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Arguing with Job: Consolation and Quarrel in the Joban Dialogue

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An abstract of a dissertation submitted to the Faculty of the James T. Laney School of
Graduate Studies of Emory University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
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Hebrew Bible

2013

Abstract
Arguing with Job: Consolation and Quarrel in the Joban Dialogue
by Brian J. Alderman

This dissertation investigates the contexts and cultures of argumentation in the dialogue between Job and his friends (chaps. 4-27). Scholars, taking their cue from Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions, and beginning with Western expectations for argumentation, have often pointed to the failure of argument and dialogue in *Job*, focusing on the nature of the characters' exchanges and the dialogue's lack of resolution. This dissertation begins by situating the exchanges between Job and his friends in the context of other ancient Near Eastern dialogues, particularly the Mesopotamian dispute poems and the wisdom dialogue as a genre. While sharing some overlapping features, the Joban dialogue moves beyond these texts through the characters' increasingly ill-mannered and antagonistic speeches and by exploiting the wisdom dialogue's expectation of irresolution.

The arguments between Job and his friends are carried out in a manner that reflects the fictive social setting that is configured by the book's narrative framework, where the characters appear as friends and sages in a consolatory context. The role of the friends, particularly in the first cycle, is not adversarial but consolatory: they try to correct Job's inappropriate speech and distorted views through rebuke; they offer him advice by encouraging him to "seek God"; and they attempt to demonstrate the reliability of the moral order through the "fate of the wicked" and the "hope of the "pious" narratives. Through the latter, the friends not only try to motivate Job to act on their advice, they also attempt to restore his confidence in the future by telling these stories as *his* story in the conclusions to their speeches in the first cycle. Refusing their counsel, Job instead shifts the framework for their exchanges to a form of dialogue that is similar to what Douglas Walton has described as a "quarrel," a context of dialogue where deep grievances and suppressed emotions can be expressed even through impolite and adversarial interaction. For Job, the quarrel opens up a space for speaking about pain, suffering, and traumatic experience. For the friends, the quarrel complicates and, ultimately, frustrates their attempts at consolation.

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months of writing.

My parents, Donnie and Linda Alderman, and my in-laws, Joe and Gayle Cooley, have offered immeasurable love, support, and understanding throughout my time in graduate school, as have Rodney Alderman and Rhonda, Spider, and Jared Thompson.

I dedicate this to Monica and Ella Kate Elise. Monica has read through dozens of drafts, spent nights alone while I was away at the office, and endured more broken promises than I would like to admit. But she has continued with me on this journey, offering her love and support along the way. Perhaps I will find some way to repay the debt I owe her. I remain grateful that Ella is too young to remember those nights away. Her joy and grace have made everything worthwhile.

I also dedicate this dissertation to the memory of my uncle, Larry Grey Andrews.

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Introduction

"What does arguing look like?" That is the question Jean Goodwin posed to students in an exercise designed to determine their attitudes toward argumentation and debate.[1] After asking students to represent argumentation visually by drawing a recent argument they had encountered, Goodwin then presented students with a series of images related to argument including "couples arguing bitterly and pointlessly"; others involving adults "arguing vigorously yet with apparent enjoyment, during meals"; one set of images presented "pairs of maroon-robed Tibetan Buddhist monks engaged in vigorous, formalized debate in a monastic courtyard"; and a final set of pictures drawn from various contexts presented arguments in Christianity, politics, baseball, and history.[2] In the final step of the exercise, Goodwin asked students to explore their own understanding of argument in light of three perspectives of argument, which she represented on the board. Argument as a cooperative activity with a shared goal (e.g., the resolution of a disagreement) was presented at one end of the spectrum, and, at the other end, was argument as a competitive activity—one that is marked by individual interests, with each side seeking victory over the other, as in a fight.[3] In the middle, she placed "coordinated" argument, a view that understands arguers as "pursuing their own goals, but... in a way that shows respect for others."[4] After asking the students whether argument looks "more like love, or more like war," she invited them to briefly articulate their own positions in

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[1] Jean Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," *Informal Logic* 25 (2005): 79-93.
[2] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 83.
[3] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 83.
[4] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 83.

writing.

Goodwin found that between the first and last steps of this exercise certain changes occurred among the students. The students' initial activity of drawing an argument reflected an overwhelmingly negative view. Sixty percent presented argument as angry; forty-five percent as emphatic; thirty-four percent as futile; nineteen percent as hurtful; and fourteen percent as enjoyable/productive.[5] What she saw in students' written responses were positive, negative, and mixed views of argument. A considerable minority held to a negative view of argument, with one student describing argument as "competitive, aggressive... like trying to beat your opponent into submission—get him to give up their ideas in favor of yours. It's a beating."[6] A very small percentage of students were optimistic, but most had mixed views, often tending toward the negative side. One student wrote that "arguing can look like a coordinated discussion... However, in practice, argumentation frequently looks like a state of war."[7]

What does arguing in *Job* look like? John Course cites the following responses of various scholars in the introduction to his *Speech and Response:*[8]

> Actually it is scarcely appropriate to call this section of the book a dialogue. There is not here the give-and-take of philosophical disputation aimed at the advancement of understanding and truth. Rather each side has a partisan point of view which is reiterated ad nauseam in long speeches. There is no real movement in the argument. (M. H. Pope)

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[5] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 84.

[6] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 84. This was tempered somewhat by others who described argument as "like" or "sort of like war" rather than suggesting that argument *is* war.

[7] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 88. See Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture* (New York: Ballantine Books, 1999).

[8] John Course, *Speech and Response: A Rhetorical Analysis of the Introductions to the Speeches of the Book of Job (Chaps. 4-24)* (The Catholic Biblical Quarterly Monograph Series 25; Washington: The Catholic Biblical Association of America, 1994), 2.

> As they listen to each other, both partners in the dialogues scarcely have more than very loose connections with individual, characteristic hypotheses. In their own train of thought they do not adhere closely to that of the other. This means that, on one hand, the argument often fails to advance and that, on the other, the intellectual ground covered becomes more and more extensive. The speeches are repetitive and, to a certain extent, move forward only in a circular fashion. (Gerhard von Rad)

> Accusers and accused restate their respective opinions with increasing vehemence, making little or no attempt to meet the arguments of their opponents. (R. B. Y. Scott)

> The various responses frequently ignore the addresses they purport to answer, giving the impression that Job and the friends talk past one another. (J. L. Crenshaw)

What are the underlying assumptions of argument in the above statements? Arguments are expected to be responsive, involving "give-and-take," "to adhere closely," with "an attempt to meet the arguments of their opponents" and not "talk past one another." Arguments should reflect "real movement" and "advance" in a direct fashion (rather than extensively broadening "the intellectual ground" being covered); they should not be "repetitive" or "circular" with arguers "restat[ing] their respective opinions with increasing vehemence," or reflecting "a partisan point of view which is reiterated ad nauseam in long speeches." Arguments, according to Pope, should also have a goal: "the advancement of understanding and truth."

In his monograph, Course focuses on the extent to which Job and the friends respond to one another within the dialogue. Examining the introductory units of the three cycles of speeches in *Job*, he identifies three rhetorical devices for determining connections between speeches: 1) the repetition of a word or root; 2) allusions (or synonyms); and, 3) thematic connections. By identifying related words, phrases, and

themes, Course calls attention to the "disagreements" between the characters as well as

their responses: counterpoints, advice, defense, accusation, and so forth.[9] He also

identifies some distinctive characteristics of each speaker's introduction.[10] By attending

to the connections between the characters' speeches, Course argues that readers are able

"to enter more deeply into the dynamics of the dispute."[11] Noting that connections

between the introductions to these speeches are strongest in the first cycle, Course

observes that "[a]s the dispute developed it appears that less of an effort was expended to

relate the introductions together in this manner as a greater incidence of connections

between an introduction and the body of the preceding speech was uncovered in the latter

two speech cycles."[12] Although he has established that the characters address one another,

the connections between their speeches often occur only through certain words, phrases,

and allusions. But how does one account for the nature of the characters' interaction in

the dialogue? And can one explain the shift that Course observes in the second and third

cycles?

　　　　To return briefly to the pedagogical exercise mentioned above, among those

students who reflected mixed views of argument, Goodwin found that several students

noted that the context of an argument, the importance of the relationship between the

arguers, arguers' personal characteristics, and the extent to which one is invested in the

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[9] See *Speech and Response*, 145-160, for a synthesis and summary of Course's conclusions.
[10] Course, *Speech and Response*, 152-55. For a discussion of the differences among the characters, see also the essay of D. J. A. Clines, "The Arguments of Job's Three Friends," in *Art and Meaning: Rhetoric in Biblical Literature* (ed. D. Clines, D. Gunn and A. Hauser; JSOTSup 19; Sheffield: JSOT, 1982), 199-214.
[11] Course, *Speech and Response*, 147.
[12] Course, *Speech and Response*, 148-49.

topic also need to be considered. What Goodwin was most surprised by, however, were the ways in which student responses called attention to how argument serves as a means of self-assertion.[13] As Goodwin observes, "several students noted that people engage in argument in order to show *themselves*, not their opinions, to be right."[14] People are often easily angered because their convictions are so deeply held.[15]

The following study seeks to understand how the exchanges between Job and his friends are shaped by, reflect, and extend beyond certain contexts and cultures of argument. Methodological and theoretical concerns are distributed throughout the chapters, so I will not repeat those here.

In Chapter 1, I situate the Joban dialogue in the context of ancient Near Eastern disputes and the wisdom dialogue as a genre. While the disputations model arguments that are agonistic but nevertheless playful and entertaining, they also attempt to contain argument's socially disruptive potential (e.g., violence). In these debates, the arguer's goal is to win by displaying one's wit, engaging in insult, and showing self-control. The wisdom dialogue works differently. As a genre, it establishes certain expectations for argument: namely, that the arguers will not finally succeed at persuading one another. The wisdom dialogue, therefore, privileges irresolution, preserving the two sharply

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[13] Three drawings represented argument as a way in which someone in a subordinate position might question or challenge someone in power. These included an athlete arguing with a referee (adding to the image "human error, anger, questioning authority"), a student arguing with a teacher, and a resident arguing with a dorm manager. Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 89.

[14] Goodwin, "What Does Arguing Look Like?," 90.

[15] After noting the inadequacy of argumentation theory in accounting for the close ties between an arguer and the position she argues, Goodwin ("What Does Arguing Look Like?," 90) concludes by suggesting that we have much to learn from her students, especially the fact that people argue because "they care, deeply; [and] that in arguing, they are putting not only their opinions, but themselves and their deepest convictions at risk."

contrasting poles of argument. In my analysis of the wisdom dialogue, I will also attend

to the question of whether or not the individual arguers reflect certain goals. I argue that

the Joban dialogue departs from these ancient Near Eastern precursors, and particularly

the exemplars of the wisdom dialogue, by exploiting the genre's expectation of

irresolution. Drawing on the work of Douglas Walton, I will briefly consider how the

dialogue between Job and his friends displays characteristics similar to a subtype of

eristic argument, which he designates as the quarrel. I will show how the quarrel emerges

and develops in the Joban dialogue in Chapter 4.

In Chapter 2, I locate the exchanges between Job and his friends in the context of

the book's narrative framework. I intend to show how the narrative configures a fictive

social setting where the characters appear as friends and sages in a consolatory context. I

then consider cultural expectations for friendship, especially in proverbial wisdom, and

for consolation both in ancient Israel and in Greco-Roman consolatory literature.

In Chapters 3, I argue that the dialogue begins with the friends' goal of consoling

Job through rational persuasion. I examine the means by which they attempt to console

Job and certain shifts that are reflected in their speeches.

I then argue in Chapter 4 that Job attempts to shift the dialogue to a quarrel, which

offers him a framework where impolite speech, the venting of deep grievances, and

striking out at another are socially acceptable. I will show how certain characteristics of

the quarrel are represented in the characters' speeches, especially striking out at the other,

distorting another's speech, reflecting a "closed attitude," and showing a pretense of not

quarreling. I will also suggest that the friends have not given up on their initial

consolatory goals. Finally, I will examine how the quarrel between Job and his friends

ends.

CHAPTER 1
JOB AND THE DIALOGICAL CONTEXTS OF ARGUMENT

1.1 Introduction

Argument's social dimensions have often been neglected in studies on *Job*, where the topic has been examined mostly in the context of literary and rhetorical analyses. While several studies have focused on how literary forms, genres, and rhetorical devices are taken up in argumentation, and others have examined the theological content of characters' claims, interpreters have rarely ventured beyond what normally falls under the umbrella of "rhetorical" approaches to explore the contexts and cultures of argument as they are represented in *Job*. Although some have expressed an interest in the book's "sapiential character," as well as its relation to other ancient Near Eastern texts, such investigations have usually been carried out in ways that are only indirectly related to argumentation.

In these next two chapters I will attempt to elucidate the cultural backdrop for argument in *Job*. Here, in chapter 1, I situate the book in the context of other ancient Near Eastern dialogues, considering genre's effect on argumentation and persuasion. In the following chapter, I examine how the narrative, in configuring a fictive social setting, not only establishes a complex interpersonal context for argument, but also determines the friends' goals in argumentation. After I explore the situational and interpersonal contexts of the characters' exchanges, I then turn to an analysis of their arguments in chapters 3 and 4, where I argue that *Job* begins with a particular "context of conversation," consolatory persuasion, but that the dialogue soon shifts to a different framework of

interaction, one that allows for a "highly emotional" and even adversarial type of dialogue to emerge, which is known as the "quarrel."[16] I focus on the friends' argumentative and persuasive strategies in the context of their consolatory efforts in chapter 3. Then, in the final chapter I attempt to show that it is Job who is ultimately responsible for transforming the consolatory context of persuasion into a "quarrel" and consider how the quarrel as a framework for dialogue functions for Job.

To open the discussion, I begin with a brief overview of Douglas Walton's dialogical approach to argumentation, which, I suggest, may be used profitably, albeit loosely, to analyze the exchanges between Job and his friends. Following my discussion of Walton's "conversational contexts of argument," I will first attempt to tease out some of the cultural dimensions of argumentation, noting how modern assumptions about argumentation in dialogue have often influenced interpretations of *Job.* I will then look more closely at representations of dialogue in other ancient Near Eastern texts that share some relationship with *Job* to show how these texts together form part of the generic backdrop against which *Job* might be read.

1.2 The Social Nature of Argumentation

In the past few decades argumentation theorists have begun to give greater attention to how arguments arise and play out in the context of specific social situations. Past studies, rooted in formal logic and focusing primarily on the structures of argument—on how reasons jointly support and defend claims—have not effectively

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[16] Douglas Walton, *The New Dialectic: Conversational Contexts of Argumentation* (Toronto: University of Toronto, 1998), 179.

captured the complexity that is characteristic of interpersonal argumentation, particularly argumentation as a process (or what O'Keefe has referred to as argument[2]).[17] More recently, several common interests have begun to emerge among argumentation theorists, especially with regard to argument's social, interactive, and goal-oriented nature.

1.2.1 Conversational Contexts of Dialogue

In his *New Dialectic*, Douglas Walton has sought to provide a theoretical basis for thinking that can be used to analyze and evaluate arguments in "everyday conversational exchanges."[18] According to Walton, dialogue is "a goal-directed conventional framework in which two [or more] speech partners reason together in an orderly way, according to the rules of politeness or normal expectations of cooperative argumentation for the type of exchange they are engaged in."[19] With six major types of common conversational exchanges—persuasion dialogue (critical discussion), the inquiry (scientific dialogue, public inquiry), negotiation (deal-making), information-seeking dialogue (interview, advice-solicitation, expert-consultation), deliberation, and eristic (quarrel) dialogue— Walton argues that each type of dialogue has its own distinctive goals and methods, and may be carried out in different conversational contexts. Persuasion dialogue, for example, begins with a difference of opinion in its *initial situation*, has as its *goal* convincing another party of some particular claim, and, if successful, offers the benefit of greater

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[17] See Daniel J. O'Keefe, "Two Concepts of Argument," *Journal of the American Forensic Association* 13 (1977): 121-128; see also idem, "The Concepts of Argument and Arguing," in *Advances in Argumentation Theory and Research* (ed. J. R. Cox and C. A. Willard; Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University, 1982), 3-23.
[18] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 3-4.
[19] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 3.

understanding for those who are involved.[20]

Although Walton labels his approach "*new*," he is quick to acknowledge the influence of Aristotle, admitting that in many respects his framework not only represents ancient concerns, but also reflects an attempt to renew or recapture an interest in what he sees as the neglected "Aristotelian roots of logic as an *applied*, *practical* discipline" as well as "many of the leading ideas expressed in Aristotle's work on dialectical argument and fallacies, or sophistical refutation."[21] His goal is to draw attention, specifically, to practical and dialectical argumentation, thereby balancing the "semantic, formal study of logical inferences," which is the result of a "one-sided" emphasis on deductive syllogistic reasoning, with the practical study of arguments as they are offered in everyday contexts.[22]

1.2.1.1 Fallacies and Ad Hominem *Argumentation*

Since arguers' claims need to be considered in light of their contexts and the goals of their dialogue, Walton argues that we also need to re-evaluate what have traditionally been considered as "fallacies." He suggests that "fallacies," which have been understood as inappropriate forms of argumentation, should instead be seen as dialectical strategies that are deemed appropriate or inappropriate based on the degree to which they contribute or fail to contribute to the goals of a particular dialogue type.[23] Attacking another's

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[20] In addition to the overview of Walton I offer here, I will also develop his approach further in the latter part of this chapter.

[21] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 4.

[22] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 4.

[23] A "fallacy," Walton (*The Place of Emotion in Argument* [University Park, Pa.: Pennsylvania State University, 1992], 66) observes, "is a technique of argumentation that has been used wrongly (abused) in such a way that it goes strongly against the legitimate goals of a dialogue."

character in *ad hominem* argumentation, which has normally been considered fallacious, may instead be deemed appropriate in certain contexts. To attack the credibility of another scholar, for example would be inappropriate in a critique of that person's work. But if character and credibility are relevant to the context of argumentation, as in a case of academic plagiarism (or perhaps in a court of law), then such a move would be justified.[24] Walton's approach to "fallacies," therefore, suggests that certain forms of argument that were previously considered inappropriate may, nevertheless, function as legitimate argumentative strategies in a particular context.

Since the issue of character figures so prominently in *Job*, both in its narrative frame and in the dialogue, it is important to ask in light of Walton's work *how* statements about character and intelligence—as well as the characters' claims more generally—function in the context of their dialogue and their goals. In the following chapter I will argue that such an investigation needs to consider how Job's suffering, the characters' relationship as friends (and the friends' consolatory goals), and their identity as sages are reflected in their exchanges.[25] Because the "wise" valued forms of moral correction that included instruction and rebuke—forms of correction that could often be quite forceful, as I will demonstrate in chapters 2 and 3—one should not necessarily assume that the friends' critiques of Job's character (e.g., his way of speaking, his lack of self-control, and so forth), as well as the accusations he makes against them, are necessarily

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[24] Although, even when *ad hominem* arguments are inappropriate, they are often, nevertheless, effective.

[25] I will examine these more closely in the following chapters.

inappropriate.[26] In considering the context and goals of their exchanges, the characters

may be understood as offering either corrective "rebuke" or inappropriate *ad hominem*

attacks depending on the context and goals of their exchanges.[27]

1.3 Conflict and Western Cultures of Argument

Interpreters have often found the Joban dialogue's dynamics or, as some would

argue, its lack thereof, more vexing than interesting, especially when considering its

adversarial tone. Marvin Pope is often cited in this respect, since he questions whether the

designation of "dialogue" is apt for describing the book's central section. Pope, who

clearly has the Socratic dialectical dialogue in mind, notes that with regard to the Joban

dialogue that

> it is scarcely appropriate to call this section of the book a dialogue. There is not
> here the give-and-take of philosophical disputation aimed at the advancement of
> understanding and truth. Rather each side has a partisan point of view which is
> reiterated *ad nauseum* in long speeches. There is no real movement in the
> argument. Attempts to find progression in the debate and subtle differences in the
> character and personality of the three friends are labored and unconvincing.[28]

Citing Pope, Denning-Bolle has asked appropriately whether our difficulty in interpreting

ancient Near Eastern dialogues is related to the fact that "we are steeped in Plato's

dialogic tradition" and thus have certain unconscious expectations that when unmet cause

us to "grow uncomfortable and disgruntled."[29]

As noted in the introduction, research related to argumentation in *Job* has often

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[26] For a fuller discussion, see chapter 2.

[27] See my discussion of Walton's "quarrel" as a dialogue type below.

[28] Marvin Pope, *Job* (Anchor Bible 15; 3rd ed.; New York: Doubleday, 1979), lxxv.

[29] Sara J. Denning-Bolle, *Wisdom in Akkadian Literature* (Ex Oriente Lux XXVIII; Leiden: Ex Oriente Lux, 1992), 89.

taken its cue from Greco-Roman rhetorical traditions, where approaches to argument have been and continue to be resolution-oriented. The focus has been on logic or reason, which is often thought of as untainted by the emotions.[30] This way of thinking about argument is prominent in western democratic cultures, where argument is regularly understood theoretically as a means for resolving disputes, reaching consensus, or as a way of making the best possible decision in a given situation.[31] This kind of thinking is

[30] This, for example, is part of the critique Palcewski offers against Foss and Griffin's "invitational rhetoric." Catherine H. Palcewski ("Bodies that Argue: Power, Difference and Argument," in *Argument in a Time of Change: Definitions, Frameworks, and Critiques* [ed. James F. Clumpp; Annandale, Va.: National Communication Association, 1997], 183) writes: "Foss and Griffin create a false dichotomy between empathy and criticism, as though one cannot feel and think at the same time. Devaluing persuasion, particularly for a marginalized group or a counter-public sphere, is particularly dangerous in that it allows for the dominant discourse to proceed unchecked."

[31] The extent to which our own expectations and assumptions obscure argumentation practices in other indigenous cultures can also be illustrated with a brief contemporary example. In their examination of the communication practices of the Jemez Pueblo, Robert S. Littlefield and Jane A. Ball ("Factionalism as Argumentation: A Case Study of the Indigenous Communication Practices of the Jemez Pueblo," *Argumentation and Advocacy* 41 [2004]: 87-101) also note (91) that Greco-Roman models have often been imposed on nonwestern forms and practices, which are subsequently devalued when approached from western perspectives. They take as an example, "factionalism," which they argue occurs as a legitimate form of argumentation among the non-democratic society of Jemez Pueblo. They define "factionalism" as "an institutionalized socio-cultural process wherein conflict is best understood as dynamic dissention rather than corrosive division." In this context, occasions for debate, which are frequent, are welcomed as an opportunity for the display of rhetorical skills. Factionalism (91) moves through six identifiable stages or phases, which include the "identification of the issue; taking of sides; presentation of arguments; decision by authority; recognition of [the] need for symbolic healing; and healing and resolution." They suggest (99) that only those who "are products of the Greco-Roman tradition" view factionalism as synonymous with a failure of argument at Jemez. They contend (99) instead that it is the strategies employed at Jemez that continue to "sustain the Pueblos in the face of dispute."

One might take their approach further with a critique of their own investigation, since they attempt to show how argumentation in a particular indigenous culture is, nevertheless, consistent with Greco-Roman, or at least modern, expectations for argument. They maintain (99) that "factionalism" is, in fact, "rational, ethical, structural, sequential, rhetorical, functional, and contextual," all of which are characteristics they consider to be normative and useful for analyzing argumentation at the outset. Although their concern is with other norms and cultures of argument that have been overlooked or devalued, they continue with expectations that are consistent with their own definitions of argument. To expand their approach, one might not only include cultures of argument that have been overshadowed by ancient Greco-Roman and contemporary western assumptions, but also consider the particulars of alternative cultures of argument and what they might contribute to argumentation theory itself. See, for example, Alberto González and Dolores V. Tanno, *Rhetoric in Intercultural Contexts* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2000). Within this volume, see especially, Robert Schuter, "The Cultures of Rhetoric," 11-17; Donal Carbaugh and Karen Wolf, "Situating Rhetoric in Cultural Discourses," 19-30; Mary M. Garrett, "Some Elementary Methodological Reflections on the Study of the Chinese Rhetorical Tradition," 53-66. For an engaging

also reflected in the comments of Pope and others who point to both the characters'

unresponsiveness and their inability to achieve some kind of resolution.[32]

The nature of Pope's critique might also be considered from a different angle: the

practice of argumentation in other contemporary contexts. Since Pope begins with

expectations for how arguments *should* occur rather than how they actually play out in

practice, his critique could also be applied to argumentation as it occurs in other contexts

like the television culture of argument (and, especially, political argumentation), which is

marked by both frequent emotional appeals and irresolution.[33] Although argumentation in

such contexts might not provide textbook examples for how to argue, thinking about how

these types of argument function culturally may be fruitful for the present investigation.

To be sure, there are many ways in which the arguments between Job and his

friends *do not* resemble everyday argumentation. The dialogue is, after all, *literary* and

poetic in nature. Yet, as I will attempt to demonstrate in the chapters that follow, the

characters' arguments are often closer to the passionate, personal exchanges people

regularly live out than to the idealized expectations for argument brought to the text.

1.4 Conflict and Ancient Near Eastern Argument

Three groupings of ancient Near Eastern texts are also relevant for my analysis of

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cultural and textual analysis, see *idem*, "*Pathos* Reconsidered from the Perspective of Classical Chinese Rhetorical Theories," *Quarterly Journal of Speech* 79 (1993): 19-39. On rhetoric and culture more generally, see Gerry Philipsen, *Speaking Culturally* (Albany: SUNY, 1992).

[32] In Chapters 3 and 4, I will attempt to show that the dialogue is not static: Job and his friends *do* respond to one another, just not in the way Pope expects. The characters' responses not only occur through echo and allusion, but also through what I identify as subtle shifts that occur in their argumentative goals and strategies.

[33] I will return to this point below in my discussion of the Wisdom Dialogue.

Job.[34] I will deal with two of them in what follows: the Mesopotamian "disputations" and the "wisdom dialogue" as a genre. I will examine the third category, the appeal-to-the-deity texts, in relation to Job's speeches in the final chapter.[35]

I will begin by focusing on a group of texts referred to variously as "contest" literature, literary dialogues, wisdom disputations, and fables. The primary concern of these texts is the dispute itself, which involves two interlocutors drawn from and personifying the natural order (e.g., Summer and Winter), animals (e.g., Ox and Horse), cultural phenomenon (e.g., Hoe and Plough), and other realms. The opponent's speeches in these disputes normally show a clear progression in argument and conclude with a verdict announcing the winner. These debates focus on the qualities of the disputants and generally avoid more serious matters like love, war, and trade.[36]

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[34] For surveys of Job in the context of other ancient Near Eastern literature, see Rainer. G. Albertson "Job and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature," in *Scripture in Context II* (ed. W. Hallo, J. Moyer, and L. Perdue; Winona Lake, Ind: Eisenbrauns, 1982), 213-30; R. Albertz, "*Der sozialgeschictliche Hintergrund des Hiobbuches und der 'Babylonishcen Theodizee'* [*Ludlul bēl nēqi*]," in *Die Botschaft und die Boten* (ed. J. Jermias and L. Perlitt; Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 349-72; J. Gray, "The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature," *ZAW* 82 (1970): 251-269; J. Lévêque, *Job et son Dieu* (Paris; J. Gabalda: 1970); Moshe Weinfeld, "Job and Its Mesopotamian Parallels: A Typological Analysis," in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F. C.* Fensham (W. Classen, ed.; Sheffield, JSOT, 1988), 217-26; R. J. Williams, "Theodicy in the Ancient Near East," *Canadian Journal of Theology* 2 (1956): 14-26.

[35] Included in the third grouping are the Sumerian text A Man and His God, The Dialogue Between a Man and His God, *Ludlul Bel Nemeqi* or I will Praise the Lord of Wisdom, and RS 25.460, A Sufferer's Savlation, an Akkadian text from Ras Shamra. While these texts represent different literary genres, they are held together by their focus on a particular issue in Mesopotamian thought: "the situation of extreme suffering and the proper human response to it" (Newsom, *Book of Job* [New York/Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003] 3). With *Job*, these texts share graphic descriptions of physical and psychological suffering; expressed fears of alienation, abandonment, and betrayal; affirmations of individual piety; and accusations against the deity, although these occur less frequently than do appeals for relief and deliverance. In my final chapter I will show how Job's situation of suffer, more specifically, the loss of his assumptive world, gives rise to similar expressions, although Job often recasts them in the form of irony or parody.

[36] Herman L. J. Vanstiphout ("The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation [Part I]," *Acta Sumerologica* 12 [1990], 342**)** argues that since the verdicts "expressly refute the principle of exclusive contradiction," the oppositions in these pairings cannot be considered "the 'real' subject of the disputations in any meaningful sense, and most certainly not in a mutually exclusive sense."

In the wisdom dialogue, two interlocutors (or two opposing parties) engage in an argument over a controversial issue, which tends to spiral out to include a variety of topics such as the fragile and corrupt nature of humanity, the prosperity of the wicked, pious suffering, divine justice, and others.[37]

Together, the disputations and the wisdom dialogue help to fill out the culture of argument in which Job participates, one that is often marked by conflict and strife—and, in the case of the wisdom dialogue, where controversies may be opened up and explored. While I am not trying to show direct influence between these texts and traditions, I do assume a level of cultural learnedness on the part of the author of *Job*, one that partakes of an international scribal culture.

1.4.1 The Mesopotamian Disputes

The Mesopotamian dispute poems, while often sharing a common designation, are part of a larger category of texts that are, nevertheless, quite different in character. The Sumerian term for these texts is *a-da-mìn*, or in earlier Sumerian compositions from the Old Babylonian era, *a-da-mìn dug$_4$-ga*, which is to be translated as "contest" or "debate."[38] This designation should not, however, be taken as a strict generic category

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[37] See, for example, the work of H. P. Müller, "Keilschriftliche Parallelen zum biblischen Hiobbuch: Möglichkeit und Grenze des Vergleichs," in *Mythos-Kerygma-Wahrheit: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament in seiner Umwelt und zur biblischen Theologie* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 136-51. Newsom (*Book of Job*, 72-89) uses Müller in her own investigation of the genre, which she understands to be attested by two texts: Job and the Babylonian Theodicy, which together are "preoccupied with reflection on world order" and share "share the critical clustering of formal and content similarities that suggests that the two belong to a distinctive genre, 'the wisdom dialogue.'" See Newsom, *Book of Job*, 72-73, 79-89.

[38] Bendt Alster, "Sumerian Literary Dialogues and Debates and their Place in Ancient Near Eastern Literature," in *Living Waters: Scandinavian Oriental Studies Presented to Dr. Frede Løkkegaard* (ed. E. Kech et al.; Copenhagen; Museum Tusculum: 1990), 2. See also in this regard, idem, "An Aspect of 'Enmerkar and the Lord of Aratta," *Revue d'assyriologie* (1973), 104 n. 1 [101-109]; Miguel Civil,

because of the variety of texts it identifies.[39] Instead, as several scholars suggest, the label

likely refers to the action represented within these texts: a verbal contest.[40]

Karel Van Der Toorn has suggested that rather than positing a separate genre for

these texts (e.g., "contest" literature), it would be preferable to speak of them as the

"fables we know from Egypt since the New Kingdom, Mesopotamia, and Israel," which

contain at their core "a verbal contest."[41] Vanstiphout, however, cautions against labeling

these texts as fables on the basis of the "basic generic difference between a fable, which

illustrates, and a debate poem, which explains and reasons."[42] In the fable, animals or

other objects are used illustratively because their properties are well-known. The

challenge for the participants in the dispute is instead to take their well-known properties

as their starting point *and* subject, and then demonstrate their cleverness through their

argumentative skills. Vanstiphout explains the contrast between the two as follows:

> unlike the fable, where the properties are not only known but also immovable, and
> their interrelation provides the mechanics of an illustrative story—very often
> without naming them... or even by abstracting them—, the Dispute *explicitly* lists
> them, compares, them, discusses them, [and] eventually points out their
> consequences and counterpoints.[43]

"Sumerian Riddles: a Corpus," *Aula Orientalis* 5 (1987), 8, n. 6.

[39] Alster ("Sumerian Literary Dialogues," 3) suggests that these text fall into two groups: 1) dialogues that contain verbal contests and 2) epic tales that contain contests (but not verbal contests) between two rulers like "Enmerkar and Ensuhkeshdanna" and "Enmerkar and the Lord of Arrata." Alster (4) suggests that an *a-da-min-dug₄-ga* contest might also refer to a duel by two people (or animals) on their lord's behalf.

[40] See Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 272; Alster, "Sumerian Literary Dialogues"; and Simonetta Ponchi, *Traditions of Controversy*, 63.

[41] Karel Van Der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue as a Vehicle for Critical Reflection," in *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East*: Forms and Types of *Debates in Semitic and Related Literatures* (ed. G. J. Reinink and H. L. J. Vanstiphout; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 42; Leuven: Department Oriëntalistiek, 1991), 64. [59-75]

[42] Vanstiphout ("The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation [Part 1]," 280) also notes that in Mesopotamian literature the fable genre is "*not* restricted to animals or the like...."

[43] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 280.

Additional support for Vanstiphout's conclusion is found in the debate's content, which

is fluid rather than fixed, with each composition revealing its "most *individual* features"

in the debate proper.[44]

Several of the texts do, however, share overlapping features that are suggestive of

something like a genre. The interlocutors, described above, clearly reply to the others'

arguments, sometimes even including the other's words. Their arguments are also

arranged into alternating speeches in a particular framework, which is established by the

introduction, although the disputes themselves vary with respect to the number of lines

each interlocutor receives, as well as the number and order of their speeches.[45] It is also

worth noting here that when the number of speeches is uneven, the ultimate victor has the

last speech. The winner in these cases is also the first to speak.[46]

Common formal features of these disputes are reflected in their structure or

framework, which includes a mythological introduction, the debate proper, and the

judgment or verdict. The introduction presents the contenders and their qualities,

provides the setting in time (e.g., mythological), and reveals the occasion that gives rise

to the dispute. The dispute proper normally consists of multiple speeches assigned to the

two interlocutors. Finally, with the verdict, an arbiter, who is normally a deity, settles the

matter by declaring the winner.

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[44] Italics original. Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 297.

[45] Italics orginal. Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 298. Akkadian disputes, by contrast, are characterized by "alternating strophes of equal length." For a discussion of the fixed form of later disputes, see Sebastian Brock, "The Dispute Poem: From Sumer to Syriac," *Journal of the Canadian Society for Syriac Studies* 1 (2003): 3-9.

[46] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 298, notes that in light of the other evidence, "it seems probably that the rule was to let the eventual winner begin."

Vanstiphout also identifies four common *constituent parts*, which are as follows:

1. The "opposing parties," or "the *contenders*." The disputants are personified representations of natural phenomena, including *plant life*, *animal life*, *human industry*, and *economic endeavor*.[47] Since the contenders are normally represented as equals with complementary functions, the "cleverest debater" is usually assigned victory.[48]

2. The *locus* of their interaction. Their debates may occur in their natural habitat, as in the case of Heron and Turtle[49] or Bird and Fish; it may be arbitrary as with Summer and Winter or Tree and Reed, both of which occur upon arriving at either Temple or Palace to offer their gifts; or, it may take place in the context of a banquet or festival, as with Ewe and Wheat, Ox and Horse, Tamarisk and Palm, Summer and Winter, and Tree and Reed. In other cases, however, as with Hoe and Plough, the *locus* is unmentioned.

3. The "point over which they can quarrel," or the "*occasio litigandi*." There is often a close connection between the *occasio litigandi* and the *locus* of the debate, which provides instances in which quarrels are bound to occur. In "Bird and Fish," the dispute begins with Bird frightening Fish in its own habitat (lines 13-24).[50] The *locus* giving rise to the *occasio* is also true for "Ewe and Wheat" (lines 65-70).[51] The same may be said of others, including "Tree and Reed," "Summer and Winter," and "Ox and Horse."

4. The presence of "an arbiter" who possesses "the competence and the power to end the conflict."[52] In many instances the verdict scene is either missing or poorly preserved.[53] Otherwise, there are no open endings: a verdict is always offered "in which a judge considers the case, cites authorities for his decision, and renders the verdict in favor of one of the parties."[54] In Summer and Winter, Tree and Reed, Bird and Fish, and Heron and Turtle, one or both of the disputants appeal to the judge specifically for a verdict.

In sum, several characteristic features of these disputes may, therefore, be identified.

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[47] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 278. How victory is assigned is a far more complex matter, as I note below.

[48] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 280.

[49] It should be noted that in the case of Heron and Turtle the designation "du_{14}--mú," "to pick a quarrel," is used instead of the normal expression for "debate" or "contest" (a-da-mìn dug_4-ga). See Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 274.

[50] *COS* 1.181:581.

[51] *COS* 1.180:586.

[52] Italics original. Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 278.

[53] This is true of the Sumerian "Silver and Copper," and all of the Akkadian disputes.

[54] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 284.

First, the introduction to these disputes establish a context for debate by configuring 1) the identity of the contenders and their relationship to one another, and 2) the situation that gives rise to the dispute itself. Second, the disputants, who have been presented as equally worthy and even complementary in function, take up their well-known properties in a verbal contest where the winner is usually the first to speak. And, finally, the disputes are settled by an arbiter, normally a god, who issues the verdict declaring the winner.

1.4.2 Argument as Play: Ancient Near Eastern Dialogues as Entertainment

In contrast to modern discussions of argument that focus on problem-solving and decision-making as part of a cooperative endeavor, ancient Near Eastern disputations are marked by a rivalry that lends itself to and even revels in sharp adversarial exchanges. Samuel Noah Kramer, noting the place of rivalry in Sumerian culture, argued that "the drive for superiority and preëminence" was "one of the motivating forces of Sumerian behavior," one that in his estimation accounted for these disputes.[55] At the same time, these texts often take on a playful, even game-like character, which reflects their value for entertainment.

The playful nature of ancient Near Eastern disputes is especially evident when their setting is that of a banquet or festival. In the case of the Ewe and the Wheat, the dispute begins at a banquet, presumably with both in a state of inebriation:

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[55] Samuel Noah Kramer, "Rivalry and Superiority: Two Dominant Features of the Sumerian Culture Pattern," in *Selected Papers of the Fifth International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, Philadelphia, September 1-9, 1956* (ed. A. F. Wallace; Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1960), 288.

> (65) They drank sweet wine,
> They drank tasty beer;
> And when they had drunk sweet wine
> And sated themselves on tasty beer
> They started a quarrel in the midst of the watered fields;
> (70) They held a wrangle in the Dining Hall.[56]

Fueled by their intoxication, the two begin to quarrel, bragging about their respective qualities. Despite the rivalry that develops between them, their contest can hardly be taken very seriously in light of the context out of which it grows.

Similarly, the dispute between Ox and Horse occurs in the form of what Vanstiphout describes as "after-dinner entertainment":[57]

> The Ox and the Horse became friends
> Their bellies were sated with the luscious pasture;
> In their pleasure they engaged in a dispute (lines 21-23).[58]

Here, in the context of their developing friendship and satisfied appetites, they begin to participate in what is described as the enjoyable activity of "dispute."

In the case of Ewe and Wheat, the banquet setting may also suggest that these contests functioned as a sort of theater for the gods, who are "gathered above for a parallel banquet, [and] are watching the Dispute as entertainment," where Enki is not only the god who sets the dispute in motion,[59] but also the one who offers his verdict to

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[56] *COS* 1.180:576.

[57] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 282. See also W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1960), 176-177 [11. A 21-23], cited in Vanstiphout, 307 n. 77.

[58] Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 177.

[59] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation (Part 1)," 282. See, in this respect, *COS* 1:180:576:
> Then Enki spoke to Enlil:
> "Father Enlil, Ewe and Wheat
> Were well settled on the Holy Hill;
> (40) Let us now send Ewe and Wheat down from the Holy Hill."
> Enki and Enlil, having agreed on this, their sacred word,

Enlil.[60] Additional support for this suggestion may be implied by the contrast between the gods—who partake of "the bounty of Ewe and Wheat" and drink "of the sweet milk" of the sheepfold but remain unsatisfied—and Ewe and Wheat, who drink and are sated. With the gods unfulfilled, the stage is set for a satisfying performance.

Entertainment, of course, need not always take the form of what is pleasant. While I will explore the place of insults in argumentation below, the presence of humor in demeaning and offensive personal attacks is worth noting here in connection with the preceding discussion. Jacob Klein has published a list of insults, which he argues is clearly related to the insulting dialogues found in the *edubba* compositions.[61] While the text he considers is unlike the disputations in that it lacks their dialogical framework, Klein argues that the list of insults contained in this text was likely used as a vocabularly for debate, one that consisted of "derogatory" and "obscene epithets," which "no doubt caused amusement to the ancient reader or listener."[62]

Sent down Ewe and Wheat from the Holy Hill.
[60] *COS* 1.180: 577-78:
Thereupon Enki spoke to Enlil:
(180) "Father Enlil, Ewe and Wheat, both of them,
Should walk together!
Of their combined metal [the alloy] should never cease;
Yet of these two Wheat should be the greater!
May the other one kneel before Wheat;
(185) May … kiss her feet!
And from sunrise to sunset
The name of Wheat be praised!
[May you put Ewe's neck to the yoke] of Ashnan!
For whosoever has gold, or silver, or cattle, or sheep,
(190) Shall ever wait at the door of him who has grain, and so pass his days!"
[61] Jacob Klein, "An Old Babylonian Edition of an Early Dynastic Collection of Insults (BT 9)," in *Literatur, Politik und Recht im alten Mesopotamien: Festschrift für Claus Wilcke* (ed. Walter Sallaberger, Konrad Volk, and Annette Zgoll; Orientalia Biblica et Christiana; Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz, 2003), 136.
[62] Jacob Klein, "An Old Babylonian Edition of an Early Dynastic Collection of Insults (BT 9)," 136. In relation to this text, see also Åke W. Sjöberg, "'He is a Good Seed of a Dog,' and 'Engardu, the Fool,'" *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 24 (1972):107-119.

1.4.2.1 The Disputants' Relationship: Complementarity, Opposition, and Argument

The sharp exchanges in these disputes, where interlocutors focus on their respective qualities, are often understood to be concerned primarily with the issue of precedence or merit.[63] The debates set the stage by presenting the opponents—both in their introductions and in their verdicts—as peers, emphasizing their equality by noting that they carry out similar purposes and are equally worthy on the basis of their properties.[64] Both contenders are viewed as necessary for society. In fact, they may be described generally as "complementary sets" taken from the same environments, as with Hoe and Plough, which are as the basic agricultural tools; Tree and Reed and Tamarisk and Palm, the most important plant life; Summer and Winter, Mesopotamia's two seasons; and Copper and Silver, the most valuable metals.[65] The list, of course, could go

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A contemporary analogue may, in fact, be found in a practice referred to as *the dozens* (See Shirley N. Weber, "The Need to Be: The Social-Cultural Significance of Black Language," in *Intercultural Communication: A Reader* [ed. Larry A. Samovar and Richard E. Porter; Belmont, Calif.: Wadsworth, 1991] 85-92), a term used to describe a verbal debate that consists primarily of insults. The term is derived from the practice of slavery, where, if an individual had a disability, he was sold at a discounted rate along with eleven slaves. The "dozens" is often used to refer to a "game that is played in jest" but is, nevertheless, "the highest form of verbal warfare and impromptu speaking" (90). The focus of the debate is on the other's—or his or her significant other's—physical appearance, and often takes the form of something like, "Man, you so ugly...," or, "Say Man, your girlfriend so ugly..." (90).

[63] Bendt Alster, for example, refers to this body of literature as the "Sumerian literary precedence poem." See Bendt Alster, "Sumerian Literary Dialogues and Debates and their place in ancient Near Eastern Literature," in *Living Waters: Scandinavian Orientalistic Studies Presented to Professor Dr. Frede Løkkergaard* (ed. E. Keck; Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 1990): 1-16. The matter of "precedence" or "merit" is complicated, however, as Vanstiphout ("The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2. The Subject," *Acta Sumerologica* 14 [1992], 340-41) suggests, by texts that show debates beginning with questions over literal precedence (see below), where no clear relationship exists between precedence and merit. Merit, in terms of benefit or usefulness, is taken up explicitly in the arguments of Hoe and Plough (*COS* 1.181:578 [lines 11-17, 21-23]), Bird and Fish (*COS* 1.182:582 [lines 97-98]), and Ewe and Wheat (*COS* 1.180:576 [lines 83-88, 107-109]). Vanstiphout argues, as I will develop briefly below, that often it is the opponents' *values*, which are reflected more subtly, that are central to these debates.

[64] But as Simonetta Ponchia ("Debates and Rhetoric in Sumer," in *Traditions of Controversy* [ed. Marcelo Dascal and Han-liang Chang; Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2007], 65) notes, even if a topic "does not need demonstration by the contenders... it may offer material for sustaining their arguments."

[65] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation. Part 2," 341.

on.

The introductions to these disputes regularly emphasize the contestants equal worth or complementary functions.[66] In the Tamarisk and Palm, the introduction shows how both were planted by the king and, in at least one respect, functioned in the same manner by offering their shade.[67] The narrator's introduction to the contest between Ewe and Wheat offers a more developed picture of the equal worth of the two contenders:

> Thus both Ewe and Wheat were radiant in appearance
> And among the gathered people they caused abundance,
> (55) And in the Land they brought well–being.
> The ordinances of the Gods they fulfill with care;
> The store–rooms of the Land they fill with abundance,
> So that the barns of the Land are bulging with them.
> Even in the home of the needy, who are crouching in the dust,
> (60) When they enter there, they bring about wealth.
> Both of them, wherever they direct their steps,
> Add to the riches of the household;
> Wherever they stand, they bring satisfaction; Wherever they sit, they are embellishment.[68]

The complementarity of the two is described here in terms of their appearance, their service to the gods, and their benefits for the land and humanity, including the needy. Together, they are described as "bring[ing] satisfaction" and serving as an "embellishment."

The mutuality of the disputants is also affirmed, or reaffirmed, in some of the

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Vanstiphout notes two exceptions in this regard: "Ewe and Wheat" and "Ox and Horse," since, for the latter, their dispute "seems to take up precisely the different spheres of the contenders into the body or subject of the debate."

[66] The mutuality of the disputants is also suggested by their terms of address. In Ewe and Wheat, the pair uses "sister"; in Summer and Winter, "brother" is used.

[67] "The Tamarisk and the Palm," MS A: obv. I.6-8 (Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 155): "[The king] planted the Palm in his courtyard... / [He planted] the Tamarisk. In the shade of the Tamarisk [he arranged] / A banquet; in the shade of the Tamarisk [he arranged]."

[68] *COS* 1.180:576.

verdict scenes. Ewe and Wheat and Summer and Winter provide two examples. In Ewe

and Wheat, it is Enki's address to Enlil that ends their dispute. As Enki does so, however,

he reaffirms their equality and complementarity, which were described in the

introduction, by noting that as they move beyond their quarrel the two of them "should

walk together!"[69] Similarly, when Summer aproaches Enlil for a verdict, he also seems to

reaffirm the equality they share after what is nearly a violent confrontation, as he states

(no doubt, for the benefit of the gods) that "Brother has started a quarrel with brother, but

now they are calm again."[70] After the verdict is offered by Enlil, a scene of reconciliation

immediately follows:

> (310) [Summer] bowed before [Winter], said prayers to him.
> In his house he prepared beer and wine for him.
> At its side they pass the day with a succulent banquet.
> [Summer] gives gold and silver to [Winter];
> In brotherly love and friendship they will alternate
> (315) And they shall comfort their minds by speaking sweet words, and so gratify
> each other.[71]

Despite their use of insults, and a dispute that escalates almost to the point of a physical

altercation (see below), in the end mutuality is reestablished between the two of them.

Noting the complementarity of the opponents, and the issues these debates

address (e.g., whether Summer is better than Winter, or a hoe is more useful than a

plough), Vanstiphout observes that "[t]hese are not the most serious or important issues

imaginable, nor do these oppositions lay bare deep metaphysical antitheses."[72] Since the

disputants share a common situation (and often much more), he suggests that they might

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[69] *COS* 1.180:577.
[70] *COS* 1.183:588.
[71] *COS* 1.183:588.
[72] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 342.

also be expected to share a "set or framework of values."[73] What Vanstiphout argues is

that the contenders often "embody" more than illustrate an "opposition between ways of

life or *attitudes*."[74] He refers to this opposition of values as the underlying or covert

subject. He explains

> the contenders—or, to be more precise, the victors—will try to present their
> characteristics or features within said framework. Their "evidence" whether in
> defense or in prosecution is geared to explain and validate their features as parts
> of a larger set, and as having a consistent bias one way or the other... this
> interpretation of a covert subject also explains why the verdicts so often insist, at
> the same time, upon a basic equivalence as well as the victory of one of the
> contenders.[75]

The clearest example of this occurs in Hoe and Plough.[76] The opposition, he

argues, exists not so much in their agricultural roles, as in the ways of life, or attitudes,

each reveals: in Plough's pomposity, "its preciosity, its intricate construction, [and] its

need for many assistants," and in "Hoe's humility, its simplicity, its being ever ready, its

versatility, its constant companionship to man—topped, of course, by Enlil's need of it at

every new creation."[77] In light of the values reflected in their debate, he suggests that the

work might instead be labeled "A Sumerian Debate Treating... the Superiority of the

Commoner over the High and Mighty."

After a brief survey of some of the strategies of argument in these disputes, I will

focus on how these disputes reflect what is valued (self-control), what is allowed (mutual

insult), and what serves as a cause for anxiety (argument's potential for violence).

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[73] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 343.

[74] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 343.

[75] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 343.

[76] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 344.

[77] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems. A General Presentation. Part 2," 345. For
specific examples, see *COS* 1.181:579-580 [lines 100-106, 130-34, 162-174].

1.4.2.2 Strategies of Argument

Several argumentative strategies can be identified in these disputes. Here, I will focus on three: the use of *topoi*; common observations, including the use of proverbs; and reversal, which may take several forms.

The *topoi* employed by the interlocutors in these disputes include, but are not limited to, priority, utility, beauty, extension, simplicity, and versatility.[78] Utility, the question of which of the two is most beneficial to humankind, at times determines their outcomes as indicated in the verdict scenes of both Ewe and Wheat and Hoe and the Plough.[79] Others could be mentioned, including Hoe's use of simplicity, as it contrasts its diminutive features with the attention Plough needs when it is in need of repair; or in Bird and Fish, Bird's appeal to its aesthetically pleasing nature, which serves as the basis on which its victory is finally assigned.[80] While there are certainly other examples that could be cited, these provide a brief overview of their presence in these disputations.

Sometimes their arguments consist of everyday observations or common knowledge. In its reply to Plough, Hoe points to its common tasks : "I make ditches; I make canals; I fill the meadows with water..."[81] In other instances, the disputants use proverbs or proverb-like sayings as part of their argumentative strategies. Another example from Hoe and Plough shows how Hoe presents what appears to be a proverb

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[78] Ponchia, "Debates and Rhetoric in Sumer," 65.
[79] See *COS* 1.180:577-578; *COS* 1.181:580-581
[80] For examples of these, see below. On the verdict in Bird and Fish, see *COS* 1.182:584.
[81] *COS* 1.181:579. This is part of a larger argument in which Hoe responds to Plough's insults, which present Hoe as a filthy instrument. Hoe responds by emphasizing its utility over the limited use of Plough. See below.

from which it then draws its conclusion:

> The fowler samples eggs;
> (80) The fisherman catches fish;
> And they all empty bird–traps
> Thus is wealth spread everywhere by my doing.[82]

A more common and complex strategy of argumentation is found in what Vanstiphout refers to as *reversal*, which works through opposition and tends to occur in three ways: 1) turning strengths into weakness, 2) highlighting the inherent weaknesses of the other, and 3) noting the positive dimensions of one's own weaknesses.

One example of reversal that takes the form of turning another's strength into weakness is found in Ewe and Wheat, where Ewe boasts of the use of its wool as clothing for royal and cultic officials:

> In his gown, which is my cloth of shining wool,
> The king rejoices on the throne
> My sides gleam on the flesh of the Great gods!
> (110) Together with the bathed purification and incantation priests
> When they have dressed for purifying me,
> I walk to my holy meal![83]

Wheat, however, replying to Ewe's observation of what happens to Wheat in the processing of grains, combines both the two images Ewe has presented—the image of food processing and clothing, albeit implicitly—for its own benefit:

> (175) But you are put into various containers;
> When your innards are taken away by the buyers in the market,
> And your neck is wrapped with your very own loin-cloth,
> One man says to the other: 'Fill the measure with grain for my sheep!' "[84]

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[82] *COS* 1.181:579.
[83] *COS* 1.183:586.
[84] *COS* 1.180:577.

With the last line, Wheat turns Ewe's argument upside down by suggesting that as Ewe is processed and sent to market, it provides the "clothing" for grain.[85]

This type of strategy also occurs more subtly as in the case of Hoe and Plough. After Plough has emphasized its association with nobility and the gods, as well as the enormity of its work (lines 40-49), Hoe acknowledges Plough's "greatness" but also draws attention to Plough's inherent weakness by contrasting its work (and, again, drawing on the *topoi* of utility) with the limited nature of Plough's, which occurs during only one-third of the year:

> Your work is slight, though your ways are great!
> My turn of duty is twelve months;
> Your effective term is four months;
> The time you are idle is eight months;
> (110) So you are absent twice as long as you are present![86]

Vanstiphout notes that another factor that contributes to the effectiveness of Hoe's argument against Plough in this instance, when viewed from a literary perspective, is that Plough's speaking time is only one-third of Hoe's, which may be taken to suggest that Plough's argumentative skills and rhetorical ability are inferior to Hoe.[87]

Hoe also works from the opposite direction with an argumentative strategy that turns its weakness into strength. After Plough has insulted Hoe by assigning its place to the mud and dust and noting its association with the poor, a thing unfit for nobility (lines 55-64), Hoe responds at the conclusion of its speech as follows:

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[85] *COS* 1.180:577.

[86] *COS* 1.181:579.

[87] Vanstiphout ("The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation [Part 1]," 299) notes that Plough speaking time "provides... a mathematical interpretation of or background to the hollowness of Plough arguments, which consist of an unwise mixture of haughtiness, disdain, and boasting."

And you, Plow, think to insult me (by saying) 'Go, dig a hole!?'
On the plains, where no moisture is found,
When I have dug up the sweet water,
The thirsty ones come back to life at the side of my wells![88]

The examples cited above, which include the use of *topoi*, common observations or proverbs, and the use of reversal, illustrate some of the most common argumentative strategies employed in the context of the Mesopotamian disputation literature. Although the disputants' arguments are often adversarial, they are normally marked by a certain measure of restraint that allows the participants to maintain or restore their relationship despite their sharp exchanges.

1.4.2.3 Insult as an Appropriate Argumentative Strategy

Insult also serves as an appropriate argumentative strategy—one that can be presented with subtlety or severity. In either case, it may be used successfully in the context of a dispute, where it reveals both the argumentative skill and the individual weaknesses of the disputants.

In the context of the dispute, insults are normally referred to explicitly by either the narrator or in reference to the one for whom the disparaging remarks are intended. Two examples of the narrator's observations regarding an insult are found in Summer and Winter and Bird and Fish. In Summer and Winter, after the narrator states "Thus had [Winter] then insulted [Summer]," Summer is described as searching for "rude insults."[89] A similar expression is repeated twice in Bird and Fish, once for each disputant: "Thus

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[88] *COS* 1.181:580.
[89] *COS* 1.181:586.

Bird insulted Fish on that day." Other examples show when an insult registers with a disputant. Making explicit what Plough has implied, Hoe asks, "And you, Plough, think to insult me (by saying) 'Go, dig a hole!'"[90] After searching for "rude insults," Summer twice admonishes Winter: "[Winter,]... You should not place these heavy insults (against one?) who does not lead a sitting life," and only a few lines later, "[Winter], do not speak insults..."[91] In the more agonistic Bird and Fish, Fish objects to Bird's argumentative strategy, noting that "[m]y weakness and my strength you did not consider; yet you spoke inflammatory words!"[92] These are only a few of the examples that could be offered to show that insults had an appropriate place in argumentative strategies more generally.

In some cases, the insults offered are more subtle in nature, taking the form of ridicule, or, at times, having a more serious tone. As an example of the former, Hoe ridicules Plough by reversing, or inverting, the image Plough has created in listing all of the nobility who attend its procession.[93] Hoe cleverly responds by naming all who must be present when Plough is in need of repair:

> (95) When you finally put your head to the task,
> Your *tongue gets caught* by brambles and thorns.
> Your tooth *breaks*, and your tooth is renewed;
> You will not keep it for long.
> Your plowman calls you "This Plow is broken again!"

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[90] *COS* 1.181:580.
[91] *COS* 1.183:586.
[92] *COS* 1.182:583.
[93] As in *COS* 1.181:578:
At the celebration of my harvest–festival in the fields...
(30) The king himself takes hold of my handle-bars;
My oxen he harnesses to the yoke;
Great noblemen walk at my side;
The nations gaze at me in admiration,
The Land watches me in joy!

> (100) And, again, carpenters have to be hired, people …
> The whole chapter of workers is milling around you.
> The harness–makers scrape another green hide for you,
> Twisting it with pegs for you.
> Without stopping they turn the tourniquet for you,
> (105) And finally a foul hide is put upon your head.[94]

In other cases, insults are more direct as when Plough refers to the location of Hoe's identity as a "hole-digger"; its physical appearance as consisting of a "pathetic long tooth"; its activity as filthy, as one who is "always burrowing in the mud... whose head is always in the dust...," who spends its "days in mud," but is never cleaned; and its association with the poor and the slave.[95]

In most instances, however, what appears to be most important is how one responds to invective, whether argumentatively or emotionally. With regard to the exchange between Hoe and Plough cited above (lines 55-60), Hoe responds to Plough's insults with a two-fold argument of precedence and utility:

> O Plow, my smallness—what is that to me? My humble state—what is that to me?
> My dwelling at the river bank—what is that to me?
> At Enlil's place, I precede you!
> In Enlil's temple, I stand in front of you![96]
> (70) I make ditches, I make canals;
> I fill the meadows with water;
> And when the water floods the canebrake,
> My small baskets carry it away.
> When a canal is cut, or a ditch,
> (75) And the water rushes out as a rising flood,
> Making everything into a swamp,
> I, the Hoe, dam it in,

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[94] *COS* 1.181:579.
[95] *COS* 1.181:578-580.
[96] *COS* 1.181:579.

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So that neither southern nor northern storm can *blow it away*.[97]

Hoe first notes that its diminutive size, its lowly position, and its location are of no consequence, since it takes priority over Plough before the gods. Second, by reversing Plough's insults, or what Plough assumes to be Hoe's weaknesses, Hoe demonstrates its greater utility in the extent of its benefit for humanity.

Exercising self-control or restraint after one has been insulted is also presented as a virtue in these disputes. Two texts illustrate the self-control of the disputants, who take the other's insults lightly: Summer and Winter and Bird and Fish. When Winter insults Summer, Summer responds "as if he acted friendly."[98] The response found in Bird and Fish is of a similar nature. There, the narrator states that Bird "[t]ook not to heart the insults Fish had hurled at it, treating the insult instead like a nurse singing a lullaby."[99] The temptation to respond negatively is implicit in the narrator's following remarks, which note that "[Bird] did not give in to that speech, but angry words rose from it" nonetheless.

In some dialogues the lack of self-control or restraint, as well as the disputants' inappropriate responses to insult, appear to reflect social disapproval, whether implicitly or explicitly. In Bird and Fish, the narrator describes Fish as becoming angry after the insults of Bird. Although no explicit critique is offered here, and the narrator states that "[Fish] took not to heart the insults Bird had hurled at it,"[100] in what follows the narrator

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[97] *COS* 1.181:579.
[98] *COS* 1.183:587.
[99] *COS* 1.182:582.
[100] *COS* 1.182:582.

describes Fish as speaking "unrestrainedly."[101] This remark anticipates the last words Fish

will speak, which foreshadow its unrestrained act of violence in destroying Bird's nest:

"The harshness and evil speech you held, I shall hand back to you." While this might at

first be taken metaphorically, particularly since it is in response to the verbal response

Bird has offered up ("The harshness and evil speech you held..."), Fish's claim ("I shall

hand back to you...") is physically actualized.[102]

Insult may also reveal weaknesses in an opponent's character, as in the dispute

between Copper and Silver:

> Strong Copper cast his legitimate insults against Silver, and was full of hate
> against him—insults of a miserable dog, like water from a brackish well. He
> exerted his powers against him to harass him. And at this Silver felt thoroughly
> harassed; it did not befit his dignity.[103]

Here, Copper's insults are effective since they accomplish his goal of provoking Silver,

who "felt thoroughly harassed"—a reaction unbefitting for Silver's character.

The examples discussed above suggest that insults were considered appropriate

argumentative strategies. Exercising self-control and restraint in withstanding another's

verbal assault also appears as a virtue of some of the disputants.[104]

1.4.2.4 Insults and Argument's Potential for Social Disruption

As noted above, not all ancient Near Eastern dialogues retain the tone of mutual

respect found in the Tamarisk and the Palm or in the Ox and the Horse. Apart from

whatever entertainment value they may have had, these dialogues tend to draw attention

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[101] *COS* 1.182:582.

[102] See my discussion below on pp. 36-39.

[103] The translation here is that of Ponchia, "Debates and Rhetoric in Sumer," 81 n. 5.

[104] Ponchia, "Debates and Rhetoric in Sumer," 81 n. 5.

to argument's potential for social disruption, as the interlocutors assume an adversarial

posture, insult one another, experience anger, and even resort to violence. The purpose of

these disputes may have been to model forms of dialogue that would have been

disapproved of socially, even if they were still enjoyable.

<u>1.4.2.4.1 Insult and Anger in Argumentation</u>

Social disapproval is hinted at in two of the disputes mentioned above: Hoe and

Plough and Summer and Winter. With respect to the former, in Enlil's verdict to the

debate between Hoe and Plough, he first rebukes the disputants for their anger ("Why

should the sieve quarrel with the strainer? Why make another angry?") before directly

rebuking Hoe, who is ultimately the winner: "O Hoe, do not be so angry! Do not cry out

so loud!"[105] Despite the fact that Hoe emerges as the victor, Enlil nevertheless notes that

its anger was out of place in its dispute with Plough.

The case of Summer and Winter is more complicated, since evidence of socially

disapproved speech is indicated implicitly. Since the introduction provides a lengthy list

of their properties and accomplishments, there is little question that they are of equal

worth and possess complementary functions, although this is precisely what sets the stage

for their debate over precedence. As the two make their way to the Temple to offer their

gifts to Enlil, Winter starts a quarrel with Summer out of anger:

> [Summer] and [Winter] drove together the gift of young cattle;
> The two of them, like butting bulls they reared themselves for battle.
> [Winter], because of his tired arms and shoulders
> (110) From all the grain grown heavy in the furrow which he had been watering,
> Turned from them as (from) a stranger; he did not want to draw near.

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[105] *COS* 1.181:580.

Anger overcame [Winter], and he started a quarrel with [Summer].[106] One might assume that they are friends since they are traveling together. As the debate unfolds and escalates, however, Summer searches for "rude insults," even while warning Winter not to "speak insults" in the same speech.**[107]** When Winter does insult Summer, Summer is presented as exercising self-control, "trusting in his heart," and taking Winter's speech "as if he acted friendly."[108] Even so, the tension heightens so that "[b]oth of them stretch their legs, [and] stand up as for a fight."[109] Winter then appeals to Enki, likely in an attempt to avoid the fight, although the text at this point is poorly preserved.

While there is no indication of divine disapproval with respect to their use of insults, their display of emotion, or even their posturing for a fight, it is interesing to note that prior to speaking "respectfully to Enlil," Summer "collects everything in his head and calms down."[110] Then, in the context of his address, he again notes that they have moved beyond their angry emotions, now referring to Winter as "brother." Winter has used the kinship term three times up to this point in the dispute, but for Summer this is the first and only time, occurring in his speech to Enlil: "Brother has started a quarrel with brother, but now they are calm again."[111] The text then makes a point to show that these two equally worthy opponents have finally reconciled, with the expectation that their future interaction will be characterized by reciprocity: "In brotherly love and friendship they will alternate. And they shall comfort their minds by speaking sweet

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[106] *COS* 1.183:586.
[107] *COS* 1:183:586.
[108] *COS* 1.183:587.
[109] *COS* 1:183:588.
[110] *COS* 1.183:588.
[111] *COS* 1.183:588.

words, and so gratify each other."[112]

1.4.2.4.2 Bird and Fish: Argument's Potential for Violence

The final example I wish to offer is that of Bird and Fish, whose dispute begins in their natural habitat and quickly turns into a quarrel, which ultimately leads to an act of violence on the part of Fish. The conflict, which follows a brief cosmological introduction, begins almost immediately in this text: "Upon that time Fish laid its eggs in the swamp; Bird built its nest in an opening of the thicket. But Bird frightened Fish (dwelling) among its property."[113] In what follows, each disputant offers two speeches of almost equal length.

The dispute itself focuses on the opposition between the aesthetically pleasing Bird and the usefulness of Fish, although it shows an excessive display of emotion from the outset, where Fish "cried out," "started a wrangle," "stood up in pride," and "shouted at him, turning up his nose."[114] Invective characterizes the exchanges that follow, as Fish and Bird take turns insulting each other.

The exercise of self-control in response to another's insults is demonstrated by each of the disputants. Initially, both show restraint, not taking the other's abusive remarks "to heart." After a string of scornful attacks in Fish's first speech, the narrator notes that while Fish had insulted Bird, Bird did not take Fish's insults to heart.[115] Rather, in a manner that is reminscent of Winter treating Summer's assault "as if he acted

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[112] *COS* 1.183:588.
[113] *COS* 1.182:581.
[114] *COS* 1.182:581.
[115] *COS* 1.182:582.

friendly," Bird hears Fish's insult "[a]s if it had been but a nursemaid singing a

lullaby."[116] Yet, Fish has apparently struck a nerve, since, although Bird "did not give in

to that speech," the narrator observes that "still angry words rose from it."[117] When Bird

follows suit with a humiliating contrast between the two, Fish also exercises self-control

in not taking Bird's insults to heart.[118]

Ultimately, however, it is Bird's speech that causes Fish to resort to violence, as is

clear from the final words of Fish's second full speech: "The harshness and evil speech

you held, I shall hand back to you!" The narrative that follows describes Fish conceiving

of "an evil plot against Bird," and then:

> (105) Silently, furtively, it slithered alongside
> And when Bird arose from its nest to fetch food for its young
> Fish searched for the most discreet of the silent places.
> Its well–built nest, made from brushwood it made into a derelict house;
> Its well–built house it destroyed, tore down the storeroom;
> (110) The eggs it had laid it smashed, and threw them into the sea.
> Thus did Fish strike at Bird — and then fled into the waters.[119]

After reciprocating with some form of violent action,[120] Bird engages in a final round of

insults, after which Fish appeals to Shulgi as judge. Yet the narrator continues to note the

moral decline reflected in their ongoing interaction, describing them as "jostling and

continuing the evil quarrel, [i]n order to establish, the one over the other, his pre-

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[116] *COS* 1.182:582.

[117] *COS* 1.182:582.

[118] *COS* 1.182:582.

[119] *COS* 1.182:583.

[120] After seeing its destroyed nest, the narrator describes Bird's actions (*COS* 1.182:583) as
follows:
> Bird now seeks around for Fish, searching the marshes;
> Bird peers into the river, watches it closely.
> (120) As if snatching into the water, it stretched out its legs,
> Clasped its *claws*? together and did not open them again.
> Thus Bird took vengeance.

eminence..." or jostling one another "[l]ike goring [oxen(?)]."[121] The image effectively

characterizes their violent interaction.

In the verdict scene, litigation follows with Bird recounting Fish's devastation and

appealing to the judge to remedy its situation. Judgment is finally granted in favor of Bird

in light of its aesthetically pleasing nature, particularly its sweet and pleasing voice.[122] No

mention is made of Fish's act of violence, although this issue may have been addressed in

the twenty or so lines that are missing at the end of the piece.[123] In any case, Fish's

destructive act would have been understood as intolerable in the framework of a debate.

Vanstiphout argues that it is on the basis of Fish's socially inappropriate actions that the

dispute develops in ways that are so different from the other debates, with "argument[s]

turn[ing] into narrative, and the contenders... seek[ing] not only a a verdict on the matter

of intrinsic merit," but Bird seeking redress for Fish's act of injustice.[124] That the verdict

was based on more than Bird's aestheticism may also be implied by the fact that, unlike

most cases, the first to speak is not the one who is declared the winner in Bird and Fish.

Moreover, referring to the part of the verdict that states that "[a]t *Enlil's* holy table, Birds

should not take precedence over you (Fish)," Vanstiphout notes that "the intention here

seems to be that even if Fish should have some claim on preferment, this can never

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[121] *COS* 1.182:583-584.

[122] *COS* 1.182:584.

[123] As Herman L. J. Vanstiphout ("Lore, Learning and Levity in the Sumerian Disputations: A Matter of Form, or Substance?," in *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Medieval Near East* [ed. G. J. Reinink and Herman L. J. Vanstiphout; Orientalia Lovaniensia Analecta 42; Peeters: Leuven, 1991], 35-36 n. 42) observes, "While we cannot as yet be completely certain, it is highly probably that the (criminal) case was answered in the Verdict proper as well. So far we possess only—and on an unpublished fragment joined to the published tablet from Sippar [BM 65147 = *CT* 42 42] at that—a number of partially broken lines containing the Verdict on the merits of the case."

[124] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation. Part 2," 348.

excuse its criminal attack on Bird: the crime of violence is far worse than any lack of serious 'virtue.'"[125] As Vanstiphout suggests, perhaps this piece should instead be dubbed as either "The Importance of Being Pleasant" or "A Debate and Fable Showing that High Moral Value is no Excuse for Intolerance."[126]

The preceding examination reinforces Kramer's claim cited above that these debates are an expression of an agonistic culture. I also noted earlier that these disputes have a playful dimension that is reflected even in the opponents' use of insults. In fact, in light of the discussion above, the disputes themselves may be seen as a sort of "play space" that models agonistic interaction. In doing so, it explores what is valued (mutual respect and self-control), what is allowed (mutual insult), and what serves as a source of anxiety (the tendency of argument to spill over into violence).

1.4.3 The Wisdom Dialogue

Like the contest literature, a second category of texts also privileges conflict, only it does so by using persuasive and adversarial arguments to open up and explore more serious topics and issues.[127] Only two other ancient Near Eastern dialogues examined in relation to *Job* share the clustering of features that is suggestive of a genre.[128] H. -P. Müller and Carol Newsom have recognized the similarities between *Job* and the Babylonian Theodicy, and Karel van der Toorn adds to this collection a third, an Egyptian text known as a Dialogue of a Man with His *Ba* or the *Lebensmüde*.[129] These

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[125] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation. Part 2," 348.

[126] Vanstiphout, "The Mesopotamian Debate Poems: A General Presentation. Part 2," 347-348.

[127] By "controversial" I am referring to issues that would have been matters of extended debate.

[128] Newsom, Book of Job, 72-73.

[129] H. -P. Müller, "Keilschriftliche Parallelen zum biblischen Hiobbuch: Möglichkeit und Grenze

texts, they argue, represent a distinct literary genre known as the wisdom dialogue or the

literary dialogues (van der Toorn).[130]

What sets these texts apart from other ancient Near Eastern "dialogues" or

"disputes" is the issue or issues they choose to explore through argument. H. P. Müller

identified the central issue as relating to a moral order underlying reality, particularly the

doubt that is expressed in relation to God's ability or willingness to uphold the moral

order as its guarantor.[131] For the *Lebensmüde,* the issue is slightly different, as the man in

this text contemplates death and the afterlife, in light of his miserable existence, even as

his *ba* threatens to leave him.[132]

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des Vergleichs," in *Mythos-Kerygma-Wahrheit: Gesammelte Aufsätze zum Alten Testament in seiner Umwelt und zur biblischen Theologie* (Beihefte Zur Zeitschrift Fur Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft 200**;** Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 1991), 136-51; Newsom, *Book of Job*, 79-89; van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue as a Vehicle of Critical Reflection," 59-75. Although these texts differ in character from the literary dialogues, they set the broader context of disputation into which van der Toorn's three examples are to be situated.

[130] See, especially, Newsom's (*Book of Job*, 79-89) overview and critique.

[131] See H.-P. Müller, "Keilschriftliche Parallelen zum biblischen Hiobbuch: Möglichkeit und Grenze des Vergleichs," *Orientalia* 47:3 (1978): 360-375. As Müller (361) observes,

> Das Theodizeeproblem nimmt seinen Anlaß bei der Strittigkeit einer der Wirklichkeit zugrundeliegenden sittlichen Ordnung. Es wird von Menschen erörtert, die durch diese Strittigkeit betroffen sind; in institutionalisierter Form geschieht dies im Zusammenhang der Weisheitslehre. Religiös motiviert ist das Problem insofern, als die Gottheit, wenn sie als Garant einer sittlichen Weltordnung verstanden wird, der bezeichneten Streitigkeit mit unterliegt; deren Diskussion ist dann vom Zweifel an der Macht oder am Willen der Gottheit beherrscht, diese Ordnung aufrechtzuerhalten. Eine Lösung des Theodizeeproblems würde, wenn sie gelingt, im Bereich des Verstehens liegen, ganz gleich, ob sich an der Wirklichkeit etwas ändert oder nicht; ihre Bewährung wäre sogar gerade dann vollkommen, wenn das Übel, das sie erklärt, seinen Bestand behält.

[132] See van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Dialogue," 59-75. While the identity of the *ba* in this text is uncertain, and has baffled Egyptologists since it does not normally appear as a separate identity prior to death, it appears to fill something like the role of the man's soul. The *ba* is a term that is often translated as "soul," which van der Toorn finds to be lacking. Drawing on the similarities between the *Lebensmüde* and its closest parallel, the Complaints of Kha-Kheper-Re-Seneb, van der Toorn argues that the *ba* is best understood here as the man's alter ego. If he is correct, then we would have a man who is carrying on a conversation with himself or, as van der Toorn suggests ("The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 66), taking counsel with himself. Van der Toorn notes E. Brunner-Traut's argument ["Der Lebensmüde und sein Ba" in ZÄS 94 (1967), 6-15] that the *Lebensmüde* shows the *ba* to be active in life, and that the *Lebensmüde* is concerned with the problem of a premature separation between the man and his

Newsom has argued persuasively that "the most striking similarities" among these texts are to be found between the Babylonian Theodicy and *Job* 3-27.[133] These texts not only share the form of a dialogue, which is initiated by an individual sufferer, but also reflect other important features including a common topic of discussion (undeserved suffering), which then "leads to reflection on the elusiveness and moral questionableness of the divine, the existence or nonexistence of a moral order… and the ethical distortions of the social order."[134] It is the characters' exploration of this central issue (and the issues that emanate from it) that makes available other avenues of intellectual inquiry. Newsom refers to this dimension of the dialogues as their "exploratory stance," or what van der Toorn calls the "interrogative" mood, and what Buccelati describes as a "stance of critical inquisitiveness."**[135]** Moreover, in each text, the friend(s) encourage the sufferer to engage in "the traditional practices of piety, contrasting the passing nature of misfortune with what is lasting, and arguing that the wicked will eventually receive punishment."[136]

It is difficult to deny that the closest connections are to be found between Job and the Babylonian Theodicy. But the Man and his *Ba* also merits closer attention in light of the similarities it shares with these two dialogues. Like *Job* and the Babylonian Theodicy, the *Lebensmüde* is also a stylistically complex composition. While Job consists of poetry and unfolds in a series of cycles, and the Babylonian Theodicy is written as an acrostic in

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ba. See also G. E. Kadish, "British Museum Writing Board 5645. The Complaints of Kha-Kheper-Re'-Senebu," *JEA* 59 (1973): 77-90; and, H. Brunner, *Altägyptische Weisheit: Lehren für das Leben* (Zürich: Artemis, 1988), 378-383. In this text, a Heliopolitan priest speaks to his heart rather than his *ba*, although his heart does not respond.
[133] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 80.
[134] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 80.
[135] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 79.
[136] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 80.

twenty-seven stanzas of eleven lines each, the *Lebensmüde* includes a mixture of "prose,

symmetrically structured speech, and lyric poetry."[137]

The differences in the topics of concern in these dialogues are also not as sharp as

they first appear. While *Job* and the Babylonian Theodicy explore the topic of the moral

order through the experience of undeserved suffering, the *Lebensmüde* presents a man

engaging his *ba* on the question of whether death is to be preferred over life, which is

also an explicit topic of reflection for Job, especially in chaps. 3, 7, 10, and 17. Although

the moral order comes into clearer focus in *Job* and the Babylonian Theodicy, all three

texts share concerns with divine justice. In fact, the issue of justice—that the righteous

and the wicked will be rewarded accordingly—is at the heart of the debate over the moral

order. Yet this issue also appears in the *Lebensmüde* in relation to the man's

dissatisfaction with life and longing for death, which are due in part to the absence of

justice he has witnessed in society. Locating himself among the suffering, the man

appeals to his gods for relief on the basis of his own wretched existence.[138] Although he

does not directly accuse the gods of injustice, he does voice his disappointment with

divine inaction over the moral decline he witnesses in society and even imagines himself

in the afterlife acting to punish the wicked.[139] All three texts, therefore, reflect a concern

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[137] See "The Dispute Between a Man and His Ba" (Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature* [Berkley, Los Angeles, and London: University of California, 2006], 1.163.

[138] *AEL* 1.164.
Tread on the evil, put down my misery!
May Thoth judge me, he who appeases the gods!
May Kohns defend me, he who writes truly!
May Re hear my speech, he who calms the sun-bark!
May Isdes defend me in the sacred hall!
For my suffering is [too heavy a burden to be borne by me].

[139] See *AEL* 1.168: "Truly, he who is yonder will be a living god, Punishing the evildoer's crime."

with issues of justice and, at least implicitly, the moral order, in the context of a society in moral decline.

To better understand the wisdom dialogue's goal or goals, and Job's relationship to the genre, it will be helpful first to look more closely at how interpreters have understood the nature of its conclusions.

1.4.3.1 Irresolution in the Wisdom Dialogue

The lack of a resolution in the wisdom dialogue appears to be one of its more troubling features for interpreters. Although van der Toorn notes that the "literary dialogues" are "not merely precursors or variants of the classic model" (i.e., the "Socratic dialogue"),[140] his description of the two categories tends to overlap. According to van der Toorn, the literary dialogue functions as what he refers to as "a conventional vehicle of critical reflection," an instrument used "to grapple with questions to which the wisdom of the past has no answers," which, he suggests, likely arose in a scholarly setting but ultimately came to exist independently of it.[141] He describes the Socratic dialogue similarly as "a conventional form of reflective prose" that was "used as a vehicle of philosophical speculation."[142] It, too, had its origins in an academic context and eventually gained wider usage.

The extent to which van der Toorn's understanding of the Socratic dialogue has influenced his own expectations for the literary dialogues is particularly evident in how he treats their conclusions. The purpose of the literary dialogues is to deliberately contrast

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[140] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 60.
[141] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 74-75.
[142] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 59.

opposing viewpoints in an attempt to arrive at a "new perspective."[143] In each case, van

der Toorn suggests that the confrontation between the two interlocutors leads to a

conclusion, which may take the form of "a compromise, an agreement or a revelation,"

serving, in turn, "as a point of departure for future reflection."[144] But, although each

dialogue may, in fact, end differently, no clear *agreement* is reached.[145] For van der

Toorn, the wisdom dialogue (or literary dialogues) appears instead to be a failed Socratic

dialogue.

Lambert's analysis of the Babylonian Theodicy appears to reflect similar

assumptions. According to Lambert, the failure is that of the author, who, rather than

following through with a solution to the problem of divine order, abandons the central

issue, shifting the topic of argumentation instead to a discussion focusing on humanity's

evil inclinations.[146] He describes the author's failure as follows:

> Apparently the author could not resolve the conflict between the deep-seated
> conviction and actual life, so his way out was to assert a thesis which seemed to
> him logically irrefutable, and in some way related to the problem. Whatever evil
> men do, he argues is done because the gods made them that way. Where the
> author fails is in not seeing clearly the relationship of his thesis to the main
> problem.[147]

Thus, for Lambert, the text represents a failed attempt to reason adequately through an

issue to its resolution. Again, Lambert assumes that the characters' arguments should

conform to modern notions of logic, argumentation, and dialectical relevance, as is

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[143] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 69.

[144] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 69.

[145] In fact, the Joban dialogue does not conclude at all, unless one includes God's speeches as van der Toorn does. The Joban dialogue (chaps. 4-27) ends either because it is in a state of textual disrepair, or, as I will argue in the final chapter, it finally collapses or breaks down.

[146] Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 65.

[147] Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 65.

evident in his discussion of the meter of the text, where he notes that "[l]ines of four main stresses are hardly long enough for the development of a smooth chain of reasoning such as the author attempts."[148] But is "a smooth chain of reasoning" really the author's goal? From Lambert's perspective, the poet was, in the end, unable to create a composition appropriate to the kind of argumentation he envisioned.

Both van der Toorn and Lambert attempt to read these dialogues through a set of expectations derived from the Socratic dialogue—with an emphasis on arriving at a new perspective through dialectic.[149] This is expressed clearly in van der Toorn's observation that "[t]he literary dialogues... do not merely take stock of the damage the traditional dogmas have suffered, but try to construct something new upon the debris of these views."[150] If, however, "one cannot say that the literary dialogues really lead up to their conclusions,"[151] as van der Toorn acknowledges, but continues to claim that their goal is to reach "a new perspective," then the dialogues must finally fail at what they set out to do.

Newsom has modeled a different stance toward the wisdom dialogue, however, by finding in its repetitiveness and in the indeterminate nature of its conclusions clues to its goals. Rather than viewing the dialogues as "intellectual or aesthetic failures,"[152] Newsom suggests that the dialogue "seems to value the play of thought in its own

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[148] Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, 66.
[149] See Denning-Bolle, *Wisdom in Akkadian Literature*, 69-84; and, Newsom, *Book of Job*, 84-85.
[150] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 69.
[151] van der Toorn, The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 84.
[152] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 85.

right."[153] Here she draws on the work of Giorgio Buccellati who argues that the juxtaposition of contrasting positions throughout the dialogue emphasizes "the unfolding of a thought process viewed dynamically in its becoming."[154] Buccellati writes:

> [T]he dialogue form is then especially apt to reflect the spirit of critical inquisitiveness, which represents… a major wisdom theme. Since the search itself is a value, and its very experience an achievement, it stands to reason that the correlative literary embodiment should acquire an autonomous preeminence. The dialogue is the outward form of a conceptual clarification obtained through dialectical alternation.

The wisdom dialogue values and promotes inquiry by leaving its central concerns unresolved. One of its distinguishing features, therefore, is that the characters will not finally succeed in persuading one another.

Rather than viewing the lack of persuasion as flawed argumentation or failed reasoning, argumentation and persuasion are instead seen as proceeding according to the goals of a specific literary genre, which serves the interests of critical inquiry by allowing at least two positions to stand side by side.[155] The result is that "two incommensurable ways of apprehending and engaging the world remain simply juxtaposed, both requiring acknowledgement."[156]

According to Newsom, the lack of resolution in these dialogues serves an

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[153] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 83. See also David J. A. Clines ("Does the Book of Job Suggest that Suffering is Not a Problem?" in *Weisheit in Israel: Beiträge des Symposiums "Das Alte Testament und die Kultur der Moderne" anlässlich des 100. Geburtstags Gerhard von Rads (1901–1971)* [ed. David J. A. Clines, Hermann Lichtenberger and Hans-Peter Müller; Altes Testament und Moderne, 12; Münster: Lit Verlag, 2003), 108 [pp. 93-110]), who writes: "It may be that the author does not have a viewpoint that he wants to propound, that he is more of a poet than a theologian. What may interest him may be the play of opinion, the variety of plausible position, the impossibility of definitive statement. The lyrical opportunities in his theme may be more important to him than reaching a satisfactory theological conclusion."

[154] Giorgio Buccellati, "Wisdom and Not: The Case of Mesopotamia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), 39.

[155] As Newsom (*Book of Job*, 85) observes, "the ancient Near Eastern wisdom dialogues seek neither to demonstrate the triumph of one voice over the other nor to argue their way to a resolution."

[156] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 85.

important purpose in that, by leaving issues unresolved and juxtaposing contrasting positions, they are able to highlight contradiction. She argues that reality for the wisdom dialogue is best apprehended "(1) by argument rather than story," and "(2) at its points of contradiction."[157] As she explains,

> [i]n the imagination of the wisdom dialogues critical inquisitiveness is best exercised and the world most adequately grasped at the point of contradiction. Rather than concealing or softening contradictions as other forms of discourse may do, the structure of the dialogue highlights them. Indeed, contradiction is the governing trope for the wisdom dialogue, represented formally in the binary structure of the dialogue, represented rhetorically in the argumentative contradictions by each speaker of the other's claims, and represented existentially in the contradictions between expectation and experience on the sufferer's part.[158]

In light of Newsom's analysis, I would like to consider in what follows how the wisdom dialogue might function—not as an attempt to resolve disagreements—but as what Jean Goodwin refers to as "good argument without resolution," or "argument as showing."[159]

1.4.3.2 Good Argumentation without Resolution

Rather than taking disagreement resolution as *the* function of argument, Jean Goodwin has suggested that good arguments have other purposes as well, even if they remain unresolved. To illustrate her claim, Goodwin chooses the 1991 U.S. Congressional debate over the Persian Gulf War as an example of argumentation "that is both conspicuously good and conspicuously not aimed at resolving disagreement."[160]

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[157] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 82.
[158] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 83-84.
[159] Jean Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," in *Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference of the International Society for the Study of Argumentation* (ed. F.H. van Eemeren et al.; Amsterdam: Sic Sat, 1999): 255-59.
[160] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 255.

Noting that the participants understood their task as a "debate," she identifies "a confrontation stage," an "opening stage," and an "argument stage."[161] In planning for the debate, members of Congress frequently used language that suggested that their common goal was in fact resolution, as indicated by statements such as "the time for decision is now"; or, the matter "need not only be debated, but resolved, voted upon."[162] Of course, as Goodwin observes, although a vote may settle (and, in that sense, be resolved through) a dispute, it does not resolve differences of opinion.[163] In fact, Goodwin shows that the members' votes were determined independently of, or prior to, the debate itself. Debate was only one of a number of reasons members gave as the reason for their vote, and not the most significant.[164] The most significant important reasons given were internal, as reflected in references to the "heart," the "gut," and searching one's soul.[165] Moreover, in announcing the votes they would make, no member was undecided and no one changed his or her position.[166] The debate, therefore, appears to have had little affect on anyone's decision.

But if the function of their debate was not to resolve their disagreement, what purpose did it serve? Citing the frequency with which members of Congress referred to

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[161] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 256. With respect to the "argument stage," Goodwin describes members of Congress using terminology regularly associated with argument.

[162] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 257.

[163] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 257.

[164] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 257. Goodwin (257) lists these in their order of importance as "talking with constituents"; "visiting the troops or the region"; "listening to debate now and over the last few months"; "attending to testimony at Congressional hearings"; "praying"; "talking or listening to the President and his aides"; "reading, especially accounts in the media"; "discussing the matter with staff, or with fellow members, or with experts, or with friends and families."

[165] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 257.

[166] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 258.

their responsibility to debate, Goodwin argues that debate was "a fulfillment of a 'responsibility to express'—that is, make evident—one's 'convictions,' one's views... to render their reasoning noticeable... *to show that a standpoint is acceptable....*"[167] Showing that a position is acceptable, therefore, makes it possible for others to adopt it without being criticized for having done so irrationally.

1.4.4 The Wisdom Dialogue as Showing

So does the wisdom dialogue represent argument as showing? And if so, what does it show? In what follows I will argue that the wisdom dialogue attempts to show the acceptability of two sharply contrasting positions: one represents more commonly held assumptions about the moral order; the other challenges these assumptions. But, as I will suggest in what follows, while preserving the two sharply contrasting poles of argument, each text privileges the voice (and position) of the sufferer in slightly different ways. To demonstrate how this occurs, it is first necessary to examine both the setting of the arguers' exchanges and their goals, especially in relation to the conclusions they reach.

The Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde,* in particular, present slightly different challenges for understanding the situation that gives rise to their exchanges. Since the Babylonian Theodicy lacks a narrative framework, the details of the situation are to be discerned from what unfolds in the dialogue itself. The sufferer is the one who initiates the discussion by addressing his friend: "O sage... come, let me tell you" (I.1). The sufferer, in this case, desires to share his experience and, from his opening words, even appears interested in considering it in the context of friendly conversation.[168] As I

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[167] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 258.
[168] This may be implied in his introductory words where he describes his experience of being

will show below, the friend responds by attempting to correct the sufferer's distorted

views and by encouraging him to do two things. First, he instructs him to "wait on"

(II.21), "fear" (II.22), "pray to" (IV.38-40), "seek the reward of" (VI.66), and "[f]ollow

in the way of" (XX.219) his god. And, second, the friend encourges the sufferer to "seek"

(IV.42) justice.[169]

The *Lebensmüde* is slightly more complex in light of translation difficulties and,

especially, the fragmentary nature of the text.[170] It is difficult to know, for example,

whether the man or his *ba* speaks first since the earliest portion of the text is missing. The

first preserved lines reveal the man's frustration with his *ba's* unresponsiveness and his

fears that it will desert him.[171] Of course, these may be accusations without any basis,

especially since, in the first speech we have preserved of the *ba*, it tries to move the man

beyond his complaints, offering correction and advice.[172]

The situation in both the Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde* appears to be

similar. Both texts present someone (the "sufferer" in the Babylonian Theodicy and "the

man" in the *Lebensmüde*) in distress who gives voice to his grief and, in doing so, raises

questions about issues of justice in life. The other party (the "friend" and the *ba*) then

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orphaned after the death of his father and his abandonment by his mother [Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, I.9-11]. As Lambert (64) notes, what is implied and what will be developed and explored in what follows is "Why do the gods not protect those who cannot protect themselves?"

[169] Other examples could be added here, but this provides a sampling of what the friend advises.

[170] See Lichtheim's discussion of these in *AEL* I.193-164. One of the more significant translation issues relates to how one is to translate *íhm*. Lichtheim (163) chooses to translate this word as "lead toward" rather than "hold back." See also Nili Shupak's discussion in *COS* III.146 (cf. R. O. Faulkner, "The Man who was Tired of Life," *JEA* 42 [1956]: 21-40). The expression is odd (if Lichtheim and Shupak are correct) since the *ba* is trying to dissuade the man of his interest in death.

[171] *AEL* I.165.

[172] *AEL* I.165. The *ba* responds with rebuke by asking, "Are you not a man? Are you not alive? What do you gain by complaining about life like a man of wealth?" The also offers its advice to the man (165): "Follow the feast day, forget worry."

tries to move that person beyond his distress. The goals of the dialogue, therefore, are more complicated than resolving a difference of opinion. Although a disagreement emerges, it does so as the sufferer (BT) and the man (*Lebensmüde*) gives voice to their discontent. From the outset the two "sides" appear to have different goals. The sufferer and the man both want to voice their suffering—and their frustration with injustice and the gods is part of this.[173] The friend and the *ba* also share the similar goals of moving the sufferer and the man beyond their distress. While their approaches are different, they both attempt to restore their addressee to life as usual. In the *Lebensmüde* this becomes particularly clear in the final speech of the *ba*, where it encourages the man by saying, "Now throw complaint on the woodpile, you my comrade, my brother! Whether you offer on the brazier, (150) whether you bear down on life, as you say, love me here when you have set aside the West!"[174]

To answer the question posed above of what and how do these dialogues show, I will suggest in what follows that, first, they show respect. As Goodwin observes, "argumentation can be used to address someone as a rational being, thus conspicuously showing respect."[175] Second, they show the acceptability of each position, although the *Lebensmüde* is more ambivalent in this regard, as I note below.

1.4.4.1 The Wisdom Dialogue as Showing Respect

Both the Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde* commonly reflect concerns with mutual respect and receptivity in dialogue. These are most clearly reflected in the

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[173] This is, of course, more prominent in the Babylonian Theodicy than in the *Lebensmüde*.

[174] *AEL* I.169.

[175] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 258.

Babylonian Theodicy, where most of the speeches preserved begin with a term of address

and/or compliments, often excessive, of the other's wisdom—or, for the friend, advice.

The terms of address, which vary, include the following: "O Sage" (I.1), "Respected

friend... my dear fellow" (II.12-13), "My friend" (III.23, XIV.144, XXV.265), "my

comrade" (V.45), "O Palm, tree of wealth, my precious brother... jewel of gold"

(VI.56-57), "Choice friend" (VII.68), "My reliable fellow" (VIII.78), "Humble and

submissive one" (XVI.166), and "O wise one, O savant" (XXIV.254). The sufferer

concludes the dialogue with an acknowledgment of his friend's pleasant disposition:

"You are kind, my friend..." (XXVII.287).

The nature and scope of their compliments are also illustrated in what follows:

"your mind is a river whose spring never fails, / The accumulated mass of the sea, which

knows no decrease" (III.23-24); "Your mind is a north wind, a pleasant breeze for the

peoples. / Choice friend, your advice is fine" (VII.67-68); and, "O palm, tree of wealth,

my precious brother, / endowed with all wisdom, jewel of [gold] / You are as stable as

the earth..." (VI.56-58). And in one speech, the sufferer concludes: "You embrace the

totality of wisdom, you counsel the peoples."[176]

At times, however, terms of address and compliments are also lacking. When this

is the case for the friend (II, IV), the friend normally offers correction instead, as when he

responds to the sufferer's initial speech with "what you say is gloomy," which he then

follows with advice and correction: "You let your *mind* dwell on evil, my dear fellow. /

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[176] In light of Job 12:2, it is difficult not to hear a note of irony. The preceding line, however, which is broken ends with "wisdom," suggesting that the sufferer's compliments were more extended.

You make your fine discretion like an imbecile's; / You have reduced your beaming face to scowls" (II.13-14). At other times, the friend provides sharper critiques, which are preceded by compliments: "My reliable fellow, holder of knowledge, your thoughts are perverse. / You have forsaken right and blaspheme against your god's designs. / In your mind you have an urge to disregard divine ordinances..." (VIII.78-80). It is also worth noting that in three instances the friend reintroduces terms of address and the use of compliments into their exchanges after they have been absent from the sufferer's speeches (XIV.144, XVI.166-167, XXIV.254) in what appears to be an attempt to restore civility to the dialogue.[177]

The sufferer, on the other hand, does not critique the friend's wisdom or speech, at least explicitly. In fact, after the friend states that he is showing restraint and continues with his rebuke (IV.34-37), the sufferer follows with a gesture of deference: "I bow to you, my comrade, I grasp your wisdom" (V.45).[178] At other times, he simply continues to offer counter-evidence."[179]

Although the sufferer does not critique the friend explicitly, he does express a concern that he—or, more precisely, his position—is not being heard. On two occasions he explicitly pleads for the friend to hear him out (III.25-26: "listen to what I say. / Pay attention for a moment; hear my words"; XXV.265-266: "Pay attention, my friend,

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[177] In only one of the three instances in which the friend begins without a term of address and compliment does the suffer respond differently. See the beginning of the following paragraph for this example.

[178]Later, after praising the friend's wisdom, the sufferer proceeds similarly: "Just one word would I put before you" (VII.69).

[179] E.g., "I have looked around society, but the evidence is contrary. / The god does not impede the way of a devil..." (XXIII.243-244). The friend does the same in XII (which is questionable since it is broken) and XXII.

understand my ideas. / Heed the choice expression of my words). On another occasion his

critique appears to be implicit. After he has asked the friend to "listen" in III.25-26, and

the friend has responded by noting his restraint, the sufferer follows his gesture of

deference ("I bow to you, my comrade") by saying "I *grasp* your wisdom" (V.45). The

sufferer is certainly concerned that the friend has not taken what he has to say seriously—

or, as the opening lines of his last speech suggest, understood the extent of his grief:

"You are kind, my friend; behold my grief. / Help me; look on my distress; know it"

(XXVII.287-288).

The *Lebensmüde* reflects similar concerns with mutual respect and receptivity.[180]

Early in the dialogue, the man addresses the *ba* by saying, "Be patient, my *ba*, my

brother."[181] Similarly, in the *ba's* concluding words, it addresses the man as "my

comrade, my brother."[182] Yet both the man and his *ba* express concerns with not being

heard. After the man says, "if my *ba* listens to me*, without malice in its heart…,*" the *ba*

responds similarly with "Listen to me! It is good for people to listen."[183] Both want to

make sure that their positions are heard or understood. The context of a trusting, friendly

relationship is not taken for granted.

The overall tone of the characters' exchanges in the *Lebensmüde* is also sharper

than that of the Babylonian Theodicy. The man, for example, equates the *ba's*

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[180] Because the *Lebensmüde* is a mixture of poetry, narrative, and symmetrically structured speech (*AEL* 1.163), the narrative introductions to the speeches of the man and his *ba*, which are related by the man himself (e.g., "I opened my mouth to my *ba*, to answer what it had said… My *ba* opened its mouth to me, to answer what I had said."), mark their speeches and responses, or their turn-taking in dialogue, and lend a sense of orderliness to their exchanges.

[181] *AEL* I.165.

[182] *AEL* I.169.

[183] *AEL* I.165.

unresponsiveness with abandonment (lines 5-9), accuses it of misleading him (lines

10ff.), and insults the *ba* as "too ignorant to still the pain in life."[184] The *ba's* critiques are

also sharper than those of the friend in the Babylonian Theodicy. After the first speech of

the man that is preserved, the *ba* responds: "Are you not a man? Are you not alive?"[185]

The *Lebensmüde* appears, therefore, to reflect a greater degree of frustration on the part

of the interlocutors than does the Babylonian Theodicy.

In short, both the Babylonian Theodicy and, to a lesser degree, the *Lebensmüde*

illustrate argument as showing respect. In the Babylonian Theodicy, maintaining a civil

dialogue appears to serve the goals of both the sufferer and his friend. For the sufferer,

mutual respect ensures a "space" or forum where his voice and position will be heard. His

calls to "listen" serve as call to attention, emphasizing his need to be heard. As for the

friend, maintaining civility allows him to proceed with his goals, one of which will

ultimately be met, as I will show in the following section. While mutual respect is

reflected in the exchanges between the man and his *ba*, their exchanges are sharper. And,

while only the sufferer expresses concerns with receptivity in the Babylonian Theodicy,

the nature of the dialogue between the man and his *ba* is different. As noted above, the

dialogue is related by the man himself. His voice is the dominant voice, and his speeches

are lengthier and more developed than the *ba's*, at least in the text that we have

preserved.

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[184] *AEL* I.164.
[185] *AEL* I.165.

1.4.4.2 The Wisdom Dialogue as Showing the Acceptability of an Argument

Neither the Babylonian Theodicy nor the *Lebensmüde* conclude with a resolution of differences. But like the vote Goodwin discusses in the context of the congressional debate, there is at least some sense of resolution, especially in the Babylonian Theodicy.

Although the sufferer and his friend do not settle the issues raised in the course of the debate, the conclusion they reach is significant three ways. First, the friend makes a concession to the sufferer. Throughout the dialogue the friend has responded to the sufferer by encouraging him to seek his god and embrace justice.[186] The sufferer, in turn, has argued that displays of piety do not ensure a life of blessing (V.54-55), claiming that those who pray are just as likely to become "impoverished and dispossessed" (VI.70-71, XXV.270). Indeed, the fact that he has been pious and just, yet still suffers, confirms his claim (V.54-55, VII.72-77, XXIII.251-253, XXV.275). As the dialogue progresses, the sufferer turns to injustices in society, complaining in his next to last speech that "[p]eople extol the strong man who is trained in murder" (XXV.267) and "suppress the honest man who heeds the will of his god" (XXV.270). It is at this point that the friend makes his concession. The friend not only states that the gods are responsible for falsehood, but also admits that injustice follows from it by noting that the poor "suffer every evil like a criminal, because he has no protection. / Terrifyingly they bring him to his end, and extinguish him like a flame" (XXVI.285-286). What the friend does not concede is that piety is of no value when it comes to the gods.

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[186] He also offers correction, as noted above, in addition to what Denning-Bolle (*Wisdom in Akkadian Literature*, 136-158) refers to as "pivotal points," moral exhortation expressed in traditional appeals or sayings.

Second, the sufferer does what the friend has encouraged him to do all along. After humbly admitting that he has exhausted any other source of help (XXVII.289-294), the sufferer appeals to the gods for aid: "May the god who has thrown me off give help, / May the goddess who has [abandoned me] show mercy, / For the shepherd Šamaš guides the people like a god" (XXVII.295-297).

Finally, after expressing his concern that the friend has not taken his position seriously, the sufferer begins his final speech not just with a call for his position to be heard, but for his experience to be understood: "You are kind, my friend; behold my grief. Help me; look on my distress; know it" (XXVII.287-288).

The differences between the sufferer and his friend have not been resolved—the two poles of their argument have been preserved. And yet, the friend has at least conceded that the gods have some responsibility for the way things are. Also, with the sufferer's appeal to the gods, the friend's goal has been achieved. The sufferer, however, still waits for help, for someone to "behold" his grief, to "look on" his distress, and to "know it" (XXVII.287-288).

The conclusion of the *Lebensmüde* is of a different character. While there is a sense of closure, there is no indication that the issues have been settled. Van der Toorn describes the dialogue as being marked by the repetition of arguments that are recast in slightly different ways until the man and his *ba* finally arrive at what he describes as a surprising compromise in which the *ba* encourages the man "to make the best of both worlds."[187] Since it is the man who relates the dialogue with his *ba* (e.g., "What my *ba*

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[187] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 69-70.

said to me:"), and since he allows it to have the last word, it may be that the *ba* has

convinced him to abandon his obsession with the afterlife.[188] But does the man's silence

reflect his contentment with the *ba*'s answer and his recognition that death will come

soon enough? Or, does it suggest that he is unwilling to continue in dialogue, perhaps

frustrated with his *ba*'s persistence? While the *ba* is normally understood as the man's

soul,[189] Shupak has suggested that the *Lebensmüde* reflects "the internal struggle of a

despairing man."[190] Although she refers to the exchange as a monologue, it could also be

understood as an example of an internal dialogue, a dialogue with oneself, especially

since it takes the form of exchanges occurring between two interlocutors, even though it

is recounted by the man. Perhaps the man has fully explored the two sides (at least for

himself). In any case, as the dialogue stands, the differences between the two remain.

I have suggested above that argument in the wisdom dialogue functions "to

show." First, I noted how the wisdom dialogue models a concern for respect. Although

the interlocutors are sharply opposed in their disagreements, they continue to use terms of

address and/or compliments (in the Babylonian Theodicy) throughout their exchanges.

The Babylonian Theodicy, in particular, reflects an etiquette of politeness in argument.

Second, I have suggested that the wisdom dialogue presents argument as showing

acceptability. In presenting and preserving the two poles of argument, the wisdom

dialogue holds each position up for the consideration of others, although the sufferer in

the Babylonian Theodicy and the man in the *Lebensmüde* are privileged slightly: the

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[188] van der Toorn, "The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue," 60.
[189] Cf. Lichtheim in *AEL* I.163.
[190] *COS* III.321.

sufferer through his calls for attention and his final plea for the friend to understand his experience; and the man through the features of the dialogue itself (with the man relating the exchanges and receiving longer, more developed speeches). Their arguments, in particular, may show the acceptability of a difficult position.[191] In fact, sometimes what is important is not getting others to embrace a position, but to briefly consider it.[192]

In the following chapters, I will argue that Job shares the wisdom dialogue's presentation of two sharply contrasting positions as well as its expectation that the characters will not finally succeed at persuading one another. *Job* also shares with the Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde* a similar initial situation—one where a sufferer gives voice to his pain, and, as he does so, begins to call into question traditional views and assumptions about God, justice, and the moral order. Job's friends will also take on roles similar to the friend and the *ba* as they attempt to move him beyond his grief. But, unlike the Babylonian Theodicy where the sufferer initiates the conversation, the friends' response is unsolicited.

Unlike the Babylonian Theodicy, in particular, where mutual respect and politeness in conversation are expected, I will argue that in *Job* a shift occurs to a different type of dialogue—one where impoliteness is appropriate. As I will suggest in the following section, argumentation in the Joban dialogue is strikingly similar to a type of dialogue that Douglas Walton designates as the "quarrel," which is marked by its agonistic and impolite nature.

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[191] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 259.
[192] Goodwin, "Good Argument without Resolution," 258-259.

1.5 The Quarrel as a Context of Dialogue

According to Walton, the quarrel is "a kind of angry or adversarial verbal exchange based on a conflict between two parties (perceived or real)," one that erupts suddenly and is characterized by personal attack.[193] Although Walton describes the goal of the dialogue itself as "to win a verbal victory by any means," and that of the individual as "to 'hit out' verbally at the other party," the quarrel can have other important functions, as I note below.[194] Walton offers five identifying characteristics:

> First, an indicative characteristic of the quarrel involves a truculent, personal attack, with one side trying to blame the other for some culpable behaviour which allegedly occurred in the past and which led to bad consequences. This characteristic involves the repeated, sudden, or irrelevant use of ad hominem arguments. Second, eristic dialogue generally is characterized by the kind of closed attitude that refuses to admit defeat and seeks victory at all costs. Third, eristic dialogue uses the straw man tactic of unfairly attempting to make the position of the other side look bad. Fourth, it is further characterized by a high degree of irrelevance that skips around randomly from topic to topic in an apparently disorganized sequence of argumentation. However, quarrels are not completely chaotic or disorganized sequences of argumentation in dialogue. The participants do take turns, and the responses of one to the arguments of the other are connected over short sequences, even if occasionally they tend to skip widely from one topic to another. Fifth, some subtypes of the quarrel exhibit a kind of duplicity or deception which is associated with a dialectical shift or a pretence of not quarreling.[195]

Although many have assumed that the quarrel has no real value for argumentation, it may still serve an important function, depending on its nature. In what Walton refers to as a trivial quarrel, which is "a purely agonistic exchange," the goal of each party is simply to "win out" over the other in an "adversarial contest."[196] Trivial quarrels may function to impress or to entertain, but he suggests that these have "no real

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[193] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 178.

[194] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 178.

[195] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 196. The "straw-man" argument is one example Walton provides of how one side *distorts* the views of the other to make them look bad.

[196] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

value or worth as an argument."[197] Serious quarrels, on the other hand, can serve an important social function by revealing "serious suppressed grievances and feelings."[198] By moving discussions out of the realm of "polite conversation," the quarrel creates a framework in which "deep grievances or pent-up emotions" can be "expressed verbally in argumentation."[199] The result can be cathartic, possibly even helping the participants to avoid a physical altercation.[200] As Walton explains, because the "normal constraints against mentioning delicate subjects" are lifted in a quarrel, arguers are then able to express their feelings, "even at the cost of offending or deeply disturbing the other party."[201]

The arguments between Job and his friends often more closely resemble the kind of dispute that one is likely to find on a television talk show or in a forum where political views are being debated, instances where the conventions of polite conversation are generally abandoned. In the culture of argument often represented on television or talk radio differences are simplified, claims are exaggerated, and polarizations are exploited. In such settings, panelists and participants, holding firmly to their own views, present their arguments, talk over one another, and remain unconvinced by the arguments of others. Rather than responding directly to each other's questions, arguers often continue with their attacks on the opposing side, picking up where they last left off in the

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[197] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.
[198] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.
[199] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.
[200] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179. At the same time, Walton notes that the quarrel may also be employed for other purposes, such as impressing others, for example, in an academic context, or entertaining an audience.
[201] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

discussion, or shifting the discussion in a new direction. In the end, their arguments are normally left unresolved, as each participant remains unconvinced by the others, and unchanged in thought and perspective.

Job 3-27 shares a number of similarities with the quarrel as a common type of dialogue. As they argue, both Job and his friends "strike" out at one another with verbal assaults and frequently engage in personal attacks (cf. Job 11:9; 12:2).[202] The characters also reflect what Walton refers to as a "closed attitude." As I will suggest, this is particularly evident in the friends' speeches in the second cycle with their focus on the fate of the wicked. Commentators have also noted the tendency of their dialogue to skip around, referring to its "leapfrogging structure between statement and reply."[203] Job and his friends will also distort one another's positions. Finally, I will argue in the final chapter that the friends engage in a pretense of not quarreling.

By Walton's standards their quarrel is not a successful one—when quarrels are successful both parties become aware of hidden disagreements and grudges, and can then respond appropriately to one another with more sensitivity. In fact, the closing stage of a successful quarrel takes places when "both participants 'make up,' which means they adopt a continuing basis for the relationship, having acknowledged and made allowances for the expressed grievances of the other party."[204] When this occurs, the quarrel has served to strengthen a relationship. But, rather than becoming more sensitive in the

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[202] In the following chapters, I will make a distinction between sapiential rebuke, as offered by the friends, and insult.

[203] Edwin M. Good, *In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job with a Translation* (Stanford: Stanford University, 1990), 415 n. 25. Here, Good is describing the views of Cox, Thompson, and Terrien.

[204] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 186.

course of the dialogue, Job and his friends appear to grow increasingly hostile and

impatient.

But, while Walton recognizes that the quarrel may, in fact, serve other purposes,

what he does not consider is how the quarrel might provide a framework for those who

are trying to give voice to traumatic experience.[205] It is here that Job's speeches might

show, at least, one direction in which Walton's model might be further developed.[206]

Because the quarrel allows for what might otherwise be described as unconventional

speech while also exploring and debating issues, it opens up a space for speaking about

pain, suffering, and traumatic experience.

1.5.1 Job, the Quarrel, and Dialogic Shifts

Concerning the relationship between *Job* and the quarrel, it should be noted that

Job appears to represent what Walton describes as "mixed discourse."[207] As a complex

literary genre, it allows for different goals, methods, and dialogue types to overlap, while

at the same time operating according to its own set of conventions. As I have noted, the

repetition in dialogue, the tendency to skip from one topic to another, and the lack of

resolution in the dialogue are all features that *Job* shares with Walton's quarrel. The

conventions of the Joban dialogue, therefore, appear to reflect features that are actually

characteristic of the kinds of quarrelsome dialogues carried out in certain social contexts.

As I have suggested, other dialogue types also appear to be present in *Job*,

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[205] He even notes (*The New Dialectic*, 180) that in some cases, "it may be less clear that someone who is engaging in a quarrel has adopted the eristic framework for some definite purpose."

[206] In the final chapter, I will argue that it is Job who shifts the dialogue from the friends' attempts at consolatory persuasion (see chapter 3) to a quarrel.

[207] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 200-203.

specifically. For example, at times, Job and his friends participate in something similar to what Walton describes as inquiry or persuasion dialogue. Since argumentation in *Job* conforms largely to the type of exchange one would expect to find in a quarrel, how then do we account for the presence of other dialogue types? In the final two chapters, I will argue that the quarrel represents a failure or breakdown of the friends' attempts at consolatory persuasion, with Job shifting the context of their dialogue to a quarrel.

1.6 Conclusion

I have argued that Western expectations for argument, as they have been shaped by Greco-Roman principles, have often obscured other cultures of argument, especially in cases where argumentation is highly emotional, adversarial, or when marked by lack of resolution. Arguments are normally expected to be cooperative exchanges aimed at *resolving* differences of opinion. But when they fail to follow this pattern, they are dismissed either as unsuccessful or deficient.

The Mesopotamian disputations demonstrate the significance context has for argumentation by establishing the identities and relationships between the disputants and "setting the stage" for the debate to follow. These texts generally appear to avoid more serious matters, focusing instead on the debate itself. I also suggested that the disputes serve as a "play space" in by modeling within an agonistic culture what is valued (mutual respect and self-control), what is allowed (mutual insult), and what serves as a source of anxiety (argument's potential for violence). The Mesopotamian disputes illustrate how fiercely adversarial argumentation, although it has its limits, may nevertheless have its

place in argument.

The wisdom dialogue, by contrast, focuses on more controversial matters, showing a particular concern with issues of justice and the moral order underlying reality. The nature of these dialogues' conclusions often registers as a curious and somewhat surprising feature to modern readers who bring to the text their own expectations for how arguments should unfold and what they should accomplish. In focusing on the nature of the exchanges that take place in the Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde*, as well as their conclusions, I have suggested that argumentation in the wisdom dialogue serves to show respect and to show the acceptability of the two sharply contrasting positions.

In what follows I will suggest that the arguments between Job and his friends are carried out in a manner that is consistent with the context of their argumentation—a context that is marked by pain, suffering, and deeply held convictions. Polite speech is exchanged for a more emotional and aggressive type of interaction that allows for personal and emotional issues to be explored and debated.

CHAPTER 2
JOB AND THE NARRATIVE CONTEXT OF ARGUMENT

2.1 Introduction

Having addressed *Job's* relation to the Mesopotamian disputes and the wisdom

dialogue as a genre in chapter 1, I now wish to situate the characters' speeches in the

context of the book's narrative framework in an attempt to tease out some of the cultural

expectations for their exchanges. In what follows I will examine how the narrative

configures the identity of the characters and the kind of relationship that exists between

them, and in so doing establishes the setting for the arguments that follow. Since my

focus is on the adversarial and even agonistic nature of their exchanges, particularly on

the emergence of the quarrel as a framework for interaction in dialogue, I will focus

specifically on three aspects of their relationship: their roles as sages, with some attention

given to their underlying assumptions about reality; the expectations of friendship in a

sapiential context; and, the forms consolation might take among the wise.[208]

I begin with Job, showing 1) how the narrative offers an exaggerated portrait of

Job as pious and wise; 2) that behind this representation of Job lies a larger "assumptive"

world on which the characters' arguments in the dialogue will often rest—a sort of

common ground for their interaction;[209] and, 3) that the narrative ultimately positions Job

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[208] In the final two chapters, I will analyze more closely the relationship between the characters'
argumentative goals as well as some of the strategies or techniques they employ in their attempts to realize
them.

[209] Here I refer specifically to 1) the principle of justice, which provides the basis on which good
and bad outcomes are understood to be distributed; and 2) the expectation that one can influence or
determine one's outcomes through one's own behavior. The principle of justice provides the basis of their
dispute. The expectation that one can influence or determine one's outcomes is reflected especially in the
friends' advice that Job engage in the practices of piety as well as in the vision of Job's future they hold out
to him.

as the embodiment of the wisdom tradition and its dominant discourse. In its presentation

of Job as both a suffering patriarch and a model of wisdom and piety, Job's voice is

presented as authoritative and final. Thus within the narrative, Job becomes the one who

instructs, discredits, silences, and even prays for competing and opposing voices. He does

not, however, allow dissenting or quarreling voices to have their full say about matters.

In the latter part of the chapter, I will develop the characters' relationship as

"friends" and "sages" within the consolatory context provided by the narrative. There I

will explore some of the expectations for friendship in the Hebrew Bible, since Job will

take up this topic often in the form of accusations in the dialogue. I will then consider

how certain assumptions for consolation, as it might have been offered in a sapiential

context, could provide a helpful backdrop for reading and interpreting the friends'

speeches.

2.2 Job, Piety, and the Sapiential Context of Argument

Scholars have frequently contrasted the representations of Job's piety in both the

narrative frame and the poetic dialogues as they have explored what is one of the most

vexing interpretive problems posed by the book: the relationship between the poetry and

prose.[210] A full rehearsal of the responses to these and other related questions is beyond

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[210] From this single issue emerges a host of related questions: Did the prose tale once exist independently prior to being taken up and fashioned into a literary whole by a poet? Should one read the book's constituent parts as composed by a single author? Is the relationship between the prose and poetry to be understood primarily as one of continuity or fissure? Claus Westermann, "The Two Faces of Job," in *Job and the Silence of God* (ed. Christian Duquoc, Casiano Floristán, and Marcus Leféburek; Concilium 169; Edinburgh and New York: T. & T. Clark and The Seabury Press, 1983), 15, writes: "Anyone reading the Book of Job must be struck by the contrast between Job's attitude to God in the prose-narrative which forms the framework of the Job drama, and his attitude in the drama itself. In the narrative he is the patient, humble, godly man, resigned to the fate which God has appointed for him; in the drama he accuses God, rebels against him and resists the fate which God sends him."

the scope of my inquiry here. It is interesting to note, however, that so many interpreters

have begun to explore the complex relationship between the poetry and prose either by

taking Job's integrity as their starting point or privileging it in their investigations.[211]

There are, of course, good reasons for beginning a discussion of the book's shape

with Job's piety. Nearly every voice in the prose tale—including that of the narrator,

God, *Hassatan*, and Mrs. Job—either affirms or implies that Job is a paragon of virtue.

His integrity plays an equally important role in the dialogue, both in his own arguments

and in those of the friends, although scholars have not always effectively captured the

nuance of the latter.[212] But what has attracted the attention of so many biblical scholars is

the book's present form, where Job's traditional piety has been taken up as a lens for

exploring a complex web of ethical and theological issues.

Although Job's integrity is the primary concern of the prose tale, the descriptions

of his piety points beyond his character to a more complicated relational framework in

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[211] H. L. Ginsberg, "Job the Patient and Job the Impatient," in *Congress Volume, Rome 1968* (Supplements to Vetus Testamentum; Leiden: Brill, 1969), 88-111;Walter Brueggemann, "A Neglected Sapiential Word Pair," *ZAW* 89:2 (1977): 234-258; W. Vogels, "Job a parlé correctment. Une approache structurale du livre de Job," NRT 102 (1980): 835-852; Rick D. Moore, "The Integrity of Job," *CBQ* 45 (1983): 17-31; R. W. E. Forrest, "The Two Faces of Job: Imagery and Integrity in the Prologue," in *Ascribe to the Lord: Biblical and Other Studies in Memory of Peter C. Craigie* (ed. Lyle Eslinger and Glen Taylor; JSOT SS 67; Sheffield: JSOT, 1988): 385-398; Athalaya Brenner, "Job the Pious? The Characterization of Job in the Narrative Framework of the Book," *JSOT* 43 (1989): 37-52; W. Voegels, *Job* (Belichting van het Bijbelboek; Boxtel: Katholieke Bijbelstichting; Brugge: Tabor, 1989); M. J. Oosthuizen, "Divine Insecurity and Joban Heroism: A Reading of the Narrative Framework of Job," *Old Testament Essays* 4 (1991): 295-315; W. Vogels, "Job's Empty Pious Slogans (Job 1, 20-22; 2, 8-10)," in *Book of Job: Proceedings of the 42nd Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, Aug. 24-26, 1993* (ed. W. A. M. Beuken; Louvain: Leuven University; Peeters, 1994), 369-376.

[212] Job's piety even appears to have had something of a legendary status, since the only other mention of Job in the HB occurs in Ezekiel where Job is recognized along with Noah and the legendary Canaanite king Danel for his exemplary righteousness (Ezek 14:14, 20). See Pritchard, *ANET*, 149-155; Shalom Spiegel, "Noah, Danel, and Job: Touching on Canaanite Relics in the Legends of the Jews," in *Louis Ginsberg Jubilee Volume 1*. (New York: American Academy for Jewish Research, 1945): 305-56.

which the characters are situated as friends and sages in a consolatory context, a

relationship that will be developed, explored, and modified through their exchanges in the

dialogue. Since the characters frequently invoke sapiential values and virtues in the

context of their exchanges, I will now turn to a closer examination of the narrator's

complex configuration of their social world, with its underlying assumptions, values, and

expectations.

2.2.1 Wisdom and the "Land of Uz"

With its simple narrative style, the book's opening verse provides a window into

the cultural context of the characters' arguments by situating their exchanges in a distant

land (1:1), one that has various associations with wisdom:

| A man there was in the land of Uz; | איש היה בארץ־עוץ |
| Job was his name. | איוב שם |

Attempts to identify the precise location of Uz from the biblical evidence have been

frustrated by competing traditions for its whereabouts. Although the term occurs more

widely, "the land of Uz" as a geographical designation is found only in biblical poetry.

The evidence there, however, is mixed with regard to its exact location.[213] The term also

appears as a personal name, although here, too, references to "Uz" are marked by

ambiguity.[214] In light of the evidence, scholars have proposed locations both northeast of

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[213] While it is identified as the dwelling place of Edom in Lam 4:21, in Jer 25:20 it is listed before Philistia, Edom, and Moab. Since the latter text generally moves from south to north and from Israel's neighbors to those at some distance, an Edomite location for Uz does not seem to fit this arrangement. Note, however, John Day (John Day, "How Could Job Be an Edomite?" in *Book of Job* [ed. W.A.M. Beuken; Louvain: Leuven University; Peeters, 1994], 392-399), who argues for an Edomite location here; see also Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, xxii.

[214] Uz is both a descendant of Seir in Edom (Gen 36:21, 28; 1 Chr 1:42) and of Aram (Gen 10:23; 22:20-21; 1 Chr 1:17). That Uz lies somewhere in "the east," as indicated in Job 1:3, is also unhelpful since the designation generally refers to areas east of the Jordan. Cf. also, Gen 29:1; Judg. 6:3; 7:12; Isa. 11:14;

Israel in Aram and southeast in Edom.

Why would the narrator choose such an obscure location outside of Israel for

Job's homeland?[215] Habel has suggested that "the narrator is using an obscure designation

to conjure up an image of antiquity and mystery."[216] Others have suggested that Job's

uncertain geographical setting focuses the reader's attention instead on his extraordinary

piety. Newsom argues, for example, that "Job's archaic name and foreign homeland help

to establish a sense of narrative distance, which facilitates the presentation of Job as a

paradigmatic figure."[217] She suggests that what is crucial "is the description of his

character: 'blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned away from evil.'"[218]

Clines has suggested similarly that "[w]hat is important about this man is not his name or

his origin. The name Job is of uncertain meaning, Uz of uncertain location… Job's moral

character is the theme of this scene, and the barest identification of the man is all that is

needed."[219] Although Job's character provides the means by which the narrator's

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Jer. 49:28; Ezek. 25:4, 10.

[215] The question of Job's origins, of whether he was an Israelite or Gentile, was a point of considerable contention among Jewish and Christian interpreters as they debated the relationship of Jews to Gentiles. But since Job's ethnicity figures neither into the story nor the dialogue, the book itself does not seem to share their concern. See especially the discussion of Judith Baskin, *Pharaoh's Counsellors* (BJS 47; Chico, Calif.: Scholars Press, 1983), 8-26; idem, "Rabbinic Interpretations of Job," in *The Voice from the Whirlwind: Interpreting the Book of Job* (ed. Leo G. Perdue and W. Clark Gilpin; Nashville: Abingdon, 1992), 101-110; and more recently, Samuel E. Balentine, *Job* (Smyth & Helwys Bible Commentary; Macon: Smyth & Helwys, 2006), 44-45.

[216] Norman Habel, *The Book of Job* (Old Testament Library; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1985), 86; cf. Yairah Amit, *Reading Biblical Narrative: Literary Criticism and the Hebrew Bible* (trans. Yael Lotan; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2001), 120-21, who interprets Job's hazy locale as signifying the story's fictive nature.

[217] Carol A. Newsom, "The Book of Job: Introduction, Commentary and Reflections," in *The New Interpreters Bible* (vol. IV; ed. Leander Keck, et al; Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1996), 345; on narrative distance, see also Gerald Janzen, *Job* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1985), 34-35.

[218] Newsom, "Job," 345.

[219] David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20* (Word Biblical Commentary; Dallas: Word Books, 1989), 9. Habel (*The Book of Job*, 86) draws the lines more boldly when he suggests that the author is intentionally ambiguous about Job's location: "A vague land in the distance East is more intriguing as the abode of an

fundamental question about disinterested piety is investigated, does his vague

geographical location serve only to highlight his moral virtue, or can one begin to detect

in what Clines refers to as "the barest identification of the man" a more richly textured

Job?[220]

Despite its ambiguous whereabouts, several factors suggest that at least one of the

reasons the author chose Uz was because it carried a particular social resonance that

helped to establish a sapiential framework of values and expectations for the characters'

interaction. As mentioned above, Lamentations 4:21 describes "daughter Edom" as a

"dweller in the land of Uz," Job's homeland. Both Edom and Teman, a region or city in

the country—and the homeland of Eliphaz—were known for their wisdom.[221] Although

the reason for this association is not entirely clear, three different texts play off this

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ancient hero than a familiar town across the river in Edom." Of course, "Uz" may be an inherited feature, if the story is non-Israelite in origin. There is still, however, the intentionality in presenting the detail.

[220] Meir Weiss (*The Story of Job's Beginning: Job 1-2: A Literary Analysis* [Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1983], 24) moves in this direction when he states that "several details that are formally organic but thematically superfluous, including the mention of 'the Land of Uz' itself, take on a significance that is organically consonant with the theme of the story and even complements it." He does not, however, explore how these details are significant.

[221] Cf. Jer 49:7; Ezek 25:13; Hab 3:13; Obad 8-9; especially, Amos 1:11-12; see also Nelson Glueck, *The Other Side of the Jordan* (Cambridge, MA: American Schools of Oriental Research, 1970), 29-32; Roland de Vaux, "Téman, Ville ou Région d'Édom?" *RB* 76 (1969): 379-385; and, more recently, Ernst Axel Knauf-Belleri, "Edom: The Social and Economic History," in *You Shall Not Abhor an Edomite for He is Your Brother: Edom and Seir in History and Tradition* (ed. Diana Vikander Edelman; Archaeology and Biblical Studies 3; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 100 n. 19 [93-118]

For the tradition of Edomitic wisdom, see Robert H. Pfeiffer, "Edomitic Wisdom," *ZAW* 44 (1926): 13-25; Otto Plöger, *Sprüche Salomos* (BKAT 17; Neukirchen: Neukirchener, 1984): xxviii-xxix; See also Denis Baly, *The Geography of the Bible* (New York: Harper, 1974), 237, who argues that the Edomites gained wisdom by trading with those from Arabia and distant lands. Leslie C. Allen, *The Book of Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, and Micah* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1976), 153, follows a similar line of argument: "To Edom's bazaars thronged peoples of the east, who brought with their wares travellers' tales of learning and lore. It was probably this byproduct of its being a center of trade and travel that gave rise to Edom's awesome reputation for wisdom"; Knauf-Belleri ("Edom: The Social and Economic History, 113) argues that "Edom's technological skill in producing copper was 'Edom's wisdom' to which Jer 49:7 and Obad 8 allude."

tradition: Jer 49:7, Obad 8-9, and Bar 3:22-23.[222]

That Uz served to situate their arguments in a sapiential context is further strengthened by the author's use of several proper names associated with the region, particularly in his introduction of the friends in 2:11-13.[223] The clearest example is, of course, Eliphaz who appears to have been derived, along with his homeland Teman, from the Edomite genealogy of Gen 36, where Eliphaz is named as the oldest son of Esau (Gen 36:10, 11, 15; 1 Chr 1:35), and where Teman appears as Eliphaz's oldest son (Gen 36:11, 15; 1 Chr 1:36). Eliphaz's elevated status as a sage may also be implied by *Job* where he is mentioned first, speaks first, and is directly addressed by Yahweh (2:11; 4:1; 42:7-8).[224]

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[222] While these texts recognize Edom's reputation for wisdom, they also reflect an uneasy relationship with Israel. But, by placing Job in a patriarchal or pre-patriarchal setting, the prose tale may also hearken back to a time prior to Israelite and Edomite hostilities, and so locate the interaction between Job and his friends in the distant yet familiar world of the wise. In this respect, the setting for their exchanges reflects well wisdom's international character.

    The first two texts contain oracles of judgment that position Edom as Israel's enemy and as objects of Yahweh's wrath. With Jeremiah, the values of "counsel" (עצה; cf. Jer 18:18) and "wisdom" (חכמה) characterizing Teman have "perished" (אבדה) or "vanished" (נסרחה) prior to its destruction (Jer. 49:7).

    In Obad 8-9, Yahweh plays a more active role in subverting human wisdom by destroying the "wise" (חכמים) from Edom and eliminating "understanding" (תבונה), a theme that is common in the wisdom literature (e.g., Job 12; Prov 21:30) and in prophetic oracles against Israel (Isa 3:1-3; 5:21; 29:14; Jer 8:8-9) and the nations (e.g., Egypt – Isa 19:11-13; Babylon – Isa 44:25; 47:10; Jer 50:35; 51:57; Phoenicia – Ezek 28:2-7, 17; Zech 9:2); see, Paul R. Raabe *Obadiah: a New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (AB 24D; New York: Doubleday, 1996), 164; cf. Hans Walter Wolff, *Obadiah and Jonah: A Commentary* (trans. Margaret Kohl; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 52.

    In the last text, Baruch relies on Edom's popular association with wisdom in an attempt to overturn that notion, twice mentioning Teman as among those who have *not* heard of wisdom (3:22; cf. Job 28:22) and where those who search for her "have not learned the way to wisdom, or given thought to her paths" (Baruch 3:22-23; NRSV).

[223] See especially, Clines, *Job 1-20*, 57-59; and John Day, "How Could Job Be an Edomite?," 392-399. Some have argued for an Edomite origin for the book. See Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (New York : Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978), 67 and n. 17. Francis I. Andersen (*Job: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: Downers Grove, Ill.: Inter-Varsity, 1976), 58 points out that "[t]he idea that Job has an Edomite background is as old as the LXX, which equates Job with Jobab, king of Edom (Gn. 36:33)."

[224] Edouard Dhorme (*A Commentary on the Book of Job* [trans. Harold Knight; London: Nelson, 1967], xxvi), for example, suggests that "[t]he reputation for wisdom which the Edomites (Ob 8, 9) and especially the Temanites (Jer 42:7; Bar 3:22-3) enjoyed no doubt had something to do with the choice of Eliphaz as the first of Job's interlocutor's."

The names and locales of the other friends are, however, more tenuously connected with Edom; but the various associations are well-recognized, if not undisputed.[225] The various associations with Edom not only suggest that the characters' exchanges occur in a land known for its wisdom, but also that they themselves have, to a greater or lesser degree, some claim to wisdom.[226]

One final observation might be made in noting that Uz may also transcend its geographical identity through the author's use of evocation, drawing on the word's association with "counsel" (עצה). Maintaining that Uz (עוץ) would have been linked aurally with "counsel" (עצה), a term that occurs with some frequency in wisdom literature, Meir Weiss concludes that "the narrator's reason for choosing 'the Land of Uz' as the home of Job, and the meaning expressed therein, is that 'the Land of Uz' is Edom, the land of 'Wisdom,' and in the name Uz is echoed Wisdom's concept of עצה, 'council.'"[227] This is, as Weiss notes, an observation that has been made especially in rabbinic literature.[228] Maimonides, for example, takes עוץ as an imperative ("to take

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[225] As Clines (*Job 1-20*, 59) notes, "[a]ll six proper names in [2:11] have… a stronger or weaker Edomite connection (that of Naamah being the weakest), as does the name Uz in 1:1 and the name [of Elihu's homeland] Buz in 32:2…"

[226] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 59, observes: "So Job's friends seem to be represented as countrymen of his, sharing the same values and traditions, not the historical and cultic traditions of Israel, but the religious views one might expect from descendants of Abraham, that is, for practical purposes, general Israelite religious and social ideas shorn of whatever might strike the hearer as distinctively Israelite; cf. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 97, who writes: "The diverse geographical origins of these three 'wise' men suggests that they each bring their own traditional wisdom to comfort Job and interpret his plight."

[227] In addition to the aural association of Uz (עוץ) with "counsel" (עֵצָה), Weiss (*The Story of Job's Beginning*, 24) offers Edom's reputation for wisdom (Jer 49:7; Oba 8), the description of Job as "greater than all the people of the East" (see below; 1:3), and "the world of Wisdom literature" as "the conceptual starting-point of the story (and of the entire book)" as evidence, before concluding that "[t]he aim is to establish that Job… lived in the world of Wisdom." Weiss does not, however, explore the significance of this sapiential context for interpreting the prose tale.

[228] Weiss (*The Story of Job's Beginning*, 23) cites Rashi, Maimonides, and R. Zerachya of Barcelona.

advice"), which, he suggests, invites the reader to discern among its ideas which one is right.[229] The term, which has a broad range of meanings as it occurs in different contexts,[230] denotes a deliberative act describing one's thoughts or plans.[231]

Although "counsel" (עצה) is not a distinctively sapiential term, it appears as a synonym for wisdom in several texts, including the oracle against Edom cited above in Jer 49:7, where "counsel" (עצה) occurs parallel to "wisdom" (חכמה). Jeremiah also names "counsel" (עצה) as the principal mark of the wise (18:18), in the same manner that "instruction" (תורה) is associated with the priest and the "word" (דבר) with the prophet. Elsewhere the term is used to describe the attributes and activities of the wise who possess (Isa 19:11; Jer 18:18; Prov 8:14; 19:20; 20:18; cf. Eze 7:26), receive (Prov 12:15; 19:20; cf. 20:18), and provide counsel (Prov 1:25, 30). Perhaps the most notable example of the latter is Woman Wisdom whose "form in chapters 1 and 8," as Shupak observes, "is close to the figure of the wise teacher," as she refers to her words as "counsel" in 8:14

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[229] Maimonides, *Guide for the Perplexed* (trans. M. Friedländer; New York: Pardes Publishing, 1946), 296, writes: "The name Uz therefore expresses the exhortation to consider well this lesson, study it, grasp its ideas, and comprehend them, in order to see which is the right view."

[230] Nili Shupak (*Where Can Wisdom Be Found: The Sage's Language in the Bible and in Ancient Near Eastern Literature* [Orbis Biblicus et Orientalis 130; Fribourg, Switzerland: University Press, 1993], 43), observes that עֵצָה

> falls into three categories associated with the various areas of life: education—instruction by the teacher and the words of the wise man denoted as "counsel;" the king's court—the king appears as a counselor and his officials as bearers of counsel to the king; religious sphere—the counsel of god (*sḫr nṯr*) is on the one hand the divine plan reflected in the world order and in creation, and on the other it is 'fear of god' and loyalty to him, which occupies a major place in the life of the believer.

[231] Italics original. Michael V. Fox (*Proverbs 1-9: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [The Anchor Bible 18A; New York: Doubleday, 2000], 32) defines the term as, "*deliberation*: careful thinking and planning, the resolution arrived at by such thinking, and the capacity for such thought." As such, it may be expressed as advice or counsel (Job 29:21; Prov 12:15) or as consultation with others (Judg 20:7; 2 Kgs 18:20; Isa 8:10; 29:15), but is not necessarily articulated (Ps 13:13; Prov 20:5; Isa 46:10). Although, as Fox (*Proverbs 1-9*, 32) notes, the noun יוֹעֵץ as a professional designation appears to always refer to an adviser.

(cf. 1:25, 30).[232]

While the term "counsel" (עצה) is used most often in *Job* to refer either to the "schemes" of the wicked (5:13; 10:3; 18:7; 21:16; 22:18) or the deity's governance of the world (12:13; 38:2; 42:3), it is only used once to describe the activity of a sage: Job in 29:21. Like Woman Wisdom, Job is positioned as wisdom's authoritative voice, the wise teacher (cf. 4:3-4). Unlike Prov 1-9, however, where Woman Wisdom is presented within the speech of the father; it is Job who describes his own status within the community.[233] Job's self-description of his past life in chap. 29 shares considerable overlap with the narrator's portrait of Job in the prose tale, a comparison I develop below.

Thus, the narrator begins to establish the context of argument with the mention of Job's homeland in the opening verse, situating the characters' interaction in the world of the wise with its accompanying values and expectations (see below), and positioning Job's voice as supreme. By locating Job and his friends *geographically* outside of Israel, the narrator also begins to position them *socially*, orienting the reader to the virtues and values of that context.

2.3 Job as Pious Sage in Narrative Framework

Through the narrator's representation, Job will emerge not only as one who inhabits a land known for its wisdom, but also as the consummate sage behind whose virtues lies a complex web of values and assumptions.

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[232] Shupak, *Where Can Wisdom Be Found*, 44.

[233] See Carol A. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom: A Study of Proverbs 1–9," *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (Peggy L. Day, ed.; Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989): 142–60.

The narrator's positioning of Job as a paragon of wisdom initially occurs indirectly through the description of Job's piety. Four attributes occurring in two sets of expressions are used by the narrator (1:1), and later by God (1:8; 2:3), to characterize Job as "blameless and upright, one who feared God and turned aside from evil" (תם וישר וירא אלהים וסר מרע). The relationship between the terms is often understood as parallel and synonymous, with "blameless" and "fearing God" referring to Job's character, and "upright" and "turning from evil," to his conduct.[234] Such a clear distinction between the two is, however, unwarranted. While it is true that "upright" and "turning from evil" are often associated with behavior, especially with keeping straight on the path of wisdom (see below; Prov 16:17; cf. Prov 4:25-27), this distinction should not be overdrawn since "blameless" (תם) is also used elsewhere to describe one's conduct.[235] The two should instead be considered as overlapping and inseparable since, for the wise, one's character is expressed through action.[236] The effect of this hyperbolic clustering of virtues serves ultimately to present Job as more piously wise than any other individual.[237]

Job is not, however, presented *only* as a model of righteousness. While his moral virtue is recognized as exceptional from the outset, the attributes ascribed to him move

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[234] See especially, Weiss, *The Story of Job's Beginning*, 25; and Janzen, *Job*, 35, who, while recognizing the parallel relationship between these expressions, is more cautious, writing that "[t]aken together, the two pairs of expressions in 1:1 sum up the Israelite conviction as to the distinguishable but inseparable relation between authentic piety and genuine morality."

[235] Prov. 2:7b, for example, refers to "those who *walk* blamelessly" (להלכי תם).

[236] As Newsom (*Book of Job*, 48) has observed with regard to didactic literature, more generally, "[v]irtues are not abstract values but elements of practice, integrated into a person's character through the concrete exercise of that virtue." This is expressed, for example, in Prov 16:6: "By the fear of Yahweh one avoids evil" (ביראת יהוה סור מרע).

[237] Brenner ("Job the Pious," 41) notes, for example, that Job's piety even exceeds that of Noah who is described with only two adjectives, צַדִּיק and תָּמִים. Job also shares the first two adjectives with David whom the Deuteronomist describes as possessing "integrity of heart and uprightness" (בתם-לבב ובישׁר).

beyond simple descriptions of piety, subtly reinforcing the expectations and assumptions

of the sapiential context intimated by Uz, and strengthening his character as a sage.

Although the expressions that describe his piety are generally used in moral and religious

contexts,[238] they are prominent in the wisdom literature and Psalms, where both piety and

wisdom are often intricately linked.[239] An examination of how these terms are used

elsewhere is instructive and will provide a clearer backdrop for the kinds of expectations

that follow one possessing such virtue.

2.3.1 Assumptive Worlds

The concept of an "assumptive world" was first developed by Parkes, who first

defined the expression as "a strongly held set of assumptions about the world and the self

which is confidently maintained and used as a means of recognizing, planning and

acting...," "[a]ssumptions" that "are learned and confirmed by the experience of many

years."[240] Although the idea has since been given various expressions, Janoff-Bulman has

developed the concept through a series of essays as well as in her monograph, *Shattered*

Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma.[241] While I will develop the

"assumptive world" more fully in my treatment of Job's speeches in Chapter 5, a preview

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[238] See Newsom, "Job," 345.

[239] See my discussion of the assumptive world of the wise below. See also the following discussions in Michael V. Fox (*Proverbs 10-31: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* [The Anchor Bible 18b; New Haven: Yale University, 2009], 925-31): "Attributes of the Wise"; "The Rewards of Wisdom"; "The Nature of Wisdom"; and, especially, "Wisdom and Righteousness."

[240] C. M. Parkes, "What Becomes of Redundant World Models? A Contribution to the Study of Adaptation and Change," *British Journal of Medical Psychology* 48 (1975), 132. See also idem, "Psyco-Social Transitions: A Field of Study," *Social Science and Medicine* 5 (1971): 101-115.

[241] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions: Towards a New Psychology of Trauma* (New York: The Free Press, 1992). See also idem, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events: Applications of the Schema Construct," *Social Cognition* 7:2 (1989): 113-136.

at this point will prove to be helpful for the following discussion.

Following Parkes, Janoff-Bulman has suggested that an "assumptive world" is "a

conceptual system, developed over time, that provides us with expectations about the

world and ourselves."[242] These assumptions exist in a network of theories and

representations that are hierarchically organized, with some assumptions more central

and fundamental than others, although, as Janoff-Bulman notes, "our most fundamental

assumptions" tend to be those "that are most abstract and general, as well as pervasive in

their applicability."[243] These not only form "the bedrock of our conceptual system," they

are also the ones that "we are least aware of and least likely to challenge."[244]

Janoff-Bulman suggested that most people possess three fundamental assumptions

about themselves, the world, and the relation between the two: 1) the world is

meaningful; 2) the world is benevolent; and, 3) the self is worthy.[245]

> 1. The extent to which a person understands the world as meaningful is related to
> how one understands the distribution of positive and negative outcomes. Two
> distributional principles are directly relevant to my investigation: the principle of
> justice and the controllability of outcomes. The principle of justice, which follows
> Lerner's "just world theory," suggests that "people get what they deserve" based
> on their character, what Janoff-Bulman refers to as the "person-" or "self-outcome
> contingency."[246] Good, moral, decent people deserve positive outcomes and *vice
> versa*. The principle of "controllability" is related not to character but to the
> conviction that outcomes result from people's behaviors, the "action-outcome
> contingency."[247] That is, people are able to control their world by engaging in
> "appropriate, precautionary behaviors," at least minimizing their vulnerability to

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[242] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.
[243] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.
[244] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.
[245] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 6.
[246] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 8. See also Michael J. Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World* (New York: Plenum, 1980).
[247] Ronnie Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 118.

misfortune.[248] Together, justice and controllability provide a "sense of meaning."[249]

2. The second major assumption relates to the benevolence of the world, both personal and impersonal. This assumption involves what Janoff-Bulman refers to as an "implicit base-rate notion of benevolence/malevolence."[250] If one believes strongly that the world and those in it are generally good and helpful, the chance that misfortune will strike will be considered unlikely.

3. Finally, self-worth influences the extent to which one feels vulnerable to misfortune. If one perceives the world as malevolent but has a high view of the self and is convinced that the world operates on either the principle of justice or controllability, the chances of negative outcomes are perceived as minimal. A low view of the self may, however, lead to a high sense of vulnerability.

I have provided this brief overview of Janoff-Bulman's concept of the assumptive world to provide a backdrop for my discussion of the narrative's configuration of Job as well as the friends attempts to offer consolation, which I explore in the following chapter.

2.3.2 The Assumptive World of the Wise

The attributes used to characterize Job in v. 1 reflect a larger assumptive framework—one that provides for a meaningful and benevolent world, in which one's own character and behavior (self-worth) contribute to the outcome of events.

The same attributes that characterize Job are often employed to contrast the secure and prosperous lives of the righteous with the calamitous fate of the wicked, illustrating that a principle of justice is at work in the world. This is true especially of the first pair of terms, as in Ps. 37:35-38, where the psalmist contrasts the "blameless" (תם) and the "upright" (ישר) with "transgressors" (פשעים) and "the wicked" (רשעים). The psalmist first

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[248] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 118.

[249] Janoff-Bulman ("Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 118-119) notes a third distributional principle, that of randomness or change, which in the context of *Job* is not directly relevant, since misfortune is generally attributed to the deity.

[250] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 117-118.

notes witnessing ("I have seen" [ראיתי], v. 35a) the oppression (עריץ, v. 35a) and

intimidation ("towering like a cedar of Lebanon" [ומתערה כאזרח רענן], v. 35b) of the

wicked, but then states that upon passing by again, they had disappeared (lit., "he was no

more" [איננו], v. 36a; "and he could not be found" [ולא נמצא], v. 36b): the wicked are

"destroyed altogether" (נשמדו יחדו, v. 38a) and their posterity "cut off" (נכרתה, v. 38b). The

"blameless" and the "upright," however, are set up as an example, since posterity follows

the peaceful: "Observe the blameless, and see the upright" (שמר תם וראה ישר, v. 37).[251]

These virtues are generally assumed to function as a benefit of the divine protection that

follows those who possess and enact them,[252] as well as a source of protection, more

generally, as as petitioners appeal to them in prayers,[253] or as they are expressed in

proverbial sayings.[254] There is also, as noted above, a general expectation that behind

one's character and behavior a principle of justice is at work, which explains the

distribution of good and bad outcomes on the basis of people getting what they deserve.

One can see how this initial pairing of terms not only begins to establish Job as a wise

and secure individual, but also echoes the values and expectations of a larger assumptive

world.

The second set of expressions ("fearing God and turning aside from evil" [ירא

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[251] JPS and NIV read "there is a future…" for "there is posterity for the peaceful man [לאיש שלום כי־אחרית]; 37:37b).

[252] As in Prov 2:7: "[God] stores up sound wisdom for the upright and is a shield for those who walk blamelessly" (יצפן לישרים תושיה מגן להלכי תם). Here I am reading the Qere יצפן for וצפן, as shown in BHS. On the usage of תושיה, which occurs throughout Job (5:12; 6:13; 12:16; 26:3), see below.

[253] Cf. Ps 25:21: "May *integrity* and *uprightness* guard me" [תם־וישר יצרוני].

[254] Cf. Prov 11:3a: "The *integrity* of the *upright* guides them (תמת ישרים תנחם), but the crookedness of the faithless destroys them" [reading the Qere ישדם for ושדם]; and Prov 2:21: "For the upright will dwell in the land, and the blameless will remain in it" [כי־ישרים ישכנו־ארץ ותמימים יותרו בה].

אלהים וסר מרע]), which also plays a prominent role in the wisdom tradition, describes

Job's relationship to the deity as well as his orientation to and experience of life. Both

expressions, used to characterize the wise,[255] not only have important implications for

how sages are to live but also point to the quality of life they might expect to enjoy as a

result. Both expressions function within the context of a larger assumptive framework.

The "fear of God/Yahweh"[256] makes explicit another dimension of the assumptive

world, the "personal-" or "action-outcome contingency." The "fear of God/Yahweh"

leads to riches, honor, and life (Prov 22:4; Ps 34:9; 112:1), with a particular emphasis on

the latter (Ps 112:1): the "fear of Yahweh" prolongs life (Prov 10:27), is a fountain of life

(Prov 4:26), and leads to a secure and satisfied life (Prov 14:26; Prov 15:16; Prov

19:23).[257] Moreover, the "fear of Yahweh" is both the beginning of one's search for

wisdom (Prov 1:7) and its goal (Prov 2:5).[258] The "fear of Yahweh," therefore, serves as

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[255] Cf. Prov 14:16: "The wise man fears and turns from evil" (חכם ירא וסר מרע; Prov 14:16). "to fear" is often used without an expressed object to refer to piety. See Job 4:6; 15:4; 22:4.

[256] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 86, writes: "The 'fear of God/Yahweh' is a traditional expression of wisdom theology for that total devotion which underlies and motivates those who follow the path of wisdom to salvation and success (Prov. 1:7; 2:5-8; 3:7; 16:6)… Job is the model of a righteous wise man who epitomizes the advice of the sage: Be not wise in your own eyes; Fear Yahweh and shun evil (Prov. 3:7; cf. 14:16)"; on the "fear of God" outside the wisdom tradition, see Exod 19:16; 20:15-18; Deut 4:10, 5:29; 6:2, 13, 24; 10:12, 20; 1 Sa 12:14, 24; 1 Ki 8:40, 43; 2 Ch 19:7, 9; Isa 11:2-3; Jer 5:22-24; Mal 3:5; the significance of the "fear of Yahweh in Proverbs can be seen in its structural function, as it frames chs. 1-9 (cf. 1:7; 9:10) and even the book as a whole (1:7; 31:30); for the "fear of Yahweh" in Proverbs, see 1:7, 29; 2:5; 3:7; 8:13; 9:10; 10:27; 14:26-27; 15:16, 33; 16:6; 19:23; 22:4; 23:17; 24:21; 31:30; for the "fear of God in Qoheleth, see 3:14; 5:6 [7]; 7:18; 8:12-13; 12:13.

[257] The connection between piety and security may also be implied in Prov. 16:6, which describes the "fear of Yahweh" as the means by which one "turns aside from evil" (Prov. 16:6). In this case, the second expression may carry the sense of not only avoiding *moral* evil (cf. 8:13), but also misfortune or physical harm (cf. Job 2:11; 42:11). So Roland E. Murphy, *Proverbs* (Word Bible Commentary 22; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1998) 121; R. N. Whybray, *Proverbs* (NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), 242; William McKane (*Proverbs: A New Approach* [OTL; Philadelphia: Westminster, 1970], 498) writes that "the meaning, in view of the parallelism, is almost certainly that by fearing Yahweh one will not suffer evil or injury."

[258] Michael Fox, "Ideas of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," *JBL* 116 (1997): 620. The phrase is frequently associated with the acquisition of wisdom (Prov. 1:7; 9:10; 15:33; Ps. 111:10; Job 28:28), where it is identified as the "beginning of knowledge" (Prov. 1:9) or "wisdom" (Prov 9:10; Ps 111:10).

the prerequisite to acquiring the kind of knowledge and perceptive ability necessary to
live wisely.

The verses I have highlighted here illustrate how the first term in this second set
of expressions functions within the context of the sage's assumptive world. Those who
"fear Yahweh" can expect to enjoy full, rich, and secure lives. Although a causal
connection is not made explicit in *Job*, it may nevertheless be implied in the prologue's
exaggerated depiction of Job as a wealthy patriarch with the perfect number of children
(10—seven sons and three daughters; 1:2) and possessions (7,000 sheep + 3,000 camels;
500 yoke of oxen + 500 she-asses),[259] a description replete with sevens, threes, and sums
of ten, all of which are symbolic of completeness or perfection and suggest that Job's life
is as it should be with those who "fear Yahweh."[260] This image of completeness is even
extended to the epilogue, which describes Job's restoration and the end of his life. There
the narrator portrays Job's death richly, in a manner that is reminiscent of the patriarch
Abraham: as Abraham died "old and full" (Gen 25:8; זקן ושׂבע), Job dies similarly, "old
and full of years" (42:17; זקן ושׂבע ימים).[261]

The second term in this second set of expressions ("turning aside from evil," סר

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[259] See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 13 who includes as other examples of seven sons Job 42:13; Ruth 4:15; 1
Sam 2:5; Jer 15:9; "Keret" 15.2.23 (John C. L. Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends* [Edinburgh: T & T
Clark, 1977], 91); and Ovid, *Metamorphoses* 6.182-83, where "seven sons" occur alongside "seven
daughters." Baal also has three daughters (Gibson, *Canaanite Myths and Legends*, 46, 48).

[260] The *waw-consecutive* (ויולדו) may not suggest a causal connection between vv. 1 and 2 (see
Alan Cooper, "Reading and Misreading the Prologue to Job," *JSOT* 46 [1990]: 69-71). But, as Dan
Mathewson (*Death and Survival in Job: Desymbolization and Traumatic Experience* [Library of Hebrew
Bible/Old Testament Studies 450; New York: T & T Clark, 2006], 41) argues, "the connection of piety and
life (whether causal or merely symmetrical) is a picture of a moral world order quite common in the HB,
especially obvious in Deuteronomy, certain Psalms, and Proverbs."

[261] Cf. Mathewson, *Death and Survival in Job*, 87-91.

מרע) not only reflects the assumption that one's character or behavior is tied to outcomes, but also suggests that one can directly control outcomes, what Janoff-Bulman refers to as the "principle of control." Implied in the phrase, "turning from evil" (סר מרע), is the metaphor of walking as a form of moral conduct.[262] That a prosperous life was achieved through piety and expressed through proper action was often understood in terms of the metaphor of life as a way or path, as in Prov. 14:2: "He who walks uprightly fears Yahweh" (הולך בישרו ירא יהוה). The metaphor is particularly at home in sapiential circles where one's "way" or "path" functions as a metaphor for moral behavior: in life one takes and walks on a particular path to a certain end. This image functions as a "ground metaphor"[263] or "nuclear symbol"[264] that "organizes other perceptions and images and conveys a way of perceiving the world."[265] In this line of thinking, "[l]ife is conceived of dynamically; it is a journey along a road and to lose one's way is to lose one's life."[266] To turn aside is to risk one's life.[267] Wisdom, however, provides a map, according to Fox, offering "guidance as to which paths lie where."[268]

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[262] See the teaching concerning the "fear of the Lord" in Ps 34:11-14, which also includes, as part of its instruction ("I will teach you"; אלמדכם), learning to "depart from evil and do good..." (Ps 34:12 [11], 15 [14]).

[263] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 128-31.

[264] Norman C. Habel, "Symbolism of Wisdom in Proverbs 1-9," *Int* 26 (1972): 131-57. See also William P. Brown, *Seeing the Psalms: A Theology of Metaphor* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 31-54.

[265] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 129.

[266] McKane, *Proverbs*, 501.

[267] While the wisdom tradition recognizes many possible paths in life, two are of special concern: the way of life (Prov 5:6; 15:24; 6:23; cf. 10:17) and the way of death (14:12; 16:25; cf. 7:27). The former is straight, secure, unobstructed, and well-lit (Prov 3:23-26; 4:10-19); the latter is evil, dark, and riddled with obstacles (cf. Prov 4:10-19). To follow the path to life one must "keep straight" on one's path (4:26b), "not swerve to the right or to the left" (4:27a), "turn one's foot" (4:27b) or "turn from evil" (Job 28:28; Prov 3:7; 16:6; Ps 34:15 [14]). By doing so, "all of one's ways will be established" (4:26b).

[268] Fox, *Proverbs 1-9*, 129.

In order to stay on the path to life, the sage willingly receives training for wisdom

through instruction or discipline, as is indicated by Prov 15:33: "the fear of Yahweh is

instruction (מוסר) in wisdom" (Prov 15:33; cf. 6:23; 10:17). Wisdom is, therefore,

understood to depend on "discipline" or "correction."[269] That discipline comes from two

sources: human beings and Yahweh. Moral instruction or discipline is often transmitted

inter-generationally through one's parents,[270] but it may also be offered through other

sages.[271] I will develop the place of "discipline" among sages in the following chapter. In

both cases, the goal is a "formation of character that both embodies virtue and leads to

well-being."[272] Yahweh is also understood as the source of wisdom.[273] The "fear of

Yahweh," mentioned above, does not result in its automatic transmission but is instead

the beginning of a process that leads to its acquisition and practice. Yahweh is, however,

sometimes understood to take an active role in the process of correction, as Eliphaz

suggests in his first speech, where he interprets Job's suffering as a form of divine

discipline (Job 5:17-18).

One can begin to see how the narrator's description of Job's character and wealth

in the opening verses moves beyond a simple, exaggerated account of Job's piety through

these expressions by also establishing that Job is also knowledgeable, disciplined, and

wise. No doubt is left about his character and conduct, as has so often been recognized,

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[269] McKane, *Proverbs*, 487.

[270] Prov 4:1; 13:1, 24; 19:27; 22:15; 23:13.

[271] Discipline (מוסר) is often paired with "reproof" or "rebuke," which occurs as תוחכת in Prov 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:10; and as נערה only in Prov. 13:1; cf. Prov 1-9, more generally.

[272] Leo G. Perdue, "Wisdom in the Book of Job," in *In Search of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of John G. Gammie* (ed. Leo G. Perdue et al; Louisville: Westminster/John Knox Press, 1993), 77.

[273] As in Qoh 2:26 ("For to the one who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy"). Cf. Prov 2:6.

but these attributes also suggest other qualities when read in light of the sapiential circles

that valued them. The virtue and well-being Job embodies reflect the formation of

character that follows from wise instruction (מוסר). As one who is upright and turns aside

from evil, Job appears unswerving on the path to life. Moreover, Job enjoys the blessings

that follow the disciplined piety of the sage; the completeness of his virtue parallels the

wholeness that characterizes his life. As William Brown has observed: "[t]he story of

Job's journey begins, in effect, where the book of Proverbs ends. The silent son of

Proverbs has successfully secured his life within the community as head of a successful

and secure household (Prov 31:10-31)."[274]

2.4 Job, Patriarchy, and the Absence of Argument

Job's piety, his ideal family, and his unmatched possessions together situate him

as a wise and wealthy patriarch whose position has a distinctive effect on how he speaks

to, and interacts with, others. In what follows, I would like to consider how the narrative

configures Job's verbal interaction with others. Then, I will attempt to show that the

narrative offers a window into one of two distinctly different modes of verbal interaction,

with Job representing the authoritative and silencing voice of tradition. As I will show in

the following chapters, the authoritative status Job enjoys in the narrative, where he

embodies the wisdom tradition's dominant discourse, is diminished in the dialogue.[275]

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[274] William P. Brown, *Character in Crisis* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996), 51.

[275] As we have seen from the introduction of Job in 1:1, Job's status as a sage is closely interwoven with descriptions of his piety. The representation of Job as a mediator on behalf of his children in the prologue (cf. Ezek 14:14, 20) and then the friends in the epilogue bolsters the portrayal of Job as a piously wise patriarch, recalling the patriarch Abraham's offering of a ram in the place of his son (Gen 22:13), and his intercession on behalf of Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen 18:23ff; cf. 20:7). While one might initially be inclined to dismiss Job's sacrifices for his children and his intercession on behalf of his friends as irrelevant

The narrator reinforces Job's status as a sage through his pious and authoritative speech by focusing specifically on the nature and effect of Job's words in relation to God, his wife, and finally his friends. Speech is often a topic of critical reflection in the dialogue, with Job and his friends using speech as a point of attack, often charging one another with speaking improperly. Their concerns reflect those of the sages, more generally, who noted the importance of knowing when to speak and when to keep silent as well as understanding the powerful effects of one's words.[276] But the juxtaposition of competing voices that marks the quarrel is uncharacteristic of the narrative where Job's relationship to his wife and even the friends is represented not as egalitarian but hierarchical.

To examine the authoritative and hierarchical nature of Job's speech and the effect it has on his interaction with others, it will be necessary to look briefly at three texts (1:20-22; 2:9-10; and 42:7-9) where either the narrator or God provides an

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to his status as a sage, and only a feature of piety, Leo Perdue (Wisdom in the Book of Job," 82) has pointed out that "[c]ultic piety, including sacrifices, offerings, and prayers, was an important dimension of 'wise' action in the sapiential tradition, as long as it was correlated with moral behavior (see Prov 3:9-10; 15:8, 29; 21:27; 28:9; Sir 34:18-35:25 [Gk.])." Similarly, 1 Kgs 10:23 describes Solomon as one whose *wisdom and wealth* exceed that of other kings. Job thus appears not only as one who is morally upright, but as fulfilling a role that is appropriate to the sage as he intercedes on behalf of others.

By merging Job's role as a patriarch with his position as a pious sage in 1:3, the narrative reinforces and begins to confirm Job's authoritative status over and against the other characters. The narrator describes Job as "the greatest of all the people of the east" (גדול מכל בני קדם ;1:3), a phrase that is reminiscent of an expression used to describe Solomon in 1 Kgs 4:30 [5:10]: "the *wisdom* of Solomon was greater than all the peoples of the east" (ותרב חכמת שלמה מחכמת כל בני קדם). Although the expression follows the cataloging of Job's possessions, and would initially appear to support Clines' (*Job 1-20*, 14) claim that Job's greatness refers entirely to his wealth, in light of its association with Solomon and the wisdom of the east more generally, Clines' view appears too restrictive. Whether the allusion is intentional or not, the narrator's assessment of Job locates him alongside of Solomon, as a paragon of wisdom. Considering the narrator's hyperbolic style, especially in the characterization of Job in 1:1-5, the expression is likely more inclusive than wealth, referring to Job's status more generally. That is, Job is presented as without peer in every respect, including wisdom.

[276] See my discussion of speech in the context of friendship below.

evaluation of Job that positions him in a particular relationship to the others. The first two instances follow the two scenes of testing in the prologue. The first occurs after Job receives the tragic news of his terrible loss (1:13-22); the second, after the onset of Job's physical suffering and his exchange with his wife (2:7-10). The final scene (42:7-10), which occurs in the epilogue, functions in a similar fashion, as God rebukes the friends and affirms Job's speech, placing the friends in a position that is subordinate to, and even dependent on, Job as their intercessor.

2.4.1 Job and the "Folly" of God

While my focus is on the narrator's evaluation of Job's actions, it is important at the outset to situate his speech within the context of his reaction to the tragedy he endures. Job's response after the first series of disasters is typical of those in the context of grief: he engages in nonverbal, conventional acts of mourning, particularly tearing his robe[277] and shaving his head,[278] and, in a somewhat unconventional fashion, prostrating himself in worship (ויפל ארצה וישתחו). While there are other contexts of mourning in which people fall to the ground to pray,[279] Job is the only example of someone worshiping in the context of such a terrible tragedy. His worship culminates in a statement that weaves together his piety and wisdom, as he embraces the inevitability of death alongside of the sovereignty of the deity:

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[277] Gen 37:34; Jos 7:6; 2 Sam 1:11; Ezra 9:3, 5; Esth 4:1.

[278] Cf. Ezra 9:3; Isa 15:2; 22:12; Jer 7:29; Ezek 7:18; Mic 1:16.

[279] Xuan Huong Thi Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible* (JSOTSupp 302; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1999), 25, cites Josh 7:6-7, where Joshua falls upon the ground and prays; Ezra 9:5-6, where Ezra kneels and prays; and 1 Macc 4:36-40, where, after finding the sanctuary desolate, Judas and his brothers tear their clothes, mourn with great lamentation, and fall with their faces to the ground.

Naked I came from my mother's womb
 and naked I shall return there;
Yahweh has given
 and Yahweh has taken;
May the name of Yahweh be blessed (Job 1:21).[280]

Job's verbal expression of grief is significant in that it does not follow the traditional response of a lament or funeral song. Rather, Job draws a proverbial saying from within the wisdom tradition itself, where the image of the mother's womb and the grave as life's end are merged metaphorically (Ecc 5:15 and Sir 40:1; cf. Job 24:20a).[281] Understanding how Job's use of the metaphor functions here is less important for my purposes than the nature of the narrator's response.[282]

Immediately following Job's remarks, the narrator offers an evaluative summary of his words: "In all this Job did not sin or charge God with folly" (תפלה, 1:22). The phrase "in all this" (בכל־זאת) is somewhat ambiguous, but one should not assume that it refers only to Job's speech.[283] Since Job has moved beyond the conventional acts of mourning to worship, the statement may also encompass Job's exemplary actions, with the narrator once again underscoring Job's piety. In either case, the narrator is concerned with Job's speech, as indicated by 1:22b ("or charge God with folly," ולא נתן תפלה לאלהים).

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[280] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 93, writes: "Job's initial pair of responses are customary rites of mourning and grief.... His second pair of actions, however, are expressions of reverence and devotion."

[281] Newsom, "Job," 352.

[282] Newsom, "Job," 352, explains that Job's orientation to the human realm in v. 21a ("Naked I came…") and the divine realm in 21a ("Yahweh has given…") are linked by the parallelism between the two sayings:

> In the first saying, the terror of birth and death, the vulnerability of nakedness, is contained through the image of the mother. It is she who sends and she who receives back again. In the second saying, Yahweh occupies the same place as the mother and is to be understood in light of that image. The fragility of the gift and the desolation of the loss are endurable only if it is Yahweh who gives and Yahweh who takes (cf. Ps 104:27-30). Human words of blessing addressed to God are an act of worship that reaffirms relationship with God.

[283] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 14.

The nature of the narrator's endorsement in 1:22b is not entirely clear, however, since the meaning of תפלה, which the NRSV and NIV translate as "wrongdoing," is obscure. The term occurs only in Jer 23:13 where it suggests something improper or unseemly, although Job uses its cognate תפל to refer to life as "tasteless" in 6:6 (cf. Lam 2:14).[284] Interestingly enough, the Septuagint translates both תפלה in 1:22 and תפל in Lam 2:14 as ἀφροσύνη, "folly." Dhorme compares the relationship between that which is "tasteless" (6:6) and "foolish" in *Job* to the Latin *fatuus*, which itself came to mean both "insipid" and "foolish";[285] yet due to the paucity of evidence, one cannot assume the same kind of connection exists here. Even so, while folly may not be the best translation of תפלה, it is significant that several ancient versions have understood it in this manner.[286] Perhaps their reading, including scholarly emendations to "folly" (נבלה; cf. BHK), follows from that term's role in the prose tale where Job accuses his wife of speaking foolishly in the prologue (2:1) and where God accuses the friends of the same in the epilogue (42:8).[287] Regardless, in 1:22 the narrator endorses Job's piously wise response, which consists of an unconventional act of worship and his use of sapiential imagery. If, as Clines suggests, תפלה refers to the most modest form of cursing, Job appears here without the slightest hint of impropriety.[288]

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[284] So Clines, *Job 1-20*, 172; Newsom, "Job," 387; cf. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 146, who argues that Job views the comfort of the friends as insipid (cf. Ps 69:21-22 [20-21]).

[285] Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 14.

[286] Cf. LXX, Vulgate, Symmachus; See Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 14.

[287] Or perhaps of doing נבלה to them.

[288] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 40.

2.4.2 The "Foolishness" of Job's Wife

The prologue not only upholds his status as a wise patriarch, but also develops it through his brief argumentative exchange with his wife, who is the first and only character in the narrative to offer Job counsel. Here, Job breaks his silence a second time not to worship but to offer a strong rebuke to his wife.

Her advice to Job, however, is marked by ambiguity: "Do you still hold fast in your integrity? Curse God and die" (עדך מחזיק בתמתך ברך אלהים ומת, 2:9). While it is clear that she does not doubt Job's piety, her intentions are not entirely clear. Is she urging Job in an act of sympathy to abandon his integrity and bring about what is inevitable?[289] Is she encouraging Job to be "guilelessly honest," to speak in a manner that is consistent with his integrity but inconsistent with religious norms?[290] Some argue that she is not speaking euphemistically, and genuinely encourages Job to "bless" (ברך) God despite death's inevitability, although Job's rebuke seems to rule out this last alternative.[291]

Whatever her intentions, the voice of the wise patriarch Job effectively silences her with a firm rebuke. Without the slightest indication that he has entertained her advice, Job says not that she herself is foolish but that she speaks as "one of the foolish women"

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[289] So, Marvin Pope (*Job* [3d ed.; AB 15; Garden City, N.J.: Doubleday, 1973], 22) writes: "Death is not necessarily the immediate consequence of cursing God. His wife, perhaps, meant to suggest that since he was not long for this world, he might as well give vent to his feelings, or hers, and curse God."

[290] Newsom, "Job," 356.

[291] See, especially, C. L. Seow's survey of ancient and modern scholarship in "Mrs Job" in *Engaging the Bible in a Gendered World: An Introduction to Feminist Biblical Interpretation in Honor of Katharine Doob Sakenfeld* (ed. Linda Day and Carolyn Pressler; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2006), 141-52. Most note the ambiguity of Job's wife's words. To name only a few, see Tod Linafelt, "The Undecidability of ברך in the Prologue to Job and Beyond," *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996): 154-172; Claire Mathews McGinnis, "On Playing the Devil's Advocate in Job: On Job's Wife," in *The Whirlwind: Essays on Job, Hermeneutics and Theology in Memory of Jane Morse* (ed. Corrine L. Patton, James W. Watts, and Stephen L. Cook; New York: T & T Clark, 2002], 121-41); F. Rachel Magdalene, "Job's Wife as Hero: A Feministic Forensic Reading of the Book of Job," *Biblical Interpretation* 14 (2006), 209-258.

(כדבר אחת הנבלות תדברי 2:10). While there is an intellectual component,[292] the term נבל carries moral and social connotations as well.[293] The fool is elsewhere associated with the morally corrupt and wicked,[294] as well as with those who, in contrast to the noble, are "disreputable" (Isa 32:5; Prov 17:7).[295] Because she has spoken in a manner that is inconsistent with Job's identity as a piously wise patriarch, Job places her at the moral and social boundaries of his world. Her counsel, neither pious nor wise by his standards,[296] is characterized "in its social sense as 'low-class' or 'common,' with the unambiguous overtone of disapproval on moral or religious grounds."[297] Moreover, as Newsom has observed, "Job's reply may also contain an element of social disdain for the outspoken woman (cf. Prov 21:9, 19; 25:24; 27:15-16)," characteristic of the wisdom literature, more generally.[298] In any case, the effect of his words is similar to that of 29:21-22, where Job fondly recalls how silence preceded and followed his own speech.

Juxtaposed with Job's evaluation of his wife's speech is the narrator's ambiguous assessment of Job's: "In all this Job did not sin with his lips" (בכל זאת לא חטא איוב בשפתיו,

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[292] For example, the term appears parallel to "unwise" (לא חכם) in Deut 32:6. Cf. Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 22, who argues that "the root… refers not to intellectual weakness but to moral obtuseness and blindness to religious truth… It is moral rather than intellectual folly which is basic to the root." Cf. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 20, who writes that Job here refers to "foolish women, who have neither brain nor moral principles."

[293] A. Phillips, "NEBALAH—A Term for Serious Disorderly and Unruly Conduct," *VT* 25 (1975): 237-41; W. M. W. Roth, "NBL," *VT* 10 (1960): 394-409; Karel van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotami: A Comparative Study* (Studia Semitica Neerlandica; Assen/Maastricht, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1985), 107.

[294] See Ps 14:1 with 10:4 and 39:9[8], as noted by Clines, *Job 1-20*, 54.

[295] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 54.

[296] Cf. Clines (*Job 1-20*, 51), however, who argues that "[i]t is an impious suggestion she makes, but it does not arise out of impiety; it is human and entirely for Job's benefit."

[297] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 54; Similarly, Newsom, "Job," 356; cf. van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 107, writes: "Job can scold his wife for 'speaking like one of the *nābāl*-women'… because he is thinking of a specific class of people conspicuous for their godless behavior. It is important to grasp that throughout its use in the Old Testament *nābāl* conveys the idea of poverty and social inferiority."

[298] Newsom, "Job," 356.

2:10). Much has been made of the possible tension in the narrator's remarks, often leading commentators to ask, as the Talmud suggests, that if Job did not sin "with his lips" might he have sinned in his heart?[299] Because of differences between the narrator's evaluation of Job in 1:22 and 2:10, this proposal merits some attention. While both affirm that "In all this Job did not sin," the former notes that Job did not "charge God with wrongdoing" (NRSV), which the latter omits, adding "with his lips" instead. It is possible that the phrase was introduced to heighten suspense within the narrative, although it is somewhat disingenuous, as Newsom observes, to talk about narrative tension in a hero story where the audience knows that all will end well—unless it offers the reader a chance to "enjoy the pseudo-anxiety that the hero will fall from perfection, knowing that in the third and decisive test the hero will triumphantly dispel all doubt about his character."[300]

Rather than casting doubt on Job's integrity, I would argue that here the narrator draws Job's speech more sharply into focus as a characteristic of his pious wisdom, elevating it over and against Job's wife, whom the narrator considers to have been appropriately silenced by Job. The attention to Job's lips is significant since within the context of the wisdom tradition they have the power to guard knowledge (Prov 5:2), spread knowledge (Prov 15:7), preserve one's life (Prov 13:3; 14:3), and serve as a sign of wisdom and prudence, especially when restrained (Prov 10:13, 23; cf. 17:28). Since they can also ensnare (Prov 5:3; 6:2; 12:13; 18:7), "the Wisdom tradition taught that the

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[299] See Weiss, *The Story of Job's Beginning*, 71-74; *b. B. Bat.* 16a.

[300] Newsom, "Job," 357.

one who controls his speech has his whole life in focus (Prov. 13:3; 21:23; cf. Jas.

3:2)."[301] Job is here presented as a model of restrained speech, the ideal sage, who not

only inhabits the world of the wise, but acts (1:1, 22) and speaks (1:22; 2:10; 42:7-8)

accordingly.

2.4.3 The "Foolishness" of Job's Friends

The clearest affirmation of Job's speech comes in what initially appears to be the

strangest of places, the epilogue, where the approving voice is even stronger—and

stranger, considering the placement of this affirmation—than the prologue's narrator.

Twice God affirms that Job has spoken נכונה, "what is right" or "correctly" (42:7, 8; cf.

Ps. 5:10 [9]; Deut 13:15; 17:4; 1 Sa. 23:23)[302] in contrast to the friends who have spoken

"folly" (נבלה; 42:8; cf. 2:10). God's endorsement of Job's speech (42:7), however, is

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[301] John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 84.

[302] See Pope's (*Job*, 350) discussion on this matter. More recently, several scholars have sought out a way of translating the text of 42:7 that avoids God's commendation of Job's subversive speech within the dialogue by offering alternative translations of נכונה. Duck-Woo Nam (*Talking about God: Job 42:7-9 and the Nature of God in the Book of Job* [Studies in Biblical Literature 49; New York: Peter Lang, 2003]) has argued (13-15) for translating the phrase in question as "because you have not spoken about me constructively as my servant Job has." Rickie D. Moore ("Raw Prayer and Refined Theology: 'You Have Not Spoken Straight to Me, as My Servant Job Has," in *The Spirit and the Mind: Essays in Informed Pentecostalism* [ed. Terry L. Cross and Emerson B. Powery; New York: University Press of America, 2000], 35-48), noting (35) that נכונה "has to do with being firm, established, right, upright, straight," slips (or shifts) from what is "firm" to what is frank ("firmly" or "straight," 41). Moore's focus is on the fact that Job has spoken *to* God ("to me"; אלי) while the friends have only spoken *about* God ("to me"; אלי). That is, for Moore, Job is commended for praying throughout the dialogue and is, in the epilogue, to pray for the friends. I translate the phrase, "you have not spoken what is right (i.e., 'established' or 'grounded') *to* me." I agree with more that Job is commended for his address to God, but his address to God takes the form of resistance through irony/parody and the legal metaphor, not prayer. Although I disagree with Moore that Job is engaged in prayer, Job has spoken directly to God, although (contra Moore) what he has spoken has been right (i.e., "grounded" or "established"). On נכונה as "grounded" or "established," I follow Edward Greenstein in his review of Nam's book (Edward L. Greenstein, review of Duck-Woo Nam, *Talking about God: Job 42:7-9 and the Nature of God in the Book of Job*, *Review of Biblical Literature* [http://bookreviews.org] [2004]), where he argues persuasively that נכונה refers to "something that is "'established, set, firm, valid.' It is not 'constructive' but rather '(well-)constructed.'" That is, what is spoken, as Greenstein argues, is "true."

somewhat confusing since it follows soon after the Divine Speeches (38-41) where God

charges Job with "concealing counsel" and speaking "words without knowledge" (38:2).

If God has just rebuked Job, in what sense has Job spoken "correctly" and what then is

the nature of the friends' "folly?"

Some have suggested that behind the book of *Job* lies an old tale about the

righteous Job who patiently endured the testing of God, ultimately emerging as its

vindicated hero. In this line of thinking, it is argued that since the prologue and the

epilogue are the only remnants that now remain, and since at the conclusion of the

prologue the friends have only offered Job their show of solidarity in sympathetic

gestures and silence (2:11-13), it is necessary to logically supply a "missing middle"[303]

that would explain how the friends have *not* spoken what is right concerning God.[304] Thus

it is argued that in the middle part of this story the friends would have shared some brief

dialogue with Job where they, like his wife earlier, counseled him to curse God, which he

rejected outright, and thus spoke correctly of God.[305] It is difficult to know, of course,

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[303] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 36.

[304] Others, of course, have argued that that the prologue consisted of two tests in 1:1-22 and 2:1-10 and the epilogue, where Job's family and all who have known him come to console him and Job experiences his restoration (42;11-17). In this view, 2:11-13 and 42:7-10 were incorporated in response to their presence in the dialogue. See, for example, Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 573-75.

[305] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 268 n. 12 cites Cheney's commentary and reconstruction of this scene:
The chief value of the Epilogue is, that it enables us to reconstruct the main outlines of the omitted portion of the story. Thanks to it we are able, in some sense, to "call up him who left half told" (or whose editors have transmitted to us half told, or told amiss) the story of the most patient of men. The result of an inquiry would probably be that in lieu of Job iii.-xlii., 7, there stood originally something like this, only in a style of flowing, natural eloquence:
And these three men, moved at the sight of Job's grief, broke out into lamentations, and withheld not passionate complaints of the injustice of God. They said: Is there knowledge in the Most High? And does God judge righteous judgment? But Job was sore displeased, and reproved them, saying, Bitter is the pain which racks me, but more bitter still are the words which ye speak. Blessed be the Most High for that which He gave, and now that I am empty, blessed still be His name. I will call unto Him and say, Shew me wherein I have erred; let me not depart under the weight of Thine anger. For God is good to all those who call upon Him, and will not suffer the righteous to fall forever. And Job reasoned ofttimes with his friends,

whether the middle part of the tale ever existed; and, perhaps, it is irrelevant. Newsom

argues that we have what the author wrote, which she compares to an optical illusion:

> Just as there are some drawings in which the eye can "see" a line that is not drawn on the page but that is necessary to complete the figure, so readers can perceive the outlines of the missing middle of the prose tale. The illusion created, that what has been displaced is the mirror image of the extant dialogue between Job and his friends, is a part of the overall strategy of the book."[306]

When read in this manner, the result is "a relationship between Job and his friends that is

the reverse of the one actually present in the poetic dialogues."[307] That is, the friends offer

impious rather than pious speech. This reversal can also be seen in how they relate to Job,

where they no longer appear in an egalitarian relationship as peers, whose voices are

equally authoritative, as in the prologue. Rather, they depend on Job to act on their behalf

to appease God's wrath. While this reading reveals some of the ironies and tensions

present in reading the book, my concern is that Job—not the friends—is commended for

speaking truthfully.[308]

While the reading of the preceding paragraph remains speculative, there is

nevertheless a "dramatic reversal of roles,"[309] whereby the author reinforces the image of

Job as sage *par excellence*. This occurs first through God's affirmation of Job's speech,

which frames the sacrifice God commands of the friends (42:7b, 8b), and then through

Job's intercession (cf. 1:5) for them:

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and bade them repent, lest God should deal with them as with transgressors. And at the end of a season, God came to Eliphaz in a dream and said, My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends, because ye have not spoken of Me that which is right, as My servant Job has." See T. K. Cheyne, *Jewish Religious Life After the Exile* (American Lectures on the History of Religions; New York and London: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1898), 160-161.

[306] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 37.

[307] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 36.

[308] See n. 96 above.

[309] I have borrowed this phrase from Habel, *The Book of Job*, 584.

After Yahweh spoke these words to Job, Yahweh said to Eliphaz the Temanite: "My wrath burns against you and against your two friends, *for you have not spoken of me what is right* (נכונה), as my servant Job has. Now take for you seven bulls and seven rams and go to my servant Job and offer up a burnt offering for yourselves, and my servant Job shall pray for you, for I will accept his prayer not to deal with you according to your folly (כי אם פניו אשא לבלתי עשות עמכם נבלה),[310] *for you have not spoken of me what is right* (נכונה) *as my servant Job has* (Job 42:7-8).

Job's favor with Yahweh is evident in the contrast Yahweh draws between Job's correct speech and the false speech of the friends.[311] The term "folly," which occurs in both the prologue (2:10) and epilogue (2:8), links Job's criticism of Mrs. Job, as one whose speech is like that of "foolish women" (נבלות), with God's criticism of the friends "folly" (נבלה). That the term elsewhere refers to those who speak falsely and lead God's people astray (Isa 9:14-16 [115-17]; 32:6) also seems to support the claim that the friends have spoken impiously.[312] In contrast to Job's piety, they appear before Yahweh as sinners, an important turn from the dialogue where they increasingly suspect sin on Job's part.[313]

Job, however, is twice affirmed as having spoken correctly (42:7b, 8b).[314] If, however, one compares the repetition of 42:7b and 8b with that of 1:22 and 2:10 ("In all this Job did not sin…"; בכל זאת לא חטא איוב), there is significant overlap. While both are

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[310] See Janzen, *Job*, 265.

[311] Job's favor with Yahweh is also demonstrated by Yahweh's repeated use of "my servant," a designation that elsewhere refers to Abraham (Gen 26:24), Moses (Num 12:7-8), David (2 Sam 3:18; 7:5, 8), and others. It is interesting to note that Yahweh had previously used this designation when commending Job to *hassatan* in the prologue (1:8; 2:3), once in each exchange. Here, however, Yahweh confers this special status on Job four times in the space of two verses.

[312] This, of course, introduces an irony into Job's criticism of the "false" and deceptive nature of the friends' speech in the dialogue.

[313] Particularly in chs. 11, 15, 22.

[314] I understand the repetition here as emphatic. See, however, Samuel R. Driver and George B. Gray (*A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Book of Job* [Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1921] 373), who observe: "If the whole of the Epilogue and Prologue are from one hand, that hand had lost its cunning before it reached the Epilogue; the repetition in 8b of the clause in 7b may indeed be a mere textual accident: if not, it is very different in character from the repetitions in the Prologue."

concerned with confirming the pious and authoritative nature of Job's speech, the latter demonstrates Job's superior status by contrasting Job's favor with Yahweh (*through* Job's speech) with the seriousness of the friends' offense.

In fact, it is because of his high regard for Job that Yahweh designates him as the one who will intercede on behalf of the friends: "But my servant Job will pray for you and I will accept him" (ואיוב עבדי יתפלל עליכם כי אם פניו אשׂא; 42:8). Yahweh has informed Eliphaz that his anger burns against the friends (חרה אפי בך ובשני רעיך; 42:7) and that to atone for their sin, it is necessary first to go to Job, and then to sacrifice a burnt offering of seven bulls and seven rams, after which Job will pray for them.[315] Thus, as with his children in the prologue, Job now serves as a mediator for the friends—in the end, restoring their relationship to God through prayer.[316] The relationship between Job and the friends in the epilogue is, therefore, one of dependence as the friends are required to offer the sacrifices to appease Yahweh's wrath while awaiting Job's prayer on their behalf (42:8).

Considering the narrator's positioning of Job in relation to the other characters, one might also add to Brown's observation that the book of *Job* begins where Proverbs leaves off some comment on how, in the world of the narrative, Job comes to embody the mode of interaction so clearly represented by the father in Prov 1-9, one where a dominant voice opposes and disqualifies alternative and competing voices.[317] The

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[315] Here the symbolic numbers of this lavish offering convey the gravity of their offense and relate their desperate need for Job's intercession. On seven bulls and rams, see Num 23 and Ezek 45:22-25.

[316] On this text, see also Samuel E. Balentine, "My Servant Job Shall Pray for You," *Theology Today* 58:4 (2006): 502-518.

[317] In the context of Prov 1-9, I am thinking especially of the son's companions (1:10-14) and the

narrative positions Job as the central and authoritative figure as it reasserts his voice over all other human actors. Job appears not only as a model of wisdom and piety, but as a wise and suffering patriarch who instructs, discredits, silences, and even prays for competing, opposing, and—in light of the "missing middle"—even imagined and implied voices. In the narrative framework, Job does not allow for the kind of dissent he will voice in the dialogue to emerge.

As I will suggest, the narrative and the dialogue ultimately model two different ways of relating to others. In the dialogue, Job is no longer the silent son, as Brown notes.[318] But neither does Job possess the same authority to silence others. In fact, as one who suffers, he will have to resist the tendency of those attempting to silence his dissenting voice.[319] Brown has argued that "much of the tension that erupts within the deliberations [of the dialogue] is rooted in the friends' strained attempts to press the dynamics of the discourse back into the traditional hierarchical setting of conventional wisdom teaching, which Job regards as nothing else than a pedagogy for the oppressed."[320] While this is true to a certain extent, Brown fails to consider how their relationship as friends and their consolatory goals affect their interaction with Job. That

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speech of the strange woman (7:10-21). See Carol A. Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," in *Gender and Difference in Ancient Israel* (ed. Peggy L. Day; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1989), 142-160.

[318] Brown twice compares Job to the silent son in Proverbs, though in both cases he acknowledges Job's development within the community (Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 51) as a wise patriarch. He writes (Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 52): "Like the figure of the silent son turned patriarch in Proverbs, Job has successfully appropriated the wisdom of his elders. He has embodied the character of the listening heart, and it has literally paid off for him." He does not, however, attend to how the narrator positions Job in relationship to the other characters.

[319] In the final chapter, I will argue that Job attempts to silence the friends by positioning them as his audience before God.

[320] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 64.

is, Job's expectations of his friends *as friends*, and his position before them as a sufferer, complicates what might normally be considered more of an egalitarian relationship among friends and sages. I will deal more thoroughly with how the dynamics of this relationship are negotiated in argumentation in the remaining two chapters. Before doing so, however, it will be helpful first to consider the nature of their relationship in light of some of the cultural expectations for friendship.

2.5 The Expectations of Friendship

While some have been sympathetic to the friends, commentators have often followed Job's lead in their evaluation of Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, assuming that although they are introduced as Job's friends, they are not very good ones. Although they have recently been assessed more positively, especially with respect to their role as comforters,[321] there has been little discussion of what one might reasonably expect of them as friends, or how one might one go about evaluating their response to Job's suffering.

Norman Habel illustrates the difficulty of assessing the friends' actions in his essay, "Only the Jackal is My Friend," where he contrasts their performance in the prologue with that of the dialogue.[322] According to Habel, the prologue's "patriarchal examples of true friendship" serve as a *foil* for the dialogue, setting off what he identifies as the "good friends" of 2:11-13 from the "defensive proponents of orthodox religion"

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[321] For a fuller bibliography, see my discussion of "The Consolatory Context of Argument" below.
[322] Norman Habel, "Only the Jackal is My Friend: On Friends and Redeemers in Job," *Interpretation* 31 (1977): 227-236.

exposed by Job in the poetry.[323] Interestingly, the standard by which Habel evaluates the friends shifts as he moves from the prologue to the dialogue. Beginning with a brief overview of the friendship tradition in the HB, Habel assesses their performance in the prologue positively. They are "ideal friends" first and foremost because of their display of loyalty: they meet and travel to where Job is, respond empathetically, and identify with Job in his grief.[324] But when they appear in a different light in the dialogue, they are no longer evaluated according to the same standard Habel has used for the prologue, but rather according to Job's own expectations and assessments.

By asking "What role does Job demand of his *potential* friends in such an extreme situation?" Habel not only recasts their friendship as unrealized but uses Job's own speeches as the primary means for determining the strength of their commitment.[325] Not surprisingly, Habel's assessment of the friends sounds strangely familiar, as it echoes Job's own accusations: "[t]he friends are trapped in their own pride; they are driven to dispute rather than [to] empathize with Job."[326] Without attending to the friends' consolatory goals or their continuing presence, Habel, therefore, concludes that "Job stands alone without… a compassionate friend to sustain him."[327]

But what constitutes "true friendship," or what are the characteristics of an "ideal friend"? In the dialogue Job is the only character to draw specifically on the topic of friendship (6:14-30; 12:4; 13:4; 16:20; 17:5, 10; 19:13-22). While his charges provide a

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[323] Habel, "Only the Jackal," 229.
[324] Habel, "Only the Jackal," 228.
[325] Italics mine; Habel, "Only the Jackal," 229.
[326] Habel, "Only the Jackal," 232.
[327] Habel, "Only the Jackal," 230.

somewhat narrow window into the nature of friendship, the broader context of friendship

expectations in the wisdom literature provides a framework for at least understanding

why Job makes some of the accusations he does. An inquiry into such expectations brings

into sharper focus a neglected and often unexplored relational dimension: the

vulnerabilities of friendship.

In what follows I will attempt to describe some of the cultural expectations for

friendship, which will serve as a backdrop for evaluating the friends' performance

(Chapter 3), especially in light of Job's accusations against them in the dialogue (Chapter

4).

2.5.1 Friendship in the Hebrew Bible

Rather than developing the topic of friendship in a detailed or systematic fashion,

the Hebrew Bible often treats the subject indirectly through biblical narratives[328] and

more explicitly in the form of proverbial wisdom as well as in psalmic and prophetic

laments.[329] Since it is not possible to provide a comprehensive investigation of friendship

with all of its nuances here, in what follows I will deal primarily with expectations of

friendship in proverbial wisdom, which I will argue in the following two chapters

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[328] The narratives of David and Jonathan and Naomi and Ruth provide some of the most
thoroughly developed accounts of friendship, modeling cultural expectations for friendship without
necessarily reflecting consciously on its values and vulnerabilities. For a discussion of the potential for
tragedy in friendship, see R. A. Putnam, "Friendship," in *Reading Ruth: Contemporary Women Reclaim a
Sacred Story* (ed. J. A. Kates and G. T. Reimer; New York; Ballantine, 1994), 44-54; see also G. S.
Jackson, "Naomi, Ruth, and Orpah," *TBT* 32 (1994): 68-73.

[329] On friendship in *Job* and in the wisdom literature, more generally, see Samuel E. Balentine,
"Let Love Clasp Grief Lest Both Be Drowned," *Perspectives in Religious Studies* 30 (2003): 381-97;
Graham Davies, "The Ethics of Friendship in Wisdom Literature*,"* in *Ethical and Unethical in the Old
Testament: God and Humans in Dialogue* (ed. Katharine Dell; New York: T & T Clark, 2010), 135-150.
For a survey of the various terms for friendship/kinship and their relation, see Davies, "The Ethics of
Friendship," 135-138.

expresses the values and vulnerabilities of friendship that inform Job's speeches and, to some certain extent, the friends' responses.

2.5.2 Friendship in the Wisdom Tradition

Proverbial sayings consider not only the norms of friendship, but also show the extent to which personal and contextual variables can determine friendship's limits and even its failure. Two kinds of friendship expectations may prove useful here. "Prescriptive" expectations are concerned with the norms of correct and incorrect friendship behavior in a particular culture, what might also be referred to as the "'rules of friendship,'" which refer to the "behaviors that most members of a group think or believe should be performed or not performed."[330] Normative friendship expectations are particularly relevant since they reveal "some of the ideals... that guide and direct friendships."[331] Friendship behavior is not, however, governed entirely by social constraints; personal experience comes into play in what are referred to as "predictive expectations," which focus on how friends may behave, not only on the basis of their location within a particular social category, but also in response to contextual variables.[332] I begin with a discussion of three examples of prescriptive friendship expectations: loyalty or *hesed* in friendship, self-control, and appropriate/inappropriate speech. I will then turn to predictive expectations for friendship in proverbial wisdom.

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[330] See John J. La Gaipa, "Friendship Expectations," in *Accounting for Relationships: Explanation, Representation and Knowledge* (New York: Methuen, 1987), 134-135. On the "rules of friendship," see also M. Argyle and M. Henderson, "The Rules of Friendship," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 1 (1984): 211-237.

[331] See John J. La Gaipa, "Friendship Expectations," in *Accounting for Relationships*, 135.

[332] See John J. La Gaipa, "Friendship Expectations," in *Accounting for Relationships*, 134-135.

One of the primary expectations of friendship in the wisdom literature is loyalty

or *hesed*, a term often used to describe God (Pss. 25:10; 36:11 [10]; 88:12 [11]; 101:1),

which is associated with keeping the covenant (Deut. 7:9; Neh. 1:5; Isa. 54:10), and is

commonly translated as "steadfast love" or "loving kindness."[333] The term refers to an

action performed on behalf of another "in the context of a deep and enduring

commitment between two parties," by one who is capable of offering help to another who

is unable to act on his or her own behalf.[334] Thus, it is primarily a one-sided rather than

mutual or reciprocal act that is performed on behalf of someone in a time of need.[335]

The sages recognized the value of finding one with such a cherished quality,

noting that "what is desired in a person is loyalty" (Prov 19:22a; תאות אדם חסדו), but also

the difficulty in doing so. Despite the fact that many proclaim their loyalty (Prov 20:6a),

a faithful person is indeed rare (Prov. 20:6b). Ben Sira describes faithful friends in terms

of their incomparable value as "a treasure" (6:14b) and "beyond price" (6:15a), with the

well-being they provide being "a sturdy shelter" (6:14a; NRSV) and even "life saving

medicine" (6:16; NRSV). The unfaithful, by comparison, cause pain and disability like a

loose tooth or unsteady leg (Prov. 25:19; cf. Job 6:14ff.).[336]

Loyalty in friendship is demonstrated particularly through constancy during

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[333] Nelson Glueck, *Hesed in the Bible* (trans. A. Gottschalk; Cincinnati: Hebrew Union College Press, 1967); Katharine D. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed in the Hebrew Bible: A New Inquiry* (HSM 17; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1978); Gordan R. Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible* (JSOT 157; Sheffield: Sheffield Press, 1993).

[334] Clark, *The Word Hesed in the Hebrew Bible*, 267.

[335] Cf. Sakenfeld, *The Meaning of Hesed*, 53-54.

[336] Richard J. Clifford, *Proverbs: A Commentary* (Louisville; Westminster John Knox, 1999), 225. On friendship in Ben Sira, see Jeremy Corley's "Caution, Fidelity, and the fear of God: Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship in Sir 6:5-17," *Estudios bíblicos* 54 (1996): 313-326, and *Ben Sira's Teaching on Friendship* (Brown Judaic Studies 316; Providence, R.I.: Brown University Press, 2002).

difficult times.[337] Constancy is perhaps most clearly expressed in the often-quoted saying

of Prov. 17:17: "a friend loves at all times, a brother is born to share adversity" (בכל־עת

אהב הרע ואח לצרה יולד). The relationship between the two lines of this saying may be either

synonymous or antithetical. If it is the former, then "brother" is used metaphorically to

refer to the friend in terms of fictive kinship.[338] The latter would, on the other hand,

provide a contrast between a friend demonstrating constancy by loving freely at all times

(בכל־עת), and a brother, who because of kinship ties, is *obligated* to be present in the

context of adversity (צרה). In any case, the sages recognized that a friend could exceed

the intimate bonds of kinship by observing that "there is a friend closer than a brother"

(Prov. 18:24b; ויש אהב דבק מאח).[339]

2.5.2.1 Establishing and Maintaining Friendships

The strength of another's character plays an important role in establishing and

maintaining friendships. Two common sapiential values are of particular concern here:

self-control and propriety in speech. As I will suggest in the following chapter, the

friends reflect both of these values in their exchanges with Job, particularly as they offer

correction or rebuke for his inappropriate display of emotion (Job 5:2) and his improper

speech.

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[337] To communicate the strength of such commitment, several texts link friendship and kinship (Prov. 17:17; 18:24; 27:10; cf. Ps 88:19; 122:8; Deut 15:21b).

[338] Cf. Job 6:15 where Job refers to the friends as "my brothers" (אחי); cf. also the use of "brother" by both the man and his *ba* in the *Lebensmüde*.

[339] Though the verse is difficult to interpret, Prov. 27:10 may also suggest a contrast between one's blood relatives and one's friends: "Do not forsake your friend or the friend of your father; do not go to your brother's house on the day of your distress. Better is a neighbor (or friend?) who is near than a brother far away." Although some find three unrelated sayings here, Clifford (*Proverbs*, 238) suggests that there is a "clear logic: Cultivate old family friends and neighbors; do not automatically count on kin for help in time of trouble, for neighbors and friends are ready at hand."

Concerns with self-control, especially with food, women, the emotions, and wealth, appear to have served as an important guide in the selection of a sage's companions. In addition to the recognition that the company one keeps tends to influence one's character, it was also understood that certain associations often have regrettable results. While the one who "walks with the wise becomes wise," the one who befriends "fools (רעה כסילימל) suffers harm (ירוע)" (Prov 13:20).[340] Similarly, one should not be a "companion of gluttons" (רעה זוללים) lest one shame one's father (Prov 28:7), nor of prostitutes (רעה זונות) lest one squander one's wealth (Prov 29:3). One of the strongest warnings is found in an admonition not to befriend an angry person (אל־תתרע את־בעל אף), since one may learn their angry ways and become entangled in a snare (Prov 22:24-25).[341]

Speech is another pervasive concern among the wise, particularly its corrective function in the context of friendship. Talk between friends has the potential to affect relationships either negatively through deception or positively through open and direct speech, such as rebuke. Proverbs 25:18 communicates the potentially destructive effects deception can have on a relationship through metaphors in which one's words are used as a weapon. The deceiver is compared, for example, to a "war club," a "sword," and a "sharp arrow" (Prov 25:18; Cf. 26:18-19), all of which are images that point to the potential of speech to inflict violence.[342]

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[340] Here I am reading the *qere* יֶחְכָּם for וְחְכָּם.

[341] See also Prov 16:29, where, similarly, the violent are referred to as enticing their friends or neighbors and leading them in the wrong way.

[342] Even the one who deceives his friend or neighbor jokingly is like a maniac (כמתלהלה) shooting "firebrands," "arrows," and even "death" itself (Prov 26:18-19). As McKane observes (*Proverbs*, 602), "[l]iberties cannot be taken with dangerous weapons, nor can they be taken with the confidence of a friend. When this is betrayed it is the death of friendship, for the damage done is irreparable and the old relation of trust and openness cannot be resuscitated."

While speech that takes the form of deception, gossip, or betraying another's confidence can adversely affect friendships,[343] open and direct speech that marks sages' interaction in the context of friendship, talk that often takes the form of "good advice" (Prov 12:26; NRSV), or correction through rebuke (Prov 27:5-6; cf. 20:30),[344] is essential to maintaining the path to life (Prov 10:17). Rebuke, which is elsewhere closely linked with discipline (מוסר),[345] is therefore characteristic of the wise, who correct others along the way (Prov. 12:1; 13:8; 15:5, 10, 31-32) and even receive correction themselves (Prov 1:1-6; 9:8-9).[346]

2.5.2.2 The Vulnerabilities of Friendship

While the wise recognize the possibility of becoming unnecessarily burdensome to a friend, as in overstaying one's welcome (Prov 25:17),[347] there is a general recognition that people are far more likely to experience desertion as a result of the loss of their social status. These examples, and those that follow in my discussion of the psalmic laments, often reflect a second category of friendship expectations referred to as "predictive" expectancies, which focus on the "anticipatory quality" of friendship, the probability that

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[343] Flattery, or "smooth talk" (מחליק), is a subtle but deceitful form of persuasion that may function as a snare for one's friend or neighbor (Prov 29:5; cf. 28:23). The sages also prized discretion and directness in their relationships. That is, one should avoid activities closely related to deception like gossip (Prov 11:13) or whispering that separates close friends (Prov 16:28). Most importantly, one should demonstrate one's trustworthiness by keeping secrets (Prov 25:9), for in failing to maintain confidences one ultimately alienates friends and destroys relationships (Prov 17:9; Sir. 27:16-21).

[344] Prov 27:5-6: "Open rebuke is better than hidden love. Faithful are the wounds of a friend; many are the kisses of an enemy."

[345] Cf. Prov. 3:11; 10:17; 12:1; 13:18; 15:32; Job 5:17.

[346] See my discussion of "rebuke" below under "Consoling Sages: Instruction and Rebuke."

[347] "Let your foot be seldom (lit., "Make your foot be precious" [הקר רגלך מבית]) in your neighbor's house, lest he have his fill of you and hate you" (Prov 25:17; הקר רגלך מבית רעך פן ישבעך ושנאך). Job is also aware of the boundaries of loyalty in friendship (6:22-23).

within a particular "social category" friendship behaviors will be influenced by social context.[348]

Possessions, in particular, are noted as having a profound impact on one's social sphere, especially with respect to friendship. Wealth provides security, social stability (Prov 10:15a; 13:8a; Sir. 13:21-23), and many friends (14:20b; 19:4a, 6; Sir. 12:9), some of whom hope to receive generous gifts (Prov 19:6b). Poverty, on the other hand, is understood as the mark of ruin (Prov 10:15b).[349] The impoverished are not only subject to injustice (Prov 13:23), but are also separated from (Prov 19:4b), and even hated (שׂנא) by, friends and kin alike (Prov 14:20a; 19:7). One of the most notable effects of poverty is the emotional and physical gap it creates between the poor and their families and friends: "all the brothers of a poor man hate him; how much more will his friends be distant from him!" (כל אחי רש שׂנאהו אף כי מרעהו רחקו ממנו; Prov 19:7a).

Such sentiments are clearly expressed by Job in the dialogue, where he uses the language of social distancing and estrangement to describe his relationship with family and friends in the context of his suffering (Cf. Job 19:13-21).[350] But are his accusations of the friends' failure accurate representations of their responses to his suffering? Perhaps it

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[348]John J. La Gaipa, "Friendship Expectations," in *Accounting for Relationships*, 134-157.

[349] See Andreas Scherer, "Is the Selfish Man Wise?: Considerations of Context in Proverbs 10.1-22.16 with Special Regard to Surety, Bribery and Friendship," *JSOT* 76 (1997): 59-70.

[350] Cf. "Dialogue Between a Man and His God," where the sufferer states (Benjamin R. Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* [3d ed.; Bethesda, Md.; CDL, 2005] 148): "Brother does not de[sp]ise his brother, Friend is no calumniator of his friend"; and *Ludlul bel-nemeqi* where (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 397) "My brother became my foe, My friend became malignant, a demon, My comrade would denounce me savagely, My colleague kept the taint to(?) his weapons for bloodshed, My best friend made my life an aspersion. My slave girl defamed me before the rabble. An acquaintance would see me and make himself scarce, My family set me down as an outsider…" [cf. Job 19:13-22]; Cf. also "A Suffer's Salvation" (Foster, *Before the Muses*, 410), where friends and kin make burial preparations.

is the "predictive" expectation that friends will withdraw in times of need that leads Job

to strike out at Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar. The narrative's representation of the friends'

response to Job's tragedy, and—one might argue—their continued presence with Job

suggests that friends continue to reflect the value of loyalty in friendship.[351] One might

also add that the friends' speeches appear to reflect friendship concerns within the

dialogue, not only by their continued presence, but also through their attempts to console

Job, which involves realigning his behavior with sapiential values through rebuke and

helping to restore him to "normal" activity, more generally.

As noted above, at least two different types of expectations may be identified

from these texts. In proverbial wisdom one finds primarily, though not exclusively, the

norms or ideals that guide and sustain friendship. Proverbial wisdom is, however, also

aware of what is painfully and most forcefully articulated in the hard realities of personal

experience reflected in accusations of alienation and abandonment in the psalmic

laments: that friendship has its limits and indeed often fails in times of trouble.[352]

This survey of friendship expectations provides a backdrop for evaluating the

friends' performance *as friends* as well as Job's accusations against them; however,

before turning to their argumentative strategies, it is first necessary to understand how

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[351] This also appears to be reflected in the final speech by Eliphaz in chap. 22, where, although he declares Job to be one of the wicked (vv. 5-11, 15-20), to holds out the possibility of restoration through repentance (vv. 21-30).

[352] One could easily add to the above a discussion of the psalmic and prophetic laments, which reveal, through their own anguished voices, the various social dimensions of suffering, especially how friends and family respond with betrayal, desertion, and even acts of aggression. On several accounts these texts invite comparison with Job who laments what he interprets as the friends' refusal to show loyalty (6:14, 27), develops the notion of deceit with striking imagery (cf. 6:14-21; 13:4-12), and expresses concerns about abandonment (6:14-21; 17:10 [?];19:12-21) as well as acts of humiliation and scorn (Job 12:4; 16:20; 17:5) through a series of claims and appeals.

they might attempt to fulfill their consolatory goals.

2.6 The Consolatory Context of Argument

In identifying the friends' goals in 2:11, the narrative adds another dimension—
that of comforter-mourner—to what is an already complex social relationship. As
suggested earlier, the settings of verbal exchanges and differences among participants
have a pronounced effect on how one speaks, with different contexts lending themselves
to particular forms of argument. Yet as Penelope Brown and Colin Fraser have noted,
"purpose is the motor which sets the chassis of setting and participants going."[353] In the
chapters that follow, I will attempt to show how the interpersonal context that is
established by the narrative anticipates, and contributes to, the kind of complexity of
argument one finds in the dialogue. Here, however, I wish to explore how culturally
based expectations for consolation may help to illuminate the exchanges between Job and
his friends.

2.6.1 Cultural Expectations for Consolation

Carol Newsom has pointed to the difficulty of determining the cultural
expectations for consolation in ancient Israel, noting that while grief and consolation are
universal human experiences, expectations for these processes differ across cultures. She
notes specifically the "gap" that exists between "modern western expectations" for
comfort and consolation, and "the way the friends respond to Job."[354] Pointing to the

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[353] Penelope Brown and Colin Fraser, "Speech as a Marker of a Situation," in *Social Markers in Speech.* (ed. Klaus R. Scherer and Howard Giles; European Studies in Social Psychology; Cambridge: Cambridge, 1979), 34.

[354] Carol A. Newsom, "'The Consolations of God': Assessing Job's Friends Across a Cultural Abyss," in *Reading from Right to Left: Essays on the Hebrew Bible in Honor of David J. A. Clines*

difficulty of understanding their actions, she asks, "[h]ow can one tell if the friends are being presented as model comforters, as initially good but increasingly bad comforters, or as complete caricatures of the cultural model of the consoling friend?"[355]

Despite this lingering question, scholars have continued to assess the friends' performance negatively at times, relying more on Job's evaluation of the friends, referring to them as "bad comforters" who expound "flinty theology" and whose "bigoted orthodoxy turns our sympathies completely against them."[356] Others have sought to determine the reason for their failure, suggesting that the "friends fail to comfort [Job] because they are limited in their perception of God."[357] Some have even interpreted their initial silence negatively, suggesting that it "was reprehensible in the sense that they did not bless God as Job had done."[358] At the same time, others have interpreted the friends' performance—or at least parts of it—in a more positive light, suggesting that they undertake their "dual purpose [of comforting and consoling] in exemplary fashion."[359] Eliphaz's first speech, in particular, has been noted as "a paradigm for sapiential

(JSOTSupp 373; ed. J. Cheryl Exum and H. G. M. Williamson; London/New York: T & T Clark, 2004), 347-358. See, similarly, Paul A. Holloway's (*Consolation in Philippians: Philosophical Sources and Rhetorical Strategy*, [SNTS 112; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001], 1-3, 55-83) discussion of modern assumptions in relation to Greco-Roman consolatory literature.

[355] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 347.

[356] R. D. Moore, "The Integrity of Job," 19.

[357] Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, 35.

[358] Daniel J. O'Connor, "The Cunning Hand: Repetitions in Job 42:7, 8," *ITQ* 57 (1991), 17.

[359] Janzen, *Job*, 57.

counseling" by Habel[360] and "well-disposed and consolatory toward Job" by Clines.[361] Most recently, Newsom has attempted a "self-conscious rehabilitation of the friends."[362]

But how does one begin to evaluate the performance of the friends? What constitutes comfort and consolation? And what are their intended effects? I will note the visible contours of this process below. But to better understand the range of meaning and activity associated with consolation, I will first examine the terms נוד and נחם to determine their goals in the context of another's grief and suffering as well as the relation between the two.

2.6.2 Comfort and Consolation

The two Hebrew terms used for comfort (נוד) and consolation (נחם) have often been conflated on the basis of modern expectations without a broader consideration of how these expressions relate to one another or to the consolatory process as a whole.[363] Marvin Pope rightly understands נוד as "an expression of commiseration," but has taken the term as a synonym for נחם, "to comfort," in light of their pairing in 42:11.[364] Although Saul Olyan recognizes "comforting as a multi-dimensional activity," he appears to do the same in his discussion of Job's friends in 2:11-13, where after mentioning נוד as one example of mourners participating in the rites of mourning, he also suggests that נחם

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[360] See Habel, *The Book of Job*, 118-123; Clines *Job 1-20*, 121; See also Claus Westermann (*The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis* [Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977], 9-10), who writes that "[n]o speech is so amicable, reserved, and sympathetic to Job as the beginning of the first speech of Eliphaz; the peoperly intended consolation still sounds forth here. Contrary to his own intention, Eliphaz's word of consolation leads to disputation." I will deal with Habel's treatment of Eliphaz's first speech more carefully in the following chapter.

[361] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 121.

[362] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 90.

[363] See, however, Newsom's "'The Consolations of God,'" 247-248.

[364] Pope, *Job*, 24.

refers to "join[ing] the mourner in mourning rites..."[365] While he recognizes that נחם may also refer to consolatory actions (42:11), including strengthening speech (16:5), he does not clearly articulate the relationship between "the rites of mourning" and the "acts of comforting."

Although the verbs "to comfort" (נוד) and "to console" (נחם) are often used interchangeably in English, they appear to have a more nuanced relationship in Hebrew.[366] In what follows I will suggest that in contexts of grief נוד refers primarily to acts of sympathetic identification. I will argue that the second verb ("to console," נחם), is concerned, however, with the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral changes that take place in an individual and the kinds of actions that are necessary to move those who suffer beyond their grief.

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[365] Saul M. Olyan, *Biblical Mourning*: Ritual and Social Dimensions (Oxford: Oxford University, 2004), 46-48. Olyan (*Biblical Mourning*, 47) also conflates the terms in his discussion of Isa 51:19, where he suggests נחם indicates ritual identification in mourning (i.e., moving back and forth) since the text places in parallel the questions, "Who will move back and forth (ינוד) for you?" and "Who will comfort you (ינחמך)?" Here (47 n. 49) he follows IQIsaᵃ and LXX *ינחמך for MT אנחמך. One might also cite Westermann's (*Isaiah 40-66*, 34) association of comforting with helping. In support of his claim, he cites Lam. 2:13; Ps 86:17; Isa 12:1; Isa 49:13; 51:3, 12; 52:9; Jer 31:13; Zech 1:17.

[366] As Newsom ("The Consolations of God," 348) observes, in the five instances of its occurrence, נוד "is paired with נחם," where "it appropriately is always the first of the two terms, for it describes the initial stages of the longer process of achieving consolation." The two verbs "to comfort" (נוד) and "to console" (נחם) appear in tandem in Job 2:11; 42:11; Isa 15:19; Nah 3:7; Ps 69:21 and occur both in the narrative prologue, where they describe the goals of Job's friends (2:11), and in epilogue, where they refer to the actions of Job's family (and, presumably, his friends) through which his consolation is finally realized (42:11). The pairing of these terms in the prose tale serves to frame the dialogue between Job and his friends as a consolatory exchange. In the former, the friends arrive after the loss of Job's children "to comfort" and "to console"; in the latter, Job's brothers and sisters arrive and succeed where the friends have failed. Within the prose tale kinship and friendship are inextricably linked in the consolatory process. The relationship is significant since in his arguments Job will accuse (heard against the backdrop of predictive expectancies of friendship in the wisdom tradition) family and friends of abandoning him.

2.6.2.1 Comfort as Sympathetic Identification

The first term, נוד, which is often translated as "grieve," "lament," "bemoan," or "show sympathy," refers literally to a back-and-forth or agitated movement (cf. 1 Kgs 14:15, where Israel will "shake like a reed in water"; cf. Isa 24:20). In contexts of grief, it may refer to the rites of mourning, perhaps as in the body rocking back and forth (cf. Jer 22:10; 48:17). In some cases, it may even be used to describe self-pity (Jer 31:18). Elsewhere, however, it expresses emotional support (or refers to its absence)[367] through a display of sympathy or sympathetic gestures, as in the shaking of one's head (Jer 18:16), although this action may also be used to show disapproval or scorn (Cf. Ps 64:9 [8]).[368]

Since in the five instances in which נוד and נחם appear together, נוד always occurs first, as Newsom has observed, the term "appropriately describes the initial stages of the longer process of achieving consolation."[369] Thus, rather than interpreting נוד as identical with consolation (נחם), one should instead understand it as the beginning of what is often a longer and more complex process.[370] The actions of the friends in 2:12-13 might, therefore, be understood as expressions of sympathetic identification that are to be included among their initial "acts of comforting."

Newsom provides a helpful overview of the consolatory process as it is reflected in various Hebrew narratives.[371] The earliest stages of the process begins with the

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[367] Cf. Jer 15:5: "Who will show sympathy to you?" (ומי ינוד לך). See also Isa 51:19 in this regard.
[368] Cf. also Jer 16:5; Nah 3:7; Ps 69:21.
[369] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 348. Cf. Job 2:11; 42:11; Isa 51:19; Nah 3:7; Ps 69:21.
[370] See Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 348-349.
[371] See Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 348-350.

physical presence of family and friends, who participated in mourning rites.[372] The rites

of mourning are not, however, an end in themselves, but acts of identification, which

include, but are not necessarily limited to, the actions of Job's friends in 2:11-13 (e.g.,

weeping, tearing robes, throwing dust). In addition to the visible and audible displays of

grief, a period of sitting in silence appropriately follows (Job 2:13b; Isa 23:1-3a; Ezek

26:15-17a; Ezra 9:3-4).[373]

Displays of sympathy in the form of physical gestures were part of a more

complex process that involved other actions such as the sharing of a meal (Job 42:11; Jer

16:7) or drinking from the "cup of consolation" (Jer 16:7), although, as I will suggest

below, this process might also be expanded to include offering instruction, advice, and

even rebuke, if necessary.[374]

But how did one bring about the end of another's grief? What conventional

strategies existed for helping to restore someone who was mourning to ordinary life?

2.6.2.2 Consolation as Cognitive, Emotional, and Behavioral Change

The Hebrew verb נחם has a broader range of meaning than נוד. In the niphal, the

focus is on the change that occurs within a subject, with the verb often being translated as

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[372] Cf. Gen 37:35; Job 2:11; 42:11; 1 Chr 7:22; 2 Sam 10:1ff//1 Chr 19:1ff. On the last example where the relationship among kings is modeled after kinship, see P. Artzi, "Mourning in International Relations," in *Death in Mesopotamia*, 161-70.

[373] See Pham, *Mourning in the Ancient Near East and the Hebrew Bible*, 29-31; see also, Norman Lohfink, "Enthielten die im Alten Testament bezeugten Klageriten eine Phase des Schweigens?" *VT* 12 (1962): 260-77.

[374] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 349. The period for ritual mourning appears to have lasted for seven days (Gen 50:10; 1 Sam 31:13//1 Chr 10:12; Jdt 16:24; Sir 22:12), at which time one normally resumed one's regular affairs by "getting up, washing, anointing with oil, putting on clean garments, eating, worshiping and, above all, having sex." See Newsom "'The Consolations of God,'" 349.

"to repent," "to relent," "to regret," "to feel sorrow," or "to be comforted."[375] In the piel

נחם is primarily concerned with the actions intended to bring about a change in the

mourner.[376] In the context of consolation, נחם, may refer either to a *comforter's actions* or

the *intended effects* of those actions.

But what kind of change is envisioned? Simian-Yofre understands the change as

emotional and cognitive in nature, with "emotion/affect" and "decision/effect" being

"indissolubly interwoven."[377] With regard to the former, Simian-Yofre speaks of an

"affective dissociation," an "intentional and explicit distancing from what has taken

place"; yet, with regard to the latter, there is also a "determination to bring about a new

situation that actually alters what has gone before," which Simian-Yofre describes as

"tantamount to a *decision* regarding a future situation."[378] To move beyond grief,

individuals must first begin to think differently about their present situation.[379] In the piel,

this verb points to "the subject's determination to change someone else's attitude with

regard to the situation."[380]

Here, Gary Anderson's observation that Western understandings of emotion have

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[375] Cf. Gen 6:6; 24:67; Exod 13:17; 32:12, 14; 1 Sam 15:11, 29, 35; 2 Sam 13:39; Pss 77:3; 110:4; Jer 8:6; Ezek 14:22; 31:16; 32:31; Amos 7:3, 6.

[376] Gen 37:35; 50:21; 2 Sam 12:24; Ps 23:4; Jer 16:7; Ezek 14:23; 1 Chr 19:2.

[377] Simian Yofre, "נחם," *TDOT* 9:340-42.

[378] Italics mine. Simian Yofre, "נחם," *TDOT* 9:342.

[379] David Jacobson, "The Cultural Context of Social Support and Support Networks," *Medical Anthropology Quarterly* 1:1 (1987), 46 [42-67] notes that before mourners are able to move beyond grief they must first undergo a process of "cognitive restructuring" by which they come to understand their world differently; see also Parkes, "Psycho-Social Transitions," 101-115. As Jacobson ("The Cultural Context of Social Support," 46) notes, "individuals typically do not begin to manage the reorganization of their new lives until they have given up *the idea* of what they have lost. Until individuals reach that turning point, advice or information about how they should or could lead their lives is not typically experienced as supportive."

[380] Simian Yofre, "נחם," *TDOT* 9:343.

often diminished or ignored their behavioral dimensions is apt.[381] It is easy to see how some might assume the effects of consolation are primarily emotional in nature, or in Simian-Yofre's case, a cognitive-emotional response. It is important, however, to consider consolation's cognitive and behavioral dimensions.

Instead of beginning to think and act differently because of how one feels, it may be that the change that occurs in one's thinking influences, in turn, how one feels and behaves. The focus of נחם in the niphal is on consolation's restorative effect (cf. Lam 1:16),[382] with the change in one's disposition leading to the termination of mourning, which is marked by various activities. In her overview of the process of consolation in ancient Israel cited above, Newsom observes that "[t]he termination of mourning (i.e., the public state of being consoled) was marked by specific actions," which "included getting up, washing, anointing with oil, putting on clean garments, eating, worshiping and, above all, having sex."[383] One no longer mourns but rather resumes one's normal affairs, sometimes even responding with outward, physical demonstrations of joy.[384] נחם then is not confined to emotional categories but has both internal (emotional and cognitive) and external (behavioral) dimensions. Consolation ultimately changes not only how one thinks and feels, but also how one behaves.

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[381] Gary Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, a Time to Dance* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State Press, 1991), 9-14.

[382] See Lam 1:16: "a comforter is far from me, one who restores my spirit" (כי־רחק ממני משיב נפשי); Olyan (*Biblical Mourning*, 48 n. 54) compares Lam 1:16 with Lam 1:19 where food functions similarly to restore the spirit, and suggests that the idiom "restore the spirit" carries the sense of strengthening.

[383] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 349.

[384] Isaiah 61:2-10 (esp. 2, 3, and 10), for example, is one of several texts illustrating how mourning rites (ashes, mourning, a faint spirit) are replaced by objects and actions associated with joy (a garland, oil of rejoicing, a mantle of praise). See Anderson, *A Time to Mourn, A Time to Dance*, 85-86; cf. also Jer 31:13 and *Jub.* 4:7.

Although the goal of this consolatory process is clear, the mechanisms by which

consolation occurs are not always explicitly stated. The use of נחם implies, at least in

some cases, the performance of certain acts, although there is no evidence that is

comparable to the verbal dimension of consolation that is enacted by Job's friends. While

the evidence is limited, it, nevertheless, suggests that consolation at times had a verbal

and rationally persuasive component.

2.6.3 Consolation as Rational Persuasion

Two examples cited by Newsom either point to or illustrate consolation's verbal

dimensions: Gen 37:33-37 and Ezek 14:21-23.[385] The former describes the attempt of

Jacob's children to comfort him while he is mourning for Joseph.[386] When Jacob

recognizes Joseph's cloak he tears his garments, dons sackcloth, and mourns for his son

"many days" (Gen 37:33-34). When all of his sons and daughters get up to comfort him,

he refuses: "For I will go down to my son in Sheol in mourning" (Gen 37:35). That Jacob

provided a rationale for his refusal of their consolatory attempts seems to suggest that his

children engaged in some form of verbal persuasion, perhaps offering words of comfort

or advice aimed at bringing about a change in Jacob thereby putting an end to his

mourning.[387] Moreover, their action—getting up to comfort him—may indicate that they

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[385] See Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 350-351.

[386] See Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 350; Claus Westermann, *Genesis 37-50: A Commentary* (trans. John J. Scullion; Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1986), 44; cf. Anderson, *A Time to Mourn*, 87.

[387] Note Claus Westermann's (*Genesis 37-50*, 44) observation: "The verb נחם means not only that they spoke words of comfort, but rather that they wanted to bring about a change and have Jacob put an end to the rites of mourning...." As Newsom ("'The Consolations of God,'" 350) observes, "[i]t is not clear, however, whether the children were doing something that was a standard part of the consolation process— and so were shocked when Jacob suddenly refused to do what was expected of him—or whether their intervention itself was a response to what they already recognized as a 'blocked' process."

had already assumed a posture of mourning by sitting alongside him. If Jacob had exceeded the socially prescribed period for mourning, as perhaps indicating in his mourning for Joseph *many days*,[388] they may have chosen to move beyond sympathetic gestures to conventional means of consolation.

The second example Newsom mentions is Ezek 14:21-23, where after God's judgment against Jerusalem, God describes the survivors coming to Ezekiel and the exiles. God then says, "When you see their conduct and their actions (את דרכם ואת עלילותם), you will be consoled (ונחמתם) for the evil that I have brought upon Jerusalem" (v. 22). As Newsom observes, with "you shall know that it was not without cause that I did all that I have done in it" (v. 23), the disaster is located in "a rational and explicable framework" that "does the work of consolation... allow[ing] the ones grieving over Jerusalem to begin to dissociate from their former disposition of confused distress."[389] Consolation, in this case, "is a matter of becoming reconciled to a situation that cannot be changed."[390]

Three other texts might, however, also point to consolation's verbal dimension. In each text, comfort (נחם) occurs together with the expression, "speak to the heart" (Gen 50:20-21; Isa 40:1-2; Ruth 2:12). Here I examine one text in particular in an attempt to show the persuasive dimension of consolatory speech: Gen 50:20-21.

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[388] As noted above, the traditional period of mourning was seven days (cf. Gen 50:10; Jdt 16:24; Sir 22:12). Ben Sira warns (Sir 38:17-20) against excessive grief and the effects it can have on one's health. However, "a day, two days, to prevent gossip" (Sir 38:17) may refer to the intense weeping and wailing that occurs within the customary seven-day period. See Patrick W. Skehan and Alexander. A. Di Lella, *The Wisdom of Ben Sira* (AB 39; New York: Doubleday, 1987), 443.

[389] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 351.

[390] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 351 n.6.

After the death of Jacob, when Joseph's brothers are afraid he will exact

vengeance for their actions, Joseph explains why they should not fear (Gen 50:20-21a):

"You intended me harm, but God intended it for good so as to bring about what is

today—to preserve the lives of many people. Therefore, do not fear; I will support you

and your children." (Gen 50:20-21a).[391] The narrator's conclusion to the section in 21b is

significant: "and [Joseph] comforted them (וינחם) and spoke kindly to them (NRSV; lit.,

"spoke to their heart"; וידבר על לבם)."[392] The expression, "speak to the heart" (דבר על לב)

is often translated as "speak tenderly" or "kindly." But since the heart (לב or לבב) often

represents the seat of reason, it would be appropriate in light of its context here to

translate this expression as "to speak to the mind," or "to speak persuasively."[393] Joseph

speaks persuasively in this instance by offering a theological rationale that accounts for

past events and present circumstances, which along with his own promises of provisions

for his brothers and their families, helps to reassure his brothers that he intends them no

harm.[394]

Unfortunately, there is much that remains unknown about the consolatory process

in ancient Israel. What happened, for example, when a mourner refused to be comforted

as in the case of Jacob (Gen 37:34-35; cf. Jer. 31:15)? What were considered appropriate

responses to the inconsolable when they exceeded the culturally appropriate period of

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[391] Here I follow closely Westermann's (*Genesis 37-50*, 203) translation of למען עשׂה כיום הזה להחית
עם־רב as "so as to bring about what is today, (that is) to preserve the lives of many people."

[392] As Westermann observes, (*Genesis 37-50*, 206) while v. 21a concludes Jacob's response to his
brothers, v. 21b serves as the narrator's conclusion for vv. 15-21a, which begins with the brothers' fear of
Joseph.

[393] See, for example, Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press,
1974), 40-58.

[394] The expression may also refer to encouragement, see 2 Sam 19:8 [7]; 2 Chr 30:22; 32:6.

mourning? In Job's case the customary seven days have passed, even as his friends remain by his side in a display of solidarity. Yet Job shows no signs of change. Might the speeches of Job's friends offer a window into the consolatory process when a mourner refused to be comforted?

2.6.3.1 Greco-Roman Consolatory Literature

That consolation sometimes took the form of rational argument is also well-attested in the ancient world. In her inquiry into the cultural expectations for consolation in ancient Israel, Newsom, drawing on the work of Paul A. Holloway, provides a thought-provoking investigation into Greco-Roman consolatory literature.[395] She notes that her comparison is not intended to suggest influence in either direction but to introduce what she refers to as "a kind of 'triangulation' that allows one to test certain assumptions and perhaps attend to details of the friends' performance, which otherwise might not appear distinctive.[396] While noting the modern tendency to conflate consolation and sympathy, Holloway observes a clear distinction between these terms in the Greco-Roman world: "Ancient consolers were by no means unsympathetic to those afflicted with grief; however, they understood their primary task to be not one of sharing in the grief of others, but one of removing that grief by rational argumentation and frank exhortation."[397]

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[395] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 347-358; see also, Paul A. Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 56.

[396] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 347.

[397] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 1. In this respect, he cites Plutarch *De ex.* 599B (*Consolation in Philippians*, 1).

> For we do not have need of those who, like tragic choruses, weep and wail with us in unwanted circumstances, but of those who will speak to us frankly and instruct us that grief and self-

Greco-Roman consolatory literature spans a wide range of genres represented in Homer, in treatises dealing with the passions, in lyric poets like Simonides and Pindar, in dramatic poets such as Euripides, and occasionally in orators like Plato.[398] In a fascinating ascription Plutarch credits Antiphon, the fifth-century sophist, with inventing "an art for the alleviation of grief" (τεκνη ἀλυπίας).[399] The late Republic and early Empire also provide a wealth of consolatory material. While there are consolatory poems and funerary inscriptions, the most well attested literary genre from this period is the consolatory letter, examples of which include Cicero, Seneca, Pliny, Plutarch and others.[400] Early Christian consolations from the third and fourth centuries are also prominent, especially in the form of letters and sermons.

Despite the variety of Greco-Roman sources concerned with consolation, there is still significant overlap in consolatory topoi. Especially prevalent were consolations concerned with death, both for the dying and the bereaved, but consolation could also be offered for any misfortune including exile, shipwreck, poverty, old age, blindness, and legal issues, among others.[401]

In light of Job's relationship to the friends, it is important to note that consolation was understood as an expression of friendship in the Greco-Roman literature.[402]

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abasement are in every circumstance useless, serving no purpose and showing no sense.

[398] See Holloway's discussion (57) in *Consolation in Philippians*.

[399] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 58.

[400] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 59 n. 23.

[401] See Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 60-61, who cites Cicero here (*Tusc.* 3.34.81): For there are specific [remedies] customarily spoken regarding poverty, specific remedies regarding life without honor or fame; there are separate forms of discourse respectively for exile, the destruction of one's country, slavery, illness, blindness, and any other mishap that might properly be called a calamity.

[402] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 354. See also Amanda Wilcox, "Sympathetic Rivals: Consolation in Cicero's Letters," *American Journal of Philology* 126:2 (2005): 237-255, who argues that

Highlighting the obligation of friendship, Epicurus states that we should show sympathy

(συμπαθῶμεν) to friends (τοις φίλοις) not by mourning (θρηνοῦντες) but by caring

(φροντίζοντες) for them in their distress.[403] In the Pseudo-Plutarchian letter to Apollonius

after his son's death, the author conveys his sympathy, stating that he was overcome with

grief at the news, but waited until after the funeral to allow appropriate time for

mourning, recognizing that "compassion was more seasonable than advice."[404] He then

continues by locating his consolatory efforts within the expectations of friendship: "now

that a competent time is past… I believed I should do an acceptable piece of friendship, if

I should now comfort you with those reasons which may lesson your grief and silence

your complaints."[405]

The two previous examples, which identify consolation as an act of friendship,

also reveal another relevant point of comparison in their distinction between consolation

and expressions of sympathy.[406] This sentiment is clearly expressed in Thucydides, for

example, where Pericles says in the peroration to his *epitaphios*: "I do not lament; rather I

shall console."[407] But, while this example suggests a sharp distinction between the two,

sympathy also had its place, particularly preceding consolatory arguments, as in a letter

that begins, "When I heard of the terrible things that you met at the hands of thankless

fate, I felt the deepest grief, considering that what had happened had not happened to you

the rhetoric of consolatory letters is marked by competition among rivals.

[403] *Sent. Vat.* 66; see Holloway, *Consolation*, 62 n. 41.

[404] Plutarch, *The Complete Works of Plutarch*, II (New York: The Kelmscott Societ, 1909), 413, cited in Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 354.

[405] Plutarch 1929:413.

[406] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 62; cf. Newsom, 354.

[407] *Thucydides* 2.44; trans. Holloway, 62.

more than to me."[408] Moreover, while Menander Rhetor states that a consolatory speech should *begin* with a short "monody" or "lament" preceding the "consolatory part,"[409] Gregory Nazianzen understands "commiseration" to count "as a kind of consolation" in a more elaborate consolatory process.[410] Time was, therefore, allowed for grief and expressions of sympathy, but while the latter played an important role in the consolatory process, the cessation of grief remained its focus, as Aristippus' dictum cited by Aelianus suggests: "I have come not to share your grief but to stop your grief."[411] Similarly, Cicero observes that it is the consoler's obligation "to do away with distress root and branch, or allay it, or diminish it as far as possible, or stop its progress and not allow it to extend further or to divert it elsewhere."[412]

Perhaps the most important assumption, as Newsom suggests, is that "consolation was a fundamentally rational enterprise,"[413] or, as Holloway notes, it was focused on "the combating of grief through rational argument."[414] Although different schools had their own argumentative strategies for consolation, they shared a common goal: to move the sufferer beyond his or her grief so that one could adjust anew to one's life and resume one's normal social activities. To effect such a change, a consoler would at times have to offer reasons to convince or persuade one another to think differently about grief in

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[408] Ps.-Demetr., *Epist. Typ.,*5, cited in Holloway, 63.

[409] Men. Rh. 2.9, cited in Holloway, 63, who also cites Gregory Nanzianzen as understanding "the consoler's obligation "to sympathize on some points, exhort on others, and, perhaps, to deliver a rebuke on others" (Greek); see *Ep.* 165.

[410] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 63.

[411] *Varia historia* 7.3, cited in Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians,* 62.

[412] *Tusc.* 3.31.75; trans. King 1927.

[413] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 354.

[414] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 56.

relationship to his or her life. Since the problem was rational, there was a concern to

"correct" someone in "distress and restore them to responsible behavior."[415] Consolation,

therefore, functioned as a type of moral instruction, which "consisted primarily of a series

of arguments against grief"[416] and were "designed to help the sufferer embody the virtues

appropriate to a wise person."[417]

Although consolation often took the form of exhortation, it could also take the

form of rebuke, especially in cases where one proved inconsolable. While sometimes

"soft words" were employed to "alleviate a wounded heart,"[418] Plutarch observes that "it

is not partners in tears and lamentation… that we need… but men who speak frankly and

instruct us that grief and self-abasement are everywhere futile, and that to indulge in them

is unwarranted and unwise."[419] But if a mourner engaged excessively in grief, a consoler

would shift from exhortation to rebuke.[420] As mentioned above, Gregory Nazianzen

considered it the consoler's role "to sympathize on some points, exhort on others, and,

perhaps, to deliver a rebuke on others."[421] This rebuke could often be quite severe, as

Seneca's letter to Marullus suggests:

> When a man is stricken and is finding it most difficult to endure a grievous
> wound, one must humour him for a while; let him satisfy his grief or at any rate
> work off the first shock; but those who have set themselves to make lamentation
> should be rebuked forthwith.

Seneca's rebuke of Marullus is relentless: "Is it solace you look for? Let me give you a

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[415] Holloway, *Consolations in Philippians*, 45 n. 55.
[416] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 64.
[417] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 354.
[418] Plutarch 1929:413.
[419] *On Exile* 559B, trans. de Lacy 1929.
[420] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 64.
[421] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 63.

scolding instead! You are like a woman in the way you take your son's death."[422]

In addition to the hard edge sometimes identified with consolation, there was also what Newsom has described as an "eclecticism that is not careful about logical self-consistency" in its use of argumentative strategies.[423] While some consolatory arguments were ideologically neutral, others were governed by the philosophical presuppositions of their particular school.[424] Even so, Cicero, who distinguishes between five theories of consolation associated with the various schools, writes in his *Consolatio*: "I threw them all into one attempt at consolation; for my soul was in a feverish state and I attempted every means of curing its condition."[425]

Greco-Roman consolatory literature illustrates well the verbal dimensions of consolation in the ancient world, offering some additional insight into the performance of the friends. While there was a place for sharing another's grief through expressions of sympathetic identification, a consoler's primary goal was to stop or remove a sufferer's personal distress through rational means. Consolers therefore offered advice and moral instruction, often in the form of exhortation. At other times, especially when a sufferer proved inconsolable, they expressed themselves more forcefully through rebuke.[426] Yet, even in its more severe forms, consolation was understood as an expression of friendship.

The assumptions underlying Greco-Roman consolatory literature places the

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[422] *Ep.* 99.1-2; trans. Gummere 1925.

[423] Newsom, "'Consolations of God," 355.

[424] Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 64.

[425] *Tusc. 3.31.76;* trans. King 1927.

[426] The broad range of strategies employed is summed up in Gregory Nazianzen's observation that the consoler's role was "to sympathize on some points, exhort on others, and, perhaps, to deliver a rebuke on others." See Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 63.

friends' performance in a refreshing light. Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar appear initially in the prologue as friends expressing the strength of their commitment by arranging to meet and then traveling to where Job is with the dual purpose of showing sympathy (נוד) and engaging in consolation (נחם). As in the Greco-Roman literature, their sympathetic actions in 2:12-13 are only the initial part of an extended process. In *Job* this process is, of course, carried into the dialogue, which itself provides an eclectic array of forms and argumentative strategies as the friends not only offer Job instruction through rationally based arguments on how the world works, but also advice on how he might influence or change his particular circumstances. When Job needs correction, or proves inconsolable, their arguments begin to take on the harder edge of rebuke as it is represented in Greco-Roman texts—a form of speech, which I will argue in what follows, is consistent with the sages' understanding of the friend's role.

2.6.3.2 Consoling Sages: Instruction and Rebuke

The sages recognized that wise or skillful speech could function therapeutically to bring healing (Prov 12:18b), giving life (Prov 10:11; 15:4) and health to the body (16:24).[427] Advice was also cherished (Prov. 12:15; 13:10), as were encouraging words, more generally. While anxiety or psychological distress (דאגה) was considered to weigh one down, a "good word" (דבר טוב) could result in a joyful disposition (Prov 12:25). Moreover, those "who listen to advice" and "accept instruction" gain wisdom for the future (19:20).

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[427] However, those who resist rebuke repeatedly are broken beyond healing (Prov. 29:1).

Although in the wisdom tradition instruction and correction appear to have been carried out normally in parent-child relationship, sages were also understood to benefit from further instruction. Instruction and rebuke were understood by the wise as the means for gaining additional wisdom (Prov 1:4-5; 9:9). The "instruction of the wise" (תורת חכם) was considered "a fountain of life" (מקור חיים) whereby one avoided death's snares (Prov 13:14). While obeying instruction situated one on "the path to life" (ארח לחיים; Prov. 10:17a) and lead to an honorable position (כבד; 13:18b), rejecting rebuke resulted in poverty and disgrace (ריש וקלון; 13:18a) and could cause one to "err" or "go astray" (תעה; 10:17b). Moreover, for the sages, hating rebuke was considered to be a mark of stupidity (12:1), one that would lead to death (15:10b).

The sages, therefore, welcomed instruction and rebuke and even appear to have expected reprimand in contexts of friendship. Correction among sages appears to have been a mutual activity that was normally received positively: "Rebuke the wise, and he will love you" (הוכח לחכם ויאהבך; 9:8). Thus the wise were able to give and receive correction, apparently with a sense of mutual appreciation (9:8, 9; 28:23).[428]

One can also find in the sapiential practice of rebuke traces of what the Greco-Roman consolatory literature makes explicit through sharp, corrective responses to prolonged and excessive grief. There is, for example, in Proverbs a recognition that severe forms of discipline (lit. "wicked punishment," מוסר רע; 15:10a) might be necessary for those who have forsaken "the way" (לעזב ארח; 15:10a). Proverbs 27:5-6, however, offers the clearest evidence of the kind of severity that, at least at times, characterized

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[428] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 42.

rebuke among sages:

טוֹבָה תּוֹכַחַת מְגֻלָּה מֵאַהֲבָה מְסֻתָּרֶת:
נֶאֱמָנִים פִּצְעֵי אוֹהֵב וְנַעְתָּרוֹת נְשִׁיקוֹת שׂוֹנֵא:

> Better is open rebuke than hidden love.
> Faithful are the wounds of a friend;
> Profuse are the kisses of an enemy.

These two proverbial sayings in vv. 5-6 contrast true and false friendship, first, in a "better than" saying, and then, through antithetical statements.[429] Earlier, I noted the importance of open and direct speech among friends. Here, rebuke (יכח) that is expressed directly or publicly is contrasted with love that is either unexpressed or perhaps intentionally kept a secret.[430] McKane suggests that the former is the case, where there is a concern with "straining or breaking the tie of friendship"; it is not that "it does not give proof of its genuineness of deeds, but that it is lacking in *ruggedness*."[431] The contrast here, as McKane so aptly notes is between "love which expresses itself effectively and love which is mute and impotent in relation to the other's welfare."[432] This is related more clearly in the second saying, where the character of an enemy's kisses are contrasted with the "wounds" of a friend. Various proposals have been offered for the exact nature of the enemy's kisses, although its meaning remains unclear.[433] But whether the kisses are "excessive" (Cf. NIV, NRSV, RSV, ESV) or "deceitful" (NASB, KJV, NJB, CEV), the wounds inflicted by the friend are clearly described as "faithful" or "reliable" (אמן). The

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[429] See Clifford, *Proverbs*, 237-238.
[430] See *HALOT*, 771.
[431] Italics mine. McKane, *Proverbs*, 610.
[432] McKane, *Proverbs*, 610.
[433] See N. M. Waldman, "A Note on Excessive Speech and Falsehood," *Jewish Quarterly Review* 67 (1976): 142-45.

CEV translates the first part of the line in v.6 as follows: "You can trust a friend who corrrects you," which effectively communicates the meaning of "faithful" or "reliable" (אמן), but this translation fails to do justice to the "wounds" (פצע) the friend inflicts (cf. Gen 4:23; Ex 21:25; Isa 1:6). Job will also use this term in reference to God who "multiplies [his] wounds for nothing" (והרבה פצעי חנם; Job 9:17). Here, however, the "wounding" is assumed to have a salutary effect (cf. Job 5:17-18). Moreover, in light of the juxtaposition of vv. 5-6, the "wounds" are presumably inflicted verbally. In this respect, Murphy notes that although a friend's "correction can seem like a 'wound,'" there is a need "for bravery and honesty on both sides, or the alleged friendship is simply not worth cultivating. Now it can be seen to be reliable."[434] The simple fact is that "[t]he truth may hurt, but it is evidence of a friendship which can be relied on through thick and thin."[435]

2.7 Conclusion

In sum, the narrative reveals a complex relational framework in which the characters are not only positioned in a hierarchical relationship with Job, but are also situated in a larger context of values and expectations for interaction. The narrative locates the exchanges between Job and his friends within a sapiential context, establishing their identity as sages and at the same time positioning Job as a wise yet suffering patriarch whose wisdom, piety, and speech are unmatched, even in the context of his suffering. As sages, the friends' posture toward Job is one of deference and

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[434] See Murphy, *Proverbs*, 207.
[435] McKane, *Proverbs*, 610-611.

dependency. As friends, they appear against a backdrop of expectations provided by proverbial wisdom, which not only include normative claims about friendship, but also possess an anticipatory quality that recognizes the potential of failure in friendship especially during times of distress. As I will show in Chapter Four, Job privileges the latter, using language that is very similar to that of the psalmic and prophetic laments to accuse his friends of abandonment and betrayal.

Yet when examined against this same backdrop, the friends appear to be fulfilling the role of a true friend, both in the prologue and in the dialogue, as they demonstrate loyalty and constancy during Job's tragedy, particularly as they engage in attempts to correct and console Job in the dialogue. Moreover, when read against the expectations for consolation in ancient Israel and in light of Greco-Roman consolatory literature, their actions both in the prologue and in the dialogue appear to be consistent with the range of actions that might be associated with consolation. The Greco-Roman materials, in particular, help to "normalize elements of the friends' words and behavior"[436] that have often been taken as dogmatic or even mean-spirited, so that their actions now appear to follow more directly from their goals.

Ultimately, however, the friends will fail in their consolatory efforts. In the next two chapters, I will attempt to show how this occurs as I identify and lay out the categories of argument they use most frequently, while also examining the dynamic nature of the dialogue, showing how their categories function within it.

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[436] Newsom, "'The Consolations of God,'" 356.

CHAPTER 3
ARGUING WITH JOB: FROM CONSOLATION TO QUARREL, PART 1

3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I attempted to reclaim the "quarrel" as a category for

understanding the antagonistic exchanges between Job and his friends, arguing that it

provides a framework where participants can move beyond the conventions of polite

conversation to express their grievances in ways that would normally be socially

unacceptable. The quarrel is useful because it offers a way of thinking about how the

impolite interaction between Job and his friends functions. But, as I have suggested, it

also helps one to see where *Job* may take the wisdom dialogue as a genre, or at least

where it diverges from the Babylonian Theodicy.[437]

Although the quarrel provides a framework for understanding some of the

dialogue's adversarial elements, it does not adequately account for the dialogue as a

whole. In fact, the risk of foregrounding conflict and allowing it to overshadow the

friends' consolatory goals still remains. It is important to recognize therefore that the

quarrel is not the type of dialogue that *Job is* but rather what it *becomes*. I will argue

below that the dialogue actually begins with the consolatory strategies of the friends

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[437] See my discussion in chapter 1, where I suggest that while the Joban dialogue shares the genre's expectation that the characters will not succeed at persuading one another, it moves beyond the *Babylonian Theodicy* and the *Lebensmüde* with (1) its characters' increasingly ill-mannered and antagonistic speeches, and (2) the Joban poet's exploitation of the genre's expectation of irresolution.

Although a certain degree of conflict and opposition characterize the *Babylonian Theodicy* and the *Lebensmüde*, both reflect and model, more or less, mutuality in conversation and polite disagreement. While neither offers a clear resolution to the issues raised, their conclusions—as well as their terms of address throughout—suggest that their characters remain respectful of one another and somewhat open to differences of opinion. *Job*, by contrast, presents its characters as intentionally violating norms that are otherwise deeply valued in the wisdom tradition (e.g., propriety of speech, avoidance of strife, control of emotions, etc.), so that, as I will argue, their dialogue ultimately collapses rather than reaching a conclusion.

before it is later transformed into a quarrel by Job (see chapter 4). Before turning to the

friends' speeches, however, it will be helpful first to consider the extent to which the

dialogue establishes a consolatory context in its own right.

3.2 Consolation in the Joban Dialogue

In sketching the consolatory process in the latter part of chapter 2, I have tried to

show how consolation extends beyond sympathetic gestures to include emotionally

supportive speech and rationally persuasive arguments. Despite a lack of specific

evidence for what is said in certain contexts (e.g., Gen 37:33-37), verbal and non-verbal

expressions appear to have played an important part in a more intricate process geared at

restoring an individual to her or his normal state of affairs. The comforter's goal is to

move a mourner beyond the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral dimensions of grief by

changing how a person thinks and, subsequently, how he or she feels and behaves.

Greco-Roman consolatory literature, which shares generally the contours and

goals of the process that is represented in the Hebrew Bible, illustrates well the verbal

dimensions of consolation in the ancient world, offering some additional insights into the

performance of the friends. While there was a place for sharing another's grief through

expressions of sympathy, a consoler's primary goal was to stop or remove a sufferer's

personal distress through rational means. Consolers offered advice and moral instruction,

often in the form of exhortation. At other times, especially when a sufferer proved

inconsolable, they expressed themselves more forcefully through rebuke.[438] Yet, even in

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[438] The broad range of strategies employed is summed up in Gregory Nazianzen's observation that the consoler's role was "to sympathize on some points, exhort on others, and, perhaps, to deliver a rebuke on others." See Holloway, *Consolation in Philippians*, 63.

its more severe forms, consolation was understood as an expression of friendship.

While I suggested in the last chapter that Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar fulfill expectations for true friendship despite Job's frequent accusations of betrayal and deception, here I would like to suggest that they also attempt to realize what they at least appear to recognize as their sapiential obligation to console Job. As I will show, the extent to which their identity as sages informs their task is evident both in their forms of discourse and in their underlying values and beliefs.

3.2.1 Consolation and Pedagogy

William Brown has located the interaction that occurs between Job and his friends in the context of a larger discussion of sapiential discourse, which he describes as the "ethos of instruction."[439] The framework for his analysis is Proverbs 1-9 where, in a hierarchical relationship, a father offers instruction and rebuke to his silent son, warning him of the consequences of his contemporaries' actions. In doing so, the father dismantles the "enticing egalitarian ethos" of these "'sinners,' who depict themselves as peers equal in relation to the son (1:10-19)."[440] Such correction (מוסר) or rebuke (יוכיח) is characteristic of both the father and Yahweh in Proverbs 1-9 (cf. 3:11-12).[441] But, as Brown recognizes, rebuke is also appropriate in relationships among sages (cf. Prov. 9:8-9), even if it carries the potential for controversy. Sages who attempt to rebuke others, for example, open themselves up for rebuke as well, since they were expected to

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[439] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 30-32.

[440] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 30-31. See, similarly, Newsom, "Woman and the Discourse of Patriarchal Wisdom," 142-160.

[441] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 31.

offer *and receive* correction, recognizing it as a shared responsibility.[442]

Since Brown acknowledges that rebuke is offered by and to sages in contexts of mutual submission, it is surprising that he ignores the egalitarian nature of Job's relationship with the friends by arguing that the friends attempt to "press the dynamics of the discourse back into the traditional hierarchical setting of conventional wisdom teaching...."[443] His evaluation of the friends in this regard is decidedly negative. According to Brown,

> [t]he friends condescendingly try to force Job back into the role of the silent son, the unquestioning recipient of wisdom. Job needs to be re-educated, and the first step is for him to acknowledge his inferior status before his consoling elders. By invoking the traditional pedagogy of hierarchy, Eliphaz suggests that Job must in some sense regress back to the family of his childhood in order to reappropriate the values of traditional wisdom.[444]

Brown seems to suggest that instruction and rebuke occur primarily in contexts of inequality. But is pedagogical language inherently hierarchical? Would the traditional pedagogy that characterizes the parent-child relationship be fitting for sages, or for describing the relationship between Job and his friends? Proverbs 1:1-6 suggests that both elder/youth and peer instruction are envisioned.[445] Moreover as in the wisdom dialogue, Job and his friends frequently reflect concerns with mutuality and respect, so there is at least an expectation of reciprocity on their part, even if those expectations are often frustrated. Why then does the dialogue collapse into a quarrel? Does it degenerate, as

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[442] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 42.
[443] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 64. For the generic context of their interaction, see my discussion of mutuality and reciprocity in the Wisdom Dialogue in chapter 1.
[444] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 66.
[445] In Prov 1:5-6, the one who is "wise" (חכם) and "understanding" (נבון) is understood to increase "instruction" (לקח) and acquire "skill" (תחבלות) by listening (שמע; v. 5a). Brown (*Character in Crisis*, 28) also notes this briefly.

Brown suggests, because of how the friends respond to Job? And, if so, what

responsibility does Job bear for rejecting what Brown describes as "the defining character

trait of the wise" by refusing "to receive correction with a sense of appreciative

collegiality"?[446] I will suggest below that the performance of the friends in the first cycle

may actually be understood as appropriate to their situational and relational context.[447]

What then is the relationship between sapiential pedagogy and the consolation the

friends offer? The language that Job and his friends use to describe their interaction

provides a window into their shared assumptions about how consolation is offered and its

intended effects. Rainer Albertz has suggested that one can detect two sapiential roles in

the exchanges between Job and his friends: one educational and the other pastoral.[448] The

educational function is well-represented by the characters' frequent use of pedagogical

terminology: they "advise (*y'ṣ*; 26:3; cf. *'eṣâ* in 29:21), teach (*yrh* hiphil; 6:24, 8:10),

transmit knowledge (*yd'*, *bîn*; 6:24, 26:3, 28:11), and give guidance, educate, and instruct

(*ysr* hiphil, *ykḥ* hiphil; 4:3; cf. mûsar in 20:3, 6:25-26, 15:2, 19:5. 32:12; cf. *tôkaḥat* in

13:6)."[449] It is, however, their pastoral role that Albertz finds most surprising (although he

notes that it is nevertheless "quite typical" in *Job*), where the sage is expected to provide

"consolation (*nḥm*; 16:2; 31:24), strength (*ḥzq* piel, *'mṣ* piel, *qûm* hiphil; 4:3-4, 21:34),

help (*'zr*, *yš'* hiphil; 26:2), and healing (*rp'*; 13:4)."[450]

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[446] Brown, *Character in Crisis*, 42.
[447] I will deal with the friends' speeches in the second and third cycles in the context of Job's in the following chapter.
[448] Rainer Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job: The Friends' Perspective," in *The Sage in Israel and the Ancient Near East* (ed. John G. Gammie and Leo G. Perdue; Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 249-50.
[449] Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job," 249.
[450] Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job," 249.

Albertz suggests that the pastoral dimension of the characters' interaction is derived from the crisis of the early postexilic Jewish community, during which sages "provided sufferers with *instructive*, *consoling*, and *meaningful modes of explanation* that could open up for them a perspective on the future."[451] Although I do not share Albertz's concern with determining the situation that lies behind the poet's literary representation, his attention to what he describes as the pastoral dimension, as well as the relationship he sees between instruction and consolation, are significant for thinking about how the characters' consolatory strategies are carried out in their situational and relational context. Unfortunately, he does not further analyze the friends' performance in the dialogue.

3.3 Consolation in the First Cycle

In what follows, I will argue that consolation is both shaped by, and expressed through, traditional sapiential categories such as rebuke, advice, and instruction. Through these forms of pedagogy the friends attempt to provide Job with the emotional, physical and psychological resources necessary for moving beyond his grief.

Since rebuke is consistently offered in the introductions to the friends' speeches, and confrontation appears to be one of the first stages in how the friends respond to Job's excessive grief in the dialogue, I begin with an examination of how their rebuke functions in the first cycle.[452] I will suggest that rather than attempting to chip away at Job's

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[451] Albertz, "The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job," 250. Albertz's ("The Sage and Pious Wisdom in the Book of Job," 244) primary motivation is to identify through his analysis the particular group from which the "ideal of learning" that is represented in the dialogue originates.

[452] In fact, with the exception of Bildad's third speech (25:2-6), each of the friends begins with a critique of some aspect of Job's disposition, beliefs, or conduct, which they consider socially unacceptable.

credibility, as in *ad hominem* argumentation, the friends' reprimands should instead be seen as supportive and corrective, especially in light of my discussion of expectations for friendship and sapiential consolation in the previous chapter.[453] In the context of their speeches, rebuke functions to modify or correct Job's inappropriate behavior, which the friends view as incompatible with Job's identity as a sage and as a violation of sapiential values. Realigning his character with sapiential norms, therefore, becomes an increasingly necessary goal for the friends as they attempt to move Job towards the kind of normalcy that characterizes the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being they envision.[454]

In addition to correcting Job's behavior through rebuke, I will argue that the friends attempt to put an end to Job's grief through rational means. This is expressed in two ways. First, by encouraging what they consider to be therapeutic and situationally-appropriate behaviors, the friends offer Job *advice* as to how he might influence or change his particular circumstances. Their advice is normally related to the practices of piety (e.g., "seeking God") and situated in the context of conventional, rationally-based instructions, which often provide the motivation for accepting the advice the friends have offered. Second, through these conventional, rationally-based instructions the friends offer reassurance to the reliability of the moral order (i.e., to how the world works) by juxtaposing the fate of the wicked with the hope of the pious (4:6-11; 5:9-16; 8:4-7, 11-22), structuring their arguments through cause-and-effect relationships (4:8-9; 8:4,

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[453] As I will show, however, Zophar's speech reflects conflicted motives.
[454] This ideal is depicted most clearly in the friends' representation of the hope of the pious.

11-12), and providing a larger framework of values and assumptions to help Job to think through his situation more carefully (4:6-9; 5:3-7).

3.3.1 Consolation and Rebuke in the First Cycle

3.3.1.1 Rebuke in the First Speech of Eliphaz

Eliphaz's rebuke (4:2) serves as a relatively minor part of a larger consolatory strategy he employs in 4:3-11. Rather than drawing attention to Job's inappropriate speech, as Bildad and Zophar will do, Eliphaz, who offers only the mildest of rebukes (4:2, 5; cf. 5:2), appears more troubled by Job's disposition, as suggested by his cautious opening remarks (4:2a);[455] his concern with Job's apparent weakness (4:5b)[456] and dismay (4:5c; cf. 21:6; 23:15-16); and, perhaps indirectly, with Job's resentment (כעש) and anger (קנאה; 5:2), as represented in Eliphaz's set-piece about the fool.

His strategy begins with an appeal to Job's former status as a counselor and then contrasting the effectiveness of Job's past instruction (4:3-4) with his failure to manage his own emotional response to his present dilemma (4:5; 5:2). Eliphaz does not yet appear to consider the possibility that Job has begun to question the idea of a moral order. He does not question whether Job belongs among the wise or if he still shares their values. Nor is Eliphaz concerned that Job lacks the kind of piety that is characteristic of the sage. Instead, he is troubled that Job is unable to derive comfort from the strength of

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[455] So Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 46; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 121; Newsom, "Job," 375; Cf. the Tanakh's "If one ventures a word with you, will it be too much?"

[456] Though often understood as "to be weary" or "impatient," לאה, as several commentators point, is better understood as "to be unable" (cf. Exod 7:18; Prov 26:15). See, especially, Gordis's (*The Book of Job*, 46) discussion, where he notes this meaning becomes particularly clear with the infinitive (cf. Gen 19:11; Exod 7:18; Isa 1:14; Jer 6:11; 15:6; 20:9).

his own character (4:6). For Eliphaz, that signals some limitation on Job's part that needs to be addressed.

Eliphaz understands Job's problem to lie with his inability to apply what he knows about the normal workings of the moral order to his own situation. As if providing the contours for that process, his argument moves outward from Job's particular situation (4:2-6) to the fate of the innocent, or hope of the pious, more generally (4:7), and finally, to the fate of the wicked (4:8-11). By structuring his claims in this way, Eliphaz is able to situate Job's experience (4:6) within a broader framework that emphasizes the contrast between the hope of the pious (4:7) and the fate of the wicked (vv. 8-11), an argument I will deal with more closely in the final section of this chapter. What is important to note here is that with this juxtaposition Eliphaz not only attempts to reorient Job to the reliability of the moral order, but also to illustrate what Janoff-Bulman refers to as the "person-" or "action-outcome contingency": the idea that one's fate is ultimately determined by one's character or behavior. Rather than trying to shame Job for his inability to draw strength from what are likely the same resources Job used to comfort others, Eliphaz addresses Job's grief on a cognitive level: his piety and integrity should serve as a source of hope and confidence for the future. Newsom suggests that here Job has "lost sight of who he is and consequently of the stability that comes from such knowledge."[457] It is to Job's identity as a sage—and the world of sapiential values and assumptions—that Eliphaz wishes to restore him.

Even more forceful than Eliphaz's opening remarks in chap. 4, though perhaps

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[457] Newsom, "Job," 376.

less direct, is his warning of the dangers that follow from a failure to control one's

emotions: "For resentment kills the fool, and anger slays the simple" (5:2; כִּי־לֶאֱוִיל

יַהֲרָג־כָּעַשׂ וּפֹתֶה תָּמִית קִנְאָה). Since the term for fool (אֱוִיל) carries negative moral connotations,

and is often used to describe the wicked (Prov 10:10; 14:9; 20:3; Jer 4:22; Ps 107:17),

Eliphaz does not intend to identify Job with the fool (cf. 4:6-7),[458] but instead appears to

be warning Job of where his unrestrained speech may ultimately lead, as Eliphaz

illustrates these disastrous consequences through his anecdote in vv. 3-5.[459]

3.3.1.2 Rebuke in the First Speech of Bildad

Although he offers a sharper critique than Eliphaz, likely because of Job's speech

in chap. 6, Bildad follows a somewhat similar strategy in that he also locates Job's

situation in a larger assumptive framework that illustrates the reliability of the moral

order. Bildad, however, first focuses on correcting what he perceives to be Job's distorted

speech and views.

In contrast to Eliphaz, who spoke admirably of the salutary effects of Job's past

instruction (4:3-4), Bildad expresses serious concerns not only with how Job has spoken

(i.e., rashly), but also with what it is he hears him saying. Like each of the friends in the

dialogue, with the exception of Zophar in 20:2, Bildad begins by offering his initial

rebuke in the form of a rhetorical question: "How long will you say these things, and the

words of your mouth be a great wind?" (רוּחַ כַּבִּיר; 8:2; cf. 18:2).[460]

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[458] See my discussion of Job's justification of his speech (6:2-4) in the following chapter where
Job recasts Eliphaz's term for "anger" (כַּעַשׂ) as "anguish."

[459] As Clines (*Job 1-20*, 141) notes, Eliphaz is not referring to Job's children in this context: he
may lack sensitivity but "is not intentionally cruel."

[460] Cf. Yair Hoffman, *A Blemished Perfection: The Book of Job in Context* (JSOTSupp 213;

While Bildad begins his first speech with what appears to be a common insult or critique elsewhere in *Job* (15:2; 16:3; cf. 32:18), his question in v. 2 suggests that Job has overstepped the boundaries of what is socially acceptable for a sage and therefore calls for correction. The rash speech he hears is a mark of foolishness, which a sage is expected to avoid at any cost (Prov 29:20; Ecc 5:2-3; 10:13-14). Job has not only justified speaking rashly (6:3) and without restraint (7:11) in his previous speech, but has resisted and criticized the friends' correction (cf. 6:24-27), arguing that by inappropriately offering rebuke in his case, they have treated the words of the "desperate" (יאשׁ) as "wind" (רוח), as something empty or meaningless (6:26b).

By alluding to and slightly modifying what Job has said, Bildad reinforces his supportive yet corrective role. Although "wind" (רוח) often refers to that which is empty, insubstantial, or fleeting (Job 30:15; Ecc 1:14, 17; 5:16), Bildad is not dismissing Job's speech as insignificant; it is not frivolous speech that troubles him. Instead, he shows that he takes what Job has said so seriously that it must be addressed. His rebuke highlights the potentially destructive effects of Job's communication.[461] By describing Job's words as a "*mighty* wind" (cf. "mighty waters"; Isa 17:12; 28:2), his language evokes the irresistible (Prov 27:16; Job 21:18; 30:22) and sometimes deadly force (Job 1:19) wind can have. So Bildad uses this image as a subtle warning to Job, cautioning him of the implicit dangers of careless speech.

Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1996), 118, who suggests in response to v. 2 that "[t]his caustic remark is tantamount to an open declaration: I have come to insult you for the things you said."

[461] These are, of course, inseparable from the content of what Job has said, which becomes evident in what follows (cf. 8:3).

With Bildad's second rhetorical question, "Does God pervert justice? Or does the Almighty pervert the right?" (8:3), he shifts to what he still considers their shared assumption regarding the principle of justice at work in the world, which will provide the framework for his consolatory argument in vv. 4-7. The precise relationship between Bildad's question and Job's previous speech, or speeches, is unclear. Is Bildad alluding to an argument Job has made previously, taking his claims to their logical conclusion,[462] or does his question have some other purpose? John Course finds a connection between the presence of the root "to be righteous" (צדק) in 8:3b and 6:29b ("Turn now, my vindication rests on this"; ושבי עוד צדקי בה) and argues that it is "Job's testimony of his righteousness [which] implies that God has attacked him unjustly" that prompts Bildad to respond with a sharp rebuke.[463] Similarly, Westermann has observed that

> [i]n this question, Bildad summarizes what he thinks Job has said about God. But in reality Job has not said that. Bildad has made a theoretical proposition out of the lament which Job has directed to God in his burning agony. To be sure, it is the proper logical deduction from what Job has said—of this there is no doubt. However, it abstracts from the lamentlike character of the words of Job, to say nothing of the fact that the words were directed expressly to God.[464]

From Westermann's perspective, the incongruency between Job's speeches and Bildad's question reflects the kind of difficulty that is inherent in trying to represent expressions of personal agony through traditional theological categories. Although Bildad takes Job's highly personal and emotionally-expressive form of discourse and, through inference and abstraction, reduces it to a central theological concern, his move does not necessarily

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[462] See Hartley (*The Book of Job*, 156): "Although Job has not explicitly said that God perverts justice, Bildad hears Job taking this step when he challenges God."

[463] Course, *Speech and Response*, 50.

[464] Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 21-22.

indicate a defensive, dogmatic posture that ignores Job's suffering.[465]

Rather, Bildad's claim that God does not pervert justice serves as the premise

from which he develops his argument in verses 3-7, where, like Eliphaz, he not only

models for Job how to think properly about his situation, but also describes the process

by which restoration occurs:

> If your children sinned against him, he delivered them into the power of their transgression. If you will seek God and make supplication to the Almighty, if you are pure and upright, then he will rouse himself for you and restore you to your rightful place. Though your beginning was small, your end will be very great (8:4-7).

That Bildad's argument proceeds from effect to cause is significant: one can infer from

what has happened the conditions that led to the tragedy—or, one can assume from their

destruction that Job's children were sinful.[466] Bildad's argument relies, of course, on the

assumption that one's character or behavior is ultimately linked to one's fate.

What is troubling to most commentators about Bildad's approach is that rather

than drawing on a general example, he uses a deeply personal argument that implicates

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[465] Bildad's response is often taken to be highly defensive. See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 202; Balentine (*Job*, 148) suggests that "Bildad understands that if Job's words are left unchecked, the friends' theology and the God for whom they speak will necessarily be compromised"; similarly, Janzen (*Job*, 84) argues that Bildad "has heard in Job's words an implicit accusation as to God's injustice" and that "Bildad's rhetorical question is meant to settle the implicit question before it comes out into the open." Much of what Job has said has focused on the intensity of his suffering, the vulnerability of his condition, and the failure of the friends to recognize his need to voice his grief in an unrestrained manner. Identifying God as the source of his distress would hardly have been a shocking claim for the friends (cf. 2:10). In any case, if Bildad's intention is to silence Job, it seems to have the opposite effect. It should also be considered that by rhetorically exaggerating or caricaturing what Job has said, and in terms that are theologically untenable for Bildad and the friends, Bildad may be trying to compel Job either to deny what he has implied—that Job is challenging God's justice—or, at least, to articulate his own views more clearly. It remains unclear how Job himself understands the deaths of his children. But, although one cannot say that Bildad is responsible for the shift that occurs in Job's thought in chaps. 9-10 (cf. 9:2; 4:17), Job does move directly to charging God with injustice in his following speech (cf. 9:22-24).

[466] As Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 88) has observed, "In 8:4, אם a cannot mean 'if,' for there is nothing hypothetical about the destruction of Job's sons, and therefore, in Bildad's view, no doubt whatsoever about their sinfulness."

Job's children in their deaths to demonstrate God's justice. As callous as Bildad's

argument may be, one can nevertheless discern his therapeutic intention: Bildad wants to

help Job to come to terms with his tragedy by locating his children's death in a rational

framework, which, in this case, is provided by the assumptive world Job shares with his

friends—a moral order in which justice is reliably at work and in which character and

behavior determine outcomes.[467] As for Job, Bildad appears to be making a distinction

between Job's children who were killed for their sins and Job, a basically righteous

person, perhaps, as Eliphaz suggested, suffering as a result of divine chastisement

(5:17-18), but one for whom the hope of restoration is still possible.

Has Job already abandoned this view of reality? As I noted above, Eliphaz does

not entertain the possibility that Job may think differently about the moral order in light

of his circumstances. Does the same hold true for Bildad? His rhetorical question in verse

3 ("Does God pervert justice? Or the Almighty what is right?"), which expects a negative

response, suggests that he still believes that Job shares their assumptions. If Job thinks

differently about reality, Bildad does not yet appear to recognize it. It is significant,

however, to note that Bildad is the last of the friends to use a rhetorical question that

takes their shared assumptions about the moral order of the world for granted.[468] We may

therefore begin to see some indication that the friends are starting to recognize the drastic

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[467] The logic here is the same as Ezekiel's rational consolation of the exiles over the fate of Jerusalem (14:21-23). See my discussion in the latter part of chapter 2.

[468] After Bildad's first speech, rhetorical questions will focus increasingly on Job's intellectual and moral arrogance. In his next speech, he concludes from Job's behavior that Job no longer shares their assumptions about reality: "You who tear yourself in your anger, shall the earth be abandoned because of you? Will the rock be removed from its place?" (18:4).

impact Job's situation has had on his thinking and values. Although Bildad neither dwells

on Job's past nor tries to explain why Job has suffered, he does appear to be more

intentional than either Eliphaz or Zophar about incorporating into his consolation

particular details relating to Job's situation, as I will show.[469]

3.3.1.3 Rebuke in the First Speech of Zophar

Unlike Bildad, who at least acknowledges the seriousness of Job's speech, Zophar

is unwilling to admit that what Job has said carries any weight at all. Just how seriously

he has taken offense at Job's speech can be seen in the various expressions and phrases

he uses to characterize Job ("a man of lips") and his talk ("a multitude of words,"

"babble," "mockery"):

> "Should a multitude of words go unanswered,
>   and should a man of lips be vindicated?
> Should your babble silence men,
>   and when you mock, shall no one shame you?" (11:2-3)

From Zophar's perspective, Job's behavior is more fitting for a fool than a sage. While

Zophar's approach involves a certain degree of shaming (cf. v. 3b; see below), and while

he is the first of the friends to note Job's guilt, his first step is to help Job recognize, as a

fellow sage, why the friends have taken their critical stance and why he is deserving of

rebuke. He does so with two opening sets of rhetorical questions. Zophar begins

indirectly with a general example (v. 2) before addressing Job's situation specifically (v.

3). His rhetorical questions (11:2-3) invite Job to reflect on the situations he presents and

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[469] Although he does not express the same confidence in Job's moral standing that Eliphaz does, neither does he accuse Job outright. His use of conditional language in 8:6a ("If you are pure [זך] and upright [ישׁר]") may, however, suggest that he is less certain of Job's character. Clines (*Job 1-20*, 204) suggests that "it is a sign of delicacy, not always recognized in Bildad, that he will not make an issue of Job's sinfulness, but will try to direct Job toward God and toward the future."

then to draw his own conclusions as to how one should react. With the first set of

questions in v. 2, he asks whether a "multitude of words" (רב דברים; v. 2a) deserves a

response and if "one full of talk" (איש שפתים: literally, "a man of lips"; 2b) should be

justified (צדק).[470] Then, in verse 3, Zophar addresses Job directly, as if inviting him to

apply sapiential values directly to his own actions.

There may, however, be in Zophar's initial question ("Should a multitude of

words go unanswered?") some recognition that Job's continued need for correction has

complicated the friends' consolatory task, since for the sage there was conflicting advice

about whether one should rebuke or even respond to the foolish, the wicked, and the

scornful (Prov 9:7; 23:9; 26:4-5; Job 15:3; cf. 24:25). Sages also recognized that some

who resist rebuke repeatedly are eventually "broken beyond healing" (cf. Prov 29:1). One

may therefore find in Zophar's question some indication of his own concern with what is

appropriate as he tries to address Job's recalcitrance. Why does he proceed? Is it a sign of

their deep friendship? Is it condemnation? Although he considers Job guilty (v. 6),

Zophar has not yet abandoned his efforts to console (see below on 11:13-20), although he

may be close. Affirmations of the moral order, except as they are represented in the hope

of the pious (11:15-19) and the fate of the wicked motifs (11:20), are otherwise notably

absent from Zophar's speech.[471]

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[470] Like Eliphaz earlier, Zophar is apologetic in the introduction to his speech. Eliphaz was worried about overwhelming Job but characterized the situation as one that would compel anyone to speak. Zophar is more concerned about allowing improper speech to go uncorrected and, therefore, failing to fulfill his role as a sage.

[471] At the conclusion to the first cycle, Zophar focuses instead on the "mystery of God" (החקר אלוה; 11:7) and the limits of human knowledge (11:5-9).

That Job has complicated the friends' consolatory goals is also evident in what appears to be an emerging critique of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance that will lead to Zophar's insult in v. 12 and will continue to be developed throughout the second cycle. Zophar does this initially by referring to Job as a "man of lips" in v. 2, which sets Job in sharp contrast to the ancestors who speak "with understanding" or from the "mind" (לב; e.g., the former generations, cf. 8:10).[472] The words and expressions Zophar uses in vv. 2-3 position Job as the one who is to be silenced and is in need of instruction and rebuke.[473]

From Zophar's perspective, a tension exists between Job and the friends in their attempts to negotiate their relationship as sages in a consolatory context. This is seen most clearly in Zophar's suggestion that Job has tried improperly to assume the role of an instructor. By misrepresenting Job's speech in v. 4, Zophar shifts the discussion from Job's desire for vindication ("Should a man of lips be vindicated?"; 11:2b) to his own concerns about moral purity and intellectual arrogance (11:4). Zophar quotes Job as saying, "'My teaching is pure, and I am clean in your sight'" (זך לקחי ובר הייתי בעיניך; 11:4). But, although Job has repeatedly declared his innocence by suggesting that he is "righteous" (Job 9:15a, 20a; 10:15b; cf. 9:2), "blameless" (תם; 9:21), and "not guilty" (לא

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[472] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 419. Just as Bildad alluded to Job's use of "wind," Zophar now incorporates a term (ṣdq; "to be righteous") that Job has used repeatedly in his previous speech (9:2b, 15a; 20a; 10:15b). But while Job used the term forensically, longing for vindication as a righteous person, Zophar argues that a person characterized by superficial speech should not be justified. As Newsom ("Job," 419) observes, "Zophar is primarily interested in the sapiential and religious sense of ṣdq, the sense of the right order of the world established by God's wisdom and maintained by God's oversight of the world." From Zophar's perspective, Job's speech demonstrates his unwillingness to act according to this order and his subsequent need for rebuke.

[473] Cf. verse 3: "Should your babble silence others (בדיך מתים יחרישו), and when you mock shall no one rebuke you (ותלעג ואין מכלם)?"

אַרְשַׁע; 10:7), he has used neither of the terms Zophar employs ("pure" [זַךְ] and "clean" [בַּר]).[474]

A more important development occurs in the first half of v. 4, where Zophar cites Job as having said "My *teaching* (לִקְחִי) is pure" (11:4a). That Zophar's citation is such a clear departure from Job's previous claims has troubled some who have chosen to emend the text to "my conduct [לְכְתִי] is pure."[475] However, the term "teaching" or "doctrine" (לֶקַח) is sapiential in character (Prov 1:5; 4:2; 7:21; 9:9; 16:21, 23; cf. Deut. 32:2; Isa. 29:24) and often refers to traditional instructions that have been handed down from one generation to the next. Through his exaggeration of Job's speech, Zophar appears to suggest that Job has assumed a position of intellectual superiority not only in relation to the friends, but also with respect to ancestral tradition as well.[476] Contrary to what Zophar has implied, Job has not assumed the role of an instructor, as he will in 27:11, but has suggested instead that he is open to instruction.[477]

In addition to establishing rebuke as a consolatory strategy, three other important developments should be briefly noted. First, there is a growing awareness between the speeches of Bildad and Zophar that Job no longer shares their view of the moral order. Bildad, who is troubled and unclear about what Job has said, employs a "straw man" argument perhaps to elicit a more careful response on the part of Job; Zophar's

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[474] The difference here, however, appears to be relatively insignificant.

[475] So NRSV. Job will, however, affirm that his prayer is pure (16:17).

[476] Cf. Job 8:8, 10: "Ask now (שְׁאַל־נָא) the former generation and inquire (חֵקֶר) into what their ancestors have established.... Will they not teach you and tell you (הֲלֹא־הֵם יוֹרוּךָ יֹאמְרוּ לָךְ) and utter words from their understanding (וּמִלִּבָּם יוֹצִאוּ מִלִּים)?"

[477] Cf. 6:24: "Teach me (הוֹרוּנִי) and I will be silent; make me understand (הָכִינוּ לִי) how I have erred."

exaggerated representation of Job not only appears to reflect his frustration with the dynamics of their dialogue—and the fact that Job continues to speak at all—but also exposes his concerns with Job's "teaching" or "doctrine." Zophar hears in Job's speech theological claims that challenge the friends' underlying assumptions about the moral order.

Second, the friends' different evaluations of Job's moral standing appear to coincide with their recognition that a shift has occurred in Job's thinking, or, more specifically, his assumptive world. Although I have highlighted this only briefly in the preceding discussion, there is a clear shift from Eliphaz, who assumes Job's blamelessness (4:6); to Bildad, who speaks conditionally (8:4-5); and, finally, to Zophar, who assumes at least some guilt on Job's part (11:6). By the end of the first cycle, some guilt on Job's part is assumed, at least for Zophar. Concerns with Job's character, therefore, may be linked not only to his unwillingness to receive their rebukes, but also to their growing awareness of his very different way of thinking about reality. I would like to suggest that, corresponding to the previous two developments, we can begin to see in Zophar's speech an emerging critique of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance. Zophar, at least, has recognized in Job's resistance to their therapy what Douglas Walton refers to as a "closed attitude."

Does this mean that the characters are engaged in a quarrel by the end of the first cycle? Yes, but their interaction is more complicated. In the following chapter, I will suggest that Walton's criteria for a quarrel are met as Job resists their consolatory goals and begins to engage in personal attacks in chap. 6. Yet the friends continue their

consolatory efforts throughout the first cycle. With Zophar, however, there is a shift. In addition to sharp rebuke, Zophar also identifies Job's guilt (v. 6) and engages in insult (v. 12). At the same time, he will both advise Job to engage in the practices of piety and offer a vision of the life Job should expect to enjoy after he has done so. Unlike Eliphaz and Bildad, however, Zophar concludes with a somewhat ominous representation of the fate of the wicked in the final verse of his first speech (11:20), which perhaps serves as a warning to Job.

In the second cycle, it will become clear that Job no longer shares the friends' assumptions about the moral order. As a result, they abandon the practices of piety they recommend throughout the first cycle, offering instead their own variations of Zophar's critique of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance. In the following chapter, I will argue that their critiques occur in the context of a developing rivalry with Job. But the friends have not abandoned their consolatory goals altogether. Since Job no longer shares their assumptions, they must first try to persuade him on a more fundamental, assumptive level. Rather than situating Job within the larger framework of the hope of the pious, they offer instead vivid representations of the fate of the wicked through which they attempt to reassert the reliability of the moral order before one final consolatory attempt (cf. 22:21-30).

3.3.2 Consolation and Advice in the First Cycle

While the friends signal to Job that he is behaving improperly as a sage through their rebukes, their advice offers him a way of reorienting his behavior and ultimately

restoring his life. In each of the speeches within the first cycle (5:8; 8:5; 11:13-14) and in

Eliphaz's final speech (22:21-25), the friends' pedagogy provides Job with the means to

influence or change his particular circumstances by encouraging him to embrace some

particular attitude or behavior. Their advice consists primarily in urging Job to pray or to

"seek God," with the exception of Eliphaz, who encourages Job to accept the discipline

of the Almighty (5:17) and the results of their inquiry (5:27).[478]

The friends' advice often takes the form of implicit admonitions, which are

expressed conditionally and usually followed by a result clause that describes the

motivation or the action's salutary effects.[479] In the context of the friends' speeches the

result clause, which provides the motivation, normally takes the form of the hope of the

pious *topos* (5:9-16 [cf. v.8]; 8:6b-7 [cf. vv. 5-6a]; 11:15-19 [cf. vv.13-14]), which serves

as reassuring instruction as to how the world works.

The friends' use of the conditional form is interesting in that it resembles the

father's counsel to seek wisdom in Proverbs 2: "If you seek it like silver and search for it

like hidden treasures, then you will understand the fear of Yahweh and find the

knowledge of God" (2:4-5). Michael Fox has encapsulated the sage's teaching to show

that "[t]he lecture advances a single line of thought: If you do what I say, you will learn

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[478] See, especially, Newsom's (*Book of Job*, 105-115) discussion of the "practices of piety."

[479] See, for example, the discussion of Philip Johannes Nel, *The Structure and Ethos of the Wisdom Admonitions in Proverbs* (BZAW 158; Berlin/N.Y: Walter de Gruyter: 1982), 54-57. Eliphaz is, however, the exception in this case, since in his first speech he describes how he would respond personally to such a situation (5:8), and offers in his last address advice through both imperatival and conditional forms (22:21-25). He does, however, relate the benefits of such action in both instances (5:19-26; 22:26-30). Cf. Westermann (*Structure of Job*, 90-91): "according to its form, [Eliphaz's first] speech is not a conditional statement. In reality, however, the promise *is* conditioned; it is just that the condition is very cautiously formulated and deliberately separated from the element of promise."

wisdom, which will bring you to the fear of God and righteousness, which will protect you and keep you from wicked men and women and thereby ensure you a long life."[480] The similarities between Proverbs 2 and the advice of the friends are striking both formally and thematically. The emphasis on the intellectual and emotional orientation one should assume toward wisdom and the benefits that follow overlap considerably with the advice and reassurance the friends offer.[481] The friends are not, however, encouraging Job to seek wisdom—he is already among the wise—but rather to "seek God."

In what follows, I will examine how each of the friends presents "seeking God" as the remedy for Job's situation in the first cycle. Their advice rests on their assumptions regarding a "behavior-outcome" contingency, as Janoff-Bulman describes, which, when combined with the hope of the pious motif that follows, also implies a cause-and-effect relationship. I will also attempt to show how their advice reflects, with each successive speech, the shift that is occurring in the dynamics of their dialogue—a shift from consolation to quarrel.

3.3.2.1 Advice in the First Speech of Eliphaz

Eliphaz is both deferential and somewhat ambiguous with his advice, offering it only indirectly as the course of action he would take if in similar circumstances: "As for me, I would seek El, and to Elohim I would commit my cause" (5:8).[482] It is unclear what

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[480] Michael V. Fox, "The Pedagogy of Proverbs 2," *JBL* 113/2 (1994), 235-36.

[481] The father, for example, calls for the child to assume a particular orientation to wisdom by "inclining" his mind (לב) to understanding (v. 2; תבונה), by "crying out" (v. 3; תקרא), and by "seeking" (v. 4; בקש) and "searching" (חפש) for it.

[482] Clines (*Job 1-20*, 143) goes even further with his translation ("I myself pray to God and leave my case in his hands"), suggesting that "it is a sign of Eliphaz's attempted delicacy, as also of his self-assuredness, that he speaks only of himself and does not presume to tell Job what to do."

the practice Eliphaz presents entails. Although he offers no additional details here, the

expression of piety he encourages is reminiscent of psalms where "seeking" (דרש) God is

appropriate in times of need (Ps. 77:3[2]) and where God is represented as immediate

("never forsaking"; Ps. 9:11[10]) and responsive ("answering" and "delivering"; Ps 34:5)

to those who pray. For the psalmists, prayer is understood as personally beneficial,

serving as a source of encouragement (Ps 69:33 [32]), strength (Ps 105:4), happiness (Ps

119:2), and contentment (Ps. 34:11 [10]). The effects of prayer illustrated in the psalms

often resemble the friends' representation of the hope of the pious, where they too

emphasize prayer's emotional, physical, and psychological benefits, as in Eliphaz's own

hymn about divine transformation.[483]

Eliphaz provides so little detail or direction with regard to the practices of piety he

recommends because he assumes that Job possesses the necessary resources to address

his own situation (4:3-4). Since he has already shown admiration for Job's ability to

counsel others (4:3-4) and has expressed confidence in his piety (4:5), there is no need to

offer further instruction at this point.[484] Prayer is a mark of the wise according to the

Psalms (Ps. 14:2//53:3). And, although it is rarely mentioned in the wisdom tradition (cf.

Prov. 15:8, 29; 28:9), as I argued in the previous chapter, the Joban prose tale establishes

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[483] On Eliphaz's hymn in 5:9-16, see below.

[484] He will, however, respond differently in his final speech by developing the practice more carefully (22:21-25; cf. Zophar below in 11:13-14). Clines (*Job 1-20*, 143) explains this gap in Eliphaz's first speech by finding a clue (or, perhaps, a model) in doxology, which follows immediately in 5:9-16, where Clines suggests that for Job's context "appeal is futile but praise is becoming." The lack of interest in *how* Job should pray may also indicate that Eliphaz is less concerned with the content of Job's speech than he is with Job's turn to the deity. If Job chose to heed Eliphaz's counsel, he would embrace what the friends consider to be an appropriate—and, for Bildad and Zophar, an essential—step in the restorative process: a proper orientation to God.

Job's identity as a pious sage, at least in part, through the practices of piety, as Job is

represented interceding on behalf of his children (1:5), by responding to his tragedy with

worship (1:20), and by praying for his friends (42:7-9). In fact, in Eliphaz's final

depiction of Job's restoration he envisions a life for Job that, at least with respect to his

piety, closely resembles that of the narrative, *one where Job prays and his prayers are*

answered (22:27), and where he once again intercedes effectively on behalf of others

(22:30).[485]

3.3.2.2 Advice in the First Speech of Bildad

Bildad's advice moves the dialogue forward by developing and nuancing what

Eliphaz has suggested by making the outcome contingent on Job's character. As

Newsom observes, "[b]oth Eliphaz and Bildad introduce the topic in a chiastic line that

poetically models the orientation toward God it urges: 'But if it were I, I would seek

[דרש] El, and to Elohim I would present my cause' (5:8); 'If you seek out [שחר] El, and

from Shaddai you seek mercy…" (8:5)."[486] There is, however, a significant development

in that Bildad's advice is not only closely tied to his critique of Job's speech (8:2)[487] and

his explanation of the death of Job's children (8:3), but is also framed conditionally. This

shift in form will characterize the friends' advice throughout the remainder of the

dialogue (8:5-6; 11:13-14; 22:23-25).

Unwilling to make the same kinds of assumptions about Job's character that

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[485] On the difficult grammatical issues in vv. 27-30, see Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 251-252.

[486] Carol A. Newsom, "Job and His Friends: A Conflict of Moral Imaginations," *Interpretation* 53 (1999), 246. (239-53)

[487] On seeking (שחר) God, see also Isa 29:6; Hos 5:15; Pss 63:2; 78:34. Cf. 5:8, where Eliphaz's advice follows after what may be an indirect rebuke of Job's emotional outburst (cf. 5:2-5).

Eliphaz has, Bildad sets forth two conditions upon which Job's restoration depends. First,

Job must "seek (שׁחר) God."[488] Elsewhere the term refers to one's longing for God (Ps.

63:2[1]; Isa. 26:9) as well as the pursuit of wisdom (Prov. 1:28; 8:17). Bildad is,

however, slightly more specific with his counsel than Eliphaz in that he adds that Job

should "seek God's favor" (תתחנן). This expression, which occurs in the hithpael, may be

used in two rather different ways. In the language of the psalmists, it refers to pious

supplication (Pss 30:9 [8]; 142:2 [1]). Although it is difficult to know how this might

have been expressed, it may have taken the form of the psalmist's familiar plea, "Be

gracious to me" (חנני; Ps. 4:2 [1]; 6:3 [2]; 9:14 [13]; 26:11). The verb may also suggest

the more urgent sense of "pleading with" God.[489] Since Bildad adds "if you are blameless

and upright" in the next line, it appears to represent the posture of the pious supplicant

reflected in the first option (cf. Prov 15:8, 29; cf. Prov 28:9).

Second, Bildad elevates the importance of Job's moral standing by providing

another qualification for his restoration, suggesting that the efficacy of Job's prayers

depends on his integrity: "If you are pure and upright…" (אם־זך וישר; 8:6a). Has Bildad

concluded that Job is guilty of a particular sin? Following Bildad's logic with respect to

Job's children in v. 4, Janzen suggests that the "'if-then' utterance in verses 4-6 is not

offered as a genuine conditional statement, as though Job's purity and uprightness might

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[488] While seeking God (here שׁחר) sometimes involves repentance (Hos. 5:15; Ps. 78:34), here it appears to be synonymous with Eliphaz's use of דרשׁ in 5:8, especially in light of the fact that both are presented in the form of a chiasm. The term also describes the Strange Woman's desire for young men (Prov. 7:15).

[489] On reading "plead for mercy" for what is sometimes translated "make supplication, " Cf. the use of חנן in Job 9:15; 19:16; Gen 42:21; 1 Kgs 8:33, 47, 59; 9:3; Hos 12:5; Ps 30:9 [8]; 123:2; 142:2; Esther 4:8; 8:3; 2 Chr 6:24, 37; cf. Deut 7:2).

be in doubt" but that "the statements all assume a positive answer and intend to reassure

Job."[490] In that case, Janzen suggests that "Job is advised that even if he is innocent, he

may regain his former happy condition only by appealing to God's mercy."[491] The brief

arguments in v. 4 and vv. 5-6 are different, however. Bildad's argument in v. 4, though

framed conditionally, moves from effect-to-cause, that is, from the death of Job's

children to their sinfulness: the outcome in their case is already known. For Job, however,

the future remains open. If Bildad, however, is beginning to suspect that Job no longer

shares their assumptions about the moral order (more specifically, principles relating to

the distribution of outcomes like justice, the person/action outcome contingency, and so

forth), he may also be uncertain of Job's moral standing.[492]

Even if Bildad has his doubts about Job, the critical issue for Bildad, however, is

whether Job will respond appropriately with humility by seeking God's mercy. His

rhetorical question in v. 6 present Job with the opportunity to change things, or at least to

respond (agreeably, of course). Clines, for example, suggests that "Bildad invites a

sympathetic engagement with his argument on Job's part by the subtle uses of the particle

'if' (אם)."[493] However, as Janzen observes,

> Bildad's rhetorical questions—asked straightforwardly from the platform of the
> traditional view—are heard differently by one for whom raw experience has
> begun to de-construct the old structures of experience. The invitation contained
> in the question becomes, for such a person, a question not to reaffirm and embrace
> tried-and-true views, but to entertain and explore other possible answers to what

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[490] Janzen, *Job*, 84-85.

[491] Pope, *Job*, 65.

[492] So Driver (*Job*, 76), who suggests that on the basis of Job's sufferings "he might (upon his principles) have inferred, and undoubtedly did infer, that he had sinned greatly; but he leaves this inference unsaid."

[493] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 202.

has become a genuine and agonizing question….[494]

If that is the case, Bildad does not get the kind of response he expects and "may [even] be said at this point to have contributed unwittingly, and ironically, to the subversion of his own intentions and views."[495] As noted earlier, Job will respond by taking up the issue of God's justice and making his views known clearly in 9:22-24.

3.3.2.3 Advice in the First Speech of Zophar

Although Edwin Good has described Zophar's advice as "both short and unhelpful,"[496] when compared to that of Eliphaz (5:8) and Bildad (8:5-6), his is the most developed counsel in the first cycle:[497]

> If you establish your mind,
>   and spread out to him your palms,
> If wrongdoing is in your hand, remove it
>   and do not let iniquity dwell in your tents… (11:13-14).

As with Bildad, Zophar uses conditional language, placing the responsibility of Job's restoration in his own hands.

As noted above, Zophar is the first of the friends to offer an explicit critique of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance. From his perspective, Job has not only attempted to instruct the friends (11:3b-4a) by offering them a teaching (לקח) that is contrary to traditional views, but has also exceeded the limits of human knowledge (11:8-9). That Job's stubbornness is one of Zophar's concerns is also suggested by the fact that the advice he offers in verses 13-14 follows what is sometimes interpreted as a proverb

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[494] Janzen, *Job*, 87-88.
[495] Janzen, *Job*, 88.
[496] Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 231.
[497] Cf. Eliphaz in 22:21-25.

intended to insult Job's intelligence in v.12: "But a hollow person will get understanding when a wild ass is born a human" (ואיש נבוב ילבב ועיר פרא אדם יולד; 11:12).[498] Habel classes this saying with impossible tasks, observing that "[t]he metamorphosis of an addle-brained fool like Job into a wise man would be as impossible as the birth of a human to a wild ass."[499] Yet, while Zophar cites this insult perhaps to draw attention to Job's "closed attitude," he does not apply it *directly* to Job, but instead leaves it hanging in the air, perhaps as an expression of his frustration with Job's resistance and recognition of the possible futility of their consolatory attempts.

Zophar's advice calls for a reorientation of Job's whole person and his social sphere, as he develops the practices of piety by specifying three conditions as necessary for Job's restoration: Job is to "establish his mind," "spread out his palms to God," and distance himself from sin by removing "wrongdoing from his hand," and refusing "iniquity a place in his dwelling" (11:13-14). Although his description of the process may appear meager to modern readers, Zophar's step-by-step approach to prayer would have likely sounded pedantic to Job, who, like every pious person, would have known how to approach God.

Yet, considering Job's stubbornness and Zophar's emphasis on intellectual matters, it is not surprising that Zophar describes this process as beginning with a rational

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[498] The basic meaning of the expression is that a "hollow person is as likely to get a mind as a cold is to be born a human." See Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 123. As he suggests (123), "colt" (עיר) and "wild ass" (פרא) are in apposition with one another as in נערה בתולה.

[499] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 209. Intelligence (לב or לבב) becomes a topic that is addressed explicitly and repeatedly in the speeches that follow (לב: 12:24; 15:12; 17:4; 23:16; לבב: 12:3 [cf. 13:1-2]; 17:11; 22:22; 27:6). See my discussion in chapter 4.

orientation where Job must first "establish" or "order" (כון)[500] his mind (v. 13; "If you establish your mind"; אם אתה הכינות לבך; cf. 8:10). In this act, one makes an intentional decision to clear one's mind of distractions so that one might focus one's attention more properly on God (cf. 1 Chr 29:18; 2 Chr 30:19).[501] In this way, the initial practice Zophar recommends addresses the emotional and cognitive dimensions of Job's suffering.

The precise function of Zophar's second step ("spread out to him your palms"; v. 13b) is not entirely clear, although it appears to refer to a physical gesture that either accompanies or follows self-examination. Ancient Near Eastern iconography illustrates supplicants with their hands raised at face level and with their palms turned outward;[502] and similar gestures are reflected elsewhere in the HB, where individuals "spread out" (פרש) or "lift up" (נשא) their palms or hands.[503] The gesture may indicate "surrender," as Clines has noted. Or, as Newsom has suggested, it may have had a variety of meanings depending on the situation and context.[504]

The gesture does, however, appear to have had a place in the self-examination of the pious. In a declaration of innocence, the psalmist affirms on behalf of the community in Ps 44:21-22 [20-21], "If we had... spread out our hands (ונפרש כפינו לאל) to a foreign god, would not God discover this?" The psalmist in Ps 7:4 [3] states, "O Yahweh my

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[500] So Habel, *The Book of Job*, 202. See my discussion of this root in chapter 2.

[501] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 267. Newsom (*Book of Job*, 110) describes the therapeutic benefits of this practice as follows: "this preliminary activity itself, especially if practiced by one with a turbulent mind, would be a means of displacing anxiety and turmoil."

[502] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 265-66; Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hallett; New York: Seabury, 1978), 313, pls. 415, 416, 422.

[503] Cf. Exod 9:29, 33; 1 Kgs 8:22, 38; Ezek 9:5; Jer 4:31; cf. יד in Ps 143:6.

[504] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 110.

God, if I have done this, if there is any wrong in my hands... (בכפי)," willing to accept the

consequences if God knows otherwise. In fact, Job himself will later declare that there is

no violence in his hands (על לא־חמס בכפי; cf. 22:30) and that his prayer is pure (16:17). In

Psalm 24:3-4, there is an examination of both one's hands and minds: those who have

"clean hands" (נקי כפים) and "pure minds" (ובר־לבב) will ascend Yahweh's hill and stand

in the holy place. In light of the text cited above, perhaps in certain situations the hands

or palms were displayed, as if for God's inspection. The psalmist does, at times, ask God

to carry out a sort of moral inspection: "Search me, O God, and know my mind; test me,

and know my thoughts" (Ps 139:24).

The final step Zophar recommends involves distancing oneself from any moral

wrong discerned. Here, the practices of piety extend beyond intellectual and physical

preparation for prayer to acts represented metaphorically in which one intentionally

distances oneself from sin, first by removing it from one's hand, and then by refusing it a

place in one's dwelling (v. 14). Zophar's response is distinctively sapiential, as Clines

observes:

> How does Zophar propose Job can get rid of his sin? Not by sacrifice or
> atonement, not even by repentance, but by a renunciation of it, a distancing of
> himself from it, putting himself far from it. This is wisdom theology speaking.
> Sin is not something to be covered up or cleansed or forgiven, but to be avoided,
> departed from, disassociated from (cf. Ps. 1:1; Prov 1:10-15; 4:14-24; 5:8;
> 30:8).[505]

It should be noted, however, that, as Newsom observes, Zophar's advice is not a response

to "Job's particular sin but rather… a reference to part of the ordinary practices of self-

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[505] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 268.

examination conducted by any pious person engaging in preparation for prayer."[506] For

the friends, the practices of piety offer the means by which a sufferer can initiate personal

transformation.

In summary, the advice of the friends in the first cycle is concerned primarily with

how Job might influence or change his particular circumstances. As with their

increasingly aggressive rebukes, however, one can also detect in their advice certain

shifts in the dynamics of their dialogue. With each successive speech there appears to be

a recognition that Job needs advice that is more carefully nuanced and developed. Eliphaz

offers his unsolicited counsel cautiously and in a manner that is consistent overall with

his deferential and sympathetic approach. He does not provide Job with any explicit

directive but rather invites him to consider how he would respond if facing similar

circumstances. Bildad and Zophar both develop Eliphaz's advice to "seek God"

conditionally, with implicit admonitions (8:5-6; 11:13-14), which are immediately

followed with attempts to motivate Job to embrace their counsel (see below; 8:7;

11:15-19; cf. 5:9-16, 19-26). For Bildad, Job must not only "make supplication" (8:5) but

must also possess the proper moral qualifications of being "pure" (זך) and "upright"

(וישר). Although Bildad does not accuse Job of bearing guilt, he does appears less certain

than Eliphaz of Job's innocence; he does, however, remain hopeful about Job's future

(8:7, 20-22; cf. vv. 16-19).

Zophar's speech provides the clearest indication that a shift is occurring in the

dialogue, since, in addition to his ridicule of Job, he provides the most extensively

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[506] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 110-111.

developed description of the practices of piety in the first cycle. In a speech where he has already revealed his concern with the dynamics of the dialogue and more implicitly with Job's attempt to instruct the friends (11:3a, 4a), Zophar outlines for Job the process by which his restoration will be made possible. His attention to detail, as I have suggested, may further serve to shame Job for his intellectual and moral arrogance, particularly in the larger context of Zophar's speech. That is, since he outlines what any pious person would already know, Zophar's advice be offered with some ridicule (cf. v. 3b). Even so, while he recognizes Job's guilt (v. 6), he has not yet given up on the prospect of Job's restoration (vv. 15-19). But, as I will show, he is less optimistic than either Eliphaz or Bildad about that possibility (cf. v. 20).

3.3.3 Consolation and Instruction

The friends situate the advice they offer in the context of rationally-based, conventional instructions that often take the form of two consolatory topoi: the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious. By incorporating these motifs into their speeches, the friends are not trying to explain why it is that Job is suffering, as is sometimes suggested, but rather to reassure him that reality is structured positively to support his restoration. There are at least two reasons for reading the friends' speeches in the first cycle in this fashion. First, Job does not take the fate of the wicked speeches personally. As I will argue in the following chapter, even when he responds to Eliphaz's warning in 5:2 on "anger" and "resentment," Job's use of כאש is intended to highlight Eliphaz's failure to understand the severity of his grief or "anguish" (כאש; 6:2a). Second, the placement of the

hope of the pious statements at the end of their speeches can be seen as a justification for interpreting the intervening material as consolatory, including the otherwise ambiguous fate of the wicked speeches. The hope of the pious and the fate of the wicked, through their underlying assumptions, provide for Job a rational framework that not only demonstrates how the world works, but also shows the kind of future Job can expect on the basis of his character and actions.

How the friends use these motifs to persuade Job does, however, vary, depending on where they occur within the dialogue itself. Since they are presented differently throughout the three cycles, it is important to consider their context and to note differences within individual speeches, as well as between cycles when determining their function. Although the friends employ both motifs in their initial speeches, a dramatic shift occurs in the second cycle when they abandon their attempts to offer advice along with their reassuring representations of the hope of the pious. There, they also limit their speeches almost entirely—with the exception of their critiques of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance—to their vivid and extensively developed representations of the fate of the wicked. How is one therefore to understand these developments in light of the friends' consolatory goals? And what kinds of changes in strategy might these differences suggest? In what follows I will focus on how the friends use these motifs to console Job, helping him locate his own experience in relation to that of the wicked and the pious, and prompting him to envision the ending to his own story. Since Carol Newsom's attention to the therapeutic use of narrative informs the following discussion, I begin with a brief overview of her work.

3.3.3.1 Consolation and Narrativity

Carol Newsom has argued that Job's friends attempt "to integrate and ultimately

transcend [his] present turmoil (esp. chaps. 4-5, 8) by understanding his experience "in

terms of narrative..."[507] Humans, she observes, make meaning of their experience through

various "configurations" or narrative structures, "where a sense of the immediate past and

an expectation of the immediate future [form] a temporal horizon."[508] By offering an

"elementary plot," narrative provides people with a framework for organizing and

understanding their experience, "mak[ing] it possible for an intentional subject to act and

to plan and to experience 'the values, purpose, and meaning' essential to such action."[509]

Narrative structures thus give life a sense of coherency. But as Newsom observes,

"narratives… are always vulnerable to dissolution and require considerable effort to

recover, restore, or rewrite."[510] If one is unable to see the narrative's thread, or is

uncertain of the story itself, then one's sense of meaning is lost. To restore the kind of

coherency narrative provides, it is therefore necessary either to locate oneself in "an

existing and accepted narrative" or to determine "'What *is* the story?'"[511]

Relying on their own "repertoire of stories," which Newsom recognizes as

"always socially given and prior to the individual," the friends are able to situate Job's

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[507] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 96.

[508] Newsom (*Book of Job*, 98) is here summarizing the work of David Carr (*Time, Narrative, and History*, 33-34, 49), whom she also cites to illustrate the forms such structures take, including "'beginning, middle, and end,' 'means and end,' 'departure and arrival,' 'departure and return' (i.e., rest to motion to rest), 'suspension and resolution,' or 'problem and solution.'"

[509] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 98.

[510] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 98.

[511] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 98

"experience into an already existing and accepted" framework.[512] They have no need to ask "What *is* the story?" since they already understand Job's situation in relation to two well-known tales: the hope of the pious and the fate of the wicked. These stories are so familiar, so deeply ingrained in their understanding of the world that, within the first cycle, they often omit what might otherwise be considered important details.[513] With the fate of the wicked motif, for example, the friends normally focus on the end of life, assuming either that the rest is not directly relevant or that Job can piece the other parts of the narrative together from its conclusion. Similarly, they do not ask or try to explain how the righteous came to suffer, but emphasize instead the dramatic transformation they experience. Thus, part of what makes these narratives reassuring is their familiarity. As long as one can see the thread, one knows the rest of the story, including how it will end or even where it begins. The daunting task facing the friends is to help Job not only to recognize the story, but also find his place within it.

Through the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious, the friends attempt to restore coherency or narrativity to Job's experience. Although the language they use in association with these motifs is not distinctive to the wisdom tradition, their narratives echo common sapiential concerns with the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being of the sage. As I will show, they attempt to facilitate the resolution to Job's grief by appropriating these motifs in two rather different ways. First, by juxtaposing these motifs they demonstrate God's governance of the moral order, which they offer to Job as a basis

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[512] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 98.
[513] An exception to this is would be Eliphaz's discussion of the fool in 5:2-5.

for hope. Second, they situate Job's experience within the narrative of the pious, illustrating how they imagine his story will end.

3.3.3.2 The Fate of the Wicked and the Hope of the Pious

That the hope of the pious serves to reassure Job is hardly a novel idea. In what follows, however, I will attempt to show how the friends use this motif along with the fate of the wicked in a manner that is consistent with their overall strategy of responding to the various dimensions of Job's grief. These motifs provide an additional means by which the friends address how Job thinks about his situationas they attempt to help him recover the kind of confidence and hope that are characteristic of a sage.

In the first cycle, each of the friends uses the language of "hope" or "confidence" explicitly and in the context of contrasting the pious with the wicked.[514] They often juxtapose these motifs to demonstrate the reliability of the moral order, appropriating and developing familiar ways of talking about the righteous and the wicked. In Proverbs, these two motifs are alsp frequently juxtaposed to provide the kind of binary contrast that is characteristic of the wisdom tradition more generally. While it is less obvious in *Job*, the friends also use juxtaposition throughout the first cycle for a similar effect (cf. 4:7-11; 5:9-16; 8:12-20; 11:15-20). In fact, with the exception of 5:2-7 and 15:18-26, each time the hope of the pious occurs, it is either adjacent to or interwoven with the fate of the wicked (cf. 4:6-7, 8-11; 5:11, 12-14, 15-17; 8:4, 11-15, 16-20a, 20b, 21, 22; 11:6-19, 20). Unlike Proverbs, however, the friends do not rely on the sentence to contrast these ideas,

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[514] Cf. "confidence" (כסלה in 4:6a; 8:14a) and (בטח; 11:18) and "hope" (קוה; 4:6; 5:16; 8:13; 11:18, 20).

but instead use a variety of forms including proverbial sayings (4:10-11; 5:2), analogies with nature (8:11-19), and longer hymnic material (5:9-16); they even juxtapose different forms such as rhetorical questions and proverbial sayings (4:7-11).

Their representations of these motifs also reflect certain shifts that are occurring within the dialogue itself, especially between the speeches of Bildad and Zophar. While Eliphaz and Bildad both contrast the righteous and the wicked to encourage Job to be optimistic in his outlook (4:6-11; 5:9-16; 8:11-20) and to help him find the conclusion to his own story in the familiar tale of the pious (5:19-26; 8:21-22), Zophar uses the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious differently (cf. 11:15-20). Rather than encouraging confidence in Job's present situation, Zophar considers hope as a possibility *only* in the context of Job's future restoration and *after* he has appropriated the practices of piety Zophar recommends. This development, together with other features of Zophar's argument, suggests that Zophar has adopted a different, more critical stance toward Job.

Since Zophar only presents the hope of the pious in the conclusion to his speech, I will incorporate his response into the final section where I deal with the friends' conclusions in the first cycle. I will first explore how Eliphaz and Bildad use the narratives of the wicked and the pious supportively by juxtaposing these two narratives to reassert the reliability of the moral order, by situating Job within the framework they provide (4:6-11; 5:9-16; 8:4-7, 11-22), and by structuring their arguments through cause-and-effect relationships that demonstrate their assumptions about the moral order, especially principles of justice (4:8-9; 8:4, 11-12).

<u>3.3.3.2.1 Instruction in the First Speech of Eliphaz</u>

Within his first speech Eliphaz juxtaposes the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious twice to offer Job comfort and hope in his present circumstances (4:6-11; 5:9-16). He first presents these motifs through a series of rhetorical questions (4:6-7), proverbial sayings (4:8-11), and finally a hymn (5:9-16). While each form offers reassuring instruction as to the reliability of the moral order, they do so in slightly different ways.

In my discussion of rebuke in Eliphaz's first speech, I noted that in moving outward from Job's particular situation (4:2-6) to the hope of the pious (4:7) and then to the fate of the wicked, Eliphaz attempts to situate Job's experience (4:6) in a broader framework that contrasts the hope of the pious (4:7) with the fate of the wicked (4:8-11). That re-contextualization occurs first through two sets of rhetorical questions in vv. 6-7, which work implicitly by prompting Job to reflect first on his own identity in v. 6 ("Is not your fear your confidence; and your hope the integrity of your ways?"; הלא יראתך כסלתך תקותך ותם דרכיך) and then in relation to the pious (4:7) and the wicked (4:8-11) more generally. Because rhetorical questions assume that the listener already knows the answer to what is asked and will likely be aware of its implications, they also provide the speaker with a way of identifying with the listener as well as making and emphasizing a certain point.[515] With Eliphaz's second question he shifts Job's attention to the hope that

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[515] L. J. De Regt, "Implications of Rhetorical Questions in Strophes in Job 11 and 15," in *The Book of Job* (ed. W. A. M. Beuken; BETL 114; Leuven: Peeters, 1994), 321. Similarly, with respect to metaphors (cf. 6:10-11), William P. Brown, "The Didactic Power of Metaphor in the Aphorisitic Sayings of Proverbs," *JSOT* 29:2 (2004), 136.

characterizes the righteous, inviting Job to draw on his own knowledge: "Recall now, who that was innocent ever perished? And where were the upright destroyed?" (4:7). Eliphaz's pairing of the "innocent" (נקי) with "perish" (אבד) might also have been intended to have something of a jarring effect rhetorically, since, with the exception of Ecc 7:15, the verb occurs nowhere else in association with the righteous in the wisdom literature.[516] Eliphaz's questions, however, allow him not only to reframe Job's situation according to their shared assumptions about the moral order (particularly, the principle of justice), but also to assign Job a particular identity within that order, the implications of which Job would fully understand: Job's "piety" (יראה) and "integrity" (תם) provide "confidence" (כסלה) and "hope" (תקוה) because the consequences of proper charcter and behavior (i.e., the person/action outcome contingency) are ultimately experienced in a life of well-being (cf. 4:7). Moreover, as addressed earlier, Eliphaz's reconfiguration of Job's situation also functions correctively in addressing Job's disposition (4:5bc; 5:2).

The hopeful, future-oriented outlook expressed by the friends, particularly in the concluding remarks to their speeches, is not an attitude they assume only with respect to Job, but is also a mark of the sage more generally. Those who possess wisdom can be confident that "there is a future" and that their "hope will not be cut off" (Prov. 24:13-14; cf. 19:20; 23:17-18). Eliphaz's rhetorical questions in vv. 6-7 therefore are not ambiguous with respect to Job's relationship to the nature of reality; rather Eliphaz

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[516] See Mathewson, *Death and Survival in the Book of Job*, especially, 87-90. The actual "fate" of the righteous is rarely developed in wisdom apart from its discussion of the offspring and memory of the righteous. The emphasis remains instead on the quality of one's life and avoiding deaths snares (cf. Prov. 12:28; 13:14; 14:27).

employs them in the context of his efforts to restore to Job the kind of disposition that is fitting for a sage and to move him beyond his grief.

The proverbial sayings Eliphaz uses to describe the wicked in vv. 8-11 work more complexly through cause-and-effect argumentation (vv. 8-9) and metaphor (vv. 10-11). In verses 8-9 Eliphaz makes explicit the correlation between one's actions and their consequences first by offering an agricultural metaphor for the wicked that draws on the traditional image of sowing and reaping: "As I have seen, those who plow iniquity and sow trouble, reap the same" (כאשר ראיתי חרשי און וזרעי עמל יקצרהו; 4:8; cf. Prov. 11:18; 22:8). The initial image he provides as first-hand observation is organic and communicates the relation between actions and their consequences "as something built into the structure of the created world," a cause-and-effect relationship that reinforces the reliability of the moral order.[517] Then with verse 9 he builds on the wisdom tradition's frequent depiction of the wicked as self-defeating (v. 8) by describing *God's role* in their destruction (v. 9; cf. 5:12-14): "By the breath of God they perish and by the blast of his anger they come to an end" (v. 9). It is through an extension of God's being—by "God's breath" (מנשמת אלוה) and the "blast of his nostrils" (מרוח אפו)—that they meet their demise.[518] Eliphaz is not offering incompatible understandings of the fate of the wicked here, but rather illustrating for Job God's agency and role as guarantor of the moral order, a recurring theme in the speeches of Eliphaz and Bildad in the first cycle.

The structure of Eliphaz's argument as it is represented in these two verses (vv.

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[517] Janzen, *Job*, 73.

[518] On God's "breath" and the "blast" of God's nostrils, cf. Gen 2:7; 2 Sam 22:16; Job 27:3; 32:8; 33:4; 37:10; Ps 18:16[15]; Isa 30:33.

8-9) is significant for understanding the nature of the consolation he offers. The fate of

the wicked and the hope of the pious have a complementary relationship in reaffirming

the reliability of the moral order. Verses 6-7, as well as the conclusion to Eliphaz's first

speech in 5:19–26, suggest that Eliphaz has not concluded that Job is among the wicked.

Rather, he is attempting instead to remind Job of what he already knows but has lost sight

of in his distress. He deals only indirectly with the emotional dimensions of Job's grief

(4:5; cf. 3:20-26); he is more concerned with Job's lack of perspective and his distorted

view of reality. Yet, while he might consider Job irrational, he does not offer the sharp

rebuke that characterizes the speeches of Bildad and Zophar. Through his questions in

verses 6-7, Eliphaz invites Job into a reflective process that begins with Job (v. 6) moving

outward to the fate of the innocent (v. 7), and then concluding with the contrast provided

by the wicked (vv. 8-11). By structuring his argument in this way Eliphaz is able to

explore the workings of the moral order alongside of Job in an attempt to help him

reorder his thoughts and think through his situation more carefully.[519]

In 5:9-16, Eliphaz juxtaposes the righteous and the wicked to represent God as the

guarantor of the moral order and to attest to God's transforming activity in the context of

a hymn, which I argue in this case also functions as instruction.[520] Clines has taken

Eliphaz's hymn as continuing his advice by describing the means by which Job should

seek God (i.e., he should respond with praise rather than lament).[521] As elsewhere (8:5-6

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[519] Eliphaz does, however, seem to miss the close resemblance that Job's suffering shares with the fate of the wicked. This appears to be an irony created by the author, though not intended by Eliphaz.

[520] See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 143-147.

[521] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 143-147; see similarly, Balentine, *Job*, 116.

[cf. v. 7]; 11:13-14 [cf. vv. 15-19]), however, the hymn provides what I understand as the motivation for the advice he has just given (5:8; "But as for me, I would seek God; and to God, I would commit my case"; אולם אני אדרש אל אל ואל אלהים אשים דברתי). Rather than encouraging Job to praise God despite his present circumstances, Eliphaz is instead trying to *motivate* Job to engage in the practices of piety, or "to show *why* Job should lay his case before [God]."[522] The reason is to be found in the "because" statements of vv. 9-16 that back up his advice (v. 8).[523]

By focusing on the character and actions of God, the one to whom Eliphaz would "commit [his] cause," he provides what Newsom has aptly described as a "trope of transformation," where he "sketches several mini-narratives" to portray God as one who transforms situations.[524] He attempts to facilitate a change in how Job thinks and acts by emphasizing God's power and wonder in maintaining the natural order (5:9-10; cf. 9:10) and intervening in the social order (vv. 11-15). God is active not only in sustaining creation (v. 10), but also in elevating the lowly and the mournful (v. 11), thwarting the schemes of the crafty (vv. 12-14), and saving the needy (v. 15). Yet while the emphasis throughout vv. 11-15 is on transformation, the conclusion to Eliphaz's hymn is marked by irresolution: "But there is hope for the poor, and injustice shuts its mouth" (ותהי לדל

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[522] Driver, *Job*, 52.

[523] Newsom ("Job," 380) captures well the hymn's potential for consolation, observing that traditional language, images, and forms function in their most sympathetic role in Eliphaz's speech. Although Eliphaz may be composing the doxology for the occasion, it is constructed almost wholly out of phrases and images that are a familiar part of the repertoire of worship and wisdom. The power of such familiar words and forms at a time of chaos resides in their ability to reconnect a disoriented person with a reality once experienced as reliable and trustworthy, and that has not ceased to exist despite the present collapse of the individual's world.

[524] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 102-103.

תקוה ועלתה קפצה פיה). Here he presents an image of the poor, who, while not yet having experienced the kind of reversal Eliphaz has described, nevertheless remains hopeful.

Eliphaz does not attempt to apply the particulars of the hymn directly to Job's situation, but instead emphasizes God's intervention in human affairs, "shift[ing] the focus from situation to process," and suggesting implicitly "that the crucial aspect of reality is that it is always open."[525] Thus, Eliphaz's hymn presents traditional affirmations of God's agency as a reason for Job to be optimistic about God's intervention on his own behalf.

3.3.3.2.2 Instruction in the First Speech of Bildad

Bildad's instruction in his first speech also juxtaposes the wicked with the righteous on the basis of an analogy with a plant in 8:11-19, by which he portrays the fragile existence and ultimate fate of the wicked through both cause-and-effect argumentation and metaphor while also developing the hope of the pious through metaphorical representation. Although the analogy is riddled with interpretive dilemmas,[526] I will attempt to show how Bildad's instruction serves to renew Job's confidence in the moral order. More surprisingly, and unlike the other friends, Bildad appears to incorporate particular details relating to Job's situation in a way that acknowledges the kinds of difficulties the righteous sometimes face.

In the first half of his analogy (vv. 11-15), Bildad shows the wicked thus have no source for life and—no basis for hope. Bildad begins by asking, "Can papyrus grow

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[525] Newsom, "Job," 381.

[526] On vv. 11-15, see, especially, the discussions in Habel (*The Book of Job*, 176-178) and Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 90-94, 521-522).

where there is no marsh? Can reeds flourish where there is no water?" (v. 11). Where

there is no water as a source of life, the plant will die, as Bildad illustrates in v. 12:

"While it is not cut down in its flower, before any other plant it withers" (עדנו באבו לא יקטף

ולפני כל חציר ייבש). Bildad uses a rhetorical question and a metaphorical comparison (vv.

11-12) to illustrate the cause-and-effect relationship that justifies his conclusion in v. 13:

"Such are the paths of all who forget God; and the hope of the godless shall perish" (כן

ארחות כל שכחי אל ותקות חנף תאבד).[527] Similar metaphorical comparisons are also present in

Ps 1:3-4 and Jer 17:5-8, where they are used to reinforce the stability, vitality, and

persistence of the righteous (Ps 1:3; Jer 17:7-8) over the difficult, unstable, and fragile

existence that characterizes the wicked (Ps 1:4; Jer 17:5-6).[528]

With a different series of images, Bildad continues to develops the tenuous

existence of the godless, highlighting their ill-founded confidence (כסל; v. 14a). Although

verse 14a is difficult to interpret, if one relies on the synonymous parallelism evident in

verse 14b where the "trust" of the godless is compared to a "spider's web" (ובית עכביש

מבטחו), its meaning comes more clearly into view: the "confidence" (כסל; v. 14a) of the

ungodly is equally fragile.[529] Verse 15 reinforces the precarious existence of the godless

by shifting from the spider's "house" (בית עכביש) to *his* "house" (ביתו), which collapses

under his weight as he leans against it and grasps for in vain (v. 15b). With this final

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[527] See my discussions of the metaphor of the "way" or "path" in Chapters 2 and 4 (under "Dominating Bodies").

[528] As Newsom ("Job," 402) observes, "God is implicitly compared to the water essential for life, whereas 'those who forget God' and 'the godless' correspond to the plants."

[529] יקט is a *hapax legomenon*. *BDB* (876) assumes קוט "break, snap," but recognizes the parallelism with בית עכביש and suggests "a fragile thing." In light of the parallelism with v. 14b, which suggests a noun, I am inclined to follow Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 91) who suggests "threads" (קורים). See also Habel, *The Book of Job*, 169; and Pope's discussion (*Job*, 67-68).

image, Bildad vividly conveys the ultimate demise of the ungodly.[530]

Although the latter half of Bildad's parable (vv. 16-19), which is particularly difficult to interpret, has been understood as a second comparison between the godless and the plant,[531] a continuation of the comparison in vv. 11-15, a good case can be made for reading it as providing a contrast to the wicked where the righteous are shown both to endure and survive tragedy.[532] Despite the passage's interpretive quandaries, there are at least two reasons for reading Bildad's parable as providing Job with a basis for hope and confidence. First, Bildad's preference for contrast throughout his speech supports such an interpretive move. He has already juxtaposed the fate of Job's children with Job's potential restoration (vv. 4, 5-7). Second, following his analogy, Bildad will conclude with a description of God's relationship to the righteous and the wicked in v. 20, which he then applies to Job's situation by contrasting his well-being with that of his enemies in vv. 21-22.

Bildad's contrast between the righteous and the wicked in his analogy with the plant is also consistent with the representation of this motif elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Ps. 1:3-4; Jer. 17:5-8), although Bildad appears to develop this image in slightly different ways. Initially, Bildad's representation of this motif is consistent with what a sage would normally expect of descriptions of the righteous. Like the tree described in Jeremiah 17:8, which "sends out its roots by the stream" (על־יובל ישלח שרשיו)

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[530] As Driver (*Job*, 81) notes, Bildad's description may also include "his family, establishment, and the resources implied in the possession of an estate."

[531] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 207-10; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 69-71, 219-29.

[532] Cf. 5:19; see n. 533 and my discussion of v. 20 below.

and "does not fear when heat comes" (יראה כי־יבא חם),[533] the plant Bildad describes is

"moist" or "well-watered" (רטב). While receiving the light it needs, the plant is not

overwhelmed by the heat of the day (lit., "before the sun" [לפני־שמש]; v. 16a). Here Bildad

contrasts the parched and withering plant representing the ungodly in verses 11-12 with

an image of the righteous, or the "well-watered" plant. Moreover, as with Jeremiah's tree,

which "sends out its roots" (ישלח שרסיו; 17:8), the "young shoots" of Bildad's plant

"spring out" (ינקתו תצא; v. 16b), confirming its vitality and promise. Such a representation

of the righteous—with images of life, light, and growth—is common to the wisdom

tradition.

One does not, however, often find in the wisdom tradition an explicit

acknowledgement of the difficulties faced by the pious, which is what Bildad introduces

in v. 17, where he describes adversity in terms of the the plant's "roots" being "entwined

in the stoneheap" (על גל שרשיו יסבכו; v. 17a) with the plant itself gazing at a "house of

stones" (בית אבנים יחזה; v. 17b).[534] The latter image of the house of stones is one of

stability and strength that contrasts with the fragile images associated with the dwelling

of the ungodly in verses 14b-15.[535] With this image Bildad also begins to develop the

hope of the pious in a more nuanced fashion with respect to Job as he relates the difficult

circumstances the plant must endure, since "[it] has no fertile soil in which to grow, but...

is hardy enough to make its way even through rocks."[536] Bildad continues this motif in

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[533] Reading Qere יִרְאֶה for Ketiv ירא.
[534] Cf. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 167; Newsom, "Job," 403; and Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 70-71. On emendations, see Pope, *Job*, 67; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 92-93;
[535] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 403.
[536] Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 93.

verse 18, where he describes the plant as being torn (lit., "swallowed"; בלע) from its

place, an image by which he acknowledges the severity of Job's calamity.[537]

The ultimate contrast between the two parables, however, is found in the

conclusion to the second, which does not end on the same tragic note as that of the

ungodly. Verse 19 appears to illustrate instead a life that is restored or renewed after

tragedy: "See, this is the joy of his way (משוש דרכו), that from the dust later it will spring

forth" (ומעפר אחר יצמחו).[538] In light of the similarities between Bildad's parable and the use

of this motif elsewhere to contrast the righteous with the wicked, it is unnecessary to

interpret this verse as ironic.[539] The final image appears to be one of recovery or

restoration: the story of the plant is not over but is beginning anew. As Habel observes,

"The rocky ground which devours the plant may deny it ever saw the extended tendrils or

roots, but the plant rejoices in the new life that rises from the dust.... It is the very

nature… of this plant that it has the capacity to rise from the dust of death (cf. 7:21;

14:8-9)."[540] Like the final note of Eliphaz's hymn, Bildad's illustrates the resiliency of the

pious by pointing to the open-ended expectation of hope.

Bildad's concludes the parable of the two plants with a short summary (v. 20) of

God's relationship to the righteous and the wicked: "Surely, God will not reject (מאס) a

blameless person (תם), nor take (חזק) the hands of evildoers (מרשים)." Bildad notes that it

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[537] Newsom, "Job," 403. As with Eliphaz's reference to God's deliverance and protection in six and seven troubles (5:19), Bildad's analogy shows that the friends were not oblivious to the fact that the righteous could experience terrible difficulties.

[538] See, especially, Newsom, "Job," 403; Janzen, *Job*, 86; cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 209-10.

[539] Driver, *Job*, 82; cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 200.

[540] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 177-178.

is not the blameless, like Job (cf. 1:1, 8; 2:3), who are "rejected" (cf. Ps 15:4b), but the

wicked (Pss 15:4a; 53:6 [5]; cf. Gen 18:25). God "takes the hand," not of the wicked, but

of the righteous. The image of taking another's hand is used elsewhere to describe God's

deliverance (Gen 19:16), protection (Isa 41:13; 42:6), and favor or guidance (45:1; cf.

51:18). If the righteous experience horrific challenges, God is their sustaining presence

(cf. Isa 41:13).[541]

Although Eliphaz and Bildad use different forms in their attempts to console Job,

they share common goals. Both attempt to stop Job's grief through rational means,

offering reassuring instruction as to how the world works by juxtaposing the fate of the

wicked with the hope of the pious (4:6-11; 5:9-16; 8:4-7; 11-22), structuring their

arguments through cause-and-effect relationships (4:8-9; 8:4, 11-12), and providing a

larger framework that helps Job think through his situation more carefully (4:6-9; 5:3-7).

They not only emphasize the reliability of the moral order through their juxtaposition of

these motifs, but situate Job within it (4:6-11; 8:4-7, 21-22), prompting him to understand

his own experience in relation to the narratives of the righteous and the wicked. Eliphaz

takes for granted that Job shares their understanding of the moral order; Bildad appears to

be having doubts. And while Eliphaz is more confident than Bildad in assigning Job a

particular identity within that order (4:6), both try through their instruction not only to

restore hope and confidence to Job (4:6; 5:16; 8:11-22), but also to motivate him to

accept their advice (5:9-16; 8:6bc-7, 20-22). To provide Job with a basis for that hope,

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[541] I will address the last two verses (vv. 21-22), where Bildad applies his observations to Job, in the following section as I examine how the friends seek to reconstruct for Job a future that is consistent with his sapiential identity.

both emphasize God's role as guarantor of the moral order in destroying the wicked (4:9;

8:4, 22), maintaining the natural order (5:9-10), intervening in human affairs (5:12-16),

and supporting the righteous (8:20a; cf. v. 20b). Finally, while acknowledging that the

poor and the righteous experience adversity (5:18; 8:16-18), both illustrate through their

instruction—Eliphaz through his hymn and Bildad through his analogy—hope's

expectant and open-ended nature, whether through the poor man awaiting God's

intervention (5:16), or the plant that is just beginning to sprout again (8:19).

3.3.3.3 Envisioning Job's Future: The Hope of the Pious as Consolation

Throughout the first cycle the friends draw on the narratives of the righteous and

the wicked to reaffirm the moral order and offer Job a basis for hope in his present

circumstances. In the conclusions to their speeches, they tell the story of the righteous

again, only this time *as Job's story*, constructing a new narrative intended to prompt Job

to imagine how his own story might end. The significance of these narratives is two-fold.

First, as I noted earlier, in directing Job's attention to a future in which he is restored,

they serve as a hermeneutical key for interpreting the intervening material as consolatory.

Second, through these narratives the friends present their own therapeutic vision of what

"the good life" of a sage might look like. Although they often use similar imagery to

describe the deliverance, security, and general confidence Job will experience, they

configure their narratives of Job's future—and his identity within them—differently,

providing additional insight into the dynamics of their dialogue. To highlight the subtle

shifts that occur between the speeches of Eliphaz and Bildad and that of Zophar, it will be

helpful to look at how the friends offer consolation in the conclusions to their speeches in the first cycle.

3.3.3.3.1 The First Speech of Eliphaz

While Eliphaz's image of Job's restoration in 5:19-26 forms part of the motivation for accepting the divine correction of which he speaks (5:17; cf. v. 18), its consolatory function is two-fold: It not only reaffirms the world's meaningfulness by locating Job in the hope of the pious motif as a demonstration of the principle of justice; it recasts Job's confusing and frightening world as benevolent. Since Eliphaz provides the most extensively developed representation of the hope of the pious, he may also be the most confident in his reassurance to Job.

What Eliphaz envisions for Job's restoration, which he describes in verse 19-26, serves not only as an illustration of the kind of happiness Job will enjoy when his well-being is restored, but also represents Eliphaz's attempt to motivate Job to submit to divine discipline. He begins with a macarism ("Happy is…"), offering Job advice and encouraging him not to reject (אל־תמאס) the discipline of the Almighty (v. 17). His initial appeal to the salutary effects of God's reproof (יכח; v. 17) is followed by a brief description of God's restorative activity in this process: "he wounds but he binds up; he strikes but his hands heal" (v. 18). As Newsom has suggested, verses 17-18 function as a "small narrative" where "the discordance of pain is incorporated into a concordant narrative that ends in healing (v. 18), the whole grasped together under the figure of

mūsar, moral formation through discipline or chastisement."[542]

By situating his narrative of Job's future in the context of his advice to embrace God's correction (5:17-18),[543] Eliphaz briefly addresses the issue of Job's suffering, using characteristically sapiential language to locate Job's distress within the relational framework of God's discipline. The image of God Eliphaz invokes is that of a loving father who disciplines his son (Prov. 3:11-12; Deut. 8:5; cf. Prov. 20:30; 22:15; 23:13-14). While he generally avoids addressing particular details relating to Job's circumstances (cf. 4:3-5), Eliphaz does at least briefly acknowledge Job's pain in an attempt to integrate it into a coherent narrative, which he considers to be "part of the educative scheme of El."[544]

Eliphaz, however, focuses less on God's correction than on God's agency in providing the illustrious future he envisions for Job. In the following chapter, I will attempt to show how Job communicates his own loss of control, particularly through the image of what I refer to as "dominating bodies." In contrast to Job's incapacity or personal agency, Eliphaz emphasizes God's intervention in vv. 19-21a, just as he drew Job's attention to God's role in the destruction of the wicked in 4:9. Here, however, he provides a detailed account of God's acts of deliverance and the divine protection Job will enjoy as a result (vv. 19-21a).[545]

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[542] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 104.

[543] Reading Qere וידיו for Ketiv וידו.

[544] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 134.

[545] As Newsom ("Job," 381) observes: "The imagery moves from mere survival in v. 20 (not dying from famine, not being killed in war) to secure protection in v. 21 (being hidden from slander and its destructive power) to active confidence in v. 22 (the ability to laugh fearlessly at the disasters of famine and predatory animals)." The effect of this, she explains, is that it "evokes something of the life-giving power of God, which sustains a person even in calamity, the inextinguishable source of strength that prevents a

Eliphaz devotes most of his narrative, however, not to God's intervention in Job's affairs, but to creating an elaborate representation of Job's future that reflects the friends' consolatory goals. Eliphaz's imagery reflects the physical, emotional, and psychological well-being Job should expect to experience (5:21b-26). Eliphaz moves Job beyond his present circumstances by portraying him as one without fear (ירא; v. 21b) in the face of destruction ("when it comes"; כי יבוא)—one whose assurance of well-being even enables him to laugh at "destruction and famine" (v. 22a; cf. Prov. 31:25b).[546] Eliphaz does not deny malevolence in the world, or in the world of Job's future he envisions, but instead focuses on Job's positive emotional and psychological state as indicated in the responses he describes in verses 21b-22b ("you shall not fear…," v. 21b; "you shall laugh…," v. 22a; "you shall not fear…," v. 22b).

Despite whatever threatening elements exist in the world, because the reality Eliphaz configures for Job is highly benevolent, Job can be confident in his future. Eliphaz develops Job's benevolent world in three ways: by describing Job's relationship to 1) the natural world and 2) the human world; and, 3) by providing an account of Job's "abundant" death.[547]

In emphasizing Job's relationship to the natural order, Eliphaz does not deny that sources of anxiety exist but focuses instead on Job's response.[548] The "wild animals of the

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person who is gravely suffering from shattering entirely and even enables that person to flourish again."

[546] The assurances of deliverance from famine, death, and the tongue are prevalent in psalmic piety. Cf. Ps 31:21[20]; 33:19; 49:16[15]; 52:4, 6[2, 4]; 64:4[3]; 103:4; 105:16-17; 120:2; 144:10. Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 151-152.

[547] See Mathewson, *Death and Survival in the Book of Job*, 49, 87-91, 115-118, 120, 166, 168.

[548] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 136.

earth" (v. 22b), or of "the field" (v. 23b), will remain, but Job will not "fear" them (v.

22b); rather, they "will be at peace" with him (שלם; v. 23b). Moreover, he will "be in

covenant with the stones of the field" (כי עם אבני השׂדה בריתך; v. 23a). Although this

expression has troubled commentators, as Newsom observes, "[t]he notion of a covenant

with the stones of the field... clearly suggests the reversal of the ancient conflict between

human cultivation and the earth's resistance, described in somewhat different images in

Gen. 3:17*b*-18."[549] With this image, Eliphaz also anticipates Bildad's description of the

plant that will live on despite its existence among the stones (8:17; cf. 2 Kgs 3:19, 25;

Matt. 13:5). Although the ground will not be clear in Job's future, it will be fertile.

Eliphaz casts Job's relationship with humans in terms of the security he will

experience, emphasizing the psychological transformation Job will undergo through his

repetition of "you shall know..." in verses 24-25 (וידעת). Again, his vision of Job's future

vividly illustrates his physical and emotional well-being, only in this case directing Job's

attention to his household ("you shall know that your tent is safe"; v. 24a) and his

possessions ("you shall inspect [פקד; cf. Jer. 23:2] your pasture and miss nothing"; v.

24b), which are secure from every threat.[550] Moreover, with the images in verse 25, where

Job rests assured that his descendants will be numerous like the "grass of the earth" (cf.

Gen. 15:5), Eliphaz shows that Job will not only enjoy safety and confidence but will also

be pleased or satisfied with his life.

In the final image of his narrative, Eliphaz further configures Job's benevolent

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[549] Newsom, "Job," 381.
[550] As Clines (*Job 1-20*, 152) observes, "Life at its center and on its fringes will be equally secure."

world by briefly describing Job's death, which is significant, since the death of the

righteous is only rarely mentioned in the wisdom literature.[551] Although Proverbs at times

alludes to their death when, for example, referring to their progeny (Prov. 13:22; 20:7) or

the memory of their name (10:7), it never describes the death of the righteous explicitly.

And why should it? Righteousness delivers from death (Prov. 10:2a; 11:4; cf. 13:14;

14:27); the pious, who are "established forever" (Prov. 10:25; cf. 10:30), experience lives

free from the threats of the wicked and calamity, more generally: "In the path of

righteousness there is life; in walking its path there is no death" (NRSV; 12:28).[552]

However, in keeping with Eliphaz's willingness to acknowledge negative aspects of

reality, or what might be considered normal sources of anxiety, here he chooses to

include how Job's future will end in v 26. As Dan Mathewson explains:

> If there are no other statements of the death of the righteous in the life/piety/

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[551] As Dan Mathewson (*Death and Survival in the Book of Job*, 88) observes: "the symbolic placement of the biological necessity of death among the righteous rarely—almost never—receives overt description. It must be gleaned from various narrative and poetic details, both positive and negative."

[552] Cf. Prov 19:23. The second line of 12:28 reads literally, "But the way of path not death," which the NRSV, ESV, TNK, and NIV follow. The NIV reads "is immortality." BDB (39) notes "In the way of righteousness is life, and in the pathway thereof אַל־מָוֶת there is *no-death!*" but suggests אַל־מָוֶת is an error for אֶל־. In fact, the most significant issue in translating this verse is that אַל is elsewhere used to negate verbs, not nouns. This verse is problematic, however. Most commentators choose to emend the text in some fashion so that the line is antithetical. Cf. Fox, *Proverbs 10-31*, 996; Murphy, *Proverbs*, 88, n. 28a; Tremper Longman III, *Proverb* (Baker Commentary on the Old Testament: Wisdom and Psalms; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006), 269; McKane, *Proverbs*, 451. Mitchell Dahood ("Immortality in Proverbs 12:28" *Biblica* 41 [1960], 176-81), however, has pointed to a nearly identical construction in Ugaritic in II Aqhat 6:25-32, where "life" (*ḥym*) and "not death" (*blmt*) occur in parallel. Bruce Waltke (*The Book of Proverbs 1-15*, [NICOT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005], 543-545) takes 12:28 to refer to immortality. Bruce Vawter ("Intimations of Immortality in the Old Testament," *JBL* 91 [1972]: 158-71) notes, however, that immortality does not necessarily follow in the case of Prov 12:28. Vawter (169) suggests that "the treading of the path of the righteous is no death," concluding that "[i]n whatever guise, death is never the fruit of righteousness." Kenneth L. Barker ("The Value of Ugaritic for Old Testament Studies," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 133 (1976), 119-129) has argued (127) that the Ugaritic *bl-mt* and the Hebrew אל־מות are synonyms for "life." Barker (127) suggests translating v. 28b as "in its pathway there is no death" or "the journey of her pathway is no death," citing Derek Kidner, *The Proverbs* (Chicago: Inter-Varsity Press, 1964), 100. R. B. Y. Scott,. *Proverbs and Ecclesiastes* [AB 18; Garden City: Doubleday, 1965], 91-92) translates the verse: "On the road of righteousness there is life; and the treading of its path is deathlessness."

relationship complex, Eliphaz provides one, announcing that the righteous person who is saved from untimely and calamitous death, 'shall go to the grave at a ripe old age, as a sheaf comes up in its season' (5:26). The image of the sheaf is at once an image of abundance (fertility, crops), nourishment, and fullness (completion of the life-cycle). Although this image of the abundant death of the righteous is more-or-less implicit in the symbolization of abundant life, Eliphaz makes it overt, and therefore offers to Job an entirely coherent and proper symbolization of 'good' death.[553]

Rather than being "untimely" or "calamitous," Job's death will be predictably abundant. After his emphasis on the kind of confidence that comes from knowing (vv. 24a, 25a; cf. v. 27b), Eliphaz attempts to configure Job's conception of life, and even death itself. The effect is to provide an unambiguous and timely ("in its season," בעתו; v. 26c) ending to Job's story, describing it as the conclusion to a long, full, and satisfying life.

3.3.3.3.2 The First Speech of Bildad

Bildad configures his hope of the pious narrative as a vision of Job's future, briefly developed (8:21-22) from the conclusion to his analogy of the two plants (8:11-20): "Surely, God will not reject a blameless person (תם), nor take the hands of evildoers (מרעים)" (v. 20). The conclusion, as noted above, serves to reassert God as the guarantor of the moral order with a brief description God's relationship to the righteous (v. 20a) and the wicked (v. 20b). Bildad applies this observation to the kind of personal transformation Job will experience in verses 21-22.

While Bildad's description of Job's future is shorter than Eliphaz's elaborate account (5:19-26), one should not necessarily assume that "the happy ending he foresees is more ambiguous and qualified."[554] Bildad does not make his concluding assurance

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[553] Dan Mathewson, *Death and Survival in the Book of Job*, 88.
[554] Balentine, *Job*, 101; cf. the discussion in Hoffman, *A Blemished Perfection*, 120-121.

conditional (cf. 8:5-7). Rather, as noted above, his analogy of the plants functions

positively to encourage Job to assume a hopeful and optimistic outlook despite his

present situation: Job's story ultimately becomes one of overcoming difficult

circumstances and surviving disaster (cf. 5:19-16).

In consoling Job with his brief narrative, Bildad directs Job's attention both to

God's ability to transform his disposition (v. 21) and to the future of Job's enemies (v.

22a) and the wicked, more generally (v. 22b). Unlike Eliphaz's dramatic representation

of divine intervention and the response he expects it to elicit from Job (5:19-25), Bildad

focuses more narrowly on Job's disposition, describing God's transformation in terms of

Job's affective and behavioral responses: "He will fill your mouth with laughter and your

lips with shouting" (8:21). While laughter and shouting are elsewhere signs of assurance,

triumph, and restoration, only here is God directly responsible for creating such a

response in an individual.[555] When what Bildad imagines for Job's future is placed in the

context of his earlier rebuke of Job's improper speech (8:2), God replaces the potentially

destructive wind (רוח כביר) that has filled Job's mouth with "laughter" instead.

In addition to the change in Job's disposition, those who might pose some threat

to Job are rendered powerless. Bildad first addresses Job's relationship to his enemies

directly and in personal terms ("Those who hate you will be clothed with shame"), before

moving outward to the wicked, more generally ("and the tent of the wicked will be no

more" [v. 22]). While the threat the wicked would have posed to the righteous is rarely

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[555] Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 210; Newsom, "Job," 403. Cf. also, Job 5:22; 33:26; Prov. 31:25; 1 Sam. 4:5, 6; 2 Sam. 6:15; Ps. 33:3; Ps 126:2a.

acknowledged in the wisdom literature,[556] which focuses instead on the life and security

the righteous enjoy, it is often implicit in the kinds of activities attributed to them, such as

"shedding blood" (Prov. 1:16), "delighting" in evil (Prov. 2:14), "doing wrong" (Prov.

4:16), making others stumble (Prov. 4:16b), and waiting to ambush the innocent (Prov.

1:11b).[557] The first image, as Balentine observes, is one where "[t]he metaphor envisions

shame as a garment that signifies disgrace and humiliation."[558] It is one of diminishment,

"of being put to shame or being reduced to insignificance," the end of which is ultimately

non-existence (cf. v. 22b).[559] In contrast to Job's previous speech where he spoke of his

impending death as a time after which God would seek him yet he "would be no more"

(7:21; איננִי), Bildad here uses the same expression to describe "the tent of the wicked":

Job's enemies "will be no more" (8:22; איננִּי).

3.3.3.3.3 The First Speech of Zophar

That Zophar has not completely abandoned his consolatory efforts is evident in

the vision he offers of Job's future, in which he describes the emotional, psychological,

and physical well-being Job will experience if he is restored. Zophar no longer appears to

assume, as Eliphaz and Bildad do, that Job shares the friends' assumptions about the

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[556] Such a threat is implicit, for example, in Eliphaz's use of leonine imagery in 4:10-11 where the anxiety that is caused by their roar (שאגה; 4:10a) and growl (lwq; 4:10a) is cancelled out by broken teeth (4:10b), the lack of prey (4:11a), and scattered cubs (4:11b). Clines observes (*Job 1-20*, 128) how the wicked in 4:10-11 have "been metamorphosed *into* lions; they are not *like* lions, but *are* lions, and as lions they may at any time starve to death. What is at issue," he suggests, "[is] the unforeseeable calamity that can strike at any moment" (italics original).

[557] Such language is, however, familiar to the psalmist. Cf. Ps 9:14[13]; 18:18[17]; 21:9[8]; 35:26; 84:11[10]; 132:18. Cf. G. W. Anderson, "Enemies and Evildoers in the Book of Psalms," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 48 (1965-66): 18-29); C. Barth, *Introduction to the Psalms* (trans. R. A. Wilson; Oxford: Blackwell, 1961), 49-55.

[558] Balentine, *Job*, 156. Cf. Jer 14:3; 22:22; Ps 35:26;

[559] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 211.

moral order, since, with the exception of the future he imagines as possible for Job

(11:15-19; cf. v. 20), he offers no instruction concerning the reliability of the moral order.

Instead, Zophar emphasizes the "secrets of wisdom" (תשלמות חכמה; 11:6) and the

"mystery of God" (החקר אלוה; 11:7; cf. 5-9) in response to Job's inquiries (cf. 10:2).

Moreover, unlike Eliphaz and Bildad, who urge Job to be hopeful in his present

circumstances (4:6-7; 5:8-16, 17-26; 8:5-7, 16-20, 21-22; 11:15-19), Zophar presents

hope *only* in the context of Job's restoration (v. 18b), which will only occur after he has

embrace the friends' advice to engage in the practices of piety (11:13-14).[560]

Even so, Zophar has *not* given up on the possibility that Job will be restored, since

he assumes that a fundamentally righteous person will experience God's benevolence.

The imagery Zophar uses in vv. 15-19 to illustrate the kinds of changes Job can expect to

take place are characteristic of the pious more generally, as I note below.

The first change Zophar describes suggests both a change in Job's mood, or

disposition, and in his relationship to God: "For you will lift up your face [פניך] without

blemish [ממום]" (v. 15a). Faces that are bowed are a sign of defeat or shame (Ps 21:13

[12]; cf. Ps 34:6 [5]). In the context of Cain's anger over God's disregard for his offering,

his countenance (or "face") is described as having fallen (v. 5; ויחר לקין מאד ויפלו פניו).

Yahweh, however, responds by showing Cain that it is possible to move beyond his

dejected mood by responding in an appropriate manner: "If you do well is there not an

uplift?" (v. 7; הלוא אם תיטיב שאת). The change in mood is indicated by a physical response,

an "uplift" of the "fallen" face (cf. 10:15). The lifting of Job's face, in this context, may

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[560] Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 270.

be an outward, physical demonstration that follows from the sense of "stability" or

"security" that has displaced Job's "fear" (v. 15b).[561]

The lifting of one's face, however, also involves a corresponding change in one's

relationship to others—or, in Job's case, to God. Newsom has highlighted the relational

dimension of this expression (cf. 2 Sam 2:22; Gen 4:6-7), showing how the notion of a

physical "blemish" (מום), extended through metaphor, is used to suggest "moral

disfigurement," which "[u]nlike the physical blemish, which cannot be altered… is

susceptible to removal by the practices described."[562] As she suggests, by referring to

Job's response as a lifting of his "face," Zophar uses the language of intimacy to

characterize Job's relationship to God (cf. 10:15).[563] Eliphaz will make this change more

explicit in his final speech, where he describes Job as not only delighting himself in the

Almighty, but also as lifting his face to God (22:26).

The overall psychological portrait Zophar configures is one where "confidence"

(בטח; v. 18a) and "hope" (תקוה; v. 18b), which follow from Job's secure existence (v.

15b), have replaced his fear (v. 15c). By using an image of poured or cast metal, Zophar

represents Job as "firmly established."[564] The contrasting image of instability is provided

by Job's "trouble," represented by flowing water in v. 16: "For you will forget your

trouble (עמל) and remember it as waters that have passed." Job has used the term (עמל) in

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[561] Cf. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 124) who interprets this as "to be cheerful, happy, self-confident."

[562] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 111.

[563] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 111.

[564]Here, the term מצק, a Hophal participle, is taken from יצק, a term used in metal working to describe cast—or literally, "poured"—metal (Ex 25:12; 26:37; 36:36; 37:3, 13; 38:5, 27; 1 Kgs 7:24, 30, 46). The image is one of stability or security. Cf. *HALOT*, 478, which suggests "firmly established," used in this sense only in Job 11:15, although יצוק is used to suggest "firm" in Job 41:15-16ab.

cursing the night of his birth (3:10), in characterizing human existence more generally (3:20), and in describing his sleepless nights (7:3). With the soothing and tranquil image of passing waters, Zophar suggests that Job's "trouble" will be washed away. Moreover, he explores Job's psychological relationship to his pain by "placing in synonymous parallelism the polar opposites" of "remembering" and "forgetting."[565] As Clines observes, Job's "remembering" relates to "a pain that is past and gone," where "he will 'forget' it not in the sense of losing it completely from his memory, but in the sense of its no longer having any power to affect him."[566] The consolatory image Zophar provides, therefore, is of pain that "is not totally forgotten... but is remembered as powerless."[567]

Zophar also uses images of light, darkness, and failing sight to frame his juxtaposition of Job within the hope of the pious narrative he offers (11:15-19, esp. 17-19) and the fate of the wicked he describes (v. 20).[568] Job's life, Zophar observes, "will be brighter than the noonday; its darkness like the morning" (v. 17).[569] Responding to Job's expectation of death as a place "where light is like darkness" (ותפע כמו־אפל; 10:22), Zophar suggests instead that even the darkest moments of Job's life (lit., "life-span"; חלד) will radiate with light, using an image that is characteristic of the righteous: "the path of the righteous is like the light of the dawn, shinning brighter until full day" (וארח צדיקים כאור נגה הולך ואור עד־נכון היום; Prov 4:18; cf. Job 22:28).[570] For the sage, light

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[565] Here I have rearranged slightly Clines observation (*Job 1-20*, 269).

[566] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 269.

[567] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 269.

[568] This type of contrast is characteristic of the wisdom tradition where "the hope (תוחלת) of the righteous is gladness and the hope (תקוה) of the wicked perishes (אבד)" (Prov. 10: 28).

[569] For "its darkness" I am here reading תְּעֻפָה for תֵעֻפָה'.

[570] Cf. Ps 37:6: "He will cause your vindication to shine like the light, and the justice of your cause like the noonday" **(והוציא כאור צדקך ומשפטך כצהרים).** See also my discussion in Chapter 2 of "light" as it is

not only symbolizes life but illuminates the path of wisdom, making the way of the righteous clear.[571]

Zophar concludes with a description of Job's restored hope (קוה), which will follow from his persistent and complete sense of safety (בטח; v. 18b). To reinforce the security that will replace Job's vulnerability,[572] Zophar develops his claim, twice referring to the security Job will experience at night in v. 18b ("you will rest securely"; לבטח תשכב) and v. 19a ("you will lie down, and no one will make you afraid"; ורבצת ואין מחריד; v. 19b). With Job securely established, Zophar notes, "many will seek your favor" (v. 19b).

By juxtaposing the hope of the pious (vv. 15-19), in which Zophar has tentatively (vv. 13-14) cast Job, with the fate of the wicked in the final verse (v. 20), Zophar chooses to end on an ominous note that may serve to warn Job that the fate of the wicked may be his own.[573] But, while one should not rush too quickly to associate Job with the wicked.[574] Balentine notes that "*If* Zophar had concluded his speech with v. 19, *then* one might

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associated with the "way" of the righteous. The image of Job's life as "brighter than the noonday" and "its darkness like the morning" reflects the reversal of a similar image used by Eliphaz to describe those whose schemes God has frustrated: "They meet with darkness at day and grope at noon as at night" (v. 17; cf. 5:14; Isa. 58:10b).

[571] See Job 22:28; Prov 4:18; 6:23; Prov 13:9; Prov 29:13; Ps 56:14 [13]; cf. Job 3:23; 18:5-6, 18; In contrast to Job who has complained about his frustrated confidence in the friends (6:20) and the hopelessness of his life (7:6), Zophar notes that Job's life will be marked by a newfound confidence "because there is hope" (11:18a; ובטחת כי־יש תקוה).

[572] On Job's vulnerability, see my discussion of the loss of Job's assumptive world in the following chapter.

[573] Zophar concludes his speech in v. 20, as follows: "But the eyes of the wicked will fail; escape will perish for them (מנהם; lit., "from them"); and their hope is a breathing out of life (מפח־נפש)." The last expression is normally understood in one of two ways. Some take it to refer to death (Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 79; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 211; Pope, *Job*, 84; RSV; NRSV; NJB; TNK; ESV; NAS). Others argue the primary concern here is despair. See Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 125; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 271; and Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 203. In light of Job 31:39, Jer 15:9, and Sir 30:12, the latter is preferable.

[574] See Habel, *The Book of Job*, 211, where he suggests that "[i]f Job persists in being one of the 'wicked/guilty,'" he will find his own fate in Zophar's description of the wicked in v. 20. See also Clines (*Job 1-20*, 271), who suggests on the basis of v. 6 that "Job is already headed for the fate of the wicked."

conclude that his primary goal was to comfort and encourage Job."[575] Zophar has

continued with the consolatory goals of the friends. Unlike Bildad, however, who sought

to reassure Job with his description of the wicked in personal terms in the conclusion to

his speech,[576] Zophar's representation, although not directed explicitly at Job, is more

ambiguous with three final images illustrate the fate of the wicked: diminishing sight,

their loss of a place of refuge or escape, and their hopeless despair. Instead, the future

Zophar has described in relation to Job remains uncertain—at least, until Job embraces

his advice.[577]

3.4 Conclusion

While Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar's representations of Job's future reflect

common concerns with his emotional, psychological, and physical well-being, they

provide different portraits of his restoration. Eliphaz's account, which is the longest and

most reassuring narrative of the friends, is consistent with the overall tone of his speech.

After briefly locating Job's suffering in the context of divine discipline, and attempting to

integrate Job's painful past into a coherent narrative, Eliphaz focuses especially on the

kind of well-being Job can expect to experience. Both Eliphaz and Bildad emphasize

God's role in Job's restoration as well as Job's emotional response. The image Eliphaz

offers is one in which Job experiences divine deliverance (vv. 19-20) and protection,

although Eliphaz makes no explicit mention of the wicked. Fearless in the face of disaster

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[575] Balentine, *Job*, 193.

[576] As noted above, this occurs in two ways: First, those who "hate" Job will be "clothed with shame" (v. 22a); and, second, although Job had lamented that he would soon "be no more" (7:21; אֵינֶנִּי), Bildad observes with respect to the wicked more generally that "they will be no more" (8:22; אֵינָם).

[577] See n. 569 above.

(v. 21b), Job is able to laugh at destruction and famine (v. 22a). Moreover, in Eliphaz's

configuration of Job's future, he lives at peace with the natural world (vv. 22b-23) and

with an assurance of his safety (v. 24), fecundity (v. 25), and as Mathewson suggests, his

"abundant death" (5:26).[578] While Bildad's account is briefer, he too emphasizes God's

role in Job's restoration, but moves beyond Eliphaz's description of Job's emotional

response by suggesting that Job's laughter and shouting will themselves be the direct

result of God's transforming activity ("He will fill you mouth with laughter..."; v. 21).

Moreover, God will also take an active role in relation to Job's enemies, clothing them

with shame (v. 22). Although the brevity of his description may point to the growing

tension in the dialogue, Bildad remains hopeful of Job's restoration.

Zophar's narrative of restoration provides an interesting point of departure from

those of Eliphaz and Bildad. The change he anticipates in Job is also similar to that of

Eliphaz in that he expects an emotional and psychological transformation that will

provide Job with a deep sense of security (v. 15b, 19b), confidence (v. 18a, 18d), hope (v.

18b), and especially rest (v. 18d, 19a) in the absence or fear (v. 15c). Zophar is, however,

the only friend to develop the interpersonal dimension of Job's future (cf. 5:25), and does

so only briefly, noting that many will seek his favor (11:19b).

What is missing from Zophar's description of Job's future, including his

description of the wicked, is any mention of God's agency. While Eliphaz acknowledges

the self-defeating nature of the wicked (4:8); and Eliphaz and Bildad note God's

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[578] Matthewson, *Death and Survival in Job*, 87-89, 91.

intervention in their destruction (4:9; 5:12-14; 8:4, 20b, 22), as well God's transforming activity in relation to the righteous (5:11, 14-15, 17-18, 19-20a; 8:20a, 21); Zophar offers instead a brief, impersonal description of the fate of the wicked (11:20). Ending on this final note may suggest that Zophar is at least more cautious about the possibility of Job's restoration.

In response to Job, who no longer shares their understanding of the moral order, Zophar also begins to offer explicit critiques of Job's moral and intellectual arrogance. These critiques will continue into the second cycle where they will be accompanied by more impersonal descriptions of the fate of the wicked. There the focus will shift from God's role in their destruction, which is emphasized in the first cycle, to a view of the wicked as primarily (cf. 20:15b) self-defeating. I would suggest, therefore, that as Job begins to address God, and especially after chaps. 9-10, there is a movement on the part of the friends away from language that emphasizes God's agency and from their attempts to persuade Job to move beyond his grief, to trying to persuade Job of the existence of the moral order—primarily by illustrating, or "making vivid" that order through the fate of the wicked, as I will show in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 4
ARGUING WITH JOB: FROM CONSOLATION TO QUARREL, PART 2

4.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter I argued that the role of the friends, at least initially, is not

adversarial but consolatory. Their speeches in the first cycle follow a pattern of argument

that is similar to what Arthur W. Frank describes as "the restitution narrative."[579] As

Frank explains, the plot of this narrative has three movements that are perhaps best

captured in television advertisements for cold remedies:

> First, the ill person is shown in physical misery and, often though not always, in
> social default... The second movement introduces the remedy... a helper may be
> involved in bringing the remedy, and... a subplot may involve the sufferer's initial
> rejection of the remedy and thus of the helper. Eventually the remedy is taken,
> and the third movement shows physical comfort restored and social duties
> resumed. The success of the remedy [also] validates the helper...[580]

Of course, this storyline is so familiar and desirable that its plot "can be condensed to a

single image, knowing that the reader/viewer will fill in the rest from memory."[581]

Medical tests and procedures, treatment options, and possible outcomes are omitted.

Instead, brochures show images of patients gardening or participating in sports or other

hobbies instead of in treatment or recovery.

The friends' consolatory attempts reveal contours similar to those of Frank's

restitution narrative. The friends first try to correct Job where he is in "social default,"

focusing particularly on his inappropriate speech and distorted views. They offer him the

practices of piety as a remedy, suggesting that he "seek God." And, finally, like the

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[579] See Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller: Body, Illness, and Ethics* (Chicago: The
University of Chicago, 1997).
[580] Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, 79-80.
[581] Arthur W. Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller*, 80.

restitution narrative, they direct Job's attention to the future, where they present him "as good as new" in the context of the "hope of the pious" narratives.

The effectiveness of the friends' efforts, however, depends on an assumed causal relationship between the advice they offer and its expected outcome—or, more specifically, between Job's response to their advice and his future restoration as depicted in their representations of the hope of the pious motif. If Job is to enjoy the glorious future they envision, he must not only engage in the practices of piety they recommend, but also share their assumption that there is, in fact, a cause-and-effect relationship between his character/actions and his ultimate outcome.

That this is no longer the case is something the friends appear to realize only gradually in the first cycle, as I noted in the previous chapter.[582] I have suggested that this recognition leads to a shift in the friends' speeches in the second cycle, as reflected in the changing nature of their critiques as well as the character and content of their speeches. Realizing that Job no longer shares their assumptions about the moral order on which their consolatory strategies depend, they must instead demonstrate its reliability, which, I will argue, they attempt to do through the fate of the wicked narratives that dominate their speeches in the second cycle.

In what follows, I will argue that it is Job rather than the friends who initiates the quarrel. In showing how this occurs, three goals will guide my inquiry. First, I will attempt to show how Job's speeches reflect the loss of basic assumptions about the world,

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[582] See my discussion in chap. 3. Although Eliphaz begins as if Job shares his assumption that character and behavior can influence outcomes, Bildad appears less certain that this is the case. Zophar, near the end of the first cycle, appears to realize that a dramatic shift has occurred in Job's fundamental assumptions. This, of course, is most noticeable in the second cycle after Job's dramatic speech in chaps. 12-14.

which he previously shared with the friends. I will then explore how Job shifts the

dialogue from one of consolatory argument to that of the quarrel by transgressing

sapiential norms for speech and by calling into question the character and wisdom of the

friends. I will then attempt to show how the quarrel ultimately leads to the collapse of

their dialogue.

To begin, I offer a brief overview of Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's research on trauma

and the loss of the assumptive world. This discussion will serve as the broader framework

for my analysis of Job's speeches.

4.2 Trauma and the Loss of the Assumptive World

Ronnie Janoff-Bulman has explored how traumatic events affect victims' basic

assumptions about themselves and the world as well as the tremendous challenges they

face in adapting to these changes. Borrowing the concept of an "assumptive world" from

C. M. Parkes, Janoff-Bulman argues that "at the core of [one's] internal world" there

exists a hierarchically-organized set of assumptions, "a network of diverse theories and

representations" that has developed unself-consciously over time as it has been reinforced

through personal experience.[583] This set of assumptions (or "internal representations")

functions schematically, providing people with expectations about themselves and their

environment, both "reflect[ing] and guid[ing their] interactions... and generally enabl[ing

them] to function effectively."[584] Together, these assumptions offer people what they

need most: a "stable, unified conceptual system" that allows them to "impose order on a

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[583] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.
[584] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.

complex, confusing, chaotic world."[585]

According to Janoff-Bulman, three fundamental assumptions lie at the core of

most people's assumptive worlds. These include expectations that 1) the world is

benevolent; 2) the world is meaningful; and 3) the self is worthy.[586] The first assumption,

that the world is *benevolent*, concerns the extent to which people consider the world, both

personal and impersonal, to be positive or negative; that is, to what extent do good versus

bad events occur? This category "involves an implicit base-rate notion of benevolence/

malevolence," where, for example, a more positive evaluation of the world would likely

result in the assumption that misfortune is fairly uncommon.[587] The second assumption,

whether or not an individual considers the world *meaningful*, is tied to how one believes

outcomes are distributed, whether through 1) a principle of justice based on personal

deservingness; 2) the "controllability" of outcomes based on appropriate or precautionary

behaviors that could minimize one's vulnerability; or, 3) the principle of randomness or

chance. The third basic assumption, the idea that *the self is worthy* (self-worth), is related

to one's self-perception—that is, the extent to which people consider themselves to be

good, moral, and decent individuals. Whether one evaluates the world positively or

negatively depends on some relationship between these three assumptions. So, to

illustrate how these work together, an individual may consider the world highly

malevolent, but if that person also assumes that there is a distributional principle of

justice, and views herself as "good," then perceptions of vulnerability would be

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[585] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 5.

[586] Janoff-Bulman (*Shattered Assumptions*, 6) recognizes that there are exceptions: "Of course, not everyone holds these basic assumptions; yet it appears that most people do... Sometimes what we think we believe and what we really believe are not one and the same."

[587] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 117.

minimized.[588]

Rarely do these basic and fundamental assumptions undergo dramatic change in adulthood. People instead tend to be "cognitively conservative," maintaining or preserving their basic assumptions even in the face of opposing or contradictory evidence.[589] When changes do occur, they are normally "at the level of narrower schemas or mini-theories rather than one's most fundamental assumptions"; they also tend to occur gradually rather than suddenly.[590] Rather than altering existing schemas or developing new ones, individuals are far more likely to reinforce preexisting assumptions by interpreting their worlds in a schema-consistent manner.

As a result, most people go about their daily lives with what Janoff-Bulman refers to as "an illusion of invulnerability."[591] In contrast to victims who experience diminished safety and security, nonvictims often appear unaffected by either the tragedy of others or statistics related to accidents, crime, and illness. Although people are willing to acknowledge, at least theoretically, the high rate of certain types of diseases, or the frequency with which crimes and other types of accidents occur, they do not appear to believe they will ever experience such things.[592] Even in recognizing the possibility that tragedy may strike, a sense of order or "coherence" often remains, allowing people to

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[588] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events: Applications of the Schema Construct," *Social Cognition* 7:2 (1989): 117.

[589] See Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 26-45. Individuals are able to maintain positive ideas about themselves and the world because when change does occur it normally takes the form of either assimilation or accommodation. With assimilation, changes occur in the new information itself to create a sense of congruency with preexisting schemas; in accommodation, those schemas are altered in such a way that the "old" and the "new" are integrated as fully as possible. On assimilation and accommodation, Janoff-Bulman follows J. Piaget, *The Construction of Reality in the Child* (New York: Basic Books, 1971).

[590] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 42.

[591] Italics mine. Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 116.

[592] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 116.

continue to feel safe.[593]

Because these basic assumptions remain unexamined and unquestioned, people are psychologically unprepared for traumatic life events, which are both "out of the ordinary and directly experienced as threats to survival and self-preservation."[594] Since the "new" data of traumatic experience does not fit easily with preexisting expectations, Janoff-Bulman argues that there is often a violation, or even shattering, of the assumptions that had provided the psychological foundation supporting the individual's notions of the world's coherence and stability.

When traumatic experience causes this foundation to give way to a world that is dangerous and frightening, victims often experience a "double dose of anxiety," which includes a recognition that neither one's survival nor one's attempts at self-preservation are guaranteed in light of a threatening and unpredictable world, and an awareness that "the survival of [one's] conceptual system... is in a state of upheaval and disintegration."[595] While victims are attempting to confront threats to their physical survival, which are intensified by their awareness of the fragility of the human condition, their psychological well-being also begins to erode, resulting in "the abrupt disintegration of [their] inner world": "life experiences... shatter their most fundamental assumptions," including their "basic trust in the world" itself.[596]

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[593] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 18. See also Aaron Antonovsky (*Health, Stress, and Coping* [San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1979]), who describes this "sense of coherence" as "as global orientation" that is characterized by a pervasive, enduring, and "dynamic feeling of confidence that one's internal and external environments are predictable" and that more than likely things will work out "as well as can be reasonably expected."

[594] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 53.

[595] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 64.

[596] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 63.

This loss of basic trust in the world is not only reflected in Job's initial speech in chap. 3, but is also evident in his interaction with the friends in the dialogue.

4.2.1 Breaking the Silence of Suffering

The initial and protracted silence that surrounds Job and his friends at the conclusion of the prologue is significant because it captures in Job's experience part of the social nature of suffering, particularly the challenge sufferers face in articulating or "giving voice" to grief and pain. Noting that the "silence of suffering" has become something of a cliché, David Morris argues that this expression remains significant because it acknowledges that, while voiceless metaphorically speaking, "silence [in suffering] becomes a sign for something ultimately unknowable... an experience not just disturbing or repugnant but inaccessible to understanding."[597] Moreover, as he observes, "[v]oice is what gets silenced, represessed, preempted, denied, or at best translated into an alien dialect..."[598] For Morris, however, literature—and, in our case, Job—has the potential to give "this deeper silence a voice."[599]

Job finally breaks the silence of the prologue with a speech that pours forth in a manner that is often characteristic of trauma survivors. While it is addressed to no one in particular, Job's initial speech in chap. 3—and, one might add, those that follow (cf. 6:3b; 7:11; 10:1)—reflects what Janoff-Bulman refers to as an "insatiable need to talk," or what trauma victims sometimes describe as "feel[ing] coerced into talking."[600] Although

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[597] David B. Morris, "About Suffering: Voice, Genre, and Moral Community," *Daedalus* 125 (1996), 27.

[598] David B. Morris, "About Suffering," 29.

[599] David B. Morris, "About Suffering," 27.

[600] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 108.

this kind of talk is often ineloquent and inarticulate,[601] Job's speeches are vivid and

evocative. Of course, it is not uncommon for intense imagery to be associated with the

psychological experience of anxiety. In fact, Janoff-Bulman characterizes anxiety as

"'fear mediated by images...,'" although this normally occurs in the form of dreams or

other intrusive recollections.[602] While Job refers to these kinds of experiences (cf.

7:13-14), he also uses metaphor and imagery as he attempts to articulate his experience.

Cohen has described trauma survivors as craving metaphor as they try to make sense of

their traumatized world on the one hand, and everyday, ordinary life on the other.[603]

Metaphor plays an important role both in making sense of one's pain and in making

evident, or "showing," what otherwise remains inaccessible to others.[604]

As Job gives voice to his suffering he finds in speaking out a means of resistance

and agency. Here I draw on the work of Arthur Kleinman who has used "resistance" in

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[601] David B. Morris, "About Suffering," 28; see also, Lauren Berlant, "Trauma and Ineloquence," *Cultural Values* 5 (2001): 41-58. For an example of the inarticulateness that sometimes accompanies suffering, see *Ludlul bēl nēmeqi*, or *I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom*, which perhaps best illustrates this tendency as the individual, Shubshi-meshre-Shakkan, describes his "[sweet]-lipped discourse" becoming "murky and obscure"; his lips becoming "like those of a deaf man"; and his (formerly) "resounding call" instead "str[iking] dumb." When he attempts "to turn a biting comment, [his] gambit [is] stifled." Unable to speak to those who grieve nearby, he concludes that a "snare" has been "laid on [his] mouth" and "a bolt bars [his] lips." See Benjamin Foster, "The Poem of the Righteous Sufferer," in *The Context of Scripture* (ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger; Leiden; New York: Brill, 1997), 487-489.

[602] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 180, citing S. Arieti and J. Bemporad, *Severe and Mild Depression* (New York: Basic Books, 1978), 138. Cf. Job 7:13-15, especially, v. 14: "But you scare me with dreams, and terrify me with visions" (וחתתני בחלמות ומחזינות תבעני).

[603] Barry M. Cohen, "Art and the Dissociative Paracosm: Uncommon Realities," in *Handbook of Dissociation: Theoretical, Empirical and Clinical Perspectives* (ed. Larry K. Michelson and William J. Ray; New York: Plenum, 1996: 525-544.

[604] See David Biro, *The Language of Pain: Finding Words, Compassion, Relief* (New York: Norton, 2010), who refers (19) to the experience of pain as the "quintessentially private experience." As Elaine Scarry (*The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World.* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1987], 4) observes, "for the person in pain, so incontestably and unnegotiably present is it that 'having pain' may come to be thought of as the most vibrant example of what it is to have certainty," while for the other person it is so elusive that 'hearing about pain' may exist as the primary model of what it is to 'have doubt.'"

relation to suffering in two ways. First, he describes suffering itself as "the result of processes of resistance (routinized or catastrophic) to the lived flow of experience," both to one's actions and to one's plans or future.[605] In this sense, Job's anxiety, which I argue below follows from his traumatic experience, is itself a form of resistance in that there is a recognition that the "lived flow of experience" has been disrupted. But Kleinman also employs the term "resistance" to refer to "resisting the imposition of dominating definitions (diagnoses), norms defining how we should behave (prescriptions), and official accounts (records) of what has happened."[606] It is this more active form of resistance represented in the act of speaking out that ultimately offers Job a way of living with his shattered assumptive world.

4.2.2 Anxiety and the Desire for Death

Job's initial speech emerges from the "cornered horror" that is often associated with traumatic experience as the world suddenly becomes frightening and unpredictable.[607] His curse on the day of his birth (3:3-10) and his lament over not having died then (vv. 11-26) culminate with an account of his overwhelming anxiety (3:25-26):

כי פחד פחדתי ויאתיני ואשר יגרתי יבא לי

For what I fear comes upon me;
   And what I dread befalls (lit., "comes") me (v. 25).

לא שלותי ולא שקטתי ולא נחתי ויבא רגז

I am not at ease, nor am I quiet;
   I am not at rest, but trouble comes (v. 26).

The clustering of verbs in these verses shows that Job's benevolent and meaningful

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[605] Arthur Kleinman, "Pain and Resistance: The Delegitimation and Relegitimation of Local Worlds," in *Pain as Human Experience: An Anthropological Perspective* (ed. M. J. D. Good, et al.; Berkeley: University of California, 1992), 174.
[606] Arthur Kleinman, "Pain and Resistance," 174.
[607] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 63.

world, as depicted in the prologue, has now been replaced by one that is threatening and

uncertain. Although many commentators understand v. 25 (with Job's use of "fear" [פחד

פחדתי] and "dread" [ואשׁר יגרתי]) to reflect some prior anxiety on Job's part (e.g., his

constant concern that his children have sinned in 1:5), the term normally refers to a fear

that is accompanied by the anticipation of something (9:28; Deut 9:19; 28:60; Ps

119:39).[608] The NRSV's translation, which is similar to my own, captures what might

also be understood as the ever-present experience of trauma, or what Shay refers to as

"the persistence of the traumatic moment."[609] Anxiety that follows a traumatic event is

often associated with a sense of danger that is neither imminent nor clearly defined.[610] In

either case, Job's anxiety has replaced the tranquility that formerly characterized his

world, as the negation of the first three verbs of v. 26 suggests ("not at ease," שׁלה; "not

quiet," שׁקט; "not at rest," נוח). What "comes" (ויבא) instead, Job observes, is "turmoil" or

"trouble," the root of which (רגז) is associated with agitation that often takes the form of

shaking,[611] reflected in the kind of physical response that accompanies fear, anxiety, and

other intense emotions (e.g., "trembling" or "shuddering"), including joy.[612] Job's use of

"turmoil" (רגז) reflects his own physical and psychological experience of anxiety, which

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[608] *HALOT*, 386, suggests "fear (of things to come)."

[609] See, similarly, Balentine, *Job*, 94, who writes: "It looks like one who lives in persistent 'fear' and 'dread' (v. 25), as S. Mitchell has put it, like one whose 'nightmares have come to life.'" As Jonathan Shay explains (*Achilles in Vietnam: Combat Trauma and the Undoing of Character* [New York: Scribner, 1995], 173), "So long as the traumatic moment persists as a relivable nightmare, consciousness remains fixed upon it. The experiential quality of reality drains from the here-and-now... This is a cognitive aspect of the detachment of the trauma survivor from his (sic) current life and is intimately connected with the persistence of numbing, one of the basic skills of surviving prolonged, inescapable terror." On hypervigilance and hyperarousal following traumatic experience, see Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 65-69.

[610] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 65.

[611] 1 Sam 14:15; 2 Sam 22:8; Amos 8:8; Hab 3:7; Joel 2:10; Ps 77:19.

[612] Exod 15:14; 2 Sam 19:1; Jer 33:9; Joel 2:1; Ps 99:1.

follows from his own terrifying experience of the world.

It is Job's turmoil—the rattling of his existence—that makes death so desirable in his first speech where he curses the day of his birth because it did not "hide trouble" (עמל; cf. v. 20) from his eyes (v. 10).[613] Because of the suffering he now faces, Job finds the state of those in Sheol preferable to his own anxious existence, as vv. 11-26 suggest. In these verses Job uses similar and sometimes overlapping terminology to contrast his own situation with those who are at rest. While he describes himself as "not quiet" in v. 26 (לא שׁקטת), he draws on the same verb he used earlier when imagining Sheol in v. 13, after wishing that he had died soon after birth or had been stillborn: "Now I would be lying down (שׁכבתי) and quiet (אשׁקוט)." Similarly, the rest Job laments as currently absent (לא נחת; v. 26) is also to be found in death ("then there would be rest for me"; אז ינוח לי; v. 13). Finally, in contrast to the presence of "turmoil" (רגז), which he identifies in v. 26, Job speaks of the desirability of death in terms of a place where the wicked cease from the turmoil (רגז) that they cause (v. 17).

For Job, death also marks the end of the dominating and oppressive relationships that characterize life (3:11-19).[614] Each set of relationships Job employs in vv. 17-19 (cf. vv. 13-15) reflects an inequality of power: that of the wicked and the weary (v. 17); the prisoners and their taskmaster (v. 18); the small and the great; and slaves with their masters (v. 19).[615] As Clines observes, "[i]n Sheol the social distinction and thus the control of one group by the other has been annihilated, and that is what makes Sheol a

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[613] See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 104.

[614] I will develop this image more carefully below in the context of my discussion of dominated and dominating bodies.

[615] Newsom, "Job," 369.

restful place."[616] The peacefulness of Sheol, free of the cruel bondage that marks human

existence, stands in sharp contrast to the threatening world Job now experiences—a

world that makes death all the more appealing.

Job's initial response to his traumatic experience in chap. 3 reflects what Janoff-

Bulman describes as a "double-dose of anxiety." Internally, Job experiences the erosion

of his sense of safety, which accompanies his lost assumption of the world's

benevolence. At the same time, he has come to perceive the external world as threatening

and uncertain. With his observation that "turmoil comes" (ויבא רגז; v. 26), Job's

vulnerability is particularly evident.[617]

4.2.3 Dominated Bodies: The Loss of Benevolence and Meaningfulness

To further illustrate Job's loss of a benevolent and meaningful assumptive world,

in the following paragraphs I will focus on how Job uses images of dominated and

dominating bodies to characterize human existence as well as his own experience.

Through associated imagery, Job not only reveals his loss of power, which, as in the case

of traumatic experience, includes the "power to assume a safe world,"[618] but also his loss

of control, which, in turn, result in Job's own intense experience of vulnerability and

helplessness.

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[616] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 91-92. As Clines (91-92) observes, "[t]hese two groups were in life locked together in a bitter social relationship, described from the perspective of the exploited as an absence of rest or ease, compulsion to work, absence of freedom, inferior status, and from the perspective of the 'narrator' as a 'troubling' on the part of the exploiters."

[617] Here, Job's response resembles that of a Holocaust survivor who responded to a question about the experience of liberation by saying, "Then I knew my troubles were *really* about to begin." Italics original. Lawrence Langer, *Holocaust Testimonies: The Ruins of Memory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), 67.

[618] Jeffrey Kauffman, "Safety and the Assumptive World: A Theory of Traumatic Loss," in *Loss of the Assumptive World* (ed. Jeffrey Kauffman; New York: Brunner-Routledge, 2002), 208.

4.2.3.1 Life as Hard Labor and Slavery

Using a cluster of images related to servitude, including forced service (צבא),

hired labor (שׂכיר), and slavery (עבד), Job describes human existence as lived out under

the oppressive hand of dominating bodies. According to Job, the lot of humanity is "hard

service" (7:1a; צבא; cf. 14:14):[619]

7:1 הלא־צבא לאנושׁ על ארץ וכימי שׂכיר ימיו
7:2 כעבד ישׁאף־צל וכשׂכיר יקוה פעלו

"Do not humans have a hard service on earth,
and are not their days like the days of a laborer?" (7:1)

"Like a slave who longs for the shade,
and a laborer who anticipates his wage?" (7:2)

The initial term צבא, which commonly refers to military service or warfare, is also used to

refer to conscripted military service or forced labor.[620] Although Job will later use this

image to describe his personal experience (cf. 14:14b),[621] he employs the term here, along

with that of wage labor (שׂכיר; 7:1b) and slavery (עבד; 7:2a), to refer to human experience

in general, first comparing life to the "days" of a laborer, and then developing the image

by focusing on the "payoff" that the slave and the hired worker expect to receive. The

"laborer" or "hireling" (שׂכיר), who worked for a fixed period of time, was to be paid at

the day's end (Lev 19:13; 2 Sam 10:6), although this did not always occur (Deut 24:14;

Mal 3:5). The slave, on the other hand, received no compensation, longing instead for

only the shade of evening (cf. Job 36:20).

Job's focus in these verses is on how the passing of time is experienced, as

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[619] See, especially, Leo G. Perdue, *Wisdom in Revolt*, 111-48.
[620] See Num 1:3, 20, 22; 1 Chr 5:18; 7:11; cf. Job 14:14; Isa 40:2.
[621] "All the days of my service I would wait until the coming of my release"; כל ימי צבאי איחל עד בוא
חליפתי; cf. Isa 40:2.

Newsom has suggested, noting that

> meaningful time for the *śākîr* has a radically limited horizon. The "narrative" of his life extends no further than the end of each day, in a pattern that does not integrate into some larger structure but merely repeats, day after day. So, too, for the slave, who receives... simply the respite of evening shade (7:2a).[622]

These images serve to reinforce Job's experience of human existence as burdensome and repetitive, with the hired laborer and the slave both longing for the day's end—and what little, if any, reward it has to offer—only to begin again the day thereafter. When life is characterized in this fashion, the kind of future Eliphaz holds out to Job is impossible to imagine. Rather, as Habel observes, "the living naturally look forward to the end of their enforced term on earth (cf. 3:13-19)."[623]

The meaningless of Job's own existence becomes clear in the conclusion he draws from this analogy regarding his own situation in vv. 3-4, where he focuses on his own experience of time as a dominated body.[624] Like the hired laborer who has been denied proper wages, Job has been "made to inherit" (הנחלתי) "months of emptiness" (ירחי שׁוא; v. 3a) and has been "allotted" (מנו) "nights of trouble" (לילות עמל; v. 3b). Job is "paid in the coin of time—months and nights," as Newsom observes, a payment that is defective, as the terms "emptiness" (שׁוא) and "trouble" (עמל) suggest.[625] Moreover, in contrast to the slave, who longs for the relief provided by the shade at the end of the day, Job instead recoils from the night, which offers him no more than a period of dreaded and extended

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[622] Newsom, *Book of Job*, 133.
[623] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 158.
[624] See Newsom, "Job," 393.
[625] Newsom, "Job," 393. As Newsom (393) explains, "What is striking about v. 4 is its rendering of the reality of time as experienced by one who cannot rest. Expected values are reversed. The night that should be desirable is treated with impatience. Time that should seem all to short is experienced as frustratingly prolonged."

agitation.[626]

4.2.3.2 God as a Dominating Body

Through another series of metaphors and images, Job shifts from the cruel

bondage he has associated with life to the terror he experiences before God as a

dominating body. He develops his experience of being overpowered and helpless in

relation to God through several graphic images. Although other images could be included

here, I will here deal with two: God as confining/restricting movement and God as an

agent of aggression and violence.[627]

Since what Janoff-Bulman has described as the determining principles of

controllability, justice, and randomness figure prominently into the following discussion,

it will be helpful to begin by first offering a brief overview of these terms.

4.2.3.2.1 The Loss of a Meaningful World: Justice, Controllability, and Randomness

According to Janoff-Bulman, justice, controllability, and randomness (i.e.,

"chance" or "luck") function as three principles that ultimately determine the

meaningfulness of one's world. As noted earlier, justice and controllability attempt to

explain outcomes on the basis of a person's character or actions, respectively. Together,

these principles help people to make sense of negative outcomes, while reassuring them

that their worlds are safe and secure. Randomness is chosen less often to explain negative

events precisely because it is unable to provide an explanatory model that helps people

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[626] "When I lie down, I think, 'When will I arise?' But the night (lit., "evening") is long (lit., "is extended"); and I am full (lit., "sated with") of tossing until dawn" (אם־שכבתי ואמרתי מתי אקום ומדד־ערב ושבעתי נדדים עד־נשף; 7:4).

[627] Due to the constraints of space, I have limited my discussion to only these to categories, although a third could be added, that of God's oppressive surveillance of Job.

"make sense" of why certain things happen to particular people.[628]

Neither in Job nor in the ancient Near East is "randomness" normally a category for explaining outcomes.[629] In describing Mesopotamian religion, Bottéro notes that "evils," or negative outcomes, "could be explained by their immediate causes insofar as they were discernible: bad management leads to failure; excessive expenses to ruin; an unhappy marriage to boredom; a sunstroke, a chill, an unsuccessful sexual relation to an illness...."[630] When no cause was discernible, one might have explained an outcome on the basis of "luck," although luck was not thought of in the same way that we might think of "luck" today. Instead, outcomes were understood as reflecting the favor of the gods. In Akkadian, for example, the expression "to acquire a god" is the only way of describing luck.[631] At other times, especially prior to the development of what Bottéro refers to as "'theology' of sovereignty," one might also have accounted for misfortune on the basis of demons, attacking "like vicious animals" on no other basis than their own malevolence.[632]

In the Hebrew Bible, outcomes are often considered to be the result of one's character and actions, or God's benevolence and justice. The idea that God is directly responsible for the outcome of events, whether positive or negative, is expressed clearly by Job in the prologue where he recognizes the deity as responsible for his misfortune in

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[628] Janoff-Bulman, "Assumptive Worlds and the Stress of Traumatic Events," 119.

[629] Cf. Ecc 9:11: "for time and chance happen to all of them" (כי־עת ופגע יקרה את־כלם).

[630] Jean Bottéro, *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning, and the Gods* (Chicago: The University of Chicago, 1992), 228.

[631] Thornkild Jacobsen, *The Treasures of Darkness: A History of Mesopotamian Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976), 155. Jacobsen (155) illustrates this point with two examples drawn from omen texts, where one refers to a house that "will acquire a god," while the unfavorable "portent may indicate that 'that house will grow poor, will not acquire a god."

[632] Bottéro, *Mesopotamia*, 229. After this development, demons instead carried out the decisions of the gods.

1:21 and 2:10.[633] The narrator makes a similar affirmation as well in the epilogue by noting that Job's siblings and others arrive to comfort and console him "for all the calamity that the Lord had brought upon him" (42:11; על כל־הרעה אשר־הביא יהוה עליו).

Like those trauma survivors who consider their misfortune to have been the result of chance, Job's assumptions about the deity's arbitrary and malevolent actions similarly preclude any consideration of justice or controllability in the determination of outcomes. There is nothing that Job can do or be to protect himself from negative events. The loss of these two principles therefore make it impossible for Job to make sense of what has become a meaningless world.

4.2.3.2.2 God as Confining and Restricting Movement

By using images of personal confinement, restricted movement, and obstructions to the "way" or "path" of life, Job calls into question a prominent sapiential and psalmic metaphor that rests on both the distributive principle of justice and controllability. In Chapter 3, I discussed how one's "way" or "path" functions as a metaphor for moral behavior, where life is understood as a journey along a certain pathway or road. The way of life is secure, unobstructed, and well-lit (Prov. 3:23-26; 4:10-19); the way of death is evil, dark, and riddled with obstacles (cf. Prov 4:10-19). To follow the path to life one must "keep straight" (4:26b), "not swerve to the right or to the left" (4:27a), not "turn one's foot" (4:27b), and "turn from evil" (Prov 3:7; 4:27; 13:19; 14:16; cf. Job 1:1, 8;

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[633] In the former, Job states that "Yahweh has given; and Yahweh has taken," (יהוה נתן ויהוה). As Clines (*Job 1-20*, 37-38) observes, "Job does not say, 'Yahweh has given an the Sabeans, the Chaldeans, the lightning and whirlwind, have taken away.'" They are, instead, "secondary to the one who must be ultimately responsible." In 2:10, Job associates both "good fortune" (טוב) and "calamity" (רע) with God. See also Second Isaiah, where Yahweh "makes peace" (עשׂה שׁלום) and "creates calamity" (Isa. 45:7; בורא רע). Cf. similarly, Deut 32:39: "See now that I, even I, am he; and there is no god beside me; I kill, and I bring to life; I wound, and I heal; and there is no one who can deliver out of my hand."

2:3). To lose one's way or to turn aside is to risk losing one's life (Prov 4:14-19; 5:5-8). This metaphor rests, however, on assumptions of a benevolent and meaningful world, where controllability and predictability are linked with the idea that one's character and behavior lead to predictable outcomes.

Challenging the assumption of controllability and especially the idea one can choose his or her own way, Job describes the sufferer's "way" as hidden (דרכו נסתרה; 3:23a) in his initial speech in chap. 3. There he employs an image that reflects the experience of uncertainty and confusion associated with those "to whom light is given" but whose way forward, nevertheless, remains unclear. The reason the sufferer's experience is futile, as Job makes explicit in v. 23b is that God is the one responsible for the sufferer's immobility: "Eloah," Job concludes, "has fenced him in" (ויסך אלוה בעדו; 3:23b; cf. 1:10). Without recognizing the way or path, and without knowing what actions to take, there is no way to control one's outcome or to maintain a meaningful world.

A sense of hopeless finality accompanies Job's use of such imagery, as in 12:14 where he accuses God of shutting (סגר) others in so that "no one can open up (פתח)." Job will later refer to God walling up (גדר) his own way and obstructing his path with darkness (19:8; חשׁך). In 13:27, Job pairs God's restriction of his movement with God's oppressive gaze: "You place my feet in the stocks and watch all my paths" (ותשׂם בסד רגלי ותשׁמור כל ארחותי). The image, which is that of a prisoner who is not only confined by God, but also being closely watched, stands in sharp contrast to the optimistic outlook of the psalmist who exclaims, "You have set my feet in a broad place" (העמדת במרחב רגלי; Ps 31:9 [8]). For the psalmist, the future is wide open. But for Job—who not only has nowhere to go, but is unable to move—the future on which the friends so heavily rely in

the first cycle remains unimaginable.

4.2.3.2.3 God as an Agent of Aggression and Violence

Job's sense of vulnerability and helplessness is also intensified by his perception

that his experience is the result of acts of divine aggression and violence, which are

neither controllable (i.e., they cannot be avoided by engaging in appropriate,

precautionary behaviors) nor distributed according to a principle of justice.

Reappropriating and subverting what is normally a positive image, that of God as

warrior, Job portrays God instead as a wounding and menacing presence.[634] Job himself

becomes the helpless object of God's attack. While several images could be examined in

what follows, I have chosen to focus on the image of God as archer.[635]

Job uses the metaphor of God as an archer in the following three texts to reveal

his sense of vulnerability and helplessness:[636]

6:4 כי חצי שדי עמדי אשר חמתם שתה רוחי בעותי אלוה יערכוני
"For the arrows of Shaddai are in me;
my spirit drinks their poison;
the terrors of God are arrayed against me."

7:20b למה שמתני למפגע[637] לך

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[634] On the positive associations with God as warrior, see Exod 15:3-4; Ps 7:13-14 [12-13]; Ps 24:8; Ps 64:8 [7]; Isa 42:15. See Patrick D. Miller, *The Divine Warrior in Early Israel* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[635] Some of the other images that represent God as a dominating body include God as a hunter, whether a human being (e.g., a king) pursuing an animal as on a hunting expedition (10:16; though this verse is problematic and might also refer to God as the attacking animal), or as a wild animal stalking its prey (16:9). Job also uses imagery related to warfare (10:17c), the siege (19:8-12), and the overwhelming force of God's assault, more generally (9:17-18). Job also uses varying images to describe the effects of God's assault on him, including being torn to pieces by a wild animal (16:9), crushed "with a tempest" (9:17; NRSV), brutally wounded without cause (9:18), unable to catch his breath from the blows God inflicts (9:18), being filled with bitterness by God (9:18), the experience of psychological terror (7:13-14), as well as the various images associated with God's surveillance of Job. On the latter, see especially Habel, *The Book of Job*, 160-161, and throughout his commentary.

[636] On God as an archer, see Deut 32:23; 32:42; Ezek 5:16; Lam 2:4; 3:12-13; Pss 7:13; 38:3 [2]; 64:8 [7].

[637] מפגע occurs only here, though there is little disagreement on translating it as something that is

"Why have you set me as a target for yourself?"

"He set me up as a mark for himself..."

In the above examples, Job reappropriates familiar imagery to illustrate God's violent assault against him. God is elsewhere imagined as an archer who takes aim in judgment at Israel,[638] the unrepentant (Ps 7:13-14 [12-13]), the enemies of the psalmist (Ps 64:8 [7]), and also those in need of rebuke (יכח) and discipline (יסר).[639] Following the tradition that God's correction is sometimes forceful and severe, Eliphaz had described the reproof (יכח) and discipline (יסר) of Shaddai in terms of "wounding" (יכאיב) and "striking" (ימחץ), which, he suggested, have accompanying salutary effects for those who submit to God (5:17-18).[640] Job, however, insists that God is interested not in correction but violence, as he concludes from his experience that he has been made God's target (7:20; cf. 36:32), an image he first develops in 6:4 and then includes in 16:12, where it becomes part of a more elaborate and graphic display of God's relentless assault on him (16:12-14).

Job initially uses the metaphor in 6:4 to justify his rash speech, suggesting that it is the result of the pain and terror that has followed from God's hostility (cf. Lam 3:12-13). The image of physical penetration ("the arrows of Shaddai are in me [עמדי]")[641] is coupled with the effects of God's violence, as Job suggests by describing his "spirit" (רוח) as drinking the arrow's poison (lit., "heat"; חמה) and in his claim that the "terrors of

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hit or struck (i.e., a "mark" or "target").

[638] Deut 32:23; 32:42; Ezek 5:16; Lam 2:4; Lam 3:12-13.

[639] Ps 38:3 [2]; cf. Job 5:17.

[640] In a conjectural reading of Prov 3:12, *HALOT* (454) suggests reading יַכְאֵב ("he wounds") for כְּאָב ("as a father") to yield: "for Yahweh reproves the one he loves; he wounds the son in whom he delights."

[641] One would expect בי, though as Clines (*Job 1-20*, 158) עמדי is parallel to בי in 28:14. Of course, the fact that Job's spirit drinks their poison indicates physical penetration.

God" are arrayed against him. Although poisoned arrows are not mentioned elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, the reference may nevertheless refer metaphorically to their effect.[642] The same term (חמה) is used elsewhere to describe the painful, burning sensation that follows from being struck by a venomous serpent. But it is also closely associated with God's wrath.[643] Job's final image of the "terrors" arranged against him again illustrates his sense of helplessness in an image where God, marshalled against him in battle, has dispatched his "terrors" (Ps 88:17 [16]).[644]

Developing the metaphor of the divine warrior in 16:12-14, Job reveals his experience of intense vulnerability with an image of God setting him up as his target (v. 12c) even as God's archers surround him (v. 13a; סבב).[645] The threat to his survival is clear as Job presents himself as helplessly confined before what appears to be that of a military commander with his archers ready to display their overwhelming force.[646] It is not God's archers who unleash their fury, however, but God.

Job "makes evident" the effects of God's savage and merciless assault on his body with three sets of vivid images associated with that of the target and archer of v.

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[642] See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 171.

[643] On the association between venom and its burning sensation see Deut 32:24, 33; Ps 58:5 [4]; 140:4 [3]. On Yahweh's wrath, see 2 Kgs 22:13; Isa 51:20; Jer 6:11; 2 Chr 28:9; 34:21; 36:16; cf. Job 21:20 ("the wrath of Shaddai"; חמת שדי).

[644] Dhorme (*A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 77) translates the expression, "The terrors of Eloah are marshalled against me," citing part of a prayer of Ashubanipal, "*duluḫḫû amât limuttim sudurûni kaian* 'trouble, malicious words are constantly arrayed in battle formation against me." He notes (77) that in the D stem *sadâru* has the same meaning has ערך.

[645] Amy Erickson ("God as Enemy in Job's Speeches" [Ph.D. diss, Princeton Theological Seminary, 2009], 57) notes the frequency with which the psalmist in the individual laments describes surrounding (סבב) enemies (Pss 3:7 [6]; 12:9 [8]; 17:9, 11; 27:3; 55:19 [18]; 140:10 [9]. Erickson (57) also shows how Psalm 22, particularly vv. 12-22, "mixes military metaphors and animal metaphors in order to portray the brutality and ferocity of the enemy," which surrounds its victim (22:13 [12], 17 [16]). As Erickson observes, "The beasts form a circle around their prey to ensure that their victim cannot escape. The besieging army may use the city walls to its advantage in a similar fashion, in that the walls, designed to protect the citizens within..."

[646] So Clines, *Job 1-20*, 384; Andersen, *Job*, 182; Pope, *Job*, 124.

12c-13a. In the first image, Job puts his broken or shattered body on display.

שְׁלוּ הָיִיתִי וַיְפַרְפְּרֵנִי וְאָחַז בְּעָרְפִּי וַיְפַצְפְּצֵנִי 16:12ab

"I was at ease, and he broke me in two;
  he seized me by the back of the neck, and dashed me to pieces."

By noting that God's violent assault occurred while he "was at ease," Job relates the startling and unpredictable nature of God's attack.[647] Using parallel expressions in the first two lines of v. 12, Job describes God as breaking him apart (וַיְפַרְפְּרֵנִי) and then seizing him by the neck before dashing him to pieces (וַיְפַצְפְּצֵנִי).[648] That God grabs Job by the back of the neck in v. 12b is also a sign of God's overwhelming force. The term עֹרֶף, "the back of the neck," is used elsewhere to describe one's enemies fleeing in defeat (Exod 23:27) as well as an indication of victory and domination over one's enemies (Gen 49:8b).[649] In contrast to Ps 18:17 [16], where God reaches down to draw the psalmist from the mighty waters that threaten to overwhelm him, Job is snatched by the back of the neck and then smashed into tiny pieces like a fragile clay pot that is shattered against the rocks.

Job's second image follows vv. 12c-13a, where God has made Job his target, and God's archers have surrounded him:

יְפַלַּח כִּלְיוֹתַי וְלֹא יַחְמוֹל יִשְׁפֹּךְ לָאָרֶץ מְרֵרָתִי 16:13bc

"He pierces my kidneys, and does not spare;
  and pours out my gall on the ground."

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[647] Cf. the Aramaic of Dan 4:4: שְׁלֵה הֲוֵית. See also Job's complaint in 3:26; "I am not at ease" (לֹא שָׁלַוְתִּי).

[648] I take the *pilpel* as intensive here, although it could also be taken as iterative. See, for example, Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 261. *HALOT*, 975, suggests "to tug, shake someone about." Citing Gesenius-Buhl, Dhorme (*A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 236) argues that the root פרר as "shake" can be explain by פרר in the *hiphil*, הֵפֵר as "'break', 'dash to pieces' (5:12; 15:4)," citing the *poel* in Ps 74:13, where God "breaks" or "divides" the sea; the *hitpoel* in Isa 24:19, which "shows the earth shivering into splinters, rent asunder." Of פצץ, he further notes that the *poel* in Jer 23:29 indicates "to smash up," and the *hithpoel* in Hab 3:6 means "scatter in fragments."

[649] Jacob, for examples, says of Judah, "your hand will be on the neck of your enemies" (Gen 49:b).

Job does not, however, attribute his wounds to the archers but to God, who has pierced

(פלח) his kidneys (v.13b) mercilessly.[650] As Erickson notes, "the deity is terrifyingly close

and intimately involved in the violence he inflicts on his victim."[651] With these fatal

blows, God not only attacks a vital organ, but also the seat of the emotions (Ps 16:7 [6];

Prov 23:16; Jer 12:2).[652] In Psalm 139, the kidneys are the only organ referred to as

created by God: "For you formed my kidneys; you knit me together in my mother's

womb" (כי אתה קנית כליתי תסכני בבטן אמי; v. 13).[653] As "a symbol of intimacy," the kidneys

become "the site of violent assault."[654] The effect of the physical representation of God's

attack follows, as gall (מררה) pours out, an image that also has emotional connotations, as

suggested by the fact that the term for gall (מררה) is itself derived from the word for

"bitterness" (מרר). As Clines concludes, "[i]f the affections and sympathies are assaulted,

it is bitterness that spills out."[655]

With Job's final image in v. 14, he returns to the theme of confinement in the

form of besiegement, where a city wall is breached.

16:14 יפרצני פרץ על־פני־פרץ[656] ירץ עלי כגבור

"He breaks through me gap upon gap;
he runs at me like a warrior."

Job's vulnerability here is evident in the incessant, repeated assaults of what would

normally be an attacking army. But in Job's case, it is God, who creates "gap upon gap"

(16:14b; פרץ על פני פרץ). When the wall is finally breached, God rushes at Job like a

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[650] On translating פלח as "pierced," see also Prov 7:23: "until an arrow pierces its liver" (עד יפלח חץ
כבדו; cf. Ps 38:3 [2]; Lam 3:13).
[651] Erickson, "God as Enemy in Job's Speeches," 64.
[652] See Balentine, *Job*, 253.
[653] Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament*, 65.
[654] Newsom, "Job," 459.
[655] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 385.
[656] For my translation, "crack upon crack," see *HALOT*, 973.

warrior in battle, with Job standing helpless and alone.

While other images could also be explored in the context of this discussion, the examples I have offered illustrate the effects of what Job perceives as God's overwhelmingly brutal attack on him. The images of Job being critically wounded while awaiting the onslaught of God's terrors (6:4), of being set up as God's target (16:12c) and surrounded by his archers (16:3), as well as God's direct and intimate involvement in these merciless acts of violence against him (16:12ab; 16:13) all point to Job's overwhelming sense of helplessness.

Rather than passively accepting his situation—or, for that matter, accepting the advice of the friends to seek God—Job instead insists on speaking out (cf. 6:2-4; 7:11). In what follows, I will show how Job seeks a framework for dialogue where such speech is possible.

4.3 From Consolation to Quarrel

In the previous chapter, I argued that the increasingly aggressive nature of the friends' speeches in the first cycle is related to their frustrated attempts to correct and console Job, as well as their growing awareness that he no longer shares their assumptions regarding the moral order of the world. The clearest indication that one of the friends is beginning to shift to the quarrel is found in Zophar's first speech, as I noted in the latter part of chapter 3. The quarrel does not, however, begin with the friends. Rather, it is first taken up by Job. Before examining how Job attempts to transform the dialogue into a quarrel, and his reasons for doing so, a brief review of the quarrel's features is in order.

4.3.1 The Quarrel as a Context of Dialogue: A Review

The quarrel, a subtype of *eristic* dialogue, is a highly emotional and adversarial form of exchange that is characterized, particularly, by verbal attacks.[657] Quarrels occur as a result of "unspoken disagreements, grudges, or differences" that have often been suppressed and, therefore, often emerge abruptly.[658] Each party's goal is to strike out at the other, focusing on the other person's character or behavior. Although voicing such complaints would normally be inappropriate in the context of polite conversation, the quarrel "allows these hidden grievances or differences to come to the surface and to be expressed explicitly and dealt with in an appropriate framework."[659]

Quarrels may also, at times, serve as a hindrance to the goals of a conversation, especially when they occur in the context of a shift from another type of dialogue. Shifts from one context of dialogue to another may be judged licit or illicit, depending on the extent to which the goals and standards of the new context reflect and support those of the initial context. A licit shift may occur, for example, when a panel that is involved in a critical discussion (persuasion dialogue) about the safety of nuclear reactors chooses to consults experts (information-seeking).[660] A more common *illicit* shift occurs, however, when one moves a particular form of dialogue into the context of a quarrel, normally through *ad hominem* attacks.[661] As a result, the goals of the original dialogue are often left unrealized.

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[657] I will incorporate other characteristics of the quarrel into my discussion of *Job* below. See also my comments on Walton in Chapter 2.

[658] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

[659] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 184.

[660] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 201.

[661] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 201.

How a quarrel functions depends on its nature—or more specifically whether a quarrel is "trivial" or "serious."[662] Walton describes the former as "a purely agonistic exchange," where the goal of each party is to "win out" over the other in an "adversarial contest."[663] Although trivial quarrels may impress or entertain, they have "no real worth as an argument," according to Walton.[664] Serious quarrels, on the other hand, can serve an important social function by providing an outlet for intensely felt, unexpressed grievances. By moving discussions out of the realm of "polite conversation," the normal constraints against certain ways of talking, or talking about certain topics, are lifted. Arguers are then able to express their feelings, "even at the cost of offending or deeply disturbing the other party."[665] In this sense, they function cathartically and, Walton suggests, may offer an alternative to a physical altercation.[666] Moreover, by providing a framework where both parties are able to speak freely, Walton suggests that the quarrel also has the benefit of "giv[ing] each side a deeper insight into the feelings of the other party—an insight that can facilitate a smoother relationship in the future."[667]

Walton, however, has not yet explored how the quarrel might provide a framework for survivors of traumatic experience. Because the quarrel allows for what might otherwise be described as unconventional or impolite speech, it opens up a space for those who are trying to give voice to their pain and suffering. In this respect, Job's

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[662] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179. Walton also notes (*The New Dialectic*, 180) that in some cases, "it may be less clear that someone who is engaging in a quarrel has adopted the eristic framework for some definite purpose."

[663] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

[664] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

[665] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

[666] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179.

[667] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 179. At the same time, Walton notes that the quarrel may also be employed for other purposes, such as impressing others, for example, in an academic context, or entertaining an audience.

speeches might show at least one direction in which Walton's model might be further developed. By shifting the dialogue to a quarrel—to a framework where polite speech is exchanged for a more aggressive and emotional type of interaction—Job opens up a space that allows for transgressive speech.

4.3.2 The Quarrel's Emergence and the Failure of the Friends

The shift to the quarrel, which begins in Job's first response to Eliphaz, can be identified in two ways. First, Job's justification of what would otherwise be considered inappropriate speech signals his dissatisfaction with the friends' expectations for dialogue. Implicit in this justification is also a critique of Eliphaz's failure to understand the severity of his grief and his desire for them to see its magnitude. The second way Job attempts to shift the dialogue to a quarrel is through his critiques of the friends as friends as well as on the basis of their speech and character.

4.3.2.1 Job's Justification of Speech in 6:2-4

The first indication that Job is shifting the dialogue from the friends' goal of consolatory persuasion to the quarrel is found in the justification he offers for his speech in 6:2-4:

<div dir="rtl">

לוּ שָׁקוֹל יִשָּׁקֵל כַּעְשִׂי והיתי במאזנים ישאו־יחד
כִּי־עַתָּה מֵחוֹל יַמִּים יִכְבָּד עַל־כֵּן דְּבָרַי לָעוּ
כִּי חִצֵּי שַׁדַּי עִמָּדִי אֲשֶׁר חֲמָתָם שֹׁתָה רוּחִי בְּעוּתֵי אֱלוֹהַ יַעַרְכוּנִי

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> O that my anguish were weighed
> and my calamity placed together in the balances.
> For then it would be heavier than the sand of the seas;
> therefore, my words have been rash.
> For the arrows of Shaddai are in me;
> my spirit drinks their poison;
> the terrors of God are arranged against me.

In admitting that his "words have been rash" in v. 3b (דברי לעו), Job recognizes that he

has transgressed norms for appropriate speech. The verb he uses, לעע ("to be rash"),

occurs elsewhere only in Prov 20:25, where it refers to a hasty vow that is later

regretted.[668] Rather than offering an apology for his outburst, however, Job instead

provides a rationale for why his impulsive speech is warranted. As noted above, the

quarrel provides a framework where impolite and unconventional speech is acceptable.

The justification Job offers here and in what follows (7:11; cf. 10:1; 13:13ff.) shows that

he has cast off the normal constraints for dialogue, or for "appropriate" speech: Job has

no intention of being a silent sufferer (6:24).

The reasons Job offers for his "rash" speech, as well as *how* he presents them, are

also significant for showing why he is dissatisfied with the dialogue—or, more

specifically, with Eliphaz's first speech—and why he desires something like the quarrel

as a framework for their interaction. Quarrels begin, according to Walton, when feelings

of resentment over hidden injuries and suppressed grievances are announced. But before

they are voiced, they begin to take shape after some injury is caused by the other party

(e.g., an inconsiderate remark, a point taken too lightly, and so forth). By recasting a verb

Eliphaz has used in 5:2a (כעש),[669] and then locating it in the context of his metaphor of

measuring or weighing in vv. 2-3a, Job offers an implicit critique of Eliphaz's failure to

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[668] For discussions concerning the verb's root, see Dhorme (*A Commentary on Job*, 76), who suggests לעה with the meaning, "to be stammered out." Here I follow Georg Fohrer (*Das Buch Hiob* [Kommentar zum Alten Testament 16. Gütersloh: Gütersloh Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963], 160) and Habel (*The Book of Job*, 139) in understanding the root as לעע, as in Prov 20:25.

[669] Job echoes several key terms from Eliphaz's first speech, specifically כעש, "anguish" (6:2; cf. 5:2); תקוה, "hope" (6:8; cf. 4:6; 5:16); דכא, "crush" (6:9; cf. 4:19); תשיה, "resource" (6:13; cf. 5:12). See Whybray (*Job*, 50) who observes that in the context of chap. 6 they are all used negatively.

understand the nature and extent of his suffering.[670] Eliphaz has warned Job about

inappropriate and excessive displays of emotion and their destructive effects: "Surely

resentment (כעש) kills the fool, and anger (קנאה) slays the simple" (5:2). Although he does

not directly identify Job with the "fool" in 5:2a,[671] Job appears to take offense at

Eliphaz's words, since he employs the same verb Eliphaz has used (כעש) but gives it a

slightly different nuance with his emphatic wish in 6:2a ("O that my anguish were

weighed"; לו שקול ישקל כעשי). Eliphaz may be more concerned about Job's "resentment"

or "anger," but what Job wants Eliphaz and his friends to see and understand is his

immeasurable "anguish" (כעש; cf. 10:17; 17:7). If only his suffering could be placed on a

set of scales, Job imagines, the friends would then realize its severity.[672]

Through Job's speech and imagery in vv. 2-4, Job provides justification for his

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[670] Other evidence of Eliphaz's inability to recognize and acknowledge the seriousness of Job's predicament may reflected in his expression of surprise at Job's response to suffering (4:5; cf. 4:3-4) as well as in his treatment of Job's situation "as though it were merely a matter of short-term discipline" (5:17-26), as Course (*Speech and Response*, 39) notes.

[671] Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 138-139.

[672] In contrast to Eliphaz, who has a tendency to speak of the human condition more generally (chaps. 4-5; cf. Course, *Speech and Response*, 39), Job confronts Eliphaz and the friends with the particular nature of his anguish, using two sets of personal and evocative images in vv. 2-3a and v. 4. Job first presents his anguish as heaviness, specifically as a weight to be measured (v. 2). Job intensifies this image with his use of hyperbole in v. 3a, as he imagines an impossible display: even the weight of his suffering would ultimately prove immeasurable against all the sand of the sea (כי עתה מחול ימים יכבד).

Job's second series of images (v. 4) also serves both to justify his rash speech and "make vivid" for the friends the severity of his suffering by placing himself on graphic display. Drawing on the metaphor of God as Warrior, Job uses imagery associated with a military assault to show that, as God's enemy, he has become the object of divine aggression: "For the arrows of Shaddai are in me; my spirit drinks their poison" (v. 4ab). These images reinforce the prolonged effects of God's violent attack on him. The source of Job's pain, and the reason for its persistence, lies with Shaddai's arrows, which have have not only pierced, but also remain in him (lit., "with me" [עמדי]; v. 4a), releasing their deadly poison. Unlike the psalmist, who drinks by the stream and is renewed (Ps 110:7), or even the wicked "who drink iniquity like water" (15:16), Job suggests that his spirit (רוח), his life-force, drinks (שתה) involuntarily from the toxin of God's arrows that have invaded his being (v. 4b). His final image in v. 4c also brings the psychological dimensions of his suffering into clearer focus, as he stands helpless before "the terrors of God," which are arranged against him (בעותי אלוה יערכוני) as if being drawn up in formation for battle. On this last image, see Gen 14:8; Judg 20:20, 22; 1 Sam 17:2, 8; 2 Sam 10:8; 1 Chr 12:34, 36ff.; 1 Chr 19:9, 17; 2 Chr 13:3; 14:9. See *HALOT*, 885.

outburst, reflects his dissatisfaction with the consolation Eliphaz has offered, and begins to give voice to his pain.

4.3.2.2 Job's Attack on the Friends in 6:14-21

The second indication that Job is attempting to shift the dialogue to a quarrel is found in the critiques he offers of his friends, first as friends (6:14-21), and then as sages in their consolatory role (vv. 24-27). Job here moves beyond the Babylonian Theodicy, where only the friend offers corrective critiques of the sufferer. Job's speech is instead closer to the man in the *Lebensmüde*, although Job's critiques tend to focus especially on the topics of friendship and consolation (or speech, more generally).

Job provides his first explicit and most extensive critique of the friends by drawing on images associated with the unpredictable and dangerous Near Eastern wadi (vv. 14-21) to identify the nature of the their failure (vv. 15-17) and relate the grim consequences of their actions (vv. 18-20), waiting to address them directly in v. 21. That Job's critique here follows immediately after he has described his own physical and psychological exhaustion (vv. 11-13) is significant. Without any internal source of help (עזר) or resourcefulness (תושיה; v. 13), he expects a friend (v. 14a; רעה) to fulfill that role, especially one characterized by faithfulness (v. 14a; חסד),[673] and especially from his "companions" or brothers (v. 15a; אחי).

Unfortunately, the general statement Job offers on friendship in v. 14 to introduce the critique of his friends in this section is difficult. The text reads as follows:

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[673] I discuss the difficulty of this verse below.

6:14 לְמָס מֵרֵעֵהוּ חָסֶד וְיִרְאַת שַׁדַּי יַעֲזוֹב[674]

"One who refuses (or "withholds"; מאס) loyalty from his friend,
 also forsakes the fear of Shaddai."[675]

Despite its difficulties, I understand Job in this verse to be equating an unwillingness to show "loyalty" to a friend with abandoning one's piety.[676] Piety, in this view, is demonstrated through fidelity to one's friend. Although one cannot be certain, this translation appears to be supported by the fact that Job elsewhere represents the failure of friendship as moral in nature (cf. 6:26-27; 12:5a).[677] If this is the case, the failure of friendship should then be understood as a failure of piety, with Job suggesting that this is tantamount to forsaking God.[678]

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[674] For a closer examination of the issues surrounding this verse and a fuller discussion of the various options, see Clines, *Job 1-20*, 176-178. How one understands this verse depends on 1) how one translates (or whether one emends) the first word לָמָס, a form that occurs only here; and, 2) who is understood to be the subject of the verb in v. 14b.

[675] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 388. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 62) provides an interesting alternative by choosing to retain "melts," since the metaphor (though not the term itself) is present in the references to snow and ice in v. 16 and the resulting floods in v. 15. He takes as the subject of the second line the one whose loyalty fails: it is the one "Who melts away his loyalty from his friend" that "departs the fear of Shaddai." Overall, his translation achieves a similar sense of meaning as many who emend the text, normally, to some form of מאס "to reject, refuse" or מנע "to withhold, holdback," as in the case of the NRSV: "Those who withhold kindness from a friend forsake the fear of the Almighty."

[676] In the other major option (i.e., "One who is despairing (lit., 'melting'; מסס) should have the loyalty of his friend, even though he forsakes the fear of Shaddai"), loyalty is owed even to someone who has forsaken piety (i.e., "the fear of Shaddai"; יראת שדי). Associating לָמָס with the root מסס ("dissolve, melt"), BDB suggests that the form should be translated "despairing," or, literally, "melting." Several translations follow in this vein, offering something along the lines of the NIV: "A despairing man should have the devotion of his friends, even though he forsakes the fear of the Almighty." Habel (*The Book of Job*, 138) translates the verse as follows: "The despairing need the loyalty of a friend / When they forsake the fear of Shaddai." See Pope (*Job*, 178) who follows the Arabic *mss*: "A sick man should have loyalty from his friend, though he forsake fear of Shaddai." Similarly, Janzen, *Job*, 79. Cf. NAB, GNB, NEB, and JPS. Moreover, as Newsom ("Job," 388) observes, since Job notes (vv. 22-23) that he has not been unreasonable in his demands of the friends, the first option—that one who has forsaken God still deserves a friend's loyalty—seems less likely.

[677] See also what immediately follows. Like 6:14, Job 12:5 is also difficult, but see my discussion below.

[678] Concerning what follows ("My brothers are treacherous" [בגד]; v. 15a), Erlandsson (*TDOT* 1:470-472) suggests that since "treacherous acts" are often "in contrast to Yahweh's faithfulness to his covenant," the verb בגד "has primarily a religious function" in this context. Moreover, as Seth Erlandsson (*TDOT*, 1:472) observes, "Job states that the reason for treachery among men is the abandonment (*'azabh*) of the fear of God (v. 14)."

Job's initial critique is that the friends have acted treacherously:

6:15 אחי בגדו כמו נחל כאפיק נחלים יעברו

"My brothers are treacherous like a stream bed,
  like a channel of stream beds that passes away."

Job's use of kinship terminology in v. 15a ("my brothers"; אחי) to identify his friends

may, in light of what follows, reflect his frustrated expectations of social support[679]—or,

perhaps, the close ties he has imagined sharing with the friends.[680] But, in comparing

them to the wadi, Job reveals their "treacherous" (בגד) nature, using a term that in Prov

25:19 describes someone who is unreliable: "Like a decaying tooth and a tottering foot is

trust in one who is unfaithful in a time of trouble" (שן רעה ורגל מועדת מבטח בוגד ביום צרה).

The image of a bad tooth and a foot that is unsteady suggests the potential for pain and

instability. But the term itself often reflects a failure within the context of a covenant,

whether one fails to honor an agreement (Judg 9:23; Lam 1:2; Isa 33:1), commits

adultery (Ex 21:8; Jer 3:20), or fails to keep God's law (1 Sam 14:33; Jer 3:21; Ps

119:167-158; Mal 2:10).[681] At times, the term also carries stronger moral connotations,

especially in Proverbs, where the word בגדים ("treacherous") is used synonymously with

"the wicked" (רשעים),[682] or where their own crooked ways and self-defeating schemes are

contrasted with the "integrity" and "righteousness of the upright" as in Prov 11:3 (תמת

ישרים) and v. 6 (צדקת ישרים). בגד, then, suggests more than unreliability; it also points to

those of questionable moral character.[683] In this respect, Job's initial critique is quite

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[679] Cf. Prov 17:17b: A "brother" [אח] is born to share adversity." See my discussion of friendship in chapter 2.

[680] Cf. Prov 18:24b: "there is a friend closer than a brother" (ויש אהב דבק מאח; cf. 35:14).

[681] See Erlandsson, *TDOT*, 1:470.

[682] Prov 2:22 states that "the wicked (רשעים) will be cut off from the land, and the treacherous (בוגדים) will be rooted out of it."

[683] Cf. Erlandsson, *TDOT*, 1:472.

severe.

In the imagery that follows in vv. 15b-20, Job shows somewhat indirectly how the friends' "treachery" is marked by a careless disregard for life (vv. 17-18; cf. v. 27). Although the caravans from Tema "look" (הביטו) and the travelers from Sheba "hope" (קוו) for water (lit., "for them"; למו), their desires are ultimately frustrated, as the verbs that are used to describe their reaction ("ashamed" [בוש] and "embarrassed" [חפר]) suggest (vv. 19-20).[684] Job's shift from the unreliability of the wadis to the psychological dimensions of the caravaneers reflects his own sense of hopelessness. Like the caravaneers who turned aside in search of water, Job has found nothing in the friends to sustain him and so is left "ashamed" and "confused."

Job only applies his critique directly to the friends in v. 21, where he identifies fear (חתת) as the reason for their failure:

6:21 כי עתה הייתם לא תראו חתת ותיראו[685]

> "So you have now become to me;
>   you see calamity, and are afraid."

While the first line is difficult, the second reveals why Job thinks the friends have acted treacherously: it is out of "fear" (ירא) at the sight of "calamity" (חתת).[686] Commentators offer various reasons for the friends' reaction to Job's calamity. Pope thinks that the friends have abandoned their loyalty out of fear induced by Job's "horrible physical

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[684] While the semantic range of these verbs (בוש and חפר) includes the kind of unsettledness associated with being "disappointed" or "disconcerted" (so NRSV's "disappointed" and "confounded"; cf. Pss 35:26; 40:15 [14]; 70:3 [2]; 83:18 [17]), they are normally translated with the sense of being "ashamed" or "embarrassed." See Newsom, "Job," 389.

[685] On the first half of the verse I follow the emendations of others with כן for כי and then לי for לא (*qere* לו). See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 161; Pope, *Job*, 54. The first half of the verse may also be translated, "For now you are nothing," if one chooses to follow the *kethiv* לא. For a fuller discussion of the options, see Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 76.

[686] Newsom, "Job," 389.

condition."[687] Clines notes the use of the familiar wordplay in v. 21b ("you see" [*tir'û*]

and "you are afraid" [*tîrā'û*]), which is used elsewhere for those who witness something

astonishing and are then filled with awe for the one who accomplished it.[688] On this basis,

he argues that the friends have seen Job's condition and are afraid because of their close

association with Job; that is, since Job is experiencing divine disfavor, they are concerned

that they, too, might experience God's judgment.[689]

Andersen suggests another alternative, however. While he thinks that Job's

accusation in v. 21b introduces an idea that is "completely new and irrelevant,"[690] he

finds what he describes as "a profound pastoral insight here," noting that "it is often fear

that prevents a would-be counselor from attaining too much empathy" with a client.[691]

Although he does not develop this thought, discomfort and fear are common responses

among those who are confronted with the tragedy of others. Despite the fact that people

often go to great lengths to maintain or preserve their assumptive worlds, when facing

others who have been victimized their basic assumptions may, nevertheless, be called

into question.[692] As Janoff-Bulman notes,

> Victims are threatening to nonvictims, for they are manifestations of a malevolent
> universe rather than a benevolent one... Survivors of extreme events are
> threatening, not because they pose any direct physical threat but because of the
> more subtle, yet potent threat they pose to our most fundamental assumptions,
> core beliefs that enable us to feel safe, secure, and confident.[693]

Consequently, people often respond with discomfort and/or victim-blaming. Here, Job's

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[687] Pope, *Job*, 54.

[688] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 180.

[689] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 180. See, similarly, Driver-Gray, *Job*, 1:65; Habel, *Job*, 149.

[690] Andersen, *Job*, 131.

[691] Andersen, *Job*, 132.

[692] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 147.

[693] Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*, 148.

recognition of their "fear" may point to their intense feeling of discomfort with someone

else who has experienced tragedy.[694] In fact, this is suggested by the verbs Job uses in v.

20 ("ashamed" [בוש] and "embarrassed" [חפר]), which, as Newsom observes, "come from

the language of social relations," where "[t]hey connote the shame experienced by those

who have lost status or the respect with which they were formerly treated (Isa 24:23; Jer

15:9; Mic 3:7)."[695]

4.3.2.3 Job's Attack on the Friends in 6:24-27

With a second critique in 6:24-27, Job strikes out at the friends' failure to offer

appropriate consolation as sages.[696] Job focuses, especially, on the misuse of speech in the

context of Eliphaz's failed attempt at consolation (vv. 25-26), which he takes as a sign of

their callous disregard for others (v. 27).

Job draws his critique in vv. 24-26 from the language of instruction ("Teach me"

[הורוני], v. 24a; "Make me understand" [הבינו לי], v. 24b) and correction ("rebuke" [יכח],

vv. 25b-26a), and calls for the friends to do what Eliphaz has not done: to instruct him (v.

24a; הורוני) and to "make him know" (v. 24b; הבינו לי) what minor or inadvertent offense

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[694] Two other texts reflect these tendencies: 12:4-5 (esp. v. 5) and 17:6-10. With respect to 12:4-5, Newsom ("Job," 427) states that

> [i]t is a disturbing but well-recognized phenomenon that the precipitous misfortune of someone previously respected and successful sometimes evokes contempt rather than sympathy. Perhaps this is a reflects of a need to rationalize inexplicable misfortune, a need for those "at east" to believe that it could not happen to them.

Drawing on the work of Martin Symonds, Janoff-Bulman (147) refers to the effects of stigmatization and social ostracism as a "second injury" to the victim, one that confirms that the world is malevolent and that the victim is not a worthy human being. See Martin Symonds, "The 'Second Injury' to Victims," in *Evaluation and Change: Services for Survivors* (Minneapolis: Minneapolis Medical Research Foundation, 1980).

[695] Newsom, "Job," 389.

[696] As will normally be the case, Job uses the plural here in responding to his friends. At this point, however, since only Eliphaz has spoken, Job appears to take Eliphaz's approach (and failure) as representative of the friends, more generally.

(שׁגה) he has committed (v. 24b). Then, Job states, he will be silent (v. 24a). If Eliphaz had offered him something of value from his wisdom, something other than his general examples affirming the moral order or describing the fragility of the human condition, Job would be satisfied.[697] Instead, Eliphaz has only offered worthless rebuke. Acknowledging that frank speech has its place, even if it is unpleasant (v. 25a; "How painful[698] are honest words!"), Job asks, "what does your correction accomplish?"[699] Eliphaz, with his gentle correction (4:2; cf. 15:11b), has failed by treating Job's speech, the words of a despairing man (אמרי נאשׁ), like the "wind" (ולרוח; v. 26b), as something insignificant or insubstantial.[700]

Job offers his sharpest attack on the friends in the context of chap. 6 in the conclusion he draws concerning their character in v. 27.

אף על יתום תפילו[701] ותכרו על ריעכם

Indeed, you would cast lots over the orphan,
 and barter for your friend.

Job has already suggested through his image of the wadi and the caravaneers that the friends have shown a callous disregard for his life (vv. 17-18).[702] Here, with his first accusation, he claims that they would cast lots over an orphan—one who was not only considered among the most vulnerable in society, but whose protection was also upheld

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[697] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 389.

[698] Some read מלצו "pleasant" (lit., "to glide, be smooth"; cf. *HALOT*, 594) for מרצו. The former occurs elsewhere only in Ps 119:103, where it describes the sweetness of honey. The latter, מרץ, occurs only four times in the HB, three of which are in the niphal (Job 6:25; 1 Kgs 2:8; Mic 2:10). The last, Job 16:3, occurs in the hiphil.

[699] Verse 25b reads literally, "But what does reproof from you reprove?" (ומה־יוכיח הוכח מכם).

[700] Newsom, "Job," 389.

[701] As Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 76) notes, "תַּפִּילוּ is an ellipsis for תַּפִּילוּ גּוֹרָלוֹת 'cast lots,'" as in 1 Sam 14:42.

[702] As H. H. Rowley (*The Book of Job* [rev. ed.; NCBC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980], 64) notes, this verse "agrees well with the stinging words of verses 14-23."

throughout the ancient Near East (cf. Job 31:17, 21).[703] In his second accusation, Job

returns to the topic of friendship, only not to address the friends' failure to fulfill their

obligations, but rather to suggest that they would actually sell off a friend for a profit.[704]

In both brushing aside Job's speech (v. 26) and their willingness to cast lots for an

orphan, or barter for a friend (v. 27), the friends have revealed their tendency to devalue

others.[705]

4.3.2.4 Job's Desire: 6:28-30

In addition to the friends' betrayal of Job out of fear (v. 21; cf. vv. 14-20) and

their failure to offer appropriate instruction and rebuke (vv. 24-27), Job begins to develop

a third critique in chap. 6 as he tries to demonstrate the truthfulness of his own speech

(vv. 28-30). While his image of the treacherous wadi implied deceitfulness on the

friends' part (vv. 14-20), Job will make the nature of their deception explicit in 13:3-19.

In attempting to establish the veracity of his speech in 6:28-30, Job relies on the

body as a means of communicating the truth of his experience to others. The first image

he draws on in v. 28 is that of the "face": "But now, be pleased to face me, for I will not

lie to your face" (ועתה הואילו פנו־בי ועל־פניכם אם־אכזב; v. 28).[706] The force of Job's request

can be captured only in part by the colloquial expression, "Look me in the eye," which is

sometimes used in the contexts of truth-telling. Through its expressions, the face reveals

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[703] See F. Charles Fensham, "Widow, Orphan, and the Poor in Ancient Near Eastern Legal and Wisdom Literature," *JNES* 21 (1962): 129-139.

[704] Cf. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 150

[705] As Newsom ("Job," 389) observes, the unifying feature in these situations (vv. 26-27) is that "one who is vulnerable is devalued and treated as less than a person."

[706] *HALOT* (381) suggests that when an imperative follows an imperative יאל be translated "be resolved and accept" (cf. 2 Kgs 5:23; 6:3; Judg 19:6; 2 Sam 7:29).

one's emotions, whether one is happy or sad, or is experiencing joy or pain. As Lawrence Kirmayer explains, "The face is both a transmitter and a receiver of emotion: a transmitter because it displays our own suffering and broadcasts it to others—not only for them to look at and read, but, more palpably, as something that evokes emotions..."[707] It is in this context of a meeting of their faces that Job uses an oath formula ("if I lie..."; v. 28b) to swear that he will not lie to their "face."[708] From Job's perspective, in a face-to-face encounter the friends should be able to see that he is speaking truthfully.

Job's urgent attempts to communicate the truth of his situation also appear to echo his fears of abandonment—and his desire for the friends' continued presence. This is evident both in his concern with the "face" (v. 28b) and in the action of turning implied in "face me" (פנה; v. 28a) and in "turn" or "return" (שׁוב) in v. 29. Job's image of a face-to-face encounter in v. 28 reveals his desire for the immediacy or presence of the friends. Since the verb פנה refers to the act of turning toward something or someone, Job's request may also imply that the friends have turned, or, perhaps, looked away.[709] As noted above, nonvictims often experience discomfort in the presence of one who has undergone tragedy and choose to distance themselves from that person (or to distance the individual through stigmatization). This sense of abandonment is also reflect in v. 29, where Job twice asks the friends to "turn" or "return" (שׁוב). Many commentators understand שׁוב to

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[707] Lawrence J. Kirmayer, "Culture and the Metaphoric Mediation of Pain," *Transcultural Psychiatry* 45 (2008), 326. As Kirmayer (327) observes, "Even our experience of our own body is also mediated by our exchanges with the faces of others. One thinks of a child who injures herself and then looks for a parent to just how she should respond."

[708] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 182.

[709] Cf. *HALOT*, 937-38.

refer to a change in the friends' attitude (e.g., "to relent")[710] But שׁוּב, like פנה, is also used

to refer to the physical act of turning.[711] In light of the juxtaposition of these two verbs

(פנה and שׁוּב) in vv. 28-29, the physical nuance of שׁוּב seems more appropriate here.[712]

Job is convinced that the friends' presence and their mutual recognition of his (v.

28) is necessary, for in seeing him they would recognize the truthfulness of his claims (v.

29b). For the friends to continue as they have after turning and witnessing the reality of

his experience would be deceitful (v. 29a).[713] More importantly, in turning, the friends

would see that Job's integrity is still intact (וְשֻׁבוּ עוד צדקי־בה; v. 29b).[714] With two final

rhetorical questions in v. 30, Job agains invokes the body as he calls for the friends' trust,

referring both to the tongue (לשׁון; v. 30a) and palate (חך; v. 30b). He first asks, "Is there

deceit (עולה) on my tongue (לשׁון)?" (v. 30a).[715] The question is purely rhetorical since Job

situates himself as the only one who can offer an accurate reply: "Cannot my palate

discern disaster/deceit?" (אם־חכי לא־יבין הוות; v. 30b). As with עולה, which can mean either

"injustice" or "deceit," Job's use of הוות is also marked by a similar ambiguity. While the

general meaning is "ruin" or "destruction" (cf. 6:2), it can also refer to deceit, as Gordis

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[710] Habel (*The Book of Job*, 150), for example, who suggests that "relent" is "equivalent to a call of repentance." See also Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 141; cf. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 77-78), who argues for "stop, stay."

[711] The physical nuance of the verb is reflected in 17:10, for example, where it is paired with בוא, when Job says, "Come back now, all of you..." (ואולם כלם תשבו ובאו נא).

[712] Although it is possible, as Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 215) suggests, that Job is calling "for both an outward and an inward motion," for their physical presence as well as a change in their attitudes.

[713] While עולה can refer to "injustice" (Isa 59:3; 61:8; Hos 10:13; Mic 3:10), Habel (*The Book of Job*, 150) has suggested that in light of its close association with speech in *Job*, it should be understood as "deceit" or "deception." Cf. 5:16; 6:30; 13:7; 27:4.

[714] See Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 78), who reads: "my integrity is still in itself, i.e., it is intact."

[715] On עולה as deceit, see n. 791 above.

argues (cf. Mic 7:3; Ps 5:10).[716] Here, it may well reflect both nuances.[717] With these

words Job declares that he is the only one to determine the truthfulness of his speech

regarding his situation.[718]

The dilemma Job faces in vv. 28-30 is one that is common in contemporary work

on trauma and the problematic nature of testimony. In light of both the fragmentary

character of survivor accounts (e.g., the "gaps" that exist in their telling) and the

inaccessibility of their experience to outsiders,[719] how is one to evaluate the truthfulness

or accuracy of their claims? For Job, the answer is to be found in his experience. Writing

in response to those who consider the relationship between what trauma survivors have

seen or experienced and what they are able to communicate to be tenuous at best,

Michael Bernard-Donals has proposed "an indicative view of ethos."[720] He argues that

"the extent to which we might say the the speaker or writer is 'telling the truth'—depends

on the discourse's ability to move an audience to 'see' an issue or an event that exceeds

language's ability to narrate it."[721] Job longs for something similar in vv. 28-30—for the

friends to see and know the truthfulness of his claims in their face-to-face encounter with

him.

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[716] Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 78

[717] Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 142; Newsom, "Job," 390.

[718] See the discussions of Clines, *Job 1-20*, 182-83; Newsom, "Job," 390-392; and Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 141-42.

[719] See my discussion earlier in this chapter.

[720] Michael Bernard-Donals, "Ethos, Witness, and Holocaust 'Testimony': The Rhetoric of *Fragments*," *JAC* 20 (2000), 566.

[721] Bernard-Donals, "Ethos, Witness, and Holocaust 'Testimony,'" 566. He explains (566) that "[s]urvivor testimonies "indicate an event as it occurs prior to the speaker's ability to speak it," not in an historically accurate rendering, "but in the way they disrupt the narrative of history and force the reader, or the interviewer, to see something horrible, perhaps a trace of the traumatic event itself."

4.3.3 Shifting to the Quarrel

Job's initial attempts to shift the dialogue to a quarrel in chap. 6 involve attacking the friends' role as friends (vv. 14-21) and their attempts at the consolatory role they have assumed as sages (vv. 24-27). As I will show, Job develops his critique of the friends in his final speech of the first cycle (chaps. 12-13, in particular) and continues to do so throughout the remainder of the dialogue by focusing more explicitly on the friends' wisdom, their failed attempts at consolation, and their speech, more generally, especially its deceptive nature and damaging effects.

Although Job begins his shift to the quarrel in chap. 6, evidence of the quarrel in the friends' speeches is delayed. Of course, as Walton notes, participants in a dialogue often fail to realize that a shift to the quarrel has occurred in the first place. This appears to be the case with Bildad in chap. 8, who, as I have argued, keeps Job's consolation as his primary goal in the first cycle. Following Bildad's speech, Job hardly addresses the friends at all (chaps. 9-10). Instead, he begins to entertain and develop the idea of a trial with God. And while I have argued that Zophar is still engaged in consolatory persuasion, his speech is the sharpest speech of the friends in the first cycle. Not only does Zophar call for shaming based on Job's actions (v. 3b), he also criticizes Job's moral and intellectual arrogance (11:4; cf. vv. 5-9; 8:8, 10). He is also the first of the friends to state explicitly that Job bears some guilt (v. 6c), although, as I have noted, Zophar argues from the limits of knowledge and God's wisdom rather than basing his claims on the moral order—claims on which Eliphaz and Bildad have so heavily relied. Perhaps it has become clear enough to Zophar that those kinds of arguments are no longer effective, or maybe it

reflects a difference in how they argue. In either case, the most significant indication that

Zophar is also shifting to the quarrel is that he is the first of the friends to engage in

insult, which, although offered indirectly (cf. 11:12), is the distinguishing mark of the

quarrel. In saying that "A hollow-headed man will be intelligent when a wild ass colt is

born human,"[722] as Good observes, "he seems here to imply that Job is 'hollow-headed'

and can never approach the intellectual intelligence Zophar possesses."[723] This, as I will

argue below, reflects a rivalry that is beginning to develop between Job and the friends.

At least two factors are involved in the friends' shift to the quarrel. First, the

friends' increasingly aggressive tone is due in part to their growing recognition that Job

no longer shares their assumptions regarding the moral order.[724] That is, they begin to see

in his speeches what Walton describes as a "closed attitude," which is one of the quarrel's

central characteristics. Job's clearest attacks on the moral order precede and follow

Zophar's speech in chap. 11 (cf. 9:22-24; 12:13-25). In the second cycle, the friends

abandon both their advice that Job should seek God as well as the hope of the pious

narratives, which they have used in their attempts to move Job beyond his grief.[725] As I

will argue, their nearly exclusive focus on the fate of the wicked in the second cycle is

evidence of their own "closed attitudes." And yet their speeches are also more

complicated in that they appear to reflect what Walton refers to as a pretense of not

quarreling.

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[722] The translation here is that of Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 231.

[723] Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 231.

[724] See my discussion in the previous chapter.

[725] Although, as I will discuss below, Eliphaz will reintroduce these in his final speech, once again positioning Job within the hope of the pious narrative.

A second factor related to the friends' shift to the quarrel appears to be Job's

attacks and their need to respond. Walton has suggested that once the quarrel is

recognized, it is difficult to resist.[726] That Job's speeches register as insults to the friends

is evident throughout the second cycle where they either suggest or state explicitly that

Job has insulted them. In the context of his other critiques of Job (cf. 15:2-13), Eliphaz

asks, "Are the consolations of God too small for you (המעט ממך תנחמות אל), or a word that

deals gently (ודבר לאט) with you?" Eliphaz's question seems to reflect his own offense at

Job's suggestion that he has failed to offer proper instruction (6:24) and has engaged in

worthless rebuke (6:25-26). Eliphaz is particularly gentle in approaching Job in his first

speech (4:2a; "If one ventures a word with you, will it be too much?"; TNK).[727] And

while he addresses Job directly in the introduction to his speech (4:2-6), and in describing

Job's restoration (5:19-26), his speech otherwise tends to be somewhat indirect and

impersonal.[728] Bildad also appears to have taken offense at Job's parody of the friends'

speech in which he presents their knowledge as so common that it is shared by the natural

world (12:7-9), including cattle (בהמה; v. 7a).[729] He responds by asking, "Why are we

counted as cattle, considered stupid in your eyes" (18:3).[730] Zophar, who admits to

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[726] Walton, *The New Dialectic*, 192.

[727] See my note on לאה in the early part of chapter 4. While the verb can mean can mean "impatient" or "weary," as Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 76) points out, it can also have the sense of "to be unable."

[728] See Course, *Speech an Response*, 39 n. 77.

[729] Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 279, 292. See also *HALOT*, 112, which suggests בהמה with בהמות deleted as dittography.

[730] Of course, Bildad's comments here may also be understood as a response to Job's claims in chap. 17, where he charges that God has closed their minds to understanding (כי־לבם צפנת משׂכל; v. 4a) and that, if they "come back," Job will not find a wise one among them (v. 10). I assume that vv. 2-4 are directed at Job and that the plural reflects a textual error. Cf. Newsom, "Job," 467. For a discussion of the different alternatives, see Clines, *Job 1-20*, 409-10.

The verb נטמינו is a *hapax legomenon.* Here I have followed Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 190), who

speaking out of an emotionally agitated state,[731] also notes that he has been insulted

(כלמתי; cf. 11:3b) by the instruction or correction (מוסר) that he has heard (20:3).[732]

In what follows I will show how the quarrel develops and plays out in the

remainder of the dialogue. Before turning to the second cycle, however, I begin with

what I see as a developing rivalry between Job and the friends in Zophar's first speech

(chap. 11) and in Job's final speech in the first cycle (especially, chaps. 12-13).

4.3.3.1 Rivalry and the Quarrel

Perhaps as an unintended consequence of Job's critique in chap. 6, a rivalry

begins to develop between the two parties. Although the friends do not take up the topic

of friendship, they do begin to critique Job's intellectual standing. This is first seen in

Zophar's critique of Job's intellectual and moral arrogance in chap. 11. Job then follows,

in turn, with sarcastic critiques of the friends' wisdom in chaps. 12-13, where he will also

accuse the friends of engaging in deception.

In discussing Zophar's first speech (chap. 11) in the previous chapter, I noted that

a tension exists between Job and the friends in their attempts to negotiate their

relationship as sages in a consolatory context. Unlike the sufferer in the Babylonian

Theodicy, Job also engages in critique. Zophar, who recognizes in his first speech that

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understand the verb as a variant of טמם, which in Aramaic and rabbinic Hebrew has the meaning "to stop up." He suggests "to consider stupid" for the verb. See, similarly, Clines, *Job 1-20*, 404; cf. Dhorme, *A Commentary on Job*, 258; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 297.

[731] Zophar refers both to his "disquieting thoughts" (שׂעפים; cf. *HALOT*, 1343) and the "feeling" within him. On חוש as "to feel," see the discussions in Dhorme, *A Commentary on Job*, 289-290; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 300; Gordis, *The Book of Job,* 214; and Clines, *Job 1-20*, 473.

[732] Job has not only expressed his own sense of insult (cf. 19:3a) but has suggested that the friends have used their words to torment (תוגיון נפשי) and break him to pieces (ותדכאונני; v.2), ultimately appealing to the friends fear by noting the "punishment of the sword" (עונות חרב) they can expect, if they continue to persecute (רדף) him (vv. 28-29).

Job is mocking the friends (11:3), describes Job as a "man of lips" over and against the former generations, which Bildad has described as speaking "with understanding," or from the "mind" (לב). He sharpens this critique, however, by misquoting Job as saying "My teaching (לכח) is pure" (11:4a). By distorting Job's speech, which is another sign of the quarrel, Zophar suggests that Job has assumed a position of intellectual superiority not just over the friends but over the wisdom of the past as well. As I will note below, he returns to this theme again in chap. 20 by describing his sense of insult at Job's arrogant attempts to correct (מוסר) the friends (v. 3).

After Zophar's initial speech, the rivalry between Job and the friends comes more clearly into view in Job's last speech in the first cycle (chaps. 12-14) where Job combines overstatement and understatement to critique the friends' wisdom.[733] Job's overstatement takes the form of a sarcastic compliment: "No doubt, you are the people with whom wisdom will die" (12:2).[734] To Job, the friends have spoken as if they are the embodiment of wisdom. Job may also be exaggerating Zophar's reference to the "secrets of wisdom" (11:6a), to which apparently Zophar believes he has access (v. 6c). Job, however, does not claim superiority for himself but instead relies on understatement: "But I have a mind (לבב) like you; I am not inferior to you (לא־נפל אנכי מכם). Who does not know such things?" (12:3). A similar statement also marks the conclusion to the initial part of his speech in chaps. 12-14: "What you know, I know also; I am not inferior to you" (13:2). What is identical in both verses is Job's claim that he is not inferior to, or does not fall

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[733] One could also include here Job's parody of the way the friends talk in vv. 7-10.

[734] Here I follow the reading of J. A. Davies, "A Short Note on Job XII 2," *Vetus Testamentum* 25 (1975), 671; cf. Pope, *Job*, 89.

lower than, the friends (לֹא־נֹפֵל אָנֹכִי מִכֶּם).[735]

4.3.3.2 The False Comfort and False Testimony of the Friends: 13:3-12

Within this same speech Job will again attack the friends' failure in their role as comforters (vv. 4-5a) as well as their identity as sages (v. 5). He will also develop the theme of deception implied by the image of the wadi in 6:14-21. In describing their failure to console, Job accuses the friends of "smearing with lies" (טֹפְלֵי־שָׁקֶר; v. 4a), an expression that is elsewhere used for slander (Ps 119:69; Sir 51:5). As several commentators note, however, Job's use of the phrase is best understood in relation to Job's characterization of the friends as "worthless physicians" (רֹפְאֵי אֱלִל) in v. 4b.[736] The image is one where the friends apply their platitudes or clichés as a balm or salve that covers over the truth to which he bears witness (cf. 12:13-25).

That their failure extends to their identity as sages is evident in Job's critique in v. 5: "Oh that you would be completely silent! That would be your wisdom!" (מִי־יִתֵּן הַחֲרֵשׁ תַּחֲרִישׁוּן וּתְהִי לָכֶם לְחָכְמָה).[737] The friends have viewed their consolatory efforts as an expression of their wisdom, as Job suggests in v. 12a where he dismisses their traditional replies (זִכְרֹנֵיכֶם; lit., "your remembered things," i.e., "maxims") as "proverbs of dust" (מִשְׁלֵי אֵפֶר).[738] Although there he has shifted into the world of the legal metaphor (while bringing the friends with him), the terminology he uses is also characteristic of the

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[735] Job may here again be responding to Zophar's remarks about the empty-headed person getting a mind (וְאִישׁ נָבוּב יִלָּבֵב) in 11:12.

[736] See Newsom, "Job," 433; Clines, *Job 1-20*, 306; and Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 247. As Clines (*Job 1-20*, 306) notes, "[a] more convincing way of finding parallelism here would be to take the 'plastering' as an anointing with oil or ointment (for which the verb סוך is admittedly employed), and regard the friends as false soothers" and "worthless physicians."

[737] The expression הַחֲרֵשׁ תַּחֲרִישׁוּן is emphatic.

[738] On זִכְרֹנֵיכֶם, see Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 143), who suggests "arguments from history"

wisdom tradition more generally. As Gordis suggests, זכרון ("something remembered")

reflects the tendency of the friends to appeal to the past and to "invoke the testimony of

the ancients" (cf. 8:8ff.).[739] The word משל, while reflecting a wide range of meanings, is

often used to refer to traditional sayings, especially in Proverbs (cf. 1:1, 6; 10:1; 25:1;

26:7, 9).[740] For Job, the friends' words have been neither desirable (Prov 10:20; 16:24;

25:11) nor beneficial (Prov 10:11; 11:14; 12:6).[741] He concludes that their silence would

have served as a better witness to their wisdom than their insubstantial speech.

In 13:7-11, Job develops the deceitfulness of the friends, which he first implied

with the image of the wadi in 6:14-21. While Job began to explore the possibility of a

trial with God in chap. 9, and then carried out a rehearsal of what he would say in chap.

10, by this point in the dialogue, the legal metaphor has become such a powerful force in

his thought that he brings the friends into its world.[742]

As Job now prepares to speak to God directly, he charges the friends with being

false witnesses. The lines in v. 7 are parallel. Job asks the friends if they will speak

"falsely" (עולה) or "deceitfully" (רמיה) on God's behalf (לאל; lit., "for God"; v. 7a). Here

he assumes that the friends will not only be witnesses in the trial he has imagined, but

that they will also offer false testimony against him. He develops this thought by asking if

they intend to show "partiality" toward God in v. 8.[743] Since impartiality was expected in

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[739] Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 143.

[740] See Fox's (*Prov 1-9*, 54-56) discussion, where he describes the term as having two basic uses as a trope and a "*saying* that has currency among the people." Italics original.

[741]Newsom, "Job," 434.

[742] In the following section, I will explore the development of the legal metaphor through the lens of self-talk and imagined interaction.

[743] The expression for partiality is נשא פנים, which is literally, "to lift the face." As Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 419 n. 3) notes, the image may derive from noting the identity of participants in a trial.

a legal setting (Lev 19:15), his accusation is that the friends are willing to act unjustly.
Or, perhaps in God's absence, they would even willing to plead the case on God's behalf
(אִם־לָאֵל תְּרִיבוּן; v. 8b).

4.3.4 The Quarrel in the Second Cycle

Throughout the second cycle, each side continues to attack the wisdom or intellect
of the other. In the friends' speeches these critiques overlap with the kinds of rebuke they
offered in the first cycle, although they are even sharper in the second cycle of dialogue
(15:2-6; 18:2; 20:3). In the context of their rivalry with Job, however, the friends'
rebukes take on a different character as they call Job's wisdom into question as well as
his character more generally. In what follows, I will first describe the friends' rivalry with
Job as it is expressed in relation to his intellectual and moral arrogance. I will then show
how their use of the fate of the wicked narratives in the second cycle reflects another
characteristic of the quarrel—what Walton describes as a pretense of not quarreling. I
will discuss Job's critiques of the friends' failed consolatory attempts in the second cycle
separately, since they develop in a more agonistic direction.

4.3.4.1 Rivalry and the Quarrel in the Friends' Speeches

As with Zophar in chap. 11, rivalry with Job is also evident in Eliphaz's speech in
chap. 15, where he offers a response that is similar to Job's opening and closing
statements in 12:3 and 13:2: "What do you know that we do not know? What do you
understand that is not with us?" (מַה־יָדַעְתָּ וְלֹא־נֵדָע תָּבִין וְלֹא־עִמָּנוּ הוּא; 15:9). Eliphaz's
questions follow his claim that Job has elevated his own status to that of the primordial

human (15:7-8; cf. 38:4, 21). Eliphaz here draws on a myth about the first human who was understood as perfect in wisdom and beauty—a myth that differs from Gen 2 but is hinted at in Ezek 28:12-19.[744] Applying this tradition to Job, Eliphaz asks if he was created "before the hills" (v. 7b), or has been privy to the Divine Council (v. 9a), and now stands in sole possession of wisdom (v. 9b). Moreover, unlike Job, who claimed that he was not inferior to the friends, Eliphaz asserts the friends' superiority on the basis of their age, with the assumption that older is wiser: "Both the gray-haired and the aged are among us, older than your father" (v. 10). Here, again, Eliphaz is drawing on Job's speech in chap. 12, specifically, his parody of the friends in vv. 7-12 ("wisdom is with the aged, and understanding in the length of days"; v. 12).

Bildad, whose initial concern is with the fact that Job has insulted the friends' intelligence (18:3), also attacks Job's intellectual and moral arrogance (v. 4). With his question in v. 3, he asks why Job views them as cattle, as "stupid" in his eyes. After this question, he offers a statement, which is then followed by two additional questions directed at Job: "One who tears (טרף) himself in his anger (באפו)—Is the earth to be rearranged for your sake, or the rock removed from its place?" (v. 4).[745] In his previous speech, Job accused God of "tearing" (טרף) him "in anger" like a wild animal (אפו; 16:9). Here, Bildad suggests that the violence Job experiences is not an act of divine aggression

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[744] See Robert Gordis, "The Significance of the Paradise Myth," *The American Journal of Semitic Languages and Literatures* 52 (1936): 86-94.

[745] Here I follow Mitchell Dahood ("The Root *ʿzb* II in Job," *JBL* 78 [1959], 306), who suggests reading עזב II, "to arrange, rearrange." Cf. TNK's "Will earth's order be disrupted for your sake?" See also *HALOT*, 808, which in citing 18:4 observes, "although it is highly questionable, II עזב may still be considered a possibility..."

but is instead self-inflicted. He then draws from Job's speech in 14:18b,[746] where Job

refers to a "rock" (צור) that is "removed from its place" (יעתק ממקמו) as he describes the

world's naturally erosive and disordering character before he finally concludes that it is

God who destroys the hope of humans (14:19c). In Job's previous speech, he called on

the earth not to cover his blood, or allow a resting place for his cry (16:18). For Bildad, it

is not simply that Job is trying to undo or restructure the natural order to fit his situation.

From his perspective, it is on the basis of Job's experience—and his arrogant

assumptions—that Job is calling into question the moral order underlying reality, which

Bildad goes on to reaffirm through the fate of the wicked speeches (vv. 5-21).[747]

Zophar is also insulted by Job's correction (מוסר; 20:3a) and belittles Job with an

appeal to the past, which takes the form of a rhetorical question: "This do you not know

from of old, since the placing of humanity upon the earth?" (20:4; הזאת ידעת מני־עד מני שים

אדם עלי־ארץ). As in his critique in chap. 11 mentioned above, Zophar is not only insulted

that Job has tried to correct the friends, but has positioned himself over and against what

is "from of old" (v. 4a).

4.3.4.2 The Fate of the Wicked and the Quarrel in the Second Cycle

In the second cycle, the friends use the fate of the wicked motif in a slightly

different manner than in the first. In the previous chapter I argued that the friends use the

fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious topoi, which are often juxtaposed in the first

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[746] Course, *Speech and Response*, 109.

[747] See my discussion in the last chapter of how the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious serve to as evidence of the reliability of the moral order and as motivation for Job to engage in the practices of piety.

cycle, as a form of instruction that reaffirms the moral order of the world and functions

(especially the hope of the pious) as the "motivation" for Job to accept the practices of

piety they recommend. Although many understand the friends as applying the fate of the

wicked to Job in the second cycle, I understand this motif to have a different function.

Rather than condemning Job, the fate of the wicked instead appears to reflect the friends'

attempts to reassert the moral order and *persuade* Job of its reliability.

In the second cycle, the fate of the wicked narratives appear to take on an

instructional character. Eliphaz, for example, introduces the fate of the wicked as follows:

אֲחַוְךָ שְׁמַע־לִי וְזֶה־חָזִיתִי וַאֲסַפֵּרָה

אֲשֶׁר־חֲכָמִים יַגִּידוּ וְלֹא כִחֲדוּ מֵאֲבוֹתָם

"I will show you; listen to me;
This I have seen, and will recount,
what sages have declared,
and their ancestors have not concealed..."[748] (15:17-18)

The instructional nature of Eliphaz's speech is reflected in the knowledge he has gained

through what he has seen (חזה; cf. Prov 24:32) and plans to recount (ספר; cf. 28:27),

which he claims has been confirmed and reinforced by what sages have declared (נגד; v.

18a) and their ancestors have not concealed (cf. 8:8, 10). Zophar has used this verb to

contrast Job's "teaching" (לקח; 11:4) with what God would declare (נגד) concerning the

secrets of wisdom, if God should choose to speak (11:5-6). Job has also used this verb in

his parody of the way the friends talk when he told the friends to "ask the cattle, and they

will teach (ירה) you; and the birds of the air, and they will tell (נגד) you" (12:7). A second

element that points to the instructional quality of Eliphaz's speech is his use of the "call

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[748] Here I read כהדום אבותם with the *mem* as an emphatic enclitic. See Clines, *Job 1-20*, 342.

to attention" (v. 17b; שׁמע־לי), which is often associated with instruction in wisdom and the Psalms. Eliphaz, for example, concludes his first speech with an invitation for Job to "hear, and know it for yourself" (5:27). The psalmist says, "Listen to me; I will teach you the fear of the Lord" (שׁמעו לי יראת יהוה אלמדכם; Ps. 34:12 [11]; cf. 45:11 [10]; 66:16). Similar appeals are also heard in Proverbs from the father and Woman Wisdom. The father says, "Hear, my son, your father's instruction (מוסר), and do not forsake (נטשׁ) your mother's teaching (תורת; cf. 4:1, 10; 5:7; 7:24; 19:20; 22:17; 23:19; 23:19, 23). And Woman Wisdom says, "Hear for I will speak noble things, and from my lips what is right" (8:6); and, "now my sons, listen to me... Hear instruction and be wise, and do not leave it unattended" (vv. 32-33).

Zophar offers a slightly different appeal to tradition/common knowledge in v. 4 ("This do you not know from of old, since the placing of humanity on the earth...") to direct Job's attention to the fate that the wicked should expect: "that the rejoicing (רִנַן) of the wicked is short (מִקָּרוֹב), and the joy of the godless is only for a moment?" (20:5). In what follows, Zophar twice uses statements that echo Job's earlier claims about his own mortality and that of humanity. Job has said of his own fleeting existence, "The eye that sees me (עִין ראי) will not behold me (לא־תשׁורני)" (7:8), adding that "the one who goes down to Sheol" (v. 9) "does not return again to his house nor does his place recognize him any longer" (v. 10). Then, in chap. 14, after his comparison of the tree's hope with that of humanity, Job asks concerning the human who has died, "Where is he?" (ואיו; 14:10). To describe the fate of the wicked, Zophar takes up Job's speech: "those who have seen him will say, 'Where is he?'" (20:7b), adding that "the eye that caught sight of

(שׁוּף) him will not do so again,[749] and no longer will (an eye) behold his place" (v. 9; עין

שׁזפתו ולא תוסיף ולא עוד תשורנו מקומו). Zophar therefore recasts what Job has spoken

concerning his own experience and that of humanity more generally—not to apply them

to Job or humanity—but rather to confirm that fate of the "wicked" and the "ungodly"

(20:5).

But how do we know that the instruction Bildad and Zophar offer is not an

account of the certain fate that Job will suffer? As Newsom has suggested, the friends do

not directly identify Job with the wicked in the second cycle.[750] Second, when Job

responds to the friends in chap. 21, he does not appear to have taken their use of this

topos as directed at him. Rather, his focus is on countering their claims regarding the

moral order underlying reality: Job takes up their speeches to present the "hope of the

wicked" (cf. 21:7-13). Moreover, as I have noted, in the first cycle the friends

consistently situate Job within the hope of the pious to show the positive outcome he will

experience after seeking God. One might also expect them to follow a similar pattern

regarding the fate of the wicked, if they wished to show the negative outcome that Job

should expect for not engaging in the practices of piety. One final, albeit indirect, reason

should also be considered. Throughout the second cycle, and even into the third, Job

continues to attack the friends' attempts at consolation. Since their speeches focus almost

exclusively on the fate of the wicked (in addition to their rebukes and attacks on Job), by

what other means might they offer consolation?

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[749] On שׁזף, here I follow *HALOT*, 1456, which suggests "to catch sight of."
[750] Newsom, "Job," 363.

The friends' use of the fate of the wicked in the second cycle also reflects two characteristics of the quarrel. First, by focusing on the fate of the wicked to reassert the moral order underlying reality, the friends reveal their "closed attitude." They have recognized that Job no longer shares this fundamental assumption and have abandoned their advice and the hope of the pious narratives to vividly illustrate the fate of the wicked. Second, their use of this topos, along with their continued rebukes, also reveals a pretense of not quarreling. Since consolation offered through rational argument, especially cause-and-effect argumentation, has failed—and failed because Job no longer accepts the fundamental assumption on which the effectiveness of their consolation depends—they attempt to persuade Job that there is, in fact, a moral order through their graphic representations of the wicked's demise.

4.3.4.3 Rivalry and the Quarrel in Job's Speeches

Job's rivalry with the friends also involves attacking their wisdom (cf. 17:10b; 19:5), but his critiques are often interwoven with his continued critique of their failed consolatory attempts (16:2-5; 21:2-4, 34).[751] Yet Job's accusations become sharper throughout the second cycle as he shifts from suggesting that the friends' consolation is a cause of discomfort (v. 2) to accusing them of abandonment (17:10), and then, finally, to claim that they have used their words to violently attack him (19:2-3, 21-22, 28-29; 21:27).

The first sign of rivalry in Job's speech in chap. 16 relates to the friends' attempts

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[751] Another area of critique, which I will incorporate into my discussion of the final cycle, relates to the deceptiveness of the friends' speech.

to console (vv. 2-5). After noting that the friends have nothing new to say (v. 2a; "I have heard many things like these"; שמעתי כאלה רבות), Job describes them as comforter's of trouble (v. 2b; "You are all troublesome comforters"; מנחמי עמל כלכם).[752] For Job, "trouble" (עמל) is what the night of his birth could have prevented him from ever seeing (3:10), as well as what characterizes his restless nights (7:3). And yet, trouble (עמל) is what he claims the friends have offered instead of consolation (v. 2a). Since v. 3 is in the singular, and Job does not normally address individual friends, he appears to be quoting their critique of his endless (הקץ) and "windy words" (לדברי רוח; v. 3a; cf. 15:2)—a further example of the friends' devaluing of his speech (cf. 6:25-26).[753] Job then describes various gestures associated with consolation (vv. 4-5). While some understand the gestures Job describes in v. 4 as unsympathetic, with Job choosing the opposite in v. 5,[754] Newsom is correct in her observation that Job is instead showing that he is thoroughly familiar with the different consolatory strategies.[755] As she observes,

> He knows how to be critical (v. 4a) or to nod in sympathy (v. 4b; to 'shake the head' can be a positive as well as negative gesture). He knows how to speak strengthening words (v. 5a) or how to be silent (v. 5b; the line can be translated 'sympathy would restrain my lips'). He is as well trained a sapiential counselor as any of them (cf. 4:3-4) and could perform as well, if the roles were reversed.[756]

In this sense, Job's words in vv. 4-5 fit well within the context of the rivalry discussed above and his critiques of their consolation in what follows. Despite Job's equal status,

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[752] Newsom ("Job," 457) observes the ambiguity in the expression "comforters of misery," noting that "that is undoubtedly how the friends see themselves."

[753] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 378-79. Clines cites 12:7-8 as another example of the use of the singular, where Job places speech on the mouth of the friends. Newsom, "Job," 457; cf. Habel, *The Book of Job*, 271; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 257.

[754] Clines, *Job 1-20*, 378-79; Harley, *The Book of Job*, 257.

[755] Newsom, "Job," 458.

[756] Newsom, "Job," 458.

however, as he observes, his speech is unable to assuage his pain (v. 6).

Job's speech in chaps. 16-17 also includes a critique of the friends' wisdom, though it is situated in the context of a more serious accusation involving the failure of friendship: the friends' act abandonment as a result of his stigmatization. After describing his experience of social ostracism (vv. 6-9), Job's speech implies that the friends have either participated in, or responded to, his stigmatization by beginning to abandon him: "But all of you, come back now, and I will not find a wise person among you" (ואולם כלם תשבו ובאו נא ולא־אמצא בכם חכם; 17:10). Although he understands God as the source of his stigmatization (v. 6a), its effects are experienced most directly in his experience of others' responses, especially the pious—"the upright" (ישר; v. 8a); "the innocent" (נקי; v. 8b); "the righteous" (צדיק; v. 9a); and "the one with clean hands" (טהר־ידים; v. 9b). In the presence of one such as Job, "a byword"[757] (v. 6a) and "one before whom people spit" (v. 6b),[758] the pious person responds outwardly with "astonishment" (שמם; v. 8a) and by "stirring himself up against the godless" (על־חנף יתערר; v. 8b). Inwardly, there is on the part of others a determination (ויאחז צדיק דרכו; "and the righteous holds to his way"; v. 9a) and increased dogmatism (יסיף אמץ; v. 9b). As Good explains, "When a man like Job suffers, dogmatically pure folks harden their dogmatism. It is the same contempt for the sufferer that Job has noted before (12:5), and it rests on the same fear that Job perceived in the friends' eyes (6:21)."[759] Job's call for the friends to "come back" suggest that the friends have reacted as others have, which leads to his insult in v. 10b that there is not a

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[757] Reading לִמְשֹׁל rather than לִמְשָׁל. Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 373.

[758] Lit., "a spitting in the face I have become" (ותפת לפנים אהיה).

[759] Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 251.

wise one (חכם) among them.

Job will return to the friends' failed consolatory attempts in chap. 21, but in his next speech in chap. 19, and in his final speech in the second cycle in chap. 21, his accusations become more serious as he accuses them of having used their speech to carry out acts of violence against him (19:2-3, 21-22; 28-29; 21:27). This is first seen in 19:2-3, as Job moves beyond the troublesome nature of their consolation (cf. 16:2) to suggest something more sinister, as he asks "how long" (עד־אנה; v. 2a; cf. 18:2) the friends intend to continue to "torment" him (עד־אנה תוגיון נפשׁי; v. 2a), "breaking him in pieces with words" (ותדכאונני במלים; v. 2b). The "crushing" (דכא) Job earlier desired from God (6:9) is not what he wants from his friends who have, nevertheless, "insulted" (כלם; v. 3a) and "abused" him (v. 3b) repeatedly (v. 3a; "These ten times...").[760] In fact, Job compares the friends' treatment of him to God's by asking, "Why do you pursue me like God? Are you not satisfied with my flesh?" (למה תרדפני כמו־אל ומבשׂרי לא תשׂבעו; v. 22). Like God pursuing dry chaff (cf. 13:25b), so now the friends also persecute him.[761]

Job's accusation that the friends have participated in stigmatizing him becomes even clearer in 19:5 when Job suggests that they "exalt" (תגדילו) themselves against him and make his "humiliation" (חרף) an argument against him (ותוכיחו עלי). The term for "humiliation" (חרף) here is used by the psalmist, who describes himself as "a worm and not a man (אישׁ), scorned (חרף) by humans (אדם), and despised (בזה) by the people (אם)" (Ps 22:7 [6]). Rather than showing pity or compassion on Job, the friends have exploited

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[760] חכר is a *hapax legomenon.* Here I follow Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 200), who, on the basis of the Arabic *ḥaqara*, suggests "insult, despise."

[761] See my discussion above for the hostile sense this verb sometimes carries.

his shame and disgrace to elevate themselves instead.

Job concludes his speech in chap. 19 by returning to the friends' "pursuit" or "persecution" (רדף) of him in 19:28-29 with a warning that takes the form of an appeal to fear:

כי תאמרו מה נרדף־לו ושרש דבר נמצא־בי
גורו לכם מפני חרב כי־חמה עונות חרב למען תדעון שדין[762]

"If you say 'how we will pursue him,'
and the root of the matter is found in me;
Be afraid of the sword,
for wrath brings the punishment of the sword,
so that you will know there is a judgment." (19:28-29)

In a similar appeal to fear in 13:9-11, Job was concerned with preventing the friends from offering false testimony against him in the context of legal proceedings. Here, the friends' false accusation (i.e., finding "the root of the matter" in him; v. 28b) appears to be, from Job's point of view, one of the reasons for which they persecute him. Job warns the friends that if they continue in the same manner, they should be afraid for themselves (גורו לכם) because the consequences of their actions involve the "sword" (v. 29ab), "wrath" (חמה) and "punishments" (עונות; v. 29b), and the realization of a judgment (דין; v. 29c).

The topic of consolation also frames Job's speech in chap. 21 (vv. 2b, 34), as he calls for the friends' attention: "Listen closely (שמעו שמוע) to my words, and let this be your consolation" (v. 2; תנחומתיכם). Like Eliphaz in 15:17, Job uses a call to attention here, "listen closely," which is followed by his suggestion that letting him speak will

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[762] Qere שֵׁדּוּן. שֶׁ is a form of the relative pronoun שֶׁ "that, which," though only here in Job. Cf. Clines, *Job 1-20*, 435.

suffice for any consolation they might otherwise try to offer. Unlike Eliphaz who calls on

Job to hear so that he might understand (5:27) and to listen so that he can instruct Job

concerning the moral order (15:7), Job uses these calls to hear in a different way. Unlike

the friends who are trying to persuade Job that there is, in fact, a moral order as

demonstrated by the fate of the wicked, Job is no longer interested in dialogue with the

friends. That this is the case first becomes evident in chap. 13, when, as Job prepares to

address God directly, he begins to position the friends as his audience (vv. 6, 13, 17),

calling for the friends to be silent (vv. 5a, 13) and to hear what he has to say (vv. 6, 17);

Job does not wish to interact; rather, he is preparing for his confrontation with God (v. 3).

The situation is similar in chap. 21: Job only wants the friends to hear him out as he

suggests: "Bear with me, and I will speak; and after I have spoken, mock on" (v. 3). It is

not that Job does not want them to understand his experience of suffering (cf. vv. 5-6).

Job's primary concern is with God, not with the friends ("As for me, is my complaint

against a person [אדם]?").

After suggesting that the friends intend to do violence (חמס) to him (v. 27), Job

offers a concluding comment on the futility of their consolation: "How will you comfort

me with emptiness (הבל)? Of your answers only falsehood (מעל) remains" (v. 34). With

his use of "falsehood," Job suggests that the friends have acted fraudulent with respect to

the truth.[763]

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[763] See Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 236), who describes the priestly associations of מעל, which
includes the violation of something sacred—a meaning that is extended to include acts of treachery (Num
5:12, 27; Deut 32:51; Ezra 10:2). As Gordis (236) observes, "Here, Job declares the Friends' answers to be
an act of faithlessness against the truth and by that token against God. He thus anticipates God's final
judgment on the Friends: 'For you have not spoken truth about me as has my servant Job' (42:7, 12)."

In the second cycle, the quarrel is reflected most clearly in the rivalry that began to develop between Job and the friends in the first cycle (cf. 6:24-27; 11:4; 12:3; 13:2, 5). In additional to their usual rebukes, which are normally directed at Job's speech (cf. 15:2-6, 12-13; 18:2; 20:2-3), the friends also focus their critiques on Job's intellectual (15:7-8; 20:3a, 4) and moral arrogance (18:4). In criticizing Job's wisdom or intellect, they suggest or imply that Job has expressed his own superiority over creation (15:7-8; 18:4), the wisdom of the past and/or common knowledge (15:18; 20:4), and them (15:9-11; 18:2; 20:3a).

Job's attacks are often aimed at the friends' speech, especially as it reflects their consolatory attempts (16:2-6; 21:2-4, 34a) and their deceptive nature (21:34b; cf. 13:3-12). While Job also critiques their wisdom more generally (17:10b), his most serious accusations are related to the friends' failure as friends through abandonment (17:10a) and stigmatization (19:5) as well as his claims that the friends have used their speech to carry out violence against him (19:2-3, 21-22, 28-29; 21:27).

The friends' use of the fate of the wicked topoi also reflects a shift to the quarrel in two ways. First, the friends' repeated attempts to reassert the moral order through these narrative reveals their closed attitude—their unwillingness to change their minds or admit defeat. Second, in using the fate of the wicked motif to persuade Job that there is a moral order, the friends also display a pretense of not quarreling.

4.3.5 The Quarrel in the Third Cycle

In considering the third cycle's relationship to the quarrel, it is necessary first to consider some of the problems it poses for the reader. Unlike the first two cycles which are marked by symmetry in dialogue (Eliphaz/Job, Bildad/Job, Zophar/Job), Bildad's speech is unusually brief (cf. 25:1-6), and Zophar's speech is missing altogether. And yet, while Job responds to Bildad in chap. 26, his speech in chap. 27 begins with a narrative introduction that is different from previous introductions. The introduction to chap. 27, however, suggests that someone else has spoken, or that Job has been interrupted or, perhaps, has paused his speech: "Then Job again took up his discourse and said..."[764] At times Job also sounds more like the friends than himself (cf. 24:18-25; 26:5-14; 27:13-23), making claims that, at least at face value, reflect the friends' understanding of the moral order. At least the introduction to Job's speech may be accounted for by the nature of the quarrel itself.

How do quarrels end? According to Walton, the goal of the quarrel is hitting out at the other. Ideally, the quarrel will end with each side having a greater understanding of the other, since it has provided the space for the participants to give expression to their grievances in ways that would not normally be acceptable in polite conversation. But even if this does not occur, the quarrel's goal is met in the act of striking out at the other. Resolution is not the quarrel's goal. The quarrel instead provides a framework where participants can fully express their differences.

Bildad's truncated speech and the absence of a final speech from Zophar may

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[764] The same heading will introduce Job's speech in chaps. 29-31 after the wisdom poem in chap. 28.

indicate that they have fully exhausted their efforts at persuasion and are no longer committed to their dialogue with Job. One could see how such a response might follow from Job's critiques, especially in the second cycle, where he has claimed that the friends have nothing to say that he does not already know (16:2); he has noted that although he is fully aware and capable of offering the conventional expressions of sympathy and consolation they attempt (16:3-5; cf. 4:3-4), his own speech provides no relief from his pain (16:5); he has accused the friends of using their words as weapons to torment (19:2-3) and persecute him (19:22; cf. vv. 28-29; 21:27); and he has described their comfort (נחם) as "emptiness" (הבל) and "falsehood" (מעל; 21:34). More importantly, Job has denied and countered their claims about the moral order underlying reality as represented in the fate of the wicked in chap. 21 by offering his own account of what I have described as the "*hope* of the wicked."

Just as there is a discernible shift in the friends' speeches in the second cycle as they shift their attention to focus on the fate of the wicked in their attempts to persuade Job of the moral order underlying reality, another recognizable shift occurs in the third cycle as Eliphaz addresses Job in a way that is different from the friends' speeches in the first and second cycles.

4.3.5.1 Consolation and Quarrel in the Speech of Eliphaz

Eliphaz's final speech in chap. 22 reflects two developments from the second cycle. First, he finally states explicitly that Job's suffering is an expression of God's rebuke (יחך; v. 4a) and judgment (משפט; v. 4b), which are the result of Job's "great wickedness" (רעה; v. 5a) and "endless sins" (עון; v. 5b). Second, despite his conclusion

that Job is sinful, Eliphaz's speech reveals that he has not yet entirely given up on the idea of moving Job beyond his grief—or his sinfulness—and restoring him to his proper place in relation to God and others. While Eliphaz's speech lacks the rebuke—and, for the second cycle, the rivalry—that has characterized the friends' speeches throughout the dialogue, Eliphaz once again advises Job to engage in the practices of piety (22:21-25), which each of the friends offered in the first cycle (cf. 5:8; 8:5-6; 11:13-14). Similarly, Eliphaz also follows his advice with a final image of Job's restoration (vv. 26-30) as each of the friends did in the first cycle (5:19-26; cf. 8:21-22; 11:17-19).

Yet Eliphaz's final speech also shows that his closed attitude remains: he is unwilling to re-evaluate the moral order based on Job's claims in chap. 21. In place of his characteristic introductory rebuke, Eliphaz instead offers an argument, which he develops through a series of defensive rhetorical questions (vv. 2-5) in which he claims that God derives no benefit (סכן) from either humanity (lit., "a man"; גבר; v. 2a) or the wise (משכיל; v. 2b).[765] Even if Job is righteous (צדק; v. 3a) and blameless (תמם; v. 3b), Eliphaz argues that God would receive no "delight" (חפץ; v. 3a) or "gain" (בצה; v. 3b) from Job's character and behavior. Moreover, he suggests that if God has rebuked Job (v. 4a) and entered into judgment with him (v. 4b), it is not because of his piety (ירא; v. 4a) but rather his sin, as he states in v. 5: "Is not your wickedness great? There is no end to your iniquities" (הלא רעתך רבה ואין־קץ לעונתיך).

No friend has yet made such a bold claim—to connect Job's sinfulness with his

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[765] Verses 2-5 all begin with the interrogative ה־. See Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature: Job, Proverbs, Ruth, Canticles, Ecclesiastes, and Esther*. Forms of the Old Testament Literature 13. Grand Rapids, Mich.: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1981), 34. Cf. Course's discussion in *Speech and Response*, 130-131.

suffering and the tragedy he has experienced. In his first speech, Eliphaz recognized Job

is a person of piety (4:6) who could expect to be restored (v. 7). As one who shares in

humanity's fragile and sinful nature (4:17-21; 5:6-7), Job's experience could be

understood in terms of God's correction (יכח) and discipline (מוסר; 5:17ff.) leading to a

bright and secure future (5:19-26). Bildad set Job's experience in the context of his

children's death to illustrate the consequences of their sin (and, as I have argued, the

reliability of the moral order) and the hope that nevertheless remains for Job if he will

"seek God" (8:4-7). And while Zophar identified Job as bearing guilt (11:6), he did not

accuse him of intentional sin or identify him with the wicked but pointed to Job's

ignorance in relation to the wisdom of God (cf. 11:5-11).[766] Even in chap. 15, when

Eliphaz accuses Job of allowing iniquity to teach his mouth (v. 5a) and of choosing the

"tongue of the crafty" (ותבחר לשון ערומים), his focus is how Job's speech (cf. 15:2-6)

threatens to destroy (פרר) the piety (ירא) he ascribed to Job in 4:6.

Here, however, Eliphaz proceeds with a list of sins of which he claims Job is

guilty (vv. 6-9) before he reaches his conclusion—one that illustrates and explains Job's

present circumstances. His accusation takes the form of prophetic judgment, which

begins with כי ("because"; v. 6) and is followed על-כן ("therefore"; v. 10), which

introduces Job's punishment.[767] The sins Eliphaz accuses Job of having committed, which

are social in nature, are particularly cruel. Job is represented as seizing pledges (חבל) as

security for a loan from family (אחים) for no reason (חנם; v. 6), going so far as to strip the

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[766] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 499, who observes, "Such inadvertent sin, although punishable, did not carry with it the stigma of much more serious willful and blatant sin."

[767] See, especially, Good's (*In Turns of Tempest*, 273-74) discussion in this regard.

naked of their clothing (v. 6b; cf. Exod 22:26-27); of withholding water and bread from

the hungry and the thirsty (v. 7); and of showing disregard for widows (v. 9a) and

crushing (דכא) the arms of orphans (v. 9b). The punishments, which follow vv. 10-11,

echo the fate of the wicked with snares (18:9; cf. Ps 69:23 [22]; Prov 22:5) and terror

(15:21; cf. Pss 14:5; 53:6 [5]; Prov 3:25), and darkness (5:14; 15:22-23, 30; 18:5-6, 18;

20:26; cf. Prov 20:20) and flood (20:28; cf. 22:16).[768]

In vv. 12-14, Eliphaz responds to Job, distorting his speech in chap. 21. He begins

with a claim to which he imagines Job is still committed: that God is high in the heavens

(נבה שמים; v. 12a). But he follows by misrepresenting what Job has said: "Yet you say,

'What does God know? Can he judge through deep darkness?'" Job has not, however,

argued from God's ignorance; rather, he has focused on divine inaction: God does not act

to punish the wicked (21:9b, 17-18), despite their rejection of God (v. 14) and their own

sense of self-sufficiency (v. 15) they prosper nevertheless (v. 16a). Consequently, Job

claims that there is no discernible reason as to why some die in prosperity and security

(vv. 23-24) and others die in "bitterness of soul" (בנפש מרה) and "have never tasted of

good" (ולא־אכל בטובה; v. 25).

What seems to trigger Eliphaz's response is Job's preface to his argument in

21:22-26, which takes the form of a rhetorical question: "Can one teach (למד) God

knowledge (דעת), seeing that he judges those on high?" (21:22). What Job says, however,

is not what Eliphaz hears. What Eliphaz hears, or at least what he quotes Job as saying,

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[768] For a discussion of "a flood will sweep away his house," see Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, 305-306; and Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 304 n. 30.

are the words of the wicked: God is unable to judge through "deep darkness" (ערפל; 22:13b) and unable to see because of the dense clouds (עבים; v. 14) that cover him.[769] Elsewhere, the wicked are represented in a similar fashion as understanding their actions as hidden from God's limited vision (Pss 10:4, 11; 94:7; Isa 29:15; Ezek 8:12; 9:9).

Eliphaz has not, however, given up on the possibility of bringing about a change in Job's behavior. This is evident in v. 15 as he warns Job about the dangers of not reforming his conduct, asking, "Will you keep to the old way, which wicked men have trod?" As I noted in chapter 2, the metaphor of the "way" or "path" functions as a metaphor for moral behavior: the path one follows leads to a particular end. Eliphaz shows where that path ends by portraying the wicked as being snatched away (lit., "seized"; קמטו) before their time (ולא־עת) with their foundation washed away by a flood. Eliphaz, therefore, illustrates the fate that may await Job.

However, despite his certainty that Job's situation can be explained on the basis of his wickedness (vv. 4-5), Eliphaz does not wish for Job to experience the fate of the wicked. This is evident in the final verses of his last speech where, as in the first cycle, he once again offers Job advice (vv. 21-25) before finally holding out a vision of the future that will follow Job's restoration (vv. 26-30). Eliphaz first offers two sets of imperatives (vv. 21-22), the first of which is followed by a result clause (v. 21b). He encourages Job to "agree" (הסכן־נא)[770] with God (אמו) and "be at peace" (ושלם; v. 21a; cf. 5:23-24). "As a

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[769] Cf. Ps. 73:11: "And they say, 'How can God know? Is there knowledge in the Most High'"

[770] See Pope's (*Job*, 167) discussion of this verb in connection with the Ugaritic *šskn*.

result" (בהם),[771] he says, "good will come to you" (תבואתך טובה).[772] Eliphaz employs a wordplay with הסכן ("agree") in v. 21a. He has argued that humans can be of no benefit (סכן) to God, yet here he suggests that by yielding to God and being at peace, Job will experience as a result the well-being (טובה) that follows from a right relationship with God (v. 21b).

Eliphaz's advice in vv. 21-22 is not only aimed at restoring Job's relationship to God, it also works implicitly to reconcile Job and his views to those of the friends and their way of thinking. Regarding the entreaty "agree now with him" (הסכן־נא עמו), Clines suggests that "this is the language one uses for friends who have fallen out with one another."[773] While Clines recognizes that Job is expected to yield to God, the focus, he suggests, is on being reconciled to God.[774] But in what way is Job to "agree with," or "yield to," God? According to Eliphaz, he is to "receive instruction (קח־נא מפיו תורה) from [God's] mouth," and "place [God's] words in [his] heart" (ושים אמריו בלבבך; v. 22). In his previous speech, Eliphaz accused Job of allowing iniquity (עון) to teach (אלף) his mouth (15:5), but here he envisions God replacing iniquity as Job's instructor. What kind of instruction (תורה) does Eliphaz imagine God providing? In Proverbs, "instruction" (תורה) is often traditional in character. It is "the instruction of the wise" (תורת חכם; Prov 13:14), or what is offered by a mother and a father to a son (Prov 1:8; 3:1; 4:2; 6:20; cf. 31:26). The content of the teaching Eliphaz imagines is consistent with his own views (cf. 15:11)

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[771] See GKC §135.p, which understands בהם here in 22:21b and in Ezek 33:18 as "thereby."
[772] תבואתך may be emended to תְּבוּאָךְ or read as תְּבוּאָתְךָ "your increase."
[773] Clines, *Job 21-37*, 562.
[774] Clines, *Job 21-37*, 562.

and with those of the wise more generally.

Eliphaz follows his initial exhortations in vv. 21-22 with an "if" clause that governs his remaining advice in vv. 23-25: "If you return to the Almighty..."[775] The language of "returning" or "turning" (שׁוב) to God suggests a reorientation of Job's life, which Eliphaz develops in vv. 23b-25. First, however, he makes clear the results of such a response by stating that Job will then be restored (lit., "built up" [בנה]; v. 23a). Eliphaz illustrates the nature of this reorientation in two ways. First, he describes how Job should respond to sin. In a manner that is reminiscent of Zophar's advice in 11:13-14, Eliphaz speaks of putting iniquity (עולה) at a distance (רחק) from one's tent ("If you remove iniquity [תרחיק עולה] from your tent"; v. 23b).[776] The second dimension of this reorientation is concerned with what Job values or values most (vv. 24-25).[777] As others note, in suggesting that Job should place gold in dust (v. 24a) and the gold of Ophir (v. 24b) among the rocks of the wadi, Eliphaz speaks of returning it to its place of origin.[778] Job is instead to find his most prized possession in the Almighty (v. 25).

The images of restoration that follow the reorientation Eliphaz has advised (vv. 26-30) emphasize the transformation Job will experience in relation to God (vv. 26-28) and others (vv. 29-30). The first change Eliphaz describes is concerned with Job's mood or disposition: Job will delight himself (תתענג) in the Almighty (v. 26a), a response that is characteristic of the pious (Ps 37:4; cf. 27:10) and the repentant (Isa 58:14). Again, in a

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[775] For a different view, see Clines (*Job 21-37*, 564-66) who argues that vv. 23b-25 are promises that follow from doing what Eliphaz has recommended.

[776] See my discussion of Zophar's advice in the previous chapter.

[777] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 502.

[778] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 502; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 333.

manner that is reminiscent of Zophar's description of Job's restoration (11:15a), Eliphaz

suggests that Job will lift up his face to God. The change is Job's disposition is

represented physically. The face that is bowed reflects defeat or shame (Ps. 21:13 [12];

cf. Ps 34:6 [5]). With his relationship to God restored, Job will pray (עתר), God will hear,

and—with his prayer answered—Job will pay his vows (v. 27).[779] In contrast to Job's

imagery of personal confinement, restricted movement, and obstructions to the "way" or

"path" of life noted earlier, Eliphaz reassures Job that he will decide (גזר) on a matter, and

it will be established for him (v. 28a). No longer will his path be characterized by

darkness (19:8); light will instead shine on his ways (v. 28b).

Eliphaz concludes his final speech and the hope he holds out for Job by describing

Job in relation to others. The first image is that of Job offering encouragement to others

(v. 29; cf. 4:3-4): "When people are brought low (השפילו), you will say, rise up."[780] In the

second image, Eliphaz presents Job as interceding on their behalf: "He [i.e., God] will

deliver (מלט) the guilty (lit., "not innocent"; אי־נקי); and he will be delivered through the

cleanness of your hands" (ונמלט בבר כפיך).[781] Eliphaz, therefore, presents Job in a manner

that is similar to that of Abraham (Gen 18:21-33) or Moses (32:9-14) who intercede for

others.[782] Job will, of course, also intercede on behalf of the friends in the epilogue (42:8).

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[779] As David J. A. Clines (*Job 21-37* [WBC 18A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2006], 566) observes, "It is not that Eliphaz promises him that he will be so pious that he 'will' in fact pay his vows, but that he will be given everything he asks for so that 'he will be able,' 'will have good cause,' to present the offerings he has vowed. See also Newsom, "Job," 502, who, arguing similarly, cites 1 Sam 1:10-11; Pss 22:26 [25]; 61:6-9 [5-8]; 65:2-3 [1-2].

[780] גוה is literally, "pride." Habel (*The Book of Job*, 333) suggests "courage." Cf. Gordis (*The Book of Job*, 252) who argues that here it has the meaning, "Go in pride, rise upward!" See also Newsom ("Job," 503) who suggests that as it stands juxtaposed with "brought low," it should be understood as an exhortation: "be lifted up."

[781] See Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 252; cf. Clines, *Job 21-37*, 547; RSV.

4.3.5.2 The Quarrel in Job's Speeches

Job only responds directly to Eliphaz's speech in chap. 22 in one verse, returning

to the theme of truthful and deceptive speech, which he has developed in relation to the

friends. His reply, which follows another account of the "hope of the wicked," consists of

a challenge: "If it is not so, who will prove me a liar (יכזיבני), and show there is nothing in

what I say (24:25; וישם לאל מלתי; cf. NRSV, RSV, ESV)?"[783]

Although Bildad does not take up Job's challenge, Job nevertheless responds to

Bildad in 26:1-4, as the use of the singular in vv. 2-4 suggests.[784] In fact, Job may even

interrupt Bildad's speech, as several commentators have observed.[785] Not only does

Bildad's speech consist of only six verses, the introduction to Job's speech in 27:1

suggests that there has been some kind of interruption: "Job again took up his discourse

and said..."[786] The same introduction will recur in 29:1 after the wisdom poem in chap.

28. Moreover, as Habel notes, "[t]he mood and perspective of 26:5-14 seem to be at odds

with Job's previous use of hymnic materials relating to God's creative power and

governance."[787] If Job has interrupted Bildad's speech in 25:1-6, this may also be a sign

of the dialogue's collapse. As Newsom observes, "[s]uch a structure may be the author's

attempt to represent the interruptive and even overlapping speech of the parties to a

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[782] Newsom, "Job," 503.

[783] Cf. Course, *Speech and Response*, 137-44.

[784] Job normally uses the plural to refer to the friends. For a discussion of this issue, see Clines, *Job 21-37*, 630.

[785] Newsom, "Job," 516-19; Habel, *The Book of Job*, 366-68; Pope, *Job*, 534-535; Gordis, *The Book of Job*, 534-35; cf. Janzen, *Job*, 173; Balentine, *Job*, 381-82.

[786] Some suggest that Job has paused to wait for Zophar to speak, see Balentine, *Job*, 399; Good, *In Turns of Tempest*, 386; Hartley, *The Book of Job*, 368.

[787] Habel, *The Book of Job*, 366. Cf. 9:5-13; 10:8-13; and 12:13-25, all of which Habel (366) cites.

conversation that has irretrievably broken down."[788]

The insulting tone of Job's speech in 26:1-4 again reflects the rivalry that has

come to characterize his interaction with the friends:

<div dir="rtl">

מה־עזרת ללא־כח הושעת זרוע לא עז
מה־יעצת ללא חכמה ותושיה לרב הודעת
את מי הגדת מלין ונשמת מי יצאה ממך

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"How you have helped one without power![789]
and assisted the arm without strength!
How you have counseled one without wisdom,
and abundantly shown your resourcefulness!
With whose help have you spoken,[790]
and whose spirit has come forth from you?"

Sharpening the ridicule of Job's words is the fact that vv. 2-3 are also susceptible to the

TNK's translation, which suggests that Bildad is the one without "wisdom," "power,"

and "strength":

> You would help without having the strength;
> You would deliver with arms that have no power.
> Without having the wisdom, you offer advice...[791]

With his last question in v. 4 ("With whose help..."), Job suggests that Bildad has needed

assistance (divine?; cf. v. 4b) even with the useless words he has offered.

When Job resumes his speech in chap. 27, he states explicitly that he will never

say that the friends are right (v. 5a). After an oath in which Job swears to his truthfulness

by the life of God (v. 2) and then asserts that his lips and tongue will not speak falsehood

(עולה) or deceit (רמיה) as long as he lives (v. 3), Job addresses the friends: "Far be it from

me that I declare that you are right (אם־אצדיק). Until I die, I will not put away (לא־אסיר)

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[788] Newsom, "Job," 516.
[789] On לא used substantively, see GKC §152.a.
[790] "With whose help" is literally, "with whom."
[791] Cf. Newsom, "Job," 517; Balentine, *Job*, 386.

my integrity" (תמתי; v. 5). With these statements Job reveals and confirms with yet

another oath (אם־אצדיק) his own "closed attitude" by stating that he will not lie by

yielding to the friends; he will instead maintain his integrity (תמתי) to the end (v. 6).

In his second and final address to the friends, and now with the friends silenced

(cf. 6:24), Job assumes the role of the instructor in a final act of rivalry: "I will teach you

(אורה אתכם) concerning the hand of God; that which is with the Almighty, I will not

conceal (לא אכחד; v. 11; cf. 6:10)."[792] Although Job claims that all of the friends have seen

it for themselves, and should recognize that what he says is true, he describes them as

continuing to "blow wind" (v. 12b).[793] The content of Job's instruction (vv. 13-23), of

what he has to teach the friends, however, contains no daring and evocative ideas,

complaints, or accusations against God; those have already been spoken (cf. 9:22-24;

12:11-13:1). Instead, taking Zophar's concluding words in 20:29 as his starting point, Job

appears to speak for Zophar, being so familiar with the friends' ways of talking that he

can anticipate and even mimic their responses.[794] As Janzen correctly observes, "the

rhetorical device of having Job finish his friends' arguments for them signals the end of

the dialogues. Job will no longer listen to the friends; he knows already what they will

say. [And t]he friends see that they have nothing more to say, or that there is no point in

trying to say it."[795]

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[792] Habel (*The Book of Job*, 382) takes v. 11 as reflecting Job's understanding of what he has been doing all along.

[793] Newsom, "Job," 524; cf. Good (*In Turns of Tempest*, 288) who translates הבל תהבלו, "and why, then, are you so utterly vapid?" He suggests (288), however, for "[h]*ebel tehbalū*: 'Why do you puff a wind-gust?'"

[794] Newsom, "Job," 524.

[795] Janzen, *Job*, 174.

In the third cycle, the quarrel comes to its end. While the nature of the dialogue in the third cycle may be the result of the text's disarray, I have suggested that it might also be explained in terms of the dialogue's collapse. The quarrel's goal is not resolution but "striking out." Moreover, the characters' closed attitudes—or their unwillingness to admit defeat—suggest that they have reached an impasse in their dialogue. Bildad's short speech and the absence of Zophar's may also indicate that the friends have exhausted their efforts. And if Job has interrupted a longer speech by Bildad, then he has violated the turn-taking that has structured their interaction throughout the dialogue. It may also be the case that Bildad and Zophar have little to say after Eliphaz's final speech in chap. 22.

Although Eliphaz links Job's suffering to his sinfulness (22:4-5) and provides a list of accusations (vv. 6-9) and a description of Job's punishments (vv. 10-11), he appears to be primarily concerned with reforming Job's character and bringing about his restoration. Elements of the quarrel remain, including Eliphaz's closed attitude and his distortion of what Job has said (vv. 12-14). And yet, he does away with the rivalry that has characterized their speeches and focuses instead on changing Job's course ("Will you keep to the old way, which wicked men have trod?"; v. 15), warning that the fate of the wicked may be his own (vv. 16-17). Eliphaz also reintroduces the advice to engage in the practices of piety (vv. 21-25) and their results, which he illustrates by situating Job in the context of the hope of the pious (vv. 26-30).

Although Eliphaz and Bildad have abandoned their rivalry with Job, Job has not

done the same. In addition to his ongoing concern with true and false speech (24:25; 27:2-6), Job ridicules Bildad's consolatory efforts (26:1-4) before finally positioning himself as the authoritative instructor in 27:11: "I will teach you concerning the hand of God; that which is with the Almighty I will not conceal." After a final insult in v. 12 (i.e., they "blow wind"; הבל תהבלו), Job then begins to speak in the manner of Zophar. The friends need not speak; Job already knows what they will say—and it is nothing new (16:2a).

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has explored how, beginning with Job, the dialogue shifts from the friends' goal of consolatory persuasion to a quarrel, a framework of dialogue that provides the space for impolite and adversarial interaction in argument. I began by considering Job's initial speech in chap. 3 as well as his use of imagery related to dominated/dominating bodies in light of Ronnie Janoff-Bulman's work on the loss of the assumptive world. I have argued that the gap that exists between Job and his friends is due, at least in part, to both his traumatic experience and his loss of fundamental assumptions, including those of benevolence and meaning—and, related to the latter, the principles of justice and controllability. These principles provide different ways of explaining the distribution of positive and negative outcomes. Each is also based on a principle of causality, or what Janoff-Bulman refers to as a "person-" or "action-outcome contingency." While justice relies on deservingness to explain the outcome of events (i.e., people get what they deserve), controllability is concerned with the extent to which

people can influence their own outcomes either through precautionary behaviors or through the avoidance of others. Job's use of images depicting God as a dominating body, in particular, points to his lost sense of benevolence (with God represented instead as a malevolent and wounding presence) as well as the principles of justice and controllability. These assumptions are particularly important for the arguments of the friends since their advice to engage in the practices of piety and the results they expect to follow assume a causal connection between one's actions and outcomes.

Job first attempts to shift the dialogue to a quarrel in chap. 6 by attacking the friends' failure as friends (6:14-21) and their identity as sages in their consolatory role (6:24-27). The first of the friends, however, to show signs of shifting to the quarrel is Zophar in chap. 11. Although I argue that Job's consolation continues to be his goal in his first speech, Zophar not only calls for shaming based on Job's actions, but also assumes guilt on Job's part (v. 6c). There are two clear indications that Zophar is shifting to a quarrel: his somewhat indirect insult of Job (cf. 11:12), and his distortion of what Job has said (cf. 11:4).

The quarrel between Job and the friends is also reflected in the rivalry that Job's critique of the friends' teaching and rebuke in 6:24-27 seems to spark. From Zophar's speech in chap. 11 to the end of the second cycle, the friends attack Job's intellectual (11:4a; 15:7-8, cf. v. 18; 18:2; 20:3a, 4) and moral arrogance (11:4b; 18:4).[796] The characters also defend their own intellectual standing (12:3; 13:2; 15:9-10; 18:3). Job

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[796] These critiques tend to overlap with the rebukes they offer, though the friends are normally concerned with Job's speech in the introductions to the speeches.

focuses his attacks on the friends' wisdom or intellect (12:2; 13:5; 17:10b) either in association with or independently of the consolation they offer (16:2-6; 21:2-4, 34a). In the latter half of the second cycle, his attacks take on a more serious tone as he accuses the friends of abandonment (17:10a), stigmatization (19:5; cf. 17:6-10), and of using their speech to carry out acts of violence against him (19:2-3, 21-22, 28-29; 21:27).

The fate of the wicked speeches show that the friends are both engaged in a quarrel and are also trying to restore Job's confidence in the moral order underlying reality. These narratives reflect the friends' closed attitudes—their unyielding views regarding the way the world works—and provide a pretense of not quarreling. But their goals are complicated. While they have shifted to a quarrel and strike out at Job, especially in their rivalry, I have argued that they remain committed to their initial consolatory goals. As I noted in the previous chapter, only gradually do the friends begin to realize that Job no longer shares their assumptions regarding the moral order. Job's assumptive world has been shattered; he no longer expects the world to be governed by something like a principle of justice; neither does he believe that there is anything he can be or do to affect his outcome (controllability). This is why the friends abandon their advice to engage in the practices of piety as well as the hope of the pious narratives, which illustrate the results of such practices. By the second cycle, the friends appear to realize that if they are to succeed at consoling Job, they must first restore his belief in the moral order, which I have argued they attempt to do through their vivid representations of the fate of the wicked.

In the third cycle, the dialogue begins to show signs that it is collapsing, and the

quarrel between Job and his friends finally comes to an end. In this cycle, I have focused

primarily on the speeches of Eliphaz and Job. Eliphaz's speech is significant because he

is the first of the friends to connect Job's suffering with his sinfulness. Yet, despite his

closed attitude and his distortion of Job's speech, I have suggested that Eliphaz's primary

concern is reforming Job's conduct (cf. 22:15) and restoring Job to a right relationship

with God and others. To do this, Eliphaz first warns Job that he might potentially suffer

the fate of the wicked (vv. 16-17). Eliphaz then returns to two of the strategies the friends

use in the first cycle of the dialogue: advice and instruction. Eliphaz's advice consists of

his recommendations of the practices of piety; his instruction, as in the first cycle, situates

Job within the hope of the pious narratives (though less so in this final speech), and

serves as the motivation for such practices and to illustrate the results that follow.

Job continues with ridicule and rivalry in the third cycle, unswayed by Eliphaz's

speech. He first mocks Bildad's consolatory efforts (26:1-4), perhaps even interrupting

Bildad's speech to do so. Then, in chap. 27, Job swears by the life of God (v. 2) that as

long as he lives (v. 3) he will not lie (v. 4), nor will he admit that the friends are right: to

do so would be to deny his integrity (v. 5). In a final act of rivalry, Job positions himself

as the friends' instructor, offering one last insult before speaking as if he were Zophar.

Job has finally found the silence from the friends that he has called for throughout much

of the dialogue.[797]

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[797] Of course, the book has not concluded. Although I have chosen not to address Job's speeches in 29-31, Elihu's speeches, and God's speeches in the context of this dissertation, I will explore the cultures of argument in those speeches in a future study.

Conclusion

This study has explored the nature and dynamics of the argumentation between Job and his friends in chaps. 4-27 in light of different contexts and cultures of argument. I began by examining the ways in which argumentation is modeled in both the Mesopotamian dispute poems and the wisdom dialogue as a genre, particularly as it is represented by the Babylonian Theodicy and the *Lebensmüde*. In order to better understand the dynamics of the Joban dialogue, I then considered the context and goals of the arguers as it is established by the dialogue's narrative framework and argued that the narrative configures a fictive social setting where the characters appear as friends and sages in a consolatory context. The narrative, I have suggested, positions Job not simply as a model of wisdom and piety, but also as a wise and suffering patriarch who instructs, discredits, silences, and even prays for those who represent competing and oppositional voices. In short, Job does not allow for the kind of dissent that he himself will voice in the dialogue. The narrative, however, also sets the stage for the conflict between Job and his friends. In light of my examination of cultural expectations for friendship and consolation, I suggested that Job's own expectations of his friends as friends and his position before them as a sufferer complicates what would normally be a more egalitarian relationship among friends and sages.[798]

In concluding, I will first offer a summary of the friends' goals in argument in the first cycle. I will then provide an overview of Job's attempt to shift the dialogue to a

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[798] On this, see also my discussion in the early part of Chapter 3.

quarrel and of how it is developed, especially in the second and third cycles. I will then consider the goal or goals of the dialogue itself in relation to the Mesopotamian disputations and the wisdom dialogue.

Consolation in the First Cycle of Speeches

As I have noted, the friends' goals in argument are established by the narrative framework: their goal in traveling to and being with Job is to "comfort" (נוד) and "console" (נחם; 2:11). In my examination of cultural expectations for consolation in the Hebrew Bible and in light of Greco-Roman consolatory literature, I argue for a distinction between acts of sympathy expressed in solidarity with a sufferer (נוד; cf. 2:12-13) and consolation (נחם), which takes the form of rational persuasion. Consolation can additionally have a sharp, corrective edge that is nevertheless understood as an expression of friendship, as illustrated in the Greco-Roman texts I surveyed in Chapter 2. I argue that the friends' use of the sapiential category of rebuke functions in just this sort of capacity, although it has often been misunderstood and, in turn, lead to a privileging or foregrounding of dialogue's adversarial nature and to viewing the friends negatively. The friends' rebukes function instead to correct what they view as Job's improper behavior and distorted views.

In suggesting that the friends' identities as sages informs their task as consolers, I propose two additional categories on which the friends rely: advice and instruction. I do not use these categories formally, but heuristically. Their advice consists of therapeutic and situationally appropriate behaviors and attitudes, and is expressed through their

recommendations of the practices of piety, or "seeking God." Their advice offers Job the means by which, as they see it, Job might influence or change his particular circumstances. The friends also offer conventional, rationally-based instruction, which often provides the motivation for accepting the advice that they have offered (in the form of a result clause).

With regard to their instruction, I focus specifically on what I understand as their use of two consolatory topoi: the fate of the wicked and the hope of the pious. I argue that by incorporating these motifs into their speeches, the friends are not trying to explain why it is that Job is suffering, but to reassure him that reality is structured positively to support his restoration. Although some understand the fate of the wicked topos to refer to Job, the friends neither identify Job directly with the wicked (at least in the first two cycles; cf. chap. 22) nor does Job take the fate of the wicked speeches personally. More importantly, the placement of the situation of the hope of the pious at the end of the friends' speeches, and their situating Job within these narratives, can be seen as a justification for taking the intervening materials as consolatory, including the otherwise ambiguous fate of the wicked motif. In the first cycle, each of the friends uses the language of "hope" or "confidence" explicitly and in the context of contrasting the pious with the wicked.[799]

The hope of the pious and the fate of the wicked, through their underlying assumptions, provide for Job a rational framework that not only demonstrates how the

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[799] Cf. "confidence" (כסלה in 4:6a; 8:14a) and ("trust"; בטח; 11:18) and "hope" (קוה; 4:6; 5:16; 8:13; 11:18, 20).

world works, but also shows the kind of future Job can expect on the basis of his character and his actions. The friends often juxtapose these motifs to demonstrate the reliability of the moral order (cf. 4:7-11; 5:9-16; 8:12-20; 11:15-20). In fact, with the exception of 5:2-7 and 5:18-26, each time the hope of the pious occurs, it is either adjacent to or interwoven with the fate of the wicked (cf. 4:6-7, 8-11; 5:11, 12-14, 15-17; 8:4, 11-15, 16-20a, 20b, 21, 22; 11:6-19, 20). Eliphaz and Bildad, for example, structure some of their arguments through cause-and-effect relationships (e.g., 4:8-9; 8:4, 11-12) to provide Job with a rational framework so that he can think through his situation more carefully (cf. 4:6-9; 5:3-7) and locate his own experience in relation to them (4:6-11; 8:4-7, 21-22).

Here, a few differences between Eliphaz and Bildad, on the one hand, and Zophar, on the other, are worth noting. Eliphaz and Bildad both contrast the wicked with the pious to encourage Job to be optimistic in his outlook (4:6-11; 5:9-16; 8:11-20). Both also acknowledge that the poor and the righteous can experience horrifying challenges and adversity (5:18; 8:16-18); but, at the same time, they focus their instruction on hope's expectant and open-ended nature, whether through the poor man awaiting God's transforming activity, or the plant that is just beginning to sprout again (8:19). Eliphaz and Bildad also emphasize God's role as guarantor of the moral order in destroying the wicked (4:9; 5:12-14; 8:4, 20b, 22), maintaining the natural order (5:9-10), intervening in human affairs (5:12-16), and supporting the righteous (5:11, 14-15, 17-18, 19-20a; 8:20a, cf. v. 20b).

While the hope of the pious and the fate of the wicked occur throughout Eliphaz

and Bidad's speeches as they encourage hope in Job's present as well as in his future,

Zophar considers hope a possibility only in the context of Job's future restoration

(11:18b), and after he has appropriated the practices of piety that Zophar recommends

(11:13-14). Zophar also no longer appears to assume that Job shares the friends'

assumptions about the moral order; he focuses instead on the "secrets of wisdom" (11:6)

and the "mystery of God" (11:7; cf. 5-9). In juxtaposing the hope of the pious (vv. 15-19)

with the fate of the wicked in the final verse (v. 20), Zophar chooses to end on an

ominous note of warning to Job. Moreover, unlike Eliphaz and Bildad who often note

God's intervention in the destruction of the wicked (4:9, 5:12-14; 8:4, 20b, 22), as well as

God's transforming activity in relation to the righteous (5:11, 14-15, 17-18, 19-20a;

8:20a, 21), Zophar's description of the fate of the wicked is brief and impersonal. Finally,

I suggest that Job's sharper tone, his distortion of Job's speech, and his use of insult

suggest that he is shifting to the quarrel.

The Emergence and Development of the Quarrel

I have argued that the quarrel is not the type of dialogue that *Job is* but rather

what it *becomes*. I have also suggested that Job is responsible for the quarrel's emergence

and that he first attempts to shift the dialogue from the friends' goal of consolatory

persuasion to a quarrel in his first reply to Eliphaz. He does so with two attacks on the

friends: Job first attacks the friends failure as friends through imagery related to the

treacherous wadi (6:14-21); he then calls into question their identity as sages and their

ability to perform their consolatory role (6:24-27). In both instances, he attacks their

character by accusing them of moral failures. The reason for Job's desire for something like the quarrel as a framework for dialogue is implicit in the justification he offers for his speech in 6:2-4. First, despite whatever norms might ordinarily constrain him, Job is unapologetic for his speech (v. 3b) and will continue to insist on speaking out (cf. 7:11; 10:1). Second, I have suggested that his justification offered an implicit critique of Eliphaz's failure to recognize the severity of Job's suffering. What Job desires is to "make evident" is suffering for the friends through imagery and metaphor (cf. 6:2-3a, 4). Job also wants the friends to see that he is telling the truth about his situation (v. 28), to be present with him (v. 29), and to accept his own judgment (v. 30).

A rivalry with the friends then begins to develop in the first cycle. In that attacks of one another's character are involved, this serves as another indication of the quarrel. I have suggested that this rivalry is first seen in Zophar's misrepresentation of Job's speech (cf. 11:4) and in his insult (v. 12), both of which serve to critique Job's intellectual and moral arrogance. Job, in response, then mocks the friends' wisdom (12:2; cf. 13:6) and defends his own intellectual standing (12:3; 13:2) before he accuses the friends of false comfort and deception (cf. 13:3-12).[800]

The rivalry between Job and the friends continues and is developed in the second cycle. For the friends, this rivalry tends to overlap with their continued rebukes of Job's speech. But, as in Zophar's speech in chap. 11, they also begin to attack Job's wisdom and intellect (15:7-8, cf. v. 18; 18:2; 20:3a, 4; cf. 11:4a), as well as his moral arrogance (18:4; cf. 11:4b). Like Job (12:3; 13:2), Eliphaz and Bildad also defend their own

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[800] And, of course, the friends defend their wisdom in turn.

intellectual standing (15:9-10; 18:3). Job's attacks focus on the friends' wisdom or

intellect, often in connection with their failure as friends (17:10) or with the consolation

they have offered (16:2-6; 21:2-4, 34). Especially in the latter half of the second cycle,

Job's attacks take on a more serious tone as he accuses the friends of abandonment

(17:10a), stigmatization (19:5; cf. 17:6-10), and of using their speech abusively or even

violently (19:2-3, 21-22, 28-29; 21:27).

The friends also abandon their advice and the hope of the pious motif in the

second cycle to focus almost exclusively on the fate of the wicked. I have argued that

their use of this topos also indicates that they are engaged in a quarrel—but not in the

way one might expect. Although many take the fate of the wicked topos as referring to

Job, I understand them differently. In Chapter 3, I suggested that, in the first cycle, the

friends' speeches reflect a growing awareness (most evident in Zophar's speech) that Job

no longer shares their assumptions concerning the moral order. By the second cycle, it is

clear that Job no longer believes that there is anything that he can do or be that will

influence his outcome: Job no longer shares the friends' assumptions about the moral

order on which their consolatory efforts depend. Consequently, I have suggested, the

friends use the fate of the wicked narratives in an attempt to reassert the moral order and

to persuade Job that it is, in fact, in effect. At the same time, their use of this motif

reflects two characteristics of the quarrel: 1) it points to the friends' closed attitude

concerning the moral order, and 2) it offers a pretense of not quarreling. The friends'

have not given up on Job's restoration; however, neither are they open to changing their

own views of reality.

The third cycle reflects another shift on the part of the friends. While Zophar does not speak, Eliphaz and Bildad both abandon their rivalry with Job. Eliphaz also does away with the rebukes that have characterized the friends' speeches from the start. Instead, for the first time in the dialogue, Eliphaz links Job's suffering to his sinfulness (22:4-5), listing particularly cruel social sins (vv. 6-9) and describing Job's punishments (vv. 10-11). Yet, I have argued that Eliphaz's primary concern in his last speech is Job's restoration, which he first attempts by warning Job of the fate he might suffer (vv. 16-17). Then, in concluding his speech, Eliphaz reintroduces the advice (vv. 21-25), which characterized the friends' speeches in the first cycle, and a depiction of Job's restoration (vv. 26-30).

Even as their dialogue breaks down and their quarrel ends, Job continues with ridicule and rivalry. After mocking Bildad's consolatory efforts (26:1-4), Job positions himself as the friends' instructor (27:11), offers one final insult (v. 12), and, being so familiar with their speech, begins speaking as if he were Zophar.

Disputation and Dialogue

I have argued that while the Joban dialogue shares the wisdom dialogue's expectation that the characters will not succeed at persuading one another, it moves beyond the *Babylonian Theodicy* and the *Lebensmüde* with (1) its characters' increasingly ill-mannered and antagonistic speeches and (2) the poet's exploitation of the genre's expectation of irresolution. Job lacks the politeness that is expressed between the sufferer and the friend in the Babylonian Theodicy, which I have described as "argument showing respect." Terms of politeness and respect are virtually absent from Job (cf.

19:21). Moreover, unlike the sufferer with his friend, Job strikes out at his three friends attacking their failure as friends, their consolatory attempts, their wisdom, and their deceitful talk. The friends make no concession to Job, and their goals are left unmet as Job, unlike the sufferer, refuses to appeal to the deity in a posture of prayer.[801] Yet, like the sufferer, Job wants to be heard and understood. For Job, the quarrel provides a space for the kind of raw and impolite speech that he needs to give voice to his suffering.

While the wisdom dialogue, especially in the Babylonian Theodicy, preserves two sharply contrasting goals of argument, the more difficult position is slightly privileged. In the Babylonian Theodicy, the sufferer speaks first and last, much like the winners in the Mesopotamian dispute poems. I also suggest that this is accomplished, in part, by the sufferer's calls for the friend to hear and with his final words, which, while acknowledging the kindness of the friend, express his unmet need for solidarity in suffering: "You are kind, my friend; behold my grief. / Help me; look on my distress; know it" (XXVII.287-288). But, even in wanting to be heard, Job moves beyond the sufferer in the Babylonian Theodicy by calling for the friends' silence. In the end, Job speaks as authoritatively as he does in the narrative tale: his voice in the dialogue, as in the narrative, is privileged above all others, only now the content and character of his speech has changed in light of his experience of suffering.

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[801] Job's addresses to the deity do include appeals, but these often take and ironic or otherwise unconventional form.

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