

# An Ironic Depiction of Being Wise in Search of Wisdom: A Socio-Rhetorical Study of the Elihu Speeches in Job 32-37

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by

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## **Declaration**

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## **Dedication**

To my family.

## Acknowledgements

I am grateful to God for the grace to be able to study thus far. I am grateful to my promoter Prof. Hendrik L. Bosman for his great care and mentoring effort in guiding me through it all. I am grateful to the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University for accepting me to study here and for giving the space and support to succeed. I highly appreciate the great insights and stimulating contributions of our scholars like Prof. Louis Jonker, Prof. Juliana L. M. Claassens, Prof. Douglas G. Lawrie (University of the Western Cape), Dr. Ntozake Simon Cezula, Dr. Charlene Van Der Walt, and many other visiting scholars from various international communities of scholarship that are too numerous to mention. I am thankful also for my family for their kind prayerful and moral support. I am thankful to my senior colleagues in Nigeria like Prof. Zamani B. Kafang, Rev. Silas B. Musa, Prof. Matthew Michael, Drs. Nathan and Jane Chiroma, Mrs Debbie Colvin, Mr Timothy Kafang, etc., who have been instrumental in teaching me the Old Testament from the early stage of my theological development and have played a decisive role in one way or another in my being where I am today. I appreciate the various life contributions of my friends in Stellenbosch like Rev. Friday S. Kassa, Pastor Dr Zacharia Bulus Takore, Mr Patrick Dunn, Mr Joel Ruak and other conversation partners from the New Testament and Systematic Theology specialisations, that are too numerous to mention. I am thankful to Stellenbosch University for the financial support I got through Hope Bursary funds through my time of study here which have been great blessings toward my success. I am also thankful to the editor of this dissertation Dr Philip Hayab John and all those who have contributed toward my success, you are too numerous to mention, but I truly appreciate each one of you from the depth of my heart. I give special thanks also to all scholars in history from whose works I draw great ideas. May you all dwell in great blessings and always grow in wisdom.

## **Abstract**

This dissertation is an investigation of the socio-rhetorical function of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. We have also discussed how many scholars in the historical interpretation of the book of Job identified crucial areas of serious concern that still relate to the authorial, literary and theological problems of the book of Job. These areas include the poem on wisdom (Job 28), the speeches of Elihu (32-37) and the speeches of Yahweh (38-42:6). But our focus has been on the Elihu speeches which help us to see the irony of the depiction of being wise in search of wisdom within the interactions of Elihu and Job primarily.

We have indicated in our statement of the problem that there has not been much interest in the study of the book of Job especially in African contexts and by African scholars, thus we thought it wise to pick up the challenge of attempting to contribute to filling that vacuum. Our hypotheses point to the expectations on the role of irony as a new cutting edge to the understanding of the meanings of wisdom, suffering and justice. That irony plays a vital role in our understanding of the role of God in human suffering and the question of justice in the book of Job. In order to provide an adequate study that would be satisfactory to our investigation of the Elihu speeches, we found Robbins' (1996) guide to socio-rhetorical interpretation useful in leading us into the multidimensional aspects of the Elihu speeches. Thus we used it as a guide (not a strict manual to be slavish about) in our study as evident within our various chapters.

Chapter 1 provides the background to the study in relation to the writer's home (traditional) background which in a sense mirror's the patriarchal context which highly values social and religious orders. It further provides information as to the problem, methodology, hypotheses and conceptualizations for the study. Chapter 2 provides a survey of the book of Job in relation to its history of interpretation. Chapter 3 is an intertexture of Job 32-37 towards the literary study of the inner texture and patterns of the Elihu speeches. Chapter 4 is the intertexture of Job 32-37 which shows how the Elihu speeches interacted within other texts in the world that form their contextual rhetoric. Chapter 5 is the sociocultural texture of Job 32-37 which provides information about the social and cultural texture of the Elihu speeches and represents the formative (composition/ compilation) context of the Elihu speeches. Chapter 6 is the ideological-theological texture of Job 32-37 which presents the function of the Elihu speeches toward an

interpretation in service to power as well as its sense of spirituality (consciousness of the divine and the sacred). Chapter 7 provides the summary/conclusion and recommendations for further studies.

The contributions that this dissertation has made to Old Testament scholarship especially in African contexts in regards to Job scholarship is on the fact that we have demonstrated how socio-rhetoric can be utilized as a useful method in Old Testament biblical and theological studies. Furthermore, we show the dual function of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job both as a response and as a preparation. We have also demonstrated the role of irony in the depiction of being wise in search of wisdom especially about Elihu as a main case in point in his conversation with Job and other friends about Job's experience of suffering and his quest for justice and dignity. It is a cohesive attempt that bridged the gap between the sections of the book of Job and its essential characters. It also represents how traditions (in Postexilic contexts) emerged at a critical point in a given context and opened especially the reader to further understanding of the progressive nature of traditions in the Old Testament.

## Opsomming

Hierdie proefskrif behels 'n ondersoek na die sosio-retoriese funksie van die Elihuredes in die boek Job. Die fokus val ook op die historiese interpretasie van die boek Job wat aandag skenk aan belangrike sake wat verband hou met die kwessie van outeurskap, sowel as literêre en teologiese vraagstukke. Sommige van die hierdie vraagstukke is: die gedig oor wysheid (hfst 28), die Elihuredes (hfst 32 – 37), sowel as die JHWH-redes (hfst 38:1 – 43:6). Die klem op die Elihuredes sal bydra tot die oorweging van hoe wysheid op 'n ironiese manier uitgebeeld word. Dit vorm deel van die deurlopende uitbeelding van wat wysheid behels – met besondere aandag aan die interaksie tussen Elihu en Job.

In die probleemstelling word onder andere aangetoon dat daar weinig aandag aan die boek Job deur Afrikateoloë in verskillende Afrikakontekste gegee word. Hierdie proefskrif probeer om hierdie gebrekkige aandag vir Job aan te spreek. Die hipoteses verwys na die moontlike rol van ironie as 'n vars benadering tot die verstaan van wysheid, lyding en geregtigheid. Verder word ook voorgestel dat ironie 'n deurslaggewende rol speel in ons verstaan van die rol wat God speel in menslike lyding en die vraag na geregtigheid. Teen die agtergrond van hierdie vraagstelling en hipoteses is Vernon Robbins (1996) se benadering tot die sosio-retoriese interpretasie as bruikbaar vir die Elihuredes beskou, sonder om dit bloot slaafs na te volg.

Hoofstuk 1 bied die aanleiding tot en die agtergrond waarbinne die navorsing uitgevoer was. In die hoofstuk is aandag geskenk aan die skrywer se tradisionele agtergrond wat oënskynlik 'n patriargale konteks weerspieël wat besondere waarde aan sosiale en godsdienstige ordelike heg. Verder word verduidelik wat die proefskrif se probleemstelling, hipoteses, metodologie en konseptualisering behels. Hoofstuk 2 verskaf 'n oorsig van die struktuur en interpretasiegeskiedenis van die boek Job. Hoofstuk 3 bespreek die intratekstuur van Job 32 – 37 deur middel van die literêre studie van strukture en patrone binne die Elihuredes. Hoofstuk 4 behels die studie van die intertekste van Job 32 – 37 waarin aangetoon word met watter netwerk van tekste die Elihuredes resoneer. Hoofstuk 5 fokus op die sosio-kulturele tekstuur van Job 32 – 37 wat inligting verskaf oor die sosiale en kulturele bedding waarbinne die Elihuredes gevorm en saamgestel is. Hoofstuk 6 verleen aandag aan die ideologiese en teologiese tekstuur van Job 32 – 37 waartydens aangetoon word hoe interpretasie ook in die boek Job in diens van mag geskied

het, asook die verdere bewussyn vir die sakrale en die goddelike as komponente van spiritualiteit. Hoofstuk 7 bied die samevatting en gevolgtrekking, asook voorstelle vir verdere studie.

Die bydraes van hierdie proefskrif tot Ou-Testamentiese navorsing, veral binne Afrikakonteks, lê binne die demonstrasie van hoe sosio-retoriek as `n bruikbare metode binne die Bybelse en teologiese navorsing van die boek Job benut kan word. Vervolgens, toon die proefskrif aan hoe die Elihuredes beide as `n reaksie op voorafgaande en voorbereiding tot die daaropvolgende dele in in die boek Job funksioneer. Daar is ook aangedui dat die rol van ironie in die uitbeelding van hoe om wys te wees en op soek na wysheid te wees `n belangrike rol binne die gesprek tussen Elihu en Job vervul. Ironie dra by tot die verstaan van hoe Job se ervaring van lyding en sy soeke na geregtigheid en waardigheid tot uitdrukking kom. Dit dui ook aan hoe tradisies (veral in posteksilliese kontekste) na vore getree het en die leser sensitief gemaak het vir die progressiewe aard van tradisies in die Ou Testament.



## Abbreviations of Academic Sources

AB	The Anchor Bible
AFER	African Ecclesiastical Review
ATR	Anglican Theological Review,
BASOR	Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research
BBR	Bulletin of Biblical Research
BN	Biblische Notizen
Bsac	Bibliotheca Sacra
CBi	Christian Bioethics
CBQ	The Catholic Biblical Quarterly,
CBW	Conversations with the Biblical World
CC	Cross Currents
Cr	Criterion
DBSJ	Detroit Baptist Seminary Journal
En	Encounter
Ex	Exchange
HEBAS	Hebrew Bible and Ancient Israel
HELOT	A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament
Hor	Horizons

HR	History of Religions
HTR	Harvard Theological Review
JAAR	Journal of the American Academy of Religion
JAOS	Journal of the American Oriental Society
JBL	Journal of Biblical Literature
JES	Journal of Ecumenical Studies
JPC	Journal of Pastoral Care
JPC	The Journal of Pastoral Counseling
JPT	Journal of Psychology & Theology
JRA	Journal of Religion in Africa,
JRDH	Journal of Religion, Disability and Health
JSJPHRP	Journal for the Study of Judaism in the Persian, Hellenistic and Roman Period
JSOT	Journal for the Study of the Old Testament
JTSA	The Jewish Theological Seminary of America
Jud	Judaism
KJV	King James Version
LXX	Septuagint
MC	Modern Churchman,
Mis	Missiology

MSJ	The Master's Seminary Journal,
MT	Masoretic Text
NIV	New International Version
NR	Nova Religio
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
OJT	Ogbomosho Journal of Theology
OTE	Old Testament Essays
PEGLMBS	Proceedings, Eastern Great Lakes and Midwest Biblical Societies
Pn	Pneuma
PP	Pittsburgh Perspective
Pro	Proceeding
PRS	Perspectives in Religious Studies
Pt	Prooftexts
RE	Review & Expositor
RE	Religious Education
RQ	Revue de Qumran
RSR	Religious Studies Review,
RTR	The Reformed Theological Review
SAJE	South African Journal of Education

Scrip	Scriptura
SHBC	Smyth Helwys Bible Commentary
Ts	Touchstone
TS	Theological Studies,
VT	Vetus Testamentum
WBC	Word Bible Commentary
WTJ	The Westminster Theological Journal,
ZAW	Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft

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## Chapter 1: Introduction

### 1.1 Background of the Study

As a child, born and raised in the northern part of Nigeria particularly in the town of Malumfashi, Katsina State. This is a Hausa context that is characterised with a strong worldview of honour and shame. Therefore I grew up with religious-ethical paradigms cautiously wrapped within cultural worldviews with much care and concern in order to maintain the contextual tradition on the one hand and to raise ethically informed persons within the context, on the other. One of the key ways of religious-ethical instructions is through what is called '*Tatsuniya*' that is, storytelling which is usually done by an elderly person to younger people, mostly children. Thus our grandfather was the chief storyteller within our extended family, and as children, we used to always sit at his feet under the moonlight to listen to interesting stories that contain religious, cultural and ethical lessons. That is how wisdom was imparted into the younger minds from those who are much older. We learned to listen in silence, to listen carefully and to respond to issues only when asked. No child was allowed to interrupt especially the storyteller (Grandfather) let alone to falsify any of his ideas. This tradition of learning from the older ones is not unique to my contextual tradition or life experience, yet, it has been a serious point of concern to me personally especially whenever I come to study the book of Job. The book of Job contains fascinating characters at almost every turn of the book which excites wonder and inspires interest in terms of their function and reasonable expectation in light of the entire Job-story knitted in the book. There have been several interruptions by different characters in the book of Job starting from the prose prologue where we meet series of character intrusions behind the scene (i.e. beyond Job's grasp), as well as those within the scene (within Job's understanding, though not always with his expectations), which provide and sustain a lengthy discourse/dispute with Job concerning the calamities that befell him<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Job's life as told in the prose section in the book that bears his name is discussed in my Post Graduation Diploma Thesis, "A Critical Investigation of Tewoldemedhin Habtu's Interpretation of Job 1:6-2:13 and 42:7-17: An Exercise in Relating African Scholarship on Job with International Research Trends" Submitted to the Faculty of Theology, Stellenbosch University, Unpublished, (May, 2013).

I often wonder at the intrusion of the youngest speaker, Elihu, at the end of Job's rigorous dialogues with his three friends. Elihu's speeches are an unexpected intrusion in the whole book of Job to the extent that some readers seriously question their authenticity and doubted their contribution to the entirety of God -Job drama<sup>2</sup>. I discussed Job's declaration of innocence and/or oath of clearance in my Master's thesis in which I investigated the motivation of Job for such confidence and confrontation to God in search of a just explanation of his tragedies. Job's piety stood as a clear impetus for his high morality and rigorous oath in defence of his innocence (Musa 2014). That study helped me to reconsider the place of piety in regards to human ethics in relation to my Nigerian, Hausa Christian context. In that, piety plays a foundational role in Job's ethics as discovered in my study. In that journey, I saw the need to keep faith and ethics together in that faith should be functional by informing and helping how a person could lead a responsible and pious life before God and other human beings. It was also discovered that towards the end of his avowals, in chapter 31:35 Job dramatically signed his document of clearance before God and summoned God to answer his charges and self-witness. Job's words of argumentation were said to be ended (31:40c), and the environment was well set and silent waiting for the voice of God in God's self-defense and Job's clearance or condemnation.

Suddenly, Elihu's voice was heard on the scene, almost from nowhere which will naturally lead one to ask the question; 'what on earth he has come to do or say after all that has been said and done?' Job and his readers must hold their breath a little longer for the continuation of Job's hearing from another person who is much younger than the previous speakers. This dissertation will try to investigate the person and speeches of Elihu in search of the meaning of wisdom and the possibility of who could be wise in such conversations. The following section provides a preliminary research discourse in order to consider several scholars' views on Elihu and his speeches in Job 32-37 and see how we could take the discussion further as this dissertation progresses.

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<sup>2</sup> For example Dillard and Longman (1994:204) point to the doubt of the originality of Elihu's speeches in Job claiming that he said nothing new and he was ignored at the end of the story when God finally responded. Archer (1985:471) also points out scholars' doubt on Elihu's presence in Job's story claiming that he was not mentioned either in the prologue (2:11) or epilogue (42:7ff) of the book of Job. Collins (2004:515), and Eissfeldt (1974:463-64) also doubt the genuineness of Elihu's speeches and presuppose that Elihu brings nothing new to the discussion. But Archer (1985:472) among others gives decisive replies to such objections. We shall return to this discussion later in this dissertation. For more arguments on the contextual placement of Elihu's speeches in the book of Job see footnote 33 in Magdalene (2007: 10).

## 1.2 Preliminary Survey of Existing Research

This section would summarize some discernible trends of scholarship in regards to the book of Job which would be discussed within the rubrics of literary, historical and theological trends<sup>3</sup> of research on the book of Job with a particular concentration to the speeches of Elihu in order to see how several scholars view Elihu's speeches and what, within the speeches, captures their attention mostly with a view to discern a niche within the progress of Job research and point readers to the possibility of another paradigmatic discourse from Job 32-37.

From the literary point of view, scholars like Westermann (1981a) Newsom (2003), Perdue (1991), and Clines (2006) provide us with literary critical readings of the book of Job in which they concentrated on the possibility of genres and their functions in order to unlock the meaning and complexity of the book thus placing it on a level that could easily and meaningfully engage with our contemporary concerns and literary appeals. Westermann discusses the fundamental nature and possibly reigning genre within the book of Job. Newsom employs Mikhail Bakhtin's polyphonic paradigm of engaging with Job's powerlessness and limitations of speech in his struggle to make sense of life and his then, present situation. Perdue comes from the metaphorical point of view in order to invite his readers into discerning the possibility of new literary discourse that could engender better theological understanding of the world in which we live and the speech we make<sup>4</sup>. Clines' discussion is mainly on the literary nature and appeal of the book of Job to our human endeavour to understand life amidst serious disaster and confusion. All these scholars do not accept Elihu speech as an original piece, even from the author of Job, but rather they see it as an addition to the book of Job<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>3</sup> There may be a possibility of having one or two scholars mixing two or three of these highlighted trends in research, such possibilities would make us refer to an author in another category or trends after being highlighted in another. At the end of this section, the writer shall decide which of the above trends appeals to him most in regards to this present research and how he may continue from other existing literatures on the book of Job.

<sup>4</sup> In Perdue's view, Elihu's disputation draws more from cosmological rather than anthropological tradition which could stand as a practical disposition of a wisdom teacher. In regards to the cosmological metaphors in Elihu's speeches the need to consider how Elihu's addresses relate to Sapiential wisdom (Perdue 1991: 249) would also be taken seriously in this study.

<sup>5</sup> One of the most cogent examples of such distancing of Elihu from Job story (and seeing him as an intruder) is that of Newsom's (2003:201f) view who from her literary critical perspective agrees with classic views of Elihu's placement or position in the book of Job thus accepting the arguments in Elihu as a secondary character in the book from a historical-critical perspective. Yet she has her reservation on what his speeches have to contribute to the whole book of Job. She sees Elihu as an outsider coming by himself into the book of Job when she refuses to see

In regards to the historical perspective, scholars like Pope (1973), Habel (1985) and Balentine (2006) wrote extensively in order to explain the historical milieu in which the book of Job possibly evolved and was received into the Hebrew canon and becomes part of the Hebrew Bible. These scholars introduce the reader to the background studies around the man Job and the book that bears his name. It is generally agreed that the book of Job was compiled not by a single author and not possible at the same time. It must have grown within an extended period of time into what we have today as the biblical story of Job. The general conjecture of scholars around the historicity and unity of Job is still calling for more attention and decisive reception. The book of Job dramatically presents a journey of a man's life on the stage of life from a fulfilled life (1-2) into the abyss of suffering, confusion and protestation which constitute the dialogue section (3-31). It is observable that many see Elihu's speeches as a later addition to the original story of Job in which Elihu performs different roles at once<sup>6</sup>.

Some who concentrated on the theological messages of Job, Dhorme (1992)<sup>7</sup>, Habel (1985), Janzen (1985), Hartley (1988), Fyall (2002), Gutiérrez (2005), Balentine (2006), Habtu (2006), Newsom (1996) present discussions on the theology of the book of Job. They each engaged from their theological backgrounds and sought to make sense of life in light of faith amidst suffering and the hiddenness of God. Most of them view Elihu and his speeches from an apologetical point of view. Although not all of them as will be mentioned later give sufficient concentration to the person and speeches of Elihu, let alone his ironic depiction of being wise.

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him as a character in the book but rather says, "he is a reader of the book of Job, one who literally writes himself into the text" (Newsom 2003:202). Thus Elihu's quotations in the text show him as a "transcendental" reader of the book (Newsom 2003:202).

<sup>6</sup> Some scholars see Elihu as a young man playing the judge at Job's trial, some see him as a prophetic forerunner of God, and yet others see him as playing both roles of an accuser of Job and the defender of God's honor and justice (See Habel 1985: 452-514; Scholnick 1992:355; Janzen 1985:217, 222; Hoffman 1996:293; Hartley 1988:427; Magdalene 2007:242, 232-34). Janzen tries to give some comparison between Elihu and some Old Testament prophets in passing which we need to further consider critically from a socio-rhetorical perspective. He sees Elihu's speeches as integral to the whole book of Job (Janzen 1985:218) to which I agree and would try to further clarify my views as this work progresses. In this study we need to closely consider his view of Elihu's speeches in relation to Israelite prophetic tradition in order to see the interface of wisdom, prophetic and legal traditions in Elihu's addresses to Job and his friends and how that constitutes a dramatic irony (Janzen 1985:220) especially to contemporary readers.

<sup>7</sup> Although with an early date here, but Dhorme's (1992:347) view is the oldest discourse on Elihu's passages referred to in this exploration. It is used because of its theological focus on the message of the passages in question. It is discernible from his discussion that Dhorme concentrates more on the theological rhetoric and implications of Elihu's speeches without their socio-rhetorical textual ironic implications towards an understanding of the meaning of wisdom and knowing who is wise.

From the above exploration, we can see that theological-ethical paradigm is neglected in the discussion of the question of wisdom in the book of Job and especially in regards to Elihu's speeches. Thus from the writer's point of view, there is need to dialogue further with scholars like Habel, Hartley, Newsom, Balentine and Clines in order to move the discussions further into a more theological-ethical discourse in which the historical-theological focuses and the literary-critical focuses shall be interactive in a view to enrich our lives in terms of faith and behaviour or theology and ethics in a given social context. This attempt shall consider Elihu's role as a new but cogent voice of wisdom within the crises situations of speech limitation and experience limitations as well, in response to human suffering.

### 1.3 Statement of the Problem

The fact that some scholars in recent research have neglected Elihu's speeches in discussing the book of Job<sup>8</sup> is taken seriously by the present writer in order to try to reconsider the merit of that section in Job and see its potential towards further biblical and critical theological study. Thus this dissertation will help to provide another discussion of the book of Job especially in light of Elihu's responses to his tragedy which will introduce us to its socio-rhetorical values and implications in African<sup>9</sup> perspective.

Besides, the fact that we are in a world full of suffering is something that cannot be denied. This dissertation presupposes that we are not the only ones to suffer, those we know who suffered and

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<sup>8</sup> The examples of scholars who did less or nothing on Elihu's addresses include Yair Hoffman's (1996:289-93) paradoxical view on the book of Job which has no discussion on the question of wisdom and the person who might have possessed it or knows how to teach it. There is no discussion on the socio-rhetorical implications of Elihu's speeches in response to the question of theodicy. Hoffman mainly focused on the legitimacy of Elihu's speeches which in his opinion could be an addition by another author although not necessarily from a distant time context with the original author of the rest of the book of Job. It is also surprising to me that in her discussion of "Job", Newsom (1998:208-15) entitled the dialogue sections, "Experience and the critique of tradition (Job 3-27; 32-33)" but hardly mentioned anything on Elihu's speeches. She successfully circumvented the Elihu passages saying nothing about the person and arguments of Elihu and attributed the thoughts in 34:10-12 to universal/common knowledge. Newsom (1996: 317-638) also discusses the book of Job in which Elihu's speeches are also highly neglected in her discussion of the theological issues discernible in the book.

<sup>9</sup> The present write is very much aware of the controvesial possibility of using the word "Africa" without any further clarification. In this dissertation Africa could mean the life context of the present writer namely, northern Nigerian contexts and in other instances of literary conversation I engage scholars beyond my Nigerian, or West African contets. For example, in terms of research South Africa is also considered an African context not strictly in the traditional sense of the word that ideologize the concept of Africa to be the home of only the black race. But in this dissertation Africa and humanity are used in more inclusive senses than not.

died in various ways were not the first either. Job was one of the people in the ancient world who suffered. He tested the joys, paradoxes, tragedies and contradictions of life that many of us face today. The struggle to understanding our humanity and how we should relate to one another in times of suffering is crucial to this dissertation. Thus we shall investigate Elihu's approach to the problem of suffering and being human in the world of God in order to see how that would challenge our own worldviews towards responding to human suffering around us, especially in African contemporary contexts.

#### **1.4 Research Question**

This dissertation will be carried out as an attempt to respond to the following primary research question; what is the socio-rhetorical function of the Elihu speeches (32-37) in the book of Job?

#### **1.5 Hypotheses**

This dissertation will be considered with the following possible hypotheses in view:

- That irony influences the definition of wisdom, both in terms of what wisdom entails and who is wise;
- That irony redefines the role of God in human suffering and the quest for justice;
- That ironic wisdom subverts traditional and ideological conventions;
- That Elihu embodies a prophetic wisdom voice in the book of Job.

#### **1.6 Methodology**

This dissertation will be approached with a multidimensional attitude towards engaging with the selected passages for the study. The socio-rhetorical method would be applied in the study. Socio-rhetorical criticism is an exegetical approach towards and informed discussion of any given text. This is an approach that calls for the examination of a text from various critical points of view in order to closely engage with it, not only on the production history of the text but also of the meaning(s) that could be discerned within it. "This method reflects the latest development

in exegetical scholarship towards holistic or multi-dimensional interpretation” (Jonker & Lawrie 2005:58).

Jonker and Lawrie further explain that the prefix “socio” in the term “socio-rhetorical” indicates that this approach has the intention of bringing to the interpretation of biblical texts the rich resources of modern anthropology and sociology. Vernon Robbins (1996:1)<sup>10</sup> further expounds the socio-rhetorical approach to biblical interpretation as an exercise that “focuses on values, convictions, and beliefs both in the texts we read and in the world in which we live”. The term “rhetoric” refers to the way language is a means of communication between people. Socio-rhetorical criticism is thus interested in studying the ways people use language to construct texts, but also wants to integrate this aspect with an analysis of the ways in which people live in the world (both ancient and contemporary) (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:58; cf. Tate 2008:338).

It is noteworthy at this juncture to briefly present an overview of the socio-rhetorical approach to the interpretation of the Scripture. Within this quest, it would be good to see the move as well as the interface between rhetorical and socio-rhetorical criticism. The foregoing method could aid us to distinguish the emphasis between James Muilenburg and Vernon Robbins among others.<sup>11</sup> In his attempt to explain the place of rhetorical criticism (which also characterises his contributions) Brueggemann (1997:53f) highlights the move within interpretive categories under the rubric of sociological approaches to textual interpretations. He points out how scholars like Muilenburg promotes turning attention to the text itself as of primary concern away from the endless discussions about it, namely the historical-critical approach to finding what is real or not within the text.

Although Muilenburg’s option was not entirely welcomed within Western philosophy and thoughts, thus he has his serious critics especially within Western thinkers who view rhetorical criticism with suspicion (cf. Swearingen 1991). Rhetorical criticism has a deep Platonic-

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<sup>10</sup> Robbins is a New Testament scholar and a leading proponent of socio-rhetorical criticism.

<sup>11</sup> These two scholars respectively represent the schools of rhetorical and socio-rhetorical criticisms.

Aristotelian history regarding the human endeavour to use words to capture and describe reality<sup>12</sup> (Brueggemann 1997:54).<sup>13</sup>

Another significant move that further paved the way for rhetorical criticism, even within the Western philosophical suspicion on reality and its articulation, was the work of Hermann Gunkel on form criticism (Brueggemann 1997:54). The study has inspired many other scholars after him for further reflection on the form of the biblical text which further open the way to biblical-theological studies (cf. Von Rad 1962; Tucker 197; Hayes 1974; Koch 1975; Tribble 1994). By way of explanation of the meaning of rhetorical criticism, Brueggemann (1997:54-55) writes that “Rhetorical criticism is a method that insists that *how* what is said is key and definitive of *what* is said. As a result, the theology of the Old Testament does not trade in a set of normative ideas that may be said in many ways, but in a particular utterance that is spoken and written in a certain way.” In his 1968 inaugural address, Muilenburg brings to the fore of scholarship his emphasis on the art of rhetorical criticism within the rubric of what he called “close reading”. The previous view necessitates a careful noticing of the details of a given text, “such as word patterns and arrangements, the use of keywords in repetition, the careful placement of prepositions and conjunctions, and the reiteration of sounds of certain consonants” (Brueggemann 1997:55).

Other leading Old Testament scholars who have continued the art of rhetorical criticism and even took it beyond Muilenburg include Brueggemann (1997) himself regarding his emphasis on how God’s self-revelation and engagement with humanity through the power of “speech” (the spoken/written word). Clines (1978) has an interest in the world that is generative within the text in which even the hearers or readers could live in using rhetoric (cf. Brueggemann 1997:56). Gun (1978; 1980) also follows rhetorical criticism to emphasise the intentionality of the text (to the characters within and without the text) (cf. Brueggemann 1997:56).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> “Unlike other fashionable approaches to interpretation, rhetorical criticism has old roots. The ancient Greeks already studied and taught rhetoric as the art of speaking effectively. For centuries, rhetoric, logic, and grammar formed the *trivium*, the basis of education in Europe. Even today, eloquent speakers and writers wield great influence, while those who lack eloquence are ignored” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:129).

<sup>13</sup> For more on rhetorical criticism in biblical interpretation see (Foss 1989; Patrick & Scult 1990, Porter & Stamps 2002; Jonker and Lawrie 2005).

<sup>14</sup> For New Testament example of rhetorical criticism see Lee (2001:34-52)

Robbins (1996:1ff) as we have seen above takes the art of interpretation further by giving attention to the world of/in the text for the world outside of the text for theological generative understanding, to the multidimensional world around, within and outside the text. The world of both people (anthropology) and words (rhetoric) as well as intersecting perceptions, or presuppositions (ideologies). Hence the construction of “socio-rhetorical” interpretive approach. For the fact that socio-rhetorical approach views the text “as though it were a thickly textured tapestry”<sup>15</sup> (Robbins 1996:2; Jonker and Lawrie 2005:58), it is agreeable here that, “different interpretive angles are needed in order to bring the multiple textures of the text into view” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:59). Thus we shall follow Robbins (1996:2ff) in order to briefly<sup>16</sup> present the reader with the five interpretive angels that he presents within socio-rhetorical interpretation which is pivotal to our understanding of the Elihu speeches.

Firstly, there is the *inner texture* which is concerned with “features like the repetition of particular words, the creation of beginnings and endings, alternation of speech and storytelling, particular ways in which the words present arguments and the particular ‘feel’ or aesthetic of the text” (Robbins 1996:3). In other words, the inner texture “deals with aspects of a linguistic structure such as grammar and syntax and refers to the various ways the text employs language to communicate” (Lee 2001:49). Jonker and Lawrie (2005:59) further clarify how we may understand the location of the inner texture of a written text. It “resides in verbal texture- the texture of language itself.”<sup>17</sup>

Secondly, there is the *intertexture* which focuses on “text’s configuration of phenomena that lie outside the text” (Robbins 1996:3)<sup>18</sup>. Thus this is an art of textual interactions with one another, so to speak, which entails comparing one text with another, or taking note of the meeting points of one text and another (cf. Lee 2001: 49). By implication, “the text’s particular configuration of phenomena in the world takes on a richer, thicker quality” (Robbins 1996:3). Thus “[a] major

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<sup>15</sup> “Like an intricately woven tapestry, a text contains complex patterns and images” (Robbins 1996:2).

<sup>16</sup> We shall discuss the details of each of the textures especially between chapters 3-6 of this dissertation within which we shall try to apply them in our interpretation of the Elihu speeches in Job 32-37.

<sup>17</sup> It is noteworthy here that, “The interpreter who undertakes this aspect of textual analysis does not deal with ‘meaning’ or ‘interpretation’ as such, but instead develops an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:59).

<sup>18</sup> “As interpreters explore the intertexture of a text, then, they are continually looking at phenomena outside and inside the text being interpreted” (Robbins 1996:3).

goal of the intertextual analysis is therefore to ascertain the nature and result of processes of configuration and re-configuration of phenomena in the world outside the text” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:59).

Thirdly, there is the *social and cultural texture* this entails “the capacities of the text to support social reform, withdrawal, or opposition and to evoke cultural perceptions of dominance, subordinate, difference, and exclusion” (Robbins 1996:3). The foregoing could help us to understand the text as part of a particular society and culture (Lee 2001:50). Thus socio-cultural topics and categories of life<sup>19</sup> become keys to unlocking the meaning and usefulness of the text.

Fourthly, there is the *ideological texture*. This “concerns particular alliances and conflicts the language in a text and the language in an interpretation evoke and nurture. Ideological texture concerns the way the text itself and interpreters of the text position themselves about other individuals and groups”(Robbins 1996:4; Jonker and Lawrie 2005:61). In this texture, ideas or belief systems are of paramount importance, even more primarily important than the characters within the text. In this texture, the text becomes the main dialogue partner from the author to the reader (Lee 2001:51).

Fifthly, there is the *sacred texture*. Robbins (1996:4) explains that “Analysis of sacred texture is a way of systematically probing dynamics across the spectrum of relationships between the human and the divine.” In other words, this texture is called the “theological texture” (Lee 2001:52).

So far we have seen the hermeneutical move from rhetorical to socio-rhetorical approaches to textual interpretation within the schools of Muilenburg and Robbins respectively. Without actually discarding rhetorical analysis, we shall in this dissertation concentrate more on applying the socio-rhetorical approach to our interpretation of the Elihu speeches found in the Book of Job. To my understanding of the dynamics of interpretive approaches in our discussion so far, rhetorical criticism is more of the study of the inner texture of the text. Thus Robbins’ socio-rhetoric has to take Muilenburg’s proposal much further and wider into the other essential textures of the text. The socio-rhetorical approach is helpful to the interpreter to have a more

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<sup>19</sup> These include the specific, common and final social topics and categories (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:60).

honest approach to the text without necessarily reading his/her mind into the text (Robbins 1996:4; Jonker and Lawrie 2005:61). Thus, it provides more time and skills (“wide spectrum” Robbins) to get into the textures of the text and then outside it in conversation with possible texture towards a multidimensional view and interpretation of the text.

In sum, the socio-rhetorical approach pays close attention to the multidimensional potentials of a given text by closely examining its textures in terms of how words are used to discuss anthropological and sociological concerns which have to do with people’s worldview, value system, culture, philosophical and religious ideologies as the case may be. Thus we shall apply it in discussing the Elihu speeches in the book of Job in light of its intratextual, intertextual, sociocultural, ideological and theological textures in order to see how their anthropological and sociological make ups inform our understanding of wisdom and the person who is wise in a very critical context of human suffering like that of Job.

## **1.7 Significance of the Study**

African theological scholars<sup>20</sup> like Mbiti (1975:39-42) discuss the works of God in creation which has to do with God and affliction from a traditional African perspective. Magesa (1997) and Turaki (1999) also have discussions on African worldview in regards to ethical values and norms which can be interacted with in light of Elihu’s speeches to see how our use of the socio-rhetorical methodology will impact contemporary African contexts in terms of understanding the meaning of suffering and wisdom, in light of African worldview of honor and shame and patriarchal cultures. Thus this will contribute to the African theological and scholarly engagement with one another in contemporary contexts. This dissertation will further help readers in African contexts and beyond to have another look at the speeches of Elihu and their theological values. The ironic depiction of wisdom from the Elihu speeches will help the reader to rethink the meaning of wisdom and the value of being wise. The dissertation will also

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<sup>20</sup> These African theological scholars mentioned in this section are not seen as the ideals of African theology, religion, ethics and philosophy. They have their various focuses and limitations, nevertheless, they would be used as dialogue partners in order to help us consider the questions of being wise within African worldviews that are highly sensitive to the issues of honor and shame, from a socio-religious perspective.

contribute to Old Testament reconsideration of how wisdom is taught and displayed beyond the prevailing conventional views in Proverbs and Ecclesiastes.

## **1.8 Scope of the Study**

This study intends to provide a socio-rhetorical analysis of Elihu's responses to Job's suffering thus we shall primarily consider Job 32-37 in search of the meaning and person of wisdom and how that can be related to issues of human suffering. We shall also explore other relevant African religiophilosophical works like those of Mbiti, Magesa and Turaki among others in order to see how we can relate African worldview of honour and shame to the wisdom of Elihu as well as the role of God in human affliction. Other Old Testament passages that have to do with prophetic and wisdom traditions will be investigated in order to see how they possibly relate to the speeches of Elihu in the book of Job. From intertextual and intratextual perspectives we shall also consider several verses in the book of Job to see how they reflect, anticipate or project the speeches of Elihu. This will help us towards the coherency of the book of Job and possible reception of Elihu speeches.

## **1.9 Conceptualization**

This section gives clarity to some of the major concepts that shall be used in discussing this dissertation. The concepts may have various or extended meanings in other contexts, but the following explanations represent what they mean to the present writer, and this provides how they would be used in this particular study.

### **1.9.1 Suffering**

The word "suffering" entails a hurtful, painful and uncomfortable experience. Balentine (2009:390) recognises the fact that the words "suffering and evil" are used in connection with each other although their conceptual meanings and usage may vary due to contextual and relative differences of people and ideas. Yet they answer to the conceptual meaning of pain, or agony. He explains that "suffering is not evil; evil is neither the cause nor the inevitable consequence of

suffering”<sup>21</sup>. He further points out that, “neither suffering nor evil necessarily calls the meaningfulness of life into question; both are essentially part of the givenness of human existence, experiences to be endured and overcome more than problems to be solved”. Balentine further agrees that God is and should be central in the human discourse on suffering and evil for only is God the beginning and end of life and all that it entails.

Marshall, Millard, Packer and Wiseman (1996:1136) see from the biblical perspective that suffering is an unfortunate development into the perfect creation of God. It is an intrusion as a result of human sin (Ge. 3) which comes in the form of “conflict, pain, corruption, drudgery and death (Gen.3:15-19)”. From a practical theological perspective on suffering, Louw (2000:73) observes that “It affects not only our identity but questions God’s identity”. Thus suffering touches our spirituality, emotions, relationships, etc.

From biblical, theological perspective, it has been variously observed that the Bible is replete with accounts of human suffering in the world of God and how God relates to human suffering. Thus it is agreeable that suffering is the reality that people experience in many ways as long as we live on this earth (Fretheim 1984; Hall 1986; Lindström 1994).<sup>22</sup> Job expressed his suffering as lament<sup>23</sup> or complaint towards his friends and even God as a result of his pain of the loss of dear children<sup>24</sup>, wealth and health. In the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37, we will try to see the place of God amidst human suffering and how that would challenge our sense of response to God in suffering and to other people as well as ourselves when suffering comes. Thus we will

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<sup>21</sup> In my view, if evil is the feeling and act of rebellion against God, then evil is sin, and if evil is sin then evil is the cause of suffering. Biblical testimony tells us that evil is sin and sin is the cause of human suffering. Although not every Hebrew words that is described with the word *rā'* connotes something evil or sinful (Clines 2010).

<sup>22</sup> For more on God’s place in human suffering see Kushner (1981); Buttrick (1966).

<sup>23</sup> Lament is a process of voicing out or writing out one’s feeling of pain, discomfort or agony. Louw (2000:21-24) explains that lament is a painful process of responding to suffering and engaging with the reality and the questions of the presence or absence of God in our suffering. Lament may come as a cry for help, a prayer/petition, a critical confrontation or as a complain on the injustice of suffering and the ‘uncomfortability’ of life (see also Westermann 1981a; Westerman 1981b; Brueggemann 1995; Seow 2013:56-8). The book of Job provides us with ample examples of the latter meaning and practice of lament. Brueggemann (2002:118) also explains that lament is a daring speech to God to intervene in order to decisively alleviate or overcome the problem of evil as a serious need that human beings face in the world.

<sup>24</sup> Such an experience constitutes an existential contemplation in which many questions would be asked and not all could have cogent answers directly or immediately. From a contemporary example, De Gruchy (2013; cf. Wolterstorff 1987; Hauerwas 1990) experienced such contemplation and questions in which his faith sought answers in life and death as a result of the death of his son. Thus the possibility of lamenting goes beyond acting drama but rather brings the fears, doubts, hopes, faith, and life of people closer to the question of fragility and ability which could also serve as an opener towards other possibilities beyond lament.

investigate how God is involved in Job's suffering according to Elihu's response and its potential to lead us to live in contemplation beyond a feeling or dejection, and a curse.

### **1.9.2 Wisdom**

Generally speaking, wisdom is an inherent quality of grasping and using knowledge appropriately, reasonably and profitably. Wisdom can be acquired from listening to wise teachers like the Sages<sup>25</sup> in the Old Testament and other ancient Near Eastern literature (Douglas & Tenney 2009:1529). Brueggemann (2002:232) helps us to understand the meaning of wisdom from a biblical perspective further when he says, "Wisdom in the Old Testament refers to a body of accumulated teaching based on discernment and reflection about the character and mystery of life". Concerning wisdom teaching, he further says:

The teaching is theological-ethical reflection from below, grounded in experience that, as such, constitutes a tradition alternative to the better known traditions of salvation history rooted in God's miracles and expressed as covenant... The teaching is rooted in common sense and has a high degree of prudential concern.

Wisdom can be accumulated from human practical experiences and experimentation with life, but it is ultimately a divine attribute which is given to people in various contexts and times. The giving of wisdom as a divine revelation is done in fear of God which points to the limit of human capacity to knowledge and wisdom, yet, for the openness and/or liberation of human reason and life experiences (cf. Von Rad 1972: 53-103). Thus wisdom is a divine mystery beyond human easy acquisition and control (cf. Job 28). In this study, we shall see how the Elihu speeches illustrate the truth of wisdom as a mystery in his perception and dialectical move within the pressing issues in Job's situation namely, suffering, wisdom and justice. This could help us to understand the meaning of wisdom and its ironic depictions beyond a given tradition or fixed ideological perspective.

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<sup>25</sup> Sages are generally known as the transmitters of tradition in ancient Israel (Crenshaw 2007:843-48; Brueggemann 1997:680; Perdue 1990:720-21; Crenshaw 1978:97-103).

### 1.9.3 Irony

Irony is a literary technique that shows hidden or open contradictions<sup>26</sup> in the characters' actions, in the case of a drama or a written account. The irony, as demonstrated by Good, is a literary device for the expression of ideas, yet, in agreement with Sister (1965:272-74), it is also an idea to be expressed. It excites humour because of the lack of knowledge of what might be obvious to another person in a book, drama or life situation, while the other person misses it and does another thing entirely different instead.<sup>27</sup> For example, Job's friends came as comforters, but they unknowingly and ironically turned into accusers, thus adding more to his suffering than alleviating it.<sup>28</sup> In line with the above presupposition on irony Sherwood (2008:69) explains that irony "is a literary device that exploits the difference between the literal sense and implied sense, which is often, but not always, construed as opposite". The aforementioned scholar goes further to point out that there is the possibility of dramatic, tragic and comic irony in the book of Job.<sup>29</sup> Seow (2013:82) observes that irony has been used in the book of Job "in its full range of types." He further explains some of its various types and natures.

Nevertheless, in this dissertation irony would be understood and used as a literary device that contains and points to "elements of incongruity" within a life situation and/or a literary text which helps to provide another angle or perspective in perceiving and understanding reality between two or more related ideas or persons (cf. Williams 1977: 51, Good 1965: 30-31). It thus has the capacity to obscure and illuminate depending on the understanding it provides to a given reader. Hence irony would be seen as an implicit or explicit critical device (cf. Good 1965:30, Emerton 1967:176-177). Irony also plays the role of a signifier to the meaning which might

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<sup>26</sup> Within these hidden and open contradictions we shall identify what we would call embedded and embodied irony in light of the Elihu speeches.

<sup>27</sup> In drama irony always plays around the inside character and the outside spectator, the spectator seems to know much more than the inside character, and then the inside character often than not ignites an experience in the spectator that only starts at the end of what has been presented (cf. Good 1981:19). Irony, then, begins in conflict, a conflict marked by the perception of the distance between pretense and reality"(Good 1981:14).

<sup>28</sup> In this sense Job's friends appeared more sarcastic than ironic in the dramatic sense of the word. According to Good (1981: 26) sarcasm and irony are often used interchangeably and are seldom distinguished. But he describes sarcasm in the following words, "Sarcasm will seldom attempt to hide its feelings, and its tone is ordinarily heavy. Irony on the other hand, uses a lighter tone and will therefore have a far more ambiguous effect." Amongst other things, irony is also seen by Good (1981:31) as the juxtaposition of the 'is' and the 'ought' "leaving the moral to the reader's perceptiveness."

<sup>29</sup> There could also be what would be called "humorous irony or parody" (Seow 2013:83).

have earlier obscure because of a certain ambiguity, paradoxical reality and even towards a certain “misdirection” from the known to the unknown, or from the obscure to the obvious (cf. Sharp 2009: 1-5, 241-48). This understanding of irony mainly does not serve to arrive at a certain fixed position of the perception and interpretation of reality, but rather it invites continual thoughts and new interests within the possible potentials it holds. There are ironic realities in terms of life and speech in Job 32-37 which we will consider in order to see the possibility of life progression beyond any attempted fixity or traditional/ideological limitation.<sup>30</sup>

#### 1.9.4 Scribes

Scribes in ancient Israel are a minority group of elite who are trained and specialised in the art of writing documents from royal and sacerdotal centres and administrative bodies. This shows that this group of people has been used especially in the urban centre of administration during the peak of the monarchical period of Israel to keep royal records of critical issues in service to those in power. Thus take stock of property, taxes, and debts which make the management of writing “allies with the accumulation of power and the amassing of wealth” (Brueggemann 2002:189; cf. Sakenfeld 2009: 136-38; Davies 1998; Crenshaw 1998). Scribes also function as the transmitters of knowledge. This means some of them like Ben Sira engaged within school systems in order to train younger pupils in the wisdom traditions in order to help them to have a good knowledge of life and their history and philosophy. Scribes engaged in collecting various wisdom thoughts and traditions together even across boundaries as could be seen in the collection of the book of Proverbs, the book of Job, and various Psalms both for sacerdotal, prophetic and wisdom purposes of preserving and transmitting knowledge and wisdom of the ages (cf. Von Rad 1975: 15ff; Sakenfeld 2009: 137). Brueggemann (2002:189) further rightly explains that “the scribes were custodians of religious scrolls and became the chief interpreters of the religious traditions of Judaism.”<sup>31</sup> There are examples of influential scribal figures that cut across the prophetic, priestly and wisdom traditions these comprise people like Baruch (Jer. 32:12-16; 36:4-32; 45:1-2), Ezra (Ezra 7:6; Neh. 8) and Ben Sira (Sirach 39:1-4, 7-9).<sup>32</sup> It is interesting to note that most

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<sup>30</sup> See my hypotheses on 1.5.

<sup>31</sup> This came to more prominence in the second century B.C.E “when Judaism had only diminished political power, scribes had become expert on Jewish religious life, preserving and teaching the treasured authoritative scrolls” (Brueggemann 2002:190).

<sup>32</sup> For the mention of scribes in the New Testament see Matt. 5:20; 23:13, 15, 23, 25, 27, 29).

scribes are from the priestly traditions and/or families and their works are mainly located in the postexilic period (cf. Betz et al. 2012: 552).<sup>33</sup> The above individuals functioned as writers, copyist (editors), and interpreters of the sacred texts that they got from priestly, prophetic and wisdom traditions.

### **1.9.5 Retribution Theology**

This is a religious understanding of God's moral governance by the rules of deeds and consequences. For further clarity, although not without his reservations, Penchansky (2009:781) explains that "Retribution means that God gives individuals and communities a degree of suffering that somehow corresponds to their sin or offence." He further gives some examples from both Old and New Testament of the Bible. Thus retribution theology means God rewards those who live righteously with a life of blessings and God curses those who are not righteous. In other words, God's treatment of people, according to this doctrine, is based on how human beings live before God. Those who do good will see good, and those who do wrong will see evil. Elihu's piety is demonstrated in his attempt to lead Job's friend to a better understanding of God and the question of human suffering. This led him to a critical confrontation of the conventional understanding of the doctrine of retribution which he also adheres to although not without some flexibility.

### **1.9.6 Theodicy**

Theodicy is a human moral and/or religious struggle with the person, power and presence of God in situations of evil and suffering. Louw (2000:25 cf. Gutiérrez 2005) helps us to understand that, "Theodicy (*theos dike*) means the justification of God in the light of evil and suffering. It is a human attempt to justify God's goodness and his handling of affairs." In other words, Brueggemann (2002:212) explains it better when he says that theodicy "concerns the question of God's goodness and power in a world that is manifestly marked by disorder and evil." Job

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<sup>33</sup> Nevertheless, there are evidences from ancient Babylon and Mesopotamia and Egypt that show prove that existence of scribes before the exilic and postexilic periods of Israel (i.e. before 586/7 BCE). These group of people are mainly trained from the royal extraction of society in order to be useful in administrative traditions. Scribes are known in the ancient world to be a group of professionals that could operate corporately or independently depending on the tradition and agenda in question. The earliest evidence of the existence of scribal tradition in the ancient Near East came from Sumerian sources in which they are describes as 'sons of the tablet house.' (Sakenfeld 2009:136).

particularly, struggled with this reality throughout the book, until the end when God exonerated him and blessed him (chap. 42). Elihu gives interesting perspectives on God in regards to giving wisdom and responding to human suffering by way of redemption by the grace in God's sovereign will. Thus he provides another discourse in Job's struggle with theodicy as well as Job's readers of ongoing generations.

### **1.9.7 Human Dignity**

Human dignity can be described as the God-given worth of humanity to every person which should be recognised, respected and enhanced. It entails the essential meaning and presence of the image of God (*Imago Dei*) in human beings which cannot be taken away from anyone or be destroyed. The creation of humankind in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27) is a clear indication of the reality of human vitality before the Creator as well as to other people. This also permits relational interaction of caring for one another and sharing with one another as a result of our interconnectedness from creation (see Bosman 2013:51; De Lange 2013: 9-11). Nevertheless, human dignity can be violated or hindered as a true sense flourishing and self-identity. Where such violation happens there, we see the reality and meaning of dehumanisation and the need for rehumanisation, that is the restoration of one's human value and freedom to be human in the world of God (Claassens 2012:665,668).

Soulen and Woodhead (2006) engage with the concept of human dignity in light of contemporary life challenges from a multidimensional perspective. Thus human dignity is seen as a human worth for life and vitality which emanates from human creation and salvific experiences namely, the redemption and sanctification of a person through a submissive life of faith to God towards a realistic and functional spirituality.

### **1.10 Summary**

As seen above, the first chapter of this dissertation will give an introduction to the reality and possibly highlight some problems of suffering that human beings face in life. The second chapter would be a survey of the book of Job and the theme of 'human suffering' in order to see what many other scholars have done over the years especially in terms of the interpretation of the book

of Job. This will help us in discussing the possibilities around the composition and reception of the book. It will also help us to see some of the historical contributions of different scholars in engaging with the book of Job as well as how they were invited by the book or similar stories to address or respond to human suffering in powerful ways specifically. The third chapter will provide an intratextual study of the Elihu speeches thus to concentrate on the rhetoric of Elihu within the selected passages in his response to Job's suffering.

Chapter four will provide an intertextual reading of Elihu's speeches in the book of Job and how they relate to other relevant passages or texts within the Old Testament. Chapter five will lead us into considering the possible socio-cultural textures of the Elihu speeches in order to see how social structure and culture influence his response to Job and his friends which will also be linked by interactive comparisons to the African contexts within the worldview of honour and shame. Chapter six will focus on the ideological-theological textures of Elihu's speeches which may help us to see how Elihu grapples with the ongoing ideology of his day, for example, the doctrine of retribution and how its ironic display undermines its traditional understanding and application in the context of suffering. This section will also try to investigate Elihu's perception and response to Job's theodicy concern in search of justice and dignity as a human being in the world of God. Thus this discourse will attempt to discern the possibility of forming a theology of care towards realistic human dignity within the reality of suffering. This would be done by closely examining the rhetoric of Elihu about God towards Job and his friends. Then chapter seven will close the dissertation with a brief conclusion which will summarise the study so far and try to bring it to an end by suggesting areas for further research as well as the possible contribution that is achieved so far in this particular dissertation towards the growth of Job research and Old Testament biblical studies.

## Chapter 2: A Summary of Contents and Survey of Scholarship on the Book of Job

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### 2.1 Introduction

This chapter aims at providing a survey of the contents and the prevailing views on the background of the book of Job and the significance of its different components found in the final form. The above point would take us further into a survey of scholarship on Job in light of its nature and reception as Wisdom Literature. The various literary components of the book of Job have captured the interest of various Job interpreters.<sup>34</sup> The study of the methods, main interpretive interests and the application of different trends of approach to Job study would be of great interest to us as we also try to journey within existing literature<sup>35</sup> towards a rediscovery of the person of Job from the socio-rhetorical perspective of his dialogue with his friends and God, for this study, the contribution of the young man Elihu in Job 32-37 would be our focal point.

The understanding of the genre in the book of Job is one of the challenging aspects of engaging with the book as a whole (Pope (1973: xxx-xxx); Habel 1985:42-59; Hartley 1988:20-32; Hoffmann 1996:31-45). There have been various attempts to discuss a coherent literary texture in the book of Job by different scholars, yet, finding a single one, or a satisfactory way of classifying the book as a whole has made the attempts harder to do.<sup>36</sup> The issues that were much discussed in the study of the literary nature of the book have been its binary classification between the prose and poetic sections in which the prose form provides the prologue and epilogue of the book, while the poetic section fills in the middle portion. There has not been a real consensus among scholars about which of the two sections could have been the older “story” or “legendary” version of the book of Job and which comes later (Penchansky 1990: 27-30). In

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<sup>34</sup> The interpretive methodology and thematic emphasis would be our major points of interest as we try to survey how the book of Job has been variously interpreted over the years. We do not intend to provide an exhaustive discussion of books, commentaries, and journal articles on chronological order, but rather we shall highlight how three different trends of interpretation as they emerged and play a role in engaging with the complexity of the book over the years. These three interpretive trends, as would be seen below, are the literary, historical and theological trends/approaches which would be the focus of our emphasis.

<sup>35</sup> See footnote 1 above.

<sup>36</sup> Seow (2013:47-64) discusses various scholarly presuppositions and suggestions on the genre of Job ranging from being a drama, an epic, didactic narrative, dialogue, lament, lawsuit, skeptical literature etc. (cf. Westermann 1981; Dell 1991, Magdalene 2007; Newsom 2003; Pelham 2010).

this dissertation, we agree with the options on the prose as part of later additions to the book seeing that the poetic dialogues are filled with ancient Near Eastern old vocabularies that may not strictly be peculiar only to Hebrew literature.<sup>37</sup> Thus the book might have been an adoption of the work of an old sage which has gone through various stages of a reduction up to Hebrew biblical reception which might have had the Yahwistic additions in the prose sections (cf. Newsom 2003:16f). Other later additions as observed by various scholars include the poem on wisdom (chap. 28), the Elihu speeches (chaps. 32-37), and the divine speeches (chaps. 38-42:6) (cf. Habel 1985: 35-39; Hoffmann 1996:46-58).

Thus, this chapter would take the common literary components of the book of Job as a point of departure<sup>38</sup> in order to provide the survey of the contents of the book and then an overview of some scholarly contributions in regards to its literary, historical and theological approaches to the book. There would be a brief comment on the reception of the book of Job later on even though without any exhaustive discussion of it but rather mainly in search of how Elihu has been possibly viewed in terms of the reception of the book of Job as a whole.

## **2.2 Three Interpretive Levels in Approaching the Book of Job**

This section intends to explore the contents of the books of Job as it appears in its final form in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). This exploration does not presuppose the author's finalisation of thoughts and structure of the book, yet, it is aimed at presenting a summary of the book of Job in order to give the reader an idea of what the book entails before we go into a more deeper and critical study of our selected texts. We shall also incorporate the survey of scholarship within identifiable trends of interpretations as we explore the book. Thus the three main divisions to be discussed are the literary, historical and theological trends in approaching the book.

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<sup>37</sup> Pechansky (1990:27) cites examples of various ancient Near Eastern vocabularies in the poetic section of Job which include words of Aramaic, Arabic, Akkadian, Egyptian and classical Hebrew texture of writing (cf Pope 1973:xlvii-l; Hartley 1988:5-6).

<sup>38</sup> The reason for this is because the literary components of the book of Job can obviously be seen as clear divisions of the book by distinctive genre classification between the prose and poetic literary genres. Thus within these two main components we would reflect on the summary of the contents of the book as well as to highlight how various scholars engaged with it.

## 2.2.1 A Literary Approach to the Prose Sections (1:1-2:13; 42:7-17)

### 2.2.1.1 Prologue (1:1-2:13)<sup>39</sup>

The book of Job opens with the story of “a man” who lived in the land of Uz named Job (1:1) who happens to be the protagonist of this canonised Job story which bears his name. The first few verses of the book of Job present Job as a blameless and upright man who feared God and turns away from evil (1:1bc). This portrays his renowned piety<sup>40</sup> which later became the litmus test of his personality and relationship with God. Murphy (1996:35) sees Job in the prologue as a “living saint” who had won the approval of God by his lifestyle<sup>41</sup>. Job was a man who had a lot of possessions under his stewardship.<sup>42</sup> He had the blessings of children,<sup>43</sup> animals, servants and intellect (1:2,3). His children lived a life of mutual relationships and customary fellowship with one another (1:4,5)<sup>44</sup> yet, amidst all that the piety of Job and his wisdom could be seen in his effort to offer sacrifices to purify his children in case they have committed sin by cursing God in their heart.<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> The prologue to the book of Job is seen as a narrative that “betrays a clear structure based on several scene” (Murphy 1996:34-35) for example;

1:1-5, Job’s sturdy piety and prosperity.

1:6-12, the interview between the Lord and the Satan in the heavenly court.

1:13-19, the disasters that wipe out Job’s possessions and children.

1:20-22, Job’s reaction.

2:1-6, the second interview between the Lord and the Satan in the heavenly court.

2:7-8, the affliction of Job’s person.

2:9-13, Job’s reaction (and I will add ‘the arrival of his friends and their first reactions to his tragedy).

<sup>40</sup> Thus the prologue to Job has been seen as a “didactic tale in which the hero embodies a virtue or complex of virtues valued by wisdom tradition” (Perdue 1991:86)

<sup>41</sup> Without necessarily believing and/or emphasizing the historicity of Job, Murphy (1996:35) rightly noted that the author of the book of Job “deliberately chose the figure of a well-known holy man as a hero of his work”.

<sup>42</sup> The juxtaposition of Job’s wealth and piety is obvious in the prologue-epilogue sections, yet, the implication that one may condition the other hangs in the air (Coogan 2011:439). It is my view that the dialogue sections attempted to reasonably unravel this mystery although the doctrine of retribution made all characters in the dialogue to stagger towards any simplified footing, even so, numerous Job readers today.

<sup>43</sup> “Naturally, his family circle was complete. He had seven sons and three daughters, who enjoyed one another’s company on festive occasions, particularly birthdays” (Crenshaw 1998:92)

<sup>44</sup> The fellowship of Job’s children in their various homes was viewed by Crenshaw (1998:93) as a “false sense of security” which was exposed by the calamities that befell him (and them) in very tragic and quick successions. To the present writer, Job’s children’s fellowship could be seen as mere customary fellowship without any quest for security against any expected calamity that might befall them, thus Crenshaw’s presupposition quoted above could be seen as a weak one based on an interpreter’s suspicion.

<sup>45</sup> Crenshaw sees Job’s act of making sacrifices on behalf of his children as a suspicious tendency that marred his enjoyment and forced him to offer sacrifices as precaution against an “angry deity” (Crenshaw 1998:92).

Job became a central subject of discussion between Yahweh and the Satan<sup>46</sup> when the heavenly beings appeared before Yahweh to present themselves (1:6ff).<sup>47</sup> Yahweh points the Satan to the piety and devotion of Job to God<sup>48</sup>, and the Satan suspected that Job might have been so obedient and righteous in order to win the favour of God or maintain such relationship in response to his material blessing. Thus the Satan asked this notorious question, “Does Job fear God for nothing?” (1:9). From the previous critical question on the lips of the Satan one might easily think that Satan was concerned about the glory of God thus s/he wanted to closely probe the motives of a human being like Job to make sure that he was not deceiving the Lord. On another hand, the question might still lead the reader to a critical examination of the motive of the Satan as well in regards to the actual goal that he wanted to achieve in his probation of Job’s piety by such an important question (Murphy 1996:36). We cannot be conclusive about the questions of motives in this discourse. Nevertheless, the question that the Satan posed became the major foundation stone for the trials of Job in order to allow the Satan to experiment with Job and see whether Job truly feared God for nothing or not. “The cynical charge that Job’s piety depended on favourable external circumstances struck at the heart of ancient religion”(Crenshaw 1998:92).

The trials of Job came in series in that his material wealth and future aspirations in his sons and daughters were shattered at once when raiding parties took away his flock, thunder killed his animals, and a house collapsed on his children (1:13-19). The intensity and totality of Job’s loss are accentuated in his servants’ reports within the phrase, “and I am the only one who has escaped to tell you” (1:15b, 16c, 17d, 19c). These happened in seemingly quick successions because of the ‘poetic’ refrain from each of the reporting servants, “While he was still speaking,

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<sup>46</sup> “the Satan” in this context is understood as an angelic being which stands before the Lord, not as the Devil of the New Testament theology, but rather as an Adversary, a prosecuting attorney who according to Murphy (1996:36) is in “position to know who are the saints and who are the sinners” before the Lord. Thus “the Satan” in Joban context may safely describe to be an “accuser” or a “prosecutor” in God’s court (See Crenshaw 1998:92) For more on “the Satan” in Job see Coogan (2011:439), Balentine (2006:51-54).

<sup>47</sup> The prologue in chapters 1-2 dramatically alternates from one scene to another. The scenes are generally believed to be in both heaven and earth (Coogan 2011:438) or the heavenly court and the earth. In my view it is much better to say the presence of God and the presence of Job. Thus the presence of God is the invisible realm of God meeting and discussing with other spirit beings that only the narrator could grasp and first possibly imagine. Then the presence of Job is where Job sits and was with his family, where he received tragic news, gave strange reactions which demonstrate strong piety and legendary fidelity and where his wife is said to speak to him concerning his unacceptable suffering and tenacious fidelity to God. It is where at last his three friends met him and were silenced by his suffering. For more on the “divine council” in relation to Israelite religion tradition see Perdue (1991:88).

<sup>48</sup> Which according to Crenshaw (1998:92) the Satan was oblivious of,

another messenger came and said” (1:16, 17 & 18).<sup>49</sup> The affluent Job of the opening verses in chapter 1 now became a tormented soul. In response to all this, he is reported to “bless the name of the Lord” and recognise the prerogative of Yahweh in giving and taking life and everything. Thus he did not curse the name of Yahweh to Yahweh’s face as earlier presupposed by the Satan (1:20-22). Job’s integrity is underlined by the narrator of this introductory section to the book of Job (Crenshaw 1998:93).

In another scene before the Lord, the Satan appeared again with the heavenly beings. The narrator reports with the emphasis that the Satan also came to “present himself” before the Lord (2:1). Thus they both had another time to rethink Job and his piety. Yahweh admitted that the Satan incited him against Job to afflict him for no reason (2:3)<sup>50</sup> yet, he still maintains his integrity before Yahweh and is still described in pride as has been done before. The Satan suggested further torment directly on Job’s physical life in terms of his health (2:4,5) thinking that “[a] man will give all he has for his own life”. Yahweh granted the request of the Satan by allowing the Satan to afflict Job’s physical body. Job’s health was taken away, and he became a miserable fellow sitting on a dunghill, scraping himself with potsherds because of his intense suffering. Thus his three visitors namely, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar came from their towns and met him at the dunghill with the aim of giving him “comfort” as a result of the calamity that had befallen him (2:11-13). They sat with Job speechless and in mourning for seven days, perhaps not actually know where to start and/or what to say to him. For the purpose of this study, which searches for the meaning and application of wisdom in the book of Job, we could ask, were Job’s friends silent out of wisdom or out of verbal bankruptcy? Could we see the wisdom in their coming and empathy with Job or foolishness for coming to exacerbate his misfortune?<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> “The substance of these messages concerns four decisive blows, two from earthly powers and two from heavenly forces. The Sabeans stole Job’s oxen and asses; divine fire consumed the sheep; Chaldeans made off with the camels; and a mighty wind felled a house upon Job’s children” (Crenshaw 1998:93).

<sup>50</sup> The fact that Job was afflicted for no reason recalls the Adversary’s presupposition on the suspected interior motive of Job in serving Yahweh. Yet Yahweh never lose sight of Job’s fidelity, thus Crenshaw says it right in the following words, “The divine confidence in Job equals the temper’s faith in his own creed, and once again God’s servant falls into compassionless hands” (Crenshaw 1998:93).

<sup>51</sup> The question on wisdom would no doubt be further reflected upon as this dissertation progresses but the possible answers to the above raised questions are beyond the scope of this dissertation because of the fact that we are concentrating on the Elihu speeches. Nevertheless, the reader and/or present writer could take the study further in an article or another major research on the wisdom of Job’s three friends etc.

### 2.2.1.2 The Epilogue (42:7-17)

In the last prose section of the book which is the epilogue, (42:7-17) the narrator provides another texture of Job's experience which once again invites us to rethink many things in light of the ongoing flow of the whole book now that it is coming to an end. One of the basic questions that come to many scholars' minds in relation to the unity of the book of Job and the potential functions of the speeches therein is the fact that some early and middle characters in the story especially those in the prose prologue are either dismissed or neglected. For example, the Satan which started the wager with Yahweh in the prologue section is absent in the epilogue, Job's wife who also forms part of the prologue and is later mentioned in passing in Job's confessions of innocence is now absent in the epilogue, and most significantly for the purpose of this dissertation Elihu is also not referred to in the epilogue section. The main question under-guarding this literary, theological or dramatic neglect of characters, is why? For instance, why was Elihu not mentioned in the epilogue? Could it be because of the piety under-guarding his speeches or that there is another reason otherwise? This question may still linger in our search and discussions on the Elihu speeches toward another, hopefully, reasonable suggestion, although not one that presumes to put to the matter to rest finally.

Job was vindicated from the retributive ideological interpretation/accusation of his three friends (42:7f). Crenshaw (1998: 94) sees the epilogue as a story in which the servant of God returned into the protective hedge of God. But the negative report about his three friends' unacceptable testimony might have come from another lost source<sup>52</sup> seeing that there is nowhere in the entire book of Job where their falsehood can be traced. Perdue (1991:238) sees the redemptive reality of God as taking precedence in the restoration of Job in this old narrative. Rethinking the narrative alongside an old myth, Perdue points out that, "Redemption is the final and climactic end of the myth pattern which internally organises the stages of dramatic enactment." Thus this story achieves its discerned purpose alongside a presupposed mythical genre that anticipates a happy ending within serious tragedy. Yahweh exonerated Job and declared his three friends

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<sup>52</sup> The book of Job might not definitely be a collection of thoughts and stories from one single source, yet, we can only conjecture, and for the fact that we cannot really be certain of any "lost source" that could be directly linked to this passage or scenario, then we can just leave it as a presupposition that may require more evidences.

guilty for not saying what is “right” in their judgment of Job’s situation.<sup>53</sup> After Yahweh’s declaration of their guilt of Job’s friend, or inaccuracy of their words, Job was asked to pray for their forgiveness. Thus he mediated for their forgiveness and became the channel of their blessing as they end their visit and hopefully returned to where they came from. Job’s fortunes were restored by Yahweh (42:10,11) which also makes us ponder between the possibilities of reward and gifts of grace. If the doctrine of retribution holds sway in the Job story as presupposed by his three friends, and even by Elihu, then we could conclude that Job was finally rewarded by Yahweh which accentuates Job’s faithfulness and Yahweh’s justice. But in light of the Elihu speeches, we may see something different from a dogmatic understanding and application of retributive justice and theology. We would like to closely consider who Job has been to various scholars in modern interpretations as we continue our search for the meaning and person of wisdom, as well as the role of God in human suffering and in regards to the epilogue we could even add, and human blessing/prosperity (42:12-15). Thus Job’s human dignity was finally restored when his friends and relations returned to him (42:11,15) and brought him gifts which we could also see as blessings. He was also blessed with children, although only the daughters are mentioned in the epilogue. Nevertheless, we cannot strictly argue against his having any male child anymore. Job was blessed with many years and generations, and he had a happy end of life as a fulfilled person (42:16,17).

In sum, Job chapters 1-2; 42:7-17 form the Job novella which is one of the clearly defined sections of the book by its prose literary nature.<sup>54</sup> It helps to lay the foundation of the book of Job with a significance which Spiekermann (2009:736) believes can hardly be questioned. This prose section is a self-contained story of an ancient socio-religious figure who experienced both the happy and tragic sides of life. God subjects Job to ultimate tests even though he is known to be “blameless both *corum Deo* and *corum mundo*” (Spiekermann 2009:736).<sup>55</sup> Thus the prologue of Job leads readers to a nagging question on theodicy which is disturbed by the person of God in

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<sup>53</sup> Perdue (1991:239) among many other readers/interpreters of Job found this irony turnover of who said what was right and who said what was wrong in Yahweh’s judgment, very striking. Thus it serves as a “deconstruction” of the friends’ “false theology of retribution” (Perdue 1991:239) or rather we should say, “false application of the theology of retribution”.

<sup>54</sup> The Job novella is literarily seen as the Prologue and Epilogue of the book of Job, which is generally known as the “didactic prose” in Job (Coogan 2011:438).

<sup>55</sup> The above assertion is gleaned and buttressed by the divine testimony in chapters 1:1, 8; 2:3.

relation to suffering (calamity).<sup>56</sup> Suffering could come as a result of sin as in Psalm 51, but this is not a rule to everyone all the time. Thus the theodicy question here is; why would a holy and loving God subject a faithful servant like Job to such tragedy in order to prove a point? (cf. Murphy 1996:36 cf. Spiekermann 2009:736).<sup>57</sup>

### **2.2.2 A Historical Approach to the Prose Sections of Job**

In studying the historical background to the book of Job, one would notice that it is a story of a person from the land of Uz as mentioned in the opening verse of the final form of the book, thus one would like to ask who wrote the book, where and when and how did it get into the canon of Israel in terms of the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament? These questions are very crucial in engaging with the background of Job, and they have received various and seemingly unending answers seeing that there have not been enough premises actually to establish finished arguments on them. This constitutes some of the contentious problems from both external and internal spheres of Job research. There are also many problems that many scholars have been wrestling with from the inner aspect of the book of Job which has to do with the unity of the book in terms of its genre and composite parts. Different scholars have contributed to these questions from various perspectives, some are more convincing than others, yet, the following historical survey would highlight some of those responses in recent research<sup>58</sup> and how they may help the reader to refresh their minds not with actual details of the contentions so far but with the obtainable discourse on the background of Job in terms of its external and internal problems and canonicity.

Pope (1973:xxx-lxxxiv) amongst other scholars provides a historical background study to the book of Job regarding its historical context which many scholars agree that it was ancient Mesopotamia. Before giving his translation to the book of Job as well as exegetical commentary, he considers the linguistic dynamics in Job alongside other texts in the ancient Near East. In Pope and many others after him, the date and authorship of Job remain uncertain, yet, there is a

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<sup>56</sup> Murphy (1996:36) sees “suffering” as a mystery in human life.

<sup>57</sup> Murphy (1996:36) has carefully explained that issue under scrutiny in this interesting and disturbing discourse when he points out that, “The issue is not divine caprice, but human sincerity, and the author has portrayed the issue by means of the exchange between the Lord and the Satan”.

<sup>58</sup> The historical survey of the book of Job focuses on works in the beginning to mid- 20th century which could be seen as “recent research” compared to Jewish-rabbinic studies into the Medieval periods and before which do not necessarily focus on historical issues before the emergence of the Enlightenment period.

consensus towards its patriarchal setting as we shall see soon in Hartley's (1988) historical consideration of the book from his literary point of view.

In the historicity of the book of Job, it is evident from various scholars' point of view that the actual date of the existence of the hero Job is highly uncertain, as mentioned by Pope above, although, "Scholars have proposed dates from the tenth century to the fourth century B.C." (Habel 1985:40).<sup>59</sup> Yet, many scholars believed him to have lived during the early patriarchal days mostly because of his longevity which was even more than that of the patriarchs (42:17), his family priestly role (1:5) as an indication of a period before the establishment of the priesthood as in the tradition of Israel, the constitution of his wealth in terms of animals, slaves, and children, and the kind of money<sup>60</sup>(1:3f). From a personal point of view, Job could be seen as a pre-Abrahamic and pre-Mosaic person because of the juxtaposition of the lands of Uz and Ur in the table of nations in Genesis 10 which could be a case in point to suggest that the people of Uz and Ur might have been contemporaries or that, Uz might have been in existence many years before the emergence of Ur and its person which if this hypothetical view is true then Job might have existed before Abraham and Moses, or at most he might have been a contemporary of Abraham. Habel (1985:40) observes, agreeable that, "The very fact that the author locates the characters in a distant world and avoids direct allusions to the later historical and prophetic traditions to Israel makes the task of determining an appropriate date rather difficult". No matter

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<sup>59</sup> For example, Perdue (2008) reads the book of Job among other wisdom literatures in light of their historical contexts. He places the book of Job as a literary composition which emerged within the "Neo-Babylonian empire" (Perdue 2008:117ff). He did not neglect the socio-religious ideology of the day which is seen in his discussion of the sages and their social setting (Perdue 2008:140-148). Hartley (1988:18-20) further explains the reigning argument for the possibility of dating the book of Job during the 7<sup>th</sup> century or mid-6<sup>th</sup> century B.C. thus taking the points of view of textual affinities with some Old Testament books and Job. He also reflects on the Babylonian exile in terms of its being the possible point of departure for the writing of Job, which the present author sees not in terms of the actual composition of the written account of Job's life but rather in terms of its reception into the canon of Israel. None of the traditional and critical suggestions of the authorship and date of the book of Job is definitely convincing towards the closure of the argument. Thus Hartley (1988:20) sees the reasonability of dating the book within the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> century because of its literary connecting points with other Old Testament texts like Amos, Hosea, Jeremiah and Isaiah, yet, he is more convinced to place Job's composition (which the present author calls 'finalization into Israel's canon') during the 7<sup>th</sup> century B.C.

<sup>60</sup> כֶּסֶף הַלֵּבָב "piece of silver" which denotes an patriarchal monetary weight of a value that can be the worth of a lamb (Gaebelein 1988:1059).

when this story was actually written one of the main issues to note here is the fact that ,“The story deals with the struggle of an ancient hero with his God” (Habel 1985:40).<sup>61</sup>

From the above discussion, we can see that the prose framework of Job (1-2 & 42:7-17) plays a significant role in helping us to locate the man Job within a supposed historical context, or rather in a context that gives historical meaning. The mentions of his town, Uz, his great wealth (in terms of animalia), many servants, mode of sacrifice, and great wisdom (1:1-5), money given to Job from his relatives and friends in his restoration, and the length of his days before his death (41:11,17). All help us to identify the person as an ancient patriarch who was blessed with affluence and suddenly encountered disaster for no reason (2:3). This means that it was none of Job’s personal faults or sins that called for such calamities in his home and life. We would continue some reflections on the historical elements of the book of Job later on as we consider the middle section, especially the Elihu speeches (32-37).<sup>62</sup> At this point, we would like to turn our minds towards the theological significance that this prose framework may have in light of the Jewish-Christian interpretations. Thus we shall describe how this section of the book of Job informs the various interpreters from the theological perspective.

### **2.2.3 A Theological Approach to the Prose Framework**

Seow (2013:111) points out the “Jewish consequences”<sup>63</sup> in which he surveys the interpretation of Job by Jewish Rabbis in search of the meaning and purpose of Job’s suffering. Job has been described majorly within these interpretations as “a patient and steadfast” (Seow 2013:111)<sup>64</sup> person who suffered within the providential will and purpose of God. Many Rabbis like Pappias, Akiba and Yannai come up with serious debates on the purpose of Job’s suffering and the portrait of Job in terms of his blamelessness and faithfulness to God even in suffering. They tried to know why Job suffered and at the same time defend the justice and providence of God (Seow 2013: 121-23).

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<sup>61</sup> Job might have encountered a serious time of struggle with God in the prose framework in terms of the pain of parting with almost everything that he might consider precious to his life. Yet, the main voiced struggle is more conspicuous in the dialogue sections, especially in how he perceived and voiced his thoughts about God.

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Chapter 5

<sup>63</sup> “Consequences” here shows what happened when different people at different stages encounter and interact with the book of Job in terms of interpretive exegesis and reception into various application contexts (Seow 2013:110).

<sup>64</sup> Cf. Roland Murphy’s (1995:33-48) theological interpretation on “Job the Steadfast”

Furthermore, to the early Christian engagement with the character, Job in the prose framework, it is noted that many church fathers and Christian interpreters also engaged with the book of Job with keen interest. For example, Justin Martyr, Irenaeus of Lyon, Hippolytus of Rome, Origen, Augustine of Hippo, among others read Job as “a model of faith” (Seow 2013:122) in terms of a Christian ideal of religious piety and faithfulness to God and as a challenge from Gentile righteousness.<sup>65</sup> The methodological approach to the book of Job during the above mentioned periods of Job interpretation is the “homiletical amplification and reimagination of aspects” (Seow 2013: 126) of the account in order to enhance its coherence and didactic significance. Thus we can say that early interpreters of Job, and probably other texts in that period, engaged a didactic approach which allows them space to think through the text in search of its relevance towards possible instructions in terms of faith and traditional identities.

In early Christian interpretations, Job is portrayed as a person of “impeccable faith and unwavering patience” (Seow 2013:251). His suffering was read positively by people like Didymus the Blind, as an experience that paves the way towards virtue. Even though Job’s mention of nakedness led Clement of Alexandria, Basil of Caesarea to associate him with asceticism (Seow 2013:252) his suffering is seen as providentially ordained in order to lead Job to a perception, (Gregory), Moral rectitude (Maimonides) and theological encounter of the God in nature and history (Aquinas and Calvin). Job suffering was understood by Tertullian to be on purpose to glorify God (Seow 2013:252).

Spiekermann (2009:376) sees Job as being steadfast (see also Murphy), to God when God subjects him to a serious scrutiny of his fidelity and left his life and relationship to God an open question. On the other hand of his theological analysis, Spiekermann (2009:736) sees God as an alternating character who changes faces perhaps for dramatic sake, thus he views God testing

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<sup>65</sup> Kevin Vanhoozer (2005:384) also points out that in the early days of Christianity, John Chrysostom (ca. 347-407) and Jerome (ca. 347-419), read the book of Job with the intention of finding a model image of example of a man of God. Chrysostom sees Job as a man who models self denial amidst life problems. These life problems have much to do with the spiritual struggle with the devil. Thus Job was seen as a person who persevered through the trials of life and so stands out as a good example to imitate. He had much interest in the Job of the prologue who responded to suffering and loss with perseverance while the Job of the dialogues who protests against God. He keeps the Job confronted and transformed by the speeches of Yahweh at the margin, relishing the response of Job in the prologue (chaps. 1-2). On the other hand, Jerome sought a Christological model and he found Job 19:23-27 as a good pointer to his Christological quest through which he formulated the doctrines of hope and bodily resurrection from the book of Job.

Job, not treating him well, and even questioning his fidelity (piety) “in the person of Satan” probing if Job “fears God for nothing” (1:9). This dramatic divine change of face does not portray the actual and/or discernible characterization in the story seeing that God and the Satan<sup>66</sup> are distinct characters in the story that own their roles and voices one as the sovereign over all things and the other as a creature (angelic being) which acts according to the bidding of the divine and is subject to God’s control.

Thus we can see that the prose framework of the book of Job has captured the attention of various interpreters especially Christian interpreters to ask and respond to questions that have to do with personal piety in terms of righteousness, and faithfulness of God even in the face of adversary and suffering. Job’s piety is seen as mentioned above as model of faith in suffering which chooses to “bless” God rather than “cursing” God to God’s face (1:11). The prose sections no doubt play significant roles of introducing the characters of the book of Job to the reader, except for Elihu who might heighten the suspicions of critics of its later insertion. Yes, there are stages of redaction of the book at various times which might suggest the later addition of the prose sections to the poetic middle in order to make the legendary story of Job suitable for Hebrew reception.<sup>67</sup> The epilogue like the prologue also presents a pious Job who was favoured and richly blessed by his God. Yet, it left many theological questions on the Satan, Job’s wife and Elihu unanswered. Thus we would try to closely read Elihu’s theological rhetorical response to Job in order to understand the purpose of his suffering and its function in light of the entire discourse on suffering, wisdom, justice and the person of God in all life situations.

#### **2. 2.4 A Literary Approach to the Poetic Dialogues (3-42:6)**

The poetic rendition of Job provides the reader with some crescendo in reading the rise of the quests of Job towards meeting God and asking for justice in his pathetic situation. We would see in chapter 3 how Job breaks the silence of his three friends through a “curse-lament” which engendered various dialogues which soon escalated into serious disputes over traditional

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<sup>66</sup> As earlier explained this is generally understood at this stage, not as an actual reference to Satan or the Devil as in the later Judeo-Christian understanding of a negative angelic being.

<sup>67</sup> We would reflect on this later in the historical criticism of the poetic dialogues.

presuppositions within the dogma of retribution.<sup>68</sup> Job's friends tried to convince him of his "sinfulness" in order to persuade him to repent to God and live, but Job stood his ground to resist their claims and presuppositions firmly. We shall see from the dialogues what heightens the tensions of Job and his friends towards seeking a direct contact with God within chapters 4-27, 29-31 and see how responses would later come to Job (chaps. 32-37 & 38-42:6).

#### **2.2.4.1 Job' Dialogues with Friends (3-27)**

The dialogue of Job and his three friends was finally opened and necessitated by Job's curse-lament in chapter 3, in which he cursed the day of his birth and sought to have been killed at birth. He seriously despaired of his miserable life and confessed that death could have been the best for him instead of such misery. Such disturbing thoughts from Job in light of his unfortunate situation led Eliphaz to give a decisive response that may comfort Job and make him think closely about his life, actions and their result (chap. 4,5). Job responded to Eliphaz's pastoral guidance by pointing them to the enormity of his affliction which he claims only to know, not them (chap.6). Job appears to be a man confused by the presence of God and the absence of God in his affliction (chap. 7) trying to probe closely why would God the greatest watcher of human beings watch and reduce mankind to such intense scrutiny?

Like Eliphaz above, Bildad came up with a traditional philosophical perspective trying to make Job think deeply and closely about his life and human life generally, perhaps he could learn the lesson of God's justice even in creation that God does not pervert justice but gives to everyone what he/she deserves (chap. 8). Bildad thus painted "matchless imagery for the destruction of the wicked (chaps. 8; 18;25) (Crenshaw 1998:96).<sup>69</sup> Job does not settle with such deeds and consequences notions which indeed constitute the ideology of retribution which almost all the chapters in the book of Job wrestle with one way or another. In his attempt to move away from such retributive settlement, Job proposed a word with God (chaps 9,10). Job does not deny the sovereignty of God, yet he boldly challenged the justice of God especially in his own case.

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<sup>68</sup> Job's curse-lament is variously interpreted by different scholars including the possibility of seeing it as an assault to primordial creation, thus a deconstruction of creation by the power of human language (Perdue 1991:91).

<sup>69</sup> Bildad further shows the dark side of God in God's punishment of the wicked when he "likens divine punishment to the extinguishing of a lamp and a plant's destruction, pictures a hunter's powerful trap, and envisions disease and death as divine agents" (Crenshaw 1998:96).

Zophar's speech like those of his other friends above tried to persuade Job to see reason in accepting his fate from God and to humbly repent that God may spare him (chap.11) . Zophar placed emphasis on the life of the godless and what comes to their lives as a divine response to their ways which by implication judges Job's actions. In chapters 16 and 17 Job still objects their points of view and presses on his need actually to see God and hear from God. He was not unaware of imminent death, yet his integrity is at stake, and he was not ready to give it all up. Thus the cycles of dialogues with his friends continued into the second and seemingly third (though incomplete)<sup>70</sup> cycle of speeches with Job's friends trying to help him see his sinfulness and repent before God, yet Job continued his resistance to their suggestions and 'judgments'. He insists on his innocence and quest for God's justice which led him to probing the "credibility of God" (Murphy 1996:40 cf. Von Rad 1972:221) especially when God is portrayed as playing the devil and /or enemy of Job (Crenshaw 1998:98 cf. Von Rad 1972:217). Job also questions the significance of morality before God since even the "good" and "the righteous" are not free from torment as also mentioned by his three friends in previous conversations (Crenshaw 1998:97). His personal resolve all along could be seen in the following words, "I will never admit that you are in the right; till I die, I will not deny my integrity. I will maintain my righteousness and never let go of it; my conscience will not reproach me as long as I live" (27:5,6). Crenshaw (1998:97) points out that Job's insistence in search of divine presence is a pointer towards his self-witness of his integrity seeing that no sinful person can stand before God. Thus if God should answer him and allow him to stand in self-defense, he believes he would get his vindication.<sup>71</sup> Job's speech towards God was dramatically changed with the heightening of his quest within the accusation of his three friends and their insistence of his sinfulness. Job moved from a direct address to God to more of an indirect reference to God by way of a painful testimony on how he perceived God is treating him. Thus talking to God intensively changed to talking about God (Crenshaw 1998:98).

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<sup>70</sup> The last speech of Zophar is seemingly lost, some scholars think that it has been assimilated in chapters 25-27, yet, the argument on this shall always remain a hypothesis (see Crenshaw 1998:96-97; Clines 2006 etc.)

<sup>71</sup> This might also be a quest for an indictment upon his life if he is sinful, he declared in his challenge to God that God should write out his charges and he (Job) will wear it out to demonstrate his guilt to all to see (Job 31:35-37).

#### 2.2.4.2 A Poem in Search of Wisdom (28)

Job 28 is generally known as the wisdom hymn or poem.<sup>72</sup> “The poem is often taken as an interlude, allowing readers to assess the intensity of Job’s turmoil and to prepare for the divine speeches” (Crenshaw 1998:113). It is indeed a solemn religiophilosophical quest for the “place” of wisdom. It describes human ingenuity and strength in searching out precious things from the dark recesses of the earth. Thus describing the abundant riches embedded in nature which requires serious discipline and determination to get. Such precious deposits in the land could metaphorically describe the preciousness of wisdom yet; they do not point to its place. The inaccessibility of wisdom poses a great challenge to wisdom theology seeing that the traditional religious rituals were not necessarily in functional places at the time of writing or this search for the place of wisdom. The Temple of the Lord could be an excellent idea in search of wisdom, yet, since it is no longer functional during this literary composition and presumably most of the wisdom literature. The search for the place of wisdom becomes crucial and seemingly impossible. Thus this poem in Job 28 plays a very pivotal role in our discussion of wisdom in light of Elihu’s response to Job and his friends seeing that it points out some similarities of the place of wisdom, namely, “the fear of the Lord” (28:28; cf. 32:8ff) (cf. Crenshaw 1998:101).

#### 2.2.4.3 Job’s Challenge to God (29-31)

Job gives his personal self-critical testimony as his declaration of innocence before God and others in chapters 29-31 (Newsom 2003:183-99; Wharton 1999: 118-39; Magdalene 2007:177-90). These chapters form the climax of Job’s claims of his personal innocence and the injustice of his afflictions. In chapter 29 he flashed back to the former days of his life in which he had good life with God and other people and had high hopes of a better end of life in blessings and satisfaction which are highly jeopardized by his present suffering. He also closely reflected on his current suffering in chapter 30 in which he pathetically bemoan his life of misery and abandonment by many people he knew and loved if not for God too. In this chapter he shows how seriously despised he has been and the silence or hiddenness of God exacerbate his quests

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<sup>72</sup> For more on Job 28 as a poem which describes wisdom’s inaccessibility by human effort see Crenshaw (1998:100), Perdue (1991:242-47), Newsom (2003: 169-82), Brueggemann (2003:296), Wharton (1999:112-17) etc. Fyall (2002:90-91) further describes wisdom as transcendental to chaos forces of nature, it is thus hidden in God who can only reveal it.

and/or threatens its success. He ended up his words by giving a self-critical witness of his life of piety, generosity, fidelity, empathy etc. (chap 31). Towards the end of his words he openly threw his challenge to the Almighty God by saying, “Oh that I had someone to hear me! I sign now my defense- let the Almighty answer me; let my accuser put his indictment in writing” (31:35). Thus Job ended his words in challenge to God with high expectation to see God and/or hear God’s response to his challenges and long awaited verdict.

#### **2.2.4.4 Elihu Speeches (32-37)**

In an uninvited and unexpected dramatic intrusion a young man emerged with words full in his mouth in an attempt to speak to Job and his three friends (chaps. 32-37). Elihu<sup>73</sup> does not intend to answer the questions of Job, but rather to talk to Job and his three friends in wisdom seeing that he waited for their display of wisdom yet he only saw a defeating silence in them and now he came up to give his own address. Thus his addresses serve as his attempt to provide more adequate answer to Job than the three friends had managed to do (Crenshaw 1998:100). After introducing himself in terms of age and experience he made his claims of authority in order to legitimize his attempt to speak sense and wisdom to the elders in question (32:6ff). Nevertheless, Job “ignores” Elihu’s speeches on the supposed premise that he was tired of hearing human words (Crenshaw 1998:100).<sup>74</sup> Whatever might have prompted Job’s silence to Elihu’s speeches is not very clear from the text hence it would continue to be an exercise of human speculation. Crenshaw’s (1998:100) observation on the significance of Elihu’s speeches towards Job as his friends which emphasizes God’s majesty and removed the deity from human criticism is worth noting here.<sup>75</sup> Elihu’s intervention further describes the failure of traditional wisdom (Perdue 1991:249). Fyall (2002:53) shows the significance of the intrusion of Elihu from a legal metaphoric perspective of the book of Job (see also Perdue 1991:248-56; Magdalene 2007:225-

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<sup>73</sup> Elihu is seen as an Israelite according to Crenshaw’s (1998:100) view, whose name means “He is my God”. But Murphy (1996:42) does not share the same presupposition. Elihu’s speeches are seen as later additions to the book of Job. Hoffmann (1996:289-93), Newsom (2003:200-233) and Balentine (2006:511-624) are good examples of scholars who probe the legitimacy of Elihu’s speeches and point their readers to its relevance in relation to the entire book of Job.

<sup>74</sup> To the present writer Crenshaw’s presupposition above may not be necessarily so but rather it could be that Job has been defeated into silence by the theological trajectory of divine wisdom and justice that under-guarded Elihu’s speeches.

<sup>75</sup> The ‘removal’ of God from human criticism is here understood as a theological paradigm in contemplation of God’s unfathomable majesty in light of human infinite understanding,, and correct assessment.

46). It is the intention of this dissertation to critically study the Elihu speeches in light of Job's suffering and see to what extent does it hold significant potential in discussing the meaning of wisdom, the person of wisdom and the character and role of God in human suffering? From which we could see the potential significance of his speeches within the dialectics of irony, ideological-theological versions and subversions as an ironic depiction of being wise in search of wisdom.

#### **2.2.4.5 God's Response to Job (38:1-42:6)**

The long awaited Yahweh whose coming to Job has been interrupted although anticipated through the ingenious speeches of Elihu (32-37) finally appeared in the whirlwind (38:1). The coming of Yahweh is described as an 'answer' to Job (38:1) although Yahweh speaks to Job where highly interrogatory and not a direct dialogic response to the questions that Job has repeatedly posed directly and indirectly to Yahweh. In the speeches of Yahweh (chaps 38-41)<sup>76</sup> Job's suffering situation was not directly addressed<sup>77</sup>, but rather he was taken through a creation tour to consider and contemplate the person of Yahweh through Yahweh's activities of creation in terms of its origination, control and sustenance.<sup>78</sup>

Yahweh displays himself as an actively powerful God who controls chaotic situations and creatures towards a profitable order (40-41). By implication Yahweh is a God that Job cannot actually contend with in terms of what happens to God's creation in God's world. Such owning and controlling the universe is seen as a very serious task that only God can do (Crenshaw 1998:99). The question of having and not having wisdom arises in Yahweh's interrogative approach to Job when Yahweh asks, "Who is this that darkens my counsel with words without knowledge?" (38:2). Job was thus challenged to tell Yahweh what he knows, to declare what he understands and think twice about confronting the justice of Yahweh (40:8). In this dissertation

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<sup>76</sup> Yahweh's first speech to Job is seen as a mocking invitation to Job to think about and tell where he was during the act of creation and he was challenged to "govern nature's forces and to tame those creatures who dwell beyond the regions of human habitation" (Crenshaw 1998:99).

<sup>77</sup> Crenshaw (1998:99) observes that, "The absence of any explicit reference to humans in the entire speech is calculated to teach Job the valuable lesson that the universe can survive without him." This presupposition could make more sense where Job is portrayed as one who prides himself as the custodian of the well being of the universe or even himself. Such conclusion lack definite premise in the book of Job seeing that Job is portrayed as a fragile human being who has high regard to the divine.

<sup>78</sup> Thus Yahweh plays "God the sage" in order to introduce Job to the complexity of nature and history.

we shall critically reflect on Elihu speeches and see how significantly linked they are in the theophany (Yahweh) speeches (38-42:6), and to what extent can we juxtapose the person of God presupposed by both Job and Elihu in preceding chapters of the book to the person and role of Yahweh in the theophanic response to Job?

### **2.2.5 A Historical Approach to the Poetic Dialogues**

The poetic section has taken many scholars further into a critical reading of the book of Job especially in relation to Historical-textual criticism. This presupposes a discussion of the text in light of other similar texts in the ancient Near East in order to highlight its historical reality or a kind of traditional understanding of the genre and various motifs within ancient literature. The historical texture of the poetic framework of Job suggests some later redactions and addition for example in relation to texts like Job 3, 28, 32-37; 38-42:6. These texts have some interesting connections to other texts in the ancient Near Eastern literature in terms of various similar motifs which might point the reader to some historical connections at one point or another, yet, it would always not be more than a hypothesis. Nevertheless, such reflections would help us to understand some recurring motifs as well as diverging ones.

The prose sections, which we discussed above has helped us to place the person of Job as a probable ancient patriarch in his own right; a man of great wealth, wisdom and piety. If the above placement of the setting of the book of Job makes sense as far back as the ancient period even before the patriarchs of Israel then we could further argue that the story of the man Job might have been an old saga which was later composed probably bit by bit or section by section into what was later collected as the finished book of Job, which might have gone through some processes of reduction in order to improve it to the final book of Job that we have now. Thus in Pope's (1965:xxxviii) view, "There is no certainty that the author was an Israelite. Some parts of the book may suggest familiarity with the Prophetic and didactic writings of the Old Testament, but there is nothing very specific or definite". Such familiarity may have been because of the work of a Judean editor or redactor (cf. Newsom 2003:16). That Judean editor might have been Elihu or Ezekiel or Ezra seeing that these people could have a good sense of knowing the story of Job, and in the case of Elihu, he might have personally known the person, Job, because of his engagements with him in the focal sections of this dissertation namely, the Elihu speeches (32-

37). Ezekiel might have known the story of Job from ancient Mesopotamia because of his mention of Job among two other people renowned for their righteousness namely, Noah<sup>79</sup> and Daniel<sup>80</sup> (see Ezek. 14:14,20). If Ezekiel compiled the story of Job into an acceptable Israelite document, then he might have read the prophetic book of Jeremiah too which may afford him the sorrowful nuances that link the books of Job and Jeremiah in terms of huge loss and the inner human suffering as in Job 3 cf. Jeremiah 20 and the book of Lamentations. Ezra might have also played the same role as Ezekiel, as presupposed above, although the dominant genre of the books believed to be compiled by Ezra (1-2 Chron; Ezra-Neh; Mal. etc.) are different from the book of Job, and they are mainly the tales of restoration back to Jerusalem and the processes of identity negotiations while in the old and new place they call home after the exile. With the above hypothesis, we can challenge the traditional, rabbinic proposition of Mosaic authorship of Job and rather settle with the different authorial proposal at the various levels of the book. Furthermore, we believe that whomever the author and editors might be, they must be highly skilled in ancient Near Eastern wisdom literature, and the editor of the finished book of Job must have been very much rooted in the Yahwistic tradition of Israel as attested to by other scholars.<sup>81</sup> For example, Pope (1973: xxxvii) sees the author/editor of Job as a religious seeker of wisdom when he says, “He must have been a profoundly religious person, sensitive to the tragic predicament of humanity, especially to individual suffering”. In order to emphasise the fact that he must have been one with vast knowledge and an ardent reader of ancient Near Eastern documents he adds that “The seeker of wisdom in the ancient world, even as today, tended to ignore geographical boundaries and political barriers” (Pope 1973: xxxviii). Habel (1985:42) agrees with Pope in the above quotation, in regards to the nature of the author/editor of Job as a wisdom seeker with international quest and exposure when he says, “Consistent with the orientation of traditional wisdom thinking, the author of Job has created an artistic work with

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<sup>79</sup> For Noah’s righteousness see Gen. 6ff.

<sup>80</sup> This is not the prophet “Daniel” which appears in one of the exilic histories of Israel but rather is “Dan’el” one of the ancient Canaanite kings in Ugaritic documents (cf. Pope 1973, Habel 1985).

<sup>81</sup> “The author of the Dialogue, as well as the later editors, and redactors, may have made considerable changes in the ancient folk tale of Job but most have retained the chief features of a story already known” (Pope 1973:xxxv).

universal dimensions rather than a text directed at a particular historical situation or theological issue alive in Israel at a given moment.”<sup>82</sup>

The foregoing discourse on the problems of the book of Job does not clear away all there is that makes the book a complex and problematic piece of ancient literature. Nevertheless, it has reflected on those significant questions and possibly tried to highlight some slight changes in the prevailing views and argument so far. Thus it is agreeable that, “The book of Job in its present form can hardly be regarded as a consistent and unified composition by a single author. Nevertheless, there is a considerable degree of organic unity despite the incongruities. Even the Elihu speeches, though probably interpolated, are blended into the whole with such skill that some scholars have seen Elihu as a reflex of the author of the dialogue”<sup>83</sup> (Pope 1973 :xxviii).

Hartley (1988:15) like many other scholars agrees with the anonymity of the authorship of the book of Job, yet, like Pope (1965:xxxvii) above, he also points out that the author must have been one of the ancient wise men who might have written didactic books like Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Although wisdom writers did not concern themselves with cultic worship and redemption history,<sup>84</sup> their emphasis on the significance of the fear of God as the beginning of wisdom, knowledge and understanding is commendable. So also their emphasis on monotheistic religious beliefs and practices in daily living which could have been the prompting thoughts toward high ethical values that books like Job and Proverbs present to the reader. In response to the probable reason for the versatile nature of the literary and geographic texture of wisdom texts like Job, Hartley (1988:15) suggests that the wisdom writers who have contributed in its composition might have had some official contacts with neighbouring countries, cultural thoughts, and legends. Thus the author of Job is regarded as a person of great learning and linguistic skills which could be seen in his use of language that cuts across almost every genre

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<sup>82</sup> As to Habel’s seeming conclusive statement in regards to the purpose of the book of Job, it may be agreed that the original story of Job as it was in the oral tradition may not have any definite purpose and/or audience in mind but as time goes by it has been written probably to document it alongside other existing fragmentary stories in the ancient Near East. But when it was finally adopted into the Hebrew Biblical canon, one cannot assume it was not for any purpose or in response to any issues of life and/or relationship of human beings with God as individuals and as a group or nation in the case of Israel. In this dissertation my presuppositions points to the post-exilic composition of the book of Job which could allow the hypothetical suggestion that the Babylonian exile has been the main or one of the main reasons that prompted the preservation and inclusion of the book of Job in to Hebrew Bible.

<sup>83</sup> On the possibility of seeing Elihu as part of Job authorship see the discussion above.

<sup>84</sup> Except a few in the Psalter who wrote the “wisdom Psalms”.

and linguistic texture like irony, humour, sarcasm, rhetorical probation, polemical speech, etc. (cf. Hartley 1988:16).

The author is said to have had a keen interest in cosmological observation, scientific thinking, and discourse amongst other things (Hartley 1988:16). He also must have had an interest in foreign cultures, legends, and antiquity (historical backgrounds/myths) thus the patriarchal parallels that the prose prologue and epilogue of Job contain are too specific to be accidental. In regards to his spiritual interest and insight, the author of Job is described by Hartley (1988:17) to be someone who knows Yahweh. Thus he could be numbered along the great wise people of ancient Israel.

Giving the unending nature of the dating and authorial specificity of Job, Habel (1985:42) settles with the task of pointing out the universal appeal of the book of Job which he discusses as emanating from an ancient patriarchal context with a considerable significance to stimulating thoughts on human reality and constant struggles. The evidence that he considered pointing his arguments to the postexilic era in terms of its composition and most probably its reduction into the final form, yet, his emphasis on its timeless and boundless potential is significant to our quest for continuous discourse of Job in search of wisdom.

### **2.2.6 A Theological Approach to the Poetic Dialogues**

Considering the book of Job as a whole, especially in regards to the dialogue sections which highly characterize a significant portion of the poetic sections, we would see how gradually the portrait of Job changes from a patient-pious person who accepts his fate without question to a seriously impatient-zealot who cannot wait to confront God about his integrity in light of his sufferings. Thus theological reflections on God's role in human suffering and the motif of "innocent suffering" take precedence in this section.

The interpreters of the medieval periods like the Jewish Rabbis, early church fathers and other Christian interpreters for example Gregory, Maimonides, Aquinas and Calvin among those discussed above in the history of literary interpretations, they have also theological concerns as they engaged with the text with the aim of providing some theological thoughts for the benefit of their congregations and listeners/readers. Among other things, they grappled with the questions of the nature of God in terms of God's power, providence and justice in relation to human beings

like Job. Coming down to the 20<sup>th</sup> and mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, one would see that there are varying points of interests in approaching the theology of the book of Job in terms of his person as well as his place in the whole creation of God. Gerhard von Rad (1972:206-25) analyses the book of Job under the rubrics of trust and attach. This helps the reader to see the places of both God and Job in the text as well as the interface of their interaction in terms of knowledge, wisdom and creation. Job, who appears to be too much occupied by his calamity and search for reasonable answers from the Almighty, is finally led to a place of encounter with God which shows the limitation of his knowledge (von Rad 1972:223-26).

Von Rad (1972:211) mentions Elihu's speeches only in passing; he did not expound their significance in terms of theological-philosophical questions of wisdom, justice, the role God in human suffering that we take seriously in this dissertation. Yet, he further admits that the questions of theodicy in terms of fairness and injustice between God and Job within the dialogues confronts every reader of Job (1972:215) yet, the discussion towards that was scanty and vague towards a close consideration of the problem. The hermeneutical approach intended by the poet to reading Job is very elusive (1972:217), yet the notion of polemical discourse and socio-religious tensions are always sustained within the discourses which now and then invite readers to employ 'other' methodologies of unlocking the problems embedded in the book of Job. Von Rad (1972:221) points out that what concerns Job mostly above other things was "the credibility of God". This is a usual concern that poses theodicy challenge within the theological-philosophical search for the person of God and the actual meaning of life and the role of God in such a life. The book of Job helps us to bring these two important subjects into close interaction with one another with the hope that we would closely consider through Job's life and words the significance of suffering to specific human experiences, and the place of God in such experiences. Job is said to experience many things about God in his experience like the "anger of God" (Von Rad 1972: 221), the incomprehensibility of God, the power and mystery of God in the divine speeches of Job 38-42:6. Thus leaving Job more perplexed than before, in serious need of a cogent explanation of the reason for his suffering.

In his notable work *Irony in the Old Testament*, Edwin Good (1990) interprets the book of Job as a reconciled irony. This leads us into seeing the possible injustices done within the book based

on the depictions of the various characters that make up the book in that Job has been afflicted with calamity at the beginning of the book which seriously embittered him and constituted the contestations of integrity throughout the book. Even though there was no exact resolve to all the tensions that the afflictions of Job raised in and around the book, Good points out that there is an ironic reconciliation with both the human and the supernatural characters concerned.

David Penchansky (1990) reads the book of Job in search of the tensions between known portraits of Job, God and Job's friends in the book of Job as legendary story and the emerging continuous dissentious nature of the whole story especially as he tries to uncover the ideological undertones of the book in light of contemporary literary theories that seek to probe a text beyond the conventional by means of suspicion and textual ideological criticism. Thus in Penchansky's readings, the various conflicting characters of Job and God as depicted in the text are closely considered.

James Crenshaw's (1998:89-115) discussion on Job portrayed Job as one who was desperately in search of divine presence through which he may make sense of what he was going through. Job's quest ended up without satisfactory resolution (Crenshaw 1998:108-109) yet, Job was led by the speeches of God to the point of understanding the fact that the world does not operate based on traditional or rational principles. In contrast to the portraits of Job the searcher for answers and meaning, Roland Murphy (1995:33-48) sees Job as the steadfast. Despite all he had to go through he remained steadfast to his fidelity to God without succumbing to doing what was presumably expected by the Satan as a result of Job suffering, namely to curse God to God's face. Claus Westermann (1995: 105-107) engages with the book of Job in his search for the meaning of wisdom in the wisdom literary texts, especially within the Hebrew Biblical canon. Similarly, Leo G. Perdue (1994:123-192) closely read the book of Job in search of wisdom given priority to discussing various motifs within Joban literature that either anticipate or engender the quest for God's justice unto Job and how Job could possibly achieve that. Perdue (2008:148-51; cf. Perdue 1991) also highlights some of the discernible theological themes in the book of Job taking the creation and anthropological metaphors very seriously, which serve as his point of departure to discuss the person and power of God towards Job and beyond.

Susan Schreiner (1994) gives interactive commentaries on Gregory's *Moralia*, Maimonides's *Guide*, Aquinas's *Expositio*, and Calvin's *Sermons on the book of Job*. Her discourse is a commentary on commentaries and sermons from various contexts into different contexts as well. But what remains as a serious contextual connective within the above-mentioned materials is the situation and/or contextual experiences of people before and at the time of their closer reflections on the book of Job. The aforementioned commentators and medieval interpreters of Job all experienced suffering, rejection, alienation and exile in one way or another. Thus the person of Job in the book of Job stands out as an example or a symbolic personality in relation to their various contextual experiences. This experiential connection with Job as told in the book of Job make some of them have a different understanding and interpretations of suffering, the providence of God, nature, history and human experience and the problematic of knowledge and its limitation of transcendental phenomena which remains a religiophilosophical challenge to Enlightenment and Postmodern philosophers.

Schreiner observes that the themes of the reality of human suffering, the providence of God and the incomprehensibility of divine justice were crucial to ancient interpreters like Gregory, Maimonides, Aquinas and Calvin. Calvin further reflected on the depth of divine justice which led him to the perception of double justice. The person of Job remained so difficult to explain for Calvin and other medieval interpreters, so also the question of divine justice. Calvin perceived the idea of double justice in Job, which could be understood as justice to Job and justice on Job. Nevertheless, justice on Job was much clearer than the latter. The works of God in nature and history actually helped Calvin to sustain the tension between divine hiddenness and visibility throughout his work (Schreiner 1994:120). Amongst the three friends of Job, the young man Elihu is seen positively in the book of Job by Calvin. In the sermons on Elihu's speeches, we also find some of Calvin's "strongest statements about God's hiddenness and the inscrutability of divine providence" (Schreiner 1994:134).

Wolfers's *Deep Things Out of Darkness* (1995) approaches the book of Job from a more critical point of view in that he gives close attention to the contestations of Job and raises identity questions in light of the covenantal history and theology of Israel. Thus seeing Job in a sense as the nation of Israel in what he suffered and why, although such analysis becomes problematic when we read the book of Job in relation to the Deuteronomic order of deeds and consequences.

The book of Job critiques such traditional notions and invites Job readers to read such conventional ideologies with some flexibility.

By way of a reader response, contextual understanding and application of the theology of Job, Ceresko (1999) read the book of Job from a liberation spiritual perspective which seeks to proffer liberation philosophy and theology from wisdom perspective. Although in his discussion of some key texts in Job he did not give attention to the speeches of Elihu towards such enterprise (Ceresko 1999:76-90). Similarly, Gutiérrez (2005) reads the book of Job from liberationist perspective, thus juxtaposing the disturbing questions of theodicy and human suffering. He turns the book of Job into a tool that stimulates new speech formation in the context of suffering in regards to God's goodness, justice and love. He carefully navigates the complexities of the book of Job up to the possibility of its significance as an advocacy and revolutionary action book.

Hoffman (1996:9) combines the literary, theological and linguistic study of Job. He analyses the theoretical presuppositions underlying the book of Job (1996:13ff) and the discernible literary genres (1996:31-38) in relation to Aristotelian philosophy. He also reflects on the place of Job's poetics in relation to other ancient Near Eastern literature which helps one to closely read and understand the book of Job in its ancient context. The difficulty of the language of Job and the ambiguous quest on the justice of God towards Job also characterise his discussion of the text.

Van Wolde's (1997) *Mr and Mrs Job* is a feminist attempt to reconsider the depiction and role of Job's wife in the book of Job which is seemingly not considered significant by the author (editors) of the text and probably many readers in history. Thus van Wolde advocates another second critical look on Job's wife in sympathy and appreciation instead of being pushed and left at the margin.

Newsom (2003) interprets the book of Job from a literary critical point of view. She employs Mikhail Bakhtin's literary framework of polyphony in which he sees dialogue as a cardinal point of departure in engaging the truth (s) in the book of Job. The truth of Job and in Job does not lie

on our fixed reality but rather it permeates all voiced and imagined realities in the book of Job. Newsom critically analyses the presence and significance of voices in the book of Job in terms of the contestations for moral imagination. Job is portrayed as a person who does not accept things as they are but is always on the move to speak with passion within his struggle with the pathetic reality of life that confronts him which he too needs to confront in his words. Among the speaking characters in the book of Job, everyone has a certain claim of truth, yet, there is no privileged voice as *the* voice of truth *per se*. This could be intended not to resolve or to intensify but rather to sustain the tensions and quests that the book stimulates. Elihu is portrayed as a “dissatisfied reader” (Newsom 2003:200ff) of Job’s experiences and the truth he seeks, and the one he speaks. He tried his best in speaking his mind as we shall see more elaborately in our chapters 3 and 4 below, yet, he could not provide the ultimate answer to Job’s questions.

Among other modern critical scholars, there have been critical engagements to the literary, theological and philosophical challenge of the multidimensional nature of the book of Job in its final form. There are also other various approaches to Job interpretation in modern and postmodern interpretations in monographs and commentaries (Vanhoozer 2005:385 cf. Habel 1985; Harley 1988; Gutiérrez 1987; Good 1990, Wolfers 1995 and Clines 1989; 2006, Balentine 2006).<sup>85</sup>

### 2.3 The Reception of the Book of Job<sup>86</sup>

The reception of Job concerns itself with how significant the book of Job has been to various readers in different contexts and time. In this attempt, the literary and theological texture of the

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<sup>85</sup> Murphy (1996:203) observes that Cline’s deconstruction of Job was an attempt to enforce a “reader response” approach in reading the book of Job even beyond what could be seen explicitly in the book. Thus Clines places a lot of emphasis on suspicion in trying to discuss the plight of the poor among the rich in an ancient patriarchal society. In Murphy’s (1996:203) criticism of Clines’ reading he points out that, “Some of his inferences are arguments from silence; Job did not say something, but those moments of silence are pregnant with Clines’s implications. This approach is questionable; one cannot expect the Job author to have pronounced on all social questions”. A similar approach could be seen in E. M. Good’s (1990) interpretation of the book which denies it any definite meaning but rather leaves it as an open text for ‘reader response approach’ thus setting the stage well to play with the text. Cf. Dell’s (1991) “skeptical” approach to the book of Job which we can also see as critical ideological reading of the text.

<sup>86</sup> For space constraints we shall not go into much detail regarding the reception history of the book of Job but rather we shall briefly highlight the Judeo-Christian reception with emphasis for the place of Elihu. But we shall indicate possible materials for further studies for extended information on the entire history.

book takes precedence in describing how that book has been perceived and received either as a normative text that shows how human beings should relate to God or as a didactic text which lends itself to wisdom instruction in a very complex universe. Thus we would try to synchronize some literary and theological emphases in order to see the shifts that the book of Job might have taken from being an ancient literary text into its value to faith communities, and to the artistic world of English literature for instance, in terms of fiction writing and philosophical reflections on human life in relation to suffering.

In regards to the Judeo-Christian reception, the *Targum of Job* from the Qumran findings (11QtgJob) provides the oldest version of Job in the collection of writings this formulate the literature of Judaism (Gertz et al. 2012:566). The Septuagint version (LXX) which was developed in the second/first century BCE, “is approximately one-sixth shorter overall than the Hebrew book of Job” (Gertz et al. 2012:566). This version provides some additions about the future personal life of Job and his children (sons). It portrays his sons as Kings and says that Job would have the share of rising from the dead. The long lament of loss of children and fortune of Job’s wife is also provided. The resurrection orientation of Job is also portrayed in the *Testament of Job* which also highlights the Christian theological reception of the motif of resurrection in Job 19:25-27. This passage led to some Christological extrapolations into the New Testament theology (Gertz et al. 2012:566). The books of James and Tobit mention “the patience of Job (James 5:11; Tob. 2:15). In 1 Cor. 3:19, Paul appeals to Job 5:13, in Phil. 1:19 to Job 13:16 and in Rom. 11:35 to Job 41:3 (NRSV 41:11)” (Gertz et al. 2012:566).<sup>87</sup>

In the medieval period, there was a shift from simple didactic exegesis to more philosophical and religious engagement with Job in terms of the search for the meaning of life and the mystery of the divine. Seow (2013: 126) highlights two main reasons why the book of Job got a lot of interest from ancient interpreters. These include the fact the Jews were scattered in the world and subjected to suffering under Muslim and Christian contexts, and because of the dialogical nature of the book which holds great potential for theological discussions. The book’s existential

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<sup>87</sup> Thus Job continues to be a great symbol of life in suffering which permeates Western arts from the early Church period to numerous contemporary depictions (Gertz et al. 2012:567).

potential and its universal appeal can also be considered as good reasons that invited more scientific methods in studying it.<sup>88</sup>

In regards to the Elihu speeches which are the main focus of our search even in the reception history, we found some references to the presence of Elihu and some little parts of his speeches from our exploration of the work of Seow (2013:114, 116, 128, 133, 134-135, 141, 143-144, 153, 156, 164, 174, 178, 186, 205, 209). This helps us to see the important recognition of the presence of Elihu as part of the book of Job (at least in terms of the short references to him). Nevertheless, that does not mean that the Elihu speeches were never considered as a problem in terms of the so-called later additions to the book of Job (cf. 2.2.2.4 above). Even though Elihu is somehow recognised by especially pre-enlightenment readers and interpreters of the book of Job his actual function was not closely considered especially within the dialectic of irony and wisdom and the possibility of his situation as a critical theological voice that could be understood interactively between the existing and interfacing traditions of Israel. Thus this dissertation shall take this challenge as a point of departure for further elaboration.

## 2.4 Summary

In the above exploration of the book of Job we have seen its structure by taking its literary classifications namely, the prose sections and the poetic dialogues as a point of departure. This has helped us to see how the various parts of the book fit into a coherent whole even though each of the characters has his (her) own position as provided by the author (editor) of the book. Nevertheless, listening to what each of the voices has to say makes the book much richer and wide open for a variety of understandings and interpretations.

The various trends of interpreting the book of Job are also indicated in terms of the history of interpretation of the book. This has helped us to survey various scholarly observations concerning the history of the composition of the book which can also be viewed as the process of its Hebrew reception as part of the canon. Many scholars (cf. Pope, Habel and Hartley) have helped us to reflect more on the historical setting that might have given rise to the story of Job as

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<sup>88</sup> For more extended exploration on the reception history of the book of Job beyond the Judeo-Christian contexts into the fields of arts in terms of literature, music, and visual arts see Seow (2013: 110-248).

well as the composition of the book that bears his name. From our explorations, we found out that there is no fix time period for the reconstruction of the events that make up the book of Job. Nevertheless, the survey of the history of Israel among other nations and regions of life in the ancient Near Eastern contexts have led us to some assumptions as to the possible time that such a literary piece was collected and put into the final form in which we have it now. The discussion for the historicity of the book of Job would be further expanded in our chapter 5 on the social and cultural textures of the Elihu speeches below. This would give us some critical reasons why the choice for the late composition of the book of Job as a coherent whole has been suggested and the possible traditional transformations from social, political and religious spheres of life that necessitated it.

The historical and theological critical interpretations of the book of Job have led us to see the various areas of approach and emphases in the book. Thus it is agreeable that the canonised or final form of the book of Job has been variously interpreted by different Jewish and Christian interpreters as well as many different modern and postmodern readers.<sup>89</sup> This could have happened because of the all-encompassing nature of its genre as “*sui generis*” which has serious appeal to different readers at different times (Habel 1985:41).

In light of the above survey of the book of Job and the scholarship that engaged with it at various time and methods we found the works of Pope (1973), Habel (1985), Good (1990), Clines (2006), Newsom (2003), and Balentine (2006) very inspiring and stimulating for their critical interest and insight in bringing new emphases or angles of interpretations to the book of Job. For example, Pope (1973), Habel (1985), Hartley (1988), and Balentine (2006) have helped us to have a taste of the historical setting, literary and theological nature of the book of Job. Newsom (2003) and Clines (2006) help us to be critical of the voices in the book and to try to listen to them together towards a harmonious effect, thus not neglecting anyone to the advantage of the other. Amongst all these scholars Good (1990) has done well to stimulate our mind toward the presence of irony in the book of Job. Thus his reading of Job in terms of a reconciled irony challenged us to have a second look at the whole approach but in this work with more emphasis

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<sup>89</sup> Although we did not give a systematic approach to the wide history of interpretation of the book due to the limitations of time and space. Nevertheless, we highlighted some discernible examples that could give us the taste of the various stages and eras of Job interpretations.

on the Elihu speeches than he gives. Thus we shall not only see irony from a dramatic (comic) point of view but rather we shall argue that it is an intentional and meaningful literary device that helps one to engage meaningfully with the book of Job among others. Furthermore, it helps us to see the emergence of various research trends around the book of Job which mirror other numerous trends beyond the scope of this dissertation, thus also afford one the insight on the significance of the socio-rhetorical methodology that this dissertation aims at using in reading the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37. Thus the next chapter would focus on an intratextual (inner texture) reading of the Elihu speeches.

## Chapter 3: Intratextual Texture of Job 32-37

### 3.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, we have explored components of the book of Job and several scholarly works on the book of Job under the rubrics of literary, historical and theological interpretations. Yet, the act of an in-depth study of the texts in regards to its multiple textures of the text (Robbins 1996a:2-4) is seriously neglected. It is the aim of this study to respond to the need of such negligence especially by Old Testament interpreters of wisdom texts by way of trying to apply Robbins' (1996a) ideas as useful keys to engaging the book of Job with serious significance in search of wisdom. It is the presupposition of this study that the Elihu speeches in Job were not just a disruptive intrusion (Gordis 1965: 104) from a hotheaded and brash young fool (Habel 1985:447) who had almost nothing to contribute to the book of Job. A close analysis of the Elihu speeches would lead us to his concerns and contributions to the book of Job.<sup>90</sup>

### 3.2 Explaining Intratexture

As briefly mentioned elsewhere in this dissertation (1.6) Robbins (1996a:7) sees the term “intratexture” as “innertexture” which he further describes as the act of “getting inside the text” (cf. Jonker & Lawrie 2005: 59). The intratexture of a text focuses primarily on a text in terms of identifying the nature of communication in the text. In Robbins'(1996a:7) words, “The inner texture of a text resides in features of the language of the text itself, like the repetition of words and use of dialogue between two persons to communicate the information.” In other words, the attention of the interpreter in regards to the inner texture or intratexture of a text dwells on the verbal texture of the text, thus trying to identify how things are said, or communicated in the text. This exercise is vital for the identification of the nature and structure of the text before venturing into the various layers of interpretation of the text. Robbins (1996a:7) states the purpose of such analysis prior to the actual interpretation of the text as a rewarding exercise when he said, “The

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<sup>90</sup> Even though we shall demonstrate that Elihu has a different major concern from Job's situation and the interpretive responses of his three friends, it would still be pointed out that his socio-religious worldviews were very similar and/or the same to Job and his friends in terms of the doctrine of retribution and the problem of theodicy. These issues would actually be discussed in chapters four, five and six of this dissertation.

goal of this analysis is to gain an intimate knowledge of words, word patterns, voices, structures, devices, and modes in the text, which are the context for meaning and meaning effects that an interpreter analyzes with the other readings of the text.”

### **3.3 The Rhetorical Textures of Job 32-37**

In our study of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job one of the important issues, we wish to address is the significance of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. Job’s continuous quest for finding a satisfactory answer concerning his suffering became almost impossible, so he heightened his quest with his declaration of innocence (chapter 31) which contains serious oath against his life and reputation if he was not an upright person. The ground has already been prepared to hear what God has to say in response to Job’s “challenging” oaths (31:35-37). Suddenly, Elihu came into the picture in response to Job and his friends (chapters 32-37). Our concern at this point is the kind of speech that Elihu presented to Job and his friends. We would like to closely analyse the rhetorical textures within the speeches according to Robbins’ (1996a) socio-rhetorical guide to interpretation.<sup>91</sup>

#### **3.3.1 Repetitive Texture**

The repetitive texture of a text studies the several and perhaps different occurrences of a word or group of words in a selected unit (Robbins 1996a: 8). This texture of the texts focuses the attention of the reader on the multiplicity of ideas inside the texts usually in terms of “grammatical-syntactical, verbal, or topical phenomena” (Robbins 1996a: 8). Having described the meaning of the repetitive texture or pattern of a given text, it is also in order to briefly highlight its function<sup>92</sup> before we move to giving examples from Job 32-37. Robbins (1996a: 8)

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<sup>91</sup> Without getting into in depth details of linguistic analysis due to space constraints, we would begin from some of the points that we can observe and/or glean from the speeches altogether and after each collection of samples of rhetorical elements we shall provide some quick discussion about the grammatical relationships that exists between them especially in terms of similarities and differences without any attempts to provide interpretive functions that would yield the meanings of the various textual rhetoric.

<sup>92</sup> There is no discussion in this work on the various types of repetitive forms that could be found in a given text, because as we go through the text we may find different kinds of repetitive styles that may not fit the selected presupposition if we are to settle on certain types. Nevertheless, for more discussion on possible types of repetitive form in a text based on a comparative discussion that is more of an intertextual texture/pattern see Robbins (1984:53-74).

further helps us to understand that the repetitive texture of texts does not primarily provide the “inner meanings” or reveals precise boundaries of a text within given textual unit but rather it allows the reader to notice the “overall rhetorical movements in the discourse.” It performs the metaphorical function of a window which lets the light to shine through the text as the reader studies it for the purpose of initial understanding of what is possibly going on inside the text. In the case of the Elihu speeches in Job 32-37, we would examine the repetitive pattern of the text to possibly know what the dominant discourse pattern, topics, and audiences of the speeches is. There are grammatical repetitions in terms of many nouns<sup>93</sup> pronouns,<sup>94</sup> and verbs.<sup>95,96</sup>

In the use of names as proper nouns or phrasal and substantive nouns, Elihu is depicted as the main speaker, Job and his friends as the main audience, God and “an angel” are being referred to or described, and all substantive nouns are descriptive or quality of peoples’ lives in one way or another. In this qualitative life description, different symmetries appear cutting across socio-religious contexts of ethics and class.<sup>97</sup>

The above collections of nouns and verbs constitute the governing characteristics of the speeches of Elihu. They introduce divine and human persons as the major occupants of the mind of the

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<sup>93</sup> Cf. Tables 1 , 5 and 6 on addendum.

<sup>94</sup> There are instances where pronouns are used to substitute proper nouns of human persons and deity. There are first person singular pronouns (אֲנִי = “I” cf. 32:6 [3 x], 7,10 [4 x], 11 [2 x], 12, 14, 16, 17 [3 x], 18, 19, 20 [4 x], 21 [2 x], 22 [2 x]; 33:1, 2, 6 [2 x], 8, 9 [2 x], 12, 24, 27 [3 x], 31, 32,33; 34:5,6 [2 x], 16, 31 [2 x], 32 [3 x], 33; 35:3, 4; 36:1 [2 x], 3 [2 x], 37:20); second person singular pronouns ( “you” cf. 33:6, 7 [2 x], 8, 32 [2 x]; 34:16, 17, 33 [2 x]; 35:2, 6, 7 [2 x], 14 [3 x]; 36:2, 4, 17 [2 x], 19, 21; 37:15, 16, 17, 18 ); second person plural pronouns ( “you” cf. 32:6 [2 x], 12 [2 x]; 34:2 [2 x], 10, ); third person singular pronouns ( “he” cf. 33:11[2 x], 13, 16, 25, 26 [2 x], 28, 30; 34:8, 9,11, 21, 23 [2 x], 24, 25 [2 x], 26, 29, 37 [2 x]; 35:7, 12, 15; 36:5 [2 x], 6 [2 x], 7 [ 2 x], 9, 10, 15 [ 2 x], 16, 27, 30 [2 x], 31, 32; 37:4 [2 x], 5, 7, 11, 13, 20 [2 x], 22, 23, 24); The third person masculine singular is embedded within the main/governing verb of the sentence for example, אָשֵׁט “he puts/places.” Third person plural pronouns (they); first person reflexive pronoun (me); first person possessive (my); second person possessive pronoun (“your) third person possessive singular (his); third person possessive plural (their). Elihu speaks more in the singular not plural thus if we are to follow Clines’ (2006: 705) hypothesis that the use of pronouns guides us to the actual target of the direct addressee (through which he made his case on the demarcation of 32:14 and 15) more strictly, then we would agree that Elihu addressed Job directly much more than he did Job’s three friends. There is no use of the first person plural pronouns “we” throughout the Elihu speeches.

<sup>95</sup> For the display of the verb examples see Table 8 on addendum.

<sup>96</sup> The various grammatical/syntactical data of this sections cannot be displayed on a table at this stage because of the constraints of space but the tables in addenda contain such displayed examples as they occur in the verses through our the Elihu speeches.

<sup>97</sup> We shall return to these issues in our chapter 6

narrator and Elihu as the main speaker. The different verbs here comprise different voices, patterns of usage and roots.<sup>98</sup>

### 3.3.2 Progressive Texture and Pattern

This texture as the name implies is concerned about the progression or sequences of words and phrases throughout the unit (Robbins 1996:9). It gives attention to alternating words in terms of opening and closing the sentences<sup>99</sup> or giving reason (s) for action or introducing a new phase of the discourse with the use of words like; “now,” “then,” “you”, “I,” “because,” “therefore” etc.<sup>100</sup> progressive texture can be discerned through the observation of the use of repetition (Robbins 1996:10) thereby helping the reader to know how the discourse within the text is heightened. By gradual progressions, it helps one to locate the words or thoughts that serve as stepping stones of the principal argument as well as providing textual markers for differentiation of textual units or demarcation exercise of a giving text(s). The following example identifies the different progressive markers of the Elihu speeches with Job and his three friends.

The various phrases and particles used in the Elihu speeches which are replete with introductory words which introduce the main speaker namely Elihu. They show the progress of his speech from its gestation in his mind when he speaks his mind in regards to what he wishes to do. Examples of these particles and phrases are those translated as “because,” “and,” “but,” “Out of,” “Behold”, “Look”, “See”, “When,” “Now” etc.<sup>101</sup>

The progressive texture and pattern of Elihu’s opening speech as his apology (32:6b-10)<sup>102</sup> for his coming critical response is mostly characterized by the use of repetitive first person

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<sup>98</sup> We cannot go into any much details here because of the lack of space but we shall further highlight some of the functions of the grammar in our following sections.

<sup>99</sup> For more on the different forms and series of progression in light of textual grammatical repetition in a given text see Robbins 1984:19-52.

<sup>100</sup> For more on the progressive texture see the transition markers on Table 4 on the addendum.

<sup>101</sup> For more on how they occur in the texts see Table 6.

<sup>102</sup> Most of our textual division here follows Habel (1985) although there may be some slight variations where necessary. This does not mean that Habel’s division was perfect but rather because it closely provides some useful patterns that would help our understanding of the flow of the speeches as well as its socio-rhetorical value in terms of the various sections within it. This division would be useful to guide our further discussion into the next chapter for intertextuality. Thus the arranged flow of the text would be possibly maintained towards a better understanding of Elihu’s speeches to Job and his friends.

pronouns “I”, first person possessive pronoun “my” and particles of reason and purpose “that is why” (32:6bf).

The  $\text{לָכֵן}$  (Therefore [32:10]) in Elihu’s apology here does not indicate a resolute point within the trend of the argument so far, but rather it stands more as a progressive marker <sup>103</sup> and a trigger for more decisive speech which adds a certain emotional crescendo to the discourse so far. It marks the beginning of Elihu’s use of imperatives within his reflexive focus in order to strengthen the texture of his arguments in response to Job’s problem of suffering.

In his “need to answer” (32:11-16) verses 10-13 like verses 6b-9 are characterized by Job’s use of first person personal pronoun “I” in order to explain his needs to his audience for proper engagement towards a desirable end (cf. Magdalene 2007:225ff; Clines 2006:705) . According to Clines’(2006:705 ) observation, the verses 15-22 present what could be the soliloquy of Elihu which suspends the flow of the arguments for some time in order to allow access to the thought pattern of Elihu to see its progress in terms of inner arrangement of what to say and probably to whom to say. From his inmost being, Elihu felt a certain compulsion to answer (32:17-22). He turns the moment into one of soliloquy about his intention to intervene and how he intends to do so (vss. 17-22). His focus turns within himself in order to examine and voice out his intention. This is seen in his use of the first-person singular pronouns “I”, “my” and “me.”

In 33:1-7 Elihu issues a summons to testify in court before his hearing. He directs his attention to Job in order to convince him to listen to his words (33:1-4). As in 32: 6b-9 above he further explains what he wishes to say and how he got it and would say it. His self-witness in terms of responsible speech from an inner motivation is clear in his words like, “my words,” “I say,” “I know” (cf. Cf. Habel (1985:455). Furthermore, in the presentation of his case, Elihu began his charge towards Job by stating facts from what Job has previously said which he has heard (33:8-11).<sup>104</sup>

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<sup>103</sup> See Table 5? For transitive markers

<sup>104</sup> We shall not go any further into discussing the contents of Elihu’s quotations of Job and his friends’ speeches and how he countered each one of them with a serious response here, but rather as we go further in this dissertation in the section on argumentative texture and pattern we shall closely consider that.

In the refutation of Job's claims (33:12-28) Elihu progresses in the court case by drawing attention to Job by the use of  $\text{וְהִנֵּה}$  as "Behold" or "Look" (vs.12)<sup>105</sup> which brings the reader to one of the first climaxes of Elihu's counter arguments between Job and his friends' points. Verses 12-18 show Elihu's first cogent argument in defence of God's active presence and sovereignty, to which we shall return in following chapters of this dissertation. Elihu presents some progressive analogies (vss. 15-30) in defence of God's presence and actions in personal human life for the good of the person even in contexts of suffering. The use of "for" (vs. 14), "so that" (20), and "yet" (23)<sup>106</sup> further strengthens the flow of this arguments so far.

Elihu gives his summation and summons in 33:29-33 in which Job is directly and specifically addressed once again in order to have him "pay attention" and "listen" to Elihu's discourse so far. Verse 31 forms an *inclusio* with verse 1 in that Job is directly and specifically called to listen to Elihu's speech. There is another *inclusio* in Elihu's charge to Job to "answer"<sup>107</sup> with anything (cf. vss. 5 and 32 cf. Dhorme (1967:507) Gordis (1978:364) Habel 1985:457).

Elihu presents a summons to Judge in 34:1-3 in which the word "Then" to explain the progression of the discourse of Elihu from previous encounters (34:1a cf. Gordis 1978:382). As he usually does at the beginning of the previous chapters, he calls for the attention of Job and his friends addressing them as  $\text{הַחֲכָמִים}$  "you wise men" and  $\text{אֲנֹכְיָם}$  "you men of learning"<sup>108</sup> (vs. 2) in a sort of a sarcastic way of speaking. He gave them imperative to "listen" to him using the word "for"<sup>109</sup> in order to provide the reason why they really need to make use of their ears to listen.

In the presentation of the case against Job (34:4-9) Elihu then invites them into a sort of a committee meeting in which they could all together look into the issue at them with discernment both in speaking and listening (vs. 4). Elihu draws his line of argument from Job's previous speech in order to see how he could actually respond to what he might have perceived as a reckless way of thinking and speaking (vss.5-9).

<sup>105</sup> Cf. Gordis (1978:362) "Behold", Dhorme (1967:491) "Now", Habel (1985:455) "well". All this provides some good sense as to the right meaning and function of the interjection unlike the NIV which erroneously translated it as a conjunction "But".

<sup>106</sup> Following the NIV.

<sup>107</sup> The root word  $\text{שׁוּב}$  "to return" words is used in both verses.

<sup>108</sup> "men of knowledge" Gordis (1978:382), Habel (1985:472) "you judges;" The present writer agrees more with Gordis here seeing that there is actually no word for judges supplied by the MT thus it was only implied by Habel.

<sup>109</sup> The meaning of  $\text{כִּי}$  in verse 3

Elihu presents his defense of God's justice in 34:10-30 in which he proceeds with a seeming resolution marker by the use of "So" (vs. 10) in order to introduce his imperative demand on them again to "listen" to "men of understanding" and be true in judging the case first with a clear consideration of God's justice as a major case in point (vss. 10-15). He goes further to also introduce another step of his argument from the centrality of the justice of God as a fundamental reality into its practical aspect (vss. 17-20 cf. Dhorme 1967:519; Gordis 1978:382; Habel 1985:474).

In his appeal and verdict (34:31-37) Elihu ends his first major argument with a hypothetical portrait of the guilty person before God who is willing to acknowledge his wrong humbly and stands at the mercy of God (vss. 31-33). Job then is openly declared the guilty party and even one who is a sinner who has been insensitive to his sinfulness by adding more rebellious textures to it when he speaks against God (vss. 35-37) (Habel 1985:474).

Elihu confronts Job's claim (35:1-4) and continues on his *defense of God's absence* (35:5-13) in which he personally changes his focus from Job's friends or all of them from a general point of view to specifically now addressing Job using cosmic reality as a point of departure to drive home his point about the sovereignty of God which he uses as a case in point to explain the presence of God in practical terms even though God seems far away in Job's situation (cf. Dhorme 1967:530-33; Gordis 1978:398; Habel 1985:486-87). The use of "indeed" (vs. 13 NIV)<sup>110</sup> intensifies the point of Elihu when he argues that: *לֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ אֵל אֶל יְשׁוּעֵי לֹא יִשְׁמָעוּ* (God does not listen to their empty plea; the Almighty pays no attention to it [v.13]).<sup>111</sup> Job is seen as one who utters such an empty plea which God has no time for, how then could his case be any better? Elihu's refutation of Job's claim (35:14-16) reached a climax in a partial verdict against Job when he said, *וְאֵיבֹב הַקֶּבֶל יִפְצֵהוּ פִּיהוּ בְּבִלְי־דַעַת מִלִּין יִכְבֵּר*: (So<sup>112</sup> Job opens his mouth with empty talk, without knowledge he multiplies words" [v. 16]).

<sup>110</sup> The adverb *אֵל* is variously rendered as in Gordis (1978:398), Dhorme (1967:535) "pure" as 'only', Habel (1985:487) "So" etc. The present writer would like to see it also as an emphatic pointer to the intensity of what is being said as in "Indeed" "surely" etc.

<sup>111</sup> Following the MT, the action is fronted for emphasis as in "He doesn't hear, God, and the Almighty doesn't see it" (vs. 13a my translation).

<sup>112</sup> Various rendered as "Yet" (Gordis 1978:398; Habel 1985:487), "Yes" (Dhorme 1967:537).

Elihu's defence of God's justice in creation (36:1-33) takes his speech further (Gordis 1978:406; Dhorme 1967:538; Habel 1985:494) to a much better wisdom teaching. It is interesting to note that in chapters 36-37 he turns milder and considerate, unlike to brash seemingly angry young man bursting out like bottled-up wine skin to which he has likened himself (32:18,19).

He opens by asking them to *כִּתְּרֵ-לִי* "bear with me" (36:2) as he wishes to elaborate his lecture about God further, thus now speaking not so much as Job's accuser but rather as a wisdom teacher who stands as a spokesperson for God (cf. Habel (1985:495)).<sup>113</sup> Consequently, Job is warned specifically to be aware of the possible reason why he suffers and not be enticed any otherwise, for he believes that the only thing that would help Job here is being careful (vss. 18, 21),<sup>114</sup> proper use of his past experiences (vs. 24) and an interest in learning also from the displayed wisdom of God in the created world as a whole (vss. 27-33).

It is ironic here that while Elihu was teaching his wisdom to Job and his friends he also has been instructed at the same time in a compelling ways about the wonder of God's creation (37:1-13). He also progresses onto a direct referential interest in which he presents his closing challenge to Job (37:14-24) when he addresses him by saying, *הֲאִזְנִינָה זָאת* (Listen to this)<sup>115</sup> and to *עֲמֹד וְהִתְבּוֹנֵן וְנִפְלְאוֹת אֱלֹהִים* (stop and consider God's wonders [vs. 14])<sup>116</sup> cf. Gordis 1978:410; Habel 1985:497).

### 3.3.3 Sensory-Aesthetic Texture and Pattern

The sensory-aesthetic texture and pattern of a text is seen in the sensory organs of human life and communication that the text evokes, for example, the appeal to see, touch, feel, smell, hear, think, etc.<sup>117</sup> and the manner in which these calls are made in a text, for example as an intuition, reason, imagination, humour, etc. (Robbins 1996:29-30). The mention of body parts like mouth, eyes, hand, etc., evoke sensory textures. Imperatives like behold, look, see, hear, listen, tell, etc., also evoke the human sensory-aesthetic engagement within any given discourse. There are also universal phenomena like trees, clouds, storm, lightning, etc. All these invite the listener and the

<sup>113</sup> The portrayal of Elihu as a spokesperson for God takes us into the prophetic (theophanic) texture of the speeches of Elihu in which we shall try to juxtapose them with some thoughts of Old Testament prophets as well as wisdom teachers to see how best we can consider the role of Elihu in the whole Job disputatious drama.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Dhorme (1967:546) "Take care lest..."

<sup>115</sup> Literally, "Give ear to this,"

<sup>116</sup> Literally could be, "stand still and carefully consider the wonders of God."

<sup>117</sup> For some examples of the occurrence of human body parts as sensory organs see Table 2 on the addendum.

reader to reflect on cosmic elements and patterns of life from a sensory-aesthetic perspective. Weor (2012:172) explains that the ability of an interpreter to identify different “types” of literature (overall texts) and the various forms in the literature (shorter forms like proverbs, parables, or riddle) is an original insight into different sensory-aesthetic textures.

The following are identifications of the sensory-aesthetic texture/patterns classified within the ranges of human body parts, speech patterns (semantics) for sensory-aesthetic action in the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37.

### 3.3.3.1 Human Body Parts for Sensory-Aesthetics<sup>118</sup>

Chapter 32:1a opens the prologue (32:1-6a) to the Elihu speeches with the depletion of Job’s three friends which further exasperates Elihu for the fact that they would not convince Job from being צַדִּיק בְּעֵינָיו (righteous in his own eyes). This is an idiomatic expression to one’s self-estimation thus בְּעֵינָיו (in his own eyes)<sup>119</sup> figuratively means in his own personal view of himself, thus making the subjective aspect of Job’s self-opinion very hard to penetrate as it is in general human life. In 32:5b the linguistic depletion of Job’s friends is categorically described as having no answer in “their mouth.”<sup>120</sup> This technically explains that their mouth is empty of words, which actually means they had nothing at all to say.

In his anger/wrath Elihu starts his apology (32:6b-10) in an attempt to secure a place for himself in the ongoing contentious conversation, but then he was terrified of his youth which made him hesitant<sup>121</sup> מִחִנָּת דַּעֲי אֶתְכֶם (To speak my mind before you [32:6]).<sup>122</sup> Elihu here implies that he definitely has something in his mind that he so wished to say but faces a serious problem

<sup>118</sup> For the occurrence of nouns in terms of human body parts see Table 2 on addendum.

<sup>119</sup> Hartley (1988:428; Clines 2006:683) points us to the variant reading “in their eyes” as in LXX, Syr and Pesh. which were also followed by scholars like Dhorme (1967:472) while Gordis (1978: 366) emend the *hû*, ‘he’ to *hâyâ*, ‘he was’ as a better reading from the MT. Nevertheless, the actual opinion of the friends on Job cannot be decisive here even as Elihu would like his reader to see. Perhaps if they had more strength of speech they would still wage the war continually to bring Job to his knees. Thus ironically, they were not satisfied with Job’s position even as Elihu was not.

<sup>120</sup> This phrase is more of an implication than what it actually is in the MT, thus Hartley (1988:429) left it out of his translation.

<sup>121</sup> This youthful hesitation tells the reader that Elihu “knows his place” amongst others, thus Habel (1985:449) observes that, “He is conscious of his youthfulness.” Nevertheless, from this side of social worldview, “we are more than tempted to regard him as a young fogey rather than as a representative of a youth culture” (Clines 2006:717).

<sup>122</sup> Literally, “From telling my knowledge to you”

emotionally which stems from his cultural (personal?) perspective of life.<sup>123</sup> Nevertheless, considering the gift and function of wisdom and/with/by the Spirit of God (32:8) Elihu further summons the courage nearly lost but now is regained and he is determined to contribute as he makes clear when he asserts that, אֶעֱנֶה דְעִי אֶרְאֶנִי (I will speak<sup>124</sup> my mind<sup>125</sup>. Yes I will<sup>126</sup> [32:10] cf Habel 1985:441).<sup>127</sup>

In a more emphatic way Elihu continually asserts his intent to speak (32:11-22) which now has become a real need seeing that the friends have nothing more to say thus maintains, אֶעֱנֶה אֶרְאֶנִי :חֲלָקִי אֶתְנֶה דְעִי אֶרְאֶנִי (I will answer with my piece.<sup>128</sup> Yes, I will! I will speak my mind. Yes I will! [32:17] cf Habel 1985:441). In an attempt to further emphasise the need he had to speak his mind regarding what his “belly” consists of saying,

בִּי מִלְתִּי מְלִים הִצִּילְתָּנִי רוּחַ בִּטְנִי:

הִנֵּה־בִטְנִי כִּינּוּן לֹא־יִפְתַּח בְּאִבּוֹת חֲדָשִׁים יִבְקַע:

“For I am bloated with arguments, and the wind distends my belly.

Behold my belly is like unvented wine,

Like new wineskins,<sup>129</sup><sup>130</sup> ready to explode”<sup>131</sup> (32:18, 19 cf Habel 1985:442).

<sup>123</sup> We shall try to reflect more on the overarching cultural background within which Elihu belonged and made his speeches, later on when we come to the discussion in chapter 5 of this dissertation.

<sup>124</sup> אֶעֱנֶה is used in the pi’el to actively inform by way of a declaration.

<sup>125</sup> דְעִי literally, “my knowledge.” Yet, this idiom is problematic for example compared to Pope’s (1973:243) rendering it as “to call” thus to speak or utter rather than “to know” by emending the root word from *yd* ‘to know’ to *d’w* ‘to call’ in comparison to Qumran Targum (cf. Habel 1985:442).

<sup>126</sup> Elihu’s “passionate character” is clearly displayed here even within the ironic pun of the idiom *’ap-’ānī* in which *’ap*, ‘anger’ now is used within a decisive determinacy to speak sense to his audience (Habel 1985:451).

<sup>127</sup> Elihu hear adds his speech to those of Job’s friends when he says, ‘I too’ which does not show a total negation of their speeches, so to speak, but rather that he too is trying to give his own contribution to Job particular and then his friends as well (cf. Clines 2006:719). Yet, Elihu is confident in himself that he will “he will succeed where the friends have failed (v. 14)” (Clines 2006:722).

<sup>128</sup> “my portion” (Hartley 1988:432), thus he adds that, “Elihu will speak his portion of wisdom and the insight that he possesses” (Hartley 1988:435).

<sup>129</sup> אִבּוֹת is seen as ‘wine jars’ or ‘skin-bottles’ not wineskins as in popular readings (Clines 2006:688). The former is more attested to by archaeology according to Hartley’s (1988:432) observation.

<sup>130</sup> Interestingly, this happens to be the only simile in the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37.

<sup>131</sup> The question on what is ready to burst or explode here is not very clear according to scholars’ point of view thus the objects ‘belly’ and “wineskins” or skin-bottles” remain an open question which can only be settled by emendations of the text (cf. Hartley 1988:432; Clines 2006:688-89).

Elihu's belly is here described as the container of his arguments, this way of speech could puzzle a reader to oscillate on where actually Elihu's intellect is, his mind or his belly? Why would he make reference to his stomach if it has nothing to do with his intellect? These questions remain open but should not be too detached from an idiomatic way of speech in ancient Near East. He now resolves to speak and be relieved of the burden he bears from himself when he says, אֶפְתָּח וְאֶעֱנֶה (I will open my lips and answer [32:20b]). The point of interest here is, could this strike a positive note on the mind of his audience that he has found the real (right?) answer to give better than what Job's three friends have done?

In chapter 33, Elihu poised himself ready to take up the case against Job in God's defence as we have seen above on the argumentative textures. Job is summoned<sup>132</sup> to hear Elihu's מְלִי (arguments) and וְכָל־דְּבָרַי הֵאֲזִינָה (all my words in your hearing [33:1]).<sup>133134</sup> He then continues his sensory-aesthetic tactics to raise his emotional inclination towards himself actually and what he has to say especially now that he announces the coming out of what he has to say when he says, הִנֵּה־נָא פִתְחֹתִי כִי דַבַּרְהָ לְשׁוֹנֵי בְהֶכְיִי: (Behold I open my mouth; My tongue forms words on my palate [ 33:2] cf Habel 1985:455). It is ironically interesting for one to observe Elihu announcing the opening of his mouth only here (!). What has he been doing with his mouth all this while? Nevertheless, the rhetorical tact to point his audience to the actual sphere of his speech and opinion is not in doubt coming originally from inside him, thus "my mouth," "my tongue", "my palate", "my heart", "my lips" (33:2,3) are categorical spheres of his arguments (case/opinion) against Job's claims. Elihu's mortality is seen as any other human being's when he rightly asserts that he is just an ordinary person like Job who was מְהוּמָר קִרְצָתִי (formed from clay [33:6]), thus

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<sup>132</sup> Elihu's summon of Job directly by name without any titles (cf.32:12; 37:14) makes Hartley (1988:437) to think that Elihu has kept his words when he promised not show any special regards to anybody's personality in this discourse. Thus chapter 33 becomes a direct and decisive address to Job specifically (cf. Clines 2006:724). If we take it a bit further in search of the intent of such a speech pattern, various scholars have different speculative ideas for example, Gordis (1978:371) sees it as a technical (psychological) way of getting the attention of Job much closer to himself, while Pope (1973:247) thinks that Elihu (or the author) was somewhat nervous or insecure thus he spoke that way to express his "greater familiarity" with Job not in order to show any serious familiarity but that is how his "temperate" works. Whatever the case may be, all these points would not beyond speculations.

<sup>133</sup> Literally, "give ear to all my words"

<sup>134</sup> Habel (1985:464) agreeably observes that, "Elihu addresses Job as a litigant in the public 'hearing' which Job had requested in his closing speech (31:35-37)."

there is no need for Job to be terrified and *לֹא־יִכְבֹּד עָלַיָּךְ לַאֲחִיבִי* (My hand need not oppress you [33:7] cf. Habel 1985:455).<sup>135136</sup>

In stating Job's case against God, Elihu gives a direct quotation from him, perhaps as a gesture of his sworn honesty towards the end of his apology. He presents Job's case in part as saying about God, *יָשָׁם בַּסֹּד רַגְלַי אֲשֶׁמֶר כָּל־אֲרָחָתַי*; (He sets my feet in stocks;<sup>137</sup> He watches my every path [33:11] cf. Habel 1985:455). This imagery of Job's feet as being in the stocks presents him as a prisoner of war. On verse 11 Hartley (1988:440) observes that Elihu's quote of Job here "captures Job's feeling that God's dogged observance never allows him a moment of respite so that he might catch his breath." Job imagines himself as one captured by God and put under a severe, almost an oppressive condition, so to speak. In addition, God's presence was undesirable when all God did was to watch his every path. This also speaks about how he was hunted and limited by the presence of the all-seeing God. Thus while Job's feet were in stocks and could not literally carry out their normal duty of busy walks, God's eyes by implication were very busy watching his every path.<sup>138</sup>

Elihu's refutation to Job's charge of being captured and even tortured by God is given through some vivid analogies as we have earlier discussed in the argumentative texture above within the imagery of human "deep sleep" when "dreams" and "visions" are sent for a purpose. In reference to what God does Elihu continues by saying, *אָז יִגְלֶה אָזְנוֹ אֲנָשִׁים* (Then he opens<sup>139</sup> the ears of mortals [33:16]) which impress on his audience and the reader God's pedagogic ingenuity. This is done "in order that they might be receptive to the truth" (Hartley 1988:443)<sup>140</sup>. Moreover, through such nocturnal instructions, *יְהִשֶׁף גַּבְשׁוֹ מִנִּי־שַׁחַת וְחַיָּתוֹ מִמַּעַבְרַת בְּשָׁלַח*; (He spares their souls from the Pit and their lives from crossing the Channel [33:18] cf. Habel 1985:456). Human

<sup>135</sup> Literally, "And my hand upon you will not be heavy".

<sup>136</sup> Consequently, "Elihu wants to create an atmosphere that will allow Job to argue his case as he wishes, although not with God himself but with God's representative- a man similar to himself. While the debate may be fierce, Job is encouraged to present his position free from awe of Elihu" (Hartley 1988:439).

<sup>137</sup> Clines (2006:729) casts a doubt on the translation of *sād*, as "stocks" but rather would prefer it to be emended to *sād*, 'quicklime' because in his view if Job is hindered from walking around God would have him nowhere to keep watch over him. But the present writer agrees with the translation as 'stocks' which goes much better with the MT and the intertexture of the present verse in comparison with 13:27.

<sup>138</sup> "my path" here is not so clear whether it could also mean Job's inner paths of life, as in his thoughts or not.

<sup>139</sup> Literally means "uncovers" (Pope 1973:250).

<sup>140</sup> For instance, a truth that specifically concerns a specific person/audience (cf. Pope 1973:250)

souls/lives here are much more valuable to spare and watch over than social comfortability.<sup>141</sup> Thus Elihu's discourse so far enjoined Job and his friends to diligently pay more careful attention to the deeper meaning of what God does in order to find the real meaning and purpose of it.

Elihu continues his discussion of God's use of suffering for the good of the sufferer in some exceptional cases, we must maintain, in that, the עֲצָמוֹת "bones" and הַיְהוּה "being" or נַפְשׁוֹ "soul" are inflicted with some kind of ailment that makes the sufferer even to detest choice food (33:19,20). This results in the wasting of his/her "flesh" for those who could see, and even the internal wasting of אֲרָאָה לֹא רָאָה his "unseen bones" (33:21). This indicates that his נַפְשׁוֹ "soul" or "being" (as inner self) is very near extinction in terms of מוֹת "Death"<sup>142</sup> as going down the שְׁחַת "Pit" (33:22).

Elihu strikes a hopeful note when he thought and spoke of the possibility of healing for the sick and suffering person. The restoration of health would manifest itself in the refreshment of his בְּשָׂרָה "flesh" (33:25) thus showing a decisive reversal of extinction from the realm of life by a generous intervention of an angelic mediator. Another note that somewhat forms a climax of the restoration of health and the assurance of continued survival to the sufferer is the revelation of God's פָּנָה "face" to him (33:26)<sup>143</sup>. This imagery of the possibility of seeing face to face ensures mutuality and acceptance of the other (see Levinas 1969). Elihu closes the healing pericope with the possibility of a testimony by the once sick and dying person now back to life and its vigor because his/her "soul" or "being" has been saved from going into the Pit but rather now beholds the אֹר "light" of life (33:28). This seeing of light ensures the continuity of life as Clines (2006:740) observes when he says, "The light is the light of day, which is symbolic of life, and implicitly is contrasted with the darkness of Sheol." The pedagogic use of dreams/visions and illness are all coming with actual intent in regards to God's restoration of human souls מִיְהוּה שְׁחַת "from the Pit that they may bask<sup>144</sup> in the light of life" (33:30 cf. Habel 1985:456). The theme of the human soul and human self/being is of crucial importance here. It

<sup>141</sup> In other words, "God has to be cruel to be kind" sometimes (Clines 2006:732).

<sup>142</sup> This could be like a monster that takes a person away into the abyss of the dead (cf. Pope 1973:251; Habel 1985:469).

<sup>143</sup> This assures admittance into his presence (cf. Pope 1973:252).

<sup>144</sup> Could also be "lighted" or "illumined" in/by the light of life.

faces devastating extinction because of its fragility unless it is saved, preserved and restored by God<sup>145</sup>, humanity is but nothing on the face of the dangers of life.

After speaking on the theme of human life and survival (anthropology), within the rubrics of life and death, being young and old, the visible and invisible life, etc. Elihu turns to more abstract (ideological, theological and philosophical) sphere of his discourse on the justice of God from chapter 34ff (cf. Habel 1985:472ff). He began with an appeal for his audience to give their אָזן “ear” to him (34:2) the reason for this appeal is not far-fetched, כִּי־אָזֶן מִלִּין תִּבְהֶן וְיִסֹּד יִטְעֶם לְאֶכָּל: “For the ear tests arguments as the palate savors food” (34:3 cf Habel 1985:472)<sup>146</sup>. It is aesthetically interesting to see how realistic/pragmatic Elihu is in his thinking. He juxtaposes the functional activities of the ear and the palate in very engaging ways without necessarily telling the actual outcome of either, thus making his point on the need to enjoin his audience to prepare well in order to judge and “decide” what he has to tell them (34:4 cf. Habel 1985:473). This makes him braver as being more vulnerable to those who may critically differ from his points of view.

Elihu, as usual, provides a verbatim quote of Job’s litigation against God which he claims has been denied him even though he believes to be on the right (34:5). Thus he is reported to have said he had been אֶגְוִי־שׁ הַצֵּי “wounded with arrows” (34:6b)<sup>147</sup> of God even as a guiltless person. This is one of the climactic points of Elihu’s disagreement with Job as if to ask him, “when and where did this ever happen?” Elihu decisively avers that Job is not to the right and in fact according to his personal estimating has never been one seeing that, יִשְׁתַּהֲלֶעַג כַּמַּיִם. “He drinks derision like water” (34:7 cf Habel 1985:473). There is no doubt this is hyperbolic, yet, it is such an utterance that instinctively raises the sensory-aesthetic emotions of the listener and/or reader towards the richness of the speech texture of Elihu.

In his assertion of God’s justice to humankind in general, Elihu emphasised the fact that all of the human life rest in the benevolence of God, thus,

<sup>145</sup> As we shall try to closely consider in chapter 6 on the ideological-theological textures later on.

<sup>146</sup> Pope (1973: 254) has “as the palate tastes by eating.” For more technical grammatical variations of reading this line see Clines (2006:746).

<sup>147</sup> This is almost an incurable injury by *hiṣṣî* ‘my arrow’. This implies ‘the arrow in me’ which caused the incurable wound (cf. Hartley 1988:451). Nevertheless, some scholars would wish to emend the word into what could mean “my wound” as what is actually being incurable not the arrow. For further discussions on that see Clines (2006:747).

אִם-יִשְׁמַח אֱלֹהֵי לִבּוֹ וְיִחַזֵּק וְיִשְׁמְטוּ אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק:

יִגְנַע כָּל-בְּשָׂר יִחַד וְאָדָם עַל-עַפְרָר יָשׁוּב:

“If he plans in his heart to gather his spirit and breath to himself,

All flesh expires at once, and humankind returns to the dust” (34:14,15 cf. Habel 1985:473). This strikes a note on what Paul Tillich (1960) describes as essential existence. From Elihu’s assertion of God’s grace to human sustenance we would see the reality of human life and be the life of God in terms of God’s רִיחַ (spirit) and נְשָׁמָה (breath [cf. Hartley 1988:454]). In 34:19 all humanity, both the wealthy and poor are the creative work of God’s “hands.”<sup>148</sup> It is ironic what hands do to human creation and preservation in that God’s hands create people and no “human hand” can destroy them (34:20 cf. Habel 1985:473).<sup>149</sup> It is also ironic to note the fact that God’s עֵינָיו עַל-דַּרְכֵי-אִישׁ וְכָל-צִעְדָיו יִרְאֶה: (eyes know the ways of human beings. And he sees their every step [34:21 cf. Habel 1985:473-74]), that is why they are preserved from extinction, even though this God-watchfulness is one of the realities that disgusts and terrifies Job, so to speak (cf. Habel 1985:484; Clines 2006:779).

The watchfulness of God towards humanity preserves, as we have observed above, while God’s actual withdrawal and active hiddenness destroys. This is seen in the imagery of God’s face in 34:29, if God hides his “face” no one can “see” him but can he continually see him/her/them? This is one of the distinctive mysteries of God and essential human existence. Job is then enjoined to seek God’s face in a confessional prayer and request that God may teach him to “see clearly” (34:32 cf. Habel 1985:474). Elihu here sees that the need for Job is more than to hear or think but more importantly to see clearly, this is an anticipation of what Job would eventually do (figuratively?) in 42:5, to say ‘but now I see you’ because he has seen.

In his continual challenge to Job in response to Job’s claim of being upright, Elihu in 35:7 poses his rhetorical question to Job in terms of the effectual benefit of being right in relation to the

<sup>148</sup> We shall return to the intertextual potential of this rhetorical question in search for an understanding of the creation of humanity in biblical literature in our next chapter.

<sup>149</sup> In a pragmatic sense of life many human beings use their hand to kill other human being to an extent that one could almost say, ‘no one can kill without hands’. Yet, God’s graciousness is enough to protect and preserve humanity against humanity.

transcendence of God asking if Job or any person in his capacity is either righteous or sinful what does God receive “from your hand?” This could be a rhetorical way of saying that God does not essentially benefit/profit from one’s righteousness. This does not actually mean that there is no connection between one’s acts of righteousness and the relational demand and/or desire of God but rather that God does not לקח (receive) or accept anything of it in terms of bribe to buy one’s favor with God (cf. Hartley 1988:465-66; Clines 2006:797). Elihu then in a sensory-aesthetic way declared his verdict against Job’s self-pity and various claims of righteousness in saying; וְאֵיּוֹב הֶקְבֵּל יַפְצֵה-פִּיהוּ בְּבִלְי־דָעַת מְלִין יַכְבֵּר׃ (Yet Job opens his mouth in empty talk and multiplies meaningless arguments [35:16]). It is ironic that throughout this speech corpus Elihu has been the one who actually opens his mouth while Job’s mouth literally remains closed, so to speak. Yet, the one who opens his mouth renders the one who closed guilty of הֶקְבֵּל (empty talk)<sup>150</sup> and בְּבִלְי־דָעַת מְלִין (meaningless arguments)<sup>151152</sup> not because his mouth remains closed now but rather because he has opened it too much already according to Elihu’s estimation.

In his last defence of God’s justice in chapters 36-37, Elihu points out that there are still more points of argumentation to put forward in order to display the justice of God. But before he goes any further, he draws attention to the essential character of God in terms of the possession of a durable or most preferably, a sincere heart when he says, כַּבִּיר כֶּחֶץ לֵב (The Champion is strong of heart [36:5b cf. Habel 1985:494]). On one of the key reasons that Elihu uses to substantiate his argument on the reliability of God is God’s vigilance especially on the afflicted (abused and vulnerable) points out that, לֹא-יִגְרַע מֵעֵינָיו מִצְדִּיק עֲיִנָיו (He does not turn his eyes from the righteous, [36:7 cf. Habel 1985:494]). This assertion in a sense may hunt Job for the fact that he has been suspicious and aversive to God’s watchfulness on humanity even on himself.<sup>153</sup>

In line with his argument on the instructive help of God to save a sinning soul (cf. 33:15ff) Elihu returns to that point of view once again in reference to how God instructs a sinning soul for his /their own good through the ear when he figuratively says, וַיִּגַּל אָזְנָם לְמוֹסֵר אִי־אָמַר כִּי-יִשְׁכֹּן מֵאֲוֶן׃ (He

<sup>150</sup> Literally, “vanity”

<sup>151</sup> Literally, “knowledge-less utterances” or “speech without knowledge” or “utterance without sense” which in Hausa of northern Nigeria could be “maganar banza” or “zancen wofi.”

<sup>152</sup> In this sense Elihu dismisses Job’s case as invalid and just nothing but pretentious cries (cf. Habel 1985:494; Hartley 1988:467).

<sup>153</sup> We have discussed this in our section on the argumentative textures above and it may still come back in our chapter 6 for ideological-theological discussion.

opens their ears with a warning and summons them to return from sin [36:10 cf. Habel 1985:495]). Elihu's agile move from God's instruction from a single soul to multiple ones here is interesting, yet, "with a warning" that suffices to adequately instruct those who could discern to return מֵאֵוֹן (from sin)<sup>154</sup> this time around not going down into the Pit (cf. 33:18, 22, 28). Nevertheless, הַנְּפִי-לֵב (the godless of heart [36:13])<sup>155</sup> care less about such warning and as a result, תְּמַת בְּנַעַר נַפְשָׁם וְחַיָּתָם בְּקִדְשִׁים: (Their soul dies in their youth; their life is spent among pervert [36:14 cf. Habel 1985:495]). Even though this verse has been problematic to many scholars in their struggle for its actual understanding as we have seen in our section on argumentative textures (cf. Dhome 1967:543-44; Pope 1973:269; Gordis 1978:415; Hartley 1988:470-71; Clines 2006:861). Nevertheless, its function for the shameful destiny of the destruction of the life of the recalcitrant is inevitable. In contrast, God delivers the afflicted by/through their affliction וַיִּגַּל בְּלִחְזֵי אָזְנָם (and opens their ear through adversity [36:15]). The "ear" in this verse could be both a literal and figurative one in the sense that God makes them hear new things that would be helpful to them by reason of their affliction, in other words, God would help their mind to critically engage with their afflicted situations towards a good sense of discernment and reconstruction of life and worldviews towards profitable order and the continuity of life.

In chapter 37:1 Elihu makes reference to his own לֵב (heart) in terms of how it has been terrified and drawn to sublimity by the marvellous works of God. Thus he further enjoins his audience to listen to the קוֹל (voice) of God which comes from his פֶּה (mouth [37:2]). This helps us to see how this speech is full of speeches from elsewhere that all seek a good audience. The "voice" of God achieves a certain definite emphasis in this pericope (cf 37:2, 3, 4, and 5). This discourse amounts to God's incomprehensible wonders in the universe as a whole (37:5). God's marvellous provision of rain upon the earth has a very informative function in Elihu's rhetoric when he says, בְּיַד-כָּל-אָדָם יִהְיֶה לְדַעַת כָּל-אֲנָשִׁי מֵעַשָׂהוּ: (Is a sign on the hand of each human being that all mortals may know his works [37:7 cf. Habel 1985:496]). Job is passionately enjoined to (Give ear to [37:14]), all of it.

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<sup>154</sup> Literally, "from mischief"

<sup>155</sup> He may be sarcastically may be implying Job here

### 3.3.3.2 Speech Patterns for Sensory-Aesthetics

This section of the sensory-aesthetic textures of the Elihu speeches would concentrate on the innovative use of language to evoke emotional action and/reactions by the use of picturesque words in terms of imagery, simile, metaphor, personification and imperative speech patterns. This would help the reader to appreciate Elihu's innovative swiftness in presenting a persuasive argument. Elihu is first and foremost introduced to the reader by the omniscient narrator as an outraged person. First of all his "anger... flared up" (32:1) when he saw that Job was righteous in his own eyes and he is bent on a continual justification of himself rather than God in light of the suffering he has been experiencing so far, as presented in the book right from chapter 1. Elihu's "anger also flared up" against Job's three visiting friends because they have nothing really persuasive to answer Job's incessant questions and charges against God (32:3b, 5c).

Elihu was really angry with everybody in conversation so far, his approach until the three friends are highly under-guarded with his theological presuppositions. Nevertheless, his young age made him be "scared and afraid" (32:6b) actually to stand up against their points of argumentation so far. This emotional burden made him to somehow recoil into himself for a long while as they spoke to their wits' end, so to speak. Yet he had a very high expectation of their physical maturity and experiences which could be seen in the following personified thought; אַמְרֵתִי יָמִים יְדַבְּרוּ וְרַב אֲשֵׁנִים יִדְעוּ הַכְּמָה: (I said to myself, 'Days will testify and many years teach wisdom' [32:7 cf. Habel 1985:441]). According to Habel's (1985:441) translation, Elihu sees wisdom as being both the spirit or breath of God the Almighty<sup>156</sup> which תְּבִינָם (gives them insight [32:8]).<sup>157</sup> But to his disappointment, he did not see such understanding of wisdom in them so far. Thus he braced himself to intervene, there comes his first decisive imperative שְׁמַעָה לִּי (Listen to me! [32:10]).<sup>158</sup> Now the time is ripe for him to speak his mind to which he emphatically says, אַף־אֶעֱנֶה (Yes I will).

<sup>156</sup> The spirit of God as the spirit "per excellence" which indicates divine inspiration (see Gordis 1978:367 cf. Clines 2006:685).

<sup>157</sup> Literally, "which causes them understanding" (cf. Gordis 1978:367).

<sup>158</sup> The verb שְׁמַע (Listen) here is singular in the MT which some emend to reflect a plural audience so it does not end in addressing only Job but rather Job and his friends as well (cf. MSS, LXX, Pesh, Vg. JB see Clines 2006:685-86). Nevertheless, Gordis (1978:368) maintains the singular version as in the MT arguing that, "The singular imperative may well be correct, since it is Job and not the Friends whom Elihu constantly addresses; cf. 33:1 etc."

He then continues with a demonstrative interjection, הִנֵּה (Behold [32:11]) pointing them to himself to have them observe what he has done so far in relation to the ongoing conversation. He waited for them to speak their words enough and while waiting he was a responsible listener when he says, אָזִין עַד־תְּכוּנֹתֵיכֶם עַד־תִּחְקְרוּן מִלִּין (I heard your insights<sup>159</sup> as you probe arguments [32:11 and vs. 12a cf. Habel 1985:441]). This is a sort of a self-commendation toward himself which in a sense could strike another ironic code in that, he now justifies himself in terms of waiting for them to speak their fill while he becomes the self-controlled waiter, so to speak, but he has been very angry with Job, in particular, who tried to justify his own self too in light of the whole ordeal. Elihu reached a sad conclusion after his observation and close attention to Job and his friends because;

חָתוּ לֹא־עָנוּ עוֹד הָעֲתִיקוּ מֵהֶם מְלִים:

וְהוֹחֲלֹתַי כִּי־לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ כִּי עָמְדוּ לֹא־עָנוּ עוֹד:

“They are shattered; they answer no more! Arguments have forsaken them.

I have waited till they finished speaking, stopped dead and answered no more” (32:15, 16 cf. Habel 1985:441). The shattering of Job’s friends, and probably Job himself in the whole discourse so far is pitiable. And fleeing of arguments from them heightens their depletion and helplessness.

Elihu’s self-determination to actually speak out his mind is emphatically repeated in his recurring אֲרֵאֲנִי (Yes, I will [32:17 cf. 10]). He continues to call attention to himself in order to justify his speech asking them, הִנֵּה־בִטְנִי כִּי־לֹא־יִפְתָּחַ פִּאֲבֹתַי חֲדָשִׁים יִבְקַעַ: (Behold my belly is like unvented wine, like new wineskins, ready to explode [32:19 cf. Habel 1985:442]). Ironically, he is already exploding when he warns of his tendency for exploding if he does not speak his mind. His self-assurance and seeming oath of confidence of not being partial or attempting to raise his face in favour of any party (32:21-22) is already another ironic depiction of his wisdom and self-

<sup>159</sup> Hartley (1988:431) observed that for the MT *t<sup>e</sup>bûnōtêkem*, ‘your reasoning’. Yet, the Syr. Presents something like *tklytkm*, which could be rendered ‘your completion’ (cf. Dhorme 1967:478). He points out that this sense goes in accord with the Qumran Targum. Thus if the foregoing argument stands then the *hāqar*, in the following line of the MT could mean ‘end or limit’ not really ‘search’ (Gordis 1978:368). Nevertheless, we could maintain both casting in the same sentence to say, ‘until you complete searching...’ or ‘until the end of your reasoning’ (Clines 2006:686).

confidence seeing that he has already taken side with God right from the beginning of his intrusion into the conversation.

In chapter 33, Elihu continues his appeal to Job to give him a good hearing saying; וְאוֹלָם שָׁמַע־נָא וְכָל־דְּבָרַי הִאֲזִינָה: (Now hear my arguments, Job; Consider all my words in your hearing [33:1 cf. Habel 1985:455]).<sup>160</sup> The sensory organ of the ear is very much needed in this discourse so far. In that Job is called to “consider all my words in your hearing” which is an encouragement for Job to critically examine and engage with the “arguments”<sup>161162</sup> that Elihu would like to marshal out to him. Elihu further calls attention to what is going on in his mouth when he says, הִנֵּה־נָא פִּתְחֵתִי כִּי דַבֵּרָה לְשׁוֹנֵי בְהֻכִּי: (Behold I open my mouth<sup>163</sup>; my tongue forms words on my palate [33:2 cf. Habel 1985:455]). Elihu here paints an excellent literary picture of the art of speech in his mouth by the use of the tongue to direct the words in terms of the right sound and texture of whatever he wishes to say. Thus the arrangement, tact and clarity of his speech are evident for any good listener so to speak (33:3). In 33:5, Elihu calls for a verbal contest which emphasizes Job’s freedom of speech if at all he has something cogent to say in disagreement with Elihu’s arguments, thus he says;: אִם־תּוֹכַל הַשִּׁיבֵנִי עָרְכָה לְפָנַי הִתְיַצֵּבָה: (Refute me if you can! Present your case before me! Take your stand [cf. Habel 1985:455]). Another “behold” is uttered in 33:6 to point Job to the human commonality, equality and fragility which he shares with Elihu. This is given to allow Job to gain the needed confidence and freedom he desires in this conversation (cf. 33:7).

Job’s case is restated as a testimony which Elihu overheard very clearly when Job emphatically presents his arguments against God’s justice toward him, thus Elihu says, אַךְ אִמְרַת בְּאָזְנֵי וְקוֹל מִלִּין אֶשְׁמָע: (Now<sup>164</sup> you testify in my hearing; I heard the force of your argument [33:8 cf. Habel 1985:455]). Job is quoted as claiming to be truly innocent and guiltless before God, yet, God has

<sup>160</sup> Hartley (1988:437) stays much closer to the MT here when he translates “But now, Job, hear my speech; listen to all my words.”

<sup>161</sup> Literally, “speeches” or “utterances”

<sup>162</sup> It is clear here that Elihu presents “arguments” to his audience, thus this entails very different points of engagement but within a discernible and coherent focal interest in defense of the justice of God. In doing this we shall time and again see the interplay of the ironic reality of wisdom in search of the best wisdom to apply to Job’s case and his personal life in order to bring him into a better perspective of the person, power and justice of God which Elihu believes Job is not getting very clearly.

<sup>163</sup> The NIV “I am about to open my mouth” seem rather awkward among others (cf. Clines 2006:690).

<sup>164</sup> Could be “surely” (Hartley 1988:439 cf. Clines 2006:692).

found “pretexts” against him by which he captures him and counts him as an “enemy” put him in “stocks” and incessantly “watches” over him (33:9-11 cf. Habel 1985:455). Elihu quickly refuted Job’s charges based on the axiom of the greatness of God above all humans (33:12). Nevertheless, despite God’s greatness/transcendence Elihu maintains that he also testifies time and again “though no one may see it” (33:13-14). Thus the point of interest here is not to charge God with being irresponsible to personal quests or even accusations (litigation) against him. But rather it is ironic to note that as Job testifies in Elihu’s hearing so God also presents God’s testimony in the world always although it may be elusive to many. Thus another ironic twist here is on the question; who answers whom? Job accuses God of not answering him, but Elihu is answering him with the fact that God presents constant testimonies in creation which invariably may mean that Elihu could be one of those God-ordained channels of the answer to Job which not many would discern. This means God is active with us in the other even when we do not take real cognizance of what it is going on.

To go into existential discussions of the evidence of God’s self-testimony, Elihu starts with the descriptive reality of what happens in the night *בְּנִפְלֵ תִרְדָּמָה עַל-אֲנָשִׁים* (when deep sleep falls on mortals [33:15 cf. Habel 1985:15]). The falling of deep sleep on mankind shows God’s mysterious activity in human life. God is ironically active in a wise way when people sleep deeply. God engages in the acts of opening the ears, turning humans from wrong actions, suppressing human pride and sparing their souls from destruction (33:16-18). On another point of argumentation God can use physical suffering not words or visions in a dream to “indict” a person within their inner selves with excruciating pain into the bones which would reveal the actual fragility of the physical body when it loathes any food, even choice food and then “wastes” away in a sense, thus “draws near to the Pit” of Death (33:19-22). Nevertheless, in a situation where there is a merciful angel as mediator, one who would willingly “vouch” for the person’s righteousness before God and “pleads for mercy” for his sake (33:23-24) then there would be hope for redemption when the angel compassionately says, *רְדֵם-הוּ מִיֵּרֶדֶת לְשַׁחַת מִצְעָתִי כֶפֶר* (Redeem him from descending to the Pit! I have found a ransom! [33:24]). Then there would be a refreshment of the flesh as that of youth, the restoration of good old days of health and strength, penitential prayer and public confession of guilt which is climaxed by a grateful testimony for the graciousness of God despite human unrighteousness (33:25-28). This

psychological trick may have made Job to have some ease in his tension and possible fear of extinction, as we have earlier pointed out, but the big question is not the genuineness of Elihu's points of argumentation as in whether what he says would indeed lead to a correct end of forgiveness and restoration, but rather whether Job would actually succumb to such a psychological maneuver to plead guilty before God?<sup>165</sup>

In sum, Elihu emphatically points out that all this God does several times for the good of human beings. With the interest of returning them back to life from going into death and allowing them the freedom to continually “bask in the light of life” (33:29-30 cf. Habel 1985:456). Thus Job is called for proper conduct in term of the attitude of imperative listening, hearing, being silent, and then testifying if he has anything different to say in his defence as seen in Elihu's words saying;

הַקָּשֶׁב אֵיּוֹב שָׁמַע־לִי הַתָּרֵשׁ וְאַנְכִי אֲדַבֵּר:

אִם־יִשְׁמְלוּן הַשִּׁיבֵנִי דַבֵּר כִּי־תִפְצְתִי צְדָקָה:

“Listen, Job, and hear me!

Be silent while I make my case.

If you have arguments, refute me!

Testify! For I am eager to find you in the right” (33:31-32 cf. Habel 1985:456-57)

This might have come to Job as an ironic surprise seeing the vehemence of Elihu's discourse right from the beginning. It is ironic to know that all that Elihu does so far is actually also with Job's interest at heart when he says he actually wanted to justify him, not only God by implication. But if Job has nothing more in self-defense by way of response, then his guilt is well established and there is still more to “hear” while he keeps “silent” in order to properly “teach” Job “wisdom” as the very thing he lacks up to this point according to Elihu's assessment (33:33).

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<sup>165</sup> In an ironic way in terms of the inner character perspective, these verses (pericopes) helps one to speculatively anticipate what will actually happen in chapter 42:1-6 of the Book of Job.

In his response to both Job and his friends, Elihu uses the simple idiom of “give your ears to me” (34:2). This further helps one to see the importance of the ear in terms of hearing. In a decisive way, Elihu explains the fact that the ear does not only receive information, but it further helps in sieving it thus *אֵזוֹן מִלִּיּוֹ תִבְחָנוּ וְחֹדֶי יִטְעִמוּ לְאָכֵל* (the ear tests arguments as the palate savours food [34:3]). This illustrates the fact that “ears are discriminating organs” (Clines 2006:768) thus will distinguish what right or wrong information/argument for the mind is.<sup>166</sup> Elihu made known to his audience what they need to judge namely, “what is justice” as “what is defensible” (34:4).

Job is once more quoted on his charge against God’s perceived injustice when he claims that he has been “denied” litigation before God. The imagery of a game is given to Job when he thought himself as one who has been “wounded with arrows” (34:6b). Elihu quickly counters Job’s claims with a severe description of Job as one who *יִשְׁתֶּה-לְעַג פְּמִים* (drinks derision like water), and *וְאָרְחָה לְחַבְרָה עִם-פְּעֻלֵי* (keeps company with evildoers) which in other words makes him one who *אָוֵן* (consorts with the wicked [34:7,8]). Elihu by implication makes Job an infamous negative character which ironically depicts a different Job from the one the reader meets in the prose frameworks. This invariably presents an “evil” and “wicked” Job who almost has no equals, as far as Elihu can judge (cf. 34:7a). One needs to closely ask if Elihu’s description of Job is not necessarily true or false, but rather just or unjust? Could we see Elihu’s wisdom in using disturbing negative imagery to describe a person whom he would like to speak good sense to? This could be nothing short of an ironic depiction of being wise.<sup>167</sup>

In 34:10 Elihu marks a certain point of resolution to drive his point home with a *לְכֵן* (Therefore) interjection (34:10) which brings his sarcasm towards Job and his friends into the light when he calls them “intelligent people” when the reader could hardly see that he meant it. He emphatically makes his point of God’s being far from doing “wrong” or any “injustice” (34:10bc). His reasons for saying that are given in 34:11-15 which emphatically presents God as the sovereign God who generously maintains life in the world out of his free will and power. With this reality in mind, he further challenges his audience saying, *וְאִם-בְּיָדָהּ שְׂמָעָה-נְאֻתָהּ אֵינָהּ לְקוֹל*

<sup>166</sup> But in actual fact, the mind does the sieving while the ear technically receives the words.

<sup>167</sup> Clines (2006:770) explains that the negative acts of Job, that if drinking iniquity like water and keeping company with evildoers is not necessarily a literal act so to speak but rather an intellectual act, in that, Job is not actually known as a sinful person but his attempt to question God and put God in the wrong makes him one.

:מְלִי (So if you have discernment, hear this! Give ear to the force of my argument! [34:16 cf. Habel 1985:473]). God’s treatment to even noble people whom he sees and calls “Scoundrels” and pronounces wicked rulers “condemned” while he gives his “favor” to the “poor” as being the works of “his hands” (34:16-21) accentuate the justice of God as we have earlier mentioned in the section on argumentative textures.

God “sees their every step” (34:21b) which presents a vigilant God who knows everything that people do even without their knowing it. Thus it is another point of irony in the Elihu speeches in which God sees and knows what people in general and even specifically do not know and do not understand. It is the prerogative of God to execute punishment of all evil doers thus יִרְעַץ כְּבִירִים יִרְעַץ כְּבִירִים (He shatters the mighty without an inquiry and appoints others in their place [34:24 cf. Habel 1985:474]). It is ironic to see that God has the power to “shatter the mighty” yet God does not take their place but rather “appoint others in their place”. The ultimate acts of God to “shatter”, “overthrow” and “crush” are very formidable enough to incite fear to those who know by way of hearing or reading. God does not do any of this for fun but rather as a result of the “wickedness” of the wicked that they are punished and destroyed (34:26). This wickedness as we have earlier seen is characteristic of their disloyalty to God (34:27) in terms of acknowledging God and treating the “poor” with justice. Thus God ironically upsets and destroys the wicked but allows the voice of the poor as victims of injustice and whatever kind of oppression to come to his ears. All this God does with sheer freedom of will (cf. 34:29-30).

Job is now called and enjoined to “confess” to God and promise not to “offend” anymore but rather place himself in loyalty to God as a request that God should “teach” him to “see” clearly (34:31-32 cf. Habel 1985:474; Clines 2006:745). Job is once again given space to “testify” to what he knows (34:33) if not he would surely be condemned by the “wise” and “intelligent” people (cf. 34:34-37). Thus wisdom here comes as the right discernment of what a good and profitable life entails in terms of justice for all as a mark of true godliness.

Chapter 35, as we have earlier noted Elihu’s response to the seeming detachment or absence of God in human affairs. Elihu refutes Job’s arguments against any of such perceptions (35:1-4) and takes the nexus of sin and consequences away from its traditional stance in terms of the relation of human acts to the essence of God. Elihu thus argues that human “transgressions,” or

“wickedness” or “righteousness,” do not actually affect the person of God directly. They rather affect other individuals in the world that is why many oppressed people cry out to God under severe oppression while some neglect the acknowledgement of God at all in their lives and affairs (35:5-11). Such negligence of God, Elihu argues brings about God’s detachment (35:12-13). Job’s “complaint” and “arguments” are considered utterly “meaningless” (35:14-16) because he refuses to acknowledge his transgression but rather is too obsessed with the claims of self-righteousness. This is another irony in that Elihu does not only pronounce Job guilty, but he actually wanted him to acknowledge his wrong and confess it before God and be set free. In this case, Elihu is not actually detached from his socio-cultural worldview on the theory of retribution.<sup>168</sup>

Elihu’s speech took a more sublime tone when he said, כַּתְּרִי לִי וְעִיר וְאַתְּנֶנָּה כִּי עוֹד לְאַלֹּהִים מְלִים: (Bear with me a little, and I will convince you; There are more arguments in Eloah’s defence [36:2 cf. Habel 1985:494]). Elihu continues to “glean” from his knowledge of what he has discerned in the realm of nature far from the thoughts of human beings in order to “prove” his “Creator” in the right instead of a human like Job (36:3). We have returned here to the ironic tone of who does Elihu really want to justify in his arguments and how does his wisdom work that out? Elihu has confidence in the “flawless” nature of his arguments which is enough to raise the hope of the reader that he will actually satisfy Job’s quest for a just response. If so, then comes the question; would Elihu have the last word in the Job and friends’ discourse?<sup>169</sup>

The fact that God is just and caring toward the “afflicted” against the oppression of the “Wicked” continues to be the focal point of Elihu’s arguments so far. Thus God does not “allow” free life for the wicked to continue their wickedness but rather נָתַן (accords)<sup>170</sup> justice to the afflicted

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<sup>168</sup>Like Job’s other three friends who emphasized the same point of much earlier. We shall elaborate on this worldview in our chapter 5 below.

<sup>169</sup> The answer is yes if we follow Clines’ (2006:889-926) submission in reconstructing the speeches of Elihu by bringing chapter 28 to be its final conclusion, thus to satisfy whoever might have been in the search for the place of wisdom. But in this dissertation we are not actually taking that route despite the enormous importance of Job 28 as a great wisdom hymn. We have seen how Elihu has given his best to raise the tense and prepared the mind of Job and his readers not towards him having the last word in Job’s dispute, the dispute has been between Job and God ironically, thus we shall see the significance of his speeches, especially this last two chapters toward such serious preparation for the coming of Yahweh (38ff) into the scene to engage with Job.

<sup>170</sup> Literally, “he grants” or “he gives” (cf. Gordis 1978:413)

(36:6). God does not גרע (turn)<sup>171</sup> his eyes from the righteous but more than that he שׁוֹב (seats)<sup>172</sup> them in places of honor and dignity (36:7), when the righteous are אָסַר (bound)<sup>173</sup> in fetters or לָכַד (caught)<sup>174</sup> in cords of affliction, which amazingly do happen (36:8). Though such God performs a revelatory act by “disclosing” their “wrongs” to them in terms of their “arrogance” in life toward God as well as other human beings. All this has a saving effect on the sufferer which seriously punctuates Elihu’s arguments so far (36:10). Obedience to God ensures the continuity of their lives in “prosperity”, but continual arrogance makes their lives to “expire” (36:12). Elihu further indicates a typical attitude of the “godless” when they face affliction they only “harbour anger” in their hearts (36:13) instead of taking notice of the significance of their suffering and appropriate the lessons that come with it. By implication, this godless imagery depicts Job from Elihu’s point of view. But ironically, Elihu’s angry nature may pose a puzzle to readers at this juncture to think that he too could fall into the temptation of this categorization seeing his propensity towards serious “anger” as depicted of him right from the beginning of his speeches (cf. 32:1-5).

Elihu offers some kind of hope to Job when he says that God would “lure” him from the “jaw of the Adversary” (36:16) which implies that all this tragedy will eventually come to an end. But the crucial question is, when? Meanwhile, Job is being too “obsessed” with lawsuit and litigation thus he needs wise caution here lest he gets “enticed” with his wealth and food as a bribe to God as we have discussed earlier. Any option of using wealth to buy his way out of his “adversary” is actually stricken off the page (36:19), and a good sense of focus on God against despair and obsession with self-pity is encouraged (36:20-21). Thus Job must wait for God to actually have the last word, not his friends, and not even himself.

From 36: 22ff Elihu turns his mind completely on the “sublime” nature of God in terms of God’s “power” which is displayed in the working of God in nature. An imperative is given to Job to “remember” to “extol” the creation of God among all other human beings. Thus the focal point for the mind of Job here should be the grandeur of God in the creation and not his self-

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<sup>171</sup> Literally, “takes away” or “remove” or “withdraws”

<sup>172</sup> Literally, “returns” or “restores”

<sup>173</sup> Literally, “tie-up”

<sup>174</sup> Literally, “be captured” or “trapped” (Clines 2006:812)

righteousness. The double “Behold” in 36:26-33 (especially 26, 30) punctuates the incomprehensibility of God’s ways to humanity in terms of God’s creation and control of the storms.

This wonder further occupies Elihu enough to make his heart “quake” and “leap” from its place (37:1). Thus he gives very urgent imperatives on Job to “Listen” and “Listen” to the rumble of God’s voice (37:2ff). The thunderous voice of God works wonders beyond human comprehension (37:5). For example, God “commands” the snow and torrential rain to fall on the earth (37:6).<sup>175</sup>

Job is emphatically enjoined to *הַאֲזִינָה לְאָזְנְךָ* (give ear to this [37:14]) in this way he may *וְעָמַד לְפָנָיו* (pause to consider the marvels of El [37:14b cf. Habel 1985: 497]).<sup>176</sup> Elihu then ends with very challenging rhetorical questions (37:15-22)<sup>177</sup> which form the bridge from his own beliefs to the following arguments of God in chapters 38-42 to finally bring us to the final climax of the encounter between Job and God (as Yahweh) through his experience of suffering. Elihu ends his speeches with the magisterial qualities of God as being the Almighty, just, and righteous beyond actual human comprehension. *לְכֹן יִרְאֶינָהוּ אֲנָשִׁים* (Therefore mortals fear him [37:24a]) and that is their wisdom.

### 3.3.4 Narrational/ Argumentative Texture and Pattern

The narrational texture focuses on the “voices” of which the “words in the text speak” (Robbins 1996a :15). We shall see the narrator’s discourse pattern in terms of how he introduces patterns in terms of how he introduces the characters in the texts and what they (the characters) do or represent in the text. Thus we shall identify the different use of voices and words in terms of making a statement, asking questions, giving directions and polemical confrontations. For the sake of progression in the textual discourses, the narrational texture also plays a useful role for in Robbins’ (1996a :15) words, “[u]sually the narrational texture reveals some kind of pattern that moves the discourse programmatically forward.” The actual person of the narrator could be

<sup>175</sup> We shall dwell more on the theme of God’s works in the world when we discuss the ideological-theological textures in chapter 6 of this dissertation.

<sup>176</sup> Clines (2006:808) translates “stop and consider the wonderful deeds of God”.

<sup>177</sup> We shall go into some detail on these rhetorical questions in our next chapter on intertextual textures and patterns of the Elihu speeches to see how they link up progressively with the conversation of God and Job (38ff).

obscure within the text usually left for the reader to discern who he might actually be. The narrator, then, in a given text is the voice that tells the story and speaks to the reader (cf. Weor 2012:170).<sup>178</sup> There could be instances where the narrator's voice/voices tell the story in the text without actually having the narrator as being one of the characters in the story through which his voice speaks (Robbins 1996b : 72 cf. Weor 2012:170).

In the Elihu speeches that we are studying here we shall concentrate on the narrator's opening remarks on the major speaker in this speeches and then try to discern how the main speaker alternates between his own thoughts and words to those of his addressees by the use of the אָמַר (i.e. to say, he said) as the governing verbs of speaking and "you" either singular or plural, depending on his actual target at a point, within the speeches.

The grand narrator or omniscient narrator opens with a prologue (32:1-6a cf. Habel 1985:446; Murphy 1981: 40-41; Clines 2006:705). The omniscient narrator further introduces the apology of Elihu in 32: 2, 6b by saying, אָלִיהוּ בֶן-בָּרְכַאֵל הַבּוּזִי וַיֹּאמֶר (So Elihu son of Barakel the Buzite spoke up).<sup>179</sup> He continues by following similar introductory remarks on Elihu almost the beginning of every chapter of the Elihu speeches for example;

- ❖ 34:1 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֵּעַן אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר (Then Elihu answered and said)
- ❖ 35:1 וַיֹּאמֶר וַיֵּעַן אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר (Then Elihu answered and said)
- ❖ 36:1 וַיִּסָּף אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר (Then Elihu continued and said)

After being introduced by the so-called omniscient narrator Elihu began his multifaceted speech in which he; speaks within himself (32:7-9, 15-22),<sup>180</sup> he speaks in intentions to the hearing of his audience in his "I will" phrases (32: 10,11, etc.). His use of pronouns helps us to know when

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<sup>178</sup> Weor (2012: 170) goes further to provide some New Testament examples of how narrational texture appears in the Gospels of Mark and John as discussed by Rhoads and Michie (1982) and Alan Culpepper (1983) respectively. Robbins (1984) also provides a socio-rhetorical reading of the Gospel of Mark, in which he interacted with the work of Rhoads and Michie cited in the preceding lines excluding that of Culpepper which appeared a year before his own. In another work Robbins (1994) also concentrates on the form and socio-rhetoric of Mark which also does not have any connective discussions with the works of Rhoads and Michie (1982) and Culpepper (1983) before it. Reasons for such oversight and/or negligence are not obvious.

<sup>179</sup> Based on NET Bible

<sup>180</sup> As a soliloquy

he alternates direct addressee.<sup>181</sup> He represents arguments and appeals to especially Job as sometimes to Job and his three friends when he summons them to hear what he has to say/ teach them (33:1,31-33 [to Job], 34:2-3; 35:2-4 [both Job and friends]). He uses legal and wisdom procedures in his approach which marks his speeches unique from others who have spoken to him<sup>182</sup>. He quotes Job's previous speeches and calls him and his friends to listen to the wisdom he offers them. Even though most of his speeches are in response to previous dialogues/ debates, Elihu uses rhetorical questions to draw his audience, both Job and friends, into a kind of a lawsuit in regards to their speeches, perceptions and conclusions about God. His last speech was more of a homily to both Job and friends (36:1-37:24) which travel with their minds as well as that of the reader into higher and deeper realms of life. Thus the speeches of Elihu could be seen as a monologic discourse which oscillates from being a response (argumentation) to a homily (admonition) to Job and his friends.

Going further into the argumentative texture/patterns in the speeches of Elihu we shall now concentrate on communication in terms of its role in relationships. Generally speaking, communication is a vehicle for a relationship. It helps to relate ideas from one person to another, these ideas may often come in terms of argumentation in order to convince an audience of something important that they need to know and/or do, or to persuade them towards a defined or hypothetical cause of action, or to dissuade them from any discerned cause of action that could be harmful or detrimental to the intended healthy relationship. This helps us to understand that argumentative texture in speech or text conveys cogent ideas with reasons which are often logically displayed within a discourse thus forming the inner texture of the discourse. Robbins (1996a:21) explains that thoughts or ideas as reasons that may be presented as assertions with reasonable supports which help to clarify them using opposites/contraries "and possibly presents short and elaborate counter arguments". In other instances, the argumentation elements could be qualitatively described and displayed in order to describe a given truth or reality. There are various rhetorical theories presented in the historical analysis of the argumentative texture of

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<sup>181</sup> Clines (2006:705) believes that Elihu's attention took a sharp turn at 32:15 from Job which left the speech more problematic in which the reader has to decide whether he is addressing Job's friends, and with Job included, or none of them but presenting a soliloquy. The present writer agrees with the last option on soliloquy.

<sup>182</sup> This would be further elaborated when we discuss the intertextuality of Job 32-37 below.

texts. Some of these tools include a state thesis (premise), rationale (reason), possible analogy, prove or disprove of the main (major) thesis (premise) (Robbins 1996a: 21ff).

Following Habel's (1985: 443ff) analysis of the Elihu speeches, it is agreeable that the argumentative texture is the dominant texture in the Elihu speeches given the intent and form of the Elihu speeches within Job 32-37. Thus we shall take a cursory view of the flow of Elihu's speeches from their beginning to see their argumentative flow up to the various famous climaxes that each speech contains and the ultimate ironic twist of the whole discourse. Elihu appeared as a "dissatisfied reader" according to Newsom (2003:200ff) who could not condone the seeming fickleness of Job's three wise friends in actually addressing Job to a silent acceptance of his fate thus persuading him to totally leave God out of the question of whom to blame. Although he was the youngest of all the conversation partners he "represents a reasonable position which argues that for God to appear before a human court is quite improper" (Habel 1985:443) thus he dared to step forward with his arguments with the hope of bringing the "proceedings to an orderly close himself."

Chapter 32-33 stand as Elihu's main self-introductions in which he presents his needs and reasons to participate in the Job and friends' discourse concerning the suffering and dilemma of Job on its possible reason and the search for whom to blame. Chapter 32 is generally taken as Elihu's apology (Habel 1985:440; Hartley 1988:431; Clines 2006:706) in which we could see his three main arguments (Habel 1985:446) that present and clarify the reasons for Elihu's intrusion in the whole conversation.

In chapter 33, Elihu extended his apology (Hartley 1988:437) to the setting of an imaginary court in which Job would have to stand to listen to his charges and have the space to respond. Thus he plans a fair play in treating Job's case from the legal perspective (Habel 1985:459-68; Hartley 1988:446). Elihu then calls on to "Job to answer" (vss. 31-33; Hartley 1988:448) which he never did, perhaps he has ironically become forsaken of words like his friends have been, thus the verbose Job of previous chapters has now suddenly become the silent one before another wordy person. It is noteworthy here that Job may not have the right words to respond to any of Elihu's counter arguments and charges of being in the wrong, yet, he has the heart that struggles against all the odds to maintain his righteousness and to survive the overwhelming life challenge posed

to him. Habel (1985:467) was right in observing that, “Job’s is an existential struggle as much as it is a rational debate over the value of a forensic encounter.”

The evidence that Elihu presents to Job and his friends in his argument on the presence and interactive response of God in justice help us to walk with him in his existential<sup>183</sup> exploration of what it means to live and not to die or perish. Habel (1985: 468ff) helps us to see the progressive textures of life against death in the existential evidences presented by Elihu which all have to do with human consciousness as a phenomenological sphere<sup>184</sup> of existence. These evidence ranges from dreams, suffering and healing by means of a mediator (33:15-28 cf. Gordis 1978:375; Habel 1985:468; Hartley 1988:443-444; Clines 2006:732). Elihu believes that God must have given him terrible dreams as correctives thus the “ultimate goal” in the dream (s) “is to rescue the individual<sup>185</sup> from a disastrous end in the Pit”<sup>186</sup> (Habel 1985:468).

Elihu moves further into discussing the issue of suffering from a positive existential perspective to point his audience to another meaning of why some people suffer in life even without knowing it (33:19-22 cf. Habel 1985:469; Hartley 1988:444).

He then moves to the third sphere of life in terms of its essential element for continuity and sustainability namely, healing. Thus he gives “evidence from healing” (Habel 1985:469-70; Hartley 1988:446; Clines (2006:735) to counter Job’s claim of the absence/silence/ inactivity of God in human life (33:23-28). He shows the mediating angel/messenger of God who instructs the sufferer for his own good (Newsom 2003:213) as well as announces the good news of the “ransom”<sup>187</sup> for the sufferer who is meant to motivate the sufferer to confessions in gratitude.

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<sup>183</sup> For more on the various dimensions and significance of existentialism from both an essential and pragmatic points of view see James W. Woefel (1973); Paul Tillich (1960).

<sup>184</sup> For more on phenomenological philosophy and consciousness see Edmund Husserl (1980, 1982, 1989 and 1990).

<sup>185</sup> In this case Job.

<sup>186</sup> The “Pit” is generally understood as the “abode of the dead,” a synonym to Sheol which signifies the doom of the recalcitrant. Thus Habel (1985:469) rightly explains the numinous effect of the imageries in this pericope which sounds the warning to the consciousness of the sufferer that ‘Pit’ and ‘Death’ “invade the world of sufferers and threaten their existence through illness.” From a literary perspective the alliterative juxtaposition of the words *ṣaḥat*, “Pit” and *šelāh*, “channel” in verse 18 is interesting (Habel 1985:468-69; Hartley 1988:444).

<sup>187</sup> This ransom could mean something like “redemption money (Ex. 21:30; 30:12) or a substitutionary vehicle for rescuing life of someone in danger (Isa. 43:3; cf. Job 36:18; Matt. 20:28).” Seeing that none of these realistic possibilities is clear from our text in terms of what the angelic mediator has to offer in Job’s behalf, then Habel (1985:470) goes further to help us see the possibility of pointing to some action of the sufferer that could serve as payment to ransom him from his present situation, saying, “Although the person has sinned (v. 27), it is apparently

In this analogy, Elihu describes what optimistic faith may denote in this context. It counters the fear prompted by despair and anxiety (cf. 9:14-24) which negatively characterise the steps for an existential degeneration (cf. Woefel 1973) thus accentuating the theme of grace in terms of forgiveness, restoration and sustainability. This graciousness of the angelic mediator and God's response provide the elemental reason and contents of the sufferer's testimony (33:26-28). Elihu then is not just presenting an argument here for the sake of it, but rather he is playing a psychological role of psychotherapist within an essentialistic paradigm that takes the question of existentialism even further into the fabric of human existence (cf. Tillich 1960).<sup>188</sup> The hypothetical prayer of the sufferer and his acceptance by God into a restored wholeness of life anticipates Job's acquittal by God in the closing prose section of the book (42:7ff) which accentuates Job's righteousness<sup>189</sup> before God and people in the community thus dismissing every suspicion of his friends against him<sup>190</sup> (cf. Hartley 1988:447). Elihu then tactically takes a quick turn in his tact to play psychological trick on Job somehow to have him admit his sinfulness, that he instead of God has perverted what is right (33:27; Hartley 1988:445), but this would be a dead end to Elihu's wisdom ironically seeing the former resolution of Job in which he vows never to admit that he is wrong in any way even if such tenacity on his integrity calls for his very life (27:6). Elihu then finishes this so called psychological trick or speech (hardly argument, so to speak) by a positive confession of God's grace that restores the healed and restored sufferer from going down into the pit but rather now he is brought into new life into the

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the pleading of the advocate and his willingness to stand surety for the sufferer based on his past record that serves as the ransom." On another side of the argument on the ambiguity of the nature of the ransom that could be offered, Hartley (1988:446) thinks of "[w]hatever it is" that "compensates the divine justice for that person's failure," could serve as the ransom in question not really some kind of money or action, thus leaving the question on the nature of the ransom still open for further suggestions. After wide reading of various scholarly suggestions, Clines (2006:737-38) concluded that there may be nothing like a definite ransom to be offered to anyone on behalf of the sufferer thus the phrase, 'I have found a ransom for him' could only be a poetic way of casting an idiom which could mean 'there is no good reason for him to die.' Thus going back to the main thrust of this third sphere of conscious evidences, healing here comes as a surety for continual survival, the aversion of death and the accentuation of graciousness, and mercy which guarantees free forgiveness to the sufferer (cf. Clines 2006:737f).

<sup>188</sup> From the psychological approach of Elihu, Clines (2006:740) believes that if he plans to make Job to confess to anything then he is "much mistaken" because of the kind of man Job has been especially when it comes to the question of his integrity before both God and people. Nevertheless, his speech here serves as a good counter to Eliphaz's pessimism in chapter 5:1ff that there is no one, not even among the "heavenly beings" who would serve as advocate or vouch for Job before God (Hartley 1988:446). Thus this has a good potential towards an optimism in Job's mind on what may lie ahead for him.

<sup>189</sup> Hartley (1988:447) agreeably explains that, "Here righteousness means that God accepts him as an upright and blameless person. All suspicion of wrongdoing that has been raised against him during his affliction fades into the dusk."

<sup>190</sup> As seen at various points in their previous arguments in order to convince Job of his sinfulness.

life of God (33:28).<sup>191</sup> Elihu's speech in these three argumentation strands has significantly pointed to a systematic way for Job to understand the person and work of God actually and then come to terms with the disciplinary/profitable significance of his suffering instead of being melancholy and pessimistic about the role and the person of God in his suffering.

After the theme of God's graciousness in chapter 33, Elihu goes further to speak in defence of the justice of God in chapter 34 (cf. Habel 1985:472ff). After his imaginary setting of the court in his speech by way of uttering summons to Job and others for careful listening and judgment of the argument he was about to present (34:1-4), Elihu as usual cited Job's previous claims of his innocence which was violated by God, when God takes away "my right" said Job on Elihu's lips (34:5-6). Elihu then seriously indicted Job of being a wicked and evil man for the company he keeps (34:7-9). Elihu presents his argument from 34:10-30 which is characterised by the motifs of testimony and advocacy<sup>192</sup> on the justice of God (Habel 1985:482; Hartley 1988:453-54; Clines' (2006:771). He reaches a certain conclusion here on the freedom of God not only in dispensing justice to everyone but also in owning the life of every person as well as the whole world (34:13-15). In this concluding remark, Elihu makes it clear that the right of God to govern the world with justice is inherently in God's self (Hartley 1988:454) thus every life is contingent to the freedom<sup>193</sup> of God's will and power (vv. 14, 15).<sup>194</sup>

After making his points on the just character of God in the foregoing verses, Elihu goes further into the heart of his argument in which he concentrates on his attempt in "defence" of God in

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<sup>191</sup> If Job had succumbed to this suggestive reasoning he would have given some significant message about his new caught view of God in what might be the end of his suffering. Hartley (1988:447-48) further explains that, "Such a confession is an essential step in sealing his reconciliation. By witnessing to God's mercy the redeemed person glorifies God before the entire community."

<sup>192</sup> The motif of testimony and advocacy used here is borrowed from the characterization of Walter Bruggemann's programmatic book *Old Testament Theology* (1997).

<sup>193</sup> The fact that God is not a viceroy to anybody or anything does not necessarily guarantee his justice if he chooses to be a tyrant, nor had he been under the pressure of an higher authority, he would have been constrained to do justice, if he chooses to be shrewd/dubious/wicked and unjust (cf. Clines 2006:774), thus God's justice comes neither from God's freedom by itself nor from any other pressure outside God but rather inherently from God's self as God's will.

<sup>194</sup> Given the implied functions of the rhetorical question of verse 13 Habel (1985:482) asserts that, "For Elihu it is El himself, not humans or other deities, who rule the entire world with absolute authority, and he does so in his own right." In like manner Hartley (1988:454) agreeably points out that, "Since all human existence is contingent on God's will, a person risks his life in contesting God's lordship." This then by implication could be a sounding board to Job and Job interpreters of their perception of God and the emotive derive of passing seeming arbitrary judgment on the freedom and power of God that is beyond us all.

terms of God's governance of the world (34:16-30 cf. Gordis (1978:382, 388; Habel 1985:473; Hartley 1988:456; Clines 2006:777). Thus in his response to Job's charges of injustice against God, Elihu brings two honorific titles of God to bear namely "the Righteous one (*ṣaddîq*) and the Mighty One (*kabbîr*; cf. Ps. 99:4)" (Hartley 1988:457). The juxtaposition of these two divine virtues in terms of the essence of God within the framework of God's justice in governance pose a huge challenge to Job's thinking pattern in that, "if it is true that God fails to judge justly, as Job complains, then Job's belief that God is all-powerful is invalid. But since Job still thinks that God rules supremely, then he is surely mistaken in his charge that God hates justice" (Hartley 1988:457).<sup>195</sup><sup>196</sup> The acts of God in controlling rulers of the world in terms of their proper scrutiny, life and death and the arbitration between the rich and poor accentuates the justice of God (34:18-20 cf. Habel 1985:483; Clines 2006:778).

In the following verses of Elihu's continuing argument on the just governance of God, that is 34:21-30, Elihu in an emphatic way focuses on how God deals with injustice as a means of a balance of power or ensuring order in an imbalance society where the poor and the vulnerable become the victims of the dehumanization of the mighty ones, that is those in privileged positions of authority (Habel 1985:484).

Elihu presents his "rationale for argument" in 34:24-28 (cf. Habel 1985:480) in which he explains the internal and external spheres of God's operation in God's execution of justice as the display of God's might, wisdom and righteousness (Hartley 1988:456-58; Clines 2006:781).

So far we could see from the foregoing discussion that the justice of God is both "absolute" and "universal" and its function is both "retaliatory" and redemptive" (Habel 1985:485). The capacity to hear and respond appropriately is entirely God's prerogative. Thus the author leaves

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<sup>195</sup> As observed by Clines (2006:775-76) God's justice comes inherently from God's essence, God's self and will and not merely from God's might or power. Nevertheless, in ancient philosophy of governance justice and power are essentially intertwined (Hartley 1988:457) but it does not necessarily mean that one must give rise to the other but rather the evidence of good governance has both as essential characteristics.

<sup>196</sup> Thus Elihu uses logical and theological points of reasons to contradict, challenge and even dismiss Job's perception that the Just One could in anyway act unjustly (Habel 1985:483). Clines (2006:777) in light of Elihu's argument in this verse shows the heinousness of what Job was actually trying to entertain in his mind or a stance he was willing to maintain when he says, "If declaring the innocent guilty is a matter of reproach in law and prophets and writings (Exod. 23:7; Isa. 5:23; Prov. 17:15), how much worse it must be when the innocent is himself the mighty just one!" Perhaps this did not occur to Job.

the questions open perhaps for readers of all ages to fill in the blanks.<sup>197</sup> Thus God remains free for dispensing justice and grace. Justice to those who have been oppressed by corrupt leaders, and now is heard and rescued in one way or another, and grace to those allowed to come before him and “behold his face”, thus to be accommodated before the one who does not reject all. Elihu’s thesis still stands that God is not guilty of injustice in light of universal sustenance and redemptive justice even in the face of a seeming unbridled tyranny or injustices in the world.<sup>198199</sup>

Elihu’s discourse in chapter 35 is his response to Job’s challenges about God’s injustice. Elihu still maintains his assumed office of an arbiter between Job and God, thus speaking strictly in defence of God seeing that the possibility of Job to call God to stand trial before him is “a sheer impossibility” (Habel 1985:488). In this turn of argumentation Elihu confronts Job with the case of the transcendence of God and its relation to the contamination as human corruption, in other words, Elihu argues within nexus of deeds and consequences in light of human righteousness and sin before the essence of God in which he decisively and ironically challenges and even dismisses the symmetrical tradition of deeds and consequences between human acts of the being of God (35:1-16). In this argument, we shall see how the transcendental God responded to the silence of God<sup>200</sup> in human self-awareness. Habel (1985:488) helps us to understand the categorical nature of Elihu’s arguments between verses 5-8 and 9-13 which is “akin to a syllogism in the Aristotelian tradition.”<sup>201</sup>

Elihu’s argument is tailored within wisdom pedagogy<sup>202</sup> in which he asks his audience to intently look at, and observe universal phenomena which themselves stand as the testament<sup>203</sup> and

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<sup>197</sup> This may not be in the strict sense of the word but rather it appears so now that the conversation still continues.

<sup>198</sup> Hartley (1988:459) rightly observes here that, “God’s slowness to act does not deny his sovereignty.” In like manner Peter’s explanation of God’s slowness is appropriate here too when he says, “The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance” (I Peter 3:9).

<sup>199</sup> This point could stand as another unique accent placed within the overall arguments by Elihu’s speeches.

<sup>200</sup> Which in other words is known as the *dues absconditus*; “the hidden transcendence and detachment of El” (Habel 1985:488).

<sup>201</sup> This could be another point of departure for further discussions beyond the scope of this dissertation.

<sup>202</sup> This pedagogical paradigm often takes the phenomena of creation as its point of departure from which it draws its line of reasoning within the interactive order of creation (cf. Hartley 1988:465).

<sup>203</sup> By implication Hartley (1988:465) rightly observes that the “sheer vastness of the solid blue sky overwhelms a person with a feeling of blank wonder.” Thus leading one to see the wonder of God’s greatness and one’s own “smallness” in the world of God (cf. Ps. 8:3-4).

symbol of God's self in terms of God's imposing presence and might (Habel 1985:491).<sup>204</sup> Habel (1985:491) agreeably observes that "the perceptive wisdom student discerns truth through the observation of nature."<sup>205</sup>

Elihu's case on the detachment of God from the essential world stresses God's transcendence which is enough to serve as a sounding board to Job's attempt to summon God to stand and answer the charges that he (Job) would like to confront God with. Thus this accent on God's transcendence trivialises the significance of Job's personal attempt to bring God under control even if God is in the wrong according to his perception and/or experiences.

Elihu refers his audience to natural theology as a potent handmaiden to wisdom theology in which he points the humans to learn wisdom as the acknowledgement of the reality of God in the structure of the cosmos. The animals and birds also suffer in many ways, yet their total dependence on the order of nature as the ordained order of God's working in the world is such a remarkable point of departure for wisdom traditional thinking and pedagogy.<sup>206</sup> It is ironic to note that both Job and Elihu in various ways have cited the fact that the wisdom of God can be discerned in the order of nature.<sup>207</sup>

Habel (1985:492) succinctly summarizes the significance of Elihu's argument in this pericope in the following words; "Elihu's argument implies a cosmology in which the earthly domain is a self-contained universe where human actions are restricted in their influence on fellow people in that world; El becomes a detached high god." The present writer agrees more with Clines (2006:797) who differs with Habel on this line of thought using Elihu's entire argument, or rather focusing on the emphatic junctures of Elihu's argument to present the fact that God is actively involved in the same universe (world) in which Job and all humans live. This could be a spontaneous argument by Elihu, strong enough to silence Job's outburst against God, yet, if one

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<sup>204</sup> "God's exalted detachment protects his transcendence. He is above anything that happens on earth" (Habel 1985:491). Thus his detachment here does not concern his active presence so to speak, but rather accentuates his distinctiveness from the created world and so points humans to God's transcendent otherness.

<sup>205</sup> This again brings up for us the reality of natural theology which has been a contested issues among some conservative protestant theologians as earlier noted in Kassa (2014)

<sup>206</sup> Cf. Proverbs 6:6-8; 8:22-31; 26:2; 30:15-23; Psalms 104:21; 147:9.

<sup>207</sup> Cf. Job 12:7-9 the passage to which Elihu is probably alluding to in our present passage of discussion (cf. Habel 1985:492).

juxtaposes it with God's introductory remarks on Job's life,<sup>208</sup> one sees nothing but an ironic depiction of being wise by Elihu towards Job in particular. In the last section of Elihu's argument which constitutes the second major defence of God's justice (cf. Habel 1985:494). It is agreeable that chapters 36:1-37-24 comprise Elihu's fourth speech (Hartley 1988:467 cf. Habel 1985:494).<sup>209</sup>

After his short introductory remark to his audience, not in terms of calling them to give ear and listen but rather than they should bear with him which suggests that he needs them to be more "patient" (Hartley 1988:468) with him as he finally brings his points home in the justice of God within the nexus of the affliction of the righteous and the power of a just God which in other words constitutes a high theodicy texture which ran like a golden thread in the whole Elihu speeches as well as the entire Job saga. Elihu places accent on the nature of his knowledge, pointing out that it is something different from ordinary human philosophy because it is a flawless argument received from afar which makes its intent of proving God in the right a basic point of concern beyond Job's personal interest or point of argumentation (cf. 36:3).

Elihu takes a giant leap from being a disputatious respondent to Job and his friends to a sublime wisdom teacher, thus now presenting a testimonial argument rather than a disputatious argument not with the aim of answering questions on the puzzle of life but by way of calling for an existential sublimity<sup>210</sup> for the unending questions that characterize the mystery of God in the mystery of creation and human life.

Elihu thus presents God as the Mighty One<sup>211</sup> or as in the words of Habel, 'the Champion' who stands sure as the shield of the oppressed/afflicted ones by means of distributive justice when he

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<sup>208</sup> Cf. Job 1:1-5; 2:1ff

<sup>209</sup> We may not exhaustively discuss this speech *in toto* here for the sake of space and our focal point of interest namely, tracing the argumentative texture/pattern of the Elihu speeches. Therefore, we would try to draw attention for closer consideration on any major sub-sections of the speeches wherever necessarily.

<sup>210</sup> This helps us to see, from a psychotherapeutic perspective, the sublimative significance of Elihu speeches especially within chapters 36-37. Sublimation in this regards could be seen from Tillich's (1960:8) explanation, as the process of making something that is not sublime, to be sublime. Thus "the sublime is the highest potentiality of life." It is something qualitative, new, creative, and freely given in speech or writing. The turn of Elihu's speech here leads to such important climax.

<sup>211</sup> It is noteworthy here that God's might does not override his sense of justice in the sense that "God's own power does not imply contempt for the powerless" (Clines 2006:856-57). Habel (1985:506) sees God's "might" as being "courageous" which Clines (2006:857) rightly sees as being "out of place" in this context considering Elihu's view of the essential existence of God. This rhetoric accentuates the fact that God "never governs capriciously or out of

slays (cf. Dhorme 1967:540) the רָשָׁע the “wicked” and liberates the victims of oppression,<sup>212</sup> and dignifies them with the kings by giving them good positions of authority (vs.7, cf. Hartley 1988:470). This kind of God-image is what Job and many contemporary readers are struggling to understand from a pragmatic, subjective point of view (cf. Habel 1985:506). Job had previously been preoccupied with a critical view on God’s power, justice and invariably morality,<sup>213</sup> but Elihu’s response here could suffice to display to Job the reality of God as not being distant and totally silent as being unconcerned with the affliction of people but rather that God is always constant and engaged in distributive justice.<sup>214,215</sup>

Elihu then further explains what he has already brought before his audience on God’s just treatment of people, the righteous afflicted and the wicked afflicted (36:8-15). In that God uses affliction<sup>216</sup> even to the righteous for a pedagogical function to disclose to them their wrongs too as a warning (Habel 1985: 495, 507; Hartley 1988:471, 472; Clines 2006:859-862).

As a practical wisdom teacher and a prophetic voice, Elihu then applies his thrust of the whole discourse concerning the role of God in human affliction from a didactic point to view thus providing a sort of an “admonition to Job” on what to take note of in his search for reason(s) for his suffering even though he knew himself to be righteous. The point of application for Job here

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fear” (Hartley 1988:470) thus God’s decisions are very free and reliable, although not always very clear for everyone to understand their depth and purpose at once.

<sup>212</sup> In other words, “God does not continue to support the life of the wicked so that they may prosper indefinitely in spite of their evil ways” (Hartley 1988:470), otherwise God would not be just to the victims of oppression.

<sup>213</sup> Cf. chapter 10: 1ff 12: 13ff

<sup>214</sup> If we are to take the notion of “distributive justice” somewhat seriously and far enough we would ironically run into the same resistant contest of Job seeing that he does not actually get what he deserves even though some people may think so (for example, his three friends in the debates). But then following Elihu’s trend of thought carefully we could notice that Elihu did not say, as Job’s friends have earlier implied that Job got what he deserved, but rather he kind of try to sensitize Job that God is aware of his affliction, and the eyes of God are not turned away from the righteous (vs. 7). By implication sooner or later Job’s right would be upheld and he would eventually be justified if he is truly innocent, thus this speech helps to prepare Job in a significant way for a conscious anticipation of what would happen in chapter 42:7-17.

<sup>215</sup> Hartley (1988:470) helps to add flavor to our understanding of God’s justice in this passage, in addition to what we call ‘distributive justice’ he has “compassionate justice” which in many ways does not actually settles the nature of justice in Job but rather helps to open doors for further discussions of the same.

<sup>216</sup> Clines (2006:858f) does not agree with the notion of God actually bringing the affliction according to his understanding of Elihu’s argument here, but rather he puts accent on the behavior of the afflicted especially during the affliction. We shall return to such presupposition in chapter 6 below on our discussion on the ideological-theological texture of the speeches of Elihu in search of the causation of affliction in the ancient Near Eastern worldview.

is a serious caution against the obsession with wealth<sup>217</sup> and “luxurious food” which could entice him into pride which Elihu earlier interpreted as evil/wickedness in the sight of God (36:16-19)<sup>218</sup>. Elihu sounds severe warning about the enticement of immaterial wealth,<sup>219</sup> which also could lure him to evil when he says,

אַל־תִּשְׁאַף הַלֵּלָהּ לַעֲלוֹת עִמִּים תִּהְתָּחֵם:

הַשָּׁמַר אֶל־תִּפְּוֹן אֶל־אֲוֹן כִּי־עַל־זֶה בְּתַרְתָּ מַעֲנִי:

“Do not yearn for night time when peoples disappear from their place.

Beware! Do not turn to evil!

For this end, you were tried with affliction” (36:20-21; cf. Habel 1985:20-21).<sup>220</sup>

After revealing to Job the probable purpose for his suffering even though as a righteous person, one of the salient questions on the mind of Job would now be directed on God perhaps even away from his immediate suffering to probably as; ‘If what Elihu is saying is true then what kind of being is this God?’ Thus Elihu runs into his last testimonial argument about God, this time around with more concentration on the active attitude of God in terms of the ability to create and sustain everything in the universe (36:22ff). Elihu testifies saying,

הֲוֹ־אֵל יִשְׁגִּיב בְּכֹחוֹ מִי כָמֹהוּ מִנְרָה:

מִי־פָקֵד עָלָיו דְּרָכָו וּמִי־אָמַר פְּעֻלָּתָ עֲוֹנָה:

“Behold, El is sublime in his power.

<sup>217</sup> The Hebrew *sepeq* here means, ‘riches as generous/ample gifts’ or ‘large bribe’ (cf. Gordis 1978:417).

<sup>218</sup> In other words, Habel (1985:509; cf. Clines 2006:863) helps us to see the significance of this point of argument from a forensic contextual point of view which shows the limitation of wealth as a means to paying off or buying off one’s way before the divine court. This is enough prove to soften the quest of Job towards the impossible, thus trying to assuage him to only keep down and be submissive to the mystery of God.

<sup>219</sup> The play on the word *sûl* as being lured or enticed by God on the one hand and on the other by wealth/riches indicates Elihu’s seriousness in penetrating Job’s motives (cf. Hartley 1988:474).

<sup>220</sup> Even though a great chunk of these verses have been abandoned for example by the NAB for not even translating verses 16-20 altogether for their notorious difficulty (cf. Clines 2006:864). Nevertheless, Elihu’s appeal to Job to learn from his affliction and be saved or sustained by them rather than to succumb to depressing pessimism makes more sense of them within the ironic context of Job’s search for the legitimacy/significance of his suffering.

What counsellor can compare with him?

Who appoints his way for him?

Who says, ‘You created the wrong way?’ (36:22-23; Habel 1985:495).

The point of Elihu’s testimonial argument here is God’s freedom<sup>221</sup> and perfection as God’s uniqueness, taking creation as a point of departure<sup>222</sup>. Having made this assertion clear, Elihu goes a little further to call Job’s attention to what he ought to concentrate about in the question of the sublime God as of primary importance saying,

זָכֹר כִּי־תִשְׁגִּיא פְעָלוֹ אֲשֶׁר שָׂרְרוּ אַנְשֵׁים:

כָּל־אָדָם הָזוּי־כֹּחַ אֲנֹשׁ יִבִּיט מִרְהוֹק:

“Remember, then, to extol his creation that humans hail with the song. All humanity has seen it; mortals beheld it from afar” (36:24-25; Habel 1985:495).<sup>223</sup>The preceding is a call for Job to remember and marvel at the available and not so easy to understand the creation of God (Habel 1985:510, 511; Clines 2006:867).<sup>224</sup> It is both marvellous and ironic that the young Elihu could see beyond the piercing eyes of the aged. He sees God in creation beyond what many saw, and he believed that to acknowledge God’s mystery in awe is more profitable than tenaciously holding onto an unfathomable idea.

Elihu further presents important points of God’s wonder in creation that call not for obsessive complain or even settled scientific understanding and explanation but rather a striking wonder

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<sup>221</sup> This is accentuated with the fact that, “El is his own counselor; he needs no instruction from another divine being in the performance of his task as creator or ruler of the cosmos (cf. Isa. 40:12-15)” (Habel 1985:510). God’s freedom is seen in God’s supreme choice of how best to teach discipline to his people. Hartley (1988:475) captures the theological significant image of God in Elihu’s argument well when he wrote about God the teacher saying, “As a caring teacher he uses discipline to prod his students along the right paths, not as capricious tyrant who enjoys seeing his servants suffer.” Clines (2006:865; cf. Newsom 2003:220) also catches the pedagogical significance of the works of God in creation as the great teacher who provides instruction to his people to which brings “enlightenment through every evidence of his working.”

<sup>222</sup> This gives the discourse a new focal point, hence “Behold, El” (v. 22 cf. Habel 1985:510) which turns the mind of Elihu’s audience to the person of God as of primary importance in the continuing discourse. This gives the verses from here onwards a very deep wisdom theological casting.

<sup>223</sup> “from afar” in this verse could be the reality of catching a glimpse of God’s grand book within natural order not by positional choice but as a result of human natural limitation (cf. Clines 2006:868).

<sup>224</sup> Elihu’s didactic maneuver from being warning to an exhortation is impressive (cf. Habel 1985:510).

that leads to true sublimity. He points to God's power as the primary cause of the storms (Habel 1985:496). This strikes our mind with the ancient Near Eastern (especially Israelite) worldviews of the principle of causality (see Von Rad 1966:166ff; 2005:125ff; Habel 1985:496; Amit 1987:385-400; 2012:105-121; Gericke 2015:86-112; Clines 2006:871-73).<sup>225</sup>

Elihu continues his climactic discourse on the person and activities of God in the world from creation point of view, moving now into a subjective dimension of the testimonial argument in which he tells the effect of the mighty works of God in his personal life saying, "Indeed, this makes my heart quake and leap from its place" (37:1 cf. Habel 1985:496). Thus through God's roaring voice in creation (37:2-13),<sup>226</sup><sup>227</sup> Elihu asserts that "He works wonders we cannot comprehend" (37:5b cf. Habel 1985:496). The rest of the chapter (37:14-24) contains solemn admonitions to his audience to consciously consider and marvel at the works of God and remain with the sublime ironic truth of God's activities and absence, speech and silence that challenge the question of being wise as being just.<sup>228</sup>

### 3.3.5 Opening-Closing Texture and Pattern<sup>229</sup>

The opening-closing texture is an interactive texture with the aforementioned textures namely the repetition, progression and narration/argumentative textures. The opening-middle-closing

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<sup>225</sup> The scholars cited here are important, if note the leading voices in terms of the historical discourse on Dual Causality Principle (DCP) and its recent challenge to causation theory by Jaco Gericke thus taking the arguments of Von Rad and Amit further.

<sup>226</sup> It is ironic here to see Habel's (1985:512) observation of the experiences of the rumbling (thunderous) voice of God also in the life of Job which contrasts Elihu's experience saying, "Job had also experienced *rogez*, but as turmoil and trouble (3:26; cf. 14:1), not as a wondrous response of faith."

<sup>227</sup> This lionie depiction of God and the rumbling of the mighty thunder is enough to paralyze a person from approaching God (cf. Hartley 1988:480). Here one would wonder if Elihu is trying to use another tactic to scare Job from his attempt of confronting God. Whatever might be the case, the irony of presenting a scary God that is worth listening to and respecting is striking. Clines's (2006:874) observation is interesting when he notes from Elihu's point of view that God's thunder is not mere noise, thus, "What is to be heard in the thunder is the voice of God, and the inarticulate and wordless thunder is therefore yet another of his manifold ways of communicating with humans—a leading theme in Elihu's speech."

<sup>228</sup> This leaves Job and his friends (and his readers) marveling not only on the mystery of God but on what lies ahead for Job in the near future (to the reader, in the chapters the follow the Elihu speeches namely, 38-42).

<sup>229</sup> Compared to Robbins (1996a:19ff) one could see that there is a little change from Robbins' proposed pattern and/or example which he calls the "Opening-middle-closing texture and patterns." In this case we would preferably work more closely with the opening and closing textures as the major framework that provides both entry and exit into the speeches of Elihu. We would not have a definite sub-heading called the "middle texture" because of the difficulty to actually know that exact central point of Elihu's discourse as it could often be easily discernible in a narrative. Nevertheless, we shall incorporate the middle texture(s) within our discussion as the case may be, but there would not be a definite textual demarcation ascertaining that pattern of speech in the Elihu speeches.

texture “resides in the nature of the beginning, body and conclusion of a section of discourse” (Robbins 1996:19). The exact demarcation of the starting points and end of this texture has not achieved a finally (agreed) perspectives by various scholars. This suggests to us that in comparison with different scholars’ point of view and the nature of the text for the actual point of departure in approaching the text there would be variations of textual units. Robbins (1996:19) further explains that “Variations may occur because there are different kinds of opening, various kinds of middles, and different kinds of closings.” These variations are seen by Weor (2012:166) as the reasons behind the “complexities”<sup>230</sup> within the text in light of the opening-middle-closing texture. In our discussion of the Elihu speeches in this dissertation, we shall concentrate more on the speech markers from the narrational point of view. The words like “Now”, “Then”, “Therefore”, would guide our demarcation of the opening-middle-closing texture of his discourse.<sup>231</sup> His use of imperatives, on the other hand, would help us to see the progression of the speech in terms of its climax within the various discernible progression steps.

### **3.3.5.1 Opening Textures and Patterns in Job 32-37**

Weor (2012: 166) in explaining the meaning of the opening texture of the text deviates slightly from Robbins’ (1996a:19ff) perspective in order to discern the “beginning” of the textual discourse to a more hermeneutical presupposition in terms of either the actual ownership or intended reception of the text when he explains, following Wales (2001:278f), “open-ended” perspective to assert that the text is open to every or any reader at any point in time. This suggests that “[a]n open text refers to a kind of interpretive interaction between the text and the reader” (Weor 2012:166). It is clear that almost everything here is about hermeneutics, that is, the interactive enterprise of meaning-making out of a text, towards a text or within a text. The latter is of more interest and importance to the contemporary reader in light of Robbins’ (1996) proposals. At this stage, we do not want to go as far as trying to see how the texts influence the reader per se, but rather what features does the text have at a point in time which provides various influential elements to the reader at any point in time. Thus following Robbins

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<sup>230</sup> Robbins (1996: 2ff) explains these complexities in light of the “multiple textures” of the text.

<sup>231</sup> There would not be much details in the discussions because of our space constraints.

(1996:19f) the meaning of an “opening texture”<sup>232</sup> of a text is the idea of searching for the beginning of the various possible *units* of a given text or groups of texts.

As could be discerned in our preceding discussions, among recent scholars, Habel (1985), Hartley (1988) and Clines (2006) are very helpful for our discussion of the various elemental points at which new sections (segments/units) are opened<sup>233</sup> within the Elihu speeches. This is because of their close interest and effort in providing us with the working knowledge of the textual demarcations within the discourse from interactive textual critical perspectives.<sup>234</sup> Following the MT on 32:1 Habel (1985:440) unlike Hartley (1988:428) translates the ׀ that opens the Elihu speeches as “So” (cf. Gordis 1965; NIV)<sup>235</sup> but in the present writer’s perspective the fitting translation would have been “But” in order to open with a contrast in reference to the probable intention of Job’s friends to speak sense to him so that he could see enough reason to come to terms with his sinfulness as a causal point of departure for his suffering.

On the next opening of the following segment of Elihu response, Hartley (1988:431) unlike Habel (1985:441) and Clines (2006:705) sees the function of ׀ as “then”<sup>236</sup> which opens a new segment of the Elihu “apology” speech for being a young man trying to address elders. Both Habel (1985:440) and Clines (2006:705) take 32:1-6a to be the prose prologue or preface to the speeches of Elihu. Although Hartley (1988:428) takes verses 32:1-5 to be the main introduction cast in prose form which strictly focuses on the person of Elihu and not serves as an introduction to his speeches.

Habel (1985:441) takes 32:6b-10 as Elihu’s presentation of his “right to answer” to both Job and his three friends when he ran short of what to actually say to either solve Job’s problem or to silence his perceived arrogance. Hartley (1988:431) takes a broader view of Elihu’s self-introductory discourse which presents Elihu’s “apology” as a young man to speak to and before

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<sup>232</sup> The point of concern here is not on “an open text” (Weor 2012: 166 cf. Wales 2001:278) but rather an opening texture of a text (Robbins 1996:19).

<sup>233</sup> For focal reasons, and change of topics.

<sup>234</sup> Others like Gordis (1978) and Dhorme (1967) would also be consulted where necessarily needed, even though our three focal scholars for the textual critical study here have used them meaningfully as well.

<sup>235</sup> Dhorme’s (1967) “And” also supplies a good translation of the conjunction in question.

<sup>236</sup> Habel also has the particle translated as “then” but it does not mark a new segment of the speeches in his textual division.

the elders (32:6-22).<sup>237</sup> Clines (2006: 705) somehow came very close to agreeing with Habel on the textual demarcation in his consideration of 32:6b as the beginning of a unit, but unlike others, he quickly stops at verse 7 based on his understanding of the strophic divisions of the chapter.

Both Habel (1985:441) and Hartley (1988:431) agree in their translation of the interjection particle הִנֵּה as “Behold” (32:11) which marks a new segment of the speech in Habel’s discussion. Thus he tries to draw their attention to think of how much caution he has taken before actually deciding to come into the discussion. This interjection is used with a contrasting conjunction as, וְעַד־יָכֹם “But to you...”, (32:12)<sup>238</sup> in order to open his critical evaluation of the effort of Job’s friends so far, which actually presents no suitable “arbiter”(Habel 1985:441) to satisfactorily “refute” Job (Hartley 1988:432) in answer to the “charges” he arguably presents (Habel 1985:441). Although Habel (1985:441) agreeably describes 32:17-22 as Elihu’s presentation of his “compulsion to answer”, the present writer would like to agree more with Clines’ (2006:705) strophic demarcation in that verses 19-22 form a full strophic segment. Thus the interjection, הִנֵּה “behold” that opens verse 19-22 serves as an opening texture to the reality of Elihu’s inner emotional state in light of the arguments between Job and his friends. If this suggestion makes good sense then verses 19-22 provide the reader with the right section that we can call, in the words of Habel as noted above, Elihu’s “compulsion to answer” Job and his three friends.

Chapter 33:1 opens with a conjunction and an adverb at the same time thus, וְאַיִן. Some scholars like Habel (1985:455) neglected the conjunction and translated the adverb as an adverb of time, as “now”. Hartley (1988:437) stays close to the MT when he translated the construction as “But now” (NIV). Clines (2006:689) seemingly takes the adverb to be the conjunction when he opens the section with only “but” as his translation of וְאַיִן. It is agreeable in Clines’ perspective that this opening texture, following the above translations does not present the reader with “a logical connective” as in other translations which neglect the conjunction and translate the adverb as “wherefore” (KJV), “therefore” (NAB), “Howbeit” (RV), etc. thus in the present writer’s

<sup>237</sup> Thus unlike Habel and Clines, Hartley neglects some of the inner sections or segments of the Elihu “apology”. Our close examination of the sections may help us to see the potential variety of segments in the speeches if we try to consider how various grammatical markers are used to open and close the speeches.

<sup>238</sup>Present writer’s translation, others have it differently, many neglecting the conjunction to say, “To you” (Habel 1985:441) or “On you” (Dhorme 1967:478) etc.

perspective the rendering “But however” helps much better to see the opening texture as “a sign of a new topic” (Clines 2006:689).<sup>239</sup>

In examining Elihu’s “restatement of Job’s case”, Habel (1985:455) agreeably discerned the segment of such space for presentation of charges against Job within verses 8-11. This also agrees with Clines’ (2006:705) strophic division of the segment. Habel (1985:455) translates the adverb  $\text{כֵּן}$  as an adverb of time “now”. This does not fit the context of Elihu’s speech amidst a trial in which a case is being presented to an accused person, namely Job, thus it is much better to follow Clines (2006:692) and Hartley (1988:439) who see the emphatic function of the adverb as “surely” (Hartley 1988:439), “indeed” (NJPS), unlike the contrast in the NIV with “But” or the restrictive of Dhorme (1967:489-90) when he takes  $\text{כֵּן}$  as “only” which helps his translation of  $\text{הֲגַדְתָּ אֵלֶּיךָ כֵּן}$  to be “you have merely said”. This, like Clines (2006:692) observes, does not actually accentuate the scenario of a charge placed against someone within a crucial conversation thus it seems to merely wave a hand at or over what Job might have said in the past without actually taking it very seriously. But rather than that the unequivocal function of the adverb in this reading makes more sense to help us see how the charge was dramatically opened before Job.

Elihu goes further to refute Job’s previous claims of being upright and guiltless when he used the interjection  $\text{וְעַתָּה}$  to open another segment of the trial (33:12-14 cf Habel 1985:455). Habel (1985:455) renders the  $\text{וְעַתָּה}$  as “well” and goes further to explain the use of the demonstrative pronoun that is attached to it while Clines (2006) seemingly makes the  $\text{וְעַתָּה}$  to assimilate itself into the demonstrative pronoun  $\text{זֶה}$  thus he skips any reference to the  $\text{וְעַתָּה}$  and goes onto the  $\text{זֶה}$  as “in regard to this” thus referring to his review of Job’s previous claims of innocence. The present writer agrees much better with Hartley (1988:440) who renders as “Behold, in this...” (33:12a) or we could borrow from both Clines and Hartley to say, “Behold, in regard to this...” as a proper pointer to an opening texture of a conversation within the element of respect or courtesy.

Habel (1985:455) and Clines (2006:705) agree in their demarcation of the following segment of Elihu’s refutation of Job’s case within 33:15-18 which presents the “evidence from dreams” of

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<sup>239</sup> May I differ a little from Clines here to say that the open texture here does not necessary present us with a new “topic” so to speak in the discussion but rather a new texture, or dimension, or scenery, or direction which is an envisaged court of justice where Job is summoned to testify (Habel 1985:455).

Elihu's argumentative claim in verse 14 above. Thus the opening marker of this segment is found in the function of preposition  $\text{בְּ}$  which helps the reader to locate the sphere or locale of the evidence being presented, thus  $\text{בְּחֵלֶם}$  "In a dream," (vs. 15).<sup>240</sup> The use of the conjunction  $\text{וְ}$  in verse 19 marks a new opening to the texture of the text by introducing a new topic as further evidence of the work of God in mortals. Habel (1985:456) and Clines (2006:705) agree on the demarcation of this segment which covers verses 19-22. The conjunction  $\text{וְ}$  is rightly translated as "Or" in both Habel (1985:456) and Hartley (1988:441). Clines (2006:697) also points out in his observation that Sicre Díaz inserts 'at other times' as his translation of the  $\text{וְ}$ . This is not out of place because it only helps the reader to notice an alternative reality as an extension of the same argument.

Another segment that presents "evidence for healing" is noted covering verses 23-28 (Habel 1985:456). Hartley (1988:444) takes the demarcation of this pericope two verses longer than Habel when he includes verses 29-30 thus having his pericope for the discourse of "the angelic mediator" to cover verses 23-30). Clines (2006:705) differs a little in his strophic division of the segment when he locates a tricola within verses 23-26.<sup>241</sup> However, this segment of the discourse presents the reader with a practical aspect of mediation by a messenger of God. There is a unanimous agreement of scholars on the meaning of the first conjunction  $\text{אִם}$  which means "if" (Habel 1985:456; Hartley 1988:444; Clines 2006:700). This conjunction serves the function of an opener to the texture of the pericope both as a change of topic towards providing an alternative point of argumentation by Job's friends, thus Elihu clearly here, kind of, provisionally responds to Job's quest for a mediator or an arbiter for his case.

Thus verses 29-33 present the "summation and summons" of Elihu to Job and his three friends (Habel 1985:456-57). Hartley (1988:448) concentrates more at the later stage of Elihu's speech in this chapter on his summons which he calls "[a]n invitation for Job to answer" covering verses 31-33. Clines (2006:705) discerned a 4 lines tricola in verses 27-30 then shifts to the 3-line arrangement of verses 31-33 thus in this case he is in agreement with Hartley concerning the

<sup>240</sup> There are other synonymous realms akin to dream that provide the contexts for the God's testimony to mortals. These include  $\text{חֵזוֹן}$  (vision),  $\text{חֵלֶם}$  (sound sleep) and  $\text{בְּחֵלֶם}$  (in a slumber [v.15]).

<sup>241</sup> When we return to closely look at the interior or the middle and closing parts of the argument presented we shall try to discern the reasons for their differences in the demarcation of the pericope as we have observed in this paragraph.

demarcation of the later segment of this pericope. Taking Habel's (1985:456) division as a point of departure, for his dramatic feel on the various scenic pericopes, we could see how he utilizes the הִנֵּה "behold"<sup>242</sup> in order to open the texture of the text towards a dynamic change of focus in order to further set the stage well for the oncoming discussion on God's work in the cosmos.

In chapter 34 the first few verses are considered as Elihu's preliminary on his first defence of God. Habel (1985:472) sees the first segment as the "summons to judge" (vss. 1-3) while Hartley (1988:450) differs a little in adding one verse to the segment he calls "a summons to listen" (vss. 1-4). Clines (2006:764) takes verses 2-9 as a single strophe while agreeing with Hartley in taking the internal division of the strophe within verses 2-4 as a given unit. In terms of the descriptive genre of this few opening verses, the present writer agrees more with Habel when he describes what Elihu calls for "to judge" taking Hartley's "to listen" a bit further and better situated for the overall context of the Elihu speeches. Nevertheless, Hartley's inclusion of verse 4 as the closing verse of the summons saying, מִשְׁפָּט נִבְחַרְהָ לָנוּ נִדְעָה בֵּינֵינוּ מַה־טוֹב: (Let us choose for ourselves what is right; let us determine among ourselves what is good). Appropriately helps to point one to the climax of the pericope for the need not to both listen and go but to also "taste", which could be further nuanced as to judge, and to closely consider and discern. The translation of the conjunction וְ as "then" (34:1) is agreeable (Habel 1985:472; Hartley 1988:450)<sup>243</sup> as a programmatic opener to the texture of Elihu's continual speech in terms of its actual progression. After all that has been said in the previous chapters 32-33 comes this as a continuation of the discourse hopefully towards an envisaged climactic point of argumentation.

According to the present writer's consideration of this following segment which Habel (1985:473) calls "charges against Job", he did well in his translation of the conjunction וְ as

<sup>242</sup> Hartley (1988:446) translate the הִנֵּה as an affirmative interjection "Truly" which does not show any change of topic of focus as evidential in Habel's rendering. Although the affirmation of the "all these things" that God does cannot be trivialized here. Clines (2006:704) unfortunately neglected the interjection all together and never provide any explanation for that in his notes. More so, the whole verse does not even appear in Pope's (1973:252) note as expected.

<sup>243</sup> Dhorme (1967: 509) has "Then Elihu spoke and said;" (34:1) this may mislead the reader to assume that Elihu is then giving an entirely new speech without the continuation of what he has started in previous chapters so to speak. Pope (1973:254) entirely neglects the MT grammatical rendering, neither does he indicate if he goes with the LXX or any other, but just summarized 34:1 as "Elihu continue". Gordis (1978:386) provides no note on the verse. Clines (2006:746) also did not translate the verse but rather gave a short indication of the potential problems that is might have posed to other scholars who attempted either keeping it side altogether or relocating it elsewhere within the speeches.

“for” which helps to open the texture of Elihu’s confrontational speech (litigation) toward Job by presenting his case before his very eyes to also reconsider what he has been saying all along. Hartley (1988:451) has an agreeable demarcation of the pericope (i.e. vv. 5-9) but less convincing translation when his  $\text{כֵּן}$  becomes a time indicator “now.” This may easily mislead the reader to assume that Elihu is trying to insinuate that it is actually “now” that is, at the time of his speech to Job and friends, that Job has said what he further quoted as Job’s words which he turned around as one of his seminal charges against him.<sup>244</sup>

The following strophe is seen within verses 10-15 (Habel 1985:473; Hartley 1988:452-53; Clines 2006:764).  $\text{לְכֵן}$  as “Therefore”<sup>245</sup> Is used as an opening texture which serves not only a resolution pattern of biblical literature but rather, especially here in Elihu’s speeches, becomes an opener to Elihu’s imperatives to his audience to “listen” to him as he tells them more about the character of God. Another similar opening texture occurs within verses 16-30 (Habel 1985:473-74; Hartley 1988:454-56).<sup>246</sup> The occurrence of the double conjunction  $\text{כֵּן אִם}$  which Habel (1985:473) translated as “So if” or “Now, if” (Pope 1973:255)<sup>247</sup> is programmatic in charging Job and his friends to critically engage with the realities that Elihu has presented before them so far in order to have a better resolution on their assessment of the governance/rule of God in the world. The above translators are not totally out of point, in fact, they place the point more in an agreeable position because it helps one to focus more on the wishes and intended condition for the progression of the speech and action from the speaker’s perspective.

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<sup>244</sup> Clines (2006:746) has no comment on the conjunction, in fact, he picked only the word “justice” and totally neglected all others. His reason for this is actually not obvious but one could say it is due to his interest of, what could be the qualitative features rather than the rhetorical features of the pericope.

<sup>245</sup> Dhorme (1967:512) much away from the MT opens verses 10 with contrasting conjunction “But” instead of the adverb “Therefore”. Pope (1973:254) translates his  $\text{כֵּן}$  as “So” which also serves almost the same purpose as the “Therefore” according to the explanation above.

<sup>246</sup> Clines (2006:764) shares the above mentioned pericope into two main strophes comprising verses 16-20 and 21-30 respectively.

<sup>247</sup> Hartley (1988:454 cf Clines 2006:749) follows Gordis (1978:382) for his view of the emphatic function of the construction, as “Assuredly,” or “Indeed”, and not based on his “Therefore” translation which has almost no warrant from the MT and he supplies no explanation in his notes to explain his decision about it. Thus this takes the reader away from the litigation (Habel) context of Elihu’s response to Job and his friends to one of oath taking or declarative statement (cf. Job 31).

Verses 31 presents another opening texture by the use of the conjunction וְ which is variously rendered by different scholars in their attempt to make sense of the ambiguity it poses.<sup>248</sup> Pope (1973:255) translates the opening texture of this verses as an interrogative discourse by Elihu toward Job that presupposed a cross-examination of his points of argument in the ensuing words, “Has he said to God, ‘I was mistaken, I will offend no more;’” (v. 31).<sup>249</sup> Hartley (1988:459) reasoned alongside Gordis’ and Tur Sinai’s option to rearrange the problematic casting of the MT<sup>250</sup> to be more of a contrasting admonition saying, ‘But say instead to God’.<sup>251</sup> The NIV’s “Suppose someone says to God”<sup>252</sup> is a far-reaching pre-supposition that takes away the focus from Job and his friends as the targeted audience of Elihu’s address. Habel’s “So confess to Eloah and say,” is much closer to the MT, כִּי־אָלֵאֵל הֶאָמַר, than those mentioned above, thus it helps the present writer to prefer rendering it as “Now confess to God saying,” as an adequate opening to the texture of Elihu’s “appeal” and “verdict” on Job’s case (Habel 1985:474).

Chapter 35: 1 presents another opening texture of Elihu’s continual response in reply to Job’s critical charges against God and his claims of innocence. Habel (1985:486) and Hartley (1988:463) got the meaning of the verse very well when they rendered, וַיַּעַן אֶל־יְהוָה וַיֹּאמֶר: as, “Then Elihu answered and said,” and “Then Elihu replied”, respectively, compared to Pope (1973:262) who usually neglects the grammatical supply to a direct translation that he believes best communicates his understanding of the text. Pope (1973:262) and Clines (2006:787) are similar to each other in their translation of this verse when they say, “Elihu went on to say,” and “Then Elihu continued and said,” respectively. Habel, Hartley and Clines, as shown above, do well to translation the conjunction וַ as “Then” thus providing an opening into the texture of the וַיַּעַן “answer” that Elihu gave to his audience in the succeeding verses. Thus verses 1-4 are

<sup>248</sup> Clines (2006:759) amongst others takes this conjunction to be an affirmative particle “indeed” in this context, while the present writer agrees more with Habel (1985:474) who cast it as a pointer to a resolution “so”, yet, the best is to say, “now”.

<sup>249</sup> According to Pope’s translation.

<sup>250</sup> As Hartley (1988:459) observes in reference to Driver-Gray due to its “unusual form”.

<sup>251</sup> From a textual critical perspective there are no words for “But” and “instead” in the MT has employed here by Hartley. Thus it is not so much advisable to the present writer to often agree with quick emendations or imposed grammatical presuppositions.

<sup>252</sup> Like in Hartley’s new casting of the verse, there is no grammatical supply of words from the MT enough to recast the statement as “Suppose someone says’. Although as in Clines (2006:759) many translations takes it as an “apodosis of a conditional sentence, which is not more than a hypothesis, thus they variously translate it as “Surely it is meet to be said unto God,” (KJV); “hath any said unto God?” (RV, RSV); “when such a one says,” (Dhorme); “if a man says,” (Newsom) etc.

agreeably the opening verses into the texture of the following pericopes of Elihu's response in this chapter (cf. Habel 1985:486-87; Hartley 1988:463; Clines 2006:787).

The *hif'il* verb **הִבִּיט** is agreeably a directional verb which entreats Job to take a look or concentrates/gives his attention to the heavens in order to catch a glance of what might be revealed to him, mostly intuitively, from the reality of the universe. Thus the translation of the verb as "Behold" (Habel 1985:487) or "Look to" (Pope 1973:262), "Look at" (Hartley 1988:464) or "Look up to" (Clines 2006:787) is just in order to help the reader see what Elihu would like Job to do and end up seeing something spectacular in his mind that might challenge his foregoing thoughts.

The **מִן** "from"<sup>253</sup> that opens verse 9 serves as a key to another central opening of the texture of the text from a general ethical focus to a practical concern of a great cry for help. Hartley (1988:464) remains close to the MT in his translation "From excessive oppression human beings<sup>254</sup> cry out" (vs. 9a). In a similar way, Clines (2006:787) fronted the subject of the verb and use the conjunction<sup>255</sup> "because" (cf. Gordis 1978:398) to supply a reason for such action. Thus he renders the verse, "People cry out because of many oppressions."

Unlike Clines (2006:787) verse 13 provides a closing texture to the previous argument and not opens a new one (cf. Habel 1985:487; Hartley 1988:465). Thus verse 14 provides another opening texture to this argument in order to challenge and counter Job's previous claims on his inability to see (perceive?) God. The interjection **אֵיךְ** is used here in contentious pattern of discourse in light of Job's previous argument, and not an interrogative one as in the translations of Habel (1985:487) and Clines (2006:787)<sup>256</sup> when they rendered, **אֵיךְ כִּי־תֹאמַר** as, "How then can

<sup>253</sup> Pope (1973:262) moves away from the derivative functional use of the preposition **מִן** which could have been "from" in general understanding of its use to rendering it as "in" thus stressing the sphere of the cry and not its actual derivative reason. Thus his verse 9a reads; "In great oppression they cry out." Habel (1985:487) in a similar way changes the meaning of "from" to "Under" which could be only presuppositional and not actually visible from the MT grammatical supply, thus his translation of **מִן גְּרוֹב עֲשׂוּקִים יִזְעִיקוּ** is "Under great oppression people cry out;" Unfortunately, none of these scholars (Pope and Habel) supply any reason in his notes on verse 9 for such maneuver (cf. Gordis 1978:400-401; Dhorme 1967:532-33).

<sup>254</sup> There is no actual word for "human beings" from the MT, but rather Hartley here sees it from an implied perspective of the use of the third person masculine plural that accompanies the verbs "to cry".

<sup>255</sup> In the MT there is no conjunction but rather a preposition functioning as the derivative of the main action in the verse.

<sup>256</sup> Clines follows Dhorme (1967:535) very closely in this translation.

you complain...” and “How much less when you say that...” respectively.<sup>257</sup> Thus the present writer agrees more with Hartley (1988:465) when he translates the verse much closer to the provision in the MT saying, “Though you say that...”<sup>258</sup> Verses 14-16 then forming the last segment of the opening textures and patterns of argumentation of the Elihu speeches in chapter 35 of Job (cf. Habel 1985:487).

The almost unanimous agreement of scholars on the meaning of chapter 36:1 which says, וַיִּסֶּר אֱלִיָּהוּ וַיֹּאמֶר: “Again Elihu spoke;” (Pope 1973:266), “Elihu continued and said;” (Habel 1985:494), “Elihu continued to speak;” (Hartley 1988:468), “Then Elihu added and said;” (Clines 2006:806). From the above-quoted scholars, the fact that Elihu made progress in his speech to his audience is indisputable, although it is only Clines who stays much closer to the MT by providing a translation also of the conjunction וַ as “Then”. Habel (1985:494) sees verses 1-7 as Elihu’s second defense of God’s justice, this is agreeable from the content in the verses concerned, yet, the short self-introduction that serves as the opening texture to it in verses 1-4 as agreed by Hartley (1988:468) and Clines (2006:806) is very important to see Elihu’s usual way of either taking a new turn in his arguments or achieving a significant climax in what he has to say. Thus he often starts with a confident self-introduction that provides an opening to the entire argument he brings forward.

Going with Hartley and Clines as mentioned above verses 1-4 serve as Elihu’s usual personal introduction of himself in regards to the discourse he wants to engage in, thus verse 5 has the interjection וַיֵּן “Behold” (Habel 1985: 494; Hartley 1988:469),<sup>259</sup> which serves as the key to the opening texture of his argument in defense of God’s justice. The argument on the qualitative characters of God and human beings, even the wicked in particular continues from verse 5 through to verse 15 as in Hartley (1988:469-70), unlike Habel (1985:495) who sees verses 8-15 as forming a new pericope, but looking at the linguistic texture and the flow of the argument, Habel cuts across a flowing argument to create a new one, thus taking Hartley’s (1988:469-70)

<sup>257</sup> Pope (1973:262) ignores the interjection and conjunction altogether and just say, “You say you cannot see him” (vs. 14a).

<sup>258</sup> Cf. “Although you say that...” Gordis (1978:398).

<sup>259</sup> Dhorme (1967:539) translates the interjection וַיֵּן as in the affirmative “Yes” while Pope (1973:266) translates it as “Lo” which is still acceptable although in a kind of old English rendering of the interjection. Clines (2006:806) translates it as “Though” to kind of strike an argumentative contrast between the qualitative character of God and human beings.

suggestion here is much better than Habel's. Although, Clines (2006:806) closely identifies the actual turn of focus by MT's fronting of "the godless" (vs.13). Thus to put it in another agreeable perspective we could also accept Clines' (2006:806-7) division of Elihu's focus on the godless from verses 13-21. In a nutshell, the verses 1, 5, and 13 provide us useful keys to the opening textures of the argument of Elihu in chapter 36.

Habel (1985:495) helps us to recognise another opening texture in verse 16a which is formed by the occurrence of both a conjunction and an interjection at the same time as,  $\text{עַתָּה}$  which is variously translated as, "Now" (Habel 1985:495), "Even so" (KJV).<sup>260</sup> From the present writer's perspective,  $\text{עַתָּה}$  would be rendered "And now" in order to help the reader see how Elihu is opening the application texture to Job as a warning in regards to his previous presuppositions as well as the points of argumentation already brought forward. Thus following Habel (1985:495) and Clines (2006:807) verses 16-21 constitute a particular segment addressed to Job as an admonition by Elihu.

Habel (1985:495) and Clines (2006:807) also present an agreeable suggestion in which they see verses 22-25 as another unit of argument. This segment has its opening by the use of the interjection  $\text{הִנֵּה}$  which is translated as "Behold" (Pope 1973:267; Habel 1985:495; Hartley 1988:473 and Clines 2006:807). Thus calling the attention of his audience, namely Job, as part of the admonition to closely focus on God's freedom and might in creation. Another "Behold" (vs.26 cf. Habel 1985:496; Hartley 1988:475 and Clines 2006:807) <sup>261</sup>occurs as an opening to another texture of the same ongoing argument but in this case Elihu goes more into specific details in which he explains the significance of God's work in the storm, trying to impress upon

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<sup>260</sup> The construction  $\text{עַתָּה}$  is either neglected or at best modified to suit the translator's thinking as would be seen in how it has been variously rendered in different translations. Gordis (1978:406) "He has also removed you..." Dhorme (1967:544) "And similarly He will remove you...", Pope (1973:267), "He lured you...", Hartley (1988:472), "He lures you...", Clines (2006: 807) "He has removed you also", NIV "He is wooing you...". It is interesting to note that scholars omit a great detail of the pericope from verse 16-20 because of its difficulty (Pope 1973:270). From Clines's (2006:816) notes that scholars see these verses as doubtful, more so, "NAB does not offer any translation of vv 16-20 on the ground that 'the Hebrew text is in disorder'."

<sup>261</sup> Dhorme (1967:552) prefers to the interjection as an authenticating particle when he translates it as "Yes" (cf. Dhorme's translation of verse 5 above). On another hand, Pope (1973:267) translates it as "Lo" which in old English still serves the same function with "behold."

Job the possibility of seeing the “glory” of God within it (Hartley 1988:475). Thus following Habel (1985:496) verses 26-33 establishes the last unit or segment of chapter 36.<sup>262</sup>

Elihu’s resultant feeling (37:1) about all that has been going on especially concerning his emphasis on the great acts of God, which he describes as  $\text{הָאֵלֹהִים־עָשָׂה}$  has almost a unanimous agreement in terms of its translated meaning as a positive self-description. The translation of  $\text{הָאֵלֹהִים־עָשָׂה}$  as “Indeed” and not as “also” is agreeable among scholars (cf. Habel 1985:496; Hartley 1988:476; Clines 2006: 807).<sup>263</sup> Clines (2006:835) recognises the fact that  $\text{הָאֵלֹהִים־עָשָׂה}$  is usually known as ‘also’.<sup>264</sup> But he argues that “because there has been nothing previously that has made Elihu’s heart to tremble, it is more likely to be the emphatic ‘indeed’”. Habel (1985:496; Hartley 1988:477) presents verses 1-13<sup>265</sup> as a particular segment of Elihu’s further elaboration of his explanation of the significance of the work of God in creation.

Chapter 37:14-22 (Habel 1985:497) achieves a certain climax when Elihu finishes his didactic presentation of the work of God in the complexity of creation which is far beyond obvious human explanation and has the potential to excite awe in humans toward God and inspires a sublime life. The *hif’il* imperative verb  $\text{הִשְׁמַע־עָרְוָה}$  which calls on Job to give his ear, or to incline his attention toward what Elihu has been saying in order to wonder and marvel at the reality of the comprehensiveness of God’s acts and their incomprehensibility, thus to teach him wisdom (Habel 1985:497; Hartley 1988:481).<sup>266</sup> Elihu brings his argument to a close by focusing on  $\text{וַיִּשְׁבַּח}$

<sup>262</sup> Scholars agree that there is a continual flow of thought from chapter 36 into chapter 37, thus the division of the verses within this pericope is variously rendered. For example, Hartley agrees with 36:26 as an opener into the texture of the forensic argument of Elihu regarding the thunderstorm. But, unlike Habel (1985:496) he does not see the pericope as ending with verse 33 but rather verse 32 thus he carries verse 33 as opening part of the hymn in chapter 37. Similarly, Clines (2006:807) rearranges the verses after taking verses 26-31 as a particular unit, then verses 29, 30, 32, and 33 form another unit which ends the argument in chapter 36 before the beginning of chapter 37 (cf. Pope 1973:266). As seen above the present writer agrees more with Habel (1985:496) by taking verses 26-33 as a presentation of a coherent discourse using forensic language to help his audience to consider the mighty acts of God in creation and exalt him in awe.

<sup>263</sup> Pope (1973: 278) neglects the interjection and goes on to say, “At this my heart trembles” (37:1). Similarly, Clines (2006:807) renders the translation much better by including the interjection to say, “At this indeed my heart trembles,” (37:1).

<sup>264</sup> Translations like the KJV, RSV, NJPS, NEB rendered  $\text{הָאֵלֹהִים־עָשָׂה}$  as “also”. NJB ‘my very heart’, in which it is almost taken as emphatic. But NAB and NIV “ignores it altogether” (Clines 2006:835).

<sup>265</sup> In the case of Hartley (1988:477) as mentioned above, he opens this segment with verse 33 of chapter 36 then flows into chapter 37:1ff. Unfortunately, there is no clear explanation on why he chose to do that, but from the writer’s observation, he bases the flow the argument on grammatical usage. If this is true, then it is less convincing as well because the grammar in both chapters are almost very similar as forensic pattern of speech.

<sup>266</sup> Clines (2006:808) has “Hear this...” (37:14) as a dynamic equivalence of the MT.

“the Almighty”, in light of the grandeur of God’s person and unsearchable, incontestable majesty.<sup>267</sup> Thus verses 23-24 mark the end of Elihu’s argument in response to Job and his three friends with an ironic twist on those who are wise and those who could either see God or have God see them with respect.

### **3.3.5.2 The Middle Texture of Job 32-37**

Considering the “middle texture” in light of the Elihu speeches, as earlier explained this might not be definitely described in a given section (s) in the Elihu speeches, but rather we shall consider its potentiality in terms of its meaning and function from Robbins’ (1996a: 19f) example.<sup>268</sup> The middle texture, in other words, is the central part of the discourse, or the “body” of the narrations, discourse or argument (Robbins 1996a:19). Weor (2012:168) helps us to understand that the middle texture of a text is what happens between the beginnings (opening) and the ending (closing) textures of the text. It is interesting to note that the “middle follows and is followed by other incidents” in the text. In other words, the central texture of a text presents the reader (or internal character or listener) the manifestations of the opening promises of the text and produces or allows spaces for an anticipation of what lies in the immediate or distant future and what happens between the middle and end of the text.

The middle textures in the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37 would be located between the various points of argumentation presented by Elihu as the main speaker within the chapters.<sup>269</sup> This would not be found exactly at one segment or pericope in a given chapter seeing that the nature or form of speech that highly characterises the discourse is argumentation, not an actual narration which if it were would have been much easier to locate the opening, middle and closing textures clearly. But seeing that it is argumentative in which various thoughts come to the mind of Elihu as he tries to make his points, we would try to locate the middle of those sections/segments of the

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<sup>267</sup> Cf. Rudolf Otto (1950).

<sup>268</sup> But our major concern would be the entry and exit, in other words, the opening and closing textures of the Elihu speeches.

<sup>269</sup> The present writer would like to take the cue from Robbins and move the imagination and discussion of the middle texture especially of Elihu speeches into two main categories which would be discussed interchangeably as the case may be. Firstly, the grand middle texture of the speeches would be found between chapters 32-33 which are the introductory chapters and chapters 37:14-24 close the speeches. Thus chapters 34-37:13 form the actual middle texture of the Elihu speeches so to speak. And secondly, within the discussions we shall try to indicate middle textures within various segments of the speeches as the case may be.

arguments as they flow from Elihu in the preserved records to see where could be the middle of each of the sections of his arguments and how do other Job scholars interacted with such rhetorical realities in their various works, thus helping to pave the way to our continued discussion of the same.

In the preliminary introduction of Elihu into the debates of Job and his friends (32:1-6a), the middle texture of this opening segment lies in verse 4 where Elihu is said to have waited. Previously he was angry with Job, and then Job's friends for Job justify himself rather than God thus making God appear guilty instead of himself, and his friends have come to their wits' end without any wiser words to either silence Job from his self-righteous outburst or to successfully convince him of his sinfulness before God. Thus in between such disappointment and anger Elihu is said to have waited. But the textual problem here is with what or whom did Elihu wait? Various scholars have rendered verse 4a וַאֲלִיָּהוּ הָקָה אֶת־אֵיּוֹב בְּדַבְּרֵיהֶם as "Elihu had waited with Job while they spoke," (Habel 1985:441), "Elihu had waited while they talked to Job," (Hartley 1988:429), "Elihu had waited to speak to Job..." (Clines 2006:680).<sup>270</sup>

In Elihu's expression of his thought and seeming disappointment and the assertion of his new discovery on the point of the source of wisdom the middle texture of his argument between verses 6b-10 is verse 8 in which he expresses the reality of the רִיחַ "spirit" in humans and וְנִשְׁמַת "and the blowing wind" of Shaddai that תְּבַיְנֵם "gives them insight" (vs. 8). The presence of interjection אַכֵּן which is translated as "Surely" (Habel 1985:441), "But" (Hartley 1988:431) and "But surely" (Clines 2006:680) makes the verse all the more pivotal as the central focal point of

<sup>270</sup> Hartley (1988:429) further explains that the word בְּדַבְּרֵיהֶם in the MT is "most difficult". The struggle of various scholars to make sense of its casting even with a slight emendation attests to his claim. Thus he opts for a revocalization of the word to be "*b<sup>e</sup>dabb<sup>e</sup>rām*" which means 'while they were speaking'. This agrees with his conclusion that "Elihu waited during the whole dialogue." But his agreement with other scholars like Gordis (1978:360) and Pope (1973:240) to render the object marker אֶת as a conjunction "with" has made the turn of the grammar to be too sharp and overbearing so to speak. Thus Clines (2006:684) proposes another explanation in which the MT construction וַאֲלִיָּהוּ הָקָה אֶת־אֵיּוֹב בְּדַבְּרֵיהֶם is literally rendered 'waited for Job with words.' Which is more plausible than other translations considering the "unparalleled use of, הָקָה piel 'await'. For more examples of the various rendering of the verse he showed the variances in the RV, RSV and NIV which similarly have, 'had waited to speak unto Job', NEB 'had hung back while they were talking with Job', NAB 'bided his time before addressing Job', KJV 'had waited till Job had spoken' (suggesting that Elihu had to wait for Job to finish speaking) etc. Clines further argues that, "the sequel, 'because they were older than he,' can only refer to the friends (who are the subj of the two verbs in the preceding verse), so it is clear that Elihu's deference is to the friends, not to Job." Thus based on the use of the object marker in reference to Job and the fact that Job's friends were the object of Elihu's deference helps the present writer to agree more with Clines in rendering the first half of verse to be, "waited for Job with words" (vs. 4a).

the argument so far in search of the origin of wisdom as *בין* “insight”. Considering the various translation of *כִּן* as quoted above, the present writer would like to agree more with Clines who tries to save face by employing a translation that presents both the conjunction and the affirmative particle. Thus his translations of “But surely” or “But truly” (NJPS) “suggests a change of mind rather than a counter-argument Elihu has put to himself” (2006:685). Elihu’s mind then achieves a certain insight into the middle of this thought and disappointment of what he could read from the performance of Job’s friends in light of current thoughts on the course of wisdom and understanding. Thus the ironic twist here is on not what he was thinking from his traditional worldview but rather what he actually could discern here and now from Job and his friends.

The fact that Job’s three friends reached their wits’ end in their conversation with Job without actually defeating his bold claims of innocence about himself makes verses 12 and 13 become another middle texture of Elihu’s argument at the time of his waiting for something definitely powerful enough to put Job’s case to rest. In this middle texture Elihu discovers that *אֵין לָאִיּוֹב מוֹכֵחַ* “there is no arbiter for Job,” thus *עוֹנֵה אַתְּמוֹנֵי מִמֶּנּוּ* “No one among you to answer his charges” (Habel 1985:441)<sup>271</sup> Elihu goes further to rebuke the friends in case they would come up with some argument in search of a good reason to decline their engagement with Job and leave the whole matter to God thinking after all it did not directly concern them (vs. 13). Furthermore, Elihu’s self-analogy in comparison to a bottled wine that is fuming and getting ready to burst is another middle texture in between verses 17-22, thus verses 18 and 19 that introduce the bottled wine in “new wineskins” analogy becomes the middle portion of the argument from which he gained more momentum to respond in all honestly decisively (vss. 21,22).

In chapter 33:1-7 (Habel 1985:455; Hartley 1988:437) the middle texture of Elihu’s second self-introduction to Job specifically is found in verses 4-6 in which Elihu tries to put Job at ease to freely interact with him seeing that they both have the same origin namely, *רוּחַ-אֵל* “The spirit of El,” *וּנְשַׁמַת שַׁדַּי* “The Breath of the Shaddai”, thus they are *לְאֵל* “before God”<sup>272</sup>, *מִזֶּמֶר* “from

<sup>271</sup> This also is a problematic text to translate and interpret. Clines’ (2006:680) translation “but behold there was none who confuted Job, or answered his words, among you” is much closer to the MT. Thus it rightly puts the reader into the picture of Elihu’s disappointment and dilemma with Job and his friends.

<sup>272</sup> “in God’s sight” (Hartley 1988:437; Clines 2006:681).

clay". In the restatement of Job's case and claims of innocence (vss. 8-14 cf. Habel 1985:455) verses 9-11 present the middle texture of the discourse in which Job was asked to direct his attention to what he has been saying about God which actually makes God appear guilty as already introduced before (cf. 32:3,4). Yet, verse 10 performs the crucial function in directing the attention of Job's listeners (judges?) on what he claims as a charge against God.

Another middle texture is found in the presentation of the evidence of God's kind acts of rescue to the mortal in a dream (vss. 14-22 cf Hartley 1988:441-42). The central focus is on what God does in the dream, thus verses 16-17 become the inner middle texture which says,

אַז יגלה אֵזוֹ אַנְשִׁים וּבְמַסְרָם יִתְּתֵם:

לְהַסִּיר אָדָם מִעֲשֵׂה וְגוֹה מִגִּבֹּר כִּסְּהָ:

“Then he opens the ears of mortals. And by warning them leaves his signature, To turn human beings from an action, or to suppress pride in people” (Habel 1985:455-56).<sup>273</sup> Another middle texture is found within the presentation of more evidence of the work of God in terms of healing the frail which cover (vss. 23-28 cf. Habel 1985:456). The inner or middle texture here is in verses 24b, 25 and 26 which present the anticipated result of God's kind of revelatory encounter that brings healing and renewal of life as the rediscovery of the wonders of God.

In his summation of his case to and against Job, Elihu focuses his attention again on the work of God for the benefit of the suffering person, thus presenting the middle texture of the summation of his argument within verses 29-33 (Habel 1985:456-57)<sup>274</sup> on verse 30 in which he states the intention of the God's acts of discipline by the use of suffering to human beings which are, לְהַשִּׁיב

<sup>273</sup> Habel's translation here provides the present reader with a suitable perspective of what God might have done to the mortal through dreams and visions of the night. Although other scholars have different translations especially in regards to the end of verse 16 which Habel translates as “And by warning them leaves his signature” for example, Hartley (1988:441) has “and he frightens them with visions.” He further explains the fact the construction וּבְמַסְרָם יִתְּתֵם ‘and he seals with their fetters’, has been variously emended by scholars such as Gordis (1978:362) and Pope (1973:246) following the LXX and Syr. Taking the MT *yahtōm*, ‘he seals’, to be revocalized as *y<sup>h</sup>ittēm* ‘he frightens them’ (cf. Clines 2006:695).

<sup>274</sup> Hartley (1988:444) takes his division of this section as “[t]he angel mediator” (33:23-30).

נִפְשׁוֹ מִנִּי־שְׁחַת לְאֹרֶר בְּאֹרֶר הַחַיִּים:  
[Hartley 1988:446].<sup>275</sup>

Then Elihu moves to make an appeal to Job to admit and confess his guilt before God as the only way for him to have a respite and even total restoration from his suffering (vss. 31-33 cf. Hartley 1988:459). The inner central/middle texture here is Elihu's call and a seeming step backwards to allow Job space and time to make up his mind and take a good and profitable decision for his own sake in such dire situation.

In the presupposed judgment that is either thought about or actually anticipated, now placed on the lips of Elihu (vss. 34-37 cf. Hartley 1988:460). The inner middle texture is a focus on Job from the perspective of the wise people who may pronounce their verdict on him in which they would insist that,

אָבִי יִבְחֶנּוּ אִיּוֹב עַד־נֶצַח עַל־תְּשׁוּבַת בְּאִנְשֵׁי־אָנוּ:

“Job ought to be tried to the limit because he testifies like sinners” (vs. 36, Habel 1985:474).

The major middle texture of the discourse in chapter 35 covers verses 5-13 (Habel 1985:487) in which Elihu responds to a theodicy question on the silence of God in the world. Elihu stresses the effect of sin (wickedness) of people against one another, yet, even in that, most people are oblivious of the possible lessons that they could learn about God. Thus his argument here concerning the presence of God in a wicked world hinges on people's carelessness on the positive things that they often take for granted without the acknowledgement of God. This makes his seeming indictment so piercing when he says,

לְאִישׁ־כְּמוֹךָ רָשָׁעָה וּלְכוֹ־אֲדָם צְדָקָתָה:

מֵרֵב עֲשׂוּקִים יִזְעָקוּ יִשְׁוּעוּ מִזְרוּעַ רַבִּים:

<sup>275</sup> Pope (1973:246 cf. Hartley 1988:446) “To light him with light of life” (vs. 30b). Clines (2006:682) “that they may be illumined with the light of life.” NIV “that the light of life might shine on him,” takes the passive of ‘to light’ to become active (cf. Clines 2006:704). Hartley (1988:446) helps us to understand that the MT *lē’ôr*, ‘to light,’ is a Niphal infinitive construct with the elision of the *h* (cf. BHS for its usual form as *l<sup>h</sup>ē’ôr*. Following the translations of Pope, Hartley and Clines as a good sense of providing illumination or a sense of an enlightening the soul that enlivens the almost dead person renders the translation of Habel (1985:456) “may bask” (see above) as being too loose.

וְלֹא־אָמַר אֵיךָ אֱלֹהִים עֲשֵׂי נִתְּנוּ זְמֵרוֹת בְּלַיְלָה:

מִלְּפָנָיו מִבְּהֵמוֹת אֶרֶץ וּמֵעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם יִתְּכַמְּנֻנוּ:

“Your wickedness affects mortals like yourself;

Your righteousness fellow human beings.

Under great oppression people cry out;<sup>276</sup>

They call for help against the arm of the mighty.

But none says<sup>277</sup>, ‘Where is God, my Maker,

Who provides songs in the night,

Who teaches us by the beasts of earth,

And makes us wise by the birds of heaven?’” (vss. 8-11, Habel 1985:487).

Elihu here eloquently demonstrates the fact that God is active in the world day and night by means of providing real inspiration for human beings and vast knowledge of his presence of nature which is enough to inform people of God’s great wonders from a natural theological perspective but unfortunately many seem to take all that for granted or entirely neglect such possibilities.<sup>278</sup>

The “core teaching” (36:5-15 cf Hartley 1988:469) of Elihu as a wisdom teacher achieves its climax when he closely reflected on not only what God does in the world but rather how God does things in the world. Thus the middle texture of chapter 36 centres on the reality of God’s response to the existential questions on ‘the wicked’ (v. 6) and ‘the righteous’ (v. 7) in regards to his justice and kindness in terms of disciplining them appropriately (v. 10-12). This accentuates

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<sup>276</sup> For the textual critical note on this verse 9 see page 33 above.

<sup>277</sup> Pope (1973:262) has “One says not,” which can still be render “he says not...”

<sup>278</sup> For further discussion on how natural law that yields natural theology has been debated upon based on some theological and philosophical presuppositions over the years see the second chapter of Friday S. Kassa (2014:20-53).

the sublime presence and action of God which Elihu anchors in his perception of the nexus between deeds and consequences.<sup>279</sup>

Elihu then applies his thesis to Job on how he would like Job to closely perceive what God does to and in his life from a more helpful perspective for his preservation rather than utter destruction (vss. 16-25 cf. Hartley 1988:472). Within these verses comes the inner middle texture as an admonition to Job saying,

אֱלֹהֵי שָׂאֵף הַגִּילָה לְעֹלוֹת עַמִּים תִּהְיֶה:

הַשָּׁמַר אֶל־תִּפְּוֹן אֶל־אֲוֹן כִּי־עֲלֹה בְּתֵרֶת מַעֲנִי:

“Do not pant after the night when people vanish from their place.

Beware lest you turn to evil,

Which you seem to refer to affliction” (vv. 20, 21, Hartley 1988:473)

It is ironic here that Elihu recast the die again in favor of the foregoing arguments of Job’s friends thus in a sense reiterating their main point of debate on the morality of Job before God, in what Elihu thought that Job might have been an evil person, in fact, one who might have preferred to do evil rather than to suffer affliction for his righteousness. This could be an element for ironic depiction of being wise in search of wisdom when Elihu appears to seemingly save the day for God, before Job and his friends only to run into a grave contradiction of the assertions of both the narrator and Yahweh in the prose framework of the book of Job (cf chapters 1, 2 & 42:7-17).

Following Habel’s (1985:495) division of the pericopes on Elihu’s admonition to Job (vss. 16-21) and his testimony to El as Creator (vss. 22-25) mark the end of the first major interpretation of application of the reality of God in creation and sustaining the world which is enough to attracts Job’s attention to a more cautious approach to God. Another interpretation is given on how God’s acts of controlling the cosmos go beyond human comprehension (vss. 26-33). A second part of the same interpretation or what we might call an extension of the former one is

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<sup>279</sup> We shall return to this topic later on in chapters 5 and 6 below.

found in 37:1-13. Part of the middle texture of this discourse is found within verses 5-7 which say,

יִרְעַם אֵל בְּקוֹלוֹ נִפְלְאוֹת עֲשֵׂה גְדֵלוֹת וְלֹא נִדְעַ:

כִּי לְשִׁלְגוֹ יֹאמֵר הוּא אֶרְצָא וְגַשְׁמֵם מְטָר וְגַשְׁמֵם מְטָרוֹת עָזוּ:

בְּיַד-כָּל-אָדָם יִחְתָּוּם לְדַעַת כָּל-אֲנָשִׁי מֵעֲשֵׂהוּ:

El thunders marvellously with his voice;

He works wonders we cannot comprehend.

He commands the snow, ‘Fall earthward!’.

His torrential rain, his mighty torrential rain,<sup>280</sup>

Is a sign on the hand of each human being<sup>281</sup>

<sup>280</sup> The translation of verse 6 is grammatically problematic compared to how different scholars understand it. For example, KJV, “For he saith to the snow, Be thou on the earth; likewise, to the small rain, and to the great rain of his strength.” Pope (1973:278 cf Clines 2006:808) has it as “To the snow he says, ‘Fall earthward’, To the downpour of rain, ‘Be strong.’” Habel (1985:496) translates it as, “He commands the snow, ‘Fall earthward!’ His torrential rain, his mighty torrential rain,” Hartley (1988:478) “To the snow he says, ‘Fall to the ground’; to the downpour of rain, ‘Be mighty’”. NIV “He says to the snow, ‘Fall on the earth’, and to the rain shower, ‘Be a mighty downpour.’” ASV “For he saith to the snow, Fall thou on the earth; Likewise, to the shower of rain, And to the shower of his mighty rain.” Compared to the MT, these translations have variously been emended, of course one may wonder if there is the possibility of giving any direct translation of this verse without any emendation, yet we must not be quick at it. There are words in the translations especially of verse 6b that are not visible in the MT for example, “Be strong” (Pope 1973:278), “Be mighty” (Hartley 1988:478). “commands” (Habel 1985:496) etc. In the present writer’s view some words need little emendation to make some more sense giving the larger context of what God does in the firmament. Thus verse 6a which reads, *יִרְעַם אֵל בְּקוֹלוֹ נִפְלְאוֹת עֲשֵׂה גְדֵלוֹת וְלֹא נִדְעַ* could be rendered as “When to the snow he says, ‘Fall on the earth’ like showers of rain.” In this translation the first *כִּי* serves as an adverb of time “when”. The *וְ* in *וְגַשְׁמֵם* is loosely rendered as “like” and could also serve as “with” only that snow does not come with rain so the former usage makes more sense than the latter. Verse 6b which reads, *כִּי לְשִׁלְגוֹ יֹאמֵר הוּא אֶרְצָא וְגַשְׁמֵם מְטָר וְגַשְׁמֵם מְטָרוֹת עָזוּ* could be rendered as “and the shower of rains he strengthens.”

<sup>281</sup> This verse 7a which reads, *בְּיַד-כָּל-אָדָם יִחְתָּוּם* is also variously understood by scholars thus, “Every man he shuts in” (Pope 1973:278), “He seals up every man” (Hartley 1988:478), “He shuts everyone indoors” (Clines 2006:808). Hartley follows Pope to emend the word *b<sup>y</sup>ad*, ‘by the hand of’ to read *ba<sup>ad</sup>*, ‘behind, about “which is used with a verb meaning ‘seal’”. While Clines (2006:839) follows other translations that presuppose that the downpour of snow stopped the activities of everyone indoor. For example, ‘he brings all human activity to a standstill’ (NJB), ‘he stops everyman from his labor’ (NIV), ‘he shuts every man fast indoors’ (NEB). Considering the provision of the MT the present writer agrees more with Habel (1985:496) although with a slight adjustment of his words, instead of his “Is a sign on the hand of each human being.” Could be rendered here as “In the hand of every human being is a seal”. Thus to interpret it to mean that part of the marvelous works of God in the world is to put a “seal” in/on the hand of every human being, thus by implication to own all human beings including Job who ironically feels neglected.

That all mortals may know his works” (Habel 1985:496).

Elihu presents a sublime closing charge to Job (Habel 1985:14-22) which has its middle texture in the rhetorical questions that were posed saying;

הַתִּדַע בְּשׁוּם־אֱלֹהִים עָלֵיהֶם וְהוֹפִיעַ אֹר עָנָנוּ:

הַתִּדַע עַל־מַפְלְשֵׁי־עַב מִפְּלֹאוֹת תַּמִּים דְּעִים:

תִּרְקִיעַ עֲמוּ לְשִׁחָקִים חֲזִזְקִים פְּרָאֵי מוֹצֵק:

הֲיִסְפַּר־לוֹ כִּי אֲדַבֵּר אִם־אֶמַּר אִישׁ כִּי יִבְלַע:

Do you know how El orders them and make his lightning flash from<sup>282</sup> the clouds<sup>283</sup>?

Do you understand the balancing of the clouds,

Marvels of a perfect mind?

Can you, like him, spread out the clouds

Solid as a mirror of cast metal?<sup>284</sup>

Can he be informed when I will press charges?

Does a mortal testify when confused?<sup>285</sup> (vvs 15,16, 18 and 20 cf. Habel 1985:497).

<sup>282</sup> Hartley (1988:481) has “appear in” and explains that, “The perfect consecutive carries on the construction of the infinitive with a preposition.”

<sup>283</sup> The last phrase of this verse 15 which in the MT is אֹר עָנָנוּ could be rendered “lightening of his cloud”, although the implied “appear in his cloud” (Hartley 1988:481) makes good sense too. Pope’s (1973:279) “clouds” in plural does not reflect the MT singular number.

<sup>284</sup> “Can you spread out the sky with him, Strong as a molten mirror?” (Pope 1973:279 cf. Hartley 1988:482), “will you, with him, hammer out the sky, hard as a metal mirror?” (Clines 2006:808). Unlike Pope, Habel and Hartley above, Clines focuses on the creative action of crafting out, or casting into being which more actively presents the force of the verb רָקַע in the MT rather than the spreading activity which sounds milder.

<sup>285</sup> Pope (1973:279) has “Should he be told I wish to speak? Does a man asked to be devoured?” Other scholars by implication explain the piel verb דָּבַר “to speak” as meaning “to confess” which makes good sense in the present context. But the question here is who wishes to confess to whom? Whose words are these exactly; Elihu’s as Job’s to himself, or Elihu’s as Job’s to God or only Job’s to God? Furthermore, the last verb in the verse בָּלַע may mean “to be confused” (Habel 1985:497; Hartley 1988:482) if it is in nif’al form but in its pu’al imperfect as in the MT it means “he will be communicated.” Thus the present writer agrees more with Clines’ (2006:808) translation when he

These questions generate the last climax of Elihu's address to Job more specifically. It forms the middle texture of the final segment of his argument in which he ponders over the might and perfection of God's acts beyond the comprehension of human beings like Job, yet, also wonders, as Elihu or the author/redactor may assume, who could inform God what he would like to truly say in response to all that has been said and heard so far. This in a sense confronts Job's confidence and raises the mind of the reader to what Job might possibly like to say in response to such a challenge.

### 3.3.5.3 Closing Textures and Patterns in Job 32-37

Once again Weor's (2012:169) presentation of the meaning of the closing texture of a text follows what the present writer perceives as a slightly distorted perspective suggested by Wales (2001:39) in his analysis which seems problematic in the explanation of the concepts "closed" and "closing." Their understanding and presentation of the latter are in light of the aforementioned concepts. They discuss the meaning of a closing texture as a closed text which suggests that the actual text in question "aims at a specific social context." If Weor understood Wales very well, then their ideas of the opening and closing texture of a text deviate from Robbins idea. They try to emphasise their perceptions from a hermeneutical point of view while Robbins is trying to suggest various features within the text that may lead to a sound hermeneutics. Wales and Weor's understandings and presentation of the closed text as closing texture betrays Weor's good grasp of the meaning and function of the middle texture which is more agreeable than the other component concepts from his perspective.

According to Robbins (1996a:19) on the meaning of closing texture, it is a feature of a given text that indicates the "conclusion" of the flow of the passage (as in prose) or "unit of text" (as in any form of text like poetry, etc.). Thus this texture helps the reader to see how a matter of argumentation is finally resolved within the textures of the text not even in terms of the larger context of the text in terms of production and reception. If the form of the text is narrational, then

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says, "If I speak, will he learn? If anyone says anything, will he be better informed?" Although compared to the MT this translation has some added implied words but the verse could be rendered, "Shall it be told him that I wish to speak? If a person truly says [something] will he be informed?" Thus the word "something" is implied here not seen in the MT. The  $\text{ו}$  in the MT is taken in the affirmative "truly" and  $\text{בלע}$  is taken as "communicated" which by implication yield "informed". Looking at the context of this speech, Elihu assumes Job's role in his request to Job to tell them what they should tell God thus verse 20 directly and presumably response to verse 19.

the closing/concluding texture of the text/unit of text provides the reader with the information on how the story comes to an end from the author/redactor's point of view. In the case of the Elihu speeches in Job 32-37, as we have done with the other preceding textures, we shall attempt to see how the various issues that Elihu presents in his responsive discuss with Job and his friends achieved a certain conclusion rhetorically. Thus as we have done with the opening and middle textures, we shall view this texture from two major levels also, namely, the conventional closing texture<sup>286</sup> and the inner closing texture which may be peculiar to this present dissertation.<sup>287</sup>

From a scholarly conventional point of view (cf. Habel 1985:497; Hartley 1988:481), the main closing textures of Elihu's speeches comprise chapters 36-37 in which he offers a sublime didactic discourse that actually holds great potential of not directly answering Job's questions on his innocent suffering but rather it silenced him before the tremendous majesty (cf. Otto [1923] 1936) of God in the cosmos which serves as an introduction to the theophanic encounter of Job in chapters 38-42:6.<sup>288</sup>

In terms of the inner dimensions of the closing texture (s), Elihu's first closing texture occurs in 32:10 where he says, "Therefore<sup>289</sup>, I say, 'Listen<sup>290</sup> to me; I, even I, will offer my view'" (Hartley 1988:431). The other is his crucial decision when he could not find any satisfactory responses from Job's three friends concerning Job's various assertions of innocence which by implication points an excellent accusing finger at God, which the likes of Elihu cannot condone.

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<sup>286</sup> Which could be compared to various scholars' demarcation of the text(s).

<sup>287</sup> The inner closing texture would take a quick look at how the various points/segments of Elihu's argument achieve a certain conclusion within the text (s) in question.

<sup>288</sup> We shall further elaborate on the theological significance of the mysterious majesty of God in the Elihu speeches when we discuss the ideological-theological textures of the text in chapter 6 below.

<sup>289</sup> Habel (1985:441 cf. Clines 2006:680) has this interjection as "So" which also rightly projects the possibility of an achieved resolve within one's heart given what has transpired in his mind in the preceding verses.

<sup>290</sup> Hartley (1988:431) points us to his seeming surprise at the decision of the translators of the verb *שמעו* from the MT in plural form in the LXX, Vul, and Syr. In which they did not provide any cogent reasons to his understanding, yet, given the context of Elihu's address to Job and his friends may suggest such a reading. But Hartley insists that, "MT could be correct, for it is the harder reading and Elihu addresses the bulk of his words to Job." The present writer agrees more with the plural reading here given the plurality of the audience of Elihu in this chapter and contexts as "elders" and wise men except for what the reader may not know for we do not see whose face does Elihu look at when he says what he says, which perhaps may limit its focus to only one instead of all four people at once (cf. Clines 2006:685).

Elihu then goes further in the words of Habel (1985:441) to express his “need to answer”. In that, he has sensed a rhetorical insufficiency which makes his response very needful as vividly described in his own words saying,

חָתוּ לֹא-עָנוּ עוֹד הַעֲתִיקוּ מֵהֶם מְלִים:

וְהוֹחֲלֵתִי כִּי-לֹא יִדְבְּרוּ כִּי עֲמָדוּ לֹא-עָנוּ עוֹד:

“Dismayed, they do not answer again;

Words have forsaken them.<sup>291</sup>

Shall I wait<sup>292</sup> because they do not speak,<sup>293</sup>

because they have stopped and answered no more?” (vss. 15,16; Hartley 1988:432).

Thus this closing texture of the pericope from verses 11-16 (Habel 1985:441) becomes a pivotal point of Elihu’s reason for his intrusion into the whole Job story, thus justifying the insertion of the Elihu speeches at whatever stage into the Job-saga in order to show how unending a subjective argumentation could be.<sup>294</sup> The final closing texture of this chapter occurs in verse 22 which gives a theological reason on how Elihu resolves to approach the matter in response to Job’s plight claiming to be just and honest knowing what might follow if he does not, as could be seen in his own words saying,

כִּי לֹא יִדְעֵתִי אֲכַנְּהָ כְּמַעֲט יִשְׁאַנִּי עֲשׂוּנִי:

<sup>291</sup> “Arguments have forsaken them” (Habel 1985:441).

<sup>292</sup> Hartley (1988:432) has “Shall I wait...” for he argues concerning the וְהוֹחֲלֵתִי that opens the verse that, “The verb in the perfect with a *waw* may introduce a question.” This is a good grammatical observation but given the hif’il nature of the verb and the context within which the verb occurs could allow the perfect sense of the action and the leading conjunction would serve as a “but” which could make the translation to be “but I have waited...” thus contrasting Elihu’s action with that of the friends of Job (cf. Habel 1985:441).

<sup>293</sup> Habel (1985: 441) has verse 16 as “I have waited till they finished speaking, stopped dead and answered no more.”

<sup>294</sup> Later on we shall discuss more on the texture/pattern of the argument of Elihu which would help us to contemplate it from a form critical nexus between a polemic and a necessary homily (hortatory discourse) all from a subjective point of view.

“For if I knew how to flatter, my Maker would soon dispatch me” (Habel 1985:442)<sup>295</sup>

In chapter 33, Elihu continues his elaborated introductory speech in this case with particular attention to Job as an example in point. In setting the stage for Job to stand trial at his imaginary court (vv.1-7 cf. Habel 1985:455). Elihu presents his first closing texture of his self-introduction in terms of his reason, intention and methodology in approaching Job’s case by saying,

הִנֵּה אֲמַתִּי לֹא תִבְעַתְךָ וְאֶכְפִּי עָלֶיךָ לֹא יִכְבֵּד:

“Behold, no fear of me need terrify you; my pressure<sup>296</sup> will not be heavy on you” (v. 7 cf. Hartley 1988:437 cf. Clines 2006:681).

Furthermore, in stating Job’s case against him and responding critically (vss. 8-14 cf. Habel 1985:455), Elihu reached another closing texture of restating Job’s case against God with a contrasting counter argument when he says,

כִּי־בִאתָת יְדַבֵּר־אֱלֹהִים וְבִשְׁתִּימִים לֹא יִשְׁנֶנָּה:

“But El does testify, time and again, though no one may see it” (vs. 14 cf. Habel 1985:455).

Then Elihu continues in a long section (vss. 15-30 cf. Habel 1985:455-56) presenting evidential reasons of the justice of God in dealing with a person who does not know everything, thus outlining the possibility of God’s programmatic acts of grace in suffering.<sup>297</sup> Elihu presents another climactic closing texture which serves as decisive exhortation as well as graceful summons for Job to speak up in order to be justified as seen in the words of Elihu saying,

הַקָּשָׁב אִיּוֹב שָׁמַע־לִי הַתְּרִשׁ וְאֲנֹכִי אֲדַבֵּר:

אִם־יִשְׁמְלוּן הַשִּׁיבֵנִי דַבֵּר כִּי־תִפְצְתִי צִדְקוֹךָ:

אִם־אִין אַתָּה שָׁמַע־לִי הַתְּרִשׁ וְאֲאֵלְפֶךָ תְּכַמֶּה: ס

<sup>295</sup> Hartley (1988:433) renders verse 22b as “else my Maker would quickly carry me off.”

<sup>296</sup> Unlike Hartley above Habel (1985:455) take the noun אֶכְפִּי quite literally as “my hand”.

<sup>297</sup> To which we shall return in chapters 6 more decisively.

“Attend<sup>298</sup>, Job, listen to me; be silent, and I shall speak.

If you have a response, answer me.

Speak, for I wish to have you acquitted.

If not, listen to me;

Keep silent; and I shall teach you wisdom”(vv. 31-33 cf. Hartley 1988:448).

This closing texture that marks the end of Chapter 33 presents another high point of an ironic depiction of being wise as we shall continue to investigate and reflect upon in this study.<sup>299</sup>

The first closing texture that we would like to point out in the first pericope of chapter 34:1-9 (Habel 1985:473) is found in verse 9 which says,

כִּי־אָמַר לֹא יִסְכּוּ־גֹבֵר בְּרִצְתּוֹ עִם־אֱלֹהִים:

“For he says, ‘It profits a person nothing to court God’s favour” (Habel 1985:473).<sup>300</sup>

This verse presents the reader with a reason, even though, a presupposed reason from Elihu’s perspective on Job’s life and action, on why Job chose to live the way he did. The entire chapter achieves a closing texture after Elihu’s long homily (vv. 10-30 cf. Hartley 1988: 452ff) on the sovereignty of God in God’s governance of the world with justice, thus verses 31-37 which present Elihu’s “appeal and verdict” (Habel 1985:474)<sup>301</sup> towards Job closes the court scenario texture/pattern of the discourse in chapter 34.

<sup>298</sup> The *hif'il* construction implies that Job should direct or incline his ear (attention) towards Elihu and what he has to say to him.

<sup>299</sup> We shall return to this in chapters 5 and 6.

<sup>300</sup> Hartley (1988:451) renders the verse as “For he has said, ‘A man does not profit when he pleases God.’” In like manner Clines (2006:744) translates it as “For he says, ‘It is of no profit to a man to take pleasure in God.’” Clines (2006:748) sees the idea of trying to identify who actually takes the ‘pleasure’ within the so called ‘friendship’ relationship between a person and God as an endless conjecture. Nevertheless, Hartley further clarifies that this “thought is a main theme that Elihu wishes to refute; thus it is repeated in order to rebut it from various angles.” Even though, as he has observed, many scholars think that it was a late interpolation. Nevertheless, it still serves the context well in the present writer’s view unlike the reservations of many other scholars about its seeming interruptive/disruptive effect.

<sup>301</sup> Hartley (1988: 459, 460) divides this closing texture into two main sections namely, “A call for a decision (34:31-33)” and “A judgment (34:34-37)”.

In chapter 35:1-4, Elihu takes another well-founded decision for response to Job's indictment against God in which he closes his self-introductory remarks with the unveiling of his intention in response to Job saying,

אָנִי אֲשִׁיבָה מִלִּי וְאֶת־רַעֲיָה עִמָּךְ:

“I will refute<sup>302</sup> your arguments and those of your friends with you” (35:4 cf. Habel 1985:487).

Elihu then continues according to his plan to respond to Job and his friends in defence of God's silence or detachment from the world (cf. Habel 1985:487) which achieves its closing texture in verse 13 which emphatically affirms the presence and attentiveness of God saying,

אֲדַשְׁאוּ אֲלֵי יְשׁוּמָעוּ אֵל וְיִשְׁדֵּי לֹא יִשְׁרָנָה:

“Surely it is false that God does not hear, that Shaddai does not regard it<sup>303</sup>” (Hartley 1988:465).

Chapter 35 finally achieves a closure in verses 14-16 which Habel (1985:487) describe as “taunt” given by Elihu to Job's claims. But the present writer sees the closing texture here as bringing forward an ironic challenge as a refutation of Job's claims of the absence and silence of God in the world as presented in the following words,

אָף כִּי־תֹאמַר לֹא תִשְׁנַנְנוּ דִּין לְפָנָיו וְתִחַוֶּלֶל לּוֹ:

וְעַתָּה כִּי־אִין פֶּקֶד אִפּוֹ וְלֹא־יִדַּע בְּפֶשׁ מְאֹד:

וְאִי־וֹב הֶבֶל יִפְצָה־פִּיהוּ בְּבִלְי־זַעַת מִלִּין יִכְבֵּר: פ

“How then can you complain you do not get a look at him,

That your case is before him and you are waiting on him,

When he does not now vent his anger

<sup>302</sup> The root word for the verb “refute” here is שׁוּב which implies a return of thoughts in words which means “to answer” (Hartley 1988:463).

<sup>303</sup> Hartley's (1988:465) observation on the implication of the last phrase in this verse, “regard it” is worth noting when he explains that, “The third person feminine suffix on *yšūrennâ*, ‘he regards it’, is an indefinite pronoun referring to the oppression which causes the people to cry.”

Or clear acknowledged transgression?

Yet Job opens his mouth in empty talk

And multiplies meaningless arguments” (vv. 14-16; Habel 1985:487).

Verse 4 of chapter 36 is another closing texture of Elihu’s self-introduction to Job and his friends now in the last phase of this conversation with them. After his call for their patience while he presents his knowledge (36:1-3) he then ends the pericope by an emphatic assertion concerning the genuineness of his knowledge towards them saying,

כִּי־אֱמַנָם לֹא־שָׁקֵר מִלִּי תַמִּים דְּעוֹת עֲמָדָה:

“For truly my words are not false; one complete in knowledge is among you” (vs. 4; Hartley 1988:468).

Elihu’s words here concerning himself are no doubt an exaggeration thus in a sense parodying the reality of knowledge when he sees himself as one who is “complete in knowledge” (Hartley 1988:468) but Habel (1985: 494) is more realistic in translating the phrase as “perfect in reason” which could imply a straightforward reasoning.<sup>304</sup> By this Elihu seeks to further commend himself to them so that they would actually give their attention to what he has to tell them now taking the discourse beyond the sphere of human suffering in the world but rather into the grandeur of God’s control of the elemental realities of the world. Elihu then continues his address into another long speech in which he presents interpretations and admonitions in order to excite the mind of Job and his friends to the great mystery of the person and presence of God in the world (36: 5-37:13; Habel 1985:494-97).<sup>305</sup> Elihu presents his final challenge concerning to knowledge of God in 37:14-22 (Habel 1985:497 cf. Hartley 1988:481) which is more of an exhortation for Job to take note of the wonderful acts of God and be instructed by them. He then

<sup>304</sup> Clines (2006:806) put it more straightforward when he says, “a man sincere in his ideas stands before you” (vs. 4b).

<sup>305</sup> This long speech contains different pericopes in terms of the focal points of Elihu’s admonition but it does not present any definite break in its flow thus the present writer sees it as a continual discourse through those verses indicated. We shall then try to further see their fragmentation when we come to closely discourse the argumentative textures of the speeches in a section below.

drives home his thesis on the great mystery of God which Hartley (1988:483) rightly describes as “the divine splendour” in 37:21-23 saying;

וְעַתָּה לֹא רָאוּ אֹר בְּהִיר הוּא בְּשָׁחֲקִים וְרוּחַ עֲבָרָה וְתַטְהֵרם:

מִצָּפוֹן זָהָב יֵאָתֶה עַל־אֲלוֹהַּ נֹרָא הוּד:

שִׁדְי לֹא־מִצְאָנְהוּ שְׂגִי־אֶ־כַּח וּמִשְׁפֹּט וְרַב־צְדָקָה לֹא יַעֲנֶה:

“Now after they had seen the light, it is bright in the sky,

For the wind has blown, sweeping the sky clean.

From the north comes golden<sup>306</sup> splendour;

God is clothed in awesome majesty.

Shaddai, far beyond our reach,

Great in power and justice, great in righteousness<sup>307</sup>,

He does not oppress<sup>308309</sup> (Hartley 1988:483 cf. Clines 2006:808).

And then his final closing remark to these speeches occurs in 37:24 describing the effect of the greatness of God and the limitation of human beings when he says;

לָכֵן יִרְאוּהוּ אֲנָשִׁים לֹא־יִרְאֶה כָּל־חַכְמֵי־לֵב: פ

“Therefore men<sup>310</sup> fear him;

Indeed, all wise of heart see him<sup>311</sup> (Hartley 1988:483).

<sup>306</sup> Many scholars try to emend the MT *zāhāb* “gold” to *zōhar*, “brightness” which “diminish the poetic picture” (Hartley 1988:483).

<sup>307</sup> “great righteousness” here remains close to the MT unlike the emendations of Dhorme (1967:572) and Gordis (1978:410) which even suggest new objects of the verb as God being the master of righteousness and man abounding in righteousness respectively.

<sup>308</sup> By implication, “he does not pervert justice” (Clines 2006:809).

<sup>309</sup> Habel’s (1985:497) is unfortunately erroneous when he misunderstood the point of the words “oppress” for answer” in translating *לֹא יַעֲנֶה* thus he has “He does not answer!”.

<sup>310</sup> As “mortals” (Habel 1985:497; Clines 2006:809).

The limitation of mortals for reaching and/or seeing God even indicates the absence of wisdom of the purity of the heart and/or the fear of God (cf. Job 28:28). Thus the claims of wisdom for Job's friends could be a sarcastic parody of being wise. They were great men of renown in the East, yet, not grasping the mystery of God in the world. This could be another great climax of an ironic depiction of being wise in search of wisdom seeing that even those who might claim to have acquired wisdom must keep on searching for it.

### 3.4 Summary

This chapter has focused on the intratexture or inner texture of the Elihu speeches which covers Job 32-37. In this study, we concentrated on “the data that lie in the text itself” (Robbins 1996a:36) in which we explored the various textures in the Elihu speeches namely, repetitive, progressive, sensory-aesthetic, narrational/argumentative, and opening-middle-closing textures. This exploration has helped us at different junctures to see the ironic potentialities as well as realities within the flow of the Elihu speeches. This may prompt a question of the nature of the movement of the speeches in terms of their unity or disunity, coherences or ambiguity, simplicity or complexity. These questions are in many ways not the case of either/or but rather that of both/and. In that, the Elihu speeches are both unified and different, coherent and complex, etc. This could be seen depending on how one would like to view the nature of language in the speeches. In this study, we have observed that the Elihu author has brought together another meaningful conversation in response to Job's life challenges of suffering, this time around not from simple socio-cultural traditional philosophy per se, but rather from a theological perspective. Elihu based his argument on his theological understandings to which we shall return later on in chapter 6 of this dissertation. Nevertheless, we cannot deny that there have been serious interfaces of socio-cultural traditional ideologies in terms of language and practical worldviews. This chapter has tried to closely look at the multi-layered aspect of the speeches

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<sup>311</sup> This is a direct contrast to Habel's (1985:497) when he says, “But even the wise of heart cannot see him.” Unlike Habel as quoted in the foregoing line, Hartley (1988:483-84) follows Gordis (1978:410) to emend the MT *yîrā' uhu*, ‘they will fear him’ or “are afraid of him” (Clines 2006:809, 850 cf. KJV, RSV, NAV, NJB, NJPS, NEB etc.) to *yîr'ēhû*, ‘they will see him’ and “stand in awe”, this agrees with the plural subject in the LXX, and helps the reader to see the accomplishment of Elihu in teaching his audience a viable sense of being wise.

from its rhetorical perspective as of first importance thus to serve as a point of departure to further inquiries in regards to other points of concern.

Going back to the question of irony (cf. 1.9.3) and the Elihu speeches in terms of an ironic depiction of being wise we could see its reality as an embedded and embodied irony in the person of Elihu's wisdom. Elihu steps forward as a respondent to Job's case against God in order to arbitrate the case, but ironically he further accuses both Job and his friends in his defence of God (cf. Magdalene 2007:225ff). Elihu spoke vehemently in defence of God and not actually in direct response to Job's complaints which he more or less condemned within a similar argumentative pattern, thus juxtaposing Job's earlier claims with the reality of God in the world, which often helps him to nullify Job's case. Elihu spoke first and foremost in and from his anger to a more sublime sense of a sage who offers good counsel to one who might have taken things for granted. Thus we can say here that as an embedded and embodied irony, the speeches of Elihu function both in response to Job's claim of innocence before God and as Elihu's great admonition not in solving Job's puzzle of life, but in elaborating it for further contemplation.

We cannot say that the intratextual exploration is enough to establish every case for or against the significance of the Elihu speeches in response to Job in terms of the ironic depiction of being wise in search of wisdom which has been the motif of this dissertation but rather it has created great potentialities toward such continual discussion. This has helped us to affirm that the Elihu speeches intrinsically contain various points of argumentation towards a given audience in light of human suffering as a point of departure. But that has not been the end of the conversation. Job's suffering served as a starting point for Elihu's various reflections on diverse phenomena in life touching the realms of existentialism, metaphysics, and pragmatism.

Meanwhile, the next chapter (i.e. chapter 4) is the twin of chapter 3, in that, chapter 4 would focus on the intertexture of the Elihu speeches. This would help us to make related discussions by taking the Elihu speeches as a point of departure into other texts that may be relevantly pertinent for more conversation with our focal texts.

## Chapter 4: Intertextures of Job 32-37

### 4.1 Introduction

In our previous chapter, we studied the intratexture or inner texture of the Elihu speeches from the book of Job which helps us to closely see the nature of the various textures which the inner texture comprises. This opens the door to the character of the speeches within the corpus which in this case is an address in response to Job in regards to his distress for the affliction he had experienced. The intratexture brings to our understanding not only the simple nature of providing an answer to a situation but rather a complex way of a struggle within oneself, namely Elihu to actually succeed in making his points in defence of God. Thus we could see that he has a polyphonic (cf. Newsom 2003) speech i.e. speech with many voices, ranging from an apology to argumentation and then to teaching/exhortation within the ancient wisdom traditional texture. In this chapter we shall attempt to understand, not only the literary nature of his conversation (as in the previous section) but furthermore, we shall investigate the interactive nature of his conversation in relation to his various conversation partners from within the book of Job and beyond. Thus in our attempt to see the interface of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job and other texts around it in the ancient Near Eastern contexts, we would like to read it intertextually to see how its rhetorical elements correspond or diverge from the streams of thoughts and various traditions in the ancient literary world<sup>312</sup>. This comparative reading would help us to see the potential that it holds for further dialogic discussions around emerging themes from its horizon, which would occupy our interest and concentration in our next two chapters, namely chapters 5 and 6.

This chapter would use the Book of Job and the Old Testament literature as its point of departure into other traditional streams of literary wealth of the ancient Near Eastern world. This study could help the reader to see some of the major points of interest in terms of the form (s) of the Elihu speeches. In other words, we would try to see how the correspondence of Elihu speeches in Job help the reader understand Elihu as a representative of a certain theological tradition within the ongoing debate. The intertexture would also invariably help us to closely examine some

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<sup>312</sup> For more on the intertextual reading of Job see Dell and Kynes (2013)

possible influential factors around the text from the perspective of the author/narrator/editor of the Elihu speeches in Job. But before we go any further into all this, it would be good to have a working knowledge of an intertextual reading taking the work of Robbins (1996) as a point of departure.

## 4.2 Explaining Intertexture

According to Robbins (1996:40), an intertextual approach is the interaction of the text with phenomena around the world of the text. Thus it is the process of taking one's mind outside the text into its contextual environment<sup>313</sup>. This has to do with "physical 'objects'<sup>314</sup>, historical events, texts, customs, values, roles, institutions, and systems" (Robbins 1996:40). It is crucial to note the significance of intertexture from Robbins' (1996:40) perspective which envisages a configuration of phenomena from the outside world into the text. This could indicate instances where a given text "imitates another text but places different people in it." The intertexture does not actually focus on objects outside the text per se but rather tries to examine how those objects from outside the text are configured within useful contours of the text in order to provide an intended and/or potential meaning. Thus intertexture concerns itself with the "production of the texts; it examines the interaction between the textual formation and the world in which this formation takes place" (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:59).<sup>315</sup> Intertextuality tries to identify "parallels"

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<sup>313</sup> Lee (2001:49) follows Robbins (1996:40f) to point out that intertextuality is an interaction with objects outside the texts to provide meaning within the text. Similarly Yi (2002:51) shows the hermeneutical significance of intertextuality pointing out that it helps to create a new text from an old one and then provides the reader (author) the hermeneutical "lens" with which to read the newly created text(s).

<sup>314</sup> As the following words in this quotation show, not everything that lies outside the text is necessarily a 'physical object'. There are many things that have provided the contextual framework for the text that are not actually physical but could be understood alongside what we may call "the concrete world of the text."

<sup>315</sup> In this chapter we shall be more concerned about the interactive potentials of the Elihu speeches with other texts beyond its immediate context in order to appreciate his rhetorical power and its viability for interaction with other texts. Our chapter 5 below would concentrate more on the history of possible textual composition in context. Thus there may be a little shift from Robbins' (1996:40ff) mode of approach of the intertexture seeing that we shall take a walk from the Elihu speeches as point of departure into other textual spheres comparatively speaking. Nevertheless, we shall later on appropriate all the necessary historical-contextual elemental steps of interpretation in search of a suitable historical context for the Elihu speeches in chapter 5 below.

within texts in order to engender or sustain their dependability toward other (better?) contextual understanding (Hacham 2007:765-785).<sup>316</sup>

Intertextuality could be presented in terms of echoing effects from one text to another in terms of its rhetorical elements or textual traditions (Juza 2014:227-245). This presupposes a textual conversation, so to speak, between one text and another (Seri 2014: 89-106)<sup>317</sup>. It is basically the work of the hermeneutist in terms of his/her capacity to harmonise thoughts and textual interfaces from one tradition to another, or in order to use one text to respond to another or illustrate how a certain idea or ideology is being developed or has been drawn up within textual interfaces. Furthermore, “[s]ometimes it inverts a tradition, turning the rhetoric of a previous situation on its head to create a new and distinct dramatic tradition” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005: 59).

As a leading scholar of the intertextual approach to interpretation, Julia Kristeva (1980 cf. Seri 2014: 89-90) has earlier presented the concept and significance of intertextuality as a means of multifaceted textual interactions which could be used within various literary works. Kristeva (1980:15) explains the meaning of “intertextuality” (*intertextualité*) “as the transposition of one or more *systems*<sup>318</sup> of signs into another, accompanied by a new articulation of the enunciative and denotative position.”<sup>319</sup> Ancient narratives have been used by many scholars over the years to illustrate and further develop the conceptual and methodological meaning and the importance of intertextuality. This approach does not merely indicate instances where meaning is being imitated but rather its transposition for further appropriation. Nevertheless, citation, allusion, rewriting and imitation are significant in discerning intertextuality (Seri 2014:90; Shalom-guy 2010: 419-432). Another crucial aspect of intertextuality is the interface between oral and written

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<sup>316</sup> This dependability and contextual understanding could be seen much better within the interaction of the Testaments in the Bible. For good examples of intertextuality between the Old and New Testaments books of the Bible see; Moyise and Menken (2004; 2005) Hays (2005); Pao (2002); Wagner (2003); Moyise (2010).

<sup>317</sup> Andrea Seri (2014:89) explains the potentiality of creating new wave of connection and possible meanings within a textual corpus and/or traditions by means of an intertextual reading. This invariably affects the nature and texture of the constellation of texts around the focal texts depending on the reader’s (or listener’s) insights into and around the focal texts (cf. Reiner 1985). Nevertheless, it does not provide free license for unbridled speculations and extreme manipulation of any given text (s) for the interest of the reader. Texts could have different meanings to different readers depending on the personality of who reads what and when. Yet, the discernible meaning and function of the text must not be far-fetched.

<sup>318</sup> Italics as in the original

<sup>319</sup> For more discussion on the transposition of ideas for instance, anterior ideas or synchronic perceptions into communicative speech as the process of textual formation and the art of intertextuality see Kristeva (1980:51-55).

thoughts and traditions. This would help the reader to discern various levels and modes of interactions within a given social context or textual genres (Edenburgh 2010:131-148).<sup>320</sup> With these explanatory thoughts in view, this chapter would follow the lead from Robbins as point of departure as earlier explained to move into other textual spheres in terms of intertextual comparative study within the oral-scribal textures as explained by Edenburgh, and then to possibly suggest the significance of the Elihu speeches in terms of their forms (genres) and traditional hermeneutical maneuvers.

### 4.3 Types of Intertexture

Going back to Robbins (1996:40f) intertextuality has to do with the creative interaction of a text with other phenomena from outside itself as described above<sup>321</sup>. This creative interaction could be in the form of referencing that is a case where an author refers to events or past acts in the past in order to create some new sense of understanding it possibly in a different context from the actual or primary context. Intertextuality can also take the form of “imitation” (Robbins 1996:40) in which one text resembles or imitates the other in some practical ways even though most of the times such imitation is seen more as being implicit than explicit, so to speak. Intertextuality can be subversive at times, in that, a given tradition may be taken and be turned on its own head in order to create another similar or even different tradition altogether. This is more illustrated in Derridian deconstruction theory<sup>322</sup> which Jonker and Lawrie (2005:157ff) explain as being double-edged which provides a kind of reading that tries to look through a given text within the interest of the issues otherwise left at the margin, thus seeking to invite a reconsideration that often goes beyond the traditional convention of what is often understood from the same text for the sake of giving it a fresh look and taste.

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<sup>320</sup> Intertextuality is in other words called a “diachronic approach” of textual exegesis which helps the reader to see the connections that the author supposedly intends to portray and the significance of predated texts in terms of various intertextual influences (Yates 2013: 287).

<sup>321</sup> John Barton (2013: 1ff) explains the fact that intertextuality is not just a mere theory of interpretation but rather it is more of an interactive method, or approach to textual interpretation.

<sup>322</sup> Deconstructing a text here entails finding the Achilles heel or the weakness of and within a given text. This becomes the pointer to a critical engagement that confronts the potential and possible weakness within the text towards a more viable sense of understanding and interpreting it. Thus “ [i]n deconstruction it is a matter of reversing the oppositions, of privileging the unprivileged and vice versa, but of writing, reinscribing, the structures that have previously been constructed” (Clines 1995:66). Thus the power of meaning from the text often lies with the reader at any given time.

There are four important types of intertexture outlined especially by Robbins (1996a: 115f cf. Lee 2001: 50f), namely, *oral-scribal intertexture*, *cultural intertexture*, *social intertexture* and *historical intertexture*.<sup>323</sup> We shall follow his guide to explain what each of them entails<sup>324</sup>. For our focal interest in this chapter, we shall now turn our attention closely to the first type of intertextuality, namely, the “oral-scribal intertexture”<sup>325</sup>(Robbins 1996:40). Robbins goes further

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<sup>323</sup> These intertextual patterns shall remain italicized throughout this chapter and the next in order to serve as the guiding principles of our interactive interpretations.

<sup>324</sup> Although we will focus more on the first one namely, the oral-scribal intertexture in this chapter, the three others shall be explained and elaborately discussed in our next chapter which actually focuses on the socio-cultural textures of the text.

<sup>325</sup> The interface between oral and scribal patterns of intertexture are too complex to easily unravel, thus Robbins (1996:40) is right to describe them in connection to each other as “oral-scribal”. This is what David M. Gunn has earlier suggested in his response to John van Severs as would be seen in the following example of the complexity of trying to separate the two conventions and/or patterns. Gunn wrote an essay (1974:513) in order to further challenge the presupposition of Van Seters (1972:182-97) on the report of “the conquest of the Kingdoms of Sihon and Og (in Numbers, Deuteronomy and Judges),” thus challenging van Seters’ “oversimplification of the issues involved” as to their inconclusivity based on van Seters’ presentations of their derivative form as being the scribal/written convention and not the oral convention which Gunn argues could be included.

Gunn (1974:515) observes that often than not, “it is exceedingly difficult to distinguish clearly between the ‘oral’ and the ‘literary’ functions of the traditionist concerned.” This point is agreeably true and valid but before we think about the “function of the traditionist concerned” it is more appropriate to focus more on the derivative forms involved which has been the actual bone of contention between the two scholars in this example, namely, Gunn and van Seters. In Gunn’s presupposition from the above quote it would be too rash of van Seters to assume a clear cut pattern or convention of providing a report or historical (religious) documentation because of the possible complexity that a given story may entail, thus Gunn would like to suggest having an eye for both patterns rather than just one of them. This inclusive approach would provide a good “meeting point for oral tradition and ‘written’ literature” (Gunn 1974:515). In conclusion to his critical essay, Gunn calls for further reflection on the nature of form or forms in the Old Testament texts opting for a careful discernment of the literary forms and the possibility for the presence of both oral and scribal traditions within them (Gunn 1974:518).

Van Seters (1976: 139-154) critically responded to Gunn (1974:513-18) and decided to explore the possibility of accepting the presence of both oral and scribal conventions within “extant literary texts” (Van Seters 1976:139). He (Van Seters 1976:145) observes that, “The process of written composition is quite capable of employing a variety of sources, styles, and genres, in its presentation of a story whereas oral tradition would tend towards a uniformity of style and genre within a particular unit of tradition.” To my understanding the use of various sources, styles and genres in scribal tradition also applies to oral tradition within much difference. It all boils down to the knowledge and decision of the author or speaker (or singer).

Van Seters (1976:145) thought that Gunn was looking for an example within biblical literature or even outside of it, where the use of an “oral pattern” within a literary convention is evidently used so that he could suggest an “alternative explanation” in which the latter “may be substituted.” Furthermore, Van Seters (1976:148) reports that Gunn “seems to suggest throughout the discussion that story-telling is synonymous with oral tradition.” This is a misunderstanding of Gunn’s proposal for he tries to suggest the possibility of the use of ‘both’ oral and scribal conventions in biblical narratives for example, not willing to selectively agree with Van Seters that oral traditions are actually excluded. Thus he does not seek for any substitution of convention or pattern or suggests the synonymy of oral traditions and story-telling (against Van Seters’ refutation and insistence). Van Seters (1976:148) tries to counter what he understood to be Gunn’s intentional point by saying, “But a story may be a literary product with varying degrees of tradition behind it or none at all.” This assertion is true and agreeable which

to agreeably explain that oral-scribal intertexture involves a text's use of any other text outside of itself, whether it is an inscription, the work of a Greek poet, non-canonical apocalyptic material, or the Hebrew Bible.<sup>326</sup> Under this rubric, he outlines five basic ways in which intertextuality can be done by any given author between different texts in developing another text. These are “recitation, recontextualization, reconfiguration, narrative amplification and thematic elaboration” (Robbins 1996:40).

According to Robbins (1996:41), “*Recitation* is the transmission of speech or narrative, from either oral or written tradition, in the exact words in which the person has received the speech or narrative or in different words.” *Recontextualization* is explained as a situation in which the use of words is done from a written (or oral) source based on implication. There is no explicit clue within the formative (or formed) text that a particular statement is actually a citation from an existing source or document (Robbins 1996:48). Robbins in the same place explains *recontextualization* as being “in contrast to recitation.” It sounds more as an assimilation of recitation rather than an actual contrast to it. It could also be explained as the implicit side of recitation. *Reconfiguration* “is recounting a situation in a manner that makes the following event ‘new’ in relation to a previous event. Because the new event is similar to a previous event, the new event replaces or ‘outshines’ the previous event, making the previous event a ‘foreshadowing’ of the more recent one” (Robbins 1996:50). *Narrative amplification* is discerned as an accumulation of the various elements of intertextuality to produce a new meaning in which a composition contains “*recitation, recontextualization, and reconfiguration*” (Robbins 1996:51). Thematic elaboration is seen as an “alternative” to narrative amplification. “Elaboration is not merely an expansion or *amplification of a narrative*. Rather, a theme or issue

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ironically makes Van Seters to appear self-contradictory. His insistence of the use of scribal convention/pattern to the exclusion of oral tradition does not fit within a phenomenon (story) which could be a “literary product with varying degrees of tradition behind it...” which could actually include oral tradition or pattern of construction in one way or another depending on the nature of the story and the story-teller and the author.

In conclusion to his somewhat corrective response to Gunn's essay, Van Seters (1976:149) takes a firm stand on what he calls “a common Scribal convention” in his disagreement with Gunn (1974) and his attempt to dismiss the reality of “oral patterns of story-telling in Judges and Samuel.” To his understanding, Gunn has not made “any case.”

<sup>326</sup> This involves the interaction between written and spoken message. It may sometimes involved “formal verbatim recitation of texts” (Lee 2001:50).

emerges in the form of a thesis or *chreia*<sup>327</sup> near the beginning of a unit, and meanings and meaning-effects of this theme or issue unfold through argumentation as the unit progresses” (Robbins 1996:52).

In regards to the criteria that we would use to discuss intertextuality of the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37 in connection to other Old Testament and ancient Near Eastern texts in this chapter, we would follow Robbins and Sommer’s guide within the rubrics of *references*, *allusion* and *echo*.

It is important at this junction to try to explain the meaning of these salient concepts in intertextuality, namely, reference, allusion and echo. In Robbins’ (1996:59) understanding and demonstration, references are allusions and echoes are actually different. According to Sommer (1998: 10) allusion entails the art of using another existing literary work as a source of influence<sup>328</sup> for one’s own present work in creating a similar or different text. Allusion could serve both as a literary device and also as a communicative technique sometimes. Although it is not without its problems in regards to communication from one context to another (cf. Cherney 2014: 9ff).<sup>329</sup> Thus references primarily ‘point’ to a personage, concept, or tradition and allusions ‘interact’ with cultural concepts and traditions<sup>330</sup>. In other words, we could say that reference is indicative while allusion is interpretive in nature (function). How do they relate to “echo”? Robbins (1996:60) further helps to clarify that an ‘echo’ “is a word or phrase that evokes, or potentially evokes a concept from cultural tradition.” Echo occurs when there are obvious elements of a later text in a present one which guides the reader towards the possibility of an allusion between one text and another (cf. Sommer 1998:16). Thus echo could occur in terms of short phrases or important speech markers between different texts that stimulate their possible connectivity across time and places. It is often elusive in many texts, and its identification as present or absent is most debatable between scholars. Thus we could safely say here than an echo is not an actual reference but could be an indicator to a reference. It is a step toward an unknown

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<sup>327</sup> Robbins (1996:41) explains that a “chreia” is a brief statement or action aptly attributed to a specific person or something analogous to a person. Furthermore, “Attributing speech to a particular person or text from the past evokes an explicit image of a person or text in the world outside the inner texture of the text” (Robbins 1996:41).

<sup>328</sup> Influence here entails the elemental link between a past and present text in terms of “generic and thematic lineage” (Sommer 1998:14).

<sup>329</sup> Cherney (2014) provides us with the study of how allusion could be used much easier as a literary device rather than a communicative technique across contexts. He explains problems from his Portuguese perspective in reading Second Isaiah intertextually.

<sup>330</sup> These are discernible in both oral-scribal contexts and actual written rhetorical contexts.

terrain by the author at the time of writing or speaking, yet, it potentially evokes conceptual discourses (issues) within or outside a given cultural context.<sup>331</sup>

The five modalities of oral-scribal intertexture as presented by Robbins would help us to explain the type of reference, allusion or echo that might occur at the different stages of the Elihu speeches in relation to other texts in the wider contexts. Thus at the end of this chapter, after rereading the Elihu speeches within the stages outlined below, we shall return to the question of , how and who did Elihu actually address from an intertextual perspective? Who has been his conversation partner in terms of his personal makeup or influence as well as his intertextual potentiality and actuality by means of his addresses? But before then, we shall delineate how our approach to the Elihu speeches will be within the various stages into which we have classified the intertextual levels for easier discernment of how much depth or points of interest could be seen in connection with any level or stage of interaction.

#### **4.4 Toward an Intertexture of the Elihu Speeches within Old Testament Literature**

Given Robbins' (1996:40ff) model of intertextual study as explained above, the reader may note a certain deviation by the present writer from Robbins' model into a rhetorical intertextual discourse with little or no attention to the socio-historical contexts from the Elihu rhetoric, in this chapter. This is true seeing that Robbins' model fits much better with mostly narratives which are constructed within what could be described as an ample contextual milieu. But passages like the Elihu speeches have mostly skewed socio-historical contextual elements, so to speak. In that, Elihu only speaks, he does not tell stories from or toward a specific context, nevertheless, he speaks to people in a given context, yet, he only speaks. Thus it would be much better for us here to use his speech as a point of departure into other textual contexts to possibly see how or toward which direction his thoughts have either been developed for such speeches or toward which possible context have his thoughts been focused in terms of responsive communication.

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<sup>331</sup> Robbins (1996:62) also includes social intertexture and historical intertexture within the various types of intertextures that could be discerned and discussed so far. Yet we would leave these two for further elaboration in our next chapter (i.e. chapter 5) of this dissertation seeing that it is an extension of intertextuality, although with more emphasis on the social culture or context of production.

This approach entails a little tour de force of the Old Testament texts as well as other possible extra-biblical texts from the ancient Near East which hold similar and interactive potentials with the Elihu speeches. Doing this would prepare our ground well for the development of our next chapter on the socio-cultural context of the Elihu speeches. This intertextual framework follows the programmatic work of Dell and Kynes (2013) on *Reading Job Intertextually*. But instead of taking our cue with them from the Pentateuch onward, our approach here would take its steps from the Elihu speeches in a wave-like move into other spheres or corpuses of the Old Testament, namely from the Book of Job, to Wisdom traditions, the Prophetic traditions, the Deuteronomistic History, and then the Priestly traditions.<sup>332</sup> This would help us to examine which oral-scribal tradition, so to speak, occupies Elihu speeches more and how does it affect their function in the Book of Job within the questions of the irony of wisdom, suffering, justice and mystery.

#### **4.4.1 Textual Designs<sup>333</sup> of the Elihu Speeches within the Book of Job**

There are two significant movements that we need to consider as we try to understand the design of the Elihu speeches in light of the overall book of Job. We propose in this dissertation that the Elihu speeches have two main purposes, namely, to respond to Job's quest and challenge and then to prepare Job for what lies ahead, namely the next speech of Yahweh (38-42). But before then, the speeches of Elihu symmetrically correspond with the rhythm of the entire book of Job as well as the daring life of Job himself. The following discussion in this section would provide explanation toward the foregoing assertion.

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<sup>332</sup> The age of these different and intersecting traditions definitely differs from one another. We shall have some comments on the dating of the material especially in regards to its contextual setting and period of canonical reception into the religious (and wisdom) documents of ancient Israel. Nevertheless for the purpose of our study in this section we would work with the assumption that the Elihu speeches might have been older than other biblical traditions apart from the wisdom traditions (thus older than the Priestly and Prophetic traditions more specifically), yet, the ancient Near Eastern materials (oral and/or written in whatever form) have been older than the Elihu speeches hence they, alongside other wisdom oral and/or literary material might have influenced his vocabularies and worldviews as we shall see in the following sections of this chapter.

<sup>333</sup> This shows how the texts the form the book of Job interface with each other at one point or another in order to form a cohesive written material from a predominantly oral traditional social context (more on this in chapter 5). This is another little step away from Robbins' model because of our need to see the place (or position) of the Elihu speeches and the rest of the book of Job within a more interactive sense. This is accentuate our presupposition that the author/editor/compiler of the book of Job has a significant reason for including the Elihu speeches in the book no matter when they were actually composed, but their position in our present biblical form holds great significance to the entire rhythm of the book.

The two most significant movements in the Elihu speeches that correspond to the overall book of Job as pointed out by Habel (1985:443) are “the flow across the gap between the prose and poetic portrayals of Elihu” followed by “the subtle shift between the sapiential and legal motifs that dominate the Elihu’s apology.” Just like Job at the beginning of the book (1:1-5; 2:11-13), Elihu is also introduced (32:1-5). The difference between the two introductions could be seen in the fact that the genealogical information of Job was not given by the narrator as that of Elihu. Nevertheless, both were introduced within a narrative framework before they even spoke a word. By symmetrical contrast to Job, Elihu in the narrative (prologue) that introduces him depicts him “as passionate and hot-headed” (Habel 1985:443). Unlike the noble and virtuous Job who turns away from any evil (and possibly any negativity in life) but is highly devoted to his piety.

The calamity of Job stroke him so suddenly without time to prepare himself for the unexpected (1:6-19; 2:1-10) thus he was in agony of life for days of silence even together with his visiting friends who had no words or wisdom to speak to him about his situation (2:11-13). Elihu, on the other hand, was also later aware of Job’s calamity, and he came like Job’s three other friends to speak with him. But he remains silent in respect for the age of the three other friends (32:7, 11, 12) and so he waited until they had nothing more to say (32:16-17). The three friends of Job have tried to speak their own wisdom to him in several turns (chaps. 4-27) as Job himself was in turns responding to each of their conversations in very critical ways. They got to the point of “compassion fatigue” (Louw 2008:135) because of the lack of wisdom to truly speak sense to Job in his unfortunate situation of suffering. This demonstrates the wise hymn on the wisdom that wisdom is hidden ironically even from the wise and the innovative (Chap. 28), but it is known only to God and is gained within the fear of God (28:28).

This realisation might have motivated Job to try the somewhat cultic resort of confession of any sin in order to see if that could have been the reason for his suffering even though he has always denied his involvement in anything sinful or wrong before God. Nevertheless, he made his declaration of innocence (chaps. 31) in order to ascertain his claim of innocence within his theodicy contention on the justice of God in his suffering (chap. 9, 10 and 16). He ended his oath of innocence with a challenging call on God, the Almighty, to come out of hiding to declare his own version of the case, to defend himself and indict Job if he is in the wrong (31:35-37). Then

he (Job) stopped speaking (31:40).<sup>334</sup> But Elihu, whose piety is seen within reason for his anger, did not think of Job's summons of God as something appropriate (Habel 1985:444). Thus he resolved to stand up to the challenge and speak to Job instead of God. He started his speech with a somewhat humble apology for who he is especially in terms of age (32:7-9) yet, he claims an inherent wisdom by the Spirit of God which is the spirit of wisdom in him (32:8). Like Habel (1985:444) observes, his assertion of having the Spirit of God as the wisdom within him either presents him as "a boy wonder or a brash fool."<sup>335</sup> Thus he personally introduced himself and responded especially to Job's seeming rashness to get answers to his question on God's justice. The first response is that he needs to slow down to be taught (schooled) in wisdom (chap. 33-35)<sup>336</sup> <sup>337</sup> and secondly, that he needs to learn the wisdom, grace, power and justice of God through God's work in the cosmic arena (chap 36-37)<sup>338</sup>, this sublimity will lead him to the true wisdom<sup>339</sup> that is already envisaged in chapter 28 which is the fear of Yahweh. The motif of fear reached its climax by the coming of Yahweh in the storm (chap. 38:1ff) which inevitably terrified Job humanly speaking as it did to Elihu (37:1). Yet like Elihu, Yahweh severally called

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<sup>334</sup> Some interpreters use the phrase "the words of Job were ended" (Balentine 2008:511), but the present writer thinks it best to say that he 'stopped' speaking, perhaps to accentuate the fact that he has already made his point and that's enough for the time being.

<sup>335</sup> In humorous way, Elihu uses the words used earlier by Eliphaz to taunt Job, in his attempt to describe himself and his need to speak, namely to answer with a wind-filled mind (cf. 32:17-22 and 15:2) (Habel 1985:444).

<sup>336</sup> Balentine (2008:537) agreeably observes that the introduction (33:1-7) and the summation (summons) (33:31-33) "provide a rhetorical frame that indicates Elihu is sincerely inviting Job into a dialogue." It is noteworthy here from chapter 33 and throughout his other following speeches "Elihu draws upon forensic and cultic metaphors-courtroom litigation and prayer- both of which have played an important role in the dialogues between Job and the friends." (Balentine 2008:537). In 34:2-15 Elihu addresses Job's friends "calling upon them to make a collective decision about the merits of Job's case (v.4)". And then he goes further to specifically address Job "whom he summons to hear (v. 16), questions (v. 18), dictates the terms of a confession to (vv. 31-32), and questions again (v. 33)" (Clines 2006:764). Balentine (2008:565) further clarifies the design of chapter 34 by pointing out what he calls the "the core of his speech" within this chapter in defense of God's justice. The three sections and arguments of the core speech are as follows; (1) it is unthinkable that God should be unjust; therefore anyone who makes such a charge lacks wisdom (vv. 10-15); (2) God is a lover of justice; therefore, God would never do what God hates, namely, pervert justice (vv. 16-20); and (3) God sees and judges everything, including those who try to hide from God's justice; therefore, God's justice is beyond question, even when God's silence and hiddenness suggest otherwise (vv. 21-30)."

<sup>337</sup> "Elihu instructs Job to measure the smallness of his existence against the vastness of the universe God administers" (Balentine 2008:583). Elihu further explains to Job that "the 'secrets' of God's wisdom (11:6-12), are necessarily beyond his comprehension" (Balentine 2008:584).

<sup>338</sup> In chapters 36-37 the teachings (speeches) of Elihu come to a climactic stage, this is where he makes his point within a very clear accommodative spirit of a sage. Clines (2006:851) helps us to see that, 36:2-25 Elihu is "continuing the theme of the justice of God." Thus using his nature argument to clarify his point on the justice of God in term of his involvement in the sustenance of all of life.

<sup>339</sup> This true wisdom is not the wisdom of argumentation but the wisdom of honest acknowledgment and praise, thus, "the structure of Elihu's speeches that he places himself and his model for the praise required of Job at the center of his world (36:22-25)" (Balentine 2008:599).

Job to prepare his speech (himself) and respond in wisdom (33:5, 32 cf. 38:3; 40:7 cf. Balentine 2008:537). Like Elihu, Yahweh thought that Job was speaking from an ignorant mind which does not see the bigger picture of life in the world. Thus, the universal design stands as a decisive teaching aid as it often does for the sages in their teaching of wisdom to their pupils. Yahweh now emerges as the sage, teaching wisdom to Job within stimulating questions of life (38-41).

The unfathomable wonders of God led Job into silence (40:4, 5 cf. 2:11-13). He could not have words to answer God's challenges too (cf. 31:35 and 32:1). This led to his capitulation in humble submission (or repentance? 42:6). The anticipation of his acquittal by repenting (argument of his friends e.g. 5:17-26) would now come to fruition. The intentional anticipation of Elihu to justify Job rather than God would also soon come to fruition, although it is not he (Elihu) who is now justifying him but Yahweh. And so the positive view of Elihu for the purpose of Job's suffering, which could be corrective (salvific) in order to keep him away from falling down the pit of pride into the death is now tenable. But by way of reversal, the enmity that Job actually thought was between God and himself is not tenable from the bigger picture. But rather God (Yahweh) is now his true ally working for his justification and restoration (42:7-17). The life of Job came full circle, from affluence to disaster and back to affluence again (cf. 1:1-5; 1:6-27; 42:7-17).

In regards to the whole drama in the book of Job, Elihu stands at the centre, first between Job and his friends and then between Job and God. Always performing a bridge function, looking in "opposite directions," like the two-faced god Janus<sup>340</sup> in Roman mythology (Balentine 2008:599),<sup>341</sup> listening and speaking against the grain of his time in context, responding to Job and friends to the question of suffering and justice and preparing Job (and them) for what lies ahead, namely, God's verdict on justice and the liberation from suffering.

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<sup>340</sup> "Janus, the Roman god of gates and doors, beginnings and endings, is depicted as looking in opposite directions at the same time." Thus "[E]very January, the month that bears his god's name, we look back to the year that has passed and forward to the next" (Balentine 2008:599).

<sup>341</sup> Baletine (2008:599) agreeably illustrates that "Elihu exemplifies the wisdom that promises to tie together the beginnings and endings of this drama," namely, the book of Job.

#### 4.4.2 Elihu's Speeches within the Book of Job

**32:1-6a Prologue.**<sup>342</sup> The use of the words “these” in reference to the “three men” who have come to Job as his friends to sympathise with his situation, is typical narratological rhetoric toward effecting “closure” and/or “transition” (Habel 1985:447).<sup>343</sup> For example, “this” (singular) or “these” (plural) are *recontextualized* in 1:22; 2:10; 33: 12, 29; 42:7, 16.<sup>344</sup> Whether as in the singular or plural form it appears that all the usages so far are indicative of a summation of things that either Job said or God does. But the usage in 32:1 in a referent indication that shows the focal point of the following discourse thus we shall think of it as the main transitive usage of the particle so far. It is clear from 32:3 that the “these three men” of verse 1 are identical to the three friends of Job<sup>345</sup> (Habel 1985:447) which stresses the focus of the author and consequently reader on them.

The fact that Job is seen as being “righteous in his own eyes” (32:1)<sup>346</sup> further accentuates the friends “previous insinuations (8:6; 11:4; 22:3)” (Habel 1985:447) by means of thematic elaboration. This assertion agrees with Job’s self- declaration of innocence even in chapter 27:1-6 in which he insists on holding onto his integrity even if it means his death. The same presupposition would be referred to later on in Elihu’s speech of 33:9 as a critical reference to Job’s self-assertion of his purity. Besides, the claim of being “right” or “righteous” as Job asserts is somewhat almost impossible among mere mortals like him as indicated by the speeches Eliphaz (4:17; 15:14), Elihu (33ff) and Yahweh (40:8) made. Yet, “Job has maintained his

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<sup>342</sup> In this section and other elaborate ones we shall closely follow the textual structural pattern as discussed and presented in our chapter 3 for a more cohesive approach.

<sup>343</sup> Clines (2006:711) takes the use of the “these three men” in 32:1 as “prima facie evidence that it once stood at the end of the speeches of the friends, namely, after chap. 27 (Zophar’s last speech) rather than in its present position in the Masoretic book, after Job’s speech.” This argument is not more than a speculative hypothesis thus it does not necessarily convinces the present writer to its merits and point of view, especially when we ask; how many speeches must the three friends present to show that all three friends had chances to speak?

<sup>344</sup> From the above examples, we can see that apart from the speech of Elihu in chapter 33, this narrational particle is only used in the prose framework of Job.

<sup>345</sup> Hartley (1988:429) helps us to identify a “chasm between the comforters and Job” in the term used for them namely, men (’*nāšîm*) instead of ‘friends’ (*rē’îm*) as in 2:11; 19:21; 42:10. Some scholars like Dhorme (1967:???) think of the different usage of terminology here as indicative of authorial difference. This is not a welcome idea to the present writer as argued by Clines (2006:711-712).

<sup>346</sup> Habel (1985:447) in right to move away from the LXX translation which says, “in their eyes” for the friends would not actually accept the fact of Job’s innocence until they are compelled by Yahweh’s verdict in the end (cf. 42:7ff).

integrity and righteousness against all evidence and arguments to the contrary” (Habel 1985:447). It is interesting to see the ironic twist of being right that Elihu brings to bear when he declared himself to be one with “an upright heart” (33:3) that must be listened to. Thus one may pose the challenging question to say, what right then does Elihu have to rebuke or criticise Job for being righteous in his own eyes?

In 32:4-5, Elihu presents himself as one who is “waiting”, this act of waiting for Job’s friends to finish speaking with Job is indicative of his respect for them as his elders as well as a needed expectation for a wise outcome from those who are much older than himself (cf. Habel 1985:448). Another crucial point of interest in verse 5 is the mention of Elihu’s “anger”. He was first of all angry with the friends of Job for being unable to refute Job’s previous arguments which appear to indict God of injustice toward Job (cf. 2b). Then his anger is shifted to Job himself for justifying himself rather than God (vs. 5). It remains an open challenge how we should understand Elihu’s anger in these verses, namely, was he angry at his natural character or he has legitimate ground for being angry as Habel (1985:449) postulates? If his anger merely comes from his natural tendency then it could be dismissed even as a selfish (negative) anger, but as it is in text, his anger is under guarded by his theology which means he is not just angry for being sake or for himself but for the respect of God (positive).

**32:6b-10 Right to Answer:** Going back to Elihu’s apology in trying to set the stage for his discourse, in 32:6 he humbly presents himself as being “young” which made him hesitate from speaking his mind to those older than he was. This is an indication of his humility in recognition of his place among the elder who is already perceived to have “prestige, sagacity, and experience (cf. Job 12:12; 15:10)” (Habel 1985:449)<sup>347</sup>. Thus the preceding verses in comparison show Elihu’s *recontextualization* of old age and wisdom in regards to Job and his three friends. It is proper for young people like Elihu to even hide <sup>348</sup> from people of “wisdom and stature” like Job and his three friends (cf. 29:8) (Habel 1985:449). Nevertheless, it is ironic that Elihu soon sees himself as a “champion of truth to the aged (cf. 33:33)” (Habel 1985:449). This reconfigures the

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<sup>347</sup> The implication of the common saying that ‘wisdom lies with the aged, understanding with length of days’ with has been earlier found on Job’s lips (12:12) as well as Eliphaz (15:10) saying, ‘Among us is one who is gray-haired and aged, older indeed than your father,’ means that “Job’s understanding cannot possibly be superior to that of older men” even as Elihu as personally admitted in verse 9 above (Clines 2006:717).

<sup>348</sup> Or step aside (cf. NIV)

presence of authority as taking a new dimension in Elihu's case, in that, he purports that wisdom and truth do not necessarily lie with the elders, thus now presenting himself as one worth hearing too because of his authority although much younger than conventionally expected.

We shall briefly highlight the use of some governing verbs here in 32:6-10 in relation to their usage in other portions of the book of Job in particular for the sake of this section (cf. Clines 2006:717). The verbs are עָנָה "answer",<sup>349</sup> שָׁמַע "hear",<sup>350</sup> הוֹרָא "declare",<sup>351</sup> הוֹרָא "give notice/explanation"<sup>352</sup> and יָדָע "knowledge".<sup>353</sup> These verbs, to just mention a few, for the time being, indicate the mode and nature of the conversation between Job and his three friends and now from Elihu by means of *recontextualization* and *thematic elaboration*. Thus the speeches of Elihu are constructed to pass information from one person to another, from a speaker, to a hearer/listener which would result in imparting knowledge as one's opinion (subjective) about something considered crucial (objective) in light of Job's suffering experiences.

Elihu's *reconfiguration* of the number of "days" as wealth of experience which could be capable of teaching wisdom (vs. 7) directly contrasts Job's view of the days of humanity on earth (cf. 7:1, 17; 14:1) which the latter sees a full of hard work, and burdensome watchfulness of God (cf. Habel 1985:450). This length of days implies a sign of a human life that has come a long way within very tedious burden of whatever kind from the will of God. The days of humans are thus not full of excitement and learning but rather well marked, fully controlled by the power of God who watches everything. In a sense, Job may be interpreted to have a so-called dull perception of the days of mankind on earth rather than Elihu who sees them as opportunities for gaining useful

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<sup>349</sup> This word appears only in Job 5:1 in its qal form, and in 40:1 with an accusative to indicate a seeming favorable or bearable response in conversation with someone. Thus it is now *recontextualized* on the lips of Elihu in comparison with lips of Job and Yahweh.

<sup>350</sup> This verb is used in the imperative fourteen times in Job (Clines 2006:717). In verse 10 it appears in the singular most probably because Elihu intends to speak directly to Job, according to Clines' (2006:719) opinion, elsewhere, as in verses 6, 11-14 it appears in the plural, thus following Clines still, Elihu addressing Job and his friends and whoever may be the audience at whatever stage, so to speak. Thus the verb in Elihu's speech represents a *recontextualization* effect.

<sup>351</sup> This verb is used in the piel form five times in Job (Clines 2006:717) as an attempt to tell, announce or basically to provide information or knowledge about something important and urgent.

<sup>352</sup> In the piel this word implies an art of speech that brings light into the discourse by way of giving an announcement. The same word is *recontextualized* in 36:2. This art is earlier referred to in the hif'il of בִּינְיָא as "giving insight or instruction" which takes Elihu's discourse into the realm of proper wisdom tradition as Habel (1985:450) helps us to note.

<sup>353</sup> This is indicative of an experiential knowledge or cognitive opinion (cf. 32:6).

insights for the acquisition of wisdom from long time experiences of life. This poses a case of an ironic depiction of being wise within the days of life. The question that remains here could be, would Elihu continue with his appeal to the traditional way of wisdom acquisition or he has just made that recitation and reconfiguration in his usual way of posturing considerable criticism which presupposes a shift from the common place understanding of life and even the particular point of departure of Job?<sup>354</sup>

Job's earlier "challenge to his friends" (Habel 1985:450) in 26:4 saying; "Who<sup>355</sup> has helped you utter these words? And whose spirit spoke from your mouth?" This question achieves a resounding answer by means of narrative amplification, ironically from the young Elihu whose claim of insight and authority comes from the "spirit of God" which is, in other words, the "breath of the Shaddai" (32:8)<sup>356</sup>. This same spirit and breath of God is the essential element of the existence of mankind<sup>357</sup>.

Verses 7 "I thought to myself", and verse 10, "I even I will explain", and verse 17, "I too will answer my part, I too will explain what I know," help us to see the emotional move of Elihu from his inward person to the outward, and outspoken person which Habel (1985:451) describes in the words, "reflective" and "asseverative." This quick move shows the urgency of his need to speak as earlier noted in this study. It is repeated here to point the reader to the inner and outer struggles that Elihu had to go through at the thought of his speech and its (their) actualization within the chapters of our concentration in the book of Job. Above all things, the desperation of Elihu to really have the space to speak cannot be overstated considering his repeated use of

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<sup>354</sup> The appeal to traditional worldviews in search of wisdom and the right understanding of life, even in light of Job's sorrowful situation is not alien to the Job dispute, in fact it has been one of the main points of argumentation from Eliphaz (4:12-16; 5:27), Bildad (8), and Job's critical dilemma (10:2-4; 12:2-3; 13:1-4 cf. 15:7-10) (cf. Habel 1985:450).

<sup>355</sup> The Net Bible says, "To whom did you utter these words? The combination of the direct object marker and the interrogative at the opening of this verse in the MT is puzzling. Thus the  $\text{וְאֵלֶיךָ}$  could be understood as indicative or a direct recipient as "to whom? (Net Bible), or as in the NIV "who has helped you...?" i.e. with whose help? As the indirect object. Giving the context of the conversation between Job and his three friends, the NIV makes good sense, yet, if we are to strictly follow the MT as our main point of departure in this study, then the Net Bible takes the lead.

<sup>356</sup> This is not just any kind of spirit of life but as Habel (1985:451) agreeably explains, "it is that force which gives insight and understanding."

<sup>357</sup> Thus in Habel's (1985:451) understanding of 32:6-10, it is ironic to note that, "The elders had access to the spirit as he, but they preferred to follow tradition and failed to take advantage of that inner source of knowledge."

active noun יַעֲרֵר (cf. 6, 10 and 17) which presuppose speaking one's mind (Habel 1985:451) with the intent of giving insight or enlightenment to those who listen.

**32:11-16 Need to Answer:** The need for Job to be answered has been an urgent one, and Elihu also had a profound interest in seeing that happen (32:11-12). Habel (1985:452) points out that Job has himself sought for someone to “arbitrate the case openly and equitably (9:33; 16:21)” but found not. His three visitors/ friends have nothing more to say (cf. 32:1, 11,12, 15 and 16), even his witness in heaven (16:19) was still silent. Thus no one could preside over the issue as challenged in 31:35 in order to give Job a fair legal hearing<sup>358359</sup>. By the use of *narrative amplification*, Elihu then had to step into the darkness of the moment with a view to filling the vacuum and void. He comes up now to stand as an “arbiter and attorney for the defence” (Habel 1985:452). But the question here still rings, whose attorney would he be, and in whose defence would be speaking? This issue amongst others poses the irony of the Elihu speeches as well as points the reader to its significance in light of the closing speeches of Yahweh as we shall see later on.

Elihu started unfolding his ironic depiction of being wise when he refuted the friends of Job not to claim that they have found wisdom perhaps in Job<sup>360</sup> and that it would be only God who can deal with it or respond to its challenges (32:13,14). Wisdom is far beyond human reach so to speak, as demonstrated in the wisdom hymn/poem (28:23)<sup>361</sup> in that, “her abode remains hidden to all except God” (Habel 1985:452-53). Nevertheless, by a self-depiction as a *reconfigured* sage Elihu claims to have it (32:8) although not without the help of God by way of special endowment. It is noteworthy here that, “The arguments prepared<sup>362</sup> by Job for his case are not

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<sup>358</sup> For the dramatic oscillation between the need for a *mōkīah* that led to the founding of a *šōmēa* which becomes identical with the *mōkīah* see Habel (1985:452) and Dick (1992:330).

<sup>359</sup> Clines (2006:719) tries to differ here by saying, “It is not the formal legal language that is being spoken here, but the language of debate and disputation.” Thus he does not accept the fact that Elihu lamented the void of someone apt to categorically respond to Job's charges, especially charges against God. Nevertheless, he has not brought any solid evidence to either prove his point or prove the leading point otherwise. Thus we leave his point to him as his personal presupposition which needs more convincing proofs. Ironically, the frequency of the name of Job on Elihu lips (32:12; 33:1, 31; 34:5, 7, 35, 36; 35:16; 37:14) strikes Clines (2006:720) as a decisive focal rhetoric on reference to Job especially as of primary importance.

<sup>360</sup> That “outranks theirs” perhaps (Clines 2006:720).

<sup>361</sup> Wisdom here would mean in terms of its essential nature not practical function, so to speak.

<sup>362</sup> This verb comes from the Hebrew יָרַע which means to prepare, to arrange, to marshal (as in military) or to sort out papers (as in legal arena) cf. 13:18; 23:4; 33:5 (Habel 1985:453).

convincing to Elihu and the counterarguments of the friends even less convincing” (Habel 1985:453).

The speech depletion of Job’s friends inevitably prompted Elihu’s speech (vss. 15, 16). Thus he uses *narrative amplification* to further interpret the silence of the friends as <sup>363</sup>התה which mean ‘shattered’ or ‘dismayed’ just as Job has been by the terrible dreams he was given by God (6:21; 7:14 cf. Clines 2006:721-22)<sup>364</sup>. It is ironically sympathetic to hear from Elihu’s mouth that “words have deserted them”. Thus in a figurative sense words have moved away from them as objects like mountains are forcefully moved by a high power or a mysterious movement of essential elements of life in terms of growth (cf. 9:5; 21:7; 14:18 and 18:4). Thus Clines (2006:722) in a seeming sarcasm admits that, “If words have shown a clean pair of heels to the friends; it is all too easy to see where they have been headed: it is to Elihu, who now finds himself with almost a surfeit of the most excellent arguments.” He spoke to fill the void of their silence, even though he too ironically waited while they spoke, thus he waited in silence as implied by the force of the verb in other sections like 6:11; 13:15; 14:14 and 29:21 (Habel 1985:453; cf. Gordis 1978:369).<sup>365</sup>

**32:17-22 Compulsion to Answer:** Elihu discloses his ego in his assertiveness for his speeches in the repetition of his יֵאָמֵר “Yes, I will” twice in verse 17 which elaborates his theme of the intention to respond in verse 10 in light of the brewing of his thought within his mind (cf. vss. 7-12) (cf. Hartley 1988:435). Thus within this determination, he will really act as the long awaited reconfigured “arbiter” who will hear and “counter Job’s arguments” (Habel 1985:453). Habel (1985:453-54) helps us to see the irony in Elihu when he claims to have the spirit of God inside him which gives him wisdom (vs. 8), in verse 18 he describes himself as one whose belly<sup>366</sup> is full of wind which ironically makes him fall into the ditch that should be avoided in such situation of speech as already pointed out by Eliphaz (15:2). Consideration the *narrative*

<sup>363</sup> From this root comes the verb תָּהַר in Job 41:25 as “terror” that Job suffered with the coming of Yahweh.

<sup>364</sup> In contrast the verb is used to describe the terror/fear that “the wild horse knows nothing of” in 39:22 (cf. Clines 2006:722).

<sup>365</sup> The act of waiting is sometimes synonymous to having hope, or waiting in hope in these verses. The verb יָהַל means to endure pain as the looming danger of death (6:11; 13:15 [depending on the translation here cf. Gordis 1978:369-70]), It also means to have hope in silent expectation of something somewhat positive coming (14:14; 29:21), 29:21 presupposes an expectation in respect.

<sup>366</sup> “The ancients believed that that human spirit resided in the abdomen” (Hartley 1988:436)

*amplification* between Eliphaz and Elihu (cf. 15:2, 32: 8, 18), the fact that Elihu is depicted as one who is full of wind/spirit now *reconfigures* him more within the imagery of being more like a fool than a wise person judging by Eliphaz's cautious point of view as already mentioned.<sup>367</sup> Nevertheless, Hartley (1988:436 cf. Clines 2006:722) observes the irony that Elihu poses in comparison with Job's three friends, in that, while they were empty of words he was actually full of what to say. Yet, he gave them his word never to indulge in partiality<sup>368</sup> in terms of trying to bestow uncalled for honorary titles to anyone<sup>369</sup>, thus to reproach somebody in a sarcastic way (32:22 cf. 19:3; Gordis 1978:371).

**33:1-7 Summons to Testify in Court:** In chapter 33:3-4, by means of *thematic elaboration*, "Elihu reiterates his previous protestation of authority and integrity (32:8, 11, 22)" (Habel 1985:464). This in a sense should impress upon Job amongst others the actual vitality that the speech of Elihu would bring to the texture of the discourse so far. Thus its authority as reflected in his integrity should commend good listening and response. His point of interest about himself in accentuating his integrity and the worth of his speech lies not only in the origination and genuineness of his knowledge but also in his ability to clearly argue his case with integrity and present Job with a "fair trial" (Habel 1985:464). He then invites Job to attend his imaginary court<sup>370</sup> using forensic language that reflects such juridical context.<sup>371</sup> Elihu then presents

<sup>367</sup> Although Clines (2006:722-23) is suspicious of Habel's (1985: 453f) interpretation of Eliphaz's statement in 15:2 in that, "Eliphaz there protested that a wise man would not fill his belly with the east wind- but his point was that turbulent outbursts are unbecoming to the sage." Thus he caution the reader not to make "Elihu an offender for a similar phrase that has to do with motivation more than emotion." This caution is very much acceptable here even in consideration of the role of irony within and around the Elihu speeches. Thus we are not actually using Eliphaz's argument to judge Elihu but rather trying to see what potentialities lie within the horizon if we do, or if we compare the two and probably more points of views.

<sup>368</sup> Giving honorary titles as titles of distinction as or showing partiality as lifting of the face in one's favor is envisaged here (cf. 13:8; Dhorme 1967:485; Clines 2006:723). It is interesting to closely note Hartley's (1988:436) semantic observation on the use of pun and chiasm in verses 21-22 in terms of showing partiality or favoritism and being carried away by the Maker who sees all things. He points out that, "There is a fine play on words here. Heb. *nāsā*, 'lift, carry, take,' occurs in both v. 21a and v. 22b. In v. 21a it is used with *p<sup>n</sup>ē* ('face of') in the idiom 'to show partiality,' and in v. 22b it means 'to be carried away.' Furthermore, two verbs in vv. 21-22 are chiasmically arranged; *nāsā*, appears in v. 21a and v. 22b and *kinnā* is used in v. 21b and v. 22a: a: b:: b:a. There is also chiasm with the grammatical order in v. 21: negated verb: prepositional phrase:: prepositional phrase: negated verb. And there is play on sounds in v. 22b: *yīśšā' ēnī 'ōśēnī*."

<sup>369</sup> Generally speaking, "[t]he use of titles is proper, unless intended to influence a person to a favorable bearing; then their use is kind of bribery" (Hartley 1988:436).

<sup>370</sup> Clines (2006:724f) does not see it like that, but rather sees the flow of a more or less common "old-fashioned" rhetoric.

<sup>371</sup> Habel (1985:464) sees the essence of the word *millīn* in 32:11, 14, 15, 18 as envisaging a judicial process of arguing a case at law.

himself as the most appropriate person for the meantime to address the Job case, seeing that he “appropriates those characteristics which the aged friends were expected to exhibit in their roles as wise counsellors (cf. 32: 7, 9)” (Habel 1985:464).

Elihu’s opening of the mouth to speak in 33: 2<sup>372</sup> is a *reconfiguration* of 3:1 where Job opened his mouth to start the chain of speeches that led us thus far. The difference of the two could be seen in terms of the recipient or addressee of each speech. Job presented what we might call a soliloquy, thus without an actual audience, while Elihu decisively here addresses Job himself, by his name (33:1).<sup>373</sup> The use of the verb עָרַךְ<sup>374</sup> in the imperative connotes not only an argument, so to speak, but rather by means of *recontextualization* of the verb describes the art of setting or arranging a case as a person arranges papers for proper presentation in a court of law<sup>375</sup>. Thus Elihu calls on Job who claims to have prepared his case, to now present it before the judge (cf. Habel 1985:464-65).

Elihu deviates a little from the legal proceedings here in Job’s case by the use of thematic elaboration in order to point out some interesting point of commonality between the two of them as well as all of them. In that Job has nothing to fear from a mortal like him (33:6-7 cf. 32:8), after all both share in the common spirit of life and physical frame (Habel 1985:465). Besides, Job himself had already described himself as one moulded<sup>376</sup> by the hand of God (10:8), so this imagery should make him feel at home in the following discussions amongst other things. Thus he tries<sup>377</sup> to save him from the terror<sup>378</sup> that could scare him away from an honest discourse concerning his case (33:7) which he earlier saw as an impossibility toward his attempt of confronting God (9:34; 13:21). The phrase אֶת־יָדִי “My hand” is an interesting reconfiguration of

<sup>372</sup> Not many scholars are happy with Elihu’s verbosity here in fact many tend to be impatient and seemingly furious with him, for such examples see Dhorme (1967:486) and Clines (2006:725).

<sup>373</sup> For different critical views on Elihu’s address to Job by name see for example Gordis (1978:371) Pope (1973:247) and Clines (2006:724).

<sup>374</sup> The same verb is used in a similar fashion in 13:18; 23:4.

<sup>375</sup> This sounds as a hostile language which carries war imagery by the use of the word עָרַךְ “to draw or marshal” as in a battle line arrangement. Thus Clines (2006:726) thought that, “This could be though very hostile language, as if a fight to the death is about to ensue.”

<sup>376</sup> Or “nipped from clay” (cf. Habel 1985:465).

<sup>377</sup> This is seen in Elihu’s decisive assertiveness in the use of words like “behold I” and “Yes I” in verse 6 cf. 32:17. Hartley (1988:438) rightly observes here that great emphasis falls on “I”, for the verse begins with ‘behold, I’ (*hēn-’āni*) and closes with ‘even I’ (*gam-’āni*).

<sup>378</sup> Terror as בַּעַת is a commonplace in the dialogues between Job and friends (cf. 3:5; 7:14; 9:34; 13:11, 21; 15:24; 18:11) (Hartley 1988:439).

the rhetorical tact to address the somewhat anticipated fear of Job. Habel (1985:465) explains that this imagery “may not only be an allusion to the heavy hand of God laid upon Job (13:21), but also to the specific role of the arbiter whose hand (*yād*, 9:33) rests on the shoulder of both God and the accuser to remove the terror of God and thus guarantee a fair hearing.”

**33:8-11 Presentation of Case:** In Elihu’s review of Job’s case against God<sup>379</sup>, he points out the oscillation of Job in being both a defendant and a plaintiff almost at the same time (vs. 8f). Nevertheless, he has to bring proofs of his charges for them to be valid before the hearing of Elihu and stand as facts with evidence that warrant close consideration. In defence of his innocence, Job presents his case from a “collage of elements from several discourses” (Habel 1985:466). By means of reconfiguration, he vehemently declared in 33:9 to be תָּיִשׁ “pure”<sup>380381</sup> without עֲשָׂוֹן “transgression”<sup>382</sup> or יָוֶז “guilt”<sup>383384</sup> in his life before God and people.<sup>385386</sup>

<sup>379</sup> 33:8-11 is the first verbatim or paraphrased review of Job’s case against God, others are found in 34:5-6, 9; 35:2-3 (cf. Clines 2006:728).

<sup>380</sup> This presupposes cultic/ceremonial purity, or essential purity from any contamination which brings about restoration from God according to Bildad’s words saying, “If you are pure and upright, even now he will rouse himself on your behalf and restore you to your prosperous state” (8:6 NIV). The NB’s translation “If you become pure” makes more sense here because Bildad among others has already understood Job to be a sinner, hence impure, so to reverse his misery requires him to become pure based on retribution theory as we shall see later on in our discussion. Job also used the word תָּיִשׁ in reference to the purity of his prayer (Gordis 1978:373) in 16:17 saying, “yet my hands have been free of violence and my prayer is pure” (NIV). By contrast Eliphaz claims that, “What is man that he should be pure, or one born of woman, that he should be righteous? If God places no trust in his holy ones, if even the heavens are not pure in his eyes,” (15:14, NB). Bildad reiterated the same point of nature’s uncleanness before God compared to human presupposition when he says, “If even the moon is not bright, and the stars are not pure as far as he is concerned, how much less a mortal man, who is but a maggot- a son of man, who is only a worm!” (25: 5, 6; NB).

<sup>381</sup> Clines (2006:728) sees this word in association to being “clean” in terms of moral purity in light of 9:30, “of hands washed clean in soap and lyre” . But 9:30 is more concerned with ceremonial cleansing than the inner behavioral or moral cleanliness.

<sup>382</sup> עֲשָׂוֹן as ‘sin’ or ‘transgression’ have been amply used, some on the lips of Job (7:21; 13:23; 14:17; 31:33) and Bildad (8:4) towards Job, “all the other uses of the word are in the mouth of Elihu (34:6, again of Job’s claim of innocence; 34:37, the presumption Elihu attributes to the ‘wise’ that Job adds rebellion to his ‘sin’; 35:6, a hypothetical ‘sin’ of Job; and, most interestingly, 36:9, where God informs the *righteous* of their ‘sin’)” (Clines 2006:729).

<sup>383</sup> יָוֶז as ‘iniquity’ is used by Job in reference to his alleged sins (7:21; 10:6, 14; 13:23, 26; 14:17; 31:33), the same is used by Job’s friends Zophar (11:6) and Eliphaz (15:5; 22:5 cf. 19:29; 20:27; 31:11, 28) (cf. Clines 2006:729).

<sup>384</sup> יָוֶז could also mean, “punishment”, “offense”, thus if we take it that way, then Job is trying to totally acquit himself of any burden or punishment, thus pushing the burden of injustice directly to God.

<sup>385</sup> We could translate verse 9 here to be, תָּיִשׁ אֲנִי בְלִי עֲשָׂוֹן וְלֹא יָוֶז בִּי “Pure I am without transgression, pure I am and no guilt in me” or the latter part could also be “and no guilt toward me” which could presuppose that he is confident of his innocence that he has no need to be guilty of anything. Based on this translation Habel’s (1985:466) link of, ‘I am blameless’ (*tam*, 9:20, 21; cf. 1:1, 8) with 33:9 and its resonance with his integrity and righteousness in 27:5, 6 is a bit far-fetched even though Job’s advocacy for his purity has some good warrant for such interpretation, nevertheless, the Hebrew (MT) does not actually allow it. “without transgression” (vs. 9) does not

By means of recitation, Elihu referred to Job's bewilderment at his perception of how God conducts God-self towards him, in fact against him, in that Job sees God playing the devil's advocate by looking for a "pretext"<sup>387</sup> (Habel 1985:466) to treat him (Job) as his אֹיֵב "enemy"<sup>388</sup>. This theme of God's enmity against Job has been one seen with outrage primarily by Job and often many Job interpreters in recent history. Job's perception of God as his enemy in this text would be an allusion to 13:24 where Job asks "Why do you hide your face and consider me your enemy?" and he added, "You fasten my feet in shackles; you keep close watch on all my paths by putting marks on the soles of my feet" (13:27 NIV)<sup>389390</sup>. By means of *narrative amplification*, Job further asserts in 19:11 that, "His anger burns against me; he counts me among his enemies" (NIV). In his attempt to further explain Job's outrage toward such a display of God's self toward him Habel (1985: 466) has the following words; "Shaddai, as a hunter and warrior, treats Job as a wild beast, a target, a chaos monster, and a military adversary (6:4; 7:12,

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actually mean that Job is perfectly sinless before God and human beings, because as Gordis (1978:373) points out he has already made "frequent references to his errors and transgressions (7:21; 10:5, 6; 13:26; 19:4f)". Nevertheless, he insists that he is upright before God and not deserving of this calamity/punishment that he is going through. In opposition to Gordis as quotes in the foregoing lines, Clines (2006:728) tries to dissuade his readers from the verses of self-admittance of sins that Job has done to be false, so to speak. Arguing that those presuppositions were just the construction of the narrator and not actual Job's self-witness. It is unfortunate that Clines has not actually presented reasons for Job's sinless, if that could be his premise beyond the so called narrator's words even in his reference to verses 9-11 which contain words like, "pure", "innocent", "without sin", "without guilt". Clines does not explain the contexts of reference within which and towards which Job is using these words; is he referring to his entire life or only in regards to this period of his affliction?

<sup>386</sup> Habel (1985:466) suspects that Elihu had ignored Job's "comprehensive expressions" of innocence and integrity in 31:6f but the present writer does not think so, thus we would try to see if Elihu's review of Job's case would actually ignore or as we argue respond, among other things, to Job's self-witness in his declaration of innocence. In contrast to Habel's position as mentioned above, Clines (2006:728) agreeably declares that Job's declaration of innocence in 9:21; 10:7; 13:18; 16:17; 23:7, 10-12; 27:4-6; and chapter 31 as a whole are the substance of his claim which Elihu quotes. In an interesting contradiction, so to speak, Clines (2006:729) accepts Habel's claim of Elihu's ignorance of Job's declaration of innocence in chapter 31, as a point of argumentation that Elihu's speeches have their position right at after 27 before Job gives his last speeches (29-31) to conclude the dialogues. If this position is accepted then the function of irony in the Elihu speeches, especially in light of the coming of Yahweh is highly minimized or never taken noticed of by the scholars who hold such views, which cannot actually understand the rage (anger) of Elihu against Job and his friends without his intrusion into the discourses after 29-31 of Job.

<sup>387</sup> This presupposes the fact that, "the reason for his plight lies with God, not in some wrong he has committed" (Hartley 1988:440). Thus by implication Elihu is stressing the fact that Job thinks that God has just found fault or an occasion to mistreat him as an enemy "without cause" (cf. 9:17; 10:13-14; Clines 2006:729).

<sup>388</sup> There is a play on words here in that, the man יֹבִיב "Job" has become an אֹיֵב "enemy" to God (cf. Clines 2006:729).

<sup>389</sup> Chapter 30:21 further brings Job's feeling and charge to the light when he says, "You turned on me ruthlessly; with the might of your hand you attack me." The phrase לְאֶפְרַיִם which is translated as being 'ruthless' (NIV) literally means, "being cruel towards me", thus describing the manner of God's שָׂטָם "hostility" towards Job (cf. Clines 2006:729).

<sup>390</sup> Hartley (1988:440) agreeably comments that, "This line captures Job's feeling that God's dogged observation never allows him a moment of respite so that he might catch his breath."

20; 16:11-14; 19:6-12; 30:21)<sup>391</sup>. Shaddai's hounding of Job as the enemy is cruel and unwarranted in Job's eyes.<sup>392</sup> The motif of God the spy who watches over human beings in an as domineering<sup>393</sup> way according to Job's perception is ironic on in the thematic elaboration of the providential duty of God to care for God's creation (10:12). By means of *reconfiguration*, Job had earlier satirised God the incessant watcher of all his ways who gives him no space to rest and catch his breath (7:8, 20). Yet, he counted on God's watchfulness as a blessing to him that made his past days safe and enjoyable (chap. 29:1ff). Furthermore, in his oath of innocence, he calls on God to scrutinise him meticulously in all his ways to see if there is anything wrong with him (chap. 31).<sup>394</sup>

Clines (2006:729) cautiously helps us to see Elihu's summary of Job's charges against God in fourfold points of powerful interest which comprise; (1) God finds pretext against him, i.e., unreasonable ground for assaulting him. That means he has been framed. (2) God treats him as an enemy, not a creature<sup>395</sup>, still less as a pious man. (3) He puts Job's feet in the stocks, i.e., limits his freedom of movement, constrains him to suffer and to be humiliated. (4) God spies on all his doings so that Job feels oppressed and perpetually under scrutiny.

**33:12-28 Refutation of Job's Claim:** In response to the previous charges of Job against God restated by Elihu<sup>396</sup>, Elihu now as an arbiter gives his verdict saying, "you are not right, in this" (vs. 12a)<sup>397</sup>. This is a legal subversion of Job's claim not actually on his innocence but on his charges against God, about God's seeming fickleness or caprice in regard to giving justice to

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<sup>391</sup> The enmity imagery from these verses is alluded to by means of narrative amplification thus accentuating Job's perception of God's acts towards him.

<sup>392</sup> This is most probably because, "For Job, the blameless hero, to be treated as the villain exposes an insidious side to the character of Shaddai" (Habel 1985:466). This complaint further strikes an ironic note to the reader in that Job believes his innocence and thinks that he deserves a better treatment from God than what was actually going on.

<sup>393</sup> Chapter 10:14 presents God's watchfulness as a punitive measure on the erring person when Job says; "I sinned, you would be watching me and would not let my offense go unpunished" (NIV).

<sup>394</sup> For example, "Does he not see my ways and count my every step?" (31:4, NIV) Although he had earlier sarcastically said, "Surely then you will count my steps but not keep track of my sin" (14:16, NIV).

<sup>395</sup> Clines (2006:729) stretches his imagination too far here, yes Job accused God of seeing him as a somewhat targeted monster (16:9ff) yet he still remains God's creation (10:8f) and nothing else. Only that he complains of not giving the dignity that he deserves (see Claassens 2013:169-183).

<sup>396</sup> By means of recitation,

<sup>397</sup> The use of the pronoun *אני* leads us back to Job accusation of injustice toward God. Elihu is seen as being significantly different from the three friends in his approach of verdict toward Job in that, "he will argue that Job is wrong for his bold complaints against God, rather than for some undisclosed past sins" (Hartley 1988:442).

mankind<sup>398</sup>. Prior to this point of argument, Job had already accused God of caprice in regards to being a consistent listener to the complaints of people who would come and cry to God. In 9:2-4 Job had emphatically pointed to God's injustice of audience to the needy saying,

אַמְנֵם יִדְעֵתִי כִּי־כֵן וּמֵה־יִצְדָּק אֲנֹשׁ עַם־אֱלֹהִים:

אִם־יִחַפֵּץ לְרִיב עִמּוֹ לֹא־יִעֲנֶנּוּ אֶת־תְּמִימֵי־אֱלֹהִים:

חֲכָם לֵבָב וְאִמְיָץ כַּחַם מִי־הַקְּשָׁה אֱלֹהִים וַיִּשְׁלָם:

“Indeed<sup>399</sup>, I know that this is true.

But how can mere mortals prove their innocence before God?<sup>400</sup>

Though they wish to dispute<sup>401</sup> with him, they could not answer him one time out of a thousand<sup>402</sup>.

His wisdom is profound; his power is vast<sup>403</sup>.

Who has resisted<sup>404</sup> him and come out unscathed?<sup>405</sup>

Giving the previous submission about God's wisdom and might,<sup>406</sup> Job has already envisaged the futility of trying to contend with God in any argument talk more of trying to have God stand trial

<sup>398</sup> For more elaborate subversion of Job's charges against God in terms of “Job's legal appeal by finding pretexts to condemn the innocent” would occupy the discourse in 34:10-15 etc (cf. Balentine 2006:542).

<sup>399</sup> The adverb אַמְנֵם is an affirmation of truth like saying, “in truth” or “it is true” etc cf. Job 12:2; 19:4; 34:12; 36:4.

<sup>400</sup> This rhetorical question accentuates the impossibility of a mortal/weak human being to be righteous before a wise of powerful God just like Eliphaz had earlier envisaged when he said; “Can a mortal be more righteous than God? Can even a strong man be more pure than his Maker?” (4:17).

<sup>401</sup> The verb רִיב is a governing one in the book of Job, it envisages a contention or dispute between two parties, thus it is more than a mere case or complains against someone. Cf. Job 13:19; 33:13. Hartley (1988:442) explains that, “In Elihu's opinion contending with God is a very presumptuous sin.” That is why he would like to rebuke Job perhaps to correct or cautiously soften his harsh perception of God.

<sup>402</sup> This means God's wisdom will overwhelm the human to the point of speechlessness, thus this statement here anticipates Job's encounter with Yahweh from 38ff.

<sup>403</sup> The Net Bible translates this part of the verse more explicitly saying, “He is wise in heart, and mighty in strength,” (9:4a).

<sup>404</sup> The verb קָשָׁה means “to be hard” or “strong” or “stiff” of the head or neck. This recalls the stiff-neckedness of the Israelites out of Egypt etc.

<sup>405</sup> The use of the verb שָׁלֵם “be sound, safe, complete,” envisages Job's fear of extinction from God should he try to really confront God. Habel (1985:467) also rightly observes here that Job's is an existential struggle as much as it is a rational debate over the value of a forensic encounter.

to answer his charges (cf. 9:14-19)<sup>407</sup>. It is ironic to note here that the “answer” that Job ultimately wished to hear from God is not forthcoming and his wise friends have come to their wits’ end that they have no cogent argument to answer his charges. Nevertheless, Elihu braced himself and stepped forward with the words, אָנֹכִי “this is my answer to you” (vs. 12)<sup>408</sup>. Thus he cautioned Job not to accuse God of not answering at all (vs. 13)<sup>409</sup>. This means God’s answer to human beings may come by means of other people or nature and not directly from God, so to speak.

Verse 14 is a testimonial assertion that refutes Job’s charge that God does not answer human beings who would like to ask him anything, even ones in a thousand (9:3). Here Elihu contends that God does answer or communication to humanity severally<sup>410</sup> and variously even when they do not see or perceive what God says (Habel 1985: 467). “For God does speak- now one way, now another- though no one perceives it” (vs. 14, NIV)<sup>411</sup>. In light of verses 15-19 as we shall

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<sup>406</sup> Dhorme (1967:492) if Job understands that God is greater than human beings, as also asserted in the Muslim prayer, ‘*Allahu akbar*’, then that would be the answer to Job’s problem of God not answering everything that humans ask or complain about. Although the meaning “answer” in this context would receive further attention in verses 14ff. but Job’s point of contention here is ironically solved in his understanding of the mighty/power/greatness of God which would become Elihu’s tool to further refute and nullify his charges in a few verses to come. Regarding the might/power of God in this argument, it is interesting to note that Elihu’s understanding of God always hinges on God’s power which explains everything in life and beyond (cf. Clines 2006:730). But if Job had already acknowledged and feared the might/power of God in 9:2-3; 14-19 etc. why does Elihu have to remind him of the same here? This is a puzzling question that does not have an easy answer but it could be possible that Elihu did not hear Job’s acknowledgement and consideration of God’s power, if he tries to approach them as stated in his earlier speech. That is why Elihu does not bring it back to him as a quotation but rather like a refresh assertion as a major feature of his theology. In response to the governing question within this note, Clines (2006:730) explains that Job’s claims of God’s greatness and silence (not answer) to human complaint are not clearly related points of argumentation, so to speak. That could be the reason why they were readily refuted by Elihu. But rather, he (Clines) further explains that God’s greatness/power to have made Job his enemy (according to Job’s perception) and his refusing to answer should not be the reasons why Job should not approach him with his complains but rather these two points form the substance not the reason for the complaint. For more on Job’s complain on the silence (not being answered) of God could be seen in 9:16; 19:7; 30:20.

<sup>407</sup> Just like 9:2-4, Job here despairs of the impossibility of meeting God in a confrontation for any argument of his innocence. Thinking that “it was impossible for a weak litigant” like him to find “justice” from God (Habel 1985:467).

<sup>408</sup> Ironically, many interpreters see this not as an answer to Job but rather as Job’s burden within the whole argument in which he feared being silenced by might or wisdom (cf. Gordis 1978:374).

<sup>409</sup> The LXX version says, “Yet how do you say I am righteous and He has not answered me?” (cf. Gordis 1978:373).

<sup>410</sup> That is “time and again” (vs. 14).

<sup>411</sup> Dhorme (1967:493) translates the second part of this verse as “And He does not repeat His word.” Following the Targum and Syriac versions more closely when they say, ‘He has no need to consider it’ (Targ.), hinging on the contestable understanding of שׁוּר which could mean “look, see, perceive, consider” etc. He quotes the Vulgate ‘*idipsum non repetit*’, ‘not repeating’ (cf. Syr.). This he takes as being the “well understood” meaning of שׁוּר (cf. 7:8; 35:12) This line of argument further silences Job from any contention on God’s silence, nevertheless, it is very

closely consider soon, we could see God's graciousness in giving his message through visions which signal God's leniency as portrayed by Gordis (1978:374) when he says, "God sends His message through visions again and again before taking more drastic steps." To take the discussion further, we could see from Elihu's speech here that the two principal ways<sup>412</sup> that God uses to warn an individual are through visions of the night (vss. 15-18) and discipline through suffering (vss. 19-22) (Hartley 1988:443).

By means of *thematic elaboration*, verse 15 opens the series of evidence which illustrates Elihu's points of argument in regards to the communicative justice of God to the individual. He starts with the phenomena of dream and vision of the night which take their initiative from God, not the individual recipient but rather God gives the dream or vision with a message encoded in it which the individual would have to discern and understand (vss. 14, 23) (Habel 1985:468). Dhorme (1967:493; cf. Clines 2006: 731; Balentine 2006:543) sees Elihu's assertion of the possibility of an individual receiving revelation through a dream as a direct inspiration by the account of Eliphaz in 4:12ff thus he believes that Elihu quotes 4:13 "almost verbally" here.<sup>413</sup> Hartley's (1988:443) observation about the significance of Job's troubling dreams (7:14)<sup>414</sup> as a means of God's communication to him is in order here. The purpose of God's nocturnal communication by means of dream or vision is given as a warning (*mūsār*) to the individual for their own good (vs. 16) as earlier described in 5:17 saying, "Blessed is the one whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline<sup>415</sup> of the Almighty" (NIV). Thus Elihu alluded to the

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reasonable to argue that God's word is given (spoken) for hearing not seeing so to speak. But Elihu's contention here could be an understanding of God's message not only by hearing but also by perceptible seeing or observation of nature. This accentuates the reality of variety in God's message to human beings, yet, no one 'understands' it. It is interesting to note Hartley's (1988:443) observation here that, "Even when a person fails to recognize the manner of God's speaking, God keeps communicating with that person."

<sup>412</sup> These two main ways of God's communication are peculiar to this passage. They are not the only ways by which God communicates. Clines (2006:730) helps us to see that other scholars have discerned other means of God's communication (even within this pericope) which include cultic action, angelic mediation, and prayer.

<sup>413</sup> To the present writer this is a good parallel or coincidence but thinking it as a direct influence from Eliphaz to Elihu seems far-fetch for the fact that Elihu did not acknowledge such link in a direct speech, nor does the narrator relates it as such. But we can consider it as recitation from the author's point of view.

<sup>414</sup> What appears troubling to Job (7:14) is earlier put as being instructive to human life in that it teaches the fact that all humans are 'born to trouble' (5:6,7) that is according to the LXX version, but could be emended to mean 'humans beget trouble' thus placing the source of trouble (as travail) in humans not otherwise. This kind of terrifying message is contrary to Job's expectation so to speak (cf. Andersen 1977: 249). Thus, "Job's only recourse is to submit himself happily to the human condition, assured by the promise that trouble is the rod of God's compassionate discipline (5:17)" (Balentine 2006:543).

<sup>415</sup> Discipline here can come to a person in form of suffering or as a disciplinary instruction (Gordis 1978: 375).

foregoing by means of *thematic elaboration*. Through adherence to the warning and/or discipline of God a person's life<sup>416</sup> is spared<sup>417</sup> from destruction<sup>418</sup> <sup>419</sup>in the pit of corruption (vs. 18 cf. 17:14).<sup>420</sup> It is interesting to note here that the sparing of a person's נַפְשׁוֹ "life/soul/being/self" from destruction has been given considerable attention here, it parallels הַיָּהוּ "living being/vital essence" as explained by Dhorme (1967:496) cf. vss. 20, 22, 28; 36:14. The destruction from which the person is being saved here does not necessarily refer to a violent death, but rather to an insidious going down into, or passing away onto, or crossing the river<sup>421</sup> (vs. 18) of life into the realm of the dead.<sup>422</sup> This comes as a result of an insidious, almost unnoticed attitude of pride<sup>423</sup> which pushes one into arrogance and recalcitrance (cf. vs. 17).

Continuing with *thematic elaboration* Elihu goes further to explain to his audience another dimension of God's communication and a warning to the erring person or recalcitrant other, namely, by means of suffering<sup>424</sup>(33:19-22; Habel 1985:469). Thus as we shall see, not all suffering is negative, because God can use it as a pointer to the sufferer, to a certain area of their life which needs adjustment or radical change in order to stay alive and happy in the world of God. This mode of communication appeals to the human sense of feeling when the sense of

<sup>416</sup> The sparing of a person's נַפְשׁוֹ "life/soul/being/self" from destruction has been given considerable attention here, it parallels "living being/vital essence" as explained by Dhorme (1967:496) cf. vss. 20, 22, 28; 36:14.

<sup>417</sup> The verb שָׁמַר means "restrain, hold back," thus "to save or spare" as in 7:11; 16:5, 6; 21:30; 30:10 cf. Clines 2006:733).

<sup>418</sup> The reason for the need for salvation from pride as the evil deed of humanity is stated in verses 17 which anticipates further reference in 36:9 as עֲמָלָם "their work" which is although "unqualified" but still has a "negative connotation" (Gordis 1978:375) that points one to the progressive point of Elihu's argument.

<sup>419</sup> This salvation from this evil deed is done when pride is hidden away or taken away as being separated from the person (33:17 cf. 24:4; Gordis 1978:375).

<sup>420</sup> The Pit here features the underworld (Habel 1985:468) which the NB translates as "corruption," thus playing on the word שְׁחָתָה 'Pit/corruption' from its root שָׁחַת "destroy."

<sup>421</sup> Cf. vs. 28 in light of which Dhorme (1967:497) translates dying as the act by which one is believe to 'pass through the Canal'. Thus he points out "an allusion to the vertical canal, analogous to the well of souls, which allows the spirit of the departed to pass into Sheol beneath the earth."

<sup>422</sup> This is parallel to 36:12 saying, "But if they refuse to listen, they pass over the river of death, and expire without knowledge" (NB). The NIV still maintains the MT of the phrase בְּשֵׁלַח יַעֲבֹרוּ as "they will perish by the sword." The תַּבְּלִי-דַעַת as "without knowledge" (NIV, NB etc) here makes more sense as 'without knowing'. That is without actually knowing what is happening to them.

<sup>423</sup> הַגָּא "pride" or "arrogance" is particularly singled out as "a surrogate for generic evil" (also cf. 22:29). Thus, "[i]t is *hybris*, the arrogance to which men, particularly good men are prone, and which is attenuated by trouble" (Gordis 1978:375). Clines (2006:732) further helps us to see Elihu's reminder to Job that "it is pride that prevents the oppressed from directing their cries to God (35:12). It is more likely that 'pride' serves here merely as one example of a sin that can be corrected through a dream audition." He further explains how "pride" is used in a neutral sense to describe even wild animals in the book of Job (cf. 28:8 "Proud beasts" or more lit. 'sons of pride').

<sup>424</sup> Suffering in terms of "sickness" is seen as an "everyday experience" used by God to communicate to humanity in one way or another (cf. Andersen 1977:249 and Hartley 1988:444).

hearing or listening seems inadequate (Balentine 2006:547)<sup>425</sup>. Habel (1985:469) helps us to see the governing verbs of verses 19-22 as הִנְכָּח “be reproved”<sup>426</sup> and רִיב “lawsuit” which belong to the forensic language of Job and Elihu (cf. 9:3; 13:6; 16:21; 32:12; 33:13). Thus the experience of suffering here embodies a lawsuit in which pain<sup>427</sup> is the indictment with the hope for repentance if the sufferer has done something wrong. Such lawsuit in the form of suffering could bring one to the brink of death and the grave. Habel (1985:469) agreeably observes here that ‘Pit’ and ‘Death’<sup>428</sup> “invade the world of sufferers and threaten their existence through illness.” Illness here amongst other things becomes the existential threat of human possibility for the flourishing of life (Louw 2008). Yet, it is given in this context not to annihilate the sufferer but ironically to save the sufferer from extinction (destruction).

Elihu thought of the possibility of sparing the life of someone who has been inflicted with whatever kind of suffering that leads his life near death<sup>429</sup>. He thought of the possibility of having an intervening<sup>430</sup> angel (33:23, 24) who would speak to the sufferer by way of translating or explaining the gracious mind of God to help and buy his life back<sup>431</sup>. This corresponds to the confident assertion of Job by means of narrative amplification of 16:20, “My intercessor is my

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<sup>425</sup> Balentine’s (2006:548) description of the possibility of Elihu’s knowledge of what happens to Job in the prologue stretches the mind a bit too long, for the fact that what happens in the prologue (chaps. 1-2) especially regarding Job’s loss and the cause of his illness, are almost only known by the narrator in good details and then now the reader of the story but never the human characters, so to speak.

<sup>426</sup> Habel (1985:469) has ‘indicated’ most probably he meant “indicted,” which fits more with the context of legal confrontation. The root word נָכַח is used as a legal term to indicate God’s correction to a wrong doer. In reference to Eliphaz’s usage of the term in 5:17, Dhorme (1967:497) explains that, “God had used dreams and apparitions to terrify man and prevent him from taking his faults to extremes.”

<sup>427</sup> This pain describes serious bodily discomfort which could be seen from the use of the word זָהַם “to loathe” or “repulsive” (cf. 6:7 “loathsome food”). Another similar word תִּעַב “to abhor” is variously used by Job to describe his sorrowful situation (cf. 9:31; 19:19; 30:10) (Dhorme 1967:498). In 33:21a the verb נָלַח is used in the sense of the imperfect jussive to see how inevitably the sufferer will waste away and come to the end of his life. For more on Job’s suffering cf. 13:27; 15:33; 18:9, 12 etc. (Dhorme 1967:499). Clines (2006:734) observes that the verb נָלַח “waste away” has been used “of the wicked (4:9), of days (7:6), of a cloud (7:9), of eyes (11:20; 17:5), and of the kidneys as signifying the inner being (19:27).”

<sup>428</sup> Chapter 18:13, 14 refer to the “Firstborn of Death” and “the King of terror” respectively cf. 33:18; 30:23.

<sup>429</sup> Andersen (1977:250) sees this section more as the possible response to the illness of the sufferer rather than another revelation of God’s communication to humanity. This suggests how the sufferer ought to respond and how the mediating messenger would act, as well as God.

<sup>430</sup> This takes an idea of arbitration, which is to pray for or intercede for someone as in 42:8 between Job and his friends (cf. Dhorme 1967:501).

<sup>431</sup> Gordis (1978:377) considers the interactive nature of these two verses when he sees vs. 23 as “the protasis of a condition” and vs. 24 as “the apodosis.”

friend” (NB).<sup>432</sup> In other words, 16:20 may be Job’s complaint on how he has been treated by his “friends” which bring tears to his eyes (16:20b) and now necessitates an impartial spokesperson as an advocate to stand for his right. Looking at the possible meaning of the word מְלִיץ in this context, Habel (1985: 470) helps us to see the correspondence (*reconfiguration*) by way of an *allusion* by Elihu to Job’s previous speech and need for “a mediator who would rise to justify his integrity before God and the court of heaven (9:32-35; 16:18-22; 19:21-27).” The stated purpose of the advocate could bring some real relief and tension to Job when he comes לְהַגִּיד לְאָדָם יֶשְׁרָר “to tell them how to be upright” (NIV) or “to tell a person what constitutes his uprightness” (NB).<sup>433</sup> In this light, Habel (1985:470) sees this saintly mediator or messenger as a spokesperson on earth rather than one in the heavenly court. In this sense, we can think of Elihu as an ironic option doing the same thing he is explaining to the hearing of his audience.<sup>434</sup> Job, as well as any sufferer, would be happy to hear the plea as well as the announcement from the mouth of the mediator asking for his deliverance (vs. 24).<sup>435</sup><sup>436</sup> This counters Eliphaz’s pessimism that there is no holy one who would listen to Job and help him (cf. 5:1), by contrast, this part of Elihu’s speeches as earlier mentioned in passing could be of great relieve to Job seeing that his longing for an advocate, witness and Redeemer is now coming to fruition (cf. 9:33; 16:19 and 19:25). To summarise Elihu’s speeches so far, Hartley (1988:447) points out succinctly that, “In Elihu’s

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<sup>432</sup> The MT version is this part of the verse is problematic to many interpreters. מְלִיץ רַעֲיָי literally means “The ones who scorn me are my friends.” Or it could be a complaint rather than an assertion to mean “My friends treat me with scorn” which would be the best explaining of pouring out the tears that he does in the following line of the same verse. The word רַעֲיָי in wisdom writing could be either scorner or mediator, hence the use of מְלִיץ in 33:23 (cf. NB notes).

<sup>433</sup> The MT is “to declare to a human being his uprightness.”

<sup>434</sup> It is ironic that Elihu recognize and justify his own uprightness but denies and condemns Job of his own. The question; ‘who is wise?’ can also take a cultic turn to ask, ‘who is upright?’

<sup>435</sup> The כֶּפֶר announced here is the actual ransom for the life of the sufferer (cf. Gordis 1978:378). Thus the address to “Release” the sufferer from death goes to “the death angel that has come to take this person’s life” (Hartley 1988:446; cf. Clines 2006:737). Balentine (2006:549) also sees the mediator as one who intervenes in order to rescue the life of the sufferer from death, but different from other scholars’ views around this point, Balentine interprets the act of the mediating angel from a “cultic” perspective in which he performs various conversational acts of interpreting what is uprightly required for the sufferer, then speaking to God on his behalf asking for his deliverance, and then speaking to the public, announcing the ransom found for his life upon which basis he calls for his release from those Hartley (within this footnote as cited above) sees as “the death angel.” It is ironic here that Elihu may not have interest in the kind of a mediator he explains to Job, in that, “his notion of a mediator is not someone who will prove to God that Job is in the right, but someone who will prove to Job that God is in the right” (Clines 2006:737).

<sup>436</sup> The word פָּדַע could mean ‘to deliver’, ‘to free’ or ‘to redeem’ (cf. 5:20; 6:23; Dhorme 1967:502) which fits the context of one already in suffering, thus there is no need for any emendation of the word. The translation “to exempt” does not fit because it presupposes an exemption from suffering which contradicts Job’s actual situation.

teaching this particular angel<sup>437</sup> works for the restoration of those who have strayed from the right way. This means that God does not immediately abandon any of his servants who err. The converse is the truth; he labours zealously for their full restoration to faithful service.”

Through *thematic elaboration*, we could now see that Job’s longing to “see” God’s “hidden” face (13:24) will now be possible as an actualization of the redemption of his soul and the reinstatement of his person in the presence of God (vss. 25-26).<sup>438</sup> The seeing of God here would not be in litigation anymore as Job had earlier desired, but rather it would be an experience of joy and gratitude,<sup>439</sup> as a result of the intervention of an expected redeemer who lives and stands in a heavenly court (cf. 19:25-27). Towards the end of the book of Job, Job indeed saw God but like Habel (1985:471) observes, not “in the way he expects or in the manner that Elihu anticipates in this passage (42:5).” The healing and restoration of the sufferer is a demonstration of the divine-human effort (interactive or corporative effort) in gaining “advantage from a particular course of action” (cf. 10:3; 15:3; 21:15; Habel 1985:471). This interactive effort has to do with the wrongdoer confessing their wrongdoing<sup>440</sup> which resonates more with the traditional approach to the problem of sin in both personal and public life.

**33:29-33 Summation and Summons:** Habel (1985:471-72) helps us to see how the summation of Elihu (33:29-30) by means of *thematic elaboration* ties up with the opening statement of verse 14 with the recurring theme of God’s ultimate purpose (vs. 18, 24, 28) concerning human suffering. God’s illumination of the life<sup>441</sup> of the sufferer with God’s light of and in wholeness

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<sup>437</sup> The actual identity of this special angel is not so easy to find. Walther Eichrodt (1967: 23-29) among others is believed (cf. Hartley 1988:447) to identify him with ‘the angel of Yahweh’ in the Old Testament literature, especially when he (Eichrodt, 23) sees him as the guide and protector of those who fear God. We shall try to return to this point of view later on in our wider intertextual discussions within the Old Testament, in conversation with Eichrodt. Nevertheless, there is no special interest from the present writer to either actually agree or definitely encourage such generalization.

<sup>438</sup> It is interesting to note Habel’s (1985:470) observation on the textual correspondence within verses 25-27, in that the threefold restoration of Job by way of having God’s favor, seeing God’s face and being restored to his righteousness, corresponds to the threefold confession of guilt urged in verses 27.

<sup>439</sup> This corresponds to Bildad’s first speech to Job when he says, “He will yet fill your mouth with laughter, and your lips with gladness” (8:21). This does not necessarily imply a cultic context, but rather a rather it could just be “the emotion of joy that is intended” (Clines 2006:739).

<sup>440</sup> Cf. 1:22; 35:6; even though ironically, Elihu would later castigate Job “for questioning the value of avoiding sin (35:3)” (Habel 1985:471).

<sup>441</sup> This expression could simply be understood as a description of “to be alive” cf vs. 28; 3:20; 18:18 (Dhorme 1967:507). Clines (2006:740) in agreement to the symbolic effect of ‘light’ in this context, further explains that, “The light is the light of the day, which is symbolic of life, and implicitly is contrasted with the darkness of Sheol.”

(vs. 30) brings us to the climax of the prospects of the sufferer for seeing the face of God and living in the light of God (vss. 14,15, 26, 28)<sup>442</sup>. Elihu ends his speech in this chapter with an ironic assertion of himself as one who is more than an arbiter in Job's case with God<sup>443</sup>, or just a spokesperson for God but in addition to all that, he is an ardent speaker for wisdom, he is a sage who, by virtue of his special knowledge could instruct people like Job and his friends as a wise counselor (cf. 32:7-8; 33:3-4) (Habel 1985:472; Dhorme 1967:508). By this, he hopes to make sure<sup>444</sup> that Job is "to the right" (33:32)<sup>445</sup> rather than to actually condemn him in his misery.<sup>446</sup> Elihu's summons to Job to "hear"<sup>447</sup> him carefully, indicates that he has not actually finished his speech but that he has reached a point of transition into real wisdom teaching. Thus as could be seen from several scholars (Dhorme 1967: 508; Clines 2006:740-41) verse 31 is a transition point into the forth coming speeches of Elihu.

**34:1-3, 4-9 Summons to Judge and Presentation of Case Against Job:** In chapter 34:2-3, Elihu's mind goes to the point of a just defence of what is defensible (Habel 1985:481). He calls on "the wise"<sup>448</sup> and the judges of the community to "judge" what he has to say in light of Job's case (vs. 4). By means of *recontextualization*, Elihu in verse 3 alludes to a proverb which was earlier found on Job's lips when he says, "For the ear tastes words as the tongue tastes food"

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<sup>442</sup> This symbolic description of acceptance and wholeness contrasts the aborted "who have not seen the light (3:16)" (Dhorme 1967:505).

<sup>443</sup> By showing himself as an arbiter in this discourse he thus he first made it clear that others in conversation, namely Job and his friends, do not understand how to "judge" issues (32:9) "which means they do not have what is required to be an 'arbiter' (*mōkiāh*, 32:12; cf. 9:33)" (Balentine 2006:551).

<sup>444</sup> This expresses the strength of Elihu's 'desire' in the whole Job-God case that he arbitrates amongst other things. Clines (2006:741) explains the positive effect of desire in this section in resonance to other occurrences of the verb in other verses within Job, in that, Job desired to argue his case with God (13:3); he satisfied the desire of the poor (31:16), shows how the wicked do not desire the knowledge of God's ways (21:14 cf. 9:3; 21:21; 22:3). Thus desire is nothing wrong in this context and in other parts of Joban literature, it is only a "strong and deliberate act", and not something that displays arrogance.

<sup>445</sup> Balentine (2006:557) has already seen the irony of Elihu's desire to see Job in the right when he has already decided that he is in the wrong (vs. 12).

<sup>446</sup> Clines (2006:741) cautiously helps us to understand here that Elihu is determined to see Job in the right not in the sense that he is right in his complaint against God, but rather that his righteousness is fully upheld.

<sup>447</sup> This is Elihu's trademark in these speeches which usually marks his beginning and sometimes ending of a section. In speeches directed to Job more specifically (cf. 33:1, 33; 34:16), in speeches that include the friends (cf. 32:10; 34:2, 10).

<sup>448</sup> This parallels the possession of knowledge as in 8:9 (cf. Dhorme 1967:509). The identity of "the wise" and "those who know" in this context is contestable among scholars seeing the seeming incredibility of Job's friends in his first speech (32: 7-9 etc) (Cf. Hartley 1988:450). Nevertheless, Clines (2006:767) critical examination of the use of verbs and pronouns interactively helps us to see how Elihu begins the speech by inviting the friends of Job into a committee-like participation in scrutinizing Job's case to find out what is just and good. This entails both speaking to the friends in the quoted speeches of Job, and then speaking to Job by way of critical response and/or verdict.

(NIV; cf. 12:11)<sup>449</sup>. This is a call for a very critical assessment of what he has to say about Job’s case with God which expects a very just verdict at the end of the day.<sup>450</sup>

Elihu uses recitation to refer to<sup>451</sup> Job as saying, “I am in the right” (vs. 5)<sup>452</sup> and “I am guiltless” (vs.6)<sup>453</sup> as he had already prepared his mind to maintain even if it costs him his very life (27:2-6)<sup>454</sup>. Yet, he claimed being denied<sup>455</sup> “litigation” by El, his “lawsuit”<sup>456</sup> is turned to make him a

<sup>449</sup> Unlike in Elihu’s speeches here the proverb in 12:11 appears as a rhetorical question. Gordis’s (1978:386) caution that “quotations in biblical literature are rarely exact” is in order here.

<sup>450</sup> The quest for טָרִיף “what is just” (vs. 4 cf. 32:9) is a case in point here (Dhorme 1967:510) as a parallel to מַה־טוֹב “what is good” (34:4). In this case Hartley (1988:450) explains that, “*Right* stands for that which is legally correct and *good* for that which is morally sound.” (Note: Italics is in the original for emphasis sake. He takes טָרִיף to be ‘right’). Balentine (2006:567) helps us to see the governing role of טָרִיף in this chapter (cf. vss. 4, 5, 6, 12, 17, 23) in which Elihu uses the word in his quotation of Job’s use of the word in light of his personal experience in quest for justice. And how Elihu himself uses the word “in a more general sense, with reference to the process, the system of governance, by which legal judgments are rendered” (cf. 4, 12, 17 and 23). This shows us the interpretive angles from which the two people are coming. Job “argues inductively” (Subjectively) while Elihu argues “deductively” (objective/intersubjective point of view).

<sup>451</sup> In 34:5-6 Elihu uses recitation in reference to Job’s words although with some little variation compared to the original wordings of Job in the derivative passages as seen in the table below. We want to be cautious to describe what Elihu does with Job’s words as actually quoting Job. Balentine (2008:568) alerts us to the possibility of Elihu “misquoting Job” instead of actually “quoting” him. But according to Robbins (1996:42) there it is possible for recitation of another speech or text to occur in different words as we could see in the case of Elihu and Job. Thus it should not be understood as quotation per se but rather as reference by means of recitation. The following speech juxtaposition is an example of his point of reasoning;

<b>Job’s Words</b>	<b>Elihu’s Words</b> (“Quotations” Balentine 2008:568)
9:15, 10:15 <i>if/though</i> ( <i>’im</i> ) I am innocent ( <i>šādaqti</i> )	34:5a For Job has said, “I am innocent” ( <i>šādaqti</i> )
27:2a As God <i>lives</i> ( <i>hay ’ēl</i> ) <i>who</i> has taken away my right	34:5b God has taken away my right
6:28 Would I <i>lie</i> ( <i>’im ’ākazzēb</i> ) to your face? [a oath sworn to friends]	34:6a in spite of being right I am counted a <i>liar</i> ( <i>’ākazzēb</i> )
6:4 The <i>arrows of the Almighty</i> ( <i>hiššē šadday</i> )	34:6b <i>my arrow</i> (NRSV: “wound”) is incurable

<sup>452</sup> This corresponds with his *šādaqti* in vss. 10; 9:15; 13:18; 27:6 (cf. Habel 1985:481; Hartley 1988:451). Dhorme (1967:510) already notes the avowal of Job’s righteousness as hypothetical in especially, 9:15, “Though I were innocent, I could not answer him; I could only plead with my judge for mercy”, 10:15, “If I am guilty-woe to me! Even If I am innocent, I cannot lift my head, for I am full of shame and drowned in my affliction”, which could also include 9:20, “Even if I were innocent, my mouth would condemn me; if I were blameless, it would pronounce me guilty.”

<sup>453</sup> By quoting Job almost verbatim, Dhorme (1967:510) understands Elihu as one who has a usual technique of “incriminating Job through his words” (cf. 33:8-11).

<sup>454</sup> This is his first oath of integrity before God and his determination to maintain it no matter the cost.

<sup>455</sup> This denial of justice and Job’s condemnation by God comes as an interpretation of God’s refusal to appear in court to handle Job’s suit (Habel 1985:481).

<sup>456</sup> Habel (1985:481) sees *mišpāt* in its forensic context to mean ‘litigation’ or ‘lawsuit’ “rather than justice in general (cf. 13:18; 31:13).”

liar<sup>457</sup> before God, more to that he is wounded with arrows of affliction<sup>458</sup>. This has made him appear guilty in the eyes of the community (Habel 1985:481) as we can see from the speeches of his three friends. In addition to all this, Elihu attacks Job's character, describing him as one of the renegades of society (Habel 1985:481) one who drinks<sup>459</sup> iniquity like water<sup>460</sup>. This charge corresponds with Eliphaz's cynical view of Job's character in 15:16 in which the same statement is made an almost word for word<sup>461</sup>. This denotes the ease and free flow of Job's indulgence into corruption (iniquity). This ironically implies that it is Job's character<sup>462</sup> that should be placed under scrutiny (review) not God's (cf. Balentine 2006:568).

The quote of Job's thought on the futility of holding court with God on any important point in life (vs. 9)<sup>463</sup>, which renders righteousness fruitless<sup>464</sup> "and the corollary that wickedness seems

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<sup>457</sup> The construction  $\text{לֹא־יָשָׁר}$  is admittedly difficult to translate on a straight line, yet, scholars like Dhorme (1967:510-11) and Gordis (1978:386 cf. also Clines 2006:769) amongst others have seen the reality of verse as being an inversion of subversion of Job's justice from being 'right' to becoming a 'liar' for his integrity before God. Although following the LXX rather than the MT here the reverse is the case in which 'He (God) is lying' (Andersen 1977:252). But Andersen (1977:252) maintains that, "Elihu is exaggerating, for Job has never accused God of branding him a liar, and thus telling a lie." Instead, he further explains, "His complaint has been that God has not lodged any formal charge at all."

<sup>458</sup> If what Elihu quotes of Job is true, with this charge Hartley's (1988:452) observation is in order when he says, "Job has pictured God's hostility either as a mighty warrior attacking his foe or as a general marshalling his troops against his enemy (16:9-14; 19:7-12)."

<sup>459</sup> "The picture is that of a very thirsty person gulping down large amounts of water" (Hartley 1988:452; Balentine 2006:568).

<sup>460</sup> Cf. 9:23; 11:3; 21:3; 22:19.

<sup>461</sup> Andersen (1977:252) notes the difference in Elihu's use of Eliphaz criticism of Job, in which he (Elihu) replaces 'iniquity' with 'scoffing', in a sense "enlarging it with the wholly groundless accusation that Job is a companion of *evildoers* (verse 8)" (Note; Italics is in the original).

<sup>462</sup> Clines (2006:770) reads Elihu's charge against Job slightly different from other scholars in that he sees Elihu's charge not against Job actual (or entire) character, but rather only regarding his intellect (thoughts) in light of his case against God.

<sup>463</sup> To describe this as a real 'quote' is contestable seeing Andersen's (1977:252-53) contention that, "the sentiment expressed in verse 9 cannot be found in Job's speeches in as many words." He further explains, "In all his subsequent trials Job never said this was a waste of effort. On the contrary, he said again and again that he would stick to his integrity to the end. What, then, is Elihu getting at? Job has made two observations: first, that the expected judgment often does not fall on the wicked (21:7-34); secondly, that trouble comes to good and bad alike (9:22). Incidentally, the latter remark shows that Job had not adopted a one-sided view that the good suffered, while the bad were left off. The attitude that Elihu portrays is precisely what Job finds in the wicked in 21:14f, as they encourage themselves in their evil deeds. It is quite unfair for Elihu to claim that Job thinks this himself, even if he believed that this would be the next step in Job's thought." With all this in view, we could see an ironic depiction of being wise in Elihu, in that, he thought his wisdom has rightly fathoms the character of Job when he describes him as a companion of evildoers, not knowing that one day Andersen would charge him as unfairness against Job who also sees the evil of the evildoers as being repulsive to him. Balentine (2006:568) sees Elihu's lack of evidence to clearly verify and support his charges in this verse against Job calls his own integrity to question. He calls the wise men to taste words with their ears as the palate (tongue) tastes food (vs. 3) "but he is oblivious to the possibility that his own words may fail to pass the test." Instead of actually quoting Job, Elihu quoted what the wicked say in 21:15,

to bring no obvious disadvantage (9:22; 10:3; 21:7-16)” (Habel 1985:481) has been one of Elihu’s leading bones of contention in his speeches to Job and friends (cf. 33:27; 35:2-8 cf. also 22:2-3). Job’s delusion on the profitability of a good life could be discerned in 29:18-20, yet, it is a pointer to teach the salient fact that, “God is not influenced by human actions” (Habel 1985:481).

**34:10-30 Defence of God’s Justice:** But rather God as a “wholly other” (Otto 1959:39f) is very much separate from acts of wickedness and wrongdoing which are the perversion of justice (vs. 10). Habel (1985:482) rightly notes that verb עָשָׂה “wickedness,” “wrong”, or “injustice”, is one of the prominent words used to connote “both the moral act of doing wrong and the forensic status of being ‘in the wrong’ or ‘guilty’ (cf. 9:20, 29; 10:2; 15:6). So also the noun עָוֹן “wrong”, “injustice”, connotes “both unlawful activity/injustice and false testimony (cf. 6:29-30; 11:14; 13:7)<sup>465</sup>. In contrast to humanity, God does not act wickedly, nor does God pervert justice (vs. 12)<sup>466</sup>. Through thematic elaboration, the foregoing point of concern for justice resonates with Bildad’s earlier thesis in 8:3 on the uprightness of God in terms of justice, thus constituting an excellent response against some of Job’s claims and charges of injustice against God in light of his personal experiences as could be seen in 12:16-25<sup>467</sup>. Elihu’s response here tries to in a sense augment some of the right claims of the friends on the justice of God and then to correct Job’s erroneous perception of God with the emphasis that, “Shaddai never perverts the process of justice thereby reducing the world to chaos” (Habel 1985:482).

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“Who is the Almighty that we should serve him? What would we gain by praying to him?” Nevertheless, we may not follow Balentine to dismiss Elihu’s charge against Job and then wash Job clean, seeing how Clines (2006:771) helps us to closely see a trace of such theological puzzle if not inclination in Job’s own statements in 9:22 where “he said that God destroys both righteous and wicked alike.” And 21:7 which critically asserts that, “the wicked live to ripe old age and are not cut off from their sins.” Thus in contrast to Andersen above, Clines (2006:771) believes that, “Elihu’s report of Job’s theology seems fair.” However one reads it, Clines (2006:771) observation makes good sense when he says that the use of language by Job (and also to Job) is a clear indication of “a God-obsessed man wrestling with the problem of theodicy.”

<sup>464</sup> The verb סָכַן is used to mean, ‘to be of use’ or ‘to profit’ or ‘to benefit’ (as in 15:3; 22:2, 21; cf. Dhorne 1967:512; Gordis 1978:387).

<sup>465</sup> In comparison with the Syriac version Dhorne (1967:513) notes that עָשָׂה “wickedness” in this context means “to do evil” and עָוֹן “unrighteousness” means “to commit unrighteous deeds”. It is quite interesting to see how the words עָשָׂה and עָוֹן alternate in describing the wish of Job (?) to his enemy or adversary in 27:7 saying, “May my enemy be like the wicked, my adversary like the unrighteous.”

<sup>466</sup> Elihu uses exclamations here which reflect Job’s and his own pattern of speech in ways to emphasize the impossibility of especially an unthinkable possibility, thus his use of the exclamation *’ōmnām* (v. 12) the NRSV has “of a truth” also cf. 9:2; 12:2; 19:4-5; 34:12; 36:4 (cf. Balentine 2006:569; Clines 2006:772).

<sup>467</sup> Hartley’s (1988:454) example of 19:6 is in order here which says, “Know then that God has put me in the wrong and closed his net about me.”

In verse 13 Elihu emphasises the freedom of God in God's sole ownership of the earth<sup>468</sup>. It is not entrusted<sup>469</sup> to him by anyone. This means that the governance of God over the globe is solely free of anybody's surveillance that could keep God in check on anything. Thus "[f]or Elihu it is El himself, not humans or other deities, who rules the entire world with absolute authority, and he does so in his own right" (Habel 1985:482). The sustenance of all of life<sup>470</sup> in his (God's) power as stated in verses 14-15<sup>471</sup>(cf. Gordis 1978:388; Clines 2006:774). This also poses a serious reply to Job's quest in questioning God in whatever God is doing in the world, even concerning his personal life. It is ironic that Job is not in charge and God is totally free of anybody's coercion in governing the world.<sup>472</sup>

Elihu's view of God as the righteous and mighty One (vs.17)<sup>473</sup> in the words צַדִּיק כִּבְיָר closely helps us to see the summary of his theology as Habel (1985:483) also points out. It calls to mind 'the idea of the Holy' which forms the title of Otto's (1959) programmatic book that we would like to bring into the conversation later on in this dissertation briefly.<sup>474</sup> The might of God already stated here would be further reflected upon in 36:5 in which God's might (transcendence) resonates with his tender-care and respect to humanity ('he does not despise people'). The justice of God is emphasised in God's dispensation of justice especially towards unjust rulers whom he destroys as a result of their wickedness (vss. 18-20)<sup>475</sup><sup>476</sup>. Habel (1985:484) helps us to note that, "The suddenness of their fall is a mark of his personal involvement in their action (cf. 20:5)" (cf. also Andersen 1977:254; Hartley 1988:458). This

<sup>468</sup> The phrase אֶרֶץ הָאֱלֹהִים "His earth" also occurs in 37:12 (cf. Dhorme 1967:514).

<sup>469</sup> From the Hebrew בָּקַד "to visit," "to designate" or "to appoint" (cf. 7:18; 31:14; 36:23). These connote giving orders or being under someone's orders (Dhorme 1967:514 cf. Gordis 1978:387-88)

<sup>470</sup> In verse 14, Dhorme (1967: 515) notes the parallel juxtaposition of the words רוּחַ "his spirit" and נְשָׁמָתוֹ "his breath" as the essentials of life (cf. 4:9; 27:3; 32:8; 33:4).

<sup>471</sup> In verse 15, the verb גָּוַע "to perish", "to expire" as "to die" is one of the prominent governing verbs in the book of Job (cf. 3:11; 10:18; 13:19; 14:10 etc. see Dhorme 1967:515). The idiom כָּל־בֶּשָׂר "all flesh" (vs. 15) is also discernible in other verses as in 12:10; 28:21. This refers to all living beings especially in the category of human beings and animals, so to speak (cf. Clines 2006:774).

<sup>472</sup> Hartley (1988:454) agreeably points out here that, "Since all human existence is contingent on God's will, a person risks his life in contesting God's lordship."

<sup>473</sup> The word for 'mighty' here is used in 8:2 to modify windy in describing the verbose speeches of Job which amount to almost nothing (cf. Dhorme 1967:516).

<sup>474</sup> This would come more clearly in our chapter 6 of this work.

<sup>475</sup> This further accentuates the justice of God in keeping everyone to their place. There is great contrast of God's dealing with the שָׂרִים 'princes' (3:15; 29:9) as the שׂוֹעֵ 'noble/rich' of the society, and on the other hand the דָּל 'poor' or 'weak' (20:10, 19; 31:16) people of the same society (cf. Dhorme 1967:517).

<sup>476</sup> The hiph'il וַיִּקְרַח connote the act of taking the mighty ones away (cf. 4:19; 6:2; 7:3; Gordis 1978:389).

happens at midnight; it ironically presupposes an “ominous time when death is abroad on the earth (cf. 27:20; 36:20).” This makes all people equal before God essentially speaking, which has a huge bearing from creation theology.<sup>477</sup>

The all-seeing nature of God’s eyes also equalises all people before God, in that even evil doers have no hiding place from his gaze (vss. 21-22). By means of *recontextualization*, this resonates with Job’s earlier critical observation of God’s watchfulness (cf. 7:17-20; 10:13-14; 24:23-24). Habel (1985:484) sees the all-seeing nature of God here as a pointer to God’s “all-knowing” capacity by which he “judges human conduct (vs. 25)” (Habel 1985:484). Ironically, Job relied on his perception on God’s watchfulness upon all of his ways when he took his oath of innocence in 31:4 (cf. 14:16; 34:21; Clines 2006:779). The significance of God’s watchfulness is not only a severe scrutiny, or God’s purpose for sustenance; it also affects God’s justice as well (cf. Dhorme 1967:519; Hartley 1988:458)<sup>478</sup>.

In light of God’s freedom to see and judge everything Habel (1985:484) and Hartley (1988:458) see the futility of Job’s demand for any formal trial. God dispenses judgment “without enquiry” (vss. 23-24 cf. 13:9; 24:16)<sup>479</sup><sup>480</sup>. Balentine (2006:574) agreeably observes here that God’s acts freely without social coercion of timing for him (vs. 23). Thus “[h]uman beings cannot schedule God’s justice. They must simply wait and see.” This further draws our attention to the certainty of God’s distributive justice. God’s justice like wisdom has its “place” which in this case is the public place (vs. 26 cf. 28:1) where everyone would see, learn and be satisfied that justice has been done to the perpetrators of evil (vs. 26ff). Thus everyone who departs from the ways of God would eventually find God to expose “such waywardness for heaven and earth to behold” (Habel 1985:485). God’s justice then is clearly accentuated not only in regards to an individual’s life

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<sup>477</sup> The phrase *כִּי־יָמְעֵשׂהוּ יְהוָה כָּל־מְלָאכֶיךָ* “for they are all the works of his hands” (vs. 19) closely resonates with Job’s point of view of life in his oath of innocence (31:15 cf. 14:15) as well as Elihu’s call for Job in preparation for a possible conversation (33:6) (cf. Dhorme 1967:518).

<sup>478</sup> Balentine (2006:573-74) helps us to see how Elihu’s statements in verses 22-23f become a decisive response to the complaints of Job especially in chapters 23-24 on the silence and hiddenness of God.

<sup>479</sup> Dhorme (1967:521) explicitly points out that, “God does not need to use the formalities of legal procedure, He acts by sovereign authority.”

<sup>480</sup> This judgment is described in terms of “crushing” the wicked ones who are unjust to the poor in society (cf. 4:19; 6:9; 19:2 etc. Clines 2006:780). For more on the occurrence of the “cry” of the oppressed as a notable motif in Job see 16:18; 19:17; 27:9; 31:38; 35:9, 12; cf. Clines 2006:781)

like Job's but also in relations to nations of the world and all humanity in general (vss. 29-30 cf. vs. 15; 3:18; 10:8; see Habel 1985:485; Hartley 1988:459; Clines 2006:781).<sup>481</sup>

**34:31-37 Appeal and Verdict:** Elihu's rhetoric in 34: 31-33 is almost his typical ending of a certain confrontational discourse in which he tries to step back a little bit to allow the accused some space of responding if he has anything to say (cf. 33:33). In such points of summation and submission, Job is emphatically in the wrong except if he could explain himself otherwise (cf. 31ff; 33:5, 32). In Habel's (1985:486) words, "The onus is on Job, contends Elihu. Job must decide, not Elihu. Job is the problem, not Elihu. Job must speak up an answer Elihu-if he has anything left to say."

The verdict of Elihu on Job so far is given in verses 34-37<sup>482</sup> which still calls for further examination of Job's life<sup>483</sup>, not necessarily in terms of reciting what he might have said but in trying to penetrate what could be a deep seated ideology(ies) within him that make him guilty even without him realizing it. Thus his words are "without knowledge" or "understanding". His argument sounds like that of the wicked ones.<sup>484</sup><sup>485</sup> This makes Elihu continue his speeches into the following chapter to see how to put right some of Job's wrong perceptions conceivable.<sup>486</sup>

**35:1-4 Confronting Job's Claim:** Chapter 35:2-4 seem to reflect on Elihu's reference (by means of recitation) to Job on the futility of being right before God (cf. 34:9) which gave rise to

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<sup>481</sup> Andersen (1977:254 cf. Balentine 2006:574) sees verses 29-30 especially as significant in silencing the complaint of Job about the silence of God in the face of social injustice etc. Hartley (1988:459) also follows Andersen to assert that, "God's slowness to act does not deny his sovereignty."

<sup>482</sup> Job's demeanor here must have communicated to Elihu that he does not really accept his verdict and exhortation (cf. Hartley 1988:461). Not only Job but some interpreters of Elihu implicitly make some "gratuitous abuse" of Elihu's determination to actually answer Job within a good sense making manner of argumentation (Clines 2006:796).

<sup>483</sup> In Balentine's (2006:578) understanding, "Elihu desires that Job's testing should not stop until there is nothing more that can be exacted from him."

<sup>484</sup> Hartley (1988:461) tries to capture Elihu's point of what is a harsh verdict here saying, "In Elihu's view Job's answers to the friends are the kind of answers that the impious would give. Therefore, being guilty of impiety, he deserves the harshest fate."

<sup>485</sup> Job's lack of insight, or prudence here depicts him more as a foolish person than a wise one. Thus an ironic depiction of being wise, in that, Job thought of his friends as those who speak worthless words, now it is confirmed that he does. This would further characterize the confrontational statement of Yahweh during the following speeches from 38ff.

<sup>486</sup> Andersen (1977:255) gleaned from the foregoing verses that reason of Elihu's actual condemnation of Job in that he adds to his sin, rebellion. The former might be a minor case of a fault, while the latter is more of an open disobedience to a known precept etc. This renders Job "guilty of infidelity" towards God and people at once (Hartley 1988:462).

the idea of the freedom of God to do as he wishes. In such regard, Job's justice<sup>487</sup> has been "deliberately ignored" by God (34:5 cf. Habel 1985:491). This point of reasoning ties well with Eliphaz's preceding claim that God is truly free of the effect of human actions (cf. 22:2-4)<sup>488</sup>. Thus he is "above them." The significance of this assertion and its possibility to trigger a challenge on the detachment and silence of God is very crucial here. Thus Elihu must give a decisive response to salvage that looming misunderstanding. He began by reprimanding Job's hubris on his personal righteousness (35:2f) which he seeks to always emphasise in his various avowals of innocence (cf. Hartley 1988:463).

**35:5-13 Defence of God's Absence:** Elihu began to challenge Job's perception of God through nature, thus by the use of *narrative amplification* he invites him to observe the great wonders of God in the universe (vss. 5-8 cf. 11:7-9; 22:12-14). The distance between the heavenly realm and the earth is a pointer to the transcendence of the divine from the mortal. Habel (1985:491) agreeably explains that "Just as the clouds are high above life on earth, so the domains of gods and mortals are quite separate and distinct."<sup>489</sup> This keeps God as the divine "free from the intrusion of earthly influences (cf. 4:17-19; 25:2-6)" (Habel 1985:491 cf. Hartley 1988:465). It has earlier been pointed out that Job's sin does not affect the person of God (vs. 6 cf. 7:20)<sup>490</sup> and so his righteousness also has no "impressive obligation" that can move God to any point of coercion or compulsion to do anything otherwise (vs. 7 cf. 34:9) (cf. Habel 1985:491; Hartley 1988:466). If we follow Habel's (1985:491) interpretation of Elihu here that Job like any other mortal is "insignificant" before God then that sets us at odds with the prologue (1:8ff) as well as

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<sup>487</sup> תְּבִינָה here stands for what is right or wise (cf. 32:9; 34:4; Dhorme 1967:530; Gordis 1978:400).

<sup>488</sup> By way of explaining Eliphaz's business-like relationship between a human being and God, Balentine (2006:585) points out that according to Eliphaz's calculation, "the only profit that matters is the dividend God receives when human beings 'agree' with God; if individuals incur losses along the way, they must simply accept them as the cost of doing business with God (22:2, 21)." By returning this point of argument back to the face of Job as a critical point of concern, perhaps we may agree with Good (1990:329ff) that Elihu has somewhat taken Eliphaz as his model here (cf. Balentine 2006:585). Nevertheless, we must not press the issues so far, Elihu did not show his affiliation to any of the elders who have spoken to Job before him, in fact he criticize them as well for not being able to actually silence Job's outrage against God (cf. 32:1ff), thus we would not have to definitely press the point of admirable from him to any or all of them.

<sup>489</sup> Clines (2006:797) rightly observes that elsewhere the height of the heavens above the earth has been used, to different purpose, as a symbol of the unknowability of the divine mind, which is 'higher than heaven' (Zophar, 11:8).

<sup>490</sup> "Job has already reflected on this thought in a vague hope that God would pass over any wrong he might have done and leave him alone (7:20-21)" (Hartley 1988:465). Clines (2006:797) takes Job's view to be one which thinks that his sin is "hardly worth retribution since he will soon be dead."

Job's personal experiences and testimony which clearly shows that God has deep interest even to an individual like Job and God is aware of all mortals and guard their lives in terms of providing sustenance, watching over them (7:12ff) and even providing limitations to their lives that they cannot exceed (14:1ff). Elihu is not actually concerned about who is more important before God and who is insignificant in this pericope but rather he is making the point as well put by Hartley (1988:466 cf. Balentine 2006:586) that "there is value in upright behavior without conceding that human conduct affects the heavenly realm."

If Elihu's God is entirely unaffected by the actions of people whether good or evil (cf. Habel 1985:492), then the cries of the oppressed which is believed to be such a penetrating action of seeking for help would never gain a hearing by God (cf. 34:28; 24:5-12). Nevertheless, the oppressed are also to blame in the sense that their cry for help was not a cry of faith (vss. 10-11)<sup>491</sup>. The image of God who works through human experiences is reiterated in verses 10-11 (cf. 33:14-30). God's provision of songs in the night (vs. 10) resonates with the visions and dreams of the night (33:15f) through which God provides warning to his people. Habel (1985:493) helps us to note that, "The morning stars are later identified as the singers of the sky at the time of creation (38:7)." These are the various actions of God through which he makes his presence and will evident to humans.<sup>492</sup> Thus the actions of God can be discerned and learned even from animal life experiences, so to speak (vs.11 cf. 12:7-9) (cf. Habel 1985:492; Balentine 2006:588). It is clear that God does not listen to the cry of the oppressed because of their wickedness which expresses itself in their self-sufficiency and carelessness about trusting God (cf. vss12-13) (cf. Habel 1985:493). Their cry is an empty cry which exemplifies the falsehood/deceit in which Job did not walk (cf. 31:5).

**35:14-16 Refutation of Job's Claim:** Job's accusation of God that God does not know transgression, and he does not punish wrong doers with justice (vss14-16) then that really shows

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<sup>491</sup> This is Elihu's decisive response to Job's criticism in 24:1-12 (cf. Hartley 1988:466; Balentine 2006:588).

<sup>492</sup> Balentine (2006:588) rightly observes that Elihu and God both have something to tell us concerning the significance of nature beyond our sustenance (cf. 36:26-37:24 and 38:39-39:30; 40:15-41:34) we would do well to try to listen to the interfaces between their speeches in order to understanding what they have to teach us. We shall elaborate more on this in our chapter 7 below.

that he does not take notice of what God is doing in the world (vs. 14)<sup>493</sup> he is here said to be acting like the wicked who have no time to take notice of the presence and work of God in the world. This amongst other things should be a response to Job to soften his anxious waiting on God's verdict to justify him (cf. 9:14-17; 23:4; 31:35-37 see Habel 1985:494). Elihu admonished him to only wait on God, even though he is a wise man has in his many words and charges against God, acted foolishly (Hartley 1988:467).<sup>494495</sup>

**36:1-33 Defence of God's Justice in Creation:** In chapter 36: 1ff, Elihu continue his discourse in his attempt to make sure that he proves to Job amongst others, that God is "the just one" (Habel 1985:506) and not Job (35:2).<sup>496</sup> Elihu here employs his perfect<sup>497</sup> knowledge 'from a distance' (cf. 2:12; 36:25; Habel 1985:506)<sup>498</sup>. Elihu's attempt to "vindicate God, falls into the trap of playing God" (Habel 1985:506) . This is an ironic depiction of his being wise before Job and others. By means of recitation, Elihu's depiction of God as the Mighty One (vs. 5 cf. 34:17) resonates with his other depiction as 'The Ancient One' (15:10) which even though points to the distance of God (35:5) but still resonate with God's justice in his governance of cosmic order (Habel 1985:506).

The justice of God is seen in the affliction of human beings (36:8-12) which already has been articulated in 33:15ff cf. 35:9-11. Through this affliction God provides his revelation to the afflicted even though this happens in an ordinary sense of life (Habel 1985:507), it always has to bear with the divine intent in that, God opens the ears of the afflicted actually to hear whatever

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<sup>493</sup> The governing verb "to see" or "notice" occurs especially here in the speeches of Elihu (cf. 33:14, 27; 34:29; 35:5, 13, 14; Balentine 2006:589).

<sup>494</sup> Clines (2006:801f) does not see Elihu's verdict on Job as being just to Job, because Job had already brought up a problem that he cannot see God (23:8-9; 13:24; 30:20) and he does not know his actual offence if there is any, thus he truly needed a clear hearing from God (10:2; 13:18-23; 23:4; 31:35-37). Nevertheless, the words in verses 14-15 are all words not actually spoken by Elihu but they are attributed to him (put in his mouth by Elihu?).

<sup>495</sup> Speaking empty words, as vanity has been earlier attributed to the speeches of Job as well as Job attributing it to the speeches of his friends (cf. 8:2; 11:3; 15:2; 18:2; for Job's own use see 21:34; 27:12; Clines 2006:802).

<sup>496</sup> For other places of the quest for being in the right as being the just one see (27:5; 33:12, 32) (Cf. Habel 1985:506).

<sup>497</sup> Elihu's perfection is seen in his mastery of his argumentation points before Job (vs. 4) even though Job had been earlier described as a perfect person in the prose prologue, yet, the focus of Elihu here is the perfection of God (37:16; Habel 1985:506; Hartley 1988:468). Elihu here demonstrates that his knowledge is superior not equal to Job's and his friends' (cf. Balentine 2006:600). Following Clines (2006:854) this most probably anticipates his use of scientific knowledge as part of his speech in the coming verses (cf. 36:26-37:24).

<sup>498</sup> In this Balentine (2006:600) ironically sees a similarity of distance between Job's friends who came from a distance and Elihu who brought knowledge from a distance.

they need to hear in such circumstances (cf. 33:16; 36:10, 15)<sup>499</sup>. Habel (1985:507) agreeable points out that, “Divine discipline as a ‘warning’ (v. 10 see on 33:16) or punitive action is likewise intended to produce submissiveness.”<sup>500</sup> The purpose of suffering according to Elihu’s point in verse 11, as that of being prepared for being a servant is seen as an act of adding “insult to injury” and an act of defiance to Job’s complaints of being subjected to servitude as a human being under God (cf. 7:1-2; 13:27; Habel 1985:507). This amongst other things remains a puzzle whether to dismiss divine enslavement as unwarranted or to accept being a slave to God as a virtue, following Elihu’s argument against Job’s understanding (cf. Balentine 2006:604).

The “godless in heart” are those who would refuse to listen to the word and warning signs of God for their good (vss 13-15 cf. 8:13)<sup>501</sup> rather they are characterised by willful anger (cf. 15:12-13; Habel 1985:508). Habel (1985:508; Clines 2006:860) further explains the fact that Elihu may be implicitly referring to Job as belonging to such group of stubborn people. This kind of attitude to the God-given warning in light of Elihu’s wisdom leads to early (or swift) death of the rebels (cf. 15:32; 22:16). Yet, Habel (1985:508) points us to Job’s possibility of rejecting such a traditional understanding of life (cf. 21:7-15).<sup>502</sup> Even though Job is still obsessed with his quest for justice from God despite all that Elihu has said to his hearing (cf. 35:14), in 36:16 he does not take note of the gracious act of God in his life, thus he had no time to rethink his views which authenticate Elihu’s verdict against him (vs. 17)<sup>503</sup>. Although in 33:23-24 there is possibility of the intervention of a mediator who may interpret the way to uprightness and plead for the redemption of the sufferer, yet, verses 18-19 stand as clear warning that there is nothing that can be used, even in relation to vast wealth to buy “redemption in the face of the final adversity” (Habel 1985:509).

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<sup>499</sup> With the aim of having them turn away from “practicing iniquity” (Clines 2006:859). This is reminiscent of Eliphaz’s (22:21-28) admonition to Job on the happy ending that awaits him if he will ‘return’ in repentance to God.

<sup>500</sup> This echoes Clines’s (2006: 858) on the purpose of the affliction, which in his case is the main focus rather than the actual origin, or originator of the affliction. The way the afflicted should respond is the most important pointer of the affliction onto the afflicted.

<sup>501</sup> Even though Bildad and Elihu here agree on the fate of the wicked, Job’s perspective is still not clear on why God does not show actual distinction from treating the righteous and the wicked but rather destroys them both (cf. 9:22; Balentine 2006:604).

<sup>502</sup> This is Job’s puzzle over the prosperity of the wicked which actually upsets all that he might have known and believed concerning retribution theology.

<sup>503</sup> In terms of the possibilities for life and death, Balentine (2006:605) suggests that, “Elihu believes God has made the choices clear to Job and that Job has freely chosen death over life.” But eventually, we shall still see the graciousness of God even beyond what Elihu might have concluded according to Balentine’s understanding here.

Warnings from verse 20ff against turning to the forces of darkness reconfigure Job's curse of the day of his birth into a night of darkness and gloom (3:8). Elihu now takes a new turn to his speeches from that of intense anger (32:1ff) to that which is sublime thus leading Job to a better sense of consideration of the person and power of God (vs. 22ff cf. vss 5, 26, 30) rather than upon his affliction. Habel (1985:510) shows Elihu's insistence of the just governance of God in the whole world as in his previous defence (cf. 34:13-15). Thus God governs the world in ways that show him as the greatest teacher or counsellor, which is typical of wisdom teaching (cf. 8:10; 12:7-8; Habel 1985:510). Elihu exhorts Job to "remember" what is best for him to do instead of vehement castigation and obsession for personal right and justice (vs. 24). In his previous speeches Job also dared to remind God of his "creatureliness" as God's handiwork (10:9-12; 13-14) which further accentuates his need for just and dignified treatment from God (cf. Habel 1985:511). Thus the theme of human creativity within the creation theology of the whole world stands in the tension of who gets what especially from Job's personal perspective.

Elihu's focus on "divine inscrutability" comes to full fruition here (36:26-18) which, by means of thematic elaboration also resonates with Eliphaz's previous point of view on the impossibility to reach God and coerce him for anything (cf. 5:9-10). Thus where human limitation appears conspicuously, divine inscrutability appears strongly<sup>504</sup>. This is seen in the divine knowledge of what is utterly impossible for human beings to know and do or get (cf. 28:27). This amongst others accentuates the fact that God's ways are "beyond human comprehension and inquiry (cf. 5:9; 34:24)" (Habel 1985:511). The creative power and wisdom of God is something very profound to the mind of Elihu (36:29-33) which Job does not seem to get clear.

**37:1-13 The Wonder of God's Creation:** Elihu's confession on the wonders of God in 37:1 *re-contextualizes* Job's experience of "turmoil and trouble" too when series of calamity befell him (cf. 3:26; 14:1). Habel (1985:512) helps us to note the contrast between the two responses, in that Job's in the verses referred to above, was not actually a "wonderous response of faith" but rather

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<sup>504</sup> Balentine (2006:612) draws our attention to God's inscrutability in terms of moral charge or scrutiny when he examines the rhetorical questions, "Who can say to God, 'You have done wrong?'" (36:23). It is worth noting here that the verb פָּעַל "done" occurs thirteen times in Job, eight of which are in Elihu's speeches (7:20; 11:8; 22:17; 31:3; 33:29; 34:8, 22, 32; 35:6; 36:3, 23; 37:12). The verbal root עָוָה "to do, make" normally refers to human action, in the book of Job it is often translated as "sin, deceit, wrong, wickedness" (cf. 5:16; 6:29-30; 11:14; 13:7; 15:16; 22:23; 27:4; 34:32; 36:23).

than of despair and personal agony. Nevertheless, Job's earlier response does not obscure Elihu's understanding of the need to respond in praise nor does it deflect his enthusiasm in making the appeal (cf. Balentine 2006:614). These wonders of God are elsewhere seen as the general description of God's power in the world (cf. 5:9; 9:10; Habel 1985:513). This is worth noting here that cosmic forces do not just work automatically, but rather they work always according to the commands of God (cf. 36:24ff; 37:9-10; 38:34-35). The aforementioned is the signature of God upon humanity as well as the whole world of God's presence and power (33:16). God's wonderful creations each have their own places and time of action according to the will and design of God (see 37:9-10 cf. 28:1; 38:12, 22). The breath of God is described as the actual producer of ice (vs. 10) which elaborates the motif of its function as the source of life and inspiration (32:8; 33:4; 34:14; Habel 1985:513). It is evident from Elihu's interpretation that God can use natural phenomena not only for providing life and the sustenance of life but also for punitive and merciful reasons (37:11-13).

**37:14-24 Closing Challenge to Job:** Job is called specifically to stand still and pay attention to the wonderful works of God in the world (37:14 cf. vs. 1, 5)<sup>505</sup>. Habel (1985:514) explains how these marvellous works of God demonstrate the perfection of the mind of God. Thus the might of God should be not only the overriding factor from a human point of view but also God's great and perfect mind in relation to all of life and creation. Elihu as an arbiter or a mediator<sup>506</sup> between Job and God now asks him to know what Job thinks about what God must hear from him in light of all that he has heard so far (37:19-20). This is done because of Elihu's realisation of the impossibility for Job to actually confront God or summon God to a human court to stand trial (Habel 1985:515f)<sup>507</sup>. Nevertheless, Elihu did not lose sight of God's leading characteristics (37:23) as emphatically demonstrated in his speeches, namely, God's might (36:5,22) and justice (34:12; 36:6) as well as his righteousness even in light of Job's charges against him (34:17; 36:3 cf. Clines 2006:886).

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<sup>505</sup> Clines (2006:880) understands this call as actually being one to wonder and ponder than to actually understand everything being said or described.

<sup>506</sup> For the portrait of Elihu as an "answerer" between the two parties see Balentine (2006:609).

<sup>507</sup> Elihu understands and portrays God as the free and sovereign "teacher" (36:22) to humanity, who visits and inspects human life and fidelity at will (see 5:24; 7:18; 31:14; 34:13; 35:15; 36:23 cf. Balentine 2006:611).

From the foregoing intertextual discussions within the book of Job, we could see how the speeches of Elihu resonate with almost every fibre of the book of Job. By means of recontextualization or thematic elaboration, Elihu either alludes to a principle earlier stated by someone among Job's friends or Job himself, or he uses Job's own words by way of a direct or equivalent reference by means of recitation, and then by means of reconfiguration and narrative amplification, he uses his own personal understanding of life and God to demonstrate his concern to Job's quest for justice, but above all, he wanted Job to come to a better understanding of God in terms of God's person and power in the world. This is what led Elihu from being an angry respondent to an accommodative wisdom teacher who takes Job into the realm of the transcendent as well as immanent God. The call for Job to closely consider and marvel at the wonderful and unsearchable acts of God prepares Job for a deeper discourse on the power and presence of God in the world in the chapters following the Elihu speeches (i.e. 38ff). Meanwhile, we need also to try to read the Elihu speeches in Job in relation to their intertextual interactions to wisdom literature/traditions. This is what occupies the following section of this chapter.

#### 4.4.3 The Elihu Speeches and Wisdom Traditions<sup>508</sup>

**32:6b-10 Right to Answer:** Elihu's use of חֵכְמָה "wisdom" and בִּינַי "understanding (32:7-9), insight"<sup>509</sup> in his critical response to the disappointment he got from Job's friends helps us to see his interest in the leading "sapiential terms (cf. Prov. 1:2)" in wisdom teaching (cf. Habel 1985:450). Elihu's understanding of the way of getting wisdom as the product of learning through life experience is evident in verse 7 (cf. Von Rad 1972: 53f). Nevertheless, his acceptance of his position as a young man before those who are much older points us to the traditional understanding that wisdom is conventionally taught to the young people by the old one and not vice versa<sup>510</sup>. Thus being wise comes from the mentoring relationship between a teacher and his pupil (cf. Prov. 4:1-7) (cf. Von Rad 1972: 15ff). This makes Habel (1985:450) stretch his mind so far as to say that in this acquisition of wisdom and understanding from a

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<sup>508</sup> In our attempt of studying the possible interactions of the Elihu speeches and wisdom traditions, we would consider the books of Psalms, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes for the sake of our time and space. We would not go into any details about them unless very necessary, so also in regards to the books of Sirach and the Wisdom of Solomon. Nevertheless, we would like to limit our scope in this within wisdom books in the protestant canon.

<sup>509</sup> For other related wisdom terms see von Rad (1972:53).

<sup>510</sup> Clines (2006:717) points out from Ecclus 25:4-6 that, "wisdom is becoming to the aged, and the crown of old men is wise experience." From which the younger ones must draw theirs.

somewhat school structure, disciplining and conscious learning become the leading factor for gaining wisdom not “the fear of Yahweh.”<sup>511</sup>

**32:11-16 Need to Answer:** Elihu asserts that he has carefully listened to the תְּבוּנָה “reasoning, thought, understanding, insight” of Job and his friends (32:11). This refers to their inner selves in terms of their faculty of perception (cf. Ps. 94:4; Gordis 1978:369). It denotes arguments which are used with the aim of persuading others (Ps. 49: 4 cf. Dhorme 1967:478). It is one of the leading qualities of a parent’s teaching to which the child (student) needs to pay close attention (Prov. 5:1 cf. Habel 1985:452). In a sense, Elihu here plays his role as a young man (student?) very well in first taking the time and interest to listen to what his older wisdom counterparts (or even teachers?) have to say before he could gain his own ground set for his own opinion. It enriches the life of the wise with pleasure as their “understanding” (Prov. 10:23), and distinguishes a man of sound reasoning from a fool, by his silence (Prov. 11:12)<sup>512</sup>. This quality in Job and his friends no doubt portray them as men of wisdom. But ironically, Elihu appears to be wise too and even more, for he could not actually be satisfied with their wonderful thoughts of wisdom.

Elihu’s strong caution to the friends of Job not to boast of having wisdom in keeping silence with Job (32:13)<sup>513</sup> in a sense slows their quest for wisdom down. By use of narrative amplification in Elihu’s speech, Habel (1985:452) helps us to understand that finding wisdom and her abode is the supreme quest of those aspiring to be wise (28:12; Ps. 78:72; Prov. 3:13; 8:17, 35 cf. Dhorme 1967:480; Gordis 1978:368). But unfortunately for most of them, even Job’s friends here, the place of wisdom is far beyond the reach of humanity, it is only known to and by God (28:23). This is the primal case in point that necessitates the fear (as reverence) of God as the beginning of wisdom (Prov. 1:7ff).

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<sup>511</sup> If we are to accept this thought then it sets a very huge sapiential order in gaining wisdom out of place because in both Proverbs 1:7f and Job 28:28 “the fear of Yahweh” is the leading principle for gaining wisdom and understanding. Thus the present write here thinks differently from Habel’s assertion above and we would try to come back to it in a sense later on as this section progresses.

<sup>512</sup> Cf. Elihu’s silent listening to Job and his friends’ arguments (32:16) which recalls the silence of the godly (Ps. 37:7) as being patient for the intervention of the Lord to come in its time (cf. Gordis 1978:369).

<sup>513</sup> Cf. Sir 15: 11-12 for a similar use of cautious opener, “Say not” (Dhorme 1967:480).

**32:17-22 Compulsion to Answer:** Elihu's self-depiction as a bottled-up wine which is probably fuming and ready to burst (32:18-20), by means of *reconfiguration*, parodies the place of wisdom and the use of wine. In Proverbs 9:2, 5 it is ironic to see that "wine"<sup>514</sup> links up to the "naive"<sup>515</sup> who are invited to the feast of "wisdom". It is actually ironical to see the satire on wisdom in relation to drinking wine in Proverbs 20:1 which says, "Wine is a mocker and beer<sup>516</sup> a brawler; whoever is led astray by them is not wise" (NIV). Thus Habel (1985: 454) critically responds by saying that "[f]or Elihu to describe himself as filled with wine is to employ an ambiguous metaphor and may suggest that his prolixity and bold speech are the marks of a drunken fool."<sup>517</sup> Judging Elihu's anxiety to speak up in the debate especially in the sense of pouring his words out without any more restraint, portrays him more as a fool than a wise person in the light of Proverbs 17:27-28 which sees wisdom more in self-controlled speech, in that even a moron who learns when to keep quiet and does so is considered wise.<sup>518</sup> Thus it is more pleasant and wise, according to Proverbs 22:18 for a person to have a right amount of knowledge ("these sayings") and restrained lips that are not rash in speaking anything.<sup>519</sup> Thus Elihu brings the first part of his apology to a close at 32:22 when he promises to be honest and not to show partiality, for he acknowledges that if he does, then his Maker (God) will hurriedly take him away in

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<sup>514</sup> "wine" as יַיִן in this context serves as a common drink which may be used at feasts to refresh the guest, it may not be necessarily fermented to cause the wise to become foolish in thoughts and actions. But Elihu's self-depiction is one which even goes a bit further to think of his inner being as boasting out of order because of his need to speak (cf. Habel 1985: 453-54).

<sup>515</sup> Habel (1985:454) translates יִתְיָ as "fool" which is a bit touchy, but here the word could mean someone who is easily deceived, who can believe everything without much thoughts to it (cf. Prov. 14:15). Although given the full verse in context, especially the adjective the parallels this one, also suggests one who is actually a fool, thus הֶסֶר-לֵב "one who lacks heart," we may not take this readily into our common understanding of heartlessness but rather one who has no sense, one who does not have good discretion. This could be illustrated in wisdom literature by one who commits adultery (Prov. 6:32). Committing adultery as an act here does not out rightly show senselessness, but in many ways not thinking through it before getting into it is what constitutes foolishness, so to speak.

<sup>516</sup> שֵׁכָר means 'strong drink' that intoxicates.

<sup>517</sup> This sounds too easy and literal conclusion, so to speak. But no doubt Elihu's self-depiction here is ironically ambiguous.

<sup>518</sup> Habel (1985:454) poised himself well here waiting to prove his point on the foolish nature of Elihu about which he has already made his conclusion. Thus saying, "he will expose his true nature by opening his mouth." This has also been the conclusion of his conversation partners to whom Habel seems to ally in his perception of Elihu's "true nature" as quoted above (cf. Job 13:16; 15:1-2; 18:2-6; 24:7).

<sup>519</sup> It is interesting to note that these wise sayings are to be kept in the human בֶּטֶן "belly," which Elihu, at some point, could not continue to do (cf. 32:19).

destruction<sup>520</sup>. This swiftness of something looming very near could be seen to resonate with the thought in Psalm 2:12; 81:15; Prov. 5:14, as something happening very quickly, in ‘no time’ (cf. Dhorme 1967:485).

**33:1-7 Summons to Testify in Court:** In chapter 33, Elihu presents himself as a wisdom teacher who speaks like the Lady wisdom herself. He calls attention to his speech (vs. 2)<sup>521</sup> through which he would demonstrate his wisdom which he has resolved to share like the Psalmist in 49:2-5 who also calls attention to his listeners to the profound thoughts of wisdom that he had to share. He claims to have his words coming from an upright heart, with his lips uttering what is truthful, or sincere (33:3)<sup>522</sup>. Similar avowal of integrity is found on the lips of Lady Wisdom (Prov. 8:6-8) who calls on those who would like to hear the words of truth and nobility to listen to her as she opens her mouth to speak in truthfulness and upright to those who find knowledge (cf. Habel 1985:464; Clines 2006:725).<sup>523</sup> This integrity and uprightness of speech come from the presence and power of wisdom which is the spirit or breath of the Almighty in Elihu (32:7-8) which stands in parallel to Lady Wisdom as a perfect helper from time immemorial (cf. Prov. 8:22-31).<sup>524</sup>

The challenging call for Job to present his prepared speech as his own version of the argument before the court (33:5) by means of *recontextualization*, agrees with the wisdom tradition which encourages young people to be trained in proper skills of work and speech which will enable them to stand before other people of high position (i.e. Kings cf. Prov. 22:29). Elihu calls Job to come in safety and relaxation of mind because of the same nature that they share of being human

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<sup>520</sup> For the Lord’s reaction towards disrespectful audience and dishonest people see Ps. 2:12; 81:15; 94:17 in which he is portrayed as the Creator who also has the power and decision to put to death or punish by any means (cf. Gordis 1978:371).

<sup>521</sup> Clines (2006:724) points out that his method of saying that he has now opened his mouth and so Job should pay attention and listen to what he has to say is a style of speech in wisdom tradition which he describes as a kind of “phatic communion than actual communication (cf. e.g., Ps. 78:2; Prov. 8:6-8).”

<sup>522</sup> Gordis (1978:372) sees the link between self-praise in biblical medieval Hebrew and Arabic poetry as a common feature. It shows the blessedness of a gifted mind in speech (cf. Pss. 45:2; 49:4).

<sup>523</sup> These words of knowledge (33:3) is understood by the wisdom teacher (Prov. 19:27) as the anchor for the path of righteousness to whoever incline their ear to listen obediently (cf. Gordis 1978:371).

<sup>524</sup> Habel (1985:464) sees Elihu as one who employs the characteristic tradition of wisdom tradition especially in regard to Lady Wisdom in order to affirm his authority in speaking good sense to Job and his friends. Thus he acts as “spokesman for Wisdom” (Habel 1985:464).

if nothing else (33:6-7)<sup>525526</sup>, thus he encourages Job not to allow his (Elihu's) *יִמְתֵּן* “fear” to terrify him. This resonates with the overwhelming “anger, wrath” of God which helps to provide the thematic elaboration in Psalm 88:16. In a sense, this could be intertextually understood to mean that Elihu tries to help Job to see him and approach him as truly human, without any thought of him as a symbolic representation of the divine (cf. Habel 1985:465).

**33:8-11 Presentation of Case:** Elihu's reference, by means of recitation, to Job's accusation on God on God's treatment of him as an enemy (33:10) could be linked to the wisdom principle of divine favor upon the righteous while wickedness only attracts calamity (cf. Prov. 12:21). Gordis' (1978:373) note on the possible shared understanding of life in relation to evil within a definite, albeit, hidden cause is agreeable in this context.<sup>527</sup> Elihu then takes the case of Job a little deeper than he expected to ironically turn his charge upon its head by indicting him on trying to contend with God in terms of God's seeming silence (33:13). Gordis (1978:374) rightly observes that this charge is almost identical with Koheleth's observation: ‘A man cannot contend with One mightier than he’ (Eccl. 6:10). Thus from a wisdom perspective, Job's case against God is ready for dismissal. Nevertheless, there are still thoughts to further consider.

**33:12-28 Refutation of Job's Claim:** Elihu counters Job's charge by referring him to the reality of God's communicative actions in one way or another, time and again (33:14). Gordis (1978:374) points out that this act of enumeration, even in ascending order in specific instances is also visible within wisdom literature (cf. Prov. 30:15, 18, 21, 24). The Psalmist also uses that kind of enumeration even in reference to the fact that twice he heard what God has once spoken (cf. Ps. 62:12). Thus the problem as mentioned elsewhere is not in the so-called silence of God, but the human inability to perceive, and understand what God might be saying.

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<sup>525</sup> On the use of the verb *קָרַךְ* in the pual form in verse 6 to denote “form” or “made” by extrapolation to creation theology, Dhorme (1967: 488) helps us to get the sense of ‘pinch, grip’ which the verb actually portrays, or even the ‘wink’ of an eye in a malicious way (cf. Prov. 6:3; 10:10; 16:30; Ps. 35:19). This helps us to catch a glimpse of the inner interest with which Elihu made his speeches. He consciously do his best to provide vivid pictures of issues he wanted to present, thus his knack in rhetorical maneuver.

<sup>526</sup> In verse 7, *אָרַךְ* most appropriately denotes ‘my pressure, burden’ as in Prov. 16:26; Sir. 46:5 (cf. Dhorme 1967:489). Thus the act of ‘my hand’ is such a metaphoric expression as in wisdom tradition to show the possibility of Elihu's pressure upon the person of Job in such a serious confrontation. Thus Elihu differentiates himself from God whose ‘hand lies heavy’ on human beings (cf. Ps. 32:4).

<sup>527</sup> We shall return to such presupposition when we discuss the ideological-theological texture of the text in chapter 6 below.

Elihu's use of מוֹדֵר in 33:16 serves the function of providing “warning” to dissuade rather than its use in wisdom text like Proverbs 1:3; 3:11; 4:13; 13:24; 15:33; Psalm 50:17 to mean “instruction, training”(cf. Habel 1985:468). This ‘instruction’ hinges on the fear of Yahweh, and a great sign of a promising and obedient life. Thus taking instruction (teaching) as a warning will save the listener from the danger of the Pit (33:18) which is known as the abode of the dead, in the underworld. The ‘Pit’ (33:18) may be synonymous to Sheol in the Psalter (see Ps. 103: 4; cf. Habel 1985:468). In the Psalms, *śahat* refers “to the feminine figure of the underworld (e.g. Ps. 16:10; 49:10) it also connotes the place of “the fallen, not the faithful (Ps. 55:24 cf Habel 1985:468). The imagery of death as a counter to life is very pertinent to wisdom literature as used in the Elihu speeches (33:18 cf. Ps. 78:50; 143:3). Thus to Elihu as well as Job, to die is to be cut off from the land of the living ones, or to transit into the realm of the dead. As could be seen in Jacques Derrida's (1993) philosophical thought that death is not just a termination of life, so to speak, but as seen in the worldview of the ancient Near East, it is more of a transition from one realm to another.

In his use of the motif of an intervening ‘angel’ who speaks for or on behalf of the sufferer<sup>528</sup> for the redemption of the sufferer (33:23-24)<sup>529</sup>, Elihu conjures the imagery of the heavenly court before which stand “thousand heavenly messengers (cf. Eccl. 7:28)<sup>530</sup> who do the bidding of the divine judge.<sup>531</sup> Whatever this person out of a thousand could be, the reality of having angelic beings as protectors of humanity as the children and servants of God is evident in Psalm 91:11-13 (cf. Habel 1985:470). Thus Elihu's point on an intervening angel before the court of God at Job's trial is viable.

The motif for “ransom” (33:24) as a necessity for buy-back the life of a dying person is also seen in Psalm 49:7-9 which used almost the same words. Life is such a dear reality of all the living that cost a lot to maintain even at the verge of death. Thus Elihu in line with his wisdom traditional understanding of life conjures up the imagery of one announcing a ransom to buy-

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<sup>528</sup> As well as to the sufferer

<sup>529</sup> An example of protective angelic role in regards to the righteous is found also in Psalm 34:6-7.

<sup>530</sup> For the possibility of understanding of the role of a mediating angel in wisdom texts cf. Cant. 3:9; Eccl 5:5; 1 Enoch 9:3ff; 15:2; II Enoch 7:5; Jub. 30:20 cf Gordis 1978:377; Clines 2006:736).

<sup>531</sup> In Ecclesiastes 7:28 the “one out of a thousand” here depicts a human throng or crowd not necessarily angelic ones thus the link with Elihu's point in Job 33: 23f seem obscure here.

back the life of the sufferer so that he does not have to die out of the realm of the living into the Pit of agony (cf. Dhorme 1967:502). Proverbs 13:8 links the payment of ransom, hence the buying of life, with one's wealth. This could be a constituted irony in the case of Job for he had great wealth at the beginning of the story (1:1-5), as well as the start of his life most probably, but later on in life, and very suddenly he lost almost everything he ever had except his dear life and wife. Now he is sitting among the poor, so to speak, yet, Elihu speaks of providing a ransom for his life if Job understood Elihu as saying he may need to provide some payment for his life as a ransom, then it would sound almost as sarcasm or taunt to him. But if, as the case may be, Elihu announces the possibility of one, other than Job, thus the mediating angel/messenger, announcing a ransom, most probably provided by God, then this would be a good news that he hopes would lead Job to humble repentance of whatever he (Elihu) might have been suspecting of him (e.g. pride)<sup>532</sup>.

Elihu remains optimistic of the result of Job's compliance to confess whatever might be his fault that he may have the right stance on the face of God (33:25-26) to see God's appearance and delight in him in youth-like exuberance.<sup>533</sup> By means of narrative amplification and thematic elaboration, the previous point of concern agrees well with the cultic motif of the extreme joy that a worshipper gets who gain access and acceptance before God as in Psalms 22: 21-25; 24:6; 27:7-9 (cf. Clines 2006:739). Habel (1985:471) rightly notes from the Psalmist's perspective that to behold the face of God is to "enter his presence and find his favour" (cf. Ps. 17:15). This access to favour in the presence of God is also *recontextualized* in wisdom literature as having the favour of the King (Prov. 16:15; Esth. 3:8; 5:13). This favour/mercy<sup>534</sup> obtained from God brings great joy in the heart of the worshipper which prompts his response in sacrifices of gratitude (Ps. 27:6; 30:8; Eccl 9:7 cf. Gordis 1978:378). It is interesting how Elihu ends this chapter (33:30)<sup>535</sup> with the tone of the sufferer being whole again and being illumined or

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<sup>532</sup> Although pride is described as an internal disposition which contrasts humility (Prov. 29:23) it could also be used as a positive quality (without its excess) even in regards to God (Ps. 68: 34) (cf. Clines 2006:732).

<sup>533</sup> The idea of youthful vigor as a renewed blessing from God see Pss. 103:3; 110:3; 144:12; Eccl. 11:9 (cf. Clines 2006:738).

<sup>534</sup> Gordis (1978:378) agreeably points to the fact that God's favor serves as the reason for being alive (cf. Ps. 11:7). Such deliverance is a vindication from the Lord of the righteousness of the sufferer (cf. 24:5). הַיְיָ in the context of Job 33:26 is seen as one's "goodness" or "charity", not necessarily righteousness in relation to cultic acts (Ps. 22:31; 35:6, 18; 40:10; Prov. 21:21cf. Gordis 1978:379).

<sup>535</sup> Cf. 33:29-33 Summation and Summons:

enlightened by the light<sup>536</sup> of God which symbolizes life and full acceptance by God (Pss. 4:7; 21:1; Prov. 6:23 cf. Habel 1985:472).

**34:1-3, 4-9 Summons to Judge and Presentation of Case Against Job:** Elihu's summons to the "wise" literally 'the knowers, men of knowledge' (Gordis 1978:386; Dhorne 1967:509) at the beginning of this section of his speeches (34:2) resonates by means of *reconfiguration* with the intellectual bankruptcy suffered by those who have wealth and power in society (cf. Eccl. 9:11) which is invariably illustrated by Job and his friends in this immediate context. His focal point is God for whom he speaks more vigorously in this chapter in defence of God's justice.<sup>537</sup>

**34:10-30 Defense of God's Justice:** The greatness and justice of God in dispensing justice to both the righteous and the unrighteous according to each one's deeds (34:10-12) in terms of the nexus between deeds and consequences "is a cornerstone of wisdom theology (Prov. 4:10-19)" (Habel 1985:482)<sup>538</sup>. In this, we see the transcendence of God in arbitrating between all humanity in whatever circumstances. Yet, God is supreme in the world in that through God's breath life is given and sustained and when God withdraws it life is destroyed in the ecosystem (34:14-15 cf. Ps. 104:29-30; Eccl 12:3). In 34: 14ff, Habel (1985:483) points us to the significance of Elihu's statement on the giving and withdrawal of life by God as a warning towards Job in light of the power of God to eliminate life at once should he decide to do so.<sup>539</sup>

The motif of God's justice is seen as God's intrinsic nature (34:17) which is inseparable to his action in history (cf. Ps. 7:10). In the nexus between wisdom and justice in terms of leadership, Habel (1985:483 cf. Gordis 1978:388; Clines 2006:778) rightly observes in regards to 34:18-19 that, "In sapiential tradition human rulers are expected to govern righteously, with wisdom as their counselor (Prov. 8:15-16; 16:10-13; 20:8-9); justice is to epitomize their regime." God's

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<sup>536</sup> Dhorne (1967: 506) comments here that, "the light of the living is a circumstantial complement which denotes what illuminates man who lives on this earth" (cf. Ps. 56:14). The gaze upon the face of God here portrays a satisfactory encounter which produces great joy (Pss. 27:13; 37:34; 54:7 [9]; 59:10[11]; 106:5; 112:8; 118:7). Thus this could refer to an inner quality of life that accompanies communion with the divine (cf. Clines 2006:740).

<sup>537</sup> The purity of God in terms of justice is also attested to in wisdom texts like Pss. 28:4; 62:12 [13]; Prov. 12:14; 19:17; 24:12; Ecclus. 16:14 (Clines 2006:773).

<sup>538</sup> Dhorne (1967:513) points us to similar examples of retribution theology in Ps. 62:13; Prov. 24:12; Sir. 16:15 [14].

<sup>539</sup> Gordis (1978:388) agreeably points us to the significance of this statement on nexus of God's breath and life, that since God does not actually withdraw the breath of life from all creatures, significantly testifies to God's beneficence (grace) toward all creatures.

justice is emphatically demonstrated in his treatment of humanity. God's care to even the lowly and most vulnerable of society, namely the poor (34:19) is a pointer to an ideal way of justice in a social context. This stands as a good pointer also to who is righteous and God-fearing and who is not, in that, by means of reconfiguration, the treatment of the poor invariably points to the treatment of God their Maker (cf. Prov. 17:5; 22:2; Habel 1985:483-84).

The omniscience of God is demonstrated in God's all-seeing nature. That God sees all the ways of humanity, his eyes are on each individual to the extent that there is no darkness where anyone, even the wicked<sup>540</sup> can hide from God's sight and knowledge (34:21-22) this fact is *recontextualized* in Psalm 139:11-12 which carries the same theme and motif (cf. Dhorne 1967:519)<sup>541</sup>. The possible difference between the two verses could be seen in the focal context, in that, in Job the eyes of God see the wicked that there is no darkness for them to hide, this should sound a warning, or a sarcastic pointer to the life of Job which has been under serious suspicion right from the beginning of his rounds of dialogue with friends. While on the other hand, the all-seeing nature of God as portrayed in Psalm 139 serves as a focal light on an individual (righteous person) who is always under the guiding and sustaining presence of God.

As a result of God's justice, he deposes the wicked rulers and installs others (better ones) in their stead (34:23-24). This motif is also familiar with wisdom literature by means of *thematic elaboration* as in Psalm 109:8 where a petition is placed that the days of the wicked one would be few and may another person take his job. The fact that God's judgment brings one down and exalts another is evident in Psalm 75:7 [8]. In a similar way, God lifts up the poor from the garbage and sits them with princes (Ps. 113:7-8). Thus amongst other things should remind Job of God's irresistible actions which could in his own case either humble him (which is preferable even from Elihu's point of view) or criminalise him (actually to make him guilty) according to the cynical view of the three friends.

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<sup>540</sup> These are evildoers who mock/blaspheme God and mistreat his innocent people. For the typical behavior of the godless see Pss. 10:1; 35:16; 39:8 [9]; 42:3 [4] (cf. Clines 2006:770).

<sup>541</sup> Still on the motif of God's watchfulness on human steps in wisdom texts see Pss. 33:13; 69:5 [6]; 94:11; 119:168; Prov. 5:21; cf. Clines 2006:780.

The relationship between poverty (oppression) and a cry for help which is described in 34:28<sup>542</sup> is also seen in Proverbs 21:13 as a warning in proverbs that whoever does not listen (responsibly) to the cry of the poor (oppressed), they too would not find God's help when they cry for help. In 34:28 of Job, the fact that God hearkens to the cry of the poor is used by Elihu as a case in point to argue for God's care and compassion to the oppressed to always cry to him for help in their distress. This could be a pointer to Job's joy and comfort knowing that his thoughts and cry for aid and justice most especially, do not fall on deaf ears. Therefore Job is entreated to humbly learn to request the wisdom of God as a wise pupil to a sage asking, "teach me what I cannot see" (34:32 cf. Prov. 4:4, 11). This would in a good sense accentuate his wisdom and piety as *recontextualized* in Psalm 27:11; 86:11; 119:33 cf. Clines 2006:783).

**35:5-13 Defence of God's Absence:** The effect of one's virtues in terms of being wise or being wicked affects oneself (and other humans cf. 35:8), as pointed out by Elihu as well as the wisdom tradition in Proverbs 9:12. This sounds ironic in that, the human who performs whatever action, especially that act of being wicked is little aware of its effect to oneself we may say until the repercussion actually comes, then one knows of one's real foolishness instead of wisdom. In Job's case and the Elihu speeches, the point of consideration here is the person of God and human actions. Here Job is informed that his virtues do not actually affect the essence of God, because of God's transcendence (cf. Habel 1985:492).

God's provision of songs<sup>543</sup> in the night (35:10) is a marker of God's bestowal of wisdom to humanity which entertains and sustains the souls.<sup>544545</sup> Like the visions of the night (33: 15f), the songs of the night display the presence and power of God which speaks to everyone's heart everywhere in the world (Pss. 19:2-5; 65:9 cf. Habel 1985:493; Gordis 1978:401). Furthermore, Elihu refers to the indirect ways of God's teaching wisdom to humanity, even by means of the animals on earth (35:11). This is consistent with wisdom tradition which also regards the possibility of learning God's knowledge in terms of knowing God's presence and might through the order and function of creation (Prov. 6:6-8; 26:2; 30:15-23). Wisdom then is seen as the

<sup>542</sup> For example of a cry in need of God's presence and help see Psalms 38:21; 109:4 (cf. Gordis 1978:391).

<sup>543</sup> For various scholarly opinions on what the "songs" in the night could mean and/or signify see Clines 2006:799.

<sup>544</sup> Cf. Clines (2006: 799) agrees with songs given to cheer even a sorrowful soul in the night (Ps. 42:8 [9]).

<sup>545</sup> Gordis (1978:401) observes that, "The religious spirit was particularly sensitive to God's presence in the night (cf. Ps. 8:4)".

counsellor of God at creation (Prov. 8:22-31 cf. Habel 1985:492). Humanity thus could and should learn dependence on the providential care of God as the animals do for their daily sustenance (Pss. 104:21; 147:9). Those who actually neglect the presence of God and do not seek or even mention him (35:10) are seen as those who represent the foolish, for the question of seeking God is a marker of being wise (Ps. 14:2; 24:6 cf. Clines 2006:799).

In regards to Elihu's consciousness of inner human life, he cautiously speaks about what is an evil that could be found in those considered to be upright. Taking the victims of oppression as a case in point, he points out from their supplication what is unacceptable which by implication applies to Job as well<sup>546</sup>. The cry of the oppressed is considered to be *אָרִיץ* "deceit" before God (35:13), in the same way, the wise asks for the removal of falsehood and, lies from himself (Prov. 30:8)<sup>547</sup> by means of *thematic elaboration* which he considers a wearisome burden but rather asked for a simple heart of wisdom.

**36:1-33 Defense of God's Justice in Creation:** The depiction of God as the "Creator" or "Maker" (36:3; 35:10; 32:22) resonates by means of *narrative amplification* with the worldview of wisdom tradition in terms of the origin of creation and its orderliness by God (Prov. 14:31; 16:4; 22:2)<sup>548</sup>. Furthermore, Elihu depicts God as a wisdom teacher when he points out the purpose of God's revelation as one which is meant to bring correction or discipline (36:8-12) this resonates with the work of the wisdom teacher (sage) in the wisdom traditions. He teaches his pupil with the purpose of imparting knowledge to him (her), which comes through "the submissive attitude of the pupil" (see Prov. 1:2, 3, 5, 8; 15:33; Habel 1985:507).<sup>549</sup> The link of teaching motif as a key to wisdom is once more ascribed to God in 36: 22 cf. Prov. 8.<sup>550</sup> Thus Habel (1985:510) rightly asserts that El is acclaimed as his own counsellor, the incomparable, self-sufficient Creator. Elihu expects that those who take note of the creation of God would see

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<sup>546</sup> Thus gleaned from Elihu's statement here Clines (2006:800) points out that Elihu by implication means even the oppressed are not innocent. If this is true then Job is not free to persist on his argument for his innocence, yet, a victim of suffering.

<sup>547</sup> "falsehood and lies" here constitute a hendiadys in the Hebrew grammar which connotes real deception.

<sup>548</sup> Habel (1985:506) points out the fact that God as the Creator rules the world "in accord with the moral order he has established in his cosmos" (cf. Prov. 8).

<sup>549</sup> The alternating key words in these verses quoted from proverbs are "discipline, understanding and knowledge."

<sup>550</sup> Prov. 5:13 implies "true teacher" (Gordis 1978:419). For more on this motif in the Old Testament see Pss. 25:8,9, 12; 94:12). Clines (2006:865) notes that this is a "rare" motif in the Old Testament especially in reference to God.

his wonders<sup>551</sup> in it and extol God's person (36:24 cf. Ps. 104:31-33)<sup>552</sup>. This accorded well also with the unfathomable majesty of God coming from his pavilion (booth cf. 36:29f cf. Ps. 18:12 [11]).<sup>553</sup> God is thus seen in this verse as a storm God (like Baal or Yahweh cf. Pss. 18:11; 68:34; 29:3 cf. Habel 1985:511)<sup>554</sup>.

**37:1-13 The Wonder of God's Creation:** The loud rumbling that terrified Elihu (37:1-2) echoes the voice of Yahweh in the Old Testament by means of *re-contextualization* (cf. Pss. 18:14 [13]; 29:3-9). This great rumbling could be linked to the elements in the theophanies of the history of Israel (Ps. 68:10)<sup>555</sup>. God does not only store the storm and hail but also has a place for "wind" too (Ps. 135:7). The governing verbs of 37:11-12 suggest the imagery of a cosmic navigator, namely God as the One who controls natural elements (Ps. 104:3 cf. Habel 1985:514)<sup>556</sup>. Elihu thus ends his speeches on the wisdom tone full of wonder and sublimity on the might of God (37:24) which leads to the fear of God that gives<sup>557</sup> wisdom (37:24 cf. 28:28; Prov. 1:7).<sup>558</sup>

In sum, the following are the proverbs that are reflected in the Elihu speeches, namely, Prov. 1; 4; 5; 10; 11; 3; 8; 9; 20; 17; 22; 30; 13; 15; 6; 16; 20; 22; 21; 26; 30; 14. In order to reflect on their date of composition and/or final compilation, we need to consider them based on discernible classifications. The classifications of proverbs based on a date have popularly revealed that chapters 1-9 are the introductory part which was collected much later, probably finalised during the Babylonian exile (Scott 1985:15; Waltke 2004: 61-63; Fox 2000:6, 48).<sup>559</sup> In

<sup>551</sup> This refers to the acts of God in Israel's history (Pss. 44:1 [2]; 95:9) they could also refer to the future acts of God's deliverance of his people (Ps. 90:16), the same could apply to God's righteous rule in the world (Ps. 92:4 [5] cf. Clines 2006:867).

<sup>552</sup> For more examples of Psalms of praise for God's great wonders see Psalms 8, 19, 29, 65:6-13 [7-14], 147, 148 cf. Clines (2006:867).

<sup>553</sup> Habel (1985:511) explains that this pavilion is the heavenly tent stretched out for the storm deity to appear in his splendor with his meteorological attendants (cf. Ps. 104:2-4 cf. Gordis 1978:420).

<sup>554</sup> We shall come back to the depictions that relate to the ancient Near Eastern context later (4.4.6) then we would elaborate of the "storm-god" motif etc.

<sup>555</sup> Clines (2006:874) helps to clarify that the metaphors used in this verse are no actual description of a theophany but just "a metaphor of a theophany."

<sup>556</sup> Ps. 18:11, 'He rides on a cherub and flies, and soars on the wings of the wind' cf. Ps. 68:34 (Gordis 1978:421).

<sup>557</sup> For a possibility of a counter argument that points to a hindrance of wisdom and being heard by God see Gordis (1978:434).

<sup>558</sup> By implication, Habel (1985:516) rightly sees the call to fear God as directly applying to Job within the given context.

<sup>559</sup> Thus these proverbs must have been finalized in the either the Persian period or in the early Hellenistic (Fox 2000:6, 48). Fox (2000:49) further notes that the universalistic outlook of Proverbs 8 reflects a nonintellectual cosmopolitan period than the Persian.

these Proverbs (1-9 cf. 1; 4; 5 and 6) the wisdom that is urged upon the hearers is ethical obedience rather than intellectual development (Scott 1985:16). The following Proverbs (10-21 the “Solomonic collection” are mostly “pre-exilic” in terms of formative and discussion scope (Scott 1985:18). Yet, they could have reached their final form around 5<sup>th</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> century BCE because of the long process it had to go through. Proverbs 22:17-24 “the traditions of the wise” resonate much with the Egyptian saying of Amen-em-ope especially 22:17-23:11. There is similarity both in structure and subject matter (Scott 1985:20). There are also other “collections of the wisdom of Solomon” which are most probably exilic especially in terms of their composition and/or compilation as we have discussed some above. Proverbs 30-31 constitute the appendices to the whole collections of the book of Proverbs (Scott 1985:22). It is noteworthy here that Agur’s scepticism resonates with the Qoheleth in Ecclesiastes in terms of subject matter for example, on the impossibility of knowing God and the facts of somewhat Jewish piety (Scott 1985:22).

It is noteworthy here that not all the Psalms are actually from the “Priestly traditions” some are rather wisdom Psalms and others reflect other traditions as well. The following are the Psalms that resonate with the Elihu speeches; Pss. 94; 49; 78; 2; 81; 49; 8; 22; 12; 62; 50; 103; 16; 55; 143; 91; 22; 24; 27; 17; 27; 30; 4; 21; 104; 7; 139; 75; 113; 86; 119; 147; 14; 24; 18; 68; 29; 135. In this section, we shall try to briefly reflect on their possible classification and dates from a more tradition critical point of view. The major traditions that we are concerned with here are the wisdom and priestly traditions. Thus we shall now see how the various wisdom psalms and priestly or cultic/ritual psalms reflect a possible period in terms of date. According to Brueggemann (1984: 184) Psalms, 127 and 128 could be good examples of “wisdom Psalms” that are actually related to Solomonic wisdom. These Psalms reflect on “elemental life situations.” Eissfeldt (1974: 124-125; Dillard and Longman 1994:223-224) helps us to note that “in the Psalter Pss. i, xxxvii, xlix, lxxiii, lxxviii, xci, cxii, cxxviii and cxxxiii” belong to the collections that could be described as “wisdom poems.” He further shows us some Psalms of the “choir” or cultic psalms that we can describe as coming from the Priestly traditions of Korah, Heman, Ethan and Asaph groups namely, “Pss. xlii, xlv-xlix, lxxxiv-lxxxv, lxxxvii-lxxxviii, i, lxxiii-lxxxiii, lxxxix” (Eissfeldt 1974:452). All this reflect both first temple period usage

especially in their oral form which must have been collected and edited into the final form during the exile and beyond.<sup>560</sup>

#### 4.4.4 The Elihu Speeches and Prophetic Traditions

**32:1-6a Prologue:** Starting with his ancestral home, Elihu was introduced as a Buzite (32:2, 6), it is interesting to note that Buz as place name appears in Jeremiah 25:23 and 49:7-8 in association with Dedan and Tema (the land of Uz has appeared in v. 20) (cf. Clines 2006:713).<sup>561</sup>

**32:6b-10 Right to Answer:** Elihu's reluctance in 32:6 to speak because of his youthfulness is echoed in Jeremiah's (1:6) response to the call and commissioning of the Lord too by means of *recontextualization*, presenting his youthful age as an excuse to somehow decline his call and prophetic ministry among God's people (cf. Habel 1985:449). In terms of what he has to offer or what he felt reluctant to offer to his audience namely, חָכְמָה (wisdom) and בִּינָה (understanding) resonate with the particular virtues of God in Isaiah 40:14 and the treasures of Zion in Isaiah 33:6 by means of reconfiguration. But Elihu's reference to the Spirit (רוּחַ)<sup>562</sup> which implicitly is of God and now resides or comes upon him to enable him to have wisdom is echoed by means of *recontextualization* in the exceptional personality of Daniel (5:12) as well (cf. Habel 1985:451). The spirit could be seen as a "charismatic gift" especially in people with a special assignment in the Old Testament like the prophets (e.g., Isa. 11:2; Ezek 2:2). But in contrast to receiving or claiming to have received such a gift, Elihu sees the presence of the Spirit of God on all humanity (common humanity) not only exclusively in himself (cf. 32:8)<sup>563</sup>. Yet, the presentation of his message at this juncture is quite unique from the previous speakers even from its semantic introductory point of view.<sup>564</sup> Thus we cannot press a prophetic claim on Elihu too quickly based on an assumption of his possession of a super inspiration from the Lord through the Spirit (cf.

<sup>560</sup> There are examples of ceremonial psalms like those that accompany an offering or are offered for the dedication of the Temple, for example, from Eissfeldt (1974:454) are "Ps. xxxviii, i, lxx, xxx." For more on ceremonial psalms see Hooke (1958); Mowinckel (1962); Weiser (1962); Westermann (1981); Brueggemann (1984; 2007).

<sup>561</sup> Based on this correlation of place names and persons, Clines (2006:713) proposes that Elihu, "like the other three friends of Job, is being portrayed as an Edomite."

<sup>562</sup> Or wind, as it is translated in Jer. 5:13 to show the transitory transformation of the prophets. Otherwise רוּחַ has been used in several passages in Isaiah (4:4; 19:3; 31:3; 63:10f) to denote an inner power that is immaterial.

<sup>563</sup> Thus Clines (2006:718) is right to point out that Elihu in this verse (8), "has set his sight no higher than to justify his own intervention in the debate."

<sup>564</sup> Elihu uniquely opened verse 8 with the particle אֲנִי "surely, truly" this is seen as a 'strong asserverative' "often used to introduced emphatically the statement of a *fact*, after what had been, mistakenly, 'said' or thought" (cf. Zeph 3:7; Jer. 3:20; 8:8; Isa. 49:4; 53:4; Clines 2006:718).

Witte 2013:64-65). Nevertheless, the loss of wisdom (counsel) from the elders (32:9, 15) resonates with the unfortunate situation that Ezekiel (7:26) pronounced upon the people of his day (cf. Clines 2006:717).

**32:17-22 Compulsion to Answer:** Elihu's distress because of his inner urge to speak his mind (32:19-20) is echoed in Jeremiah's (20:9) testimony by means of *reconfiguration* that the word of the Lord was like fire within him, urging him to speak it out even against his will (cf. Habel 1985:454)<sup>565</sup>. But in contrast Elihu was so willing and ready to speak up, to him, it would be a source of his relief, hence pleasure to say his mind out and release himself from the heaviness that the inner urge presses within his stomach. Habel (1985:454) rightly observes that "The wine motif, as adopted by the poet, suggests a further element of satire" within the book of Job in conversation with other literature around it. For example, Jeremiah (or probably the Lord himself) has felt such a sensation within Jeremiah's prophetic message to the false prophets of his day (23:9)<sup>566</sup>. He felt as someone seriously drunk with wine. Furthermore, "the cry of the populace that every jar would be filled with wine is interpreted by Jeremiah as a sign that the inhabitants will be filled with drunkenness (Jer. 13:12-13)" (Habel 1985:454). Elihu's self-presentation as one who would not use flattery on his audience (32:21-22) is echoed through *thematic elaboration* by the utilisation of the same verb (piel of *kny*) as the literal act of giving an honorary title to someone. This could be exemplified by the Messianic designation given to King Cyrus of Persia in the Book of Isaiah (44:5; 45:4). But Elihu in this context is trying to move away from its interpretive, negative usage to mean flattery or partiality to anyone (cf. Habel 1985:454; Clines 2006:723).

**33:1-7 Summons to Testify in Court:** The summons of Elihu to Job to hear, which is literally to 'give ear' thus to listen is common to covenant lawsuit (33:1f cf. Isa. 1:2; Micah 6:1) (Balentine 2006:540). Opening the mouth (33:2) is also a forensic term which indicates the beginning of a speech or to provide a verbal response (cf. Isa. 53:7; Dan 10:16) (Clines 2006:725). The essence of the dreams or visions that God brings to a person according to Elihu's explanation (33:18) is

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<sup>565</sup> Thus Jeremiah's experience his more "forcible" than "more dignified" instance (cf. Clines 2006:723).

<sup>566</sup> It is noteworthy here that the Apostles of Jesus Christ, in connection to the outpouring of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost, were wrongly understood to have been under serious wine influence (Acts 2:4, 13). The larger crowd could not see the connection of their utterances with the prophetic message of Joel (2:28 ff) for the outpouring of the Spirit of the Lord which will result in prophetic ministry.

to serve as disciplinary measures, to keep the sufferer humbled, lest he becomes proud and perishes by going down into the Pit of Death. The portion of the arrogant and the uncircumcised is found with the slain in the Pit (cf. Ezek 28:8-10; Isa. 14:15 cf. Habel 1985:468).

**33:12-28 Refutation of Job’s Claim:** Elihu’s summons on Job to prepare and bring his lawsuit forward, before God is an inversion of what is mostly seen in the prophetic texts in which God brings lawsuit to the people (33:19-21 cf. Isa. 3:13; Micah 6:2). During the hypothetical trial of the sufferer, an angel plays the role of an advocate who steps forward to speak the mind of the judge to the sufferer thus to provide help and possible acquittal of the accused. This is echoed the court case of Joshua the high priest before the assembly of God by means of *re-contextualization* (33:23-24 cf. Zech. 3:1-5; Enoch 9:3ff; 15:2, Isa 43:27) (Habel 1985:469-70).<sup>567</sup> Thus the announced “ransom” before the assembly is seen as a “substitutionary vehicle for rescuing the life of someone in danger” (Isa. 43:3) (Habel 1985:470)<sup>568</sup>. The accused is expected to make a public confession of the fact that he has perverted what is right (Micah 3:9 cf. Isa. 59:8) which would be a true sign of his penitence before the court that would open the door for his forgiveness and restoration.<sup>569</sup>

**34:1-3, 4-9 Summons to Judge and Presentation of Case Against Job:** In chapter 34:2 the verb יָדָע “know” is used in the prophetic literature in particular by the prophet Isaiah (1:3; 7:15; 40:21; 53:3;) to presuppose the act of knowing as recognizing something or someone closely, thus having a close acquaintance and deeper experience. Thus Elihu’s depiction of the friends of Job as those who ‘know’ could be a derogatory way of taunting them as those who have the first-hand information or experience of life issues, thus they are now called to somewhat scientifically cross-examine Job’s case and render their verdict as judges (cf. Habel 1985:480).

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<sup>567</sup> There is also an appearance of a protecting (mediating) angel in the story of Daniel (12:1) (cf. Clines 2006:735). The same motif is also carries over even into the New Testament sections of the Bible (e.g. Matt. 18:10; Acts 12:15).

<sup>568</sup> God has also promised to redeem the righteous from death but there is no indication of a demand for any ransom (Hosea 13:14). This substitutionary ransom, then resonates with the priestly intervention that he has presupposed by the prophets on behalf of the sin of the people of God (cf. Isa 60:7; Jer. 14:12; Ezek 20:40-41; 43:27; Hos. 8:13) (cf. Clines 2006:738).

<sup>569</sup> The restoration of the sufferer has to do with the renewal of his skin (physical body) into the freshness of youth (33:25). Thus the youthful vigor here also resonates with the promise of God through the words of Isaiah for those who faithfully wait upon the Lord (Isa. 40:31) (cf. Clines 2006:738).

The use of the adjective אָנִי to refer to the incurability of the wounds inflicted on Job by the arrows of pain (34:6), has been used in several other prophetic passages to describe the incurability of the diseases of the people who disobeyed God (cf. Isa. 17:11; Jer. 17:9, 16: 30:15; Mic. 1:9) (Clines 2006:770). The emphasis here is not on the means of the reason for the wounds but rather on the nature of the wounds in regards to any possible (human) cure. This in a sense could awaken the mind of the audience to sense a divine hand around the whole issue closely. Although they have not always denied such possibility the problem with them in that regard is that they tend to press their charge on Job's sinfulness too hard than necessary.

**34:10-30 Defense of God's Justice:** The motif "all flesh" (34:15) could mean all of life, yet in regards to its occurrence in most prophetic texts, its *recontextualized* use seem to be strictly restricted to human beings (cf. Isa. 40:5; 49:26; 66:23; Jer. 25:31; Ezek. 20:48; 21:5; Joel 3:1; Zech. 2:13) (cf. Clines 2006:774). In regards to the power of God within social arena for the need for social justice it is important to point out here that the divine confrontation to those who arrogate power to themselves and claim the divine right to do so, and then go ahead to misuse it by abusing those under them is necessary, and instances of such rulers is evident in ancient stories (34:18-19 cf. Ezek 28:2-10).<sup>570</sup> In the blameless rule of God, corrupt and arrogant rulers (leaders) are swept away even without the help of mortals (34:20 cf. Dan. 2:34; 8:25). This comes about because of the penetrating eyes of God from which nothing can be hidden (34:21-22 cf. Amos 9:2-3; Jer. 23:24; Habel 1985:484). This further accentuates the uniqueness of God (cf. Jer. 23:23) among his people. The seeing eyes of God contrast his somewhat hiddenness which could show his displeasure and the withdrawal of his favour, hence the display of his anger by his absence or passivity (34:29-30 cf. Isa. 54:8; Micah 3:4).

**35:5-13 Defense of God's Absence:**<sup>571</sup> The refusal of the oppressed to acknowledge the presence of God (35:10) shows their faithlessness, whereas the same kind of question; "where is

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<sup>570</sup> Baletine (2006: 571) rightly note that the prophets of Israel were decisively involved in condemning rulers who abuse power in their day (Isa. 10:5-19; Jer. 22:1-9; Ezek 28:1-10; Amos 7:12-13 etc.). Thus Elihu could implicitly doing the same here in the case of Job (in almost same accord with Job's three friends).

<sup>571</sup> This heading contains the summary of other following sections of the speeches which have to do with further defense of God's justice, the wonders of God, and Elihu's challenge to Job which brings his speech to an end (cf. chaps. 35-37).

your God” by contrast serves as a clarion call back to true piety<sup>572</sup> by the prophet Jeremiah (2:6-7) (Habel 1985:492; Balentine 2006:588). The use of the word קַי “fetters/chains” (36:8) occurs in some prophetic literature with a metaphoric depiction of captivity, and the affliction of the captives (cf. Isa. 45:14; 28:22; 52:2; Jer. 30:8) (Clines 2006:858). The encounter of the wonder of God and the need to praise him in response (36:24-25) resonates with the vision of Isaiah in the temple of the Lord (6:3) (cf. Habel 1985:511). Elihu’s shock at the wonders of God also made Jeremiah to experience a “devastating force of war within his being” (37:1 cf. Jer. 4:19; Isa. 31:4) (Habel 1985:512). Clines (2006:874) helps us to see how 37:2, 4 contain some linguistic elements of theophanic language compared to other texts, especially within some of the prophet texts. The use of רָעַד “rage/thunder/quake”<sup>573</sup> (Isa. 13:13; Jer. 33:9; Amos 8:8) , “Thunder” as the קוֹל “voice” of God (Isa. 30:30), שָׁאָג “roar” (Jer. 25:30; Amos 1:2) and רָעַם “thunder/storm” (Isa. 29:6) are all exemplifying the foregoing assertion. God’s power in making ice and cold winter rains<sup>574</sup> (37:9-10)<sup>575</sup> contrast the perceived hot wind as the depiction of Yahweh’s anger to Israel (Isa. 30:28, 33; 40:7) (Habel 1985:513).

In sum, here are the prophetic passages that reflect the Elihu speeches in Job, namely, Jer. 25; 49; 1; 13; 17, 30; 23; 2; 4; 33; Isaiah 40; 33; 11; 44; 14; 3; 43; 59; 1; 53; 17; 49; 66; 54; 45; 28; 52; 31; 13; 30; Mic. 6; 3; 1; Daniel 5; 2; Ezek. 2; 7; 28; 20; 21; Zech. 3; 2; Amos 9;8; 1; Joel 3. From the above passages, the most probably pre-exilic texts are those from Amos, Jeremiah and Joel (cf. Dillard & Longman 1994: 375-376, 286-291, 364-367) while others are clearly from the exilic period especially towards the end of the Persian period and the rise of the Hellenistic Period. It is interesting that most of the quote from the book of Isaiah comes from Second Isaiah which is generally accepted among scholars to be a post-exilic literature (Eissfeldt 1974:330-345; Dillard & Longman 1994:275-276; Lasor et al. 1996:279-288). Thus we could see how the Elihu speeches are echoed grammatically (word and phrases) within the Israelite prophetic

<sup>572</sup> Piety here connotes seeking after God (cf. Isa. 65:1; Jer. 29:13) (Clines 2006:799).

<sup>573</sup> This could also be “turmoil”

<sup>574</sup> Clines (2006:878) notes that winter winds from the south are known as tempestuous even in prophetic texts (cf. Isa. 21:1; Zech. 9:14).

<sup>575</sup> Cosmology and meteorological elements are located in specific places under the control of God (cf. Jer. 10:13; 51:16) (Clines 2006:877).

traditions. This leads us to discern its age as being more from the late Persian periods and/or the early part of the Hellenistic period.<sup>576</sup>

#### **4.4.5 The Elihu Speeches and Priestly Traditions**<sup>577</sup>

The priestly tradition here presupposes biblical materials that contain the principles of purity in terms of rituals and family (even national) purity. This could be a pointer to the selection and uniqueness of the people of Israel in terms of their religion and ethics among other peoples around them in the ancient Near Eastern contexts. Thus the priestly materials here would comprise records like the Books from Exodus to 2 Chronicles. These are basically the narrative or systematic records of the conduct of the people of Israel which attained their finished form during the Babylonian exile. We shall read the priestly traditions of Israel in light of the Elihu speeches of Job 32-37 in order to see how they echo thoughts from the Elihu speeches in one way or another.

To begin with, his name as mentioned in 32:2ff, “Elihu” is not an uncommon name in the priestly document of the biblical literature<sup>578</sup>. Clines (2006:712) helps us to see how it has been borne by four other individuals in the Hebrew Bible. For example, there was an Ephraimite, an ancestor of Samuel (1 Sam. 1:1), a brother of David, otherwise known as Eliab (1 Sam. 16:6; 1 Chron. 2:13; 27:18), a Manassite chief in the time of David (1 Chron. 12:21), and a Korahite gatekeeper (1 Chron. 26:7). The name basically means ‘He is (my) God’.<sup>579</sup> Clines (2006: 713) points out a further connection of “Ram” with an ancestor of David mentioned in the Book of Ruth (4:19 cf. 1 Chron. 2:9, 10, 25, 27). The name could be the short form of “Eliram” ‘God is exalted’. His father’s name “Buz” is mention in Genesis 22:21 “as the personal name of the cousin of Abraham, and brother of Uz (Clines 2006:713).

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<sup>576</sup> We shall reflect more on this with some illustrations in our next chapter.

<sup>577</sup> Henceforward, we may not strictly follow the verse divisions as in other foregoing sections because of the somewhat scant points of resonance between the interactive documents. Nevertheless, we shall continue to follow the lead from Elihu’s speeches as our point of departure.

<sup>578</sup> Habel (1985:448 cf. Balentine 2006:515) sees him as the only speaker in the book of Job with an Israelite name. Thus the name could be a pointer to the name of the prophet ‘Elijah’ which means, ‘Yahweh is my God.’

<sup>579</sup> Clines (2006:712) maintains the trying to find the reference to the name would do much help then just deciphering its meaning. Thus as we shall go through the Elihu speeches in Job then we shall at the end of this study pose for a synthetic analysis of the speech as well as its references, allusions and echoes (resonances), then we shall briefly reflect on how this name portray his personality and role.

Elihu's hesitation to speak before the elders because of his age is echoed in the confessions of Gideon (Judg. 6:15), Saul (1 Sam. 9:21) and Jeremiah (Jer. 1:6) for similar insufficiency, that they could not stand to speak or go to fight because they are afraid of their status (cf. Habel 1985:449). Yet all of them were later endowed with abilities by the power of the Spirit of God in them<sup>580</sup>. Thus Elihu's avowal of having the Spirit of God within him<sup>581</sup> that gives wisdom (32:8) is echoed in the special endowment of the same in priestly documents (cf. Gen. 41:38; Exod. 28:3; 31:3; Num. 27:18; Deut. 34:9; 1 Sam. 10:6).

Still on the use of names in the Elihu speeches as well as other texts within the priestly documents, Elihu is almost the only conversation partner who addresses Job directly by his name (cf. 32:12; 33:31; 37:14) some may see this as an act of disrespect to the person being addressed (Clines 2006:724) but compared to other passages, for example in the priestly records (1 Sam. 1:8; 17:55; 22:16; 2 Sam. 9:6; 2 Kings 2:4; 5:25; 9:22) people's first names are used in addressing them, which shows some sense of closer affinity, or deep knowledge and direct relationship with the person being addressed (cf. Pope 1973:247).

Elihu's call for Job to prepare his argument by the use of the word עָרַךְ "set, arrange, marshal." It is the same word used for the military preparation of the army to line up or draw for battle (cf. 1 Sam. 17:8, 16; 2 Sam. 10:8) (Clines 2006:726). Furthermore, Elihu's mention of dreams and visions of the night as means of God's revelation to mankind (33: 15 ff), and even the presence of an intervening angel<sup>582</sup> are not strange to the priestly traditions of Israel (cf. Gen. 20:3, 6; 28:11-15; 31:11, 24; 41:25-32; 46:2-4; Num. 12:6; 1 Kings 3:5)<sup>583</sup> (Clines 2006:731).

Elihu's connection of the restoration of the sufferer to having access to the face of God (33:26) presents a beautiful development in terms of the possibility of the sufferer to gain such a great privilege knowing that the presence of God is dreadful especially to those without enough

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<sup>580</sup> It is worth noting here that Elihu's status and confession helps us to recall other young people like Joseph (Gen. 41:37-39) and Daniel (Dan. 1:17-20; 2:10-23) "were given the Spirit of God which enabled them to be wiser "than all the sage counselors in a king's court" (Balentine 2006:521).

<sup>581</sup> The Spirit of God and the breath of Shaddai in this context synonymously presuppose the impartation of the "life-giving breath imparted to Adam (Gen. 2:7) and all other human beings (33:4)." The same Spirit was also the "wisdom imparting spirit" in Genesis 41:38 (in Joseph in Egypt) (Habel 1985:450-51).

<sup>582</sup> Here Hartley (1988:447) thinks of 'the angel of Yahweh' (cf. Gen. 16:7-13; Num. 22:35) (cf. Clines 2006:736).

<sup>583</sup> Although in "many instances the message remains veiled or symbolic and demands special interpretation (Gen. 41:11-12; Judg. 7:13-15; Dan. 2:31-45)" (Habel 1985:468).

priestly preparations (cf. Exod. 33:20 “says is fatal”<sup>584</sup>; yet it is possible to seek and find his face (presence), Exod. 23:15; 34:20; 1 Chron. 16:11) (cf. Clines 2006:738). In a similar sense of the foregoing, having access to see the face of the King “signifies admission to his presence in order to find favour cf. Gen. 32:21; 44:23, 26; 2 Sam. 3:13; 14:24, 28, 32)” (Clines 2006:739).

The wicked rulers in 34:18-19 were declared “Scoundrels” by God as a sign of his judgment upon them. Habel’s (1985:483) view of such a divine declaration, as reported or envisaged by Elihu, implies to declare their downfall and link them “with the perverts and scum of society (as in Judg. 19:22; 20:13).” Furthermore, Clines (2006:778) shows how the threat of the destruction of the wicked rulers רָגַע “in a moment” (34:20) is echoed in the warnings of the Lord concerning his presence to those who see him, and stand before him in wickedness (cf. Exod. 33:5; Num. 16:21, 45). The destruction of the wicked will come upon them as a result of their infidelity to God. The description of their infidelity in the phrase טָרוּ מֵאַחֲרָי which literally means “turn aside from after”<sup>585</sup> is used in other places within priestly traditions to literally mean turning away from following someone (2 Sam. 2:21, 22) and more metaphorically, of turning away from following God (Deut. 7:4 [hiph]; 1 Sam. 12:20; 2 Kings 18:6; 2 Chron. 25:27). The phrase is most probably the opposite of הִלַּךְ אַחֲרָי which means “go after”<sup>586</sup> which in a literal sense means following someone to another place (Gen. 24:5) but it is frequently used to depict the inclination to follow after other gods (Deut. 4:3; 6:14) and sometimes even Yahweh (Deut. 13:4[5]) (cf. Clines 2006:780-81). Acts of infidelity seen as the wickedness of people towards God may make God to freely (and rightly) hide his face from them (34:29). This could mean abandonment to serious vulnerability seeing that the hiding of God’s face could signify his displeasure from those he had delighted in (cf. Job 13: 24; Deut. 32:20). Part of God’s response would be to deter evil (wicked) rulers to continue ruling their nations in unjust manners (34:30). Although 34:30 is a difficult verse actually to decipher, the possible sense that we can make out of it in regards to God’s response to unjust rulers is that God takes the initiative, as in the preceding verses of his turning away his pleasure from them, thus unleashing in terrible judgment that brings their days

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<sup>584</sup> The face of Yahweh mediates light and life to the worshiper (Num. 6:24-26; to me this is metaphoric than just literal). Although as earlier mentioned in some context “seeing God or his angel is considered dangerous or even deadly (Ex. 33:23; Judg. 6:22)” (Habel 1985:471).

<sup>585</sup> This implicitly means “turn away from following” (NB)

<sup>586</sup> Or “follow” someone,

of reign of terror to an end. Doing this would take away their “snare” (מִוִּקְשׁ) from the people. The word “snare” here has also been used elsewhere within priestly materials to denote a trap or bait that a wicked ruler puts or becomes to his people (cf. Exod. 10:7 (of Moses), Judg. 2:3 (of foreign gods), and 1 Sam. 18:21 (Michal), 2 Sam 22: 6 (of death)). All these usages are metaphorical to show how an innocent, vulnerable life faces the danger of unnecessary distraction that disrupts loyalty and so brings punishment and even death (cf. Clines 2006:781).

The קַוָּץ “outcry” for help by the oppressed wicked in 35:12 is echoed by means of *recontextualization* in the Israelites’ cry for help under their Egyptian bondage (Exod. 2:23-25). Clines (2006:801) agrees that it is hard between these two passages to actually maintain a certain parallelism between the two cries for help, as in which one is just a “mere cry” and which is a “prayer”. Even though the Hebrews groaned under the tasking burden of their masters in Egypt, there is no indication that they actually prayed to God (any God per se) (see Birch 2015:10), but they just suffered and groaned within a keen desire for rescue. Thus we can say that in both cases whenever the oppressed cried for help, God made support possible. And in the event of the Hebrews Yahweh heard their cry and was moved by his compassion to come and rescue them which he did through Moses in the Exodus narrative. But in the Elihu depiction of a similar incidence, the cry was not heard, so to speak, because of the arrogance, or wickedness of the oppressed (35:12).

In 36:8 the description of affliction as “cords” is echoed by means of reconfiguration with David’s metaphorical description of his suffering probably as a fugitive on the run from Saul (cf. 2 Sam. 22:6 even in reference to Sheol) (Clines 2006:858). The spreading of the clouds is seen as the manifestation of the presence and power of God (36:29 cf. Exod. 16:10; 20:21; Lev. 16:2; 1 Kings 8:10; Ezek. 10:4) (Clines 2006:872). Furthermore, God’s Pavilion (הֶקֶדֶשׁ to denote dwelling place is referred to elsewhere (Gen. 33:17, for cattle; Lev. 23:34, metaphor for a memorial feast; Lev. 23:43, for travelers like the wandering Israelites; 2 Sam 11:11, as military camp; 2 Sam 22:12, the hiding place of Yahweh).

There is a corresponding description of creation narrative of Genesis 1 and Elihu’s speech by means of *narrative amplification* of 37:18 in regards to the nature of heaven and the formation of rain. Clines (2006:882) is right to describe verse 18 as “typical of Hebrew cosmology.” This

could be clarified by the following points of interest. It is noteworthy here that the sky is viewed as solid but thin, a sheet of beaten metal (a ‘firmament’ רִקְעָה)<sup>587</sup> this is echoed in Genesis 1:7 of the creation of the firmament.<sup>588</sup>

The following passages are the passages from later<sup>589</sup> priestly traditions of Israel, namely, Gen. 41; 20; 28; 24; 41; 46; 32; 44; 26; 24; 33; Exod. 28; 31; 23; 34; 33; 10; 2; 16; 20; Lev. 16; 23; Num. 27; 12; 16; Deut. 34;7; 4; 6; 13; 32; Judg. 6; 19; 20; 2; 1 Sam. 10; 1 Sam 1; 16; 9; 17; 22; 12; 18; 2 Sam. 9; 10; 3; 14; 2; 22; 11; 1 Kings 3; 8; 2 Kings 2; 5; 9; 18; 1 Chron. 12; 26; 2; 16; 2 Chron. 25, that resonate with the Elihu speeches. It is interesting to note here how the Elihu speeches relate more with the Moses’ group priestly traditions. It very much echoed what could be found in the Elihu speeches than that done by the Deuteronomist. Although the Deuteronomistic History<sup>590</sup> also does well to reflect the thoughts from Elihu in more practical terms that could stand as good illustrations for further and more deeper intertextual studies. It is a scholarly consensus, although arguably, that the books that present the socio-religious history of ancient Israel namely, from Genesis up to 2 Kings are book that has mostly been written and finalized during the Babylonian exile (Eissfeldt 1974: 129-143, 218-219,236-238; Dillard & Longman 1994:38-39, 58-62, 93-97,136-140, 152-159, 170-172; Lasor et al 1996:114-117,156-161,545-549).<sup>591</sup> Similarly, the retelling and almost a reconstruction of the history of Israel by the Chronicler reflects the time after the exile but under Persian period. This implies that the dating of the books by the Chronicler would most probably fit in with the Persian period Yehud, thus the later Persian period just before the rise of the Hellenistic period (cf. Person 2010; Gertz et al. 2012: 561ff; Sander 2005:263-277).<sup>592</sup>

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<sup>587</sup> Here is in the Hiphil denoting being caused to be by hammering out cf. Exod. 39:3; Num. 16:38-39; 17:4 etc

<sup>588</sup> For more on creation resonances on the mention of the firmament and its significance see Clines 2006:882.

<sup>589</sup> This implies late in terms of time of composition and not necessary in actual history.

<sup>590</sup> For more on the Deuteronomistic History theory see Noth (1981); Römer (2000); Knoppers and McConville (2000).

<sup>591</sup> These sources present us with the overviews of the rigorous scholarly exercises in trying to understand and interpret the history of ancient Israel from a contextual perspective especially in terms of the composition/compilation periods of some of the most crucial aspects (books).

<sup>592</sup> Although any mention on the Elihu speeches in the book of Job has been totally neglected without any obvious reasons, it is asserted in Gertz et al, in support to our claim above that, “In terms of language and history of tradition, the book of Job stems from learned wisdom circles in the Persian/Hellenistic Period” (Gertz et al, 2012:564). Compare also opinions by Pope (1973) and Newsom (2003) as mentioned above.

#### 4.4.6 The Elihu Speeches and the Ancient Near Eastern Texts

Following our usual procedure which begins with his ancestry, it is observed that Elihu's father's name, Barakiel, 'God has blessed,' does not have a variant in the Old Testament but rather it has a similar occurrence in Akkadian documents as *Bari-ilu/i* which is believed to have been borne by several persons probably from Jewish extraction. It is mentioned in the "business documents of the firm Murashu sons from the fifth century B.C. in Babylon" (Pope 1973:242). Elihu stands similar to Diomedes in Homer's *Iliad*, both have a considerable family lineage (cf. Clines 2006:712), and both had to be cautious in their speech according to the expected norm of expression within their ancient contexts. Just as Elihu recognised his youthfulness (32:7-9) which made him hesitate to speak his mind before the elders, so also Diomedes had to present an apology to his listeners "not to become angry because he is the youngest to make a speech" (Clines 2006:717). Elihu's claim to have wisdom by the indwelling of the Spirit and breath of God, the Almighty (32:8) somehow echoes the testimony of the worshiper in the *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2,14) by means of reconfiguration in which he testifies about his god that, "He has placed Maat in my body"<sup>593</sup> thus he further states the purpose of such grace as a sage when he says, "My Lord<sup>594</sup> instructed me just so that I might enact his teaching" (Halo 2000:67).

In his continual self-introduction to Job, Elihu particularly called Job to set himself at ease before him because of their human commonality from creation (33:6-7) thus both of them were קרץ 'pinched off' from "a lump of clay" just as a potter does with some clay from a larger lump when he wants to make a pot. This resonates with the tale of creation from *Gilgamish Epic* (1.2. 38; *ANET 74a* cf. Clines 2006:727; Habel 1985:465) by means of *narrative amplification* and *thematic elaboration* in which the story is told of the female creator goddess Aruru who 'nipped off clay' to create Enkidu with the intention of making him equal to *Gilgamish*.<sup>595</sup> The fact of

<sup>593</sup> Thus Maat (justice/rightness) in this context could be a variant of wisdom etc. This we shall see later on in our reflection on the Elihu speeches who argues out the justice of God which displays the wisdom of God in the world.

<sup>594</sup> "lord" here could mean "a teacher" thus a sage who taught a pupil with the purpose that the pupil may "enact" (live out) "his teaching" (his instruction/law cf. Deut. 6:4ff; Prov. 31-12)

<sup>595</sup> The praise of the divine in the *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2,14) also resonates with the idea of human creation from the creative hands and power of the divine saying; "O my lord, who fashions people, who transforms a lifetime, who makes a good fate for his favorite, who is satisfied by truth, whose abomination is falsehood, how prosperous is he who hears your teaching of life!" (Halo 2000:67). The prosperity that comes from the "teaching of life" could be a similar pointer to Elihu's quest to teach wisdom to Job (chaps. 32:6-22; 33:31-33).

equality in creation from an essential clay (transient) imagery and point of departure in both records is striking.

Furthermore, the motif of night visions and dreams in regards to one's health towards healing and restoration (33:15) echoes the so-called *Babylonian Job* or the *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi* through *thematic elaboration*, which tells about how the sufferer who also “discerned in his dreams a message of restoration to health” (*III.1-53*; *ANET*, 598b-99a cf. Clines 2006:731; Habel 1985:468). The sufferer was able to “[r]eceive food, takes drink” (*ANET III. 52*; Prichard 1950:436). The restoration happened as a result of the prayer of confession offered by the sufferer which led to his acceptance and restoration into joy thus, “He turns away the man's suffering into joy” (Halo 1997:575). This resonates with the restoration of the sufferer namely, Job (33:26)<sup>596</sup> into a righteous state and rejoicing if he would comply to confess before God through a prayer of penitence<sup>597</sup>. The imageries of Death and the place of Death in 33:18 namely, תַּחַטְּ “pit” or “grave” and הַלְּוֹ “canal”, “water-channel” or “river”.<sup>598</sup> These to Habel (1985:468-69 Cf. Clines 2006:733) may be reminiscent of the names of the Canaanite deities *Šaḥar* and *Šalim*, Dusk and Dawn.<sup>599</sup> Similarly, the *Babylonian Job* also has a portion which reads, ‘Our fathers so indeed give up and go the way of death. It is an old saying that they cross the river Hubur’ (Lines 16-17; *ANET*, 602a cf. Clines 2006:733). The words of Elihu in which he sought the attention of Job to listen to him while he speaks that he intends to teach him wisdom (33:31-33) resonates with the wisdom teacher in the *Hurro-Hittite Bilingual Wisdom Text* who says,

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<sup>596</sup> Compare “He sees God's face with rejoicing” with “for my face will see the face of my lord Atum” which is explained as the ‘sacred face’ (Halo 1997:28)

<sup>597</sup> Indeed there is blessing in beholding the divine face (presence) as the poet sang in the *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2.14) saying, “May he be fulfilled by beholding you unceasingly,” (Halo 2000:67). This satisfies the longing of the worshiper for the beauty of his god, as described in the *Book of the Dead* 125(2.12) when the confessor says, “I have come before you, my lord, just so that you might bring me so that I might see your beauty” (Halo 2000:60). This must be a pure encounter in which Elihu's worldview also portrays, thus making honesty or truth the cardinal virtue before the deity, for example, “Behold, I have come before you to bring Truth, having repelled you falsehood” (Halo 2000:60). This confession of honesty before the divine is echoed in Elihu's confession of honesty to his audience too (32:21-22) in which he said he will not be partial in his speech lest his Maker takes him away, thus being honest not only before mere mortals like Job and his friends, but ultimately before his Maker (God).

<sup>598</sup> It is interesting to note here that this could be the only place in the Old Testament (Hebrew Bible) “where such an underworld river is alluded to,” (Clines 2006:733).

<sup>599</sup> In Ugaritic myth, there is the narrative of *Dawn and Dusk* (1.87) which is about the birth of the gracious and beautiful gods for human well-being (Halo 1997:274-83).

“Leave that story. I will tell you another story. Listen to the message. I will speak wisdom to you” (ii, 23-25 cf. ii, 39-41, iii, 6-8, iii, 20-22; iii, 34, *ANET*, Hallo 1997:216)<sup>600</sup>.

Elihu refers to Job’s confession of innocence (34:5 cf 27: 6f and chapter 31) in which Job insists that he is righteous and pure in words and deeds.<sup>601</sup> A similar confession is found in the *Book of the Dead* 125 (2.12) up to a climax where purity is repetitively stressed when the confessor says, “I am pure, I am pure, I am pure, I am pure!” (Hallo 2000:60). The challenging rhetorical question of Elihu on the kingship of God (34:13)<sup>602</sup> goes beyond mere rhetorical device to evoke thoughts. It is a known tradition that even a deity’s power to rule may be given to him/her by another High God (the Supreme Creator/Ruler of the Universe)<sup>603</sup>. Habel (1985:482) further explains that in Canaanite mythology, Baal, like Marduk of Babylon, wins kingship by conquering the forces of chaos. Yet El, the high god, retains the final authority that enables Baal to rule. Without the permission of El, Baal is unable to build his celestial temple/palace and, from there, rule earth as the storm deity.

The theme of the annihilation of all human life by God’s power and will (34:14-15) relates to another similar mythological tradition in both Egypt and Mesopotamian Flood myths (*ANET*, 10-11, 93-95) by means of *recontextualization* which portrays a “divine plan to withdraw life from earth” thus the execution of all life in various ways and even spheres of life (cf. Habel 1985:483). This emphasises the vulnerability of humanity and all living things as being at the mercy of the divine who is all powerful in regards to life and death<sup>604</sup>.

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<sup>600</sup> The quoted line is a refrain within several wisdom analogies repeated in several lines as demonstrated in the quotation.

<sup>601</sup> 34:5; “For Job says, ‘I am innocent’” cf. “I have not transgressed” and “I have not sinned; I have not done wrong” (Hallo 2000:61).

<sup>602</sup> 34:13 says; “Who appointed him over the earth? Who put him in charge of the whole world?” (NIV)

<sup>603</sup> For an example of such giving of charge to rule as deity by another higher deity see *The Book of the Dead* 175 (1.18) in which Atum says, “How beautiful is that which I have done for Osiris, exalted more than all the gods! I have given to him rulership in the desert, the Land of Silence, while his son Horus is the heir upon his throne which is in the Island of Flames. I have made his seat in the bark of Millions (of Years). I have caused that he dispatched the elders. I have caused that his monuments be founded, while love of him is on earth, while the falcon is distant, secure in his palace through the desire of founding his monuments. I have sent the soul of Seth distinct from all the gods. I have caused that his soul be under guard in the bark through the desire that he not frighten the god’s limbs” (Hallo 1997:28).

<sup>604</sup> In such a similar understanding of life as being by the grace of the divine the worshiper in the *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2.14) requests, “May you give me a long lifetime in your favor” (Hallo 2000:67).

God's abhorrence of the cry of the wicked (35:12) echoes the words of the prayers within *Two Hymns to the Sun-god* by the use of recitation when he says, "I was a true one who abhors falsehood, who does not trust the words of a liar" (Hallo 1997:44)<sup>605</sup>. Thus he is one who desires truth and honesty instead. Elihu is also convinced of that in relation to God, whom he believes has the power to help save Job from his calamity, but before God does that, God desires Job's honesty. The neglected oppressed were so neglected for their wickedness (falsehood) (cf. 35:12-13).

The self-description of Elihu as one who is "perfect in knowledge" whose "words are not false" (36:3,4) echoes what is in the mouth of the pious poet in *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2.14) through use of reconfiguration, who also testifies about himself saying, "My mouth holds Maat" (Hallo 2000:67)<sup>606</sup>. Furthermore, his depiction of God as the "Mighty One/the Champion" especially for the righteous-poor (36:5-7) ironically shows the significant activity of God in God's involvement in the rescue of the righteous and the insurance of their justice. This also resonates in a sense to the Canaanite myths of the contest of the gods in terms of power and right/justice. "Anath, for example, threatens to splatter El's hoary head with blood if she does not get her way" (Baal V.v. 1-5; cf. Habel 1985:506). This shows the vigour of the deity in the quest for what is just and right. But ironically, unlike Anath in the previous quote, God (Yahweh) does not threaten or fight his way with other gods. This could be a pointer to their being already subservient to him.

Death is described as the descend into 'jaws of adversity' (36:16-17), this imagery *reconfigures* the mythical image of Sheol and Mot "as powers whose mouths open wide to swallow living beings from earth (Ps. 141:7)." Thus "[i]n Canaanite mythology, Baal must descend the mouth of Mot (Death) to enter the depths of the underworld (Baal I.ii.1-6 cf. Habel 1985:508). Another allusion to the ancient Near Eastern mythological traditions is the concept of the divine as "teacher" (*mōre*) (cf. 36:22-23). Habel (1985) follows Whybray (1971) in order to show how the imagery of God-teacher resonates with the concept of the "divine counsellor who guides the creator god in his primordial labours."

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<sup>605</sup> Similarly in the *Hymn from the Tomb of Ay* (2.14) it is written that, "Falsehood is my abomination" (Hallo 2000:67). Thus falsehood, deceit, lie are all synonymous to being wicked and so abhorrent.

<sup>606</sup> "Maat" in this context could be understood as "truth" or "justice" especially in regards to speech.

Towards the end of his addresses to Job and his friends, Elihu turns his mind to meteorological phenomena in which he describes God as the one whose hands covers and direct the lightning against its target (36:32). This echoes thoughts from ancient Near Eastern texts. Clines (2006:873) helps us to note that, “In Semitic art, lightning is frequently depicted in the hands of warrior gods.” Thus in the *Enuma Elish*, “Marduk is equipped with lightning as a weapon, as is also Baal; ‘Seven lightning bolts he casts, eight magazines of thunder; he brandishes a spear of lightning.’” Furthermore, in classical Greek epic, Zeus is also depicted often as a deity with a thunderbolt. Thus Zeus is ‘Lord of the bright lightning’ (*Homer, Iliad* 19.121). The lightning of Zeus is depicted as dreadful even to natural phenomena (Clines 2006:873). The writings of Pliny also carry the imagery of thunderbolts and lightning. The theme of thunder as the voice of the gods like Baal<sup>607</sup> is echoed in 37:1f in which Elihu was terrified by the thunderous effect of the power of God. Similarly, Habel (1985:512) also points out that thunder is frequently interpreted as the voice of the deity in the world and tribal religions. In Ugaritic mythology, thunder is the voice of Baal and in the Old Testament the voice of Yahweh (Pss. 18:14 [13]; 29:3-9; Ex. 19:18).

Elihu’s acknowledgement of God as the maker of rain (37:3ff)<sup>608</sup> by means of *recontextualization* also echoes a popular image of Baal in the ancient Near East.<sup>609</sup> Thus is it said, ‘Now Baal will begin the rainy season, the season of wadis in flood; and he will sound his voice in the clouds, and flash his lightning to the earth’ (cf. Clines 2006:874)<sup>610</sup>. According to Pope (1973:280) “In the myth dealing with the building of Baal’s house (text 51), the goddess Asherah acclaims El’s wisdom in assenting to Baal’s desire for a house and assures El that Baal can now be relied upon to give his rain in due season (51 v 68-71);

Now the time of his rain Baal will keep,

The time of showers with snow (?)

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<sup>607</sup> Baal is depicted in Ugaritic myth as one who struck his enemies with terror and made them took to the woods in protection of Hadad, as would be seen in the following words; “Baal uttered his holy voice/ Echoed the issue of his lips/ His holy voice rocked the earth/...The high places of the earth shook/Baal’s enemies took to the woods/ Hadad’s foes to the hillsides” (Pope 1973:279).

<sup>608</sup> Psalm 18:16; “The fountainheads of the deep were laid bare/ And the world’s foundations exposed/ At your roar, O Yahweh/ At the blast of your nostrils.”

<sup>609</sup> It is interesting to note that this storm-god imagery that has been linked with Yahweh or Baal in biblical and Canaanite records is here associated with El (Habel 1985:511).

<sup>610</sup> For more on a situation in which a Storm-god is said to smite with lightning and fire see *ANET, ii.1-15*, Hallo 1997:216)

He will utter his voice in the clouds,

Flash lightning to earth.

(*šrh larš brqm*).”

The fact that God makes torrential rains to fall that even stops human beings to be able to carry out their regular work (37:7) recalls the speech of Homer and Virgil by means of thematic elaboration who also “speak of such storms that make humans cease their work (*Iliad* 17. 549-50). Elihu’s use of thoughts that resonate with ancient cosmology is seen in his mention of the assigned location (place) for meteorological forces in the heavens (37:9-10). Pope (1973: 281) and Habel (1985:513) agree that in Ugaritic mythology El has seven chambers<sup>611</sup> and in Mesopotamian cosmology, the seven winds have designated storehouses. Thus the celestial storehouse for the ‘cold’ could be among the abodes appointed for the hail and snow (38:22) or the storehouses of the wind (Ps. 135:7). All this tell us that everything is following the divine design and is in good control.

The mention of the coming of God in “golden splendor” (37:22) is taken as a mythological reference and linked by Pope (1973:286-87) “to the palace of gold, silver, and lapis lazuli built for Baal on the heights of Mount Zaphon (‘Mount North’)” (cf. Clines 2006:885). Habel (1985:515) links such *re-contextualized* allusion to the Hymn of Aton (*ANET*, 369-71). Thus God is depicted as being covered (clothed) with dazzling light. In *Two Hymns to the Sun-God* (1.27), it is mentioned about the god (Re) who is “self-made” and is described in many names, that, “Fine gold does not match your splendour; ...Your splendour is like heaven’s splendour, Your colour brighter than its hues. When you cross the sky, all faces see you, When you are set, you are hidden from their sight; Daily you give yourself at dawn, Safe is your sailing under your majesty” (Hallo 1997:43).

From the foregoing discussion, we could see that there are various angles that there are possibilities of intertextual links from different contexts and speech patterns and/or genres in the

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<sup>611</sup> Thus the quote from a Ugaritic text says; “El answers from the seven chambers (*hdrm*)/ From the eight enclosures” (Pope 1973:281). These chambers in my view, may be more figurative than liberal, just to demonstrate El’s ample abode (dwelling place).

ancient Near Eastern contexts that could be helpful to an interactive discussion of the Elihu speeches. To the present writer that earliest works which were possibly formative to the Elihu speeches from especially the authors perspective are the ancient works of ancient Egypt as the “Hymn from the Tomb of Ay”, “The Book of the Dead”, and “Two Hymns to the Sun-god” to which we have discerned some possible connections intertextually. On the second level, the Mesopotamian ancient texts which were collected by ancient Assyrian, Sumerian and Babylonian Kings at various stages in history also hold very viable formative influence on the making of the Elihu speeches. Such texts include the creation-related stories of Gilgamesh and Enumah Elish and later on the Babylonian Job which stands much closer to our present book of Job because of its focus on human suffering. There are many other formative parallel texts with the book of Job (cf. Jastrow 1906: 135-191)<sup>612</sup> as we shall more elaborately discuss in our next chapter on the historical intertexture of the Elihu speeches.

#### **4.5 Ancient Traditions and the Intertextual Formation of the Elihu Speeches**

There is no attempt in this section to provide a formative fix period to the Elihu speeches, but rather we shall try to point out by means of the corresponding points that we have already discussed above, the potentials of situating the Elihu speeches within emerging theological tradition within other existing traditions or philosophical patterns. This does not mean that Elihu must have known all the traditions which in a sense resonate with his speech but possible it could be a good pointer to the original author or editor of his speeches into the final form.

Considering the biblical canonical texts,<sup>613</sup> we would submit that the priestly tradition has been of enormous influence to the formation of the Elihu speeches. The reason for this statement is because of how the various strands of priestly works have been much earlier influential to the formation of other traditions that have a high theological-ideological texture like the prophetic tradition which has also been formed within interactive priestly traditions at different stages in the history of Israel. Thus the Elihu speeches here alongside its wisdom traditional texture which also like the priestly tradition does not have a specific (fixed) time frame has been formative to

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<sup>612</sup> There are more younger versions that we can explore later on as this study progresses.

<sup>613</sup> This refers especially to the Protestant canon.

the speeches of Elihu especially as we have discussed within his traditional theological thinking which we shall further elaborate upon in our chapter 6 of this dissertation.

It is noteworthy to see the flow or move of Elihu's perspective within his speeches from chapters 32-37 of Job within the rubrics of order and mystery especially within priestly and wisdom traditions of Israel so to speak. The quest and human subservience to a profitable life within the trajectory of the order has been the earlier pattern given the formative history of ancient Israel as well as other ideologies in the ancient Near East (cf. Bosman 2012:433-439). This has been the driving force of Elihu in his speeches from chapters 32-35 in which he employed various rhetorical force to speak sense as wisdom toward a real sense of order in the minds of Job and his three friends. Later on he suddenly cast his mind upon the world of God within chapters 36-37 which have been the alternating direction of his discourse into the consideration of God's mystery from creation perspective which has put Job in better sublime perspective on the human need for fear (from horror to respect) (Gericke 2012:440-451) as the illuminating mystery of God which is also formative to being wise (28:28 cf. Prov. 1:7f)

#### **4.6 A Discussion of the Intratexture and Intertexture of the Elihu Speeches**

This section concerns itself with an interactive analysis of the Elihu speeches which we have been studying so far within various categories of methodological analysis in order to get into the textures of the texts within themselves (intratextuality), and then at the beginning of this chapter we widen our horizon on the Elihu speeches by studying how they have interacted with other texts around them and even those far away from them in terms of time and place (intertextuality). Thus at this juncture we would try to provide an interactive reflection on the study so far in order to see how it responds to our hypothetical interest of this dissertation, and how the discoveries so far hold the potentialities of making sense of the significance of the Elihu speeches in our contemporary dilemmas of life around the question of human suffering, wisdom and justice in the world of God.

One of our leading hypotheses in this dissertation posits the following fact that is pertinent to our reflection in this section. Namely, that irony influences the definition of wisdom, both in terms of who is wise and what wisdom entails (cf. 1.5 above). So far we have applied the two salient

textual critical methods of studying the textuality of the texts within and outside themselves in conversation with other texts. Now the question to still pose and reflect about revolves around the meaning of wisdom and its significance in the one who has it.

In Chapter Three of this dissertation, we have seen the nature of the speeches of Elihu in terms of their identifiable patterns and how they have been deployed argumentatively to the hearing of Job and his three visitors. Now we need to ask about the cohesive value of those speeches from chapters 32-37 in light of the entire book of Job and at the end of this section, we shall briefly comment on the age of the speeches in light of the book of Job which would open doors to further horizons of our socio-rhetorical interpretation in terms of more socio-cultural and ideological-theological critical studies which are crucial to the significance of the speeches within and towards contextual understanding and application.<sup>614</sup>

In order to better synthesise the Elihu speeches and other speeches in the book of Job, we must concentrate on the value of themes or motifs that permeate the book. Although we cannot cover every single theme or motif in the book of Job in regards to the Elihu speeches, yet, we shall try to highlight a few for example in order to make our position clear. We need to first consider the theme of virtues in the book of Job, thus asking, who has virtues and who knows? Right from the beginning of the book, the narrator introduces us to Job as a wealthy man of good virtues (1:1-5). We can summarise these virtues in the single word “piety.” Job has been introduced as a pious person, even the adversary testified to the fact that Job feared God but doubted if it were for nothing (1:9). Job was tried by series of afflictions upon his possessions, children and personal life (chaps. 1-2). This led to the coming of his friends and Job’s laments (chap. 3) which opens the floor for three cycles of tedious debates (3-27). Within these disputations, Job’s piety has been severely doubted, and so his insistence on defending himself now took centre stage in his life even more than finding an explanation to the reason for his suffering (chaps, 9, 10-13, 27).

This leads us to the second major theme of the book which is human suffering. Job suffered as the result of the affliction he experienced by the instigation of the Satan, for no reason (2:3). His three friends were severely appalled by his suffering when they came to visit him (2:11-13). His suffering is voiced in chapters 3 and 31 for example, and all along it has been interpreted by his

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<sup>614</sup> These aspects would be discussed better in chapters 5 and 6 below.

three friends as a sign for his sinfulness (wickedness) before God. Thus they believed God was actually punishing him. Job stood in contrast to them in all this. Thus he insisted on seeing God by means of actual confrontation in court (9-13, 23) and he was even ready to be tested by God to see if he was actually in the wrong (31). In this case, Job seeks vindication from God, which by implication means he sought justice from God (Habel 1985: 391f).

If the question of justice now takes centre stage especially from chapter 27 of his response to his friends, what does he need actually to get it? If Job has voiced his intention of taking God to court to answer him, then what kind of person is he portraying himself to be? What happened to Job's piety then, if he voices his charges of injustice not against his friends but directly against God? This takes us to another theme of Job's quest for justice in his situation. He claims to have the legitimate right to doing that, and so he was very determined to do it.

Another theme, which would be our last major theme running through the book that later achieved centre stage is wisdom. This theme arouses from his friends who claimed to have the wisdom to understand and interpret Job's problem of suffering to him. Eliphaz reached the climax of his first exposition of life to Job by pointing to the ephemeral nature of human beings who often die in oblivion, without wisdom (4:21)<sup>615</sup>. It is noteworthy here that Zophar has thought of Job as one not being wise. Thus he thought and voiced his wish that God would meet with Job and speak wisdom to him (11:5-9) (cf. Habel 1992:309). Wisdom in this context is linked to the having a special understanding as finding the profound truth of God (Habel 1992:309).

In what Habel (1992:310) calls a "biting sarcasm" Job responded to his friends on their focus on the theme of wisdom in relation to his calamity, saying that they are the wise people, and when they die, wisdom will die with them (12:2). He then began the closure of his speeches to the first cycle by pointing out the fact that in his view if those verbose friends of his would keep silence, that would be their wisdom (13:5). In the second cycle, Eliphaz critically threw some sarcastic questions toward Job asking if he was the first human ever born, one who stood in the council of God and so has and keeps wisdom to himself (15:7-9) (cf. Habel 1992:307). Eliphaz continued to

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<sup>615</sup> In this case his speech could be understood to be that, "Wisdom is not innate; it is normal for mortals to die without acquiring it" (Habel 1992:309).

explain how wisdom belongs to the special category of people in society who could wield it as a weapon, or adorn themselves with it as a treasure, thus linking human fathers as the transmitters of wisdom from the wise men (15:18-19).

From the foregoing we could see that wisdom or be wise is also a salient theme in the book of Job. Now we shall continue the exploration of the book within this rubric to see how it would help us to achieve the intended goal of this research, which is to point our readers to the significance of irony in defining wisdom in the book of Job as well as the role of irony in God's part in human suffering, wisdom and justice (1.4 above). Thus within a socio-rhetorical interpretive approach to the Elihu speeches, ironic wisdom, would be pivotal in our understanding of human suffer and justice in the world of God.

In continuation of our exploration of the theme of wisdom in Job, we shall now move towards the most contentious sections of the book namely, Chapters 28, 32-37 and 38-41 to see how the theme of ironic wisdom helps us to recognize and accept their legitimacy and their significance in our continual struggle to understand what it means to be human in the world of God. Chapter 28 has been titled as the poem in the quest for wisdom (Habel 1985:391), a dialogic allegory (Newsom 2003:169) or a soliloquy in search for wisdom (Balentine 2006:415), etc. The fact that "wisdom" is recognised as its leading focal force is important to our study. Different scholars have differences of opinion as to who the author of Job 28 could have been. Habel (1985:391) agrees with Andersen (1977) to see it as coming from the poet who is the author/redactor/compiler of the book of Job. Newsom also sees it as the work of the poet (2003:169). Balentine (2006:415) attributes ironic wisdom to Job himself, thus seeing it as his "Soliloquy," while Clines (2006: 908ff) points to Elihu as his last speech to Job which answers Job quest on wisdom.<sup>616</sup>

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<sup>616</sup> Zuck (1992:299) points out that many scholars attribute Job 28 to Zophar, Bildad or even God, some do not even think of it as being original to the actual book of Job. But, he thinks it is an integral part of it and so it belongs to Job because Job's speeches have earlier stated the impossibility of human accessibility to wisdom when he says; "Job now affirms that it is not possible for man to presume that he can discern the inscrutable mysteries of the majestic God". These are not all the examples of opinions on this chapter, but they are given to provide a working example.

It is important for us to see Clines' interest and effort to link the poem on wisdom (chap.28) directly to Elihu<sup>617</sup>, this would help us to continue the steps of seeing how the Elihu speeches tie up with the rest of the book of Job. His effort is interesting to the present writer for the fact that other scholars (especially those referred to in this discussion) do not actually link chapter 28 of Job to the Elihu speeches. Thus we shall also contribute further to Clines' effort here although with a slight variation from his hypothetical ascription of the poem to Job.

Many scholars see the theme of chapter 28 as being the human inaccessibility of wisdom (Habel 1985:392), thus seeing wisdom as something that transcends human acquisition, and so it is consequently beyond human reach as already mentioned by Bildad (chap. 11). This makes Gordis (1978) propose the two kinds of wisdom, one as higher wisdom and the other as lower wisdom. But Habel (1992:307) does not entirely agree with Gordis' higher and lower wisdom theory because the wisdom of God elsewhere appears without the definite article which he uses as a pointer to the distinction of his argument.

How does wisdom come out in chapter 28 of Job and how does it help us to see the legitimacy and significance of the Elihu speeches? As we have earlier mentioned, Habel follows Andersen among others to see chapters 28 as the poet's interlude within the book of Job which marks a pivotal point in the flow of the discussions. Balentine (2006:417) also points out that it could be a *fermata* (Westermann 1981) a long pause to ponder between the speeches. Thus it performs a dual function in our view as an interlude. Its end in 28:28 helps us to look back to 1:1f to see its function as an *inclusio* on the theme of fearing God and turning away from evil. This helps us to closely reflect on wisdom more as a virtue<sup>618</sup> which comes from human responsive responsibility

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<sup>617</sup> Clines (2006:908-909) proposes the rearrangement of chapters in the book of Job, arguing that the Elihu speeches have been wrongly placed where they are found in the final form of the book. Thus he suggests that they should be placed immediately after the friends' speeches in chapter 27, thus they would be the response directly to the friends' speeches and makes sense of the opening verses that said that the friends stopped speaking because they had nothing more to say (32:1). Thus the arrangement would be 32-37 and chapter 28 as the final speech of Elihu, then comes Job's last speech in 29-31, then the response of God directly to Job in 38-42. Clines supposed an accidental occurrence that rendered the textual arrangement faulty especially within the tradition of the Masoretic text (2006:909). But the fact that he could not provide any actual reason of what he calls the "disarrangement" of the chapters in the book of Job, his argument is nothing more than a hypothesis. For more discussion on this see his article, Clines (2004:115-29).

<sup>618</sup> An example of wisdom as virtue could be clear in Fulola Olojede's (2012:472-479) critical discussion on Lady Wisdom in Proverbs in light of her virtues of hospitality, responsibility, and generosity which point to some cardinal needs on how to respond to the challenge of poverty in contemporary Africa.

to the reality of God and His precepts. Thus agreeing with Hendrik Bosman (2012:433-439) to see wisdom as both order and mystery (fearing God/the Lord and turning away from evil).<sup>619</sup>

On another hand, chapter 28, coming from the poet's perspective is significant in looking forward to the preceding chapters of the book of Job. In that, the last speeches of Job in chapters 29-31 become a personal self-scrutinization and declaration of what it means to fear the Lord and to turn away from evil. Thus by implication, Job is presenting himself as a righteous person, a man of integrity, hence a wise person.<sup>620</sup>

Furthermore, the theme of finding wisdom which is illustrated in chapter 28 with the miners' quest for the valuable treasure of and beneath the earth (28:1-9) which ended as being a transposed quest from finding our precious treasures to the pursuit of wisdom (28:10-12). Wisdom here becomes ironically an elusive reality which could not be found by human beings (12, 14, 20), or any other animate and inanimate realities except God who looked and saw it (28:24). Ironically God just saw it without even searching for it. This provides a reflection to the limitations of human beings to actually fathom the deep mysteries of life. The friends of Job used wisdom and thought they had enough to explain to Job the mystery of his suffering, but they failed to be able to do so. Job is a great wise man (1:1-3) sought in vain to understand the mystery of his suffering. This human inability is further taken by Elihu in his speeches to further explain to Job and his friends what they thought they could not understand.

Ironically as we have seen in his self-introduction/apology, Elihu takes the themes of wisdom, human suffering, the justice of God and the power of God as interactive rubrics to respond to Job's quest, not for wisdom per se but for justice from God. In the process, he spoke to teach Job and his friends the wisdom that he thought they lacked (32:6-9) and to explain to Job one of the mysteries of suffering (33:15ff) as the mystery of God's love and grace to discipline and/or protect a person from destruction. Furthermore, Job's initial quest to meet with God became an

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<sup>619</sup> Following Jacques Lacan's psychoanalysis on how to get knowledge, Gericke (2012:440-451) takes the question of the fear of the Lord, as the beginning of wisdom and linked it to knowledge as the prerequisite for wisdom, thus explaining the notion of the presence of wisdom emanating from fear as "paranoia" which becomes an undergirding factor for knowledge in making wisdom possible.

<sup>620</sup> According to Zuck (1992:302) "the truly wise man is the one whose mind is centered on God, not self, and is regulated by God" (Zuck 1992:302).

appalling proposal to Elihu (32:1; 34, 35), thinking that Job did not actually understand what was actually proposed, thus denying Job's right to such a quest by pointing him to the justice of God in the world (34-35). Thus the Elihu speeches are significant to the understanding of the book of Job because of how they go back and forth with issues almost neglected by Job and his friends, thus helping Job and his friends to reflect on the whole issues surrounding Job's misery in light of the bigger picture not of who Job is or what he actually needs or deserves but on who God is and what God is doing in the world. The other twin function of the Elihu speeches that we have seen so far is that of preparation for Job's meeting with Yahweh in chapters 38-42. Elihu takes further the theme of creation beginning with the mining illustration in chapter 28 which points out human activities in God-like forms, and the greatness of God in finding out wisdom beyond human comprehension (28:23, 28). Thus in the Elihu speeches greater knowledge of the world, and human life in both private and social spheres lies entirely in God's hands. As such Elihu seeks to awaken Job to remember to acknowledge God in who God is and what God is doing in the wider world, thus starting some themes on creation that would be further discussed by God. Elihu's satisfaction in explaining the purpose of human suffering and God's justice in the world could be seen as being sufficient, that could be the reason why Yahweh does not go back to such crucial matters. But rather further expanded the themes of creation theology which led to Job's enlightenment on who God is and not what happened to him.

Before we end this section, it is important to reflect on the interface of the intertextual study that we have made above, to ask who has been Elihu's conversation patterns in terms of reference, allusion, and echo more specifically in light of Robbin's five models of intertextuality within an oral-scribal perspective. Sommer (1998:20-22) helps us to understand some fundamental ways of using the older material in forming new ones in terms of textuality, namely, explicit citation, implicit reference and inclusion<sup>621</sup>. In our interpretation of the Elihu speeches, we have already pointed to his use of explicit citation (recitation [Robbins]) although using slightly different words in reference to Job's previous claims. This means Elihu did not use the "exact" words of Job or anybody verbatim into his sentences, but rather he made references to them. Implicit reference and inclusion are pivotal to explaining how Elihu used words in his speeches. Thus in

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<sup>621</sup> These are further elaborated in our use of Robbin's five modalities of *recitation*, *recontextualization*, *reconfiguration*, *narrative amplification* and *thematic elaboration* at various sections of our intertextual study in this chapter above.

response to Job and his three friends, Elihu used to reference and allusions by means of *recitation, re-contextualization and thematic elaboration*. In terms of the constituent contents of his speeches, linguistically, he borrowed from other ancient vocabularies (forensic language) by means of *inclusive re-contextualization, reconfiguration and thematic elaboration* from materials within the ancient Near Eastern contexts. Thus in light of the foregoing study of the Elihu speeches in terms of intertextuality, we could see that Elihu's speeches have things to share with other texts around the biblical canon.

Elihu's conversation contains intersecting features from both older and younger materials intertextually. In his apology and presentation of the need to speak (32-33), he uses more of wisdom and prophetic allusions in terms of the imagery of youth and the understanding of social convention of theology and ethics, which are more prevalent within wisdom and prophetic traditions. His response to Job and his three friends in chapters 34-35 dwells more on younger materials within wisdom and priestly traditions namely, issues of suffering, justice and the sovereignty of God. In his sublime speech of preparation of Job to an acceptable encounter with God, Elihu uses much older forensic languages (36-37) which have links even beyond the scope of biblical literature into Egyptian and Mesopotamian mythology around the theme of cosmic creation and management.<sup>622</sup>

In regards to the textural flow or patterns of the Elihu speeches in connection with other texts that could be intertextually linked to them, we could primarily see the use of explicit reference and allusions to words and patterns of life within wisdom tradition especially when he (Elihu) refers to Job's personal assertions as well as the other preceding speeches of Job's friends. Within this texture of speech, we could see the use of repetitive ideas from wisdom tradition that influence the narrational/argumentative textures his speeches, in particular between chapters 32-35.

Secondly, there have been echoes of thoughts and themes for example on human suffering and the quest for divine justice by the prophetic and priestly traditions. This in many ways prepares the ground for Elihu's confrontational discourse with Job in regards to his understanding of God and God's governance of the world. Words that resonate with prophetic traditions do not

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<sup>622</sup> We shall concentrate more on this in our next chapter on the socio-cultural texture of the speeches.

necessarily explain the questions of source and/or influences, but rather the themes (topoi) discernible of them are more in terms of the use of metaphor as the literary device to transpose ideas from one context into another. In relation to the Elihu speeches, we cannot ascertain who borrowed from whom but we hereby wish to remain with the view that the wisdom and prophetic texts in the Hebrew canon of ancient Israel, may be younger in terms of tradition but older in terms of their active popularity among the Israelite but they do not necessarily form or influence Elihu's conceptualizations.

Thirdly, the Elihu speeches further resonate with the priestly tradition. This could be much closer to the inclusive adoption of the Elihu speeches as well as the entire book of Job as we shall further elaborate in the next chapter (i.e. chapter 5), but in this regard we have identified the interface of ideas from the Elihu speeches and the priestly tradition within its narrational/argumentative textures which helps us to see the intersection of worldviews especially in relation to cultic and shared life (one's daily life), which could be viewed from the perspective of an individual or in connection with the wider community. Names of people and paradigmatic examples of incidences in life have been useful in seeing the links.

Fourthly, there has been a general use of ancient Near Eastern mythological traditions, cutting across the entire Elihu speeches in order to project the overarching worldview within which the Elihu speeches evolved. The resonance or echoes of ancient mythological themes and actions have been influential to the formation of Elihu's vocabularies and conceptual frame works. Thus when he speaks about being young, death, pit (grave, Sheol, underworld), heavens, God (El), the world, and all related meteorological ideas and connective actions of God in relation to the cosmological phenomena, such issues did not just occur to him. But as we have studied in conversation with the ancient Near Eastern context, we could see that his ideas were categorically drawn from various streams of thoughts to creatively formulate his speeches within his targeted pre-supposition of providing some instructions on wisdom, suffering and justice to Job.

Elihu then ended with the themes of justice and righteousness (37:23) in regards to God which are further than human reach. This ties up with the arguments of Job's friends, especially Bildad. And then he also refers to the theme of being wise as something that can only be determined by

God (37:24), pointing to the fact that mortals revere him. Thus the themes of being wise as culminating in reverence to God brings the subject of wisdom in Job full circle. This gives legitimate and significant accent to the somewhat loose ends of the book namely, chapters 1-2, 28, 32-37, and 38-42.

#### **4.7 Summary**

This chapter provides the reader with the intertextual study of the Elihu speeches. We have seen how Elihu's use of words have gone from within the book of Job into the wisdom literature as its wider context, to the prophetic and priestly traditions as well as the broader ancient Near Eastern contexts by means of reference, allusion and echo. It is noteworthy here that there is no clear cut boundary between the traditions under consideration namely the priestly, prophetic and wisdom traditions. But it should be noted here that there is a great sense of interface among them. For example, almost all the texts that we examined as the interactive texts for the intertexture of Elihu have been heavily focused on the priestly/prophetic and wisdom traditions. There is more on non-priestly material in terms of cultic materials for the ritualistic religion even though they are not totally neglected. Most of the texts from the prophetic passages are younger in nature thus pointing us to the time of the exile and the great time of the intellectual revival of Israel. This abundant time of intellectual revival was a great humanistic era of trying to know who is a human being in terms of creation and function. Even though there are influences from an initial priestly worldview within the cause and effect of ideological thinking of life, the idea of God's creation of human beings and the world widens the horizon beyond a simple category of understanding thus it makes it open to mystery. In regards to the Elihu speeches then we could see how this interface of trends influences the composition and flow of ideas in that the old method of cultic sense of order permeates the speeches from the first one to the third one (chaps 32-35) but there is change of focus in the fourth speech (chaps. 36-37) which opens wisdom to the mystery of God and how that should affect human life and knowledge of God.

From the foregoing points of view we can follow Sommer (1998:20) to describe the Elihu speeches as being "inclusive" in nature, thus emanating from various sources of influence within interactive contexts that form the thickness of the texts and invites a curious reader for its

multifarious challenges and significances, such as the cohesiveness of the book of Job in light of the presence and strategic location of the Elihu speeches after Job's confession of innocence and its significance to the coming speeches of Yahweh in the succeeding chapters of the book. So far, we have seen that the Elihu speeches significant in providing us with another theological trend, namely wisdom in the context of suffering in relation to God and practical human life experiences of trauma in the contexts of loss, illness, and the limitation of wisdom and knowledge/understanding.

Our textual studies of the Elihu speeches began more intensely with the intratextuality (inner texture/patterns) in our chapter three, which serves as an opening into the various layers of the "nature" of the texts within themselves. Then in this present chapter four, we have applied the intertextual method of study which helps us to see its "influential" nature and potentiality (significance) in light of its interactive nature as a conversation. This conversation is one of the characters within texts and texts in the process of forming characters.

This study so far has helped us to see the positive function of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job as serving the purposes of responding to Job's hunt for the reason for his suffering and the justice of God. It basically helps us to see Elihu's preparation of Job for the coming of Yahweh. These functions combine to show us the ironic nature of wisdom that it is an elusive reality not in a particular place that one could go and get or buy it for oneself, but rather it is owned by no one ironically, even God looked and saw it (28:24), then God acknowledged it, and established it (28:27). Wisdom essentially lies within an experience with Yahweh within the rubrics of fear (mystery) and turning away from evil (order). Elihu who claims to have wisdom ended up with the person of the Almighty who has the final say on it (37:24).

In our next chapter, we shall concentrate on the socio-cultural significance of the Elihu speeches. This would be in order to reflect further on the kind of setting and possible period that forms its history as well as the critical phase of wisdom beyond its acquisition and use from a personal perspective to its ironic display within cultural worldviews. This would help us to see further examples of texts, especially that resonate with some existing patterns in the Elihu speeches in order to first and foremost describe the kind of social context from which the Elihu speeches and invariably the book of Job might have emanated from. Furthermore, we shall try to examine and

point out the socio-cultural significance of the Elihu speeches in conversation with similar existing contexts like the African contexts. This would help us to see the tension between interactive worldviews of the old and the new (ideas and people) and the power of speech that governs actions and reformulations of all of them.

## Chapter 5: Social and Cultural Textures of Job 32-37

### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter would be the continuation of our chapter 4 in which we started the intertextual discussion of the Elihu speeches. In the previous section, we gave much closer attention to the *oral-scribal intertexture* which has been the major intertextual texture discernible in the Elihu speeches among others.<sup>623</sup> This made us give the whole chapter in discussing its various ramifications in light of the Elihu speeches. In this present chapter, we shall try to consider the other three essential intertexture namely; *cultural, social and historical intertexture* in order to see how to locate the Elihu speeches within a tenable sociocultural context. We shall do this by means of further intertextual discussion by bringing other similar texts to the Elihu speeches into consideration by means of close reading in conversation with the Elihu speeches.

Furthermore, we shall proceed in this same chapter into the sociocultural textures of the Elihu speeches. This would help us to closely consider the various sociocultural topics and life categories within the already located context and age of our focal text. Thus this section would lead us into further socio-cultural interactions with especially African contexts in terms of their traditional worldviews that correspond to the Elihu speeches. This interaction would help the present writer to locate especially himself within the possible sociocultural context of traditional function and validity as highlighted in chapter one of this dissertation in which the background statement shows that there are thick layers of African cultural sensitivity to honor and shame that check or hinder the viability of younger people's contribution in social discussions or even by way of giving any reasonable contributions to real life situations. These kinds of sociocultural parameters would be discerned and discussed especially within existing African socio-religious and philosophical literature.

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<sup>623</sup> Within which the following intertextual discussion is also very much embedded and anchored

## 5.2 Transition from the Intratexture and the Intertexture of Job 32-37

Before we go any further in our study of the social and cultural textures of the Elihu speeches, we would like to point out some significant areas as observed from our study of the intratexture and intertexture of Job 32-37. In the intratexture we studied the nature of the texts in terms of their grammatical features and function,<sup>624</sup> then we moved into the intertexture in which we discussed the interactions of the texts within objects from the outside world of the given texts.<sup>625</sup> Now we would like to reflect a little more about the possible trends that would help to set the stage for venturing into the kind of world within which the Elihu speeches developed, thus we shall take it further in the next chapter to consider the dominant critical function of the speeches in terms of the ideologies they seek to confront.

As could be seen from the structure of the first discourse (chaps. 32-33) the divisions contain a prose narrative (32-1:6a), an apology for intervention (32:6b-22) and a disputatious confrontation speech (33:1-33)<sup>626</sup> given directly to Job (cf. Clines 2006:706). The short narrative is the author's attempt to introduce Elihu into the discussion between Job and his three friends<sup>627</sup>. This already helps us to see a kind of organisational framework within the sort of context that the Elihu speeches were developed. In presenting an apology as we have earlier seen in chapter 3 of this study on the intratexture of the speeches, he carefully presents it in the form of a reasonable argument in which he provides the reason for his intervention. He first addressed Job and his friends (vs. 6b-7), in which he describes his disappointment in them for failing to find the wisdom that their age represent from the conventional point of view to refute Job for justifying himself rather than God (vss. 8-12), but seeing that they were helpless to be of any lasting help in the situation he further provides his reason for his chance to speak (vss. 16-19) but he further promises not to be partial in his speech (vss. 20-22).

From the governing verbs of the apology for example "wisdom" (32:7, 13), being wise (32:9), "hear" or "listen" (in the imperative (32:10), "Knowledge" (32:6, 10, 17), "word" (32:11), and

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<sup>624</sup> Chapter 3 above

<sup>625</sup> In chapter 4 above

<sup>626</sup> This elaborates a little on Clines' (2006:706) "disputation" motif in chapters 33:1-33.

<sup>627</sup> See Balentine (2006:513) for the ambiguity of the Elihu of the narrator and Elihu as he knows as presents himself.

its variable “word” (32:11, 14, 15, 18), “say” (32:12, 14) and “answer” (32:12, 15, 17, 20) all presuppose a wisdom teaching context. Thus it is a progressive and intentional conversation context as seen in the gradual and narrative-argumentation textures above (cf. 3.3.2 & 3.3.4). Elihu’s use of wisdom teaching techniques by means of citation (32:7) and imagery (32:18-19) are powerful features that permeate the rest of the speeches in which he quotes his opponent, and point to a known fact in order to refute his point of concern (32: 9-11, 13, 7, 10). He uses rhetorical questions to provoke his listeners to a much deeper thinking (32:16; 33:13).

The disputatious confrontation motif contains Elihu’s specific concentration on Job and the case he would like to address. Thus Elihu calls Job to listen to him (33:1) in acknowledgement of the crisis situation about which Job’s three friends could be adequately resolved (32:12, 14, 16, 17, 20, 33:12). He further calls Job to answer him if he has anything to say in his own defence (33:5, 32). It is agreeable here that the introduction (vss. 1-7) and the summation (vss. 31-33) of what he has to say provides a rhetorical frame that indicates Elihu is intentionally inviting Job into a dialogue for his own good (cf. Balentine 2006: 537). The diction here presupposes the legal and cultic systems in terms of courtroom litigation and prayer in which fair hearing is possible (cf. Balentine 2006:537)<sup>628</sup>. Although Elihu had sensed a sense of self-justification in Job (32:3) which made him angry and made him to out rightly also condemn him (33:12), he still sought to uphold the law court etiquette of acquitting Job at the end (33:32). There are also elements of the prophetic language in which he rises to speak for the divine at the dismay of his opponents (32:16) as endowed by the Spirit of God (32:8). He promised the do it circumspectly in acknowledgement to the presence of God his Maker (32:22) who holds power to life and death.

The second speech in chapter 34 also carries the language of disputatious confrontation in which issues are addressed to the hearers (cf. the use of second person plural), quotations are made of previous speeches (34:5-6, 9, 18, 31-32, 35-37), and wisdom instruction is given (34:11-12, 13-15, 35, cf. Clines 2006:765). In this chapter Elihu is more concerned with issues that have to do with “law and justice” (cf. 34:4, 5, 6, 12, 17, 23, in the NRSV: the word *mišpāt* is rendered as ‘right’, ‘justice’, and ‘judgment’) (cf. Balentine 2006:566). But it is provocative to know that

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<sup>628</sup> According to Elihu’s discussion in the foregoing sections whether Job would choose to present his case in a courtroom or in a cultic center the verdict would just be the same in that he would be proven guilty and God would be declared innocent (cf. Balentine 2006:537).

Elihu cast justice in this chapter as God's punishment of the wicked and not even the vindication of the innocent (cf. 34:8, 10, 17,18, 29). In this, we could see that the law court setting and wisdom teaching are still the presupposed context of the discourse.<sup>629</sup>

Chapter 35, like the previous ones namely, chapters 32-34 contains a disputatious confrontational speech in which the hearers are directly addressed (35:2-8, 14-15). These contain quotations of the alleged sayings or claims of Job about his innocence and the injustice of God (vss. 21, 3, 14-15) as well as "a hypothetical quotation on the mouth of the oppressed (v. 10)" (Clines 2006:794). Also, rhetorical questions are used and punctuated exclamations (vss. 2, 3, 14-15). The only sentence that reflects wisdom instruction is found in verse 13. Thus we could now sense a certain change in trend between wisdom and priestly/prophetic legal confrontation or appeal for purity.

The fourth speech which is in chapters 36-37 is cast predominantly in wisdom teaching trend. It contains creation elements from concrete reality with the intention of giving admonition to an abstract sense of life. Thus Clines (2006:852) puts it right when he says, "Unlike Elihu's previous speech, which was predominantly disputation, with only a single sentence of wisdom instruction, this speech is very largely instruction, within occasional elements of warning and advice." Chapter 36:5-15 focuses on God's response to both the wicked and the righteous. Chapter 36:26-37:24 concentrate on the power of God in the creation and God's wisdom as a teacher. As seen in other instances of the elements of wisdom teaching, there is the use of rhetorical questions (37:15-18) which anticipate the Yahweh speeches of 38-42:5. The natural time sequence is carefully acknowledged in terms of the three seasons mentioned namely, Autumn (36:26-37:4), winter (37:5-13), and summer (37:14-24). All this stroke the code of wisdom on the majesty, righteousness and the transcendence of God to human knowledge that calls for reverence (37:23-24).

From the previous explorations, we have seen the shift in terms of focus from a more conventional social and cultural settings of the basic priestly/prophetic instructions to a natural setting of wisdom instruction that is more open to mystery. Thus at this juncture, we would like

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<sup>629</sup> Although Clines (2006:765) points out the possibility of the language of a hymn in praise of God's rule in the world (vs. 18-19a) and an embedded psalmic language stipulated in Job's supposed words of confession (34:31-35).

to ask the question; what kind of social and cultural environment do chapters 32-34 presuppose? And what is the significance of the shift from a more ordered priestly/prophetic contexts of chapters 32-34 to mysterious wisdom contexts of 36-37 in regards to the importance of Elihu's speeches in the book of Job?

### 5.3 Scribal Traditions and the Elihu Speeches

As has been indicated in our conceptual discussion on scribes in relation to the traditions of ancient Israel and beyond in chapter 1 above (cf. 1.9.4), there are indications of scribal roles in collecting the Elihu speeches into the entire book of Job most probably in the late Persian period as we have pointed out in the latter part of our chapter 4 (CF. 4.5; 4.6 above). But before we establish a proper context within which the Elihu speeches emerged, we would like to reflect briefly on the nature of scribal activities and contexts that might have generated such high textured literature (cf. chapter 3 above).

The fact that the written form of biblical materials came from the hands of the scribes who were the few but well trained and skilled writers of their day is not a big point of contention.<sup>630</sup> But rather where did the writers of the book of Job and primarily the Elihu speeches come from? From which scribal order or cultural background can we situate them? This is in fact a very costly point of argument because of the stark lack of tenable evidences from the later Persian period which has been the general consensus among many scholars as being the period from which the faith of Israel especially became more intellectual/textual which has been the major paradigm shift from its being an oral-historical-narrational forms (cf. Schniedewind 2004:52-60).

Nevertheless, it is agreed that the late Persian period has been the main period of a large scribal enterprise which could have been sponsored by the priests in order to write and rewrite their history and continue their most cherished legacies (cf. Van der Toon 2007). Schniedewind (2004: 116ff) sees the late Persian period as a time of 'retrenchment' in which earlier materials that comprise the biblical text were intentionally collected, edited and preserved as the holy Scriptures of ancient Israel. The few but highly educated scribes were the custodians of high

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<sup>630</sup> For more on the presence and activity of scribes in late Bronze age Egypt and into Palestinian contexts on different historic artifacts see Crenshaw (1998:29-33).

culture and traditions which form the intellectual class that von Rad (1972:15ff) explains as the transmitters of traditions. These are in other words the literati which are very few in number not actually more than 3% of the population<sup>631</sup>. This small percentage places them on high demand from various wings that need their expert services.<sup>632</sup>

It is noteworthy here that, “In Egypt and Mesopotamia, where complex writing systems existed, scribal training occurred in official schools,<sup>633</sup> sometimes associated with temples” (Crenshaw 1998: 85).<sup>634</sup> The wisdom tradition of Israel, in particular, has been transmitted by skilled scribes whose materials were gathered from various contextual sources as could be seen in the case of the books of Proverbs and Job in particular. Scholars like Jesus Ben Sira could be some of the few transmitters of wisdom in his day whose expertise must have been generated from late Egyptian and earlier Israelite wisdom. If all this point are helpful, then the scribal order/group<sup>635</sup> which put the book of Job and especially the Elihu speeches into the final form in which we have them now must have been the returned scribes with Ezra and the like who must have been instructed within Ezekiel’s tradition while in exile about the reason for the suffering of God’s people in exile which traditionally happened as a result of their sin against Yahweh. But within such traditional understanding, the scribes provide a prophetic wisdom voice<sup>636</sup> which critiqued

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<sup>631</sup> “To what extent ordinary Israelites and Judeans could write remains a mystery. Like most things in the ancient world, literacy was affected by three factors: environmental, political and social” (Crenshaw 1998:38-39). This restriction has a lot to do with the manipulation of power by the upper ruling class.

<sup>632</sup> Betz et al (2012:552) also acknowledge that in ancient Israel literacy was limited to a small fraction of the population. Those few who had access to literacy were trained mainly to serve in royal houses, court and temple precincts. Their trainings could have been in both formal school systems (Sir. 51:23 and Acts 19:9) or to some general extent, their homes (cf. Crenshaw 1998:86). But mostly the training into professional service must have been at the urban center of learning and administration (cf. Dan 1:5ff), thus the centers of power are equally the centers of intellectual training for textuality performances and evaluation (cf. Crenshaw 1998:89).

<sup>633</sup> For biblical, other social historical evidences for schools in ancient Israel and other Near Eastern contexts see Crenshaw (1998:90-113 cf. Rollston 2006: 47-74 ).

<sup>634</sup> Thus the writers/editors of the book of Job and which include the Elihu speeches must have been with the Second Temple scribal order (guild).

<sup>635</sup> “In all probability, most scribes belonged to guilds, and self-interest moved them to adopt a policy of manipulating scarcity, restricting scribal expertise insofar as possible” (Crenshaw 1998:39).

<sup>636</sup> This prophetic wisdom voice does not actually denote the status of Elihu in any sense of coming from an actual prophetic guild etc. But rather it is an indication of the kind of combined linguistic texture and his approaches to Job and his friends. Elihu came into the discussion as a young man (32:6) but he came with wisdom that is given to him by God (32:8) and he came to speak to Job and his friends in God’s behalf (cf. 34-36). Elihu then, by means of his approach and voiced intentions was a prophetic voice among the speakers in the book of Job. As we shall see later on this combination of prophetic confidence and zeal within wisdom tradition further presents us with clear distinction of the Elihu speeches from other speeches of Job’s friends. Thus his was not just a mere repetition of things that have been said, but rather he came as the voice of wisdom that challenged tradition with divinely given experience which was decisive for preparing Job for the ultimate voice he longed to hear, the voice of Yahweh from

the old dogma of retribution which the Job frame work,<sup>637</sup> thus establishing the fact that there could be another purpose for suffering besides being rejected or punished by God.

It is important at this junction to reflect on the interfaces between priests, prophets and sages/scribes (cf. Jer. 18:18) in order to see their role in the composition and compilations of the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). This would be a pointer to the possible sophistication that is found in our book of Job including the Elihu speeches. It is noteworthy here that there have been many intersecting discussions among various scholars about the reality and reasonability of the existence of a school in ancient times, taking ancient Israel around Iron II as a case study. Christopher Rollston (2006: 47-74) also lends his voice to the ongoing debate when he considers the reality of learning, especially learning how to read and write the Hebrew language as his main point of concern. Thus his argument for the existence of standardised systems of learning is based on epigraphic, palaeographic and orthographic evidence in ancient Israel even before the “School of Instruction” mentioned in Ben Sira. He points to the Lamaire’s (1981) conclusion for the possibility of many schools systems in Israel but critically disagree with such polarisation. Whybray (1974:35) and Crenshaw (1998: 113) also point to the fact that there were schools as well established institutions in ancient Israel (especially Whybray) which also seems highly unlikely to Rollston (2006: 49-50) whose point does not actually dismiss the possibility of schools but argues that they are not as much as might have been suggested by Lamaire and others, and not as sophisticated as proposed by Whybray. Schools may have existed as standardised systems of learning but not in such a way that they become the main occupation of a given person who is the teacher employed by the government to serve the illiterate population. Following Rollston’s point of view, we could agree that there were schools as guilds in which learners follow their teacher who must have been a sage from the scribal guild. This presupposed effective teaching and learning between a teacher and students which are usually not to a significant following as we may see in the modern sense of schools (Carr 2005:112ff). Thus we can have the “wisdom school”, the “school of the prophets” etc. just as socio-religious guilds for

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the storm. For more on the combination of voices from prophetic and wisdom traditions see Weinfeld (1977:178-195); Laney (1981:313-325); Sisson (2012:91-108).

<sup>637</sup> We shall elaborate more on the critical significance of the Elihu speeches in relation to the prevailing dogma of retribution in the book of Job later on as this chapter.

the understanding, preservation and transmission of the traditions through the coming generations (Crenshaw 2010:34; Niditch 1996).

These schools are not entirely distinctive in terms of their literary enterprise because the scribes are available to teach and produce whatever records that are needed for official or public use, thus sages/scribes worked for themselves, the prophets of their time as well as the government (cf. Jer. 18:18). It is noteworthy here that even though the prophets of the Old Testament may be understood to be a special group of people psychologically speaking, because of their extraordinary insights into the will of God and the production of the word of God to oneself and to the people (community/nation) mostly verbally. The prophets are anthropologically and socially common people as many other individuals in any given social context. Nevertheless, “the prophets are situated realistically among issues of social power, functioning as speakers and advocates for a variety of social interests that are said to be congruent with God’s will and purpose” (Brueggemann 2002: 158).<sup>638</sup> The prophets, in particular with the Israelite contexts of the Old Testament development, could be seen as disruptive and transformative human characters (Brueggemann 2002: 159). They are active in voicing the will of God to their context and even during the exilic or “the temple less age” when religion in Israel was in serious theodicy crisis and the search for the hidden presence of God in the world, the prophets lend their voices for the possibility of truth and hope that revived the priests and the scribes to their tasks of faithfulness towards the organization of religious truth (cf. Middlemas 2007; Fiddes 2013). Thus “[a]s carriers of peculiar powers of insight and transformation, they refused to be explained by or contained in more conventional modes of order, power, or knowledge” (Brueggemann 2002:159).

From the foregoing, we can see an interface between the contextual ministry of the prophets and the scribes seeing that prophetic literature is mostly written and compiled by the Scribes (secretaries) who work with the prophets during his time of ministry (cf. Sakenfeld 2009:641-43). Thus there is no need to view the prophets and scribes/sages as working isolation from one

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<sup>638</sup> Even though prophets generally speaking, claim to speak the word of God in the name of the Lord in the Old Testament, not all of them were of them were true, some of them were false thus presenting and representing a lying tongue to the society.

another.<sup>639</sup> Carr (Carr 2005 cf. Polak 2011:127) discusses the interface of orality and textuality which presents us with clues to an interactive social context in which the speakers and writers coexist namely the Prophets/Priests<sup>640</sup> and Scribes. Rollston (2006:67) concludes his analysis and arguments on the possibility and nature of schools in ancient Israel with a strong conviction that there were schools (guilds) which were essentially scribal in nature. These scribal traditions produced the social documents of Israel in exact and distinct forms. This sense of artistry comes from the scribal expertise and precision. Thus great works like the book of Job have been acclaimed by many scholars of being one of the great artistic works from the ancient Near East. That is why Crenshaw (2010: 23-34) sees the sages/scribes that copied, compiled and edited the Hebrew Bible emerged as an independent social class of wisdom scribes. The rhetorical value and intentions of the Elihu speeches also stand as excellent examples of such wealth of knowledge and skill from ancient times.

Following the diction of the Elihu speeches (Clines 2006: 706-708, 765-766, 794, 852; Seow 2013:31-37) one could meet a combination mostly of prophetic wisdom as a subversion of dominant priestly presupposition especially within the nexus of deeds and consequences in regards to piety and prosperity. The combination of ancient Egyptian priestly phraseology helps the reader to understand the international scope of the sage and scribe (s) who put the book of Job together. Newsom (2003:16f) thinks of a Judean editor who must have emerged from the postexilic era. Clines (2006) and Balentine (2006) also discerned a more prophetic wisdom voice of the Elihu character. This helps us to conclude that this must have been the work of a younger prophetic wisdom tradition which is rooted in the Torah priestly theology as well. This locates the Elihu speeches as coming from the late Persian period in the province of Yehud possibly within the Ezra scribal traditions. There is no doubt that the Elihu speeches are purveyors of theological presuppositions rooted in earlier religious ideologies of Israel which have become the authoritative pattern of the speeches of Elihu. To these ideological-theological points, we would turn not only to identify them but also in order to see their significance in the Elihu speeches that provides the critical roles it plays in the entire book of Job.

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<sup>639</sup> For more on Prophecy in ancient Israel and their interactive possibilities from both the Old and New Testament see Sakenfeld (2009:620-48); Von Rad (1965), Overholt (1989), Wilson (1980).

<sup>640</sup> For more interconnections between the works of the Priests and Prophets see Bosman (2014: 377-394; Grottanelli 1994:246-264).

## 5.4 Cultural Intertexture of the Elihu Speeches

This section intends to further elaborate on the previous chapter in which we discussed the “oral-scribal intertexture” now we are moving into the discussion of the “cultural intertexture.” This entails an encounter probably between two or more ‘strange’ cultures because cultural intertexture has to do with engaging with the “symbolic worlds” within a given text or speech from a particular community or context with “special nuances or emphases” as to the nature and meaning of the symbols within their written or spoken thoughts (Robbins 1996a: 115 cf. Lee 2001: 50). This is the demonstration of insider knowledge of the author within the voice and action of his character in a given text that mirrors the conceptual values, and traditional systems of a given society. Thus “[c]ultural intertexture appears in a text either through reference or allusion and echo” (Robbins 1996:58). As we have already discussed earlier in our discussion of the oral-scribal intertexture above, reference here is a “pointer” to an existing tradition or an influential personage or reality. The allusion is a “statement” that presupposes the existence of a tradition, and an echo is a long reverberation of a cultural tradition in an interactive way (cf. Robbins 1996:58-60 cf. Sommer 1998:16f; Cherney 2014:9ff). These could occur almost simultaneously embedded within a given speech pattern as in the case of Elihu. Thus in the Elihu speeches as our focal area of study, we shall now identify examples of such cultural markers.<sup>641</sup>

Elihu’s thought in 32:7 presents a reference to a cultural understanding of life in terms of human-wisdom identity namely, those who are advanced in age, thus, he says, *יָמִים יְדַבְּרוּ וְרַב אֲשֵׁנִים יִדְבְּרוּ* (Age should speak, advanced years should teach wisdom). This, after all, resonates with the African cultural concept of being wise in terms of one’s age (cf. Masenya 2015:110-127)<sup>642</sup>. As it happens among the ancient people, like the Israelites, etc., the sages are those much older in terms of age whose responsibility it has been to teach wisdom to the younger generation (cf. Gammie & Perdue 1990; Blenkinsopp 1995). That is why Elihu could not freely interact

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<sup>641</sup> The presentation of the Elihu speeches henceforth would be done based on the point or area of identified occurrence of the needed examples under our headings, thus we shall be followed very strict structural form of the speeches in order to avoid repeated some of the thoughts that we have already presented.

<sup>642</sup> In this essay, Masenya (2015: 110ff) discusses the place of wisdom in African context, especially in light of the liberation theological discourses in South Africa. She explores the traditional understanding and interpretation of wisdom from the biblical perspective within the elitist framework. Nevertheless, she pushed the boundary unto the possibility of opening up good access to the meaning and power of wisdom within an optimistic socio-economic point of view.

with them in the first place (32:6). He has to wait for the right or just for the decisive moment to speak his mind. Thus in speaking to Job and his three friends, Elihu dared the cultural tradition to confront the elders of his time with the truth that they needed to hear from him.

The mention of *כַּיִן לֹא־יִפְתָּח* (bottle-up wine)<sup>643</sup> and *אֲבוֹת* (wineskins [32:19]) which climaxes his apology is a mythological allusion to a cultural phenomenon. Elihu presents us with two culturally significant allusions. Firstly, of the imagery of the “wine” as a traditional or cultural common drink in the ancient Near Eastern context where he belonged (cf. Frankel 1999). This also reflects the kind of a village commodity found and produced from local industries and even homes in traditional Africa to provide common drink to people (cf. Mbiti 1990: 134, 136)<sup>644</sup>. Wine is a natural phenomenon that cuts across many cultural traditions often in the slightly different sense of production and quality. Secondly, the *אֲבוֹת* (wineskins) is the cultural qualitative device for the storage of the wine for long time use and proper fermentation.

Elihu’s refutation of Job’s quoted claims in the phrase, *כִּי־יִרְבֶּה אֱלֹהִים מֵאָנוּשׁ׃* (For God is greater than any mortal [33:12]) also represents a cultural/traditional echo of human perception of God. This sounds familiar to traditional African understanding of God as well (Mbiti 1990:39-57; Kato 1975:27-46; Gehman 1989:124-135, 189-215; Nyirongo 1997:11-24 Turaki 1999:27-28, 145-169).<sup>645</sup> As could be found in almost all religious traditions, God is a “wholly other” as in the words of Otto (1959: 15ff cf. Turaki 1999:181)<sup>646</sup> whose supremacy cannot be challenged or

<sup>643</sup> Literally, ‘like wine not to be open’.

<sup>644</sup> Although he explicitly discusses more on the use of “beer” and “drink,” yet, “wine” falls into the category of “drink” here.

<sup>645</sup> In traditional African beliefs the whole cosmos is permeated with “power” and that power is the power of the Supreme Being called and worshipped in various ways and contexts. Yet, this Supreme Being is not only an agent of good but is sometimes and for various reasons (sins/wrong doings) is found as being an active agent of evil (cf. Gräbe 2002: 241). From a more biblical theological perspective in an effort to stressed African theological foundation Tiénou (1982:447-48) observed that God permeates all of human history as described in the Old Testament and such facts should not be underestimated. Tiénou (1982:444) further plains for the practical African response to the reality of God in concrete life experience when he says, “...God is feared, worshipped, loved and known for what he does in concrete historical events.” Thus the understanding of the positive, gracious and transformative presence and use of the power of God in African contexts and beyond as described by Elihu in his response to Job, is very significant and needful the possibility of being truly human in the world of God. For more discussion on the concept of God in African contexts and life experiences see Turaki (2012) and Uzukwu (1981:344-352).

<sup>646</sup> Turaki (1999: 181-82) argues that “the essence of African traditional religions” is rooted in “mysterium tremendum.” But unlike Otto’s (1959) discussion of the concept, Turaki points more to the African mystical (involving magic and fear i.e. terror) understanding of the Supreme being not just the fascinating awe involved, which marks the Deity apart from creation and unique and inspiring.

equally questioned. It is thus agreeable in practical ways, even in modern times that, “The African settings seem to involve worldviews that remain especially open to experiencing God’s power in very concrete and tangible ways” (Gräbe 2002:225).<sup>647</sup> That is why Elihu further says, :מְעוֹלִים לַאֲלֹהִים מִלַּעַשׂ וְשֹׁדֵי מִעֲוֹלִים (Far be it from God to do evil, from the Almighty to do wrong [34:10b; cf. 12])<sup>648</sup>. Furthermore, the description of death and dying as a fearful experience that consists of a transition into another realm (33:22) is another cultural perception of life in the beyond. Grave as the ‘pit’ or the underworld as the abode of the dead is an allusion to many cultural worldviews of what life becomes after death.<sup>649</sup>

There is an allusion to retribution thinking in the statement :כִּי פָעַל אָדָם וְשָׁלַם-לּוֹ וְכָאֵרַח אִישׁ יִמְצָאנוּ (He repays everyone for what they have done; he brings on them what their conduct deserves [34:11]). As we have earlier discussed, it is ironic here that Elihu does not totally sever all ties with the overarching retribution dogma of this day. Thus this also represents a cultural worldview that cuts across contexts from the ancient Near East to traditional Africa (Mbiti 1990:199-207)<sup>650</sup>. This is the belief that nothing goes for nothing, but rather everything awaits God’s scrutiny and final response as either a reward or punishment. Thus some (like Job’s three friends earlier on and now Elihu) used retribution dogma as a cultural device to diagnose the reason for some misfortune in life.

Elihu’s warning to Job when he says, :בְּיַחַתְמָהּ פְּוִי-יִסִיתֶךָ בְּסֻפָּךָ וְרֵב-כֶּפֶר אֶל-יִטְתֶּךָ (Be careful that no one entices you with riches, do not let a large bribe turn you aside [36:18]) is another echo of cultural contextual practices in life. Although this may not be acceptable as a “normal” cultural convention, yet, it could be traceable as a known cultural practice within a context or profession in which large sum of money (wealth) could be used to deflect a person from the standard of

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<sup>647</sup> The Pentecostal movement in Africa has been at the fore in understanding and presenting the person of God within the paradigm of power as a wholly other beyond questions and challenges. This reflects their general conception of who God is by what God is expected to do in their personal lives. For example P. J. Gräbe observed that, The Pentecostal movement is known for its focus on the power of God at work in the world and in the lives of believers. God’s presence is thus understood as something that is tangibly felt and may be expected to involve a transformative effect on the lives of those touched by it” (2002:225).

<sup>648</sup> We shall return to some of these verses later on in the next chapter.

<sup>649</sup> But African beliefs are and those of the Hebrews as being gathered to one’s ancestors at the point of death is one important point of consideration that present a cultural worldview on death and dying that may be different to modern perceptions.

<sup>650</sup> In this section, Mbiti discusses African understanding of evil, punishment and restitution which in many ways constitute a response to human failure/sin.

his/her integrity. This in modern Africa is what constitutes the tragic phenomenon of corruption in our social systems (Ossai-Ugbah 2011:137-57; Atwoju 2004:75-80)<sup>651</sup>. Thus we can say here that it has been recognised that worldly wealth can be used as a means of influence against a necessary and useful or profitable standard of uprightness and life of dignity in given contexts. In Elihu's words here we could see that the life of dignity and uprightness is an immediate requirement.

From a more religious perspective that is echoed in several psalms, Elihu admonished Job to remember to extol the marvellous works of God “which people have praised in song” (36:24). As we have seen in our discussion of the oral-scribal intertexture of the Elihu speeches and ancient Near Eastern contexts, there are songs sang to the gods, thus in traditional Africa also many people find good songs of praise as appropriate expressions of the worth of God as the supreme being whose might call for awe and worship (Mbiti 1975:146-152; Chitando 2000: 296-310). Singing praise songs have been in the cultural fabric of African life even to the traditional rulers/leaders and as mentioned in the previous line, to the deity most especially.<sup>652</sup> Towards the end of his speeches Elihu presents something of a general truth in his description of the majesty of God within natural phenomenological analogy when he says, וְעַתָּה לֹא רָאוּ אֹר כְּהִיר הוּא בְּשָׁמַיִם, וְרִיחַ עֲבָרָה וְהַטְהַרְמוּ: (Now no one can look at the sun bright as it is in the skies after the wind has

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<sup>651</sup> In this article Ossai-Ugbah discusses the use of wealth and privilege and tools for human corruption and oppression, thus he calls for the possibility of salvation and sanctification of life even in light of the moral society sin (corruption and oppression), in many contexts, especially the African contexts which he focuses on. To be more specific for example in light of the socio-economic history of Nigeria, one of the notable features is that of embarrassing corruption as noted by Atwoju when he says, “The level of corruption in Nigeria is quite alarming and worrisome. It is a major and embarrassing crisis even for those who are corrupt. Corruption has almost become our second nature. Some Nigerians within and outside the country are capable of committing any imaginable abomination. Anybody from anywhere, at any time, for any reason, can get away with anything in this country, particularly when position, power, influence, authority or money is involved” (2004:76). He further adds that, “In economic activities, business, politics and ordinary social life, people go to any extent to achieve their set goals, no matter how criminal and deadly their means might be” (2004:77). Nevertheless, he remained optimistic toward the end of the article knowing that biblical theology offers humanity good and useful thoughts and guide to a more humane life and relationship that would help us live beyond the present embarrassing situations.

<sup>652</sup> Mbiti (1975:146) asserts that, “Joy, praise and thanksgiving belong together, and express another dimension of African spirituality.” One of the many examples of the songs of praise and thanksgiving from various African perspectives in this book include the following, which selected for its simplicity and mention of ‘wisdom’; “I shall sing a song of praise to God; Strike the chords upon the drum. God who gives us all good things- Strike the chords upon the drum- Wives, and wealth, and wisdom. Strike the chords upon the drum” (Mbiti 1975:148).

swept them clean [37:21]). This is rather a strange analogy of course but the stress on the brightness of the sun beyond the natural capacity of human beings to constantly gaze at is something that stands true across traditional cultural experiences<sup>653</sup>. This may not directly fit the discussion of cultural intertexture per se, yet, the reconfiguration of the presence of the sun in terms of its imagery for the glory and presence of God is pervasive within various traditional beliefs. Earlier in this confession of innocence Job swore that he has not allowed himself to be deflected or enticed to the worship of the sun in its brightness (cf. 31: 26). This thus opens us to the reality of the deification of the sun in some cultures, even African cultures (cf. Barrett 1976; Turner 1979:72-75).<sup>654</sup>

## 5.5 Social Intertexture of the Elihu Speeches

Secondly, there is “social intertexture” which has to do with the attempt to understand life within a social environment. This involves more active than written or spoken form of the social life. Thus social intertexture tries to understand life in terms of social identity, roles, activities, customs, conventions, taboos, etc. (cf. Robbins 1996a: 115 ff; 1996b :62f; Lee 2001: 50). In his discussion of the social intertexture, Robbins (1996:62) takes the theme of “knowledge” as social knowledge as a key to identifying the social potential of a given text in light of its general knowledge in contrast to its cultural knowledge. He explains the social categories within which social knowledge could manifest itself as follows;

- ❖ *social role* (soldier, Shepherd, slave, athlete) or *social identity* (Greek, Roman, Jew),<sup>655</sup>
- ❖ *social institution* (empire, synagogue, trade worker’s association, household);<sup>656</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Clines (2006:884) explores the possibility of relating this verse expression to a theophany, but when he could not get very clear links to do that successfully, he admits that, “the language here is so allusive, and so unlike the formal pedagogy of Elihu that we have met before” thus is not so easy to see this as some kind of a climax to Elihu’s expression regarding anything so clear and specific. Nevertheless, from an inter-cultural perspective we think this could be useful towards some kind of expression in relation to a religious or customary, socio-cultural experience.

<sup>654</sup> H. W Turner (1979 72ff) presents the review of Leonard E. Barrett’s (1976) works that relates the origins and links of African perceptions of the sun to the establishment of Jamaican folk traditional beliefs and its significance in their religious worships.

<sup>655</sup> Italics as found in the original

<sup>656</sup> This is elusive and almost invisible in the Elihu speeches. Yet, we may try to trace a little fragmental part of it but there may not be very clear cut examples in terms of a definite imperial or national life system etc.

- ❖ *social code* (e.g., honour, hospitality);
- ❖ *social relationship* (patron, friend, enemy, kin).

These are valuable data that could come from the text in order to help the reader to discern the “social meaning” of the text (Robbins 1996:63). In the following discussion, we shall try to see how the above-mentioned categories manifest themselves within the social knowledge of the Elihu speeches.

### 5.3.1 Social Identity and Role<sup>657</sup>

Following our Table 1 in chapter 3 in which we displayed the nouns in Job 32-37, we could easily identify the various nouns within the verses as they occur which are the elemental pointers to the general (common) and specific (uncommon) characters within the speeches. Our primary concern here would be to identify the particular human and substantive human characters within the speeches in terms of how they are presented in the text (say NIV, NB, or NRSV versions).

In 32:1, “these three men” substantively used to describe Job’s friends who have come to sympathise with him about his misfortune but now have “stopped answering Job” most probably, and as we shall soon discover because of their short of more words to say. “Job” is identified as a person to whom the visiting friends stopped answering. Job, in this case, is described in concrete or proper nouns while his associates (these three men) are identified in the substantive<sup>658</sup>. These two classifications are the main characteristic ways of noun description in the Elihu speeches.<sup>659</sup>

In 32:2, the narrator continues to use concrete/proper nouns to identify “Job”, “Elihu”, “Barakiel”, and “Ram” while the substantive noun “the Buzite” is used to determine the ancestral

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<sup>657</sup> This is a slight variation from Robbins’(1996:62) original in which the theme of “social role” comes before “social identity” in this present dissertation we think ‘social role’ should follow ‘social identity’. This helps to logical location of the issues, in that, the social identity is first discerned before trying to understand and mention each of its function (role). Nevertheless, we shall discuss them together as indicated by Robbins (1996: 62) as well. This helps us to avoid unnecessary repetition of thoughts and phrases.

<sup>658</sup> For a more elaborate discussion on the meaning and significance of the substantive nouns in especially the biblical languages namely, Hebrew and Greek see (Neusner 1977: 27-54; Wischmeyer 1978: 212-238; Thorion 1983:193-217; 1985: 17-63).

<sup>659</sup> These patterns no doubt could be identified in other sections of the book of Job as well as in many other parts of the Old Testament etc. But they are specifically identified as such in this section in order to help the reader to easily locate the characteristic identity patterns within the given speeches.

family of Elihu through his father “Barakiel”. “Job” is once again juxtaposed with his רעים (companions/friends [32:3]). Thus they are now focused on as the object of Elihu’s anger. Then “Elihu” is mentioned with “Job” in concrete terms (32:4) setting them as would be conversation partners, but at that point, Elihu had not started speaking to him or his friends yet. Toward the end of the opening narration, “the three men” are mentioned again in the substantive (32:5) thus forming an inclusio with the initial thought of the first verse of the chapter (i.e. 32:1).

In 32:6 the narrator’s attention focuses more on the presentation of “Elihu son of Barakiel the Buzite” once again. This properly identifies Elihu as a proper person, a man who belongs to a particular known family.<sup>660</sup> Elihu identifies himself as being יָעִיר (young) in contrast to Job and his three friends who are זָקֵן (old).<sup>661</sup>

In 32:8, the word “man” or “person” or “a human being” is used in a generic sense to convey the idea of the operative object of the locale of the “Spirit” of God or “the breath” of the Almighty in terms of giving wisdom. Elihu voices his consternation at the contrasting juxtapositioning of the idea of trying to locate wisdom in most senior people or “the elders” (32:9) which he took Job and his friends to be but was disappointed in the result. Here social identity takes age dimension from being general, accurate and ancestral.

In a more focused sense of emphasis “Job” is identified as the person who supposed to be proven “wrong” by the previous speeches of Job’s friends (32:12). Elihu uses a social axiom to address and hopefully straighten the thoughts of Job’s friends lest they succumb to compassion fatigue to give the dialogue up, as they have most probably done, by refraining to fully address Job to put him in his proper place by submitting the case to God, for God to refute him “no man” or no human beings like them. In this proverbial speech pattern, social identity is generic from a definite point of emphasis. Elihu further focuses on “Job” by admitting the fact that Job did not present his arguments against him directly (32:14).

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<sup>660</sup> His family may not directly be obvious to the reader or any of the historic readers and interpreters of this speeches, yet, it is worth noting to see Elihu, even more than Job here identified within a proper family identification order.

<sup>661</sup> Elderly or like we discovered in Pope above where he translates the word as seniors (cf. chapter 3).

In 32:21 substantive nouns are used in more generic terms that could mean “man” or “a human being” which is generally translated as “anyone” in order to describe the one in a social context that will not be the target of Elihu’s flattery should he choose to use any. Thus in the given conversation context between Elihu and Job and his three friends, “anyone” applies to all of them at exemption from falling prey of his flattery or partial judgment.

33:1 opens with the proper name of “Job” as the direct addressee of the following speech. In 33:10 Elihu refers to Job’s words by the use of citation to describe in a negative social term how Job’s perceived God’s relationship with himself, he is reported to have perceived that God has taken him to be an “enemy” which is an antagonistic social portrait.

The generic words “men” and “mankind” are used to describe the social recipients of God’s acts of discipline which would later turn out to be acts of grace unto them (33:16, 17). Thus many translations use the third person collective pronoun “them” to represent such words and properly locate them as generic social terms.

33:23 presents the “human being” on trial as the recipient of the gracious intervention of the mediating “angel”. This may not directly resonate with any vivid human cultural context, yet, the human person as a social person is identified and involved. Thus we think this could stand as an example of social identification, even though beyond accessible social context. In the same way, 33:26, 27 both contain the generic terms of “human being” and “men”. These descriptions locate humanity as being active in confessional speeches to set wrong things right within interactive encounters. 33:31 forms another inclusio by addressing “Job” as a proper person to whom the speech is actively directed.

As it would appear in other subsequent headings, the name “Elihu” is mentioned at the opening and continuations of his speeches (34:1; 35:1; 36:1). He is identified as a person of expression through these aforementioned verses. His addressees are established in a dynamic way by the substantives *חֲכָמִים* (wise men) and *אֲנָשֵׁי יָדָעַיִם* (men of learning [34:2]). Although by the use of language through these speeches we could see a seriously male dominated world yet, most of the actual grammatical expressions are idiomatic or proverbial which are cast more in generic terms that encompass the perspectival presence of all genders.

Chapter 34:5 mentions Job by his proper name again as Elihu cites his previous speech of innocence. The same use of a noun is seen in 34:7 where Job is depicted as a negative point of reference which stands in contrast to the Job depictions of the prose prologues and epilogues of the book that bears his name. In 34:8 the synonymous substantives “evildoers” and “wicked” depict the negative human characters of society. As in the opening line of 34:2 “men of understanding” (34:10) are illustrated in an inclusio to those who need to listen to what Elihu has to say attentively.

In 34:11 both generic and specific nouns that depict humanity namely “mankind” and “men” are used to describe the recipients of the payment or judgment of God upon all of their actions. Thus social actions are seen and taken account of by God awaiting the day of repayment. More so, “all humanity” is described under the sustaining power of God (34:15).

34:18 starts some inventory of common nouns based on class and positional distinctions namely, “kings,” “nobles,” “princes,” “rich,” and “poor.” No doubt these socially constructed dividing lines are not strange to our lives and present societies. In a substantive sense of the use of the high social class, “the mighty” (34:24) are describes as those being shatters in the night. “Humanity” is described to be plain to God without any need for further investigations (34:23).

In 34:26 “everyone” is mentioned in the context of “seeing” the punishment of the wicked. The wickedness of those being punished is described as the “crying out” of the “poor” and “needy” in society. Verses 29 and 30 used the generic description of “humanity” under the overarching rule of God in social contexts that are often vulnerable to “snares” that could entangle and easily destroy them. It is interesting that “nation” is mentioned in conjunction to “individual,” thus showing the interface of the habitat and the inhabitant of a social context. “Men of understanding” and “wise men” are synonymously used to depict social interaction in which the former makes a declaration, and the latter hear and transmit them in wisdom thus Elihu is depicted here as part of the conversation but amazingly not as a real leader of the discourse but a mere recipient of what is being said (34:34). In 34:35 and 36 Job is mentioned twice being reported in terms of the negative quality of his speech devoid of “knowledge” thus he is depicted by the use of simile as a “wicked man.”

“Humans” and “other people” are described as the recipients of the result of the wickedness of other people (35:8). This leads “people” to “cry out” under a load of oppression because of social injustices, thus pleading for relief from the “arms of the powerful” (35:9). Yet there would not be such a response “when people cry out” as a result of the arrogance of “the wicked” (35:12). This chapter ends with the depiction of “Job” as an empty talker (35:16).

In 36:5 no human being is being “despised” by God.<sup>662</sup> Yet, there is the contrasting juxtaposition of “the wicked” and “the afflicted” in 36:6 in which the former is not allowed to live for the sake of the “right” of the latter. This envisions a just social context where life is possible and human right is recognised, accepted and upheld. Thus this envisions a social upgrade of “the righteous” as “kings” (36:7). In contrast to the righteous who are being blessed in the preceding verse, 36:13 mentions “the godless” as recalcitrant human beings who “harbour resentment” and do not even “cry for help” from anyone. This depicts the callousness of humanity even in their affliction. A further contrast is provided in verse 15 which announces the possibility of the deliverance of those who “suffer” thus they shall be addressed even in their “affliction”. In 36:17, Elihu envisions a social context in which a person, probably Job in this regard is laden with “judgment due the wicked.” Yet, as we have seen in chapter 33, Elihu believes that such affliction is not entirely negative but for the good of the sufferer.

There is a quick succession of synonyms in 36: 24 and 25 namely, “people,” “all humanity,” and “mortals.” These are those in a social context who interact with nature and are blessed with the divine insight that leads them to honest acknowledgement and humble worship. An example of those true blessings that lead to awe and worship are the showers of the Almighty for which “mankind” stands as the recipients (36:28). This depicts the generous governance of “people” by God (36:31).

37:7 asserts the creatureliness of “everyone” in synonymous parallelism to “people” who are made for the purpose of knowing God and enjoying good rest in God’s grace and power. At the end of this chapter “people” are set in parallel with “wise one” consequently constituting a social context in which the mystery of the fear of God is present, and the possibility of God’s response to true devotion is acknowledged (37:24).

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<sup>662</sup> We shall elaborate on this later on in the next chapter of this dissertation.

In sum, the speeches of Elihu present us with social identity and roles especially in terms of human beings and deity (God). But we have not discussed the issues concerning God in the foregoing discussions because we hope to return to that with more concentration in our next chapter on ideological-theological textures. Nevertheless, we focused more on human identity and roles especially in regards to the question of social contexts. Humanity is described in both specific and generic terms, sometimes using the substantive form of speech which could be an envisioned analogy or an expression of a common and a new thought truth or principle. Yet, we have seen the social imagination of Elihu within these speeches of humanity in its most active and specific contexts. From the specific point of view, human beings like Elihu, Job and Job's three friends are depicted as humans in conversation in which one speaks, and others hear or are called (expected) to hear and possibly respond. People are also depicted in terms of class, and characters (e.g. kings, nobles, rich, poor, wicked, righteous, etc.). In addition to the roles of speech which are mainly associated with Job's three friends and later on Elihu who have variously engaged him in his time of grieve, which would also discern the role of mediation or advocacy (Magdalen 2007:200ff Brueggemann 1997)<sup>663</sup>. Elihu tries to mediate between both Job and God as well as Job's three friends and God.<sup>664</sup>

### 5.3.2 Social Code and Relationship<sup>665</sup>

To the present writer, social code and relationships go together; one could be an excellent guide to the other. In this discussion, we shall start in the reverse order in which relationship (friend, enemy, kin) will open the door to discuss relational codes alongside it. From the Elihu speeches, we could discern elements for a family connection in the short narrator's introduction of Elihu when he described him as being the son of Barakiel from the Buzite "of the family of Ram"

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<sup>663</sup> "advocacy" is treated more elaborately as one of the leading trajectories of Brueggemann's *Theology of the Old Testament*.

<sup>664</sup> Elihu steps forward to speak in God's behalf in terms of presenting "claims and counterclaims" as an interactive pattern between Job's previous speeches and his own personal speeches in response (cf. Magdalene 2007: 229). Thus Elihu understood himself as "God's stand-in." Even though Elihu does not insist that he is a "judge" per se, he evidently indicates that he is "a witness" in defense of God (Magdalene 2007:230). Magdalene thus observes that, "Elihu is God's advocate not only in attempting to convict Job but also in proving God innocent" (2007:234). We shall return to this thought later on when we discuss the emerging code and relationships from the Elihu speeches below.

<sup>665</sup> Unlike the expectation in Robbins (1996:62) the Elihu speeches do not have explicit social institutions like empire, synagogue, trade worker's association, household etc. Therefore we shall skip its discussion in that regard in this section. Nevertheless, we shall discuss "social code" (e.g., honor, hospitality), and social relationship (e.g., patron, friend, enemy, kin) mostly in an implicit sense where they are not explicitly depicted.

(32:2, 6). This helps us to locate Elihu within a definitely known family history which is probably akin to the tribal leagues of Israel (cf. Gottwald 1979:237ff; Gerstenberger 2002:21, 22)<sup>666</sup>. His name as we have discovered previously also has resonance with Israelite names especially that of Elijah etc. There is also the mention of “these three men” (32:1) whom we have earlier identified as Job’s three friends who came from their various homes to visit and comfort him in his affliction (2:11-13). These depictions help us to discern the social codes of family, friendship and solidarity.

Going a little further down the discourse into Elihu’s apology and quest to also speak his mind in regards to the affliction of Job and especially prompted by Job’s earlier utterances, Elihu described himself as a “young” person who could not actually speak up amidst people who are older than he was (32:6). Thus he was “fearful” and not “daring to tell” them what he knew about life. This leads us to the social code of life experience. Life experience is often associated with the acquisition of wisdom (cf. Clines 2006:717). Thus Elihu was urgently in need of speech, but he could not speak up because he does not have the required experience to share words with people like Job and his friends. Another common code in this regard is that of honour and shame (cf. Olyan 1996:201-218; Takore 2013)<sup>667</sup>. Elihu gives honour to his traditional understanding of life and the people before whom he stands in conversation, thus taking good care lest he shames them or himself, so he gave good thought to himself, listened carefully for all they had to say before speaking up himself (32:7, 10-12). The seeming oath of honesty not to flatter anyone (32:21) highlights the social code of “partiality” as “favouritism” in many social contexts. People use wealth or knowledge as elements of power in order to show favouritism in dealing with various people around them. This, often than not, leads to the distortions of human right and dignity to the active perpetuation of social injustices and horrible dehumanisation.<sup>668</sup>

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<sup>666</sup> Brueggemann (1997:682) helps us to see the function of the family as a context for wisdom learning and the human social development when he says, “The family or clan is, among other things, a decisive socializing agent, which constructs a world of limit and choice, of symbol and imagination, in which the child may safely live.” For more on the structure of the family and clan as social contexts see Gerstenberger (2002:19-20)

<sup>667</sup> From a more sociological dimension, Takore (2013:6) explains honor as a recognition and promotion of one’s worth within a given community or social context. In contrast, shame, is also a social debasement, or contempt or “humiliation” of a person or a given social context based on moralistic value systems. He further elaborates on the interface between honor and shame in the context of the Genesis 6 account of the formation of human social according to biblical stories of the beginning of life and the human world. This he discusses in conversation with his Nigerian, Southern Kaduna cultural contexts.

<sup>668</sup> See our discussion on corruption above.

By the interplay of “me” and “you” interactive pronouns in 33:5 and the sentence “I am same as you in God’s sight” (33:6a) helps us to see the social code of equality. Equality here is depicted as we have earlier noted based on creation reality (cf. Nelson 1982: 1-12; Claassens & Spronk 2013)<sup>669</sup>. Elihu presents himself as a fellow human being to Job that should normally be viewed within the possibility of real and hopefully understandable and responsive interactions. The social reality of human mortality is highlighted in the sentence “I too am a piece of clay” (33:6). This shows the mortality of both Elihu and Job as well as any other human being.

Negative relationships are depicted either from the perception of Job as he has been cited by Elihu or by Elihu himself in his imaginative description of life within a concrete social life situation, thus the words “enemy” (33:10), “worthless” and “wicked” (34:18; 35:8, 12), “oppression” (35:9) etc. In contrast, some words portray positive social life or at least expect such a social life as that of innocence, righteousness (cf. 34:5f; 35:2f). “Wisdom” is portrayed in various ways from being a socially acquired treasure of life (32:7) to a divine deposit in human beings (32:8) to a relational product between a teacher and pupil (33:33), and a definite skill in speech (34:1) or a personal treasure of life that leads to the mystery of fearing God (37:24).<sup>670</sup>

There is also the depiction of social and cosmic governance by God. In the social realm, God is depicted as the ultimate mystery behind the wisdom of human beings (32:8), the reality of their life and death (32:22) and the purposive deity who could allow suffering and body and emotional affliction for the reason of saving the victim from greater destruction (chap. 33:15ff). God’s justice and presence are argued out in terms of God’s governance of the social and cosmic world (35-37). God addresses social vices by taking away the wicked ones who are powerful and oppressive (cf. 36:6-7), thus giving life and dignity to those who are afflicted (36:5, 15) and bringing them to the place of proper nourishment and the flourishing of life (36:15-16). In the

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<sup>669</sup> Nelson (1982:1-12) considers human creation and redemption from the biblical protestant understanding as points of departure to discovering and affirming human dignity in terms of human rights. In addition, we have already discussed some of the essays in Claassens and Spronk (2013) especially those written by Claassens, Bosman and De Lange as pointers to the meaning and need for human dignity from biblical creation perspective. See our discussion on section 1.9.6 above.

<sup>670</sup> This accentuates one of our leading hypotheses (cf. 1.5) that irony in the Elihu speeches helps us to require anew definitive understanding of the meaning of wisdom. Thus this takes our preliminary description of wisdom further than the initial (cf. 1.9.2). Thus wisdom here in terms of its meaning and acquisition defies human conventional ideologies especially of wisdom as the accumulation of the skills of life in terms of an ordered success in life. But beyond that wisdom is also an encounter from an ordered life and world into the realm of divine mystery (cf. Bosman 2012: 433-439; Gericke 2012: 440-451).

cosmic arena, God governs by creating and ordering true blessings from the heavens in terms rains, and showers upon the earth (37:6ff). God does that with a view to providing food and nourishment to the inhabitants of the earth and the land itself. Yet God does not do all this without his thunderous might (37:5) which displays God's mystery and invites humanity to acknowledge and give reverence to God (36:24-26; 37:24).<sup>671</sup>

#### **5.4 Historical Intertexture of the Elihu Speeches**

Lastly, there is "Historical intertexture," this gives focus to time questions of life, thus trying to understand sociological events in terms of time or period that they happened especially in regards to the past within any given present time (cf. Robbins 1996a: 118f; Lee 2001: 50). According to Lee (2001:50), historical intertexture focuses on a "particular historical event or period than social practices" within human interactive life. Historical intertexture could either take traditional or scientific meaning in regards to the exact (factual) happening of an event within a particular (specific) time and place (location or context).<sup>672</sup> It could be understood as the interpretation of life from the past in the present in order to make the present meaningful in light of the coming future.

Historical intertexture here refers to the events that happened within a time framework (Robbins 1996:63). There are no clear cut indications of historicity in the book of Job let alone the Elihu speeches. The Elihu speeches are poetic discourses in verse form thus it is challenging to discern their historical precision. Nevertheless, the search for the historical intertexture in this case "leads to imprecision in analysis, interpretation, explanation, and understanding" (Robbins 1996:63). Therefore we may not be looking for what is exact here but rather what makes sense. In our critical historical exploration of the book of Job in our chapter two above (cf. 2.2.1c; 2.3.2f) we have seen how the person of Job and his life set in the ancient city of Uz led us to the

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<sup>671</sup> With this creation and cosmic motifs in the latter part of these speeches, we have gone even beyond the possibility of a social context to a more universal one. This in many ways goes beyond the scope of this dissertation, but rather prepares the reader and primarily Job to the coming speeches of Yahweh in the preceding chapters of the book that bears his name.

<sup>672</sup> Lee (2002:166) engages within the problem of history in terms of trying to understand the ancient (traditional) history in relation (contextual relation) of a modern scientific understanding and interpretation of history. Thus Lee (2002: 166ff) provides us with scholarly views for a better (workable) understanding and application of history within the interface of conceptualizations between myth and history, reality as (in) stories and past experiences of life.

discussion of the textualization of the event as naturally separate events. Thus even though, the city of Uz cannot be precisely recovered in our modern sense of historical search and analysis. Yet the composition or at least the editing and incorporation of the book of Job as literature into the canon of the Hebrews could have been done within and probably after the Babylonian exile.

In order to further expatiate on such thinking we shall try to evaluate the rhetoric of Elihu in light of events in the post exilic times to see the potentials that such an exercise holds in leading us to a hopefully reliable context of the composition and incorporation of the book of Job including the Elihu speeches into the Hebrew Bible. Meanwhile, based on our study of the intratextuality of the Elihu speeches<sup>673</sup> we could see that dismissing them as not being part of the actual book of Job do not help us if we are to adequately understand the tension of daring to confront God and the eventual confrontation of a disturbed human being like Job. Such tension must have been enormous and in serious need of preparation which we believe the Elihu speeches more than any other, renders.

Thus taking our various observations and summary of our preceding chapter, namely chapter 4 above, the intertexture of the Elihu speeches in terms of the dominant type, namely, the oral-scribal intertexture, is mostly characterized by the realities and textual interfaces of materials that emerge from the Persian periods and almost down into early Hellenistic era. Taking that as our continuing pointer to the historical texture of the Elihu speeches, we shall now provide some examples that would help us to relatively situation the Elihu speeches and his depiction as a distinctive theological traditional (emerging) voice in perspective.

Following Newsom (2003: 200ff cf. Balentine 2006: 554) we shall here briefly examine the rhetoric of the Elihu speeches in search of a proper context of their possible origination and/or adoption into Israelite literature. Newsom (2003:207) agreeably discerned Elihu as an intriguing character in the Job story firstly in term of his “moral imagination.” She then goes further to ask for the distinctiveness of the person in light of his moral imagination. This is not an easy route to follow for it entails a rigorous examination of the possible dynamisms within a given speech patterns of a literary character taking Elihu as a case study. She recognised and argued for the possible shifts in metaphor, genre, temporality and framing that characterise the dynamism of his

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<sup>673</sup> In chapter 3 above

moral imagination (Newsom 2003:207). Elihu's distinctiveness and significance would be examined as led by Newsom in terms of the framing of his arguments. We have already considered his use of Job's forensic metaphors in response to his (Job's) quest for the understanding of his suffering and his appeal for divine justice which raises the tension of the Elihu speeches toward an intriguing climax for the coming of Yahweh. Yet, Elihu stands away from the almost conventional simplifications of life by Job's friends within the texture of deeds and consequences, in that, he provides a significant contribution with his analogy on "redemptive suffering." Now we shall further see the type of historical context that the examination of Elihu's rhetoric in conversation to the narratives in Daniel (1-6) and some elements in the genre of Ben Sira and as well as the narratives of the Chronicler would suggest to us.

Newsom (2003:214) in agreement points out that the narratives of Manasseh, Nebuchadnezzar and Antiochus IV Epiphanes are presented as "closest analogies" to the Elihu speeches. This intertexture does not actually suggest exact sameness in terms of parallelism or direct influence between the narratives mentioned above and the Elihu speeches. Nevertheless, we shall follow some discernible search light, within workable rubrics to see how such rhetoric becomes almost a common place in a certain historical period and even overlapping contexts. The rubric of the repentant sinner within "moral type" in the face of looming suffering and even death could be a useful golden thread to help us see the links in terms of the rhetorical patterns emerging from the Elihu speeches.

Starting with the Chronicler's account of Manasseh in which he (Manasseh) is depicted as a royal character to whom God wanted to speak but he could not listen because of his sheer arrogance and recalcitrance until later on when God inflicted him with suffering by the coming captivity of his enemies in whose hands he suffered and sought the Lord in prayer and repentance which eventually led to his restoration (2 Chron. 33; cf. 11). This resonates with the analogy of suffering as God's discipline in the speech of Elihu in Job 33.

In 1 Maccabees 6 and 2 Maccabees 9 the story of the wicked and angry Antiochus IV Epiphanes is told. How he was enraged by his arrogance on hearing the news of the success of his opponent, Judah the Maccabee. This broke his heart to the point of sickness and madness. His arrogance met with serious physical sickness which is explained as the punishment of God to him. Yet, he

was not willing to repent in a timely manner to obtain favour but rather he even pressed his threats against the righteous and devout people even further. That provoked God's judgment upon him in terms of "a sudden illness" which brought him "pain and the decay of flesh" (Newsom 2003:214)<sup>674</sup>. Even though he acknowledged his wrong and affirmed God's right as justice to him, he did not obtain God's favour and restoration. But the reason for suffering right from the beginning was for his own good in order to call him back to the correct order or wisdom in humility and life of responsibility as envisaged by Elihu (33: 24-26).

Thirdly the similarity of the Elihu analogy of the repentant sinner and the story of King Nebuchadnezzar in Daniel 4 is striking. Newsom (2003:215) helps us to see that the common human problem to be addressed between the two is 'pride' (Job 33:17; Dan 4:3, 27). The practical means of mediation is "communication" through a "terrifying dream" which is to serve as God's warning against human arrogance (Newsom 2003:215). In both cases, the dream alone does not help without interpretation (Job 33:14; Dan 4:26-27). That is why "[b]oth accounts make use of a mediator figure, who attempts to resolve the crisis" (Newsom 2003:215). Thus Daniel and the mediating angel in the Elihu speech of chapter 33 serve a similar function for the good of the recipient of the terrifying dream and stands the danger of destruction from the divine.

Furthermore, in the Elihu speech of 33:19-22 the sufferer is depicted as having a physical illness that causes pain and a wasting away of his flesh. By comparison, King Nebuchadnezzar also suffered from an ailment that could be seen as psychological in the first place. Hence he was stricken with madness which also had some degrading physical effects on him thus reducing him into the likeness of a wild animal (Dan 4:29-30).<sup>675</sup> This led to what Newsom (2003:215) rightly describes as the reason that led his life "to the brink of destruction." But both stories have a turning point where the redemption of the victim begins. In the Elihu speech the mediating angel played the role of an interpreter of what needs to be done to the sufferer in order to return back to his normal life and joyful relationship with God, but that of Nebuchadnezzar hung on the scale of

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<sup>674</sup> For more detail discussion on the life and death of Antiochus IV Epiphanes and its aftermath see Dagut (1953:149-157), Barry (1910:126-138), Goldingay (1986: 439), Mercer (2001:89-93), Blasius (2006: 521-547).

<sup>675</sup> For more contextual discussion on Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and affliction see Avalos (2014:497-507), and Garrison (2012:172-187).

For more contextual discussion on Nebuchadnezzar's dreams and affliction see Avalos (2014:497-507), and Garrison (2012:172-187).

time, thus at the appointed time his mind was refreshed, and he got not only his “reason” back to himself but also “the understanding that leads to the praise of God” (Newsom 2003:216). Thus the sufferer in the Elihu speech also acknowledged the presence and sovereignty of God through his confession and prayer which opens the door for his restoration (33:26) (cf. Clines 2006:738-39). Both were returned to the state of well-being and acceptable relationship with God and nature, other people around them into the state of their honour and respect (cf. Job 33:25, 26; Dan. 4:33; Newsom 2003:216).

Taking the examples of especially the three mentioned characters from different stories above namely Manasseh, Nebuchadnezzar and Job within the pattern of moral imagination, we could see that the tide of retribution thinking has taken hold in some way but mostly oblivious to the possible positive reality of human suffering. The acknowledgement of Manasseh and Nebuchadnezzar and their repentance ties the theme of human response to the retributive measures of the divine on account of the arrogance of the human. But in the case of Job, he appeared not to really understand the purpose of his suffering which might be the necessary point of interest of Elihu to the point that out to him in such a significant way. Thus Elihu speaks for God just like Job’s three friends may claim to have done but his analogical depiction of a deplorable situation that still stands the chance of hope and renewal of self and relationship is novel even to the overarching theology of the people of Israel who should have known better by that time from the prophetic messages that they have been listening to especially during the exile in Babylon. Thus the placement of the speeches of Elihu where they appear in the present form of the book of Job in the Hebrew Bible is significant in terms of the newness it brings to the fore within a given era of such literary need and production. Magdalene (2007:246) also agreeably asserts that “Elihu’s speeches supplement a great deal to the book from both legitimate historical and literary points of view. Most importantly, they bring the legal materials of Job into a cohesive unit.”

It is important to consider another useful rubric of interpretation that allows an interactive intertexture of the Elihu speeches within the paradigm of its historical context. Now we want to see how its genre resonate with the theme of “power” for governance in terms of both human political, social system and divine sovereign governance of the cosmos (cf. Newsom 2003:216).

The use of genre that relates to political power in the book of Job is only peculiar to the Elihu speeches (Newsom 2003:218). It is interesting to note Newsom's (2003:218) observation on the socio-political depictions in the Elihu speeches saying, "In his speech, kings, nobles, and the mighty are not positive figures of necessary human governance but negative or at least ambivalent images of corruptible power that must be checked by the intervention of God."

The following key words from the Elihu speech are engaged for literary, historical intertexture. In Job 34:18 God accuses the rulers as *בְּלִיעַל* (scoundrel)<sup>676</sup> and *עֲשֵׂי־רָע* (wicked). The suddenness of their destruction is described as coming *עַד־רָגַע* (in a moment)<sup>677</sup> *בְּחֶמְלָה לַלַּיְלָה* (before half the night [34:20])<sup>678</sup>. Its strangeness or novelty is stressed by the fact that it would be done "not by human hand" (34:20). Their inexcusable negligence is described as "without investigation... knowing their works" (34:24-25). The subversion of privilege would come when God "sets others in their place" (34:24). With the foregoing genre, we could sense the tension between the power of God and that of the King as a human political ruler especially in the juxtaposition of thoughts between the book of Daniel chapters 2 and 5 (cf. Newsom 2003:218).

Furthermore, God gives power to human rulers in God's freedom; "who removes kings and sets up kings" Dan 2:21; cf. "he shatters the mighty...and sets others in their place," Job 34:24. The arrogance of King Belshazzar became his downfall, thus, "you did not take your heart humbly even though you knew all this," Dan 5:22-23 cf. the King is assessed and condemned as "scoundrel" in Job 34:18. The sin of Belshazzar led to his destruction "that very night" Dan 5:30 cf. Job 34:20 where the wicked shall be destroyed "in a moment, before half the night." Earlier on King Nebuchadnezzar had a dream in which his inhospitable and arrogant kingdom was destroyed by a rock cut out of nowhere, "by no human hand" (Dan 2:34), this compares also with Elihu's imagination of the death of the wicked rulers "by no human hand" (Job 34:20). There is correspondence also in the motif of repentance between Nebuchadnezzar and the sufferer in the Elihu speech (cf. Job 33; 34:31-32) who was later on restored to his normal life and relationships.

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<sup>676</sup> We have already discussed this word as meaning "useless".

<sup>677</sup> Or "suddenly"

<sup>678</sup> Or "in the middle of the night," or "when the night is half way"

Newsom (2003:218) is agreeable right and helpful in pointing out that, “Time and knowledge are also the motifs in both contexts.” Elihu’s description of the omniscience of God is seen in the fact that “there is no gloom or deep darkness where evildoers may hide” from God’s face and power (Job 34:22). This compares with the acknowledgement of Daniel on God who “knows what is in darkness” (Dan 2:22). Elihu speaks to the fact of God’s active power and presence even when God seems to be distant and absent (Job 34: 29-30), this also resonates with the depiction of God in the Daniel narrative<sup>679</sup> knowing that God has been the power behind the scene which has been the source of Daniel’s knowledge and powerful inspiration. In addition to the Daniel revelatory and confrontational narratives which allow historical intertexture with the Elihu speeches in Job, Ben Sira also reflects the reality of power within political arena, that power is not constant especially in time of “injustice, insolence and greed” (cf. Sirach 10:8; 9-17-10:8). Thus at the end of the day God appears with justice to subvert everything for the good of the downtrodden, for example, ‘The thrones of the arrogant God overturns and enthrones the humble in their stead; The roots of the proud God pluck up, to plant the lowly in their place’ (Sir 10:14-15 cf. Dan 4: 14, 34; Job 34:24; Newsom 2003:219).<sup>680</sup>

From the above thematic resonances and genre similarity, we could now draw the line on the probably historical context of the Elihu speeches. As mentioned above taking note of the striking attention given from our intertextual study in chapter 4 on the major area of care by the Elihu author to the materials that dominate the Persian period, it is now agreeable with much interest that the Elihu speeches must have emerged from the late Persian and early Hellenistic historical period.<sup>681682</sup> From this point its messages of the possible positive reason for the suffering of the innocent appealed to the exilic theodicy of Israel which most probably necessitate their acceptance and incorporation of the text as well as the entire book of Job under the overarching theme of the suffering of the righteous, into their religious and moral imaginative canon.

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<sup>679</sup> For more on the literary assessment of the Daniel narrative frame see Henze (2001:5-24).

<sup>680</sup> Other similar passages from Sirach to the Elihu speeches especially in terms of genre are Sirach 42:15-43:33 (cf. Newsom 2003:220-221).

<sup>681</sup> Magdalene (2007:246; cf. Perdue 2008:118-123) among others also concludes that “the Elihu speeches are a Neo-Babylonian or Persian-period addition to an earlier text, from a legal perspective they are much more likely to be original to the text.”

<sup>682</sup> As mentioned in our survey of the book of Job there are various evidences of other existing materials that are very similar to the present book of Job in other texts of the ancient Near East which most probably provide the background for the sustenance of the Job story from its oral form into its written and variously edited forms up the present form in contemporary canons in both Hebrew and Christian Bibles.

## 5.5 Social and Cultural Textures of the Elihu Speeches

Going back to our chapter one of this dissertation (1.6) we have briefly discussed the social and cultural texture of socio-rhetorical interpretation as Robbins' (1996:3) third and fourth textures or layers of interpretation. In this chapter, we shall take our intratextual and intertextual discussions of both chapter three and four further into the social dimension. Thus we shall continue with the other layers of the interactive discussion of the text but now within its formative texture or context.<sup>683</sup> In this sociocultural texture, we shall engage "lived" world of the text. This would help us to see the social function of the text in a given world or context thus "living with a text in the world" (Robbins 1996:71). This is explained as engaging with the sociological and anthropological theories<sup>684</sup> of the text which helps one to understand the nature of the persons and places in the text, thus the "social and cultural nature" of the text "as a text" within a located world" (Robbins 1996:71). The linguistic analysis and the intertextual discussions that we have done in our chapters 3 and 4 would help us to locate the kind of world which the engaging text evokes before us as readers.

The social and cultural texture manifests itself within specific, shared and final topics and life categories that help the reader to understand the actual world of the text (Robbins 1996:71). Understanding the nature of the text from a social and culture texture would help the reader to imaginatively decide on how and to what extent to engage with the world as given in the wording by the author/narrator/editor within the interactive life of the characters in the text. This nature of the world in the text would help us to engage with its morality and/or religious beliefs etc. thus one may discern if it was a right or wrong world to live in and how to live in it. If there are negative things within, one may like to understand how to handle them or change them for the better (Robbins 1996:71).

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<sup>683</sup> We have earlier left the cultural, social and historical textures which Robbins (1996:40-70) places within the interactive world of the text. This we decide to carry over into the present chapter instead of the previous one because we think it fits much better to be discussed within the formative texture of the texts thus we gave ample space in the previous chapter for the discussion of the oral-scribal textures within the five modalities that were used to help us discern the kind of reference, allusion and echoes within the intertextuality of the Elihu speeches from the present form of book of Job and beyond.

<sup>684</sup> For more on the development of sociological trends as markers for social/cultural anthropological interpretations of the Scripture see Weber (1965), Mendanhall (1973), Gottwald (1979), Brueggemann (1997).

From a more general perspective, it is important to understand that, “Common social and cultural topics in the text exhibit the overall perception in the text of the context in which people live in the world” (Robbins 1996:71). This brings the systemic order of life into the forefront to the reader so as to closely engage with the life it presupposes. There may be some differences of the system of life between the life in the text and the life of the reader from outside of the text. Thus the need for more engagement may be opened depending on identifiable points of interest.

In the final categories of the text, the reader is taken into the orientation texture of the people (characters) in the text based on their settled worldviews and/or order of priorities in life (Robbins 1996:71). This leads one to the “deeper level” of the text toward an engagement that provides the space for acceptance of what is right and functionally profitable and/or the deconstruction and reconstruction of what is not accommodative and useful in the reader’s world and time. In sum, the specific and final topics in the social and cultural texture of a text reveal to the reader “the potential of the text to encourage its readers to adopt certain social and cultural locations and orientations rather than others” (Robbins 1996:72). In regards to the Elihu speeches in the book of Job as our point of departure, we shall now turn to their social and cultural textures in regards to some special themes of interest.

In our attempt to continue our discussion into the following sections of the social and cultural texture of the text, we need to be reminded of the difference between social and cultural text and social and cultural intertexture. The two may look similar, but they do not mean the same thing (cf. Jonker and Lawrie 2005:60). Social and cultural intertexture is what we have done in chapter 4 of this dissertation, thus to read a particular text not in isolation but in conversation with other texts around it. This has helped us to come to a good sense of discerning the contextual time of the event and later composition and compilation of our selected text. Nevertheless, we do not claim any tangible certainty about the exactness of such times as mentioned in the previous line. This is why we avoid giving exact dates of events whether, in terms of actual performance and later dynamic composition, we only point out possibilities of the time period which sound more appropriate for the evolution of the text in question. On the other hand, reading a text in light of or in search of its social and cultural texture is what Robbins (1996: 71) rightly describes as “living with the wording in the world.” This takes the act of intertexture further by trying to

closely consider the possibility of the presence of social and cultural layers within the text in question. Thus we shall demonstrate in the following discussions, the fact that, “Social and cultural texture concerns the capacities of the text to support social reform, withdrawal, or opposition and to evoke cultural perceptions of dominance, subordinate, difference, or exclusion” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:60). This exercise will lead us to discern some “social orientations and locations” within the given text and how those orientations and locations help to either build or destroy social and cultural beauty by the way we interact with each other in the given text. This does not directly settle the case of the text from the author’s (editor’s) perspective but it also further evokes the reaction and engagement of the reader from his/her own social and cultural contexts. This is the main reason why right from the background of this study, the present writer provides an interfacing social and cultural interest as a point of departure, as the meaning and place of wisdom in a society that is suffering from brokenness and is in need of justice.

### 5.5.1 Specific Social Topics

Following Bryan Wilson’s “typology of sects,” Robbins (1996:72, 137 cf. Wilson 1982) mentioned the seven anthropological frameworks that could be obtainable in a given society which forms and nurture the society in one way or another. These seven anthropological frameworks could serve as a point of departure for the social and cultural texture of the text in order to discern the interaction of characters within the text. This would show us what kind of responses that the characters in the text embody and how that would also evoke another response to what the text presents to the reader.

The social and cultural frameworks are the conversions,<sup>685</sup> revolutionist,<sup>686</sup> introversion,<sup>687</sup> Gnostic-manipulations,<sup>688</sup> thaumaturgical,<sup>689</sup> <sup>690</sup>reformist,<sup>691</sup> utopian.<sup>692</sup> It is noteworthy here to

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<sup>685</sup> This response admits to the corruption of the world as a result of the corruption of people. It does not trust an objective elemental transformation of the world but rather a subjective one, in which people would have to agree to change in order to change the world from its corrupt and unacceptable form to a better one. Salvation within the self is the key towards the transformation of the world (Robbins 1996: 72).

<sup>686</sup> As the name implies, it is a call to overturn the world which is bad and to re-create a better one. This calls for a revolutionary words and acts that motivate people towards a certain destruction of the corrupt order of things that the door of the new and better things be opened. This also trusts the involvement of supernatural powers to come and destroy what is bad in the present world and to help to re-create it anew (Robbins 1996:72-73).

agree that from the aforementioned responses and/or Christian anthropological frameworks, “each kind of response creates a kind of culture that gives meanings, values, traditions, convictions, rituals, beliefs, and actions to people” (Robbins 1996: 72 cf. Geertz 1973, 1983, 1995).<sup>693</sup> The “change in social practices” is the main function of these responses. This may occur “either by challenging and recreating the social order, or by allowing the reader to withdraw from present society with a view to creating an alternative social world, or by transforming his or her perceptions of society as a creative response to its challenges” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:60).

In relation to the Elihu speeches we could ask, who is who among the characters in the Elihu speeches in our selected texts and how could we see their representations within the foregoing anthropological frameworks and/or responses above. Firstly, we could see that Job’s three friends (Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar) responded as the *conservationists*. They believe that Job was suffering because of his own sin (self-corruption). Thus his world ran into chaos and disorder and loss.<sup>694</sup> This depicts the view that the corruption of the world is the dishonesty of people and the only way of salvation is the conversion of people from doing what is wrong with doing what is right.

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<sup>687</sup> This is a separatist advocacy that calls for withdrawal from the world which is corrupt in order to maintain one’s sense of holiness. This response “views the world as irredeemably evil” thus the only solution is to withdraw from it (Robbins 1996:73).

<sup>688</sup> “The Gnostic-manipulationist response seeks only a transformed set of relationships-a transformed method of coping with evil” (Robbins 1996:73).

<sup>689</sup> May be rendered “thaumaturgicalist” in order to make it a noun like the others.

<sup>690</sup> “The thaumaturgical response focuses on the individual’s concern for relief from present and specific ills by special dispensations. The request for supernatural help is personal and local, and its operation is magical” (Robbins 1996:73).

<sup>691</sup> This calls for the rearrangement of social order. It admits the corruption of the world as a result of the corrupt of the system of the world. Thus if the social structures can be changed then the social order of things and behaviors will also change to make salvation as good life possible in the world. This can be possible by gaining “supernaturally given insights” on how to reorganize the world and life for the better (Robbins 1996:73).

<sup>692</sup> This is much more radical than the reformist mentioned above, “The utopian response seeks to reconstruct the entire social world according to divinely given principles, rather than simply to amend it from a reformist position. The goal of the utopian response is to establish a new social organization that will eliminate evil” (Robbins 1996:74). For more on the utopian theory in terms of concept and practical use in biblical interpretation see Ehud Ben Zvi (2006).

<sup>693</sup> For more on the impact of culture and humanity see Geertz (1973:33-86).

<sup>694</sup> For more on the rhetorical critical nature and impact of the arguments of Job’s three friends see David J. A. Clines’ “Arguments of Job’s Three Friends.” In Zuck (1992:265-78).

Secondly, we could see that Elihu appears within the speeches as a *gnostic-manipulations*, and to some extent a utopian. These two points could be explained by the fact that Elihu appeared as one who knows the secret of wisdom even beyond traditional conventions of his day (32:8). This charismatic sense of wisdom depicts him as one who could immediately provide the answers to the questions of Job. He was full of things to say even when the wise people of the day and time had nothing left on their minds and lips (32:17-22). Elihu's calls to Job and his friends to "listen to me" or "listen to my words" (32:10; 33:1, 33; 34:2; 36:2; 37:2)<sup>695</sup> display his gnostic-manipulationist ideology in speech. Thus he had the audacity to speak in necessary forms to his elders just to make sure that he makes his points clear to them. He appears as the one who knows while all others do not, so they must listen to him.<sup>696</sup> Furthermore, as we have mentioned above, the gnostic-manipulationist response is one that shows people how to respond to their suffering situation. Unlike Job's three friends who tried to convince and convict Job of what they ideologically perceived to have been the reason for his suffering, Elihu took a new method of not trying to explain why Job was suffering but rather how Job could respond or cope with his pain. Elihu's mention of the ways that God speaks to human beings for their good (cf. 33:15-38) is a case in point from his agnostic-manipulationist character. Elihu does not only present himself as one who knows the secret of how to cope with one's suffering but also the wonderful mysteries of God that lead to awe in the world (cf. 36-37). Within that nexus between God's wisdom and human suffering, Elihu envisages a better sense of life, in a perfect sense in which the future is better than the present within a cultic category of response. He said that if a person complies with the interpreting messenger of God, then well-being and wholeness will come from God to rejuvenate the person (33:25,26) and give the person reason and confidence to stand before the people and confess whatever guilt they may have been harbouring in their heart. It is interesting here that well-being comes as an act of God's grace even before the confession of guilt, but rather the confession of guilt may come later on as a warning to others or a teaching aid that others would not have to repeat the same mistake.

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<sup>695</sup> 37:2 refers primarily to the voice of God in nature which Job and his friends need to listen to as Elihu has done.

<sup>696</sup> This is why scholars like Habel (1985:447-449) seem to dismiss him as boastful and arrogant. Dismissing him or shutting him down or belittling the significance of his speech is not an option to the present reader. But like Job and his friends had to learn, to give time for patient listening.

Thirdly, Job is portrayed as *thaumaturgical*. This is one who believes in a personal attempt to deal with a particularly problematic situation. Job's quest to confront God with his problem and to have God answer to his charges (cf. 9; 10; 23; 27; 31) is evidence of his local, personal attempt to engage the supernatural in dealing with his situation. Even though he has heard what his three friends have been saying to him in regards to his suffering, yet, he insists on his encounter with God to directly listen to what God has to say to him above all. There is a little variance in the thaumaturgical response and the actual story of Job as in the Protestant canon of the Old Testament. The thaumaturgical response has to do with some expectation, from the sufferer, on the use of some "magical" acts that would bring about the solution of a case in point. But according to the biblical book of Job, Job does not expect any magic from God, and even when God responded to him in a wild wind (chap. 38ff), God does not display any magical activities in response to his problem. Even Job's gracious restoration at the end of the book that bears his name (42:7-17) things turn out so miraculously that Job got even double of what he had before, yet there is no mention of any magic within the acts of his restoration to wholeness and dignity.

After considering the various social responses that the characters in the book of Job especially those mentioned in the Elihu speeches could represent, we shall now move to another sphere of the social and cultural analysis of the possible topics that we can discern from the passages.<sup>697</sup> The following discussion has much to do with the cultural aspects of the social life that appeal to the worldviews of the people especially in ancient and even some present patriarchal societies.<sup>698</sup>

### **5.5.2 Common Social and Cultural Topics**

This section engages with the interface of worldviews and value systems from the perspective of the text (author) and reader (interpreter). According to Robbins (1996:75) "Common social and cultural topics are the overall environment for the specific social issues in a text." The identification of the various levels of common social and cultural topics opens the paths for the

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<sup>697</sup> These topics are actually inexhaustible given the enormity of the scope (length) of the Elihu chapters we have to deal with. Thus the following shall be some possible examples but much more can be gleaned by further scholarship from the same corpus. We may not directly conform to Robbins' views entire and in every turn of the way but we recognize his thoughts and suggestions as helpful to our approach to the passages in question.

<sup>698</sup> For examples of the unfortunate manifestation of patriarchy in Africa see Coetzee (2001:300-304), Sultana (2010:1-18), Asinyanbola (2005) and Wood (2013).

reader into the moral/ethical world of the author, characters and possibly direct audience/recipients of the texts (especially in its early stage and form). This moral/ethical world of the text has to do with the “social and cultural values, patterns, or codes” (Robbins 1996:75) within a given context. Thus being in the framework of the text as a direct participant affords a person a direct access to the worldview of the context which invariably draws him/her into the socio-cultural context of the time and place. But as in the case of a distant reader or interpreter one could get into the sociocultural texture of the text only through the text, this helps one to engage which the sociocultural phenomena of the text “consciously or intuitively” (Robbins 1996:75) this is not without its merits. This interaction adds strength and value to the life and imagination of the reader/interpreter of the text. It helps one to know when one is reading within or away from the text, reading too much or too less into or from the text. Thus as Robbins (1996:75) rightly observes it cautions one from “ethnocentric”<sup>699</sup> and “anachronistic interpretation.”<sup>700</sup>

Although Robbins applies his interactive investigation of the sociocultural texture of the text in reference to the first century Mediterranean world, the present writer would like to engender a creative interface of the same between Elihu’s context and textual texture which is much earlier than first century Mediterranean world (C.E) but rather within a late Persian period and most probably early Hellenistic period (B.C.E) as we have earlier argued in the previous chapter of this study. This would be done with some possible resonance with African traditional socio-religious worldviews in order to creatively maintain the attempt of this interpretive exercise which is to take Robbins’ interpretive guide further especially by engaging it with some

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<sup>699</sup> Ethnocentric interpretation refers to basing “interpretations on the values one’s own people consider central to life” (Robbins 1996:75). This in a sense tempts the interpreter to colonize the text, thus reading his/her value systems as normative to the text. J. B. Agus (1981: 217-230) helps us to see ethnocentrism from the understanding of the meaning and scope of God’s covenant to his people. He discusses the narrow, exclusivistic view of the prophetic-philosophic trend of the covenants of God, thus many groups of people be it Church or Jewish communities tend to interpret the covenant of God mostly within their own self-interest to the exclusion of the rest of humanity. This demonstrates ethnocentrism and the betrayal of the open-ended scope of the love and presence of God to his people in the world. R. E. Hood (1984:269-282) presents us an example of the presence and effect of ethnocentrism in the Anglican Communion context of the Book of Common Prayer asking if the book could be inclusive of other cultures and racial realities. This is because of the dominance of the British and North American worldviews as the custodians of traditions old and new, thus their ethnocentric worldview inhabits the text of the book of prayers to the extent of excluding others to the margin.

<sup>700</sup> Anachronistic interpretation has to do with “presupposing something for one period of time that was present only during a different period of time” (Robbins 1996:75). For more on anachronism see Sami Syrjämäki (2011) who discusses anachronism as the sin of historians.

traditional African textures. These textures would be seen much better in this section because of the possibility to engage the leading text and the interactive context within ideas that have to do with value systems, worldviews, and codes as mentioned above.

Robbins (1996:76-86) has outlined eight basic common socio-cultural topics which serve as a guide into the social and cultural texture of the text from a more common level of interaction of its worldviews as well as providing an example of what might be identifiable within a given text for a better interpretation. Thus in this section, we shall briefly explain the eight topics in perspective with possible interactions with African traditional worldviews that possibly resonate with them, thus opening the possibility of the interpretive exercise to the average African readers especially in contemporary contexts. Furthermore, we shall try to search the Elihu Speeches in order to see which of them is visible and tenable for a better understanding of the speeches.

### **5.5.2.1 Honour and Shame**

We would begin with what Robbins (1996:76) describes as “Honour, Guilt, and Rights Cultures.”<sup>701</sup> In his explanation of the previous cultural topics (concepts), Robbins, unfortunately, gave more priority to honour above the other two perhaps he takes them to be the same as synonymous realities. Thus he explains honour agreeably when he says,

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<sup>701</sup> The topics of “honor, guilt, and rights cultures” are much more conspicuous in the Elihu speeches alongside other topics which are closely related to them as we shall see in the following discussions above. But it should be clear here that the present writer see the other common topics outlined by Robbins (1996:76-84) namely, “Dyadic and individualist personalities” (Robbins 1996:77), “Dyadic and legal contracts and agreements” (Robbins 1996:79), “Challenge-response (riposte)” (Robbins 1996:80), “Agriculturally based, industrial, and technological economic exchange systems” (Robbins 1996:83), “Peasants, laborers, craftspeople, and entrepreneurs” and “Limited, insufficient, and overabundant goods” (Robbins 1996:84), and “Purity codes” (Robbins 1996:85) as belonging more conspicuously in a narrative genre not necessary poetry, let alone the Elihu speeches. There possibility of the tenability of some elements in relation to some of the points mentioned here cannot be denied but they are mostly insufficient to clearly discuss them in the text without reading much into the text. Nevertheless, in Job who seeks the company of others, especially God to understand himself we could see an example of a “dyadic personality.” To the reality of challenge-response conversation we could see such elements in Elihu’s challenge to Job to listen to him and answer him if he has anything to say (cf. 33:31-33; 34:1-4; 36:27-33; 37:2). Although there are no actual responses from other conversation partners, yet, there is an implicit sense of their response. We can even take their silence as a response in Elihu’s call for them to quietly and attentively listen to what he had to say. We shall comment briefly on agriculturally based economy and purity codes elsewhere within other segments of our discussion below. But we would not like to slavishly follow Robbins pattern in everyone even where it becomes very hard to clearly see the details of the elements of his discussion in a genre of poetry like the one we are presently engaging.

*honour*<sup>702</sup> stands for a person's rightful place in society, one's social standing. This position of honour is marked off by boundaries of power, sexual status, and position on the social ladder. Honour is a claim to worth along with the social acknowledgement of worth. The purpose of honour is to serve as a social rating that entitles a person to interact in specific ways with his or her equals, superiors, and subordinates, according to the prescribed cultural cues of the society.

Honour from the foregoing perspective is both a personal and social phenomenon; it is a social construct that provides access to the influence of an individual according to the extent of his/her honour within a given society.<sup>703</sup> It is true that honour can be both "ascribed" to a person like those within the decent social class, or by reason of economic acquisition and education. Honour on another hand could be "acquired." "*Acquired* honour is honour actively sought and garnered most often at the expense of one's equals in the social context of challenge and response" (Robbins 1996:76). Robbins goes further to point out that honour has a male and female "component." The female component of honour is what he calls "shame." He explains that "Shame in this context refers to a person's sensitivity about what others think, say, and do with regard to his or her honour" (Robbins 1996:76). If the present writer understands Robbins very well, shame is a reactive feeling, mostly negative feeling of being robbed of one's honour in a given situation. This is done by what people think and says about one's honour. If this is true then shame is not another component of honour, it is very different from honour, is it a reaction to the abuse of honour, or in other words, it is the sensitivity to the misappropriation or denial of honour. Shame in the present writer's perspective is seen as the antithesis of honour.<sup>704</sup> We shall return to it a bit later to see how it relates much closely to guilt as a component rather than placing it within honour as a component.

Robbins' remarks on honour and shame in the foregoing discussion especially within their gendered scope are very true, especially in traditional and contemporary African contexts. Honour is mostly related to male persons while shame is easily ascribed to the female persons.

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<sup>702</sup> Italics in the original

<sup>703</sup> Takore (2013:6) describes the social meaning of honor from the Hebrew Biblical perspectives when he describes it as a form of glory or esteem given to a person who satisfies the expectations of a given society (community).

<sup>704</sup> Shame is the loss of respect, esteem and worth in the eyes of people in society usually as a result of a certain misbehavior that brings contempt to the person and invariably the society to which s/he belongs (cf. Takore 2013:6).

Males are honoured as the custodians of cultures and traditions, ethics and morality, truth and social order, while women are mostly at the margin of the same, they are rather seen as the persons within society upon whom the male honour must be activated and actively used. Thus they are mostly the object of control and satisfaction. If they need any honour, they must work (fight) for it. Thus their honour is not ascribed but rather acquired. In the process of their acquiring honour to themselves even as self-worth they constantly stand the risk of shame. Thus they are denied access to socio-political, socio-religious privileges in most contemporary African societies. This is an extension of traditional worldviews of gender disparity from ancient African traditions.<sup>705</sup>

these elements of honor and shame could be found in the first speech of Elihu, that is the speech in chapters 32-33:7, the anger of Elihu in the 32:1-5 is an emotional element of his shame towards Job's friends and Job himself in that he had expected them to speak to Job in a way that would convince him on not necessarily his state of guilt but rather on how to respond to his state of suffering, not the way he has been doing which is more of self-justification to the detriment of God's honor and integrity. Thus if what Elihu fears comes true that Job is truly justified then God is to blame, hence to take the shame of acting unjustly. On the other hand, leaving things as they have been doing not exonerate Job's friends from Elihu's perception of their shame, seeing that they failed to instruct Job well, but rather they went on to "condemn" him (32:3).

Furthermore, the dialectic of honour and shame could be sustained within the self-introduction of Elihu and the presentation of his need to speak after all others have done. This is found within 32:6-22 which we could borrow from Derrida's "différance"<sup>706</sup> to point the reader to the tact of Elihu in his speech. Thus from Elihu's speech-act, we could see the working of the theory of "différance" as a gesture of honour when he held his speech until the appropriate time and at the

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<sup>705</sup> For more on the concept and practical effect and implications of honor and shame in ancient Israel, and African traditional contexts see Olyan (1996:201-218); Takore (2013) even though they do neglected the aspect of the interplay of gender within the concept of honor and shame as we found in Robbins view above.

<sup>706</sup> The term difference as coined and suggested by Jacques Derrida combines the ideas of differing as 'putting off until later' and differing as being 'other' ( Derrida 1982:26ff). For elaborate explanation and use of the term in his deconstruction theory see Derrida (1997).

same time presented it as an innovative gesture of difference, which presents an opinion that actually differs from the previous speakers.<sup>707</sup>

Elihu's waiting and hoping for "age" and "many years" to speak because he is "young" and they are "old" is a great pointer to his self-consciousness of the need for honour according to the socio-cultural expectation of the day (32:6,7). This ties well with my opening comments in the background to this study as a reflection of life from my traditional social and cultural context in which younger people are not expected or allowed to speak where older people are speaking or interrupting while in conversation with elders. This silencing technique could be pedagogic in order to instil values of self-control and the ascription of honour to those whom honour is due. Yet, it could be a method of shaming the young as sidelining them from the centre of things, thus pushing them to the margin as those who have almost nothing useful or meaningful to offer. Elihu does not actually seek to pour contempt on his people in context, but rather he acted based on the necessity for what he believes is right and urgent even to the subversion of settled order of things in his given context. This is the contestation of ideas and values within a sociocultural environment.

Furthermore, Elihu's assertion that it is not only the old who are wise (32:9) has finally unveiled his seeming little secret within the actual scope of wisdom in context. Thus the real context of the origination of wisdom is beyond human sociocultural constructs, and it is within every person who has the Spirit of the Almighty. This in a sense also subverts any idea of wisdom monopolisation by a selected few within a given social context. This also presents a point that exposes the elders to the reality of shame before such a young man who now speaks with charismatic authority. The fact that words eluded Job's friends (32: 15, 16) and made them grow silent at the nick of time further exposes their shame as wise men. Thus they are helpless before each other and powerless to actually rescue the honour of what is at stake, not just Job's life as

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<sup>707</sup> This point of view of the element of "différance" both as waiting (differral) as a sign of respect and difference within Elihu speech marks it distinctively from the others and hopefully respond to the critics of the book of Job especially those who tend to dismiss the speech of Elihu as almost empty and tautological. We believe his speech is very innovative and significant if not to the entire flow of the Job-story then to the sustenance of the tension within Job and his readers in a sense of inner (intuitive, emotional) preparation for the coming of Yahweh and Yahweh's following speeches.

we shall further come to realise in Elihu's speeches in the following sections but rather God's honour which to him is very much at stake.

Elihu's différance as a sign of his honour is further displayed in his promise of speech without partiality or flattery to anyone (32:17-22). This is not without its motivation which could be the fear of God (my Maker) as the beginning of wisdom. This fear we as could see from this passage proves the thought of Jaco Gericke (2012:440-51 cf. 4.5 above) on the premise that it is not only fear as reverence to the divine as a sign of engaging the great mystery (*tremendum mysterium* cf. Otto 1959) of God that constitutes wisdom as the order of things in light of God's precepts but also fear as terror or the dead of death (extermination) which Gericke identifies as "paranoia." This could be the combination of the elements of honor and shame in that Elihu's sense of wisdom in dealing with human beings within an acceptable order is in fear (dread) of a possible consequence that could definitely endanger and even destroy him (take me away, vs. 22), thus he is helpless in having no option but to choose to be truthful, tender and kind in the given situation. On the other hand it is an honour on to him for discerning what is right and willing to do it, thus not succumbing to the whims and curiosity of youth.

Elihu's preparation of Job's mind as he was about to actually speak his mind on behalf of God (33:1-4) is another act of différance in his speech-act tactics. His approach to Job here is very much tender and innovative, more genuine than the three friends of Job. He struck the code of honour when he invited Job to see him as a fellow concrete human being in concrete but the complex world (33:7). The complexity of life here has to do with its origin which is the creative hand of God which mould human beings from clay. This, as we have seen from chapters 3 and 4 of our study of this verse, is an act of God's grace of creation as is also intuitively understood and reflected in other extra-biblical texts, that the human person is the handiwork of the divine. This gives the human an important social and cultural texture of life, yet, places them constantly as helpless creatures in the hands of the divine. The divine has supernatural power over human beings and every natural element thus using them for the good of the human even in very complex situations of life that could include pain and helplessness (33:15-33). God does all these things in order to save the human from going down the pit (33:29, 30). It is an act of honour to

preserve the life of the one who suffers, thus turning his suffering as a means of grace through which to bless his life.

### 5.5.2.2 Guilt and shame

After discussing the meaning and place of honour and shame as antithetical social and cultural phenomena and how they could be discerned in Elihu's first speech, we shall now take Robbins' topics further to discuss the meaning and social function of guilt and shame, rights, justice and righteousness. This in a sense takes the discussion of Robbins further because he only leaves it at honour and minimal comment on shame in a contestable way.

Guilt and shame are emotional elements of consciousness; they are manifested within the human sphere of sensation and/or feeling. The sense of shame could be a reaction to the views of other people towards oneself that confirms his/her guilt. Accordingly, it could be an acceptance of guilt. From a public perspective it could be seen as the struggling with guilt in the quest for honour.<sup>708</sup> Although the word "guilt" and "shame" may not have directly occurred in the Elihu speeches, yet, they are implied as we have discussed on honour and shame above. The need for Job's self-justification and his further insistence on his innocence which Elihu also heard and quoted from (cf. 34:5-6) is evidence that Job had been trying to dismiss the guilt-feeling that the interpretations of his three friends have been trying to impose on him because of his suffering. Job did not admit to his guilt so he did not actually admit to the shame of committing any sin or criminal offence that may warrant such suffering. Ironically, Elihu tries to make sure that Job is ashamed of himself and admit to the guilt of justifying himself rather than God.<sup>709</sup> We can see the ironic depiction of honor and shame within the resistance of the possibility of guilt in this context, in that Job resists any act of being guilty, thus resisting shame that his three friends and

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<sup>708</sup> For more on the dynamics of shame and guilt within cultural contexts as a struggling for honor in both personal and public levels see Benedict (1934, 1947), You (1997:57-64), Murray and Ciarrocchi (2007:22-41), Murray, Ciarrocchi and Murray-Swank (2007:222-234), Hesselgrave (1983:461-483), in relation to the context of ancient Israel see Olyan (1996:201-218). It is noteworthy here that we cannot deny the practical presence of the feelings of guilt and shame and even the infliction of such feelings that may lead to dejection and exclusion in African contexts. But sadly such topics are often neglected in notable works of African leading scholars (cf. Mbiti 1969). Nevertheless, the autobiographical account of Turaki (2012) reflects the issues of guilt and shame as a theological struggling with sin. That is more of a private kind of feeling and not public confrontation within a curve of tension as could be seen in the book of Job.

<sup>709</sup> Cf. "But I tell you, in this you are not right, for God is greater than any mortal" (33:12) and 35:2,3 which say, "Do you think this is just? You say, 'I am in the right, not God.' Yet you ask him, 'What profit is it for me, and what do I gain by not sinning?'"

Elihu have been trying to convince him of, although we must note that Elihu is not actually bent on trying to convict Job of any sin per se apart from a cautious call within the rubric of his charismatic wisdom that Job should try to handle his suffering with good care and caution towards God because of the sovereignty and freedom of God.<sup>710</sup>

### 5.5.2.3 Human Rights (to speech)

Following Habel (1985:44f) Elihu recognised the need for him to speak to these elders. Thus he gave his apology which earned him the “right to speak.”<sup>711</sup> Right here could be understood as opportunity, or freedom or a necessary space to do something that is considered urgent or important especially to the doer. It is the moral and ethical opportunity to do something without undue restraints and/or interference by others (cf. Ajibade 2014:42). Elihu shows his seriousness to speech in finally letting his thoughts out of his mind after a long time of waiting for the right time or opportunity to speak (cf. 32:6-7). He further pressed his right to participate in the discussion because of the special charisma that he believes he has, that is the gift of wisdom by the presence of the Spirit of God (32:8). This earns him space and freedom to stand on the same platform with Job and his friends to discuss the mystery of life and wisdom. Elihu’s right for speech became urgent when he describes it as deep longing or necessity for his personal relief (32:18,19). This imagery is such a rhetorical device in Elihu’s speech that shows the seriousness of the need for him to speak his mind and set his entire life at ease. This speech is one of the necessary acts of being human. We know our world better when we know ourselves enough to identify and speak out the truth of ourselves to others around us. This shows the therapeutic effect of speech which in other words renders silence as a disability.

Furthermore, Elihu shows his creatureliness as another pointer to his right to speak to Job about the mysteries of life within the capacity of human wisdom (33:6,7). The fact that Elihu too is a human being like Job gives him the right to understand what being human in a concrete world entails, thus he could have some important if not interesting points to share with Job. Even

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<sup>710</sup> We shall return to this point later in the next chapter on the ideological-theological textures of the Elihu speeches.

<sup>711</sup> Habel (1985:449) agreeably (although could otherwise interpreted as anachronistically) discusses chapter 32-6-10 as “Elihu’s Right to Speak.”

though he may not clearly understand everything that Job was going through, yet, as a fellow human being, he could stand in solidarity with him.<sup>712</sup>

Although it can be argued that Elihu had space/right to speak to his elders, even telling them deep truths in the earnest sense of speech (cf. the use of imperatives in the speeches), yet, we cannot say that he followed the social and cultural conventions of speaking to those who are older than he. It is a subversion of the norms in many social contexts. Even in traditional African settings, the younger people do not actually have the rights to speak to their elders in any way close to what Elihu did. Nevertheless, we could argue here that he also had the courage to speak in such a way not because of the normativity of such speech but because of the necessity and need of the context.

#### **5.5.2.4 Justice and righteousness**

These two concepts could be seen interchangeably especially in the second and third speeches of Elihu (chaps 34-35).<sup>713</sup> Justice here conjures up a juridical scenario in which what is right is discerned and given to the proper person who needs and deserves it. Thus the court case arranged by Elihu to give Job a fair hearing is a demonstration of justice. Elihu then plays the roles of both an accuser and an advocate whom both accuses Job of self-justification and self-righteousness and spoke passionately on behalf of God (cf. Magdalene 2007). Justice as a fair hearing is allowed in Elihu's speeches but justice as a personal testimony is not allowed nor was it acceptable. He counters Job's argument because they contradict the social norms thus in his speeches which seem to vindicate Job only prepares him for more speech especially from the divine. Up to the end of the speeches, Elihu had many things to say, and he did, but he did not actually solve Job's problem of suffering without reason, hence without justice.

On the other hand, being right as a topic is utilised especially in reference to the divine.<sup>714</sup> God is righteousness; his sovereignty may seem to contradict his righteousness. Nevertheless, Elihu's

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<sup>712</sup> We shall further discuss the topics of right and solidarity in relation to the divine, in our next chapter.

<sup>713</sup> In the Elihu speeches and even the entire book of Job it could be discerned that being righteous/ or just is portrayed in contrast to being wicked (cf. 32:1; 36:7 and 34:26; 36:6, 17 see also the connection to 38:13, 15; 40:12).

<sup>714</sup> We shall return to this topic of being right as an attribute later on in our next chapter on ideological-theological discussion.

speeches press the point that it is only through the sovereignty of God that God's righteousness is seen much better. Elihu thus calls Job to take note of the bigger picture of life as elsewhere mentioned above. His concern was not actually on the righteousness of Job but on how righteous a person could be even in the face of suffering. This concept helps us to see the priestly elements that permeate Elihu's worldview and speeches. He advocates penitence as a way of gaining restoration from God, in any case of sin, forgiveness would be possible if one is contrite and humble before God (33:26).<sup>715</sup>

#### **5.5.2.5 Wisdom and Being wise**

As already identified in our intratexture (inner texture) and the intertexture of the Elihu speeches, wisdom is one of the important and common topics in the book of Job which achieves some kind of dialectical climax in the Elihu speeches. We describe it as a dialectical climax because of Elihu's considerable interest to speak out on behalf of God. In this, he tries to creatively respond to the inadequacy of the comprehension and representation of wisdom and the art of being wise by Job's friends. Wisdom is first identified as a noun, thus a phenomenon of life that is bestowed on humanity in order to enhance their real understanding of life (32:8). This drastically challenges the art of being wise beyond traditional conventions (32:9). Thus it is not only the aged who are wise. This makes being wise an act of God's grace on any human being; we could take it further beyond gender binaries and also assert that it is not only the male persons who are wise.

Furthermore, wisdom is the skill of life was not neglected but rather also closely identified as an urgent necessity in Job's life (33:33). Thus dialogue is employed as a paradigmatic attempt to impart wisdom to Job. Elihu presents himself as a wise person; his wisdom is in terms of the perfection of his revelatory knowledge (36:3,4). Thus he further unfolds his profound and wide wisdom by pointing Job to the actual reality and wonders of God (chaps 36-37). At the end of his speech, Elihu ironically concludes on the fact that God's greatness is beyond human wisdom. Thus God does not regard one who is wise in his own eyes (37:24). This is a critique of being wise and so invariably points to the facts of awe and humility as the paths to wisdom. Awe here

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<sup>715</sup> This reflects the "purity codes" (Robbins 1996:85) within the Elihu speeches as the socially acceptable way of engaging with the divine and restoring the order of things to a more acceptable and safe condition.

depicts the high majesty of God (cf. 37:22; 28:28) which is the fear of God that becomes wisdom.

### **5.5.2.6 Retribution**

This is one of the common topics within the entire book of Job. Its elements are also reflected in the Elihu speeches. As earlier explained in our section on conceptualization (cf. 1.9.4), retribution has to do with the divine-moral responsive nexus between deeds and consequences in a person's life or that of a community (cf. Dillard 1984: 164-72; Berlejung 2015:271-287). The elements of retribution as a social and cultural construct are seen in Elihu's further insistence as Bildad did (cf. chap. 8) on the implicit fact that no one who does wrong goes free especially in the sight of God who sees all things and judges all things. For example, Elihu guarded himself against flattery and/or partiality amongst others for fear of God's retributive action upon him (32:22). He further reprimanded Job within the same cultural category of thinking when he indicts him of living with evildoers and contemplating the profitability of serving God (34:7-9). God is said to depose the high and mighty ones because of their social injustices (34:18-20, 24-27).

### **5.5.2.7 Creation**

Another common topic that characterises Elihu's speeches is the idea of creation. Creation here is described as an act of "making" things and human beings.<sup>716</sup> Thus God is the creator of all things. In these speeches Elihu depicts God as a maker; this helps us to see the divine as being actively involved in the creative processes of everything and everyone.<sup>717</sup> As mentioned above, the social context and order of things are all arranged and controlled by God. Chapters 36-37 are replete with ideas of God's infinite power of creation and control. Although there are no other detailed elements of commercial distribution, redistribution and reciprocity as presupposed by Robbins (1996:83), yet, the creative acts of God in the world is evident in the presence of agrarian society. In the Elihu speeches especially within the chapters mentioned in this section, God is the creator and controller of rain, seasons and all that provides sufficient food and

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<sup>716</sup> Cf. 28:26; 31:15; 33:4; 40:15, 19 in reference to God as Maker see 4:17; 32:22; 35:10.

<sup>717</sup> We shall briefly return to this topic also in our next chapter on ideological-theological interpretation.

sustenance for all the living things in the world (cf. 37:5-13). This is one of the great mysteries that Elihu wishes to show Job in order to humble him.

The reality of God as the Creator resonates very well with the African contexts both traditional and modern. Mbiti (1969:39) clearly supports the previous assertion when he says, “Over the whole of Africa creation is the most widely acknowledged work of God. This concept is expressed by saying that God created all things, through giving Him the name of Creator (or Moulder, or Maker), and through addressing Him in prayer and invocations as the Creator.” From the foregoing discussion, we could see that in both the ancient social and cultural context of Elihu and that of traditional and modern Africa God is the centre of Creation. Thus the sociocultural context is part and parcel of the cosmos, thus part of the vast mystery of God.

### 5.5.3 Final Cultural Categories

Following Aristotle’s *Art of Rhetoric*, Robbins (1996:86) also adopts the interpretive texture of discerning the location of one’s culture within the final topics and categories of culture that set the stage for one to understand the writer’s (author’s) and character’s worldview and/or point of view in terms of their argument. The topics in this section of the study are concerned with the distinct “manner in which people present their propositions, reasons, and arguments both to themselves and to other people” (Robbins 1996:86). These topics comprise the dominant culture,<sup>718</sup> subculture<sup>719</sup>, counterculture,<sup>720</sup> contraculture<sup>721</sup> and luminal cultural rhetoric.<sup>722</sup>

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<sup>718</sup> This cultural texture has to do with the presentation of “a system of attitudes, values, dispositions, and norms that the speaker either proposes or asserts are supported by social structures vested with power to impose its goals on people in a significantly broad territorial region” (Robbins 1996:86).

<sup>719</sup> This in many ways is an imitation of the attitudes and values of the dominant culture but it takes it a little further in terms of its focus on ethnic subculture which may be identified in terms of the use of language of other specific ethnic identity norms to perpetuate a certain sense of cultural identity (cf. Robbins 1996:86-87).

<sup>720</sup> As the name implies, this cultural rhetoric could be described as an “alternative cultural rhetoric” which “rejects *explicit* and *mutable* characteristics of the dominant or subculture rhetoric to which it responds” (Robbins 1996:87). This is innovative, revolutionary, reformatory, and utopian at best. It evokes the coming of a new future with new possibilities that may appear heretical to the dominant culture. It welcomes newness and provides space for vital hope and inclusive relationality for a better life (cf. Robbins 1996:87).

<sup>721</sup> Also as the name implies this is an oppositional culture. It is mainly a group culture that responds negatively to anything that it considers a threat within itself. Robbins (1996:87) explains it well when he writes, “Contraculture rhetoric is primarily a reaction-formation response to some form of dominant culture, subculture, or counterculture rhetoric. This means that it does not create an alternative response on the basis of values it develops out of a different system of understanding, but it simply reacts in a negative way to certain values and practices in another culture.”

Giving the entire flow of the book of Job and even its interfacing nature as we have seen from the intertexture<sup>723</sup>, *the dominant cultural rhetoric* could be identified within the cultural traditions and philosophies of Job's three friends. They concluded that Job must have been wrong that is why he was suffering. This is in line with retribution ideology which forms the dominant culture of deeds and consequences. For them, Job has no further chance of acquittal but to admit to his wrong and confess them before God and pray for mercy. In the speeches of Elihu especially in chapters 32 and 34, there is dominant culture of hierarchy. In the former, is it within human society and culture textures in which Elihu needed to show a good sense of respect and order in the presence of and elders. And in the latter, God is seen as being above all mortals (33:12) thus God is entirely above any reproach and/or accusation (34:12,13). God is majestic and full of awe (37:23ff) beyond the reach of human beings but deserving submission and worship.<sup>724</sup>

Following the dominant, social and cultural supremacy of God is that of the major character, Job, who is depicted within *liminal cultural rhetoric*. Right from the beginning of the conversations (3-27) and Job's Oath of innocence as self-witness (defence?) (29-31) Job has been struggling to actually know himself in light of what is happening to him. He has tenaciously held onto his integrity that he is innocent of all the interpretive charges against him (34:5,6). This is Job's liminality; he is torn across the poles, not willing to yield to the presuppositions and assertions of the dominant cultural voices of his three friends, yet, not knowing what exactly awaits him from the voice of God. His social, cultural and religious identity is conflictual as reflected in his disjunctive speeches in reply to the previous chapters in conversation with him. The Elihu speeches also seem to exonerate Job (33:32), yet, he was only prepared more within his liminality for what Yahweh finally has to say in the long run (37:2ff). Elihu calls Job to listen to the voice of God in nature through which he could learn wisdom which is beyond the skills of life but rather as embodied in the mystery of fearing the LORD.

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<sup>722</sup> This is a transitional culture which struggles within itself and in relation to other dominant and often domineering cultural textures and identities in order to find a space for itself which is often contestable. This could happen as a personal or a group experience which is textured within sense of "disjunctive and multiaccental" speech form and reality of life that could be described as a hybrid. It is thus a dialectic of culture and identity which is often split between or across social and cultural contexts and rhetorical textures (cf. Robbins 1996:88).

<sup>723</sup> That is, in the preceding chapter of this dissertation.

<sup>724</sup> We shall reflect further on this theme in our next chapter.

The voice of Elihu is the voice of *counter cultural rhetoric*. It challenges the dominant culture especially as to the reason for suffering by pointing unto the purpose of suffering. He also challenges the origin of wisdom as a gift within the quality of life that shows itself in the form of attributes rather than a cultural presupposition that consists of poor skills of life (32:7-9). Elihu's counter cultural rhetoric helps to push the boundaries of knowing what wisdom is and actually being wise. Nevertheless, he maintains the influential voice of the otherness of God beyond human challenge (33:12f). Elihu's counter cultural speeches help us to see not the presence of things in themselves or how they work in the world but rather how we should react in conversation with them. In this case teaching Job's friends the wisdom of speech, teaching Job the wisdom of being wise in understanding God and himself, teaching his readers the wisdom and agility in pushing the boundaries of dominant ideologies, reading against the grain and always being opened for new possibilities that lie ahead.

Although it is beyond the scope of the Elihu speeches, we can say in passing that the voice of Yahweh in the book of Job ironically reflects *the sub cultural rhetoric* thus not far away from the dominant culture but linguistically innovative towards keeping the dominant categories in view. This we must leave for further research on the speeches of Yahweh (38-42:5) in conversation with Job.

## 5.6 Summary

From the above study, this chapter focused more on the social and cultural textures of the Elihu speeches. These textures mainly seek to follow the literary pointers that appear in the Elihu rhetoric as displayed in the nature of the speeches from our chapter 3 above. Thus these literary pointers help us to see where and how to identify and locate the social and cultural contexts within which the Elihu speeches might have emerged. Thus as a progressive study of our intratexture and intertexture (cf. 5.2), we agree with the fact that the Elihu speeches in the book of Job are constructed with a very qualitative texture of both depths of learning and width of contextual and inter-contextual exploration or the exposure of life. We thus argue that the Elihu speeches in the book of Job might have been the product of the merging critical voices of custodians of religion and high culture of the postexilic period namely the prophet, priest and

scribes. Although it is a critical engagement with ancient priestly tradition in terms of life and religious worldview, nevertheless, we identified Elihu as a Prophetic-Wisdom-Voice that criticised the status quo and leaves it open for further engagement. The Elihu speeches we conclude might have been done by an informed person (s) from these emerging voices with some specific intentions within the overarching flow of the book of Job. Thus the Elihu speeches in this sense are not seen as an unnecessary interruption in the flow of the book of Job, but rather as an innovative attempt to closely draw the attention of Job and his readers of what is coming ahead and soon enough.

It is argued in the above discussions that the Elihu speeches are constructed from and within a social context that had the rise of intellectual interests and activities of professional learning skills and the hybridization of cultures and information/worldviews (cf. 5.3, 5.4, 5.5). This traditional sense of social and cultural life is noticeable even from the previous speeches of the disputatious dialogues between Job and his three friends. But in this study, we see the friends' perspective more from a generalistic, philosophical-ideological point of view. Thus they all spoke their thoughts pass Job while Elihu is depicted as a distinct and intentional voice who really wanted to talk to Job. The scribal and character voice that we have discerned to help us see the significance of the Elihu speeches much better is the prophetic-wisdom voice, which among the polyphonic array of voices in the book also presents itself as a voice of truth.

The speeches of Elihu, we argue, could have most probably come from the late Persian period in terms of the history of their composition and compilation, which makes their reception into the canon of Israel as part of the Hebrew Bible understandable (cf. 5.6).<sup>725</sup> This was informed by the interactive sense of the speeches with other texts and realities within that period that have very similar function in terms of trends, but the Elihu speeches are corrective to a certain dogmatic view of life and the relationship between God and humanity within an ironic prophetic-wisdom-voice which makes it so distinctive and literary colorful. Elihu is full of ironic yet intentionally subversive rhetoric against powers that dominate and perpetuates injustice and traditional

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<sup>725</sup> This observation agrees much with the intertextual texture of the Elihu speeches (4.4ff) which Elihu's speeches are found to be more engaging with other Hebrew and extrabiblical materials like Second Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel and some Egyptian and Mesopotamian similar versions/trends of literature and rhetoric, which are also believed to have been composed during the same period of time. Not in term of the exactness of time in the strict sense of the word but rather within some good sense of time overlap and intellectual consciousnesses (cf. Middlemas 2007).

slavishness which lead to folly and destruction. His speech is full of passion for justice and righteousness as the cardinals of wisdom that is anchored in the mystery of God (cf. 5.6.1.5). Elihu spoke in absolute truths from thoughts that have the definite (concrete) world in mind.

The reading of the speeches in light of special or specific, collective and final topics has helped us to see some important categories of social and cultural responsive frameworks and textures within the Elihu speeches and in conversation with the reader's context as well. This has further helped us to see the uniqueness of the Elihu speeches thus pointing us to their significance in the book of Job in helping Job to move beyond the dominant cultural categories of his day into an expectation of something better out of his suffering. Elihu also prepares Job to carefully and patiently manage his liminality so that he does not further complicate the dilemma that he is already struggling with. Elihu does not give clear cut answers to Job's problems, but rather he acknowledges them and calls for a greater view of life than just a quick resignation to apathy.

In summary, this chapter has taken our intertextual study from chapter four further by way of discerning the possible social and cultural contexts in terms of time period and location of the production of the Elihu speeches. In our next chapter, we shall concentrate more on the reality of the divine, namely, God in the Elihu speeches. This would help us to take our reflection of some ideological constructs further in order to see their potential and significance in teaching how to be wise with regard to the presence and actions of God in the world (i.e. theological perspective). This would not be without its critical points of interests especially in regards to particular categories of the nature of God that preclude possibilities for further conversation or engagement with the divine in a given context. This attempt would take some thoughts on the African traditional understanding of God into consideration and see how to call for a more constructive engagement.

## Chapter 6: Ideological-Theological Textures of Job 32-37

### 6.1 Introduction

This chapter would carry our previous discourses, especially in our third chapter further into the spheres of ideological-theological textures. We have already explored the nature of the Elihu speeches in our chapter three above. This chapter would use that to discuss further the ideological elements that under-guard the speeches. Thus in this section, we shall look at the significance of the narrative-argumentative and the aesthetic textures (cf. 3.3.3 & 3.3.4) of the Elihu speeches in order to see their use in terms of function. This would help us to explore the possible intentions that the speeches are meant to achieve primary as a contribution to the entire Job-friends debate, and then we shall see its significance in preparation and anticipation of the closing speeches of Yahweh in chapters 38-42:6. The study in this chapter would help us to discuss our hypotheses which focus on the ironic depiction of being wise, thus to see how the use of irony in a literary text like the Elihu speeches helps one to see another dimension of the meaning of wisdom, suffering, divine power and justice. On another hand, it will help us to discuss further our hypothesis which focuses on the role of God in human suffering and see how that challenges our understanding of human wisdom and knowledge in regards to the divine.

For better clarity of discussion, we decide to separate our discussion of ideological and theological textures. The basic reality is not so much in their similarity but their differences in terms of function. They may appear or sound similar, but one leads to the other in an interfacing sense of the word. Ideology, especially from a sociocultural perspective leads to a certain kind of theological perspective, so also a theological perspective from a particular kind of sociocultural perspective leads to a certain kind of ideology. These two are not mutually exclusive, but for the sake of clarity in terms of some of the critical elements that we consider essential especially using Robbins' guide to socio-rhetoric we would try to discuss them in the same chapter as interfacing realities that highly influence each other but with separate emphasis

which might have been the reason why Robbins discusses them as separate chapters of his book.<sup>726</sup>

## 6.2 Explaining Ideological Texture

Before we engage Robbins (1996) much closely for suggestions on how to conduct an ideological interpretation, it is important at this point to briefly explore what it means, or at least, what it is mostly understood to mean within the art of scientific studies and biblical interpretations in particular. To ask the question, what is an ideology? One gets various answers to this vital point for an ideological criticism. The following points are good examples. The term “ideology” originally was explained in a simple sense as “the science of ideas” (Yi 2002:117), nevertheless, this simplification was not actually maintained if at all it captures what many other scholars later conceived of the idea after its principal proponent Antoine Destutt de Tracy from the time of the French Revolution (cf. Byrnes 1991:316-330). The concept has been received and applied variously by various scholars. Thus we could now sense its political taste as to describe it as a texture of politics. This connotes the fact that ideological texture is one used in service of power within the local political context whether in terms of state politics or cultural, egoistic politics. For example, at the wake of Napoleon Bonaparte in France, he critically resisted Destutt de Tracy and his group which turned the tides of ideology as a school for the freedom of the mind within scientific ideas to one of accusation and defeatism (cf. Yi 2002: 118). The changing face of ideology continues to advance even to the rise of Marxism. According to Yi (2002:118) “Marx regarded ideology as a distorting belief system.” It is seen as a set of ideas into which people are led to hiding themselves by believing them which is mostly to the service of those in power or those who have the capability to exert such influences on them. Ideology in Marxists’ perspective is an “illusion, fantasy and false consciousness” (cf. Yi 2002:118). It is noteworthy to know from Karl Mannheim’s perspective that ideology is a product of social and cultural realities which are not free of biases (cf. Yi 2002: 119-120). For Mannheim, ideology is an idea system that is more of the conservative texture (cf. O’Keefie 1983:283-305). From David

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<sup>726</sup> It should be noted here that we would not slavishly follow Robbins on every note as we have earlier indicated but we shall use his guide in areas that appear viable to the nature and elemental scope of our text. This means there are points from Robbins’ guide which are invisible in the Elihu speeches that we are discussing thus such sections or points would not be discussed not because they are not important at all, but because they do not fit our focal text.

Clines' perspective, ideology is understood as 'a coherent set of ideas amounting to a worldview' that is often than not, not devoid of social class interest (cf. Yi 2002: 120). Ideology is also understood pejoratively as the "vested interest" of a certain social or theological group in order to exert control over others (cf. Yi 2002:120; Brueggemann 1984:89-107). Ideology is a closed mindset that refuses alternative views (Yi 2002:133).

Therefore biblical ideological criticism<sup>727</sup> is a critical view on three main levels of the author, text and reader which could have both intrinsic and extrinsic perspectives (cf. Yi 2002: 123). Penchansky (1992: 35-41) describes how an ideological reading could be done by putting Derrida's reading "under erasure" in practice within biblical interpretation. This engages with the writer's perspective within the written perspective of the author in question and then point his readers to the critical weakness of what s/he reads as a statement 'under erasure.'

Biblical ideological criticism opens the Bible to human subjectivity and intersubjective reasoning,<sup>728</sup> thus "Human autonomy, established as it is in human subjectivity as the realm of freedom, comes at the cost of an antagonism of people towards the world of material objects and its analogue in the human self, the experiences of the senses" (Briggs 1992: 3,4). It also critiques the "rationalising practices" of capitalist societies that hinder the flourishing of humanity within the subjective paradigm. "It protects the colonisation of experience through the empire of reason, asserting the claims of the affective over against the hegemony of the cognitive." It confronts the dialogic effect that comes from the text as a force that exerts "pressure" and variation as "judgment" (Sternberg 1985:505) from the text into a given community of readers or personal reading experience<sup>729</sup> that hopefully engages with the polyphonic texture of the text.<sup>730</sup>

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<sup>727</sup> For various examples of readings that see the biblical texts as ideological texts especially in regards to the biblical hermeneutics of ideology in the Old Testament see Gottwald (1983; 1985), Stenberg (1985), Garbini (1988), Boer (2003), Tribble (1978; 1984), Fiorenza (1999, 2001, 2007).

<sup>728</sup>For more on subjectivity and intersubjectivity theory even in its relation to theology and religious education see Smith (1993:378-393), Bracken (1996:703-719; 2006:207-220), LaMothe (1999:230-240), Seitz (2010:45-62).

<sup>729</sup> Thus it helps to address the unnecessary effect of the following on a given reader, "Suppression, invention, manipulation: from the reader's vantage point of dramatic irony, this distorted account of what we know to have happened aggravates the effect of the happenings themselves. The evasion of the truth is as scandalous as it is futile; and so is the evasion of responsibility, manifested in the acrobatics of grammatical person" (Sternberg 1985:507).

<sup>730</sup> For more on the polyphonic texture of a text for intersubjective dialogism see Bakhtin (1981; 1984; 1986) and Newsom (2003).

As guests in a conversation, ideological reading engages the conversation of people within a given text. It is the interface of ideas between people of different times, and geography and perspectives. Just like in the socio-cultural textures above, the focus here is also people in and around the text. This brings the creative tension of an author and his reader in conversation with the characters in the text, into focus (cf. Robbins 1996: 95). This kind of analysis stands on the opposite spectrum of intratexture (inner texture).<sup>731</sup> It is noteworthy here that, “Inner texture concerns words, phrases, and clauses of the text itself; ideological texture concerns the biases, opinions, preferences, and stereotypes of a particular writer and a particular reader” (Robbins 1996:95). For one to clearly see and clarify the elements of ideology within a particular text, there is need to closely consider the various spheres which gave rise to such elemental reality that constitutes a certain ideology and how it is deployed in a particular a text. Thus the following section focuses on the spheres and modes of ideological discourse.

The spheres of ideological thinking and behaviour happen within a self (or a person) in relation to other individuals in a given context. Thus Robbins (1996:95) is right to indicate the spheres of ideological interpretation as those which start from the particular person who engages the exercise, that is from “me” who tries to engage the text in terms of writing and interpreting it. Secondly, another sphere of ideological interpretation has to do with “other people’s interpretation” of a given text (Robbins 1996:95 cf. Jonker and Lawrie 2005: 60-61) . This examination would help one to know their own point of view and areas of interest within a given text as well as the kind of text that they are making out of it. The third sphere of ideological interpretation has to do with “the text” which is the interpreter or a group of interpreters. These various layers open the distinct layers of the text from the different people who engage the text as an object of interpretation.

Robbins (1996:95) rightly points out the similarity of ideological interpretation with intertextual interpretation. In an intertextual interpretation, the interpreter(s) analyses how a particular text relates or interacts with other texts around it. While in an ideological texture, a particular author analyses himself/herself in light of the text before them as well as how other interpreters engage the same text. Thus it is an analysis of the network of people’s mindsets or worldviews around a

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<sup>731</sup> Cf. Chapter 3 above.

particular text. It is impossible to make ideological interpretation only from one particular person's point of view, but rather in relation to other people. It is noteworthy here that, "A person's ideology concerns her or his conscious or unconscious enactment of presuppositions, dispositions, and values held in common with other people" (Robbins 1996:95). As we shall see from the Elihu speeches, later on, the ideology of a particular person may not necessarily be "in common with other people" like Robbins puts it but rather in tension with other people as well. The two could be obtainable, but there is no certainty of the presence of only one particular face of it. From the reader's perspective, there may be some points of harmony in terms of commonality of socio-cultural values or divergence of opinion due to the shift in life values. This divergence may bring about some kind of tension between the ideology of the author which is also reflected in the given text, and the ideology of the interpreters which engages the text from the outside and in relation to other interpreters like him or her. Before we move to the next section, we need to point out here that ideologies are sociocultural constructs that present and represent a systemic worldview within a particular time and place in history with some particular purpose which is mainly to decide, control and maintain a certain view of human limitations in life. In other words, ideology is the deployment of systemic ideas in service of power.

Some of the sociocultural contexts of which ideologies are cultivated and expressed include the local context of the individual, which Robbins (1996:96) calls the "individual location." This is where a person grows and is primarily educated about the meaning and values of life. The perspectives of life from this early life context may certainly shift with the movement of the person into other locations and engagement with other individuals in search for the meaning of life. Another social influence for the formation and expression of ideology is the network of life, which is one's life in relation to other people around her/him. This is what Robbins (1996:100 cf. Jonker and Lawrie 2005:61) agreeably calls life in "relations to groups." These groups are no doubt diversified in terms of their textures.<sup>732</sup>

Apart from the social and cultural spheres of life which form the various contexts within which ideologies are cultivated, there are also modes in which ideologies are critically expressed and often contested. Robbins (1996:105ff) helps us to see the five modes of intellectual discourse

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<sup>732</sup> For more on the groups like clique, gang, action set, faction, corporate group, historic tradition and multiple historic traditions throughout the world, see Robbins (1996:100-101).

patterns or methodological approaches either for the promotion of ideologies or for their contestations (i.e. criticism). These five modes of ideological, intellectual discourses patterns comprise the following; historical-critical discourse,<sup>733</sup> social-scientific criticism,<sup>734</sup> history-of-religions discourse,<sup>735</sup> new historical discourse<sup>736</sup> and postmodern deconstructive discourse.<sup>737</sup> From the previous modes of intellectual discourses, we shall utilise two major ones namely, the social-scientific discourse and the postmodern deconstructive discourse in order to engage the embedded problems that the Elihu speeches may pose to a given reader.<sup>738</sup>

Another question that is crucial for the progress of our study on the ideological textures of the text here is about the technique of analysing ideology from and within a given text. This helps us to see the various tenable levels of the presence of ideology in relation to a given text. Thus this is mainly the work of an interpreter and the text, but the struggle would be with the author and

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<sup>733</sup> This form of discourse engages the origin and/or the genuineness of a given material. Thus it is interested in searching for the “accurate historiography that yields theological insight into God’s activity in the world” (Robbins 1996:106). This mode of discourse is no doubt a contested one, it is not as simple as it appears here. It has a lot to do with the search for what is true, reliable, genuine and useful from the biblical text in question. This gave rise to many other forms of discourses in the field of biblical studies thus it stands as some like Robbins describes as the “dominant culture rhetoric in the field of biblical studies today” (1996:107).

<sup>734</sup> “This discourse invests itself most directly with social and cultural anthropologists, with a special commitment to overcoming ethnocentrism and anachronism.” Thus as a consequence from its point of interest and analytical procedures it “locates a person among social scientists rather than literary critics or theologians” (Robbins 1996:107). This could provide the possibility of making one a biblical social scientist, as a result of taking biblical studies as point of departure into social scientific studies in order to critically address the ills of any given society.

<sup>735</sup> “This discourse, like social-scientific criticism, uses historical-anthropological resources, but it uses them to compare religious rituals, myths, festivals, and practices in groups anywhere in the world”(Robbins 1996:108).

<sup>736</sup> This kind of discourse often than not has the interface or intersection of interests within its modes of expression, thus it is a bearer of a collection of ideological perspective which are driven towards a certain kind of harmonization or search for a common significance. “These ideological commitments have a significant different social and cultural location than the commitments of people who produce either theological or social-scientific commentary.” Furthermore, “it differs from the use of social sciences to analyze a text as a social and cultural text rather than a religious text” (Robbins 1996:109). This mode of discourse is more interested in the art and aesthetics of the text than its historicity or religious value.

<sup>737</sup> Like the previous one namely new historical discourse, this is another postmodern pattern or intellectual discourse. It engages with the text from a difference point of view, ironically from another ideological point of view that turns the text against itself (cf. Jonker & Lawrie 2005: 146ff). This helps to unveil the embedded prejudice of the text if read from another perspective which is entirely different from that of the original author. Thus it makes one an author or another author.

<sup>738</sup> The main reason why we choose to concentrate more on the social-scientific and postmodern discourses here is because these two have greater potentials than all other to engage the ideological-theological discourse of the Elihu speeches. Besides we have already explored some of the discourse patterns like the historical-critical, and history of religions discourse in our discussion of the intertexture (chap. 4) and the socio-cultural textures (cf. chap. 5). The new historical discourse could be embedded in terms of discussion within the rubric of social-scientific and postmodern deconstructive discourses. Thus all these discourses patterns of the ideology and theology have high sense of interface within a certain rubric for example the social-scientific. This can be used as an umbrella terms to contain and usefully discuss all others in an interactive sense.

the text primarily. Robbins (1996:111) agreeably helps us to see three essential ways of analyzing the ideological texture of a text namely, “analyzing the social and cultural location of the implied author of the text; analyzing the ideology of power in the discourse of the text; and analyzing the ideology in the mode of intellectual discourse both in the text and in the interpretation of the text.”

The three ways of ideological analysis and/or interpretation are very useful in helping us to further reflect on our intertextual and socio-cultural textures of the text which we have already discussed in previous chapters namely chapters 4 and 5 respectively. In that, the intertexture of chapter 4 has been helpful to locate the possible social context in terms of the literary development of the Elihu speeches, while the socio-cultural textures of chapter 5 have taken us further into the contextual texture of the ancient time in which the Elihu speeches might have been collected. We identified that kind of social strata that could be obtainable within the speeches, and now we shall further engage the speeches to see their rhetorical function from the central characters’ perspectives and the outer characters namely the author/editor, and readers of different times and contexts.

But before then we need to further elucidate our view of the foregoing strategies for ideological analysis. One of the important points to keep in mind in doing this kind of analysis is the “events” in and of the texts, this would help us to have a good view of the progressive effect of the discourse in regards to what has gone before and what is expected (cf. Robbins 1996:111). The “natural environment and resources” (Robbins 1996:111) are also essential to take note of in the analysis for they would help us to see the presence and value of the technical things<sup>739</sup> that comprise the text within a given context. The kind of “population” in terms of personality is essential as we have pointed out in the previous chapter on the social and cultural textures. Therefore issues that have to do with culture and socialisation, belief systems and politics (in terms of military or legal) are all beneficial for our understanding and possible analysis of the ideologies within the text (cf. Robbins 1996:111-112).

Furthermore, the analysis of “power relations” in the text is one of the core points of concern in our interpretation here. In regards to the Elihu speeches, this would help us to reflect on different

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<sup>739</sup> The “technology” of the people in context (Robbins 1996:112)

kinds and levels of power relations closely; for example, the power relations between human beings and the divine, and between only people in a given social context. This power relation may be in terms of physical or cognitive power etc. Thus the differentiation strands would consist of the types of power relation, the degree of rationalisation of the power relations and the possible means of their institutionalisation which will help us to see the possible aims or objectives that such power relations are intended to achieve (cf. Robbins 1996:113). But before we go into all that we would now give some time for the explanation of the theological (sacred) texture.

### 6.3 Explaining Theological (Sacred) Texture

The theological texture is, in other words, called the “sacred texture” (Robbins 1996:120). This texture focuses on the discernment of the divine in the text. Thus it is “seeking the divine in a text.” This analysis “involves systematically probing dynamics across a spectrum of relationships between the human and the divine” (Jonker and Lawrie 2005:61). This involves many but very connected things. It focuses on the search for the deity in the text,<sup>740</sup> as well as any “holy person” (Robbins 1996:121)<sup>741</sup>, a spirit being,<sup>742</sup> divine history,<sup>743</sup> human redemption,<sup>744</sup> social

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<sup>740</sup> Robbins (1996:120) rightly point out here that, “God, or divine being, may exist either in the background or in a direct position of action and speech in a text. This is the realm of theology par excellence- the nature of God and God’s action and revelation. Sometimes there is simply reference to God or a god in a text. Sometimes God speaks and acts like another character in the story. Describing the nature of God can be a first step toward analyzing and interpreting the sacred texture of a text.”

<sup>741</sup> “Regularly a sacred text features one or more people who have a special relation to God or to divine powers”(Robbins 1996:121).

<sup>742</sup> “Sacred texts often feature special divine or evil beings who have the nature of a spirit rather than a fully human being” (Robbins 1996:123).

<sup>743</sup> “Many sacred textures presuppose that divine powers direct historical processes and events toward certain results”(Robbins 1996:123). From the foregoing explanation by Robbins, divine history does not actually presuppose the beginning of the divine in the text, although there may be texts that would show how an idea of the divine got from one particular location in time to another. This also could be a divine history of some kind too. Nevertheless, divine history in this context means the kind of history that is ordered and/or designed by the power and will of the divine.

<sup>744</sup> “Another dimension of sacred texture is the transmission of benefit from the divine to humans as a result of events, rituals, or practices. As a result of things that happen or could happen if people do them, divine powers will transform human lives and take them into a higher level of existence. Perhaps the result will be the changing of the mortal nature of humans-namely, a state of existence that leads to death- into an immortal nature, a state where they will no longer die. Or perhaps a burden of impurity or guilt is removed in such a manner that a person is liberated from powers or practices that are debilitating and destructive” (Robbins 1996:125).

commitment,<sup>745</sup> religious community<sup>746</sup> and ethics<sup>747</sup> guiding it. In our study of the Elihu speeches, we shall focus more on the presence of the deity and his relation to human beings and the world (cosmos). Thus the theological textures of the presence of the divine in the text, human redemption and ethics are feasible areas to explore within the Elihu speeches and so we shall soon turn to them in the next section and see how they would help us to better understand the significance of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job.

## **6.4 Ideological-Theological Textures in the Elihu Speeches**

At this stage, we shall closely examine the speeches of Elihu once more in search of their ideological elements and the possible functions that they were intended for. This involves a close reading of the Elihu speeches especially in conversation with various commentators on the role of the speeches. From the foregoing section the most important textures that we would take very seriously here would be the social-scientific approach to the text, then a theological approach in search of the presence and function of the deity in the text and later on we shall see how the present writer would like to engender another level of creative reading of the speeches that would point his readers to the ironic depiction of wisdom in the Elihu speeches and still leave them open for further critical readings.

### **6.4.1 Patriarchy**

As we have earlier stated above under the rubric of honour and shame (cf.5.6.1.1) patriarchy is an ancient ‘conventional’ system of social and cultural life that gives men (male persons) privileges and power over women (female persons).<sup>748</sup> This may in so many ways also include the marginalisation of children and any people without wealth and strength for direct social influence. Thus a patriarchal system of context is a male dominated system which presupposes

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<sup>745</sup> This texture becomes the function of people in the text (or contexts) in relation to the holy people in the text like priests or prophets, those “humans who are faithful followers and supporters of people who play a special role in revealing the ways of God to humans” (Robbins 1996:126).

<sup>746</sup> This involves the participation with “other people in activities that nurture and fulfill commitment to divine ways” (Robbins 1996:127).

<sup>747</sup> “Ethics concerns the responsibility of humans to think and act in special ways in both ordinary and extraordinary circumstances. When addressed in the context of religious commitment, the special ways of thinking and acting are motivated by commitment to God” (Robbins 1996:129).

<sup>748</sup> Compare the masculine language that permeates the Elihu speeches as demonstrated on Table 4 on addenda.

the monopoly of social power and order. In the apology of Elihu (32-33), we could see how nervous he was to stand and provide a voice for his own concerns. He first and foremost acknowledged his young age and the old age of Job and his three friends (32:6). This presupposes the conventional silence and silencing of the younger ones in society. By implication, he was saying, ‘I know I should not speak here.’ His ‘waiting’ while they spoke (32:11) is an expected submission to the social order and power of his day. Another glaring elemental patriarchy in the text is seen from a gender perspective that makes up the text. There is no mention of any woman character, Elihu quoted Job and referred to Job’s friend’s maxims as his own, yet he does not mention anything from Job’s wife’s perspective. Thus she was to the background a long time ago.

Moreover, the depiction of the divine in the speeches whether as God, Almighty, Creator/Maker as we shall further discuss below are cast in male gendered perspective. Even though the “Spirit of God” (32:8) carries the feminine gender in the Hebrew language (cf. MT), it is hardly recognised in our Western and Westernized translations of the Scriptures. Thus the only element of the female gender is very minimal in the text and hardly even acknowledged by many. This tells the reader that the text actually reflects male world (patriarchal system) of the contexts which makes it predominantly of “masclish” (Clines)<sup>749</sup> as in many other texts of its time and texture. For a further understanding of the ideological-theology of power especially in relation to the divine in the text, we would now turn out attention to the section that focuses on the knowledge of the divine in the Elihu speeches.

#### **6.4.2 Divine Sovereignty<sup>750</sup>**

In this section we would begin with the exploration of the name (s) of the deity in the Elihu speeches, after that we shall discuss some points from the overall survey by way of some

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<sup>749</sup> This term is from David J.A. Clines’ “The Scandal of a Male Bible.” Which is the lecture he presented as “The Ethel M. Wood lecture 2015” at King’s College, on 24/2/2015 see <http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/trs/eventrecords/2015/ethel2015.aspx> (accessed on 4th October, 2016).

<sup>750</sup> In this section we shall take the occurrences of the name (s) of the deity in the Elihu speeches according to the data on our Table 1: The Use of Various Nouns in Job 32-37. Cf. Appendix.

synthetic analysis of what those names help us to understand about the divine in the speeches as well as some corresponding parts of the book of Job primarily.<sup>751</sup>

Elihu is introduced as one whose anger burned on Job's three friends and Job himself because Job justified himself rather than  $\text{אלהים}$  (God cf. [32:2]) thus he perceived that some disregard and/or injustice had been done to God. The Deity is described as  $\text{אלהים}$  (the Almighty [vs. 8])<sup>752</sup> whose  $\text{נְשִׁמָּה}$  (breath)<sup>753</sup> gives “understanding”<sup>754</sup> which in the preceding verse is synonymous to  $\text{חָכְמָה}$  “wisdom” (vs.7)<sup>755</sup>. Wisdom is related to the divine as something that God possesses (1 Kings 3:28), something that comes with and from the fear of God (Job 28:28cf. Prov. 1:7f) something that the angel of the Lord possess (2 Sam. 14:20), and something that has the quality of being a spirit (Deut. 34:9). All these descriptions relate wisdom to the realm and reality of the divine.

$\text{אלהים}$  “God” is described as one who “refutes”<sup>756</sup> arrogant people (vs. 13). Thus God is depicted as the high God who is above all and the judge of all (cf. Gen 14:18, 22; Isa. 14:13; Ez. 28:2). God as the Almighty Creator is mentioned in 33:4 as one who made Elihu and gave him life. This description agrees with his earlier reference to the one he dreads as  $\text{עֹשֵׂה־יְמֵי}$  “my Maker” (32:22 cf. 33:6). Thus God is the Maker or Creator par excellence as it has been recorded in the early parts of the book of Genesis (1-2). From this point of departure, God is one from whose “sight,” that is in whose perspective and presence, all human beings are equal because of how they are all equally created (cf. 33:6). God is one who speaks in different ways even though no one perceives it (33:14). Thus God is actively involved in the life of a person at various times (vs. 29). God is the one whom Job accuses of denying him justice (34:5). God is one who has no need to examine people any further (34:23) this presupposes his all-knowing essence about everything and everyone. God could be addressed by anyone in repentance and promise of commitment never to

<sup>751</sup> This selection is informed by our discussions in our chapters 4 and 5 about the intertexture and social contexts of the Elihu speeches, thus we will not extensively seek to merge some kind of earlier contexts of life and production of the text with some late Israelite understanding of the divine, wherever such things occur would not be beyond a receptionist or redactional presupposition.

<sup>752</sup> This is reminiscent of the God Almighty who appeared to Abraham in Genesis 15:1ff & 17:1ff.

<sup>753</sup> This is the breath of life that animates beings cf. Gen. 2:7; 2 Sam. 22:16; 1 Kings 15:29; 17:17; Isa. 57:16.

<sup>754</sup> From the root word which means  $\text{בִּין}$  “insight” as in a prophetic figure cf. Jer. 9:11; Isa. 6:9f; Isa. 32:4.

<sup>755</sup> This means special insight or endowment of a certain ability in doing something peculiar. Its use cuts across different strata of life cf. Deut. 34:9; 2 Sam 14:20; 20:22; 1 Kings 2:6; 7:14; 5:10; 3:28; Isa. 33:6; Ps. 90:12; Job 28:12ff; Prov. 8:1,36. It occurs 32x in Proverbs, 28x in Ecclesiastes and 18x in Job (cf. CHALOT).

<sup>756</sup> The root for this word is  $\text{הָרַג}$  which means to “scatter, blow away”.

offend again (vs. 31). God is believed to teach the person the best of things to know by seeing (vs. 32) thus having a clear knowledge of what is before that time hidden and unknown. God is one against whom Job had been speaking full of scorn and arrogance (34:37). Elihu further challenges Job to think of what he has said, thus claiming to be the right “not God” (35:2). God is one who is mighty and firm in his intent (36:5). God is exalted in his power and the “teacher” par excellence (36:22). God is greater than human knowledge can fathom, and he is eternal (vs. 26). He is the God who thunders greatly in unusual ways and does great things beyond human understanding (37:5). He is the God whose “breath”<sup>757</sup> produces ice and by which the breadth of the waters freezes (vs. 10). Thus God is the worker of wonders (vs. 14).

In 34:10,12 אֱלֹהִים (God) and אֱלֹהֵי (Almighty) are used in synonymous parallelism to designate the divine as one who is pure and far away from doing anything “wrong.”<sup>758</sup> Furthermore, the same parallelism is made in 35:13 thus depicting the deity as one who does not “hear”<sup>759</sup> or “regard”<sup>760</sup> the cry of the deceitful oppressed. Between 37:22 and 23 “God” and “the Almighty” are used synonymously again to describe the awesome splendour of God and the inaccessibility of the Almighty who is great in power, justice, righteousness and care (cf. אֵלֹהִים לֹא יִצְעֶקָה “he does not oppress” NETB). Thus people (humanity) “fear him for he does not regard all the wise in heart” (vs. 24).<sup>761</sup>

God is described as אֱלֹהִים who is greater than all mortal (33:12).<sup>762</sup> God is the one to whom prayer is offered in repentance, and he gives favour and restoration of wholeness and joy to the one who thus humbly and honestly pray (vs. 26). As the variant of אֱלֹהִים and אֱלֹהֵי אֱלֹהִים is used to describe God as one whose service Elihu accuses Job of pouring contempt on because there is no “profit”<sup>763</sup> in doing so (34:9). In 35:10, the oppressed are described as those who cry for the help from the cruelty of their oppressors, but they do not care enough to seek for the place of אֱלֹהִים

<sup>757</sup> אֵלֵי אֱלֹהֵי cf. footnote 2 above.

<sup>758</sup> The Hebrew root word for this is עָוַל which means “wrong doing, and injustice” cf. Deut. 25:16; 32:4; Prov. 29:27.

<sup>759</sup> לֹא יִשְׁמָע

<sup>760</sup> Literally, it means “not to see” or “not to notice” from the construction לֹא יִשְׁמָע cf. Num. 23:9.

<sup>761</sup> Cf. 9:4.

<sup>762</sup> This designation of God is used about 41x in Job. It has variety of significance in other texts especially the late priestly materials cf. Deut. 11:38; 32:17; 2 Kings 17:31; Hab. 1:11; Job 3:4; Pss. 8:6; 18:47; 143:10; 145:1.

<sup>763</sup> The root for this word is כִּנְיָן which means “be of use.” It has been variously used in the book of Job cf. 15:3; 22:2a; 35:3

“God”. They do not care to ask for where God is, the “creator”<sup>764</sup> and giver of songs in the night. This is the God for whom Elihu speaks (36:2) before Job and his three friends. God is the one who commands cosmic wonders to happen like the lightning flash in the storm (37:15). He comes from the north in golden splendour with awesome majesty around him (vs. 22) thus his greatness calls for his reverence by all.<sup>765</sup>

From the foregoing, we can see the different interfacing realities of God. All depicted in the male gender perspective of being and function. The functions of God in terms of strength, and being great and doing great acts of wonder are all pointers to the masculine depiction of the divine in the text, thus paving the way clear enough for the construction of an ideological-theology in service of contextual power relations. Furthermore, God is depicted as one who is confronted, despised by the deceitful oppressed, and vigorously defended by Elihu as if God is helpless to defend himself in human conversation even about the accusations marshalled against him. God is also described as one who is imminent, passionately active in creation and sustaining all that he creates. God is the sage who dwells with his creatures and teaches them wisdom and delivers them from evil. Furthermore, God is one who is the great one, the wholly other,<sup>766</sup> who is transcendent to his knowledge, power and majesty. This is the God whose being calls for great reverence for the wonders he works in the whole world. This is the God who scrutinises all humans and does not regard those who are wise in their own hearts. He does not oppress the righteous but stands with them against their oppressors.

In his discussion on the “superhuman sensorium” Tilford (2016: 51ff) mentions the depiction of God, among other superhuman realities in the book of Job as one who is capable of both “harm and help” depending on which aspect of his nature he puts to work and to whom and for what purpose. God is very much capable of “tactile” and “olfactory” activities in the cosmos according to the book of Job (cf. Tilford 2016:44).<sup>767</sup> The point is not always simple to understand, with comprehensive explanations in terms of ‘how’ he does it. Nonetheless, the

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<sup>764</sup> This word יְצָר reflects the plural majesty of God as the Creator of everything even the one who neglects to about God.

<sup>765</sup> There are instances where none of the aforementioned names of God is used but rather the person of God is implied by the use of the third person masculine pronoun “he” in the text (cf. 33:28; 34:33 etc).

<sup>766</sup> Cf. Otto (1936:25ff).

<sup>767</sup> For more on tactile and olfactory functions in biblical literature see (Avrahami 2011; Tilford 2013)

thoughts of the writer(s) of the book of Job affords us a true glimpse into the nature of God within real and olfactory possibilities. “God ‘crushes’ individuals; he ‘seizes’ them; he ‘cuts’ them off; he ‘slaps’ them; he ‘tears’ them apart. He ‘takes away’ speech and discernment of whoever is chosen; he ‘strips away’ glory and ‘takes’ away from the crown of the righteous” (Tilford 2016:52) no doubt, “[h]is touch is deadly.” But by contrast, the deity in the Elihu speeches is one depicted with the gracious power which makes life and order possible in the cosmos. This depiction is much conspicuous in the actual language. Thus God’s tactility in Elihu's speeches helps us to see the significance of the divine especially in terms that explain the puzzle of creation, the mystery of order over against chaos and the activity of a great God who is actively involved in his creation as we shall see in the following examples.

Elihu’s apology explains that the breath of the Almighty “makes them”<sup>768</sup> understand that issues of life display wisdom (32: 8). Elihu refrained from partiality because he thought that God who is his Maker would soon “take me away” (32:22). The Spirit of God is the breath of the Almighty “made” Elihu, which means it “gives me life” (33:4). Elihu quotes Job as one who claims that God “fastens” his feet in shackles (vs. 11). God may cause someone to “be chastened” on a bed of pain (vs. 19). God “delivers” the one who is near-death thus ‘turning’ them back from going down the pit which gives a good reason for joy and praise (vs. 28, 30).

Job is quoted by Elihu as one who claims that God “denies” him justice (34:5). God’s “arrows inflict incurable wound” (vs. 6) on Job despite his innocence. God ‘shakes’ and ‘removes’ unjust rulers instantly and mysteriously (vs. 20)<sup>769</sup>. God is the one who “shatters” the mighty and replaces them with others who are better than themselves (vs. 24). He is the Maker/Creator of people and he “gives” songs in the night (35:10). He “teaches” people and “makes” them wiser than the animals (vs. 11).

Furthermore, Elihu explains that God does not “keep the wicked alive but gives the afflicted their rights” (36:6). He “enthrones” and “exalts” the righteous (vs. 7). He “makes” people listen to correction (vs. 10). God “scatters his lightning about him, bathing the depth of the sea” (vs. 30).

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<sup>768</sup> i.e. humanity in general

<sup>769</sup> This shows us that “His touch is lethal, instantly causing suffering, disease, and death to the one who receives it” (Tilford 2016: 53). This is not a standing rule on the hand of God, it does not always destroy at every touch it depends on what the will of God is in the act of touching whoever he touches.

Thus he “governs” the nations and “provides” food in abundance and “fills his hand” with lightning ( vs. 31, 32). He “brings” the clouds either as punishment or blessing to the people (37:13). God “controls” the clouds and “makes” his lightning flash (vs. 15).

In regards to getting and giving information by the divine as superhuman agents, “the book of Job links the knowledge and judgment of superhuman agents to vision and audition” (Tilford 2016:55). Judgment in this context refers to the sense of discernment and understanding of phenomena. This could be within the divine-self as an internal and personal affair, and it could be further expressed outwardly by means of divine communication into the external world of human existence. Tilford (2016:55) helps us to see that in the book of Job, God’s knowledge is depicted in what he sees with his eyes<sup>770</sup> and it is given through his voice. It can be expressed passively in what is created and could be discerned and understood by human beings, or it could be clearly or intuitively communicated by God’s act of speech.

Furthermore, it is significant to note that superhuman emotive capabilities differ from those of humans in the book of Job in that the book does not use ingestion to describe them (Tilford 2016:54). Instead, the author/editors use the emotion of “anger” to depict the emotion of both humans like Elihu (32:1-5) and God (especially in the rest of the book of Job). In the Elihu speeches, God’s emotions are described in his “anger” especially against the wicked and their wrongful acts (34:18ff) This is depicted in how God sees them, what God says to them and how God treats them. It is thus agreeable that, “As with humans, God’s anger is a violent, internal emotion with obvious consequences. God becomes angry inside after seeing the activities of the wicked and violently lashes out because of it” (Tilford 2016: 54).

From a social and cultural perspective, we can see from the above-mentioned attributes of God that God is one who saturates the mind and worldview of the people in Elihu’s context. God is known in various ways of self-manifestation explains why different names are used to describe him and/or refer to him.<sup>771</sup> God is one that should be dreaded without question and at the same time one to be trusted for salvation, healing, restoration, and grace. God is one whom humanity

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<sup>770</sup> It is thus understandable that, “Superhuman sight acquires information about the world” (Tilford 2016:55).

<sup>771</sup> The reference to God as Almighty, Maker, Creator, and he could be significant in questioning the Wellhausenian method of taking ‘name’ (especially of the divine) as a methodological key to tracing the source of a given text. For more on J. Wellhausen’s source criticism see Knight (1982:1-155).

cannot absolutely know or fully understand but is called to the display of wisdom which is not just the acquisition of skills for work but rather a conscious awareness of the person and presence of God in a genuine sense of humility. Elihu presents a God that is both active in his world, and that must be revered by all individuals. The significance of his speech does not actually condemn Job so totally even though he also thought of him as one who does wrong before God, but that does not mean that Elihu's arguments go back to the origin of Job's suffering but rather on the approach of Job and his friends to the sufferings of Job. Thus as one who is passionate about God and Job, Elihu uses his prophetic wisdom to call on Job to consider his situation and the greatness of God, the presence of God with the righteous and the attitude of God to the conceited oppressed and the proud. In this way, he prepared him, more than all the other three friends on how to closely understand the mysterious ways of God which are actually beyond any human understanding. This calls Job to the wisdom of silence, wonder and more patience for the revealing mind of God on his situation. The preparation of Elihu on Job is both theological and psychological. His theological presuppositions may be similar to those of Job and his friends in regards to the doctrine of retribution, but he exceptionally gives space for the wonders of God beyond human understanding. This prepares Job to the possibility of the unknown which only God can reveal. This presents Job and his readers with a God who is not only great, awesome and powerful beyond human understanding but also to a God who is eminent, caring for all his creatures, among which Job is one, and a God who is free, just and righteous without being oppressive (37:23, 24).

#### **6.4.3 The Ideological-Theological Significance of the Elihu Speeches in the Book of Job**

In his first speech (32:1-33:33) Elihu's response was authenticated by his spiritual endowment (cf. Janzen (1973:217), even though he was the youngest among those, he was going to address. Thus he was not allowed to speak according to the tradition of his day. He was not even of the known friends of Job who came to visit him and sympathise with him (cf. Habtu 2006:593 [2:11-13]).<sup>772</sup> Thus Elihu has not bound my any friendship obligation to seek Job's restoration or to

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<sup>772</sup>Elihu was an "intruder" (Gordis 1965:104; Gutiérrez 2005:44; Balentine 2006: 526). "Elihu is, to say the least, not immediately a sympathetic character" (Clines 2006:742). We do not think that he actually forced himself into the text of the book of Job just in order to make sure that he too "literally writes himself" into the text (cf. Newsom 2003:202; Balentine 2006:526), but rather as one who had been part of those who listened to the contentious conversations between Job and his three friends and then he was motivated to really supply what he observed was

provide the interpretation for his suffering as other friends would have felt and been expected to do (cf. 6:14-23).

Elihu ironically was drawn to anger, not pity of Job's situation (cf. Habtu 2006:593). His anger was a display of what could be called an emotional contest for the assertion of certain values in a person's life. Given the socio-cultural context in which Elihu is presumed to have lived, his anger becomes a mirror within which the reader would see not only the negative depiction of being angry as a vice but furthermore, the depiction of being angry as a sign of one's piety (cf. 32:1-5) (cf. Balentine 2006:529-33; Newsom 2003:200)<sup>773</sup>. This tells the reader that something serious was at stake and someone needs urgent care in response to it. Elihu's anger as we could see from a socio-religious values system is a righteous one because of his caution towards the person of the deity.<sup>774</sup> Even though he does not allow Job to justify himself, thereby pushing the blame to God, yet, he was not actually anxious to either criticise Job in order to fulfil the conformist expectation of his context like many others might have been within retribution ideology and theological worldview (cf. Clines 2006:707). In that, they would seek to know the reason for the tragedies. He rather was motivated for the justification of God and the justification of Job (cf. 32:2f; cf. 33:33) thus; this motivation is clearly different from the other conversation partners.<sup>775</sup> He was prompted first and foremost to respond to his theological ideology which does not allow a mere human like Job to have a free sense of speech that even dared to suspect the person of God as being responsible for his tragedy. But based on an ancient worldview that sees the hand of the divine in everything that happens in the cosmos, Elihu is expressing a deep sense of loyalty to the divine not in terms of total denial to the quest of Job for his own

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lacking. He was a contributor to the book, one who came in as a result of being disappointed, we agree with Newsom that he was dissatisfied, of course with the presuppositions of Job and his friends but then to claim that he was part of the writers can only stand hypothetically without any serious point for tenability from the book of Job.

<sup>773</sup> For more on the dynamisms of human anger within certain situations that prompts human consciousness and necessary reaction for what they value, see Nussbaum (2001:28ff).

<sup>774</sup> "He is angry with Job, not because he cried out in his suffering, but because he has cried out against God. He is angry with his friends, not because they have failed to comfort Job in his suffering, but because they have failed to condemn him for challenging God. If these convictions about God's justice were not important to Elihu, then we would not expect him to be angry" (Balentine 2006:532).

<sup>775</sup> It is ironically interesting to note with Clines (2006:742) that, "His goal is Job's restoration, not to prove Job is in the wrong" (cf. 33:32). "For that to happen, Job will of course have to confess that he has been in the wrong (cf. 33:27b-c), will have to reconsider his claim to perfect innocence (33:9), and will have to withdraw his charges against God (33:10-11)" (Clines 2006:742). Thus Elihu's ideology of the sanctity of God is paramount, nevertheless he appears to provide that most "supportive" and hopeful speeches to Job's problem of suffering (Clines 2006:742). His main point here is not to label Job as a sinner but rather in order to help him to act wisely amidst his suffering.

justification but rather he called for a more thoughtful and systematic sense of phenomenological understanding how life is and how one should conduct oneself in the face of suffering rather than looking for quick solutions or hanging their thoughts on a whimsical sense of the action of the divine without reason. Elihu's ideological-theological reaction to the problem of Job's suffering provides us with another view of human understanding of life from a subjective point of view. Elihu was directly concerned about the honour of God regardless of the reason behind Job's loss. He does not take note of the correlation between anger and loss which might have allowed him to open more room for Job's grief than Job's friends did. Although his intentions would appear good in his attempt to provide Job with a fair hearing and to possibly justify him but it is ironic to see the objects of Elihu's anger namely Job's friends and Job himself, but never God or the Satan who incited God to afflict Job "without reason" (2:3). The friends blamed Job for his suffering, Job blamed God for his suffering, but Elihu blamed none, not even the Satan of the prologue. Perhaps he too, like Job, was not aware of the Satan's role in the story. Elihu seems to take the world as a 'place of accident' (cf. Balentine 2006:535; Nussbaum 2001: 19ff) where things happen without reason, with no one to blame. To what extent do Elihu's speeches help us in reading the book of Job up to this point? We could answer in the affirmative about the importance of the interventions in the story of Job, but we cannot claim that they solve all the problems. They recognised the need to satisfy Job's quest for justice which would satisfy him, but could not offer that satisfaction directly, rather than that they seek to prepare Job to hear from the God who alone can do that. He understood Job's need of an arbiter, and he stepped in to speak primarily for God but nevertheless, for Job as well (Magdalene 2007: 225-46).<sup>776</sup> Elihu basically tried to help Job to know how to manage his life amidst suffering without any quick resolves. Thus he speaks to prepare him for the closing speeches of the divine who may teach him better lessons. Elihu's attempt to "teach Job wisdom", helps us to see wisdom as something that is different from the accumulation of life experiences in the pursuits of success and happiness or the human acquisition of technical skills in life but a sense of fear/awe of the divine (cf. Clines 2006: 707).

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<sup>776</sup> "Elihu appears in his own court and alternately takes the roles of judge, public prosecutor and advocate"(Van Wolde 1997:101).

Elihu's theological claim of being inspired as a result of the effect of the spirit of God in him as well as all humanity gave him the courage to penetrate the ideological silence of his context which is always in service of honor and shame, to a confidence that liberates his speech in order to achieve his aim of liberating Job. Balentine rightly points out that, "Inspiration gives him access to understanding that enlarges upon what can be discerned through ordinary experience"(2006:526). This certain claim rings a real bell towards human dignity and equality in a social context. "God inspires all persons, Elihu claims, with gifts that make each one unique. Every person has worth; every person has a voice, every person has something to contribute. Individuals who have no title do not require the counsel or consent of those who do before claiming to have something important to say. Young people are not necessary because of age to yield to the monopoly of the elders; women are not required because of gender to accept the decisions of men; persons of colour are not obliged to acquiesce to the opinions of someone who is white" (Balentine 2006:527). Elihu found authority to make his voice heard by the endowment of the liberating spirit/breath of God.

As a new voice that we have earlier described as the prophetic wisdom voice within the plethora of voices that permeate the book of Job, Elihu's voice is heard, as a voice of hope that provides inspirational instructions and encouragement to Job while everybody is awaiting God's answer (Hartley 1988:449). Hartley (1998: 449) sees the Elihu as a messenger of "hope" amidst the suffering of life that contemplates the dark side of God. Elihu's ideological cautions against Job's quick self-justification is displayed in his attempt to take Job's attention away from the cruelty of God which he perceived came as a result of the silence and enmity of God towards him, to another way of understanding the presence and power of God beyond the question of simple sense of justice as getting what one deserves. Thus the divine use of dreams and visions (33:15ff) is an ideological attempt to provide a conduit for theological insight into a new and better possibility in which Job could have another view of God as a purposive mystery who uses the suffering of his people for good. The purpose of suffering then is not as the overarching traditional ideology has it as a sign of punishment but rather as a sign of God's effective way of speaking and taming the human being into a good sense that preserves their life. The near death experience of Job was not an actual movement into death but rather away from it. Elihu then "hopes that Job will listen to God speaking through his misfortune" (Hartley 1988:449).

It is important for us to see the ironic depiction of Elihu in the whole conversations of the book of Job. The author presents him as one whose character is terrifying and even embarrassing, but his attitude is one of deep concern and passion for both the humans and the divine. It is ironic to note that Elihu does not actually abandon his ideological view of retribution, but in a wise and creative way, he displaces it with the idea of education (Clines 2006:742). In this displacement of retribution theology he pushes the contextual boundaries that call for punishment, but instead, he provides speech patterns and opens the possibility of restoration. Even though restoration is situated within the context of one's recognition of his wrong doing especially as an individual against the divine in thought and speech, Elihu points out that "confession is not a prerequisite to restoration" (Clines 2006:743) by mentioning the latter after the former. This makes restoration to be an act of grace that comes as the gift of the divine. This gift of life and renewal brings great joy and free access to the divine (33: 26-28). As a result, 'confession' in this context is testimony rather than the claim of guilt.

Elihu practically demonstrates to us from a theological perspective that our cultural and traditional ideologies cannot be ends in themselves. He has recognised his divinely given authority and the right to make a thoughtful contribution, and he did so. This depiction in this light in the story of the Job helps us to see that, under the gifts of God and the guidance of God's spirit, "we all have a voice in the conversation about the meaning<sup>777</sup> of suffering in the life of faith" (Balentine 2006:527).

The new voice of Elihu in the book of Job helps us to see the ceaseless quest for justice and justification of perennial issues of life. This "reinvigorated" conversation (Newsom 2003: 200) calls our attention to the irony of the human distress and limitation in the face of suffering. The why questions of Job still remain open despite all that his wise friends have said to him (cf. Balentine 2006:527-8). From Job's point of view, we can see that "Suffering is almost always more imposed than invited" (Balentine 2006:528). Thus "[w]hen suffering stakes out its targets, it feels like falling under siege" (Balentine 2006: 528). This opens the door to the disturbing reality of the suffering of the innocent man, Job, and all those in history like him. The author's insertion of Elihu where he appears in the book of Job reminds us that on the question of human

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<sup>777</sup> 'meaning' is the focus here not reason "because the most basic human need, as philosophers, psychologists, and theologians agree, is for meaning" (Balentine 2006:558).

suffering mere silence cannot be the final answer for in the minds of different people there is always something more to say. We could agree that Elihu understood the crucial contestation within the situation, which is not Job's intentional displacement of God but rather his attempt to get satisfaction from a fair hearing which he (Job) thought even God would not give him (9:16ff) thus he saw his insignificance to force words from God's mouth in order to ascertain his innocence.

Within the ongoing tension from Job's side in quest for justification, one could see the vacuum that has been created by the roles of Job's three friends who came to sympathize with him (2:11ff), but ironically they ended up passing judgments from their general ideological points of view, thus leaving Job without an arbiter which he seriously needed to stand between him and God (cf. 9:33-35; 13:20-27; 31:35-37). The friends could not actually answer Job but rather condemn his words as a sinner who gets what he deserves (32:1-5). But Elihu is presented as one who knew better than that, one who is willing to step into the vacuum and open the silence in order to satisfy Job. We could see from the narrative that he understands that, "If someone does not step in, then neither the assailant nor the assailed will gain satisfaction" (Balentine 2006:529). Elihu does claim to "answer" Job seeing that his friends have lost words to speak any further (32:11-17). Yet, he wishes to speak in order to alleviate his own inner suffering (32:18-22). To what extent can we claim that Elihu has answered Job's questions and justified him? This issue remains open as an ironic depiction of being wise in search of wisdom. "The war of ideas about right and wrong will rage on, the boundaries between what is moral, ethically, and religiously acceptable in a civilised world will remain ambiguous, and the number of victims who will pay the price for the indecision will continue to increase" (Balentine 2006:529).<sup>778</sup>

With this great move towards excellent contribution, Elihu earned for himself (or rather his author/editor provides him) a prominent place in the book of Job namely, to give insight to the purpose of suffering as a divine strategy for communicating with humans but it still leaves the sufferer helpless seeing that he still remains a sufferer even after hearing and understanding all these points. It may even increase his powerlessness in the face of the divine even if it does not

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<sup>778</sup> This is a realistic but sad note of course, that is why this study is done in order to motivated good thoughts and courage from other Elihus of our time that they could be helpful and reasonable voices in order to reduce the numbers of those who are paying the price of contextual-ideological cruelties.

criminalise him towards making him more guilty (cf. Clines 2006:743). Even though the prophetic wisdom voice of Job which penetrated the socio-cultural ideologies of his day especially in terms of the importance of being human and the significance of the potentialities that each one has in life. Elihu is, no doubt, still held captive within socio-religious ideologies of the ‘might is right’ of the divine over against any claims of human innocence in what happens in the world. The help that such religious ideologies can do to us now is to assist us to understand the dilemma of the ‘Jobs of our world’<sup>779</sup> which are plunged into endless contestation between the justice mated in faith communities as mercy over against justice, especially their own justice, justice for them. Thus, “[t]he Jobs of this world, in countless numbers, have often discovered that places of worship offer little or no sanctuary for them. Their rants and ravings against the injustice of life have no place in our carefully prescribed litanies. Their anger and their despair, which relentlessly calls for systematic changes in the very institutions that provide for our prosperity, remains unquieted by our traditional benedictions of peace” (Balentine 2006:562). The point here is the need for the extension of actual help instead of mere words of the indictment or quick comfort. The emphasis of who is right or wrong alone may leave much more trouble than they had been before. Thus more distant from a God to whom they should draw near enough to be free in their speech, even of complaints, and a confession from the heart. Given the significance of the speech of Elihu up to this point we could say that Job may still remain puzzled about his relationship with God, and one would wonder if Elihu’s first speech is a speech of real hope that brings that light that can penetrate the dark side of God into a much better sense of understanding that makes more sense to the role of wisdom in human suffering and the quest for justice. We shall now turn to his second speech for more discussion.

In his second speech (chapter 34) Elihu brings himself to one of his main points about the reason for his speech. He perceived something wrong from Job’s assertion, and now he speaks in order to correct it. The speech as we have earlier pointed out started from Job’s accusation of God that God has taken away his rights (vs. 5). Thus he invariably is calling the justice of God into question. That has been one of the scandals that Elihu’s theological ideology cannot condone. Thus he seriously responded with a thunderous question in verse 17 asking, “Can one who hates justice govern?” This is the pivotal question in this speech. Elihu perceived Job’s criticism of the

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<sup>779</sup> Cf. Balentine (2006: 562) , this means the suffering others of our world.

just governance of God, and he felt it right to call him into order. Many may see this speech as being harsh, yet, Clines (2006:766) thinks that he is “not offensive or haughty.” Saying this is like reading it away from its context. If, as we have established in chapter 5, the context in which Job and Elihu presumably lived was one of high patriarchy, as evidenced in Elihu’s apology in chapter 32, then there is no how that this grave confrontation in this chapter would not be offensive or haughty in light of the context in which it was composed. Even in our contemporary African context, like the present writer’s home context, it would be judged highly unruly of one to look at an elder and say, “...if you have understanding...” (vs. 16), “...who drinks scoffing like water” (vs. 7), this amount to pouring insult to the addressee. But in light of our discussion we could see that Elihu has taken advantage of the need of the hour and stood on the authority of his wisdom to penetrate the patriarchal contours of his context in order to give freedom and pronounced power to his speech that he could brace himself to say the unspeakable, under normal circumstances.

In Elihu’s attempt to correct Job’s misunderstanding and lack of knowledge, he advised that Job should admit that he was “misled” (vs. 31) and should promise that, “if” he has done anything wrong, he would not do it again (vs. 32). Clines (2006:766 cf. Balentine 2006:580) rightly sees his scheme as a remarkable call for “low-key confession” which is the admittance of Job’s guilt as a mild way that may not even seriously cost him anything. This could be a good pointer to Elihu’s understanding of the effect of the nexus of honour, shame and guilt in his context. That Job’s honour may be highly jeopardised in making any serious confession is not a new thing to think about but how can he admit his guilt, to allay his shame without causing more public shame to himself? This is what seems impossible for Job to get himself around. Thus Elihu is depicted as the wise prophetic voice who takes the divine consciousness of Job’s friends further (e.g. Bildad’s) on the question of the perfection of the justice of God into more elaborate sense by trying to point out to vivid examples of how that could be understood in the wider world order. Elihu is now depicted as the defender of God even though he initially promised to “justify” or “vindicate” Job (33:32). This in itself is an ironic depiction of being wise, in that Elihu as one who claims special wisdom but has to call for a search into the cosmic order with a view to discerning the just governance of God.

It could be noted here as well as in our previous critical interpretation of this chapter that Elihu's interest has shifted from explaining the meaning and purpose of human suffering in which he speaks to help Job consider the question of human suffering in another creative dimension that demonstrates the love and grace of God to human like him (33:15ff). In this chapter, he brings Job's charges against God under erasure, under criticism. Ironically Job has earlier put God's actions and integrity under erasure, and now he is quoted by Elihu, not in solidarity but in the same way he critically counters his voice in a corrective sense. Elihu sensed that Job was trying to go overboard with his accusing arguments against God by trying to resolve the dilemma that the retribution dogma has posed unto him. But here is Elihu trying to counter such an attempt in a subscription to the same dogmatic point of view.<sup>780</sup> In order to demonstrate God's just governance of the world, he depicts God as "the Righteous Mighty One" (vs. 17). This is a God who sees all the ways of humanity, judges and deposes wicked rulers instantly and without fear or favors (vs. 18-20, 23-26), thus subjecting everyone under serious "scrutiny" (vs. 21-22), repaying everyone according to their deeds (vs. 11) thus ensuring that the people who are being ruled are "protected from unjust government" (vs. 30) (cf. Hartley 1988:462). This is the God who holds the mystery of "life and death" (vs. 14-15). It is agreeably here that Elihu "explores the question of God's justice in a quite thoughtful way" (Clines 2006:786). From his theological ideology, he points us to the impossibility of any human right to accuse God of injustice. He further shows us what is important to God in the world namely, justice, peace, righteousness and life against death. He brings us to the point that all that we are is a gift of grace. Thus no one should think of rebelling against God who sees and knows everything and can destroy the wicked instantly.

But ironically, Elihu's speech here is not without its weak points too. It can also be placed, written, and read under erasure. His description of God as the "Righteous and Mighty One" presents a quick way of denying any possibility to challenge God in anything freely. God is depicted as One who governs with retribution ideology and in whose government "might is

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<sup>780</sup> In this second speech, Elihu's voice is portrayed very differently from the one in his previous speech. In this speech, "Elihu's compassion and openness seem to have hardened into a rigid concern to protect God's just rule from the challenge of a rebel like Job. In his view Job has added unbelief to his sin by complaining so bitterly against God. He believes that that is why Job never receives any response from God. Elihu thus locates Job's plight in his inflamed rhetoric rather than in any continuance of past sins"(Hartley 1988:462).

right” (Clines 2006:786). This kind of argument always brings one to a dead end. This is no different from what is obtainable in most contemporary African contexts in which no one can question the wisdom and might of the divine. Furthermore, Elihu’s depiction of God as one who instantly destroys wicked rulers by way of judgment also stands contestable because that does not always happen. It is also ironic to think that the God who praised the integrity of Job and believed in it, has his integrity seriously doubted and criticised by Job. Elihu tries to correct him, but he ended up silencing him, doing so may further aggravate his bad feelings about his suffering than alleviate them. This is because Elihu also is oblivious of God’s view of Job’s integrity, nor does he show any awareness of what happened at the beginning that led Job into that kind of suffering? So, both of them are groping in the dark, only God sees and perhaps the reader of the book of Job.

In light of our contemporary suffering world and particular contexts, we could learn from the above discussion that God’s justice is not a complete remedy for suffering. Human righteousness is not a sure sign of security and safety like many of the contemporary prosperity believers would like to advocate incessantly.<sup>781</sup> Suffering may come and be part of the experience of the people of God, yet, that does not pervert God’s justice, ironically. It does not universalize the doctrine of retributive justice in the one hand, neither does it advocate the presence of an angry God, or a merciless tyrant who enjoys the suffering of his people. Balentine (2006:582) creatively invites us to think that “those who have been consigned to the muddle heap of suffering may have to concede that they sit in the pews of holy places as discomfited listeners. They may be able to manage little more fidgeting attention, until and unless they hear their names called. If and when it happens, it is like their flickering faith, rekindled by an honest spark, will burst into flame.” This is a call to the identification, not denial of misery on the one hand, and on the contrary, it is a call to be more concerned with the next mystery. The calling of our names by justice may linger on its way but will surely arrive, and at its coming rekindle our flickering faith into flame.

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<sup>781</sup> For more on the presence and various effects of prosperity theology across the world, for example in American and African contexts like Nigeria and Zambia see Lee (2007:227-236), Haynes (2015:5-24), and Gaiya (2015:63-79).

Elihu's third speech (chap. 35) still continues with the tone of the previous one (cf. chap. 34) which is severe and even harsh on Job. But this is more on evaluation scheme if we closely follow the flow of his arguments. In this chapter 35, he calls Job to closely listen to himself and reflect on issues which are already raised. This is typical of wisdom teaching, in that life is meant for close reflections and evaluations not just letting things flow freely without any care or concern. Elihu's probing question to Job is instructive when he says, "Do you count it justice when you say, 'I am more righteous than God'?" (vs. 2). Now Job is called to look into himself to see how unjust his statements have made him be. He is further asked to think about this fact, "If you have sinned, what harm have you done him" (vs. 6ff). This in a sense takes Elihu's argument on the transcendence of God further and belittles Job in his own speech. "Elihu is less concerned to prove that Job has committed some hidden sin that has led to his plight than to show that Job's asseverations of innocence and his charges against God are presumptuous folly" (Hartley 1988:467).

In this chapter, Elihu presents himself as one who is ready to use his insight into an objective discussion of the question of justice and righteousness. He thus shows himself as an impartial judge that he promised he would be (cf. 32:20f), but it is doubtful if he really was, nevertheless, his call for serious contemplation here helps us to see how justice should be done more than what it really is. Elihu in the book of Job satisfies the need for a "judicious spectator"<sup>782</sup> who can call both parties into objective, or better, intersubjective dialogue about what is at stake.

Elihu as a judicious spectator and now the arbiter/ judge points out that Job is too obsessed with himself and had no time to think about who he really is or what his speeches portray him to be. This helps us to think about human self-consciousness which is often elusive in the primary sense but rather seen or sensed only by those outside oneself. Elihu makes his two points of arguments from this chapter concerning being righteous and/or being wicked in that human righteousness only affects other humans essentially, and not the person of God (vs. 8). Secondly, that God does not listen to the cry for help of dishonest people (vs. 13) which may be a scathing

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<sup>782</sup> Balentine (2006:592) agrees with Nussbaum (1995: 86ff) that "Justice requires the wisdom of a 'judicious spectator.' It requires the perspective of one who may be called a 'spectator,' for those who pass judgment on others must surely maintain a level of skeptical *detachment* (italics in the original), that is, judicial neutrality, if they are to render a decision that is uncompromised by personal interests, safety, and happiness."

indictment of Job, thus parodying his righteousness (cf. Clines 2006:794). At the end of the day, Elihu gave the verdict that uttered “empty talks” and made arguments “without knowledge”. These points are very pivotal to the closing speeches of God. Thus we could see at this stage how the author or editor of the book of Job placed the Elihu speeches at this juncture in anticipation of the closing speeches of Yahweh. In Elihu’s sense of wisdom, he calls for deep reflection of human self-consciousness as a key to making a head way in reasonable moral contestation (cf. Newsom 2003: 200ff).

The contestation from the foregoing pointers is more on value systems in terms of their effect rather than personal human experience or expectations. Elihu as a sage rightly calls Job for close examination of things before he concludes his point. In doing so, Elihu may be interpreted as one whose approach to Job is a scathing criticism not a justification of Job. But more than that, the revolutionary voice of Elihu within what we call the prophetic-wisdom-voice is dynamic in problematizing settled issues within a given ideological theology. His critical evaluation of the value of being right/righteous as something that implicitly affects fellow human beings and not God is a new dimension in understanding the value of piety or being virtuous in a given social context. Thus making the point that being righteous is a humanistic issue rather than a theological one (cf. Clines 2006:803f). This may be a serious contradiction about the understanding of wisdom theology especially that of von Rad (1972) who dismisses the secularity of wisdom thinking in Israel and advocates that wisdom teaching is essentially theological. Elihu does not deny the existence of God in this chapter but rather draws the line between piety and justice within social circles.

This assertion is another attempt to take the meaning of justice further than the traditional ideology that still presents itself in our contemporary societies. That justice is not just about what a particular person deserves but rather about being concerned about the effect of one’s behaviours in a social context. Thus justice is not feeding the personal hunger of a particular person but caring for others. If this is true, then Elihu has nothing to tell Job in that his life has been one which was shared with those in need and he stood for justice in his social context (cf. chaps. 29-31). What then could be the justification of Elihu’s speech here to Job? On this, we can only turn to the question of pride and arrogance. Elihu points out that God does not listen to the

cry for help of the oppressed not just because they suffer and seek deliverance but rather because they fail to acknowledge the person of God. They do not cry to God, thereby asking, “Where is God, my Maker.” Even here we can see the speech of Elihu under erasure because Job does not deny the existence of God anywhere in his speeches as seen in chapter 34 but rather he questions the integrity of God because of his suffering without reason. Thus this speech is not actually about Job; it is rather using Job as a point of departure to address a general issue of concern namely, human selfishness in piety and human arrogance in their “practical atheism” (Clines 2006:804).

The portrayal of Elihu in this chapter is not just a criticism of who is right/righteous but also that criticism of who is just. Who is just in suffering? Who is just in giving just? What is justice? Who deserves justice? And who is a true judge? These are questions that are beyond the scope of this dissertation and even the contents of the book of Job. They are issues which we need to further ponder about seeing that Elihu’s aim from the beginning is to get people to ponder, to think about the issues of life around them critically. This is a real contest for moral imaginations (cf. Newsom 2003), a challenge to moral values and ethics that cuts across all of life and not just that of a given individual; it is the contest between shadow and reality, form and substance, image and essence. It is noteworthy here that, “An image is not reality; it can only aim to reflect it. Judges are not justice; they can only determine to serve it. And those who speak for God do not have a special purchase on divine wisdom; they can only hope to be authentic mediators of its elusive truth” (Balentine 2006: 594).<sup>783</sup>

Chapters 36-37 present us with Elihu’s fourth and last speech which takes his attempt on speaking for the justice of God further into a dramatic arena of the display of God’s power in natural phenomena. Elihu in a more supportive tone of speech, compared to chapters 34-35, calls for Job’s patience to bear with him as he searches out knowledge from afar to say some more things in favour of God (36:2). He shows the overall volume of the voice of God which surpasses human understanding, yet no human consciousness can evade it (vss. 5-15). This is a powerful and instructive voice in the cosmos. Elihu once more moved another ideological-theological boundary stone concerning the distinction of the righteous and the wicked (36:5-17). He pointed

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<sup>783</sup> For more on the elusiveness of truth in the book of Job see Newsom’s (2003) interpretation of Job from a polyphonic perspective.

out that even those who are righteous cannot be free of falling into sin. So being righteous is not being sinless, being wise is not knowing everything. Clines (2006:887) rightly acknowledges that “In this, he transcends the old distinction between the righteous and the wicked that is the staple of the wisdom and psalmic literature, and that constrains the thinking of the other friends.” This pointer places Elihu at a more agreeable position on being more “realistic” to human nature than in the quick and sharp divisions between being righteous and being wicked mostly based on contextual ideological-theological presuppositions. From Elihu’s point of view, we could see that being righteous, as being wise, calls for great care lest one’s righteousness leads them into pride that can easily ensnare them to failure and destruction.

Furthermore, it is instructive to see the workings of nature in the Elihu speeches. He mentions the great voice of God through nature in both great and small realities. The gift of rainfall (36:31), the voice of thunder (36:33), winter storms (37:7) and storm clouds (37:13) and all the meteorological phenomena (36:22; 37:23) are natural wonders that communicate divine wisdom, and justice in providence in the ordering and sustenance of life in the cosmos (cf. Clines 2006:888).<sup>784</sup> All these great wonders are pointers to the fear of God that humans are expected to have instead of pride and divine indignation (cf. 37:24). Nature here unlike in the prologue narrative (1:6ff) is not depicted as a monster that eats away personal possession, but rather it is a divine agency for its sustenance.

Job is closely called to consider the wonders of God in the world (37:5, 14) and then was drawn in an ironic way into a realm of wisdom which means the end of knowledge. Elihu bombarded him with crucial philosophical questions like; “do you know?,” “will you hammer out the sky?,” “teach us what we shall say to him” (37:15-20). These are questions that call Job to the realisation of the end of his knowledge which would lead him into wisdom.

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<sup>784</sup> It is noteworthy here to consider Balentine’s (2006:622) observation on “Elihu’s Ode to Creation” in which Elihu “adds to the wonder of God’s world by *subtracting* from its reality. There is almost no place in Elihu’s world for creatures, animal and human. To find them, one must look for the places where they hide (37:7-8). Huddled together in dens and homes, they offer covered praise to God whose awesome power seems far more threatening than inviting.” It is ironic here to note Balentine’s depiction of Elihu as one who “subtracts” from God’s creation by giving a sweeping overview in which the animals and human creatures are giving another location than a central one. In the present writer’s view, Elihu did not actually subtract them from God’s world because of the given to possibilities of where they could be found namely, ‘dens and homes’. This is because of the wonderful acts of God in controlling weather conditions (Hartley 1988:485). Nevertheless, these creatures are included in God’s creation and thus display God’s great majesty.

Thus to be wise is to consider the mystery of God in the creation and extol it in praise. In 36:24 and 37:14 Elihu calls him to “remember to extol [God’s] work” and “stop and consider the wonderful deeds of God” (cf. Clines 2006:853)<sup>785</sup>. To Elihu, if Job would do this then he is wise. Thus wisdom is beyond the mere acquisition of some kind of skills in life or having more strength of wit than other people, but it is the humble and honest acknowledgement of God’s mystery. Job is now turned to be someone who adores God and waits for God rather than one who attacks God even if what he feels in life is seemingly undeserving.<sup>786</sup> This is not in effect to perpetuate the culture of silence and unreasonable submission of every fate to the design of God, as we often see people do in my northern Nigerian African contexts,<sup>787</sup> but rather it is a call to voice out whatever we have to do in truth and humility and the right acknowledgment of the person of God beyond us as human beings. Elihu instructs Job in like manner when he says, “As for the Almighty, we cannot find him” (vs. 23), “Behold, [God] is exalted in his power; who is a teacher like him?” (36:22). Thus God’s thoughts are not our thoughts, God’s ways are not our ways<sup>788</sup>. “Elihu certainly thinks he has a lot to teach Job, and that Job is in the wrong in his attitude to God, but he keeps far from an oppositional stance toward Job” (Clines 2006:853). Thus we can say that Elihu judged Job’s case wisely, even if not fairly or justly. He did what he

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<sup>785</sup> Elihu is here “invoking a way of perceiving the world that cultivates a sense of wonder” (Balentine 2006: 62). One may like to ask at this juncture, about the significance of considering the wonder/mystery of God in creation; what does it add to wisdom thinking and theological understanding? Newsom’s (2003:226) insight are helpful here when she points out three important ways in which one can be enriched by the praise of the wonders of God in creation. “(1) contemplating the wonder of *God’s* creation requires that we not be self-absorbed by *our* needs; (2) to experience awe and wonder opens us to an encounter with something *other* than ourselves; even things or persons that are familiar may be experienced as new and surprising; and (3) the ‘gaze of wonder’ neutralizes, at least temporarily, the natural inclination to look at the world as if it is seen in its essential goodness” (cf. Balentine 2006:621-22). Thus this call to contemplation makes a genuine contribution to the story of Job, for it invites Job into the realm of yielding himself above all to the mystery of God in which the fear of God becomes a revealing wisdom. It speaks the same words to the Jobs of our contemporary world.

<sup>786</sup> Baletine (2006:623) thinks that Elihu has dominated his speeches to as what he calls “blocked conversation” or a soliloquy. But if we remember his first speech carefully down to his second speech he calls Job to answer him after listening to what he has to say (33:32; 36:21ff; 37:15ff) . To the present writer Elihu does not actually stop Job from answering him or defending himself like he did to the previous speakers, but it could be that he had nothing to say to counter the truths that Elihu has brought before him, especially from his leading theological motive to be a voice for God. We assume that Job understood Elihu clear enough to let his words stand and stay with the wonder of God before him and humbles him better to engage in the coming conversation with Yahweh, which is highly anticipated in light of the enter book of Job up to this stage (cf. Hartley 1988: 485).

<sup>787</sup> For example in northern Nigerian contexts everything is submitted to the will of God (Allah in Islam). Thus humans should accept life as it comes without questions. This religious ideology embraces all tragedies like death, accident, physical disability etc. It most a time makes people more passive than active in identifying and possibly address some redeemable or correctable ills of life.

<sup>788</sup> Cf. Isa. 55:8-9.

wanted to do namely to teach Job wisdom (33:33). He taught him the wisdom of knowing the end of his knowledge; this is the limit that he needed to acknowledge that would open him up to the revealing knowledge of God. Elihu then succeeds with this speech to make Job to “stop his complaint against God” (Clines 2006:853) not because there has nothing to say about all that he had suffered, but rather because there is something more to do from ideological-theological perspective than that, namely, to consider and marvel at the wonders of God and wait for divine revealing justice. This act of wondering and waiting for mystery is the wisdom that Elihu wants to teach Job, which is the fear of God (37:24) this echoes the poem on wisdom in chapter 28 which also sees wisdom as the mystery of fear that leads to the reverence of God. Clines (2006:907, 925) takes chapter 28 as the culmination of the speeches of Elihu.<sup>789</sup> But as we have earlier discussed toward the end of chapter 4 above chapter 28 would be best interpreted in this work as an interlude between the style of speeches, thus as a transition from dialogue patterns into the monologues in the book of Job. Nevertheless, seeing its echo at the end of the Elihu’s speeches further strengthens the placement of the Elihu speeches to add special flavor to the understanding of the meaning of wisdom in the book of Job in more practical way which is different from the traditional conventions of understanding wisdom as an intellectual reality for the successful ordering of life which is known to come from the traditions of Torah instructions in or around the temples, by parents at homes, or teachers/sages in schools. This kind of wisdom is the revealing mystery from the divine, which transcends any human tutelage, it comes into someone’s experience and engages their attitude rather than just their intellectual faculty, which

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<sup>789</sup> To the present writer chapter 28 can be situated either at an interlude between the cycles of dialogues and the monologues or at the end of Elihu’s speeches as the interlude before the coming speech of Yahweh, its function still remains the same which is to call the listener and reader to the reality of the mystery of being wise. “Wisdom, according to Job 28, is not the accumulation of knowledge, nor is it the uncovering of secrets. Wisdom consists in a certain way of being and behaving, which is within the capacity of humans generally” (Clines 2006:925). The assertion in the foregoing quote that wisdom is “within the capacity of humans generally” is not a good sense of justice to the text just referred to because like we have earlier observed, chapter 28 shows the human limitation of getting wisdom as we have earlier discussed in the latter part of chapter 4. Wisdom as the mystery that comes into one’s attitude is beyond the intellectual capacity of humans to generally fathom it, this mystery is the fear of the Lord (28:28 cf. Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13-14) that means wisdom that humbles a person before God. for more on Job 28 and its function (s) in the book of Job see Ellen van Wolde (2003).

is the faculty of human reason. This wisdom that comes from the consideration of the wonder of God transcends human reason, but rather it transforms human attitude.<sup>790</sup>

## 6.5 Summary

In summary, this chapter provides the reader with the ideological-theological texture of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. After explaining the concept of the ideological texture (6.2), we followed Robbins' (1996:105ff) guide in order to critically engage with the Elihu speeches in search of the possible ideology that it contains. That is we tried to see how useful its socio-political agenda could be, that is taking ideological interpretation as an interpretation in service of power, we discussed how the Elihu speeches present us with the ideas of the social-cultural values systems of life generally and in terms of traditional-religious ideology and theology in particular. In doing this Robbins' (1996:105f) five models of ideological discourse pattern namely, *the historical-critical discourse, social-scientific criticism, history of- religious discourse, new historical discourse, and postmodern deconstructive discourse*, helped us a lot to see the various possibilities that are available for such an approach. We do not think that all the steps or discourse patterns given by Robbins must fit in well into every passage under interpretation. Therefore, we chose the most significant for our discussion especially on the idea of the ideology and theology of the texts. Thus we chose the social-scientific<sup>791</sup> and postmodern deconstruction discourse patterns<sup>792</sup> to read the Elihu speeches closely.<sup>793</sup>

Furthermore, we explained the concept of theological (sacred) texture according to Robbins' (1996:120) guide which also provides us with the clue to engage with the theological aspect of the Elihu speeches especially in search of the divine in the texts. Some of the ideological-theological issues we got from the Elihu speeches include the presence of patriarchy (6.4.1) and divine sovereignty (6.4.2) as the most prominent ones among many that could be discerned. We

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<sup>790</sup> With this point in view about wisdom we can call for a further critique of human reason and judgment in conversation with Immanuel Kant (2007; 1952) but it is far beyond the scope of this present dissertation. It could be taken further by another research that may do justice to it better than this presupposition.

<sup>791</sup> This gave us space to critically engage with the social and cultural anthropological questions.

<sup>792</sup> This helped us to critically engage with the strength and weaknesses of the text especially in relation to its ironic cutting edge that makes the texts under consideration to creatively engage with one another.

<sup>793</sup> For more on these aspects of the ideological critical study see our explanation of the ideological texture above (cf. 6.2).

then took the study further by discussing the ideological-theological significance of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job (6.4.4) which helps us to see the interactive use of the Elihu speeches as a hinge within transitory textures of the book.

From the above discussions, we can see that the study so far has utilised our earlier exploration of the narrative-argumentative texture of the speeches which forms part of our chapter 3 above (3.3.4). Earlier on we have established the fact that Elihu's arguments have been anchored in his theological ideology. This is his understanding of the person of God in his ancient context especially in terms of God-talk in the situation of suffering like that of Job. Job has been forced by the pains within his physical and mental sense of being human to voice out his thoughts to and even against God in his attempt to further assert his integrity before God and people. Job had earlier signed his document of argumentation and had submitted it to God that God who is the Almighty should come to him and answer him. Thus he finally summoned the courage to call God into a forensic confrontation (cf. Job 31:35ff). In the silence of the anticipation comes the young speaker Elihu. The coming of Elihu has raised several questions in the minds of many interpreters through the ages as we have already stated in our exploration of the book of Job in chapter 2 (2.3.2d). This dissertation concerns itself mostly with the significance of the Elihu speeches, thus going beyond the historical critical arguments that may try to undermine it and delegitimize its presence and effect in the overall story of Job.

In this study, we have taken the ideological-theological purpose of the author/editor of the book of Job as a most probable underlining reason for inserting the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. He might have seen the fact that Elihu has something important to add to the ongoing debate about Job's suffering. But unlike the three friends of Job namely Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar who are portrayed earlier as wise sympathisers, Elihu is depicted as a young man emerging from nowhere that the reader expects. He steps into the already tensed atmosphere of contestation for Job's integrity in light of his suffering. The coming of Elihu would no doubt create a certain diversion of attention of the reader to the ongoing challenge of Job, especially to God. Thus in this dissertation, we argue for the significance of the Elihu speeches in response to Job's quest for God's justice against suffering that seriously traumatised him.

In the study so far we have argued that Elihu's response to Job has the dual function of both responding to the issues that Job has earlier raised especially in regards to the moral justice of God and in respect to the coming of God's speech to Job. Both responses are embedded within his theological-ideology. That is his perspective of the divine in relation to humanity and the larger world (cosmos). Ideology, as we have discussed above in this chapter (cf. 6.2) is the sociocultural construct of human ideas in a systemic order that formulates a certain worldview of power. Thus an ideological interpretation is an interpretation in service of power. It considers and represents the interest of those at the top of the social rank (order of importance) and is used with a view to protecting such people or power ideas. Power ideas in the book of Job are ideas of privilege, prominence and influence. Job detests his suffering situation because of its distortion of his former glory (cf. 29:1ff). That was when he thought that he was in harmony with God, but now that he suffers, he also, ironically implies that God has turned against him. Job represents socio-cultural ideologies of power as a privilege, his three friends represent the traditional/philosophical ideology of retributive justice, and Elihu represents an ideology of religious power for the privilege of the divine, and God represents the ideology of authority in regards to ownership and control.

In addition to the presence and function of ideology as a tool in service of power and privilege, we also point out to its effect in regards to the formulation of a certain theological texture of life and speech. In our discussion of the theological/sacred texture of Elihu's speeches, we focused on the image and function of the deity in relation to humanity in the text. We point out the discernible interface between Elihu's ideology and his theology one definitely informs the other in one way or another. Thus our discussion of them in the same chapter is useful in order to help us to identify their interfacing harmony and possible disruption easily.

In our use of sociological and deconstruction discourse patterns of interpreting ideology, we identified how Elihu's apology becomes constructive and deconstructive at the same time. His self-understanding of his position and possible influence in his social context helps us to see the patriarchal consciousness of the context, but his theological claim of inspiration gave him the courage he needed to penetrate the exclusionary ideology of his context into a more free sense of speech to those even higher than him in social status. But he gained the courage to form and own

his voice as a unique prophetic-wisdom-voice that directly addressed Job as a mere human being who is equally created and vulnerable as Elihu.

In his first speech, we argue that Elihu constructed his own voice and used it as a tool to the rereading of Job's earlier assertions, thus bringing them under erasure, thereby exposing their weaknesses and calling Job into a new dimension of self-consideration and the understanding of the possible meaning and purpose of his suffering. Thus Elihu's response to Job' helps us to see the elusiveness of justice, especially from a particular person's perspective in light of a given situation in life. Thus the question of just turning over to become the need for doing justice. This is one of the ironic twists that the Elihu speeches bring into the conversation.

Furthermore, Elihu challenges Job to consider the transcendence and freedom of God, in his second and third speeches, as one who is the Almighty one beyond any personal confrontation. This turns Job's quest on its own head toward a seemingly dead end. Elihu then seems to say to Job 'what you are asking is unnecessary and impossible', because God speaks in many ways and through different situations but human beings do not take notice. This could imply that even Job and his three wise friends had no clue on what God is actually doing in the book of Job.

In his fourth speech, Elihu is ironically depicted as a calm sage, full of perfect knowledge from afar and who is ready to point Job to the wonders of God. Elihu is no longer angry at this stage, he only calls for more patience to his listeners in what he would further say about God. He calls Job to a texture of wisdom that can only be described as a mystery. This depiction of wisdom from the Elihu speeches helps us to see the transformative use of the prophetic-wisdom-voice of Elihu on the dogma of cause and effect into an openness to the transformative reality of wisdom which can be found and/or given wherever the presence of God is felt. Job is called to consider the works of God beyond his present situation and then give his voice and strength in extolling the greatness of God rather than complaining. This is the wisdom of wonder that culminates in fear of God as the Lord of the universe. This fear calls one to serious caution in all of life and calls one to hope further that waits for the coming of God. If God is the great one who does all the mighty acts of and in history, if he is the just and righteous one who does not oppress (37:23-24), then he is worth waiting for in real hope without being wise in one's own eyes.

The next chapter would present the concluding summary of this dissertation by way of pointing the reader to the entire scope and texture of this study and basically the contributions that each chapter brings into the study and how that helps us to respond to our research question on the significance of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. Furthermore, we shall point out how the study so far has proven our hypotheses right in regards to the role of irony and God in the understanding of wisdom, human suffering and divine justice in the book of Job.

## Chapter 7: Conclusion

### 7.1 Research Summary

This section provides the reader with the comprehensive summary of this dissertation. This dissertation is an investigation of the socio-rhetorical function of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job (cf. 1.4). As we have already indicated in chapter two above ( 2.3.2d ), the questions by many critical scholars about the authenticity and legitimacy of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job is not a new thing<sup>794</sup>. We have seen scholars especially from the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century critical studies either choosing to neglect Elihu and his speeches in their reading of the book of Job (cf. Von Rad 1972:211; Clines 1995:122-44) or at most to treat it with some less regard as the intrusive interruption of a boastful young man who had nothing new to say than to repeat the preceding argumentation points of the three friends of Job. Some scholars see him as promoter of a traditional dogma like the three other friends of Job (cf. Driver & Gray 1921; Pope 1973), or as a human mediator or arbiter between Job and God (Andersen 1977, Habel 1985, Magdalene 2007 etc), or from a dramatic perspective a later authorial insertion in order to provide another response to Job other than what his three friends have already said (Gordis 1965, Westermann 1981, Clines 2006, Newsom 2003, Balentine 2006 etc).

In this dissertation, we investigated the Elihu speeches in Job 32-37 in search of their socio-rhetorical function. In order to successfully carry out this intention, we followed Robbins' (1996) guide to socio-rhetorical interpretation which provides us significant steps and points to consider with a view to understanding the layered nature of any given text towards its literary and ideological significance in time and place. The following lines will provide the overview of the whole dissertation according to the extreme nature and thrust of every chapter.

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<sup>794</sup> For more critical studies of the character Elihu in the book of Job see Clines (2006:678-79; 2004:115-25); Althann (1999:9-12), Barton (1924), Freedman (1968:51-59), Michel (1982:29-32), McCabe (1997:47-80), Staples (1924), Tate (1971: 487-95), Wahl (1992:250-55), Waters (1999:28-41; 1999:143-59; 1998), Wilson (1996:81-94), Witte (1993:20-25).

Chapter 1 provides the background of the dissertation in light of the personal background of the writer which portrays some socio-cultural elements especially in terms of serious patriarchal worldviews and practices which hinder the flow of relationships between the older and younger generations and so presents enormous challenges on critically engaging issues of life like the quest for justice in a suffering situation especially in reference to the divine (cf. Mbiti 1969). The book of Job is fascinating in relation to such northern Nigerian (African) context and texture of life because of its similarities of such cultural textures and worldviews. Thus the interest of scholars like Gordis (1965), Von Rad (1972), Murphy (1996), Rowley (1970), Pope (1973), Habel (1985), Crenshaw (1984; 1998; 2010) and Newsom (2003) among others captured the mind of the writer in order to also add his voice to the discussion of the book of Job as one of the books of wisdom which was later adopted by ancient Israel. Thus the chapter further provides the preliminary research trends in interpreting Job which points to the problem of the very insufficient attention to it in African contexts. Not many scholars actually worked on the book of Job. Thus there is only one commentary on the whole book which is part of the pioneering effort of African scholars known as the *Africa Bible Commentary* edited by Tokunboh Adeyemo (2006) in which Tewoldehedhin Habtu provides the commentary on the book of Job. Thus the writer indicated the need for further engagement with the book of Job in more wider and important ways.

Our use of Robbins' (1996) guide to socio-rhetorical interpretation in this dissertation does not take Robbins' guide as flawless in making a socio-rhetorical interpretation. For example, in his critical response to Robbins (1996) socio-rhetorical interpretation Yi (2002:198-99) following Botha (1998) points out the fact that "Robbins does not give any reason why he lets apparently incompatible aspects coexist in his model." These "apparently incompatible aspects" refer to the co-existence of the reader-response and actual reading of the texts.<sup>795</sup> Nevertheless, he further explains such a liberal perspective as an effort to provide a "comprehensive" approach to the ancient texts which is more agreeable than otherwise. Thus it is not seen as a weakness to his interpretive model but rather the evidence of its uniqueness in terms of the need for multidimensionality towards interdisciplinary studies (cf. Jonker & Lawrie 2005). The following

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<sup>795</sup> These aspects are what Yi (2002:198-99) in other words calls the synchronic and diachronic approaches of interpretation.

chapter by chapter summary would provide the importance of the use of socio-rhetorical criticism in the study of the book of Job.

Chapter 2 takes the quest that was started from chapter 1 further by means of setting the stage more appropriately for studying the book of Job. It began with providing an overview of the entire book according to the various discernible sections from the book. This would help especially readers who are not so much familiar with the contents of the book of Job and its main structural divisions. In these divisions, the Elihu speeches were given a special place and recognition, but that does not isolate or fragment it away from the rest of the book of Job. It rather serves as a call to closer attention on the person and speeches of Elihu in Job. Thus we highlighted the problem of identifying the individual and significance of Elihu in the book of Job which has been further elaborated in the subsequent sections of the dissertation (cf. chaps 3 &4). Furthermore, we also provide an overview of various trends of Joban interpretation from the so-called pre-critical to the critical contexts. In this section, the interest of scholars was heavily on the philosophical and theological potentials of the book of Job to the neglect of its literary and socio-cultural textures. This also emphasises the need for applying Robbins' socio-rhetorical guide in order to further expand the quest for the understanding of the book of Job. Thus the use of Robbins' suggestions occupies our study from chapters 3-6.

Chapter 3 contains the intratexture or as in Robbins (1996:7) "inner texture" of the Job 32-37. This helps us to see the various inner textures within Elihu's rhetoric in terms of their repetitive, progressive, narrational, opening-middle-closing, argumentative and sensory-aesthetic textures and patterns. But the arrangement of the foregoing textures was not followed accurately as they appeared in Robbins's guide mainly because of the poetic nature of the Elihu speeches. This necessitated our merging of especially the narrational-argumentative textures and also discussed the opening-middle-closing texture within them as well. Because of the lack of clearly narrational flow, one finds it difficult to actually know where exactly the opening-middle- and closing pattern could be located. Thus we avoided any fixity on that fluid pattern as far as the Elihu speeches are concerned.

Chapter 4 deals with the intertextual textures and patterns of the Elihu speeches. In this chapter, we examined the textual openness of the Elihu speeches to interact with other texts which form

the world of the text. In our study, unlike Robbins, we give particular attention to the study of the multifaceted nature of the “oral-scribal intertexture” (Robbins 1996:40) of the Elihu speeches as the main intertextual texture. This is because of the literary and oral nature of the speeches of Elihu. This forms one of the major points of interests that helps us to understand the scope and context of the Elihu speeches. Thus we have investigated the use of oral-scribal texture in light of the use of recitation, re-contextualization, reconfiguration, narrative amplification, and thematic elaboration which we discovered that the use of recitation, recontextualization, and reconfiguration had occupied the Elihu speeches as patterns of oral-scribal intertexture more than others. These have been used as devices in order to actualize the presence of references, echoes and allusions in the speeches (cf. Sommer 1998). These steps have helped us to see the various layers of interaction between the Elihu speeches and other texts like the speeches within the book of Job, the wisdom traditions, prophetic traditions, priestly and the ancient Near Eastern texts. These interactions have helped us to see the voices within the Elihu speeches as not belonging to a particular tradition but rather the speeches contain informed voices which Elihu embodies. These voices constitute the Elihu voice in the book of Job which we call the prophetic-wisdom-voice. This comes as a serious response to the need for the time of Israel’s experience of the dark side or the hiddenness of God (i.e., *Deus Absconditus*). In the study, we argue that the book of Job, in light of the Elihu speeches, is one which was finalised between the late Persian period and the rise of the Hellenistic period. Thus it is seen in this study as a post-exilic text which holds the vast potential of responding to the dreadful situation of Israel as in Job. During the exile, Israel experienced a struggle to hold her faith together. There was no temple in the exile, so all the ritualistic religious orders had no specific place and/or structure. Nevertheless, the need to “fear” the Lord in terms of being wise is not less urgent. Thus in such a temple less period (Middlemas 2007), the quest for the place for wisdom is highly needed. The Elihu speeches thus do not only respond to Job’s need for an arbiter but also replied in showing him the way to wisdom which is in fear of God.

Chapter 5 reflects further on the nature of context within which the long textured intertexture that we discussed in chapter 4 might have happened. In doing this, we returned to the remaining sections for the intertextual analysis which we left off by concentrating mainly on “oral-scribal intertexture” in chapter 4. Thus we disagree with Robbins to merged social, cultural and

historical intertexture to the oral-scribal. This fits chapter 5 better which is mainly on the sociocultural textures. Thus the remainder of the steps for chapter 4 become useful in forming the social and cultural background of the social and cultural texture which focused on the examination of life with the text in the world (Robbins 1996:71). The different topics that we examine in chapter 5 namely, the specific, common social and cultural themes and final categories help us to see some of the interactive textures of the ancient world and contemporary African contexts.

Chapter 6 focuses on the ideological-theological textures of the Elihu speeches. Unlike Robbins, we tried to join ideological texture and the “sacred texture” (Robbins 1996: 120) which we call the theological texture, together. This is because of the interface between the two. We do not see much distance between ideological thinking and theological reflection; one informs the other. Thus we discussed the ideological texture as an interpretation or worldview in service to power. In the case of the Elihu speeches, ideology becomes evident in terms of patriarchal power and even theological, dogmatic thinking. Along with this line, we see the doctrine of retribution which has been problematized by the book of Job and not less the Elihu speeches. In all this, we saw how irony plays a great role in twisting the whole thing sometimes beyond the conventions of the day. This is the deconstructive sense of the Elihu speeches which put the contextual value systems and theological presuppositions under erasure. The Elihu speeches earn its place in the book of Job as the speech of subversion and for subversion. This subversion is not destructive because of its intentionality of facing the more evocative view of life and being open to the unexpected. In this chapter, we discussed how the use of irony and God play significant roles in the reconstruction of the meaning of wisdom, justice and the value of human suffering. Wisdom, as in chapter 28 of the book of Job is a reality that has no specific place, but it is a gift from God to those who choose the path of mystery (fear the Lord, cf. 28:28). The reconstruction of wisdom as the fear of the Lord has brought the priestly texture of wisdom literature full circle. In that Job, the Psalmist, Proverbs and Qoheleth all testify to (cf. Job 28:28; Ps. 111:10; Prov. 1:7; Eccl. 12:13 Cf. Bosman 2012). The above connective understanding of the meaning of wisdom as an exclusive gift of the divine helps us to see the priestly/scribal textures of the texts. Thus we argue that the Elihu speeches came from the hands of an informed post-exilic scribe.

## 7.2 Research Contributions

This dissertation contributes to Old Testament scholarship by critically engaging the significance of the Elihu speeches in the book of Job. It is supposed that both older and younger scholars may now be given the special dual roles of the person of Elihu as both a respondent and a mediator between Job and God. Unlike Newsom (2003) and Balentine (2006), we do not think of Elihu as the one who wrote himself into the text of the book of Job,<sup>796</sup> but like Gordis (1965), our assumption is that his speeches came from the same author of the rest of the book of Job with the specific intention of adding another opinion to the voices already heard in conversation with Job. This new voice is polyphonic because it embodies an intersection of voices as a result of the contextual challenges of the time. Consequently, Elihu is assumed to embody a prophetic-wisdom-voice which dared to expound philosophical ideologies in order to be heard.

The strength of Elihu and the display of his passion and wisdom have contributed to our modern challenges of the gaps between the old and the new. Hence, this dissertation enlarges the growth of African scholarship in terms of hermeneutical approaches and criticism. So far, this is conceivably the first work that we know of carried out in Africa on the Elihu speeches within the dialectic of irony and wisdom using Robbins's socio-rhetorical guide to interpretation, which provides the enriching texture of the multidimensionality that we need in the present contexts of global conversations.<sup>797</sup>

*Irony*<sup>798</sup> as already explained in Chapter One above is understood as a literary technique that points us to elements of incongruity in a given life situation or literary piece (cf. 1.9.3). Thus, the dialectics of irony and wisdom in our discussion has facilitated us to grasp the use of *irony* as a hermeneutical key to constructing and unlocking the intriguing aspects of the Elihu speeches which could be discerned and illustrated in different ways. As we have already discussed (See,

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<sup>796</sup> Newsom (2003: 202 cf. Balentine 2006:526) sees Elihu as a later “dissatisfied reader” of the book of Job thus she maintains that, “my governing assumption is that Elihu is not simply another character; he is a reader of the book of Job, one who literally writes himself into the text.”

<sup>797</sup> For more academic contributions on the Elihu speeches in the book of Job see Brolley (1995), Johns (1983), Martin (1972), McCabe (1985), Gore (1997), Waters (1998). But none of them studied the Elihu speeches within the dialectical rubrics of irony and wisdom. Thus we hope that this research would be a watershed in search of ironic wisdom and its significance in critical thinking in African contexts and beyond.

<sup>798</sup> “Irony” and “ironic” will be highlighted in this paragraph in order to make it clear to my readers how I returned to the describe of the literary role of irony in the Elihu speeches.

1.9.3), the *irony* in Job is more of a dramatic irony which is explored as the element of the incongruous in the unfolding of the life story and experiences of Job sometimes as a comic relieve (as if answers to his situation could easily be found) and at other instances as the intrusion of the unexpected which could be understood as the elemental presence of the mystery of life. The use of irony in Job could actually be humorous because of the lack of the obvious and the presence of the unexpected. For example, irony is used as a transition pattern in the flow of the book of Job in that, after Job has given his Oath of innocence and called on the Almighty to step forward to respond to him (chap. 31:35ff), a young person by the name of Elihu emerged on the scene (chap. 32-37). Elihu is introduced by the narrator as an angry young man, whose anger was against Job's friends and Job himself. The irony is used as an emotional contrast in that the three friends who came to sympathise with Job ended up criticising him and also being criticised by Elihu and Yahweh (cf. 2:11-13; 32:1-5; 42:7-9). The irony is also used as an element for subversion in that a young man claims to know better than older people and now has come to teach them wisdom (32:11ff). It is *ironic* also that the Elihu who promised never to take side actually took God's side over against Job's. He also pledged to justify Job (33:31-33) but ended up indicting him as one who is in the wrong (33:12; 35:2 etc.). In his discussion of the significance of suffering Elihu shows that the God who brings it takes it away. It is also *ironic* that the transcendent God is the immanent God who primarily engages in the details of all of life (37:23,24). It is *ironic* to note that Elihu maintains that wisdom is beyond the acquisition of skills and life experiences in the conventional sense of the word, but rather it is a revelation that comes from the fear (reverence, mystery) of God. Thus our discussion of *irony* in Job especially within the Elihu speeches has added a contributing voice and effort on Sharp's (2009) discussion of *Irony and Meaning in the Hebrew Bible* in which the book of Job was unfortunately not reflected in a major section of the illustration of the presence of *irony* in the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament). Nevertheless, she has done well to pave the way and expect other contributions as the present one in addition to what she started which does not claim total exhaustion of the presence of *irony* in the Hebrew Bible (cf. Sharp 2009 4, 5).

In regards to the tradition of socio-rhetorical studies, it is important to note that Robbins' socio-rhetorical guide to biblical interpretation was written mainly from the New Testament perspective and within the narrative or prose literary texture in terms of genre, but this

dissertation provides an engagement with it in the Old Testament especially within the dominant genre of poetry. This exercise has helped us to have a much closer look at the details of the text and its intertextual scope and potentials towards good responses to critical questions of life like the problems of human suffering, the quest for wisdom as a religious category in a temple less context. Compared to other notable works on the book of Job like those done by scholars like Habel (1985), Newsom (2003), Clines (2006), Balentine (2006), Habtu (2006) and Magdalene (2007) who have also discussed the Elihu speeches as integral to the book of Job and indicate that Elihu's response to Job's situation of suffering has taken the focus of Job further and away from suffering the issues of justice, divine justice specifically (cf. Habel 1985; Hartley 1988). But we have taken the contributions further in examining the nature of the Elihu responses to Job, not just in terms of "what" questions but in terms of "how", thus Elihu shows Job and Job's readers how to conduct themselves in suffering, he showed the meaning of justice in terms of how justice is done not just in terms of who is just or not. He points Job to the need for wisdom which is beyond the acquisition of skills of life but rather as a religious category of life which recognises and engages the mystery of God.

Furthermore, we have taken the work of Newsom (2003) and Balentine (2006) further in terms of our attempt to see Elihu as an integral part of the story of Job not just an afterwards reader and late commentator but rather one who has been part of the ongoing conversation from his knowledge and use of the previous speeches especially those of Job (Witte 1993). Unlike Newsom, we see Elihu as a representative of a particular voice from a new tradition that is more peculiar to post-exilic spirituality. Thus we pointed to the ironic combination of important traditions in the Old Testament and other ancient Near Eastern contexts. We have closely examined how the priestly, prophetic and wisdom traditions merged to form a unique voice which we describe as the prophetic-wisdom-voice. This voice is ironically not innocent from the ideological interest of its day. Nevertheless, it served as a method to critique the dogmatism of a patriarchal sense of being wise and just.

### 7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

As we have already indicated, the use of Robbins' socio-rhetorical guide to interpreting the Old Testament is not always without its challenges. For example, in terms of the form (*Gattung*) of the text, we encountered a similar problem to Yi's (2002: 199) dilemma on the use of narrative criticism to the text in question. The nature of the Elihu speeches' dominant genre being "poetry" does not allow us so much analysis of the "narrative texture" of the text. But unlike Yi, we were able to engage it which still presents and sustains its possibility even in the interpretation of a material that contains concise narrative features. The same problem applies with the historical texture of the Elihu speeches specifically. There are very revealing pointers to historicity in the world outside the text. Therefore, we recommend that more attention should be given to the poetic genre of literature in the near future on socio-rhetorical criticism. This could be done in terms of showing good steps to follow for the understanding of their semantics, psychology, ideology and theological potentials.

Robbins' socio-rhetoric gives ample space for discussing the literary and sociocultural questions around the text. In light of the need for more theological-ethical readings, we recommend that in the near future current sociocultural issues in terms of reader-response criticism are importantly needed to be incorporated into the model. These are issues like identifying problems in terms of gender, immigration, racism, trauma and essential theological questions (cf. Yi 2002:201).

This dissertation does not deal with all the questions of interest around the book of Job. Thus there is a lot of more grounds to cover in terms of continual research. For example, due to the extensive nature of the Elihu speeches (chaps 32-37) there is no how one can do justice to all the needed critical questions of the text like the comparative criticism of the MT and the LXX, or the comparative discussions of the stories of Job in other ancient Near Eastern contexts and the biblical book of Job in terms of their ideological critical points of similarity and difference, or the comparative discussion of the biblical book of Job and the Testament of Job or the wisdom of Ben Sira etc. All these areas hold great potential for further research which is beyond the scope of this present dissertation. Therefore, we submit them for interested students and scholars for further studies.

In conclusion, in response to our hypotheses in Chapter One, we can answer the questions of the function/significance of irony in the Elihu speeches of the book of Job in the affirmative. Irony really played a pivotal role in the depiction of the presence and role of God in Job's suffering, in the suffering of Job as a case in point and the attempt of Elihu to critically instruct Job on the need to be wise. The speeches are unique in terms of their texture, flow and scope. Some of the new things that Elihu does in the speeches include the fact that he prepared Job for the next speeches of Yahweh (cf. 38-42), as well as making the Joban reader reflect on the previous speeches and then prepare very well, within the urgency of being wise for the coming of God. Elihu is a true prophetic-wisdom-voice in the book of Job and the entire Old Testament like no other. He dared the times and contextual conventions to provide such a critical voice, thus opening us up, especially people from high patriarchal African contexts to have the courage to break ideological silences towards the freedom of speeches, self, and the truth of life for the dignity and justice for all.

Robbins' guide to socio-rhetorical interpretation is very wealthy and useful in helping this study to come this far. It helps me to systematically understand and creatively engage with the multi-dimensionality of any literary text. Once again this research has been helpful to answer our research question in the affirmative, and to prove our hypotheses right, that irony has been creatively used in the book of Job especially in the Elihu speeches to provide new meaning to role of God in human suffering, the sense of wisdom and justice in human life. Elihu in the book of Job is a depiction of ironic wisdom in search of wisdom.

## Some Grammatical Tables of Frequency from Job 32-37

**Table 1: The Occurrence of Names in Reference to Deity**

Name of Deity	English	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
אֱלֹהִים	God/gods	1		1				2
שַׁדַּי	Shadday/Almighty	1	1	2	1		1	6
אֵל	God	1	4	6	2	3	3	19
אֱלֹהִי	God		2		1	1	2	6

**Table 2: The Occurrence of Body Parts**

Words	English	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
עֵין	eyes	1		1		1		3
אָף	nose	4			1	2		7
פֶּה	mouth	1	2		1	1	1	6
בֶּטֶן	stomach	2						2
שִׁפָּה	lip	1	1					2
פָּנֵה	face	1	2	3	2		2	10
לְשׁוֹן	tongue		1					1
חֵךְ	palate		1	1				2
לֵב	heart		1	1		2	2	6
שִׁפָּה	lip	1	1					2
אֶבְרָךְ	hand		1					1
אָזֶן	ear		2	1		2		5
רֶגֶל	foot		1					1
עֲצָם	bones		2					2
נַפְשׁ	Soul/life	1	5			1		7
יָד	hand			2	1		1	4

**Table 4: Various Transition Markers in Job 32-37<sup>799</sup>**

Words	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
אָכַן	1						1
לָכֵן	1		2			1	4
הֵן	1	4			4		9
הִנֵּה	2	2					4
וְ	22	29	37	15	32	19	154
אִלְמָּה		1					1
אֲדָה		1		1			2

<sup>799</sup> These transition markers follow the division of van der Lugt (1995:411-12, 422-23.).

זָז		1					1
אָמָן			1		1		2
עֵתָהּ				1		1	2

**Table 5: The Use of Nouns in terms Gender**

Masculine	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
Singular	13	3	7	3	1	2	29
Plural	12	6	5	6	8	7	44

Feminine	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
Singular	2	9	4	2	3	1	21
Plural	1	2	1	1	1	1	7

Genders	Total Occurrences
Masculine	73
Feminine	28

**Table 6: The Distribution of Various Nouns**

MT	English	Chap. 32	Chap. 33	Chap. 34	Chap. 35	Chap. 36	Chap. 37	Total
אִישׁ	man	4	3	7	1	1	3	19
אִיּוֹב	Job	5	2	4	1		1	13
עֵין	eye	1		1		1		3
אֶפֶס	nose	4			1	2		7
אֵלִיהוּא	Elihu	3		1		1		5
בֶּן	Son	2			1			3
בְּרַכְיָאֵל	Barakiel	2						2
מִשְׁפָּחָהּ	Clan	1						1
רָם	Ram	1						1
נַפְשׁוֹ	soul/self	1	5			1		7
אֱלֹהִים	God	1		1				2
רֵעַ	friend	1			1			2
מַעֲנָה	answer	2						2
אֵלִיהוּ	Elihu	1			1			2
דְּבָר	word	2	2	1				5
יוֹם	day	3	1			1		5
אֵין	nothing	2	1	2	1			6
פֶּה	mouth	1	2		1	1	1	6
דַּעַ	knowledge	3				1	1	5

רב	multitude	1			1	1	1	4
שָׁנָה	year	1				2		3
חֵכְמָה	wisdom	2	1					3
רוּחַ	spirit/wind	2	1	1			1	5
אָנוּשׁ	a human being	1	2			1		4
נְשָׁמָה	breath	1	1	1			1	4
שְׁדֵי	the Almighty	1	1	2	1		1	6
מִשְׁפָּט	justice	1		6	1	2	1	11
תְּבוּנָה	understanding	1						1
מִלָּה	word	4	3	3	2	2		14
אָמַר	say/word	2	1	1				4
אֵל	God	1	4	6	2	3	3	19
עוֹד	again	2		1		1		4
חֶלֶק	share	1						1
בֶּטֶן	belly	2						2
שִׁפָּה	lip	1	1					2
מְעַט	a little	1						1
לְשׁוֹן	tongue		1					1
יָשָׁר	upright		2					
לֵב	heart		1	1		2	2	6
דַּעַת	knowledge		1	1	1	1		4
פָּנָה	face	1	2	3	2		2	10
חֹמֶר	clay		1					1
אִימָה	dread		1					1
אָכַף	hand		1					1
בְּלִי	Without		1	1	1	1		4
פְּשַׁע	transgression		1	2	1	1		5
עוֹן	guilt		1					1
תְּנוּאָה	fault		1					1
אִיב	enemy		1					1
סֹד	block		1					1
רֶגֶל	foot		1					1
אֶרֶח	path		1	1				2
כָּל	all		4	5		2	5	16
אֱלֹהִים	God		2		1	1	2	6
חֵלֹם	dream		1					1
חֲזִיוֹן	vision		1					1
לַיְלָה	night		1	4	1	1		5
תְּרֵדָמָה	deep sleep		1					1
תְּרֵדָמָה	slumber		1					1
מִשְׁכָּב	bed		2					2
אָזֶן	ear		2	1		2		5
מוֹסָר	warning		1			1		2
אָדָם	mankind	1	3	4	1	1	1	10

מַעֲשֵׂה	deed		1	1			1	3
גִּוְה	pride		1					1
גִּבּוֹר	young man		2	3				5
שַׁחַת	pit		5					5
חַיָּה	life		4			1		5
נַחַל	river		1			1		2
רִיב	dispute/strife		1					1
עֲצָם	bones		2					2
מֵאֲכָל	food		1					1
תַּאֲוָה	desire		1					1
בָּשָׂר	flesh		2	1				3
רָאָה	see		1					1
נֶשֶׁת	bare		1					1
יֵשׁ	there is		2					2
מַלְאָךְ	messenger		1					1
מַלְיָן	spokesperson		1					1
כֶּפֶר	ransom		1			1		2
נַעַר	youth		1			1		2
עֲלוּמִים	youthful strength		1					1
תְּרוּעָה	a shout of joy		1					1
צְדָקָה	righteousness		1		1		1	3
אוֹר	light		2			2	4	8
חַיָּה	life		1					1
בֵּין	among			2				2
חֵץ	arrow			1				1
לְעַג	scorn			1				1
מַיִם	water			1		1	1	3
חֲבֵרָה	company			1				1
אָוֶן	mischief			3		2		5
לֵבָב	heart			2				2
חֲלִיל	far be it			1				1
רָשָׁע	wickedness			2	1			3
עוֹל	wrong			2				2
פַּעַל	deed			1		2		3
אֶרֶץ	earth			1	1		5	7
תִּבְלָה	world			1			1	2
יַחַד	together			2				2
עָפָר	dust			1				1
בִּינָה	understanding			1				1
קוֹל	voice		1	1			5	7
מֶלֶךְ	king			1		1		2
בְּלִיעַל	uselessness			1				1
שָׂר	commander			1				1

שׁוֹעַ	eminent	1		1				2
יָד	hand			2	1		1	4
רִגַע	moment			1				1
תְּצוֹת	middle			1				1
עַם	people			2		2		4
צִלְמֹת	deep shadow			1				1
חִקָּר	investigation			1		1		2
תַּחַת	instead			2		2	1	5
מַעֲבָד	work			1				1
מָקוֹם	place			1			1	2
אֲחֵר	behind			1			1	2
צָעָקָה	cry for help			2				2
מוֹקֵשׁ	ensnare			1				1
בְּלַעֲדֵי	apart from			1				1
נֶצַח	forever			1		1		2
צְדָקָה	righteousness				1	1		2
שָׁמַיִם	heavens				2		1	3
שָׁחַק	cloud				1	1	2	4
עֲשׂוּקִים	oppression				1			1
זְרוּעַ	arm				1			1
זְמִירָה	song				1			1
בְּהֵמָה	animal				1			1
עוֹף	bird				1			1
שָׁוְיָה	empty plea				1			1
דִּין	case				1	1		2
פֶּשַׁע	transgression				1			2
מְאֹד	very				1			1
הַבָּל	vanity				1			1
זָעִיר	a little longer					1		1
לִשְׁקָר	falseness					1		1
דַּעַת	knowledge					1		1
כֹּחַ	strength					3	1	4
כִּסֵּא	throne					1		1
זָק	fetter					1		1
חֶבֶל	cord					1		1
עֲנִי	misery					3		3
לַחֲזָק	adversary					1		1
נָחַת	set on					1		1
שֻׁלְחָן	table					1		1
דִּשְׁוֹן	fatness					1		1
חֵמָה	wrath					1		1
סִפְקָה	riches/mockery					1		1
שׁוֹעַ	cry for help					1		1
מוֹרֵה	teacher					1		1

דָּרָךְ	way					2	1	3
עוֹלָה	wickedness					1		1
מִסְפָּר	number					1		1
מָטָר	rain					1	2	3
אֶד	mist					1		1
אָדָם	human being					1		1
עָב	cloud					1	2	3
תְּשׁוּעָה	thunder					1		1
סִפָּה	booth					1		1
שֵׁשׁ	root					1		1
יָם	sea					1		1
אֲכָל	food					1		1
רָע	thundering					1		1
מִקְנֵה	livestock					1		1
רָגַז	thundering						1	1
הִגְהָה	rumbling						1	1
גְּאוֹן	majesty				1		1	2
שֶׁלֶג	snow						1	1
גֶּשֶׁם	shower						2	2
עֹז	strength						1	1
חַיָּה	animal						1	1
אָרֶב	den						1	1
מְעִינָה	hidden den						1	1
סוּפָה	wind						1	1
קָרָה	call						1	1
רֵחַב	breath						1	1
מוֹצֵק	freezing					1	1	2
רֵי	moisture						1	1
עָב	cloud					1	2	3
עָנָן	cloud						2	2
מְסֻבָּה	around						1	1
תְּהַבְלוֹת	guidance						1	1
שֵׁבֶט	rod						1	1
מִפְלְאוֹת	marvelous work						1	1
בְּגָד	garment						1	1
רְאִי	mirror						1	1
זָהָב	gold						1	1

**Table 7: The Distributions of the Pronouns**

MT	Number	English	Function	Chap 32	Chap 33	Chap 34	Chap 35	Chap 36	Chap 37	Total
אֵלֶּה	plural	these	demonstrative	1	1					2

הוא	3 <sup>rd</sup> person Masc.	He	pronoun	12	24	20	8	15	23	102
היא	3 <sup>rd</sup> Fem. Sing.	she	pronoun	1	1	2	1	2	1	8

**Table 8: The Distributions of Verbs**

MT	English	Chap 32	Chap 33	Chap 34	Chap 35	Chap 36	Chap 37	Total
שבת	case	1						1
ענה	answer	7	2	1	2			12
קרה	become hot	4						4
צדק	righteous	1	2	1	1			5
מצא	find	2	2	1			2	7
רשע	guilty	1		3				4
חכה	wait	1						1
ראה	see	1	3	2	1		2	9
אמר	say	4	3	6	5	3	3	24
זהל	fear	1						1
ירא	fear	1					2	3
חזה	telling	3				1		4
דבר	speak	3	4	2			1	10
ידע	teach	2		3	1	1	5	12
בין	understand	3				1	1	5
חכם	be wise	1			1			2
שמע	listen	1	4	5	1	2	3	16
יחל	wait	2						2
אזן	hear	1	1	2			1	5
חקר	Search out	1						1
יכה	rebuke	1	1					2
נדף	blow away	1						1
שוב	answer	1	5	1	1	1		9
חתת	be dismayed	1						1
עתק	fail	1						1
עמד	stand	1		1			1	3
צוק	press	1						1
בקע	burst open	1						1
רוח	find relief	1						1
פתח	open	2	1					3
נשא	lift up	2		2		1		5
כנה	flatter	2						2
עשה	to make	1	1		2		1	5

מלל	speak		1					1
חיה	life		1			1		2
יכל	be able		1					1
ערך	present	1	1			1	1	4
יצב	stand		1					1
קרץ	form		1					1
בעת	terrify		1					1
חשב	reckon		1		1			2
שים	put		1	3		1	1	6
רבה	be great		1	1				2
ריב	content		1					1
שור	perceive		2	1	3			6
גלה	open		1			2		3
חתם	seal		1				1	2
סור	turn aside		1	3				4
כסה	hide		1			2		3
חשך	spare		1					1
עבר	pass over		2	1		1	1	5
זהם	loath		1					1
כלה	waste away		1			1		2
קרב	draw near		1					1
מות	kill		1	1		1		3
חנן	show favor		1					1
רטפש	be renewed		1					1
עתר	pray		1					1
רצה	take pleasure		1	1				2
חטא	sin		1		1			2
עוה	pervert		1					1
פדה	redeem		1					1
פעל	do		1	3	1	2	1	8
קשב	be attentive		1					1
חפץ	desire		1					1
חרש	be silent		2					2
אלף	teach		1		1			2
בחן	test			1				1
טעם	taste			1				1
כזב	lie			1				1
שתה	drink			1				1
ארח	goes on the road			1				1
סכן	profit			1	1			2
פקד	give charge			1	1	1		3
אסף	gather			1				1
גוע	perish			1	1			2

שנא	hate			1				1
חבש	govern			1				1
נכר	regard			2				2
געש	be shaken			1				1
רעע	shatter			1				1
הפך	overturn			1			1	2
דכא	be crushed			1				1
ספק	strike			2				2
שכל	understand			2				2
שקט	be quiet			1			1	2
סתר	to hide			2				2
מלך	to reign			1				1
חבל	act corruptly			1				1
חזה	see			1		1		2
ירה	teach			1				1
יסף	do again			2		1		3
שלם	repay			2				2
מאס	reject			1		1		2
בחר	choose			2		1		3
יעל	benefit				1			1
נבט	look at				1	1		2
גבה	be high				1	1		2
רבב	multiply				1			1
לקח	receive				1			1
זעק	cry out				1			1
שוע	cry for help				1	1		2
נתן	give				2	3	1	6
צעק	cry out				1			1
חיל	wait				1			1
פצה	opens				1			1
כבר	multiply				1	1		2
ישב	to set					1		1
אסר	be tied					2		2
לכד	be caught					1		1
נגד	to declare		1			2		3
גבר	be arrogant					1		1
עבד	serve					1		1
חלץ	deliver					1		1
סות	incite					2		2
מלא	be full	1				2		3
תמך	to take hold of					1		1
נטה	turn aside					1		1
שאף	desire					1		1

שמר	take care		1			1		2
פנה	turn					1		1
שגב	be high					1		1
זכר	remember					1		1
שגא	extol					1		1
שיר	sing					1		1
גרע	take away					1		1
זקק	distill					1		1
אָאָר	pour down	1		2		2	2	7
רעף	drop					1		1
פרש	scatter					1		1
דין	judge					1		1
צוה	command					1	1	2
פגע	strike					1		1
עלה	go up					2		2
חרד	tremble						1	1
נתר	to leap						1	1
יצא	go out						1	1
שרה	to lose						1	1
שאג	roar						1	1
רעם	thunder						2	2
עקב	restrain						1	1
שמע	hear	1	4	5	1	2	3	16
פלא	wonderful						2	2
הוה	fall						1	1
בוא	come			1			2	3
שכן	dwell						1	1
טרח	load down						1	1
פוץ	scatter						1	1
יפע	shine						1	1
רקע	hammer out						1	1
יצק	cast out						1	1
בלע	communicate						1	1
טהר	cleanse						1	1
אתה	come						1	1
אתה	oppress						1	1

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