

**An Unheard Voice amidst the Commotion:
Analysis of Job 2:9-10 in Light of the Law of Retribution**

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Abstract

Job's wife is the first person in the Joban narrative to challenge the ubiquitous law of retribution, the first to reject the image of an unjust God. She resists the discrepancy which arises between the conception of a God of mercy and a tyrannical god. Although her questioning of the governing worldview is legitimate, previous scholarship has severely criticized this biblical character. This article advocates for the vindication of the image of the wife of Job, along with all the women she represents: women who have something to say yet have been silenced and written off. By means of feminist hermeneutics, the objective is to offer a more sympathetic reading of Job 2:9. Moreover, another aim is to interpret this text from a Latin American perspective.

Introduction

Job's wife has always been an exceedingly controversial biblical figure. Her words have produced reactions that range between the two extremes of the pendulum of scholarly opinion. In general, she has been written off and considered a temptress and a disloyal wife. Not only that, she has also become the embodiment of the person who vexes or torments those who are suffering.¹ In light of this, her own marginalized voice has rarely been heard. Her name is never mentioned, her woes never listened to. Her cry of frustration is not taken seriously. We must make an effort to see the full picture here: the tragedy of a mother who lost all of her daughters and sons, of a wife who, along with her husband, lost all of her wealth; the tragedy of a woman who must endure the bodily affliction of her life partner; of the dwindling hope of a future.

The book of Job allows for just eleven words: "Do you still persist in your integrity? Curse Yahweh and die" (Job 2:9 NRSV). However, in spite of the reduced space which has been allotted her, she expresses an essential truth which any authentic Christian response to suffering should include.² The impact of these words may be observed in the varied responses which they have provoked throughout history.

If Yahweh is indeed good and capable of extending his salvation, then why is there suffering and evil? One of the answers which emerges in the book of Job—and still has numerous proponents—is: suffering is Yahweh's punishment for sin, the fulfillment of the law of retribution. Conversely, Yahweh's favor is manifested through **שָׁלוֹם**, complete wellbeing and blessing. In the book of Job, the expected outcome of Job's faithfulness would be Yahweh's insurmountable blessing. This *quid pro quo* understanding of life underlies his wife's suggestion. She clearly does not believe in gratuitous devoutness nor in the fear of God for naught (Job 1:9).³ Since Yahweh's blessings seem to have been withdrawn, the only feasible solution is to curse Yahweh and die, since he has rewarded Job's faithfulness with suffering. We must keep in mind that his wife's suggestion attests to Job's innocence and protests Yahweh's treatment of her husband.⁴ She does not doubt his "integrity."⁵

¹ Sandro Gallazzi, "El grito de Job y de su mujer", *RIBLA* 52 (2005), p. 148.

² Donald Schweitzer, "'Curse God and Die': Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", *Touchstone* 14 (Summer 1996), pp. 32-38.

³ David J. A. Clines, *Job 1-20 in Word Biblical Commentary* 17, Dallas, Word Publication Group, 1989, on CD-ROM.

⁴ Schweitzer, "Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", pp. 32-38.

⁵ Clines, *Job 1-20*, on CD-ROM.

“Faith in God cannot be simplistically squared with the world as we know it,” as Schweitzer rightly asserts.⁶ This declaration is clearly evidenced in the Joban narrative. Job’s wife did not personify the Near Eastern ideal of what a godly and just role model must be and, as a result, she has been accused by scholars for centuries with copious colorful statements. However, we must not forget that she is the first person in the narrative to challenge the conventional law of retribution, the first to reject the picture of an unjust God. She opposes the incongruity which arises between a God of compassion and a despotic god who not only allows suffering, but seems to be the cause of the suffering. The complaint of Job’s wife compels us to rethink our own conception of God, so that we do not end up siding with a god who is an enemy of life.

Retribution is the name of the game and Job’s wife is starting to question its rules; there is a disconnection between this worldview and reality. Job’s friends not only defend the dogma of retribution—which is an ideology clearly propagated by the Satan—but they amplify it.⁷ In a religion which consists of pure retribution, man lives righteously to attain benefits from God, and blesses him for what he has received. Satan’s wager is appropriate here: if this man in particular receives evil, he will curse God.⁸ Nonetheless, God believes in Job, he does not view Job’s religion as one of pure retribution; he accepts the bet, confident that even though Job suffers adversity, in the end, he will bless God.⁹

This religion of retribution is still alive and well. Prosperity theology is one of the expressions of the law of retribution in the postmodern ecclesiastic realm.¹⁰ This theology postulates that God’s plan for men and women is to make them happy, bless them, give them health and prosper them in everything they do. Yet, why is this concept more complex than it seems? According to this theology, those who lack faith will not be prospered; they will not enjoy good health nor find happiness in this life. These individuals do not fulfill what the Scriptures say regarding divine promises and are tied up in sin.¹¹ Once again, it becomes evident that life is not as simple as some Christians make it out to be.

Censuring the victim is a way of reassuring ourselves that the world is better than it seems; that no one suffers if there is not a good reason for it.¹² Accordingly, everyone feels better about it, except the victim, who ends up agonizing even more because of being ostracized or censured.¹³ One of the ways of finding meaning in human suffering is supposing that we deserve what occurs to us, that misfortune occurs as a consequence of our sins. This type of theology or, as Solano Rossi calls it, “anti-theology,” provides a patch for Job’s friends problems, yet it does anything but resolve Job’s own issues and the issues of the myriad of Jobs that exist.¹⁴

A Lawsuit Drama

Although there are theories that argue that the book of Job belongs to the genre of parody or comedy, a number of scholars have reached the conclusion that it is actually a lawsuit drama or a legal altercation between God and Job. As Schökel so eloquently states, “the book of Job is a drama with little action and much passion; or better, with much intellectual action involving an impassioned debate and search.”¹⁵ It is suggested that the book includes legal and litigation

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ Luis Alonso Schökel, “Toward a Dramatic Reading of the Book of Job”, *Semeia* 7 (1977), p. 53. Magdalene points out the similarities between this worldview of Job’s friends and the ritual incantations of Mesopotamia, which date from approximately 2500-1500 BCE. Rachel F. Magdalene, “Job’s Wife as Hero: A Feminist-Forensic Reading of the Book of Job”, in *Biblical Interpretation* 14.3 (2006), p. 220.

⁸ Schökel, “Toward a Dramatic Reading”, p. 53.

⁹ Schökel, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

¹⁰ Luiz Alexandre Solano Rossi, “Los caminos de la teología y de la anti-teología en el libro de Job”, *RIBLA* 50 (2005), p. 53.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² Solano Rossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

¹³ Solano Rossi, *op. cit.*, pp. 53-55.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁵ Schökel, “Toward a Dramatic Reading”, p. 46.

metaphors. Scholars now believe that these metaphors structure the narrative's articulation of theological concepts.¹⁶

Two notions of God's justice emerge within the book of Job: on the one hand, the depiction of God as a judge who dispenses retribution without partiality (a view which is defended by Job's friends), on the other hand, the idea of the party summoned to a bilateral lawsuit (the view sought by Job); this tension emerges through selected passages of the drama.¹⁷

In regards to the legal aspect of the drama, Magdalene points out that the Neo-Babylonian litigation records prove that the heavenly trial in the Joban narrative is quite sophisticated.¹⁸ She proposes the Satan is a third-party prosecutor who puts forward a formal legal indictment against Job with the claim that he has the culpable mind of a blasphemer.¹⁹ He does this by using the commonly abbreviated oath formula in its weak form, which can be found in the Neo-Babylonian period: "If he has not done X [content of the accusation]."²⁰ In this case, the apodosis, which discloses the provisions of the curse, would be implicit.²¹ The Satan does not claim that Job has already blasphemed, but that he will blaspheme in the future because he has the guilty mentality and intent of a blasphemer.²²

The Satan is astute because, once a formal charge is brought forth; the legal process must begin, given that if God tries stopping the proceedings he will be showing further favoritism towards Job.²³ Thus, God—as in the case of all ancient Near Eastern defendants and witnesses—is obliged to cooperate.²⁴

Although only having a guilty mind is generally insufficient grounds for finding guilt in a human court, it is sufficient basis for criminal sanctions in the divine court. This can be observed throughout the biblical text, where God continually tests the human heart; this action represents a cosmic investigation of potential faulty or criminal intention (e.g., Jer. 11:20; 20:12; Pss. 7:9-12; 44:22).²⁵

In this trial, Job endures an "inquisitional terror" and Magdalene argues that he is a torture victim. Some of the indicators of torture she proposes are: loss of health (2:7; 7:5; 16:8; 19:20; 21:6; 30:30), the emotional consequences of the death of his children and servants and the loss of all his wealth.²⁶ Additionally, he views himself as the victim of divine violence and reports having received numerous wounds (6:4; 7:20; 9:17; 16:9; 19:10-12, 22; 30:18), he suffers pain, anguish and misery, groans under the pain (3:24; 23:2), cannot catch his breath and what little air he is able to inhale has a bitter taste to him (9:18), he speaks outrageously at times (6:3), his sleep is disturbed (3:26; 7:3-4; 30:17), he has lost his appetite and is not able to eat (6:5-7), and last but not least, he has lost his success and dignity (30:22; 19:9; 30:15, 29).²⁷ According to Magdalene, these experiences are a common denominator in torture victims and they are the reason he articulates repeatedly that he hates his life (9:21; 10:1).²⁸

¹⁶ For an in-depth treatment of this topic, see Rachel R. Magdalene, *On the Scales of Righteousness: Law and Story in the Book of Job*. Thesis (Ph. D.), Iliff School of Theology and The University of Denver, Colorado Seminary, 2003.

¹⁷ Schökel, "Toward a Dramatic Reading", p. 45.

¹⁸ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 221.

¹⁹ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 221.

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*

²² Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 222.

²³ *Ibid.*

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 222.

²⁶ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 224.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 225.

As a consequence of all the hardship Job is enduring, he makes a demand for a mid-trial settlement, so that God will cease and discontinue his abusive action (Job 7:16).²⁹ In the ancient world, a dispute could be settled anytime during the litigation, the same as today.³⁰

In this lawsuit drama, it is argued that Job's friends are God's police force.³¹ Nonetheless, we would like to propose that they are "unsolicited prosecutors," given that they have not been summoned to the trial, yet they passionately try to defend God and find guilt in Job's life. Clearly, their friends' objective is not Job's well-being but the triumph of a theological dogma that provides support for a particular legal system.³² In light of the harmful doctrine and theology they transmit and God's reprimand of them in Job 42, we can be sure that they are certainly not representing God.

Regarding the place of Job's wife in this drama, Clines suggests the following:

"Job's wife plays an ambiguous role. In purely narrative terms, her intervention functions as the means of drawing from Job a verbal response to his affliction. That response is delayed both by the characteristic silence of Job and by the challenge of his wife's utterance; and at the same time response in the vein we have come to expect of Job is threatened by her suggestion. Her presence thus introduces delay, tension, and finally resolution into this tiny segment of the narrative."³³

As we will study in more detail, some scholars view her as a mere foil to reflect a contrast between his faithfulness and her unfaithfulness.

Jane Doe

Seeing as Job's wife remains nameless —not an insignificant factor— we have decided to identify her as "Jane Doe" in this article, which is not only a name utilized in forensics, it is also emblematic of all the nameless women whose identity is not disclosed for various reasons. Jane Doe represents "a fictitious name used in legal proceedings for a female party whose true name is not known" (*Random House Dictionary*) as well as "an average or ordinary woman" (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*) and "a name used for a person whose real name is unknown" (*Dictionary of American Slang and Colloquial Expressions*). The selected terminology allows us to consider her as an individual and not as a mere adjunct of Job. Simultaneously, it allows us to bridge the gap of time for a moment thereby permitting her to embody all the unheard voices of women in the twentieth century.

Great effort has been invested into identifying our Jane Doe, and three divergent traditions have emerged in this regard. The first proposes that she is Dinah, Jacob's daughter. The second tradition proposes that she is an Arabian woman. There is a third stance as well, in which both Dinah and the Arabian woman are represented as two different wives.³⁴

The first case is witnessed in the *Targum of Job*, a rabbinic commentary, and Pseudo-Philo. The Targum reads: "And Dinah his wife said to him, Are you steadfast in your integrity until now? Curse [lit. "bless"] the word of the Lord and die."³⁵ In this case, the author refers to Dinah without any background information.

In Pseudo-Philo's *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, we find the following text:

"And Jacob dwelt in the land of Canaan, and Shechem the son of Hamor the Hurrite raped Dinah his daughter and humiliated her. And the sons of Jacob, Simeon and Levi, went in and killed the whole city of them by sword; and they took their sister Dinah and went away from there. And afterward Job took her as

²⁹ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 251.

³⁰ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, pp. 251-252.

³¹ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 231.

³² *Ibid.*

³³ Clines, *Job 1-20*, on CD-ROM.

³⁴ Michael C. Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the Testament of Job: A Note on the Synthesis of Two Traditions", *Journal of Biblical Literature* 127 (Spring 2008), p. 72.

³⁵ *The Text of the Targum of Job: An Introduction and Critical Editions*, AGJU 20; Leiden, Brill, 1994, translation by Legaspi. *Ibid.*

a wife and fathered from her fourteen sons and six daughters; that is, seven sons and three daughters before he was struck down with suffering, and afterward seven sons and three daughters when he was healed.”³⁶

As Legaspi points out, Pseudo-Philo attends to two concerns by means of this text: first, defiled Dinah’s marital status (which the author resolves by having her marry exogamously—namely, Simeon and Levi had their unmarriageable sister, Dinah, wed a Gentile). Second, the need to establish a link between Job and Israelite history (which the author resolves by marrying him into the people of Israel).³⁷ The biblical book of Job does not mention Israel, Sinai or Zion; moreover, it has no relation with the fundamental Israelite religious traditions or background such as Passover or the exodus. By supplying this information on Dinah, Pseudo-Philo provides a conclusion to the open-ended biblical text regarding Simeon and Levi (i.e., “And they killed Hamor and his son Shechem with the edge of the sword, and took Dinah from Shechem’s house, and went forth,” Gen 34:26 NAS). Pseudo-Philo also makes a great effort to prove that Dinah was Job’s only wife: both the wife of the prologue and the wife of the epilogue. This is reflected in the meticulous enumeration of children and the reference to the use of the same names after Job’s trial.³⁸ It is suggested that this link established between Job and Dinah is based on the usage of the same root (נבל) in Genesis 34:1-10, the passage on Dinah, and in Job 2:10, the text in which Job upbraids his wife.³⁹

The second tradition is known primarily from the Septuagint. According to this perspective, Job was an Edomite king whose name was Jobab and who had an Arabian woman as his wife. Although the LXX translation of Job is a sixth shorter than the MT, it expands on the MT in two key passages: in 2:9, where it provides a full version of Job wife’s speech (LXX 2:9a-e), and in the last section of the book, where it provides a colophon (LXX42:17a-e).⁴⁰ This is probably an instance of the Midrashic tendency to supply details concerning minor characters and to elaborate short speeches.⁴¹ The text itself is pertinent to our discussion:

This man is described in the Syrian book as living in the land of Ausis, on the borders of Idumea and Arabia: and his name before was Jobab; and having taken an Arabian wife, he begot a son whose name was Ennon. And he himself was the son of his father Zare, one of the sons of Esau, and of his mother Bosorrha, so that he was the fifth from Abraam. And these were the kings who reigned in Edom, which country he also ruled over: first, Balac, the son of Beor, and the name of his city was Dennaba: but after Balac, Jobab, who is called Job, and after him Asom, who was governor out of the country of Thaeman...⁴²

It is believed that the source of this depiction of Job is the list of Edomite kings in Genesis 36:31-39 (“Jobab son of Zerah of Bozrah,” v. 33). Once again, Job is placed in the time of the patriarchs.⁴³ A common denominator between these two biblical texts is the similarity between the name “Job” and “Jobab.”

The portrayal of Job’s wife as an Arabian woman is worthy of exploring. Although the Septuagint supplies more information regarding Jane Doe, she still remains unnamed. However, there is a comparatively full picture of her: she was Arabian and an Edomite queen who hired herself out after Job’s fall so as to provide for their needs; hence, her cry of weariness and vexation. All of this appears in LXX 2:9a-e:

And when much time had passed, his wife said to him, How long wilt (you) hold out, saying, Behold, I wait yet a little while, expecting the hope of my deliverance? for, behold, thy memorial is abolished from the

³⁶ Pseudo-Philo, *Liber antiquitatum biblicarum*, cited by Legaspi, “Job’s Wives”, p. 73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*

³⁸ *Ibid.*

³⁹ John E. Hartley, *The Book of Job*. The New International Commentary on the Old Testament, Michigan, Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1988, p. 83.

⁴⁰ Legaspi, “Job’s Wives in the Testament of Job”, p. 74.

⁴¹ Clines, *Job 1-21*, on CD-ROM.

⁴² Lancelot C. L. Brenton, *The English Translation of The Septuagint Version of the Old Testament*, FABS International, 1988.

⁴³ Legaspi, “Job’s Wives in the Testament of Job”, p. 74.

earth, *even (your) sons and daughters, the pangs and pains of my womb which I bore in vain with sorrows; and (you yourself sit) down to spend the nights in the open air among the corruption of worms, and I am a wanderer and a servant from place to place and house to house, waiting for the setting of the sun, that I may rest from my labors and my pangs which now beset me: but say some word against the Lord, and die.*⁴⁴

The author of the *Testament of Job* incorporates both identities —of Dinah and the Arabian woman— into his text. This work describes how Job offers counsel to his children and divides the inheritance while on his deathbed. Job’s first wife is identified as Sitis, and she is subjected to a tribulation of her own. Dinah, his second wife, is also mentioned in the opening paragraph:

The book of Job, the one called Jobab... I, your father Job, am engaged in steadfastness, but you are a chosen and honored race from the seed of Jacob, your mother’s father. I am from the sons of Esau, brother of Nahor, but your mother is Dinah, from whom I begot you. My former wife died a bitter death along with the other ten children.⁴⁵

It is evident that the *Testament of Job* is dependent on the Septuagint *Job*. Nonetheless, the author’s use of the Dinah tradition is rather peculiar and, as Legaspi points out, the connection made between the Edomite king and Dinah is not creditable.⁴⁶

The author of the *Testament of Job* expands on the portrait of the Arabian woman in the Septuagint, and even goes so far as to provide her with a name, Sitis, and describe how she was forced to beg and labor as a slave for years in order to provide bread for the two of them. Not only this, Sitis ends up selling her hair to the Satan in exchange for bread, and, misguided by the Satan, tells Job that he should resign in his struggle.⁴⁷ Despite these unfortunate events, Sitis is exculpated in the end and given a vision of her children crowned in splendor (T. Job 39-40) before she dies in peace.

As observed in the above description, the author of the *Testament of Job* takes great pains to reconcile the two traditions mentioned earlier by making Dinah Job’s second wife, a rather inventive resolution.⁴⁸ Why does Dinah not appear as Job’s only wife throughout the *Testament of Job*? Perhaps to safeguard Dinah’s image as the only daughter of a highly regarded patriarch. In this version, Dinah is neither the contentious figure of MT 2:9 nor the humiliated wife of LXX 2:9a-3.

However, there is a great benefit clearly established in the *Testament of Job* regarding the marital bond between Job and Dinah. As mentioned above in regards to Pseudo-Philo, this author is also quite keen on incorporating Job into the “chosen and honored” ethnicity, the Jews (T. Job 1:5).⁴⁹ The motif of “Dinah, the wife of Job” allows for a religious and racial contextualization of Job’s ὑπομονή (endurance, patience). In the *Testament of Job*, Job’s ὑπομονή culminates in his second marriage to Dinah. Thus, Job’s covenantal inclusion is the fulfillment of his opposition to idolatry reflected before his tribulation and his laudable endurance.⁵⁰

The MT does not allude to the presence of two wives. Moreover, it does not even mention a wife in chapter 42. Thus, it is very difficult to determine whether the mother of Job’s new children in the epilogue can be identified with the same woman as in chapter 2. At the same time, no elements in the biblical text exclude the possibility of Job having two wives.⁵¹

⁴⁴ Brenton, *The English Translation of The Septuagint*.

⁴⁵ The *Testament of Job according the SV Text* (SBLTT5), Legaspi, “Job’s Wives in the Testament of Job”, p. 76.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

⁴⁸ Legaspi, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

⁴⁹ Legaspi, *op. cit.*, p. 78.

⁵⁰ Legaspi, “Job’s Wives in the Testament of Job”, p. 79.

⁵¹ Legaspi, *op. cit.*, p. 77.

A Legitimate Response

In Job 2:9, Jane Doe undoubtedly was reacting to their misfortune out of anger. Harrison points out that anger is frequently a feeling-signal which stems from love and conveys moral outrage concerning sin or evil.⁵² Jane Doe responds to the injustice of losing practically everything she had loved and worked towards for years on end. She expresses this type of anger, a reaction indicating that something is off with the view of suffering as a deserved punishment.⁵³ It is worthy of mentioning that, before Jane Doe's outburst, Job had received the news of the death of his children and loss of goods and property without question. Thus, we could say that his wife's response empowers Job in his quest for a truer understanding of God.⁵⁴ She dares to pronounce the words which are on the verge of erupting out of Job's own mouth.⁵⁵ In a sense, she acts as a catalyst in his learning and growth process.⁵⁶ Her scream seems out of tune with the silence which surrounds her,⁵⁷ yet as the narrative progresses we realize that this scream is not void of meaning.

It is interesting that Jane Doe is the only character who does not use formulaic testimony markers when speaking. Consequently, she is forced to utilize indirect methods, which frequently are the most effective—or only—viable methods for marginalized individuals.⁵⁸ A shameless and blatant act such as this one might well get the attention of the divine council.⁵⁹ As Clines points out—following Habel—“Job's wife is a realist,” while Job is nothing if not an idealist, and he will definitely suffer for it.⁶⁰

There has to be room for this type of anger in any response to suffering and evil, for deep down this response conveys that suffering and evil are ultimately not God's will.⁶¹ Jane Doe's anger is a sign that—in the face of God's will for life, his love for creation and salvific power—this suffering is wrong. It conveys a discrepancy between this agony and a God of love, thereby acknowledging the reality of evil.

One of the main points of the book of Job is the mystery of evil. This mystery involves a creation that has been devastated as a result of injustice and an incomprehensibly complex creation, not an all-controlling will of God.⁶² Evil, suffering and death are portrayed as “a rip in the fabric of creation,” as suggested by Schweitzer.⁶³

Jane Doe's anger is a sign that what has often been understood in our context and tradition concerning Yahweh's sovereignty must be reformulated: God cannot be understood as love and at the same time directly responsible for all the tragedies and catastrophes that occur in history.⁶⁴ As we can observe in the Joban narrative, the loss and anguish that Job and his wife experienced were not the work of a loving God. In the end, Job was able to overcome evil and suffering because of his sense of God's power and intrinsic justice. This hope is what sustains us and empowers us to struggle for life when facing recurring and radical evil.⁶⁵ A hope that is able to endure even the darkest night.

⁵² Beverly Wildung Harrison, *Making the Connections: Essays in Feminist Social Ethics*, ed. Carol Rob, Boston, Beacon Press, 1985, pp. 14-15.

⁵³ Schweitzer, “Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?”, p. 32.

⁵⁴ Schweitzer, “Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?”, p. 32.

⁵⁵ See Ilana Pardes, *Countertraditions in the Bible: A Feminist Approach*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, Harvard University Press, 1992.

⁵⁶ Magdalene, “Job's Wife as a Hero”, p. 242.

⁵⁷ Gallazzi, “El grito de Job y de su mujer”, p. 148.

⁵⁸ Magdalene, “Job's Wife as a Hero”, p. 232.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

⁶⁰ Clines, *Job 1-20*, on CD-ROM.

⁶¹ Schweitzer, “Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?”, p. 32.

⁶² Gregory Boyd, *Is God to Blame?*, Illinois, InterVarsity Press, 2003, p. 85.

⁶³ Schweitzer, “Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?”, p. 32.

⁶⁴ Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, p. 38.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*

The majority of us do not like ambiguity; life is always easier when we believe that everything is simple and clear cut. This simplistic view of life is what leads Job's friends to accuse him and Job to accuse God, thus failing to acknowledge their ignorance regarding the complexity of God's creation.⁶⁶ This same one-dimensional perspective is the reason why Jane Doe is censured and reproached when she questions the seemingly clear-cut beliefs of her society. As Boyd states, "in our fallen delusion, we believe it is our right and within our capacity to declare unambiguously who and what are 'good' and 'evil.'"⁶⁷ Since she challenged the concept of normalcy within her culture, she is associated with הַנְּבִלָּוָה.

Not to be angry in the face of the tragedy would, on the contrary, concede that it is common and acceptable. Jane Doe's reaction is a perfectly natural response to injustice. There must be an objection to this type of suffering as an assault on life, as an inconsistency with God's will. However, an adequate response does not necessarily lead to repudiating a connection to God.⁶⁸ Thus, protest is a necessary element in the Christian response to suffering and Jane Doe's outcry and complaints regarding their suffering are perfectly valid, yet her response threatens to efface the one hope they have left.⁶⁹ Simultaneously, this proposition prevents both of them from achieving a new image of God's closeness and compassion.⁷⁰

Clines offers an interesting outlook regarding Jane Doe's possible view of the situation:

Rarely has the scene been viewed through her eyes... Through no fault of her own, but solely because of the social structures of her time, her own well-being has been wholly dependent on Job's. She has relied on him for her economic existence, for her social status, and for her moral standing in the community. But now, at a stroke, she has lost everything. Her income is gone, now that the cattle and servants have been destroyed, her position as matriarch and wife of a prince has been lost, and she is open to the obloquy of guilt by association. All this in addition to the sudden loss of her ten children. And who is to blame? No one but her husband. All that raising early in the mornings to sacrifices in case the children had sinned (1:5) was nothing but the scrupulosity of the hypocrite. It is not the children but the husband who has brought disaster upon the household. And Job has uttered no word of regret for his unarguable responsibility for the destruction of the family, but insists on "maintaining his integrity." The only honorable act from this guilty man now would be for him to call down the wrath of God upon his own head.⁷¹

In biblical faith, God is found amidst incredulity, suffering and sin, the challenge is to trust God in spite of experiences of his apparent absence. Biblical tradition evidences God's interaction with his people throughout history: he is not a static presence, but an active, dynamic one. He draws near, intervenes and withdraws.

The apostle Paul expresses a profound reality that may be applicable to this type of circumstance: "the Lord is for the body" (1 Cor 6:13). Paul is actually speaking of the ethical implications of the cross in regards to sexuality and immorality, however, the underlying theological perspective has other ramifications as well.⁷² If God is for the body, consequently, he is against violence to the body: violence against men, women and children. Likewise, if God is for the body, we cannot interpret the suffering of Job and his wife as coming directly from God. When we take this into account, we can acknowledge that Jane Doe's anger is justified, that we have a right to cry out when individuals' bodies are broken or eaten away by sickness and suffering.⁷³ Knowing that God is for the body enables people to trust that their cry of anguish will be heard, that in the end the suffering and injustice which they are facing will be overcome. As Schweitzer suggests, this faith offers the possibility to people to live and love again in spite of the wounds they have endured over time.⁷⁴

⁶⁶ Boyd, *Is God to Blame?*, p. 97.

⁶⁷ Boyd, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

⁶⁸ Schweitzer, "Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", p. 32-38.

⁶⁹ Schweitzer, "Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", p. 32-38.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ Clines, *Job 1-20*, on CD-ROM.

⁷² Schweitzer, *op. cit.*, pp. 32-38.

⁷³ Schweitzer, "Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", p. 32-38.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

The Devil's Assistant or a Heroine?

Prior scholarship in general has not been kind to Job's wife, to say the least. The anti-female readings of this text are almost as legendary as her speech.⁷⁵ We suggest that this research has placed a heavy emphasis on the religious and moral expectations of a good Christian. In general, authors have not taken into account the effect that suffering can produce in a believer. They have not allowed for a natural reaction of indignation against evil and injustice... at least not for the woman in this story. Likewise, they have not left room for "real" responses in the face of crises: doubt, anger and frustration. Who is able to live through the calamity he and his wife experienced without being moved?

The church fathers were the first to cast stones at Jane Doe. Augustine not only calls her *diaboli adjutrix* (that is, "the devil's assistant or maidservant"), but finds a connection between this biblical character and Eve: he calls her an Eve devoted to seduction who serves the devil and proposes blasphemy.⁷⁶ Gregory expands on this idea by describing Job as a fortress and his wife as a stairway by which the devil is trying to find access to him, yet Job does not listen to her and gives a lesson to the one who, instigated by the serpent, spoke perversely.⁷⁷ Similarly, Chrysostom offers an explanation for why the Satan did not destroy Job's wife along with the rest of the family: so she could become his instrument.⁷⁸ Thomas Aquinas also followed this same line of thought and, similarly, Calvin calls her "Satan's tool."⁷⁹

Modern interpreters have followed this same school of thought regarding Jane Doe. Habel, for example, expresses that "she serves as the earthly mouthpiece for a hidden Satan."⁸⁰ Along those same lines, Davidson suggests the following, "As the weaker, Job's wife fell first into the snare of the Devil, and used her influence, as in the beginning of history, to draw her husband after her."⁸¹ The Geneva Version is rather straightforward and its view of her as the second Eve, "Satan (uses) the same instrument against Job as he did against Adam."⁸² Hartley argues that Jane Doe echoed the Satan's disbelief regarding human faith in Yahweh: "all that a man has will he give for his own life."⁸³

According to Legaspi, Jane Doe is a "disloyal wife."⁸⁴ A valid question arises in this regard: what type of actions and attitudes does this loyalty involve? Silence and submission in the face of injustice?

Schökel and Sicre Díaz are a bit more benevolent towards Jane Doe and give her a little more credit. They suggest that she is an "unconscious accomplice of the Satan,"⁸⁵ that she is defending a religion based on self-interest, determined by Yahweh's actions towards them: humans are to bless the benign Yahweh and curse the harmful Yahweh, if they end up doing

⁷⁵ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 210.

⁷⁶ Augustine, *Enarrationes in Psalmos XCVII*, 6, cited by Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 136. Keil and Delitzsch are in agreement with Augustine that Job's wife is diabolic adjutrix: "Love has no such godless utterance as to say, Die. No, indeed! This woman is truly diabolic adjutrix (Augustine); a tool of the tempter (Ebrard); *impiæ carnis præco* (Brentius). And though Calvin goes too far when he calls her not only *organum Satanæ*, but even *Proserpinam et Furiam infernalem*, the title of another Xantippe, against which Hengstenberg defends her, is indeed rather flattery than slander." C. F. Keil and F. Delitzsch, *Job. Commentary on the Old Testament* 4, Massachusetts, Hendrickson Publishers, 1989, p. 71.

⁷⁷ Gregory cited by Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 136.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*

⁷⁹ Clines, *Job 1-21*, CD-ROM.

⁸⁰ Norman Habel, *The Book of Job: A Commentary*, Old Testament Library, Philadelphia, Westminster Press, 1985, p. 96.

⁸¹ A. B. Davidson, *The Book of Job*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1962, p. 18.

⁸² Davidson, *The Book of Job*, p. 17.

⁸³ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 84.

⁸⁴ Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the Testament of Job", p. 77.

⁸⁵ Luis Alonso Schökel and J. L. Sicre Díaz, *Job: Comentario teológico y literario*, Madrid, Ediciones Cristiandad, 2002, p. 135.

so, they will live in peace.⁸⁶ Moreover, this episode involving Job and his wife is suggested to show that those closest to him surrendered under the severity of his trial while he still remained true in spite of it.⁸⁷ Jane Doe's religion is represented as exactly the type which the Satan attributed to Job.⁸⁸

At the same time, others assert that she is an unwise and negative foil to her husband in his complete trust in Yahweh; and moreover, that her earthly, worldly, commonsensical approach is diametrically opposed to Job's spirituality.⁸⁹ According to Legaspi, Job's wife in the MT is a "nameless and bitter companion whose primary significance is to *intensify* the suffering of Job and throw his ὑπομονή into dramatic relief."⁹⁰ In other words, for many scholars, Jane Doe's entrance into the picture describes another dimension of Job's trial, to be precise, the estrangement that his hardship produced between his wife and him.⁹¹

On the other side of the spectrum, we find the *Testament of Job*, in which Job's wife becomes a full heroine: not only does she receive a name, but her suffering evolves into a redemptive factor—both she and her children attain divine glory.⁹² The Septuagint also acknowledges Jane Doe as a sufferer in her own right, a text which mirrors the exasperation experienced by her. This is possibly due to the tendency in Jewish tradition to depict Job's wife sympathetically.⁹³

Magdalene also advocates for the position of Jane Doe as a heroine. She states the following, "She (Job's wife) teaches us all the lesson that compassion, generosity, generativity and edification are still possible even under the worst conditions."⁹⁴ Furthermore:

Job's wife is, indeed, wise and powerful. She is not the Satan's handmaiden, she is not a foolish woman, she is not offering Job theological euthanasia, and she is not one to be ignored. Rather, she is attempting to maintain her husband's integrity, nay his very humanity and his normative-legal world, in the face of a god who appears to be torturously violent and unjust, and she succeeds. She moves both Job and God. In the process, she becomes a quiet hero, both in the story and beyond.⁹⁵

Since the book of Job belongs to the genre of wisdom literature, we could expect the narrative to include characters that are wise or foolish. As observed in the examples cited above, most commentators have viewed Job as a wise character and his wife as a foolish one. However, others place her among the wise. Magdalene claims that Jane Doe becomes the first person to articulate what is transpiring and to recognize what the issue in the divine council is: questions regarding blasphemies and blessings.⁹⁶ Additionally, Job's wife is portrayed by her as Job's advocate who incites him to blaspheme in spite of it going against her best interests. Thusly, she is defending him in a scandalous and forceful manner, contending that he is a man of deep integrity.⁹⁷ "Job's wife, with just two painfully uttered sentences, joins the ranks of the wise."⁹⁸

One cannot deny that Jane Doe's role is to show how atypical Job's silence and acceptance are regarding his bodily affliction.⁹⁹ Job initially accepts his fate without putting up a fight and his wife makes this passivism evident. Some scholars propose that Job's words in the prologue manifest God's point of view, not his own.¹⁰⁰ Since he does not put up a fight, his wife's

⁸⁶ Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 135.

⁸⁷ Davidson, *The Book of Job*, p. 17.

⁸⁸ Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

⁸⁹ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 211.

⁹⁰ Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the Testament of Job", p. 79.

⁹¹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 83.

⁹² Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the Testament of Job", p. 79.

⁹³ Clines, *Job 1-21*, CD-ROM.

⁹⁴ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 257.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 232.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

⁹⁸ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 257.

⁹⁹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁰ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 228.

questioning of the injustice in many instances has been interpreted as foolishness (reflected in Job's reproach in 2:10) and ungodliness.

Job's response to his wife is worthy of mentioning. He labels Jane Doe's counsel as that which comes from "one of the foolish women" (2:10). He uses the strongest Hebrew root for fool: נבל, which denotes someone who is senseless or has renounced Yahweh's ways. By rebuffing her, many suggest that he rejects his wife's unwise counsel and seeks to prevent her from becoming a foolish woman.¹⁰¹ Another argument is that it is a response of faith to a person who no longer believes, not the trivial reply of an irritated husband.¹⁰²

In Deuteronomy 32:6, this term is applied to Israel ("Do you thus repay the LORD, O foolish and unwise people? Is not He your Father who has bought you?") and it refers to their lack of judgment and intelligence, since they are unable to interpret history.¹⁰³ This could well be the connotation of נבל in this instance. Jane Doe—undoubtedly moved by compassion and affection—does not comprehend the meaning of what is happening. The question is: will his wise friends have a better understanding of it? And how about Job himself, when he is under even more pressure because of the ever-intensifying pain, anguish and dialogues that arise out of his situation?¹⁰⁴

We must consider the fact that Jane Doe is not simply the instigator of blasphemy; her desire is to defend her innocent husband before Yahweh's injustice.¹⁰⁵ In that case, if Yahweh is unjust, he has no right to receive man's blessing. Since her husband is on the verge of death, he should somehow leave this earth with something that proves that he has a sense of justice, such as a testament or will that could be used as an epitaph.¹⁰⁶

A legitimate question would be: why is this incident inserted into the narrative? A mere demonstration of pity does not seem like reason enough for it to appear. On the one hand, as mentioned earlier, some authors consider Jane Doe as a mere foil for Job, which would provide a contrast between her rebellious attitude and his unwavering faithfulness to Yahweh. On the other hand, perhaps Jane Doe's role is to move Job from a passive stance to an assertive one in his relationship with Yahweh.¹⁰⁷

A Question or a Statement? A Blessing or a Curse?

The fact that Jane Doe uses, in Job 2:9, the same wording as Yahweh in Job 2:3 ("hold fast to his integrity") is worthy of mentioning. The majority of scholars have interpreted Jane Doe's phrase as a question, implying that she casts doubt upon his holding fast to his integrity in the face of his physical torture. In lieu of seeing this quality in her husband as an asset, she is fearful that it produced in him a fanaticism that refused to deal with reality.¹⁰⁸

Another interpretation has also arisen a propos this verse. Seeing as the Hebrew interrogative particle is not present in this first part of Jane Doe's speech, the possibility that she is making a statement instead of raising a question is viable. Magdalene claims that the first colon is a statement to both Job and the court, and she phrases it thusly: "You must still hold onto your integrity!"¹⁰⁹ This interpretation would carry the opposite meaning of the conventional translations.

¹⁰¹ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 84.

¹⁰² Jean Léveque, "Job: el libro y el mensaje", *Cuadernos Bíblicos* 53 (1999), p. 10.

¹⁰³ Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁴ Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁰⁶ Schökel and Sicre, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

¹⁰⁷ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 214.

¹⁰⁸ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 83.

¹⁰⁹ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 233.

In the Hebrew text, the verb Jane Doe utilizes is בָּרַךְ (to kneel or bless). Therefore, her declaration would literally be rendered: “bless Yahweh and die.” Before reaching any conclusions based on the basic connotation of the word בָּרַךְ, it is essential to keep in mind that this is the same wording utilized by the Satan in Job 2:5—which undoubtedly is one of the reasons why there are such diverse renderings and interpretations of Job 2:9. Yet if in the second part of her speech she echoes Satan’s, in the first half she echoes the Yahweh’s words (2:3).

Different perspectives have been proposed concerning the phrasing of Job 2:9. On the one hand, the command “bless Yahweh” is viewed as a euphemism for cursing Yahweh, as the majority of English and Spanish translations propose (in this case, Jane Doe’s words would mirror the Satan’s words in Job 2:5). On the other hand, “bless Yahweh” is seen as Jane Doe’s suggestion that Job bid farewell (“bless Yahweh”) and accept his fate (“dying”).¹¹⁰ Linafelt suggests the following rendering: “Still you hold fast to your integrity; continue to bless Yahweh, though you die.”¹¹¹ However, as McGinnis suggests, Job’s response would not make sense if we adopt this rendering, unless Jane Doe is being sarcastic in saying that Job should continue to bless Yahweh, which is improbable.¹¹²

If בָּרַךְ is seen as a curse, whether she thought that Job would die instantly as the result of cursing is hard to say. In this case, she is believed to have desired for Job to strike out at Yahweh, the cause of his trial, and that this would speed up his certain death.¹¹³ What is clear is that she desired for Job’s grief to be shortened, for she was also suffering and desperately desired for her husband’s misery to end. Affection towards her husband is probably what leads her to rebel against a God who seems rather cruel.¹¹⁴ Conversely, Hartley points out that Jane Doe’s words were at the core of Job’s temptation: that it was foolish to adhere unwaveringly to his integrity in the face of such calamity.¹¹⁵ Clines claims that it is not accidental that she pronounces the same words as the Satan as his prediction of Job’s definitive response to being dispossessed of his wealth and physical wellbeing.¹¹⁶ She tempts her husband by positioning herself on his side against Yahweh.¹¹⁷ In this case, for Jane Doe to compromise faith in Yahweh so as to ease an insufferable burden was the most sensible course of action for her.¹¹⁸ Since Job was going to die anyway, he should savor the last comfort that powerless revenge provides: cursing his torturer.¹¹⁹

Another option is that contains the meaning of both “curse” and “bless” in its semantic range.¹²⁰ We must not forget to ask ourselves what sense the author intended Jane Doe’s words to convey, perhaps the key is found in the way in which Job responds.¹²¹

In any case, be it a blessing, a curse or both, the urgency of Jane Doe’s plea is expressed in the fact that both verbs are in the imperative.¹²² When two imperatives are used together, the second frequently expresses the result or consequence of the first. Thus, “renounce Yahweh

¹¹⁰ Legaspi, “Job’s Wives in the Testament of Job”, p. 71.

¹¹¹ Linafelt, “The Undecidability of בָּרַךְ in the Prologue to Job and Beyond”, *Biblical Interpretation* 4 (1996), p.167, cited by Claire Matthews McGinnis, “Playing the Devil’s Advocate in Job” in S. L. Cook, C. L. Patton, and J. W. Watts [eds.], *The Whirlwind: Essays on Job, Hermeneutics and Theology in Memory of Jane Morse*, JSOTSup, 336, New York, Sheffield Academic Press, 2001, p. 127.

¹¹² *Ibid.*

¹¹³ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 83.

¹¹⁴ Schökel and Sicre, *Job*, p. 136.

¹¹⁵ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 84.

¹¹⁶ Clines, *Job 1-21*, CD-ROM.

¹¹⁷ Schökel, “Toward a Dramatic Reading”, p. 135.

¹¹⁸ Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 84.

¹¹⁹ Schökel and Sicre Díaz, *Job*, p. 135.

¹²⁰ Magdalene, “Job’s Wife as a Hero”, p. 209.

¹²¹ Davidson, *The Book of Job*, p. 17.

¹²² Hartley, *The Book of Job*, p. 83.

and die” perhaps means that if he does it, this will bring down Yahweh’s final stroke of death immediately.¹²³

Gruber’s translation of “**נָתַתְּ**” is also worthy of mention: he suggests the rendering “drop dead.”¹²⁴ His selection of foul language has been criticized by Moshe Greenberg and other scholars, for he does not use the language of higher education but that of a wastrel or a fishwife. They claim that, by using this kind of vocabulary, he has offended not only Job’s wife, but the Hebrew Scriptures. However, he defends his position by arguing that history of interpretation shows that the use of the imperative and Job’s reference to her words as associated with reveal that this is a case of rhetoric of contempt and familiarity.¹²⁵ Indeed, since these words are spoken in a familiar context and in a moment of frustration, it is quite possible that Gruber is in the right.

Euthanasia or Martyrdom?

What is Jane Doe’s proposal to her husband? Was she trying to help him commit suicide or was she encouraging him to die in order to prove a point to God? Some scholars have suggested that Jane Doe’s proposes theological euthanasia to her husband. One of the proponents of this view is Clines, who states, “It is an impious suggestion she makes, but it does not arise out of impiety; it is human and entirely for Job’s benefit, this ‘theological method of committing euthanasia.’”¹²⁶ However, there are two apparent difficulties with this view: first, it is not clear whether Job is suffering from an ultimately terminal condition; additionally, Job does not ask his wife to kill him.¹²⁷ Perhaps a stronger argument would be that she is encouraging Job to end his own life by means of a type of “God-assisted suicide.”¹²⁸ Second, Magdalene suggests that pity is not strong enough of a reason for a woman who has suffered numerous losses to give up all hope of a prosperous future and encourage her husband to end his life.¹²⁹ By doing this, a future of ostracism and poverty would await her, given that she would be left without any resources. Thus, her suggestion to Job would actually represent her own slow and agonizing suicide.¹³⁰ Magdalene claims that those who see Jane Doe as taking pity on Job are not sensitive to the cultural reality of women at the time. Nonetheless, the possibility that Job’s overwhelming despair gave her enough pity to momentarily forget about her own status and future cannot be ruled out either. Perhaps, at the time, the only imperative that drove her was putting an end to her husband’s misery.

The other school of thought regarding Jane Doe’s suggestion is that she offers Job a means by which to perform the ultimate act of resistance to the violent and oppressive legal system: martyrdom.¹³¹ As mentioned earlier, some authors argue that Yahweh is the torturer or abuse perpetrator in this narrative.¹³² Is this viable? We submit that this terminology is a bit extreme, especially since in the prologue we have been provided with the background information and know that God is not the cause of suffering. The Satan is the instigator of it all.

¹²³ Davidson, *The Book of Job*, p. 18.

¹²⁴ See Mayer I. Gruber, “The Rhetoric of Familiarity and Contempt in Job 2:9-10”, *Scriptura* 87 (2004), pp. 261-266.

¹²⁵ Gruber, “The Rhetoric of Familiarity and Contempt in Job 2:9-10”, pp. 261-266.

¹²⁶ Clines, *Job 1-20*, CD-ROM.

¹²⁷ In the Hebrew Bible, euthanasia is not generally regarded as appropriate; Abimelech requests euthanasia when wounded (Judges 9:54), King Saul likewise requests his armor-bearer to kill him when wounded (1 Sam 31:4-5). These cases involve warriors who are fatally wounded and desire to control specific details of their death. Euthanasia does not seem to be consistent with the general perspective of life and death in the Hebrew Bible. Magdalene, “Job’s Wife as a Hero”, p. 212.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*

¹²⁹ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 213.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*

¹³¹ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 233.

¹³² Magdalene, “Job’s Wife as a Hero”, p. 213.

The martyr responds in kind by offering up his her body toward a different political or ideological commitment.¹³³ From this perspective, it is a heroic death and Job's wife knows that, notwithstanding how horrendous it might appear to the outside world, this kind of death would be highly principled.¹³⁴ It would be worth the awful sacrifices of both of them and would be significant.¹³⁵

The Tables Turned

The naming of Job and his wife's three new daughters in the epilogue presents a stark contrast with the nameless position of his wife and other 17 children at the beginning of the book. The bestowal of an inheritance to these daughters (Job 42:14-15) may actually imply that Jane Doe's actions have produced a newfound respect for women, not only in Job but in God as well.¹³⁶ As Mitchell argues, the presence of the daughters in the end of the narrative may well be an indication of a shift in male-female relations within the narrative.¹³⁷ According to this author, there is something extremely satisfying about the preponderance of the feminine at the end of the narrative, the entire "yin side" of humanity, which has been denigrated in the figure of Job's wife has at last been recognized and honored here.¹³⁸ It is almost as if Job also releases the male compulsion to control after he has surrendered.¹³⁹ We as readers cannot understand entirely why the daughters are so important but we know they are... it is almost as if they are granted the last word.¹⁴⁰

Hartley offers some interesting insight regarding Job and his wife's daughters and their inheritance:

In fine epic style, which delights in beautiful or successful women (Gordon), the hero's daughters receive special prominence. They are named and their beauty is noted, a further witness to Yahweh's gracious blessing. In addition, they received an inheritance, usually reserved solely for the sons as long as there was a male heir. In Israelite law daughters could inherit if there were no sons (e.g., Num. 27:1-11; 36:1-13). This custom provides some evidence that the epic account predates the priestly law. A few Ugaritic texts take daughters into consideration regarding inheritance; thus daughters possessed some rights to the family property in that culture.¹⁴¹

In the Hebrew Bible, Job 42:15 is the only case where females receive an inheritance when their male counterparts are available (Job 42:15).¹⁴² Some scholars relate this fact to the tradition of Dinah and, more specifically, her redemption. Dinah was dispossessed of her marital rights (Gen 34:2), yet she lives to observe how her own daughters are blessed beyond all realistic expectations.¹⁴³ Consequently, Dinah becomes a prototype of ὑπομονή herself, she survives her dishonor and perseveres.¹⁴⁴

Thus, the prosperity and blessedness of Job's later life includes not only his own restoration but that of his wife as well (be it Dinah or someone else). We could say that in the epilogue God

¹³³ Magdalene argues that the Ancient Israelites were familiar with the concept of martyrdom as resistance, as in the case of Samson, for example, who offers himself instead of continuing to take abuse by his Philistine torturers, he kills numerous Philistines in the process (Judges 16:23-31). The case of Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego can also be considered a case of martyrdom (Daniel 3). Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 235.

¹³⁴ Magdalene, *op. cit.*, p. 238.

¹³⁵ *Ibid.*

¹³⁶ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 256.

¹³⁷ Mitchell, *The Book of Job* New York, HarperCollins, 2nd Ed, 1987; cited by Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 256.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁴¹ Hartley, *Book of Job*, p. 542.

¹⁴² Legaspi, "Job's Wives in the Testament of Job", p. 78.

¹⁴³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ Legaspi, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

indirectly affirms the value of Jane Doe's efforts when he declares that his friends were in the wrong but says nothing about her.¹⁴⁵

Conclusion

Questions still remain, and with them the objection against suffering and death.¹⁴⁶ While we cannot know the "why" of particular instances of suffering, we can and ought to know that our entire surroundings are under siege by forces that hate God and everything he stands for.¹⁴⁷ In chapter 42, God's response to Job deals with the same reality that Latin American liberation theology has tried to emphasize, namely, the denunciation of the power in the world, the current sociopolitical system of "institutionalized injustice," a cultural mind frame and legal process which ultimately —like Job's friends— seeks to rationalize suffering and premature death.¹⁴⁸ God's response recognizes Job's innocence, on the one hand, and, on the other, watches over the interest and rights of all people and of every creature which exists in all of its variety and intricacy.¹⁴⁹

When Job repents towards the end of the narrative, is it possible that he heard a call to show solidarity to life in all of its forms?¹⁵⁰ If this is the case, the groaning of creation would be calling us beyond the lament and the theological debate —even though these are essential— into a more concrete fight in our daily lives.¹⁵¹ It involves a fight which favors the underprivileged, which defends the powerless and alleviates the suffering of innocent victims, even if at times it is through silence.¹⁵² It involves a fight which empowers the unheard to voice their concerns. Jane Doe serves as an archetype for those whose suffering is not only dreadful but unacknowledged.¹⁵³ As Oduyoye declares so succinctly regarding all marginalized women, "I do not speak much, but I am not without a voice."¹⁵⁴

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¹⁴⁵ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 257.

¹⁴⁶ Schweitzer, "Was Job's Wife Completely Wrong?", pp. 33-38.

¹⁴⁷ Boyd, *Is God to Blame?*, p. 105.

¹⁴⁸ Leif E. Vaage, "Desde la tormenta: el gemido de la creación y la respuesta de Dios a Job", *RIBLA* 21 (1995), pp. 73-90.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁵¹ Vaage, "Desde la tormenta", , passim.

¹⁵² See Elsa Tamez, "De silencios y gritos: Job y Qohélet en los noventa", in *DEI* 7 (1999), p. 2.

¹⁵³ Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 257.

¹⁵⁴ M. A. Oduyoye, *Daughters of Anowa: African Women and Patriarchy*, Maryknoll, New York, Orbis Books, 1995, p. vii; cited in Magdalene, "Job's Wife as a Hero", p. 240.

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