THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF JOB IN MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

by

HORST DIETER MASTAG

B.A., Brigham Young University, 1971
M.A., Brigham Young University, 1975

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES
THE DEPARTMENT OF GERMANIC STUDIES

We accept this thesis as conforming
to the required standard

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

September 1990
In presenting this thesis in partial fulfilment of the requirements for an advanced degree at the University of British Columbia, I agree that the Library shall make it freely available for reference and study. I further agree that permission for extensive copying of this thesis for scholarly purposes may be granted by the head of my department or by his or her representatives. It is understood that copying or publication of this thesis for financial gain shall not be allowed without my written permission.

Department of Germanic Studies

The University of British Columbia
Vancouver, Canada

Date Nov. 9, 1990
THE TRANSFORMATIONS OF JOB IN MODERN GERMAN LITERATURE

ABSTRACT

In modern times German authors have made ample use of the Job-theme. The study examines the transformations that the story of Job has undergone in German narrative and dramatic works from Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s Der neue Hiob (1878) to Fritz Zorn’s Mars (1977).

The most striking feature of these works lies in their diverse characterization of the Job-figure. As a mythical figure he remains synonymous with the sufferer, but he may be characterized as patient or impatient, humble or arrogant, innocent or guilty, rich or poor, courageous or cowardly; he may be a Jew or a Christian, a Nazi or an anti-Nazi, a believer or an agnostic.

The authors have retained most of the characters included in the Old Testament story. The Job-figure usually has a wife (who doubts and despises God), a number of children (who die in an impending disaster), and several friends (who accuse him of wrong-doing). Concerning the plot, most writers have excluded any prologue in heaven. The suffering of the Job-figure (usually brought on by the loss of loved ones, by physical pain and by mental agony) is always central to the story. More often than not, however, the modern Job-figure exhibits a form of impatience and impiety once misfortune has struck. A theophany (literal confrontation with God) does not occur, but a divine agent may be provided in the form of a dream or a vision, or indirectly by nature. An epilogue (the restoration of Job’s health, possessions and children) is usually omitted, but some authors imply a renewal of Job, so as to suggest a purpose for and a hope after his arduous trials.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>PAGE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Abstract</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgements</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Previous Studies on Job in German</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. THE BOOK OF JOB</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Prologue</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Dialogues</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Elihu Speeches</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Theophany</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Epilogue</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE OLD JOB IN NEW CLOTHES</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Misfortunes of Theofil Pisarenko</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Fortunes of Pisarenko</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Patience of Pisarenko</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impatience of Burlak</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisarenko’s Wife</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisarenko’s Friends</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisarenko’s God</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### III. JOB, THE WANDERING JEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Misfortunes of Mendel Singer</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Job-Figures—Mendel and Deborah</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>America as an Affliction</td>
<td>65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendel's Rebellion</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendel's Comforters</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mendel's Restoration</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Menuchim—the Modern Miracle</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Galician Job-Novels</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### IV. JOB IN THE NAZI PERIOD

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen</td>
<td>99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I (&quot;Das Vorspiel im Reiche Gottes&quot;)</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II (&quot;Die Heimat Jobs des Deutschen&quot;)</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III (&quot;Die große Versuchung&quot;)</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act IV (&quot;Kampf und Überwindung Jobs&quot;)</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act V (&quot;Das Nachspiel im Reiche Gottes&quot;)</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Die Hochzeit von Dobesti</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### V. JOB RISING OUT OF THE ASHES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hiob. Drama in drei Akten</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I (Prologue)</td>
<td>124</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act I</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act II</td>
<td>128</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III (Prologue)</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Act III</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Herr Job. Spiel in einem Akt</strong></td>
<td>145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herr Job's Friends</td>
<td>150</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### VI. JOB, THE EXISTENTIALIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Job, the Religious Existentialist</td>
<td>160</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Dialogue (&quot;Hiobs Kampf&quot;)</td>
<td>162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Second Dialogue (&quot;Auf der Höhe des Kampfes&quot;)</td>
<td>165</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Third Dialogue (&quot;Hiobs Sache&quot;)</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fourth Dialogue (&quot;Der Theologe&quot;)</td>
<td>173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fifth Dialogue (&quot;Gott&quot;)</td>
<td>174</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job, the Secular Existentialist</td>
<td>179</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Arrest of Joseph K</td>
<td>181</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Advisors of Job and Joseph K</td>
<td>183</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty or Not Guilty?</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilty of Living</td>
<td>194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Joseph K., the Passive Fighter</td>
<td>197</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One Problem, Two Solutions</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank my research supervisor, Dr. Peter Stenberg, for his continued support and valuable advice throughout the course of this project. He was a conscientious and cooperative advisor who provided me with helpful directions along the way. I would also like to thank the other members of the Examining Committee for their suggestions and criticisms.
INTRODUCTION

The Book of Job is one of the literary masterpieces of the world. For centuries this ancient work of the Middle East has been praised far and wide. Thomas Carlyle writes of the Book of Job: "There is nothing written, I think, in the Bible or out of it, of equal literary merit."¹ Lord Alfred Tennyson acclaims the Book of Job to be "the greatest poem, whether of ancient or modern literature,"² while Daniel Webster describes it as the "most wonderful poem of any age and language."³ Many commentators on the Book of Job place the work next to Dante's Divine Comedy and Goethe's Faust.⁴ Some critics even place the Book of Job above all other works.⁵

The Book of Job, although some two thousand years old, deals "with problems that are as vital and as puzzling to-day as they were two millenniums ago."⁶ Job is Everyman. By falling from the height of happiness to the depth of despair, he epitomizes the human experience of innocent suffering. By wrestling with himself, with his friends and with God, he exemplifies man's struggle for meaningful existence. By arriving at a resolution and once again attaining peace of mind, he provides faith and hope for a brighter tomorrow. Paul Sanders says the following of Job's universality:

For Western man Job has been the preeminent symbol of innocent suffering. His story interests both scholar and common reader, man of faith and skeptic; no one seriously concerned to understand man's condition can ignore it.⁷
Because of its universal meaning, the Book of Job is a perpetual source of inspiration to men of letters:

Poets, artists, philosophers, psychologists and playwrights are drawn to Job like bees to fresh blossoms' nectar, and each one who wrestles with the book captures new insights that had previously eluded readers.⁸

Throughout the centuries German writers have taken the figure of Job and have adapted his person and problem to their particular time and place.⁹ These adaptations usually resulted in creating an innocent and suffering but patient Job. However, as a consequence of the secularization of the Christian world and the turbulent history of the twentieth century, the figure of Job has been freed from the fetters of his patience and piety.

It will be our purpose, then, to investigate some modern transformations of Job and consider how diverse a character Job has become within the last century. As a mythical figure, he remains synonymous with the sufferer, but he may be characterized as patient or impatient, humble or arrogant, innocent or guilty, rich or poor, courageous or cowardly; he may be a Jew or a Christian, a Nazi or an anti-Nazi, a believer or an agnostic.

Of the several dozen works reflecting the theme of Job in modern German literature,¹⁰ we have in the main limited our discussion to those works which include enough components of the Job-story, so as to make feasible a comparison between the original character of the Old Testament and any modern transformation of Job.¹¹ We have therefore excluded discussion of the following: any comedies, works depicting Job as a character without any problems whatsoever; any inverted Job-stories, works depicting Job as an unrighteous but fortunate character; those works depicting Job as one who suffers under the yoke of woman; those works using the name of Job merely as a signal for
suffering; those works having an oblique relationship to the story of Job; and those works which do not reflect the events of modern history or philosophy. Any discussion of these, however, would only corroborate our thesis that the figure of Job, like a chameleon, has become a highly adaptable character in modern times.

Before considering any of the modern works, it will be necessary to review the essential elements of the Book of Job. We shall briefly examine the structure, the plot, the characters and the theme of the biblical work. This sketchy analysis is not intended to be a thorough exegetical or literary examination, but an introduction to those aspects most commonly treated by the authors under consideration.

We have chosen to begin with Leopold von Sacher-Masoch’s Der neue Hiob (1878), because the novel is one of the last significant works where the hero’s patience and long-suffering are kept intact. This particular Job-figure, a farmer of Eastern Europe, endures every affliction that is laid in his path and never once questions the goodness or fairness of God.

In Hiob, Roman eines einfachen Mannes (1930), Joseph Roth describes how the condition of the hero’s youngest child, an epileptic son, leads to a chain of unfortunate events. In due time, the hero loses his two healthy sons in the First World War, his wife dies of shock and his only daughter goes insane. Further hardships result from the loss of his home country and a constant encroachment of secular life. The hero vents his anger against the Almighty, but regains peace of mind once his only living son is restored to health and is reunited with him.
During the 1930s, Job was being moulded into a figure serving the ideological concepts of his creators. For Ernst Wiechert and Kurt Eggers, Job becomes the symbol of the German nation. In *Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann* (1932), Wiechert depicts Job as a once arrogant German, now defeated and defamed, in the aftermath of the First World War. In *Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen* (1933), Eggers depicts Job as a German sacrificing all he has, even his seven sons, for the greater good of a Germany destined to rule the world. In *Die Hochzeit von Dobesti* (1936), Theodor Haerten makes Job out to be a gypsy. He is portrayed as an unruly character whose lack of discipline eventually leads to the heinous act of destroying his own kith and kin. He is an undesirable non-Aryan who is a liability to a healthy society in the Third Reich.

The Job-figures after 1945 bear the scars of the Second World War. Rolf Lauckner sets his drama, *Hiob* (1949), in the ancient Middle East, but the ruins and rubble present in his play are a reminder of the urban devastation of postwar Germany. After experiencing and witnessing much suffering, the hero concludes that the ways of God are simply incomprehensible to man. The ending is positive, in that the hero shows the necessary courage to rebuild his life after almost total annihilation. Rudolf Henz, in his short play, *Herr Job* (1969), draws on the losses of both World Wars to create a suffering Job. Despite all of the destructive forces, however, the hero prospers again in the postwar years and continues to keep the faith until his only son rejects him and everything he has rebuilt. At the end of the play, the hero asks himself why the restored possessions should have been a blessing for the biblical Job and a curse for him.
Since the Job of the Old Testament has been interpreted as an existentialist by some modern scholars, it should be no surprise that modern writers would depict the Job-figure in a like manner. Hans Ehrenberg, for instance, expressly entitled his work *Hiob, der Existentialist* (1952). With theological overtones, the author presents modern man as a Job who must be driven to despair before life can have any real meaning for him. In *Der Prozeß* (1925), Franz Kafka depicts Joseph K., a character seen as a modern Job by a number of critics, precisely as someone who is driven to despair, but is unable to convert his struggle into a meaningful experience. For Ehrenberg, the suffering of man has a purpose and can lead to God; for Kafka, the suffering of man has no purpose and only leads to death.

Lastly, we shall consider how Job is presented in Leszek Kolakowski's philosophical story, *"Hiob oder die Widersprüche der Tugend"* (1965), and in Fritz Zorn's autobiographical essay, *Mars* (1977). Both writers accuse God of being the cruel author of suffering and Job of being a coward unwilling to rise up against his tormentor.

**Previous Studies on Job in German Literature**

To date there has been one so-called comprehensive study treating the theme of Job in German literature. In his study entitled "*Der Dulder Hiob in der deutschen Literatur*" (1930), Josef Hügelsberger examines works spanning some eight centuries (from the "Hiobssegen und altdeutsche Erbauungsliteratur" of the twelfth century through to Oskar Kokoschka's *Hiob* in the early part of the twentieth century). Due to the wide time span covered in the study, the treatment of most works lacks thorough analysis.
At the end of his study, Hügelsberger draws the following conclusion:

Die Gestalt Hiobs hat sich im Laufe der Entwicklung nicht sehr verändert: er ist immer der passive Mensch geblieben, der das Schicksal über sich ergehen läßt und sich höchstens zum Klagen aufschwingt.\textsuperscript{13}

Although this would be the rule especially in Old High German and Middle High German literature,\textsuperscript{14} it seems that Hügelsberger worked from a preconceived notion and selected only those works which depict Job as a patient sufferer.\textsuperscript{15} As a consequence, he has foregone the treatment of significant works such as Hartmann von Aue’s Der arme Heinrich\textsuperscript{16} (about 1195) and Johann von Tepl’s Ackermann aus Böhmen\textsuperscript{17} (about 1400), both of which reveal a Job-figure with an impatient disposition. Other important works, such as Lessing’s Nathan der Weise\textsuperscript{18} (1779), Goethe’s Faust I\textsuperscript{19} (1808) and Stifter’s Abdias\textsuperscript{20} (1843), all of which reflect aspects of the Job-story, receive no mention at all. Since Hügelsberger does not limit his study to any particular genre, he might also have considered some poets, such as Günther\textsuperscript{21} (1695-1723), Heine\textsuperscript{22} (1797-1856) and Lenau\textsuperscript{23} (1802-1850).

A major oversight in Hügelberger’s study lies in his treatment of modern works. His exclusion of Sacher-Masoch’s Der neue Hiob (1878) is especially regrettable, since this late nineteenth-century novel depicts the Job-figure as the patient sufferer par excellence. Besides that, the first three decades of the twentieth century brought forth about a dozen works reflecting the Job-story, but Hügelsberger treats only one of them.\textsuperscript{24}

In the past twenty years several studies have been made of German works dealing with the Job-theme. Ulf Wielandt considers how aspects of the Job-story were adapted in the Old High and Middle High German periods,\textsuperscript{25} Karl Heinz Glutsch examines the
Job-theme as it is reflected in literature of medieval Germany,26 and Carol Anne Winston compares a work of the late Middle Ages, Der Ackermann aus Böhmen, with the Book of Job.27

A couple of works have been written treating the Job-theme of two modern authors—Joseph Roth and Franz Kafka. In her study, "Das Hiobsmotiv im epischen Werk Joseph Roths. Zum Verhältnis von mythischer 'Vorlage' und sozialgeschichtlicher Darstellung" (1980), Angelika Pöthe treats those narrative works of Roth which in some way reflect aspects of the Job-story. She traces the Job-motif in the following works: Die Rebellion (1924); Der Wasserträger Mendel [ein Fragment] (1929/30); Hiob. Roman eines einfachen Mannes (1930); Tarabas. Ein Gast auf dieser Erde (1934); Die hundert Tage (1935); Beichte eines Mörders, erzählt in einer Nacht (1936); and Das falsche Gewicht. Die Geschichte eines Eichmeisters (1937). Concerning the relationship between the Book of Job and Joseph Roth's works, Pöthe ascertains the following:

Joseph Roth wählt in keinem seiner Werke den Hiobsmotiv als Sujet, er schreibt keine Bearbeitungen des Buches Hiob oder greift auch nur den Erzählstoff des alttestamentlichen Buches auf. Er gestaltet moderne Schicksale, die er auf das Schicksal des biblischen Geschlagenen hin transparent macht.28

According to Pöthe, then, Roth uses the Job-myth as a device that serves to underscore the suffering of modern man. The protagonists in Roth's novels are Job-figures inasmuch as they are victims of tragic circumstances, which in turn leads them to rebel against God, whom they hold responsible for their misfortune.

In his study, Kafka's 'Prozess' im Lichte des 'Buches Hiob' (1976), Rudolf Suter demonstrates how analogous these two works are. His analysis consists largely of comparing
the lives of the two protagonists, of exploring their feelings of guilt and of examining the image of God and the Court. The focal point for Suter lies in the fact that the lives of both Job and Joseph K. are suddenly disrupted and that both try to come to terms with a higher power, though they then experience disparate endings. Suter asks the question:

Wie kommt es, dass Hiobs Auseinandersetzung glücklich endet?
Wie kommt es, dass K. am Schluss der Auseinandersetzung umgebracht wird?²⁹

His study leads him to conclude that Job lives in a world considered to be whole and coherent, where the individual is part of God’s creation. The biblical figure has a meaningful relationship with God and his community. Despite his suffering, Job sees God as his Judge and his Comforter. Joseph K. lives in a world that appears disconnected and incoherent. His personal relationships with others are tentative at best and his efforts to come to terms with God (the system of the Court) leave him alienated and despondent. Suter also reviews about a dozen articles in which comparisons are made between Job and Joseph K., but he strongly disagrees with those critics who assume that Kafka consciously used the Job-story as a pattern for Der Prozeß. For both Pöthe and Suter, the Book of Job served less as a prefiguration, than simply as a valuable comparison with specific works of modern fiction.

It should not go unmentioned that studies have also been made of two German exile poets, Karl Wolfskehl (1869-1948) and Ivan Goll (1881-1950), both of whom show a predilection for the Job-theme in their poetry.³⁰

No comparative study, however, has been made of Job in modern German literature. Isolated articles have appeared giving examples of modern authors who treat the Job-theme,
but any discussion of their works has been limited to brief comments. Hector Maclean ("The Job Drama in Modern Germany" [1954]) makes a short analysis of how four playwrights (Ehrenberg, Wiechert, Haerten, Borchert) relate their dramas to the Job-story. Lieselotte von Eltz-Hoffmann ("Hiob in der Dichtung" [1967]) gives a sketchy account of selected authors (Hartmann von Aue, Goethe, Wiechert, Joseph Roth, Archibald MacLeish) who have made use of the Job-motif in their works. Sigrid Bauschinger ("Hiob und Jeremias. Biblische Themen in der deutschen Literatur des 20. Jahrhunderts" [1980]) does little more than mention a number of authors (among them, Richard Beer-Hofmann, Joseph Roth, Karl Wolfskehl, Elke Lasker-Schüler, Nelly Sachs) whose works reflect the Job-theme. Heinz Flügel ("Hiob in der Gegenwartsliteratur" [1985]) briefly summarizes some works (Shakespeare's Merchant of Venice, Lessing's Nathan der Weise, Goethe's Faust, Joseph Roth's Hiob, MacLeish's J.B.) in context with the Job-story and goes on to mention a number of authors (among them, Heinrich Heine, Franz Kafka, Ernst Bloch, Ivan Goll, Nelly Sachs) who deal with Job as a figure who is reflected in modern literature.

The Job-story is also a subject of considerable interest in the study of other literatures. Adelheid Hausen has made a comprehensive study of Job in French literature. Judith Rauchwarger deals with the theme of Job as reflected by four Spanish authors. Lawrence Besserman dwells on the legend of Job as seen chiefly in the English literature of the Middle Ages.

Two studies have been made primarily of American postwar literature as it relates to the Job-theme. Gary M. Spitzer ("The Book of Job in Contemporary Literature" [1970]) has chosen to treat an American poet (Robert Frost), an American playwright (Archibald
MacLeish) and, oddly enough, a German theologian-philosopher (Hans Ehrenberg). In Spitzer's treatment, Frost regards Job as a joker, MacLeish sees him as an everyman and Ehrenberg views him as an existentialist. According to Spitzer, all three authors suggest that a mutual dependence exists between God and man, that is to say, "that God needs man as much as man needs God." His treatment of Ehrenberg, of some interest to us, consists of translating and commenting on key passages of *Hiob, der Existentialist*. The significance of the drama, however, is not contextualized within German or even American literature. Spitzer treats the work in a vacuum, unrelated to any modern history or philosophy.

Linda Labin ("The Whale and the Ash-heap: Transfigurations of Jonah and Job in Modern American Literature—Frost, MacLeish, and Vonnegut" [1980]) examines two of the same works which Spitzer treats, Frost's *Masque of Reason* and MacLeish's *J.B.*, as well as a number of works by Kurt Vonnegut. She sees in these a response to the Second World War and its aftermath. According to Labin, each author emphasizes a different human characteristic in order to cope with trying modern times:

For Frost, the most important thing in life is, evidently, courage, while for MacLeish it is human love, and for Vonnegut it is human decency.39

Nearly all studies of works incorporating the Job-myth seem to bear out the fact that authors continue to turn to the biblical story of Job because it is a source rich in symbolism for modern man in search of meaning.
Notes


10For a list of works reflecting aspects of the Job-story in twentieth-century German literature, see Appendix A.

11Although we have chosen to limit our discussion to narrative and dramatic works, it should not go unmentioned that the motif of Job has also been taken up by a number of modern German poets. Chief among these are: Johannes R. Becher, Karl Wolfskehl, Ivan Goll, Nelly Sachs, Elke Lasker-Schüler and Paul Celan.
12 See footnote 3 in Appendix A.


15 Of the works within the New High German period, Hügelsberger discusses the following:

Ruof, Jakob, _Die beschreybung Jobs deß fromen gottsforchtigen und gedultigen mannes Gottes_ (1535), [geistliches Schauspiel].

Lorchius, Joannes, _Jobus patientiae spectaculum_ (1543), [lateinisches Schauspiel].

Narhamer, Johann, _Historia Jobs_ (1546), [Komödie].

Sachs, Hans, _Comedi. Der Hiob_ (1547), [Schauspiel].

Bertesius, Johannes, _Hiob. Tragicomedia_ (1603).

Schupp, Johann Balthasar, _Der geplagte oder gedultige Hiob_ (1659), [didaktische Schrift].

Riedel, Franz Xavier, _Das Buch Hiob_ (1846), [Erzählung].

Rietmann, Joseph Jakob, "Hiob oder das alte Leid im neuen Lied" (1843), [Gedicht].

Brunner, Sebastian, _Der deutsche Hiob_ (1846), [politische Satire].

Müller, Johann Wilhelm, _Hiob_ (1850), [Schauspiel].

Pönholzer, Bartolomäus, _Job. der fromme Dulder_ (1862), [religiöses Schauspiel].

Zapf, Philipp, _Hiob_ (1866), [dramatisch-didaktisches Bild].

Koester, Hans, _Hiob_ (1885), [episches Gedicht].

Adler, Leopold, _Das Buch Hiob_ (1891), [Schauspiel].

Bünker, J. R., ed. _Der geduldige Hiob_ (1915), [steirisches Volksdrama].
Kokoschka, Oskar, Hiob (1917), [expressionistisches Drama].


23 See Mateja Matejic, "'The Anguish of Spirit' of Job, Lenau, and some Slavic Authors," *Germano-Slavico* 4 (1974), pp. 31-41. Matejic is of the opinion that "Lenau's poetry is closest to the Book of Job."

24 For a list of works reflecting the Job-theme prior to 1930, see Appendix A.
25 See Wielandt.

26 See Glutsch.

27 See Winston.

28 Pöthe, p. 200.


34 See Flügel, pp. 204-17.


There is much controversy surrounding the authorship, the date and the genre of the Book of Job. The author of this ancient Hebrew text is unknown, the date of its origin can only be surmised, and critics are unable to agree on its literary classification. Two problems are usually associated with the authorship of Job. First, did merely one author or did multiple authors contribute to the final version of the book? Most biblical scholars are of the opinion that the various components of the Book of Job were not written by one and the same author.¹ Second, if the major portion of the Book of Job can be attributed to one author, who was he? Here, scholars are in disagreement and turn to speculation. Marvin H. Pope notes that the authorship has been ascribed to a variety of candidates, among them the following: a contemporary of Abraham who married Jacob’s only daughter Dinah; a grandson of Esau; and Moses.² Robert Gordis reviews a number of critics who put forth divergent views as to the origin of the Book of Job. It has been argued, for instance, that the author may have been of Arab, Aramaic, Egyptian or Edomite origin.³ Gordis himself
is of the opinion that "the Book of Job was written by a highly learned Hebrew in his native
tongue." Laura S. Portor, too, assumes the author to be Hebrew, perhaps a Hebrew in
exile, someone who was "a dissenter, a nonconformist of his day, "someone who was looked
on "by the ‘faithful’ as a pariah—as a danger and a menace to his own." Robert H. Pfeiffer,
in discussing the nationality of the author, shows that the vast majority of modern critics
represents the viewpoint that the major parts of the Book of Job were written by a Judean
or a Jew.

Since the authorship is unknown, fixing a precise date to the Book of Job is hardly
possible. Most biblical scholars accept that the chief contributor to the Book of Job lived
between 700 and 200 B.C.E., but that "the folk story of Job in its oral version goes back to
unknown antiquity."

The events of the story of Job, as portrayed in the Old Testament, take place in the
era of the patriarchs (about 2200-1500 B.C.E.) in the land of Uz, an area east of Palestine
and north of Edom. Many critics therefore surmise that the setting of the story of Job is
in a part of Arabia.

Critics and commentators have great difficulty classifying the genre of the Book of
Job. Attempts have been made to define the work in the broadest sense, such as epic,
dramatic or lyric, or in a very narrow sense, such as a parable, a dramatic poem or a
didactic wisdom story. But the Book of Job defies traditional classification and some
biblical scholars have recognized this. Pope, for instance, states the following:

In point of fact, there is no single classification appropriate to
the literary form of the Book of Job. It shares something of the
characteristics of all the literary forms that have been ascribed
to it, but it is impossible to classify it exclusively as didactic, dramatic, epic, or anything else.\footnote{10}

H. H. Rowley likewise concludes that the Book of Job is \textit{sui generis}:

Much ink has been wasted in discussing the precise literary category into which it.\textit{[the Book of Job] falls, and whether it is epic or drama. It has been compared with the work of Homer, or with creations of the Greek dramatists, Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, or with the Dialogues of Plato. In truth it is not to be classed with any of these. In the words of A. S. Peake "it is itself." The genius of the author gave it its unique literary form as the means of expressing his profound message.}\footnote{11}

 Structurally speaking, the Book of Job may be divided into two parts: a) the prose frame, consisting of the Prologue (1-2) and the Epilogue (42:7-17), and b) the poetic Discourses, consisting of the Dialogues or Symposium (3-31), the Elihu speeches (32-37), and the Theophany (38-42:6). Most scholars are of the opinion that these two parts are heterogeneous in nature and that the prose frame belongs to a much older folk-tale, which the author used in order to create a desired tension. The Prologue and Epilogue together form a literary unit. The former describes the cosmic transactions between God and Satan that result in the trials of Job, while the latter describes the restoration of the afflicted hero.\footnote{12} Most scholars also agree that parts of the poetic Discourses are accretions to the more homogeneous dialogues between Job and his friends. The speeches of Elihu, a fourth friend not mentioned previously or thereafter, do not seem to fit. Job does not respond to Elihu as he does to the others, and, more important, his series of speeches interrupts the crescendo built up by Job's appeal to God and the ensuing Theophany.\footnote{13} God's Speeches from out of the Whirlwind, although displaying majestic imagery, do not connect thematically with the previous dialogues. Job and his friends discuss the subject of suffering,
whether it is deserved or not. When God speaks, He does not address this problem at all, but instead parades His wondrous creation in front of their eyes.¹⁴

Other parts of the Book of Job are identified as interpolations of one sort or another, especially the so-called "hymn in praise of wisdom" (28).¹⁵ Should the Book of Job, however, be composed of literary bits and pieces, then it must still be remembered that a redactor, or a number of redactors, over time desired the final version as it stands. Samuel Terrien proposes the following:

If the book in its present form were proved to be a compilation, it would be a priori not an artificial collection of hitherto isolated and autonomous units, but an organic whole which grew through a process of internal development by the grafting of additions to a *Grundschrift*.¹⁶

For our discussions we will use the present form of the Book of Job as it has been passed down through history as canonized scripture. The present text, with all of its structural and thematic conundrums, has been and continues to be the point of reference for artists and thinkers dealing with the figure of Job.

The Prologue (1-2)

The opening verse introduces the hero as an undisputed man of God: "Es war ein Mann im Lande Uz, der hieß Hiob. Derselbe war schlecht und recht, gottesfürchtig und mied das Böse" (1:1).¹⁷ Job has ten children, seven sons and three daughters. He is also the richest man in the East, owning large parcels of land and thousands of head of livestock. The hero is clearly presented with superlatives—a man second to none.
The scene then shifts to Heaven, where God and Satan (here, one of the sons of God and not the arch-adversary) briefly converse with one another. Satan says he has been down on Earth and God inquires if he has taken note of his righteous servant Job. Satan suggests that Job is only God-fearing because he has been blessed so richly. This leads to the first wager: "Aber recke deine Hand aus und taste an alles, was er hat: was gilt's, er wird dir ins Gesicht absagen?" (1:11). The Lord takes him up on this, saying: "Siehe, alles, was er hat, sei in deiner Hand; nur an ihn selbst lege deine Hand nicht" (1:12).

One day, four messengers come running to Job to deliver the devastating news. The first three tell of the complete destruction of Job's herds of livestock as well as the death of his servants. The fourth one tells of the collapse of the house in which Job's children were gathered for a celebration and that all ten have died in the mishap. Deeply grieved, but not enraged, Job utters the words:

Ich bin nackt von meiner Mutter Leibe gekommen, nackt werde ich wieder dahinfahren. Der Herr hat's gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen; der Name des Herrn sei gelobt! (1:22)

The scene shifts back to Heaven. God informs Satan of Job's steadfastness in the face of tragedy, but Satan swiftly adds that a man will sacrifice everything as long as his health is preserved. He then presses on to make a second wager: "Aber recke deine Hand aus und taste sein Gebein und Fleisch an; was gilt's, er wird dir ins Angesicht absagen?" (2:5). The Lord agrees once again setting the following conditions: "Siehe da, er sei in deiner Hand; doch schone seines Lebens!" (2:6).

A terrible disease strikes Job, covering his body with boils from head to toe. He is in so much pain and discomfort that he scrapes his running sores with a potsherd just to
feel momentary relief. Job's wife cannot bear this horrible sight and intense suffering and
nicht auch annehmen?" (2:10). Then three friends appear who come to mourn and comfort Job.

One fascinating aspect of the Prologue lies in the fact that the reader is privy to some vital information that remains inaccessible to the mortals who are caught up in this ill-fated drama. The cause of the afflictions originates from the agreement made between God and Satan—an agreement intended to test the faithfulness of Job. Satan expects Job's faithfulness to falter once he is stripped of his possessions, his children and his own health. But God knows that His servant will remain steadfast even under the most trying circumstances. Notwithstanding, Job has to be put to the test, so that Satan can be proved wrong. The reader, then, knows from the very outset that Job is an innocent sufferer, that he is a mere pawn in a cosmic chess game. But despite the calculated catastrophes that come over Job, his faith in God never waivers. He does not understand why he is struck down so severely, but he praises God nonetheless. He is a paragon of patience and stands the test admirably.

The Dialogues (3-31)

What a sharp contrast, then, when Job's first words after seven days of silence are the following: "Der Tag müsse verloren sein, darin ich geboren bin, und die Nacht, welche sprach: Es ist ein Männlein empfangen!" (3:3). Job is not only lamenting; he is complaining and cursing the day he was born. In fact, he wishes he had never been born: "Warum bin
ich nicht gestorben von Mutterleibe an? Warum bin ich nicht verschieden, da ich aus dem Leibe kam?" (3:11). The parallelisms, so indicative of Hebrew poetry and well transmitted by Martin Luther in German, punctuate the fury and frustration felt by Job.

Suddenly a new Job has emerged. Chapter 3 seems to be the storm after the calm and for the rest of the Dialogues Job vents his anger. Present at this outburst of bitter emotions are his three friends: Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar. They have come to comfort Job, but now they are outraged at the resentment and rebellion he is displaying towards God. Job the Patient has become Job the Impatient.

Morris Jastrow makes it a point to contrast the two Jobs:

The Job of the story has sublime faith in God's justice, despite all appearances to the contrary. The Job of the discussions conceives of God as strong and powerful, but as arbitrary and without a sense of justice. Such are the two Jobs, the one as far removed from the other as heaven is from earth.

Three cycles of speeches follow (4-11; 12-20; 21-27). They are carefully planned by the author, for each cycle consists of three speeches by Job interlaced with a reply by each friend. (Since Bildad's third reply is quite short and Zophar does not make a third reply, it is generally assumed that these were present in but later lost from the original version.) The contents of the discussions, although they touch on a variety of subjects, chiefly revolve around one theme—the plight of the innocent sufferer. Job's friends, representing the conventional viewpoint of the day, conclude that Job must have brought these afflictions on himself. The friends insist on a cause and effect relationship concerning Job's misfortunes. In concert with Deuteronomy 28 and Leviticus 26, they cling to the belief that a just God
rewards the righteous and punish the wicked. Assuming that Job's condition is a form of
punishment, it follows that he must have sinned. And since his punishment is so severe, he
must have sinned quite severely. But Job cannot accept this argument. He knows he has
served God to the best of his ability, and should there have been a trifling sin here and
there, then the punishment meted out is surely disproportionate to his transgression. By
accusing Job of gross violations of the Law, his friends elevate themselves above him. Since
they can flaunt their good health and prosperity, they can assume, according to their brand
of religion, that they must have been righteous enough in order to be enjoying such a
blessed condition. Indeed, they posit themselves to be models of moral conduct while
accusing others of their shortcomings. It is a classic case of self-righteousness and it is no
wonder that Job ends up calling his friends "miserable comforters." Terrien describes the
rigid belief of the friends this way:

Their orthodoxy . . . is a devious attempt to maintain the sense
of their own honor. It is not God they defend, but rather their
own security. Indeed, it is their pride which they uphold when
they condemn Job, and it is their sin which they reveal when
they pay tribute to divine sovereignty. 22

Since these discussions presuppose the prologue of the frame story, the reader lends all of
his sympathy to Job, a truly innocent sufferer. And who can help but identify with him?
Even if one has not had the same misfortunes as Job, the anguish can be felt by all. So
Søren Kierkegaard felt when he wrote the following:

I have not owned the world, have not had seven sons and three
daughters. But one who owned very little may indeed also have
lost everything; one who lost the beloved has in a sense lost
sons and daughters, and one who lost honor and pride and
along with it the vitality and meaning of life—he, too, has in a
sense been stricken with malignant sores. 23
In his *Genius of Christianity*, Chateaubriand expresses a similar sentiment:

> Job is the emblem of suffering humanity; and the inspired writer has found lamentations sufficient to express all the afflictions incident to the whole human race.²⁴

For Jastrow, the Dialogues capture the essence of human suffering:

> The Symposium [3-27] is all the more remarkable because despite its rebellious tone, its boldness is kept within the limits of an honest search for truth, undertaken in a profoundly serious frame of mind. Its pessimism is free from any tinge of cynicism or frivolity; its skepticism is never offensive, because it keeps close to intense sympathy for suffering mankind as typified by Job. The Symposium, quite apart from its literary qualities, stands out for these reasons in the world’s literature as one of the boldest attempts to attack a problem which today, after two thousand years and more, still baffles religious minds.²⁵

In these three cycles of speeches, the friends entertain variations on the same theme—the doctrine of retribution—, while Job defends himself and tries to make sense of God and His ways. But throughout the Dialogues there is really no intellectual movement between the two parties.

After the cycle of speeches by each friend, Job brings his discourses to a conclusion. In chapter 28, thought to be extraneous because it does not correlate with the rest of Job’s speeches, he praises wisdom as the greatest gift, which unfortunately is not accessible to mortals:

> Wo will man aber die Weisheit finden? und wo ist die Stätte des Verstandes?
  Niemand weiß, wo sie liegt, und sie wird nicht gefunden im Lande der Lebendigen. (28:12-13)

Job’s crowning comment in praise of wisdom comes in the last verse of the chapter: "Siehe, die Furcht des Herrn, das ist Weisheit; und meiden das Böse, das ist Verstand" (28:28).
In chapter 29, Job yearns for his former state of blessedness, while in chapter 30, he bemoans his present state of misery. He demonstrates his state of destitution when he lapses into his final lamentations:

Meine Eingeweide sieden und hören nicht auf; mich hat überfallen die elende Zeit.
Ich gehe schwarz einher, und brennt mich doch die Sonne nicht; ich stehe auf in der Gemeinde und schreie.
Ich bin ein Bruder der Schakale und ein Geselle der Strauße.
Meine Haut über mir ist schwarz geworden, und meine Gebeine sind verdorrt vor Hitze.
Meine Harfe ist eine Klage geworden, und meine Flöte ein Weinen. (30:27-31)

Chapter 31 consists of a series of negative confessions. Job lists all of the sins of commission of which he is not guilty and feels, after all of the accusations of his friends, blameless before God. He finally rests his case and challenges God to answer him:

O hätte ich einen, der mich anhört! Siehe, meine Unterschrift – der Allmächtige antworte mir! – und siehe die Schrift, die mein Verkläger geschrieben!
Wahrlich, dann wollte ich sie auf meine Achsel nehmen und mir wie eine Krone umbinden;
ich wollte alle meine Schritte ihm ansagen und wie ein Fürst zu ihm nahen.
Wird mein Land wider mich schreien und werden miteinander seine Furchen weinen;
hab ich seine Früchte unbezahlt gegessen, und das Leben der Ackerleute sauer gemacht:
so mögen mir Disteln wachsen für Weizen und Dornen für Gerste. (31:35-40)

The Elihu Speeches (32-37)

After Job’s challenge to his Creator, the reader anticipates God’s appearance. And God does indeed appear, but not before a fourth friend, Elihu, steps in and sets out to
accomplish what the others could not. He is young and arrogant and first of all chastizes Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar for failing to confute Job. Then he proceeds to regurgitate in four uninterrupted speeches what the other three have already said. In effect, then, Job has four friends or so-called comforters who visit him. Consequently, any modern transformation of such friends into an adapted version of Job may consist of three or four individuals.

The Theophany (38:1-42:6)

The dramatic suspension is finally lifted when God answers Job out of the whirlwind. The first words that God speaks practically nullify the preceding discussion between Job and his friends. He bursts upon the scene asking: "Wer ist der, der den Ratschluß verdunkelt mit Worten ohne Verstand?" (38:2). In other words, He tells Job that from a cosmic perspective he is relatively ignorant. Then God throws out a counter-challenge: "Gürte deine Lenden wie ein Mann; ich will dich fragen, lehre mich!" (38:3). Supreme sarcasm seems to be embodied in these words. Physically and mentally, Job has drunk from the dregs. He is still reeling from the loss of his ten children and his untold possessions. Presently, he is sitting on a pile of dust and ashes surrounded by four friends who are more like enemies. All the while, blood and pus are oozing out of innumerable boils covering his body. His only question throughout the entire Dialogue has been: Why? Now God appears and tells Job to cease complaining and stand up like a man.

Completely avoiding Job's appeal, God overwhelms him with a battery of questions. In so doing, He portrays Himself as the grand Creator and Keeper of the Universe. He
dazzles Job, using beautiful and vivid images, with the marvels and mysteries of His creations:

Wo warst du, da ich die Erde gründete? Sage an, bist du so klug!
Weißt du, wer ihr das Maß gesetzt hat, oder wer über sie eine Richtschnur gezogen hat?
Worauf stehen ihre Füße versenkt, oder wer hat ihr einen Eckstein gelegt,
da mich die Morgensterne miteinander lobten und jauchzten alle Kinder Gottes? (38:4-7)

God's panorama of creation touches on all forms of nature, inanimate and animate: the sky above with myriads of stars and constellations; the earth itself with its elements and seasons, and the vast plant and animal kingdoms. Job listens to his Maker in awe and then submits: "Siehe, ich bin zu leichtfertig gewesen; was soll ich antworten? Ich will meine Hand auf meinen Mund legen" (40:4).

God begins another speech and this time describes the power of two curious creatures known as Behemoth and Leviathan, considered by some to be the hippopotamus and crocodile respectively, by others to be two mythical monsters.

At the end of God's speeches, Job considers the question he was asked when God first spoke, namely: "Wer ist der, der den Ratschluß verhüllt mit Unverstand?", and acknowledges: "Darum bekenne ich, daß ich habe unweise geredet, was mir zu hoch ist und ich nicht verstehe" (42:3). He regrets his barrage of complaints and says:

Ich hatte von dir mit den Ohren gehört; aber nun hat mein Auge dich gesehen.
Darum spreche ich mich schuldig und tue Buße in Staub und Asche. (42:5-6)

Despite the grandeur of His appearance, God brings no balsam to the wounds of the innocent sufferer. Job, least of all, needs convincing of God's greatness, but that is, after
all, the impact of the Theophany. A further point of irony lies therein, that Job has already anticipated that he would be unable to answer any of God’s many questions, should he ever have an encounter with Him:

Ja, ich weiß gar wohl, daß es also ist und daß ein Mensch nicht recht behalten mag gegen Gott.
Hat er Lust, mit ihm zu hadern, so kann er ihm auf tausend nicht eins antworten.
Er ist weise und mächtig; wem ist’s je gelungen, der sich wider ihn gelegt hat? (9:2-4)

The Epilogue (42:7-17)

In the short closing frame the Lord chastizes Eliphaz and his two friends, because they did not speak the truth as Job did. There is also a great irony here. All along the three friends are upholders of the law of retribution and defenders of God’s unquestioned justice, while Job cries out against the unfairness of suffering without cause. More specifically, of course, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, as well as Elihu, all assumed that Job had been afflicted on account of his sins, which Job vehemently denied. In this, clearly, the friends did not speak the truth. Job’s health is restored, his fortunes are doubled and he again becomes father of seven sons and three daughters. All’s well that ends well. "Und Hiob starb alt und lebenssatt" (42:17).
Notes


2See Pope, p. XXXII.


4Gordis, p. 212.


8Pfeiffer, p. 675.


10Pope, p. XXXI.

11Rowley, pp. 141-42.


15See Terrien, "The Book of Job," p. 888; Fohrer, p. 329; and Pope, p. XXXVII.


17"Das Buch Hiob," Die Bibel oder die ganze Heilige Schrift des Alten und Neuen Testaments. Nach der deutschen Übersetzung Martin Luthers (Luzern: Kunstkreis Buchverlag, 1964). All further references to this work appear in the text with numbers in parentheses indicating chapter and verse of the passage.

18Driver surmises the disease to be "the severe and loathsome form of leprosy called Elephantiasis." (Old Testament, p. 413).

19Driver sees Job's cry passing through three phases: 1) He curses bitterly the day of his birth, wishing himself unborn. 2) He asks why, if he needed to be born, he did not at once pass to the grave. 3) He expresses his mournful surprise, that life should be prolonged for those who, in their misery, long only for death. See Old Testament, p. 413. James L. Crenshaw examines some key passages that show how Job perceives God to be his personal enemy. Job's dilemma is, that on the one hand, he feels God is too far away (13:24-28), and on the other hand, he feels God is too close (16:9-14 and 19:9-12,22). See James L. Crenshaw "Murder Without Cause," A Whirlwind of Torment (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), pp. 62-75.

20Eliphaz is usually considered to be the most gentle and dignified of the three. Zophar is the most caustic and dogmatic. Bildad falls somewhere in between.

21Jastrow, p. 41.


25Jastrow, p. 38.
CHAPTER II

THE OLD JOB IN NEW CLOTHES

Aus Leiden kommt Kraft,
Aus Leiden kommt Gesundheit.

Hermann Hesse

Leopold von Sacher-Masoch (1836-1895) was born in Lembach, a town in the Ukraine, then part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. He studied law, mathematics and history in Prague and Graz and for a few years returned to Lembach to teach as a professor. By the early 1860s he was devoting himself entirely to writing. Although he is not considered by most critics to be a major writer, Sacher-Masoch has been described as the "Turgeniev of Little Russia,"¹ the "Galician Jean Paul,"² as well as the "Austrian Lessing,"³ while some of his shorter works have been compared to those of Gogol and Dostoyevsky.⁴

Today Sacher-Masoch is primarily known for his Venus im Pelz (1870), one of his many works which typifies a form of perversion derived from his name and coined by the neurologist Krafft-Ebing as masochism. But many of his stories and novels describe the nineteenth-century milieu of those farmers and villagers who had settled in Galicia, the area of Eastern Europe where he himself lived until the age of twelve. Among those novels is Der neue Hiob (1878), one of his finest, yet most neglected works.
Shortly after Sacher-Masoch’s death in 1895, Ludwig Salomon wrote in a review about the author’s literary contributions:

Als das künstlerisch vollendetste Werk ist jedoch der Roman Der neue Hiob zu bezeichnen, das Lebensbild eines galizischen Bauern, der die ganze Schwere des Daseins zu tragen hat, aber mit Beharrlichkeit und Zähigkeit alle Mühsale überwindet und schließlich, wie Hiob selbst, sein Leben in Frieden und in Dankbarkeit gegen Gott beschließt. Ohne allen sensationellen Aufputz ist die einfache und doch auch so eigenartige Geschichte erzählt und wirkt daher um so erschütternder.\(^5\)

It is curious, then, that Der neue Hiob has received so little attention in the secondary literature treating the theme of Job. Hügelsberger remarks at the end of his work:


Der neue Hiob, however, is a sizeable novel which follows the fortunes and misfortunes of a Galician farmer, Theofil Pisarenko. The narrator sets out to visit this man, learns about his extraordinary life and records his biography as Der neue Hiob. The local priest describes this Job-like character in the following manner:

"Pisarenko ist ein Weiser in seiner Art, ein Patriarch des alten Testamentes, ein griechischer Philosoph, ein Bojar aus der Zeit Iwan des Schrecklichen, ein Mensch, der Alles gelitten hat, was ein Mensch nur leiden kann, ohne Klage, ja mit guter Laune, wenn man so sagen darf, erfüllt von einem unerschütterlichen Gottvertrauen."\(^7\)

Because Der neue Hiob is a lengthy novel, Sacher-Masoch is able to augment the basic story line considerably. He chooses to spread the contents of the Prologue over some sixteen chapters, then telescopes the otherwise drawn-out Dialogues into half a chapter, and expands what is in the Epilogue into three more chapters. He retains all of the structural
components, except for the scenes in Heaven, but shortens and lengthens them as he sees fit.

The Misfortunes of Theofil Pisarenko

Theofil Pisarenko, son of hard-working Christian parents, lives in a time and place where a certain amount of suffering is to be expected. He was born on December 23, 1794 in the eastern part of Galicia. There is talk of the French Revolution in Western Europe, but at home, in Zablotow and surrounding townships, there is ongoing contention among the people—the Christians and Jews, the Russians, Poles and Ukrainians. At the turn of the century this polyglot region falls under the jurisdiction of the Habsburg Emperor, who is favored by Pisarenko’s family, because they belong to the peasantry that is working for Polish landowners. The Industrial Revolution has not yet reached this interior part of Europe and farm machinery is still primitive.

Moments after the boy’s birth, his father takes him to a frozen creek, breaks open the ice and immerses his new-born son in an act of baptism. To justify his actions, the father acclaims: "Er ist geboren, um zu leiden, er soll sich bei Zeiten abhärten" (p. 6). The tone is set. It is not a mere foreshadowing but a clear pronouncement of impending afflictions for Pisarenko. As he is growing up, the boy attentively listens to stories his mother tells him from the Bible, but he is especially fascinated by the story of Job.

At the age of twenty, Pisarenko meets Joadan, a beautiful Jewish girl, who is receptive to the teachings of Christianity. She enters a convent and in due time expects to marry Pisarenko. Some local Jews, who find this conversion to be offensive and shameful,
decide to abduct and punish the girl. Pisarenko, mysteriously awakened in the night and
drawn to ride out into the wilderness, finds that his bride-to-be has been tortured and left
to die. Moments before her death, he gives her a private baptism and takes her body into
town. A mob of Jews demands the body from Pisarenko but he refuses to hand it over. In
defiance the mob pronounces a curse on Pisarenko:

"Gras soll wachsen auf seiner Schwelle, Krankheit und Unglück
sollen nisten in seinem Hause, sein einziger Gast soll der
Malach Hamowes [ein Todesengel] sein." (p. 81)

When a fire in a neighboring village destroys several houses of a ghetto, costing seven
lives, the local Jews fear that this may be an act of reprisal for the blood of Joadan.
Consequently they bribe the mandatar of Zablotow and ask him to remove Pisarenko from
their midst. He complies and makes sure Pisarenko is recruited into the military. He serves
in Vienna but gets so homesick before Christmas that he walks all across the wintery terrain
just to be with his family for awhile. After one day at home, the mandatar stops by and
accuses Pisarenko of desertion. His punishment consists of a severe thrashing with pointed
sticks by soldiers lined up in two rows, through which he must run until beaten bloody.
After another year in Vienna, he is discharged from the military on account of recurring
bleeding on his back.

Upon his return home, he finds out that his mother has already died. His father dies
shortly after his arrival. Two years later Pisarenko marries his childhood sweetheart, Xenia.
They get a splendid start in life: "Theofil und Xenia hatten alle Ursache, zufrieden zu sein"
(p. 115). They have sufficient property, including house, yard and enough land to graze a
variety of cattle. Relatively speaking, then, Pisarenko is at this point in his life like a Job
of modest means. Over the coming years Xenia bears him three children.
In due time, however, this peaceful and prosperous life is to be interrupted by one fateful blow after another.

Im nächsten Sommer traf Theofil Pisarenko der erste schwere Schlag jenes Geschickes, das ihn nun unablässig verfolgen und ihm den Namen eines neuen Hiob verschaffen sollte. (p. 119)

The first of these disasters is a plague of locusts, which devastates the entire countryside, causing a subsequent starvation among the inhabitants of the village. Pisarenko is forced to sell cattle, machinery and clothing—virtually all of his belongings. Some peasants are starving to death, others are driven to steal in order to survive. But even in the face of adversity, Pisarenko remains upright. The following year the cholera epidemic spreads throughout Europe and kills many Galicians. An early victim of the plague is one of Pisarenko’s sons. Later, his whole family gets infected. In his effort to get some help for his dying family, he falls victim to the disease himself, but manages to survive the attack. When he returns home, he finds his sister, wife and remaining two children dead.

When Pisarenko is over fifty years old, he marries Nikulina, a girl whose parents died at the hands of peasants who were staging an uprising in Galicia. She soon bears him a son, Demid, and then a daughter, Axinia. In time, the good news arrives from the Kaiser that all forms of serfdom have been abolished. Previous peasants, including Pisarenko, are now landowners and are in a position to employ workers themselves. But in this new age of progress and optimism, Pisarenko is beset with a new string of disasters. Due to the carelessness of one of his servants, who drops his pipe into a bail of straw, Pisarenko’s farm burns to the ground. Later in the same year a severe hailstorm destroys all of the crops in the region. No one bears greater losses than Pisarenko. The next year, the rivers overflow
and flood the valley. Pisarenko, his wife, two children and their dog barely manage to save themselves by crawling onto the roof of their house and drifting off with the current as the walls collapse beneath them. The next day they hit shore and are soon afterwards rescued by friends. Villages throughout the valley are totally destroyed and Pisarenko has to start all over one more time.

Not long after rebuilding his house, Pisarenko suddenly comes down with a terrible disease. His limbs weaken and his joints stiffen—he becomes virtually immobile. After many months of pain and agony, his condition worsens as a rash of boils filled with blood and pus spreads over his entire body. His eyesight grows so dim that the world around him appears as mere shadows.

Damals war es, wo Theofil Pisarenko seinen traurigen Beinamen erhielt. "Gibt es noch ein Unglück in der Welt, das Den nicht getroffen hat?" sagten die Bauern, und so nannten sie ihn denn Hiob. (p. 309)

Job’s suffering likewise is enormous and intense, but it does not seem to last very long. Possessions and children are restored to him, and the disease, painful though it was, plagues him only for a matter of weeks. Pisarenko’s trials, however, are part and parcel of life. They keep grinding away year after year until he is afflicted with the same horrible disease Job had. But here, too, Pisarenko has to withstand pain and suffering much longer than Job.
The tide of misfortunes that lasted for fifty-eight years of Pisarenko's life recedes moments after he has a miraculous vision of God. His health is restored, and from then on, good fortune becomes his constant companion.

Not long after his recovery, Pisarenko receives a visit from the local priest, who informs him that by now he should have a fair sum of money in the bank. Some twenty years before, Pisarenko had received 2000 Gulden from his landlord as compensation for personal suffering. At the time, Pisarenko did not really feel it was his rightly earned money and therefore handed it over to the priest to do with as he saw fit. Unbeknown to Pisarenko, the priest had opened an account for him in a neighboring town. Over the years the amount had more than doubled. With this newly-found capital, Pisarenko buys more land and expands and renovates his farm. He is so unaccustomed to such luck, however, that he exclaims:

"Ich habe so viel Unglück erfahren, daß mich das Glück, das Gott mir sendet, fast erschreckt, und ich es wie eine Versuchung ansehe." (p. 325)

Soon Pisarenko invests his money wisely and begins to turn substantial profits from one year to the next. He sends his children to school to be educated. Demid studies law and agriculture in Vienna. Axinia is instructed in piano and good housekeeping in a convent.

In due time both return home, get married and have families of their own. As Pisarenko enjoys more and more respect around town, he is voted by the local community to be their representative in the Landtag in Vienna. Later on he also becomes president of a newly-formed Bauernparlament. During this time of political responsibility he takes great pride
in learning how to read and write. Soon he begins to acquire a library of his own in his house. His personal enrichment is so striking that the narrator exclaims: "Pisarenko begann eine interessante Persönlichkeit zu werden" (p. 359). Because he holds the acquisition of knowledge in such high esteem, Pisarenko donates a considerable sum to the building of a school in Zablotow. Besides having a Realschule and Ackerbauschule, the town soon gains a theatre as well. With the spreading of the Industrial Revolution throughout Europe, the railroad finally reaches Galicia. New farm machinery is introduced and many new inventions are imminent. The closing pages describe Pisarenko as a patriarchal figure, surrounded by family and friends and admired by all, especially the youth:

    Theofil Pisarenko ist das Vorbild der dortigen Jugend, und wo der verständigste, erfahrenste und unternehmendste Mann zugleich der redlichste und frömmste ist, kann der Fortschritt nur Segen bringen. (p. 374)

This comment embodies two ideas. It is an approval of scientific progress and it also suggests that God will eventually bless the righteous. The list of superlatives used to describe Pisarenko almost raises him to the stature of a saint.

In the autumn of his years, Pisarenko experiences personal achievement, political involvement and financial success as he has never known previously. His family is growing and contributing to society. Zablotow is making contact with education and culture, and Galicia is moving into the Industrial Age. For Pisarenko, something good will always come of something bad, but only the good is worth remembering. He has the last word as he reflects upon his trials:

Indeed, the tone of Pisarenko’s final speech resembles a sermon. God is good, life has a purpose and mankind is the better for it.

The Patience of Pisarenko

The figure that Sacher-Masoch used as a model is clearly the Patient Job of the Prologue. In the first seventeen chapters, Pisarenko bears up under each affliction and displays enough patience and long-suffering to rival Job.

The first real test of his patience comes when he loses his bride-to-be, Joadan, at the hands of a band of Jewish avengers. She had taken the step to embrace the Christian God of love, yet her life was extinguished in her prime. To be sure, the young bridegroom-to-be grieves, but he boldly accepts the course of events and perseveres. The narrator notes:

Er grollt niemals mit seinem Schicksale. Was ist, muß sein, und es ist gewiß gut, daß es so ist, wenn er es auch nicht zu ergründen vermag. Grübeln und zweifeln erscheint ihm ebenso unnütz, als sich beklagen; deßhalb verfällt er aber nicht in Unthätigkeit, heitere Trägheit liegt ihm ebenso fern, wie ein dumpfes Hirnbrüten, er muthet Gott nicht zu, daß er ihm helfe, ohne selbst die Hände zu rühren; erweist sich aber seine Arbeit, seine Sorge, sein Mühen als vergeblich, so fügt er sich dem
Willen Gottes, ohne sein Leben zu verwünschen oder sich gegen die Fügungen, die zu verstehen er sich unfähig hält, aufzulehnen. Diese Weisheit der Ergebung, dieser Muth des Duldens waren es, welche Theofil aufrecht erhielten.

(pp. 82-83)

After locusts devastate all of the crops and the family is starving, Xenia finds it necessary to beg for food for her new-born child, only to be rejected and chased away by the well-to-do. She feels defeated by circumstances and expresses her desire to die. She concludes: "'Gott hat uns verlassen'" (p. 138). Pisarenko reacts sharply and comes to the defense of God:

"Es geht uns schlecht, das muß wahr sein, aber es wäre eine Sünde, zu sagen, daß wir die Elendesten sind, die es auf der Erde gibt oder zu verzweifeln und sich deshalb das Leben zu nehmen." (p. 138)

He continues by reminding her how people had to suffer under ruthless tyrants and how Christ and the martyrs were tortured to death. He relates how miners are burned by coal, how sailors drown at sea, and how their forefathers were taken as slaves and mercilessly tortured by the Turks. He advises: "'Betrachte Alles genau und sage dir, daß du noch lange nicht die Unglücklichste bist auf dieser Erde'" (p. 141).

In order to keep his family alive, Pisarenko goes forth to sell his boots. As he walks home on ice and snow, he cries out: "'Es ist ein Elend, mit bloßen Füßen im Schnee gehen, jetzt erst weiß ich, daß ich arm bin!'" (pp. 141-42). The narrator hastens to add: "Es war das erstemal in seinem Leben, daß er sich beklagte, es sollte aber auch das letzttemal sein" (p. 142). As Pisarenko approaches his house, he sees a man crouched down on all fours. To his hands and legs he has attached wooden boards, which he uses for moving about. Aghast at the scene, Pisarenko notes that the man has no feet. He immediately regrets that
he had complained and then offers gratitude, saying: ""Mein Heiland, verzeihe mir die Sünde, daß ich mich beklagt habe. Ich habe bloße Füße zwar—aber Gott Lob Füße"" (p. 142).

When Xenia displays feelings of anger towards God, because they lost their first child, Pisarenko advises her:

"Fasse dich, der Herr hat's gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen, der Name des Herrn sei gelobt!" (p. 160)

Compare with:
Der Herr hat's gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen; der Name des Herrn sei gelobt! (1:21)

When, in the effort of finding a doctor for his infected family, he is overcome by fever and feebleness himself, he exclaims: ""Die Cholera,"" and then ""Gottes Wille geschehe"" (p. 161). And when, on arriving home, he finds that his sister, wife and other two children have fallen victim to cholera, he cries out:

"Was plagen wir uns, Gott und seine Rathschläge zu verstehen? Wir sind von Gestern her und wissen nichts. Unser Leben ist ein Schatten auf Erden." (p. 164)

Compare with:
denn wir sind von gestern her und wissen nichts; unser Leben ist ein Schatten auf Erden. (8:9)

It is interesting to point out here that in the Old Testament these are not the words of Job, but those of Bildad, who uses them to counsel Job.

The supreme test of Pisarenko's patience and long-suffering comes once he is afflicted personally. As a vigorous, active man he is suddenly rendered immobile and useless—and for no reason at all, it seems. His wife's faith falters and his friends accuse him of wrong-doing. At that point his only companions are physical pain and mental anguish. But even when his friends visit him and accuse him of grievous sins and self-righteousness,
Pisarenko remains calm and controlled. He is not like the Job of the Dialogues who bears the "bitterness of his soul" by offending his friends and challenging God. Pisarenko, like Job, denies having committed any grave sin, but he never questions the justice of God. He resigns himself to the fact that both good and evil originate with God and that he, for one, is ready to accept his portion of either.

Pisarenko, then, is not only as patient as the Job of the Prologue, he is also more patient than the Job of the Dialogues. One way that Sacher-Masoch shows this is through the use of montage technique. On several occasions Pisarenko speaks the very words that Job's comforters use in the Book of Job. In other words, the measured responses that the friends use to reassure Job of God's justice are here put into the mouth of Pisarenko, so that he can likewise affirm God's justice. This means, in effect, that Pisarenko is a character blended of the Job of the Prologue and his orthodox friends. The fusion of these particular characters results in an individual who bears all the marks of patience, perseverance and faithfulness, as the Patient Job does, yet never appears unorthodox or heretical, as the Impatient Job does.

The Impatience of Burlak

A fellow villager who experiences many hardships alongside Theofil is an individual by the name of Burlak. He is portrayed as a ruffian, "der wilde Geselle," even a vigilante and a revolutionary, who takes the laws into his own hands when he feels that he or society has been unjustly treated. It appears that Sacher-Masoch wants to demonstrate the two ways of responding to adversity—one with patience, the other with impatience.
Even as a youngster Burlak steals from his landowner and considers Theofil to be "ein Tölpel, ein Schaf, eine Memme," because he does not want to join him. Later on, when the farmers are starving due to the crop loss on account of the locusts, he manages to survive comfortably by stealing from his employer. At this point, Pisarenko still has enough food to keep his family alive, because he has sold all of his belongings, and says:

"Nun, wir leiden auch keinen Mangel, das Beste ist, mit dem zufrieden sein, was man hat, und Weniges benöthigen, dann hat man bald genug, und wenn Einer genug hat, hat er viel, mein Freund, sehr viel." (p. 130)

One harbors hatred and vengeance in his heart, the other one compassion and forgiveness. After Joadan is killed by a mob of Jews, her father, Wolf Abeles, probably an accessory to the murder of his own daughter, meets Pisarenko on the street, spits on him and curses him. Many years later, when the cholera sweeps through Galicia, Pisarenko comes across Wolf Abeles wallowing on the ground with convulsions. He immediately jumps to his aid, while Burlak, who is also present, reproaches him, saying: "Du wirst doch nicht dem Schurken Hilfe leisten, dem Juden, dem Mörder!" (p. 159). Pisarenko is not able to save Wolf Abeles, who then dies in the arms of his enemy.

After Pisarenko has lost his wife and children to cholera, a young and spoiled lady of the nobility, Diana Saborska, shows an express interest in him. His feelings, however, are not reciprocal. Since she is the sister of Theofil's new landowner, she takes the liberty to command him to love her. Theofil refuses and says: "Ich will lieber sterben, als thun, was Unrecht ist" (p. 185). She cannot believe her ears and calls him "du himmelschreiender Dummkopf." Burlak exasperates the situation by trying to council him:
"Höre, Theofil, hast du deinen Verstand verloren. Eine Dame, eine Herrin, angezogen wie eine Czarin, schön wie ein Kadine des Großherrn, findet Gefallen an dir und du trittst dein Glück mit Füßen!" (p. 186)

Pisarenko responds: "Ich bedanke mich für ein Glück, das ein Unglück ist, wenn man es recht betrachtet, und eine Sünde obendrein" (p. 186).

At one point, Pisarenko has to witness how his landlord whips two sick horses which are no longer able to pull the plough for him. Pisarenko is then forced to pull the plough himself. Burlak in the meantime reports the incident to the regional authorities and the landlord receives a written order to discontinue mistreating his worker. Pisarenko thanks Burlak: "Gott lohne es dir, aber mir wird es heimgezahlt werden" (p. 201). Burlak comes back saying:

"Weil du Alles duldest, stelle dich ihnen wie ein Mann, widersetze dich, ich – ich beuge mich nicht – ich habe es satt – ihr werdet es noch Alle erleben, was ich im Stande bin." (p. 201)

Pisarenko notices his look of vengeance and submits:

"Bruder, wir sind nicht fähig, unser Recht zu behaupten, wir bleiben die Sklaven, sie die Herren. Das Beste ist noch Geduld. Gott wird es ändern. Ich sehe die Zeit kommen, wo er es ändern wird, er kann uns nicht so ganz verlassen." (p. 201)

Pisarenko indicates here that God will not only stand by an individual, but that He will guide the affairs of an entire nation.

Burlak hopes to alter the repressive conditions with force. He wants to fight fire with fire. He is also ambitious and envies the life-style of the rich. Pisarenko lets him know that the nobility is really no happier and that he would just as soon remain an honest worker of the land. Burlak sees that they have different approaches to life and says:
"Es ist nicht Einer wie der Andere, ich bin im Recht und du bist es. Wir wollen sehen, welchem von uns es besser ergeht." (p. 204)

Burlak becomes the leader of a band of rebels, who insist on avenging the cruel ways of some of the landowners. Whenever they attack, he wears a wooden mask over his face. No one knows his identity and he is known among the people as "die Holzmaske."

One night, the band of vigilantes capture Pisarenko and lead him to their hideout in the mountains, where they are holding captive the two men responsible for the murder of Joadan many years before. Then they proceed to torture and kill them. After going through with their brand of justice, they invite Pisarenko to join their ranks. He replies:

"Vergieb mir, aber ich will lieber Alles leiden, als Gott versuchen in dieser Weise. Ich kann nicht Richter sein in dieser Sache, aber mir dünkt, ein Geduldiger ist besser als ein Starker." (p. 231)

In Galicia, a region torn between Polish and Austrian loyalties, an insurrection arises among the Polish nobility, who want to separate from the Kaiser in Vienna. The local farmers, favoring the Kaiser, rise up against the rebel landowners, and in so doing, shed much blood. Chief among the agitators is Burlak, who personally leads a group of farmers against the local nobility. As Burlak is raging from house to house killing landowners, Pisarenko makes every effort to save the lives of the very enemies who had mistreated him earlier. The rebellion is soon quelled and the status quo is restored.

Some years later, Burlak is tricked by his lover, Anna Krumlowska, who hands him over to the authorities and collects a handsome reward. "Die Holzmaske" dies on the gallows. Having witnessed the hanging, Pisarenko expresses the two ways to fight oppression and which way he endorses:
"Er [Burlak] hatte kein schlechtes Herz, aber er verließ sich zu viel auf sich selbst und zu wenig auf Gott. Die wahre Weisheit ist, nicht zu rechten mit seinem Schicksal, wenig wünschen, noch weniger hoffen und mit dem, was man hat, zufrieden zu sein. Nicht der ist glücklich, der hat, was er wünscht, sondern jener, der nicht wünscht, was er nicht hat. Um Krieg zu führen mit der Flinte, braucht man bei weitem nicht so viel Muth, als wenn es kämpfen heißt mit dem Leben. Darum ist ein Geduldiger jederzeit besser, als ein Starker. Geduld ist auch Muth und der beste, den Gott uns geben kann." (p. 289)

The author of Job gives two faces to his hero. Sacher-Masoch creates two separate characters—one who is patient and trusts in God, the other one who is impatient and trusts in himself. Pisarenko accepts hardship and humiliation and relies on God to alter history; Burlak resents the oppression by the landowners and relies on himself to alter history. The former lives to be over eighty years old and witnesses radical changes in social conditions; the latter dies at the hand of those whom he regarded as his enemies. By contrasting the patient figure of Pisarenko with the aggressive figure of Burlak, Sacher-Masoch lends credence and weight to his own message, which is: "Ein Geduldiger ist besser als ein Starker" (p. 231, p. 289, title of chapter 15).

Pisarenko’s Wife

Because Pisarenko loses his first wife, Xenia, along with his three children, it is his second wife, Nikulina, who must be regarded as the parallel for Job’s wife. She is also the one present when Pisarenko is struck down by his horrible disease.

As Theofil’s condition grows ever worse, Nikulina is trying to establish a cause for this devastating effect. She suggests: "Meinst du nicht, daß dir allenfalls der böse Blick
eines Menschen geschadet hat?" (p. 310). Pisarenko shrugs off the notion as superstition. On another occasion she suggests that he go to a rabbinical faith healer who, it is rumored, has restored thousands to health. But he refuses to go on account of his Christian belief. His pathetic condition persists and Nikulina looks on in despair.

The cracks in her faith in God finally surface when she insists: "'Da dich Gott aber verlassen hat, ist es nicht weise von dir, seine Gebote so streng zu befolgen.'" He disagrees: "'Gott hat mich nicht verlassen, er prüft mich nur.'" She rebuts:

"Ich denke, er hat dich genug geprüft, und könnte jetzt einmal anfangen, Andere zu prüfen, die er noch nie versucht hat. - Wenn ich so Alles überdenke, was schon über dich gekommen ist, Herr, und dich sehe in deinem Elende, das jedes Herz erzittern macht, so erscheint es mir unnütz, zu Gott zu beten, und ich fange an zu zweifeln an seiner Güte." (p. 311)

She feels frustrated and helpless. In fact, she wishes they were both dead. But Pisarenko's optimism persists:

"Kannst du wissen, wozu uns Gott noch bestimmt hat? der ist nicht weise, der zu seiner Mutter sagt: warum hast du mich geboren?" (p. 312)

Nikulina is clearly irritated by her husband's stubborn steadfastness. She cries out:

"Wie lange wirst du noch festhalten an Gott? du wirst sterben und ihn segnen!" (p. 312)

Compare with:

Hältst du noch fest an deiner Frömmigkeit? Ja, sage Gott ab, und stirb! (2:9)

Unlike Job's wife, Nikulina refrains from blasphemy, but she does manifest her irate feelings towards God. Pisarenko replies:
"Du redest, wie eben Weiber reden, haben wir Gutes empfangen von Gott und sollen das Böse nicht annehmen? Es wird Niemandem gestattet, daß er mit Gott rechte." (p. 312)

Compare with:
Du redest, wie die närrischen Weiber reden. Haben wir Gutes empfangen von Gott und sollten das Böse nicht auch annehmen? (2:10)

Pisarenko excuses his wife’s unfit behavior and continues to stand up for God.

**Pisarenko’s Friends**

Pisarenko, like Job, has four friends visiting him while he is sick and afflicted. However, Pisarenko’s friends also exist in the story line before and after the visit to his bedside. They are genuine friends who do more to help than debate the theodicy. For instance, after the hailstorm, which did more damage to Pisarenko’s crops than to anyone else’s, these same four friends help him through hard times. The narrator declares:

Das Glück versorgt uns mit Freunden, aber zu Zeiten auch das Unglück, und jene, die uns dieses bringt, sind die besten. Damals gewann Theofil Pisarenko einige solche Freunde. (p. 277)

Then the narrator proceeds to introduce each friend individually, describing his physical appearance and general disposition. They are all congenial characters who make up the village mosaic.

When these four visit their ailing friend Pisarenko, they adopt the same attitude that the friends of Job display. The first one, Selwester Owesny, assumes that Pisarenko is guilty of some wrong-doing and says: "Man möchte weinen, wenn man dich betrachtet. Was hast
du wohl verbrochen, daß es dir so ergeht, Herr Bruder?" Pisarenko quickly denies the charge:

"Ich habe niemals Unrecht gethan, aber ein Uebel folgt bei mir dem anderen, wie die Jahreszeiten einander folgen. Ich erwartete das Gute und es kommt Böses, ich hoffte auf Licht und es kommt Finsterniß." (p. 314)

Compare with:
Ich wartete des Guten, und es kommt das Böse; ich hoffte auf Licht, und es kommt Finsternis. (30:26)

The second friend, Unufry Jaschtschor, likewise accuses Pisarenko by saying:

"Ja, so ergeht es dem Menschen, aber Keiner wird für Nichts gestraft." (p. 315)

Compare with:
Gedenke doch, wo ist ein Unschuldiger umgekommen? oder wo sind die Gerechten je vertilgt? (4:7)

The third friend, Bilka, surmises what the supposed transgression may have been:

"Hast du etwa den Armen bedrängt, dem Hungrigen dein Brod und dem Müden dein Dach versagt, Geld auf Zinsen geliehen, wie ein Jude, oder schreit Jemandens Blut wider dich?" (p. 315)

Compare with:
Du hast etwa deinem Bruder ein Pfand genommen ohne Ursache; du hast den Nackten die Kleider ausgezogen; du hast die Müden nicht getränkt mit Wasser und hast dem Hungrigen dein Brot versagt. (22:6-7)

The fourth friend, Bojan, reiterates the accusation one more time, but with a touch of sarcasm:

"Hört ihn an, denn er ist der beste Mann, der erschaffen wurde. Er will von Nichts wissen und auch ich könnte ihn keiner Sünde anklagen und vielleicht Keiner in der Gegend; aber unser Herrgott sieht, was wir Alle nicht sehen, und er legt seine Hand auf keinen Unschuldigen." (p. 315)

Like the four comforters who visit Job, the four neighbors who visit Pisarenko wrongfully accuse their friend and in effect rub salt into his wounds.
After hearing out his friends, Pisarenko replies with a sardonic remark himself:

"Ja, ja, ihr seid die Wahren! mit euch wird die Weisheit sterben." (p. 315)

Compare with:
Ja, ihr seid die Leute, mit euch wird die Weisheit sterben!
(12:2)

Pisarenko continues with a counterattack by asking Bojan why he was cursed with an infirmity:

"Was hast du etwa im Mutterleibe verbrochen, Bojan, daß du mit einem verkürzten Beine zur Welt gekommen bist und hinken mußt dein Leben lang?" (p. 315)

He proceeds by answering his own question: "Gott verhängt seine Prüfungen, wie es ihm gut dünkt, und selig ist der Mensch, den er heimsucht" (p. 315). In other words, even afflictions come from God and one should consider oneself fortunate to be sought out by the Almighty. Pisarenko continues:

"Fragt die Thiere des Waldes und die Vögel in der Luft und die Fische, die im Wasser leben, oder redet mit der Erde. Auch die Sterne sind bereit, euch Antwort zu geben. Ist in dieser Welt Etwas, was Gott nicht gemacht hat, und sollte der Mensch allein sich sein Schicksal bereiten?" (pp. 315-316)

Compare with:
Frage doch das Vieh, das wird dich’s lehren, und die Vögel unter dem Himmel, die werden dir’s sagen; oder rede mit der Erde, die wird dich’s lehren, und die Fische im Meer werden dir’s erzählen. Wer erkennt nicht an dem allem, daß des Herrn Hand solches gemacht hat? (12:7-9)

The friends are unwilling to accept the fact that an affliction is not necessarily the result of sin. Owesny tries to ascribe an air of arrogance to Pisarenko, when he acclaims: "Wir sind alle Sünder, dieser allein will ohne Makel sein." Bojan presses the issue one step further and suggests: "Wenn du frei von Schuld bist, so ist Gott ungerecht gegen dich. Verklage
ihn also!" (p. 316). He is fully aware of the fact that God would appear to be unjust, if He is omnipotent, but allows the innocent to suffer. He attempts to provoke Pisarenko to accuse God of injustice.

A wise and humble Pisarenko replies: "Spottet meiner, es ist gut so, auch dies schickt der Himmel über mich als eine Prüfung." He clearly accepts the entire ordeal as a test from God and is not interested in challenging His ways. He continues:

"Wie kann ein Mensch gerechter sein als Gott? Wie kann ein Mensch gerecht sein vor Gott und rein der vom Weibe Geborene." (p. 316)

Compare with:
Wie kann ein Mensch gerecht sein vor Gott? oder ein Mann rein sein vor dem, der ihn gemacht hat? (4:17)

He goes on to describe the insignificance and impurity of man:

"Der Mond leuchtet nicht und die Sterne sind noch nicht rein vor seinen Augen, wie viel weniger der Mensch, welcher der Verwesung anheimfällt und des Menschen Sohn, der Wurm!" (p. 316)

Compare with:
Siehe, auch der Mond scheint nicht helle, und die Sterne sind nicht rein vor seinen Augen:
Wieviel weniger ein Mensch, die Made, und ein Menschenkind, der Wurm! (25:5-6)

Here, Pisarenko seems to practice more patience and restraint than Job. Of course, Sacher-Masoch consciously portrays Pisarenko in this manner, since the words spoken by him are taken from comments made by two of Job's friends, Eliphaz and Bildad. It is no wonder then that Bilak suddenly praises Pisarenko's line of thinking and says: "Nun sprichst du, wie du sollst" (p. 316).

The ailing Pisarenko insists that his thinking has been consistent the whole time and continues:

Pisarenko is here imparting his personal Weltanschauung, which he has held his entire life.

For instance, after he had experienced the double-disaster of losing his farm to fire and losing his crops to hail, Pisarenko was forced to fend for his family by working for a landowner in a nearby village. He remarks to his wife: "'Nicht durch Klagen und Weinen sollen wir Gottes Hilfe anrufen, sondern indem wir Recht thun, kräftig handeln und geduldig leiden'" (p. 277).

He continues the discussion with his friends by once more borrowing the phraseology of Eliphaz, saying:

"Du plagst dich vom Morgen bis zum Abend und kannst es doch Gott nicht recht machen." (p. 317)

Compare with:
Es währt von Morgen bis an den Abend, so werden sie zerschlagen. (4:20)

Pisarenko ends his defense with the following remark:

"Muß der Mensch nicht immer kämpfen auf Erden? Seine Tage sind wie die eines Taglöhners, wie ein Knecht sich sehnt nach dem Schatten und ein Taglöhner, daß seine Arbeit aus sei." (p. 317)

Compare with:
Muß nicht der Mensch immer im Streit sein auf Erden und sind seine Tage nicht wie eines Taglöhners?
Wie ein Knecht sich sehnet nach dem Schatten und ein Taglöhner, daß seine Arbeit aus sei. (7:1-2)
With these words, Pisarenko silences his company. His friends leave one by one and his wife puts the children to bed. The ailing Pisarenko, alone in the room, falls into a deep sleep.

**Pisarenko’s God**

Job is the plaintiff who wants to bring his case before God, but Pisarenko does not feel that there is a case to be made. As far as he is concerned, it is useless to accuse God of any injustice. When his friends challenge him to challenge God, he simply says: "Was würde es mir helfen, Gott anzuklagen?" (p. 316). But God also appears to Pisarenko, just as he does to Job.

Awakened suddenly out of his deep sleep, Pisarenko sees a figure floating above the ground and signaling him to follow. Soon he finds himself alone on a green hill under a starlit sky. There God appears in a cloud:

> Mit einemmale erhob sich ein Wind, der von Mitternacht wehte und ein Grollen des Donners und eine Wolke voll Feuer füllte Himmel und Erde. Inmitten der Wolke aber war ein Licht und als sich das Feuer theilte, wie ein Vorhang, sah Theofil eine Gestalt, gebildet wie die eines Menschen auf einem Stuhl sitzen, der wie Saphir erglänzte, ihr Gewand wallte zur Erde nieder und ihre Füße ruhten auf einem Regenbogen wie auf einem Schemel. Seraphim standen hinter ihr und Himmel und Erde waren von einem silbernen Rauch erfüllt. (p. 318)

This description of God is much more detailed than the minimal description given in the Book of Job.8
Then a powerful but gentle voice inquires: "Was ängstigt dich und macht dich verzweifeln?" (p. 319). This is quite different from the intimidating question God asks Job.

Pisarenko is given the opportunity to make his concerns known. He cautiously proceeds:

"O, Herr! willst du wider ein fliegend Blatt so ernst sein und einen durnen Halm verfolgen?" (p. 319)

Compare with:

Willst du wider ein fliegend Blatt so ernst sein und einen durnen Halm verfolgen? (13:25)

He continues:

"Was ist dir ein Mensch, ob er Recht thut oder Unrecht? Ein Schatten, der über deine Erde gleitet, ein Licht, das ein Hauch der Luft verlöscht! Wie kann ein Mensch rein sein vor dir? Ich habe gethan, was ich für Recht hielt, war ein Unrecht dabei, so wüste mein Herz nichts davon, aber du hast mich ganz verlassen und hast mein vergessen." (p. 319)

Compare with:

(7:12-21, which Sacher-Masoch has paraphrased and condensed).

God removes Himself and Pisarenko remains lying on the hillside for three days and nights.

When he awakens on the fourth day, the dark veil has lifted from his eyes and the boils and sores which had covered his body have vanished. He is completely restored to health.

The exchange between Pisarenko and God is much shorter than the exchange between Job and God. However, Job's God is not nearly as kind or attentive. He makes two long speeches and parades His many creations in front of Job's eyes, but He never addresses Job's concerns. Sacher-Masoch leaves these less likeable traits of God to one of His earthly representatives. Before the friends visit Pisarenko, a priest comes by to offer him his last rites and says: "Es ist eine schwere Prüfung über Euch gekommen, aber wir wollen beten, daß sie ein Ende nimmt." Sensitive towards his undeserved suffering, Pisarenko replies: "Glauben Sie nicht, mein Herr Vater, daß schon dies wie ein Vorwurf
"Ware?" (p. 313). Although the priest is tactful in his approach, he cannot hide his presumption that God is acting justly and that the sufferer for some reason deserves his affliction. Pisarenko, of course, is ready to accept the ways of God, even if he does not understand them, but like Job, he holds fast to his innocence. Pisarenko continues:

"Es ist gut so, weil Gott es so will, unsere Sache ist es, ruhig zu dulden. Wir sehen nichts, Gott Alles. Der Mensch wird zum Unglück geboren. Ich habe geglaubt, Gott und seine Welt zu verstehen, aber ich verstehe ihn nicht mehr!" (p. 313)

Compare with:
sondern der Mensch wird zu Unglück geboren, wie die Vögel schweben, emporzufliegen. (5:7)

The priest then reminds Pisarenko that no one is capable of understanding God. Essentially, he summarizes the contents of God's first speech to Job, when he says:


Compare with:
(38-39, from which Sacher-Masoch has taken key phrases and concepts).

The priest, then, is portrayed as another miserable comforter on the one hand and as an unconcerned God on the other hand.

In summary, Sacher-Masoch makes the characters in Der neue Hiob less extreme. He makes Pisarenko more patient and pious than Job, Pisarenko's wife less blasphemous than Job's wife, and Pisarenko's friends less hypocritical than Job's friends; and he shows
Pisarenko's God to be more caring and concerned than Job's God. The work is an unequivocal endorsement of patience and long-suffering under any circumstances.

But as a farmer of peasant stock, Pisarenko is not merely the Passive Job of the Prologue. For his particular circumstances he is practical and wise. In the face of disease, disaster and hard labor his life is reduced to the daily task of survival. Having patience does not change the conditions, but it is a means of coping with unforeseen and undesirable events. Hardships in general are buffered by believing in a loving God and a better tomorrow. For Pisarenko, tomorrow comes during his own lifetime. In the long run, then, patience coupled with diligence prove to be the best equipment for a poor farmer trying to survive in nineteenth-century Galicia.

Sacher-Masoch is less concerned with the Impatient Job of the Dialogue. Pisarenko is not a Job-figure who wishes he were dead and questions the justice of God. His faith knows no doubt, his love knows no anger. For Pisarenko, God is still the guiding light of the universe, a concept which will find less acceptance in the war-torn twentieth century.
Notes


4Farin, p. 364.

5Farin, p. 190.

6Hügelsberger, p. 147.


8It is interesting to note, however, that the form of the vision described here by Sacher-Masoch resembles other visions as recorded in the Old Testament, i.e., those found in Exodus 24, Ezekiel 1, Daniel 7.
CHAPTER III

JOB, THE WANDERING JEW

Job bin ich um den unbekannte Götter wetten
wer siegt ob bös ob gut nichts kann mich retten.

Gábor Hajnal

Some fifty years after Sacher-Masoch had written Der neue Hiob, Joseph Roth (1894-1939) wrote Hiob, Roman eines einfachen Mannes (1930). Like Sacher-Masoch, Roth was born in the region of Galicia. He studied German language and literature as well as philosophy at Lemberg and Vienna. After the First World War, Roth took up journalism and for some years worked for the "Frankfurter Zeitung." In his early period as a writer (1924-1932), Roth published seven novels, among them his best-known work, Der Radetzkymarsch (1932). In 1933 he emigrated to Paris. During this period of exile (1933-1939), he published six more novels and a number of minor works. For much of his adult life Roth suffered from severe depression. He was disturbed by the increasingly adverse political climate throughout Europe and the sudden onset of an incurable mental condition of his wife, Friederike. His personal suffering drove him to excessive drinking, which resulted in his premature death at the age of forty-five.
Today Roth is recognized as one of the major Austrian novelists between the two World Wars. His works are clearly characterized by his own life and times:

Die Schwermut des untergehenden alten Österreich und zugleich der Leichtsinn seiner genießerischen Lebenshaltung, die Tragik des Judentums und die Heimatlosigkeit des Kosmopoliten prägen die Dichtungen Roths, die in der Mitte stehen zwischen scheinbarer Groteske und wahrhafter Trauer, zwischen gewinnender Sentimentalität und glasklarer Intelligenz.¹

Roth's *Hiob* met with relative financial success. Even the American edition (1931) was classified as a "best-seller." Efforts were made to produce a film of the novel, but anti-Semitic feelings of the 1930s prevented a screenplay from being realized at first. After considerable changes to Roth's Job-story, however, a radically altered screen adaptation appeared under the title of "Sins of Man" (1938). Shortly after Roth's death, Viktor Kelemen adapted the novel for the stage under the title of *Hiob: Die Geschichte eines armen Mannes*. The premiere was performed in the Théâtre Pigalle of Paris in 1939.² More recently, a television version in three parts entitled "Hiob" (1978), directed by Michael Kehlmann, has been received very favorably.³

The Misfortunes of Mendel Singer

The protagonist of Roth's *Hiob*, a Hasidic Jew named Mendel Singer, resembles the biblical figure of Job in that he is faithful to God, but he differs from Job in that he is simple and average:

Vor vielen Jahren lebte in Zuchnow ein Mann namens Mendel Singer. Er war fromm, gottesfürchtig und gewöhnlich, ein ganz alltäglicher Jude.⁴
He is an average Jew living in an average village of Eastern Europe. From the outset, then, Roth establishes certain points of comparison and contrast between legend and novel. Mendel's righteousness links him with the biblical Job-figure, but his commonness links him with the man in the street.

Like Job, Mendel is afflicted two separate times: once while living in Russia (Part I of the novel), and once while living in America (Part II of the novel). At the beginning of the novel Mendel Singer is still a relatively young man of thirty. He has a wife, Deborah, two sons, Jonas and Schemarjah, and a young daughter, Mirjam. Despite his meagre income as a teacher of the Torah to Jewish children, Mendel does not complain about his station in life. He faithfully obeys the commandments of God and has peace of mind.

Sein Schlaf war traumlos. Sein Gewissen war rein. Seine Seele war keusch. Er brauchte nichts zu bereuen, und nichts gab es, was er begehrt hätte. (p. 8)

The first affliction to strike the family is the epilepsy of Menuchim, the fourth child. Like Job, Mendel accepts the affliction as a part of God's design without knowing any reasons for the mishap. He applies his faith in God by fasting and praying for his son, but Menuchim's condition does not improve. With time, the epileptic boy becomes an accepted burden for Mendel, but he has three other children who make life problematic for him. Jonas and Schemarjah face conscription into the Russian army. Jonas welcomes his role as a soldier and moves away from home in order to live an unrestricted and unruly life. Schemarjah dodges the army by fleeing the country and emigrating to America. Mirjam begins to flirt with and soon gives herself to the Cossacks about town. After learning that
his daughter is sporting with Russian soldiers, Mendel makes the momentous decision to move to America, taking Mirjam but leaving Menuchim behind.

The second affliction to befall Mendel occurs in the New World. Not long after settling in New York, the Singers are seriously affected by the events of the First World War. Jonas is listed as missing in action in Europe, Schemarjah dies as an American soldier in the line of duty, and Deborah dies of shock and grief after learning about the loss of her sons. After a week of mourning, Mendel learns that in the meantime Mirjam has gone mad and needs to be institutionalized. Mendel blames himself over and over again for having left Russia, but he also blames God for persecuting an innocent man like himself. In his effort to do right, he has lost everything—his wife, his children, his homeland, his happiness.

Two Job-Figures—Mendel and Deborah

For much of the novel, Mendel and Deborah share the role of Job-figure, but their response to suffering differs greatly. Mendel is more patient, or passive, while Deborah is more impatient, or active, in trying to cope with the blows of fate. The moment the parents learn about the epilepsy of Menuchim, they have opposing reactions. Mendel accepts the infirmity as the will of God and has ample faith that in due time his son will be healed. Deborah feels that man should intervene in the course of unfortunate events and thereby direct the affliction to a more favourable outcome.

Upon discovering Menuchim's illness, the doctor suggests that with his medical expertise he could probably cure the lad. Deborah is quite willing to let the doctor take Menuchim to the hospital where his condition may be treated, but Mendel insists: "Gesund
machen kann ihn kein Doktor, wenn Gott nicht will" (p. 13). He is careful enough not to entrust his sick son to a Russian hospital, and at the same time he is faithful enough to trust that God will still heal his son. However, the parents choose to leave Menuchim's fate in the hands of God and not in the hands of the Russian doctors. Mendel seeks God's help by fasting twice a week. Deborah goes to the cemetery and appeals to the bones of her ancestors to intercede for her ailing son. But despite the continual prayers of his parents, Menuchim's condition does not improve. Throughout this crisis, Mendel's faith remains intact while Deborah's faith begins to wane. Deborah decides to make her way to a nearby town and visit a famous rabbi, who is rumored to heal physical, mental and spiritual maladies of all sorts. She is willing to seek new avenues of hope, because God has been inaccessible to her:

Sie wagte nicht mehr Gott anzurufen, er schien ihr zu hoch, zu groß, zu weit, unendlich hinter unendlichen Himmeln, eine Leiter aus Millionen Gebeten hätte sie haben müssen, um einen Zipfel von Gott zu erreichen. (p. 17)

Instead, she places her faith and hope in the rabbi, who is after all God's representative on earth. When she finally reaches the rabbi, she is not disappointed, for he pronounces a hopeful prophecy upon her epileptic son:

"Menuchim, Mendels Sohn, wird gesund werden. Seinesgleichen wird es nicht viele geben in Israel. Der Schmerz wird ihn weise machen, die Häßlichkeit gütig, die Bitternis milde und die Krankheit stark. Seine Augen werden weit sein und tief, seine Ohren hell und voll Widerhall. Sein Mund wird schweigen, aber wenn er die Lippen auftun wird, werden sie Gutes künden. Hab keine Furcht und geh nach Haus!" (p. 19)

Deborah inquires: "Wann, wann, wann wird er gesund werden?" The rabbi responds:

"Nach langen Jahren, aber frage mich nicht weiter, ich habe keine Zeit und ich weiß nichts
mehr."

He adds explicitly: "'Verlasse deinen Sohn nicht, auch wenn er dir eine große Last ist, gib ihn nicht weg von dir, er kommt aus dir, wie ein gesundes Kind auch'" (p. 20).

As her sons face conscription, Deborah prays that they may be found unfit for military service: "Diesmal betete sie um eine Krankheit für Jonas und Schemarjah, wie sie früher um die Gesundheit Menuchims gefleht hatte" (p. 32). When both boys are found to be strong and healthy enough to pass the physical examination, Deborah turns to her husband and insists that he seek help: "'Mendel, geh und lauf, frag die Leute um Rat!'" (p. 40). But her husband is not moved to undertake any action:


This is the first indication that Mendel believes God has willed these afflictions upon them, ergo, He has punished them. Deborah, wanting to alter the course of events, interprets her husband's response as a blend of piety and cowardice. She is furious "und spuckte plötzlich aus, weißen Speichel feuerte sie wie ein giftiges Geschoß vor Mendels Füße" (p. 41). Unable to solicit any aid from her husband, she makes her way again to the cemetery and pleads for intercession. Esther Steinmann suggests that Mendel is afraid to act on his own:

Die Wirklichkeitsrezeption dieses Hiob [Mendel Singer] steht demgegenüber im Zeichen eines 'Gleichmuts', einer Unerschütterlichkeit und Apathie, die nichts erwartet, hofft oder fürchtet, die jede Entwicklung ausschließt und Mendel immer nur darin bestärkt, alles an sich geschehen zu lassen, nichts aber in sich."
Deborah knows of a man who is in the business of helping people flee the country. She is willing to explore this possibility, but needs money in order to make contact. Mendel is unable to oblige and merely laments his state of poverty, saying: "Dem einen gibt Er und dem andern nimmt Er" (p. 43). Here Mendel has slightly altered what Job said when he was reduced from a rich man to a poor man: "Der Herr hat's gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen" (1:21). Job's words indicate that he gives his total approval to the way God operates. What God gives to man, He is also entitled to take back. But Mendel's comment implies that God willfully gives much to some and little to others. In other words, God is the author of wealth and poverty. Commenting on this altered biblical verse, Steinmann writes:

Das Hiob-Wort wird in Mendels Mund dahingehend verfremdet, daß der göttliche Wille, den der biblische Hiob als Einheit von geben und nehmen verstanden und dergestalt ungeteilt auf sich bezogen hatte, dichotomisch aufgespalten wird: Geben und nehmen verteilen sich auf verschiedene Personen als das ungleiche Maß der unberechenbaren Unbegreiflichkeit Gottes.

Mendel defends his viewpoint by stating:

"Gegen den Willen des Himmels gibt es keine Gewalt. 'Von ihm donnert es und blitzt es, er wölbt sich über die ganze Erde, vor ihm kann man nicht davonlaufen' - so steht es geschrieben." (p. 44)

He simply has a passive attitude towards the fate that has befallen his family. Deborah impugns Mendel's philosophy of patience and long-suffering. She counters with her own argument: ""Der Mensch muß sich zu helfen suchen, und Gott wird ihm helfen. So steht es geschrieben, Mendell!" (p. 44).
Although she is antagonistic towards her husband, Deborah is by no means characterized unsympathetically. This is a significant departure from the traditional role of the wife of a Job-figure. Deborah is not depicted as the weak bystander who keeps silent and submissively supports her husband; she proves instead to be the strong one who attempts to show her husband the need to act. Pöthe gives a very positive assessment of Deborah:

Die Deborah-Figur verkörpert in beeindruckender Weise eine unternehmende Haltung zum Leben, die über weite Passagen des Romans der Dulder-Position Mendels ebenbürtig—wenn nicht gar überlegen—erscheint. 9

As a result of his mother's efforts, Schemarjah is able to leave the country and eventually make his way to America. Deborah tries to change circumstances and events, Mendel tries to accept them. She makes every effort to spare their sons from military service, while he makes no effort at all.

Finally circumstances arise which drive Mendel to act. Out of necessity he chooses one evil (leaving Menuchim behind) over a greater evil (having Mirjam frolic and perhaps end up with a Cossack). Both parents agonize over this situation where either decision appears unsatisfactory. Under the present circumstances, however, Mendel opts for emigrating to America. His reasoning is the following:

"Fahren wir nicht nach Amerika, so geschieht ein Unglück mit Mirjam. Fahren wir nach Amerika, so lassen wir hier Menuchim zurück. Sollen wir Mirjam allein nach Amerika schicken? Wer weiß, was sie anstellt, allein unterwegs und allein in Amerika. Menuchim ist so krank, daß ihm nur ein Wunder helfen kann. Hilft ihm aber ein Wunder, so kann er uns folgen." (p. 95)

On this occasion, Mendel goes against his own advice, that is, "Man soll sein Schicksal tragen!" (p. 44). By deciding to fight against fate, Mendel abandons his role as passive
onlooker and follows his wife's admonition by actively seeking to change the course of events.

Deborah is particularly torn by the decision to leave her son. She hopes to prevent this conflict by seeing Menuchim recover before they leave for America. But her faith grows cold as Menuchim's condition remains unchanged:


In desperation Deborah accuses God of injustice: "Wofür straft er uns jetzt? Haben wir Unrecht getan? Warum ist er so grausam?" (p. 97). She speaks like Job the Impatient, but her dwindling faith finally succumbs to despair:

Die Kraft, die zum Glauben gehörte, brachte sie [Deborah] nicht mehr auf, und allmählich verließen sie auch die Kräfte, deren der Mensch bedarf, um die Verzweiflung auszuhalten. (p. 106)

Once in America, Deborah feels guilty about having left Menuchim. Upon receiving the news that Jonas and Schemarjah have died, she no longer has the spiritual stamina required to withstand the shock and as a result dies herself.

America as an Affliction

Although the parents are thoroughly sincere in wanting to save their daughter from the Cossacks, it appears that Mendel and Deborah at the same time see in America an
escape from the hardships confronting them at home. They anticipate that the New World will offer them a better life as Schemarjah, now called Sam, has already described it. Mendel is tired of his humdrum existence as a teacher:

Rußland ist ein trauriges Land, Amerika ist ein freies Land, ein fröhliches Land. Mendel will kein Lehrer mehr sein, der Vater eines reichen Sohnes wird er sein. (p. 78)

Deborah has never been proud of Mendel's lowly status:

Sie war ein Weib, manchmal ritt sie der Teufel. Sie schielte nach dem Besitz Wohlhabender und neidete Kaufleuten den Gewinn. Viel zu gering war Mendel Singer in ihren Augen. (p. 9)

Both Mendel and Deborah desire a life that is economically more attractive and is apparently attainable in America. Schemarjah, albeit as a deserter, has already gone ahead and settled in the New World. Now Mirjam's coquetry provides the necessary impetus to seriously consider emigrating.

The only obstacle remaining is Menuchim, but Mendel and Deborah interpret their troubled circumstances in such a manner as to justify leaving their epileptic son behind. And although the sick boy is placed with a caring couple, his anguish about being left behind is not diminished:

Er war ein Idiot, dieser Menuchim! Ein Idiot! Wie leicht sagt man das! Aber wer kann sagen, was für einen Sturm von Ängsten und Sorgen die Seele Menuchims in diesen Tagen auszuhalten hatte, die Seele Menuchims, die Gott verborgen hatte in dem undurchdringlichen Gewande der Blödheit! Ja, er ängstigte sich, der Krüppel Menuchim. (pp. 104-105)

Deborah is terribly plagued by the rabbi's admonition not to leave Menuchim, something she has never revealed to her husband. After taking leave from Menuchim and while en
route to their port of departure, she is continually haunted by feelings of guilt: "Die Räder der Eisenbahn wiederholten unaufhörlich: Verlaß ihn nicht! Verlaß ihn nicht! Verlaß ihn nicht!" (p. 109). Thorsten Juergens therefore sees the unfortunate events awaiting Mendel in America as an effect resulting from an essentially immoral decision: "Der Weg nach Amerika führt ins Unglück, da er von einer unmoralischen Entscheidung ausgeht." The couple gets so caught up with the concept of America that they are unable to perceive any ill consequences to their decision, until it is too late:

Es war, als hätten sie, Deborah und Mendel, nicht freiwillig den Entschluß gefaßt, nach Amerika zu gehen, sondern als wäre Amerika über sie gekommen, über sie hergefallen.... Nun, da sie es bemerkten, war es zu spät. Sie konnten sich nicht mehr vor Amerika retten. (p. 106)

Once in America, Mendel suffers from loneliness, loss of homeland, and a crisis of faith. He feels uprooted and misplaced from the moment he steps onto American soil. His initial ride through New York irritates his senses. The air is filled with dirt, noise and stench. He is overpowered by the negative forces that envelop him as he sets foot in the New World: "Amerika drang auf ihn ein, Amerika zerbrach ihn, Amerika zerschmetterte ihn" (p. 118). He faints after his ride through the city and on recovering suddenly realizes that America will mean isolation for him:

Es war ihm, als wäre er aus sich selbst herausgestoßen worden, von sich selbst getrennt würde er fortan leben müssen. Es war ihm, als hätte er sich selbst in Zuchnow zurückgelassen, in der Nähe Menuchims. Und während es um seine Lippen lächelte und während es seinen Kopf schüttelte, begann sein Herz langsam zu vereisen, es pochte wie ein metallener Schlegel gegen kaltes Glas. Schon war er einsam, Mendel Singer: schon war er in Amerika ... (pp. 119-120)
Socially and economically, the New World seems to resemble the Old World, for Mendel and his family live in an enclave where many East European Jews have settled and carry on their old customs and traditions. So many fellow Jews, in fact, have settled in this district, that Mendel hardly feels transported at all. The narrator remarks: "Aber dieses Amerika war keine neue Welt. Es gab mehr Juden hier als in Kluczysz, es war eigentlich ein größeres Kluczysz" (p. 126).  

The sameness of life is also born out stylistically. For instance, Roth repeats verbatim the food items the Singers eat in Russia as well as in America:

Die Karotten verringerten sich, die Eier wurden hohl, die Kartoffeln erfroren, die Suppen wässerig, die Karpfen schmal und die Hechte kurz, die Enten mager, die Gänse hart und die Hühner ein Nichts. (p. 8, p. 127)

It is unlikely that the Singers eat exactly the same fish, fowl and vegetables in New York as they did in Zuchnow, but the verbatim repetition underscores the constancy of hardship in both worlds. Juergens makes the following observation:

Äußerlich wird Mendel beinah heimisch in der neuen Heimat, doch das geistige Vakuum wächst. Die wirtschaftliche und soziale Situation verändert sich kaum für die alten Singers. Sie haben ein russisches Ghetto für ein westliches eingetauscht.

Along with the urban noise and pollution, Mendel notices a spiritual hollowness about America. First reference to this void is made by a fellow passenger aboard the boat as the new immigrants are entering New York harbor. He remarks: "Jetzt erscheint die Freiheitsstatue. Sie ist hunderteinundfünfzig Fuß hoch, im Innern hohl, man kann sie besteigen" (p. 114).
Some months later, while looking out of his window one night, Mendel notices a searchlight scanning the night sky:

Da sah er den rötlichen Widerschein der lebendigen amerikanischen Nacht, die sich irgendwo abspielte, und den regelmäßigen silbernen Schatten eines Scheinwerfers, der verzweifelt am nächtlichen Himmel Gott zu suchen schien. Ja, und ein paar Sterne sah Mendel ebenfalls, ein paar kümmerliche Sterne, zerhackte Sternbilder. (p. 140)

The searchlight symbolizes the loss of faith of modern man in general, but it also anticipates Mendel's own loss of faith. By now, Mendel has lost his homeland, his family has been torn apart and the future looks uncertain. His roles as a father to his children and a teacher to his pupils no longer exist. He feels alone in a strange land and God seems farther away than ever. His religious crisis is precipitated once Jonas and Schemarjah fall victims to the War and Deborah dies of shock. In his dialogue with the dead body of his wife, Mendel describes America as a death trap for himself and his family. Referring to the psychological and physical destruction of his family, Mendel says:

"Amerika hat uns getötet. Amerika ist ein Vaterland, aber ein tödliches Vaterland. Was bei uns Tag war, ist hier Nacht. Was bei uns Leben war, ist hier Tod. Der Sohn, der bei uns Schemarjah hieß, hat hier Sam geheißen. In Amerika bist du begraben, Deborah, auch mich, Mendel Singer, wird man in Amerika begraben." (p. 154)

In his writings Joseph Roth was reluctant to describe the New World as the Promised Land, because to him America symbolized all of the negative aspects of modern civilization:

Amerika war für Roth von Anfang an Sinnbild und Ort aller ins Extrem ausartenden, unerwünschten Aspekte der westlichen Zivilisation, z. B. Technik, unvermessener Fortschrittsglaube, Kapitalismus, Gottlosigkeit, Kulturlosigkeit, Unfreiheit, gesellschaftliche Entwurzelung. Amerika stellt für Roth die "geistige Leere," die "Wüste" schlechtin dar.13
Mendel’s Rebellion

While engaging in a mute dialogue with his wife, Mendel for the first time in his life entertains the notion of a senseless existence:


In his reveries Mendel is still searching for a possible reason behind these tragic events:

"In jungen Jahren habe ich dein Fleisch genossen, in späten Jahren habe ich es verschmäht. Vielleicht war das unsere Sünde. Weil nicht die Wärme der Liebe in uns war, sondern zwischen uns der Frost der Gewohnheit, starb alles rings um uns, verkümmerte alles und wurde verdorben." (pp. 153-54)

Mendel is stunned and disillusioned. Not unlike the biblical Job, he expresses his death wish. But despite his feelings of grief and self-pity, he still considers God to be the all-wise and all-knowing designer of life:

"Du hast es gut, Deborah. Der Herr hat Mitleid mit dir gehabt. Du bist eine Tote und begraben. Mit mir hat Er kein Mitleid. Denn ich bin ein Toter und lebe. Er ist der Herr, Er weiß, was Er tut. Wenn du kannst, bete für mich, daß man mich auslösche aus dem Buch der Lebendigen." (p. 154)

But Mirjam’s sudden mental collapse causes feelings of anger and resentment to surface within Mendel. While in the hospital visiting his demented daughter, Mendel gets a patronizing earful from her doctor who says: "Sie sind doch ein frommer Mann, Mister Singer? Der liebe Gott kann helfen. Beten Sie nur fleißig zum lieben Gott" (p. 159). At this point, something snaps inside the timorous man from Zuchnow. He has always been pious and righteous and he has always said his prayers. Now a gentile doctor frivolously
advises him to use the spiritual medicine he has been using all along. To Mendel, the
doctor’s words smack of condescension, of mockery. Because he wanted to save Mirjam
from the morass of immorality, Mendel went to the trouble of uprooting his family and
moving to America. Had he not been so conscientious to serve God, most of these
afflictions would have been averted.

A drastic change in Mendel’s behavior manifests itself at once. When Mac
(Schemarjah’s friend) and Vega (Schemarjah’s widow) are ready to leave the hospital with
Mendel, he abruptly demands: “Führ mich direkt nach Hause, in meine Gasse” (p. 160).
The patient sufferer has turned rebellious:

Seine Stimme klang so hart, daß alle erschraken. Sie sahen ihn
an. Sein Aussehen schien sich nicht verändert zu haben.
Dennoch war es ein anderer Mendel. Genau wie in Zuchnow
und wie die ganze Zeit in Amerika war er angezogen. In hohen
Stiefeln, im halblangen Kaftan, mit der Mütze aus schwarzem
Seidenrips. Was also hatte ihn so verändert? Warum erschien
er allen größer und stattlicher? Warum ging so ein weißer und
furchtbarer Glanz von seinem Angesicht aus? (p. 160)

Mendel begins to direct his anger against God. On his way home with the couple he
verbalizes his indignation:

"Einmal hat mir Sam gesagt, daß die Medizin in Amerika die
beste der Welt ist. Jetzt kann sie nicht helfen. Gott kann
helfen! sagt der Doktor. Sag, Vega, hast du schon gesehen, daß
Gott einem Mendel Singer geholfen hätte?" (p. 160)

Mendel has risen to a new level of awareness. Suddenly he dares to question and doubt and
in so doing sets himself apart from his fellow Jews. Pöthe sees in Mendel’s rebellion a true
mark of self-assertion:
Der "einfache Mann" ist durch das Leid, das ihn betroffen hat, zum ersten Mal etwas Besonderes, steht über der Masse der anderen "Mendels" in der Judengasse von New York, besitzt aber auch die Persönlichkeit, um mit relativer Konsequenz gegen Gott zu rebellieren.¹⁴

At home Mendel gathers all of his religious paraphernalia together with the intention of burning them. He says to himself:

"Aus, aus, aus ist es mit Mendel Singer. Er hat keinen Sohn, er hat keine Tochter, er hat kein Weib, er hat keine Heimat, er hat kein Geld." (p. 162)

Not much later, he repeats the same words and then makes a significant addition:

"Aus, aus, aus ist es mit Mendel Singer! Er hat keinen Sohn, er hat keine Tochter, er hat kein Weib, er hat kein Geld, er hat kein Haus, er hat keinen Gott." (p. 175)

Mendel is trying to nullify his lifelong relationship with God.

Just as he used to praise God by singing psalms, he now curses God by threatening to burn Him. Mendel asks himself the perennial question of those who suffer: Why me and why not someone else?


Mendel has declared open warfare against God. He ceases to pray and he foregoes his rituals. He even sets out to irritate God: "Man erzählte sich von ihm, daß er oft in das italienische Viertel hinübergig, um Schweinefleisch zu essen und Gott zu ärgeren" (p. 170). By intentionally disobeying God, Mendel openly displays his defiance against his Maker. But his momentary burst of anger cannot negate an entire lifetime of service and devotion
to God: "Sein Herz war böse auf Gott, aber in seinen Muskeln wohnte noch die Furcht vor Gott" (p. 163).

Mendel's Comforters

While Mendel is angrily preparing to set the things of God ablaze, the neighbors are alarmed at the racket he is making and at the smoke coming through his door. They contact four of his close friends, Menkes, Skowronnek, Rottenberg and Groschel, who quickly pay a visit to Mendel. They inquire why he wants to light a fire and Mendel proudly tells them:

"Ich will mehr verbrennen als nur ein Haus und mehr als einen Menschen. Ihr werdet staunen, wenn ich euch sage, was ich wirklich zu verbrennen im Sinn hatte. Ihr werdet staunen und sagen: auch Mendel ist verrückt, wie seine Tochter. Aber ich versichere euch: ich bin nicht verrückt. Ich war verrückt. Mehr als sechzig Jahre war ich verrückt, heute bin ich es nicht." (p. 164)

Mendel feels his anger is justified. For all of his life he has served God, but God has relentlessly punished him. He shows a sense of pride in his newly found self. His stature seems to grow as he is facing up to God.

The rebellious spirit demonstrated by Mendel is certainly parallel to the doubt and despair exhibited by Job. Circumstances are different, of course. Mendel does not have to suffer any physical affliction himself, but he loses his wife as well as his children. In terms of sequence, Job does not turn rebellious until his friends arrive. Mendel, on the other hand, is already irate before his friends come to visit him. Job also retains his integrity throughout. Neither his degree of suffering nor his lack of understanding causes him to turn
against God. Mendel, however, shows open anger towards God and he is proud of having
these pent-up emotions come to the surface. It may be a desperate move on his part, but
it is also a genuine feeling that is raging within him.

Mendel's friends, however, are not nearly as faithful as Mendel has been:

Sie waren nicht alle fromm und gottesfürchtig, wie Mendel
ever gewesen war. Alle vier lebten schon lange genug in
Amerika, sie arbeiteten am Sabat, ihr Sinn stand nach Geld,
und der Staub der Welt lag schon dicht, hoch und grau auf
ihrem alten Glauben. Viele Bräuche hatten sie vergessen,
gegen manche Gesetze hatten sie verstoßen, mit ihren Köpfen
und Gliedern hatten sie gesündigt. (p. 164)

Since living in America, their belief system has become buried under the influence of
secularism. Job is confronted by friends who are zealous believers. Their orthodoxy comes
from the heart. Mendel's friends are merely applying orthodox ideas as a means of lending
assistance. They do not speak with authority. For one thing, they have not experienced the
misfortunes that have befallen Mendel, and for another, their position as counsellors is
weakened since they do not uphold the Law as strictly as Mendel does.

Skowronnek is the first one to speak up:

"Lästere nicht Mendel. Du weißt besser als ich, denn du hast
viel mehr gelernt, daß Gottes Schläge einen verborgenen Sinn
haben. Wir wissen nicht, wofür wir gestraft werden." (p. 164)

Again, the Deuteronomic code of reward and punishment looms in the minds of the friends.
According to Skowronnek, God does not punish capriciously. Mendel must have upset the
eternal order somehow, maybe unknowingly, but God's punishment is certainly just.

But Mendel now thinks he knows why God punishes innocent people like him:
"Gott ist grausam, und je mehr man ihm gehorcht, desto strenger geht er mit uns um. Er ist mächtiger als die Mächtigen, mit dem Nagel seines kleinen Fingers kann er ihnen den Garaus machen, aber er tut es nicht. Nur die Schwachen vernichtet er gerne. Die Schwäche eines Menschen reizt seine Stärke, und der Gehorsam weckt seinen Zorn. Er ist ein großer grausamer Isprawnik. Befolgst du die Gesetze, so sagt er, du habest sie nur zu deinem Vorteil befolgt. Und verstoßt du nur gegen ein einziges Gebot, so verfolgt er dich mit hundert Strafen. Willst du ihn bestechen, so macht er dir einen Prozeß. Und gehst du redlich mit ihm um, so lauert er auf die Bestechung. In ganz Rußland gibt es keinen böseren Isprawnik!" (pp. 164-65)

The second friend, Rottenberg, draws Mendel's attention to the misfortunes of Job:


Rottenberg makes reference here to the Prologue in Heaven, where Satan comes before the Lord and ventures that Job will renounce God, once he is tried to the limit. The comparison allows Mendel to see himself as a selected servant of God, who is being put to the test by the whims of Satan.

Groschel, the third friend, picks up on the Job-theme:

Tochter war schön, und bald hättest du einen Mann für sie gefunden!" (pp. 165-166)

Job too bemoans his losses. Chapter 29 in particular is an elegy to his past which was so fulfilled in comparison with his present which is so empty. He expresses a longing for days that can no longer be. Now Groschel brings up Mendel's past, because he wants to show him that he too was a great and blessed man like Job. But Groschel's use of the subjunctive reminds Mendel that some of these blessings were never realized. Consequently, intended consolation turns into certain agitation. Mendel rebukes his friend:

"Warum zerreiβt du mir das Herz, Groschel? Warum zählt du mir auf, was alles gewesen ist, jetzt, da nichts mehr ist? Meine Wunden sind noch nicht vernarbt, und schon reiβt du sie auf."
(p. 166)

Rottenberg, still groping for a cause, dares to suggest that Mendel has brought all of these afflictions upon himself, because he left Menuchim behind.

"Vielleicht, lieber Mendel, hast du Gottes Pläne zu stören versucht, weil du Menuchim zurückgelassen hast? Ein kranker Sohn war dir beschieden, und ihr habt getan, als wäre es ein böser Sohn."
(p. 166)

Mendel now feels he is being attacked. First, he turns to Groschel to see what solace he could possibly glean from the comparison with Job:

Then, he turns to Rottenberg, who has insinuated that Mendel's move to America was an act of negligence with respect to Menuchim:

"Denn es ist nicht richtig, daß ich Menuchim böswillig zurückgelassen habe und um ihn zu strafen. Aus andern Gründen, meiner Tochter wegen, die angefangen hatte, sich mit Kosaken abzugeben – mit Kosaken –, mußten wir fort. Und warum war Menuchim krank?" (p. 167)

Mendel has arrived back at the initial incident that caused such an unlucky chain of events. In his eyes, this proves that God is out to get him: "Schon seine Krankheit war ein Zeichen, daß Gott mir zürnt – und der erste der Schläge, die ich nicht verdient habe" (p. 167).

Like Job, Mendel defends himself quite effectively against his disagreeable friends.

Then, Menkes, the fourth friend described as "der Bedächtigste von allen" (p. 167), explains why miracles are no longer evident. He is similar to Elihu and tries to bring the dispute to a close. He exclaims:

"Obwohl Gott alles kann, so ist doch anzunehmen, daß er die ganz großen Wunder nicht mehr tut, weil die Welt ihrer nicht mehr wert ist. Und wollte Gott sogar bei dir eine Ausnahme machen, so stünden dem die Sünden der andern entgegen. Denn die andern sind nicht würdig, ein Wunder bei einem Gerechten zu sehn, und deshalb mußte Lot auswandern, und Sodom und Gomorrha gingen zugrunde und sahen nicht das Wunder an Lot. Heute aber ist die Welt überall bewohnt – und selbst wenn du auswanderst, werden die Zeitungen berichten, was mit dir geschehen ist. Also muß Gott heutzutage nur mäßige Wunder vollbringen. Aber sie sind groß genug, gelobt sei sein Name!" (p. 167)

He ends his speech advising Mendel to be realistic but positive under the circumstances:

Menkes says to make the best of a bad situation and to look for the silver lining in the cloud. But to no avail, for Mendel Singer thinks he is a magnet that attracts misfortune:

"Meine Anwesenheit bringt Unglück, und meine Liebe zieht den Fluch herab, wie ein einsamer Baum im flachen Felde den Blitz" (p. 168). He sees a pattern in his life and he assumes it is God's pleasure to persecute him:


Compare with:

Denn die Pfeile des Allmächtigen stecken in mir; desselben Gift muß mein Geist trinken, und die Schrecknisse Gottes sind auf mich gerichtet. (6:4)

Mendel has essentially described God as a cruel God, someone who is hunting him down, delighting in the torture of His victim.

The four friends have almost exhausted their tactics. Groschel makes one last attempt to get through to Mendel: "Aber seine Macht ist in dieser Welt und in der andern. Wehe dir, Mendel, wenn du tot bist!" (p. 169). In other words, Mendel is placing his soul
in jeopardy, because after he dies he will surely have to answer for his blasphemy. Mendel cannot help but laugh at this ultimate threat:

"Ich habe keine Angst vor der Hölle, meine Haut ist schon verbrannt, meine Glieder sind schon gelähmt, und die bösen Geister sind meine Freunde. Alle Qualen der Hölle habe ich schon gelitten. Gütiger als Gott ist der Teufel. Da er nicht so mächtig ist, kann er nicht so grausam sein. Ich habe keine Angst, meine Freunde!" (p. 169)

The friends appear genuinely concerned. What is uppermost in their minds is a possible explanation for the tragic course of events, some comforting thoughts to address the present situation, and some words of advice for a difficult future. They use the Law as a framework for discussion, for they have, after all, their Jewish faith in common. But the friends have been more passive in practicing their faith, whereas Mendel has not only been more devout in his religious practices, he had made it his livelihood to teach about the very God he feels is now torturing him. Therefore, Mendel's friends do not have the orthodox zeal and fervor that Job's friends display. Hence, they appear more compassionate and less judgemental. Mendel at no point calls them "miserable comforters." Their neighborly concern is further born out when they decide to stay with Mendel the entire night.

**Mendel's Restoration**

After the War has ended, Mendel manages to obtain a number of records that a returning soldier has brought back from Europe. He plays one of them on his gramophone and the music he hears simply moves him to tears. The name of the song is "Menuchims Lied."
A great composer and master conductor by the name of Alexej Kossak happens to be performing in New York. He comes originally from Zuchnow and inquires about Mendel Singer. It is presumed he is a relative since Deborah's maiden name was Kossak. When Mendel is shown a picture of this young genius, he becomes spellbound by his luminous eyes.

The father and son reunion takes place at a most significant moment—on seder-evening, when one chair is left empty in case the Prophet Elijah arrives. Mendel has been invited to spend the evening before passover with the Skowronnek family. The atmosphere and symbolism of the celebration is described in great detail. The group around the table begins singing about the great God who led their forefathers out of Egypt. The time approaches when someone, in this case, Mendel, goes to the door with a glass of wine, and opens it while the head of the family sings an invitation to the Prophet Elijah. Everything transpires as anticipated, but as soon as Mendel has taken his seat, a knock is heard at the door. The climactic buildup to this highpoint of the evening leaves everyone breathless.

Der Geruch der Kerzen, der Genuß des Weins, das gelbe ungewohnte Licht und die alte Melodie hatten die Erwachsenen und die Kinder so nah an die Erwartung eines Wunders gebracht, daß ihr Atem für einen Augenblick aussetzte und daß sie ratlos und blaß einander ansahen, als wollten sie sich fragen, ob der Prophet nicht wirklich Einlaß verlange. (p. 197)

Alexej Kossak is the unexpected guest. He enters and then tells about old friends and neighbors back home and finally divulges his own identity. He is indeed Menuchim. The father is overcome with joy as he recalls the words of the rabbi: "Der Schmerz wird ihn weise machen, die Häßlichkeit gültig, die Bitternis milde und die Krankheit stark" (pp. 207-208).
Menuchim—the Modern Miracle

Menuchim's appearance at the end of the novel brings together a variety of themes. His restored health and flowering genius, of course, represent the miracle. This confirms the rabbi's prediction, which is verbalized three times within the novel (once by the rabbi, once by Deborah, and once by Mendel). The agonizing guilt felt by Mendel for leaving Menuchim behind is at this moment lifted. The righteous son has found his prodigal father. Mendel's anger towards God has turned to repentance:


Job also repented once he saw in front of his eyes the miracle of God's creation:

"Ich hatte von dir mit den Ohren gehört; aber nun hat mein Auge dich gesehen. Darum spreche ich mich schuldig und tue Buße in Staub und Asche" (42:5-6). Mendel's gall has turned to gratitude. He donates to the poor the money Menuchim brought him for his house back in Russia.

The four comforters are able to show their genuine friendship. Just as they shared in Mendel's grief when he felt most despondent, so they share in the joy of his greatest hour of happiness. All four friends come by to visit Mendel after he has been reunited with Menuchim. Menkes says:

vollbringt, heute noch, wie vor einigen tausend Jahren. Gelobt sei sein Name!" (p. 208)

Job's friends, in contrast, do not make an appearance after his restoration.

The miracle of Menuchim's restoration symbolizes God's hand in the life of Mendel Singer. It runs parallel to Job's Epilogue and the narrator clearly makes the comparison by saying:

Er selbst, Mendel Singer, wird nach späten Jahren in den guten Tod eingehen, umringt von vielen Enkeln und "satt am Leben", wie es im "Hiob" geschrieben stand. (p. 215)

In Joseph Roth's work the ending reads: "Und er ruhte aus von der Schwere des Glücks und der Größe des Wunders" (p. 217).

New York lives up to its reputation of "die Stadt der Wunder" (p. 123), since it is in New York that Mendel witnesses the miracle. Hence, the final picture of America is a positive one. Looking out of his window, Mendel sees a sea of flashing advertisements. He sets his eyes particularly on one advertisement for a new soda drink:

Es war eine Reklame für eine neue Limonade. Mendel bewunderte sie als die vollkommenste Darstellung des nächtlichen Glücks und der goldenen Gesundheit. (p. 211)

Of course, the miracle itself occurs back in Russia, where doctors, whom Mendel does not trust, manage to cure Menuchim's epilepsy. The new name of Menuchim Mendel is Alexej Kossak, which brings to mind the Cossacks whom Mendel despises. The miracle symbolically brings together the old and the new and it reconcile some of their differences.

Although Roth entitled his novel Hiob and drew liberally on the biblical myth, he by no means wanted to recreate the Old Testament story. The differences, here, between the
two versions are as important as their similarities. To begin with, Mendel Singer is a simple man trying to make ends meet, not a rich and respected man like Job. It could also be said that Mendel is the father of an average family. He has four children, albeit one with epilepsy. Job is the father of ten children and begets ten more at the end of his trials. Mendel practises his religion, but more out of tradition than out of conviction. Job is depicted as a pious and righteous individual, someone who walks and talks with God. The misfortunes that Mendel experiences are not out of the ordinary either, at least not for a Russian Jew living in the early part of the twentieth century. Although Mendel loses his homeland, he is not the richest man who loses all of his possessions; although Mendel loses two sons to a war and subsequently his wife, and he has first a sick son and then a sick daughter, he does not lose ten children with one blow; and although Mendel goes through mental agony, he is never struck personally with a horrible disease. In sum, Mendel is an average man coping with difficult enough problems, but Job is a superlative man suffering under the most extreme conditions. It follows though, that by using the Job-motif in his novel, Roth is suggesting that not only an extraordinary man like Job, but also a very ordinary man like Mendel Singer can be the victim of trying circumstances and can be driven to despair.

Two Galician Job-Novels

It is indeed remarkable that a relatively small and distant region like Galicia should produce two authors who would write a modern Job-novel within a couple of generations. Undoubtedly, Sacher-Masoch and Roth were both acquainted with the hardships of the
Galician people. The former, it must be remembered, also had a penchant for describing the pain and suffering of mankind. The latter, born of Jewish parents, saw the demise of his homeland, Galicia,\(^\text{15}\) the collapse of the Habsburg Empire and the rise of National Socialism. Both authors, then, identified the suffering they saw as Job-like trials.

The two Job-characters, Theofil Pisarenko and Mendel Singer, display significant similarities as well as differences. Unlike the biblical Job, both modern Job-figures are common people caught up in the everyday struggle of life. Poor living conditions, a meagre income and hard work are their constant companions. Each one is an Everyman, a believable character wrestling with the human condition. This is a major departure from the traditional Job-figure who is not only upright but also very rich.

Both modern protagonists are innocent sufferers. Theofil, a devout Christian, and Mendel, a Hasidic Jew, are both faithful to God, but both were unduly struck down in a chain of unfortunate events. Theofil suffers as a result of cruel landowners, natural disaster and loss of family. Mendel suffers as a result of an ailing son, loss of homeland and loss of family. Theofil's suffering climaxes in physical pain and debilitation; Mendel's suffering crescendoes in mental agony and frustration.

The faith of each protagonist is tried to the limit. Theofil retains his patience and integrity throughout his trials. He bears each burden heroically and continues to praise God in the face of the most adverse conditions. His response to suffering rivals the patience of the Job in the Prologue. Mendel remains faithful and steadfast until his wife dies and his daughter goes insane. He rebels against God and intends to burn Him. His response is
more analogous to the Impatient Job of the Dialogues. He accuses God of hounding and persecuting him. He harbors feelings of anger and vengeance towards God.

When Sacher-Masoch wrote his Job-novel in 1878, the Habsburg Empire was still seen as a unifying force manifesting vitality and optimism. Reflecting the spirit of the times, he has his Job-figure, Theofil Pisarenko, stay in Galicia where he eventually finds fulfillment and favor with God. By the time Roth wrote his Job-novel in 1930, the Habsburg Empire had collapsed as a result of the First World War and the National Socialists were steadily gaining in strength and influence. Responding to the uneasiness felt throughout Europe, he has his Job-figure, Mendel Singer, emigrate to America where he feels uprooted and misplaced.

Both novelists, although not wanting to recreate the biblical story of Job, used much of the pattern of the Old Testament story. Each protagonist has a wife who appears less valiant than the Job-figure himself, although Mendel's wife is much more independent than subservient. At the height of the personal crisis, immediately following the most serious affliction, four friends appear who intend to succor the sufferer. In each case, the friends try to relate the afflictions of the Job-figure to some previous sins against God. It should be mentioned, however, that the friends of both Theofil and Mendel appear before, during and after the crisis. Although they take the position of defending God and His ways, they are much less orthodox and accusatory than their biblical predecessors. For Sacher-Masoch and Roth, the disputations between the protagonist and the friends are not necessarily the focal point of the story. Hence, less antagonism exists between them.
Each Job-figure is rescued from his agony. However, the Theophany that Theofil experiences in the nineteenth century no longer befits Mendel's world, which is already torn and tormented. A vision of God is still plausible for Theofil, who never doubts God's existence and serves Him faithfully in good and bad times alike. But Mendel has lost his bearings. He is disturbed and disillusioned by the course of events in his life. By providing a miracle at the end, Joseph Roth at least holds out a glimmer of hope for himself and the reader.

It is clear that Joseph Roth's Job-figure no longer has the certitude of life and the confidence in God that is displayed by Sacher-Masoch's Job-figure. Theofil's world is still whole; Mendel's world is already fragmented. The former experiences a restoration and subsequent fulfillment with family and friends. The latter eventually ceases to rebel against God and also finds fulfillment, but out of necessity, it seems, in the restoration of his only son. Sacher-Masoch's Epilogue appears real and consistent, while Roth's Epilogue appears illusory and tentative, if not artificial. Nevertheless, both Job-figures come through their afflictions affirming the value of human struggle in the face of tragic events.
Notes


Just as Mendel Singer feels guilty about the incurring tragic events in his family, so Joseph Roth felt guilty about the illness and death of his wife Friederike, who suffered from schizophrenia and had to be institutionalized in 1928. Mendel Singer's guilt feelings for neglecting his son Menuchim is a partial purging of Roth's self-indictment. David Bronson writes: "... er [Joseph Roth] fühlt sich an Friedls Krankheit schuldig, verzeiht sich nicht, daß er nicht mehr für sie getan hat, entkräftet aber die Heftigkeit der Selbstbezichtigung ein wenig, indem er auf das Ausmaß seiner Besorgtheit hinweist." See Bronson, p. 384.


Steinmann, p. 40.

The imagery of thunder and lightning is used extensively in the Book of Job, especially when God's might and majesty are portrayed.

Pöthe, pp. 158-59.
Thorsten Juergens, *Gesellschaftskritische Aspekte in Joseph Roths Romanen* (Universitaire Pers Leiden, 1977), p. 122. If Juergens here wants to establish a cause and effect relationship between Mendel Singer's conduct and his subsequent misfortunes, he falls into the same trap as did Job's comforters many centuries ago, when they tried to pin his afflictions to a hidden misdeed. It must also be remembered that Mendel is not of the opinion that mankind needs a mediator between himself and God like a rabbi. For him, the rabbi's words are insignificant.


Juergens, p. 123.

Juergens, p. 119.

Pöthe, p. 148.

The Jews living in Galicia were part of a large group of Ashkenazi Jews who had been settling in Central and Eastern Europe ever since the Middle Ages. See Susanne Berg, "Archaik in der Moderne. Zu Joseph Roths 'Hiob'-Roman," *Deutschunterricht* 37 [1985], footnote 1 on p. 102.
Sacher-Masoch and Roth both used the figure of Job to reflect the hardships of life in Galicia. The former made Job into a devout Christian; the latter made him into a Hasidic Jew. The following authors (Ernst Wiechert, Kurt Eggers and Theodor Haerten), writing while National Socialism was on the rise in Germany, take the same biblical Job and twist him into a propagandistic figure who serves to proclaim the particular message of the writer. For Wiechert, Job is the German who has brought shame and hardship on the German nation for causing the First World War and the subsequent suffering. For Eggers, Job is the German who is destined to bestow on Germany her rightful role as leading nation of the world. For Haerten, Job displays non-Aryan characteristics which are not desirable to a wholesome society and must therefore be rooted out.
Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann

Ernst Wiechert (1887-1950) originated from East Prussia and was primarily known as a novelist. He taught for most of his adult life at the secondary school level and served in the First World War from start to finish. As the National Socialists were gaining power in the 1920s, there was some controversy surrounding the position of Wiechert. In his novel Der Totenwald (1924), he anticipates the ideology of the National Socialists, presents them in a positive light and has the book cover appear with a swastika on it.¹ In time, however, Wiechert's position became quite clear. According to H. R. Klieneberger, Wiechert "offered much more drastic opposition to Nazism than any other writer who had remained in Germany."² In two speeches given at the University of Munich in 1933 and 1935 he voiced some strong opinions opposing the Nazi regime. In 1938 he defended the persecuted theologian Martin Niemöller and also protested against the occupation of Austria. As a result he spent some months in the Gestapo-prison at Munich and the concentration camp at Buchenwald. He recalls the experiences of his imprisonment in Der Totenwald: ein Bericht (1946). Upon his release he lived in Bavaria where he was kept under observation and was prohibited from publishing anything. After the War, in 1948, Wiechert emigrated to Switzerland where he died two years later.

In the fall of 1932 Ernst Wiechert was commissioned by the "mitteldeutscher Rundfunk" to write a play that was to be broadcast on the upcoming New Year's Eve. The result was the work entitled Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann. The authorities wanted the author to reflect upon the past year, but Wiechert decided to go back further into the German past. He later commented on the reason behind his historical perspective:
Die Rückschau ist in meinem Spiel weiter gegangen, als es verlangt war, weil aus dem Leben eines Volkes sich niemals ein einzelnes Jahr als etwas für sich Daseiendes lösen läßt, sondern die Wurzeln jedes Jahres tief hinabreichen in das Vergangene.\(^3\)

Wiechert reached back to the recent but devastating past of the German nation, choosing the figure of Job to portray Germany's glory before the War, her afflictions during and after the War, and the eventual healing of the wounds in the years to come.

The short play consists of a "Vorspiel" and the "Hauptspiel." To begin with, a narrator describes the plight of Germany after the devastation of the First World War:

\[\text{Im Dunklen stehn wir, ganz allein, das Volk des Kreuzes, voller Pein.}^4\]

He asks God if Germany as a prodigal son could not be accepted back into the fold of nations:

\[\text{"Wollest uns wieder nehmen an Deinen Thron Als Deiner Völker verlorenen Sohn!" (p. 9)}\]

Then he announces that the play will be allegorical in nature:

\[\text{So höret als des Jahres Lohn das Gleichnis vom deutschen Hiobssohn. (p. 9)}\]

The Prologue (Vorspiel) tells of the birth of Hiob, how he grew up in the thriving Germany of the Wilhelmine era, how he was called to go to war and how he returned home an invalid and a beggar.

For the young man Hiob only the good life matters. He tells his teacher about his future ambitions:

\[\text{Ich will lernen, zu werden groß und reich, und möchte werden dem Kaiser gleich; ich möchte haben viel Gut und Ehr und lernen zu leben ohne Beschwer. (p. 11)}\]
To his pastor he tells which is his favorite verse in the Bible:

Im Buche Hiob, am Verse drei,
das Wort will ich mir legen bei:
"Und er war herrlicher denn alle,
die gegen Morgen wohnten." (p. 12)

The accompanying afflictions that the biblical character had to endure are of no concern to him. Wiechert's Hiob does not embrace piety and rectitude. He is arrogant and strives for comfort and convenience and despises spiritual values. Indeed, he stands in stark contrast to the biblical Job who is blameless before God and man.

Amidst the wedding celebrations of Hiob and his bride, warning bells are heard and a voice forebodes the outbreak of the First World War:

Es steht ein Feuer über der Welt,
es reitet ein Reiter über das Feld.
Trägt eine Sense in seinem Arm...
Ach, daß sich Gott unser aller erbarm... (p. 13)

Hiob receives the news rather lightheartedly:

Ein dummer Spaß, geht schnell vorbei,
dann feiern wir das Fest aufs neu. (p. 14)

On the battlefield Hiob encounters the personified figure of Death. A struggle ensues between them and Hiob loses a leg in the process. While convalescing in a military hospital, he searches for a sin that could possibly have brought down the wrath of God:

Was hab ich Gott zuleid getan,
daß er aus mir macht einen Krüppelmann? (p. 17)

Hiob then likens God to a hunter whose sport it is to shoot game:

In Seide war ich eingehüllt,
nun bin ich ein zerschossen Wild,
mit dem der Jäger hat seinen Spott,
und dieser Jäger heißet Gott. (p. 18)
Compare with:
Denn die Pfeile des Allmächtigen stecken in mir; derselben Gift
muß mein Geist trinken, und die Schrecknisse Gottes sind auf
mich gerichtet. (6:4)

These are but brief lamentations in comparison with the ongoing revolt that the Old
Testament Job displays.

By means of a lullaby Wiechert contrasts prewar and postwar Germany. When Hiob
was a young boy his mother sang a lullaby to him that reflected Germany’s prosperity and
God’s protection:

Schlaf, Kind, schlaf, das Reich ist groß,
und das Korn ist gemahlen.
Schlaf, Kind, ich web dir einen bunten Rock,
und dein Vater kann ihn bezahlen.
Die andern sind arm,
aber dein Brot ist warm,
und dein Wein steht in goldenen Schalen.

Schlaf, Kind, schlaf, dein Pate ist Gott,
er wird dich erheben.
Schlaf, Kind, und fürchte nichts in der Welt
als Gott und ein Bettlerleben.
Die andern sind arm,
aber dein Brot ist warm,
und Nehmen ist besser denn Geben. (p. 10)

Now Hiob returns home from the War, wounded and poor. His wife sings their son the
following lullaby reflecting the destruction of Germany and the impending afflictions:

Schlaf, Kind, schlaf, das Reich ist verstreut,
wie das Reich der Perser und Meder.
Schlaf, Kind. Gott webt dir ein Bettlerkleid,
und Gott ist ein mächtiger Weber.
Die andern sind reich,
aber unsre Wangen sind bleich,
und auf den Feldern sammeln wir Treber...
Schlaf, Kind, schlaf. Dein Name ist Spott.
Mit Dornen werden sie dich krönen.
Schlaf, Kind, sie nageln schon an deinem Kreuz,
und die Knechte werden dich höhnen.
Deine Spur verweht,
und dein Name vergeht,
du ärmer von Hiobs Söhnen...

Schlaf, Kind, schlaf, es ist Sterbenszeit
für Deutschlands Kinder.
Der Tod geht um unter der Erstgeburt,
der große Garbenbinder.
Des Herodes Zeit
ist wieder bereit,
ach Gott, wo ist sein Überwinder? (pp. 20-21)

The old lullaby shows Hiob growing up in the Germany of Kaiser Wilhelm II—a rich
and proud country. Wiechert undoubtedly ascribes collective guilt to the nation that was
so self-absorbed and then plunged much of the world into war. Hence, Hiob's subdued
rebellion—he is a sufferer, but not an innocent one. The new lullaby depicts the Germany
of the Weimar Republic—impoverished and humiliated. But Wiechert also points to the
victors of the War and describes them as being overbearing and cruel towards Germany.
He blends the Job-motif with the Christ-motif, pointing to a future that is laden with
innocent suffering for the coming generation.

War-stricken Hiob is forced to put his remaining possessions up for auction. The
meagre amount being offered is an indication of the worthless goods he still has:

DER AUKTIONATOR:

Hieran, ihr Leute, ohne Scham!
Das Wild ist mätt, das Wild ist lahm.
Des Hiob Hof, des Hiob Land,
wir bieten aus es auf der Gant.
Zwei Groschen zum ersten, zwei Groschen zum zwoten...
Zwei Groschen zum... wer hat mehr geboten? (p. 21)
In the auctioneer’s following attempt to sell Hiob’s belongings, Wiechert makes it abundantly clear that he is not just talking about the collapse of an individual, but about the ruin of an entire nation:

**DER AUCTIONATOR:**

Vier Groschen für Kronen, Städte und Land!  
Vier Groschen für Luther, Goethe and Kant!  
Vier Groschen zum ersten, vier Groschen zum zwoten!  
Vier Groschen zum... (p. 22)

Hiob’s wife pleads for God’s mercy as she visualizes a future of bondage and vicissitude for the three of them:

Das Korn wird wachsen für fremdes Brot,  
der Baum wird blühen für fremdes Gebot,  
die Kuh wird brüllen um fremden Trank,  
die Diele wird knarren unter fremdem Gang.  
Wir gehn ohne Ernte und ohne Samen,  
wie aus der Mutter Leib wir kamen:  
ein Mann, ein Weib, ein säugend Kind,  
drei welke Gräser in Gottes Wind.  
Nun, Vater der Armen, bitten wir dich:  
wollest uns führen gnädiglich! (p. 22)

Unlike Job’s wife in the Old Testament, Hiob’s wife is supportive of her husband. She is gentle and consoling—a model German wife and mother.

In the "Hauptspiel" Hiob searches for God and His mercy. He, his wife and son, "drei Bettler aus Niemandsland," go begging for food. They are directed to Pilatus, "der Herr der Welt." There is reveling and frolicking as the three approach the house of Pilatus. They sing the following refrain:

Es leuchtet ein Stern über Bethlehem,  
die Hirten waren im Feld.  
Da kamen drei Weise aus Morgenland,  
die suchten das Kindlein der Welt.
Once inside, each one recites a heartrending verse that bemoans their terrible plight. But Pilatus is unsympathetic towards the three beggars and has them thrown into a dungeon. It is here in the darkness of the dungeon that Hiob experiences his moment of enlightenment. He comes to recognize in Pilatus his former self:

Ich sah ein Gesicht... ich sah es ganz nah...
sind nun im Kerker, aber es ist immer noch da.
Ist ein fremdes Gesicht, aber mir schrecklich verwandt,
asl hätt’ ich es früher an mir gekannt... (p. 30)

Now Hiob acknowledges his sinful past and pleads for forgiveness:

Kenne nun meine Sünde und große Schuld,
und will nun bitten um Gottes Huld. (p. 30)

A heavenly messenger appears to the three prisoners and addresses Hiob, saying:

Du armer Knecht, hast nun vollendet,
dein Bettlerkleid ist bald gewendet.
Tu ab dein Zepter, tu ab deine Kron’
und lege sie auf die Stirn deinem Sohn.
Hast gelitten zu deiner Frist genug,
war mehr, als jemals ein Volk ertrug. (p. 31)

The dungeon walls open up and an army of dead men and women become visible. The dead explain that they are engaged in a battle to fight evil and to restore the Christian faith to its proper place in the nation. Hiob joins their ranks and marches away with them.

After the play was aired, the Nazi members of the audience took offense to Wiechert’s characterization of Germany. For one, they did not like Germany being compared to a beggarman. To this Wiechert replied:
For another, they did not see why Germany should bear the name of an Old Testament figure. To this Wiechert responded:

Ernst Wiechert has, of course, altered the Job-story greatly, but he has also retained some significant parallels. Like the biblical Job, Wiechert's Hiob is afflicted with physical pain and loss of belongings and he too complains about his adverse conditions. But the Job of the Old Testament is never reduced to a beggar, not in a real nor in a figurative sense. He remains steadfast and eloquent, even in the face of great adversity. Wiechert's Hiob finds it necessary to humble himself to the point where he and his family go begging. Job of old is never cut off from the community. Friends visit him and they actively engage in discussions relating to Job's afflictions. Wiechert's Hiob is ostracized by society. The biblical Job defends his own righteousness and questions the justice of God. Wiechert interprets Hiob's afflictions, the suffering and ill consequences of the War, as a means to return to God. Since he is a prodigal son who had at one point chosen to deviate from the path of righteousness, Hiob has no right to rebel against God. The Old Testament Job finds a rich reward at the end of his suffering and lives out a fulfilled life. Wiechert's Hiob finds no solace in this life. Any reward is reserved for a life after death, where Hiob fights together with others to defeat evil. In short, Wiechert has reduced Job to an allegorical
figure, who represents first an arrogant Germany, then a deservedly suffering Germany and finally a repentant Germany about to be again accepted by the nations of the world and by God.

It is no surprise, however, that the German public nearly fifteen years after the end of the First World War no longer wanted to hear the message of sorrow and remorse. In anticipation of a brighter future most Germans were eager to bury the memories of the recent past, while Wiechert's play brought to mind these painful years of humiliation and hardship. What an irony that the play was aired to celebrate the beginning of the year 1933, the year when the National Socialists came to power.

It is noteworthy that Harry Steinhauer, in compiling a number of German dramas in 1938, would include Wiechert's *Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann* in his anthology. He calls the work "a sort of spiritual constitution of the Third Reich" and clearly sees it as an admonition against the rise of National Socialism. According to Steinhauer, 

he [Wiechert] denounces both the pride of the Wilhelmine era and the defeatism of the [Weimar] Republic, and would have them superseded by a new dignity which is, however, continually mindful of Christian humility and love for one's fellowmen. When he saw alarming signs of a new arrogance and ruthlessness, especially among the very young, Wiechert fearlessly stepped into the arena to issue his warning against the dangers inherent in such an attitude.7

In retrospect, then, Wiechert's play appears to be not only a reflection of events passed, but just as much a prophecy of events to come.
Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen

Kurt Eggers, born in Berlin in 1905, was a writer of poetry, fiction and drama, but whatever the genre, it reflected a brand of passionate nationalism. His rise to fame came about through his drama Hutten (1933). As a broadcast director in the early years of the Nazi regime, Eggers took full advantage of his position by providing his audience with a number of his own plays especially written for radio, such as Annaberg, ein kämpferisches Spiel (1933), Revolution um Luther (1935), Die Bauern von Meißen (1936), and others. In 1936 he was made chief administrator for special events (Abteilungsleiter für Feiergestaltung im Rasse- und Siedlungshauptamt SS) in Berlin.

Less than a year after Wiechert's play had been aired, Eggers published a play bearing a conspicuously similar title: Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen. Ein Mysterium (1933). It was printed as part of a series entitled "Aufbruch zur Volksgemeinschaft" and "was the 'hub' of the Cologne Reichsfestspiele in February 1934."8

In their efforts to eradicate "decadent" theatre that had prevailed prior to the rise of the Third Reich, the National Socialists created a new dramaturgy that would at once proclaim their ideology and fascinate the spectators. The Thingspiel9 became just such a vehicle. In his dramaturgical notes Wilhelm Andreas von Schramm outlined a basic structure for this type of drama. A Thingspiel should include the following: 1) a parade, 2) a chorus, 3) war songs, 4) a display of banners, and 5) a presentation of symbols.10 In form and content, Eggers' play assumed the format of a Thingspiel, but the Cultural Board chose to classify it as a "Mysterium" because the story line originated from an Old Testament myth and not from old Germanic mythology.11
The drama consists of five acts. The first and last acts (Prologue and Epilogue) take place in the Kingdom of God, the central three acts take place on German soil.

**Act I ("Das Vorspiel im Reiche Gottes")**

God, "der Herr der Herrlichkeiten," Satan, "der böse Feind," and Michael, "der Erzengel," are assembled together in Heaven. Satan begins the discussion by belittling the faith of mankind. Even a believer, he says, will cease to pray and turn away from God, once he has to suffer sufficiently:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Geht in die Häuser, in die Stuben, } \\
\text{Geht in die Städte, geht aufs Land, } \\
\text{Geht zu den Greisen, zu den Buben: } \\
\text{Nichts ist von eurem Herrn bekannt. } \\
\text{Die Not macht hart, die Sorge stumm, } \\
\text{Das Leid singt euch nicht Lieder. } \\
\text{Der Menschenfrage des Warum } \\
\text{Hallt keine Antwort wider.}^{12}
\end{align*}
\]

Michael perceives a two-pronged accusation in Satan's statement. For one, men are only faithful as long as they are not exposed to suffering, and for another, suffering is a senseless aspect of God's plan. But Michael makes no apology for the suffering among mankind. He states categorically:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{Menschenleiden dient zur Reife! } \\
\text{Daß der Mensch den Sinn begreife, } \\
\text{Ward ihm Kampf gegeben. } \\
\text{Wer da klagt } \\
\text{Und verzagt, } \\
\text{Ist nicht wert, ein Mensch zu sein! (p. 12)}
\end{align*}
\]

Here the purpose of suffering is made imminently clear. It serves in the maturation of the
spirit. Satan, however, argues otherwise:

Der Mensch ist gut,  
Solang sein Blut  
Zufrieden ist.  
Doch kommen die Stunden  
Der Schläge und Wunden,  
Dann wird er zum Tier!  
Dann wird sein Gott  
Zu Hohn und Spott! (p. 13)

God, eager to disprove Satan's theory, tells about his sterling servant—Job, the German—and if he wishes, Satan could tempt him:

Versuche Job, den Deutschen!  
In meinem Erdenreich  
Ist keiner ihm gleich  
Unter den Menschen. (pp. 13-14)

The agreement between God and Satan is much more than the wager in the Job-story. A bargain is struck: if Satan wins, he gains the whole kingdom; if he loses, he dies.

Versuche Job, den Deutschen!  
Versuche ihn zu verderben,  
Und du sollst triumphieren  
Oder – sterben! (p. 14)

This is a bet with the highest prize possible—the Kingdom of God is at stake. And the outcome depends on the courage, tenacity and faithfulness of Job, the German.

Act II ("Die Heimat Jobs des Deutschen")

Down on Earth, in Germany, a servant delivers to his master Job the message that war has broken out. A barbaric enemy has crossed the border and is now killing people and
pillaging town and country. The servant assures Job: "Deine Söhne freuen sich des Krieges, Herr!" Job adds:

Und das ist gut so. Eine Jugend, die nicht mehr kriegsfroh ist und mutig in der Schlacht, die läßt die Heimat leicht verderben.
(p. 20)

The propagandistic tone is obvious from the outset. War lurks on the horizon. A ruthless enemy will attack the peaceful German people and they will valiantly fight back. So it is that Job's seven sons are called to go to war. They gladly respond to the battle cry and their father praises them for their sense of honor and duty.

Job's wife is much less convinced that giving up seven sons for a war is a good thing. Therefore, Job finds it necessary to council her:

Weib, es ist schwer für mich und dich,  
Gott zu danken für die Gabe,  
die er uns diesen Tag bescherte.  
Jedoch er weiß, was seinen Knechten ziemt  
Und will, daß sie gehorchen und nicht murren.  
Die letzte Weisheit, die wir Menschen haben,  
Heißt: sich bescheiden.  
Drum wollen wir nicht klagen, wenn der Acker brach liegt  
Und das Unkraut sich verbreitet.  
Einst kommt der Tag, da es gejätet wird!  
Wir wollen beten für das Leben unserer Söhne,  
Daß sie den Feind bestehen und nicht wanken. (p. 21)

The possible loss of children, a clear trial and a trauma for Job's wife, is hardly perceived as an affliction by Job. In fact, by telling her to obey and not to complain, Job himself, in this case, turns out to be a miserable comforter. He has neither empathy nor understanding for his wife's fear. When she tells him she had a dream about seven strong oak trees which were all hewn down, he chides her, saying:
Wer weiß, ob nicht der böse Feind dir die Versuchung sandte,
Um dir den Fluch aufs Schicksal in den Mund zu legen
Und dich zu reißen aus dem Reich des Herrn der Herrlichkeiten,
In dem die Seele durch den Glauben wohnt. (p. 22)

Eggers has made Job into a one-dimensional character—obedient and submissive—not directly to God, but to the state, which, of course, is fighting on behalf of God. Job is willing to sacrifice anything and everything in the short term, even the blood of his sons, as long as the end would render a victorious Germany. And this, in his estimation, would be for the better good for all of mankind and would increase the glory of God on earth.

Before leaving for the battlefront the seven sons together recite a song of parting:

Unser Herz ist stark, unser Leib gerüstet.
Aus dem Bauersmann ist ein Krieger geworden.
Zum Würigen und Morden
Zwingt ihn der Krieg.
Wer ein Krieger ist, der hat Freude am Kampfe,
Dem ist das Schwert
Der liebste Gefährt,
Dem Krieger.
Wir ziehen ins Feld
Und die Entscheidung fällt
Heut oder morgen.
Was sollen wir sorgen
Um unser Los,
Wir Krieger! (pp. 23-24)

Job, the German patriarch, gives his sons a blessing as they head out to war. He reminds them:

Das Gebet des Kriegers heißt: Gott gib mir Kraft!
Kraft zum Kämpfen, Kraft zum Sterben, wie Du willst!
Aber laß mich nicht als Feigling fallen,
Als Verräter meiner Heimat! (p. 24)

Job’s wife fears the worst, but Job assures her that God in His wisdom will test no one beyond his ability to bear the burden.
One day seven corpses are delivered. A chorus of pallbearers praises the heroism of these brave soldiers:

Wohl dem Krieger,
Der als Held
Für seine Heimat
Kämpfend fällt.
Er ist bei Gott
Im Reiche des Lichtes.
Denn der Herr liebt die Tapfern
Und hasset die Feigen.
Ehre den gefallenen Helden,
Sie sind bei Gott. (p. 26)

Job is struck with grief, but he resigns himself to asking God why this had to happen. His wife is unable to contain her bile and curses God, saying:

Das Blut meiner Söhne ist mein Blut,
Und das steht auf und verklagt
Den Herrn der Herrlichkeiten
Wegen des Unrechts in seinem Walten,
Wegen der Willkür.
Wegen des Mordes an meinen Söhnen! (pp. 26-27)

The servant defends Job's wife. He questions the justice system of the universe and the existence of God. Not being able to envision such a cruel God who would allow all seven sons to be killed, he attributes the war and its grueling consequences to nothing more than bad luck, which would mean that Job's sons died in vain:

Da hast du's, Herr, da, sieh!
Der Herr der Herrlichkeit
Kann deinem Leid
Nicht wehren.
Nur vermehren
Kann er die Pein,
Die Angst, das Verlassensein,
Dein Gott.
Und deine sieben Söhne
Sind umsonst gefallen! (pp. 28-29)
Job resists the temptation to doubt. He puts his faith on the line, insisting:

Der Tod der Söhne kennt kein Umsonst.
Ihr Sterben hat Sinn,
Wenn auch du ihn verbirgst.
Laß mich daran halten, Herr,
Und wehre aller Versuchung,
Ich glaube, Herr! (p. 29)

**Act III ("Die große Versuchung")**

Three allegorical figures appear to Job and his wife: Poverty (Armut), Disease (Seuche) and Vice (Laster). Job and his wife are both infested by Poverty and Disease but they resist Vice. Eggers continually drives home the point that the afflictions are specifically directed at the German character. Satan’s licence to strike down Job appears more like a conspiracy against the nation called Germany than the individual called Job. Poverty, for instance, says:

Zieh deinen Mantel aus,
Du Deutscher!
Zieh diese Lumpen an,
Du Weib!
Eure Bitterstunde ist gekommen,
Euch wird alles genommen,
Was ihr noch habt! (p. 36)

Disease likewise says:

Job, du Deutscher, du Bettelmann!
Die Seuche,
Die Seuche rührt dich an.
Der Seuche,
Der Seuche seid ihr untertan,
Du Mann, du Weib! (p. 40)

And Vice tempts Job, saying:
Job, du Deutscher, folge mir,
Ich zeige dir
Die Betäubung,
Das Vergessen.
Ohne Schmerz,
Ohne Herz
Sollst du leben
Tag für Tag. (pp. 45-46)

The afflictions of Job the German go beyond those of Job the Hebrew. Both of them lose their children, both of them get to know poverty and disease, but only the German Job has to confront Vice in all her splendor. She offers temporary relief from suffering, a temptation which never beset the biblical Job. The German Job, of course, resists valiantly. Michael, the archangel, everpresent and observing his mortal hero, applauds him, saying:

Deutscher, du Ringer,
Du Höllenbezwinger,
Du bist stark!
Der Hölle Brut
Und Satans Wut
Werden im Gerichte
Zunichte!
Der Herr der Herrlichkeiten
Wird dich zur Freiheit leiten! (p. 47)

Act IV ("Kampf und Überwindung Jobs")

Impoverished and diseased, Job and his wife carry on. She is the weak companion who receives all of her strength from her husband. He assures her that faith in God is the only thing that matters. Both are exhausted and fall into a deep sleep. Choirs of angels sing praises to Job. In fact, the little verse reads like a miniature set of beatitudes for the Germans:
Selig der Deutschen, Der überwindet Des Feindes List. Selig der Deutschen, Der findet Der Freiheit Weg. Selig der Deutschen, Der kämpft und siegt, Er wird frei! (pp. 54-55)

Act V ("Das Nachspiel im Reiche Gottes")

Back in the Kingdom of God the Lord is convinced of Job’s valor and faithfulness.

He asks the rhetorical question:

Wo ist in meinem Erdenreich Einer dem Deutschen gleich An Ertragen und Glauben? (p. 58)

The archangel Michael proudly reviews the trials and triumphs of Job:

Er hat gesiegt In tausend Nöten, Der Deutsche! Es wollte ihn töten Der böse Feind. Doch seine List Zerschlagen ist Am Deutschen. Er nahm die Plagen, Um ihn zu schlagen. Er raubte sein Gut Und spritzte ins Blut Ihm das Gift, Dem Deutschen! Doch der glaubte Und siegte! Selig der Deutsche, Der aus der Hölle Brand Den Weg in die Freiheit fand! (p. 58)
Satan complains about the outcome. There are other tests he had not applied that surely would have brought down Job. But Michael defends the superiority of Job:

Und hättest du tausend Foltern noch,
So wird der Deutsche doch
Sie überstehen.
Du bist verloren,
Aufs Neue geboren
Wird durch den Deutschen die Welt. (p. 59)

Satan is outraged and wants to kill Job. At this point God steps in and reminds Satan that he has lost the bet and he must now die. Legend has it that Satan will one day be defeated by the righteousness of a strong man, in this case, the German nation. Michael then dismisses Satan:

So stirb
Und verdirb
Durch des Deutschen Schwert. (p. 60)

Through astral projection the soul of Job appears in front of God. He blesses his faithful servant and his homeland:

Deutscher!
Ich segne dich
Für deinen Glauben.
Deutscher, ich preise dich
Für deine Stärke.
Immer und ewiglich
Sei deinem Werke
Bestand.
Deutscher!
Dein Land
Sei die Quelle der Welt,
Die belebt und erhält
Alle Völker.
Zieh aus des Knechts Gewand!
Meine Hand
Wird dich krönen
Und versöhnen
It is clear from the benison pronounced on Germany that Eggers wants the events and aftermath of the First World War to be nothing more than a fading memory. Germany should no longer suffer the yoke of reparations and restrictions imposed upon her by the Peace Treaty of Versailles in 1919, but rather should now assume a leading role among the nations of the world.

God seals a promise upon the head of Job, stating:

Kehrst du zurück auf Erden,
Soll dir Erfüllung werden
Deiner Sehnsucht!
Ich nehme die Armut
Von dir.
All dein Gut
Gebe ich dir.
Deiner Söhne Seelen
Will ich befehlen,
Von neuem zu leben.
Der Erden Herrlichkeit will ich geben
Deinem Geschlecht.
Dein Volk sei fortan
Das Volk meiner Offenbarung.
Die heiligsten Güter der Menschen
Sollen zur Wahrung
Ihm übergeben sein.
So zieh in Frieden von mir,
Deutscher! In dein Erbe zurück,
Aus dem Elend ins Glück.
Mein Geist wird um dich sein
Und bei dir bleiben
Bis an das Ende aller Welten.
Du kamst als Knecht und gehst als Herr,
Du Deutscher!
Zieh in dein Reich
Als König! (pp. 62-63)

The Germans become the Chosen People and Germany becomes the Promised Land.

David slew Goliath, Siegfried slew the Dragon, but Job the German slew the Devil.

Deutschland, Deutschland über alles—über alles im Weltall!

In the final scene Job and his wife receive their sons with stretched out arms, a beam of light shines on Job and a chorus closes with the following aggrandizement of Germany:

Frei sind wir Deutschen,
Weil uns die Gnade ward,
Groß sind wir Deutschen,
Weil immer der Segen harrt
Den Gerechten.
Es konnten die Schlechten
Nichts Böses uns tun,
Der Hölle List
Zuschanden ist.
Auf lichten Wegen
Strahlt uns entgegen
Die Liebe des Herrn.
Wen aber die Liebe umfaßt,
Der lebt,
Und wenn ihn die Welt auch haßt,
Er lebt!! (pp. 63-64)

In all the praises and promises made to Job in the last act, his name is never used once. He is always addressed as the German—a clear signal that Eggers wants to transfer all the superlative qualities from Job the individual to the national character of Germany.

In order to mould Job into a German prototype, Eggers neglects some of the most dramatic features of the Job-story. In the Old Testament version the frame-story serves to create tension. The Prologue informs the reader that Job is an innocent man and that he is the victim of a supernatural ploy. The two wagers between God and Satan provide a
mythical causality to the misfortunes that Job experiences. But the reader, unless he is very literal-minded, soon forgets about these wagers, because he gets caught up in Job's struggle with himself, his friends and his God. This is the essence of the Dialogues. In the closing half of the frame-story, the Epilogue, no connection is made between the afflictions of Job and the wagers made in Heaven. For Eggers, however, the battle within Job is practically non-existent. As a propagandistic hero who blindly obeys authority, he has no need to rebel against the will of God. From the point of view of the author subscribing to Nazi ideology, Job is not only a model of a man; in him rests the destiny of a nation, of the world and—to take it to its literal ridiculousness—the destiny of the entire universe!

Whatever benefits the biblical Job reaps from his trials are of a personal nature. Above all, he has established a closer and more meaningful relationship with God. The Job-figure created by Eggers has a mission to fulfill. He takes on messianic proportions symbolizing a down-trodden Germany that will rise above all nations. By looking back to the defeat of Germany in the First World War, Eggers has created an ode to self-pity; by looking ahead to Germany as a dominant world power, he has created a cry for revenge. When the archangel Michael is designated as the protector of Germany and when God and all the heavenly hosts stand behind Germany, it seems that any future plan, including another World War, would be justified.

Despite the superiority with which Eggers portrays his Job the German, Nazi critics were dismayed that the protagonist's sacrifices were motivated by a desire to satisfy God and not the Führer. Bruce Zortman clearly defines the problem as the critics saw it:

Job represents the leader of the German people, Hitler himself; he must, therefore, at least symbolize the Führer, be above reproach and perfect, for, as it was incessantly
propagandized, "while Germany sleeps, he [Hitler] alone guards." In the ideology of National Socialism no one, not even God, could be placed higher than the people's leader. But Job, though displaying nonhuman perfection, is still answerable to the Old Testament God and the Old Testament God still remains almighty—a repugnant and frightening idea in Hitler's Germany.\(^\text{13}\)

In his zeal, then, to glorify Germany, Eggers has managed to reduce the great literary figure of Job to a docile and colorless character. By almost deifying Job, he has made him into a puppet of a propagandistic mind. The praises which Eggers wanted to sing in his day must today be read as an adumbration of horrors to come or a parody of an era gone by.

**Die Hochzeit von Dobesti**

A few years after Wiechert and Eggers had written their version of Job, Theodor Haerten added a new twist to the Job-story in the publication of his drama entitled *Die Hochzeit von Dobesti* (1936). The action takes place in Zwölfdörferland, an invented name for a region in southeastern Europe. Here Hiob is a rich farmer, but he is not of pure Aryan stock and this leads to his demise.

**Act I**

The play opens with a wedding. Asur, the son of Menalkas, a well-to-do farmer, is marrying a girl from another village. For some reason neither Hiob nor any of his children show up at the wedding. Hiob has seven sons and three daughters, several of whom are married. Some wedding guests, including Hiob's cousin Bildad, discuss Hiob and his family. Since his wife died some thirteen years before, Hiob seems not to be of much use anymore
and his whole family is a restless and unsettled lot. One farmer adds: "Das liegt im Blute. Hiobs Mutter war aus Zigeunerstamm." There is talk about a new house and a new car he bought for his children. Suspicions are being raised about his financial affairs and rumor has it that he is unable to pay his mortgages. Melitton, a wedding guest late in arriving, interrupts the celebrations with the bad news that fire has destroyed Hiob's farm killing all of his children, servants and cattle. Melitton witnessed the blaze as he was approaching Hiob's farm the previous evening. He was able to rescue Hanni, the little goose maid, who was thrown to the edge of the encircling fire. He also reports that he saw Hiob that morning still alive, but covered from head to toe with sores:

Aus Schultern, Brust und Wang brechen die Schwären
Und Blut und Eiter rinnt an ihm herab. (p. 38)

Suddenly a dumb and mentally deranged cripple chances upon the farm and disrupts the wedding celebrations by molesting the maids. Some of the servants beat up the intruder and throw him off the premises. Of the cripple it is said that his mother once had a relationship with a gypsy from the local fair. The punishment for their union is this crippled idiot.

Near the end of the wedding festivities, after most guests have already left, Hiob appears. No one dares to touch him on account of his leprous sores. The priest approaches Hiob, saying:

Fürst Hiob: Was ein Mensch
In solcher Not erwarten kann an Hilfe
Soll Euch getan sein. Übt indessen Ihr
Die schwere Tugend der Ergebenheit
In Gottes Willen.
Und hört den herben Sinnspruch aus der Schrift.
Es steht im Buch der Bücher aufgeschrieben
Von Euerm Namensahn und Schicksalsahn:

(pp. 50-51)

The little goose maid is the only one who is not repulsed by Hiob's ugly boils and who shows some genuine compassion towards him.

Act II

Although it is already late in the evening, the town's investigating judge appears along with two assistants. An interrogation follows. He informs those present that just the day before, six hours before the fire, Hiob's assets were seized because he was unable to make his mortgage payments. It has also been determined that straw was stuffed underneath the stairway and gasoline was poured over it. All of the evidence points towards Hiob as the perpetrator. Bildad, for example, tells of a time when Hiob had received notice to repay his debts. Distraught at the impossible task, he proceeded to poison the day's meal. As he commenced to eat, he changed his mind and threw away the food before anyone else could eat from it. He then went to Bildad, arriving in a very sick state, and asked for money. Bildad responded by loaning him a large amount of cash. Hiob then broke down and told him all about the debts he had incurred and that he needed this money in order to buy an automobile for the boys and a fur for one of his daughters-in-law.

The judge's assistant pieces together the bits of information and summarizes Hiob's fate in the following manner:
He continues to relate how Hiob’s life unfolded. After his wife’s death, the stable part of the marriage, Hiob’s unruly and undisciplined nature took over. As time went on, he became careless with his money, incurring more and more debts and was not willing to work any harder to offset the losses. His children had likewise become squanderers of money and were making unreasonable demands on their father.

As the interrogation is coming to a close, a fire suddenly breaks out at Menalkas’s farm. Hiob, who has been in a stupor until this point, now comes alive at the sight of the flames. He shouts:

> Feuer!
> Freßt! Freßt, ihr roten Küh! Fleisch! Das Gebein!
> Die Knaben! Mädchen! Frauen! (p. 117)

He runs over to the blaze and utters:

> Endlich. Ich hab sie. Ah. Mir wird - Oh, gut.
> Endlich. Die Last. (p. 117)

**Act III**

The fire is quickly brought under control. Nearby, the dead body of the cripple is found covered with burns. He had apparently started the fire for revenge and accidentally set himself aflame in the process.

Menalkas, who initially came to the defense of Hiob, is now convinced that Hiob was the arsonist of his own property and is therefore responsible for the death of all those who
perished in the fire, including his own children and grandchildren. He repudiates Hiob for his heinous act:

Mein Herz ist kalt wie Eis und hart wie Stein
Und ohne Ohr und Tor für sanftre Worte.
Beim ewigen Gott: Es liebt das Tier die Brut.
Der Wolf, der reißende, leckt seine Jungen.
Mit schweißiger Schnauze atzt er seinen Wurf.
Ja, selbst der Lindwurm und der grause Drache,
Der Vampir, in der Schrift der Behemoth,
Wo steht von diesen Bestien denn geschrieben,
Daß eins an seinen Kälbern sich vergaß?
Sonst Glut im Rachen, Feuer im Gebläs,
Das eigene Gewürm trugs doch behutsam
Mit zärtlich-blutigen Hauern vor die Höhle,
Auf daß sichs krächzend in der Sonne balg.
Und legt die Schlange, wohl das falschste Tier,
Das sich nicht einmal um den Auskruch kümmert,
Die Eier denn ins Feuer, frag ich Euch!
Nein! Solche Untat ward dem Mensch allein,
Und unter diesen - schweigt mir! - einem Bauer,
Und einem unsres Stammes aufgespart.
Das reißt jed Band entzwei. Das tötet alles. (p. 129)

Hiob defends himself saying that his own children were to blame for his bankruptcy and he was driven to do what he did:

Und da, als alles schon zu Ende war, als ich nach Luft schon schnappte, wie die Schleie in der Reuse, da wollten sie das Haus noch in der Stadt. Kröten und Spinnen! Ich war die Fliege. Sie saugten an meinem warmen Blut sich satt. Ich war die Imme, die den Honig in die Waben füllte. Sie stahlen mir den Stock und jagten mich hinaus. Die reife Gerste, draus sie für sich die Maische quetschten. Vor die Schweine die Treber!

In his delirious state, Hiob calls each of his children by name and praises them for their particular characteristics. Then he vividly recalls how he sat in the walnut tree and
sadistically watched his children burn to death. He had to shoot one of them because he
wanted to escape. "Ein solcher Mensch – ist überhaupt kein Mensch" (p. 152) is the
conclusion drawn by those who listened to him.

At last the doctor, who had been expected all night, arrives to check on Hiob. He
apologizes for being late and says:

Ein Stamm Zigeuner, seine Weiden wechselnd,
Zog durch das Tal. Wir kamen nicht vorbei.
Vieherden. Wagen. Hoch zu Roß das Volk.
Männer wie Könige. Die Fraun von einem Wuchs,
Aus Schmuck und Augen blitzend - Schrecklich, schrecklich,
All seine Kinder auf die Art - (p. 154)

The wedding couple, oblivious to the whole ordeal that transpired overnight, steps
out of the house into the twilight of the dawn. Both are filled with bliss as they gaze upon
the nature surrounding them. Asur says to his new wife:

Uns stimmt die Freude, liebe Frau, so fromm.
Dem Schlechten glüht der Morgen Höllenfeuer.
Dem Frommen wird die ganze Welt zum Dom.
Fromm sein und froh sein, sieh, das reimt sich fast.
Und wer recht froh ist, wird auch Tüchtiges schaffen. (p. 157)

As the sun rises in the sky, a mystical feeling comes over the wedded couple. Asur
dedicates his life to God and vows that he and his family will always serve Him:

Und so, bei diesem Licht, das uns beglückt
Zum ersten Mal in unserer jungen Ehe,
Schwör ich Dir, Herr, mit meinem Hausstand zu:
Wir wollen einfach, froh und tätig sein.
Der Sitte treu. Des guten Tags uns freuen
Und mutig tragen, was Du Schweres schickst.
Ich will den Hof, vom Vater mir vertraut,
Daß ich ihn einst den Kindern weitergebe,
Also verwalten, wie es sich geziemt
Für Gottes höchste Gaben: Vieh und Frucht.
Dies schwört mein Weib mit mir. Und meine Kinder,
Die Du uns schenken mögst, schwörens Dir auch. (p. 162)
Then Menalkas bids the couple to go out into the field:

Jetzt geht ins Feld und schaut die Saat Euch an.
Es steht so reich und gut. Wills Gott der Herr,
Wird uns der Herbst 'ne volle Ernte bringen. (p. 163)

Erwin Breßlein quite rightly identifies the final scene with the newly-wed couple as emotional verbiage:

Ein nichtssagender Verbalrausch, die emotionalisierende "ewige Lichtkraft der überdauernden Natur," begleitet . . . Asur und seine junge Frau beim schauernden Erlebnis ihrer Schollengebundenheit, wenn sie wie zu einem Gottesdienst ins Feld schreiten.¹⁵

This air of religiosity and the commitment to be pious, honest and industrious are undoubtedly intended to serve as a stark contrast to the unruly way that Hiob and his family lived.

At the end, Bildad finds that Hiob has died overnight. His body is taken away and now life can resume its regular rhythm in the land of Zwölfhörfigerland.

Haerten's Job-figure hardly resembles the biblical Job. It is true, he has a long and difficult struggle. However, his afflictions may not be traced to any agreement made in Heaven, nor to any natural disaster, not even to a man-made horror such as war, but to his genetic make-up—gypsy blood! According to Haerten, and certainly to the National Socialists, this biological defect is a detriment to society. The author blames the gypsies for three mishaps in the play: first, Hiob's undisciplined life and his subsequent criminal action against his own family; second, the deviant behavior of the cripple; and third, the doctor's late arrival for his call to the farm. Hiob was guilty before disaster struck and he is guilty of the very disaster that destroyed his possessions and killed his own children. The onset
of leprosy the day after the fire can only be seen as an immediate punishment after the crime.

Haerten's Hiob has no real comforters, other than the little goose maid who in her naivity is talkative and kind towards the sick old man. One farmer does remind the others that Hiob and his family were not malicious:


But after the fire, one can only hope for the mercy of God on the soul of Job. In the end the entire community has no choice but to brand Hiob a multiple murderer. The priest passes his judgement by stating: "Seine Seele stinket wie die Pest von Schuld" (p. 139). In the Old Testament version the friends are in the wrong; in Haerten's version Hiob is in the wrong. He is a foreign element in society and does not have the attributes of order, industry or discipline. As such, he could disrupt the healthy, wholesome way of life of the others. "Job is a living lie, the centre of decay within the community which must be eradicated. In more specifically Nazi terms Job is not of pure Aryan stock."16 For Hiob, no restoration is possible, only a quiet death that will make the world a better place to live in for everyone else.

Haerten has concocted a very odd and unlikely Job-figure. It seems as if he has spitefully taken the Old Testament or Jewish story and rendered it worthless by making a villain out of a long-standing hero. Since, historically speaking, Job is a Jewish figure, he did not need to depict Hiob as a Jew, but could degrade two peoples with one play by
making him into a gypsy. In this sense, at least, Haerten was aware of Hiob's true identity and thereby was able to avoid the supreme irony which did not escape Eggers, who inadvertently took an "inferior" Jewish figure and used him to create a "superior" German figure.

All three authors of the 1930s, Wiechert, Eggers and Haerten, display in their works a considerable departure from the Job-story. They are much less concerned with the wider issues of the innocent sufferer, the struggle amidst adversity or man's relationship with God, than with their intent to prove something. Wiechert wants to show that Job (Germany) suffered because he strayed from the path of righteousness; Eggers wants to show that Job (Germany) is God's greatest creation and is destined to rule the world; and Haerten wants to show that Job (the gypsies and by extension any other non-Aryans) is a noxious element in society and needs to be rooted out. What these authors have produced, then, is an overt manipulation of Job.
Notes

1Jörg Hattwig, *Das dritte Reich im Werk Ernst Wiecherts* (Frankfurt/Main: Peter Lang, 1984), p. 1.


9The term "Thing" was used because of its origin among the old Germanic tribes for whom a "Thing" meant more or less an open court of law for free men.

10Summarized by Zortman, p. 37.

11Zortman, p. 41.


13Zortman, p. 46.


16 Maclean, p. 18.
CHAPTER V

JOB RISING OUT OF THE ASHES

Warum geht's doch den Gottlosen so wohl,
und die Verächter haben alles die Fülle?

Jeremias

Surely, real-life Job-figures were legion at the end of the Second World War, but it seems that they were scarcely reflected in German literature after 1945. Two authors who did take up the Job-theme in their works were Rolf Lauckner and Rudolf Henz. However, Lauckner, in his three-act play Hiob (1949), only makes oblique references to the destruction of the War, while Henz, in his one-act play Herr Job (1969), only briefly refers to the sufferings of both World Wars and then dwells on the affluent postwar years.

Hiob. Drama in drei Akten

Rolf Lauckner (1887-1954) originated from East Prussia, and through a second marriage of his mother, became the stepson of Hermann Sudermann, one of the leading dramatists of Naturalism. This literary connection helped to draw attention to Lauckner, who was himself an aspiring playwright. His more significant dramas, such as Predigt in
Litauen (1919), Wahnschaffe (1920) and Matumbo (1925), were products of the early part of his career. Julius Bab characterizes Lauckner's style of writing in the following manner:

Ein echtes, von schärfster psychologischer Erkenntnis nicht gebrochenes, sondern genährtes Gefühl für seine Mitmenschen ist vielleicht der wertvollste Inhalt und die entscheidende Formkraft in Lauckners Werken. . . . Aber die Leben schaffende Kraft des Mitleidens hat seit Gerhart Hauptmann wohl keiner so stark und rein für eine dramatische Wirkung einzusetzen vermocht wie Lauckner.¹

The setting of Hiob is far removed from twentieth-century Germany. The action takes place in the Middle East at the time of the biblical Job. Because of its identical setting and also its faithful chronology to the Old Testment story, Lauckner's drama in parts appears to be an epigonal version of Job. The play is divided into three acts. The first and third acts have prologues, which take place in Heaven where everything is spoken in rhymed verse. The dialogues of the three acts take place on Earth and are spoken in prose. Stylistically speaking, this is a reversal of the original version of Job. In the Hebrew, both the Prologue and the Epilogue are written in prose and the Dialogues are written in verse.

Act I (Prologue)

It should be no surprise to the reader, that the Prologue of Act I runs parallel to the Prologue of Job. The scene opens with two cherubs guarding the Gate to Heaven. Satan appears and reports on his visit to Earth. He says that people are not really wicked, but they are more and more seeking after material things:
Nicht, daß sie Arges tun und brennen, rauben,
Nur, wie sie mehr und mehr auf sich bedacht,
Treibt sie nicht Gottesfürcht noch Aberglauben,
Sondern das Lüsten nach Besitz und Macht!
Man drängt und jagt, zu Eigentum zu kommen,
Belistet sich und grübelt Tag und Nacht. -
Danach im Wohlstand, neigen sich die Frommen
Vor Gott, der ihren Reichtum treu bewacht.²

Included among these affluent mortals is Hiob. Satan reassures the cherubs that he is as honest and upright as ever:

Nicht doch! Kaum einen fand ich sonder Fehle
Wie ihn an Frommsein, Opferwillen, Wohltun, Recht
Und Gottestreue... Nein, - ich will nur sagen, -
Fünftausend Rinder, Schafe und Kamele,
Sieben Söhne, dann drei Töchter, Haus and Knecht,
Und stets bei sich, soweit er immer wandre,
Von einer Ernte wachsend in die andre, -
Da macht das Frommsein Spaß. - Mehr sagt ich nicht. (p. 307)

Satan makes the same charge here that he makes in the Book of Job (1:9-10), namely, that it is easy to be righteous when one is rich. The cherubs do not feel that Hiob would fall into this category—he would be faithful regardless of circumstances. Satan doubts this and suggests that Hiob be tried:

So prüft doch dies Gekrönt von Gottes Kindern!
Nehmt ihm die Hälfte, - er beginnt zu schwanken!
Die Sorgen werden ihn am Beten hindern...
Und - nehmt ihm alles, - fällt er ab von Gott! (p. 307)

Overhearing this conversation, God speaks out:

So nimm denn Hiob hin in deinen Bann.
Ich will in nichts dir deine Zweifel spalten.
Sinn nach, wie traurig Leben scheinen kann,
Wenn Gott sich müht, es düster zu gestalten! -
Es geht um mehr als ihn und deinen Arg. -
Wo sich dein Wahn und meine Allmacht streifen,
Und scheu sich Irrtum, Angst und Dunkel barg,
Entschleire sich ein göttliches Begreifen. (p. 308)
This, in effect, corresponds to the first wager made between God and Satan in the Book of
Job.

**Act I**

The setting is the ancient Middle East and the opening scene reveals some dispersing
guests as they leave the wedding of Ahab and Mirjam, the second of Hiob’s three daughters.

Some friends discuss the benevolence of Hiob:

> Die Stadt verdankt ihm Tempel, Turm und Mauern, das Krankenhaus, die halbe Armenpflege, - und überhaupt, was wär der ganze Ort, - was wären wir, vom Rat, wenn Hiob uns nicht stützte! (p. 309)

Now Hiob is in the process of taking over the entire funding for the relief of the poor. As
a judge in the land, he has the reputation, even among criminals, for handing down fair
verdicts. In short, he is a model of a man—not only rich, but also righteous.

There appears among the wedding guests one servant by the name of Kelaja,
apparently a recent newcomer from Moab, who seems to know a great deal about everyone
in Hiob’s family. He breeds discontent among some of the older children, by telling them
how much bigger Mirjam’s marriage portion is compared to Lea’s before her. Kelaja gives
the impression of being a clever and competent individual, but there is something suspect
about him as well.

At the end of Act I, Hiob, his wife Eliseta and their youngest daughter Ruth, are
enjoying the peaceful evening air. Hiob praises God, saying:
Vorläufig sitzen wir hier froh zusammen, ein Fest klingt nach, ein schöner Tag geht schlafen, und geruhsam trägt der Herr den Abendfrieden auf seinen Schwingen segnend durch das Land. (p. 321)

Suddenly, the tranquility is interrupted by Jemla, chief overseer to Hiob's livestock. He reports that all of Hiob's animals, thousands upon thousands, have been buried by a formidable sandstorm. Clearly dismayed, but still composed, Hiob says: "An die - zwölftausend Stück - mit einem Schlage!... Gott, der Gerechte!!..." (p. 325).

On the heels of Jemla comes Kelaja warning everyone to flee, for the storm has reached the city. The building where the wedding celebrations were taking place has collapsed and all of Hiob's children present have perished. Kelaja's accompanying laughter makes it clear that he is Satan incarnate. Solemn and sombre, Hiob exclaims: "Der Herr hat's gegeben, - der Herr hat's genommen!..." (p. 326). Then he falls on his knees and prays:

Allmächtiger im Himmel!!... Mach mich stark, daß ich dir danken kann!!... Verzeih den Zweifel!!... Schütz Haus und Kinder, voller Gnade, du - und sei gelobt in alle Ewigkeit! - Amen! (p. 326)

Act I plays out the first trial of Hiob, running parallel to the first part of the narrative frame in the Book of Job. Satan is the instigator of the affliction and Hiob refrains from cursing God.

In Lauckner's adaptation, information is more specific about Hiob's rectitude and goodness. Strong emotional ties between Hiob and his daughters, especially the bride Mirjam, are established. The love between Hiob and Eliseta is also given emphasis. Such details, which do not exist in the Book of Job, serve to create greater sympathy for the hero once disaster strikes.
Act II

It is nighttime and the moon is shining on the rubble and the ruins of town. Two temple boys, Telem and Bedja, appear and discuss possible reasons for the great destruction. The boys assume the roles of two comforters. In this case, however, Telem is accusing Job while Bedja is defending him.

Telem makes the charge: "Er [Hiob] muß doch ziemlich viel gesündigt haben..." (p. 326). Bedja finds this unlikely: "Kann einer so viel sündigen, wie ihm hier, in einer Nacht durch Sturm und Brand verdarb?" (p. 326). He continues: "Außerdem, dann müßten alle ja gesündigt haben, die Stadt, das ganze Land..." (p. 327). Telem is convinced otherwise. To him, it seems there was a definite pattern in the path the storm took. Oddly enough, it had singled out precisely that which concerned Hiob—be it the animals in the open country, certain buildings in town, and especially Ahab's house in the valley where the wedding feast was taking place. The matter is quite simple to him:

Sämtliche Kinder Hiobs und Verwandte, von weither zugereist, die Schwiegersöhne und Schwiegertöchter, - alles, alles tot!... Wenn das nicht Zeichen sind!... Man mag sie immer deuten wie man will, doch werfen sie auf Hiobs Frömmigkeit ein etwas trübes, wunderliches Licht. (p. 327)

Bedja, not at all thinking in terms of reward and punishment, pursues another line of reasoning:

Ich kann mir denken, daß auch Hiob fehlte, - doch sicher nicht im Maß für solche Strafe! - Vielleicht ist er auch gänzlich ohne Schuld, - ein Opfer?... Vielleicht ein Kampf des Götzten Baal mit Gott! (p. 327)

In rationalizing about these dire effects, Bedja entertains two possibilities: first, Hiob may not be blameless, but the measure of his punishment far exceeds any possible wrong
he may have done; and second, Hiob may be entirely blameless and has fallen victim to a power struggle between God and an Adversary. Bedja’s conjecture as to the cause of the destruction (one possible reason for innocent suffering as it relates to the Book of Job) comes closer than any of Job’s friends managed to guess in the Old Testament. Bedja is not quite right, for the afflictions here do not come about as a result of a battle between God and Baal. Even in the case of the biblical Job, God and Satan are not at war over the souls of men. In both works, Satan is in the service of God. But Bedja is not blinded by the external forces upon the fate of man, especially upon a just and honest man like Hiob. Therefore, he suspects some stirrings behind the scenes.

For a final thought, Bedja comments on a pathetic sight in the distance. Hiob’s wife is digging through the rubble and debris of their house trying to find the odd piece of their belongings. Nearby lurks a band of beggars, thieves and lepers ready to loot Hiob’s damaged house. Bedja muses: "Das alles wollte Gott? Wirkt Hiobs Schuld?" (p. 328). Even if God would respond to reward and punishment, Bedja cannot envisage a sin great enough to cause this kind of destruction, least of all such a sin committed by Hiob.

Zadok, leader among the lepers, approaches Eliseta. He introduces himself:

Ein Ausgestoßener!... Wer ich war?... Zadok, der Sattler, war ich... Mir ging’s gut... Zwei Esel und drei Schafe, Hof und Knecht. Auch Weib und Kinder... Die starben erst, dann traf der Blitz das Haus, zuletzt schenkte mir Gott noch meine Schwären, - und seine Güte währet ewiglich! (p. 330)

His mocking tone disturbs Eliseta, but he continues:

Ich fluche Gott und hab noch nicht einmal gespürt, daß er die Gnade hatte, drauf zu hören! Denn im Vergleich zu dem, was ich gelitten, geht’s mir von einem Tag zum andern besser. - Der Schmerz stumpft ab, der Tod kommt langsam näher... Ja, was
ich sagen wollte, mit Erlaubnis, - ich war auch einmal fromm
und heiligte den Sabbath, ging zum Tempel... Bis er mir alles
nahm... (p. 330)

Zadok represents a Job-figure gone awry. Like Hiob, he too lost his earthly possessions and
his wife and children. He too was pious and faithful—until disaster struck. He takes to
heart the words of Job’s wife, when she cursed God. It is now Zadok’s pleasure to do
exactly that and to speak cynically of God:

Er frisst gewaltig viel, der Gott der Väter!... Das Haus dazu, die
Kinder, Felder, alles! Jetzt seid ihr, mit Erlaubnis, nackt wie
wir, - und seine Güte währet ewiglich. (p. 330)

Referring to Eliseta’s last child, Ruth, Zadok says with Schadenfreude: "Und euch
wird er auch noch dies Letzte nehmen, wie mir!..." (p. 330). Of course, Zadok prefigures
what is still awaiting Hiob. Eliseta senses this and therefore has reason to fear for her own
life and the life of her daughter, who is presently ill. She becomes very confused and
frustrated by listening to Zadok. He is a despicable character, but she fears he is speaking
the truth—not only about imminent tragedy, but maybe even about God, who, under the
present circumstances, does not appear to be very just. She exclaims:

Wir haben gebetet und haben geopfert, wir haben gefastet und
dich gepriesen, wir haben gegeben und sind in deinen Geboten
gewandelt, - warum fasst uns dein Grimm mit solcher Macht
und schlägt uns deine Faust so hart? (p. 331)

Eliseta’s doubts are already anticipated by her daughter’s doubts in a brief scene in Act I.
At that point Ruth tells her parents how she had prayed dearly for her favorite lamb to get
well, but that it died anyway. She therefore assumes that prayers do not help.

Hiob appears and Zadok leaves. Hiob and Eliseta try to come to terms with their
losses. Now as before, Hiob’s generosity persists, for he does not mind if beggars help
themselves to something useful they might find in the ruins of his house. His wife takes
offence at his magnanimity:

So! Und wir selbst?... Noch nicht genug verdammt in unsrer Not, aus Kot und Lumpen irgend so ein Restchen herauszuwühlen, das uns nützen könnte, Erinnerung mehr als Hilfe, und ein Stöhnen: so war's einmal! - das sollt ich noch verschenken?... Laß es ihnen!... Großmütiger Hiob!... (p. 332)

Then she turns her anger towards God:

Nicht alle haben so viel "Glück" in sich, daß sie auf jeden Nackenschlag von Gott mit immer tiefterer Demut sich verneigen und ihm mit immer größerer Inbrunst danken! - Was soll ich ihm noch danken, sag es mir!... Vielleicht, daß er mir gnädig dazu half, den Topf dort aus den Trümmern auszugraben, damit ein Scherben zum Gedenken bleibt?... Sonst seh ich nichts als Unglück, Qual und Not! (p. 334)

Eliseta feels that terrible times have come upon them and she does not know how
to cope with them. Hiob then becomes a comforter to his wife as he tries to console her.
He recounts the blessed life they have had together and then tells her: "Jetzt haderst du mit Gott, weil er es einen Augenblick versäumte, auf uns zu sehn und unser Glück zu schützen!" (p. 334). Besides that, life goes on and nature runs its course. He shares his residual optimism and says: "Weißt du, was morgen in der Erde keimt, ob aus dem tausendfältigen Geblühe nicht auch für uns ein Samenkörnchen treibt?" (p. 334). Soon she softens her heart and regrets her rebellious tone.

Hiob and Eliseta turn their attention to their sick daughter and the mere suggestion that God may also take Ruth has Hiob lose his control: "Er ist doch nicht der Götze Baal, noch Moloch!..." (p. 335). He regains his composure and then discusses with Eliseta modest plans for a new future for the three of them.
At this late hour, Manasse, a friend and town councillor, comes to deliver a threefold message of bad tidings. First, the few sacks of Hiob’s grain that had been saved could not be sold, because the contents were all black and burnt. Second, Hiob’s debtors refuse to repay their loans. Third, Hiob’s friends no longer seem to have any pity or compassion for him. Although no one on the council was able to help financially, some did suggest that Hiob be able to serve on the city council. However, this met with opposition from the priests, and then Manasse reports:

Dein Unglück sei so schwer und augenscheinlich, daß man darin ein Zeichen Gottes sieht und erst mit Sorgfalt untersuchen müsse, was ihn bewogen hat, so hart zu strafen. (p. 339)

The council members speculate as to Hiob’s punishment: "Ein ungeheures Maß geheimer Sünden, meinten die einen, Götzendienst die andren" (p. 339). Hiob realizes that all of his friends, the people he had showered with goodness and with gifts over the years, have now in his hour of need abandoned him and even turned against him.

Suddenly Hadassa, the maid, climbs from out of the rubble to tell the parents that Ruth has died. Hiob is not able to contain himself any longer. Like Job of the Old Testament, he complains bitterly:

Mein Kind!... Mein letztes Blut!... Lösch mich doch aus!... Vertilge meinen Stamm!... Reiß mir das Auge, das im Wetterstrahl so oft geglaubt, dein Gnadenbild zu sehen, aus meinem Kopf, das Herz, das um dich warb, aus meiner Brust und laß mich Lasten tragen, wie einen Esel, daß ich nichts mehr weiß!... Das letzte Licht, das noch mein Jammerdunkel mit trüben Schein durchbrach, hast du zertreten, die letzte Wurzel von dem Baum gerissen!... Die Finsternis bricht über mich herein. - Und all den einzigen Weg, der mir noch blieb, zu dir, versperrst du selbst mit deiner grimmgen Faust!... So lieg ich schreiend denn im Sumpfgehänge und weiß nicht, wo ich gehn
soll in der Nacht!... Das Gute sann ich, und es kommt das Böse!... Ich suchte die Ruhe, und du gabst den Sturm!... (p. 341)

Compare with:
Ich wartete des Guten, und es kommt das Böse; ich hoffte aufs Licht, und es kommt Finsternis. (30:26)

At this instant, Kelaja appears and now hopes to hear Hiob cursing God. When Hiob does not do so, Kelaja goads him and lists three reasons why he should curse God. First, God punished Hiob for no reason. Though Hiob kept the commandments, God chose to destroy his house and possessions. Second, God punished innocent bystanders. He killed all of Hiob's children, including sons-in-law and daughters-in-law, and now even Ruth, his last precious child. Third, God favors the wicked. He rewards idol worshippers and criminals and discounts the righteous like Hiob. With Hiob in a most vulnerable position, Kelaja asks: "Kommt dir denn nie ein Zweifel? Wächst kein Zorn in deinen Adern gegen solche Richter?" (p. 342). Hiob tells him to leave and says: "Du redest Gift, wo ich nach Balsam lechze!" (p. 342). At that moment Eliseta reappears in the ruins. She has not been able to withstand the shock of her daughter's death and has gone mad. She reaches out to Kelaja, saying: "Das ist der Rechte," and leaves with him. Hiob collapses.

**Act III (Prologue)**

The Prologue of Act III, like the Prologue of Act I, takes place back in Heaven and runs parallel to the Prologue of the Book of Job. Satan returns from his sojourn on Earth and reports that Hiob for the time being is still keeping the faith. Just as in the Book of Job (2:4-5), Satan makes a second charge concerning those who are righteous but well:
Solange ein Mann
Die Fäuste und Sehnen noch anspannen kann,
Verteilt er den Tag zwischen Glauben und Hoffen
Und fühlt sich im Grunde ja gar nicht getroffen.
Doch greif seinen Leib an, versetz ihn in Not
Mit Schmerz und Gebrechen, dann zeigt sich sein Wert,
Dann endet das Beten, dann lästert er Gott
Und verflucht und verdammt, was er vordem verehrt! (p. 346)

God again overhears the charge and Satan this time receives permission from God to inflict
Hiob personally:

So nimm denn, Satan, noch das Letzte hin,
Was Hiob mit dem Irdischen verbindet.
Schlag seinen Leib, daß, wenn der Glaube siegt,
Des Knechtes Gottesfurcht auf nichts sich gründet,
Was nach dem Schein der Menschenmaße wiegt! (p. 347)

This transaction corresponds to the second wager made between God and Satan in the Book
of Job.

Act III

The physical blow to Hiob has already been struck before the third Act begins. The
opening scene shows the local dump and Hiob sitting there wrapped in rags and writhing
with pain. Each on one side but not too close to Hiob sit his two friends, Eliphas and
Bildad. Hiob begins with a mournful cry:

Die Eingeweide brennen!... Wie Schakale fressen sich die
Geschwüre durch den schwarzen Leib! - Faustgroße Wunden,
die bei allen Schmerzen noch reizen, daß man sich mit
Scherben kratzt und so nicht einmal Narben bilden können!
(p. 348)
Compare with:
Meine Eingeweide sieden und hören nicht auf; mich hat
überfallen die elende Zeit.

Like Job of old, Hiob utters his death wish:


Compare with:


He even asks his friends to take his life. Signs of rebelliousness manifest themselves when he says:

Daß Gott ein solches Unrecht dulden kann! - Er braucht Gewalt, und niemand darf ihn fragen, warum! Er ist ja nicht von unserem Fleisch und Blut. - Was kann uns gegen seine Allmacht schützen? (p. 348)

This is the first time Hiob is implicating God. To suggest that God tolerates injustice implies disconcern and callousness on His part. Hiob even suggests that God's omnipotence can be an evil force to contend with, but there is no way to escape Him. Both friends are shocked by Hiob's slander. Eliphas tells him:

So furchtbar er dich auch getroffen hat, füg dich, nimm es geduldig hin und bitte Gott, daß er dich wieder heilen möchte. (p. 348)

It is the same accusation that Job's friends make in the Dialogues. The sufferer must have done something to provoke the wrath of God in order for this to have happened. But Hiob asks for evidence of any wrongdoing:

Was hab ich denn verbrochen, daß er mich bis an meine tiefsten Wurzeln brennt?... Hab ich ihm nicht gedient so gut ich konnte?... Weiß einer von mir eine schlechte Tat?... (p. 348)
Eliphas and Bildad sympathize with Hiob, but they do not want to become accomplices to a friend who has turned against God. They grope for other reasons why God may have acted as He did. Maybe Hiob’s forefathers are to blame, for instance. They are unable to agree on anything. Bildad at least wants to establish the fact that God is punishing Hiob, but Hiob bluntly denies this: "Er straft mich nicht, weil nichts zu strafen ist!" (p. 349). He adds that God also knows of his innocence. Bildad then questions the obvious conclusion to this: "Und läßt dich trotzdem so erbärmlich leiden?... Wie die Gottlosen?" (p. 349). Hiob has a ready answer:

Das ist es eben, - trägt das Frommsein Lohn? Und leiden wirklich nur die Schuldigen?... Wie viele kannt ich nicht mit harten Herzen, Bedrücker, Heuchler, Schelme, Gottesleugner, die sich in Saus und Braus, gesund, mit Kind und Kindeskindern ihres Lebens freuten, während die Frommen oft und Tugendhaften, Demütigen und Reinen so ins Elend sanken und so in Armut darbten, daß sie schließlich krank und verzweifelt umgekommen sind! - Das ist das Rätsel, das ihr lösen sollt. (p. 349)

Hiob’s argument is very convincing and his friends have no reply. They are not willing to admit that God lets the innocent suffer, but they are unable to deny that God lets the wicked prosper. His friends do not understand him, and God is his only hope: "Aber so viel ich schreien mag, er antwortet mir nicht" (p. 350). Still, Hiob wants to understand God’s ways:

Ich will den Sinn von all dem Leid verstehen, und wie wir zur Gerechtigkeit gelangen! - Ich suche die Weisheit, und ihr reicht mir die Schürze der Priester zum Trost! - Aber die Weisheit ist mehr als aller Glaube und wird nicht im Tempel bewahrt und im Gebet der Gesalbten... Wo ist sie, woher kommt sie, und wo ist der Verstand, der Menschen Tun zu leiten und dem Rechten die Wege frei zu halten?... Wir wählen Gold und Schätze aus der Erde, wir graben Berge ab und leiten Ströme
Structurally speaking, Lauckner deviates very little from the sequence of events as they occur in the Book of Job. The discussion that Hiob has with his two friends, Eliphas and Bildad, corresponds to the Dialogues in the Book of Job. Lauckner's Hiob expresses a death wish (as Job does in chapter 3), then disputes with his friends (as Job does from chapters 3-27), and finally praises the value and inaccessibility of wisdom (as Job does in chapter 28).

In the Old Testament version, Elihu steps in after the friends have been silenced. In Lauckner's version Zadok reappears. He contends more effectively than Eliphas or Bildad did. In Zadok's opinion, injustice and corruption prevail to such an extent that the individual needs to take the law into his own hands. He cites an example, where his best friend with the help of false witnesses, cheated him out of all his possessions. Consequently, there was only one thing to do—kill the friend! He says: "Wenn wir uns selbst nicht helfen, hilft uns Gott?" (p. 352). Zadok has in mind much more than a survival of basic needs such as food and shelter. He takes his line of reasoning to an extreme by overriding both the law of the land and the law of God. Zadok believes in being a law unto himself.

Hiob is horrified at Zadok's logic, which is really only an extension of his own logic, when he proposed that the wicked prosper. Now Hiob is on the defensive: "Hättest du recht und lebten alle so, wie du es rätst, dann würde sich bald jede Ordnung lösen" (p. 353).
For men like Hiob, there is still enough law and order in the world to justify submission to the system. Zadok is of a different opinion: "Ja, hat sie [die Ordnung] das nicht längst getan?... Herrscht denn was andres als Gewalt und Ungesetzlichkeit?" (p. 353). In other words, only the strongest survive, or those who have the most powerful weapons. According to Zadok:


Hiob asks Zadok what he makes of the order that prevails in the macrocosm. He has no sound answer and leaves Hiob with the solution that Job’s wife suggested many centuries ago: "Fluch Gott und - stirb! - Das ist der beste Rat, der einem solchen Querkopf angepaßt..." (p. 354).

Roth’s Deborah and Sacher-Masoch’s Burlak in some ways anticipate Zadok. Deborah believes she can influence the outcome of events by actively pursuing change. What Deborah hopes to achieve within the law, Burlak feels he can only accomplish outside of the law. He wants nothing more than to create a fairer world and bring justice to a lawless society. As a result, Burlak steals and kills as a means of rooting out those men whom he perceives to be oppressors and tyrants. Deborah and Burlak, both depicted as impatient characters in contrast with the patient Job-figure, nevertheless believe in God and presume to act in accordance with His will. They are driven by optimism, idealism and hope. Zadok, however, is convinced that God is either cruel or dead. He pillages and murders under the pretext of fighting for his own survival. His actions are driven by bitterness and cynicism.
Lauckner has created an interesting individual in Zadok. With reference to the Job-story, he embodies a peculiar constellation of characters: a Job-figure (he has suffered similar afflictions as Hiob), a counter-Job-figure (he doubts the goodness and the very existence of God), a comforter (ironically, he understands Hiob's anguish and pain better than the other friends, albeit with gloating sympathy), a miserable comforter (not in the fashion of upholding a senseless law, but in not upholding a law at all), an Elihu-figure (he appears after the friends were unable to confute Hiob), and the figure of Job's wife (he advises Hiob to curse God and die). Zadok, then, is a composite of virtually all of the mortals appearing in the Book of Job. Despite the similar experiences that Hiob and Zadok have had, they are contrasted as hero and villain. Hiob is a rebel, a righteous one, while Zadok is a rebel too, but a wretched one. The former is a positive force; the latter is a destructive one.

The maid, Hadassa, faithfully stands by Hiob, even in his leprous condition. She turns out to be his most genuine and enduring comforter. But more than that, she becomes for Hiob a source of wisdom amidst total confusion. She sees quite clearly that her master's affliction cannot be a form of punishment: "Dann müßte Gott ja erst die ganze Welt mit Ausschlag schlagen, eh er dich, als Letzten, so hart verfolgte!" (p. 355). This is in accord with Hiob's thinking, but it does not diminish his suffering. Hadassa excuses God's arbitrary ways and assures Hiob: "Aber, wer Willkür übt, der läßt auch Gnade walten. Und solcher Gnade bist du sicher, Herr!" (p. 355). She has a very soothing effect on the sufferer, who admits: "Du weißt in deiner Einfalt bessern Trost und sagst mir mehr als meine klugen Freunde" (p. 355). But Hiob is still trying to determine why the righteous suffer and the
wicked prosper. To this, Hadassa simply asks the following question: "Es ist ja doch so viel, was wir nicht wissen, – müssen wir grade unser Leid verstehn?" She continues: "Ob unsre Leiden nicht vielleicht vor Gott etwas ganz anderes bedeuten, als was uns daran verdrießt?..." (p. 356).

These simple words from his guileless maid strike a chord of truth within Hiob:

Da liegt die Weisheit!... Weisheit ist Erkennen, daß Gott in höhren Kreisen denkt und wirkt, als alle Könige der Welt und Räte, Gelehrte, Priester, Älteste der Stadt!... Er lohnt und straft nach anderen Gesetzen, als die der Vogt zum Straßenschutz befolgt! (p. 356)

Hiob realizes at this moment the same thing as Job realizes once God appears to him, and that is:

Man understands only a part of the world, the part represented by his own experience, and this is the part upon which Job based his demand for justice. But God alone understands divine justice, and it is by divine and not human standards that he rules the universe. Job learns that not all suffering is punishment, but that the rationale of what is not is known only to God.³

As this realization grows and comes to fruition, Hiob speaks in a soliloquy, which is uttered in blank verse:

Möcht schon von uns ein jeder anders nennen, 
Was ihm als Unglück, was als Glück erscheint, 
Wie weit verschieden mag es Gott erst deuten, 
Der über Himmeln sinnt und Welten schafft! - 
Wohl schickt er Beides, wie er alles fügt, 
Nur teilt es sich, nach uns geborgnen Zwecken, 
Zu einem segensvollen Ganzen aus, 
Das wir nur staunend sichten, nicht begreifen. (p. 357)

He marvels at the beauty of nature around him. First, he takes a blade of grass and describes its delicate fabric; then he spots a lizard and describes its unique skin. Finally, he
looks up into the sky and contemplates the order of the heavenly bodies. His thoughts return to himself and he reflects:

Und ich, - ein Staubchen, - nehm an allem teil,
Verwoben in der Schöpfung machtgen Klang,
Der mich ergreift, durchströmt, ins Weltall schleudert,
Das Donnermaß der Sternenchöre dichtet
Und allen Tod und alles Leben singt! -
Was ist mein Leid in diesem Glutgewoge?
Wie konnt ich meinen, daß der sinnlos straft,
Der allem Wesen doch den Sinn erst leihst?
Zu schaun, wie sich das alles löst und bindet,
Gehegt, gehalten und gehütet wird, -
Das ist die Weisheit, das ist Furcht des Herrn! (p. 358)

Compare with:
Siehe, die Furcht des Herrn, das ist die Weisheit. (28:28)

Hiob ends with the same conclusion as Job does in his "hymn to the praise of wisdom." And what he has visualized here are the same things as Job visualizes when God speaks to him out of the whirlwind. One is a revelation from within; the other is a revelation from without. The effect, however, is the same.

Eliphas and Bildad return and Hiob shares with them his new insights. He claims he has found his way back to God and praises Him, because out of suffering has come knowledge and understanding (Erkenntnis). He imparts:

Nach Dingen jagen macht uns unzufrieden und schafft die Unruhe in unserm Blut. Nur wer Erkenntnis sucht, lernt überwinden. Und Überwinden bringt Zufriedenheit. (p. 359)

Hiob knows his friends do not understand this and never will. He concludes, saying:

Aus allem Leiden, das uns unrecht scheint, springt ein befreiter Quell empor, der Gott als Tau für andre Saaten dient. (p. 360)
Despite all of his suffering, Hiob embraces his belief in God anew by concluding that God's ways are essentially amoral but above all incomprehensible to man. Speaking of God as Lauckner's Hiob finally perceives Him, Lieselotte von Eltz-Hoffmann says:

Gott ist weder der gerechte Richter, an den Hiobs Freunde glauben, noch der sinnlos strafende Weltenherrscher seiner eigenen Vorstellung, sondern vielmehr der Unfaßbare, ganz Andere, vor dem alles Geschehen einen anderen Sinn und andere Ausmaße gewinnt, die sich jeder menschlichen Wertung entziehen.⁴

Kelaja makes his last appearance. He knows that Hiob has passed both tests and now tries other means to foil Hiob's faithfulness to God. With Mephistophelian charm he offers to heal him and restore all of his wealth. This would only be possible, however, if he were to recognize the god Marduk of Babylon. At that moment, God's voice thunders from above and interferes with Satan's plans. Kelaja-Satan is henceforth banned from association with other heavenly hosts. Disgraced and disgruntled he says in departing:

Du kannst mich nicht zerstören
Und sollst noch oft von meinen Wirken hören! (p. 361)

Lauckner here changes the role of Satan from one who was in the service of God to one who becomes an Adversary, an evil force, which all humans will have to contend with.

Then God rebukes Hiob:

Dich, Hiob, meinen Knecht, muß ich wohl schelten,
Daß du im Zorn und Trotz mit mir gestritten.
Doch bist du aus den niederen Gezelten
Zu weiterm Blick durch eigne Kraft geschritten. (p. 361)

As in the Book Job, the Theophany is instrumental in bringing about a repentant attitude in the mind of the doubter. Lauckner's Hiob admits:
Ich weiß, ich habe leichtfertig gesprochen, Herr, denn ich hatte dich noch nicht erkannt. - Ich habe in Verzweiflung irr geredet, doch von nun an will ich in Demut schweigen und will mich scheu und ahnend niederbeugen vor deiner Unbegreiflichkeit. (p. 361)

Compare with:
Siehe, ich bin zu leichtfertig gewesen; was soll ich antworten? Ich will meine Hand auf meinen Mund legen. Ich habe einmal geredet, und will nicht antworten; zum andernmal will ich's nicht mehr tun. (40:4-5)

As in the Book of Job, God also reprimands Hiob's friends:

Doch deine Freunde waren schlecht beraten
Und sollen Wind aus ihren tauben Saaten
Und Unkraut ernten. (p. 361)

Compare with:
Da nun der Herr diese Worte mit Hiob geredet hatte, sprach er zu Eliphas von Theman: Mein Zorn ist ergrimmt über dich und über deine zwei Freunde; denn ihr habt nicht recht von mir geredet wie mein Knecht Hiob. (42:7)

Lauckner does not include in his version the fact that God gives Job credit for having spoken the truth. For many modern exegetes, this passage justifies Job's rebellious reaction in the Dialogues. God's final words ring like a psalm to faith:

Du bist den schweren Weg des Leids gekommen
Und wirst in Gnaden wieder aufgenommen! -
Dein Leib sei rein, dein Gut zurückgefunen,
Dein Name aber aller Zeit verbunden,
Daß keine Not je die Gewißheit raube:
Wie über allem Tod die Ewigkeit,
So überragt den Zweifelnden der Glaube! (p. 362)

The closing scene reveals the onset of a restoration. Hadassa reports to Hiob that one of the beams of his damaged house has crashed down, and in so doing, has revealed a hidden chest filled with treasures. Hiob stands up, shows his arms clear of boils, and says:
"Ich gehe!... Ich gehe jetzt zu unserm Trümmerhaus... Hilfst du mir mit, es wieder aufzubauen?" (p. 362).

Although the setting is in the pre-Christian Middle East, Lauckner's Hiob disguises the Germany of the immediate postwar years. The storm that leaves Hiob's house and everything in its path in ruins is analogous to the urban devastation of the Second World War. Especially Lauckner's use of words like "Trümmerfeld," "Schutt," and "Gerümpel" conjure up images of cities in ruins. At one point, Hiob is even called "Herr der Trümmer." In this sense, aspects of the drama are reminiscent of the "Trümmerliteratur" of the late 1940s. When, in the final scene, Hiob invites Hadassa to rebuild their "Trümmerhaus," Lauckner is clearly suggesting that Germany take courage and rebuild one more time from the rubble and ruins of war.

By creating two antithetical Job-figures, Lauckner illustrates two possible reactions to mayhem and destruction. One can either lose all faith in humanity and live in lawlessness, like Zadok, or one can pick up the pieces and rebuild one's life, as Hiob is about to do.

Lauckner stops short of a fairy-tale ending akin to the Epilogue in the Book of Job. Hiob experiences a spiritual renewal and physical healing. He also has a helpful companion to assist him in starting anew. Any restoration of home, possessions and family is only implied in the hopeful ending.

Although the drama has a more realistic ending than the Old Testament version, Lauckner's Hiob strikes the reader as epigonal. The hero is extremely faithful and patient, and his apostasy is but a brief mental aberration. He does not sound the existential cry of
hopelessness. The most modern character in the play is Zadok, who represents the cynical man in a meaningless world. In some ways, he anticipates the Job-figure of subsequent decades.

_Herr Job, Spiel in einem Akt_

Rudolf Henz (1897-1987) was a prolific writer who lived in Lower Austria and enjoyed relative prominence throughout Austria. In the 1950s he was awarded two significant literary prizes ("Österreichischer Staatspreis für Literatur" in 1953 and "Literaturpreis der Stadt Wien" in 1956). Henz wrote in a variety of literary genres: Unter Brüder und Bäumen (lyrics, 1929), Kaiser Josef der Zweite (drama, 1937), Begegnung im September (novel, 1939), Peter Anich, der Sternsucher (historical novel, 1946), and Der Turm der Welt (monumental epic, 1951). Kurt Becsi has called Henz the most significant Catholic poet of postwar Austria and Wilhelm Bortenschlager summarizes what Henz's viewpoints are as a Christian writer:

Aufgabe des Dichters ist es nach Henz, nicht das Chaos zu mehren oder auch nur zu registrieren, sondern es zu bändigen und in Ordnung zu bringen. Die Aufgabe des christlichen Dichters vor allem aber sieht er im Verkünden, Rühmen und Beschwören; er glaubt nicht, daß jede neue Mode mitgemacht werden müsse, und hält das Bewahren im guten Sinn der österreichischen Tradition keineswegs auch heute für abseitig oder sinnlos oder überholt.

His short drama, _Herr Job_, was published together with four other dramas in a volume entitled Tollhaus Welt. Fünf neue Dramen (1970). The setting of the play is in the late 1960s in a town apparently in West Germany, but appropriately called Uz. _Herr Job_
is a modern farmer who, through personal industry and with the use of modern technology, has established a successful business. He is over seventy years old, half-blind and suffers from heart problems. Barbara, herself a seventy-year old woman and presumably the maid, opens the scene by taking the Bible and reading from the Book of Job:


This is a modern translation of Job 1:1-12. Henz wants to convey in simple and direct language what transpired in Heaven, that was to have such a profound effect on Job down on Earth.

Herr Job interrupts Barbara at the point where God and Satan have concluded their first wager. Then he continues by interpolating and adapting the Job-story to himself:

Und der Krieg nahm dem jungen Job die drei älteren Brüder. Und was der Krieg noch verschonte, verschleppten die rebellischen Knechte, und das Geld auf der Bank zerfiel wie Moder. Der junge Herr Job aber, als Rebell heimgekehrt, übernahm den Hof und nahm ein Weib! Er versoff sich nicht und schrie nicht mehr auf gegen Gott, der die Menschen gezüchtigt hatte wie nie zuvor. (pp. 11-12)

He interprets the First World War as the consequence of the first wager. His affliction is
the loss of his three older brothers and an impoverished life style after the War. He quells his rebellious spirit, takes a wife and rebuilds the farm.

Accepting that Herr Job’s interpolation was the adaptation of Job 1:13-22, Barbara
continues reading from the Book of Job:


This reading corresponds to Job 2:1-5, where God and Satan conclude their second wager.

Herr Job takes his cue at this point and continues his personalized version:

Und der andere Krieg nahm Job sein Weib und seinen Sohn und Erben Michael und verbrannte, was er gebaut, geerntet und erworben hatte. Die Häuser, die Maschinen, das Geld, die Ehre der Krieger, den Mut, die Freiheit, den Glauben an die Redlichkeit der Menschen und an ihre Vernunft. Und Job kam heim mit verderbten Nieren und geschwächtem Herzen, aber mitten unter Nachbarn, die nicht mehr beten konnten, dankte Job Gott und stritt mit den Leuten Satans, wo immer er sie antraf. (p. 12)

He interprets the Second World War as the consequence of the second wager. This time he loses his wife and only son and everything he had built up between the two Wars. He returns home with damaged kidneys and a weakened heart. His idealism is marred. But after all this, he still believes in God. This interpolation corresponds to Job 2:6-10. Herr Job, like Job of old, was struck down twice and kept the faith both times.

As if continuing to read, Herr Job now augments the story of the Prologue:

After a complete restoration, even while enjoying a doubling and tripling of his possessions in the postwar years, a test more severe than the previous two was awaiting Herr Job. His only son Karl, a young man in his early twenties, has turned against his father and has left home.

The tone of the augmented passage becomes increasingly bitter. The words are allegedly spoken by Satan, but the sarcasm clearly belongs to Herr Job, who is angry at God. He continues as if Satan were still addressing God:


Herr Job is questioning the purpose of God's creation. As far as he is concerned, God lets people multiply as profusely as ants only to destroy them again. He depicts the Creator
as a cruel and capricious God. Herr Job goes on with his improvised version of the Book of Job:


According to Satan, God allows people with their curious minds to explore new frontiers and invent new gadgets knowing full well that they will apply this newly obtained knowledge to destructive purposes. He does not see why God would be so shocked by this. It is, after all, His own sport. And now that people are getting wise to His game, God is hiding because He is afraid to confront them. Satan describes God as a divine sadist and coward and then challenges Him for the power over the world. Herr Job, by expressing these thoughts, goes beyond heresy and revolt—he uses blatant blasphemy.

Barbara, who is listening to this verbal bile coming from the old man's mouth, wants to read the ending of the Job-story and be done with it. But Herr Job reminds her: "Das 32. Kapitel hast du mir versprochen für heut, die Reden des jungen Elihu" (p. 13). He identifies the young and arrogant Elihu with his own son Karl: "Was der junge Mann dem alten Ijob ins Gesicht schreit. Sein Sohn könnte er sein" (p. 14).
Then Barbara decides to improvise as well. She picks up on the previous augmentation to the Prologue of Job and says:

Und Gott sprach zu Satan: Warum jagst du mich wieder gegen meinen Diener Ijob. Ich hab ihn doch genug geprüft, und noch immer steht er zu mir. (p. 14)

If those were His words, Herr Job interjects, then God does not know what He is talking about. He may have been tested sufficiently, but he is not faithful anymore. The old man brings to an end the interpolated dialogue by exclaiming:


As Satan sees it, God has taken from the people the purpose and passion for living, because sooner or later they will all die anyway. Herr Job feels fully justified in his indignation. According to him, he has not turned away from God, but God has turned away from him. His son's desertion remains the sore spot: "Gott soll mir meinen Karl zurückgeben, und ich werde wieder beten" (p. 16).

Herr Job's Friends

Various people from town stop by to see Herr Job. When later he is asked by Karl who all of these people are, he replies: "Alles Freunde von mir, Helfer, Tröster" (p. 30). Frau Rummel is an elderly lady who nags Herr Job about his disloyalty to the Catholic Church. She reminds him of the days when together they knelt in worship every Sunday.
Then she pries into his past trying to uncover some sin that might account for his present anguish: "Die eigenen Sünden erkennen! Das fordert Gott von dir" (p. 16). She also proceeds to list all of the traditional causes which he no longer supports:

Keine Kerze mehr für den heiligen Antonius, keine Wallfahrt mehr seit drei Jahren. . . . Kein Blasiussegen, keine Tierseggnung, keine Autowiehe, kein Kaspar, Melchior und Balthasar mehr auf der Haustür! Keine Palmzweige, kein geweihter Schinken, keinen Groschen mehr für neue Glocken. (pp. 16-17)

When put into perspective, the insignificance of these works has a comical, if not absurd effect. Herr Job has suffered great losses as a result of two world wars and is presently experiencing a personal crisis. Frau Rummel's shallowness and stupidity are clearly exposed when she applies as a standard for faithfulness the support of trivial causes and the acquisition of religious knick-knacks. Herr Job reacts sarcastically towards her nonsense:

Das Dorf brennt, die Stadt brennt, die Erde brennt, das Meer brennt, auch das Meer! Wir verbrennen da drinnen vor Angst. Eine Medaille, eine Spende für die Glocken, und Gott löscht das Feuer und bringt alles wieder in Ordnung. (p. 17)

Frau Rummel does not have the sense to see Herr Job's problem, much less envision any real solution. She is nothing more than a windbag and it is no wonder that Herr Job calls her "du Kerzlweib, du Nachteule, du Pharisäerin!" (p. 16).

Herr Meier is the consummate bourgeois of an affluent society. He is the owner of a company dealing in electrical appliances and has in his estimation all of the features of a successful and exceptional individual. Of his weekly routine, he says:

He also prides himself for living in the real world and not in the world of religious trinkets and ceremonies. But when Frau Rummel calls him an atheist, he flatly denies it and reminds her of his year-round activity and support for the Church:


As a shrewd businessman he finds it advantageous to give the appearance of conformity and not offend any potential clients. Although he complies with the local traditions and niceties, he scorns the priests who want to subdue his autonomous spirit. He tells Herr Job:

Mich gängelt niemand, mich schreckt niemand, mich kommandiert niemand, mir redet niemand drein, von dem ich mir bloß einbilde, daß er mir dreinredet ... Ich fürchte weder Pfaffen noch Hölle und Fegefeuer. (p. 20)

But Herr Meier's self-assuredness also reveals his self-righteousness. He uses himself as a standard and measures the misfortunes of others by contrasting them to the fortunes in his own life. In this manner he blames Herr Job for the loss of his wife and son during the Second World War. He reasons this way:

Hätten Sie im Krieg so fest an die Vorsehung geglaubt wie ich, Ihr Älterer wäre nicht in Stalingrad geblieben und die Bombe nicht auf Ihr Haus gefallen und ausgerechnet auf die Küche. (p. 19)

He also blames Herr Job for the desertion of his son Karl:
Herr Meier does not fathom Herr Job's problem either. He is so caught up in his own world of success and happiness that he is oblivious to the deeper meaning of existence. This becomes most evident when he points to Herr Job's farmyard and says: "Seit wann gab es in Uz je Existenzangst, und bei dieser phänomenalen Existenz" (p. 22).

Dr. Schneider is a relatively young female physician and humanist who says of herself: "Ich bin ein moderner, liberaler Mensch" (p. 33). She has recently published a book entitled _Vom unbekannten Gott_, and according to her, the only antidote against despair lies in selecting a god that best fits one's particular disposition:

> Sehen sie, gegen die Verzweiflung am Leben helfen heute nur die neuen Götter. Man sucht sich einen Gott aus. Jeder den seinen, der wirklich zu ihm paßt. Das ist doch herrlich. (p. 28)

The doctor is not at all a comforter of the soul. She diagnoses Herr Job's physical problem and prescribes appropriate pills and injections to remove the symptoms of the ailment. As she ends her visit, she hands Herr Job a box of tranquilizers.

A priest, referred to as Herr Kaplan, also stops by to see Herr Job. He asks the old man if he has any confessions he wishes to make. Herr Job says no, but in essence does so as he pours out his heart to the priest. He wants to know where he went wrong with his son. He tells how he let the boy have his way in virtually everything:

But Herr Job is really wrestling with himself. He knows he spent too much time and energy rebuilding the farm and not enough with his boy. So he comes to his own defense:


The priest does not condemn Herr Job for any actions other than his excessiveness: "Unsere Hauptsünde: Übertreibung, Herr Job. Auch die Ihre" (p. 24). Herr Job resents the accusation and points to the abundant materialism throughout Western society today. He goes on to accuse the Church of not addressing modern maladies like anguish, doubt and hopelessness:

    Warum schreit ihr nicht mitten auf der Straße: Kommt alle zu uns, ihr Gejagten, ihr Geblendeten, ihr Verzweifler, ihr Verpfuschten! (p. 25)

The priest, more so than the others, recognizes the problems Herr Job has, but he does not have sufficient time for him. At the moment he is obligated to go and listen to confessions before mass, but tomorrow he could be back for half an hour to discuss the topic "God."

    Karl had abandoned his father three years before because he was no longer able to cope with his father's zeal for success. Now he stops by for half an hour to show the farm to Heidemarie, a hitch hiker he picked up on the Autobahn. The father is trying to understand the gall of his son and asks if his preoccupation with building up the farm is such an unforgiveable sin. In the course of the conversation it becomes evident that the son, representing the new generation, holds his father, representing the previous generation,
responsible for the state of corruption the country is in today. For Karl, reconstruction after the War meant reconstruction of the old system. He is a brash young idealist who wants to change the world and he thinks that his father should have created a new world rather than rebuild the old.

But Karl treasures a picture he has seen of his father. In it he visualizes his father as someone who had the potential to overthrow the establishment:


Herr Job answers in the affirmative and Karl asks:

Warum hast du dann nichts getan, weder gestreikt, noch gekämpft, auch nicht, als sie drüberm Wald die Großbauern erschlagen haben und deine Geliebte, die Madlein, die Holinka das Rathaus angezündet hat. (p. 37)

Instead, his father had married a rich woman, become mayor of Uz and continued to support the established order in society. Karl continues his same line of argument:

Warum hast du dann den Hof wieder aufgebaut, wieder als Bürgermeister von Uz, wieder in dieser komischen Republik, so als habe sich nichts in der Welt geändert, warum schuftest du, stopfst du Geld in deine Kassen, bist du wieder eine Stütze dieser erbärmlichen, hundsgemeinen Gesellschaft? (p. 37)

Karl's accusations extend even beyond his father's success on the farm. He asks: "Hast du den ersten Krieg verhindert, den zweiten? Die Nazi, die Faschisten, ein einziges KZ, einen einzigen Galgen?" (p. 37)

Herr Job makes it clear that he identifies his son with Elihu. He points in particular to chapter 32 of the Book of Job. Here Elihu introduces himself as a young and bright
individual, more adept than the other three. Like Elihu, Karl is younger than the others and steps into the picture after the others have finished their discussions with Herr Job.

Karl negates all previous ideas that have been voiced. He belongs to a generation that wants to break all ties with the past. Herr Kaplan recognizes this when he says: "Das Alte abräumen, Spekulationen, Theorien, Überlieferungen, alle, auch die atheistischen" (p. 31). Karl opposes not only the ideas of his father, but also those of everyone else. He has written a booklet entitled, "Diese junge Welt," but his father is not interested in its contents. He makes the sarcastic presumption:

Da wird auch drinnen stehn, was ihr Jungen zu sagen habt gegen die heutigen Straflager, Massaker und Galgen, gegen die Hetzer im Westen, die Hetzer im Osten! Gegen jeden Terror! (p. 38)

Herr Job fears that his son's generation has nothing constructive to offer. He says: "Ihr aber zerstört nur" (p. 39). He also sees in the new generation the same fanaticism he saw in his own:

Genauso folgerichtig, fanatisch, töricht wie wir in eurem Alter. Bis wieder einer kommt und euch zur Ordnung treibt wie uns, mit der Peitsche. Ein Herr über Leben und Tod. Dann steht ihr wie dein Bruder Michael verzückt vor einem anderen größten Menschen des Jahrtausends und jubelt ihm zu und marschiert für ihn in den Tod. Und dann später will jeder nur Opfer gewesen sein, nicht mitschuldig an allem, was über uns gekommen ist, genauso wie wir. (p. 39)

Identifying himself with the biblical Job, Herr Job cannot see a fitting epilogue in his own life: "Der Schluß vom Hiob paßt wirklich nicht auf mich. Und er bekam sieben Söhne und drei Töchter, und und und" (p. 41). He views the restoration of Job's possessions as a
good thing just as he thought he was doing the right thing by rebuilding what was destroyed during the War:

Damals durfte sich noch einer freuen, wenn er dann mehr besaß als vor der Prüfung. Mit Schafen und Rindern und Eselinnen gab Gott seinen Segen. Heut soll das kein Segen mehr sein. Heut darf so ein alter Mann nur um den Tod bitten. (p. 41)

Herr Job asks himself if he should burn down everything he has built up. Would that solve anything? At the end he contemplates what would happen if there were another mass destruction:

Was soll uns schon geschehn, auch wenn sie diesmal die Welt anzünden, Barbara? Nur unsere Söhne! Wird Gott sie retten, wie er uns noch einmal gerettet hat, auch wenn sie nicht mehr beten können? (p. 41)

Herr Job is Lauckner's Hiob two decades later. Resilient as he is, Herr Job has rebuilt what was in ruins and has in the meantime reached a state of prosperity envied by his neighbors. But Henz adds a new dimension to the suffering of a Job-figure by describing as a trial the refusal of one generation to accept the explanations of the previous generation. In fact, for Herr Job the agony resulting from the generation conflict with his son Karl looms larger in his mind than the losses of either World War.

By depicting Karl as the Elihu-figure, Henz is characterizing the postwar generation as argumentative and arrogant. To some degree this is born out in recent history. While learning about the concentration camps that operated throughout Central Europe, much of the youth of postwar Germany and Austria tended to criticize this part of history and condemn all those possibly responsible for it. German student movements of the late 1960s made every attempt to expose those politicians who had ostensible Nazi connections. Like
Karl, students participated in APO (außerparlamentarische Opposition) activities by divorcing themselves from the traditional political parties and proposing radical new ideas of their own. Contention between generations was typical as the sons accused their fathers of apathy during the Third Reich and as the fathers saw in their sons an arrogance which was not unlike the misguided zeal they experienced when they were young. But Herr Job is concerned about the destructive mindset of the new generation and doubts very much that they will be able to create a better world.
Notes

1Julius Bab, Die Chronik des deutschen Dramas, Teil V. Deutschlands dramatische Produktion 1919-1926 (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1972), pp. 341-42.


4Eltz-Hoffmann, p. 192.


6Bortenschlager, p. 233.

CHAPTER VI

JOB, THE EXISTENTIALIST

Hiob, du hast alle Nachtwachen durchweint
aber einmal wird das Sternbild deines Blutes
alle aufgehenden Sonnen erbleichen lassen.

Nelly Sachs

The authors we have discussed thus far clearly reflect the problems of their own generation. Sacher-Masoch addressed the hardships of Galician farmers of the 19th century, while Joseph Roth described the plight of a Jew who had lost his home in the Habsburg Empire and had not yet accepted his new home in New York. Of course, writers in the 1930s were caught up with the rise of Nazism and responded either positively (Eggers and Haerten) or negatively (Wiechert) towards its expanding influence. Postwar writers, like Lauckner and Henz, tried to come to terms with a devastated past, a fragile present and a tentative future. For all of them, the modern figure of Job was a character who suffered from the malaise of his particular time and place in history.

On a broader scale, however, some authors have mirrored in a more general way major philosophical views of the twentieth century, namely, the problem of Job as it relates to the predicament of modern man. Two authors who have created Job-figures in this existential mode are Hans Ehrenberg and Franz Kafka.
Although all of the works discussed above have been treated in chronological order, we find it appropriate to include Ehrenberg's *Hiob, der Existentialist* (1952) and Kafka's *Der Prozeß* (1925) in the same chapter. Each writer characterizes a Job-figure within the context of modern existentialism. By examining these two figures side by side we are able to compare more clearly the problems and solutions presented by each author. It should also be mentioned, that in the main Kafka's works were not available to the general reading public until the 1950s, the same time when Ehrenberg's *Hiob, der Existentialist* enjoyed its greatest readership.

In general terms, existentialism may be divided into two main schools of thought: theistic or Christian existentialism; and atheistic or secular existentialism. Spiritually speaking, postwar Europe was a fertile territory for existentialism. Both secular and religious existentialists found reasons to propagate their particular brand of philosophy. The secular existentialist was convinced of the absurdity of life and rendered existence meaningless, except for some subjective meaning an individual might attach to it. For him, God was dead and life was a one-time experience culminating in death and nothingness. The philosophy in part was a reaction to the untold horrors of two world wars. The religious existentialist, however, saw in this hour of destitution and despair a greater need for God than ever. Man had stared into the abyss, and now in spite of, or because of, the chaos and calamity surrounding him, he needs God.

Ehrenberg's *Hiob, der Existentialist* reflects the Christian form of existentialism, while Kafka's *Der Prozeß* leans towards the secular form of existentialism. Ehrenberg's protagonist, the everpresent Hiob, accepts pain, anguish and isolation as an opportunity to
rise to the occasion of true existence. In his struggle with God, Hiob defines more clearly the parameters of his own existence. Through suffering, he finds greater meaning in life. Kafka's hero, Joseph K., similarly suffers from guilt, anguish and isolation. But Joseph K.'s relentless search to find God, who is nowhere to be found, only increases his agony and convinces him of the futility of his efforts. His answer finally lies in a self-condemning death. Both characters, Ehrenberg's Hiob and Kafka's Joseph K., are actively engaged in a bitter struggle to survive, but only the former can claim victory, whereas the latter goes down to defeat. The one sought and found life; the other sought and found death.

Job, the Religious Existentialist

Hans Ehrenberg (1883-1961), a notable theologian from Hamburg, was a Jew who converted to Lutheranism. He studied economics in Munich and philosophy in Heidelberg. After the First World War, during which he served as an officer, Ehrenberg commenced his theological studies, which he concluded four years later in 1924. His open fight against National Socialism began in 1927 and led to his imprisonment for several months (November 1938 to March 1939) in the concentration camps at Oranienburg and Sachsenhausen. Shortly after his release (April 1939), Ehrenberg emigrated to England, where he spent the war-years, and then returned to Germany in 1947.

Throughout his life, Ehrenberg wrote dozens of books, most of which were theological and philosophical in nature. Some of his more significant works are Östliches Christentum (1923-25), Disputationen. Drei Bücher über den Deutschen Idealismus (1924-25), Deutschland im Schmelzofen (1932), Autobiography of a German Pastor (1943), and
Goethe, der Mensch (1940). Of all his works, Hiob, der Existentialist may be described as "das Persönlichste und zugleich Tiefste"¹ according to Ehrenberg's friend Ernst Wilm.

Ehrenberg's Hiob, der Existentialist is more or less a reinterpretation of the Book of Job as it applies to modern man. Throughout the work, one sentence is expressly repeated: "Unsere Zeit ist Hiob-reif geworden."² In his "Scenarische Vorbemerkung" Ehrenberg tells the reader why the Job-story is so relevant to modern man:

Der Zusammenbruch, der im biblischen Hiobbuch über den reichen und frommen Mann Hiob kommt, hat sich im Zusammenbruch der reichen und frommen bürgerlichen Welt auß neue ereignet. Und der Kampf, den der zum Proletarier gewordene Hiob führen muß, Kampf mit Gott und dem Menschen, wird im Spiegel unserer eigenen Zeit wiederum sichtbar. (p. 5)

For Ehrenberg, the breakdown of the rich and pious bourgeoisie over the last century is analogous to the downfall of Job, the rich and pious man of the Old Testament. Therefore, man suffers today just as Job suffered then. He is involved in a struggle that will surely determine his future for centuries to come and the solution lies in posing the most central question of his existence: "Gibt es einen Gott, einen Gott, der wirklich ist?" (p. 5). No doubt, Ehrenberg wants to plant in the mind of his reader the necessity to believe in a God who is real, a God who really exists.

It is noteworthy that five years after Ehrenberg wrote Hiob, der Existentialist, Terrien published a work entitled Job: Poet of Existence, in which he echoes Ehrenberg's sentiment, stating: "Times are singularly ripe for a rediscovery of Job."³ For Terrien, as for Ehrenberg, the reality of God comprises the central issue of his work:

God is not a mere adjunct of a social group, be it Israel, the church, the United States of America or Western culture.
However loyal one is to such historical agencies, and however constructive the function they may fulfill in the epic of mankind, Israel, church, country or Western culture is only a relative means toward an absolute end: the purpose of a creative God in the universe. Such a truth hurts. Some call it subversive. In the end, however, it alone can undercut the attacks which are perennially made against faith in God.4

Hiob, der Existentialist could be classified as a theological discussion in the form of a drama. Four characters participate in the discussion. They are:

Zunächst Hiob selber, in hohiem Alter, aber auf der Höhe der Kraft und der Erfahrung.
Zuzweit irgend ein Mensch, mittleren Lebensalters, einer aus Vielen, gleichwohl erheblich über dem Durchschnitt, aber, gemäß seiner Generation, ohne einen endgültigen geistigen Charakter.
Zudritt ein Leser, jugendlich, repräsentativ für die geistige Haltung der heutigen Jugend, mit dem unbestechlichen Willen zur Entschiedenheit.
Und viertens der Geist Elihus, jenes vierten Redners aus dem biblischen Hiobbuch, der nach dem Ablauf der Hauptdiskussion zu Worte kommt. (p. 6)

Ehrenberg presents his discussion in five dialogues, which again may be divided into two parts. The first two dialogues are literary while the last three are theological in nature. In all of this the author is trying to imitate the form and content of the Book of Job, that is, he makes use of the literary form of the dialogue to present his philosophical and theological contents. There is no attempt by Ehrenberg to create a drama with action and tension. The work builds up to a climax inasmuch as Elihu is not introduced until the fourth dialogue, preparing the reader for a would-be theophany in the fifth dialogue entitled "Gott."
First Dialogue ("Hiobs Kampf")

The first two dialogues are exclusively between Hiob and Mensch. To begin with Hiob makes it perfectly clear that he exists today just as he existed two and a half thousand years ago: "Ja, ich existiere! Ich existiere vollständig!" (p. 7). He is a universal figure who is always current: "Ich bin immer noch zeitgemäß, bin es heutzutage mehr als je: Denn – ich existiere!" (pp. 13-14).

At the outset Mensch wants Hiob to explain the apparent paradox between Job the Patient of the Prologue and Job the Impatient of the Dialogues. Why did he initially resign himself? Hiob explains:

Ich war wie betäubt. Ich konnte nicht schreien. Ich konnte nur sagen, was ich immer gesagt hatte: Der Herr hats gegeben, der Herr... Du weißt es! (p. 7)

It is a natural thing to do, when one is stunned by catastrophe. Hiob reminds Mensch how he felt at the time: "Blank wie die Nacht, ja da war Nacht, völlige Finsternis, und in der Finsternis sagte ich es" (p. 7).

Then Hiob begins to relate how he had to struggle out of that darkness, that loneliness, that despair. Difficult as it may have been, it was all in all a positive experience. Hiob tells Mensch that in effect he did not "exist" while he was enjoying the bounties of life—having a large family, sizeable possessions and ample respect. He was a static character until he was confronted with a catastrophe. Then he became a dramatic figure:

Schauplatz bin ich geworden – und Theater, Schlachtfeld! Eine dramatische Person! Schicksalsträger! Theater! Das eben ist die Existenz! (p. 12)
Before that point in time he was a fairy-tale figure in a fairy-tale world, as represented in the Prologue. Suddenly there came the unexpected—the formidable test:

Nicht in einem Hui! sondern in einer dramatischen Explosion, einer Metamorphose - die Puppe platzt, das fertige Tier tritt aus der Larve heraus und hockt da in Staub und Asche, und drei Freunde sitzen herum, und das Buch Hiob kann starten!

(p. 12)

Hiob proceeds to tell Mensch that everyone lives in a fairy-tale world, that everyone lives in a cocoon, until disaster strikes and the ensuing struggle leads to a new state of awareness or existence. Prior to arriving at this level, man merely lives in a state of pre-existence (Vorexistenz), undeveloped and unchallenged. How could people be described before they have encountered such a struggle? In Hiob's words:


According to Ehrenberg, a personal traumatic event must take place before an individual can truly exist. This is what happened to Hiob and Mensch reminds him:

Du bist wirklich gewaltsam hineingeschleudert worden in die Katastrophe, in das Leid, in die Heimsuchung, in die Anfechtung, in die Krankheit, in den Disput, in den Aufstand, in den Aufschrei. (p. 13)

The plan that was devised between God and Satan in the Prologue really served to bring out the latent qualities in Hiob. Satan was not permitted to take Hiob's life, because Hiob had to be tested to the very limit, so he could truly exist:
Ich sollte ja leben, wirklich leben! Ich sollte ringen, bis zum bitteren Ende versucht werden! Er sollte mein Gott bleiben, durch alle Minuten eines furchtbaren Kampfes hindurch! Keinen Moment verschwand Er, keinen Moment verschwand ich! Keine Ferien von Gott, keine Ferien von mir selber! (p. 15)

During such an intense struggle with the Divine, it is important to rebel against God. Hiob reminds Mensch: "Mit meinem Schrei in meinem dritten Kapitel begann es, nicht wahr? Die Anklage gegen Gott: Du hast schuld! Du Gott!" (p. 15). Hiob explains how his accusations led to liberate both himself and God. Without taking up the fight against God, we hold Him to be a mere concept, an abstraction. By accusing Him, by wrestling with Him, we not only cause our own existence, but also the existence of God. In Hiob’s words: "Ehe wir Gott nicht anklagen können, können wir nicht existieren, und es gibt keinen Gott, wenn er uns nicht existieren läßt" (p. 16).

Several modern thinkers draw similar conclusions about Job's encounter with God. Maurice Friedman, like Ehrenberg, quotes from the third chapter of Job, where Job curses the day of his birth. According to Friedman, Job experiences an exile by denying his creation and hence his creator:

Job experiences the most terrible exile that Biblical man can know: that sense of abandonment by God that undermines the very meaning of his existence. The abyss has opened beneath Job; his life has become insupportable to him, and the only relief he can imagine is death.¹

Once separated from God, man can only regain God’s presence by revolting against Him. "Through his very rebellion he [Job] has received an answering response which leaves him no longer an exile."⁷ Claus Westermann shows how Job’s complaints grow and intensify throughout his speeches until he gains an audience with God, that by fighting against God,
he demonstrates his hope in God. Since God at the end of the Theophany says to Job's friends "ihr habt nicht recht von mir geredet wie mein Knecht Hiob" (42:6), He not only condones but approves, it appears, the accusations made against Him by His servant Job.

The final verdict, that Job has spoken correctly of God, means that Job still clung to the God whom he experienced as his adversary. This implies that God even accepts the despairing words of a sufferer who doubts his justice, if only he will cling to him in this abyss of despair.\(^8\)

Indeed, the Impatient Job of the Dialogues is as virtuous as the Patient Job of the Prologue.

Alexander Di Lella sees in this type of doubting the true hallmark of faith:

Thus the principal function of the Book of Job was, and is, to demonstrate dramatically and forcefully that doubt as to the correctness of religious affirmations concerning ultimate reality, is a sign of mature faith. Such doubt, canonically legitimated by the Book of Job, is neither reckless nor irreligious, but rather can be entertained and even welcomed with enthusiasm and hope by contemporary believers in their quest to achieve some understanding of the realities of God and of themselves and their anguish. None of these realities can be expressed fully or once and for all as if the affirmations corresponded totally to the realities themselves. Doubting in this way becomes a serious religious enterprise requiring intellectual maturity and moral integrity as well as enormous courage and deep faith in a God who still trusts human beings as he trusted Job.\(^9\)

Ehrenberg is only one of many for whom doubt and despair are vehicles that lead to new heights of awareness and existence. Those who never confront God, have no choice but to believe in a mere concoction of God—a figment of their fancy. This in effect also places God in a pre-existent state, a fairy-tale world.
But of the two parties, God and man, God is the one who steps out of His pre-existence first and challenges man to follow Him. Man usually responds more slowly. Hildegard Demnitz explains:


Most people, however, together with their God tarry in this primordial state of pre-existence. This is what Hiob and his friends had in common prior to his afflictions. But the day came when Hiob was jolted out of his comfortable zone and then he and his friends were no longer able to see eye to eye. Hiob says of his friends:

Da saßen sie vor mir, die 'anderen', die 'Freunde', die 'klugen Leute', die 'nicht Ausgebombten', die Menschen, die nicht gelitten hatten. (p. 8)

Job's friends are oblivious to the human condition:

They look away from the existential reality of Job's unique situation rather than face the question raised by his suffering. The god they argue for, as a result, is not the real God whom Job encounters, but an idol—the product of their own rationalized theology.

The friends are blinded by their own orthodoxy and their lack of courage to question the justice of God:

Hence, only Job, and none of the friends, turns out to be the authentic believer, approved by God himself, because he had the personal integrity and religious courage to question the traditional notions about God and his justice, and to express his feelings of rage and hurt, and to cry out to others in the
religious community for compassion and understanding in the face of the implacable absurdities, unsettling ambiguities, and inevitable doubts that arose because of his extraordinary adversities.\textsuperscript{12}

Like the community in the day of Job, the community of today by and large believes in a packaged God who can be analyzed and whose existence can be proved, but not experienced. Hiob says to Mensch:


For an existentalist like Hiob, God must also be an existentalist. He must be as real and relevant as the world around us. "Ist Gott nicht existentiell, so gibt es keinen Gott" (p. 18). In our modern society God appears to be silent only because man has not had the courage to awaken Him. God lies dormant in His Vorexistenz and He will remain there until man rediscoveres Him. Montgomery Belgion corroborates Ehrenberg’s concerns, when he says:

For most people to-day God does not exist because they do not really exist themselves and are only shadows. In the kind of pre-existence which they lead they are ridden by an anti-God complex.\textsuperscript{13}
Second Dialogue ("Auf der Höhe des Kampfes")

Hiob and Mensch continue their discussion and now shift the focus to Hiob's friends. As far as Hiob can determine, the three friends represent three basic types of theologians: first, "der wohlmeinende" (like Eliphaz); second, "der diskussionsbesessene" (like Bildad); and third, "der ketzerverbrennende" (like Zophar). Mensch quotes several passages by the friends that are to show their good intentions and valid points, but Hiob counters Mensch and quotes passages by the same friends that clearly reveal that they were no friends at all: "Sie waren keine Tröster; sie waren hoffnungslos korrekte Theologen" (p. 25).

Mensch wants to know why Hiob so vehemently protested his innocence. Hiob answers:

Ich verneinte meine Schuld, um nicht ganz vom Angesicht Gottes verbannt zu werden – daß Gott weiter mit mir spräche, ich nicht ganz ausgestoßen sei. (p. 25)

On the one hand, Hiob knew that God was justified in every move He made; on the other hand, he wanted to provoke God to answer him. Hiob's lamenting and protesting should be ample evidence that he did not want to be shunned by God. He explains:


Hiob's defensive stance was a cry for divine companionship. He wanted to know that, in a seemingly hopeless situation, God had not really left him. Now Hiob can assure Mensch: "Ich war nicht gott-los! Ich war mit Ihm, Er mit mir" (p. 27).
According to Terrien, Hiob's struggle with God demonstrates his faith in God:

Were he to yield to unbelief, his problem would immediately cease to exist. His physical and moral grappling with undeserved evil would remain, but his spiritual torture would end. Thus the path of his agony is not comparable to a continuous descent into hell; it is an incessantly up-and-down movement, a conflict between denial and affirmation, doubt and certainty, revolt and acceptance, a struggle against God and a hope in him, a flight from before God and a longing to encounter him.14

Hiob felt accused by God but he also felt that his only hope was with God. Jim Garrison sees the same paradox:

The novelty of this demand by Job is in the fact that he appeals to God against God. While on the one hand recognizing God’s injustice to him, he also is certain that it is from God that he will receive justice.15

Friedman draws a similar conclusion:

Job never gives up his trust in the creator who is also his redeemer, but he can only recognize him as the God of the real world in which the innocent suffer while the wicked prosper. Were Job to experience an evil so terrible that he could not recognize the voice of God in it, he would no longer be able to trust in God; for trust in God, at its deepest level, means trust in existence.16

But after his intense struggle, after experiencing the darkest hour, light finally broke through for Hiob. He recalls vividly:

Wo die letzte kleine Möglichkeit einer Hilfe verschwunden war, eben da wurde ich von Gott überwältigt. Wenn jede Hoffnung genommen ist, dann kommt Gott wirklich. Immer, nicht nur bei mir. (p. 32)

Ehrenberg's tone is didactic here. He tells the reader to engage in the battle and to rest assured that there is hope even beyond all hopelessness.
So ends the first half of Ehrenberg's dialogues. In his "Scenarische Zwischenbemerkung," he informs the reader that the discussion will now shift from a literary to a theological plane. The second part, like the first, is primarily a reinterpretation of the Book of Job, but Ehrenberg's intent to instruct becomes more obvious. He writes:

Und die zweite Hälfe der Dialoge – weniger dramatisch als die erste, aber raumhafter – rückt Stück um Stück aus dem leidenschaftlichen Verlangen der Menschenseele nach Entscheidung in die tatsächliche Entscheidung hinein. (p. 34)

In short, the author wants to help the reader make a firm commitment towards serving God and his fellow man.

Because of the theological nature of the second half, it will suffice to give a brief summary of the remaining three dialogues.

Third Dialogue ("Hiobs Sache")

A new character, Leser, joins Hiob and Mensch. He is young, critical and independent, representing modern secular man. His opening statement describes a world without God: "Das Wort ist von nun an ohne Sprecher und ohne Hörer!" (p. 35). He cites an example of a Norwegian resistance fighter who, despite his belief in God, had to die at the hands of the enemy:

Moen im Gestapogefängnis in Oslo! Moen der Widerstandskämpfer! Moen der total heutige Mensch! Er betet, er bekennt den Gott seiner Eltern, er beichtet, er verspricht – aber er kommt nicht durch! (p. 35)
In light of the gruesome statistics that are contained in the annals of the twentieth century, modern man can no longer be expected to believe in a just and kind God.

It is a pity that Ehrenberg no more than touches on the subject of the innocent victims who perished in the Nazi concentration camps. The millions of innocent lives lost there truly reflect the problem of Job on a massive scale.17

The remaining conversation centres around the fact that the existence of God cannot be proven. At least, Hiob is not able to present to Leser, the sceptic, any argument that would convince him to believe in God. For Hiob, however, man's ability first to endure and then to recover from untold afflictions points to a loving God. "Hiobs Sache," then, lies in the fact that his story offers succor and hope to the forlorn and afflicted.

Fourth Dialogue ("Der Theologe")

Ehrenberg chooses not to depict Elihu as the arrogant braggart, as he is usually depicted, but as a benevolent intruder. It was Elihu's calling to mend two ailing relationships—the situation between Hiob and his friends and the situation between Hiob and God. Concerning the first relationship, Elihu saw that the lengthy discussion between Hiob and his friends was going nowhere. He therefore took it upon himself to redirect the thrust of the debate. Elihu reminds Hiob:

Ihr wolltet mit Begriffen wie Gott, Gerechtigkeit, Unschuld, Schuld, Leiden usw. eine Entscheidung treffen, und das geht einfach nicht. (p. 46)

Concerning the second relationship, Elihu saw that Hiob was trying to restrict God by ascribing to Him certain parameters and pre-conditions. But he tells Hiob:
Es gibt keine Voraussetzungen für Gott, keine Voraussetzungen zu dem, was wir von Gott auszusagen haben und aussagen können. Gott ist immer 'firsthand'. (p. 48)

Hiob reiterates Elihu’s sentiment, when he says:

Ja, sie alle wollen eine Welt ohne Leiden, ohne Tod, ohne Krieg, ohne Grausamkeit, ohne Übel! Unter der Bedingung wollen sie auch alle an Gott glauben. (p. 50)

But as mortals we need to accept that security limits our faith. Only insecurity with its accompanying side-effects—pain, anguish, doubt—can lead to an encounter with God and to spiritual growth. Hiob now sees in Elihu a harbinger and defender of God:

Du bist kein Professor, kein Prophet, kein jüdischer Weisheitslehrer, kein Evangelist, kein Philosoph oder Forscher; du bist wirklich ganz schlicht der Anwalt Gottes. (p. 51)

Demnitz regrets that Elihu, the bold individual who provoked Job and his three friends in the Old Testament and who today could again be a motivating force in bringing about a closer relationship between man and God, was only depicted as a spirit. In effect, Elihu represents Ehrenberg’s persona which, due to the author’s modesty, is not made clear in the work:

Hätte nicht Ehrenberg übermütig genug sein sollen, sich mit ihm [Elihu] zu identifizieren, hätte er nicht in eigenem Fleisch und Blut auf den Plan treten sollen? Er hat in dem Vorausgegangenen die Hoffnung in uns genährt, daß er in der Tiefe, wo Ernst und Humor sich treffen, fähig dazu wäre.18

By making Elihu out to be someone who needs to bring Hiob back to his senses, however, Ehrenberg seems to negate the value of Hiob’s rebellion, which he praised so forcefully in the first two dialogues.
Fifth Dialogue ("Gott")

Hiob is grateful for Elihu’s advice. As in the Book of Job, Elihu has once again admonished Hiob to set aside his differences with God. Hiob admits: "Und wieder hat mich Elihu jetzt befreit, von gefährlichen Erinnerungen, falschen Erwartungen" (p. 53). Hiob, symbolizing the innocent sufferer, tends to err today as he did in Old Testament times. He says:

Ich habe alle meine Register gezogen, ich habe ihn [Gott] mit Gefühlen, Gedanken, Urteilen; Vergleichen, Bildern, Bitten und Herausforderungen überfallen: (p. 54)

The story of Job as it has come down through the ages was to serve as an example to anyone who felt similarly afflicted. To Job, and Job alone, God made a paradigmatic appearance. In today’s world God reveals himself through the fellowship that human beings have with another: "Ein Du-Ich-Wechselgesang füllt den Weltenraum. Das ist Gott jetzt! Anders als damals, als der Blitz mich traf" (p. 56).

Hiob explains that the encounter he had with God in the Theophany primarily served as a lesson in repentance. Within the speeches of God Hiob sees three invitations to repent. The first time is realized when God addresses Hiob saying: "Gürte deine Lenden wie ein Mann; ich will dich fragen lehre mich!" (38:3). Here God is calling Hiob to repentance. The second time can be seen when Hiob admits to his errant ways: "Ich habe einmal geredet, und will nicht antworten; zum andernmal will ich's nicht mehr tun" (40:5). Here Hiob is acknowledging his fallibility. The third time embodies the actualization of repentance. This occurs at the end of the Theophany when Hiob says: "Ich hatte von dir
mit den Ohren gehört; aber nun hat mein Auge dich gesehen!" (42:5). Hiob assigns great significance to his last utterance. He says:

Dieser kleine Satz verändert die gesamte Welt. Nicht von uns hängt es ab, ob oben oben, unten unten, links links, rechts rechts, vorne vorne, hinten hinten ist. Allein davon, Gott so gehört zu haben, daß wir ihn gesehen haben. (p. 58)

It behooves modern man, who will probably not have a face-to-face encounter with God, to become so aware of and in tune with God, that he will consider himself to be in the presence of God. John Killinger interprets the value of suffering in a like manner:

Suffering deepens the consciousness of man until, like Job, he sees with the eye what he had previously only heard of with his ears. Out at the naked edge of the world, staring into the abyss and yearning to die, he discovers what it means to live. 19

Mensch asks if the Book of Job does not slide back into a fairy-tale in the Epilogue. Hiob assures him that the opposite is actually true:


Hiob is here referring to his opportunity to intercede on behalf of Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, who had been chided by the Lord. Hiob says: "Das war meine herrliche Buße, für die bei Gott zu beten, die mich gequält hatten" (p. 59). This kind of fellowship, working with and caring for others, brings Hiob back into the community. It signals on the one hand the end of his exile and on the other a truly existential interaction between him and his friends. Hiob continues to explain and says that this giving and taking among community members all happens within the church: "In der Kirche sind wir alle Liebende und
Geliebte; denn wir beten für einander – wenn wir es tun” (p. 60). In this way members of the community come together in the spirit of love and support for one another.

It appears that Ehrenberg began his work as a theologian and ended it as a preacher. Nonetheless, beyond some of his fuzzy theological notions he has clearly interpreted the figure of Job as a modern existentialist. The author has taken a mythical character from the dusty pages of the Old Testament and has made him relevant to the contemporary reader. But in his efforts to argue cogently, Ehrenberg may have defeated the very purpose he set out to achieve. Belgion sees this as a possible drawback to the work, in that perhaps it allows the reader of the book to remain detached. He has the temptation to feel that here are some figures arguing with one another, that they argue well and that he can admire the author’s skill, but that all this discussion does not bear on his own life.\(^{20}\)

In the first part of his dialogues, Ehrenberg demonstrates that faith and doubt are only two different sides of the same coin. Indeed, an individual can at the same time believe in and wrestle with God. In fact, a struggle with God implies both faith and growth. In the second part of his work, Ehrenberg emphasizes the importance of fellowship among the members of the community. The love of God can only manifest itself whenever individuals develop and nurture interdependent relationships with one another.

Ehrenberg’s Hiob makes a hero of the Impatient Job. It should be added, of course, that through this impatience, Job is led to a higher level of patience or peace of mind. As a theologian, Ehrenberg sees this not only to be desirable but necessary in a godless society. Some modern authors, however, choose to leave the Impatient Job impatient, because they are unable to envision any resolution to the modern predicament of man.
Ehrenberg's work appears to be a plea for the rebuilding of personal life shattered by the catastrophe of the Second World War. Man, who has been rudely shaken out of his slumber, may now seize the opportunity to leave his pre-existence and become an authentic individual. It is true, he suffered physical, mental and spiritual pain, he was lonely and destitute, he was angry at God, but all of this has made him acutely aware of the preciousness of existence and the value of community at large. God has always been there, is still there, and will always be there. Any restitution lies in the hands of the individual himself. Suffering can be a prism that diffuses bad experience and changes it to new enlightenment. According to Maclean,

Ehrenberg's interpretation offers a spiritual solution to a European-wide sociological problem. There is however the possibility of a more national approach which is limited to Germany. During this century Germany has twice suffered eclipse. Two world wars have passed over her. Each time a few years have sufficed to change her from a proud, indeed an over-proud nation, into a shattered wreck. Each time she has become an outcast among the nations, but she has contrived to remain in existence, in fact has shown remarkable recuperative powers. However in 1945 especially the will to live had almost disappeared.21

Job, the Secular Existentialist

Franz Kafka (1883-1924), a major literary figure of the twentieth century, was born into a middle-class Jewish family living in the German-speaking part of Prague, which was throughout most of his lifetime part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. This diverse background led to cultural conflicts within Kafka, but he also had to contend with personal conflicts. He felt very troubled about the uneasy relationship he had with his father and
with women and about the dissatisfaction he felt with his job as a lawyer for the Worker's
Insurance Company. Many of the conflicts which Kafka experienced found expression in
his story lines, which in turn resulted in some of the most compelling works of the twentieth
century.

The anguish and anxiety experienced by Kafka’s characters are often ascribed to
modern man living in a world without absolutes. Although this spiritual agony so prevalent
in modern times could lend itself to a comparison with Job’s afflictions, Kafka neither
mentions nor makes any reference to Job in his works. However, a number of critics see
Kafka as the author who has shaped modern man into a modern Job-figure.

Margarete Susman, in her essay "Das Hiob-Problem bei Franz Kafka," was the first
to draw attention to the Job-like features of Kafka’s characters. Likewise Max Brod, close
friend and biographer of Kafka, made a number of comparisons between Kafka’s characters
and Job. Hermann Levin Goldschmidt insists: "Kafka und Hiob werden zusammen
brennende Gegenwart." The similarities between some of Kafka’s works and the Book of
Job was also on the mind of Gershom Scholem when he wrote the following in a letter to
Walter Benjamin:

Ich würde auch dir raten, jede Untersuchung über Kafka vom
Buche Hiob aus zu beginnen oder zum mindesten von einer
Erörterung über die Möglichkeit des Gottesurteils, welches ich
als den einzigen Gegenstand der Kafkaschen Produktion
ansehe, in einer Dichtung zu behandeln[1].

Of Kafka’s works, Der Prozeß (written in 1915 and published in 1925) is most akin
to the Book of Job. Northrop Frye is of the opinion that "the hero of Kafka’s Trial . . .
reads like a kind of ‘midrash’ on the Book of Job." Suter has interpreted Der Prozeß with
respect to the Book of Job and a number of critics have dealt with various aspects of the two works.

There seems to be no way of ascertaining whether those portions of Der Prozeß analogous to the Book of Job came about intentionally or unintentionally. For our purpose, it will suffice to identify the existing parallels and to give reasons for the existing differences. The protagonists of the two works, Job and Joseph K., indeed have similar plights. First, a stroke of misfortune comes upon them without any fault of their own. Second, both have a number of friends who aggravate their particular situation. They invoke feelings of guilt by associating misfortune with transgression of the Law. Third, both try to explain their suffering within the framework of the Law, but this only leads to greater frustration. On the one hand, they feel innocent because they have not violated the Law; on the other hand, they feel guilty because the Law, which they uphold, has found it necessary to call them down. The final outcomes for Job and Joseph K., however, are quite different. The former resolves his problems and lives out his life in hope and happiness. The latter is unable to resolve his conflicts and finally perishes in hopelessness and despair.

The Arrest of Joseph K.

Joseph K. is not a man of stature like Job of old. Of him it may be said: He is like everyone else on earth, an average and mediocre man who does not know God and lives with his shortcomings. Nonetheless, an unpleasant event changes his life, as K. suddenly finds himself under arrest one morning. The first sentence of the novel introduces K.'s predicament: "Jemand mußte Joseph K. verleumdet haben, denn ohne daß er etwas Böses
getan hätte, wurde er eines Morgens verhaftet." The cause of K.'s arrest remains ambiguous throughout the entire novel. André Neher sees particularly in this opening of Der Prozeß a parallel to the Book of Job:

Of all the writers who have been inspired by this prologue to the Book of Job, it is undoubtedly Kafka who has seized upon its most specific qualities. What the biblical narrative puts deliberately into this opening intrigue is a suggestion of error—that suggestion which poisons the atmosphere of The Trial.

The arrest is for Joseph K. what the afflictions are to Job. Both represent events which suggest to the smitten individual that he is in disfavor with the powers that be. The disfavor in turn presupposes some kind of sin or transgression. Harry Slochower sees in K. the same mythic pattern he sees in Job:

In The Trial, Joseph K. is arrested and "tried" for a crime which is never stated by the authorities. Yet, the novel suggests that Joseph K. is guilty. As in the case of Job, his crime is not in the nature of an overt act. It consists in his having been content with leading a routine life, according to the accepted conventions. In this sense, his arrest (as that of Job) constitutes his awakening to the fact that he had not lived.

Slochower here corroborates Ehrenberg's concept of the Vorexistenz. In the case of Joseph K., the arrest functions as the necessary jolt to cause him to act and seek out his existence: "His arrest catapults him toward something approximating rebirth."

Unexpected events disrupt their routine way of living. An abrupt change occurs in the life of each protagonist, but whereas Job assesses his catastrophe with a sense of sobriety, K. considers his ill-fated arrest to be rather harmless, if not amusing. His continuation of life as it was before the arrest is not impeded. Job recognizes the gravity of his lot; K. does not.
Not only the characters but also the points of view of the narrators are similar in the two works—at least to the extent that neither Job nor Joseph K. is aware of the reasons behind the afflictions. In the case of Job, however, the reader clearly shares the knowledge with the narrator why calamity has struck. But in the case of K., the reader too is denied the information needed to make any sense of K.’s arrest.

Typical of modern writers, Kafka has abandoned the perspective of an omniscient narrator. In Der Prozeß, in fact, the narrator goes to great lengths emphasizing the limited knowledge he has. It follows, then, that the reader’s understanding of the proceedings would be as limited as the understanding of the narrator or indeed the character. Because the hero is struggling against unknown and possibly insurmountable odds, the effects on the reader are at times laughable, if not absurd.33

The Advisors of Job and Joseph K.

Both Job and Joseph K. have a number of friends who invoke feelings of guilt by blindly defending the Law. The three friends, Eliphaz, Bildad and Zophar, come to visit Job and intend to comfort the sufferer. But their consolation turns to criticism, their balsam turns to salt. One after another asserts that the Lord is a just God and that He does not inflict punishment without a good reason. Eliphaz tries to point to a transgression that must have been committed:

Gedenke doch, wo ist ein Unschuldiger umgekommen? oder wo sind die Gerechten je vertilgt?
Wie ich wohl gesehen habe: die da Mühe pflügten und Unglück säten, ernteten es auch ein. (4:7-8)
Bildad intimates a little more strongly that Job must have erred in order to have drawn this affliction upon himself:

Darum siehe, daß Gott nicht verwirft die Frommen und erhält nicht die Hand der Boshafien,
bis daß dein Mund voll Lachens werde und deine Lippen voll Jauchzens. (8:20-21)

Zophar takes the strongest stand and chastizes Job for mocking God. He wishes God would appear and personally rebuke Job:

Ach, daß Gott mit dir redete und täte seine Lippen auf und zeigte dir die heimliche Weisheit! Denn er hätte doch wohl mehr an dir zu tun; auf daß du wissest, daß er deiner Sünden nicht aller gedenkt. (11:5-6)

Then Zophar proceeds to describe the portions of the wicked, which closely resemble the misfortunes that have befallen Job. Elihu, the fourth friend and most miserable of all, reprimands Job most severely. He relates the Deuteronomic dictum that God cannot be unjust and that all of the blessings and curses of mankind are rooted in a cause:

Darum höret mir zu, ihr weisen Leute: Es sei ferne, daß Gott sollte gottlos handeln und der Allmächtige ungerecht;
Sondern er vergilt dem Menschen, danach er verdient hat, und trifft einen jeglichen nach seinem Tun.
Ohne Zweifel, Gott verdammt niemand mit Unrecht, und der Allmächtige beugt das Recht nicht. (34:10-12)

Elihu not only calls Job to repentance, but he calls him to silence as well, because in his opinion, Job is only compounding his sins by complaining so much:

O, daß Hiob versucht würde bis ans Ende! Darum daß er sich zu ungerechten Leuten kehrt.
Denn er hat über seine Sünde dazu noch gelästert; er treibt Spott unter uns und macht seiner Reden viel wider Gott. (34:36-37)
His friends are no source of comfort whatsoever. In agony Job cries out to them: "was soll ich denn harren? und wer achtet mein Hoffen?" (17:15). Soon he directs his complaints towards his Maker: "Er hat mich zerbrochen um und um und läßt mich gehen und hat ausgerissen meine Hoffnung wie einen Baum" (19:10). But Job also knows that God is beyond reproach and he says: "Darum will auch ich meinem Mund nicht wehren; ich will reden in der Angst meines Herzens und will klagen in der Betrübnis meiner Seele" (7:11). Void of hope and happiness, he longs for the grave:

Schreie ich zu dir, so antwortest du mir nicht; trete ich hervor, so achtest du nicht auf mich.
Du bist mir verwandelt in einen Grausamen und zeigst an mit der Stärke deiner Hand, daß du mir gram bist.
Du hebst mich auf und läßt mich auf dem Winde fahren und zerschmelzest mich kräftig.
Denn ich weiß, du wirst mich dem Tod überantworten; da ist das bestimmte Haus aller Lebendigen. (30:20-23)

Shortly after his arrest, Joseph K. sets out to discuss his case with three individuals: his Uncle Karl, the Lawyer Huld, and the painter Titorelli. However, as is the case with Job's friends, K.'s friends are more of a hindrance than a help. They only complicate matters for K., who wants to pursue his trial and arrive at a verdict. Similar to Job's comforters, K.'s advisors completely uphold the justness of the Law and assume him to be guilty.

K.'s Uncle Karl is alarmed when he finds out that his nephew is involved in a criminal case. His first reaction is to shield the reputation of the family:

"Du warst bisher unsere Ehre, du darfst nicht unsere Schande werden. Deine Haltung gefällt mir nicht, so verhält sich kein unschuldig Angeklagter, der noch bei Kräften ist." (p. 82)
Once K. becomes the client of the Lawyer Huld, he finds it necessary to spend less
time at the bank and more time on his case. Huld passes on mounds of information, but
none of it gets K. any closer to the truth. It seems that the road to the Court leads down
many blind alleys and dead-end streets. The lawyer has a lot of advice, but it does not serve
any useful purpose. Concerning this legalistic entanglement, the narrator finally poses the
question: "War es Trost oder Verzweiflung, was der Advokat erreichen wollte?" (p. 107).

The painter Titorelli presents K. with only dismal hope. He tells him about the three
different ways to attain acquittal:

"Ich habe vergessen, Sie zunächst zu fragen, welche Art der
Befreiung Sie wünschen. Es gibt drei Möglichkeiten, nämlich
die wirkliche Freisprechung, die scheinbare Freisprechung und
die Verschleppung." (p. 131)

This categorization seems well thought out, but K. quickly learns that the information is
entirely esoteric and virtually useless. Titorelli goes on to explain each form of acquittal.
The most desirable path, of course, would be definite acquittal (wirkliche Freisprechung),
but no advocate can wield any influence on that form. Only the innocence of the accused
will determine a successful outcome in that case, and in all the years that the painter has
been at the Court, he has never witnessed a definite acquittal. This leads K. to conclude
that either all those who had been accused were indeed guilty, or that even the innocent
were unable to attain definite acquittal. How, then, can Joseph K., who has been arrested
under the Law that never errs, hope to attain definite acquittal? By and by, K. finds himself
living in the skin of Job as it were. He has not committed any crime, but the prevailing law
has found it necessary to arrest him. If, therefore, his innocence cannot be proven, a
definite acquittal is certainly out of the question. This leaves K. to consider the ostensible
acquittal (scheinbare Freisprechung) or the indefinite postponement (Verschleppung). Titorelli spells out the advantages and disadvantages of each approach. In conclusion, he says: "'Beide Methoden haben das Gemeinsame, daß sie eine Verurteilung des Angeklagten verhindern.'" K. swiftly adds: "'Sie verhindern aber auch die wirkliche Freisprechung'" (p. 139). Here, Titorelli has achieved the perfect creation of a dilemma—choose one way and you can be assured you will not be condemned, but in that case you cannot be acquitted; choose the other way and you cannot be acquitted, but then you can be assured you will not be condemned.

The priest in the cathedral, who may be compared to Elihu, presents K. with the most hopeless situation. In their discussion about K.'s welfare, which does not look well at all, the priest warns him of certain delusions that exist when confronting the Law. He recites the legend of the doorkeeper, who is the only one authorized to grant admittance to the Law. A man trying to enter the gate leading to the Law is not allowed to pass. He asks the doorkeeper if he might be allowed to pass at some time in the future. The doorkeeper replies with a maybe. The man decides to sit outside the gate and waits patiently—all of his years, in fact, until he is about to die. In his dying moments he inquires of the doorkeeper: "'Alle streben doch nach dem Gesetz, wie kommt es, daß in den vielen Jahren niemand außer mir Einlaß verlangt hat?'" The doorkeeper then shouts into the failing ears of the old man: "'Hier konnte niemand sonst Einlaß erhalten, denn dieser Eingang war nur für dich bestimmt. Ich gehe jetzt und schließe ihn.'" K. immediately identifies the problem that could very well be his own: "'Der Türhüter hat die erlösende Mitteilung erst dann gemacht, als sie dem Manne nicht mehr helfen konnte'" (p. 183).
A detailed exegesis of the parable follows, and the priest demonstrates that the parable allows for a wide variety of interpretations. These differing opinions only confuse K. all the more. He merely wants to get to know the Law, what it means, how it functions, and how he can best prepare for his trial. But the more he investigates, the less sure he feels about his actions.

Both Job and Joseph K. have advisors who operate with an idée fixe. They have definite conceptions of what constitutes correct procedure within the framework of the Law. Job's three friends emphasize his guilt, maintain foolishly a cause and effect relationship between wickedness and punishment, and are totally devoid of genuine pity for a man who undergoes such torment. K.'s contacts assume his guilt as well, and they exercise long dissertations and judicial maneuvers that are of little use. Their approach increases K.'s disquiet and uncertainty. They only prolong a sense of false hope, but solve nothing. Speaking of the counsel of the advisors for both men, Donald Kartiganer says they have "a common denominator of half-truth entangled in a web of misconceptions, double-talk, and delusions."34

Guilty or Not Guilty?

In the discussions which both men have with their contacts, the dialogues often assume the form of litigation. Job and Joseph K. have to come to terms with their predicament, and in doing so, they vigorously defend themselves. Both men deal with their guilt feelings on three different levels: first, they demand from their friends any evidence
that would support their accusations; second, they firmly and openly express their innocence; and third, they engage in some activity that might cloak their feelings of guilt.35

Job incorporates the first approach into many of his early speeches. He pleads his case and challenges his friends or God to prove him guilty: "Wieviel ist meiner Missetaten und Sünden? Laß mich wissen meine Übertretung und Sünde" (13:23). If there was any violation, then he wants it identified:

Meine Seele verdrießt mein Leben; ich will meiner Klage bei mir ihren Lauf lassen und reden in der Betrübnis meiner Seele und zu Gott sagen: Verdamme mich nicht; laß mich wissen, warum du mit mir haderst. (10:1-2)

Job is concerned about the rights as an individual who has been affected so drastically by the Law. At times, he intends to provoke God, so He might respond to his outcry:

Habe ich gesündigt, was tue ich dir damit, o du Menschenhüter? Warum machst du mich zum Ziel deiner Anläufe, daß ich mir selbst eine Last bin? (7:20)

Even if, perchance, Job did transgress somewhere along the way, God should be loving enough as to forgive the sinner and remove his suffering. Job asks God: "Und warum vergibst du mir meine Missetat nicht und nimmst nicht weg meine Sünde?" (7:21). All of these questions arise out of a sense of guilt. According to the Law (Leviticus 26 and Deuteronomy 28) and his unsympathetic friends, Job was struck by misfortune because he must have deserved it. But Job simply cannot recall any sinful act, hence, the anger directed at God and his comforters.

Joseph K. reacts similarly in his situation. From the very beginning he considers the arrest to be an outrageous and absurd act. He wants to know the nature of his offense.
When talking to the Inspector, K. tries to undermine the whole incident, because he has not done anything wrong:

"Anderseits aber... kann die Sache auch nicht viel Wichtigkeit haben. Ich folgere das daraus, daß ich angeklagt bin, aber nicht die geringste Schuld auffinden kann, wegen deren man mich anklagen könnte." (p. 15).

The Inspector does not comment on K.'s claim to innocence, but he corrects him on a certain misconception, and that is: K. is indeed under arrest, but no charges have been laid against him. In the evening K. visits Fräulein Bürstner, apologizes for the disarray of her room and recounts to her the unexpected event of the day. Then he curiously asks her: "Glauben Sie denn, daß ich schuldlos bin?" Moments later he comments on his own question: "Ja, aber die Untersuchungskommission kann doch eingesehen haben, daß ich unschuldig bin oder doch nicht so schuldig, wie angenommen wurde" (p. 27).

K. appears to be rather submissive in character. Job is quite forthright and complains continually. K. seems less sure of himself and complains very little. But when the occasion arises, like Job, K. counteraccuses the higher authorities. At his first interrogation, he chides the assembly of officials at the Court:

"Und der Sinn dieser großen Organisation, meine Herren? Er besteht darin, daß unschuldige Personen verhaftet werden und gegen sie ein sinnloses und meistens, wie in meinem Fall, ergebnisloses Verfahren eingeleitet wird." (p. 44)

For a second approach to overcome his guilt feelings, Job emphatically stresses his innocence and the confidence he has in himself. He says that he does not doubt the outcome of his trial: "Siehe, ich bin zum Rechtsstreit gerüstet; ich weiß, daß ich recht
behalten werde" (13:18). After each one of the three comforters has spoken his mind and has tried to discourage Job, he reaffirms his position:

Das sei feme von mir, daß ich euch recht gebe; bis daß mein Ende kommt, will ich nicht weichen von meiner Unschuld. Von meiner Gerechtigkeit, die ich habe, will ich nicht lassen; mein Gewissen beißt mich nicht meines ganzen Lebens halben. (27:5-6)

Joseph K., endowed with a contemplative mind, wants to avoid the very appearance of guilt. If ever his actions would give the impression that he has something to hide, others may read it as a signal of guilt. K. tries at all costs to take preventative measures so as not to project the slightest hint of guilt. This is his way of confirming his innocence. Speaking to his uncle, who has suggested that his nephew move out to the country with him for as long as the trial is still in progress, K. says:

"Nur den Landaufenthalt halte ich selbst in deinem Sinne nicht für vorteilhaft, denn das würde Flucht und Schuldbeuβtsein bedeuten." (p. 85)

After learning more about the complicated judicial system and trying to understand a few basic rules, K. concludes:

"Vor allem war es, wenn etwas erreicht werden sollte, notwendig, jeden Gedanken an eine mögliche Schuld von vornherein abzulehnen. Es gab keine Schuld." (p. 109)

K. pretends to be innocent. He suffers from feelings of guilt and paranoia and has to hide his insecurity behind a mask of self-assurance. On many occasions he imagines that others are watching or judging him. Consequently, he has to state and act out his innocence. To his major contacts like his uncle, the lawyer and the painter, K. makes his innocence known. When he talks about guilt to the priest, however, his claim of innocence virtually
brings out his guilt. The priest informs K. that his case does not look hopeful. The Court is under the impression that he is guilty. To this K. says:

"Ich bin aber nicht schuldig, es ist ein Irrtum. Wie kann denn ein Mensch überhaupt schuldig sein. Wir sind hier doch alle Menschen, einer wie der andere."

The priest promptly adds: "Das ist richtig, aber so pflegen die Schuldigen zu reden" (p. 180).

Job has nothing to lose, when he challenges so boldly and stands behind his innocence so firmly. He has already lost everything and does not need to impress anyone or hide anything. He simply cannot understand his stroke of misfortune and seeks an explanation from the powers that be. K., who has not yet been charged or tried, hopes to get an acquittal. He clings tenaciously to his innocence, because he still has everything to lose, should the verdict turn out to be guilty.

A third approach in dealing with guilt lies in a preoccupation that will diminish the sting of guilt. Job recalls his many acts of benevolence that he performed before ill fate struck him down. Within his heart he knows that he has not deviated from the path of righteousness. In fact, Job wishes that the Lord would set him a trial date:

Ach, daß ich wüßte, wie ich ihn [Gott] finden und zu seinem Stuhl kommen möchte
und das Recht vor ihm sollte vorlegen und den Mund voll Verantwortung fassen
und erfahren die Reden, die er mir antworten und vernehmen,
was er mir sagen würde. (23:3-5)

His record is a good one when he reminisces:
Er aber kennt meinen Weg wohl. Er versuche mich, so will ich erfunden werden wie das Gold.  
Denn ich setze meinen Fuß auf seine Bahn und halte seinen Weg und weiche nicht ab  
und trete nicht von dem Gebot seiner Lippen und bewahre die Reden seines Mundes mehr denn mein eigen Gesetz. (23:10-12)

He recalls how he assisted the poor and needy:

Denn ich errettete den Armen, der da schrie, und den Waisen, der keinen Helfer hatte.  
Der Segen des, der verderben sollte, kam über mich, und ich erfreute das Herz der Witwe.  
Gerechtigkeit war mein Kleid, das ich anzog wie einen Rock; und mein Recht war mein fürstlicher Hut.  
Ich war des Blinden Auge und des Lahmen Fuß.  
Ich war ein Vater der Armen; und die Sache des, den ich nicht kannte, die erforschte ich.  
Ich zerbrach die Backenzähne des Ungerechten und riß den Raub aus seinen Zähnen. (29:12-17)

Job's last speech before Elihu makes his entrance is a powerful discourse in defense of his faithfulness and integrity.

Joseph K. hardly reflects on a devout or benevolent past. He directs his energy towards the future and prepares as best he can for a contingent trial. He presumes that his confidence will grow stronger, the more time he spends on his case. K. sets out to seek connections within the system of the Court. Together with his Lawyer Huld and the painter Titorelli, he draws up plans of defence and contingency. Personally, K. thinks about presenting his case in detail in a defence paper:

Der Gedanke an den Prozeß verließ ihn nicht mehr. Öfters schon hatte er überlegt, ob es nicht gut wäre, eine Verteidigungsschrift auszuarbeiten und bei Gericht einzureichen. (p. 98)
For K., strategy becomes a means of overcoming guilt. He takes concrete steps to advance his case, and in turn, his involvement provides him with hope.

Both heroes, Job and Joseph K., are caught between innocence and guilt. They are innocent because to the best of their knowledge, they have not violated the Law. They are guilty because the Law has seen fit to punish them. K. does not know the great physical loss and pain that Job experiences, but he shares in the mental anguish and hopelessness that is created by the suspension of undefined guilt.

Guilty of Living

The great appeal of the Book of Job and Der Prozeß may lie in the fact that they present, albeit without a real solution, one of the most vexing problems of humanity—the universal sense of guilt. Is man by his very nature a guilty creature? Does his voice resound with an echo of guilt as long as he can speak? Is he condemned to live a life of guilt? Modern philosophers and theologians would answer in the affirmative.

If man is guilty, by what Law has he been found guilty? To whom does he answer? Who are the judges? Can man defend himself in a Court? Can he seek legal advice and assistance? How effective are the defence attorneys? Can the prosecutors be bribed? How does the Court arrive at the verdict? What is the Law? How does one interpret the Law? Can man be found guilty of a Law he does not understand? Who is the Lawgiver? And finally, what is the penalty for violating the Law? To a certain extent Job and Joseph K. take these questions personally. Life, as a process of seeking answers to these questions, especially in the face of calamity, may very well be regarded as a trial.
Neither Job nor Joseph K. is a lawbreaker, but both are afflicted with a painful condition—perpetual frustration. William Mueller perceives man to be in a similar state of guilt and frustration:

He [man] learns in time that persistent and painstaking as he may be, he is simply unable to make of himself a righteous man acceptable to God. If he refrains from murder and adultery, he probably fails to stifle his anger or to curb a wandering and lustful eye. And if he succeeds in eradicating his irascibility and his concupiscence, he probably finds it impossible not to covet. And if, as is most unlikely, he succeeds in avoiding covetousness as well, he falls to pride, a pride in his own success.... As one becomes aware of his losing battle to work his way to God, he must indeed fall into a terrible sense of frustration, knowing that his own best efforts lead him only along the dead-end path of an ever-contracting circle. 36

Job realizes all too clearly the station of a mortal like himself. He recognizes the omnipotence of God and knows that he could never win a legal fight against the Almighty. He says:

Ja, ich weiß gar wohl, daß es also ist und daß ein Mensch nicht recht behalten mag gegen Gott. Hat er Lust mit ihm zu hadern, so kann er ihm auf tausend nicht eins antworten. (9:2-3)

Then Job goes on to reflect upon the futility of ever questioning God, for in so doing, man would only condemn himself, even if innocent:

Will man Macht, so ist er zu mächtig; will man Recht, wer will mein Zeuge sein? Sage ich, daß ich gerecht bin, so verdammt er mich doch; bin ich unschuldig, so macht er mich doch zu Unrecht. (9:19-20)

Yet Job is participating in his own self-fulfilling prophecy—he constantly defends himself, which means he constantly defeats himself. At one point, Eliphaz paraphrases Job's
sentiments: "Dein Mund verdammt dich und nicht ich; deine Lippen zeugen wider dich" (15:6).

Joseph K. experiences similar feelings of frustration. His situation seems impossible; guilt always hides behind the appearance of innocence. When he solicits help from Titorelli, K. exclaims: "Ich bin vollständig unschuldig." The painter says: "Wenn Sie unschuldig sind, dann ist ja die Sache ganz einfach." K. disagrees:

"Meine Unschuld vereinfacht die Sache nicht . . . . Es kommt auf viele Feinheiten an, in denen sich das Gericht verliert. Zum Schluß aber zieht es von irgendwoher, wo ursprünglich gar nichts gewesen ist, eine große Schuld hervor." (p. 128)

He definitely believes that the Court will somehow find him guilty at the end. His face, his very lips pronounce his guilt. That is what the businessman Block says to K. He tells him how some people, by means of a superstitious belief, are able to predict the outcome of a given case. He explains:

"Ein solcher Aberglaube ist es zum Beispiel, daß viele aus dem Gesicht des Angeklagten, insbesondere aus der Zeichnung der Lippen, den Ausgang des Prozesses erkennen wollen. Diese Leute also haben behauptet, Sie würden, nach Ihren Lippen zu schließen, gewiß und bald verurteilt werden." (p. 150)

This is clearly a reference to the self-condemnation of anyone who tries to defend himself.

It seems, then, that Job and Joseph K., despite their innocence, are guilty of something. It is not a moral guilt, although there is much discussion about sin in the account of Job. It is not a legal guilt, although both narratives make extensive use of legal terminology. It is a human guilt—a feeling that imbues the human mind as long as it has the power to reason.
Kafka presents to the reader the human trial of life with the foregone conclusion that the verdict will be guilty. The writer of Job arrived at the same conclusion, when he asked the question: "Was ist ein Mensch, daß er sollte rein sein, und daß der sollte gerecht sein, der vom Weibe geboren ist?" (15:14).

In discussing the nature of guilt, Stephen A. Reid turns to both Job and Joseph K. and draws the following conclusion:

Job's persistent denial of guilt provides the only dramatically feasible means of exposing the nature of that guilt. It is in the process of the discourses with his friends—discourses occasioned by his denial of guilt—that Job reveals the source and substance of that guilt. Some twenty-five hundred years after the composition of The Book of Job, Franz Kafka employed the same method of revealing the guilt of Joseph K. in The Trial. Indeed, the similarity between the two works is startling.  

Joseph K., the Passive Fighter

Given the existential framework of hopelessness and despair, Joseph K. never makes an attempt to alter his misfortune. He is extremely diligent in trying to ascertain what his course in life is, but he is not willing to envision what his course in life could become. In this sense, Michael Schreiber sees K. as antithetical to Job:

Joseph K. verbindet sich zwar mit der Hiob-Position was die Radikalität des Fragens angeht, doch wird er zum Anti-Hiob, wo er Antwort sucht: er ist kein Ausharrender, kein Wartender, sondern will selbständig eingreifen.

K. is passive to the extent that he neither complains nor contends. But K., unlike Job, lacks the necessary faith and trust to take up the fight. Susman makes it a point to contrast Kafka's characters, like K., with Job:
Aber so groß hier das Leid und die Wirrsnis durch die Gottentfernung ist—Kafka klagt nicht. Es wird, anders als bei Hiob, nicht geklagt in seinen Werken. Die unerhörtesten Leiden, die schauerlichsten Schicksale werden erzählt, aber nirgends ertönt eine Klage. Dazu ist alles zu unentrinnbar, zu unabänderlich, und Gott würde ja die Klage gar nicht hören. Selbst bei der gräßlichen Hinrichtung am Schluß des Prozesses ertönt keine Klage. So muß es sein. Der Gerichtete weiß nicht warum, aber er ergibt sich der Notwendigkeit. Er weiß, daß sein Prozeß nicht bis zum Richter vordringen kann.\textsuperscript{39}

Although Job and Joseph K. respond differently to their predicaments, they see eye to eye with respect to their problem. Max Brod asserts the following:

\textit{In der gegen Gott erhobenen Frage und Anklage vereinen sich nun allerdings die beiden [die Haltung Kafkas und die Haltung Hiobs]. Es ist das Erlebnis der Inkommensurabilität, das beiden gemeinsam ist.}\textsuperscript{40}

God at least answers Job out of the whirlwind, but this divine appearance serves only to underline the insurmountable difference between human rights and divine rights. God lays out His creation before Job and for His final sampling of menagerie He displays the two beasts, Behemoth and Leviathan. None of His creations, however, be they wind and weather, flowers and trees, fish and fowl, or the monsters Behemoth and Leviathan, relates to the human condition of which Job has inquired. God and man make contact, but the gaping cleft between them remains. For Job, at least, God's presence and His presentation satisfy him enough, so as to bring sufficient meaning to his suffering and hence his existence in order to carry on. God, however, does not appear to K., who tries relentlessly to make contact with Him. Eventually, then, K. interprets the silence of God as a tacit condemnation of his life. He feels that he has no place, or at least no rights, within God's creation. According to Günther Anders:
Erkennt Hiob Gott schließlich deshalb an, weil dieser "Nilpferd und Krokodil" geschaffen habe—er aber nichts; so erkennt Kafka, mindestens K. an, daß seine eigene Machtlosigkeit ihn des Rechts beraubt, Rechte in Frage zu stellen.\textsuperscript{41}

The intention of both writers remains the same, that is, "Das Heteronome Gottes soll geschildert werden, das nicht mit Menschenmaß Meßbare."\textsuperscript{42} But in the final analysis, the following may be said: "Hiob beruhigt sich dabei, daß Gott und Mensch nicht auf gleiche Ebene zu bringen sind. Kafka beruhigt sich nicht."\textsuperscript{43}

Although Job and Joseph K. experience similar feelings of anguish, frustration and loneliness, they experience disparate endings. The High Judge finally appears to Job. It is true, He does not answer Job's questions concerning his suffering, but He does appear as the Creator of the Universe and makes clear to Job that he is a part of God's Creation. He also assures Job that his doubting and lamenting was justified, and He chides Job's friends for blindly defending the Law. Yet ties are strengthened between Job and his friends as he intercedes for them and in effect takes an active part in the community. Furthermore, Job is restored to health, his guilt feelings are lifted, double the portion of his possessions are restored to him and he fathers ten more children.

K. makes a conscientious effort to confront the court's Judge, but is unable to realize his goal. The Judge remains hidden, the system of the Court remains enigmatic and K. shudders at the yawning abyss before him. These divergent endings mark the major contrast between the two works. For Eugene Goodheart, the two authors present opposing viewpoints:
Nothing could be further from the vision of Job than Kafka’s despair. Though the human and divine spheres are indeed incommensurable in both Kafka and Job, the biblical work, indeed the whole of the Bible, conceives the two spheres as interpenetrable.44

One Problem, Two Solutions

Joseph K. was exiled and he remains in exile. He had found, in accordance with secular existentialism, that life is absurd, meaningless and in vain. He is honest and authentic in his assessment of existence, for he in no way creates illusions that might make his suffering more bearable. Job, too, was exiled, but through his isolation, he found his way back to God, to the community and to himself. His struggle propelled him to a new existence. He has found, in accordance with Christian existentialism, that life may at times be absurd, but that in the grand scheme of things, life has a purpose.

After his intense struggle, Ehrenberg’s Hiob is able to say: "Ich hatte von dir mit den Ohren gehört; aber nun hat mein Auge dich gesehen" (42:5). He has a revelation and he deems his revelation as valuable. Joseph K. cannot lay claim to any such phenomenon. Goodheart points to this disparity:

What a world of difference between Job and Kafka’s heroes, who hear only the silence of despair and see only the abyss of suffering and vacuity!45

Ehrenberg’s Hiob is an existentialist because on account of his struggle he manages to leave his pre-existence and therefore advances to true existence. Kafka’s K. is an existentialist because in spite of his struggle he finds no existence other than the earthly one and he accepts this reality in despair. The former is an existentialist because he has come out of
despair; the latter is an existentialist because he lives in despair. Ehrenberg's Hiob is victorious in his struggle because he, despite tumultuous events of modern times, retains his faith in an existential God and a meaningful universe. His struggle symbolizes a confrontation with a caring God. K. finally admits defeat in his struggle because of the fragmented world he lives in. He does not feel that he is part of a greater whole. He remains adrift in an absurd sea of life—without compass, without rudder, without anchor. He feels alienated and isolated and finally comes to recognize but still not comprehend the futility of life.

Friedman stresses that a Job-figure like K. is by no means the biblical Job but "an image of modern man as Exile, and, even more, he is an image of modern man as Problematic Rebel." Friedman praises heroes like K., for in a world of incertitude and insecurity, he takes it upon himself to struggle nonetheless:

K. is not Job—he has not Job's strength and Job's trust in existence—yet he too is not merely problematic. He is a Modern Job—someone who has taken into himself all the tension and the problematic and has shown at least a minimum stance that a man may assume through which he may preserve his own integrity and attempt, at the same time, to answer the wavering call with the uncertain calling. K. is significant for us precisely because he can neither be reduced to the average nor heightened to superman. Those who point a way for modern man which begins by leaving out his problematic offer not hope but despair. Those who settle into the problematic leave only an abyss of nihilism. Those who remain steadfast amid the confusion of the self and the perplexity of the call offer, if not a way forward, at least a holding point until such a way becomes visible.

Although Job and Joseph K. may be considered kindred spirits in their confrontation with anguish and guilt, it seems that their existence, separated by two and a half millenia,
has a vastly different meaning for each one. Job's universe is whole. Defiant as he may be, Job never doubts the existence nor the goodness of God. Because the reasons behind Job's afflictions remain unexplained to him, it may be said that his suffering seems no less acute or absurd than the suffering of modern man. But throughout his trial, Job's faith never falters. Di Lella argues that Job's ordeal

pointed even more insistently to a need for an honest, open, and mature faith in a transcendent and mysterious God—a faith that can live with ambiguity and unresolved religious dilemmas. Only with such a faith can believers of any age attain some degree of meaning for the Job-like absurdities that come their way. Absurdity cannot be avoided; meaninglessness can.48

Put simply, Job experiences a theophany because God clearly exists for him and he experiences a restoration because, for him, life has a purpose and he makes the commitment to live.

Ehrenberg interprets Job, then and now, as the existentialist who strives and struggles until he is reborn. He welcomes chaos because out of it comes order. He wrestles with God and in so doing comes alive as an authentic human being. He openly expresses his doubts but firmly holds onto his faith. He has the courage to look deep into the abyss, but then rises to new heights of awareness and enjoyment of life. For Ehrenberg, Job is an existentialist with a God and with a commitment to serve God. Feelings of futility, anguish and despair are necessary in the struggle to find one's place in existence. For a modern Job, as for the ancient Job, his trial is by faith, his ordeal is by fire—but at the end he will be victorious by better knowing himself, by better loving his fellow man, and by better serving and perhaps understanding God.
When Ehrenberg in 1952 wrote, "Die Welt ist Hiob-reif geworden," he responded to a shattered world in need of optimism. A postwar world was in the throes of recovery and deep wounds needed much balsam. His *Hiob, der Existentialist* was an attempt to provide such a healing agent. When Kafka before his death had Max Brod promise not to publish his works, he knew the world would be ill-equipped to handle his lack of optimism. Due to the domination of the National Socialists for a couple of decades after his posthumous publications, Kafka did not enjoy any success until after the Second World War. When Kafka was discovered in the 1950s, a work like *Der Prozeß* confirmed for many the belief in a meaningless existence.

In effect, then, the readership was offered two divergent solutions to the modern predicament about the same time. Ehrenberg created a Job-figure, a Christian existentialist, who learns to overcome adversity and lives. Kafka created a Job-figure, a secular existentialist, who succumbs to the trials of life and dies.
Notes


2Hans Ehrenberg, Hiob, der Existentialist (Heidelberg: Schneider, 1952), p. 5. Further references to this work appear in the text.

3Terrien, Job: Poet of Existence, p. 16.


5In his novel, Demian (1919), Hermann Hesse expresses a very similar idea about the progress of the individual. According to one of the characters in the novel, most people have not yet reached this higher level of awareness and may be regarded as creatures who are still in the early stages of the evolutionary process. Pistorius tells Sinclair: "Sie werden doch wohl nicht alle die Zweibeiner, die da auf der Straße laufen, für Menschen halten, bloß weil sie aufrecht gehen und ihre Jungen neun Monate tragen? Sie sehen doch, wie viele Ameisen, wie viele Bienen!" See Hermann Hesse, Demian. Die Geschichte von Emil Sinclairs Jugend (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974), p. 96. Within the framework of Jungian thought, Hesse here alludes to the process of individuation which, in so many words, is an inward struggle leading to the rebirth of the individual.


7Friedman, p. 21.


11 Friedman, pp. 13-14.

12 Di Lella, p. 53.


16 Friedman, p. 17.


18 Demnitz, p. 81.


20 Belgion, p. 132.
21 Maclean, p. 16.


23 See Max Brod, Verzweiflung und Erlösung im Werk Franz Kafkas (Frankfurt am Main, 1959).


27 See Rudolf Suter, Kafkas 'Prozess' im Lichte des 'Buches Hiob' (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1976).

28 See footnote 3 of Appendix A (especially Friedman, Mueller, Kartiganer and St. Leon).

29 Franz Kafka, Der Prozeß (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982), p. 7. Further references to this work appear in the text.


32 Slochower, p. 300.


Suter, p. 65.


Michael Schreiber, "Kafka und Hiob" in "Ihr sollt euch kein Bild - ..." Untersuchungen zur Denkform der negativen Theologie im Werk Franz Kafkas (Frankfurt am Main, Bern, New York: Peter Lang, 1986), p. 64.


Brod, Franz Kafka, p. 223.

Brod, Franz Kafka, p. 224.


Goodheart, p. 106.
46 Friedman, p. 403.

47 Friedman, p. 403.

48 Di Lella, p. 55.
CHAPTER VII

JOB, THE COWARD

Wieso ich noch lebe?
Unsicherer Gott
Dich Dir zu beweisen.

Ivan Goll

The works discussed to this point, whether they have reflected Job as patient and faithful or as impatient and rebellious, whether they have depicted God as accessible or inaccessible, all attempt to attach meaning to suffering. Even the works written in the 1930s suggest that a divine purpose lies behind the affliction of a Job-figure, however perverted that point of view may be. And an author, like Kafka, who throws serious doubts on a divine purpose, nevertheless has his protagonist search for an eventual plan or design, even if that search should not prove fruitful.

In more recent years, the Job-story has found favor not only with creative but also with analytical writers. Leszek Kolakowski and Fritz Zorn, for instance, have both made use of the legend of Job in order to support their particular philosophical argument.
The Lampooning of Job

Leszek Kolakowski (1927- ), a contemporary thinker from Poland, enjoys substantial praise and influence in both the East and the West. After losing his professorship at the University of Warsaw in 1966, Kolakowski taught at Yale University, McGill University and the University of California at Berkeley. Since 1970 he has been senior research fellow at All Souls College in Oxford, England.

His works have received much critical acclaim in Germany, where he received the "Friedenspreis des Deutschen Buchhandels" in 1977. His works, whether first published in Polish or in English, are quickly translated into German. Several of his books, which deal primarily with religious and philosophical ideas, were first published in German. Among them are the following: Der Mensch ohne Alternative—Von der Möglichkeit und Unmöglichkeit, Marxist zu sein (1960); Die Gegenwärtigkeit des Mythos (1973); and Leben trotz Geschichte (1977).

Kolakowski attempts to combine Existentialism and Marxism in his thinking. He acknowledges his debt to existentialist themes, such as "anguish, absurdity, authenticity, risk, commitment, the permanent possibility of tragedy." His philosophical concepts bear a relationship to contemporary German thought and his reaction to the Job-story is especially helpful to our study.

In his short philosophical essay entitled "Hiob, oder die Widersprüche der Tugend" (1965), Kolakowski exposes God as a ruler who indeed delights when His subjects praise Him for His goodness, but who only triumphs once people praise Him for His malfeasance,
such as allowing the innocent to suffer. The story of Job serves to illustrate the sly and sadistic God which Kolakowski envisions.

He sets up his argument by recounting the Prologue in Heaven. In the upper spheres of Heaven, Jehovah and Satan are sitting at a bar called COCOFLI, which stands for Co-existence - Cooperation - Friendship - Love - Identity. Jehovah is drinking mineral water while Satan is drinking cognac and blowing smoke rings. The Devil tells the barkeeper that he was just down on Earth. There he was assured of three more souls who, otherwise faithful individuals, were not able to endure their trials any more and chose to break the Commandments of God. Disturbed at his rival's success, Jehovah asks Satan if he has perchance come across Hiob. Satan replies: "'Hiob? ja, ich hab ihn gesehen. Ein braver Bursche, aber nicht sehr aufgeweckt.'" Jehovah, knowing full well that his servant Hiob is righteous in all ways, asks: "'Na, hat er wen umgebracht? Oder hat er vielleicht gelästert?'" (p. 53). Satan retorts:

"'Nein, dieser Hiob ist dein bester Diener, ein Muster an Frömmigkeit. Er zittert aus Furcht vor dir, und in unserem bescheidenen Büro hat er nicht einmal ein Konto. Er tut nichts Böses, denn er hat keinen Grund dazu: Es geht ihm ausgezeichnet, er verwaltet seinen riesigen Besitz und verbringt seine Tage bei absolut koscheren Gelagen. Warum sollte er lästern?'" (pp. 53-54)

As in other versions, Satan suggests that Hiob is only righteous on account of his well-being. He proceeds to infer that human nature is created is such a way, so that those who live in prosperity tend to be good and those who live under trying circumstances often turn to crime. Since mortal existence is laden with trials and tribulations, most people are driven to unrighteousness. The few obedient ones, then, are righteous either because they
are contented or they are righteous because they lack the courage to break the Law. Satan then leads up to the first wager saying:

"Außer wenigen Ausnahmen bestehen deine Leute also aus Feiglingen und Satten. Hiob ist satt, und ich zweifle nicht daran, daß er dir so lange treu bleibt, wie er satt ist. Nimm ihm den Wohlstand, und du bereicherst meine Register um eine Seele." (p. 55)

Jehovah gives his permission for Satan to try Hiob in all ways other than taking his life. Satan then takes full advantage of his licence to strike and proceeds to afflict Hiob with even more diseases than the biblical Job had to bear. In light of the cruelty demonstrated by Jehovah, the narrator ridicules Hiob for not rising up against God who is responsible for his undeserved and excessive suffering.

Der Teufel kehrte unverzüglich auf die Erde zurück und infizierte Hiob mit einer unangenehmen Hautkrankheit, auf die er noch eine Menge anderer Krankheiten folgen ließ, die nicht weniger unangenehm waren: Krankheiten des Darms, der Nieren, des Herzens, der Lungen, der Gelenke und des Rückenmarks. Schmerzgekrümmt lag Hiob auf den Trümmern seines Hauses und pries auch in Unglück und Verzweiflung weiterhin Gott. (p. 56)

Contrasted with Hiob's submission and servility, his wife appears quite sensible when she says:

"Das hast du nun von deinem Jehova, und du preisest ihn noch! Gleich wirst du sterben, und du weißt genau, daß alle Erzählungen von einer anderen Welt Märchen sind. Wenn es wirklich eine andere Welt gibt, so ist sie nicht besser als diese. Genug! Verfluche wenigstens deinen Gott, so viel du kannst!" (p. 56)

Hiob proudly presents his counter-argument:

Hiob's wife sees a contradiction in her husband's logic: "'Aber wenn Jehova, dem du Treue geschworen hast, sich als böse erweist, hilfst du mit deiner Treue zu ihm dem Bösen'" (p. 57). But in Hiob's eyes, loyalty ceases to be loyalty as soon as it becomes conditional. He maintains: "Ich bleibe nicht deswegen treu, um Gutes zu tun, sondern um treu zu bleiben. Das Mittel und das Ziel sind hier identisch" (p. 57).

Satan concedes the loss of his second wager, but he hastens to add that Jehovah's victory is entirely dubious. He makes three points that explain his position. First, Hiob's behavior was most irrational, since he remained stubbornly loyal to God his protector, even when He became God his tormentor. Second, Satan managed to win the soul of Hiob's wife, who readily blasphemed God. Third, he accuses God of breaking the conditions of their agreement, because He secretly helped to see Hiob through his crises with patience and virtue. They briefly argue about this point, not arriving at any conclusion. Jehovah claims victory over Hiob's soul and Satan acknowledges his loss in the matter. So ends the recounting of the Prologue in Heaven.

The narrator then lists seven morals that may be drawn from the Job-story. Most of them are trivial in nature, but a couple of them deserve mention here. Moral number four explains the title of the piece:
Die Treue ist eine Tugend mit innerem Widerspruch, denn wenn sie in der Hoffnung auf einen Vorteil praktiziert wird, hört sie auf, eine Tugend zu sein, und wenn sie um ihrer selbst willen betrieben wird, zwingt sie häufig zum Bösen, hört also auch auf, eine Tugend zu sein. (p. 61)

In moral number five Kolakowski states his form of theodicy as illustrated by the story of Job. Since God, specifically Jehovah, is good by definition, he reveals Himself only as the author of goodness and those who are recipients of this goodness, then praise God for His benevolence. But there is little merit in this, since God only triumphs genuinely when people praise Him for His injustices. Paradoxically, then, God only comes away victorious when He acts contrary to what He stands for. Kolakowski deems this an ingenious blueprint for God's creation. He states:

Um ihn [den Sieg] immer davonzutragen, muß er stets in der Rolle des Bösewichts auftreten, und den oberflächlich denkenden Menschen kommt es deswegen so vor, als ob Jehova die Welt sehr schlecht eingerichtet habe. In Wirklichkeit hat er sie klug eingerichtet, er vermehrt das Unglück der Menschen, denn er würde ja keinen moralischen Sieg davontragen, wenn die Menschen glücklich wären; der Teufel würde geringe Erfolge erzielen, aber Gott gar keine. Man sieht daher, daß Millionen durch das Tor der Hölle getrieben werden müssen, damit sich für einige wenige die Pforte zum Paradies öffnet. Das ist der Vorschlag einer neuen Theodizee, die mit der menschlichen Erfahrung besser übereinstimmt als die traditionelle. (p. 61)

Moral number seven suggests that Hiob assumed that his afflictions came from God. Had he thought otherwise, he would have sought a remedy for his ailments:

Wenn Hiob der Meinung gewesen wäre, daß sein Unglück das Werk des Teufels ist, so hätte er versucht, es zu bekämpfen, statt untätig dazusitzen. Er wäre zum Beispiel zu einem Hautarzt gegangen. (pp. 61-62)
Accordingly, then, both good and evil come from God. However, it is more convenient to attribute the bad consequences to evil sources and be passive than fight the evil in the world as an active participant.

Kolakowski's purpose is not to adapt the Job-story to modern circumstances, but to make a philosophical point. It is interesting, of course, that he makes his point by taking the character of Job and lampooning him. Kolakowski's Hiob ends up as someone with no redeeming qualities whatsoever. To begin with, his traditional righteousness is discredited because it exists as a result of a life of prosperity. His proverbial patience is turned from a virtue to a vice, since Hiob in effect aids and abets the evil by condoning the evil deed and praising its perpetrator. This makes him a coward, afraid to rise up against injustice.

The Despising of Job

About a decade later, a Swiss writer going by the pseudonym, Fritz Zorn, takes Kolakowski's anecdotal accusations out of the abstract and uses them as a personal attack against a cruel God. The thirty-two-year old teacher of Romance studies adopts the pen name "Zorn" and proceeds to write a bitter autobiographical essay entitled Mars (1977), having obvious reference to the Roman god of war. The anger and fury, already implied by the choice of pseudonym for the author and title for his work, originate from his personal crisis. Zorn is a terminally-ill cancer patient who lashes out at his parents, society and God for inflicting him with the disease. He traces his cancer to psychological depression which, according to Zorn, was inflicted upon him by a bourgeois society that upholds false ideals.
The young man's clash with these ideals brought on a case of neurosis which in turn resulted in cancer.

The author begins his work with a personal introduction:

Ich bin jung und reich und gebildet; und ich bin Unglücklich, neurotisch und allein. Ich stamme aus einer der allerbesten Familien des rechten Zürichseeufers, das man auch die Goldküste nennt. Ich bin Bürgerlich erzogen worden und mein ganzes Leben lang brav gewesen.²

Although this opening statement bears similarities to the opening verse of the Book of Job, Zorn at no time places himself in the skin of Job. Quite to the contrary, he disdains the pusillanimous patience for which Job is known:

Von allen Lastern darf man eines nicht haben: Geduld. Ich denke hier an den exemplarischsten Vertreter dieser Charaktereigenschaft, den alttestamentarischen Hiob. In seinem ganzen Elend kommt Hiob nicht auf die Idee, Stellung zu beziehen, sondern er küscht oder, wie es die Bibel ausdrückt: "Er versündigte sich nicht und redete nichts Törichtes wider Gott." (p. 166)

It is clear, however, that Zorn thinks of himself as an innocent victim, not unlike Job, but he despises how the Old Testament figure responds to suffering—at least in the Prologue. According to Zorn, "Hiobs Reaktion ist nicht nur feig, sie ist auch dumm" (p. 167). Job was a coward because he did not want to offend God, although in his case he had every right to offend Him. And Job was stupid because he accepted as consolation a reply from God that did not address his particular problem whatsoever. Zorn sees this brand of cowardice throughout society. For that reason, he wants to set himself apart from the rest as an anti-Job-figure:
Gerade dies aber, daß es eben so viele Hiobe gibt, ist für mich wieder eine Verpflichtung, es diesen Hioben meinerseits nicht gleichzutun, Hiobs Weib nachzufolgen und sterbend Gott zu fluchen. (p. 167)

Zorn compares himself to a stinging bee, which defends itself while dying. He directs his venomous sting towards God, sardonically acknowledging His tyrannical greatness:


But the angry author blames God for a lot more than his own disease. For instance, he finds God responsible for the atrocities committed by the Nazis:

Du hast die Gestapo, das KZ und die Folter erfunden; ich anerkenne also, daß du der Größte und der Stärkste bist. Der Name des Herrn sei gelobt. (p. 167)

Of course, we have seen precursors to Zorn in characters like Roth’s Mendel Singer who assumes God to be "ein großer grausamer Isprawnik," and in Henz’s Job who addresses God as "Du Ungeheuer." Some modern critics likewise have denounced the God of Job.

Ernst Bloch, a Marxist philosopher, writes:

Der Gott, von dem im Hiob die Rede ist: an seinen Früchten erkannt, mit so viel Gewalt und Größe herrschend und erdrückend, tritt nur als Pharao vom Himmel her entgegen, doch Hiob eben ist gerade fromm, indem er nicht glaubt.5

David Robertson, an Old Testament scholar, takes comfort in the notion that man is more kind and compassionate than his Creator:
We do not fear that which we feel beneath us in dignity; rather we scorn it. This is, as I see it, the strategy of the poet who wrote the book of Job. While God may be more powerful than we are, he is beneath us on scales that measure love, justice, and wisdom. So we know of him what we know of all tyrants, that while they may torture us and finally kill us, they cannot destroy our personal integrity. From this fact we take our comfort.  

As a terminal cancer patient, Zorn vividly experiences real suffering. His pain does not lie in the memories of a war gone by, but in the assurance of his budding life cut short. Contrary to Job, Zorn desires no dialogue with the community, he expresses no faith in a theophany, and he sees no hope in a restoration. For him, suffering does not lead to greater enlightenment or religious exhilaration, only to a feeling of anger and despair pointing towards death. Job the Religious has become Job the Irreligious. More than that, Job has become an anti-Job. In his preface to Mars, Adolf Muschg makes reference to the antithetic Job-motif that dominates the final chapters of the work:

Der Krebs erscheint hier nicht mehr bloß als Reflektor des eigenen Lebens, sondern als Waffe, als schwarze Magie, als bösertige Verdrehung des evangelischen Satzes, wonach das, was dem Ärmsten unter den Brüdern angetan wird, Ihm geschieht. Das Anti-Hiob-Motiv, die absolute Weigerung, sich mit dem Todes-Gott zu versöhnen, ist das vorwaltende Leitende der letzten beiden Kapitel. (p. 19)

For Job, the affliction turns out to be a means to a closer relationship between man and God; for Zorn, the affliction acts as a wedge that drives man and God ever further apart. The dying writer points to his affliction as evidence against a loving God; he uses his disease as a weapon to fight his divine enemy. Zorn's last sentence is his declaration of war against God. He writes: "Ich erkläre mich als im Zustand des totalen Krieges" (p. 225). This kind of animosity toward a biblical figure like Job could only happen in a secular age,
it seems, an age in which Scripture has been reduced to a myth, religion is viewed as an opiate, and God has been declared dead. The only thing that remains for the sufferer, even in the case of someone like Zorn, is the struggle and the will to survive.

All is bad that ends badly. But neither Zorn nor Kolakowski has done justice to the biblical Job. By attributing cowardice to the patient sufferer, they totally disregard the Job of the Dialogues. By dwelling on their interpretation of suffering, they have created their own "theodicy"—a very bleak one at that. Like many modern thinkers, Kolakowski and Zorn reject the Patient Job of the Prologue. However, where other writers choose to examine and work with the Impatient Job of the Dialogues, Zorn and Kolakowski react against the Patient Job and in effect create an anti-Job to the Job of the Prologue. They accept the Patient Job, but they satirize, ridicule and condemn him. They lambaste Job for timidly accepting the will of God and not rising up against Him. They are angry at a model which they deem foolish and faint-hearted. In effect, then, Kolakowski and Zorn become iconoclasts destroying the traditional Job who was praiseworthy for his piety, patience and long-suffering. Now his wife becomes a model on account of her anger and blasphemy. Job is the coward; Job's wife is the heroine.
Notes


3Fritz Zorn, Mars (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982), p. 25. Further references to this work appear in the text.

4In his postwar play, J.B., Archibald MacLeish too describes a God who is amoral and hence unloving. At the conclusion of the play, after having lost five children, J.B. says: "He [God] does not love. He is." The only consolation left to his wife Sarah and all of humanity is revealed in her response: "But we do. That's the wonder." See Archibald MacLeish, J.B. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1956), p. 152.


CONCLUSION

Throughout the past century the story of Job has been incorporated into a number of German novels and dramas. From the works discussed, it is evident that the figure of Job, as he has been transformed by modern authors, wears many faces. Depending on the perspective of the writer, the Job-figure may be a devout Christian (for Sacher-Masoch) or a disillusioned Jew (for Roth); a rich sheik (for Lauckner), an affluent farmer (for Henz) or a humble beggar (for Wiechert); a Nazi hero (for Eggers) or a gypsy lowlife (for Haerten); a Christian existentialist (for Ehrenberg) or a secular existentialist (for Kafka); a blind conformist (for Kolakowski) or a spineless coward (for Zorn).

Several patterns may be seen in the transformations of Job in German literature of the twentieth century. First, modern Job-figures tend to be ordinary rather than extraordinary men. Many are no longer endowed with the great wealth and wisdom possessed by the biblical Job. Instead, they are common men, farmers and workers, meeting the every day challenges of life. Second, mortal existence in and of itself is regarded as an affliction for modern man. There may be specific trials which exacerbate the struggle, but life's journey is laden with hardships from the cradle to the grave. Third, modern authors tend to ascribe to Job the rebellious features that dominate the Job of the Dialogues. The modern Job-figure does not systematically become more impatient with every re-worked
Job-story, but it is safe to say that the impatience of Job is as prevalent if not more so than
the patience of Job.

Sacher-Masoch went to great lengths to uphold the reputation of the Patient Job. Theofil Pisarenko loses his possessions, his family, his health and almost his own life, but he never questions the justice of God. His response to suffering, it could be said, rivals the patience of the Job of the Prologue. Sacher-Masoch achieves this end in part by utilizing and manipulating passages from the Book of Job. Theofil, for instance, not only speaks the words of Job, but he also speaks the words of Job's comforters. He therefore becomes a composite of the Patient Job and his orthodox friends, appearing more stout and steadfast even than the biblical Job. Sacher-Masoch virtually negates the Impatient Job by having Burlak, the alternate Job-figure, die on the gallows. Because of the faithful reflection of the Job-story, Theofil's transformation may be termed an imitation of Job. He is not really a new Job, as the title implies, but the old Job in a new setting.

By depicting Mendel Singer as a Wandering Jew, Roth intimates that the Jews as a whole may be regarded as a collective Job-figure. His novel reflects how Mendel is torn between the Old and the New World and is unable to feel comfortable in either. He bears his afflictions well and remains patient and passive until he loses his family. Then he becomes an Impatient, if not Indignant Job, as he plans to burn God. By decidedly reacting against the injustice which he perceives, Mendel finds new inner strength, but no peace of mind. Roth accommodates the Epilogue of Job by restoring Menuchim's health and reuniting father and son, but the ending rather resembles a dream world than a real world of fulfillment.
During the Third Reich, authors moulded Job into a character with a political message. Both Wiechert and Eggers chose to depict a Job-figure who represents the German nation. Wiechert portrays Job as the prodigal son who turns away from God. His afflictions as a result of the First World War are just deserts for his pride and arrogance. He is a guilty Job, whose suffering does not diminish until he acknowledges his mistakes of the past. Wiechert emphasizes the humiliation of Job. The Job-figure which Eggers concocts also suffers as a result of the First World War, but as a victim and not a villain. The trials which he endures demonstrate his superior qualities and in the end lead to the defeat of Satan. Job therefore saves the whole world, even the entire Universe! Eggers emphasizes the glorification of Job, but since all of his hyperboles are meant in earnest, his Job-figure must be regarded as a mere puppet of a Nazi propaganda play. Haerten changes Job from a righteous to an unruly figure. In this case, however, Job does not represent the Germans, but the gypsies—and by extension, all non-Aryans. He is uncouth and unlawful for no other reason than being a gypsy. This finally leads him to destroy his own property and kill his own children. Therefore, his suffering is deserved and his death is desirable. Haerten emphasizes the malevolence of Job and in doing so has produced a monstrous work justifying, even encouraging, the Nazi ideology of racism.

Lauckner and Henz portray a Job who suffers from the wounds of the Second World War. This is not readily evident in the case of Lauckner, whose Job after all lives in Old Testament times. However, the afflictions described in the work suggest the massive destruction of postwar Germany. When, after a number of trials, Hiob loses his last child, he questions the justice of God. His rebellion takes the form of contemplation which finally
leads him to enlightenment. He recognizes the mystery of existence and accepts suffering as an inexplicable part of God's plan. Lauckner abandons the fairy-tale ending by not immediately restoring to Hiob his possessions and family. But optimism prevails in the final scene, when Hiob and his maid together agree to rebuild their lives. The alternate Job-figure, the utterly miserable Zadok, is the foreboding of a Job turned askew. He is an admonition of what Job might become if he were to give up on God. In the course of two World Wars, Henz's Job has lost everything twice. He also states implicitly that besides losing his property, his family and his health, he has lost his ideals. He continues to work hard and once again manages to gain riches. His greatest trial comes when his only son, Karl, rejects his material world and leaves home. He lives with the paradox that the prosperity he has acquired through ardor and diligence should in the end become a curse for him. What was a restoration for Job in biblical times becomes a downfall for Job in postwar Germany. By making Job's son the Elihu-figure, Henz adds a new variation to the Job-story. The most miserable comforter is his own flesh and blood—the one who understands him the least and antagonizes him the most.

Ehrenberg and Kafka portray their Job-figure as modern man in search of God and meaning of life. As the eternal spirit of Job, Ehrenberg's Hiob has the advantage of quoting himself and explaining his own words and actions from the Old Testament story. He proclaims an existential God and emphasizes that an agonizing struggle is necessary before one can know God. Struggle here means experiencing doubt and despair, but this will eventually lead to a stronger faith and a deeper commitment to God and humanity. The work in effect is a dramatic exegesis of Job. Kafka's Joseph K. bears the anguish of modern
man. His very "trust in existence is at stake," as he feverishly searches for God and the Law. It appears, however, that the narrator continually overrides him, making him look absurd as he is trying to find meaning in a meaningless world. Kafka’s K. is a new Job in a new setting—the secular world of the twentieth century. His afflictions are the dread of uncertainty and meaninglessness and his only resolution lies in death.

For Kolakowski and Zorn, it is a given fact that existence has no divine purpose. In such a world, any effort to find value and meaning in suffering is senseless as well. But while lampooning and condemning Job for patiently bowing to an essentially cruel God, both writers vilify Job’s God, who appears unwilling to allay the suffering of mankind. Since both writers personify a spirit of rebellion, it is ironic that they do not acknowledge the Impatient Job of the Dialogues but only the Patient Job of the Prologue.

In a paradoxical way, it is now the prose story of a Job’s piety which fails to sustain the interest of modern man and thus drives him to ignore the poem of Job’s impiety. Yet it is precisely the poem of Job’s impiety which is pertinent to modern man’s predicament.²

The complexity of the entire Job-story serves neither Kolakowski nor Zorn in his particular presentment. Consequently, they have not transformed, neither imitated nor adapted the figure of Job; they have merely selected those facets of the Job-story which support their respective arguments.

The Book of Job continues to serve as a paradigm for innocent suffering, but also as an inexhaustible source for addressing the human condition in general. The assessment which Hausen makes of Job in modern French literature also holds true for Job in modern German literature, and that is:
Hiob, früher Vorbild dann Vergleich, wird zum Prototyp menschlichen Lebens überhaupt und gibt Anstöße für das Denken über Einsamkeit, Krankheit, Leid, Tod, Glück, Gerechtigkeit, Freundschaft und Glaube. Er regt uns an, unser Verhältnis zu Gott und den Mitmenschen neu zu reflektieren.³

The transformations which Job has undergone in modern German literature vary from the sublime to the blasphemous, a diversity not found in works previous to the twentieth century. This diversity speaks to some degree for the liberal mind of modern German writers, but especially for the adaptability of Job—an ancient yet modern work which continues to generate new variations on an old theme.
Notes

1Friedman, Problematic Rebel, p. 486.


BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hattwig, Jörg. Das dritte Reich im Werk Ernst Wiecherts. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1984.


APPENDIX A

The following is a list of German narrative and dramatic works of the twentieth century that in some way reflect the biblical myth of Job. Included are those works which bear the name "Job" or "Hiob" in the title and also those works which have been described by one critic or another as reflecting at least in part the Job-story or Job-theme. The list does not include expository works, such as translations, interpretations, commentaries or essays relating to the Book of Job. The footnotes after given works draw attention to the secondary literature discussing the Job-motif as it pertains to that work.

1. Polgar, Alfred. Hiob (1912), [novella].
2. Kokoschka, Oskar. Hiob (1917), [drama].
3. Britting, Georg. "Der verlachte Hiob" (1922), [short story].
4. Fontana, Oskar Maurus. Hiob der Verschwender (1925), [comedy].
5. Kafka, Franz. Der Prozeß (1925), [novel].
8. Welti, Albert Jakob. Hiob der Sieger (1928), [drama].
16. Wiechert, Ernst. Das Spiel vom deutschen Bettelmann (1932), [drama].
17. Eggers, Kurt. Das Spiel von Job dem Deutschen (1933), [drama].
18. Friedländer, Salomo (pseudonym: Mynona). Der lachende Hiob (1935), [grotesque].
22. Mann, Thomas. Joseph und seine Brüder (1943), [novel, tetralogy].
23. Borchert, Wolfgang. Draußen vor der Tür (1946), [radio play].
24. Weinrich, Franz Johannes. Das Gastmahl des Job (1948), [mystery play].
25. Schaeffer, Albrecht. Enak oder das Auge Gottes (1948), [narrative].
26. Lauckner, Rolf. Hiob (1949), [drama].
27. Fehrbrügge, Michael. "Die Geige des Hiob" (1950), [fairy-tale].
29. Mönnich, Horst. Hiob im Moor (1953), [radio play].
31. Dürrenmatt, Friedrich. Der Besuch der alten Dame (1955) [tragicomedy].
Notes

1At times, of course, it is difficult to ascertain whether an author has made use of the Job-story or not. This may especially be the case whenever specific reference to Job is lacking in either the text or the title of the work. Concerning the reader's problem of recognizing an applied myth in general, John J. White puts forth the following notion: "Some [readers] will find overtones of mythology in all novels [or dramas]; others will want to ignore such reverberations, even in works where they are worthy of consideration. Admittedly, it is not always possible to make a clear-cut distinction between allusions forming an integral part of a novel [or drama] and fortuitous analogies that occur to certain readers." See John J. White, Mythology in the Modern Novel. A Study of Prefigurative Techniques (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1971), p. 63. Undoubtedly, this does not exhaust the works that reflect the Job-story, but it is more complete and accurate than any list in other motif studies: Compare with Elisabeth Frenzel, Stoffe der Weltliteratur (Stuttgart: Kröner, 1962), pp. 278-79; Heinz-Jörg Ahnert, Deutsches Titelbuch 2. Ein Hilfsmittel zum Nachweis von Verfassern deutscher Literaturwerke 1915-1965 mit Nachträgen und Berichtigungen zum Deutschen Titelbuch 1 für die Zeit von 1900 bis 1914 (Berlin: Haude & Spener, 1966), p. 210; Karl Heinz Glutsch, "Die Gestalt Hiobs in der deutschen Literatur des Mittelalters," Diss. Karlsruhe 1971, Appendix, pp. xxiii-xxv; Wilhelm Bortenschlager, Deutsche Literaturgeschichte 2. Von 1945 bis zur Gegenwart (Wien: Leitner, 1986), p. 670; and Horst & Ingrid Daemmrich, Themes & Motifs in Western Literature. A Handbook (Tübingen: Francke, 1987), pp. 154-55.


5See Pöthe, pp. 27-29.

6See Pöthe, pp. 42-47.

8 See Pöthe, pp. 34-42.


11 See Pöthe, pp. 32-34.

12 See Maclean, pp. 18-19.

13 See Pöthe, pp. 26-27.


15 See Maclean, pp. 19-20.

16 In an afterword to his work, Schaeffer states: "Meine Erzählung ist, wie der Leser gesehen hat, auf einem einzigen Motiv aufgebaut, nämlich dem Motiv eines umgekehrten Hiob, wie es sich nennen läßt: der Ungerechte, der sich selbst zugrunde richtet, indem er fordert, worauf er nicht den geringsten Anspruch hat, und dem Gott für seinen Frevel an ihm selbst dadurch vergilt, daß er ihm dies zu Unrecht Beanspruchte gibt."


APPENDIX B

Sacher-Masoch makes extensive use of the Old Testament text of the Book of Job. The following list of quotations allows an overview of the passages used and to what extent they have been altered. The left-hand column lists, in order from beginning to end, those passages which Sacher-Masoch has adapted from the Book of Job. The right-hand column lists the source passages from the Book of Job.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Der neue Hiob (Sacher-Masoch)</th>
<th>Hiob (Old Testament)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pisarenko: Fasse dich, der Herr hat's gegeben, der Herr hat's genommen, der Name des Herrn sei gelobt! (p. 160)</td>
<td>Bildad: denn wir sind von gestern her und wissen nichts; unser Leben ist ein Schatten auf Erden. (8:9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pisarenko: O! warum bin ich nicht todt zur Welt gekommen oder lieber gar nicht geboren worden! (p. 306)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Pisarenko’s wife:
Wie lange wirst du noch festhalten an Gott? du wirst sterben und ihn segnen! (p. 312)

Pisarenko:
Du redest, wie eben Weiber reden, haben wir Gutes empfangen von Gott und sollen das Böse nicht annehmen? (p. 312)

Pisarenko:
Ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt, und er wird mich hernach aus der Erde auferwecken. (p. 313)

Pisarenko:
Der Mensch wird zum Unglück geboren. (p. 313)

Job’s wife:
Hältst du noch fest an deiner Frömmigkeit? Ja, sage Gott ab, und stirb! (2:9)

Job:
Du redest, wie die närrischen Weiber reden. Haben wir Gutes empfangen von Gott und sollten das Böse nicht auch annehmen? (2:10)

Job:
Aber ich weiß, daß mein Erlöser lebt; und er wird mich hernach aus der Erde aufwecken. (19:25)

Eliphaz:
sondern der Mensch wird zu Unglück geboren, wie die Vögel schweben, emporzufliegen. (5:7)

Jahweh:
(summary of God’s first speech) (38-39)

Priest:

Pisarenko:
Ich erwartete das Gute und es kommt Böses, ich hoffte auf Licht und es kommt Finsterniß. (p. 314)

Job:
Ich wartete des Guten, und es kommt das Böse; ich hoffte auf Licht, und es kommt Finsternis. (30:26)
Unufry Jaschtschor:  
Ja, so ergeht es dem Menschen, aber Keiner wird für Nichts gestraft. (p. 315)

Bilak:  
Hast du etwa den Armen bedrängt, dem Hungrigen dein Brod und dem Miiden dein Dach versagt, Geld auf Zinsen geliehen, wie ein Jude, oder schreit Jemandens Blut wider dich? (p. 315)

Pisarenko:  
Ja, ja, ihr seid die Wahren! mit euch wird die Weisheit sterben. (p. 315)

Pisarenko:  
Fragt die Thiere des Waldes und die Vögel in der Luft und die Fische, die im Wasser leben, oder redet mit der Erde. Auch die Sterne sind bereit, euch Antwort zu geben. Ist in dieser Welt Etwas, was Gott nicht gemacht hat, und sollte der Mensch allein sich sein Schicksal bereiten? (pp. 315-16)

Pisarenko:  
Wie Kann ein Mensch gerechter sein als Gott? Wie Kann ein Mensch gerecht sein vor Gott und rein der vom Weibe Geborene? (p. 316)

Eliphaz:  
Gedenke doch, wo ist ein Unschuldiger umgekommen? (4:7)

Eliphaz:  
Du hast etwa deinem Bruder ein Pfand genommen ohne Ursache; du hast den Nackten die Kleider ausgezogen; du hast die Müden nicht getränkt mit Wasser und hast dem Hungrigen dein Brot versagt. (22:6-7)

Job:  
Ja, ihr seid die Leute, mit euch wird die Weisheit sterben! (12:2)

Job:  
Frage doch das Vieh, das wird dich's lehren, und die Vögel unter dem Himmel, die werden dir's sagen; oder rede mit der Erde, die wird dich's lehren, und die Fische im Meer werden dir's erzählen. Wer erkennte nicht an dem allem, daß des Herrn Hand solches gemacht hat? (12:7-9)

Eliphaz:  
Wie kann ein Mensch gerecht sein vor Gott? oder ein Mann rein sein vor dem, der ihn gemacht hat? (4:17)
Pisarenko:
Der Mond leuchtet nicht und die Sterne sind noch nicht rein vor seinen Augen, wie viel weniger der Mensch, welcher der Verwesung anheimfällt und des Menschen Sohn, der Wurm! (p. 316)

Bildad:
Siehe, auch der Mond scheint nicht helle, und die Sterne sind nicht rein vor seinen Augen: Wieviel weniger ein Mensch, die Made, und ein Menschenkind, der Wurm! (25:5-6)

Pisarenko:
Du plagst dich vom Morgen bis zum Abend und kannst es doch Gott nicht recht machen. (p. 317)

Eliphaz:
Es währt von Morgen bis an den Abend, so werden sie zerschlagen. (4:20)

Pisarenko:
Muß der Mensch nicht immer kämpfen auf Erden? Seine Tage sind wie die eines Taglöhners, wie ein Knecht sich sehnt nach dem Schatten und ein Taglöhner, daß seine Arbeit aus sei. (p. 317)

Job:
Muß nicht der Mensch immer im Streit sein auf Erden und sind seine Tage nicht wie eines Tagelöhners? Wie ein Knecht sich sehnt nach dem Schatten und ein Tagelöhner, daß seine Arbeit aus sei. (7:1-2)

Pisarenko:
O, Herr! willst du wider ein fliegend Blatt so ernst sein und einen dürren Halm verfolgen? (p. 319)

Job:
Willst du wider ein fliegend Blatt so ernst sein und einen dürren Halm verfolgen? (13:25)