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The Polemic Nature of the Genesis Cosmology

by Gerhard F. Hasel

This paper, emphasizing that the creation narrative of Genesis I, far from being dependent on the "creation" stories of Babylonia and other ancient Near Eastern comogonies, designedly polemicizes against them, was originally presented to the Uppsala Congress of the International Organization for Old Testament Studies in August, 1971. We are glad to publish it in this revised form. Dr. Hasel is Associate Professor of Old Testament and Biblical Theology in Andrews University, Berrien Springs, Michigan.

ALMOST one hundred years ago a new phase of OT study was inaugurated with the publications of the Babylonian versions of the flood¹ and the creation account.² Soon a school of thought arose which attempted to show that there was nothing in the Old Testament that was not but a pale reflection of Babylonian ideas.³ This "pan-Babylonian" school led to the well-known "Bible versus Babel" controversy which was started in the first decade of our century by Friedrich Delitzsch,⁴ who claimed that the Old Testament was lacking almost completely in originality. Today the situation has changed radically. We can no longer talk glibly about Babylonian civilization because we now know that it was composed of three main strands and that even before the end of the third millennium B.C. as W. G. Lambert and others⁵ remind us. The cultural and religious situation is not only multi-layered but also extremely complex and diverse with its own long history of traditions.⁶ The finds at Ugarit have made it apparent that Canaanite mythology does not need to agree with that of Mesopotamia. We are aware more than ever before that the question of religio-historical parallels is much more complex and intertwined than was ever expected. This is true also with regard to parallels between Israelite motifs, concepts, and thoughts and those of her neighbors.

C. Westermann has pointed out that it is a methodological necessity to consider religio-historical parallels against the totality of the phenomenological conception of the works in which such parallels appear.⁷ This means that single parallel terms and motifs must not be torn out of their religio-cultural moorings and treated in isolation from the total conception of the context in which they are found.⁸ To treat them in isolation from their larger context and phenomenological conception is to run the danger of misreading elements of one culture in terms of another and vice versa, which is

bound to lead to gross distortion. On the basis of these brief methodological considerations one may venture to study certain external influences to which Israel has undoubtedly opened itself and at the same time one appears to be in a position to recognize ever more clearly where Israel has forcefully rejected and fought off that which it felt irreconcilable with its faith and understanding of reality.⁹ The purpose of this paper is to investigate a number of the traditional religio-historical parallels between the Hebrew creation account of Gen. 1: 1-2: 4a and cosmogonies of the ancient Near East. It is our aim to bring to bear on representative terms and motifs, traditionally considered to have religio-historical parallels, their living cultural and religious context¹⁰ in order to take seriously the meaning and limitation of parallel phenomena and to shield and control oneself against the reading of elements of one religio-cultural setting in terms of another.¹¹ It is hoped that this procedure will reveal certain aspects of the nature of the Genesis cosmology which have not at all been noted or received less than adequate attention.

Tehôm

Since H. Gunkel¹² in 1895 argued that the term *tehôm*, "deep, primeval ocean, sea," in Gen. 1: 2 contains vestiges of Babylonian mythology, many Old Testament scholars have followed his supposition that there is a direct relationship between *tehôm* and *Tiamat*, the female monster of the Babylonian national epic *Enuma elish*. On this question there is today a marked diversity of scholarly opinion. Some scholars of high reputation maintain that *tehôm* in Gen. 1: 2 contains an "echo of the old cosmogonic myth";¹³ other scholars of equal erudition argue against it.¹⁴

A. Heidel has shown on philological grounds that the Hebrew term *tehôm* does not derive from the Babylonian *Tiāmat*¹⁵ as Gunkel and others had claimed. There is a growing consensus of scholarly opinion maintaining that *tehôm* derives from a Common Semitic root¹⁶ from which also cognate Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Arabic terms derive. The Babylonian terms *tiamtu*, *tāmtu*, "ocean sea," as well as *Tiāmat* stem from this Common Semitic root. This is true also of the Ugaritic *thm/thmt*, "deep(s),"¹⁷ whose semantic and morphological relationship to the Hebrew *tehôm* precludes that the latter is borrowed from Akkadian¹⁸ or Hurrian.¹⁹ The Arabic *tihāmatu* is also a derivative of this Common Semitic root.²⁰

The position that *tehôm* is philologically and morphologically not dependent on *Tiāmat* causes us to ask a number of crucial questions. Does *tehôm* contain an echo of an old cosmogonic myth? Did the author of Gen. 1 "demythologize" the semantic meaning of the term *tehôm*? In a more fundamental way we raise

the question: what actually does come to expression through the term *tehôm* as used in Gen. 1: 2? To find an answer we must first of all survey briefly the usage of *tehôm* in the Old Testament. *Tehôm* and derivative forms appears thirty-five times in the Old Testament. It is treated both as a masculine²¹ and feminine²² noun and also without indication of gender.²³ *Tehôm* appears in connection with the subject of creation aside from the passage under discussion in Pss. 33: 7; 104: 6; Job 38: 16; Prov. 3: 20; 8: 24, 27; in each case, however, without any mythological overtones. In general *tehôm* is "a poetic term for a large body of water."²⁴ Invariably it appears without the article,²⁵ which must not be construed to indicate that it is a proper name or a person.²⁶ The semantic usages of *tehôm* in the Old Testament indicate that it is used in a depersonalized and inanimate sense.²⁷

Our attention must now turn to the ancient Near Eastern parallels. In this connection it is significant that *tehôm* is a term derived from a Common Semitic root whose cognates in other Semitic languages are often used in texts which deal with creation in terms of a cosmogonic battle myth. Furthermore, the notion of the "deep" or "primeval ocean" is an idea by no means exclusive to the Hebrew creation account.

Whereas no specific Sumerian myth of creation has been recovered,²⁸ Sumerian cosmogony can be put together from various fragmentary myths of origin. One text describes the goddess Nammu, written with the ideogram for primeval "sea," as "the mother, who gave birth to heaven and earth."²⁹ S. N. Kramer deduces from this that "heaven and earth were therefore conceived by the Sumerians as the created product of the primeval sea."³⁰ The Babylonian national epic *Enuma elish*, which was not composed to tell the story of creation, but to glorify the god Marduk and the city of Babylon,³¹ opens by stating that at first nothing existed except the two personified principles, *Apsu* and *Tiāmat*,³² the primeval sweet-water and salt-water oceans respectively. The Babylonians could thus conceive of a time when there was neither heaven nor earth, only primordial waters, but "apparently they could not conceive of a time when there was nothing whatever except a transcendental deity."³³ After an elaborate theogony in which the gods evolve from these two personified principles, and after *Apsu* has been subdued by *Ea*, we find *Tiāmat* reigning unsubdued, opposed by and suppressing the gods she has begotten. At last one of them, Marduk, becomes their champion, engages *Tiāmat* in combat, and slays her.³⁴ The concept of the personified *Tiamat*, the mythical antagonist of the creator god Marduk, is completely absent in the notion of *tehôm* in the Hebrew creation account. In Gen. 1 *tehôm* is clearly inanimate, a part of the cosmos, not the foe of God, but simply one section of

the created world.³⁵ It does not offer any resistance to God's creative activity.³⁶ It is therefore unsustainable to speak of a "demythologizing" of a Babylonian mythical concept or the use of a mythical name in Gen. 1: 2.³⁷ To suggest that there is in Gen. 1: 2 the remnant of a latent conflict between a chaos monster and a creator god is to read into it from mythology.³⁸ To the contrary, the author of the Hebrew creation account uses the term *tehôm* in a "depersonalized"³⁹ and "non-mythical"⁴⁰ sense. *Tehôm* is nothing else but a passive, powerless, inanimate element in God's creation.

Egyptian mythology has many competing views of creation.⁴¹ In Heliopolitan theology Nun, the pre-existent primeval ocean, "came into being by himself."⁴² In one of the Egyptian cosmogonic speculations Atum,⁴³ who arose out of the pre-existent Nun,⁴⁴ threatened that the "land will return into Nun, into the floodwaters, as (in) its first state."⁴⁵ Thus it is to be noted that in Heliopolitan cosmogonic mythology the "watery chaos or waste"⁴⁶ was pre-existent and was personified as Nun, "the mother of gods," or "she who bears Re [the sun god, identified with Atum] each day."⁴⁷ In the rival Memphite theology⁴⁸ Ptah, the chief god of Memphis, is equated with Nun and is the creative principle itself out of which Atum⁴⁹ and all other gods were created.⁵⁰ Ptah is both Nun, the primeval ocean, and Ta-tenen, the primeval land, which arose out of Nun and is equated with the land of Egypt.⁵¹ In Hermopolitan cosmogony there existed prior to creation an infinite, dark, watery chaos, whose characteristic are incorporated into the four pairs of gods of the Ogdoad.⁵² As the water begins to stir, the primeval hillock emerges from the deep, bringing up the "cosmic egg" out of which Re, the sun god, will appear to proceed with the creation of all other things. The new creative events occur in cyclical fashion, with the daily rebirth of the sun and the annual receding of the Nile.

In recent years a number of the leading Egyptologists point to decisive differences between the Egyptian cosmogonies and Genesis creation,⁵³ so that one can really no longer say that "the Egyptian view of creation was very similar to that of Israel."⁵⁴ Gen. 1 does not know the threat of the created world's return to a chaotic state as is expressed in the Heliopolitan cosmogony.⁵⁵ It does not know the cyclical nature of creative events. The creative events occur in linear succession, dated by days which end with the seventh day. This linear view, which inaugurates history, is opposed to the mythical concept of a primordial event which is constantly repeated in the present.⁵⁶ Contrariwise, Egyptian cosmogony does not know a once-for-all creation which took place "in the beginning" as is expressed in Gen. 1: 1. It does know of a creation "in the first time" (*sp tpy*), which, however, is ever repeated in cyclical fashion, in

such a way that man himself experiences it.⁵⁷ Further more, the idea of *tehôm* in Gen. 1: 2 does not have “features reminiscent of the Hermopolitan cosmogony.”⁵⁸ No god rises out of *tehôm* to proceed with creation nor is *tehôm* a pre-existent, personified Ocean as Nun in Heliopolitan theology. The concept of *tehôm* in Gen. 1 is devoid of any kind of mythical quality or connotation. With T. H. Gaster it is to be observed that Gen. 1: 2 “nowhere implies . . . that all things actually issued out of water.”⁵⁹ Is it not a fact that there is in Gen. 1 a complete absence of any suggestion that God accomplished the creation of the world after the conquest of hostile forces though this is part of one version of the primeval establishment of order in Egyptian cosmogony?⁶⁰ The way in which the author of Gen. 1: 2 speaks of *tehôm*, “deep,” and *mayim*, “waters,” indicates that both are subordinated to the “earth” which is the center of description as the emphatic position of this term in the Hebrew text indicates.⁶¹ We must also note that the phrase “over the face of the waters” is parallel to the phrase “over the face of the deep” which is an additional support for *tehôm* being a non-mythical term.⁶² The conclusion seems inescapable that *tehôm* in Gen. 1: 2 is devoid of mythical features reminiscent of Egyptian creation speculations.⁶³

In short, the term *tehôm* in Gen. 1: 2 lacks any mythological connotations which are part of the concept of “primeval ocean” in ancient Near Eastern (Sumerian, Babylonian, Egyptian, Ugaritic) creation mythology. *Tehôm* is used in a non-mythical context, namely a “historical” context with its different meaning and emphasis. The description of the depersonalized, undifferentiated, unorganized, and lifeless state of the “deep” in Gen. 1: 2 cannot be motivated from mythology. To the contrary, it is motivated from the Hebrew conception of the world and understanding of reality. In stating the conditions in which the cosmos existed before God commanded that light should spring forth, the author of Gen. 1 rejected explicitly contemporary mythological notions by using the term *tehôm*, whose cognates are deeply mythological in their usage in ancient Near Eastern creation speculations, in such a way that it is not only non-mythical in content but antimythical in purpose. Thus there comes to expression with *tehôm* an antimythical polemic which can be observed also in other parts of the creation account of Gen. 1 as we shall see in the following discussion.

Tannin

The divine creative act on the fifth day (Gen. 1: 20 ff.) was deemed to comprise living creatures that have their habitat in the water or in the air and are thus distinguished from the creation of the land creatures on the following day. Gen. 1: 21 speaks of the

creation of the cryptic *hattanninim haggedolim*, "the great sea monsters."⁶⁴ Certain Ugaritic texts contain the cognate term *tnn* and allow a better understanding of the Hebrew term and its emphasis in the Hebrew creation account of Gen. 1. It is significant that *tnn* plays a special role in the Baal-Anath cycle.⁶⁵ Anath, the sister of Baal, speaks in one text about the primordial enemies of Baal:

What enemy rises up against Baal,
 What adversary against Him who Mounteth the Clouds?
 Have I not slain Sea [Yam], beloved of El?
 Have I not annihilated River [Nahar], the great god?
 Have I not muzzled the Dragon [Tannin], holding her in a muzzle?
 I have slain the Crooked Serpent [Lotan—Leviathan],
 The foul-fanged with Seven Heads.⁶⁶

In this Canaanite battle myth, Anath, being angry at the arrival of Mot's messengers, boasts that to her triumphs over the enemies of Baal belongs the "muzzling"⁶⁷ of *tnn*. Here *tnn* is a personified antagonistic monster, a Dragon, parallel to the opponents Yam, Nahar, and Lotan, which were all overcome by Anath or the creator god.⁶⁸

We cannot review in detail the Old Testament passages in which *tannin* appears.⁶⁹ H. Gunkel distinguished two layers of meaning, namely an older one in which *tannin* is a mythical chaos monster and a younger one in which it is a creature among other creatures.⁷⁰ It is no longer possible to follow this twofold distinction. It should be noted that *tannin* appears only once parallel to Rahab (Is. 51: 9), and only twice parallel to Leviathan (Ps. 74: 13; Is. 27: 1). Its infrequent appearance with the article⁷¹ and in plural form⁷² is rightly taken by M. Wakeman to suggest that in poetic passages, where the absence of the article cannot guide us, *tannin* can be read (alone, parallel or in opposition to Rahab or Leviathan) as a "generic term."⁷³ From an examination of the relevant passages one is led to conclude that there is no case in which *tannin* must be read as a proper noun. Thus *tannin* in the Old Testament, unlike Rahab and Leviathan, "is more properly a generic term . . . than a personal name."⁷⁴ We need to note also that in the largest group of texts, which comprises seven of the thirteen *tannin* passages, this term is simply referring to an animal, a serpent, a crocodile, or a big water animal, without any mythological overtones.⁷⁵ It does not seem likely that the usages of *tannin* in this dominant group of texts presuppose the second group of four texts in which scholars have recognized mythical overtones.⁷⁷ The third group of texts comprises the two passages in which *tannin* is employed in clearly "nonmythological contexts"⁷⁸ with reference to created creatures. In Ps. 148: 6 the *tanninim* are called to praise Yahweh as are other things created by God. The second passage is the one under discussion.

Against this threefold grouping of texts with their particular emphases, the nonmythological context of *tannin* in Gen. 1: 21 comes into much clearer focus. In order to recognize even more clearly the special purpose of the singling out of the *tannin* in Gen. 1: 21, a number of points require our attention. (1) The *tanninim* of vs. 21 are mere creatures *in* the water. They lack any mythical power; they do not possess qualities different from the other created water creatures. (2) In vs. 21 the term *bārā'* is employed for the first time since the opening in vs. 1. It is hardly accidental that this term appears in connection with the creation of the *tanninim*.⁸⁰ Since *bara'* is not used in connection with the creation of the land animals (vs. 25), it appears that this verb has been chosen at this juncture in order to emphasize that the *tanninim* creatures were created by God in an effortless creative act. A polemic emphasis becomes transparent: the *tanninim* are aquatic creatures which were "created" by God; they are not pre-existent rivals of the Creator which needed to be conquered as in Canaanite mythology. (3) The juxtaposition of the *tanninim* in vs. 21 with the swarming aquatic creatures suggests that *tannin* is a generic designation⁸¹ for *large* water creatures⁸² in contrast to the *small* water creatures mentioned next. The distinction between *large* and *small* water creatures in Gen. 1: 21a finds its support in Ps. 104: 25, 26 which knows "living things [in the sea] both great and small."⁸³ In short, the choice of the term *tannin* in connection with the term *bārā'* emphasizing God's effortless creation of the large aquatic creatures appears as a deliberate attempt to contradict the notion of creation in terms of a struggle as contained in the pagan battle myth.⁸⁴ It appears inescapable to recognize here again a conscious polemic against the battle myth.⁸⁵

The Separation of Heaven and Earth

The idea of the creation of heaven and earth by division is common to all ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies. The Sumerians present the process of separation as the sundering of heaven from earth by the air-god Enlil.⁸⁶ The Babylonian epic *Enuma elish* reports that Marduk forms heaven out of the upper part of slain *Tiāmat* and earth out of the lower part and the deep from her blood.⁸⁷ The Hittite version of a Hurrian myth visualizes the process of separating heaven and earth as being performed with a cutting tool.⁸⁸ In Phoenician mythology separation is described as the splitting of the world egg.⁸⁹ In Egyptian cosmogony one finds that Shu, the air god, pushed up Nut, the sky goddess, from Geb, the earth-god, with whom she was embraced.⁹⁰ This forced separation brings about heaven and earth.

The picture in Gen. 1: 6 ff. has its analogy to pagan mythology in that it also describes the creation of heaven and earth to be an act of separation.⁹¹ However, notable distinctions appear as soon as

one inquires into the "how" of the act of separation. In contrast to Babylonian and Egyptian mythology, the firmament, *rāqia'*, is raised simply by the *fiat* of God without any struggle whatever. The waters in Gen. 1 are completely powerless, inanimate, and inert. The firmament (sky) is fashioned by separating the waters on a horizontal level with waters above and below the firmament (vss. 6-8). In a second step the waters below the firmament are separated on a vertical level to let the dry land appear, separated from the waters (vss. 9, 10). Any notion of a combat, struggle, or force is absent in both of these creative acts.

These significant differences have been explained by suggesting that the Biblical writer "suppressed or expurgated older and cruder mythological fancies."⁹² But with C. Westermann one needs to maintain that the Biblical writer "does not reflect in this act of creation the contemporary world-view, rather he overcomes it."⁹³ Inherent in the Biblical presentation of the separation of heaven and earth is an antimythical polemic. Separation takes place without struggle whatever. It is achieved by divine *fiat* in two steps rather than one. In this instance Gen. 1 is again opposed to pagan mythology.

The Creation and Function of the Luminaries

It goes far beyond the limitations of this paper to discuss in detail ancient Near Eastern astral worship.⁹⁴ The Sumerians worshipped as the major astral deity the moon-god Nanna and to a lesser degree the sun-god Utu.⁹⁵ In Egypt the sun in its varied appearances was the highest deity,⁹⁶ whereas the moon had an inferior role. In the Hittite pantheon the chief deity and first goddess of the country was the sun-goddess Arinna.⁹⁷ Ugaritic texts speak of the sun-goddess Šapaš as "the luminary of the gods."⁹⁸ She plays a role also in the Baal myth.⁹⁹ Sacrifices are prepared for Šapaš and also the moon-god Yariḥ¹⁰⁰ as well as the stars.¹⁰¹ The Akkadians venerated the moon-god Sin in particular at Ur where he was the chief god of the city and also in the city of Harran, Syria, which had close religious links with Ur. The sun-god Šamaš, the goddess of Venus, Ishtar, and other starry deities had high even though changing rank in Mesopotamia.¹⁰²

Parenthetically we should note that it has been claimed that *Enuma elish* places its "attention to the creation of the celestial bodies . . ." ¹⁰³ after Marduk had formed the sky and the earth from slain *Tiāmat*. But such a claim is a misconception. *Enuma elish* knows nothing about the creation of sun, moon, and stars. There is no reference to the creation of the sun; the moon is not created unless one follows the strained interpretation that the phrase "caused to shine"¹⁰⁴ means creation; the stars are not reported to have been created either. Marduk simply fixes stations for the "great gods . . . the stars."¹⁰⁵ The order of the heavenly

bodies in *Enuma elish* is stars-sun-moon¹⁰⁶ whereas Genesis follows the well-known order sun-moon-stars. The stars are likely referred to first in *Enuma elish*, "because of the great significance of the stars in the lives of the astronomically and astrologically minded Babylonians."¹⁰⁷

Against the background of the widespread astral worship the creation and function of the luminaries in Gen. 1: 14-18 appears in a new light. (1) In the Biblical presentation the creatureliness of all creation, also that of sun, moon, and stars, remains the fundamental and determining characteristic. Conversely, *Enuma elish* depicts Marduk as the one who fixes the astral likenesses of the gods in their characteristics as constellations.¹⁰⁸ (2) In place of an expressly mythical and primary rulership of the star Jupiter over other stars or astral deities,¹⁰⁹ Genesis has the sun and moon to rule day and night respectively.¹¹⁰ (3) The sun as a luminary is in Genesis not "from eternity," namely without beginning, as is the sun-god Šamaš in the Karatepe texts.¹¹¹ In Genesis the sun and the moon have a definite beginning in relation to the earth. (4) Gen. 1 avoids the names "sun" and "moon" undoubtedly because these Common Semitic terms are at the same time names for deities.¹¹² An inherent opposition to astral worship is thus apparent. (5) The heavenly bodies appear in Genesis in the "degrading"¹¹³ status of "luminaries" whose function it is to "rule". As carriers of light they have the serving function "to give light" (vss. 15-18). (6) The enigmatic Hebrew phrase "and the stars" in vs. 16 appears to be a parenthetical addition, whose purpose it is, in view of the prevalent star worship in Mesopotamia,¹¹⁴ to emphasize that the stars themselves are created things and nothing more. They share in the creatureliness of all creation and have no autonomous divine quality.

We can readily agree with the conclusion of G. von Rad who has stated that "the entire passage vs. 14-19 breathes a strongly anti-mythical pathos"¹¹⁵ or polemic. W. H. Schmidt has pointed out similarly that "there comes to expression here [Gen. 1: 14-18] in a number of ways a polemic against astral religion."¹¹⁶ Others could be added.¹¹⁷ The Hebrew account of the creation, function, and limitation of the luminaries is another unequivocal link in the chain stressing that in Gen. 1 there is a direct and conscious anti-mythical polemic. The form in which this Hebrew creation account has come down to us attempts to portray the creatureliness and limitations of the heavenly luminaries as is consonant with the world-view of Gen. 1 and its understanding of reality.

The Purpose of the Creation of Man

The similarities and differences between the purpose of man's creation in Sumerian-Akkadian mythology and Gen. 1: 26-28 affords another point which requires our attention. Sumerian mythology

is in complete accord with the Babylonian Atrahasis Epic and *Enuma elish* in depicting the need of the creation of man to result from the attempt to relieve the gods from laboring for their sustenance.¹¹⁸ This mythological picture, which views the creation of man as an afterthought to provide the gods with food and to satisfy their physical needs, is contradicted in Gen. 1. The first chapter of the Bible depicts man as the "pinnacle of creation."¹¹⁹ Man is not made as a kind of afterthought in order to take care of the needs of the gods. He appears as the only one "blessed" by God (1: 28); he is "the ruler of the animal and vegetable kingdoms."¹²⁰ All seed-bearing plants and fruit trees are *his* for food (1: 29). Here the divine concern and the divine care for man's physical needs come to expression in antithesis to man's purpose to care for the physical needs of the gods in Sumero-Akkadian mythology. It is obvious that when it comes to defining the purpose of man's creation, Gen. 1 combats pagan mythological notions while, at the same time, the man-centered orientation of Gen. 1 and man's glory and freedom to rule the earth for his own needs is conveyed.¹²¹ We may suggest that the different idea with regard to the purpose of the creation of man in Gen. 1 rests upon the Hebrew anthropology and understanding of reality.¹²²

Creation by Word

One of the most striking characteristics of the creation account in Gen. 1 is the role of the motif of creation by God's spoken word. The idea of the creative power of the divine word is also known outside Israel.¹²³ With regard to the power embodied in the divine word in Mesopotamian speculations, W. H. Schmidt has shown that "in Mesopotamia a creation of the world by word is not known." The Memphite theology of the Egyptian Old Kingdom knows that god Atum creates by the speech of Ptah.¹²⁵ S. G. F. Brandon's investigation of the notion of creation by divine word in Egyptian thought has led him to the conclusion that "creation was effected by magical utterance."¹²⁶ Thus it seems certain that in Egyptian speculation the pronouncement of the right magical word, like the performance of the right magical action, actualizes the animate potentialities inherent in matter. In Gen. 1, on the other hand, the notions of a magical word and of animate potentialities inherent in matter are absent. The first chapter of the Bible knows only of creation by an effortless, omnipotent, and unchallengeable divine word¹²⁷ which renders the so-called similarity between the Egyptian mantic-magic word and the Hebrew effortless word of Gen. 1 as "wholly superficial."¹²⁸ Gen. 1 shows in its view of God's creative word its distance to pagan mythology. In Gen. 1 God's effortless creation by the spoken word, in the words of H. Ringgren, "is given a fundamental significance that is without parallel."¹²⁹ May

it not indeed be the purpose of Gen. 1 to attack the idea of creation through magical utterance with a concept of a God who creates by the spoken word, bringing about what is desired because of the One who speaks and not because of any magical power inherent in the word spoken? It appears that this is a distinct way of indicating that Israelite faith is liberated from the baneful influence of magic. Gen. 1 wishes to stress thereby the essential difference between created being and divine Being in order to exclude any idea of emanationism, pantheism, and primeval dualism.

This investigation of crucial terms and motifs in the creation account of Gen. 1 in conjunction with a comparison of respective ancient Near Eastern analogues has repeatedly pointed into one direction. The cosmology of Gen. 1 exhibits in a number of crucial instances a sharply antimythical polemic.¹³⁰ With a great many safeguards Gen. 1 employs certain terms and motifs, partly taken from ideologically and theologically incompatible predecessors and partly chosen in deliberate contrast to comparable ancient Near Eastern concepts, and uses them with a meaning and emphasis not only consonant with but expressive of the purpose, world-view, and understanding of reality as expressed in this Hebrew account of creation. Due to our laying bare of main aspects of the polemic nature of the Genesis cosmology with its consistent antimythical thread running through Gen. 1, one does not do justice to this particular emphasis in Gen. 1 when one speaks in the instances considered of a "demythologizing"¹³¹ of mythological motifs, which are said to be "reshaped and assimilated,"¹³² "defused,"¹³³ "broken,"¹³⁴ "removed,"¹³⁵ or whatever description one may use. It does also not do justice to the antimythical polemic of Gen. 1 to speak of the historicization of myth.¹³⁶ It appears that the Genesis cosmology represents not only a "complete break"¹³⁷ with the ancient Near Eastern mythological cosmologies but represents a parting of the spiritual ways brought about by a conscious and deliberate antimythical polemic which meant an undermining of the prevailing mythological cosmologies.

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NOTES

- 1 In 1872 George Smith of the British Museum conveyed through the columns of *The Times* and a paper he read at a meeting of the Society of Biblical Archaeology on Dec. 3, 1872, printed in the Society's Transactions, II (1873), 213-234, that he discovered a flood account which is part of the Gilgamesh Epic.
- 2 On March 4, 1875, George Smith described in a letter to the *Daily Telegraph* the discovery of about twenty fragments of the so-called Babylonian creation story, *Enuma elish* according to its incipit. In the following year appeared Smith's book *The Chaldean Account of Genesis*, which contained the pieces of *Enuma elish* which had been identified.

- 3 This theory was started by Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels* (Berlin, 1895, 1900), 2 vols.; *Das alte Westasien* (Leipzig, 1899); "Himmels- und Weltbild der Babylonier als Grundlage der Weltanschauung und Mythologie aller Völker," *Der alte Orient*, III (1901), 2 ff. On Winckler, see Otto Weber, "Hugo Winckler als Forscher," *MVAG*, XX (1915), 13-24. Winckler's most faithful disciple in the relatively short lived "pan-Babylonian" school was Alfred Jeremias whose chief works are *Das Alte Testament im Lichte des alten Orients* (Leipzig, 1904; 3d ed. 1916); *Handbuch der altorientalischen Geisteskultur* (Leipzig, 1913). Critiques of the "pan-Babylonian" approach were presented by W. L. Wardle, *Israel and Babylon* (London, 1925), pp. 302-330; L. W. King, *History of Babylon* (London, 1915), pp. 291-313.
- 4 His famous book *Babel und Bibel* (Leipzig, 1902) brought little that was new. But the particular emphasis it gave brought about a storm of those objecting to the theories that Babylonian religion was superior to Israelite religion and that the latter was but a pale reflection of the former.
- 5 W. G. Lambert, "A New Look at the Babylonian Background of Genesis," *JThS*, N. S. XVI (1965), 288 ff.; A. L. Oppenheim, *Ancient Mesopotamia. Portrait of a Dead Civilization* (2d ed.; Chicago, 1968), pp. 171 ff., stresses strongly that a "Mesopotamian religion" should not be written; S. N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (2d ed.; Garden City, N. Y., 1959), pp. 76 ff.
- 6 Among many examples we may refer to the Babylonian traditions which seem to go back to a Sumerian prototype, see the writer's "Review of *Atrahasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (1969) by W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard," in *AUSS*, VIII (1970), 182-188.
- 7 C. Westermann, "Sinn und Grenze religionsgeschichtlicher Parallelen," *ThLZ*, XL (1965), cols. 489-496.
- 8 For instance the Babylonian epic *Enuma elish* contains a mythical account of creation, which has caused it to be called "The Creation Epic" (*ANET*³, p. 60). But it is incorrect to choose this as a proper designation for the entire epic, since the unique goal of *Enuma elish* is to praise Marduk. As a matter of fact the part which deals with creation is relatively short (Tables IV: 135-VI: 44). The proclamation of the fifty names of Marduk is longer than the whole section on creation (Tablet VI: 121-VII: 136). It is good to be reminded by Oppenheim, *op. cit.*, p. 233, that *Enuma elish* "was intended to be used solely as a vehicle of the priest-god relationship. The story was not read to the believers as a testimonial of the deity's achievements but was read to the god himself. It is a hymn in praise of Marduk by which the priest extols his god." Note the correct attempts to come to grips with the total phenomenological conceptions of both *Enuma elish* and Gen. 1 by C. Westermann, "Das Verhältnis des Jahweglaubens zu den ausserisraelitischen Religionen," in *Forschung am Alten Testament* (München, 1964), pp. 206 f.; N. M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis* (New York, 1970), pp. 4 ff.
- 9 A number of decades ago J. Hempel, "Chronik," *ZAW*, XIII (1936), 293 f., has argued that it is part of the nature of Old Testament faith "to carry a polemic and usurping character, that it does not rest in itself, but lives in constant controversy, that it draws to itself thoughts, concepts, and terms from other religions which it can assimilate and incorporate in a transformed fashion." E. Würthwein, *Wort und Existenz* (Göttingen, 1970), p. 198, adds to Hempel's argument the point that Israelite faith "does not hesitate to reject that which endangers it" or "which is irreconcilable with it."
- 10 Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. xxvii, warns that one must not tear "a motif right out of its cultural or living context and so have distorted the total picture. In other words, to ignore subtle differences is to present an unbalanced and untrue perspective and to pervert the scientific method."
- 11 Westermann, *ThLZ*, XI (1965), 490 f.: "Ein dem Verstehen biblischer Texte dienendes Vergleichen muss von phänomenologisch fassbaren Ganzheiten

herkommen und auf sie zielen . . . Das nur punktuelle Vergleichen ist dann nicht mehr sinnvoll . . . [und] führt niemals zu Parallelen; die sind nur möglich, wo auf beiden Seiten Linien gezeigt werden können, die einander parallel sind . . . Damit wird auch einer einlinig entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Festlegung vorgebeugt. In dem vom Einzelphänomen nach der zugehörigen Ganzheit gefragt wird, und zwar nach beiden Seiten hin, wird erst die Parallele im Sinn des parallelen Verlaufs (und dessen Grenzen!) ernst genommen, an Stelle einer oberflächlichen entwicklungsgeschichtlichen Herleitung des einen aus dem anderen."

- 12 H. Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit* (Göttingen, 1895), pp. 29 ff.; idem, *Genesis* (Göttingen, 1901), pp. 109-112.
- 13 B. W. Anderson, *Creation versus Chaos* (New York, 1967), p. 39 B. S. Childs, *Myth and Reality in the Old Testament* (2d ed.; London, 1962), p. 37: "Philologically *tehom* is the Hebrew equivalent of Tiamat"; S. H. Hooke, "Genesis," *Peake's Commentary on the Bible*, ed. by H. H. Rowley and M. Black (London, 1962), p. 179; R. Kilian, "Gen. I 2 und die Urgötter von Hermopolis," *VT*, XVI (1966), 420.
- 14 C. Westermann, *Genesis* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1967 ff.), p. 149; W. Zimmerli, *Die Urgeschichte. 1. Mose 1-11* (3d ed.; Zürich, 1967), p. 42; K. Galling, "Der Charakter der Chaosschilderung in Gen. 1, 2," *ZThk*, XLVII (1950), 150 f.; K. A. Kitchen, *Ancient Orient and Old Testament* (Chicago, 1968), pp. 89, 90; D. F. Payne, *Genesis One Reconsidered* (London, 1968), pp. 10, 11.
- 15 A. Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (3d ed.; Chicago, 1963), pp. 90, 100, has pointed out that the second radical of the Hebrew term *tehom*, i.e., the letter *He*, in corresponding loan words from Akkadian would have to be an *Aleph*. If "Tiamat" had been taken over into Hebrew, it would have been left as it was or it would have been changed to *tile'amā*.
- 16 Lambert, *JThS*, N. S. XVI (1965), 293; O. Kaiser, *Die mythische Bedeutung des Meeres in Ägypten, Ugarit und Israel* (2d ed.; Berlin, 1962), p. 115; P. Reymond, *L'eau, sa vie, et sa signification dans l'Ancien Testament* (Leiden, 1958), p. 187 and 187 n. 2; W. H. Schmidt, *Die Schöpfungsgeschichte der Priesterschrift* (2d ed.; Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1967), p. 80 n. 5; Kitchen, *op. cit.*, p. 89; Heidel *op. cit.*, p. 99; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 146; D. Kidner, *Genesis* (London, 1967), p. 45; M. K. Wakeham, "God's Battle with the Monster: A Study in Biblical Imagery" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Brandeis University, 1969), pp. 143, 144; L. I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World* (Rome, 1970), p. 13; M. Dahood, *Psalms II*, 51-100, "Anchor Bible" (Garden City, N. Y., 1968), p. 231.
- 17 For *thm*, dual *thmtm*, pl. *thmt*, in Ugaritic texts, see G. D. Young, *Concordance of Ugaritic* (Rome, 1956), p. 68 No. 1925. Representative samples of this Ugaritic term according to C. H. Gordon's *Ugaritic Textbook* (Rome, 1965) may be the following:

UT, 53: 30 [el.yn]bh.gp ym.wyšgt.gp.thm[t . . yd]lp mšt ltm . . . hlm lšpl hlh.trm.

El thinks of the shore of the sea and advances to the shore of the ocean; . . . he lets it trickle by two hand-fuls . . . One [woman] reaches down, the other reaches up; . . .

Here *thm* is found parallel to *ym* (cf. Job 28: 14; 38: 16), referring to the sea/ocean as a part of the cosmos and not to a mythical monster. *Thm* is here in antithetical parallelism as the lower ocean to the upper ocean (cf. Ps. 33: 7).

'Ant III: 22-23 tant.šmm. 'm.arš.thmt. 'mn.kkbm

The murmuring of the heaven to the earth,
of the deeps to the stars.

In this chiasm earth and *thmt*, "deeps," are contrasted.

I Aqht 42-43

šb'.šnt.
 yšrk.b'l.tmn,rkb.
 'rpt.bl.ṭl.bl.rd.
 bl.šr'.thmtm.bl.ṭbn.ql.b'l

For seven years Baal failed, for eight years the rider on the clouds, without dew, without showers, without the upsurgings of the deeps, without the sweet sound of Baal's voice.

The drought comes as the waters from above and the waters from below (*thm*) are cut off (cf. 2 Sa. 1: 21).

UT, 51: iv: 20 idk.l ttn.pnm
 'm.el.mbk.nhrm
 qrb.apq.thmtm

Then surely [Anat] set her face toward El at the source of the rivers in the midst of the channels of the deep.

In this statement the upper (heavenly) and lower (earthly) oceans are not necessarily distinguished. Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 159-161, concludes her study of the Ugaritic term *thm* by pointing out that the form of this term varies as *tehôm* in Hebrew and that there is "nothing in the Ugaritic material to indicate animate nature."

- 18 This was claimed by Gunkel. For the history of research on the motif of the battle with the dragon, see Lambert, *JThS*, N. S. XVI (1965), 285. Note also the studies of the battle with the dragon motif by D. F. McCarthy, " 'Creation' Motifs in Ancient Hebrew Poetry," *CBQ* XXIX (1967), 87-100; Westermann, *Genesis*, pp. 39 ff.; and in great detail in all its multiplicity and variety in Wakeman's dissertation, *God's Battle*, who has exposed the crucial points of disagreement among scholars with regard to the battle with the dragon monster in Canaan and Israel on pp. 234-255.
- 19 J. Lewy, "Influence hurrites sur Israël," *Revue des études sémitiques*, V (1938), 63-65, regarded *tehôm* from a linguistic point of view as a Hurrian adjective, derived from the root *thm* with an appended suffix (*mh*> *ṣm*). Cf. Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 13. In support of the view that the Hebrew term *tehôm* comes from a Common Semitic root and is not a Babylonian loan word, Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 101, explains that in Arabic *Tihâmatu* or *Tihâma*, a name for the low-lying Arabian coastal land, derives from the same Common Semitic root. Cf. Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 231.
- 20 Dahood, *op. cit.*, pp. 231, 240. In Ps. 78: 15 *tehômôt* is used parallel to *midbar*. In Arabic *tihâmatu* denotes "sandy desert," a meaning which fits the parallelism of Ps. 78: 15. Dahood points out that one need not rely solely on Arabic to establish the sense of "wasteland" as a meaning for *tehômôt*, because in Ugaritic according to UT, 2001: 3-5: *tlk bmdbr . . . thdtn w hl . . . wilt thmt*, one finds that *mdb*, "wilderness," is balanced with *thmt*, "wasteland."
- 21 *Tehôm* is four times masc. sing: Job 28: 14; Hab. 3: 10; Jon. 2: 6; Ps. 42: 8; *tehômôt* is twice masc. pl.: Ex. 15: 5, 8; Deut. 8: 7 is not necessarily a plural; *tehômôt* is once masc. pl.: Ps. 77:17; *tehômôt* is once masc. pl.: Prov. 3: 20.
- 22 *Tehôm* is nine times fem. sing: Gen. 7: 11; Am. 7: 4; Is. 51: 10; Ps. 36: 7; Gen. 49: 25; Duet. 33: 13; Exe. 31: 4, 15; Job 41: 24; *tehômôt* is once fem. sing.: Ps. 78: 15 (with Phoenician sing. ending *-ôt*).
- 23 *Tehôm* has in eight passages no indication of gender: Gen. 1: 2; 8: 2; Eze. 26: 19; Ps. 104: 6; Job 38: 16, 30; Prov. 8: 27, 28; *tehômôt* or *tehômôt* appears in eight passages without indication (other than form) of number or gender: Ps. 33: 7; 71: 20; 106: 9; 107: 26; 135: 6; 148: 7; Prov. 8: 24; Is. 63: 13.

- 24 Wakeman, *God's Battle*, p. 143. Note her detailed discussion of *tehôm* with reference to the question whether it was once considered to be a person in the Hebrew Bible (pp. 143-49).
- 25 Exceptions are Is. 63: 13; Ps. 106: 9.
- 26 It is more often found in poetry where the article would not necessarily be expected. In this connection it is significant that whenever *yam*, "sea," is found parallel to *tehôm* (Job 28: 14; 38: 16; Is. 51: 10; Ps. 33: 7; 107: 23; 135: 6), then the former refers to the sea as part of the cosmos and not to the personification "Sea" as when *yam* is found parallel to Rahab (Job 26: 12; Ps. 89: 10; Is. 51: 9), Leviathan (Job 3: 8; Ps. 74: 13), Tannin (Job 7: 12). This appears to point into the direction that *tehôm* in the Hebrew Bible is depersonalized.
- 27 M. K. Wakeman, "The Biblical Earth Monster in the Cosmogonic Combat Myth," *JBL*, LXXXVIII (1969), 317, suggests that in Ex. 15: 8 *tehôm* "is associated with the ancient image of the earth demon which is distinguishable from, though controlling, the primeval waters." This, however, does not need to imply that it has mythological, personalized overtones.
- 28 S. N. Kramer, ed., *Mythologies of the Ancient World* (Garden City, N. Y., 1961), p. 95.
- 29 S. N. Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology* (New York, 1961), p. 39; cf. T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the Old Testament* (New York, 1969), p. 3.
- 30 S. N. Kramer, *History Begins at Sumer* (Garden City, N. Y., 1959), p. 83.
- 31 Kramer, *Mythologies*, p. 120; Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 7, says that the function of *Enuma elish* was "to validate Marduk's assumption of the divine government of the universe by explaining his ascendancy from relative obscurity as the city-god of Babylon to a supreme position in the Babylonian pantheon . . ." Oppenheim, *op. cit.*, p. 233, reminds us that *Enuma elish* "was not read by the believers . . . but to the god [Marduk] himself."
- 32 *ANET*³, pp. 60, 61.
- 33 Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 89; F. G. Bratton, *Myths and Legends of the Ancient Near East* (New York, 1970), p. 37: "In the beginning [in Babylonian cosmogony] there was no heaven and earth. There was nothing but water . . ." Parenthetically we should be reminded that the idea of the priority in time of water figures in cosmogonies from all over the world among peoples living in most diverse geographical areas. Cf. Gaster, *Myth, Legend and Custom in the OT*, pp. 3, 4.
- 34 See R. Labat, "Les origines et la formation de la terre dans le poème Babylonien de la création," in *Studia Biblica et Orientalia* (Rome, 1959), III, 205-207; and the penetrating analysis of the battle between Marduk and *Tiamat* in *Enuma elish* in which Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 20-31, sees a combination of two structurally separate accounts of creation, following the victories over *Apsu* and *Tiamat* respectively. See also Lambert, *JThS*, N. S. XVI (1965), 293-295, who points out that three ideas concerning the primeval state were known in Mesopotamia: (1) the priority of the earth, out of which everything came forth; (2) creation out of the primeval ocean/deep; and (3) time is the source and origin of all things. Compare also Th. Jacobsen, "Sumerian Mythology. A Review Article," *JNES*, V (1946), 128-152.
- 35 Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 10; J. Skinner, *Genesis* (ICC; 2d ed.; London, 1930), p. 48; N. H. Ridderbos, "Genesis 1: 1 und 2," *OTS*, 12 (1958), 235 ff.; Galling, *op. cit.*, p. 151; S. Aalen, *Die Begriffe 'Licht' und 'Finsternis' im Alten Testament, im Spätjudentum und im Rabbinismus* (Oslo, 1951), pp. 10 f.; Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 81 n. 5; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 146.
- 36 Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 14, notes that "the primordial state in which the world was pictured . . . is further determined by its relation to darkness . . . neither the darkness nor the chaos ['sea'] is personified, nothing is said of its needing to be subdued before the work of creation can begin."

- 37 So still W. F. Albright, *Yahweh and the Gods of Canaan* (Garden City, New York, 1968), pp. 184, 185, who is, however, forced to admit that Gen. 1: 2 as it now reads does not contain the idea. Albright surmises that vs. 2 originally contained a statement of the triumph of God over the great Deep (*Tehôm*), "which was later deleted." Such subjective guesses are of little value! Objections against the view of demythologizations in Gen. 1: 2 are presented by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 81 no. 5; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 146; Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 11. E. D. James, "The Conception of Creation in Cosmology," in *Liber Amicorum. Studies in Honor of Prof. Dr. C. J. Bleeker (Suppl. to Numen, XII; Leiden, 1969)*, p. 106, sums up his study of the ancient Near Eastern cosmologies by pointing out that Gen. 1 is "without any reference to the struggle between Yahweh and Leviathan and his host as in . . . the Psalms and the book of Job, or to the battle between the gods and the victory of Marduk over Tiamat in the *Enuma elish*." W. Harrelson, "The Significance of Cosmology in the Ancient Near East," in *Translating and Understanding the Old Testament. Essays in Honor of H. G. May*, ed. by H. T. Frank and W. L. Reed (Nashville, 1970), p. 247: ". . . all vestiges of the conflict of Yahweh with powers of the universe have been eliminated as the story now stands."
- 38 Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 146: "Von einem Kampf mit *tehôm*, entsprechend dem Kampf Marduks mit Tiamat, zeigt Gn 1, 2 keine Spur . . ." Cf. Aalen, *op. cit.*, pp. 10, 11.
- 39 So Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
- 40 So Galling, *op. cit.*, p. 151. Even in Ugaritic *thm/thmt* does not indicate a conflict as between Baal and Yam in the Baal-Yam cycle or a battle between El and Yam (cf. D. J. Frame, "Creation by the Word" [unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Drew University, Madison, N. J., 1969], pp. 131 ff.) nor are there contained in this Ugaritic cognate notions such as are associated with Leviathan, the sea-monster (cf. *UT*, 67: i: 1-3; Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 95, 96).
- 41 H. Frankfort, *Ancient Egyptian Religion* (New York, 1961), pp. 19 f., points out that Egyptian creation thought is distinctive through its "multiplicity of approaches" and "multiplicity of answers." Cf. R. Anthes, "Mythologies in Ancient Egypt," in *Mythologies of the Ancient World*, pp. 17 ff. Detailed discussions of Egyptian cosmogonic speculations are provided by Brandon, *op. cit.*, pp. 20 ff. and Frame, *op. cit.*, pp. 68-74.
- 42 Taken from Chapter XVII of the *Book of the Dead* (ca. 2000 B.C.) as quoted from *ANET*³, p. 4a.
- 43 Atum is often referred to as the "one who came into being by himself" and the "one who was alone in Nun." Cf. *ANET*³, pp. 3, 4.
- 44 Brandon, *op. cit.*, p. 24.
- 45 *ANET*³, p. 9b, from the 175th Chapter of the *Book of the Dead* (ca. 1550-1350 B.C.).
- 46 Brandon, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- 47 *Ibid.*, p. 26. In Memphite theology two other deities, Hu and Sia, seem to exist alongside Atum as assistant creators. Cf. H. Ringgren, *Word and Wisdom* (Lund, 1947), p. 22.
- 48 It is preserved on the so-called "Shabaka Stone" (ca. 700 B.C.) whose traditions go back to the Old Kingdom (ca. 2700 B.C.) according to J. A. Wilson in *ANET*³, p. 4a, and Brandon, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 ff.
- 49 The "father" and "mother" of Atum is Ptah who was both Nun, the abysmal waters, and his consort Naunet. He seems to be androgynous. *ANET*³ p. 5a, and M. S. Holmberg, *The God Ptah* (Lund, 1946), p. 32.
- 50 Ptah "gave birth to the gods." *ANET*³, p. 5a.
- 51 Holmberg, *op. cit.*, p. 31.

- 52 The four pairs of gods who make up the Ogdoad are Nun and Naunet (water), Hu and Hauhet (infinity), Kuh and Kauket (darkness), and Amun and Amaunet (hiddenness). Cf. Brandon, *op. cit.*, pp. 43 ff.; Kilian, *op. cit.*, pp. 420 ff.
- 53 H. Brunner, "Die Grenzen von Zeit und Raum bei den Ägyptern," *AfO*, XVII (1954/56), 141-45; E. Hornung, "Chaotische Bereiche in der geordneten Welt," *ZAS*, LXXXI (1956), 28-32; S. Morenz, *Ägyptische Religion* (Stuttgart, 1960), pp. 167 ff.
- 54 So still Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 73.
- 55 E. Würthwein, "Chaos und Schöpfung im mythischen Denken und in der biblischen Urgeschichte," in *Wort und Existenz* (Göttingen, 1970), p. 35.
- 56 Brunner, *op. cit.*, p. 142, points out that "niemals ist ein Mythos 'historisch' im Sinn der israelitischen oder einer späteren Geschichtsbetrachtung gemeint, niemals will er ein einmaliges, unwiederholbares Ereignis schildern . . . Die Zeit, die der Mythos meint, ist vielmehr stets auch das Hier und Jetzt; . . ."
- 57 Morenz, *op. cit.*, pp. 176 f.; Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 72.
- 58 Against Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 193, who attempts to revive a suggestion made by A. H. Sayce, "The Egyptian Background of Genesis 1," in *Studies Presented to F. L. Griffith* (London, 1932), 417-23, that the chaos in Gen. 1:2 is very close to the Hermopolitan cosmogony.
- 59 T. H. Gaster, "Cosmogony," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), I, 703; cf. Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 13. The priority of water in ancient cosmogony and mythology may be due to the fact that water, having no fixed shape and appearing to be ungenerated, comes by nature to be regarded as something that must have existed before all other things were made.
- 60 See "The Primeval Establishment of Order" in *ANET*³, pp. 9, 10. cf. Frankfort, *op. cit.*, pp. 132, 133. Frame, *op. cit.*, p. 193, does not recognize that the burst of light with which the creator-god overcomes darkness is described as a victory, an overthrow of enemies. Egyptian creation thought contains the battle myth, see Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 17-19.
- 61 This has been elaborated by Würthwein, *op. cit.*, p. 35, but note also our observations above which stress that Genesis creation comes "in the beginning" as a unique act which is completed within seven days; *supra*, n. 56.
- 62 So Galling, *op. cit.*, p. 151.
- 63 With Galling, *op. cit.*, pp. 154, 155; Würthwein, *op. cit.*, p. 36; and others against Kilian, *op. cit.*, pp. 420-438, who argues that Gen. 1:2 is connected with the Hermopolitan cosmogony. He concludes that the first words, "but the earth was," are secondary and translates Gen. 1:2, "Tohu wabohu and darkness were above the primeval ocean, and the spirit of God hovered above the waters." The difficulty of this translation lies in having *tohu wabohu* "above" the *tehôm*, which is very hard to conceive (cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 142). Furthermore, there is no reason to excise the first words of Gen. 1:2. Since this is the procedure by which Kilian establishes a definite relationship between Gen. 1:2 and the Egyptian cosmogony, his attempt must be considered to be unsuccessful (cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 86 n. 6). In addition, on methodological grounds it is inadvisable, actually impermissible, to read Gen. 1:2 through the eyes of Egyptian mythology, if one does not want to prejudice one's conclusion from the start.
- 64 L. Koehler—W. Baumgartner, *Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros* (Leiden, 1958), pp. 1034, 1035, suggests "sea-monster" for Gen. 1:21; Ps. 148:7; "dragon" for Is. 27:1; 51:9; Jer. 51:34; Ez. 29:3; 32:2; Ps. 74:13; Job 7:12; "serpent" for Ex. 7:9, 12; Dt. 32:33; Ps. 91:13.
- 65 *ANET*³, pp. 129-155.

- 66 This is the translation of 'Anat: III: 34-39 by John Gray in *Documents from Old Testament Times*, ed. by D. W. Thomas (New York, 1961), pp. 129, 103. Slightly varying translations are found in *ANET*³, p. 137, Wakeman, *God's Battle*, p. 102; Dahood, *op. cit.*, p. 333 on *UT*, 'Anat: III; 37-38: "Indeed I muzzled Tannin, I silenced him; I smote the winding serpent."
- 67 On this difficult term, see T. H. Gaster, *Thespis* (New York, 1966), p. 134 n. 49; M. Held, "A Study in Comparative Lexicography," *JAOS*, LXXIX (1959), 169-176; S. E. Loewenstamm, "The Muzzling of the Tannin in Ugaritic Myth," *IEJ* IX (1959), 260 f.; Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 129-132.
- 68 In another context of the same myth it is said of Baal that he slew Lotan, the Primeval Serpent, the Crooked Serpent, Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 123 n. 16. Cf. *UT*, 67: I: 1-3.
- 69 See G. R. Driver, "Mythical Monsters in the Old Testament," *Studia Orientalia*, I (1956), 234-249; Gaster, *Thespis*, pp. 142-149; Wakeman, *God's Battle*, pp. 100-115.
- 70 Gunkel, *Schöpfung und Chaos*, p. 120: "Aus den uralten Chaosungeheuern aber ist eine merkwürdige Art von Fischen geworden, die unter den anderen Geschöpfen figurieren." *Idem*, *Genesis*, p. 100.
- 71 Twice or possibly three times of thirteen appearances: Is. 27: 1; Ez. 29: 3; (32: 2).
- 72 Twice: Gen. 1: 21; Dt. 32: 33. Ex. 7: 12 seems to have an enclitic *m*.
- 73 Wakeman, *God's Battle*, p. 103.
- 74 *Ibid.*, p. 111.
- 75 Ex. 7: 9, 12 speaks of a rod turning into a serpent; Ps. 91: 13 preserves the promise, "You shall tread safely on snake and serpent" (NEB); Dt. 32: 33 refers to the venom of serpents: Ez. 29: 3 and 32: 2 compares the Egyptian Pharaoh with a mighty animal of the streams. Commentators usually assume that *tannin* refers in these two verses to the crocodile. Jer. 51: 34 compares Babylon to a powerful animal which swallows up Jerusalem.
- 76 Driver, *op. cit.*, pp. 234 ff., points out that there is really no reason against the view that *tannin* as a normal generic designation for a type of animal, even if a specifically mysterious and dangerous one, could not go back to the earliest linguistic stages. Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 191, takes the same position.
- 77 Only in Is. 27: 1; 51: 9; Job 7: 12; and in Ps. 74: 13 can a usage of *tannin* be recognized which corresponds in some of its aspects to the ancient Near Eastern battle myth.
- 78 So T. H. Gaster, "Dragon," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), I, 868.
- 79 G. von Rad, *Genesis. A Commentary*, transl. by J. H. Marks (Philadelphia, 1961), p. 54: "Significantly it is used first (if we disregard the summary v. 1) for the creation of living creatures (v. 21)." Cf. Ridderbos, *op. cit.*, p. 223; Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 190.
- 80 Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 164 ff., points out that *bara'* appears in the creation account of Gen. 1: 1-2: 4a at places where decisive theological statements are made and that therefore important meaning is attached to this verb.
- 81 Wakeman, *God's Battle*, p. 109, thinks that *tannin* in Gen. 1: 21 singles out a particular species of creatures whereas the other creatures are listed only by general categories. This suggestion runs into difficulty in view of the fact that in no other place in Gen. 1 a particular species is singled out. Ps. 104: 25-26 which is parallel to Gen. 1: 21-22 speaks of the creation of large and small aquatic creatures, which seems to be the distinction also of Gen. 1: 21-22.

- 82 Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 191, points out that Gen. 1: 21 wants to distinguish clearly between large and small water creatures. He supports the view of A. Dillmann that Gen. 1: 21 as Ez. 29: 3 and 32: 2 means by *tanninim* crocodiles and similar large water creatures. T. C. Mitchell, "Dragon," *The New Bible Dictionary* (2d ed.; London, 1965), p. 322 also suggests that in Gen. 1: 21 evidently "large sea-creatures such as the whale are intended, . . ."
- 83 The relationship between Ps. 104 and Gen. 1 is discussed by A. van der Voort, "Genèse I, 1 à II, 4a et le Psaume CIV." *RB*, LVIII (1951), 321-347; P. Humbert, "La relation de Genèse I et du Psaume 104 avec la liturgie du Nouvel-An israélite," *Opuscles d'un Hébraisant* (Neuchâtel, 1958), pp. 60-83. Whereas Humbert follows Gunkel in considering that the author of Ps. 104 has had the text of Gen. 1 before him, H. J. Kraus, *Psalmen* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1960), II, 709, believes that there is no direct literary dependence of one on the other and maintains that both Gen. 1 and Ps. 104 depend on the same tradition. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 41, 42, follows Kraus. On the whole see also Frame, *op. cit.*, pp. 171-176, who argues that Gen. 1 shares with Ps. 104 "the creation thought that formed a background for the festival of Zion and for the wisdom influenced theology of the Davidic court" (p. 177). On the other hand, Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 34, is of the conviction that Gen. 1 "was modelled on the pattern of this psalm [104]." Whatever the exact relationship may be, it is certain that the sequence of creative acts in both Gen. 1 and Ps. 104 is very close. We should also emphasize the non-cultic nature of the story of creation in Gen. 1 with Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 9, S. Mowinckel, *The Psalms in Israel's Worship* (Nashville, 1962), I, 166-169, H. Ringgren, *Israelite Religion* (Philadelphia, 1966), p. 106 n. 8; and F. Hvidberg, "The Canaanite Background of Gen. I-III," *VT*, X (1960), 285-294, against Humbert and Frame.
- 84 Cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 122, 180, who speaks of a "critical reaction" against mythology in Gen. 1: 21. Wakeman, *God's Battle*, p. 109, says that *tannin* in "Gen. 1: 21 is a deliberate effort to contradict the battle myth." Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 22.
- 85 Against Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 191, who believes that Gen. 1: 21 merely "demythologizes."
- 86 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, p. 37; cf. Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 21; Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 17.
- 87 *ANET*³, p. 67; B. Landsberger and J. V. Kinnier Wilson, "The Fifth Tablet of Enuma Eliš," *JNES* XX (1961), 154-179.
- 88 O. R. Gurney, *The Hittites* (2d ed.; Baltimore, 1966), p. 193; H. G. Güterbock "The Song of Ullikummi," *JCS*, VI (1952), 29. ". . . they came and cut heaven and earth asunder with a copper tool, . . ."
- 89 H. W. Haussig, ed., *Wörterbuch der Mythologie* (Stuttgart, 1961), I, 309, 310. H. Ringgren, "Ar den bibelska skapelsesberättelsen en kulttext?" *SEA*, XII (1948), 15, shows that the word *merahepet* should not suggest any conception of cosmic egg. He attempts to show that Gen. 1 has been formed in conscious protest against a certain (Canaanizing) version of the New Year Festival. It appears on the basis of our investigation that this is a too limited and one-sided view. The conscious protest or polemic goes against a great number of mythological motifs.
- 90 Morenz, *op. cit.*, pp. 180-182; Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff. It is also significant that in this cosmogonic presentation the heaven/sky is feminine whereas the earth is masculine.
- 91 Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, pp. 47 ff.; 160 ff.
- 92 Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the OT*, p. 6.
- 93 Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 160.

- 94 See the essay of the present writer, *infra*, n. 123, and Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 117, 118, with additional literature.
- 95 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 41 ff.; H. Schmökel, *Das Land Sumer* (3d ed.; Stuttgart, 1962), pp. 129 ff.
- 96 Frankfort, *op. cit.*, p. 28.
- 97 A. Goetze, *Kleinasien. Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft, III.* (2d ed.; München, 1957), pp. 89, 136 ff.
- 98 A. S. Kapelrud, *The Ras Shamra Discoveries and the Old Testament* (London, 1965), p. 45.
- 99 *Ibid.*, pp. 47 ff.
- 100 A hymn celebrates the marriage of moon-god Yarih, "the One lighting up Heaven," with the goddess Nikkal, *UT*, 77.
- 101 S. Kirst, "Sin, Yerah und Jahwe," *Forschungen und Fortschritte*, XXXII (1958), 213-219; A. Caquot, "La divinité solaire ougaritique," *Syria*, XXXVI (1959), 90-101; T. H. Gaster, "Moon," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, 1962), III, 436.
- 102 B. Meissner, *Babylonien und Assyrien* (Heidelberg, 1925), II, 18-21, 25 ff., 398 ff.; Ch. Virolleaud, "Le dieu Shamash dans l'ancienne Mésopotamie," *Eranos-Jahrbuch*, X (1943), 57-79; J. Lewy, "The Late Assyro-Babylonian Cult of the Moon," *HUCA*, XIX (1945/46), 405-489; E. Dhorme, *Les religions de Babylone et d'Assyrie* (Paris, 1949), pp. 53-94.
- 103 Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 116.
- 104 *ANET*³, p. 68.
- 105 *Ibid.*
- 106 Not as Heidel, *op. cit.*, p. 117, says, "stars, moon, and sun."
- 107 *Ibid.*
- 108 Tablet V: 2. In Babylonian thought the gods cannot be separated from the stars and constellations which represent them.
- 109 Tablet V: 5-7.
- 110 On this point, see Westermann, *Genesis*, p. 185.
- 111 Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 118 n. 9.
- 112 Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, pp. 57 ff.
- 113 Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
- 114 Meissner, *op. cit.*, II, 25 ff., 398 ff.; Dhorme *op. cit.*, p. 82; Gaster, *Thespis*, pp. 320 ff.
- 115 Von Rad, *Genesis*, p. 53.
- 116 Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 119.
- 117 J. Albertson, "Genesis 1 and the Babylonian Creation Myth," *Thought*, XXXVII (1962), 231; H. Junker, "In Principio Creavit Deus Coelum et Terram. Eine Untersuchung zum Thema Mythos und Theologie," *Bib.* XLV (1965), 483; Payne *op. cit.*, p. 32; Sarna, *op. cit.*, pp. 9 f.; Stadelmann, *op. cit.*, p. 17; David Neiman's unpublished paper, "The Polemic Language of the Genesis Cosmology," which stressed the antimythical polemic of certain terms in Gen. 1: 2 and 1: 14-16, was read Oct. 25, 1970, at the SBL meeting in New York.

- 118 Kramer, *Sumerian Mythology*, pp. 69, 70, quotes the Sumerian myth *Enki and Ninmah*, which shows that the purpose of man's creation was the same as in Babylonian mythology. The newly recovered and published Tablet I of the Atrahasis Epic states, "Let man carry the toil [for physical support] of the gods." W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis. The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, 1969), p. 57. *Enuma elish*, Tablet IV: 107-121, 127; V: 147, 148; VI: 152, 153; VII: 27-29; *ANET*³, pp. 66-70, contains the same tradition. For a critical discussion of the problem on the origin and nature of man in the Atrahasis Epic, which is now the most important single witness to the Babylonian speculation on man's origin and nature, see William L. Moran, "The Creation of Man in Atrahasis I 192-248," *BASOR*, 200 (Dec. 1970), 48-56, who quotes many relevant studies.
- 119 Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
- 120 Gaster, "Cosmology," *Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible*, I, 704.
- 121 See also the chapter "Man as Ruler of the World" in O. Loretz, *Schöpfung und Mythos* (Stuttgart, 1968), pp. 92-98.
- 122 Childs, *op. cit.*, pp. 31 ff., discusses a number of aspects of myth in conflict with Old Testament reality. For a critique of von Rad's view that a story of God creating the world should exist from ancient times and yet not be brought into a real theological relationship until it was related to a historical salvation-faith ("The Theological Problem of the Old Testament Doctrine of Creation" in *The Problem of the Hexateuch and Other Essays* [New York, 1966], pp. 131-143), see James Barr, *Old and New in Interpretation* (New York, 1966), pp. 74-76, 98.
- 123 See the excursus with literature by Schmidt, *op. cit.*, pp. 173-177. Cf. Westermann, *Genesis* pp. 52-57; Frame, *op. cit.*, pp. 67 ff.; and the present writer's essay, "The Significance of the Cosmology in Gen. 1 in Relation to Ancient Near Eastern Parallels," *AUSS*, IX (1971).
- 124 Schmidt, *op. cit.*, p. 174. It is true that Marduk in *Enuma elish* Tablet IV: 23-26 (*ANET*³, p. 66) demonstrates his creative power by letting a piece of cloth vanish and by restoring it through the word of his mouth. Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 95, points to the "tremendous difference between the Hebrew and Babylonian notions" of creation. In Gen. 1 God creates by word alone, but for Marduk it is only one of many "means" of creation. However Gunkel also remarks in his *Genesis* (1910 ed.), p. 105, that Marduk employs a conjurer's word. This display of being able to make a cloth vanish and appear again by word of mouth is "the act of a stage magician." So J. L. McKenzie, *Myths and Realities* (Milwaukee, Wisc., 1963), p. 100. It is obvious that there is no similarity between the Genesis formula, "God said . . . and it was so," and the magic notion in *Enuma elish*.
- 125 *ANET*³, p. 5. See also the analysis of this text by K. Koch, "Wort und Einheit des Schöpfergottes in Memphis und Jerusalem," *ZThK*, LXII (1965), 254 ff.
- 126 Brandon, *op. cit.*, p. 51.
- 127 Westermann, *Genesis*, pp. 56, 57: "Die Entsprechung zwischen dem Erschaffen durch das Wort, z. B. in der memphitischen Theologie und Gn. 1, ist so zu erklären, dass beide Texte den gleichen Gegenstand haben und beide je in ihrer Traditionsgeschichte einem relativ späten Stadium angehören. Da die Motive und Darstellungsweisen der Schöpfung begrenzt sind, ist von vornherein mit mancherlei Entsprechungen zu rechnen, die ohne Abhängigkeit des einen Textes von anderen vielfach anzutreffen sind."
- 128 Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 12.
- 129 Ringgren, *Israelite Religion*, p. 107.

- 130 J. Hempel, "Glaube, Mythos und Geschichte im Alten Testament, *ZAW*, LXV (1953), 126-128, has shown that it was the "conscious intent" of the author of Gen. 1 to destroy the myth's theogony by his statement that it was Israel's God who created heaven and earth. So also McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 195. W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia, 1961), I, 186, 187, sees in the use of the name Elohim in Gen. 1 a tool to assist Israel in clarifying her concepts of God against pagan polytheistic theogony. Würthwein, *op. cit.*, p. 35, notes that the cyclical and repetitious nature of creation mythology is contradicted by the placing of the creation accounts of Gen. 1-3 at the beginning of a linear history with a non-repeatable period of creative time that closed with the seventh day. He indicates that this should be understood as a polemic which marks off, defends, and delimits against the ever-repeating reenactment of creation in extra-biblical mythology.
- 131 W. H. Schmidt, "Mythos im Alten Testament," *EvTh*, XXVII (1967), 237-254, discusses the new understanding of myth and argues that for the hermeneutical method, which attempts to come to grips with the understanding of existence, the term "demythologization" (*Entmythologisierung*) should be reserved, whereas the designation "demythologizing" (*entmythologisieren*) should be reserved for the controversy of OT and NT with mythology. Of the new understanding of myth in contemporary scholarship, see also G. H. Davies, "An Approach to the Problem of Old Testament Mythology," *PEQ* LXXXVIII (1956), 83-91; McKenzie, *op. cit.*, pp. 182-200; Childs, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-30.
- 132 Gunkel, *Genesis*, p. 104.
- 133 G. Fohrer, *Geschichte der israelitischen Religion* (Berlin, 1969), p. 177.
- 134 Childs, *op. cit.*, p. 43. He also speaks of a "reshaping" and "assimilating" of myth.
- 135 McKenzie, *op. cit.*, p. 195.
- 136 Cf. M. Noth, "Die Historisierung des Mythos im Alten Testament," *Christentum und Wissenschaft*, VIII (1928), 265-272, 301-309; E. Jacob, *Theology of the Old Testament* (London, 1958), pp. 197-200.
- 137 So Sarna, *op. cit.*, p. 9. Payne, *op. cit.*, p. 29, says that the "biblical account [of creation] is theologically not only far different from, but totally opposed to, the ancient Near Eastern myths."