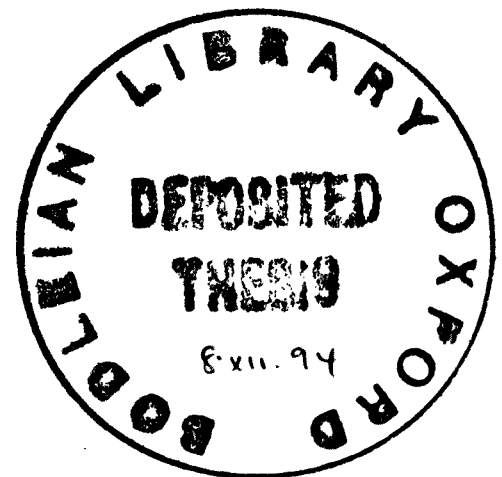


**THE BOOK OF JOB:
FOUNDATION FOR TESTIMONY IN THE
WRITINGS OF GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ,
ELIE WIESEL, ARCHIBALD MACLEISH
AND CARL GUSTAV JUNG**

**A Thesis Presented For the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy**

Trinity Term, 1994



**Linda Laurance Cooper
Wolfson College, Oxford**

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Abstract

This thesis seeks to illustrate that the classic biblical work on the problem of the innocent sufferer, the Book of Job, is still relevant in twentieth century, Western culture.

The exegetical complexity of the Book of Job is outlined in order to show that the work lends itself to diverse interpretations and uses by readers outside the academic community.

This thesis then focuses on the writings of Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Peruvian Catholic priest, who uses the Book of Job to empower the people's revolt against dictatorships; Elie Wiesel, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, who identifies himself with Job and believes that Job must still be arguing with God; Archibald MacLeish, an American poet, professor, and statesman, who creates a modern Job who eventually realizes that humans have only the love of other humans as a *raison d'être* for life; Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist, who believed that the Book of Job reflects an honest appraisal of the unconscious/God energy - a dualism which Christianity has suppressed much to its detriment.

The four authors discussed are not 'critics'. Their use of the Book of Job is not exegetical in the standard sense of the text as object. To them it is a fundamental theme replete with a myriad of archetypal meanings.

The conclusions reached are: The existential angst of the second half of the twentieth century is apparent in the work of these four writers. They chose the Book of Job because it provides a foundation for testimony about crucial world conditions. These four radically different individuals find a similar 'core meaning' in the Book of Job. Subjective interpretation of ancient texts can be useful in presenting controversial subjects to the general public.

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Introduction: In this section it is suggested that the Book of Job has been chosen by these four writers because Job presents an archetypal character in an archetypal situation.

Man's struggle to come to terms with the inexplicable, to talk with God, has never been satisfied. This Joban theme, as it continually reappears throughout history, is paramount in expanding and explaining our concepts of metaphysical reality. Most readers of the ancient Book of Job find something with which they can identify: whether it is a Job who is the patient man, a Job who is an iconoclast, a God who is of limited benevolence, or a God who transcends human understanding.

The writer of the Book of Job never questioned the existence of God; nor did he question God's influence over his creatures. He did question, however, God's justice. Thus the Book of Job is witness to the paradox of a good God who works in history - a history of suffering. Like Job, early writers, who relied on the Book of Job, never questioned their faith in God and, therefore, used the Book of Job to help rationalize away the problem of unmerited suffering. Today the Book is still utilized by writers who are concerned with the problem of the innocent sufferer; their faith in God, however, is often problematic. This shift, with the perceived removal of God from history and the failure of science to alleviate suffering, incites the existential human spirit to create its own meaning and worth. Thus the dialectic aspects of Job become important because Job petitions for justice on his behalf. His arguments resonate with today's existential

thought.

In the introduction, parameters are set out which govern the balance of the thesis. It is suggested that the mode of the four writers is that of a 'reader', (that is someone who relies on the text for subjective meaning) rather than an exegete who examines the text as an 'object'. Also crucial to understanding the interpretive focus of each author is to be cognizant of their *Sitz im Leben*. Existentialism and testimony are also important concepts. In responding to the testimony of Job, each author's arguments reflect the impact of existential thought as he argues for some form of self-empowerment.

Chapter I: The traditional interpretation of the Book of Job is set forth in order that the writings of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung may be compared against it. Along with this, the exegetical complexity of the Book is outlined to show that it lends itself to diverse interpretations and uses by readers outside the academic community.

Chapter II: Gustavo Gutiérrez is a leader in the liberation theology movement. The concepts of liberation theology are explained and then applied to Gutiérrez's theology. His interpretation of the Book of Job, set forth in *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Poor*, is discussed with an emphasis on how he perceives the text to help empower the rebellion of the misbegotten of Latin America. Gutiérrez

argues that there is an evolution in the character of Job. At first his contention with God is for his personal suffering but slowly this changes to concern for the poor. His education through suffering teaches him how to talk about God to the poor. Then Gutiérrez suggests that the Voice from the Whirlwind helps Job to understand that God is a God of love and has a plan for his creation. Gutiérrez's interpretation of chapter 42:6 is crucial here. Finally some of the problems with Gutiérrez's utilization of the Book of Job are outlined.

Chapter III: Elie Wiesel is a Holocaust survivor. A survey of Wiesel's early Hasidic childhood, which imbued in him a strong Jewish faith, is contrasted with his experiences as a victim of Hitler's 'final solution'. Other Jewish approaches to the Shoah are outlined. Then there is an examination of Wiesel's writings which reflect his association with Job as well as his dependence on existentialist thought. There follows an examination of the two works which Wiesel devotes to the text of the Book of Job, *Job, Ou Dieu dans la Tempête* and 'Job Our Contemporary', in which he continually skews standard exegesis so that he may align the Joban theme with the reality of a post-Holocaust world. A short comparison is made between Wiesel's use of the Job archetype and the work of three other Jewish writers who use the Joban theme as a foundation for their testimony to a post-Holocaust Jewry - Richard Rubenstein, Lawrence Corey, and Elizer

Berkovits. Finally there is a brief discussion of Wiesel's efforts to teach love and compassion to the rest of the world - lessons he finds in the Book of Job.

Chapter IV. Archibald MacLeish, an American statesman, journalist, teacher, and poet, was concerned with creating a better world. In the first section, there is a survey of MacLeish's poetry and plays in which he takes a classic myth, Faust, or biblical myths, Eve, Cain and Abel and rewrites them for what he considers increased relevancy in today's world. This is the same approach he employs with the Book of Job. There follows a discussion of the background issues which influence MacLeish and finally come to fruition in his Pulitzer prize winning play *J.B.* The play is analyzed to show how MacLeish changes the thrust of the Book of Job to fit his eventual conclusion that love and compassion are the only truths in which humans can believe. There is a survey of the play's reception by various theologians and critics and its continued viability to the present time.

Chapter V. Carl Gustav Jung believed that many of the psychological ills of Western society could be attributed to a spiritual crisis in people's lives when a God-image was wanting. There is a brief look at Jung's early years in which he relates he was already grappling with the concept of the dualistic nature of God. This concept is continually developed through out Jung's work and finally comes to

fruition in what he describes as the only piece of writing he would not change: *Answer to Job*. Jung suggests that the suffering of Job is caused by the archaic nature of God/Self which is not in touch with the shadow side of its unconscious. Thus, by Job's demands for explanations, he brings God into greater psychic awareness, a higher consciousness which ultimately leads to the incarnation of Christ - the answer to Job. However, Jung believes, Christianity has remained fixed and refused to expand with the continued development of the human psyche; therefore some Christian dogmas have buried the love and compassion which Christ brought to the world. This refusal to grow has exacerbated the shadow side of the human unconscious.

Some of the criticisms to *Answer to Job* are outlined as well as the rebuttals. Then there is presented an example of how Jung's work is used theologically at the present time. Finally there is an analysis of Jung's ideas on the importance to Western culture of the God-image and if lost how desperate our lives will become from a sense of loss of love and compassion.

Chapter VI. The conclusion outlines the similarities and the differences in the interpretations of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung. It presents an argument for there being a 'core meaning' in the Book of Job. It also suggests that there is a strong existential bias which runs through the work

of these four authors; that their drive to testify is part of the existential drive for self-realization, which then leads to a desire to improve the collective welfare of all peoples. There follows the argument that the Book of Job is relevant today, as in the past, because the text presents an archetypal situation about suffering and Job represents the archetypal sufferer. The conclusions reached are: The existential angst of the second half of the twentieth century is apparent in the work of these four writers. They chose the Book of Job because it provides a foundation for testimony about crucial world conditions. These four radically different individuals find a similar 'core meaning' in the Book. Subjective interpretation of ancient texts can be useful in presenting controversial subjects to the general public.

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Preface

I have always been concerned with the problems of unwarranted suffering, a conundrum created by the precepts of the Judeo-Christian tradition in which we are to believe in an all-good, all-knowing and all-powerful God. My puzzlement eventually led me to teaching and discussing a canonical work on the subject, the Book of Job. As my interest in the Book developed, I became curious as to how other people had used the work, and began collecting the various writings on the Book which had survived down through the centuries - thus creating an intellectual history on the Book of Job. This material, however, was too unwieldy for an academic thesis and eventually was relegated to passing asides and scattered footnotes. Thus my thesis focuses on the relative contemporary work of four writers who also seemed to have concerns with the problem of unwarranted suffering.

The dilemma of acknowledging the people who have been helpful to me in various ways while working on this thesis, is that there is a real danger of leaving someone out. That having been stated, I would like to thank: First, my supervisor Prof. John Barton who patiently read and guided my various efforts through many editions until I produced the final one presented here. Second, due to the complexity of my

subject matter there have been several Oxford tutors whose expertise and friendship have helped me along the way: Jon Stallworthy, John Ashton, Chris Rowland, Glenda Abramson, and Martin Goodman. Also to be included in the English contingent are Aulikki Nahkola and Isabel Wollaston both of whom helped to keep this lengthy process all in perspective.

Special acknowledgment is necessary to the American contingent who, too, were pressed into service to read various bits and to provide editorial advice: Josephine Jacobsen, Fr. Joseph Gallagher, Josephine Trueschler, Sr. Mary Aquin O'Neill, John Davis, and Martie Sanger.

Finally special thanks is due to my children, Kenna Meister and Caitlin Kelley, both of whom contributed in innumerable ways to this project - from editing, managing my affairs while I was in England, to suggesting various books to read, and providing constant encouragement.

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When we read Job as drama and ourselves enter into its seriocomic incongruities, we run the gauntlet between the ridiculous and the sublime, the tragic and the comic, the 'sea of troubles' and the, 'ocean of tranquillity'. If we are enabled to survive the ordeal like Job did, and if we can penetrate to that inner sanctum where the opposites are reconciled, we, too, may experience the spiritual healing that will 'bless our latter days more than our beginning' (Job 42:12).

William J. Urbrock¹

It is Job himself who guides the generations. When one generation has served its time, fulfilled its duty, fought its battle, then Job has guided it; when the new generation, with its innumerable ranks and every individual among them in his place, stands ready to begin the journey, then Job is again present, takes his place, which is the outpost of humanity.

Søren Kierkegaard²

No serious writer, composer, painter has ever doubted, even in moments of strategic aestheticism, that his work bears on good and evil, on the enhancement or diminution of the sum of humanity in man and the city. To imagine originally, to shape into significant expression, is to test in depth those potentialities of understanding and of conduct...which are the life-substance of the ethical.

George Steiner³

¹ 'Reconciliation of Opposites in the Dramatic Ordeal of Job' in *Semeia* 7, p. 153.

² *Edifying Discourses* vol. 1, trans. David P Swenson & Lillian M. Swenson, Minneapolis: 1962. Reprinted in Hone, *Voice of the Whirlwind*, San Francisco: 1972, p. 142.

³ *Real Presences*, Chicago: 1989, p. 145.

INTRODUCTION

As the cycles of political and social history, philosophical and theological thought, and natural and moral evils affect humankind, the impact can be seen in differing interpretations of the problem of suffering. The Book of Job, in the history of Western intellectual culture, has always played a prominent role in humankind's attempts to come to terms with the problem of evil and the plight of the innocent sufferer. Job, as the archetype of the innocent sufferer, becomes a bellwether for the current metaphysical trends.⁴

Prior to the sixth century C.E., the Book of Job was only discussed by Jewish, Muslim, and Christian exegetes familiar with the Hebrew Bible. In the sixth century, Pope Gregory the Great's treatise on Job, the six-volume *Moralia*, popularized the biblical book. In the Jewish tradition, Maimonides' influential *The Guide for the Perplexed* (twelfth century) devotes two chapters to the Book of Job, indicating that the subject of Job played an important part in his metaphysics.

⁴ In this thesis, when it is written the **Book of Job**, this represents the entire work, while 'just' **Job**, represents the man.

Plays and poems as well as sermons began to appear in all languages throughout the Western world. Consequently, in the last fifteen centuries, Job's archetypal appeal to suffering humanity has led to the integration of the Book of Job into the cultures of the religions of paradox: Christianity, Judaism, and Islam.⁵ In the Western world, the Book of Job is continuously paraphrased by theologians, analyzed by philosophers, reworked by writers and illustrated by artists.

While the Book of Job implicitly repudiates the argument for retributive justice, this belief-system remains a popular rationale for the cause of suffering.⁶ When forty thousand

⁵ The religions of paradox postulate that God is all-good, all-knowing and all-powerful, and yet evil exists - hence the paradox. The religions of dissolution believe that evil is only apparent. These belief systems, such as Buddhism, are found primarily in the Eastern hemisphere. The religions of solution, such as Manicheism, embrace an equal power dualism between the forces of good and evil. For further discussion on this subject cf. Stephen Vicchio. *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, Westminster, Maryland: 1989, pp. 30-34, 45-83.

⁶ Even today there is a strong endorsement for retributive justice and suffering as training. The quotation below is from a pamphlet, published in 1972, which was distributed by many Christian organizations to churches, bookshops and hospitals. 'Affliction comes from God's hand. The connection between sin and sickness is recognized far too little. Sin is the deepest and most essential root of sickness. The person who is sick fails to recognize this essential cause of sickness and attributes his suffering to external circumstances, to natural causes.... Sickness is a splendid opportunity to grow and mature inwardly. Don't you feel how God is at work in you precisely while you are sick? The grace that is operative as one suffers is more valuable than physical healing. Affliction is a means of training used by God's salutary love.' (J. Brenning, R. Brocks, Chr. Gremmels, & D. Preiss, 'Leid und Krankheit im Spiegel

people in Lisbon were killed by the devastating rumble of an earthquake on All Souls Day in 1755, suddenly the time-honoured belief in retributive justice suffered a severe setback. The patience of Job lost its appeal and the iconoclastic personality of Job came to the forefront.⁷

The Industrial Revolution and Darwinism brought about massive changes in society and shook the tenets of religious belief. But these technological and scientific advances, for the most part, were considered positive; therefore, the works based on Job retreated from the pessimistic, revolutionary aspects and again emphasized the parts of the Book which corresponded to the positive tenor of the times. These positive attitudes, reflected in the works concerning Job, continued until World War I.

The twentieth century has rediscovered Job, not once but several times and still continues to do so. Unlike the past centuries' slowly evolving trends in society, the pace of change in the twentieth century has quickened. As the world's disasters accumulate, the interpreters of the Book of Job have become legion. Many writers and thinkers state 'the time is ripe for Job' and have used Job to implement their points of

Soelle. Trans. Everett R. Kalin, Philadelphia: 1975, p. 17.

⁷ Perhaps the term iconoclast has not been applied to Job before; however I believe it is appropriate. The *Random House Dictionary* defines iconoclast as 'one who attacks cherished beliefs, traditional institutions, etc. as being based on error or superstition'.

view.

This empathy for the Book of Job, is like an ink-blot from a Rorschach test; what the interpreter sees tells you a good deal about the interpreter and the age in which he or she lives. This is particularly evident in the last half of the twentieth century in which the Book of Job has figured prominently in the works of Western culture.

In this thesis I examine the work of four late twentieth, century writers, all of whom employ the Book of Job to testify to the plight of the 'innocent sufferer' and present the 'solutions' they think will help to rectify these seeming injustices. They are Gustavo Gutiérrez, Elie Wiesel, Archibald MacLeish, and Carl Gustav Jung. These writers have been selected because each has written about the Book of Job in the second half of the twentieth century and each is an outstanding figure in his field.

While I examine the standard interpretation of the Book of Job in the first chapter in order to establish a background for the work of the authors discussed herein, I do not try to solve or defend various exegetical questions about the Book: date, authorship, origin, language, etc., because these forms of exegesis treat the text as **object**. Rather, in this thesis, I address interpretation which treats the text as **subject** - the method of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung. In

other words: what is the 'real presence' of the Book of Job that has attracted these four very different authors to utilize this classic for their testimony on the plight of the innocent sufferer? (By implication then, this thesis could be extended to include many other authors who have similarly relied on the Book of Job for their testimony.)

George Steiner, in '"Critics"/"Readers",' examines the polarities between readers and critics and suggests that the reader is interested in a 'canon' while the critic is interested in a 'syllabus'. Critics order their focus, deleting any extraneous material, and in so doing objectify the text under scrutiny:

I have said that ordering sight 'objectifies.' I have tried to show that such objectification in criticism has nothing to do with the phantasm of 'objectivity' - which would be pure stasis, a zero point. What then is meant by 'objectification,' by the assertion that it is of the nature of criticism to see that which it sees as an object? It means simply that the *telos*, the thing aimed at by the act of ordering perception, is a datum, a *donné*. It is 'out there,' at a distance, at an angle, in a perspective which criticism determines with a view to intelligibility and estimate.⁸

This makes the text for the critic an **object** - 'out there'.

The four authors I discuss are not 'critics'. Their concerns with the Book of Job are not exegetical in the standard sense of the text as object. As 'readers' rather than 'critics' they are relying on the **transcendence** of the

⁸ Steiner, '"Critics"/"Readers"', in *New Literary History*, vol. X, Spring 1979, #3, p. 430.

than 'critics' they are relying on the **transcendence** of the Book of Job. The text is not 'a thing out there' but a **subject** replete with myriad archetypal meanings:

The reader proceeds as *if* the text was the housing of forces and meanings, of meanings of meanings, whose lodging within the executive verbal form was one of 'incarnation.' He reads as *if* - a conditionality which defines the provisional temper of his pursuits - the singular presence of the life of meaning in the text and work of art was 'a real presence' irreducible to analytic summation and resistant to judgment in the sense in which the critic can and must judge.⁹

The 'real presence', the subject of the iconic status of the text may be different for different readers, but the vitality inherent in the text remains crucial. And in the case of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung, they have chosen to base their testimony on the Book of Job because they identify with the 'real presence' of the text. Steiner suggests that

[t]he ascription, even where it remains only a provisional constant, of 'real presence' to the text, means that the reader's engagement with the text is not 'objectifying,' that it cannot be a relationship of reification, of competition, and, by logical extension, of supersedure. The reader opens himself to the autonomous being of the text. The dialectic of encounter and of vulnerability (the text can bring drastic hurt) is one in which the ontological core of the text, its presentness of inward being, both reveals and makes itself hidden.¹⁰

Gustavo Gutiérrez, a Peruvian Catholic priest, confronts, in his country, on a daily basis, the poverty and degradation

⁹ 'Critics', p. 440.

¹⁰ 'Critic', p. 441. Steiner concludes that his depiction of 'critic' and 'reader' are near fictions. Obviously neither one exists in a pure state. Cf. p. 451.

of men, women, and children who have no rights as citizens. He uses the Book of Job to empower the people's revolt against dictatorship. Elie Wiesel, a Hungarian Holocaust survivor, identifies himself with Job and believes that Job must still be arguing with God - demanding that God honour his covenant with his creatures. Archibald MacLeish, an American poet, professor, and statesman, believes that the poet must utilize his craft for the enlightenment of the general public. He creates a modern Job who eventually realizes that, even if God exists, humans have only the love of other humans as a *raison d'être* for life. Carl Gustav Jung, a Swiss psychiatrist, believes that the Book of Job reflects an honest appraisal of the unconscious/God energy - a dualism which Christianity has suppressed much to its detriment. Only by bringing to consciousness the dual aspects of the unconscious/God dynamic which resides in the psyche will the human behaviour responsible for evil be controlled.

The interpreter cannot be a blank slate on which the text is written as pure message. Rather the interpreter has a 'pre-understanding', an active role which must be considered whenever his or her exegesis is being examined:

It is the reality of this pre-understanding that is so important to the understanding of exegesis, for it introduces the interpreter and his or her *Sitz im Leben* into the hermeneutical process. Studying the *Sitz im Leben* of the reader becomes as important a part of that process as the investigation of the *Sitz im Leben* of the writer. The task of understanding is seen to be a 'fusion of horizons', that of the interpreter and that of

the text, rather than a detached academic's view of the horizon only.¹¹

This is true for the writers examined in this thesis. The *Sitz im Leben* of Gutiérrez dictates that his concern is for the poor that surround him. If he can use scripture to alleviate their suffering, he will, and whatever the writer's 'intent' will play only a distant second to his primary goal. Wiesel's interpretive approach, derived from his life in the death camps, is to continue to demand that God honour his covenant with his creatures. MacLeish, a skeptic, will argue that human love is the only value apparent in this godless world. Influenced by his psychoanalytic profession, Jung believes that human love and human negativity as well as God's love and God's negativity are aspects of the human unconscious which the Book of Job helps to illustrate.

In responding to the **testimony** of Job, so vividly portrayed in the Book of Job, each author's arguments reflect the impact of existential thought as he argues for some form of self-empowerment - an existence that defines an essence:

What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means that, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and, only afterwards defines himself. If man, as the existentialist conceives him, is indefinable, it is because at first he is nothing. Only afterwards will he be something, and he himself will have

¹¹ Christopher Rowland & Mark Corner, *Liberating Exegesis*, London: 1990, p. 74.

made what he will be.¹²

How man achieves this 'something' is through the transcendence of his present reality by acts of consciousness. Thus the essence of man is that he can transcend his existence. Consequently the 'value' of our life is determined by how we choose to respond to the predicament. This is why Job is often considered one of the first existentialists; he chooses to 'fight back', if not for justice, at least for some explanation of his sufferings.

Man's struggle to come to terms with the inexplicable, to talk with God, has never been satisfied. This Joban theme, as it continually reappears throughout history, is paramount in expanding and explaining our concepts of metaphysical reality. Each reader of the ancient Book of Job finds something with which he or she can identify: whether it is a Job who is the patient man, a Job who is an iconoclast, a God who is of limited benevolence, or a God who transcends human understanding.

The writer of the Book of Job never questioned the existence of God; nor did he question God's influence over his creatures. He did question, however, God's justice. Thus the Book is witness to the paradox of a good God who works in

¹² Jean-Paul Sartre, 'Existentialism', in *A Casebook on Existentialism*, ed. William V. Spanos, New York: 1966, p. 278.

history - a history of suffering. Like Job, early writers, who relied on the Book, never questioned their faith in God and, therefore, used the Book to help rationalize away the problem of unmerited suffering. Today the Book of Job is still utilized by writers who are concerned with the problem of the innocent sufferer; their faith in God, however, is often problematic.

The age of science has changed the focus. God, indeed, may be working in history, but man now has the 'material tools' to create a 'utopia'. Science could create heaven on earth.¹³ But this hope is challenged by the devastation of World War II; consequently existentialist attitudes become prevalent in Western intellectual culture and influence the twentieth century uses and interpretations of the Book of Job. This shift, with the perceived removal of God from history and the failure of science to alleviate suffering, incites the individual human spirit to create its own meaning and worth. Thus the dialectic aspects of Job become important. Job's existential character argues for justice on his behalf, which appeals to the existentialist in Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung. Existentialists

¹³ H. G. Wells' *The Undying Fire* (New York: 1919) is the Book of Job in early twentieth century dress. The undying fire is man's ability to learn and create a better world through education. (In the case of Wells the education is in the classics and not in the practical sciences.)

aim, above all, to show people *that they are free*, to open their eyes to something which has always been true, but which for one reason or another may not always have been recognized namely that men are free to choose, not only what to do on a specific occasion, but what to value and how to live.¹⁴

Existentialists have a missionary spirit and want to teach the rest of humanity about human freedom in order that each individual's view of life will be altered. We, as individuals, therefore, must understand that we are responsible for constructing our own life. Human nature is not static but possesses potentiality. We have the choice of creative possibilities - a choice of creating an 'unauthentic existence' by not fulfilling our potential or an 'authentic existence' by realizing our most important (and possible) abilities and desires. We are 'condemned to be free', to struggle to ascertain meaning in our daily striving. In spite of the 'unchosen elements' in an individual's life, the steepness of the hill, the unfairness of life, each of us is free to choose how we wish to respond to such challenges.

Our freedom to choose ourselves is limitless. An Existentialist psychoanalysis [sic] would seek to explain what it was that a man had chosen for himself in the future, rather than to explain the present in terms of the past.¹⁵

Because of this pervading point of view, '[e]xistentialists hope to be not merely intellectually, but emotionally and

¹⁴ Mary Warnock, *Existentialism*, Oxford: 1970, p. 2.

¹⁵ Warnock, p. 122.

practically innovators'.¹⁶ These innovators' concern for the world is what makes it significant, in a temporal sense.¹⁷ Thus it is this creative use of our existence which defines our essence and helps to define our surroundings.

This essence which struggles to transcend the limits of existence becomes the demand for justice in Gustavo Gutiérrez's *On Job*: man's insistence that God honour the Covenant in Elie Wiesel's 'Job, Our Contemporary' and Commentary on the Book of Job; the 'burning coal of the heart' found in Archibald MacLeish's play *J.B.*; and the need for man to come to terms with the dualistic nature of God and himself in Carl Gustav Jung's *Answer to Job*.

The authors of these works suggest that only if we take responsibility for our lives and then extend that sense of responsibility out to the community is there hope for a better life for everyone. The modern Furies have driven this insight to the forefront of our consciousness. Karl Jaspers in *The Way of Wisdom* reflects on a Joban theme when he writes that a meaningful life can only mature in

the darkness in which the individual finds himself...from his sense of forlornness when he stares without love into the void, from his self-forgetfulness when he feels that

¹⁶ Warnock, p. 2.

¹⁷ Cf. Warnock, pp. 53-54. Warnock argues that Heidegger was a 'partial' existentialist, and later existentialist philosophy finds its foundations in his work. Heidegger, long before Sartre, said: 'The essence of human being lies in its existence' (Warnock, p. 54).

he is being consumed by the busy-ness of the world, when suddenly he wakes up in terror and asks himself: What am I failing to do? What should I do?¹⁸

By asking that question, man creates in himself and for himself a new meaning of life, a new religion; a religion which, if it takes the form of theistic existentialism, relies on humanity's demands for a re-negotiated covenant with God or a 'leap of faith', and if in the form of humanistic existentialism knows that only each individual is responsible for the nurturance of the self and of the community.

The twentieth century existential angst in Western intellectual culture arose in part from a loss of faith in God. Paul Tillich declares that Nietzsche's 'death of God' position is 'the decisive event which underlies the search for meaning and the despair of it in the twentieth century'. This is brought about by 'the loss of God in the nineteenth century'.¹⁹ William James, the American psychologist and philosopher, however, would probably deny this premise, contending that even a belief in 'no-God' was a belief-system and could qualify as a religion and a reintroduction of some form of the divine. In *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, James writes:

Religion, whatever it is, is a man's total reaction upon life, so why not say that any total reaction upon life is

¹⁸ Quoted in William K. Spanos, *A Casebook on Existentialism*, New York: 1966, p. 8.

¹⁹ Quoted in Spanos, p. 325.

religion? To get at [reactions and attitudes] you must go beyond the foreground of existence and reach down to the curious sense of the whole residual cosmos as an everlasting presence, intimate or alien, terrible or amusing, lovable or odious, which in some degree everyone possesses. This sense of the world's presence, appealing as it does to our peculiar individual temperament, makes us either strenuous or careless, devout or blasphemous, gloomy or exultant, about life at large; and our reaction, involuntary and inarticulate and often half conscious as it is, is the completest of all our answers to the question, 'What is the character of this universe in which we dwell'?²⁰

Thus, as Paul Tillich and others have stated, the conventional conception of the Judeo-Christian God may be dead, but if James is correct, we have replaced God by other Deities which partake of the Divine whether we wish to acknowledge the case or not. Efforts to maintain a faith in God, whose underpinnings have been destroyed by a pervasive sense of skepticism, have become a common theme in late nineteenth and twentieth century writings. Consequently, the relevance of the Joban theme remains pertinent in twentieth-century intellectual culture, often reaffirming the canon/classic status of the Book of Job as testimony to struggle and to subjective transcendence in a world of violence - a world with or without God - a world of suffering. The four writers I discuss in this thesis illustrate the relevance of the Joban theme in twentieth-century Western culture and intellectual thought.

²⁰ William James. *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, New York: 1961, p. 45.

A CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Classics

The Book of Job may be considered a 'classic' - a paradigmatic text for the problem of the innocent sufferer - and as such takes its place amongst the classic literature of the world. Classics are exemplary examples of perennial situations which define human existence:

On historical grounds, classics are simply those texts that have helped found or form a particular culture. On more explicitly hermeneutical grounds, classics are those texts that bear an excess and permanence of meaning, yet always resist definitive interpretation. In their production, there is also the following paradox: though highly particular in origin and expression, classics have the possibility of being universal in their effect.²¹

Classics depict archetypal situations with archetypal characters. These characteristics make them readily identifiable to each reader. Perhaps it should not be said that a classic has inexhaustible potential for meaning, but rather, that a classic never exhausts our interest because of its wealth of archetypal material:

For any text can be described truly in potentially infinite ways, and its relations to broader levels of context are always changing as history lengthens. Let us then celebrate the diversity of interpretation as a sign that our texts are interesting in more ways than one.²²

A classic theme becomes familiar and we welcome its

²¹ David Tracey, *Plurality and Ambiguity: Hermeneutics, Religion, Hope*, London: 1987, p. 12.

²² Jeffrey Stout, 'What Is the Meaning of a Text?' in *New Literary History* Vol. XIV, 1982-1983, p. 8.

retelling as we welcome an old friend. Even if we know the 'outcome' of a story, the appeal remains. Everyone knows that King Lear will learn too late of the love that his daughter Cordelia has had for him, or that the hand of Abraham is stayed from sacrificing his son Isaac at the last moment by the angel of the Lord. Classics become part of the canon of 'boundary situations' stories which affect human lives:

Canonic are the texts and fragments of texts...whose entrance into the reader's mind, and 'mind' is in this context a wholly inadequate, restrictive designation, whose immediacy to the reader's recall and re-vocation, come to alter the texture of consciousness. The reader revisits, comes back into awareness of the quick of his own augmented being through reference to, through silent colloquy with, through citation of, texts and pieces of text....The canonic text enters into the reader, it takes its place within him by a process of penetration, of luminous insinuation whose occasion may have been entirely mundane and accidental....²³

These classics, literature produced over the centuries in response to 'boundary situations', have created a continually expanding canon. Paradoxically non-canonical and 'subversive' works often become acceptable, gain the status of 'classic', and are incorporated into the canon.²⁴ Rather than superseding prior classical works, they become integrated into the earlier perceived wisdom and are handed down to later generations to be used as they see fit. Thus the following

²³ Steiner, 'Critic', p. 446.

²⁴ The behaviour of the Church toward the works of St. Thomas Aquinas is a good example of the 'subversive' becoming the backbone of the canonical tradition.

generations rework and 'revitalize' the earlier arguments to reflect more 'modern' beliefs and/or situations:

To interact with classic texts is to converse with difference and otherness. There are...some generic rules for good conversation. But there is only one way to understand what the rules are there for: we must insist upon the act of questioning. We must allow that act to test, form, and transform itself by allowing ourselves to question. To understand is to interpret. To interpret is to converse. To converse with any classic text is to find oneself caught up in the questions and answers worthy of a free mind.²⁵

It is this continual questioning of the classic work which keeps it vitally alive and which subtlety changes its perceived meaning through the ages. Thus the Book of Job, as the biblical classic on the problem of the innocent sufferer, continues to be cited frequently by authors who are concerned with questions of theodicies.

Myths

Many of the myths that make up the canon of classical and biblical literature are about archetypes in archetypal situations. These stories are not so much about facts as about a mode of vision which helps to place life's 'boundary situations' in some frame of reference which unites the 'factual' world within a situational context.

Myth is a form of integrated perceptual awareness which unites 'facts' and 'explanations' because it is a form of awareness in which fact and explanation have not yet become *disunited*. It is a mode of perception or of

²⁵ Tracey, p. 20.

vision, rather than a mode of explanation....²⁶

While humanity has made great progress in the technological world, the spiritual, emotional aspects of the individual have changed only in subtle and minimal ways. Thus, many of the myths of the pre-Christian era have meaning for the people of the twentieth century, sometimes modified, sometimes disguised.²⁷ This is the case with the Book of Job, which is a prime example of a myth that seems to embody a truth that cannot so much be objectified as experienced.

The kinds of meaning or truth which myths embody are a part of, as well as the original basis of our ontological *vision* of the world, and if we are to come to terms with the nature of these truths we shall need to allow ourselves to be led in the direction of greater concreteness and imagistic plenitude rather than in the direction of greater formality and abstraction. The myths of our culture - which include those myths of other cultures which are imaginatively accessible to us - contain, and can therefore reveal, the fullest possible meaning of the world in which we live, rather than merely the meaning of the kind of desert landscape which may appeal to those with (perhaps psychologically or politically compelling, but nevertheless religiously indefensible) reasons for wanting to repudiate the world.²⁸

Mircea Eliade argues, much as Carl Jung, that

²⁶ Colin Falck, *Myth, Truth & Literature: Towards a True Post-modernism*, Cambridge: 1989, p. 117.

²⁷ The George Lucas *Star Wars Trilogy* is a space-age version of the quest for the Holy Grail with the attending forces of good and evil helping and hindering the fair knight/warrior. Joseph Campbell, an expert on myths, was an advisor to Lucas when he was making these movies. There are many more examples, ie. Superman, etc.

²⁸ Falck, p. 130.

today we are well on the way to an understanding of one thing of which the nineteenth century had not even a presentiment - that the symbol, the myth and the image are of the very substance of the spiritual life, that they may become disguised, mutilated or degraded, but are never extirpated.²⁹

These images are not irrelevant tales from long ago, but represent responsible creations of the psyche which is endeavoring to bring to consciousness 'the most hidden modalities of being'. 'Consequently the study of them enables us to reach a better understanding of man - of man "as he is", before he has to come to terms with the conditions of History'.³⁰ Eliade remarks that the progressive desacralization of humankind has made ineffectual our spiritual life but, yet, has not destroyed the 'mythological litter' still lingering in the mind's remote recesses. He writes:

These degraded images present to us the only possible point of departure for the spiritual renewal of modern man. It is of the greatest importance...to rediscover a whole mythology, still concealed in the most ordinary, everyday life of a contemporary man....³¹

Perhaps this is why the Book of Job has become such a point of reference in this century. Job, as the suffering archetype, bears a family resemblance to every suffering human and needs to be acknowledged. As each person comes to terms with the

²⁹ Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols*, trans. Philip Mairet, London: 1961, p. 11.

³⁰ Eliade, p. 12.

³¹ Eliade, p. 18. In the chapter on Jung's *Answer to Job* this argument is presented using the language of analytical psychology.

inexplicability of a particular situation, he or she will not feel alone.

Theodicy

Give someone a round peg to put in a round hole, and ask him to write an explanation of how he did it, and you will probably get a short paragraph. Take a round peg and a square hole - the problem of theodicy, to be squeezed into a pseudo-logical framework - and give it to ten thousand people, and ask them to tell you how they could not do it, and you will get a very long book. Insoluble contradictions generate infinite numbers of incomplete solutions.³²

Wendy Doniger O'Flaherty

The first extant **philosophical** consideration of the problem of evil is found in the writing of Epicurus (341-270 B.C.E.):

God either wishes to take away evils, and is unable; or He is able, and is unwilling; or He is neither willing nor able, or He is both willing and able. If He is willing and is unable, He is feeble, which is not in accordance with the character of God; if He is able and unwilling, He is envious, which is equally at variance with God; if He is neither willing nor able, He is both envious and feeble, and therefore not God; if He is both willing and able, which alone is suitable to God, from what source then are evils? or why does He not remove them?³³

Leibniz, in the eighteenth century, however, is credited with the first use of the word *theodicy* (or in French *théodicée*) as

³² *The Origins of Evil in Hindu Mythology*, Berkeley: 1976, p. 376.

³³ Quoted in John Hick, *Evil and the God of Love*, revised ed., New York: 1977, p. 5, 1f.

a label for the intellectual attempt to reconcile the evil in the world with God's attributes of omnipotence and omnibenevolence. In other words, theodicy originated as a philosophical 'justification of God's ways to man'.³⁴

In the twentieth century, some theologians still attempt theodicies of the Leibnizian, rational type;³⁵ however, the word and the concept have been expanded by such thinkers as Max Weber who relates the term *theodicy* to an existential drive to explain suffering and evil.³⁶ (That drive may not necessarily have a religious perspective as illustrated by some of Sigmund Freud's work.) Weber suggests that the attempts to interpret the reasons for human suffering provide the impetus for the diversity of religious systems not only in the West but world-wide.³⁷

Weber attempted to show that problems of this nature [such as premature death], concerning the discrepancy between normal human interests and expectations in any situation and society and what actually happens, are inherent in the nature of human existence. They pose problems of the order which on the most generalized line have come to be known as the problem of evil, of the

³⁴ John Milton, *Paradise Lost*.

³⁵ Current theodicies can be found in the work of Alvin Plantinga, John Hick, and Richard Swinburne.

³⁶ Gananath Obeyesekere, 'Theodicy, Sin and Salvation in a Sociology of Buddhism', in *Dialectics in Practical Religion*, ed. Edmund R. Leach, Cambridge: 1968, p. 9.

³⁷ In the late twentieth century, certain forms of the nature/nurture arguments found in Freudian psychology and Hegelian concepts of history are used to account for some moral evils.

meaning of suffering, and the like....It is differentiation with respect to the treatment of precisely such problems which constitutes the primary modes of variation between the great systems of religious thought.³⁸

While Weber has a broader concept of the term theodicy, it is still most often used in the narrower, classical sense.

It is the problem of evil, of belief, the meaning of suffering, which in the twentieth century can no longer be answered with a blasé reliance on faith. Kierkegaard's 'leap of faith' today is a hard fought struggle blocked by the death of metaphysics and the violence and irrationality of the world politic.

Testimony

Many verses in the Hebrew Bible fall into the category of testimony. They bear witness to significant events which may change or underscore humanity's conception of reality.

The myths in the bible often ask questions about

the meaning of truth and Ultimate Reality not only as it is in itself but as it is existentially related to us. The religious classics are testimonies by human beings who, like ourselves, have asked these questions and believe that they have received a response from Ultimate Reality itself. They believe, therefore, that some revelation has occurred giving them a new possibility of enlightenment or even some new way to formulate the question.³⁹

³⁸ Talcott Parsons, *Essays in Sociological Theory Pure and Applied*, Glencoe, Il: 1949, pp. 139-140.

³⁹ Tracey, pp. 87-88.

Such is the case with the Book of Job, in which Job is driven by his suffering and by the unrelenting orthodoxy of his comforters to demand a hearing before God. There are testimonies which dwell on the positive aspects of life, but, the preponderance of testimonies, seems to be weighted toward the negative side. The 'boundary situations', which cause suffering either to the individual or the group, are the events that elicit the most heart-felt testimonies.

By 'testimony' I obviously do not mean to limit the concept to historical or legal parameters, but to a philosophical/theological idea which 'confers the sanction of reality on ideas, ideals, and modes of being....'⁴⁰ In this sense, the witness conveys a statement to another person or group with the intent of arousing belief or faith on the strength of the testimony. Often the witness 'is the man who is identified with the just cause which the crowd and the

⁴⁰ Paul Ricoeur, 'The Hermeneutics of Testimony', trans. by David Stewart & Charles E. Reagan in *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis L. Mudge, Philadelphia: 1980, p. 122. The following section relies heavily on Ricoeur's essay on testimony as the only current work on the hermeneutics of testimony other than C.A.J. Coady, *Testimony: A Philosophical Study*, (Oxford: 1992). Coady avoids any discussion of testimony in a metaphysical or religious sphere and relies heavily on linguistic speech-act theories. Other works, such as Shoshana Felman & Dori Laub, *Testimony*, (New York & London: 1992) are almost exclusively devoted to the concept of testimony as it impacts the milieu of the Holocaust. As David Tracey notes: 'The category 'testimony' needs further reflection' (p. 137, fn. 18).

great hate and who, for this just cause, risks his life'⁴¹, or reputation. The witness argues for a 'belief' in order to convince the hearer of an important opinion or truth and always supports the rights of the 'wronged party'.

Not every statement is testimony. Mere facts - such as the price of petrol or that I had a hair cut yesterday - do not qualify as testimony. There is an implied truth to testimony which is greater than the witness and which speaks 'to the interior man, to his conviction, to his faith'.⁴² *False testimony* is seen as a lie on the part of the witness and can only occur if the emotions of the witness are not fully engaged in his or her testimony. 'This perverse intention is so fatal to the exercise of justice and to the entire order of discourse that all codes of morality place it very high in the scale of vices'.⁴³ Consequently: 'The engagement of the witness in testimony is the fixed point around which the range of meaning pivots. It is this engagement that marks the difference between the false witness and the faithful and true witness'.⁴⁴

In this context, it is apparent that testimony is related to legal discourse with the seeming fundamental aspects of a

⁴¹ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 129.

⁴² Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 130.

⁴³ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', pp. 128-129.

⁴⁴ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 130.

trial.⁴⁵ The witness testifies to a particular situation, much as he or she would in front of a legal magistrate, with the hope of convincing the hearer - judge and/or jury - of the validity of the argument. As we will see, this is the case with the Book of Job in which Job often uses legal parlance as he pleads his cause before the court of God. Because the 'receivers' of the testimony bear a family resemblance to a court of law they are persuaded with 'proofs' much as would be presented to an actual court.

There is an existential attitude, a motivating force, an integral part of this witnessing which appears to be an argument for remembering the wrongs of yesterday in order to prevent them from happening tomorrow. Or, in the case of the Hebrew prophets, there is sometimes a prognostication of approaching doom, if Israel refuses to return to the ways of the Lord. In Ezekiel's oracles of approaching judgment, he relates:

The words of the Lord came to me:
 You, O mortal, thus says the Lord
 God to the land of Israel:
 An end! The end has come
 upon the four corners of the land.
 Now the end is upon you,
 I will let loose my anger upon you;
 I will judge you according to your ways,
 I will punish you for all your abominations.
 My eye will not spare you, I will have no pity.
 I will punish you for your ways,
 while your abominations are among you.

⁴⁵ Cf. Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 124.

Then you will know that I am the Lord (7:1-4).⁴⁶

In Ezekiel's testimony, he has allowed himself to become the oracle which foretells divine punishment. Yet some of the prophetic writing have a positive message as in Second Isaiah in which the servant Israel is the Lord's witness:

Bring forth the people who are blind, yet have eyes,
 who are deaf, yet have ears!
 Let all the nations gather together,
 and let all the people assemble.
 Who among them declared this,
 and foretold to us the former things?
 Let them bring their witnesses to justify them,
 and let them hear and say, 'It is true.'
 You are my witnesses, says the Lord,
 and my servant whom I have chosen,
 so that you may believe me
 and understand that I am he.
 Before me no God was formed,
 nor shall there be any after me.
 I, I am the Lord,
 and besides me there is no other savior.
 I declared and saved and proclaimed,
 when there was no strange god among you;
 and you are my witnesses, says the Lord (43:8-12).

These Hebrew prophets have felt compelled to speak out:

At first the witness is not just anyone who comes forward and gives testimony, but the one who is sent in order to testify. Originally, testimony comes from somewhere else. Next, the witness does not testify about isolated and contingent fact but about radical, global meaning of human experience. [In Second Isaiah] It is Yahweh himself who is witnessed to in the testimony. Moreover, the testimony is oriented toward a proclamation, divulging, propagation: it is for all peoples that one people is witness. Finally, this profession implies a total engagement not only of words but of acts and, in the extreme, in the sacrifice of a life. What separates this new meaning of testimony from all its uses in ordinary language is that the testimony does not belong to the

⁴⁶ All biblical quotations are from the *New Revised Standard Version* unless otherwise noted.

witness. It proceeds from an absolute initiative as to its origin and its content.⁴⁷

The testimony which Ricoeur writes of here has a prophetic meaning. Yet, at the same time, it has not abolished the profane aspect of testimony so that the two are amalgamated into one. Thus religious testimony becomes a conjunction between 'the prophetic moment and the juridical moment. A tension is thus created between faith and things seen'.⁴⁸ In testimony, a confession of 'truth', the juridical language of the trial is apparent. This drive to present their case before the world 'court' is particularly apparent in the work of Wiesel and Jung, but also is the underlying motivation of Gutiérrez and MacLeish.

In some works the theme has an autobiographical background which has motivated the author to create a story to illustrate the underlying forces behind his or her dilemmas. Perhaps this is the case with Job, who pursued by the Furies of the Satan, demands a trial with and before God. Job, in testifying to his plight, arguing for the justice of his case, and then accepting the theophany of the whirlwind, ultimately acknowledges a ground of Being outside himself. Job with his 'leap of faith', stands out as one of the first theistic existentialists.

⁴⁷ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 131.

⁴⁸ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 133.

Søren Kierkegaard, considered one of the first modern theistic existentialists, glorifies Abraham for his obedience to God, but it is with Job that he himself identifies, because of Job's witness to the contradictory nature of human existence. In *Repetition*, he records four 'letters from the young man' which aver his strong empathy for the Joban character:

In the whole Old Testament there is no other figure one approaches with so much human confidence and boldness and trust as Job, simply because he is so human in every way, because he resides in a *confinium* touching on poetry.⁴⁹...If Job is a poetic character, if there never was any man who spoke this way, then I make his words my own and take upon myself the responsibility.⁵⁰

Kierkegaard singles Job out because of his *testimony* and volunteers to continue to repeat Job's message. Job is a teacher of men who by the recounting of his story has

left himself as a pattern to succeeding generations, his life as a principle of guidance to every man, his name as an assurance to the many, his own deeds as an encouragement to the striving. Such a teacher and guide to men was Job.⁵¹

Job has become a pattern, according to Kierkegaard, for

⁴⁹ S.K. Footnote: 'The range of poetry as a human interpretation of being and existence encompasses Job, who defends himself on the basis of moral excellence (32:1: "for he continued to think himself righteous") until he moves beyond to the religious (42:1-6) "Therefore I melt away, I repent in dust and ashes)". Hence Job is in a border territory (*confinium*) touching both poetry and the religious'. (p. 372)

⁵⁰ Søren Kierkegaard, *Fear and Trembling/Repetition*, eds. & trans. Howard V. Kong & Edna H. Hong, Princeton: 1983, pp. 204-205.

⁵¹ Kierkegaard, *Discourse*, p. 142.

man's contention with God in defence of himself and of the poor - a pattern which is drawn upon again more than a hundred years later by the liberation theologian Gustavo Gutiérrez. Abraham has argued with God on behalf of a possible few good men in Sodom, but Kierkegaard does not use this story to bolster his premise (Gen. 18:22-33).⁵² Rather, he is impressed by a man who in the face of such calamities can say: 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord', and at the same time still strive for justice with the Lord:

[Y]ou who in your prime were the sword of the oppressed, the stave of the old, and the staff of the brokenhearted, you did not disappoint men when everything went to pieces - then you became the voice of the suffering, the cry of the grief-stricken, the shriek of the terrified, and a relief to all who bore their torment in silence, a faithful witness to all the affliction and laceration there can be in a heart, an unfailing spokesman who dared to lament 'in bitterness of soul' and to strive with God.⁵³

The justice that Job seeks, according to Kierkegaard, is for the integrity of the soul and not so much a worldly justice. Job, then, testifies to humanity's ability to survive with its soul intact in spite of all its afflictions. 'Job walks by the side of the race and guarantees it its happiness, combats the apprehensive dream that some horror may suddenly befall man and have the power to destroy his soul as

⁵² *Fear and Trembling*, which has Abraham as the central figure, was published the same day (7 October, 1843) as *Repetition*, which has the Joban material.

⁵³ Kierkegaard, *Repetition*, p. 197 (*italics added*).

its certain prey'.⁵⁴ This witness to the plight of humanity and its survival in spite of affliction is based on man's dialectical discourse with God - a position to which the story of Job testifies.

But to be such a witness, creates a lonely outpost, a loneliness which is equated with the testimony of an existential being. Elie Wiesel, commenting on his breaking of the silence of the Holocaust, writes:

If someone else could have written my stories I would not have written them. I have written them in order to testify. And this is the origin of the loneliness that can be glimpsed in each of my silences.⁵⁵

Wiesel feels alone: 'A voice crying in the wilderness', just as Job must have felt alone with his wife and the comforters arraigned against him. We will see that this drive to testify also seems to create a feeling of aloneness in Gutiérrez, MacLeish, and Jung:

In the face of life's horror - luckily most people notice it only on occasion, but a few whom inner forces appoint to bear witness are always conscious of it - there is only one comfort: its alignment with the horror experienced by previous witnesses.⁵⁶

In the aftermath of World War II there was a silence of denial which refused to look back at the destructive forces

⁵⁴ Kierkegaard, *Discourses*, p. 143.

⁵⁵ Elie Wiesel, 'The Loneliness of God', published in *Dvar Hashavu'a* (magazine of the newspaper *Davar*), Tel Aviv, 1984. Quoted in Felman & Laub, p. 3.

⁵⁶ Elias Canetti, *Kafka's Other Trial*, New York: 1974, p. 4.

that the world had unleashed. But slowly there has been a need to speak out. Elie Wiesel suggests that 'testimony' is a new genre invented by the latter half of the twentieth century; however, I believe, it is a very old genre reinterpreted and revitalized by the vicissitudes of our times. Wiesel writes: '[O]ur generation invented a new literature, that of testimony. We have all been witnesses and we feel we have to bear testimony to the future'.⁵⁷

One of the first to confront the issues of World War II was Albert Camus; however, at that time, he questioned the power of testimony. In a famous essay, *Neither Victims nor Executioners*, he writes:

History is in the hands of blind and deaf forces, which will heed neither cries of warning, nor advice, nor entreaties....

The years we have gone through have killed something in us. And that something is simply the old confidence man had in himself, which led him to believe that he could always elicit human reactions from another man if he spoke to him in the language of a common humanity....

Mankind's long dialogue has just come to an end....The result is that...a vast conspiracy of silence has spread all about us, a conspiracy accepted by those who are frightened and who rationalize their fears in order to hide them from themselves.⁵⁸

This conspiracy of silence eventually has eroded and more and more people have felt the need to bear witness. Camus, himself, torn by his need to testify to the war's atrocities,

⁵⁷ Wiesel, 'The Holocaust as a Literary Inspiration' in *Dimensions of the Holocaust*, Evanston, Il: 1977, p. 9

⁵⁸ Albert Camus, *Neither Victims Nor Executioners*, trans. Dwight MacDonald, Berkeley: 1968, p. 20.

wrote *La Peste*, an allegorical account of the German occupation of France which he equates with the plague. On a different level, in this novel, he also examines the different, possible, existential responses each individual can make to calamity. As Job has confronted God with his plight, so too Camus, the protest atheist, has confronted his readers with humanity's plight:

The story of the Plague amounts, thus, to the historical determination to bear witness, a determination that is lived at once as an artistic and as a political decision, and that functions at the novel's end not as a true closure, but as a signature, of Camus' work.⁵⁹

More and more people, following the lead of such writers as Camus, have been driven by the Furies in their lives to bear witness to the sufferings of humanity. This enhanced need has been instigated by the staggering number of violent deaths in the twentieth century, which have been aided by our greater technological expertise:⁶⁰

This is why contemporary narrative - the narrative of that which, in the Holocaust, cannot be witnessed - has by necessity inaugurated a contemporary Age of Testimony, and why the age of testimony has also turned out to be, paradoxically enough, the somewhat unique age of historical prooflessness: the age of professional

⁵⁹ Felman & Laub, p. 113.

⁶⁰ Winston Churchill, on the optimism at the turn of the century, wrote: 'Little did we guess that what has been called the Century of the Common Man would witness as its outstanding feature more common men killing each other with greater facility than any other five centuries together in the history of the world.' Quoted in *Philosophy for a Time of Crisis*, Adrienne Koch, New York: 1959, pp. 21-22.

denial....⁶¹

But this need is also reflected in other works; although the Holocaust is often featured, sometimes at the expense of acknowledging other incidences of the continuous outrageous behaviour of humanity against humanity.

Testimony has become an integral role of the dissident intellectual. Alexander Solzhenitsyn wrote *The Gulag Archipelago* based on his eleven-year experience and recollection of the labour-camps and on the testimony of some two hundred survivors. In his 'Forward to the Abridgment' of *The Gulag Archipelago*, he states that he hopes the abridgment will allow a wider public to read and to comprehend the importance of testimony.

If it were possible for any nation to fathom another people's bitter experience through a book, how much easier its future fate would become and how many calamities and mistakes it could avoid. But it is very difficult. There always is this fallacious belief: 'It would not be the same here: such things are impossible.'

Alas, all the evil of the twentieth century is possible everywhere on earth.

Yet I have not given up all hope that human beings and nations may be able, in spite of all, to learn from the experience of other people without having to live through it personally.⁶²

Thus, it appears that people are driven to testify in spite of the isolating nature which the act of bearing witness often engenders. They testify in the hope that they may help other

⁶¹ Felman & Laub, p. 201.

⁶² Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*, abridged by Edward E. Ericson, Jr., London: 1988, p. x.

peoples to avoid the tragedies they have witnessed. 'There is therefore no witness of the absolute who is not a witness of historic signs, no confessor of absolute meaning who is not a narrator of the acts of deliverance'.⁶³

Methodology

In the chapters on Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung I have included short synopses of other writers' works. These writings help to place in context the interpretations and uses of the Book of Job made by Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung, either by outlining similar or contrasting philosophies or similar or contrasting interpretations of the Book.

Eschewing more formalist methods, I have endeavored to remember that the agenda of these four writers has not been to present papers on the Book of Job at an Old Testament seminar at the University of Oxford, but to bear witness to the plight of humanity as it has impacted their lives. In the academic milieu the validity of subjective interpretation is often treated with suspicion; however most of the world lives outside the Academy's ivory towers and must deal with reality as it is found. Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung are writing for those people, and the Book of Job becomes their guide. Thus the methodology for these four writers is not governed by any formal critical method. They do not perceive

⁶³ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 134.

the Book of Job as an object but as the foundation for their testimony. I, as their 'examiner', have tried to be sympathetic to their endeavors while at the same time pointing out when they have strayed far from the path of standard interpretation. Bearing this in mind, I have placed the chapter on Gustavo Gutiérrez first after Chapter I, the Book of Job, as he, more than the others, attempts to base his interpretations of the Book of Job on the perceived teachings of the Church. His efforts then become a valuable foil against which the others may be considered.

Issues to Be Considered

1. Is subjective interpretation a valid form of hermeneutics - for the general public and/or for the Academy?

2. Why did these authors use the Book of Job as a foundation for their testimony on the problem of the innocent sufferer?

3. Are these texts a reflection of the existential angst of the later half of the twentieth century?

4. Is there a 'core' meaning in the Book of Job which often elicits similar responses?

AN ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK OF JOB

For an indirectness and a slipperiness attaches to the whole Book [of Job], even in the Hebrew and as orators say in Greek, it is tricked out with figures of speech, and while it says one thing, it does another; just as [when] you close your hand to hold the eel or a little muraena, the more you squeeze it, the sooner it escapes.

Jerome¹

A man should carry two stones in his pocket. On one should be inscribed, 'I am but dust and ashes.' On the other, 'For my sake the world was created.' And he should use each stone as he needs it.

Rabbi Bunam²

In this chapter the traditional interpretation of the Book of Job is set forth in order that, in the following chapters, the writings of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung may be compared against it. Along with this, the exegetical complexity of the Book of Job is outlined to show that it lends itself to diverse interpretations and purposes utilized by readers outside the academic community.

The Book of Job expresses the conflict inherent in the belief systems of the religions of paradox: Christianity,

¹ Jerome, 'Commentary on Job', in *Nicene and Post Nicene Fathers of the Christian Church*, Ser. II, Vol. VI, Oxford: 1893, p. 491.

² Quoted in Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, Chicago: 1965, p. 131.

Judaism, and Islam. How can there be suffering in the world if God is all good, all knowing, and all powerful? This question has been ever present in Western culture from the earliest times until the present. The Book of Job, familiar to nearly everyone, has often been used to gain insight into this eternal problem which has again gained new prominence in today's turbulent world.³

Format of the Book of Job

The extant Masoretic text can be broken down into five basic literary efforts.

- I. The Prologue (chs. 1-2)
- II. The Dialogue (chs. 3-31)
- III. The Elihu Speeches (chs. 32-37)
- IV. The Theophany (chs. 38-42:6)
- V. The Epilogue (ch. 42:7-17)

The prologue (chs. 1 & 2) and epilogue (ch. 42:7-17), considered to be the oldest parts of the book, are arguably based on a popular folk-tale from ancient Near Eastern cultures, while the poetic dialogues (chs. 3-42:6) are believed to have been written, in the most part, by an author (or authors) who inserted his poetry in the framework of the folk-tale. The Prologue of Job relates a myth of a 'blameless and upright man' who was a pillar of his community. He has

³ This chapter purely 'sets the scene' for the following work. It is not meant to be a critique on the validity of the numerous and diverse opinions on the Book of Job. For simplicity's sake, I have chosen and elucidated the opinions which seem to be the most coherent to me. Obviously this means that these are the opinions which I hold as well; although I have read widely in the field, my expertise in biblical Hebrew and in the ancient Near East is limited.

flocks and herds.⁴ There is a literary balance in the prologue. For example, certain phrases are repeated after each of Job's possessions is destroyed: a messenger flees to Job to report: "'I alone have escaped to tell you." He had not finished speaking when another messenger arrived' (1: 15b,16). These devices were all integral parts of the folk tale. They established a familiar rhythm with which the people listening could identify.

The epilogue concludes the tale of Job by having him rewarded for his faith. His new sons and daughters are the same numbers but all his herds and flocks are returned to him times two.⁵ It is a reasonable assumption that the prologue and epilogue were part of a common, oral folk tale which the writer of the poetic dialogues used to frame his own discourse on why an innocent man may suffer. Thus, the folk tale sections of Job probably existed in an oral tradition long before the Book was written down and expanded by the writer of the poetic dialogues - a tradition which had a long history prior to the genesis of the Book of Job.⁶

⁴ The numbers 'three', 'seven', and 'ten', or multiples thereof, had mystical significance in ancient cultures and even into the Middle Ages. They symbolized completeness, entirety and soundness and later the Trinity, the Apostles, etc. Cf. Dianne Bergant, *Job, Ecclesiastes, Old Testament Message*, Wilmington, Delaware: 1985, p. 25.

⁵ The significance of this will be discussed later in this chapter.

⁶ Cf. Pope, pp. XXVII-XXVIII.

The Book of Job and the Question of Theodicy

Tryggve Mettinger has described three *prima facie* models of reality which he thinks the author of Job would have had to consider in wrestling with the problem of theodicy.

He could lean (1) towards a dualistic understanding in which existence is predicated upon polarities that cannot be deduced from each other, (2) towards a monistic understanding in which a single cause is the ultimate ground of both good and evil, or again (3), toward an understanding that God is *jenseits von Gut und Böse* ('beyond good and evil'), which boils down to saying that the notion of theodicy itself is somehow irrelevant.⁷

Mettinger's hypothesis fits into the following paradigms: solution which would be (1), dissolution which would be (2), and paradox which would be (3). However the Book of Job obviously does not honour one model over the other; the result has been twenty-five hundred years of conflicting exegesis about this one Book of the Bible.

The Book of Job supplies at least six possible and partly conflicting answers to the question of why the innocent suffer. Suffering is: 1. A test: Suffering is visited upon man by God (or Satan) as a test of his piety. The test category has been used by some thinkers to suggest that God does not always behave as a moral agent, as in testing Job, God has allowed the destruction of his children, his servants, and his flocks. 2. Retributive justice: Man reaps in his life time what he deserves - either rewards or punishments from

⁷ Mettinger, 'The God of Job: Avenger, Tyrant, or Victor', in *The Voice from the Whirlwind*, eds. Leo G. Perdue & W. Clark Gilpin, Nashville: 1992, pp. 39-40.

God. 3. Educative: Man is given lessons by God which will make him a better, more God-fearing person. 4. A limited God: God is in a continual struggle to control chaos which is responsible for both human and moral evils. 5. Paradox: The workings of God's ways in the world and, consequently, the apparent evils therein are beyond our comprehension. 6. Character making (not necessarily tied to a belief in the Divine, and, therefore, distinct from #3): Man must not be narrowed by his suffering but build on it in order to inspire himself to greater compassion for his fellow human beings.⁸ Marvin Pope states: 'Virtually every basic argument that has been adduced in connection with the problem [of evil] is touched on in the Book of Job.'⁹

Perhaps this diversity of answers in the Book of Job is a result of different authors writing at different periods of time in the evolution of a teleological theodicy. Or it could be the effort of a single author whose thinking about the

⁸ Some exegetes find fewer answers, some more, and some different. For instance Jim Alvin Sanders lists eight possible answers to be found in the Book of Job: retributive, disciplinary, revelational, probational, illusory (or transitory), mysterious (because only God knows why), eschatological, and/or meaningless. Cf. *Suffering as Divine Discipline in the Old Testament and Post-Biblical Judaism*, Colgate Rochester Divinity School Bulletin, Vol. XXVIII, Rochester, N. Y: Nov. 1955, p. 1. Vicchio discusses the same answers outlined in this chapter with the exception of a limited God. Cf. Vicchio, pp. 161-205.

⁹ Marvin Pope, *Job (Anchor Bible Commentaries)* 3rd ed. New York: 1973, p. LXVIII. This statement is possibly true if one argues that Job in his iconoclasm is exercising his free will. There is, however, no explicit free will argument in the Book.

problem of evil evolved over his lifetime.¹⁰ It is this diversity, however, and the six partially conflicting answers to the problem of evil which have appeal to twentieth century writers. Whatever position they wish to assume, somewhere in the Book of Job these thinkers will find an argument to support eloquently their hypothesis. The appeal and the use of the Book by a diverse range of interpreters is the particular subject of this thesis.

Antecedents

The Book of Job is part of the genre of wisdom literature which 'had been cultivated for centuries in the land of the Fertile Crescent - Egypt, Palestine, Syria, and Babylonia.'¹¹ Dianne Bergant suggests wisdom literature has a 'humanistic outlook on life...encourag[ing] a systematic reflection on daily living in order to discover the underlying principles of

¹⁰ The various conflicting problems with dating and origin will be touched on briefly in the following text. There are numerous commentaries on the Book of Job; many with widely divergent points of view. Several noteworthy efforts are: Buitenweiser, *The Book of Job*, 1922; Clines, *World Biblical Commentary*, 1989; H. H. Rowley, *The Book of Job and Its Meaning*, 1958; Gordis, *The Book of God and Man*, 1965, and *Commentary*, 1978; Jantzen, *Interpretation - Job*, 1985; Leveque, *Job et son Dieu*, 1970; Pope, *Anchor Bible Commentary*, 1973; Snaith, *The Book of Job - Its Origins and Purpose*, 1968; Wilcox, *The Bitterness of Job*, 1989. There are, of course, innumerable articles as well; some will be mentioned in passing. However it is not the purpose of this thesis to determine which viewpoint is the most cogent. Consequently the various areas of conflicting opinions will be noted only as they are relevant to the material being presented.

¹¹ Gordis, (1965), p. 33.

causality.'¹² The problem of suffering and a just God is often the focus of these ancient writings.

For thousands of years humankind has proposed answers to justify or explain why there is suffering in the world, why the innocent suffer, why evil exists. In Egypt, from the third millennium B.C.E., between the Old and Middle Kingdoms, pithy fragments express a rather pessimistic outlook on the human condition: 'Hearts are rapacious: every man seizes his fellow's goods,' or 'The gentle man has perished but the violent man has access to everybody'.¹³

The problem of suffering received considerably more attention in Mesopotamian literature. From Sumer, in an excavation at Nippur, 4000 year old documents have been recovered which include one poem about a man, who like Job, was prosperous and healthy, but then is afflicted with calamities. He complains to his god:

suffering overwhelms me like one chosen for nothing but
tears, evil fate holds me in its hands, carries off my
breath of life, malignant sickness bathes my body...
My god, you are my father who begot me, lift up my face.
Like an innocent cow, in pity...the groan,
How long will you neglect me, leave me unprotected?
Like an ox...,
How long will you leave me unguided?¹⁴

In the following lines the sufferer admits that 'never has a

¹² Bergant, p. 15.

¹³ *Egyptian Didactic Tales*. J.A. Wilson, Princeton: 1969, pp. 405 ff.

¹⁴ *Man and His God: A Sumerian Version of the Job Motif*, S.N. Kramer, Princeton: 1969, pp. 589-590.

sinless child been born to its mother...a sinless youth has not existed from of old', but in the conclusion the man is restored to his fortunes. The demon of fate 'turned the man's suffering into joy'.¹⁵

A closer parallel to the Job story can be found in Akkadian literature from the Cassite period, about 1500 B.C.E. A poem entitled *Ludlul Bel Nemeqi*, 'I will praise the Lord of Wisdom,' pleads against the fickleness of the gods:

Who then can know the will of the gods in heaven?
The counsel of the infernal gods, who can understand?
Where has mankind learned the way of a god?
He who was yesterday alive, is dead today,
One moment dejected, suddenly exuberant.
One minute he sings a happy song,
the next instant he moans like a mourner.
Like opening and shutting, their conditions change.

The hero of this poem continues with a graphic description of his physical woes. At the close of the poem, the Lord of Wisdom, Marduk, reveals, in three dreams, his goodwill toward the hero. Subsequently the disease demons are expelled, and the man is restored to his former prosperity.¹⁶

Several other extant poems from the ancient Near East also try to come to terms with the evils of human suffering. Hence from earliest recorded history humankind has wrestled with the problem of the 'innocent' sufferer. But it is not until a later period in Greece with the emergence of the

¹⁵ Kramer, p. 591.

¹⁶ *Ludlul Bel Nemeqi*. trans. Robert D. Biggs in *The Ancient Near East*. ed. James B. Pritchard, Princeton: 1975, pp. 149-160. Also cf. W.G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature*, Oxford: 1960.

tragic poets and in the ancient Near East with the Book of Job that, what are generally considered truly great literary works on the problem of suffering were composed. Homer, the later tragedians, and the story of Job all consider man's plight in what appears to be a less than understandable world.

Provenance of the Book of Job

Any attempt to identify the provenance of the Book of Job is futile. There is nothing specifically Israelite about the work. And while there is imagery found in Job which is also found in other parts of the Hebrew Scriptures, these phrases could easily be part of the heritage of the ancient Semitic world. Pope comments:

The author of the Book of Job cannot be precisely placed temporally or geographically, but this is of no great consequence for he speaks to and for all humanity about a problem that has perplexed thinking and feeling men in all times and places.¹⁷

Generally the Book is thought to be the product of several authors, with emendations added by the scribes who copied it. The prologue and the epilogue seem to be related with a coherent story line and similar prose writing. The poetic dialogues, the Elihu text, and the Yahweh speeches all could be by different authors, each of whom felt he had something of importance to contribute to the original text. However, whatever the provenance for Job may be, the Book has

¹⁷ Pope. p. XLII. Pope cites a few of the critical works which argue for particular locals. Cf. pp. XL-XLII.

a distinct vocabulary and a wide ranging knowledge of the ancient Near East. The acumen of the Book is summarized by Gordis:

Job has more words of unique occurrence and a richer vocabulary than any other biblical book. For example, the author uses four nouns for 'lion,' six terms for 'trap,' and four synonyms for 'darkness.' He knows the names of the constellations, of metals, and of many precious stones. He is familiar with the detailed anatomy of great beasts, the technical language of the law courts, and the occupations of mining and hunting.¹⁸

The diversity of the language, the variety of the metaphor, and the knowledge the Book exudes, all contribute to make it one of the classics of the written word. Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) says the Book is

the grandest thing ever written with pen. One feels, indeed, as if it were not Hebrew; such a noble universality, different from noble patriotism or sectarianism, reigns in it. A noble Book; all men's Book! It is our first, oldest statement of the never-ending Problem, - man's destiny, and God's ways with him here in this earth. And all in such free flowing outlines; grand in its sincerity, in its simplicity; in its epic melody, and repose of reconciliation. There is the seeing eye, the mildly understanding heart. So true every way; true eyesight and vision in all things; material things no less than spiritual....There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit.¹⁹

Dating of the Book of Job

Most authorities consider the Book of Job, and in particular the poetic dialogues, to have been written in the

¹⁸ Gordis, (1965), p. 160.

¹⁹ Carlyle, 'The Hero as Prophet', in *The Voice out of the Whirlwind*, ed. Ralph E. Hone, San Francisco: 1972, pp. 198-199.

post-exilic period or about five hundred to three hundred B.C.E.; however there is a wide variance of opinion which spreads the dating over a millennium.²⁰ An argument for the post-exilic date is as follows: Prior to the Babylonian Exile an individual's life was considered only as part of the collective destiny:

In ancient, preprophetic Israel religion was inseparably bound up with the material and political conditions of the people's existence and was primarily the concern of the community; its chief objective was not the promotion of individual well-being but the furtherance of the common weal.²¹

Thus the suffering of the righteous was inseparable from the destiny of the race. This belief is reflected in the following passage in Deuteronomy which later became incorporated into one of the basic prayers of post-biblical Judaism, the *Shema*.²²

If you will only heed his every commandment that I am commanding you today - loving the Lord your God, and serving him with all your heart and with all your soul - then he will give the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the later rain, and you will gather your grain, your wine and your oil; and he will give grass in your fields for your livestock, and you will eat your fill. Take care, or you will be seduced into turning away, serving other gods and worshiping them, for then the anger of the Lord will be kindled against you and he will shut up the heavens, so that there will be no rain and the land will yield no fruit, then you will perish quickly off the good land that the Lord is giving you (11:13-17).

²⁰ Cf. Pope, pp. XXX-XXXVI and Rowley, *From Moses to Qumran*, New York: 1963, pp. 197-198, fn. 6.

²¹ Moses Bottenweiser, *The Book of Job*, New York: 1925, p. 71.

²² Cf. Gordis, (1967), p. 136.

An even more explicit portrayal of group retribution, not only for the generations of the living, but for the generations to come is found in the second commandment of the Decalogue:

You shall not bow down to them [idols] or worship them; for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me, but showing steadfast love to the thousandth generation of those who love me and keep my commandments (Exodus 20:5,6).²³

The belief in group retribution begins to fade in response to the Babylonian Exile. 'The welfare of the individual became dominant after the return from...Exile.'²⁴ The literary prophets, such as Jeremiah, begin to question the discrepancy between what they see in the actual world and the inherited belief that the righteous and the wicked reap their just rewards in this lifetime. Jeremiah, in a despair similar to Job's, seems to express this sentiment from his own painful experience:

You will be in the right, O Lord,
When I lay charges against you;
But let me put my case to you.
Why does the way of the guilty prosper?
Why do all the treacherous thrive?
You plant them, and they take root;
They grow and bring forth fruit;
You are near in their mouths
Yet far from their hearts (12:1,2).

Pope suggests, however, that the fact that the writer of the Book of Job expresses no concern for the fate of Israel,

²³ Another example of the collective group responsibility is found in Isaiah in which the Suffering Servant of the Lord is responsible for the saving of the many. Is. 52:13; 55:3,4,5,12.

²⁴ Gordis, (1965), p. 149.

which would have been natural for a scribe of the Second Temple period, indicates an earlier pre-exilic date for the Book.²⁵ This, of course, presumes that the writer is indeed Hebrew.

God and Job - Characterization Differences

The name of God changes from the prologue to the dialogues which indicates either a different author or a subtle shift in the perceived character of God. In the prologue He is Yahweh, a more personal name than those titles employed in the dialogues: Elohim, El, Eloah and El Shaddai. Morton Jastrow suggests the names in the dialogue 'conjure up the picture of a Being of universal scope and power whom one approaches in awe, and whose decision once made is unchangeable.'²⁶

The difference in Job's character between the two sections is also noteworthy. From the patience he exhibits in the prologue, his attitude reverses in the dialogues and Job adamantly questions his fate:

I loathe my life;
 I will give free utterance to my complaint;
 I will speak in the bitterness of my soul.
 I will say to God, 'Do not condemn me,

²⁵ Cf. Pope, pp. XXXII-XXXIV. Other arguments which impact the dating of the Book, such as the appearance of the Satan, the various names for God, the use of classical Hebrew at its best, etc. will be noted as they become relevant within the various passages.

²⁶ Morton K. Jastrow, *The Book of Job*, New York: 1923, p. 44.

let me know why you contend against me.
Does it seem good to you to oppress,
to despise the work of your hands
and favor the schemes of the wicked' (10:1-3)?

These personality changes of the main characters help to boost the argument that the prologue and the dialogue are possibly from a different tradition and written by different people for different reasons.

Question of Eschatology

Another indication for the chronological placement of the Book of Job in the post-exilic period is Job's consideration and rejection of an after-life. There appears to be a chronological progression in a belief in an after-life in the Hebrew Bible which does not come into full fruition until the Book of Daniel. In Koheleth the idea of an afterlife is never entertained. He admonishes: 'Whatever your hand finds to do, do with your might, for there is no work or thought or knowledge or wisdom in Sheol, to which you are going' (Ecc. 9:10). Job, perhaps slightly later, seems to reflect on the idea of bodily resurrection - if only humans could regenerate themselves as does a tree - but then Job discards this notion:

For there is hope for a tree,
if it is cut down, that it will sprout again,
and that its shoots will not cease (14:7).

But mortals die, and are laid low;
humans expire, and where are they?
As waters fail from a lake,
and a river wastes away and dries up,
so mortals lie down, and do not rise again
(14:10-12).

He discounts the idea of any life after death and continues to seek understanding and forgiveness in his life. Job muses:

Oh that you would hide me in Sheol,
that you would conceal me
until your wrath is past,
that you would appoint me a set time,
and remember me!
If mortals die, will they live again? (14:13,14a)

In later periods of theological exegesis, many make an effort to have these lines presage bodily resurrection; however this is only wishful thinking on Job's part for he concludes:

the waters wash away the stones
the torrents wash away the soil of the earth;
so you destroy the hope of mortals.
You prevail forever against them,
and they pass away (14:19,20a).

Buttenweiser suggests that:

Though we do not know when the belief in the world to come became generally accepted, it is positively certain that at the time of the Maccabees and even earlier it was a tenet of faith, permeating the religious life and thought of the Jews.²⁷

It is fairly certain that the apocryphal books of Maccabees (c. 165 - 37 B.C.E.), an 'historical' account of the Hasmonean dynasty, postdates the Book of Job by several hundred years. Written about the same time as Maccabees, the Book of Daniel's author is considered to be a pious Jew living under the persecution of Antiochus Epiphanes (164-167 B.C.E.). In it we find the first clear reference to resurrection in the Bible:

Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and

²⁷ Buttenweiser, p. 73.

everlasting contempt (12:2).

As Job has dismissed the idea of an after-life, this would suggest that the Book of Job is earlier than the Book of Daniel.

Difficulties in Translation - Interpretation

The complexities of the Book of Job - language, characterization, dating, provenance, themes, and conclusions - make it a deconstructionist's dream or nightmare depending on one's focus. It is not surprising, therefore, that many interpreters, who are grappling with the message or messages in the Book, choose to look at the Book as a coherent whole. But even then there are numerous problems. Perhaps the most significant is the contradictory nature of the text which may be deconstructed until there is nothing left. There is not one character in the Book who has enough strength of conviction to override convincingly the opinions of the others. There is no opinion so sacred it is not immediately contradicted by someone or something else. Satan doubts God's opinion of Job. Job's wife recommends that Job curse God, but his initial reaction to his sufferings is to chastise his wife. Eliphaz rejects Job's opening speech who is in turn rejected by Job. This pattern of contradictions continues with the other friends. The arguments Job presents in chapters 3-37 are not what God has predicted in chapters one and two. God appears out of the whirlwind to correct Job who

amazingly accepts correction, but then is told by God (42:7-9) that he speaks correctly about God. These same words cause Job's friends to disown their convictions of chaps. 3-37 and apparently to embrace what Job has just relinquished because of God's apparent displeasure.

David Clines, in a deconstructive essay on the Book of Job, reflects that the dialogues reject the theme of retributive justice while the epilogue seems to reaffirm it.²⁸ But, ultimately, Clines acknowledges that the Book of Job never loses its vitality however it is deconstructed:

In just the same way, no deconstruction can rob the readers of what they have savoured in the Book of Job. Even when it has been deconstructed the book can still go on exciting or entrancing us, enraging us against heaven or compelling our admiration for the divine, even assuring us that these are the truths about God and the universe. But when we believe its hero, we will believe him because we want to, because it suits our sense of fitness of things, and because he has divulged a truth about a transcendental signified that is one and incontrovertible.²⁹

The appeal of the Book of Job, which Clines emphasizes, is also the appeal which attracts so many people to the Book; some however, including MacLeish, and Jung, reject Clines' 'truth about a transcendental signified that is one and incontrovertible'.

Apart from the areas of academic disciplines, the textual

²⁸ This is not exactly true: Job, in demanding God to explain why he (Job) is suffering, is also arguing from the point of view of retributive justice.

²⁹ David J.A. Clines, *What Does Eve Do to Help?*, Sheffield: 1990, pp. 122-123.

and thematic discrepancies allow the interpreter a wider range of play. While the idea of a coherent method of interpretation is admirable in concept, it is unrealistic in reference to the Book of Job. Everyone always brings to the table his or her own belief system, culture and life experience. This subjectivity is impossible to efface. This is particularly true in the case of the Book of Job for it often speaks to each interpreter's personal anguish.

As an example of the problems with interpretations on the Book of Job consider the following number of 'chronological' translations of Job 42:6:

- (a) I am poured out and dissolved/smitten and am become dust and ashes, and I am sorry for my children for they are dust and ashes; Qumran Targum.
- (b) I counted myself vile, and have fainted, and I esteem myself dust and ashes; LXX.
- (c) Therefore do I spurn what I once said and take solace in dust and ashes; Saadiah ben Joseph, trans. from the Arabic, ninth century.
- (d) I reproach myself and do penance in dust and ashes; Aquinas, trans. from the Latin, thirteenth century.
- (e) I retract and repent in dust and ashes; Norman Habel, 1965.
- (f) I recant and repent in dust and ashes; Marvin Pope, 1965.
- (g) I retract all I have said and in dust and ashes I repent; Jerusalem Bible, 1966.
- (h) I despise myself and repent in dust and ashes; RSV, 1973.
- (i) I abase myself and repent in dust and ashes; Robert Gordis, 1978.
- (j) I recant and relent, being but dust and ashes; Jewish Bible Society, 1985.
- (k) I am consoled to be dust and ashes; Elie Wiesel, trans. from French, 1985.
- (l) I repudiate and abandon dust and ashes; Gustavo Gutiérrez, trans. from the Spanish, 1986.
- (m) I will be quiet, comforted that I am dust; Stephen Mitchell, 1987.

Stephen Mitchell explains why he interprets the passage as he

does:

The first verb, 'em'as, means 'to reject' or 'to regard as of little value,' never 'to abhor or despise.' Since the object has somehow dropped out of the Massoretic text, it must be supplied by the translator. 'Myself' is based on a misunderstanding of the verb. A sounder interpretation, first proposed by the ancient Syriac version would be: 'Therefore I take back [everything I said].'

In the second half of the verse, the verb, as used in *Job*, always means 'to comfort.' The phrase *nihamti 'al* means 'to be comforted about' or possibly 'to repent of' but not 'to repent in or upon.' Nor does 'afar va-efer indicate the place where Job is sitting. This phrase, which occurs once before in *Job* and twice elsewhere in the Bible, always refers to the human body, which was created from dust and returns to dust. So the literal meaning is: 'and I am comforted about [being] dust.'³⁰

Robert Gordis would disagree with part of Mitchell's interpretation.³¹ He writes that 'em'as:

is not a metaplastic form of [mas] 'I melt' (as in Ps. 58:5...) but 'I despise my argument' or 'I abase myself'; so the Eng. Vss and most commentators who follow LXX, which offers a conflate, 'I counted myself vile and fainted' [are correct?].³²

As Terrence Tilley notes: 'the multiple possibilities for rendering 42:6 mean that the interpreters make, rather than find the text which they interpret'.³³ This is particularly

³⁰ Stephen Mitchell, *The Book of Job*, San Francisco: 1987, P. xxxii.

³¹ There are many commentaries on the 'proper' translation of this difficult *bistich*. Cf. I.J. Kaplan, 'Maimonides, Dale Patrick, and Job XLII 6' in *Vetus Testamentum*, vol. XXVIII, pp. 356-358.

³² Robert Gordis, *The Book of Job, Commentary, New Translation and Special Studies*, New York: 1978, p. 492. Edwin M. Good agrees with Gordis, cf. p. 57.

³³ Terrence W. Tilley, 'God and the Silencing of Job', in *Modern Theology*, April 1989, p. 260.

important to remember when considering the Book of Job because each of us sometime in our lifetime will feel an affinity with Job. Even an imposed methodology does not negate the interpreter's inherent bias.

Interpreters tend to approach Scripture from their particular perspectives. They have their own world-and-life view, their own way of apprehending reality. This imposes certain limits but also enables them to see reality as a coherent whole. Whether or not they are conscious of it, this world-and-life view, which is religiously determined, lies behind all their activities and colors their understanding of reality in a definite way. We can extend this observation to biblical hermeneutics and say that every interpretation of the text implies a world-and-life view.³⁴

Even if we consider two of the more recent translations, the RSV (h) and JBS (j), there are biases which appear to originate with the mind-set of the translators. The RSV seems to distinguish between a very unworthy human in contrast to a 'wholly other' God - perhaps a Christian bias. While the JBS seems to suggest the 'smallness' of a human being in contrast to the power of God - perhaps a Jewish bias.³⁵

³⁴ C. René Padilla, 'The Interpreted Word: Reflections on Contextual Hermeneutics', in *A Guide to Contemporary Hermeneutics*, ed. Donald K. McKim, Grand Rapids, Mi: 1989, p. 302.

³⁵ Obviously one could take each translation and relate it to the culture and period in which it occurred and be able to conclude certain hypothesis about the milieu of that particular rendition. The current shifts in biblical interpretation have moved on to literary and narrative approaches, but as the philosophical-theological approach has remained an undercurrent during the historical-critical period so too must other forms remain viable during the movement toward more diverse forms of biblical hermeneutics. For a more extensive examination of various rationales for interpretation of 42:6 cf. Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy*, Washington D.C.: 1991, pp. 96-102. For a study of the history

Many people who read the Book of Job and take it for their own use do so because the Book speaks to them on a personal level which transcends any hermeneutical method. The **content** of the Book, which is about suffering and injustice, leads the reader to identify with Job's existential struggle against the injustice of his suffering and with his desire to **testify** to this dilemma. These readers use it to support their own testimony on the problems of evil and the innocent sufferer. This is the case for the four writers I discuss in this thesis.

The Prologue

In the prose prologue, God asks the 'Satan' if he knows Job. This Satan is not the full-fledged tempter found in the New Testament, but *ha-satan*, the adversary, a semi-divine being on a par with the 'Sons of God'.³⁶ He is also a

of biblical interpretation and its changing style cf. Thiselton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics*; Stephen Prickett, *Words and the Word: Language, poetics and biblical interpretation*, Cambridge: 1986. In the first chapter Prickett examines I Kings 19:8-12 in which Elijah eventually hears 'the still, small voice of God' (KJV) against assorted 'modern' translations such as 'a low, murmuring sound' (New English Bible) which are dictated, Prickett suggests, by differing cultural milieus. For a fascinating, general study of the complexities of translation and interpretation cf. George Steiner, *After Babel*, London: 1975, particularly chap. 5 on the subject of hermeneutics.

³⁶ Satan as a proper noun first occurs in I Chron. 21:1 which Hugh Williamson argues dates from the fourth century B.C.E. This would suggest that the Book of Job was earlier than Chronicles. Cf. H.G.M. Williamson, *1 and 2 Chronicles*, (New Century Bible Commentary), London: 1982, pp. 15-17.

skeptic. Satan challenges Yahweh to test the strength of Job's goodness by suggesting that Job 'will curse God to his face' if he no longer has the bounty of God's goodness.³⁷ God's response to Satan is: 'There is no one like him [Job] on the earth: a blameless and upright man who fears God and turns away from evil' (1:8). God, however, accepts the challenge proffered by the Satan to test Job's fortitude. Yet he sets limits on what the Satan can do to his servant Job. In the first test Yahweh adjures: 'Very well, all that he has is in your [Satan's] power; only do not stretch out your hand against him' (1:12). In the second test, Yahweh demands only that Job's life be spared. Job responds to all his calamities at this point with astounding patience. Because of the implied homily, Gerhard von Rad considers the prose section a didactic narrative, not simply a 'folk narrative, but highly cultivated literary prose' in which the narrator 'portrays Job as a fitting witness to God'.³⁸

The use of suffering as a trial to ascertain the moral stamina of God's servants is found in other parts of the scriptures. For instance, God says to Abraham in Genesis:

³⁷ Edwin M. Good suggests that *brk* used by the Satan in 'If he doesn't curse you to your face' (v.11) here is rhetorical, that it is he, the Satan, who will be cursed if he loses the wager. Good concludes, therefore, that this is the reason the Satan does not reappear in the epilogue. He has lost the wager; he is cursed. Cf. *In Turns of Tempest: A Reading of Job*, Stanford: 1990, pp. 194-195.

³⁸ Gerhard von Rad, *Wisdom in Israel*, trans. James D. Martin, London: 1972, p. 208.

'Take your son, your only son Isaac, whom you love, and go to the land of Moriah, and offer him there as a burnt offering on one of the mountains that I shall show you' (22:2). Although Abraham's problem is different from Job's; the final denouement is the same. Whatever God chooses to ask of humankind, it is not ours to question or even understand.

The torment and anguish of Job initiated by the Satan raises the first question. Why would God allow a righteous man to suffer? There are two answers suggested in the prologue. The first is to prove to Satan that God is right about Job, and the second is solely to test Job; both would belong to a solution model. Neither of these answers is acceptable today nor would they have been to the people of that time. The Jews, in the Post-Exilic period, believed humanity experienced good or evil, not as a test by God, but as a meting out of retributive justice.³⁹ Man, therefore, must live in obedience to God in order to avoid punishment. Pope states: 'The issue at stake in the testing of Job was not simply the winning of a wager, idle or diabolical, but the vindication of mutual faith of God in man and man in God'.⁴⁰

The test solution, *per se*, a wager between God and the Satan or the Satan and Job, generally finds little support in

³⁹ Recent dating of the Akedah has placed it in the Post-Exilic period. This story, of course, is about God's testing of Abraham. Consequently no matter how much we try to make hard and fast rules there are always exceptions that disprove the rule.

⁴⁰ Pope, p. LXX.

the twentieth century. Yet the concept of God needing to test Job implies a god of either limited knowledge or, because of the gratuitous death of children, servants, and livestock, of limited goodness. Either one of these forms of a limited god is used sometimes in twentieth century theodicies as a solution to the problem of evil.⁴¹

Job's wife is allotted only six words in Hebrew near the end of the prologue. 'Odekhá mahazík bethumnatekhá, bárékh 'elóhim vámúth', translated her complaint to Job is: 'Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse God and die' (2:9). Her sentiments have led to some of the most discussed and interpreted words affecting women in Western culture up into the present time. They have armored the anti-feminist arsenal of such church fathers as St. Augustine who said she was an *adiutrix diaboli* - a handmaiden of the devil.⁴² However the admonition of Job's wife elicits from Job a patient response - one of the most often quoted phrases from the Book of Job. 'Shall we receive the good at the hand of God, and not receive the bad? In all this Job did not sin with his lips' (2:10).

Job's sentiments conveyed in the Prologue must be the genesis of the myth of the patient Job mentioned in the

⁴¹ Cf. John K. Roth, 'A Theodicy of Protest', pp. 7-38; & Frederick Sontag, 'Anthropodicy and the Return of God', pp. 137-166, in *Encountering Evil*, ed. Stephen T. Davis, Edinburgh: 1981.

⁴² Quoted in Gordis, (1978), p. 21.

Epistle of James,⁴³ There is, however, a circa second century B.C.E. work, *The Testament of Job*, a rewrite of the Book of Job, which tries to diffuse all the possibly heretical aspects of the original.⁴⁴ In this folktale, the Job mentioned by James is the patient hero.

Job's friends come to support and comfort him in his miseries. Before the comforters try to convince Job that he must have committed some sin which would explain his suffering, Job has accepted all with patient resignation. This description of the friends joins the prologue with the poetic dialogues:

they raised their voices and wept aloud; tore their robes and threw dust over in the air upon their heads. They sat with him on the ground seven days and seven nights, and no one spoke a word to him, for they saw that his suffering was very great (2:12b-13).

They are mourning with Job, sitting *Shivah* for the loss of his children and the loss of his health and wealth. Ultimately, however, his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, as well as Job and God, all undergo a reversal of character from the prologue to the main, poetical body of the work.

The Dialogues

⁴³ James 5:11.

⁴⁴ Of course one could argue that the *Testament of Job* was the original and that the Book of Job was the rewrite because the dating of both is not fixed by any cogent evidence; however this reversal of chronology does not seem probable. For a thorough investigation and interpretation of the *Testament of Job* cf. *Studies in the Testament of Job*, ed. Michael A. Knibb, & Pieter W. van der Horst, Cambridge: 1989.

The poetic dialogues are systematically divided into three cycles of discourses. Each cycle, with the exception of the final part of the third which may have suffered some loss,⁴⁵ consists of each friend presenting his argument for retributive justice. Job's contrary argument follows after each friend's discourse, and he responds not so much to his comforters, but instead demands an audience with God. As the dialogues unfold (chaps. 3-31), the friends' demeanors change; they become accusatory and are no longer sympathetic with Job's plight. The comforters only become more irate at Job's responses. Thus, it appears that the characters in the dialogues are not debating, they are only reacting. This gives the interchanges a Surrealistic aspect by the non-rational juxtaposition of sentiments.

At the beginning of the dialogues, Job breaks the silence that has lasted for seven days by cursing the day of his birth. He says:

Let the day perish in which I was born,
 and the night that said,
 'A man-child is conceived.'
 Let that day be darkness!
 May God above not seek it,
 or light shine on it.
 Let gloom and deep darkness claim it (3:3-5).

It is as though Job were conjuring up the void that existed before creation.⁴⁶ He wishes himself back to a time in which

⁴⁵ Cf. Bergant, p. 129.

⁴⁶ Cf. Fredrik Lindström, *God and the Origin of Evil*, trans. F. H. Cryer, Sweden: 1983, p. 149.

he never could have existed. He is an angry, broken man. He does not know why he suffers, and there appears to be no end to it. In spite of his agony, Job blames no one.

Eliphaz, the first friend to speak, compliments Job on his charity towards others:

See, you have instructed many,
you have strengthened the weak hands.
Your words have supported those who were stumbling
and you have made firm the feeble knees (4:3-4).

Shortly thereafter, however, Eliphaz responds to Job's plea for deliverance by forgetting his former praise and by suggesting if you reap trouble you must have sowed it. He instructs him in divine retribution:

but humans are born to trouble
just as sparks fly upward.
As for me, I would seek God,
and to God I would commit my cause (5:7-8).

He takes the wise in their own craftiness
and the schemes of the wily are brought
to a quick end.
They meet with darkness in the daytime,
and grope at noonday as in the night.
But he saves the needy from the sword
of their mouth,
from the hand of the mighty.
So the poor have hope,
and injustice shuts its mouth (5:13-16).

It never occurs to Eliphaz to consider Job blameless.

Job responds not to Eliphaz but to God. He knows Shaddai has turned against him and that he, Job, is helpless in defending himself against the power of the Lord. Job also feels betrayed by his friends who no longer stand by him. He has nowhere to turn. Not only does he feel God has forsaken him, but his friends have also become one of his burdens.

Have I said, 'Make me a gift'?
 Or, 'from your wealth offer a bribe for me'?
 Or, 'Save me from an opponent's hand'?
 Or, 'ransom me from the hand of the
 oppressor'? (6:22-23)

Bildad has the next dialogue with Job. He tries to reason with him, telling Job not to rely on his own insight but to trust in the wisdom of his ancestors. He speaks for retributive justice in the here and now. Job's children must have died because of their sins, and Job is suffering because of his.

Job, in his 'response' to Bildad, embroiders on his previous lament. He stresses God's power and then blames him for the anarchy of the world:

Though I am innocent, my own mouth would condemn me;
 though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.
 I am blameless; I do not know myself;
 I loathe my life.
 It is all one; therefore I say,
 he destroys both the blameless and the wicked.
 When disaster brings sudden death,
 he mocks the calamity of the innocent (9:20-23).

This is not the patient Job of the prologue; this is the iconoclastic Job. Von Rad states:

No one in Israel had ever depicted the action of God towards men in this way before. Those who prayed the prayers of lamentations were not exactly prudish when they reproached God with his severity. But here is a new tone which has never been sounded before: God as the direct enemy of men, delighting in torturing them....One cannot but affirm that Job stands face to face with a completely new experience of the reality of God....⁴⁷

Finally Zophar adds his arguments for retributive justice. Job must have sinned in secret for if he were

⁴⁷ von Rad p. 217.

guiltless he would not be suffering.

The friends, apparently angered by Job's defiance, refuse to acknowledge the intent of Job's accusations and continue to adamantly uphold the conventional doctrine of retributive justice. Job's three friends have turned into self-righteous critics, who have nothing to give to Job but empty and accusatory advice. Job tells his friends they are worthless. They defend God with 'dishonest argument'. When the comforters started philosophizing, they stopped dispensing comfort. However, note that Job, in the very act of his petition to God to explain the injustices he has suffered, still believes implicitly in retributive justice.

The end of the first cycle of discourses shows that the friends are inflexible. They rigidly support retributive justice. Job, who has also believed in a simplistic form of retributive justice, finds his present sufferings have created a problem with that belief. Job decides he wants a trial with Shaddai and he, Job, will be the defendant for he has 'no other hope than to justify his conduct in God's eyes':⁴⁸

Listen carefully to my words,
and let my declaration be in your ears.
I have indeed prepared my case;
I know that I shall be vindicated (13:17-18).

This narrative refrain of Job as witness in his defense

⁴⁸ Much of the language which Job uses in his petition to God is derived from legal parlance which helps to equate it with the concept of testimony. For a further discursion of the legal language in the Book of Job cf. Luis Alonso Schökel, 'Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job' in *Semeia* 7, eds. Robert Polzin & David Robertson, 1977, pp. 56-58.

continues throughout the dialogues; however in the final chapters God unexpectedly turns the interrogation around as he asks Job a series of rhetorical questions about the governing of the universe. As we saw earlier, this juridical format is an integral part of the act of testifying.

In the second cycle of discourses the three friends continue with their harangue against Job, in a more adamant fashion. Eliphaz suggests that Job has no monopoly on wisdom, and that Job's words condemn him. Bildad adds there is an order to things which Job does not wish to see; therefore for his wickedness horrible things will happen to him. Zophar is angry for Job's unrelenting insistence on his innocence. The comforters add layer upon layer of accusations but nothing new to their arguments. They are, however, a good foil for Job and, as Job wrestles with his dilemma, he becomes more and more convinced that he will be proven right, and God will not forsake him.

For I know that my Redeemer lives,
and that in the last he will stand upon the earth.
and after my skin has thus been destroyed,
then in my flesh I shall see God (19:25-26).

This Redeemer, whom Job mentions is not to be confused with a Divine Redeemer in the Christian sense. 'He is a *Go'el*, a redeemer ready to avenge injustice to a kinsman,'⁴⁹ or, in Job's petition, he could be God prosecuting God. Several recent commentators, notably Bergant and Pope, have

⁴⁹ Gordis, (1965), p. 153.

argued that Job cannot be referring to God. Pope states: 'In this context the heavenly witness, guarantor, friend, can scarcely be God, who is already accuser, judge and executioner.'⁵⁰ Gordis notes, however, that their interpretation is based on Western categories of logic which are foreign to the Oriental spirit. Gordis suggests:

The sharp delimitation of personality is foreign to biblical thought. In all these passages, Job is affirming his faith that behind the God of violence, so tragically manifested in the world, stands the God of righteousness and love - and they are not two but one!⁵¹

This dialectic aspect of God portrayed in the Book of Job becomes important in the twentieth century and is relied upon extensively by the four writers considered later in this thesis.

The agony Job has suffered has taught him that the doctrine of retributive justice does not always appear to be just. It is he, an innocent, who is suffering while the wicked continue unscathed:

Why do the wicked live on,
reach old age and grow mighty in power?
Their children are established in their presence,
and their offspring before their eyes (21:7-8).

They sing to the tambourine and lyre,
and rejoice to the sound of the pipe.
They spend their days in prosperity,
and in peace they go down to Sheol (21:12-13).

In spite of this apparent dichotomy, Job is steadfast in his belief in his acquittal. He will not relinquish his trust in

⁵⁰ Pope, p. 118.

⁵¹ Gordis, (1978), p. 526.

God. '[W]hen he has tested me, I shall come out like gold' (23:10b). This is the only reference that Job makes to the possibility that he may be undergoing a test orchestrated by God. It is interesting to note that the friends never equate Job's suffering with a test, and are immutably fixed in their zeal that Job receives deserved punishment for his sins.

By the third cycle, Job has had more than enough of the traditional wisdom offered by his friends. Eliphaz is now so angry, he has lowered himself to the point of inventing sins for Job. Near the end of the dialogues, Eliphaz harangues Job with these words:

Is not your wickedness great?
 There is no end to your iniquities.
 For you have exacted pledges from your family
 for no reason,
 and stripped the naked of their clothing.
 You have given no water to the weary to drink,
 and you have withheld bread from the hungry
 (22:5-7).

Bildad suggests God cannot be defined, implying the absurdity of Job's efforts to communicate with God. The speech attributed to Zophar states that even innocent children of wicked parents will be punished, and whatever has befallen Job, he must certainly deserve it.⁵² Ironically, Job responds to his comforters:

How you have helped one who has no power!
 How you have assisted the arm that has no strength!
 How you have counseled one who has no wisdom,
 and given much good advice (26:2-3)!

⁵² On the damage suffered in the third cycle of speeches and at the attempts at restoration cf. Gordis, (1978), pp. 534-535.

The friends' treatment of Job has shown how wrong-headed traditional piety can be. Their God is one who reacts rather than a God who acts. Their speeches are 'orthodox or conservative wisdom, while Job's discourses may be termed "anti-wisdom wisdom".'⁵³ The comforters' argument for retributive justice, orchestrated by God, explains the cause of suffering and, therefore, answers the question as to why there is suffering in the world.

Job concludes his dialogue by avowing his faith in his God and his faith in his own integrity. Through his own moral sense, Job is moving towards a greater conception of the Divine.

The Poem of Wisdom

The next section, the Poem of Wisdom (chap. 28) is different from the preceding dialogues but is part of the general veneration of wisdom found throughout the ancient Near East. From the sixth century B.C.E. an Aramaic passage from the *Proverbs of Akiqar* reads:

Wisdom is from the gods,
And to the gods she is precious,
Forever her kingdom is fixed in heaven,
For the lord of the holy ones has raised her
up.⁵⁴

Thus it is not surprising to find the veneration of wisdom included in the Book.

⁵³ Pope. p. LXXIII.

⁵⁴ Quoted in Gordis, (1965), p. 34.

While often considered a later addition, the Poem of Wisdom adds another dimension to the *mysterium* of God presented by the Book. This poetic interlude outlines man's quest for power and riches and wisdom. Man can find power and riches in worldly things but the source of wisdom is found only in

the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom;
and to depart from evil is understanding
(28:28).

The only reality in human wisdom advocated in these Scriptures is the absolute moral obedience to God.

Job then continues his argument with El Shaddai (chap 29-31). He is certain he has not forsaken God; he is secure in the knowledge of his faith. He knows he has not sinned.

For I was in terror of calamity from God,
and could not have faced his majesty (31:23).⁵⁵

But Job can not reconcile divine justice and benevolent providence with what seems to him his purposeless suffering.

Elihu - The Fourth Comforter

The Elihu passages (chaps. 32-37) which follow the poetic dialogues appear to be an afterthought and are considered by some scholars to be a later addition to the Book of Job.⁵⁶

⁵⁵ Chapter 31, 'The Code of the Man of Honour' is discussed more fully in the chapter on Gustavo Gutiérrez.

⁵⁶ For an appraisal of the literature, pro and con Elihu, cf. Gordis, (1965), pp. 104-116.

Elihu's only appearance is in his own speeches.⁵⁷ He is not mentioned before that, nor does he appear in the epilogue when the other friends of Job are rebuked by God. These speeches are not as organized or as succinct as the dialogues and are full of bombast. Elihu stresses his own youth and his knowledge, suggesting it is greater than his elders. The tradition of the wise youth is not exceptional in the Hebrew Scriptures - David knew better than Saul (1 Sam 18-24), and Joab knew better than Abner (2 Sam 2-3). Elihu boasts:

For truly my words are not false;
one who is perfect in knowledge is with you
(36:4).

The most significant idea contributed by Elihu is that the sinful suffer for their own edification. He says:

He opens their ears to instruction,
and commands that they return from iniquity.
If they listen and serve him,
they complete their days in prosperity,
and their years in pleasantness (36:10-11).

He delivers the afflicted by their affliction,
and opens their ear by adversity (36:15).

Nowhere does Elihu consider Job's suffering as unmerited.

Pope suggests that Elihu's

complete evasion of the issue as Job had posed it must be the poet's oblique way of admitting that there is no satisfactory answer available to man, apart from faith.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ However both St Gregory the Great and St. Thomas Aquinas (*The Literal Exposition on Job*, trans. Anthony Damico, Atlanta: 1989) thought that God, in the beginning of the theophany when he thunders: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?' (38:2) was referring to Elihu.

⁵⁸ Pope, p. LXXV.

Elihu's espousal of suffering for educational purposes can generally be considered a dissolving of the problem of evil - suffering ceases to exist as an entity in itself and becomes a means to an end. This idea finds much support in the twentieth century; however this education is not necessarily instigated by God but by the simple juxtaposition of circumstances.

The fate of Elihu in subsequent centuries has been curious. There are some, like Moses Maimonides, who felt that what Elihu contributed to the Book of Job was of the greatest significance.⁵⁹ Others such as Pope Gregory the Great suggested Elihu was in the pay of the Devil.⁶⁰

THE VOICE FROM THE WHIRLWIND

Following the verses of Elihu are the Yahweh speeches (chaps. 38-41), some of the most eloquent poetry ever written. The Voice from the Whirlwind adds another answer to the question of why the righteous may suffer. These verses ignore Job's petition for judgment and respond with an array of wonders from the universe.

In the first section of the Yahweh speeches, a poem of

⁵⁹ Cf. Moses Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed*, trans. M. Friedlander, 2nd ed., New York: 1956, Part III, chap XXIII.

⁶⁰ Gregory the Great, *Moralia on Job*, in *Fathers of the Church*, trans. by members of the English Church, Oxford: 1844, vol. 23, 31.

creation, God asks Job many questions as if he were in a court of law.

Have you commanded the morning
since your day began,
and caused the dawn to know its place,
so that it might take hold
of the skirts of the earth,
and the wicked be shaken out of it (38:12-13)?

Yahweh then questions Job about the phenomena of the heavens:

Have you entered the storehouses of the snow?
or have you seen the storehouse of the hail,
which I reserved for the time of trouble,
for day of battle and war (38:22-23)?

Then he questions Job about the animals of the world. Does Job feed the young lions or know where the mountain goats give birth? All this magnificence underscores Job's conclusion that the power of God is beyond comprehension and that man, himself, is a finite being. When Yahweh asks Job for his answer, Job admits:

See, I am of small account; what shall I answer you?
I lay my hand on my mouth (40:4).

He has been moved to humble silence by the theophany, and we are left to surmise whether this theophany has presented Job with a sufficient answer for the justice he has been seeking.

Then Job is asked, from the heart of the whirlwind again, if he can master all that is evil:

Look on all who are proud, and bring them low;
tread down the wicked where they stand.
Hide them all in the dust together,
bind their faces in the world below.
Then I will also acknowledge to you
that your own right hand can give you victory
(40:12-14).

This passage implies that if Job can conquer the evil in the

world, God will acknowledge him as being even more powerful than God himself. To continue this theme of a God who is unable to control evil, Yahweh relates, while he created the world, he is still in continuous conflict with the Behemoth and the Leviathan, monsters of chaos - beasts that are loathsome to man. God describes the Leviathan:

When it raises itself up the gods are afraid;
 at the crashing they are beside themselves.
 Though the sword reaches it, it does not avail,
 nor does the spear, the dart,
 or the javelin (41:25-26).

There have been numerous interpretations of the identity of the Behemoth and the Leviathan,⁶¹ generally regarded as a hippopotamus and a crocodile.⁶² Mettinger believes the chapters on the Behemoth and the Leviathan are related to an Egyptian version of the chaos battle myth in which these two animals are incarnations of evil; 'the same chaos power that is the enemy of the creator God'.⁶³ The implication of these passages, Lindström suggests 'is ultimately an understanding of the world in which evil is self-sufficient, which is to

⁶¹ An innovative late nineteenth century book spends three hundred pages proving the beasts were metaphors for the steam engine and a paddle-wheel boat. Cf. Samuel O. Toudell, *A Wonderful Discovery in the Book of Job*, Philadelphia: 1890.

⁶² John Day argues that the Leviathan and the Behemoth are purely mythical creatures derived from Canaanite myths of the chaos monsters which God overcame at the time of creation. Cf. John Day, *God's Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea*, Cambridge: 1985, pp. 62-87.

⁶³ Mettinger, p. 46; also cf. Lindström, p. 155.

say, independent of man and the actions of God'.⁶⁴ They do imply, therefore, that God is still struggling to control the evils which arise from the forces of chaos. His power is limited. There are other passages in the Hebrew Bible, particularly in Genesis, which underscore God's problems in controlling his creation.⁶⁵ Whatever these beasts represent, this last exposition by God moves Job to admit that he has spoken out of ignorance:

I know that you can do all things,
and that no purpose of yours can be thwarted.
Who is this that hides counsel without knowledge?
Therefore I have uttered what I
did not understand (42:2-3).

therefore I despise myself,
and repent in dust and ashes (42:6).

Von Rad points out, however, that the Voice from the Whirlwind does blame Job for two transgressions. The first is found at the beginning of the first divine speech when God challenges Job with: 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge?' (38:2) and the second at the beginning of the second divine speech when God demands: 'Will you even put me in the wrong? Will you condemn me that you may be justified?' (40:8)⁶⁶ Both condemnations suggest that Job has argued his case from a position of ignorance as to the ways of the Lord. Whatever translation is accepted for 42:6,

⁶⁴ Lindström, p. 156.

⁶⁵ Cf. The Flood (Gen. 6:5 - 8:22), Tower of Babel (Gen. 11:1-9), Sodom and Gomorrah (Gen. 18:22 - 19:14).

⁶⁶ von Rad pp. 223-224.

it seems to indicate that Job has achieved a new awareness about his relationship with God.

Paul Ricoeur finds in Job's repentance a suggestion that Job now realizes divine retribution does not animate the events in the world. Ricoeur writes:

It becomes suddenly apparent that the demand for retribution animated Job's recriminations no less than the moralizing homilies of his friends. That is why the innocent Job, the upright Job repents. Of what can he repent, if not his claim for compensation, which made his contention impure? Was it not still the law of retribution which drove him to demand an explanation in proportion to his existence, a private explanation, a finite explanation?⁶⁷

Consequently God does not rebuke Job for any sins, but he does criticize him for a lack of understanding. Nor does it appear that Job repents of sinfulness but rather of foolish speech.

We must assume God's statement, that Job is blameless and upright, and Job's insistence on his innocence, are correct. Some have suggested, however, as does Maimonides in his *Guide for the Perplexed*, that Job has learned wisdom through his suffering.⁶⁸ Maimonides concludes, if Job had been wise, he would not have had any complaints against God because he would have understood the nature of his calamities. Before Satan's wager with Yahweh, Job was an upright but also prideful man. Job's hubris gets him his hearing with God, but it may have been his pride as well which provokes the jealousy of Satan

⁶⁷ Paul Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, trans. Emerson Buchanan, Boston: 1967, p. 321.

⁶⁸ Cf. Maimonides, pp. 351-373.

and thereby Job's downfall.

Job intuitively from the whirlwind theophany that the world has been created for the sake of God and not humankind. Yet Job knows God cares for what he has created. The answer to Job's dilemma is found in the theophany: Humanity cannot intellectually understand the workings of God. There are no definitive solutions for the rational mind. Humanity must trust the Lord on an emotional and spiritual level. Job accepts this paradox.

While the Voice from the Whirlwind is beautiful poetry, Gordis believes the Yahweh speeches are not unlike other epiphanies in the Hebrew Scriptures. The deepest insights of biblical faith are derived from the tension between: 'faith in God's retribution and the spectacle of injustice triumphant in the world'.⁶⁹ This is the position many orthodox Jews and Christians try to maintain when developing their theodicies; however, they usually cannot tolerate the tension of the paradox and slide toward solutions or occasionally toward dissolutions.

THE EPILOGUE

⁶⁹ Gordis, (1965), p. 146. Gordis goes on to say: 'In essence the contradiction was resolved by imbuing human experience with a sense of time and endowing history with the dynamism of process. The universe is not static, it is on the march to the future. The evils of the present world order will be overcome in the messianic age when the sovereignty of God is recognized by all men and nations.' (pp. 146-147) This sentiment seems to place Gordis in the process theology camp.

The epilogue is related to the prologue both in its style and in its theodicy. The ending in the epilogue ignores the previous passages in which Job finds spiritual sanctity - but not physical redress. The epilogue upholds the discredited doctrine of individual retribution by restoring to Job his possessions doubled and new children.⁷⁰ The problem of the death of his first ten children and his servants is ignored. Yahweh rebukes the three friends (there is no mention of Elihu) for not expressing God's intentions properly, and asks Job to make sacrifices on their behalf. Thus, in the epilogue, Job is rewarded in his lifetime for his faith in the Lord, and the friends are punished for their misrepresentation of the Lord. Again rewards and punishments can be regarded as solutions to the question as to why there is evil in a world governed by an omnipotent, omnibenevolent God. The fact that the Epilogue implicitly supports retributive justice after Job has so eloquently disproven its validity in the dialogues often causes discontent with the readers of the Book of Job. This unease is evident in the interpretations of the Epilogue by Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung.

THEODICY AND THE BOOK OF JOB

To reiterate: there are at least six possible answers in the Book of Job to the question of why the righteous suffer.

⁷⁰ The only other place in the Hebrew Bible in which the accused, when proven innocent, receives his possessions back double is in Exodus 22:9.

The first is that it is a test by God for some divine reason. As the Satan, however, does not reappear in the epilogue, much credence cannot be given to this concept. The second answer, presented by the three friends (and inferred by Job in his petition for divine justice) is that there is individual retribution in this lifetime. This retribution is responsible for the good and evil experienced by humankind. Retributive justice also is sanctioned by inference in the epilogue. Common experience, as in the case of Job, shows this concept not to be valid. The third answer, espoused by Elihu, is that suffering is educative in that it leads God's creatures to behave with reverence to the Lord. Again humanity's experience negates this belief. The fourth answer is suggested when God admits he still cannot control the forces of chaos. His power is limited. Job's answer is the fifth. Only by faith can defeat be turned into acceptance. This argument, resting in the *mysterium* of God, appears to be an acceptance of the paradox: God is all powerful, all good, and evil exists in the world. There is no rational rebuttal to this.

Finally there is the sixth answer. We must struggle against being narrowed by our sufferings, sufferings which occur without the intent or intercession of God. In the twentieth century this idea often receives considerable support. Consequently a protest-atheist and a non-believer may interpret suffering in this form, but their hypotheses

here belong more to Max Weber's use of the word *theodicy*, as an existential drive to explain any unmerited suffering and evil. These hypotheses make no attempt to justify God's ways to man and emphasize that there need be no divine guidance to elicit moral behavior in humans.⁷¹

The questions raised by the Book of Job are not unique within Hebrew Scripture. Much of the Hebrew Bible is concerned with similar questions expressed in a variety of ways. Many pithy sayings concerning the fate of the wise and foolish, the just and the wicked are scattered through out the Writings. The Psalmist:

Better is a little that the righteous person has
than the abundance of the wicked.
For the arms of the wicked shall be broken,
but the Lord upholds the righteous
(Ps. 37:16,17).

Kohелеth:

There is nothing better for mortals than to eat and drink, and find enjoyment in their toil. This also, I saw, is from the hand of God, for apart from him who can eat or who can have enjoyment? For to the one who pleases him God gives wisdom and knowledge and joy; but to the sinner he gives the work of gathering and reaping,

⁷¹ Albert Camus' Dr. Rieux, an atheist in *La Peste*, (*The Plague*, trans. Stuart Gilbert, New York: 1948) who battles to prevent people dying of the plague, is an example of such a moral character. Why there is suffering and injustices in the world, in the metaphysical sense, do not concern Dr. Rieux. What does concern him is the righting of wrongs and sufferings - in what ever form he finds them - in this case the plague. His sense of what is moral behavior is not dependent on the creed of a religion. The work of Camus, as we will see, has influenced Gutiérrez and Wiesel.

only to give to one who pleases God (Ecc. 2:24-26).⁷²

The underlying motivation behind many of the wisdom aphorisms is an attempt to make coherent an apparently random wilfulness of God. Gordis states:

The one great issue which agitated the spirit of biblical religion beyond all others was the mystery of suffering or, more precisely, the mystery of unjust suffering. The axis on which all Hebrew religion turns has as its two poles faith in God as the Ruler of the universe and the fact of widespread human suffering.⁷³

While this is an undercurrent theme of much of the Hebrew Scriptures, the greatest expression of this paradox is found in the Book of Job, which still retains its place as a canonical myth on human suffering and testimony. Yet, I believe, that what appeals to the twentieth century reader is not any answer that can be derived from the Book of Job to the problem of the suffering of the innocent, but rather the **content** of the Book - content which speaks about suffering and injustice and the fact that Job, the archetype, responds with an existential struggle to come to terms with his existence. In all this he **testifies** to his dilemma and then to his search for answers. The problem of human suffering has not diminished since the Book of Job was written twenty-five hundred years ago, and Job's existential quest is particularly appropriate in this century of mass terror and destruction.

⁷² For a more thorough discussion of Wisdom literature cf. Roland E. Murphy, *Wisdom Literature*, Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1981.

⁷³ Gordis, (1965), p. 135.

The Book of Job is the only work whose protagonist not only speaks of his sufferings but then tries to come to terms with them in a way which resonates with the concept of self-empowerment so important to twentieth century Western intellectual culture.

In the chapters which follow we shall see how the Book of Job has become the foundation for the testimony of four thinkers from the second half of the twentieth century - testimony about what they perceive is wrong with the world and how these wrongs can be overcome.

**GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ - ON JOB:
GOD-TALK AND THE SUFFERING OF THE INNOCENT**

WE KNOW that there is no promised land
or promised stars.
We know it, Lord, we know it,
and we go on working with you.

We know that a thousand times over
we will hitch our wagon anew
and that a thousand times over
we shall erect anew
our old shelter.
We know that for this we shall receive
neither ration nor wage.
We know it, Lord, we know it,
and we go on working with you.
And we know
that over this dwelling
a thousand times
and a thousand times again,
we must perform the same old tragicomic trick
without praise
and without applause.
We know it, Lord, we know,
and we go on working with you.
And you know, Lord, that we know,
that we all know, all of us,
(Where is the Devil?)
that today you can lay a bet with anyone,
a safer bet than with Job and Faust.
Léon Filipe¹

In this chapter the concepts of liberation theology are outlined. These ideas are crucial in the formation of Gutiérrez's philosophy. Then Gutiérrez's interpretation of

¹ *Versos y oraciones de caminante*, Madrid: 1981, pp. 83-84. Cited in Gutiérrez, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, Maryknoll, N. Y.: 1986, p. 110, fn. 17.

the Book of Job, set forth in *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Poor*, is explained with an emphasis on how he perceives the text to help empower the rebellion of the misbegotten of Latin America. Finally some of the problems with Gutiérrez's utilization of the Book of Job are suggested.

The Book of Job as the biblical, canonical work on inexplicable suffering has been used as a foundation for the testimony of many different peoples and philosophies. Job's *cri du coeur* for the liberation theologian, Gustavo Gutiérrez, becomes a demand for justice from human oppression rather than (as does the standard interpretation of the biblical Job) a demand for an explanation of God's justice.

WHAT IS LIBERATION THEOLOGY?

Liberation theology attributes its genesis to the afflicted people suffering in the modern world, and its primary spokespersons are found among the religious of Latin America. They argue, that by listening to the wisdom and intuition of the poor of Latin America, as well as witnessing their plight, they have developed a criterion for what they have labelled the Theology of Liberation. As in so many other reflections and attempts to come to terms with the problem of evil and unwarranted suffering, the Book of Job (and Faust a later corollary as mentioned in Filipe's poem) is used to present a personal answer. Liberation theologians' interpretation of scripture is witness to a 'living' church

which responds to the plight of its members rather than isolating them with sophisticated theological edifices constructed by a First World white majority, a world which has little interaction with the oppressed of the Third World. Contributing, to and supporting this new thinking, are Afro-American, Hispanic, and Amerindian theologies of the United States as well as those from Africa, Asia and the South Pacific. These, combined with a new feminist perspective, have helped to increase the interaction between traditional theological thinking and the developing liberation theologies:

At the heart of the theology of liberation is the twofold belief that the experience of oppression, poverty, hunger, and death of God is speaking to all people today and that God's presence among the millions unknown and unloved by humanity but blessed in the eyes of God is confined to the witness of the Christian tradition, particularly the Scriptures themselves.²

While liberation theology is generally considered a Christian movement, (as emphasized in the above quote from Rowland and Corner), it has begun to find expression in Jewish and Muslim perspectives as well.³ Thus the impetus behind this new

² Rowland & Corner, p. 43.

³ For works on the Jewish tradition and liberation theology cf. M.H. Ellis, *Toward a Jewish Theology of Liberation*, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1987, Dan Cohn-Sherbok, *On Earth As It Is In Heaven: Jews, Christians, and Liberation Theology*, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1987. Richard Rubenstein, *After Auschwitz*, 2nd ed., Baltimore: 1992. In chap. 14, Rubenstein is highly critical of both Ellis, for his support of liberation theology which can be considered anti-semitic because 'their views of Jews and Judaism are almost uniformly shaped by the Church's supersessionist theological claims over the Synagogue', and Cohn-Sherbok, for 'a new orientation toward Jesus'. James H. Cone, *A Black Theology of Liberation*, Philadelphia: 1970, is one of the first and most influential black American writers

theology is the presence of voices, which in the past have been silent. These oppressed people have now decided to take charge of their destiny, 'to think out their own faith'.⁴

Christian Smith, however, cautions that the theologies of liberation which occur outside of Latin America are not *liberation theology*. The difference lies in the power base. Citing Doug McAdam's definition of 'members' who work within the established order and 'challengers' who are excluded from the established order, such as the American blacks in the early and mid-twentieth century,⁵ Smith states:

[B]efore the liberation theology movement was able to become a mass-based movement of excluded peasants and workers, the movement's leaders had to gain control over the Church's institutional authority and resources through a task logically akin to an organizational takeover. Before it could mobilize its members to exert pressure to transform society, it faced the problem of institutionalizing its ideology and action strategy in the Church. This first and crucial step of the movement was carried out not by powerless, excluded masses using nonconventional means, but by theological elites in the context of a powerful, well-established organization, using largely institutionalized means. With liberation theology, then, we are dealing with a fundamentally different kind of social movement than that of McAdam's black insurgency.⁶

Thus movements which call themselves part of the liberation

to present a case for black liberation theology.

⁴ Gustavo Gutiérrez, *A Theology of Liberation*, trans. Caridad Inda & John Eagleson, 2nd ed., Maryknoll, N. Y: 1988, p. xxi.

⁵ Cf. Doug McAdams, *Political Process and the Development of Black Insurgency, 1930-1970*, Chicago: 1982, pp. 44-48.

⁶ Christian Smith, *The Emergence of Liberation Theology*, Chicago: 1991, pp. 67-68.

theology genre, such as feminist theology, black liberation theology, etc. may be influenced by its philosophy but most often are working outside an established power base.

Nevertheless, there is a family resemblance within all theologies of liberation, a desire to be witness to the problems of the suffering poor regardless of academic and political definitions. There is, in the modern sense, an emphasis on existential thought, a premise which Kierkegaard defines as: 'An objective uncertainty held fast in the most passionate personal experience [that] is the highest truth attainable'.⁷ Relating this concept to Black Theology, James Cone writes:

[W]e can say that the definition of truth for the black thinker arises from a passionate encounter with black reality. Though that truth may be described religiously as God, it is not the God of white religion but the God of black existence. There is no way to speak of this objectively; truth is not objective. It is subjective, a personal experience of the ultimate in the midst of degradation. Passion is the only appropriate response to this truth.⁸

Another black leader, Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, speaks eloquently on the universality of human suffering:

Liberation theology more than any other kind of theology issues out of the crucible of human suffering and anguish. It happens because people cry out, 'Oh, God, how long?' 'Oh, God, but why?...' All liberation theology stems from trying to make sense of human suffering when those who suffer are the victims of organized oppression and exploitation, when they are emasculated and treated as less than what they are: human

⁷ Quoted in Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith*, New York: 1957, p. 90.

⁸ Cone, p. 48.

persons created in the image of the Triune God, redeemed by the one Savior Jesus Christ and sanctified by the Holy Paraclete. This is the genesis of all liberation theology and so also of black theology, which is theology of liberation in Africa.⁹

Tutu's explication of liberation theology can also explain why the Book of Job, a canonical work on the problem of the innocent sufferer, is used by Gustavo Gutiérrez to argue his case for liberation theology. While the Book of Job pre-dates the Christian era, many Christian thinkers, as noted above, have seen in Job a prefiguration of Christ.

The Impact of Vatican II

The vision of Pope John XXIII and Vatican II helped to form the foundations of Latin American liberation theology. Their concern for the marginalized gave 'permission', impetus to change the focus of the Catholic Church toward an increased ministry to the poor. Shortly before Pope John died he dictated these words to Cardinal Cigognani:

Today more than ever, certainly more than in previous centuries, we are called to serve humankind as such, and not merely Catholics; to defend above all and everywhere the rights of the human person, and not merely those of the Catholic Church. Today's world, the needs made plain in the last fifty years, and a deeper understanding of doctrine have brought us to a new situation, as I said in my opening speech to the Council. It is not that the Gospel has changed; it is that we have begun to understand it better. Those who have lived as long as I have were faced with new tasks in the social order at the

⁹ Desmond Tutu, 'The Theology of Liberation in Africa' in *African Theology en Route: Papers from the Pan-African Conference of Third World Theologians, December 17-23, 1977, Accra, Ghana*, eds. Kofi Appiah-Kubi & Sergio Torres, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1979, p. 263.

start of the century; those who, like me, were twenty years in the East and eight in France, were enabled to compare different cultures and traditions, and know that the moment has come to discern the sign of the times, to seize the opportunity and expand the view.¹⁰

Thus, the attitude of churchmen such as Pope John and, therefore, the apparent approval of the Vatican, encouraged theologians in Latin America to rethink theology in light of the extreme conditions of poverty and repression which existed there:

Whereas the New Christendom strategy tried to 'christianize' and control society, Vatican II affirmed the most humble 'pilgrim' status of the Church, journeying alongside the rest of humankind. Furthermore, Vatican II recognized the evidence of God's work in - and therefore the value of - 'secular historical progress'.¹¹

After Vatican II the church throughout the world began to experience a major shift toward a more involved laity and to question the role of the clergy. This was most evident in the enormous unrest and ferment in Latin America in the second half of the 1960's. It became more important to translate Sacred Scripture into the vernacular which in turn spawned many Bible study groups. Other progressive pastoral strategies and social activities were now also endorsed by Vatican II. Most significant for Latin America were the questions on: the role of Christians in politics, the celibacy of priests, the extent of ecclesiastical authority, the uses and efficacy of Marxism, and the justification of violent

¹⁰ Quoted by Gutiérrez in *Theology*, pp. xlv-xlvi.

¹¹ Smith, p. 17.

revolution.¹²

Out of this chaos, structure began to form when 130 bishops, representing every country in Latin America, met at Medellín, Columbia from 24 August to 6 September, 1968, to implement Vatican II in Latin America. A Magna Carta of controversial programs for social change endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church emerged out of the convention. The Medellín document on poverty begins:

The Latin American bishops cannot remain indifferent in the face of the tremendous social injustices existent in Latin America which keep the majority of our peoples in dismal poverty, which in many cases becomes inhuman wretchedness. A deafening cry pours from the throats of millions of men [sic], asking their pastors for a liberation that reaches them from nowhere else.¹³

While the stance assumed by the bishops at Medellín in later years would appear relatively mild, they

decried the extreme inequality that exists between social classes. They attacked international imperialism and placed the principal guilt for the economic dependence of Latin America countries on foreign monopolistic powers. They warned against the use of violence but recognized that situations of injustice were so grave as to constitute 'institutional violence.' In speaking of the 'poverty of the church' they called for solidarity with a commitment to the poor.¹⁴

The bishops at Medellín leant support and direction to Catholics who were intent on making progressive or radical

¹² Cf. Smith, pp. 16-17.

¹³ Quoted in *The Gospel of Peace and Justice: Catholic Social Teaching Since Pope John*, ed. Joseph Gremillion, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1979, p. 471.

¹⁴ Arthur F. McGovern, *Liberation Theology and Its Critics*, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1989, p. 9.

social changes on behalf of the poor and in the name of God.¹⁵ And behind the bishops was a Peruvian priest, who argued that God was historically on the side of the poor, and God's gift is a definitive life to his creatures, who in response must build fellowship not only as a grace but as a task in God's saving work.¹⁶ His name is Gustavo Gutiérrez, and his argument was officially sanctioned by the bishops at the conference. A month prior to the conference, Gutiérrez had delivered a paper to the priest group, *Oficina Nacional de Información Social*, in Lima, Peru. It was entitled: 'Toward a Theology of Liberation' and became the foundation for his ground-breaking work, *A Theology of Liberation* (1968).

Of the sixteen documents issued at Medellín 'at least three of them were very good indeed ['Justice', 'Peace' and 'Poverty'] - which is a high batting average for corporate episcopal prose'.¹⁷ 'Peace' was written by Gutiérrez and Pierre Bigo and Gutiérrez wrote the draft on 'Poverty'. These were authored on behalf of the bishops dealing with these subjects:

¹⁵ For an analysis of the conference at Medellín cf. Smith, chap. 7.

¹⁶ Gustavo Gutiérrez, 'Expanding the View', in *Expanding the View*, eds. Marc H. Ellis & Otto Maduro, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1988, p. 26.

¹⁷ Robert McAfee Brown, *Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Atlanta: 1980, p. 16. By 'very good' we must assume Brown is implying that the documents were philosophically effective in arguing for a stronger stance in regards to the situation of the poor in Latin America.

The documents on peace, justice, and poverty together provide an analysis of the Latin American social situation. They charge that Latin America suffers under 'neocolonialism', 'internal colonialism', 'external colonialism', 'the international imperialism of money', 'a dependence on a center of economic power', and 'a marked bi-classism'. These exploitative structures constitute 'serious sins', 'a sinful situation', and 'a situation of injustice that can be called institutionalized violence'. The documents claim that poverty 'is in itself evil', that the 'growing distortion of international commerce [is]...a permanent menace against peace', and that 'those who have the greater share of wealth, culture, and power [by retaining their privilege] are responsible to history for provoking explosive revolutions of despair'. In response, the documents call for 'all-embracing, courageous, urgent, and profoundly renovating transformations'.¹⁸

These ideas, then, formulated by the progressive assistants to the bishops, became the nucleus for liberation theology.

The bishops spoke of a need for *conscienticizing evangelization* - a church policy which would reflect and interact with the actual living conditions of its recipients. In support of this thesis, Gutiérrez quotes from some of the documents he helped to author:

[We] would be guilty of betraying the cause of Peru's development, if we did not stress the fact that the doctrinal riches of the gospel contain a revolutionary thrust. [Indeed], the God whom we know in the Bible is a liberating God, a God who destroys myths and alienation, a God who intervenes in history in order to break down the structures of injustice and who raises up prophets in order to point out the way of justice and mercy. He is the God who liberates slaves (Exodus), who causes empires to fall and raises up the oppressed.¹⁹

Such sentiments expressed in official form began the movement which became the theology of liberation and which would

¹⁸ Smith, p. 162.

¹⁹ *Theology*, p. 69.

eventually lead Gutiérrez to enlist the Book of Job into his cause.

Most of the exegetical work by Gutiérrez and other liberation theologians is based on their reading of the Gospels' call for restitution and rehabilitation of the afflicted as shown in the ministry of Jesus and in the Old Testament's portrayal of 'historical' acts of deliverance as in the story of Exodus. The manner in which liberation theologians interpret the Bible may be markedly at variance from the standard First World hermeneutics. Brown writes:

One could almost assume that the Bible read by liberation theologians and the Bible read by middle-class Christians were two different books, containing similar texts but yielding utterly different messages. When North Americans [and Europeans] encounter third world biblical interpretations, they are likely to react, 'Those people are biased; their own situation conditions their reading of Scripture...' Such a charge is appropriate only if it continues, '...and so does ours'.²⁰

The difference between the two approaches to biblical interpretation can be attributed to the cultural situations. For First-World theologians an analytical, 'objective' approach based on historical-critical methods is the most 'appropriate' method in discovering the meaning of Scriptures. For Latin Americans, and other people interested in the text as 'subject' and not 'object', biblical scholarship is certainly commendable, but it is not given a place of prominence in their interpretation of text. Rather, what is

²⁰ Brown, (1980), p. 57.

most important is the meaning of that text for its readers, and there has been a great emphasis placed on teaching the poor to read; their text is the Bible and the historical-critical method is irrelevant:

They frequently have little regard for the historical circumstances of the text, its writer and its characters. There is often a direct identification by the poor with biblical characters and their circumstances, with little concern for the hermeneutical niceties which are invoked in applying the text to their own circumstances.²¹

Rather than using the text for daily inspiration on a personal level, the Latin American will use the text as inspiration to 'collective action in making real the will of God as revealed in Scripture'.²² They take the stories found in the Bible and make them an integral part in their own lives:

The Gospels and epistles for Latin Americans are the beginning of a story that continues in their own lives. For these people the Spirit of God still walks the earth, the apostles and martyrs are still among them, and Jesus is being crucified and resurrected every day....We approach Scripture with reverence and need, hoping to mine its richness, but feel the need to sink long shafts (historical criticism) to reach the ore; for Latin communities, Scripture is an exposed vein of ore, immediately relevant to their social context.²³

Theological reflection comes second. First comes action directed toward achieving human liberation. Gutiérrez insists upon this distinction:

Theology is reflection, a critical attitude. Theology

²¹ Rowland & Corner, p. 45.

²² Christine E. Gudorf, 'Liberation Theology's Use of Scripture: A Response to First World Critics' in *Interpretations*, vol. xli, 1987, p. 6.

²³ Gudorf, p. 7.

*follows; it is the second step. What Hegel used to say about philosophy can likewise be applied to theology: it rises only at sundown. The pastoral activity of the church does not flow as a conclusion from theological premises. Theology does not produce pastoral activity; rather it reflects upon it....The theology of liberation attempts to reflect on the experience and meaning of the faith based on the commitment to abolish injustice and to build a new society; this theology must be verified in practice of that commitment, by active, effective participation in the struggle which the exploited social classes have undertaken against their oppressors.*²⁴

THE FORMATION OF GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ

One of the most prolific writers to argue for liberation theology is Gustavo Gutiérrez. He has developed his theology of liberation because of his personal circumstances, his childhood, an excellent education, and living and working with the poor. He was born in 1928, in Lima, Peru, of mestizo parents. In his early childhood, he experienced discrimination because of his 'mixed blood' and poverty. In addition, an illness, osteomyelitis, kept him bedridden for six years leaving him with a permanent limp. Because of his own health problems, Gutiérrez was motivated to study medicine at San Marcos University, where he earned a degree in medical science. While there he also became interested in the theories of Karl Marx and joined a Christian student movement, which was protesting economic and social inequalities in Peruvian society. Becoming more interested in psychiatry and philosophy, he studied for a time at the Catholic University

²⁴ *Theology*, p. 9.

in Lima. Finally his interests gravitated toward the field of theology and the priesthood. Thus, after completing his theological studies in Santiago, Chile, he was sent to Louvain, Belgium, as a promising Latin American candidate for ordination. There he did graduate work and earned additional degrees in philosophy and psychology. Finally, he received a Ph.D. in theology from the University of Lyons in France. In 1959, he was ordained priest in Rome while studying at the Gregorian University. Through all his academic pursuits, he continued his studies of Karl Marx.

Having completed the theological grand tour, Gutiérrez returned to Lima to take up a teaching post at Catholic University. But after nearly a decade away from the misery and hopelessness of the people of Peru, Gutiérrez was newly confronted with the fact that his European education was not relevant to Latin American realities:

[T]he next stage in Gustavo's education consisted of unlearning his previous education, re-reading the history of the continent, re-reading the Bible, re-reading theology, and discovering that re-reading means re-making - a re-making, as far as possible, of the situation of the poor and dispossessed.²⁵

While at a conference of liberation theologians at El Escorial in Spain in 1972, Gutiérrez summarized the discoveries he had made on returning home to his native Peru, cited here by José Miguez Bonino who was present on that occasion:

²⁵ Brown, (1980) p. 23.

He said (in summary): I discovered three things, I discovered that *poverty was a destructive thing*, something to be fought against and destroyed, not merely something which was the object of our charity. Secondly, I discovered that *poverty was not accidental*. The fact that these people are poor and not rich is not just a matter of chance, but the result of a structure.... Thirdly, I discovered that *poor people were a social class*.

When I discovered that poverty was something to be fought against, that poverty was structural, that poor people were a class [and could organize], it became crystal clear that in order to serve the poor, one had to move into political action.²⁶

Gutiérrez and the Politics of Liberation Theology

Gutiérrez frequently quotes Dietrich Bonhoeffer to show that a radical repositioning of a man's philosophy is possible, even from one who comes from the bourgeoisie, a man from 'a world come of age'. Bonhoeffer, who finds himself in prison, must relearn how to speak to God:

We have for once learned to see the great events of world history from below, from the perspective of the outcast, the suspects, the maltreated, the powerless, the oppressed, the reviled - in short from the perspective of those who suffer.²⁷

Bonhoeffer, who was executed shortly after he wrote the above passage, never had an opportunity to experience unjust 'history from below', other than the society of a prison. Gutiérrez has had ample opportunity to practice what he

²⁶ José Miguez Bonino, 'Statement by José Miguez Bonino', in *Theology in the Americas*, eds. Sergio Torres & John Eagleson, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1976, p. 279, italics added.

²⁷ Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Letters from Prison*, trans. Reginald H. Fuller, ed. Eberhard Bethge, London: 1953, p. 17, cited in Gutiérrez, *The Power of the Poor in History: Selected Writings*, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1983, (in a different translation).

preaches.

While Gutiérrez's origins are not with the bourgeoisie, his European education had aligned him with the middle class. This alignment was to change when he returned to Peru, where he experienced a radical reassessment of his theological beliefs. Much like Bonhoeffer's new awareness of suffering caused by his imprisonment, Gutiérrez's found that his European education was a poor bedfellow with the plight of the poor in Latin America. Remnants of his European education, however, would stand Gutiérrez in good stead.

Gutiérrez and Marxism

When Gutiérrez returned to Lima in 1961 and began teaching, he lectured on Christian and Marxist thought, but always in the context of a 'pastoral' concern for his students who were confronted with both points of view in their daily lives.²⁸ Some aspects of Marxism, however, are crucial to Gutiérrez's theology because they provide the tools for social analysis which help him to make sense of the situation in Latin America.

The philosophical precursor to Marx, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel also has had an influential impact on Gutiérrez as is evident throughout his writings.²⁹ Hegel

²⁸ Cf. Brown (1980), p. 36.

²⁹ The secondary sources on Gutiérrez mention Hegel only *en passant* preferring to dwell on the influence of Marx (who of course was in turn markedly influenced by Hegel); however

argues that old cultures are supplanted by new and better ones. Consequently old institutions, customs, and thought forms give way to a new reality. This premise easily equates with the theology of liberation. Gutiérrez believes (as well as most historians) that Hegel's philosophy, to a great extent, is a result of the French Revolution in which the right of the individual to participate in the formation of his or her own society was proclaimed. Paraphrasing Hegel, Gutiérrez writes:

Through the dialectical process humankind constructs itself and attains a real awareness of its own being; it liberates itself in the acquisition of genuine freedom which through work transforms the world and educates the human species....Thus human nature gradually takes hold of its own destiny. It looks ahead and turns towards a society in which it will be free of all alienation and servitude. This focus will initiate a new dimension in philosophy: social criticism.³⁰

Humanity, in an existential drive, gradually takes hold of its own destiny. This argument for self-empowerment is what

some aspects of Hegel's teleological concept of history fit very well into Gutiérrez's theology. Throughout *A Theology of Liberation* and *On Job* there are frequent references to God's place in human history and where 'world-history is progress in the consciousness of freedom'. (Gutiérrez quotes this in *Theology*, p. 19; it comes from Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. J. Sibree, London: 1861, p. 18). Obviously Gutiérrez would want to qualify Hegel's concepts of 'might makes right' and the 'state is the embodiment of reason'.

³⁰ *Theology*, p. 19. Marx, of course, in an early work praised this Hegelian belief. 'The outstanding achievement of Hegel's *Phenomenology*...is...that Hegel conceives the self-creation of man as a process....He thus grasps the essence of labor and comprehends objective man - true, because real man - is the outcome of man's own labor'. (*Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, ed. Dirk J. Struik, trans. Martin Milligan, New York: 1964, p. 177. This passage is quoted by Gutiérrez in *Theology*, fn. 27, p. 185.

Gutiérrez finds in the Book of Job. Job chooses to argue with God in an attempt to understand and, therefore, be able to control his destiny. Thus, throughout Gutiérrez's writings, there are continual references to God working through man to create history - and ultimately Gutiérrez looks beyond Job with a view toward a history of salvation through Christ:

The eschatological promises are being fulfilled throughout history, but this does not mean that they can be identified clearly and completely with one or another social reality; their liberating effect goes far beyond the foreseeable future and opens up new and unsuspected possibilities. The complete encounter with the Lord will mark an end to history, but it will take place in history. Thus we must acknowledge historical events in all their concreteness and significance, but we are also led to a permanent detachment.³¹

Consequently Gutiérrez interprets scripture and theological doctrine from within a new intellectual lineage: part Hegelian and part Marxism.

Gutiérrez relies extensively on Marx's ideas on 'class struggle'. Marx argues that it is the capitalist system as a whole which is evil, not just the willful corruption of a few individuals. For example, Marx's concept of 'class struggle', in which the workers and owners, or the proletariat and the bourgeoisie are in constant conflict - as oppressed and oppressor - is exemplified in Latin America. And even if a few in power make an effort to rectify the imbalances, the very nature of the system will impede any progress. 'For the [capitalist] system to 'work', profits have to assume priority

³¹ *Theology*, p. 97.

over persons'.³² If everyone is to be treated equally, then, the system must be changed. In *A Theology of Liberation*, Gutiérrez states:

[C]ontemporary theology does in fact find itself in direct and fruitful confrontation with Marxism, and it is to a large extent due to Marxism's influence that theological thought, searching for its own sources, has begun to reflect on the meaning of the transformation of this world and human action in history. Further, this confrontation helps theology to perceive what its efforts at understanding the faith receive from the historical praxis of humankind in history as well as what its own reflection might mean for the transformation of the world.³³

Marx's championship of the oppressed and disenfranchised classes is not new; he was restating concepts of social justice, which may be found in the Bible as far back as Isaiah. Thus when Gutiérrez reads Luke:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives
and recovering the sight of the blind,
to set at liberty those who are oppressed...(Luke
4:18)

he finds in his Christian faith an affirmation of some of Marx's revolutionary ideas. Likewise when the gospel calls for a 'new heaven and a new earth', this must mean a new order in which the poor are raised up - 'those of low degree are exalted' - (words attributed to Mary in the Magnificat, Lk. 1:46-53). Gutiérrez states:

What happens is that we can't be with the poor of Latin America without calling upon social analysis using terms

³² Brown, (1980), p. 37.

³³ *Theology*, p. 8.

like injustice, exploitation, exploiting class and class struggle to explain what is happening. To use certain notions to explain a reality does not mean agreeing with the determined [sic: determinist?] philosophical positions postulated by Marxism.³⁴

Marxism, then for Gutiérrez, is not a world-view but an analytical tool, which liberation theologians use as another system of thought to explain important guidelines for human rationality.

In defense of Gutiérrez, and other liberation theologians who have been labeled as 'communists' because of their use of Marxist ideas, Brown writes:

There is a radical side to the Christian tradition that has been submerged for centuries and also long antedated Marx. Theologians in the early centuries affirmed, as Gustavo reminds us, 'that if persons are in extreme need, they have the right to take from the riches of others what they themselves need. This is a very revolutionary attitude'. And he also reminds us, 'This is a classical, not a Marxist idea'.

So Gustavo reads Marx, applies Marx, criticizes Marx, and teaches Marx, especially in terms of what Latin Americans might learn from him for carrying on a 'gospel-inspired' Christian struggle.³⁵

This revolutionary attitude has been accused of encouraging violence, but Gutiérrez points out that in Latin America the situation is already violent. He distinguishes three kinds of violence in Latin America:³⁶

³⁴ Gutiérrez quoted in 'Gustavo Gutiérrez', Agostin Bono, *National Catholic Reporter*, 15 February 1977, p. 17.

³⁵ Brown (1980), p. 38.

³⁶ It is a curious fact that as we survey Gutiérrez's writings he, without fail, divides anything he categorizes into threes. Perhaps this is attributable again to the influence of Hegel.

The first is the *institutional violence* of the present social order; the second, the *repressive violence* which defends the first, keeping in power the ruling regimes; and the third, *counter-violence*. To me counter-violence is the least of the evils.³⁷

While Gutiérrez wishes to bring about change by peaceful means, counter-violence is sometimes the only recourse for those suffering the repressive violence prevalent in Latin America. He does not call for violent revolution, but he does call for revolution. Whether it is violent or peaceful is a decision not made by Gutiérrez and others of like mind, who insist on human rights, but by those in power. If they continue to abuse segments of the population then that population must insist on their God-given rights.

While always a moderate among liberation theologians, Gutiérrez has recently distanced himself from Marxism. The works published in the 1980's show little evidence of Marxism (*We Drink from Our Own Wells: The Spiritual Journey of a People* (1983) or *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent* (1986). In *The Truth Shall Make You Free: Confrontations* (1990) there is an essay written in 1984, 'Theology and the Social Sciences', which explains why some of the tools of Marxist thought are useful but the ideology as a whole is unacceptable to any religious believer. In a recent interview with Arthur McGovern he says: 'Socialism is not an essential of liberation theology; one can support liberation

³⁷ Gutiérrez, 'Terrorism, Liberation, and Sexuality', in *The Witness*, April, 1977, p. 10.

altar. First go and make your peace with your brother, and only then come back and offer your gift (Matt. 5:23-24).

Torres interprets this passage to mean that, if there is a division between people (as between the poor and the rich), they are disqualified for participating in the worship of the Lord, the practice of which should establish a profound community among persons. Gutiérrez quotes Torres with approval and sadness on the occasion when the priest asked to be relieved of his 'clerical duties' because: 'The Christian community cannot offer the sacrifice in an authentic form if it has not first fulfilled in an effective manner the precept of "love thy neighbor".'⁴¹ And 'The Catholic who is not a revolutionary is living in mortal sin'.⁴² Torres eventually joined the guerrilla forces and was killed soon afterwards. The last years and death of Torres had a lasting impact on Gutiérrez who mourned the loss of a school friend he had studied with for two years in Louvain and the waste of a talent which he felt would have been more effective fighting with a pen - a choice that Gutiérrez himself has made.

Another man to be martyred (1980) for his social and political views was Archbishop Oscar Romero of San Salvador, El Salvador, a man who was appointed Archbishop because of his conservatism and became an activist because of the human

⁴¹ *Theology*, p. 149 & p. 247, fn. 31.

⁴² John Gerassi, *Revolutionary Priest: The Complete Writings and Messages of Camilo Torres*, New York: 1971, p. xiii.

suffering he encountered in the course of his ministry in El Salvador. Gutiérrez believes that Romero's murder was a milestone for the Latin American Church:

He died - they killed him - for bearing witness to the God of life and to his predilection for the poor and the oppressed. It was because he believed in this God that he uttered an anguished, demanding cry to the Salvadorean army: 'In the name of God and of this suffering people whose wailing mounts daily to heaven, I ask and beseech you, I order you; stop the repression!' The next evening his blood sealed the covenant he had made with God, with his people, and with his church. Martyrdom (in the broad sense of the term) is the final accomplishment of life; in this case, it was a concrete gesture toward the poor and thereby an utterly free encounter with the Lord.⁴³

The martyrs, whose testimonies have spoken eloquently of their faith, Gutiérrez believes have not died in vain; their outrageous deaths have increased the fervor in the belief of the righteousness of liberation theology's cause.⁴⁴

Bartolomé de Las Casas

Undergirding all of Gutiérrez's belief that God has a predilection for the weak and underprivileged is his reading of the Bible and in particular his exegesis of the Book of Job. He affirms:

The entire Bible, beginning with the story of Cain and Abel, mirrors God's predilection for the weak and abused of human history. This preference brings out the

⁴³ *Theology*, p. xliii.

⁴⁴ For a summary of the major activities and repression against the church activists cf. Jean Luis Segundo, *Theology and Church: A Response to Cardinal Ratzinger and A Warning to the Whole Church*, trans. John W. Dierksmeir, Minneapolis: 1984, & Smith, pp. 192-201.

gratuitous or unmerited character of God's love. The same revelation is given in the evangelical Beatitudes, for they tell us with the utmost simplicity that God's predilection for the poor, the hungry, and the suffering is based on God's unmerited goodness to us.⁴⁵

The discovery of a historical justification for his cause, and in consequence ignoring damaging texts, is crucial to Gutiérrez's interpretation of the Bible.⁴⁶ He views the Bible as witness to God's working in history through the action of his creatures. Also, in the current situation in Latin America, he believes it is important to have a better understanding of his country's past history. For this understanding he turns to the Latin American missionaries of the sixteenth century whose social activism helped Gutiérrez to realize he is not walking this path of faith alone:

These men and women try to see clearly amid the changes of history and, in many cases, try to oppose the interests of the powerful. I am thinking here of the witness given by many sixteenth-century missionaries who did not forget the demands of the kingdom of life when they were faced with the cruel exploitation and death being inflicted on the Amerindians. Among those missionaries, Bartolomé de Las Casas was perhaps the one who saw most deeply into the situation and best articulated a theological reflection based on it. He was, however, only *primus inter pares*, for he had many companions who shared his commitment and his hope. The witness of all those persons should feed the life of the Christian community today, for it is one tributary of the great ecclesial tradition within which every sound theology is located.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ *Theology*, p. xxvii.

⁴⁶ Thus Gutiérrez would ignore such passages as Gen. 9:18-27 in which Noah banishes Canaan for witnessing his nakedness because ultimately these verses are used as a proof text for slavery.

⁴⁷ *Theology*, p. xxxv.

Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566) has had a profound affect on shaping Gutiérrez's thought.⁴⁸ Las Casas, a Spanish bishop, took the side of the Amerindians against the *conquistadors*. He believed that one's salvation was intimately linked with his or her practice of social justice. Thus the Spaniards had no justification for killing the infidel Indians who refused to convert to Christianity. 'In the face of this widespread injustice, Las Casas made a devastating response: it is better to be "a live Indian, even though infidel," than "a dead Indian, even though Christian".'⁴⁹

The Theology of Gustavo Gutiérrez

Gutiérrez, as a Catholic priest, must continually reckon with how to talk about God to 'nonpersons':

The question is not how we are to talk about God in a world come of age, but how we are to tell people who are scarcely human that God is love and that God's love makes us one family?⁵⁰

Consequently, Gutiérrez's starting point for his exegesis of the Book of Job is the question: 'How are we to talk about God who is revealed as love in a situation characterized by

⁴⁸ Gutiérrez is currently writing a history of Bartolomé de Las Casas.

⁴⁹ Quoted in Brown, (1980), p. 24.

⁵⁰ Quoted in *The Emergent Gospel: Theology from the Developing World*, eds. Sergio Torres & Virginia Fabella, London: 1978, p. 241.

poverty and oppression?'⁵¹ For him the classic question is: what is the relationship between faith and human existence, social reality, and political action? His response is, that by giving preference to the poor while maintaining the universality of God's love, he is honouring his faith and the situation of the poor.

Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation* has become the set text for any discussion on liberation theology. Written first in 1968, and then re-issued twenty years later with a new forward by the author, Gutiérrez believes the book's issues are just as important today as when they were first expressed. He, however, acknowledges that he has expanded his vision considerably since he wrote *A Theology of Liberation*. First, by living in the barrios and sharing in the world of the poor, his knowledge of their plight is less theoretical and more profound. Second, he has come to realize that afflicted peoples are not only the poor in Latin America, but also individuals who experience other forms of racism and 'machismo' which take their toll among the rest of the world's populations.⁵² The premise of his book, however, remains the

⁵¹ Gutiérrez, *On Job*, p. xiv.

⁵² Brown recalls that at a conference in Detroit, 'Theology in the Americas', August 1975, the majority of Latin American liberation theologians attended including Gutiérrez. There they encountered North American feminists. 'In Detroit, the Latin Americans were as macho as anyone, not aware of the problem of the liberation of women. It was the North American women who really put the question to them for the first time. So they learned something about a whole arena of oppression in their own societies that hadn't occurred to them before. And

same, but now rather than just the poor of Latin America it belongs to the oppressed world-wide.⁵³

Gutiérrez distinguishes 'three levels or dimensions of liberation in Christ...'. First, there is liberation from unjust social situations caused by political and economic oppression. Second, there is an existential need to reinterpret history in order to understand that 'we live with profound inner freedom in the face of every kind of servitude, and this is the second dimension or level of freedom'. Finally, there is liberation from sin which frees us from the severest form of servitude. Sin causes a break in friendship from God and from other human beings:

and therefore cannot be eradicated except by the unmerited redemptive love of the Lord whom we receive by faith and communion with one another. Theological analysis (and not social or philosophical analysis) leads one to the position that only liberation from sin gets to the very source of social injustice and other forms of human oppression and reconciles us with God and our fellow human beings.⁵⁴

GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ AND THE BOOK OF JOB

So there is a 'wager.' But it is on a deeper level than Pascal's famous intellectual wager. Pascal addressed the 'nonbelievers' (the 'winners' in history who have time for abstract speculation), whereas Job addresses the 'nonpersons' (the 'losers' in history for whom nothing remains)....The

if you look at where they stand today on this same issue, the change is unbelievable'. Quoted from a 1988 interview of Gutiérrez by Smith, Brown, (1980) p. 208.

⁵³ Cf. 'Introduction: Expanding the View', *Theology*.

⁵⁴ *Theology*, p. xxxviii.

confirmation for the cause of social justice. If his readers are surprised by his use of the Book, he suggests it is because they have failed to grasp the connection between the word of God and Christian life.⁵⁶ He argues:

Not only is it legitimate in principle to read the Bible from the standpoint of our deepest and most pressing concerns; this has also in fact been the practice of Christian community throughout its history. But this principle and this fact must not make us forget something I have often said because I am deeply convinced of it: although it is true that we read the Bible, it is also true that the Bible reads us and speaks to us. As the Letter to the Hebrews says... 'The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart' (4:12).⁵⁷

Historical, political liberation will help to bring about the growth of the Kingdom, but it is not *the coming* of the Kingdom, a distinction that Gutiérrez makes clearly. This alignment with the poor entails a conversion, a commitment to one's neighbor:

the oppressed person, the exploited social class, the despised ethnic group, the dominated country.... To be converted is to know and experience the fact that, contrary to the laws of physics, we can stand straight, according to the Gospel, only when our center of gravity is outside ourselves.⁵⁸

The implication from this premise is that to reach the

⁵⁶ The standard Old Testament proof-text for liberation theologians is the story of the Exodus from Egypt, which Gutiérrez uses as well (cf. *Theology*, pp. 86-92), but not as extensively as he uses the Book of Job. I discuss the problems with the story of Exodus and liberation theology at the end of this chapter.

⁵⁷ *On Job*, pp. xvii-xviii.

⁵⁸ *Theology*, p. 118.

gratuitous love of God one must go through humankind, one must express a gratuitous, universal love for all humankind through saving acts within history. These acts realized will help to constitute the coming of the Kingdom.

Before one can engage in theology as critical reflection on praxis, Gutiérrez states, one must first make a commitment to the poor.⁵⁹ This focus on the poor is of primary importance and without it all subsequent theologizing is insubstantial. In *A Theology of Liberation*, he writes:

All the political theologies, the theologies of hope, of revolution, and of liberation, are not worth one act of genuine solidarity with exploited social classes. They are not worth one act of faith, love, and hope, committed - in one way or another - in active participation to liberate humankind from everything that dehumanizes it and prevents it from living according to the will of God.⁶⁰

No matter what theology is preached all of it is meaningless if the praxis is not devoted to alleviating the suffering of the nonperson.

When acting or speaking on behalf of the poor, of the afflicted, Gutiérrez does not rely on a sanitized image derived from a seminarian's library or a theological classroom discussion. His image is of Ayacucho. Ayacucho is a city in Peru about two hundred miles southeast of Lima. Like most inhabitants of Peru, the people there not only are desperately

⁵⁹ Gutiérrez often uses the word 'praxis' which has a Marxist connotation that connotes an intertwining of theory and action.

⁶⁰ *Theology*, p. 174.

poor but are also the victims of ongoing military and economic repression. Between 1980 and 1985 guerilla attacks were responsible for more than eight thousand deaths. The area is dotted with common graves. Ayacucho, in the local dialect Quechuan, means 'corner of the dead'.⁶¹ The theme of Ayacucho is the basso profundo which threads its way through all of Gutiérrez's work. In his book, *On Job: God-Talk and the Suffering of the Innocent*, he dedicates it first to his parents and then:

To the people of Ayacucho who,
like Job,
suffer unjustly and cry out
to the God of life.

In a complaint reminiscent of Irving Greenberg's query: How can one do theology with the image of the Holocaust's burning children present?⁶² Gutiérrez asks:

How are we to do theology while Ayacucho lasts? How are we to speak of the God of life when cruel murder on a massive scale goes on in 'the corner of the dead'? How are we to preach the love of God amid such profound contempt for human life? How are we to proclaim the resurrection of the Lord where death reigns, and

⁶¹ Cf. Robert McAfee Brown, *Gustavo Gutiérrez*, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1990, p. xxiii.

⁶² Greenberg believes that, as a result of the Holocaust, no theology or theodicy may be supported if it cannot be presented in the presence of burning children. Positive action is the only human criterion for validity, not a validation of God but of goodness. Greenberg writes: 'To talk of love and a God who cares in the presence of the burning children is obscene and incredible; to leap in and pull a child out of a pit, to clean its face and heal its body, is to make the most powerful statement - the only statement that counts'. Irving Greenberg, 'Cloud of Smoke, Pillar of Fire', in *Auschwitz: Beginning of a New Era?*, ed. Eva Fleischner, KATV, 1977, pp. 41-42.

especially the death of children, women, the poor, indigenes, and the 'unimportant' members of our society?⁶³

Gutiérrez uses the testimony of Job to help answer these difficult questions.⁶⁴

He is aware that his interpretation of the Book of Job is not the traditional one.⁶⁵ He recognizes that methodology is central to academic interpretation and is cognizant that his methodology is not from the main stream of theological exegesis. In *On Job* his methodology focuses on spirituality and testimony but of a kind peculiar to his life-experience; therefore he acknowledges that his work 'raises the question of theological method'.⁶⁶ Yet his discourse on the Book of Job is in an exegetical format descended from academic tradition.

Taking the premise that the Christian church must be able

⁶³ Gustavo Gutiérrez, quoted in Brown, p. xxiii. While Gutiérrez is focusing on the poor in Peru, his concern would not exclude the abused from other continents; each non-person beckons to the liberation theologian.

⁶⁴ Besides his book *On Job*, Gutiérrez has a chapter on Job in his recent work *The God of Life*, trans. Matthew J. O'Connell, London: 1991, chap. VIII. This book asks the question: How can the poor believe in the God of life? and responds with other questions and answers based on Scripture, but Job is the only scripture which has an entire chapter devoted to it, primarily the chapter is a synopsis of his book *On Job*.

⁶⁵ Gutiérrez seems to have read all the standard commentaries and even makes references to such early texts as Gregory the Great's *Moralia on Job*.

⁶⁶ Gutiérrez, quoted in Elsa Tamez, *Against Machismo*, Oak Park, 1987: p. 48.

to speak of a loving God in the face of unwarranted suffering, Gutiérrez applies this concept to what he conceives as the central issue of the Book of Job: 'speaking ill' and 'speaking well' of God:⁶⁷

How are human beings to find a language applicable to God in the midst of innocent suffering? This question, with all its implications for our understanding of the justice and unmerited generosity of God, is the great theme of the Book of Job. Throughout the work Job will stubbornly insist on his innocence. How, then, is a human being to speak of God and to God in the situation Job must endure?⁶⁸

How Job responds, and how he speaks to God over the course of the Book, is paramount to Gutiérrez's exegesis. The fact that Job 'persists in his integrity still' in spite of his trials and tribulations indicates to Gutiérrez that Job's faith is a 'disinterested faith', a faith which is not based on reward. Job does not look inward because of his suffering, which is the normal human reaction, but focuses outward in solidarity with others who also suffer. Gutiérrez believes the point the author wished to emphasize was that 'disinterested religion alone is true religion'.⁶⁹ Thus, the Book is about how to speak to God in the face of unwarranted suffering; for the believer this is **the problem**.⁷⁰ 'The problem of speaking

⁶⁷ Cf. *On Job*, p. 3.

⁶⁸ *On Job*, p. 12.

⁶⁹ *On Job*, p. 5.

⁷⁰ Muriel Spark uses this conundrum for the title to her novel based on the Book of Job. *The Only Problem*, New York: 1984.

correctly about God amid suffering is not limited to the case of Job, but is a challenge to every believer.'⁷¹ If the element of injustice is combined with this suffering, then any concept of God's love becomes difficult to endorse. The discourse, then, becomes a radical questioning of God which Gutiérrez is able to understand but which he avoids. The Book of Job becomes a guide for the proper discourse with God and to God.

Gutiérrez (and as we shall see Elie Wiesel) has felt the impact of the existential writings of Albert Camus, whose work, as that of a protest atheist, continually challenges belief in a loving God. Gutiérrez writes:

In recent times, few have voiced the second of these difficulties [the view of God's love combined with unwarranted suffering] as austere and persistently as Albert Camus. According to Camus, there is no place for God in a world so pervaded by the suffering of the innocent. In *The Plague*, in which the presence of evil in the world is the key to interpreting everything, Camus reports one of his characters [Fr. Paneloux] saying, in a sermon:

Truth to tell, nothing was more important on earth than a child's suffering, the horror it inspires in us, and the reasons we must find to account for it. In other manifestations of life God made things easy for us and, thus far, our religion had no merit. But in this respect He put us, so to speak, with our backs to the wall. Indeed, we were all up against the wall that plague had built around us, and in its lethal shadow we must work out our salvation.⁷²

In this sermon the Jesuit, Fr. Paneloux, is negating his previous sermon in which he has argued that the town of Oran

⁷¹ *On Job*, p. 11.

⁷² *On Job*, p. 13.

must deserve the plague and those who died from the plague, likewise, were guilty of some sin. It is not until later, when an innocent child dies, that the priest understands his belief in retributive justice is fallacious. Like Pascal, Fr. Paneloux adjures that in the face of the suffering of the innocent: 'My brothers, a time of testing has come for us all. We must believe everything or deny everything. And who among you, I ask, would dare to deny everything'?⁷³

Gutiérrez continues to examine Camus's search for a rationale of a God who allows the innocent to suffer, a God who is deaf and silent in spite of gross injustices to his creatures.⁷⁴ Gutiérrez admits that the problem remains for Camus, the problem remains for everyone; however:

if believers caught in this situation are able to live their faith disinterestedly and find language suitable for speaking of God, then human beings can accept the God of the Bible without being unfaithful to themselves. This is the wager on which the Book of Job is built and to which the poet tries to respond.⁷⁵

Camus was violently disturbed by the death of the children. Gutiérrez seems to explicitly ignore the problem of the gratuitous death of Job's children.

Job Experiences Two Major Shifts in His Point of View

According to Gutiérrez, Job experiences two major shifts

⁷³ Camus, *The Plague*, pp. 201-202.

⁷⁴ Cf. *On Job*, pp. 13-15.

⁷⁵ *On Job*, p. 14.

in his point of view in learning the correct way to speak to God. His arguments with his friends first cause him to broaden his perspective from his own personal suffering to include the suffering and injustice which plague the lives of the poor. As I have shown in the chapter on the Book of Job, this is not the usual interpretation, in which Job only becomes more and more motivated to ascertain his guilt as his comforters become more and more insistent on his guilt. Gutiérrez suggests the Voice from the Whirlwind causes Job's second shift: 'now [Job] understands that the world of justice must be located within the broad but demanding horizon of freedom that is formed by the gratuitousness of God's love.'⁷⁶ Consequently, Job learns how to speak properly to and about God; likewise it is important for all God's creatures to make the same attempt, but this attempt has many levels:

Talk about God presupposes and, at the same time, leads to a living encounter with God in specific historical circumstances. It requires, therefore, that we discover the features of Christ in the sometimes disfigured faces of the poor of this world. This discovery will not be made apart from concrete gestures of solidarity with our brothers and sisters who are wretched, abandoned, and deprived.

But the mystery of God is not exhausted by its historical embodiment. The Apostle Paul tells us: 'Now we see in a mirror dimly, but then face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood' (1 Cor. 13:12). In this book [*On Job*] I am looking in a mirror and accepting the limitations the mirror imposes. These pages are inspired by the hope that a time will come when shadows and reflections disappear and we shall see face to face,

⁷⁶ *On Job*, p. 16.

knowing as we are in turn known.⁷⁷

Thus Gutiérrez's praxis will be with and for the misbegotten now, but he acknowledges that he can only envision what he is doing 'through a glass darkly', and it remains for God in the future to allow him/us to see more clearly.

The first issue which broadens Job's perspective, then, is the problem of retributive justice. There is an implied approbation for retributive justice in certain versions of Christianity which regard wealth as God's reward for honest hard work and poverty as God's punishment for the lazy and sinful. 'It is, moreover, a convenient and soothing doctrine for those who have great worldly possessions, and it promotes resignation and a sense of guilt in those who lack possessions'.⁷⁸ Thus, Gutiérrez remarks that the first major shift in Job's point of view arises when he refuses to accept the adamant arguments for retributive justice put forth by the friends. Job begins to understand that his own narrow experience of suffering is not what is at stake. The real issue is the suffering and injustice which plague the lives of all the poor. This suffering and inequality is caused by the wicked who are enemies of the poor and rejecters of God. Gutiérrez describes chapter 24:2-14 as 'the most radical and cruel description of the wretchedness of the poor that is to be found in the Bible, and [it is] also...a harsh indictment

⁷⁷ On Job, p. 17.

⁷⁸ On Job, p. 22.

of the powerful who rob and oppress the poor':⁷⁹

The wicked removed landmarks;
 they seize flocks and pasture them.
 They drive away the donkey of the orphan;
 they take the widow's ox for a pledge.
 They thrust the needy off the road;
 the poor of the earth all hide themselves.
 Like wild asses in the desert they go out to their
 toil,
 scavenging in the wasteland food for their young.
 They reap in a field not their own
 and they glean in the vineyard of the wicked.
 They lie all night naked, without clothing,
 and have no covering in the cold.
 They are wet with the rain of the mountains,
 and cling to the rock for want of shelter.

There are those who snatch the orphan child
 from the breast,
 and take as pledge the infant of the poor.
 They go about naked without any clothing;
 though hungry they carry the sheaves;
 between their terraces they press out oil;
 they tread the wine presses, but suffer thirst.
 From the city the dying groan,
 and the throat of the wounded cries for help;
 yet God pays no attention to their prayer.

There are those who rebel against the light,
 who are not acquainted with its ways,
 and do not stay in its paths.
 The murderer rises at dusk to kill the poor and
 needy
 and in the night is like a thief.

Curiously, in most Joban exegesis, I find these passages are ignored with the exception Job's accusation that God pays no attention to the prayers of the needy. Gutiérrez notes, however, that Job is describing **concrete** situations of the poor caused, not by destiny, but by the perfidy of those who prey on the poor. When Job realizes his suffering is part of a greater injustice, he raises his cry on behalf of his fellow

⁷⁹ On Job, p. 32.

sufferers as well as himself. The above interpretation, I believe, is peculiar to Gutiérrez. The believer in God (in this case Job) must help to lighten the burdens of the afflicted and stand in 'solidarity with them'.

In support of his interpretation, Gutiérrez finds in the Hebrew Bible many injunctions to care for the poor, the orphan, and the widow. The arguments in the Book of Job are not unique.⁸⁰ Isaiah asks:

Ah, you who make iniquitous decrees,
 who write oppressive statutes,
 to turn aside the needy from justice
 and to rob the poor of my people of their right,
 that widows may be your spoil
 and that you may make the orphans your prey!
 What will you do on the day of punishment?
 (Is.10:1-3a)

Isaiah, of course, is employing the same argument which Job's comforters represent: the wicked will be punished for their iniquity. Eliphaz first mentions the sinfulness of humanity in general (chap. 4), and then that sin deserves punishment (chap. 15), and finally invents a list of Job's iniquities:

Is it for your piety that he reproves you,
 and enters into judgment with you?
 Is not your wickedness great?
 There is no end to your iniquities.
 For you have exacted pledges from your family
 for no reason,

⁸⁰ In the prophets alone: 'Fraudulent commerce and exploitation are condemned (Hos. 12:8; Amos 8:5; Mic. 6:10-11; Isa. 3:14; Jer. 5:27; 6:12), as well as the hoarding of lands (Mic. 2:1-3; Ezek. 22:29; Hab. 2:5-6), dishonest courts (Amos 5:7; Jer. 22:13-17; Mic. 3:9-11; Isa. 5:23, 10:1-2), the violence of the ruling class (2 Kings 23:30, 35; Amos 4:1; Mic. 3:1-2; 6:12; Jer. 22:13-17), slavery (Neh. 5:1-5; Amos 5:26; 8:6), unjust taxes (Amos 4:1; 5:11-12), and unjust functionaries (Amos 5:7; Jer. 5:28)'. *Theology*, p. 167.

and stripped the naked of their clothing.
 You have given no water to the weary to drink,
 and you have withheld bread from the hungry.
 The powerful possess the land,
 and the favored live in it.
 You have sent widows away empty-handed,
 and the arms of the orphan you have crushed.
 Therefore snares are around you,
 and the sudden terror overwhelms you (22:5-10).

Gutiérrez finds the details of Eliphaz's list significant:

'The emphasis is not on public worship: Was not Job a religious man? Eliphaz takes a clearly prophetic stance and finds fault with Job's behavior vis-à-vis the poor'.⁸¹ Thus, while Job is innocent of the accusations of his friends, Gutiérrez suggests, with a bit of special pleading not found in 'standard exegesis', that the comforters' very arguments have helped Job to understand better the plight of the poor and to work to set them free:

His friend's [in this case Eliphaz] argument will help Job to launch a very interesting process in which his individual situation becomes less and less the focus of the debate. He will broaden his perspective to include the sufferings and injustices to which the poor fall victim....This broadening of outlook will in turn enable him to develop the rudiments of a new way of talking about God.⁸²

Gutiérrez argues that Job now develops the notion of his obligation to care for the poor, and much of Job's concluding monologue (chap. 29-31) is his affirmation of his righteousness toward the poor and his faithful adherence to an ethical code. Gutiérrez avows that: 'Job's life bears witness

⁸¹ *On Job*, p. 35.

⁸² *On Job*, p. 37.

to his solidarity with the poor and the helpless':⁸³

Surely one does not turn against the needy
when in disaster they cry for help.
Did I not weep for those whose day was hard?
Was not my soul grieved for the poor? (30:24-25)

Likewise, Job is the defender of the poor. Gutiérrez turns to parts of chapter 31, the Code of Honour, to support his position.

If I have withheld anything that the poor desired,
or have caused the eyes of the widow to fail,
or have eaten my morsel alone,
and the orphan has not eaten from it -
for from my youth I reared the orphan like a father,
and from his mother's womb I have guided him -⁸⁴
if I have seen anyone perish for lack of clothing,
or a poor person without a covering,
whose loins have not blessed me,
and who was not warmed with the fleece of my
sheep;
if I have raised my hand against the orphan,
because I saw I had supporters at the gate;
then let my shoulder blade fall from my shoulder,
and let my arm be broken from its socket
(31:16-22).

Job, in this monologue presents himself as upright and in 'neighborly solidarity with the oppressed and the dispossessed'.⁸⁵ He has provided counsel, shelter, food, and clothing for the orphan and other needy, as well as justice for all. These assertions are usually interpreted as Job's justification of his innocence. They are arguments for his

⁸³ On Job, p. 40.

⁸⁴ Verse 18 is here translated not from the RSV but from the author's Spanish Bible. Gutiérrez notes the difficulty of this passage and cites several other renderings in fn.7, p. 117.

⁸⁵ On Job, p. 42.

own self-righteousness and not for proving his solidarity with the poor. Gutiérrez notes that this code of ethics is found in other parts of the Bible, which fact substantiates his premise that God is on the side of the poor. 'He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord' (Prov. 19:17). 'He who oppresses a poor man insults his Maker' (Prov. 14:31).

Robert Gordis notes that chapter 31, the 'Code of a Man of Honor', is the noblest presentation of individual ethics in the pages of the Bible.⁸⁶ Gordis lists fourteen sins, transgressions that Job insists he has not committed.

1. lust (vv. 1, 2)
2. cheating in business (vv. 5, 6)
3. taking the property of others (vv. 7, 8)
4. adultery (vv. 9-12)
5. unfairness toward slaves in court (vv. 13-15)
6. callousness toward the resident poor (vv. 16-18)
7. lack of pity for the wayfarer (vv. 19, 20)
8. perversion of the just claims of the widow and the orphan (vv. 21-23)
9. love of gold and confidence in wealth (vv. 24-25)
10. the worship of the sun and the moon (vv. 26-28)
11. joy in the calamity of his foes (vv. 29-31)
12. failure to practice hospitality (v. 32)
13. concealing his sins because of fear of public opinion (vv. 33, 34)
14. the expropriation of land of others within the letter

⁸⁶ Léon Epstein, *Social Justice in the Ancient Near East and the People of the Bible*, trans. John Bowdin, London: 1986, discusses the various currents of social justice which have been identified and labeled in the Bible. He mentions the Book of Job only briefly: 'Job, whose psychology is...typically Israelite, accepts the loss of all to which he was most attached, but what he will never be is separated from is justice' (p. 66). In this context, of course, this is justice for Job. Epstein's chapter on 'Justice in the Old Testament and the Kindred Approach of Historical Materialism' (pp. 68-82) is a survey of other's work in regard to the prophets and their advocacy of the struggle for the power of Yahweh and social justice.

of the law (vv. 38-40)⁸⁷

As Gordis remarks, all the sins enumerated here are concerned with inner attitudes, the sins of thoughts and feelings, and not such gross crimes as murder and theft which are punishable by law.⁸⁸ The above numbers 5-8, as Gutiérrez has noted, fit into his category of concern for the misbegotten.

Because Job regards himself as upright, because 'he has cultivated a neighborly solidarity with the oppressed and dispossessed'⁸⁹ he cannot understand why he has been subjected to unjust suffering. Just before the end of his final speech he pleads:

Oh, that I had one to hear me!
(Here is my signature! let the Almighty answer
me!) (31:35a)

The response to Job's plea at this point are the speeches of Elihu. Some have argued that he is the mouthpiece of Yahweh, that Elihu is a play on Eliyahu (Elija) thus a forerunner of the Lord.⁹⁰ Others find him redundant, believing Elihu is arguing again for the traditional, but now discredited view of retributive justice.⁹¹ Gutiérrez states:

⁸⁷ Gordis, (1978), p. 542.

⁸⁸ Item 10 is the only ritual element listed, the worship of heavenly bodies. 'Such an act is tantamount to the denial of the living God, which leads to the surrender of the ethical law emanating from Him'. (Gordis, (1978), p. 542)

⁸⁹ Gutiérrez, *On Job*, p. 42.

⁹⁰ Gordis, (1965), pp. 104-16. Gordis has many more arguments in praise of Elihu.

⁹¹ Pope, pp. LXXIX-LXXX.

Elihu's contribution to the debate is important and very much his own. God uses different modes of self-manifestation, and suffering can be one of them. (Eliphaz had earlier suggested this theme 5:17-18). In view of Job's impatience, Elihu warns him of the danger of being deaf to God. Attention is needed, for God may speak in unexpected ways. Misfortune is not always a punishment, as the friends and even Job himself suppose; it can also have a pedagogical purpose.⁹²

For Gutiérrez, then, what Elihu has to say is important. He concurs that suffering will often make one more prone to hear the word of God. Thus, by their affliction, the poor are closer to the Divine.

Not only does Elihu argue for pedagogy but he affirms also that God favors the oppressed and is not impressed by the mighty:

He shatters the mighty without investigation,
and sets others in their place.
Thus, knowing their works,
he overturns them in the night and they are
crushed.
He strikes them for their wickedness
while others look on,
because they turned aside from following him,
and had no regard for any of his ways,
so that they caused the cry of the poor to come to
him,
and he heard the cry of the afflicted - (34:24-28)

Gutiérrez, unlike most commentators on Elihu, finds that the relationship of God and the poor is the very heart of [Elihu's] prophetic message. The Lord is ever watchful and ready to hear the voice of the poor, even though attentiveness to them may at times take unobtrusive forms.⁹³

Elihu's arguments have not completely denied retributive

⁹² On *Job*, pp. 45-46.

⁹³ On *Job*, p. 47.

justice, but they do prepare the listener for the Voice from the Whirlwind and what Gutiérrez suggests is the author's ultimate answer to Job's question.⁹⁴

At this point Gutiérrez finds that Job has developed a greater understanding of how to speak to God. He has abandoned his personal problems in favor of a commitment to the poor:

This realization, which is partially attained by Elihu, gives Job a way of talking about God on the basis of his experience of suffering and injustice. To go out of himself and help other sufferers (without waiting until his own problems are first resolved) is to find a way to God. The reason for his own unjust situation is a question that still gnaws at him, but he now begins to see that he may not let it be an obstacle to immediate commitment to the poor. The needs of others cannot be left in abeyance until everything has become clear.⁹⁵

Remembering that the central question in the Book of Job for Gutiérrez is: 'How do we talk to God in view of the suffering of the innocent?' Job has now learned half of that answer and will learn the other half when the voice from the tempest speaks. Gutiérrez acknowledges that Job at times has clearly come close to blasphemy; however, what has driven him to this has been the intolerable arguments of his friends. Verses such as 9:15-24 criticize God for the apparent callous way in which he acts in the world. Job protests:

Though I am innocent, my own mouth would condemn me;
though I am blameless, he would prove me perverse.
I am blameless; I do not know myself;
I loathe my life.

⁹⁴ On *Job*, pp. 46-47.

⁹⁵ On *Job*, p. 48.

It is all one; therefore I say,
 he destroys both the blameless and the wicked.
 When disaster brings sudden death,
 he mocks at the calamity of the innocent.
 The earth is given into the hands of the wicked;
 he covers the eyes of its judges -
 if it is not he, who is it then? (9:20-24)

These bold words occur not only in the Book of Job, Gutiérrez notes, but such works as Psalm 73 and Lamentations 3:1-9 also express the same sentiments - the prosperity of the wicked and the plight of the innocent.

As Job argues, the idea of an arbiter becomes more and more appealing to him. He becomes less acerbic in his appeal to God and more interested in trying his case before the Lord. Gutiérrez notes that to do this Job, representing every innocent sufferer, finds he must interact with two different aspects of God:

Job's cry expresses an anguished but sure hope that comes to him from a profound insight - namely, that God is not to be pigeonholed in the theological categories of his friends. It might almost be said that Job, as it were, splits God in two and produces a God who is a judge and a God who will defend him at that supreme moment; a God whom he experiences as almost an enemy but whom he knows at the same time to be truly a friend. He...accuse[s] God of persecuting him (19:21-22), but at the same time he knows that God is just and does not want human beings to suffer. These are two sides of the one God. This painful, dialectical approach to God is one of the most profound messages of the Book of Job.⁹⁶

That Gutiérrez focuses on the dialectical nature of God as portrayed in the Book of Job seems to be a modern cultural phenomena; however, his emphasis is on the fact that Job must demand he try his case against God before God. This

⁹⁶ On Job, p. 65.

dialectical aspect of God's nature also plays a central part in Elie Wiesel's midrash on the Book of Job. But in the work of MacLeish and Jung, what they perceive as the truly negative dialectical aspect of God becomes crucial to their use of the Book of Job.

Three times Job demands a trial before God. In 9:33-35 he demands an arbiter, in 16:18-22 he sketches the outline of a mediator. Finally in a much disputed passage he demands a living avenger, a *gō'ēl*.

I know that I have a living Avenger (*Gō'ēl*)
and that at the end he will rise up above the
dust.

After they pull my flesh from me,
and I am without my flesh, I shall see God;
I myself shall see him, and not as a stranger,
my own eyes will see him (19:25-27).⁹⁷

In the RV and some other Christian translations *gō'ēl* has been translated as Redeemer, representing Christ; Gutiérrez generally does not use the word in this meaning but goes back to the Hebrew where *gō'ēl* is an 'avenger of blood' a member of the family who is obliged to rescue either the victim or his reputation. Used in this context Gutiérrez suggests that the *gō'ēl* is Yahweh, a member of the victim's family. He writes:

The application of the name to Yahweh implies that as a result of the covenant God has become part of the family of the people. God is thus the nearest relative, the one who takes responsibility for the people, the one who rescues them and avenges them if necessary.⁹⁸

God, therefore, must be the defender of anyone who suffers an

⁹⁷ Translation from the Spanish text used by Gutiérrez.

⁹⁸ On Job, p. 64.

injustice. As a confirmation of this idea Gutiérrez cites Proverbs 23:10-11:

Do not remove an ancient landmark
or enter the field of the fatherless,
for their Redeemer is strong;
he will plead their cause against you.⁹⁹

Gutiérrez acknowledges that the interpretation of verses 19:25-27 are crucial to the interpretation of the Book of Job, and in his view Job is referring to God and not some intermediary apart from God. What appears as a conflict in Job leads to his discovery of the dialectical approach he must take when considering his relationship with Yahweh.

Gutiérrez utilizes and is comfortable with the apparent conundrum of the dialectical nature of God. Gordis suggests that the problem of interpreting God's nature lies in the

⁹⁹ The translator has used the *New Jerusalem Bible* to replace the Spanish version of Job used by Gutiérrez (*Job. Comentario teológico y literario*, L. Alonso Schökel & J. L. Sicre, Madrid: 1983), and the RSV for the other biblical quotations, unless otherwise noted in which case the translator states that the verse has been directly translated from the Spanish. I have substituted the New RSV in this thesis for all biblical passages unless otherwise noted. In the case of Proverbs 23:10-11 I have quoted the passage in *On Job* as it is written which is from the older RSV. It does not agree with the New RSV in that redeemer is not capitalized (as well as substituting orphans for the fatherless). The JB translation of Proverbs 23:11 is: 'for he who avenges them is strong/and will take up their cause against you'. The note to this passage in the JB states that the avenger is Yahweh, but he is not called the Redeemer. While Gutiérrez has stated that he has not considered *gō'ēl* in the sense of Redeemer, it seems in this case the older translation of the RSV has helped him to underscore his point.(cf. *On Job*, p. 64).

application of Western categories of logic to the Oriental spirit.¹⁰⁰ Any attempt to understand God within the confines of Western rationalism is doomed to failure; the mystery of God is too complex. Thus in the case of Job, there is no contradiction when God is called upon to defend Job against God.

The Voice from the Whirlwind

While Job has behaved with correct intent toward the poor, he has still questioned the Lord's ordering of the universe. The Voice from the Whirlwind brings about the second shift in Job's point of view. He no longer views God as an adversary but as the God of love who has a plan for his creation. The first speech from the whirlwind indicates that God, indeed, has a plan (*'ēśāh*) which the human mind is not able to grasp in order to evaluate and foresee the divine action. 'God is free'. Relying on Jean Leveque's exegesis of *'ēśāh* which concludes that the *'ēśāh* of God always refers to God's action *in history*, whether of the nations or of Israel or of individuals',¹⁰¹ Gutiérrez concludes that this government is not about the government of the *material* world but about the *plan* of action of the divine will in human history. While Job has been 'obscuring my intentions', Yahweh will

¹⁰⁰ This is discussed in greater detail in my chapter devoted exclusively to the Book of Job. Cf. Gordis, (1978), p. 527.

¹⁰¹ Leveque, *Job et Son Dieu*, vol. 2: p. 531.

seek to specify and clarify the meaning of the divine will in human history. This is what God does; the interpretation of God's words depends on keeping this purpose in mind. God's plan has its origin in the gratuitousness of creative love.¹⁰²

What may be learned from the first set of Yahweh speeches? God is not handcuffed by strictures of retributive justice.¹⁰³ He is free to exercise his plan in history in accordance with his own creative love. Love is a cause of the divine plan not an effect. This is the reverse of MacLeish's concept which is that love is the effect of human interaction and not the effect of a Divine Plan.

At the end of God's first speech, Job expresses humility but not resignation. Gutiérrez notes that Job is still aware of his own problems and needs further understanding before he can relinquish his preconceived notions of his world and himself.

The second speech reveals God's just government of his creation. He cannot be domesticated and subjected to human will but:

God will help Job - and in him all of us - to escape from his prison by showing him that he will be in the right only if he occupies the place that is properly his as a human being and a believer.¹⁰⁴

And while God is helping his creatures, he needs the help

¹⁰² On Job, p. 69.

¹⁰³ Robert Frost emphasizes this insight in *The Masque of Reason*, (New York: 1945) a play based on the '43rd chapter' of the Book of Job.

¹⁰⁴ On Job, p. 77.

of the Jobs of the world to defeat the evils therein. The plea on God's part for human help in chapter 40:9-14 is often interpreted, as noted above, as an indication of God's limited power. Gutiérrez, however, suggests that these verses are spoken by God with profound irony:

Have you an arm like God,
and can you thunder with a voice like his?
Deck yourself with majesty and dignity;
clothe yourself with glory and splendor.
Pour out the overflowings of your anger,
and look on all who are proud, and bring them low;
tread down the wicked where they stand,
Hide them all in the dust together,
bind their faces in the world below,
Then I will acknowledge to you
that your own right hand can give you victory.

Thus God is suggesting his power is limited by human freedom, and while God may desire justice he cannot impose it on his creatures:

Rather the Lord is explaining, tenderly and, as it were, shyly, that the wicked cannot simply be destroyed with a glance. God wants justice indeed, and desires that divine judgment (*mishpat*) reign in the world; but God cannot impose it, for the nature of created beings must be respected. God's power is limited by human freedom; for without freedom God's justice would not be present within history. Furthermore, precisely because human beings are free, they have the power to change their course and be converted....In other words, the all-powerful God is a 'weak' God. The mystery of divine freedom leads to the mystery of human freedom and to respect for it.¹⁰⁵

If human rational pride usurps God's place, then it leads to an elevation of the self and a denial of God.¹⁰⁶ Thus,

¹⁰⁵ On *Job*, pp. 77-78. Gutiérrez here appears to be relying on the work of Jürgen Moltmann. Cf. *The Crucified God*, trans. R.A. Wilson & John Bowden, London: 1974.

¹⁰⁶ On *Job*, p. 79.

Gutiérrez implies that misdirected human freewill is the cause of the suffering of innocents. Gutiérrez ignores the problem of suffering caused by natural disasters. Yet, just as it is important to understand that God is able to exercise his freedom, so too is it important to believe that humans may exercise their freedom. Gutiérrez suggests this is one of the lessons that Job learns:

Job's freedom finds expression in his complaints and rebellion; God's freedom finds expression in the gratuitousness of the divine love that refuses to be confined within a system of predictable rewards and punishments. Job's freedom reaches its full maturity when he encounters without intermediaries the God in whom he hopes; God's freedom comes to light in the revelation that divine gratuitous love has been made the foundation of the world and that only in light of this fact can the meaning of divine justice be grasped. When human freedom meets the divine freedom it also penetrates to the depths of itself.¹⁰⁷

Job, then, is prepared to relinquish all human, rational claims against God.

Gutiérrez's Interpretation of 42:1-6.

Gutiérrez believes that the correct interpretation of Job's second reply is the key to understanding the Book of Job. What is the true relationship between *justice* and *gratuitousness*? While Job's first reply was focused on himself, the point of reference to the second reply is God: 'God's plan, God's words, God's presence'.¹⁰⁸ The epiphany

¹⁰⁷ On Job, P. 80.

¹⁰⁸ On Job, p. 82.

which Job experiences is brought about by his realization that his argument with God has been misdirected. Now he knows that God has plans, and God is free to direct them as he chooses. Job, therefore, does not 'repent' but reverses his opinion; 'he repudiates and abandons dust and ashes' (42:6).

Gutiérrez has chosen to follow 'a new translation' of the verb *naham*, (as I outlined above in the chapter on the Book of Job). There is no object in the original Hebrew for the verb *naham*, 'retract'/'repent', and if a direct object were supplied the outcome could be misleading. *Naham*, however, when used with the preposition *al*, means 'to change one's mind' or 'to reverse an opinion' thus the rendering of 42:6 into 'I repudiate and abandon (change my mind about) dust and ashes'.¹⁰⁹ 'This means that in his final reply what Job is expressing is not contrition but a *renunciation of his lamentation and dejected outlook*'.¹¹⁰ He relinquishes his demand for justice - a supposed attribute of retribution. God, too, had been a prisoner to the doctrine of retributive justice; Job has now set him free.

Tilley points out that by changing the image of a submissive and repentant Job to one who now acknowledges his education in verse 42:6, we are led to believe that Job understands he has no control over the world. Tilley suggests

¹⁰⁹ On *Job*, p. 86. Gutiérrez correctly notes that this 'new translation' was made at least eight centuries ago by Maimonides in his *Guide for the Perplexed*.

¹¹⁰ On *Job*, p. 87.

that in the whirlwind speeches, Job has learned about God's freedom but not about God's love. Yet Gutiérrez relies on the argument of God's love to implement his thesis that God, just as Job, is for the poor. Tilley states:

So just what does Job 'know about God's love'? Gutiérrez simply reads divine love into a text where God's love is never mentioned. The divine love is the purifying phallic scalpel that tears into Job, allegedly to root out evil. To make knifing the central symbol of divine love portrays God in this text as sadist....The evil is not hidden in Job; the evil is God violating him. Evil does not need to be rooted out; it needs to stop. Perhaps readers might think they learn something about God's love from reading this text, but Job could only learn that love is abuse. But a reader taking Job's position [as seen through Gutiérrez's interpretation of 42:6] would only learn of divine sadism.¹¹¹

While Tilley is highly critical of Gutiérrez's interpretation of 42:6, I contend there is something about the Book of Job which continually elicits a particular response from writers in the second half of the twentieth century. They have a reliance on God's love as explanatory in regard to the problem of the innocent sufferer, even though the word 'love' is never used in the Book of Job. Love is implicit in the idea of the Hebrew covenant with the Lord.¹¹²

Gutiérrez believes Job's experience has moved him to solidarity with the afflicted. His new awareness has shown him that God 'has a special love for the disinherited, the

¹¹¹ Tilley, *The Evils of Theodicy*, p. 100.

¹¹² A further discussion by Rabbi Weiner of love and the Book of Job is found in my chapter on Archibald MacLeish.

exploited of human history'.¹¹³ Gutiérrez considers that this preferential love for the poor is the basis for speaking to God. Yet ultimately, the motives of this special love are not about the virtues and merits of the poor but about the goodness and freedom of God.¹¹⁴

Tying Christianity into the Book of Job, Gutiérrez sees no discontinuity between the 'old faith' and the 'new'. While, when the Book of Job was written there was no sense of life beyond the present, and, therefore, retributive justice was even less credible, faith in a future life through Christ does not negate the message of the Book of Job: 'The poet's insight continues to be valid for us: the gratuitousness of God's love is the framework within which the requirement of practicing justice is to be located'.¹¹⁵

Gutiérrez's Conclusion

According to Gutiérrez, as Job has moved away from the concerns for his own life and taken up the concerns of the poor, he has had to develop two languages. In the Prologue Job used *prophetic* language, a language inspired by the contemplation of God. This proper tone weakens as he became more and more involved in his unjust situation. His epiphany, however, teaches him the language of *mysticism* and restores

¹¹³ *On Job*, p. 88.

¹¹⁴ *On Job*, p. 88.

¹¹⁵ *On Job*, p. 89.

his faith in spite of injustices: 'Mystical language expresses the gratuitousness of God's love; prophetic language expresses the demands this love makes'.¹¹⁶ Both languages are necessary and become increasingly integrated into one language, balancing and feeding each other. Both languages are important to Job in his journey to seek justice and to defend the poor. Like the prophets, he demands justice for the poor and then accepts what happens with mystical contemplation:

The journey of prophecy and the journey of contemplation are precisely that: a journey. The road must be traveled in freedom without turning from it because of its pitfalls, and without pretending ignorance of its ever new forms, for unjust human suffering continues to be heartrending and insatiable; it continually raises new questions and causes new dilemmas. It never ends; neither does protest, after the manner of Job. Although the way of talking about God has become clearer, it continues to be mysterious, as awesome and as alluring as ever.¹¹⁷

Through the language of contemplation/mysticism Job has learned that everything comes from God.¹¹⁸ Through the language of prophecy he has learned to attack the injustice and deprivation of the poor. 'Both languages arise, among the poor of Latin America as in Job, out of the suffering and hopes of the innocent. For poverty and unjust suffering are

¹¹⁶ *On Job*, p. 95.

¹¹⁷ *On Job*, p. 96.

¹¹⁸ Gutiérrez uses 'mystical language' and 'language of contemplation' interchangeably.

in fact the situation of the majority in Latin America.'¹¹⁹

Gutiérrez moves to the ministry of Jesus to conclude his work on the Book of Job. Obviously influenced by the work of Moltmann, Gutiérrez believes, when Jesus allowed himself to be nailed to the cross, he took on the suffering and abandonment of God's creatures.¹²⁰ He states: 'This radical communion with the suffering of human beings brought him down to the deepest level of history at the very moment when his life was ending.'¹²¹ The language of the cross is a synthesis of the prophetic and contemplative, and, therefore, is the only appropriate way of speaking about the God of Jesus Christ. Even in Jesus's lament he 'spoke correctly of God':

His cry on the cross renders more audible and more penetrating the cries of all the Jobs, individual and collective, of human history....This cry cannot be muted. Those who suffer unjustly have a right to complain and protest. Their cry expresses both their bewilderment and their faith. It is not possible to do theology in Latin America without taking into account the situation of the most downtrodden of history; this means in turn that at some point the theologian must cry out, as Jesus did, 'My God' my God, why hast thou forsaken me?'¹²²

Gutiérrez is aware that there have been other outrageous human tragedies in this century, but for the people in Latin America the question of: 'How to do theology after Auschwitz?' is not applicable. In Latin America everyday they are still

¹¹⁹ *On Job*, p. 97.

¹²⁰ On the influence of Moltmann cf. Thiselton, pp. 416-417.

¹²¹ *On Job*, p. 100.

¹²² *On Job*, p. 101.

experiencing 'the violation of human rights, murder, and the torture that we find so blameworthy in the Jewish holocaust of World War II'.¹²³ But like so many others, Gutiérrez believes

Job shows us a way with his vigorous protest, his discovery of concrete commitment to the poor and all who suffer unjustly, his facing up to God, and his acknowledgment of the gratuitousness that characterizes God's plan for human history. It is for us in Latin America, to analyze its course with requisite historical effectiveness, and, above all, to compare it anew with the word of God.¹²⁴

CRITICISMS OF GUSTAVO GUTIÉRREZ AND LIBERATION THEOLOGY

The political intersection of the Church and liberation theologians has been rife with misadventure which goes beyond the scope of this paper.¹²⁵ However criticism on a more interpretive level may be made against liberation theologians whose use of scripture is often a case of special pleading. They refer to the story of the Exodus of the Jews from Egypt

¹²³ On Job, p. 102.

¹²⁴ On Job, p. 102.

¹²⁵ Gutiérrez was summoned to Rome on several occasions to defend his theology, and the Holy See never managed to find due cause to silence him. Several other Latin American priests and bishops have been silenced for periods of time. In most cases this 'punishment' has enhanced the cause of liberation theology. For a history of the repressive measures taken against the liberation theology movement by the Vatican, Latin American clergy, political and military measures of the various countries including imprisonment and assassinations, the United States Government, and some of the populace itself, cf. Smith pp. 165-233. For the particular one year silencing of the Brazilian liberation theologian Leonard Boff, cf. McGovern, pp. 219-223.

as the paradigmatic event of political liberation from slavery. 'The liberation of Israel is a political action'.¹²⁶ This is obviously true for the Jews, but if perpetrated by the Christian God who is concerned with the downtrodden and the defenseless, I think there are a few problems with the story which seem to have been ignored or overlooked:

At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, from the firstborn of Pharaoh who sat on his throne to the firstborn of the prisoner who was in the dungeon, and all the firstborn of the livestock (Exodus 12:29).¹²⁷

If innocent children and animals are slaughtered as an example of the revelation of God working in history, then the paradigm has a fatal flaw which has been purposely ignored in order to argue for the Bible's support of political liberation.

I note a similar discrepancy with Gutiérrez's use of the Book of Job. He considers the prologue only in order to prove that Job's 'faith and behavior are disinterested'.¹²⁸ The problem of the death of the innocent children, servants and livestock are ignored, irrelevant. The only reason for their death is, as Gutiérrez acknowledges: 'God accepts the satan's

¹²⁶ *Theology*, p. 88.

¹²⁷ Norman K. Gottwald has written a critical essay on the problem of the socio-historical basis of the Exodus among Latin American liberation theologians. Cf. 'The Exodus as Event and Process: A Test Case in the Biblical Grounding of Liberation Theology', in *Expanding the View: Gustavo Gutiérrez and the Future of Liberation Theology*, eds. Marc H. Ellis & Otto Maduro, Maryknoll, N. Y: 1988.

¹²⁸ *On Job*, p. 5.

challenge because God trusts Job'.¹²⁹

There is also a bit of special pleading in the dialogues - both on Job's justification of himself and Gutiérrez's interpretation of that justification. Job certainly testifies about his ethical action toward the poor, by feeding them, caring for them, but nowhere does he mount a campaign to correct the injustices of the system in which he lives nor voluntarily hand over all his goods and become one of the poor. But to read Gutiérrez one would think that Job, if it were not for his boils, is one step away from joining the revolutionary guerilla forces.

In contrast, for a writer like Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik, the abiding problem with Job is that *he never identifies with the poor*. While Job comes to the aid of the poor in times of distress, Soloveitchik writes:

[I]n two respects you [Job] were lacking in the great attribute of *hesed*, of loving kindness: (1) you never assumed your proper share of the burdens of communal responsibility and never joined in the community's pain and anguish; (2) nor did you ever properly empathize with the agonies of the individual sufferer....[H]esed means more than a passing sentiment, a superficial feeling; *hesed* demands more than a momentary tear or a gold coin. *Hesed* means to merge with the other person, to identify with his pain, to feel responsible for his fate. And this attribute of *hesed* you lacked in your relationship with the community and with the individual.¹³⁰

Though Soloveitchik may err in one direction as he continues

¹²⁹ On Job, p. 5.

¹³⁰ Joseph B. Soloveitchik, 'Kol Dodi Dofek: It Is the Voice of My Beloved That Knocketh', trans. Lawrence Kaplan, in *Theological and Halakic Reflections on the Holocaust*. ed. Bernhard H. Rosenberg, Hoboken, N. J: 1992, pp. 59-60.

to argue that the state of Israel is a divine reward for the suffering of the Jews in the Holocaust, he counterbalances the argument which Gutiérrez makes for Job's solidarity with the poor.¹³¹

The only reference Gutiérrez makes to the epilogue is early in the book, in chapter 3, where he acknowledges that the return of all of Job's worldly possessions and new children may be a bit 'naive', but 'the poet wants to give human and material expression to the deep spiritual joy that Job has experienced in his final encounter with God'.¹³² Whether Job experienced 'deep spiritual joy' which relieved his suffering is open to interpretation.¹³³ And I wonder if one carries through Gutiérrez's rationale what happens to Job when he again joins the ranks of the fortunate? Do the poor rise up in arms against him because he is no longer of their kind?

The primary question, then, in liberation theology interpretation, is what is 'reality' and what is 'truth'. Paul Ricoeur in the *Rule of Metaphor* writes:

¹³¹ Cf. Soloveitchik, pp. 51-105.

¹³² *On Job*, p. 12.

¹³³ Muriel Spark, in *The Only Problem*, speaking through her character Harvey Gotham, believes that Job continues to suffer: 'I'm convinced [Job] suffered on. Perhaps more....It became a habit, for he not only argued the problem of suffering, he suffered the problem of argument. And that is incurable' (p. 32). What happens to Job when he again becomes one of the greatest (wealthiest) men in the east? Like many other questions in the Book of Job, no answer is supplied, it is up to the reader to supply his or her own.

All language, all symbolism consists in 'remaking reality'....It is when symbolism breaks through its acquired limits and conquers new territory that we understand the breadth of ordinary scope.¹³⁴

Gustavo Gutiérrez's reality consists of the poor, the forgotten of Latin America. When he reads the Book of Job the significant bits for him are concerned with the poor that he knows so well. His reality defines the truth that God's love and concern are for the poor who must join with God in defeating the evil which has placed them in this position. While Gutiérrez is aware that the nonpersons of Ayacucho will not read his commentary on the Book of Job, he believes his interpretation will show others that the message of the Bible is God's love for the misbegotten. The way to work in concert with God is to provide similar love and concern for his chosen, to help them rise up against the wicked who have placed them in this position of denigration.

As most people before him, Gutiérrez has used the Book of Job to testify to the inscrutability of unwarranted suffering.¹³⁵ Like the other three authors treated in this thesis, he has taken his kaleidoscope and created a picture out of the Book's various pieces which bolster his arguments,

¹³⁴ Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor*, trans, R. Czerny, Toronto: 1977, p. 237.

¹³⁵ The other liberation theologian to utilize the Book of Job is Elsa Tamez. In a short essay, 'A Letter to Job' she argues that the silence of God is instrumental in creating human beings who dare to walk and hope, to endure. The silence of God is character building for his creatures. Cf. Elsa Tamez, 'A Letter to Job' in *New Eyes for Reading*, Geneva: 1986, pp. 50-53.

his theology of liberation. He is witness to the suffering of the poor in Latin America, and he has used the Joban archetype, 'a man who suffers and suffers against suffering', to testify to their plight. Gutiérrez's identification with Job and the Book of Job is acknowledged by Elie Wiesel in the following chapter.

ELIE WIESEL: CONTENTION WITH GOD - FAITH SEEKING BELIEF

In this chapter there is a survey of Wiesel's early Hasidic childhood, which imbued in him a strong Jewish faith. This is contrasted with his experiences as a victim of Hitler's 'final solution'. Other Jewish approaches to the Shoah are outlined. Then there is an examination of Wiesel's writings which reflect his identification with Job as well as his dependence on existential thought. Following is an examination of the two works which Wiesel devotes to the text of the Book of Job, *Job, Ou Dieu dans la Tempête* and 'Job Our Contemporary'. He continually skews standard exegesis so that he may align the Joban theme with the reality of a post-Holocaust world. A short comparison is made between Wiesel's use of the Job archetype and the work of three other Jewish writers who use the Joban theme as a foundation for their testimony to a post-Holocaust Jewry - Richard Rubenstein, Lawrence Corey, and Elizer Berkovits. Finally there is a brief discussion of Wiesel's efforts to teach love and compassion to the rest of the world - lessons he finds in the Book of Job.

At Maryknoll, N. Y. during July 1988 a group of theologians and activists from around the world gathered to

commemorate two important events, the twentieth anniversary of the Medellín conference and the subsequent publication of Gustavo Gutiérrez's *A Theology of Liberation*. Elie Wiesel was there to greet Gutiérrez. He reflects on their common perspective on suffering:

I feel very close to Gustavo Gutiérrez, even though we have not met one another. We share a common passion for Job - whose situation intrigues and saddens us at the same time - and a need to believe that God has not abandoned creation. Some theologians would describe our approach as 'liberative'. And indeed why not? I feel at home with the term 'liberation'. Because we are created in the image of God, we human beings ought to be free just as God is free. And, like God, we should want to be the vehicles of freedom for others. Or, to put it another way, those persons are truly human who recognize themselves in the freedom of others, and who measure the extent of their own freedom by its relationship to that of their fellow human beings. It was in order that we might be free that God chose to create us. Persons who live in fear, in oppression, in hunger, in misery, are not free. What remains free, however, is their thirst for freedom, their desire to free themselves - the part of them that God, as only God can do, loves to enlighten in the fulfillment of hope.

Yes I feel very close to Gustavo Gutiérrez. Along with him, I believe that God is not an abstraction but a living presence. To the prisoner, God represents memory; to the starving, a smile; and to the wandering exile, a companion on the way.

The mystical tradition teaches us that even God is in exile. In the process of freeing the oppressed from their oppression, and the humiliated from their shame, we are likewise freeing God.¹

In 1976 Elie Wiesel wrote in *Messengers of God*:

In Jewish history, all events are linked. Only today, after the whirlwind of fire and blood that was the Holocaust, do we grasp the full range of implications of the murder of one man by his brother, the deeper meaning of a father's questions and disconcerting silences. Only

¹ Quoted in the 'Preface' to *Expanding the View*, eds. Marc H. Ellis & Otto Maduro, Maryknoll, N.Y: 1988, pp. vii-viii.

as we tell them now, in the light of certain experiences of life and death, do we understand them.²

And so, faithful to his promise, the storyteller does nothing but tell the tale: he transmits what he received, he returns what was entrusted to him. His story does not begin with his own; it is fitted into the memory that is the living tradition of his people.

The legends he brings back are the very ones we are living today.³

One of the legends that Wiesel brings back is the archetypal myth of the Book of Job.

WIESEL'S CONTINUOUS STRUGGLE WITH HIS CHILDHOOD TEACHINGS

Elie Wiesel is being, perhaps, deliberately naive, misleading in the above quote, but he continually returns to his perceived role as the storyteller in order to stress the roots of his story and the validity of their use and re-interpretation for the modern reader and listener. This century has produced many strands of hermeneutics. These various methods have created numerous disputes on the proper method for biblical and literary interpretation and criticism.⁴ Yet in the works of Elie Wiesel, there can be no dispute about method, which for Wiesel is dictated by his

² Archibald MacLeish also rewrites the Cain and Abel story (*Nobodaddy*) to coincide with his philosophy on the need for man to be in charge of his own destiny - an American poet's form of midrash.

³ Elie Wiesel, *Messengers of God*, trans. Marion Wiesel, New York: 1976, pp. XIII-XIV.

⁴ For a discussion of some of these methods cf. Erich Auerbach, *Mimesis, The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, trans. William Trask, Princeton: 1953; John Barton, *Reading the Old Testament*, London: 1984; Northrop Frye, *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*, London: 1982.

Hasidic childhood faith nurtured in the *shtetl* village of Sighet and by his adolescent experiences in the death camps of Hitler. These experiences permeate his work and demand recognition and inclusion in any review of his oeuvre. Wiesel's writings are almost a one-dimensional monologue with God in an attempt to reconcile his childhood faith of a God who led the Jews out of the land of Egypt with a God who has betrayed the covenant as witnessed in the Holocaust.

Elie Wiesel was born in 1928, in Sighet, a small Transylvanian *shtetl*.⁵ His mother, a pious woman, had had a secular education, unusual for a *shtetl* woman. She had hoped her son would become a Rabbi and an educated man with a PhD. Consequently, young Elie spent his days studying Torah at the local Yeshiva, and after hours, studying the Zohar with the local 'mystic'. This teacher, Moshe the Beadle, appears in Wiesel's first work, the autobiographical *Night*, as Moshe the Madman and then his character virtually reappears in every other Wiesel novel. The character of Moshe, in an ironic twist, is the first indication of the pervading influence which the Book of Job has on Wiesel. In *Night*, Moshe has escaped from a mass grave and has returned to the village to tell his story. In a refrain similar to the one found in chapter 1 of the Book of Job, he warns: 'I alone have escaped

⁵ For the best survey of Elie Wiesel's life cf. Harry James Cargas in *Conversation with Elie Wiesel*, Paramus, N.J.: 1976, pp. 62-80.

to tell you'.⁶ The people in the village, like Job, did not realize the import of Moshe's words; they continued to work and pray as in the past. Wiesel comments:

Tandis que nous, les Juifs, il y a une génération, nous avons refusé d'y croire...Quand les messagers arrivaient, l'un après l'autre, dans nos petits villages pour nous annoncer: 'On va vous tuer, on a déjà tué'...non! nous n'avons pas voulu les croire...⁷

Consequently, the fifteen year old Elie, along with the rest of his family, are soon shipped in cattle cars to Auschwitz, where he and his father are separated from the rest of their family. Ultimately: there he and his two older sisters survive, and there his parents and younger sister die.

The devastating impact of this experience begins with Wiesel's first night in the camp when he sees children hurled into a burning pit. In the first part of his memoir Wiesel recalls this death camp experience:

Never shall I forget that night, the first night in camp, which has turned my life into one long night, seven times cursed and seven times sealed. Never shall I forget that smoke. Never shall I forget the faces of the children, whose bodies I saw turned into wreaths of smoke beneath a silent blue sky.

Never shall I forget those flames which consumed my faith forever.

Never shall I forget that nocturnal silence which deprived me, for all eternity, of the desire to live.

⁶ The wisdom of 'madmen', and in particular Moshe, play an important part in the novels of Wiesel. Cf. Rosette C. Lamont, 'Poetics of Madness'; Harry James Cargas, 'Drama Reflecting Madness: The Plays of Elie Wiesel'; Robert McAfee Brown, 'Twilight: Madness, Caprice, Friendship, and God', all in *Elie Wiesel: Between Hope and Memory*, ed. Carol Rittner, New York: 1990.

⁷ Elie Wiesel & Josy Eisenberg, *Job, ou Dieu dans la Tempête*, Paris: 1986, p. 24.

Never shall I forget those moments which murdered my God and my soul and turned my dreams to dust. Never shall I forget these things, even if I am condemned to live as long as God Himself. Never.⁸

In these few sentences the conflict within Elie Wiesel is apparent. Here, as in MacLeish's poem discussed later, 'The End of the World', the sky is silent; God is silent. Here the Hasidic mystical cast is evident in the repetition of the number seven signifying completion. By analogy young Elie's life must be 'finished'. Here the God of his childhood seems to have been consumed with the flames from the furnaces of Auschwitz. Yet this God of Wiesel's continues to struggle for life against overwhelming odds. Wiesel, like Job, has not lost faith in his God but faith in his God's justice. He relates that all his other writings are but concentric circles around, *Night*, his seminal work.⁹ His faith continues to search for belief.

Tension Between Faith and Belief

The tension, found in the juxtaposition of a God who has a reputation for justice with a God who is silent in the face of injustice, is repeated again and again in Wiesel's work in other guises. This is the same tension created by God's silence in the poetic dialogues of the Book of Job, balanced

⁸ Elie Wiesel, *Night*, trans. Stella Rodway, New York 1960, p. 45. This quotation is given a prominent place in the new Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.

⁹ Cf. Robert McAfee Brown, *Elie Wiesel, message à l'humanité*, Paris, 1988, p. 30.

against Job's silence of acquiescence after the speeches of God from the whirlwind. There is comparable tension in the surviving victim of the Shoah, identified by Wiesel as each one a Job, created by the dilemma of either remaining silent or speaking as a witness. There is tension in demanding from God justice, in righting the wrongful death of children. There is tension in trying to place the Holocaust into the traditional covenantal framework. Ultimately Wiesel cannot do it:

[T]he adolescent in me, yearning for faith, questioned: Where was God in all this? Was this another test, one more? Or a punishment? And if so, for what sins? What crimes were being punished? Was there a misdeed that deserved so many mass graves? Would it ever again be possible to speak of justice, of truth, of divine charity after the murder of one million Jewish children.¹⁰

The tension inherent between Wiesel's childhood trust in the covenant and his adolescent nightmare is a tension created between faith and belief which he carries with him into adulthood. If he keeps 'the faith' - if he contends with God - perhaps his belief will be restored.¹¹ But the only way to accomplish this is to do so within the context of his

¹⁰ Wiesel, 'To Be a Jew' in *A Jew Today*, trans. Marion Wiesel, New York: 1978, p. 11

¹¹ Wiesel's cantata, *Ani Maamin: A Song Lost and Found*, is a modern rendition of an old Hasidic chant sung in his childhood. 'I believe', it affirms, 'in the coming of the Messiah'. Wiesel's version has Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob visit earth during the Holocaust. In the cantata, the refrain, *Ani Maamin*, occurs frequently, as though if 'I believe' is said often enough maybe he again will believe. *Ani Maamin: A Song Lost and Found*, a bilingual edition, New York: 1974.

religion; therefore Wiesel attempts to reformulate the covenant. Isabel Wollaston writes:

Thus, rather than formulating the Holocaust in light of the tradition; the tradition is reformulated in the light of the Holocaust. Biblical characters and situations can only be fully understood in the light of the Holocaust.¹²

Wiesel, therefore, continually returns to the Bible and rewrites the stories so that he may bolster his faith in the hope that then he might believe.

What happens when Bible and Midrash are viewed by Wiesel through the smoky glasses of the Holocaust, is a re-write of each, or a subtle change of interpretation:¹³

The tragic grandeur of Wiesel's work lies in this desperate effort to make the Bible, in the face of Auschwitz, say what it cannot say, because it said what it did when Auschwitz had not yet come into existence; and the painful emotions aroused by Elie Wiesel's...books are largely due to this endeavor to place the words of the witness of Auschwitz within a Book which can finally only be silent.¹⁴

In *Messengers of God* Wiesel interprets some of the significant stories of the Hebrew Bible - Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, the Akedah, Jacob and his struggle with the Angel, Joseph, Moses,

¹² Isabel Wollaston, 'A Comparative Study of Jewish and Christian Responses to the Holocaust', unpublished thesis, University of Durham, 1989, p. 138.

¹³ The word Midrash generally refers to a group of Jewish commentaries on the Hebrew Scriptures produced between 400 C.E to 1200 C.E. However this form of rabbinic exegesis has gained new significance after the Holocaust in the works of such writers as Wiesel who try to reformulate Judaism in light of Hitler's pogroms.

¹⁴ André Neher, *The Exile of the Word: From the Silence of the Bible to the Silence of Auschwitz*, Philadelphia: 1981, p. 216.

and in conclusion Job. Why? Because he believes to be a Jew is to be bound to his forebears, and as a Jew it is his duty to keep them, their stories, alive. Consequently some of the stories must be rewritten, as in the case of Job, because the myths in the Bible were written before the Holocaust. Yet they must be preserved because these stories make up the very fibre of the Jewish identity. Wiesel affirms:

If we have the strength and the will to speak out, it is because every one of our forebears expresses himself through us; if the eyes of the world often seem to be upon us, it is because we evoke a time gone by and a fate that transcends time. *Panim* in Hebrew is used in the plural form: man has more than one face. His own and Adam's. The Jew is haunted by the beginning more than by the end. His messianic dream is tied to the kingdom of David and he feels closer to the prophet Elijah than to his next-door neighbor.¹⁵

Therefore the traditions of the past demand a dialogue in the present with the Torah. The Shoah instills an innervating silence. As do many Jewish writers, Wiesel battles with this conundrum.

The arguments between Jewish faith and the devastation of the Shoah, between silence and speech, are intrinsic to Wiesel's midrash on Job, as well as to the rest of his work. The literary critic, Lawrence Langer writes:

Wiesel's work is a sustained dramatization of counterpositions, a long monologue disguised as a series of dialogues, revealing his own divided self. His inconsistency is both real and imagined, the reflection of a writer who feels trapped by two necessities - to speak and hold his tongue - and who incorporates this

¹⁵ *Messengers*, p. xii.

very tension into the substance of his vision.¹⁶

Consequently there is a haunted quality to his work - a questing for an affirmation of belief which is never realized. Ultimately circumstances have placed Wiesel in the position of a witness for the victims of the Shoah. In this situation his role becomes a teller of tales in the Hasidic midrashic tradition, and with a quest which is never completely realized. Michael Berenbaum suggests:

[H]is images of God are often re-understandings of traditional images and frequently take the structural and linguistic forms of midrashic exegesis. Wiesel speaks of the Holocaust in terms of the Akedah and of Job. His writing is solidly rooted in Jewish imagery and idiom, and even his sense of the failure of the tradition is expressed in very traditional language. He compares Auschwitz to Sinai; although the covenant established at Sinai has been shattered, he continues to use the language of Sinai and covenant to express that shattering.¹⁷

Wiesel, then, creates a new Midrash by recasting biblical and Hasidic stories. He recreates the stories of his people whose joys and sorrows have alternately turned from hope to dust and ashes and back to hope. He uses tales while other Jewish thinkers use theology and philosophy - just as in the past the author of the Book of Job used a tale to testify to the problem of the innocent sufferer.

¹⁶ Lawrence Langer, *Versions of Survival: The Holocaust and the Human Spirit*, Albany, N. Y: 1982, pp. 156-157.

¹⁷ Michael Berenbaum, *The Vision of the Void: Theological Reflections on the Work of Elie Wiesel*, Middletown, Ct: 1979, p. 167.

OTHER JEWISH APPROACHES TO THE SHOAH

The Jewish theologian Emil Fackenheim also believes that the covenant must be reformulated, but he approaches this concept from a theological point of view.¹⁸ He ignores the question of the benevolence and/or the omnipotence of God and dwells on the repercussions for the Jew of abandoning faith in a merciful God who works in the historical world.¹⁹ He writes:

I believe that whereas no redeeming voice is heard at Auschwitz a commanding voice is heard, and that it is being heard with increasing clarity. *Jews are not permitted to hand Hitler posthumous victories. Jews are commanded to survive as Jews, lest their people perish....They are forbidden to despair of God, lest Judaism perish. They are forbidden to despair of the world as the domain of God, lest the world be handed over to the forces of Auschwitz.*²⁰

Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, on the other hand, believes the covenant with God is dead/void and affirms a 'Nothingness' which is the Lord of all creation.²¹ Humans must return to 'nature', without the support of a belief in God, to bolster

¹⁸ Cf. Emil Fackenheim, *The Jewish Bible After the Holocaust: a Re-reading*, Bloomington: 1990.

¹⁹ In an interesting essay, Hans Tiesel surveys four interpretations of the Holocaust in the context of theodicy - Richard Rubenstein, Martin Buber, Emil Fackenheim, Roy Eckhardt (a Gentile) as well as Wiesel. Cf. 'Holocaust Interpretations and Religious Assumptions' in *Judaism*, vol 25, 1976, pp. 135-149. Rubenstein, Buber, and Fackenheim use the Book of Job in their discussions of theodicy, and this use will be discussed later in this chapter.

²⁰ Emil L. Fackenheim, *Quest for Past and Future: Essays in Jewish Theology*, Bloomington, Indiana: 1968, p. 20.

²¹ Rubenstein, (1992), p. 154.

them while still cherishing their Jewish identity. He states:

I would like to offer my own confession of faith after Auschwitz. I am a pagan. To be a pagan means to find once again one's roots as a child of the Earth and to see one's own existence as wholly and totally an earthly existence.... [P]aganism does not mean the rejection of one's people's ancestral dance, its distinctive rituals, nor its ancestral story.²²

Wiesel finds the posturing of such writers as Rubenstein specious. These writers were not inmates of the death camps. How can they embrace atheism:

How strange that the philosophy denying God came not from the survivors. Those who came out with the so-called God is dead theology, not one of them had been in Auschwitz. Those who had, never said it. I have my problems with God, believe me. I have my anger and I have my quarrels and I have my nightmares. But my dispute, my bewilderment, my astonishment is with men.²³

And later in the same essay, there are echoes again of Wiesel's compulsion to testify to the horrors he has witnessed and his contention with God.

To be a Jew is to have all the reasons in the world not to have faith in language, in singing, in prayers, and in God, but to go on telling the tale, to go on carrying on the dialogue, and to have my own silent prayers and quarrels with God.²⁴

Of a similar philosophical point of view to Wiesel is one of the most respected twentieth century, Jewish thinkers,

²² Rubenstein, 'Some Perspectives on Religious Faith After Auschwitz', in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, eds. Franklin H. Littell & Herbert G. Locke, Detroit: 1976, pp. 267-268.

²³ Wiesel, 'Talking and Writing and Keeping Silent' in *The German Church Struggle and the Holocaust*, eds. Franklin H. Littell & Herbert G. Locke, Detroit: 1976, pp. 271-272.

²⁴ Wiesel, 'Talking and Writing', p. 277.

Abraham Joshua Heschel (1907-1972), an experientialist, who builds his philosophical writings on the dignity of the human character. His works are based, however, on Jewish law which he believes teaches people how to live with God regardless of tragedies. Wiesel, perhaps because he abjures theology, never relies on Jewish law. Heschel believes 'boundary situation' questions are impossible to answer. He never discusses, therefore, the problem of evil, but he does not hide the problem in the mystery of paradox. Heschel's approach to those questions, which many philosophers and theologians ask, is to consider them inappropriate - ultimate truth may be hidden from man. Such questions belong to the realm of the ineffable and partake of its mystery. Heschel says:

The sense of the ineffable, the awareness of the grandeur and mystery of living, is shared by all men, and it is in the depth of such awareness that acts and thoughts of religion are full of meaning. The ideas of religion are an answer, when the mystery is a problem. When brought to the level of utilitarian thinking, when their meaning is taken literally as solutions to scientific problems, they are found to be meaningless. Thus the basic ideas in Judaism have more than one dimension; what they refer to is a mystery, and they become distorted when taken as matter-of-fact descriptions. The idea of man as a being created in the likeness of God, the idea of creation, of divine knowledge, the election of Israel, the problem of evil, messianism, the belief in the resurrection or faith in revelation become caricatures when transposed into categories of pedestrian thinking.²⁵

With this mind-set, an attempt at a theodicy for Heschel might well have bordered on the blasphemous; while Wiesel seems to

²⁵ Heschel, 'The Mystery', in *Between God and Man*, ed. Fritz A. Rothchild, 2nd ed., New York: 1965, p. 48.

be afraid what answers he might discover if he were to address the problem of theodicy:

For Heschel, the entire range of questions that philosophers have addressed to theologians in an attempt to establish how they validate their theological claims have at best a subsidiary role. They may systematize and clarify these claims, but they can never call their basic veracity into question. The living quality of the immediate experience carries its own warranty of truth; it can never be undermined by rational speculation.²⁶

For Heschel, however, why there is evil is all too obvious. 'If a man has beheld evil, he may know that it was shown to him in order that he learn his own guilt and repent; for what was shown to him is also within him.'²⁷ This evil arises from freedom of choice - a free will demanded by God:

Man is free to act in freedom and free to forfeit freedom. In choosing evil he surrenders his attachment to the spirit and forgoes the opportunity to let freedom happen. Thus we may be free in employing or in ignoring freedom; we are not free in having freedom. We are free to choose between good and evil; we are not free in having to choose. We are in fact compelled to choose. Thus all freedom is a situation of God's waiting for man to choose.²⁸

Like many before him Heschel believes it is our free will which causes the evil in the world and not as, in part, Wiesel believes, a failure of God to honour his covenant. It is man's turning away from God and the values of the spirit which brings about his suffering.

²⁶ Neil Gilman, *Sacred Fragments*, New York: 1990, pp. 134-135.

²⁷ Abraham Heschel, 'The Meaning of this Hour', in *Between God and Man*, New York: 1965, p. 255.

²⁸ Heschel, 'Freedom', in *Between God and Man*, pp. 150-151.

Unlike most modern Jewish thinkers, Heschel does not dwell on the atrocities of the Holocaust. Their origins were all too obvious to him. Modern people, while paying lip-service to God, have deserted him. While humans have need of God so too does God have need of humans, and while we are enmeshed in our own will, the will of God is hidden. In an essay first delivered in 1938 to Quaker leaders in Frankfurt, and subsequently expanded and published in a 1943 issue of *The Hebrew Union College Bulletin*, Heschel reflects for this one time only, the tenor of those times:

For evil is indivisible. It is the same in thought and in speech, in private and social life. The greatest task of our time is to take the souls of men out of the [snake] pit. The world has experienced that God is involved. Let us forever remember that the sense for the sacred is as vital to us as the light of the sun. There can be no nature without spirit, no world without Torah, no brotherhood without a father, no humanity without attachment to God.

God will return to us when we shall be willing to let Him in - into our banks and factories, into our Congress and clubs, into our courts and investigating committees, into our homes and theaters. For God is everywhere or nowhere, the Father of all men or no man, concerned about everything or nothing. Only in His presence shall we learn that the glory of man is not in his will to power, but in his power of compassion. Man reflects either the image of His presence or that of a beast.²⁹

Heschel believes all the crimes of this century are the result of our turning away from God's will and exercising our own will, whether we are the victim or the victimizer. Heschel has not limited God's power in an attempt to rationalize the radical evil in the world. Human free will is

²⁹ Heschel, 'The Meaning of this Hour', p. 257.

responsible, and in human compassion is the solution.

Ultimately both Heschel and Wiesel believe the 'lesson' is compassion. For Heschel, we learn this lesson by experiencing the barrenness of life which turns us toward God, and for Wiesel, we learn this lesson by experiencing the inhumanity of God which teaches us love and compassion for our fellow humans.

THE DUTY OF THE JEW IS TO ARGUE WITH GOD

Wiesel's philosophy is radically different from Heschel's; however it is still Wiesel's reliance on traditional Judaism which shapes his opposition to God. As Abraham, pleading for the faithful in Sodom (Gen. 18:16-33), and Moses, interceding for the makers of the Golden Calf (Ex. 32:7-14), have argued with God, then it is the duty of the Jew to continue to argue, because God does not seem to be honouring his covenantal agreements.

Contention with God has been an accepted Jewish response to the problem of evil. One midrash affirms: 'God says, "I rule mankind. Who rules me? - The righteous. For I make decree and they annul it".'³⁰ Thus, as is apparent in Job's argument with God, the belief exists that retributive justice

³⁰ Quoted in Byron Sherwin, 'Wiesel's Midrash: The Writings of Elie Wiesel and Their Relationship to the Jewish Tradition', in *Confronting the Holocaust*, eds. Alvin Rosenfeld & Irving Greenberg, Bloomington, Ind: 1979, p. 123.

still functions, or barring that, God, at least, will no longer remain complacent if the people's contention with God is only strong enough. Wollaston notes:

Contention with God formed a central part of early Hasidism. Part of the Zaddik's function was to intercede with God on behalf of his community. He implored or demanded that God intervene in history to prevent His Chosen people suffering further. Hasidism concentrated on the morality of God's continuing silence in the face of His people's suffering.³¹

Wiesel's childhood was imprinted with Hasidic traditions, and he still cites the teachings of the Hasidic Master, Levi Yitzhak of Berditchev (1740-1809), who wrote:

Jewish tradition allows man to say anything to God, provided it be on behalf of man....It all depends on where the rebel chooses to stand. From inside his community, he may say anything. Let him step outside it, and he will be denied this right. The revolt of the believer is not that of the renegade; the two do not speak in the name of the same anguish.³²

Contention with God is prescribed for the faithful. Wiesel writes in *A Jew Today*:

[M]an must interrogate God, as did Abraham; articulate his anger, as did Moses; shout his sorrow, as did Job. But only the Jew opts for Abraham - who questions - and for God - who is questioned.³³

Suffering instigates the contentious behavior of Wiesel the Jew, not so much his suffering, but the suffering of the

³¹ Wollaston, p. 168.

³² Wiesel, *Souls on Fire: Portraits and Legends of Hasidic Masters*, trans. Marion Wiesel, London: 1974, p. 99. This is the reason why Rabbi Richard Rubenstein, who does not come from a religious background, has been so vehemently attacked by some of the American Jewish religious community. The revolt of a non-believer is viewed as seditious.

³³ Wiesel, *A Jew Today*, p. 6

others in the death camps and particularly the suffering of the children.

When Wiesel writes in *Night*: 'I did not deny God's existence, but I doubted His absolute justice',³⁴ he is echoing the sentiments of Dostoyevski's Ivan Karamazov whose argument does not concern a denial of God but a discrediting of God's justice in relation to the death of an innocent child, (also a crucial argument in the existential writings of Albert Camus). Ivan says to his brother Alyosha:

Listen: if everyone must suffer, in order to buy eternal harmony with their suffering, pray tell me what have the children to do with it? It's quite incomprehensible why they should have to suffer, and why they should have to buy harmony with their suffering. Why do they get thrown on the pile, to manure someone's future harmony with themselves?³⁵

Just as Ivan has lamented the plight of the children, one senses that it is not so much Wiesel's suffering that has caused his continued contention with God but with the continued plight of the children, then and now.

The Influence of Albert Camus

While Wiesel casts himself in the role of the 'angry

³⁴ *Night*, p. 57.

³⁵ Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky, San Francisco: 1990, p. 244. The sentiments expressed by Ivan Karamazov have become a shoal on which all theodicies founder. A. Boyce Gibson states: 'Henceforward, no justification of evil, by its outcome or its context, has been possible; Ivan Karamazov has seen to that.' Cf. his *The Religion of Dostoyevsky*, London: 1973, p. 176.

believer,' like Gutiérrez, he is familiar with and admires the writings of Albert Camus, an 'angry non-believer':

'Although I admired Sartre's collection of short stories, *Le Mur*, I feel much closer to Camus,' says Wiesel. 'When I was a journalist in Paris,' he likes to tell, 'I would often see Camus in the *Quartier Latin*, at some of the cafés where we all liked to meet. I met him there, but I don't believe he would have remembered me. For me he was the author of *L'Etranger* and *La Peste*, two important works for my own thinking.'³⁶

There are many indications that the young Wiesel emulated Camus, not the protest atheism of Camus but the faith Camus placed in the indomitable spirit of man. These words from Camus' *The Rebel* could be a credo for the young Wiesel:

Nothing is given to men, and the little they can conquer is paid for with unjust deaths. But man's greatness lies elsewhere. It lies in his decision to be stronger than his condition. And if his condition is unjust, he has only one way of overcoming it, which is just to be himself.³⁷

Dr. Rieux in Camus' *La Peste* is an atheist, but except for this difference he, like Wiesel, is a modern Job.³⁸ Dr. Rieux trusts that he can make a difference in the world, if only for a short time, while he contends with the absurdity of unjustifiable death. He does not resign himself to the evils of the plague, but confronts them head-on as an integral part

³⁶ Quoted in Lamont, p. 89.

³⁷ Albert Camus, *The Rebel: An Essay on Man in Revolt*, trans. Anthony Bower, New York: 1956, p. 30.

³⁸ Lamont draws an interesting comparison between Dr. Rieux and Dr. Russel, a character in Wiesel's *The Accident* (trans. Anne Borehardt, New York: 1962). She maintains there is more than just a casual resemblance between the two, and Wiesel probably modeled his doctor on Camus' doctor, pp. 94-95.

of his life, and while his dialogue may be with the futility of his existential existence, it is similar to the dialogue that Job and Wiesel have with the silence of God. Each shares a refusal to accept the suffering of the innocent.

Michael, the Wiesel-like character in *The Town Beyond the Walls*, also voices the protestations of an existentialist.

The only valuable protest, or attitude, is one rooted in the uncertain soil of humanity. Remaining human - in spite of all temptations and humiliations - is the only way to hold your own against the Other, whatever that may be....To see liberty only in madness is wrong: liberation, yes: liberty no.³⁹

The anguished cry of Wiesel's character, the Rebbe, and then his question in *The Gates of the Forest*, echo the sentiments which motivate Wiesel to continue writing:

'So be it!' he shouted. '[God is] guilty; do you think I don't know it? That I have no eyes to see, no ears to hear? That my heart doesn't revolt? That I have no desire to beat my head against the wall like a madman, to give rein to my sorrow and disappointment? Yes, he is guilty. He has become the ally of evil, of death, of murder, but the problem is still not solved. I ask you a question and dare you answer: *What is there left for us to do?*'⁴⁰

What Wiesel has chosen to do is to protest, to protest to God and to inspire all those around him to do the same.

As reflected in his writings, Wiesel's faith is in a continual struggle with his experience. He must rely, therefore, on the Hasidic teachings of his childhood to

³⁹ Wiesel, *The Town Beyond the Walls*, trans. Stephen Becker, New York: 1967, p. 172.

⁴⁰ Wiesel, *The Gates of the Forest*, trans. Frances Frenaye, New York: 1967, p. 197, (*italics added*).

bolster his struggle toward hope, toward belief, but as the Rebbe has admitted, it is because he does not have any other method at his disposal:

I am a student of the ancient prophetic texts; every prophet had to be both a seer of pain and a consoler. I wish I had the power to console. I try, meaning I desperately seek hope. The emphasis is on the desperate.⁴¹

THE QUESTION OF THE MORAL INSTRUMENTALITY OF SUFFERING

Having experienced life in the death camps, Wiesel is adamant that suffering does not necessarily bring out the best in man. He, therefore, would consider Elihu's arguments (or anyone else's) for the moral instrumentality of suffering specious:

Suffering brings out the lowest, the most cowardly in man. There is a phase of suffering you reach beyond which you become a brute. Beyond it you sell your soul - and worse, the souls of your friends - for a piece of bread, for some warmth, for a moment of oblivion...saints are those who die before the end of the story. The others...no longer dare look at themselves in the mirror, afraid they may see their inner image...⁴²

Consequently, arguments which support the moral instrumentality of suffering, found in the works of such thinkers as Richard Swinburne and Ignaz Maybaum, would be completely unacceptable to Wiesel.

Ignaz Maybaum, an extreme exponent of the teleological

⁴¹ Wiesel, *One Generation After*, trans. Lily Edelman & Elie Wiesel, New York: 1970, p. 72.

⁴² Wiesel, *The Accident*, p. 49. This assertion that suffering is not necessarily morally beneficial is a common theme in post-Holocaust Jewish literature.

position on suffering, is a German Reform rabbi who survived the war in London. He uses the parable of the Suffering Servant (Isaiah 53-54) to develop a theodicy in light of the 'monstrous atrocities' of the twentieth century. In some Jewish traditions the suffering servant is believed to take on suffering for the iniquities of the rest of the people in order to bring them to God and eventually to redemption.⁴³ Maybaum takes this position to an extreme. The six million Jews who died in the Nazi 'final solution' 'died though innocently so that others might live',⁴⁴ and bear witness for the other fourteen million killed by the Nazis during the war.⁴⁵ The Holocaust becomes the instrument which releases the Jews and the Christians from the bondage of the Middle Ages that have obstructed progress.⁴⁶ The cross has been replaced by the gas chamber. Maybaum states:

Our age desires to grasp the holy meaning of martyrdom. Once the death of the six million Jews, the ignominious death in the gas chambers can be understood as holy martyrdom, our age can return to God. The death of the witness has a purpose: he brings God back into the world

⁴³ Rabbinic and medieval sources argue that the righteous may suffer for the sins of others as was argued by the pre-exilic prophets (horizontal retribution which affects the community at that present time (Joshua 7), vertical retribution which affects families for generations to come (Lamentations 5:7). In this guise, suffering does not necessarily lead to redemption. Cf. *Midrash Pesikta de-Rav Kahana* 26:11, ed. B. Mandelbaum, vol. 2, 1962), p. 399.

⁴⁴ Ignaz Maybaum, *The Face of God After Auschwitz*, Amsterdam: 1965, p. 67.

⁴⁵ Cf. Maybaum, p. 57.

⁴⁶ Cf. Maybaum, p. 62.

which has forsaken Him. The death of six million Jews, the death of the other fourteen million civilians and the death of those, too, who died in uniform, reveals what Christians should understand by their own less lucid image of the crucifixion....We Jews view the death of six million martyrs of our time in the same light in which we view the witness whom the Hebrew Bible calls the Servant, the Servant of God. The Servant is the witness who makes visible the martyrdom of man.⁴⁷

The Jews of the Holocaust are the sacrificial lamb which will bring all people back into communion with God. Maybaum explains:

In Auschwitz, the Jewish people was [sic] the High Priest and the sacrificial lamb in one. They died because of the sins of others. The world is cleaner, because the unclean passion of savagery is spent, because the modern views on technical progress have revealed their nihilism leading to destruction. The world is cleaner because the work of atonement has been performed.⁴⁸

Maybaum believes that the Holocaust is evidence of the Divine will, God's blueprint for the progressive unfolding of Providential care'.⁴⁹

In the Christian camp: the theodicy of Richard Swinburne is one of the most often cited examples of a variety of the free will defense which argues that the evils that occur, both natural and moral, are allowed, indeed encouraged by God, in order that his creatures may have opportunities to develop compassion. Swinburne states: 'one of the greatest privileges which a creator can give to a creature is to allow him to help

⁴⁷ Maybaum, p. 57.

⁴⁸ Maybaum, p. 71.

⁴⁹ Steven T. Katz, *Post-Holocaust Dialogues*, New York, 1983, p. 157.

in the process of education, in putting alternatives before his fellows'.⁵⁰ Swinburne believes that if we lived in a world in which there were no challenges caused by evil and suffering, our experiences would not instil in us a regard for the higher moral goods. While Swinburne acknowledges that the crux to the problem of evil and the moral instrumentality of suffering is threatened by the quantity of suffering both to humans and animals, he posits that this suffering is finite. We are only given what we can handle,⁵¹ and if too much we simply 'shuffle off this mortal coil'. In short, the quantity of evil and suffering which abounds is necessary. Swinburne writes:

[T]he fewer natural evils a God provides, the less opportunity he provides for man to exercise responsibility. For the less natural evil, the less knowledge he gives to man of how to produce or avoid suffering and disaster, the less opportunity for his exercise of the higher virtues, and the less experience of the harsh possibilities of existence; and the less he allows to men the opportunity to bring about large-scale horrors, the less the freedom and responsibility which he gives to them.⁵²

In effect Swinburne has a teleological theodicy.

Education, through suffering, will lead God's creatures to the greater good. He states: 'The more one becomes aware of what the most important good things are, the more one comes to see

⁵⁰ Swinburne, 'The Problem of Evil', in *Reason and Religion*, ed. Stuart C. Brown, Cornell: 1977, p. 89.

⁵¹ Cf. Swinburne, 'The Problem of Evil', p. 89.

⁵² Swinburne, *The Existence of God*, Oxford: 1979, p. 119.

that they have lesser evils as inevitable components'.⁵³ By arguing for the moral instrumentality of suffering, Swinburne in effect nullifies the problem of evil. If it exists in the long term only for our benefit then the problem no longer exists. Swinburne was not an inmate of Auschwitz.

Swinburne's teleological theodicy, like that of Maybaum, dissolves the problem of evil. Evil is allowed in order to elicit the greater good for all humankind, a position which is unthinkable to Wiesel. Having lived through unspeakable atrocities he knows that tragedies do not cancel each other out, even as they eclipse one another:

On the contrary, they multiply and accumulate, becoming more unjust with every blow. True, every man suffers alone - yet his suffering is never limited to himself. Suffering begets suffering ever sharper, deeper and more harrowing. In other words, Job's anguish, however similar to Abraham's, however reminiscent of Abraham's, cannot be explained by it. The fact that Job's torments had a precedent does not imply that they have a meaning. In this respect, Jewish tradition differs from the Buddhist concept: to insert individual anguish into cosmic anguish does not resolve, but on the contrary, aggravates the problem. Therein lies its universality. Every individual is both beginning and end; that is why he deserves an answer, not a consolation, unless the consolation itself becomes an answer.⁵⁴

The answer for Wiesel cannot be: 'Suffering brings out the better good in man'.

⁵³ Swinburne, 'Knowledge from Experience and the Problem of Evil', in *The Rationality of Belief in Honour of Basil Mitchell*, ed. William S. Abraham & Steven W. Moltzer, Oxford: 1987, p. 167.

⁵⁴ *Messengers*, p. 221.

LITERATURE: PHILOSOPHICAL AND THEOLOGICAL INSIGHTS

Suffering is evil, but unlike Swinburne and Maybaum, Wiesel does not try to define its characteristics or rationalize its existence. Like Heschel and unlike many philosophers and theologians, he does not debate the 'problem of evil'. Wiesel does not consider himself a theologian:

I don't like the word 'theologian.' I find it disturbing. What is a theologian, really? Someone who knows things about God. But who knows what God is? Kafka once said, 'Man cannot speak of God. If at all, he can speak to God.' So I'm still trying to speak to Him. How can we speak of Him?⁵⁵

Thus Wiesel's concern is how to speak to God, which he does through his literature, just as is Gutiérrez's intent is to show humanity how to speak about God and to God.

Wiesel is aware that in a theoretical framework the problem of evil can be negated by denying God's goodness, his power, or his existence. But he prefers the art of the writer, in which he may portray evil with faces and sounds, with shapes and smells. In Wiesel's first book *Night*, the exemplar for his subsequent writings, he simply shows evil in some of its guises; he offers no solutions. In a poignant and often quoted passage from *Night*, Wiesel describes the lingering death of a Jewish child hanging on the gallows at Auschwitz:

One day when we came back from work, we saw three gallows rearing up in the assembly place, three black crows.

⁵⁵ Quoted in Gene Koppell & Henry Kaufman, *A Small Measure of Victory*, An interview with Elie Wiesel, Pamphlet, University of Arizona, 1974, p. 13.

Roll call. SS all round us, machine guns trained; the traditional ceremony. Three victims in chains - one of them, the little servant, the sad-eyed angel... All eyes were on the child. He was lividly pale, almost calm, biting his lips. The gallows threw its shadow over him... The three victims mounted together on the chairs. The three necks were placed at the same moment within the nooses.

'Long live liberty!' cried the two adults.

But the child was silent.

'Where is God? Where is He? someone behind me asked.

At a sign from the head of the camp, the three chairs tipped over.

Total silence throughout the camp. On the horizon the sun was setting.

'Bare your heads!' yelled the head of the camp. His voice was raucous. We were weeping.

'Cover your heads!'

Then the march past began. The two adults were no longer alive. Their tongues hung swollen, blue-tinged. But the third rope was still moving; being so light, the child was still alive...

For more than half an hour he stayed there, struggling between life and death, dying in slow agony under our eyes. And we had to look him full in the face. He was still alive when I passed in front of him. His tongue was still red, his eyes were not yet glazed.

Behind me I heard the same man asking:

'Where is God now?

And I heard a voice within me answer him:

'Where is he? Here He is - He is hanging here on the this gallows...'⁵⁶

We do not have the moral, philosophical, or theological language to plumb the depths of this barbaric act. Soelle writes:

One has not yet travelled the way that leads from the question to the answer simply by reflecting on it theologically. The reflections stands in danger of missing the way itself since it is bound to other

⁵⁶ Wiesel, *Night*, pp. 76-77. This scenario of Wiesel's has been taken up by some Christian commentators (cf. Soelle (p. 145) and Kenneth Surin *Theology and the Problem of Evil*, Oxford: 1986, (pp. 116-117) which has created outrage in some parts of the Jewish community because Christian writers have equated the Jewish child with Christ.

situations and thus cannot comprehend the question.⁵⁷ Only in such a guise does a 'story' bring to life the full impact of this theological problem - the problem of the innocent sufferer.

These portraits, then, illustrate far better the injustice wreaked on the innocent sufferer than a philosophical/theological discussion on theodicy. Wiesel undermines traditional 'answers' to the problem of evil by the palpable presence of evil so clearly replayed in his writing.

In the play, *The Trial of God*, two Jews, aware that they are about to be killed in a pogrom, enact a Purim play in which God is tried for crimes against humanity. Brown writes:

The play insists that arguments justifying God in the face of evil are not only inadequate, they are diabolical. In attempting 'to justify the ways of God to man,' we do the devil's work, making a pact with deception. No argument can justify one dead child with a look of terror frozen on his or her face. If they 'explain' that terror, they are blasphemous.⁵⁸

The Six Days of Destruction (1988), one of Wiesel's later books, is again about the problem of victims and evil. Mary Jo Leddy writes:

After reading Wiesel's descriptions of evil, one can no longer remain innocent or ignorant of evil except by choice. Wiesel's description of the destructive fires of Auschwitz forever challenges Augustine's notion that evil 'is the absence of good.' Evil was present and real at Auschwitz because of the enforced absence of the Jews in

⁵⁷ Soelle, p. 145.

⁵⁸ Robert McAfee Brown, *Elie Wiesel: Messenger to All Humanity*, Notre Dame: 1983, p. 154.

the world.⁵⁹

Wiesel, as a witness to the suffering of innocents and as himself a victim, readily identifies with the Book of Job.

JOB - A MAN WHO SUFFERS AND CONTENDS WITH GOD

It is not surprising, then, that Job, the biblical man, the man who does not question his faith in God but does question the justice of God, often is a model in Wiesel's writings for a man who suffers and contends with God. His characters refer to Job, and he is discussed in Wiesel's essays and midrash:

And then, why not say it? I was preoccupied with Job, especially in the early years after the war. In those days he could be seen on every road of Europe. Wounded, robbed, mutilated. Certainly not happy. *Not resigned.*⁶⁰

Marcel Dubois writes about this affinity of the Jewish survivor of the Holocaust with Job:

Commenting on the works of Elie Wiesel, André Neher once said that the Book of Job was, for the survivor of Auschwitz the breviary of revolt. Job, 'that man betrayed by God,' was the symbol of those six million people, all named Job. The Book of Job was one that every survivor of the Holocaust could have written. The attitude of Job is a perpetual model of justification for every person under trial, and in particular for every son and daughter of Israel. This man did not hesitate to declare his distress, to rise up against God, to call Him

⁵⁹ Mary Jo Leddy, 'Between Destruction and Creation', in *Elie Wiesel: Between Memory and Hope*, ed. Carol Rittner, New York: 1990, p. 45.

⁶⁰ *Messengers*, pp. 233-234, (italics added).

to account, to insult and accuse Him.⁶¹

This call to witness, testified to by Job, is directed by Wiesel against God, which is unlike Gutiérrez who uses Job's iconoclastic revolt to inspire the oppressed to rebel, not against God, but against their human oppressors.

Two works of Wiesel's devoted exclusively to the Book of Job are: *Job: ou Dieu Dans la Tempête*, a commentary on the Book based on a two year long series of interviews with Josy Eisenberg for French television, and 'Job Our Contemporary' in *Messengers of God*, a collection of Wiesel's midrash.

There are no surprises in *Dieu*, considering Wiesel's proclivity to turn everything into some form of witness for the Holocaust. Its four hundred pages thoroughly examine most of the Book of Job with the exception of the second and third dialogues and the Poem of Wisdom. Eisenberg and Wiesel rely on traditional midrash to form a framework for their discussions,⁶² but Wiesel's biases (of a man like Job who has survived unspeakable atrocities because of some inexplicable quirk in the nature of God) colour all the commentary. The message, which Wiesel finds in Job, is one that he repeats again and again:

⁶¹ Marcel Dubois, 'The Memory of Self and the Memory of God', in *Elie Wiesel: Beyond Memory and Hope*, ed. Carol Rittner, New York: 1990, p, 73.

⁶² Curiously, the Book of Job is not treated extensively in the ancient rabbinic Midrash. For a further study of rabbinic comments on the figure of Job cf. Judith R. Baskin, *Pharoah's Counsellors, Job, Jethro, and Balaam in Rabbinic and Patristic Tradition*, Chico, Calif: 1983.

Job est quelqu'un qui souffre, mais en même temps
quelqu'un qui souffre contre...la souffrance!

En fait, Job est de tous les âges. Je suis
convaincu que chaque génération dit la même chose que
nous: que ce livre a été écrit pour elle.⁶³

In the opening paragraphs to 'Job Our Contemporary', Wiesel
writes:

Through the problems [Job] embodied and the trials
he endured, he seems familiar - even contemporary. We
know his history for having lived it. In times of stress
it is his words that we turn to express our anger, revolt
or resignation. He belongs to our most intimate
landscape, the most vulnerable part of our past.

Job: a moment of obsession, a gleam of anguish, a
cry contained but not stifled trying to pierce our
consciousness, a mirror a thousand times shattered
reflecting the image of a solitude bursting with madness.

In him come together legend and truth; in him come
together silence and the word. His truth is made of
legends, his words are nourished by silence.

Whenever we attempt to tell our own story, we
transmit his. The opposite is true also: those of his
legends we presumed invented, we lived through; those of
his words we thought illusory, proved to be true; we owe
them our experience of evil and death.⁶⁴

I believe what Wiesel identifies here, Job as the archetype of
the suffering human, is what has been the appeal of Job
through the ages and is why the four writers in this thesis
have relied on his story for the foundation of their own
testimony - the plight of Job is recognized by every human.

The themes of Wiesel's book and the essay obviously
overlap, but each adds its own dimension to his interaction
with Job. In *Dieu* Wiesel psychoanalyzes Job. Job is a bad
father because he simply assumes his children may have sinned,

⁶³ *Dieu*, p. 17.

⁶⁴ *Messengers*, p. 211-212.

and, therefore, offers sacrifices for them. He should have talked to them and not acted like a priest. This is unlike the standard interpretation which generally praises Job for being so concerned for his children as to offer sacrifices. Wiesel wonders why Job did not offer sacrifices for his sins as well; after all, he is human.⁶⁵ He concludes that Job could not have been Jewish. He does not behave like a Jew. If he were a Jew, Job would have questioned the messengers who come to tell him his crops have been destroyed, his animals have perished, and his children have been killed.⁶⁶ And finally, Wiesel affirms that all humans have problems, and, yet, Job in the beginning of his story arouses the scorn of Satan because he has the most and the best of everything that life has to offer - he has no complaints and no problems. This indicates to Wiesel that the tale is but a story and is orchestrated so that Satan will have a reason to challenge God.

The Joban Midrash of Baba Bathra, which Wiesel uses, concerns itself primarily with the Book of Job prologue and the epilogue.⁶⁷ To the question asked by the rabbis: when did

⁶⁵ *Dieu*, pp. 28-30.

⁶⁶ *Dieu*. p. 59.

⁶⁷ This is not unusual; it is not until the 18th century that writers began to concern themselves to a serious extent with the iconoclastic nature of the dialogues in the Book of Job. See for instance: Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason*, (1795), London: 1938, in which Paine cites his admiration for the Book. 'Patience has but a small share in the character of the person whom the book treats; on the contrary, his grief is

begin to speak their words are hypocritical and calculated.

Job: 'suffered, and *they* made speeches on suffering. He was crushed by sorrow, and *they* built theories and systems on the subject of grief, suffering and persecution'.⁷¹

In the television commentary the dialogues elicit the standard interpretive remarks from Wiesel and Eisenberg with only an occasional variance, more, obviously, for the television audience than for serious interpretation. Yet Wiesel's agenda is apparent; he continually molds Job into a contour which will facilitate his radical change of the conclusion.

In commenting on verses 3:17-26, in which Job appears to long for death as a surcease to his suffering, Wiesel suggests that it is not death that Job seeks but non-being. Job is being poetic; he exaggerates:

Mais je persiste quand même à attribuer à ce texte avant tout une valeur poétique. Et j'ajouterais: c'est en cela qu'il me touche. Parce qu'à travers ces versets, à travers leur lyrisme, Job laisse enfin percer sa souffrance, il nous confie enfin ce qu'il pense du monde. Et, dira-t-on, il exagère?...Oui bien sûr, c'est vrai: il exagère!⁷²

The reason Wiesel knows that Job exaggerates is because giving up, even to death, is foreign to his spirit. And Job, as mentioned earlier, could still mourn for those who had died.

Job does not acquiesce to his friends. If he had he would no longer be Job. And he continues to demand a dialogue

⁷¹ *Messengers*, p. 225.

⁷² *Dieu*, p. 115.

with God. For this Wiesel loves him:

Pour moi, Job représente la grandeur humaine: je le vois plutôt comme un personnage de Kafka qui cherche Dieu - et Dieu aussi, de son côté, par d'autres voies, le cherche... Ils sont à la fois adversaires et interlocuteurs...⁷³

Wiesel points out that Job would have preferred to think of himself as guilty, would have preferred to think of God as cruel and unjust rather than an indifferent God. Not only was Job abandoned by his friends and wife, he also felt abandoned by his God which is what caused Job to demand a hearing. 'His revolt ultimately was directed against his own solitude, which he knew to be irreducible, for it concealed God's face beneath that of man.'⁷⁴

The Voice from the Whirlwind

By demanding a hearing with God, defying the system, Job becomes a 'messenger to God'. 'He told God what He should have known for a long time, perhaps since always, that something was amiss in His universe.'⁷⁵ In chapter 40:7-14, where it is often suggested there is an indication of the limited power of God, Wiesel interprets these passages which conclude with:

Then I will acknowledge to you
that your own right hand can give you victory
(40:14).

⁷³ *Dieu*, p. 176.

⁷⁴ *Messengers*, p. 224.

⁷⁵ *Messengers*, p. 229.

with the novel idea that God is exhorting Job to be courageous. God is sympathetic; he loves Job. Wiesel says: 'Et c'est ce qui fait la beauté de ce chapitre: Dieu et Job sont amis.'⁷⁶ One wonders what kind of friendship this is - certainly not of the human variety; nor are these verses generally interpreted this way.

Wiesel, however, is aware that the Voice from the Whirlwind has simply ignored Job's petition for a hearing as in a similar manner traditional theodicies ignore the plight of the individual sufferer. God has ignored Job's personal plight:

Actually, God said nothing that Job could interpret as an answer or an explanation or a justification of his ordeals. God did not say: You sinned, you did wrong. Nor did He admit His own error. He dealt in generalities, offering nothing but vast simplifications. Job's individual experience, his personal misfortunes mattered little; what mattered was the context, the overall picture. The concept of suffering was more important than suffering; the question of knowledge was more important than knowledge. God spoke to Job of everything except that which concerned him; He denied him his right of individuality.⁷⁷

If God is not willing to recognize the individual in his or her suffering, he or she is alone. Thus, Wiesel existentially believes, humankind must be its own source for compassion.

The much disputed verse, 42:6, also earns a different interpretation from Wiesel, who changes the standard French from: 'C'est pourquoi je me suis dégoûté et me repens sur la

⁷⁶ *Dieu*, p. 381.

⁷⁷ *Messengers*, p. 231.

poussière et la cendre' to: 'Je suis consolé d'être poussière et cendre.' As Terrence Tilley notes: 'the multiple possibilities for rendering 42:6 mean that the interpreters make, rather than find the text which they interpret'.⁷⁸ Thus the reader imbues the text with his or her own philosophy of life. This is evident in Wiesel's interpretation. His Job is not repentant, does not recant; he is secure in his own humanity and takes comfort from that.

Martin Buber, in his interpretation of the Book of Job, elucidates Wiesel's existential problem, but then moves on, unlike Wiesel, to find solace in the Voice from the Whirlwind. Buber considers the Book of Job one of the first examples of a human quest in the form of speech/literature.⁷⁹ But Job's quest, while couched in the personal 'I', reflects a much bigger quest, that of an exiled people and their covenant with God. Buber interprets the question which is asked by Job to be: 'Why does God make me, or the people of Israel, suffer these things?'

Job's question comes into being as the question of a whole generation about the sense of its historic fate. Behind this 'I', made so personal here, there still stands the 'I' of Israel.⁸⁰

It is important for Buber to note that everything, beyond doubt or question, comes from God, but then the question is:

⁷⁸ Tilley, 'God and the Silence of Job', p. 260.

⁷⁹ Martin Buber, *The Prophetic Faith*, New York: 1949, p. 188.

⁸⁰ Buber, p. 189.

'How are these sufferings compatible with His godhead?'⁸¹

In Job, Buber finds there are four views of God's relationship to man's suffering. The first is not too different from Jung's archaic God. Buber calls him a 'small mythological idol', in which the faithful sufferer is true to an untrue God.

The second is the God of the friends which is a 'great ideological idol' that rewards or punishes his people according to their merit. Interestingly, Buber relates this position to the God of *religion*, not the *living God*. The dogma of requital presented by the friends' orthodox view is an attempt to unmask Job's life and present it as a charade:

Instead of the 'cruel' (30:21) and living God, to Whom [Job] clings, religion offers him a reasonable and rational God, a deity Whom he, Job, does not perceive either in his own existence or in the world, and Who obviously is not to be found anywhere save only in the very domain of religion.⁸²

The third view, which seems similar to Wiesel's, is of Job who finds that God contradicts his revelation by 'hiding his face' (13:24). God is 'at one and the same time fearfully noticeable and unperceivable' (9:11).⁸³ Job can no longer believe in a just God; therefore his faith has become more complex. 'He believes now in justice in spite of believing in

⁸¹ Buber, p. 189.

⁸² Buber, p. 191.

⁸³ Buber, p. 191.

God, and he believes in God in spite of believing in justice.'⁸⁴ Before Job had conceived of God as near and intimate: 'Now he only experiences Him through suffering and contradiction, but even in this way he does experience God.'⁸⁵ Consequently Job petitions God to avenge the injustices of God, and it is this separation from God that leads to Job's despair.

When God answers Job out of the whirlwind, even though Job hears nothing relevant to his petitions, he no longer feels God is remote; God has offered himself. God is present while his mysterium remains hidden. Buber embraces this paradox. For him the riddle of suffering can be only overcome by revelation. 'The God of revelation, works from His godhead, in which every reason and purpose held by man are at once abolished and fulfilled.'⁸⁶ Wiesel has not been able to make this 'leap of faith'. His faith is still trying to establish his belief in God.

The 'Rewriting' of the Epilogue

The most disputed issue for Wiesel becomes the prose conclusion in which Job dies an old man, saturated with years: *Vayamat Iyov zaken useva yamin*. Wiesel believes it would have been better if Job had 'died without having repented, without

⁸⁴ Buber, p. 192.

⁸⁵ Buber, p. 192.

⁸⁶ Buber, p. 196.

Job for not continuing to rebel. The narrator relates:

[Michael] was seeking his God, tracking him down. He would find Him yet. And then He won't get off as lightly as He did with Job. He won't win out so quickly. I'll be a match for Him. I'm not afraid of Him, not intimidated.

Michael never ceased resenting Job. That biblical rebel should never have given in. At the last moment he should have reared up, shaken a fist, and with a resounding bellow defied that transcendent, inhuman Justice in which suffering has no weight in the balance.

I won't be had so easily, Michael thought. I'll ask Him, why do You play hide-and-seek with Your own image? You'll tell me that You created man in order to put him to the test - which explains nothing. The contest is too unequal; and anyway it isn't an explanation I need, but a clear, concise answer in human terms!⁹⁰

The writing here in this early work is unequivocal.

Wiesel's later works do not relent in their quest but have become more tolerant about the lack of answers. Berenbaum notes that Wiesel's attitude toward Job seems to have changed over the years:

The early Wiesel was far more antagonistic toward Job and less tolerant of his yielding. This may partially be due to Wiesel's failure to reinterpret Job in his early writings and to the reinterpretation that he gives to Job and other challengers of God in his later writings. An example of this shift in attitude is to be found in *Souls on Fire* where Wiesel, in speaking of Rabbi Levi Yitzchak of Berdichev, said of his attacks on God: 'As a child I loved them and saw in them nothing but love and friendship. Today I feel their weight of despair and revolt and love them even more' (p. 91).⁹¹

Elie Wiesel's Modern Job

Thus it is apparent that the modern Job, who is

⁹⁰ Town, p. 52.

⁹¹ Berenbaum, p. 50, f. 34.

represented by many of the fictional characters of Wiesel's, adamantly calls God to account for the atrocities of the Holocaust. These characters, like Wiesel himself, use an approach similar to that of Levi Yitzchak of Bereditchev - despair, revolt and love. It is man against God. Yet, no matter how vehement the argument becomes, there is still a sense of God's presence; the argument is necessary and must continue in order to prevent evil through God's acts of indifference. In 1975, in a conversation with University of Oregon students about the Holocaust, Wiesel states: 'My disputation with God still goes on. To me it was an injustice on a theological scale, on a universal scale. God was silent, and therefore His silence was unjust.'⁹² In the work of Gustavo Gutiérrez this silence is ignored. For Archibald MacLeish this silence is an indication of an indifferent God. And for Carl Jung the silence is created by the inability of the human psyche to come to terms with the dual nature of the unconscious - the Self which is an aspect of God.

Elie Wiesel - Two Problems With the Book of Job

There are two problems with the Book of Job as Wiesel understands it. The first concerns the children. Wiesel is adamant that it is possible to accept one's suffering on a personal basis, but one cannot condone the suffering of

⁹² Wiesel, 'Questions and Answers: At the University of Oregon, 1975' in *Against Silence: The Voice and Vision of Elie Wiesel*, ed. Irving Abrahamson, New York: 1985, vol. 3, p. 229.

others, particularly in the case of children:

Je ne le comprends pas et je lui en veux. Jusqu'ici je le défendais, j'essayais de me faire son avocat...mais là, je ne le comprends plus. Parce que quand même! Il a perdue ses biens, bon! Il a perdu son bétail, d'accord! Mais ses fils...Comment peut-il ne pas protester? Comment peut-il ne pas demander à Dieu: 'Mais pourquoi? pourquoi eux? Qu'ont-ils fait, eux? Tu veux me punir? Soit! Punis-moi! Tu veux être injuste avec moi? Entendu: j'accepte: sois injuste! Peut-être, du reste, ne suis-je pas moi-même assez juste! Mais mes fils, mais mes filles?'⁹³

Unlike Gutiérrez, who tries to ignore the unjust death of the children, the problem of the children continues to haunt the rest of Wiesel's commentary.

Wiesel is unwilling to find solace in the whirlwind speeches because of the unwarranted sacrifice of the children. Job may be able to acquiesce to God in regards to his suffering, but just as Ivan Karamazov cannot abide a mother accepting an apology from the murderer of her child, Wiesel finds it unacceptable for Job to surrender on behalf of his children.

Likewise, the death of one million innocent children in the Holocaust is an injustice on a theological, universal scale and is related to what Wiesel considers the second lapse in the Book of Job. Job should have realized that:

[B]y accepting Your inequities, do I not become Your accomplice? Now it is my turn to choose between You and my children, and I refuse to repudiate them. I demand that justice be done to them, if not to me, and that the trial continue.⁹⁴

⁹³ *Dieu*, p. 70.

⁹⁴ *Messengers*, p. 234.

This demand is in accord with the existential humanism of Camus. Humanity must take charge of its own destiny because God has grown lax in ordering his universe.

Wiesel suggests, in 'Job Our Contemporary', that because Job appears to have caved in so quickly to the Voice out of the Whirlwind, he did not in fact do so, but discovered a novel way to continue his resistance: 'He pretended to abdicate before he even engaged his battle.'⁹⁵ Job, therefore, will continue to argue with God, and his apparent abdication from the fray is just a decoy which will allow him future confrontations with God about his creation.⁹⁶

For Wiesel, Job is an archetype of the suffering man who wages battle against his suffering:

Job personified man's eternal quest for justice and truth - he did not choose resignation. Thus he did not suffer in vain; thanks to him, we know that it is given to man to transform divine injustice into human justice and compassion.⁹⁷

One must contend: with God, with human evil. One must testify to the atrocities in the world in the hope that the more people are made aware of injustices the more they will fight

⁹⁵ *Messengers*, p. 234.

⁹⁶ The idea that a figure in the Hebrew Bible would not actually acquiesce to a message from God is not unique with Wiesel. In a recent essay Lippman Bodoff suggests that in the Akedah Abraham is stalling by taking so long to prepare for his journey up the mountain with Isaac - gathering fire wood, etc. He is giving God time to change his mind, testing God to see if he lives up to Abraham's moral expectations of him. Cf. 'The Real Test of the Akedah' in *Judaism*, 1993, 42: 165, pp. 71-92.

⁹⁷ *Messengers*, p. 235.

against them.

JOB AND AUSCHWITZ - OTHER INTERPRETATIONS

There are no overtly critical works devoted to Wiesel and his interpretation of the Book of Job; however there are other post-Holocaust Jewish interpreters of the Book who come to different conclusions. Richard Rubenstein, using a psychological approach, suggests that: 'Job does not provide a helpful image for comprehending Auschwitz'.⁹⁸ While Rubenstein admires the Book of Job as an exercise between religious belief and common sense, he feels that Job's dilemma has no relevancy for those who died at Auschwitz. 'Job seeks insight, not escape.'⁹⁹

Teach me, and I will be silent;
make me understand how I have gone wrong (6:24).

Job survives his trial. Most of the inmates of Auschwitz did not survive; they had no opportunity to discover how they had 'gone wrong'. Rubenstein admits, however, that for Wiesel, the Book of Job has some relevancy because he lived through the atrocities of the death camps and survived:

Elie Wiesel can regard Job as a model for his anguish, because his sufferings were in truth a test for him. He has survived his ordeal with his faith deepened. One cannot liken those who were immediately executed to Job.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁸ Rubenstein, 'Job and Auschwitz' in *New Theology*, no. 8, 1978, p. 271.

⁹⁹ Rubenstein, (1978), p. 276.

¹⁰⁰ Rubenstein, (1978), p. 281.

I believe Rubenstein to be wrong; Wiesel's faith was badly damaged. Only as the years have progressed has Wiesel, like Job, begun to come to terms with his experience. As Berenbaum noted, Wiesel's attitude to Job has changed through the years.¹⁰¹ He has become less antagonistic toward Job as he has come to terms with his own revolt and despair with God.

Rubenstein suggests that the victims who went immediately to their deaths at Auschwitz can be likened to Job's children¹⁰² - not to Job.¹⁰³ The appeal of Job the archetype is that he maintains his integrity in spite of his tragedies - his losses, his illness, his wife, his friends. Those in the camps, who did survive at Auschwitz, were generally totally degraded. They often assumed some of the characteristics of their anti-Semitic captors or developed a childish dependence on their guards.¹⁰⁴

This is an important reason why Job fails as a model for understanding the camps theologically. Admittedly, there were Job-like survivors such as Wiesel, but those psychiatrists who have studied behavior in the camps

¹⁰¹ Cf. footnote # 92.

¹⁰² Emil Fackenheim makes a similar comparison. Those who died in the gas chambers were Job's first set of children. Perhaps post-Holocaust Jewry is Job's second set of children. Cf. Fackenheim, (1978), pp. 47, 92-95.

¹⁰³ Cf. Rubenstein, (1978), p. 282.

¹⁰⁴ Several psychiatrists who survived the death camps have written about the psychological reactions of the inmates and what was necessary for their survival. Cf. Elie Cohen, *Human Behavior in the Concentration Camps*, trans. M.H. Braaksma, New York: 1973; Bruno Bettelheim, *The Informed Heart*, Glencoe, Illinois: 1960; Victor Frankl, *From Death Camp to Existentialism*, Boston: 1959.

and who possessed first-hand knowledge of their subject have concluded that most inmates were so totally assaulted both emotionally and physically that they were incapable of maintaining a sense of their own adult integrity and dignity. It is precisely this capacity which distinguished Job in his trial before God and man.¹⁰⁵

Rubenstein contends that to compare the experience of Job to the experience of those in the death camps is a 'defensive oversimplification'. Job's iconoclasm does produce the Voice From the Whirlwind. There was only 'divine' silence at Auschwitz.

Relying heavily on the atheistic existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre and the theological idiom of Paul Tillich, Rubenstein believes it would be far better for humankind to admit to the 'death of God', to admit that the Judeo-Christian conception of God is no longer relevant for our culture or social issues.¹⁰⁶

The thread uniting God and man, heaven and earth, has been broken. We stand in a cold, silent, unfeeling cosmos, unaided by any purposeful power beyond our own resources. After Auschwitz, what else can a Jew say about God.¹⁰⁷

Rubenstein, like Ivan Karamazov, does not deny God; he simply feels God's existence is irrelevant to the human condition. However, just as Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish and Jung, Rubenstein draws his strength of purpose from the self-empowerment of existentialism. 'As the world outside becomes

¹⁰⁵ Rubenstein, (1978), p. 285.

¹⁰⁶ Cf. Gilman, p. 102.

¹⁰⁷ Rubenstein, quoted in Gilman, p. 202.

ever more spoiled, sterile, and denatured, men have no alternative but inner space; they must find their humanity within themselves and each other.'¹⁰⁸

A radically different perspective on the Book of Job and the place of the Holocaust in Jewish history is held by Lawrence Corey. His contention is: 'that rather than dealing with undeserved suffering, the Book of Job is a meticulous exposition of *deserved* suffering, and a parable of God's relationship to Knesset Israel, the Holy Community of Israel'.¹⁰⁹ According to Corey, Job's suffering was deserved punishment because he failed to perform God's *mitzvot*, or 'commandments'.¹¹⁰ Corey finds the evidence for this theory in Deuteronomy:

The Lord will send upon you disaster, panic, and frustration in everything you attempt to do, until you are destroyed and perish quickly, on account of the evil of your deeds (28:20)....Your ox shall be butchered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it. Your donkey shall be stolen in front of you, and shall not be restored to you. Your sheep shall be given to your enemies, without anyone to help you. Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people....You shall be continually abused and crushed (28:31-33).

Corey notes a similarity between this text and the first round of Job's disasters in which Job's oxen and donkeys are stolen, his sheep and servants destroyed by fire and his children

¹⁰⁸ Rubenstein, (1978), p. 289.

¹⁰⁹ Lawrence Corey, 'Suffering and the Redemptive Destiny of Israel' in *Dor Le Dor: Our Biblical Heritage*, vol. XVII, no. 2, winter 1988/9, p. 121.

¹¹⁰ Cf. Corey, p. 122.

crushed when the house they were in collapsed (Job 1:13-19). Corey states that even though Job feared God and shunned evil '[n]owhere in the author's description is Job called *mitzvot* observant'.¹¹¹ Thus he has been punished by the Lord.

The sufferings of Job, however, align him with the suffering servant in Isaiah (52:13, 53:1-12) which means that after Job repents he is chosen to be God's servant and is 'elevated to the status of God's Holy Priest by whose prayers and intercession the Gentile and sinner are redeemed'.¹¹² Consequently Job is responsible for the salvation of his Edomite, Gentile friends. Likewise Knesset Israel is God's 'Chosen Priest' and is responsible for the salvation of the rest of the world:

It is for this destiny that the House of Israel has been privileged to be inflicted by the Master of the Universe with the sufferings of Job. It is for this holy office that the Jew is forged in the iron furnace of Egypt.¹¹³

Like Ignaz Maybaum, Corey suggests that the Jews who died in the Holocaust are the suffering servants of the Lord who will redeem the rest of the world. Like Job, they are rewarded for their sufferings - in this modern scenario with the State of Israel. Corey's interpretation of the Book of Job and the atrocities of the death camps is, I suggest, the antithesis of the comfort Wiesel finds in the Book of Job. Nor is Wiesel

¹¹¹ Corey, p. 123.

¹¹² Corey, p. 126.

¹¹³ Corey, p. 128.

able to impart any 'greater' mission in the meaningless destruction of the Jews by Hitler's 'final solution'.

Another approach to the Book of Job is found in the work of Elizer Berkovits. Berkovits sees himself as a 'man of faith' - Job's brother, because unlike Wiesel he has not gone through the hellish torments of Auschwitz:

We are not Job and we dare not speak and respond as if we were. We are only Job's brother. We must believe because our brother Job believed: and we must question, because our brother Job so often could not believe any longer. This is not a comfortable situation; but it is our condition in the era after the holocaust.¹¹⁴

The duty of a man of faith is to defend God against false accusations of injustice like those of Job's comforters. But it is difficult for such a man to present a cogent argument when surrounded by the apparent arbitrariness of God's justice:

This is also the essence of Job's dilemma. The sustained fire of his plaint is not derived from his personal plight, but from the passion of his faith. There is no weakening of faith here. On the contrary. It is the very power of the faith that lends force to the accusation.¹¹⁵

Wiesel's 'force of accusation' seems to be derived more from his experiences in the death camps than from a strong faith.

Berkovits suggests that Auschwitz is not singular to Jewish history. There have been many Holocausts.

Berkovits takes the daring step of balancing Auschwitz with the reestablishment of the State of Israel. Both

¹¹⁴ Elizer Berkovits, *Faith After the Holocaust*, New York: 1973, p. 5.

¹¹⁵ Berkovits, p. 68.

have to be integrated simultaneously into the larger pattern of Jewish history. To isolate either one is to misread the pattern.¹¹⁶

However the victims of Auschwitz cannot be likened to Job because, ultimately, Job hears the Voice from the Whirlwind while they hear only silence. Berkovits writes:

To the very end God remained silent and in hiding. Millions were looking for him - in vain. They had heard of Him by the hearing of the ear, but what was granted to their eyes to behold was 'dust and ashes' into which they - and everything dear to them - were turned.¹¹⁷

In the death camps there were those who defied God with authentic rebellion and there were those who went to their deaths defiantly singing *Ani Mamin - I believe*. But for those who have not gone through their experiences, Berkovits suggests, one may only assume the role of Job's brother - as a witness who can support the rebellion of the believers and the belief of the rebellious.

Neither the authenticity of rebellion nor the authenticity of faith is available to those who are only Job's brother. The outsider, the brother of the martyrs, enters a confusing heritage. He inherits both the rebellion and the witness of the martyrs: a rebellion not silenced by the witness; a witness not made void by the rebellion. In our generation, Job's brother, if he wishes to be true to his God-given heritage, 'reasons' with God in believing rebellion and rebellious belief.¹¹⁸

Berkovits, in the role of Job's brother, is witness to Wiesel's position of rebellion and also to his attempts to

¹¹⁶ Gilman, p. 208.

¹¹⁷ Berkovits, p. 69.

¹¹⁸ Berkovits, p. 69.

reaffirm his belief.

THE UNIVERSALITY OF WIESEL'S ARGUMENTS FOR JUSTICE

Wiesel not only argues for the Jew, he argues for human rights throughout the world. He has argued for the Cambodians, for the Palestinians, for all oppressed peoples.¹¹⁹ He understands their plight on a subjective level. For Wiesel, the greatest evil is indifference, that is why he changes the conclusion to the Book of Job. If Job no longer protests the death of his children, then in his indifference he too is contemptible - evil. In an interview with Carol Rittner, he responds to the question: 'Is evil a noun or a verb?'

It's both. It's everything. I think evil has many faces, but I would say that all of these faces have masks, and beneath the mask there is indifference. That is what all the faces of evil have in common: indifference. And the moment you start tearing off the mask, good has a chance because you are already fighting. It's easy to fight evil. It's enough not to be indifferent.¹²⁰

Consequently, it is each individual who is responsible for creating good in the world. Indifference, on a world-wide level, ignored the plight of the Jews during World War II. And indifference is still rampant everywhere.

For his efforts on behalf of all oppressed peoples,

¹¹⁹ Cf. Brown, (1983), pp. 109-138.

¹²⁰ Carol Rittner, 'An Interview with Elie Wiesel', in *Elie Wiesel: Between Memory and Hope*, ed. Carol Rittner, New York: 1990, p. 36.

Wiesel was awarded the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1986 (as he notes the prize is not for his literature). He begins his acceptance speech with the traditional prayer: *Ani Maamin*:
 'Ani Maamin, I believe... I believe in the coming of the Messiah...I believe in hope for a future, just as I believe in the irresistible power of memory.'¹²¹ Wiesel has taken the memories, the memories of all those deaths, particularly of the children, and turned them into creative witness, a role he believes belongs to all modern Jobs. The conclusion to his acceptance speech:

The only lesson I have learned from my experiences is twofold: first, that there are no plausible answers to what we have endured. There are no theological answers, there are no psychological answers, there are no religious answers, there are no philosophical answers. The only conceivable answer is a *moral* answer. This means there must be a moral element to whatever we do. Second, that just as despair can be given to me only by another human being, hope too can be given to me only by another human being. Mankind must remember also, and above all, that like hope and whatever hope signifies, peace is not God's gift to his creatures. Peace is a very special gift - it is our gift to each other. And so *Ani Maamin* - I believe - that we must hope for one another also because of one another. And *Ani Maamin* - I Believe - that because of our children and theirs we should be worthy of that hope, of that redemption, and of some measure of peace.¹²²

Josy Eisenberg, in the concluding summary to *Job ou Dieu dans la Tempête*, suggests there are two competing currents running through the Book of Job - revolt and submission. She says:

¹²¹ Wiesel, 'The Nobel Lecture: Hope, Despair, and Memory,' in *The Nobel Peace Prize 1986*, New York: 1986, p. 21.

¹²² 'Nobel', p. 31.

C'est là, me semble-t-il, la véritable morale du livre Job: nous sommes, nous serons toujours, tout ensemble de Job et de Dieu. Nous faisons nôtres les terribles accusations que Job a proférées: Dieu semble jouer avec l'homme, se jouer de sa créature, être indifférent à sa souffrance. Et Dieu ne fait rien pour dissiper ce 'malaise dans la civilisation'. Mais, d'autre part, au-delà des apparences, la crédibilité divine est à la mesure de l'immense sagesse du Créateur. Et il me semble que ce déchirement permanent, cette contradiction de tous les instants, c'est l'essence même de notre foi.¹²³

These two currents of revolt and submission run through the work and the heart of Elie Wiesel. Perhaps this is why he considers himself a modern Job. But unlike the biblical Job (in spite of Wiesel's modern reversal) Wiesel is still arguing with God. He does not accept traditional theodicies, in any format, as capable of justifying the Holocaust. Just as Job, Wiesel will not play the game of the philosopher and theologian and manufacture theoretical answers to the problem of evil, but chooses to relate to reality through the personal experience of his suffering and the suffering of others. He is worried about Job's children even if Job is not.

Wiesel is unwilling and/or unable to justify God's ways to man. Unlike Swinburne, his experiences in the death camps have irrefutably proven to him that not all suffering creates the better good no matter how far removed it may seem. And like Heschel each individual is responsible for his or her behavior and must give love and compassion to all humankind. Only then will the world be a better place to live; it is not

¹²³ *Dieu*, p. 399.

the responsibility of God but of his creatures.

Thanks to [Job], we know that it is given to man to transform divine injustice into human justice and compassion.¹²⁴

Because Wiesel will not entertain the question of theodicy I wonder if in the core of his being, which is reflected in his writings, there is not an undercurrent, a resignation, a fear that God is limited.

Gutiérrez relies on the Book of Job to reassure the misbegotten in Latin America that God is on their side. Gutiérrez believes that ultimately Job is rewarded because he has taken on the burdens of the poor. Wiesel, on the other hand, has used the Book of Job to show that God has neglected the misbegotten and must be reminded of his covenant. In conclusion, however, both Gutiérrez and Wiesel believe that human love and compassion are the most forceful weapons we have in our arsenal in crimes against humanity. Next, we will see that Archibald MacLeish uses the Book of Job to illustrate that love and compassion are all the good that remains in this godless universe.

¹²⁴ *Messengers*, p. 235.

ARCHIBALD MACLEISH: A HUMANIST'S PERSPECTIVE

*Thus men forgot that
All deities reside in the human breast.*
William Blake¹

To me, a man committed to no creed, and more uncertain than I should be of certain ultimate beliefs, the God of Job seems closer to this generation than he has to any others in centuries.²

In the first section of this chapter, there is a survey of MacLeish's writings in which he takes a classic myth, Faust, or biblical myths, Eve, Cain and Abel and rewrites them in order to make them what, he considers, more relevant in today's world. This is the same rationale with which he reinterprets the Book of Job. Then there is a discussion of the background influences which finally come to fruition in MacLeish's Pulitzer prize winning play *J.B.* The play is analyzed to show how MacLeish changes the thrust of the Book of Job to fit his eventual conclusion that love and compassion are the only truths in which humans can believe. There is a survey of the play's reception by various theologians and

¹ William Blake, *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* in *Complete Writings*, ed. Geoffrey Keynes, London: 1966, p. 153.

² MacLeish, 'About Trespass on a Monument', *New York Times*, 7 December, 1958, sec. 2, p. 15.

critics and its continued viability to the present time.

Archibald MacLeish was an extraordinarily motivated man. Not only were his choices of careers wide ranging, but he was successful as a lawyer, journalist, Librarian of Congress, assistant secretary of state and spokesman for the republic, teacher, playwright and poet. His multiplicity of interests and talents aroused criticism amongst his peers - the poets maintaining that a poet of any worth should not devote his talents to journalism or part of his life to government, while those in government could not believe a poet and journalist could be of any merit in public service. Later, when he began his teaching career at Harvard, his students were first skeptical that anyone of MacLeish's background could possibly teach writing to such 'superior' students as he would encounter there. Thus the two most powerful goals in MacLeish's life often competed for his time and friendships: 'he wanted to write great poetry and he wanted to advance great causes'.³ An acquaintance of MacLeish, and the Poet in Residence for two terms at the Library of Congress, Josephine Jacobsen, suggests that MacLeish suffered a great deal from the scorn heaped on him by his peers, whether they were poets

³ Scott Donaldson, *Archibald MacLeish: An American Life*, Boston: 1992, p. ix.

or statesmen.⁴ The antagonism that MacLeish experienced perhaps is explained best in psychological terms by Carl Jung:

Society expects and indeed must expect every individual to play the part assigned to him as perfectly as possible, so that a man who is a parson must not only carry out his official duties objectively, but at all times and in all circumstances play the role of a parson in a flawless manner. Society demands this as a kind of surety; each must stand at his post, here a cobbler, there a poet. No man is expected to be both. Such a man would be 'different' from other people, not quite reliable. In the academic world he would be a dilettante, in politics an 'unpredictable' quantity, in religion a free-thinker - in short, he would always be suspected of unreliability and incompetence, because society is persuaded that only the cobbler who is not a poet can supply workmanlike shoes.⁵

In spite of the suspicions of the public, MacLeish received many honours for his poetry. Among these citations were three Pulitzer Prizes: the first for *Conquistador* (1932), an American epic, the second for *Collected Poems, 1917-1952* (1952) which also was awarded the Bollingen (shared with William Carlos Williams), the National Book Award and the Shelly Memorial Award. The third Pulitzer Prize was for drama and was awarded to the verse play *J.B.* (1959), an adaptation of the Book of Job for the stage and a reflection of twentieth century existentialism. The play also won the Tony award for Drama and represented the United States in the Brussels World

⁴ The above recollection is from a private conversation with Mrs. Jacobsen.

⁵ Carl Jung, *Collected Works*, vol. VII, para. 305.

Fair in 1958.⁶

While we have numerous books of poetry and essays by MacLeish and studies, interviews, and reminiscences about or with MacLeish, we have very little information about the 'interior' man or what motivated him to write his poetry and verse dramas, other than a compulsion to use his skills to bring to public awareness the state of the nation and/or the individual:

Two of his friends at Harvard, W. Jackson Bate and John Finley, both characterized him as having an unusually rounded personality, hard to get hold of. He was genial 'Archie' to almost everyone who knew him, yet revealing of himself to almost no one.⁷

When in the process of a series of interviews for what MacLeish called the 'autobiography of his public life', he wrote in a letter to his interviewers:

I wonder if talking about individual poems and so forth is what we ought to do with this. What we've been doing is making sense of the vagaries of a life that has touched too many places perhaps, and sort of related them to each other....They either do their job as poems or they don't. Nothing I can say will help.⁸

Thus, why MacLeish was drawn to the Book of Job can only be answered with partial truths and circumstantial evidence.

⁶ Cf. Richard Calhoun, 'Archibald MacLeish's J.B. - Religious Humanism in the 80's', in *The Proceedings of the Archibald MacLeish Symposium May 7-8, 1982*, eds. Bernard A. Drabeck, Helen E. Ellis, Seymour Rudin, Lanham, Maryland: 1988, pp. 78-79.

⁷ Donaldson, p. xiv.

⁸ *Archibald MacLeish: Reflections*, eds. Bernard A. Drabeck & Helen E. Ellis, Amherst: 1986, p. 11.

The writer and poet Donald Hall, one of MacLeish's first troublesome students at Harvard, who continued his acquaintance with him and finally became his friend after thirty years, writes:

MacLeish's face was handsome, benign, and horsey with a long upper lip; its expression was welcoming, friendly, confident, joshing....[but] these appearances concealed their own opposites....MacLeish's engulfing gregarious heartiness concealed a diffident spirit. Maybe everyone is rock, everyone is whirlpool.⁹

Consequently the very public, outspoken man had a private side which may be discerned only in the subtle undercurrents of his writings: 'If MacLeish can be said to have had a mission as distinguished from a vocation, it has been to integrate the role of poet with that of public man.'¹⁰

THE EARLY STAGES

MacLeish was born in Glencoe, Illinois on 7 May, 1892, the second child of his father's third marriage. MacLeish considered his mother, Martha Hillard MacLeish, 'one of the great North American women'.¹¹ He credits his mother with understanding the relationship 'between intellectual rhythm

⁹ Donald Hall, 'Rocks and Whirlpools: Archibald MacLeish and Yvor Winters', *Their Ancient Glittering Eyes*, New York: 1992, p. 111.

¹⁰ Grover Smith, 'Archibald MacLeish', in *Seven American Poets from MacLeish to Nemerov*, ed. Denis Donoghue, Minneapolis: 1972, p. 19.

¹¹ *Reflections*, p. 15.

and verbal rhythm' which she passed on to her children through her choices of reading materials: such selections as parts of the King James Bible that had narrative qualities, Shakespeare, and Dante.

MacLeish attended Yale where he wrote fiction and won awards for his poetry. He authored the 'Class Poem 1915' and *Songs for a Summer's Day* which was the Yale University Prize Poem of 1915 and published by Yale University Press. While at Yale he continued to grapple with his childhood problems of faith and briefly considered a career in the ministry.

Religious doubts are evident in his poetry and prose from his Yale undergraduate days. In the short story 'The Charity of Love' (1913) the romantic hero, John Claverhill, is skeptical about orthodox religion and finds his gods in nature. Probably speaking for the author, he says: 'I believe in a religion that speaks to the heart, not the head', and when the girl who has been the recipient of this speech admonishes him that his sentiment smacks of paganism, he agrees. 'Our gods are the laughing brooks, the winds in the treetops, the flowing sea of grain.'¹² Nature will continue to play an important part in MacLeish's writings, and his belief in love as the framework for any faith will come to its ultimate fruition in *J.B.*

Two years later, in the poem 'The Grail' MacLeish again

¹² Quoted in Donaldson, p. 64.

expresses his attempts to find answers to his soul-searching questions:

Yes, I have sought for Truth,
 And flung against the ready-rending tooth
 Of doubt, and beat with bleeding blows
 The bars invisible to heaven.
 I have cried out to Christ who loves and knows,
 And knowing still can love,
 That my might may be riven
 With lightning of His truth and might thereof:

 Shall be no answer made?¹³

Before he went to fight in World War I, MacLeish was enrolled in Harvard Law School. There he wrote his first one-act play, *Our Lady of Troy*, which takes its plot from *Faust*, a work that influenced him as it did Carl Jung. Like most of his subsequent plays, he uses a 'canonical' work which asks ultimate questions and then recasts the theme, applying a meaning peculiarly his own. When Faust is coerced to produce the apparition of Helen of Troy, he believes she is just a product of his craft. When she moves and speaks independently of his will, Faust is driven to acknowledge that the power of the imagination is far more real than all of his science. In a final anguished speech, Faust admits:

'A rose the world has dreamed'; - and I, I stood
 Peak-high in those grey mountains of my mind
 And saw all truth, all science, all the laws
 Spread out beneath my feet. I sold all things
 To know that all I knew was all the world
 Of knowledge; and I bought - why, nothing then, -
 Or only this at last - a space to know
 That out beyond my furthest range of thought

¹³ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 64.

All knowledge shines - a radiance of stars.¹⁴

The poet's appeal to art and beauty arguably suggest that there is more truth found in them than that gleaned from reason and science. There are more things in heaven and earth than 'all the world of knowledge' could ever fathom.

After the war and while living in Paris, MacLeish began work on his first verse drama, *Nobodaddy*, in which he relies on the myth of Adam and Eve, Cain and Abel, but transforms these themes into 'modern concepts' so that contemporary readers will come to understand what he believes are the implications of these tales.¹⁵ In an interview given in 1978, MacLeish relates that

back in my late twenties [*Nobodaddy* was substantially completed in 1923], I was assailed by the implications of Genesis, the great myth of Genesis which to my mind, with all reservations allowed for it, is the greatest of all myths. There is nothing that quite does what that does. What it says, and says loud and clear, in tones which subsequent generations have neglected and paid no attention to, is that the beginning of human life, the beginning of humanity, is the beginning of consciousness.

¹⁴ MacLeish, *Our Lady of Troy, in Tower of Ivory*, New Haven, 1917, p. 21.

¹⁵ In Act I of MacLeish's play, Adam and Eve eat the forbidden fruit and become aware that they are isolated, cut off from their animal natures. In Act II, they flee from the Garden of Eden into an alien world which does not care and a universe which ignores humanity and its values. Act III, thirty-five years later in a drought ridden desert east of Eden, Cain and Abel re-enact their story, but this time Cain condemns Abel for wanting to crawl to God in order to return to a oneness with nature. Cain argues that if one does not stand upright to God now then man will be condemned to eternally bowing before him. Cain stabs Abel with the sacrificial knife and runs off into the dark.

When we ate of the tree of knowledge it is not - in Genesis - what the fundamentalists preachers make it out to be, a mere knowledge of sex, though down to then Adam and Eve were totally sexless in relation to each other. The beginning of humanity is the beginning of the consciousness of self as human, of the conscious, and it was for that you were going to die if you ate of the tree. It is a tremendous myth. It hasn't even begun to be explored yet.¹⁶

The title of the play, *Nobodaddy*, is taken from William Blake's sardonic name for the orthodox Christian God whom he called 'Old Nobodaddy' because he represents a God of mystery and power as well as of cruelty - the same God which both he and MacLeish find in the Book of Job.¹⁷

Both writers suggest that Satan is not a sinner but a non-believer; one, who by his very questions, leads human beings into a state of discontent often equated by Christians with sin. But the reverse is actually true; Satan helps humans to realize the good within themselves. These beliefs presented in *Nobodaddy* are reinforced later in *J.B.*

In *Nobodaddy* MacLeish, almost without exception, has emphasized the polar opposites of the orthodox interpretation of the Genesis story. It is important to remember, however, that *Nobodaddy* is a poetic essay and not meant as a biblical

¹⁶ *Reflections*, p. 203.

¹⁷ Blake used the term *Nobodaddy* in several poems, but his strongest statement about *Nobodaddy* is found in the short poem entitled 'To Nobodaddy' in *The Complete Poetry and Prose of William Blake*, ed. David V. Erdman, Berkeley: 1982, p. 471. Blake, of course, also relied on the Book of Job in an artistic series of illustration which underscore his unorthodox religious beliefs.

commentary. Donaldson summarizes these polarities succinctly:

God is not an omnipotent deity but the life force in nature. Adam is humanity's first hero, not its first sinner. Eve is not the dupe of Satan but the instrument of man's rebelling against his animal origins. Abel symbolizes humanity's debilitating yearning to return to the womb of the natural world, and Cain becomes a heroic figure who dares to cut the cord.¹⁸

MacLeish makes Cain his hero. As a result of his action humans, condemned to be wanderers and fugitives from the Garden of Eden, are able to realize their potential as thinking, creative creatures. At the conclusion of the play Cain tells Eve he now knows who he is:

Beyond the garden of the will of God,
past the dry well in the desert,
farther than the slaughtered ram -
farther even than the murdered brother...

Cain! who weeps...
who has become a man...¹⁹

MacLeish explains why he has made Cain his hero:

Cain, the son of those whose eyes were opened. The murderer of the brother whose offering was accepted. He who will not go back again to Eden. Who would not, even if he could. Who will go on. Who has the journey of mankind before him and the myth of man to bear.²⁰

The themes in this early verse play will echo again in MacLeish's *J.B.* The voice of the serpent in *Nobodaddy* has similar overtones to that of Nickles in *J.B.*, and the attitudes of Cain and *J.B.* represent the modernization of the

¹⁸ Donaldson, p. 166.

¹⁹ MacLeish, *Nobodaddy*, in *Six Plays*, Boston: 1980, p. 30.

²⁰ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 166.

character of Job.

THE POET AS JOURNALIST

His critical reputation as an artist suffered a setback with the publication of *The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish* (1928). In this poem MacLeish again has taken a canonical work and rewritten it as a vehicle for his personal idiom. Shakespeare's Hamlet is troubled by doubts of what is reality and what action he should take - is the ghost of his father an apparition from heaven or hell? is it fitting to take vengeance in his name? The Hamlet of MacLeish has doubts about himself and the moral underpinnings of the universe. In *The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish* the final affirmative refrain: 'It is time we should accept'²¹ is negated by the closing quotation from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*:

Thou wouldst not think
How ill all's here about my heart!

In this play MacLeish still appears to be searching for some assurances of a rational universe. But he can only hear the 'voices calling the small new name of god:'

It is always the same. It is always as though some
Smell of leaves had made me not quite remember;
As though I had turned to look
and there were no one.
It has always been secret like that with me.

²¹ MacLeish, *The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish in Poems: 1924-1933*, Boston: 1933, p. 32.

Always something has not been said.²²

Even the mythological quest is incapable of providing solace for MacLeish's character 'Bleheris', another Gawain on the journey to the Chapel Perilous and the Grail Castle. Relying on Jessie L. Weston's *From Ritual to Romance* (a book which T.S. Eliot used extensively in the writing of *The Waste Land*), MacLeish recreates the chapel scene, but his hero Bleheris experiences a black and hideous, disembodied hand which snuffs out the one candle, and Bleheris is left to ride away choked by: 'the stench / Of death, of flesh rot'.²³ Donaldson surmises that MacLeish's conclusion in *The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish* is: 'Death remains inscrutable, an evil that at least brings the petty ambitions of life to an end. The pessimism of the poem is cosmic, not merely personal.'²⁴ The more mature MacLeish would assert a plaintiff hope in the concluding refrain in *J.B.*, that the 'burning coal of the heart' offers solace for suffering humanity.

The reviews of *The Hamlet of Archibald MacLeish* were tepid at best, but MacLeish was particularly troubled by the review of Conrad Aiken who states that MacLeish 'can say things with a brilliance, a suppleness, a power, which any living poet might covet' but in this poem 'he remained a slave

²² *The Hamlet of A.M.*, pp. 12-13.

²³ *The Hamlet of A.M.*, p. 9.

²⁴ Donaldson, p. 185.

of tradition'. In response MacLeish wrote that 'he [MacLeish] had an ear like a tweed suit in October that picked up anything it heard. "But the experience I thought was mine, the emotion mine, the poetry mine".'²⁵

While living in Paris, MacLeish had become intrigued by a book he discovered at the Bibliothèque Saint Janivier, Bernal Díaz del Castillo's *True History of the Conquest of New Spain*. This is Castillo's apologia on the exploration of the unknown American West and the havoc and destruction experienced by the Amerindians at the hands of Cortez and the Europeans. MacLeish started work on a poem based on Castillo's book, which would eventually be entitled *Conquistadors*, while still in Paris. The poem, however, became more complex than he originally intended, and he postponed work on it for a year during the period in which he and his family moved back to the United States. After they were settled, MacLeish went to Mexico to travel the path which Cortez had taken.²⁶ MacLeish, who had been investigating the history of the sixteenth century, saw on his visit to Mexico City the twentieth century frescoes of Diego Rivera. These artistic, social commentaries were to change MacLeish's world view. The frescoes showed the daily struggles of simple Mexican people of the twentieth

²⁵ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 185.

²⁶ For an extended description of the makings of the poem *Conquistadors* cf. *Reflections* pp. 73-77.

century, and like Gutiérrez's experiences in Lima, MacLeish is moved by a 'new image of man'. He wrote in his notebooks:

It is true that Diego is a Communist. It is true also that no whole man can live on that dog biscuit....But there is something else also. One says: What new dignity of man is this? Merely the noble savage repainted as the noble peasant or the noble pulque-drinker or the noble welder? Or something more? And one answers: Something more - and wonders how this guessed-at figure of mankind can move our generation of morbidly swollen egos with the reddened eyes and the swollen faces. How can such men and women as we are find the image of our lives in the odor of labor and sun and a love simple and violent as the habit of the heart?²⁷

Diego's frescoes influenced MacLeish dramatically, and he began to contemplate how he could use his poetry to address the magnificence and calamities of his own time.

The resulting poem, *Conquistadors*, was published in 1932. The work vividly portrays the abuses of colonialism and the atrocities of war wreaked by Cortez and his men on their march west. In *Conquistadors*, the Conquest of the New World becomes metaphor - America the metaphor for human hope and the 'west' the metaphor of the dreamed-of future. The poem received mixed reviews; most of the reviewers missed the metaphorical themes and just considered the poem a rousing narrative, 'vibrating with masculine emotion and stained with barbarous colors and compact with terror and beauty'.²⁸ However the poem was interpreted, it won MacLeish his first Pulitzer Prize

²⁷ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 188.

²⁸ Herbert Gorman, in the *New York Evening Post*. Quoted in Donaldson, p. 217.

for poetry (1933).²⁹

MacLeish continued to struggle with the public man writing for *Fortune*, who was concerned with the intricacies of American economy, politics, etc., and the private poet writing for the artistic muse, who was concerned with the interior landscape. In a letter to Carl Sandburg in July 1936, he admonishes: 'You and I have a considerable responsibility. We are poets but we are also men able to live in the world. We cannot escape our duty as political animals.'³⁰ MacLeish called himself a: 'writer who keeps up a running quarrel with his time'.³¹ The quarrel in the late thirties was against fascism, and, while not communist, if he could gain support for his arguments he was not adverse to employing their arguments, if kept at an arm's length. Like Wiesel, Gutiérrez, and Jung, MacLeish felt it incumbent on himself to testify to the plight of humanity. His activism took the form

²⁹ While MacLeish found some of his negative reviews annoying, the review in the British publication *New Verse* amused him. The reviewer suggested that *Conquistadors* could not be a good poem because the conquest of Mexico was not a proper subject for poetry. The English poet Stephen Spender had liked the poem and MacLeish sent him an epistle with a bit of doggerel. It concludes:

Alas the poor provincial poet!
Let him learn while truth will show it
That history's what happens to an Englishman at
Eton.

Quoted in Donaldson, p. 219.

³⁰ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 120.

³¹ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 262.

of essays which argued for relief from oppression for all peoples. These essays were a: 'a dialectic consisting of a *critique* of injustice, misrepresentation, and oppression, and an *affirmation* of alternate values and methods for social transformation'.³²

Social activism was not confined to MacLeish's prose. In a lecture presented at Yale in 1937, 'Public Speech and Private Speech in Poetry', he endorsed the notion that the artist must speak with a public voice. He saw this as a reaction against the Victorian 'teacup' poet, a reaction which was inaugurated by Eliot and Pound, but particularly by Yeats the 'best of modern poets'.³³ MacLeish continued to espouse this point of view years later when in an essay 'Poetry and Journalism' (1958) written the same year as *J.B.*, he states that:

To separate journalism and poetry, therefore - history and poetry - to set them up at opposite ends of the world of discourse, is to separate seeing from the feel of seeing, emotion from the acting of emotion, knowledge from the realization of knowledge.³⁴

In 1938 MacLeish left *Fortune*, a position he had held for

³² John T. Newcomb, quoted in Donaldson, p. 163.

³³ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 273.

³⁴ MacLeish, 'Poetry and Journalism' (1958) in *A Continuing Journey*, Boston: 1967, pp. 36-37.

nine years, to administer the Nieman Foundation at Harvard.³⁵ His year in the academy would have a lasting appeal, and eventually MacLeish would return to academic life. He stayed at Harvard a year before being summoned to Washington at the behest of the president, Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

THE PUBLIC SERVANT

Moving to Washington in 1939, MacLeish assumed the position of Librarian of Congress. Donald Hall, showing the antipathy which MacLeish sometimes aroused in other artists, asserts that MacLeish was being rewarded for the 'poet gone public, Paris aesthete turned political'.³⁶ MacLeish's nomination would arouse violent feelings both pro and con, but as newly appointed associate justice of the Supreme Court (and friend) Felix Frankfurter wrote to the President: not only did MacLeish fill Roosevelt's requirement that he be a man 'who knows books, loves books and makes books', but he also had a wide range of other capabilities:

It must be remembered that Archie was one of the leaders of his class at the Law School, proved his mettle as a very able lawyer, was invited to join the Harvard Law School Faculty, then pursued his poetic career, was the

³⁵ This was a year long program, newly endowed, which gave journalists an opportunity to study at the University. Over subscribed and very successful, MacLeish described the influx of journalists into the Harvard community as letting more 'air into Harvard than anything that has happened in this century'. Quoted in Donaldson, p. 283.

³⁶ Hall, p. 113.

most effective editor of *Fortune*, and this year showed astonishing personal and organizing faculties in connection with the Nieman Fellowships at Harvard. He unites in himself qualities seldom found in combination - those of the hardheaded lawyer with the sympathetic imagination of the poet, the independent thinker and the charming 'mixer'. He would bring to the Librarianship intellectual distinction, cultural recognition the world over, a persuasive personality and a delicacy of touch in dealing with others, and creative energy in making the Library of Congress the great center of the cultural resources of the Nation in the technological setting of our time.³⁷

The Senate found it difficult to consider that a poet, in spite of all his other abilities, might make an effective leader for the Library; MacLeish, however, tells the story that: 'when a senatorial supporter revealed that he had played football for Yale' he was duly appointed to his new position.³⁸

MacLeish was concerned that his position with the Library would take too much time away from his poetry, but as he was wont to say in later years: 'Mr. Roosevelt decided I wanted to be Librarian of Congress'.³⁹ The years in Washington brought MacLeish close to the centre of power.

In November of 1944 he resigned from the Library of Congress⁴⁰ and had hoped that his days in Washington were

³⁷ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 291.

³⁸ Hall, p. 113.

³⁹ Quoted in Donaldson, p. 193.

⁴⁰ In spite of his divided energies experts rank MacLeish as one of three great figures in the Library's history. Cf. Donaldson, p. 379.

over, but Roosevelt appointed him assistant secretary of state (1944-1945), and finally in 1945 he was chairman of the American delegation to the London Conference of United Nations to found UNESCO. MacLeish wrote the message to the American people that Mr. Roosevelt had died. Then he tendered his resignation from government service to the new president Harry S. Truman. In this decade MacLeish wrote no poetry; his talents and patriotism were utilized to encourage the American war effort.

THE HARVARD YEARS

Awarded and praised for his work during the war, MacLeish, nevertheless, was delighted to return to his writing. He published a book of poetry in 1948 and continued to write his prose pieces.

In November of 1952 MacLeish published his *Collected Poems, 1917-1952*. Almost universally praised, *Collected Works* earned MacLeish his second Pulitzer Prize.

But it is his next book of verse that is of concern here, when MacLeish again takes up a biblical theme and returns to the Garden of Eden which he had explored thirty years earlier with *Nobodaddy*. *Songs for Eve* was published in 1954, and while not all the short 'songs' are addressed to Eve, she is the central character of the work. Eve is responsible for the 'browsing animal' Adam's fall from earth to consciousness and

consequently an awareness of God. These series of poems are optimistic, not because of a discovery of God but because of a humanistic discovery of the differences between the sexes which creates feelings of love.⁴¹ Thus in 'Adam in the Evening' MacLeish suggests that differences work for the best:

Beauty cannot be shown
But only at remove:
What is beautiful is known
By opposites, as love.

Counter, the mind can see.
When first Eve disobeyed
And turned and looked at me,
Beauty was made.

That distance in the blood
Whereby the eyes have sight
Is love - not understood
But infinite.

The book was generally well received with only a couple of negative reviews which suggested that MacLeish, in turning the Fall into a positive scenario, 'had made overpowering demands upon his own delicate lyric talents'.⁴² MacLeish's application of his form of humanism to biblical themes appears soon again in his verse play *J.B.*

⁴¹ Jung, of course, wrote about the same dynamics in psychological terms suggesting that opposites attract because the human animal is always seeking completion outside his or her self in another human rather than finding wholeness from within the self. The feelings of love occur when the perception of wholeness is realized. Cf. appendix on Jungian terms.

⁴² Donaldson, p. 436.

THE GENESIS OF J.B.

A man asks a seemingly divine-like character:
 'What are people for?' To which comes another
 question.
 'Must everything have a purpose?'
 'Certainly', replied the man.
 'Then I leave it for you to find it', the divine
 image turned and walked away.

Kurt Vonnegut: *The Road to Timbuctoo*

The problems of innocent suffering caused by 'hit and miss patterns of destruction' were brought home to MacLeish when he visited the bombed-out London area of West Ham. The devastation there led him to consider other disasters which had occurred in the fifteen year period concluding with the end of World War II:

More innocents had been hurt, maimed, or mutilated during this period...than ever before in history. Preoccupied by the incomprehensible injustice of this experience,... he hit upon the idea of expressing it through the biblical story of Job.⁴³

How he was going to retell the Job story was evident in an address he gave to the First Church of Christ, in Farmington, Connecticut in May, 1955. Again MacLeish would apply his personal version of twentieth century humanism, an existential rationale on the problem of so much unwarranted suffering in the world.

In his address he asks his audience whether the Book of Job has been read generation after generation because the poet wanted us to know

⁴³ Donaldson, pp. 450-451.

that the universe is cruel - that there is no justice, that God may plunge us into misery for no cause and then, at the end, for no cause either, give to us twofold all that was taken away - all but the lost - all but the dead?⁴⁴

Obviously the question is rhetorical; the Book of Job has endured in spite of these reasons. But the appeal to twentieth century culture may be precisely because the dual aspects of God's nature are portrayed in this canonical work.

MacLeish points out that the fateful action in which God delivers Job, though innocent, into the hands of Satan creates all the interactions which follow: Job suffers; the comforters come and a great debate ensues; then God speaks from the whirlwind. Again MacLeish asks his audience: '**Why** did God deliver Job into Satan's hands? Why? For a reason which is made unmistakably plain. Because God had need of the suffering of Job - had need of it for Himself as God.'⁴⁵

As MacLeish interprets the text: the wager is between the power of good and the power of evil;⁴⁶ therefore the reason God accedes to Satan's challenge is because God believes in Job and to prove that in spite of everything, even God's

⁴⁴ MacLeish, Address to the First Church of Christ, Farmington, Ct., 8 May, 1955, in *The Dimensions of Job*, ed. Nahum M. Glatzer, New York: 1969, p. 283.

⁴⁵ Address, p. 284.

⁴⁶ This concept is of primary importance to Carl Jung and his concept of *anima, animus and shadow* (cf. appendix). MacLeish was obviously influenced by Jung's *Answer to Job* which was published in English two years prior to MacLeish's address to the First Church of Christ.

injustice, Job is capable of loving God - he will accede to his power. 'God stakes His supremacy as God upon man's fortitude and love.'⁴⁷

MacLeish continues to refine his argument by condensing the above statement into a single sentence. His conclusion to the Book of Job is:

The justification of the injustice of the universe is not our blind acceptance of God's inexplicable will, nor our trust in God's love, His dark and incomprehensible love, for us, but our human love, notwithstanding anything, for Him....Love - love of life, love of the world, love of God, love in spite of everything, is the answer - the only possible answer - to our ancient cry against injustice.⁴⁸

Consequently, MacLeish argues we do not love God because we believe in him, rather we believe in him because we love him. God, therefore, exists because human love has created him (which as we will see later, is not what Jung states but certainly is its first cousin). In a paragraph whose sentiments will be the concluding focal point of *J.B.*, MacLeish writes:

Man depends on God for all things: God depends on man for one. Without man's love, God does not exist as God, only as creator, and love is the one thing no one, not even God Himself, can command. It is a free gift or it is nothing. And it is most itself, most free, when it is offered in spite of suffering, of injustice, and of death.⁴⁹

⁴⁷ Address, p. 285.

⁴⁸ Address, p. 285.

⁴⁹ Address, p. 285.

At the end of his talk MacLeish suggests that it is suffering which teaches us the value of love, and our ultimate labour is to learn to love that which allows us even to suffer. The final paragraph of his address becomes the undercurrent which surfaces at the conclusion of *J.B.*⁵⁰ He admonishes:

Man, the scientists say, is the animal that thinks. They are wrong. Man is the animal that loves. It is in man's love that God exists and triumphs: in man's love that life is beautiful: in man's love the world's injustice is resolved. To hold together in one thought those terrible opposites of good and evil which struggle in the world is to be capable of life, and only love will hold them so.⁵¹

Even though love is not mentioned in the Book of Job, MacLeish imbues his interpretation with love; in so doing he makes the Book of Job compatible with his existential philosophy - the most significant human deed is to respond to life with love and compassion.

MacLeish uses the Book of Job to question the rationale of such a vengeful God in a world in which 'good' Germans have

⁵⁰ The MacLeish's had been married in the First Church of Christ thirty-nine years prior to MacLeish accepting an invitation to present an address to their congregation. Perhaps he felt a certain obligation to speak to this Christian community. But as noted in the quotation from his article on the writing of *J.B.*, MacLeish did not consider himself a Christian, nor was he sure of any Greater Power. While his audience in Farmington, Connecticut might choose to hear that MacLeish was espousing a belief in God, he was only allowing such a belief, as a creation of human love within the mind, not as a force which exists outside of the human psyche.

⁵¹ Address, p. 286.

murdered millions of Jews and 'good' Americans have dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. If such people are indifferent about their guilt then, as Jung has argued, there must be another, better, more cogent image for the concept of God, for the concept of goodness.

Consequently MacLeish was looking for a new metaphor:

one that incorporates love with a sense of responsibility, one that can unite a compassion for others with a concern for the individual spirit. MacLeish, as he has asked other poets to do, seems to be casting off a metaphor that belongs to the past and to be seeking a new metaphor for our time.⁵²

His most successful explication of a new metaphor is found in his verse drama *J.B.*

According to MacLeish, what is true for poetry, a heightened evocation of feelings, is also true for verse drama. In an article for the *Atlantic*, MacLeish rejects T. S. Eliot's argument that poetry should be used only if prose were not 'dramatically adequate'. MacLeish argues, however, prose may be effective in presenting an illusion of the actual but if a dramatist wishes to portray the 'illusion of the real' then he or she is concerned with an 'illusion that dramatic poetry can pursue'. To bolster his argument, he suggests that the 'illusion Oedipus creates is an illusion of the revelation of the web of human fate which men have accepted as a perception of the reality of their lives for thousands of

⁵² Signi Falk, *Archibald MacLeish*, New York: 1965, p. 139.

years', or 'the metaphor of Prospero's island...is a metaphor which tells us more about ourselves than any newspaper has ever told us', or 'Yeats's *Purgatory* has no prototype in actuality but it casts its shadow in the country where things are'. 'Only poetry creates an illusion which can foster an understanding by the mind, by the emotions, and by the senses - that is, by the whole being.'⁵³ This is an effect he strives for in *J.B.*

MacLeish was much influenced by Yeats and Eliot, both of whom relied extensively on myths from the past. Eliot, writing about Joyce's *Ulysses*, in 1923 says:

In using the myth, in manipulating a continuous parallel between contemporaneity and antiquity, Mr. Joyce is pursuing a method which others must pursue after him. They will not be imitators, any more than the scientist who uses the discoveries of an Einstein in pursuing his own, independent, further investigations. It is simply a way of controlling, of ordering, of giving a shape and a significance to the immense panorama of futility and anarchy which is contemporary history...Instead of narrative method, we now use mythical method.⁵⁴

Thus like others before him and after him MacLeish has built his testimony on the edifice of the Book of Job. He writes in the *New York Times* why he chose to 'trespass on a monument':

I have constructed a modern play inside the ancient majesty of the Book of Job much as the Bedouins thirty years

⁵³ MacLeish, 'The Poet as Playwright', *The Atlantic*, CXCV, February 1955, pp. 49-52.

⁵⁴ Eliot, 'Ulysses, Order, and Myth' in *Selected Prose of T. S. Eliot*, ed. Frank Kermode, London: 1973, pp. 177-178.

ago used to build within the towering ruins of Palmyra their shacks of gasoline tins roofed with fallen stones.

The Bedouins had the justification of necessity and I can think of nothing better for myself. When you are dealing with questions too large for you, which, nevertheless, will not leave you alone, you are obliged to house them somewhere - and an old wall helps.⁵⁵

MacLeish, therefore, like the other men discussed in this thesis, places his twentieth century beliefs on the mythical foundation of the Book of Job.

J.B.: A MODERN ADAPTATION OF THE BOOK OF JOB

The play is set in a circus tent.⁵⁶ A circus tent, after the show, that has left it full of discarded props and:

Clothes that have the look of vestments of many churches and times have been left about at one side....the light at the beginning - such light as there is - is provided by bulbs dangling from hanks of wire.⁵⁷

MacLeish's tent is the modern universe where man finds rem-

⁵⁵ MacLeish, 'About Trespass on a Monument' in *The New York Times*, 7 December, 1958, sec. 2, p. 5.

⁵⁶ There are two versions of *J.B.* The original was first published and then produced by the Yale University theater in the spring of 1958. In the audience at the second performance was Alfred ('Delly') de Liagre, Jr. who decided he would like to finance the show and produce it for Broadway. Elia ('Gadge') Kazan was hired as the director. There was some substantial rewriting, particularly in the last scene, for the Broadway production. (Cf. Donaldson, pp. 449-459) MacLeish, however, preferred the original version which is still the version in print. To simplify the examination of *J.B.* only the original dialogue will be discussed. The reactions of theologians, critics, etc. to the Broadway production is included as their arguments are about the general themes presented and not individual verses.

⁵⁷ Archibald MacLeish, *J.B.*, Boston: 1956, p. 2.

nants of the past, such as religious tradition, but must live in the present, where God has become superfluous.

The theme of the circus tent and the disintegration of the world has appeared before in MacLeish's work and must have evoked a certain poignancy for him. In 1933 he wrote the Petrarchan sonnet 'The End of the World':

Quite unexpectedly as Vassert
The armless ambidextrian was lighting
A match between his great and second toe
And Ralph the lion was engaged in biting
The neck of Madame Sossman while the drum
Pointed, and Teeny was about to cough
In waltz-time swinging Jocko by the thumb -
Quite unexpectedly the top blew off:

And there, there overhead, there, there, hung over
Those thousands of white faces, those dazed eyes,
There in the starless dark the poise, the hover,
There with vast wings across the canceled skies,
There in the sudden blackness the black pall
Of nothing, nothing, nothing - nothing at all.⁵⁸

In 'The End of the World' the shocking realities of the mundane world are suddenly projected against a 'black pall' - a silent, indifferent universe. Just as in Wiesel's *Night*, the sky is a void with no hope of a compassionate god ameliorating the plight of suffering humanity. MacLeish believed that a 'poem should not mean but be', and 'poetry is one of the means by which life can be brought to sense'.⁵⁹ Poetry is to evoke feelings, for MacLeish the only valid

⁵⁸ Archibald MacLeish. 'The End of the World' in *Poems 1924 - 1933*, Boston: 1933, p. 93.

⁵⁹ Quoted in Barry Wallenstein, 'Poetry and Experience' in *Archibald MacLeish Symposium*, pp. 43, 44.

response. What MacLeish dramatically evokes in this sonnet, therefore, is that without the comfort, the protection of orthodox religion, modern man experiences an existential void. Jung writes about modern man's acute sense of the abyss which he considers a justifiable fear of the unknown brought about by the loss of the comforting but containing walls of religious institutions - rites, creeds, and disciplines:

But one thing is certain - that modern man, Protestant or not, has lost the protection of the ecclesiastical walls carefully erected and reinforced since Roman days, and on account of that loss has approached the zone of world-destroying and world-creating fire. Life has quickened and intensified. Our world is permeated by restlessness and fear.⁶⁰

Much of MacLeish's work reflects this anxiety, exemplified by 'The End of the World'. Most readers, however, find the conclusion to *J.B.* a turning away from such angst and toward a more positive view of life.

The crux of the play is summed up in *J.B.*'s words: 'God is unthinkable if we are innocent.'⁶¹ These words are also the underlying difference between this modern drama and the ancient Book of Job. The biblical Job has no doubt about the existence of God. The biblical Job has no doubt about his own innocence. The biblical Job does have doubts about the rationale of God's justice. David Hume presents the theodicy problem succinctly in *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*

⁶⁰ Jung, *Psychology and Religion*, New Haven: 1938, p. 59.

⁶¹ *J.B.* p. 111.

when he writes:

Is He (God) willing to prevent evil, but not able? Then He is impotent. Is He able but not willing? Then He is malevolent. Is He both able and willing? Whence then is evil?⁶²

Hume's question has been stated many times over in various ways by other philosophers and theologians. If God is omnibenevolent, and there is evil in the world, then he must be a limited God. If he is omnipotent, and there is evil in the world, then it is God's choice to allow evil. Whether this evil is part of a Divine Plan or the arbitrariness of God, is a question which has no solution - at least in this life.

For the writers discussed in this thesis: Gutiérrez does not ask the 'problem of evil' question; he seems to accept the paradox. Wiesel does not choose to ask the question; possibly because he would be afraid of his answer. And Jung believes the dynamics of the human psyche provide the answer. MacLeish does ask the question but does not have an irrefutable solution to Hume's question or to Job's. MacLeish's answer is derived from the twentieth century morass of existentialism; love is the only *raison d'être* for life. For him love has become a new religion.

In his verse play MacLeish has again set his scene in the big top. This time the canvas has not blown away, as in the

⁶² David Hume, *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, New York: 1959, p. 178.

earlier poem 'The End of the World', but the show is over and what is left are the dregs. The first two actors on the stage play several roles. Mr. Zuss and Nickles are a modern Chorus, distant relatives to the chorus of Greek tragedy, and they help to set the scene.⁶³ They are broken down actors, with cynical comments on the plot, and, when they put on their masks they become God and Satan, 'has beens', with only a limited part in the action - in the world.

As the play begins Mr. Zuss and Nickles begin to carve out their roles with satiric quips in a half-hearted attempt to define what these roles might be. Mr. Zuss defends his role of God with 'God is'. Nickles, then alluding to the theophany from the whirlwind of the Book of Job, says that God's statement may be good enough for the goats, for the hawks, but not good enough for Job, and the world is full of Jobs. Then Nickles hums a paraphrase of David Hume's words. Like a refrain he repeats it several pages later.

I heard upon his dry dung heap
That man cry out who cannot sleep:
'If God is God He is not good,
If God is good He is not God;
Take the even, take the odd,
I would not sleep here if I could...'⁶⁴

Nickles has changed Hume's query from an interrogatory into a

⁶³ Old Nick is a slang name for the devil and must be the derivation of Nickles. Mr. Zuss obviously refers to the Greek god, Zeus - a god of limited moral attributes.

⁶⁴ J.B., p. 11.

declarative statement. A good God would not allow evil; therefore God is either not good or not God. MacLeish is implying that there cannot be a Judeo-Christian God with all the 'omni' attributes who would still allow the suffering which abounds in the world.

Nickles and Mr. Zuss play slightly different roles than their ancient roles in the prologue of the Book of Job. Nickles does not implement Job's catastrophes; rather he is appalled by them. In the Book of Job, the Satan is simply one of 'the sons of God', but, just as Nickles, he does challenge God to a contest. Ultimately, however, good and evil both come from God. The biblical Job acknowledges this state of affairs with a lament:

although you know that I am not guilty
and there is no one to deliver out of your hand.
Your hands fashioned and made me;
and now you turn and destroy me (10:7-8).

In the play Mr. Zuss eventually has the winning hand as well.

The modern contest begins in the same manner as the biblical prologue. Nickles stating that of course a rich man will be pious as he has many reasons to praise God. Mr. Zuss retorts, J.B. would praise God no matter what the circumstances. Here, as in his earlier works, MacLeish changes the biblical 'rules' when Nickles whispers 'Why must he suffer then'?⁶⁵ Nickles expresses concern for humankind.

⁶⁵ J. B., p. 48.

Mr. Zuss has no response. Later Mr. Zuss says the test is so J.B. can see God, a reference to the biblical Job's, and J.B.'s, epiphany inspired by the Voice from the Whirlwind. Mr. Zuss says the best place to see God is always from the ash heap. These quips help to establish a sense of uncaring on God's/Zuss' part, as if he has simply become an observer of the action but has no active role in the results - a *Deus absconditus*.⁶⁶ Nickles, on the other hand, is aware of the suffering of humanity and can only express 'an agonized disgust'.

J.B., a New England millionaire, and Sarah his attractive wife are the modern Job and his wife. J.B. believes, in the beginning of the drama, that his good fortune is because God is with him. It is his good luck. He tells his family:

We get the earth for nothing, don't we?
It's given to us, gift on gift.
Sun on the floor, airs in the curtain.
We lie a whole day long and look at it
Crowing or crying in our cribs:
It doesn't matter - crow or cry
The sun shines, the wind blows...⁶⁷

Sarah's character is far more developed than the biblical

⁶⁶ This satiric portrait of God is carried to an unsuccessful conclusion in Neil Simon's play, *God's Favorite* (New York: 1975), another work based explicitly on Job. In this play, it is difficult to determine if the supernatural force represents God or the Devil. The character's dialogue is so ambiguous, it is as though Simon could not decide whether God was for good or evil, was present or had left the scene.

⁶⁷ *J.B.*, p. 40.

wife of Job. In the beginning, she considers their good fortune is deserved, after all J.B. is 'blameless and upright'; so if humans do their part God will hold up his end of the bargain. Nagged by conscience, Sarah believes in retributive justice. 'God rewards and God can punish./God is just.'⁶⁸

Sitting around their abundant, happy Thanksgiving table, J.B. tries to inspire his five children - David, thirteen; Mary, twelve; Jonathan, ten; Ruth, eight; Rebecca, six - with a love of life. Nickles, in his role as commentator, finds this *joie de vivre* reprehensible. He seems to care about the suffering experienced by humans and believes it would be better never to have lived than to live with unwarranted evil. His character is the reverse of the biblical Satan. He comments:

Best thing you can teach your children
Next to never drawing breath
Is choking on it.⁶⁹

Then the aging actors put on their God masks, and the play within a play commences with the Distant Voice prompting when Mr. Zuss falters over his lines - Job's disasters - his tests begin.

Modern messengers report on the individual, senseless

⁶⁸ J.B., p. 39.

⁶⁹ J. B., p. 44. This sentiment is also expressed in Sophocles' *Oedipus at Colonus*.

accidents which cause the death of all the children. First, two drunken, foul-mouthed soldiers pay a visit to J.B. and Sarah, not to tell them of the death of their son David, but to sponge off them. Their grotesque behavior underlines the senselessness of the first tragedy - a son who died from someone else's carelessness after the war was over.⁷⁰ When J.B. denies that anything could have happened to David, Nickles whispers:

Couldn't it?
Ask him! Couldn't it? Suppose it did though
What would the world be made of then?⁷¹

The next scene brings two newsmen as the messengers and a girl who is the society editor. Her role is to keep the parents talking so the news photographer can take pictures. Jonathan and Mary have died in a car accident; the kid who was driving was drunk. Sarah demands to know what her children had done to Him; what they, the parents, had done to Him. J.B. awkwardly tries to mollify her:

Shall we...

⁷⁰ The stage directions state that David is thirteen. In the next scene he is in the army but there does not appear to have been an elapsed time of several years. (They must take them young in New England.) In the following scene Jonathan and Mary are killed while driving with a drunken driver. They seem to be a little young, twelve and ten, to be out in such company. Rebecca appears to be still a child of six when she meets her fateful end. Somehow all these discrepancies must have been ironed out in the production of the play. None of the reviewers makes any comments about the age problems.

⁷¹ J.B., p. 62.

Take the good and not the evil?
We have to take the chances, Sarah:
then in a desperate candor
Is no good!⁷²

It doesn't mean there

As Mr. Zuss and Nickles watch the tragedies down on earth they continue to argue about the outcome. Nickles insists that if J.B. only knew who was responsible for his suffering he would deny God. Nickles starts to descend the ladder to earth.

Nickles: He needs a helping hand: you've seen to that -
A nudge from an old professional.

Mr. Zuss: Leave him a'
Lone! He can't act and you know it.

Nickles: He doesn't have to act. He suffers.
It's an old role - played like a mouth-organ.
Any idiot on earth
Given enough breath can breathe it -
Given tears enough can weep.
All he needs is help to see.

Mr Zuss: See what?

Nickles: That bloody drum-stick striking;
See Who lets it strike the drum!⁷³

In the next scene the messengers are two policemen who have identified the molested, dead body of a little girl dressed in white with a red parasol as the youngest child of J.B. and Sarah, Rebecca.

As the disasters befall J.B., this modern Job remains

⁷² J.B., p. 71.

⁷³ J.B., p. 75.

patient. 'The Lord giveth.../the/ Lord taketh away'!⁷⁴ But he does not say 'Blessed be the name of the Lord'; an omission which Mr. Zuss notes and wonders why J.B. will not play his part as had the ancient Job. Nickles explains that now J.B. has

got there, hasn't he?
Now he has said it, now he knows.
He knows Who gives, he knows Who takes now.⁷⁵

He will not play the part because, as Nickles points out, J.B. is suffering and now 'He knows its Name'!⁷⁶

The final catastrophe is a bomb blast which kills their last child, Ruth, and destroys J.B.'s bank and warehouses, only the floor of their house remains. Two messengers bring an unconscious Sarah home. She had been looking for Ruth in the rubble of the destroyed town. As she regains consciousness, J.B. begins to mouth his platitudes and then demands that she repeat after him: 'The Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away'. But Sarah rebels and shrieks: 'Takes! Kills! Kills! Kills! Kills!' ⁷⁷ Then finally, to the relief of Mr. Zuss, J.B. utters in the silence: 'Blessed be the name of the Lord'.⁷⁸

⁷⁴ J.B., p. 83.

⁷⁵ J.B., p. 83.

⁷⁶ J.B., p. 84.

⁷⁷ J.B., p. 89

⁷⁸ J.B., p. 90.

Mr. Zuss preens over the yea-saying of J.B., but Nickles is disgusted and horrified over the callousness of human beings to the suffering of others. Not only is there the hideous, senseless death of the children of J.B. but twenty thousand other people have died in the bombing of the town in order that Mr. Zuss might win his wager. Nickles still thinks suffering man would be better off dead, and Mr. Zuss says suffering teaches man to praise God.⁷⁹

After their argument, the two old actors search for their masks so that the drama may continue, when from the heavens comes the Distant Voice prompting them with the words from the second half of the prologue: 'Hast thou considered my servant Job...' And thus the drama continues with the scene opening on J.B. covered with sores from the radiation of the bomb blast, and Sarah too despondent to want to continue living. Nickles unseen, speaks to Mr. Zuss:

Never fails! Never fails!
 Count on you to make a mess of it!
 You hit at one man you blast thousands.
 Think of that Flood of yours - a massacre!
 Now you've fumbled it again:
 Tumbled a whole city down
 To blister one man's skin with agony.⁸⁰

Meanwhile J.B. continues to insist to Sarah that God is just, but Sarah disagrees with J.B. She says hysterically:

God is just!

⁷⁹ Cf. *J.B.*, pp. 94-95.

⁸⁰ *J.B.*, p. 99.

If God is just our slaughtered children
Stank with sin, were rotten with it!⁸¹

She at least knows her children were innocent. Why should they suffer and die? In the Book of Job, the biblical wife never mentions the death of her children, nor does Job ever talk of their deaths; however the Septuagint version of the Book of Job remedies this callousness on the part of Job's wife. She says to Job:

Behold, thy memorial is abolished from the earth, even thy sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain and sorrows; and thou thyself sittest down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting sun, that I may rest from my labours and my pangs which now beset me (LXX 2:9).

The only consideration the biblical Job has for his children is in the prologue in which he implies his children may have sinned in their hearts; therefore he makes ritual sacrifices for their insured piety.⁸²

Two other ancient works treat Job's wife or her ersatz representative with more compassion and respect than the original Book of Job. MacLeish could possibly have read the apocrypha which contains the Book of Tobit written somewhere between 225-175 B.C.E. It exists in several versions, one of which explicitly suggests that Tobit, like Job, is an example of patience, and he has a wife who becomes impatient with his

⁸¹ J.B., p. 109.

⁸² Cf. Job 1:5.

piety. Tobit, a virtuous Hebrew, fed the hungry and gave clothes to the naked, but his outstanding virtue is his scrupulous burial of the dead. In spite of his piety he is struck with blindness:

But [Tobit] continued immovable in the fear of God, giving thanks to God all the days of his life. For as the kings insulted over holy Job: so his relations and kinsmen mocked at his life, saying: Where is thy hope, for which thou gavest alms, and buriedst the dead? But Tobit rebuked them, saying: speak not so: For we are the children of saints, and look for that life which God will give to those that never change their faith from him. Now Anna his wife went daily to weaving work, and she brought home what she could get for their living by the labour of her hands. Whereby it came to pass, that she received a young kid, and brought it home: And when her husband heard it bleating, he said: Take heed, lest perhaps it is stolen, restore ye it to its owners, for it is not lawful for us either to eat or to touch anything that cometh by theft. At these words his wife being angry answered: It is evident thy hope is come to nothing, and thy alms now appear. And with these and other such like words she upbraided him (2:10-23).

As we can see, besides the similarity between Tobit and Job, there is a certain family resemblance between Anna and Job's wife. The righteousness of both men has caused hardship for both women.

A much more evolved role for women is found in the Testament of Job, a work which is part of the Jewish folkloric tradition, apparently based on the Septuagint. It is not likely that MacLeish was familiar with the Testament; however it is interesting to note that some early writers were made uncomfortable by the short shrift given to Job's wife in the original.

The Testament of Job is an anonymous, apocryphal tale, possibly written as early as the first century B.C.E. It retells the story of Job in his own words spoken from his death bed. He now has ten new children and a new wife, Dinah, and the restitution of his former estate. As he tells the story of his trials and tribulations, the women and his first wife, Sitidos, play a much larger role than in the Hebrew original.

When Sitidos complains about her sacrifices while Job refuses to 'Curse God and die' her impatience is blamed on the perfidy of Satan. In tears she cries out to Job:

Job, Job! How long will you sit on the dungheap outside the city thinking,/ Only a little longer!/ and awaiting the hope of your salvation?/ And I am a vagabond and a maidservant going around from place to place. For already your memorial has perished from the earth - my sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb, for whom I toiled in vain, with hard-ships. But you sit in worm-infested rottenness, passing the night in the open air; and I, for my part, am most wretched, laboring by day and suffering at night until I can obtain a loaf of bread to bring to you (24.1b-4b).

The reference to the 'pangs and pains of my womb' are clearly derived from the Septuagint; however Satan's insidious role and Sitidos' complaints of the wealth and comfort she no longer has is new. Sitidos continues with a modified version of the speech of Job's wife from the Hebrew text. She says:

Job, [Job]! Though many things have been said generally, I say to you in brief: The weakness of my heart crushes my bones. You, then, arise, and when you have taken the loaves, be satisfied, and say some word against the Lord and die. Then I too shall again be free from weariness arising from [my] labors for your body (25:8-10).

Her concluding words to Job soften the impact of her advice. They seem to arise from her concern about Job and her own despair.⁸³

Sarah, in *J.B.* cannot forget her children nor their tragic deaths. She says:

They are
Dead and they were innocent: I will not
Let you sacrifice their deaths
To make injustice justice and God good!⁸⁴

Sarah intuitively immediately what J.B. will only understand later. Therefore her admonition to 'Curse God and die...' arises from the conundrum of Job's position. Job cannot hold fast to his integrity and bless God for one of them - either God or Job - must be guilty.

Job asks for the reasons for his disasters and unlike the biblical Job, he believes his guilt is the cause of it all.

God is God or we are nothing -
Mayflies that leave their husks behind -
Our tiny lives ridiculous - a suffering
Not even sad that Someone Somewhere
Laughs at us as we laugh at apes.
We have no choice but to be guilty.
God is unthinkable if we are innocent.⁸⁵

The death of the children and the arguments between Mr. Zuss and Nickles have been more involved and longer than the

⁸³ For an exhaustive study of the Testament of Job cf. *Studies on the Testament of Job*, eds. Michael A. Knibb & Pieter W. van der Horst, Cambridge: 1989.

⁸⁴ *J.B.*, p. 110.

⁸⁵ *J.B.*, p. 111.

original work in which the arguments of Job and the comforters create most of the dramatic tension, and the death of the children is confined to the first part of the prologue. But this interaction in the verse drama has helped to involve the audience with the problems of the innocent sufferer. MacLeish then must give dramatic form to philosophical questions: what is the relationship of man to the forces of good and evil? what determines guilt and/or innocence? who or what is responsible for suffering? To present these issues, MacLeish has recreated the three comforters into representations of three different, philosophical premises of modern society.

J.B.'s comforters appear on the scene like three carrion crows, come not so much to comfort but to pick at the bones of J.B. J.B., as of old, has called out to God to ask what he has done to deserve such punishments; in response to his plea he is confronted with the pat answers of his comforters:

Zophar: Why should God reply to you
 From the blue depths of His Eternity?

Eliphaz: Blind depths of His Unconsciousness?

Bildad: Blank depths of His Necessity?

Zophar: God is far above in Mystery.

Eliphaz: God is far below in Mindlessness.

Bildad: God is far within in History -
 Why should God have time for you?⁸⁶

They supply him with three forms of twentieth century

⁸⁶ J.B., p. 119.

determinism, each of which diminishes human responsibility.

Bildad, a thick, short man dressed in a ragged windbreaker, is the first comforter to argue with J.B. He believes the individual is inconsequential in the Hegelian sense of 'God is history' - only a cog used to build a greater destiny for the race. Thus if anyone is guilty of sin it is only because he or she is from the wrong class or born at the wrong time. The individual has no ultimate control over his or her behavior, rather what life has become is simply a sociological accident.⁸⁷ Bildad declares:

History is justice! - time
Inexorably turned to truth! -
Not for one man. For humanity.
One man's life won't measure on it.
One man's suffering won't count, no matter
What his suffering; but All will.
At the end there will be justice! -
Justice for All! Justice for everyone!⁸⁸

The early nineteenth century German philosopher G.W.F. Hegel presented a similar thesis in his work on the philosophy of history. He states there are men (heroes) who shape the events of the world because their own particular aims contain the substantial will of the World Spirit. But 'if we take another look at the final destiny of these world-historical individuals who had the calling to manage the affairs of the

⁸⁷ Here Bildad's philosophy is reminiscent of the philosophy espoused by Elihu Barrack, the doctor, in H.G. Wells' *The Undying Fire*.

⁸⁸ J.B., p. 121.

World Spirit, we find that their destiny was by no means happy'.⁸⁹ These humans, as tools for Hegel's materialism, represent an argument for a *thesis* or *antithesis* that eventually leads to a *synthesis* which then repeats itself always improving the position of humanity in general. Whether these individuals/heroes are happy, however, is unimportant. This teleological approach makes man an intrinsic part of a forward moving history, part of God's plan:

[T]he real world is as it ought to be, that the truly good, the universal divine Reason is also the power capable of actualizing itself. This good, this Reason - in its most concrete representation - is God. God governs the world: the content of His governance, the fulfillment of His plan, is world history....In the pure light of this divine Idea (which is no mere ideal) the illusion that the world is a mad or foolish happening disappears. Philosophy seeks to know the content, the actuality of the divine Idea, and to justify the despised reality - for Reason is the perception of God's work.⁹⁰

For Bildad, then, J.B.'s suffering is inconsequential. What is important is not justice for one man but justice for all. J.B., wedded to his assumed guilt, responds:

Guilt matters. Guilt must always matter.
Unless guilt matters the whole world is
Meaningless. God too is nothing.⁹¹

Eliphaz, the lean psychiatrist in an intern's dirty coat, disagrees with Bildad and espouses Freudian insights into the

⁸⁹ G.W.F. Hegel. *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*. Trans. Leo Rauch, Indianapolis: 1988, p. 33.

⁹⁰ Hegel, p. 39.

⁹¹ J.B., p. 121.

personality. For him there is no guilt; what resides in the unconscious mind causes humans to behave in ways in which the conscious mind may not approve. People are driven by something over which they have no conscious control. He lectures:

Come! Come! Come! Guilt is a
Psychophenomenal situation -
An illusion, a disease, a sickness:
That filthy feeling at the fingers,
Scent of dung beneath the nails...⁹²

But J.B. refuses to accept this argument which annihilates his responsibility for his sufferings. He responds violently:

I'd rather suffer
Every unspeakable suffering God sends,
Knowing it was I that suffered,
I that earned the need to suffer,
I that acted, I that chose,
Than wash my hands with yours in that
Defiling innocence. Can we be men
And make an irresponsible ignorance
Responsible for everything? I will not
Listen to you!⁹³

Zophar, the fat, fundamentalist cleric, agrees with J.B. and is outraged at the idea that guilt is an illusion. He believes in original sin. If humans were not possessed with guilt they would be no different from animals. The one reality: all humankind is guilty - always. But J.B. demands to know exactly what has been his sin. Zophar says such information is unimportant; J.B. must simply repent. When

⁹² J.B., p. 121

⁹³ J.B., p. 123.

J.B.'s three comforters have effectively absolved J.B. from any responsibility for his sins; their arguments have taken away his free will. Each comforter, as well as J.B., finds the philosophy of the other unacceptable. J.B. must believe he is responsible for his own actions. He cannot accept there is some force hidden from him that controls his behaviour. He demands that God reveal to him his sins. The Distant Voice responds out of the whirlwind, but as in the biblical source, it gives J.B. no answers, but rather parades its powers and the celestial zoo. And in the third encounter, the Voice rebukes J.B. for his presumptuousness:

Wilt thou condemn
Me that thou mayest be righteous?

Hast thou an arm like God? Or canst thou
Thunder with a voice like Him?

Deck thyself now with majesty and excellency
And array thyself with glory and beauty...

Then will I confess unto thee
That thine own right hand can save thee.⁹⁷

[woman] and hence it is added, *And to the worm, Thou art my mother and my sister*; in this way, viz. that we come into this world at once from corruption itself and along with corruption itself. For as regards the matter of corruptible flesh, the worm is our 'mother and sister,' in that we both come forth out of corruption, and come with corruption which we carry about us. And if we may understand it in a spiritual sense, nature is not inappropriately called our 'mother' and habit too a 'sister' (Gregory, vol. 21, p. 131).

⁹⁷ J.B., p. 131.

And like Job, J.B. responds with: 'I abhor myself...and repent...'⁹⁸

Mr. Zuss is not pleased with J.B.'s response. He finds his repentance objectionable: He complains to Nickles:

Giving in! You call that arrogant,
Smiling, supercilious humility
Giving into God?⁹⁹

Mr. Zuss's complaint is echoed by many other critics of Job. As I noted previously, this is Elie Wiesel's primary objection. He, however, does not suggest that Job's words are 'arrogant, smiling, supercilious humility'. Rather Job's words simply couch an intent to continue the argument with God.

Later Mr. Zuss complains to Nickles that J.B. gentled God the way a farmhand would gentle a raging bull because he chose to repent not from the fear of God but because he was free to make this choice in order to placate God:

...As though Job's suffering were justified
Not by the Will of God but Job's
Acceptance of God's Will...
.....
...In spite of everything he suffered!
In spite of all he'd lost and loved
He understood and he forgave it!...¹⁰⁰

Perhaps Mr. Zuss believes, as is argued in Elie Wiesel's modern midrashic interpretation, that J.B. did not really mean

⁹⁸ J.B., p. 132.

⁹⁹ J.B., p. 135.

¹⁰⁰ J.B., p. 139.

to recant his demand for justice - a justification for his suffering - but hoped to keep the dialogue open so that, ultimately, God would come to understand the significance of his covenant with his creatures.

Nickles is furious at J.B.'s response. His anger is not because he lost the wager with Mr. Zuss but because he thinks J.B. plays it as a sheep and does not reject God's answer.

His suppurating flesh - his children -
 Let's not talk about those children -
 Everything he ever has!
 And all he asks is answers of the universe:
 All he asks is reasons why -
 Why? Why? And God replies to him:
 God comes whirling in the wind replying -
 What? That God knows more than he does.
 That God's more powerful than he! -
 Throwing the whole creation at him!
 Throwing the Glory and the Power!
 What's the Power to a broken man
 Trampled beneath it like a toad already?
 What's the Glory to a skin that stinks!

 Plays the way a sheep would play it -
 Pious, contemptible, goddam sheep
 Without the spunk to spit on Christmas!¹⁰¹

Mr. Zuss responds with his own self-damning insight: It was J.B. in spite of all his sufferings who forgave God:

...He'd heard of God and now he saw Him!
 Who's the judge in judgment here?
 Who plays the hero, God or him?
 Is God to be forgiven?¹⁰²

It was J.B. who was innocent, or as innocent as a most reverent, good man can be.

¹⁰¹ J.B., p. 136.

¹⁰² J.B., p. 140.

Nickles cannot believe that J.B., the Jobs of the world, will continue to embrace life, to build it anew, to suffer inexplicable pain just to live. When hearing from Mr. Zuss that the play goes on: Job/J.B. has his fortune restored, his wife returns, and new children, Nickles jeers:

Wife back! Balls! He wouldn't touch her.
 He wouldn't take her with a glove!
 After all that filth and blood and
 Fury to begin again!...
 This fetid earth! That frightened heaven
 Terrified to trust the soul
 It made with Its own hands, but testing it,
 Tasting[sic] it, by trial, by torture,
 Over and over till the last, least town
 On all this reeling reeking earth
 Stinks with a spiritual agony
 That stains the stones with excrement and shows
 In shadow on each greasy curtain!
 After life like his to take
 The seed up of the sad creation
 Planting the hopeful world again -
 He can't...he won't...he wouldn't touch her!¹⁰³

And Nickles pleads with J.B. to end it all - not to embrace life again - but end it all with a rope. J.B. does not listen to this temptation; rather he hears someone at the door - Sarah.

The Burning Coal of the Heart

J.B. by the end of the drama has changed. He no longer expects justice from God; God just is. Sarah, too, has changed. Sarah comes back to J.B. because she can love. She

¹⁰³ J.B., p. 143.

probably contemplated suicide,¹⁰⁴ but the spark of life is too strong in spite of the devastation of her family and of her world. The burgeoning life in the twig of forsythia she discovers next to a burnt out building shows her that life continues against all odds. But now she no longer believes in retributive justice. The only thing left for her, for them to believe in is human love. Sarah says in her benediction:

Blow on the coal of the heart.
The candles in church are out.
The lights have gone out in the sky.
Blow on the coal of the heart
And we'll see by and by....¹⁰⁵

The coal of the heart that Sarah invokes is the indomitable spirit of humanity. The humanism of the Renaissance, which had God as part of its underpinnings, has been replaced here by a form of twentieth century humanism which cannot find God in the universe. Humanity, no longer willing to rely on God, must rely on its own creative force. Our self-empowerment ignites the flame smoldering in the coal of the heart

The biblical Job has his fortune returned doubled and is given new children. Whether he embraces life, we are left to surmise. J.B. and Sarah, we are led to believe, get everything back through their willingness to start again. Their love, not the generosity of God, will provide the new

¹⁰⁴ Cf. *J.B.*, p. 152.

¹⁰⁵ *J.B.*, p. 153.

children to replace the ones who were killed.

Consequently, J.B.'s and Sarah's new understanding is not derived from some new theological insight or some historical world view. What they glean from their suffering is related to the existential angst of the twentieth century. The candles in church and the lights in the sky have been smothered by the crimes of our age; only the coal of the heart survives. The indomitable spirit of man is the only thing of intrinsic worth. It is this call to the indomitable spirit of man that so captivated MacLeish's audiences.

Under MacLeish's big top is a universe where God and Satan, or Mr. Zuss and Nickles, are crippled. They are neither in nor out of the play but on the periphery. It is as though the God of Job has vanished into the wings. He has become a *deus absconditus*. The only given MacLeish allows is that God always wins over Satan. But the question of winning seems out of step with the rest of the drama. The wisdom learned by J.B. and Sarah is love is not only their salvation but the salvation for humankind.

MacLeish says in an essay, printed in the New York Times, on his justification of his play and on his conclusion that love is all there is:

What love does is to affirm. It affirms the worth of life in spite of life. It affirms the wonder and the beauty of the human creature, mortal and insignificant and ignorant though he be. It answers life with life and so justifies that bravely tolling line of Shakespeare's that declares that love 'bears it out even to the edge of

doom'.¹⁰⁶

This is a different outcome from The Book of Job where the writer says 'Truly, the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding' (28:28).

PRODUCTION HISTORY AND RECEPTION

The play ran in New York for almost a year, and then was produced overseas. In Germany, France, the Scandinavian countries, Israel, and Spain, it was a great success. It was a disaster in England and ran for only two weeks.¹⁰⁷ For MacLeish, the play won a Tony Award and his third Pulitzer Prize, this time for drama.¹⁰⁸

When the play opened on Broadway there was concern that the use of a venerated, biblical story would cause disapproval both from the religious sector as well as from the general public. To dispel some of these possible issues MacLeish agreed to meet with the audience after the performance to answer questions. For the first such session free tickets to the play were given to Jewish, Protestant, and Catholic theologians in order that they could view the play and then discuss it afterwards with the author. About a hundred

¹⁰⁶ New York Times, 12 December, 1958. sec. 2. p. 15.

¹⁰⁷ I have been unable to find reviews for the English production.

¹⁰⁸ Cf. *Reflections*, p. 202.

rabbis, ministers, and theologians remained to question MacLeish. MacLeish had thought that the Protestants would approve of the play, and the Rabbis and the Catholics would object to its content. In *Reflections* he relates that the reverse was true. The Rabbis liked the fact that Job's issues were being presented on Broadway; the Catholics liked the theological questions, but the Protestants felt that MacLeish's solution rested with love and sexual intercourse between a man and a woman and for them this was unacceptable.¹⁰⁹

During the course of the discussion MacLeish told an elderly rabbi that he had been influenced in his own thinking by Carl Jung's analysis of the Book of Job in which Jung suggests that the Book 'adumbrated the love-theme of the New Testament'.¹¹⁰ MacLeish seems to make no other reference to Jung, but throughout the drama there are hints of *Answer to Job*.

MacLeish's verse drama did cause violent reactions in the press, both secular and religious, some acclaiming it as a

¹⁰⁹ Cf. *Reflections*, pp. 200-201. This summary is MacLeish's and a bit simplistic.

¹¹⁰ Quoted by Herbert Weiner in 'Job on Broadway', *Commentary* XXVII, February 1959, p. 153. Unfortunately no one seems to have transcribed the questions and answers from this session except for an occasional anecdote as related by such people as Rabbi Weiner. This is the only reference I found to MacLeish reading Jung; although his play appears to owe a great deal to Jung's *Answer to Job*.

extremely powerful work reflecting the true nature of the human condition, while others were outraged. Some of these commentators were decrying the modern changes in Job's character, others were made uneasy by the questions asked and the doubts cast on the role of Divine wisdom and the problem of suffering. The positivists argue, however, that: 'J.B.'s final words are neither the end of the action nor the end of the argument.... The play resembles a sermon, an uplifting message in an ugly world, which may be why it was treated with reverence by so many reviewers'.¹¹¹

Life Magazine published three essays by three theologians on the subject of *J.B.* and the Book of Job. Reinhold Niebuhr approved of the play. He commends MacLeish for 'the honesty with which he states the problem and...the artistic ingenuity with which he fits his modern play into the old framework'.¹¹² The Jesuit, Thurston Davis, disapproved of the play and the audience on leaving which reacted as if they had been

attending a revival or making a mission. But what they have just witnessed is not a religious drama or a morality play. If *J.B.* means anything, it is an urbane but shallow repudiation of religious faith.¹¹³

¹¹¹ Gerald Wealis, *American Drama Since World War II*, New York: 1962, p. 188.

¹¹² Reinhold Niebuhr, 'Modern Answers to an Enigma' in *Life Magazine*, LVI, 18 May, 1959, p. 135.

¹¹³ Thurston Davis, 'Arid Repudiation of Religion', *Life Magazine*, p. 135.

Louis Finklestein suggested that the reason the play was such a surprising success was that

ours is a Job-minded and Job-hearted generation. This is the unique discovery of MacLeish, the poet. In the character of J.B. he has created a symbol in which we see ourselves and our society, troubled and guilt-ridden.¹¹⁴

Rabbi Weiner, in an essay for *Commentary*, notes that MacLeish relies on the last chapter of the Book of Job for his 'answer', a chapter often discredited and discarded as nullifying the arguments preceding it. But Job/J.B. chooses to affirm life by accepting his wife back and starting a new family; he has not chosen to 'Curse God and die', or to live an animal-like form of survival. In the question and answer period after the play Rabbi Weiner quotes MacLeish as asserting that life: 'involves a choice, and such life affirmation must have as its coefficient love - the affirmation of another person's worth'.¹¹⁵ Weiner notes, however, that the Book of Job is one of the few books of the Bible which does not have love as one of its themes. As a matter of fact it never even mentions the word 'love', a problem I noted above in Gutiérrez's use of the Book of Job. Generally love and fear are conjoined in the Bible as they are representations of basically opposite movements in the creature-God relationship:

¹¹⁴ Louis Finklestein, 'Insight into Our Deep Need' in *Life Magazine*, p. 135.

¹¹⁵ Weiner, p. 154.

Fear or awe emphasizes the omnipotent and transcendent qualities of God, love assures man that God, despite His transcendent power, will not abandon the righteous who fulfill his Law. Fear emphasizes the sense of separation and distance. Love brings together.¹¹⁶

Thus Weiner finds it acceptable for love to be the theme which MacLeish uses as his 'answer' even if love is not the original answer in the Book of Job. But Weiner still finds the modern ending in *J.B.* dissatisfying because faith is conspicuously absent from MacLeish's solution. Not because faith is discussed in the Book of Job; on the contrary faith is such an understood foundation to the arguments of Job and his Comforters that it is not an issue. The only question is whether this awful, powerful God is interested in running his creation according to principles which humans can recognize as just and good.

Weiner is unhappy with MacLeish's secular solution. He suggests that the impulse to survive and to build again is a basic drive; therefore the 'coefficient of love' is not a necessary component. And without an experience of the numinous in the conclusion to *J.B.*, which is the 'answer' in the Book of Job, there is only a dialogue, a relationship between man and man, not man and God. Thus *J.B.*'s (and Job's) question about whether there is heart as well as power in the universe is resoundingly asked in the first part of the drama, but Weiner says there is

¹¹⁶ Weiner, p. 155.

disappointment when this question is resolved or flattened into a secular solution no different from the usual receipt for happiness offered in any number of best-seller psychological 'comforters' of our age. Perhaps the real reason why *J.B.* leaves one disappointed is that it is essentially a secular play treating religious problems.¹¹⁷

I believe MacLeish would probably object to categorizing the problem of suffering as only a 'religious' problem. While MacLeish does not deny God, he is much more a 'protest atheist', as exemplified by Ivan Karamazov, who is not comfortable with relying on 'numinous intervention' to supply answers to such existential questions. In a general response (obviously to some theologians' criticisms) about *J.B.*'s willingness to resume his life again - risk his heart and his hopes again, MacLeish writes:

That is as pure and naked an affirmation of the fundamental thing - the fundamental human belief in life in spite of life, the fundamental human love of life as life and in spite of all the miseries of life - as I have ever found. In fact, it is the purest and the most naked - and all the more moving because the theologians have never noticed it. Or, more precisely, cannot notice it, being theologians. The Book of Job is a *human* triumph. Its answer is not a dogma but an act - Job's act, Job's *doing*, Job's picking up his life again. And the myth of Job is a myth for our time because this is our answer also: the answer that moves so many of us who, without the formal beliefs that supported our ancestors, nevertheless pick up our lives again after these vast disasters and go on - go on as *men*.¹¹⁸

For the theologically untrained critic (as well as for

¹¹⁷ Weiner, p. 157.

¹¹⁸ MacLeish, 'The Men Behind *J. B.*', *Theatre Arts*, April 1959, p. 62.

some of the trained) there was generally a positive evaluation of the play. Andrew MacLeish, in his review in *Modern Drama*, suggests that:

J.B. is not only a play within the suggestive framework of the Book of Job; it truly reflects the Bible. But what it reflects is not a single story but a continuous view of God as the whole Bible sees Him. And this vision which sees both the Old Testament God of Wrath and the New Testament God of Love is the 'model', and its discovery is the great adventure.¹¹⁹

Marion Montgomery concludes her review of the verse drama with an objection to the ending, which is what she calls a 'humanistic sermon and a pep talk. The last scene feels like a summarizing moral one used to find tacked on the ends of lyrics. The 'Application' very properly follows a fable, but not *J.B.*'¹²⁰

Other critics such as Denis Donoghue find the moralizing character of the play appropriate, and he compares it to a heroic romance. he writes:

J.B. has little traffic with 'character' in a modern sense, only with an Aristotlean idea of character as the moral force at work through a person's acts. The play is rich in this kind of character, rich as a morality play is rich....¹²¹

¹¹⁹ Andrew MacLeish, 'The Poet's Three Comforters: *J.B.* and the Critics', in *Modern Drama* 2, December 1959, p. 228. I was unable to determine if this Andrew MacLeish was a relative of Archibald MacLeish.

¹²⁰ Marion Montgomery, 'On First Looking into Archibald MacLeish's Play in Verse, *J.B.*', in *Modern Drama* 2, December 1959, p. 242.

¹²¹ Denis Donoghue, *The Third Voice: Modern British and American Verse Drama*, Princeton: 1959, p. 209.

Theologian Tom F. Driver calls the Broadway production suffering 'from a sort of theological schizophrenia' because it begins by raising the most difficult of religious questions, the justification of God's ways to man, and before it is through it jumps down from that high plain to a purely humanistic one....¹²²

Another theologian Samuel Terrien wrote: 'The Joban poet deals with the problem of faith in an evil world, while the author of *J.B.* presents modern man's reactions to the problem of evil without the category of faith in a loving God'. Thus Terrien interprets MacLeish's modern man, represented by *J.B.*, as 'an emasculated, piously conventional victim of fate who rarely rises above an intellectual stupor'.¹²³

Both Driver and Terrien were faculty members at Union Theological Seminary. The president of the Seminary, Henry P. Van Dusen, took issue with their objections and found the play a resounding success on all levels. He concludes his rebuttal with this summary:

From this discussion, three conclusions may perhaps be adduced: First, Archibald MacLeish has given us a drama of heroic proportions and immense suggestiveness, of chastening poignancy and inescapable power. Second, this drama may evoke the most diverse and even opposite responses from people of like presuppositions dwelling within an intimate spiritual community. Third, don't

¹²² Tom F. Driver, 'Notable, Regrettable', *Christian Century*, LXXVI, 7 January, 1959, pp. 21-22.

¹²³ Samuel Terrien, 'J.B. and Job' in *Christian Century*, LXXVI, 7 January, 1959, pp. 9-11.

trust any interpreters. Don't allow anything to stop you from first reading *J.B.* and then seeing it for yourself.¹²⁴

Most of the adverse criticism to *J.B.* is based on an objection to a form of twentieth century humanism which appears to place humans above God. MacLeish had no such intentions. In an essay 'Yeats and the Belief in Life' (1958), written the same year as the production of *J.B.* on Broadway, he cites with approval Yeats' belief in the validity of life - in spite of suffering and death and without the Christian God. He writes:

To believe in man as men of our generation must believe is not to glorify man or to put him in place of God or otherwise blind ourselves to the realities of human life. Yeats never attempted to conceal from himself the fact that human life is, in its condition, tragic. Indeed he early came to the conclusion that men only begin to live when they come to understand how wholly tragic their lives are.¹²⁵

But MacLeish does not conclude *J.B.* with an unremitting sense of tragedy. Rather, there is still a gleam of hope residing in the 'coal of the heart'. This hope is what many critics describe as the most salient feature of the play. Joseph Wood Krutch, in his review for *Theatre Arts*, found the play uplifting because it acknowledges the problem of unwarranted suffering without trying to present either facile optimistic

¹²⁴ Henry P. Van Dusen, 'Third Thoughts on *J.B.*', in *The Christian Century*, 28 January, 1959, p. 107.

¹²⁵ MacLeish, 'Yeats and the Belief in Life' (1958), in *A Continuing Journey*, Boston: 1967, p. 22.

solutions or nihilism. 'It gives no easy answer. But neither does it give up the problem.'¹²⁶ Richard Calhoun finds in the play *J.B.* a stronger call for hope than much of the literature of the second half of the twentieth century. As a professor of literature at Clemson University he writes:

I and many of my colleagues now ask our students to identify hope, the possible way out of the wasteland in the literature they read. My students like to look for honesty about man's true situation but also to look for hope. Too many critics make the mistake of thinking that *J.B.* is the book of *Job*, which is a magnificent work of poetry but a little too hopeless for my students or for a religious humanist like the Archibald MacLeish I find in his lay sermon or in his play. *J.B.* is different; it is a significant comment on man's existential situation in the 1950's when the other God seemed to have taken over. Moreover it is an important contribution to the darker view of American optimism in American literature, and it is, when experienced in the theatre, a darn good play.¹²⁷

In the same vein, Rabbi Harold Kushner, in a book which has been on the best seller list for several years (*When Bad Things Happen To Good People*), positively cites MacLeish's assertion in his Address and play that God needs man for love. He reaffirms MacLeish's (and Jung's) argument:

We love Him because He is the best part of ourselves and of our world. That is what it means to love. Love is not the admiration of perfection, but the acceptance of an imperfect person with all his imperfections, because loving and accepting him makes us better and

¹²⁶ Joseph Wood Krutch, 'The Universe at Stage Center', in *Theatre Arts* 42, August 1958, p. 10.

¹²⁷ Calhoun, p. 87.

stronger.¹²⁸

Rabbi Kushner is more certain of the existence of God than is MacLeish, but his God is unable also to create a perfect world.¹²⁹

THE 'COAL OF THE HEART' FOR ARCHIBALD MACLEISH

As MacLeish described, in his 'Address to the First Church of Christ' and in *J.B.*, the void has been replaced by a human creation - twentieth century humanism. While there are no answers found in the mysteries, nor will the elaborate rituals and structures of the church provide succor, people will/must create a form of the divine within their own minds - an admonition which is adamantly repeated by Jung with one exception: Jung believed in the power of the Divine; whether it is an objective reality or not, to him, was immaterial; while MacLeish was dependent only on human interactions. Edward Edinger, in describing the three possible positions that an individual can assume toward the religious question of creature and creator, suggests that the second condition is common to the twentieth century, the 'secular rationalistic/existential position' which is basically

¹²⁸ Harold S. Kushner, *When Bad Things Happen To Good People*, London: 1982, p. 153.

¹²⁹ Rabbi Kushner devotes a chapter to the Book of Job. He interprets verses 40:9-14 as another argument for the limited power of God. Cf. pp. 50-51.

atheistic'. He states:

According to this mode of experience, there is no transpersonal agency that is relevant to human existence. So the ego does not experience itself as a creature created by a creator God. Rather it experiences itself as a random phenomenon, a product of chance, and no values exist beyond what the ego creates for itself.¹³⁰

This succinctly explains MacLeish's position. The only source of nourishment and comfort as portrayed in *J.B.* is the burning coal of the heart - love as each individual gives and receives it from his or her fellow humans.

In an essay, 'Who Precisely Do You Think You Are? (1965), MacLeish discusses his perceptions of the evolutionary history of human self-confidence in its philosophical aspects. He cites the sentiments of Sophocles' famous Chorus in *Antigone* as a blueprint for man's evaluation of his place in the world, in which he is perceived not as a hero, but still with a life worth living:

What Sophocles' Chorus is saying, in other words, is

¹³⁰ Edward Edinger, *Transformation of the God-Image: An Elucidation of Jung's Answer to Job*, Toronto: 1992, pp. 92-93. The first position he labels *credo containment* in which the ego experiences itself as the creature created by the creator God. The rules of this God are revealed in a creed and administered by the priesthood or clergy. The creature subordinates his will to the will of God (p.91). The third position Edinger labels the *Ego/Self dialogue or individuation*. In this situation the ego experiences itself as the creature of the creator Self. It is an individual personal experience which leads to an awareness that the ego is the creature of a transpersonal creator. Only out of this position can a genuine dialogue occur (p. 92). In Jungian psychology, this individuation is the ultimate goal of human integration. For a discussion of the terms of Jungian analytical psychology see the Appendix.

what men throughout those centuries were always saying, that man is the wonder of the world because, although he dies, although he has no remedy for destiny or death, he masters nevertheless the ageless earth, tames beasts, builds cities, races with the wind-swift mind. Heroism was never triumph to the Greeks of the great age: heroism was Prometheus with the eagle at his liver, Heracles among his murdered sons. And man was never anything but man, the moral figure dignified by mortality....And what has happened to that knowledge now? Nothing except we have lost it. Nothing except we have turned it inside out as those philosophers do who tell our generation that our world, *Because we die*, is an absurdity: That Sisyphus is our symbol and our sign.¹³¹

Obviously MacLeish wished to derive more from life than the futile exercise of Sisyphus toiling endlessly to push his boulder up the hill only to watch it roll to the bottom again - a concept which so vexed Camus.¹³² Not confident in any form of after-life, MacLeish believed the creative arts (and he hoped his poetry) are the only 'after-life' afforded to humans. And for the present life, love is the glue that binds meaning to human existence. His verse-play *J.B.* is an expression of this philosophy. His art-form he hopes will be his patrimony to the world and his insistence on love as the most important passion perhaps will inspire people to live with a loving regard for others.

Donald Hall went to interview MacLeish for *The New York Times Book Review* on the publication of his final book of

¹³¹ MacLeish, 'Who Do You Think You Are?' (1965) in *A Continuing Journey*, Boston: 1967, pp. 10-11.

¹³² Cf. Albert Camus, 'The Absurdity of Human Existence' in *The Myth of Sisyphus and Other Essays*, trans. Justin O'Brian, New York: 1955.

essays, *Riders on the Earth: Essays and Recollections*. As mentioned above, Hall had always been impatient with MacLeish, in spite of his kindnesses to him, from the period MacLeish had been his teacher at Harvard. Now as Hall met him at his home Uphill Farm, five years before his death, he was struck how the loss of MacLeish's first-born son and the infirmities of old age had indeed made MacLeish a suffering human being. MacLeish, did not have the reassurances of a religious faith; death to him meant extinction - only his poetry might live after him. Hall reminisces that

[t]he author of 'The End of the World' meditated on Rilke's obsession with predictions of the sun's death and the end of human life. Like Rilke, MacLeish thought of survival in terms of art. 'Mozart has vanished', he said, 'his music endures. There is a world that has been made by poets, musicians; that world exists. Are we to suppose this world will not survive us?' But I only heard the pun he made without knowing it: the death of the son.¹³³

Why do writers return to Job today? not as exegesis but as testimony for the problems of the age. The poetry and plays of MacLeish are not an unusual response to the existential angst fostered by the twentieth century. Our time is haunted by the solutions of the past, spiritual solutions which often seem untenable today. The salient character of love has been undermined by the frigid wasteland of modern life as well as by the cult of individualism which eventually leads to an overwhelming sense of isolation. Today, however,

¹³³ Hall, pp. 149-150.

the inevitable realization that love and compassion, despite innumerable difficulties, are still the most enduring qualities, is illustrated empirically - from the experiences of conflict and suffering rather than from scripture and dogma. MacLeish acknowledged that he chose Job because his subject was bigger than he thought he could handle without the bolstering support of all the Joban tradition. I suggest this is one of the reasons why the Book of Job has become again so important in twentieth century Western culture, to believers as well as non-believers. MacLeish's 'coal of the heart' may not be the Judeo-Christian God, but it is the spark of humanity which partakes of the Divine.¹³⁴

In the next chapter we see that it is this Judeo-Christian tradition which Carl Jung believes must be rescued from the frigidity of rigid dogma. It is this tradition which is capable of rescuing humanity from the abyss if we are

¹³⁴ This 'coal of the heart' is a very similar concept to Wells's 'undying fire', rather than love, though, he calls it courage. The Job character, Job Huss, recalls a message gleaned from his dream:

If you have courage, although the night be dark, although the present battle be bloody and cruel and end in a strange and evil fashion, nevertheless victory shall be yours - in a way you will understand - when victory comes. Only have courage. On the courage in your heart all things depend. By courage it is that the stars continue in their courses, day by day. It is the courage of life alone that keeps sky and earth apart....If that courage fail, if that sacred fire go out, then all things fail and all things go out, all things - good and evil, space and time. Wells, pp. 211-212.

willing to come to terms with the dialectical nature of God
and ourselves.

CARL GUSTAV JUNG AND THE ANSWER TO JOB

If only it were so simple! If only there were evil people somewhere insidiously committing evil deeds, and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and evil cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?

Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago*

In this chapter, there is a brief look at Jung's early years in which he relates he was already grappling with the concept of the dualistic nature of God. This concept is continually developed through-out Jung's work and finally comes to fruition, in what he describes as the only piece of writing he would not change: *Answer to Job*. Jung concludes *Answer to Job* by suggesting that the incarnation of Christ is the answer to Job; however, Christianity has remained fixed and refused to grow with the continued development of the human psyche. Therefore, some Christian dogmas have buried the love and compassion Christ brought into the world, and have acerbated the perceived shadow-side of the human psyche. Some of the criticisms to *Answer to Job* are outlined as well as the rebuttals. Then there is presented an example of how Jung's work is used theologically at the present time.

Finally there is an analysis of how important Jung believed the God-image is to society and if lost how desperate from lack of love our lives will be.

Carl Gustav Jung spent his life studying 'the God-image in the human psyche' and analyzing the spiritual crises which consumed so many of his patients if that God-image were wanting.¹ Although in his extensive writings he rarely addresses the issue of God in the subjective sense, except in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* and *Answer to Job*, Jung was aware of how important his personal experience of God was. Writing to a young clergyman in 1952, he states:

I find that all my thoughts circle around God like the planets around the sun, and as are irresistibly attracted by Him. I would feel it to be the grossest sin if I were to oppose any resistance to this force.²

¹ On this subject he writes that for more than thirty-five years he has been treating patients from all the civilized countries on earth whose religions have been Protestant, Catholic, and Jewish. 'Among all my patients in the second half of life - that is over thirty-five - there has not been one whose problem in the last resort was not that of finding a religious outlook on life. It is safe to say that every one of them fell ill because he had lost what the living religions of every age give to their followers, and none of them has been really healed who did not regain his religious outlook. This has of course nothing whatever to do with a particular creed or membership in a church'. (CW XI, 509) CW refers throughout to the *Collected Works of C.G. Jung* (Bollingen Series XX) trans. R.F.C. Hull, ed H. Read, M. Fordham, G. Adler, Wm. McGuire, Princeton: 1953-1979.

² Carl Jung, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, ed. Aniela Jaffé, trans., Richard & Clara Winston, New York: 1961, p. xi.

THE EARLY YEARS

Jung was born in Kesswil, Switzerland, 26 July 1875. His father, a country pastor, studied classical languages at Göttingen and wrote a dissertation on the Arabic version of the Song of Songs.³ He was an intellectual, who, according to his son, became more and more disillusioned with his faith while still committed to preaching to his congregation.

As a clergyman's child (not only was his father a pastor, but six uncles were clergy as well), the young Carl was tormented by the discrepancies he found in his surroundings. He was overwhelmed by the beauty of the world - the great cathedral in Basel where he attended church - which he contrasted with inexplicable deaths and thoughts, that came to him unbidden and seemed sinful. Wrestling with these conflicts, Jung recognized that these polarities originated with God. Just as God had created a perfect world, he also created a serpent whose only purpose was to tempt Adam and Eve to sin. So too, he believed, God was testing him.⁴ For Jung, like the early MacLeish, the beauty of nature seemed more representative of a good God than men with 'their meanness'.⁵

As a child Jung became more and more distrustful of the Church but still felt a strong attraction to Christianity;

³ *Memories*, p. 91.

⁴ *Memories*, p. 38.

⁵ *Memories*, p. 45.

therefore he prepared for his Confirmation by assiduously studying his catechism. Essentially he thought the subjects were boring, but he was fascinated by the concept of the Trinity and excited to hear his father's ideas on the subject, but his father said that he never understood this concept and passed over it. This incident, combined with the ceremony itself, which did not catapult him into high celestial orbit, ended Jung's youthful attraction to Christianity. Reflecting on this period, he writes: 'I had, so it seemed to me, suffered the greatest defeat of my life. The religious outlook which I imagined constituted my sole meaningful relation with the universe had disintegrated....'⁶

From this point forward Jung abandoned orthodox religion as a personal belief system. He studied medicine at the University of Basel and became interested in the field of psychic phenomena. He wrote his doctoral dissertation *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena*.⁷ Combining interests in medicine and psychic phenomena, Jung decided to specialize in psychiatry:

Here alone the two currents of my interest could flow together and in a united stream dig their own bed. Here was the empirical field common to biological and spiritual facts, which I had everywhere sought and nowhere found. Here at last was the place where

⁶ *Memories*, p. 56.

⁷ Jung's dissertation was originally published in German as *Zur Psychologie und Pathologie sogenannter occulter Phänomene*, Leipzig: 1902.

collision of nature and spirit became a reality.⁸

Childhood Perceptions of the Duality of God

Jung relates as a minister's child he was aware of the tension between what was preached in the Christian pulpit and what transpired in the mundane world. He discovered that often the apparent opposites of good and evil could be found even within himself.⁹ Jung says of his childhood:

I either did not see or gravely doubted that God filled the natural world with His goodness. This, apparently, was another of those points which must not be reasoned about but must be believed. In fact, if God is the highest good, why is the world, His creation, so imperfect, so corrupt, so pitiable? 'Obviously it has been infected and thrown into confusion by the devil,' I thought. But the devil, too, was a creature of God. I had to read up on the devil. He seemed to be highly important after all. I again opened Biedermann's book on Christian dogmatics and looked for the answer to this burning question. What were the reasons for suffering, imperfection, and evil? I could find nothing.¹⁰

It was at this juncture that Jung's mother suggested he read Goethe's *Faust*, a book which 'poured into his soul like a miraculous balm':

At last I had found confirmation that there were or had been people who saw evil and its universal power, and - more important - the mysterious role it played in delivering man from darkness and suffering. To that extent Goethe became, in my eyes, a prophet. But I could

⁸ *Memories*, p. 109.

⁹ Cf. *Memories*, chap. I.

¹⁰ *Memories*, p. 59. Jung found A.T. Biedermann, *Christliche Dogmatik*, 1869, in his father's library and read it in order to find out what was known about God.

integrate the Self.¹³ But Jung was aware that the word 'myth' is suspect to the religious believer. Wallace Clift summarizes this problem for the Christian:

The thoughtful Christian knows that the relationship with God (whom we know to be 'beyond', infinite, ultimate, etc.) can only be expressed in symbolic or mythical language. Yet many are afraid that to call the expression of that relationship a 'story', and a 'myth' is to suggest that it is not true in some way.¹⁴

For Jung, to call a story a myth was to recognize its underlying fabric as of universal importance, indeed even divine:

Both dogma and myth are to be taken far more seriously than our modern intellectualism is wont to do. They are expressions, in a classical form, of profound inward truths about life. They have a deep archetypal base in man's unconscious. No one thought them up and 'put them over'. They are as much a part of our psyche as the heart, lungs, and stomach are of our bodies.¹⁵

Humankind, however, is not static, and, as our cultures change, the underlying myths must be reinterpreted to continue bolstering the psyche. Yet we have allowed our myths to become mute; we no longer listen to their wisdoms:

The fault lies not in it as it is set down in the Scriptures, but solely in us, who have not developed it further, who, rather, have suppressed any such attempts. The original version of the myth offers ample points of departure and possibilities of development. For example,

¹³ For a brief description of Jungian terms see Appendix 1.

¹⁴ Wallace B. Clift, *Jung and Christianity*, New York: 1983, p. 86.

¹⁵ Charles Bartruff Hanna, *The Face of the Deep*, Philadelphia: 1967, p. 45.

the words are put into Christ's mouth: 'Be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.' For what purpose do men need the cunning of serpents? And what is the link between this cunning and the innocence of doves?...¹⁶

For Jung it is tragic that we do not allow such imagery to expand our awareness and create new myths for our times.

Just as Goethe has used the story of *Faust* and the prologue to the Book of Job to create a new story from an old myth and brought it forward into the nineteenth century, Jung has taken the myth of Job (as have the other three writers discussed in this thesis) and 'revitalized' it for the twentieth century. The myth captured in the Book of Job becomes an archetypal argument about the nature of the shadow-side of God, and Job, in his response, becomes the archetypal pattern for humanity's efforts to achieve integration. Job often appears in Jung's writings and in his discussions with friends.¹⁷

In the early psychoanalytic movement, Sigmund Freud considered sexuality the controlling motivation in human nature, and Alfred Adler argued that the Will to Power is the dominant force. Jung believed the most important aspect of the personality is the interaction between the conscious and the unconscious. Joseph Campbell notes that Freud and Adler

¹⁶ *Memories*, p. 332.

¹⁷ Cf. Laurens van der Post, *Jung and the Story of Our Time*, London: 1976, p. 219.

were monotheists; neither would tolerate contradictions to their 'faiths':

Jung, on the other hand, had been a polytheist all of his life; that is to say, had always known that the ultimate 'One' which cannot be named (the 'inconceivable God') is manifest in many forms, these appearing as pairs-of-opposites; so that anybody fixing his eyes on but one is left open at the back to the other; whereas the art is to learn both, to recognize and come to knowledge of both:...in the words of Heraclitus, 'Good and evil are one,' and 'God is day and night, summer and winter, war and peace, surfeit and hunger.'¹⁸

Jung believed that human consciousness is responsible for only one-quarter of our behavior; the balance is governed by the personal and collective unconscious - the *shadow*, the *animus* and the *anima*. While these aspects of our personality remain buried below the conscious surface, they control our behavior in possibly negative ways.

Our appreciation of God also resides within the layers of our conscious and unconscious; therefore religion can function as a positive force as well as a destructive negative force. These concerns led Jung to study the mystical traditions. He was particularly attracted to the Christian mystic Meister Eckhart (c.1260-1327), who, he believed, understood the interdependence between God and our being:

Under the rubric of God's relativity Jung claims that Eckhart affirms that God and human beings are functions of each other in what we in some real sense contribute to the fullness or realization of God just as God is the

¹⁸ Joseph Campbell, 'Introduction' to *The Portable Jung*, ed. Joseph Campbell, trans. R.F.C. Hull, New York: 1971, p. XXVI.

source and author of our being.¹⁹

What must have attracted Jung to Eckhart, is his insistence that in God is man, and in man is God; God is immanent without losing his transcendence. We create, therefore, the divine from within our own psyche which in turn enhances our self-understanding of the image of God.²⁰

THE RATIONALE BEHIND ANSWER TO JOB

The Book of Job serves as a paradigm for a certain experience of God which has a special significance for us today. These experiences come upon man from the inside as well as from the outside, and it is useless to interpret them rationalistically and thus weaken the apotropaic means. It is far better to admit the affect and submit to its violence than to try to escape it by all sorts of intellectual tricks or by emotional value judgments. Although, by giving way to the affect, one imitates all the bad qualities of the outrageous act that provoked it and thus makes oneself guilty of the same fault, that is precisely the point of the whole preceding: the violence is meant to penetrate to a man's vitals, and he to succumb to its action. He must be affected by it, otherwise its full effect will not reach him. But he should know or learn to know, what has affected him, for in this way he transforms the blindness of the violence on the one hand and of the affect on the other into knowledge.²¹

The final decades of Jung's life were dedicated to the

¹⁹ John P. Dourley, 'Jung, Tillich, and Aspects of Western Christian Development' in *Jung and Christianity in Dialogue*, eds. Robert L. Moore & Daniel J. Meckel, New York: 1990, p. 73.

²⁰ For a further discussion of Jung and Eckhart cf. Dourley, pp. 73-76.

²¹ Jung, *Answer to Job*, in *The Portable Jung*, p. 527 (CW par. 562).

treatment of the sickness he perceived in Christianity, sickness caused by an unwillingness to respond to the duality of God/Self. Christianity inflates the divine ego (Father-Son) and represses or denies the shadow (Satan) while neglecting the guidance and healing of the divine anima consciousness (the Paraclete).²² These issues were apparent to Jung even from a very young age, but not until the last half of his life did he address these issues in his works.

In writing about the dual nature of God, Jung continually reiterates that his point of reference is psychology; he is not a theologian but an empiricist. The God he mentions is the God which resides within the Self (*Selbst*), an expression of divine grace, but the Self cannot take the place of God. The Self is the *image* of God in man. Jung writes:

It is impossible for *psychology* to establish the difference between the image of God (or the Self) and God himself (i.e. in reality, not merely conceptually). For even the concept of the Self indicates something transcendental; and empirical science is incapable of making positive statements about it. So great is the 'numinousness' in our experience of the Self, that it is all too easy to experience the manifestation of the Self as a manifestation of God. It is not possible to distinguish between symbols of God and symbols of the Self, i.e. it is not possible to *observe* the distinction empirically.²³

²² Cf. James P. Driscoll, *The Unconscious God of Jung and Milton*, Lexington, Ky: 1993, p. 91.

²³ Quoted in de Gruchy, 'Jung and Religion: A Theological Assessment' in *Jung in Modern Perspective*, eds. Renos K. Papadopoulos & Graham S. Saayman, Bridgeport, Dorset: 1991. p. 202.

Two of the archetypes of the Self in the Judeo-Christian tradition are, according to Jung, 'God' and 'Christ':

Strictly speaking, the God-image does not coincide with the unconscious as such, but with a special content of it, namely the archetype of the Self. It is this archetype from which we can no longer distinguish the God-image empirically. We can arbitrarily postulate a difference between these two entities, but that does not help us at all. On the contrary, it only helps us to separate man from God, and prevents God from becoming man. Faith is certainly right when it impresses on man's mind and heart how infinitely far away and inaccessible God is; but it also teaches His nearness, His immediate presence, and it is just this nearness which has to be empirically real if it is not to lose all significance. Only that which acts upon me do I recognize as real and actual. But that which has no effect upon me might as well not exist. The religious need longs for wholeness, and therefore lays hold of the images of wholeness offered by the unconscious. which, independently of the conscious mind, rise up from the depths of our psychic nature.²⁴

Thus, when Jung writes about God in the Book of Job, he is writing about an aspect of the Self, not distinguishable from God, but not God. James Williams notes, however, that if these perceived models of God disintegrate: 'then the individual or the community is thrown into a search for new patterns of meaning. But "the God question" is not secondary to self-understanding: the search for "God" is the process of self-understanding':²⁵

The religious myth is one of man's greatest and most

²⁴ Jung, *Psychology and Religion: East and West*, CW XI, pp. 468-469.

²⁵ James G. Williams, 'You have not spoken Truth of Me', in *Zeitschrift Für Altestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1971, p. 252.

significant achievements, giving him the security and inner strength not to be crushed by the monstrosity of the universe. Considered from the standpoint of realism, the symbol is not of course an external truth, but it is psychologically true, for it was and is the bridge to all that is best in humanity ²⁶

Just as God is a symbol of the transcendent aspect of the Self, the character of Job embodies an archetype, an image representing the ego's typical encounter with the Self.

Edinger summarizes the chief features of the Job archetype:

1) an encounter between the ego and the Greater Personality (God, Angel, Superior being); 2) a wound or suffering of the ego as a result of the encounter; 3) the perseverance of the ego which endures the ordeal and persists in scrutinizing the experience in search of its meaning; and 4) a divine revelation by which the ego is rewarded with some insight into the transpersonal psyche.²⁷

Jung, however, while considering the archetypal journey of Job, is far more concerned with how that journey impacts on the God/Self or the ultimate revelation cited above in number 4 in which the ego gains insight into the transpersonal psyche.

There have been several twentieth century writers who have psychoanalyzed Job, but Jung is the only one who has chosen to extensively psychoanalyze God.²⁸ Jung was aware

²⁶ Jung, *Symbols of Transformation*, CW V, p. 231.

²⁷ Edward F. Edinger, *Encounter With the Self: A Jungian Commentary on William Blake's Illustration of the Book of Job*, Toronto: 1986, p. 11.

²⁸ For works concerned with the psychology of Job cf. Martin Warner, *Philosophical Finesse*, Oxford: 1989, chap. 4; Israel J. Gerber, *The Psychology of the Suffering Mind*, New

that this endeavor would roil the surface of the Christian sea and, while he wrote extensively on psychology and religion, it was not until 1952 at the age of seventy-eight that he chose to stir the waters with his 'storm-battered' book, *Answer to Job*.²⁹ On the dust jacket to the original edition Jung writes that the book is not a scientific investigation but a 'personal confrontation with the Christian world view':³⁰

[My] questions were motivated by contemporary events, falsehoods, injustices, slavery, and mass murder [which] engulfed not only major parts of Europe but continues to prevail in vast areas of the world. What has a benevolent and almighty God to say to these problems? This desperate question asked a thousand times is the concern of this book.³¹

In *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, he acknowledges that he

York: 1951; W.S. Taylor, 'Meaning of Job' in *Voice out of the Whirlwind*, ed. Ralph E. Hone, rev. ed. San Francisco: 1972, pp. 107-118; Frank Lake, *Clinical Theology*, London: 1966, pp. 581-588; Jack H. Kahn, *Job's Illness: Loss, Grief, and Integration*, New York: 1975.

²⁹ Jung, however, referred throughout his writings to the injustice Job experienced at the hands of Yahweh. The earliest reference occurs in *Psychology of the Unconscious* (1911-12, pp. 70-71) which was later modified, *Symbols of Transformation* CW 5, (1950, pp. 54-57). He also uses this theme in seminar lectures, 'Interpretations of Visions', Notes of seminars given in Zurich. Privately printed in Zurich, 1930-1934, and in a few other places in his more recent writings (cf. 'The Shadow, Anima, and Animus, CW 9, no. 2, 1948; *Aion*, 1950, CW 9, no. 2, pp. 42).

³⁰ *Answer to Job* was published in England before it was published in the U.S. His American publishers refused to publish the book as it 'was shocking to their sensibilities'. In a letter to J. B. Priestly, *Letters*, vol.2, 8 November, 1954.

³¹ Jung, CW 18, par. 1498a

had to 'overcome the greatest inner resistance' before he could write *Answer to Job*. And not long before his death he affirmed how important he believed *Answer to Job* was in the context of his oeuvre, primarily because the central theme of the work is the transformation of God through human consciousness. This is also the theme of Jungian psychology. He remarked: 'he would like to rewrite all of his books except *Answer to Job*, but he would leave that one just as it stands'.³²

What finally allowed him to address the issues he presents in *Answer to Job* was his work, *Aion*, which he wrote immediately prior to *Answer to Job*.³³ In *Aion* he studies

the psychology of Christianity, and Job is a kind of prefiguration of Christ. The link between them is the idea of suffering, Christ is the suffering servant of God, and so is Job. In the case of Christ the sins of the world are the cause of suffering, and the suffering of the Christian is the general answer. This leads

³² Quoted in Marie-Louise von Franz, *C.G. Jung: His Myth in Our Time*, trans. R.F.C. Hull & A.S.B. Glover, New York: 1966, p. 161.

³³ In *Aion*, one of Jung's psychological arguments is against the Catholic doctrine of *privatio boni*. Published in 1951 it caused an immediate rift in Jung's relationship with the Jungian trained Catholic theologian Victor White, O.P. The final blow to the relationship was delivered by the publication of *Answer to Job*. White finds Jung's psychological interpretation of God far too subjective and destructive. Cf. Victor White, 'Jung on Job', in *Blackfriars*, 1955: 36, pp. 52-60. For a more modern perspective in which Jung's argument against *privatio boni* is acknowledged as valid, but the writer is still concerned by arguments for the dualism in God's nature cf. de Gruchy, pp. 193-203. A further discussion of the reception of the *Answer to Job* is found later in this chapter.

inescapably to the question: Who is responsible for these sins? In the final analysis it is God who created the world and its sins, and who therefore became Christ in order to suffer the fate of humanity.³⁴

In *Aion* there are references to the light and dark side of the divine image - the wrath of God - the God who must be petitioned to 'Lead us not into temptation'. This ambiguous nature of God becomes the main focus in *Answer to Job*. And Christ becomes the 'answer to Job', but not in the typological configuration normally prescribed by Christian theologians, but rather, Yahweh's incarnation as man is in response to his unjust treatment of Job.³⁵ Job has displayed a consciousness superior to Yahweh; Yahweh, therefore, must respond by becoming morally responsible as well. In so doing he becomes a conscious expression of love, or the feminine, the anima, a previously undeveloped element of the Self and of God.

Like William James, Jung believed that man would always find another 'god' to replace one previously discarded. In the twentieth century we have disassociated ourselves from the religious, moral support systems of the past and have substituted forms of political philosophy - capitalism and

³⁴ *Memories*, p. 216.

³⁵ The French Catholic scholar Jean Daniélou also equates Christ as the 'answer to Job', but his essay suggests that Jesus 'gives a meaning to suffering' by allowing the 'righteous man to inter into communion with sinners' - a notion radically at odds with Jung's interpretation. Cf. 'Job: The Mystery of Man and of God' in Glatzer, *The Dimensions of Job*, pp. 100-111.

communism - and forms of religious fundamentalism which divorce us from the darker aspects of our being and make us believe that 'our hands are clean'. In *The Undiscovered Self*, Jung analyzes the then current cultural, political crisis (1958), he writes:

You can take away a man's gods, but only to give him others in return....When any natural human function gets lost, i.e., is denied conscious and intentional expression, a general disturbance results. Hence, it is quite natural that with the triumph of the Goddess of Reason a general neuroticizing of modern man should set in, a dissociation of personality analogous to the splitting of the world today by the Iron Curtain. This boundary line bristling with barbed wire runs through the psyche of modern man, no matter on which side he lives. And just as the typical neurotic is unconscious of his *shadow side*, so the normal individual, like the neurotic, sees his shadow in his neighbor or in the man beyond the great divide. It has even become a political and social duty to apostrophize the capitalism of the one and the communism of the other as the very devil, so as to fascinate the outward eye and prevent it from looking at the individual life within.³⁶

Jung writes that the God portrayed in the Book of Job is different from the demiurges of the Hellenistic world. Zeus, other than needing a few sacrifices, had no use for man. Yahweh, the God of the Hebrews, even before the time of the Book of Job, had as much need of man as man had of Yahweh, each dependent on the other. How people in the ancient Near East felt about their God is evident from the testimony in the Hebrew scriptures. He is a jealous God who knows no moderation - his loving kindness plays against his cruelty,

³⁶ *The Undiscovered Self*, New York: 1958, pp. 65-66, CW 10.

his insight against his obtuseness:

Such a condition is only conceivable either when no reflecting consciousness is present at all, or when the capacity for reflection is very feeble and a more or less adventitious phenomenon. A condition of this sort can only be described as *amoral*.³⁷

Humans have always had mental reservations about the 'omni' characteristics of God, according to Jung, even in the face of divine decrees, otherwise there would be no human freedom. 'And what is the use of freedom if it could not threaten Him who threatens it?'³⁸

What concerns Jung is how modern man with a Christian education 'comes to terms with the divine darkness which is unveiled in the Book of Job'.³⁹ To do this properly Jung feels he must respond with his own subjective reaction not with some carefully considered academic exegesis.

God Wanted to Become Man

Jung suggests that the character of God appears to have undergone changes over the course of time, but, despite these changes, there remains an apparent need for God to have human support, just as there is a need for humans to have God's support. Yet we are 'unable to say with any degree of certainty - unless it be by faith - whether these changes

³⁷ *Answer*, p. 527.

³⁸ *Memories*, p. 220.

³⁹ *Answer*, p. 527.

affect only the images and concepts, or the Unspeakable itself'.⁴⁰ Jung believes, nevertheless, that this dependent relationship between God and his creatures is what the Book of Job is about, and this relationship is carried forward into Christianity to the present day.⁴¹

The dominant theme in *Answer to Job* can be summed up with the words: 'God wanted to become man, and still wants to'.⁴² Jung manages this theme in three basic segments: First there is the suffering of Job. Second there is God's answer. Finally there is Jung's appraisal of the Present Crisis.

THE SUFFERING OF JOB

At the beginning of the dialogues in the Book of Job is Job's petition to God, in which Job reflects on the predicament of his situation. Jung writes:

In spite of his pitiable littleness and feebleness, this man knows that he is confronted with a superhuman being who is personally most easily provoked. He also knows that it is far better to withhold all mortal reflections, to say nothing of certain moral requirements which might be expected to apply to a god.⁴³

But God's justice has been praised; therefore Job brings his

⁴⁰ *Answer*, p. 523.

⁴¹ This dependency is not the same as argued by Moltmann and in part adopted by Gutiérrez. Jung is not concerned with the passibility of God but rather with humanity's changing projections through the ages of the personality of God.

⁴² CW XI, 453-454.

⁴³ *Answer*, p. 528.

case before that aspect of God in spite of his reservations. Jung illustrates his thesis with snippets of Job's reservations about God from the text:

'How can a man be just before God'?(9:2) 'If I summoned him and he answered me, I would not believe he was listening to my voice'.(9:16) 'If it is a matter of justice, who can summon him'?(9:19) He 'multiplies the wounds without cause.'(9:17) 'He destroys both the blameless and the wicked.'(9:22) 'If the scourge slay suddenly, he will laugh at the trial of the innocent.'(9:23) 'I know', Job says to Yahweh, 'thou wilt not hold me innocent, I shall be condemned' (9:28,29)....'For he is not a man, as I am, that I should answer him, and we should come together in judgement.' (9:30,31) Job wants to explain his point of view to Yahweh, to state his complaint, and tells him: 'Thou knowest that I am not guilty, and there is none to deliver out of thy hand.'(10:7) 'I desire to argue my case with God.'(13:3) 'I will defend my ways to his face,'(13:15) 'I know I shall be vindicated.'(13:18)⁴⁴

Jung concludes: Job doubts man can find justice before God, but that does not preclude Job's making a petition to that effect. Job realizes God is not bound by any ethical conventions or moral opinions. And here Jung finds the greatest aspect of Job's psychological perception:

[H]e does not doubt the unity of God. He clearly sees that God is at odds with himself - so totally at odds that he, Job, is quite certain of finding in God a helper and an 'advocate' against God. As certain as he is of the evil in Yahweh, he is equally certain of the good.⁴⁵

Job is familiar with the duality of God's character which is portrayed as a combination of opposites - both kind and

⁴⁴ Answer, pp. 529-530. Jung's Bible was the Zurcher Bible, and the biblical quotations in this chapter are translated from that unless otherwise noted.

⁴⁵ Answer, p. 531.

wrathful, just and unjust. These contradictions within Yahweh have never been challenged until the consciousness of Job intervenes. 'Job, in his encounter with Yahweh, becomes that consciousness, perceives the contradiction and thereby generates the challenge to Yahweh.'⁴⁶ God has always demanded praise for his 'justice' regardless of the mayhem it has caused elsewhere.

Elihu's and the friends' arguments rely on what appears to be a rather arbitrary form of retributive justice often equated with despotic rulers. Thus when Elihu uses the metaphor of kings and princes for God, he is equating this type of despotic power to a similar overriding character in the divine (Job 34:17-18). This *distinct personality* of Yahweh differs from an archaic king only in scope.⁴⁷ The problem of justice remains, however, with the Hebraic concept of the covenant which had established personal and moral ties in the framework of a religious relationship with God. In the 89th psalm, Yahweh says of David:

My steadfast love I will keep for him for ever,
and my covenant will stand firm for him (89:28).

I will not violate my covenant,
or alter the word that went from my lips.
Once for all I have sworn by my holiness;
I will not lie to David (89:34,35).

Jung remarks, however, that God, who has been jealously

⁴⁶ Edinger, (1992), p. 12.

⁴⁷ Cf. *Answer*, p. 531.

concerned with the prescription of his laws and contracts, is not beyond breaking his own oath, which is evident by David's following petition to Yahweh:

How long, Lord, wilt thou hide thyself for ever?
 shall thy wrath burn like fire?
 Remember how short my time is:
 wherefore hast thou made all men vain? (89:46,47)

And then the Lord is questioned on behalf of David:

Lord, where are thy former loving kindnesses,
 which by thy faithfulness thou didst answer to David?
 (89:49)

The Bible provides testimony that what man considers right behavior does not necessarily apply to God:

[Man] without knowing it or wanting it,...shows himself superior to his divine partner both intellectually and morally. Yahweh fails to notice that he is being humoured, just as little as he understands why he has continually to be praised as just.⁴⁸

It is as if, Jung suggests, Yahweh must receive praise in order to assure himself that he is really there. In a conscious human this would not be necessary, and 'in view of the true facts of the case', a human would

at least have put an end to the panegyrics on his justice. But [God] is too unconscious to be moral. Morality presupposes consciousness. By this I [Jung] do not mean to say that Yahweh is imperfect or evil like a gnostic demiurge. He is everything in its totality; therefore, among other things, he is total justice and also its total opposite.⁴⁹

To exist in reality, Yahweh needs conscious reflection.

⁴⁸ Answer, p. 534.

⁴⁹ Answer, p. 534.

His existence is only real when this awareness exists in a mental/human being. Thus the Creator needs conscious man for his existence, and at the same time, due to his own 'unconsciousness', would rather man remained unconscious as well. But as the 89th Psalm illustrates, there were apparent breaches in the covenant. Perhaps, Jung wonders, these discrepancies influenced the author of the Book of Job.⁵⁰

God has a history of double-faced behavior, Jung suggests. The evidence for this duplicity begins in the Garden of Eden when God points out the Tree of Knowledge to Adam and Eve and then forbids them to eat of it. Later, this perfidy is applied to his faithful servant Job, who must undergo a rigorous moral test for no other purpose than to enter into a bet with an 'unscrupulous slanderer'. Yahweh's behavior from a human point of view is unconscionable. Man has a more developed sense of morality:

Because of his littleness, puniness, and defenselessness against the Almighty, he possesses, as we have already suggested, a somewhat keener consciousness based on self reflection: he must, in order to survive, always be mindful of his impotence. God has no need of circumspection, for nowhere does he come up against an insuperable obstacle that would force him to hesitate and hence make him reflect on himself.⁵¹

Jung elaborates that because of Satan's desire to wager with the Almighty, there follow in quick succession: murder,

⁵⁰ Cf. *Answer*, p. 537.

⁵¹ *Answer*, p. 538.

robbery, premeditated bodily injury, and denial of a fair trial. This ruthlessness and brutality has been allowed by Yahweh, who shows no remorse, compunction or compassion. Such behavior cannot be excused by unconsciousness; because by entering into the contest with the Satan, God knowingly must have violated three of his own commandments presented to Moses on Mount Sinai.⁵² So it is Yahweh who darkens his own counsel and not Job, and it is Job who has developed a superior knowledge of God, which even God himself did not possess.⁵³ By demanding a hearing with God in spite of his lack of hope of redress, Job has forced God to reveal his true nature.

Like Gutiérrez, Wiesel, and MacLeish, Jung is suggesting that Job and his suffering are a model for the sufferings of our times. Here is a model which, if followed, can make suffering meaningful. 'Job is no more than the outward occasion for an inward process of dialectic in God.'⁵⁴ Edinger restates Jung's statement in psychological terms: 'The ego is the outward occasion for an inward process of dialectic in the Self'.⁵⁵ The ego, as what is uniquely individual and

⁵² These must be: Thou shalt not commit murder; thou shalt not steal; thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbor (Deut. 5:17,19,20),

⁵³ *Answer*, p. 540.

⁵⁴ CW XI 587

⁵⁵ Edinger, (1992) p. 49.

particular, dark and earthy is capable of a certain divine numinosity. This is in contrast to some Christian doctrines which suggest that all that is earthy must be purified and removed.

God's Answer Out of the Whirlwind

Job, in the dialogues with his comforters, has acknowledged the power of the Almighty; he has no further need to be impressed by God's might. In the whirlwind speeches, Jung suggests then, God must be addressing someone else who doubts his power and greatness; Job has never doubted God's power only his justice, and God does not reply to his query about justice. Jung suggests, then, in what I believe to be a radical departure from the standard interpretation, that it is not Job's cause to which Yahweh responds but to his own affairs with Satan. The episode with Satan, however, cannot be mentioned by God as it must remain unacknowledged; therefore God must do his best 'by casting suspicion on Job as a man of subversive opinions'.⁵⁶ Job's response: 'I lay my hand on my mouth', leaves no doubt that he has understood the divine demonstration and does not wish to confront the power of the Almighty further.

Yahweh, however, seems to be unaware of Job's response and behaves as though he has a powerful opponent to confront.

⁵⁶ *Answer*, p. 542.

Taunting him twice, he says:

Gird up your loins like a man; (38:3)

.....

I will question you, and you shall declare to me.
(40:7)

The Lord's response to Job is as that of an equal, which has never been a position assumed by Job. Jung notes:

Yahweh sees something in Job which we would not ascribe to him but to God, that is, an equal power which causes him to bring out his whole power apparatus and parade it before his opponent. Yahweh projects on Job a skeptic's face which is hateful to him because it is his own, and which gazes at him with an uncanny and critical eye. He is afraid of it, for only in face of something frightening does one let off a cannonade of references to one's power, cleverness, courage, invincibility, etc. What has all that to do with Job? Is it worth the lion's while to terrify a mouse?⁵⁷

Then Yahweh challenges Job to contain the evil in the world which leads Jung to conclude that Job is challenged as if he too were a god.⁵⁸ But the only other great power present is the Satan. Yahweh's behavior, then, is of a mortal who projects his shadow side and remains unconscious of the effect, in this instance at the expense of Job.

Finally, Job repeats Yahweh's words in what appears to be an act of submission:

'Who is this that hides counsel without insight?'
Therefore I have uttered what I did not understand,
things too wonderful for me, which I do not know.
'Hear, and I will speak;

⁵⁷ Answer, p. 544.

⁵⁸ Cf. Answer, p. 544. These passages (40:7-14), as mentioned in chapter 1, are often interpreted as an indication of the limited power of God.

I will question you, and you declare to me.'
 I had heard of thee by the hearing of the ear,
 but now my eyes sees thee;
 therefore I abhor myself,
 and repent in dust and ashes (42:3-6 modified).

Jung suggests, as has Elie Wiesel and the character of Nickles in *J.B.*, that Job's words could well be equivocal. Now he has seen God and his covenant for what they are. He has discovered that Yahweh is not human but, in certain respects, less than human, that he is just what Yahweh himself says of Leviathan (the crocodile):

He beholds everything that is high:
 He is king over all the proud beasts (41:25).

In explaining his perception of Job's epiphany to Rivkah Kluger, Jung expresses his ideas even more clearly. In her book, *Satan in the Old Testament*, she relates Jung's conclusion:

In his great final speech God reveals himself to Job in all his frightfulness. It is as if he said to Job: 'Look, that's what I'm like. That is why I treated you like this.' Through the suffering which he inflicted upon Job out of his own nature God has come to see his self-knowledge and admits, as it were, this knowledge of his frightfulness to Job. *And this is what redeems the man Job.* This is really the solution to the enigma of Job, that is the true justification for Job's faith, which, without this background, would, in its cruelty and injustice, remain an open problem. Job appears here clearly as a sacrifice, but also as the carrier of the divine fate, and that gives meaning to his suffering and liberation of his soul.⁵⁹

As have the other writers considered in this thesis, Jung

⁵⁹ Rivkah Kluger, *Satan in the Old Testament*, trans. Hildegard Nagel, Evanston, Il: 1967, p. 129.

suggests that the apparent submission of Job in the epilogue is only an illusion. In one form or another Job continues to protest. Edinger suggests that Job's story: 'is a symbolic description of the dawning of a transpersonal dimension of consciousness that has the power of redemption.'⁶⁰ By the example of Job, humanity has learned to protest against injustice and irrationality.

The Role of Wisdom - *Hàkmá*

Just as Yahweh may be considered the masculine personification of the collective unconscious, wisdom may be considered the feminine personification of the collective unconscious. 'Unconsciousness has an animal nature' Jung suggests.⁶¹ Jung depicts the Leviathan and Behemoth, in another work, 'The Hymn of Creation' as beasts which represent the ungovernable wildness and licentiousness of Nature - the overwhelming danger of unchained power residing in the collective unconscious - and as such are what destroyed Job's earthly paradise. If the Behemoth 'is the first of God's sovereign deeds' (40:19a), he must represent the primary symbol of chaos, destruction and suffering which is in contrast to the position of Wisdom, *hàkmá*. In Proverbs, Wisdom is the primary representation of the power to create,

⁶⁰ Edinger, (1992), p. 52.

⁶¹ Answer, p. 547.

to order, to establish rapport between men and harmony with nature.

Yahweh created me [Wisdom], first fruits of his fashioning,
before the oldest of his works (Proverbs 8:22).

Wisdom and Behemoth, therefore, represent the dichotomy of good and evil found in the divine creation. Jung elaborates in 'The Hymn of Creation', his interpretation of the Monsters of Chaos from the Book of Job:

God, so the poet gives us to understand, has simply shown his other side for once, the side we call the Devil, and let loose all the terrors of Nature upon the unfortunate Job. The God who created such monstrosities, at the very thought of which we poor weak mortals stiffen with fear, must certainly harbour within himself qualities which give one pause. This God dwells in the heart, the unconscious.⁶² That is the source of our fear of the unspeakable terror, and the strength to withstand that terror.⁶³

In Job, the anima of God is Sophia - Wisdom - and Satan manifests the primitive Yahweh's self-doubt; therefore Satan becomes the catalyst which forces Job (or man) to self-awareness. Later the New Testament equivalent of Sophia is Mary, and the 'individuating ego' is Christ who is the brother and the opposite of Satan.⁶⁴

⁶² Here, in a footnote, Jung acknowledges his use of anthropomorphisms.

⁶³ Jung, 'The Hymn of Creation', CW 5, p. 89.

⁶⁴ Cf. James W. Heisig, *Imago Dei*, Lewisburg, Pa: 1979, p. 83. It is interesting to note, that carrying the theme of archetypal opposites, the two distinct personalities of Job correspond nicely to the schema of light-dark, good-bad, etc. Job the patient and obedient man is in direct contrast to Job

The Role of Ezekiel

Man, perhaps because of his mortality and unlike God, must live with a moral code. Man's behavior, then, raises him 'above the stars in heaven, from which position of advantage he can behold the back of Yahweh'.⁶⁵ Jung suggests God's unconsciousness, similar to an animal's nature, is described in the vision of Ezekiel in which three animals (lion, eagle, bull) and a man, appear to him. In what I believe to be a very different interpretation, Jung suggests that the man, high and behind Ezekiel's head, probably represents Satan. This idea is helpful in comprehending how much Jung continually readapts myths to coincide with his analytical psychology:

This symbolism [in Ezekiel] explains Yahweh's behavior which, from the human point of view, is so intolerable; it is the behavior of an unconscious being who cannot be judged morally. Yahweh is a *phenomenon* and, as Job says, 'not a man'.⁶⁶

At the conclusion of the Book of Job, the protagonists appear to believe that the 'incident is closed for good and all'; however:

the Promethean iconoclast. Those who identify with the former find the position of the latter intolerable and vice versa. Cf. Driscoll, pp. 127-128.

⁶⁵ *Answer*, p. 545.

⁶⁶ *Answer*, p. 547.

[w]e, the commenting chorus on this great tragedy, which has never at any time lost its vitality, do not feel quite like that. For our modern sensibilities it is by no means apparent that with Job's profound obeisance to the majesty of the divine presence, and his prudent silence, a real answer has been given to the question raised by the Satanic prank of a wager with God. Job has not so much answered as reacted in an adjusted way. In so doing he displayed remarkable self-discipline, but an unequivocal answer has still to be given.⁶⁷

A relationship of trust is out of the question to a modern way of thinking, nor can moral satisfaction be expected from an unconscious nature god of this kind. Jung remarks in a footnote that this conception of divine unconsciousness in God is a human device which allows our conception of God's actions to be beyond moral judgment and 'allows no conflict to arise between goodness and beastliness'.⁶⁸

Thus, in spite of man's impotence he is still set up over God himself. While we do not know whether Job realizes man's superiority, certainly, the numerous commentaries on Job down through the ages have ignored (perhaps because of the implied Gnosticism) or overlooked the implication that an external force overrules Yahweh.

In the following centuries nothing happened to rescue the monotheistic conception of God from 'disaster'. The relativization of God was unthinkable then and has remained so for two thousand years. Jung concludes:

⁶⁷ Answer, p. 548.

⁶⁸ Answer, p. 547, fn. 42.

The unconscious mind of man sees correctly even when conscious reason is blind and impotent. The drama has been consummated for all eternity: Yahweh's dual nature has been revealed, and somebody or something has seen and registered this fact. Such a revelation, whether it reached man's consciousness or not, could not fail to have far-reaching consequences.⁶⁹

The Book of Job has revealed the dual nature of God, but only the collective unconscious has absorbed that fact.

JOB MOVES GOD TOWARD A HIGHER CONSCIOUSNESS

Jung continues his investigation into the character of Yahweh. Modern man 'with his sensitive conscience', he suggests, may find the Hebrew God with his moral flexibility unreliable. Modern man wants God to be better than mere mortals - nobler, which may explain Yahweh's change of behavior after the 'Job episode'. Jung writes:

As always when an external event touches on some unconscious knowledge, this knowledge can reach consciousness.... Something of the kind must have happened to Yahweh. Job's superiority cannot be shrugged off. That is why Sophia [Wisdom] steps in. She reinforces the much needed self-reflection and thus makes possible Yahweh's decision to become man. It is a decision fraught with consequences:... he has to catch up and become human himself. Had he not taken this decision he would have found himself in flagrant opposition to his omniscience. Yahweh must become man precisely because he has done man a wrong. He, the guardian of justice, knows that every wrong must be expiated, and Wisdom knows that moral law is above even him. Because his creature has surpassed him he must regenerate himself.⁷⁰

⁶⁹ Answer, p. 550.

⁷⁰ Answer, pp. 572-573.

Christ as the Answer to Job

Once the Book of Job challenged the earlier, unthinking, mythological answers, there was no returning to the past. Jung suggests, therefore, that Yahweh's answer to his unjust treatment of Job was to incarnate as man. Job, as the image of humanity, displayed a consciousness superior to Yahweh's, and 'Yahweh was obliged to catch up with him morally, so to speak, and the answer was for Yahweh to become man'.⁷¹

The regeneration of God leads to the stories of the birth and life of Christ. 'God wants to incarnate himself not only in the perfect man, Christ, but in creaturely man like ourselves....'⁷² These include many of the trappings of a hero's life from earlier myths handed down by tradition.⁷³ So Christ must be born of an immaculate conception, and even his mother must be above all other humans. The Christ-myth, Jung believes, is brought about by the human aspect of divine doubt in Job (man) and culminates in the reconciliation of the antimonies in the divine psyche.⁷⁴ Even in the stories about Christ there is no indication that he wondered about himself or confronted himself.

⁷¹ Edinger, (1992), p. 19.

⁷² Hanna, p. 47.

⁷³ Cf. Joseph Campbell, *The Hero With a Thousand Faces*, New York: 1988.

⁷⁴ Williams, p. 253.

There is only one significant exception - the despairing cry from the cross: 'My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?' Here his human nature attains divinity; at that moment God experiences what it means to be a mortal man and drinks the dregs what he made his faithful servant Job suffer. Here is given the answer to Job, and, clearly, this supreme moment is as divine as it is human, as 'eschatological' as it is 'psychological'.⁷⁵

The coming of Christ, Jung saw was in response to the absence of love and the emphasis on power and fear of God which were the masculine underpinnings of the Hebrew Bible. Christ is the revelation of the light side of God - the *summum bonum* - and Satan, then, becomes the representative of the 'powers' of the dark, unknown, unconscious dimension of God. The totality of these powers are the Self - are God - and this unconscious wholeness penetrated into the psychic realm of inner experience and remained unassailable for a millennium.⁷⁶ However, by the eleventh century, Jung believes, further changes in human consciousness began to appear. Unrest and doubts increased, eventually leading to: 'giantism - in other words, a hubris of consciousness - in the assertion: "Nothing is greater than man and his deeds".'⁷⁷

The twentieth century has witnessed the fruits of this developing hubris. Evil, in all its manifestations, has been

⁷⁵ *Answer*, p. 576.

⁷⁶ Cf. *Memories*, p. 328. Jung prefers to use the word 'Self' as it is not so charged with subjective emotional content as is the word 'God'. Cf. *Hanna*, p. 70.

⁷⁷ *Memories*, p. 328.

broadcast world-wide and can no longer be dismissed as
privatio boni:

The criterion of ethical action can no longer consist in the simple view that good has the force of a categorical imperative, while so-called evil can resolutely be shunned. Recognition of the reality of evil necessarily relativizes the good, and the evil likewise, converting both into halves of a paradoxical whole.⁷⁸

Christ, as one of the halves, represents the higher 'feminine' and love which were necessary to balance the other half which was the predominant 'masculine' of earlier religious myth. Van der Post writes:

Christ to Jung was the love of God made specific in man, and constituted a transcendental tradition to which both God and man were subject. Christ was an expression of cosmic love made specific, delegated to stand up with man to the terror of God as with Job on his heap of ashes.⁷⁹

Thus the 'myth' of Christ was born.

Religion has no meaning without a 'mythos', Jung suggests, and the lack of historical facts concerning the life of Christ does not lessen his universal validity. He relates that it is quite possible psychologically for an unconscious archetype to take complete control of a human and to orchestrate his fate to the smallest detail.⁸⁰ He believes this is evident in the nature of Christ:

The life of Christ is just what it had to be if it is the life of a god and a man at the same time. It is a

⁷⁸ *Memories*, p. 329.

⁷⁹ Van der Post p. 233.

⁸⁰ Cf. *Answer*, p. 577.

symbolum, a bringing together of heterogeneous natures, rather as if Job and Yahweh were combined in a single personality. Yahweh's intention to become man, which resulted from his collision with Job, is fulfilled in Christ's life and suffering.⁸¹

Thus Christ fulfills the archetypal demand for a loving God - he is the myth personified. Iris Murdoch, writing in 1992, believes that what Jung said in *Answer to Job*, in 1952, has even more validity for us today:

This authoritative dictum from Jung raises questions and doubts which are even more apt now than when he wrote. He suggests that we can preserve and develop religious mythology, no longer by reference to any traditional 'good' or 'absolute', but by fostering in our own souls a natural harmony of opposites, good and evil, masculine and feminine, dark and light. In the battle between Plato and the presocratics, Jung is definitely on the side of the latter, cosmic soul is God, there is no absolute beyond explanations of religious experience which he pictures in terms of myth.⁸²

Christians, in accepting the mythos of Christ, and in relegating evil to simply *privatio boni*, have continued to bury the dark side - the shadow - of their own personalities. But according to Jung, man does not have to make a pact with the devil as did Faust. Rather he must acknowledge his dark side, confront his evil in order to bring it to consciousness and, thereby, take control of his life. Christianity offers the potential of acknowledging sin/guilt as well as the good through the person of Christ. Jung writes:

⁸¹ *Answer*, p. 578.

⁸² Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, London: 1992, p. 134.

Just as medical treatment appoints the person of the doctor to take over the conflicts of his patients, so Christian practice appoints the Savior, 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins' (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:14; Isa. 53:4). He is the deliverer and redeemer of our guilt, a God who stands above sin, who 'committed no sin, no guile was found on his lips' (I Peter 2:22); who 'himself bore our sins in his body on the tree' (I Peter 2:24).⁸³

In another essay he writes:

If only people could realize what an enrichment it means to find one's own guilt, what a sense of honor, and new spiritual dignity!...Unfortunately, without guilt there can be no ripening of the soul, neither can there be any broadening of the spiritual horizon. What did Meister Eckhart have to say on this subject:⁸⁴ 'For this reason God is willing to bear the brunt of sins...mostly sending them to people for whom he has provided some high destiny. See. Who was dearer to our Lord or more intimate with him than his apostles? Not one of them but fell into mortal sin, all of them were mortal sinners'.⁸⁵

From a psychological point of view, Jung has utilized the character of Yahweh, in the Book of Job, to illustrate what happens when the psyche is in conflict with itself. He believes that what is true in the character of man is also true in the character of God. God exists in the psyche of man, and what must be remembered about Jung's belief in the psyche is that it is real while at the same time not a

⁸³ *Symbols of Transformation*, CW 5, p. 61.

⁸⁴ 'After the Catastrophe', in *Essays in Contemporary Events*, London: 1947, P. 55, CW 10.

⁸⁵ Evans, Richard, *Meister Eckhart*, vol. II, London: 1956, pp. 18-19.

physical fact.⁸⁶ Religious statements, therefore, are not about the reality of the *physis*, but, without exception, the reality of the *psyche*.

God As 'Wholly Other'

Christianity, by denying the relatedness of God and his creatures, sets the two in opposition to each other.

The opposition between God and man in the Christian view may well be a Yahwistic legacy from olden times, when the metaphysical problem consisted solely in Yahweh's relations with his people. The fear of Yahweh was still too great for anybody to dare - despite Job's gnosis - to lodge the antimony in Deity itself. But if you keep the opposition between God and man, then you finally arrive, whether you like it or not, at the Christian conclusion, *omne bonum a Deo, omne malum ab homine*, with the absurd result that the creature is placed in opposition to its creator and a positively cosmic or demoniac grandeur in evil is imputed to man. The terrible destructive will that breaks out in John's ecstasies gives some idea of what it means when man is placed in opposition to the God of goodness: it burdens him with the dark side of God, which in Job is still in the right place. But either way man is identified with evil, with the result that he sets his face against goodness or else tries to be as perfect as his father in heaven.⁸⁷

This human burden of sin and guilt is what happens when God is placed outside human boundaries as 'wholly other'. Just as we can concentrate our libido or psychic energy in sexual desire for another person and completely lose ourselves, so we can be lost in the absorption of a God completely outside our soul

⁸⁶ Jung asserts: 'God is an obvious psychic and non-physical fact, i.e. a fact that can be established psychically but not physically'. *Answer*, p. 642

⁸⁷ *Answer*, p. 632.

which can cause a devastating void in our creative power and spiritual energy. Again Jung relies on Meister Eckhart:

Whereas he who does not hold God as an inner possession, *but with every means must fetch Him from without*, either in this thing or in that, where he seeks Him insufficiently, with every manner of deeds, people or places; surely such a man has Him not, and easily something comes to trouble him. And it is not only evil company which troubles him, but also the good, not only the street, but the church, not only evil words and deeds, but even the good. For the hinderance lies within himself: in him God has not yet become the world. Were He that to him, then would he feel at ease in all places, and secure with all people, always possessing God.⁸⁸

For Jung the banishment of God to a 'place' outside the psyche is psychologically dangerous and impossible because, God is 'one of the soul's deepest and closest intimacies'.⁸⁹ The God of Jung is not *ipso facto* the Christian God, but Jung's heritage is Christian and that is his frame of reference when he speaks of God. Murray Stein writes on Jung's arguments in *Answer to Job*:

Of all his published works, this one most clearly reveals his highly charged emotional relationship to Christianity, which I refer to as countertransference because it occurs within the context of his therapeutic designs on Christianity. While *Answer to Job* is both a recapitulation and an extension of Jung's earlier interpretation of biblical Christian tradition, it is more significantly, passionate, engaged interpretation and intense dialogue, in which Jung plays the roles at once of the emotionally involved psychotherapist and of the angry son who brutally confronts the Father with His

⁸⁸ *Psychological Types*, London: 1921, pp. 303-304, CW 6, (modified).

⁸⁹ Jung, CW XII, p. 11, fn. 6.

shortcomings.⁹⁰

How passionately involved Jung was on the subject of the problems of Christianity which was unresponsive to psychological growth is apparent in his arguments with Father Victor White on the subject of *privatio boni*.

Privatio Boni

One of the topics in *Aion* which led Jung to write *Answer to Job* was *privatio boni*. He considered it one of the most salacious arguments in Church doctrine. *Privatio boni* takes away the real status of Evil and relegates it to a deficient aspect or missing piece of the Good. In a letter to Father Victor White, Jung explains his rejection of *privatio boni*:

On the practical level the *privatio boni* doctrine is morally dangerous, because it belittles and unrealizes Evil and thereby weakens the Good, because it deprives it of its necessary opposite: there is no white without black...no truth without error, no light without darkness etc. If Evil is an illusion, Good is necessarily illusory too.⁹¹

In a following letter to White, Jung attacks the doctrine's confusion between Good and Being:

The crux seems to lie in the contamination of the two incongruous notions of Good and Being. If you assume, as I do, that Good is a moral judgment and not substantial in itself, then Evil is its opposite and just as non-substantial as the first. If, however, you assume that

⁹⁰ Murray Stein, *Jung's Treatment of Christianity*, Wilmette, Il: 1985, p. 163.

⁹¹ Jung to Victor White, 30 April, 1952, *Letters*, vol. 2:61. eds. Gerhard Adler & Aniela Jaffé, Princeton: 1978.

Good is Being, then Evil can be nothing else than Non-Being....God is certainly Being itself and you call him the *summum bonum*. Thus all Being is Good and even Evil is a minute Good, even if Satan's disobedience is still good to a small degree and nothing else. For that Good he is in hell. Why should Good be thrown into hell? And at what percentage of goodness are you liable to get condemned?⁹²

For Jung if there is no *privatio boni*, there is also no absolute moral evil, and what transpires in that guise is the buried negative aspect of the human psyche - the shadow. As the negative aspects of our personality are painful for us to acknowledge, we repress them, hide them, and, thereby, think we have disposed of them. But we have disposed of nothing. The shadow side of our nature has simply been pushed

into a place where it both has us in its grip and automatically projects itself on the person or the nation we do not like; so the tension we will not stand in ourselves is carelessly and irresponsibly cast out to increase the tension and strife and anguish of our world.⁹³

In like manner the negative aspects of the Bible which portray unethical behavior, either by God or rewarded by God, have been ignored or discounted. Thus Christians may suggest that it is only the Hebrew Bible which speaks of an archaic God. But the dark side of the Apocalypse in Revelations also

⁹² Jung to Victor White, 30 June 1952, *Letters*, 2:72. In that argument, by equating God with Being, Jung seems to bestow on God certain metaphysical qualities which elsewhere he says are undefinable. He, therefore, contradicts his notion that God is a force integral to the Self but which is unknowable.

⁹³ Hanna, p. 100.

has been ignored - most likely because of the threat it would have to the undeniable positive aspects of the Christian message.

CRITICISMS OF ANSWER TO JOB

Jung's *Answer to Job* was received with vehement protests from some Christian leaders. He was anti-God, anti-Christ, anti-religion. Victor White, who had long been a supporter of Jungian psychology finally became outraged at Jung's effrontery with the publication of *Answer to Job*. In a long, negative review White suggests that Job's problems should not be shifted to the back of his gods in the guise of labeling them archetypal images. He demands:

What lesson, as a pupil in psychology, am I supposed to derive from it all? That we can legitimately transfer our personal splits and ills to our gods and archetypes, and put the blame on them?...Or are the critics right who consider that Jungians have become so possessed by archetypes that they are in danger of abandoning elementary personal psychology altogether?⁹⁴

Jung refutes all of White's criticisms in a letter, ending with this warning:

If Job is to be considered as a neurotic and interpreted from the personalistic point of view, then he will end where psychoanalysis ends, viz. in disillusionment and resignation, where its creator most emphatically ended too.

Since I thought this outcome a bit unsatisfactory and also empirically not quite justifiable, I have suggested the hypothesis of archetypes as an answer to

⁹⁴ White, 'Review of *Answer to Job*' in *Journal of Analytical Psychology*, vol. 4, no. 1 (January 1959), pp. 77ff.

the problem raised by the shadow.⁹⁵

There were others who attacked Jung's book. Brome summarizes the charges of a 'hostile handful' of critics:

There were those who felt that *Answer to Job* simultaneously committed the sins of blasphemy and arrogance: blasphemy that he should attempt to unravel the metamorphoses of the Holy Spirit in the manner of a neo-Gnostic and arrogance in making it conform to his own theories....Jung had now appointed himself psychiatrist to God, diagnosed a divine sickness and successfully cured the Patient by applying his own theories.⁹⁶

In their responses, I believe, they misread Jung's intent. He was arguing, in actual fact, for the revitalization of religion as one way for man to resolve the bifurcation of the Self caused by the misapplication of religious myths. Christopher Bryant notes that it is because Jung was a profoundly religious man, concerned with the fate and faith of his Christian surroundings, that he has been 'able to shed a new and brilliant light on the whole field of religious psychology'.⁹⁷ In the same vein, Professor G.S. Spinks writes that Jung's contribution to religious psychology exceeds that of any other writer of this century.⁹⁸ Stein asserts that Jung's critics underestimated the self-awareness,

⁹⁵ *Letters*, vol. 2, p. 545.

⁹⁶ V. Brome, *Jung: Man and Myth*, New York: 1978, p. 254.

⁹⁷ Christopher Bryant, *Jung and the Christian Way*, London: 1983, p. 3.

⁹⁸ Cf. G.S. Spinks, *Psychology and Religion*, Newark, N.J: 1963, p. 90.

critical faculties, and psychological stature of Jung:

Jung was not naively a prophet, but he certainly did take risks and did expose his personality to public scrutiny. But since he assumed the position of physician to an ailing religious tradition, he was required to reveal himself in this fashion to his patient. A 'doctor of souls' cannot hold back. In addition to the personal factors at work in his treatment of Christianity, he revealed a detailed account of its disorder, its developmental history, and its potential for further development toward wholeness.⁹⁹

Jung was extremely concerned with the inability of the Christian Church to remain dynamic, to grow and expand with the evolution of the human psyche. To him, this is the crux of the problem with Christianity. In a later essay reflecting on *Answer to Job* and the God-image, he writes:

The early Christian prophecy concerning the Antichrist, and certain ideas in late Jewish theology, could have suggested to us that the Christian answer to the problem of Job omits to mention the corollary, the sinister reality of which is now being demonstrated before our eyes by the splitting of our world: *the destruction of the God-image is followed by the annulment of the human personality*. Materialistic atheism with its utopian chimeras forms the religion of all those rationalistic movements which delegate the freedom of personality to the masses and thereby extinguish it. The advocates of Christianity squander their energies in the mere preservation of what has come down to them, with no thought of building on to their home and making it roomier. Stagnation in these matters is threatened in the long run with a lethal end.¹⁰⁰

Jung, however, did not feel that Christianity was necessarily at fault, rather the problem lies in our conception and interpretation of Christianity. To resist the

⁹⁹ Stein, p. 109.

¹⁰⁰ CW, Vol. 7, p. 109 (originally published in 1966).

narcotic pull of mass movements, such as the materialism of today, we must either have a strong faith in God, or in the power of a numinous symbol which produces the same results.

'Resistance to the organized mass can be effected only by the man who is as well organized in his individuality as the mass itself.'¹⁰¹ Only the person who is existentially free from the mass will be able to find himself and his uniqueness in God. He or she, then, will be able to make a genuine contribution to society. This is the appeal of Job; he is not constrained by the traditional thinking of his comforters; he is able to visualize, as Gutiérrez explains, a new way to talk to God and about God. Jung writes:

A religious symbol that comprehends and visibly represents what is seeking expression in modern man could probably do this; but our conception of the Christian symbol to date has certainly not been able to do so. On the contrary, that frightful world split runs right through the domains of the 'Christian' white man, and our Christian outlook on life has proved powerless to prevent the recrudescence of an archaic social order like communism.

This is not to say that Christianity is finished. I am, on the contrary, convinced that it is not Christianity, but our conception and interpretation of it, that has become antiquated in face of the present world situation. The Christian symbol is a living thing that carries in itself the seeds of further development. It can go on developing; it depends only on us, whether we can make up our minds to meditate again, and more thoroughly, on the Christian premises. This requires a very different attitude towards the individual, towards the microcosm of the self, from the one we have had hitherto.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ *The Undiscovered Self*, p. 60, CW 10.

¹⁰² *The Undiscovered Self*, pp. 62-63, CW 10.

A religious symbol that comprehends and visibly represents the dynamics of the personality which are seeking expression in modern man could probably bring about an enhanced integration of the human psyche.

Jung knew that his *Answer to Job* was destined to be misunderstood. The contemporary world is simply unwilling to engage in any deep reflection on the state of the human soul. About seven months before he died, Jung unburdened himself in a letter to someone who had written to him and whom he did not know:

I had to understand that I was unable to make the people see what I am after. I am practically alone. There are few who understand this and that almost nobody sees the whole....I have failed in my foremost task, to open people's eyes to the fact that man has a soul, and there is a buried treasure in the field and that our religion and philosophy is in a lamentable state.¹⁰³

While Jung may have felt 'like a voice crying in the wilderness' his work continues to be viable. Besides the psychoanalytic aspects of his work, some theologians have incorporated Jung's concept of the dual aspects of God into their theologies.

JUNG'S CONTINUED THEOLOGICAL INFLUENCE

An example of Jung's continued theological influence is found in the work of Jim Garrison, *The Darkness of God*:

¹⁰³ Quoted in Gerhard Adler, 'Aspects of Jung's Psychology' in *Psychological Perspectives*, vol. 6, no. 1 (spring 1975), p. 14.

Theology After Hiroshima, in which the dark or shadow side of human nature and, therefore, God, is developed into a Christian teleological argument. Taking Jung's psychology, Garrison develops it into a form of process panentheism - creating a God whose good and evil sides appear to be contradictory but in fact have a teleological purpose. Garrison traces the duality of God's nature through the Hebrew Bible and into the New Testament to show that ultimately God's wrath is interpreted in the context of love. Yet, in enacting his will, God often blinds his creatures in order to show his power or intensify the appearance of his beneficence. Thus God hardens the heart of Pharaoh so that the plagues of the Egyptians may lead to the freedom from bondage of the Israelites and ultimately bring them to the promised land.¹⁰⁴ In the time of Jesus, various people are blinded to the events, which lead to his crucifixion and death without which there would be no atonement and salvation for his followers.¹⁰⁵

For Garrison, it is this inscrutableness of God's justice found in the Book of Job which makes the Book so important in

¹⁰⁴ Garrison, ironically, relies on this same argument for his thesis as do liberation theologians. Does this death of innocent Egyptians coincide with their concept of a Christian God?

¹⁰⁵ Cf. Garrison, *The Darkness of God: Theology After Hiroshima*, London: 1982, p. 114.

divining hints of God's teleological purpose.¹⁰⁶ Yahweh is flaunting his own covenant. As Jung suggests, he is darkening his own counsel when he answers Job out of the whirlwind. Job, consequently, experiences God as a direct enemy, but he also recognizes the internal conflict within God and calls on him as an intermediary - God against God. Garrison argues:

This is not dualism. It is rather the perception on the part of Job that God can only be experienced as an antimony, a totality of opposites which in their dialectical tension produce Yahweh's tremendous dynamism and unpredictability.¹⁰⁷

Consequently evil does not necessarily derive from human free will or demonic forces but is inherent in the very nature of God. This is what Job 'sees' in the Voice from the Whirlwind. Garrison quotes W. Eichrodt with approval:

[Job experiences] the awakening of a wholly new readiness to take the authoritative presence of God seriously - a presence to whose hidden depths suffering also belongs - and to renounce every theory which does not come within reach of divine richness. Here one can certainly no longer be self-assured in the possession and disposal of one's life; but one must simply stand and wait, in the human existence which one knows to be provisional, surrounded and upheld by the eternity of God.¹⁰⁸

So far Garrison's argument appears to be similar to Jung's, but the similarity is misleading because Garrison

¹⁰⁶ Garrison, p. 171. Frank Cross argues that it is the portrayal of the dialectical nature of God in the Book of Job which brings the Mosaic covenant to an end. Cf. *Canaanite Myth and Hebrew Epic*, Cambridge, Ma: 1973, pp. 343-346.

¹⁰⁷ Garrison, p. 169.

¹⁰⁸ Garrison, p. 170.

finds, in the reversal of Job's fortunes in the conclusion, actions which underscore the notion of God as the *Summum Bonum*. Garrison affirms:

Though [God is] clearly the prime cause of what humans experience as intrinsic evil and intrinsic good, God invariably uses intrinsic evil instrumentally for a higher purpose. The antimony of God must therefore be seen as complementary aspects within the over-arching beneficence of the will of God.¹⁰⁹

To conclude his analysis of Job and the moral instrumentality of God's ordering of the Universe, Garrison compares Job to Christ. Both Job and Christ are abandoned by God, and both are redeemed - Job in his lifetime and Christ through his resurrection. And as Job discerns the antinomial nature of God from the whirlwind, so too should humanity discern a similar truth in the death and resurrection of Christ. For Garrison, this revelation is a far more profound Christ-event than just the redemption of man:

The mystery of sin and evil, of the blindness and disobedience of Israel and the suffering of Job, are not to be seen as antithetical to the will of God but integral to its antinomial character. They are not to be interpreted as playing no part in the divine intention and reality; on the contrary, to those whose eyes are opened to see, they are revealed as central to God's purpose and plan from the beginning. The crucifixion of Christ compels us to see these, the weal and the woe, in the light of the antinomial character of God's actions. Indeed, if Christ crucified is the central fact of human existence, then the whole of reality needs to be seen and interpreted through this prism alone.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁹ Garrison, p. 170.

¹¹⁰ Garrison, p. 174.

Jung never considers God to have a teleological purpose. There is no divine, moral instrumentality which is the cause of suffering and evil. Yet Jung does acknowledge that suffering helps to develop an integrated consciousness. This is very different from Garrison who believes that the overriding pedagogical nature of suffering and evil cancels out whatever moral limitations he has found in God's character.

THE CRISIS OF THE PRESENT TIME

Perhaps the reason so many writers of this century have used the Book of Job to examine the problem of evil and suffering is because it openly confronts the negative aspects of God in a way which, because the Book of Job is part of the Canon, mitigates the issues under scrutiny. While Jung does not seem to need the security of a canonical work to argue for him, he does recognize that the Book of Job represents an archetypal myth of enduring quality which helps him to explain what impact the dialectical nature of God/Self has on the individual and collective psyche:

We have experienced things so unheard of and so staggering that the question of whether such things are in any way reconcilable with the idea of a good God has become burningly topical. It is no longer a problem for experts in theological seminaries, but a universal religious nightmare, to the solution of which even a layman in theology like myself can, or perhaps must, make

a contribution.¹¹¹

Jung feels this compulsion to testify, because Christianity has failed to recognize a dark aspect in the nature of God/Self, with the results that the shadow-side of man has been allowed to rampage out of control in this century. It is now time to acknowledge the shadow, bring it into the light of day so that it may be made harmless.

Concerned by the disintegration of the psyche and society Jung felt compelled, in true existentialist fashion, to testify and to try to rectify the problems he has seen. He builds his testimony on the Book of Job.

VOCATUS ATQUE NON VOCATUS, DEUS ADERIT.¹¹²

The imprint of the Divine in the human psyche was evident to Jung in all the patients he saw over his lifetime. Shortly before he died, Jung wrote in a letter to Laurens van der Post:

I cannot define for you what God is. I can only say that my work has proved empirically that the pattern of God exists in every man, and that pattern has at its disposal the greatest of all energies for transformation and transfiguration of his natural being. Not only the meaning of his life but his renewal and that of his institutions depend on his conscious relationship with

¹¹¹ Answer, p. 629.

¹¹² 'Called and not called, God will be there'. This inscription is carved over the doorway of Carl Jung's house in Kusnacht/Zurich.

this pattern in his collective unconscious.¹¹³

It only remains for humanity to become aware of the dynamics that Jung outlined in *Answer to Job* to start the renewal.

In an interview with Frederic Sands he describes God as the inexplicability of fate and the voice of conscience: 'all that I have learned has led me step by step to an unshakable conviction of the existence of God....I do not take His existence on belief - I know that He exists.'¹¹⁴ When later questioned about his answer he replied: 'I do know that I am obviously confronted with a certain factor unknown in itself which I call God'. And about his idea of the devil, he wrote to Professor Hilty: '"Devil" is a very apt name for certain autonomous powers in the structure of the human psyche. As such the devil seems to me to be a real figure.'¹¹⁵

Van der Post asserts that Jung's lifelong attempt to discover the mysteries of the psyche were motivated by a reverence and love for the mystery of life. Jung believed that the transformation of the Self is brought about by the redemption of evil through human awareness as he has outlined in *Answer to Job*, and by the mystery of love. The Shadow must be brought to consciousness in order to achieve integration.

¹¹³ Quoted in Van der Post, p. 216.

¹¹⁴ Interview by Frederic Sands, *Daily Mail*, 29 April, 1955.

¹¹⁵ Quoted in Brome, p. 255.

Christ is God's answer to Job. In the culture of the West, Christ is humanity's path to the Self, not a destination but a journey of discovery, which is the reason Christian myth speaks of a 'second-coming' - a symbolic journey for continued individuation of the Self:

The task of differentiation and individuation of our meaning, so dependent on transforming evil through love without sacrifice of the good is unending. Thus the imposition of what might appear so monstrous a shedding of cosmic responsibility on mere flesh and blood, would be unpardonable were it not for the fact, that at the core of this symbol of the Self of which Christ was a living symbol, creation has placed at the disposal of the spirit of man the greatest of all weapons; the power of a love that is beyond good or evil, light or darkness.¹¹⁶

The power of love, in the twentieth century, has become the salve for the existential angst suffered by modern man. Jung does not find love in the Book of Job, but he does find love in Christ who is the 'answer to Job'. Not surprisingly then, Jung, as have the other three writers I have examined in this thesis, ultimately argues that love is the only solution to the problem of innocent suffering:

I sometimes feel that Paul's words - 'Though I speak with the tongues of men and angels, and have not love' - might well be the first condition of all cognition and the quintessence of divinity itself. Whatever the learned interpretation may be of the sentence 'God is love,' the words affirm the *complexio oppositorum* of the Godhead. In my medical experience as well as my own life I have again and again been faced with the mystery of love, and have never been able to explain what it is. Like Job, I had to 'lay my hand on my mouth, I have spoken once, and I will not answer' (Job 40:4f). Here is the greatest and the smallest, the remotest and the nearest, the highest

¹¹⁶ Van der Post, p. 237

and the lowest, and we cannot discuss one side of it without also discussing the other. No language is adequate to this paradox. Whatever one can say, no words express the whole. To speak of partial aspects is always too much or too little, for only the whole is meaningful. Love 'bears all things' and 'endures all things' (1 Cor. 13:7). These words say all there is to be said; nothing can be added to them. For we are in the deepest sense the victims and the instruments of cosmogonic 'love'. I put the word in quotation marks to indicate that I do not use it in its connotations of desiring, preferring, favoring, wishing, and similar feelings, but as something superior to the individual, a unified and undivided whole. Being a part, man cannot grasp the whole. He is at its mercy. He may assent to it. Love is his light and his darkness, whose end he cannot see. 'Love ceases not' - whether he speaks with the 'tongues of angels', or with scientific exactitude traces the life of the cell down to its uttermost source. Man can try to name love, showering upon it all the names at his command, and still he will involve himself in endless self-deceptions. If he possess a grain of wisdom, he will lay down his arms and name the unknown by the more unknown, *ignotum per ignotus* - that is, by the name of God. That is a confession of his subjection, his imperfection, and his dependence, but at the same time a testimony to his freedom to choose between truth and error.¹¹⁷

Gutiérrez, Wiesel, and MacLeish specifically write about love in relationship to the Book of Job; Jung does not. Yet, he believes that the Book of Job finally has brought to consciousness the duality of God/Self, which engenders the ultimate 'answer' to Job - Christ. Christ is the archetype of love and compassion. Thus the acknowledged dark side of God in the Book leads to the birth of Christ, the acknowledged light side of God. If we bring these antinomies together in consciousness, we integrate the Self; we are in conscious control; we are able to deflect our negative propensities into

¹¹⁷ *Memories*, pp. 353-354.

positive good. In *Answer to Job*, Jung expresses the existentialist's desire for self-empowerment which leads to the collective good for all.

In the concluding chapter, we see that these four very different writers, ultimately, have very similar arguments for the alleviation of human suffering and the enhancement of human life.

CONCLUSION

After long labour lost, and times expense,
Both grant the words, and quarrel for the sense.
Thus all disputes for ever must depend;
For no dumb rule can controversies end.
Thus when you said tradition must be try'd
By Sacred Writ, whose sense yourself decide,
You said no more, but that yourselves must be
The judges of the Scripture sense, not we.
Dryden, *The Hind and the Panther*, Bk II, 200-207

Why read the Bible today? Why use it as a basis for a dialogue on the problems confronting society today? The Scriptures are evidence that the dilemmas of humankind have not changed markedly over the millennia. We still need to be reminded of the precepts put forth in the Decalogue, and in the Code of a Man of Honour as elaborated by Job. And we still suffer. Thus, the Bible is a repository of human wisdom garnered over the ages, and, what was once valid instruction then, is often still valid now. The wisdom collected in the Bible is not just a set of rules and regulations but often myths which are, as well, great literature, and their didactic quality is enhanced because we often relate to stories better than we relate to rules and regulations. John Barton, in discussing the role of the Bible in moral debates, states:

Finally, to read the Bible as *literature*, and for the most part great literature, is to recognize that we do not learn from a list of regulations....If these books

are to work on our moral sense, it can only be in the way that other equally non-didactic literature does so: by informing our imagination and conscience; by making us sensitive to nuances of moral conduct; by presenting us with models and paradigms and analogies for our own action, and some understanding of the interplay of human desires and aspirations and conflicts.¹

We have seen the Book of Job is such a piece of literature. Current Western culture is still informed by the myth of Job, and we continue to use his testimony to build our own rationale of understanding.

IS THERE A CORE MEANING IN THE BOOK OF JOB?

As is apparent, the myriad facets of the Book of Job can be interpreted in a multitude of ways, and many readers choose the text because it does not hinder the creative search for answers to soul-searching questions about the nature of God and human suffering. Yet there appears to be a core meaning to the Book of Job which often elicits similar responses that are not overtly elucidated there.

The **content** of the Book is about suffering and injustice as it relates to the nature of God. How this content takes **individual form** is through struggle either with Self/God or society. Job struggles with his comforters and he struggles with God. The **methodology** for this is **testimony**. Job is witness to the conundrum that, if retributive justice is the

¹ Barton, 'The Place of the Bible in Moral Debate' in *Theology* vol. 88, 1985, p. 208.

modus operandi of the Divine Plan, then something is sorely amiss. He brings this testimony before God. Consequently content, individual form, and testimony meld together to create the 'real presence', the core meaning of the text.

If we try to impose a structured interpretation onto a 'classic', we immediately discover that certain discrepancies violate such a rigid format. It is the presence of these discrepancies 'which draws us into the text, compelling us to conduct a creative examination not only of the text but also of ourselves'.² If we approach the Book of Job (or any creative piece of writing) purely from an objective, critical point of view, we denature the text, strip it of its vitality, its virtual dimension. This is not to say that various forms of criticism are not valid. Certainly they offer fascinating and insightful evidence for the manner in which the text was conceived, created, edited, and included in the canon - in short, the history of the text. But in so doing, the human, subjective quality has been sacrificed. Stanley Fish states: '[T]he problem is simply that most methods of analysis operate at so high a level of abstraction that the basic data of the *meaning experience* are slighted and/or obscured'.³ Even the

² Wolfgang Iser, 'The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach' in *Reader Response Criticism: From Formalism to Post-Structuralism*, ed. Jane P. Tompkins, Baltimore: 1980, p. 64.

³ Stanley Fish, 'Literature in the Reader: Affective Stylistics' in Tompkins, p. 76.

various methods of interpretation have become so complex and contradictory that their very implementation helps only to fragment the text into a seemingly innumerable number of discrepant parts. Edwin M. Good, commenting on the modern fate of the Book of Job (or any text) in the clutch of various exegetical methods, states:

[R]eading has disintegrated. We have become uncertain about what a text is and about why we read. According to semeiotics, a text is a congeries of codes to be cracked. To the structuralist, it is a system of signifiers. The deconstructionist tells us that a text has already undermined itself and means a whole host of contraries. The hermeneuts are sure that a text is (1) something that means or (2) that properly means only what its author meant or (3) that probably never means what its author meant. The psychoanalysis critic denies this, on the grounds that we do not know what we think. The political critics have decided that a text means what 'they' think it means, because a text is always a product of power. Historical critics may insist that the text means only what it used to mean.⁴

All these methods negate or overlook the core meaning, the real presence of the text.

Stanley Fish, in an essay entitled 'Is There a Text In This Class?', deconstructs the meaning of this particular query into several possible interpretations. 'Is there a text in this class?',₁ is a query about whether there is, in fact, a text which will be read and interpreted. 'Is there a text in this class?',₂ refers to the various number of disputed

⁴ Good, p. 177. Good goes on to admit that he likes deconstructionist indeterminacy because its advocates consider multiple possibilities, and there is no single truth (pp. 178-181).

literary hermeneutical methods available to students of literature as well as to the validity of individualistic and subjective interpretation - the reader as interpreter in which situation the set text disappears.⁵ Taking Fish's concept and applying it to this thesis, we can ask: 'Is there a text in this thesis?',₁ I think the reply is 'Yes' as set forth in chapter I. The Book of Job, as a book of the Bible, is subject to exegetical research on its origins - dating, author, integrity, etc. Thus the core material of this thesis is the Book of Job. 'Is there a text in this thesis',₁ however, is not the primary focus of this work, but rather the focus is the personal interpretations of our four authors.

The Book of Job is a fascinating exercise in exegetical method. It is also a canonical work which is drawn into almost every discussion of the problem of the innocent sufferer. This is where 'Is there a text in this class?',₂ applies to this thesis. Here the answer to this question is 'No'. The four authors I examine in this thesis argue from divergent perspectives for particular reasons and toward different goals. The text is important to them as a foundation for their arguments, but then it 'disappears' because what they are trying to build out of the Book of Job

⁵ Cf. Stanley Fish, 'Is There A Text In This Class?' in *Is There A Text In This Class?*, Cambridge, Ma: 1980, pp. 303-321. He cites a third possible interpretation: Has someone left a (particular) text in this class? This does not pertain to our discussion.

is more important than the text itself. Although their interpretations may be subjective, they are no less coherent.

However the ultimate conclusions of Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung about the 'meaning of life' are drawn from the Book of Job, and the conclusions are similar. In this case then the answer to our question 'Is there a text in this class?' must be 'Yes'. There appears to be a 'core meaning' to the Book of Job, at least in the eyes of these four authors, which their subjective interpretation ultimately 'discovers'. Fish suggests that this core meaning exists because there are not 'possibilities and norms' encoded within the language, but that

communication occurs within situations and that to be in a situation is already to be in possession of (or to be possessed by) a structure of assumptions, of practices understood to be relevant in relation to purposes and goals that are already in place; and it seems within the assumption of these purposes and goals that any utterance is *immediately* heard.⁶

If I apply Fish's hypothesis to our four authors, it suggests that they each chose the Book of Job because they were 'aware' of its core meaning - an emphasis on love and compassion - and were relying on such a meaning even though it is not explicitly stated in the Book. Whether this 'core meaning' in the Book is exemplary only of the last half of the twentieth century is difficult to say without an exhaustive study of all such literature based on the Book. This is because as times

⁶ 'Is There A text', p. 318.

change so may 'meaning':

[M]eanings come already calculated, not because of norms embedded in the language but because language is always perceived, from the very first, within a structure of norms. That structure, however, is not abstract and independent but social; and therefore it is not a single structure with a privileged relationship to the process of communication as it occurs in any situation but a structure that changes when one situation, with its assumed background of practices, purposes, and goals has given away to another.⁷

Thus, while Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung come from radically different backgrounds and life experiences, they are still products of Western civilization with all its unconscious baggage firmly in place - centuries of religious, political, and cultural precepts which underlie all our behaviour. They are, also, subject to the existential angst of the twentieth century which may have helped to dictate their choice of the Book of Job and their 'finding', as well, the core meaning of love and compassion as the virtual dimension of the text.

Our four writers approach the Book of Job from radically different perspectives, but from within twentieth-century Western intellectual culture. For each one of them the myth of Job is revitalized by their experiences in the world. The text engages their imagination and inspires them to work out both its interpretation and 'boundary situation' problems in new ways. The Book of Job lends itself to such a variety of

⁷ 'Is There A Text', p. 318.

approaches because of the number of interpretive possibilities, as cited in chapter I. Thus a reader may choose to emphasize one aspect of the text and ignore or discount certain other aspects; or, because there are no 'answers' to Job's questions, the reader may supply her or his own.⁸

Validity of Subjective Interpretation

For to you every vision has become like the words of a sealed book. You give it to someone able to read and say, 'Read that.' He replies, 'I cannot, because it is sealed.' You then give the book to someone who cannot read, and say, 'Read that.' He replies, 'I cannot read.'
(Isaiah 29:11-12)

Most interpreters of the Book of Job agree that the arguments of the comforters are specious; their interpretations of Job's calamities are acceptable neither to us nor to Job. Thus I want to emphasize that the confrontation between the comforters and Job is about who has the power - the *right to interpret*. 'To the victor go the spoils' or

⁸ The Book of Job has always elicited such responses; for instance, in the Middle Ages, Gregory the Great continually refers to 'Blessed Job' and ignores Job's iconoclasm, while Chaucer's Clerk compares the rebellious humility of Job to that of any woman's. As Job's wife has just urged him to 'Curse God and die', the Clerk's remark must convey some recognition of the impatient, rebellious side of Job.

Men speke of Job, and moost for his humblesse,
As clerkes, wham hem list, can wel endyte,
Namely of men, but as in soothfastnesse,
Though clerkes preyse wommen but a lyte,
Ther kan no man in humblesse hym acquyte
As womman can, ne can ben half so trewe
As womman been, but it be falle of-newe. (E 932-938)

interpretive power:

By seeking control over the hermeneutic privilege, by arrogating the collective experience to themselves, the comforters assert their further authority over the concepts governed by the interplay of signs in the text.⁹

Modern theories of interpretation have not progressed any further than the comforters'; each advocate of a particular hermeneutical method claims supremacy for that method. But interpretation is not an 'either or' situation in which there is only one correct method. Rather, interpretation is a 'both and' reality in which many methods add to the understanding of the text. Generally, there is value in most interpretive approaches to a text. The only instance which belies this assertion is when the interpretation bases none of its assertions on the tableau set out by the text. For instance, if someone were to argue that Job was in fact a representative of an Aleutian tribe of Eskimos, there would be little basis for accepting this hypothesis (that is until someone discovers a lost document which describes Job as just that). New situations, new ideas, new discoveries will almost always dictate new interpretations.¹⁰

⁹ Richard Jacobson, 'Satanic Semeiotics, Jobian Jurisprudence' in *Semia* 19, 1981, ed. John Dominic Crossan, p. 69.

¹⁰ Cf. Stanley Fish, 'What Makes an Interpretation Acceptable?' in *Is There a Text In This Class?*, Cambridge, Ma., 1980, pp. 345-347.

Gutiérrez probably has some knowledge of biblical Hebrew but relies on the expertise of others for any linguistic analysis of the text. He approaches the Book from a theological, scholarly tradition. He acknowledges this tradition and then justifies his radical re-reading of the Book as a method long used in the past and ignored in modern times. There are no other interpretations of the Book of Job which use it as an argument for God's empowerment of the poor - after all, Job was one of the wealthiest men of the East, and in the epilogue his wealth is returned doubled.¹¹ I wonder if we were to follow Gutiérrez's argument for God's empowerment of the poor to its ultimate conclusion - that is the poor achieve their aims and join the ranks of the more fortunate classes - is God still with them? Gutiérrez to all intents and purposes ignores the epilogue perhaps because of this very problem.

Wiesel is, probably, the only one of the four considered here who is fluent in biblical Hebrew, but this expertise in the language does not preclude him from imbuing the text with his own interpretations. He acknowledges his rewriting of the epilogue. The original makes him uneasy. He accedes to the notion that Job, indeed, may be able to acquiesce to the

¹¹ Another liberation theologian to use the Book of Job is Elsa Tamez, but her approach is radically different. It is the silence of God which gives the people the strength to rebel against their injustices. Cf. 'A Letter to Job', pp. 51-53.

mysterium tremendum of God, but he cannot do so because of the innocent children willfully destroyed as a result of a wager between the Satan and God. Job, therefore, in Wiesel's midrash, must continue his revolt, even if it is in silence. (As he admits, a vituperative argument with God would inevitably end in defeat.) There is a desperate undercurrent in Wiesel's work which suggests his 'faith' as well as his 'belief' are badly damaged, and it is necessary for him to rely on Job to help him continue his contention with God.

MacLeish is unlikely to have had any knowledge of biblical Hebrew. Nor is there any evidence that he had read any of the major scholarly commentaries on the Book of Job. He approaches the text as a layman in the crucial sense, from a Christian background and with perhaps only Jung's *Answer to Job* as a secondary commentary. He reads the Book of Job as a biblical myth and comes to his own unfettered conclusions which he then translates into a format 'suitable for modern consumption'. MacLeish views the epilogue as crucial to the myth of Job because it underscores the resilience of humanity. Job lives on. The love between husband and wife creates a new family; Job's enterprise creates new prosperity. It is not 'God from whom all good things flow', but the indomitable spirit of man. Yet at the end of MacLeish's life he hoped that his works would live on, for as Hall notes, MacLeish seemed unsure that if his works did not out-live him then his

life, ultimately, would be meaningless - perhaps the human spirit is not enough.

Jung knew some biblical Hebrew, but it would not have influenced his interpretation of the Book of Job. For him, the Book of Job is a mythical story about archetypes which presents broad pictures about human behaviour. Consequently, Jung does not ignore or rewrite the epilogue, but chooses to integrate it into the story. The Voice from the Whirlwind helps Job to understand the primitive nature of God and expands his consciousness. Job, therefore, does not concede defeat but, like Wiesel's Job, continues to challenge God in order that God may become more human - moral and compassionate in response to human suffering. Now that Job intuits the dual aspect of God's nature, his suffering has meaning; he has become the scapegoat for the rest of humanity and brings to consciousness not only his own negative aspects but God's as well.¹² This awareness of the negative aspects of the Self leads to the incarnation of Christ - the affirmation of compassion and love which are positive aspects of the Self and help to maintain the psychic balance.

Gutiérrez was trained as a Catholic theologian, but the exigencies of the Latin American poor have demanded that he

¹² René Girard argued that the Book of Job was originally written as a 'scapegoat myth' and later redactors disguised this theme. Cf. *Job, The Victim of His People*, London: 1988; 'The Ancient Trail Trodden by the Wicked: Job as Scapegoat' in *Semeia* 33 (1985), pp. 13-41.

radically rethink his theological education. He uses the Book of Job as an example to the poor on how to talk to God and about God. Wiesel spent his childhood, prior to the age of fifteen, being meticulously schooled in the faith of a Hasidic Jew. His experiences in the death camps contravene his childhood faith and have led him to believe that God's lack of compassion teaches us human love and compassion. MacLeish had no such radical education on the world stage, but his desire to work for the betterment of humanity coupled with his gift as a poet caused severe conflicts in his life. On a personal level he was continually ridiculed and rejected for his idealism which only made him more convinced that 'truth' is found in man's capacity to love. Jung, too, did not go through the harrowing experiences of Wiesel; however, he was witness to the apparent decay of the human psyche brought about by its severance from its 'primitive, spiritual' self. Jung believed that only by acknowledging these forgotten aspects, as portrayed in the Joban myth, will humanity begin to realize its potential. Thus each writer, immersed in twentieth-century western culture, feels he is witness to a fundamental crisis in the governing of humanity. Each writer uses the classic myth on suffering, the Book of Job, as a foundation for his testimony, a foundation on which he builds arguments for love and compassion.

In each case the writer has used the **content** of the Book

of Job to outline the **individual form** of existential rebellion which becomes a **methodology** of testimony.

THE CASE FOR EXISTENTIALISM AND TESTIMONY

Einstein once remarked that with the arrival of the atomic age everything had changed except our thinking. Unfortunately the remark is true. Perhaps contemporary reflections on interpretation, with their emphasis on plurality and ambiguity, are one more stumbling start, across the disciplines, to try to change our usual ways of thinking. It is true that the point is not to interpret the world but to change it. But we will change too little, and that probably too late, if we do not at the same time change our understanding of what we mean when we so easily claim to interpret the world.¹³

David Tracey

Existentialism confers a moral meaning on individual experience, and testimony is the method which is used to bring this meaning to the public. Testimony is the method which our four writers have employed to present their arguments to the world.

Gustavo Gutiérrez never appears to wrestle with the theodicy problem. His faith accepts the paradox of an all-good, all-powerful God and the existence of evil in the world. Thus, in spite of the rampant injustices Gutiérrez has witnessed in Latin America, he believes that God is with these misbegotten people, suffers with them, and supports their efforts toward achieving a more equitable world. His concern is to reassure these 'non-persons' who might believe that God

¹³ Tracey, p. 114.

is neglecting them, has forgotten them. His concern is to show that this apparent neglect is not the case, but rather that God will support them in their efforts to achieve freedom from tyranny.¹⁴ For the group to achieve its goals each individual must assert his or her will to create meaning out of life. Gutiérrez emphasizes the love of God for his people, the passibility of Christ, rather than the love of humanity for their creator. This is his testimony.

Elie Wiesel is also more concerned with will rather than love, but his is a different 'will' than that endorsed by Gutiérrez. For Wiesel, what is paramount is the re-establishment of the covenant, the Jewish covenant, a universal covenant with God. The foundation of his childhood faith will not support his experiences in the death camps. Wiesel, then, must *will* himself to believe, and he must will God to honour his covenant. He does this through the medium of his writing and his efforts on behalf of oppressed peoples world-wide. In this attempt to change the world for himself and then for others, Wiesel still clings to the remnants of his faith. His contention with God, like Job's, but with the modern twist of the problem of belief, has become the dominant theme in his life. This is his testimony.

¹⁴ In this sense his argument is for the empowerment of the group rather than the existential emphasis of the empowerment of the individual. This focus on the will of the group is more Marxist, the natural evolution of Sartre's existentialism. Cf. Mary Warnock, pp. 131-140.

Archibald MacLeish sees the human capacity to love, to love those who have abused us, to love God in spite of everything as the sustaining force in human existence. That is why, of the four writers considered here, MacLeish ironically the most skeptic, is the only one who embraces the Joban epilogue as it is written. In it he finds evidence for the human capacity of forgiveness and love. MacLeish avers love is what creates the energy to live in spite of adversity; therefore love is what creates meaning in life. This is his testimony.

Jung ultimately argues that love is the strongest force in the world, but we must have self-knowledge before we can love ourselves. Self-knowledge/integration can only be achieved when we acknowledge the multi-dimensional aspects of our personalities. Only then are we able to extend that 'unconditional' love to the rest of humanity. In the same regard, God as a human projection has dimensions to his personality which include the light as well as the dark. Only by acknowledging the God which resides within as well as the God which resides without and, therefore, the dark side of God, can we control the destructive forces that lurk within each one of us. By becoming aware of our psyche and knowing the transcendent in whatever form is significant for each one of us, we create meaning in an existential sense in our lives. This is his testimony.

While on the surface these four authors have used the Book of Job for radically different ends, ultimately their arguments coalesce and unite them with the existential purpose of showing the individual that he or she is free to create a meaningful life. Not only are Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung asking their readers to understand what that freedom is, they are asking them to experience it - Gutiérrez in the form of 'Job shows us the way' toward actual freedom; Wiesel in the form that 'it is given to man to transform divine injustice into human justice and compassion'; Macleish in the form of 'the burning coal of the heart', which imbues humanity with the resilience to carry on against all odds with love and compassion. Jung in the form that each one of us has the ability 'to choose between truth and error'. Each suggests that man is free to love, and with compassion this world will be a better place to be.

Both Gutiérrez and Wiesel acknowledge the profound influence of the existential writings of Albert Camus. Gutiérrez, in his only reference to the problem of Job's dead children, admits that Camus' Dr. Rieux has a legitimate argument against God; however, if believers 'are able to live their faith disinterestedly...then human beings can accept the God of the Bible without being unfaithful to themselves'. Thus Camus' revolt against God is turned by Gutiérrez into a revolt by the poor, sanctioned by God, against inequality.

Wiesel takes the protest-atheism expressed by Camus and turns it into a vehicle to express his own revolt, but ultimately his faith dictates submission. The boulder that he shoulders up the mountain carries along his shaken belief in God's justice in the hope that it too will achieve the summit, and true, it is possible this belief will tumble back to the plain as a result of new atrocities, but *Ani Maamin*, Wiesel wants to believe and he will adamantly continue his challenge of this particular mountain.

MacLeish was obviously influenced by Jung as is evident in his Address and in his verse play. His debt to existential thought is also apparent. His overriding espousal of human freedom, which is evident by man's capacity to love even in the face of calamity and his desire to educate people to the potentialities of their freedom, indicates that MacLeish, too, argued from an existentialist point of view.

Jung does not comment on the influence of existentialism on his psychology. I contend, however, that his subjective concern for the individual and the notion that the individual must be responsible for his or her own well-being, which ultimately leads to individuation, is linked intrinsically with existential philosophy. A meaningful existence creates within each one of us a valid 'essence'.

The four writers often approach their subjects from the common ground of self-empowerment. Thus Gutiérrez is

compelled to argue for a new image of man by his experiences in the *barrios* of Lima, Peru. But this new image requires the empowerment of the lower classes themselves. Wiesel does not seem so concerned with a new image for man; he is more concerned with a new behaviour - ethical behaviour - for God. If God were to behave, as Jung says, with the moral character of his creatures, then perhaps the plight of humanity would greatly improve. By God's inhumanity, his creatures learn how to behave with compassion and love for each other. For MacLeish, his argument for a new image of man is inspired by his visit to Mexico where his concept of humanity is radically changed by his witness to the social inequality and poverty there. His new image of humanity is implemented by the upper classes' assumption of social responsibility for the lower ones. Jung, as well, has a new image of man. Each individual must become conscious and thereby fully responsible for her or his actions. In so doing each will reflect a capacity for love - a love which is represented in the Christ archetype.

While existentialism has often been criticized for its concern only for the individual, this is not the case. Rather existentialism argues for the self-realization of the individual which leads to a moral responsibility for the group as a whole:

Collective moral responsibility becomes both a fact and a value for political existentialism as Sartre conceives it. As a fact, it provides the point of departure for our social relations. To be in-society is

to be serially responsible and oftentimes to share group responsibility as well. His popular polemics...assume that as a matter of fact we are responsible for our world, for what 'happens' to us and to others, and for the value-image of man that our every basic choice projects.¹⁵

For Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung, their interpretation matters, not because they believe that they are adding to the compendium of knowledge about the Book of Job, but because they perceive a 'crisis' surrounding their lives and in their communities for which they feel morally responsible and which they wish to address. The transcendence, the real presence, they find in the Book is foundation for that testimony:

At times, interpretations matter. On the whole, such times are times of cultural crisis. The older ways of understanding and practice, even experience itself, no longer seem to work. We can find ourselves distanced from earlier ways. Then we need to reflect on what it means to interpret. We find that in order to understand at all we must interpret. We may even find that to understand we need to interpret the very process of understanding-as-interpretation. Such moments can occur readily enough in any individual's life. The great creative individuals - thinkers, artists, heroes, saints - found themselves impelled to find new ways to interpret an experience that their culture or tradition deemed unable to interpret well or even at all.¹⁶

The role of the individual is to interpret (not only in times of crisis but also as a necessary interaction with the world). Thus the 'reader' may find valid, different meanings

¹⁵ Thomas R. Flynn, *Sartre and Marxist Existentialism: The Test Case of Collective Responsibility*, Chicago: 1984, p. 184.

¹⁶ Tracey, p. 7.

for classics, for religious texts which may make more traditional exegetes uncomfortable. Tracey states:

Any interpreter who is willing to ask the fundamental questions to which the religious classics respond can and should converse with them.

Not only religious believers, therefore should risk interpretations of the religious classics. Some interpret the religious classics not as testimonies to a revelation of Ultimate Reality, as religious believers will, of course, interpret them, but as testimony to possibility itself....The religious classics can also become for nonbelieving interpreters testimonies to resistance and hope.¹⁷

Gutiérrez and Wiesel rely on the Book of Job from within their religious faiths to foster testimonies of resistance and hope, and MacLeish and Jung, while raised in the Christian tradition, rely on the Book of Job from outside orthodoxy for similar inspirations of resistance and hope.

The Book of Job: Foundation For Testimony

Testimony as a theoretical concept has been considered of dubious value for centuries, since the time of Aristotle and Plato who suggested that it was based on hearsay.¹⁸ Paul Ricoeur suggests that Aristotle tries to tie the logic of testimony to the logic of argumentation but fails because the proofs are non-technical. Thus 'it is the exteriority of testimony which will cause problems for a hermeneutics'.¹⁹

¹⁷ Tracey, p. 88.

¹⁸ Cf. Coady, pp. 4-5.

¹⁹ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 128.

But testimony has a place in our human discourse as witness:

Everyone understands that this is something other than an exact, even scrupulous narrator. It is not limited to testimony that...but he testifies for...he renders testimony to....By these expressions our language means that the witness seals his bond to the cause that he defends by a public profession of his conviction, by the zeal of a propagator, by a personal devotion which can extend even to the sacrifice of his life.²⁰

As Kierkegaard has emphasized, Job testifies to his plight and contends with God. Likewise, Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung testify to perceived wrongs and direct their arguments to God and with God.

All four writers utilize the dialectical aspects of God's character depicted in the Book of Job. Gutiérrez suggests that Job is aware of God's dialectic nature. Job accuses God of persecuting him and then asks God to defend him from such evils because Job knows 'God is just and does not want human beings to suffer'. Gutiérrez believes this desire of Job to bring his case before God is one of the most important aspects of the Book. On the limited power of God, arguably represented in chapter 40:7-14, Gutiérrez suggests the words are spoken by God with profound irony because God's power is limited by human freedom.

Wiesel, rather than openly discussing a God who could have a light and a dark side, chooses only to question how God could remain silent in view of his covenant with his people.

²⁰ Ricoeur, 'Testimony', p. 129. The ellipses are original with the text.

Thus Wiesel deflects this problem onto the dual nature of Job's suffering, a man he considers like himself for: 'Job is one who suffers and at the same time suffers against suffering'. So Job, too, has an iconoclastic nature which is in direct conflict with his patient nature portrayed in the prologue. Wiesel also considers the limited God passages, but he chooses to interpret them as God's sympathetic exhortation to Job to be courageous.

MacLeish chooses to use the Book of Job because it depicts the randomness of human catastrophes in a universe supposedly guided by a divine being. His ultimate conclusion is: this 'guidance' is meaningless. We are responsible for our lives. Even if fate has dealt us an atrocious hand we may choose to respond in a positive manner. MacLeish does not single out chapter 40:7-14 to illustrate why God's guidance could possibly be ineffective; however, there is no doubt that the God portrayed in MacLeish's play is limited in power.

Jung believes the Self - both as realized in the human psyche and the God archetype - has a good and evil dimension. The Book of Job is a perfect tool for Jung to draw on to illustrate his thesis. The negative aspects of God's character are brought into the open in the myth of Job. Jung believes this revelation helps to give birth to the positive aspects brought about by the appearance of Christ in Western religious culture. Thus when God challenges Job in 40:7-14,

God has projected his negative side onto Job, but as it was the Satan and not Job who has challenged his power, God in actuality must be challenging the Satan - his own Shadow.

Both MacLeish and Jung reject the archaic God-image in the Book of Job by suggesting that human consciousness has evolved and needs a more evolved God-image as well. Wiesel does not argue such a point, but the fact that he wants to renegotiate the covenant suggests that he believes there has been an evolution in human thought and circumstances, and God must renew his covenant to make it more relevant to the plight of his people.

For Gutiérrez and for Jung, the words of Jesus on the cross: 'My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me?' are revelational. Gutiérrez suggests that Jesus' cry on the cross makes more poignant the 'cries of all the Jobs, individual and collective in human history'. Suffering humanity, emulating Christ, expresses bewilderment as well as faith when it cries out to God. And as Gutiérrez, the theologian, tries to help these people, he, too, sometimes will be moved to repeat Jesus' cry from the cross. Jung interprets the scene in a similar fashion but with a different emphasis. The despairing cry from the cross indicates that God's human nature finally has attained divinity; at that moment God experiences what his faithful servant Job has suffered. 'Here is given the answer to Job, and, clearly, this supreme moment is as divine as it

is human, as "eschatological" as it is "psychological". In all these subjective emphases, the ultimate appeal of the Book of Job still derives from the **content** - an existential identification with the suffering archetype which takes the **individual form** of demanding justice for perceived wrongs. The **methodology** Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung present before the 'court' of the Western world is testimony.

The Book of Job has provided interpreters with many 'fuzzy' areas on which to focus. Thus reading the Book of Job is like looking through a kaleidoscope. The many pieces of coloured glass rearrange themselves each time the instrument is picked up by a different viewer. In an essay on Ricoeur's hermeneutics and the Book of Job, Loretta Dornisch writes:

To discover the reference or references of Job, to unlock the symbolic discourse is the challenge for interpretation. It is the reason why the interpretation of Job is never completed. Because the symbol gives rise to thought, it requires interpretation. The text of Job provides a theoretical model of reality which is multi-leveled, with cosmic, oneiric, and poetic aspects which have not been exhausted in spite of all the interpretations over the centuries. As a theoretical model of reality, the Book of Job challenges the reader, and thereby offers the possibility of making Job a living text. Job is poetry as creation in the ontological sense of the word.²¹

For Gutiérrez, the reality of Ayacucho drives his exegesis. To show that the poor misbegotten are loved by God and in turn must be loved and aided by their fellow humans, to

²¹ Loretta Dornisch, 'The Book of Job and Ricoeur's Hermeneutics', in *Semeia* 19, 1981, p. 17.

show that the poor have the right to demand justice from their opponents as well as God, Gutiérrez has interpreted the Book of Job as scriptural confirmation for these concepts. His faith in God is firm. Yet he acknowledges how difficult it is for 'non-persons' to believe in a loving God. Thus Gutiérrez's interpretation of the Book of Job is to show the misbegotten that God is with them.

Wiesel believes that

whoever lives through a trial, or takes part in an event that weighs on man's destiny or frees him, is duty-bound to transmit what he has seen, felt and feared. The Jew has always been obsessed by this obligation. He has always known that to live an experience or create a vision, and not transform it into link and promise, is to turn it into a gift of death.²²

Certainly this sense of duty is what motivates Gutiérrez, MacLeish, and Jung as well - a drive to testify, which they hope will right the wrongs they perceive surrounding humanity. But for Wiesel, even more, this striving is a personal effort to find 'belief' in the structure of his 'faith'.

MacLeish rewrites the story of Job into what he perceives as a more relevant scenario for modern sensibilities. God has walked off the world stage, and human love and compassion are the stage directions which bind the play of life together.

Jung relies on the contradictory nature of the Book of Job to show, that if we confront and acknowledge our own duality, then Jesus' authentic message of love and compassion,

²² Wiesel, *One Generation After*, pp. 184, 223-224.

the answer to Job, will be manifest.

Each of these writers has approached the text from a subjective/existential point of view. They have viewed the Book of Job as a foundation on which to place issues which are crucially important to them, derived from their life-experiences. To each of them the Book is a subject full of life and meaning which can only augment his personal arguments. If they treated the text in a 'normal academic format', the vitality on which they are depending would no longer be present:

The overarching principle is: identity re-creates itself, or, to put it another way, style - in the sense of personal style - creates itself. That is, all of us, as we read, use the literary work to symbolize and finally to replicate ourselves. We work out through the text our own characteristic patterns of desire and adaptation. We interact with the work, making it part of our own psychic economy and making ourselves part of the literary work - as we interpret it. For, always, this principle prevails: identity re-creates itself.²³

These four writers certainly use the Book of Job to support their testimony on 'boundary situations'. Yet, ultimately, they each conclude that love and compassion are the most crucial and critical aspects of human existence.

²³ Norman N. Holland, 'UNITY IDENTITY TEXT SELF', in Tompkins, p. 124.

THE VOICE FROM THE WHIRLWIND

Paul Ricoeur argues that Job, when he hears the Voice from the Whirlwind, is consoled. Language gives birth to a form of consolation because

[t]he power of saying is not something that we appropriate but that which appropriates us; and it is because we are not masters of our own language that we can be 'gathered,' that is, joined to that which gathers. As a result, our language becomes something more than a simple, practical means of communicating with others and a means of controlling nature....Man finds consolation when, through language, he lets things be, lets them be revealed. Because Job understands word as that which gathers, he sees the world as gathered.²⁴

By 'gathered' Ricoeur means humanity responds to language by being reassured the world is the dwelling place - a 'poetic' dwelling which maintains a tension between heaven, the divine, and our rootedness to the earth - all of creation. The epiphany experienced by Job creates in him a love for creation and an understanding of his place in that creation:

This mode of being is no longer 'the love of fate' but a love of creation....The love of creation is a form of consolation which depends on no external compensation and which is equally remote from any form of vengeance. Love finds within itself its own compensation; it is itself consolation.²⁵

I suggest Ricoeur here identifies the 'real presence' of love which is hidden in the core of the Book of Job. While the Book never uses the word 'love', Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish,

²⁴ Paul Ricoeur, 'Religion, Atheism and Faith', in *The Conflict of Interpretation: Essays in Hermeneutics*, Evanston, 1974, p. 464.

²⁵ 'Religion, Atheism, and Faith', p. 467.

and Jung believe that Job ultimately does not capitulate; he continues to present his case before God. Yet each writer still argues that love is the only 'answer' which justifies human existence. This love, then, if Ricoeur is correct, is the 'love of creation' that God has brought before Job. This suggests that there is a core meaning to the Book of Job which Ricoeur has identified as acceptance of the word as poetic representation of creation. There is no teleological solution presented in the whirlwind, no intelligent connection between ethical beliefs and physical realities; what remains, as MacLeish has argued, is a love of life, of creation, of our fellow creatures.

There are some differences in their approach to the problem of the innocent sufferer and faith in God, and there are differences in the outcome required by their initial focus. Yet their ultimate conclusions are markedly similar. Do these conclusions belong only to our age? Is it because these authors are writing in the second half of the twentieth century that they seem to be arguing for self-empowerment, love, and compassion? And is the Book of Job significant in the last half of our century because it is a canonical work which portrays the dialectic nature of its God? In part, I think the answer to these questions is 'Yes'. The appeal of the Book of Job to Gutiérrez, Wiesel, MacLeish, and Jung is certainly because of the dialectical nature of God portrayed

there. And the self-empowerment which Job inspires has an appeal to existentialism. Certainly other ages have endorsed love and compassion as witnessed by the ministry of Jesus, but our age has a desperate need to reaffirm the significance of these feelings. Yet the appeal of the Book of Job, I suggest, is more significant than just speaking to the dialectical aspect of God, or an argument for self-empowerment, and an intimation of love and compassion.

The Book of Job is relevant because of these aspects but also the dimensions of the Book are much greater than this. Job is an historic archetype, just as is the suffering servant in Isaiah or Jesus on the Cross. Their appeal is limitless. Every age must have its heroes, and if it does not then it returns to the past to reuse one of its outstanding characters whether from myth or religious traditions - archetypes. I conclude this is one of the reasons why the Book has become again so important in the twentieth century to believers as well as non-believers:

[T]his controversy over the legitimate limits of the hermeneutic appraisals of symbols is quite unprofitable. We have seen that myths decay and symbols become secularized, but that they never disappear, even in the most positivist of civilizations, that of the nineteenth century. Symbols and myths come from such depths: they are part and parcel of the human being, and it is impossible that they should not be found again in any and every existential situation of man in the Cosmos.²⁶

Job remains true to his principles, not led astray by

²⁶ Eliade, p. 25.

the dogma of the comforters. He endures unjust violence and carnage and is still unwavering in his faith in himself and in God. Many writers return to the Book of Job today not to practice the scholarly exercise of exegesis but to testify to the problems of our age and to offer possible solutions.

Krutch explains:

Job, sitting with his boils among the ashes and surrounded by comforters who do not comfort, best represents us at every stage of his career. In his prosperity and confidence he represents a civilization that was never so prosperous as ours still is, never so sure that God was on his side as, up to a generation ago, we still were. The calamities that fall upon him are those that have already fallen upon half of the world, and of which we still feel the threatening shadow. Seated among the ashes he asks, as we do, 'Why, why? Have I offended God or does no God to be offended anywhere exist? Am I being punished for some sin or am I the victim of a cruel joke?' Even in his self-pity Job is Modern Man, for if some men have seldom suffered more, most men (or at least most writers) have seldom complained more or found less in the universe to please them. Finally if the biblical book ends with only a half answer to the question it has raised, a half answer seems to be the best that we are also likely to get.²⁷

²⁷ Krutch, p. 10.

APPENDIX

A Glossary of Jungian Terms¹

Analytical psychology: Analytical psychology or depth psychology has developed a language based on the discoveries and concepts of Carl Gustav Jung. In his writings, Jung developed theories of the structure and dynamics of the psyche, both the *conscious* and *unconsciousness* aspects

Animus/anima: Between the personal unconscious and the collective unconscious resides the *anima* and *animus*. In a man the *anima* can be thought of as the 'inner personality' of the unconscious - those human qualities which are not found in consciousness.² These are the *feminine principle* of *Eros* which pertains to feelings, love and relatedness. Jung used the term *animus* for the corresponding unconscious aspects of the woman's personality. In the woman, the *animus* is also the corresponding contrasexual element - the *masculine principle* of *Logos* which stands for rationality and consciousness.

Archetypes: In the deepest layer of the *collective unconscious* reside the *archetypes*. Archetypes can be compared to instincts. Just as instincts are unconscious behavior on a biological level, so too the archetype is an instinctual response on a psychic level. Archetypes are perceived and experienced subjectively through certain universal, typical, recurring mythological motifs and images. These *archetypal images*, symbolically elaborated in various ways, are the basic contents of religion, mythologies, legends and fairy tales of all ages. Although archetypes are not generally perceived directly; their characteristics manifestations are.

Consciousness/Ego: The ego is the foundation of consciousness. Consciousness is composed of feelings, thoughts, fantasies, and perceptions, the ego is in charge of

¹ The definitions which follow are derived from a compendium of Jungian definitions in *Memories, Dreams, Reflections*, pp. 302-492, unless otherwise noted.

² CW VI, pp. 467-468. For further discussion of the *anima* cf. James Hillman, *Anima*, Dallas: 1985 and Emma Jung, *Animus and Anima*, Dallas: 1981.

bringing these things into awareness. If successful *individuation* - the attainment of wholeness - takes place.

God-image: Whether God and the unconscious are two different entities we are unable to determine, but the God-image, as contained in the unconscious, is a special aspect of the self. The self, then, can be explained as an *imago dei* in man.

Individuation: The process by which a person becomes a psychological 'in-dividual' - separate, indivisible unity or 'whole' (*The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*, CW XI, vol. 1, p. 275).

Self: 'The self is not only the centre but also the whole circumference which embraces both the conscious and the unconscious; it is the centre of this totality, just as the ego is the centre of consciousness' (*Psychology and Alchemy*, CW XII, para. 44). Generally after the age of thirty-five, the ego is replaced by the Self in a process of discovery and extended dialogue which combines the unconscious with the conscious into a psychic entity. The Self is the centre and source of psychic life, a new centre which reconciles the conscious and unconscious into a new creative self-realization - the objective psyche.

Shadow: Often the hidden, repressed aspect of the personality whose ultimate ramifications extend back into our animal ancestors. The shadow, which is the first layer of the unconscious, is comprised of personal characteristics and potentialities of which the individual is unaware. The contents of the shadow, which are not necessarily negative, may be projected onto an external object. As long as the shadow is projected the individual, maintaining his own sense of righteousness, can condemn and hate the evil and weaknesses he sees in others. The shadow does not consist necessarily: 'only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc.' (*Aion*, CW IX, vol. 2, p. 266).

Soul: The soul as the universe within is equivalent to the universe without - 'the spectacle of the starry heavens at night' (CW IV, pp. 331 f.). 'The soul must contain in itself the faculty of relation to God, i.e. a correspondence, otherwise a connection could never come about. This correspondence is, in psychological terms, the archetype of the God-image' (*Psychology and Alchemy*, CW XII, para. 12).

Unconscious, the: The unconscious includes all the

psychic elements outside conscious awareness, and, therefore, is not connected with the ego. The unconscious is a composite of differing forces. The *collective unconscious* is comprised of transpersonal, universal contents which are unavailable to the ego. The shadow of the collective unconscious also may govern the dynamics of the group. The dynamics of this aspect of the shadow of the collective unconscious is most evident in the actions of the Germans against the Jews during WW II.

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