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A Greek Tragedy? The Book of Job

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means of which God communicated Himself." An attentive reading of the *Journal* reveals the usual features of infused prayer according to the common teaching of theologians: intuitive vision of divine things, experience of the presence and action of God in the soul, complete passivity before the sovereign freedom of God to come in and go out of the soul with His gifts.

To read of such an unusual experience of God on this earth is awesome. For those who are well acquainted with Ignatian ideals of self-conquest and service, however, there is another value to be found from a study of this *Journal*. The translator sums it up by saying, "In a certain sense, the *Journal* is no more than the *Exercises* in action." This is especially true of all that concerns the making of an "election," i.e. a decision of where God's will is to be found among the concrete possibilities placed before a soul. "It would be difficult to find a more reliable and authentic commentary on this central part of the *Exercises*," says Father Young, "than these mystical pages of the *Spiritual Journal*."

This translation is an important addition to studies in English of Ignatian spirituality.

NEIL J. QUIRKE

A GREEK TRAGEDY?

THE BOOK OF JOB. By Horace M. Kallen.

New York: Hill and Wang, Inc., 1959. xxvi, 163 p.

This book is a paperback edition of a volume which came out in 1917. It is really a reconstruction in dramatic form of the book of *Job*. Mr. Kallen believes, against the opinion of many scholars, that the book is *not* mere dialogue after the manner of Plato, but is in fact a Greek tragedy after the style of Euripides. His work is an attempt at restoring *Job* to its original form as well as a justification of his belief that it was originally a Greek drama. There are, therefore, at least two points Kallen has to prove in order to make good his stand: first, that it is drama, not mere dialogue; second, that it was written in imitation of the style of Euripides. Under the second point are at least two things which need proving: one, that *Job*, like Euripides' works, was a protest against orthodox views or is heretical; two, that despite its revolutionary message, it is yet framed in orthodox events and symbols. This review will attempt an evaluation of Kallen's thesis.

To the first point; *Job* is not mere dialogue, it is drama. Drama has both external and internal structure. Effectively, K. claims that *Job* has all the external features of Greek drama. It contains a prologue, three *agons* or *episodes* or "acts" in the three bouts of debate between Job and his friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar; a messenger in the person of Elihu, an epiphany or sudden appearance of a god in the voice of Yahweh over the whirlwind and an epilogue. Nor are the choruses wanting. In Greek drama, the *episodes* or "acts" are set off from one another by an equal number of choral odes which come immediately after each *episode*; these choral odes are in lyric measure and in content they serve as commentary on the action or dialogue. The choruses, according to K. are in chapters XXIV and XXVIII and in XL, 15-24 and XLI. This last he transposes so that it immediately follows after chapter XXXI. K. also believes that although there are four acts in *Job*, the fourth consisting of the speeches of Elihu, there are only three choral odes. So much for the external structure of *Job* as drama.

The internal structure of drama consists primarily in the unfolding of the action through the development of the plot by means of incidents connected after the pattern of necessity or probability and leading up to the *peripeteia* or reversal of situation. Action, therefore, is demanded by the internal structure of drama. K. claims that actually there is action in *Job*. Something does happen. "From the poet's point of view the dialogue is the happening; it culminates in the challenge of the justice of God . . ." (p. 28). The movement of the dialogue is significant. In chapter III Job makes his opening monologue. He complains that suffering has reduced his powers of endurance to the breaking point and begs for release in death. Now enter his three friends. Eliphaz counsels patience because it is man's portion to suffer. Job is inconsolable. Bildad reminds him that it would be a sin to ask God for death on the plea that he is suffering, for God sends suffering to the wicked only. Job replies that despite God's justice man is forced to say that God "destroyeth the perfect with the wicked." Zophar rebukes Job for referring to himself as perfect. He exhorts Job to own his sinfulness in humility and his prosperity will return. Thus ends the first round: chapters IV-XIV.

Eliphaz now declares that misfortune comes to the wicked only and hints that Job might be of that class. Job appeals before the three of them to God who, he is convinced, is torturing him without cause. Bildad retorts by saying that God is torturing Job because of his crimes. But Job while claiming that God is "wronging" him yet declares that his avenger is alive and will vindicate his innocence in the end. Zophar adds in answer that from time without number

only the wicked have suffered. Job counters that the wicked, on the contrary, have prospered and died in peace. This ends the second bout of words: chapters XV-XXI.

In the third round, Eliphaz declares that man alone can profit by his good life and that Job since he is punished must be guilty of crimes. He counsels Job to turn to God and be saved. Job protests his constant willingness to turn to God. In fact, he has never withdrawn from God, but he complains that he cannot find Him. If only he could come by God, Job would prove to Him his utter sinlessness. Bildad thereupon proclaims that God is too infinite to be known. This wrings from Job the admission that such an unattainable God is of no use to a man on the verge of despair. Yet in the name of the same God whom he knows to be torturing him, Job asserts his clear conscience and exclaims: "My heart shall not reproach me so long as I live." Zophar sharply reminds Job that his present calamity belies his claims to innocence. In reply Job is forced to recount his past life, and to contrast it with his present conditions; and he challenges God to examine his past life and discover a blemish in it—"Lo here is my signature—let God reply." The end of the third round: chapters XXII-XXVIII.

K. claims that towards the end of the third *agon* or "act", there is a change in the mood of the dialogue. Job began with an unhappy complaint and ends with a heroic defiance of God. "The argument has moved from the position that (1) God sends underserved misfortunes on the righteous through the demonstration that (2) he deals prosperity to the wicked, to the final position that (3) an omnipotent and unattainable God is no use to the just man who suffers, and who demands that God shall justify himself. The friends have grown weaker as Job has grown stronger. From argument they have passed to iteration. The intellectual and the emotional situation at the end is the reverse of the situation at the beginning" (p. 31). Thus the coming of Elihu which begins the fourth act is of great dramatic significance and indicates, according to K., some familiarity with Greek drama. Playing the role of the messenger, Elihu *not only* partly sums up the arguments of the other three but also adds something new. He announces what is to come. His words are really only a prelude to the speeches of Yahweh. The particular burden of the words of this youthful sage is that suffering is not only punishment but cure, in as much as it opens the ear of the sufferer to the voice of Yahweh and restores him to righteous paths. (Chapters XXXVI, 7-12 and XXXIII, 14-18). Indeed God will reveal himself to Job when Job is ready. Thunder is heard in the distance, the lightning flashes, a storm is approaching, the whirlwind is come, and over the whirlwind speaks the Voice. As epiphany, the Voice is part of the dramatic development. God in reply to the demands of Job gives account of Himself

but far differently from the account of His defenders. They put stress on his power, especially to deal justice to sinners; Job has alluded to God's indifference towards the righteousness of man in His prospering both the idolater and the adulterer. God, on the other hand, emphasizes His providence, particularly in regard to the most irrational and helpless forms of life. Such indeed is God. He in turn challenges Job to answer His questionings. Job is disarmed but satisfied. Thus God has done what neither Elipaz nor Bildad nor Zophar could do. After the manner of a Euripidean epiphany, this one, K. claims, saves an intolerable situation: namely, God's good name challenged by Job's defiance.

The epilogue rounds out the play. It is written in prose like the prologue. This epilogue is generally similar in content to the epilogue of a Euripidean drama which usually ordains a ritual as in the *Medea*, or foretells the future of the protagonist as in the *Hecuba* and K. adds that the "drama closes in as Euripidean a manner as it begins" (p. 34).

Both from the external and internal structure of drama, the book of *Job* is justified as drama and is not mere dialogue. And now to the second point; *Job* was written in imitation of Euripides, not only in what concerns its outward trappings of speeches which are "set and argumentative" in the *agons*, and the epiphany and epilogue, but especially in the fact that *Job*, like the dramas of Euripides, was a protest against orthodox views, was revolutionary and heretical. It is evident that the book of *Job* probes into the problem of the suffering of the just. The three friends of Job expound the traditional view that suffering is always given for guilt; and so even the just must be guilty of faults of which he may not be conscious. Job contests this traditional solution alleging that it does not hold true in his case. K. believes that the author of *Job* is castigating the ancient certainties about God's absolute justice and is in fact asserting that God's so-called justice and providence is no more than moral indifference; and that man, though Yahweh be indifferent to his moral life (otherwise how could He sustain the most impotent and the most wicked and destroy the strongest and the most innocent?) is yet capable of attaining the excellence proper to him as man through his courage and his self-respect; and this excellence is the ultimate justification of human life. Through courage and self respect, not through faith and humility, man faces up to the dark and dire realities of life making his human soul his only citadel—even against Omnipotence itself. K. develops these ideas at greater length in the chapter called "The Joban Philosophy of Life".

K. believes that the heterodox message of *Job* is actually couched in traditional framework. For he, "like Euripides, knew the wisdom of conveying his heterodox doctrine by means of a seductive orthodox setting, and of so putting the seal of ultimate approval on

the heterodoxy" (p. 68). One can gather that the traditional events and symbol which the author utilizes are to be found in the prologue, the epilogue, the choruses and the epiphany.

But how is it that *Job* as handed down to us is not cast in dramatic form? K. tells us that the original Euripidean garb was cast off when the book was inserted into the canon of sacred Scriptures. The drama had to be rewritten in such a way that in content and in form it be in keeping with the traditional views of orthodox Jewry.

But how did the author of *Job* which was written perhaps towards the close of the fifth century get to know the Euripidean form of drama in a manner adequate to enable him to compose a Hebraicized imitation of it? In a brilliant though summary fashion, K. reviews the historical context which made this possible. First, there was the widespread influence of Euripides among the Greeks of the later Hellenic and Hellenistic periods, not in Greece only but also in Egypt, in Syria and even in Rome later on; a fact attested to by the surprisingly large number of extant plays (19 altogether) plus numerous fragments of plays preserved of Euripides as compared with the meager number of plays preserved under the names of Aeschylus and Sophocles. Secondly there was the flowering of Greek dramatic art in Alexandria under the patronage of the second Ptolemy; and thirdly, the coincidence of this second factor with the clear indication that the Jews of the Diaspora had been completely acclimatized to the Greek tongue and, by implication, to Greek life and art, namely when the Greek version of the Hebrew Testament or the *Septuagint* was undertaken at Alexandria by Jewish scholars. With these facts in the background, K. thinks the Jewish writer learned of the Euripidean form either from personal experience when he attended one of these dramatic performances in his travels in Syria or Egypt, or from hearsay from fellow Jews who flocked from the farflung frontiers of the Hellenistic world into Jerusalem during the yearly festivals. And to make his case even more cogent, K. cites Eusebius and Clement of Alexandria who, besides mentioning other Alexandrian Hebrew writers who composed works in imitation of Greek epic poets and historians, also refer to a certain Ezechiel, "the poet of Jewish tragedies," who composed a play on the *Exodus* based on the biblical account and cast in the Euripidean mold. Such a one was no isolated, unique example, he thinks. Other Jewish writers must have written also in the manner of Euripides and one of these was the author of *Job*.

Now what are we to think of the reconstruction of Mr. Kallen? It is certainly an ingenious piece of work and makes *Job* much more readable than the standard form. And what are we to think of his claim that the original book of *Job* was a Greek tragedy in the Euripidean vein, that it is a serious criticism of traditional views of orthodox Hebrews about the absolute justice of God despite the suffering of the

innocent, as well as a propounding of some sort of anthropocentric humanism like that of the Sophist Protagoras?

First of all, no one would cavil at his contention, based on historical grounds, that Euripides was *the* dominant figure in the dramatic art of the late Hellenic and the Hellenistic worlds. Nor would one deny the great probability of the Jewish author having come in contact with the influence of Euripides and to show this influence in his writing. Yet we must make it clear at the outset that a hypothesis, however brilliant and articulate, is still a hypothesis and should never be taken as actual fact. Mr. K., however, takes this to be a fact.

Secondly, if we wish to assign a work of ancient times to a particular genre it is safe not to use for norm causes extrinsic to the work itself, but to begin and end our demonstration from reasons intrinsic to the work itself. Now, considering the evidence of the text as we have it in the standard editions today, or even as reconstructed by K., all we can say is that it is *highly probable* that *Job* was originally written as a Greek tragedy à la Euripides. All admit (except Kitto perhaps) that drama worthy of its salt must have an "action" whether it be a drama of plot like that of Sophocles or whether it be a drama of character like that of Aeschylus. Something at least must happen to the protagonist *within* the drama itself as presented to the spectators so that his lot is reversed either for better or for worse. Even in the so-called psychological drama of Euripides there is progress of thought, a deepening of the mental problems confronting the soul. Now except for the prologue and the epilogue there is no action in *Job*. The same ideas are repeated over and over again, with pleasant variety to be sure, but without any detectable movement of thought towards a climax or in the direction of a solution. The speeches of Elihu, although they propound a new aspect of the traditional doctrine, namely, that suffering is also a cure and a call from evil to good, are really not necessary for the development of the dialogue; and were one to excise them from the text, they would not be conspicuous for their absence. This is the opinion of authorities on the subject. (Cf. Orchard and Sutcliffe's *A Catholic Commentary on Sacred Scripture*, London: Thomas Nelson, 1953, p. 418.) K., however, thinks that Elihu plays a major role in the dramatic development of the play. Like the messenger in, say, the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, he brings bad news. What is it? The fact that "the defense of God by his friends has failed. And this is bad news..." (p. 32). One can hardly restrain a smile. But K. is not jesting; he is most serious here. And, one may ask, is there need for telling the audience that the friends have failed in their defense when they have been witnessing this for full thirty-two chapters. There is really no change in the mental anguish of Job. He is just as tortured at the close as he was at the start of the debate. On the admission of K.,

besides, Job is not in so tight a "fix" that a *deus ex machina* should be invoked to extricate him from it, since just before Elihu appears, whose speeches according to K. are meant to lead up to the epiphany and the cutting of the "knot", it is the three friends who are found weaker, and Job the stronger. And this is not the way things happen in Greek tragedy. In the *Trojan Women* and the *Hecuba* of Euripides, the protagonist is overwhelmed with sorrow and is never shown to be stronger than his enemies at the very crucial point just before the messenger appears. It would seem that God not Job is in a bad situation since it is His reputation which is at stake and which Elihu undertakes to defend.

Thirdly, concerning the choruses. One could remark at once that K. took unwarranted freedom with the text when he transposed chapters XL, 15-24 and XLI to immediately succeed chapter XXXI in order to make it serve as the third choral ode. Besides, the choral odes in Greek tragedy should come immediately after each of the episodes. But this is not so of the first two choruses in chapters XXIV and XXVIII; for both occur *within* the *third* episode itself. In Greek tragedy, too, the choral odes are different from the dialogues in metrical form at least, if not in theme. But the third choral ode is not in meter but in prose. The choral odes should be sung by the chorus, not by the protagonist. But K. assigns the first choral ode to Job himself.

Thus it would appear that the internal evidence from the text itself does not sufficiently warrant a categorical statement to the effect that *Job* was *actually* written in the manner of a Euripidean tragedy. We do not deny that there are dramatic possibilities in it; that actually drama might be written out of it especially from the prologue and the epilogue where there is action certainly (in fact K. claims that Archibald MacLeish's *J. B.* has been inspired by the prologue). But these dramatic possibilities are not peculiar to Job, for the same may be had in a dialogue of Plato. Nor is the epiphany altogether foreign to the Hebrew mind so that it must be attributed to Euripides' influence. Is not Hebrew history strewn with divine appearances to men under some guise or other? God appeared as a young man to Abraham and Sarai, to Moses as the Burning Bush, to the Chosen People in the desert as a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night.

As to the contention that *Job* is a criticism of the traditional beliefs concerning God's justice in sending suffering to the just as well as an affirmation of a man-centered humanism, there does not seem to be sufficient warrant from the text itself. The argument though it begins with the assertion that God sends undeserved misfortune to the righteous and gives prosperity to the wicked does not really end, as K. claims, with the position attributed to Job that an omnipotent and unreachable God is no use to the just man in pain

and who demands that God justify His ways. For there is a further progression, namely, that God makes use of pain not only to punish men for crimes, but also to open their ears to His voice and to recall them to righteous paths. This is the position of Elihu. K. seems to overlook the fact that Job's outburst of impatience is but a natural human reaction to the length and intensity of his bodily and mental anguish; that it betrays not so much a defiant spirit as one fretful yet full of hope that God who tortures will yet console. So that *Job*, as it stands, is not a criticism of belief in God's loving kindness and providence even when He gives pain, but an affirmation of it. Certainly the problem of suffering on the part of the innocent with which the dialogue proper is concerned is not altogether resolved. No answer was adequate before the death of God's most innocent Son on the Cross. But the fact is that Job's anguish is allayed through the realization of God's sovereign lordship over him and his complete lowliness before the Lord. It was neither courage nor self-respect alone which quieted the miseries of Job; it was his faith joined with humility.

To recapitulate then. It does not seem clear from the reading of the text that the work is cast in the Euripidean form of drama or even that it is drama at all. Nor is it clear either that it was due to Euripides' influence that he used a prologue and an epilogue, and the dialogues which are set and argumentative, and the climactic order leading up to Elihu and Yahweh; for the simple reason that these may be present in an ordinary philosophical dialogue. Nor are the so-called choruses in *Job* really written after the fashion of Greek tragedy. For otherwise they should come after the *episodes* in order to set these off from one another. But the first two choruses do not come after the first and the second *episodes* but *within* the third *episode*; only the third choral ode comes immediately after the *third*; and this is so only because K., rather arbitrarily, transposes it from its place. Again, the Greek choral odes are cast in lyric measure; but the third choral ode of *Job* is in prose. Nor do we get an impression from reading *Job* of criticism of the traditional belief in God's divine justice even when causing tears in the just, and of a proud affirmation of anthropocentric humanism. Rather there comes forth a sense of relief in the belief that behind the ugly face of pain there is an infinitely just and loving God whose sure hand guards and guides all things sweetly. It is not unbelief that is engendered but the trusting belief of a child in the power and the love of his Father who is in heaven. It seems to me it is K.'s attempt to prove a point, namely, that the philosophy of the author of *Job* was anthropocentric humanism, that leads him to claim that the author was criticising the traditional Hebrew faith and expounding a revolutionary and heterodox doctrine after the manner of Euripides. This is readily seen when one reads the chapter on the "Joban Philosophy

of Life", a well-written but almost blasphemous affirmation of a naturalistic faith in the absolute dignity of man independent of God—in fact, in defiance of Him. That the form the author gave to *Job* "was scrambled from the dramatic to the narrative when *Job* was added to the canonical Scriptures;... to fit it into the conventional perspectives of the dominant Judaism at the time" (p. IX) is an altogether gratuitous statement and has no proofs whatsoever.

In conclusion, then, we wish to make clear just exactly what we criticize in this rather interesting work. It is not so much the probability of Euripides' influence on the author of *Job*; for that is very probable. It is Kallen's categorical statement that *Job* is a tragedy in the Euripidean form which we deny. For to say it was very *probably* written as Greek tragedy is far different from saying that *in its original form it was Greek tragedy* in imitation of the most tragic of Greek poets.

FRANCISCO DEMETRIO

ADULT EDUCATION

HANDBOOK OF CATHOLIC ADULT EDUCATION. Edited by Sister Jerome Keeler, O.S.B. Milwaukee: The Bruce Publishing Company, 1959. vi, 95p. \$1.35.

Having written to 230 Catholic institutions of higher learning, the editor learned (from the 170 which replied) that ninety have no adult education program, and that of the eighty which stated that they have a program, twenty have evening courses for credit rather than adult education in its ordinary meaning. The editor offers this handbook as compact reference material for establishing, directing, or participating in the adult education movement. Descriptions furnished in the text, and listings placed just before the index, present data not only on the colleges and universities offering adult education programs, but also on what is done by dioceses, parishes, special centers, libraries and labor schools.

Approximately five pages of text are presented by each of seventeen contributors and the editor. The variety of contributors permits flexibility, besides adding interest. The writers include: seven lay persons, of whom four are women and three men; six priests, of whom three are diocesan, and three religious; and five other religious, one male and four female. The text contains three major divisions: "Areas of Interest and Activity", "Institutional Resources", and "Common Problems". These follow an Introduction presenting the meaning and scope of, and some thoughts of Pope Pius XII concerning, adult education.