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Images of the dead (body) and the missing corpse in the *Book of Job*

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The *Song of Songs* is regarding Eros, whereas the *Book of Job* seems to be about Thanatos. Despite the dominance of the theme of death in this biblical book, no word for a corpse or even a dead body occurs. Absence is, however, hermeneutically so important that it probably constitutes its essence in that only gaps leaving questions can be interpreted. The theory of the French psychoanalyst, Mária Török, about a phantom in a psychic crypt as unknown parental bequeathal can shed some light in the darkness of this mysterious absence: God never reveals the secret deal with the Satan to the traumatised Job who consequently cannot see the hidden wisdom – the truth – of the 'corpse'. It is possible that death is more צַלְמָוֶת [a shadow of death, a word that occurs more in *Book of Job* than in any other biblical book], than a body, explaining something of Job's ambivalent attitude to physical death.

Contribution: The interdisciplinary research into biblical texts as literature from a psychoanalytical perspective adds to the broader horizons within which these texts can be analysed and interpreted. This is in line with the current shift of psychoanalytical interpretations away from psychiatry to literary studies.

Keywords: *Book of Job*; psychoanalytical; corpse; death; secret.

Introduction

The context for this study has been the prevalence of the body in the *Book of Job* where more than 70 different body-parts are mentioned against a background of illness and threatening death. A second influence has been the relative absence of the bodily reality of death in much of the current Western culture. It has been claimed that of the two greatest anxieties, only sexuality but not the intimate reality of bodily death has been confronted in Western society since the late 1960s. This is despite the constant public news of violent deaths and lately the international pandemic of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The hypothesis is that the unexpected absence of any explicit mention of a corpse in the *Book of Job* could be explained with the help of a psychoanalytical lens, which may shed some light on his attitude to physical death in the book. The aim of this study is not to give a definite conclusion but to widen the horizons of possibilities.

The methodology is to first outline all the textual traces pointing towards a consciousness and unconsciousness of death, focussing, but not exclusively, on Job's own words. Thereafter, the hermeneutics of interpreting the absence from the text will be explained to finally apply this psychoanalytically to the search for the absent corpse in the *Book of Job*.

Death in the *Book of Job*

Death occurs already in the first chapter where the violent killing of 7000 sheep, numerous servants except four and the accidental demise of all 10 children[1] of Job are reported to him. Strangely enough, nowhere it is said that Job or his wife had their corpses fetched to bury them, as one would have expected. In the last verse of the book, Job's own death for which he has wished all along is finally mentioned as well. The book is therefore framed by a dominant theme of death, which runs through most of the text. In only eight chapters (23, 25, 32, 35, 37, 39, 40, 41) there is no explicit reference to death. Amongst these only chapter 23 is about a speech from Job, and even here there is probably a subtle, indirect hint to death in the last verse, 23:17, suggested by the two synonymous nouns, חֹשֶׁךְ and אֹפֶל [both meaning 'darkness'].

In fact, darkness is a subtheme mostly connected to death in the book (Van der Zwan 2019):

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1. וַיָּמוּתוּ [and they are dead] in 1:19.

[*J*]ust the root, חֹשֶׁךְ [*darkness*], occurs 26 times, sometimes clustered with אֹפֶל [*thick darkness*], which is found six times and צַלְמָוֶת [*shadow of death*] in eleven instances, adding additional shades to this idea and suggesting its importance. In 28:3, humans believe they can put an end to darkness in mining, here compared to a powerful breakthrough of water. (p. 4)

With נַחַל [wadi, rather than shaft] and פָּרַץ [break open, in Gn 38:29 used for the womb] in 28:4, נְהָרוֹת [streams] in 28:11 and יְאֹרִים [channels] in 28:10 (Van Wolde 2003:29), all:

[*R*]eminding of the birth process. In 38:19, however, God rhetorically asks if Job knows where darkness, in parallel to death in verse 17, have their place. These instances of darkness can be contrasted to אוֹר [*light*], found 32 times, sometimes together with its opposite, such as in 38:19 where these two extremities may be used as a merism. Moreover, the word, לַיְלָה [*night*], occurs 17 times. (Van der Zwan 2019:5)

Thus, it adds to the gloomy atmosphere.

Job barely survives on the boundaries with death, but God would not allow him to cross that last border in 1:12 and 2:6. That could be why God only asks about the שַׁעֲרֵי [gates of] death in 38:17: Job has not even arrived at the boundary of or entrance to death (cf. 17:16: בַּדֵּי שְׁאֹל [the bars of *She'ol*]).

In the second chapter, Job is taunted by his wife in verse 9 to follow them through the imperative, וָמֻת [and die!]. At that stage, Job rejects it as a foolish option.

When his turning point comes is not altogether clear, but this theme continues in the third chapter when Job repeatedly asks why he has not, in fact, died at birth. He virtually wants the womb to have been his grave in 3:11 and in 10:19 he repeats this link between them. He longs לַמָּוֶת [for death] in 3:21 and in the next verse he idealises קֶבֶר [the grave]. Job associates it with the place where both the wicked and the weary would יָנוּחוּ (be at rest; cf. also 3:13, 17:16 and שַׁאֲנַנּוּ [are at ease] in 3:18). Death is thus the great equaliser for Job. In 9:23, Job hypothesises about a scourge יָמִית [killing] the innocent. Dying and killing are expressed by the same Hebrew root, which Elihu also uses to verbalise לַמְמִתִים [to the destroyers] in 33:22, which Brown, Driver and Briggs (2000:1342) interpreted as the 'angels of death'.

Ashes (אֵפֶר) in 2:8 and 42:6 – as if to frame the book – (cf. also 13:12 and 30:19) and עָפָר [dust] in 2:12 and 42:6 – also as if to frame the book – (cf. also 4:19, 5:6, 7:5.21, 8:19, 10:9, 14:8.19, 16:15, 17:16, 19:25, 20:11, 21:26, 22:24, 27:16, 28:2.6) (even here the transience of these precious metals), 30:6.19, 34:15, 38:38, 39:14, 40:13, 41:25 (God uses the word more as synonym for earth) make the same subtle suggestion. Whereas ashes associate with death, dust seems to be more connected to earthiness and transience, used by all protagonists except explicitly by Satan.

The same shadow of death is cast by רִמָּה [a worm] when it is mentioned in 7:5, 17:14, 21:26 and 24:20, all indicative of corruption, as it is feeding on the dead and even being used hyperbolically for an insignificant man in 25:6, where it is paralleled with תּוֹלֵעָה [maggot]. Likewise, in 13:28 rottenness and decay are suggested by רָקָב and עָשׁ אֲכָלוֹ (moth-eaten [garment]).

Job also expects death in 7:21, his days being few (10:20) and fast (7:6 and 9:25) and only vanity (7.6.16). This subtheme of the brevity and futility of his life can be elaborated on even more, but is left at this remark due to practical considerations.

The noun, פִּיד [ruin, disaster, but etymologically with connotations of death], appears in 12:5, 21:20, 30:24 and 31:29. Furthermore, three verbs with the meaning of dying have been used throughout the book: אבד (3:3, 4:9, 4:11, 4:20, 6:18, 8:13, 11:20, 12:23, 14:19, 18:17, 20:7, 22:12, 29:13, 30:2, 31:19), גוע (3:11, 10:18, 13:19, 14:10, 27:5, 29:18, 34:15, 36:12) and מות. According to Brown et al. (2000:945), אֵלֵךְ in 10:21 should also be understood as meaning 'I die'. This makes sense as it is also connected to darkness here. In chapter 33 the noun, שַׁחַת [pit], appears five times (in verses 18, 22, 24, 28 and 30) where it is four times connected with נפשׁ [life-energy] and the same four times with חיה [life], clearly suggesting the tension and struggle for survival.

In 21:33, גְּדִישׁ [tomb] is a *hapax legomenon*, even when גָּדִישׁ (heap [that is, of corn coming in after the harvest]) from a different root is also associated with the קֶבֶר [grave] in 5:26 (*vide infra*), adumbrating the ripe old age mentioned by the narrator in the last verse of the book (cf. 30:2 where Job speaks). A watch guards the tomb according to 21:32, because it is so desired thanks to the רִגְבֵי־נָחַל [clods of the valley], which are pleasant to the dead in the next verse (cf. 17:16 referring to the bars of *She'ol*, probably blocking entrance). Similarly, זִכְרֹנֵיכֶם [your memorials] in 13:12, but not זִכְרוֹ [his remembrance in 18:17] probably refers to a tomb.

Job avoids a direct referral to death by metonymically expressing the earth of the grave as עָפָר [dust] in 7:21 (cf. 17:16, 19:25, 20:11, 21:26). In 17:1 he personifies (cf. 28:22) the קְבָרִים [grave, actually plural] as if it were something alive by claiming it is ready for him. Here it also seems as if death is the end of time. Job also uses the typical euphemism of sleep for death in 3:13 and 14:12.

Chapter 14 deals with death more than many other chapters, and the root, מות [die], occurs thrice: in verses 8, 10 and 14, comparing humans to trees who have a better chance of reviving. Humans are unlike trees of which the stem יָמוּת [dies] in the dust and yet sprouts again with new rain. Yet, in verse 13, he imagines or even wishes *She'ol* as a hiding place, where God would keep him as a secret for a while, but always remember him, even when death is the realm of forgetfulness according to verse 20. Death is the state of complete oblivion – one could say, unconsciousness – according to verse 21 (cf. also 7:21). Pondering it is a one-

way mindset, possible only from the perspective of life, even though it seems as if there is still suffering in death according to verse 22. Likewise, Job sees no return from שְׁאוֹל [She'ol] in 7:9 and 10:21. In 24:19 he believes that She'ol[2] consumes (the verb, גזל, occurs thrice in this chapter) those who have sinned, implying that he will survive.

Apart from the generally morbid tone of the book, death is often indirectly present in the background as well. The word, אלמנה [widow], occurs in 22:9 (the only time not mentioned by Job), 24:3, 27:15, 29:13 and 31:16 and adds to an eerie atmosphere of mourning.

The question arises what Bildad means with בְּכוֹר מָוֶת [the first-born of death] in 18:13, if it is really a terminal disease, as Brown et al. (2000:1342) understand it.

Some body-parts also suggest death such as blood in 16:18 and 39:30 and bones in 2:5, 7:15, 19:20 and 20:11. So in 30:30, for instance, Habel (1985:159) correctly recognises more a corpse than a living body in these images. In 28:22, Job personifies death (cf. 17:1) if it were a body with ears, which have heard the rumour of wisdom and identifies it through parallelism with אֲבַדּוֹן [destruction; cf. She'ol likewise in 26:6]. In 12:2, wisdom is also personified by Job as יָמִית [dying] with his first three interlocutors. Moreover, portraying death as a building is reminiscent of psychodynamic associations between a house (cf. Job's fantasy of She'ol in 17:13; vide infra) and the body both as containers, and therefore representations of the self (Freud 1967b:154, 1961a:89, 1961b:351; Jung 1984:116). Yet death itself remains a mystery according to 38:17, where God asks Job rhetorically if שַׁעֲרֵי-מָוֶת [the gates of death; cf. Psalm 9:14, 107:18] have been revealed to him, or if he has seen וְשַׁעֲרֵי צַלְמָוֶת [the gates of the shadow of death].[3] The words in 17:16, בַּדֵּי שְׁאֹל [the bars of the netherworld, She'ol], have a similar sense and suggest a kind of cellar to which one descends (cf. also 21:13). Apart from separation, it also refers to body-parts: members or limbs such as in 18:13 (of a man) or in 41:4 (of the leviathan). The depths of She'ol is not necessarily an extremity in opposition to God in the heavenly heights, because God is also deeper and more unfathomable than the netherworld according to the words of Zophar 11:8.

That Job associates death with his family in 17:14 after linking it to his house in the previous verse could be explained as his parents having died already and so dying would be joining them (vide supra).

It is possible that death is more צַלְמָוֶת [a shadow of death,[4] a word that occurs more in Job than in any other biblical book]

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2. Job is the only character using the word, She'ol.

3. Here the possible parallelism might imply that death and the shadow of death are synonymous (cf. 10:21), unless God is willing to compromise the question by asking about even the minimum of death, just its shadow.

4. Clines (1989:170, 192, 584, 2011:1058) regarded it as a compound noun and translated it as 'darkness/shadow of death', opposing a revocalisation as if the word stems from, צלם, the existence of which Clines (1974:22) argued is unlikely. Brown et al. (2000:2069) took the first syllable to derive from the verb, צלל III [be / grow dark]. Both these scholars therefore insist on the separate part as מות [death]. In 10:21,22 Clines (1989:361), however, translates it with 'deep shadow', but draws attention to the fact that מות is used to form a superlative, so still retaining the same word, just with a different sense, using 'death' as intensifier. Cohen (1996:308) had the same view as Clines.

than a (dead) body. In 3:5 it is paralleled to darkness, a cloud and blackness, as it is in 10:21–22 where it is clearly identified with the chaos and darkness of death. However, in 12:22 Job claims that God can brighten the shadow of death, apparently meaning that hidden things can be revealed by God. Job describes his face in 16:16 as reminder of his emotional and spiritual state, when the shadow of death is on his eyelids. It therefore seems to have a bodily dimension as well. In 24:17 (twice) it is linked to the terrors of criminality. It is not clear if Job means in 28:3 that miners risk their lives facing the shadow of death, so being on the boundary of death, or if he simply refers to the extreme darkness similar to death. Elihu is the only other interlocutor apart from Job using the same expression in 34:22, but for him it is the hiding place of the wicked. The expression thus has both literal and figurative connotations, but the association with death remains, simply because of the part of the word, מָוֶת.

Interpreting the unsaid

All interpretations are in a sense transgressive, trespassing, crossing borders and boundaries, where the gaps are as transitional spaces for creative (intrusive, but bridging) transitional objects. In this way, they negotiate differences, contradictions, ruptures and discontinuities as Achilles heels, at the seams often having become scars on the 'skin' of the text. Yet, they testify of hidden trauma, just as the gaping gaps in the skin of Job requires a forensic sleuth. If every 'hand' knew the other, all would be above board, transparent and connected like a seamless cloth and there would be no role for interpretation.

The gaps or discrepancies in ancient texts such as the biblical books have been identified by form criticism and redaction criticism as the left-over fractures revealing the original fragments, which have been woven together into one piece. A similar breach can also be detected when the same author develops and ends up with an earlier and a later version of the content. A pivotal splitting leaves ambiguity and silence about the true content. Underlying the paradigm shift could have been a crisis or even trauma. The redactor would harmonise the two versions even with a third version, the 'synthesis', not necessarily acknowledging and appreciating development as something positive. That is why a polemical tone in a text has, for instance, been identified by Török (Johnson 2005:740) as signs of hidden contradiction, doubt and an unease in the mind of the character carrying a trauma.

Mária Török (1925–1998), a Hungarian refugee, was a French psychoanalyst focusing on the effect of transgenerational trauma and is now getting so much recognition that she is becoming more and more an alternative to both Jacques Lacan and Didier Anzieu in France.

Török (1976:passim) made a case study of Freud's most famous patient, Sergei Pankeiev, the Wolf Man, rereading Freud's notes with the 'crypt' as a psychoanalytic concept within their own clinical contexts. Therefore, they worked

with a text, not Freud's patient personally, and so their findings are also applicable to texts and not limited to patients.

In doing this, what was supposed to be a closed case by focusing on the partitions (the gaps) of the verbal remains Freud's patient left behind on the one hand and the encryption replicating itself on the other. By suggesting a family theatre, this leaves the inner crypt as repository of a phantom haunting the living (Török 2009:393ff., 437ff.). Incidentally, Nicholas Rand, the translator of *L'Écorce et le noyau* (ed. 1994:175) remarks in his editorial notes that the work of the phantom coincides in every respect with Freud's description of the death instinct.

There is therefore a kind of family-triangle: the deceased parent, seemingly taking a secret to the grave but unaware of 'bequeathing' it as a phantom or knowingly transmitting it as a lie to a child where it is stored in the form of a gap in its unconscious (Török 2009:296–297n1) and the traces of which are betrayed (to others) as gaps in the child's speech. The phantom's secret does not seem to have been necessarily about a trauma experienced by the parent. It could have been a father's secret affaire, for instance, or simply a parent's unconscious into which the child has tapped. This gives a new understanding of Freud's '*unheimliche*' [uncanny] in the sense that the secret could be '*heimlich*' [secretly familiar in the family], yet simultaneously '*unheimlich*' [foreign] for the child who unconsciously senses this secret when it has an exceptional empathy for the unconscious of the parent. Because the child never personally experienced this secret it cannot be psychically introjected but only incorporated, in the psychoanalytical sense of this terminology. The same applies to the sensitive recipient of the *Book of Job* who would inherit this same secret as 'nescience' (unrecognised, inaccessible knowledge, Török 2009:444) being co-opted as 'cryptophore' (Török 2009:299) by the existing chain of secret preservers, and being in cahoots with them, its contagion being beyond Job's infectious skin-problem.

The crypt is therefore not something repressed in the unconscious of the child to be excavated by psychoanalysis or which can return to the conscious, but hiding the phantom of a loss transferred into, cryptically included as a gap, an unexpected absence, another in the body of a text and buried as *Fremdkörper* in the body of the child by the parent. A gap cannot be introjected, but is incorporated as something heterogeneous, eating like a cancer into the psyche, without being able to be digested or sublimated through symbolisation, in language for instance. As unconscious phantasy, it remains ineffable. It is a false or artificial 'unconscious' settling in, but not part of the personal unconscious by incorporating the lost beloved object for which it erects an unmarked tomb or monument commemorating its exclusion. It is the effect of an encrypting and leads to 'anasemic' discourse (over against symbolisation) as the uncommon sense and idiosyncratic meaning of certain structures and psychic movements of the unconscious.

Cryptonymy is suggested by anagrams, homophones, rhymes, puns and other word and sound plays, which are give-aways for unconscious desires, circumventing the mind's linguistic censorship. As phantom words they point, instead, to gaps in the introjective strivings of the ego, and to some catastrophe in the parent.

Two related aspects of the text are therefore interpreted: the polysemy, ambiguity or equivocation and the gaps, unsaid or silences, the secret according to Török (2009:252ff.; vide infra).

Interpreting the absent corpse in the *Book of Job*

Silence is also a subtheme in the *Book of Job* and the question is what its meaning is. It is not only God's silence but also the silence of the grave(s) (cf. 3:18). Death is unspeakable. For Török (2009:265–266), the most traumatic is not the experience of a tragedy but the (often enforced) silence about it. Apart from social repression due to shame there is also something ineffable about traumatic experience being beyond the verbal boundaries (Emery 2008:631). This seems to play a role in the speeches in the *Book of Job* where his losses are not explicitly verbalised in the dialogues.

In the *Book of Job*, significant examples of puns are already the name אִיּוֹב [Job] alluding to אוֹיֵב [enemy] in 13:24, גִּיל (exultation, or tombstone [Greenstein 2003:662] as parallel to קֶבֶר [grave]?!) in 3:22 and אֹבוֹת [wine-skin, but also necromancer! but then uttered by Elihu] in 32:9).

Amongst the contradictions in the *Book of Job* are his contrary descriptions of the wicked in chapter 21:7–33 and in 27:14–23, the latter of which actually very much reflects his own situation. This can hardly be interpreted as development in spiritual insight, as can be the earlier belief by Job in 10:21b that the underworld is a realm of utter darkness but later confesses in 25:3b that God's light can penetrate even this darkness. Van der Lugt (1995:534) also regarded the conception of wisdom in chapters 4–26 as practical versus that of wisdom as theoretical in chapter 28 as being in tension, but this does not imply a contradiction.

Particularly chapter 17, where Job utters several things about his apparently eminent death, seems to be a collection of unrelated, discontinuous fragments. In fact, it is hard to trace progression in Job's views and feelings until the end of chapter 31. Much of it is cyclical and repetitive, a feature of Freud's idea of the death instinct coinciding with the phantom (ed. Rand 1994:175, *vide supra*).

The silences, ambiguities, contradictions and discontinuities in the *Book of Job* point towards a skeleton in the closet: a phantom in the crypt imprisoned in his unconscious.

The phantoms are not simply the dead, but specifically their (sometimes shameful) secrets, and so it is not quite about unsuccessful mourning (which Job seems to be successfully

doing in 30:31) in the sense of not coming to terms with the loss of a love object.

Job does not understand his enigmatic fate. He is unaware of something or someone controlling his tragic life. That is why he rhetorically asks in 9:24c who it could be if it were not God (cf. 10:2 versus 10:7). God, as a probable Father-figure[5,6] to Job who never mentions his own father but several times his mother, 'bequeathed' the Satan to Job without Job knowing it, which is again why Job never mentions the Satan himself, simply because he is not aware of his existence. Freud (p. 36) might have had an inkling of this in his notion of the death drive when he ascribes a 'dämonischen Charakter' (demonic character) to being possessed by repetition compulsion. Alternatively, it could have been Job's mother who held the secret, perhaps about Job's unknown father. God empathically echoes his concern about an unknown father in 38:28–29, but then on a transcendental scale.

That sounds like a phantom hidden in a crypt. Unleashing this 'inherited' phantom would therefore have caused Job's trauma. The phantom is like a dormant cancer or poison which suddenly becomes active. It is 'inherited' probably because Job is an exceptionally sensitive and empathic person (cf. e.g. 29:15–17, 30:25) who also craves empathy himself (*vide infra*). Job might have confused this unnameable crypt with 'his' womb [בִּטְנִי] in 3:10 when the ellipsis not only suggests that he 'metonymically' owns his (introjected) mother but also that this dead mother-being-a-womb represents the (incorporated) grave and unnameable corpse as well. His fantasised wish to have died in the – also 'his' – womb in 3:10–11 suggests him carrying a 'dead body' in his own tummy (cf. Török 2009:319[7]).

Neither Job was present when his children died nor is there any mention of burial. One assumes that it was practically impossible for some unknown reason. That is also a gap, a secret, in the text. They have been left 'unburied' or 'buried alive' in Job's unconscious, and so he is left with the natural questions what really happened, such as whether the reports by the surviving messengers have been true and accurate. Significantly, he never mentions them again, except in 29:5.

That might be the reason why the verb, קבר [bury], occurs relatively seldom in a book reporting so many deaths: only in 27:15. The noun as 'grave' with the same consonants in 3:10 (as wish, associated with abortion or miscarriage, cf. 10:19), 5:26 (the only one not mentioned by Job, and then a natural late death, *vide supra*), 10:19 (again as wish, and again associated with abortion or miscarriage, cf. 3:10), 17:1

(perhaps also as wish) and 21:32 (again linked to birth) is a leap beyond burial.

It is conspicuous that, despite the recurrent references to death, no word for corpse or cadaver such as פגר or נבלה occurs in the book, not even 'dead body'. The first of these two Hebrew words occurs in Leviticus 26:30, where even idols have carcasses. In Numbers 14:29.32.33, 2 Chronicles 20:24 (with בגדים suggested as emendation in verse 25) and Jeremiah 9:21 it is connected to the verb, נפל [fall], and to either the open field or the wilderness, in other words as something contemptible, even compared to dung in the last instance. As a verb in the *Pi'el*-form it means 'being exhausted' or 'faint' in 1 Samuel 30:10, 21. Otherwise it occurs in 1 Samuel 17:46, 2 Kings 19:35 = Isaiah 37:36, Isaiah 14:19, Jeremiah 31:40, 33:5, 34:3, 41:9, 66:24, Ezekiel 6:5, 43:7.9, Amos 8:3, Nahum 3:3 and of animals in Genesis 15:11, showing that the word was well-known.

It might be significant that the second Hebrew word, נבלה, generally also occurs in the same biblical books of Kings and those by the three major prophets as פגר, but otherwise is more in the contexts about cleanliness: in Leviticus 11:39.40 (twice), Deuteronomy 21:23, 28:26, Joshua 8:29 (Jahwistic, Elohistic), 1 Kings 13:22.24(twice).25(twice).28(thrice).29.30, 2 Kings 9:37, Isaiah 5:25, 26:19 (wish for restoration to life), Jeremiah 7:33, 9:21, 16:4.18 (collectively of lifeless idols), 19:7, 26:23, 34:20, 36:30 and Psalm 79:2. Of a human it is not used in the Priestly and Holiness parts of Ezekiel, which use פגר, of animals (clean and unclean, wild animals, cattle, birds and reptiles), mainly in Leviticus and Ezekiel: Deuteronomy 14:8.21 (specifically the body of an animal dying of itself), Leviticus 5:2 (thrice), 7:24 (Priestly?), 11:8.11.24.25.27.28.35.36.37.38.39.40 (twice), 17:15 (all Priestly), 22:8 (Holiness) and Ezekiel 4:14, 44:31. If the *Book of Job* has been written or redacted relatively late, then its vocabulary could chronologically overlap with that of the Priestly texts, which also stem from a relatively late period. Yet, it does not occur here, even when Job could possibly be regarded as a priest.

The virtual *hapax legomenon*, גוּפָה, occurs only in 1 Chronicles 10:12 and then twice. The verse has a non-identical parallel in 1 Samuel 31:12 where the word, גְּוִיָּה, is, however, used instead. A seemingly related noun, גַּף, but from the root, גפף, occurs twice in Exodus 21:3 and in Proverbs 9:3, but means 'body', that is an alive one, or in the former context, 'self', and in the latter 'height, elevation', referring to a part of a city, as if it were a body, an association also found in psychoanalytical work (*vide supra*).

The above-mentioned noun, גְּוִיָּה, is somewhat better known, but usually means an alive 'body' as in Genesis 47:18, 1 Samuel 31:10, Ezekiel 1:11. 23, Daniel 10:6 and Nehemiah 9:37, although Clines (1989:687, 1155) is open to the idea of substituting it for גוה [back, body] in 20:25 where it would mean corpse. Only in Judges 14:8.9 (of a lion), 1 Samuel 31:10 (probably the original in 1 Chronicles 10:10 where one finds גֻּלְגָּלְתּוֹ [his head, skull] instead).12 (twice, *vide supra*), Psalm

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5. Some change the vowels of the verb in גְּדֵלַנִי כְאָב in 31:18 so that it is possible to understand it as '(God) raised me like a father', an option Clines (2006:633) regarded as unnecessary.

6. God is indeed a father, according to 1:6 and 2:1, God's sons mentioned there probably unknown to Job.

7. '*Je porte en moi un, qui est mort, ne pouvant digérer ma perte*' [I carry in me someone who is dead and who cannot digest the fact of having lost me].

110:6 and in Nahum 3:3 where it occurs twice and then as parallel to פֶגֶר, does it mean 'corpse' or 'carcass' in the first instance mentioned. Incidentally, none of these instances of the four nouns, differentiates between a corpse and a cadaver as some modern languages do, suggesting that the human and animal fate is identical.

Several possible explanations can be mooted. Conspicuous is that Job seems to ignore fathers in what one can assume is a patriarchal society – even his own father, perhaps because he was illegitimate. Yet, he gives women some attention in his speeches. Being singularly pious according to his introduction in the first verse could be reaction formation to prove himself worthy despite it all, in a compensatory manner. Of course, he himself has been the father of 10 children, and then a particularly conscientious father, but never speaks about them, as if they have been יָתוֹם [fatherless], a word he does use twice (verses 17 and 21) in the same chapter 31 where he speaks about *not* having eyed a young woman, because his punishment could be that his wife be sexually taken by other men…who might have begotten his first 10 children or himself and explaining his wish in chapters 3 and 10 not to have been born? Then his words are like those of a ventriloquist: the phantom as other, as stranger, speaks through his mouth. He speaks about יָתוֹם [an orphan, fatherless[8]] in 6:27, (in 22:9 Eliphas speaks), 24:3.9, 29:12 and 31:17.21, maybe because he feels fatherless and now even childless, blamed by Bildad in 18:19 as his deserved punishment. He acknowledges fatherhood of an (informally) 'adopted'[9] child in 31:18, apparently a girl because the accusative suffix of אַנְחֶנָּה [I guided her] is feminine, unless it refers to אַלְמָנָה [widow], but that would be two (not one, as Clines [2006:633] seems to claim) verses earlier. The first impression is therefore that his preceding words, וּמִבֶּטֶן אִמִּי [and from my mother's womb[10]], could mean that the יָתוֹם [orphan; even when masculine in form including both genders in meaning] was born from his mother's womb, so Job's half-sister, of whom the father is perhaps unknown…and after the birth of whom his mother might have died?…Even when Clines regards חֲלָצָו [his loins; *vide infra*] metonymic for the whole body, one wonders why this body-part has been selected to represent the whole body and if it could not imply something sexual in the sense of procreation 'on behalf of' Job, who could have been his children's god-father, so to speak. What might seem like vain speculation is, in fact, a serious attempt at closing the gaps, which these questions leave by at least creative if not plausible conjectures.

One also wonders whether the 10 'new' children in the final chapter have also been adopted, as no mention is ever made of their mother nor that Job healed from his terrible disease affecting his visible skin and making him to stink (like a corpse?) according to 19:17. When all his possessions have been doubled, why have the number of his children not likewise been doubled? Why has his healing not explicitly been mentioned when his other losses are so clearly compensated for? There are numerous questions, not only gaps, the recipient of the book are therefore left with. Some of these the Testament of Job and the *midrashim* try to answer in their own ways.

It could be acceptable for Job to idealise death without considering the unclean idea of a corpse. Death is for him about escaping the body, even a state where he would see God with his very own eyes despite his skin having been destroyed and without his flesh according to 19:26–27.

His possible avoidance could also be related to his refusal to mention his dead children in his grief, if he does grieve. This could be because of his guilt that he could not save them through sacrifice, or for not having sacrificed for them after their last party[11] in 1:13.

Another possible explanation stems from an article, '*Maladie du deuil et fantasme du cadavre exquis*' [The illness of mourning and the fantasy of the exquisite corpse], by Török in 1968 for which she received the seventh Prix Maurice Bouvet the next year. In this work, she re-examined the problems of introjection and incorporation, as presented from the works of Sándor Ferenczi through those of Melanie Klein. She distinguished introjection, as a process that allows the ego to be enriched with the instinctual traits of the pleasure-object, from incorporation, a fantasmatic mechanism that positions the forbidden or prohibited object within. According to Török (1968:718ff.) when (gradual, slow, laborious, mediated, effective) introjection – and so mourning – are impossible or refused, incorporation is the only alternative: unmediated, immediate, fantastic, magical and even hallucinatory.

She was building on but changing the observations by Abraham (1980:306), communicated to Sigmund Freud who refrained from responding to them, which increased libido and even conception is often triggered by mourning. What Melanie Klein emphasises as the triumph of the fulfilment of early death wishes[12] for others, Török regards as the 'final, climactic outpouring of love' for the deceased, as summarised in Rand's editorial notes (ed. 1994:103).

Török (1968:723–725) recognised an emerging emotional illness in erotic mourning rites where the '*fantasmes du cadavre exquis*' (the phantasm [or phantasy[13]] of the exquisite cadaver) are so erotically cathected that women and desire aroused at funerals are merged in the unconscious.[14] Török (1968:717)

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8. Clines (2006:91,663) insists on only 'fatherless', when they are juxtaposed to widows suggesting that these children are still with their widowed mothers, as in 24:3 and 31:17 they don't have fathers. The same applies to 24:9 where the mother is almost explicitly mentioned.

9. כְּאָב [like / as a father]

10. Unless Job meant it as hyperbole for his own life starting from birth, as Clines (2006:696) claims.

11. Job has not known about it, because the messenger told him in 1:18 only after they had died.

12. Death wishes are expressed in the *Book of Job*, but then not for another but as something suicidal, which Job explicitly considers in 13:14.

13. Melanie Klein (*passim*) uses the spelling 'phantasy' and extends Freud's concept by including its unconscious base. The link with phantasm here is important as it conjures up the notion of phantom as well.

14. Cf. also Pope (1977:210ff.) interpretation of the eroticism of the Song of Songs with a funeral context (cf. also Horine 2001:30).

also explained the illness of mourning not as e result of object-loss but because of the guilt-feelings caused by the irreparable crime of '*d'avoir été envahi de désir*' [having been overcome with desire] when one should be grieving in despair. The desire itself has nothing to do with paraphilia but is universal according to her. One could speculate if the Eros-drive asserts itself to survive the Thanatos' gravitational force back to the origin.

The result was mourning become illness, or the impossible grieving for a loved one, fuelled by the fantasy of incorporation of the lost love-object in the body or, vice versa, a fantasy of entering the body of the lost object of love. This secret identification is a form of magic to recover the lost pleasure-object and to compensate for the missing introjection, denying the loss.

It cannot be claimed that the *Book of Job* portrays a subtheme of eroticism but there are some surprising references to sexuality in 24:15, 31:1.(7–8?).9 (vide infra).10. The same could be true in a more subtle way in 31:15, 18 referring to the womb and reminding one of chapters 3 and 10, and even 31:20 mentioning loins (*vide supra*) and even 31:27 where Job repeats the same words as in 31:9 (*vide supra*). It might be going too far to suggest that Job is sexualising death but these verses make one wonder why they occur in the mind of a mourning man.

The erotic images could have helped Job deal with the unassimilable trauma, just as Rebekah seems to facilitate Isaac through his mother's death in Genesis 24:67 (cf. Rachmuth 2021). From Török's perspective, Job's ego is enriched through introjection of his repressed libido making him to heal bodily and psychically and to procreate once again. In this 'neurosis of transition' introjection of desires replaces the incorporated lost object, upon which a constant dependency would have been the case. In such a mindset, of course, there is no place for a corpse.

If there is any secret explicitly mentioned in the *Book of Job*, it is the mystery of God's wisdom confessed in the last chapter, but adumbrated already in 40:4–5. Zophar mooted it in 11:6 as the תַּעֲלֻמוֹת [secrets] of wisdom as well. Job uses the same word in the singular form in 28:11 for whatever is hidden. Darkness [חֹשֶׁךְ] referring to a secret is often mentioned in the book as in 12:22, for instance, and in 34:22 it means a secret hiding place. Job himself virtually claims not having any secrets in 31:28.

In addition, there are several hints of hidden, secret issues as a subtheme in the *Book of Job*, expressed by seven different verbs. The verb, טמן [hide, conceal], occurs in 3:16[15] (Job's wished-for non-birth) already, 3:21 (elusive death as hidden treasure), 18:10 (hidden snares), 20:26 (lost treasures), 31:33 (sins) and 40:13 (twice, proud sinners). In addition, the Hebrew verb, חבא [withdraw, hide] occurs in 5:21 (positive: protective), 24:4 (the poor hiding from danger), 29:8 (modesty or shame

of the young). 10 (modesty or shame of the nobles) and 38:30 (metaphorically: congealed water; cf. 6:16, *vide infra*). Another verb, סתר [hide, conceal] in 3:10 (trouble). 23 (future [Clines 1989:208]), 13:10 (corruption). 20 (Job) hiding from God). 24 (God hiding from Job), 14:13 (in *She'ol* as refuge; *vide supra*), 22:14 (clouds allegedly hiding God), 24:15 (an adulterer), 28:21 (wisdom, cf. also עלם *vide infra*), 31:27 (secret sin), 34:22 (sinners). 29 (God hiding), 40:21 (the behemoth). In 6:16 (snow: cf. 38:30, *vide supra*), 28:21 (wisdom, cf. also סתר *vide supra*) and 42:3 (counsel) one finds the verb, עלם [conceal]. Then again, there is צפן [hide, treasure up] in 10:13 (the secret in God's heart), 14:13 (probably in *She'ol*; *vide supra*), 17:4 (God's understanding), 20:26 (darkness as treasure?), 21:19 (sins), 23:12 (God's words), 24:1 (times). Less direct but adding another dimension to hiding is negation in the verb, כחד [hide, efface], in 4:7 (the righteous), 6:10 ([not] God's words), 15:18 ([not] wisdom).28 (cities), 20:12 (wickedness under the tongue) and 22:20 (opponents). Much less than the noun, חשך [darkness, obscurity], the verb with the same consonants is found in 3:9 (stars), 18:6 (light, a paradox) and especially 38:2 where God[16] ironically confronts Job with a rhetorical question about obscuring עֵצָה [counsel], perhaps wisdom, with tricky but empty eloquence, to which Job naively admits in 42:3, but adding that there are things he does not understand, some hidden secrets which for Job seem like wonders, supernatural (cf. Clines 2011:398ff.). What Job still doesn't know is that this is because God has never revealed the secret deal with the Satan, which has actually been behind Job's trauma all along. Even the narrator remains silent about it in the epilogue.

From this discussion it follows that death, wisdom, God and sin are hidden from time to time but also nature, such as the behemoth and even snow. It seems that Job believes wisdom to be hidden in death, which is why he longs to 'see' God in death in 19:26–27 if LeCocque's translation of וּמִבְּשָׂרִי in 19:26 is not accepted as 'and in my flesh', that is, before death (LeCocque 2007:92; Van der Lugt 1995:227n9), but as 'without my flesh', that is, after death, as Spronk (1986:312–313) understands it.

In addition, one often gets a sense of imprisonment or some other enclosure that could be a textual pointer to a phantom in a crypt, which is ironically idealised as containing the ultimate wisdom about the trauma suffered. This may not only be Job's individual traumas (apart from his wife who has all along remained in silence) but also it being a reminder of transgenerational trauma, even the trauma of the human condition. Job senses that when the wisdom hidden in God's heart will be revealed (cf. 11:7), it will be the relief and healing longed for all along.

The refuge Job seeks in death in chapters 3 and 10 (where God's secret is like something transpersonal in 10:13) reminds one of the crypt where the transpersonal secret – inherited from the parent and not belonging to the individual's

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15.Darkness is emphasised in chapter 3, with light constantly being denied.

16.Elihu has the same view of Job in 35:16.

personal experience – is hidden. The unmentioned 'corpse' is the ineffable phantom in this crypt. It is as if Job senses that the secret is merged with the deceased but unnameable parent whose secret it has been. God's invisible presence and wisdom, as לֹא-חֵקֶר (unsearchable, cf. 5:9, 9:10 [עַד-אֵין חֵקֶר], 11:7 [without לֹא, but rhetorically implied], 36:26), similarly escapes Job's in sight. Job cannot embody it.

To reinterpret Derrida (1992:50, 52) with a different context when he writes in his thanatology, *Donner la mort* [usually translated as 'The gift of death'], *'le don de quelque chose qui reste inaccessible, donc non présentable et par conséquent secret'* [the gift that is not a present, the gift of something that remains inaccessible, unpresentable, and as a consequence secret]… *'ce n'est rien d'autre que la mort, une nouvelle signification de la mort, une nouvelle appréhension de la mort, une nouvelle manière de se donner la mort'* [is nothing other than death itself, a new significance for death, a new apprehension of death, a new way in which death is given], can allow Job to live again, when he receives the gift of a new significance of death from God.

Conclusion

Job is ambivalent about death. Sometimes he idealises it as an escape and a place to hide, where he will even be able to see God, yet at other times it is the place of no-return, darkness and terror.

The elusive corpse is probably not coincidental. Job can imagine himself dead but not as a corpse. Nor is there a word about the corpses of his children. The gaps pertaining to their deaths remain and reflect the unspeakable. That is why he cannot even identify with them as a corpse. The unnameable 'corpse' is the phantom in the crypt incorporated in Job's unconscious.

There are at least three interconnected subthemes in the book relevant for images of the dead: darkness, secrecy and silence. These may be connected to shame but then it is only social and therefore conscious. The dark secret hidden in silence sealed within the crypt may even be deeper than the death of his children.

At the same time the womb, the grave, the mine in chapter 28, wisdom and God are all symbols of an enclave encapsulated in the unconscious where the unnameable corpse of an unnamed loved one is hidden.

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