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Over the past century of research in Ancient Near Eastern religions, a number of scholars have utilized a comparative approach to note affinities between the Book of Job and Mesopotamian theodicy literature. The disparate results have shown both the advantages and flaws of the comparative method, uncovering useful contextual information, but appraisals have often been plagued by ideological bias and interpretive difficulties. As commonly noted, the Book of Job, the Akkadian poem *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi*, and the poetic dialogue known as the Babylonian Theodicy contain shared thematic and literary features that can increase the understanding of each composition within its religious environment. Although each text contains idiosyncratic traits, their structural, stylistic, and ideological similarities suggest that these texts can be categorized as a distinct genre within Ancient Near Eastern religious literature, offering insights to the religious thought of the Mesopotamian and Israelite intellectual elite.

THE TEXTS AND METHOD OF ANALYSIS

The composition known as *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi* (hereafter *Ludlul*) is a monologue given by a suffering man, lamenting his punishment by the wrathful gods.

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After his deliverance is promised in a set of dreams, the sufferer recounts his restoration at the hands of Marduk. The text dates to the Kassite period (circa 600–1150 BCE).[1]

The text commonly called the Babylonian Theodicy (hereafter BT) can be tentatively dated later than *Ludlul*, at approximately 1000 BCE.[2] In a poetic dialogue, the sufferer laments his afflictions and the injustice in the world, while the sufferer's friend tries to convince him that the world fits traditional conceptions of divine justice. Ultimately, the sufferer wins the debate, convincing his friend that the gods unfairly inflict suffering upon mankind. However, the sufferer's concluding speech leaves the discussion on an ambiguous tone, avowing his righteousness while expressing hope of divine redemption.

In dealing with the Book of Job, the majority of scholars have concluded that the text has undergone multiple stages of redaction and expansion. The most agreed–upon division is that the poetic dialogue and the prose narrative which frames it were composed separately. A majority of scholars conclude that the poetic portion is older than the prose frame story.[3] The following analysis will assume that the poetic dialogue is independent, while occasionally noting any parallels between the Mesopotamian literature and the later canonical edition of Job.

The question of whether the texts share a genre may seem like a literary

1. Several versions of Ludlul have been discovered, with some important textual variants. For a summary of the textual witnesses, see A.R. George and F.H.N. Al–Rawi, "Tablets from the Sippar Library. VII. Three Wisdom Texts," *Iraq* 60 (1998), 187. For the dating, see William G. Lambert, *Babylonian Wisdom Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), 26. Citations will be given from the translation by Benjamin Foster in his collection *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (Bethesda: CDL Press, 1993), I: 308–325.

2. Lambert, *Wisdom*, 67; Sara Denning–Bolle, *Wisdom in Akkadian Literature* (Leiden, Ex Oriente Lux, 1992), 136. Foster's *Before the Muses* translation will be cited in this paper (II:806–814). Hereafter, the Ludlul and BT will be cited by tablet and line number (i.e. II:2).

3. Marvin H. Pope, *Job* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1965), xxi–xxv; for a more complete argument, see Bruce Zuckerman, *Job the Silent* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 25–33. For a counterargument which rearranges the chronology but retains the separate prose/poetry compositions, see John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1988), 21–22.

rather than a religious question. However, in its more traditional definition, genre presupposes a pattern of influence: each text works within a paradigm created by its predecessors, with which the author is acquainted either directly or indirectly. The term 'genre' denotes influence not in the sense of rigid criteria, but rather as discursive frameworks allowing for a flexibility built on certain convention.[4] Determining if the texts conform to a definable genre is relevant for discussing the religious and historical affinities, since it provides evidence for one culture influencing another if this influence can be corroborated by historical circumstance. From this perspective, the Mesopotamian theodicy literature and the book of Job can be compared and contrasted in relation to several key categories: literary features, religious ideology, and the texts' respective social settings.[5]

LITERARY FEATURES

There are significant similarities in the content of the three texts. All three describe a sufferer upon whom, it appears, the god(s) have chosen to inflict undeserved calamity. They lose their prominent economic standing,[6] are socially rejected,[7] are afflicted with physical maladies,[8] and weep and mourn their state. The three respective sufferers express their ignorance regarding any sin that

4. For a helpful discussion, see Carol Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 11–17.

5. Noting differences as well as similarities is crucial for a proper comparative treatment, as noted by several scholars. Cf. Jonathan Z. Smith, *Imagining Religion: From Babylon to Jonestown* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 21; Wendy Doniger, *The Implied Spider: Politics and Theology in Myth* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 67–72.

6. Ludlul I: 99–101; BT XXII: 242; Job 29:6–7, 30:12–19 (and, if the prose prologue is included, 1:1–20).

7. John Gray, "The Book of Job in the Context of Near Eastern Literature," *Zeitschrift Für Die Alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 82 (1970), 255; Moshe Weinfeld, "Job and Its Mesopotamian Parallels: A Typological Analysis," in *Text and Context: Old Testament and Semitic Studies for F.C. Fensham*, ed. by W. Classen (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1988), 219; See Ludlul I:58–65, 79–92, BT XIII: 252–253, Job 6:14, 12:4, 16:7 20; 19:13–17.

8. Ludlul II:1–55 (*passim*), BT III: 27–30, Job 19:20, 30:17, 27, 2:7 (prose portion).

Mesopotamian, "Shamash the Sun–God Receiving Homage from Three Small Figures," ca. 870 BCE (Archaeological Museum, Istanbul, Turkey).

would have merited such affliction:[9]

> *Ludlul:* "I for my part, was mindful of supplication and prayer…
> I instructed my land to observe the god's rites."[10]
>
> *BT:* "Indeed, in my youth I tried to find out the will of (my god),
> With prayer and supplication I besought my goddess.
> I bore a yoke of profitless servitude."[11]
>
> *Job*: "Let Him weigh me on the scale of righteousness;
> Let God ascertain my integrity.

9. Ludlul II:11–34; BT VII: 72–77, XXVII: 290–297.
10. Ludlul II: 23, 24 (11–34).
11. BT VII: 72–74.

If my feet strayed from their course…
May the growth of my field be uprooted!"[12]

In their laments, the three sufferers describe the malice that their respective gods have directed toward them:

Ludlul: "After the Lord (changed) day (into night),
And the warrior Marduk (became furious with me)…"[13]

BT: "God does not block the progress of a demon…
What has it profited me that I knelt before my God!"[14]

Job: "For he crushes me for a hair,
He wounds me much for no cause."[15]

While the texts share these features, they also display notable differences. Unlike *Ludlul* and Job's dialogue, BT does not include a divine response. The dialogue runs its course with only human participants. In addition, *Ludlul* has its own unique features. One of the most obvious distinctions is form; *Ludlul* is a monologue, while the other two texts are dialogues involving the sufferer and his friend(s).[16] Unlike the other texts, *Ludlul* both begins and ends with the

12. Job 31: 6–7a, 8a.

13. Ludlul I:41–42.

14. BT XXIII: 245, 251.

15. Job 9:17–18; All biblical citations appear as translated in *Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, The New JPS Translation According to the Traditional Hebrew Text* (Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society, 1988).

16. Since Yahweh's response instigated another dialogic response from Job, one cannot see dialogue as "*a feature of the plot* rather than as an independent disputation." (Norman C. Habel, *The Book of Job* (Philadelphia, Westminster, 1985), 26, emphasis mine).

praise of a deity, Marduk, who has delivered the sufferer from his suffering.[17]

Ludlul also has the distinction of being the only text to reach a conclusion about the theodicy problem; the sufferer is restored, and the relationship is repaired. In contrast, BT and poetic portion of Job have decidedly ambiguous endings,[18] although interpreters have often tried to impose clarity on them. The sufferer in BT eventually convinces his friend that the gods brutalize human beings. His friend declares:

> "They lavish mischief upon (man), they conspire to kill him.
> They make him suffer every evil…
> They bring him to a horrible end,
> They snuff him out like an ember."[19]

Yet, despite this admission from his detractor, the sufferer ends his complaint by begging for the deities' mercy.[20] The ending of the Joban dialogues is similarly ambiguous. After Yahweh lambasts Job for his impudence, Job appears to retract his complaint, but his motivations, and Yahweh's assessment of his complaint's validity, remain unclear.[21] The dialogic forms of both texts foster

17. While some scholars see Job's recant (Job 42:1–6) to include praise of the deity, the 'praise' comes only at the end of the long dispute, and it is much less elaborate than that of Ludlul's protagonist. In BT, the sufferer does not offer any praise to the god(s).

18. Karel van der Toorn,,"The Ancient Near Eastern Literary Dialogue as a Vehicle of Critical Reflection," in *Dispute Poems and Dialogues in the Ancient and Mediaeval Near East,* edited by G.J. Reinlink and H.L.J. Vanstiphout, (Leuven: Peeters, 1991), 70–71. On the ambiguity of BT ending, see Pope, *Job*, lxii; for Job's final ambiguity, see Newsom, *Job,* 29, 258. The incredibly disparate interpretations of both texts are evidence of this undecideability.

19. BT XXVI: 283–285.

20. BT XXVIII: 295–296.

21. Job 42:5–6. The Hebrew is notoriously difficult in this verse; the normal reading of the verb is 'despise,' but there is no direct object. In light of the textual witnesses, the idea of Job retracting his statement seems best (thus, the JPS *Tanakh* "recant"). Yahweh seems to imply that Job's complaints were valid and accurate in 42:7.

Southern Mesopotamian (Larsa), "Statuette of a Kneeling Man; called 'The Worshipper of Larsa'," ca. early 2nd millennium BCE (Musée du Louvre, Paris, France).

inconclusiveness.[22] As a structure committed to the clash of opposing perspectives, the dialogue style seems to allow for more ambiguity than *Ludlul*, which functions as a didactic monologue.[23]

In addition to these large–scale similarities and differences, the texts also share more specific literary features. All three texts include explicit avowals that the sufferer is ignorant of any offense that elicited divine wrath.[24] All three texts display the thematic similarities and literary conventions proposed by Karel van der Toorn's "emblematic sufferer" paradigm:[25] by employing a character who suffers from an array of physical and emotional afflictions, the texts create a figure with which various readers can identify. This 'Everyman' trope heightens the philosophical problem. Each of the texts displays an intellectual vocabulary of rare words.[26] The texts also draw from a set of common

22. Giorgio Buccellati, "Wisdom and Not: The Case of Mesopotamia," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 101 (1981), 43.

23. For this characterization, see Denning–Bolle, *Wisdom*, 129–130.

24. Ludlul II:12–32; BT XXVII: 289–294; Job 29:7–17;

25. Karel van der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction in Israel and Mesopotamia* (Assen–Maastricht, The Netherlands: Van Gorcum, 1985), 59–66. While van der Toorn describes the 'emblematic sufferer' from an exclusively social perspective, the effect that this trope has on heightening the dramatic tensions and *pathos* should not be ignored.

26. Karel van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture and the Making of the Hebrew Bible* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2007), 116. Despite this insight, van der Toorn overreaches his evidence when suggesting a basis for Job in scribal lexical compendiums.

metaphors. These conventional tropes include images of imprisonment, crossing the infernal river,[27] and descent into the netherworld. While not attested in all three texts, one could also add images of the pit, day and night imagery, and dream revelations as shared components of Job and *Ludlul*.[28] While each text uses these metaphors in unique and innovative ways, they do so within a shared poetic and discursive framework.

RELIGIOUS IDEOLOGY AND SOCIAL CONTEXT

These literary characteristics provide the proper data set to discuss the religious beliefs expressed in the texts. There is some difficulty in extrapolating worldviews from the texts; three isolated compositions cannot provide enough information to assess a complete worldview. To reach a conclusion, contextual information must be supplied, and this juxtaposition can allow presuppositions to become bias. This danger is evident in many previous comparisons between these theodicy texts. Even a cursory comparison of scholarly conclusions illustrates how widely interpreters have disagreed about the religious implications of the texts. Some claim that the Mesopotamian theodicies are revolutionary,[29] while others have concluded that they are a sycophantic reinforcement of an inflexible theology of retribution.[30] In a similar vein, some scholars have elevated the poetic innovation and theological reflection of Job over the 'simplistic' Mesopotamian texts.

There are multiple reasons for this interpretational disparity. Some portions of the texts––particularly the BT and Job––are notoriously ambiguous,

27. Weinfeld, "Mesopotamian Parallels," 218. (Ludlul IV:71; BT II:17; Job 33:18).

28. Weinfeld, "Mesopotamian Parallels," 218; on the day and night imagery, see William L. Moran, "Notes on the Hymn to Marduk in Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983), 258.

29. Buccellati, "Wisdom," 37.

30. E.A. Speiser, "The Case of the Obliging Servant," *Journal of Cuneiform Studies* 8 (1954), 104; B.G. Albertson, "Job and Ancient Near Eastern Wisdom Literature," in *Scripture in Context II*, ed. W.W. Hallo et al. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1983), 225.

and thus susceptible to over–reading. To complicate matters, scholars have long disagreed on the nature of Mesopotamian and Israelite religion. However, an analysis of the argumentation shows that many of these conclusions may have been reached because of a scholar's specialty in one culture or the other. Mesopotamian scholars tend to see *Ludlul* and BT as intellectually innovative, "revolutionary,"[31] and "couched in powerful poetry."[32] Conversely, biblical scholars often denigrate the Mesopotamian literature as intellectually unintelligible, "facile,"[33] or "rudimentary,"[34] while assessing Job as "higher level wisdom."[35] This trend does not negate the insights of the respective scholars, but it does serve as a warning about allowing one's own scholarly interests to interfere with the comparative process.

Ludlul, BT, and Job do suggest some key ideological similarities between Mesopotamian and Israelite religion. Both religious worldviews emphasized the transcendence of their deities. Although deities could be described anthropomorphically, their designs and thoughts were believed to be beyond the comprehension of humans. Divine transcendence was not only a presumed aspect of the divine, but it also could explain why the ideal and real did not always correspond. More specifically, notions of divine transcendence could be used to explain why the pious appeared to suffer, why an individual's fortunes could turn without any apparent reason, and why the moral order of the cosmos could appear to fall apart, yet actually remain intact.

In conjunction with this theological principle, the Mesopotamian and Israelite religious worldviews had a general cause–and–effect system of rewards and retributions. Those who served their god(s) and lived ethically could expect the favor of the god(s) and reap benefits from their piety, while those who

31. Sarah Denning–Bolle, "Wisdom and Dialogue in the Ancient Near East," *Numen* 34 (1987), 231.
32. Buccellati, "Wisdom," 43.
33. Gray, "Near Eastern Literature," 258.
34. Robert Gordis, *The Book of God and Man: A Study of Job* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1965), 59.
35. Albertson, "Job" 230.

failed in their responsibilities toward the god(s) and transgressed the divinely approved ethical code could expect to be punished by the god(s). Even when theodicy was considered problematic in events which disagreed with the causational system, the evidence of the symmetry of piety/reward and impiety/punishment was the normal expectation. In counterbalance to this expectation, the idea of divine transcendence was a needed, if not always satisfactory, reconciliation.

In comparing the religious components of the texts, a clear distinction between *Ludlul* and the other texts appears. The protests of innocence in *Ludlul* center on cultic sins, while BT and Job include other, moral dimensions of the sufferer's behavior.[36] However, the distinction between 'moral' and 'cultic' should not be unduly emphasized, since the lines between the two were blurry or nonexistent in Israelite and Mesopotamian cultures.[37] However, the protagonists' additional claims of humility and beneficence are significant distinctions in BT and Job. In addition, the author of *Ludlul* avoids fully confronting the theodicy problem.[38] While dealing with the same dilemma as the other texts, it ultimately returns to a traditional view in Mesopotamian religion: in the words of the poet, while the gods may be cruel in punishment, once appeased, Marduk "rescued me [from the pit] / summoned me [from destruction]."[39] Since *Ludlul* resolves its theodicy, it does not challenge divine justice to the same degree as BT and Job's dialogue. The gods can be expected to deal justly with humans. Despite suffering being incomprehensible at times, larger questions about why

36. Cf. Weinfeld, "Mesopotamian Parallels," 224. Ludlul's sufferer speaks of his dutiful observance of libations, observing religious festivals, and making food offerings, while Job and BT's sufferer protest on basis of their generosity and moral integrity.

37. Van Der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction,* 72.

38. Lambert, *Wisdom*, 27.

39. Ludlul IV: 5–6.

such suffering occurs dissolve once the protagonist experiences redemption.[40] In this conclusion, *Ludlul* finds the idea of divine transcendence to be a sufficient counterbalance to the incongruity between the religious ideal of the causational system and the mortal experience.

In contrast to the reinforcement of traditional views found in *Ludlul*, BT and Job disclose a radical questioning of the notion of the gods' justice and a causational system in which the righteous are rewarded and the transgressors are punished.[41] In their intense arguments, the sufferers in BT and Job cross the traditional boundary between lament and blasphemy. This is clearly indicated in BT, where the sufferer's friend comments that the sufferer has "spurned propriety,"[42] "besmirched [every] code,"[43] and "blaspheme[d] in the anguish of [his] thoughts."[44] After being convinced of the sufferer's position, the friend invokes this blasphemy, giving the gods derogatory eponyms "Liar" and "Slanderer."[45]

Both BT and Job also explore the problem of theodicy beyond the solipsistic view of the text's sufferer, exploring the issues of injustice and suffering on a more general scale.[46] In their radical questioning, these texts wrestle with the inadequacy of divine transcendence as a sufficient answer to a non–causational reality. The inability of humans to discern the deities' thoughts is at least temporarily found to be an unsatisfactory answer to the unmerited suffering and the

40. In contrast, William Moran believes that Ludlul should be interpreted as an ideology of individual personal gods to the sole rule of Marduk. See Moran, "The Babylonian Job," in *The Most Magic Word: Essays on Babylonian and Biblical Literature*, ed. R. Hendel (Washington: Catholic Biblical Association, 2002), 182–200.

41. Van Der Toorn, "Literary Dialogue," 68; Buccelatti, "Wisdom," 37.

42. BT XX: 214.

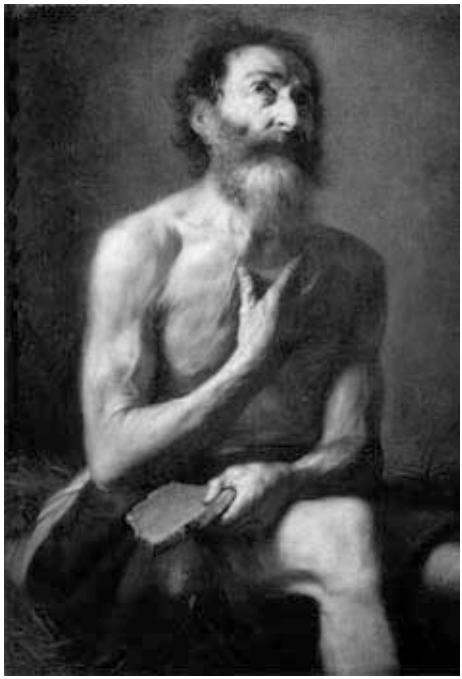
43. BT XX: 214; Lambert renders "you profane ordinances." (*Wisdom*, 85).

44. BT XXIV: 245; cf. Job 15:1–6.

45. Victor A. Horowitz, "dNarru and dZulumaar in the Babylonian Theodicy," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 124 (2004): 777–778.

46. Job 12; BT XXIII: 243–250; cf. Hans–Peter Müller, "Keilschriftliche Parallelen zum biblischen Hiobbuch Möglichkeit und Grenze des Vergleichs," *Orientalia* 47 (1978): 372.

inequity in the mortal world.



Attributed to Bartolomé Estebán Murillo, "Job," 17th century AD (Galleria nazionale di Parma).

Despite these similarities in ideology, there are significant differences between BT and the Joban dialogue. Job's dialogue presents a more extensive examination of theodicy, both from the sufferer and from the counter–ideology of Job's friends. However, some of this thoroughness can be attributed to its length; the text is much longer, allowing the problem to be discussed more extensively.[47] Moreover, in a significant way, the dialogue in Job is less of an examination than BT, since both sides of the argument appear to largely ignore the other side's arguments, leading to theses and counter–theses that rarely break new ground. Although the two debaters in BT display this same trait of 'talking past each other,' the friend is eventually persuaded by the sufferer. Thus, there *is* some consideration of the opposite view, since there is an ultimate agreement.

As for the Joban dialogue, regardless of Job's reasons for recanting after Yahweh's speech, he reaches this point not from the counterarguments or his friends or, for that matter, from any counter argument by Yahweh. The recant is the result of a speech from Yahweh, which, although emphasizing the deity's power, does not address Job's argument about injustice and suffering. In short, the arguments in Job have more static positions that are less inquisitive, less

47. Contra. Albertson, who seems to argue that more dialogue shows deeper thought ("Job," 226).

responsive to counterargument, and recalcitrant to the point that only a *non sequitur* from the deity can bring the argument to a conclusion, albeit an artificial one.

These contrasts suggest a more general difference between Mesopotamian polytheism and the burgeoning Israelite monotheism. The real nature of this difference is difficult to discern, especially since neither culture produced any systematic theological statements. One difference that can be detected, at least tentatively, is that Mesopotamian polytheism had more flexibility than Israelite monotheism due to a multi–causational worldview.[48] While deities were expected to act according to the causational system, other deities or malevolent entities could also influence an individual's fate and disrupt the effects of righteousness or sin. In this way, calamity could be explained in multiple ways.[49] This belief, although it is not explicitly mentioned in BT, may have allowed a greater flexibility in speculation. One could decry the injustice of the gods, since multiple causes allowed for a way of thinking about right and wrong outside of the will of a particular god. This multiple causation system could not exist within the ideals of the developing Israelite monotheism; thus, questioning the deity's justice was more unsettling and opaque in the Israelite worldview.

While the theodicy texts attest to philosophical speculation and counter–cultural inquiry in Mesopotamia and Israel, one should be cautious in extrapolating from these texts to general trends in their respective cultures. Given the very low literacy rates in ancient Israel and Mesopotamia,[50] few people would have been able to read these texts, particularly with their challenging vocabulary. In addition, the scribal cultures responsible for these texts were a relatively

48. Jonathan Goldstein, *Peoples of An Almighty God* (New York: Doubleday, 2002), 19; cf. Hans–Peter Müller, "Keilschriftliche," 367.

49. Van Der Toorn, *Sin and Sanction*, 113–114.

50. Van der Toorn, *Scribal Culture,* 10–11. While Israel might have had a slightly higher rate than Mesopotamia, less than ten percent of either culture would have been able to read a literary text, much less the challenging style of the three theodicies under examination.

small group of elite scholars.[51] While the theodicy texts show a speculative and revolutionary aspect of religious thought, they likely do not reflect commonly held beliefs, and few would have been exposed to their speculation. The texts are products of the intellectual elite who had the time, means, and education to compose them; as such, they reflect the thought and interest of only miniscule parts of Mesopotamian and Israelite societies.

Finally, this assessment of the shared features of BT and Job's poetry raises questions about the possible influence of BT on Job. While there is no reason to posit Job's 'dependency' on BT, it is likely that the author(s) of the poetic dialogue in Job had some acquaintance with BT and other Mesopotamian literature. As members of the social and scholarly elite, the Israelite author(s) were likely in a position to be influenced by the literature and thought of other cultures, as evidenced by other texts produced by their social circle.[52] The literary features and metaphors employed by the authors of Job's dialogue indicate shared conventions with the Mesopotamian literature, and particularly with BT; this also indicates that the author had some acquaintance with BT and its Mesopotamian literary context.

CONCLUSION

After a consideration of the literary and theological features of *Ludlul Bēl Nēmeqi*, the Babylonian Theodicy, and the poetic portions of the Book of Job, there is a clear distinction between *Ludlul* and the other two texts. In both literary and ideological aspects, *Ludlul* represents a different expression of the problem of theodicy.[53] In contrast, BT and the dialogue in Job merit a different genre

51. A. Leo Oppenheim, "The Position of the Intellectual in Mesopotamian Society," *Daedalus* 104 (1975): 38; Van Der Toorn, *Scribal Culture,* passim.

52. For example, Proverbs 22:17–23:11, which is an adaptation of the Egyptian "Instruction of Amen–em–ope"; for an authoritative discussion of their relationship, see Michael V. Fox, *Proverbs 10–31* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009), 753–756.

53. Ludlul might best be categorized with a particular group of Mesopotamian literary prayers and Israelite lament psalms, with which it shares a core set of features. See Weinfeld, "Parallels," 217.

within Ancient Near Eastern literature and religious expression.[54] Both texts question the adequacy of a theological causation system, and express their views in a dialogic style that accentuates the philosophical nature of their discussion and ultimately results in ambiguous conclusions. In assessing these texts, generalizations about their respective cultures should be avoided, since these texts are products of a small intellectual elite whose speculations and counter–cultural thoughts are representative of their idiosyncratic worldviews. In this way, BT's and Job's dialogic form, revolutionary questioning of the traditional religious paradigm, and constellation of shared stylistic features constitute unique expressions in their religious worlds.

54. In agreement with Van Der Toorn, "Literary Dialogue," (65), who suggests that the Egyptian "Dialogue Between a Man and His Ba" also belongs to this genre.