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Reading Job Following the Psalms

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“There are no *texts*, but only relationships *between* texts.”¹ Harold Bloom made this statement describing his distinctive understanding of literary influence but it concisely expresses a more general hermeneutical truth: texts cannot be understood in isolation; they must be read in dialogue with others, and which others are chosen necessarily affects their interpretation.² The book of Job is mainly read together with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes as a fellow member of the category “Wisdom Literature.” Between these texts, Job tends to be contrasted with the retributory worldview of Proverbs, associated with the skepticism of Ecclesiastes, and accredited with a sapiential concern for addressing philosophical problems presumed to be shared by both. There is an element of truth to all three of these insights; without it, they would not have become so widespread. However, restricting Job to this interpretive context threatens to distort its interpretation since it has links at least as strong, if not stronger, with another book: the Psalms. Based on the nature of these connections, which involve characters, forms, and allusions, I will suggest that the meaning of Job is not only found *between* the book and the Psalms, but *following* the Psalms, since knowledge of the

1 H. Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1975) 3. Emphasis original.

2 Thus, John Barton observes that “unless we can read a text *as* something—unless we can assign it to some genre, however ill-defined and in need of subsequent refinement—we cannot really read it at all” (J. Barton, *Reading the Old Testament: Method in Biblical Study* [2nd ed.; London: Darton, Longman & Todd, 1996] 24). Putting a text in a genre is a way of choosing a group of works between which one interprets a text.

Psalms is a prerequisite for fully understanding Job.

If this is the case, then it would testify to the exegetical insight offered by the rabbinic tradition in *b. Baba Batra* [*B. Bat.*] 14b that placed Job immediately after the Psalms. Though the compilers of this list may not have intended the order to communicate a reading strategy for Job, in light of the connections between the books and the way the author of Job manipulates them for rhetorical effect, having Job follow the Psalms was certainly prescient, because reading Job through a psalmic lens brings new clarity to this often obscure book. Thus, the purpose of this paper is not to base an interpretive approach to Job and the Psalms on the order in *B. Bat.* 14b or to suggest that this order should be considered normative, but simply to argue that links between Job and the Psalms demonstrate the hermeneutical value of that order.³ Three successive movements in the history of the interpretation of Job will indicate three different ways the Psalms may be drawn upon to enrich the book's interpretation: the pre-critical comparison with the character of David, the form-critical attention to the Job poet's "misuse" of forms, and recent intertextual readings of allusions to particular psalms.

"The Prayer of Job and David"

Interpreters have long recognized resonances between Job and the Psalms. When the Psalms were still attributed to David, several interpreters compared the protagonists of the

3 Though other orders for the *Ketuvim* in Jewish tradition diverge from *B. Bat.* 14b at various points, they all put the Psalms before Job, most immediately before, with the exception of Jerome's report of a Jewish order, in which he lists the books chronologically, with the patriarchal setting of Job making it first, and Taschereau 17.18 from 1512 (J. Steinberg, *Die Ketuvim: ihr Aufbau und ihre Botschaft* [BBB 152; Hamburg: Philo, 2006] 133, 137, 143, 152). Historically, in the Christian canonical orders for Greek and Latin Bibles, Job's location varied drastically. It was even occasionally placed amongst the historical books or with "apocryphal" texts such as Judith and Tobit. The order Job–Ps–Prov of modern Christian Bibles was not normative. See Peter Brandt, *Endgestalten des Kanons: Das Arrangement der Schriften Israels in der jüdischen und christlichen Bibel* (BBB 131; Berlin: Philo, 2001).

two books. Rabbinic traditions include isolated comparisons of Job to David, along with other figures. For example, the distinctive cantillation in Job, Psalms, and Proverbs is explained by the fact that Job was humiliated and then restored to glory just like David and Solomon, who were dethroned temporarily.⁴ Additionally, the midrash on Ps 26 states, “Four are mentioned in Scripture as having been smitten,” before giving a list of their responses, presumably in ascending order of virtue, from Job who “rebelled” (Job 10:1-3, 13:23, 16:17-18), through Abraham, who laughed (Gen 17:17), and Hezekiah, who sought the LORD as his friend (Isa 38:2), to David, the prime example, who declared: “Why is the lash held back? Strike me again!” (Pss 26:2, 94:12).⁵

Ambrose provides a much more extensive interpretation of both Job and the Psalms in light of the connections between the experiences and personalities of their respective heroes in his *The Prayer of Job and David*. The title itself testifies to his character-focused approach. Depicting the common response of these two men to suffering, Ambrose writes, “Many indeed have complained over human weakness and frailty, but the holy Job and holy David have done so in a fashion superior to the rest.” However, he distinguishes the tone of their prayers. Job is “straightforward, forceful, sharp, and displays a loftier style, as one who has been provoked by severe afflictions,” whereas David is “ingratiating and calm and mild, of a gentler disposition.”⁶ Despite their differences in presentation, according to Ambrose, both make a similar argument, praying to God, “on the grounds that God was forgetful of His own work and of the generosity and the grace that He had bestowed on man; He abandoned man, whom He had undertaken to protect and honor, and cast him out to destruction, feeble and

4 L. Ginzberg, *The Legends of the Jews* (7 vols.; Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1998) 5:390.

5 W. G. Braude, *The Midrash on Psalms* (2 vols.; YJS 13; New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959) 1:357–58.

6 Ambrose, “The Prayer of Job and David,” in *Saint Ambrose: Seven Exegetical Works* (trans. Michael P. McHugh; FC 65; Washington, DC: Catholic University of America Press, 1971) 325–420, 389.

wrecked by various weaknesses.”⁷

Like Ambrose, John Calvin also takes the “exegetical turn of interpreting Job through the person of David.”⁸ In his *Sermons on Job*, he similarly notes that in terms of affliction, “David had passed that way as well as Job. For he had endured great adversities to such a degree that it was like he had been forsaken of God.”⁹ For both, the most devastating torment was feeling God’s hand heavy upon them (Job 6:8-14; Ps 32:4), and this suffering was magnified by the lack of comfort they received from their friends (Job 6:15-23; Ps 41:10).¹⁰ References to David and his response to suffering are woven throughout Calvin’s sermons on Job with such frequency and approval that it actually appears David, and not Job, is the true model Calvin encourages his listeners to emulate.¹¹

Calvin also shares with Ambrose the recognition of a difference in tone between the prayers of the two men, and he repeatedly uses David’s example to correct Job.¹² Thus, commenting on Job’s opening lament in ch. 3, in which Job curses the day of his birth, Calvin claims that “words escaped his mouth without advisement, by force of the misery that he endured.” However, Calvin encourages his listeners not to follow Job’s example, but instead that of David in Ps 22, who, after he has “made his moan” in the first verse, renders thanks to God and sings unto his name, as he remembers God’s faithfulness to him from his mother’s womb (v. 10).¹³ Later, Calvin notes that though Job and David both claim to have kept God’s commands (Job 23:11–12, Ps 119), David also admits his guilt before God (Pss

7 Ambrose, “Prayer of Job and David,” 330.

8 S. E. Schreiner, “‘Why Do the Wicked Live?’ Job and David in Calvin’s Sermons on Job,” in *The Voice from the Whirlwind: Interpreting the Book of Job* (eds. L. G. Perdue and W. C. Gilpin; Nashville: Abingdon, 1992) 130.

9 J. Calvin, *Sermons on Job* (Edinburgh: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1993); repr. of *Sermons on Job* (trans. Arthur Golding. London: George Bishop, 1574) 45. In quoting from these sermons I have modernized the English from the 1574 translation.

10 Calvin, *Sermons on Job*, 108, 115. Golding’s translation mistakenly lists Ps 14:10 as the second cross reference.

11 Schreiner, “Why Do the Wicked Live?” 137.

12 Schreiner, “Why Do the Wicked Live?” 137.

13 Calvin, *Sermons on Job*, 52.

130:3, 143:2), and thus humbly receives his righteousness as a gift, while Job uses his obedience as a means to attempt to go to law with God. Calvin claims Job is therefore “grossly overseen in this behalf,” but if he had acted like David, “his protestation would have been good and holy.”¹⁴

Seen as a whole, these character-based connections observed between Job and a David constructed from the Psalms reflect a dialectical relationship between the two books in which the similarities between the experiences, and even the arguments, of the two protagonists highlight the contrast between the tones of their “prayers.” Thus, in this synchronic comparison, in which the two texts are interpreted simultaneously, the shared struggle to respond to suffering comes to the fore, but Job’s reaction is judged by the psalmic paradigm.

The Use (and Misuse) of Forms

With the rise of biblical criticism, this character-based comparison between the texts was largely abandoned, and, with the modern categorization of Job as a “Wisdom” book, the earlier emphasis on the proper faithful response to suffering was also eclipsed by the more abstract concerns of theodicy and the viability of the retributive principle.¹⁵ However connections between Job and the Psalms were not ignored altogether. The development of form criticism in the early twentieth century offered new impetus for comparing Job with the Psalms. Though, by this time, the figure of David was rarely associated with the Psalter, this approach arrived at similar conclusions regarding the relationship between the two books. As a result, “Psalmistic Interpretations” of Job have become a consistent, albeit secondary, feature of Job scholarship, focusing mainly on the resonances between the book and the

¹⁴ Calvin, *Sermons on Job*, 419.

¹⁵ See C. Westermann, *The Structure of the Book of Job: A Form-Critical Analysis* (trans. Charles A. Muenchow; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1981) 1.

lament form.¹⁶

The most prominent form-critical comparison between Job and the Psalms is Claus Westermann's *The Structure of the Book of Job*. He characterizes Job as a "dramatization" of the psalm of lament, in which Job, the friends, and God correspond to the individual, the enemies, and God in the lament.¹⁷ According to Westermann, the Job poet, standing within his tradition, "cannot express himself in other than already formed linguistic structures," and thus "dramatizes the lament by weaving together the basic motifs of lamentation, motifs which were already ancient."¹⁸ These "ancient" motifs are known to us primarily through the Psalms, so a comparison with texts from the Psalter drives Westermann's analysis. Though Westermann focuses on the lament, he also recognizes other psalmic forms in Job, such as praise¹⁹ and wisdom.²⁰

Georg Fohrer argues that the book of Job, deeply rooted in the traditional material and motifs of the Hebrew Bible [HB], takes up and uses traditions from across the canon to such a degree that only a few verses in the whole text lack reference to them.²¹ He observes that laments and hymns appear most frequently.²² According to Fohrer, the Job poet mixes forms throughout the speeches, often for purposes different from their original function.²³

16 My translation. See the survey in H.-P. Müller, *Das Hiobproblem: seine Stellung und Entstehung im alten Orient und im Alten Testament* (3rd ed.; ErFor 84; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1995) 82–91, 111–18.

17 Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 8. See A. Bentzen, *Introduction to the Old Testament* (2 vols.; Copenhagen: G. E. C. Gad, 1948–1949) 1:182. For a similar comparison of Job and the implicit voices in the lament from a dialogical perspective, see C. Mandolfo, "A Generic Renegade: A Dialogic Reading of Job and Lament Psalms," in *Diachronic and Synchronic: Reading the Psalms in Real Time* (ed. J. S. Burnett; New York: T&T Clark, 2007) 45–63.

18 Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 32.

19 E.g., Job 7:17 // Ps 8; Job 11:7–9 // Ps 139 (Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 71–80).

20 See n. 33.

21 G. Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob* (KAT 16; Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus Gerd Mohn, 1963) 48.

22 Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 50–51.

23 Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*, 49–50; G. Fohrer, "Form und Funktion in der Hiobdichtung," in

Developing Fohrer's insight, Katharine Dell maintains that often the forms are "misused," thereby contributing to the skeptical tone she perceives in the book. She illustrates this pattern of misuse by comparing the forms in Job with the same forms as they appear elsewhere in the HB, with the majority coming from the Psalms.²⁴ For example, Dell claims Job 3:11–26 is a misuse of a lament form because Job presents death as desirable instead of as the unwelcome outcome of God's wrath (e.g., Ps 88:4–5[3–4]).²⁵

These form-critical comparisons of Job and texts across the HB, and particularly the Psalms, once again demonstrate a dialectic dialogue between Job and the Psalms. On the one hand, Job builds on the forms found in the Psalter. These paradigmatic forms of speech, which the Job poet imitates, are often misused or parodied by being put to a different purpose. Thus, again, similarity reveals difference. However, these interpretations introduce a diachronic, or at least sequential, element into the comparison between Job and the Psalms, though it applies to the reader and not necessarily the author and is therefore more logical than chronological. For the author of Job to "dramatize" or "misuse" the forms found in the Psalms, he must have been aware of those forms. Because these scholars understand the author of Job to be interacting with the forms appearing in the Psalms, and not necessarily the texts themselves, Job need not be written after the Psalms, but, since our knowledge of those forms comes primarily through reading the Psalms, we would miss this resonance if the Psalms did not contribute to our preunderstanding of Job. Appreciating the Job poet's interaction with psalmic forms requires a sequential and not merely simultaneous approach—we must read Job *following* the Psalms.

From Paradigm to Parody

Studien zum Buche Hiob (1956–1979) (BZAW 159; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1983) 60–77.

24 K. J. Dell, *The Book of Job as Sceptical Literature* (BZAW 197; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1991) 125–36.

25 Dell, *Book of Job*, 125.

In the past quarter-century a growing number of biblical scholars have turned their attention from generalized connections between forms to lexically specific allusions,²⁶ and Job scholarship testifies to this intertextual turn. Interaction with a developing HB is seen increasingly to be a vital aspect of the method and meaning of the book of Job, with scholars discovering allusions to various texts in the HB throughout the book.²⁷ Once again, the Psalms have emerged as a prominent component of this interpretive perspective on Job.

The most well-known and thoroughly discussed intertextual connection in Job is the “bitter parody” of Ps 8:5[4] in Job 7:17–18:

*Job 7:17–18*²⁸
 17 כי תגדלנו וכי־תשית אליו לבד מה־אנוש What are human beings, that you make so
 much of them,
that you set your mind on them,
 18 ותפקדנו לבקרים להגעים תבחננו visit them every morning,
 test them every moment?
Ps 8:5
 מה־אנוש כי־תזכרנו ובן־אדם כי תפקדנו What are human beings that you are
 mindful of them,

26 Anthony Campbell has characterized form criticism’s fall from favor this way: “Above all . . . the focus away from the present text into a surmised past accessible to a scholarly few was too burdened with subjectivity to survive in a generation focused on the present reality of what was possessed in the final text” (A. F. Campbell, “Form Criticism’s Future,” in *The Changing Face of Form Criticism for the Twenty-First Century* [eds. M. A. Sweeney and E. Ben Zvi; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003] 22).

27 See, e.g., T. N. D. Mettinger, “Intertextuality: Allusion and Vertical Context Systems in Some Job Passages,” in *Of Prophets’ Visions and the Wisdom of Sages* (eds. H. A. McKay and D. J. A. Clines; JSOTSup 162; Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1993) 257–80; Y. Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken What Is Right About Me: Intertextuality and the Book of Job* (SBLit 45; New York: Lang, 2003); L. S. Wilson, *The Book of Job: Judaism in the 2nd Century BCE: An Intertextual Reading* (StJ; Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 2006); K. Schmid, “Innerbiblische Schriftdiskussion im Hiobbuch,” in *Das Buch Hiob und seine Interpretationen: Beiträge zum Hiob-Symposium auf dem Monte Verità vom 14.–19. August 2005* (eds. T. Krüger et al.; ATANT 88; Zürich: Theologischer Verlag Zürich, 2007).

28 All biblical translations are from the NRSV.

mortals that you care for them?

The repetition of the phrase *מַה אֲנוּשׁ* (“What are human beings?”), the common structure of both passages, and the recurrence of the verb *פקד* set in a context which reverses its meaning, have led to a nearly unanimous consensus that Job is intentionally twisting the meaning of the psalm from a hymn of praise for God’s watchful care to a complaint against his overbearing attention.²⁹ As a parody, this connection between Job and the Psalms depends on evident similarities to signal the textual interplay and yet puts its emphasis on the antithetical relationship between the texts,³⁰ and thus continues to testify to their dialectical relationship.

This parody is often interpreted as Job’s skeptical rejection of Ps 8 and the psalm’s affirmation of God’s care for humanity, whom God has exalted.³¹ However, the broader context of the parody in the dialogue suggests it makes more sense to see this as a “reaffirming” parody—Job presents the psalmic imagery antithetically, not to ridicule it, but to support his repeated accusations against God by demonstrating how the deity’s current behavior toward him violates the psalmic paradigm.³² Job uses the psalm to demand for himself the royal dignity it proclaims God has bestowed on humankind,³³ and thus he does

29 For more on the linguistic indicators of this parody, see D. J. A. Clines, *Job* (2 vols.; WBC 17–18A; Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1989, 2006) 1:192; M. Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” in *The Voice From the Whirlwind* (eds. L. G. Perdue and W. C. Gilpin; Nashville: Abingdon, 1992) 86–98, 87. For a dissenting voice, see .

30 For antithetical allusion as the essential definition of parody, see W. Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords, and Your Parodied Books into Spears: A New Paradigm for Parody in the Hebrew Bible,” *BibInt* 19 (2011) 276–310, 290–91.

31 E.g., Dell, *Book of Job*, 126; Mettinger, “Intertextuality: Allusion and Vertical Context Systems,” 267.

32 Kynes, “Beat Your Parodies into Swords,” 303–06. Similarly, C. Frevel, “‘Eine kleine Theologie der Menschenwürde’: Ps 8 und seine Rezeption im Buch Ijob,” in *Das Manna fällt auch heute noch: Beiträge zur Geschichte und Theologie des Alten, Ersten Testaments* (eds. F.-L. Hossfeld and L. Schwienhorst-Schönberger; HBS 44; Freiburg: Herder, 2004) 244–72, 262.

33 See also Job’s parody of Ps 8:6[5] in 19:9, in which he accuses God of stripping his “glory” (*כבוד*) and tearing the “crown” (*עטר*) from his head, in contrast to the psalmist’s affirmation that God has “crowned” (root: *עטר*) humanity with “glory” (*כבוד*) and honor

not reject the psalm or the God it depicts but pleads that the God he is now encountering conform to that paradigm. As Ambrose observed, Job prays, like the David of the laments, “on the grounds that God was forgetful of His own work and of the generosity and the grace that He had bestowed on man.” As Christian Frevel argues, understood this way, the parody becomes a powerful rhetorical tool in Job’s larger goal of gaining vindication before God.³⁴

Eliphaz’s response supports this interpretation:

Job 15:14

מָה-אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי־יִזְכָּה וְכִי־יִצְדָּק יֵלֵד אִשָּׁה What are mortals, that they can be clean?

Or those born of woman, that they can be
righteous?

Ps 8:5[4]

מָה-אֱנוֹשׁ כִּי־תִזְכְּרֶנּוּ וּבְנ־אָדָם כִּי תִפְקְדֶנּוּ What are human beings that you are

mindful of them,

mortals that you care for them?

Besides repeating the opening phrase and structure of Ps 8:5[4], Eliphaz indicates that he is alluding to the psalm as he responds to Job’s parody of the verse by drawing on its surrounding context.³⁵ He continues, “God puts no trust even in his holy ones [קִדְשָׁיו³⁶], and the heavens [שָׁמַיִם] are not clean in his sight; how much less one who is abominable and corrupt, one who drinks iniquity like water!” (vv. 15–16). The psalmist had wondered at the

(Frevel, “Eine kleine Theologie,” 264).

34 Frevel, “Eine kleine Theologie,” 262. Michael Fishbane observes this type of appeal to earlier texts to remind God of his own nature and motivate the deity to intervene in the citation of the divine attribute formulary (Exod 34:6–7a) in Mic 7:18–20 and Pss 103 and 109 (M. Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation in Ancient Israel* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985] 439).

35 Frevel argues that Eliphaz is not referring to Ps 8 because his low view of humans conflicts with the exalted place given them in Ps 8 (Frevel, “Eine kleine Theologie,” 268).

Similarly, H. Irsigler, *Vom Adamssohn zum Immanuel* (ATAT 58; St. Ottilien: EOS, 1997)

43. This overlooks the possibility, though, that Eliphaz may be interpreting the psalm’s message in his own way as he alludes to it.

36 This is the *qere*, the *kethib* קִדְשָׁיו .

exalted place God has given humanity considering their lowliness in comparison with the “heavens” (שמים) (vv. 4–5[3–4]) and the apparent inappropriateness of their place a little lower than the “heavenly beings” (אלהים)³⁷ (v. 6[5]). Eliphaz, also contrasting humanity with the “heavens” and God’s “holy ones,”³⁸ regards these comparisons as declarations of the lowly place of humankind instead of their exaltation, and even as indications of moral impurity.³⁹ Michael Fishbane considers this a “caustic rejoinder” to Job’s earlier allusion to Ps 8:5[4], in which Eliphaz has “ironically re-established the original *traditum*” by answering the question of Ps 8:5[4] himself.⁴⁰ However, since Ps 8 expresses an exalted view of humanity, Eliphaz is not reestablishing its message, but twisting it into its opposite in order to support his argument. That Eliphaz presents the psalm negatively to respond to Job’s parody of it further indicates that Job has actually appealed to its positive message.

This sophisticated interaction with Ps 8 in Job, which includes two further allusions (Job 19:9 // Ps 8:6[5];⁴¹ Job 25:5–6 // Ps 8:4–5[3–4]⁴²), suggests a number of the other

37 The NRSV translates אלהים in Ps 8:6[5] as “God.” However, A. A. Anderson and Hans-Joachim Kraus, following the LXX, the Targum, the Syriac Version, and the Vulgate, argue that “angels” or “heavenly beings” is a better translation (A. A. Anderson, *The Book of Psalms* (2 vols.; NCB; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1981) 1:103; H.-J. Kraus, *Psalms: A Continental Commentary* (trans. Hilton C. Oswald; 2 vols.; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1993) 1:183). For the “holy ones” in Job 15:16 as angels, see, e.g., Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*. 271; M. H. Pope, *Job* (3rd ed.; AB; Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1973) 116. This corresponds to the similar statement in Eliphaz’s first speech where he compares humans to God’s “angels” (מלאכים) (4:18).

38 Gerald Janzen notes the parallel between Eliphaz’s words and Ps 8:4[3] [J. G. Janzen, *Job* (Interpretation; Atlanta: John Knox, 1985) 117]. See also J. Hempel, “Mensch und König: Studie zu Psalm 8 und Hiob,” *FF* 35 (1961) 123.

39 Bildad makes a similar point by returning to Ps 8 once again in 25:5–6: “If even the moon is not bright and the stars are not pure in his sight, how much less a mortal, who is a maggot, and a human being, who is a worm!” He repeats the comparison to the moon and stars from Ps 8:4[3] and the parallel terms אנוש and בן-אדם from Ps 8:5[4], but, like Eliphaz, distorts the psalm’s message into a declaration of human worthlessness. See W. Beyerlin, “Psalm 8: Chancen der Überlieferungskritik,” *ZTK* 73 (1976) 1–22, 18; Janzen, *Job*, 174, 176; H. Klein, “Zur Wirkungsgeschichte von Psalm 8,” in *Konsequente Traditionsgeschichte* (eds. R. Bartelmus et al.; OBO; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1993), 183–98, 188.

40 Fishbane, “The Book of Job and Inner-Biblical Discourse,” 93.

41 See n. 33.

parallels between Job and the Psalms may also be allusions intended to contribute to the debate between Job, the friends, and God.⁴³ Several of these possible allusions in Job's speeches also appear to be parodies, in which Job transforms psalmic acclamation into divine accusation (e.g., Job 10:8–12 // Ps 139:13–16⁴⁴; Job 12:13–25 // Ps 107⁴⁵). However, the friends also appear to allude to the Psalms, often the same ones as Job (e.g., Job 11:7–9 // Ps 139:7–10⁴⁶; Job 5:16 // Ps 107:42⁴⁷), but they seem to use them for a different purpose—to silence Job's complaints. In so doing, they provide an alternative response to suffering, one that expects the world to conform to a strict retributive worldview, leaving no room to challenge God to rectify injustice, because none can exist.⁴⁸ In so doing, they take to the extreme an alternative theme in the Psalms, one found in “wisdom” or “didactic” psalms, such as Ps 37, which affirms God's justice and commands sufferers to “be still before the LORD, and wait patiently for him” (v. 7).⁴⁹

42 See n 39.

43 For further discussion of allusions to the Psalms in the Job dialogue, see W. Kynes, “*My Psalm Has Turned into Weeping*: Job's Dialogue with the Psalms (BZAW; Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming).

44 Though William Brown claims that Joban dependency is “entirely possible” and “an equally valid case” can be made for Job's “deconstruction of Ps. 139” as for his parody of Ps 8 in 7:17–18, because this dependence is “difficult to prove conclusively,” he focuses on the rhetorical effects of the parallels instead (W. P. Brown, “*Creatio Corporis* and the Rhetoric of Defense in Job 10 and Psalm 139,” in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of Sibley Turner* [eds. W. P. Brown and S. D. McBride, Jr.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2000] 107–24, 122, 118 n. 33).

45 Clines, *Job*, 1:287, 297–304. He writes, “The connections with Ps 107 are so close and numerous that it seems right to term it a ‘source’ of the present hymn, in the way that Ps 8 was the ‘source’ of Job 7:17–18” (1:297).

46 Pyeon, *You Have Not Spoken What Is Right About Me*, 186–88

47 R. Gordis, *The Book of Job: Commentary, New Translation, and Special Studies* (Moresheet 2; New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America, 1978) 57.

48 Mandolfo argues that the friends take on the role of the “didactic voice” in the psalmic laments, which aims “to shore up faith in the face of contrary experiences” (Mandolfo, “A Generic Renegade,” 58).

49 Parallels between Ps 37 and Job include: v. 1 // 5:2; v. 2 // 14:2; v. 4 // 22:26 and 27:10; v. 5 // 21:31; v. 6 // 11:17; v. 10 // 8:22 and 24:24; v. 12 // 16:9; v. 19 // 5:19–20; v. 23 // 21:14; vv. 25, 28 // 4:7; v. 31 // 12:5 and 23:11; vv. 35–36 // 5:3. See G. H. B. Wright, *The Book of Job* (London: Williams and Norgate, 1883) 239. Most of these occur in the friends' speeches. Thus, Westermann proclaims, “Psalm 37 exhibits a whole array of parallels to the speeches

This widespread dialogical interaction with the Psalms in Job would further testify to the profit of reading Job following the Psalms, and would indicate an even more diachronic, sequential relationship between the texts because allusions require both the readers⁵⁰ and the author to be aware of the earlier texts. Without the readers' prior knowledge of the Psalms, they would miss these allusions and their significance would be lost, but without the author's prior knowledge of at least the psalms to which he alludes, these allusions would not even be possible.

Thus, when the characters of Job and the "David" who speaks in the Psalms are compared, their shared appeal to God in the midst of affliction becomes apparent, but Job's tone falls short of the psalmic paradigm. When Job takes up the forms of psalmic prayer, however, he often deliberately "misuses" those paradigms for addressing God. And when Job alludes to the Psalms, he refers to them as paradigms for divine-human relationship to ground his accusations against God.⁵¹ The friends then try to reinterpret those paradigms in order to defend the deity. As a whole, through the "misuse" of forms and direct allusions, the book of Job pushes the psalmic patterns for relating to God—lament, praise, and even wisdom—to their limits in its author's apparent inquiry into whether psalmic piety (which earlier interpreters associated with the character of David) can withstand Job's superlative adversity. This supports the argument made by Westermann and several others that the book does not deal primarily with a theoretical "problem" but with an existential question, as it explores the proper response to suffering.⁵²

of the friends (above all, to chap. 20)" (Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 87).

50 For this implication of the allusions in Job, see R. Heckl, *Hiob: Vom Gottesfürchtigen zum Repräsentanten Israels* (FAT 70; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2010) 64.

51 Frevel calls the Psalms the "paradigm on which the book of Job 'works,'" and claims that without a knowledge of the Psalms, the book cannot be fully understood (Frevel, "Eine kleine Theologie," 257, 267, my translation).

52 Westermann, *Structure of the Book of Job*, 1–2. See also, P. Volz, *Weisheit: (das Buch Hiob, Sprüche und Jesus Sirach, Prediger)* (SAT; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1911) 25–26; F. Baumgärtel, *Der Hiobdialog: Aufriss und Deutung* (BWANT 61; Stuttgart:

Job between the Psalms and Wisdom

In his interpretation of the *Ketuvim* according to the order given in *B. Bat.* 14b, Julius Steinberg expresses concerns with this view.⁵⁵ He observes that one's behavior in suffering is a direct consequence of one's understanding of the nature of suffering. *Verhalten* and *Verstehen* are indivisible. Instead of reading Job following the Psalms, Steinberg goes on to defend Job's place among the Wisdom Literature, reading the book primarily as the introduction to a series in *B. Bat.* 14b going from Job through Proverbs and Ecclesiastes to Song of Songs.⁵⁶ However, in my view, the ways in which Job resonates with and even presupposes the Psalms suggest that Steinberg offers more insight into the way the location of the book reflects its theological message when he notes this combination of response to and reflection on suffering in the book, since the former draws on the Psalms and the latter resonates with the "Wisdom Literature." In fact, a similar argument could also be made for connections in characters, forms, and allusions between Job and Proverbs, though it would not be quite as strong. One of the rabbinic traditions mentioned earlier compares Job to Solomon, several common forms appear in both books, such as numerical sayings (e.g., Job 5:19–21; cf. Prov 30:18), proverbs (e.g., Job 8:11–12, 12:12–13, 17:5), and hymns to wisdom

W. Kohlhammer, 1933) 187–88; Fohrer, *Das Buch Hiob*. 549; Heckl, *Hiob*. 205, 215.

⁵⁵ Steinberg, *Die Ketuvim*, 277.

⁵⁶ Steinberg, *Die Ketuvim*, 454–55. In response to Hendrik Koorevaar, who sees Job and the Psalms connected primarily in the persons of Job and David as suffering "servants of the LORD," Steinberg argues that the material of the Psalter is so rich and extensive that relationships could be demonstrated between the Psalms and nearly each of the books in the *Ketuvim*, and that, in fact, the collective message of the Psalms actually differs significantly from the book of Job. Steinberg does not explain exactly how he understands the messages of the two books to differ, and it is not clear to me that they do so in a way that would discount reading them in close connection, particularly when the other option is to read Job in conjunction with Proverbs, a book with which Job is widely seen to be at odds because of its differing view on retribution. In fact, Steinberg himself notes that because the Psalter is made up largely of prayers, its message, at least in part, is to teach how one can search for a refuge in God through prayer (268). As Job uses the forms and even the words of these prayers to address God in order to motivate the deity to respond to his cries for justice, he reflects this message. For Koorevaar's argument, see H. J. Koorevaar, *Wijshiedscanon 1: Rut, Psalmen, Job, Spreuken, Prediker, Hooglied* (Leuven: Evangelische Theologische Faculteit, 2003) 27.

(e.g., Job 28; cf. Prov 8), though these forms are not predominant in Job,⁵⁷ and there are occasional possible allusions to specific Proverbs, as well (e.g., Job 15:7 // Prov 8:25; Job 18:5–6, 21:17 // Prov 13:9, 24:20).⁵⁸ Ivan Engnell remarks that “from many points of view, it can be said that [Job] occupies a middle position between the Psalms of Lament and the so-called Wisdom Literature.”⁵⁹ This reflects the order of the *Ketuvim* given in *B. Bat.* 14b, in which Job stands precisely in that middle position between the Psalms and “Wisdom Literature.”

Conclusion

Though intertextual connections between Job and several other texts, including Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, offer insight into the book, the prominence of its links with the Psalms suggest that these resonances are a prime resource for interpreting the book. The rabbinic tradition that placed the Psalms before Job reflects this reading strategy, in which Israel’s prayers become a lens through which to understand Job’s struggle to hold onto faith in the midst of suffering. Thus, Job does not merely follow the Psalms in this traditional order, the book also follows the models for relation with God the Psalms depict, pressing them to their breaking point.

Reading Job after the Psalms, however, creates a “dialogical” relationship between the texts,⁶⁰ which also invites the Psalter to be read anew, its meaning filtered through its connections with Job. Not only does Job’s interaction with individual psalms, such as Ps 8,

57 Dell, *Book of Job*, 64–72.

58 E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job* (trans. Harold Knight; London: Thomas Nelson and Sons, 1967) clxv–clxvi.

59 I. Engnell, “The Figurative Language of the Old Testament,” in *Critical Essays on the Old Testament* (ed. J. T. Willis; trans. John T. Willis; London: SPCK, 1970) 242–90, 256.

Similarly, C. Kuhl, “Neuere Literarkritik des Buches Hiob,” *TRu* 21 (1953) 163–204; 257–317, 311, 312.

60 For “dialogical” nature of intertextuality, see S. Moyise, “Intertextuality and Biblical Studies: A Review,” *VeE* 23 (2002) 418–31, 424–25.

highlight tensions within them,⁶¹ but, by alluding to psalms of various types, drawing on a variety of psalmic forms, and even having the characters embody the clash between lamenting and didactic voices in the Psalter, Job's interactions with the Psalms reveal the tensive diversity of the collection. And yet, the dramatic structure of Job also offers a means for holding those tensions together, as it moves, like the Psalter, from initial intense obedience (Job 1; cf. Ps 1) through a dispute over God's אֱהָבָה ("loyal love"), which dominates much of the book of Job and the Psalter (see, e.g., Pss 25, 73), to praise in the divine speeches and Job's response and the Psalter's concluding doxology (Ps 150).⁶² Walter Brueggemann, who notes this similarity, warns that it should not be drawn too tightly and refrains from affirming that it is intentional, but cannot resist the observation that both texts "portray Israel's way with God that moves from obedience to praise."⁶³ Thus, *lectio continua* inspires *lectio alterna* as reading Job following the Psalms creates a hermeneutically generative reciprocal relationship *between* Job and the Psalms.

61 This accords with Fishbane's description of aggadic exegesis, which, he claims, is "not content to supplement gaps in the *tradtum*, but characteristically draws forth latent and unsuspected meanings from it" (Fishbane, *Biblical Interpretation*, 283). Newsom claims the Job poet "fragments and recombines motifs from traditional psalms of supplication, re-presenting them in ways that expose repressed aspects of their meaning" (C. A. Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003] 131). As the allusions to Ps 8 demonstrate, this technique is not restricted to psalms of supplication.

62 W. Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise: The Psalms as Canon," in *The Psalms and the Life of Faith* (ed. P. D. Miller; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995) 189–213, 211 n. 41.

63 Brueggemann, "Bounded by Obedience and Praise," 211 n. 41.

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