

THE TRUTH ABOUT SANCHO PANZA BY F. KAFKA IN THE ASPECTS OF HUMANIZATION OF MYTH: PARTICIPATION OF F. KAFKA IN THE TRICKSTER TRADITION OF J. W. GOETHE AND TH. MANN

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Abstract

The tradition established by European literature is revealed within the framework of the author's concept of humanization of myth (applying its terms and concepts such as the myth of laughter, the myth of *non-totem-death's* abolition, beneficent trickster, etc.). This tradition implies using in a trickster manner the reminiscences of the Book of Job and implementing in a laughter way the intention offered by the mythologem of Job, i.e. abolishing *non-totem-death* by joint efforts of God and man. The tradition is represented by such names as J. W. Goethe, F. Kafka and Th. Mann. According to Goethe, the story of the torment predetermined by God of a man known to be righteous (Job) is replaced by the story of the salvation predetermined by God of a man known as a sinner (Faust), who has sold his soul to the devil. God Himself is a trickster. According to Goethe, God actually verbalizes the postulate of the powerlessness of evil. Kafka accentuates human actions. Sancho makes a righteous choice when faced by evil-*non-totem*: the protagonist is haunted by a demon who is supposed to destroy him and initiate a lot of disasters through him. However, Sancho, using the books of chivalry, in a laughter manner frees himself, the Universe and even the demon from the terrible predestination: Sancho gives the demon a human name (Don Quixote), tempts him by good and never abandons him. According to Th. Mann, the aspect of cooperation between God and man is verbalized in a trickster way.

Keywords: *European tradition, humanization of myth, mythologem of Job, myth of laughter, myth of non-totem-death's abolition.*

The Truth about Sancho Panza, a laughter novel by F. Kafka (1917), "a little prose piece which is his most perfect creation" (Benjamin, p. 139) holds a specific place in his enormous artistic heritage¹.

For instance, it is characterized by a happy ending almost unimaginable in the works by this author².

Moreover, *The Truth about Sancho Panza* is an implicit yet a laughingly convincing development of a happier version of the mythologem of Job, which also seems implausible at first.

This conclusion (which is to be subsequently confirmed), in its turn, prompts us to ask the following question, "What can be said about the great works of European literature which include clear reminiscences of the Book of Job?"

It has been stated that both *Faust* (1808) by J.W. Goethe and *Joseph and His Brothers* (1943), a tetralogy by Th. Mann, also develop a happy ending in relevant reminiscences widely using the means of laughter. Therefore, the great European literature consistently comprehended the Book of Job in both creative and laughter manners.

This research brought us back to the Book of Job itself, prompting the following suggestion: its conventional concepts do not correspond to its original interpretation the mythologem was created for. It should be taken into account that these concepts result from the humanity's millennial pondering over this mythologem. Such prominent thinkers as S. Kierkegaard, C.G. Jung, etc. are listed only among the authors of the most "recent" centuries.

Hence, as we verify our assumption of the Book of Job, we could only hope for success if we apply a special approach to the mythologem and/or special tools never used before.

For this purpose, we have applied the concept of humanization of myth³. (It has been developed by us in order to identify the basic harmonizing regularities of mythological consciousness).

As a result, the following fact has been revealed:

- The original interpretation of the mythologem of Job is far from the widespread concept related to it. In particular, it did not originate as a theodicy (the justification of God), and had a true happy ending in this different capacity.

- Interpreting the mythologem of Job, the great European literature definitely treads the path marked by the mythologem itself in its initial interpretation specified above.

Let us demonstrate it below, applying the author's concept of humanization of myth. (The research of the mythologem of Job is presented in a rather abbreviated form; a whole range of aspects shall be omitted here).

The components of the concept shall be characterized as needed. Let us mention the following to begin with:

- One of the basic notions of the concept is a *totem / non-totem* dichotomy (discovered by Olga Freidenberg⁴; extrapolated by us taking the *Axial Age* by K. Jaspers into account).

The *totem* is everything consubstantial to the individual essence (life, love, generosity, kind-heartedness, sensual pleasures, universal harmony, good, true ethics, etc.).

At the same time, a *non-totem* is everything opposed to the individual essence (death, betrayal, torture, feeling abandoned by God, eternal separation from the loved ones, physical and mental torments, etc.).

- Harmonization of the Universe by a mythological consciousness, or humanization of myth is implemented as maximizing and revealing the *totem* while abolishing the *non-totem*. For this purpose, in particular, such constants of humanization of myth as the myth of laughter and the myth of *non-totem*-death's abolition are applied (both shall be explained below).

Let us identify the image of the world shaped by the story by Kafka.

In particular, we have to consider the way the narrator, the protagonist, and the Universe prefer to act.

As the text is lesser known and short, we shall reproduce the story titled *The Truth about Sancho Panza* entirely.

"Without ever boasting of it, Sancho Panza succeeded in the course of years, by supplying a lot of romances of chivalry and adventure for the evening and night hours, in so diverting from him his demon, whom he later called Don Quixote, that his demon thereupon freely performed the maddest exploits, which, however, lacking a preordained object, which Sancho

Panza himself was supposed to have been, did no one any harm. A free man, Sancho Panza philosophically followed Don Quixote on his crusades, perhaps out of a sense of responsibility, and thus enjoyed a great and profitable entertainment to the end of his days" (Kafka, p. 430).

The actions of the narrator are trickster-like from the way the title is formulated; the story uses the myth of laughter.

Let us explain what we have mentioned (within the framework of the author's concept of humanization of myth):

- A trickster, or a beneficent trickster is a laughter protagonist who commits good deeds typologically close to universal salvation under the guise of trickery (theft, silliness, or buffoonery)⁵.
- The myth of laughter, a mythological structure that develops a catharsis laughter component in a work of art conforms to the scheme below.

A laughter character, a "jester-rogue-fool" (Бахтин 2000, p. 88) shapes a space of laughter (necessarily based on the universal love⁶) around him, where the *totem* increases, and / or the *non-totem*, including death, is abolished (annihilates itself)⁷.

In the very title of the story, the narrator proudly promises to tell the "truth" (which is obviously known to no one else) about the world-famous protagonist of the novel by Cervantes. He does it in a rather pathetic manner.

A paradox of laughter is obvious: it is a laughter-like "lie" contradicting itself yet serving as a means to express the essential truth. After all, the logical consciousness tells us that there must be no other truth about Sancho Panza except the one told by Cervantes. However, mythological consciousness clarifies: this different truth is possible if we speak about some kind of essential mythological information not subjected to the principle of the excluded third.

Still, lying in order to say an almost unspeakable truth is a trickster's manner. Hence, this narrator is actually a trickster.

At the same time, Sancho as described by Kafka is a trickster, too. After all, this comic hero (as developed by Cervantes himself) acts in a beneficent way, bringing salvation to everyone.

Sancho commits it under the guise of trickery (in fact, he diverts from him his demon by giving some chivalry novels to read). He does it in the situation which seems to be inevitably fatal at first glance: an innocent man is irresistibly thrown into the possession of a demon-*non-totem*, which implies disasters for the character and those around him.

This could be the beginning of the tragedy. The mythologem of Job starts in a similar way. Nevertheless, the space of the novel, unlike that of the mythologem, is a laughter one.

Therefore, the fatal situation is resolved in a laughter way instead of becoming tragic; moreover, it is absolutely idyllic. In a carnival manner, Sancho manages to avoid becoming a victim or an executioner. By behaving in a laughter way, he frees himself, the Universe, and even the demon from the terrible predestination.

The laughter nature of this righteous man, who is able to tempt by good even the demon, who had to tempt Sancho by evil, is formed through the carnival assurance: Sancho is acting "without ever boasting of it". This assurance is regarded as a part of Sancho's stream of consciousness (no one could know about these events except him). Consequently, the protagonist appreciates an opportunity to boast over the salvation from the fatal danger (judging by the fact that this chance is the first to be mentioned, whereas his salvation is the second). It demonstrates the protagonist's laughter "silliness" and his laughter "invulnerability".

The statement that Sancho is not only lucky, but highly ethical in the laughter sense is confirmed by the way he treats the harmless demon. After all, the Universe is incompletely harmonized if an infernal creature who avoids the path of evil is abandoned. Fortunately, it does not happen. "Perhaps out of a sense of responsibility"⁸, Sancho treats the demon the way humans treat an animal behaving in a trustful way: he gives this creature a human name and accompanies him throughout his life.

Besides, the "universal" level of emerging harmony is demonstrated by the fact that the ethical trickster Panza takes a certain advantage of the situation: instead of sacrificing himself, he finds a "great and profitable entertainment" in accompanying Don Quixote.

Let us consider what the Universe, where such events are not only possible, but also contextually predetermined, is like, and examine its structure.

It is obvious that the major role is played by the reminiscences of *Don Quixote* by Cervantes, which activate relevant concepts.

Therefore, the concept "Don Quixote" clearly predetermines the miracle of laughter, where the demon inspired by chivalry novels cannot resist the "temptation by good" and becomes its inspired and passionate defender⁹. This concept inextricably connects the passion for "romances of chivalry and adventure" and such a transformation.

In addition, the concept "Don Quixote and Sancho Panza" acquires a complementary laughter "explanation" in the novel by Kafka. In fact, Sancho's conventional wisdom could have prevented him from seriously believing the promises made by Don Quixote; so he would not have had the need to follow the self-styled knight. Yet the "truth" suggested by Kafka "removes" this perplexing issue entirely.

Don Quixote's almost incredible lack of adequacy is "explained", too. Actually, it is quite clear: due to the infernality of his genesis, the poor demon cannot avoid absurdities while earnestly serving the good purpose.

Through the concept "Don Quixote and Sancho Panza", the Universe of the story implicitly implements a very special ethicizing act. The connotations that connect Don Quixote as a Kafkaesque demon and an animal which trusts a human being and is naive enough to imagine that it is human, too, suggest that transforming into a human being would be the highest award he could ever deserve. But Kafka's story complements the concept "Don Quixote and Sancho Panza". The resulting concept involves the Kafkaesque Don Quixote who "is" a man at the same time, as, according to Cervantes, he is human. Hence, Kafka's Universe is the most ethical even in relation to the demon seeking the good: in a laughter manner, he is awarded the coveted transformation and becomes a human being - a man whose ethical efforts are rewarded by an unconditional recognition of all mankind.

It can be viewed as a narrator's trickster act: the demon abandoning the path of evil and

regarding himself as a man is ethically rewarded by transforming into a human being; it should be mentioned that the narrator does it by means of stating the opposite in the laughter manner.

Since the action takes place in the space of concepts created by Cervantes, when laughter activates them in a trickster way, the situation of pre-established harmony is implicitly formed. It implicitly implies the blissful presence of God, and His predetermined help.

As a result, a laughter addition to the concept "God" from the mythologem of Job is implicitly developed: God may allow some evil powers to interfere with man's life, yet He will certainly help a free person acting as a trickster abolish evil and harmonize the Universe in a painless and even beneficial way for him and the others¹⁰.

In general, Franz Kafka formulates the following laughter image of the world.

Evil is powerless by itself. To manifest itself, it imposes itself categorically upon man it "prefers to choose" as its object. Man, however, is not in disgrace. Oddly enough, he is not doomed, either. On the contrary, the Universe (God) is filled with the most positive "mythological expectations" related to the protagonist.

The protagonist is actually a "free man", which implies that he will find the most laughter-like, catharsis-related, and carnival option to harmonize the events, acting in a "cold-blooded" yet consistent way. All the individual beings will benefit from it while the Universe (God) will be "playing into his hands", implicitly but predictably.

We believe this image of the world is the "truth" the narrator promises to tell us in a carnival manner.

Using maximum generalization, we can say that the story shapes an image of the world where man may abolish evil-*non-totem*, though it seems invincible, and transform the Universe into a special state where everyone feels good – a heavenly state, actually.

It would be appropriate to ask the following questions.

Is the act of Franz Kafka, who shapes this seemingly offbeat view of the world, extravagant? Or, rather, does his act fit into a certain tradition, regardless of Kafka's undoubted innovation?

We can demonstrate that this tradition exists, and its origins go back to unmemorable times. For instance, let us examine the myth of *non-totem-death's* abolition¹¹ as a mythological constant which has been identified by us; it has the structure described below:

1. The protagonist is faced with *non-totem-death*, which seems irresistible.

2. The protagonist makes the following choice:

- in spite of the impossibility, he seeks to abolish *non-totem-death* (the righteous, or the right choice)¹²;
- without trying to abolish *non-totem-death*, he decides to take a certain advantage from it (an unjust, or a wrong choice).

3. The outcome is clearly determined by this choice:

- if the choice is righteous, the righteous protagonist (together with his son, wife, family, etc.) finds both salvation from death and reward (an increase in existence: a treasure, a wedding, a promise from God, an apotheosis, etc.);
- if the choice is unjust, the unrighteous protagonist suddenly gains death¹³ instead of the desired award.

Let us demonstrate that the Book of Job is consistent with the myth of *non-totem-death's* abolition, but contains an important innovation.

Let us summarize the plot: the righteous Job is faced with *non-totem-death*, and it seems irresistible. His ten children die; all his property is destroyed; he contracts leprosy and suffers a lot.

The protagonist, however, consistently opposes *non-totem-death*-lies. First, he refuses to serve it in any manner, rejecting the disastrous advice from his wife (cursing God-*totem* and dying) and friends (resorting to lies-*non-totem*: admitting that he is guilty of the sins he has never committed). Second, Job actually states the illegality of the existence of *non-totem-death*. This statement is formulated as clearly as possible within the discourse the biblical narrator could use¹⁴. This affirmation is verbally approved by God Himself, who specifically states: Job's judgment is much closer to the truth than his friends' words are. Job's behavior is interpreted as the right one not only through God's praise.

The protagonist and his children gain life, health, and wealth as their awards.

It may seem that the mythologem contains an essential deviation from the scheme of the myth of *non-totem-death's* abolition. In fact, for thousands of years, the world has been sure that the Book of Job tells the story of the birth of the protagonist's new children, as Job's "former" children were dead. This element contradicts both the happy ending (though F. Dostoevsky proclaims quite the opposite in *The Karamazov Brothers*) and the scheme of the myth under discussion.

Initially sharing this conviction, we have assumed that one of the versions of the Book of Job distorted the original plot of the mythologem (where Job's dead children are returned to him alive). In search of at least some traces of this event, we have carefully re-read the Book of Job and discovered something quite unexpected. Not a single word in the Book of Job says that other children were born. In accordance with this fact, the following is clearly stated, "Now the Lord returned Job's captivity" (Job 42:10)¹⁵. Yet contextually, no one or nothing but the lost children could be the loss to be returned¹⁶. (On the contrary, the property given to Job is new, and it is exactly twice as large as he used to have; the biblical text lists it in a rather meticulous way). Therefore, according to the biblical text, Job's dead children were returned to him by God alive.

Hence, our concept makes it possible to read the text known yet misinterpreted for centuries adequately. (The only argument in favor of the former interpretation is that it is more "realistic", yet it is obviously not a criterion to be applied here).

Bright innovative specificity of the mythologem of Job is related to the fact that the *non-totem-death's* abolition is not only implemented in the plot (it is inherent to all folk stories of this kind), but is also actually verbalized as a problem to be solved, and involves joint efforts of man and God. Let us recall that the very *modus operandi* of Job whom God has praised implies actually verbalizing the illegality of the existence of *non-totem-death* (expressly stating the need to abolish *non-totem-death*, setting the task to abolish *non-totem-death*, etc.).

Hence, within this mythologem, abolition of *non-totem-death* is actually verbalized as a program God and man are supposed to implement by their joint efforts (moreover, this verbalization is approved by God).

Of course, verbalization of this intuitive guess was rather relative: it was limited within the framework of the discourse and the system of concepts available to the narrator. Errors inevitably emerging during verbalization (we shall reconsider them when examining the concept "dispute about man" transformed and supplemented by Goethe) resulted in the fact that gradually, the mythologem ceased to serve as a source of the information it had been created for. Only the persistent and bizarre feeling that the Book of Job was somewhat purposefully constructed still perplexed the reader. For instance, the Talmud includes an opinion that the story of Job is a cautionary parable, not a story based on any real events¹⁷.

Then, the unexpected happens. Apparently, the mythological consciousness of humanity does not completely "forget" the things it has reached at least once.

European literature begins to consistently interact with the mythologem of Job, as if deciding to implement its alleged program - to harmonize the Universe (abolish *non-totem-death*) by joint efforts of God and man.

This process has the peculiarities described below:

- All the three works under consideration are similar to the Book of Job due to the fact that the protagonist is a character who is representative or typical of his epoch. In the Bible, he is a righteous man. In *Faust*, he is a Renaissance man. In the novel by F. Kafka, he is obviously the "most common" person who has gained enough worldly wisdom (according to Cervantes' concept "Sancho Panza")¹⁸. In the tetralogy by Th. Mann, he is a biblical character who is supposed to solve metaphysical problems relevant to the 20th century.
- All the three works actively involve the myth of laughter. This is natural if we consider the phenomenon of abolition (self-annihilation) of a *non-totem* in the laughter space¹⁹.

- All the three narrators telling us of harmonization of the Universe (abolition of *non-totem-death*) by joint efforts of God and man apply the mythologem of Job in different ways. The achievements of the predecessors are undoubtedly taken into account: Goethe pays most attention to the actions of God; Kafka stresses human actions (without even mentioning God verbally); Th. Mann verbalizes the aspect of cooperation between God and man.

Hence, the work by F. Kafka fits into a special European tradition represented by the texts by J.W. Goethe and Th. Mann.

Let us consider them in detail, identifying the emphasized harmonizing way of action used by the narrator, man, and the Universe (God).

In *Faust* by Goethe, the image of the world is described as follows: man is a noble creature who has a higher purpose; God is the one who grants salvation; all the efforts of evil will be transformed into good.

The narrator creates the image of the world in a trickster manner, using laughter "deception". He complements the concepts "heavenly dispute about man" and "Faust selling his soul to the devil" known to his contemporaries in such a way that they are essentially transfigured.

Before demonstrating this, let us find out how the concept "dispute about man", which was in need of transformation, emerges in the Book of Job. We believe it was formed in a constrained way (as a supplementary and secondary concept). After all, the monotheistic narrator developing an innovative variation of the myth of *non-totem-death's* abolition was inevitably faced with the "technical" need to explain the following. Why did God, in spite of being almighty, generally allow the protagonist to find himself in the face of *non-totem-death*?

I. Kaufman, an authoritative biblical scholar, describes such difficulties as follows, "Some biblical stories attributing demonic acts to God <...> should be interpreted in the context of the overall monotheistic tendencies: any activity was attributed to the sphere of Yahweh, even the one that used to characterize demons" (Кайфман, p. 53). In order not to attribute the creation of woes directly to God, the biblical narrator blames Satan, the enemy of the human race, for the woes

of Job. This attempt did not succeed, anyway: during the dispute, Satan provokes God to cause evil (which seems to be a cruel pointless experimentation on a righteous man), and He yields, allowing Satan to subject Job to some terrible suffering. The anti-ethic nature of such actions of God is brilliantly revealed by C. G. Jung in his essay titled *Answer to Job* (Jung). It should be repeated, however, that the narrator could not offer a better rationalization of the fact that Job's misfortunes were actually possible. The narrator seemed so dissatisfied with it that he did not even bring it to its logical conclusion: he ceased talking about it almost defiantly as soon as he could. Therefore, this motif is used only as a starting point of the plot; after that, both God and the narration "forget" about the dispute with Satan. This negligence seems rather eloquent, we suppose.

As a man whose system of beliefs was shaped much later, Goethe was able to interpret the motif of the dispute between God and Satan, which served as a stumbling block of the Book of Job, as the cornerstone for his own text. Let us recall that, in Goethe's *Prologue in Heaven*, a dispute about man between God and the evil spirit also takes place, moreover, God allows Mephistopheles to interfere with Faust's fate. Yet this motif is reconsidered in a trickster manner. Instead of a story about the suffering of an obviously righteous man predetermined by God, we have a story of a notorious sinner, who sold his soul to the devil, yet whose salvation was predetermined by God. Therefore, Goethe's concept "heavenly dispute about man" is transfigured in a harmonizing way: God is not the one who betrays even the righteous man, yet the one who saves even the sinner.

If we focus on the biblical narrator's essential achievements instead of emphasizing his formal failure, it must be admitted that *Faust* is not opposed to the Book of Job; instead, it seems to develop a program of universal abolition of evil-*non-totem* prescribed by it.

Let us demonstrate that, in *Faust*, the basic "performer" (of the two possible options, i.e. God and man) is God. It is Him who assumes full responsibility for the harmonization of the Universe when he tells Mephistopheles that Faust's higher essence is undoubted. Let us

reconsider that God is like a gardener who knows perfectly well what kind of blossom and fruit a tree he has planted would bear. Moreover, God does not prevent Mephistopheles from interfering with Faust's fate exactly because he actually postulates that evil can only "stir" a man up, but has no power to destroy him. To avoid any doubts related to the fairness of this sudden postulate, Mephistopheles himself has to confess that he is a part of that force which always wants evil and always creates good (Goethe, p. 47). As "dispute about man" is transformed into a postulate of powerlessness of evil and is extremely important for the narrator, the outcome of *Faust* is obviously related to this dispute.

The legend of Faust inevitably included his terrible and spectacular descent to hell²⁰. Goethe's narrator modifies this outcome in a radical laughter way in accordance with the postulate declared by God in the *Prologue in Heaven*. Thus, the satisfied Mephistopheles intends to drag the soul of Faust he has honestly gained to hell. A choir of angels appears. Satan's homosexual inclinations, probably inevitable in his case, distract Mephistopheles' attention, as he turns to admire his seductive relatives. While the devil goes on the leash of his instincts, hailing angels, flattering them, and encouraging them to come closer, they steal Faust's soul and elevate it to heaven. The devil's final cry - he has been "cheated", and his fair game is "stolen" (Goethe, p. 356) - reveals the powerlessness of evil mentioned in the *Prologue* and a sort of its abolition.

It follows that, according to Goethe, God Himself is a trickster. After all, Faust (who metonymically represents every man) is saved by God in a guaranteed and rather roguish way.

Let us now consider (as briefly as necessarily) the image of the world, as well as the mode of action of the narrator, the protagonist, and the Universe (God) in the tetralogy titled *Joseph and His Brothers* by Th. Mann. It has to be mentioned that the novel descends from all the three texts mentioned above. The reminiscences of the Book of Job and *Faust*²¹ in the tetralogy are obvious (the entire chapter titled *Prologue in the Higher Spheres*; trickster imitation of Job's behavior used in order to shame God, when Jacob mourns for his son, etc.). Th. Mann highly appreciates the

works by Kafka emphasizing that the essence of this great artist is best described by the phrase "religious humorist" (Mann 1965, p. 310).

In the image of the world created by the narrator, the aspect of co-operation between God and man harmonizing the Universe is clearly accentuated. The narrator acts in varied ways, yet in a trickster manner.

For example, he applies subtle laughter "deception" using the idea of the possibility of man upbringing God implicitly formulated in the Book of Job. Probably the biblical narrator who unwittingly expressed this idea unknowingly shared it. He was forced to do that by the logic of his own narration, where Job, a human being, successfully inspiring God for harmonizing acts, had an ethicizing impact upon Him. Thomas Mann, a mythologically sensitive person, manages to reveal this surprising information on the Book of Job. Further on, Mann's narrator pretends to share this concept in a laughter manner, actually creating an "educational novel" about God.

Still, he verbalizes this extravagant occupation in a slightly different way, treating it as a record of mutual education of God and man who bless each other (Mann, v. IV, p. 182). The trickster makes it clear that he only expresses the situation when man gets an opportunity for spiritual growth, inventing a good omnipotent God, and attributing more ethical traits to God in proportion to his own development.

In connection with the concept "Job", the narrator implements this intention in the plot and by means of using the laughter manner. Therefore, he complements the concept "Job" in a trickster way, developing a plot motif of the return of the living child who was considered dead by his father. In fact, Joseph is returned to Jacob, though it takes place after many years. In the novel, Jacob is metonymically Job. As a result, it implicitly creates a special addition to the concept "Job", where Job gets back his living children. (This intuitive guess by Th. Mann coincides with the results of our analysis of the mythologem).

However, this turn of events appeals to theodicy: the father was suffering a lot, believing that his child was dead. The theodicy by Th. Mann is a laughter one, and is voiced by Joseph

the trickster meeting his father for the first time after their long separation.

"He (God - J. C.) can be understood," Joseph garrulously mentioned, "if in his greatness, he does not know when to stop, and, as he has no peers, he is unable to imagine himself walking in our shoes. He might be heavy-handed; this is why His mere touch is already destructive, though he does not actually have such cruel intentions, and all he wanted was give us a smack."

Jacob could not help smiling.

"I see that my son has preserved the charming subtlety of his judgment of God even among foreign gods", he uttered». (Mann, v. IV, p. 470).

Consequently, the narrator, simulating the worldview of the biblical times, complements the concept "Job" not only by using the motif of returning lost children alive, but also applying laughter theodicy. But in fact, the narrator develops metaphysical problems of his day, not those of the forefathers, in a trickster way.

In our opinion, this range of issues is based on the concepts similar to those developed by Nikolai Berdyaev (the 20th century) in Christianity, and Yisroel Baal Shem Tov, or Besht (the 18th century) in Judaism, and is generally reduced to the following idea. God has not embodied His will in the Universe yet, allowing the existence to be "fallen" to a large extent ²² (Berdyaev), or be in the state where God, or the Shekinah is not present in its every particle (Besht).

The task of man is applying all his efforts, both physical (creative work in any field) and metaphysical (spiritual aspirations), to promote the transformation of this fallen reality into the true one, which is equivalent to Paradise. Anyway, the tetralogy implicitly declares such cooperation between God and man, whereas the protagonist acts in an obviously trickster way.

This situation is developed there many times in various ways. Let us mention its vivid manifestation such as the story of Hermes, the lyre, and Apollo's cattle Joseph tells the Pharaoh. In a laughter way, the reader is informed that the newborn Hermes uses an extraordinary way to give a lyre to Apollo under the guise of theft and cheating, thus granting people arts. As to Zeus, he takes an active part in the game initiated by the trickster, turning out to be his true

"accomplice" - it is exactly what the little god hints him to do by giving him a wink. Zeus roaring with laughter plays right into the sly kid's hands. The elder God gives the younger one an opportunity to take the next "turn" in a generous game, a divinely perfect implementation of the function of a cultural character.

The narrator equates Hermes to Joseph telling a story about him both verbally and metonymically. For instance, in the report regarding the tetralogy, the narrator literally states that Joseph "obviously turns to Hermes" (Mann, p. 185). In the novel, the mother of Amenhotep, identifying Joseph's manner of acting full of beneficent tricks as identical to the one Hermes uses, and expects getting some life-saving assistance from him. She is not deceived: the trickster saves the entire country from the murderous hunger which is to come. God Himself assists Joseph in his trickster harmonizing actions, just like Zeus play up to Hermes. Moreover, the Almighty bestows Joseph the name "little god" or the "little Jahu" (Mann, v. II, p. 82-83).

The narrator himself tends to behave as if following the objective of embodying "the whole truth" while creating the novel (Mann, p. 173); this is the true reality resulting from joint actions taken by man and God. The relevant motif is mentioned, for example, in the dialogue between Reuben and Joseph talking about Rachel, who died: she is dead, "in reality. But the truth is different" (Mann, v. II, p. 114).

In his report, the narrator, contrasting the "truth" (treated as "the things reason has long grasped and realized") and the situation generated by Nazism which was lying when it "even dared to call itself a reality" (Mann, p. 191), not only contextually expresses his contemptuous indignation, but metaphysically denies the Nazi "reality" the right to empirical existence.

Due to the fact that "exactly the humanization of myth" (Mann, p. 178) is important in the novel, according to the narrator acting as a trickster, it follows that the humanization of myth is identical to "the whole truth" mentioned, or the "truth". Karl Kerényi, a prominent mythologist, sums up his its impression of the action of Mann as a writer, "the one who opens people's eyes to

make them see the great lessons of the game between God and man taught by mythology, <...> has a purifying and humanizing impact"²³.

Therefore, we can speak of the tradition established by the great European literature: through using the reminiscences of the Book of Job laughingly and beneficently in a trickster way, the intentions stipulated by the mythologem itself are implemented, which may be verbalized as the program of abolition of death-*non-totem* by joint efforts of God and man.

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Endnotes

1. In particular, the story under discussion is one of the few works by Kafka, where the narrator is outside the story itself (Krusche, p. 20).
2. According to R. Torrance, the motifs typical of Kafka are the following, "Franz Kafka's hapless protagonists, for example, fully share the benevolent impulse of comic heroes since Don Quixote but are powerless to battle an adversary whom they can never define nor even clearly distinguish from themselves" (Torrance, p. 255).
3. For further details, see: (Кушнир, p. 207-225). We develop humanization of myth as a multi-aspect holistic concept based on an extensive complex of works by outstanding scholars, which may be applied to a variety of studies, including literary and folklore ones.
4. Olga Freidenberg defines a *totem* as a fundamentally new concept homonymous to the term denoting an ancestor of the tribe. For further details, see: (Фрейденберг, p. 24).
5. See also: (Radin)
6. For further details, see: (Бахтин 1990, p. 279-282).
7. For further details regarding the "laughter granting life", see: (Пропп, p. 184-190).
8. According to R. Robertson, it is exactly the "problem of responsibility" (Robertson, p. 18) which is one of the basic issues in the story by Kafka.
9. Let us recall a similar motif of an irresistible temptation by good in such works as *Mr. X. Goes on Holiday* by F. Dürrenmatt and *Thief of Time* by T. Pratchett.
10. As pointed out by Elena Prus, citing the opinion of P. Albuy, it is exactly the emergence of new meanings when using a mythologem in a literary text that serves as a criterion demonstrating that a literary myth has appeared (Prus, p. 190).
11. For references to exact mythological plots and the explanation to what might be regarded as exceptions,

see: (Кушнир, p. 216-217).

12. The ways of acting through which a character seeks to abolish death-*non-totem*, generally speaking, can be different: hiding in a tree when finding oneself near the robbers' hide-out; refusing to sacrifice one's child (wife); saving a friend's dead wife from the kingdom of death, etc.
13. The mythologem of an unjust choice can interfere with the mythologem of apokatastasis (universal salvation), where the character stays alive yet suffers a great loss.
14. Proving this assertion, unfortunately, is far beyond the framework of this article.
15. http://www.chabad.org/library/bible_cdo/aid/16444
16. In our opinion, renaming the three daughters of Job is a common ritual act aimed at protecting the child from demise, confusing the angel of death (Schwarzbaum, p. 285-289).
17. For further details, see: КЕЭ <http://www.eleven.co.il/article/11800>.
18. According to M. Durán, Kafka purposefully creates Sancho as his contemporary, who is able to read (Durán, p. 217-228).
19. The absence of the myth of laughter in the Book of Job itself is associated with stage laws; explaining them is beyond the framework of this article.
20. For further details, see: (Watt, p. 27-47).
21. "As he confided to Karl Kerényi, Mann regarded the *Josef* tetralogy and the *Faust* novel as mythological colleagues" (Grimstad, p. 29).
22. For further details, see, for example: (Бердяев, p. 165-168).
23. Quoted according to: (Харитонов, p. 160).