

JOHN PASSFIELD'S NOVEL-WRITING PROJECT

The Novel: Excerpts from <i>Job</i>	Corresponding Passage in The Planning Notebook	Corresponding Passage in The Journal
<p>My wife and all of our children. The days that we have known. The nights when we have thought there would be no end. God made the flowers that bloom in the oasis. Why did he make the man who slakes his thirst at the well? The agonizing, aching desire to hold fast to that which is good. To our parents, to our spouses, to our children, to our friends. To the drops of dew on the morning flowers. To the colour of the wheat-field in the breeze. Why is all this given to us? Why is all of this taken away? What does the blood that lives in my body seem to mean?</p>	<p>Sunday, April 11, 2009. Job – a novel on the Job story. I don't have a structure for it yet. Drop the Prologue & Epilogue. Alternating Points of View: Job & Comforters Alternating. Perhaps start with Job's original situation – perfect. Then Job's complaint. Then the comforters & Job alternating. End with God's refusal to explain. Never from God's point of view. We will see.</p>	<p>I see the Job story as a case in which God feels that Job is asking all the wrong questions, and spending his energy in all the wrong pursuits. Job is concerning himself with theology – what God is thinking and whether Job feels that God is right or wrong – when he should concern himself with how he, Job, is living his life, no matter what happens to him here on earth: whether or not, in his opinion, he is being justly rewarded by life or, again in his opinion, is being unjustly punished.</p>
<p>I am alive in every moment. Every moment is fiercely painful. Every moment is agony to me. If only I were unaware of the aching in my heart. If only I were unaware of the beating of my brain. Fierce fires rage in my bloodstream. Painful memories arise before my eyes. Paralyzing consciousness. I don't know how I can go forward. If only my essence could cease to be. Pain is my only fuel. Pain is the single fuel that propels me through my days.</p>	<p>Tuesday, June 17, 2014. I awoke during the night in the midst of a dream about the structure of my proposed Job novel. It seemed to be showing me a page with an outer-frame, as I'd planned before, and with the speeches of the friends of Job (Job's Comforters) arranged in sections with breaks in them. This last element was new to me & is what my sleeping mind was working on. The structure is obvious & reminds me of the structure of my novel <i>Raslkolnikov: Murder with an Axe.</i></p>	<p>There are many innocent people here on earth who are being unjustly punished by the circumstances of their lives – and this can be verified by visiting any hospital or turning on any news program on television – and few of them choose to spend their lives on an ash-heap asking God why this is so. I assume that most of them set their own criteria as to what to do as a response to their afflictions, and then they judge themselves as to whether they have met their own standards. Those who are religious might well expect God to judge them by a similar set of criteria.</p>

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<p>My children! My children! My children! Mattan and the ruined grain! Jemima and the caravans! Heber and the widow! Epher and the sandstorm! Bazak and the golden land! Kezia and her choices! Evron and the bleating lamb! Avram and the coughing lion! Noach and the mystery! Keren and the bucket at the well! Oh my children! My children! My children! To have all of them given to me! To have all of them taken away! What is the plan that engenders such agony as this?</p>	<p>Monday, November 3, 2014. Do I set a scene in heaven with God and the Adversary (Satan) both looking like God? Two gods! Would this be blasphemy? God, giver of life. God, the taker-away of life. Job looks & looks at the second God (2nd aspect of God) & can't believe that he looks like God. He keeps expecting the first God (the giver of life) to overrule, or deny, the 2nd God. How can this be happening? By the way, I'm assuming that the whirlwind scene will have no physical depiction of God (no human depiction of God) beyond a whirlwind & a voice. How to make this into 8 image-units? Perhaps the others will fall on their knees & speak to God - what they will do etc. - though God will not address them (unlike the <i>Book of Job</i> passage). Whirlwind, dark clouds, a single light shining on the earth in front of them - on the ash heap actually. A strong, clear voice.</p>	<p>I would hope that humans – both those who believe that God is watching them like a hawk and those who believe that there is no God – would set similar standards for human behaviour – their own and that of others – and then try, themselves, to meet this standard and encourage others to meet it as well. Hopefully, both the atheist and the religious person feels that right-living is its own reward, whether one lives in comfort with one's grandchildren romping at one's feet or whether one is covered in painful boils from head to toe.</p>