

Body Exchanges in the Book of Job: A Transactional-analytical Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Although the prosaic frame before and after the poetic, main body of the Job narrative mentions two sets of children, one can question this and explain the change as psychological development in the parental figure, Job, himself. There are at least three clues to this: Job receives more in the end than he lost in the beginning, yet the number of his children remains the same; there is no mention of Job's wife being traumatised by the loss of her children and as there is no mention that Job's body is healed, it remains uncertain if he could still father children. Instead, the repeated substitutions especially in the sacrificial sections suggest that Job empathically identifies with the threatened bodies of others so that he inevitably becomes a sacrificial victim himself. Through his traumatic bodily experience, he matures and shifts to a more adult-like ego state where bodies are mentally exchanged.

KEYWORDS: Book of Job, body exchanges, trauma

A INTRODUCTION

The context for this research is the background of body studies of the book of Job where the reified and literal body of the protagonist has been the main or even only object of investigation and where the "fluid" body in the mind, and most probably in the unconscious, of Job has been overlooked. Sacrifice in the book of Job is a well-recognised research theme (e.g. Bakan,¹ Guttridge,² van Ruiten³

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¹ David Bakan, "Sacrifice and the Book of Job" in *Disease, Pain and Sacrifice: Toward a Psychology of Suffering*. (ed. David Bakan; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 95-128; „Das Opfer im Buche Hiob“ in *Psychoanalytische Interpretationen biblischer Texte* (ed. Yorick Spiegel; Munich: Kaiser, 1972), 152–166.

² Coralie A. Guttridge, "The Sacrifice of Fools and the Wisdom of Silence: Qoheleth, Job and the Presence of God," in *Biblical Hebrew, Biblical Texts: Essays in Memory of Michael P. Weitzman* (ed. A. Rapoport-Albert and G. Greenberg; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2001), 83-99.

³ Jacques van Ruiten, "Abraham, Job and the Book of Jubilees: The Intertextual Relationship of Genesis 22:1–19, Job 1:1–2:13 and Jubilees 17:15–18:19," in *The*

and Heim⁴) that remains relevant. No study has, however, related it specifically to the body and interpreted it as an exchange happening on a psychic level.

As a new hypothesis, this study therefore wishes to fill this gap in research investigating how bodies are somehow displaced and substituted. Body exchanges happen externally (mostly) during sacrifices in the book of Job. Internally, they can be traced as shifting mental states by transaction analysis.

It is further conjectured that Job's ego state of mind under pressure of his bodily pathology is forced to develop into a more wholesome, balanced and inclusive stance in his relationships with other bodies which then seem to become "new" bodies to him. Scholtz must have sensed this as well, when he states that: "If Job's further children at the end of the story (42:13) are seen merely as 'replacements' for his earlier children, what will be missed is the transformation in Job that their very existence signals."⁵

This investigation starts off with an overview of different psychological insights about sacrifice. This is then related to transactional analysis, which will be the hermeneutical guide to interpret sacrifice in the book of Job as an attempt to exchange and substitute problematic and problematised bodies. Evidence is presented finally to raise the probability that the children mentioned in the last chapter are the same as those mentioned in the beginning but different from the internalised objects in Job's psyche where he has become more inclusive of the previously repressed feminine. The spotlight throughout will be on the temporary disappearing, sliding and silenced bodies which only surface from time to time in the text as dolphins do in the ocean, making them seem to be those of different individuals, whereas only the viewpoint of the protagonist has shifted.

B PSYCHOLOGY OF SACRIFICE

Relatively little has been written on sacrifice from a psychodynamic and, specifically, a psychoanalytic perspective, though the word, "Opfer," or any of its derivatives occurs 305 times in Freud's collected work and it is his focus in *Totem und Tabu*.⁶ Akhtar and Varma try to catch up on this backlog in their article⁷ but do not include Berne (*vide infra*) as contributor to this theme.

Sacrifice of Isaac: The Aqedah (Genesis 22) and Its Interpretations (ed. Edward Noort and Eibert Tigchelaar; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2002), 58–85.

⁴ S. Mark Heim, "The Voice of Job: Sacrifice Revealed and Contested" in *Saved from Sacrifice: A Theology of the Cross* (ed. Mark Heim; Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 2006), 64–104.

⁵ Roger Scholtz, "'I Had Heard of You... but Now My Eye Sees You': Re-visioning Job's Wife," *Old Testament Essays* 26/3 (2013): 830.

⁶ Sigmund Freud, *Totem und Tabu* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1913).

⁷ Salman Akhtar and Archana Varma, "Sacrifice: Psychodynamic, Cultural and Clinical Aspects," *The American Journal of Psychoanalysis* 72/2 (2012): 95–117.

Sacrifice is always a relational matter: "*Si sacrifier peut se dire au sens direct et au sens réfléchi, c'est que cela parle de quelque chose qui se situe, qui circule au sein même de la relation, entre soi et l'autre*" (If sacrificing can be expressed in a direct and a reflective sense, it is because it speaks of something that is located, circulating within the relationship itself, between oneself and the other), as Selz puts it.⁸

As such sacrifice is about dis- and re-placement just as metaphors are and the victim is somehow a metaphor for the sacrificer. In an atonement sacrifice, three parties are involved just as in a trauma-situation (*vide infra*): the "victim" *seems* to stand in the place of the perpetrator with whom the victim *seems* to identify through projective identification.⁹ The perpetrator surrenders a part of herself or himself, yet, in another sense it is also a way of splitting off the victim-other, while the sacrificer as mediating rescuer has to be an immaculate and innocent body in order to render the sacrifice effective, according to Lev 21–22, for instance. In the case of Job as a possible priest, he first identifies with the possible perpetrators, then, distances himself from their reality through sacrifice, changing their status even when they are not even aware of it. The victim symbolises the perpetrators, who are now absent in the sense that the former perpetrators do not exist as perpetrators anymore. As burnt offering, the victim is not even internalised through eating anymore.

Slater¹⁰ summarises five possible elements of a sacrifice, which have been differently emphasised by various theorists as: mediating the divine and human realms, sustaining the divine (as if it were dependent on it), psychic transformation in the sacrificer (or perpetrator in the case of an atonement sacrifice), renunciation and "the return of consciousness to deeper life rhythms." Slater¹¹ selects (disinterested) renunciation as the only universal element, although this does not seem to be the case with Job for whom the last of reintegration would be more appropriate. Psychic integration depends on and in turn enhances symbolisation as sacrifice of the signified which is sublimated to a higher level of consciousness.

Hirsch,¹² however, regards the affliction caused to Job's body as the representation (*sic!*) of the breakdown of the symbolic order, a somewhat

⁸ Monique Selz, « Le Sacrifice et la Psychanalyse: Un Rapport Problématique, » *Pardes* 2 (2005): 118.

⁹ Melanie Klein, "Notes on Some Schizoid Mechanisms," *International Journal of Psycho-analysis* 27 (1946): 105.

¹⁰ Glen Slater, *Surrendering to Psyche: Depth Psychology, Sacrifice, and Culture* (Santa Barbara: Pacifica Graduate Institute, 1996), 24.

¹¹ Slater, *Surrendering*, 5.

¹² Alexander K. Hirsch, "Walking off the Edge of the World: Sacrifice, Chance, and Dazzling Dissolution in the Book of Job and Ursula K. Le Guin's 'The Ones Who Walk away from Omelas'," *Humanities* 5/3, 5. <https://doi.org/10.3390/h5030067.2016>.

paradoxical statement. Likewise, Alford and Alford claim that Job's ego is drawn to "nonbeing, the self undifferentiated from the world... [His] body becomes an object, cast-off piece of the world."¹³ Job therefore longs for the restoration of this symbolic order in signs which govern boundaries and laws, expressed by his skin, amongst others. The former *qān* (perfect, integrated; *vide infra*) body is now falling apart, according to 30:30.

It is important to realise that "[i]n kaum einem Bereich der Erforschung des Menschen durch Menschen treten die eigenen Grenzen deutlicher zutage, als wenn es um Kinder geht" (There is hardly any other field in human research where one's own boundaries are clearer than in that which concerns children). This is how the world renowned Swiss biblical anthropologists, Staubli and Schroer,¹⁴ start their discussion of childhood in the Bible. In identifying as father to his children through his vicarious sacrifices, Job somehow regresses to that child level where the skin and boundaries are still basic issues.

C TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS

As a psychoanalytic variation of the classic Freudian version of the psyche, Eric Berne focuses on the ego-state of people in interaction.¹⁵ Significantly, Freud¹⁶ asserts that the ego is in the first place a body-ego therefore the state of the ego could by implication also be based and have an impact on the body. Furthermore, Freud associates specifically the skin with the ego, exactly, the issue in the psychological plot of the book of Job.

Berne also distinguishes between the child, adult and parent modes or "voices" of the ego, the most authentic and mature being the adult-ego, an objective appraisal of reality, which depends on the shifts from the child and parent to the adult state. This shadows, of course, Freud's own triadic version represented by the *id*, *ego* and *superego*, all three being encapsulated in this Bernian adult-ego itself. When the child state is subdivided into a natural and an adaptive, and the parent state into a nurturing and a critical variety, nine possible interactions emerge. In his early work, Berne regards sublimation as displacement of the libido "when both the aim and the object are partial

¹³ C. Fred Alford and Charles F. Alford, *After the Holocaust: The Book of Job, Primo Levi, and the Path to Affliction* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 9.

¹⁴ Thomas Staubli and Silvia Schroer, „Vom Kindsein,“ in *Menschenbilder der Bibel* (ed. Thomas Staubli and Silvia Schroer; Ostfildern: Patmos 2014), 74-82.

¹⁵ Eric Berne, "Ego States in Psychotherapy," *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 11/2 (1957): 293-309.

¹⁶ Sigmund Freud, „Das Ich und das Es,“ in *Gesammelte Werke chronologisch geordnet* (Band XIII: Jenseits des Lustprinzips; Massenpsychologie und Ich-analyse; Das Ich und das Es; Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 2010), 253-255.

substitutions for the biological aim and object," that is, of the "childlike" *id*-realm.¹⁷

Although sacrifice is not a key concept in Berne's theories, it is typically embedded as a feature of the nurturing, but more hidden in the critical, parent and in that a victim, a persecutor and a rescuer¹⁸ are the three positions possible in the "games people play."¹⁹ These positions, of course, also link to trauma theories and so the network of associated ideas has much potential for interesting exploration and creative integration in the book of Job.

This can be relevant to an analysis of Job's sacrifices more generally but specifically to his attitude towards his children, who are extensions of both his body and his ego. As subversive hermeneutics of suspicion, psychoanalytic thinking can ask whether Job's martyrdom is not pretentious, a reaction formation and therefore a projection of or deflection from his aggression against his children, under the guise of critical parenthood, in order to induce guilt feelings. Nonetheless, on a conscious level, Job's sacrifices seem like an attempt at reparation²⁰ of rupture,²¹ which means that the nurturing and the critical parents are not really that different.

D SACRIFICE IN THE BOOK OF JOB

1 Sacrifice as steering structure of the book

Sacrifice as offering to a paternal superego God plays a background role in the book of Job. In both 1:5 and 42:8, עולה (burnt-offering) is mentioned without reference to any specific animal. Although occurring only in the prosaic frame of the book, it somehow gains an important status in the book. Almost at the end of Job's speeches, he admits in 31:23 that defensive anxiety was the reason for his piety, presumably including his sacrifices.²² In fact, from 1:5, it is clear that Job sacrificed as a cautionary measure, reminding one of obsessive-compulsive behaviour. This is not far off the mark of the Satan's suspicion, being "anachronistically adept in psychological explanations of religion" (*ibid.*).

As delegated superego, the father represents the group or, in René Girard's parlance, the mob. As soon as Job "loses" —in whatever way—his children, he

¹⁷ Eric Berne, *A Layman's Guide to Psychiatry and Psychoanalysis* (New York: Grove Press, 1957), 78.

¹⁸ The rescuer often develops from the victim, but is also often mistrusted by other victims and so experienced as persecutor by them.

¹⁹ This is also the title of Berne's 1964 book.

²⁰ Melanie Klein, *Love, Guilt and Reparation, and Other Works 1921-1945* (Vol. 1; New York: Simon and Schuster, 2002).

²¹ Otto Fenichel, *The Psychoanalytic Theory of Neurosis* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1945), 22.

²² Philip Goodchild, "The Logic of Sacrifice in the Book of Job: Philosophy and the Practice of Religion," *Journal for Cultural Research* 4/2 (2000): 170.

no longer represents the group or the mob, is no longer a father and becomes an individual, whom the group can now treat as a child again and thus mimetically joins the Satan-accuser. In fact, the three interlocutors who represent the parental mob treat him as a child when they judge him. However, they do not sacrifice anything for his sins, as Job has done for his children. Instead, he becomes a victim himself, precisely because of his "different" body, his physical marks which distinguish him from the undifferentiated mob. Girard²³ highlights such exceptional bodily features as an attractive sign in individuals, making them prone to becoming the dumping ground onto which the collective violence is projected.

The Satan, in 1:9–10 and more specifically in 2:4, questions indirectly the authenticity of Job's sacrificial way of life as mere pragmatic contract, transaction or tit-for-tat trade to level the playing field between the human and the divine: עור בְּעַד-עוֹר וְכָל אֲשֶׁר לְאִישׁ--יִתֵּן בְּעַד נַפְשׁוֹ (Skin for skin, yes, all that a man has, will he give for his life). In 1:12 and 2:6, God is willing to, at least temporarily, sacrifice the exceptional and תָּם (immaculate) Job's prosperity, children and health in a wager with the Satan.

2 Sacrifice as religious institution

Even though God is called the covenant name, יְהוָה, only in 12:9 and in chapters 1, 2, 38, 40 and 42, one can assume that the same rules and regulations for the Israelites apply to this kind of sacrifice.²⁴ Balentine²⁵ emphasises the priestly profile of Job in the prosaic frame of the book but its undermining in the poetic core, epitomised in 12:19: מוֹלִיךְ פְּהָגִים שׂוֹלֵל (He [that is, God] leads priests away stripped). He bases this connection to the Priestly writings on the word, תָּם (blameless), in 1:1, echoing Lev 22:19, 21, Num 19:2 and Ezek 43:22-23, on the word, הַיּוֹם (the day), in 1:6 and 2:1, reminding of the day of Atonement, and on the skin problems from which Job suffers, resembling the descriptions of Lev 13-14.

That Job could sacrifice implies that he initially has the perfect body, an assumption in the first place intertextually strengthened by Lev 21-22, suggested already by תָּם (perfect) in 1:1 and even by בְּתַמְתְּךָ (on[to] your integrity) in 2:9. Secondly, this is also textually hinted at by the well-structured and repetitive

²³ Girard himself has already dealt with the book of Job only "by doing violence to the text" (Goodchild, "The Logic of Sacrifice," 169), suggesting so many changes to the text – clearly to suit his theories that one can hardly regard it as the book of Job anymore.

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²⁵ Samuel E. Balentine, *Leviticus* (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2002), 32-33; "Job and the Priests: 'He Leads Priests away Stripped' (Job 12: 19)" in *Reading Job Intertextually: Job and Isaiah* (ed. Katharine J. Dell and Will Kynes; London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 42-53.

prologue of the book, according to Hyun.²⁶ It is, thirdly, implied by Job’s seemingly perfect integration into his society before his troubles, which is only possible if he had a “whole,” perfect body.²⁷ Schellenberg notes how often typically cultic words such as טהר (pure, clean), טמא (impure, unclean), תמם (perfect) and מום or מאום (blemish) occur in this wisdom text.²⁸

3 Fathers and children as parties in sacrifice

Ironically, although Job sacrifices vicariously for his sons, clearly due to his anxiety of sin but supposedly also to retain them as living bodies, he is told that he has lost his children (or more precisely, הַנְּעָרִים [young people]) and servants—both children-figures—through accidents and crime, respectively. That there were probably other people at these parties is proven by the fact that the messenger was also there, unless he was the only non-relative to chaperone them; yet, no attention is given to the parents of the other young people who also lost their children in this freak tragedy. Similar crimes are thought of by Job in 24:2-4, where boundaries are likewise transgressed against and removed and where children are also amongst the victims. Twice in that chapter, in 24:3, 9 (cf. also 6:27, 22:9 [the only one not said by Job, unless Eliphaz is quoting him], 29:12 and 31:17, 21, all in vulnerable positions), he refers to the יתום (fatherless). Here the roles are inversed in that the father is absent or even dead, but the barely surviving children have become orphans, maybe a situation he envisions when he does not survive. Perhaps Job identifies with and mourns his own father who is absent in the text.

Only in 17:14, 29:16, 31:18 and 38:28 does Job play with the word, אב (father), as metaphor in connection with corruption, charity and the rain respectively. In 29:16 he reveals his concept of being an אב (father) who is there לְאֶבְיוֹנִים (for the needy), playing on the repetition of the syllable, אב. In 31:18, he sees himself as having been like a father to the fatherless, even when Job was still young (מִנְעוּרִי [from my youth], the same root used in 1:19), suggesting that his own father died when he was still young, prompting him to take over that role for

²⁶ S. Timothy Hyun, “*Job the Disabled: Disability and Welfare in the Book of Job*,” n.p. [cited 16 January 2022]. Online: https://www.academia.edu/19001887/Job_the_Disabled_Disability_and_Welfare_in_the_Book_of_Job

²⁷ Hyun, “*Job the Disabled*,” https://www.academia.edu/19001887/Job_the_Disabled_Disability_and_Welfare_in_the_Book_of_Job; Alec Basson, “Just Skin and Bones: The Longing for Wholeness of the Body in the Book of Job,” *Vetus Testamentum* 58/3 (2008): 288.

²⁸ Annette Schellenberg, „Mein Fleisch ist gekleidet in Maden und Schorf (Hi 7,5): Zur Bedeutung des Körpers im Hiobbuch,“ in *Verkörperung als Paradigma theologischer Anthropologie* (ed. Gregor Etzelmüller and Annette Weissenrieder; Berlin: De Gruyter, 2016), 103-104.

others. This is how he has regarded all children: as needy. The other two verses, 17:14 and 38:28, are hypothetical, presumably unreal cases of fatherhood.

By excessively playing the father role, Job's ego is in the parent-mode of the ego, which worries about the still immature bodies of his children, due to his own lack of emotional development. Their egos will remain in the child mode for as long as Job's ego remains in the parent mode. The obvious question to ask is whether Job's parental attitude towards his children is anything unexpected for a father. He sacrifices for them (seemingly without them knowing about it), however, even without having proof of their sins—but just in case they secretly, *בְּלִבָּם* (in their hearts), blasphemed God, possibly by abusing their child-ego-bodies. In this way, he does not allow his children to take responsibility and thus be individuated. Not only does he displace his children by these subtly judgmental sacrifices but the sacrificial animals also replace the children. More concretely, the burden on the bodies of his children is shifted to the animal bodies which are burnt completely and are a sublimated expression of Job's anger against his children, just as God's anger in 42:7 urges for the same kind of sacrifice in 1:5, *עולה*.²⁹ By pretending to atone for his children and to tone down God's possible anger, Job as father is projecting his own Laius-complex anger at his children, the opposite of Freud's theorised oedipal parricide, a point which has been recognised by Bergmann as well³⁰.

4 Perpetrators and victims in sacrifice

Moreover, Job also loses his animals, not only through his sacrifices, but through the criminality of others in 1:15, 17 and through natural disaster in 1:16. Interestingly, he does not offer sacrifice for the sins of these criminals. Despite his efforts to spare the bodies of his children, they are lost accidentally through an act of God. One could speculate whether it was actually a final punishment for the sins that animal bodies could not push out of the way or before Job could sacrifice on their behalf, as he does not seem to know that they have been at yet another party: a messenger has to tell him about it. In 2:9, Job's wife provokes him to die (*vide infra*) and let go of his "integrity," using the same root *נָקַח* as in the first verse of the book and referring to the internalised superego or parental ego. The word "integrated" seems meaningless to Job's wife who prods Job to "dis-integrate" but holding himself together, he finds this idea stupid. He (or his parental ego) is not willing to die (yet), although in the next chapter, just a few verses further, he clearly craves it. As an integrated mind, he can still symbolise and so sublimate in sacrifice (*vide supra*).

However, as a sacrificing father and "rescuer-mediator," Job identifies somehow with his "perpetrator" children on behalf of whom he brings burnt-

²⁹ Cf. Akhtar and Varma, "Sacrifice," 101.

³⁰ Martin S. Bergmann, *In the Shadow of Moloch: The Sacrifice of Children and Its Impact on Western Religions* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1992).

offerings in the prosaic part. He becomes, as some kind of child having been one once and knowing through introspection and remembrance what goes on in their hearts, the sacrificed scapegoat. In this way, he is the pseudo-enemy and victim in the poetic part of the book where all his interlocutors, including God, could be the perpetrators and where he claims in 29:15-16, for instance, to have been the rescuer of other victims from other persecutors before his ordeal. In the end, he is the rehabilitated scapegoat who can become the rescuer again, reconcile the three sinful interlocutors with God and include all in his role as adult, allowing his children, both sons and daughters, to be adults as well. In this way, his and his children's positions constantly change, reminding one of Allan Edgar Poe's story, *The Purloined Letter*, in which the roles shift between the active observer who later becomes the passive observed. Lacan explains that the proper "place" of the signifier is determined by the symbolic structure in which it exists as it is constantly displaced.

5 Reversing roles in sacrifice

Unlike Goodchild who understands Job as offering sacrifices *for* his friends,³¹ in 42:8-9, the three bad consultants sacrifice a burnt offering for themselves supposing that they are somehow still spiritually and bodily capable to do it, while Job's prayer replaces his own burnt offerings in the first chapter and now mediates their sacrifice like a priest does in Lev 14. This suggests that his skin disease could have been healed if Lev 21 is taken into account and that his accusers are now, ironically, the accused. Eliphaz is singled out as representative of the first three human interlocutors by God in 42:7 because he seems to be the leader of the pack who started to attack Job in chapter 4. Incidentally, Elihu is not amongst the accused or amongst those who need to sacrifice or who need Job's prayer. In fact, God does not comment on his words at all. Although the Satan is actually the first accuser whose charges turn out to be implicitly invalid, no sacrifice is offered for him either. In fact, he disappeared from the scene after the second chapter. He only initiated a process which has been displaced and continued by the three (false) friends whose trumped-up changes turn out to be futile in 32:1 when they are reduced to silence as well.

Clines notes the particularly high price of the atoning sacrifices at the end, occurring only in four other instances in the Hebrew Bible (Ezek 45:23; Num 23:1, 29; 1 Chr 15:26 and 2 Chr 29:21), with much higher stakes for the people of Israel.³²

It is Job's prayer which, once again, ironically, saves his accusers from punishment and therefore changes also his *own* fortune, according to 42:8, 9 and

³¹ Goodchild, *The Logic of Sacrifice*, 170.

³² David J. A. Clines, *Job 38–42* (Nashville: Nelson, 2011), 1232.

10. God then includes them all in God's grace. His companions progress from child-like perpetrators to intimate adults.

6 Mental states and sacrifice

It is significant that Job does not sacrifice anymore, neither for his children nor for the three guilty friends. Having fallen from the subtly judgemental parental pedestal to the childlike accused, he can progress to the adult-ego as well. Once having been the victim, he no longer needs to sacrifice as a rescuer who is often robed in a parental halo. His previously extended body was due to his inflated parental ego, which has sobered down into a realistic one, thanks due to the realisation of the fragility of his body—and therefore ego boundaries, symbolised by his skin. The parental state typically believes itself to be extending into children and even other people. As such, it is, ironically, a remnant of and regression to the infantile illusion of omnipotence and omnipresence, even a reaction formation of it. The formerly deified ego has been reduced to a humbled, human one, which is – also ironically – more open to the world for which Job prays.

If Maimonides³³ touched a truth when he claimed that prayer is a progression from sacrifice, being God's temporary concession to human psychological limitations, then, one can recognise emotional development in Job from the first to the last chapter. At the same time, he elevates the sacrifices of his former accusers, lest they remain ineffective. It is as if these parental accusers are now temporarily reduced to children, even when they sacrifice, which Job's own children have never done. Contrary to Job who considered his children as possibly guilty and therefore sacrificed on their behalf, these former accusers have never offered a sacrifice for Job, whom they judged as guilty as well.

It might be frustrating for Job that the hostile friends are saved from punishment because of his prayers whereas his sacrifices for his cherished children could not save them. That assumption is strengthened by the fact that Job does not volunteer to pray for them but has to wait for (indirect) instruction from God to move to that level. The three friends offer sacrifices of their own accord but have to be instructed by God, as their paternal parent. Significantly, 42:9 states that God accepted Job (possibly as *נָא* again) and therefore his prayer for his three companions, not that God accepted these three friends in their own right due to their sacrifices. Job's prayer for his three accusers does have personal benefits as well because this led to his restoration (42:10).

It seems somehow significant that the number of bullocks and rams to be sacrificed by the three accused, according to 42:8, are to be the same as the number of Job's sons only but not his daughters, not "according to the number"

³³ Maimonides, *The Guide for the Perplexed* (trans. M. Friedlander; New York: Dover Publications, 1956), 323.

(cf. מְסַפֵּר בְּלִמָּוָה in 1:5!) of the three transgressors, as in the first chapter where the kind of animals are not mentioned, however. It is almost as if the three interlocutors are now the ones sacrificing for Job's sons (only), as Job used to do in the first chapter. If that resonance is somehow valid, it would strengthen the impression that Job only sacrificed for his sons in 1:5, even when the word, בְּנֵי (sons) is often used in a gender inclusive sense to mean "children." In the last chapter, Job does not offer sacrifice for his children any longer. That could imply that no sacrifices could be brought for his daughters as they remain not-yet responsible children below the status of their brothers.

7 Job as transformed victim in God's sacrifice

It is significant also that in the last chapter the children apparently behave so differently from the first chapter: they do not cavort in risky parties. One wonders if his children behave so differently because their father is so different from the one in the first chapter and now treats them as adults or if they have (in the meantime) grown up into responsible adults who no longer need these religious security-nets. That would then imply that they are the same children. This possibility is supported by his wife's suicidal advice to Job only in 2:9, after Job's health collapsed, as if she also was not emotionally destroyed by the alleged loss of their children in the first chapter. Hidden behind her advice could be her own interest of simply wanting to get rid of this sick and depressed man, pretending to be willing to "sacrifice" him. A further question can therefore also be raised whether it is realistic to believe that she would still be emotionally and physically capable of going through another ten pregnancies and births, when she has already lost ten children. In addition, it remains interesting that Job loses everything outside his body except his wife and his terrible friends.

Job never ventured to offer himself as sacrifice, even if his charity can be seen as activist-sacrificial in 29:15-17 and 31:13, 16-21, 31-32. The Satan taunts God by asserting that the losses Job already incurred in the first chapter have been for Job like sacrifices in lieu of, that is, just to save, his own body and life, and that Job would בָּרַךְ ("bless" but here used ironically and euphemistically for "curse") God if he does not have this "currency" anymore. Job's wife likewise taunts her husband to בָּרַךְ God and commit suicide (*vide supra*) in 2:9,³⁴ undermining 1:21 where Job blesses God and so does exactly the opposite of what he suspects his children to have done in 1:5. This shift of the verb, בָּרַךְ, suggests that Job is prompted to take the place of his children, whom he has lost already. The word is brought back again right at the end of the last chapter, in 42:12, with God as the subject and Job as the object and it is then rehabilitated with the normal meaning of the verb, to bless, just as it was used for God blessing Job in 1:10, at the beginning of the book.

³⁴ Although at that stage Job compares her words to those of הַנְּבִלּוֹת (impious women), later, in 7:15, he does consider suicide himself in an indirect, passive way.

If God starts to "consume" Job's body as sacrifice, then the interpretation of Scarry become relevant: the slow substitution of the sacrificial body first by the voice of the victim and then by that of the torturer, "permits one person's body to be translated into another's voice."³⁵ This is exactly what happens to Job who was initially vociferous in his outcry but then silenced by the words of God.

From these "transactions" there is a constant shift of investment and gain, but not necessarily including Job's health. As Rogers points out, the text is simply silent about this.³⁶ The gain, according to the evidence from the text, is only on the level of Job's extended body: Job's possessions and his children, if his daughters are now more beautiful than the previous ones. Nonetheless, some improvement in his health must be assumed if he managed to conceive children. If not, that would serve as support that the children at the end are, in fact, probably the same as those at the beginning. Incidentally, 42:13 simply uses the word, וַיְהִי-לוֹ (and he had [so many children]) without explicitly stating, וַיִּנְלְדוּ לּוֹ (and they were born to him), as in 1:2. Alternatively, it is also possible with his history and reputation that he adopted these new children but the text does not mention this.

8 Empathy and sacrifice

Job has moved from sacrificing animals due to a sense of guilt on behalf of others to sacrificing himself, even in a consciously unintentional way, as this role is collectively projected onto him. This projection relates to his empathic identification (cf. Carveth³⁷) with those suffering innocently and specifically those suffering bodily as he remembers in 29:15: עֵינַיִם הָיִיתִי לְעֹרֵר וְרַגְלַיִם לְפֶסֶחַ אָנִי (I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I to the lame). It was easier for him then when קְבוֹבוֹתַי נִעְרִי (my children were about me), according to 29:5. Through his constant identification with their suffering, he has internalised their disability due to his "thin skin" and has become like them.

His protests in the poetic part of the book are less about theodicy and more about the nurturing parental ego's lack of empathy with bodily suffering, as it seems from 26:2. Girard has also recognised Job's social ostracism and regarded it even as Job's main complaint.³⁸ Therefore all the arguments of his human interlocutors have not convinced him, as they are irrelevant and a rationalising avoidance of his real struggle, missing his sacrificial stance.

³⁵ Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), 18.

³⁶ Rogers, Jessie. "Filling in the Gaps: Faithful Readings of the Book of Job," *Proceedings of the Irish Biblical Association* 33 (2010): 39.

³⁷ Donald L. Carveth, "Dead End Kids: Projective Identification and Sacrifice in Orphans," *International Review of Psycho-analysis* 19 (1992): 218.

³⁸ Girard, *La Route Antique*, 4.

His protest is also that of his ego against the cruel aspect of the superego critical parental ego³⁹ expressed by judgemental people and, in Job's mind, ultimately stemming from God. This brings relief and liberation from depression in the childhood state so that maturing into adulthood is psychically possible.

E INTEGRATING THE FEMALE SIDE OF JOB'S BODY-IMAGE

Lacking in the theory of transactional analysis is the distinction between the paternal and the maternal parent. This is relevant for the families in the book of Job. Immediately after the mention of the initial family of Job, there is also another family at play, namely that of God who has sons, amongst whom is the Satan (1:6; 2:1). However, unlike Job who deals with his children at a distance, God *speaks* to God's children, even God's Satan-shadow-son. From a psychodynamic perspective, this means that God is intimately integrated compared to Job: God speaks to the child-ego family members, even to one who from a parental-ego position talks down to his Father, although it does not seem to have an oedipal origin, as the mother of these sons or children is non-existent. Daughters also do not appear in this family of God, if בְּנֵי in 1:6, 2:1 and 38:7 is understood in a literal, masculine way. This would suggest that there is still more development to be done on God's side, although this family portrayal could be a projection of the narrator's patriarchal perspective.

Job himself has a parental, even paternal, attitude not only towards his children but also towards God, somehow like the parental-ego son of God, the Satan. Samuels affirms that: "Job is like a parent, pressed beyond 'mortal' patience in his explosive outburst. Job does not represent mature ego-consciousness for there is still no mention of connection to the feminine which remains split off."⁴⁰ This may be the case even when Job's father is absent, suggesting that the projected God is at least partially a possibly maternal one. It is conspicuous that the divine name, שְׁדַי (*Shadday*) is heard so often in this poetic but never in the narrator's prosaic part of the book, reminding one of the root, שָׁד (female breast), occurring in 3:12 and 24:9 and also outside of the prosaic frame. When there is a link between this name and the female breast, there is always also a tension with the ever-present but suppressed feminine.⁴¹

It might seem that Job's own family also has been marginalised and relegated to the prosaic frame of the book. Although Job has seemingly lost everything and even starts to lose his skin as the disease encroaches into his body,

³⁹ Ronald Britton, *Sex, Death and the Superego* (London: Karnac, 2003), 107-112; cf. also JiSeong J. Kwon, "Psychosomatic Approach to Job's Malady: Based on Somatic Symptom Disorder," *Journal of Religion and Health* 59/4 (2020): 2032-2044.

⁴⁰ Andrew Samuels, *Jung and the Post-Jungians* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 53.

⁴¹ See David Biale, "The God with Breasts: El Shaddai in the Bible," *History of Religions* 21/3 (1982): 240-256; Harriet Lutzky, "Shadday as a Goddess Epithet," *Vetus Testamentum* 48/1 (1998): 15-36.

he has not lost his (unnamed) wife. In 2:9, she expresses herself and challenges Job to curse God. In this sense, she as a woman is his first human interlocutor and his first critic but for exactly the opposite reason as Job's male accusers. She is answered in the next verse where Job compares her to an impious woman. She is mentioned again in 19:17 as abhorring Job's breath and in 31:9-10 where Job imagines his wife prostituting to avenge him for any adultery. In all three instances, she is therefore negatively depicted. Even when the allegedly "new" children are supposedly "born" at the end, where Job's situation not only improves but where he also receives more than he had before his trauma, she is conspicuous by the silence about her just as in the first chapter, no mother of his (or God's) children is mentioned. If Job's wife has literally disappeared from the scene and not been replaced by another, this would confirm that the children mentioned in the last chapter might be the same as those in the beginning. Even Job, the father, names his three daughters, the only instance in the Hebrew Bible,⁴² as this was something which the mother would do in the culture of Job's time (cf. 1 Sam 1:20).

Job's emotional struggle with the womb,⁴³ his harsh words in 14:1, implicating mothers (his own mentioned in 1:21, 17:14 [together with his sister, also *vide* 42:11] and 31:18 and implied in 3:10) for life's difficulties and the relative absence of other women in the book except the few mentioned in side-remarks (*vide infra*) all testify of the tension with the feminine.

This makes one wonder about the surprising revelation about his "new" daughters in 42:13-15, just three verses from the end. His daughters are now personally presented with names never mentioned before and so are, at least on a psychological level, not identical with those in chapter 1. Alternatively, Job changed his attitude towards his daughters but therefore also towards his patriarchal culture. The adult-ego, Job, allows them to emerge as individuals. Giving or changing someone's name, changes not only that person's identity but also the relationship with and, therefore, by implication, the identity of the name-giver as well.

Apart from naming his children, and more specifically only his daughters in 42:14, Job breaks another cultural boundary of exclusion by bequeathing his property to his daughters as he does to his sons, exchanging his property as his extended body to them. They are freely praised for their beauty. Interesting also

⁴² Clines, *Job 38-42*, 1232.

⁴³ Pieter van der Zwan, "Job's Emotional Struggle with the Womb: Some Psychoanalytic Interpretations," *Journal for Semitics* 28/2 (2019):1-21; „Bedeutungen und Bilder der Gebärmutter in der Hebräischen Bibel," *Journal for Semitics* 24/1 (2015): 169-197.

is that no (supposedly male) servants⁴⁴ are mentioned in the final chapter as replacements for those killed in 1:15, 16 and 17.

To avoid an inexplicable relapse from this progression of Job in the second-last verse, 42:16, אֶת-בָּנָיו וְאֶת-בְּנֵי-בָנָיו (his children and his grandchildren), therefore, could be translated in a gender inclusive way. Like Job, his children are now also parents having internalised their own father psychically, and therefore adults like him. Although otherwise nothing is said about his sons, unlike the two verses about his daughters in 42:13b-15, Mitchell's assertion that "[t]he daughters have *almost* the last word" [italics added] is true in the sense that the daughters do not really have it, as both genders are treated equally here.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, it seems significant that his daughters remain numerically in the minority just as his three daughters (somehow like his three thousand camels) over against his seven sons (somehow like his seven thousand sheep in 1:3 and the seven bullocks and seven rams in 42:8) at the beginning of the book. Their quota has not improved. One could argue, of course, that there are fewer camels than sheep, because one camel is worth more than a sheep, and so the same logic would apply to the number of daughters compared to that of his sons...

What is conspicuous about his daughters is that they are associated with bodily pleasures: apart from first eating and drinking in 1:4, 18, their beautiful bodies make them exceptional in 42:15 so that they get both special names reminding of sensual delights⁴⁶ perhaps even incestuously sensed by their father, Job, and financial benefits, unusual in their culture according to Num 27:1-8, showing that Job, their father, has now become as inclusive as his sons have been with their sisters in the first chapter. This inclusivity can be understood in psychoanalytic thinking as the integration of the formerly excluded or repressed feminine *anima*. That new part could then as well be seen as different from the previously ignored.

One could, of course, wonder whether an incestuous subtext underlies the invitation by the brothers of their sisters in 1:4 as well, but even if this is not the case, the "bodies" of the sisters are accepted, included and celebrated by their seven brothers, who uncommon for the Hebrew Bible, seem to be free of sibling rivalry. Elsewhere, in 31:1, Job confesses that he committed his eyes to avoid looking בְּתוֹלָה (upon a maid, that is, a virgin) while in 31:9, he imagines himself transgressing with another woman. In 19:15, he claims: וְאִמָּהֵתִי לְזָרַתְּהוּ שְׂבָבָי ([...] and my maids count me for a stranger). In 31:13, he imagines reversed roles where he would not have taken care of them. These side remarks betray

⁴⁴ However, God's servant, Job, but not God's children, is mentioned in the last chapter. The word, עֲבָדִי (My servant), is mentioned four times in the only two verses, 42:7-8, where God speaks in this chapter.

⁴⁵ Stephen Mitchell, *Introduction: The Book of Job* (New York: HarperCollins, 1987), xxx.

⁴⁶ Clines, *Job 38–42*, 1238.

something of what lies deeper in his mind than all his intellectual verbosity in most of the book.

Job might have learnt something about this openness from his wayward children, as he opens up to receive his own siblings and acquaintances in 42:11, all having a kind of party as he is back in his own home again where they are eating together instead of sacrificing a holocaust. His extended family (as another aspect of his extended body) was never mentioned before. Just like his children whom he has internalised he includes his family and friends and receives not only from God but also from them gifts as possible exchanges for this openness.

It is when sacrificing as replacement and therefore by implication as exclusion, is substituted by inclusion that integration, development and healing can happen. Job has developed from sacrificing for his children to inclusion of all of them in his adult-ego consciousness.

F CONCLUSION

This study has shown that the bodies in the book of Job are images and therefore changeable and exchangeable as the ego-state of the protagonist develops and so creates new realities with new bodies.

It is therefore possible that Job's children mentioned in the first are objectively the "same" as those in the last chapter, when they have not literally been killed. However, they are subjectively different in the mind of a man who has matured to a more inclusive and celebratory relationship to his children where he does not feel the anxious need to displace them. He has outgrown his parental, even condescending, attitude to relate as adult to his adult children.

Continued, future research could investigate the theoretical relevance of René Girard's notion of mimetic desire as base for sacrifice, repetition compulsion and psychic shifts in the context of the book of Job.

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