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IN THE CIRCLE OF THE TRAGIC:
THE BOOK OF JOB
A FRAGMENT OF A GREATER FRAGMENT

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

The following considerations are based on a certain specific form of the tragic. In its most subtle and clear form, it is visible in the ironic structure of the action of Sophocles' *Oedipus Rex*, but it also appears in many other tragedies. Its distinguishing feature is the unintentional autotelic nature of the progress of events. The actions of the tragic hero, caused by some form of axiological or pragmatic coercion, lead beyond the will of the protagonist to his own pre-ordained catastrophe, before the hero takes any action. Tadeusz Zieliński calls a drama constructed in such a way a "tragedy of destiny," believing, at the same time, that of all the different types of Greek tragedy this is one of the most tragic of all.¹ It is precisely such a model of tragedy and the metaphysical quality evoked by it that I consider to be the primary figure of tragedy. It is around this model that I group categories that I consider important for contemporary tragic awareness, i.e. the "pure tragedy of victims," prefigured in the motif of Iphigenia in *Agamemnon* by Aeschylus and the "transcendental tragic," which can be derived from the interpretation of the Bible. I use this model to interpret the interaction, constitutive for

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¹ Tadeusz ZIELIŃSKI, *Sofokles i jego twórczość tragiczna* (Kraków: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1928), 108f, 115f.

tragedy, which takes place between what I call existential misfortune and evil in the moral sense and the equally important problem of “tragic guilt.”²

In order to orientate the reader in the technical matters of my further argument, I have to explain that in the analysis of texts I will use auxiliary notation, the purpose of which is to reflect the basic displacement pattern that reflects both the sequence and development of event formulas contained in the plot of the text:

$$S(y \rightarrow x) \implies S \rightarrow y$$

The above diagram should be read as follows: “y acts against x under coercion or pressure S, S becomes the cause of misfortune y.” By “S” I mean, say, a “force majeure,” “necessity,” which establishes the modality of various forms of “coercion” or “pressure.” This diagram shows the necessary displacement of the individual from the position of the acting subject in the tragic model I analyze: $y \rightarrow$ to the position of the experiencing subject: $\rightarrow y$. The displacing factor is the tension between the element of “coercion” (S) and the morally motivated ($y \rightarrow x$) pattern of action, which causes this action to take place in the conditions of conflict, for example, between the coercion of acting against x and the obligation to do no harm to x; one element of the conflict may be covert at the moment of taking action. Displacement is also enhanced by two additional transformation formulas: the identity formula ($x=y$) and autotelic formulas ($x \rightarrow x$), ($y \rightarrow y$).

This simple pattern will allow us to record a constitutive sequence of events, consisting of the event formula of a given drama or myth. It will thus help us to compare and follow the fundamental transformations leading to the ultimate misfortune. At the same time, I distinguish between existentialized misfortune: $S \rightarrow y$, which is a result of transformations of the pattern of action: $S(y \rightarrow x)$ (e.g. the duty to the Greeks becomes the cause of Agamemnon’s misfortune) and the misfortune originally existential: $S \rightarrow x$, which does not have such a derivation (e.g. looting and diseases become the cause of Job’s misfortune).

The moral aspect of action ($y \rightarrow x$) is first problematized by including it in the modality of coercion (S) and then existentialized in the form of an ultimate formula, which seems to be nothing more than a kind of variation of

² I address the subject at length in: *Od strony wartości. Studia z pogranicza teorii literatury i estetyki* (Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 2007), 127–164.

the formula of existential misfortune. It should be stressed, however, that the ultimate misfortune in a tragedy is the result of transformations carried out on morally motivated patterns of action. Thus, the $S \rightarrow y$ diagram is identical with the $S \rightarrow x$ diagram only in an analogous way. The former is based on morally intentional interpersonal relations, the latter in its pure form is a pattern of unintentional misfortune; in other words, the former is always derived from morally motivated actions, symbolized by tragic guilt; the latter means the original and guilt-free pattern of "being a victim of the element."

But it is precisely against the background of this distinction that the important tendency of the Greek tragedy becomes apparent. It strives to make the derivative scheme of misfortune ($S \rightarrow y$) as similar as possible to the original scheme ($S \rightarrow x$). The identity formula ($x=y$) and the "autotelic" formula, e.g. of sacrifice ($x \rightarrow x$, $y \rightarrow y$) are particularly helpful in this respect. It seems that this tendency, aiming at the maximum deprivation of the tragic catastrophe of moral character, should be considered as extremely important for the Greek structure of tragedy. Undoubtedly, the best, exemplary and at the same time very complicated example of the use of identity and autotelic formulas for this purpose, is Sophocles' drama which transforms the myth about King Oedipus. A tragedy based on the conflict of principles, such as *Antigone*, presents itself in a different way, but here too, the scheme of displacement forms the basis of the drama's event system.

Unlike the Greek tragic figure, in which the main tendency is the existentialization of the moral factor, which consists in weakening the moral determinants of the human act by including them in the system of various forms of coercion and necessity, in the Old Testament tradition we see the opposite procedure, which consists of including the existential misfortune into the moral action pattern; in other words, seeing the misfortune as the moral fault of man, as friends of the "just man" do.³ Job's drama, which is both a drama of existence and a drama of faith, reveals a dimension that is in essence poorly represented in Greek tragedy, namely the transcendental dimension of the tragic, encompassing both the relationship between man and God and God himself. The identity tensions between the image of God,

³ It is necessary to point to the underlying difference between culpability (*hamartia*) and catastrophe and suffering (*pathos*), which is clearly visible in the figure of the Greek tragic. Girard (*The Scapegoat*. Translated by Yvonne Freccero. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins UP, 1989) sees here, both in Greek tragedy (Oedipus) and in *The Book of Job*, the structuring work of the "scapegoat" pattern.

whom Job accuses of cruelty, and the image of the “advocate on high” invoked by Job, which would stand on the side of his misfortune, testifying to the blameless nature of the divine experience, opens up the possibility of transformations integrating these divergent images in terms of transcendental tragic—based on a displacement similar to the Greek figure. Such a figure is not yet realized by *The Book of Job*, which only mentions it, while the possibility of its full interpretative development can be found in *The Book of Isaiah*, in which the identity tensions associated with the Suffering Servant are incomparably stronger. These matters will be analyzed further.

Undoubtedly, both the ancient texts about the sacrifice of Iphigenia, as well as *The Book of Job* or *The Book of Isaiah*, seem to be of fundamental prefiguration significance for the process of contemporary transformations of the idea of the tragic, taking place under the great influence of 20th-century historical catastrophes, wars, persecution, and extermination of entire nations. All of them, often referred to as great historical tragedies of whole groups of people or nations, have the common feature that in their fundamental structure they are the tragedies of the victims and not of the protagonists. With the same intention of extracting important prefiguration elements, I am undertaking the following analysis of *The Book of Job* and partly also of *The Book of Isaiah*.

JOB

I believe I do not need to justify the importance of *The Book of Job* for considerations of the tragic, especially in the wake of texts by Ricoeur or Girard, although the very tragic character of the protagonist of the Book is invariably a matter of interpretation in the light of the religious message of the text.⁴ However, the assumptions of this analysis should be clarified,

⁴ Of special importance for this reasoning is P. Ricoeur’s interpretation (*The Symbolism of Evil* (New York: Harper & Row, 1969)); in some measure also R. Girard’s interpretation (“The Ancient Trail Trodden by the Wicked”, in: *Job. The Victim of His People*, transl. Yvonne Freccero (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1987), 14–20). Interestingly, M. Scheler in his “On the Tragic” (transl. Bernard Stambler, *Cross Currents* 4 (1954): 178–191) does not refer to this text, even if he does reference the Bible. His concept of tragic guilt is that of a “necessary guiltless guilt” (p. 42), developed in the context of “moral Prometheuses” (p. 37) no doubt covers, if not without reservations, the case of Job. Similarly, Jaspers and Adamczewski, not to speak about classical philologists with Nietzsche at the frontline, do not refer to this text. In Polish recent literature addressing the theoretical questions of the tragic, J.L. Krakowiak approaches *The Book of*

especially when it comes to the very concept of transcendental tragic, all the more so as there are two variations of it. Let's mention them at the beginning. Speaking of transcendental tragic, we have in mind, first of all, the history of Job himself and the role played in it by the relationship between Job and God, underpinned by complaint. In other words, we ask about the formula of the tragic misfortune of the protagonist of the Book and, at the same time, about the place that the image of God occupies in this formula. Still, *The Book of Job*, secondly, offers another possible interpretation. Namely, it contains motives that open the possibility of transforming the image of God Himself. These motives are constituted in the dramatic consciousness of Job, torn between the image of God whom he accuses of cruelty, and the image of God whom he calls his only vindicator. Their transformational importance consists in opening up the possibility of moving the position of the motif of God in the tragic mythos schema, and as a result in the constitution of such an image of God that takes the side of human misfortune, at first as a witness and guarantor of the lack of transgression that would justify Job's misfortune, and in further transformations, which we already find in other biblical texts and their interpretations, as well as in contemporary texts; he identifies himself in a special way with this misfortune by being affected by it. And this is what I have in mind when I speak of the second variation of the concept of the transcendental tragic. At the same time, the very concept of the tragic here assumes a specific character and direction of fission, displacement and integration of the image of God. In other words, in the analysis that I carry out below, it serves as an interpretative assumption. It is clear that the accuracy of this assumption can only be confirmed by the accuracy of the analysis itself and its results.

The basic statement that we have to register at the outset is that Job's misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$) has no "history"; it takes place unexpectedly and suddenly. First, it takes the form of the news brought by messengers about the looting of the Sabeans and Chaldeans, about a devastating fire that destroys Job's property, about the death of his children, buried in a collapsed house; then, as if this were not enough, Job's "bones and body" is affected by a terrible disease—leprosy. None of this series of misfortunes is the result of

Job by pointing to an analogy between theological theism (*The Book of Job*) and political violence (Stalinism) (J.L. KRAKOWIAK, *Tragizm ludzkiej egzystencji jako problem filozoficzny* (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2005), 226–234.). In Literary Studies we can point to the collected edition of texts: *Hiob biblijny. Hiob obecny w kulturze*, ed. Piotr Mitzner, Anna Szczepan-Wojnarska (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2010).

actions that Job himself is the cause of; they occur to him unexpectedly and can in no way be explained. Of course, for now I have omitted the motif of the “wager,” which because it belongs to a completely different level of action, does not change anything in the description of the phenomenological side of the events that took place in Job’s life. According to the terminology that I use in this work, one can say that the formula of Job’s misfortune takes the form of the original existential misfortune $S \rightarrow x$, rather than an existence-related misfortune $S \rightarrow y$, which is always the result of transformations of $S(y \rightarrow x)$ patterns of action, i.e. such schemes in which the misfortune of individuals originates in their own action, which on the one hand is subjected to various forms of coercion (S), and on the other hand, causing the suffering of some person x, places the blame on this action. Job’s complaint is the development of the initial formula of the original existential misfortune. It is the source of what we call Job’s drama and what is expressed in his dialogues with friends and in God’s response. The existential misfortune can become the basis of a transcendental complaint if God becomes its horizontal addressee. In other words, the misfortune which is not due to one’s violent action aimed at harming the subject with respect to whom it is taken and is not the guilt of the subject afflicted with misfortune—such misfortune, which we call here initially existential, may be interpreted as a result of intentional agency only when this agency is ascribed to a transcendental source. In the case of Job, only God can be this source. The pattern of existential misfortune in Job’s complaint must, then, be supplemented with a variable representing God, which we will designate by the letter “a.” The formula provided below reflects the principal theme of Job’s drama, i.e. the presumption of God’s participation in his misery:

(1) $S \rightarrow x \implies \text{complaint: } a(S \rightarrow x)?$

[Job (x) is subject to existential misfortune $S \rightarrow x$, he shows his misery to other people and God as one he is not guilty of, and asks “why?,” suspecting divine injustice]

This formula is the starting point of the description of Job’s situation. But at the same time, it is an extremely unstable and fragile starting point. Why? Doesn’t the accumulation of misfortunes hitting Job in one moment bring to mind a catastrophe known from the Greek drama? However, if the catastrophe in tragedy crowns and concludes the plot, in which it has its both com-

positional and logical causal source, then the catastrophe of Job crowns and concludes nothing, but also opens up nothing, has neither past nor future. But this is what makes it unclear to Job himself and to the reader of the Book. When the hero of the most dramatic tragedy of destiny, Oedipus, casts a curse on Laius' assassin, not knowing that he is convicting himself, it is the viewer, who follows the action of the tragedy, who knows well who the curse will reach. This knowledge concerns not only the knowledge of the myth that is the source of the tragedy; it concerns much more. A catastrophe is connected with guilt and an action which produces guilt. Greek tragedians problematized the nature of guilt so subtly and so deeply that it became unclear and paradoxical, and even "undeserved," but they did not question the connection itself. The catastrophe makes one expect a preceding guilt and thus an action that will lead to the catastrophe. A Greek tragedy without this connection is unthinkable. The reader of *The Book of Job* finds himself in a strange situation. He is introduced into a dramatic event, which is yet completely devoid of dramatic construction, sees a scene that could actually conclude the drama, but knows nothing about the drama itself. What is more, he hears how Job defends himself vehemently when his friends are trying hard to ascribe a drama to his misfortune. Do they not represent the same wisdom that gave rise to the tragedy? Don't they represent the spectator of a tragedy expecting a history of error which cannot be prevented, an entanglement in a trap of the world, which is impossible to penetrate, looking for pride in the life of the hero, pride which tragically changes his fate? Don't they finally represent a virtual reader of the Book who, regardless of time and with the use of categories appropriate to his time, makes his own statement in this dialogue which has no beginning or end?⁵

The initial existential misfortune is not revealed as an experience of darkness, which permeated Job's entire existence. He first remains silent for seven days, and when he does speak up, he will speak solely about night and darkness (Jb 3). It is only the attempt to lighten up the darkness, conducted by the well-meaning wise men that will make the "final catastrophe" the starting point for Job's new anguish: the anguish of the guilt of which he will be accused. Although he will defend himself persistently against adding a "history" of guilt to his misfortune, once introduced, the context of guilt

⁵ On the historical fragmentariness of interpretations of Job in Polish literature see Bernadetta KUCZERA-CHACHULSKA, "Niejednoznaczność Hioba. Między teologią a literackością," in: *Hiob biblijny. Hiob obecny w kulturze*, 17–26 ("The history of literary Jobs can be seen as an attempt at a grand, historical hermeneutics of the Bible", p. 21).

will determine the thematic field of his complaint with its poles and fundamental conflict. For if Job is innocent, whose side is at fault?

In addition to Job's position, we must take into account two other positions: the position of friends and the point of view of the Book itself, which is reflected in the structure of the plot. Only a joint analysis of all the three points of view and the related transformations will allow us to answer the question about the tragic formula contained in this work.

The first step of Job's drama, developing in a complaint, will be the attempt to add to Job's misfortune the scheme of "acting against God":

$$(2) S \rightarrow x \implies (x \rightarrow a \implies S \rightarrow x)$$

[Since Job was afflicted by misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$), he must have transgressed against God ($x \rightarrow a \implies S \rightarrow x$)]

This is the position of Job's friends, who try to talk him into recognizing a transgression against God as the source of his guilt ($x \rightarrow a$). As we know, Job rejects this pattern of "just retribution," and God ultimately proves him right, even if the entire matter is resolved only in the epilogue. This pattern is ideally balanced by the transformation that shifts the position of the victim to the position of the perpetrator (the direction of the transformation is reflected in this case by a reversed arrow): $(x \rightarrow a) \Leftarrow S \rightarrow x$, but at the same time ideally "moralized" on the human side: God's potential guilt, which I record by preceding the parenthesis with a symbol of "divine agency": $a(S \rightarrow x)$, is balanced by man's guilt, unjustified by nothing ($x \rightarrow a$). In a pattern which takes into account a sequence of event formulas, God's guilt must take the form of divine justice ("retribution"), Job's misfortune becomes burdened with guilt. One may say that the following formula is a record of the principle of "divine retribution": $(x \rightarrow a) \implies a(S \rightarrow x)$. Unlike the figure of Greek tragedy, in which the main tendency is the existentialization of the moral factor, which consists of weakening the moral determinants of the human act by including them in a system of various forms of coercion and necessity, here we see a procedure directed in a reverse standpoint, which consists in including the existential misfortune into a moral action scheme, in other words, in treating the misfortune as a person's moral guilt.⁶

⁶ It is necessary to point to the underlying difference between culpability (*hamartia*) and catastrophe and suffering (*pathos*), which is clearly visible in the figure of Greek tragic.

When defending his innocence, rejecting the accusations of “burdensome comforters,” Job formulates the main motive of the transcendental complaint: divine violence. I don’t think it can be understood as an argument for Job’s innocence, but rather as a description of the misfortune suffered, made in terms of faith in the justice of God’s action, which is not confirmed by experience. However, it is the innocence of Job that makes this description the hallmark of a position radically opposed to the “theology of retribution,” which justifies divine violence by blaming the misfortune experienced by a person on this person:

11) God has given me over to the impious; into the hands of the wicked he has cast me. 12) I was in peace, but he dislodged me, seized me by the neck, dashed me to pieces. He has set me up for a target; 13) his arrows strike me from all directions. He pierces my sides without mercy, pours out my gall upon the ground. 14) He pierces me, thrust upon thrust, rushes at me like a warrior (Jb 16:11–14)

1) I will give myself up to complaint; I will speak from the bitterness of my soul. 2) I will say to God: Do not put me in the wrong! Let me know why you oppose me. 3) Is it a pleasure for you to oppress, to spurn the work of your hands, and shine on the plan of the wicked? 4) Have you eyes of flesh? Do you see as mortals see? 5) Are your days like the days of a mortal, and are your years like a human lifetime, 6) That you seek for guilt in me and search after my sins, 7) Even though you know that I am not wicked, and that none can deliver me out of your hand? (Jb 10:1–7)

17) With a storm he might overwhelm me, and multiply my wounds for nothing; 18) He would not allow me to draw breath, but might fill me with bitter griefs. 19) If it be a question of strength, he is mighty; or of judgment, who will call him to account? 20) Though I were right, my own mouth might condemn me; were I innocent, it might put me in the wrong. 21) I am innocent, but I cannot know it; I despise my life. 22) It is all one! therefore I say: Both the innocent and the wicked he destroys. 23) When the scourge slays suddenly, he scoffs at the despair of the innocent. 24) The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges. If it is not he, who then is it? (Hi 9,17–24).⁷

The course of Job’s reasoning, contained in the above words, leaves no doubt: God acts against Job. He acts unjustly, since His action cannot be read in terms of just retribution (“It is all one! therefore I say: both the innocent and the wicked he destroys”—Jb 9:22). In order to understand Job’s words, it is necessary to take into account the state of mind in which the “righteous man” is in despair, to which he is brought to a conflict between

⁷ All quotations from *The New American Bible* or C. Miłosz’s translation (*Księga Hioba*, Lublin: Wydawnictwo KUL, 1981).

faith in a just God and facts which, from his point of view, contradict God's righteousness, and also the impossibility of proving his innocence not only to his friends. Accounting for the phenomenon of tragic guilt, Max Scheler points out: "He must necessarily appear 'guilty' even before the fairest judge, when he in fact is guiltless and is so seen by God alone."⁸ An illusory guilt is, according to the author, a necessary way of looking at the tragic hero. His guilt seems a fact and is taken as such, as there are no criteria which would help us understand the protagonist's deed other than in terms of negative moral value, entailing guilt and accusation. Innocence within the tragic can only be known to gods, who know more and know the future, or to God, the Lord of all creation. Job's situation is all the more complicated, insofar as he has the right to believe that God blames him, that is to say, to use Scheler's language, he is also subject to this necessary illusion of guilt ("necessary appearance"),⁹ or else things have taken a still more tragic turn since, if God knows the truth about Job's innocence and still afflicts him with misery, can He be a just God? This is the essence of Job's tragic awareness. He finds himself in a situation of complete loneliness in the midst of those who attribute to him the guilt to which he does not want to admit to himself, and which God himself seems to confirm in human eyes, afflicting him with misfortune. And it is precisely this point of view, the point of view of a completely lonely and cornered victim, which can only oppose its own innocence, in which no one believes, that leads Job to the essence of the tautological formula of divine violence, because "If it is not he, who then is it?":

(3) $(a \rightarrow x) \Rightarrow a(S \rightarrow x)$

[God experiences Job, Job falls into misery caused by God's action.]

It seems that a formula in which Job combines in a single image the ruthlessness of the element ("When a sudden flood kills, it mocks the suffering of the innocent;") with the presumption of cruel intentionality ("Pleasant to oppress me?") should be understood as an argument in an open question about the nature of God, motivated by personal experience, and not as a final judgement, which no longer qualifies for corrective action. The accusations, which intensify up to blasphemy, show rather the characteristics of a strategy

⁸ Max SCHELER, "On the Tragic," 42.

⁹ Ibidem.

aimed at forcing the addressee of the accusations to correct this judgment. On the one hand, the image of the personal God dissolves in the ruthlessness of an element in which there is no room for distinguishing “the righteous from the wicked,” and on the other—and here is the fundamental argument of Job that stems from faith in a personal and ethical God—in the image of earthly injustice which he himself experiences, sees his deliberate action (“The earth is given into the hands of the wicked; he covers the faces of its judges. If it is not he, who then is it?” 9:24). Everything indicates that God is acting against Job. Is this true?—the “righteous man” seems to be asking. After all, he does not renounce his faith. The violent accusations against God do not cross the boundaries of faith, even if Job has the right to believe that God Himself is outside that space of faith, among the “heavenly hosts” that surround His tent. Contemporary theological interpretation sees here a particular ambivalence of experience:

When we look again at chapter 9–10, we can only admire the phrases in Job’s arguments and complaints: on the one hand, the fanatical accusation of God and, on the other hand, the lack of firmness to really renounce Him, as if it were an appeal to God against God, an appeal from a God he knows to a God who cannot be found (9:11). Job’s desperate statements are tinged with faith and must never be considered in isolation from his faith. This atmosphere of ambivalence is characteristic of an author who can experience and express extremes such as despair and hope.¹⁰

The drama of doubt cannot be resolved by the theodicy of just retribution, proclaimed by friends, nor even by the final theophany.¹¹

We know that Job, in the face of the power of the divine vision, fell silent in humility without getting answers to the dramatic questions. He defended his innocence against the accusations of his friends and humbles himself before God as a just and innocent man, even though it was God that he had previously seen as a source of his abandonment. Why? There is no answer to this question in the Book, or it should be said, there is no simple answer. There is a fact of humility towards the divine vision and some implicit illumination of the whole, at the moment of seeing God:

¹⁰ “Księga Hioba,” transl. Roland E. Murphy, translated into Polish by Henryk Bednarek, in *Międzynarodowy komentarz do Pisma Świętego*, ed. William Reuben Farmer (Warszawa: Verbum, 2001), 664.

¹¹ See Rüdiger SAFRANSKI, *Zło. Dramat wolności*, transl. Ireneusz Kania (Warszawa, Czytelnik 1999), 263f.

By hearsay I had heard of you,
 but now my eye has seen you.
 Therefore I disown what I have said,
 and repent in dust and ashes.
 (Jb 42:5,6, *New American Bible*)

Dotąd Cię znałem ze słyszenia,
 obecnie ujrzałem Cię wzrokiem,
 stąd odwołuję, co powiedziałem,
 kajam się w prochu i w popiele.
 (Jb 42:5,6, *Biblia Tysiąclecia*)

Słyszeniem uszu słyszałem o Tobie, ale teraz
 moje oko Ciebie ujrzało.
 Dlatego żałuję i korzę się, tak jak tu jestem
 w prochu i popiele.
 (Jb 42:5,6, Miłosz)

This illumination is not one that offers comprehension but one that is the experience of the unfathomable (“too marvelous for me, which I did not know”—Jb 42:3; “Zbyt dziwne to rzeczy dla mnie których nie pojmuję”—transl. Miłosz). Without finding justification for his suffering, in his “I did not know” Job experiences the incomprehensibility of God Himself. In other words, Job’s incomprehensibility of suffering becomes a figure of divine incomprehensibility. And just as suffering embraces Job’s entire being and existence with darkness, similarly the figure of God’s incomprehensibility becomes in essence a figure of the darkness concealing God.

There is also a third point of view in the Book, apart from Job’s point of view and the point of view of friends. Let’s call it the point of view of the narrator of the whole story told in the Book. It is precisely this story or plot (conventionally didactic in function) that must be taken into account, because it is not only a frame in which Job’s drama is inscribed, but also a fundamental structural element of the drama itself. It reveals, though it does so in passing, the storyline of Job’s tragedy, creating the highest dramatic tension in comparison with the second scheme (of friends). Of course, we have in mind the motif of the “wager” from the prologue and the motif of salvation contained in the epilogue; they form a simple and closed didactic plot, based on the motif of a trial. God makes a wager with Satan, certain that Job, even in spite of the misfortunes that might crush him, will not deny him. After that, Job experiences misfortune but does not deny God. He is rewarded for this with a return to a state of happiness. This three-element composition, translated into our notation, takes the form of a formula without displacement:

(4) $S(a \rightarrow x) \Rightarrow S \rightarrow x$ + Deliverance

[God (a) consents to try Job (x) under the pressure of a wager with Satan (S), Job (x) experiences misery, Job is delivered since he has not rejected God.]

The above diagram in its first part reveals a disturbing imbalance between the acting God $S(a \rightarrow x)$ and Job, who is subject to this action ($S \rightarrow x$), the divine wager (S) which hits Job in the form of misfortunes. In the face of God's rejection of his friends' formula, which balances Job's misfortune with his guilt, this balance can only be restored by divine salvation, which confirms the lack of evil intentions in God's action. In other words, the balance between God's action and faith in God's righteousness depends on the miracle of God withdrawing the effects of Job's experience.

This scheme has two faces or two interpretations; let's call them didactic and tragic. Each of them articulates in a different way the meaning of such a plot structure. In the first interpretation, the didactic structure of the plot should be fully taken into account, i.e. the motives of the wager (S) and the deliverance. The first is the conventional motivation justifying Job's being tested by God (i.e. $a \rightarrow x$); the second is the inevitable consequence of the first: the successful passing of the test must result in a reward; in the case of Job, it is the restoration of a multiplied state of prosperity (deliverance).

Both the motifs form a functional unity. At the same time, however, they seem to be merely a narrative storyline frame in which the "drama" is inscribed in the form of Job's complaint, his dialogues with friends, and God's response. The narrative frame does not belong to this "dramatic" sequence. If we delineate the composition of the Book in such a way, taking into account the fact that neither Job, nor his friends, nor God from the "dramatic" part, know anything about the "wager," then there are only two basic motifs that constitute the dramatic situation of Job: 1. Job's unexpected testing by God ($a \rightarrow x$), a motif that concretizes differently at the level of friends' consciousness (as a retribution for Job's transgression), and differently at the level of Job's consciousness (as divine injustice), thus constituting the main axis of the work's conflict; 2. its correlation—physical and spiritual suffering due to experienced misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$), which, compositionally speaking, is the starting point of the whole story. The function of the didactic narrative frame seems to consist of a "righteous" reinterpretation or even a camouflage of the dramatic image of God acting against the

righteous, which emerges from Job's complaint. This function seems to be partly confirmed by the fact that the two parts were created independently of each other in their basic outlines and have been merged through edition.

The function of the narrative frame is slightly different, if we accept R. Murphy's interpretation of the role of the epilogue, assigned to the conscious intention of the author of the Book:

Besides, what could be an alternative? Leaving Job sitting on a stone and despairing? There had to be an end, a solution to the situation created at the very beginning by YHWH. It is by no means a case of opting for an interpretation that demands a "happy ending" for this book. The last few lines must not determine the meaning of the whole work. Rather, it can be argued that the author consciously chose a traditional and righteous story to undermine it and show how many simplifications it contains.¹²

It is not the narrative frame that is supposed to give the whole story rightful overtones, but on the contrary: the "dramatic" part is the undermining of the "rightful" story.

Following the reasoning of the author of the commentary, one can say that the narrative frame, and in particular the epilogue, represents a "righteous" interpretation of the image of God, in which the dramatic part that undermines this interpretation is inscribed. Regardless of the possibility or impossibility of determining the actual intention of the author of the Book as to whether this frame is to be a rightful and didactic correction of the "drama" or the object of an iconoclastic contestation of this rightfulness, it must be agreed that the interpretation it contains is—in the sense of a problematic composition, not an event—an intra-textual point of reference for the complication of the rightful image of God, which takes place in the "dramatic" part.

This complication takes place on two levels. First, in Job's own statements, which are constructed in such a way that the reader sees, as if from the side of Job experiencing the misfortune, the legitimacy and even the obviousness of his argumentation; second, in the open "dramatic" composition, in which neither friends nor God answer the question asked by Job: *Why?* Job "sitting on a stone" is in fact the culmination of the "drama," to "demonstrate how many simplifications" there are in the "righteous" epilogue, which restores the image of a just God in the composition of the plot, in a similar way as Euripides does in the tragedy about Iphigenia. But in this way we can say that this question mark, the fact that no question of the

¹² "Księga Hioba," transl. Roland E. Murphy, 672.

“drama” finds an answer in the “drama” itself, is the real end of the problematic composition of the Book. All begins with the problem of misfortune and ends with the unresolved problem of misfortune. Forcing God to answer, Job does not find in the words of the Lord an explanation of the doubts that afflict him: “too marvelous for me, which I did not know.” The initial darkness that embraces the existence of Job’s misfortune, therefore corresponds to the final darkness of his thoughts, which does not find light even in the One who “can do everything.” Job’s dramatic effort to explain the existential darkness and the role of God’s will in it ends in failure.

This dimension is taken into account in the tragic interpretation. It consists of omitting elements of the didactic narrative framework and treating as a whole the dialogue chapters contained between the prologue and the epilogue. Then we get a pattern of events, which is in fact an inverted scheme of “divine violence”:

$$(5) S \rightarrow x \implies (a \rightarrow x \implies S \rightarrow x)$$

[Job experiences misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$), Job ascribes his misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$) to being tried by God, for which he is not to blame ($a \rightarrow x$)]

In the event pattern of the dramatic part, one should include initial misfortune and two antithetical formulas accounting for this problem: the friends’ formula (2) and Job’s presumption of divine violence (5):

$$(6) S \rightarrow x \implies (x \rightarrow a \implies S \rightarrow x) \implies (a \rightarrow x \implies S \rightarrow x)$$

However, *The Book of Job* is not, unlike *Antigone* by Sophocles, a drama of equivalent reasons. In order to understand Job’s drama, the reader cannot fail to accept his internal point of view, in which the lack of guilt is an unshakeable assumption of the entire event situation and the problem that emerges from it. In the system constituting the message of the work limited to the “dramatic” part, the legitimacy of the friends’ formula is therefore questioned and denied from the very beginning, hence the great power of Job’s accusations against his friends and God, which the reader is somehow forced to share. What remains after the negation of the friends’ formula takes the form of a scheme (pattern 5) in which the presumption of a God not guided by the principle of just retribution becomes the only argument of misfortune and at the same time of the failure of a rational basis of faith:

$$(5) S \rightarrow x \implies (a \rightarrow x \implies S \rightarrow x).$$

On the other hand, if we take into account the fact that such an event scheme is inscribed in the narrative frame, understood as a “rightful” correction of the interpretation of the “dramatic” part, or—according to the opposite interpretation—as a point of reference for the decomposition of this “righteousness,” and thus we take into account the motive of God’s action at the starting point (wager) and the saving of Job at the starting point, we get back to the scheme of two wholes, one immersed in the other. Deliverance, as in Euripides’ tragedies, is not the result of a coherent development of the pattern of events, but enters as an unmotivated interruption of this sequence by “erasing” an essential element of the event, or even as shifting it back to the point which in the traditional poetics of the drama is called “pre-action” (in the case of Job, it is a withdrawal to the state from before God’s wager).

$$(7) S(a \rightarrow x) \implies (S \rightarrow x \implies a(S \rightarrow x)) \implies a(S \rightarrow x) + \text{Deliverance}$$

[God accepts the experience of Job within the framework of the bet with Satan $S(a \rightarrow x)$; Job falls into misfortune $(S \rightarrow x)$, Job attributes misfortune to his being unjustly tried by God $a(S \rightarrow x)$, God rescues Job, “erasing” through this deliverance divine agency $a(S \rightarrow x)$].

And it is precisely this scheme immersed in the narrative frame that is—it seems—an indelible tragic element, opening the field of threefold tragedy: of Job, of his faith and of God Himself.

The “dramatic” plot of the Book in the light of such a tragic interpretation therefore contains the same formula that we have already discovered in Job’s complaint: divine actions strike at the righteous. There it resounded as a dramatic accusation; here it constitutes the “story” of divine violence in which Job’s misfortune is incorporated. If the friends’ formula, rejected by the Book (in the epilogue), tries to maintain the moral image of a just God, in which misfortune is to be balanced with guilt, then the formula of the Book in its tragic interpretation constitutes, or rather confirms such an image of God, which may be either completely incomprehensible or arousing anxiety: the anxiety that is incomprehensible from the point of view of the space of faith in which Job’s story takes place, because the pattern of divine violence that emerges from the tragic interpretation of the Book is not undermined by it within the “dramatic” part, i.e. before the epilogue that is added

to the dialogues. The editorial stitch, connecting it seamlessly with the “dramatic” part, only intensifies the incomprehensibility of God’s image, without removing the fear that this image awakens in Job’s consciousness.

TOWARDS THE TRANSCENDENTAL TRAGIC

Is the formula of divine violence tragic? I would like to respond as follows: this is a special formula of the transcendental tragic, in other words—to recall Ricoeur’s expression—the formula of “a tragic God—an unfathomable God of horror.”¹³ For certain reasons, about which in a moment, I think it is more appropriate and I accept the phrase with a complementary modifier: “God of tragedy,” reserving this first phrase with the adjectival modifier for a completely different meaning, albeit related to it. The tragedy of Ricoeur’s term (“a tragic God—an unfathomable God of horror”) becomes apparent in the position of God as an addressee of the transcendental complaint, merging misfortune with the presumption of God’s agency. The “God of tragedy” hides under the mask of the “God of a wager” an unclear and imprecise countenance, permeating through Job’s misfortune as an assumption of incomprehensible and terrifying intentionality. This is tragic, or perhaps it would be better to say: participation in the tragic side of the source and not of the subject of the misfortune, with which, as we know, in the case of Job, there is no “history” of guilt. So, let us stress this, this source, and therefore the “God of tragedy” Himself, is not tragic in the sense that every hero of a tragedy is tragic when he experiences catastrophe and suffering. The transcendent source of human tragedy is not tragic in itself. The Greek Moirai, or the gods themselves, are so transcendent in the face of catastrophe and the suffering of the tragic hero that the world of tragedy can do well without their direct participation in the tragic action. They are replaced by *destiny* or even coincidence, which in the symbolic plan represent this unclear and dangerous agency of events, and in the plot they establish the category of the trap of the world set on the free will of the tragic hero.¹⁴ The uniqueness of Prometheus’ history only confirms this principle. Only a change in the location of the “God of tragedy” in the scheme of tragic events can lead

¹³ Paul RICOEUR, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 299.

¹⁴ I follow the interpretation of these issues by Tadeusz Zieliński and his differentiation of the category of destiny due to “transcendent moments,” “mental moments” and “inherent ones.” See Tadeusz ZIELIŃSKI, *Sofokles*, 166f.

to the transformation of its status in tragic events according to the logic of displacement. Therefore, let us add at once that Ricoeur's formula does not exhaust the features of the full possibility of changing the formula of transcendental tragicism. Moreover, it is only a possible starting point for an analysis of the transformation potential inherent in the composition of *The Book of Job*.

The "God of tragedy" formula, i.e. a God as the perpetrator of Job's innocent misfortune, is unacceptable, but Job does not reject God. This formula arouses opposition, but also a dramatic attempt to save the God of faith. In the tension between the formula of God as the perpetrator of the tragedy and the attempt to save God of faith, the essence of Job's drama is revealed. This is the tragic nature of Job himself. If God is the source of Job's misfortune and his accusations are true not only in terms of the authenticity of his experiences, but also in terms of the accuracy of recognizing the vision of God behind them, Job would have to either fall into a catastrophe of faith, or surrender to the persuasion of friends in order to preserve it, though undoubtedly in a form that has been altered in some way. For even if he saved faith, could there be a place for "God of tragedy" in its space without any correction of his image? There are two ways out of such a conflict: the "erasure" or the displacement of the conflict itself. Either the scheme itself and the accompanying formula of "God acting against Job" will be crossed out and "invalidated," or the scheme will be transformed on the side of the subject experiencing misfortune.

The Book opens up these two perspectives of departure. The first is the already discussed motif from the epilogue of the miraculous withdrawal of the effects of the divine plan. It can only be combined with the story of Job as an element of a conventionally didactic plot. Let us recall:

(4) $S(a \rightarrow x) \Rightarrow S \rightarrow x + \text{Deliverance}$

The transformation function of this theme is null. In this case, however, we can speak of a nihilizing function, which crosses out the whole scheme of events, going back to the times from before God's wager. Of course, this motif should not be ignored in the overall message of the Book, especially when it comes to the message of faith. After all, it is no one else, but God Himself, who becomes the addressee of Job's violent accusations, who rescues him, although He does not dispel Job's doubts about divine nature. S. Kierkegaard perfectly expresses this message when he writes: "The

believer always has a way against despair: the possibility that God can do everything at any time.”¹⁵ We will come back to this issue.

Job himself makes a second attempt at exiting—this time of a transformational nature—when he twice calls his “advocate on high” for help. Although it should be added here that this attempt is only the first, but also a necessary step towards such a transformation. Let us quote this double text:

(19) Even now my witness is in heaven, my advocate is on high. 20) My friends it is who wrong me; before God my eyes shed tears, (21) that justice may be done for a mortal with God: as for a man and his neighbor.
(Jb 16:19–21)

(22) Why do you pursue me like God, and prey insatiably upon me? (23) Oh, would that my words were written down! Would that they were inscribed in a record: (24) That with an iron chisel they were cut in the rock forever! (25) As for me, I know that my vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust. (26) This will happen when my skin has been stripped off, and from my flesh I will see God. (27) I will see for myself, my own eyes, not another’s, will behold him: my inmost being is consumed with longing.
(Jb 19:22–27)¹⁶

The motif of *go’el*, a defender whom Job calls for so that “justice may be done for a mortal with God” (16:19–21), and before whom he makes his unique proclamation of faith: “As for me, I know that my vindicator lives, and that he will at last stand forth upon the dust” (19,25), is no doubt one of the key, yet at the same time unclear, fragments of *The Book of Job*. Who is the addressee of this confession, who could follow Job, since he himself has repeatedly stated his loneliness in the face of the trials and tribulations sent by God? A tradition of biblical hermeneutics identifies the *go’el* from Jb 19:25 with God. Contemporary theological interpretation, supported by

¹⁵ Søren KIERKEGAARD, *Bojaźń i drżenie. Choroba na śmierć* [Fear and Trembling. Sickness unto Death], transl. Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz (Warszawa: Homin, 1972), 178.

¹⁶ In Miłosz’s translation, *Księga Hioba*:
Nawet i teraz oto mam Świadka w niebie, mego obrońcę na wysokościach.
Pośrednicy, przyjaciele moi! Ku Bogu spogląda we łzach moje oko.
Niech On rozsądzi między człowiekiem i Bogiem jak między synem Adama i bliźnim jego”
(Jb 16:19–21).

Czemu szarpiecie mnie, jak szarpie mnie Bóg, a nie możecie nasycić się moim ciałem?
O gdyby tylko zapisane były moje słowa, gdyby w księdze były wyrte!
Rylcem żelaznym i ołowiem w skale wykute na zawsze!
Ale ja wiem: Wybawca mój żyje i On ostatni nad prochem stanie.
I kiedy moja skóra już stoczona będzie, u mego ciała sam zobaczę Boga
Którego ja, ja sam zobaczę przy mnie, na własne oczy ujrzę, nie jak przeciwnika.
Zmarniały we mnie, tęskniąc, nerki moje (Jb 19:22–27).

thorough critical research, upholds, albeit with great caution, this interpretation, while rejecting the Messianic interpretation (i.e. *go'el* as the Savior), so magnificently expressed in Handel's *Messiah*. Fr. Roland E. Murphy, a co-author of *New International Biblical Commentary*, sums up the most important questions of the interpretation of Chapter 19 as follows:

Traditionally, *go'el* of verse 25 is identified with God. This is not an easy solution. Job in various places in this book is indignant against God as his enemy. Therefore, it is only a supposition that verse 25 refers to God. The only thing that is clearly stated is that he will see him. [...]

The traditional translation, clearly influenced by the rendering of this place in the Vulgate, accepted the idea of Job's resurrection. Such an assumption seems impossible. The Hebrew text, as we said, is very vague, and Job's situation would be completely different if he really believed in his resurrection. The claims of Sheol and mortality (e.g. Jb 14:7-22) in this book exclude the idea of Job waiting for the resurrection. However, this passage (v. 25-27) is a clear confirmation of faith in some advocate, some *go'el* (perhaps identical to God), whom Job will certainly see with his own eyes.¹⁷

The difficulty of interpretation identifying the invoked "advocate" with God is primarily theological. The delicate nature of this problem lies in the particular stratification of the image of God: God, whom Job treats as an enemy, and God—*go'el*—summoned as a witness and advocate. The question that is imposed in the face of such a stratification is the question of the identity of such different images of God. If there are no grounds for a messianic interpretation, the interpretation of the *go'el* motif must take the form of a formula of opposing God with God. In Fr. Murphy's aforementioned commentary to Chapters 9 and 10 we find this formula, even if it does not directly refer to the *go'el* motif, but only to the state of tearing that Job falls into, preceding confession of faith in the "advocate," blaming God and at the same time desperately seeking some support:

on the one hand, a fanatical accusation of God and, on the other hand, a lack of firmness to really renounce Him—as if it were an appeal to God against God [emphasis A.T.], from the God he knows to the God who cannot be found.¹⁸

¹⁷ *Księga Hioba*, translated by Roland E. Murphy, 666f. Let us recall moreover a commentary to Jb 19:25 by Isaac Cylkow, the author of the rabbinical translation, traditionally identifying *go'el* with God: "Doubting that any of his friends would fulfill this wish, Job turns to God, whom he continues to trust and who—he is deeply convinced about it—one day, after his death, himself as his savior and advocate, will appear and bring to light his righteousness of the matter. [*Go'el*] actually a next of kin obligated to revenge and defend a wronged relative [...]" (*Księga Hioba*, transl. Izaak Cylkow (Kraków: Austeria, 2008), 84).

¹⁸ *Ibidem*, 664.

Ricoeur sums it up as follows: “Job appeals to God against God.”¹⁹ Let’s stop at Ricoeur’s formula, which refers directly to the “advocate” motif: “God against God.” It already contains a powerful charge transforming the transcendental tragic, which can be presented in the form of an autotelic scheme: $(a \rightarrow a)$. It is not a formula with a nihilizing function, like the motive of deliverance, but a moving position of God. It does not replace anything in the scheme of the transcendental tragic, but complements and develops it:

$$(8) (a \rightarrow x) \implies S \rightarrow x \implies (a \rightarrow a)$$

[God is instrumental in Job’s misfortune, Job is afflicted with misfortune, “Job appeals to God against God”]

What is the meaning of this formula and the sequence of events it records? In order to answer this question, one must first realize what the transformation of the image of “God of tragedy” may be heading towards. At this point we must go beyond the text of *The Book of Job* and consider, at least for the time being, hypothetically as the pure possibility of the transformation of the tragic scheme analyzed here. So we ask, what is the horizon of transformations of the formula of God of tragedy?

Only seemingly will our reply be paradoxical when we say that this is a transformation of the “God of tragedy” into a “tragic God.” In our diagram, such a transformation should be reflected by shifting the position of God from the position of “subject acting against” to the position of “experiencing subject.” The element or “stage” of such a shift can be found in the transforming formula of Job: $(a \rightarrow a)$. However, this is not a complete or, in other words, fully tragic shift because it does not contain certain necessary moments to be shifted, as we will see shortly. To be precise, the autotelic formula in this case establishes a mechanism of displacement and at the same time, one could say, sets it in motion, so it is in a strict sense a transformational formula. We can only speak of full displacement when the scheme of the “God who caused the misfortune” $(a \rightarrow x)$ corresponds to the scheme of “God experiencing misfortune”: $S \rightarrow a$. The full scheme of the transcendental tragic therefore takes the following form:

¹⁹ Paul RICOEUR, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 273.

$$(9) (a \rightarrow x) \implies S \rightarrow x \implies (a \rightarrow a) \implies S \rightarrow a$$

[God is instrumental in human misfortune, man is afflicted by misfortune, the transformation formula (autotelic: $(a \rightarrow a)$) God identifies in the misfortune with man, experiencing the misfortune Himself]

Let us notice that the above diagram does not eliminate the motif of “God of tragedy” understood as a “God of horror” contained in it—a source of tragic misfortune, although it is undoubtedly able to deeply transform this image. The transformation consists of the development according to the logic of displacement. God experiences a tragic misfortune (He takes place on the side of the tragic misfortune), of which He Himself is the source. At the same time, however, there is a fundamental distinction here, if not theological then imaginary: between God as “the culprit of misfortune” and “God experiencing misfortune,” suffering like Job. The identity tension between the first and the last part is irremovable. One can say that to some extent it defines the inner conflict of the developed form of monotheistic faith.

A tragic God in the latter sense can only be a God as weak as a man in his misfortune and as a man immersed in the world of tragic evil, arousing “pity and fear” and thus relatable.

It should be emphasized emphatically that there is no such scheme in *The Book of Job*. We can only find in it a special stratification of the image of God, which at the level of interpretation is concretized in the form of an autotelic formula (“God of tragedy”—*go’el*). This, I think, is an important motif that transforms the image of God in such a way that it is possible to recreate it within the framework of what we call here the scheme of the transcendental tragic. Under no circumstances should this scheme be understood as a plot matrix, realized in specific texts of the Old Testament or even the New Testament. It is only a way of linking the antithetical images of God, which may have different origins and different theological interpretation, but which cannot be replaced by each other.

Let us, however, return from these general claims concerning the scheme of the transcendental tragic to the Book and ask what the transformational function of the stratification of the divine image in Job’s consciousness into God, whom Job accuses and God (*go’el*), whom Job summons as his advocate, would consist of. In order to answer this question, let’s try to analyze the motivation of this stratification in the event context of the Book. Let us consider the following sequence of events: (1) Job invokes an “advocate on

high” to testify to his innocence, both to his friends and to God, whom he accuses of acting unjustly toward himself. (2) God affirms Job’s innocence by rejecting the arguments of his friends. (3) Job is contrite before God. The questions are: does God identify Himself with the “advocate” by siding with Job’s innocence and is Job’s contrition based on this identification?

The second question must be answered in the negative. Undoubtedly, the reader will easily see why. The sequence of events presented above is not true precisely as a sequence, although all events can be found in the Book. It is a structure that does not reflect the actual sequence of events. And this is what seems to be decisive here. The second event, in which God confirms Job’s innocence, is the motif from the Epilogue, immediately following two theophanies and Job’s contrition. In the theophanies themselves, which belong to the dialogue part, this motif does not appear. Job is contrite before God, who “spoke out of the storm” not because of the possibility of identifying him with *go’el*, because there are no grounds for this in “God’s speeches.” The Book only gives an image, without formulating or suggesting any motivations for Job’s gesture; actually, even the gesture itself is not sure! Why a silent Job sprinkles his head with ash is a matter of interpretation, and while it is key to understanding the Book, it is but an interpretation. Ricoeur sees here a sacrifice of innocence:

relinquishing grudges, sacrificing the claim at the source of the complaint, namely the grudge to create for oneself an island of meaning in the universe, a state within a state. And here it turns out that the demand for retribution was no less hidden behind Job’s complaint, which was behind the moralizing preaching of his friends. And probably this is why innocent Job, Job the Wise Man, is contrite. Why would he be contrite? Definitely not for a claim for compensation for the damage he had suffered, which made his dispute unclear? Didn’t this right of retribution continue to push him to demand explanations to the extent of his own existence, private explanations, finite explanations?²⁰

Let us assume, however, that the sequence of events presented above may constitute the basis for understanding the Book, and it may be assumed that such an intention is behind the third statement of God introduced in the epilogue, which to some extent could also explain the motivations of Job’s contrition. With this assumption, is it possible to maintain the postulate of identity between God on the side of Job’s innocence and “advocate on high”? It seems that, if so, it is God of the epilogue who can concretize the *go’el* motive. By

²⁰ Ibidem, 285.

affirming Job's innocence, unlike God of both theophanies, he inscribes himself in the ethical vision of divine action. He settles a dispute between Job and his friends, but also the dispute with God. Job's innocence is confirmed by divine judgment, and the loss is repaid; after all, this is what Job meant when he summoned his "advocate on high" against God.

However, it would be difficult to decide to accept such an interpretation of events, especially in the context of a tragic interpretation. Leaving aside even the consideration of the composition which undermines such an interpretation, as well as the doubt as to whether the God of the epilogue really confirms Job's innocence, let us note that the attempt to rebuild—after both theophanies and the motif of showing contrition—the image of God guided by the principle of just retribution does not in fact rebuild anything of what had already been lying in ruins. By affirming the innocence after the misfortune which the divine wager piled upon Job, God merely shows and, at the same time, affirms that innocence, and therefore also the guilt, are not and cannot be a criterion for the experience of suffering and misfortune. He therefore confirms the image that Job previously developed in his complaint ("He will destroy the righteous along with the wicked"). This reveals the fundamental paradox of Job's drama: the invoked "advocate," even if we equate him with God's epilogue, is unable to reverse the course of events and restore divine justice as the basis of world order, for this order has already been irreversibly destroyed when the innocent Job is "unjustly" smitten with suffering. And even if God's epilogue compensates twice the losses suffered by Job, the problem of being "unjustly crushed" does not disappear. Even if Job managed to completely forget about the whole tragedy during his long life, neither the author of the Book nor its reader forgot about it. Only in such a context—let us note—does the figure of deliverance become meaningful, which cannot be, after all, a salvation protecting against the experience of misfortune, because it has already taken place, but a deliverance, so to speak, *in actu esse* of the ongoing tragedy. The experience of being "unjustly crushed" does delineate a space where the absence of the delivering God is as tangible as Job's presumption of a God of horror. The *go'el* Job refers to reflects the state where deliverance, understood by him first of all as a testimony of innocence, becomes something completely unreal and somehow excluded from the sphere of what can actually happen, especially after both theophanies, which do not provide answers to his questions. In other words, deliverance at a time when the worst has already happened lies in the sphere of complete improbability and complete impossibility of

reversing the course of events. Like the gagged Iphigenia at the sacrificial stake, Job can only be saved by a miracle, although he is not concerned with a miracle, but with an unjust accusation.²¹

Naturally, we may and should refer once more to Kierkegaard's formula: "God can do everything and at any moment," because it is in fact this formula that most accurately captures the drama of the Book. God can "restore Job to his former state," compensate his losses, and even repeat his life, and God of the epilogue does all this. At the same time, however, this "everything" also contains a different aspect, of opposing quality: "can do everything" also means that He can afflict the righteous with misfortune. And this is what Job experiences: the divine omnipotence, which he believed to be limited by the principle of just retribution, and therefore that God "cannot do everything" in fact. It is this opposite side of God's saving power that establishes in the Book the image of "divine incomprehension."

I think that here, in this tension between the absence of the rescuing God and the presumption of a God of tragedy, the key to Job's autotelic formula and the direction of transformation in which it may be heading should be sought. Since God, who makes a judgment of Job's innocence, even if we identify him with the motif of *go'el*, not only does not save, but even confirms the catastrophe of the ethical vision of the divine order in the world, the only way to transform this image that would not be limited to the potential identification with the image of the "God of tragedy," including the "guilt" attributed to this image, is the figure that establishes itself directly on the ruins of the ethical vision of God, in the space of acute loneliness between the presupposition of a God of tragedy and the image of the absent God of salvation.

²¹ See Jasper's reflection on the relation between the tragic and salvation, of importance for the understanding of Job's tragedy (*Filozofia egzystencji* [Philosophy of Existence], transl. Dorota Lachowska, Anna Wołkowitz (Warszawa: Państwowy Instytut Wydawniczy, 1990) 355–366). One may think that the Book as a whole is heading towards the relation of "salvation from the tragic" ("The Work expresses salvation from the tragic, if what gives it value is its overcoming in the knowledge of such being, in the face of which the tragic is either a reconciled basis or a phenomenal surface"—p. 361). However, if one follows the tragic interpretation presented here, one can see, paradoxically, that the second possibility highlighted by Jaspers: "salvation in the tragic" ("In the tragic hero, one's own possibility of a human being can be seen: to persevere no matter what happens"—p. 359) is the principle of Job's tragic construction, but a negative principle! Job does not want to "endure whatever happens," hence his lengthy complaint and accusation of people and God; he is not, in this sense, a heroic figure who, as Jaspers writes, "surrenders silently to fate." Job's volubility in itself is an "action" detached from the heroic and dignified character of a tragic attitude. Nevertheless, Job did persevere! One could add here that he persevered rejecting the salvific dimension of "tragic knowledge."

In a world of catastrophe, misfortune, suffering, violence and evil, God can rediscover himself by “descending low,” as Herbert would say, surrendering to the advantages of this world, becoming close to the crushed, and finally identifying with them. In other words, it is the figure of God moving and standing on the side of human misfortune and what is the experiential core of misfortune: the physical and spiritual suffering that the innocent Job endured. Job’s *go’el* is only a witness to Job’s innocence, not even to suffering itself, but to its being unwarranted, and this is to be confirmed in the dispute “between man and God.” It still entirely belongs to the image of God of ethics. But the fundamental movement has already been made. In the dispute of “man with God” it is necessary to move God to the position of a witness to the unjust crushing of Job. *Go’el* is therefore closer to man than God “speaking from the storm.” He is also closer to his suffering, even though Job does not assume or demand compassion from the “witness,” but only the confirmation of the truth. This displacement—as I have shown above—cannot yet constitute a new image of God, because it is too entangled in an attempt to solve an insoluble problem, and thus in an attempt to protect the ethical image of God who has just fallen into ruins. Siding with Job’s suffering, *go’el* himself does not experience this suffering. He is closer to man, but not yet close enough for Job’s suffering to become the content of divine experience.

The displacement I refer to here, motivated by the collapse of the ethical vision of God, opens up the possibility of a full transformation of this vision, if we primarily take into consideration the factor which brought about this collapse. And it is precisely the experience of unculpable suffering that is contained in the figure of Job. And it can become a fundamental factor in the transformation of the divine image. But the misfortune and suffering that accompanies it—and this is Job’s lesson—reveals itself not in one, but in two dimensions, or, to put it another way, in two configurations. If suffering devoid of guilt becomes a sign of divine incomprehension, the suffering of the innocent reveals the face of the “God of tragedy and horror” in this incomprehensibility. And if so, the figure of God standing on the side of human suffering, which must face the whole figure of “divine incomprehensibility” and, so to speak, absorb it entirely, including its dimension the “God of tragedy,” may and “should” develop around the motif of “suffering of the innocent”—the irremovable and insurmountable residue of the Job’s vision of God as presented in the Book.

Let us note, however, that the image of God standing on the side of human suffering is not yet a figure of tragedy. The potential of this image, in purely phenomenological terms, contains two ways of transformation or simply two different figures.

First of all, it may be the image of a God who suffers from the misfortunes of the people of Israel. His suffering, however, is completely transcendent in the face of human suffering. God suffers secretly in a way and measure that is divine and not human. Secondly—and this is the figure of the tragic God—He identifies himself with human suffering, Himself suffering unjust misery and misfortune. The tragedy in this second image is necessarily established on two levels: of human experience, which evokes the image of human tragedy, and at the “transcendental” level, in which the tragic sacrifice, by being included in “God’s plan,” enters into an identity relationship with it.

Ad. 1. **The suffering God of Rabbi Shapira.** The dramatic and moving image of a suffering God can be found in the sermons of a rabbi of a chasidim community in Piaseczno and founder of the chasidic school in Warsaw, Kalman Shapira²²; he delivered these sermons in Hebrew in Warsaw between 1939 and 1942. Let us first recall the observations of the author of the introduction to the Polish translation of the sermons²³:

²² Of the two equivalent ways of writing the rabbi’s first name and surname, I use the one more common in literature written in English: Kalman Shapira. The other writing, more frequent in texts written in Polish (not too extensive as yet), Kalonymos Kalmisz Szapiro or Shapira, is used in references to relevant Polish texts. Rabbi Kalman Shapira was murdered in the Trawniki camp in 1943. Texts of his Saturday sermons delivered in Hebrew between September 1939 and July 1942 were discovered in the ruins of the Warsaw Ghetto in 1950, and published in Israel in 1960, *Sefer Aish Kodesh* (Piaseczno–Jerusalem: Vaad Hasidey, 1960). On the life and activity of Rabbi Shapira, see Henry ABRAMSON, *Torah from the Years of Wrath. The Historical Context of the “Aish Kodesh,”* (New York: CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2017). The sermons and life of Rabbi Shapira were better known only after the publication by Nehemi Polen’s book about him and his wartime sermons (Nohemi POLEN, *The Holy Fire: The Teachings of Rabbi Kalonymus Kalman Shapira, the Rebbe of the Warsaw Ghetto*, New Jersey: Jason Aronson, 1994, 1999²) and after the English publication of his sermons (Kalman SHAPIRA, *Sacred Fire: Torah from the Years of Fury, 1939-1942*, transl. by J. Hershy Worch (New Jersey–Jerusalem: J. Aronson Inc., 2000)).

²³ I quote the texts of the sermons on the basis of a translation into Polish by Ireneusz Kania, an article by Paweł Śpiewak and one online translation from: Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmisz SZAPIRA, “Święty ogień. Tora z lat 1939–1942, lat szalu,” selected and edited by Witold Mędykowski, transl. Ireneusz Kania, *Znak* 4, No. 611 (2006): 58–110; Paweł ŚPIEWAK, “Kaznodzieja getta warszawskiego,” *Znak* 3, No. 490 (1996): 120–130; *Taniec opowieści, czyli chasydzi Piaseczna*, [online:] www.studnia.org/piaseczno.ramka.htm, [access: 2018–09–13]. The information on the rabbi compiled by Włodzimierz Bagieński and Piotr Rytok—*Cadyk Piaseczna* bookmark.

In his sermons preached during World War Two, Kalonymos Shapira repeatedly addresses the question of suffering. Early on he approaches it in a traditional way: suffering brings the remission of sins, is purifying and sanctifying for the suffering individual. Later on, he begins to focus on God's suffering. A suffering God may think that he is the only sufferer, and the suffering of the entire nation do not concern God. However, according to Is (63:9): "he became their savior in their every affliction." Therefore, when man suffers, God suffers, too ... During the Holocaust, traditional interpretation of suffering ceased to apply and new ones were necessary. Kalonymos proves, then, that sin is not the root cause of suffering. The Holocaust is a consequence of an assault of God Himself, and the sons of Israel suffer with Him. At a time when God hides His face, God is crying and so is a Jew.²⁴

The establishment of an image of a suffering (crying) God, especially in some of the later sermons, titled by the rabbi *Kidush ha-Shem* ["sanctification of the Name"], takes place (in structural terms) in three stages. First, God's suffering is differentiated from human suffering. The former differs from the latter in terms of scale, which is beyond human ken, which in a way accounts for "God's silence":

God suffers more than any human being. Because God is infinite, His pain, caused by the suffering of His creatures, is infinite, no individual can endure or comprehend the pain of God ... If the world shared all the suffering of God, it would not be able to endure it. If God's creation heard the sound of God's crying, the whole world would fall apart (14 February 1942).²⁵

This is accompanied, secondly, by the differentiation of God's image, which refers to the mystical motif of "God's chambers," and its particular dissociation into two images: the God of "power and dignity" and the crying God:

So we learn that while in the outer chambers of heaven there is always "power and dignity" before God, in the inner chambers God weeps, depressed, so to speak, by the sufferings of the Jews.²⁶

In the third step the rabbi explains the (consolatory) meaning of the co-suffering of man and God:

However, as we said above, the Blessed One himself cries in the inner chambers, and anyone who adheres to God through the Torah can cry with Him and study the Torah together with Him. The difference is that the anguish and bitterness that

²⁴ Witold MĘDYKOWSKI, *Wstęp*, Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmisz SZAPIRA, "Święty ogień," 60f.

²⁵ *Taniec opowieści, czyli chasydzi Piaseczna*, www.studnia.org/piaseczno.ramka.htm, [access: 2018-09-13].

²⁶ Rabbi Kalonymos Kalmisz SZAPIRA, "Święty ogień," 99.

a lonely person suffers because of his or her own situation can break him or her. They can fall down so much that they are immobilized. But crying together with God gives people strength. They cry and gain strength. They are shaken by it, but then take the courage to study and worship God.²⁷

There is no place for a more detailed analysis of these extraordinary images, derived from the depth of Jewish mysticism. We must be satisfied only with their fundamental structure. The dynamics of the development of this image, which emerges from the tension between the figure of “divine incomprehensibility,” to which the grave experience of Israel is referred by the rabbi, and the figure of divine salvation, in which it is increasingly difficult for Jews to hope. When anguish becomes boundless and unbearable by the faith of the Jews, and when the conviction of innocent suffering appears (“Israel is innocent”), then Rabbi Shapira, in a series of consolatory sermons, draws a Messianic image of God taking upon himself the misfortunes of his people and hiding from the world to weep over the sufferings of Israel:

There is a time when “I will be with him in distress” (Ps 91:15). In such times distress, God forbid, befalls Israel, and God simply suffers with us, but when the distress is so great that Israel lacks the strength to endure it, then only God gives us the strength to endure and survive these bitter and cruel misfortunes—then the burden falls on Him. It follows that at a time when distress is not yet so great [...] we can still consider whether we are worthy in the eyes of righteousness, but when torments are so great, God, save us, their burden falls upon God, then the heavens must move to help. Israel is innocent, so why should our Father in heaven suffer?²⁸

Analyzing the Messianic images of the co-suffering of Israel and God, Paweł Śpiewak observes as follows:

In this act of the birth of a new revelation, God is not a distant witness or the only perpetrator of events. God participates in the “pain of childbirth” [of the Messiah—A.T.], in the suffering of Israel, Himself suffering with him enclosed in the inner chamber of heaven (a motif taken from ancient Jewish literature). God hides there because His suffering, like Him, are infinite. For God has two chambers: the outer chamber, where He appears joyful and happy, and the inner chamber, which hides His mystery and where, because of His pride, He hides to cry in solitude and to experience infinite pain. One might say that in this suffering of God and Israel the old covenant lasts, and so does God’s compassion for Israel and Israel’s for God, and the community in suffering. God’s silence and absence are only apparent; He turns away his face so that his immeasurable suffering does not unravel the world.²⁹

²⁷ Ibidem, 100.

²⁸ Paweł ŚPIEWAK, “Kaznodzieje,” 127.

²⁹ Ibidem, 128.

Let's summarize this brief insight into the work of the Rabbi of Piaseczno. In the picture drawn by him we find three constitutive elements: 1. the scale of crying, 2. distinguishing external chambers from internal chambers and 3. the meaning of the relationship of co-suffering between man and God. According to the rules of the transcendental tragic, the second element is the transformation element, whose function is to transfer God from the outer chambers in which He is characterized by "power and dignity" to the inner chambers of weeping, which is an expression of divine suffering, and thus the establishment of two divine "images": the God of "power and dignity" and the crying God, who co-suffers with man, giving him the strength not to fall and "be immobilized" in a situation where God of "power and dignity" does not answer the most burning questions of the innocently suffering Israel.

A characteristic feature of the mystical image of the "suffering God" is the total transcendence of God's suffering in relation to human suffering. God suffers secretly in a way and measure that is divine and not human. It is not an image based on an identity relationship between the divine level and human experience, but only on a corrective split in the image of God, and in this sense it is not a figure of the "transcendental tragic" which assumes such a combination, thus abolishing the "transcendence of the suffering of God" in the above sense. The transformational importance of this image lies in the possibility of introducing into the conceptual and imaginary model of personal God not only equivalents of idealised human characteristics such as justice, omnipotence, omniscience, mercy, perfection, but also the equivalent of human experience combined with the weakness, fragility and imperfection of existence and, above all, with being a victim of violence and "doomed to destruction." Kalman Shapira's suffering God seems to restore the fading credibility of Israel's God. Paradoxically, in a situation of crisis of faith caused by unbearable suffering and fading hopes of salvation, this very image of God—impaired by suffering—brought consolation to the community destined for extermination. As Paweł Śpiewak writes, the consolation consisted in including God in the community of the suffering and thus sustaining the Covenant based on mutual compassion.

Ad. 2. The figure of a tragic God. Let us move on to the figure of the transcendental tragic. It seems that the possibility of its concretization is clearly defined. We know that we must discover an image which would include the above double identity relation: the identification of God with human suffering and the identification of the level of tragic experience of man with the divine experience. After all, we find such an image very

“close” to *The Book of Job*—in *The Book of the Prophet Isaiah*, although it is necessary to add, the second of the aforesaid identity relations is a matter of a “distant” interpretation of this image by the New Testament. Of course, the image that needs to be recalled is the “amazing” (52:15b) image of the Servant of the Lord. It is not without significance that in this case we have two hermeneutical traditions: Hebrew and Christian. If the latter—as the contemporary commentator says—“from the very beginning places this oracle at the center of the confession of faith, understanding it in an individual sense and explaining it only in the light of the Passion and Resurrection of Jesus,”³⁰ the Jewish one regards the Servant of the Lord either as a figure of the suffering experienced by Israel in exile or as the destiny of Israel to “carry the sins of the world” and thus “allowing the world to survive.”³¹ The fact that the latter interpretation is able to develop in the scheme of the transcendental tragic and to constitute the image of the tragic God is attested to by Kacnelson’s poem, which in both literary and experiential terms is nothing more than the complaint of a 20th-century Job, but in theological terms its sources must be sought in the prophetic books, especially in Isaiah.³² In the context of the analysis carried out here, attention must also be paid to a minor motif, which still arouses philological and theological controversy, and is extremely important structurally, because it establishes a relationship between the Servant and God, which can be expressed analogously to the relationship established in the motif of Job’s experience by God, and, in the language of our analysis, the motif of the Servant is included in God’s work pattern (a→x). This is, of course, verse 10 of chapter 53:

It was the LORD’s will to crush him with pain.

This motive, which is theologically interpreted as “incorporation into God’s plan,” creates a certain tension in relation to the more explicit motif

³⁰ *Księga Izajasza*, in *Międzynarodowy komentarz do Pisma Świętego*, transl. Anne-Marie Pelletier, 875.

³¹ *Ibidem*.

³² Naturally, I refer here to Icchak Kacnelson’s poem *Dos lid fun ojsgehargeten jidiszen folk*, translated into Polish by Jerzy Ficowski (*Pieśń o zamordowanym żydowskim narodzie*, ed. and notes. Jerzy Ficowski (Warszawa: Czytelnik, 1986)), which I analyze elsewhere. Of special importance is Song IX of the poem *To the Heavens*. The poet censures and rejects God’s image evoked by the metaphor of “heavens,” at the same time seeking an image of God which would relate to the most terrifying experience of the victims. He finds such a picture in the messianic suffering of Jewish children. However, it remains only a tragic metaphor.

of sacrifice (“it was our pain that he bore,” Is 53:4a), which is interpreted as a voluntary implementation of this plan. The importance of the relation established by this motive ($a \rightarrow x$) lies in the emerging possibility of transforming it into an autotelic relation ($a \rightarrow a$), which is the basic displacement factor in the scheme of the transcendental tragic.

However, there is also something more at stake here, namely the particular identity tensions which, in the case of *The Book of Job*, revealed themselves as a problem of the interpretation of the *go’el* motif, identifying it with God. In *The Book of Isaiah*, these tensions of identity are incomparably stronger in the case of a Christological or even Messianic interpretation, and they combine, so to speak, elements from different levels. However, it is worth reading them in relation to *The Book of Job*. Identity tension is established here between the addressee of the complaint of the “righteous man” and the “advocate on high,” with the problematic effect of $a=a$, while in Isaiah it is established—in terms of interpretation—between the “Lord” and the “Suffering Servant” $a=x$, which makes the identity relationship incomparably more complicated, linking the divine (a) and human (x) levels. In the following formula, the initial ($a \rightarrow x$) represents the phrase of Is 53:10:

$$(11) (a \rightarrow x) \implies S \rightarrow x \implies ?(a=x) \implies (a \rightarrow a) \implies S \rightarrow a$$

The analogous scheme of *The Book of Job* can only be represented by means of an identity and a single-level tautological relationship, establishing only the possibility of splitting the image of God, without a symmetrical element in the face of Job's misfortune ($S \rightarrow x$):

$$(12) (a \rightarrow x) \implies S \rightarrow x \implies ?(a=a) \implies (a \rightarrow a)$$

The transition from an identity relationship from *The Book of Job*, establishing itself at the level of a split in the image of God to the identity relationship from *The Book of Isaiah*, establishing itself at the level of an image of God and a suffering man, in other words a transition from a vague motif of an “advocate on high” (*go’el*) to one of the most moving poetic images of human suffering, which in horizontal interpretation is identified with the suffering of God, shows the direction of the transformation of the pattern of the transcendental tragic. At the same time, it demonstrates the complexity and tense nature of the autotelic formula (“It was the LORD’s will to crush him with pain”) set in motion by the Book. I disregard the theological

interpretation, which is connected with the identity relationship of the “Suffering Servant” and its figural sense; it is the basis of the central mystery of faith for Christianity. My analysis, which I would like to stress once again, is only a phenomenological analysis of structurally related images and accompanying formulas of events. The relationship between the image of God “who liked to crush him with pain” and the image of the Servant, which in Christian interpretation becomes a figure of Christ the Lord, and in Kacnelson’s poem evokes a divine sacralization of slain children, establishes a figure of the transcendental tragic, in other words, a special kind of *mythos* of a tragic God.

However, it seems necessary to immediately distinguish between two plans of understanding this figure: theological and poetic, and they do not remain in mutual isolation. The tragic God is more of a poetic image than a theological message; an image of a God immersed in the world of human misery and human evil, “spurned and avoided by men,” who “endured our suffering” (Is 53:3-4). We can never be sure which of the thousands of nameless victims is the tragic God. Moreover, each of them identifies himself with Him in his misfortune and fall. In theological terms, this image can be obscured by the kerygma of God’s ultimate victory over the tragic. The tragic God ceases to be a God of horror, and if so, the tragic misfortune does not have the features of a divine curse; on the contrary, it becomes a gift established by God. But this is why the poetic plan cannot be fully aligned with the theological plan. Christ triumphant over the tragic is the image of God moving away, a God who leaves a salvific message but at the same time must announce a second coming. The tragic is overcome—one could say—in God himself, and through faith that suffering is a gift, overcome in the man accepting this gift, but not in the world. Here it moves to others, among whom God Himself can be present.

This creates a particular tension between the image of a tragic God and the victorious message of His theology. The God of theology separates and distances Himself from the tragic God. The tragic God, we could say using an imaginary paradox, is God abandoned by all and by God Himself. But that is why he, like Job calling from the abyss of misfortune, is able to save God “from himself.”

Let’s recapitulate: *The Book of Job* does not establish any of the figures outlined above: neither the figure of the suffering God (ad. 1) nor the figure of the transcendental tragic (ad. 2), but both seem unthinkable without it. The book turns out to be above all a drama of innocence, which is confirmed by God in the epilogue, and at the same time—following Ricoeur’s inter-

pretation—one can say, sacrificed by Job.³³ The very act of demanding from God to recognize Job's innocence and compensate for the damage suffered as an exception, like a Greek *hybris*, moves his complaint into the sphere of guilt, and using Scheler's and Jaspers's language, Job, being innocent, slips into guilt. Paradoxically, and unlike in Greek tragedies, this seems to have saved his faith. This is the dramatic displacement of guilt and innocence between Job and God, which can never be permanently supported.

We must also note that it is precisely the innocence which Job defended against the temptation of accusations, in a configuration with suffering and misfortune, that establishes this particular borderline point of "divine incomprehensibility," where it is possible to combine in one figure two antithetical images: of a God of tragedy and a tragic God.³⁴

³³ Paul RICOEUR, *The Symbolism of Evil*, 283.

³⁴ The implicit presence of the TT figure in contemporary poetry is offered by Zbigniew Herbert's poem *Mr Cogito's Meditations on Redemption* (*Rozmyślenia Pana Cogito o odkupieniu*). The ambiguity of this work is not merely due to ironic ambivalence. The fact is that both constructional images of God reigning "on the throne of horror with the scepter of death" and a "son" subjected to a violence which grows ever stronger rather than recedes, are antithetical and disconnected. It seems, therefore, that Herbert's poem encourages us to choose one of the two ways of reading. First of all, one can go down the path of compassion for the "son," while at the same time rejecting the ironic image of God in the "marble palace," burdened with guilt ("he should not have sent a son"). Secondly, one can follow an ironic reading and consider God reigning in the "baroque palace" as the only reasonable possibility of a figure of divinity in the face of the predatory and "base" nature of man. In other words, Herbert's text seems to force a choice between opposing figures. The third possibility, to me the most accurate, is an interpretation in which both images are interdependent elements of a single figure, the figure of transcendental tragicism in the sense under consideration here. This lyrical norm, repeated by the subject "should not have sent a son," becomes an analogy of the incomprehensible in its divine genesis of Job's experience or Isaiah's incomprehensibility: "It was the Lord's will to crush him with pain," with this unclear presumption of guilt, which could be expressed by the formula "he should not have tested Job," "he should not have crushed him with suffering." The transforming autotelic nature of this formula and the identity tension it induces extends human tragedy, expressed in the experience of violence suffered by the "son," to the source of this tragedy, God reigning "on the throne of horror," "descending too low," and thus to the God of tragedy, establishing a full figure of a tragic God. Let us note that the image of God reigning "on the throne of horror" is in Herbert's poem a thing of the past, but at the same time it has not been erased: captured within the TT figure, it reveals the history of transformation ("coming down low") to which the figure subjects this image.

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IN THE CIRCLE OF THE TRAGIC: THE BOOK OF JOB
A FRAGMENT OF A GREATER FRAGMENT

Summary

Job's drama that is equally a drama of existence and a drama of faith reveals a dimension that is in fact rarely seen in Greek tragedy, namely the transcendental tragic dimension. The identity tensions between the image of God whom Job accuses of cruelty and the image of the "defender in high" (*go'el*) mentioned by Job, one who would take the side of his suffering, at the same time testifying to the fact that Job was not guilty, opens the possibility of transformations blending the different images into a figure of transcendental tragic quality—based on a figure similar to the Greek figure of a tragic transfer—in which God, as the ultimate source of everything, including unjust misery, not only takes the side of human suffering but also experiences the suffering himself, revealing the analogy and then the interpretative identity of the levels of human and divine experience of the tragic. *The Book of Job* is only the necessary starting point for the possible transformation of the image of God, introducing a split in the image of God (the motif of *go'el*) in the book protagonist's complaint and deconstructing the category of "just retaliation." The conditions that make transformation possible can be found in *The Book of Isaiah*, especially

in the image of “The Lord’s Servant” and in Messianic interpretations of this picture closely connected with the phrase: “It was the Lord’s will to crush him with pain” (Is 53:10).

Key words: The Book of Job, The Book of Isaiah, tragic quality.

Translated by Marcin Turski



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