BETWEEN TRIAL AND RETURN: NARRATIVE TELEOLOGY, SUFFERING AND RELIGION IN THE FACE OF THE NON-CORRESPONDENCE OF EXPERIENCE

Pablo Dietrich[1]

Master's student in Law, Universidade Estácio de Sá (UNESA) · ORCID 0009-0003-5447-0550

Author's translation. English translation, prepared by the author, of: DIETRICH, Pablo. Entre a provação e o retorno: teleologia narrativa, sofrimento e religião diante da não correspondência da experiência. *Revista Tópicos*, Rio de Janeiro, v. 4, n. 38, p. 1–40, 2026. ISSN 2965-6672. DOI: 10.70773/revistatopicos/792273654. The Portuguese text published by the journal is the version of record; this translation is distributed under the CC BY 4.0 licence with attribution to the original publication.

ABSTRACT

The narrative problem of suffering lies not only in its explanation, but in the relationship between loss and its resolution. Historical experience does not guarantee that losses will be restored, that suffering will shape those who endure it, or that projects will reach completion, and this lack of guarantee is called narrative non-correspondence. Narratives respond to it in four ways: by restoring what was lost, by transforming loss into formation, by transferring to another the ending denied to the one who suffered, or by deferring resolution, or else they leave the gap open; and these modes are distinguished according to the subject who receives the resolution, the time in which it occurs, and the horizon in which it is situated, whether it be biography, the history of a people, or a transcendent order. The heroic pattern described by Joseph Campbell, stripped of the claim to universality, is the clearest example of transformation. Religious traditions matter here for a precise reason: besides extending resolution to descendants and to the people, which narratives without religion also do, they can keep it open for the subject himself, or for the order of the world, after death. The death of Moses outside the promised land and the epilogue of Job are read as objections to this hypothesis. In the first, the ending that the individual lacks is fulfilled in the people; in the second, the restitution of everything that could be restored leaves in view what could not. In neither case does the broadening of the horizon eliminate non-correspondence: it displaces it or preserves it. Describing what these narratives do does not decide where the beliefs that sustain them came from nor whether they are true.

Keywords: narrative teleology; suffering; theodicy; philosophy of religion; Job.

1. PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

A person may suffer and learn nothing whatever from what he has suffered. He may sacrifice himself for a cause and see it lose; he may set out and die before any return. None of this is exceptional; it is the ordinary fabric of historical experience, and it seems a scandal only to those who expect from experience a form it never promised. A great many of the stories that cultures preserve and repeat, however, organize adversity in another way: loss becomes a call, exile becomes a passage, trial becomes formation, descent prepares an ascent, and the ending

gives meaning, retrospectively, to everything that came before. Between the life that promises no closure and the story that offers it there is a distance, and religious narratives are perhaps the place where that distance has been treated with the greatest insistence and the greatest variety.[2]

None of the parts of the problem is new. That narrative gives lived time a form it does not possess by itself is Ricoeur's central thesis; that the ending retrospectively governs the meaning of the course, the argument of Kermode and of Brooks; that adversity shakes prior beliefs and provokes efforts at reorganization, the core of the psychology that studies the making of meaning after trauma, from Janoff-Bulman to Park.[3] What is missing is to bring them together around a single question. It is not enough to ask whether a narrative closes suffering; one must ask where, when, and for whom that closure takes place.

The question has three parts, and each separates things that are usually confused. Closure has a horizon, which may be the biography of the one who suffered, the history of the people to which he belongs, or an order that transcends history; it has a time, which may be the present of the narrative, a future within history, or the end of time; and it has a subject, who may be the same one who suffered, another, an entire people, or no one. Put this way, things show why the opposition between secular and religious narratives says so little. Stories without religion go beyond biography all the time, through descendants, through memory, through the nation, through the work, through the political project, and whoever dies before seeing his cause triumph does not need God in order to be remembered as someone who prepared it. What certain religious traditions add is not the capacity to hand over to another the ending that someone lacked, which is common, but the capacity to keep that ending reserved for the subject himself, or for the order of the world, after death.

The hypothesis has a condition, and the condition is part of the hypothesis. It is not claimed that reality is absurd, that the world lacks meaning, or that religions were invented to console. It is claimed that experience does not guarantee narrative closure, that narratives have few modes of responding to this lack of guarantee, and that religious traditions offer all of them, including that of not repairing. The question, then, is this: how do heroic and religious narratives deal with the absence of a necessary correspondence between suffering and the ending that would give it meaning, and in what horizon, time, and subject do they situate the resolution when they offer it? Three further questions follow from it: whether non-correspondence and narrative repair have already been described under other names, and what remains once what has already been said is acknowledged; what separates the extension of resolution to the history of a people, within the reach of any narrative, from its extension beyond death; and whether Moses and Job confirm, correct, or refute the hypothesis.

The inquiry is theoretical and measures nothing. It brings together conceptual analysis, the comparison of narrative forms, philosophy of religion, and the close reading of two biblical texts, and it draws on psychology only as a bridge. The biblical texts do not represent "religion"; they represent a tradition chosen because in it the tension between life and the form of the story is

spelled out in so many words, and because in it repair and its absence live side by side. Two cautions accompany the whole course. To show that a belief fulfils a narrative function is not to show that it arose because of that function. And the fact that a belief consoles says nothing about its truth. Without these cautions, the description would turn into a reductive theory of religion, which is precisely what it does not want to be.

2. FROM CORRESPONDENCE TO NON-CORRESPONDENCE

2.1. Two Concepts

Narrative non-correspondence is the name given to the absence, in historical experience, of a necessary relation between an adverse event and a later conclusion capable of integrating it into a trajectory of formation, reward, restitution, or meaning. The definition is negative and concerns what is possible, and both qualifications matter. It does not say that such a relation never occurs, nor that reality has no meaning; it says that the relation is not guaranteed. Suffering may form and it may simply destroy; effort may be rewarded and it may be useless; departure may find a return and it may end along the way.

Narrative repair is the name given to the movement by which a story links, after the fact, events that in experience might have remained unconnected: suffering to learning, loss to transformation, trial to reward, departure to return. To repair is neither to lie nor to delude; it is to give form, and a form may be true or false without ceasing to be a form. The word was chosen for two reasons: it indicates that the story responds to something lived as a break, and the case of Job will make it necessary to separate repairing from restoring.

2.2. What Has Already Been Said

Neither of the two concepts is entirely new, and it would be dishonest to present them as such.

Ricoeur has already said almost everything that concerns repair. The thesis that narrative gives lived time a beginning, middle, and end that experience does not possess is the centre of *Temps et récit*, and what he calls the synthesis of the heterogeneous by the plot is, in his own terms, exactly narrative repair. Ricoeur himself rejects the idea that life comes ready-made as a story: it is, at most, a story not yet told that asks to be told, and non-correspondence may be read as a consequence of the distance between action, which merely prefigures a story, and the plot, which composes it.[4] What Ricoeur does not do is take adversity as the case in which this distance weighs most, nor ask what happens when the story available is a religious one. On evil, moreover, he maintains that no theodicy resolves it at the speculative level and that thought, before it, must pass over to action and to lament, which anticipates the possibility, central here, that the religious tradition itself leaves loss without resolution.[5]

Kermode and Brooks provide the point of departure on the side of literary theory. Kermode showed that human beings, situated in the middle of time, project endings that give

form to the interval; Brooks described reading as driven by the desire for the ending, which gives retroactive meaning to what precedes it.[6] For both, closure is not ornament but that on which meaning depends. Neither deals with the difference between stories that dispose only of a biographical ending and stories that dispose of an ending beyond death. White, for his part, showed that historical narrative imposes on the sequence of events a moral closure that the record of facts does not contain, and that this imposition answers to the desire that events have the coherence of a story; here, in its entirety, is the idea that life does not complete the arc by itself, but White does not leave historiography and does not discuss religious narratives.[7]

The closest antecedent of the classification proposed below is found in Frank, who distinguishes three narratives of illness: the restitution narrative, of one who was healthy, fell ill, and expects to be healthy again; the chaos narrative, the story that cannot be told because nothing links one event to the next; and the quest narrative, in which illness is accepted as an occasion for transformation.[8] Restitution, transformation, and the gap have evident counterparts in Frank. What Frank does not have, and what is added here, are transfer and deferral, which appear only when the subject or the time of the resolution changes, and not merely the way in which the same subject lives it.

On the side of psychology, Janoff-Bulman described trauma as the shattering of basic assumptions about the benevolence and intelligibility of the world and about one's own worth, and Lerner, the tendency to believe that people get what they deserve.[9] These studies warrant the supposition that non-correspondence is not lived with indifference, because it collides with prior expectations. It is a narrow basis.

2.3. What Remains

What remains as one's own is narrower than the initial formulation suggested, but it is something. It consists in treating non-correspondence as the underlying problem, without confusing it with the thesis of the absurd; in placing side by side the theory of narrative closure, the psychology of shaken belief, and the sociology of theodicy; in showing that every closure has a subject, a time, and a horizon, and that the modes of repair are distinguished by them; and in showing, with Moses and Job, that extending the horizon beyond death is not an automatic consolation but a possibility that the tradition itself sometimes leaves unused. The names non-correspondence and narrative repair are useful, but they reformulate Ricoeur and White; what is new, if anything is, lies in the way of bringing them together.

3. CAMPBELL WITHOUT UNIVERSALISM

3.1. The Pattern

In *The Hero with a Thousand Faces*, Campbell described a pattern in three movements, departure, initiation, and return, which would lie behind heroic myths of very diverse cultures. The hero leaves the everyday world, crosses a threshold, faces trials, obtains a boon, whether

knowledge, power, or blessing, and returns to share it. Along the way appear the call to adventure, the refusal of the call, supernatural aid, the belly of the whale, the road of trials, apotheosis, the refusal of the return, and the crossing back. Campbell took from Joyce the name monomyth and read the pattern in the light of Jung: the outward journey would figure a psychic process of integration.[10]

What matters, more than the list of stages, is what links them. At each passage, an adverse event acquires a function in a sequence that goes beyond it: separation hurts, but it is what makes initiation possible; the trial destroys, but it is what makes transformation possible; symbolic death is the price of renewal. In the monomyth nothing that is suffered remains without function, and that is why it serves here as the clearest example of transformation, the mode in which the lost good does not return and the loss is converted into the formation of the one who suffered it. Not because it describes the form of myths, but because it describes with uncommon clarity one way of giving purpose to suffering.

3.2. The Criticisms

Campbell’s claim to universality does not withstand examination, and nothing that follows depends on it. The accumulated criticisms are of four kinds.

The first concerns method. Folklorists objected early on that Campbell was not a specialist in the traditions he compiled, that he relied on second-hand sources, and that he chose the accounts that confirmed the pattern. Dundes, in the address he delivered as president of the American Folklore Society, treated him as a non-specialist relying on second-hand and biased sources, and maintained that the idea of a universal archetype is detrimental to the serious study of folklore.[11] Segal, in the study he devoted to Campbell, showed that the theory presupposes a definition of myth so broad that it encompasses legends, folktales, and novels, erasing distinctions that scholars of those genres consider essential.[12]

The second is the dependence on Jung. Read as an allegory of individuation, every journey confirms the model, including the one that fails, which comes to be read as a miscarried individuation; and the explanation shifts from culture to a supposed universal psychic level that the stories themselves cannot substantiate.

The third is individualism. The journey is that of a hero, and recent criticism has insisted that the focus on the individual who departs, prevails, and returns belongs to a particular time and place. Hanney, in the text that opens the special issue edited with Norrington to unravel the hero’s journey, takes up the expression “Hollywood McMyth” and argues for a plurality of stories centred on community, companionship, and what is held in common.[13] The objection touches the argument closely: if the pattern is individualistic, it will have difficulty accommodating the case in which the ending denied to the individual is fulfilled in the people, which is the case of Moses.

The fourth is a circle that Campbell’s own influence produced. Many contemporary stories, above all in cinema, came to be written according to the pattern, and their conformity to

the pattern is then presented as proof of its universality. The description became a recipe, and the recipe came to confirm the description.

3.3. What Remains

Once universality, Jung, and individualism are removed, less remains than Campbell claimed and more than his critics sometimes admit. What remains is a particularly clear and influential way of giving purpose to adversity within a single life and with the same subject from beginning to end. That this way recurs across cultures is a reasonable observation; that it is universal, necessary, or inscribed in the psyche is a thesis one does not need.

And there is an advantage in reading Campbell against himself. Precisely because the pattern requires that everything suffered have a function, and have it for the hero himself, it brings into view the stories in which this does not happen. Moses fulfils many stages of the journey, but does not reach its end; Job receives a restitution that does not repair. Read against the pattern, these stories appear not as failed journeys but as stories that displace or preserve non-correspondence instead of dissolving it.

4. SHAKEN BELIEF: A PSYCHOLOGICAL BRIDGE

The psychology of meaning making supplies a limited but necessary premise: that non-correspondence is not neutral for those who live it. Park distinguishes global meaning, that is, a person’s fundamental beliefs about the world and about herself, including beliefs about justice, control, and benevolence, her goals, and her sense of purpose, from the meaning she attributes to a particular event in the light of those beliefs. Psychological distress, in this model, comes not from the event itself but from the distance between the meaning given to it and the global beliefs; when the distance is great, the person strives to make meaning, and the result may be a new reading of the event, a revised belief, a sense of having grown, or a rumination that leads nowhere.[14]

Of this model, the most useful element is the distinction between two paths of the effort to make meaning. In assimilation, the event is reinterpreted until it fits the beliefs one held; in accommodation, it is the beliefs that change in order to take in the event. Assimilation is the path of narrative repair: suffering is reread until it acquires a function within a purpose already given. Accommodation may lead to the abandonment of the very expectation of correspondence. It is the path of Job, who does not try to fit his experience into the doctrine of retribution; he revises the doctrine.

The model has three limits. Park herself acknowledges that few studies have examined the full set of linkages the model proposes: it describes a process; it does not demonstrate a necessity.[15] Strawson, for whom not everyone lives, nor ought to live, his own life as a story, prevents the process from becoming a norm: that many people reorganize their beliefs after adversity does not mean that all of them do so by telling a story.[16] And the studies that describe

religions as comprehensive meaning systems suggest that they tend to sustain beliefs of uncommon scope, about ultimate destiny, final justice, and continuity after death, but this describes a scope; it neither explains the origin of religion nor decides its truth.[17]

5. WHERE, WHEN, AND FOR WHOM

5.1. The Limit of Biography

A story that does not go beyond the life of its protagonist meets an absolute limit, which is death. If someone died unjustly, there is no future in which he can be restored; if he set out and died on the way, there is no return; if he suffered without learning, there will be no occasion to learn. Closure, in these cases, can only come from outside, from someone who tells the course of a life by giving it a meaning that the course itself did not attain, and that meaning is always a meaning for others: the victim does not receive it. This limit leaves the heroic journey, in its strictly biographical version, highly exposed to non-correspondence. The monomyth requires the return of the same hero, and biography does not guarantee it.

5.2. Beyond Biography: Two Extensions

To extend closure beyond biography is to carry resolution outside the individual life. This can be done in two ways, and confusing them is the source of the strongest objection that could be raised against what is maintained here.

The collective extension carries resolution to descendants, the people, memory, the community, tradition, or the work, and it lies within the reach of any story, religious or not. A man may die and his children complete his project; his people may win what he fought for; his research may be concluded by others, his revolution may triumph, his memory may transform a community. None of this requires transcendence, and going beyond biography is not the same as being religious.

The transcendent extension carries resolution to resurrection, judgement, the life to come, or the consummation of the world. What distinguishes it from the former is not that it goes beyond biography, since the collective extension does so as well, but that it preserves or restores the subject himself, or the entire order in which he lived, after death. In the collective extension, the one who receives the resolution is another; in the transcendent, it may be the same. This is what certain religious traditions add to the possible responses to non-correspondence: not the capacity to hand the ending over to another, which is common, but that of joining to this handing over the continuity of the subject or of the world. The frames may be thought of as successive circles, from the individual to descendants, to the people, to history, and to what lies beyond it, and each circle may take in what the previous one left unresolved. It may; it need not; the two cases show that it does not always do so.

5.3. Theodicy

The idea has strong antecedents in the sociology of religion, and it is to them that it owes most. Weber described the theodicy of suffering as the problem that every religion of salvation must confront, that of explaining the unequal distribution of happiness and misfortune and, above all, the suffering of the righteous, and he classified the solutions, from messianic eschatology to transmigration, dualism, and predestination, which are, in large part, transcendent frames of closure.[18] Berger went further. Every society, for him, constructs a nomos, an order of meaning that makes the world habitable, and this nomos is constantly threatened by what does not fit within it, suffering, evil, and death; religion locates the human nomos within a sacred cosmos, and theodicy is what allows the individual to integrate into that order the experience that threatens it, so that even misfortune comes to have meaning within it. Berger further observes that theodicy does not provide, first of all, happiness, but meaning.[19] Geertz arrived at a neighbouring formulation: for religion, the problem of suffering is not how to avoid it but how to suffer.[20]

In view of this, what is added is not the idea that religion integrates suffering into a larger order, which is present in its entirety in Weber, Berger, and Geertz. Three things are added that concern the form of stories: the distinction between two ways of going beyond biography, of which only one is proper to religion; the description of integration as a succession of frames, each with its own limit; and a question that the sociology of theodicy, attentive to the integration that is accomplished, did not ask, namely what happens when the tradition has the broadest frame at its disposal and does not use it.

5.4. To Repair Is Not to Explain, Justify, or Console

Explaining, justifying, consoling, and repairing are usually treated as equivalent, and they are not. To explain an adverse event is to point to its cause; to justify it is to show that it was deserved or necessary; to console is to relieve suffering without necessarily explaining or justifying it; to repair, in the sense defined above, is to situate the event in a trajectory in which it acquires a function. One does not imply the other. One can repair without explaining, when suffering “was part of it” without anyone knowing why; console without justifying, when the divine presence brings relief without declaring the suffering deserved; explain without repairing, when the cause is known and the loss remains without function. It is the lack of these distinctions that produces reductive readings, in which every religious story about suffering is read as justification or as consolation, when it may be doing something else, or, like Job, none of these.

5.5. Subject, Time, and Horizon

Every closure has a horizon, which says where the resolution is situated: in biography, in the history of a people, or beyond history. It has a time, which says when it occurs: in the present of the narrative, in a historical future, or at the end of time. And it has a subject, which says for whom it occurs: for the same one who suffered, for another, for a people, for no one.

The modes of repair are stable combinations of these three elements. Restitution and transformation remain in biography, in the present, and with the same subject, and they differ only

in the fate of the lost good, which in the first returns and in the second does not. Transfer changes the subject and carries the horizon to the people. Deferral changes the time and, in its transcendent form, carries the horizon to where the same subject can be preserved. The gap is the case in which none of the three receives a value: the resolution is not situated in any place, time, or subject. The scheme explains why these modes exist, instead of merely enumerating them.

5.6. A Caution from Berger

Berger gave a name to the caution that accompanies all of this. In describing religion as the human construction of a sacred cosmos, Berger insisted that sociological description must leave in suspense the ultimate truth of the beliefs it describes, and he called this suspension methodological atheism: sociology says how beliefs function and are sustained, not whether they are true.[21] The same suspension holds here. To show that a religious belief has a narrative, psychological, or consoling function does not show that it was born of that function, nor that it was invented to fulfil it, nor that it is false. The first conclusion confuses what a thing does with what produced it; the second confuses the usefulness of a belief with its truth. A belief that consoles may be true, and a belief that desolates may be false.

6. MOSES: THE ENDING THE MAN LACKS IS FULFILLED IN THE PEOPLE

6.1. A Journey That Fulfils the Stages and Does Not Reach the End

The trajectory of Moses, read from Exodus to Deuteronomy, has almost all the elements Campbell catalogued, and it is easy to fit it into the pattern. There is the divided identity, that of the Hebrew raised as an Egyptian; the violent separation, the homicide and the flight to Midian; the call at the bush; the refusal, in which Moses asks who he is to go to Pharaoh and pleads that he is not a man of ready speech (Exod 3:11; 4:10); the help of Aaron, of the staff, and of the signs; the return to Egypt, the confrontation, the crossing of the sea, the wilderness as a road of trials, the ascent of Sinai, the giving of the Law, and, finally, the approach to the land. Moses accomplishes even the return in the literal sense: after the call, he goes back to the place from which he had fled. It is not there that the journey fails.

What Moses lacks is the end towards which the whole story moves. The liberation, the crossing, the wilderness, and the Law are oriented towards possession of the promised land, and Moses leads the people up to it, but he does not enter. He climbs Nebo, sees the land, and dies outside it (Deut 34). Moses fulfils the recognizable stages of the heroic journey, but he does not himself reach the end of the story in which those stages are set. His personal purpose remains incomplete, and the collective purpose of which he is the instrument is completed.

6.2. Why Moses Does Not Enter

The text gives more than one reason for the exclusion, and they do not coincide. In Numbers 20, it is linked to the waters of Meribah, where Moses strikes the rock instead of speaking to it; in Deuteronomy 1:37 and 3:26, Moses attributes it to the divine anger provoked by

the people, on account of Israel; in Deuteronomy 32:51, the reference to Meribah returns. The divergence has been much discussed, and Olson read the whole of Deuteronomy as a book organized by the death of Moses, in which the exclusion of the mediator has theological meaning: the Law outlives the one who transmitted it.[22]

Kugler, comparing the passages of Deuteronomy on the end of Moses, reaches a conclusion that matters directly here. The death of Moses, she recalls, is usually read as tragically premature, because it came before the mission of reaching the land had been accomplished; but from the passages of the Torah another story can be drawn, according to which this death came at the right place and time in the life of the people, who survived the journey and reached the land.[23] This reading runs counter to the impression that the text laments the exclusion as an injustice. At least in one layer of Deuteronomy, the death of Moses is presented as fitting the path of the people: what for the man is interruption is, for the people, conclusion, and the text, in that layer, speaks from the people's point of view.

6.3. Transfer

In Moses, the personal arc does not close, but the story is not left without an ending: the resolution passes from the man to Israel. The horizon moves from biography to the history of the people, the time remains the present of the narrative, since the people enter shortly after the death of Moses, and the subject changes. The non-correspondence between Moses' effort and his fate is real, for he leads for forty years a journey whose goal he does not reach, but the story makes it bearable by carrying the ending into a frame broader than his life.

This is not restitution, because Moses does not receive back what was denied him. It is not transformation, because the text does not say that the exclusion formed him nor that he accepted it as a lesson. It is not deferral beyond death, at least in Deuteronomy, which does not promise Moses entry into the land in another life, although later traditions explore that possibility. It is transfer: the one who receives the ending changes. And it is not proper to religion, because any story in which a project outlives the one who began it can do the same. Deuteronomy does it with exemplary clarity, and does it within a tradition that had, or would come to have, a broader frame which here it does not use.

6.4. Teleology Preserved or Non-Correspondence Exposed?

Both, on different planes. On the plane of the people, transfer preserves the purpose of the story: Israel continues on its way, the promise is fulfilled, and the death of Moses is a passage. Read from this point of view, there is no non-correspondence at all, and the suffering of the mediator takes part in a trajectory that goes beyond it and gives it a function.

On the plane of the man, transfer exposes non-correspondence. Moses dies without the land, and the text does not soften this: it has Moses ask to enter and has God refuse (Deut 3:23–27). That the exclusion suits the people does not make it suitable for Moses, and the text, in keeping the request and the refusal, also keeps the inequality between the two planes. The account

in Deuteronomy 34, in which Moses beholds the land, dies, and is buried in a place no one knows, is remarkably sober: it does not console, does not explain, does not justify.

The broadening of the horizon, therefore, does not annul non-correspondence; it displaces it. The ending is real, but it takes place on a plane different from the one on which the loss was suffered, and a story can be closed in the people and open in the man at the same time. Religious traditions seem especially capable of keeping these two accounts without reconciling them. It must be acknowledged, however, that the unintegrated remainder has little support in the text: if the layer Kugler identifies speaks from the people's point of view, what keeps the personal loss in view is above all the refused request of chapter 3. The reading needs no more than this, but it has no more than this.

6.5. Moses Against Campbell

The case confirms, by another route, the criticism of the monomyth's individualism. With Campbell's instruments, the trajectory of Moses is a journey whose end the hero does not reach. With those of the tradition that produced it, it is a journey whose end is reached by another, the people. The difference does not lie in the facts narrated; it lies in the frame by which one decides where the story ends and for whom. Campbell did not have that frame, and that is why the monomyth, applied to Moses, impoverishes the reading.

7. JOB: THE RESTITUTION THAT DOES NOT REPAIR

7.1. Why Job Is the Decisive Case

If the hypothesis were merely that religion extends the horizon of closure, Job would suffice to refute it, or at least to force it to change. The book is a religious text that treats, with rare lucidity, the non-correspondence between suffering and guilt, and that does not accept the repairs offered to it, including, in a certain way, the one its own epilogue seems to grant. It is not a hero's journey, and to read it as one is a category mistake: Job does not depart, crosses no threshold, returns with no boon. He sits among the ashes.

7.2. The Friends' Retribution

Job's friends, Eliphaz, Bildad, and Zophar, defend correspondence with more articulation than any other voice in the Hebrew Bible, and their premise is, in form, the same as that of the heroic journey: nothing that is suffered remains without function. Eliphaz states the principle from his first speech, when he asks what innocent person has ever perished (Job 4:7). If Job suffers, there is a cause; if there is a cause, it lies in Job; if Job acknowledges it, order will be restored and his goods will return (Job 5:17–27). What the friends offer is explanation, justification, and promise all at once: suffering is explained by guilt, justified by divine justice, and will be followed by restitution if there is repentance. It is the simplest closure of all: in biography, in the present, for the same subject.

The friends are not caricatures, and the best contemporary reading insists on this. Newsom read the book as a contest between moral imaginations, in which each voice represents a coherent and respectable way of understanding suffering, and none is simply cancelled by the others.[24] The friends' position is that of traditional wisdom; it is not absurd, merely insufficient for the case. And it is precisely because it is not absurd that Job's refusal has force: he does not refuse a foolishness; he refuses the most established way of making meaning in his culture.

7.3. Job Revises the Doctrine

Job rejects correspondence in two stages. First, he denies the fact: he did not commit the guilt that his suffering, according to the friends, ought to reveal (Job 27:2–6; 31). Then, and more radically, he denies that correspondence is the rule of the world, because the wicked prosper, grow old, and die in peace (Job 21:7–13). It is the second stage that matters. Job does not say that his case is an exception; he says that the rule is not a rule. He does not assimilate what happened to him to the belief in retribution, does not reread the loss until it fits the doctrine; he accommodates, that is, he revises the doctrine. And the revision, in him, produces no consolation; it produces the recognition of non-correspondence, sustained before God and without the text condemning it.

Clines read the book as a text that undoes itself: the prose frame affirms the retribution that the poetic dialogue demolishes, and neither part manages to silence the other.[25] The reading matters because it shows that the resistance to repair is not only the position of a character; it lies in the construction of the book.

7.4. Does God's Speech Explain?

God's answer from the whirlwind (Job 38–41) does not explain Job's suffering. It does not mention the wager of the prologue, does not accuse Job of guilt, does not reveal to him any pedagogical purpose. It displaces the question: instead of answering why Job suffers, it shows a creation whose order does not revolve around human justice, with Behemoth, Leviathan, and the rain that falls on the land where no one lives (Job 38:26). To read this as explanation would be to force the text; to read it as a justification of the friends' position would be to go against it, because the epilogue vindicates Job's speech, and not that of the friends (Job 42:7). What remains lies between an integration without explanation, in which Job's suffering is placed within a larger world without receiving a function, and the refusal to explain, justify, or console. In God's speech, the religious text itself declares that non-correspondence will not be resolved by correspondence.

7.5. The Epilogue: To Restore Is Not to Repair

The epilogue (Job 42:10–17) seems to undo all of this. Job receives double what he had in sheep, camels, oxen, and she-asses; he again has seven sons and three daughters; he lives a further hundred and forty years and sees four generations. Read hastily, it is repair in its most complete form, and it would be exactly what the friends promised: everything back, in the same life, for the same man.

The epilogue resists this reading through a detail the text leaves in view: the goods are doubled; the children, counted as in the prologue, are not (Job 1:2–3; 42:12–13). And even if they were, ten new children would not undo the death of ten. Goods can be restored because one is worth as much as another; persons cannot. What the epilogue restores is everything that could be restored, and it is precisely for this reason that it leaves in view what could not. Brueggemann, according to Venter's reading of him, observed that Job's final restoration is marked by an enduring loss: he receives new children, but never again receives what he lost.[26] Clines maintains that the doubling of the goods is decisive for the story and that, in the epilogue, the author moves from questions about the meaning of the universe and about justice to another, that of what is important for an authentic human existence.[27] Venter, relying on this indication, reads the epilogue as the transformation of Job, who ceases to see himself as the victim of an unjust God and comes to live a full life through new relationships; which, once again, is not the same as having the old ones back.[28]

To restore is to give back what was lost, insofar as it can be given back; to repair is to give the loss a place and a function in what comes afterwards. The epilogue restores and does not repair. The new children do not take the place of the former ones, and the doubled wealth does not answer the wager of the prologue. The story ends with a good life that holds a gap which restitution has skirted without filling.

Something more general follows from this. Restitution is the simplest mode of repair, because it keeps the same subject, the same life, and the same time, and for that reason it is the one that reaches least: it works only when what was lost can be replaced. Before what cannot be, the story must change mode, transforming, transferring, or deferring, or leave the gap where it is. The epilogue of Job does both at once, with different objects: it restores what can be replaced and leaves open the gap of what cannot, without confusing the one with the other.

7.6. What Job Changes in the Hypothesis

Job does not overturn the hypothesis, but corrects it on three points. First, it prevents one from saying that religion offers repair: Job is a religious text that does not accept the repair offered by the friends and does not exchange it for another, and what can be said is that religion is a field in which repair can be made, prolonged, transferred, or refused, and in which the gap is as proper to the tradition as repair. Second, it forces one to separate restitution from repair.

Third, it shows that the extension beyond death is not automatic. The book does not resolve Job's suffering with an explicit compensation after death; when it speaks of death, it insists that death is not undone, with the felled tree that sprouts again and the man who lies down and does not rise (Job 14:7–12), and the epilogue places the whole restoration within Job's life. The tradition to which the book belongs had, or would come to have, broader frames; the book extends the frame only as far as life reaches, to descendants and the hundred and forty years, and what lies outside remains outside. Not using the transcendent extension is, this too, a choice of the story, and perhaps the most interesting one in the book.

8. FIVE RESPONSES TO NON-CORRESPONDENCE

8.1. Four Modes of Repair and the Gap

The cases make it possible to fix five narrative responses to non-correspondence: four modes of repair, which situate the resolution in some horizon, time, and subject, and the gap, in which the resolution is situated nowhere. The difference is logical and not one of value: the first four resolve and the fifth does not, and what is described is what the story leaves, not the intention of whoever wrote it. That is why one speaks of a preserved gap and not of a refusal of closure, for the word refusal would attribute to the text an intention that cannot always be demonstrated.

In restitution, the lost good is recovered, or replaced by an equivalent, by the same subject, in the same life, and in the present of the story: these are Job's goods. In transformation, the good does not return, but the loss becomes the formation of the same subject, still within his life: this is the hero's journey, and it is Frank's quest narrative. In transfer, the good does not return to the one who lost it, and the ending denied to him is reached by another, the people, descendants, the community, or the work, in the present or in a historical future: this is Moses, and it is any project that outlives the one who began it. In deferral, the good does not return in this life and the resolution is carried into the future, and here two cases must be distinguished: historical deferral, the restoration of the people or the coming of a liberator, which stories without religion also know, and transcendent deferral, resurrection, judgement, and consummation, which is what certain religious traditions add. In the gap, finally, the good does not return and the loss acquires no function: these are the dialogue of Job, the dead children of the epilogue, and lament.

Response	**Who receives the resolution**	**Horizon**	**Time**	**Case**
Restitution	The same	One's own life	Present	Job's goods
Transformation	The same	One's own life	Present	Hero's journey
Transfer	Another or the people	The history of the people	Present or historical future	Moses
Historical deferral	The same or the people	The history of the people	Historical future	Restoration of the people
Transcendent deferral	The same, or the order of the world	Beyond history	End of time	Resurrection, judgement
Gap	No one	None	None	Dialogue of Job; Job's children

The sum of transfer and transcendent deferral, that is, the ending reached by another within history and the continuity of the subject himself beyond it, is where the religious difference appears most sharply.

8.2. Are the Five Responses Distinct?

For each pair, it suffices that there be a case belonging to one response and not to the other. Restitution and transformation are distinct because the first gives back the good and the second does not: Job recovers his flocks without the text saying that the loss formed him, and the hero who returns with new knowledge, but without what he lost, belongs to transformation and not to restitution. Transformation and transfer are distinct because the first keeps the subject and the second exchanges it: Moses is not transformed by the exclusion, the text records no formation whatever, but the people enter. Transfer and deferral carry the ending outside the life of the one who suffered in different directions, the first sideways, to another subject, the second forward, in time; Deuteronomy transfers and the hope of resurrection defers, and when a text does both, as late Jewish apocalyptic does in joining the restoration of the people and the resurrection of the righteous, there is mixture, not confusion. Deferral and the gap are distinct because the first affirms that the resolution will come and the second affirms nothing, or affirms that it will not come; Job does not defer, and the lament of the Psalms, which cries out for a resolution it does not see, shows that the boundary exists and can be inhabited.

The most delicate pair is that of restitution and the gap, because the epilogue of Job contains both. The way out is to recognize that the five responses classify what a story does with a particular loss, not the whole text: the same text may restore the goods and leave open the loss of the children.

8.3. Scope and Limits

The classification does not claim to exhaust the possibilities. It is enough for it that the five responses be distinguished by clear criteria, that each can be recognized in a text by the subject, the time, and the horizon of the resolution, that it make it possible to say of Moses and Job what the hero’s journey does not, and that it remain open to testing by other traditions. Traditions that believe in transmigration, that think of time in cycles, or that do not think of the person as an individual may require new divisions, and transmigration, which defers resolution by exchanging the empirical subject while keeping the moral subject, already does not fit entirely into any of the rows. The classification was born of one tradition and is offered to be put to the test in others.

The cases, moreover, do not fit into a single response, and they should not be forced to. Moses is above all transfer, but he holds a gap, because the refused request in Deuteronomy remains unanswered. Job is above all gap, but contains restitution, in the goods, and, in the reading of Clines and of Venter, something of transformation, in the life Job resumes through new relationships. Campbell’s journey is transformation in its pure state, and eschatology, transcendent deferral in its pure state; but pure states are constructions, and real texts mix. What the classification makes possible is to see, within each text, how the responses are distributed and, above all, what remains without any response at all.

As for Frank, his restitution narrative corresponds to restitution, the quest narrative to transformation, and the chaos narrative only in part to the gap, because Frank's chaos is the impossibility of telling, whereas the gap is a loss that is told and left in view; Job is narrated, and masterfully. Transfer and deferral have no counterpart in Frank, because he works with a single subject and a single horizon, that of the sick person and his life. The five responses may be read as Frank's classification extended by the change in the subject and the time of the resolution, a change that stories without religion also know and that certain religious traditions carry as far as the continuity of the subject after death.

9. FUNCTION WITHOUT REDUCTION: OBJECTIONS AND LIMITS

9.1. Narrative Philosophy of Religion

Philosophy of religion in the analytic tradition long treated suffering as a problem of propositions: how is evil possible, if God is omnipotent and good? Burley observes that the discipline came late to attending to narratives, but that there are exceptions, the most notable of which is Stump's work on the biblical stories and the problem of suffering, and he distinguishes two orientations. The apologetic, which he recognizes in Stump, uses stories, among them that of Job, to show that certain kinds of knowledge about suffering, love, and the relationship with God can be attained only narratively, and builds with this material a defence of faith. The pluralistic, which Burley defends, does not seek to defend faith but to do justice to the variety of possible human perspectives, religious or not.[29]

The orientation followed here is the pluralistic one, and this has consequences. The five responses do not separate true responses from false ones, nor religiously acceptable responses from unacceptable ones; they separate forms. The gap is a form as legitimate as transcendent deferral, and nothing here ranks them, which makes it possible to read Job and Deuteronomy without deciding in advance which of the two is right. One intuition of Stump's, however, deserves to be kept: that stories not only resolve suffering but make intelligible experiences that arguments impoverish. What the reader of Job knows at the end does not reduce to a proposition about the compatibility between God and evil; it is something about what it means to maintain a relationship with what one does not understand without pretending to understand it. A theodicy made of propositions does not reach this, and narrative does.

9.2. Objections

The first objection is that of obviousness: that life does not guarantee the closure that stories offer is something any reader of Kermode knows. The observation is obvious, and it is not what is being proposed. What is proposed is the scheme of subject, time, and horizon, which explains why the responses differ, and the location of the religious difference, which lies not in going beyond biography but in preserving the subject beyond it.

The second is that of reduction: to describe religion by what its stories do with non-correspondence would already be to treat it as an instrument. The description is partial, not total, and to say that a religious text does something with a loss is not to say that it is only that, just as describing the harmony of a piece of music does not reduce it to harmony nor decide whether it is beautiful. The suspension that Berger called methodological atheism is precisely this: a limit on what the description can conclude, not a conclusion about what is described. And the presence of the gap among the five responses, a response that does not console, shows that nothing here supposes that religion exists in order to console.

The third is that of originality: extending closure beyond biography would be merely Berger's theodicy under another name. In part it is. What is added is the distinction between the collective extension, which is not proper to religion, and the transcendent one, which is; and the possibility of seeing that a story can close on one plane and remain open on another, as Deuteronomy does with Moses. Theodicy, in Berger, describes the integration that is accomplished; the distinction between subject, time, and horizon shows where it is accomplished, for whom, and where it is not.

The fourth is that transfer is not proper to religion and that, therefore, Moses would teach nothing about religion. The premise is correct, and the opposite conclusion follows from it. That transfer is common to religious and non-religious stories is precisely what makes it possible to locate the religious difference with precision, in the extension beyond death, which Deuteronomy does not use and neither does Job. The two cases show that a tradition can have the broadest frame at its disposal and not use it, and what they teach about religion is that what is proper to it is a possibility, not a necessity.

The fifth bears on the reading of Job. There are interpreters for whom the epilogue restores retribution without remainder, and there are those who read in the Hebrew wording of Job 42:13 a doubling of the sons as well, leaving undoubled only the daughters, who would not be a sign of wealth.[30] The difference between goods and children, in the count the text offers, is in the text, and what it means is debatable. But the argument does not depend on the count: even if the children were doubled, the new ones would not undo the death of the former; and even those who read the epilogue as full restoration must acknowledge that the poetic dialogue and God's speech offer neither explanation nor justification, which suffices for the gap, whatever the reading of the epilogue.

The sixth is that of the textual basis: two texts from a single tradition do not warrant conclusions about religion in general. And none is drawn. The scheme and the five responses were born of one tradition and are offered to be put to the test in others, where they may fail, as has already been seen in the case of transmigration.

9.3. What Has Been Established and What Has Not

It is established, to the extent that conceptual analysis establishes anything, that there is a recognizable tension between the contingency of history and the purposiveness of narratives; that

every closure has a horizon, a time, and a subject, and that the modes of repair are distinguished by them; that what is proper to religious traditions lies in the extension beyond death, and not in going beyond biography in general; and that these traditions may use this extension or leave it unused. It remains a hypothesis, under the conditions stated in each case, that the scheme serves outside the Bible. It has not been shown, nor was there an attempt to show, that religion is born of this tension, that it exists to resolve it, or that its beliefs are true or false because of what they do. Nor has it been shown that a story without closure tells reality better than a story of transformation; that would be a philosophical or aesthetic preference, not a result. The line between what has been shown and what has been left out is the line between describing what stories do with suffering and explaining religion.

10. CONCLUSION

The narrative problem of suffering lies not only in its explanation, but in the relationship between loss and its resolution. Historical experience does not guarantee that losses will be restored, that suffering will form, or that projects will reach completion; stories may respond to this non-correspondence by restoring, transforming, transferring, or deferring the resolution, or they may leave the gap open; and these responses differ according to the subject, the time, and the horizon in which the resolution is situated. It is this difference, more than the presence or absence of an ending, that makes it possible to compare stories.

Religious traditions matter here for a precise reason. Besides extending resolution to descendants, to the people, to memory, and to the work, as stories without religion also do, they can keep the subject himself, or the order of the world, open after death. What is proper to religion in the face of non-correspondence is not going beyond biography; it is being able to preserve the one who lived it.

Moses and Job show that this extension does not, by itself, eliminate non-correspondence; it displaces it or preserves it. In Deuteronomy, the ending the man lacks is fulfilled in the people, and the text keeps the two accounts without reconciling them, closed in the people and open in the man who asked to enter and did not enter. In Job, traditional wisdom offers the simplest repair, restitution to the same man in the same life; Job refuses it and revises the doctrine instead of rereading the loss; and the epilogue restores everything that could be restored in such a way as to leave in view what could not. In neither case does the tradition use the extension beyond death that it had, or would come to have, at its disposal, and what is proper to religion thus appears as a possibility and not as a necessity.

The hero’s journey, stripped of the claim to universality, remains useful as a description of transformation, the most demanding of the responses within a single life, because it asks that loss be converted into formation without the good returning. And, precisely because it requires that everything suffered have a function for the one who suffered, it brings into view the stories in which the function is given to another, deferred, or not given at all.

The two cautions of the beginning hold to the end. To show that a religious belief does something with a loss does not show that it was born to do so, nor that it is false; and to show that a story leaves the gap open does not show that it tells the truth better than the story that closes it. A story may end well without having repaired anything, and it may repair without having ended well; to distinguish the one from the other is the least that is owed to those who have suffered.

REFERENCES

BERGER, Peter L. *O dossel sagrado: elementos para uma teoria sociológica da religião*. São Paulo: Paulinas, 1985.

BÍBLIA de Jerusalém. New rev. and enl. ed. São Paulo: Paulus, 2002.

BROOKS, Peter. *Reading for the plot: design and intention in narrative*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1984.

BRUEGGEMANN, Walter. *An introduction to the Old Testament: the canon and Christian imagination*. Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003. Cited via Venter (2015).

BURLEY, Mikel. Narrative philosophy of religion: apologetic and pluralistic orientations. *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, v. 88, n. 1, p. 5–21, 2020.

CAMPBELL, Joseph. *The hero with a thousand faces*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1949.

CLINES, David J. A. Deconstructing the book of Job. In: CLINES, David J. A. *What does Eve do to help? and other readerly questions to the Old Testament*. Sheffield: JSOT Press, 1990. (Journal for the Study of the Old Testament Supplement Series, 94).

CLINES, David J. A. *Job 38–42*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 2011. (Word Biblical Commentary, 18B).

DUNDES, Alan. Folkloristics in the twenty-first century (AFS invited presidential plenary address, 2004). *Journal of American Folklore*, v. 118, n. 470, p. 385–408, 2005.

FRANK, Arthur W. *The wounded storyteller: body, illness, and ethics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995.

GEERTZ, Clifford. Religion as a cultural system. In: GEERTZ, Clifford. *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books, 1973. p. 87–125.

HANNEY, Roy. One myth to rule them all and in the darkness bind them: a critical examination of Joseph Campbell's *The Hero's Journey*. *Media Practice and Education*, v. 25, n. 2, p. 113–122, 2024.

JANOFF-BULMAN, Ronnie. *Shattered assumptions: towards a new psychology of trauma*. New York: Free Press, 1992.

KERMODE, Frank. *The sense of an ending: studies in the theory of fiction*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1967.

KUGLER, Gili. Moses died and the people moved on: a hidden narrative in Deuteronomy. *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, v. 43, n. 2, p. 191–204, 2018.

LERNER, Melvin J. *The belief in a just world: a fundamental delusion*. New York: Plenum Press, 1980.

NEWSOM, Carol A. *The book of Job: a contest of moral imaginations*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003.

OLSON, Dennis T. *Deuteronomy and the death of Moses: a theological reading*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1994.

PARK, Crystal L. Making sense of the meaning literature: an integrative review of meaning making and its effects on adjustment to stressful life events. *Psychological Bulletin*, v. 136, n. 2, p. 257–301, 2010.

PARK, Crystal L. Meaning making following trauma. *Frontiers in Psychology*, v. 13, art. 844891, 2022. DOI: 10.3389/fpsyg.2022.844891.

RICOEUR, Paul. Evil, a challenge to philosophy and theology. *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, v. 53, n. 4, p. 635–648, 1985.

RICOEUR, Paul. *Temps et récit*. Paris: Seuil, 1983–1985. 3 vols.

SEGAL, Robert A. *Joseph Campbell: an introduction*. New York: Garland, 1987.

SILBERMAN, Israela. Religion as a meaning system: implications for the new millennium. *Journal of Social Issues*, v. 61, n. 4, p. 641–663, 2005. DOI: 10.1111/j.1540-4560.2005.00425.x.

STRAWSON, Galen. Against narrativity. *Ratio*, v. 17, n. 4, p. 428–452, 2004.

STUMP, Eleonore. *Wandering in darkness: narrative and the problem of suffering*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010.

VENTER, Philip P. Wealth, poverty and mutual care: towards a reconstructive reading of the book of Job. *Verbum et Ecclesia*, v. 36, n. 3, art. 1473, 2015. DOI: 10.4102/ve.v36i3.1473.

WEBER, Max. *The sociology of religion*. Trans. Ephraim Fischoff. Boston: Beacon Press, 1963.

WHITE, Hayden. The value of narrativity in the representation of reality. *Critical Inquiry*, v. 7, n. 1, p. 5–27, 1980.

NOTES

1 Master’s student in Law at Faculdade Estácio de Sá. Bachelor of Laws from the Fundação Universidade Regional de Blumenau (FURB). Postgraduate student in Religious Studies and in Philosophy and Sociology at Faculdade Líbano. Undergraduate student of Theology and of Philosophy (teaching degree) at Faculdade Estácio de Sá. Lattes CV: http://lattes.cnpq.br/2467496149913328. ORCID: https://orcid.org/0009-0003-5447-0550. E-mail: pablodietrichh@hotmail.com. Quotations from works consulted in Portuguese or Spanish translation, and from the author’s own works, are rendered into English by the author.

2 Biblical quotations follow the *Bíblia de Jerusalém* (Paulus, 2002), rendered here into English, with proper names in their usual English form. Passages from works in foreign languages are translated by the author, and the original is transcribed in a note when the wording matters.

3 Ricoeur, *Temps et récit* (Seuil, 1983–1985), 3 vols.; Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending* (Oxford University Press, 1967); Brooks, *Reading for the Plot* (Knopf, 1984); Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions* (Free Press, 1992); Park, “Making Sense of the Meaning Literature,” *Psychological Bulletin*, 136 (2), 2010, pp. 257–301.

4 Ricoeur, *Temps et récit*, vol. 1, part one, ch. 3, on threefold mimesis: the prefiguration of the practical field, configuration by the plot, and refiguration through reading. It is in the same chapter that life appears as a story not yet

told.

5 Ricoeur, “Evil, a Challenge to Philosophy and Theology,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion*, 53 (4), 1985, pp. 635–648. The essay ends by passing from thought to action and to feeling, that is, to the practical and affective response to the evil that speculation does not resolve.

6 Kermode, *The Sense of an Ending*, ch. 1; Brooks, *Reading for the Plot*, chs. 1 and 4.

7 White, “The Value of Narrativity in the Representation of Reality,” *Critical Inquiry*, 7 (1), 1980, pp. 5–27.

8 Frank, *The Wounded Storyteller* (University of Chicago Press, 1995), in the chapters devoted to the “restitution narrative,” the “chaos narrative,” and the “quest narrative.”

9 Janoff-Bulman, *Shattered Assumptions*; Lerner, *The Belief in a Just World* (Plenum Press, 1980).

10 Campbell, *The Hero with a Thousand Faces* (Pantheon Books, 1949). The term monomyth comes from Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, as Campbell himself indicates.

11 Dundes, “Folkloristics in the Twenty-First Century,” *Journal of American Folklore*, 118 (470), 2005, pp. 385–408.

12 Segal, *Joseph Campbell: An Introduction* (Garland, 1987).

13 Hanney, “One Myth to Rule Them All and in the Darkness Bind Them,” *Media Practice and Education*, 25 (2), 2024, pp. 113–122. The text opens the special issue “Unravelling the Hero’s Journey,” edited by Hanney and Norrington; the expression “Hollywood McMyth” is C. P. Nield’s, taken up by Hanney, and the alternative paradigms are described, in the article’s abstract, as centred on “community, companionship, and commonality.”

14 Park, “Making Sense of the Meaning Literature”; Park, “Meaning Making Following Trauma,” *Frontiers in Psychology*, 13, 2022, art. 844891, in which the model is taken up again with regard to trauma.

15 Park, “Meaning Making Following Trauma”: “few studies have fully examined the set of linkages outlined in the meaning making model.”

16 Strawson, “Against Narrativity,” *Ratio*, 17 (4), 2004, pp. 428–452.

17 Silberman, “Religion as a Meaning System,” *Journal of Social Issues*, 61 (4), 2005, pp. 641–663.

18 Weber, *The Sociology of Religion*, trans. Ephraim Fischoff (Beacon Press, 1963), ch. IX, “Theodicy, Salvation, and Rebirth,” pp. 138 ff.

19 Berger, *O dossel sagrado* (Paulinas, 1985), chs. 1 to 3: the construction of the nomos and its precariousness occupy the first two chapters, and theodicy, the third. The sentence about meaning, in the original: “It is not happiness that theodicy primarily provides, but meaning.”

20 Geertz, “Religion as a Cultural System,” in *The Interpretation of Cultures* (Basic Books, 1973), pp. 87–125. The essay was originally published in 1966.

21 Berger, *O dossel sagrado*, ch. 4 and appendix II, on the sociological and theological perspectives.

22 Olson, *Deuteronomy and the Death of Moses* (Fortress Press, 1994).

23 Kugler, “Moses Died and the People Moved On,” *Journal for the Study of the Old Testament*, 43 (2), 2018, pp. 191–204.

24 Newsom, *The Book of Job: A Contest of Moral Imaginations* (Oxford University Press, 2003).

25 Clines, “Deconstructing the Book of Job,” in *What Does Eve Do to Help?* (JSOT Press, 1990), ch. 5.

26 Brueggemann, *An Introduction to the Old Testament* (Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), pp. 301–302, according to Venter, “Wealth, Poverty and Mutual Care,” *Verbum et Ecclesia*, 36 (3), 2015, art. 1473, p. 1. Brueggemann’s

passage was not consulted directly, and the reference depends on Venter's reading.

27 Clines, *Job 38–42* (Thomas Nelson, 2011), pp. 1237 and 1241. The final question is formulated thus: "What is important for an authentic human existence?" The passage is also cited by Venter, "Wealth, Poverty and Mutual Care," p. 2.

28 Venter, "Wealth, Poverty and Mutual Care," p. 5. Venter maintains, against the deconstructive reading, that the epilogue is an essential part of the book and shows Job's transformation through God's speech.

29 Burley, "Narrative Philosophy of Religion," *International Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 88 (1), 2020, pp. 5–21; Stump, *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

30 Venter, "Wealth, Poverty and Mutual Care," p. 2, who follows Dhorme and Guillaume in reading a doubling of the sons on the basis of the difference between the Hebrew expressions of the prologue and the epilogue, and records Clines's observation (*Job 38–42*, p. 1237) that the daughters would not be a sign of wealth and therefore would not be doubled.