



LITERARY JOB PART 2

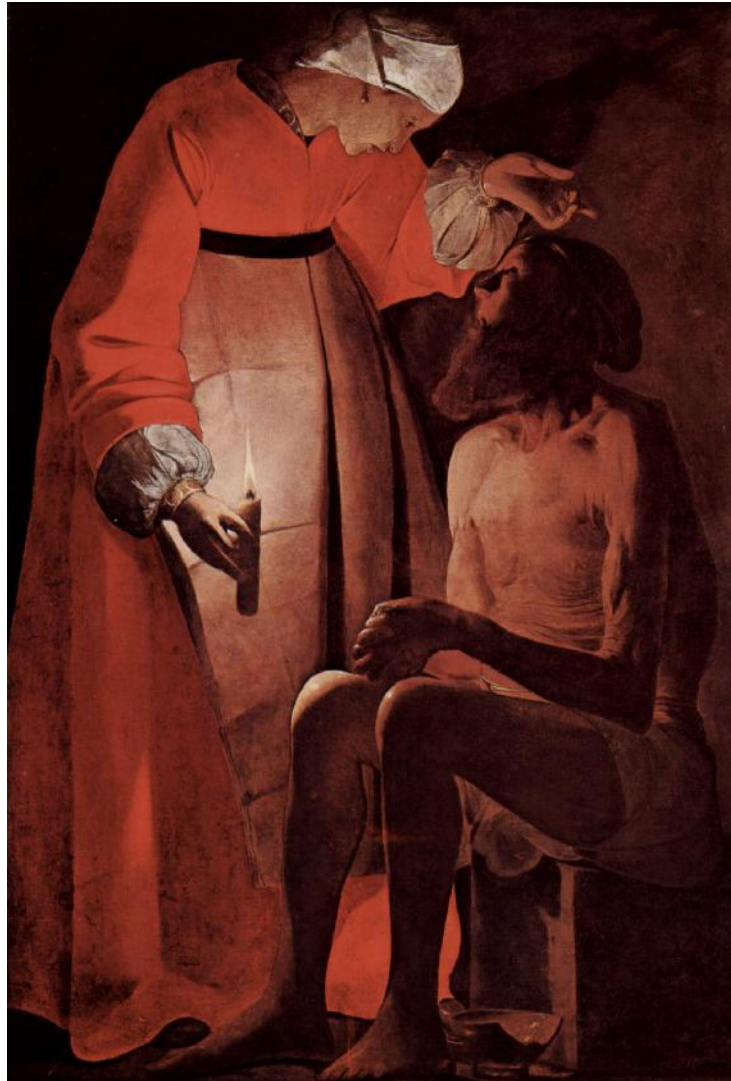
OLLI Spring Term 2016

- Tom Manteuffel



Job and His False Comforters

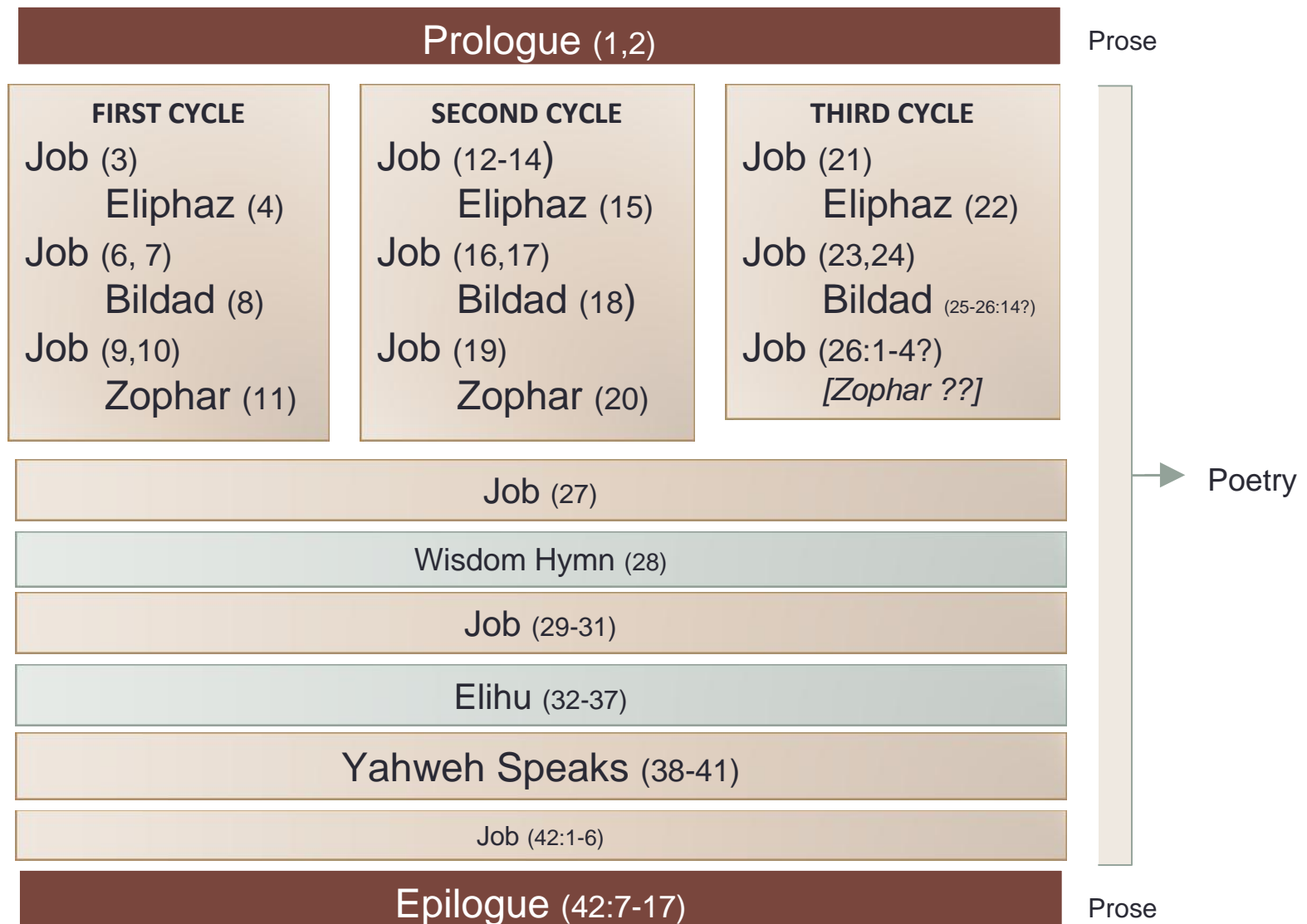
Jean Fouquet, c 1460



Job Mocked by His Wife

Georges de la Tour, 1630s

Structure of Job



Biblical Poetry

- Most important element
 - Parallelism
 - Semantics
 - Syntax
 - Rhythm (stress)

All is in *couplets* (or 'hemistichs', 'colons', 'versets')
- or occasionally *triplets*

➤ **But the effect is just as often an asymmetry as pure balance...**

Biblical poetry is not repetitive so much as *intensifying*.

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Stress (*not* meter)

“By rule no two stresses are permitted to follow each other... [therefore] each stress dominates a group of two three or four syllables; there are two, three or four such groups in a verset; and two, three or four parallel versets in a sentence.”

- Benjamin Hrushovski (Harshav)

- Mitchell uses three stresses per line

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Intensification
 - Often of degree, or quantity or ‘sophistication’

An implied “How much more so...”

An invariable rule is that if you introduce a number in the first couplet, you have to go up in the second.

Six things are there that the Lord hates,
and seven He utterly loathes.

- Proverbs 6:16

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Intensification via 'sophistication'

“The predominant pattern of biblical poetry is to move from a standard term in the first verset to a more literary or highfalutin term in the second verset.”

- Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*, 1985

*Look, Wisdom calls out,
and Discernment lifts her voice.*

- Proverbs 8:1

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Intensification via concretization

*Your granaries will be filled with **abundance**,
With **new wine** your vats will burst.*
- Proverbs 3:10

*She **weeps on** through the night,
And **her tears are on her cheek**.*
- Lamentations 1:2

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Chiasm
 - Parallelism either of 'syntax' or 'semantics'
 - Simplest form is A, B, B, A

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Chiasm
 - Can be quite complex

- A: High value of a good wife (v. 10)¶
- B: Husband benefited by wife (vv. 11-12)¶
- C: Wife works hard (vv. 13-19)¶
- D: Wife gives to poor (v. 20)¶
- E: No fear of snow (v. 21a)¶
- F: Children clothed in scarlet (v. 21b)¶
- G: Coverings for bed, wife wears linen (v. 22)¶
- H: Public respect for her husband (v. 23)¶
- G': Sells garments and sashes (v.24)¶
- F': Wife clothed in dignity (v. 25a)¶
- E': No fear of future (v. 25b)¶
- D': Wife speaks wisdom (v. 26)¶
- C': Wife works hard (v. 27)¶
- B': Husband and children praise wife (vv. 28-29)¶
- A': High value of a good wife (vv. 30-31)¶

Duane A Garrett, *Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs*, *The New American Commentary* 14 (Nashville, Tenn.: [Broadman Press](#), 1993), 248 ¶

Chiastic
analysis of
Proverbs 31

Biblical Poetry

Chiastic structure of the Genesis Flood Narrative

A: Noah and his sons (Gen 6:10)
 B: All life on earth (6:13:a)
 C: Curse on earth (6:13:b)
 D: Flood announced (6:7)
 E: Ark (6:14-16)
 F: All living creatures (6:17-20)
 G: Food (6:21)
 H: Animals in man's hands (7:2-3)
 I: Entering the Ark (7:13-16)
 J: Waters increase (7:17-20)
 X: God remembers Noah (8:1)
 J: Waters decrease (8:13-14)
 I': Exiting the Ark (8:15-19)
 H': Animals (9:2,3)
 G': Food (9:3,4)
 F': All living creatures (9:10a)
 E': Ark (9:10b)
 D': No flood in future (9:11)
 C': Blessing on earth (9:12-17)
 B': All life on earth (9:16)
 A: Noah and his sons (9:18,19a)

Gordon Wenham's Chiastic Analysis
of Genesis Ch 6-9

Biblical Poetry

- Subsidiary elements
 - Shared verbs between versets (a form of ellipsis)

*He found him in a desert land,
in an **empty, howling waste.***

- from Moses Valedictory Song, Deut 32:10

The ellipsis frees the poet to elaborate and sharpen meaning.

Biblical Poetry

- Other elements
 - Use of concrete imagery to indicate general concepts
 - Quoting of another's words
 - Extreme conciseness (usually)
 - Rhetorical questions
 - Many subtypes:
 - Victory songs
 - Laments (*individual, communal*)
 - Hymns of praise
 - Love poetry or wedding songs

Biblical Poetry

- And *flexibility!*

Biblical Poetry

Then he said to her, “Please give me a little water to drink; for I am thirsty.”
So she opened a skin of milk and gave him a drink and covered him.

- Judges 4:19 (NRSV)

He asked water and she gave him milk,
she brought him curds in a lordly bowl.

- Judges 5:25 (NRSV)

Biblical Poetry

On to Job...

*“When we move from the prose frame story of chapters 1 and 2 to the beginning of the poetic argument in chapter 3 we are plunged precipitously into a world of what must be called **abysmal intensities**.”*

- Robert Alter, *The Art of Biblical Poetry*

Job 3: His Malediction

Cursed be the day when I was born;
Let the day when my mother bore me not be blessed.
Cursed be the one who brought my father news saying
‘A son, a male, has been born to you,’
Bringing him such joy.
May this man be like the towns
That YHVH overthrew without mercy;
May he hear alarms in the morning,
The war cry in broad daylight,
since he did not kill me in the womb;
My mother would have been my tomb
while her womb was swollen with me.
Why ever did I come out of the womb
to live in toil and sorrow
and to end my days in shame!

- Jeremiah 20:14-18