


The possible impact of animals on Job's body image: A psychoanalytical perspective

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The body plays an important role in the book of Job – as do animals. According to psychoanalytical specifically object-relations theory, a subjective body image was partly constructed through the internalisation of external stimuli from significant others who mirrored the subject through their feedback or through their own bodies, which served as an ideal or critique to the subject. Amongst the external stimuli, animals constitute such significant others. Animals could therefore have impacted Job's subjective body image, particularly as their bodies were described in detail by God as a response to Job's complaints and searching.

Contribution: Two theoretical and interrelated problems were acknowledged although they cannot be satisfactorily solved: the cultural aspect of the body image and the relationship to animals.

Keywords: book of Job; body image; animals; psychoanalytical; divine speeches; skin; psychic internalisation; body; religiosity.

Introduction

The body of Job has received much attention in recent research (e.g. Basson 2008; Erickson 2013; Jones 2013; Schellenberg 2016; Van der Zwan 2017, 2019a, 2019b, 2019c, 2020a, 2020b; Viviers 2002) and so have the animals in the book of Job (e.g. Balentine 2021; Horne 2005; Perfetti 2018).

This is indeed the case in the book of Job, specifically with regard to the final chapters.

In fact, one can go one step behind this to find that firstly the human body image has not been linked in research to the experience of animals as relational objects, as one would expect in object relations theory where even any non-human object can be a good (love-) or bad object (*vide infra*). Secondly, body image can be assumed to be culturally relative and dependent. It is, however, precisely because of these two theoretical challenges that this study is risked to serve as a heuristic stimulus for further research.

As 'bodies', animals seem to play a prominent role in the way in which Job perceives his own body. This is confirmed by Jones (2013:845): 'The divine speeches, however, offer Job a new orientation to his body and the cosmos through the bodies of animals'. Thus, 'Job's body is set into a large-scale dialogue with the body of God and the bodies of animals'.

A close reading of the text¹ of the book of Job will be linked to the insights generated by psychoanalytical theory. This study can be broadly divided into three main foci: animals, the body, and religiosity in the book of Job. This sequence will guide the reader to the proposed conclusion that animals play an important role in Job's body image as the site of his own subjective religiosity.

Animals in the book of Job

Already in the third verse of the book, animals are mentioned: *וַיְהִי מִקְנֵהוּ שִׁבְעַת אֲלָפֵי-צֹאן וְיִשְׁלֶשֶׁת* (His possessions were also 7000 sheep, 3000 camels and 500 yoke [meaning 'pairs'] of oxen, and 500 she-asses). As opposed to the 11 people referred to in the previous two verses, there are approximately 1500 animals. They are called his possessions, but, as will become clear from this study, they will also turn out to 'possess' him emotionally and will play a major role as vicarious replacements and displacements of his children and as such have a metaphorical sense as well: as sacrifices they stand for his children. It is only after the

1. Translations of the Hebrew texts are taken from the 1917 edition of the Jewish Publication Society of America Version (JPS), but adjusted to reflect current English. Where no biblical book is mentioned before a textual reference, the book of Job is intended.

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enumeration of the animals that the rest of Job's household is mentioned anonymously. Not even his wife, supposedly the mother of his children, is explicitly mentioned in this chapter. The animals seem to have a higher status than she does.

The animals in this verse are domesticated or farm animals. This means that Job has them daily in his proximity. There are four kinds of animals. From their numbers, it is clear that they would be 'present' more than the much smaller number of people surrounding Job. Some of these animals, such as the oxen and asses, are working animals and the contact with the people will be frequent. Just like humans, they should also rest on the Sabbath according to Exodus 20:9.

The next verse where animals are implied, even when they are not explicitly mentioned, is only two verses further, when Job makes sacrifices on behalf of his children.

When the satan refers to Job's possessions in verse 10, he includes Job's animals as per verse 3. Four verses later in 1:14–15, the oxen and asses are the first to be stolen, and in 1:16, the sheep is the first to be killed by אש אלהים נפלה מן השמים ['God's fire falling from heaven', probably meaning 'being struck by lightning']. The camels are the last to be taken away in a robbery, perhaps suggesting their higher value as the list hierarchically ascends towards Job's children.

After this introduction with its dense cluster of domesticated animals killed or otherwise lost, references to mostly wild animals follow until the two divine speeches. These, from 38:4–39:30 to 40:5–41:26, will deal first with 10 wild animals (when the wild war-horse is included, *vide infra*) and then with the 2 primal animals, Behemoth and Leviathan (both without the definite article in Hebrew and so proper names and only mentioned once each by God).

The references between these two frames start with five words for a lion(ess),² as the strongest and therefore perhaps the animal with which Eliphaz mockingly identifies Job most, before and even during his fall, as these lions are crushed by God in 4:10–11. In 4:19, נַחַש ([the] moth), sounding somewhat similar to לֵיָשׁ (old lion) in 4:11, ironically seems to outlive human beings. Eliphaz suggests, to Job, that even such a small, fragile animal is now superior to him. Clines (2017:135) associates נַחַש with the Hebrew verb, נָשַׁשׁ [waste away], and understands לְכַנִּי as comparative to 'like'. This would mean that Eliphaz equates and identifies the human body with that of a moth. In 13:28, the reason for this becomes clear when Job complains that his skin is like a moth-eaten garment. In 27:18, the 'house' of a moth – similar to the 'house' of עֲרַבִּישׁ [spider] in 8:14 is compared by Job with the treacherous riches of the wicked wealthy. In that sense, Job agrees with Eliphaz that humans live בְּתֵי-חִמְרִים--אֲשֶׁר-בְּעָפָר יְסֻדָּם [in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust]. According to psychoanalytical theory, the body can be symbolised by a house or other building (Freud 1998, 2008a, 2008b; Jung 1984). Forming a kind of merism, these two animals, the lion and the moth,

2. לֵיָשׁ לְבִיא and אֲרִיָּה שָׁמַיִל כְּפִירִים.

suggest the two extremes of animality, but both are as fragile as the human body.

Eliphaz closes his first speech with reference to וְיַחְזִיתָ הָאָרֶץ ([and] of the beasts [= living beings] of the earth) paralleled by וְיַחְזִיתָ הַשָּׂדֶה ([and] the beasts [= living beings] of the field) in 5:22 and 23, respectively. The former fiends of the field now become idealised and harmonious partners for Job, again another irony.

Job responds in 6:5, perhaps hinting at his own animals in 1:14–15, the first of his to be lost. There is a difference in that אֲרָא [wild ass] is not the same as אֲחוּרוֹת [asses] and שׁוֹר [ox] is a different word from בָּקָר [ox] in 1:3, 14. Yet, like these animals complaining when they are suffering, so Job justifies his own complaints, suggesting that he is like these animals. In 7:5, animality creeps up close to Job when רִמָּה [worms] parasitically cover his flesh like skin, so that he feels invaded (cf. 26:6). Rhetorically, he asks God if Job resembles a sea monster, to which God will respond with the description of Leviathan close to the end of the book.

Just as the above-mentioned animals, which almost always turn out differently than expected, the implication of עֲרַבִּישׁ (spider) in 8:14 is that it is not to be trusted.

Yet perhaps another play on the similarly sounding and written נַחַשׁ (moth) in 4:19 is נַחֲשׁ [the celestial 'Bear'] in 9:9 as in 38:32. This is not a real animal but an image with a certain meaning attached to it.

In 9:26, כְּנָפֶיךָ (as the vulture, cf. 39:27–30) is a reminder of the speed and the cut-off existence of its prey with which Job may identify. Not the appearance, but the action and vulnerability of these animals are parallel.

Different from 4:10–11 where the lion may represent Job, in 10:16, God is accused by Job of hunting him כַּשֵּׁחַל [as a lion], in its traditional meaning of brutal strength.

Understanding is to be gained from yet another irony in 11:12, when וְעִיר פָּרָא [a wild ass's colt] would be born a human, something not expected. The same applies to בְּהֵמוֹת [the beasts],⁴ וְעוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם [and the fowl of the air] in 12:7,⁵ and דְּגַי הַיָּם [the fish of the sea] in 12:8, which can teach wisdom to humans from all three levels of existence: the earth, the sky, and the sea, thus serving as a merism with three instead of two representative extremes. Whether this is literally or sarcastically meant is open for discussion. These animals, including human beings, are summarised in 12:10 by כָּל-חַי [every living thing], which are nevertheless all completely dependent on God. The animals do well, even without wisdom, as is later explicitly stated in chapter 28 vv. 12, 18, 20, and 28. This Bildad has implicitly been confirmed in 18:3: כְּבֵהְמָה (as beast[s], singular

3. Ebach (1996a:96) also leaves the possibilities for 'Lion' and 'Bull' open.

4. Incidentally, this Hebrew word could already adumbrate behemoth coming onto the stage in 40:15.

5. This is virtually repeated by Elihu in 35:11: מִבְּהֵמוֹת (then the 'behemoth', beasts) and וּמִעוֹף (and then the fowls).

but probably serving as a collective noun), to whom he believes Job compares his 'stupid' opponents.

Perhaps it is Zophar's underlying paranoia that makes him say in 20:16 that the poison of אַסְפִּים [asps], paralleled by אֶרְפֵּה [viper], penetrates and kills the wicked. Two verses earlier, in 20:14, the gall of אַסְפִּים [asps] has already been used metaphorically to link the oral description of wickedness that has been internalised: slander and lies affect the psyche of the perpetrator and that of the victim. In both verses, it is clear that Zophar, at least unconsciously, imagines an oral incorporation of at least the worst part of the snake's body, its poison, into the body of the wicked, including that of Job and thus explaining Job's bodily plight. This is, however, countered by Job in 26:13, when he recognises that God neutralises the נָחָשׁ [serpent] and perhaps so heals this possibly evil internalisation.

Virtually in the middle of the book, in 21:10, again countering this evil incorporation by the wicked pictured by Zophar, Job associates the life, perhaps including the body, of the wicked with healthy, peaceful prosperity. שׁוֹרוֹ (their [his] bull), פָּרוֹתָו (their [his] cow), and תִּשְׁבֵּל [cast a calf] together serve as a counterpoint for the domesticated animals in the two framing extremities of the book reflecting Job's own life outside of his suffering.

In 24:2, Job mentions the domesticated עֶדְרָה (flock[s]) and in 24:3 the תַּמּוּר [ass] and שׁוֹר [ox] of the innocent victims of the wicked. Contrary to the פָּרָא [wild ass] in 6:5 that is *not* starving, these victims, whose animals have been stolen like those of Job in 1:14–15, are like פָּרָאִים [wild asses] in 24:5 and have to resort to the desert for bare survival. The fact that Job can identify with these people (cf. also Schwienhorst-Schönberger 2007:137) suggests that he feels like a wild ass as well.

Although Job speaks about the deepest mine (of wisdom) in chapter 28, in verse 7, he asserts that the able eyes of the עֵיט [bird of prey] or those of the אֶיָּה [falcon] cannot penetrate through to his wealth. The idealised body parts of these animals and the עוֹרֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם [and the fowls of the air] in 28:21, their exceptional eyes, are ironically exposed by their limitations and denigrated like the formerly powerful bodies of the lions in 4:10–11. That is perhaps why in the very next verse, 28:8, בְּנֵי-שִׂהָן (proud beast[s] [= son[s] of pride]), as an explanatory parallel for the לֵיֹן lion (which is in 41:26 replaced by Leviathan: הוּא מֶלֶךְ-עַל-כָּל-בְּנֵי-שִׂהָן [he is king over all the proud beasts]), are likewise regarded as being only superficially powerful. Perhaps Job also wants to see reality and its depths from a bird's-eye view and realises that his former body was only an illusion. Instead of these elevated birds he would, in the continuation of the same speech in the next chapter, be another bird, although mythical and therefore subjected to idealisation: he is prepared to die with קִנְיָ [‘my nest’] and נֶחְוֵל (and as the phoenix [a bird of resurrection])⁶ in 29:18. The bird's-eye view could be fantasised as an out-of-body

6. Clines (2006:940) explains that the vowels of the noun need to be changed from חוֹל [sand] to חוֹלִי [phoenix] as tradition has long done in order to fit יְקִי [with my nest] and so makes sense.

experience, ensuring survival beyond the body, which has come to an end in death.

In 30:1, the men whom Job had previously grouped with אֲדָמֵי כְלָבֵי צֹאֲנִי [‘the dogs of my flock’] suggests the irony of those much lower in the hierarchy now ridiculing him. Compared with the high-flying birds, these animals are on the opposite side of the hierarchy of animals. Job now associates with animals even lower on this hierarchy, comparing himself in 30:29 לְתַנִּים [with jackals] and לְבָנוֹת יַעֲנָה (with ostrich [literally = with the daughters of greed]), which live in the desert (cf. Is 43:20) like the wild asses in 24:5. A different Hebrew word for an ostrich is used in 39:13: רְגָנִים, a plural where its piercing cries are metonymically employed and then contrasted to the חֲסִידָה [stork's], אֲבָרָה [pinions], and נֹצָה [feathers]. Although much of the description is visual and auditive, the focus in 30:29 is on their comparable bodily needs.

Often recurring to the theme of the problematic skin, Job rhetorically asks in 31:20 if the naked would not have been covered by the fleece כֶּבֶשׂי (of my sheep [= lamb]), indirectly, perhaps unconsciously suggesting that he himself would want to cover the needy, as he is now experiencing their suffering in his own body.

It may be significant that from the mouth of Elihu only two statements, and then about animals in general, are heard: in 35:11 (Footnote 3) and in 37:8 referring to the חַיָּה (beasts [the living]). He is therefore the interlocutor who refers least to animals.

God, on the contrary, is the interlocutor who refers most to animals. This is confirmed by Jones (2013:855): ‘The bodies of animals play such a large role in the divine speeches (38:39–41:26) that God's discourse might justifiably be called zoocentric’. To this, he adds footnote 57:

By a rough count, the number of poetic lines in the Yhwh speeches that focus on animals is 156 out of 252 (ca. 62 percent). The emphasis on Behemoth and Leviathan is particularly striking, with ca. twenty lines devoted to Behemoth and ca. sixty-eight lines to Leviathan. (p. 855)

God introduces the first of 15⁷ animals in 38:39–40 and significantly starts with the לִיֹּנֶס [lioness] and the בְּנֵי-לֵיֹן [young lions]. These are the same animals that have already been mentioned by Eliphaz himself in 4:10–11, but God here contradicts Eliphaz, when he rhetorically implies that God indeed does take care of the lion and that it is not in bodily need. Somehow paired with the lion in God's feeding scheme is עֶרְבַּר ([the] raven) in 38:41. It is, however, in 39:1(–4) where אֶלֶי-סַלְעַת [the wild goat of the rock] and אֲחִלּוֹת [the hinds] invoke the animals in the *Song of Songs* 2:7 and 3:5 with its theme

7. Böckle recognises only ten, probably following Keel (1978:62) who groups these in five pairs. The lion, raven, wild-goat, hinds, wild-ass, wild-ox, ostrich, stork (which Böckle 2021 does not include probably because it serves as a comparison), vulture, hawk, the locust (which Böckle 2021 does not include probably because it serves as a comparison), war-horse, ox (which Böckle 2021 does not include probably because it serves as a comparison with behemoth), bird (which Böckle 2021 does not include probably because it serves as a comparison with leviathan), and proud beasts (which Böckle 2021 does not include probably because it only serves as a comparison with leviathan).

of reawakening, also of sexuality, perhaps alluding to Job's virility. Again in 39:5(–8) פָּרָא ([the] wild ass), followed by יָרִים ([the] wild ox) in 39:9(–12), he recalls 1:3, 1:14–15, and 6:5.

In 39:15, there is the general statement: ...וְחַיַּית הַשָּׂדֶה (and the wild [that is, 'field's'] beasts...), reminding us of 5:22–23 also uttered by Eliphaz. God once again picks up on the words of a former interlocutor and then turns his words around: what Eliphaz meant hypothetically is that the pious (which Job is by implication *not*) *would have been* safe from the wild animals. God on the contrary expresses as a fact that the eggs of the ostrich – miraculously – remain safe from the (other) wild animals – because God takes care of them. The initial state of the body, even as an egg, has nothing to do with piety but with God's grace.

The density of the referrals to animals increases so much that there is concatenation and overlapping of the ostrich and the horse in particular. The horn as a symbol of pride does not intimidate the horse in 39:24–25. The horn as part of an animal body is here added to the human body, adding strength and honour (cf. Gillmayr-Bucher 2004:304 and n11; cf. also 16:15 as an example) and reducing the difference between humans and animals.

Despite the overbearing prominence of behemoth and leviathan, the horse חֹסֶה ([to the] horse) is in the third position with eight verses in 39:18(–25). When it concerns the length of the passage devoted to each, the implied importance of the horse in God's speeches is to be taken seriously. However, 'size doesn't matter', because the horse leaps in 39:20 פָּאֲרָבָה [as a locust]. Last but not least, before the stage is given to the two mythical animals, is the גָּן [hawk] in 39:26 paralleled by the ascending נָשָׂר [vulture] in 39:27(–30), inversely mirroring Job's astonishment in 9:26 at the latter's sudden descent.

Although Keel (1978:65–71) is convinced that the 10 animals recognised by him are negatively connoted, as they are either unclean or associated with severe human if not also animal deprivation, the value that God places on these animal bodies can be inferred from God's own words. Of the seven birds mentioned in the book, five (עֹרֵב [raven] in 38:41, רִנְנִים [ostrich] and חֲסִידָה [stork] both in 39:13, נָשָׂר [vulture] in 39:27, and גָּן [hawk] in 39:26), all of which are unclean (Dt 14:12–18), are also confirmed to be so by God. Five (חֹזֶה to be read as חוֹלִי (phoenix) in 29:18, צִיֵּט ['bird of prey'], אֶיָּה [falcon] the latter two both in 28:7, נָשָׂר [vulture] in 9:26, and בְּנוֹת יַעֲנָה [ostrich] in 30:29), are all – except the mythical phoenix – unclean in Deuteronomy 14:12–18 and regarded as unclean by Job with two (vulture and ostrich, but using two different Hebrew words for the latter) overlappings. In addition, God adds to these the horse and the locust because of their 'flying' abilities. Furthermore, food for the lion and the raven, fertility for the wild goat and the hinds, freedom for the wild ass and the wild ox, the crude fortitude of the ostrich, the psychic and bodily strength of the horse, and the bird's-eye view of the hawk and the vulture are portrayed as admirable and ideal body states.

God does not only ironically include these rather chaotic and anarchic animals because of their exceptional behaviour. This is clear from the body parts mentioned by God, although these belong only to the last four of the 10 listed by Keel (footnote 6) and Böckle (footnote 6): the ostrich's כַּנְף (wing[s] in 40:13 and hinted at by תִּמְרִיא [she raises or flaps her wings] in 40:18); אֶבְרָה (her pinions); וְנֹצָה (and her feathers, homophonous with the different root in גָּן [bird of prey, including hawk and falcon]); בְּצֵיָה [her eggs]; צְוֹארוֹ [the horse's, neck] in 40:19; and כַּנְּפוֹ [the hawk's wings] and עֵינָיו [the vulture's eyes]. God also refers to body parts belonging to other animals, which are mentioned in this context: רֶגֶל ([the] foot, used collectively for the plural 'feet') most probably of הַשָּׂדֶה (the beast[s] of the field); the שׁוֹפָר and שֶׁפָר (horn) in 40:24 and 40:25, respectively, and then personified; and דָּם (blood) in 40:30.

These are the animal bodies that God wants Job to internalise and live by. Yet, the apogee of the ideal body is still to come in the two mythical animals of chapters 40–41: Behemoth (hippopotamus? beast? an intensive plural) in 40:15–24 followed by leviathan (crocodile?) in 40:25–41:26. Leviathan finally rules over all בְּנֵי-שָׂחָה (proud beasts [= sons of pride]) in 41:26 (cf. 28:8), the longest description of an animal in the whole Hebrew Bible and again resonating with לְוִיָּתָן [leviathan] in the mouth of Job in 3:8 and 7:12.

Although no fish or crawling⁸ animals are on God's list, these last and most important models of the ideal body are probably both water animals. Ten of behemoth's body parts are mentioned by God: מְתָנָיו [its loins], בִּטְנוֹ [its belly], both in 40:16; זָנְבוֹ (its tail, perhaps an euphemism for its penis, and as such, a call for Job's restored virility [Jones 2013:861]⁹); אֵצְמָיו ([the] sinews of); פְּתָדָיו [its thighs], all three in 40:17; עֲצָמָיו [its bones]; גְּרִמָּיו [its gristles], both in 40:18; פִּיהוֹ [its mouth] in 40:23; and עֵינָיו (its eyes) and אָף (nose), both in 40:24. These are 10 out of the 70¹⁰ body parts mentioned explicitly in the book of Job. One seventh of all the body parts mentioned are devoted to behemoth.

As with leviathan in 40:24–26 and 41:11–13, there is a strong emphasis on the mouth and nose, suggesting not only their oral sadistic nature but also the subtext of the book as one of internalisation and incorporation.¹¹ As the text focuses on the effect rather than appearance, the tail can be compared with a cedar as it concerns its powerful movement (Clines 2011:1187). The same focus would therefore be important when it concerns Job's body image, despite this technical term, a body image, giving the first impression that it is about

8.Except for the locust but then cherished precisely because of its ability to leave the ground.

9.Incidentally, 40:7 is the only instance in the Hebrew Bible where a human being is called upon to gird his loins, something which God always does elsewhere for humans. This verse might also be interpreted as a call to Job's restored virility, cf. also 38:3.

10.The figure that one arrives at is 68 when one adds up the list of Schellenberg (2016:122–126), but she has not included גְּרִמָּיו (his gristles) as in 40:18, from the noun, גְּרִם (bones, strength, and self) and יְמִין (right hand) as in 40:14, which puts the total then at 70.

11.The book of Job can in this sense be said to be an 'oral' book (פֶּה is mentioned 36 times, plus 41 instances of other mouth parts occur [Schellenberg 2016:123, 124]), even when the psychic internalisation would be rather visual (cf. Van der Zwan 2019b).

something visual. Behemoth's food is therefore its prime bodily need expressed in this passage. Primary bodily needs play an important role in someone's body image, as internal bodily experiences represent the other 'ingredients' of the body image apart from external images, which have been internalised.

Of leviathan God mentions 16 body parts: לְשׁוֹ [its tongue] in 40:25; אָפוֹ [its nose] and לְחֵי (its jaw or palate) both in 40:26; עוֹר (its skin) and רֹאשׁוֹ (its head), both in 40:31; דְּלָתַי ([the] doors of, probably meaning its lips¹²), פָּנָיו (its face [also in 41:5]), and שָׁנָיו (its teeth), all three in 41:6; מְגָנָיו ([its] scales, described in three verses, 41:7–9); עֵינָיו (its eyes) being like עֵפְפַי ([the] eyelids of) the morning in 41:10; פִּי (its mouth) in 41:11, 13; נְחֻרָיו (its nostrils) in 41:12; נְפִשׁוֹ (its throat or breath) in 41:13; צְוֵאָרוֹ (its neck) in 41:14; בְּשָׂרוֹ (its flesh) in 41:15; and לִבּוֹ (its heart) in 41:16. Only the eyes, mouth, and nose overlap with those body parts mentioned of behemoth. It means that 23 out of the total of 70 body parts mentioned in the book of Job concern these two mythical animals. Following this 'anatomy' of each of these two animals are their 'kinaesthetics' and 'kinesiology', how they relate to these bodies. These are all ingredients of body image, which is, in turn, closely tied to self-image. Over against these overwhelming, intimidating bodies, Job realises that he – that is his body – is merely עָפָר וָאֵשֶׁת [dust and ashes] in 42:6.

Yet, there is in all of these intimidating animal images a lighter tone, which suggests that Job is able to take his body(-image) less seriously. Habel (1985:573) has drawn attention to the conspicuous incidence of playfulness and laughter amongst these animals, reaching its peak in the passage about leviathan: the wild-ass יִשְׁחַק (laughs [at], scorns) city culture in 39:7, the ostrich תִּשְׁחַק (laughs [at], scorns), the horse and its rider as cultural arrogance perhaps in 39:18, the horse in turn יִשְׁחַק (laughs [at], mocks) (human?) fear in 39:22, and the wild animals יִשְׁחַקוּ [laugh and play] nearby behemoth in 40:20. The rhetorical question הֲתִשְׁחַק (will you play? [like girls]) with leviathan in 40:29 is later inversely mirrored by leviathan itself when it יִשְׁחַק (laughs [at]) the (human) rattling of the javelin in 41:21.¹³ This subversive undertone plays with the unbearable lightness of being in the body. The animal bodies in nature seem to laugh at the human body in a culture, which fears these animal bodies. With that said, the human body image as a cultural product is undermined as well – hopefully in a liberating way.

The animals explicitly mentioned in the book of Job can be grouped to suggest certain emotional associations coupled with them. It is conspicuous that, apart from the farm and domestic animals (oxen, asses, she-asses, a colt, camels, sheep, a bull, a cow, a dog, and a horse), so many birds of prey (falcon, vulture, and hawk) and other birds (ostrich and stork) and predators (mainly not only lions and lionesses but also asps, a viper, and a serpent) are mentioned. This may be understandable as they must be very present in the mind of

12. Meant metaphorically.

13. Cf. also Psalm 104:26 where either leviathan plays (לִשְׁחַק) in the ocean or God plays with leviathan, if Ebach's (1996b:151–152) understanding is correct.

the farmer or flock and herd owner whose possessions are threatened by them.

Parasitic crawling animals, such as locusts, worms, maggots, spiders, and moths, undermine these beasts of power. Then, there are also wild oxen, wild asses, wild-goats-of-the-rock, and hinds. Beasts [בְּהֵמוֹת] and the fowl of the air [עוֹף הַשָּׁמַיִם] as general groupings are sometimes coupled as merism for all animals, in 12:8 even with דְּגַי הַיָּם [the fish of the sea] to suggest three levels of animals. The expression, חַיִּים [living beings], has a similar generalising sense. Another group that suggests that the animals play more of an emotional, symbolic role is that of the probably mythical and therefore of a fantastic nature: a sea monster, a phoenix and, in the crescendo formed by chapters 40–41, behemoth and leviathan.

The book closes with a framing chapter, which repeats a sacrifice. This time, bullocks and rams are idealised by the number of perfection, seven, in 42:8–9. The lost animals in the first chapter are compensated in 42:12 by being doubled in number. Finally, in 42:14, Job's oldest daughter bears an animal name: יְמִימָה [Jemimah, probably meaning 'dove'], whereas the youngest contains an animal body part, a metaphor for pride, in her name: קֶרֶן הַפִּיחַ [Keren-happuch, 'horn of antimony'].

In summary, about 36 animal nouns are used, whereas words such as horn in 39:24 and 42:14, nest in 29:18, (spider's) web [= house] in 8:14, prey in 9:26, flock in 24:2 and 30:1, and perhaps even Bear in 9:9 and 38:32 add to this ambiance of animal nature. Compared with the more than 70 nouns for body parts mentioned in the book, this background may seem less prominent than the bodily foreground but still determines the psychological 'texture' of the book.

Body images in the book of Job

Body image as a psychological construct

Austrian neurologist and (unorthodox) psychoanalyst Paul Schilder introduced the concept of body image in 1935, based on his previous book, *Das Körperschema* of 1923 (Schilder 1923), where he expands on Freud's (1923:253) idea that the ego is always a body ego. From a psychoanalytical, and more specifically from an object-relations, understanding (*vide supra*), a body image is partially formed by the psychic introjection of aspects of external images, experienced as significant others (Schilder 1935:12). The formation of the body image is first on an unconscious level.

According to psychoanalytical thinking, there are three stages of internalisation: symbolic incorporation of part objects focusing on bodily sensation before any distinction between subject and object, introjection in the oral phase with its ambivalences and anxieties projected outward, and identification with whole objects as the most mature developmental stage (Mentzos 1984:42ff.).

Ferenczi (1910) first symmetrically opposes introjection to projection. Based on and as an extension of autoeroticism or

primary narcissism, introjection is in the first place of the core of object love, broadening the ego to include the instinctual traits of the external pleasure object.

Freud (1915:87) accepts this concept and uses it to distinguish the ego from external reality. More specifically, the superego is constructed by passively introjecting raw, external objects including observed behavioural patterns into the subject's psyche. These objects either remain in tension to it, or through the active assimilation, become different from mere reproductions as they fuse with the subject's own personality. The weaker the ego boundaries, the more the introjection.

In 1932, Ferenczi (published 1933) openly recognises that not all introjects are love objects and often negative identification with the aggressor during a trauma takes place to try and avoid the dilemma of being a victim or an abuser.

Torok (1968:720–721) prefers Sándor Ferenczi's (1910) more positive definition of introjection: 'l'introjection n'est pas de l'ordre de la compensation mais de l'ordre de la croissance'. Like him, she distinguishes incorporation as a magical fantasy denying the loss of a lost love object to compensate for failed introjection by secretly identifying with the forbidden or prohibited object and positioning it within (Torok 1968:721).

Human relations with external objects can go beyond other human beings. This is clear from the psychology of materialism, for example, where possessions sometimes achieve a fetishistic status (Marx 1962:107). It is also clear from the way in which animals are personified in 39:7 and 22 (*vide infra*, cf. also Viviers 2002:513), for example, and human attributes are projected onto them, as the inverse of introjection. Having invested animals with human ideals or even religious meaning through projection, these altered animal images are then once again introjected. This is also the case when behemoth is described in terms of cultural products in 40:18: *בְּרָזֶל בְּרָזֶל וְעֵצִים וְעֵצִים וְעֵצִים וְעֵצִים* [his bones are as pipes of brass, and his gristles are like bars of iron]. It is also clear from the opposite where God is, for example, portrayed theriomorphically (not in the book of Job), when God's wings are depicted as a protective and embracing womb in Psalm 17:8, for instance.

In the 775 issues of the academic journal, *Body Image*, since its inception in 2004, only 35 issues mention the word, 'animal'. It occurs often only once, which means that animals have not been taken seriously with regard to their impact on the human and subjective body image, even when they have not been completely ignored. From some of these articles, it is clear that animals are body image related, but then almost exclusively as negative metaphors for facial disfigurement, excessive hairiness, and fatness, for example, and as one of the three main categories of disgust. The fact that animals often serve as pet names for people, especially lovers, has not been dealt with in this journal. In another recently started academic journal (only 6 issues thus far), *Body and Religion*,

animals have only twice (Ellis 2017:148; Kamash 2018:25) been referred to and then only as an aside.

The evaluations of animal bodies are culturally determined. In fact, a very important aspect of body image as well is the cultural influence on it.

Job's body image

Unlike other biblical authors or protagonists who may be suspected of living in the mind, Job is firmly but not necessarily securely situated in his body. Even the body of the text is a 'corporeal' one because the body is repeatedly mentioned or at least used in metaphorical ways. This corporeality includes animals, especially in the divine speeches, because they resemble human bodies (Eilberg-Schwartz 1990:118) and therefore feature strongly in the human mind.

As a result of the practical limitation of space, this study does not allow for a full exposition of Job's body image, which is currently being researched by Van der Zwan at the University of Vienna in a habilitation thesis,¹⁴ in which this study on the impact of animals will comprise a chapter. A preliminary, summarised version has already been published (Van der Zwan 2019a) and does not need to be repeated here.

Central to Job's body image is his experience of the periphery of his body: the attack on his skin (cf. Van der Zwan 2017, 2019a, 2020b) as the body boundary has serious consequences for his body image, especially when it continues over a longer period of time. Considering Job's 'thin' skin, epitomised and embodied by his exceptional empathy for others as testified by himself in 29:12–17, and symbolic–symptomatic of his exposed psyche, external stimuli, even bad objects and non-human objects, which he somehow relates to, easily penetrate his unconscious. The fact that his attitude and his behaviour towards the needy are more than just a sense of justice demanded by the law as he himself states in 29:14 can be assumed from the fact that he becomes afflicted in his skin – perhaps his Achilles' heel.

Probably in all cultures, people dream of animals, sometimes even terrifying animals. That Job who lives in a culture where people are to animals physically and therefore perhaps also emotionally, even negatively, makes it likely that he will have internalised the animals around him to a greater extent than modern urban people would. That the animals listed by God are negatively connoted in his culture would mean that he may internalise these as bad objects, which may, in turn, have increased the likelihood of his sickly, physical state. One wonders, however, to what extent he also feels compassion for suffering animals.

The specific animals in his external world and how these animals are portrayed are therefore crucial for possible inferences about their impact on Job's body image. That

¹⁴Scanning underneath Job's psychic skin: a psychoanalytic interpretation of Job's body image'.

animals remind humans of their own bodies is especially clear from the similes and metaphors in the book of *Song of Songs*, where, for example, the admired woman's breasts are compared and likened to gazelle fawns – one could also imagine lambs – in 4:5. Some of these reminders are foreign to modern, western recipients of the text, such as that her teeth *שְׁפָלָם מִן-הַרְהָצָה שְׁפָלָם* [are like a flock of ewes all shaped alike, which have come up from the washing, all of which are paired, and amongst which none is missing] in 4:2, and need to be understood in the cultural context of the time.

Although similes and metaphors between human beings and animals have been claimed to be stereometrical, that is referring to the behaviour rather than the appearance of these animals, the description of the animals particularly by God in the two divine speeches from 38:4–39:30 to 40:5–41:26 is visual and as much concerned with their appearance as with their behaviour. Of course, not only the appearance of another body but also its behaviour expressing something about the abilities of that body impacts the internalisation of that image into a subject's own body image.

Other body images in the book of Job

Other interlocutors apart from Job and God also make references to the body, which could also be aurally internalised by Job. Some of these references are to Job's own body but others refer to other bodies, which could still be internalised by Job, as he may compare these bodies with his own and so modify his own body image. Apart from that, he would have experienced other human bodies visually as well. All of this is being closely examined in a habilitation thesis at the University of Vienna by Van der Zwan (*vide supra*). Here, this study is, therefore, limited only to the possible impact of animals on Job's body image.

The only time when the human bodies of others are relevant here is when Job himself pictures his first three interlocutors, just as he does with God, as animals that are not satiated by having eaten his flesh in 19:22. This is a typical image of human enemies in the laments of the Hebrew Bible (Erickson 2013:308). God is likewise likened to a lion in 10:16, in this way portraying God as an animal body. God's body is therefore invested with animality, just as Job imagines and wishes his own body to be open to divine reality. The body, and more specifically the animal body with which Job also identifies, is for Job, thus, a bridge between Job and God.

Job's body as the site of religiosity

Job wants to see God in 19:26–27 and ultimately claims in 42:5 that he does, saying it in the present tense. As Jones (2013:846) puts it, 'Job's primary experience of God is in his body'. The majority of exegetes understand this as a metaphorical expression, but the fact remains that even then Job uses bodily language, 'a corporeal discourse', says Jones (2013). His body is very prominent in the book compared with other biblical books. This can be understood when his

bodily suffering that leads him to raise religious questions is taken seriously.

It seems as if in 42:5, the mention of the physical organ, the eye, insists on a literal interpretation, especially when LaCocque's translation of *וּמִבְשָׂרִי* in 19:26 is accepted as 'and in my flesh', that is, before death (2007:92; Van der Lugt 1995:227n9) and not 'without my flesh', that is, after death, as Spronk (1986:312–313) understands it under the influence of 17:16.

From a psychoanalytical – even religious – perspective, the animals in God's first speech, but particularly the two mythical ones in God's second speech, can be interpreted as Job dreaming (cf. *בְּחֻלְמוֹת* [in dreams] in 7:14) or having a vision (cf. *וּמִמְהִינֹת* [and through visions] in 7:14) about the wild, self-subversive, animal enemies in his unconscious. That is why behemoth, perhaps as a part of his unconscious, was made *with* Job, according to 40:15. All these animals represent his sick body's 'Fremdkörper', which he cannot conquer or even control and with which he has to reconcile. Perhaps that is why his healing is never mentioned. Just as the clean animals sacrificed in 1:5 bring him redemption, so these unclean ones surprisingly do the same, but in an unexpected way. Like the unclean animals in the first divine speech are misfits, unintegrated left-overs, and excesses from the conscious, the pluralistic *בְּהֵמוֹת* [behemoth] and its deeper level, *לֵוִיָּתָן* (leviathan, the [labyrinthian] Winding One), both in the primeval waters of the chaotic cellar of his mind, reign as violent and sexual (e.g. the undertone in 40:19 and 41:18 and cf. Ebach [1996b:149]) forces like *מֶלֶךְ* [a king] over him, according to 41:26, seemingly separate from him, even with separate proper names and not recognised as part of him.

Being invisible (cf. 41:1), as seeing it reminds one of the threatened deadly consequences of seeing God, leviathan is like God who suddenly slips into its description in 41:2–3 (cf. Ebach 1996b:153) and might be identifying with it, just as Job likens God to a lion in 10:16. There, therefore, seems to be some commonality between these wild animals and God. In addition, in 41:10, leviathan's eyes are *כְּעֵפְפֵי-שָׁחַר* (like the eyelids of the morning), which express the dawning sun as divine light. Seow (2011:76n55) regards the eye in totality as an image of a celestial body, perhaps a divine body. Likewise, in 40:19, it is even said that behemoth is *רֵאשִׁית דְּרָכֵי-אֵל* [the beginning of the ways of God], just as wisdom is claimed to be *רֵאשִׁית דְּרָכֵי* [the beginning of His way] in Proverbs 8:22.

Possible impact of animals on Job's body image

Human experience of nature is mostly, if not almost always, mediated and packaged by cultural interpretations. This applies both to the way animals and the way the body is perceived. It takes a very rare mystical experience to 'undress' a human experience of nature from these filters and lenses. Also, the animals appearing in the biblical text have specific cultural associations. That oxen and (she-)

asses are juxtaposed in 1:3, 1:14–15, (perhaps even in 6:5, 24:3[5] and in 39:5, 9), and 42:12 links them intertextually to *וְשׂוֹר וְחִמְרִי* ... *לֹא* (neither his ox nor his ass) in Exodus 20:13 (where different nouns are, however, used, but the same as in 24:3), as possessions are not to be coveted, suggesting their exceptional economic and emotional value.

Apart from the collective relation to animals, there is also the question about Job's personal, psychological relation to animals, which has probably been greatly impacted by the collective attitude, even when Job is said by God in 1:8 to be singular and exceptional in his being: *אֵין כְּמֹהוּ בְּאֶרֶץ* [there is none like him on earth] *אֵין*. That animals are his property does not necessarily exclude the possibility that no emotional relationship exists between them. His children and wife are likewise part of his legal property, and yet one can assume that he fostered an affection for them all, particularly as he claims to have empathy with those who suffer in society in 29:12–17.

That some of these animals have been psychically internalised becomes apparent, when the poisonous penetration of the snake's 'evil' and deadly body part is used as a metaphor by Bildad in 20:16, preceded by the oral sadistic incorporation of two verses before in 20:14. In 7:5, Job himself feels covered, perhaps suffocated and invaded, by worms, the symbol of insignificance like *חֹלְעָה* [a maggot], according to 25:6. These experiences of Job trigger his disgust because of the reminder of death. This sense of disgust with regard to animals as one of the three¹⁵ categories other than core disgust and contamination disgust has been scientifically recognised in modern psychological research (Onden-Lim, Wu & Grisham 2012; Shanmugarajah et al. 2012; Stasik-O'Brien & Schmidt 2018). The same is true of the moth, which Job imagines to have eaten his skin as a kind of garment in 13:28.¹⁶ Apart from having incorporated some of these animals, the inverse is also vicariously the case where Job feels 'eaten' by God as the metaphorical lion in 10:16. This alternation between the active and the passive should not be misunderstood as a contradiction but similar to the typical switch between sadism and masochism (Aron & Starr 2013:39), both of which apply to Job who internalises ('eats') and is 'eaten' by God.

As an afterthought, one wonders why the sexually neutered oxen are coupled specifically with *שְׂוֹרוֹת* ['she'-asses] in 1:3, 14 and 42:12, whereas *חִמְרִי* [ass] is used in 24:5 (cf. also *וְחִמְרִים* [and of asses] in 1 Chronicles 5:21, where a similar raid is described, and *וְחִמְרֵי* [n]or his ass) in Exodus 20:13 where it is also coupled with the ox). Clines (2017:14) explains it as the higher economic value of she-asses over asses, because they produce milk and off-spring and are easier to ride on, but if these reasons were the case, then certainly Exodus 20:13 would also have preferred it, as a she-ass would then certainly be coveted more than the

15. Or four stages: core, animality, interpersonal, and moral (Powell, Simpson & Overton [2015]).

16. Forti (2008:160), comparing it with Hosea 5:12, regards *רֶקֶב* in the same verse as meaning tree-worm and therefore as synonymous parallel to the moth.

male ass. Perhaps the animal images bring Job in contact with his *anima*, the wild, neglected and repressed part of his psyche, which may be strengthened by his recognition of the feminine in the final chapter, especially 42:14–15. Perhaps the battle at the border of his body is about his banning of the baser anima-animal parts, for which he has had no empathy yet. Transpersonal growth is about the spatial expansion of consciousness including identification with other people and animals, accepting that human beings are also animals. This would make for a much healthier and more realistic body image.

Conclusion

Although the bodies of animals are different from those of human beings, there is a strong possibility that Job internalises at least some of them as his life revolves much more around animals than the modern city dweller can imagine.

Having scanned and briefly investigated all the explicit mentions of animals in the book of Job, the psychoanalytical views of body image and more specifically those of Job and others in the book have been introduced before the body of Job as a religious site, and the mediating role of animals in the 'body' of God has been highlighted. Outstanding research is the implicit references to animals that have not been dealt with in this study.

As heuristic stimulus, this study hopes to have practical value as well by inspiring research on how the experience of animals (bodies) can heal or at least improve the subjective body image of human beings.

More research can be invested in the way animals could have influenced the body images of people in the totem stage of religion and when religions use animal masks in their rituals although that is quite distant from the book of Job.

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