
THE NIGHT SCHOOL (TNS) 8, 2 – GANZ NOTES ON THE BOOK OF JOB

[OR, MERE HUMANITY]

Version: 1, 4, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16 March 2021

QUOTES

John E. Hartley – “Thus the author was a highly educated person and a devout servant of Yahweh; he may be numbered among the great wise men of ancient Israel.”¹

Francis I. Andersen – “But much of Job’s utterance is in an entirely different direction. **Job is not arguing a point; he is trying to understand his experience.** Hence he often talks to himself, struggling in his own mind. He is also trying to retain (or recover) his lost friendship with God. Hence he appeals to God again and again. His prayers may shock his religious friends, but at least he keeps on talking to the heedless God. **His friends talk *about* God. Job talks *to* God. And this makes him the only authentic theologian in the book.**”²

Baruch Levine – “**René Girard on Job**” – “Girard focuses attention on social issues and has, at least for me, posed a question I had failed to confront in my own reading of the dialogues of Job: **Why is it that societies react as they do to the victims of misfortune in their midst?** How are we to understand the often-endorsed rationalization that such victims have only themselves to blame, that they are responsible for their own plight?”

¹ John E. Hartley, [The Book of Job](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 17.

² Francis I. Andersen, [Job: An Introduction and Commentary](#), vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 104.

Francis I. Andersen – “Eliphaz thinks he knows how to get along with a **predictable (and that means, to some extent, manageable) God**. Job, who has no such pretensions, faces the agony of getting along with a God over whom he has absolutely no control or even influence.”³

Francis I. Andersen – “Gen. 22 is a miniature book of Job. Abraham was driven into an ordeal as cruel as Job’s, and he could never again be as he was before. *He had enlarged his life with God through suffering. The theology is the same. Abraham’s agony, like Job’s, was neither punitive (for the sinner) nor corrective (for the saint).*” (Francis Andersen, footnote #78.)

John E. Hartley – “Throughout the centuries the book of Job has had a great impact on the Western mind, including the great authors.¹⁵ Three examples, Milton’s *Samson*, Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Kafka’s *The Trial*, testify to its impact on thinkers from widely differing perspectives, times, and cultures. Even the psychologist C. J. Jung entered the discussion with his *Answer to Job* (1963). Thus the book of Job continues to speak to the issues of human suffering and theodicy.”⁴

St. Gregory the Great (540-604 CE) – “And because a person *asks a question* in order to be able to learn that of which that person is ignorant, for a person *to question God*, is for that person to acknowledge that he or she is ignorant in God’s sight.”⁵

Francis I. Andersen – “**The book of Job is about the unchanging human realities—war, destitution, sickness, humiliation, bereavement, depression. Also the unchanging goodness of God, who transforms our human agony into justice, kindness, love and joy. It is about ‘the terror of the Lord’ (2 Cor. 5:11) and his great tenderness (Jas 5:11). It is the story of one man who held on to his life in God with a faith that survived the torments of utter loss and expanded into new realms of wonder and delight.**”⁶

Francis I. Andersen – “**The Old Testament book about Job is one of the supreme offerings of the human mind to the living God and one of the best gifts of God to men. The task of understanding it is as rewarding as it is strenuous.** For his help, the modern student has a rich

³ Francis I. Andersen, [*Job: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 134.

¹⁵ See, e.g., M. Friedman, “The Modern Job: On Melville, Dostoevsky, and Kafka,” *Judaism* 12 (1963) 436–55; N. A. Francisco, “Job in World Literature,” *RevExp* 68 (1971) 521–33.

⁴ John E. Hartley, [*The Book of Job*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 11.

⁵ S. Gregory the Great, *Morals on the Book of Job*, Vol. III.2, 35.3.4, trans. J. Bliss (Oxford: John Henry Parker; F. and J. Rivington, London, 1850), 664.

⁶ Francis I. Andersen, [*Job: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 9–10.

legacy from the labours of the past. It is a tribute to the greatness of the book that the work of interpreting it is never finished. After each fresh exploration the challenge to scale the heights remains. **One is constantly amazed at its audacious theology and at the magnitude of its intellectual achievement. Job is a prodigious book in the vast range of its ideas, in its broad coverage of human experience, in the intensity of its passions, in the immensity of its concept of God, and not least in its superb literary craftsmanship.** It reaches widely over the complexities of existence, seeking a place for animals as well as men in God's world. It plumbs the depths of human despair, the anger of moral outrage, and the anguish of desertion by God. From one man's agony it reaches out to the mystery of God, beyond all words and explanations. It is only God himself who brings Job joy in the end. **And, when all is done, the mystery remains. God stands revealed in his hiddenness, an object of terror, adoration and love. And Job stands before him 'like a man' (38:3; 40:7), trusting and satisfied.**"⁷

Rainer Marie Rilke – “I want to ask you, as clearly as I can, to bear with patience all that is unresolved in your heart, **and try to love the questions themselves**, as if they were rooms yet to enter or books written in a foreign language. Don't dig for answers that can't be given you yet: you cannot live them now. For everything must be lived. Live the questions now, perhaps then, someday, you will gradually, without noticing, live into the answer.” Worpsswede, July 16, 1903 in *Letters to a Young Poet* [Barrows, Anita; Macy, Joanna. *A Year with Rilke* (p. 49) on February 18th. HarperOne. Kindle Edition.]

Peter Kreeft - [Socrates speaking] “**This is why I seek out people who disagree with me. They are my special friends and allies.** Their opposition helps me to be surer of the truth, as iron sharpens iron, or as a sparring partner strengthens your muscles, or an experiment confirms your theory.” [Peter Kreeft. *The Journey: A Spiritual Roadmap for Modern Pilgrims* (Kindle Locations 280-282), from the chapter called “The Cynic”. Kindle Edition.]

Peter Kreeft - “Nevertheless I [Socrates] praise you for it,” he said. “In an insane asylum like your world, simple sanity can be a heroic achievement.” [Peter Kreeft. *The Journey: A Spiritual Roadmap for Modern Pilgrims* (Kindle Locations 342-343), in the chapter called “The Cynic”. Kindle Edition.]

John C. L. Gibson – “But of one thing we will be certain. When we reach the end of this unique and scarring and excoriating⁸ book, we will know that we have had an exceedingly uncomfortable and tempestuous ride. **No book before or since has so remorselessly peeled**

⁷ Francis I. Andersen, [*Job: An Introduction and Commentary*](#), vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 16.

⁸ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the verb “**to excoriate**” – “*transitive*. To pull off the skin or hide from (a person or animal); to flay. *Obsolete*.”

away the layers of piety and hypocrisy, of self-pity and self-deceit, of meretricious⁹ groveling and heaven-defying arrogance with which, down the ages, humankind has tried to cover over the truth about itself. And no book before or since has so pitilessly confronted men with the claims of the One in whom alone their soiled and burdened lives can find meaning and peace. To read and study the Book of Job is to grow up in the faith with a vengeance; and that is worth all the theology in the world.”¹⁰

Carol A. Newsom - To the reader who is willing to forgo simplistic answers, however, **the book offers a challenging exploration of religious issues of fundamental importance:** the motivation for piety, the meaning of suffering, the nature of God, the place of justice in the world, and the relationship of order and chaos in God’s design of creation.”¹¹

Walton & Longman – “As in the book of Job, no explanation [by Jesus] for the suffering is forthcoming, possible or necessary. Jesus’ words stress what is important: **to trust God’s wisdom and to seek out his purpose.**”¹²

Mike Mason – “Knowing this gives a brand-new dignity to being human, and to all that being human entails. It gives one the sudden freedom to doubt, to be overwhelmed, to fail, to fear, to be angry, to have passions—in short, to be completely oneself. This is the kind of man Job was. What I discovered through my study of Job was that it is all right to be a human being. ***I found out that mercy is the permission to be human.***” [Mason, Mike. *The Gospel According to Job* (p. 11). Crossway. Kindle Edition.]

Hebrews 2 (NABRE) – ¹Therefore, we must attend all the more to what we have heard, so that we may not be carried away.¹³

⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**meretricious**” – “Alluring by false show; showily or superficially attractive but having in reality no value or integrity.”

¹⁰ John C. L. Gibson, [Job](#), The Daily Study Bible Series (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 4.

¹¹ Carol A. Newsom, “[The Book of Job](#),” in *New Interpreter’s Bible*, ed. Leander E. Keck, vol. 4 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1994–2004), 319.

¹² John H. Walton and Tremper Longman III, [How to Read Job](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2015), 105.

¹³ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Heb 2:1.

SONG – “THESE ALONE ARE ENOUGH”

Dan Schutte, SJ¹⁴ - “These Alone Are Enough” based on the words of the *Suscipe* prayer by St. Ignatius of Loyola in the *Spiritual Exercises* (see original below). Hear a recording on his 2009 album (some collected works), *Walking the Sacred Path*.

Take¹⁵ my heart, O Lord, **take** my hopes and dreams.
Take my mind with all its plans and schemes.¹⁶
Give me *nothing more than*¹⁷ your love and grace.
These alone, O God, are enough for me.¹⁸

¹⁴ “**Dan Schutte, SJ** is one of the best-known and most influential composers of Catholic music for liturgy in the English-speaking world. In addition to his Jesuit formation, Dan holds two master’s degrees, one in theology and one in liturgy, from the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California. He did graduate studies in music composition under the direction of Fr. Kevin Waters, SJ, at Seattle University. He has three honorary doctoral degrees for his contribution to the life of the Church.”

¹⁵ “**Take!**” – This verb in the Imperative Mood is written **six times** in this lyric. One must not miss the significance of this word “**Take!**” It is in the Imperative or “Command” form. A person “commands” God to take something (he or she is about to indicate what in particular). Why? Because that person knows that he or she has no capacity to give things so centrally precious to him or her. But the person has been brought by God far enough along the Path of Depth that he or she now knows that even things so centrally precious to him or her can be misused, left unrecognized. The person here “commands” God to “take” them from him or her and then to help him or her to use these powers in the way God wanted them to be used for His greater glory (i.e., “greater” meaning *greater than my own glory!*).

¹⁶ “**plans and schemes**” – Actually this is a nice way of indicating the kind of practical knowledge – “how to” knowledge, worldly savvy, etc. – that the Wisdom traditions of the Bible collect and esteem. Job, in the Book of Job, has all of his unusually successful “plans and schemes” taken from him.

¹⁷ “**nothing more than**” – This phrase appears once in each of the four stanzas of this lyric. This is a central rhythmic element in this poem. It repetition over and over again emphasizes this thought. Consider how it is that when we wonder whether we have *enough* (of anything), we conclude about that **in a comparative way**. We, because our desires are *mimetic* (see René Girard), cannot seem to decide about “enough” from within a thing itself. We must compare how much of it we have *compared to* someone else! Also “nothing more” is another way of saying “enough.”

¹⁸ “**Give me nothing more than ... enough for me**” – These two lines are the second two lines of each of the four stanzas of this lyric. Notice how all that I ask God to “take” from me – my central power, my possessions, anything that I have or hold on to – **is not so that I have nothing left, but so that I have nothing now that stands in the way, competes with, God’s gift of Himself** – the indwelling of the Holy Trinity; that is, “your love and your grace.”

Take my thoughts, Oh Lord, and my memory.
Take my tears, my joys, my liberty¹⁹.
Give me *nothing more than* your love and grace.
These alone, O God, are enough for me.

I surrender,²⁰ Lord, all I have and Hold.
I return to you your gifts untold.²¹
Give me *nothing more than* your love and grace.
These alone, O God, are enough for me.

When the darkness falls on my final days,
take the very breath that sang your praise.
Give me *nothing more than* your love and grace.
These alone, O God, are enough for me.

THE ORIGINAL TEXT BY ST. IGNATIUS OF LOYOLA

See my Ganz Notes on this text – *Spiritual Exercises*, “the Contemplation to Attain the Love of God”, in an attached document.

Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius [234] – **First Point** [translation by Louis Puhl, SJ]

¹⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the noun “**liberty**”, as to “the state or condition of being free – *Theology*. Freedom from the bondage or dominating influence of sin, spiritual servitude, worldly ties, etc.” Notice here how the long effort we must exert, and through so many trials, finally to become free: free of self; free of compulsions or addictions; free the distorting power of a Capital Sin; free of the disordered expectations of others, etc. “Free at last! Free at last! Praise God Almighty, we are free at last!” concluded Dr. Martin Luther King in his “I Have a Dream” speech. Why then would I ever consider handing that over to God?! I am finally free, and I am to give that up, to God? We must pay attention to what we are asking God to do: “Take it!”

²⁰ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the verb “**to surrender**” – “More widely: To give up, resign, abandon, relinquish possession of, esp. in favour of or for the sake of another.” This is a strong word. To surrender, and especially to surrender oneself so fully, in all of one’s most central Powers, is not easily done at all! To do so, to surrender so fully, is beyond a person’s ability; it is just feels too close to dying! That is why that first word in this prayer “Take!” is so important. The person is asking God *for the grace* to be able to give himself or herself fully to God. **This kind of word in this prayer proves that this prayer has no *romance* in it at all. This is difficult, the work of sacrificial love.**

²¹ “**gifts untold**” – What are gifts “untold”? The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**untold**” – “Uncounted, unreckoned, because of amount or numbers; immense, vast.”

This is to recall to mind the blessings of creation and redemption, and the special favors I have received.

I will ponder with great affection how much God our Lord has done for me, and how much He has given me of what He possesses, and finally, how much, as far as He can, the same Lord desires to give Himself to me according to His divine decrees.

Then I will reflect upon myself, and consider, according to all reason and justice, what I ought to offer the Divine Majesty, that is, all I possess and myself with it. Thus, as one would do who is *moved by great feeling*, I will make this offering of myself:

Take, Lord, and receive all my liberty, my memory, my understanding, and my entire will, all that I have and possess. Thou hast given all to me. To Thee, O Lord, I return it. All is Thine, dispose of it wholly according to Thy will. Give me Thy love and Thy grace, for this is sufficient for me.

STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

The book divides into the following literary units:

The Prologue (1:1–2:13)

Three Rounds of Speeches among Job and His Friends (3:1–14:22; 15:1–21:34; 22:1–31:37)

Hymn to Wisdom (28:1–28)

Job’s Self-Defense (29:1–31:37)

Elihu’s Speeches (32:1–37:24)

The Encounter with God in the Storm (38:1–42:6)

The Epilogue (42:7–17)²²

The frame-story (chapters 1 and 2, concluded in chapter 42) is in all likelihood a folktale that had been in circulation for centuries, probably through oral transmission. In the original form of the story, with no debate involved, the three companions would not have appeared: instead, Job would have been tested through the wager between God and the Adversary, undergone his sufferings, and in the end would have had his fortunes splendidly

²² Kathleen M. O’Connor, *Job*, ed. Daniel Durken, vol. 19, The New Collegeville Bible Commentary (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2012), 8.

restored. [Alter, Robert. *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*, “Introduction” to the Book of Job. W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle location 91411.]

Amy Lacey asked me one day whether it was right to say that Job was an actual historical person, whether one should insist on this. In asking this, she was asking in relation to a “literal” way of reading and understanding the Bible that was taught to her when she was younger. I replied that what is far more important here is that the story of Job, and in relation to his three and four Friends, and to God, *is* a story that we recognize. **We know people, perhaps ourselves, who have lived this story. Therefore, the far more important question to answer is not whether Job was a “real” historical person, but whether we let God make us as real and deep and finally free as Job did.**

The prologue (chaps. 1–2) provides the setting for Job’s testing. When challenged by the satan’s questioning of Job’s sincerity, **the Lord gives leave** for a series of catastrophes to afflict Job. Three friends come to console him. Job breaks out in complaint (chap. 3), and a cycle of speeches begins. **Job’s friends insist that his plight can only be a punishment for personal wrongdoing and an invitation from God to repent.** Job rejects their inadequate explanation and challenges God to respond (chaps. 3–31). A young bystander, Elihu, now delivers four speeches in support of the views of the three friends (chaps. 32–37). In response to Job’s plea that he be allowed to see God and hear directly the reason for his suffering, **the Lord answers (38:1–42:6), not by explaining divine justice, but by cataloguing the wonders of creation.** Job is apparently content with this, and, in an epilogue (42:7–17), the Lord restores Job’s fortune.²³

This book is divided into three parts: the first part describes Job’s state **before his temptation**; the second part contains a disputation on the cause of his temptation, and begins further along in chapter 3, in this place:¹ *After these things Job opened his mouth*; and the third part describes Job’s state after his temptation, beginning below in chapter 42, in this place:² *Then Job answered the Lord and said.*²⁴

²³ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Job.

^{*1} Jb 3:1.

^{*2} Jb 42:1.

²⁴ Albert the Great, [St. Albert the Great on Job](#), trans. Franklin T. Harkins, vol. 1, The Fathers of the Church Medieval Continuations (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 2019), 52.

THE “FRAME STORY”

A short account of Job’s trial sets the stage for the long debate between Job and his friends (3:1–42:6). **This prose account is divided into two parts, the prologue (1:1–2:13) and the epilogue (42:7–17). It has a very ancient substratum that possibly goes back to the pre-patriarchal era.¹ *The author of Job took over the ancient form and adapted it as the framework for the dialogue....* The prologue consists of six scenes set up in an a-b-c-b’-c’-d pattern. In the first scene Job is characterized as a great sheikh who worshiped God scrupulously with pure devotion (1:1–5). The next four scenes, which alternate between a meeting of the sons of God (1:6–12; 2:1–7a) and the resulting events that happen to Job (1:13–22; 2:7b–10), recount Job’s trial. In the last scene Job’s three comforters are introduced (2:11–13).²⁵**

The stark simplicity of the narrative contrasts markedly with the depth of the problem addressed. Consequently the account, though simple, captures the audience’s imagination. It has a remarkable fascination that has transcended ages and cultures.²⁶

WHAT IS THE BOOK OF JOB ABOUT?

The reader knows, and Job believes, that what has happened is not punishment for some past sin. If there is a grain of truth in Eliphaz’s teaching about ‘the chastening of the Almighty’ (5:17), it is not in the negative sense of training so that a person is restrained from potential sin. Job had long since attained perfection in this stage of character development (1:1, 8; 2:3). **The reader knows what Job does not know, namely that Job’s highest wisdom is to love God for himself alone. Hence Eliphaz’s words, far from being a comfort, are a trap. The violence with which Job rejects them shows his recognition of the danger.**²⁷

¹ Cf. N. Sarna, “Epic Substratum in the Prose of Job,” *JBL* 76 (1957) 13–25. For further discussion see section VIII in the Introduction above.

²⁵ John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 64.

²⁶ John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*, The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1988), 64.

²⁷ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 134.

Job is being tested.⁷⁸ It is essential that he does not know why. **He must ask why.** He must test and reject all the answers attempted by men. In the end he will find satisfaction in what God himself tells him.⁷⁹ ²⁸

I feel fury rise in me as I consider Andersen's deft insight in what vexes Job about Eliphaz. The fury rises in me as I recognize how often in my life I lived in Institutions that demanded of its men to submit to the most childish dominion of retribution. "If you will only submit to my domination of you, then I will reward you. If you do not, then I, and with others, will destroy you." (God, Who He is, what God is like, they ignored.) Job is furious (chapter 6) when he recognizes how Eliphaz misses completely what Job means. Job is far more spiritually advanced than Eliphaz is or ever will be. And then, even more painfully, Eliphaz tries to get Job to ignore or to disavow all that he, Job, had with great cost learned about God in his life, and through much suffering.

While Job is primarily a tale of one man's pain, there is also an implied sequel to the story, which concerns **the peculiar suffering of the man's three friends as they are brought face-to-face with the treachery of their heartless rectitude.** [Mason, Mike. *The Gospel According to Job* (p. 13). Crossway. Kindle Edition.]

We need to begin, then, with some adjustments to our expectations. First of all, Job has trials, but he is not on trial. We will propose that God's policies are on trial. **Second, the book of Job is not primarily about Job; it is primarily about God.** Third, if this is so, the book is more about the reasons for righteousness than about the reasons for suffering. Finally, the topic of wisdom plays a central role in the book. Indeed, Job's suffering leads to a heated debate as to who has the wisdom that will help the characters diagnose and prescribe a remedy for Job's problems. **Here we will see that, though all the human characters claim that they are wise, it is only God who is wise.** Let's look at these in more detail.²⁹

[W]e can begin to see that **righteousness is more under consideration than is suffering.** The question asked is, "*Why is Job righteous?*" not, "*Why is Job suffering?*" No paradigmatic explanation is offered for why suffering takes place, but there is a lot of interest in what

^{*78} Gen. 22 is a miniature book of Job. *Abraham was driven into an ordeal as cruel as Job's, and he could never again be as he was before. He had enlarged his life with God through suffering. The theology is the same. Abraham's agony, like Job's, was neither punitive (for the sinner) nor corrective (for the saint).*

^{*79} Many critics do not share Job's satisfaction with the Yahweh speeches, precisely because they are not what they expect God to say!

²⁸ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 134–135.

²⁹ John H. Walton and Tremper Longman III, *How to Read Job* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2015), 13.

constitutes righteousness. We don't have to understand Job's suffering; we do have to understand his righteousness. **His suffering does not give us direction about our suffering, but his reasons for righteousness should make us think about our reasons for righteousness.** Will Job's righteousness be sustained even when God's policies are incomprehensible and nothing seems to make sense? Will ours? As the book unfolds, we will see that this is the critical issue to be resolved.³⁰

BI-LINGUAL READERS: WORDS & EMOTIONS

The words we speak, and the words that we hear, in all of our communications with others are *never* merely about the words and their meanings! The *affects* inside of which are carried the words we speak and the words we hear are often far more important in getting to the meaning of the words than are the words themselves.

To read/hear Job correctly, we must learn to pay close attention to the affects of Job, as well as those of God – not merely to their words.

THERE IS NO “MINE” IN GOD

As human beings in a fallen world, we “come from” the 9th and 10th Commandments – the only two Commandments of the Ten that address our disordered desires – to **covet**;³¹ to possess; to make **mine**.

Ninth – “Thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbor's wife” (i.e., coveting the good and closest friends of others)

Tenth – “Thou shalt not *covet* thy neighbor's goods: slave, animals, possessions, etc.

I first wondered about this in C.S. Lewis, *Till We Have Faces* (1956),³² a novel that Lewis considered one of his finest works ... but which others did not think so. The lines that follow are

³⁰ John H. Walton and Tremper Longman III, [How to Read Job](#) (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2015), 16.

³¹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* at the verb “**to covet**” – “To have inordinate or culpable desire *for, after.*”

³² *Wikipedia* – “*Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold* is a 1956 novel by C. S. Lewis. It is a retelling of Cupid and Psyche, based on its telling in a chapter of *The Golden Ass* of Apuleius. **This story had haunted Lewis all his life**, because he realized that some of the main characters' actions were illogical. As a consequence, his retelling of the story is characterized by a highly developed character, the narrator, with the reader being drawn into her

the concluding lines of Part III of the novel. Orual, the older sister of Psyche, is finally before the gods and able to read out her Complaint.

I'll thank you to let me feed my own; it needed no titbits from your table. Did you ever remember whose the girl was? **She [Psyche] was mine. Mine. Do you not know what the word means? Mine!** You're thieves, seducers. That's my wrong. I'll not complain (not now) that you're blood-drinkers and man-eaters. I'm past that. . . . '*Enough,*' said the judge. **There was utter silence all round me. And now for the first time I knew what I had been doing. While I was reading, it had, once and again, seemed strange to me that the reading took so long; for the book was a small one. Now I knew that I had been reading it over and over—perhaps a dozen times.** I would have read it forever, quick as I could, starting the first word again almost before the last was out of my mouth, if the judge had not stopped me. **And the voice I read it in was strange to my ears. There was given to me a certainty that this, at last, was my real voice.**

[Lewis, C. S.. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*. HarperCollins. Kindle location 3661.]

Then these lines that follow immediately after the above, and which contain the title of the novel. They are the opening lines of Part IV, the last part of the novel. Orual is the older sister of Psyche, whose life had been full of complaints about the injustice of the gods, and who has all her life wanted finally to let the gods have it, to tell them off, to read her Complaint aloud to them.³³

The complaint was the answer. To have heard myself making it was to be answered. Lightly men talk of saying what they mean. Often when he was teaching me to write in Greek the Fox would say, 'Child, to say the very thing you really mean, the whole of it, nothing more or less or other than what you really mean; that's the whole art and joy of words.' A glib saying. When the time comes to you at which you will be forced at last to utter the speech which has lain at the centre of your soul for years, which you have, all that time, idiot-like, been saying over and over, you'll not talk about joy of words. **I saw well why the gods do not speak to us openly, nor let us answer. Till that word can be dug out of us, why should they hear the babble that we think we mean? How can**

reasoning and her emotions. **This was his last novel, and he considered it his most mature, written in conjunction with his wife, Joy Davidman.**"

³³ *Wikipedia* – "It is in the midst of this last vision that she is led to a huge chamber in the land of the dead and given the opportunity to read out her complaint in the gods' hearing. **She discovers, however, that instead of reading the book she has written, she reads off a paper that appears in her hand and contains her true feelings, which are indeed less noble than Part One of the book would suggest.** Still, rather than being jealous of Psyche, as the story she heard in the temple suggested, she reveals that she was jealous of the gods because they were allowed to enjoy Psyche's love while she herself was not."

they meet us face to face till we have faces? [Lewis, C. S. *Till We Have Faces: A Myth Retold*. HarperCollins. Kindle location 3683.]

THE UGLINESS OF JOB & HIS CIRCUMSTANCES – “THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE HIM”

Isaiah 52 – [from the Fourth Song of the Servant]

- ¹³ See, my servant shall prosper,
he shall be raised high and greatly exalted.
¹⁴ Even as many were amazed at him—
so marred were his features,
beyond that of mortals
his appearance, beyond that of human beings—^d
¹⁵ So shall he startle many nations,
kings shall stand speechless;
For those who have not been told shall see,
those who have not heard shall ponder it.^{e 34}

Notice how when the Friends first see Job, they are compelled to a horrifying silence, and inability to speak, *in relation to what they see*. I believe that what they see is what jolts them all most profoundly, after which they rise to reflection about all that Job has lost.

Job 2 - ⁶And the LORD said to the Adversary, “Here he is in your hands. Only preserve his life.” ⁷And the Adversary went out from before the LORD’s presence. **And he struck Job with a grievous burning rash from the soles of his feet to the crown of his head.** ⁸**And he took a potsherd to scrape himself with, and he was sitting among the ashes.**
[Alter, Robert. *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*. W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle location 91648.]

Robert Alter notes concerning this “rash” – “The Hebrew *shehin* derives from a root that means “hot” and is the same term used in Exodus for the fifth plague. Attempts at a precise medical diagnosis are pointless: the essential idea is that a burning rash covering the entire body

^d Ps 69:8.

^e Mi 7:16.

³⁴ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Is 52:13–15.

from the soles of the feet to the head would be agonizing (and also disfiguring, as the initial failure of the three friends to recognize Job suggests).”

Job 2 - ¹¹ Now when three of Job’s friends heard of all the misfortune that had come upon him, they set out each one from his own place: Eliphaz from Teman,* Bildad from Shuh, and Zophar from Naamath. They met and journeyed together to give him sympathy and comfort. ¹² **But when, at a distance, they lifted up their eyes and did not recognize him, they began to weep aloud; they tore their cloaks and threw dust into the air over their heads.** ¹³ Then they sat down upon the ground with him seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him; for they saw how great was his suffering. ³⁵

“THE DRAGON” OF ST. CYRIL OF JERUSALEM

Steven Chase, “Re-reading Job” – “I ran across this wonderful quotation from Cyril of Jerusalem, instructing catechumens: ‘The dragon is at the side of the road watching those who pass. Take care lest he devour you! You are going to the Father of souls, but it is necessary to pass by the dragon.’³⁶ The opposite of illusion has, I believe, something to do with that dragon, necessary to pass. It is necessary because our journey to the Father of Souls takes us just there where the dragon is watching; to get there we *must* pass.

In Job 40, there is a dramatic portrayal by God of His creation “**behemoth**” [dragon], about which Alter notes at Job 40:15 – “The Hebrew word means “beast.” It is in plural form, possibly a plural of intensification or majesty, but the noun is treated as singular and masculine (indeed, spectacularly masculine) throughout. Behemoth clearly takes off from the Egyptian hippopotamus, but in his daunting proportions, his fierce virility, and his absolute impregnability, he represents a mythological heightening of the actual beast, just as Leviathan is even more patently a mythological heightening of the Egyptian crocodile. The fact that the

* *Teman*: in Edom (see Gn 36:9–11). The Temanites (Jer 49:7; cf. Ob 8) **enjoyed a reputation for wisdom**. *Shuh* and *Naamath*: locations unknown.

³⁵ [*New American Bible*](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Job 2:11–13.

³⁶ Steven Chase finds this quotation in **Flannery O’Connor**, who uses it: “St. Cyril of Jerusalem, in instructing catechumens, wrote: “The dragon sits by the side of the road, watching those who pass. Beware lest he devour you. We go to the Father of Souls, but it is necessary to pass by the dragon.” No matter what form the dragon may take, it is of this mysterious passage past him, or into his jaws, that stories of any depth will always be concerned to tell, and this being the case, it requires considerable courage at any time, in any country, not to turn away from the storyteller.”

poet probably never laid eyes on these fabled beasts but knew of them through travelers' yarns no doubt facilitated this transition from zoology to myth. Whether there is some counterpart to Behemoth in Canaanite or Sumerian myth, as some have claimed, is a matter of dispute." [Alter, Robert. *The Hebrew Bible: A Translation with Commentary*. W. W. Norton & Company. Kindle location 96551.]

Flannery O'Connor – "The dragon sits by the side of the road, watching those who pass. Beware lest he devour you. We go to the Father of Souls, **but it is necessary to pass by the dragon.**" It was Flannery O'Connor who, in a perhaps unconscious echoing of Dante, said that all literature is anagogic. Here is her comment on St. Cyril: "No matter what form the dragon may take, it is of this mysterious passage past him, or into his jaws, that stories of any depth will always be concerned to tell, and this being the case, it requires considerable courage at any time, in any country, not to turn away from the storyteller.

O'Connor, Flannery (Mary Flannery O'Connor), 1925–1964, American author, b. Savannah, Ga., grad. Women's College of Georgia (A.B., 1945), Iowa State Univ. (M.F.A., 1947). As a writer, O'Connor is highly regarded for her bizarre imagination, uncompromising moral vision, and superb literary style. **Combining the grotesque and the gothic, her fiction treats contemporary Southern life in terms of stark, brutal comedy and violent tragedy.** Her characters, although often deformed in both body and spirit, are impelled toward redemption. All of O'Connor's fiction reflects her strong Roman Catholic faith. *Wise Blood* (1952) and *The Violent Bear It Away* (1960) are novels focusing on religious fanaticism; *A Good Man Is Hard To Find* (1955) and *Everything That Rises Must Converge* (1965) are short-story collections. Her *Collected Stories* was published in 1971.³⁷

AN IMPORTANT FACT: JOB NEVER ASKS TO HAVE IT ALL BACK

Job believes that God, as Sovereign, may give or retrieve his gifts at his pleasure (1:21b); he may send good or bad (2:10b). **He [God] is not accountable to any man for such actions.** Eliphaz thinks he knows how to get along with a predictable (and that means, to some extent, manageable) God. Job, who has no such pretensions, faces the agony of getting along with a God over whom he has absolutely no control or even influence. Eliphaz's speech, with which Job has no quarrel as a general statement of the power and justice of God, is beside the mark, because it simply does not fit Job's case. **Job had long since learnt to view his good life as a**

³⁷ Paul Lagassé, Columbia University, [The Columbia Encyclopedia](#) (New York; Detroit: Columbia University Press; Sold and distributed by Gale Group, 2000).

gift, not a reward, so he has no complaint when it is removed. *He has submitted no petition for its restoration.* Even in the end that will not come as an answer to prayer. Hence he does not want from Eliphaz the soothing word that if he would only do this or that, everything could be restored to ‘normal’. As if Job 1:1–5 defined the norm! The affirmations which Job has so magnificently made in 1:21 and 2:10 lead him into a new task. **He must normalize, find the rightness of, his relationship with God as it is ‘now’ (6:3). His lament in chapter 3 marks his entry upon that assignment.** To find consolation in the thought that his afflictions will be brief, that soon all will be as it used to be (5:17–26), would deflect him from this necessary and immediate task. **Unless we see this, we shall not appreciate the vehemence of the outburst that instantly follows in Job’s next speech.**³⁸

Job is being tested.⁷⁸ It is essential that he does not know why. *He must ask why. He must test and reject all the answers attempted by men. In the end he will find satisfaction in what God himself tells him.*⁷⁹ The final restoration of Job to the happy circumstances described by Eliphaz in 5:17–26, including the peaceful death in grand old age, surrounded by descendants to the fourth generation (42:11–17), is not in conflict with the conclusion reached at this point that Eliphaz is wrong. **For one thing, all that restoration comes well after Job has settled everything with God, and it is not the means by which God renews their friendship.** Furthermore, Job’s way back to this happy state is completely different from the route prescribed by Eliphaz in his first speech.³⁹

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SILENCE IN THIS TELLING

Job 2 – ¹² But when, at a distance, they lifted up their eyes and did not recognize him, they began to weep aloud; they tore their cloaks and threw dust into the air over their

³⁸ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 134.

^{*78} **Gen. 22 is a miniature book of Job. Abraham was driven into an ordeal as cruel as Job’s, and he could never again be as he was before. He had enlarged his life with God through suffering. The theology is the same. Abraham’s agony, like Job’s, was neither punitive (for the sinner) nor corrective (for the saint).**

^{*79} Many critics do not share Job’s satisfaction with the Yahweh speeches, precisely because they are not what they expect God to say!

³⁹ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 134–135.

heads. ¹³Then they sat down upon the ground with him seven days and seven nights, but none of them spoke a word to him; for they saw how great was his suffering. ⁴⁰

“Seven days” is a holy number of days. But it is also the number of “days” that God set aside to create the whole universe, in which one of those days – the last day – was *a contemplative day*: the Sabbath Day.

And so we begin to wonder whether these “seven days” (Job 2:13) are *the deconstruction days*, the *undoing* of the created world, and of the meaning of the world as it had been theologically understood to this point. In other words, these seven days of silence correspond to **the First Movement of re-creation, which is deconstruction**. And the long silence may therefore correspond to the opening lines of Genesis:

Genesis 1 (Robert Alter) – ¹When God began to create heaven and earth, ²and the earth then was *welter and waste* and darkness over the deep and God’s breath hovering over the waters, ³God said, “Let there be light.” And there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good, and God divided the light from the darkness.

Job, through this terrible testing of his life, in his life, apparently against his life, will now begin **to re-construct Theology** on a far more mature level of understanding. The former, stale Theologies of the Friends of Job has too many fundamental and serious mistakes. **These theologies mislead even their most devoted thinkers.**

What Job is experiencing in his life, thrust into his life by God’s intention, was primordial **CHAOS** – “**welter and waste**” as Alter translates the untranslatable *tohu wobohu*.

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**welter**” – “A state of confusion, upheaval, or turmoil.” And, “The rolling, tossing, or tumbling (of the sea or waves).”

The *Oxford English Dictionary* at “**waste**” – “Uninhabited (or sparsely inhabited) and uncultivated country; a wild and desolate region, a desert, wilderness.”

Notice how in 3:4, Job speaks “**Let it be darkness**”, which directly echoes the first word God speaks at the moment of Creation ... though in Job’s case, Job is undoing Creation – *deconstructing* it!

⁴⁰ [New American Bible](#), Revised Edition. (Washington, DC: The United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, 2011), Job 2:12–13.

WHY WE FEEL THE LOSS OF GOD WHEN OUR CENTRAL RELATIONSHIPS BREAK

Another general feature of Job's speeches cannot be emphasized too strongly. Scholars who find his volcanic outbursts in the dialogue utterly different from his tranquility in the prologue⁵ **overlook the fact that nowhere does Job bewail the losses of chapter 1 nor the illness of chapter 2. In this he is utterly consistent. His concern from beginning to end is God; not his wealth or health, but his life with God. It is because he seems to have lost God that he is in such torment.** This vivid consciousness does not remove the particulars of his human life—his work and his family and his body—from the scene as having nothing to do with God. Nothing could be more alien to his thought, and to Israelite religion in general, than to isolate the relationship with God as the only thing of value for a man, rendering him indifferent to poverty, callous in bereavement, heedless of pain. **On the contrary, the relationship with God is known in and by means of these ordinary things. Without them Job does not only lose his humanity; he loses God. Already we are prepared for an answer that comes, not when God (alone) confronts Job (alone), but when God is found in his world (the Yahweh speeches) and when Job finds himself once more surrounded by animals and friends and family.**⁴¹

ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

1. Where have you hidden,
Beloved, and left me moaning?
You fled like the stag
After wounding me;
I went out calling you, and you were gone.

2. Shepherds, you that go
Up through the sheepfolds to the hill,
If by chance you see
Him I love most,
Tell him that I sicken, suffer, and die.

⁵ See the Introduction (pp. 44ff.) for the use of this alleged contrast to assign the prose and the poetry to two different sources.

⁴¹ Francis I. Andersen, *Job: An Introduction and Commentary*, vol. 14, Tyndale Old Testament Commentaries (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1976), 104–105.

3. Seeking my love
I will head for the mountains and for watersides,
I will not gather flowers,
Nor fear wild beasts;
I will go beyond strong men and frontiers.

4. O woods and thickets
Planted by the hand of my beloved!
O green meadow,
Coated, bright with flowers.
Tell me, has he passed by you?

5. Pouring out a thousand graces,
He passed these groves in haste;
And having looked at them,
With his image alone,
Clothed them in beauty.

**6. Ah, who has the power to heal me?
Now wholly surrender yourself!
Do not send me
Any more messengers,
They cannot tell me what I must hear.**

**7. All who are free
Tell me a thousand graceful things of you;
All wound me more
And leave me dying
Of, ah, I-don't-know-what behind their stammering.**⁴²

Steven Chase, “Re-reading Job”, quoting Flannery O’Connor – “Flannery O’Conner again, in her no-nonsense way, helps us into the infernal night-vision of Jobean faith. She writes: ‘Ivan Karamazov cannot believe, as long as one child is in torment; Camus’ hero cannot accept the divinity of Christ, because of the massacre of the innocents. **In this popular piety, we mark our aim in sensibility and our loss in vision. If other ages felt less, they saw more, even though they saw with the blind, prophetic, unsentimental eye of acceptance, which is to say, faith. In the absence of faith now, we govern by tenderness.** [But] it is a tenderness which, long since cut off from the person of Christ, is wrapped in theory. When tenderness is detached from the source of tenderness, its logical outcome is terror.’”⁴³

⁴² John of the Cross, *John of the Cross: Selected Writings*, ed. Kieran Kavanaugh and John Farina, The Classics of Western Spirituality (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1987), 221–222.

⁴³ Flannery O’Conner, “Introduction to a Memoir of Mary Ann” in *Complete Works*, 830.