

Noah's Flood ***I: The Theology of the Flood Narrative***

David Clines

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Sheer familiarity with the Bible combined with a habit of rapid reading makes it easy to overlook points which should be obvious enough. In this scholarly and refreshing analysis of the text of the biblical Flood story as we have it, which he contrasts with other Flood stories, Mr. Clines of the Department of Biblical Studies in the University of Sheffield, draws attention to a number of points which will certainly prove fresh to most of us.

Like the other narratives in the 'primeval history' (Gen. 1-11), the Flood narrative (Gen. 6-9) displays a pattern of sin, judgment and mitigation of the penalty.¹ The following study of the theology of the Flood narrative follows the same sequence. In some ways, however, the Flood is different from the other primeval stories on the one hand it is climactic, marking a turning point in the history of mankind, with the motifs of destruction and new creation;^{2,3} and on the other hand, it can be viewed as a further stage in the continuing spread of sin which these early chapters of Genesis depict.^{4a,5a,6a,7} Thus the Flood narrative serves differing functions in the primeval history according to the varying thematic structures that are visible in Genesis 1-11. Since our

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purpose here is to examine the Flood narrative in itself, and not primarily in relation to the rest of the primeval history, we shall follow the sequence of the deepest underlying structure: the theme of sin, judgment, mitigation.

I. The Reason for the Flood

The folktale type of the 'myths of catastrophe'⁸ to which the story belongs when considered purely as a narrative, exhibits three kinds of explanation for the catastrophe of which it tells. In all cases the catastrophe is thought to be sent by the gods, but the reason for it is variously believed to be (i) the unfathomable will of the gods, (ii) some non-moral fault in mankind which has angered the gods, (iii) a moral sin on the part of mankind. Only in the case of (ii) or (iii) can a flood or other catastrophe be spoken of as a 'punishment'.

The variant versions of the Flood story to be found in Mesopotamian literature belong to types (i) and (ii). In the best-known Babylonian Flood story, contained in the Gilgamesh epic where it is recounted by the 'Babylonian Noah' Utnapishtim speaking to Gilgamesh, no reason appears to be given for the Deluge. We read simply that "the great gods decided to bring on a deluge".^{9,10} Some ethical motivation for the Flood has been seen in the words of reproach addressed by Ea, god of wisdom, to the sky-god Enlil: "O warrior, how thus indiscriminately couldst thou bring about this deluge? ... On the sinner lay his sin, on the transgressor lay his transgression ... Instead of thy sending a Flood would that the lion had come and diminished mankind... that the wolf had come and diminished mankind... that a famine had occurred and impoverished mankind... that a pestilence had come and smitten mankind".¹¹ But the point here is precisely that Enlil, in not distinguishing between the sinful and the righteous, has totally

disregarded ethical considerations.¹² The absence of any reason on the side of mankind for the sending of the Deluge may simply be due to the setting of this narrative in the Gilgamesh Epic as Utnapishtim's answer to Gilgamesh's question: "Tell me how thou didst stand in the gods' Assembly and find life everlasting?"^{12a}

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The causes of the Flood are not especially relevant to that question.¹³ But it is perhaps not without significance that the Flood story could be told at all without reference to any motivation outside the will of the gods. It is not so easy to imagine a similar thing happening in Israel.

In the other important Mesopotamian epic which contains a story of the Flood, the Atrahasis epic,¹⁴ the cause of the Flood is fully explained: due to the multiplication of mankind their uproar is disturbing the sleep of Enlil. The epic begins with a lengthy description of the creation of man, brought about in order to relieve the gods of the hard labour against which some of them have revolted. Then,

Twelve hundred years had not yet passed
When the land extended and the peoples multiplied.
The land was bellowing like a bull,
The god got disturbed with their uproar.
Enlil heard their noise
And addressed the great gods,
"The noise of mankind has become too intense for me,
With their uproar I am deprived of sleep".^{14a}

Enlil thereupon determines to send a plague to reduce or perhaps to destroy mankind, but this plan fails through the wiles of Enki (Ea). Other attempts to reduce the clamour of mankind by drought and famine also fail, and the Flood is Enlil's last desperate attempt.

It has seemed to some scholars that the mere noise of humanity can hardly have been regarded as the reason for the Flood, and they have suggested that the words for 'noise' and 'uproar' connote evil behaviour,^{15a,16,17a,18a,19} specifically an uprising or revolt of men against the gods, like the revolt of the lower gods, the Igigi, with which the epic commences.^{14b} But more recently it has been stressed that the 'noise' of mankind which brought on the Flood should not be understood in any sense as a moral evil, but rather as the natural result of the production of the teeming masses of humanity in monstrous and

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chaotic volume.^{20a} According to W. L. Moran, "The Atrahasis Epic ignores almost completely the ideas of sin and punishment, and is not in any sense a theodicy, a justification of Enlil's ways with man".^{20b} Rather the epic is concerned with the ordering of the cosmos and with man's place in the established order; the Flood is "an event in the long process by which the cosmos emerged",^{20c} a resolution of the inter-divine rivalries which had plagued the earth up to that time. So while it seems reasonable to suppose that the Atrahasis epic offers a more subtle reason for the sending of the Flood than the mere noise of humanity disturbing a cantankerous deity's sleep, the concept of the Flood as a punishment for sin is absent from this narrative.²¹

That the Flood was a punishment for human sin is an idea that is of course not unique to the Hebrew narrative. It is attested in the story of the Flood in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*^{21a} and in a number of Flood stories from various parts of the world (e.g. Lithuania, Bengal, Andaman Islands, New Zealand²²), where the sin is variously reported as war and injustice, incest, disobedience to divine commands at creation, quarrelling and war.^{23a} The great majority of Flood myths, on the other hand, to judge from the rich collections of Frazer²⁴ and Gaster,^{23b} seem to have little interest in the reason for the Flood but are largely devoted to recounting how some few human beings escaped the deluge.²⁵

In contrast to that, the Hebrew narrative, by introducing the Flood as a punishment for sin, adds another dimension to the world-wide story of a primeval deluge. While for so many other peoples the Flood is simply one of the unaccountable natural catastrophes which occur, and whose only interest for the teller and hearer is in the resourcefulness or luck of those who escaped the Flood, in the Hebrew setting the Flood is fundamentally a narrative of God's dealings with man, and the Flood is an expression of His will and activity. He alone is responsible for the catastrophe; thus any ideas of inter-divine conflict or mere chance are negated. Moreover, His relationship to mankind is that of Judge, to which function the legal speech of sentence (6:13) corresponds.^{1a} There is nothing hasty, ill-considered or

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vengeful about God's decision; though He is far from being coolly dispassionate about the situation—he was 'sorry' he had made man and it "grieved him to his heart" (6:6)—it is noteworthy that there is no word here of divine anger; rather the rational element in the divine decision is strongly marked (6:5, 11ff). Further, as Judge, God is specifically concerned with moral evil. Nahum Sarna has commented: "The idea that human sinfulness finds its expression in the state of society, and that God holds men and society accountable for their misdeeds, is revolutionary in the ancient world. No less remarkable is the fact that the Bible, dealing with non-Israelites, does not conceive of their sin in... 'religious' terms. That is to say, he does not accuse them of idolatrous or cultic offences. The culpability of the generation of the flood lies strictly in the socio-moral sphere."^{18b}

II. The Sin of the Generation of the Flood

What precisely is the sin for which the Flood is sent? Several phrases are used:

- 6:5 "the wickedness of man was great in the earth"
"every inclination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually".
- 6:11f. "the earth was corrupt in the sight of God"
"the earth was full of violence"
"all flesh had corrupted its way upon earth".

Up to this point the narrator has "simply described the fact of rapidly spreading sin, without giving any particular evaluation", but "now we hear a reflection and opinion about it",^{4b} and that from the viewpoint of God himself.²⁶ The wickedness of mankind is plainly no sin of ignorance or omission; the cause of the Flood is the intentional moral evil of humanity. "A more emphatic statement of the wickedness of the human heart is hardly conceivable";²⁷ the words 'every', 'only', 'continually' in 6:5 reinforce the pessimistic outlook of the author.

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In verses 11f. a new category is employed to describe the sin. Here it is seen as a 'corruption' of the original creation. The wording of 6:12 "And God saw the earth, and behold it was corrupt", clearly seems designed to remind the reader of 1:31 "And God saw all that he had made, and behold it was very good".^{28a} But two further phrases also describe more closely the nature of the sin.

First, it was 'violence' (*hamas*) 6:11, 13), which is virtually a technical term for the oppression of the weak by the strong. It is "the violent breach of a just order";^{5b} even when used of man's inhumanity to man, it usually has religious overtones, for it is the violation of an order laid down or guaranteed by God.²⁹ It is precisely the sin of Lamech,³⁰ who not only takes his own vengeance by slaying a man (or perhaps rather, a mere boy)³¹ for simply wounding him, but also in so doing explicitly defies the divine order relating to vengeance with his words: "If Cain is avenged sevenfold [the divine order, 4:15], truly Lamech seventy-sevenfold [a violation of the divine order]" (4:24). It is also the sin of Cain, for the blood of his wronged brother utters the cry of the oppressed (*sa'aq*) to the judge³² from the ground where it has been spilled. The divine order that has been violated by Cain is that "blood and life belong to God alone; wherever a man commits murder he attacks God's very own right of possession".^{4c} This is something Cain is expected to know, though no explicit word has come from God; "man as man knows these boundaries".^{1b} What 6:11 has said of the generation of the Flood with a word ('violence'), 4:8ff., 23f. has spelled out with narratives.

Secondly, the sin of Noah's generation is said to be that "all flesh had corrupted its way upon earth" (6:12). The 'way' is not God's way (though the Hebrew could bear that meaning), but the way of flesh, that is, the natural order of existence of living creatures, the "manner of life and conduct prescribed"³⁰ to them. What is involved here is not essentially a deformation of original purity but the transgression of natural bounds; these are sins 'against nature' (Gk. *para physin*, Rom. 1:26, though those particular sins are not necessarily implied).³³ Furthermore,

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this transgression of limits is not confined to man; as is usual, the phrase 'all flesh' includes the animals as well as man.³⁴ Their transgression has been, as becomes clear from 9:5, that they have forsaken their created status as man's subjects (1:28) and as vegetarians (1:30), and have become carnivores, preying even upon man. As so frequently in the Old Testament, man's sinfulness has blighted animals and earth;³⁵ here too they are involved in man's 'corruption' 'before they are overwhelmed with him in the Deluge. Although of course the emphasis lies primarily upon human sin, it is worth observing that 6:12 depicts a world where natural laws are broken by all levels of created beings, and where consequently the ordering work of creation or cosmos has been dissolved.

In this respect the sin of the generation of the Flood climaxes the history of human sin. The first sin is essentially a revolt against the order of creation, a rejection of the life of obedience natural to a created being. The sin of Adam and Eve is not some descent to the bestial,³⁶ but an attempt at self-divinisation ("You shall be as gods", 3:5), an assumption of autonomous existence which belongs to God alone. As such it is an unnatural crime; it is man in rebellion against manhood; it is a refusal to live within the God-given order. In Noah's time also, what is happening according

to 6:12 is that "man removes all limits in an attempt to achieve autonomous existence".³⁷ Lamech's assumption of the right of revenge (4:23f.), which properly belongs to God (Dent. 32:35; cf. Rom. 12:19), and his breaking the bounds of a 'natural' revenge, a life for a life, to say nothing of the explicit divine order of revenge (4: 15), form a partial analogy;³⁸ but perhaps the most significant parallel to the sin of 'breaking the bounds', as well as to the twin sin of 'violence', is the sin of the 'sons of God' (6:1-4), a subject which we shall not discuss here.

III. *The Judgment*

We turn now to consider the nature of the judgment that is the Flood. It is noteworthy throughout the primeval history how the punishment for sin is not seen as some penalty chosen

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at random by God, but as an almost natural consequence or outworking of sin. There is an inner connection between the sin and the punishment, and between the punishment and the sinner. This understanding of divine punishment is very plain in the narrative of chapter 3. In the first place there is the principle that the punishment fits the crime. The punishment for the crime of attempting to be independent of God is—to be independent of God. The expulsion from the garden is not some act of petulance on God's part as if He were to say, "Since you have not obeyed me, you cannot stay in my garden." It means rather "Since you have chosen to be your own god, deciding for yourself what is good and evil, go and learn to look after yourselves in a world where the decisions have not already been made for you, and where you will have to make them for yourselves and pay the price if you make mistakes." In the second place there is the principle that the punishment fits, not only the crime, but the criminal. Each of the three protagonists of chapter 3 is treated differently. The snake is fated to be a mere reptile, no longer "the most subtle of all the animals that Yahweh God had made" (3:1); his assaults on man, unnatural assaults since man should be his master, will ultimately fail (3:15). The woman's punishment "struck at the deepest root of her being as wife and mother", while the man's "strikes at the innermost nerve of his life: his work, his activity, and provision for sustenance".^{4d} The punishment of Cain, the man-slayer, is, appropriately, to be driven out from the society of men (4:14); the punishment of the tower-builders that sought a name was to gain a name, but one that marked their disgrace and not their glory (11:9).

This same understanding of punishment is discernible also in the Flood narrative. Most obvious is the use of the verb 'to destroy' (*hihsit*): in 6:11f. the earth has 'destroyed' itself (RSV 'was corrupt'), God sees that it is 'destroyed' because all flesh has 'destroyed' its way; thereupon God determines (6:13) that He will 'destroy' the earth. "The retribution will be measure for measure".^{28b} Indeed, "what God decided to 'destroy' (13) had been virtually self-destroyed already".³⁹

Less obvious, but perhaps even more fundamental, is the

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connection between the 'breaking the bounds' by the generation of the Flood and the breaking down of the divinely established natural order of the world by the Flood. Creation as represented in Genesis 1 has been largely a matter of separation and distinction:⁴⁰ light is separated from darkness (1:4), the waters from the dry land (1:9), day from night (1:14). All plants and animals

are created according to distinct categories, each "after its kind" (1:11, 21, 24f.). There is a fundamental concept of the binary nature of created existence: there is heaven and earth, light and darkness, day and night, upper and lower waters, sea and land, plants and trees, sun and moon, fish and birds, animals and man, male and female, sacred time and non-sacred time.

The Flood, however, represents a reversal of these principles of order. Joseph Blenkinsopp has exactly described the significance of the Flood as 'uncreation': "The world in which order first arose out of a primeval watery chaos is now reduced to the watery chaos out of which it arose—chaos-come-again".³⁷ If Genesis 1 pictures the establishing of a firmament to keep the heavenly waters from falling upon the earth except in properly regulated measure, 7:11 depicts the "windows of heaven" as opening to annihilate this primal distinction. Likewise the distinction between the lower waters and the earth established in 1:9 is obliterated by the breaking forth through the earth of the "fountains of the great deep" (7:11). Significantly too "the destruction takes place in much the same order as Creation".³⁷ the water first covers the earth and its high mountains, then birds, cattle, beasts, all swarming creatures, and men (7:19ff.).⁴¹

What this bouleversement means in our present context is that once again the punishment fits the crime. "As man removes all limits in an attempt to achieve autonomous existence, God removes the limits placed at the beginning. The world will just not bear this limitless kind of life—it's not that kind of world."³⁷

Yet another aspect of the Flood underlines the theme of 'uncreation'. Very obviously, the Flood is punishment by death. Though from the beginning death has been threatened as the punishment for disobedience to divine commands (2:17), and a

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movement toward death has already occurred in the limitation of the life-span (6:4), death has not yet been used by God as a punishment. Now in Genesis 1 the creation of man has been the climax of creation; similarly too in Genesis 2 where creation has been principally a matter of the creation of man (2:4-8), the creation of heaven and earth forming a mere subordinate clause in the narrative of the creation of man. If man is to be 'wiped out' (6:7) by the Flood, the purpose of the creation has been undone. Yet man was made for obedient communion with God; if now "every inclination of the thoughts of man's heart" is "only evil continually" (6:5), man has already himself stultified the purpose of creation, and death in the Flood is no more than the outworking of man's behaviour.

We may thus distinguish two perspectives on the Flood as an act of 'uncreation'. As we have seen, according to that perspective which views reality as an ordered pattern, the final effect of sin as it comes to a climax in the Flood is a confusion of the things that differ. The other perspective is to be found primarily in the narrative portions of Genesis 1-11; here a binary structure of reality is also visible, but the effect of sin in the narratives is not to confound what ought to be distinct, but rather to divide what ought to belong together. Thus in Genesis 3 it is the elemental unions that are broken by sin: man and God, man and woman, man and the soil, man and the animals. The relationship of harmony between each of these pairs has been disrupted. The communion between God and Adam has become the legal relationship of accuser and defendant (3:9ff.); the relationship of man and woman, 'one flesh', has soured into mutual recrimination (3:12); the bond of man ('*adam*') with the soil ('*adamah*') from which he was built

has been supplanted by "an alienation that expresses itself in a silent, dogged struggle between man and soil" (3:17ff.);^{4d} the harmonious relationship of man with beast in which man is the acknowledged master (2:19ff.) has become a perpetual struggle of intransigent foes (3:15). In Genesis 4 we have another vivid illustration of the outworking of sin as viewed from this perspective: two brothers, who ought to enjoy fraternal relations, become enemies, and the ultimate act of enmity, murder, results. What now has happened in the Flood is that the most

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intimate relationship of all—of man with his breath—has been broken. At his creation man is made of "dust from the ground"; then when God breathes into his nostrils the "breath of life" man becomes a living being (2:7). At the Flood, when Yahweh determines He will "blot out man whom I have created" (6:7), "all in whose nostrils was the breath of the spirit of life" died. The very constitution of man falls apart: at the first, body plus breath made a living man, but now that last union is broken, and creation is undone.⁴²

IV. *The Mitigation*

The mitigation of the punishment of the Flood means that the 'uncreation' which God has worked with the Flood is not final; creation has not been permanently undone. Old unities of the natural world are restored (8:22), and the old ordinances of creation are renewed (9:1-7). But all is not as it was before this is no *restitutio in integrum*, no simple return to the original state of perfection. The sin of the generation of the Flood has left a mark which has not been wiped out by the Flood. Human nature has not changed (8:21), animal nature has not changed (9: 5). The creation ordinances remain, for this is still God's world, but they do not remain unchanged, for this is a world where sin has become permanent.

Again man is commanded to multiply and fill the earth (9:1; cf. 1:28), and mankind has "not propagated itself over the earth again simply from its own initiative",^{4e} but the command to subdue the earth and have dominion over the animals (1:28) has taken on a brutal aspect, which is underlined by the fact that it is expressed from the point of view of the subjective attitude of the animals themselves. They will go "in fear and dread" of man, no longer under his responsible rulership (cf. also 2:19f.). Violence is now part of the natural order: every living thing is delivered into man's power (9:2); but it is not to be unrestrained violence. Even in violence there is a limit. Man may take life,

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but he may not eat blood (9:4), which is the sign of life. "Even when man slaughters and kills, he is to know that he is touching something, which, because it is life, is in a special manner God's property; and as a sign of this he is to keep his hands off the blood."⁴³

Still also, even after the Flood, man is made as the image of God⁴⁴ and still in the midst of the violence of man against man which, it is taken for granted, will often enough reach the extreme of murder (9:5), God retains his proprietorial rights in man. As God's image man was made, and an assault on the man who is God's image is an assault on God himself. The doctrine of man as the image of God had first been couched in terms of man's authority over the animals and the earth (1:26ff.); in this world of violence where God's image is not by nature obeyed but rather assaulted, the doctrine takes on a more sombre colouring it concerns now the authority of man

over man. Not only the murdered man but also the avenger and the executioner is made in the image of God: "Whoever sheds the blood of man, by man shall his blood be shed, for God made man [the executioner also] in his own image" (9:6).

Unnecessarily, it seems at first sight, this divine speech announcing new creation concludes (9:7) with the words with which it began. But not really unnecessarily, for these words, "Be fruitful and multiply, bring forth abundantly on the earth and multiply in it", signify that "primarily... God's word to this new aeon is a word of blessing and grace".⁴⁸ That the divine blessing, first and last, should be signed over a world where "the imagination of man's heart is evil from his youth"—and not only over a world which God could pronounce "very good" (1:31)—is a more striking display of the divine mercy than the salvation of Noah. A similar thought is already enshrined in 7:21f, where in spite of human evil God vows never again to curse the earth as he has done in the Flood.

Just because the world now stands under the divine mercy, the Flood is unrepeatable. It is not that the reason for the Flood no longer exists, as if the wickedness of the generation

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of the Flood was greater than that of any subsequent generation. Mankind after the Flood is not different; the Flood has not improved man.^{6c} Genesis 8:21 does not mean that the reason why the Flood came has become the reason why there will be no more floods. Rather, "in spite of the motivation for a flood remaining present, God binds himself to take another course of action".⁴⁵ Man's imagination is still sinful, and God is still grieved to the heart (? and sorry—in a way—that he has made man). If men "were to be dealt with according to their deserts, there would be a necessity for a daily deluge".⁴⁶

Human life therefore is not an absolutely assured fact of reality; it exists simply by God's good favour. "Man's existence... lies between the poles of creation and uncreation, subject to God's providence and judgment".³⁷ But that good favour, according to the Flood narrative, is not a matter for conjecture or pleading; it is assured in the sign of the rainbow, God's bow of war now laid aside (9:13-6). Once, in primeval time, God has experimented with uncreation, and has put it behind Him forever. Even though we may expect a dissolution through fire of the earth that now is, that will be no uncreation, but the prelude to a new heavens and a new earth (2 Pet. 3:7-13). In spite of human sin and violence, God has committed himself to His world; the unconditional covenant of the rainbow, by which He binds only Himself, is sign of that. The story of the Flood is therefore an affirmation of the story of creation, and speaks ultimately not of divine punishment but of God's faithfulness to the works of His hands.

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- ¹ Cf. C. Westermann, *Forschung am Alien Testament*, München, 1964, (a) pp. 53f; (b) p. 55.
- ² Cf. R. Rendtorff, *Kerygma and Dogma*, 1961, 7, 69-78.
- ³ Cf. W. M. Clark, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1971, **83**, 184-211.
- ⁴ G. von Rad, *Genesis*, Eng. trans., 1961. (a) esp. 148f.; (b) p. 113; (c) p. 102; (d) p. 91; (e) p. 127; (f) p. 128; (g) p. 129.
- ⁵ G. von Rad, *Theology of the Old Testament*, 1962, vol. i, (a) 154f; (b) 157, n. 34.
- ⁶ H. Gunkel, *Genesis*, Göttingen, 1964 (reprint of 3rd ed., 1910). (a) p. 1; (b) p. 141; (c) p. 60.
- ⁷ J. Skinner, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Genesis*, Edinburgh, 1930. (a) Gen. 2; (b) pp. 159f.
- ⁸ See C. Kluckhohn, *Daedalus*, 1959, (Spring), 268-79 (271f).
- ⁹ *Gilgamesh* XI. 14, tr. J. V. Kinnier Wilson, in *Documents from Old Testament Times (= DOTT)*, ed. D. Winton Thomas, 1958, p. 20.
- ¹⁰ *Ancient Near Eastern Texts (= ANET)*, ed. J. B. Pritchard, p. 93.
- ¹¹ *Gilgamesh* XI. 178-185; *DOTT*, 23; *ANET*, 95.
- ¹² The 'evil' spoken by the mother-goddess Ishtar in the assembly of the gods (*Gilgamesh* XI. 118-121) seems in the context to be simply her agreement to the divine plans for the Deluge. It is remarkable, however, that the author of the epic feels himself to be more moral than the gods—a quite Euripidean attitude which deserves further consideration (cf. Fisher 17).
- ^{12a} *Gilgamesh* XI.7 *DOTT*, 20; *ANET*, 93.
- ¹³ Similarly A. R. Millard, *Tyndale Bulletin*, 1967, **18**, 3-18 (11f) [http://98.131.162.170/tynbul/library/TynBull_1967_18_01_Millard_BabylonianGenesis.pdf].
- ¹⁴ The major portion of this text has recently been reconstructed and published by W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: the Babylonian Story of the Flood*, with M. Civil, *The Sumerian Flood Story*, (Oxford, 1969). (a) I, 352-359; p. 67; (b) I, 37-46; p. 45; (c) pp. 138-145; (d) pp. 14, 17f.
- ¹⁵ So G. Pettinato, *Orientalia*, 1968, 37, (a) 165-200; (b) 169f.
- ¹⁶ W. M. Clark, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, **83**, 185.
- ¹⁷ E. Fisher, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1970, 32, 392-403; (a) 399; (b) 394f.
- ¹⁸ N. M. Sarna, *Understanding Genesis*, N.Y., 1966; (a) p. 50; (b) p. 53.19.
- ¹⁹ E. A. Speiser in *ANET*, 104, described the Atrahasis epic as "a large epic cycle dealing with man's sins and his consequent punishment through plagues and the deluge".
- ²⁰ W. L. Morgan, *Biblica*, 1971, 52, (a) pp. 51-61; (b) p. 56; (c) p. 59.
- ²¹ The idea that 'noise' was responsible for the Flood does not appear in our fragmentary text of the Sumerian Flood story, Civil.^{14c} Whether it once did is a disputed question; see^{15b} (*pro*), and^{14d} (*contra*). Fisher,^{17b} goes further than consideration of the word 'noise' in his quest for the theological theme of the Sumerian Flood story, and finds in it "a searching for justice on the part of the gods, a theological affirmation that the mercy of some gods will always temper the caprice of others... Hence we have... the beginnings of a dissatisfaction with the crudities of polytheism, a conscious search for an explicitly ethical theism."^{21a} I, 128-131.
- ²² In the case of this Maori myth, it is possible that the concept of punishment is derived from the Biblical story as told by missionaries. Enid R. Peschel, *Folklore*, 1971, **82**, 116-23 (122), argues that the "Biblical structure is simply adapted to the Maori structure". The same may have happened in the case of other Flood stories.
- ²³ T. H. Gaster, *Myth, Legend, and Custom in the Old Testament*, 1969, (a) pp., 93, 96, 104, 109. For myths where the Flood is caused by the disturbance of a god's sleep, see pp. 109, 119; (b) pp. 82-128.
- ²⁴ J. G. Frazer, *Folklore in the Old Testament*, 1918, vol. i, 146-332. 82-128.
- ²⁵ However, Kluckhohn⁸ claims that the Flood theme is "usually, but not always, treated as a punishment", in the 34 culture areas in which he has identified Flood myths. He does not however specify what he understands by "punishment".
- ²⁶ Cf. R. A. F. MacKenzie, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1955, 17, 277-86; R. Lapointe, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, 1970, 32, 161-81, observing that reason, motive, and decision are the characteristic elements (p. 180).
- ²⁷ T. C. Vriezen, *An Outline of Old Testament Theology*, 2nd ed., 1970, p., 415.
- ²⁸ U. Cassuto, *Commentary on Genesis* (Eng. trans., Jerusalem, 1961), vol. ii, (a), p. 53, noting also the use of the term 'corrupt' or 'spoil' of the potter's work (Jer. 18:3f); (b) p. 57.
- ²⁹ H. J. Stoebe, in E. Jenni and C. Westermann, *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum Alten Testament*, München, 1971, vol. i, p. 583b.
- ³⁰ Dillman (*Genesis critically and exegetically expounded* (Eng. trans., Edinburgh, 1897), vol. i, p., 268.

³¹ As the word *yeled* means literally; see P. D. Miller, *Journal of Biblical Literature*, 1966, 85, 477f.

³² "What ancient German law understands by *Zeterruf*, the *vox oppressorum*, the appeal to legal protection (Gen. 18.20; Deut. 22.24, 27; II Kings 8.3; Job 16.18f.)" Von Rad.^{4c}

³³ All the same, it is curious that the only other catastrophe narrative in Genesis (ch. 19, Sodom) features sins 'against nature'. Genesis 6 and 19 are mentioned together in 2 Peter 2:5f. as examples of a sin-punishment-deliverance theme.

³⁴ Dillmann³⁰, Gunkel^{6b}, Skinner^{7b}. The phrase occurs 13 times in the Flood narrative, 4 times in reference to animals apart from man (6: 19; 7:15, 16; 8:17).

³⁵ Cf. Hosea 4:2f.; Isaiah 1:2-7; Jeremiah 23:10; Romans 8:19ff.

³⁶ I believe I owe the point to R. Niebuhr's *The Nature and Destiny of Man* (New York, 1945), though I cannot locate the passage.

³⁷ J. Blenkinsopp, in J. Blenkinsopp *et al.*, *The Pentateuch*, 1971, pp. 46, 47.

³⁸ S. Gevirtz has even seen in the irregular parallelisms of Lamech's poetry a token of his pretentious breaking of all bounds! *Patterns in the Early Poetry of Israel*, Chicago, 1963, p. 25.

³⁹ D. Kidner, *Genesis*, 1967, p. 87.

⁴⁰ See P. Beauchamp, *Creation et séparation. Etude exegetique du chapitre premier de la Genese*, Paris, 1969.

⁴¹ For a parallel reversal of creation, see Job 3:3-13, and cf. M. Fishbane, *Vetus Testamentum*, 1971, 21, 157-67.

⁴² The Babylonian parallel to the Flood as uncreation is to be found in *Gilgamesh* XI. 133 (*DOTT*, 22; *ANET*, 94b), where when the rain has ceased, "all of mankind had returned to clay", the substance of which man had been made according to the Atrahasis epic and the Babylonian creation epic.

⁴³ Von Rad^{4f}, Fisher^{17b} has made the interesting suggestion that the right to kill animals, implicitly the prerogative of God, functions in the Hebrew story as a substitute for the gift of immortality bestowed on the hero of the Flood in the Sumerian and Babylonian versions.

⁴⁴ On the subject, see further D. J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man", *Tyndale Bulletin*, 1968, **19**, 53-103 [http://98.131.162.170//tybul/library/TynBull_1968_19_03_Clines_ImageOfGodInMan.pdf].

⁴⁵ Clark, *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, **83**, 206, following Rendtorff, *Kerygma and Dogma*, 7, 73.

⁴⁶ J. Calvin, *A Commentary on Genesis* (Eng. Trans., 1847), 1965 ptg., p. 284.