

Manifestations of the Aesthetics of the Grotesque in the Testament of Job / *Manifestações da estética do grotesco no Testamento de Jó*

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ABSTRACT

The Testament of Job is an ancient Jewish text, which was not canonized by either Judaism or Christianity, which is why it came to be included among the so-called apocrypha of the Old Testament. This work was written in Greek during the Hellenistic period, probably in Alexandria. Its content is the rewriting of the biblical book of Job, an attempt to update its content in view of the current culture. We intend to point out the manifestation of the grotesque body in the Testament of Job, in accordance with Mikhail Bakhtin's use of this concept when discussing popular culture. As it is an apocryphal work, the Testament of Job dialogues with the versions of the book of Job written in Hebrew and with the one written in Greek, and therefore its content will be discussed based on its dialogical relationship with both texts mentioned.

KEYWORDS: Job; Grotesque; Bible; Bakhtin

RESUMO

O Testamento de Jó é um antigo texto judaico, que não foi canonizado nem pelo judaísmo nem pelo cristianismo, por isso passou a ser incluído entre os chamados apócrifos do Antigo Testamento. Essa obra foi escrita em língua grega durante o período helenístico, provavelmente em Alexandria. Seu conteúdo é a reescrita do livro bíblico de Jó, uma tentativa de atualização do seu conteúdo em vista da cultura vigente. Pretendemos apontar a manifestação do corpo grotesco no Testamento de Jó, de acordo com o uso que Mikhail Bakhtin faz desse conceito ao discutir a cultura popular. Por se tratar de uma obra apócrifa, o Testamento de Jó dialoga com as versões do livro de Jó escrita em hebraico e com a escrita em grego, e por isso seu conteúdo será discutido a partir de sua relação dialógica com ambos os textos mencionados.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE: *Jó; Grotesco; Bíblia; Bakhtin*

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Introduction

The Jewish work from the Ancient World entitled *The Testament of Job* is a book that was included in collections of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal books because it was not canonized by either Jews or Christians in Antiquity. This book remained virtually unknown in the West until the 18th century.

Since it is a work written in Palestine between the end of the 1st century A.D. and the beginning of the 2nd century A.D., *The Testament of Job* is filled with biblical characteristics. Therefore, we will discuss its content based on its dialogical relationship with the Hebrew *Book of Job* and the version of the *Book of Job* that was translated into Greek and incorporated into the *Septuagint* (LXX).

As previously stated above, the sources to be analysed in this study are the Hebrew Book of Job, as found in the critical edition of the Hebrew *Bible* (1997); the version of the Book of Job that was translated into Greek, as found in the Septuagint (2011), which is significantly different from the Hebrew text; and a critical edition of *The Testament of Job* (Brock, 1967), which was also written in Greek.

It is important to clarify that our study approach, conducted through biblical exegesis guided by the historical-critical methodology, does not recognize the existence of any original biblical text. Thus, we assume that our analysis of the sources is based on critical editions of the texts, which have provided the most reliable versions of the said books, as found in the critical editions we have just mentioned.

Although the critical discussion to be conducted focuses on biblical texts and a pseudepigraphal work that falls within the same field of interest as Theology and Religious Studies, our discussion here is literary and will not take into account theological and doctrinal criteria when addressing the text and conducting the theoretical discussion, as the approach will be linguistic-literary.

The theoretical framework for the study that follows is the work of Mikhail Bakhtin, including both *Rabelais and His World* (1984),¹ in which the concepts of “grotesque realism” and “grotesque body” are particularly important for the discussion to

¹ BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Rabelais and His World*. Translated by Helene Iswolsky. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1984.

be conducted, and the article “Epic and Novel” (2019),² where the Russian author presents his proposal for a historical poetics. Greek and Hebrew language dictionaries, as well as biblical commentaries and specialized studies on the literature to be analyzed, will also be used.

Since the object of our study, *The Testament of Job*, and the cultural phenomenon that produced it, Jewish apocalypticism, are typically unfamiliar to those outside the fields of Theology and Religious Studies, I will first provide a response to a *petitio principii*, in which I situate the work in relation both to the Bible and to the phenomenon of apocalypticism. Secondly, I will present the pre-rabbinic exegetical procedure (midrash, ‘agadah) that led to the emergence of *The Testament of Job* as an interpretation of the Hebrew Bible. Finally, we will point out the effects and manifestation of grotesque realism in a passage from *The Testament of Job*, as well as the place of this work within historical poetics.

1 Literature, Bible, and Apocalypticism

The discussion I intend to undertake here shares the same objective as that assumed by Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye in his work *The Great Code* (2002),³ which is to study the Bible from the perspective of a literary critic, as many other theorists have done when reflecting on biblical literature, such as Harold Bloom (1991),⁴ Erich Auerbach (2013),⁵ Terry Eagleton (2007),⁶ and others.

However, the discussion to be conducted here is based on three assumptions that need to be clarified beforehand. First, the theoretical foundation for the interpretation of the biblical text relies on the work of Russian philologist Mikhail M. Bakhtin (1984;⁷ 1981).⁸ Second, we assume the concept of apocryphality (Nogueira, 2015) when referring

² BAKHTIN, Mikhail M. Epic and Novel. In: *The Dialogic Imagination*. Edited by Michael Holquist. Austin: University of Texas Press, 1981. pp. 3-40.

³ FRYE, Northrop. *The Great Code: The Bible and Literature*. Boston: Mariner Books, 2002.

⁴ BLOOM, Harold. *Ruin the Sacred Truths: Poetry and Belief from the Bible to the Present* (The Charles Eliot Norton Lectures). Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1991.

⁵ AUERBACH, Erich. *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. New Jersey, 2013.

⁶ EAGLETON, Terry. *The Gospels: Jesus Christ (Revolutions)*. London: Verso Books, 2007.

⁷ For reference, see footnote 1.

⁸ For reference, see footnote 2.

to the Bible. Third, it is essential to understand Jewish apocalypticism as a religious phenomenon that shaped the worldview of the Jews from the 2nd century B.C.E. (Collins, 2016;⁹ Russell, 2012).¹⁰

As for our theoretical foundation being based on the work of Bakhtin (1984;¹¹ 1981),¹² it is clear to us that, despite the scarce references to the Bible throughout his books, when we consider the scriptures as a literary work, as we stated our objective above, Bakhtinian theory applies perfectly, and there is ample evidence of academic work conducted in this way.¹³

With the idea of apocryphicity (Nogueira, 2015),¹⁴ we intend to convey that when we refer to the Bible, we are not merely thinking of the seventy-two books considered canonical in the Roman Catholic tradition or the sixty-six in the Protestant tradition, nor any other set of books considered canonical in other Christian or Jewish traditions. Instead, we refer to the entire body of pseudepigraphical, deuterocanonical, and apocryphal literature.

Unlike the canonical view of the Scriptures, the conception of biblical literature from the perspective of apocryphicity includes pseudepigraphal and apocryphal books, most of which, at some level, are also apocalyptic. These books have been divided between apocrypha and pseudepigrapha of the Old and New Testaments. Although valid, we recognize that this classification of biblical literature is anachronistic and serves the ideological purposes of the hegemonic religious lines of Christianity and Judaism that developed after the period in which these books were written. Therefore, we use the concept of apocryphicity to include in the discussion about the Bible the books that were excluded from the canon due to ideological criteria, but despite this, they remain connected to the canonical books because of their historical, literary, and religious characteristics (Nogueira, 2015).

⁹ COLLINS, John J. *The Apocalyptic Imagination: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic Literature*. Erdmans, 2016.

¹⁰ RUSSELL, D. S. *Divine Disclosure: An Introduction to Jewish Apocalyptic*. Londres: SCM Press, 2012.

¹¹ For reference, see footnote 1.

¹² For reference, see footnote 2.

¹³ In the article “The Use of the Socio-ideological Method for Studies in Religious Studies and Theology” (Leite, 2017), there is a list of academic works in which the research subject is religion, and the methodology is Bakhtinian.

¹⁴ In the cited article, the concept of “apocryphicity” refers to the New Testament apocrypha, but the very same criteria mentioned also support the apocryphicity of the Old Testament.

Regarding the importance of apocalyptic literature, its justification is directly linked to the existence of the pseudepigraphal and apocryphal books of the Old Testament, which were written from the 2nd century BCE onward. It was during this time that the Jewish people endured severe cultural identity crises due to religious persecution within their own territory by the Seleucids (167 BCE) and the subsequent negative experiences that followed this event (Russell, 2012).¹⁵ From this traumatic complex, the following can be mentioned: the rise of the Hasmonean royal-priestly dynasty (140 BCE–37 BCE), the Roman invasion of Palestine (63 BCE), the Jewish war against the Romans (66 CE–73 CE), and the consequent destruction of Jerusalem in two phases, the first under Vespasian (70 CE) and the second ordered by Emperor Hadrian (135 CE).

The book that marks the beginning of apocryphal and pseudepigraphal literature is *I Enoch*, which was likely written sometime in the 2nd century BCE, and the book that marks the end of this literature is *III Enoch*, written in the 9th century CE. Although the latter is a medieval rabbinic work, it is still included in collections of Old Testament apocrypha because it is part of a tradition of apocalyptic books called the Enoch Cycle (Macho, 1984). There is a vast body of New Testament apocryphal literature that continued to be produced even after Christianity was made the official religion of the Roman Empire, but it is not relevant to address it here, as we will focus on discussing an Old Testament apocryphal text.

It is not possible to present the characteristics of pseudepigraphal and apocryphal books, as there is such a diversity in both languages and historical moments in which they were written. Significantly different cultures, from the Ethiopian Kingdom to the Armenian Kingdom, and from the Slavic nations to Rome, produced an impressive variety of material over an extensive chronological period in history, and all this content still has much to be researched (Henze, 2015).

However, when discussing pseudepigraphal and apocryphal literature, at least that which was produced until the 2nd century CE, the major characteristic is the influence of Jewish apocalyptic literature, which is the religious phenomenon that emerges among the Jews during their greatest affliction and crisis of cultural identity (from the 2nd century

¹⁵ For reference, see footnote 10.

CE onward) and ultimately shapes the worldview of Judaism and nascent Christianity (Collins, 2016).¹⁶

Due to the repeated unfortunate experiences that these Jews faced as a nation oppressed by imperial powers that subjected them to the condition of vassals, their only hopes for human existence began to lie in the beyond. That is, both in the afterlife, the belief in existence after death, and in the belief in the present beyond, which exists in the supraterrrestrial reality. According to this understanding of reality, the cosmos has a vertical structure (Collins, 1984).

After all, for the devout Jew, if Israel's institutions, such as the temple and the Davidic dynasty, were profaned and destroyed, despite the scriptures recording that they are eternal, this means that the scriptures were not well understood, and it is necessary to rewrite them in order to comprehend them properly.

From this point of view, it seemed clear to the Jews who experienced these events that the "eternal temple" mentioned in the scriptures is the heavenly one, rather than the temple in Jerusalem, which by the end of the 1st century AD had already been profaned and destroyed more than once. Hence arose the literature of the heavenly palaces [Heb. *sepher hekhalot*] and the seed of hope for the coming of a messiah who would continue the Kingdom of Israel, for the sacred scriptures of the Jews stated that the "house of David" would reign forever. Despite this, the monarchy of Israel had already come to an end, and so this fact had to be reinterpreted in light of the cultural phenomenon of apocalypticism.

Thus, from this same perspective, all the books of the sacred scriptures began to be reworked based on *vaticinium ex eventu* so that their prophecies could be reinterpreted as if they were indicating something for the present time, when the book is being read in the Hellenistic period, rather than for the past, in which the oracles originally spoken had not been fulfilled.

The existence of evil, which before the exile was attributed to Yahweh (the name of the Jews' sole God in Hebrew), from that point onward began to be traced to evil beings, led by a figure who opposes Yahweh and His people. It is difficult, within Jewish monistic theology, to explain this origin of evil and justify the existence of a being who

¹⁶ For reference, see footnote 9.

opposes the one God, as these are ideas imported from Babylonian and Persian wisdom traditions. Unlike this conception, apocryphal literature, with the book of 1 Enoch (Macho, 1984), tells a story in which evil arises from angels who sinned against God by having relations with women—a true theodicy.

These religious ideas became part of ancient Judaism after their experiences with neighboring nations, which occurred during the Babylonian exile, the forced syncretism imposed by the Seleucids, and the inevitable process of cultural exchange during the Hellenistic period. Before contact with foreign peoples, the religion of Israel was materialistic in the strict sense of the term, as there was no concept of eternal life, resurrection, heavenly paradise, hell, Satan, etc. Everything that was expected would be fulfilled in the present life. The ideal of life was to leave descendants.

However, after the Jewish people returned from the Babylonian exile, received influence from Mesopotamian and Persian religions, and endured harsh experiences of oppression under the rule of neighbouring nations, the apocalyptic worldview emerged. From then on, the people began to understand that the evil forces dominating the present age and oppressing the “people of God” are a veil placed over existence, but at any moment, there will be an “unveiling” [Greek *apokalypsis*], revealing that God is in control of the cosmos and that the evil forces are temporary. Until this happens, humanity lives in a dualistic world, where good—represented by God, His angels, and His people—fights against evil, represented by Satan, his angels, and his earthly agents, the wicked empires (Russell, 2012).¹⁷

In the Hellenistic period, when the *Testament of Job* was written, apocalyptic ideas were in full bloom in Palestine and among the Jewish diaspora communities. The Jews were rewriting their history, as they revisited their sacred books and reinterpreted them, producing pseudepigraphal literature—books written under the names of patriarchs and prophets of the past.

The implicit fictional idea underlying these works is that the prophets of the past had left written books for posterity that had not been accessed until that point in history. All of these pseudepigraphal books, therefore falsely attributed, revisited content from the ancient sacred scriptures through the character that gives the work its title (for

¹⁷ For reference, see footnote 10.

example: *1, 2, and 3 Enoch*, *Apocalypse of Abraham*, *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs*, *3 and 4 Ezra*, *Testament of Moses*, etc.). From that point in the story, the character prophesies what will happen in a time that is future from the perspective of those within the literary narrative but already past for the reader, outside of the narrative. If the reader believes the premise that the work was written in the past, then the book they are reading proves the ancients' ability to make accurate predictions. And if the ancient oracles have been fulfilled up to the present (*vaticinium ex eventu*), this is a sign that those prophecies yet to be fulfilled will also come to pass in the future.

Thus, we come to the *Testament of Job*, which will be the subject of our literary reflection. This work was written in the Hellenized Egyptian city of Alexandria, probably between the late 1st century AD and the early 2nd century AD (Haralambakis, 2012), but the narrator, who tells the story in the first person, sets the plot in a distant past, directly connected to the time of the twelve sons of Jacob. We will see in many ways that the purpose of this book is to update the content of the ancient Book of Job, as the themes of this work from the Hebrew Bible are revisited in light of the culture of the Hellenic world, in a clearly anachronistic but religiously significant way.

In light of the religious experience of apocalypticism, in the *Testament of Job*, Satan becomes a personal being who directly confronts humans; reality is divided into the earthly world where Satan's deception operates and the supraterritorial reality that can only be revealed by God (Collins, 1984). Intriguing religious themes such as future resurrection, the glorification of those who have passed through death, visions of the beyond, ecstasy, and glossolalia are part of the *Testament of Job*, even though they could not be presumed in the ancient canonical book of *Job*, which is part of the Hebrew Bible.

As we will show in more detail below, it is evident that the *Testament of Job* updated the content of the canonical book of *Job* to the Hellenistic period and the apocalyptic phenomenon that emerged in Jewish literature at that time. While in the biblical book of *Job*, characterized as wisdom literature, evil is promoted by a kind of wager that *Yahweh* did with Satan; in the *Testament of Job*, evil is carried out by Satan, who operates autonomously. In the book of *Job*, there is a highly philosophical poetic wisdom, while in the *Testament of Job*, wisdom is reduced to what is revealed directly by *Yahweh* to the character Job. On one hand, the reflections of the wisdom book of *Job* lead

to aporia; on the other hand, the revelations of the *Testament of Job* conclude with a *deus ex machina*.

All of this indicates the apocalyptic reinterpretation of the book of *Job*, as the suffering of the righteous caused by the deity, as presented in the wisdom book, is no longer accepted in light of the recent cultural developments that occurred during the Hellenistic period. Nevertheless, the canonical content also cannot be rejected by the Jewish people. Thus arose the process of reworking the meaning and significance of ancient literature, which was subjected to new interpretation through new writings without denying the validity of what had been produced in the past.

From now on, we will examine the relationship between the three works: the canonical book of *Job* in Hebrew and in Greek, and the *Testament of Job*, which rewrote it according to the influence it received from Jewish apocalypticism and the Hellenistic culture of its historical-social context, as well as by filling in its interpretative gaps, as we will see below. The book of *Job*, as it appears in the Hebrew Bible, will also be included in the analysis when it is useful for understanding the two Greek texts.

2 Between the Canonical Book of Job and the Testament of Job

The aforementioned German-Jewish philologist and literary critic Erich Auerbach (Berlin, 1892 – Wallingford, 1957), in his well-known essay “The Scar of Ulysses,” which opens his book *Mimesis* (2013),¹⁸ described the elliptical and lacunar style of the Hebrew language in which the Book of Genesis was written and highlighted the necessary filling of gaps that takes place in the process of effectively interpreting the content of the Hebrew Bible.

Even though he does not clearly mention it, Auerbach (2013)¹⁹ was knowledgeable about the interpretive traditions of the Hebrew Bible, and the process of filling the gaps in the sacred Jewish scriptures, which he presents as an initial step toward the development of the phenomenon that would lead to the emergence of World Literature

¹⁸ For reference, see footnote 5.

¹⁹ For reference, see footnote 5.

[Ger. *Weltliteratur*] (alongside the Greek Homeric style), probably alludes to the Jewish exegetical practice called *midrash*.

Midrash refers to the Jewish exegetical procedure applied to the *Tanakh* (Hebrew Bible), which began to be developed by rabbis in antiquity. Although *midrash*, strictly speaking, truly emerged in Rabbinic Judaism, that is, from the 2nd century CE onwards, one could say that the content of ancient Jewish literature found in books later classified as the New Testament, Apocrypha, and Pseudepigrapha is part of its prehistory, since much of what these books contain is an expansion of material belonging to the *Tanakh*, even though most of this literature was written in Greek and not in Hebrew, which is the language of the *Tanakh*.

Related to *midrash* are the techniques of ‘*agadah* and *halakhah*, the former referring to the interpretative procedure for non-legalistic texts, and the latter for legalistic texts. At the core of the *Tanakh* is the *Torah*, the Law, which regulates the lives of Jews in their covenant with *Yahweh*, and thus *halakhah* applies to its content. Meanwhile, ‘*agadah* is intended for the interpretation of the other two parts of the scriptures, which are the *nevi'im* (prophets) and *ketuvim* (writings), which are not central to religious life in Judaism but are still considered sacred to some degree.

In the third layer of the Hebrew Bible, among the *ketuvim*, are the books that, so to speak, are peripheral, as they do not hold the same centrality in Jewish life as the *Torah* does, nor are they an interpretation of the content of the *Torah*, as is the case with the *nevi'im*. The *ketuvim* include genres that were not incorporated into the previous two parts, books that are neither Law nor Prophets. These books classified as *ketuvim* are divided into three genres: hagiographical, poetic, and wisdom literature. Among the literary works classified this way is the Book of *Job*, which contains characteristics of all three genres at the same time.

Despite this, the canonical Book of *Job* was included in the *Tanakh* among the *ketuvim* as a hagiographical book, since the Jews understood that what stood out in this work was the narrative of a righteous man who resisted temptations and the evils that befell him without relinquishing his perseverance. Even though there is poetic and wisdom content in *Job*, these genres were not considered predominant, as it was *Job*'s classification as a hagiographical book that allowed its canonization at the Jewish Council

of Jamnia, which took place between the end of the 1st century CE and the beginning of the 2nd century CE, determining the Jewish canon, the *Tanakh* (Terrin, 1994).

Despite this being the consideration made by the representatives of formative Judaism, who determined the extent of the sacred book, the Book of Job has only its prologue (Job 1-2) and its epilogue (Job 42:7-17) in narrative form, which would allow it to be classified as hagiographical, while the majority of its content (Job 3-42:6) is poetic and wisdom literature. It is poetry of the highest level from the classical period of Jewish culture, the 6th century BCE (Terrin, 1994).

Biblical exegetes have identified that at some point not far from the 6th century BCE, the narrative content, which was originally a single unit, was split to serve as a framework for the poetic content (Terrin, 1994; Schmidt, 2004). Although the narrative part presents a folkloric tale, which had likely been circulating orally for a long time, this material offers a simplistic narrative about a righteous man who lost everything he had and was then given twice as much by God for remaining righteous amidst calamity. In contrast, in the poem, there is a Job who is outraged at suffering despite being a righteous man and who laments against God, expressing a profound existential anguish that sometimes seems anti-religious (Terrin, 1994).

Anu Põldsam states that the *Testament of Job* “takes the form of a (pre-rabbinic) ‘*agadah*’ and belongs to the genre of the ‘Jewish testament’ in the literature of the Second Temple period” (2020, p. 131). According to Trotter (2017), the *Testament of Job* expands on the content of the canonical Book of *Job*.

Regardless of the term we use to describe how the *Testament of Job* was crafted from the literary material of *Job*, it is certain that this occurred through a reading conducted during the Hellenistic period (between the end of the 1st century and the beginning of the 2nd century) of the version of the Book of *Job* found in the LXX (Septuagint), which is the translation—or perhaps it is better to say ‘version’, as pointed out by Frederico Lourenço (2018)—of what is in the Hebrew Bible into the Greek language. If the *Testament of Job* was produced from a Jewish exegesis or from an expansion of a version of the Book of *Job* in Greek rather than from the original Hebrew, this means that there is yet another intermediary layer between the canonical book and the apocryphal one that we are presenting.

There are experts in apocryphal literature who assert that this procedure of literary expansion was carried out through the ancient Jewish exegetical technique of the *Tanakh* called *midrash* (Wisse, 2003). Other specialists argue that it is not *midrash* in any way, because this technique presupposes the analysis of a biblical text through a comprehensive reading of the scriptures (Collins, 1984).

Regardless of the discussion about the accuracy of applying the technique of *midrash* and the procedure of ‘*agadah*’ to the scriptures of ancient Judaism, which belongs to specialists in the history of the interpretation of the Hebrew Bible, it seems that scholars are unanimous in understanding that the *Testament of Job* is a ‘rewriting of the biblical Book of *Job*’ (Collins, 1984; Wisse, 2003). Thus, we could say that this procedure of expanding the Book of *Job*, which led to its rewriting, if not through the procedure of ‘*agadah*’, closely resembles it, because, as we can see, in three instances where the *Testament of Job* literally maintains the texts of the canonical Book of *Job* in its content, there is a literary development or expansion of that material.

For example, in *Testament of Job* 19:3b, we find the following: ‘The Lord gave me, the Lord took away. As it seemed good to the Lord, so it has happened. Blessed be the name of the Lord.’ These words are also found in Job 1:21 of the LXX; in *Testament of Job* 25:9, it states: ‘speak some word against the Lord and die,’ a passage that is also in Job 2:9; furthermore, the names of Job’s daughters are the same in *Testament of Job* (1:3) and in the LXX (42:14). Each of these passages that have been preserved literally in the *Testament of Job* is surrounded by a significant amount of content related to the particular text.

Firstly, in the *Testament of Job*, linked to his statement in 19:3b mentioned above, there is an extensive description of Job’s possessions and how charitable he was towards widows and other poor and needy people; an exaggerated narrative of Job’s abundance and benevolence is described in ‘ridiculous proportions’ (Rogers, 2012, p. 403). There also seems to be an exaggerated literary development in the emphasis on how much the character lost of his belongings and how severely he fell ill, thereby worsening his calamitous situation in comparison to what is found in the canonical book.

Job’s wife, who invites him to say something against the Lord and die (Test Job 20:9), receives an extensive and controversial narrative, as she is described as a woman

who works to support Job while he is afflicted with diseases, sitting in the dung heap. While she works as a servant to support her husband and even shares her daily rations with him, the narrative emphasizes her ignorance, as she does not understand what is happening around her; she is deceived and pursued by Satan and does not realize that their deceased children have been resurrected in heavenly glory. However, in the LXX, aside from this woman's blasphemous speech, there is nothing more about her in the canonical book.

Job's daughters, who in the canonical book are mentioned only by name and with some remark about their beauty (LXX Job 42:14), receive a separate narrative in the *Testament of Job*, as they are given magical cords by their father that protect them from Satan, change their hearts, grant them the gift of speaking angelic dialects, put them into ecstasy, and enable them to see the heavenly reality that they did not perceive before (Test Job 46-53).

Thus, through these three passages that serve as examples, we see that the *Testament of Job* rewrites the canonical Book of Job by expanding it. Regardless of whether this process of rewriting can be called *midrash* or not, we recognize the filling of gaps (Auerbach, 2013),²⁰ the updating of ancient themes in light of Jewish apocalyptic thought (Collins, 1984), and the expansion of the literary material with information that could not belong to the original context in which the text was written.

Several scholars classify the *Testament of Job* as a folkloric narrative (Klancher, 2010; Spittler, 2016; Rogers, 2012; Wise, 2003; Law, 2013; Pōdsam, 2020). Since the emergence of 'agadah, it is recognized that one of its accomplishments is the incorporation of folkloric narratives into the canonical book being interpreted. Therefore, even without the intention of entering into the specific discussion, it seems quite plausible to use this term to refer to the process that led to the emergence of the *Testament of Job* from the version of *Job* found in the LXX.

In the following paragraph, we will also see that in the rewriting process carried out in the *Testament of Job*, this work acquired certain specific characteristics of the aesthetics of the grotesque that are part of 'popular culture,' as described by Bakhtin in

²⁰ For reference, see footnote 5.

his book *Rabelais and His World* (1984),²¹ and the role that the book occupies in Bakhtin's historical poetics.

3 The Grotesque in the Testament of Job

According to the terminology used by the Bakhtin Circle, it is evident that there is dialogism (Vološinov, 1986)²² between the Book of Job in the Hebrew Bible, its Greek version in the LXX, and the *Testament of Job*, which was also written in Greek. The plurality of voices and discourses of the other (Bakhtin, 1987)²³ is also notable in each of these texts, as we presume has become clear by stating that *Job* was composed from the combination of a prose work with a poetic work, a characteristic that was incorporated by its Greek version in the LXX and by its apocryphal rewriting entitled *Testament of Job*.

Thus, the two books written in Greek are connected to the first, which was written in Hebrew, by a dialogical chain of meaningful relationships. Therefore, all three books remain filled with a plurality of voices and discourses of the other. While both Bakhtinian concepts—'dialogism' and 'voices of discourse'—are important and certainly demonstrate the existence of both in the discussed works, our objective is to highlight the manifestation of grotesque realism (Bakhtin, 1984)²⁴ in the *Testament of Job*. We will do this clearly, pointing out its manifestation through the analysis to be conducted, while the existence of the other concepts in the discussed texts will remain latent.

According to Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1984),²⁵ grotesque realism is the aesthetic category derived from the ancient popular culture, which was gradually marginalized and then completely rejected by bourgeois society throughout the development of human cultural history. The images of grotesque realism are opposed to classical aesthetics; they relate to corporeality in its exuberance, corporeality open to other bodies, to bodily fluids, and to the contradictions and incompleteness provided by these characteristics of the body. Furthermore, according to Bakhtin, although this

²¹ For reference, see footnote 1.

²² VOLOŠINOV, Valentin N. *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*. Transl. I. R. Titunik. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986.

²³ BAKHTIN, Mikhail. *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* Austin: University of Texas Press, 1987.

²⁴ For reference, see footnote 1.

²⁵ For reference, see footnote 1.

aesthetic has been rejected by bourgeois society, its images remain alive and influential in popular culture and manifest in literature, in festivals, in gestures, and in other human performances.

Even though they are involved in controversies and have sparked significant discussion in academia, the use of the concepts of ‘grotesque realism,’ ‘grotesque body,’ and ‘popular culture,’ as articulated in Bakhtin’s *Bakhtin and His World* (1984),²⁶ represents an interesting perspective for reading the non-canonical, as is the case with the *Testament of Job*. Through these concepts, popular culture is presented as a phenomenon of cultural subversion that has occurred over time, rather than merely as a historically verifiable concept in human societies.

In Bakhtin’s article titled ‘*Epic and Novel*’ (1981),²⁷ which is part of his proposal for historical poetics, the author describes the emergence of dialogical genres characterized by popular culture, multilingualism, and laughter. In many cases, these works are constituted as parodies of works from the Ancient World, which had been written in elevated genres—specifically, epic and tragedy. These elevated works were characterized by their absolute temporal and axiological distance; thus, later on, the emergence of low genres led to their debasement, corroding them internally through parodies.

It is not difficult to see that, at some level, the *Testament of Job* is a parody of the canonical Book of *Job*. However, this does not mean that there is a lack of seriousness in this Hellenistic text, as Bakhtin refers to these parodic genres as ‘serio-comic’ (1981)²⁸ because they are ambivalent, ironic, and precisely for this reason, they are profoundly philosophical, as they produce a critical view of the world and the destruction of elevated canonical literature, which is considered rigid or necrotic. These low, parodic, serio-comic, and critical genres are part of the prehistory of the novel.

In this sense, as we will see below, we can propose that the elevated wisdom poetry produced at the height of Jewish culture received its double ‘parodic-travesting’ (Bakhtin, 1981)²⁹ in a work that lowered its language to the level of *koine*, reduced its philosophical

²⁶ For reference, see footnote 1.

²⁷ For reference, see footnote 2.

²⁸ For reference, see footnote 2.

²⁹ For reference, see footnote 2.

reflection to the level of apocalyptic revelation, and downgraded its characters to the level of motivated figures. However, in doing so, it renewed the work's potential for the interest of popular culture, thus expanding its communicative potential, which had previously been restricted to a few.

From now on, we will conduct our discussion regarding the three mentioned texts in their original languages. The Book of *Job* will be analyzed based on the critical edition of the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (1997), its Greek version from the LXX based on Alfred Rahlfs' critical edition (2011), and the *Testament of Job* based on Brock's critical edition (1967). Whenever these texts are cited, they have been translated from the original language by us, except in the cases mentioned.

We opted for the transliteration of Hebrew and Greek words, and for this, we followed the transliteration standards provided in Kelley's *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar* (2002)³⁰ and Sweetnam's *Gramática do grego do Novo Testamento* [Grammar of Greek of the New Testament] (2004). For the translation, we were assisted by the Hebrew dictionaries of Luis Alonso Schökel (1997) and Nelson Kirst *et al.* (2004), and the Greek dictionary of Carlo Rusconi (2005).

Of all the content that the *Testament of Job* expands upon from the canonical Book of *Job*, what particularly draws our attention, given the Bakhtinian approach to be taken, is the description of Job's grotesque body. According to the implicit narrator, who is the character Job himself, we read the following:

And he struck me with a severe plague from head to toe. In great trouble and distress I left the city, and sat on a dung heap worm-ridden in body. Discharges from my body wet the ground with moisture. Many worms were in my body, and if a worm ever sprang off, I would take it up and return it to original place, saying, "Stay in the same place were put until you are directed otherwise by your commander" (Testament of Job 20.6-9) (Spittler, 2016).

In the passage from the LXX that was expanded in the excerpt above, it is written: 'The devil went out from the Lord and struck Job with a malignant sore from the soles of

³⁰ KELLEY, Page. *Biblical Hebrew: An Introductory Grammar*. Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co.

his feet to the crown of his head. And Job took a shard to scrape the pus, and he sat in the dung heap outside the city' (Job 2:7-8).

In the context of the passage from the *Testament of Job* quoted above, it is mentioned that Satan was responsible for Job losing all his possessions through fires that exterminated his livestock (Test Job 16:1) and the plundering of the remainder of his properties, which was carried out by fellow citizens who trusted the word of Satan himself, who appeared to them transformed into a Persian king (Test Job 17:1-6). Satan also caused a collapse in the house where his children were, exterminating all of them at once (Test Job 18:1). Even after all this, Job remained steadfast, and Satan realized that nothing could lead him to negligence (Test Job 20:1). Then Satan asked God for permission to afflict him with sores, and this was granted, leading to Job's body being as described in the excerpt we quoted above.

Let us examine the characteristics of Job's state in the cited excerpt and in other passages that add information to this image: He suffers from a severe sore (Test Job 20:6); an illness that afflicts him from head to toe (Test Job 20:6); the sore compels him to leave the city (Test Job 20:7); for some reason related to his sick state, Job sits in the dung heap (Test Job 20:7); Job's body is consumed by worms (Test Job 20:8); there is a discharge of fluids and pus from Job's body to the point of soaking the ground (Test Job 20:8); many worms were upon Job's body (Test Job 20:8); Job's body was all punctured (Test Job 21:3); Job endured the illness for seventeen years (Test Job 26:1); Job's stench forces others to keep half a stadium away from him (Test Job 31:2); Job fatalistically accepts the sore, as he rejects the medical treatment offered by one of his friends (Test Job 38:8); Job also accepts the worms to the point of putting them back into his body when they crawled out (Test Job 20:9).

Regarding the comparison of the content of these two texts, that of the *Testament of Job* and that of the LXX, we can begin by noticing that there are two elements that appear in both texts, which are the following: (1) the hyperbole: 'from head to toe' [Greek: *podōn heōs kephalēs*], which is a figure of speech very common in both biblical Hebrew and Greek (Ricoeur, 2006); and (2) the term from physiological vocabulary 'pus' [Greek: *ichōr*], which appears in the plural in the *Testament of Job* [Greek: *ichōres*], but in the singular in the Book of *Job*.

The narrative of Job leaving the city and sitting on the dung heap is represented in both books, but while in the *Testament of Job* the description is made in the first person, as Job is the implied narrator [“I left the city and sat on the dung heap”; Greek: *exēlthon tēn pólēn, kai kathstheis epí tēs koprías*], in the book of *Job* the narrative is made in the third person [“and he sat on the dung heap outside the city”; Greek: *kai ekáthēto epì tēs koprías éxō tēs poleōs*].

In the Hebrew text, there is an irony in the act of “sitting [Heb. *yōshēv*] in the dust” (as we will see written in the Hebrew Bible), as this posture refers to a position of authority in Jewish culture; however, Job sits in the dust as a sign of humiliation. Both the LXX and the *Testament of Job* seem to completely ignore this irony due to the cultural shift in interpreting the text.

Regarding the verb “to strike” that appears in both translations into Portuguese, the *Testament of Job* uses the verb *patássō*, while the version of Job in the LXX uses *paiō*, but both have the same meaning. Since the sound of *patassō* is likely onomatopoeic (Rusconi, 2005), it may be more emphatic; however, it is difficult to identify further differences in meaning between these two words.

In the *Testament of Job*, Satan strikes Job with a “severe plague.” The Greek word here is *plēgē*, which means blow, wound, or plague, and it is also used metaphorically to refer to calamity (Rusconi, 2005). In the biblical book of *Job*, a more specific word, *hēlkos*, appears, which means ulcer or sore (Rusconi, 2005). The latter is a more precise term to denote the injury intended, which is an open wound or ulcer. Let us remember that the Greek word *plēgē* is often translated into Portuguese as “plague.” This means that while Job’s illness is clearly described in the LXX as an “ulcer,” from which Job scrapes the pus with a shard of pottery, in the *Testament of Job*, the word used for its description makes it more abstract because it is mentioned with a word that does not define it objectively.

On one hand, what is present in the text of the LXX and absent in the *Testament of Job* is only the mention of Job taking a shard [Greek: *óstrakon*] to scrape [...], as the mention of the devil having left the presence of the Lord and struck Job is not explicit in the cited excerpt from the *Testament of Job* but is clearly mentioned in its context (Test Job 20:2-3). In the LXX, the word *diábolos* appears, which is the translation of the

Hebrew word *satan*. In ordinary Hebrew vocabulary, *satan* means “accuser,” which is the same meaning as the Greek word *diábolos*. In the cited excerpt of the *Testament of Job*, there is no mention of Satan, but it is interesting that in this book, instead of translating the Hebrew word meaning “accuser,” the Hebrew term is retained, only transforming it into a vernacular word for the Greek language, thus resulting in the term “Satan.”

On the other hand, several elements present in the excerpt from the *Testament of Job* are not part of the version of the Book of Job in the LXX. Starting with “In great trouble and distress” [Greek: *megálēi taráchēi kai adēmonía*] that overwhelms Job; adding the description from Job that his “body was being eaten by worms,”³¹ which is expressed by a rare compound verb [Greek: *skōlēkóbrōton*]³²; also emphasized is the quantity of pus accompanied by bodily fluids [Greek: *hygraías kai ichōres*], which, due to their flow, wet the ground [Greek: *synébrechon tēs gēs*]; furthermore, the presence of “many worms” [Greek: *skōlēkes polloi*]; and finally, a curious anecdote about the worms trying to leave Job’s body and being placed back into the spot from where they emerged, until the one who put them there, the Lord, commanded their departure.

In the context of the Greco-Roman Ancient World, there was no medical diagnosis for leprosy, but the term “leprosy” [Greek: *lépra*], which is the translation of the Hebrew *tsaraat*,³³ was frequently used to refer to a variety of skin diseases designated by that name. Despite this, the word does not appear even once in either the canonical book of Job or the *Testament of Job*.

It seems that in the reading of the LXX, a bit of the dramatic and realistic aspect provided by the narrative of the Hebrew Bible is lost, namely, the sense of sadness one feels upon learning the story of a man who leaves his life in the midst of society to retreat into isolation because of the repugnant disease that has afflicted him. According to the narrative of the Hebrew Bible, when struck by the sore, Job “sat in the midst of the ashes” [hebr. *bitokh-há’pér*] and not in the “dung heap” [greg. *kopria*], as it appears in the LXX and the *Testament of Job*.

³¹ In Spittler’s (2016) translation, it appears as “worm-ridden in body,” but here we choose the literal sense of the Greek “eaten by worms.”

³² The verb is formed by the combination of two words: the noun *skōlēx* [worm] and the verb *brōtēō* [to eat].

³³ Hebrew language dictionaries emphasize that the best translation for this word is “dermatosis” (Schökel, 1997; Kirst *et al.*, 2004), but the LXX translated this term as “leprosy.”

The “ashes” appear frequently in the Hebrew Bible, and although here in the book of Job the term refers to *mazbala*, as we will see below, generally ashes evoke humiliation, repentance, and mourning. In Job 42:6, the same word, *ha’pér*, appears in Hebrew, but in this passage, the LXX translates this term as *gēn*, which means “earth,” and in this case, more specifically, “dust of the earth.”

The translations into Portuguese that are based on the Hebrew do not differ significantly on this point, as we can see in the *João Ferreira de Almeida Revista e Atualizada* [João Ferreira de Almeida Revised and Updated Version] (1999), the *Bíblia de Jerusalém* [Jerusalem Bible] (2002), and the *Tradução Ecumênica da Bíblia* [Ecumenical Translation of the Bible] (1996). These three translations rendered *há’pér* as “cinzas” (ashes). Meanwhile, Frederico Lourenço, who is the only one to translate Job into Portuguese from the LXX, did not choose the dysphemism “dung heap” like we did, but instead opted for mount of dung (2018, p. 89), which also corresponds to the Greek word *kopria*.

As we pointed out above, the LXX’s choice to translate *há’pér* as *kopria* in (Job 2:8) is not repeated in the second appearance of the term (Job 42:6), where it is translated as *gēn*. The choice of different translations for the same term is not random; it implies that in the first appearance, *há’pér* alludes to something, while in its second appearance, it does not. Thus, we can see that there is a significant discrepancy between “ashes” in Hebrew and mount of dung or “dung heap” in the LXX, but this difference is justified by the filling of gaps that occurs in the translation from Hebrew.

Even without mentioning the word “leprosy” and without referring to the term *mazbala*, which denotes the place “where the sick, clearly marked by curse, await death among the deranged and dogs, jackals, insects, and vultures” (Terrin, 1994, p. 71), the Hebrew text seems to presuppose them or, at the very least, leads its readers and listeners to fill in these gaps with contextual information that was shared in the imagination of the time.

Thus, what is implicit in the lacunar and elliptical language of the Hebrew Bible—“the ashes,” which allude to the unpleasant environment of the leprosarium—when translated into Greek by the LXX, is transformed into “dung heap,” which is a grotesque representation developed from popular culture used to imaginatively reconstruct a real

environment. The allusive mountain of ashes becomes a literal mountain of dung where Job sits.

To understand some significance in the inclusion of the dung heap in place of the mountain of ashes, we can read the following excerpt from Bakhtin:

The images of excrement and urine are ambivalent, like all images of the “low” material and bodily: they simultaneously degrade and signify death on one hand, and on the other, they give birth and renew; they are both sacred and humiliating, with death and birth, labor and agony inextricably intertwined. At the same time, these images are closely linked to laughter. Death and birth in the images of urine and excrement are presented in their humorous and comedic aspect (1984, p. 130).³⁴

Not only in the cited excerpt but also in many other moments, Bakhtin (1984)³⁵ explains the connection between excrement and popular culture throughout his book. In this case, the grave image from the Hebrew Bible is transformed in the LXX and the *Testament of Job*, where the term “dung heap” appears, into an ambiguous image that stems from popular culture and is typically carnivalesque in Bakhtin’s terms (1984).³⁶

As for the other image, which is exclusive to the *Testament of Job*, we can consider the following: a body eaten by worms in the tradition of ancient Judaism is a terrible punishment (Isaiah 66:24, Sirach 7:17, Judith 16:17, 1 Maccabees 9:9), but it is only so because it is a concrete representation of punishment in *Sheol*, in the materialist religion of ancient Israel, the undesirable and inevitable state of the afterlife is *Sheol*, a word that can be translated as “grave.” It is precisely in this physical place, in the grave, that the worms consume human flesh—a concrete description of reality.

In later periods, the realistic image of the worm eating the flesh of the corpse in the grave becomes one of the punishments of hell, and then the worm begins to devour the human being in a state of consciousness, as seen in the Apocalypse of Paul (*Visio Pauli*),³⁷ noted by Russell Spittler (2016) in his commentary on the *Testament of Job*. This

³⁴ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁵ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁶ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁷ Text from the 4th century A.D.

medieval concept is mentioned by Bakhtin in *Rabelais and His World* (1984)³⁸ as one that carries within it the carnivalized hell of the medieval period.

However, Spittler (2016) also notices that there is something humorous in the text regarding the mention of the worms being placed back by Job to where they came from, but he is not the only scholar who has noticed the humor in this apocryphal book.³⁹ If there is something humorous in the *Testament of Job*, it does not mean that the discussed passage can be described as constituting a banal comedy, as it is an ambiguous element being an authentic representation of grotesque realism.

The grotesque is described by Bakhtin in the following way:

They are ambivalent and contradictory images that seem disfigured, monstrous, and horrifying when considered from the perspective of “classical” aesthetics, that is, the aesthetics of established and complete everyday life. The new historical perception that transcends it gives it a different meaning, while still retaining its traditional content and matter: copulation, pregnancy, childbirth, bodily growth, old age, disintegration, and bodily fragmentation, etc., with all their immediate materiality, remain the fundamental elements of the system of grotesque images. These are images that oppose the classical images of the finished, perfect, and fully matured human body, purified of the dross of birth and development (1984, p. 22; italics in the original).⁴⁰

The image of Job being eaten by worms, which even attempt to leave his battered body, once again corresponds to an image of the aesthetics of the grotesque because it opposes the official aesthetics. It depicts a body filled with fissures, in contact with excrement and the earth, soaked in bodily fluids, but it is not an unilaterally unhappy image, as both the worms and the dung heap make it ambiguous and carnivalesque.

The fluids and pus that flow from Job’s body and wet the ground also contribute to the representation of the grotesque. While the Greek word *ichōr* in Homer’s works referred to “nectar,” the sacred drink consumed by the gods on Olympus during their banquets, as Lourenço (2018) explains when commenting on the text of Job in the LXX, here, in this text written during the Hellenistic period, the word refers to the repugnant

³⁸ For reference, see footnote 1.

³⁹ Several authors who have studied the content of the Testament of Job use terms such as “humorous” and “entertaining” to characterize it. Cf. Wisse (2003, p. 35), Law (2003, p. 6618), Klancher (2010).

⁴⁰ For reference, see footnote 1.

purulent secretion that, along with other fluids dripping from a disgusting body, connects it to the ground with its flowing element.

Job's suffering is no longer expressed in a realistic framework, as it was fully in the text of the Hebrew Bible, nor is it the imaginative representation of the LXX, which depicts him with an ulcer covering him from head to toe while sitting in a dung heap with a shard in hand to scrape off the pus. Instead, the Testament of Job presents the image of a body wounded from head to toe by a plague, completely covered in worms and connected to the ground by its fluids. Once again, there is an image similar to that of carnivalized hell.

In the *Testament of Job*, therefore, nothing remains of the one-sided seriousness of the Hebrew Bible, and even the gaps in the version of the Book of *Job* that persisted in the LXX, despite acquiring typical popular elements of the Hellenistic period, have become densely carnivalized by the manifestation of grotesque realism, which provides the ambiguity of a pulsating body through agitation, open to the world by bites and the movement of worms, and connected to the earth by the fluid and pus mixture.

As is characteristic of images in Jewish apocalyptic literature, the *Testament of Job* is not concerned with constructing a plausible reality of the real world; rather, it is more important to convey the symbolism of the advance of the infernal punishments experienced by Job in their full intensity, which results in his dissolution into an image of grotesque realism.

Both apocalyptic literature and grotesque realism diminish the images found in the canonical book, whether in the Semitic language of the Hebrew Bible or in the Greek of the LXX. The elevated wisdom that is encapsulated in aporia is transformed into grotesque images of a body in contact with feces and full of openings through which worms circulate. This serves as a representation of hell, as in the Hellenistic period, where the imagery of apocalyptic literature predominates over Jewish literature, the realistic human sufferings, like those reported in the Hebrew Bible, are no longer sufficient to describe the terrors posed by the evil that exists autonomously.

Final Considerations

We presented the *Testament of Job* in relation to the religious phenomenon that led to its emergence, Jewish apocalypticism, which arose in the cultural environment of Hellenism during the most tumultuous phase of the history of the Jewish people in antiquity, particularly the period before and after the destruction of the Temple of Jerusalem.

The cultural renewal that occurred in Jewish thought during the Hellenistic period led to the reinterpretation of all the ancient scriptures that the Jews regarded as sacred. Thus, the collection of books known as the Hebrew Bible was reinterpreted through emerging exegetical techniques and its translation into the Greek language, resulting in the production of many apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works.

We do not overlook the fact that Jewish apocalypticism was fundamental in shaping the worldview of elements such as dualism and the demonic, which provided images present in the *Testament of Job* and in several other apocryphal and pseudepigraphal works.

In parallel with the emergence of apocalypticism during the Hellenistic period, there was also a degradation of literature regarded as canonical, which Bakhtin attributes to the development of elements shaped by popular culture. In this regard, the concepts of grotesque realism and grotesque body stand out as paradigmatic in the *Testament of Job*.

Based on this context, we dedicated ourselves to presenting the *Testament of Job*, which is a rewriting of the canonical book of *Job* and is therefore dialogically related to both its Hebrew version and its Greek version. The analysis of its content considered the relationship between these works in light of the phenomena of apocalypticism and Bakhtinian popular culture.

We believe that the information we provided about the concept of apocryphicity and the Jewish exegesis that led to the emergence of pseudepigraphal and apocryphal literature was not unfounded. This is because, due to ignorance regarding these developments, a certain prejudice still lingers over biblical literature that has not been canonized, even in scholarly theological studies.

Even without intending to engage in the specific discussion about the meaning and applicability of the Jewish exegetical procedure called *midrash* and its resource known as *‘agadah*, we affirm that the *Testament of Job* is a rewriting of the canonical book of *Job* based on the procedure of expanding its content.

Finally, we point out how the concrete description found in a biblical passage from the book of *Job*—especially in the Hebrew Bible but also in the LXX—developed into an imaginative scene in the *Testament of Job*, characterized by the aesthetics of grotesque realism, according to Bakhtin’s concept, but also influenced by the phenomenon of apocalypticism and its view of hell.

The *Testament of Job*, as marginalized literature rejected by official canons, is a valuable work for appreciating Bakhtinian perspectives in many respects. Thus, we highlight its relation to the aesthetics of grotesque realism and its importance for the history of literature (historical poetics).

As we have seen, the literary form of this book is another of its relevant aspects, as its dialogical relationship with the canonical books of *Job* (both from the Hebrew Bible and the LXX) allows us to trace the development of new literary forms from the Hellenistic period influenced by popular culture.

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Research Data and Other Materials Availability

The contents underlying the research text are included in the manuscript.

Reviews

Due to the commitment assumed by *Bakhtiniana*. Revista de Estudos do Discurso [Bakhtiniana. Journal of Discourse Studies] to Open Science, the journal only publishes reviews that have been authorized by all involved.

Review I

This manuscript presents clear language and demonstrates a strong technical grasp of biblical-exegetical tools. Initially, the article proposes a dialogic relationship between texts with distinct statuses (one canonical and the other pseudepigraphical). The work addresses the proposed theme but faces some developmental issues: lack of explanations about the Septuagint; insufficient presentation of the concept of the grotesque; and some unfulfilled promises. For example, the paper promises an explanation of the apocalyptic genre and an elucidation of its influence on the Testament of Job. However, while the genre is explained, the promised influence was not thoroughly addressed, at least not as expected. Additional observations point to areas for improvement in the text, but none of these issues justify non-approval. The text is original, and its proposal to establish a dialogic relationship between canonical and pseudepigraphical texts is highly commendable and promising.

Additional Observations:

1 - The title and subtitle are repetitive. I suggest removing one and creating a new subtitle. For example:

A. Manifestations of the Grotesque Aesthetic in the “*Testament of Job*”: Pseudepigraphy and Canonicity in a Dialogic Relation

Or simply: B. Manifestations of the Grotesque Aesthetic in the Testament of Job.

2 - The authors’ names require revision. For example, Ricoeur’s name is inconsistently spelled.

3 - Titles, such as the work by Northrop Frye, have good Portuguese translations, but a Spanish translation was used instead.

4 - Although the article situates the reader well in the context of apocalyptic literature—important for understanding the Testament of Job’s reinterpretation—there is no introduction to the type of literature constituting canonical Job, i.e., wisdom literature.

5 - The connection between wisdom literature and apocalyptic literature is undeniably one of this article’s central contributions. Its absence may prevent lay readers from appreciating the intriguing developments presented in the essay.

6 - The section linking the canonical and pseudepigraphical texts focused heavily on the Testament of Job. The issue of the Book of Job being written in Hebrew and reinterpreted through the Septuagint was largely marginalized.

7 - A note on the Septuagint and its versions (the same applies to the Stuttgartensia) was missing. The LXX as we know it is, in fact, an edition. The reasons why the LXX is

significant to analyzing the Testament of Job's reinterpretation should have been highlighted.

8 - In the section on Job's grotesque, there is practically no introduction to Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque. The reader is thrust into the discussion of grotesque in the Testament of Job. Only at the end is Bakhtin's text on the grotesque referenced and, in a way, justified. A presentation of Bakhtin's Rabelais and His World to contextualize the reader was missing.

9 - In the final considerations, the paragraphs are disproportionate, giving the impression of a lack of cohesion at the conclusion. REQUIRED CORRECTIONS [Revised]

Jonas Moreira Madureira – Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie – UPM, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7050-3373>; 1157048@mackenzie.br

Reviewed on June 12, 2024.

Review II

The article contributes relevant content to academia. However, adjustments in formatting are necessary, impacting the content as well. The suggestion is approval with restrictions, addressing the following aspects: combining topics 1 and 2 and adapting them; creating a section to deepen Bakhtin's concepts explored in the article; and submitting the article for textual review. Attached are two files: 1) a text formulated by this reviewer; 2) the file text with comments in bubbles. APPROVED WITH RESTRICTIONS [Revised]

Thiago Santos Pinheiro Souza – Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais – UFMG, Belo Horizonte, Minas Gerais, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-5198-1521>; thiagosoueu@gmail.com

Reviewed on August 20, 2024.

Review III

After corrections and improvements, the article is excellent. I reviewed my notes from the previous manuscript and noted the author's careful and rigorous revisions. The article is much improved. Congratulations to the author for the excellent work, which will undoubtedly be a pleasure to recommend to my students. I also commend the editor for their coordination.

Jonas Moreira Madureira – Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie – UPM, São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil; <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-7050-3373>; 1157048@mackenzie.br

Reviewed on September 12, 2024.

Review IV

The second version of the manuscript shows improvement over the first. The text appears cohesive, with any remaining differences between this reviewer and the author falling within stylistic or approach preferences, making them irrelevant to specify. The version

is thus suitable for inclusion in the journal, and I register my favorable opinion for publication without restrictions.

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Reviewed on September 11, 2024.

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