

THE DIALECTICAL GRAMMAR OF JOB AND QOHELETH: A BURKEAN ANALYSIS

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1. A historical problem?

A loss of a sense of history and the search for a new faith to meet the needs of the individual (see von Rad 1965:453-459; 1972:190-239). Indeed, the books of Job and Qoheleth can fit into such a picture. Both books have a certain timelessness about them: Job's story, set in the distant past, deals with *historical problem*?

Any investigation of Job and Qoheleth can start by invoking von Rad's justly famous exposition of the changes that took place in Israel's wisdom tradition after the exile, the putative the perennial problem of the individual, innocent sufferer and Qoheleth deliberately postulates a 'timeless world' in which changes, though they occur all the time, are epiphenomenal (cf Crüsemann 1984:57; Perdue 1994:209f). Both books, albeit in different ways, represent a turn towards the world, a questioning of the ways of a world that transcends Israelite identity. It is easy to imagine that we encounter in these books a radically new voice in Israelite history, the voice of the individual Israelite who, having been deprived of a national identity based on an independent national state, has to come to terms with life in a broader, potentially hostile environment. Just as the book of Jonah and the first chapters of Daniel explore the possibilities and pitfalls of Israel's new position among the nations, so, and reaching equally different conclusions, Job and Qoheleth explore what it means to be an Israelite, a person of faith, in a cosmos that seems indifferent to faith.

Unfortunately Clio, capricious as only a muse can be, is not wooed thus easily. Two lines of argument can be mustered against this historical reconstruction. One could argue that creation theology had always played a large role in Israel's religious heritage (see Schmid 1974:11-30). Even if the created order was not the *Gesamthorizont* of Old Testament theology *in toto*, one can claim that it was always the focus of the wisdom tradition, which, at the same time, always had an interest in the lot of the individual. This would imply that wisdom is simply singing to her old tune in Job and Qoheleth, although in the latter book a few foreign notes have crept in. One could also argue, following a strong current in contemporary scholarship, that nearly all the books of the Old Testament were written after the exile anyway. If Job was written during or soon after the exile and Qoheleth towards the end of the Old Testament period, one can even claim that the bulk of the Old Testament writings separate these two. Here too a less extreme position is sufficient to cast doubts on the initial postulate. At least some of the most nationalistic material in the Old Testament and some of the most ambitious historical constructs derive from post-exilic times.

Since great circumspection is called for, I will refrain from suggesting that what Job and Qoheleth have to say can be explained in terms of a transparent and unilinear process of historical development. It would not, to my mind, help to become starry-eyed about 'sociological analysis'. No doubt the authors of these books belonged to the educated and

economically advantaged minority in their society¹ - as did Marx and Lenin in their time. Yet, even when these approaches fail, one may speak, a little more modestly, of a development, one that can be traced by analysing the 'grammar' of the dialectical operations along the lines developed by Kenneth Burke². I would call it, using Burke's terminology, the development that takes place when a scene becomes an agency. Since this development is an ever-present possibility in dialectical grammar, one cannot tie it down to a specific point in history; the reversal of the process is equally possible. Obviously historical or social circumstances can favour this particular form of dialectics, but, in as much as the 'circumstances' may pertain to the experience of an individual or a small group, I would not be too confident about attempts to find a precise locus for a particular manifestation of it.

Let us by all means believe that certain factors after the exile influenced the tacks taken by the authors of Job and Qoheleth. This could make good sense and does little harm, provided one does not imagine that these factors constituted either sufficient or necessary cause or that one has made any contribution to historiography by adopting the belief. If this means a return to von Rad, it is a return to von Rad the dialectician, the von Rad who was intensely aware of the battles people have to wage to continue to make sense of their lives in a changing world³.

1 On Qoheleth's social position, see Bickerman (1967:158ff), Gordis (1968:76ff), Lohfink (1980:8f) and Crüsemann (1984:passim). Murphy's objection (1992:xxi) that we have too little evidence to draw such a conclusion is not acceptable - this is the best conclusion we can draw on the available evidence.

2 The works of this eclectic scholar are not well known today. This unfortunately means that the terminology of Burke's 'dramatism', which I employ often in the following pages, may puzzle some readers. The following summary, drawn mainly from his *Grammar of Motives*, could help.

Burke (1952:x) examines 'what is involved when we say what people are doing and why they are doing it'. For this purpose he transfers the term 'grammar' from the purely linguistic field to the field of discourse. His dialectical grammar is an attempt to find the basic rules, the resources and constraints of 'talk about talk'. Just as innumerable sentences can be generated according to the same grammatical rules, so the Burkean grammar supplies the rules that operate in all the different discourses that seek to motivate or that discusses motivation. Burke is not primarily interested in the system of language, but in its use in 'symbolic action' among people, therefore he calls his approach 'dramatism' (seeing the use of language as a drama) or the dialectical approach.

According to Burke (1952:xf), the five terms, scene, act, agent, agency (= means) and purpose, are the 'generating principles' of the grammar, the 'dramatistic pentad'. In discussing the human drama, we necessarily employ these terms: the hero (agent), using a file (agency), escapes (act) from the cell (scene) in order to be free (purpose). In more complex discourses the emphasis falls on the relationships (ratios, in Burke's terms) between the terms. For instance, if one argues that a particular situation 'demands' a particular act, one is employing the scene-act ratio (scene determines act). Moreover, a particular discourse can 'feature' (strongly emphasize) one of the terms and neglect the others. When materialistic science posits an unbroken chain of causal determination, it features 'scene', for all acts, agents and agencies are 'provided' by the scene and no purpose can be discerned. In another discourse 'scene' may be largely ignored - it is seen simply as 'setting' or 'background'. Burkean grammar examines at a formal level the rules and resources according to which the terms interact. It is, for instance, always possible that what is in one discourse seen as 'ground' (vital cause) can in another be seen as 'background' (contingent setting) or that whatever is considered as 'a part of' can also be considered as 'apart from'. Similarly, when it is said that X is substantially (or: in principle) Y, it is admitted that X is in some respects not Y.

In the present article I will be examining one of these formal resources and the constraints connected to it: the possibility that 'scene' as a fairly stable and inert part of one's world view, a mere 'setting', can be converted into the source (determining principle) of what one is and that this 'scene-as-source' can then be reinterpreted as a new resource (agency) in one's discourse.

3 Von Rad acknowledged that the 'form of scepticism ... which was specific to Israel' could arise at various times (1965:453; cf Hertzberg 1963:63). On the perils of fitting these books into a unilinear history of thought, see also Janzen 1985:5-14 (on Job) and Whybray 1989:7ff (on Qoheleth).

2. The dialectics of scene and resource

The development I have in mind takes place when people under pressure feel that the customary means of relieving pressure no longer work. They begin to activate relatively 'inert' parts of their world view in order to turn these into new resources, new sources of strength (moral sources, in the terms of Charles Taylor). Since the raw material is wholly or largely taken from the existing tradition (and, therefore, from the existing terminology), the process can always be seen as a minor development within the tradition; since a more or less thorough restructuring of the rhetorical field (and, therefore, of the implications of the rhetoric) takes place, the same process can always also be seen as a radical departure from the tradition (see Burke 1952:104).

Let us, mindful of etymology, say my scene is my tent. My tent frames, as it were, some of the crucial values in my life. It contains my most precious possessions, it is the focal point of my family life, it is the place where I am 'at home'. As long as these 'meanings' remain relatively secure, I may talk of 'my tent' metonymically precisely because it is the stable and self-evident setting of my life. 'My tent' *contains* things of great value to me, but it is not, in itself, a *cause* or determinant with respect to the contents. The metonymy does not function as a trope rhetorically. Instead, it serves as a topic or *locus*, a place in which I locate what is important to me. When, under new circumstances, I lose the 'content' of 'my tent', the metonymy becomes a trope for my life. My life has been *reduced* to a 'tented existence', so that 'my tent' stands for my own *displaced* situation⁴. I have been *turned* into a mere tent-dweller.

At this stage the old topic, the scene that framed my life as a meaningful one, can be turned to use, made into an agency or a resource, in two related ways. I could, firstly, make my tent the symbol of the sad condition in which I find myself, while drawing solace from the observation that my condition is the general condition of humanity. Fate has decreed that humans are to be tent-dwellers, people without a fixed abode, people wandering for their brief lifetimes across the sifting sands of time, never quite at home anywhere. Trails of shifting tent pegs, rather than fixed roots, mark our lives. To appreciate the range of this dialectical resource one could take the displacement one step in the opposite direction, glossing 'scene' not as 'tent' but as stage setting. We strut and fret our hours upon the stage, caught in a script prescribed for us, so that our acts, far from influencing our scene, become an act out of the parts assigned to us by the hidden Author. Even if the play happens to be a tragedy, it remains all play, to be concluded by our inevitable exit from the scene. Those who take delight in the resources of symbolic action will note with satisfaction that all these deliberations can be found in the quatrains of Omar the tentmaker. It is, of course, also the line taken by Qoheleth.

I could also in a more emphatic sense *employ* the metonymic reduction of my life, saying either that it opens a new *way* for me or that it somehow serves my *ends*. After all, in the grammar of dialectic every reduction can be seen as a 'leading back' (Burke 1952:509) and every displacement as a 'replacement', a transposition, even a transcendence. If I think primarily in terms of 'way', my tropaic servant enables me to set out on new journeys of exploration. The trope of the tent has returned my freedom to me. The tent, emptied of its valuable but restricted content, now symbolizes pure potentiality, to be actualized ever anew during the travels made possible by a tented existence. The empty tent frames the freedom

4 I have in mind here Burke's view (1952:503) that metonymy involves reductions and the popular modern view, derived from Roman Jakobson, that links metonymy to displacement.

of my existence as 'a gap in Being'. Having transcended the 'properties' that bound me, I have been 'reduced' to freedom or re-placed on the way to freedom. Thus the tent becomes *potent*, both as source of strength and as source of potentiality. But every reduction or re-placement may be seen as a return to precisely the *proper* way, the way that leads to my true destination. If my 'properties' distracted me from my proper end as a human being, the reduction that robs me of them returns me to my journey towards becoming what I am 'substantially'. The impermanence of the tent symbolizes the gap between the 'already' and the 'not yet': in as much as I am *substantially* (that is, am and am not⁵) a citizen of the Kingdom of God (the realm of noumena, the republic of the mind, or whatever), my present earthly existence is necessarily a tented existence, an existence within which I cannot and may not have fixed roots or be fully at home. Thus the tent becomes a *portent* of the home that awaits me. This is the line taken by another tentmaker, Paul (2 Cor 5:1-8). The author of the book of Job tends to exploit the possibilities of the 'way of freedom', yet in Job too one gets a glimpse of a destination commensurate with this particular way.

3. Attenuated despair and agonizing hope

Though grammatically the turning of scene into agency can be made to fuel hope or despair, depending on the rhetoric used in the particular case, the type of hope or despair generated in each case is qualified by the grammar of the transformative operation. Scene does not simply pass over into new scene; it becomes an agency (means) for a new act. The apparently negative use of this new agency enables a generalization about human existence that re-replaces the events of the individual's life within a universal setting of contingency. The contingent tragedy of the individual partakes of the general contingency of affairs in the world or becomes consubstantial⁶ with the tragic in all human life. The resultant 'despair' thus becomes a shared and therefore alleviated experience and may even be affirmed in a spirit of *carpe diem* or accepted with bitter-sweet *Weltschmerz*. Generalizing despair leaves one with 'pure' despair, which, in accordance with the paradox of purity (see Burke 1952:35ff), is no longer what we would normally call despair. Since the operation as a whole depends on generalizing across time and space, the local and the temporal become occluded categories. Indeed, this line of thought would, as the example of Qoheleth shows, stress the contingencies of time and place, but, as Qoheleth also demonstrates, these contingencies are contained within an 'unchanging world'. In short, the world is in a stable state of flux.

The opposite strategy, in as much as it stresses freedom, tends to focus on the individual. Being unable to subsume the tragedy of the individual life under the generalized title of 'human tragedy', it calls to a hope that *transcends* but does not *deny* the apparent hopelessness of the existing scene. Such despair can only be cancelled or overcome in the terms of a Hegelian *Aufhebung*. The resultant hope is precisely *not* a 'purified' hope reached by stripping already existing hope of despairing accretions. It requires the negation of hope as a step on the way towards a radically new hope, not an unqualified

5 On the paradox of substance (the paradox that substance is both what you are intrinsically and the extrinsic ground on which you stand, that substance describe what you 'really' are and what you obviously are not), see Burke 1952:21ff and *passim*.

6 Burke uses the term 'consubstantial' to indicate the relationship that comes into existence through the act whereby people identify themselves with someone or something. To rephrase, what a person is substantially (keeping in mind the paradox of substance) is not an inherent 'identity' but a result of the process of identification - one's substance lies in that with which you are or have become consubstantial (1955:20ff).

hope, but one that derives its appeal from the resonance of the Pauline or Barthian 'nevertheless'. The terminology of 'ways', 'transcendence', 'freedom' and 'openness to the future' belongs in this discourse as surely as the terminology of the unchanging world belongs in the previous one⁷ Gordis 1965:4) point out. See also Fohrer 1963:547ff.

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- Or, as I suggested above, some versions of existentialism. The existence strategy leads to hope and adopting the other leads to despair, but it is equally possible that hope and despair are, respectively, the points of departure of the two strategies. Since, however, a point of departure is, as Burke (1952:53f, 65) points out, that from which one departs, one could also reverse the argument and say that a deep sense of despair led the author of Job on a search for some vestige of hope, while Qoheleth had enough robust confidence to flirt with despair. David Hume provides a good example of the latter approach. His philosophy might seem severely sceptical and too devoid of hope for most people to relish, yet all the evidence indicates that it did not disturb him in his good-natured and pleasant journey through life. Perhaps one might try Nietzsche as a corresponding counterpart to the author of Job⁸.

Nor are these the only possibilities. One could activate the other terms of Burke's 'dramatistic pentad' to explain the divergence of approaches. For instance, if one wishes to feature *scene*, one could argue that the author of Job, shortly after the exile, still entertained some hope that Israel's fortunes would be restored, whereas Qoheleth, writing much later, found his scene devoid of such hope. Or, featuring *agency* (means), one could argue that the author of Job stands closer to the earlier Israelite tradition and avails himself (or herself?) of the terminology and strategies afforded by this tradition. One can bolster this argument by assuming, as Westermann (1981:2-13) did, that the book of Job developed out of the individual lament and that the material used (the lament) already hinted at a particular solution, a solution through the meeting with Yahweh (cf Westermann 1981:70, 106, 128). Qoheleth, living much later, finds the means for his discourse in popular Greek scepticism. This argument, in turn, could be strengthened by saying that the purpose was to bring Greek and Jewish thought closer to each other, as Lohfink (1980:8ff) does. To give conclusive answers would be very difficult, although some suggestions might appear more probable than others⁹.

7 At the formal level the difference is quite clearly marked. Qoheleth begins and ends with the affirmation that all is vanity - nothing 'happens' between the beginning and the end of the book. In Job the focus is precisely on temporal change, as both Janzen (1985:55) and Habel (1985:26f; pace Gordis 1965:4) point out. See also Fohrer 1963:547ff.

8 Or, as I suggested above, some versions of existentialism. The existentialist label is usually reserved for Qoheleth (see Lohfink 1980:14f; Fox 1989:passim) - mistakenly, I believe. All the same, one gets a glimpse of the generic relationship between the two approaches when one considers the slogan 'doomed to freedom'.

9 Burke repeatedly notes that the choice of a particular terminology or grammar can be influenced by a number of factors, factors that belong to the spheres of rhetoric and symbolic in his terms (Burke 1952:104f, 161ff). It is particularly important to note that there is a 'grammatical' reason why scholars will usually prefer to explain texts in terms of scene (rather than, for instance, agent, purpose or agency). The featuring of scene

Burkean analysis does not try to eliminate ambiguity, but to indicate 'the strategic spots at which ambiguities necessarily arise' (Burke 1952:xiii) by providing a means of talking about motivation (Burke 1952:x). Thus it helps one to become aware of the terms in which one's own theory ascribes motivation and of the equally available terms that one's theory excludes. It indicates not only what evidence and warrants would be needed to justify one's own claim, but also against what other claims, equally available in terms of the resources of the dialectical grammar, one has to defend one's interpretation. In this case my analysis has tentatively 'placed' the hope and despair one finds in Job and Qoheleth respectively, by outlining the type of transformative operation used in each case. Whatever hope there is in Job is *agonizing* hope, a type of hope that takes shape within and requires the *agon*¹⁰, the tension between the limitations of the present scene and the free possibilities of the future act. Similarly, the despair in Qoheleth is the result of a deliberate generalizing. Generalized despair does indeed cover all of life, but the very process of spreading despair over the whole field causes the despair to be very thinly spread. It is *attenuated* despair that is not particularly poignant at any single point. In this way the analysis admonishes that attractively 'radical' readings of these texts may involve a misreading of their grammar.

4. The world as scene and 'the crisis of wisdom'

Up to now I have examined the grammar of the dialectical operation of turning scene into resource without considering in detail whether Job and Qoheleth fit the role I wish to ascribe to them. In this section I will indicate briefly what evidence there is for supposing that the natural world was, either at some time or within certain circles in Israel, regarded as a fairly inert scene, a frame for the drama of human life *coram Dei*. Obviously this does not mean that the world was not seen as providing means for human life, yet 'worldedness' was not a theme in its own right and 'being in the world' could not become a specially marked term. It is against such a position that the turn I wish to describe can take place.

It seems to me that this view of the natural world marks many of the texts in the Old Testament. It is clearly present in the second creation story, in which all of nature is described in terms of 'inhabitability' (one could say that the world is the human *habitus*). Species become species by being named and trees are distinguished in terms of the edibility or forbiddenness of their fruit. In this world man joyfully meets woman and God walks through the garden to meet people and to call them to account. The world is primarily the scene of meetings. Though the first creation story seems to show more interest in the world as such, one sees, even here, that the initial creative acts are all aimed at ordering a habitation. Human beings rule over the space carved out between the 'waters above the earth' and the 'waters beneath the earth', the space of ordered days and nights, separated land and sea. Indeed, the creation as a whole has a meaning; it is God's *good* creation. Nevertheless, this meaning simply provides the framework for human life in relationship with the Creator. In Ps. 8 this is abundantly clear. The refrain about the glory of Yahweh's name as it is manifest across the world literally frames the question about the human

belongs typically to the terminology of materialistic science (1952:130f) - it deals with the inevitable laws of motion. It therefore seems more 'scientific' to explain an act in terms of its scene, than to do so in terms of, for instance, the elusive purposes of the individual author. As Burke (1952:49) puts it, 'scenic words generally seem so much more 'real' than other words'.

10 Burke sometimes calls his approach 'agonistic' (1952:38). Whether or not one can aptly describe Job as a drama generically, it is certainly 'dramatic' in Burke's sense. This alone should lead one to suspect that the term 'act' will feature in the argument. By way of contrast, Qoheleth consistently reduces human acts to futility (*hebel*) - they are not properly acts at all.

condition. Looking at the stars does indeed call forth a question, but to this question an answer is already available, an answer that is derived from the meeting with Yahweh, not from the world as such¹¹.

In this line of thought the world offers resources in the way that a container offers what it happens to contain. The prophets draw many of their images from nature - both positive and negative ones. The images, however, point away from the world from which they are taken and towards the relationship between God and Israel. When the world as a whole is mentioned, it bears a stable meaning: it is the good, ordered, established creation. No wonder it keeps proclaiming in manifold ways the wisdom of the Creator and its phenomena 'speak' and 'act' in anthropomorphic ways. To summarize: since the world is the creation of the Creator, it either stands with the Creator in confronting or addressing humans or it stands along with humans in confronting or responding to the Creator¹². In neither case does it have an independent status¹³.

Arguably the wisdom tradition, in its examination of the order *in* the world, moved from the beginning in a direction that could lead to 'substantializing'¹⁴ the world as an independent entity. What might have started as an examination of the ways of God and humanity could always light upon something that could be seen as confronting humanity and even Yahweh, something that can be called the order *of* the world¹⁵. Such a discovery does not, in itself, have to have profound consequences¹⁶. In the example of the tent, I indicated that, under 'normal' circumstances, 'my tent' is available as metonymy precisely because its contents and their value are taken to be self-evidently 'given'. I may notice in passing that my tent *qua* tent has certain properties and limitations, but my main interest remains focused on what 'my tent' happens to contain. When the contents are lost or lose their self-evidence, I may begin to ask what sort of 'contents' belong, as it were, inherently, to my tent, what properties I can have are proper to 'tented existence'.

If we are to talk of a 'crisis in wisdom' or of a wider crisis in which Israel found itself after the exile, it may be claimed that this set off the development we find in Job and Qoheleth. But my argument up to now may serve as a warning that it is not necessarily easy to locate such a trigger precisely and, more importantly, that the trigger does not have to be described as a 'crisis *in wisdom*'. Individuals or groups within Israel may have faced such a

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- 11 That Gen. 1, Gen. 2-3 and Ps. 8 all belong to the background of Job is noted by Bergant (1975:65ff) and Janzen (1985:12f). Both note that Job introduces a new view (Bergant 1975:206ff; Janzen 1985:13). Concerning Qoheleth, a similar point is forcefully made by Hertzberg (1963:227ff).
- 12 Burke (1952:74f) argues for a similar duality inherent in the notion of creation: contemplating humanity in terms of 'creation' leads to the idea of necessity (humans are consubstantial with the rest of creation) and contemplating in terms of the idea of 'Creator' leads to the idea of freedom (humans are consubstantial with the Creator). The earlier tradition in Israel saw the consubstantiality of humanity with creation primarily from the human side, leading to an anthropomorphizing of the world, rather than a materializing of humanity. Therefore the world, in as far as it remains the realm of determination, is seen as determined by moral law, not natural law.
- 13 Deurloo (1997) has recently again stressed this cosmological view, which is found frequently in the psalms. It is also dominant in Deutero-Isaiah, which has notable links with Job (Janzen 1985:12f) but stands in stark contrast with the cosmology of Qoheleth (Hertzberg 1963:72).
- 14 In Burke's terminology, something that is substantialized can be seen as a 'ground' or 'principle' in terms of which other things can be explained.
- 15 To this extent Terrien (1990:235f) is right in saying that the cosmology in Job is simply 'sapiential theology'. But in Job new possibilities of the sapiential theology appear and they are not simply solved by a transformation of the sage into a prophet (Terrien 1990:242).
- 16 Burke (1952:82) notes that the departure from the 'point of departure' is not always intended or immediately perceived as something radically new.

crisis at various times and the fact that this particular reaction to it emerged most clearly in the wisdom tradition may be attributed to the fact that the wisdom tradition already had the raw material for the transformation at hand.

5. The world as resource in Job and Qoheleth

In assigning Job and Qoheleth a place in this line of thought, I do not claim to offer a new or full 'interpretation' of the two books. It is not new, in that it more or less presupposes the validity of other interpretations¹⁷; it is not full, in that it works both selectively and reductively. I do not attempt to tackle the problems surrounding the literary history of the two books. I read both, for the purposes of this analysis, as 'essential units', although in both cases I leave some passages out of consideration¹⁸. Nor would I claim that my reductive procedure reduces these books to their 'essential' core. Obviously both books, especially Job, contain much more and this 'much more' is decidedly *not* merely elaboration. I do claim that I am justified in treating the books as examples of a dialectical operation, since I would argue, using Burke's terminology, that the leading ideas of the books lie within the circumference of this operation, yet I am merely dealing with these books *in as much as* they exemplify the operation. Other aspects of the books may claim to be equally 'essential' (that is, necessary and dealing with the essence).

I have used as 'representative anecdote' (see Burke 1952:58-64) the story of the emptying of the tent. Both books, though in significantly different ways, describe such an 'emptying' very early on. The main character in Job starts with a 'full life' and is robbed of all the 'contents' of this life (1:21). The Solomonic persona in Qoheleth has everything traditionally considered to fill a life, yet he concludes that life is vain or empty. All the 'contents' have lost self-evident value. To assess the contrast at this point it helps to remember that both authors *stage* a condition of life that they had virtually certainly never experienced. Qoheleth, however comfortably off he was, was not Solomon and the author of Job, however hard his life might have been, was not Job. The point is that one author wishes to affirm the vanity of life, even if you happen to be Solomon¹⁹ (see Hertzberg 1963:53; Michel 1989:23; Perdue 1994:215); the other wishes to allow for hope, even if you happen to be Job. This staging bears on the resources the two authors wish to exploit. If even Solomon felt frustrated, I need not take my suffering to heart; if even Job was prepared to defend his cause and demand justice, I should not give up hope.

For Job and Qoheleth the natural world is neither a luminous sign of divine presence nor

17 In particular, I presuppose the (closely related) readings of Job by Fohrer (1963) and Clines (1989) as well as the excellent commentaries by Janzen (1985) and Habel (1985). My position with regard to Qoheleth may be more eccentric, but much of what I have to offer comes from major commentaries: Hertzberg (1963), Lauha (1978); Crenshaw (1987) and Murphy (1992). Crüsemann (1984) and von Rad both offer perceptive remarks and Perdue's interpretation (1994) comes very close to mine.

18 In particular, I leave out of consideration the Elihu speeches in Job and the epilogue in Qoheleth. One could justify such a procedure from non-specialist point of view, as Warner (1989:109-112) does in the case of Job. Scholarly arguments do not yield that much more. If one admits, for instance, that there are some glosses in Qoheleth, then one has to add that these have not obscured the general trend of the book (Whybray 1989:18). If, as Fox believes, the epilogue in Qoheleth stems from the same hand as the rest of the book, then one has to admit, as Fox (1989:315f) does, that the author is not speaking with a new voice in these verses. Nor can one say that those who read Job as a literary unit on principle (Janzen, Habel and others) are dealing with a text that radically differs from that reached by some who regard only some passages as secondary (Fohrer, Rowley and recently Dell 1992:209).

19 The argument remains the same even if the royal figure in the passage was not originally intended to represent Solomon, as Lauha (1978:44) claims.

a part of the creation that shares human creaturely concerns. When Job curses the day of his birth, he invokes terrible images of *decreation* and death (3:1-26; cf Gutiérrez 1987:8). Though Job is concerned with the *exceptional* position in which he finds himself (3:20ff) and not with 'the world' as such, his reaction shows that the world as creation loses its stable meaning and self-evident value contents when the individual is in crisis. In his later speeches Job goes much further. The world as it is (not only Job's world) provides metaphorical reasons for seeing human life in general as brief, uncertain and bleak (7:1-10; 9:22-26; 14:1-22). When his friends try to employ images from nature to affirm a moral universe (5:10f,23-26; 8:11-17; 11:12; 15:32f; 18:16; 20:6-17), Job in effect answers that these images are inappropriate (6:5f, 15ff; 7:7ff, 12; 9:25f; 12:7-15; 13:28; 14:11f, 18f). The spectacle the world offers is devoid of moral meaning (cf Habel 1985:57ff). Here one can see clearly the change in dialectic. The world has become an independent entity in that it is no longer the vessel of either the Creator's message or 'normal' human life, yet it has, simultaneously, become a potent metaphor for what human life is or can be. Human life has to be defined as the type of life afforded by this type of world.

In Qoheleth, right at the start, the world is described as a voiceless spectacle of repetitions, meaningless and boring (cf Scott 1965:211; Crenshaw 1987:67; Perdue 1994:210) *and*, at the same time, determining of the life of the creatures within it (1:4-11)²⁰. Qoheleth is not, I believe, saying that the world or life is full of absurdities (in the sense of incongruities). The sole absurdity is that people should expect human life in such a world to be different from what it is. This tedious world cannot even be called 'creation'; it is, instead, the place 'under the sun', that which happens to be, without regard for divine or human purpose. In Qoheleth too the creation stories are deconstructed²¹. In the royal fiction section (1:12-2:26) the reader has the opportunity to exercise, vicariously but to the fullest, the function of ruling over the world (cf Hertzberg 1963:87), and to see that this royal task is nothing but a burden. Whereas Gen 1 suggests that all people are kings and queens appointed by God, Qoheleth claims that even kings have to bow to the ways of the world (see Scott 1965:205). Qoheleth does not quite deny that the world is God's good creation. Instead, in chapter 3 he affirms both God's act of creation and, obliquely, that 'God saw that it was good' (3:11). What he denies is that the goodness was intended as 'goodness for human life' and is therefore perceptible to human eyes (see Crüsemann 1984:60; Murphy 1992:39; Perdue 1994:211). In this sense, the world is suddenly seen anew as something *apart from* human life, yet, at the same time human life becomes in a new way *a part of* precisely this world. Humans are 'but animals' (3:18-21)²². If the 1:3-3:15 summarize

20 As Lauha (1978:37) puts it, 'Natur und Mensch sind Erscheinungen eines gleichen unaufhörlichen Ablaufs'. Zimmerli (1980:141ff) believes that the cosmology of this section is radically subordinated to the anthropology of the author, but, though this may be true in some respects, it should not be overlooked that Qoheleth begins to substantiate his anthropological vision by showing that it conforms to the processes of nature (cf Hertzberg 1963:69f; Murphy 1992:9f).

21 This deconstruction of creation returns in the final passage with its marked repetition of 'before'. As Perdue (1994:234ff) points out, these temporal phrases belong in traditional creation stories, where they serve to distinguish between the chaos before creation and the ordering act of creation. In Qoheleth there is a 'dramatic reversal of cosmic creation that is occasioned by the death of the human creature' (Perdue 1994:236).

22 The section 3:16-4:3 commences with the introduction of the moral theme of righteousness and wickedness, but it undercuts this human concern precisely by affirming that such concerns are irrelevant if humans are but animals. Admittedly, it is the theme of inevitable death, so prominent in Qoheleth, that drives the argument, but it is surely significant that Qoheleth 'explains' both death itself and the equality of human and animal deaths as a natural process - dust returns to dust (3:20). Death is decidedly not an antagonist in Qoheleth

Qoheleth's basic view (see Michel 1989:2, 78ff), much of what follows can be read as an exposition of the theme 'human social life as animal life'²³.

Up to here I have argued that both Job and Qoheleth entertain a new notion about the world. The world gains a new independence from both the human and the divine and yet this world shapes and determines human life simply by being this kind of world. The world, no longer primarily the setting of divine and human interaction, has become an independent source of human life, a source from which flows a particular view of what life is or can be. Scene as setting has become scene as determinant. At this level the two books are not that far apart. But both authors turn the source into a resource and in doing so they pursue different strategies. Qoheleth generalizes, occluding particulars of time and space, in order to attenuate, while the author of Job particularizes, introducing tensions at the temporal level, in order to set up an *agon*. Having both interpreted human life in terms of the scene, they continue to reinterpret the scene as a resource for human living.

The process in Qoheleth is much simpler than the one in Job. The reinterpretation can be summarized in two statements: 'all is vanity' and 'enjoy life'. These statements are neither random, nor are they set side by side as co-ordinates. 'All is vanity' is the primary human response to the world as scene. It should be noted that it is not a *conclusion* derived from either reason or experience (von Rad 1972:227, 234; Fox 1989:89; Michel 1989:26ff; *pace* Scott 1965:204). In that it generalizes, it represents a human act of coming to terms with what the scene offers. In spreading the term 'vanity' across all human endeavour, it erases individual suffering, disappointment and failure by subsuming these under a common rubric. Human responsibility virtually disappears - what happens, happens on account of the scene and is not added to the account of any particular person (cf Hertzberg 1963:227, 237; Perdue 1994:212; *pace* Murphy 1992:lxvif). The advice to enjoy life is added as a consequence both of the analysis of the scene and of the primary response to it. Since the world is in a stable state of flux (everything has its time), there *will* be good times as well as bad times. Since all is vanity and no human endeavour can establish anything of lasting worth, one might as well enjoy the good times when and for as long as one can (see Crenshaw 1987:103ff; Murphy 1992:lixf; *pace* Gordis 1968:83ff, 131f). Thus Qoheleth attempts to eliminate the absurdity, not of the world, but of the fact that humans strive after a life that is not afforded by this world (cf Gordis 1968:147; Hertzberg 1963:135, 225; Lauha 1978:59f).

It should be stressed again that this view of the dialectical operation in Qoheleth does not tell us why the author wrote as he did. Elsewhere (Lawrie 1997), using different indices in the text, I have argued that Qoheleth is giving voice to a mood. One could, however, advance other theories, for instance, that Qoheleth stages the scene in order to justify his way of life or the advice he wishes to give. At any rate one should note that Qoheleth's 'resource', a variant of Burke's 'materialistic solace'²⁴, depends upon the availability of a considerable stock of humour and a reasonable degree of freedom (see Crüsemann

(contrast Donne); it merely provides the best example of human consubstantiality with nature (see Hertzberg 1963:111f; Scott 1965:223; Lauha 1978:76ff; Perdue 1994:219).

23 Murphy (1992:38) significantly introduces the tag *homo homini lupus* into his discussion of 4:4. In a similar way 4:11f reduces human solidarity to animal warmth and the protection afforded by the herd.

24 The materialistic solace (Burke 1952:100f) depends on recognizing the limits set by the materiality of the world to the harm that people may commit or suffer, or on recognizing that imperfect human beings cannot be 'perfect villains' (or perfect sufferers). In the case of Qoheleth, one could phrase it as follows: if the world is generally bad, it cannot be particularly bad. My point is that perceiving oneself as being in a particularly bad position makes it virtually impossible to adopt the generalizing view.

1984:69f). Slaves may well feel that their position is *worse* than that of animals and, consequently, anomalous with respect to the natural order. Being unable to efface the poignancy of their suffering by means of generalization, they would, dialectically, be more likely to grasp at more 'radical' visions of hope.

The greater difficulty of the argument in Job (as compared to that in Qoheleth) arises precisely because the dominant strategy is individualizing. Job, having distinguished himself from others in his virtue and wealth, finds himself confronted by a suffering individualizing. Job, having distinguished himself²⁵ about individualizing as strategy.

- Da [sc bei Hiob] handelt es sich wig about individualizing as strategy.
- Da [sc bei Hiob] handelt es sich wirklich um einen Kampf um Gott und seine gerechtigkeit about individualizing as strategy.
- Da [sc bei Hiob] handelt es sich wirklich um einen Kampf um Gott und seine gerechtigkeit about individualizing as ^s bei Qohelet] aber steht Gott kampflös fest (Hertzberg 1963:224f).
- For Burke a 'title' (etymologThe view of the world in Qoheleth is such that any God must naturally be located outside the world; the distance of God is required to make the generalizing strategy work. Job's suffering implies no abrogation of any law of nature; if Job is to regard his position as anomalous, it must be with respect to a law that lies outside the circumference of the world order, a law rooted either in God as moral legislator or in a human society not bound by natural laws. If, as Fohrer (1963:549; cf Clines 1990:76) claims, the book of Job is about 'human existence in suffering', one has to add that the formula implies a disjunction between the human and the 'natural'. One could summarize by saying that Job's suffering is *agony*, since from this one 'title'²⁷ one could derive the terminology and grammar of the book.

I cannot substantiate the above statement fully here. For the present purpose it is sufficient to note that suffering as agony implies precisely the type of battle we find in Job. It is perhaps no more than a consistent development of this terminology that leads Job to a position in which he has to call on God against God or to postulate the presence of the absent God²⁸. Only with respect to a supreme legislator can 'natural suffering' be regarded as 'anomalous agony'²⁹. Yet, in as much as the supreme legislator must encompass the

25 See especially 19:13-22; 30:1-19 and Girard 1992:189. Clines (1990:72f, cf 76f) argues that the book does indeed portray Job's case as unique, but that the book would be meaningless if it simply portrayed a contingent case. What happens by chance to the individual has no meaning for others. Both aspect can be covered by talking about individualizing as strategy.

26 'Da [sc bei Hiob] handelt es sich wirklich um einen Kampf um Gott und seine gerechtigkeit, hier [sc bei Qohelet] aber steht Gott kampflös fest' (Hertzberg 1963:224f).

27 For Burke a 'title' (etymologically, 'what stands at the head') is a term that 'summarizes' a whole terminology. From the 'titular term' one can derive the type of terminology and the typical dialectical operations that would follow from it. Mettinger (1992:48f) talks of an 'antagonistic theology' in Job. I would agree, noting only that not all wrestling is antagonistic: my best (!) enemy can become my best friend and 'locked in a struggle' can become 'locked in an embrace'.

28 This is a common view (see Fohrer 1963:290f, 317ff; Gordis 1965:11, 88; von Rad 1972:214f; Rowley 1976:116, 138, Gutiérrez 1987:65; Girard 1992:202f and others). Habel (1985:304ff) and Clines (1989:xliv, 388ff, 459f, 465, 470) deny that Job ever does call on God against God - Clines (1989:389) feels that this would be too subtle and paradoxical. But Habel's view that another heavenly being is meant and Clines's that Job refers to 'his own protestations of innocence' do not remove the difficulties. A degree of paradox is inherent in the grammar of the argument, as Clines tacitly acknowledges (1990:79).

29 Clines (1990:79) reveals the problem when he talks about Job's 'unjust fate'. This is an oxymoron, since fate is by definition neither just nor unjust. It is not by chance that fate (*miqreh*) is a favourite term in Qoheleth.

natural order if the law is to have validity within the natural order, the supreme legislator must also be the cause of the agony and therefore the antagonist (cf 12:9-16 and 13:13-28). In a few passages Job considers the possibility that God rules the world in such a way that suffering is a random but natural occurrence (7:1-10; 9:1-13, 22f; 12:16-25; 14:1-12; 21:7-34), but every time he recoils from this conclusion and returns to the idea that God is acting as his enemy but can, potentially, act as his vindicator (6:4; 7:17-21; 9:32-10:22; 13:15-28; 14:13-17; 16:8-21; 17:3-7; 19:6-12; 30:19-23; 31:35ff; cf von Rad 1972:217; Rowley 1976:70). Randomly distributed natural suffering cannot be agonizing, since one is not left with any antagonist.

As long as people find themselves, as Job does, unable to come to terms with their suffering except through the term agony and the act of the *agon*, 'metaphysical' moves are bound to appear, since nothing in the physical circumference negates suffering³⁰. Those who, in this same position, refuse the option of postulating a transcendent antagonist often introject the *agon* (as immanent in the individual or immanent in human society). Marxism represents a particularly sophisticated version of the way in which suffering can be defined as agony and *agon* without resorting to God.

If my analysis is correct, it would suggest that there is a grammatical link between the position adopted by Qoheleth and that adopted by Job's friends. At first glance this appears unlikely - Job's friends would seem to be highly orthodox and Qoheleth highly unorthodox (cf Murphy 1992:ixii). Nevertheless, the link is there. Job's friends postulate a relatively immutable moral order that is enacted mechanically within the natural world; Qoheleth postulates a relatively immutable natural order that severely limits the free activity of God 'under the sun'. In the first case God is *a part* of the moral order, unable to change it, in the second, God is *apart* from the natural order, equally unable to change it³¹. Job's friends are often accused of being too dogmatic; Qoheleth is often praised for his 'realism' (Whitley 1979:183; Whybray 1989:28), although he is, as far as I can see, no less dogmatic³².

Job cannot find a position (a scene) about which he can be dogmatic. Certainly, for him the world is no longer the transparent window on God's glory and moral order. It is a changeable world within which suffering is a 'natural' possibility without moral implications. At the same time, he cannot ultimately see himself as a product of this world. The world may be the *cause* of his condition, but it cannot *motivate* his agony. He keeps saying that he has been *reduced* to an animal existence (7:5, 12; 17:14; 30:29), but he cannot accept that this is because he is substantially an animal. The reduction is the willful act of God who treats him as an enemy. If Job sees as clearly as Qoheleth does that the world is not a scene that promises anything better than this existence, he nevertheless insists that humans are not at home in this scene (6:11f; 7:12). Human life belongs, far rather, in

30 To what extent Burkean analysis does not in itself lead to 'new' interpretations but can serve to confirm insights reached by other means is seen when one looks at Habel's commentary. Habel recognizes that the imagery of the book is derived primarily from cosmology (1985:57), but argues that a 'legal metaphor' 'organizes major components of the work in a creative and dramatic way' (1985:54). It is precisely in confronting a natural order that is amoral (1985:62) and in rejecting human consubstantiality with this order that Job has to resort to the legal battle as *agon*.

31 Whybray (1989:29f, cf also Zimmerli 1980:161f) is one of those who claim that Qoheleth defends God's freedom, but if, as Whybray says on the previous pages, God's will is immutable (1989:27) and nothing can alter the world (1989:28), then this 'freedom' is purely formal - God is free in as much as God is apart from the world and not a part of it (cf Crüsemann 1984:61; Michel 1989:288).

32 Few scholars acknowledge this, but see Hertzberg 1963:237, Bickerman 1967:148 and Perdue 1990:457 and 7, Bic7, Bickerman 1967:148 and Perdue 1990:457 and *passim*. The latter places Qohe7, Bickerman 1967:148 and Perdue 1990:457 and *passim*. The latter places

proximity to God (10:3, 8-12; 13:3, 15; 14:15; 31:37), who is not embodied in the world.

How and to what extent the problem is 'solved' in the book of Job remains a moot point. I do not intend to enter into the debate, but merely to indicate what type of interpretation would be commensurate with the grammar of the argument. It will not do, I believe, to say that Job finally resigns himself to 'the way of the world' or that Job *simply* returns to the traditional position, namely that the meeting with God allows one to bracket events in the world, suffering included. Tsevat's view (1980:28-37) is preferable to these options, because Tsevat maintains that the natural world is, to some extent, divorced from the divine moral order and made independent, although human beings continue to act as if a moral order applied to the empirical realm. Thinking along these lines one could reach the idea of a less than omnipotent God, a Messianic 'God-in-process', who rules over the natural world 'in principle' only³³. This would fit quite well with some aspects of the grammar of the book. It would expand both the temporal disjunction (the 'then and now' or 'now and later' effect) and the theme of the *agon* to include God. Human agony, then, is a temporary sharing in the divine *agon* and it gains sense in the hope that, as God becomes God, humans will, consubstantially, become human.

But it seems to me that this line of thought imposes too much on the text. I have indicated above that the terms freedom and act are likely to feature, overtly or covertly, in this type of dialectic³⁴. Moreover, Yahweh's speeches all too pertinently *introduces* the natural world. Lastly, no reading, however sketchy, can neglect to provide some answer to the problem posed by 42:7 (cf Girard 1992:203). If one reads this verse as part of the whole, one has to say in what way Job, unlike his friends, spoke the truth about Yahweh. I would argue that precisely this verse can be affirmed, as Burke would have said, 'for sheerly technical reasons'. 'People act, things but move' as Burke says over and over again, meaning that, whereas 'things' obey causal rules of motion, people act in a way that introduces something, however small, that is 'new', that does not simply flow from the scene. For Burke this is not a metaphysical truth, but the only intuition according to which we can make sense of our lives (1966:53). Job's friends applied the laws of motion to Yahweh, arguing that Yahweh rules according to the principle of retribution. If this is so, one can, firstly, say that Yahweh does not act at all, but that the principle of retribution as causal principle of motion works through Yahweh as agency, and, taking the argument one step further, that Yahweh is simply the name for the causal principle itself (cf Gutiérrez 1987:79; Michel 1989:277). When he attacked Yahweh's rule by calling it unjust, Job affirmed that Yahweh had the freedom to act and could, in fact, act as someone's enemy.

If Yahweh but moves, then humans, either as Yahweh's creatures or as beings of nature, will also be bound by the laws of motion. Human agony would then be senseless. But if Yahweh acts and humans are consubstantial with Yahweh, then humans have a certain freedom of action, however restricted it may be (cf Gutiérrez 1987:80). In rejecting his suffering, Job affirmed this freedom, but the freeness of this act can be maintained only if it is seen as including the dialectical possibility of *not* rejecting the suffering (cf Burke

33 This would fit quite well with some aspects of the grammar of the book. It would expand both the temporal disjunction (the 'comes even closer to this view when he talks of 'God's active struggle with chaos for kingship over creation' and notes that human righteousness involves 'actively participating' in this struggle (cf 1990:475; cf Mettinger 1992:48). Pixley (quoted in Gutiérrez 1987:128n23) talks openly of God's limitation and historicity in the book of Job.

34 The extent to which the book of Job deals with freedom is often noted in commentaries. See Janzen (1985:262ff) and Gutiérrez (1987:67ff) for a particularly clear focus on this.

1978:23)³⁵. In this one sense Job does finally resign himself to his suffering, without, however, thereby resigning himself to 'the way of the world'. He does this, it seems to me, because he recognizes the dialectical possibilities and limitations of human consubstantiality with God. This consubstantiality is, to introduce a paradox, not a consubstantiality of substance; it is only in as far as it can be actualized in meeting (cf Fohrer 1963:535n6). In this one sense Job affirms the old position that the world is the scene of a meeting, without thereby bracketing the world or making it a univocal witness to the Creator. The world, indeed, retains an independent worldliness in which the laws of motion operate and, in as much as there can be no action without motion, humans are never quite free of these laws. Only God is *actus purus*, act, that is, without motion, something that is not imaginable to the human mind.

This may indicate how the divine speeches function. These speeches, as most scholars have noted, ignore both suffering and innocence to concentrate on the act of creation and on the natural world. It is often stated that they intend to convince Job of the greatness of Yahweh, which makes it impossible for a human being to comprehend or challenge divine rule. But surely Job was in no doubt about this (Tsevat 1980:23). What made his rebellion truly an act was that it did not flow mechanically from his own view of the scene. Moreover, Job had already denied that the world proclaims the glory of the Creator. Scholars who take this line are, I believe, too eager to assimilate the grammar in Job to that in the creation stories and the psalms.

It seems to me that Clines's analysis of the speeches (Clines 1989:xlfff) gets to the point. Since Job had no hand in the creation of the world and knows nothing about how it is ruled, he 'is not qualified to hold views on the nature of the universe' (Clines 1991:xliv; cf Gutiérrez 1987:74). In other words, to draw the type of 'conclusion' that Qoheleth draws is premature and arrogant. The vivid scenes from the animal world (including the fearsome Behemoth and Leviathan) show a part of nature that simply defies human comprehension. Job, not being endowed with divine power and wisdom, cannot challenge God as an equal, but neither can he oppose God as a 'child of nature', for the natural world is, in at least some senses, as far beyond his comprehension. This leaves Job (and other human beings) poised between two worlds: doomed to be only partly 'natural' (subject to the laws of motion) and privileged, but only partly, to share in the creative act (culminating in the act of meeting). Job remains 'my servant Job', but the world has become far more than the scene of meeting or the bearer of a transparent message about the Creator. In its independence and recalcitrance it has become, as Clines (1991:xlvii) puts it, 'a paradigm for all knowledge of God'.

Having shown how the dialectical strategies diverge in the two books, one can glance back and see how they may converge unexpectedly. Qoheleth, I have argued, generalizes in order to reduce the human condition to a condition that can be seen as natural within this world (cf Whybray 1989:75; Perdue 1994:205). But does he succeed completely? Are humans, on Qoheleth's own showing, simply *a part of* the world? Do they really simply 'go through the motions'? Here and there one sees that this cannot be claimed without reservations. Qoheleth cannot deny that people do 'think too much about the days of their

35 Similarly Yahweh remains free to restore or not to restore Job. Something of the scandal of divine freedom is expressed in 4:8, which introduces the idea that Yahweh may do *nebalah* to the friends. The irony and the shock is removed if one the phrase is translated 'do to you according to your folly', 'expose you as foolish' or the like (Fohrer 1963:540; Gordis 1978:494f; Hartley: 1988:539). Janzen (1985:265f) drives home the point well.

lives' (6:19), that they do find the 'way of the world' an evil business. Precisely because people fail to live as carelessly as the birds of the air, they have to be reminded that they are 'essentially' not different from the animals. Since humans stubbornly keep thinking of themselves as *apart from* the natural world, they have to be *urged* to enjoy what pleasures the world naturally affords. In as much as the vicissitudes of life can be met with different *attitudes*, Qoheleth cannot help affirming the freedom of humans to act, even if the act to which he admonishes is a 'fitting in', a way of acting *as if* one were at home in the world and fully determined by it³⁶.

Similarly, Job's act of submission may, from the position of the observer, be interpreted as a resignation of freedom and an acceptance of the determinations of the world. After his act of submission, Job's life could well have continued *as if* his suffering determined his existence. When Yahweh does change his lot, a Qoheleth would be quite well able to interpret the change as one of the contingencies of the natural world. As I have argued above, the idea of an act that escapes completely from the laws of motion is a postulate that transcends the genius of dialectical grammar. At most one can say that the qualitative difference between action and motion suggests that, though there is no action without motion in this world, action cannot be grounded in motion but must have a source that is outside this world and that is, indeed, also the source of motion (see Burke 1955:288ff).

Do these deliberations have anything to do with 'hope for the earth'? I believe they do, if only in an oblique way. I think it can be shown that 'awareness of the world' as more than an adjunct to or setting of human existence, can lead in two directions. In the one line of thought the continuity between human life and the world is stressed - we are, after all, a part of this world (consubstantial with this world). I have the impression that ecological theology has recently moved in this direction and has advanced the claim that there would be more hope for the earth if we moved beyond narrowly humanistic concerns to see ourselves within broader horizons. If this is so, my analysis of Qoheleth can serve to admonish that a move towards broader horizons can involve a qualitative reduction, an actual narrowing of the circumference. If humans are but animals or are but products of the world as scene, they cannot be expected to entertain much hope or to act in any but vain ways. They may as well enjoy themselves while the going is good. If all they do falls under the shadow of approaching death, then the earth, being consubstantial with them, is similarly doomed. *Dasein zum Tode* is the human condition because it is the condition of the world itself.

In the second line of thought the discontinuity between humanity and the world is stressed - we are, after all, apart from the world. Now this line of thought may indeed lead to a Sartrean nausea, a rejection by beings that can act of the things that merely move, yet it seems that the strategies inherent in this line of thought point in a direction that holds out more hope for the earth. Here, for instance, reductive generalization is avoided and a measure of freedom to act is affirmed, although this freedom comes under the sign of the *agon*. Humans are removed from the causal chain in which the world scene as determinant stands above them and between them and God. They are replaced in the 'tribal' or genealogical chain in which they are *primarily* (in principle) consubstantial with God and *secondarily*, through God as 'common ancestor', consubstantial with the world. They are neither animals nor things, yet in view of the common ancestry they may come to call animals and even inanimate things 'brother' and 'sister'. True, in this line of thought the earth may be sacrificed as scapegoat, but only that type of consubstantiality that makes

36 That Qoheleth's 'resource' involves such a passivity is noted by Hertzberg (1963:225 and *passim*) and Perdue (1990:469)

scapegoating possible includes the possibility that people may sacrifice themselves for the world (see Burke 1966:18f).

Is the world 'the body of God'? It is not 'actually' so, that is, the world does not act in a way that embodies the mind of God. Though one might, in a flight of poetry, affirm that the world proclaims the glory of God, this affirmation has to be balanced by the more 'materialistic' vision of Job and Qoheleth. If one has undertaken the temporal movement through the *agon* of Job up to the point at which *agon* finds its *telos* in a meeting with God, one may return to the 'naive' vision of the Psalms and reinterpret it in terms of *entelechy* (see Burke 1966:17). The world, whatever it may be 'actually' (in its present working) or 'realistically' (viewed as an aggregate of *res*), may *become* the body of God. Indeed, the world approaches the divine only in so far as it is humanized (and assumes human characteristics), but it can become humanized only in so far as its inner *telos* is divinely determined. If, then, there is hope for the earth, it is agonizing hope, a hope described in terms of the sighing and birth pangs of the creature, longing to be set free from the vanity to which it has been subjected (Rom 8:19ff). It is only when this freedom has been enacted that we would finally be able to take leave of Qoheleth.

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