conflict and the death of Tiamat, also a substance which was the primordial sea and a hostile being though not a deity, at the hands of Marduk. He split her corpse into two. “One half of her he set up and stretched out as the heavens. He stretched the skin and appointed a watch with the instruction not to let her waters escape.”\(^1\) The rest of Tiamat was used to create other parts of the world, the Tigris, Euphrates and mountains.\(^2\)

The *Enuma elish* makes a further important contribution to ancient cosmogonic thinking which is to describe the origin and ordering of the heavenly bodies in the newly created upper part of the cosmos. Tablet V of *Enuma elish* has Marduk organize the celestial bodies as a means of marking the passage of time; the sun marks its days, the moon its months, and the stars its years.\(^3\) The orderly passage across the heavens of these luminaries was the responsibility of named deities.\(^4\) Concepts about celestial ordering were also to be found in other texts. The Akkadian text, *Enuma Anu Enlil*, has three other deities, Anu, Enlil and Ea in a similar creative and ordering role.\(^5\) Wayne Horowitz’s study of Babylonian astronomy has noted the importance of the movement of the stars over a twelve month period as markers of the right time for agricultural activities. The month of Pleiades, for example, was the time for tilling the soil and the month of Orion was the time for sowing seed.\(^6\) The sky was also the source of weather which, too, was

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2. Ibid., 101.
3. Ibid., 99.
4. Ibid.
5. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*, 177. This text says of the three gods that they
   “Created heaven and underworld, distinguished them,
   Established stations, founded positions (for the stars),
   Appointed the gods of the night, divided the courses,
   Drew the constellations, the patterns of the stars,
   Divided night from daylight, [measured] the month and formed the year,
   For Moon and Sun . . . [. . . ] they made the decrees for heaven and underworld.”
largely determined by time and season, and on which, when it brought rain, much life depended.

The notion that separation, a process which differentiated one thing from another and gave each a place where it could be itself, was one of the methods of creation is found in other texts; and I would like to draw attention to the Sumerian myth “Enki and Inanna: The Organization of the Earth and Its Cultural Processes.” On the earth, Enki creates rivers, the Tigris and Euphrates, places which provide water for irrigation. He “called the rain, the waters above, fixed them there as floating clouds, drives to the horizon their breath of life, turns the hillock into fields where emmer grows,” making possible rain-dependent agriculture. He is “the one who rides the great storm, who charges with lightning.” He creates separate places as habitats for animals, “marshes” for fish and birds, and the high steppe for “herds” where “rams and wild rams” are made to “breed.”

Natural vegetation and wild animals set in place, Enki attends to the human need for food and the poet says “He opened the mouth of the holy furrow, made grow the grain in the seeded field” which he “stocked” with “barley”, “chick-peas” and “lentils”. He “built stalls” and raised the sheepfolds” and “stocked them with the best fat and milk”. Enki’s presence, by itself, was creative and ordering and when Enki “trod the ground on his left side: hegal (abundance) sprang out of the earth for him”. His presence alone was sufficient to ensure human food supplies from both crops and livestock.

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23 Kramer and Maier, Myths of Enki, 38-56.  
24 Ibid., 47-48.  
25 Ibid., 50.  
26 Ibid., 48.  
27 Ibid., 52.  
28 Ibid., 50.  
29 Ibid., 52.  
30 Ibid., 48.  
31 Ibid., 40-41.
Finally, he built a house for humans.

“He fixed the cords, straightened the footers, erected a house at the side of the assembly, guided the lustrations.
The great prince set down the footers, fitted the brickwork upon them.
The one whose footers once laid down do not sag, whose lasting house once built does not collapse, whose vault reaches to mid-sky like a rainbow.”

The myth says not only is this house well-constructed and durable, the work of a master builder, but also that the creation of a place in which human beings can live is part of a divine design for the cosmos.

Enki built himself a house, described in the myth “Enki and Eridu: the Journey of the Water-god to Nippur.” Made of brick, it has foundations, and a roof. It is filled with music, and when completed brought order, abundance and joyfulness to the place where it was situated.

The origin of humankind is recounted in the myth “Enki and Ninmah: the Creation of Humankind”. Created to relieve the gods of the need for toil, a human prototype was

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32 Ibid., 51.
33 Michael B. Hundley (Gods in Dwellings: Temples and Divine Presence in the Ancient Near East [Writings from the Ancient World Supplement Series 3; Atlanta: SBL, 2013], 69) has said that there was no word for ‘temple’ in either Sumerian or Akkadian; the gods dwelt in houses, as did humans.
34 Kramer and Maier, Myths of Enki, 69-74.
35 See also the “Enki and Inanna” myth (ibid., 43). Enlil, too, was a builder, of Nippur his city and of a house for himself (“Hymn to Enlil, the All-Beneficent,” translated by S. N. Kramer [ANET, 573-576]). It had brickwork and foundations, and when complete, the temple with its resident deity was the source of wellbeing in the land.
36 Kramer and Maier, Myths of Enki, 31-37.
made from clay. The Atrahasis myth relates the creation of humankind for the same purpose from clay but here mixed with the blood of a slain god.\(^{37}\)

### 3.2.3 Cosmology and the Maintenance of Order on the Earth

In Sumerian thinking, order on earth was maintained by the *mes* which also had a role to play in the creation of the cosmos. They were numerous and necessarily so because each had a specialized role in cosmic organization.\(^{38}\) Kramer and Maier have described them as a “fundamental, unalterable, comprehensive assortment of powers and duties, norms and standards, rules and regulations … relating to the cosmos and its components, to gods and humans, to cities and countries, and to the various aspects of civilized life.”\(^{39}\) Similar in meaning, is the word *gis-hur* (used at the beginning of the “Creation Story”\(^{40}\)) which Kramer and Maier define as the “pattern of the cosmos” or its “ruling principles”.\(^{41}\)

The *mes* governed the creation and maintenance of the cosmos. The “Hymn to Enki with a Prayer for Ur-Ninurta”\(^{42}\) in a paean of praise to Enki says the god An, king of the gods

> “made you ward of the *me* in heaven and earth,
>   raised you up their prince —
>   to open the holy mouth of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers,
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\(^{38}\) William W. Hallo and J. J. A. van Dijk, (The Exaltation of Inanna [New Haven: Yale University Press. 1968], 50) say of them “one of the most consistent and conspicuous features of the me’s is their plurality or, in terms of the individual me, its partialness.”

\(^{39}\) Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki*, 57. Thorkild Jacobsen (“Sumerian Mythology: A Review Article,” *JNES* 5 [1966], 139) understands the term to mean *modus operandi* and notes its presence at the beginning of a god list tracing the genealogy of the gods, suggesting that it was the “active principle” of creation, preceding all else.

\(^{40}\) Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki*, 87

\(^{41}\) Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki*, 87. Richard Averbeck (“The Cylinders of Gudea,” translated by Richard Averbeck (COS 2:155: 417-433) has translated *gis-hur* as “plan” but in the text about which he writes, this was no ordinary plan but the divinely conceived specifications for a temple which an earthly ruler had been commissioned by his deity to build.

\(^{42}\) Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki*, 89-92.
to fill them full with joy,

to make thick clouds give out the waters of *hegal*,\(^{43}\)
to make them pour down heavy rain on all the fields,
to raise high the head of Ashnan over the furrows,
to cover the steppe with grass and herbs,
to plant orchards and gardens of honey and wine,
to make them reach far like forests.\(^{44}\)

The Hymn describes an orderly process which has, for divine guidance, the *me*, leading to the deity’s provision first of water, both river and rain, essential for vegetation, then plant life both natural and cultivated, which provides for the needs of human life.\(^{45}\)

The possession of the gods, the *mes* were located in many places and particularly in temples.\(^{46}\) As noted above, divine presence was by itself creative and the *mes* brought order, and so temple building and the installation of a deity and *mes* therein was conducive to order and wellbeing both within the temple and in the surrounding area. “The Cylinders of Gudea”\(^{47}\) is an account of temple building by a ruler, Gudea, and a description of the process saying that “he laid the foundation; made the footings for the walls. He gave a blessing, ‘the plumb-line aligns the bricks’.”\(^{48}\) In return the god undertook to bring abundance to the ruler’s people.

\(^{43}\) Ibid., 255 - a Sumerian word, *hegal* means “abundance”.
\(^{44}\) Ibid., 90.
\(^{45}\) The poem goes on to say (ibid)

“For the people who live out even to the very edge of *kur*
   You tend their food and drink,
   You are their father.”

A similar process is described in the dispute poem (I shall discuss dispute poems in section 3.4), *Ewe and Wheat*. The goddesses Lahar and Ashnan are sent to earth by Enki and Enlil to create abundance in accordance with the divine *me* in order to sate the hungry Anunnas gods. They succeeded and we are told that they “brought the breath of life to the land, Carried out the *me* of the gods.” (Kramer, *From the Poetry of Sumer*, 42).

\(^{46}\) For example, *mes* were present in Enki’s temple (Kramer and Maier, *Myths of Enki*, 46), and in Enlil’s temples (“Hymn to Enlil, the All Beneficent,” translated by S. N. Kramer [ANET, 573]) and (“Hymn to the Ekur,” translated by S. N. Kramer [ANET, 582-583]) and (“Ur-Nammu Hymn: Building of the Ekur and Blessing by Enlil,” translated by S. N. Kramer” [ANET, 583]).

\(^{47}\) *COS* 2.155.
\(^{48}\) Ibid., 428.
“I will cry out to heaven for rain. 
From heaven let abundance come to you, 
let the people receive abundance with you, 
with the founding of my temple 
let abundance come! 
The great fields will lift up (their) hand(s) to you, 
The canal will stretch out its neck to you, 
(up to) the mounds, places to which water does not (normally) rise, 
The water will rise, 
The water will rise for you. 
Sumer will pour out abundant oil because of you, 
Will weigh out abundant wool because of you. 
When you fill in my foundation.”

On completion, there was banqueting to the accompaniment of music in the temple and the mes were installed, bringing order and well-being to that place.

In most of the Sumerian Temple Hymns, the divine presence in temples was asserted using nearly identical formulaic words, bespeaking a common belief in this presence. They name a deity responsible for situating the temple where it is, who “has, O Kiabrig (or other city name) placed the house upon your…. has taken his place on your dais. The house of Ningublam (or other deity) in Kiabrig (or other place)”. Many of the hymns in this collection describe abundance and music within and the presence of the mes.

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49 Ibid., 423.  
51 Ibid., 26.  
52 Abundant food is found in Enki’s temple (ibid., 17), Ningublam’s temple (ibid., 25-26), Inanna’s temple (ibid., 29), Ningirsu’s temple (ibid., 39), Nininsina’s temple (ibid., 39), Nanna’s temple (ibid., 44), and Ninhursaga’s temple (ibid., 46).  
53 Music is heard in Nanna’s temple (ibid., 23) and Enki’s temple (ibid., 28).  
54 The mes are present in Enki’s temple at Eridu (ibid., 19), Ninlil’s temple at Nibru and Nuska’s temple at Nibru (ibid., 20), Nינnurta’s temple at Nibru (ibid., 23), Nanna’s temple at Ur (ibid., 24), Sulgi’s temple at Ur (ibid., 25), Asarluhi’s temple at Kuar(a) (ibid., 29), Inanna’s temple at Uruk (ibid., 32), Bau’s
3.2.4  Disorder in Creation

The myth, “Enki and Inanna” (discussed above) describes an orderly and idyllic cosmos with its constituent elements each given a place, and a cosmos in which its animate beings are given the necessities of life. Disorder in creation, however, was also possible. Very often the gods were responsible, and if not they, the monsters. Though much could be said about disorder in the thinking of the ancient Near East, space does not allow more than a brief consideration of the subject. I will discuss disorder in creation under two headings, “Gods” and “Monsters.” Job sees himself as the victim of God, and when God appears, his second speech will be mostly about two mythical beings, one of them monstrous. I will, therefore, confine my discussion to two causes of disorder, contrary deities and monsters.

3.2.4.1  Gods

An appropriate attitude to deities was required of humans and human communities and, when they demonstrated it, they could bring well-being to themselves.\(^{55}\) The absence of such an attitude, however, could lead to trouble resulting either from divine abandonment or from attack by malign powers. It could also result in direct hostile divine action taken by the gods against those they perceived as wrongdoers. Enlil’s son, Ishkur, a storm god, was instructed by his father to “destroy the rebellious land hated by the father” by unleashing on it a wind and hail storm of great ferocity.\(^{56}\) It was not always


\(^{56}\) “Ishkur and the Destruction of the Rebellious Land,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 577-578). The goddess Inanna was very temperamental as can be seen in “Hymnal Prayer of Enheduanna: the Adoration of Inanna in Ur,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 579-582) where she is described as “merciful, life-giving woman, radiant of heart” which did not prevent her from venting her rage.
clear, however, what an appropriate attitude might be as one of the texts discussed in section 3.3 makes clear.\textsuperscript{57}

Sometimes no reason was known for divinely caused disorder in human communities. The “Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur”\textsuperscript{58} and the “Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur”\textsuperscript{59} describe the sacking of cities by hostile tribes following a decree of the gods, given without a reason, which allowed it. The tribes were the means of implementing the decree. The presence of the me in human communities, placed there by deities whose gift they were, was not a guarantee of lasting order and well-being for those communities, because they could be overturned by those same deities. In the “Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur” the poet speaks of the “all devouring” storm that “overturned” the “me of Sumer” which were the me regulating kingship and law and order.\textsuperscript{60} Divine presence, believed to be creative and ordering, was withdrawn from the many temples of Ur\textsuperscript{61} so abandoning the city to its horrible fate. As will be seen in the section on texts dealing with suffering (3.3), individuals too, did not always understand why the gods made them suffer.

Deities could be contrary and the polarities in their dispositions were experienced by individuals.\textsuperscript{62} Divine contrariness is best exemplified in the storm gods of ancient Mesopotamia. Enlil, a creator god, was also the archetype of successive generations of storm gods and the progenitor of some.\textsuperscript{63} Like winds, especially rain-bearing winds which raised crops and food from the soil, Enlil could be creative and beneficent and so

\textsuperscript{57} Ludlul bel nemeqi, BWL, 41.
\textsuperscript{58} “Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 611-619).
\textsuperscript{59} “Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 455-463).
\textsuperscript{60} “Lamentation over the Destruction of Sumer and Ur,” 612.
\textsuperscript{61} “Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur,” 455-456.
\textsuperscript{62} Section 3.3 below.
\textsuperscript{63} Alberto R.W. Green, The Storm-God in the Ancient Near East (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2003), 34-41.
hailed as the “mighty one” who “hold(s) the rains of heaven”. As a storm wind, however, he could be destructive too – “he is the storm, destroying the cattle pen, uprooting the sheepfold” and his word is described as “a storm cloud lying on the horizon”. Enlil’s sons, the storm gods Iskur and Ningirsu, also known as Ninurta, like him, were both beneficent and maleficent. A temple hymn describes Iskur as “holy…., teat of heaven, (sending) rain for the late barley”, one “who bestows life upon numerous people” and also a “devastating flood.” More often he is thought of as a maleficent deity, whose anger may be experienced in seismic upheavals.

“When the lord is raging, the heavens tremble.
At Iskur’s wrath, the earth on its part also shakes.
The great mountains ….. are all thrown down.”

Ningirsu/Ninurta, also had two sides to his nature. He is seen as the source of abundance on earth. As “life-giving semen, life-giving seed” he is credited with the fertility of sheep and goats, the filling of the sea with fish and the forests with deer and wild goats. The same god, however, uses water with devastating effect. It was said of him

“Our heart, rising like the sea,
Crashing down like waves,
Roaring like fast flowing water,
Destroying cities like a flood,
Striking at the rebel land(s) like a storm”

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65 Ibid., 101.
66 Ibid., 103.
67 Green, The Storm God, 44, 50-1, 54.
68 Sjöberg and Bergmann, The Collection of Sumerian Temple Hymns, 37.
69 Quoted by Green, The Storm-God, 57.
70 Ibid., 576.
71 “Hymn to Ninurta as God of Vegetation,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 576-577).
72 COS 2.155:423.
The contrariness of a deity was also to be found in the Ugaritic Baal who was both the god of rain and fertility and also a storm god.\textsuperscript{73}

3.2.4.2 Monsters

Ancient Near Eastern thought was populated by many monsters all of them a threat to order in creation. Imaginatively and horrifyingly described in texts, they created fear even in the gods. Removal of the threat posed by a monster required one god to step forward to overcome it or kill it. Tiamat, the original and primordial monster, was originally Sea before acquiring a body which was necessary in order for Marduk to slay her. In preparation for coming conflict, Tiamat fashioned nine horrible creatures, “the Hydra, the Dragon, the Hairy Hero, the Great Demon, the Savage Dog, the Scorpion-man, the Fish-man and the Mighty Bull” in addition to giant serpents.\textsuperscript{74}

Some monsters were composite creatures, described by Chikako Watanabe as “a product of human thought operations: an imaginary creature whose body parts derive from two or more animals. Each body part reflects an idea arising from that animal’s nature and perceived behavior; different parts are combined to form a new animal.”\textsuperscript{75} A well-known composite monster is Anzu, half eagle and half lion who, while in the service of Enlil, stole the tablet of destinies and flew off with it, so creating, with his newly stolen power, a threat to cosmic order. Several deities were approached to recover the tablet but

\textsuperscript{73} Green \textit{The Storm God}, 173-175.
\textsuperscript{74} Lambert, \textit{Babylonian Creation Myths}, 59.
\textsuperscript{75} Chikako E. Watanabe, \textit{Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia: A Contextual Approach} (Wiener Offene Orientalistik 1; Vienna: Institut für Orientalistik der Universität Wien, 2002), 7.
all were apprehensive and declined. Finally, Ninurta stepped forward and did battle with Anzu before killing him.  

Three monsters are of particular interest to this thesis, the monster of Uruk, the Serpent/The Lion-Serpent, and the Asag.

The Uruk monster was the creation of the gods who decided to destroy the city whose inhabitants had become as numerous as they. The Uruk Lament describes a monster so large and terrible that “all the great gods paled at its immensity”. It had reptilian scales and the wings of a bird, “the glint of its eyes” is “lightning that flashes far” and in its mouth is a “tongue” which “shall be an inferno, raining embers”. Armed with “city-destroying slingstones” and “dripping knives covered with gore” the monster wreaks havoc on the city of Uruk to carry out the “word” of An and Enlil. The city’s deities abandon Uruk, and its inhabitants who were “slaughtered”. The monster is a metaphor for a human enemy, the Gutians and Subarians, who sacked the city.

The Serpent or Lion-Serpent, also known as “Furious Snake” and “Raging One,” a being of colossal size, appears to be a composite creature, a mixture of lion and serpent, and, created by Sea, partly marine and partly terrestrial. Its victims came from both land

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80 Green, “The Uruk Lament,” 266.
81 Ibid., 269.
82 Ibid., 270.
83 Ibid.
84 Ibid., 271.
85 Ibid., 269.
86 Ibid., 272.
and sea. It, too, made the gods afraid. The deity Tishpak was deputed to kill it which he did after a prolonged conflict. Wiggermann believes that the myth has its origin in an historical event, the taking of the Sumerian city, Eshnunna by an Akkadian people whose god was Tishpak.\textsuperscript{88} The monster may, then, be a metaphor for a hostile people.

The Asag was a monster appearing in a long text called “Ninurta Myth Lugal-E”\textsuperscript{89} which had stones for cohorts and together they wreaked havoc on the natural world. Asag was overcome after a prolonged struggle with the god Ninurta. The myth may have had its roots in history. J. van Dijk has seen, in certain passages of the poem, allusions to specific historical situations which, he posits, are the incursions of the Elamites at the end of the Cassite epoch.\textsuperscript{90} If he is correct the monster, Asag, is a metaphor for a human foe.

### 3.2.5 The Baal Myths

Although not part of a cosmogony, nor even of a cosmology, if that term is applied to the natural world, the Baal cycle which recounts the deeds of Baal has had an influence on \textit{Job}. Baal, the god of rain and fertility and also a storm god, engages in two struggles, the first is a struggle with Prince Yamm (Sea), also known as Judge Nahar (River), and the second with Mot (Death) a netherworld deity. It has its monster, the serpent Lotan.\textsuperscript{91}

### 3.3 Texts on Suffering in the Ancient Near East

\textsuperscript{88} Wiggermann, “Tishpak,” 124-126.
\textsuperscript{89} Thorkild Jacobsen \textit{The Harps that Once}, 233-255.
\textsuperscript{90} J. van Dijk, \textit{Lugal Ud Me-Lam-bi Nir-Gal}, 27.
\textsuperscript{91} “The Ba’lu Myth,” translated by Dennis Pardee (\textit{COS} 1.86: 241-274).
Very many scholars, discussing the literary context of Job, have drawn attention to Mesopotamian texts on human suffering, finding in them source material for the book. Five in number, they are: the Sumerian “Man and his God” about a man whom Kramer calls “the first Job”; a text entitled “A Version of the ‘Righteous Sufferer’” from the tablet AO 4462, a poem Nougayrol entitles “(Righteous) Sufferer” from the tablet R.S.25,460; Ludlul bel nemeqi, often called “The Babylonian Job”; and “The Babylonian Theodicy”.

These texts have received much critical attention, and so there is no need to repeat scholarly discussions here. Suffice to say that all of the sufferers believe that their troubles are divinely imposed and most of them (the sufferer in “Man and his God” is the exception) profess ignorance as to the cause of their suffering which, in their view, is undeserved. In two of the texts (Ludlul bel nemeqi and “Babylonian Theodicy”) the sufferers believe that they have paid due deference to their deity who has not responded to them as s/he ought. Two (the “Righteous Sufferer” and the complainant in Ludlul bel

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93 “‘Man and his God,’” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 589-591).
97 BWL, 32-62 and 343 which adds lines 2-12 of the ‘missing’ lines 2-40, the remainder of which have been found and translated by D.J. Wiseman in his paper “A New Text of the Babylonian Poem of the Righteous Sufferer,” Anatolian Studies 30 (1980): 101-7.
98 BWL, 71-89.
99 Nougayrol, in “(Juste) Souffrant,” 269, gives
“Marduk [is not to be] forgotten! Marduk is to be praised!
With all Marduk, would a breath have come out of my mouth
He has struck me and done harm?
He has kept me and bound me
He has split me and tore me
He has smashed me in pieces, he has poured out my (life).
He had driven me away and has gathered me up,
He had abandoned me and he has lifted me up.”
nemeqi\textsuperscript{100} have experienced divine contrariness in Marduk who could be both beneficent and maleficent. The complainant in \textit{Ludlul bel nemeqi} no longer knows what is expected of him.\textsuperscript{101} The issues on which these sufferers reflect can be grouped under three headings – divine justice and injustice, the mysteriousness of the divine mind which is responsible for their situations, and the proper attitude of human sufferers to the deity.

Two of the texts offer a partial explanation for their miseries, one rooted in creation thinking. The sufferer in “Man and His God” concedes that all human beings are sinful, and perhaps deserving of misfortune, and the sufferer in “The Babylonian Theodicy” asserts that trouble caused by other human beings is the fault of the gods who made humans to be sinful. Many of the issues articulated in the Mesopotamian literature on suffering are taken up in \textit{Job}. The Joban poet, however, will go much further in explaining the disorder in human life which is suffering and his explanation is also rooted in creation thinking.

3.4 \textit{The Dispute Poem}

I have drawn attention to ancient Near Eastern thinking on order and disorder in creation and to texts on suffering, but a neglected area concerns a small group of texts called dispute poems and the formal parallels that can be observed between them and \textit{Job}. I propose that an investigation of the structure and contents of dispute poems will make

\textsuperscript{100} Wiseman in “A New Text”, 105, has the sufferer complain that “He acts quickly and assigns (bad fortune) to the one he loves, Yet like a cow with a calf, he keeps turning back to him. His beating is barbed and pierces the body, (yet) his bandaging is soothing, it heals the afflicted.”

\textsuperscript{101} \textit{Ludlul bel nemeqi} (BWL, 41) has the sufferer say “I wish I knew that these things were pleasing to one’s god! What is proper to oneself is an offence to one’s god, What in one’s own heart seems despicable is proper to one’s god. Who knows the will of the gods in heaven.”
a case for the inclusion of Job in that genre based on the formal parallels between the Mesopotamian and Hebrew works.

The sources for my investigation are extant dispute poems, inscribed on tablets, many of which are so badly damaged that only parts of the poem have survived. There are seventeen texts deemed by one or more scholars to be dispute poems. Lists of dispute poems have been drawn up by four scholars, Johannes van Dijk, Edmund Gordon, Herman Vanstiphout, and Jean Bottéro and only eight of the texts are found on all lists. This discrepancy in scholarly views on what is a dispute poem may be explained partly by the fact that little remains of some of the texts not included, and partly by the non-conformity of a few texts to what is understood to be the definition of a dispute poem. Gordon has defined them as “those compositions whose chief subject is a dispute or verbal contest between two or more personified animals, plants, minerals, inanimate objects or natural phenomena”. Scholarly consensus on the identifying characteristic

102 Hoe and Plough, Summer and Winter, Tree and Reed, Heron and Turtle, Goose (or Crane) and Raven, Ewe and Wheat, Bird and Fish, Herdsman and Farmer, Upper and Lower Millstone, Copper and Silver, Tamarisk and Palm, Willow and Laurel, Nisaba and Wheat, Ox and Horse, Tale of the Mule, Hamanirru and Isqapisu, Disputation between the Fox, the Dog, the Wolf and the Lion.
103 J.J.A. van Dijk (La Sagesse Suméro-Accadienne: Recherches sur les Genres Littéraires des Textes Sapientaux [Leiden: Brill, 1953], 40-41) lists Ewe and Wheat, Hoe and Plough, Tree and Reed, Bird and Fish, Summer and Winter, Copper and Silver, Herdsman and Farmer, Tamarisk and Palm, Ox and Horse and Disputation between the Fox, the Dog, the Wolf and the Lion.
104 E.L. Gordon (“A New Look at the Wisdom of Sumer and Akkad,” BO 17 [1960]: 145-7) lists Summer and Winter, Ewe and Wheat, Bird and Fish, Tree and Reed, Copper and Silver, Hoe and Plough, Upper and Lower Millstone, Tamarisk and Palm, Ox and Horse, Tale of the Mule, Nisaba and Wheat, and Disputation between the Fox, the Dog, the Wolf and the Lion.
105 H.L.J. Vanstiphout (“The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1),” Acta Sumerologica 12 [1990]: 272-278) lists The Hoe and the Plough, Summer and Winter, Tree and Reed, Heron and Turtle, Goose (or Crane?) and Raven, Ewe and Wheat, Bird and Fish, Herdsman and Farmer, Upper and Lower Millstone, Copper and Silver.
106 Jean Bottéro (“La ‘Tenson’ et la Réflexion sur les Choses en Mésopotamie,” in Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East: Forms and Types of Literary Debates in Semitic and Related Literatures [ed. G. J. Reinink and H. L. J. Vanstiphout; Leuven: Department Orientalistiek, 1991], 10-11) lists Summer and Winter, Bird and Fish, Tree and Reed, Copper and Silver, Upper and Lower Millstone, Tale of the Mule, Willow and Laurel, Nisaba and Wheat, Tamarisk and Palm, Hamanirru and Isqapisu, and Disputation between the Fox, the Dog, the Wolf and the Lion. He also includes an unnamed text of which only two or three poorly preserved fragments remain and whose transliteration (without translation) is provided by Lambert (BWL, 211-2). Both Bottéro and Lambert have doubts about its inclusion in the dispute poem genre.
107 The Hoe and the Plough, Summer and Winter, Ewe and Wheat, Bird and Fish, Copper and Silver, Tamarisk and Palm, Ox and Horse, Tree and Reed.
of dispute poems, and a way of excluding some texts from classification as such, is their distinctive three-part format – first, a prologue, usually mythological, second a debate between two disputants on which of them is better, and third, a divine verdict naming the winner of the argument. This three-part format, together with Gordon’s definition would, in my view, define a dispute poem. Vanstiphout, who has written extensively on the subject of dispute poems, has analyzed the sixteen texts on his list and has found this structure in six and evidence of it in another three. Whilst the incompleteness of the other seven texts does not allow them to serve as examples of the format, what remains of them is supporting evidence for a dispute poem genre with a three-part format. Of the eight texts common to the four lists, four are well preserved examples of the genre and I shall base my argument for the inclusion of Job in the dispute poem genre mainly, but not exclusively, on them. They are The Disputation between Ewe and Wheat, The Disputation between the Hoe and the Plough, The Disputation between Bird and Fish, The Disputation between Summer and Winter, As further illustration of my argument, I shall also refer to Tree and Reed, Herdsman and Farmer, Tamarisk and Palm, The Willow and Laurel, Nisaba and Wheat, Ox and Horse, and Tale of the Mule, all of which partially illustrate the format of the genre though, because of the gaps in their text, cannot serve as exemplars of it.

112 “The Disputation between Bird and Fish,” translated by H. L. J. Vanstiphout (COS 1.182: 581-584).
115 Van Dijk, La Sagesse, 69-73.
116 BWL, 155-163.
117 Ibid., 165-167.
118 Ibid., 169-175.
119 Ibid., 177-183.
120 Ibid., 210.
Prologues usually provide a mythological background to their disputes, situating them in the distant past, and some are also short cosmogonies. Vanstiphout has suggested that their purpose may have been to give the quality of timelessness to the issues raised therein.\textsuperscript{121} \textit{Ewe and Wheat}, for example, opens at a time when the “people of those distant days” lacked wool and grain, and so Ewe and Wheat were fashioned by the gods who at a “gathering in the divine dining hall” saw a need and “gave them to Mankind as sustenance”.\textsuperscript{122} \textit{Bird and Fish}, beginning with the words “In long gone, far off days”,\textsuperscript{123} has a creation story about the waterways and marshes of Sumer and the flora and fauna placed there by a deity. \textit{Summer and Winter} has a god, Enlil who, through his union with a hill and her giving birth to two brothers, named Summer and Winter, created the seasons to regulate agricultural and pastoral cycles. In \textit{Tree and Reed}, the marriage of Heaven and Earth results in Earth’s giving birth to Tree and Reed and much other vegetation besides. \textit{Tamarisk and Palm} begins “in former days, in far off years” with a king appointed to rule by the gods who then plants a Tamarisk and a Palm in his courtyard.\textsuperscript{124} The banquet given by the king under the Tamarisk, is the occasion for the debate between the two trees over which of them is superior. \textit{Nisaba and Wheat} has neither myth nor cosmogony, opening instead, with a prayer for prosperity by the goddess. The brief introduction to \textit{Hoe and Plough} is a short hymn to Hoe, and what has survived of the prologue to \textit{Ox and Horse} is a description of the flooding of the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. Prologues introduce the two disputants (an exception is \textit{Nisaba and Wheat} which introduces only the goddess) and, most relate the circumstances which give rise to the dispute, and also the place of the dispute. Van Dijk has described prologues as “mythological and etiological.”\textsuperscript{125}

\textsuperscript{121} Vanstiphout, “The Mesopotamian Debate Poems….Part I,” 274.
\textsuperscript{122} COS1.180: 575.
\textsuperscript{123} COS 1.182: 581.
\textsuperscript{124} BWL, 155.
\textsuperscript{125} Van Dijk, \textit{La Sagesse}, 39.
Like Mesopotamian dispute poems, *Job’s* mythological prologue\(^\text{126}\) sets out the circumstances which occasion the disputes that follow. The accounts of the meetings of heavenly beings open with the words “one day” (1.6; 2.1), a time as indeterminate as the words “distant days” in *Ewe and Wheat*,\(^\text{127}\) and “in long gone, far off days” in *Bird and Fish*.\(^\text{128}\) The prologues to *Ewe and Wheat* and *Tamarisk and Palm* also feature gatherings of heavenly beings. As in most dispute poems, by the end of the prologue, the circumstances which give rise to the dispute are known, the place of dispute has been named (the ash heap) and also the disputants, Job, his three friends and God.

The second part of dispute poems consists of dialogue and mostly it is between two participants\(^\text{129}\) who speak alternately. In the debates, each participant lists and boasts of her or his virtues and, naming the shortcomings of the other, denigrates the opponent. The most obvious difference between *Job* and the dispute poems is that, in the former, the dialogue section has two disputes – a dispute between Job on the one hand and his friends on the other, and between Job on the one hand and God on the other.

Verdicts pronounced by a deity announce the winner and end disputes. A verdict may be sought by either or both disputants as in *Bird and Fish* and *Summer and Winter*, or it may be uninvited as in *Ewe and Wheat*, and *Hoe and Plough*. Unusually, in *Herdsman and Farmer*, the verdict is given by Inanna, a deity and a participant in the debate. Reconciliation between the disputants in *Summer and Winter* follows the divine pronouncement in favour of Winter, and in *Ewe and Wheat* a reconciliation is required.

\(^{126}\) In my last chapter, section 3.1.1, I argued that the addition of the celestial scenes and characters transformed a folk tale into a myth.

\(^{127}\) COS 1.180: 575.

\(^{128}\) COS 1.182: 581.

\(^{129}\) Exceptions are *Tale of the Mule* with only one speaker, probably due to there being only a single small fragment of extant text, and *Willow and Laurel*, which names other trees, may have had more speakers. *Herdsman and Farmer* is a single dispute with four participants, the deities, Inanna and Utu, speaking about Herdsman and Farmer who also speak.
by Enki following his decision in favour of Wheat. Winners may also be rewarded, with money for Hoe, and gold and silver for Winter, given by his brother Summer.

Like the Mesopotamian debates, in Job there is a divine verdict, unsought as in Ewe and Wheat and Hoe and Plough, on the dispute between Job and his friends. It is an enigmatic pronouncement by God to Eliphaz -“you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has” (42.7-8) – making Job the winner in the human dispute. Reconciliation between Job and his friends is ordered by God (42.8-9). There is another dispute, however, that between Job and God, a dispute in which the human participant is both a questioner and a protester. Is there a verdict in this contest? I will argue\(^\text{130}\) that this contest ends with both a verdict and two winners. The passage 42.2-6 has Job conceding victory to God, and the passage 42.10-17 which tells of a new family and the doubling of his fortune, suggests that God, by rewarding him, concedes victory to Job.

Though written much later than the dispute poems, Job both resembles and differs from them in some respects. The most obvious similarity is a three-part structure that can be discerned for the book: a prologue (Job 1-2), an argumentative dialogue (Job 3.2-42.6) and finally a divine verdict (42.7-8) on the human debate. A possible objection to thinking of Job as a dispute poem is the apparent light-heartedness of dispute poems which are believed to have been composed as court entertainment,\(^\text{131}\) whilst Job is anything but light-hearted. The three-part format, however, gives to the dispute poems a profundity which, at first sight, they do not have. By placing the dialogue between a prologue, in which often the gods play a part, and a divine verdict, poets have given to their debates a weightiness which otherwise they might not have had. The disputants have been described by Bottéro as “prototypes”,\(^\text{132}\) speaking not as individuals but as representatives

\(^{130}\) Chapter 7, section 7.2.6.
of their kind, and they, their properties, and their differences are part of a divinely created order in the world and in society. Vanstiphout has found the debates to be more than a listing of the properties of the speakers; they are about the values which the disputants represent.\textsuperscript{133} In \textit{Bird and Fish}, for example, Bird boasts of her beauty and Fish that he satisfied hunger and so the poem is a contest between the aesthetic and the utilitarian. In \textit{Hoe and Plough}, Hoe the tool of the poor is pitted against Plough, the tool of the richer man in a debate which Vanstiphout has called “one of the first poetic, if heavily rhetorical, statements of the case of the common man against the rich and mighty”\textsuperscript{134}. 

Given the many similarities between \textit{Job} and the dispute poem, particularly its three-part format, I shall suppose that it has been intentionally patterned on the dispute poem. Like the Mesopotamian poets, the Joban poet felt free to adapt the genre for her/his own purposes. Habel has observed that “it is a mark of creative genius that this author rarely appropriates literary forms or genres in their ideal traditional form. Rather, they are adapted, modified, and transformed to meet particular artistic and theological ends.”\textsuperscript{135} I conclude that the Joban poet intended his work to be a dispute poem in form, if not in content, though with a variation which has two disputes in the dialogue rather than one. More profound than the Mesopotamian poems, it is not about parts of creation and their comparative worth, but about the whole of creation and the place of order and disorder within creation, and this will be the subject of later chapters. I believe that by looking at the book in this way, new possibilities for its interpretation will emerge.

The dispute poem form is well suited to a rhetorical criticism of \textit{Job} since it consists almost entirely of speeches the goal of which is persuasion of the hearer which was also

\textsuperscript{133} Vanstiphout, “The Mesopotamian Debate Poems… Part I,” 280.
\textsuperscript{134} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{135} Habel’s observations (\textit{Book of Job}, 42) are in the context of his discussion of the poet’s use and adaptation of the lament genre and hymns of praise, but they can be seen as equally appropriate to a discussion on the poet’s use of the dispute poem genre.
the purpose of rhetoric formulated according to Aristotle’s precepts. The author of *Job*, like the authors of dispute poems, has a point of view to put across and he does so by means of the speeches of the participants. There are, however, two disputes, separate but linked, as I shall demonstrate in my next chapter and also in chapters 6 and 7. In chapter 2, I identified rhetorical units in *Job*, which were, firstly, the overarching unit which was the whole book, except for chapters 28 and 32 to 37, and the much smaller rhetorical units which were the speeches of the individual participants in the dialogue. I suggest that, intermediate in size, are the two disputes - the first between Job and his friends, and the second between Job and his God - each consisting of a number of speeches. The rhetorical units of *Job* are, therefore, the book as a whole, the two disputes, and the individual speeches.

My next chapter will discuss the arrangement of Job as a dispute poem and as a work of rhetoric following Aristotle’s precepts. Subsequent chapters will analyze the text of *Job*. 
CHAPTER 4

ARRANGEMENT

Aristotle stated that effective persuasion required three things of the speaker or author: “first, the means of producing persuasion” and by this he meant the three tools, *ethos, pathos* and *logos*; “second, the style, or language to be used; third the proper arrangement of the various parts of the speech.”¹ This last requirement will be the subject of this chapter.

4.1 Two Possible Arrangements for Job

In my last chapter, I discussed the Mesopotamian dispute poem,² a literary genre whose form closely resembles that of *Job*, which led me to conclude, that the Joban poet adopted the form of the dispute poem for his work. Both have a three-part format, Prologue, argumentative Dialogue and Epilogue or Divine Verdict. The two differences in form between the dispute poem and *Job*, are to be found in the middle part. Whereas dispute poems have one dispute between two parties, each speaking alternately, *Job’s* Dialogue has two disputes running concurrently, between Job on the one hand and his friends on the other,³ and between Job on the one hand and God on the other.⁴ Whereas, too, dispute poems have their disputants speaking alternately, in the human/divine

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² Chapter 3, section 3.4.
³ I shall refer to this argument as the “human dispute.”
⁴ I shall refer to this as the “human/divine” dispute.
dispute, Job addresses God five times before he elicits a response. God waits until the human dispute has ended before making an appearance.\(^5\)

Aristotle favoured simplicity in the arrangement of rhetoric.\(^6\) He said that there were two essentials for persuasive rhetoric – Statement and Argument – adding that it was permissible to have also an Introduction and an Epilogue which would give four parts to rhetoric. The arrangement for rhetoric recommended by Aristotle is almost congruent with the format of a dispute poem except for the rhetorical ‘extra’ which is the Statement. I will argue that Job 3 is the Statement necessary for the Argument which follows. That speech, however, can serve two purposes; it can either be rhetoric’s Statement or it can be the opening speech in either of the two disputes, the human dispute or the human/divine dispute, because it raises the question of suffering and disorder in creation, issues relevant to both disputes and issues which both address.\(^7\)

In my exploration of questions to do with order and disorder in creation, I will treat \textit{Job} as a work with the form of a dispute poem, the three-part structure of which is as I have outlined it below. It is also rhetoric which, following Aristotle’s precepts, has a four-part structure which is also outlined below. I have combined both structures, \textit{Job} thought of as a dispute poem and \textit{Job} thought of as rhetoric arranged according to the precepts of Aristotle’s \textit{Rhetoric}. Both are possible arrangements for the rhetoric which is \textit{Job}.

\(^5\) Fretheim (\textit{God and the World}, 238) has described this as a “divine strategy to get the various options ‘on the table’.”
\(^6\) Chapter 1, section 1.4.6.
\(^7\) In my next chapter, I will discuss the statement that Job 3 makes on the subject of disorder in creation, the statement which initiates argument in the rhetoric of \textit{Job}.  

In chapter 2, I identified the rhetorical units in *Job* and concluded that the book as a whole is also a rhetorical unit. It is made up of a prose narrative which is its Prologue or Introduction, and a prose Divine Verdict or Epilogue which frame speeches each of which is a rhetorical unit. Those speeches are also part of two different disputes which, though they present different points of view on order and disorder, are connected, as I
will show in chapters 6 and 7. The purpose of the rhetorical unit which is *Job* is to persuade the reader to think in a particular way about order and disorder in creation, which is the most important issue in *Job*. He does so by setting out and engaging with different points of view on the subject using the dispute poem form to structure his argument.

4.1.1 *The Prologue or Introduction*

Chapters 1-2 of *Job* are the Introduction to the rhetoric which is that work and also, if *Job* is seen as a dispute poem, they are its mythological Prologue to the poetry which is to follow. Whether thought of as either a work of rhetoric, or as the particular kind of rhetoric which is the dispute poem, or both, as I do, these two chapters serve the same purpose, a point made by Aristotle when he described the Introduction as “the beginning of a speech, corresponding to the prologue in poetry”. Aristotle has said of Introductions and Prologues that they are “concerned with the speaker, the hearer, the subject.” To speaker, hearer and speech belong the three modes of persuasion, *ethos* which depends on the “character of the speaker” determined primarily by what is said, which establishes her/his credibility, *pathos* or “putting the audience into a certain frame of mind”, and *logos* or “the proof, or apparent proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.” The “speaker” for the rhetoric which is *Job* is the poet who is also the narrator of the Prologue; the hearer of the Prologue is the reader who is to be persuaded by the rhetoric of *Job*, beginning with the Prologue. The Prologue provides the context, reason and subject for the poet’s argument which, initiated by the Prologue, will follow in the Dialogues.

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8 There are many connections between the two disputes. In chapter 7, I list seven motifs which connect the divine speeches to the human speeches of both disputes. They are: Place, Time, Darkness and Light, Progeny, Hunter and Hunted, Storm and Divine Warrior.

9 Chapter 1.


12 Ibid., 1.2.1356a.
My discussion of the Prologue established that an old story had been changed from a folktale to a myth, because its two principal characters, God and the satan deliberating in the supernatural sphere, between them, are responsible for the story’s plot, and also the arguments which will follow.¹³ Myths are stories which are “symbolic expression,”¹⁴ necessary because they deal with what cannot be known. A myth is not “discursive thought” nor is it a “substitute or an alternate for discursive thought. It does not really do the work of discursive thought, the work of analysis, organization, and synthesis.”¹⁵ The Joban poet will furnish the “discursive thought” or argument in what follows the Prologue.

4.1.2  
**Job’s Soliloquy or The Statement of the Rhetoric which is Job**

Most interpreters have described Job 3 as either a lament¹⁶ or a curse¹⁷ or a combination of both.¹⁸ I will argue that it is neither, and will propose instead that it be thought of as the Statement in the rhetoric of Job, the essential prerequisite of argument.

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¹³ Chapter 2, section 2.1.1.
¹⁵ Ibid., 269. See chapter 2, section 2.1.1 for my discussion on the characteristics of a myth.
¹⁸ For example, Habel (*Book of Job*, 110), Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 51), Newsom (“Job,” 366), and Seow (*Job* 1.21, 313, 319, 328) who all see the chapter as a curse in its first part and lament in the second. Leo G. Perdue (“Job’s Assault on Creation,” *HAR* 10 [1986]: 305) has described it as a “lament-like soliloquy” which replaces invocation and petition (parts of the lament) with an “extended curse” (ibid., 307).
An ancient literary genre of which many Near Eastern examples have been found, the lament is well represented in the Hebrew Psalter. It has distinguishing characteristics which Bernd Janowski has listed: “invocation, lament proper, appeal for deliverance, declaration of trust, affirmation of innocence or confession of guilt, and promise of praise”, six in all. He adds that in Job 3, nobody is invoked, nor even addressed, there is no request for relief from suffering, no mention of guilt or innocence and no expression of trust or promise of praise. Only the second of the defining features, the lament proper, is present in vv.11-26. Janowski has said that there is “no individual lament that simply laments.” It is not possible, therefore, to categorise chapter 3, or any part of it, as a lament.

If it is not a lament, can this chapter be thought of as a curse, as some have? *Job* uses three different words for curse. Breaking his seven-day silence he “opened his mouth and cursed (כֹּלֶל)” the day of his birth” (3.1), before saying of the night of his conception “Let those curse (קָבַב) it who curse (אֲרָר) the Sea” (3.8). Of the verb כֹּלֶל in the Piel, C.

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19 F. W. Dobbs-Allsopp, “Lament,” *EDB* 784-785. William Hallo’s study (“Individual Prayer in Sumerian: The Continuity of a Tradition,” *JAOS* 88 [1968]) has found the six characteristics of Hebrew laments in post-Sumerian penitential psalms of the individual and in their lineal antecedents, the neo-Sumerian letter-prayers which could allow their comparison to individual laments in the Hebrew Psalter and would affirm a long-established tradition.


22 Clines (*Job 1*-20, 77) says of chapter 3 that it is “no true lament, for it addresses no one, and what purpose can a lament serve if it is spoken into thin air?” Seow (*Job 1*-21, 314) notes that chapter 3 has a number of the features characteristic of a lament, including questions, but concludes that “the poem as a whole does not quite align with other laments in the Bible.”

23 BDB 886: “be slight, swift, trifling . . . (pi) curse”; HALOT 3:1103-1104: “to be small insignificant . . . (pi) declare cursed, accursed”. cf. Herbert Chanan Brichto (*The Problem of Curse in the Hebrew Bible* [Philadelphia: Society of Biblical Literature, 1963], 119) who has said that כֹּלֶל does not have the force of “curse” anywhere in the Hebrew Bible. He suggests, instead, “to treat with disrespect, abuse, derogate, denigrate, repudiate” (ibid., 116) and has translated 3.1 “After this Job opened his mouth and railed at the day of his birth.” (ibid., 106).


25 BDB 76: “curse.” HALOT 1: 91: (qal) “to bind with a curse”. To these definitions, Brichto (*The Problem of Curse*, 4) adds “to ban, to exclude from the company of”. Scharbat (“‘Fluchen’ und ‘Segnen’,” 5) notes that the related Akkadian word araru can be understood as “bind through a magic word”, and the related Arabic word arra as “throw out” or “drive away”. He cites Hebrew Bible passages (Gen 3.14; 4.11; Num 22.6; Jer 17.5) in which cursing and banishment go together.
A. Keller has said that it has “both a declarative and a factitive function”, thus to declare something insignificant or despicable is to make it so. Brichto has said that both blessing and curse in ancient Israel had their origin in magic which was understood to be the power governing nature, and the invoking, for the purpose of cursing, of “those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan” (3.10) certainly hints that Job sees the need for magic for the undoing of a part of creation.

The power of curse lies in its utterance, and Sheldon Blank has said, “The curse was automatic or self-fulfilling, having the nature of a ‘spell’, the very words of which were thought to possess reality and the power to effect the desired results.” As Rachel Magdalene has said, “cursing is foremost a performative utterance or speech act.” Job’s words, however, could not be described as performative or effective for two reasons. Firstly, curses are utterances which have their effect in the future and so Job’s words are not a curse because that curse would be of a day and a night which have come and gone and exist no more and so cannot be cursed. Cursing what has happened defies reason when that happening cannot be undone. Secondly, Job’s words “Let that day be darkness! May God above not seek it, or light shine on it.” (3.4) clearly show that he sees God as the Creator of the day of his birth. If his words were intended as a curse, through them he would pit himself against the power of God to no effect. Angry and bold as ‘real’ Job, now liberated from the Prologue, will prove to be, he will recognize his impotence.

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27 Brichto, The Problem of Curse, 4.
28 Ibid., 109; Michael Fishbane (“Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13,” 162) finds “magical intent” in the whole passage 3.3-13 which he describes as an “incantation unit”.
31 Blank’s study (“The Curse,” 76) asks whether the tense of the participle of וָאַרְרָה, in the curse formula should be present or future and concludes from examples of biblical curses that it is future.
32 Sheldon Blank (Prophetic Thought: Essays and Addresses [Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1977], 61) has said “the past . . . is no present reality which can be affected by what we now do or destroyed by any available means, least of all by the mere words of a curse.” Clines (Job 1-20, 77) shares this view saying “the curse is no true curse, for it fastens itself upon what cannot be altered.”
before the power of God. His claim that “God has fenced (him) in” (3.23) is his first
acknowledgment of his own powerlessness, an acknowledgment which will be repeated
often in the Dialogues, most notably in passages in which Job imagines himself in contest
with God (9.14-20, 32-35; 10.16-17; 13.14-15, 22-24) or finds himself in an encounter
with God (40.3-5; 42.2-6). The prerequisite of a successful cursing is that the object be
both available for and susceptible to cursing. Cursing a day that God has made is futile.33
Brian Britt has described chapter 3 as “a speech which deprecates and invokes
supernatural harm.”34 As deprecation it is successful but as invocation it is not. It should,
in his opinion, be seen as no more than a wish for the perishing of the day of his birth.

Neither lament nor curse, another description of chapter 3 is required. In his
discussion of the genre of Job, Westermann has said that there are two possible verbal
responses to suffering; one is lament and the other is an inquiry into the problem, which
is “an attempt to grasp it conceptually.”35 Whilst it may be difficult to equate the
vehemence of Job’s outburst with terms like “inquiry” or discussion which suggest
measured response to a situation, it is, nonetheless, the most helpful way of thinking about
Job’s first speech. Job is many things but, above all, it is an inquiry into disorder in the
life of one human being, and in creation as a whole. The anger of Job’s words in the first
part of his speech (3.1-10), which are both protest and challenge to God, gives way, in
the second (3.11-26), to questions of great profundity which ask why life is given to a
human being whose experience of it is “misery” (3.20). Chapter 3, a soliloquy placed in
the mouth of Job, is the poet’s opening reflection on the issue of suffering and disorder
in creation. Job’s words of protest, which are challenge, question and complaint, together
make a Statement, expressed in the strongest possible terms, those of cursing, and is the

33 Hartley (The Book of Job, 102) as said “his curse is illusory, for not even the greatest wizard could
accomplish such a feat.”
34 Brian Britt, Biblical Curses and the Displacement of Tradition (Bible in the Modern World 34; Sheffield:
Sheffield Phoenix, 2011), 96.
first of the two essential parts of rhetoric, the second of which is argument which will be expressed in the two disputes.

4.1.3 Disputes or Argument

Aware of the thinking of his day on suffering and its reasons, and aware also that these reasons may not be an explanation for suffering, the Joban poet has created two disputes so that the whole subject of order and disorder in creation may be explored. The first dispute is between Job and his friends. The friends, and formerly Job, are exponents of traditional retribution theology which holds that disorder can be avoided. Job’s experience has shown tradition to be flawed. The dispute is conducted in the manner of a Mesopotamian dispute poem. The three friends represent one point of view, which is that order can be secured and disorder averted, and Job another, which is a complete contradiction of the friends’ arguments and each point of view is expressed alternately in the first two speech cycles and also, perhaps, in the third cycle.

Since the avoidance of disorder can only be achieved with divine cooperation, the issues raised in the human dispute are issues best addressed to and by God. Job wants nothing more than an encounter with God and answers to his questions. The poet has created a second dispute, between Job and God for that very reason. The chief marker of Job’s address to God is the use of the second person singular verb or pronoun. Preceding and within some speeches are third person verbs and pronouns which slightly blur the boundaries of what can be regarded as Job’s direct address. Where these third persons are

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36 David Penchansky (The Betrayal of God: Ideological Conflict in Job [Louisville, Ky.: Westminster/John Knox, 1990], 25) discussing dissonance in Job has said that “the sapiential movement in Israel was often at odds with the other segments of Israelite society . . . the ideological disparity of Job reflects this tension also opening up debates within the community of the sages itself.”

37 See chapter 2, section 2.2 for my proposed restoration of the third speech cycle.
used they may be seen as preliminary observations in Job’s speech, or, when they occur in the middle of a speech, as asides but still part of the address. I have identified five direct addresses to God. They are: 7.1-21; 38 9.25-10.22; 39 13.20-14.22; 40 17.3-4; 41 and 30.20-23. 42

4.1.4 Divine Verdict or Epilogue

The narrator of the Prologue, when that is done, retires into the background, heard only in prose introductions to the speeches. He comes to the fore again in the Epilogue which tells of a divine verdict on the dispute between Job and his friends. It also, but less obviously, tells of a verdict on the dispute between Job and God. 43

4.2 Conclusion

The poet’s arrangement of the rhetoric which is Job has created two kinds of hearer (or reader). 44 These are the reader of the book and also the hearers who are participants in the disputes. The reader, privy to the celestial proceedings of the Prologue will consider the speeches of both the humans and God from a different vantage point from that of the

38 In this address the second person masculine singular is used in vv.7, 8, 12, 14, 17, 18, 19, 20, 2. Clines (Job 1-20, 183) has said of 7.1-6, “if these words are not spoken to God, they are spoken in the direction of God: they are for God’s hearing.
39 The second person masculine singular is used in 9.28, 31; 10.2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13 14, 16, 17, 18. An aside using third person singular pronouns and suffixes (9.32-35), interrupts Job’s direct address to God but there is no reason to suppose that he has stopped speaking to God and reverted to speaking to the friends (9.2-24). cf. Habel (Book of Job, 197) who does not think that 10.1-21 is direct address to God but rather, the rehearsal of a case against God, and Newsom (Job,” 413) that the passage is an imagined conversation that Job would have with God. Similarly Seow, Job 1-21, 576.
40 The second person masculine singular is used in 13.20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27; 14.3, 5, 6, 13, 15, 16, 17, 19 20.
41 The second person masculine singular occurs in 17.3, 4.
42 The second person masculine singular occurs in 30.20, 21, 22, 23.
43 Chapter 6, section 6.2.6, and Chapter 7, section 7.2.6.
44 Michael Fox (“Job the Pious, ZAW 117 [2005]: 351) speaks of Job’s “two dimensions of reality”, the “world within the narration” in which all the disputants speak and the world above the narration in which the author communicates with the reader.”

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human disputants who are not. In the disputes, the hearer(s) to be persuaded, will be both human and divine. The failure in the human dispute of the friends to persuade Job of their point of view and Job’s failure to persuade his friends of his point of view will lead to God’s entry into the disputes about order and disorder in creation. The divine speeches are also intended to persuade and it seems that Job is persuaded, but whether or not the reader is persuaded, and, if persuaded, of what, is a matter for each reader to decide.46

45 I will say more on this in chapter 7.
46 I will say more on this in chapter 7.
CHAPTER 5

MYTHICAL PROLOGUE OR INTRODUCTION (CHAPTERS 1-2)
AND SOLILOQUY OR STATEMENT (CHAPTER 3)

5.1 Mythical Prologue or Introduction

The two principal characters in the myth\(^1\) which is the Joban Prologue are God and the satan,\(^2\) and it is they who are responsible for events on earth in the prose narrative, and whose encounter at a celestial meeting determines the issues which will be raised in the poetic dialogues.

It is established by the narrator that Job has a large family, is exceptionally rich, exceptionally virtuous and exceptionally pious. God says so too, twice, though he does not mention Job’s wealth. The satan does not dispute the facts but he twice questions Job’s motives for being so good and pious, suggesting that it is self-interest which drives his conduct and piety. Misfortune would test Job’s piety, and he would respond by cursing...

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\(^1\) See my discussion on this story’s categorisation as a myth in chapter 2, section 2.1.1 and also chapter 4, section 4.1.1.

\(^2\) Much has been written about this being. He has been seen as a celestial policeman (Lowell K. Handy, “The Authorization of Divine Power and the Guilt of God in the Book of Job: Useful Ugaritic Parallels,” *JSOT* 60 [1993]: 109), or a secret agent (Pope, *Job*, 10), or a prosecutor (Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 193; Gordis, *Book of Job*, 2). There is also a view that the satan and Elohim are two aspects of the same being - C.G. Jung, *Answer to Job* (trans. R. F. C. Hull; London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1954), 10; Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, 104; Athalya Brenner, “God’s Answer to Job,” *VT* 31 (1981): 134; Vawter, *Job and Jonah: Questioning the Hidden God*, 30. Weiss (*The Story of Job’s Beginning*, 39-40) thinks of the satan as a separate being which is the hypostasis of an aspect of God, the aspect which doubts Job. Seow (*Job 1-21*, 256) interprets the satan as the hypostasis of a part of the divine personality and understands him to be “a projection of divine doubt about human integrity that is held in tension with divine trust.” Newsom (“Job,” 348) says of the satan, that he “is the externalizing of divine doubt about the human heart, which allows God to voice confident approval of Job’s character.” Gordis, however, (*Book of God and Man*, 69), sees the satan and Yahweh as separate beings, a reflection of Jewish contact with Zoroastrianism with its opposing deities, light and goodness on the one hand, and darkness and evil on the other. He said of this “dualism”, uncomfortable though its accommodation with monotheistic Yahwism was, “it offered a simple answer to the problem of evil, freeing God from the onus of responsibility by attributing evil to a malevolent spirit.”
God. He urges God to harm Job through his possessions and later through his person. God does not, but, instead, hands Job over to the satan’s power. Job’s loses his livestock, some are stolen and some are killed by lightning and his servants are killed. His children are killed by a wind. God admits responsibility for these calamities. Job is then afflicted with a skin disease but he does not curse God.

The celestial meetings establish that God appears to value the unique piety and virtue of his servant, which is no protection against trouble for Job. The idea that Job’s wellbeing is a consequence of his good qualities is the satan’s not God’s who, in any event, does not claim responsibility for Job’s good fortune. The idea that Job’s character will change as a consequence of ill-being is also the satan’s. The satan in this myth, at large in the world, is a symbol of the trouble which can inexplicably befall human beings who are unaware of his presence or hostile activities. The word ס”?ט, from its use elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, is replete with overtones of hostility.³ God, who has the power to harm Job, does not. Instead he cedes that power to the Satan.

The human character in the myth, Job, is not a Jew and lives in the land of Uz the location of which is unknown and perhaps meant to be so. The only certainty about Uz is that it was not Israel.⁴ Job’s name, not found elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, is significant for three reasons. It was quite common in the ancient Near East,⁵ and is the name of an ancient hero in folklore.⁶ Thirdly, it is a word play on the root ב”?א which, as a noun (ב”א), is translated “enmity”, and as a verb, is translated “be hostile to, treat as an enemy”.⁷ Both

³ Num 22. 22, 32; 2 Sam 19.22; 1 Kings 5.18 (English 5.4); 11.14, 23, 25; 1 Chr 21.1; Pss.38.20; 71.13;109.4, 6, 20, 29; Zech 3.1, 2. Ryan E. Stokes’s survey of these passages (“Satan, Yhwh’s Executioner,” JBL 133 [2014]: 253-255) suggests to him that the role of the satan is that of “executioner” and that this understanding of his role can be applied to the Prologue of Job.
⁴ Weiss (The Story of Job’s Beginning, 21) argues that Job’s country, Uz, was imaginary.
⁵ Marvin Pope (Job, 5-6) has drawn attention to texts covering a period from 2000 BCE to 1350 BCE, in which the name, or one very like it, occurs. See also Gordis, Book of Job, 10.
⁶ Chapter 2, section 2.1.
⁷ BDB 33.
active and passive voices of the verb have been suggested, the former would make Job the bringer of enmity and the latter, its recipient. That the name is significant and intended by the author to be seen so, is conveyed by the way in which we are told it - “Job was his name” (איב שׁמו) – a phrase which, to emphasise it, places the predicate before the subject. All three possibilities may have been in the mind of the author. By locating the hero in an unknown place and by giving him a non-Hebrew name, one quite common over a long period of time, which was also the name of a good man in folklore, the author signals his belief that human suffering is a universal and timeless problem, and his hero a symbol, not only of suffering humanity, but also of that section of humanity which is suffering undeservedly. By giving him a name signifying enmity, the author is foreshadowing Job’s changed relationship to God in the coming dialogues.

Job’s response to the first calamities, acknowledging the reality in human life of possession and dispossession, is one of unquestioning acceptance. He says, “the Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away, blessed by the name of the Lord” (1.21). Job of the myth, like many ancient Mesopotamians, understood that the deity could have a contrary nature and so was capable of visiting both good and ill on a human being apparently without regard to whether or not they deserved it. He has no doubt of the divine origin of his troubles. After the second round of misfortune, seated “among the ashes” (2.8), Job is challenged by his wife to “curse God and die” (2.9). He responds, “Shall we receive the

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9 Gordis (Book of Job, 10) thinks that the name was derived from a passive participle. So also Seow, Job 1-21, 266.
10 Seow, Job 1-21, 265.
11 Hoffman (A Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Context [JSOTSup 213; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996], 203) has argued that the choice of a “righteous Gentile” as the hero not only signalled the universality of the problem of human suffering but also possibly made it easier for the Jewish author to place in his mouth harsh words about God than to place them in the mouth of a “righteous Israelite” who, by saying them would have become less blameless and so removed one of the planks of the author’s argument about misfortune afflicting the virtuous.
12 In chapter 3, sections 3.2.4.1 and 3.3, I discussed divine contrariness.
good at the hand of God and not receive the bad?” (2.10). Job’s second response differs from his first and, depending on how it is interpreted, could be an intimation of the questioning to come in the dialogues.

Job’s second response (גּם את־הטב נקבל מאת האלהם ואת־הרע לא נxFB) (2.10) is ambiguous and so its translation must be an interpretation. Lacking an interrogative particle it could be translated as a statement, as Edwin Good has done: “We receive good from Elohim and do not receive evil”. This interpretation, however, would suggest a change from Job’s earlier understanding that God is the source of his trouble, to a declaration that God is not. More often, however, Job’s words are translated as a question, understood by most interpreters to be rhetorical, expressing Job’s pious acceptance of his situation. It is a question, however, which draws attention to, and contrasts his previous and present circumstances, a question, moreover, with a negative, hinting at protest, if not now, in the dialogues to come. There is a further hint of coming protest in the narrator’s assessment of Job’s second response to calamity: “In all this Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing” (2.10). After the losses sustained in the first round of disasters, “Job did not sin or charge God with wrongdoing” (1.22). In the coming dialogues,

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13 Clines (“False Naivety in the Prologue to Job,” HAR 9 [1985], 130) has found from the structure of the story that “it is God (and not the satan) who is the chief architect of Job’s downfall”. He comes to this conclusion through the way the story unfolds. Each celestial conversation with its provocative question which ended in disaster for Job, was initiated by God.
14 Good, In Turns of Tempest, 53.
15 Ibid., for Good’s translation of v.21b which is “Yahweh gave, and Yahweh took; Yahweh’s name be blest.”
16 They are two co-ordinate sentences (GKC, 53). The first is a statement which, beginning with the adverb גּם emphasizing the following word טב, is literally translated as “the good we have been receiving from God”. The second sentence may be a statement but is more likely a question, literally translated “but the evil shall we not (or “we shall not”) receive?” The two sentences are linked by ו, which, as has been noted in GKC, 150, can connect an interrogative sentence with the preceding sentence, thus making a question of both parts. BDB 252 says of ו that “it introduces a contrasted idea in such a way as to suggest a question.”
17 For example, Dhorme, Job, 20; Terrien, “The Book of Job,” 921; Rowley, Job, 37; Weiss, The Story of Job’s Beginning, 71; Clines, Job 1-20, 54; Seow, Job 1-21, 297.
18 Clines (Job 1-20, 52) has observed that though Job “does not follow his wife’s advice to the letter, he is from this point onward entirely infused by its spirit.”
19 Much has been said on the interpretation of the words “sin with his lips” (2.10), and summaries provided by Seow, Job 1-21, 297-298. It has been suggested that the words did not exclude the possibility that Job might sin in his heart, a concern that he had had for his children (1.5).
however, Job will charge God several times with wrongdoing though his words will fall short of cursing God or even blaspheming, sins committed through spoken words and leading to death, not to divine approbation (42.7-8). In his second response, significantly, Job does not bless God as he had done before.

A question, rhetorical or not, stimulates debate. Debates require debaters, and the author provides them, both divine and human. The first, God, has already been introduced but the poet must introduce Job’s human interlocutors, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They, like Job, are not from Israel. Described as “friends”, they arrive to “console and comfort” Job (2.11). The final scene of the Joban Prologue has Job seated on ashes where he is joined by his three friends who, distraught at the sight of him, “tore their robes and threw dust in the air upon their heads” (2.12) before sitting with him on the ground for seven days and seven nights in silence (2.12). Ashes, in the Old Testament, are often associated with mourning, as was dust and also with penitence. Suffering and penitence, the link between them and the remedying of the former by the latter, will be the dominant theme in the speeches of Job’s friends in their coming dispute with him. As in many dispute poems, by the end of the prologue, the place of dispute, among the ashes, has been named, and also the disputants, Job, his three friends and God. The humans will have no inkling of what transpired in the celestial realm; if they did, there would be no dispute. The humans, however, will claim to know a great deal and God will challenge the knowledge of them all. God of the divine speeches will differ greatly from the malleable deity of the Prologue’s myth.

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20 Hoffman (“The Relation between the Prose and the Speech-Cycles in Job,” 167) has said “Job could speak insolently and bitterly against God, shout indictments and still Satan would not be reckoned the winner of the wager, since God was not cursed.”
21 2 Sam 13.19; Isa 61.3; Esth 4.1, 3; Jer 6.26; Ezek 27.30.
22 Josh 7.6; 1Sam 4.12; Lam 2.10; Ezek 27.30; Mic 1.10.
23 Jon 3.6; Dan 9.3; Isa 58.5. See Clines, Job 1-20, 62.
24 Chapter 3, section 3.4.
The Prologue, part of the rhetoric which is *Job*, utilises Aristotle’s three tools for effective persuasion – *ethos*, *pathos*, and *logos*. Regarding the first mode of persuasion, in Aristotle’s opinion, the most important of all, *ethos*, the Prologue prepares the reader for the coming dialogues in which Job will engage with his friends and with God. By establishing his good character and telling his story, the poet provides affirmation in advance of the truth of what Job will say. The question of the credibility of the narrator, who is also the poet, will have to be left open until, by the book’s end, the reader has read all that the poet has to say.

Aristotle’s second tool for achieving persuasion was *pathos*. By Prologue’s end, the emotion stirred in the reader, and also in the three friends, is pity, and pity is the response to the undeserved distress of a good person. It is also linked to fear that the distress of the person pitied may, in the future, be experienced by the one who pities. Pity is all the greater when it is felt for a sufferer of “noble character”, and no sufferer has a more “noble character” than Job of the Prologue.

Aristotle said of Introductions that they were to give to the hearers “a foretaste of the theme”, in other words, an intimation of the arguments or *logos*, the third mode of persuasion, which will follow. The Prologue tells of disorder which happens suddenly in the life of Job. The subject of disorder in the life of the individual and in the cosmos as a whole will be taken up in the disputes that follow. Indicated in the Prologue are several issues which will be explored in both disputes.

First, there is the question of the hero’s character. The Prologue claims moral perfection for Job, its mythical paragon of virtue, but Job in the dialogues, portrayed as a

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25 Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.1.
26 Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.2.
‘real’ human being, will not (7.20-21; 13.26; 14.16; 19.4). He will, however, claim for himself goodness of character even though it falls short of perfection.

Second, there is the question of the divine disposition, on which, according to Job’s understanding in the Dialogues, depends order and disorder in his life and also in the cosmos. The reader learns from the Prologue that God is callous, fickle and capricious and, in the dialogues, Job will find him so, and also violent. Unaware of the satan’s role in his downfall, and believing that his calamities came from God, he will complain of God’s violence against him and of allowing others to do violence to him, as he had allowed the satan to do (6.4; 9.17-18, 34; 10.16-17; 13.15, 27; 16.8-14; 19.8-12; 30.11-14, 18-23), and he will accuse God of violence in his dealings with other parts of creation (9.5-8; 12.14-15, 17-25). He will accuse him, too, of callousness (9.23; 24.2-12; 30.24-26), and of capriciousness (9.22; 10.8; 29.2-30.31), from which comes injustice directly done by God (9.22, 28-29; 10.2-3, 6-7, 15; 19.6-7) or allowed by God (12.4-6; 21.7-18, 23-26, 30-33). Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar will argue that, in his dealings with Job and with humankind in general, God is both solicitous in his treatment of the needy and deserving (5.10-11, 15-16, 18-26; 8.21-22; 11.15-19; 22.21-30), and just in his treatment of the good and the bad (4.7-9; 5.12-16; 8.3-7, 20-22; 11.13-20; 15.20-35; 18.5-21; 20.5-29; 22.4-11, 15-16, 21-30 27.13-23) and, lastly, entirely predictable (4.7-9; 5.10-16, 18-26; 8.3-7, 20-22; 11.13-20; 15.20-35; 18.5-21; 20.5-29; 22.4-11, 15-16, 21-30 27.13-23).

Third, issues to do with divine power and how it is wielded in the Cosmos will be prominent in the human debates. The word for hand, כָּרָה also means power, with the former often a metaphor for the latter in both the Prologue and Dialogues. Job will say that God has it, and that “in his hand is the life of every living thing” (12.10). God’s hands had once been used creatively to fashion him (10.8; 14.15) but then, capriciously, God had turned against him and he will say “the hand of the Lord has done this” (12.9), and “the
hand of God has touched me” (9.21), a reminder of the satan’s challenges to God (1.11; 2.5). He will claim that he is persecuted by the might of your hand” (30.21) and earlier he had hoped that God “would let loose his hand” to “crush” him (6.9). He will say that “the earth is given into the hand of the wicked” (9.24) by God who had also cast Job “into the hands of the wicked” (16.11) which will remind the reader that he had given Job into the hands of the satan. Divine power is absolute and Job claims “there is no umpire between us, who might lay his hand on us both” (9.33) nor any one “to deliver me out of your hand” (10.7). Job will offer to teach his friends “concerning the hand of God” (27.11). Eliphaz, on the other hand, will claim that God denies success to the “hands” of the crafty (5.12), saves the “needy” from “the hand of the mighty” (5.15), will save Job from “the power of the sword” (5.20), and that his “hands” heal (5.18). Sin has power and Bildad will say of Job’s children that God “delivered them into the power of their transgression” (8.4). Bildad’s hymn to God’s creative power will state that his “hand pierced the fleeing serpent” (26.13). Zophar teaches “concerning the hand of God” (27.11) and “the portion of the wicked with God (27.13) which causes them to flee the “power” (27.22) of the east wind. God will never claim that he has power; he will demonstrate it.

Fourth, in the Prologue, disorder when it first comes to Job is through his “house (בֵית)\(^\text{30}\) and “possessions” (1.10), terms used by the Satan as shorthand for Job’s family, sons and daughters (1.2), livestock and servants (1.3) and the dwellings or places which were home to them. The prime causes of disorder are supernatural, God and the satan, using agents of calamity which are observable by human beings, and these are both human, Sabeans and Chaldeans, and natural, fire and wind. In the human dispute, the

\(^{30}\) BDB 108-110: (relevant to Job) “house . . . dwelling, habitation . . . shelter or abode of animals . . . (figurative) human body . . . Sheol . . . house containing a family . . . household, family”. E. Jenni (“בֵית house,” TLOT 1: 232-236) has said that the meaning of “house” frequently means the contents of the house either property, possessions or people, including family.
friends will argue that trouble comes to the wicked through their houses; they will live in “houses . . . destined to become heaps of ruins” (15.28), like the house of Job’s eldest son (1.19), and that the possessions of the house will be carried away” (20.28), as had happened to Job’s oxen and donkeys (1.14). The spider’s house (8.14, 15) and the house of stones (8.17) are metaphors for impermanence. Unstated, but understood through the poet’s use of building terminology, the first divine speech will depict the earth as a house (38.4-6) for its inhabitants and this house will endure as will that part of it which is the “steppe” which God has given to the wild ass for its “home (בֵּית)” (39.6). “Home” (בֵּית), the “dwelling of light” (38.19-20) and “home (בֵּית)” (38.20), the “place darkness” (38.19) belong to the unchanging fabric of creation. “Home” in Job will be a place which is both impermanent and permanent.

Fifth, “sons”, the means by which animate being is continued, play an important part in the poet’s thinking on creation. The myth tells the reader that it is one of the “sons of God” (1.6), the satan, who, allowed to do so by God, will bring about the death of the sons of the human Job (1.19), the devoted “servant” of God. Sons in the Prologue are, thus, paradoxically, both assailant and victims. Humankind may be threatened by sons, those of Resheph (5.7), malign beings from the supernatural realm. In the human dispute, the friends will claim that disaster comes to wrongdoers through their children, victims of parental misdeeds through being collateral damage in their punishment. In God’s celebration of life, however, sons are not victims destined for suffering and death; they are “morning stars” (בני אלהי) who “shouted for joy” (38.7), or celestial bodies, “the Bear with its children” (38.32), or the “young ones” of deer who become “strong” as “they grow up in the wild” (39.4), or the “young” of the careless ostrich (39.16). More ominously, however, the monster Leviathan, impervious to human assault weapons, including the arrow (הָכוֹן) (41.20), reigns over “all that are proud (בני שׁוּחַ)” (41.26).
Sixth, the friends claim that fire (שׁא), which, in the Prologue, burned Job’s sheep and servants, will be the means by which the wicked are undone. Eliphaz asserts that “fire consumes the tents of bribery” (15.34) and here tent refers to the inhabitants of the tent,\(^{31}\) and that “fire has consumed” their wealth (22.20). Zophar foretells a similar end for the wicked – “a fire fanned by no one will devour them; what is left in their tent will be consumed” (20.26). Whilst the cause of the fire in 15.34 is unspecified, Zophar’s fire is clearly of divine origin and a reminder of the fire which destroyed sheep and servants (1.16). Job, too, thinks of fire as the consequence of sin (31.12). Bildad, on the other hand, depicts fire as a necessity of life for the wicked, the loss of which is preliminary to their ultimate destruction – “the light of the wicked is put out, and the flame of their fire does not shine” (18.5). God’s description of Leviathan has him exhaling fire – “From its mouth go flaming torches; sparks of fire leap out. Out of its nostrils comes smoke. . . Its breath kindles coals, and a flame comes out of its mouth” (41.11-13). This creature has fire, with all its destructive possibilities, as part of its being.

Seventh, wind (רוח),\(^{32}\) in the Prologue the natural force which killed Job’s children (1.19), will, according to Eliphaz, be used by God (“the blast of his anger [רו ח]” [4.9]) to destroy wrongdoers. Later he will assert that “the wind of his mouth” (15.30) will bring about their undoing. Job will ask why the wicked are not subject to wind’s destructive power (21.18) before complaining that both he and his honour have become victims to

\(^{31}\) In the disputes, the word “tent” (אהל) is often used as a synonym for house – 5.24; 8.22; 11.14; 12.6; 15.34; 18.6, 14, 15; 19.12; 20.26; 21.28; 22.23; 31.31.

\(^{32}\) BDB 924-926: “breath, wind, spirit”. All of these meanings are to be found in Job. Rainer Albertz and Claus Westermann ("רו ח spirit," TLOT 3: 1202-1220) in their discussion on the meanings of this word have said that the basic meaning is “wind” and “breath” but they are not “understood as essence; rather it is the power encountered in the breath and the wind” (ibid., 1203). When רוח is wind it is “something found in motion with the power to set other things in motion” (ibid.) and the Joban examples they cite are 1.19; 15.2; 21.18; 27.21; 30.15; 38.24. Wind is visible when it causes other things to move. It can be a destructive force. Because of its “mysterious power” and “unknown origin” (ibid., 1205), wind can point to divine activity and, unlike human beings, God can control the wind. It may be present in theophanies and it may be equated with God’s breath which can be destructive (4.9; 15.30) and can be deployed in conflict (26.13). As spirit, wind may represent the totality of a person’s being (6.4; 7.11; 17.1).
the wind (30.15, 22). Wind also has creative power, and Bildad will think of it as a tool used by God in his creation of the cosmos – “By his wind the heavens were made fair” (26.13). When רוח means “breath”, it is associated with life and Job will say “my life is a breath” (7.7), and that “in his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of every human being” (12.10). God will finally respond to Job’s accusations, speaking out of the whirlwind (38.1), pointing out, amongst the many marvels of creation, Leviathan, a being so formed that he is beyond the reach of רוח; the shields of his back are set so closely to one another so that “no air can come between them” (41.8). He is neither sustained nor harmed by רוח. Whether translated as “wind” or “breath”, רוח has power. Wind creates the cosmos, but breath is the power behind words which create cosmologies, including those abhorrent to some. Eliphaz will ask “should the wise answer with windy knowledge and fill themselves with the east wind?” (15.2), to which Job will reply, “Have windy words no limit?” (16.3). Words create and intensify dispute. Job will say to the friends, “Do you think that you can reprove words, as if the speech of the desperate were wind” (6.26) and Bildad will respond, saying, “How long will you say these things and the words of your mouth be a great wind” (8.2).

Eighth, the Prologue suggests through the Satan’s question, “Have you not put a fence (זָהְךָ) around him and his house and all that he has, on every side?” (1.9) which, rephrased, is a statement that order in Job’s life is maintained through a protective containment which allowed him and his household to thrive and increase. The notion of confinement as a means of preserving order in creation will recur in the divine question, “who shut (סָךַּד) in the sea with doors when it burst out from the womb?” (38.8), but here the word סָךַּד suggests a restraint of Sea for the protection, not of itself, but of other parts

33 My next two chapters will be mainly concerned with the different cosmologies of Job, his friends and God.
34 BDB 962: “hedge or fence up, about”. This verb is used only twice in the OT; in Job it signifies a divine protective measure and in Hos 2.8, a divine obstructive measure – “I will hedge up her way with thorns.”
of creation. The idea of containment in a particular place, as an essential part of cosmic order, will be found in the word “way (דרך)” used by God to ask “where is the way to the dwelling of light” (38.19), “what is the way to the place where the light is distributed” (38.24), and “Who has cut a channel for the torrents of rain and a way for the thunderbolt?” (38.25). Like “way”, the word “place ( מקום)” is also used to convey the idea that containment in a particular place leads to cosmic order and the breaching of that containment leads to cosmic disorder. Charging God with violence against creation, Job will complain that God “shakes the earth out of its place” (9.6) and he will observe that, in the disintegration of creation, “the mountain falls and crumbles away, and the rock is removed from its place” (14.18). In the first divine speech, “dawn” will “know its place” (38.12) and there will be a “place” for “darkness” (38.19). Order in creation is maintained through containment within boundaries which are not only spatial, but also temporal.

James Muilenburg,35 observing that time is itself a product, the first, of God’s creative acts, has noted that, for Israel, time is not an abstract concept whose meaning is the subject of speculation, it is a reality in which things happen in the natural world and in the lives of human beings.36 Two of the terms used for time are יום and עת.37 Order in creation is maintained by the apportioning of time in which life is generated and during which life is enjoyed. The Prologue foreshadows the significance, for the Joban rhetoric, of time as a marker for order, telling of a particular point in time, a day (יום), when Job’s children, the generation to follow him, his servants and livestock were killed (1.13-19), all before their time, so breaching one of order’s boundaries in creation.

37 E. Jenni (“עת time,” TLOT 2:951-961) has said of עת, that, like יום, that the word “normally appears in concrete temporal designations specifying the pertinent temporal content, not in abstract statements concerning time per se” (ibid., 955).
Job, in the Prologue blessed by being fenced in (שׂוך) (1.9), will, when he breaks his silence, complain that God has “fenced (ןְּךָ)” him in (3.23) and confined him in a life he does not want. Like ancient Mesopotamian sufferers before him he will curse the day and the night he holds responsible for his misery.39

5.2 Soliloquy or Statement

As I have already argued,40 the soliloquy of Job 3 which is part of either or both disputes in Job, the dispute poem, is also the Statement which must precede Argument in the rhetoric which is Job.

The Statement begins with protest expressed in the strongest possible terms, those of cursing. The narrator opens the soliloquy saying “After this Job opened his mouth and cursed his day” (יום) (3.1).41 The words “after this” indicates the beginning of discursive thought following the myth which told of his affliction. There are various opinions on what or who is being “cursed” in these words. The text, however, makes it clear that it is one day which is being cursed, and only one day,42 Job’s, and by drawing attention to that

38 BDB 692: “hedge, or fence about, shut in”, and a parallel form of שׂוך.
39 Thorkild Jacobsen and Kirsten Nielsen [“Cursing the Day” in Scandinavian Journal of the Old Testament 6 (1992) 188-192] have found ancient precedents for Job’s cursing of “his day” and have drawn attention to texts in which days and nights were cursed. They cite a Sumerian text in which the mother of a youthful god curses the day, and the night before it, on which he was removed from her for military service which led to his death. In the lament over the destruction of Ur, the mourners ask the deity, Nanna, not to allow the return of the day of the storm which destroyed the city.
40 Chapter 4, section 4.1.2.
41 E. Jenni (TLOT 2:526-539) gives as the basic meaning of יום the period from sunrise to sunset in contrast to night. An alternative meaning for “day” is its twenty-four hour duration. With a pronoun suffix, the word can denote a special day, e.g. a birthday, so “his day” may mean his birthday. It may also have a more general meaning such as “(point in) time” or “moment” (ibid., 529). “Day” can signify life as in 14.6 and 30.25 (ibid., 531). Gershon Brin (The Concept of Time in the Bible and the Dead Scrolls [Leiden: Brill, 2001], 142) has said that יום is one of the words the Hebrew Bible uses to indicate a brief interval of time.
42 cf David Robertson (The Old Testament and the Literary Critic [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 36-37) who understands Job’s words to be a curse of all days and thus of all creation and so, by implication, its Creator. This is also the interpretation of Brown (Wisdom’s Wonder, 80) who argues that there is only a “technical distinction” which separates Job’s self-cursing which invokes God, and the cursing of God. Dermot Cox (The Triumph of Impotence, 39) argues that when Job curses his birth he does so “in terms that would better apply to the cause of his birth” and that would make God “in some way the object of
day, the poet draws attention to the reason for its being cursed which is that “it did not shut the doors of my mother’s womb, and hide trouble from my eyes” (3.10). The use of the demonstrative adjective, “that” with “day” (3.4) and “night” (3.6), singles out that period of time from all others. To emphasise his point, Job calls for the exclusion of the night of his conception from the calendar of created time, “let it not rejoice among the days of the year; let it not come into the number of the months” (3.6). It is a protest against a period of time which brought to birth a human whose experience of life would be torment. The day that is being cursed is, in the following verses, personified. It will “perish” (3.3), it can be terrified (3.5), the night, part of “his day”, will not “rejoice” (3.6), will “hope” (3.9), will not “see” (3.9) and has not “shut “doors” or hidden “trouble” (3.10). The word קָלָל, however, may also be an expression of Job’s abhorrence for a period of time which saw him given life; the Piel of the verb has made of that day an object of contempt. Job denigrates not all days, only “his day”, and by drawing attention to that day he draws attention to the reason for treating it with contempt, which is that it brought him into being, then to suffer.

Expanding the curse of 3.1 to cover the day of his birth and the night of his conception, the two parts of the twenty-four-hour period which is “his day”, Job

his curse.” He goes on to say that Job’s curse “amounts to a desire for the total reversion of the order of existence instituted by God at creation” (ibid., 43). Michael Fishbane (“Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13,” 158) has a similar interpretation. Others who share this view include Lindström, God and the Origin of Evil, 148; Good, In Turns of Tempest, 205; Perdue, “Job’s Assault on Creation,” 306-307; idem Wisdom in Revolt, 91-98; Seow, Job 1-21, 320. Blank (Prophetic Thought, 62) finds in Job’s cursing of his day a circumlocution for the cursing, prohibited by Pentateuchal law, of his mother who was ultimately responsible for his birth.

43 Muilenberg, (“The Biblical View of Time,” 236) has said that, for the Israelite, “time is believed somehow to be alive”.

44 Scott B. Noegel (“Job iii 5 in the light of Mesopotamian Demons of Time,” VT 57 [2007], 559) considers Job’s day to be a “personified entity”. Drawing on a number of Mesopotamian texts, he has noted the ancient belief “in the cosmic power of elements of time (to positive or negative effect)” (ibid., 557).

45 Muilenberg (The Biblical View of Time,” 236) comments that “the character of time depends upon that which happens in it” and so, for Job, the time which brought him into being, calls for cursing or, at the very least, an expression of abhorrence.

46 This is poetry and the reader is not meant to understand one day as being literally the time of both conception and birth.
continues “Let the day perish (אבד) in which I was born, and the night that said ‘A man-child is conceived’” (3.3). For the Joban poet, the word רַבָּב does not only mean “perish” or “vanish”, it bears ethical connotations and these will be well to the fore in the coming Dialogue. Looked at in this way, אבד used in a call for the elimination of “his day” and night (both have been personified) is suggestive of a moral judgment by Job against that period of time which brought him into the world for what it has done to him. He sees the elimination of a wrongdoer, “his day”, as a means of addressing the problem of the disorder which “his day” has brought to him. The use of the word רַבָּב points to an important question coming in the Dialogues, the question of who perishes and why, from which follows the question of whether or not there is an ethical underpinning of the cosmos. Is creation just, or unjust, or morally neutral, allowing both justice and injustice, an aspect of order and disorder, to exist together in the world.

Having sought the elimination of his day, Job continues by prescribing the manner in which that is to happen:

Let that day be darkness (חשׁך)! May God above not seek it, or light shine on it. Let gloom (חשׁך) and deep darkness (צלמות) claim it.

47 BDB 1: “perish, die” or “perish, vanish” in a figurative sense. Ernest Jenni [“אבד to perish” TLOT 1:13-15] notes that in the psalms and wisdom literature the verb is strongly connected to retribution theology and that it is Yahweh who does the destroying.

48 In the human dispute (Chapter 6) the friends use the verb frequently (4.7, 9, 11, 20; 8.13; 11.20; 18.17; 20.7) in connection with the deserved fate of the wicked.

49 BDB 365: “darkness, obscurity . . . distress . . . confusion.” H. Ringgren’s discussion (“חשׁך; חתך; חשׁך; חשׁך; חשׁך; חשׁך; חשׁך; חשׁך; חשׁך,” TDOT 5:245-259) of these terms has noted their link to creation, links which are established in 26.10 and 38.19f where darkness has both spatial and temporal significance. It has literal and figurative meanings. It is a physical state, one used by God to conceal himself (22.13-14) and the state which the wicked use to their advantage (24.13-17), and it may be a metaphor for ignorance (12.24-25; 38.2), or for the end awaiting the wicked (5.14; 15.23; 18.5-6; 20.26; 22.11), or the undeserving good (19.8), which is disaster, and death, and several passages suggest this meaning.

50 BDB 853: “death-shadow, deep shadow”, a word “characterizing the world of the dead”. Chaim Cohen (“The Meaning of "צלמות"'Darkness': A Study in Philological Method,” in Texts, Temples, and Traditions [ed. M. V. Fox, et al; Winona Lake: Eisenbraun, 1996]) has noted that often occurs in Job, and elsewhere, together with חשׁך (3.5; 10.21; 12.22; 24.16-17) suggesting that חשׁך shares the same semantic range. It appears in synonymous parallelism with חשׁך in 10.22. This verse is a reference to the
let clouds settle upon it;  
let the blackness (כמריר) of the day terrify it.  
That night – let thick darkness (אפל) seize it!  
let it not rejoice among the days of the year;  
let it not come into the number of the months.  
Yes, let that night be barren;  
let no joyful cry be heard in it.  
Let those curse (קבב) it who curse (אתת) a Day,  
those who are skilled to rouse up Leviathan.  
Let the stars of its dawn be dark (חשׁך);  
let it hope for light (אור) but have none;  
may it not see the eyelids of the morning (3.4-9)

In his rage against the day of his creation, Job consigns it to a terrifying darkness.  
Not content with one word for that state, he uses three or, perhaps, four. The word כתר can denote the darkness before creation (Gen 1.2) to which an effective curse, one that prevented his day ever being part of the calendar, would have consigned Job’s day.  
Associated with death, darkness (כתר) is the end which Job had wanted for his day (3.3), supposing that it had come into being. His night will be seized by a thick darkness never darkness of death, a state which Job will later wish for himself and so the traditional meaning appears to fit this context better.

51 BDB 484: “darkness, gloominess”. Pope (Job, 29), Perdue (“Job’s Assault on Creation,” 305), and Clines (Job 1-20, 68) understand this kind of darkness to be an eclipse. Seow (Job 1-21, 312) translates the phrase as “the bitternesses of Day” linking 3.5c with Job’s complaint in 3.20 (ibid., 346). He also notes that bitternesses are a feature of the Sumerian Lamentation over the Destruction of Ur.

52 BDB 66: “darkness, gloom”. Clines (Job 1-20, 85) suggests that here and also in 10.22 and possibly 23.17 and 30.26, the darkness of.Apel is like that of Sheol. So also Seow, Job 1-21, 347.

53 The word יום, “Day”, in the Masoretic text has been revocalized by some scholars to ים, “Sea”, the name of the Canaanite god Yam, perhaps because Leviathan is a marine monster, for example, Fishbane (“Jeremiah IV 23-26 and Job III 3-13,” 160), Pope (Job, 30), Gordis (Book of Job, 34), Perdue (“Job’s Assault on Creation,” 304), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 55). The text, however, is about cursing Job’s “day” and it would be strange if the object of cursing were changed abruptly. Many scholars would retain “day” in the translation, for example, John Day (God’s conflict with the dragon and the sea: Echoes of a Canaanite myth in the Old Testament [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985], 44-46), Clines (Job 1-20, 86), and Seow (Job 1-21, 312).

54 BDB 21: “light . . . morning light, dawn . . . light of the heavenly luminaries . . . daylight . . . light of lamp . . . light of prosperity.” M. Sebo (“אור light,” TLOT 1:63-67) has observed that “to see light” can be synonymous with “to live” as in 3.16, 20. In wisdom texts, “light” is often coupled with a word for darkness, most often כתר, and this pairing when applied to the human being can symbolise life and death. He notes that Light is a word with theological significance as it points to God’s work of creation. S. Aalen (”אור,” TDOT 1:147-167) has noted that light can signify “success and wellbeing” and darkness can signify “suffering and failure” (ibid., 160). Light can also denote divine favour (ibid., 161). Sinners, night and darkness, on the other hand, belong together.
to be lit by celestial bodies, stars or sun, and in this context, light is to be understood literally. “Barren”, it will hear “no joyful cry” (3.7) at the coming of new life. The diurnal progress from darkness to light is to be arrested for his night, so undoing creation’s order for that one period. He would wish to have his night cursed by those with skills to do so,55 those with skills adequate for rousing quiescent Leviathan,56 to reverse that part of creation which is the night of his conception, his words an expression of his loathing for that time rather than a credible threat of an effective curse. Though not addressed directly, the Creator is challenged not to nullify Job’s words of malediction against his day by seeking it out, or against his night. The challenge is conveyed through the repeated use of jussive verb forms beginning with “let that day be darkness” and “may God above not seek it” (3.4), and continuing with “let it not rejoice” (3.6), “let that night be barren” (3.7), and “let it hope for light, but have none” (3.9). Since, as I have already noted, it is not possible to curse his day, and Job will repeatedly acknowledge his powerlessness before God, the challenge to God should be seen as protest, albeit one which demands an answer.

Introduced in the Statement and connecting it to the Argument to follow in the Dialogue are the motifs of darkness and light which will be important for the poet’s discussion on the place of order and disorder in Creation.

Having made his protest, which is the first part of the Statement (3.1-10), Job turns, in the second part (3.11-26), to questions, five in all. Since “his day” has not been eliminated and he has been brought into the world, Job asks why he did not “die at birth”

55 Scharbet’s study of cursing (“‘Fluchen’ und ‘Segnen’”, 6) has found that the ability to curse is limited to a few people and it may be that here the poet is calling for just such people, those capable of rousing Leviathan, to curse his day. So also Perdue (“Job’s Assault on Creation,” 307) citing the Balaam cycle (Num 22-24) as evidence. Seow (Job 1-21, 324) drawing on an ancient Near Eastern text has suggested that “fallen astral deities” are being invoked here to “ensure eternal darkness”.

56 Ola Wikander (“Job 3.8 – Cosmological Snake-Charming and Leviathanic Panic in an Ancient Near Eastern Setting,” ZAW 122 (2010): 267-269) finds a link between this verse and the Enuma elish. In the Babylonian text magical spells were included in the arsenal of weapons used to overcome the sea monster but in that work the monster was killed whilst in 3.8, the suggestion is that the monster is not dead and could be roused.
(3.11) and, since he did not, why his infant life was sustained (3.12) so that it could reach maturity. His third question, asks why he had not been a stillborn infant (3.16). His fourth asks why “light” is “given to one in misery” and “life” to those who were “bitter in soul” (3.20), and his fifth why “light” is “given to one who cannot see the way (דרך)” (3.23). Light and life are now linked as darkness and death had been earlier.

In the first part of his Statement, by his choice of words for darkness and their associations with death, the poet has equated, for the reader, the one with the other; darkness is death. In the first part of the Statement (3.1-10), light is the physical condition that is day and brought to it by celestial bodies, “the stars of its dawn” and the “the eyelids of the morning” (3.9). In the second part of the Statement (3.11-26) the poet equates for the reader, life and light, the opposites of death and darkness. Light and darkness are now given both literal and figurative meanings. The first part of Job’s statement protests against a time which brought him into the world (3.10), and the second asks why life and light were given to him (3.20). This question, continuing the connection between light and life, has both a personal and a general orientation, best shown by Gordis’ translation: “Why is light given to the sufferer and life to embittered souls” (3.20).57 The first indirect object is singular and refers to Job, whilst the second is plural and refers to sufferers in general.58 His concern for all who suffer, shown in the use of masculine plural verb forms and a masculine plural adjective, continues in this extended question. He adds

who long (המחכים) for death, but it does not come,  
and dig (יחפרהו) for it more than for hidden treasurers; 
who rejoice (שמחים) exceedingly,  
and are glad (ישישו) when they find (ימצאו) the grave? (3.21-22)

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58 Cox (*The Triumph of Impotence* 47) finds in this verse a statement concerning the human condition, saying that “bitterness and tribulation have characterized the nature of man”. This assumption, however, is not borne out by chapter 3 nor by the rest of the Dialogues where very clear distinctions are made between the fortunate and the unfortunate and reasons given for their different conditions. Job asks here why life is given to the troubled, he does not ask why life is given to everyone.
Job, in these verses (3.20-23), is not only a complainant and questioner on his own behalf but the representative of, and spokesman for, all who suffer. Concealed in this question is an accusation. The verb (נתן) in 3.20 is often translated in the passive voice though the Hebrew verb is not, so the question hinted at here, but not articulated, is: who gives the light? Translators who use the passive voice may have been reluctant to make God responsible for the linking of light and life to misery and bitterness. Job, however, knows the giver but is not quite ready to name him. The fifth question may also be seen as both personal and general. Job asks “Why does he give life to the man whose way is hidden, whom God has fenced in?” (3.23). Job, unwilling to name God as the source of light for the “sufferer” and life to “embittered souls” (3.20), now names him as the one responsible for confining him, and perhaps others, to wretched circumstances. That questions need to be asked, and are asked, is as much a protest as a search for understanding.

Between questions two and three and between questions three and four, Job reflects on death. Death, the end of life for all, is a great equaliser. It is the place of “the small and great” (3.19). Included among the latter may be “kings and counsellors” (3.14) and “princes” (3.15) whose concerns in life had been with material things. For the “kings and counsellors” it was to “build ruins for themselves” (3.14), a hint of the futility of their

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59 In recent times, for example, by NRSV, Hartley, The Book of Job, 96; Clines, Job 1-20, 68; John Gray, The Book of Job (ed. David J. A. Clines; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2010), 140.
60 Dhorne (Job, 37) attributes the passive translation of נתן to “theological scruple”. Gordis (Book of Job, 38) says of נתן that it “is impersonal, hence virtually a passive . . . Job is not yet voicing a charge against God.” Seow (Job 1-21, 313) uses the impersonal pronoun “one” – “Why has one given light . . .” – adding (ibid., 332) that the implied subject of the verb can only be God.
61 These words do not appear in the MT; they are a repetition of the opening of v.20 though they are included in most translations. Seow (Job 1-21, 313) does not repeat them, making this verse, part of a long statement.
62 This phrase is sometimes translated “rebuild ruins for themselves” (NRSV), or “who rebuild ruined cities for themselves” (Gordis, Book of Job, 28; Clines, Job 1-20, 68; Seow, Job 1-21, 312) and the reason given is that ancient Near Eastern rulers often restored buildings and even cities. Pope (Job, 27), however, has “built themselves ruins” and similarly Habel (The Book of Job, 99).
endeavours whose end would be ruin as theirs would be death; for the princes, it was the accumulation of wealth “gold” and “silver” (3.15) no longer to be enjoyed by them. It is the place where “the wicked cease from troubling (רגז)” (3.17), no longer to threaten the order of the living. It is the place of liberation where “prisoners are at ease” because “they do not hear the voice of the taskmaster (שׂנג)” (3.18), and where “a slave (עבד) is free from his master” (3.19) and where “servant (עבד) Job” (1.8; 2.3) would be free of his master. It is the place where “the weary are at rest (נוח)” (3.17). Job would wish to be “at ease” (3.26) like the “prisoners” (3.18) and is not, and he would wish to have “rest (נוח)” (3.26) like the “weary” (3.17), but has not. Death is not the desired end, however, of those who do not suffer - the rich separated from their possessions, the wicked from their misdeeds, and oppressors from their oppressed. Life is good for the fortunate but death is not, and death is good for the unfortunate but life is not. Job ends his statement with an expression of his abject misery, his life one of “sighing” and “groaning” (3.24), and the realisation of his “dread” (פחד פחדתי) (3.25), and “trouble” (3.26).

The poet’s Statement in chapter 3, using the voice of Job, raises the issue of suffering in creation. It does not suggest that the whole cosmos should not have been brought into being, only that period of time which brought into being and gave life to the suffering Job, thereby giving to him also the wish, either never to have been born, or to die, the latter wish shared by other sufferers. By limiting Job’s protest to that part of creation which saw the engendering of Job, the Prologue’s representative of humanity suffering undeservedly, the poet raises the issue, through protest and question, of the place of suffering, an aspect of disorder, in the world. It is the poet’s Statement, which must be addressed by Argument, on the place of order and disorder in the cosmos. By his use of

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63 BDB 808: “dread, be in dread, in awe” (verb) and “dread” (noun). HALOT 3: 922-923: “trembling, dread . . . fear instigated by God. H. -P. Stähl [“to shake,” TLOT 2: 979-981] has drawn attention to texts in which shaking is induced by emotion, either joy or fear, more often the latter. It is a term which can describe the “numinous terror of God”, and which “characterizes God’s frightfulness in relation to his majesty and kingship” (ibid., 981).
the two polarities, darkness and light to which he links non-being and being, and death and life, he signals to the readers his understanding that creation is made up of many antitheses which require exploration because they are the stuff from which the cosmos is made.

The Argument will be taken up, starting in Job 4, by Job’s three friends who do not answer his questions, nor do they respond to his protests, but they do react to his expression of misery with words of advice. The Argument will be taken up, too, by God starting in Job 38 who also does not answer Job’s questions, and neither does he respond to Job’s expression of misery but does respond to his accusations.
CHAPTER 6

THE HUMAN DISPUTE

Having made, in *Job* 3, his Statement in the rhetoric which is the book as a whole, the poet presents his Argument, the first part of which is expressed in the form of a dispute between Job and his friends, Job representing one point of view and his friends another.\(^1\) These speeches, though ostensibly addressed to the human participants in a dispute, are, more importantly, part of the poet’s argument addressed to the reader whose persuasion to the poet’s point of view is the goal of the rhetoric which is the book of *Job*. The speeches on both sides of the dispute make use of Aristotle’s three tools of rhetoric - *logos*, *ethos*, and *pathos*. This chapter will be divided into three parts: the first will focus on the friends’ speeches, the second on Job’s speeches, and the third will be a concluding summary of the human dispute over order and disorder in creation.

6.1 *The Speeches of the Friends*

I shall begin by drawing out from the friends’ speeches their core beliefs on creation and its Creator, which are their understandings concerning the being and creative acts of God, and the relationship which God has with creation, particularly that part which is human. That human beings are seen as a part of creation, is made clear by Eliphaz’s reference to God as “their Maker” (4.17). Secondly, I will analyse the speeches which articulate the friends’ beliefs on the reasons for order and disorder in human life some of which recommend to Job the ways by which he may secure order in his life, understood

\(^1\) Chapter 4, section 4.1.
as survival and wellbeing, and avoid disorder, understood as ill-being and untimely death. Thirdly, I will outline the non-technical supports for the friends’ argument, their witnesses, which are part of their tradition and which are called upon as corroboration of their assertions before, fourthly, summarising the cosmology of the friends. This summary will be followed by a discussion on emotion as a tool for the persuasion of Job. I will conclude the study of the friends’ speeches with a discussion on their credibility as it would be perceived by their hearer, Job, and also by the reader.

6.1.1  Core Cosmological Beliefs

The friends express core beliefs on three key areas of their cosmology. There is, firstly, a reflection on the mystery of the divine being focusing on its imponderable immensity and this is the contribution of Zophar (11.5-9). Secondly, there is a reflection on the mystery of the might of God as Creator which is Bildad’s contribution (25.2-3; 26.5-14).\(^2\) Thirdly, present in all of his speeches, are Eliphaz’s reflections on the relationship of the human part of creation to its Creator (4.7-11, 17-21; 5.6-7; 15. 14-16; 22.2-4, 15-16). All three friends, however, will propound thinking on this aspect of their cosmology because it will lead to a knowledge of what powerless human beings must do to ensure a good relationship with the powerful and mysterious Deity on which depends their ordered lives, and even their survival.

6.1.1.1  Zophar on the Mystery and Immensity of God

\(^2\) See chapter 2, section 2.2, on speech attribution in the third cycle of speeches.
The unknowability of the divine by the human is foreshadowed in the Prologue’s myth which has Job and his three friends ignorant of proceedings in the supernatural realm. The theme of unknowability continues in the human debate and Zophar focuses on the mysteriousness of God’s being. In his first speech (11.2-20), Zophar expresses his desire for a divine revelation that would bring to Job knowledge of the things of God. “But oh, that God would speak, and open his lips to you, and that he would tell you the secrets of wisdom! For wisdom is many-sided (כפלים) (11.5-6). Given its context in a passage whose subject is God’s mysteriousness, “wisdom” here must refer to divine wisdom about which, since it is secret, Zophar, and other human beings, can only wonder. A further barrier to his understanding of this wisdom is its supposed complexity (doubleness).

Zophar expands on his theme of divine mystery by asking

Can you find (מצא) out the deep (חקר) things of God?
Can you find out the limit (תכלית) of the Almighty?
It is higher than heaven (שמים) – what can you do (פעל)?
Deeper than Sheol – what can you know (ידע)?
Its measure is longer than the earth (ארץ),

3 BDB 495: “the double.”
4 BDB 350: “searching, thing (to be) searched out.”
5 See Chapter 3, section 3.2.1 on the tripartite structure of the cosmos. BDB1029-1030: “heavens, sky” either the “visible heavens, sky” or “abode of God.” That it is always a plural noun, J. Edward Wright (The Early History of Heaven [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000], 55), though noting the standard dual ending of שמים, has suggested conveys the Israelite view of “the sweep or vastness of the heavenly realm from horizon to horizon”, rather than an Israelite notion of multiple heavens.
6 BDB 821: “do, make.” J. Vollmer [“פעל to make, do,” TLOT 2: 1014-1018] suggests for this verse, since it concerns “the impotence of Job”, the meaning “to be able, accomplish” (ibid., 1015).
7 BDB 393-395: (relevant to Job) “know, learn to know . . . perceive and see . . . find out and discern . . . know by experience . . . be acquainted with (a person) . . . have knowledge, be wise.” W. Schottroff (“ידע to perceive, know.” TLOT 2: 508-521) in his discussion of the verb finds, firstly, that it denotes “primarily the sensory awareness of objects and circumstances in one’s environment attained through involvement with them and through the information of others” (ibid., 511). Secondly, it denotes “the recognition that results from the deliberate application of the senses, from investigation and testing, from consideration and reflection” (ibid., 512). This perception is got through “finding (מצא)” (ibid.).
8 BDB 75-76: of the many possible meanings of this word, the most relevant for this passage are: “earth, whole earth (opposite to a part) . . . earth (opposite to heaven, sky) . . . used even of Sheol.” H. H. Schmid (“ארץ earth, land,” TLOT 1: 172-179) finds four subdivisions of meaning, of which the first, the cosmological, is the most apt for this verse, which is “earth (in contrast to heaven) and the dry land (in contrast to the waters” (ibid., 173).
By his choice of words, Zophar points to the difficulty, even the impossibility, of understanding the Divine. He asks twice, using the same word (מצא), if Job can discover something, an object (חקר) whose literal translation continues the notion of searching, which, for him, is the boundary within which the divine being is contained (“the limit of the Almighty”). The wordמצא, used by Job to express his longing for the grave (3.22), is used here by Zophar to suggest to Job a search, instead, for understanding about God. Deep, high, broad and long, creation itself is Zophar’s metaphor for the contemplation of God’s immensity. It is greater than the world known by human beings, longer than the earth on which they live and find a living, and higher than the sky, the source of the weather which can sustain or destroy that living, and also the place of the celestial bodies. It is broader even than the sea, which, according to creation thinking of the time, surrounded the earth and sky and so was the frame of the material world. The vastness of God surpasses the earth, the sky and the sea together.

Greater than the visible world, God is greater than that part of creation unknown to humans, the heavens, abode of the Deity, or deities in ancient Near Eastern thought, where matters concerning humans may be decided, as in the Prologue. God is deeper than Sheol, not his abode but, in Mesopotamian and Ugaritic belief, inhabited by the deities of the netherworld, which, as the place of death for all humans, was unknown to the living. God is greater, too, than the sea which, in the thinking of many ancients, is more than an expanse of water; it is both the primordial substance and also the primordial power which makes from that substance all else in the supernatural and natural worlds. Sea, in the ancient near East, was the stuff of creation and new creation; creative and destructive, it

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9 Schmid (TLOT 1:174) has observed that there is no Hebrew word for ‘world’ or ‘universe’, and so the juxtaposition of earth and heaven are used to express this concept.

10 Chapter 3, sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.5.
was a force which could be both ordering and disordering. For Zophar, God, Creator of all, transcends the natural world and the supernatural world of Near Eastern myth. In this belief, he asks two further questions: “what can you do?” and “what can you know?” (11.8), questions which, if rhetorical, are statements expressing feelings of profound ignorance about God (though in v.6b he claims to know something of the divine mind) and utter helplessness before God, a helplessness pointing to the power of God, a subject that Bildad takes up in his last speech (25.2-6, 26.5-14).

6.1.1.2 Bildad on the Mystery and Might of God

Drawing on creation traditions from Mesopotamia and Ugarit, Bildad in his last speech (25.2-3; 26.5-14) makes a statement about the mystery and might of God, who uses this might to be both creative and ordering.

Dominion and fear are with God;
he makes peace in his high heaven (מרום).

Is there any number to his armies?  
Upon whom does his light not shine? (25.2-3)

The shades (רפאים) below tremble,
the waters (מים) and their inhabitants.

Sheol is naked before God,

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11 BDB 928: “height, elevation, elevated place . . . height of heaven”.  
HALOT 2:633: “mountain top . . . elevated site . . . elevated socially . . . heaven . . . God’s dwelling place.”  
It is not clear whether this word refers to a part of the physical world or to the supernatural world which is the abode of the Deity or deities. Since he will go on (26.5-6) to describe divine dominance over the netherworld which, in these verses, is the abode of supernatural beings, heaven as the place of the supernatural rather than sky which is part of the physical world, seems the more likely.

12 The passage 25.4-6 is discussed in the next section dealing with Eliphaz’s reflections on humanity.

13 BDB 952: “shades, ghosts.”  
Conrad L’Heureux (“The Ugaritic and Biblical Rephaim,” HTR 67 [1974]):  
265-74] notes that these beings appear in Ugaritic texts. As attendees, along with other gods, and called rp ʿm, at banquets given by El, he concludes that they are deities.

14 BDB 565-566: “waters, water” from various sources including, and relevant to Job, “sea”, “flood”, the “subterranean” regions, “clouds”, “rain”, “primeval deep.”  
HALOT 2:576-577: (relevant to Job) “water as a primeval element . . . rain water . . . as a dangerous power, the waters of the underworld. From these many meanings, water can be understood not only as a necessity of life but also as a threat to it and both views of water are present in Job.
and Abaddon has no covering.

He stretches out (כְּסֵא) Zaphon (צָפְון) over the void (תֵּהָה), and hangs (נַלַל) the earth upon nothing (עַל בָּלִים).

He binds up the waters in his thick clouds (כְּנַנְנָה) and the cloud (כְּנַנִּין) is not torn open by them.

He covers (כִּפְשָׂה) the face of his throne (כָּסָס) and spreads over it his cloud (כְּנַנָּה).

15 BDB 639-641: “stretch out, spread out, extend, incline, bend.” HALOT 2: 692-693: “to reach out . . . to spread out (tent) . . . to lay out the measuring cord stretch out the heavens (like a tent).”

16 BDB 860: “north.” Richard J. Clifford (The Cosmic Mountain in Canaan and the Old Testament [Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972], 57) notes that the word originates in the name of a mountain, Zaphon, the mountain which was the abode of Baal. ‘North’ was a secondary meaning derived from the location of the mountain which was to the north of Palestine. Unlike NRSV, most scholars translate כְּסֵא as “north”, including, for example, Gordis (The Book of Job, 274), Habel (Book of Job, 364), Clines (Job 21-37, 620). Dhorme (Job, 372), however, understands Zaphon to refer to the sky, giving as his reason other texts (Ps 104.2; Isa 40.22; 42.5 44.24; Jer 10.12; 51.15; Zech 12.1) in which the divine act of stretching refers to the creation of the heavens, an idea expressed elsewhere (9.8) by the Joban poet, too. Habel (“He Who Stretches out the Heavens,” CBQ 34 [1972], 422) has stated that stretching out the North is “a variant way of expressing the stretching out of heaven like a tent.”

17 BDB 1062: “formlessness, confusion, unreality, emptiness.”

18 BDB 1067: “hang.” Schmid [TLOT 1:174] finds in these words an image of earth which, like a cloth is hung over the void. This image will occur again in 38.12. He draws attention to an Akkadian text (“Hymn to the Sun-God,” translated by Ferris J. Stephens [ANET, 387]) which has a similar image: “Thou (Shamash) art holding the ends of the earth suspended from the midst of heaven”.

19 The literal translation of these words is “on-not- what (interrogative)”. BDB 116: gives “nothingness” as the meaning for the word כָּסָס.

20 BDB 728: “dark cloud, cloud-mass, thicket.” HALOT 2:857-858: “clouds . . . clouds as the domain of divine existence and activity: a) God’s garment . . . b) both revealing and veiling the presence of God (Yahweh) when he appears.”

21 BDB 777-778: “cloud-mass, cloud.” E. Jenni [כָּנַנָה, TLOT 2: 937-939] has distinguished between two semantically related terms suggesting that כָּנַנָה denotes “clouds and fog more as an extended, opaque mass” and כָּנִנָּה indicates “individual, contoured rain clouds” (ibid., 938). In addition to being meteorological phenomena, they are used in texts dealing with divine power over clouds both in this passage and in 38.9, 34.37 and also in several other passages in the Hebrew Bible. They may separate God from creation, as in 22.13-14, and may also be “the special medium of revelation and simultaneously of concealing the presence of God” (ibid 939).

22 BDB 28: “grasp, take hold, take possession.” Clines (Job 21-37, 622) notes that the piel participle of this verb occurs only here and that most scholars have translated the word as “cover” as he does (ibid., 620). Others who have so translated it include Dhorme, (Job,372), Habel (Book of Job, 364), Good (In Turns of Tempest 119). Pope (Job, 180) says “obscures”, Gordis (The Book of Job, 274) has “he hides the sight of”, and Hartley (The Book of Job, 364) has “encloses the sight”. Given that the verse continues by saying that “he spreads his cloud over it”, the word “cover” would seem the obvious translation because that is what clouds do.

23 BDB 490-491: a variant of יָשָׂר, which means “seat of honour, throne.” The word כָּסָס may also, but rarely, mean “full moon” (BDB 490). Scholarly opinion seems to be evenly divided between “full moon” and “throne” as a translation of the word. Favouring the former are, for example, NRSV, Dhorme (Job, 372), Foerster (Das Buch Hiob (KAT 16; Guetersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1963), 382), Pope (Job, 180), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 119), Newsom (“Job,”518). Favouring the latter are, for example, Gordis (The Book of Job, 274), Habel (Book of Job, 364), Hartley (The Book of Job, 364), and Clines (Job 21-37, 620). Bildad’s words describe a cosmogony and so the appearance of a celestial body would not be unexpected. This cosmogony, however, uses as the stuff of creation, Zaphon, the home of the Canaanite gods from where they ruled and so, the place of their thrones. I suggest that “throne” is the more apt translation for this context where it becomes the throne of Bildad’s God.

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He has described a circle (ותּמֵר) on the face of the waters (ים),
at the boundary (קפラー) between light and darkness.

The pillars (אכסדו) of heaven tremble,
and are astounded (התמהה) at his rebuke (געתר). 27

By his power he stilled
by his understanding (רחבע) he struck down Rahab (רהב). 29
By his wind 30 the heavens were made fair;
his hand pierced the fleeing Serpent (חנש). 31

These are indeed but the outskirts (כמס) of his ways;
and how small a whisper do we hear of him!

24 BDB 349: (relevant to this verse and concerning כת) “prescribed limit, boundary;” BDB 295: (concerning נה) “draw round, make a circle.”

25 BDB 765: “pillar, column.” D. N. Freedman, and B. E. Willoughby (“Davar,” TDOT 11:187-192) note that, derived from the verb דא meaning “stand”, the noun primarily means a pillar or pole supporting the roof of either a tent or a more permanent structure. When used metaphorically, it refers to the foundations of heaven and earth.

26 BDB 1069: “be astounded, dumbfounded.” In its theological uses, U. Berges (“Hebrew,” TDOT 15: 681-684) has said that the meaning of התמהה, when used in connection with human beings confronted by divine intervention, becomes “terror” rather than “amazement” (ibid., 682). Only in this passage does the verb have a non-human subject, but the response is similar and produces “trembling at the terrible omnipotence of the Creator” (ibid., 683).

27 BDB 172: “rebuke.” The translation “rebuke” has seemed too mild a term for Andrew Macintosh (“A Consideration of Hebrew דוא, VT 19 [1969]: 471-479) whose philological study of the word has pointed to anger so intense that it has a physical as well as verbal expression best described as “snorting fury” (ibid., 473). G. Liedke (“רמש” TLOT 1: 322-323) has noted that the verb רמש often occurs in connection with God’s battle against chaos. A. Caquot (“מש” TDOT 3: 49-53) in his study of the use of this verb and also the nounحلم, has found that when rebukes come from God they are the expression of divine anger (Ps 18.15), sometimes accompanied by storm (Ps 18.15, 104.7) and wind (Isa 50.2: 66.15; Nah 1.4). God’s rebuke may be both creative (Ps 104.7) and destructive of what has been created (Isa 50.2; Nah 1.4).

28 BDB 920-92: “disturb . . . be at rest, repose”. Many scholars have settled on the second meaning, for example, Pope (Job, 180), Gordis (The Book of Job, 274), Habel (Book of Job, 364), Hartley (The Book of Job, 364), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 119), and Clines (Job 21:37-620). Given the violence of God’s creative acts, the first meaning would not be impossible and Clines (ibid., 623) has named a number of interpreters who have chosen it. The act of stilling, however, can be accompanied by force which would be in keeping with this creation account, and whilst the second meaning is preferable in this context, nevertheless, the word hints at force used to subdue Sea.

29 BDB 923: (masculine noun) “storm, arrogance . . . mythical sea monster”. The feminine noun, רהבה, means “boisterous, raging, behaviour”, the adjective, בורה, “proud, defiant”, and the verb, בורא, “act stormily, boisterously, arrogantly.” Since the mythical being, Rahab, is not found in Ugaritic or Mesopotamian texts, clues to its nature and fate must be found in passages of the Hebrew Bible to which Mary K. Wakeman has drawn attention (God’s Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery [Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1973], 56-62). In Isa 51.9 God cut Rahab “in pieces”, and in Ps 89.10 he “crushed Rahab like a carcase”. Rahab is also linked with Egypt (Isa 30.7). The linking of Rahab with Egypt, for Wakeman, makes sense “as Rahab is the proto-type of the defeated-by-God” (ibid., 60). I suggest that in Bildad’s cosmogony, Rahab, who appears in the same verse as Sea, is likely to be a sea monster. So Gordis, Book of Job, 280; Clines, Job 21-37, 638.

30 Seven winds were included in the weaponry used by Marduk to entrap and destroy Tiamat (Lambert, Babylonian Creation Myths, 89).

31 BDB 638: “serpent.” In the Baal cycle, Baal’s sister Anat claims to have crushed not only Yamm, but also a seven-headed serpent (“Poems about Baal and Anath.” Translated by H. L. Ginsberg [ANET, 137]). Mot, in a message to Baal, says “When you smite [Lotan, the] fleeing [serpent]. Finish off [the twisting serpent], the close-coiling one [with seven heads]” (ibid., 138).

32 BDB 892: “end . . . (and for this verse) the mere edge, minute part, of his doings.”
But the thunder (רעם) of his power (גבורה) who can understand (בין)? (26.5-14)

There is a symmetry in Bildad’s pondering on God, the one who orders and creates. He will reflect first on the supernatural realm and then on the natural realm and, for each realm on its upper and lower levels. Turning to his thoughts on the supernatural world, it should be noted that there is some ambiguity in meaning of נרומ “high heaven” (25.2) but here it is a reference to the place where God dwells, and also the place of the infinitely many “armies” at his disposal, the upper level of the supernatural realm. That these two verses refer to the supernatural is made the more likely by the fact that the verses 26.5-6 concern the lower level of the supernatural world and the two together would be a statement about divine control over the totality of the supernatural realm. Bildad’s speech begins by asserting God’s mastery over all that is. He asks a rhetorical question, “Upon whom does his light not shine?” (25.3), a statement that there is nothing which exists separately from God. He has ownership of light (the masculine singular suffix declares it), linked to which is life, as the poet established in Job’s statement, and its bestowal is God’s upon whom all beings depend not only for light but also for their being. God’s rule, backed by supernatural forces, with which goes the dread of those ruled, prevails in heaven where it imposes peace. In the lower level of the supernatural domain, exposed and defenceless as they are, the “shades”, “the waters and their inhabitants” have cause

33 BDB 947: “thunder.” The word has both literal and figurative meanings; the first is a weather phenomenon and the second is the sound of battle as in 39.5. In the Enuma elish, Marduk set out to engage Tiamat riding “the fearful chariot of the irresistible storm” (Lambert, Babylonian Creation Myths, 89) and, armed with “the Storm-flood”, he challenged her to “do battle” (ibid., 91).
34 BDB 150: “strength, might.” HALOT 1:172: “strength”, either of animals, humans or God, or, in the plural, “God’s mighty deeds.”
35 Bildad’s speech is interrupted by the interpolation into it of two passages. There is, first, the passage 25.4-6 with its disparaging references to human beings and also to the moon and stars, matter unrelated both to what precedes and to what follows it, and, second, there is the passage 26.1-4 which is part of a speech by Job. It seems likely that the presence of these two passages here is the result of the disarrangement of the text in the third cycle (chapter 2, section 2.2) and they should not interrupt the flow of Bildad’s reflections on God’s control of the supernatural world and his creation of the natural world.
36 Chapter 5, section 5.2.
to “tremble” (26.5). This verse offers two views of the lowest level of the supernatural world; it is both the netherworld and the primeval deep and both had their supernatural inhabitants. In Near Eastern myth, the primeval waters were not only a place and a substance, but also, and in this verse, more probably, a power, which, personified and able to experience fear, is made to tremble, like its inhabitants. In just a few words, Bildad has claimed for God supremacy over the upper level of the supernatural realm and over its lower level, either the netherworld and its beings, or the primordial waters and their inhabitants giving him mastery not only of the primordial place of creation with its supernatural denizens, but also over the primordial substance and power of creation.

Drawing on both Sumerian and Akkadian cosmogonic traditions and also the Ugaritic Baal myths, Bildad continues by describing God’s creation of the physical world, the part which can be known by human beings and, in this cosmogonic account, it is a three-part universe – heaven (sky), earth and sea. Divine strength “stretches out Zaphon over the void” to create from it the “earth” which he “hangs” over “nothing” (26.7). Zaphon here must be a mountain rather than a compass direction which cannot be stretched to create a place, and which, in any event, owes its name to a place. Thought of as a mountain, Zaphon points to a Sumerian tradition which has, as the first act of creation of the natural world, the pulling apart by the deities An and Enlil of a primordial mountain to create from it earth and sky.37 A link to this tradition would support the idea that from mount Zaphon was created not only earth but also heaven, an idea which the text later affirms with its two references to “heavens” (26.11, 13). Heaven and earth, the two parts of Zaphon, imagined by the poet as the base and covering of a tent, are, together, suspended over nothingness. For Marduk, too, stretching out was a method of creation; after splitting Tiamat’s body into two parts, he “stretched out” one part to create “the

37 See Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.
heavens”.38 The two traditions share the notion of separation of a whole into two parts as the first act of creation of the natural world, the difference between them being what was separated, mountain or monster, and in what context. In the Babylonian tradition, following conflict and death, a new creation was formed from the remains of the old, whilst in the Sumerian tradition, a new creation, earth and sky, was formed from the old, the mountain, but struggle was not its trigger. In an act reminiscent of the Akkadian myth, in which waters in the sky, created from the upper part of Tiamat’s body, were imprisoned under guard to prevent their escape,39 Bildad’s account has the waters above contained in thick clouds from which there is no escape (26.8). The “circle” which has been drawn “on the face of the waters” (26.10) creates the horizon, a boundary between sky and sea, across which, from one side to the other, light will make its diurnal way. (Zophar’s God whose being had no “limit” (זָכַלְתָּה) (11.7) is Bildad’s God, able to prescribe a limit (זָכַלְתָּה) (26.10).) Movement across this boundary creates the alternation of light and dark, and this act of divine drawing is the creator of both time and also of the means by which its passage may be marked.

Bildad’s words are his account of the creation of the structure of the natural world. He is not concerned with subsequent creative acts, such as life in its various forms, nor need he be, because in his cosmogony the conditions necessary for life have been established. Zaphon, pitched like a tent, is a dwelling for the living. Water to sustain life is provided by rain-bearing clouds and the heavens, potentially harmful, are “made fair” (26.13). Light is given a boundary to separate it from darkness. Recalling the connection established by the poet, between light and darkness on the one hand, and life and death on the other,40 in this cosmogony, the creation of both light and dark and their separation

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38 Lambert, Babylonian Creation Myths, 95.
39 Ibid.
40 Chapter 5, section 5.2.
from each other points to, and is a sign of, the bringing into being of life and death, with successive intervals between light and dark establishing the span of life allotted to mortal beings. The divine purpose in separating a mountain into two distinct parts was to allow the creation of life, as it had been Enlil’s, recounted in the “Song of the Hoe”, whose declared aim was to “make the seed of mankind rise from the earth” as though they were germinating plants.41

God’s creation of the cosmos is not devoid of conflict. As a ruler with a “throne” (26.9), armies were available to him (a rhetorical question (25.3) asserts that he has them), but it is as a single combatant, like Marduk or Baal, that God engages supernatural powers. The “Sea” is “stilled” and “Rahab” “struck down” (26.12), the “serpent” is “pierced” (26.13), and the personified structural supports of the sky are intimidated, Bildad saying, “the pillars of heaven tremble, and are astounded at his rebuke” (26.11). The means used by God to make the world are “his power” (26.12, 14), “his understanding” (26.12), “his wind” (26.13), and “his hand” (26.13). He ends his account with the words “the thunder of his power” (26.14), words descriptive of the nature of divine might and connoting both the power of the elements and also military power. The feared ruler and warrior god, with numberless “armies” (25.3) at his disposal, though he had no need of them, used force to overcome hostile forces which could threaten the cosmos which he had brought into being.

Bildad’s world is ordered, at least superficially. Its structure has been set in place, through acts of separation, heaven and earth, water and sky, light and dark. Threats to order, Sea, Rahab and the serpent have been dealt with. The poet, however, wishes to create in the mind of the perceptive reader an element of uncertainty and a suspicion that this order could be overturned. Well-versed in the cosmological myths of the ancient Near

East addressing a reader who may have been equally so, the poet would have known that Sea, in the person of Tiamat had been killed by Marduk,\footnote{Lambert, 
\textit{Babylonian Creation Myths}, 93.} but that Sea in the person of Yamm, though struck and injured by Baal had probably survived as a captive.\footnote{``Poems about Baal and Anath,'' translated by H. L. Ginsberg (\textit{ANET}, 131-132).} He will say of Sea only that it had been “stilled” (26.12) leaving the possibility that Sea could once again imperil the stability of creation. Rahab had been “struck” (26.12) and the serpent “pierced” (26.13) but neither had been eliminated as they had been in other texts. The “wind” (26.13) used here as a tool for good, may also bring calamity as the reader will recall from the Prologue (1.19). The ancient reader might also have recalled the Mesopotamian god, Enlil, the god of wind, in which capacity he was creative,\footnote{Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.1.} as God is here (26.13), but as a storm god, Enlil was destructive. Storms and warriors, and God is a warrior in this passage, more often than not, are the bearers of disaster. The “pillars of heaven” which “tremble” at the divine “rebuke” (26.11) are the structures which support the tent which is creation. In the context of his account of divine creative power, Bildad may have intended the trembling of the pillars to be understood as the consequence of their apprehension of that power. The poet, however, hints at the possibility that the God of the “rebuke”, inclined to violence against the rebuked, could be the one who undoes his own creation, collapsing together heaven and earth, roof and floor of the human dwelling, the two parts of the primordial mountain. Bildad’s world is ordered but not irreversibly so, and the poet would have the reader know that, suggesting that the bearers of disorder and destruction could be either vanquished mythical beings or even God himself.

Bildad’s world is also mysterious. Not only are the upper and lower levels of the supernatural realm, together with their inhabitants, inherently unknowable to human
beings, his words about the natural realm, its upper and lower levels, heaven and earth, the part that is knowable for human beings, point to an element of mystery in their being. Zaphon, the substance from which they are made, is stretched out and suspended over “formlessness” or “confusion” or “unreality” or “emptiness”. Earth is hung over “nothing” (26.7), with “nothing” being the translation of an enigmatic three-word phrase, the last word of which is an interrogative. There is mystery over what lies beneath the earth and there is mystery in the heavens above the earth, the place of the God’s “throne” (26.9), deliberately concealed by the divine cloud. The greatest mystery of all, however, is the nature and extent of divine power. It is a power which creates the cosmos, “the earth” (26.7) and “the heavens” (26.11), and imposes order on the heavens (26.13). It is a power which tolerates no opposition and quells threats to the divine creation (26.12-13), and it is a power which causes “fear” (25.2) and “trembling” (26.5, 11), but of that power Bildad will say that it is only the “outskirts of his ways” of which only a “small whisper” is heard (26.14). Whilst Zophar had wondered at the immensity of the divine being whose “limit” (11.7) was beyond measuring, Bildad marvels at the immensity of divine power of which only the “outskirts” are known and a “small whisper” is heard. He ends his cosmogonic account with the question “who can understand (תובなければならない)?” (26.14), a play on words, contrasting the divine understanding (תובנתו) (26.12) used to create the cosmos with his own failure to comprehend the magnitude of divine creative power. Given his apprehension of divine power and divine mystery, Bildad could echo Zophar’s questions, “what can you do?” and “what can you know?” (11.8).

As I have said, these questions, interpreted as rhetorical questions, are an expression of human powerlessness and incomprehension before a God whose might cannot be challenged and whose immensity exceeds cosmic measuring. They may, however, be looked at as though they were real questions. The first, “what can you do?” is, seemingly, a search for a way of relating to the all-powerful God, one which will be protective of
that part of creation which is human and which will ensure its survival and wellbeing. The second question, “what can you know?” appears to point to a search for knowledge about God to inform their quest for a good relationship with the Almighty. To the subject of what can be known and done, all three friends over the course of their speeches, but especially Eliphaz, will contribute and, in so doing, they will articulate a cosmology which, understanding human beings as part of creation, holds that God will punish the wicked and reward those who respond rightly to their Creator. Their beliefs point to a way of managing creation to their advantage and, since creation belongs to, and is governed by its Creator, it is also a way of managing God.\footnote{Act-consequence theology has been interpreted by some as a limitation on the freedom of God to act. Lindström (God and the Origin of Evil, 143), for example, has asked “[d]oes not God become a servant of human wish-fulfillment when he commits himself to the programme which orders all existence and according to which correct human action is materially rewarded?” Andrew Steinmann (“The Structure and Message of the Book of Job,” 97) has said that the friends believe that it is “human beings who control God’s giving and taking by their own righteous or unrighteous behaviour.”}

Answers to the question “what can you know?” will be considered in the next section. Answers to the first question “what can you do?” will be considered in the sections dealing with the advice given to Job by the friends.

6.1.1.3 *Eliphaz on Humankind and God*

Eliphaz, pondering on God and humanity and the divine view of, and involvement with humanity (4.2-21), sets out, one after the other, two different strands of thought, strands which do not cohere well, and are, indeed, quite contradictory. The first (4.7-11) allows that humans can be, and some are, good, though others are bad, and God takes action against the bad and preserves the life of the good. The second (4.17-21), following an account of how Eliphaz came by this different viewpoint, asserts that all human beings are flawed, as also are supernatural beings, and God, though aware of human
imperfection, is aloof and unresponsive to it. The juxtaposition of these two strands of thought highlights their inconsistencies, inconsistencies which Eliphaz needs to resolve, and does resolve, to his own satisfaction, over the course of his three speeches. Each strand has identifying markers indicating the presence, within the body of a speech, of further reflection on that strand. The first, considered in 4.7-11, 5.6-7, 15.34-35 and 22.15-16, is identified in each stage of its development by the use of two key words together in the same verses און and עמל, except for the last stage where only און is used. The second strand, to which Bildad will also make a contribution (25.4-6), will be elaborated in 4.17-21; 15.14-16; 22.2-4. Reflection on this strand is marked by the use of rhetorical questions to open each stage, including Bildad’s contribution, two questions until, possibly, Eliphaz’s last contribution, and the repetition of key words and phrases. These words and phrases are צדק, 증 옹 (4.17; 15.14; 25.4), זוכה (15.14; 25.4), זך (4.17; 15.15), and the next three words have the same meaning, חסיף ומנהיג (4.17; 15.14; 25.4), מصدق ומשמע והبذل אביר (4.17; 22.2), מרחיב ומשמע (15.14; 25.4), and this last phrase is semantically the same as משמע ומשלד (4.17). The two strands of thought, with four stages in each (the three contributions from Eliphaz in the second strand are supplemented by one from Bildad) are considered concurrently in each

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46 BDB 19-20: “trouble, sorrow, wickedness.” An important term in Job, R. Knierim (“און harm,” TLOT 1: 60-62), analysing the uses of the noun in the Hebrew Bible, finds that the word indicates “unhealthy activities” and also their “consequences” (ibid., 61).

47 BDB 765: “trouble, labour, toil.” Also an important term in Job, S. Schwertner (“עמל toil,” TLOT 2:924-926) has said that the word denotes not only the process of work but also the result of it, which can be trouble. Gordis (The Book of Job, 36) has observed that for the friends the word means do evil (4.8; 15.35), whilst for Job it means “suffering evil, trouble, misery” (3.10; 7.3; 11.16).

48 These words are paired elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible - Num 23.21; Pss 7.15; 10.7; 55.11; Isa 10.1; 59.4; Hab 1.3, but their pairing in Job is a tool used by Eliphaz to determine the divine attitude to wrongdoing.

49 There is scholarly disagreement (discussed below) on whether or not the second part of 22.2 is a question.

50 BDB 842: “be just, righteous . . . have a just cause, be in the right, be justified . . . be just, righteous, in conduct and character.”

51 BDB 60: “man, mankind.” HALOT 1:70: “(all) human beings, man . . . (some) men . . . single human being.”
speech. Incompatible at the outset, they will move closer together over the three speech cycles, but Eliphaz, after exploring both, will have to make a choice between them.

6.1.1.3.1 The First Strand of Eliphaz’s Thinking

The first friend to address the afflicted Job, Eliphaz, after preliminary words regarding Job’s situation, will set forth a belief on divine dealings with the good and the bad, the first strand of his thinking.

Think (ךֵּרֶךֶנ) now, who that was innocent ever perished (אָבָד)?
Or where were the upright cut off?
As I have seen (ךֶּשֶׁנ), those who plow iniquity (ךְֹנָה) and sow trouble (ךֶּשֶׁנ) reap the same.
By the breath of God they perish (ךֶּשֶׁנ), and by the blast (רָעַח) of his anger (ךֹפֶל) they are consumed (ךֶּלֶל).
The roar of the lion (ךֶּרֶנִים), the voice of the fierce lion (ךֶּשֶׁנ), and the teeth (ךֶּשֶׁנ) of the young lions (ךֶּפֶר) are broken.

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57 BDB 269-271: “remember.”
58 BDB 906-909: “see.” D. Vetter (“ךֶּשֶׁנ to see,” TLOT 3:1176-1183) has said that the basic meaning is “see” from which come figurative meanings; seeing can be the intellectual process of perceiving and understanding (ibid., 1178).
59 What they “reap” is a third masculine singular suffix, almost certainly a reference to the masculine singular nouns for “iniquity” and “trouble”.
60 BDB 60: “nostril, nose, face, anger.” G. Sauer (“ךֶּפֶל anger,” TLOT 1:166-169) has noted the connection between the meaning “nose” through which flows breath and “anger” expressed through “snorting” (in anger) (ibid., 168). The nounךֶּפֶל usually refers to divine anger.
61 BDB 71: lion. That there are five words for lion used in these two verses is often commented on but the reasons for using them all are never satisfactorily explained. Perhaps their plurality points to the importance of the lion as a metaphor in Job.
62 BDB 1006: lion. The adjective “fierce” has been added by the translator. Notwithstanding scholarly debate on what type of lion is meant here, Brent Strawn (What Is Stronger than a Lion? Leonine Image and Metaphor in the Hebrew Bible and the Ancient Near East (OBO 212; Fribourg: Academic Press, 2005), 325) concludes that, aside from being a male, no more can be known about it.
63 BDB 498: young lion. From its use elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, Strawn (What is Stronger than a Lion, 309) suggests the word indicates an animal older than a cub, therefore fully adult and so “young lion” would be an appropriate translation.
The strong lion (שׁלי) perishes (אבד) for lack of prey (טרף), and the whelps of the lioness (בני לביא) are scattered. (4.7-11)

With two questions which, for Eliphaz, are rhetorical because the word “remember” assumes that Job has a knowledge and belief that conform to what he now asserts, he states that the “innocent” do not “perish” and the “upright” are not “cut off” (4.7). Using an agricultural metaphor, Eliphaz claims to have seen, or, rather, his mind has understood, that ploughing “iniquity (און)” and sowing “trouble (עמל)” brings a harvest true to the seed planted which is more iniquity and trouble. If imagined as seeds of plants, as Eliphaz does here, iniquity and trouble have an existence separate from humans but depend on human acts to bring them to fruition, and so the relationship between “iniquity” and “trouble” and human beings is symbiotic. Like plants, through their cycle of seed, germination, maturation and the production of seed for the next generation, iniquity and trouble are a living and self-perpetuating reality in creation, a reality which, in this thinking, represents disorder in human lives but which will end in the ultimate disorder, from the perspective of the humans engaged in their propagation, which is death by the “breath of God” or the “blast of his anger” (4.9). Paradoxically, however, the bringing of disorder to the cultivators of “iniquity” and “trouble”, is also the act necessary for the preservation of order in that part of human society which is the victim of “iniquity” and “trouble”. The continuing manifestation of iniquity and trouble, through the cycle of sowing and reaping, is disrupted when their cultivators are destroyed. Given this understanding of “iniquity” and “trouble”, human beings, their propagators, are responsible for their consequences; they can, if they so choose, avoid them as Eliphaz will later argue.

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65 BDB 539: lion. The adjective “strong” has been added by the translator. Only found three times in the Hebrew Bible, this word refers to a male lion, deduced from its masculine verb forms (Strawn, What is stronger than a Lion?, 325-326).

65 BDB 383: “prey, food.” The verb תָּרָפ meaning “tear, rend, pluck” (BDB 382-383) is usually the act of a wild animal, especially a lion, but sometimes it is a metaphor for divine action.

66 BDB 522: lion, possibly also lioness. Strawn’s study of biblical usage of this noun [What is Stronger than a Lion? 312-313], has led him to conclude that לביא is both a masculine and feminine noun.
Eliphaz continues his argument, using the metaphor of the lion and its young. The lion, part of the fauna of the ancient Near East, known for its natural attributes which included strength and the predatory nature necessary for its survival, was often used as a symbol and metaphor in biblical and ancient Near Eastern texts. Paul-Alain Beaulieu has observed that in Mesopotamia the lion may be a symbol of the forces of chaos which have to be engaged and defeated by the king in order to preserve cosmic order. In verses 10-11, following the previous two on “iniquity” and “trouble” which required human beings to bring them to fruition, the lion is the symbol of the wicked, inbred in whom is wickedness, just as a predatory nature is inbred in the lion. In using the lion as a metaphor for the wicked, Eliphaz explores the possibility that wickedness does not have a separate existence from human beings but, innate in wicked persons, it has its origin there. Given its strength and its need to prey on weaker animals, the lion is also a symbol of the potent threat posed by the wicked to others, here depicted as their prey. It is, in this passage, a symbol of disorder in human communities, as seen from the point of view of their weaker members. To preserve the life of the prey, the “teeth” of the young “lions”, their means of killing and consuming their quarry, “are broken” (4.10), presumably by God though that is not stated, thereby making the lions ineffectual as agents of death and the creators of disorder for their victims; instead, they will die from hunger brought about by the “lack of prey”. Further, the young of the lioness, the future of her species, are scattered, and, separated from their parent and protector, and also from one another, they are made vulnerable. Scattered and vulnerable, the potency of their threat is dissipated. God acts against not only the present predator, destroying its means of survival, but also against future predators, through weakening their young, so lessening, though not eliminating, the continued predation of the breed. If the lion, a strong predator, is a metaphor for the

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67 Paul-Alain Beaulieu, “The Babylonian Man in the Moon,” *JCS* 51 (1999), 94. As a symbol of chaos the lion can be equated with Tiamat and other monsters.
wicked, God’s dealings with it are Eliphaz’s assurance that God will destroy the wicked by destroying their means of survival, metaphorically, their teeth.

In his opening statement on the divine perspective on wickedness in the world, Eliphaz makes plain that God takes action against its perpetrators. The reader is told twice that they “perish” (יָמַל), either “by the breath of God” (4.9) or from hunger (4.11), that “they are consumed” by the “blast of his anger” (4.9), their “teeth” are “broken” (4.10), and their young are “scattered” (4.11). The “innocent”, on the other hand, do not perish (יָמַל) nor are “the upright cut off” (4.7). God acts to protect the weak, the “prey” (4.11) of the wicked.

Whether or not Eliphaz meant Job to understand that divine action against wickedness is decisive, we cannot say; the poet, however, leaves an element of uncertainty in the mind of the reader, the one whose persuasion is the goal of the rhetoric of Job. “Iniquity” and “trouble” are not eliminated, their cultivators are; wickedness remains, awaiting new propagators in the future. Lions, metaphors for the wicked, may have perished, but their young survive to grow, reach maturity and prey in the future.

Later in his first speech (5.6-7), in the second stage of his reflection, continuing with a plant metaphor, Eliphaz seems, according to some interpretations of the text, to cast doubt on, or, according to other interpretations, to reinforce the notion that” iniquity” and “trouble” have an existence independent of humans saying,

For misery (הָלָה) does not come from the earth (עָרֶץ).

68 BDB 779: “dry earth, dust.” G. Wanke (“עפר dust,” TLOT 2: 939-941) has noted that עָרֶץ, עפר, and אָדָם are semantically related. In addition to being loose earth or dust, עפר is also the stuff from which human beings are made and the stuff to which they will return on death and so may also mean the netherworld. Nicholas Tromp (Primitive Conceptions of Death and the Netherworld in the Old Testament (Rome: Pontifical Biblical Institute, 1969), 32-34) has noted the connection dust has with death and the netherworld.
nor does trouble (עמל) sprout from the ground (אדמה), but human beings (אדם) are born (יولد) to trouble (עמל) just as sparks (בני־רשׁף) fly upwards (5.6-7).

There is a body of scholarly opinion which, unlike the NRSV and those who would support its translation, sees v.6 as a statement that earth and ground are the source of trouble for humanity. At issue is the vocalization of the particle לא; either it is לוּא (“surely”), or it is לוֹא (“not”). Pope explains his translation, “Verily, sorrow springs from the soil, from the ground trouble sprouts” by saying that לא is not negative but asseverative. Habel translates v.6 as “Evil also springs from the ground and trouble sprouts from the dry ground”. He finds in the word אדמה, a connection to the story of Adam which has dust and ground not only the substance from which human beings are made, but also the source of their trouble, the “thorns and thistles” brought forth for Adam by the cursed ground (Gen 3.17-19). This interpretation is supported by the next verse which asserts that humans “are born to trouble (5.7).” Newsom, noting that questions in Hebrew do not always have an interrogative particle, has translated the verse as a question, one which has a note of fatalism: “Does not misery come from the dust and trouble spring from the soil?” Such a translation of v.6 would, like those of Pope

69 BDB 9: “ground, land.” H.H. Schmid (TLOT 1:42-45) says that the basic meaning of אדמה is “arable farmland in contrast to the steppe and desert”, or “earth” understood as “inhabited earth” (ibid., 43).
70 BDB 9: “man, mankind.” C. Westermann (“אדם person,” TLOT 1:31-42) after a long discussion of this word and also says unveils “does not designate neither ‘man’ as exemplar nor primarily the individual; rather it denotes the category, humanity as a whole, to which the individual belongs” (ibid., 42).
71 BDB 958: “flame fire-bolt . . . בני־רשׁף=sparks.” It has been translated as “burning” (Deut 32.34), “flashing” (arrows) (Ps 76.4, “thunderbolts” (Ps 78.48), “flashes” (of fire) (Song 8.6), and “plague” (Hab 3.5).
72 For example, S. R. Driver and George Buchanan Gray (A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job Together with a New Translation [Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1921], 51), Fullerton (“Double Entendre in the First Speech of Eliphaz,” JBL 49 [1930], 370), Dhorme (Job, 61), Rowley (Job, 53), Gordis (The Book of Job, 44), Hartley (The Book of Job, 116), Clines (Job 1-20, 107), Brown (The Ethos of the Cosmos, 326), Gray (The Book of Job, 151), Longman (Job [Grand Rapids.: Baker Academic, 2012], 124), Seow (Job 1-21, 412).
73 Pope, Job, 40.
74 Ibid., 42.
75 Habel, Book of Job, 114.
76 Ibid., 132.
77 Newsom, “Job,” 380.
and Habel, have “iniquity” and “trouble” not only existing independently but also operating independently of human beings.

The theological waters are further muddied by the following verse. Both of the two possibilities – either that “misery” and “trouble” exist independently of human beings, as they appear to in 4.8, or that they do not – can be supported by the way in which v.7a is read. To explain the existence of trouble in human life, Eliphaz introduces the metaphor of birthing. There is disagreement among commentators on the vocalization of the verb יולַד, and the decision reached on which was intended, is significant, profoundly affecting the interpretation of Eliphaz’s words on human beings and disorder. If the verb is a Pu’al (יַלְדַּי), as in the Masoretic text, it would require a passive translation “human beings are born to (for) trouble” and this interpretation is supported by a translation “to” or “for” for the preposition ל. If the verb is a Hiphil (יָלַד) and the ל indicates an accusative, the translation would be “it is man who gives birth to trouble”, as does the lion in the earlier reflection (4.10) because it was in his nature to do so. An active verb would have human beings the source of trouble and the cause of disorder in human lives. It would, therefore, follow that “misery does not come from the earth nor . . . trouble . . . from the ground” because their source is human. A passive verb would have “trouble” the lot of humankind for no reason other than that human beings are human, perhaps prone to causing trouble, but certainly prone to its consequence, which is trouble whether or not they caused it; as such, they may be perpetrators of trouble, but even if they are not, they are its victims, including trouble and misery coming from the earth. Eliphaz omits to

80 The second option is favoured by Dhorme, Job, 61; Terrien, The Book of Job, 944; Rowley, Job, 53; Gordis, The Book of Job, 55; Hartley, The Book of Job, 116; Seow, Job 1-21, 412. Clines’ translation (Job 1-20, 107) says “it is man who begets suffering for himself.”
81 This is the conclusion reached by a number of commentators, including Dhorme, Job, 61; Hartley, The Book of Job, 118; Clines, Job 1-20, 142.
82 This is the interpretation of Driver and Gray, Job, 51; Seow, Job 1-21, 417-418.
say whether either of these interpretations ("born to" or "give birth to") is true of all humankind or only to a section of humankind though the use of the word אדם suggests the former.

The nature or identity of the "sparks" which "fly upward" may clarify the meaning of vv.6-7, or add to their ambivalence, depending on how they are imagined. In other biblical texts, Resheph is a destructive force which is connected to human ills such as "wasting hunger" and "bitter pestilence" (Deut 32.24), "pestilence" (Hab 3.5), "hail" which damages "cattle" (Ps 78.48), and to "shield", "sword" and "weapons of war" (Ps 76.4). It is also the name of a West Semitic god associated with warfare and sickness. Seow has noted that in Canaanite texts and iconography Resheph is portrayed as an archer whose arrows bring disease to humans. The god is sometimes equated with Nergal, the Babylonian god of the underworld, who was also associated with war and pestilence. "Dust" (עפר) (5.6) is often associated with the dead and their realm, which is also the abode of deities, and the proximity of these two terms would support an understanding of the sons of Resheph as chthonic beings. The translation found in NRSV, "as sparks fly upwards" (that is what sparks do) points to an inevitability about trouble experienced by humans because they are born to it, or trouble caused by humans because it is engendered by them. Bringing the "sons of Resheph", an equivocal term, into a statement about trouble, introduces a third possibility concerning the source of disorder in human life.

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83 Habel (Book of Job, 114) favours a literal translation, “sons of Rehseph”. Dhorme (Job, 61) has translated v.7b as “the sons of lightning soar aloft in their flight” and, connecting this verse with 39.27, argues that the subject of the two verbs for “fly upward” has to be the name of a bird, and he suggests the eagle (ibid., 62). Gray (The Book of Job, 160), noting Resheph’s association with death, has proposed that the bird is the vulture. Gordis (The Book of Job, 55) has said that “the sons of Resheph” can mean either “sparks of lightning” or “shafts of the pestilence”. Wolfers (“Sparks Flying,”7) understands בני־רשף to mean the many diseases which may be included in the term “pestilence and so he translates the verse “But when a man is born to Trouble, Pestilences have a field day!” (ibid.). Seow (Job 1-21, 418) suggests “offspring of pestilence”.

87 Ibid., 37.
hints at the possibility that human beings, who may either be the begetters of “trouble”, and, as such, a source of “trouble”, or they may be “born to trouble”, are, whether wicked or upright, subject to malign forces\(^88\) simply because they are human and these forces may come upwards from the ground, or rather, from below it. (A similar understanding of the source of disorder in a human life is to be found in *Ludlul Bel Nemeqi* whose sufferer was beset by many ills arriving from different parts of the cosmos, including the underworld.\(^89\) By introducing בני-רשף into his rhetoric, Eliphaz’s words confirm his statement of the previous verse that misery and trouble do, in fact, come from the earth, as they did in 4.8. If this interpretation of 5.6 is accepted, and I think it should be, it supports Eliphaz’s idea expressed in the first stage of his reflection, that misery and trouble coming from the ground, have an independent and self-perpetuating existence.\(^90\)

There is, however, a difference between the two ideas; his first reflection required human input to give effect to “iniquity” and “trouble”, his second reflection does not, but both ideas would have “iniquity” and “trouble” in the world, present in the ground and perhaps also in human beings, ready to cause disorder in the lives of people.

In the third stage of his reflection, articulated in his second speech, Eliphaz appears to arrive at a decision about the source of iniquity and trouble using again, instead of an agricultural metaphor, the metaphor of human procreation. He will say,

The company of the godless (חנף)\(^91\) is barren (גלמוד)\(^92\)

\(^88\) Habel (*Book of Job*, 132) interprets v.7b to mean the ills which have their origin in the underworld and which affect human beings. He understands from this text that “suffering can be “the work of invading powers, as well as the result of overt human actions” (ibid.).

\(^89\) *BWL*, 41.

\(^90\) cf Terrien’s opinion (*Job*, 944), which is that Eliphaz does not suggest that trouble happens independently of human behaviour. Clines’ interpretation [*Job* 1-20, 142] does not allow a non-human source for trouble and he would have humans responsible for their ills. He says that “when humans beget trouble for themselves they let loose (metaphorically speaking) the underworld demons of pestilence to fly high to earth in order to attack mortals.” Seow (*Job* 21, 418) is equally clear about the human origin of trouble. Seeing בני-רשף as belonging to an extended plant metaphor (5.2-7) he suggests that what flies are seeds which reproduce the plant. Linking 7b to 7a, he proposes that the plant is a metaphor for humans who also generate trouble or pestilence.

\(^91\) BDB 338: “profane, godless”.

\(^92\) BDB 166: “hard, barren, unproductive.” An uncommon word, its only use outside *Job* is Isa 49.21.
and fire (שא) consumes the tents (אהל) of bribery.

They conceive (הרה) mischief (עמל) and bring forth (לד) evil (און) and their heart (בטן) prepares deceit. (15.34-35)

The word אהל could be a reference to sterility as a failure to procreate, as in 3.7, or as material want, as in 30.3, and given what has preceded this statement (15.28-33), both are possible meanings. Bereft of possessions and, perhaps, progeny, too (Eliphaz’s prediction for the wicked), they are capable, nevertheless, of generating moral baseness. In this, his third reflection on “trouble” (עמל) and “evil” (און), the poet resolves the question of who their generators are, either all of humankind or some human beings, and decides in favour of the latter; it is the “godless” who are responsible and, in consequence, they will be poor and their “tents” will be consumed by “fire”. That they are “godless” has been established earlier in his speech which had the wicked stretching out “their hands against God” and bidding “defiance to the almighty” (15.25), acts of self-alienation from God. Linking “mischief (עמל)” and “evil (און)” to human procreation, as he had done in the second stages of his reflection (5.7), Eliphaz in this stage resolves the question raised earlier of whether humankind is “born to trouble” or gives birth to trouble, and decides in favour of the latter. The use of the metaphor of procreation suggests, too, the possibility that wickedness is part of creation, and, indeed, is innate in part of creation as he suggested in his use of the lion metaphor (4.10), and owes its continuing presence in creation, to the continuing presence there, through procreation, of the wicked.

93 BDB 13: “tent . . . dwelling, habitation.” HALOT 1:19: “tent . . . people living in a tent.” Klaus Koch (“אר,”TDOT 1:118-130) has drawn attention to the ethical dimensions of this word in Job. He has found that “a tent and its inhabitants form a unit” and so “a tent can be filled with good or evil forces” (ibid., 121). Whilst the tent of Job is associated with the good and with divine beneficence in 5.24 and in 29.4, more often in Job it is the place of wickedness and the wicked.

94 BDB 247: “conceive, become pregnant.” This word is nearly always used in connection with human conception.

95 BDB 105: “belly, body, womb.”
Following his assertion in the third stage of his reflection, that it is some human beings who are the source of “iniquity” and “trouble”, Eliphaz, makes his final pronouncement on the wicked and their end. Addressing Job, now considered to be among their company, he asks,

Will you keep to the old (עולם) way (ארח) that the wicked (מתי־און) have trod (דרך)?
They were snatched away before their time (עת); their foundation (יסוד) was washed away by a flood (נהר). (22.15-16)

In two words, Eliphaz establishes the connection between wickedness and humankind (“men of iniquity” is the literal translation of מתי־און (22.15), whose ways are ancient and will continue into the future. This being the case, their misdeeds are a part of the world in which human beings exist, and, without saying so explicitly, Eliphaz suggests that the disorder which comes from human iniquity is part of the creation experienced by human beings. Hinted at in his question, “Will you keep to the old way?” (22.15), is the suggestion that an unrepentant Job would be party to the maintenance of such disorder by his preserving the way of the wicked. Subtly implied in Eliphaz’s words, too, is the notion that not only are there in creation men of iniquity, there must also be good humans who are not “snatched away before their time” because the very existence of a right time for human death can only be established by there being humans who arrive at that time

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96 BDB 761-762: “long duration, antiquity, futurity.” E. Jenni (“עולם eternity,” TLOT 2: 852-862) has said of this word that it “has the basic meaning ‘most distant time,’ either with a view to the past . . . , to the future, or to both” (ibid 853). He adds that if עולם “describes persons or things that do not in themselves imply a temporal determination, the issue of its relationship to the future or to the entire duration is more difficult, since something ‘ancient’ can also be regarded as ‘eternal’ thanks to its duration (ibid., 355) and he cites 22.15 as an example.

97 BDB 73: “way, path,” and it has literal and figurative meanings. Semantically similar is דרך, especially in this verse which uses the verb דרך.

98 BDB 773: “time.” HALOT 2: 899-901: “point in time . . . (Eccl 7.17) (to die) before your time = לפני שתשאר prematurely . . . the proper time for an event.” See Chapter 5, section 5.1 for a discussion on “time” as a marker of boundaries.

99 BDB 414: “foundation, base.” W.H. Schmidt (“יסד to found,” TLOT 2:547-548) says that apart from its architectural usages, this verb occurs mainly in texts dealing with creation.

100 BDB 625: “stream, river.”
because they are not wicked. Thus, through implication, he reiterates his assertion made in the earlier reflection that “iniquity” is connected to a part of, but not all, humanity.

Eliphaz does not say who it is who ordains or allows the death of the wicked, but the manner of it strongly suggests that it is God. It amounts to an undoing of a part of creation, here the wicked, using another part of creation, a river, to wash away its foundation. The creation of rivers, Tigris and Euphrates, was the work of Enki in Sumerian tradition and Marduk in Babylonian tradition. In the Ba’al cycle, river (Judge Nahar) and sea (Prince Yamm) who are the same supernatural being, are defeated for the preservation of the existing order but in this text (22.16), river is the means by which a part of creation is destroyed. That the destruction of the wicked is an act of retributive justice is strongly suggested by the agent of destruction, the river. A study by P. Kyle McCarter has found that the ‘river’ in ancient Mesopotamia had cosmic and judicial significance. As a judge, the river was the means whereby the guilt or innocence of a human being was established by ordeal. Water, a necessity of life, may be the place where life or death issues are determined and it may also be the place of the dead.

The river, usually confined within boundaries for the preservation of order in the world, is let loose to snatch away the wicked “before their time”, so breaching another boundary, that which establishes the span of time allotted to human life. Death itself is not punishment, untimely death is. Before that untimely death, however, the insightful reader will understand that much “iniquity” and “trouble” may be perpetrated and much

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101 See chapter 3, section 3.2.2.
102 Chapter 3, section 3.2.5.
104 Ibid., 403. McCarter notes that the word for “cosmic river” in Sumerian and Akkadian was *id* and has suggested that there is a link between that word and the Hebrew פק meaning distress, calamity (BDB 15). He has suggested, too, that certain passages in *Job* (21.17, 30; 31.23) echo the notion of trial by river ordeal (ibid., 409-410).
105 In Bildad’s thinking (26.5), water is the place of the dead.
106 Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.
experienced. The action of the river in snatching away the wicked, curtails disorder but neither prevents nor eliminates it.

Opening his reflection on the first strand of his thinking on disorder in creation, Eliphaz assumes that it is caused by “iniquity” and “trouble” which either exist independently but require human acts to make them effectual, or they are an inborn characteristic of some human beings, metaphorically lions, who are responsible for bringing “iniquity” and “trouble” to others. Wherever and however they have their being, God acts against humans responsible for giving effect to them. In the second stage of his reflection, Eliphaz continues his pondering on the presence of “iniquity” and “trouble” in creation, concluding that they have an independent existence, one which does not require human input to give them effect but they may also have their origin in human beings. His contemplation on “trouble” and human beings finds an indissoluble link between them, with humankind either its cause or its victim. Whether cause or victim, however, human beings are subject to forces of disorder in their lives. By the end of stage two, Eliphaz has established that there are two sources for the trouble besetting human beings: human beings themselves and malign forces which exist outside them. In this stage of his reflection, Eliphaz does not talk of divine retribution. In the third stage of his thinking, Eliphaz says no more about independent sources of “iniquity” and “trouble” as causes of disorder in human life, he focuses on human beings as their source (15.35), though not all of them, only the “godless” (15.34) who give them birth, a possibility posited in the second stage of his reflection. Their end will be a “fire” which “consumes” their “tents,” (15.34). In his final reflection in the first strand of his thinking, Eliphaz clearly links a part of humanity to iniquity. Punishment of the wicked, in the manner described, “washed away by a flood” (22.16), is an undoing of creation.
6.1.1.3.2 The Second Strand of Eliphaz’s Thinking

Immediately following his initial reflection on God’s attitude and response to wickedness (4.7-11), Eliphaz puts forward the possibility of a very different divine view of the human part of creation. He relates a night experience in which the deity’s view of humankind is made known to him (4.12-21) by a “form” (4.16) who asks,

Can mortals (StartPosition ili) be righteous (park) before God (بيبלי)?

Can human beings (StartPosition ili) be pure (משָׁה) before their Maker (髀ל)?

Even in his servants (StartPosition ili) he puts no trust (משָׁה),

and his angels (/place) he charges with error;

...more those who live in houses of clay,

whose foundation (StartPosition ili) is in the dust (סָמָך),

who are crushed like a moth.

Between morning and evening they are destroyed;

they perish forever without any regarding it (StartPosition ili).

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107 There are two possible translations of the preposition יִפְגֶשׁ used in this verse with עָלָיו and עָלָיו, either “before” or “more than”. Opting for the first translation “before” are, for example, Driver and Gray (Job, 46), Dhorne (Job, 52), Terrien (Job, 940), Pope (Job, 37), Rowley (Job, 49), Gordis (The Book of Job, 50), Habel (Book of Job, 113), Hartley (The Book of Job, 110), Clines (Job 1-20, 107), Longman (Job, 118), Seow (Job 1-21, 381). The second alternative “more than” is chosen by the Authorized Version, Good (In Turns of Tempest, 59), Gray (The Book of Job, 150). Richard Whitekettle (“When More Leads to Less: Overstatement, Incrementum, and the Question in Job 4.17a,” JBL 129 (2010): 445-448) argues that the preposition means “more than” and that it is a rhetorical question used in “a rhetorical ploy that uses hyperbole or overstatement” (ibid., 446) which none of the participants in the dialogue believes to be true. By setting out three levels of righteousness, in descending order, God, angels and human beings, he emphasises the moral gap between God and human beings. Seow (Job 1-21, 389) interprets these two questions as an expression of “divine doubt”, a reminder of the Prologue in which Satan doubted Job’s good character and God affirmed it.

108 BDB 793-795; “do, make.” J. Vollmer (“do to make, do” TLOT 2:944-951) says that the meaning of this very common Hebrew verb is covered by the English words “make, do” and that it is the most common verb used in connection with creation. Often used of Yahweh, the participle may be translated as Creator.

109 “Servants” in this verse are usually understood by interpreters (for example, Pope, Job, 37; Gordis, Book of Job, 50) to be heavenly beings, such as angels.

110 BDB 521: “messenger.” Either a messenger or angel, interpreters have understood these, too, to be heavenly beings.

111 A difficult phrase, it is sometimes thought to be an ellipsis for יִועֲשׂה בָּל תִּשְׂמָע, meaning “pay heed, attention”. At issue in two interpretations of this verse is the question of who is unaware of human death, the humans themselves or other beings, including, perhaps, God. The latter option is preferred by Clines (Job 1-20, 107) who translates v.20h “they can be utterly exterminated and none may ever know” and similarly, Driver and Gray, Job, 47, and Seow, Job -21. The former option, which would be supported by seeing parallelism in v.21b, is preferred by Gordis (Book of Job, 42, 50) and Hartley (The Book of Job, 110). Another possible interpretation, which requires changing the participle to a noun (ונָשִׁים) following an enclitic ה, is that humans die without a name and this is the interpretation favoured by Pope (Job, 35-36). J. C. L. Gibson (“Eliphaz the Temanite: Portrait of a Hebrew Philosopher,” SJT 28 [1975], 266), and Habel (Book of Job, 113, 116). A fourth interpretation requires that ונָשִׁים be changed to ונָשִׁים which Dhorne (Job, 54-55) claims was in the original text and preserved in the Septuagint and so he translates.
Their tent-cord is plucked up within them,
and they die devoid of wisdom. (4.17-21)

Just as Bildad will hear only a “small whisper” of the “ways” of God (26.14) in creation, and this from observation and mythological tradition handed down to him, Eliphaz’s “ear received (a) whisper” (4.12) of a “word” whose source was an enigma, a “spirit” (4.15) and a “form”, though Eliphaz “could not discern its appearance” (4.16). The “whisper” asks two questions (4.17)\(^{112}\) which, anticipating Eliphaz’s view of humanity’s lack of moral worth and value to God, asserted in his next speech (15.14-16), he can only understand to be rhetorical questions requiring the answer “no”, and thus a pronouncement from the supernatural realm about humankind. The alternative interpretation, that humans might be more righteous and pure than God, is not one that could be entertained by Eliphaz, a staunch defender of divine goodness and justice (5.8-16). That it is a statement about humanity in general, and, thus, all human beings, is made clear by the use of the generic word for man, שָׁאָנָ. It establishes that human beings are by nature neither righteous nor pure, and that they were made that way by God, their “Maker”. The imperfection, intrinsic to humankind, is as much a part of creation as humankind itself.

The voice continues, saying that not only are mortals morally deficient, supernatural beings are too, “his servants” in whom “he puts no trust” and “his angels” whom “he charges with error” (4.18). Mortality, however, is not the consequence of a flawed disposition; supernatural beings, who also are flawed though less so than mortals, are not

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\(^{112}\) The second question is introduced by the interrogative particle אָם.
mortal, whilst human beings are. They die because of the substance from which they are made, the “clay” of their bodies and the “dust” in which their “houses” have their “foundation”, substances so ephemeral that they may be “crushed like a moth” (4.19). Mortality is part of physical creation and has nothing to do with morality. To emphasise his point, using another metaphor for the body, the tent, he underlines human transience, declaring that “their tent-cord is plucked up within them” (4.21). Life is linked to light and death to darkness; the brevity of human life is conveyed by its duration, “between morning and evening they (human beings) are destroyed”, and its lack of consequence to any, including, perhaps, God, by the words “without any regarding it” (4.20).113

There are similarities between Eliphaz’s thoughts on human imperfection and those found in the Babylonian Theodicy. Both draw on older mythical traditions which relate the making of human beings by the gods from the raw material of clay.114 The Theodicy, however, goes further than earlier Mesopotamian traditions, claiming that not only did the deities create a human being with a body, at the same time they endowed it with a nature which was immoral and which led to evil being done by some human beings to others. In so doing, the deities brought disorder into the lives of some in consequence of the divinely endowed disposition of others. This disposition was conferred on humanity for all time, making evil, together with its human perpetrators, part of creation.

Narru, king of the gods, who created mankind,
And majestic Zulummar, who dug out their clay,
And mistress Mami, the queen who fashioned them,
Gave perverse speech to the human race.
With lies, and not truth, they endowed them for ever.
Solemnly they speak in favour of a rich man,
“He is a king,” they say, “riches go at his side.”

113 Brin (The Concept of Time, 143) has suggested that the phrase “without any regarding it” emphasizes the brevity of the human life-span – so short that it is ended before it is noticed.
114 Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.
But they harm a poor man like a thief,  
They lavish slander upon him and plot his murder,  
Making him suffer every evil like a criminal, because he has no protection.  
Terrifyingly they bring him to his end, and extinguish him like a flame.\textsuperscript{115}

Eliphaz reiterates, in his second speech (15.14-16), and in the second stage of his reflection, an insight imparted to him by the “form” (4.17-18), that the moral nature of human beings is fundamentally flawed.

What are mortals (שׁאנו), that they can be clean (_ACKH)?  
Or those born of woman (חלי אשה), that they can be righteous (צדק)?\textsuperscript{116}  
God puts no trust (אמן) even in his holy ones (שׁקד),\textsuperscript{117}  
and the heavens are not clean (זכך) in his sight (בעיניו)  
how much less one who is abominable and corrupt,  
one (שׁאי)\textsuperscript{118} who drinks iniquity (עולה)\textsuperscript{119} like water! (15.14-16)

Using similar terms, insan, זכר, אישה, linking his first speech with his second, and starting his reflection with two rhetorical questions, as the “form” had done (4.17), he declares that humankind can be neither “clean” nor “righteous”. He continues, saying, as the “form” had done, that God does not trust supernatural beings, adding that “the heavens are not clean in his sight”, so expanding the sphere of imperfection beyond human beings to other parts of creation, the heavens. Whether the heavens are understood as belonging to the material world or to the supernatural world is not said, and the poet may have intended both possibilities to be understood by the reader. As the abode of the “holy ones”

\textsuperscript{115} *BWL*, 89. Chapter 3, section 3.3.  
\textsuperscript{116} The second question lacks an interrogative but an interrogative is unnecessary where the second clause is linked to the first by a ו (GKC, 150) as is the case here. Gordis (Book of Job, 161-162) says that וי should be understood as the sign of a question.  
\textsuperscript{117} BDB 872: (relevant to Job) “sacred, holy . . . angels.”  
\textsuperscript{118} Either שׁי as it is used here is a generic word for mankind (the interpretation of Clines, Job 1-20, 353) or it may be a reference to the man Job (the interpretation of Gordis, Book of Job, 162). The former interpretation is the more likely, given that this passage is part of Eliphaz’s reflection on the divine attitude to humankind  
\textsuperscript{119} BDB 732: “injustice, unrighteousness, wrong.”
(15.15), his “servants” and “angels” (4.18), the latter interpretation is the more obvious. Going further than the “form”, Eliphaz elaborates on the sinfulness of a human, describing him as “abominable and corrupt”. Using “water” as a simile for “iniquity” and the metaphor of drinking iniquity as one would water, he suggests that, as water is necessary for the maintenance of life, so iniquity sustains the life of humankind. Those “born of woman” (15.14) are morally flawed and so iniquity, inherent in human beings, through procreation, is a self-perpetuating part of creation. Eliphaz’s words echo an old Sumerian text which speaks of the innate sinfulness of humanity, a notion apparently part of Sumerian wisdom tradition:

They say – the sages – a word righteous (and) straightforward:
‘Never has a sinless child been born to its mother.\(^{120}\)

Bildad’s contribution (25.4-6) to Eliphaz’s second strand of thinking is part of the disordered third cycle of speeches and its position there makes it irrelevant not only to the rest of his speech (25.2-3 followed by 26.5-14), but also, because too late, to a two-strand conversation that Eliphaz is having with himself.\(^{121}\) The passage 25.4-6 has most in common with Eliphaz’s words of 15.14-16 and so should be considered here. Bildad says

How then can a mortal (אֲנָשָׁה) be righteous (צדק) before God?
How can one born (ילֹל) of woman (אֱשֶׁר) be pure (יָצִּ妾)?
If even the moon is not bright
and the stars are not pure (יָצִּ妾) in his sight (בְּעִיניו)
how much less a mortal (אֲנָשָׁה), who is a maggot (רֶמֶז)\(^{122}\),

\(^{120}\) “Man and his God,” 590. See Chapter 3, section 3.3
\(^{121}\) It is too late to be part of the second strand of thought to which it is most closely connected and which ends in 22.2-4 and it is too late to be part of the two strand conversation which ends with the final stage of the first strand of thought in 22.15-16.
\(^{122}\) BDB 942: “worm (cause and sign of decay).”
and a human being (בָּנָן, בָּנָאָמָן) who is a worm (תֶּלֶעַה).

As Eliphaz had done (4.17; 15.14), Bildad starts his reflection on human imperfection with two rhetorical questions asserting the impossibility of goodness in a human simply because that human is human, born of another human. His statement is linked to those of Eliphaz by the use of similar terms, צדק (4.17; 15.14), צדק (4.17; 15.14), ילוד אש (15.14), etc. He, too, finds imperfection elsewhere in creation, in the moon and the stars, bodies in the heavens, declaring, as Eliphaz had of the heavens, that in God’s sight, the stars are not “pure”. Like Eliphaz (15.16), he ends his reflection by comparing human beings unfavourably with celestial bodies who are also deficient. He likens humankind to the lowliest of fauna, the “maggot” and the “worm”, which, with their connections to death and decay, are a pointer to the human end, the end noted by Eliphaz in his first speech (4.19-21).

In the first two stages of his second strand of thought, Eliphaz has asserted that both supernatural beings (4.18; 15.15) and also human beings (4.17; 15.14) are flawed, and in the case of the latter, incorrigibly so, because they are made that way by God (4.17), they are born that way (15.15), and continue that way through a life sustained by the “water” of “iniquity” (15.16). Failing to respond to, much less correct, human imperfection, God would appear to accept human defect. Can Eliphaz accept such a bleak and hopeless view of humankind, imperfect from birth, whose failings persist only through divine indifference? Can he believe in a God who is either, and at best, amoral, or even immoral, when judged by human standards of goodness and badness, because as their Creator, God

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123 BDB 9: man, mankind. C. Westermann (“אדם person,” TLOT 1:31-42) has said of אדם that it is a collective noun used only in the singular and that when an individual man is meant בן-אדם is used. He has found that, in many texts, אדם “signifies a human being in relation to God. Humanity, as such, cannot be understood unless its existence is seen in juxtaposition to God (ibid., 38).”

124 BDB 1069: “worm.” This worm, where it is not a source of red dye, is associated with death or it may be a “symbol of insignificance.”
is ultimately responsible for the ills brought about by humankind. Eliphaz ponders these questions in the last stage of reflection on his second strand of thought on God and humanity.

He begins his third speech (22.2-30), with the third stage of his reflection, and with two further questions (twice) (22.2). The first two (22.2) are questions of general relevance concerning all humankind and the following two (22.3-4) are directed to Job.

Can a mortal (בָּר) be of use to God?
Can even the wisest be of service to him?
Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous (צדק)
Or is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless (חמס)
Is it for your piety that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you? (22.2-4).

Linking this reflection on human worth to what has been said before, are the words גבר (4.17) and צדק (15.14). The questions ask, firstly, if God needs humans at all, and, secondly, addressing Job, if God cares whether or not he is righteous. If these questions are rhetorical, as some see them, expecting the answer “no”, they would point to divine aloofness from creation, an aloofness suggested in Eliphaz’s first speech reporting the

125 There is only one interrogative in 22.2, but some, for example, Longman (Job, 284), have seen two questions in this verse. Clines (Job 21-37, 540) argues that כי prefaces the second question. cf. Dhorme (Job, 326), who finds in כי “an adversative significance”, making of this verse a question followed by an answer, and translates it, “Is it to God that a man is useful? It is rather to himself that a wise man is useful!” Driver and Gray (Job, 192) with a similar translation find only one question in this verse as do Gordis (The Book of Job, 240), Hartley, (The Book of Job, 323), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 109) and Gray (The Book of Job, 303-305).
126 BDB 698: “be of use, or service, benefit.”
127 BDB 406: “decide, adjudge, prove.” G. Liedke (“הש,” TLOT 2:542-544) has found that the word is a forensic term which can mean either to prove, disprove or justify, or “to reprimand” (ibid., 543). In its theological usage, when God is the subject, either meaning can be intended. G. Mayer (“הש; תכחת; תכחה,” TDOT 6: 64-71) has said that when God is the subject, the meaning of צדק often “moves in the direction of ‘punish’” (ibid., 68). In the context of Eliphaz’s words here, I suggest that “reprimand” is the meaning intended here. Given Job’s sorry state, the reprimand is more than verbal, and is perceived by Eliphaz as punishment for wrongdoings which he will enumerate (22.5-11).
128 For example, Hartley, The Book of Job, 324; Clines, Job 21-37, 552.
129 Some interpret Eliphaz’s words as conveying divine detachment or even indifference to human behaviour, e.g. Terrien (Job, 1072-1073), Habel (Book of Job, 338), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 272), Longman (Job, 286-287), but others do not, e.g. Clines, Job 21-37, 552.
words of the “form” – “they perish forever without any regarding it” (4.20). The key to understanding what Eliphaz means by these questions, however, and whether or not they are rhetorical, lies in the link between 22.3-4 and 4.6, the verse immediately preceding the opening of Eliphaz’s first strand of thought. The earlier verse asked “Is not your fear of God your confidence, and the integrity of your ways your hope?” (4.6) and verse 22.3 asks “Is it any pleasure to the Almighty if you are righteous, or is it gain to him if you make your ways blameless?” The earlier question (4.6), was rhetorical, expecting the answer “yes”, because it was meant by Eliphaz to be encouragement for Job to look forward to a change in his circumstances. Hope for change, and Eliphaz held out that hope, can only come from a belief that the “integrity” of human “ways” matters to God who will respond positively to them. Given such a hope and belief, it must, therefore, be a “pleasure to the Almighty if you (Job) are righteous” and it must be a “gain to him if you (Job) make your ways blameless”. As affirmation of this belief, in words heavy with sarcasm, he asks another question, which also recalls 4.6, “Is it for your piety that he reproves you and enters into judgment with you?” (22.4). By this question Eliphaz rejects his earlier image of God as aloof and unresponsiveness to human wrongdoing; God has reproved Job and entered into judgement with him for misdeeds of which Eliphaz believes Job must be guilty. If it matters to God that Job is “righteous” and that his “ways” are “blameless”, matters enough to reprove him, the answer to the first two questions, “Can a mortal be of use to God? Can even the wisest be of service to him?”, must be “yes”. With this answer goes the notion that humanity is not irredeemably bad; they can, with reproof, where required, be “of use to God” and “of service to him”. This being so, Eliphaz’s words point to the possibility of a divine engagement with humanity, one in which the human is “of use” to, and even valued by, God.
6.1.1.3.3 The Two-Strand Conversation

Eliphaz’s two-strand thinking, expressed in stages, engages with two important issues. The first issue concerns humankind, its moral character and whether it is good or bad, the deeds arising out of a bad character which may be a source of disorder in the part of creation which is human, and the possibility that bad character is not the only cause of disorder. The second issue is the divine attitude to human beings, whether or not it matters to God that humans may be good or bad, and, if it does, how does God respond to goodness and badness. These two issues are both pondered within each of the two strands of thought which are in conversation with each other. Widely divergent at the outset, by conversation’s end they come together.

The first strand begins (4.7-11) by establishing that there are good and bad human beings; the former are not punished and they survive, but the latter are destroyed by divine anger. It suggests that “iniquity” and “trouble” are a reality in creation, and that there are two possible notions concerning their presence there; either they exist separately from humans but depend on them to give them effect (4.8), or, using the lion as a metaphor for wrongdoers (10-11), that they are inborn in the human beings who will give them effect. The first stage of the second strand (4.17-21) asserts that all, not some, human beings are flawed, that they will all die, not as a consequence of their flaws but because they have physical bodies which die, and that their end is of no consequence to anybody, including, probably, God.

As in the first stage of the first strand (5.6-7), Eliphaz, in the second stage, presents for consideration two possibilities to account for the presence of trouble in the world; the first would have “iniquity” and “trouble” existing independently of humans, perhaps as malign supernatural beings, but, in this second stage, not dependent on them for their potency. The second possibility is that humankind gives birth to trouble and so is also a
source of trouble. Whether or not humanity is its source, human beings are born to experience trouble, both from other humans and from non-human sources. In this stage of his reflection on the first strand of thought, with his view that possibly “trouble” is innate in human beings, he draws closer to the first statement of his second strand which is that all people are flawed. The second stage of the second strand (15.14-16) repeats and expands on the view of the first, that all humans are flawed. Picking up on the notion expressed in the second stage of the first strand, human beings are flawed because they are born that way, (Bildad’s contribution (25.4-6) makes the same point) and with this thought, the second strand draws closer to the first.

The third stage of the first strand (15.34-35) has Eliphaz, now silent on the possibility that “iniquity” and “trouble” have an existence separate from humans, decide that evil has its origin in human beings, but not all of them, only the “godless” who conceive it and give birth to it. They will be destroyed. The third stage of the second strand (22.2-4) has Eliphaz wonder if God needs humans or cares if they are good. He concludes that human conduct matters to God who has acted to correct one of the wicked, Job, by rebuking him, so suggesting that human beings are not all irredeemably bad, and, furthermore, that a “righteous” Job may be a “pleasure” to the Almighty” and Job’s “blameless ways” a “gain to him”. Eliphaz abandons his earlier ideas which were that all of humanity is flawed and that God is indifferent to mankind and unresponsive to their failings. By so doing, the third stage of the second strand of thought now aligns itself with the first strand of thought whose God has strong views on human wickedness and acts on them.

The fourth stage of the first strand (22.15-16) has Eliphaz end his reflections on disorder, human nature, and the divine response to iniquitous behaviour of which some human beings are guilty. He declares that they will come to an untimely end.
The conversational character of the debate which Eliphaz has with himself regarding human goodness and badness and the divine response to both can best be illustrated in the following way:

**Strand 1**

4.7-11
The good are preserved and the bad are destroyed by God. “Iniquity” and “trouble” exist independently but need humans to make them effectual. They are also innate in some human beings (aka lions).

**Strand 2**

4.17-21
All beings, natural and supernatural, are flawed. All humans perish because they are mortal and not because of their flaws. God is aloof and unresponsive.

5.6-7
Two explanations for the presence of “iniquity” and “trouble” in creation are: (a) that malign forces exist independently of humankind, and (b) they have their origin in humankind who gives birth to “trouble”. Whether either or both these explanations is accepted, human beings are born to experience “trouble”. There is no mention of a divine response to troubling or troubled humans. The notion of fundamentally flawed humanity echoes
Two-strand conversation continued

the view found in the first stage of his second strand but he goes further, saying humans may be flawed because they are born to be so.

15.14-16
All human beings are flawed because they are born so, a concept appropriated from Eliphaz’s first strand of thought (4.10; 5.7). (Bildad thinks so, too (25.4).)

15.34-35
Continuing with the notion of the innateness of “iniquity” in humankind, Eliphaz declares that not all humanity conceives and gives it birth, only the “godless” who will be destroyed.

22.2-4
Does God need humans and does he care about their conduct? God has rebuked Job, so responding to what Eliphaz thinks is Job’s bad conduct. The answer to the questions must, therefore, be yes; God has a use for, and values “righteous” and “blameless” human beings, and acts to reprove those who are not. With this final insight, Eliphaz bridges the gap between his two strands of thought.

22.15-16
Those who are wicked will come to an untimely end.
The resolution of the problem created by the inconsistency between Elihaz’s words of 4.7-11 and the words of the form is important because on this resolution he will base his advice to Job. He decides in favour of notions set out in his first strand which is that some human beings are good and some are not, and that human behaviour matters to God who will respond to it either by rewarding or by punishing. Eliphaz’s position on the divine attitude to humankind and its conduct is shared by his two friends who, like him see human beings, though not all of them, as a source of wickedness (Bildad in 8.4, 16, 20, 22; 18.5, 21 and Zophar in 11.11, 20; 20.5-19; 24.20-24; 27.13). God will act against the wicked say Bildad (8.4) and Zophar (11.10-11; 20.12-29; 24.22-24; 27.13-23),\textsuperscript{130} and reward the good say Bildad (8.5-6, 21) and Zophar (11.15-19; 27.17). For the inhabitants of a cosmos, the work of a Creator whose immensity and power are beyond understanding, who is, nevertheless, believed to be concerned with creation and its constituent parts, specifically human beings and their relationship to the Divine and to one another, the most pertinent question to be asked, and answered, is Zophar’s “What can you do?” (11.8). The answer, informed by the answer to the question “What can you know?” (11.8), will be one of the subjects of the rhetoric of the friends.

6.1.2 \textit{The Speeches of the Friends}

As has been observed by classicists, the speeches of Greek antiquity were not entirely of one type or another – deliberative, judicial or epideictic – but rather, a blend of different types,\textsuperscript{131} with the one which predominates determining its purpose and, thus, its type. The speeches of the friends are both deliberative and epideictic. Deliberative rhetoric recommends to its hearers action to bring about their future good, and so concerns

\textsuperscript{130} That the unfortunate fate of the wicked is not always the consequence of direct action by God will be discussed below.

\textsuperscript{131} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.
itself with means to bring about that end, and epideictic rhetoric concerns itself with praise or blame, with, perhaps, the twofold aim of reinforcing social values and of reinforcing or changing the behaviour of its hearers, depending on how the praise or blame are worded. Since the friends attempt to answer the question “What can you do?”, four of their speeches, 4.2-5.27; 22.2-30 (Eliphaz), 8.2-22 (Bildad); 11.2-20 (Zophar) may be categorised as deliberative. Their speeches in the second cycle, I will argue, are epideictic, as are the remnants of speeches from Bildad and Zophar in the third cycle. That all of the speeches of the friends in the first cycle are deliberative, and all of their speeches in the second cycle are epideictic, points to the possibility of there once having been a pattern to the rhetoric of the friends (deliberative speech followed by epideictic speech ending with deliberative speech), and if that is the case, Eliphaz’s final deliberative speech in the third cycle should have been matched by a deliberative speech from Bildad and Zophar. What remains, however, of their rhetoric are epideictic fragments, in a speech cycle now defective because of the disarrangement of the text.

Of the three friends, Eliphaz has most to say on the subject of how individuals can ensure their survival and well-being in creation and who will live and thrive and who will not. He, and Zophar too, will also express their thoughts on the well-being of communities in which God plays an active part, protecting the weak and needy, presumably also good, who are victims of the strong by frustrating the purposes of the latter, and by a redistribution of the goods of the wicked for the benefit of the poor. I will, therefore, pay most attention to Eliphaz’s rhetoric, particularly his first speech, because the rhetoric of his friends is largely a reiteration of views already expressed.

132 Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.1.
133 Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.3.
134 See Chapter 2, section 2.2.
6.1.2. 1  Eliphaz

6.1.2.1.1  The First Speech (Job 4-5)

Chapter 4, to which may be added 5.6-7 as a postscript, is, in addition to being stages in Eliphaz’s inquiry into God’s relationship with humankind, the introduction to the rhetoric of his first speech, the most important part of which is 4.7-11 on which his advice is based. It concerns not only divine dealings with humankind, it considers causes of disorder in human life both human and non-human.135 It may be considered, too, as the introduction to the whole of his rhetoric and also, given the similarity in their thinking, to the rhetoric of Bildad and Zophar. The purpose of Eliphaz’s first speech is to counsel Job on what he can do to reverse his misfortunes, and so it is deliberative rhetoric.

Chapter 4 begins by pointing out that misfortune is the lot of many, which Job well knows because he had, in the past, attempted to alleviate it for others by instructing (יסר)136 and strengthening them (4.3). That restoration to well-being may follow admonishment, points to Eliphaz’s conviction that ill-being has either a retributive or educative purpose; the latter, at this stage of the dispute, is applicable to Job’s case. He will say “How happy is the one whom God reproves; therefore do not despise the discipline (מִסְרָה) of the Almighty” (5.17). A rhetorical question holds out the prospect of a reversal of Job’s troubles - “Is not your fear (יראה) of God, your confidence (כסלָה)138...”

135 Sections 6.1.1.3.1 and 6.1.1.3.2 above.
136 BDB 415-416: “discipline, chasten, admonish.” M. Sæbø (“טומъ to chastise,” TLOT 2:548-551) has said of this verb and also its related noun מִסְרָה that its chief meaning is “to chastise” or “chastisement” and in the case of the latter, it may be physical chastisement but is more often verbal chastisement which can be understood, in wisdom texts, as instruction, edification and discipline, intended to be of benefit to the one chastised. Those who do the chastising can include wisdom teachers and God.
137 Fullerton (“Double Entendre,” 341) explains “fear” as an abbreviation for “fear of God” which is synonymous with “religion” a term covering not only an attitude of reverence towards the deity but also the law governing human behaviour. In the context of vv.6-7 both understandings of the word would be appropriate, Job having been both God-fearing and virtuous and this is Eliphaz’s assessment of him.
138 BDB 493: “stupidity, confidence” — two opposite meanings of which the second is the most apt for this verse. Seow (Job 1-21, 395) has noted that its meaning is disputed in its only other use, Ps 85.9. He also
and the integrity of your ways your hope (תקוה)?” 139 (4.6). In Eliphaz’s thinking, good behaviour, understood here as “the integrity of your ways”, has boundaries (ways) and staying within them will bring order to human life. The second part (4.7-11) of the Introduction has Eliphaz’s assurance that God will act against the wicked either by killing them (4.9, 11), or disabling them (4.10) and by scattering their young (4.11). The second part also states the possibility that disorder can come from sources separate from human beings and this idea is repeated in 5.6-7. 140 The third part (4.12-21), draws attention to the imperfections of all beings, mortal (4.17, 19) and immortal (4.18), in the eyes of God.

The course of action proposed by Eliphaz is prefaced by a question (5.1), the answer to which is his recommendation (5.8). Question and answer are separated by a digression on the fate of fools (5.2-5), a censuring epideictic passage in the form of a narrative, followed by ambiguous statements on the sources of human suffering (5.6-7). 141 The purpose of this epideictic passage is twofold; it is, firstly, educative in that it is a warning to individuals to guard themselves against dispositions, whether human or divine, which are destructive of order for them, and, secondly, its purpose is to preserve and promote, for the benefit of the community, the mores and the morals advocated by Eliphaz and his friends. He says

notes that the masculine form, כָּסָל, also has the same opposite meanings. J. Schüpphaus (“כסיל; כסל; כסלות; מקוה; הגות”; TDOT 7: 264-269) suggests that all these words come from a single root with the basic meaning “fat, dull, clumsy” (ibid., 264). Words derived from this root, however, have acquired different and indeed opposite meanings. For example, כֶסֶל used in Job 8.14; 31.24 can mean “confidence” but in those contexts, it is a false confidence. Schüpphaus suggests that because כסלה stands in parallel to hope in 4.6, its meaning must be akin to hope.

139 BDB 876: “hope”; BDB 875:”תקוה to wait for.” C. Westerman (“תקוה to hope,” TLOT 3: 1126-1132) notes thatתקוה is derived from this verb. He notes, too, that the Hebrew verbs for hoping and waiting are semantically akin to the word for trusting (信じ). G. Waschke (“תקוה, מקוה, יַקִּיף,” TDOT 12: 564-573) has observed that Wisdom literature, including the speeches of the friends, argues that the good will have a future but the wicked will have their hopes disappointed and that Job’s speeches contest this notion (ibid., 572).

140 Section 6.1.1.3.1 above.

141 Ibid.
Surely vexation kills the fool (אויל), 142
and jealousy slays (פתה) the simple. 143

I have seen fools (אויל) taking root (שׁר) 144
but suddenly I cursed their dwelling (נוה). 145

Their children are far from safety (ישׁע), 146
they are crushed in the gate, and there is no one to deliver them.

The hungry (רעב)147 eat their harvest
and they take it even out of the thorns;
and the thirsty pant after their wealth. (5.2-6)

Eliphaz starts his narrative with a proverb (5.2) which is explained in vv.3-7. He asserts twice, in a verse whose two parts parallel each other, that death will come to the fool. In both parts of the verse an emotion, vexation or jealousy is the subject of a killing verb whose object is a fool, both the morally defective and the simpleton. Whose anger caused death, that of the fools or that of God, or even that of another human, such as Eliphaz, is not stated. Again using an agricultural metaphor, he declares that the fool, here (5.3) the bad fool, having put down roots, will have his estate cursed. If Eliphaz is the one uttering the curse, and the text clearly says that he is, he would be motivated either by zeal in the advancement of his theological point of view or by presumption in

142 BDB 17: “fool (always morally bad) who despises wisdom and discipline.” M. Sæbø (“אויל fool,” TLOT 1:57-58) has noted that “as a stereotypical character”, mostly found in Proverbs, the fool “is consistently portrayed negatively” (ibid., 58), and whose character flaws are the cause of disaster.

143 BDB 834: “be simple.” M. Sæbø (“פתה to be gullible,” TLOT 2:1037-1039) has said of this word, drawing on its usage in Proverbs, that it describes the “simpleton”, one who is “poor in understanding”, who “falls imprudently into misfortune”, who is “naively” trusting, who, in short, is a “fool” (ibid., 1038). This simpleton is never associated with wickedness.

144 BDB 1057: “root.” The noun may have both literal and figurative (referring to people) meanings. Clines (Job 1-20, 139), noting that plant imagery is frequent in Job, interprets “taking root” as “becoming prosperous and flourishing”. So also Dhorme, Job, 58.

145 BDB 627: “abode of shepherds, or flocks, habitation.”

146 BDB 447: “deliverance, rescue, salvation, safety, welfare.” F. Stolz (“ישׁע to help,” TLOT 2: 584-587) has noted that the verb has legal significance and that those in danger of being victims of wrongdoing can expect help except if they are among the “accursed” (ibid.). Sources of help were either God or the king.

147 Habel (Book of Job, 131), noting the reference to the sons of Resheph in v.7, has suggested that the hungry one is a reference not to humans but to the mythological being, Death, whose appetite is “insatiable”, and connected with Death is the thirsty one. He translates this verse: “That the Hungry One would consume his harvest His sheaves the thorns would take And after his wealth the Thirsty Ones would pant.”
appropriating for himself a punitive function which he had assigned to God in 4.8-11. The children of the fool, beyond help, human or divine, will be crushed, which is the fate of all mortals (4.19), but here it is a premature ending of life for children who are not culpable. The fate of the wicked is not only death for them but also the premature death of the life derived from them – their progeny. It is a fate which is, in effect, an undoing of creation, that part of it which is wrongdoers and their offspring. Not only will they be “crushed in the gate” (5.4), their substance, which maintained their lives and their well-being, will be taken from them. Paradoxically, out of disorder, will come order. Disorder, which for the fool and his children is death and deprivation, will bring order to the “hungry” and the “thirsty” (5.5), an order which, reversing their deprivation, sustains their life and well-being; the misfortune of some becomes the good fortune of others. Such a manifestation of disorder in the lives of some is consistent with Eliphaz’s thinking, and also that of his friends, on the fate of the bad, it is the means by which, according to their theology, further explored in later speeches, God maintains order for others in that part of creation which is human.

Eliphaz asks, “Call now is there anyone who will answer you?” (5.1). This question immediately follows his report of the words of a nocturnal visitor who had said of celestial beings, divine servants and angels, that they are flawed and not trusted by God (4.18). Appeal to any of them would be futile and so he continues, “As for me, I would seek (שָׁדַר) God, and to God I would commit my cause” (5.8). This is the course he commends to Job, adding, “He does (רְשַׁע) great things and unsearchable (חָקִּיר), marvellous things (פָּלָא) without number” (5.9). His argument is formulated as an

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148 BDB 205: resort to, seek. E. Ruprecht (“שׁדר to inquire after,” TLOT 1:346-351) has found that in late biblical texts שָׁדַר acquires the meaning of “to have recourse to Yahweh” and was “the habit of the pious” (ibid., 349) expressed in lament.
149 BDB 810: be surpassing, extraordinary . . . difficult to do . . . difficult to understand. R. Albertz (“פָּלָא ni. To be wondrous,” TLOT 2:981-986) says of this word that it is an expression of “joyous reaction (praise). The wonder, the astonishment, includes the recognition of the limits of one’s own power to
enthymeme\textsuperscript{150} based on a \textit{a fortiori} reasoning which states: God is powerful beyond understanding, doing “great things and beyond numbering, and, the unstated premise, that a lesser demonstration of divine power is both possible and to be expected for Eliphaz and a troubled Job. The unstated premise is based on a notion familiar to those well-versed in a theology which holds that God helps the needy and the deserving. The conclusion is that God should be entrusted with Eliphaz’s, or Job’s, cause.

To support his recommendation, he provides reasons, in the form of examples\textsuperscript{151} set out in two lists, 5.10-16 and 5.19-26. Continuing with his \textit{a fortiori} strategy for persuasion, his examples will be drawn first from the bigger picture, the earth and classes of people, the “crafty” (5.12) and “wily” (5.13) on the one hand, and the “lowly” (5.11), the “needy” (5.15 and “the poor” (5.16), on the other hand, and these examples support his premise in 5.9. The second list supports his unstated premise and concerns what an individual, here Job, may expect if he follows Eliphaz’s advice.

He gives rain on the earth
and sends waters on the fields;
he sets on high those who are lowly,
and those who mourn are lifted to safety
He frustrates the devices of the crafty (תָּרָם),\textsuperscript{152}
so that their hands achieve no success.
He takes (לָכְד)\textsuperscript{153} the wise (חֵכם)\textsuperscript{154} in their own craftiness (תָּרָם),\textsuperscript{155}

\footnotesize{conceptualize and comprehend. Since the pele’ event signifies transcendence of customary normal expectations, it is predominantly understood as God’s activity” (ibid., 982).}
\footnotesize{Chapter 1 section 1.4.4.2.3.2.}
\footnotesize{See Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.3.1. Aristotle recommended the use of example as the most appropriate tool for persuasion in deliberative rhetoric.}
\footnotesize{BDB 791: “crafty, shrewd, sensible.” This adjective can be either pejorative (Gen 3.1; Job 15.5), as it is in this passage, or, more often, laudatory (Prov12.23; 13.16; 14.15, 18; 22.3; 27.12). The same can be said of the verb (ערם) meaning be shrewd, be crafty, which may be used in a pejorative way (1Sam 23.22) or in a laudatory way (Prov 15.5; 19.25).}
\footnotesize{BDB 539-540: “capture, seize, take.” Often used in accounts about military engagement, this word is occasionally used as a hunting term (for example, Ps 9.15(16); Isa 24.18; Jer 5.26; 18.22; 48.44; Am 3.5).}
\footnotesize{BDB 314-315: “wise . . . skilful . . . wise in the administration of affairs . . . shrewd, crafty, cunning . . . (pl) class of learned and shrewd men.” Mostly used to describe good qualities, this adjective occasionally denotes the bad (2Sam 13.3).}
\footnotesize{BDB 791: “possibly from ערמה . . . craftiness, prudence.”}
and the schemes of the wily are bought to a quick end.
They meet with darkness (ךשך) in the day time,
and grope (משש) at noonday as in the night.
But he saves (ישש) the needy (אביון)\(^{156}\) from the sword (חרב) of their mouth (פה),
from the hand (יד) of the mighty.
So the poor have hope (תקוה),
and injustice (עלה) shuts its mouth (פה). (5.10-16)

Often described as a doxology, this passage is a statement about God’s ordering of creation. Eliphaz first proclaims the life-sustaining deeds of God in sending water to earth for the maintenance of the animate part of creation placed there. He then turns to the divine ordering of human life on earth. He will act for the “lowly” and “those who mourn” (5.11), the “needy” (5.15) and the “poor” (5.16), by setting them on “high” and lifting them to “safety” (5.11) (a state not enjoyed by the children of the fool [5.4]), by saving them (5.15) and giving them “hope” (5.16), and he will do so by acting against the “wise” and their “craftiness”, and the “wily” with their “schemes” (5.13), who will be brought to a state of metaphorical darkness, perhaps even calamity, in which, helpless, they “grope” (5.14).

These verses (5.12-16) bring to mind Eliphaz’s earlier use of the lion as a metaphor for the wicked and his description of divine dealings with lions (4.10-11). Wrongdoers in the later passage share many of the characteristics of the real lion. Both are strong, unstated in the case of the lion but assumed because that is one of its attributes, but made explicit in the case of wrongdoers who are called “the mighty” (5.15). The predator which is the real lion seizes and holds its victims in its grasp, and the “needy” are in “the hand of the mighty” (5.15). Both have mouths, which in the case of real lions are powerful

\(^{156}\) BDB 2: “in want, needy, poor.” E. Gerstenberger [“потреба to want” TLOT 1: 15-19] has noted that the adjective (אביון), thought by some to be derived from the verb (אבה), is applied to the socially weak especially those who are materially deprived. He notes that in the ancient Near East, the poor are a particular concern of deities, as they are to Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.
organs for killing and consuming prey, and which, thought of figuratively, are no less destructive as a means for the strong to harm the “needy” (5.15). God, however, intervenes on behalf of the prey, figuratively in both passages, Eliphaz saying “the teeth of the young lions are broken” (4.10), and “he frustrates (breaks) the devices of the crafty” (5.12). The tools of the “young lions” (their teeth) and the “crafty” (their devices) are broken, and their potential victims spared. Additionally, the “needy” are saved “from the sword of their mouth”, perhaps here a poetic metaphor for teeth. Acting as a hunter would, God “takes (לאכד) the wise in their own craftiness” (5.13), and the wily “meet with darkness (חשך) in the daytime” (5.14). Whether or not they die is left for the reader to ponder, but there is no doubt about the fate of the lion – it “perishes” (4.11). He ends his contemplation of the fate of the wicked by setting out the reason for suffering humanity to hope for relief, which is that “injustice”, here personified as a predator with a threatening mouth, will have its “mouth” shut (5.16). The lion, a metaphor for the wicked, is a predator, but it is also prey, the prey of God, here imagined as a hunter of hunters including “the wise in their own craftiness” (5.13).

The earlier passage (4.10-11) dealt with the fate of the lion and unstated, but strongly implied, was the import of that fate for the lion’s prey, an import made explicit in the later passage (5.11-16). There are two parts to Eliphaz’s hunter/hunted thinking as it relates to order and disorder in the human part of creation; first, the wicked, the source of disorder for some, are to be destroyed or disabled, and second, in so doing, their victims are to be rescued. As he had earlier observed in his narrative (5.2-5), the bringing of disorder into the lives of wrongdoers leads to the bringing of order into the lives of the needy, and in this passage the undoing of the powerful which brings ill-being to them, leads to the restoration and wellbeing of the weak, and it is assumed the latter are also virtuous. God, who both creates and orders all that is, in Eliphaz’s thinking, uses disorder as a means of bringing order into the life of the human community.
Eiphaz’s declaration that God will act against the powerful and for the needy, giving hope to the latter, is the ground for his assurances to Job. That these immediately follow his declaration concerning divine deeds on behalf of the needy, strongly implies that Eliphaz, in this, his first speech, perceives Job as being one of the needy. This being so, his assertions concerning Job’s eventual wellbeing are a corollary to his pronouncements on divine deeds to secure the good of the needy. As a preliminary, however, he qualifies his assurance of Job’s eventual wellbeing following recourse to the deity and issues a caveat (5.17-18) to explain suffering, without apparent reason, in the life of a human being; suffering, as discipline (5.17), may come from God but so too, in time, will come healing – “he wounds, but he binds up; he strikes but his hands heal” (5.18).157 Restoration to order and well-being of some who suffer is not immediate but is assured. Given that stipulation Eliphaz says,

He will deliver you from six troubles;
   In seven no harm shall touch (נגע) you.
In famine (רעב) he will redeem you from death,
   and in war from the power of the sword.
You shall be hidden from the scourge of the tongue
   and shall not fear destruction (שׁד)158 when it comes.
At destruction (שׁד) and famine (רעב)159 you shall laugh,
   and shall not fear the wild animals (חיים)160 of the earth.
For you shall be in league with the stones (אבן)161 of the field,

157 Contrariness was a characteristic of divine behaviour noted by ancient Mesopotamian sufferers. See chapter 3, section 3.3.
158 BDB 994: “violence, havoc, devastation, ruin.” Pope (Job, 45) suggests a change from holem to sere thus changing this word to “demon”. (Habel (Job, 135) concurs.) Pope goes further and suggests that the “scourge of the tongue” refers to incantations and black magic. The same word in the following verse he would leave unchanged and translate it as plunder. Seow (Job 1-21, 445) would not change the pointing, saying that the word play of שׁד with שׁדי (5.17) is intentional, Eliphaz’s point being that the one who attends to God will be spared destruction.
159 BDB 495: “hunger famine.” Longman (Job, 129) has made a distinction between רעב which means “the experience of famine in general” and קסח which means “hunger that results from poor crops”.
160 BDB 312: “living thing, animal . . . life . . . appetite.” H. Ringgren (“םחי, חי, חיו, חיות, חיותו”, TDOT 4: 324-344) has said of חיה, meaning “animal”, that when it is linked to ארץ it can refer specifically to wild animals (ibid 342).
161 BDB 6: “stone.” Dhorme (Job, 71) thinks that the stones represent a “scourge of some sort, one which can work against the fertility of the land and with which there needs to be a pact. So also Driver and Gray, Job, 57; Gray, Book of Job, 165. Seow (Job 1-21, 425) posits a pact with the stones in an allusion
and the wild animals shall be at peace with you.
You shall know that your tent is safe,
you shall inspect your fold (נוה) and miss nothing.
You shall know that your descendants will be many,
and your offspring (צאצא)\(^{162}\) like the grass of the earth.
You shall come to your grave in ripe old age,
as a shock of grain comes up to the threshing floor in its season (עת).
(5.20-26)

Eliphaz assures Job of deliverance from several troubles and protection from an
even greater number of troubles (“no harm shall touch you”) if he were to heed his advice
(5.19). These troubles include those which afflict populations of people, such as “famine”
and “war”, waged by “the power of the sword” (5.20), and those which may afflict smaller
numbers of people or individuals, such as slander (“the scourge of the tongue”) (5.21),
“famine”. They include, too, troubles emanating from the non-human part of creation,
such as “wild animals” (5.22), and “stones of the field” (5.23), and the latter may be
impediments to successful crop production or malign spirits. There are hints of
supernatural powers which could, but will not, harm Job. All the troubles are subsumed
(twice) under the term “destruction” (5.21, 22).

Again using \textit{a fortiori} reasoning, Eliphaz’s assurances of divine protection begin
with the bigger picture, the outside world, before turning to the smaller picture, that part

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\begin{itemize}
\item\footnotesize\textsuperscript{162} BDB 425: “issue, offspring (of men), produce (of earth).” D. Kellermann (“צאצאים,” \textit{TDOT} 12:208-210) noting that this noun occurs only in the plural, says that the word “offspring” refers either to the “young shoots of plants in the sense of ‘buds’” or “metaphorically to human ‘descendants’ (in the more specific sense of ‘grandchildren’)” (ibid., 208).
\end{itemize}
of the world which is Job’s household which, too, will be protected. Safe from all that could threaten from without, Job’s estate, unlike that of the fool (5.3), will be secure, his tent and its occupants, his fold and its stock. Likening the cycle of human life to the cycle of plant life, Eliphaz declares that Job’s progeny, unlike that of the fool (5.4), will be as numerous as the “grass of the earth”, a metaphor perhaps inspired by the Mesopotamian tradition which had Enlil “make the seed of mankind rise from the earth”. People, like plants come up from earth and there they return, as Job will, strength undiminished, in due time, as the “shock of grain” bearing much seed, the promise of continuing life, “comes up to the threshing floor in its season”, the season of ripeness (5.26). The promise of order in Job’s life if he were to “seek God” (5.8), is the promise of a life lasting until the proper time appointed for the ending of human life, and that the life which came through him, his descendants, would continue. He ends his speech saying “See, we have searched (חקר) this out; it is true.” (5.27). Eliphaz, who had earlier described divine deeds as “unsearchable”, nevertheless, claims sufficient understanding of the “great things” (5.9) of God to recommend a course to Job, which is to “seek God” (5.8), and this recommendation is the answer to Zophar’s question “what can you do?” (11.8).

6.1.2.1.2 The Second Speech (Job 15.2-35)

Eliphaz’s second speech is predominantly epideictic, using as a strategy for persuasion to his way of thinking, deprecation of three examples and amplification. He censures, first Job for intemperate speech (15.2-6, 11-13), second, all humankind (15.14-16), and lastly, “the wicked” (15.20-35). Of these three passages, the most
relevant to a study of Eliphaz’s thinking on order and disorder in creation and the one on which I shall focus, is the third which deals with the fate of the wicked. With several links to the words of his first speech (4.2-5.27), Eliphaz, who had earlier dealt with the rewards to be hoped for (4.6-7), or awaiting (5.18-26) a pious Job, and the disasters awaiting the wicked (4.8-11; 5.2-5, 12-14), concentrates in this speech on the latter.

Reviling the “wicked” (15.20), guilty of impiety, like Job (15.4), Eliphaz contends that the disorder which will come upon them is the consequence of their self-alienation from God - “they stretched out their hands against God” and bid defiance to the Almighty” (15.25). They have a life (“all his days” and “years”) writhing in “pain” (15.20), the sound of dread (פּחד) in “their ears” as they await the coming of the “destroyer (שׁדד)” (15.21) of whom Job had earlier been assured that he would have no “fear” (5.21) and at whom he would “laugh” (5.22). Eliphaz declares that the wicked are consigned to darkness (חשך) (15.22, 23, 30), as the “wise” and the “wily” had been (5.13-14) from which there is no hope of “returning” (15.22) and no “escape” (15.30). “Destined for the sword” (15.22), and in want, they search for “bread” (15.23), a fate from which Job had been promised deliverance (5.20). “Distress and anguish”, personified as a “king prepared for battle, “prevail against them” (15.24). They live in “houses destined to become heaps of ruins” in “cities” which are “desolate” (15.28) and “their wealth does not endure” (15.29), as had happened to the children of the fool (5.5), nor will earth accommodate it. Eliphaz further describes the fate of the wicked in ambiguous terms which could refer both to what becomes of their possessions, but also, and more probably, to them and their children. Using a plant metaphor as he had earlier in discussing the fate of wrongdoers (4.8; 5.5), the wicked are described as having “shoots (ניבת)” which

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167 Clines (Job 1-20, 358) understands these words to mean an “assault” on God.
168 Clines (Job 1-20, 357) has suggested that פּחדים is a reference to malign spirits of the netherworld and that the “destroyer” is of the same ilk.
169 BDB 413: “young shoot, twig.” An uncommon word, it is nearly always used in a metaphorical sense to refer to human beings as in Job 8.16; 15.30; Ps 80.11; Ezek 17.22; Hos 14.6 though in Job 14.7 it
are dried up (שׁיב) by a “flame” coming forth as a “breath (רוח)” or “wind” of his “mouth (פה)” (15.30). a fate reminiscent of the fate of the cultivators of “iniquity” and “trouble” (4.8) who were “consumed” by “the blast (רוח) of his anger” (4.9). There is, however, a difference between the two passages. In the earlier passage “the blast of his anger (רוח אפּו)” emanating from God, was the divine way of dealing with the propagators of “iniquity” and “trouble”, but in the present passage, the death of the “shoots” is more likely to have been brought about by another agent, unnamed, from whose “mouth” comes the “wind”. Eliphaz has named the forces arrayed against the wicked, “the destroyer” (15.21), and “distress” and “anguish” (15.24), the last two personified as warriors, perhaps armed with a weapon of war (15.30), any one of which could have a metaphorical “mouth”. That it is God’s should not be assumed and, indeed, it is more likely to be the mouth of one of the forces hostile to the wicked person. “Recompense” (15.31) comes “before their time (בלא יומו) and their “branch (כפה) will not be green (רענן)” (15.32), pointing, perhaps, to a premature death or at least a lessening of wellbeing for

170 BDB 386: “be dry, dried up, withered.” H.D. Preuss (“שׁיב; יבשׁה; יבשׁת”, TDOT 5: 373-379), commenting on the metaphorical usage of the word in its various forms, has said that dryness nearly always has negative associations and is frequently used in connection with divine judgement, and this is particularly true of wisdom texts (ibid., 378).

171 This clause (30b) has caused difficulty for many interpreters. There are two problems; the first is the noun פה, and the second is its third masculine singular suffix. To whom does the suffix refer? God has not been referred to since v.25 and then in connection with the self-alienation of the wicked from God. One of the suggestions has been that רוח “his mouth” be amended to פチョ “his blossom” and the suffix would then refer to the wicked person. Clines (Job 1-20, 344) cites the several translators who favour such an emendation, including NRSV and himself. So also Dhorme, Job, 223. Gordis (Book of Job, 165) suggests that the verb ייסור is a noun meaning “branch, i.e., a part separating itself from the trunk” and thus a metaphor for offspring and he translates v. 30bc as “his shoots will shrivel up in the hot wind, and his branch in the breath of God’s mouth.” Rowley (The Book of Job, 253) acknowledges the possibility that the wind came from God’s mouth. Habel (The Book of Job, 248) suggests that “mouth” is a reference to the mouth of Death.

172 Dhorme (Job, 223) has distinguished between the two uses of רוח saying that the blast of his nostril (4.9) symbolises divine anger, whilst the breath of the mouth symbolises God’s word, which is not the meaning here anyway and he prefers to translate the phrase as “the wind”.

173 Habel (Book of Job, 260) understands “darkness”, the “flame”, and “the mouth” to be “powers of death which will overcome the wicked man. Clines (Job 1-20, 362) does not interpret “wind” as divine intervention in this verse.

174 Gordis (Book of Job, 166) understands this verse and the next verse to refer to the premature death of the wicked and their progeny.

175 BDB 497: “branch, frond”. Elsewhere found only in Isa 9.13 and 19.15 where it is a metaphor for people.

176 BDB 947: luxuriant, fresh.”
the wicked and so a disordering of their lives. Furthermore, “like the vine”, “they will shake off their unripe grape and cast off their blossoms like the olive tree” (15.33) suggesting the premature end of the wicked person’s progeny. The dreadful end of the wicked is in sharp contrast to the assurances of protection, including from famine, the sword, destruction and perhaps also malign forces (5.20-23), which Eliphaz had held out to Job if he were to seek God (5.8) as were the promises of blessing including the safety of his household and possessions, many descendants and a complete life-span (5.24-26). The wicked, in this second speech, do not seek God and so they are not in Eliphaz’s thinking, protected by God. Summarising his beliefs on the fate of the “godless”, those who have alienated themselves from God (15.34), and using again, the metaphor of “fire” as the agent of destruction, Eliphaz declares that “fire (שֶׁאֵל) consumes (אֹכַל) the tents (אהל) of bribery (שֵׁד),” so ridding the human community of a threat (the perversion of justice) to its order. God is not named as the one who brings disorder, but he certainly allows it to overtake the “godless” (15.34) and, in so doing, protects that part of creation which is human, except for those who are wicked and godless.

Order in the lives of the wicked is overturned through their emotions, which are fear (15.21, 24), despair (15.22), “distress” and “anguish” (15.24), and through loss of possessions (15.21, 29) which may bring hunger (15.23), loss of homes and loss of communities (15.28), death or ill-being (15.32), and the loss of children (15.30, 33). The weapons deployed against them are the sword (15.22, and possibly 15.30), the wind (15.30), and fire (15.30, 34). The chief metaphor for impending calamity is “darkness”.

177 Gordis’s translation: “Before his time he will be cut off, and his frond will not be green” (Book of Job, 158).
178 G. W. Ahlström (“בַּנֶּךָ,” TDOT 4: 58-62) has noted that the olive tree may be used metaphorically to signify the righteous man, and also when it has lost its blossom and will have no fruit, as in this verse, with the godless (ibid., 61). He has commented on the appearance together, many times, in the Hebrew Bible of the words for vineyards and olive trees, vines and olive trees, wine and olive oil as terms for “fertility and food supply” (ibid., 60). I suggest that in this context they stand for the opposite – the failure of fertility and hunger.
179 BDB 1005: “present . . . bribe, usually to pervert justice.
180 Habel, Book of Job, 261.
In this speech, God is not the cause of, nor the protector from, disasters affecting those who have alienated themselves from him and who are also the wicked. The bringing of disorder into the lives of the wicked is the means whereby order is bought into the community by, for example, the prevention of the perversion of justice (15.34). It is one of the functions of epideictic rhetoric to strengthen adherence to certain social values and this Eliphaz does in his denunciations of the wicked and his warnings of the terrible fate which awaits them.

6.1.2.1.3 *The Third Speech (Job 22:2-30)*

Eliphaz’s final speech (22.2-30), prefaced by his thoughts on the relationship God has with humankind (22.2-4), is a combination of two epideictic passages (22.5-14 and 22.15-20) and deliberative rhetoric (22.21-30). Of the two epideictic passages, the former censures Job for his “wickedness” (22.5) and the latter, “the wicked” (22.15). Though a mixture of types, this speech is, above all, deliberative, the epideictic passages asserting that wickedness is recompensed by suffering (22.10-11, 16), a situation which his exhortations seek to remedy for Job if he is willing to take advice and change his relationship with God.

Beginning with a presumption of Job’s guilt (“Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities” [22.5]), Eliphaz enumerates the wrongs which, he claims, Job has done to others (22.6-9), and for which he has been punished (22.4). He is surrounded by “snares”, overwhelmed by “terror” (22.10), or “darkness” so great that he “cannot see” and is covered by a “flood of water” (22.11).

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181 Section 6.1.1.3.2 above.
182 Section 6.1.1.3.1 above.
Eliphaz picks up on the theme of divine remoteness expressed in Zophar’s questions, “It is higher (הָגָב) than heaven (שָׁמָיִם) – what can you do? Deeper than Sheol – what can you know?” (11.8)\(^{183}\) when he asks “Is not God high (הָגָב) in the heavens (שָׁמָיִם)?” (22.12). He picks up, too, on the theme of divine concealment found in Bildad’s cosmogony – “He covers the face of his throne, and spreads over it his cloud (ענן)” (26.9)\(^{184}\) – when he says of God, “Thick clouds (עב) enwrap him” (22.14). For Zophar the heights and depths of God had precluded human understanding of the magnitude of God, and for Bildad, God’s self-concealment from human kind is intentional and part of the mysteriousness of God. Eliphaz warns Job against supposing that divine remoteness and self-concealment mean that God does not “know” humankind and that God is not able to “judge” humankind (22.13).

Turning to his censure of the wicked, Eliphaz says that, like Job, the wicked, too, will be overwhelmed by water but for them it will be life ending (22.16).\(^{185}\) Distancing themselves from God, “[t]hey said to God, ‘Leave us alone’” because, it would seem from their question, “‘What can the Almighty do us” (22.17), that they have no use for God, notwithstanding their “houses” having been “filled with good things” (27.18). Unmindful even of their own self-interest, they are left alone to be destroyed, “washed away by the flood” (22.16), “what they left”, “consumed” by “fire” (22.20), as it had the “tents” of wrongdoers (15.34), and the butt of derision from the “righteous” who are “glad”, and the “innocent” who “laugh them to scorn” (22.19). Job, though wicked too, in the opinion of Eliphaz, has the option of retreating from such a fate.

Earlier, Eliphaz had asked “Can a mortal be of use (סכן) to God? Can even the wisest be of service (סכן) to him” (22.1)\(^{186}\) and now, supposing that he can, Eliphaz, in two

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\(^{183}\) Section 6.1.1.1 above.
\(^{184}\) Section 6.1.1.2 above.
\(^{185}\) Section 6.1.1.3.1 above.
\(^{186}\) Section 1.1.3.1 above.
enthymematic arguments (22.21, 23-28), urges Job to “agree (קָלַל) with him (God)” (22.21). He further urges, “receive instruction from his mouth, and lay up his words in your heart (לבב)” (22.22). He continues, advising Job, who, he claimed, had turned against God (15.13), to “return to the Almighty” and to “remove unrighteousness” from his “tents” (22.23), and, disdaining “gold” (22.24), to treasure instead the “Almighty” (22.25). If Job complies, he will “be at peace” and “good” will come to him (22.21), he will be “restored” (22.23), he will “delight” himself in the Almighty and lift his “face to God” (22.26), he will “pray” and be heard (22.27), he “will decide on a matter and it will be established”, and “light will shine” on his “ways” (22.28). Job, now in “darkness” (22.11), as are the wicked (15.22, 23, 30) and from which the latter have no hope of returning (15.22), will be returned to “light”. His disordered life will become again an ordered life. In brief, his recommendation is that Job return to a relationship with God and reject unrighteousness, because, in so doing, his well-being will be restored.

6.1.2.1.4 Summary of Eliphaz’s speeches

The advice of Eliphaz, chief spokesman of the friends for a particular theological point of view, is, in his first speech, to “seek God” and to “commit (his) cause” to “God” (5.8). Compliance would ensure divine protection from many perils present in creation (5.19-23), the enjoyment of possessions (5.24), many descendants (5.25), and survival for a complete lifespan (5.26). Shielded from hazards which could threaten order in his life, Job will be able to laugh at them (5.22). In this speech, Eliphaz judges Job to be needy rather than wicked. In his third speech, now supposing Job to be wicked (22.5), he recommends to Job a return to piety (22.21, 2, 23, 24) from which many blessings will...
flow (22.21, 23, 26 27, 28). In Eiphaz’s thinking, those who are in a right relationship with God and who forsake wrongdoing will not only receive good from him but will also be protected from harm. Those who distance themselves from God (15.25-26; 22.17), the “godless” (15.34), and with godlessness comes wickedness (15.34-35; 22.5, 15, 17), are susceptible to the perils present in creation from which they will not be protected (15.20-34; 22.10-11, 16). They are overtaken by darkness, their abodes are destroyed and they suffer the loss of possessions and progeny. Arrayed against them are torments, which may be malign beings, and also “flame”, “wind”, and “fire. Not only will God not protect the wicked, he may also act against them by destroying the propagators of “iniquity” and “trouble.” (4.8-9) By acting against the wicked who are strong, God protects the weak by disabling the wicked (metaphorically lions) (4.10) so that they die (4.11), and by scattering their young, postponing future deeds of wickedness (4.11). He acts against the “crafty” (5.12), the “wise” and “wily” (5.13), and the “mighty” (5.15), by frustrating their “devices” (5.12), ending their “schemes” (5.13), and bringing them to “darkness” (5.14) for the protection of the “needy” (5.15) and “poor” (5.16). For a time the wicked may thrive but their good fortune is temporary, Eliphaz declaring that “in prosperity the destroyer will come upon them” (15.21), and later, that though they had enjoyed the “good things” with which God had “filled their houses” (22.18) they had come to an untimely end (22.16).

6.1.2.2 Bildad
Bildad has only two complete speeches (8.2-22; 18.2-21), His third speech (25.2-6; 26.5-14) which is part of the damaged third cycle has been discussed above. Suffice to say that it is an epideictic speech praising God as Creator of the cosmos.

6.1.2.2.1 The First Speech (Job 8.2-22)

Bildad’s first speech (8.2-22) is deliberative, its main purpose to persuade Job, for his own good, to turn to God. Initially epideictic, censuring Job for his words and his children for unspecified sins for which they suffered, justly, an unspecified penalty (8.2-4), he comes early to his point (8.5-7), following which is a digression on affirming tradition (8.8-10), and then an example to support his recommendation (8.11-22).

Concerned for Job’s well-being, he says,

If you will seek God
    and make supplication to the Almighty,
if you are pure and upright surely then he will rouse himself for you
    and restore to you your rightful place.
Though your beginning was small,
    your latter days will be very great. (8.5-7)

To support his advice, expressed as an enthymeme, that God will act for those who seek his favour and who are also “pure and upright”, Bildad provides an example in the form of a fable, a recommendation of Aristotle, about two plants. Whilst noting the

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188 Section 6.1.1.2 above.
189 Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.3.1.
190 There is disagreement not only on how many plants the fable is about but also, if more than one, whom they represent. Favouring a two-plant fable are, for example, Gordis (The Book of Job, 521), Habel (Book of Job, 177), Hartley (Book of Job, 161-163), Newsom (“Job”, 402), and Seow (Job 1-21, 515), for whom the two plants represent the good and the bad person. Favouring the one-plant fable are, for example, NRSV, Fohrer (Das Buch Hiob, 193), Clines (Job 1-20, 209), Good (In Turns of Tempest, 219-220) and Gray (Book of Job, 183), for whom that plant represents a wicked person.
scholarly disagreement on the number of plants and whom they represent, the bad alone or the bad and the good, the ‘moral of the story’ (8.20) points to the fable being about two opposite personae, the “blameless” and the “evildoers” and, thus, about two plants. The text is ambiguous, however, and the most difficult verse for an interpretation of the second plant as representative of the good person, is 8.18, which could, but need not, as I argue, suggest not only the destruction of the second plant (good person) but also its disowning by its place, which is not consistent with the friends’ notions on the recompense due to the good.191

In a two-plant reading of the text, the first plant, withers (שִׁבָּה) for lack of water though in its prime (“while yet in flower”) (8.12). Its habitat becomes inhospitable, lacking a necessity of life. Their “paths” are those of “all who forget God”; they are the “godless” full of “hope” . . . which will be dashed (8.13) whose “confidence (כָּל)” is misplaced, as is his “trust (כָּל)” when placed in something as insubstantial as a spider’s web (8.14). The second plant (denoted only by a third person masculine pronoun), apparently well-watered (רָטְב) and warmed by the sun, spreads its “shoots (ינַקְת)” over “his garden” (8.16), growing well enough to expand or even multiply, its roots firmly “entwined” on a “stone heap” (8.17). As is the way with plants, which die and decay in the earth where they have grown, they are “swallowed up (בלע)” by the “place” in which they are growing, leaving no

191 Gordis (The Book of Job, 521) explains, however, that “the righteous may suffer adversity but will ultimately triumph.”

192 BDB 105: “confidence.” E. Gerstenberger (“שהב to trust,” TLOT 1”226-230) has said of the verb that it describes “secure circumstances or a secure frame of mind” (ibid., 228). The noun כָּל, on the other hand, unlike the other nouns derived from the verb, means “basis, object of confidence” which is its meaning in this verse and also 18.14 and 31.24 (ibid., 229). Since most texts in which the verb occurs, concern trust in Yahweh, it is a significant theological term, one which is synonymous with “believe” (ibid.). A. Jepsen (“שהב; שָּׁבַע; שָּׁבַע; שָּׁבַע; שָּׁבַע”), TDOT 2: 88-94) has observed that the verb כָּל is frequently used to convey the false sense of security of those persons who have placed their trust in something which is unreliable. Trust, when it is placed in Yahweh, can be relied upon.

193 BDB 936: “moist, fresh, juicy”.

194 Gordis (The Book of Job, 92) explains the seemingly inhospitable environment of a heap of stones as “metaphor of the temporary suffering of the righteous”.

195 BDB 118: “swallow down, swallow up, engulf”.

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trace (חרם) (8.18), save that “out of the earth still others will spring” (8.19), others which are the progeny of the plant and the good person for whom the plant is a metaphor, and this is a cause for rejoicing, Bildad saying, “see, these are their happy ways” (8.19). It is consistent with the belief expressed by Eliphaz, using plant metaphors (5.25-26), that the good will die in due time, but will be survived by their offspring which, metaphorically, come up from the earth like grass. Bildad ends with further encouragement for Job to heed his advice saying that “God will not reject a blameless person nor take the hand of evildoers” (8.20), that “laughter” and “joy” will return to Job (8.21), and that “the tent of the wicked will be no more” (8.22).

6.1.2.2.2 The Second Speech (Job 18.2-21)

Bildad’s second speech (18.2-21) is epideictic, censuring first Job for his words (18.2), his attitude to his friends (18.3), and for his anger (18.4), and then, with lengthy amplification, the wicked, paying particular attention to the horrors which await them (18.5-21). The continuing of the plant metaphor (8.16) for the wicked, links this speech with Bildad’s first (8.2-22).

Calamity comes to them in in several ways. First, light is taken from them.

Surely, the light (אור) of the wicked is put out,

and the flame of their fire (-animation) does not shine.

The light (אור) is dark (שׁך) in their tent,

and the lamp (נר) above them is put out. (18.5-6)

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196 BDB 471: be disappointing, deceive, fail, grow lean . . . act deceptively against (i.e. seem to acknowledge, but not really doing so).”

197 BDB 632: “lamp.” D. Kellermann (“,” “,” TDOT 10:14-24) has suggested that light is “a metaphor for happiness and good fortune, prosperity and well-being” as may also be the case for the lamp which is the giver of light, particularly when the two terms occur together as they do as they do here and also in 29.3 (ibid.). The extinguishing of the lamp would metaphorically denote misfortune.
Bildad later adds they are “thrust from light (אור) into darkness (חשך) (18.18). Second, they will suffer through what happens in and to their abode. Their “tent” is “dark (חשך)” (18.6), “they are torn from the tent in which they trusted” (18.14), “nothing remains in their tents” and “sulphur is scattered upon their habitations (נוה)” (18.15). Worse, they are “driven out of the world (תּבל)” 198 (18.18), and hinted at here is the annihilation of the wicked, who not only are thrust into darkness but are driven from the earth. Thirdly, as the prey of supernatural forces, frightened and chased by “terrors” (18.11), they suffer physically and, their “strength” sapped by “hunger” (18.12), they are vulnerable to “calamity” (18.12). Disease (“their skin is consumed”) is brought to them by “the first born of Death” 199 who “consumes their limbs” (18.13). Finally, they are brought to the “king of terrors” (18.14). The devices used against them are nets (two kinds - רשׁת and שבכה [18.8]), traps or snares (three kinds – פּח, צמּים, and מלכּדת [18.9], and מְלֶכָּת [18.10]), and rope (חבל). Their very being is threatened when “their roots”, which, in Bildad’s earlier speech, had anchored a plant to its place (8.17), “dry up (רִיב),” so that “their branches wither above” (18.16). (Withering had caused the death of a plant, representative of the godless person, in Bildad’s first speech (8.12.) The wicked person will die leaving no “memory” on the “earth” (18.17), nor any “offspring” or “descendant” (18.19), so that he disappears without trace, unlike the good person, symbolised by the second plant (8.19) in Bildad’s first speech.

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198 BDB 385: “world, poetic synonym of ארץ.” H.-J. Fabry and N. van Meeteren (“תּבל”, “תּבל” TDOT 15: 557-564) have said that this word with a primary meaning of “land”, is often a cosmological term and used in the context of creation theology. It may be thought of as “the circle of the earth floating in the primordial ocean” (ibid., 558).

199 Habel (Book of Job, 287-288) believes this being is Mot the son of El and the ruler of the netherworld. John Barclay Burns (“The Identity of Death’s First-Born (Job XVIII 13),” VT 37 [1987]: 363) has suggested a Mesopotamian deity, Namtar, who was the god of “plague and pestilence” and also the son of Ereshkigal, the queen of the netherworld, and her vizier, an office held by the first-born of a deity. He suggests, too, that the “king of terrors” in the next verse is Nergal, husband of Ereshkigal and king of the underworld.

200 BDB 809: “bird-trap.” The meaning is usually figurative.

201 BDB 540: “catching instrument, i.e. snare or trap.” It only has a figurative meaning.
That they are responsible for their own downfall is made clear – “their own schemes throw them down” (18.7) and “they are thrust into a net by their own feet” (18.8). Bildad concludes by mentioning God for the first time in this speech. In summarising his grim pronouncements on the lot of the wicked, Bildad returns to the motif of home and place saying, “such are the dwellings (משכן) of the ungodly, such is the place of those who do not know God” (18.21). God is not the cause of the troubles of those who have distanced themselves from him, and neither is he their protector from trouble.

6.1.2.2.3 Summary of Bildad’s Speeches

In his first speech, Bildad advises Job to “seek God and make supplication to the Almighty” (8.5) and also to be “pure and upright” (8.6). Compliance will ensure that God will “restore” Job to his “rightful place” (8.6). In his first two speeches Bildad makes the connection between godlessness and wickedness – the godless are also wicked. Neither speech talks of divine punishment of the godless or the wicked, but neither do they enjoy divine protection from disaster, and this is explicit in the first speech (“God will not . . . take the hand of evildoers” [8.20]) and implicit in the second speech (“such are the dwellings of the ungodly, such is the place of those who do not know God” [18.21]). In the second speech, the chief metaphor for calamity is darkness, and in both speeches the chief place of calamity is the abode of the godless and wicked. The chief means of securing the undoing of the wicked is, in the first speech, deprivation, either of water (8.11) or of home (8.22), and in the second speech, the hunt. Unstated, but implied by the words “all who forget God” (8.13) and “those who do not know God” (18.21), is that disaster could have been averted if they had known God. Bildad’s third speech is a statement of praise of the creative power of God who made, controls and orders all three
levels of the physical world (26.7-14), and who controls and orders the upper (25.2-3) and lower (26.5-6) levels of the supernatural world.\footnote{202 Section 6.1.1.2 above.}

6.1.2.3 Zophar

Zophar has two complete speeches (11.2-20; 20.2-29) and, in the third cycle, fragments of his final speech (24.18-24; 27.13-23).\footnote{203 Chapter 2, section 2.2.}

6.1.2.3.1 The First Speech (Job 11.2-20)

Zophar’s first speech begins with two epideictic passages; first he censures Job for his words (11.2-4), and then he praises God for his wisdom and for what, in his view, is leniency towards Job (11.6), his immensity (11.7-9),\footnote{204 Section 6.1.1.1 above.} and justice (11.10-11). The purpose of his speech, however, is deliberative. Faced with such a God, infinitely great and also just, who, nevertheless, is disposed to mercy for Job, his recommendation, using enthymematic argument, is two-fold. First, Job must change from within (“if you direct your heart rightly”), and the outward manifestation of such change will be seen when “you will stretch out your hands toward him” (11.13). Second, he is told to distance himself from “iniquity” and not allow “wickedness to reside in (his) tents” (11.14). If he heeds Zophar’s advice, much good will follow. Job “will lift up (his) face without blemish”, he “will be secure” and, as Elihaz had also promised (5.21, 22), without “fear” (11.15) and he will forget his “misery” (11.16). The “darkness” of his life will be turned into “noonday” brightness (11.17), he will be confident (בְּשַׁמְשָׁהוֹ)\footnote{205 BDB 105: “trust.”} because he has “hope
and he will sleep “in safety (בטח)” (11.18). The wicked (רשע), on the other hand, will “hope” only “to breathe their last” (11.20).

6.1.2.3.2  The Second Speech (Job 20.2-29)

Zophar begins his speech by citing a long tradition (20.4-5) on the brevity of the happiness of the “wicked” and the “godless” (20.5). His speech is epideictic, concerned almost entirely (20.6-29) with the deprecation of their wrongdoing and a lengthy amplification on their grisly end. Their most egregious sin is “greed” (20.20). Zophar uses metaphors of consumption and regurgitation to describe their failings and divine dealings with those failings, before they and their possessions are finally destroyed. Like the “mighty” in Eliphaz’s first speech (5.15-16), Zophar’s wicked have a mouth (20.12, 13) in which “wickedness is sweet” and hidden under the “tongue” (20.12), a troublesome organ which is a “scourge” (5.21) and the articulator of wrongful words (15.5). So great is their “greed” that “there was nothing left after they had eaten” (20.21). Self-serving and predatory, “they have crushed and abandoned the poor and they have seized a house they did not build” (20.19). Greed will do them no good, however, and “their hands will give back their wealth” (20.10) and “they will give back the fruit of their toil and from the profit of their trading, they will get no enjoyment” (20.18). The “riches” they have swallowed, “God casts out of their bellies” (20.15). He will instead “fill their belly to the full” with something quite different; he will “send his fierce anger into them” (20.23). Not only will they be impoverished (“their prosperity will not endure” [20.21]), they will come under attack. They will “flee from an iron weapon” but to no avail because “a bronze arrow will strike them through” (20.24) and “terrors” will “come upon them”

\[206\] BDB 105: “security” which is also the meaning of בטח (ibid.).
Their “treasures” will be consigned to “utter darkness”, “fire will “devour them (the wicked)”, “what is left in their tent will be consumed” (20.26), and “the possessions of their house will be carried away” (20.28). He summarises his position saying “This is the portion (ךָנְפֹּס) of the wicked from God, the heritage (ךָנְלָה) decreed for them by God” (20.29).

In this speech, Zophar addresses issues to do with social justice. The greed of the wicked has been all-consuming (20.21), they have taken what did not belong to them and have “crushed” the poor” (20.19). In matters concerning the poor and the vulnerable, Zophar shares Eliphaz’s belief (4.10-11; 5.12-16) that God acts directly against the wicked to aid the weak. God relieves them of their gains (20.15) which are returned to those who have been dispossessed (20.10, 18). The means of retaliation are God’s burning “anger” (20.23), weapons of war, including the “arrow” (20.24), and “fire” (20.26) which will be deployed against the wicked and the goods of their households.

6.1.2.3.3 The Third Speech (Job 24.18-24; 27.13-23)²⁰⁷

The first fragment (24.18-24) of Zophar’s third speech is epideictic choosing for censure persons, assumed from their behaviour to be the wicked,²⁰⁸ though not so labelled. They prey on the barren woman “and do no good to the widow” (24.21). Such behaviour is made possible because they are powerful and allowed to continue thus through the “power” of someone whom Zophar does not identify (24.22),²⁰⁹ though it is probably the omniscient deity, who gives them “security” and support despite knowing

²⁰⁷ Chapter 2, section 2.2.
²⁰⁸ Clines (Job 21-37, 651) translates the “he” which starts v.18 as “the wicked”.
²⁰⁹ NRSV translates the “he” of the text as “God” which makes God the subject of the next verse. So also Clines, Job 21-37, 652. Gordis (Book of Job, 270-271) argues that the wicked person is the subject of the other two verbs in the verse and so it is best to treat נָשָׁם as an intransitive with the wicked person as its subject. He has God as the subject of the first two verbs in v.23.
well what they are up to (“his eyes are upon their ways” (22.23). Exalted for a while, they will be brought low (24.24) and here Zophar uses a plant metaphor to describe the undoing of the wicked – “they wither” like “heads of grain”. A similar fate had overtaken the wicked person likened to a plant in Bildad’s second speech (18.16). The notion that the undoing of the wicked is preceded by their temporary wellbeing is consistent with what, in his second speech, Zophar says of them, “their prosperity will not endure” (20.21). Zophar indulges himself, at the start of this fragment, with rumination (24.18-20) on the eventual fate of wrongdoers; his land is cursed (קלל), as was the fool’s dwelling (5.3) in Eliphaz’s first speech, he can get no workers in his vineyard, life is fleeting, and he will be snatched away by Sheol and then he will be forgotten. In this way, “wickedness is broken like a tree” (24.20) and this last part of v.20 supports the contention that the “he” of the next verse is a wicked person.

The second fragment (27.13-23) of Zophar’s third speech is also epideictic and focuses on what befalls malefactors. That God is the author of their troubles is made clear at the outset, Zophar, in words that recall the closing statement of his second speech (20.29), saying “This is the portion (חלק) of the wicked with God, and the heritage (נחלה) that oppressors receive from the Almighty” (27.13). The wicked he talks of appear once to have enjoyed good fortune and to have had homes, offspring and possessions through which they are afflicted because none endures. However numerous their children may become they die by the sword, or they go hungry (27.14), and those who survive are buried by “pestilence” (27.15). They may accumulate possessions, “silver” and “clothing” (27.16), but the just will wear the clothing and the innocent will divide up the silver (27.17). Eliphaz had earlier pointed to the fragility of human life saying “those who live in houses (בית) of clay . . . are crushed like a moth (שׁע)” (4.17), and Zophar points to the impermanence of the abode of the wicked saying, “they build their houses” like the
moth (שֶׁעָה), "like booths (סכה)" made by a watchman (27.18). Overnight, while they sleep, their “wealth” will disappear (27.19). Worse happens in the night, for “terrors”, which had frightened Bildad’s wicked (18.11, 14), “overtake them like a flood” and a “whirlwind carries them off” (27.20). They are lifted up by the “east wind” which “sweeps them out of their place” (27.21), and “they flee (חנד)” from the power of the wind (27.22), as they “flee (חנד)” in an earlier speech, from an “iron weapon” (20.24). Wind, personified, “claps its hands at them, and hissers at them from its place” (27.23).

### Summary of Zophar’s Speeches

Zophar’s advice to Job is to “direct your heart rightly” for by so doing “you will stretch out your hands toward him (God)” (11.13), and also to reject “iniquity and wickedness” (11.14). Compliance will free Job from “fear’ (11.15, 19) and “misery” (11.16) and bring him security (11.15), “confidence” and “hope”, protection and “safety” (11.18). Unlike the other friends, Zophar says nothing about the godless, his preoccupation is with the wicked whose misdeeds are punished by divine acts (20.15, 23-29; 24.24) or by divine decree (20.29; 27.13). They suffer the loss of their possessions (20.15, 18, 21, 28; 27.17, 19) and their children (27.14-15) and they die (20.26; 24.24). Used against them are divine “anger” (20.23, 28), weapons of war (20.24-25), “fire” (20.26), “terror” (20.25; 27.20), and wind (27.20-23). Zophar is concerned with equity in the community and with the effect on the poor of the wrongdoing of the wicked (20.19), and he states that their goods will be distributed among the poor (20.10, and perhaps

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210 BDB 697: “thicket, booth . . . thicket, lurking-place of lions . . . rude or temporary shelter for watchers in vineyards.”

211 Newsom (“Job,” 525) suggests that “terrors” are not the fears of the wicked but “objective forces of death, unleashed into the world.”
20.18) and the “just” and the “innocent” (27.17). He is confident that the good fortune of the wicked is only temporary (20.5).

6.1.2.4 Supporting Evidence

Aristotle recommended that rhetors make use of non-artistic proofs to further their persuasive ends and listed a number of such proofs of which evidence is the most relevant to the Joban dialogue. He preferred evidence from dead witnesses because it could not be altered. In this category, I suggest, may be included traditions which are the beliefs held by the long-dead and which, drawn upon, shape the argument of the three friends.

That there are such traditions known to all the participants in the human dispute is established at the start of Eliphaz’s rhetoric by his words “Remember (זכר) now . . .” (4.7) which as, I have said above, point to a tradition known by both Eliphaz and Job, a tradition which supports what he is about to say, that God will preserve the good and destroy the wicked (4.7-11). In his second speech he says, “what I have seen I will declare – what sages have told, and their ancestors have not hidden” (15.17b-18) and, immediately following these words are his long description of the fate of the wicked (15.20-35). What he has seen may be an allusion to his night time vision (4.12-21), or it may be a reference to his seeing “fools taking root” before their “dwelling” is “cursed” (5.3), or it may be the product of his intellect engaging with tradition (4.8; 5.3), or it may be, and probably is, that he has heard “what sages have told” and now declares it to give veracity to what he is about to say.

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212 Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.1.
213 Clines (Job 1-20, 354) thinks it is not.
That it is ancient, makes tradition more to be valued, in the opinion of Bildad, than the knowledge of the present generation. He says “inquire now of bygone generations (דרeshׁון) and consider what their ancestors have found; for we are but of yesterday, and we know nothing” (8.8-9). He adds “Will they not teach you and tell you and utter words out of their understanding” (8.10), before telling the story of the two plants. His fable begins with a proverb, which is a truism expressed as two questions and ends with his statement that “God will not reject a blameless person, nor take the hand of evildoers” (8.20) and this is the kernel of the tradition he has received.

Zophar, too, finds ancient tradition authoritative and asks, “Do you not know this from of old, ever since mortals were placed on earth, that the exulting of the wicked is short, and the joy of the godless is but for a moment” (20.4-5). This tradition goes back to the beginning of human existence on earth and provides the grounds for his lengthy elaboration on the eventual undoing, after a period of prosperity, of the wicked (20.6-29), and his shorter pronouncements on the subject in his third speech (24.18-24; 27.13-23).

Eliphaz also claims recent evidence imparted by the “form” (4.16) which appeared to him in his night vision (4.12-21). That the “form” was otherworldly can be supposed from Eliphaz’s reaction to it – “dread” and “trembling” (4.14), the responses of lesser beings before the numinous, as Bildad would say of the “shades”, “the waters and their inhabitants” (26.5), and the “pillars of heaven” (26.11). Important though its word was as a contribution to a strand of Eliphaz’s thinking on the human-divine relationship, he does not identify it. Since, after reflection, he discards the revelations of the form, it

214 Norman Habel (“Appeal to Ancient Tradition, 255) says of these words that they can mean either “‘former’ generation or ‘first’ generation” and, from their use elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, he favours the latter. Brin (The Concept of Time, 144), however, favours “former generation”, saying that the “sense” of this verse is “that human beings, because they are in the world for only a short time period (i.e., only since ‘yesterday’) have not sufficient life experience, and therefore require the experience of ‘the former generations’”.

215 Section 6.1.1.3.2 above.

216 This, however, has not stopped scholarly speculation on its identity. It has been suggested that it was God, by, for example, Clines (Job 1-20, 131), and Gray, The Book of Job, 155. David Cotter (Study of
could not have been God since even Eliphaz, who presumes to know the divine mind, would not reject the divine word given in a vision.

In support of his arguments, Eliphaz offers the evidence of his personal observation (4.8; 5.3), and the evidence resulting from the inquiry of the friends into the truth of what Eliphaz has said in his first speech (5.27). He claims, too, support for his point of view, from “the grey-haired and the aged” (15.10), support which is to be valued because of the age of those who give it.

6.1.2.5 Conclusion

Bildad believes that God made the tripartite cosmos, consisting of sky, earth and sea and also that God has dominion over the supernatural realms of heaven and the netherworld. All three friends understand the natural world, the place of humankind, to be a place where there is both order and disorder. Disorder has its origin in supernatural beings present in the world or under the earth, and in natural beings, for example, wild animals and human beings. Iniquity and trouble exist in the world but require human action to have an effect. Human beings are both creators of disorder and sufferers from it. The friends are heirs to traditions which offer ways, centred on the human relationship with God, which, if followed ensure order and wellbeing in human life and the avoidance of disorder and ill-being. God requires of a human being, piety and virtue, which means a good relationship with God and a good relationship with other human beings. These traditions are consistent with the conclusion to Eliphaz’s two-strand conversation with

Job 4-5 in the Light of Contemporary Literary Theory (SBLDS 124; Atlanta: Scholars, 1992), 183, on the other hand, states that whoever spoke to Eliphaz, it was not God. Longman (Job, 119) has said that the statement is from the supernatural realm and made “with heavenly authority.” Dhorme (Job 49), however, questions the veracity of Eliphaz’s account, saying “It is needless to ask whether he really experienced this vision or whether he imagines it for the purposes of his argument.”
himself which holds that human piety and virtue matter to God. The absence of piety, which is the self-distancing of a person from God, will result in God’s self-distancing from the impious person and failing to protect that person from the perils present in creation. The perpetrators of wickedness will be punished and punishment may be the death both of the wicked and also of their children, sometimes later rather than sooner. God favours an equitable society in which the weak are protected from the mighty, and the goods of the wicked are removed from them and redistributed amongst the needy and the good. This outcome brings disorder to the lives of some, the wicked and the powerful, in order to create order in the lives of the vulnerable and the virtuous. For the virtuous, however, a life of order and well-being, endowed with goods and progeny, is sustained and protected by God and ends at death which follows old age, survived by many children.

The friends’ cosmology is more than an expression of belief in God as the Creator of the cosmos and of them too; it provides guidelines on how to secure their own survival and well-being. It permits them to manage themselves in a way which also manages both Creator and creation so to preserve order for themselves in that part of creation which is human and inhabited by human beings. Disorder is tamed by themselves and for themselves and is exploited by God to produce a divinely willed outcome for the community, particularly its weak but deserving members. If the satan were to ask the question “Do the friends fear God for nothing?”, the answer would have to be “No”.

6.1.3 The Role of Emotion in the Rhetoric of the Friends

One of Aristotle’s tools for persuasion is pathos.²¹⁷ Of the several emotions listed by him, fear is what has shaped the cosmology of the friends, and its opposite, which is
confidence, and the grounds for it, which is what they hold out to Job. These two emotions are the reason for their discourse. Very evident in the friends’ speeches is another emotion, and that is anger.

Aristotle said of fear that it was caused by the prospect of trouble in the future and is strongly linked to pity. Pity is the emotion felt by a person at the sight of another’s misfortune when the observer realises that the misfortune could come upon her/himself. Fear, however, may be a productive emotion for it “sets us thinking what can be done, which of course nobody does when things are hopeless” and leads to “confidence . . . (which) is the opposite of fear.” He adds that “we feel it (confidence) if we can take steps – many, or important, or both – to cure or prevent trouble”. The presence of hope in the midst of bad circumstances, together with a strategy for improving those circumstances are what create confidence.

In the human dialogue, the question to be asked is whose fears are addressed and whose allayed. I suggest that it is primarily the fear of the friends, observers of Job’s misfortune, aware, like many, that trouble could come to them. They have received from their tradition, strategies for avoiding what is feared the adoption of which allows those who do so to feel confident. They themselves subscribe to these strategies which they articulate as advice and which, if heeded, are the means of avoiding disorder and ill-being and giving confidence that order and well-being are attainable. For Job whose fears have been realised – “Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me, and what I dread befalls me.” (3.25) – the friends believe they can offer to Job a way of freeing himself from his present misery, one which leads to hope for, and confidence in, a better future. Confidence and its prerequisite, hope, are connected in Aristotle’s thinking, as they are in the thinking of

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218 Aristotle, *Rhetoric*, 2.5.1383a
219 Ibid.
220 Ibid.
the three friends and they hold out both to Job. Hope and the grounds for it, as well as the absence of hope and the reasons for that, are significant elements in the rhetoric of the friends and Job.

Eliphaz lists many potential threats to Job’s well-being which may be subsumed in the term “destruction” (5.21, 22). That they are feared can be supposed from the need for assurance that Job will be protected from them. The hazards which could afflict him are “famine” and “war” (5.20), the “tongue” (5.21), “wild animals” (5.22, 23), “stones of the field” (5.23), harm to household and loss of possessions, (5.24), the absence of progeny (5.25), and untimely death (5.26). The hazards which trouble the “needy” (5.15) and the “poor” (5.16), amongst whom is Job, are human, the “crafty” and their “devices” (5.12), the “wise” and their “craftiness”, the “wily” and their “schemes” (5.13), the “mighty” and their “hand” (5.15), and injustice its “mouth” (5.16), and from whom, they have Eliphaz’s assurance, they will be saved (5.15), so allowing them to have “hope” (5.16).

The friends propose to Job the means by which he may avoid disorder and secure order for himself. At the beginning of his rhetoric, Eliphaz says to Job “Is not your fear (יראה) of God your confidence (כסלה), and the integrity (תם) of your ways your hope (תקוה)” (4.6). He links together, from the outset, both confidence and hope, and also piety and virtue and of the latter pair, both are required if an ordered life, free from “fear” (5.22), is to be hoped for. His third speech exhorts Job to “agree with God” (22.21), “receive instruction” (22.22), “return to the Almighty”, and distance himself from “unrighteousness” (22.23). His friends, too, link both piety and virtue. Bildad urges Job to “seek God” and “make supplication to the Almighty” (8.5), and to be “pure and upright” (8.6). Zophar says “[i]f you direct your heart rightly, you will stretch out your hands toward him” (11.13), adding that he must also distance himself from “iniquity” and “wickedness” (11.14). Zophar adds that in so doing, he will have “hope (תקווה)” and
confidence (תִּקְוָה) (11.18). By his linking of hope to a confidence in divine reliability, what is hoped for, in Zophar’s mind, is assured. All three friends proffer hope to Job of many blessings to come if he follows their advice. To further their argument, they say that the outlook for wrongdoers is bleak. The “hope” of Bildad’s “godless” will “perish” (8.13), and Zophar’s “wicked” will “hope” to die (11.20). It is worth noting again that the word תִּקְוָה is derived from the verb קוה meaning “wait for”. All the good promised to Job, if he heeds the advice of the friends, is good that will come in the future. Anticipation is not certainty, however, because what is waited for and hoped for has not yet happened, and may not happen. Moreover, if the grounds for hope are flawed, there can be no hope.

Conspicuous in the dispute between Job and his friends is another emotion – anger. Aristotle said of anger that one of its causes is those persons “who speak ill of us, and show contempt for us, in connexion with the things we ourselves most care about: thus those who are eager to win fame as philosophers get angry with those who show contempt for their philosophy.”221 Job’s failure to accept advice, which is the product of a theology that claims that a good relationship with the Creator ensures for an individual both order, which is well-being, and protection from disorder, which is ill-being, has two deleterious effects on the friends and on their exchanges with Job. It undermines their feelings of worth as theologians, and, more damaging, if Job’s words are taken seriously, his words would undermine the confidence which they have created for themselves by addressing their fears and devising strategies to allay them. After Eliphaz’s first cordial speech, Job’s words are disparagingly described as “a great wind” (8.2), a “multitude of words” (11.2) a “babble” which “mock(s)” and which should “shame” Job (11.3), “windy knowledge” (15.2), and “unprofitable talk” (15.3). They come from a “mouth” taught by “iniquity” and articulated by the “tongue of the crafty” (15.5) and are the “words” of a “spirit” turned

221 Ibid., 2.2.1379a.
“against God” (15.13). In his final condemnation of Job, Eliphaz asks, “[i]s not your wickedness great?”, adding “[t]here is no end to your iniquities” (22.5). There is no evidence from their speeches that the friends take seriously Job’s words which counter theirs, but the mounting anger of their addresses to him is more than irritation at attacks on their self-esteem, it points to a latent fear that their confidence is illusory and that order in their lives can be threatened, notwithstanding their strategies to avert disorder. It may also be one of the means by which the poet directs the reader’s attention to that possibility.

I suggest that it is fear of disorder and the need to allay that fear which is fundamental to the thinking of the friends on disorder and order in the lives not only of individuals but also of communities of human beings. It is fear which is the motive for devising ways to avert disorder, ways which give them confidence that they can prevent disorder and ensure order in the lives of those who adopt their strategies. It is optimism in the face of fear which underlies the belief that God will act to protect the poor and the vulnerable against the powerful who would harm them. Job who once shared his friends’ beliefs on ways of ensuring order and avoiding disorder in his life, and his friends’ confidence that the vulnerable enjoy divine protection, has found his confidence misplaced. His use of emotion as a tool for persuasion will be discussed in the next section after analysis of his speeches.

6.1.4 The Credibility of the Friends’ Speeches

The third of Aristotle’s tools for persuasion is ethos, which has to do with the speaker, “his good sense, good moral character, and goodwill.” Aristotle adds, “anyone who is thought to have all three of these good qualities will inspire trust in his audience.” All

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222 Ibid., 2.1.1378a.
223 Ibid.
of these qualities must be evident in what the speaker says because persuasion through the speaker’s character “should be achieved by what the speaker says, not by what people think of this character before he begins to speak.”

There are more than one addressee, and more than one addressee in the rhetoric which is the human dispute in *Job*. The three friends are addressors and Job is their addressee in their rhetoric. The “goodwill” of the friends is demonstrated by their advice which, if accepted, would, they believe, restore his well-being. As upholders of piety and righteousness in the individual and fairness in society, they demonstrate their “good moral character”. What they lack, from Job’s point of view, is “good sense” in their argument. There is a fourth addressor, the author of *Job*, and another addressee, the reader whose persuasion to the author’s point of view is the goal of the rhetoric of *Job*. Nothing is known of the author’s goodwill and moral character, all that can be known is through what is said, and whether or not that is good sense can only be decided by the reader who is, or is not, persuaded; a decision on authorial credibility will have to be made by the reader and will have to wait until the end of the book.

The friends are given a voice because they represent a particular and widely-held point of view which is that piety and virtue bring divine protection, reward and order, and impiety and a lack of virtue, their opposites. This point of view needs to be debated and so it is presented to Job for his acceptance or rejection. Attending the debate is the reader, privy to information provided by the author and not available to Job and his friends, for whom the credibility of the friends’ contentions is wanting, undermined by the fact that Job is suffering in spite of his integrity, an integrity which he asserts and which was initially acknowledged by Eliphaz (4.6), and, unbeknown by the friends and Job but known by the reader, acknowledged by God (1.8; 2.3). In addition, by his use of equivocal

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224 Ibid.
words in Eliphaz’s first speech, the poet further undermines the argument of Eliphaz, signalling to the reader the authorial intention to discredit the cosmology of the friends so far as it concerns order and disorder in the part of creation which is human.

Addressing Job for the first time, when the tone of his address was still cordial and he still supposed Job to be a good man, Eliphaz asks “Is not your fear of God your confidence (כסלה), and the integrity of your ways your hope (תקוה)? (4.6). From Eliphaz’s mouth these are rhetorical questions; Job’s piety and goodness are the grounds for him to have “hope” and “confidence” that his well-being will be restored. Job’s integrity and piety are not in doubt, or not yet for the friends, and never for the reader. However, if the questions are not treated as rhetorical, they invite the reader to explore the notion that piety and integrity are guarantors of wellbeing. Raising doubt, is the word for confidence, כסלה, which may also be translated as “folly”, and probably is so translated in its only other occurrence (Ps 85.9) in the Hebrew Bible. If it is translated “folly”, the reader might ask whether God can be relied upon to co-operate in the reversal of Job’s misfortunes and would almost certainly answer “no”, because to do so, in the light of the events of the Prologue, would be “folly”. The reader who knows that responsibility for Job’s troubles belongs to God who allowed disasters to befall the God-fearing Job (1.12; 2.6), may, therefore, conclude that the “fear of God” does not, after all, bring protection from calamity and so is no cause for “confidence” (4.6).

Eliphaz’s account of his night vision has the “form” ask, “Can mortals be righteous before God (מאנני) ? Can human beings be pure before their Maker (מעשה)?” (4.17). As I noted above the preposition מ before “God” and “Maker” is ambiguous, meaning either “before” or “more than” with most commentators preferring the former, and

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225 See footnote 138 above.
226 Section 6.1.1.3.2 above.
probably Eiphaz too, as his subsequent speeches show. The latter meaning would make these questions highly provocative if they were to cast doubt on divine righteousness and purity; it would, at the very least, raise questions about the ethical standards by which God acts in the world. If God acts according to human standards of righteousness and purity, later speeches by Job, and God, too, will demonstrate divine non-conformity to those standards which would make human beings more righteous than God when judged by those standards. The poet, however, is seeking an understanding of the nature of the relationship the Creator has with creation and so signals early in the dialogue that the principles by which God acts are to be inquired into. If God does not conform to human expectations concerning the divine response to human righteousness and purity, Job may not be able to rely on his integrity to bring about a reversal of his misfortune. The reader knows from the Prologue, as Eliphaz does not, that divine approval of Job’s goodness did not protect him from disasters, disasters allowed by God (1.12; 2.6).

Later in his first speech, Eliphaz will speak of the fate of the “fool” (5.2-5) using two words for this person, אويل and פתי; the first is always bad and the second is a simpleton but the same fate overtakes both, death for them and for their children, too. The cause of death is strong emotion and Eliphaz does not say whose emotion it is, whether it is the fool’s or whether it is God’s, but because the source of the passions is unstated, their consequence might be divine punishment or it might not. This vagueness may be deliberate on the part of the poet, inviting the reader to reflect on the causes of disorder. If it is divine punishment, why are both kinds of fool caught up in it, both the wicked fool and the simpleton? Punishing the simpleton calls the justice of God into question, perhaps even, using the words of the “form” (4.17), the righteousness and purity of God. Perhaps, however, it is not punishment. The reader is told later in the same speech that there are

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227 Section 6.1.2.1.1 above.
hostile forces, אני and עמל (5.6), at large in the world with the potential to bring trouble to humankind which may well be prone to it simply because of its humanness (5.7), and from which, knowing the events of the Prologue, they have no protection. The reader knows that violent death can come to the undeserving, Job’s servants and his children (1.15, 16, 17, 19).

Eliphaz’s words concerning God’s dealings with “the crafty (חרום)” (5.12) and the “wise (חכם)” in their “craftiness (חרום) (5.13) are ambiguous. I have noted above\(^{228}\) that the word used for “the crafty”, ערמה, has two opposite meanings, one pejorative – “crafty” – and the other laudatory - “shrewd, sensible”, and the latter is far more common in the Hebrew Bible. The noun ערמה, thought to be derived from ארום \(^{229}\) is equally ambiguous. (Eliphaz will later accuse Job of choosing the “tongue of the crafty” (15.5) and the reader knows he is not one of the crafty.) There is ambiguity too, in the word for “the wise”, חכם, meaning “wise” or “crafty” or “cunning” \(^{230}\) making it either favourable or unfavourable to the person so described. Eliphaz intends Job to understand that God will act against the “crafty” and also the “wise”, to whom, in his mind, belong the unfavourable meanings of those words, bringing them to the “darkness” (5.14) of disaster and bringing to nought their “devices” (5.12) and “schemes” (5.13). The reader, on the other hand, may wonder, and is meant to wonder, if God does not act against the “sensible” and “wise” bringing to nought their “devices” (5.12) and “schemes” (5.13) which, if they emanate from the good, must be good. Whilst Eliphaz sees divine deeds as creators of order in the disordered world of the “needy” (5.15) and the “poor” (5.16), the reader may wonder, and is meant to wonder, if God’s deeds do not, instead, bring disorder into an ordered world as they

\(^{228}\) Ibid.
\(^{229}\) Ibid.
\(^{230}\) Ibid.
had into the formerly ordered world of Job. Job will argue that they do. The reader of the Prologue knows that they have.

Job has been addressed at length by his three friends and is not persuaded by them. In several speeches, he refutes the arguments made in the presentation of their cosmology. He casts doubt on the validity of tradition concerning the fate of the good and the bad and offers, instead, his experience. His friends offered him hope but he expresses hopelessness based on his experience of injustice. From hopelessness and a sense of injustice come a view of Creator and creation which differs from that of his friends; it is a cosmology arising out of despair.

In the next section, I shall first note Job’s refutations of the friends’ arguments before looking at those parts of his speeches which are addressed to his friends, to determine their purpose and to draw out from them Job’s notions on order and disorder in creation. I will then note the evidence which he uses to support his arguments before reflecting on the role of emotion in his rhetoric. Finally, I will consider the credibility of his speeches.

6.2 The Speeches of Job

In the second part of this chapter I will discuss first Job’s refutation of the friends’ arguments before turning to each of his speeches. As I did with the friends’ speeches, I will look at the supporting evidence he offers for his arguments before my concluding summary of his thoughts on order and disorder in creation. I will then consider the place of emotion in Job’s rhetoric and, finally, I will consider the credibility of his rhetoric.
6.2.1  

*Refutation*

Over the course of his speeches, Job will refute the arguments made by the friends, chiefly Eliphaz. In his first address to Job, Eliphaz offers a reason for turning to God saying

He does (שׂאָה) great things (גדלות) and unsearchable (ואין חקר),

marvellous things (נפלאות) without number ( comunità). (5.9)

This is the premise of an enthymeme, and the reason for its conclusion which states “As for me, I would seek God, and to God I would commit my cause” (5.8). As substantiation for his premise he lists examples of the great things God does, beneficial to the earth and to vulnerable human beings (5.10-16) and the great things that God would do for Job. Job, in his third speech, in almost identical words, by means of a refutative enthymeme, rejects the conclusion reached by Eliphaz, saying

Who does (שׂאָה) great things (גדלות) beyond understanding (עד־אין חקר),

and marvellous things (נפלאות) without number ( comunità). (9.10)

This is the premise of an enthymeme and the reason for its conclusion expressed earlier as a rhetorical question, “He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength – who has resisted him and succeeded?” (9.4). Between the conclusion, which is that God cannot be resisted, and the premise are examples of divine acts of power which both created the cosmos (9.8-9) and which destroy the cosmos (9.5-7). Whilst Eliphaz’s words express awe and wonder at a God who is beneficent, sustaining life on earth (5.10) and ordering

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231 Section 6.1.2.1.1 above.
232 Kemper Fullerton ("Job: Chapters 9 and 10," *AJSL* 55 [1938]: 239-40) has seen irony and *double entendre* in 9.3-4 when read together with vv.8-10. Not an expression of reverence, these verses are an expression of human helplessness before an omnipotent and capricious deity, and point to “rebellion stirring . . . in Job’s mind” (ibid., 240).
its human life (5.11-16), Job’s words express awe and wonder at a God who is maleficent, destroying with violence (9.5-7), the cosmos which he brought into being by violence (9.8).

Job takes issue with the examples (5.10-16) which Eliphaz cites as corroboration of his premise in 5.9. God, Eliphaz claims, “gives rain on the earth (ארץ) and sends (שלח) water (מים) on the fields” (5.10), an act which sustains the earth. Job claims “if he (God) withholds the waters (מים) they dry up; if he sends (שלח) them out, they overwhelm the land (ארץ)” (12.15), and both acts destroy the earth. Eliphaz asserts that “the schemes (אצה) of the wily are brought to a quick end” (5.13), so preserving order in society, and Job asserts that God “favour(s) the schemes (אצה) of the wicked” (10.3)\footnote{This refutation comes in the human/divine dispute in the next chapter but is noted here along with Job’s other objections to Eliphaz’s examples of divine beneficence in 5.10-16.}, which is conducive to disorder in society. Eliphaz says of the “crafty” (5.12) the “wise” and the “wily” (5.13), that they meet with darkness (חשך) in the daytime, and grope (שש) at noonday as in the night” (5.14). By bringing disorder into the lives of the “mighty”, God “saves” and brings order into the lives of the needy” (5.15). Job says that God makes “the leaders of the earth” (12.24) “grope (שש) in the dark (חשך) without light” (12.25). These leaders are “counsellors” and “judges” (12.17), “kings” (12.18), “priests” (12.19), “elders” (12.20), and “princes” (12.21) about whom nothing is known to their detriment, and God, by acting against them, brings disorder to society by undermining those who would maintain its order. Eliphaz declares that God “saves the needy (אביון) from the sword of their mouth, from the hand (יד) of the mighty. So the poor (אני) have hope” (5.15-16a). For Eliphaz, God is the protector of order for society’s vulnerable. Job declares that the “wicked” (24.2) “thrust the needy (אביון) off the road; the poor (אני) of the earth all hide themselves” (24.4), and that “the murderer rises at dusk to kill the poor (אני) and needy (אביון)” (24.14). In Job’s thinking, God, far from being their protector, allows disorder in
the lives of society’s vulnerable. Going further he declares that “the earth is given into the hand (יָד) of the wicked” (9.24) and by so doing, the reader understands, God creates disorder in the human part of creation.

Job takes issue with some of the assurances that Eliphaz has given to him in his second list of examples of divine beneficence (5.20-26). Eliphaz says “no harm shall touch (נגע) you” (5.19) but Job says that “the hand of God has touched (נגע) me” (19.21). The reader knows from the Prologue (1.11; 2.5) that God has allowed another hand to touch Job and harm him. Eliphaz says that “at destruction and famine you shall laugh (שׂחק) (5.22) and Job complains, “I am a laughing stock (שׂחק) to my friends” 12.4).

Divine anger, in the friends’ thinking, preserves order in creation by being turned on the wicked, the agents of disorder. Eliphaz says that divine anger (אָף) has consumed wrongdoers (4.9), and Zophar that divine anger (אָף) has been sent on the wicked (20.23) and that their possessions will be “dragged away in the day of God’s anger (אָף)” (20.28). Job says that the bearer of disorder in creation is God’s anger (אָף) which overturns mountains (9.5) and has been turned against him (16.9; 19.11).

As I have noted above, the friends expound at length on the misfortunes of the godless (8.11-15; 15.20-34; 18.5-21; 20.5-29; 22.15-17) and the wicked (4.8-11; 5.2; 5.12-16; 8.20, 22; 11.20; 15.20-35; 18.5-21; 20.5-29; 22.5, 10-11, 15-16; 24.18-24; 27.13-23). They also, in the context of their advice to Job, have something to say on the well-being of the lowly, the needy, the good and the pious (5.11, 15-16, 19-26; 8.5-7, 16-21; 11.15-19; 22.26-29). In his most extended refutation of his friends’ arguments (21.2-33), Job will expound on the good fortune of the “wicked” (21.7), and the godless (21.14-15), those who

say to God, ‘Leave us alone (לֹא קָרֵאתנו)! We do not desire to know your ways.
What is the Almighty, that we should serve him?
And what profit do we get if we pray to him?” (21.14-15)

Eliphaz has the wicked say to God “Leave us alone (骸 מַפְּנֵי)” before adding ‘What can the Almighty do to us?’ (22.17), words which point to their conviction that there is no disadvantage for them in self-alienation from God, a conviction which Eliphaz declares is false (22.16). Job’s wicked say “Leave us alone!” before asking two questions which express a belief that there is no advantage for them in serving the Almighty or praying to him, a belief which Job, by his question “[i]s not their prosperity indeed their own achievement” (21.16), shows to be well-founded. Eliphaz has said that if Job takes his advice which is to “seek God” (5.8), he may expect to live to a “ripe old age” (5.26). Job says that not only do “the wicked live on” and “reach old age”, they also “grow mighty in power” (21.7). He adds “[t]hey spend their days in prosperity and in peace they go down to Sheol” (21.13). Eliphaz has said to Job that “[y]ou shall know that your descendants (זרע) will be many and your offspring (צאצא) like the grass of the earth” (5.25). Using different words, Bildad says that the wicked “have no offspring (קָנִּים) or descendant (נכד) among their people” (18.19), and Zophar says that if “their children (בן) are multiplied, it is for the sword; and their offspring (צאצא) have not enough to eat” (27.14). Job counters saying “[t]heir children (זרע) are established in their presence, and their offspring (צאצא) before their eyes” (21.8) and all apparently enjoy an idyllic life, dancing (21.11), singing and rejoicing to the sound of music (21.12). Eliphaz has said “[y]ou shall know that your tent (אהל) is safe (שׁלום), you shall inspect your fold and miss nothing” (5.24), Not only will Job’s dwelling be secure, so too, will be his fold and its stock. Job says of the wicked “[t]heir houses (בית) are safe (שׁלום) from fear” (21.9) and their livestock are prolific (21.10). Not only are they fortunate, the godless and wicked are free from fear, because “no rod of God is upon them” (21.9). Zophar had said that
freedom from fear (11.15, 19) was the reward of piety (11.13) and virtue (11.14). Job’s description of the life of the wicked is a refutation of the friends’ belief that order in human life is earned through piety and virtue and disorder is the consequence of godlessness and wickedness.

Job continues with four questions, asking first “[h]ow often is the lamp (נר) of the wicked put out (דעך)?” (21.17). Bildad asserts that “the lamp (נר)” of the wicked is put out (דעך) (18.6). Job next asks “[h]ow often does calamity (איד) come upon them?” (21.17) He adds later “the wicked are spared in the day of calamity (איד) and are rescued in the day of wrath” (21.30). Bildad, however, claims that for the wicked “calamity (איד) is ready” (18.12). Job then asks “[how] often does God distribute (חלק) pains in his anger (אף)?” (21.17). Zophar, after describing the dreadful end of the wicked, says, “[t]his is the portion (חלק) of the wicked from God” (20.29). Zophar, later describing the “portion (חלק) of the wicked” (27.13), says that a “whirlwind (סופה) carries them off” (27.20). Job asks “[h]ow often are they like straw before the wind, and like chaff that the storm (סופה) carries away?” (21.18). Given the utopian life of the wicked which Job has described (21.7-13), these questions must be rhetorical, to which the answer is “Never”, an answer which responds to his friends’ declarations on the fate of the wicked.

Job takes issue with his friends’ exhortations to turn to God in order to achieve a restoration of order in his life. They tell him to “seek God” (5.8; 8.5), and “make supplication” (8.5), to “direct (his) heart” and stretch out (his) hand” (11.13), “agree” with God 22.21, “receive instruction (תורה) from his mouth (פה) and lay up his words (אמר) in (his) heart (לבב)” (22.22), and return to the Almighty (22.23). Job must also be “pure (זך) and upright (ישׁר)” (8.6), must distance himself from “iniquity” and not allow “wickedness (עולה)” to “reside” in his “tents (אהל)” (11.14), and must “remove unrighteousness (עולה) from (his) tents (אהל)” (22.23). In return, Job will have the many blessings promised by
Eliphaz in his first speech (5.20-26), and in his third speech “peace” and “good” (22.21), restoration (22.23), “delight” in the “Almighty” (22.26), the ear of God (22.27), and “light” (22.28) following “darkness” (22.11). Bildad assures Job of restoration to his “rightful place” (8.6) and “latter days” better than his “beginning” (8.7). Zophar promises security (11.15) and freedom from “fear” (11.15, 19), brightness after darkness (11.17), “confidence” (11.18), “hope”, and “safety” (11.18).

Over the course of his speeches, Job responds to his friends’ recommendations on ways by which he may secure a reversal of his misfortune. He says

But he knows the way (דרך) that I take;
   When he has tested (בחן) me I shall come out like gold.
My foot (רגל) has held fast to his steps;
   I have kept (שמרו) his way (דרך) and have not turned aside.
I have not departed from the commandment of his lips (שפת);
   I have treasured (צפה) in my bosom (מחקּי) the words (אמר) of his mouth (פה). (23.10-12)

There is no need for Job to seek God - he has never “turned aside” (23.11). God knows the “way” Job takes (23.10) which is also God’s “way” (23.11), and this, God will verify when he has “tested” him (23.10). Earlier, Job has said that, hazardous though it may be, “I will defend my ways (דרך) to his face” (13.15), confident that his “salvation” lies in the fact of a piety which allows approach to the divine presence, an approach not possible for the impious – “the godless shall not come before him” (13.16). Eliphaz, however, accuses Job, saying, “will you keep to the old way (ארח) that the wicked have trod (דרך) (22.15).

Zophar wished that “God would . . . open his lips (שפת)” to Job (11.5) and Job counters that he has received the “commandment” of God’s “lips (שפת)”. (23.12). Eliphaz urged

234 BDB 860: “hide, treasure up.”
235 BDB 300: “something prescribed, a statute or due.” BDB 349: “bosom” as a meaning for שַׁמְרָה or חק. The phrase could mean “from my statute” but it is most often translated “in my bosom”, a translation which goes back to LXX (Pietersma and Wright, A New English Translation.684) and seems to be the most appropriate translation. Habel (Book of Job, 344), however, translates v. 12a as “I did not deviate from the precepts of his lips.”
Job to “receive instruction from his mouth and lay up his words in your heart” (22.22) and Job counters that he has “treasured” in his “bosom” the words from God’s “mouth”. Earlier, Job has said that he has “not denied (כחד) the words (אמר) of the Holy One” (6.10).

Piety asserted, Job also claims virtue though short of the moral perfection of the Prologue’s Job (minor shortcomings are admitted in 19.4). He says “I am innocent” (9.15, 20), and “I am blameless” (9.20, 21), I am “a just and blameless man” (12.4) and that “there is no violence in my hands, and my prayer is pure” (16.17). As an “upright person” he should be “acquitted” (23.7). He speaks no “falsehood “and utters no “deceit” (27.4) and until he dies will not put away his “integrity” (27.5) nor let go his “righteousness” (27.6). The counsel of his friends is useless to Job. The disorder in his life cannot be reversed and changed to order by embracing their remedies. He cannot turn back to God because he never turned away from God; guilty of no iniquity, he cannot forsake it and he cannot resolve to be virtuous – he already is.

Early in the dispute, mystified over the causes of his misfortune, Job has said to his friends “make me understand how I have gone wrong” (6.24), but his search for understanding is fruitless. Unpersuaded by his friends’ rhetoric on order and disorder in creation and how to secure the former and avoid the latter, he has demonstrated that it has no bearing on the reality of life experienced by humankind and no bearing on the reality which is his experience of life. In his last great speech (29.2-31.40), he returns to his

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236 BDB 470: “hide, efface.” H. Eising (“כחד,” TDOT 7: 128-132) has noted the wide range of meanings of this verb of which “conceal” is one (ibid., 129). In the Piel it is always used together with a verb of speaking. The matter which is not to be concealed is always important. The word “deny,” the often used translation (for example, Pope, Job, 48; Gordis, Book of Job, 72; Clines, Job 1-20, 156) for כחד in 6.10 is probably not suitable. Dhorne (Job, 82) translates with “conceal”. Habel (Book of Job, 138) translates v.10c as “Because I will not have concealed the decrees of the Holy One.” Seow, (Job 1-21, 474) favours “suppressed”. The correct interpretation of the verse is that Job has never been silent regarding God’s word.

237 He will in the human/divine dispute acknowledge his “transgression” and “iniquity” for which he asks divine pardon (7.21).
quest for understanding. He begins with a review of his past privileged life and good relationship with God (29.2-25) before turning to his present wretched life persecuted by God (30.1-19, 24-31), and finally, certain of his innocence, ending with the issue of a challenge which is that if he is guilty of wrongdoing then let him be punished (31.1-40). Unstated, but implied, is the question ‘if I am not guilty, why am I suffering?’ Job’s final speech to his friends, addresses their argument that disorder and misfortune are the consequence of godlessness and wrongdoing.

6.2.2  **Job’s Speeches**

I turn now to a consideration of Job’s speeches addressed to his friends which are: first, 6.2-30, second, 9.2-24, third, 12.2-13.19, fourth, 16.2-17.2, 17.5-16, fifth, 19.2-29, sixth, 21.2-34, seventh,23.2-24.17, eighth, 26.2-4 and 27.2-12, and ninth, 29.2-30.19, 30.24-31-40. I will, after noting their purpose, focus on what they reveal about Job’s notions on order and disorder in creation. He will identify order and disorder at four different levels of creation, from the micro to the macro. The smallest part of creation to experience disorder is the individual (himself), the next smallest is a category of people (the poor and needy, society’s rulers, the wicked including robbers, an unspecified number of human beings subsumed under the term “the earth” [9.24]), the level above classes of people is the nation, and finally, disorder at its largest scale is experienced by the earth itself upon which all the individuals, classes of people and nations live.

6.2.2.1  **The First Speech (Job 6.2-30)**

This speech is epideictic, censuring first God (6.2-13) and then Job’s friends (6.14-30). God, with his “arrows”, his “poison” and his “terrors” (6.4), is the cause of Job’s
distress, (6.2), his loss of appetite (6.7), his lassitude (6.11-13), and his desire for death at the hand of God (6.8-9). His friends are “treacherous” (6.15), unsupportive in time of need, like a torrent-bed that runs dry in the heat (6.15-17). Other than that God is the cause of disorder in Job’s life, this speech has little to do with order and disorder in creation.

6.2.2.2 The Second Speech (Job 9.2-24)

Job’s second address to his friends is epideictic and censures God for his treatment of the cosmos, the earth, the Sea, the heavens and the heavenly bodies (9.5-9), Sea’s supernatural inhabitants (9.13), and earth’s human inhabitants (9.2-4, 22-24) including himself who is the victim of divine bullying (9.11-12, 14-16, 19) and violence (9.17-18). Of divine deeds in creation, Job says

He is wise in heart and mighty in strength
   - who has resisted him, and succeeded? -
He who removes mountains (הר) and they do not know it,
   when he overturns them in his anger;
who shakes the earth out of its place,
   and its pillars (עמוד) tremble;
who commands the sun, and it does not rise;
   who seals up the stars;
who alone stretched out (נטה) the heavens (שׁמים)

238 S. Talmon ("הר, גּבעה," TDOT 3:427-447) has observed that mountains have “mythical qualities . . . they are older than creation or were among the first to be created (Prov. 8.25; Job 15.7) and will last forever” (ibid., 430). Mountains, together with earth and sea go back to the beginning of time and their disturbance (as in 9.5) caused by divine anger represent the undoing of creation (ibid., 440).
239 Although the word for sun in this verse is חֹרֶס rather than שׁ שׁמ, it is worth noting that in Mesopotamian myth, the sun god, Shamash, was also the god of justice and divine justice is an issue in this chapter (9.20-24).
240 Chapter 3, section 3.2.1. Clines (Job I-20, 230) understands the darkening of celestial bodies to be caused by eclipses or clouds. Habel, however (Book of Job, 191), argues that the word “rise” points to a failure of the sun to rise rather than some natural phenomenon which obscured it and thus the divine command returns the earth to its primordial state.
and trampled the waves (ים) of the Sea;
who made the Bear and Orion,
the Pleiades and the chambers of the south (9.4-9).

God will not turn back his anger;
the helpers of Rahab bowed beneath him (9.13)

Similar in many respects, are Job’s words here and Bildad’s account of divine creating and ordering of the cosmos (25.2-3; 26.5-14). Both accounts describe the exercise of divine power in the three levels of creation, sky, earth and Sea. Bildad speaks with awe of the might of God, the “power” by which he “stilled the Sea” and the “understanding” by which “he struck down Rahab”. (26.12). In Job’s account, the “waves of the Sea (ים)” are “trampled” (9.8) and “the helpers of Rahab bowed beneath him” (9.13). In Bildad’s account, a horizon is created, separating sky and sea, which also marked “the boundary between light and dark” (26.10), and created day and night, following which, Bildad said, “the heavens were made fair (26.13). Bildad has God stretching out (נטה) Zaphon (26.7), part of which formed the heavens, and Job has God stretching out (inning) the heavens (9.8) and in those heavens were placed the celestial bodies, “the Bear and Orion, the Pleiades and the chambers of the south” made by God (9.9). Among those bodies should be included “the sun” and “the stars” (9.7). In so doing, God created day and night whose alternating succession created time and marked its passage. The movement of stars across the night sky, was also a marker of time and season and significant for the regulation of human activities and for the creation of order in the cosmos. However, Job says, God “commands the sun and it does not rise” and he

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241 BDB 119: “high place.” There is no agreement on the translation of this word. Clines (Job 1-20, 217) has noted that “back” is favoured by some and he translates the phrase “the sea-monster’s back”, an allusion to Baal’s battle with Yam. Others, however, prefer “waves”.

242 Chapter 3, section 3.2.1. R. E. Clements (“כוכב” TDOT 7: 75-85) has suggested that the Hebrew interest in these stars was connected with their being markers of seasonal change; the rising of the Pleiades signalled the beginning of summer and Orion, the heat of midsummer”.

243 I concluded in Section 6.1.1.2 above that Rahab (26.12) was a marine monster and probably is here too. So also Pope, Job, 71; Gordis, Book f Job, 105.

244 Section 6.1.1.2 above.

245 Chapter 3, section 3.2.1.
“seals up the stars” (9.7), so reversing that part of creation which brought into being night and day, each with its own light. The markers of the passage of time around which human life is organised, are dimmed raising the possibility of disorder in that life. The once creative and ordering God has become a disordering and destructive God. Turning to the middle level of creation, in Bildad’s account “the pillars (עמוד) of heaven tremble” (26.11) threatening the continued separation of heaven and earth, God’s first creative act, but those pillars held. In Job’s account the “pillars (עמוד) of the earth “tremble” (9.6) and “earth” is shaken “out of its place” (9.6), signalling the undoing of creation. In Bildad’s cosmos the possibility of disorder from one of several sources, including God, is latent, but in Job’s cosmos that possibility is realised. For Bildad, a mountain, Zaphon, was the stuff from which the cosmos was made, but for Job, the removing of mountains (9.5), together with the shaking of the earth (9.6) is the reversal of creation. Bildad’s world is ordered but Job’s world is disordered. They have different views of divine deeds in creation but their circumstances are different.

For Job, the human part of creation fares little better than the physical world at the hands of a violent, capricious and unjust deity. Crushed with a “tempest (שׂערה)” (9.17), he is the victim of the God of the storm, a god known to the ancients of the Near East. His “wounds” are multiplied “without cause (חנם)” (9.17), a statement which the reader knows from the Prologue is true [2.3]), he cannot get his “breath” (9.18) and he loathes his “life” (9.21). Human beings, himself included, cannot get justice when in contest with a powerful God (9.2-4, 19-20) who is unseen (9.11), deaf to human voice (9.16), whose violence cannot be prevented (9.12) and who does not differentiate between the good and bad before destroying both (9.22), whilst mocking the despair of “the innocent” (9.23).

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246 BDB 973: “sweep or whirl away of a storm wind” (שׂערה). BDB 704: “tempest, storm wind” (שׂערה). H. - J. Fabry (”שׂערה, שׂערה, שׂערה, שׂער, שׂער“,”TDOT 10: 291-296) has noted the two forms of the same verb and noun. A meteorological term, it is often accompanied by other weather phenomena. It is also used metaphorically.

247 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.1.
“The earth is given into the hands of the wicked” (9.24) and those who might prevent injustice, “judges”, have their faces covered (כסה) (9.24).²⁴⁸

Job blames God for disorder at the macro level of creation, that of earth itself, shaken out of “its place” (9.6), at the lesser level of categories of people, in this speech, the “blameless” and “the wicked” (9.22), the “innocent” (9.23) and the “wicked” and “judges” (9.24), and at the micro level of the individual, Job himself. God uses, as agents of disorder, the “wicked” and “judges” (9.24). Disorder is not necessarily inherent in creation, the world and its constituent parts were not made to be disordered. This is made clear in the case of the earth and the sky which were made to be ordered but God reversed that order. It is true in the case of Job, as the reader well knows; his ordered life was made disordered, not by divine action which Job claims, but through divine consent for which God in the Prologue admits responsibility and the reader is reminded of this by the words “without cause (חנם)” (9.17). It can be supposed that once “the blameless” and “the wicked” had ordered lives sustained by blameless ways in the case of the former and by wicked ways in the case of the latter, before both were destroyed (9.22) and before the people of the earth were “given into the hand of the wicked” (9.24), presumably those who have not been destroyed. Judges, perhaps once honest upholders of order, were corrupted by God to aid in the process of undoing order for human beings. His question “if it is not he, who then is it?” is a challenge to his hearers to prove otherwise.

6.2.2.3 The Third Speech (Job 12.2-13.19)

²⁴⁸ BDB 491: cover . . . (Piel) . . . face of judge so that he cannot see justice.” Understanding the expression “covers the faces of its judges” as a euphemism for bribery, Gordis (Book of Job, 108) suggests that the second clause of this verse modifies the “wicked” of the first clause which makes them the bribers rather than God. Rowley (Job, 81), however, understands Job to be saying that it is God who “blinds judges to the truth”. In the context of what Job has already said about God’s failure to discriminate between the good and the bad, and the giving of the earth into the hands of the wicked, it is very likely that Job here is accusing God of perverting justice by covering “the eyes of its judges”.
Job’s third speech is epideictic, censuring his friends (12.2-5; 13.4-12) and God (12.6, 13-25; 13.13-15) and claiming corroboration from nature for his point of view (12.7-10) and also the evidence of his own experience (12.11-12) set against the evidence of tradition (12.3; 13.2)\textsuperscript{249} and finally praising himself (13.16-19).

Job refers sarcastically to the “wisdom” (12.2) of his friends, which must be their sole preserve since it will die with them. He then complains that they have made him a “laughing stock”, though he is “just and blameless” (12.4), and have “contempt (בוז)” for his “misfortune” notwithstanding the ease with which it is possible to slip into that state (12.5). He gives the grounds for his rhetoric (12.7-12), and censures God (12.6, 13-25), he challenges the truthfulness of the friends (“you whitewash with lies” [13.4]) and challenges the veracity of what they have said about God (13.7-10).\textsuperscript{250}

Job, in his preliminary remarks censuring God, says “The tents of robbers are at peace, and those who provoke God are secure, who bring their god in their hands” (12.6). His words accuse God of overturning the moral order by allowing peace in the households of those who not only provoke him but who are also the bringers of violence and devastation (שׁדד)\textsuperscript{251} to other human beings. He adds that they “bring their god in their hands” (12.6).\textsuperscript{252} This last curious clause seems to point to thinking by the violent that they can manipulate God, thinking which is not entirely dissimilar to that of the friends who believe that by managing their behaviour they can manage God and so achieve peace.

\textsuperscript{249} I will discuss in a later section (6.2.3) the passages 12.3, 12.7-12, and 13.2.

\textsuperscript{250} I will discuss the passage 13.7-10 later (section 6.2.6).

\textsuperscript{251} This word is sometimes translated “robbers”, including by, for example, NRSV, Pope (Job, 88), Gordis (Book of Job, 128), Habel (Book of Job, 211), but “robber” seems a little tame particularly in view of the destroyer (שׁדד) being the cause of the horrible undoing of the wicked (15.21ff.). Clines (Job -20, 291) prefers “brigands”.

\textsuperscript{252} This phrase has produced a number of translations. Habel (Book of Job, 211) translates v.6c “Those who try to control Eloah”. Clines (Job -20, 291) on the other hand, argues that יִת should be translated “power” and that God is the subject of the verb and so he translates the clause “those whom God has in his own power” (ibid., 275) which makes of God a deity who does nothing about wrongdoing. Seow (Job 1-21, 632) writes “to those whom God has led by his hand”. Pope (Job, 89) prefers a more literal translation – “One who carries God in his hand.” So also Dhorme (Job, 170).
and security for themselves. Likening them in any way to the wicked, is, perhaps, a barb directed by Job to his friends as well as a censure of God for allowing himself to be manipulated by the wicked so that their well-being and order may be maintained.

Whilst Job in 12.6 depicts God as the passive consenter to wrongdoing, in vv.13-25, he portrays God as the bringer of disorder into the world, Job saying

With God are wisdom and strength;
he has counsel and understanding.
If he tears down, no one can rebuild;
    if he shuts someone in, no one can open up.
If he withholds the water, they dry up;
    if he sends them out, they overwhelm the land.
With him are strength and wisdom;
    the deceived and the deceiver are his.
He leads counselors away stripped,
    and makes fools of judges.
He loosens the sash (םסר) of kings,
    and binds a waistcloth on their loins.
He leads priests away stripped,
    and overthrows the mighty (איתן).
He deprives of speech those who are trusted,
    and takes away the discernment of the elders.
He pours contempt on princes,
    and looses the belt of the strong.
He uncovers the deeps (עמק) out of darkness (חשך),
    and brings deep darkness (צלמות) to light (אור).
He makes nations great, then destroys them;
    he enlarges nations, then leads them away.
He strips understanding from the leaders of the earth,
    and makes them wander in a pathless waste.

253 BDB 64: “bond, band.” It has been suggested that this is a garment, one of the accoutrements of high office of which they are now relieved to be replaced with a waistcloth, a symbol of captivity (Pope, Job, 94; Clines, Job 1-20, 300).
254 BDB 451: “firmly seated (i.e. men established in hereditary offices or dignities).”
255 BDB 771: “deep . . . = unsearchable.”
They grope (חֲשׁוֹן) in the dark (חָשׁךָ) without light (אָרּוֹן);
he makes them stagger like a drunkard. (12.13-25)

In this, his second account of the destructive acts of God, Job’s portrayal of God is
of a deity who is, above all, strong (12.13, 16), with a strength which cannot be withstood
(12.14), an observation of his earlier speech (9.4). As he had earlier, Job attributes wisdom
(12.13, 16) to God and also “counsel and understanding” (12.13). Using strength and
wisdom, God sets about the undoing of creation, both the physical world which sustains
human life and the social structures which sustain human society. Water which may be
life-giving, and was so seen by Eliphaz (5.10), is either withheld or sent in such
abundance that the earth is overwhelmed. In addition to being harmful to the physical
creation, and the animate beings present there, drought and flood are metaphors for the
punishment of the wicked in the friends’ speeches. In the thinking of Bildad (8.12; 18.16)
and Eliphaz (15.30), drying up or withering, understood metaphorically, is what happens
to wrongdoers. Being overwhelmed by water is a fate which, according to Eliphaz,
overtakes the wicked, for example, Job (“a flood of water covers you” [22.11]). Eliphaz
also has the “foundation” of the wicked “washed away by a flood” (22.16) which, in that
verse, is a river. Zophar has “terrors overtake them (the wicked person) like a flood”
(27.20). There is no suggestion in this passage, however, that human wrongdoing is the
reason for divinely sent drought or flood.

Job goes on to describe the divine assault on the human part of creation. He
observes that both the good and the bad, the “deceived and the deceiver” (12.16), victim
and wrongdoer belong to God who has a perverse way of relating to humankind and this
perversity will be further demonstrated in this account of divine dealings with humankind.

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256 Ringgren (TDOT 5:245-259) has said that חָשׁךָ may be a metaphor for ignorance and he interprets it thus
in 12.25).
Protective of the wicked (12.6), he attacks those who are not, the leaders of society who are nowhere described as morally deficient. God strikes the human part of creation by destroying its social structures. Those who rule, “kings” (12.18) and “princes” (12.21), those who dispense justice, “judges” (12.17), those who are the source of wisdom, the “elders” and those who hold cultic office, “priests”, are not only relieved of their functions, they are humiliated. Divested of the trappings of office, they are led away, silenced and deprived of understanding, to wander in a wasteland without direction, groping in the dark in ignorance and confusion. Eliphaz’s “crafty” (5.12), “wise” and “wily” (5.13) had also groped (ךָשׁ) in the dark (ךָשׁך) (5.14), but whilst they may have deserved their fate, Job’s leaders have not. Eliphaz’s God is just, Job’s is not.

Job turns to the metaphors of light and dark to describe the calamity which has overtaken society’s leaders. The “deeps” declared by Zophar to be “deeper than Sheol” (11.8) are the “deeps” which God uncovers from where they were in “darkness (ךָשׁך)” and brings the darkness (ךָלִית) associated with death to the light (אור). When paired with the darkness of death, light may be understood as a metaphor for life. Seen thus, these words are a continuation of the undoing of creation begun in 12.15. Not only is the earth overwhelmed, death now threatens life.

Following his words on divine disordering of society, through the overturning of its social structures, Job turns to generalisations on God’s dealings with humankind gathered into nations. Without reason, nations are made great and then destroyed, they are enlarged and then led away (12.24). Eliphaz had remarked on divine contrariness (5.18) and Job does, too, but he points to contrariness on a much larger scale. Whilst Eliphaz had said that divine assault would be followed by healing, Job does not, and perhaps cannot, point to the reversal of catastrophe on a national scale.
Strongly suggested but not stated, is that the disaster recounted by Job (12.17-21, 24-25) is the result of military engagement with a hostile force. He describes the removal of the top echelon of a society which, in ancient times, was only achieved by an external force. Essential for the ordering of society, removal of this echelon can have had only one end, the destruction of the whole society. This supposition is supported by Job’s observations on the rise and fall of nations (12.23) of which, what he has described may be an example, perhaps hypothetical or perhaps not. If it is not an example, it is a description of a process of national destruction. It is worth recalling the Sumerian laments on the destruction of their cities. The gods were held responsible though they used hostile tribes as their agents.\footnote{Chapter 3, section 3.2.4}

Job’s speech draws attention to the preservation by God of order and well-being for a category of undeserving people, “robbers” (12.6), whose existence is a threat to the order and well-being of others because it depends for the maintenance of its well-being on misdeeds done to others. Perversely, the same God acts against the order and well-being of a class of people made up of “counsellors” and “judges” (12.17), “kings” (12.18), “priests” and the “mighty” (12.19), “elders” (12.20), “princes” and “the strong” (12.21) not only consigning them to a state of disorder symbolised by darkness and a “pathless waste” (12.24), but also bringing disorder to those classes of people who depend on them for the maintenance of order in their lives.

Perverse though God may be, Job, a part of creation, will express his determination to defend himself before his capricious and sometimes violent Creator, even though he expects to be killed (13.15). Job’s speech to his friends ends with praise for himself (13.16-19). Unlike the godless who cannot, Job, knowing that he is not among their
number, expects to be able to come before God to present his case confident of vindication.

6.2.2.4  *The Fourth Speech (Job 16.2-17.2, 17.5-16)*

There is a two verse break (17.3-4) in Job’s speech to his friends in which Job addresses God directly. The speech is mainly epideictic, censuring first his friends (16.2-6), then God for attacking him (16.7-17), followed by an expression of hope for vindication (16.18-19) and then despair (16.20-17.2), and, finally, another censuring of God (17.5-16). This last section is confused and confusing. It could be argued that the friends are being blamed; Job talks about “friends and “their children” (17.5), and addresses people using the second person masculine plural pronoun and suffix, saying “But you, come back now, all of you, and I shall not find a sensible person among you” (17.10). Ultimately, however, it is God, not the friends, who, Job believes, is responsible for his troubles and his hopelessness, and who is, therefore, to be censured.

God is castigated for what, Job believes, are divine assaults against him or assaults by others and allowed by God. He is depicted as a hunter, a predatory animal, who has “gnashed his teeth at me” and whose “wrath (אף) has “torn me” (16.9), who “broke me in two” and “seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces” (16.12), and who “slashes open my kidneys” and “pours out my gall on the ground” (16.13). He is portrayed as a “warrior” (16.14) with “archers” (16.13) to deploy, for whom Job is the “target” (16.12). God gives Job to the “ungodly” and casts him “into the hands of the wicked” (16.11). Some “mass themselves together” against Job and have “struck” him (16.10). Divine anger which in Eliphaz’s thinking is turned against the propagators of iniquity and trouble (4.8-9), and in Zophar’s against the wicked (20.23, 28), and in Job’s against “mountains”
(9.5) and “the helpers of Rahab” (9.13), is, Job complains, turned against him. He has only Sheol and its “darkness” to look forward to (17.13) and there he will descend together with his hope” (17.14-15). Job makes clear that he believes God is responsible for the disorder in his life either directly by attacking him, or indirectly by allowing others to attack or insult him. The God who brought disorder to groups of people, nations and the earth itself is not above bringing disorder into the life of an individual.

Alternating between hope and despair, Job calls on earth for help. He does not want the evidence which is his blood to be covered up (16.18). He does not want the extinction which is the grave to silence him and his protest (16.18), claiming that he has a “witness” who is “in heaven” who “vouches” for him. Whoever that witness may be, whether it is a supernatural being that is imagined by Job, and this seems the most likely interpretation, or his own words which have been heard “in heaven”, Job claims he has support in the supernatural realm. He quickly returns to despair, saying, in a “few years” he will go the “way” of no “return” (16.22), adding “the grave is ready for me” (17.1).

6.2.2.5 The Fifth Speech (Job 19.2-29)

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258 The identity of this witness has been much debated. Gordis (Book of Job, 526-527) argues that it is God who is able to combine the opposite characteristics, violence and righteousness within the one being who is God. So also Dhorme, Job, 239; Fohrer, Das Buch Hiob, 292; Hartley, Book of Job, 264-265. Pope (Job, 125) says that God cannot be “Accuser, Judge and Executioner” and so it must be an “intercessor” who will plead with God on Job’s behalf. Habel (Book of Job, 274-276), recalling the satan in the Prologue whose function was to accuse Job, suggests that there is no reason for there not to be another person in the celestial realm who would defend Job. Newsom (“Job,” 460) posits a celestial being as such beings have been mentioned by Eliphaz (5.1). John Briggs Curtis (“On Job’s Witness in Heaven,” JBL 102 [1983]: 549-562) claims that Job’s words express a belief in a personal deity who will intercede before the high god on his behalf and that this personal god is his witness. Clines (Job 1-20, 391) has proposed that it is Job’s words, his “affirmation of innocence” that are his witness. Seow (Job 1-21, 739) says that Job’s personified “outcry” is his witness and he translates vv.19-20a as “Even now, behold, my witness is in heaven; My testifier is on high My intermediary is my outcry”.

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Job’s fifth speech is predominantly epideictic. He censures his friends for their treatment of him (19.2-5) and their harassment of him (19.22, 28), which he warns could lead to their punishment (19.29). His harshest blame, however, is reserved for God (19.6-21), following which is an expression of hope for eventual vindication (19.23-27).

God is again portrayed as a hunter and a warrior. The hunter has “closed his net” around Job (19.6), and the warrior has “walled up” (19.8) his way, confining him to one place the better to attack him – “he breaks me down on every side, and I am gone: (19.10). Job adds, “His troops come on together; they have thrown up siegeworks against me, and encamp around my tent” (19.12). In words which recall divine treatment of “the leaders of the earth” (12.24), which once Job was, Job says that God “has set darkness ( חושך) upon my paths ( נתיב)” (19.8). The “leaders” were made to “wander in a pathless ( דרך) waste” (12.24), groping in the “dark ( חושך)” (12.25). As had happened to “counselors” (12.17) and “priests” (12.19) who were “stripped ( שולח)”, and “kings” (12.18) and “the strong” (12.21) who were divested of the trappings of office, Job, “stripped ( פשט)” of his “glory”, the “crown” taken from his “head” (19.9) is relieved of all that symbolises his former status. As in his earlier speech (16.9), Job complains that he is the victim of divine “wrath” (19.11). Also, as had occurred in his previous speech, accusations of divine hunter/warrior behaviour toward him, are followed by blame for Job’s divinely caused social isolation. Job blames God for his estrangement from “family” and “acquaintances” (19.13), “relatives”, “close friends”, “guests” and “serving girls” (17.14). To his family he is “repulsive” and “loathsome” (19.7), and by “children” he is despised (19.18) and by “intimate friends” abhorred (19.19).

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259 His former status is described in chapter 29.
Notwithstanding his bitter complaints, Job ends his speech on a note of hope, saying “I know that my Redeemer (גאל) lives and that at the last he will stand upon the earth” (19.25). He expects vindication but so far in the future, perhaps even after his death and physical decay, that he would have his testimony inscribed on rock for its preservation (19.24).

6.2.2.6 The Sixth Speech (Job 21.2-34)

Epideictic in its purpose, this speech censures Job’s friends for their argument, aspects of which he refutes. Though addressing the friends, Job’s speech also censures God for overturning the moral order in creation. His complaint is that the “wicked” (21.7) and godless (21.14-15) thrive (21.7-16) and are never punished (21.17-18, 30-31) but their children may be punished instead (21.19), that there is no fairness in peoples’ experience of life (21.23-26). Particularly favoured are the high-born (נדיב) who are wicked (21.28) and whose life’s end is distinguished by ceremonial interment (21.32-33).

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260 BDB 145: “redeem, act as kinsman.” The identity of the “redeemer”, like that of the “witness” (16.19), has been much discussed. The human גאל acted on behalf of kinfolk and that might include acting as an avenger on their behalf. God could also act as a גאל. Gordis (Book of Job, 205-206) says that the monotheism of Job prevents any notion that the גאל could be anybody other than God. Rowley (Job, 138), Hartley (Book of Job, 293), Gray (Book of Job, 274) and Seow (Job 1-21, 805) support the idea that God is the גאל. Pope connects גאל to the celestial agent who is elsewhere the witness (16.19) and the “umpire” (9.33). Habel (Book of Job, 304-306) noting Job’s perception of God as his enemy, says that the redeemer cannot be God, and that it must be a third party, and arguing as he had over the identity of the witness, suggests a member, like the Satan, of the heavenly court. Newsom (“Job,” 478) sees no need to identify the גאל other than to say it is a heavenly figure, what matters is its function. Clines (Job 1-20, 459) argues that Job’s גאל is, like his “witness” (6.19), his personified cry present in the heavenly realm which speaks on behalf of Job.


262 Clines (Job 1-20, 458) says that Job wishes he could “see” God before his death and this is consistent with his wishes expressed elsewhere to enter into a dispute with God (13.3, 22.3-7). So also Hartley, Book of Job, 296; Gray (Book of Job, 275).

263 See section 6.2.1 above.

264 This word can mean nobility of rank and nobility of character (BDB 622) and, if the latter, the verse would be about two different kinds of people, one noble and the other wicked. If the word is a reference to rank, the verse could be about the high-born who are wicked and this is the interpretation of Gordis (Book of Job, 233-234), and Habel (Book of Job, 229-230) and seems the more likely interpretation as Job has been complaining about the fortunate life of the wicked and will further complain that they are going to have a grand burial.

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An epideictic speech, God is the object of Job’s censure, firstly for his treatment of Job (23.2-17), secondly for his failure to protect the vulnerable members of society (24.1-12), and thirdly, for his apparent tolerance of the wicked (24.2, 13-17).

The divine qualities Job complains of are, paradoxically, presence and elusiveness and both are conducive to disorder in Job’s life. Conscious of God as an oppressive presence, Job says “his hand is heavy” (23.2), “I am terrified” and “I am in dread” (23.15), and “God has made my heart faint” (23.16). The reason for his fear is his sense of powerlessness against God whose “power” is “great” (23.6) and who “stands alone” and no one “can dissuade him” so that “what he desires, that he does” (23.13). The consequences of divine elusiveness (23.3, 8-9) are Job’s failure to get an audience for his argument (23.4, 6-7), answers to his argument (23.5), and an acquittal from what, he perceives, is punishment for misdeeds (23.7). Acquittal would redress wrong done to him and would restore order to his life, but this he is not to have.

Turning from his own misfortunes to those of the needy, he attributes blame for the plight of the “orphan” (24.3, 9) and the “widow” (24.3), the “needy” and the “poor” (24.4, 9, 14), at the hands of the wicked (24.2-4) to God, asking “Why are times (עת) not kept

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265 I have discussed 23.10-12 in section 6.2.1.
266 “His hand” is the usual translation although the text has אַיָּה.
267 The word עָתִים has been interpreted as “times of judgment” (Gordis, Book of Job, 254; Habel, Book of Job, 351), and as “days of assize” (Clines, Job 21-37.573).
268 by the Almighty, and why do those who know him (צפן) 269 never see his days (24.1). It is God’s failure to act against the wicked, so overturning the moral order of creation, which is responsible for the disorder brought into the lives of society’s weaker members by the wicked, a disorder which Job describes at length (24.2-11). The wicked in this passage are predators who prey on the weak.

The misfortunes of the vulnerable are several and chief among them is that of displacement; they have no place which they can call their own. Boundary markers (גבולה) 271 establishing the right of its occupants to be in a place are removed (24.2), thereby allowing others, probably those who have done the removing, to take possession of the land, displacing its original inhabitants. That this is so, is confirmed by Job’s saying that the “needy (אביון)” are driven “off the road (דרך)” 272, and the “poor of the earth”, without entitlement to be there, are made to hide themselves (24.4). To sustain the life of their young, “like wild asses (פרא) in the desert (מדבר),” 273 they are itinerants in in hospitable places, “scavenging (for prey [טרף]) in the wasteland (ערבה)” 274 food for their

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268 In Section 6.2.1 I note the definition of this verb is “hide, treasure up”. Whilst the latter meaning may have been appropriate for 23.12, opinion seems divided on which of “hide” or “treasure up”, perhaps with a similar meaning, “keep”, is better in this verse. Clines (Job 21-37, 573) who translates 24.1a as “Why are days of assize not kept by the Almighty” interprets these words to be Job’s lamenting the failure of God to dispense justice more regularly (ibid., 601). Dhomme (Job, 353) suggests the removal of the negative from the first half of his verse which he translates “Why have times been hidden from Shaddai?” Gordis’ translation of the verse, supported by Newsom (“Job,” 510), is “Since the times of judgment are not hidden from the Almighty, why do those who love him never see the days of retribution?” Similarly, Habel, Book of Job, 350. In this verse, “hide” would be the most appropriate translation of צפן.

269 This phrase has been translated as “those who love him” by Gordis (Book of Job, 254), “friends” by (Habel (Book of Job, 351).

270 Amplified by interpreters, this phrase has been translated as “days of retribution” (Gordis, Book of Job, 254) and “judgment days” (Clines, Job 21-37,573).

271 BDB 148: “border, boundary.” M. Ottosson (“גבולה”; TDOT 2:361-366) has noted the ancient respect for agreements on boundaries of both nations and tribes which were believed to be protected by God. Violators would be cursed. Private property, too, was protected by boundary stones and the same sanctions applied to their removal (ibid., 366).

272 Habel (Book of Job) has suggested that דרך here does not necessarily mean “road”, it could also convey a sense of “right’ or ‘portion’ in life”.

273 BDB 184: “wilderness . . . tracts of land used for the pasturage of flocks and herds.” S. Talmon (“ערבה”; TDOT 8:87-118) says this term refers to arid or semi-arid places unsuited to agriculture because of their lack of water.

274 BDB 787: “desert-plain, steppe.” Talmon (TDOT 8:92) has described this place as “an arid region with
young” (24.5), need making predators of the needy. With no claim to a more favourable environment, they are obliged to “reap” in “a field not their own (גָּזַע)” and “glean in the vineyard of the wicked” (24.6) dependent for a living on the leavings of others. They suffer dispossession, their “flocks” (24.2) which the wicked “seize” and “pasture” (24.2), the orphan’s “donkey” and the widow’s “ox” (24.3), the “orphan child” and, as a “pledge”, “the infant of the poor” (24.9). They suffer privation, too, nakedness (24.7, 10), hunger (24.10) despite working at menial tasks (24.10-11), and a lack of shelter from the elements (24.8). “[W]et with the rain of the mountains (הר)” and “for want of shelter” they find themselves clinging to “the rock (צור)” (24.8). The rock, sometimes metaphorically a sustainer of human life, is here no sustainer of the lives of the poor and needy. The rock, sometimes a metaphor for God as it probably is here, is indifferent to their plight. The urban afflicted fare no better; “the dying (מת)” groan” and the “wounded” cry “for help to a heedless God (24.12).

The wicked, murders, thieves and adulterers, creators of misery and creatures of darkness, go about their business without hindrance. They “rebel against the light” with whose “ways” they are not “acquainted” (24.13) and “they do not know the light” (24.16). The “murderer rises at dusk (אור)” to kill the poor and needy and in the night is like a saline soil and little vegetation.”

275 BDB 117: “fodder . . . (strictly, mixed fodder.” This word has caused some discussion and led to emendations which Habel (Book of Job, 354) has noted. Whilst fodder would make sense in this verse, the words “not their own” would be consistent with the notion of dispossession of their place suffered by the poor and so more appropriate here.

276 A study by H.-J. Fabry (“צור; צר; צע,” TDOT 12:311-321) has listed the synonyms for “rock”, the most important of which, for Job, are צער, ברך and, because צער may refer not only to a stone but also a “stone formation”, צור (ibid., 314). The word צער, has both literal and figurative meanings. Understood literally, it conveys the notion of “stability and constancy” (ibid., 315). As a metaphor, a rock may also be the means of sustaining people (Ex.17.6; Num 20.11; Deut 32.13; Ps 78.15; 105.41; 114.8) (ibid., 317). Associated as it is with stability, the word צער is sometimes a divine epithet or name and these usages are frequent in the psalms.

277 BDB 607: “male, man.” Some have, by revocalising this word, changed it to a participle meaning “dying”.

278 The phrase translated “dusk” is זָרֵד which is, literally, “at the light”, which would contradict the statement of the previous verse and also the second half of this verse. Many suggestions have been put forward to address the problem which is centred on the preposition ל. Clines (Job 21-37, 587) has outlined scholarly suggestions made to clarify the meaning of the phrase. Some say that “at the light” or “with the light” means dawn. He himself translates the phrase “at daybreak”. Others have suggested
thief” (24.14). The adulterer, too, “waits for twilight” (24.15), and all operate “in the
dark” because “by day they shut themselves up” (24.16). The world in which they
function is one of darkness, Job saying, “For deep darkness is morning to all of them; for
they are friends with the terrors of deep darkness” (24.17).

Job’s excoriations (24.1-17) are a protest against what he perceives are the divine
notions concerning order and disorder in that part of creation which is human. The order
enjoyed by the wicked is that, unchecked by God, they prey on the weaker members of
society, driving them from their place, robbing and even killing them for the good of the
malefactors. Order for the wicked is disorder for their prey whose weakness makes them
vulnerable to predation; such a disposition of the different categories of human beings, so
injurious to one and so undeservedly beneficial to the other, exists, Job claims, because it
is allowed by an indifferent God.

6.2.2.8 The Eighth Speech (26.2-4; 27.2-12)

This fragmented speech is epideictic, first, blaming the friends for their treatment
of him (26.2-4), second, asserting his integrity and his determination to maintain it, which
is self-praise (27.2-6) - and this is part of his refutative argument discussed above;\(^ {279}\) and
third, blame for those, unidentified, who are his opponents (27.7-12). This speech does
not add to what Job has already said concerning order and disorder in creation.

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that the words of the phrase be separated to make לָא אוֹר meaning “not light” or before light. Pope (Job,
178) proposes a separative sense for the preposition so translating it “from”, thus allowing his
translation “at twilight” (ibid., 175). However the preposition is interpreted, the consensus seems to be
that the murderer does not go about his killing in full daylight.

\(^ {279}\) Section 6.2.1 above.
This speech has three functions. I have already touched on one; it is the end of Job’s refutation of his friends’ arguments. Secondly, it is the final articulation in the human dispute of Job’s views on order and disorder in creation, and thirdly, it is the Epilogue to Job’s rhetoric addressed to his friends. As Aristotle says, Epilogues are required, first, to make the hearer “well-disposed” towards Job and “ill-disposed” towards his opponents; secondly, they must “magnify or minimize the leading facts”; thirdly, they must “excite the required state of emotion in (the) hearers”; and, fourthly, “refresh their memories.” Peroration complete, the speaker must end with the words “I have done. You have heard me. The facts are before you. I ask for your judgement.” Job’s final address to his friends, his epilogue, has three parts; the first is a recollection of his past life and relationship with God (29.2-25); the second is a description of his present life and relationship with God (30.1-19, 24-31); and the third is the issuing of a challenge in the form of a self-imprecation, to show the reasons for the change between his past and present lives.

In times past, Job says, as a mark of divine favour, God’s “lamp (נֵר) shone over my head” (an oblique confirmation of Bildad’s statement that the “lamp (נֵר)” of the wicked is “put out” [18.6]), “by his light I walked through darkness (29.3), “the friendship of God was upon my tent” (29.4), “the Almighty was still with me” and “my children were around me” (29.5). His life was not merely sustained, but amply so (“my steps were washed with milk”) by the rock, a metaphor for God, who “poured out for me streams of oil” (29.6). Once he had expected to die in his “nest after reaching a ripe old age, saying “I shall multiply my days” as though they were sand (29.18). Once, his “roots spread out (like

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280 Ibid.
282 Ibid., 3.19.1420b.
those of Bildad’s good person [8.17]) to the waters (מים)’ which, here, is a beneficent element of creation, and there was “dew all night on my branches” (29.19). Once his “glory was fresh” (29.20) before it was “stripped” from him (19.9). A leader in his community he had enjoyed its esteem (29.7-11, 21-25). Clothed with “righteousness” and “justice” (29.14) he had upheld order in society, supporting the “poor” and the “orphan” (29.12), the “wretched” and the “widow” (29.13), the “blind” and the “lame” (29.15), the “needy” and the stranger” (29.16). As their defender, he “broke the fangs of the wicked and made them drop their prey from their teeth (שון)” (29.17), and in this he resembles Eliphaz’s God who broke “the teeth (שון) of the young lion” (4.10). Job had once been God’s agent for order in society, but no more; now the “widow” and “orphan” (24.3), the “needy” and the “poor” (24.4) are the victims of the “wicked” (24.6). God, though he has troops to deploy (19.12; 25.3), not only fails to protect them, he has removed from his position as “a king among his troops” (29.25) the one who did and would, Job, leaving the weak without a defender, and has, instead, launched his troops against Job (16.13-14; 19.8-12), preserver of order in society.

In chapter 30, the second part of his Epilogue, Job bewails his present circumstances. The man once respected by the great in the land, “nobles” (29.9) and “princes” (29.10), on whom he had “smiled (שחק)” (29.24), is now made sport of (שחק) (30.1) and mocked (30.9). He is the victim of people who are the dregs of society (30.8), and seen so by him (30.1), who are social outcasts (30.5), “whipped out of the land” (30.8), living rough (30.6-7), with what living they have from a dry (יּצֵה) and desolate (משא) waste (30.3). Abhorred (חנם) by his friends (19.19) and “far (רחק)” from his family (19.13) he is abhorred (חנם) by outcasts, kept “aloof (רחק)” from them, spat at (30.10), and sent sprawling (30.12). God’s troops had "thrown up (סלל) siegeworks (דרך) for (his) ruin” (30.12). Once God had broken (פרץ) him, breach (פרץ) upon breach (פרץ), and had rushed (רזר) at
him “like a warrior” (16.14, and now the “disreputable brood” (30.8), “through a wide breach (פרץ)” comes, rolling on (30.14). God is the cause of Job’s degradation; because he has “loosed” his “bowstring and humbled” him (30.11), the rabble are free to persecute him. Once Job had been assailed by God (16.9, 12-14; 19.10-11) or by his troops (16.13; 19.12), but now, the final indignity, he is assailed by pariahs. The one who wept for those in hardship and “grieved for the poor” (30.25), is the one who “looked for good” but instead “evil came”, who “waited for light”, but instead “darkness came” (30.26).

In the third part of his Epilogue, acknowledging that “calamity” and “disaster” are the deserved consequence of the wrongdoing of the “unrighteous” and the “workers of iniquity” (31.3), Job enumerates many misdeeds for which, if he is guilty, he invites retribution. The act of a man who does not believe he is guilty, it is his final demand for an “answer” from the “Almighty” (31.35), his final demand in the human dispute that God justify what, Job believes, God has done to him. The Epilogue ends with the narrator saying, as would be recommended by Aristotle, “the words of Job are ended” (31.40).

Since no more will be heard from the friends, the reader cannot know their response, nor need (s)he, because the Epilogue to one of the two disputes, the means by which the poet sets out a particular argument on order and disorder in creation, is, ultimately, meant to address the reader whose persuasion is the end of the rhetoric of Job. The Epilogue has met the first of Aristotle’s requirements; it has made the reader, or rather, it has made the reader continue to be, “well-disposed” towards Job, and perhaps, ill-disposed towards his friends who cling to their inherited tradition and, despite good reason not to, continue to apply to Job, its precepts one of which says “guilty because he is suffering”. The reader has always known that Job was a good and God-fearing man, but sorely tried. The second requirement, to “magnify . . . the leading facts” has been achieved with Job’s extended accounts of his past life of order and well-being and good relationship with God and his
present life of disorder and tribulation caused by God because it is allowed by God, which the reader knows to be true, too. The extended challenge to show reason for his suffering, issued by Job who knows that there is no reason, resonates with the reader who also knows that there is no reason for it. These two accounts, together with the challenge, have achieved the fourth purpose of the Epilogue which is to “refresh their (the readers’) memories”. The third requirement, which is to “excite the required state of emotion” in the reader, will be discussed below.

6.2.3 Supporting Evidence

Job claims for himself the same inheritance of tradition as the friends (“What you know, I also know; I am not inferior to you” [13.2]) and the same capacity for understanding (“I have understanding as well as you; I am not inferior to you” [12.3]). Set against tradition, however, is the evidence of disorder to be found in nature (9.6-7; 12.7-10) and the evidence of personal experience (6.4; 9.17-18; 12.11; 16.7-14; 17.6-11; 19.6-20). He claims that his point of view is supported by others, for example, travellers (21.29) who can testify to the moral disorder of creation, a “witness” in “heaven” who “vouches” for him “on high” (16.19), and a “Redeemer” (19.25) who will in the future be available to him. He argues from observation and knowledge about the ways of God with human beings, which is that God allows wrongdoers to persist in their wrongdoing at great cost to their victims. That Job’s knowledge is shared by his friends is demonstrated by their need to explain the apparent immunity from retribution enjoyed by malefactors, through their assertions that impunity is temporary (20.5, 21; 22.16-18; 24.22-24; 27.16-19), an explanation disputed by Job (21.7) whose judgement of their arguments is that “there is nothing left of your answers but falsehood” (21.34). Knowledge based on observation, is the basis of Job’s challenge at the end of his seventh speech: “If it is not
so, who will prove me a liar, and show that there is nothing in what I say?” (24.25). Knowledge based on observation is Job’s answer to Zophar’s question: “What can you know?” (11.8).

6.2.4 Conclusion

Job once shared his friends’ beliefs on survival and well-being in creation and the way by which this may be achieved - a life of piety and virtue. Experience, however, has battered his beliefs, but to the very end of his speeches addressed to his friends he holds that the iniquitous ought to suffer and the virtuous ought not. Still affirming his piety, he claims that it is God who has distanced himself from Job, not the other way around. Job would find God to argue his case but cannot. Paradoxically, the absent God is also the oppressively present God whose assaults on Job have created Job’s need to find him. What ought to be, set against what is, have led Job to believe that God does not adhere to his friends’ precepts, nor his, concerning the moral ordering of creation. Instead, God is, at the very least, perverse, and, moreover, if judged by their standards and his own, immoral, tolerating and even sustaining the wicked, and harming the good, or allowing them to be harmed for the benefit of the wicked.

He has identified and described order and disorder at four different levels of creation from the micro to the macro. At the micro level, which is the individual, God can be contrary bringing, order and well-being into the lives of the bad and disorder and ill-being into the lives of the good, himself, for example, or allowing that to happen. He had once enjoyed order but now lives with disorder. Moving up, the next level in creation is that of classes of people and Job cites, on the one hand, the elite of society, to which class he once belonged, those whose rule creates order in society, and, on the other hand,
society’s vulnerable, the poor and needy. Once the lives of the élite were ordered, but removal from their place brings disorder not only to their lives but also to the life of the society to which they belonged, and to its vulnerable members who depend on an ordered society for order in their own lives. The lives of the poor and needy were not always disordered; they once had a place and they once had possessions but now they are displaced and dispossessed by the wicked and all of this is allowed by God. What is disorder for the poor and needy, however, is, paradoxically, order for the wicked whose survival and well-being, depends on what they can take from weaker beings. They are predators, who need prey, for without it, their own lives and the order in them would be put at risk. Paradoxically, too, the predators who are the wicked, by their actions against the poor, have created a situation where, to safeguard their survival, need has made predators of the needy. Moving further up to the next level in creation is the nation. Job has observed that nations rise and fall, and this, too, is the doing of God who makes nations great before destroying them, who enlarges them before leading them away. God is both creator and destroyer of nations. At the macro level of creation, which is the natural world, God is both creative and destructive and acts both of creation and destruction are accomplished by violence. Celestial luminaries, markers of seasons and the passage of time, once made by God, are darkened and earth’s pillars tremble until earth is shaken out of its place. The earth, on which live and depend for their living, nations, classes and individuals is disordered. God is a paradox who orders and disorders the natural world. Human life at every level may be both ordered and disordered either because that is allowed or because it is so engineered by the God of paradox.

6.2.5 Emotion as a Tool for Persuasion
Job responds with anger to the attempts of his friends to give him grounds for confidence and hope which he cannot accept because their arguments are false, demonstrably so, as shown by his refutation of them and by his own observations, knowledge and experience. Their persistence in proffering it, accompanied by their mounting anger with him, is met by his own mounting anger with them. He says of them “my companions are treacherous” (6.15), and, addressing them, “you whitewash with lies; all of you are worthless physicians” (13.4), “your maxims are proverbs of ashes, your defences are defences of clay” (13.12), and “miserable comforters are you all” (16.2). He describes their speech as “windy words” (16.3). He asks, “[h]ow long will you torment me and break me in pieces with words?” (19.2), charging them with doing “wrong” to him. (19.3), and asking “[w]hy do you, like God, pursue me, never satisfied with my flesh?” (19.22), and “[h]ow then will you comfort me with empty nothings?”, adding “[t]here is nothing left of your answers but falsehood” (21.34). Job’s anger is the anger of a man who has been wronged not only by God, but also by his friends.\textsuperscript{283}

Job’s circumstances have brought to him “vexation” (6.2), “pain” (6.10; 16.6), “weeping” (16.16) and “tears” (16.20), a “broken” spirit (17.1), “grief” (17.7), loss of “hope” (17.15), dismay and “shuddering” (21.6), which have caused him to desire death (6.8-9). He believes that it is God who is responsible for his “bitterness” (9.18; 23.2), whose “presence” has “terrified” him and caused him “dread” (23.15), and has made his “heart faint” (23.16) so that he wishes he “could vanish in darkness” (23.17). Most damaging of all, is his loss of hope for which God is also responsible and Job says “he has uprooted my hope like a tree” (19.10). An expression of his despair are Job’s words “[i]f I summoned him and he answered me, I do not believe that he would listen to my

\textsuperscript{283}Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.2
voice” (9.16), and “[t]hough I am innocent, my own mouth would condemn me; though I am blameless he would prove me perverse” (9.20).

Job’s friends are unmoved by his words, the reader may not be so unfeeling. On the friends’ behalf, it should be said that they are not privy to the information which the reader of the Prologue has. In my last chapter, I raised the question of the emotions that Job’s plight could have raised in the friends and in the reader.\textsuperscript{284} I suggested that pity was the most likely, both for his friends who had arrived to console him (2.11) and for the reader.\textsuperscript{285} Whilst Job’s words have dispelled all feelings of pity in his friends, they would have maintained and strengthened them in the reader in whom they may also have aroused anger. Injustice can create in the onlooker both pity and anger on behalf of the victim, and, I suggest, the poet knows this. If anger is created in the reader, a question then arises: against whom is it directed, the unfeeling friends, or God, or both?

6.2.6 \textit{The Credibility of Job’s Speeches}

The reader knows from the Prologue that God is responsible for Job’s ills because he has allowed them to be visited on Job by another, without reason (חנּם), and God admits this (2.3). Job is telling the truth when he says he has been cast “into the hands of the wicked” (16.11) who have assaulted him (16.10), the divine troops have besieged him (19.12), and, unrestrained by God, the rabble has mocked and attacked him (30.9-14). He is telling something close to the truth (God accepts responsibility for Job’s woes) when he says “the hand (יָד) of God has touched (נָגַע) me” (19.21), and “his hand is heavy” (23.2). Close to the truth, too, are his assertions that “the arrows of the Almighty are in me” (6.4), that he “multiplies my wounds without cause (חנּם)” (9.17), that “he has torn

\textsuperscript{284} Chapter 5, section 5.1
\textsuperscript{285} Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.2
me in his wrath” and “gnashed his teeth at me” (16.9), that “he broke me in two” and “dashed me to pieces” (16.12), and that “he slashes open my kidneys” and “pours out my gall” (16.13).

At the point where the dispute between Job and his friends has reached an impasse, a new participant, God, enters the fray in support of Job. Though his entry into the dispute comes after the divine speeches, his words have a bearing on the arguments of the friends and so will be considered here. In a Mesopotamian dispute poem, on which Job is modelled, the divine verdict is a requirement.286 Addressing Eliphaz, God says twice “you have not spoken of me what is right (כון), as my servant Job has” (42.7, 8). At first sight, this is a puzzling verdict. What has been wrong with the friends’ championing of the justice of God and what has been right about Job’s words deprecating the justice of God?287 At the very least, the manner of servant Job’s address about God has been

286 See chapter 3, section 3.4
287 These questions have been much debated. Those who, like David Robertson ("The Book of Job: A Literary Study," 447, 468), hold that an ancient tale of a pious man was cut in two and the present dialogue inserted, believe that in the original dialogue the friends attacked but Job defended God and that the divine verdict is a response to that old dialogue. H. L. Ginsberg ("Job the Patient and Job the Impatient," 93) argues that there are two strata to the Book of Job: the Book of Job the Patient, and the Book of Job the Impatient. He includes in the former, chapters 27 and 28 and the divine verdict is a reference to Job’s words there. His condemnation of the friends’ speech relates to a now missing part of the dialogue. Snaith (The Book of Job, 5) interprets the verdict as a the author’s “condemnation of the facile orthodoxy of the three friends and his commendation of the attitude of Job who at least has had the courage to look the facts of human life in the face.” James G. Williams ("You Have Not Spoken Truth of Me’," 236) describes the words as “a condemnation of God – by God! Job, after all, has spoken ‘what is true of me’”. David Robertson ("The Book of Job," 468) has said of the praise of Job, that it amounts to a “terrible self-incrimination.” Donal J. O’Connor ("The Cunning Hand: Repetitions in Job 42:7, 8," ITQ 57 (1991): 14-25.) has said that the divine words are not a verdict on the speeches in the dialogue but refer to what was said in the Prologue in which Job’s words about God were pious and accepting, but they were not emulated by the friends. Fohrer (Das Buch Hiob, 539) understands the verdict to refer to Job’s words in 40.4-5 and 42.2-6. David Penchansky (The Betrayal of God, 55) describes such a suggestion as “narratively absurd”. Fox ("Reading the Tale of Job," in A Critical Engagement: Essays on the Hebrew Bible [eds. D. J. A. Clines and E. van Wolde; Sheffield: Sheffield Phoenix, 2011], 155-156) does not think that God’s words are a validation of all that Job has said. They are a condemnation of the friends for the wrong they have done to Job in claiming that he was being punished for sin, and they are a vindication of Job’s assertions that he is innocent.
disrespectful. The reader, however, would recall Job’s words earlier (13.7-10) to his friends which foreshadow the divine verdict. Using rhetorical questions, he accuses them of speaking “falsely” and “deceitfully” for God (13.7), of showing “partiality” (13.8, 10) in pleading “the case for God” (13.8). He warns that they will come under the scrutiny of God who, unlike human beings, cannot be deceived (13.9), and they will be rebuked (13.10). Disputed between Job and his friends is the question whether or not human behaviour can be managed so that piety and virtue may be rewarded with order and well-being, and impiety and iniquity punished by disorder and ill-being. Such a belief relies, for its actualisation, on divine co-operation and divine beneficence or maleficence. It is a belief that God can be manipulated by good human beings in order to bring about a desired end for themselves, which is a good life, and the satisfaction of seeing bad human beings suffer. The friends subscribe to this idea and Job, who formerly subscribed to it, has found from observation and experience that it is not true though he would like it to be. He warns the friends that their stand will incur divine displeasure. Having come to the realisation that God cannot be manipulated by human beings, Job says “[b]ut he stands alone and who can dissuade him? What he desires, that he does. For he will complete what he appoints for me; and many such things are in his mind” (23.13-14). The divine verdict is confirmation of Job’s new understanding of the divine being and the divine ways and that God cannot be manipulated by humankind. There are, however, two parts to the verdict; the first (“you have not spoken of me what is right”) discredits the friends’ arguments and the second (“as my servant Job has”) validates Job’s.

6.3  The Human Dispute over Order and Disorder in Creation – Conclusion
In chapter 3, the Statement of the rhetoric which is *Job*, the poet, using Job’s protest against the day of his conception and birth, raises for discussion the issue of disorder, experienced as suffering, in creation and asks why human beings are brought into the world only to suffer. It also points out that suffering is the lot of some, but not all, human beings, which raises another question about why that should be. Suffering and not-suffering are antithetical ways of being and for those who experience them, they represent disorder and order in human lives. As the first part of an answer to the questions raised by the Statement in chapter 3, the poet has placed before the reader a protracted debate, *logos*, between Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar on the one hand and Job on the other. The friends give their answer to the second question, why some suffer and others do not, and offer advice on how to avoid suffering, advice which is also a remedy for those who presently suffer. They do not dispute that suffering exists in creation but they do assert that to suffer or not to suffer is in the hands of individuals. If taken to its logical conclusion, their advice should largely eliminate suffering for those who follow it. The experience of suffering may have an educative purpose and, when that is so, is temporary for those being educated. It is also temporary for those who are suffering at the hands of the powerful and wicked because they will, in time, get relief when God deals with the wicked. Job has found his friends’ recommendations to be ill-founded. He, too, gives an answer to the question, why some suffer and others do not; his answer is that God allows it and even contributes to it, and this is also his answer to the question which asks why there is suffering in creation.

Emotion, *pathos*, is what drives the friends’ search for answers on why some suffer and others do not. Aware that there is disorder in creation and driven by fear of it and the need to protect themselves from it, they have created a belief system which, having God as the ultimate protection against disorder, gives them confidence and hope. Undermining their belief system raises their anger. A reader who shares their fears and beliefs would
get angry too. Job has attempted to undermine their beliefs which observation and experience have shown to be untrue. Emotion drives his beliefs but it is not fear because disaster has already happened; it is despair because the belief system which he once shared with his friends and on which he had previously relied, has proved unreliable because, it seems, divine co-operation in its implementation is lacking.

The credibility or lack of it, *ethos*, of the disputants’ points of view is an important part of persuasion to the poet’s point of view. Credibility is tested at two levels in the text. The most overt testing is to be found in Job’s extended refutations of his friends’ arguments. Less obvious, and directed at the reader, are challenges to the credibility of Eliphaz’s statements conveyed through ambiguities of meaning in the words of his first speech. That ambivalence is a feature at the start of the friends’ rhetoric, is, I suggest, a deliberate ploy by the poet to alert the perceptive reader to the lack of credibility of the friends’ arguments.

So far the dialogue has been between humans, and Job has had neither answers nor comfort from it and neither has the reader. His, and the reader’s, only recourse for understanding is God and so the poet sets before the reader the divine/human dispute.

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288 The creator of Elihu did.
CHAPTER 7

THE HUMAN/DIVINE DISPUTE

Job addresses God five times (7.1-21; 9.25-10.22; 13.20-14.22; 17.3-4; 30.20-23),\(^1\) twice very briefly, before God responds. Thereafter, God and Job speak alternately; the first divine speech (38.2-40.2), is followed by Job’s response (40.4-5) and the second divine speech is followed by Job’s second response (42.2-6). Each of the speeches is preceded by a short narrative statement (38.1; 40.3; 40.6; 42.1) and the first divine speech is interrupted by a brief narrative statement (40.1). As in the previous chapter I shall consider each speech to determine to which of Aristotle’s three categories it belongs and to discover what it has to say about order and disorder in creation. I will begin with Job’s first five addresses to God but delay consideration of his last two speeches until after my discussion of the divine speeches.

7.1 Job’s Rhetoric

As I have already observed,\(^2\) there are thematic connections between the two disputes, Job and his friends in the first dispute, and Job and God in the second dispute. This is to be expected because the questions raised in the first dispute are, since they concern divine dealings with humankind in general and Job in particular, best addressed to God and by God. Another feature of the first three addresses (7.1-21; 9.25-10.22; 13.20-14.22) is their very close connection to one another. They are stages in a train of thought on order and disorder in the life of Job, in particular, and humanity in general,

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\(^1\) In chapter 4, section 4.1, I assigned some parts of Job’s speeches to the human/divine dispute.
\(^2\) Ibid.
and the part played by God in that order and disorder. There are notions common to all three speeches and identifying them are key words which relate to: humankind, and the terms used are אדם (7.20; 14.1; 10), איש (7.1, 17; 10.4, 5; 14.19) and בני (10.5; 14.10, 14); spirit and soul or being and the terms used are רוח (7.11; 10.12), and نفس (7.11, 15; 10.1; 14.22); fear and its terms, ברות (7.14; 9.34; 13.21), חדור (7.14), אימה (9.34; 13.21), and רָעָה (9.35); hand and its terms, יד (9.33; 10.7, 8; 14.15) and פֶּה (10.3; 13.21); watching and its terms, שומר (10.12, 14; 13.27; 14.16) and משמר (7.12); setting or directing and its term, שית (7.17; 10.20; 14.13); visiting and its terms, פקד (7.18;) and פקדת (10.12); leave alone and its term, על (7.16; 10.20; 14.6); look away and its term is שמע (7.19; 14.6).

7.1.1 Job’s First Speech (Job 7.1-21)

Job, addressing his friends for the first time (6.2-30), in an epideictic speech, had censured God for his treatment of him (6.2-13), had complained, saying “the arrows of the Almighty are in me; my spirit (רוח) drinks their poison; the terrors (בעותים) of God are arrayed against me” (6.4), and had expressed the hope that God would kill him (6.8-9).³ Voicing his fear and again wishing for death, Job’s first address to God is judicial rhetoric; complaint continues but now he adds accusation. Complaining that “human beings (אדם) have a hard service on earth” (7.1), and expanding on that subject (7.2-5), he asks God to remember that “my life is a breath (רוח)” (7.7) and that even while “your eyes are upon me, I shall be gone (אין)” (7.8). This is the lot of all human beings who after going down to “Sheol” (7.9), “return no more to their houses” (7.10). He continues, speaking in the “anguish” of his “spirit (רוח)” and the “bitterness” of his soul (נפש) (7.11), charging God with harassment carried out in two ways. He complains, firstly, that God has “set a guard

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³ Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.1.
⁴ BDB 34: “nothing, nought.”
over him, as though he were a threat to order in creation, like “Sea” or a “Dragon” (7.12), a complaint which, when elaborated, amounts to surveillance, which is both excessive and hostile (7.16-20), something to which all humanity is subject. (“What are human beings, that you make so much of them, that you set your mind on them, visit them every morning, test them every moment?” [7.17-18]). God is given the epithet “watcher of humanity” (7.20). He asks God to “let me alone” (7.16) and “look away from him “for a while” (7.19). Secondly, he charges God with persecuting him using dreams as the means of doing so – “you scare me with dreams and terrify me with visions” (7.14). Day (7.1-3) and night (7.3-4) are misery for him and although his life is short (7.6-7), he would have it shorter (“I would choose strangling and death rather than this body” [7.15]), choosing death over life (7.15-16) because death would free him from his present wretchedness (7.9-10) and also from God, Job saying “you will seek me, but I shall not be” (7.21).

In this speech, disorder for Job, and also for humankind, comes from a hostile and suspicious God, one who treats Job as though he were the threat to order in creation rather than God, who, in Job’s thinking, has brought about disorder in that part of creation which

\[5\] BDB 1038: “place of confinement, gaol, prison; late, guard, watch observance.” cf Mitchell Dahood (“MISMAR “Muzzle” in Job 7.12,” JBL 80 [1961]: 270) who has suggested “muzzle” as a translation citing links with Canaanite myth which has Tannin muzzled and noting its aptness in a passage in which Job is voicing his complaints and will not be silenced. Habel (Book of Job, 153) agrees but adds that “watching” would also be appropriate. David Dievert (“Job 7.12: Yam, Tannin and the Surveillance of Job,” JBL 106 [1987]: 207) sees no reason to translate as “muzzle” especially since the verb also applies to Yam who was crushed rather than muzzled in Ugaritic myth. He suggests that given its context in chapter 7, the verb denotes divine surveillance against which Job is protesting. Newsom (“Job,” 395) agrees arguing that surveillance is a part of guarding. I suggest “watch” is the best translation, one consistent with v.20.

\[6\] This may be an allusion to Prince Yamm whose defeat in the supernatural realm by Ba’al was necessary for the preservation of order (see chapter 3, section 3.2.5). It could also be an allusion to Tiamat of Enuma elish, also a sea being whose defeat resulted in the creation of the natural world. A guard had to be placed over the upper part of her carcass, the firmament, to prevent waters escaping (see chapter 3, section 3.2.2).

\[7\] BDB 1072: “serpent, dragon, sea monster.” Dievert (“Job 7.12,” 206) has cited four Ugaritic texts which mention Tannin, in one of which Tannin is muzzled by Anat.

\[8\] Habel (Book of Job, 164) notes that divine visitation can have either good (for example, Ps 8.5) or bad consequences for those visited and here it amounts to harassment.

\[9\] The idea of testing human beings, including Job, is found in both disputes, here and in the human dispute (23.10). In the latter speech Job is confident of vindication following testing.
is human life in general and his life in particular. So great is Job’s misery caused by this
disorder, that he would choose untimely death, itself an example of disorder in the human
part of creation, over life, normally understood as order in the human part of creation.
Life has become for him disorder, and death or non-being, separated for ever from the
source of his life’s disorder, has become the desired order.

7.1.2  
Job’s Second Speech (Job 9.25-10.22)

In his second speech to his friends (9.2-24), \(^{10}\) part of the human dispute, Job
asserted his innocence (9.15, 20, 21) despite which he suffers at the hands of God (9.17,
18) who cannot be held to account (9.3, 12, 14-16, 19) for his actions, which are those of
a bully (9.4, 12, 19). In the first part (9.25-35) of his second address to God, Job will
repeat his assertion of innocence (9.28) despite which he suffers (9.28) at the hands of
God (9.31) who cannot be held to account (9.32, 33) for his actions which are those of a
bully (9.32-35). Whereas his address to his friends was epideictic rhetoric, censuring
divine behaviour, his address to God is judicial rhetoric, laying, in the first part (9.25-35),
charges of injustice (9.28-29) and persecution by plunging him into the pit (חתשׁ) \(^{11}\) (9.31),
metaphorically chastising him with a rod (9.34) and terrifying him (9.34-35). It is fear
which is an impediment to a quest for justice, Job saying “If he would take his rod away
from me, and not let dread (אימה) of him terrify (בעת) me, then I would speak without fear

\(^{10}\) Chapter 6, section 2.2.2.

\(^{11}\) BDB 1001: “pit . . . for catching lion . . . pit of Sheol.” Pope (“The Word שׁחת,” JBL 83 [1964]: 269) from
his survey of possibly related Semitic words, has concluded that must carry a suggestion of “moist
or liquid filth”. L. Wächter (“שׁחת; שׁות; שׁוחה; שׁיחה”, TDOT 14: 595-599) has noted that the word when
understood as a pit which is a trap can have both literal and metaphorical use. It can be literally a pit
where wild game is trapped or, metaphorically, it can be a misfortune deliberately prepared to entrap
a person. It is also a term meaning grave or underworld and that is its most likely meaning in 17.14.
Wächter suggests for Job 9.31 an amendment to the word so that it may be translated “filth”. I suggest,
however, that either of the two regular meanings provided by BDB, but preferably the first, would be
appropriate here particularly in view of the hunting motif which will come later (10.16) Pits, whether
they are graves or traps, are dirty places.
of him for I know I am not what I am thought to be” (9.34-35). It is fear which causes Job to wish for an umpire with the strength to lay his hand (ר)” on both Job and God (9.33). Along with Job’s fear goes a sense of hopelessness, Job saying “I shall be condemned” before asking “why then do I labour in vain” (9.29). The word “pit”, if understood as a device of the hunter to trap a quarry, makes a hunter of God and the pit into which Job has been plunged is the disorder and misfortune in which he finds himself, disorder and misfortune deliberately prepared for him by God, the hunter. God is so portrayed in the human dispute by Eliphaz (4.10-11) and by Job (16.9, 12ab, 13; 19.6), a persona which, because it is so damaging to the hunted, needs to be taken up directly with the hunter which Job does twice in his second address to God (9.31; 10.16).

The second part of Job’s address to God (10.1-22) is also judicial rhetoric and Job will again lay charges against God, capriciousness (10.3, 8-12) and violence, depicted metaphorically (10.16-17) and both have created disorder in his life. Job begins by saying “I ( Preconditions) loathe my life . . . I will speak in the bitterness of my soul ( Preconditions)” (10.1) before an oblique reference to the inequality of a divine-human confrontation. Like does not meet like and Job asks, “Do you have eyes of flesh? Do you see as humans ( Preconditions) see? Are your days like the days of mortals ( Preconditions), or your years like human ( Preconditions) years?” (10.4-5). Substantiating the first charge, capriciousness, Job reminds God four times, using four different metaphors for the creative process, that it was he who created him. Job was the “work”: of his “hands ( Preconditions)” (10.3), fashioned and made out of “clay” (10.9),12 curdled “like cheese” (10.10), knitted together “with bones and sinews” and clothed “with skin and flesh” (10.11). He reminds God that he had been granted “life and steadfast love” and that his spirit ( Preconditions) had been preserved ( Preconditions) by God’s “care ( Preconditions)” (10.12). His early experience of God was of a creating and ordering deity, but this was not to last and God,

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12 Some Mesopotamian texts have human beings fashioned by deities from clay (chapter 3, section 3.2.2). It was also the observation of the form which spoke to Eliphaz (4.19).
the “watcher of humanity” (7.20), who has set a guard (משׁמר) over him (7.12), is still watching (שׁמר) (10.14), Job surmises, for his “iniquity” and “sin” (10.6), of which God knows Job is not guilty (10.7) and for which he will not be acquitted (10.14). Job believes that his present misery is the consequence of a divine presumption of his guilt (10.14), a presumption which he remarked on earlier (7.21; 9.35). For reasons unknown (“let me know why you contend against me” [10.2]), God condemns him (10.2), oppresses and despises him (10.3), turns and destroys him though his hands (ידי) had fashioned him (10.8), turns him to “dust (עדות)” (10.9), and there is no one to “deliver” Job out of God’s “hand (ידי)” (10.7) - and this is to be expected of a divine/human confrontation.

Not only is God accused of capriciousness, Job charges him with violence. He is a hunter, a powerful predator, “bold (גאה) as a lion”, who pursues Job to kill him as a lion would his prey (10.16). Job retaliates in the only way he can, in words. With savage irony, Job says to God, you do wonders (פּלא) against me (10.16). Job and the reader will recall that Eliphaz, in the human dispute, had used the verb פּלא to extol the deeds of God in creation – “[h]e does great things and unsearchable, marvellous things (פּלא) without number” (5.9) which he lists (5.10-16). The reader will recall, too, that Job, also in the human dispute, had used the verb to describe deeds against creation so destructive that only God could have done them – “who does great things beyond understanding, and marvellous things (פּלא) without number” (9.10) which Job lists (9.6-7). Now all this marvellous might is turned against a single, defenceless human being, Job. The idea of humans being hunted by a supernatural being, God in this speech, is not unique to Job. In Bildad’s thinking, to be hunted is the fate of the wicked, various devices being used (18.8-13).}

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13 BDB 144: “rise up … be lifted up, exalted.” This verb used here has given rise to scholarly discussion. The subject is third masculine singular so to whom does it refer? Some would change the subject to the first person. Habel thinks Job is talking of himself as the lion and translates v.16a: “if I rise up like a lion, you hunt me down”. Clines also has a first person subject but translate 16a:”and if I lift myself up, like a lion you hunt me”. Some commentators would change the word to the adjective “proud” (BDB 144) qualifying the subject of the verb which is God and this is a solution supported by Pope (Job, 81), Gordis (Book of Job, 114), and Hartley (Book of Job, 188).
10), and probably by supernatural beings (18.13-14). To be the quarry of the divine hunter is illustration of Job’s contention that God has judged him to be wicked. As if being hunted was not enough, God’s rising anger brings “fresh troops” against Job (10.17). Job in the human dispute complains of the assaults of God, the warrior (16.12c-13a, 14; 19.8, 10, 12). He attributes to God the persona of the warrior, a warrior who deploys troops against a single, unarmed mortal. This second persona of God, the warrior, is so damaging to the one attacked, Job, that it, too, needs to be raised directly with the warrior.

The wretchedness of his now disordered life causes Job to return to a question raised in his opening soliloquy. He asks “Why did you bring me forth from the womb. Would that I had died before any eye had seen me” (10.18). Earlier he had asked “Why did I not die at birth, come forth from the womb and expire?” (3.11). Now he anticipates his departure, “never to return” to “the land of gloom (חָשׁך) and deep darkness (צָלַמְתָה) (10.21), the land of gloom (אַפֶל) and chaos (סֵדֶרִים)\(^\text{15}\), where light is like darkness (אַפֶל)” (10.22). He anticipates for himself the darkness (חָשׁך) he had wanted for the day of his conception and birth (3.4-5), the deep darkness (צָלַמְתָה) which he had wanted to claim that day (3.5), and the gloom (אַפֶל) which he had wanted to seize that night (3.6). He prefers the disorder of the place of the dead to the disorder which he experiences in the world of the living. He observes that the “days of his life” are “few”, and he asks his tormentor to let him alone (חדל), turn his attention (שׁית) away from him so that he “may find a little comfort” before death claims him (10.20).

Considering together Job’s first two addresses to God, brings to the fore the theme of divine capriciousness, one of the charges brought against God by Job, a capriciousness

\(^{14}\) Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.2.2.

\(^{15}\) BDB 690: “disorder, confusion, of the dark underworld.”

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which overturned the order of Job’s life and replaced it with disorder. In the human dispute, Job speaks at length on the subject of his changed circumstances (29.2-30.19, 24-31) for which he holds God responsible (30.11, 18-19), and now he puts this issue directly to God. In his second address to God, Job recalls better times when he was created and sustained by a beneficent deity. Once God had “preserved (שָׁמַר)” his “spirit (רוּחַ)” (10.12), but now he speaks in the anguish of his “spirit (רוּחַ)” (7.11). The preservation of his spirit came out of the “steadfast love” of God (10.12) but now a hostile and suspicious God has “set a guard (מְשַׁמֵּר)” over him (7.12), and the formerly beneficent but now maleficent God is still watching (שָׁמַר) him to discover his “sin” and “iniquity” of which he will not be acquitted (10.14). The “care (פָּקָד)” which once preserved Job’s spirit (רוּחַ) (10.12) is the unwelcome daily visitation (פָּקָד) to which humankind is subjected (7.18), and in so saying Job makes the point that it is not just he who is the victim of divine caprice, but all humankind.

7.1.3 Job’s Third Speech (Job 13.20-14.22)

Job’s first two addresses to God expressed his fear of God and he continues to express fear in his third address, saying, “withdraw your hand (כף) far from me, and do not let dread (אימה) of you terrify (בעת) me” (13.21). The unseen God treats him as an “enemy” (13.24), and the bullying God (9.32-35) continues his campaign of intimidation against Job, who asks “[w]ill you frighten a windblown leaf and pursue dry chaff?” (13.25). No victim is too small or too inconsequential to escape divine attention. It is strange to Job that so insignificant a part of creation as he should be the subject of God’s attention. He continues to complain of divine surveillance – “you watch (שָׁמַר) all my paths” (13.27). Believing, as he had in his second address, that disorder in his life was the consequence of the divine presumption of his wrongdoing, he returns to the subject,
asking “[h]ow many are my iniquities and my sins? Make me know my transgression and my sin” (13.23). He seeks an explanation of his suffering, asking “[w]hy do you hide your face, and count me as your enemy?” (13.24). Seeking answers and getting none, he turns again to the subject of the brevity of human life. Earlier he had talked of the brevity of his own life (7.6-8, 16; 9.25-26; 10.20) and now he reflects on the transience of all human life (14.1-2), as he had earlier (7.9-10).

To be a human being (אדם), Job says, is to have a short life “full of trouble (רגז)” (14.1). (In his opening soliloquy he had lamented that what he had feared had come, trouble (רגז) [3.26], and trouble (_chg) was something that only death would end [3.17].) He likens a mortal’s life to that of a flower which blooms and soon “withers (מלל), flees like a shadow” (14.2). (Bildad [18.16] and Zophar [24.24] in the human dispute also say that human life withers but, preoccupied as they are with wickedness, they make this observation only in connection with the wicked.) Job asks if God turns his attention to such a transient being, and Job is one such, one whom God brings to “judgement” (14.3). Job has already said of his own life that his days “flee away” (9.25), and now he observes that the length of humankind’s fleeting existence, its “days” and “months”, is “determined” by God who has set its limits (חק) which cannot be contested (14.5). As he had asked before on his own behalf (7.19), Job, now speaking for humankind, asks God to look away (שׁעה) (14.6), and as he had asked before on his own behalf (7.16; 10.20), he asks, sarcastically, on behalf of humankind that God leave them alone (חדל) to “enjoy” their days of labour which, as he has already said, is the lot of humankind (7.1-2). He speaks wistfully of the “hope” of a tree (14.7), a “hope” not shared by him (7.6), which even though cut down can “sprout again” (14.7), and even though “its root grows old in the earth (ארץ)” or its “stump dies in the ground (עפר)” (14.8), “at the scent of water (מים)” can return to life, and vitality, “like a young plant” (14.9). Mortals (גבר), however, die and, Job asks, when human beings (אדם) die, “where are they?” (14.10). They cannot hope
that death may be followed by revival, because unlike trees which revive with water, they expire, waterless; they are like “waters (מים)” which “fail from a lake, and a river which dries up” (14.11). Once dead, they are gone for ever (14.12).

His reflection on the regenerative possibilities available to a tree, leads him to a “what if . . .” type of speculation on the same possibilities for himself and humankind in general. He had in his first address to God, expressed his preference for death rather than life (7.15-16), his non-being (אין) (7.8, 21) freeing him from the cause of his being, God, who is the cause of what afflicts that being (7.12, 14, 20). He had wished for himself untimely death, usually thought of as disorder in the life of the human part of creation when it is premature, and had seen in non-being the only possibility of order for himself, his words an indictment of his Creator for causing such disorder in a part of creation, himself, that a reversal of the normal human understanding of order and disorder was created in Job. In his second address to God, he said of his death that it would be a departure, “never to return”, to a “land (ארץ) of gloom and deep darkness” (10.21), a “land (ארץ) of gloom” (10.22), ironically, the same land (ארץ) and earth in which the tree grows old and dies, but from which, unlike humans, it can return. Now he asks, “if mortals (גבת) die, will they live again?” (14.14). He wishes that God would “hide” him in “Sheol”, a place of safety and concealment from the disorder brought to him by an angry God, until the divine disordering “wrath (אף)” (14.13) is turned and life in the world of the living became ordered again. He wishes, too, that God would “appoint (שׁית)” him a “set time (חק)” when he would be remembered (14.13), thereby reversing the appointed “bounds (חק)” which are the limits to human life set by God (14.5). In the meanwhile, he would wait until his “release” when God would “call” and he would “answer” (14.15), a hope he has already expressed - “call and I will answer” (13.22). Whereas before he had wanted from his communication with God, answers to questions about his transgressions (13.23), now he simply wants a relationship with a benevolent deity who “would long for the work
of (his) hands (יד)" (14.15). Divine longing would be a reversal of divine oppression and despising of the “work (יAndWait) of his “hands (ידי)" (10.3), and a reversal of divine violence directed against Job, who has said of God “your hands (יד) fashioned and made (עשׂה) me; and now you turn and destroy me” (10.8), “you fashioned me like clay” but now “will you turn me to dust again” (10.9). The divine turning which had been so harmful to him, Job thinks wistfully, could be turned to his good (14.13). If Job’s yearning for a restoration to life were realised, it would be to a life free from the hostile surveillance of God searching for his wrongdoing, Job saying “you would not keep watch (שׁמר) over my sin” (14.16); his misdeeds would be “sealed up in a bag” and “covered over” (14.17).

Return to a life governed by a now benevolent deity is not to be, Job realises, and, despairingly, he says

But the mountain (הר) falls and crumbles away,
and the rock (צור) is removed (עתק) from its place (מקום);
the waters (ימים) wear away the stones (אבן);
the torrents wash away the soil (ערפ) of the earth (ארץ);
so you destroy the hope of mortals (שׁאנו). (14.18-19)

These words are Job’s concise statement concerning his perception of disorder in creation and God’s dealings with the human part of creation. That it was once ordered can be supposed from its once having existed in the first place. There were once a mountain, a rock in its place, stones, and soil, but working against the stones are waters and against the soil are torrents, agents of disorder and destruction, and working against the mountain and the rock are forces unnamed but powerful enough to topple mountains and remove rocks. Job’s words recall an earlier address to his friends in which he said of God that “he

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16 See chapter 6, section 6.2.2.2.
17 See chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7.
removes (מעיטר) mountains (הר) . . . when he overturns them in his anger (רא)” (9.5) and he “shakes the earth (זורח) out of its place (蘆ואת)’” (9.6), actions which amounted to an undoing of creation by an angry God. Job, in this address, again describes an undoing of creation symbolised by the falling and crumbling of the mountain and the removal from its place of the “rock” (14.18), a symbol of strength and permanence. The “rock”, sometimes a metaphor for the source of sustenance for human life, is moved and the topsoil which could actually provide sustenance is washed away. Soil (תבל) is more than the means of sustaining life, it is the substance from which human life is made and the substance to which human life will return on death, and so the washing away of soil can be thought of as a metaphor for the threat to that life. The removal of the “rock”, if it is seen as an epithet for God, points to divine abandonment of humankind. Disintegration of the mountain and erosion of the soil are understood to be part of a naturally occurring disorder in creation, a disorder used to symbolise the destruction of human hope for which God is held responsible. “Water” (מים) which had brought life to a dead tree (14.9) and given it hope (14.7), is also life threatening and symbolic of the destruction of human “hope” (14.19).

Without hope, humanity must face the reality of an overwhelmingly powerful God who “prevail(s) forever against them” (14.20) who dispatches human beings (“you … send them away” [14.20]) to the permanent, though partial, oblivion of death. Unaware of what, either good or ill, becomes of their children in the land of the living (14.21), they remain aware of the “pain of their own bodies and mourn only for themselves” (14.22). Bereft of hope, Job has lost even the hope of the nothingness (אין) of death which he had earlier anticipated for himself (7.8, 21).

In these three addresses, speaking about himself, often in terms of his spirit (7.11; 10.12) or being (7.11, 15; 10.1; 14.22), and humankind in general (7.1, 17, 20; 10.4-5;
14.1, 10, 19), Job sets out his understanding of the human condition and humankind’s relationship with God. Life is short, both his life (7.6, 7, 16; 9.25-26), which ends in oblivion (7.8, 21) or darkness (10.21-22), and the life of all humans (14.1-2), which ends in death (14.20-22) or Sheol (7.9-10). Life is hard, both his own (7.2-5) and that of all humans (7.1; 14.6). It is for him a life filled with fear (7.14; 9.34-35; 13.21) and devoid of hope (7.6). He is subject to surveillance, once benign (10.12) but now hostile (7.12; 10.14; 13.27; 14.16), and the attention, sometimes wanted (10.12; 14.13) and sometimes not (7.20), of God, as is the rest of humankind, which is subject to divine surveillance (7.20) and unwanted attention (7.17, 18). He would have God look away from him (7.19) and from humankind (14.6) and leave him (7.16, 19; 10.20) and humankind (14.6) alone. For Job, the hand of God can be both creative (10.3, 8; 14.15) and oppressive (10.7; 13.21). God can be beneficent but more often is not. The lot of human beings, in a world which can be both ordered and disordered, is hopelessness and death.

Job’s last two addresses to God (17.3-4; 30.20-23) will reflect the bleakness of his thinking about his situation and his relationship to God.

7.1.4  Job’s Fourth Speech (Job 17.3-4)

Job says to God, “[l]ay down a pledge (ערבני)\(^{18}\) for me with yourself; who is there that will give surety for me?” (17.3). He adds “[s]ince you closed their minds to

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\(^{18}\) BDB 786: take on pledge, give in pledge, exchange.” The meaning of this verse has been the subject of debate. Habel (Book of Job, 266) translates מִשְׁמַרְתִּי as “my pledge” from which comes the interpretation that Job is offering the pledge for himself. Similarly Pope, Job, 128; Gordis, Book of Job, 181; Seow, Job 1-21, 761-762. Clines (Job 1-20, 393-4) also interprets these words as “my pledge” which he has to offer for himself since nobody else will, God having “shut their mind to reason” (17.4) (ibid., 368). Newsom (“Job,” 462) interprets this as Job’s willingness to offer his own life as a pledge “in order to come before God and clear his name” and she connects this offer to Job’s words in 13.14-16 which expressed his determination to defend himself. She reasons that since God is responsible for closing the minds of his friends and preventing the friends’ understanding, it is Job who will have to be “his own surety”. Cf Gray (Book of Job, 258) who favours the NRSV translation “pledge for me”, making God the provider of the pledge.
understanding, therefore you will not let them triumph” (17.4). This short address to God occurs as a brief interruption in Job’s fourth speech to his friends (16.2–17.2, 17.5–16), part of the human dispute. In that address, Job complained that God was attacking him (16.7–17), he has been alienated from his friends (16.20; 17.2, 6), he has looked for a witness in heaven who would vouch for him (16.19), his “spirit is broken” (17.1) and all that he has to look forward to is death (17.1, 13–16). In the context of the divine/human dispute of which it is a part, it occurs after Job has accused God of harassment, capriciousness and violence against him and has said that God destroys the “hope of mortals” (14.19) who have only death to look forward to (14.20–22). In either context, a request from Job that God provide the pledge for him can only be construed as bitter irony. A more likely interpretation is that Job offers a pledge for himself, since there is nobody else, including his friends, who will. In the divine/human dispute Job has noted God’s presumption of his guilt (9.35; 10.14; 13.23) which he understands to be the reason for his misery, and he has asked for answers from God (10.2; 13.23) about his transgressions, but none has been forthcoming. Understood as a pledge for himself, his words are his final assertion of innocence and his final challenge to God to prove him guilty of wrongdoing.

7.1.5 Job’s Fifth Speech (Job 30.20–23)

In his last direct address to God before the divine reply, a brief interruption of his final speech in the human dispute, Job accuses God of callousness, saying “I cry out to you and you do not answer me” (30.20). Job has addressed God four times, three times at length, and had no response. He adds, “I stand, and you merely look at me” (30.20). God’s

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19 Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.4.
continuing hostile surveillance gives rise to hostile action and Job accuses God saying “[y]ou have turned cruel to me” and the cruelty is of a kind that can only be done by the powerful (“with the might of your hand you persecute me” [30.21]) to the powerless. It is described using the metaphor of the storm wind (30.22), Job saying “You lift me up on the wind (רוח), you make me ride on it, and you toss (מוג) me about in the roar of the storm (תהו)”. Job, in an epideictic address to his friends in the human dispute, had censured God for divine violence using the metaphor of the storm (“[f]or he crushes me with a tempest” [9.17]), and in this address, he lays a charge of violence against God, thereby making judicial rhetoric of this speech. Job’s persecutor is the God of the storm, a deity familiar to the ancients of the Near East. Finally, he accuses God of preparing to kill him, and presumably he means prematurely because death is the “appointed” end for humankind and so is not, in itself, an accusation of untoward dealings with a human being (30.23).

7.1.6 Supporting Evidence

In the human dispute the friends were able to offer tradition, revelation and observation in support of their arguments and Job was able to offer observation, experience and the testimony of others in support of his. Job, in the divine/human dispute offers as evidence only his experience and observation, observation which is

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20 BDB 556: “melt . . . Po’l soften, dissolve . . . fig. = dissipate.”
21 BDB 444: “sound, efficient wisdom, abiding success.” This phrase has had various translations. Habel (Book of Job, 416) understands it to mean “and then (you) made my success melt away” which would fit with Job’s complaint of his changed status. Others would amend the noun to והו meaning “noise” most likely that of devastation or a storm (BDB 996). This meaning is favoured by Gordis (Book of Job, 336) whose translation is similar to NRSV. Dhorme (Job, 443) creatively suggests “a storm drenches me with water.” Clines (Job 21-37, 931) offers “you dissolve me with a downpour.” Whilst both “success” and “storm” would be possible translations of והו, the latter is the more likely given that it follows v.22a.
22 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.1.
23 Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.4.
24 Chapter 6, section 6.2.3.
somewhat biased when he talks in generalisations about humankind. For example, he says that the lot of all humans is hard but in the human dispute, refuting the beliefs of the friends concerning divine retribution, he asserts that the lot of the wicked is very good. When addressing the Creator of humankind and the source of its hardship and disorder, he may feel that hyperbole necessary.

7.1.7 Conclusion

Fewer than his addresses to his friends, Job’s addresses to God are concerned with fewer issues. In the human dispute, he is concerned with disorder at four different levels of creation, the individual (himself), classes of people, nations, and earth itself and he has much to say about the bad behaviour and good fortune of the wicked. In his dispute with God, Job’s interest narrows to himself and humankind and he says nothing about the wicked. With regard to order and disorder in the part of creation which is human, he notes that life is short and hard, made harder by excessive and hostile surveillance and attention from God. In his case, this has brought him a life of fear of God and a loss of hope, a loss shared by humankind. He recalls that God, his Creator, had once been beneficent but, for unknown reasons, has turned maleficent, which has led Job to lay charges against God of harassment, persecution and violence. He has pondered the desirability of death rather than life but, on reflection, has found death less than desirable, though not necessarily less desirable than life. He has noted that creation itself is a place of disorder though once it was a place of order. Job’s thinking about Creator and creation understands God to be both creative and ordering but also, capriciously and incomprehensibly, destructive and disordering of those parts of creation which are human.
There are two parts to judicial rhetoric—accusation and defence, and I shall say more about defence below. Job’s addresses to God are, except for the fourth (17.3-4), judicial rhetoric, Job laying charges of harassment, caprice and violence. In the course of his rhetoric Job asks many questions including “what” questions (7.17-18, 20), which point to divine harassment, and “why” questions, which point to the futility of his own life (9.29; 10.18) and the hostility of God (7.20-21; 13.24). He asks a rhetorical question about the hardness of human life (7.1). He asks questions which highlight divine harassment (7.12, 19) and, accentuating the disparity between God and human beings (10.4-5), draws attention to God as a bully in his dealings with humankind (13.25). He asks if it is right for a Creator to turn against his creation (10.3). These questions not only support his contentions about the divine disposition and his accusations but they also invite a response from the one accused, God, and this response is God’s defence.

7.1.8 The Role of Emotion in the Rhetoric of Job

Job’s assessment of his life is that it is one of “emptiness” and “misery” (7.3) and without “hope” (7.6; 14.19), and that it is governed by fear of God (9.28, 35) who scares him and terrifies him (7.14; 9.34; 13.21). Filled with “dread” (9.34; 13.21), he complains in “the anguish of my spirit (7.11) and “the bitterness of my soul” (7.11; 10.1), saying “I loathe my life” (7.16; 10.1) and wishing he were dead (7.15-16; 10.18-19; 14.13). These are the same emotions he expressed in his dispute with his friends. The reader, knowing that Job is entirely undeserving of the troubles which have come upon him, can only feel pity which, as Aristotle has said, leads to fear, a fear that what has happened to Job could happen to others. The arguments of the friends on ways by which Job can restore order

25 Chapter 1 section 1.4.2.2.
26 Chapter 6, section 6.2.5.
27 Chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.2.
to his life have been shown to be false, not only by Job when addressing his friends, but by the poet addressing the reader.

7.1.9 *The Credibility of Job’s Speeches*

The reader knows from the Prologue that God is a watcher of humanity in general (7.20) and Job in particular (7.19), enabling him to form a judgement on Job’s character (1.8; 2.3) and compare it with the character of all others (1.8; 2.3). Job has accused God of harassment (7.12, 14; 9.34; 13.21, 25, 27) capriciousness (10.3, 8-12) and even violence (9.31; 10.16-17) directed against himself, and, on behalf of others, of unwanted attentions (7.17, 18; 14.3). The reader knows from the Prologue that while God did not directly cause Job’s troubles, he allowed them and God himself admitted responsibility for them (2.3). The reader of the Prologue might well think God capricious for allowing calamity to come upon so worthy a “servant” as Job and for a seemingly frivolous reason, resolving a question under discussion with the satan. The reader would also bear in mind that harm was not limited to Job; his servants and children were killed and his wife was bereaved and impoverished – all of them collateral damage in the resolution of an argument and all of them representatives of suffering humankind. God has much to answer for.

7.2 *God’s Rhetoric*

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28 Chapter 6, section 6.2.1.
29 Chapter 6, section 6.1.4.
There have been many suggestions put forward concerning the meaning of the divine speeches and useful summaries provided of significant interpretations. A related and much debated issue is whether or not the divine speeches answer Job’s questions and address his complaints. Many have thought that they do not and Pope has described them as “magnificent irrelevance”. David Clines understands the refusal to address Job’s complaints to be, by implication, a rejection of their validity. Penchansky finds in God’s rhetoric not an answer to Job’s questions, but a rebuke of his “effrontery”, which impugns “God’s wisdom in governing the world”. It has been proposed that the mere fact of God’s appearance to Job is a sufficient response to his complaints and that he should be satisfied with such uncommon attention paid to him. Against this proposal, Fox has said that if appearance alone were sufficient answer, Job would have no need of the two divine speeches and the reader who has not experienced the theophany would have no answer at all. Newsom, on the other hand, speaks of the “oblique relationship” which the divine speeches have to Job’s complaints. That there are connections between

30 See, for example, the summaries provided by Donald E. Gowan (“God’s Answer to Job: How Is It an Answer?” HBT 8 [1986]: 87) and Perdue (Wisdom in Revolt, 196-198). Some interpreters, for example, Habel (Book of Job, 528-530) and Edward Greenstein (“A Forensic Understanding of the Speech from the Whirlwind,” in Texts, Temples, and Traditions [ed. M. V. Fox et al.; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1996], 241-242), have seen the exchanges between Job and God as a lawsuit, with Job the accuser and God the defendant. Tsevat’s study (“The Meaning of the Book of Job,” 105) has concluded that God is not bound by the principles of retribution theology which has to do with justice and injustice and proposes, instead, that there exists in creation the idea of “nonjustice”. A similar view is held by Alan Cooper (“The Sense of the Book of Job,” Prooftexts 17 [1997]: 227-244). Clines (Job 38-42 [WBC 18B; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011], 1089) interprets the speeches as “Yahweh’s statement of his strategy for cosmic order” about which he intends to provide knowledge. Others take a different approach to the speeches, one which does not rely on reasoning alone. Thomas F. Dailey (“Theophanic Bluster: Job and the Wind of Change,” SR 22 [1993], 194), for example, has found in their meaning a “spiritual or mystical dimension.” Gordis (Book of Job, 435) sees in them a revelation of the beauty and order of the natural world which points to a “moral order with pattern and meaning” though this may be beyond human comprehension. Michael Fox (“Job the Pious,” 353) understands the panorama of creation to be a display of divine beneficence.


32 Pope, Job, lxxxi.


34 Penchansky, The Betrayal of God, 52.


37 Newsom, “Job,” 595.
the human and divine speeches, however, has been noted by some.\textsuperscript{38} It is my contention that God does answer Job’s questions and does address his complaints, a contention supported by the presence of links between the human and divine rhetoric.

7.2.1 \textit{The Divine Rhetoric and its Connection to Job’s Rhetoric}

This study is looking at the rhetoric which is \textit{Job}, a work modelled on the form of the Mesopotamian dispute poem,\textsuperscript{39} in which two sides to an argument engage with each other, each speaking alternately. In a variation of the dispute poem format, the human/divine dispute has Job address God five times before he gets the response which is a requirement of the dispute poem form.\textsuperscript{40} I have established that the human/divine dispute is judicial rhetoric because Job, in direct address, charges God with harassment, persecution, bullying, capriciousness and violence which has turned the order of Job’s world to disorder. Accusation, however, is only the first part of judicial rhetoric. The second part is defence\textsuperscript{41} and this is God’s address to Job\textsuperscript{42} in which he defends himself against Job’s accusations made directly to him. Looked at in this way, as both a component of a dispute poem and also as the second part of judicial rhetoric, the divine speeches are indeed a response to Job.

God’s speech in his defence is primarily judicial rhetoric in its purpose\textsuperscript{43} but, as I have already noted, speeches need not be exclusively of one type - they may have features of either or both of the other two categories of rhetoric.\textsuperscript{44} The divine speeches are also

\textsuperscript{38} For example, Habel, \textit{Book of Job}, 530-532; Alter, \textit{Art of Biblical Poetry}, 88-110.
\textsuperscript{39} Chapter 3, section 3.4.
\textsuperscript{40} Chapter 4, section 4.1.
\textsuperscript{41} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.2.
\textsuperscript{42} cf Pope \textit{(Job}, lxxx) who says that God cannot be summoned as a defendant to answer charges against him laid by a mere mortal.
\textsuperscript{43} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.2.
\textsuperscript{44} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.
strongly epideictic\textsuperscript{45} in character for they aim not only to defend God against the charges levelled against him by Job; they aim, too, to persuade Job and the reader to think in a particular way about creation. They are, thus, a blend of judicial rhetoric, which is their main purpose, and epideictic rhetoric. God’s defence is praise of creation and thus, by implication, of himself as Creator.\textsuperscript{46} Examples which are amplified are the tools of persuasion used in epideictic rhetoric.\textsuperscript{47} The human rhetoric so far has been about order and disorder in creation out of which have come Job’s accusations against God, so it is to be expected that God’s defence of himself, albeit implicit, should come out of a divinely guided exposition on order and disorder in creation. It is worth recalling what Oravec has said about the twofold response of hearers or readers to epideictic rhetoric: the first is an aesthetic or sensual response to fine language and the pictures which it paints, and the second, an intellectual response which leads to understanding.\textsuperscript{48} These are the responses, particularly the second, of Job, hearer and judge, of the divine speeches, and the responses, particularly the first, of many a reader, also hearers and judges of the divine speeches.

God’s speeches not only answer charges against him by Job; they are also a response to statements made about him and about creation by Job and his friends. The human speeches on order and disorder in creation, and divine involvement in and detachment from creation to which God responds, are not only Job’s, they are also his friends’. God has been listening to all the human disputants as will be made clear in his words to Eliphaz (42.7-8).

\textsuperscript{45} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.3.
\textsuperscript{46} Most readers, see in the divine speeches, particularly the first, a celebration of creation including, for example, Othmar Keel, 	extit{Jahwes Entgegnung an Ijob: Eine Deutung von Ijob 38-41 vor dem Hintergrund der zeitgenössischen Bildkunst} (FRLANT 121; Gottingen: Vandenhoeck&Ruprecht, 1978), 55.
\textsuperscript{47} Chapter 1, section 1.4.2.3.
\textsuperscript{48} Oravec, “‘Observation’ in Aristotle’s Theory of Epideictic,” 171.
7.2.2  

Thematic Links between the Human and Divine Speeches

That there are links between the human speeches and the divine speeches, not only supports an argument that the latter are a response to the former, they also indicate the agenda for debate between the human and the divine, with the issues raised in the human speeches addressed in the divine speeches. From the many connections that there are, identification of the most significant for a discussion on order and disorder in creation is a preliminary to such a discussion. In the following sections, I will note seven motifs in the human speeches which are taken up in the divine speeches.

7.2.2.1  

Place

One of the connections linking the human and divine speeches, and an important motif in both, is that of “place”. The notion of place has a significant part in human thinking, both Job’s and his friends, on order and disorder in creation in general and in that part of creation which is human. The word “place (علومات)” can denote abode (2.11; 7.10; 8.18; 16.18; 18.21; 20.9; 27.21, 23) and it may also be used to convey a sense of a right and proper place, so making “place” a marker of order or disorder (6.17; 9.6; 14.18; 18.4) as well as the site of order and disorder. The word is also used in the divine speeches (38.12, 19) to mean the right place in an ordered creation.

Both the world and the netherworld are places, and a term used for the latter which is employed in human (10.21, 22) and divine (38.18) speeches is רֶפֶס. Gloomy and dark, as the place of no return, it is unknowable for humans. Places which belong to the natural world and can be known, range in size from the large, the earth, to the medium, regions of the earth, to the small, the homes of individuals. The largest of the places which features in the Prologue and the human speeches is “earth ( Deborah)” (1.1, 7, 8, 10, 20; 2.2, 3,
In the divine speeches the term is also used (38.4, 13, 24, 26, 33; 39.14, 24) as it is in the Epilogue (42.15). The importance of the motif of place is foreshadowed by the poet in the Prologue which has earth, initially, a place of order and well-being for Job (1.1, 8, 10), but, for reasons unknown to him, becoming a place of disorder and ill-being (1.20; 2.3, 13). For the friends, “earth” is the creation of God (26.7) who sustains it by sending rain (5.10), and it is the abode of animals, some of them threatening but from which the pious will be protected (5.22), and the abode of humans (8.9; 20.4). However, for the wicked, in the friends’ thinking, earth is inhospitable; it is a place where their wealth will not remain (15.29), it is a place of peril where traps await them (18.10), a place on which they will leave no memory (18.17), a place which will rise up against them (20.27), and a place on which “their portion . . . is cursed” (24.18). In Job’s thinking, “earth”, shaken out of its “place”, is the victim of divine violence (9.6) and is given by God into “the hand of the wicked” (9.24). God may also overwhelm the “earth” with water (12.15). Over time, “the soil of the earth” is washed away by “torrents” (14.19). It is the abode and place of human “hard service” (7.1), the place of “the poor” (24.4), and the place from where the “disreputable” are driven (30.8). Terms used for areas of the earth: are “desert (좌ל),” the source of the “great wind” which killed Job’s children (1.19) and the place where the “poor of the earth” find their living (24.5); “wasteland (ערבה)” where the poor scavenge (24.5); “waste (שׁוא)’” (30.3, 14) and “desolation (משׁאה)” (30.3), the place of society’s outcasts. Also found in the divine speeches are מדבר (38.26), שׁואא (38.27) and מְשׁא (38.27).

49 Used once, “world (תּוֹבָל)” is a synonym for earth and is a place from which the wicked will be driven (18.18).
The smallest places on the earth important for human beings are their abodes, one of the terms for which is “house (בֵית)” (1.4, 10, 13, 18, 19; 3.15; 7.10; 8.14, 15, 17; 15.28; 19.15; 20.19, 28; 21.9, 21, 28; 22.18; 24.16; 27.18; 30.23).50 Used twice (18.21; 21.28) to denote a dwelling is the word משכן. The word בֵית is also used in the divine speeches (38.20; 39.6) as is משכן (39.6). In the Prologue, the “house (בֵית)”, initially a place of order and wellbeing (1.4, 10, 13, 18), becomes, undeservedly, a place of disorder and death (1.19). Whether houses are places of order or places of disorder depends, in the friends’ thinking, on the character of their occupants. Eliphaz claims that once the houses of the wicked had been places of order and abundance (22.18) but they are destined to become places of disorder, and unfit for habitation, they will fall into “heaps of ruins” (15.28). In Bildad’s thinking, the “house” is a place of instability for the wicked (8.14, 15) and stability for the good (8.17).51 Houses may also be targets of the wicked, to the detriment of their occupants who are not. Zophar asserts the that the wicked seize the houses of others (20.19) bringing the disorder of homelessness to them, but that divine anger will carry away the possessions of their houses (20.28), which are impermanent and insubstantial (27.18).52 Job has a negative view of houses. They are the homes of the high-born (21.28) and repositories of their wealth (3.15). They are earthly places which forget their dead occupants (7.10), and they are the place of the dead (30.23). They are places where Job has experienced alienation from others (19.15), and they are places wherein their wicked occupants are free of fear (21.9). In the friends’ thinking the “house” is the place where its inhabitants are either rewarded with order or punished with disorder. Job sees the “house” as a place of order for the rich, powerful and wicked but of disorder for himself, and also as the otherworldly place which is the ultimate destination for all. The

50 Other words used to denote a dwelling are “tent (אהל)” (5.24; 8.22; 11.14; 12.6; 15.34; 18.6, 14, 15; 19.12; 20.26; 21.28; 22.23; 29.4; 31.31) and “habitation (נוה)” (5.3, 24; 18.15) which do not appear in the divine speeches. They are most often used by Job and his friends to refer to the abodes of the wicked, the exceptions being 5.24; 19.12; 29.4; 31.31 (אהל) and 5.24 (נוה).

51 See Chapter 6, section 1.1.2.2, for my interpretation of Bildad’s plant parable.

52 See chapter 6, Section 6.1.1.2.3.3, for an interpretation of this verse.
The word מָשַׁךְ is used by both Job (21.28) and Bildad (18.21) to denote the dwelling place of the wicked and Bildad’s use of it, following his grisly description of the fate of the wicked, suggests that it is a place of utter desolation.

7.2.2.2 Time

Time, both a period and marker of order and disorder in creation, is a significant though a less obvious motif in the human speeches, one which will be taken up in the divine speeches. The two most important words used to signify time are יום and עת, and the former occurs frequently in Job. Regarding יום, I only note its use if it is relevant to a discussion of order and disorder. It may signify a particular time, a day, when something happened (1.4, 5, 6, 13; 2.1), should not have happened (3.1, 3, 4, 5, 8), should happen (24.1), or will happen (15.23; 20.28; 21.30; 38.23). It also denotes a period of time (2.13; 29.2, 4; 30.16, 27), or a lifetime (7.1, 6, 16; 9.25; 10. 20; 14.1, 5, 6; 15.20, 32; 17.1, 11; 21.13; 29.18; 42.17). The word עת is used more sparingly and, relevant to a discussion on order and disorder, is found in 5.26; 6.17; 22.16; 24.1; 38.23, 32; 39.1, 2, 18. Time is an important motif in the divine speeches and both יום and עת are used to forecast future events (38.23) and עת is also used to denote season (38.32; 39.1, 2).

In the Prologue, foreshadowing the discussion of order and disorder coming in the dialogues, day (יום) denotes a period of order (1.4, 5), of impending disorder (1.6, 13; 2.1) and disorder (2.13). In the thinking of the friends, time is a marker of human worth. The span of time allotted to a human life signifies its virtue or its wickedness. Those who die in old age (“as a shock of grain comes up to the threshing floor in its season [עת]”) are

53 See Chapter 5, section 5.1, for brief observations on time as a boundary marker.
54 The meaning of the words עת (39.18) is obscure and some interpreters have treated as an adverb or an adverbial phrase, for example, “now” (Gordis, Book of Job, 460) or “when” (Habel, Book of Job, 520), “as soon as” (Dhorme, Job, 606)
good (5.26) and those who die prematurely (‘snatched away before their time (’estah)’) are bad (22.16). The “recompense” (15.31) of the wicked is “paid in full before their time (’ayam)” (15.32). The children of the wicked, though not themselves wicked, also come to an untimely end in the thinking of Eliphaz (15.30, 33)\(^55\) and Zophar (27.14-15). Bildad’s parable of the two plants tells of the premature death, “while yet in flower” (8.12), of the plant representing the wicked person.\(^56\) In the minds of the friends, the time which is a full life span and good behaviour are linked and in consequence the wicked and their progeny die prematurely. Such a belief suggests that the length of a life is determined by human behaviour and can, therefore, be manipulated by human beings. Before their end, waiting for the wicked, Eliphaz asserts, are “days” of “pain” (15.20) and “a day of darkness” (15.23), or, Zophar claims, a “day of God’s wrath” (20.28).

For Job, a life of disorder started with a day which should not have happened (3.1, 3, 4, 5, 8). Contemplating the human lot, he says that time (’ayam) understood as the span of a life, is both short and hard for humankind in general (7.1; 14.1, 5, 6) and for him in particular (7.6, 16; 9.25; 10.20). Though times had once been good (29.2, 4), now they are bad (17.1, 11; 30.16, 27). Job once shared the notion that virtue and longevity were connected (29.18), but no longer. Observation has shown him that the wicked who are well-to-do and the needy come to the same end, death, and there is no mention of the timeliness of that end for either group (21.23-26). Apparently rejecting the idea of a connection between long life and goodness, Job asserts that the “days” of a human are “determined”, “the number of their months is known” and that God has “appointed the bounds that they cannot pass” (14.5), so ruling out the possibility of human manipulation of the time allotted to them. Before their demise, Job claims, “the wicked” (21.7) “spend their days in prosperity” (21.13), they are “spared in the day of calamity, and are rescued

\(^{55}\) See Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.1.2 for an interpretation of the passage 15.30-33.  
\(^{56}\) Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.2.1.
in the day of wrath” (21.30). Questioning divine justice, Job asks “[w]hy are times (עת) not kept by the Almighty and why do those who know him never see his days (יום)?” (24.1).⁵⁷

Linked to the motif of time are the celestial markers of the passage of time.⁵⁸ Bildad’s cosmogony had God describing a circle on the face of the waters so creating a horizon, across which the source of light travelled making of it the place where the passage of time is marked by the movement of light (26.10). Bildad’s God is both creative and ordering, creating the time and place for the alternation of light and dark.⁵⁹ Job’s God makes celestial bodies (9.9) which regulate time and season in the cosmos and which in turn order the activities of its human inhabitants, but he also darkens those bodies (9.7), creating disorder for those inhabitants.⁶⁰ Job’s God was once creative and ordering but has turned destructive of light, the marker of time, and thus, disordering. The word “time (עת)” can denote seasons and this is the sense of the word “time” following Job’s description of the “freshets” of the “torrent-bed” (6.15). “In time (עת) of heat they disappear; when it is hot, they vanish from their place (مكان)” (6.16-17) with disastrous consequences for travellers. In these verses, “time” and “place” are connected because “time” affects “place”. The divine speeches will see in the heavenly bodies the markers of the seasons and the creators of order (38.31-33) and they will link season to the continuation of life (39.1).

7.2.2.3  Darkness and Light

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⁵⁷ See Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7, for an interpretation of this verse.
⁵⁸ See Chapter 3, section 3.2.1, for ancient Near Eastern beliefs concerning celestial bodies as markers of the passage of time, and also chapter 6, section 2.2.2, where I discuss Job’s views on those celestial bodies.
⁵⁹ Chapter 6, section 6.1.1.2.
⁶⁰ Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.2.
The two words for “darkness” which appear in both the human and divine speeches are צלמות and חשך. In the human speeches צלמות is to be found in 3.5; 10.21, 22; 12.22; 16.16; 24.17, and חשך in 3.4, 5; 5.14; 10.21; 12.22, 25; 15.22, 23, 30; 17.12, 13; 18.18; 19.8; 20.26; 22.11; 23.17; 24.16; 26.10; 29.3. In the divine speeches צלמות is found in 38.17 and חשך in 38.19. The word צלמות is associated with the darkness of death and the netherworld as is, sometimes, חשך,61 with both words appearing together in 3.5; 10.21 and 12.22. The word חשך has both a literal meaning and a figurative meaning. Light (אור), too, has both literal and figurative meanings and features in the human speeches (3.9, 16, 20; 12.22, 25; 17.12; 18.5, 6, 18; 22.28; 24.13, 14, 16; 25.3; 26.10; 29.3; 30.26; 31.26) and in the divine speeches (38.15, 19, 24; 41.10). The figurative meanings of both words occur more frequently than the literal meanings in the speeches of both Job and his friends. “Light” and “darkness (חשך),” a pair of opposites, as are order and disorder, are often placed together in the human speeches (12.22, 25; 17.12; 18.18; 24.16; 26.10; 29.3) and this pairing also occurs in the divine speeches (38.19).

In Job’s first speech, a protest at his creation and a wish for the undoing, literally, of the day which brought him into the world, “darkness (חשך)” (3.4, 5) is a physical state as is, initially, “light” (3.9). Later in this speech, light is associated with life (3.16, 20). The undoing of creation, however, by uncovering “the deeps out of darkness (חשך)” and bringing “deep darkness (צלמות) to light (אור)” (12.22) is Job’s metaphor, in his third speech, for divinely created disorder in society whose leaders, without “light (אור),” “groped” in the confusion of “the dark (חשך)” (12.25). Job’s thoughts on the wicked (24.13-17), creators of disorder for some, use the terms “darkness” and “light” both literally and metaphorically. As creatures of the night (24.14, 15)62 they favour the cover of darkness to go about their misdeeds (24.16-17). They “rebel against the light (אור) . . . and do not

61 See Chapter 5, section 5.2 for a discussion on the importance of light and darkness in the rhetoric of Job.
62 See chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7 for an interpretation of 24.14.
stay in its paths” (24.13). Job, as the leader of his community, had once been able to act against the wicked. Once by God’s “light (אור)” he had “walked through darkness (חשך)” (29.3), in the days when his ordering of society had been a “light (אור)” to that society (29.24). Now, however, he waits for light (אור) in vain (30.26). God, in his mind, is responsible for the overturning of the order of his life for which the metaphor is “light”, and replacing it with disorder which is “darkness (חשך)” set upon his “paths” by God (19.8). Later he wishes he “could vanish in darkness” (23.17).

In Eliphaz’s thinking, the “wise” and the “wily” (5.13) meet with “darkness (חשך)” (5.14) and the wicked and the godless are in a “darkness” (חשך) from which they can neither return nor escape (15.22, 23, 30). Job, he declares, is surrounded by darkness (22.11), a situation which, if he would, he could change so that “light (אור)” would shine on his ways (22.28). Bildad’s cosmogony has “light (אור)”, the physical state and probably, too, the metaphor for life, emanating from God (25.3) who has created “the boundary between light (אור) and darkness (חשך)” (26.10), thereby regulating their diurnal rhythm. In another speech, he uses the terms metaphorically, saying that the “light (אור) of the wicked is put out” (18.5), that “the light (אור) in their tent is dark (חשך)” (18.6), and that, “thrust from light (אור) into darkness (חשך)”, they are “driven out of the world” (18.18). Zophar claims that “utter darkness (חשך)” is “laid up” for the possessions of the wicked (20.26). In the friends’ thinking, human beings, by their conduct, choose between living in the light or living in darkness.

7.2.2.4 Progeny

Featuring prominently in the Prologue are children (1.2, 4, 5, 13, 18, 19), foreshadowing the importance of children in the human dispute on order and disorder in
the part of creation which is human, a dispute which will also raise the question of the continuing of a part of human creation, the wicked part. Supernatural sons may kill human sons, and one of the “sons of God” (1.6), the Satan, allowed to do so by God, had the children of Job killed by “a great wind” (1.19). Other supernatural sons, those of Resheph (5.7), are malign chthonic beings potentially threatening to everyone.63 In Bildad’s thinking, the good will be blessed with children (8.19),64 but childlessness is the lot of the wicked (18.19). Eliphaz, too, promises many descendants for a pious Job (5.25), but the destruction of children for the wicked (15.30, 33).65 He claims that God acts against the children of the wicked, scattering the “whelps of the lioness” (4.11). He may be implicated, too, in the crushing of the children of fools (5.4), both wicked and simple.66 Zophar forecasts impoverishment for the children of the wicked (20.10; 27.14) and death from the sword (27.14) or pestilence (27.15). Job, who notes that orphans (24.3) and the children of the poor (24.5, 9), unprotected by God, may be victims of the wicked, asserts that not only do the wicked have children (21.8), those children thrive (21.11-12) and he protests against the notion that children should suffer as a consequence of parental iniquity (21.19). The divine speeches will also address the issue of the continuing of life (38.39, 41; 39.1-4, 14-16).

7.2.2.5 Hunter and Hunted

In the human dispute hunters, who are sometimes predators, are both natural, either animal (4.10-11) or human (4.9-11; 5.12-16; 24.2-4, 9; 29.17), and supernatural, God (4.10-11; 9.31; 10.16; 16.9, 12; 19.6) and other supernatural beings (18.8-11). God’s first

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63 Chapter 6, section 6.1.1.3.1.
64 See chapter 6, section 6.1.2.2.1 for my interpretation of this verse.
65 See chapter 6, section 6.1.2.1.2 for my interpretation of these verses.
66 See chapter 6, section 6.1.2.1.1, for my interpretation of 5.2-4.
speech also has hunters, animal (38.39, 41; 39.29-30) and divine (38.39, 41; 39.29-30). Lions are hunters and predators, as also may be human beings. I have drawn attention to the similarities between the descriptions of divine dealings with the lion (4.10-11), in this passage a metaphor for the wicked, and with the crafty and mighty in Eliphaz’s first speech (5.12-16), a correspondence which points to the mighty and crafty being thought of as hunters and predators.67 Job, too, noted the predatory behaviour of the wicked, to the detriment of the vulnerable and poor (24.2-4, 9, 14).68 In his good days, he had encountered the predatory “unrighteous” whose “fangs” he had broken, making them “drop their prey from their teeth” (29.17), so protecting the weak who are the prey, and acting as God does against the lion (4.10) in Eliphaz’s thinking. In both passages God and Job were the hunters of the hunters who, in a reversal of role, became the hunted. In Eliphaz’s mind, God is a hunter of the wicked, but for Job, God is a hunter of one who is not wicked, himself. He hunts Job as a lion would (10.16). He has “torn” him (16.9), broken him in two, seized him by the neck and dashed him to pieces (16.12). As a human hunter might, God has plunged him into a pit (9.31),69 and “has closed his net” around Job (19.6). Eliphaz declares that “snares” are around Job though he does not say who set them (22.10). Bildad introduces a different and other-worldly hunter. In his thinking, the wicked (18.5) and ungodly (18.21), deprived of divine protection because they are so, are hunted by maleficent supernatural powers (18.11) who use, as their hunting devices, nets (18.8), traps (18.9, 10) and snares (18.9), and a rope (18.10).

7.2.2.6  Storm

67 Ibid.
68 Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7.
69 Section 7.1.1.2 above.
In the human speeches, several words are used to denote “storm” which may be a meteorological event and also a metaphorical event. Storm is usually understood to be a strong wind for which the terms, in the Prologue and the human speeches, are רוח (1.19; 8.2; 15.2, 30; 16.3; 21.18; 26.13; 30.15, 22), קדים (15.2; 27.21), שערה (9.17), שער (27.21), סופה (21.18; 27.20). Occurring in the divine speeches are רוח (41.8), קדים (38.24). God speaks from the “whirlwind” (שערה, the other form of שערה) (38.1; 40.6). There are, however, other kinds of storm. In the Prologue, the storm which destroys Job’s sheep and servants is lightning (“the fire of God”) (1.16), and there is also “thunder (רעם)” (26.14), an accompaniment of divine creative power in Bildad’s cosmogony. In the divine rhetoric, storms also feature “hail” (38.22), “torrents of rain” and “the thunderbolt” (38.25).

Wind, the weather phenomenon, killed Job’s children (1.19) in the Prologue. As a weather phenomenon, “wind” was used for good by God in Bildad’s creation account (26.13). Understood metaphorically, wind (רוח), in Eliphaz’s thinking, is what destroys the children of the wicked (15.30), and in Zophar’s thinking wind (שערה, קדים, סופה) is what carries off the wicked (27.20, 21) from “their place” (27.21. For Job, the wicked are not “like straw before the wind (רוח)” nor are they “like chaff that the storm (סופה) carries away” (21.18), unlike beings of little consequence, the windblown leaf and dry chaff pursued by God (13.25). He himself is crushed by God with a “tempest (שערה)” (9.17), has his honour pursued “as by the wind (רוח)” (30.15), and he is lifted up by God on “the wind (רוח) and is made to “ride on it” (30.22). Understood as a metaphor describing disturbing speech, wind, (רוח) (8.2; 15.2) and קדים (15.2), has the power, when it comes from Job, to unsettle comfortable theological notions held by the friends, or, when wind (רוח) comes from the friends (16.3), to add to the distress of Job.
7.2.2.7 Divine Warrior

In the human speeches, Bildad’s cosmogony depicts God as a warrior. Though with troops to deploy (25.3), it is as a single combatant that God subdues forces inimical to his creation; they are “Sea” whom he “stilled” by “his power”, “Rahab” whom he “struck down” by “his understanding” (26.12), and “the fleeing serpent” whom “his hand pierced” (26.13). Zophar, too, imagines God as an angry warrior who uses an “iron weapon” and a “bronze arrow” against the wicked (20.24). Job, however, sees himself as the victim of divine assaults from a warrior God (16.13-14), who, in a display of excessive force, brings in troops to support his attack (10.17; 16.13; 19.12). God, in the divine speeches, concedes that he is a warrior with weapons, “snow” and “hail” (38.22), “reserved for . . . the day of battle and war” (38.23).

7.2.3 The Divine Speeches (Job 38.2-39.30; 40.2, 40.7-41.26)

God’s defends himself against the several charges laid by Job of maltreatment which together have caused disorder in his life, using a series of amplified examples, which are word pictures from creation. These images are set by God before Job and by the poet before the reader for their consideration. In the first speech, the examples are drawn from all three levels of the tri-partite cosmos, the upper level which is the heavens (38.12-15, 19-21, 22-23, 24-27, 28-30, 31-33, 34-38), the middle level which is earth and its inhabitants (38.4-7, 39-41; 39.1-4, 5-8, 9-12, 13-18, 19-25, 26-30) and sea (38.8-11), and the lowest level which is the nether world (38.16-18). Two of the examples (38.4-7, 8-11) are framed as short narratives, one of Aristotle’s tools for persuasion.70 The second speech has three word pictures, Job the potentate (40.10-14), and two mythical beings,

70 See chapter 1, section 1.4.4.2.3.4.
Behemoth (40.15-24) and Leviathan (40.25-41.26). Accompanying the word pictures, are many questions (most numerous in the first speech) put by God to Job.

7.2.3.1 The First Speech (Job 38.2-39.30; 40.2)

Job’s last address to God was from a wind on which he had been lifted and the storm in which he was tossed about (30.22), God replies from “out of the whirlwind (סערה)" (38.1). Wind and storm have proved disastrous for Job (1.19; 9.17; 30.22) and now wind brings to him the one he believes to be his persecutor for the long-wanted encounter (9.16, 19, 32, 35; 13.3, 15, 18, 22-24; 23.3-7; 31.35-37) with his greatly feared God (7.14; 9.34-35; 13.21, 25; 23.15-16) from whom he wanted answers to his questions. Job and the reader can be allowed a sense of foreboding; this encounter has the potential to disorder Job’s life further, or to restore its order.

7.2.3.1.1 God’s Questions

Job addressed a barrage of questions to God in his first three accusatory addresses to him (7.1-21; 9.25-10.22; 13.20-14.22), all of which required an answer and most of which were also statements concerning what he supposed was the disposition of the one questioned, God. God’s reply in defence is a greater barrage of questions addressed to

71 See chapter 6, section 6.2.2.9, for an interpretation of this verse.
72 Thomas Dailey (“Theophanic Bluster,” 189) has observed that this word means more than windiness, it is strongly linked to divine activity which, in this passage, is a theophany. The connection between theophany and storm have been noted by many, for example, Gordis, Book of Job, 442.
73 Brenner (“God’s Answer to Job,” 132-133) interprets God’s appearance in a storm as a demonstration of the duality of the divine nature. Often accompanied by rain, storms can be both creative and destructive of life.
74 See section 7.1.1.7 above where I discuss the nature of these questions.
Job and all, bar one (40.2),\textsuperscript{75} are rhetorical and so do not require an answer notwithstanding the challenge (38.3), repeated at the beginning of the second divine speech (40.7), to “gird up your loins like a man, I will question you, and you shall declare to me” (38.3). Job’s questions were statements about God and himself, and God’s questions are statements about Job and also himself as Creator. Altogether, there are thirty-six questions, of which the majority are in the first speech.\textsuperscript{76}

The first question asks “[w]ho is this that darkens ( חשך) counsel (עצה)\textsuperscript{77} by words without knowledge (דעת)” (38.2), questioning, it would seem, the temerity of Job’s seeking both God and answers from God and, by implication, condemning Job’s earlier presumption, based on ignorance, in expressing opinions disparaging to God about divine acts in the cosmos.\textsuperscript{78} These words are also, and more importantly, the opening salvo in the divine defence, expressed in “an extraordinarily belligerent fashion.”\textsuperscript{79} They undermine the validity of Job’s charges by questioning the grounds on which he makes them. It would seem, however, that God accepts Job’s presence before him, and the remainder of the questions, some of them very extended, are either addressed directly to Job using the second person singular of verbs (38.4, 5, 12-13, 16, 17, 18, 19-20, 22-23, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39-40; 39.1, 2-3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 19, 20, 26, 27) or, though not using the second person pronoun, addressed to Job, because he is there (38.6, 8-11, 24, 25-27, 28, 29, 36, 37-38, 41; 39.5-6).

The questions draw attention to Job’s ignorance of cosmogony because he was not present when the world was created (38.4-6, 8-11), to his ignorance of the outer reaches

\textsuperscript{75} cf Michael Fox (“God’s Answer and Job’s Response,” Bib 94 (2013): 14) who says that the two questions of 38.19 and a further question in 38.24 are not rhetorical and require answers from Job who does not know them.

\textsuperscript{76} Gordis (Book of Job, 559) has listed the questions in both of the divine speeches.

\textsuperscript{77} Habel (Book of Job, 528) has translated אצה as “design”, a term which signifies the mysteries of the ordering of creation.

\textsuperscript{78} Clines (“Job 38-42,” 1095) describes this question as “condemnatory”, establishing at the outset that Job is in the wrong.

\textsuperscript{79} Greenstein, “A Forensic Understanding,” 241.
of creation (38.19-20, 22-24), including the netherworld (38.16-18) because he has not been there, to his ignorance of the ways of the heavens (38.33, 36-37a), and of earth’s fauna (39.1-12), to his powerlessness to affect inanimate creation (38.12-13, 31-32, 34-35, 37b), or animate creation (39.19-20, 26-27), or to support animate creation (38.39, 41). That the questions are intended to highlight the limits of Job’s knowledge and understanding is shown by the use of words such as “know (יָדַע)” (38.4, 18, 21, 33; 39.1, 2), “knowledge (דַעַת)” (38.2), “understand (בין)” (38.18, 20), and “understanding (בִּינָה)” (38.4, 36). They are intended also to make statements about God; what Job does not know, God does and what Job cannot do, God can. God’s questions to Job recall Zophar’s questions to Job.80 Using creation itself as a measure for reflecting on the limitless immensity of God, Zophar had asked “what can you do?” and “what can you know (יָדַע)” (11.8) when contemplating such an infinite Being. Whereas Zophar’s questions were about the impossibility of Job’s knowing about the Creator, God’s questions to Job point to the impossibility of Job’s knowing all that there is to know about creation and also to his powerlessness in creation – what can he do? God’s questions also say something about God. It is he who was responsible for the creation of the earth (38.4-7), the genesis and control of the sea (38.8-11), the ordering of light and dark and their diurnal alternation (38.12-13, 19-20, 24a), the passage across the heavens of the celestial bodies (38.31-33), for the weather phenomena which have their origin in the sky (38.22-30, 34-37), and for life in its many forms (38.39-39.30) and for its sustaining (38.39-41; 39.8, 29-30).

The tone of the divine address to Job, conveyed through the divine questions, has attracted some very different descriptions. Terrien, for example, has said that God speaks to Job “with an irony that may be described at once as courteous and wistful, and does

80 See chapter 6, section 6.1.1.1.
not conceal a certain amount of sadness and disappointment.”\textsuperscript{81} Clines, on the other hand, describes the tone as tending “more toward the severe, if not the savage, than toward the gracious”.\textsuperscript{82} Fox finds a softening effect in the way God’s words are expressed. If they took the form of statements rather than questions, they would have a “harsh, bragging, bullying tone”, emphasising Job’s deficiencies.\textsuperscript{83} Rhetorical questions, however, say the same thing but with “compassion and gentleness, albeit a stern gentleness.”\textsuperscript{84} God’s speeches are assertive, establishing at the outset his dominance of the dialogue, which is to be expected since it is God who is speaking. Given the disparity between the two speakers, and the fact that one of them is speaking out of a storm, the tone is also somewhat intimidating, perhaps intentionally so. In God’s favour, it must be said that the fact of Job’s being addressed points to the divine opinion that Job is worth addressing, so demonstrating that Job is worthy of some respect, a respect not shown by a very forthright Job in his addresses about or to God.

I turn now to a discussion of the content of the divine speeches which are a response to Job’s addresses to God and about God, and are also a response to his friends. I will make use of the seven motifs linking human and divine rhetoric which I have set out above. The poet has already established a tri-partite structure for the cosmos in Zophar’s reflection (11.7-9), Bildad’s cosmogony (26.5-13), and Job’s protest at divine treatment of the cosmos (9.5-9, 13) and the same structure is evident in God’s description of his creation. I will, therefore, look at creation in the first speech level by level, starting with the lowest, the primordial deep and the netherworld, then moving to the middle level


\textsuperscript{82} Clines, Job 38-42, 1088. Clines (“Job’s Fifth Friend: An Ethical Critique of the Book of Job,” BibInt 12 [2004]: 242-245) cites a range of scholarly opinions on the tone of the divine address.

\textsuperscript{83} Fox, “Job 38 and God’s Rhetoric ;” 59

\textsuperscript{84} Ibid.
which is earth and sea and includes earth’s inhabitants, before finally considering the upper level which is the sky, place of the celestial bodies and source of earth’s weather.

7.2.3.1.2 The Lowest Level of the Cosmos – the Primordial Deep and the Netherworld (Job 38.16-18)

The Statement of the rhetoric which is Job (3.1-26), has Job curse the day of his birth (3.1-5) and long for death (3.11-22). In his first address to God (7.1-21), he reflects on the finality of death (7.9-10, 21), which is a state of not-being (7.21), and the desirability of death (7.15). In his second address to God (9.25-10.22), he asks why God had brought him from the womb and wishes that he had died at birth (10.18-19). He describes the place of the dead as a “land (ארץ) of gloom and deep darkness (צלמות)” (10.21), a description he repeats, saying it is “the land (ארץ) of gloom (צלמות) and chaos (סדרים), where light is like darkness” (10.22). In these words he is saying that disorder is a feature of the land of the dead, despite which he would still rather be there than in the world of the living which, for him, is also disordered. In his third address to God (13.20-14.22), Job ponders the desirability of a temporary stay in Sheol (14.13) but concludes that death is final and that Sheol may not be desirable anyway (14.20-22).

In response, God asks Job if he has “entered into the springs (נבך) of the sea, or walked in the recesses of the deep (תהום)” (38.16). God takes Job back to a time and place before creation, to the sources of the sea and to the depths of the primeval waters, as they were before the creating and ordering acts of God, and asks if he has been there.

85 BDB 614: “spring . . . springs, sources of the ocean.”
86 BDB 1062: “deep, sea, abyss. . . . of subterranean waters.” E.-J. Waschke (“ת唳ים,” TDOT 15: 574-581) has said of this word that it represents both the primeval water which preceded creation and also the cosmic waters which surrounded the earth after creation.
From pre-creation God turns to a state which, for a human being, is post-creation and asks “[h]ave the gates of death (מות) been revealed to you or have you seen the gates of deep darkness (צלמות)?” (38.17). The domain of the dead was understood in both Sumerian and Akkadian myth to be a place of no return, a place with gates and God asks if Job has seen them. It was also, for Mesopotamians, a realm with rulers, Ereshkigal and Nergal, of whom the latter was possibly the “king of terrors” referred to by Bildad (18.14). Finally he asks “[h]ave you comprehended the expanse of the earth (ארץ)” (38.18). If God is responding to Job’s statements on his eventual departure to the land of the dead (10.21), and I suggest that he is, “earth” here is most likely to be a reference to the netherworld. This verse (38.18) is a continuation of the questioning of Job’s knowledge of the place of the dead (38.17), and so “earth”, in this context, probably means the realm of the dead rather than the land of the living. Job cannot know about a time and place before creation nor about the place of death, from where no one has ever returned, making his reflections on its desirability uninformed. God’s questions draw attention to Job’s ignorance. (Bildad, as ignorant as Job, had reflected on the primeval waters and the place of the dead (26.5-6) and asserted divine dominance over them.) The rest of God’s first speech is concerned with places, phenomena and beings which can be observed by Job and experienced by him.

7.2.3.1.3 The Middle Level of the Cosmos – Earth (38.4-7), Sea (38.8-11), and Earth’s Inhabitants (Job 38.39-39.30)

87 “Inanna’s Descent to the Nether World,” translated by S. N. Kramer (ANET, 54-55) (Sumerian myth);
88 “Inanna’s Descent,” 54-55; “Descent of Ishtar,” 107-108)
89 “Nergal and Ereshkigal,” translated by E. A. Speiser (ANET 103-104)
90 So Habel, Book of Job, 541; Hartley, Book of Job, 499; Clines, Job 38-42, 1107.
The middle level of the cosmos is the place where order and disorder are experienced by the animate part of creation even though they may have their origin elsewhere.

7.2.3.1.3.1 *Earth (Job 38.4-7)*

Yahweh’s questions establish that it was he who “laid the foundation (יסד) of the earth (ארץ)” (38.4), who “determined its measurements”, who “stretched (נתה) the line upon it” (38.5) who sunk its “bases (אדן)” and who “laid its cornerstone” (38.6). The creation of the earth is imagined as the story of the construction of a building with God its “architect”, “surveyor” and “engineer”. Job is not told on what the foundations were laid nor on what, if anything, the bases were sunk nor of any pillars supported by the bases but he is shown that it is an enduring edifice, the completion of which is the occasion for celebration by the “morning stars” which “sang together” and by “all the heavenly beings” who “shouted for joy” (38.7).

Building construction was a cosmogonic activity in some creation accounts in the ancient Near East. Not only were houses built for humans, houses (temples) were also built for the gods. On completion of the latter, and the installation of its deity therein, there was feasting and music and well-being both within the temple and in the surrounding area. The *mes*, principles which governed creation and were conducive to its well-being, were often said to be found within temple precincts. The presence of a temple

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91 BDB 413: “establish, found, fix.” R. Mosis ("יסד, יסוד, יסודת, יסדות, יסוד, יסודת, יצוד, יסוד") TDOT 6: 109-121) has noted that as an architectural term יסד refers to the building of permanent structures and so denotes the stability and permanence of what is being constructed. It is also a creation term and can refer to the foundation of all, or parts, of the earth, again indicating permanence.

92 Clines (Job 38-42, 1100) says that these bases are metal supports for pillars though pillars are not mentioned in this cosmogonic account.

pointed to the presence there of its deity which was an assurance of well-being and order within and without. 94

Temple construction is one of the acts of a creating deity in the ancient Near East but never the first. I suggest that the Joban poet drew on these texts in his description of the creation of the earth in the first divine speech. I suggest, too, that the poet quite intentionally placed his description of the construction of earth first, thereby drawing Job’s and the reader’s attention to an earth whose construction was foremost in the mind of God, whose completion was cause for rejoicing and which was, above all, a place of stability and order, and a place of divine presence. This was the point he wished to make before any other.

7.2.3.1.3.2 Sea (Job 38.8-11)

In both Job’s and Bildad’s cosmogonic thinking, Sea and its mythical and monstrous denizens are dealt with firmly, even violently, by God. Job says he “trampled the waves of the Sea” (9.8) and “the helpers of Rahab bowed beneath him” (9.13). Bildad asserts that “he stilled the Sea”, that “he struck down Rahab” (26.12) and that his hand pierced the fleeing serpent” (26.13). Such statements are consistent with ancient Near Eastern traditions, such as Enuma elish and the Baal cycle which portray the sea as a hostile force inimical to order in the supernatural realm which had to be overcome by a warrior god if order was to be maintained. In Enuma elis, victory over the Sea (Tiamat) was a preliminary to the creation of the natural world.

94 Chapter 3, sections 3.2.2 and 3.2.3.
In Mesopotamian traditions, sea was a primordial reality which had no beginning—it was always there. Uncreated itself, from it, or on it, came all else that was created in the natural world. The Joban poet, in a break with those traditions creates earth first and provides sea with a beginning, using a birthing metaphor. Sea “burst out from the womb” (38.8), whose womb is not stated, but it is not God’s. God is present as midwife, standing by to care for the infant, by providing “a garment” and a “swaddling band” (38.9). His first act provides restraints for sea, shutting it in (טַעַם) with “doors” (39.8), and creates limits, saying “Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped” (38.11). Though not stated explicitly, the restraints imposed on sea create for it a place with boundaries which separate sea from other parts of creation, so allowing those other parts to exist without the threat of being overwhelmed. Job of the Prologue, had, claimed the satan, been fenced in (שֻׁם) so creating, though this too is not stated explicitly, a place of order and well-being for him (1.10). Job, in his opening speech complains that God has “fenced (טַעַם)” him in (3.23), metaphorically, to a ‘place’ which is a life of disorder and misery. The notion of containment conveyed by the verb טַעַם or שֻׁם has been used by the satan of Job to signify the protection of order for Job, and by Job to signify the perpetuation of his disorder, and by God to ensure the good order of parts of creation outside the fence.

7.2.3.1.3.3 Earth’s Inhabitants (Job 38.39-39.30)

95 Chapter 3, section 3.2.2.
96 BDB 692: “hedge, fence.”
97 Andre Lacoque (“Job and Religion at Its Best,” Bib Int 4 (1996): 139) has argued that in the act of separation and restraint, an identity has been created for sea because without it, sea would have overwhelmed all else and would have had nothing against which to differentiate itself and so to claim a separate identity.
Preliminary to my discussion of this part of the first divine speech, it should be noted that ancient human thinking divided earth into the civilised and cultivated, the place where people belonged, and the wild and uncultivated, the place of wild animals, inhospitable and even dangerous for humankind. In Mesopotamian art, kings who have a role as protectors of society, are portrayed exercising it by hunting wild animals. Lion hunting had symbolic significance too, as Watanabe has found; it was a way of “restoring cultural order in society.” Deities sustain the life of wild animals and are also in control of them. Most of the animals named in this passage are wild and so are inhabitants of the wild places. In Job, humans find themselves in the wilderness, driven there by need in the case of the poor (24.5), or as outcasts from the civilised place (30.5).

In this section my consideration of order and disorder for earth’s inhabitants will be based on the motifs common to human and divine rhetoric which I have identified. All but two, darkness and light and storm, are present. They are place, time, progeny, hunter and hunted, and warrior God.

Earth’s inhabitants listed in this passage are ten animals - lion, raven, mountain goat, deer, wild ass, wild ox, ostrich, horse, hawk and eagle. The animals are listed in pairs. The first pair are the lion and the raven, both in need of prey for their young, and

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99 Keel, Jahwehs Entgegnung an Ijob, 71. Dick (“The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt,” 246-248, 255) has drawn attention to the particular importance of the lion-hunting motif in Neo-Assyrian art.
100 Watanabe, Animal Symbolism, 83.
102 Keel, Jahwehs Entgegnung an Ijob, 87.
103 Portrayed in a very unsympathetic way, these people, though treated as criminals are not, but they are society’s rejects to whom, as Newsom explains (“Job,” 544), are attached a “[s]ocial stigma passed from generation to generation.”
104 Section 7.2.2 above.
105 James E. Miller (“Structure and Meaning of the Animal Discourse in the Theophany of Job (38,39-39,30),” ZAW 103 (1991): 418-421) has postulated a chiastic structure in the arrangement of the animals listed based on their classification as predators or prey, their reproductive habits and their freedom from human service.
the second are mountain goats and deer whose reproductive habits are described. The third pair are the wild ass and the wild ox, whose freedom, from humankind in the case of the wild ass and from servitude in the case of the wild ox, is celebrated. The fourth pair are the ostrich and the horse, both of them laughing, and the fifth pair are the hawk and the eagle, high above the earth and both predators. Often noted by commentators is the wildness\textsuperscript{106} of most of the animals which are beyond human control and exploitation. Exceptions are the horse\textsuperscript{107} and perhaps, too, the ostrich,\textsuperscript{108} the first valued for what it can do for humans and the second for what it can give to humans. The remainder live in places which are not hospitable to human beings and so, seldom frequented. Possessed by God, these places are his to allocate which he does, citing as an example the “steppe” and the “salt land” which he has given to the wild ass (39.6). Created by God, the animals have been given their attributes by God which, specifically, are the “might” of the horse (39.19), the “wisdom (בינה)” of one bird, the hawk (39.26), and a lack of “understanding (בינה)” of another bird, the ostrich (39.17).

All animals have a place, earth, and for some, a particular location is designated. The lion has “dens” or a “covert” (38.40), the mountain goat has the cliff (39.1) as does

\textsuperscript{106} Most of these animals were wild but they were not necessarily strange to the ancient readers of Job. A growing interest in the fauna of the ancient Near East has drawn attention to the existence of parks created to accommodate wild animals at Mari by the beginning of the second millennium BCE and later in Assyria (Annie Caubet, “Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” in \textit{A History of the Animal World in the Ancient Near East} (ed. B. J. Collins; Leiden: Brill, 2002), 220- 221). Collections of wild animals were also maintained in Agade as shown in “The Curse of Agade” (Benjamin R. Foster, “Animals in Mesopotamian Literature,” in \textit{A History of the Animal World}, 286).

\textsuperscript{107} Wild horses were not native to the ancient Near East. It is thought that the domesticated horse was introduced during the fourth millennium BCE. In art, the horse was often portrayed harnessed to a royal chariot (Brian Hesse and Paula Wapnish, “An Archaeozoological Perspective on the Cultural Use of Mammals in the Levant,” in \textit{A History of the Animal World}, 470), and by the end of the second millennium it had become a mount and so it was closely associated with human beings (Caubet, “Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” 218-220). That it was greatly valued, can be supposed from the care taken over its wellbeing (Oded Borowski, “Animals in the Literatures of Syria-Palestine,” in \textit{A History of the Animal World}, 291).

\textsuperscript{108} Native to the Levant until early in the last century (Allan S. Gilbert, “The Native Fauna of the Ancient Near East,” in \textit{A History of the Animal World}, 62), ostriches feature often in texts at Mari and in Assyrian letters. Difficult to hunt because of their speed, they were sought after for feathers, leather and eggs which were eaten and the shells decorated. Their shells were sometimes placed in graves because they symbolized fertility and the hope of rebirth (Caubet, “Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” 226, 232).
the eagle (39.28) which also has a “nest” (39.27) on a “rock” and in “the rocky crag” (39.28), the wild ass has the “steppe (ערבה)” for its home (בית)” and the “salt land for its dwelling place (משכן)” (39.6) to which, ranging “the mountains” for food (39.8), it is not confined, and high above the earth, the “hawk” is on the wing, heading “south” (39.26).

The raven (38.41), the wild ox (39.9-12), the ostrich (39.13-18), and the horse (39.19-25), also earth’s inhabitants, do not have a named place though in the case of the horse, it is with human beings. Each species has a place, named or not, to which it belongs, from which it will not be dislodged, where it lives and where it finds a living. For the wild ass it is the “pasture” of the mountains which provide “every green thing” (39.8), and for the lion and its young, the raven and its young, and the eagle and its young, it is “prey” (38.39, 41; 39.29).

It is in finding a living that disorder is introduced into the community of animals described here. God, the hunter, sees the need of the young of lions and hears the cry of the raven’s hungry young, and has provided hunters, their parents who are proxies for himself, to meet that need. Whilst satisfying hunger is essential if life is to continue, the hunger that is satisfied, when it is a predator’s, is death to the prey. What is order and well-being for some, is disorder and an untimely end for others. Not stated but necessarily implied, is that not all animals who could be prey are prey; some must be preserved to reach maturity in order to multiply and sustain the lives of predators in the future. On earth, order and disorder exist together but in a manner which ensures the order and disorder of the future. Neither order nor disorder can gain the upper hand if the life of all of earth’s inhabitants is to continue.

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109 Clines (Job 38-42, 119) has said that God sustains animal life by “creating a world with a balanced system of provision for all its creatures.”
Essential to the maintenance of such a system is procreation which, in the cosmos described here, happens according to an established pattern and at a particular time. There is a season (יָלְדָה) “when the mountain goats give birth” and a season for “the calving of the deer” (39.1). There is a set time (“months”) for gestation and a set “time (יָלְדָה) when they give birth” (39.2). As is the way of their species, the young, with parental care, “become strong, they grow up in the open; they go forth, and do not return” (39.4). They go forth either to survive and reproduce, or to become the prey of others, supporting, for example, the lives of young lions, young ravens and young eagles whose birth must be followed by nutrition essential for their maturation and brought by attentive parents, if they and their species are to survive. The ongoing cycle of life is ordered, but it has within it both order and disorder. As described here, birth and maturation represent order for some, an order created by the disorder of the untimely death of others.

The choice of the first four animals to open the divine rhetoric on earth’s inhabitants is significant. They are two carnivores, the lion and the raven, and two herbivores, the mountain goat and the deer. They are not only an illustration of the cycle of life (birth, maturation and death), their choice is the divine pointer to a balance in animate creation of order and disorder, both essential for the maintenance of that creation.

The next pair of animals, the “wild ass” (39.5) and the “wild ox” (39.9), are also herbivores, and both live in wild uncultivated places. Both are exposed to the hazard of being the prey of carnivores, but both are free and, apparently, reveling in their freedom. The wild ass is free of the “tumult of the city” which he “scorns (יָרָה)” and free of “the shouts of the driver (שָׁמַע)” (39.7), enjoying a liberation that Job had thought came only with death (3.18). The wild ox is free of the servitude to human cultivators of “furrow” and “valley” (39.10) and, indeed, stubbornly resistant to the exploitation which would be toil for human beings.
Outside the finely balanced order of birth, maturation and death outlined at the beginning of the zoological section of the divine speech (38.39-39.4), is the quirky behaviour of the joyful (“the ostrich’s wings flap (עלס) wildly” [39.13]) but feckless ostrich (רננים). Unlike the other animals, neglectful to the point of cruelty, and stupid too, she abandons her eggs on the “earth (ארץ)” where, though at risk of being crushed, they are warmed (39.14). Deprived by God of “wisdom” and “understanding (“ (39.17), and perhaps because she is so deprived, the ostrich has no “fear (פחד)” (39.16) and “laughs (שׂחק) at the horse and its rider” (39.18). Created by God to be foolish, the ostrich species survives because “earth”, also created by God, ensures the continuation of its cycle of life. The ostrich herself was once an abandoned egg cared for by earth. Order, which is the continuing of life for the ostrich species, triumphs over the disorder which is its behaviour, a behaviour life-threatening to its young.

Connecting the wild and the domesticated, perhaps in the same place, is a freedom from fear, and the laughter of both ostrich and horse. The fearlessness and laughter of the ostrich at the horse, are matched by the horse which “laughs (שׂחק) at fear (פחד)” (39.22). The horse, a powerful creature, is made by God, who gave it “might (גבורה)” and clothed its neck with thunder (רעמה). It is a creature whose “majestic snorting is terrible (אימה)”

110 BDB 763: “rejoice.”
111 BDB 943: “bird of piercing cries, i.e. ostrich.” Newsom (“Job,” 610-611) has noted the debate over what sort of bird is meant here since the more usual words for ostrich, יעל and יעליה, are not used. The bird could be either the ostrich or the owl. Both birds live in uninhabited places. Since jackals and ostriches are said by Job to be his companions (30.29) in his social isolation, and the two creatures are paired elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, יעליה is probably meant to denote the ostrich. Assuming that the bird of 39.13 is the ostrich, its reappearance here as a joyful bird is an intentional contrast with the ostrich which was Job’s companion in misery.
112 Pope (Job, 309) has provided ornithological evidence demonstrating the ostrich’s devotion to its young. So also Spangenberg, “Who Cares,” 98-99. Clines (Job, 38-42, 1125-) has given details of ostrich intelligence and habits which show a bird quite unlike the bird described in these verses. The poet, however, is not giving a zoology lesson but making a point about order and disorder in creation.
113 BDB 947: “vibration? quivering mane? of horse’s neck.” There has been some discussion on the translation of this word. Habel (Book of Job, 525) argues that it comes from the word רעם meaning “thunder” and this is the option favoured by, for example, Good (In Turns of Tempest, 160) and Newsom (“Job,” 611). Others, for example, Dhorme (Job, 607), Gordis (Book of Job, 461) and Clines (Job 38-42, 1128), prefer a more realistic picture of a horse, and so choose “mane”. Since the horse is being described as a fearless and fearsome creature, “thunder” would be more apt here.
and who has strength (כח) (39.21), “fierceness and rage” (39.24). So endowed, the horse “goes out to meet the weapons” (39.21) to which it is apparently impervious, because “[u]pon it rattle the quiver, the flashing spear, and the javelin” (39.23). It is drawn to “battle, the thunder of the captains and the shouting” (39.25). In the civilised, cultivated world, the horse described here represents the disorder present in it which is conflict and untimely death. Habel has commented that this war horse has attributes of God. It has “might (גבורה) (39.19) as does God (12.13; 26.14), and it has strength (כח) (39.21) as does God (9.4, 19; 23.6; 26.12). It is clothed with thunder (רעמה) and God’s power is described as “thunder (רעם)” (26.14). It causes terror (אימה) (39.20) as does God (9.34; 13.21). The war horse may be thought of as the earthly symbol of the warrior God, the God whose creative and ordering acts have been described by Bildad (25.2-3; 26.5-14) and whose disordering acts have been described by Job (9.5-10, 13; 10.17; 12.17-25; 16.13-14; 19.12). Going in to battle, God’s creature, the horse, is a creator of disorder for “the slain (חלל),” but out of that disorder comes order for another part of creation, the eagle, a hunter watching from afar for food for its young, the blood of the slain (39.30). Indirectly, and in cooperation with the hunter eagle, the war horse is a creator of order for the young of the eagle.

The last pair, the hawk and the eagle, are high above the earth. God asks Job “[i]s it by your wisdom that the hawk soars and spreads its wings toward the south?) (39.26) and “[i]s it at your command that the eagle mounts up and makes its nest on high?” (39.27) to which the answer, clearly, is “no”. The behaviour of hawk and eagle is instinctive and in the words “wisdom” and “command” there are echoes of the notion which is the mes, the organising principles which govern creation and which are at the disposal of the

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114 Habel, Book of Job, 547-548.
115 Newsom (“Job,” 612) has observed that this word is nearly always used of human dead. Miller (“Structure and Meaning of the Animal Discourse,” 421) has found a “dark humour” in this speech in that man who has trained the war horse ends up by finding his place in the food chain.
creating deities in Mesopotamia.\textsuperscript{116} God has placed in the hawk the instinct to fly upwards and then southwards.\textsuperscript{117} He has placed in the eagle the instinct to nest high on a “rocky crag” (39.28) so that “it spies the prey... from far away” (39.29). The patterns of behaviour implanted in both birds are what makes for their survival.

At the superficial level, this part of the divine speech (38.39-39.30) is about animals, some of which prey on others because they need to in order to survive. God, Creator of the cosmos and all its life forms, both predators and prey, has created the cosmos to be that way. Some infant creatures need hunters to provide for them so that they may grow up to be hunters themselves. God the hunter, uses as his proxy, their parents, aided in the case of an eagle by an animal of a different species, the horse, to ensure their survival. Some infant creatures do not have nurturing parents but rely on earth to fill that role. To preserve order and well-being in the lives of predators, in which he is not directly involved, God allows, but does not directly cause untimely death and disorder in the lives of prey. Order and disorder go together in the world of animals.

There is, however, a deeper level of meaning to be found in God’s description of earth and its animals and I suggest that there are two important links between that description, and the human rhetoric which, if explored, will not only point to the meaning of this divine speech but will also show how the speech responds to the rhetoric of Job and his friends.\textsuperscript{118} First, lions, both hunter and hunted, are an important metaphor in the

\textsuperscript{116} Chapter 3, section 3.2.2, Habel (Book of Job, 548) says of the hawk and eagle that they “operate... by the instinctive wisdom planted within them” which directs their flight and their care of young.

\textsuperscript{117} Clines (Job 38-42, 1131-1132) has suggested that the hawk might be one of several migratory species found in the Middle East.

\textsuperscript{118} cf Milton Horne (“From Ethics to Aesthetics in Job 38.39-39.30,” RevExp 102 (2005): 136) who has said that there are no “explicit comparisons drawn between humankind and beast” in this part of God’s rhetoric. He concedes, however, that there is a subtle anthropomorphism at work here in regard to the survival needs of human beings, and animals and especially in the “attributions of human emotions or cognition to animal behaviours” (ibid., 137). He gives as examples, the crying out to God of young ravens (38.41) and the crying out of human subjects in Job’s speeches and the laughter of the wild ass and ostrich.
human dispute (4.10-11; 29.17)\textsuperscript{119} and also feature in Job’s second address to God (10.16).\textsuperscript{120} Their appearance in God’s rhetoric which is a response to the human rhetoric is noteworthy and its significance needs investigation to discover how the divine speech uses lions to address issues in the human speeches. The second link is a passage (24.2-9) in Job’s seventh speech\textsuperscript{121} in the human dispute, describing the place and plight of the poor which may be set against the description of the habitat of the wild ass (39.5-8). These two passages are primarily concerned with place, and the connections they have with each other also need exploring to discover the significance of the later passage as part of God’s response to Job and his friends on order and disorder in creation.

The first link is the lion which has, as its basis, the connection between lions as a metaphor for the wicked in the human rhetoric and the real-life lions of the divine rhetoric. To draw out the significance of this link, I propose that, whilst not forgetting that lions are real animals, the lion and the wicked be transposed so that for “lion” in the divine rhetoric, one reads “the wicked”, a transposition well understood by the human disputants and probably also by the ancient reader. I propose too, that such a mental transposition was the intent, though unstated, of this part of the first divine speech.

Lions are used in Eliphaz’s first speech as a metaphor for the wicked against whom God acts. The adult lion, a predator, has its teeth broken (4.10) and as a consequence, its hunting capabilities are destroyed; it “perishes for lack of prey” (4.11), probably prematurely. (In his last speech [22.2-30], Eliphaz asserts that premature death is the fate of the wicked [22.16].) Its “whelps” are “scattered” (4.11) so that not only do they lack the prey brought by a parent they are removed from their place. Vulnerable, because they are scattered, and without the support of a parent, their threat to others is diminished. God

\textsuperscript{119} Chapter 6, sections 6.1.2.1.1 and 6.2.2.9 above respectively.
\textsuperscript{120} Section 7.1.2 above.
\textsuperscript{121} Chapter 6, section 2.2.7.
here is the hunter of the hunter. The effect of such divine action is that not only are the wicked destroyed and their progeny at least disadvantaged, but also, and this is unstated, the potential prey of the lion is protected. Later in Eliphaz’s first speech (5.12-16), a discussion on divine dealings with the wicked, by drawing much from his earlier lion metaphor, strengthens the analogy between the lion and the wicked. Whilst both texts emphasise the predatory nature of the lion and the wicked, both of whom are dealt with by God, the second pays more attention to their prey who are protected by God (5.15-16). Job used the same analogy in describing his actions as a leader of his community and protector of the vulnerable, saying he “broke the fangs of the unrighteous, and made them drop their prey from their teeth” (29.17). By dealing with the wicked, alias the lion, in the thinking of Eliphaz and Job, God, and also Job in former days, maintain order for the vulnerable in the human part of creation. In his second address to God, however, Job casts God in the role of a lion, a hunter and predator, and himself in the role of a prey (10.16) in whose life God has created disorder. Job stops short of drawing here the analogy between the lion and the wicked.

The divine rhetoric says that far from being destroyed, the wicked, alias the lion, live their lives, have young and raise their young either at the cost of the lives of their prey in the case of the lion, or to the great detriment of their victims, in the case of the wicked. These habits and the disorder they create are part of the divine economy. It would seem that, much as Job, his friends and probably some readers, too, would wish it were not so, the message of the divine rhetoric is that, like the lion, the wicked will always be present causing disorder in the lives of their victims. Furthermore, they will have children who will grow up to cause disorder in the future in the lives of victims. As I have already said, one of the implications arising from God’s speech is that not all animals which could

122 Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.1.1.
123 Section 7.1.2 above.
be prey are prey. It may be deduced, too, from the human rhetoric, that not all human beings are victims (the friends have given advice on how not to be a victim, which, ironically, is to turn to God for protection) and so their lives are not disordered by the wicked just as the lives of some potential animal prey are not destroyed though not because they are protected by God. That being so, in the human part of creation there is both order, for the wicked who need victims and for those who are not their victims, and also disorder, for victims of the wicked just as, in the animal world there is order for the lion and the prey which has evaded predation, and disorder for the prey which has been caught.

Turning to the second link, Job, in his seventh speech in the human dispute, asserts that, unhindered by God, whose “times (׃) are not kept and whose “days (׃) are not seen (24.1), the wicked, acting as predators and hunters, “seize flocks” (24.2), “the donkey of the orphan” and “the widow’s ox” (24.3), “the orphan child” and “the infant of the poor” (24.9) forcing the “poor of the earth” to “hide themselves” (24.4). Need drives the poor to go “[l]ike wild asses (ך) in the desert (מדבר) to scavenge in the wasteland (ערבה) food for their young” (24.5). Human prey are driven to a place they see as alien and inhospitable, where “wet with the rain of the mountains (暮らし), (they) cling to the rock (צער) for want of shelter” (24.8). The rock here, as I have argued, must be interpreted as a metaphor for sustenance of which they have little, and for God who is indifferent to their plight. The place to which the poor are driven is the place that is inhabited by wild asses (ך), set “free” by a beneficent God who has “loosed” their “bonds” (39.5), who are sustained in the “steppe (ם) which is their “home (רבי)’” (39.6), and are free to range the “mountains (ך)’” for “pasture” (39.8). The same God is seen in two very different ways by the two very different inhabitants of the same place. For the indigenous resident,

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124 Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7.
the wild ass, God has given it freedom (39.5) and given it a “home” and, to sustain its life, the “mountains as its pasture” (39.8). The poor, on the other hand, unwilling newcomers, cold and “wet with the rain of the mountains” have, “for want of shelter”, to “cling to the rock” (24.8) which provides meagre sustenance. God, the rock, far from being the beneficent God of the wild ass, is indifferent to their plight. The same place is seen in two very different ways by its two very different inhabitants. For the poor, prey of the wicked, it is a place of deprivation and disorder, but for the wild ass it is a place of well-being and order, but, and this is unstated, an order which may turn to disorder if the wild ass becomes the prey of the lion. Perceptions are entirely dependent on the situation of the one doing the perceiving.

This part of the divine speech (38.39-39.30) engages with two notions about earth current in the poet’s day, the first of which is that earth is divided into the civilised and the wild, and the second is the belief that a place constructed as a temple (38.4-7) is a place of unalloyed well-being for its inhabitants.

Since most of the animals in this passage (38.39-39.30) are creatures of the wild, this passage must be about the wild place with the exception of the place occupied by the horse and perhaps, the ostrich, provider of goods for humans. That being so, the questions to be asked are what the divine speech is saying about a part of earth regarded by the ancients as a place which is alien and to be feared and how far removed is that place is from the civilised place. God is saying that order and disorder exist in the wild place as they do in the civilised place. The example given of disorder in the latter place is the conflict and death in which the horse participates (39.19-25). In both places, life begins, is sustained, and ends, sometimes prematurely. In the wild place, as may be understood from the divine rhetoric, whether or not life begins, whether or not once begun, it is a life of well-being or ill-being, and whether or not its end is timely, has nothing to do with the
moral worth, or lack thereof, of the bearers of that life. Of the civilised place, the friends, and formerly Job, would say that whether or not life begins, whether or not once begun it is a life of well-being or ill-being, and whether or not its end is timely, has everything to do with the moral worth, or lack thereof, of human beings. Since the divine speech is a response to Job and his friends, all, particularly the latter, concerned with human life, God makes the connection between the predator lions of the wild place and the wicked humans of the civilised place, and between their animal prey and their human victims, in order to address the human preoccupation with disorder caused by human wickedness. The friends believe that by living a life of piety and virtue, they can protect themselves from disorder. God says that they cannot and that order and disorder are a part of life wherever it is lived. Truths coming from the wild place inform the inhabitants of the civilised place. The borders between the wild and the civilised appear to be porous. There is not only a transfer of truth from the wild to the civilised, there is movement in the other direction too. People transfer from the civilised to the wild, the poor (24.5) and the outcasts (30.8), though not willingly. Two of the animals living in the wild, the ass and the ox, are members of species which can and do live in both places. Finally, the wild is sustained by the civilised when the eagle spies the dead of civilised conflict and brings it back to its young (39.30).

The second notion examined by the poet is the Mesopotamian idea that a building constructed to be the dwelling of a deity points to the presence there of the deity which was an assurance of well-being and order within and without, a state which would only be changed by the withdrawal of the deity.\textsuperscript{125} Creation of the earth is described using an extended temple building metaphor and its completion was celebrated with joy and singing. Earth, protected from the sea, is a place of stability and permanence which provides a place for all of its inhabitants. God makes clear in his speech that he is present

\textsuperscript{125} Section 7.2.3.1.3.1 above.
on earth and he is involved with those inhabitants, not directly but through proxies, such as parents and through the establishment of systems which not only support them in the present but also ensure their continuation into the future. There is on earth freedom and laughter, hunger is satisfied and young are born. Superficially, there is order and wellbeing on earth but this order comes at a cost; some face capture, fear and death. Their disorder and ill-being is a price they pay for the maintenance of earth and its animal life as it has been created. Order and well-being are not universal on the earth described by God, even though its construction and completion are likened to the building of a house for a deity. A pointer to disorder in God’s house, is the arrangement of the animals named as its residents; the first pair and the last are carnivores and the three pairs between them are herbivores. Order for the outer pairs depends on disorder for the inner pairs. Perhaps significantly, the first animal named is the lion and the last the eagle. They ‘bookend’ the list of animals and bring to mind the mythological monster, the Anzu, a creature half eagle and half lion with the potential to create cosmic disorder. A deity, Ninurta, hunted and vanquished Anzu thereby rescuing creation, but God, far from taking up arms against the lion and eagle, preserves their life.

In the next section, which concerns the upper level of the cosmos, I will continue my exploration of issues to do with order and disorder focusing on the way in which this level of creation affects life on the middle level of creation, including human life.

7.2.3.1.4 The Upper Level of the Cosmos – Sky (Job 38.12-15, 19-38)

126 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.2.
God’s attention to this level of creation is focused on the sky’s luminaries, named in the case of the stars (38.31-33), but unnamed in the case of the sun (38.12-15 19-20), and on meteorological phenomena (38.22-38) which have their origin in the sky. Of the motifs common to human and divine speeches which I have identified, the most important for the section on celestial bodies are place, time, and darkness and light.

7.2.3.1.4.1 *Celestial Bodies (Job 38.12-15, 19-20, 31-33)*

Essential for order in human life, are the short time periods which together make the diurnal rhythm of night and day. Job is asked “[h]ave you commanded the morning . . . and caused the dawn to know its place (מקם)” (38.12). Job has not and cannot, but God does. The word “place” means the right and proper place of dawn in the sky on its horizon, the place where earth meets sky, and also, and more importantly, I suggest, its right and proper place in time as the daily point at which light and darkness are separated. Not named is the celestial body, the sun, whose rising brings the “dawn”, which, personified, has a “place” from where it “might take hold of the skirts of the earth (ארץ), and the wicked be shaken out of it” (38.13). The sun god, Shamash, was also the god of justice in the Mesopotamian pantheon. Light exposes wickedness. The time, which is dawn, has an effect on place which is earth in the exposure of wickedness or disorder in that place. Job has said (24.13-17) that the hours of darkness were favoured by the wicked for carrying out their misdeeds. In this passage light not only exposes wickedness, it also limits wickedness by limiting the hours of darkness so limiting the disorder which is created by the wicked. In addition, the wicked will suffer some kind of penalty by the withholding of “light (אור)” (38.15) which here, since the wicked are already exposed

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127 Section 7.2.2 above.
129 I noted in Chapter 5, that the metaphorical meanings of light (אור), included well-being.
by the light of day, must have a metaphorical meaning and points to a lack of well-being. In addition, “their uplifted arm is broken” (38.15) signifying not only injury to the wicked but a curtailment, through that injury, of their misdeeds. The coming of the dawn is an event which brings order, which exposes the wicked who create disorder, shakes them out of their places of concealment, and disables them, but it does not eliminate them.

Following a digression on the netherworld and the primordial deep (38.16-18), God returns to the subject of light and dark (38.19-20). In this later passage, light (אור) and darkness (חשך) have both literal and metaphorical meanings and the latter is what they most often have in Job. Separated by the daily coming of dawn (38.12), darkness and light, understood literally, both have a period of time which is a place in time, to which they belong. God asks “[w]here is the way to the dwelling of light and where is the place (מקם) of darkness that you make take it to its territory and that you may discern the paths to its home (בית)? Surely you know” (38.19-21a). Job does not know. Both light and darkness are personified and both have a place; “light” has a “dwelling” and there is a way to it (38.19) and “darkness” has a “place” which is also its “territory and its home (בית)” with paths leading to it (38.19, 20). If light and darkness are understood metaphorically, God’s rhetorical question of him states that Job knows neither the place nor time of order which is life and well-being (light), or disorder which is death and ill-being (darkness). That order and disorder are part of creation and that they will come, is as certain as the following of day by night and since Job does not know the “way to the dwelling of light” (38.19) nor the “paths” to the “home” of darkness (39.20), there is nothing he can do to bring about one or avert the other.

130 Section 7.2.3.1.2 above.
131 Light (אור) has a figurative meaning in 3.16, 20; 12.22, 25; 18.5, 6, 18; 22.28; 25.3; 29.3, 24; 30.26, as does darkness (חשך) in 5.14; 10.21; 12.22, 25; 15.22, 23, 30; 17.13; 18.18; 19.8; 20.26; 22.11; 23.17; 29.3.
Also important for life on earth are the longer periods which are the seasons regulated by the heavenly bodies (38.31-33). The constellations named here are the “Pleiades” and “Orion” (38.31), “the Mazzaroth”\(^{132}\) and “the Bear with its children” (38.32), all of which, apart from “the Mazzaroth” featured in Job’s second speech of the human dispute (9.9).\(^ {133}\) In my study of that speech I drew attention to Mesopotamian thinking on the movement of stars as markers of seasons and, thus, regulators of human activity. They are creators of cosmic order, undone, Job claims, by a destructive God “who commands the sun, and it does not rise; who seals up the stars” (9.7). Here, God asserts, through rhetorical questions asking if Job has power to control the constellations (38.31), or if he even knows “the ordinances of the heavens” so that he can “establish their rule on the earth (ארץ)” (38.33), that he does not but that God does have that knowledge and that power which he exercises, so preserving order in the skies and on earth. In these verses (38.31-33), the stars, for example, “the Mazzaroth in their season (עַת) (38.32)”, move in an ordered way along given paths for a known period of time. Times which are seasons are fixed by the movement of constellations and so the order of one season followed by another is established on earth. Seasonal change, bringing rain and dryness, and particularly its predictability, is necessary for the survival on earth of life - plant, animal and human. In this passage, the poet establishes the succession of seasons, the larger periods of time important for order on earth.

7.2.3.1.4.2  

**Meteorological Phenomena (Job 38.22-30, 34-38)**

\(^{132}\) It is not known which heavenly body is meant מְצָרָה. A great many suggestions have been put forward by, for example, Dhorme (Job, 589-59), Pope (Job, 301), Gordis (Book of Job, 450) and Clines (Job 38-42, 1063-1064) and no consensus reached.

\(^{133}\) Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.2.
Given the importance for life on earth of seasonal change in weather patterns, it is not surprising that these two sections of the divine speech are mainly about precipitation in its various forms. Fashioned by the seasons into its different forms, are “snow” and “hail” (38.22), “rain (שָׁטַף)” (38.25), “rain (מָטר)” and “dew (טָל)” (38.28), “ice (קרָא)” and the “hoarfrost of heaven” (38.29), and “a flood of waters” (38.34), and all are available for disposal by God who portrays himself as both a warrior God (38.22-23) and a storm God (38.24-27, 34-35), a portrayal reminiscent of the storm gods of the ancient Near East, most notably Enlil.139

God, the warrior, keeps arsenals for “snow” and arsenals for “hail” (38.22) which are “reserved for the time (עַתָּה) of trouble, for the day (יָום) of battle and war” (38.23). His maintenance of a supply of weapons is the warrior God’s assurance that there will be times and days of disorder. Hail, which comes in a storm, is a destructive weather phenomenon and invariably seen so in the Hebrew Bible. Sent by the storm God, it destroys people but more often crops and livestock, thus threatening the livelihood of human beings. Snow in heavy falls, may be damaging but when melted is life sustaining as Job had observed when talking of torrent beds (6.15-17). In flood they supported

134 The questions concerning the origin of rain, dew, ice and hoarfrost (38.28-29) have been the subject of debate. In the background are ancient Near Eastern traditions which have procreation linking meteorological phenomena and deities (Clines, *Job 38-42*, 1111; Gregory Vall (“‘From Whose Womb did the Ice Come Forth?’ Procreation Images in Job 38.28-29,” *CBQ* 57 [1995], 507). Vall (“‘From Whose Womb,” 513) after analysing similarly structured questions elsewhere in *Job* and the Hebrew Bible, has concluded that Yahweh is not the parent of rain or other forms of precipitation but is responsible for sending rain. Alter (*The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 101) says that the language of procreation is figurative. Understanding the question to be rhetorical and the answer to be “no” are Fox (“Job 38,” 58) and Clines (*Job 38-42*, 1111).

135 BDB 1009: “flood.”

136 A study by H. – J Zobel (“כָּרָא; מָטָר; זַרְעָה,” *TDOT* 8: 250-265.) has found that the kind of rain that is מָטָר, is both “intensive” and “penetrating” and falls in winter. It would, therefore, be particularly important for agriculture and pasturage and thus to animals and human beings.

137 B. Otzen (“כָּרָא,” *TDOT* 5: 323-330) has noted that the dew of summer is as necessary for the preserving of life as winter rain. In nearly all cases where dew is mentioned, it is seen as the gift of Yahweh who is also the giver of fertility. It is, thus, important for creation. A symbol of well-being, Job describing himself in former times said “my roots spread out to the waters, with the dew all night on my branches” (29.19).

138 Ibid., 324. In the Hebrew Bible, “hoarfrost” is thought of as frozen dew.

139 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.1.
caravans and when they dried up, the caravans perished (6.18). Out of the disorder of snow comes the temporary order of melted snow. The warrior/storm God may be the bringer of disorder to humankind but he is also, for a short time, the bringer of order.

The storm God knows the “way” to where “the light (אור)\(^{140}\)” is distributed and to “where the east wind (מץ)\(^{141}\)” is scattered upon the earth (38.24). He has “cut a channel for the torrents of rain (GetSize) and a way for the thunderbolt” (38.25) so that he may “bring rain (מגש) on a land (ארץ) where no one lives, on the desert (מדבר), which is empty of human life, to satisfy the waste (שהא) and desolate land (משאה), and to make the ground put forth grass” (38.26-27).\(^{142}\) The storm though violent, is creative and intended to be so, directed along channels and ways to bring rain to a particular place, the wild uncultivated place, the desert (מדבר) to which the poor were driven (24.5), and the waste (שהא) and desolation (משאה) inhabited by society’s outcasts (30.3).\(^{143}\)

After a digression on the celestial bodies (38.31-33), the storm God returns to his management of weather phenomena. A series of rhetorical questions establishes that Job cannot, but God can call from the “clouds” a “flood of waters” (38.34) and can summon to him “lightnings” (38.35). Job is asked “[w]ho has put wisdom in the inward parts

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\(^{140}\) The unlikely parallelism of “light” and “east wind” has led to many suggested alterations to this word. For example, Dhorne (Job, 586) suggests “mist (אד”), Gordis (Book of Job, 436), “air currents (אוור”), Habel (Book of Job, 522) would retain אור and translate it as “lightning” as it has been in in the Elihu speeches (36.32; 37.3, 11,15), with which Newsom (“Job, 604) agrees. Clines (Job 38-42, 1109) would revocalize אור making it עור “heat” which, created by the east wind has its own storehouse. In a passage about storms “lightning” would be appropriate.

\(^{141}\) This is the same wind that, in Zophar’s thinking, carries off the wicked (27.21).

\(^{142}\) These verses have been used by Gene Tucker (“Rain on a Land Where No One Lives: The Hebrew Bible on the Environment,” JBL 116 [1997]: 14) to support the idea that the divine speeches are non-anthropocentric.

\(^{143}\) There is an inconsistency in God’ depiction of the “desert” (38.26) and the “waste and desolate land” (38.27) as uninhabited and Job’s claim that it is inhabited by the unfortunates. It is worth recalling that the desert (מדבר) was not necessarily empty of human beings, just settled human beings. Semi-arid, it was a place of pasturage for flocks of animals (see Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.7) and thus probably also transient humans. Newsom (“Job,” 604) explains the contradiction as a difference of perception. In Job’s thinking the wasteland is “dehumanized and godforsaken”, but in God’s words it is “the place that God ‘satisfies’ with rain and causes to being forth grass, an image associated with creation.”
or given understanding to the mind (םלכ), (38.36). What is being talked
about in this verse are the clouds, the subject of vv. 34 and 37a, celestial phenomena to
which God has given “understanding”, and which have substance and dimensions
including depth and thus, “inward parts”, to which God has given “wisdom”. Here, too,
there are echoes of the Mesopotamian mes, the organising principles of creation.147
Endowed with wisdom and understanding by God, the functioning of rain-bearing clouds
is regulated by that wisdom and understanding. The Creator of earth and heaven and all
that is within them, has created the systems by which they are governed and through
which the existence of earth with all its life forms is continued.148 To demonstrate this
truth, God continues, “[w]ho has the wisdom to number the clouds? Or who can tilt the
waterskins of the heavens, when the dust (עפר) runs into a mass and the clods cling
together” (38.37b-38). The coming together of water and dust creates the necessities for
the beginning of life. In so saying, God responds, with a different perspective, to Job’s
reflection on the disordering and destructive interaction of water and earth in which Job
said “the waters (מים) wear away the stones; the torrents wash away (שׁטף) the soil (עפר)
of the earth (ארץ)” (14.19).149 The God of the storm, which is violent, threatening and

144 BDB 376: “inward parts.” Dhorme’s translation (Job, 591) of this word is “ibis”, a bird reputed to be
wise and able to foretell the rising of the Nile’s waters. So Gordis, Book of Job, 452-453; Newsom,
“No,” 605; and Clines, Job 38-42. Pope (Job, 302), however, puts forward “Thoth” and Egyptian god
and Good (In Turns of Tempest, 158) agrees. Habel (Book of Job, 523) suggests “cloud canopy”.

145 BDB 967: “a celestial appearance, phenomenon.” This word has had a number of translations. Dhorme
(Job, 591) has put forward “cock”, a bird traditionally connected to the coming of rain, which would
create a nice parallel with the bird which he would have in the first half of the verse. So Gordis, Book of
Job, 452-453; Newsom, “Job,” 605; and Clines, Job 38-42. Continuing an Egyptian connection, Pope
(Job, 302) suggests “Sekwi”, the Coptic name for the planet Mercury and Good (In Turns of Tempest,
158) agrees. Habel (Book of Job, 523) suggests “my pavilion” which is a reference to the gathering storm
clouds.

146 In section 7.2.3.1.3.3 above, I suggested that in the words “wisdom” (39.26) and “command” there are
traces of the mes which govern the habits of the hawk and the eagle

147 Chapter 3, section 3.2.3.

148 Habel (Book of Job, 544) has said of moving clouds that they seem to be “imbued with a wisdom of
their own.” He adds that a significant part of this section is “the latent theme of Wisdom as the hidden
principle active in the design of the cosmos.”

149 Section 7.1.1.3 above.
potentially disordering, is also the God of order who creates life from the disorder of the storm.

By linking the darkness and light of night and day which follow each other in an unvarying diurnal pattern with the darkness and light understood as metaphors for disorder and order, God points to the inevitability of both disorder and order in creation. By linking the succession of seasons to an unvarying pattern set by the constellations, God points to the inevitability of the disorder brought by the seasons through their storms, and to the inevitability of order which is their life creating and life sustaining rain.

7.2.3.1.5 Order and Disorder in Creation – A Summary of the First Divine Speech (Job 38.2-39.30; 40.2) in Response to Job and His Friends.

I have listed seven motifs linking the human speeches to the divine speeches and important in the interpretation of the latter as a response to the former. They are: Place, Time, Darkness and Light, Progeny, Hunter and Hunted, Storm, and Warrior God. I have based my discussion of the first divine speech on these motifs.

Place is a significant motif in the divine descriptions of the three levels of creation. The most frequently used term for designating place is “earth” followed by “house”. The place which is the netherworld is unknowable to human beings a, point made by God, and so excluded from the divine panorama of order and disorder in creation, but the middle and upper levels of creation are places which can be known and are used in the divine response to the accusations of Job and to the friends too.

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Section 7.2.2.1 above.
There are two accounts dealing with the creation of the earth by God – Bildad’s (26.7-11)\textsuperscript{151} and God’s (38.4-7)\textsuperscript{152} - and one account of divine disordering of earth - Job’s (9.5-6).\textsuperscript{153} Bildad’s account imagines heaven and earth as a tent with pillars supporting the sky and preventing sky’s collapse on earth. This structure is potentially unstable and the instability comes from God at whose “rebuke” “the pillars of heaven tremble” (26.11). In Job’s account of the disordering of creation, the threat of instability is realised when divine “anger” “removes” and “overturns” “mountains” (9.5), and “shakes the earth out of its place” making “its pillars tremble” (9.6). By contrast, God’s account of the creation of earth depicts it as a permanent edifice (38.4-6) whose completion is the occasion of celebration (38.7).

The earth, in the human view, is the abode of animals (5.22; 12.7-8) and human beings (7.1; 8.9; 12.24; 20.4, 27; 24.4) and this is the divine view too, if lions are metaphors for the wicked. In the friends’ thinking, how human beings fared in the place they occupied on earth depended on their character. “Earth”, for example, was hospitable to the good (5.22) and inhospitable to the bad (15.29; 18.10, 17, 18; 20.27; 24.18), as was “house” which could be hospitable (8.17) or inhospitable (8.14, 15; 20.28; 27.18) for the same reasons. From Job’s point of view, “earth”, as much a victim of divine maleficence as he (9.5, 6, 24), could be inhospitable to the morally deserving (12.24; 24.4), and to those about whom nothing is known of their character (7.1). “House”, too, was inhospitable to the morally deserving Job (19.15), and to those about whom nothing is known of their character (7.10). “House” was, however, hospitable to the morally undeserving (21.9, 28). In the divine thinking, earth is stable and enduring, a place which provides a number of habitats each suited to the needs of its occupants - “earth” itself

\textsuperscript{151} Chapter 6, section 6.1.1.2.
\textsuperscript{152} Section 7.2.3.1.3.1 above.
\textsuperscript{153} Chapter 6, section 6.2.2.2.
“dens” and “covert” (38.40), “mountains” (39.1, 8), “steppe for (a) home” and “salt land” (39.6), and the “rock” and “rocky crag” (39.28). Whilst earth’s creatures might each have an abode allotted to them, how each of them fares in that place has nothing to do with its moral worth. Order and disorder are possible in the lives of all, the former more so for the predator and the latter more so for its prey. Earth’s inhabitants may experience order and disorder not because they deserve either but because both are part of creation. Places in which its inhabitants once experienced order could become places where they experience disorder and this notion is foreshadowed in the Prologue. Earth, once a place of order for the virtuous Job (1.1, 8, 10) becomes, for reasons unknown to him, a place of disorder (2.3, 13). The same may be said of “house” once a place of order for Job (1.10) and his children (1.4, 13, 18), it becomes a place of disorder and death (1.19) for his children, also for unknown reasons.

Connected to the motif of place, when it concerns the middle level of creation, is the motif of progeny. Giving birth to offspring and sustaining them is the means by which animate life is maintained in that place. The importance of children to a reflection on order and disorder in creation is foreshadowed by the significant part that children play in the Prologue (1.2, 4, 5, 1 3.18, 19). In the friends’ thinking children are the reward of the good (5.25; 8.19) but childlessness is the lot of the wicked (18.19), or if the wicked do have children, they will be destroyed (15.30, 33; 27.14, 15) or impoverished (20.10; 27.14). Job, on the other hand, notes that the wicked have children (21.8) who flourish (21.11-12) and he objects to the idea that children suffer because of their parents’ misdeeds (21.19). In God’s creation, earth is a place whose inhabitants give birth when the time is right (39.1), and a place which supports potential life (39.14). Procreation has nothing to do with moral worth.
Also connected to the place which is the middle level of creation is the motif of hunter and hunted, necessary for the sustaining of some of its life forms at the cost of other life forms. The friends and Job are preoccupied with the human hunter, the wicked, for which the lion is a metaphor (4.9-11; 5.12-16; 24.4-9; 29.17), and which is dealt with by God, turned hunter of the hunter, and by Job in former days. Job in his new situation, for which he blames God, has cast himself in the role of hunted and God as his hunter (10.6). God acknowledges his role as a hunter (38.39, 41) for some animals, though he has provided their parents as proxies for himself, a role which will cause the death of other animals, but having created a complex system of animal life which has some animals feed on others, he cannot be otherwise.

In his reply to Job, God draws Job’s attention to the sky, which is the place where darkness and light separate from each other and the place where time is created. Bildad has acknowledged God as the creator of time and the marker of its passage by creating boundaries between light and darkness (26.10). Job has acknowledged God as the creator of the celestial bodies (9.9) but has also claimed that God disrupts the order they create by commanding the sun not to rise and by sealing up the stars (9.7). God’s rhetoric establishes that sky, a place of order, is a place of ordinance and rule, across which celestial bodies travel along the paths determined for them, and, in so doing, create time, both day and night and seasons. These celestial bodies are the markers of the passage of time. The rhythms of night and day and of seasons, one following another, are unchanging. Sky is not only the place across which the constellations move, it provides also the unchanging places of light and darkness, which, one following another, are, alternately, the “dwelling” of “light” and the “place of darkness” (38.19). The friends believe that the time, understood as life span, which is given to an individual, is determined by that individual’s moral worth or worthlessness as is the quality of that time which may be a time of well-being or ill-being. The good live a full life-span (5.26) but
the bad die young (8.12; 15.30, 32; 22.16), and before their untimely end they can expect times of trouble (15.20; 20.28), the metaphor for which is darkness (5.14; 15.22, 23, 30; 18.6, 18; 20.26). Life and well-being, for which the metaphor is light, are the reward of piety and virtue, and untimely death and ill-being, metaphorically darkness, are the consequence of impiety and wickedness, and the choice between the two is made by individuals (22.11, 21, 28). Job, on the other hand, says that the wicked “spend their days in prosperity” (21.13), “spared in the day of calamity” and “rescued in the day of wrath” (21.30), whilst society’s leaders (not said to be wicked) grope in the darkness (12.25), a metaphor for disorder. Once he had walked in God’s “light” through “darkness” (29.3), but now God has “set darkness” on his “paths” (19.8). For Job, time which is life, is short and hard for humankind in general (7.1; 14.1, 5, 6) and for him in particular (7.6, 16; 9.25; 10.20). By wishing away a day and night which, in his view, should not have happened (3.1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 8), Job questions a creation in which there is suffering, specifically for himself. In his response to the human disputants, God shows that day and night, which are periods of light and darkness, follow each other in an unchanging pattern. By linking this diurnal rhythm to the metaphorical meanings of light and dark, God tells Job that light, understood as well-being, life and order, and dark, understood as ill-being, death and disorder, are a part of creation and that there is nothing he or his friends can do to secure order and avert disorder.

Sky is the place from which come lightning and “wind” (39.24) and so is also the place of the storm with all its possibilities for disorder and order. Storm in the Prologue had proved disastrous for Job. A weather phenomenon, it had killed his sheep, his servants (1.16) and his children (1.19). In the human speeches, however, storm is a metaphor. God crushes Job with a “tempest” (9.17), his honour is “pursued as by the wind” (30.15) and he is lifted by God on the “wind” and made to ride on it (30.22). The wicked, however, are not like straw before the wind” nor like “chaff that the storm carries
away” (21.18) unlike persons of no consequence, the windblown leaf and dry chaff pursued by God (13.25). Eliphaz has wind destroy the children of the wicked (15.30) and Zophar has wind carry off the wicked from their place (27. 20, 21). The friends see wind as a weapon to be deployed against wrongdoers and Job thinks of wind as a God’s weapon for the persecution of himself and others of no importance. The divine speeches see wind as violent but also creative. With lightning (38.24, 35), torrents of rain (38.25) and “a flood of waters” (38.34), wind is a part of the storm which brings rain and life to “the desert” (38.26) and to “the waste and desolate land” (38.27). By combining with “dust” so that it runs into a mass and the clods cling together” (38.38), the conditions are created for the beginning of new life.

Bildad’s cosmogony imagines God as a warrior in his dealings with Sea and other marine threats to order (26.12, 13). He asserts, too, that God has numberless armies to deploy (25.3). Zophar imagines God using weapons of war against the wicked (20.24). Job claims to be the victim of the warrior God (16.13-14) and his troops (10.17; 16.13; 19.12). Rejecting the warrior persona given to creator deities of some traditions and also given to him by Bildad, God, in his cosmogony (38.8-11), portrays himself as the solicitous, but firm carer of Sea, the infant of an unknown progenitor with the potential for making trouble. This trouble has been anticipated and instead of violence as a means of restraint, controls which are divine command and “prescribed bounds” (38.10) are set in place so that earth, portrayed as God's house, is safeguarded as a place on which human beings and animals can live. The warrior God, in his first speech, makes a fleeting appearance as the possessor of arsenals of weapons for use in “the time of trouble” and in “the day of war” (38.22-23).

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154 Chapter 6, section 6.1.1.2.
God in his first speech has revealed himself as a creator of a complex cosmos made up of interrelated parts. He is the builder of the earth (38.4-7), midwife to the sea (38.8-9) and prescriber of its boundaries from birth (38.10-11), the primordial controller of the celestial bodies (38.12) who has assigned to them both place (38.12, 19-20) and path (38.20, 32) and regulates them by ordinance (38.33) so that they, in turn, can establish their rule on earth (38.33). That rule has established seasons which have brought the storms (38.24-26, 34-35) which create and sustain life (38.27, 38) and, because they are violent, may also destroy life (38.22-23). Coming with the storms, are clouds imbued by God with principles which govern their outpourings so creating life on earth. The life of earth’s inhabitants is sustained by the places they are given; for example, the mountains with its “green things” (39.8), the product of the rain, are the range of the wild ass. Seasons govern the continuation of life, through procreation, for some of earth’s inhabitants (39.1-3), a life sustained by the pasturage brought into being by seasonal rain and a life which, in time, will ensure the continuation of life for other inhabitants, those who are predators. In “dens” and “covert” (38.40), on “rock” and on “rocky crag” (39.28), they are given hunters as parents by the hunter God, parents imbued by God with principles which rule their lives (39.26, 27) and which direct their provision for their young (39.27-30), so ensuring the continuing of their species. God is present in the world he created as the divine dwelling but not directly involved with its governance which is done through the systems created by him, systems which make of creation a whole, made up of interconnected parts, a whole which is ordered. Order in this creation, however, is messy and bloody; it is made up of order and disorder and without the disorder there would not be the order of creation as it is.

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155 Sinnott, (“Job 12,” 91) has noted this aspect of creation, as has Patrick (“Divine Creative Power,” 113).
In his addresses to God, Job has accused God of many wrongs directed against himself and others. Among the charges are violence, understood metaphorically. He is chastised with a rod and terrified (9.34), attacked by the hunter God (9.31; 10.16), the warrior God (10.17) and the storm God (9.17; 30.22). God persecutes him using “dreams” which “scare” and “visions” which “terrify” (7.14) and using the “might” of his “hand” (30.21). Job is oppressed (10.3) and bullied (13.25) by a God who is callously indifferent to the cries of his victim (30.20). Particularly troubling to Job, is his feeling of being under divine surveillance, which is both excessive and hostile (7.12, 16, 19, 20; 10.14; 13.27), an experience common to all humankind (7.17-18, 20; 14.3). Most troubling of all to Job is divine capriciousness. The God who created him and was once beneficent, has turned against him (10.3, 8-12), and from this has come his feeling of being the victim of divine injustice (9.28). Capriciousness is seen by Job as the root cause of God’s ill treatment of him.

The divine speeches are God’s defence of himself against Job’s accusations. He is present in creation, and since he is a watcher and a listener, he is guilty of surveillance; but his watching and listening are not hostile. He sees the needs of creation’s parts (38.26-27) and hears the cries of its needy young (38.41) and has created systems which meet need and allow the continuing of the different parts of creation. The systems, however, which maintain creation as an integrated and ordered whole, contain within them both order and disorder neither of which is deserved and neither order can be secured nor disorder averted if creation is to continue as it is. It is Job’s ignorance of what makes the earth what it is, a place of order and disorder in which he, as a part of creation, participates, that has led him to understand the disorder of his life as capricious victimisation by God. He had expected favoured treatment based on his moral worth and the retribution theology he shared with his friends but he has been disappointed. What appears, to a human being
without understanding, such as Job, to be divine capriciousness, is in reality the divinely created and divinely ordained order of the cosmos.

Job responds to God (40.3-5) - but I will delay consideration of his reply until after my reflections on the second divine speech and what it says about order and disorder in creation. Job’s replies are best analysed in a section on the credibility of divine rhetoric, its ethos.

7.2.3.2 The Second Speech (Job 40.7-41.26)

God’s second speech is dominated by descriptions of Behemoth and Leviathan. I will, as a preliminary to a consideration of this speech, look at what sort of beings they are — real-life or mythological — and I will look back at the monsters of ancient Near Eastern myths156 to see if, and how, they have influenced the Joban poet.

7.2.3.2.1 Behemoth and Leviathan - Real Animals or Mythical Monsters?

A number of scholars think of Behemoth (בֵּהָמֶה)157 and (לְוִיָּתָן)158 as real animals rather than mythical monsters. Gordis, for example, has suggested that they are the hippopotamus and the crocodile.159 Alter notes that there is nothing mythical about the

156 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.2.
157 BDB 97: “behemoth, i.e. hippopotamus.” The discovery of bones show that the hippopotamus lived in the southern Levant until at least the Iron Age (Caubet, “Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” 217). They must have been present in considerable numbers because their teeth were used for carving in workshops in several places (ibid., 233). Clines (Job 38-42, 1185) cites archaeological scholarship which provides evidence of hippopotami in Palestine from twelfth to the fourth centuries BCE.
158 BDB 531: “serpent, dragon, leviathan.” The remains of crocodile bones have been found in the river mouths of Palestine (Caubet, “Animals in Syro-Palestinian Art,” 224).
159 Gordis (Book of Job, 571) has put forward a five-point argument supporting an interpretation of Behemoth and Leviathan as real animals: (1) The first speech is about real animals; (2) the poet used hyperbole describing animals in his first speech and is doing so here; (3) both are described as peaceful creatures with Behemoth wallowing in the shallows and Leviathan able to be caught; (4) they are not, in Job, characters in a violent cosmogonic myth; and (5) the monotheistic poet was unlikely to have
description of Behemoth, the hippopotamus, and of the description of Leviathan; he says that the crocodile is a blend of the real, the hyperbolic and the mythological. Influenced by Egyptian iconography showing hippopotami and crocodiles as the quarry of the divine hunter, Horus, who on earth was the king, Keel is of the same view. Fox, who also thinks Behemoth is a hippopotamus, argues that Leviathan is a whale. Supporting an argument that Behemoth is a hippopotamus are its herbivorous diet (40.15), its enormous size and strength (40.16-18), its food source which is the land (40.20), and its daytime habitat in shallow water (40.21-23). Supporting an argument that Leviathan is a crocodile are its teeth (41.6), its scales (41.5, 7-9), and its habitat which is water (41.23-24), usually shallow (41.22).

Pope asserts that both beasts have a mythological character. He notes that in Ugaritic texts the goddess Anat conquers Leviathan and another monster which is bovine. He notes, too, that the Bull of Heaven is killed by Gilgamesh and Enkidu in the Gilgamesh epic. The Joban text does not strongly identify Behemoth with either a bull or a hippopotamus and the shallow waters frequented by Behemoth would be favoured by either animal. Pope suggests that Behemoth is a bovine mythological creature and that Leviathan is to be identified with the Ugaritic Lotan, a snake with seven heads, slain by Baal. Good’s examination of the anatomical details of the two beasts has led him to conclude that they are not the hippopotamus and crocodile but mythic beings.

made use of creatures from a polytheistic mythical background.
160 Alter, The Art of Biblical Poetry, 107. Others who think Behemoth and Leviathan are the hippopotamus and crocodile include Dhorme (Job, 619) and Clines (Job 38-42, 1178).
161 Keel, Jahwes Entegnung an Ijob, 126-156.
163 Pope, Job, 321.
164 Ibid., 322.
165 Ibid., 329.
166 Good, In Turns of Tempest, 358-361. Habel (Book of Job, 559) sees Behemoth as a symbol of chaotic forces and the creation of the poet (ibid., 559) and Leviathan as “the poet’s recreation of a mythic tradition for his own ends” (ibid., 561).
first of the great acts of God” (40.19), putting its beginnings in primordial times. Supporting an argument that Leviathan is a mythical being is his description as a fire and smoke breathing monster (40.11-13) whose “sneezes flash forth light” (41.10) and who creates fear in other mythical beings (41.17).

If they are mythological creations, the question to be asked is what type of being either or both are. Many scholars have put both creatures into one category and called them chaos monsters and even “incarnations of evil” created by God. Edward Greenstein has described them as “horribly terrifying creatures” who are “uncontrollable except to a limited degree by God.” Robertson goes further and understands the two beasts not only to symbolize the powers of chaos but also to be symbols of God’s disdain for humankind. Brenner has said that both are symbols of evil, and because they are created by God they originate from the dark side of God. Whatever control is exercised over them originates in the other side of the divine nature. Reflecting on the links between the Joban creation account and the account in Genesis 1, Samuel Balentine notes that in the latter, humans are created on the sixth day but are not mentioned in the former. Instead, there is a sixth pair of animals, Behemoth and Leviathan which, he argues are “models” for Job.

I will argue below that the two creatures are different and that their differences serve the poet’s argument on order and disorder in creation. Brown has recognised the

167 Lacoque, “Job and Religion at Its Best,” 142. So also Terrien, “The Yahweh Speeches,” 504. John Gibson (“Evil in the Book of Job,” in Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies [ed. L. Eslinger and G. Taylor; JOSOTSup 67; Sheffield: JOSOT, 1988], 408) has described Behemoth and Leviathan as “symbols” of evil with which he links the Satan of the Prologue (ibid., 417).
170 Brenner, “God’s Answer to Job,” 134.
differences and described Behemoth as the “archetypal animal, potent yet composed, that
confirms as well as guides Job on his way toward archetypal humanity.” Leviathan, on
the other hand, is a “creature of chaos” with a “fire-breathing mouth.” Fyall identifies
Behemoth with death and Leviathan with a guise of Satan.

Whilst Behemoth and Leviathan do, in several respects, resemble real animals, they
are not entirely real but neither are they entirely mythical. In an earlier chapter I have
discussed monsters as creators of disorder in the world. Myths are human creations as
are their imaginatively described monsters. The best known monster, Tiamat, the
primordial sea, acquired a body when it was necessary for Marduk to slay her and create
the cosmos from her carcase. Before that happened, the reader of Enuma elish is told, she
had created a fearsome and monstrous cohort to support her cause. Enuma elish, with all
its monsters, is a cosmogonic myth. More relevant to the second divine speech are the
monsters which appear on earth after its creation and create havoc, including the Asag,
the Serpent or Lion-Serpent, and the monster which destroyed Uruk. The last of these
monsters was a metaphor for hostile invaders, Subarians and Gutians, who were
responsible for sacking Uruk and no deity came to the rescue of the city. The Serpent or
Lion Serpent, also known as Furious Snake or Raging One, is a metaphor for an historical
incident, the infiltration by foreigners of a Sumerian city. It was killed by the deity
Tishpak. The Asag was a monster defeated by the god Ninurta. It may well have been a
metaphor for hostile Elamites at the end of the Cassite period.

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172 Brown, The Ethos of the Cosmos, 370.
173 Ibid.
174 Fyall, Now My Eyes Have Seen You, 137.
175 Ibid.
176 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.2.
177 The Baal cycle is not cosmogonic as its events take place in the supernatural realm but it has its share of
the monstrous, notably Lotan.
178 Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.2.
Many monsters were composite creatures one of which, the Anzu, I have already mentioned.\textsuperscript{179} Watanabe has said of these beings, “A composite animal is a product of human thought operations: an imaginary creature whose body parts derive from two or more animals. Each body part reflects an idea arising from that animal’s nature and perceived behaviour; different parts are combined to form a new animal.”\textsuperscript{180} I suggest that this thinking may be applied to the poet’s creations, Behemoth and Leviathan. Both resemble real animals in many ways but they are also mythical beings, Leviathan more so than Behemoth. Since neither is completely real nor completely mythical, a new term must be found for them and I suggest that “metaphor” would be appropriate. The metaphor is a way of linking two things, which here are the natural and the supernatural, the concrete and the abstract. Newsom says of the nature of the two creatures that they are “liminal creatures, betwixt and between the categories of ordinary animal and mythic being.”\textsuperscript{181} Ancient precedent, which I shall follow, allows an interpretation of these beings as metaphors.

A comparison between the two creatures will indicate what, metaphorically, they stand for. Behemoth was made by God, as was Job (40.15). “It is the first (ראשׁית דרכי)\textsuperscript{182} of the great acts of God” (40.19) a statement which, if “first” is a reference to time rather than status and worth,\textsuperscript{183} places Behemoth in a primordial time, and adds a mythical element to the creation of this beast. It is a statement, too, which connects Behemoth with Wisdom “created” by God “at the beginning (ראשׁית דרכו) of his work, the first of his acts of long ago” (Prov 8.22). Wisdom was present beside God at the creation and ordering of the cosmos (Prov 8.23-31), “daily his delight” (Prov 8.30), and, for her part, “rejoicing

\begin{itemize}
\item Section 7.2.3.1.3.3 above.
\item Watanabe, \textit{Animal Symbolism in Mesopotamia}, 7.
\item Newsom, “Job,” 615.
\item BDB 912: “beginning, chief.”
\item Habel (\textit{Book of Job}, 566) prefers the sense of “primordiality” for the term “first”. cf Gordis (\textit{Book of Job}, 477) who says “first” has overtones of “the best”, and Newsom (“Job,” 618) who considers the word to be a reference to the “superiority” of Behemoth.
\end{itemize}
before him always, rejoicing in his inhabited world and delighting in the human race” (Prov 8.30-31). A powerful creature, in this passage Behemoth is benign (in real life it is very dangerous), spending its days wallowing happily in the shallows of a river (40.21-23), as hippopotami do. Nothing is said, however, about the origins of Leviathan. It is fierce (41.2), making even the gods afraid (41.17), its teeth are terrifying (41.6) and “terror dances before it” (41.14). It is so heavily armoured (41.5, 7-9), that it is proof against weapons – “sword”, “spear”, “dart”, and “javelin” (41.18), “arrow”, “slingstones” (41.20), and “clubs” (41.21). When it sneezes “light” flashes (41.10). Fire comes out of its mouth (41.11, 13) and smoke comes from its nostrils (41.12). This creature is anything but benign. Given that the first divine speech is about order and disorder in creation, as is the whole book, it is reasonable to suppose that this motif is continued in the second divine speech and that one of the two creatures, Behemoth, represents order, and the other, Leviathan, represents disorder. By attaching the real animal to the mythical animal, thereby creating a metaphor, the poet asserts the reality of order and disorder in creation.

I will now look at the three word pictures which are the second divine speech. The first speech asked questions, mostly rhetorical, of Job, as does the second. These questions are also rhetorical and, fewer in number, apart from the first two (40.8), concerned with Job’s powerlessness in dealing with disorder. God’s questioning of Job recalls Zophar’s question of Job, “what can you do” (11.8).

7.2.3.2.2 Job the Potentate (Job 40.7-14)

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184 Habel (Book of Job, 566) distinguishes between Wisdom and Behemoth saying that “Wisdom is the first eternal principle, Behemoth the first created design.” cf Greenstein (“The Problem of Evil,” 355) who finds the connection between Wisdom and Behemoth to be “parodic.”

185 Edwin M. Good (“Job and the Literary Task,” 480) finds nothing in this passage which can link Behemoth to chaos. cf. Robertson (The Old Testament and the Literary Critic, 50) who thinks of Behemoth as symbolizing “a world of disharmony, a world impervious to and destructive of the desires and values of mankind.”
Job had accused God of many things and now God accuses Job, through rhetorical questions (40.8) of impugning the rectitude of God in order to justify his own stand on the disorder in his life and in creation in general. God made clear in his first speech the rightness, from the divine perspective, of his creation and ordering of the cosmos, a rightness which included both order and disorder in the lives of its inhabitants. Since Job, and more especially his friends, have been preoccupied with wickedness and since Job has had the temerity to challenge the divine management of earth and its inhabitants, particularly its apparent injustice, God challenges Job to do better. With savage irony he challenges the wretch on the ash heap to “deck yourself with majesty and dignity clothe yourself with glory and splendour” (40.10) so that he can “abase” the proud (40.11) and “bring them low”, and “tread down the wicked” (40.12) and then bring about their demise (40.13). His efforts would be futile which God knows because he has already said that the wicked, like lions, are part of creation. They may be exposed by the dawn and even assaulted, but they will not be eliminated. The irony becomes more biting with God’s promise of acknowledgment of Job’s victory if Job can do what God will not.187

7.2.3.2.3 Behemoth (Job 40.15-24)

This passage begins with a description of the beast (40.15-18) which ends with a statement of its vulnerability (40.19), and continues with a description of his habitat (40.20-23) which ends with a question about its vulnerability.

186 BDB 1048: “judgment . . . justice, right, rectitude.” Good (In Turns of Tempest, 19) has argued persuasively that can be translated “order” and that v.8a should be translated “Would you even annul my order?” Dick (“The Neo-Assyrian Royal Lion Hunt,” 268) says that the word means “world order”.

187 cf Brenner (“God’s Answer to Job,” 133) who interprets God’s challenge to Job to deal with the wicked as God’s admission that he cannot.
I have proposed that Behemoth be seen as a metaphor for order, a proposal which is supported by the beast’s parallel with Wisdom whose presence at the creation and ordering of the cosmos makes of her a symbol of order. The order represented by Behemoth is the order to which Job belongs, both Job and Behemoth having in common their making by God, the latter at the dawn of time. The order which Behemoth represents is powerful; depicted as the hippopotamus, it has “strength” in “its loins” and “power in the muscles of its belly” (40.16), “[i]ts bones are tubes of bronze, its limbs like bars of iron” (40.18). It has a “tail” which it makes “stiff like cedar” (40.17), thought by some to be a euphemism for a penis. If that is so, it is an assurance of the beast’s continuation through procreation, and an assurance of the continuation of the order which it represents, an assurance which is already implicit in Behemoth’s having existed since the beginning of time, and an assurance which is strengthened by the only threat to its existence being the “sword” of the one who made him (40.19). God, the warrior, is not said to be disposed to wield that sword.

Behemoth is situated somewhere near mountains from where it gets its food and “where all the wild animals play” (40.20). Job has said that mountains are the place of divine destructive deeds; God “removes mountains” and “overturns them in his anger” (9.5). He has said that they are inherently impermanent; “the mountain falls and crumbles away” (14.18). Job has said that mountains can be inhospitable to some, the poor who are “wet with the rain of the mountains” (24.8), and God has responded that they can be hospitable to others, the wild ass which “ranges the mountains as its pasture” (39.8) and which “scorns (שׂחק) the tumult of the city” (39.7). God states here that the mountains are a place of sustenance and joy. Behemoth, the symbol of order, is nourished and “wild

\[188\text{ Section 7.2.3.2.1 above.}\]
\[189\text{ Habel (Book of Job, 565) says that the words “I made just as I made you” point to a linking of Behemoth and Job through a common destiny.}\]
\[190\text{ Pope, “Job,” 324; Habel, Book of Job, 553; Newsom, “Job,” 618.}\]
animals play (קרש)" (40.20) there and it has always been so. Mountains are part of creation and go back to the beginning of time, as Eliphaz has observed (15.7), and Behemoth, too, goes back to the beginning of time.

Though reliant on the mountains for support, Behemoth spends his days in the “marsh” (40.21), in the shade of “lotus trees” surrounded by “the willows of the wadi” (40.22) from where “[e]ven if the river (נהר) is turbulent, it is not frightened; it is confident though Jordan rushes against its mouth” (40.23). The last that was heard of a “river” was Eliphaz’s pronouncement that the “foundation” of the wicked “was washed away by a flood (נהר)” (22.16) as an act of retribution. Behemoth has no fear of such retributive violence. He has a confidence (בטח) (40.23) which Zophar had promised to Job following his return to piety and virtue (11.18), but such rehabilitation is not a prerequisite for Behemoth’s confidence. The description ends with an unanswered question, “[c]an one take it with hooks or pierce its nose with a snare?” (40.24). The hunter is not named but the reader will recall that “only its Maker can approach it with a sword” (40.19). From this it can be supposed that lesser hunters will fail to capture the beast and Behemoth is safe whilst God allows his continued liberty and being. Behemoth and order are preserved by God.

7.2.3.2.4 Leviathan (Job 40.25-41.26)

The passage about Leviathan includes rhetorical questions concerning control of the beast (40.25-41.3), a description of it (41.4-16), the effect it has on deities (41.1, 17), observations on its invincibility (41.18-21), its domain and its suzerainty (41.22-26).

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191 Chapter 6, section 6.1.1.3.1.
Hunting has been an important motif in the dialogues so far, and the description of Behemoth has ended with a question about hunting. Job is now asked if he can assume the role of hunter of the crocodile, the symbol of disorder, using a “fishhook” or a “cord” to press down its “tongue” (40.25), or a “rope in its nose” or a “hook” to pierce its “jaw” (40.26). In Bildad’s thinking the wicked are the quarry of the agents of disorder who are hunters among whose tools is the “rope” (18.8-11), and Job is asked if he can make a quarry of Leviathan, symbol of disorder, using the same “rope” to control its tongue, a body part capable of causing trouble in Eliphaz’s view (5.21; 15.5). He is asked if such actions will tame the creature so that it makes “supplications” and will “speak soft words” (40.27), and if it will make a “covenant” with Job and become his “servant” (40.28), and even become a domestic pet (40.29). The questions point not the killing of Leviathan but to the control of him. Leviathan is a symbol of disorder and the management of disorder has been the major topic of the friends’ rhetoric. It was suggested that if Job followed Eliphaz’s advice, which was to “seek God” (5.8), the disorder of his life would be reversed and many benefits would come to him (5.24-26). He would, among other things, be enabled to “be in league with the stones of the field” and “the wild animals” would be “at peace” with him (5.23). Later, Eliphaz asserts that the disorder of Job’s life is brought to him by God, saying “is it for your piety that he reproves you” (22.4), adding that disorder can be changed to order if Job will “[a]gree with God, and be at peace; in this way good will come to (him)” (22.21). Bildad had urged Job to “seek God” (8.5) and be “pure and upright” for, if he did, he would be restored to his “rightful place” (8.6), a place of order. Zophar had promised that if Job were to “direct (his) heart rightly”, were to “stretch out (his) hands toward him” (11.13), and were to distance himself from “iniquity” and “wickedness” (11.14), the disorder of his life would be changed to order in many ways best summarised by the words “its darkness will be like the morning” (11.17).
The questions God asks Job (40.25-31) are rhetorical and point to Job’s impotence when confronted by disorder, here symbolised by Leviathan. The prospect of the consequences of engaging with the beast is terrifying (40.32; 41.1), bringing to mind ancient Near Eastern traditions, such as the Serpent/Lion-Serpent myth,\(^{192}\) *Enuma elish* and the Baal cycle, which had the gods fearing to confront a monster. If Job can do nothing about Leviathan or the disorder he represents, the questions to be asked are: who can control Leviathan, or is he beyond all control?

The answers are found in 41.2-3, a text which has been interpreted in different ways.\(^{193}\) A key to their interpretation are the pronouns used, and whether they are first or third person pronouns, and particularly the pronoun attached to “before” (41.2). The first person “me” is preferred by some,\(^{194}\) but others favour the third person “him”.\(^{195}\) Relevant to the choice made are the pronouns of the following verse (41.3) which are first person but which would require emending to third person if the previous verse’s pronoun is so emended. The choice of pronoun affects the meaning of the text significantly. The issues concern the location of ultimate power – either it is with God or it is with Leviathan. If the third person pronoun is chosen for 41.2b it points to ultimate power belonging to Leviathan (“Who can stand before it?”). If the first person pronoun is chosen it points to ultimate power belonging to God (“Who can stand before me?”). If the first person pronoun is adopted there is no need to emend the pronouns of the following verse, a point in favour of the first person. God’s claim to ultimate power is followed by God’s claim that everything “under the whole heaven” (41.3), belongs to him, including, doubtless,

\(^{192}\) Chapter 3, section 3.2.4.2.

\(^{193}\) Newsom (“Job,” 622-623; *The Book of Job*, 251-252) has set out the difficulties in determining the meaning of these verses.


\(^{195}\) For example, NRSV; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 527; Pope, *Job*, 335; Gordis, *Book of Job*, 483; Newsom, “Job,” 623; Clines, *Job 38-42*, 1146.
Leviathan. It should be noted that the divine speeches have nowhere conceded that supreme power belongs to any other than God, and it seems improbable that they do now and so the pronoun should be first person, “me”. The verse (41.2) makes a statement about Leviathan’s intimidating ferocity before stating that he is, nevertheless, subject to God. If power over Leviathan and disorder belongs to God, the questions to be asked are: has he exercised his power, does he exercise it or will he exercise it? A further question could be asked but is not: can God be persuaded to exercise his power on behalf of human beings whose lives are disordered and who would be willing to reach an accommodation with God in which piety and virtue would be rewarded with order. On these questions, God is silent.

Subject though Leviathan is to divine control, a description of him (41.4-18) demonstrates unqualified admiration for the beast, God saying “I will not keep silence concerning its limbs, or its mighty strength, or its splendid frame” (41.4). It is strong (41.4, 14), it is fearless (41.25), “there is terror (terrorism) all around its teeth (terror)”(41.6), “terror dances before it” (14.14), making even the gods “afraid” (41.17). No air reaches it (41.8), instead, breathing “fire (שא)” from its mouth (41.11) and “smoke” from its nose (41.12), it is a symbol of the catastrophic disorder which can befall human beings (1.16; 15.34; 18.5; 20.26; 22.20). Its “heart is as hard as stone” (41.16) and its outer covering is impenetrable (41.7-9). so that it cannot be injured by any weapon (41.18, 20-21) whether it is “sword”, “spear” “dart” or “javelin ” (41.18), or “arrow” and “slingstones” (41.20), or clubs and javelins” (4.21), counting “iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood” (41.19).

A contentious verse, its interpretation seems to hinge on the translation of בְדוּא. It can mean “his limbs” (BDB 94) or “his boasting” (BDB 95). Choosing the latter translation, Habel’s translation (Book of Job, 551) is “[d]id I not silence his boasting”. Newsom (“Job,” 623) supports the second translation. The former translation is preferred by NRSV; Perdue, Wisdom in Revolt, 227; Clines, Job 38-42, 1146. Since this verse precedes an extended description of Leviathan, the former translation seems the more likely.
God continues by describing Leviathan’s domain where it is “king over all that are proud” (41.26). It belongs in the “deep (תּהום)” (41.24), the primeval waters present before creation,\(^\text{197}\) and it belongs in “the sea (ים)” (41.23), the second of God’s creations (38.8-11) and it belongs in the shallower places, “the mire (טיט)” (41.22),\(^\text{198}\) where earth and sea meet. Job and the reader will recall that at its birth, to protect earth from sea, God set a boundary between them (38.10) and commanded sea saying, “Thus far shall you come, and no farther, and here shall your proud waves be stopped” (38.11). Wherever it goes in its watery kingdom, Leviathan creates turbulence – it makes the deep boil like a pot and it makes the sea like a pot of ointment” (41.23). In the “mire”, it spreads itself like a threshing sledge” (41.22). Leviathan approaches the boundary between earth and sea and then swims away, leaving “a shining wake behind it” (41.24). The barrier is not breached. Leviathan, a denizen of primordial waters is a symbol of disorder and a being which, like Behemoth, has its origin at the dawn of time.

Behemoth, symbol of order, and Leviathan, symbol of disorder, thought of as hippopotamus and crocodile, are animals which inhabit both land and water and, when in the water, its shallower parts. The real animals, having the same habitat, can encounter each other, and, since both are dangerous, there is potential, sometimes realised, for conflict. The text hints at an awareness of this potential, describing Behemoth as having “bones” which “are tubes of bronze” and “limbs like bars of iron” (40.18), and saying that Leviathan “counts iron as straw and bronze as rotten wood” (40.27). Since the real animals have always occupied the same place and neither has been displaced nor destroyed, they would appear to have reached a modus vivendi, which is coexistence in the same place. The poet’s portrayal of Behemoth and Leviathan has both occupying the same place – shallow water – “marsh” in the case of Behemoth (40.21) and “mire” in the

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\(^\text{197}\) Section 7.2.3.1.2 above.

\(^\text{198}\) BDB 376: “mud, mire, clay.”
case of Leviathan (41.22). The description of Behemoth ended with a question which asked whether it could be taken by “hooks” and a “snare” (40.24), to which the answer must be “no” as none other than “its Maker can approach it” with a weapon which here is a “sword” (40.19 and, it would seem, he has not. Job was asked, in a series of rhetorical questions, if, using hunting tools, he could capture Leviathan to which the answer had also to be “no”, the beast was too powerful and too terrifying to approach. Since ultimate power is with God (41.2), he alone could capture it and, since Leviathan is at large, it would seem that God has not exercised his power over it, he does not now exercise that power, and there is no suggestion that he will. The conclusion must be that hippopotamus and crocodile, Behemoth and Leviathan, order and disorder, allowed by God, exist together.

7.2.3.2.5  Order and Disorder in Creation – Conclusion to the Second Divine Speech
(Job 40.7-41.26) in Response to Job and His Friends

The second divine speech, using three word pictures, Job the Potentate (40.10-14), Behemoth (40.15-24) and Leviathan (40.25-41.26), is essentially a reiteration of the notion expressed in the first in which God established that creation is ordered, but its order is made up of order and disorder and without disorder, the order of the cosmos would not be what it is. The wicked, a preoccupation of the human disputants, will, therefore, never be eliminated. The second speech, however, introduces a new issue which is to do with whether or not human beings can manage disorder, also known as Leviathan, to their advantage. The friends in the human dispute based their arguments on the belief that disorder can be changed back to order by God acting on behalf of those whose piety and virtue makes them deserving of such divine intervention. Job once shared this belief but now, whether or not God can control Leviathan is, for him,
irrelevant, because experience has told him that able to or not, God does not control Leviathan and the disorder in his life. Like it or not, Job has been shown and must understand that order and disorder are present together in creation which is made by God to be that way.

7.2.4 The Role of Emotion in the Divine Rhetoric

The friends in the human dispute have said that freedom from fear (5.21; 11.15), laughter (5.22; 8.21), confidence and hope (11.18), and peace (22.21) will come to those who turn to God, but those who do not can expect dread (15.21; 22.10), terror (15.24; 27.20), distress and anguish (15.24). Job, in the human dispute, complains of vexation (6.2), weeping (16.16, 20), grief (17.7), hopelessness (17.15; 19.10), dismay and shuddering (21.6), bitterness (9.18; 23.2) and dread (23.15), and a feeling of being the victim of injustice (9.16, 20, 28; 19.7). In the divine/human dispute, Job complains of similar emotions which are misery (7.3), hopelessness (7.6; 14.19), fear caused by God (7.14; 9.28, 34, 35; 13.21), dread (9.34; 13.21), anguish of spirit (7.11) and bitterness of soul (7.11; 10.1).

God’s second response to Job concedes that fear is present in creation. Leviathan, symbol of disorder, is the cause of fear. There is “terror (אימה) all around its teeth” (41.6) and “terror dances” before Leviathan (41.14). “When it raises itself up the gods are afraid; at the crashing they are beside themselves” (41.17). Leviathan himself has no fear (41.25) and even “laughs at the rattle of javelins” (41.21). He is not the only creature who laughs; the animals atop the mountain laugh (40.20), as do the wild ass who laughs at “the tumult of the city” (39.7) and the ostrich, a joyful bird (39.13), who laughs at the horse and the

199 Chapter 6, section 6.2.5.
200 Section 7.1.2 above.
rider” (39.18). The horse, a powerful animal, “laughs at fear and is not dismayed” (39.22). Because there is in creation both order and disorder, so too, there is laughter and fear.

7.2.5 The Credibility of God’s Speeches

There are two people to be persuaded by the divine rhetoric, Job and the reader who must judge whether or not God’s defence of himself is persuasive. It is a defence which is very largely epideictic rhetoric, using examples from creation, and amplification to persuade its hearer and reader to a particular point of view. Job’s judgment comes in two parts, the first (40.4-5) after the first of God’s speeches and the second (42.2-6) when God has finished his second address to him.

Job’s first response is in reply to God’s question and challenge. “Shall a faultfinder contend with the Almighty? Anyone who argues with God must respond” (40.2). His reply is brief. He acknowledges his insignificance saying, “I am of small account; what shall I answer you? I lay my hand on my mouth” (40.4), so adopting the response to him in his good days of people of lesser status, who fell silent and placed their hands on their mouths (29.9). Silence, however, is not necessarily submission. His addresses to God had sought answers to questions concerning his misfortunes and had also laid charges about divine mistreatment of him. His resolve to say no more suggests that the divine speech has given him food for thought which requires further rumination.

Job’s second response to God (42.2-6) is longer and has occasioned much debate as to its interpretation, particularly its final verse. Job’s meaning is difficult to determine and his words have been seen as rejection rather than a rapprochement.201 His reply

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201 Curtis, “On Job’s Response to Yahweh,” 505. Robertson (The Old Testament and the Literary Critic, 52-53) has found Jobs words to be insincere, a “tongue-in –cheek” attempt to placate God. Greenstein (“The Problem of Evil,” 359) has translated 42.6 as “I am fed up! I take pity on wretched humanity.”
begins, uncontroversially enough, with an acknowledgment that God is omnipotent and that “no purpose of (his) can be thwarted” (42.2). He continues with a reiteration of God’s words to him in similar but not identical terms; 42.3a (“who is this that hides counsel (עשת) without knowledge (דעת)”) is a repetition of 38.2a (“who is this that darkens counsel (עשת) by words without knowledge (דעת)”). These words may be an admission, made explicit in 42.3b, that, formerly, Job did not know what he was talking about, Job saying “[t]herefore I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me which I did not know”. There is another repetition in 42.4b (“I will question (שאל) you and you declare (ידע) to me”) of God’s words in 38.3b (“I will question (שאל) you and you shall declare (ידע) to me”) and 40.7b (“I will question (שאל) you, and you declare (ידע) to me”) following which God did indeed question Job, many times in both his speeches, but did not allow him to answer. Job’s reply is, at last, an opportunity to respond and he says “[h]ear, and I will speak” (42.4a), followed by a reminder (42.4b) that God had wanted his answers to divine questions. He goes on, “I had heard of you by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees you” (42.5). Job speaks of an earlier knowledge of God, knowledge which had been heard by the ear,202 and contrasts it with a new knowledge of God, knowledge which comes through his eyes and which he now sees. The old knowledge about God would have been shaped by the religious traditions of his community203 which he had heard. That he was aware of these traditions is made clear when he says “my eye has seen all this, my ear has heard and understood it. What you know I also know” (13.1-2a). His continued acceptance of these traditions has been challenged by his experience and by observation which has led him to conclude that, at the very least, God is capricious in his dealings with his creation.204 What he has perceived as divine capriciousness has led him to lay charges against God of maleficence directed

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202 Dhome (Book of Job, 646) translates 42.4a “I had heard of Thee by hearsay,” suggesting second-hand knowledge. So also Pope, Job, 347; Gordis, Book of Job, 491.

203 See Chapter 6, section 6.1.2.4 for the religious traditions expounded by the three friends.

204 See Chapter 6, section 6.2.3 for a discussion on Job’s observations.
at himself. Now, guided by God, he has been shown the great panorama of creation and
has seen in it the hand of its Creator. The word “see” means not only to “see” with the
eyes, but to see with the mind. What Job has just seen is what he has always seen, but the
new vision is accompanied by an understanding he did not have before. He has been
shown that what might once have been construed as capriciousness is, given his new
understanding, the order and disorder which together make creation what it is. God’s
revelation to him is sufficient to make him conclude

(42.6).

William Morrow provides three translations of this verse that the Hebrew allows.
Each clause of the verse could have at least two interpretations. He suggests that
ambiguity may have been deliberate on the part of the poet and that the choice between
interpretations depends on the verse’s context in Job’s reply, and, I suggest, on what
has preceded Job’s reply. The problems mainly concern the translation of the verbs
(משמיך) and (נחם), and the preposition (על), and also the absence of an object for

What it is that Job is rejecting or despising is not stated but given the context, which is
Job’s response following the divine speeches, “reject” would be preferable to “despise”.
He has, in speeches of judicial rhetoric, accused God of harassment, violence and caprice,
and given that God’s speeches in defence have proved Job’s charges to be unfounded, his
rejection of them is now necessary. The translation of (נחם) as “repent” is, in this context,
inapt. Job has admitted no sins, apart from minor peccadilloes, and God has not accused
him of any, so it would be strange if there were now a suggestion that Job was a sinner
who needed to repent. In this speech, Job is retracting the accusations he has levelled
against God and so (נחם) should be translated “retract”. It is significant that rejection

206 BDB 549: “reject . . . refuse . . . despise.”
207 BDB 636: “be sorry, console oneself . . . rue, suffer grief, repent.”
208 Fretheim (God and the World, 232) has said of (נחם) that it usually conveys a sense of “reversal” and that
Job is withdrawing what he has previously said about God.
and retraction are given “on dust (עפר) and ashes (אפר)” \(^ {209} \) The two disputes started with Job on an ash heap (אפר) comforted by silent friends who threw dust (עפר) on themselves (2.12). His circumstances have not changed; he is still on the ash heap and the disorder which his life has become, may not change because he cannot capture and tame disorder represented by Leviathan and he has no reason to suppose that God will, on his behalf. Despite his hopeless situation, he acknowledges not only the divine “purpose” which cannot “be thwarted” (42.2), but also the “things too wonderful for me, which I did not know” and withdraws his charges with no expectation of any reward, nor any improvement in his circumstances. In so saying and so doing, Job answers the Satan’s question “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (1.9). The answer must be, “yes, he does”. Job, with nothing to gain from it, is a man of completely disinterested piety.

The other person to be persuaded by God’s rhetoric is the reader who knows that Job is the undeserving recipient of misfortune and is most probably on Job’s side in his disputes with his friends and with God, and who feels pity for him, possibly mixed with fear that a similar misfortune could befall her/him. That Job is persuaded by God’s speeches may help some readers to be persuaded, \(^ {210} \) but the question to be asked is: of what are they persuaded? Job’s enigmatic words of 42.5 are no help because he does not elaborate on what he has seen. Clues to the answer may be found in there being several different opinions on the meaning of the divine speeches. I suggest that if readers are persuaded, they are persuaded of whatever they believe the divine rhetoric means. Thus there are not only several meanings but, arising out of those meanings, several different possible reasons to be persuaded. Whether or not the poet intended Job’s words to be so mysterious we cannot know but it leaves open to the reader many reasons to be persuaded.

\(^ {209} \) Some interpreters (for example Habel, (Book of Job, 575) and Dailey (“And Yet He Repents – on Job 42.6,” ZAW 105 (1993): 207) translate the phrase “of dust and ashes” pointing to an abandonment of mourning of which dust and ashes are the symbol.

\(^ {210} \) cf McKeating (“The Central Issue of the Book of Job,” 245) has said that though Job may be satisfied, the reader finds it difficult to know why.
It may be that meaning is found when the sympathetic and perhaps apprehensive reader brings her/his story to Job’s story.

7.2.6  *The Epilogue (Job 42.7-17) and Divine Verdict*

Job says no more but God addresses Eliphaz in words which point to divine approbation of Job. God says,

> you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has. Now therefore take seven bulls and seven rams, and go to my servant Job, and offer up for yourselves a burnt offering; and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly; for you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has done. (42.7-8)

God last spoke of Job as “my servant” in the Prologue when, extolling his virtue to the Satan, he described him as “a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil” (1.8), an assessment he repeated of his “servant Job” in 2.3, an assessment which, when first uttered, caused the Satan to ask his question “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (1.9). The use in the Epilogue of the word “servant” suggests that the relationship between God and Job is at least restored if, from God’s point of view (God has, after all, come to speak to him), it was ever broken throughout the long disputes which were vehicles of robust questioning of God, complaining about God and accusing God. That Job’s intercessions on behalf of his friends would be effective in preventing divine action against them point to God’s high regard for his “servant”.

The Epilogue tells of the restoration of Job’s fortunes,\(^{211}\) an ending which has perplexed some interpreters who view it as a reversal of the stand taken in the dialogues

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\(^{211}\) McKeating (“The Central Issue of the Book of Job,” 244) sees the Epilogue as Job’s artistic rounding off.
against retribution theology. If that were all that the dialogues were about, Job’s new wealth and family would be problematic. If, however, the dialogues and especially the divine speeches are about the existence together of order and disorder in creation, there is nothing untoward about order being followed by disorder as happened to Job, nor about order following disorder as is about to happen to Job, and neither order nor disorder is deserved. If a human being can accept that order and disorder are an inescapable part of creation, neither the hope for order nor a fear of disorder can be an inducement to piety and virtue.

Job has been given the form of a dispute poem which has, as its third part, a divine verdict proclaiming the winner of the dispute. There are two disputes in Job – firstly, the dispute between Job and his friends and secondly, the dispute between Job and God. The divine verdict (42.7-8) on the human dispute is pronounced twice in favour of Job and I discussed this verdict in my previous chapter on the human dispute. Reconciliation between the disputing parties is a feature of some dispute poems, Summer and Winter and Ewe and Wheat, and the dispute between Job and his friends ends in reconciliation. Instructed by God, Job intercedes on behalf of his friends to spare them the punishment that God intends to mete out to them for their “folly” (42.8). There is another dispute, however, between Job and God, but there is no pronouncement on the winner. The most obvious winner is God because Job has retracted his accusations and acknowledged not only divine omnipotence, but also that in the creation he has been shown he has seen “things too wonderful for me, which I did not know” (42.3). In addition, Job’s words of 42.2-6 have demonstrated that Job “fear(s) God for nothing” and

212 Kember Fullerton, “The Original Conclusion,” 126-127. Clines (“Job’s Fifth Friend,” 245) once thought that the Epilogue reaffirmed retribution thinking, but now is having second thoughts. Habel (Book of Job, 584) interprets Job’s restoration as an act of grace rather than a reward. Newsom (“Job,” 634) argues that the dissonance of this ending is deliberate on the author’s part and allows the reader further reflection on the “moral basis for divine-human relations.”

213 Chapter 3, section 3.4.

214 Chapter 6, section 6.2.6.
so God has won his argument with the satan. The satan was wrong and God’s assessment of Job has been vindicated. The poet, however, provides subtle pointers to a different winner, Job. Two dispute poems, *Hoe and Plough* and *Summer and Winter*, have the winner given a monetary reward by the losing disputant. Job is also rewarded; he has his fortunes restored twofold by God and is given a new family. In what way can Job be considered a winner in the divine/human dispute? Job has never sought restitution for what he has lost, he has only hoped, many times, for an encounter with God (9.16, 34-35; 13.3, 14-18, 22; 14.15; 19.25-27; 23.3-7) and sought reasons for his loss (10.2-7; 13.23; 23.5-7; 31.35-37). From God, his disputant, he sought an understanding of his circumstances, and in God’s words he has found it. The real winner in the dispute between God and Job is Job.

7.3 *Conclusion to the Rhetoric which is the Book of Job*

Aristotle said of rhetoric that there were three elements – speaker, speech and hearer – and it is the last which is the most important. The hearer is the one to be persuaded by the speaker who crafts rhetoric to that end. The speaker is the poet of *Job*, the speech is the Book of Job, and the hearer is its reader. Epideictic rhetoric, *Job* is intended to persuade the reader to think in a particular way about order and disorder in creation. The poet investigates these notions from the point of view of a victim of disorder. First he establishes in a mythical Prologue that Job is both pious and virtuous but experiences a series of calamities which, unbeknown to him but known to the reader, are allowed by God. At the outset, he creates in the reader feelings of pity for Job, the greater because Job is undeserving of disaster.
The reader for whom Job is written is the reader of the poet’s day to whom certain ideas were well known. To explore the issues arising out of Job’s situation, the poet introduces three friends who will offer traditional thinking on securing order and avoiding disorder, which is that both are deserved, either by piety and virtue or by impiety and wickedness. A person’s circumstances are an indicator of his moral worth. They offer to Job ways of reversing his misfortunes which are a return to piety and a renunciation of iniquity. They hold to a cosmology which allows that by managing themselves in a particular way, they can ‘manage’ God who will reward them with order in their lives. Job’s experience has taught him that such thinking is flawed. He never deviated from a life of piety and virtue but his life is disordered. He speaks not only of his own circumstances but of the misfortunes of other categories of people and of divinely created disorder for the earth. He concedes that God can be, and has been, both creative and ordering but is also destructive and disordering. His cosmology is shaped by despair. The disputes between the humans become increasingly acrimonious, which serves only to add to the sympathy of the reader who knows that Job is telling the truth. In addition, the poet at the start of Eliphaz’s rhetoric undermines his arguments by the use of equivocal words, a ploy which alerts the perceptive reader at the outset that the friends’ orthodoxy is fallacious. The reader of the poet’s day, and of later days, is confronted with the reality that orthodox theology does not hold true for everybody and that disorder and suffering need a fresh perspective.

When the humans reach an impasse, God enters the debate and provides for Job a panoramic display of creation in which he is shown a cosmos that is enduring and ordered in its structure but for the life which it supports there is both order and disorder. The cosmos that Job sees is ordered in that its interconnected parts work together to ensure the continuing of creation. Within that order, however, is disorder for some of its parts and if that were not so, the world that Job sees could not be what it is. He is shown two
beings, Behemoth and Leviathan, which are a blend of the real and the mythical and are symbols of the order and disorder which exist together in creation. The ‘realness’ of these creatures affirms the reality of what they symbolise. Job now understands that the disorder which he had experienced and which he had once supposed was divine capriciousness is actually the disorder present in creation. Human beings are part of creation and so they participate in creation in which there is both order and disorder to which they may be subject. That the truth of God’s words is to be believed is borne out by the fact that the friends, recognising that order and disorder are present in human life, subscribe to a theology which addresses this very issue and attempts to manage it. Where they erred was in supposing that it could be managed. Job, too sees both order and disorder in creation, knows that they cannot be controlled and believed, until his encounter with God, that his misfortunes were the consequence of divine violence. Now he knows otherwise. Whether or not the sympathetic reader was or is persuaded that disorder is an inbuilt part of creation, as is order, only that reader could or can decide. One reader, at least, is persuaded.
CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSION

I have argued that *Job* is, more than anything else, a book about creation theology, the terms of which include “beginning” and “ending”, or, for the animate parts of creation, “birth” and “death”. What happens between those two events, whether it is order, understood as well-being and survival for an expected time, or disorder, understood as ill-being and untimely death, must also belong to creation theology. Order and disorder as topics of Joban rhetoric have been acknowledged briefly by scholarship but there is a need for an in-depth exploration of the subject, a gap in interpretation which this study has attempted to address by focusing on order and disorder to be found in creation in the Book of Job.

In order to explore the theme of order and disorder in creation, I have used for my interpretation of the text, Aristotle’s precepts for persuasive rhetoric. These have not been used till now for the interpretation of this work. Previous rhetorical criticism has focused on *Job*’s composition and style but not on its persuasive ends. One of his precepts was that persuasion should begin with “the notions possessed by everybody” which I have taken to mean the cultural milieu of the poet and the original readers. In this milieu was a literary genre known as the dispute poem the format of which bears a striking resemblance to the format of *Job*. The genre is little known to biblical scholarship and has not, until now, been used in an interpretation of this book. I believe that approaching the text in terms of Aristotle’s persuasive rhetoric and treating *Job* as a dispute poem has led to fresh insights into the interpretation both of the text as a whole and of its component parts.
Order and disorder are both a part of creation and, desiring one and fearing the other, it is human to look for ways to secure one and avert the other and this is brought out by five Mesopotamian texts on suffering. A means of achieving this is to apply to a deity or deities for help. This then brings into play the human relationship with the divine which is a relationship of dependence based on the need of the supplicant. It also brings into play what are perceived to be the requirements of the deity or deities to ensure her/his cooperation in addressing those needs. One text points to human failure to meet the requirements of a sufferer’s god as the cause for suffering, and others to the capriciousness of that god, and some will recommend ways of regaining divine favour. Other texts express complete mystification as to the reasons for suffering and two offer an explanation which is that it is rooted in humanity, one saying that no human is sinless and the other that human beings were created by the gods to be perverse. For good or ill, the gods are involved in human life. The Joban poet joins this conversation which, he recognizes, is both universal and timeless and so a conversation appropriate for the community he is addressing.

He does so by composing Job, using the genre of a dispute poem. Dispute poems begin with a Prologue, nearly always mythological, which gives a foretaste of the dispute to follow and introduces the disputants. An ancient folktale, into which have been inserted two celestial arguments and their consequences, has changed the old story from folktale to myth, making of it Job’s mythological Prologue which provides the background to what is to follow and introduces the disputants. Prologues of dispute poems are followed by a dispute between two parties, each speaking alternately until they reach an impasse. Job’s Dialogue consists of two disputes, the first between Job on the one hand and his friends on the other, and the second between Job who addresses God five times before he receives a response. In the human dispute the friends recommend to Job strategies for ending his suffering, to which Job responds. The human dispute ends in
impasse. In the divine/human dispute, Job levels charges of mistreatment against God to which God responds. Dispute poems end with a divine verdict naming the winner of the dispute. *Job* ends with an Epilogue in which God names the winner of the dispute between Job and his friends. Using the conventions of the dispute poem, *Job*’s Epilogue also points to a winner in the divine/human dispute. *Job* takes up many of the issues present in the Mesopotamian texts, the most important of which is Job’s ignorance as to the cause of misfortune until he hears from God, and introduces a new issue, a question on whether or not it is possible to have a relationship with a deity which is not self-serving.

I have argued that the dispute poem form was chosen by the Joban poet the better to set forth different points of view on order and disorder in creation. The dispute between Job and his friends raises issues best addressed to and by God, necessitating the poet’s creation of another dispute, that between Job and God. The two disputes are, thus, closely connected but they resolve the problems of order and disorder differently. As a result, the first dispute produces two different cosmologies, the friends’ and Job’s, and the second dispute produces a third cosmology, God’s.

The arrangement for rhetoric recommended by Aristotle is almost congruent with the format of a dispute poem. Aristotle said that the two essentials for effective persuasion were statement and argument but he allowed a prologue and epilogue, too. The rhetorical “extra” added to the dispute poem form is the statement. I have argued that Job’s first speech (Job 3) which is protest, questioning, and challenge to God, together constitute a statement about suffering in creation, in particular that part of creation which is himself. Statement made, argument follows that takes the form of the two disputes. I have looked at each speech in both disputes and classified them as one of Aristotle’s three speech categories - deliberative, judicial and epideictic – to determine their purpose. In the human dispute four of the friends’ speeches are deliberative and the rest epideictic, as are all of
Job’ speeches in response to the friends. In the human/divine dispute four of Job’s addresses to God are judicial and the rest epideictic. God’s speeches in his defence against charges laid against him must be categorised as judicial rhetoric but they are also very largely epideictic speeches.

Most of Job consists of speeches, each of which is intended to persuade its hearer(s) and there are two kinds of hearer; there are the human and divine participants in the dialogues on the one hand, and the reader of the book on the other. Analysis, of the content of the speeches is best done using the precepts of a rhetoric which has a persuasive rather than an aesthetic purpose. There are three very significant features of the Joban rhetoric. Firstly, and most obviously, there is argument articulated by the friends, Job and God on order and disorder and whether or not it is possible to secure one and avoid the other. Secondly, there is attention to the credibility of the speakers both in their addresses to one another and their credibility as it might appear to the reader who, from a different vantage point, hears and considers the speeches. Testing credibility and pointing to its absence in some of the rhetoric, is one of the tools the poet uses for the persuasion of the reader. The third feature is the utter conviction, in places amounting to passion, of its speakers. Emotion not only enlivens debate, it is also the driving force behind the formulation of the friends’ theology, which is the product of a fear of disorder and a need to allay that fear. The friends use emotion to play on Job’s distress and to persuade him to their point of view, but to no avail. His view of creation and Creator is driven by another emotion, despair. Playing on the sympathy of the reader, is a use for emotion and so emotion is another of the poet’s tools for persuasion. Insufficient critical attention has been paid to credibility, or its absence, as a feature of Joban speeches and one of the poet’s rhetorical strategies, and none has been paid to the crucial role of emotion in the creation of belief systems and in the rejection of those systems which are part of the rhetoric which is Job.

I have sought to redress this by using the precepts of Aristotle’s Rhetoric for my
interpretation of the Joban text. Aristotle says that persuasion is achieved by three means, *logos*, which is argument, *ethos* which is credibility, and *pathos* which is emotion.

Aristotle recommended that argument begin with what people already know. I have already dealt with two kinds of texts which would have been part of the poet’s cultural background – Mesopotamian texts on suffering and the dispute poem. There is a third group of texts which have influenced the poet and these are texts to do with creation, both cosmogonies and cosmologies. *Job* in the context of the Hebrew Bible receives much scholarly attention, but rather less is paid to its broader ancient Near Eastern intellectual environment. There is however, a growing appreciation of this environment for its contribution to the formation of biblical discourse and this is where my focus has been. Familiar to scholarship are the mythological texts, *Enuma elish*, the Atrahasis myth and the Ba’al cycle. I have looked further afield, paying particular attention to texts which deal with notions of order and disorder in creation.

From the friends’ speeches in the human dispute, I have identified a particular contribution made by each to the rhetoric which is *Job*. Zophar’s contribution is two questions, for Bildad it is a cosmogony and for Eliphaz the resolution of a problem concerning the divine attitude to humankind. Zophar asks, in his first speech, two important questions: “What can you do?” and “What can you know?” *Job* is about knowing and acting on that knowing or not knowing and seeking understanding. The friends think they know about order in human life and how to find it and they think they know about disorder and how to avoid it. Job once thought he knew too but no longer and so seeks answers which eventually come from God. Bildad’s cosmogony draws on ancient Near Eastern traditions and portrays God as powerful, violent and potentially threatening to his creation. It differs markedly from an account given by Job, which has the divine threat against creation realised. Both creation accounts differ from God’s, and
the poet explores these differences to discover what they say about God who creates and orders the world. In the human dispute, I have paid particular attention to a debate that Eliphaz has with himself. Juxtaposed in his first speech are two conflicting ideas about the divine view of humanity. The first is that some people are good and the others bad and that God will preserve the good and destroy the bad, and the second is that all humanity is flawed and God seems indifferent to humankind and its flaws. Over his three speeches in a two-strand conversation in which each strand has identifying markers signalling its reappearance in his rhetoric, each idea is developed further, until, finally, Eliphaz resolves the problem that their inconsistency has created. He concludes that human conduct matters to God who responds appropriately. The contradictory nature of the two ideas about humankind and divine thinking about it has rarely been noticed and, until now, there has not been any resolution to the problem it poses for Joban thinking on the human relationship to God despite its resolution being fundamental to the formulation of Eliphaz’s theology on divine dealings with the good and the bad, a theology which is subscribed to by Bildad and Zophar.

Between them, the friends deliver four deliberative speeches recommending to Job a course of action which is a return to piety and virtue and in return God will change his life from one of disorder to one of order. This advice points to the notion that by managing themselves and their conduct, human beings can manage God to their advantage and so avoid disorder. With this thinking, the friends demonstrate that their piety and virtue are not disinterested. The friends’ remaining speeches are epideictic - mostly concerned with the fate of the wicked and impious. Attention is given to sources of disorder which are human, the wicked, and non-human, mostly supernatural beings. From both God provides protection for the needy, the pious and the virtuous but not for the wicked and impious against whom God may also take direct action. Elimination of the wicked, which is disorder for them, brings order to their victims, so creating an equitable society. When
the strands of the friends thinking are gathered together they form a coherent cosmology which says that disorder is present in creation but is managed by God and has a purpose. The pious and good will be protected from it and rewarded with order, and the weak and the needy rescued from it. When it is strategically applied to the wicked and impious, it creates order in the lives of deserving individuals and makes the kind of community which the friends want and which they believe God wants. I have drawn attention to the paradoxical nature of the friends’ thinking, which is that order is not possible without disorder provided that both are divinely managed in accordance with the friends’ thinking on the subject.

Through his nine addresses to his friends Job refutes their thinking and offers his own view of order and disorder in creation. Unpersuaded by his friends’ rhetoric, Job’s perspective on creation and Creator is shaped by despair. Except for Bildad and his cosmogony, the friends had been interested only in the human part of creation, but Job takes a larger view. From his rhetoric, I have identified the disorder of which Job complains at four different levels in creation, a feature of his thinking not noticed before by interpreters. God is the source of disorder which he imposes upon earth and which occurs at all levels of creation, from the micro to the macro, from the individual, to classes of people, to nations, and finally to earth and sky. When the strands of Job’s thinking are drawn together they also form a coherent cosmology. For order to be turned to disorder, order must once have existed, then to be overturned by God. Job’s world view has the earth and all its inhabitants subject to a creative and ordering God, who is also capricious and sometimes violent, who favours the wicked, bearers of disorder, and who fails to provide protection for the weak, who are vulnerable to disorder. If the Satan’s question “[d]oes Job fear God for nothing?” were asked of him, Job, in the human dispute, might reply that he would like to fear God for something.
God’s words to the friends in the Epilogue (42.7-8) are the divine verdict in the human dispute. These words have caused much scholarly debate with no consensus reached as to their meaning. I believe I have found a solution to the puzzle which they are. By separating the two disputes and considering each separately, it has been possible to focus on the issues most important in each. The impetus behind the friends’ rhetoric is the belief that good conduct persuades God to deal favourably with human beings. This Job has found to be untrue, and he warns them that they have spoken falsely about God and that God will rebuke them (13.7-10), so foreshadowing the divine verdict. Job is right when he later adds that nothing at all can dissuade God from doing what he pleases (23.13-14).

In his dispute with God, Job’s complaints made in the human dispute about God are turned by Job into accusations levelled at God, making judicial rhetoric of four of his five addresses to God. These speeches are concerned with humankind in general and himself in particular, and for both life is burdensome and short. In this dispute, Job notes that God had once been creative and beneficent but has now turned destructive and maleficent and so he lays charges of harassment, persecution and violence, all the result of divine capriciousness. As he had in the human dispute, he again expresses feelings of hopelessness.

There are many opinions on whether or not God’s speeches are relevant to the traumas experienced by Job and, if they are not, whether they can be seen as a reply to Job. I argue, firstly, that because Job has the form of a dispute poem, a reply to Job’s speeches in the divine/human dispute is a requirement of that form. Secondly, Job’s speeches in that dispute, level accusations against God, the first part of judicial rhetoric, and accusations call for defence, so what is said in response is defence and so relevant to what has been said in the accusations. My discussion of both disputes situates the
accusations in the context of prolonged debate on order and disorder in creation. It is not surprising, therefore, that the divine self-defence should come, albeit implicitly, out of a divinely guided exposition on order and disorder in creation. God’s speeches are not only a defence of himself against Job’s accusations, they also address the friends’ wrong thinking about God’s role in order and disorder in the cosmos.

That there are thematic links between the human rhetoric of both disputes and the divine rhetoric has been often noted and support my argument that the latter is a response to the former. As substantiation, I have identified seven important motifs in the human speeches which are present in the divine speeches, and have used them to provide the framework for my argument that God’s response is about order and disorder in creation as are the human speeches. The seven motifs are Place, Time, Darkness and Light, Progeny, Hunter and Hunted, Storm, and Warrior God. I believe this is a new way of analysing the divine speeches. Furthermore, since some of the motifs are metaphors, they fit well with Aristotle’s strong recommendation that metaphors should be used in persuasive argument. God’s first speech (38.2-40.2) is mostly about a tri-partite cosmos – the lowest level which is the primordial deep and the netherworld, the middle level, which is earth and sea and is the place of earth’s inhabitants, and the upper level, which is sky, the place of the celestial bodies and the source of the weather experienced on the middle level. I have looked at this speech, using the seven motifs as a guide, to discover what it has to say about order and disorder on the middle and upper levels of creation. It points to a cosmos made up of interconnected parts. Inanimate creation is an ordered structure which provides a place on which animate creation exists and experiences both order and disorder. Some forms of animate creation rely for life and order on the disorder and death they bring to other forms. This has led to my reflection on the place of the wicked in creation, a preoccupation of the friends, and for whom lions are a metaphor in Eliphaz’s thinking. By mentally substituting “wicked” for “lion” in the divine speeches,
as I believe the poet intended the reader to do, the conclusion must be that, like the lions, they will continue because they are a part of creation. Disorder and order are as much parts of creation as are light and darkness, night and day. Creation which, at first sight, seems ordered, is made up of order and disorder and without the disorder, the order which is creation would not be what it is. God’s defence of himself against the capriciousness and violence of which he is accused by Job is that order and disorder belong to creation. He leaves Job to understand, if he will, that since he also is part of creation, he participates in its order and disorder and his experience of either or both has nothing to do with deserving it or not, nor is it anything to do with divine beneficence or maleficence directed at him. While some aspects of disorder in creation, notably the predatory nature of some animals, as portrayed in the first divine speech, have been touched on by others, my exploration of the topic has been more extended than hitherto.

The second divine speech is, apart from an ironic challenge to Job, about two beings which are a mixture of the real and the mythical, Behemoth and Leviathan. The whole of Job so far has been about order and disorder, and the final speech continues on this subject. There is no scholarly consensus on what sort of creatures they are and what they represent but more often than not it is chaos or evil. I have argued that Behemoth is a metaphor for order, and Leviathan is a metaphor for disorder. A question to be explored is who has supreme power in creation, God or Leviathan, and I argue that it is God, from which could come a question which asks whether or not God has exercised that power, exercises it now, or will exercise it in the future. A further question which could be, but is not, asked is whether or not it is possible for a human to tame disorder, symbolised by Leviathan, to which the answer must be “no”. A still further question, also not expressed though it is one to which the friends have the answer, would ask if God would control or tame Leviathan for the benefit of human beings, to which the text gives no answer. Instead, God paints a word picture of two beasts in a shared habitat, Behemoth and
Leviathan, order and disorder, existing together in the same place. I believe that my interpretation of the meaning of the Behemoth and Leviathan word pictures has made a contribution to the interpretation of the second divine speech.

Just as there was a verdict in the human dispute, there is also a verdict, perhaps two verdicts, in the human/divine dispute. This dispute ends with Job’s words (42.2-6). Still on his ash heap with no prospect of a restoration of his well-being, he withdraws his charges against God, acknowledging that divine power cannot be “thwarted” and admitting that “I have uttered what I did not understand, things too wonderful for me, which I did not know.” In so saying and so doing God has the answer to the Satan’s question, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” The answer is “yes”. Job’s words appear to be his admission that God is the winner of the dispute. The conventions of the dispute poem genre, however, point to another winner. In two ancient Near Eastern dispute poems the winner is given a monetary reward by the loser. Job is rewarded and his fortunes restored twofold by God, suggesting that God acknowledges him to be the winner of the dispute. Job never sought restitution for what he has lost, he has only sought an encounter with God and reasons for his troubles. He has met God and now knows that what he had supposed was divine caprice alternating between beneficence and maleficence, was the order and disorder to which he and other parts of creation are exposed.

I conclude by setting out a summary of what I consider to be my contribution to the interpretation of Job. I understand it to be a text which, more than anything else, is concerned with order and disorder in creation. It is made up almost entirely of speeches each of which is intended to persuade its hearer(s) so pointing to rhetorical criticism as a way of exploring the text. The type of rhetoric had to be one which took into consideration emotion as the shaper of debate and also the testing of the credibility of its speakers, requirements which pointed to Aristotle’s Rhetoric. Aristotle recommends that
persuasion starts from “the notions possessed by everybody.” The conversation about suffering, especially when its cause is unknown, is ancient and one which the Joban poet joined. The notion that deities were involved in creation and often the causes of its order and disorders is also ancient and given expression by the poet’s human and divine disputants who do so in the form of a dispute poem in which there are two disputes.

An insight which has come from analysis of the human dispute is that, concealed within Eliphaz’s rhetoric, there is a conversation which he has with himself on the divine attitude to human wrongdoing, the outcome of which is fundamental to his advice to Job and to his theology concerning the wicked and concerning God. From the speeches of both the friends and Job, I have assembled their beliefs on order and disorder in creation and found that they create two different but coherent cosmologies concerning order and disorder in creation. Since they are different, a decision is required on which of them is right and the dispute poem form requires a verdict. Job has won and the friends are rebuked, a rebuke foreshadowed by Job for reasons which he provides in the human dispute. Analysis of the human/divine dispute has Job levelling accusations at God which require a defence. God’s defence is a cosmology which shows that order and disorder are a part of creation and though Job, when he experiences them, may understand them as divine capriciousness, they are not. All of earth’s inhabitants participate in the order and disorder of creation. In the second divine speech, using beings which are metaphors for order and disorder, God indicates to Job that supreme power belongs to him and that divine power allows the existence together of order and disorder. There is nothing that a human being like Job can do to tame and manage disorder. There is also a verdict in the human/divine dispute. Whilst God seems to be the winner because Job has backed down, it is actually Job who is the winner because he has found what he was looking for, answers. God also has an answer, the answer to the Satan’s question. If Job fears God knowing that he may not be rewarded for it, he “fear(s) God for nothing.”
This thesis has suggested that future study of *Job* could, firstly, continue an engagement with ancient Near Eastern texts. A large and growing corpus, they provide valuable insights into ancient thinking on creation, the human place in it, the divine relationship to it, and especially the divine relationship to the part of creation which is human. Over time, more texts may become available to biblical scholarship, and their study could be rewarding. Secondly, there is a related issue which is the way in which the monotheistic Joban poet has made use of the traditions of polytheistic societies to convey her/his thinking on order and disorder to a monotheistic readership. These traditions have been discarded, or adopted and adapted in ways which are both obvious and also very subtle. Some ideas have been both adopted and discarded within the space of the text which is *Job*. Not only does he adapt the traditions of other cultures, the Joban poet goes further and enters into a conversation with them, advancing fresh thinking on old ideas. For example, the notion that suffering has its origin in the disorder of the cosmos as explained in the divine speeches is a major advance on the creation thinking of the Babylonian Theodicy, which offers a narrower view which is that some human beings were made perverse by the gods. Since *Job* is probably the last word in this Mesopotamian conversation, it is significant for that reason as well as in its own right. I have drawn attention to ancient and different notions on place with which the poet has engaged, one of which was a belief that temple-building and the installation of a deity therein, brought well-being to both the temple and its vicinity. In the light of his views on order and disorder, the poet gives only qualified support to such a belief. Given these views, the demarcation between the wild and uncultivated place and the civilised and cultivated place is not at all clear-cut. Further exploration of *Job*’s engagement with ancient Near Eastern traditions would be of great interest. Thirdly, I have said that *Job* has the form of a dispute poem with a variation which is that there are two disputes instead of one in the part which is the Dialogue. It is possible, however, to think of *Job* as a dispute poem with
a single dispute about creation, between God on one side and the humans on the other. Support for such a proposal is the fact that the divine speeches respond not only to Job in his dispute with God, but also to what was said about creation and Creator in the human dispute. It would be worth pursuing this idea as a different way of interpreting *Job*, the dispute poem.
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