

The Trickster Paradox in Yiddish Set Expressions of Jews of the Republic of Moldova as Elaboration of Phenomenological Theodicy (the Aspect of Noetic Intention in Actualizing/Safeguarding ICH)¹

CZU: 811.112.28'373.7(478)

<https://doi.org/10.52603/rec.2026.39.14>

Rezumat

Paradoxul tricksterului în expresiile idiș ale evreilor din Republica Moldova ca elaborare a teodiceei fenomenologice (aspectul intenției noetice în actualizarea/salvgardarea PCI)

Articolul analizează două expresii idiș (ambele de natură paradoxal-comică) în contextul unei a treia expresii: „Tu fă, iar Eu te voi ajuta”, pe care o numim „dialogică”. Or, ea există ca o replică de încurajare și de încredere din partea lui Dumnezeu, care îl invită pe om la acțiuni armonizatoare comune. Articolul reprezintă una dintre experiențele de realizarea intenției noetice în actualizarea/ salvgardarea expresiilor idiș ca PCI, prin identificarea sensurilor lor existențiale. În acest scop este introdus un set de noțiuni elaborate în cadrul sistemului noetic de concepții dezvoltat de noi, inclusiv noțiunea de teodicee fenomenologică. Așa cum am relevat, atunci când recurge la oricare dintre cele două expresii (care îndeplinesc totodată funcția unor formule apotropaice), omul realizează implicit un act noetic special, paradoxal-comic, pe care l-am numit „paradoxul tricksterului”. Acesta se întemeiază pe un model particular de comportament – modelul tricksteric-noetic – care realizează fenomenologic o armonizare eticizantă a Universului, prin eforturile conjugate ale lui Dumnezeu și ale omului. Totodată – ca etapă intermediară necesară – se realizează și o teodicee fenomenologică.

Cuvintele-cheie: expresii idiș, evreii, Republica Moldova, „paradoxul tricksterului”, teodicee fenomenologică

Резюме

Парадокс трикстера в идишских устойчивых выражениях евреев Республики Молдова как проработка феноменологической теодицеи (аспект ноэтической интенции в актуализации/ охране НКН)

В статье рассматриваются два идишских устойчивых выражения (оба являются парадоксально-смеховыми) в контексте третьего: «Ты делай, а Я тебе помогу», обозначенного нами как «диалогическое». Известно, что оно существует в качестве доверительной и ободряющей реплики Бога, который приглашает человека к совместным гармонизирующим действиям. Данная статья – один из опытов осуществления ноэтической интенции в актуализации/охране идишских устойчивых выражений как НКН (через выявление их экзистенциальных смыслов). Для этого

вводится ряд понятий (в рамках ноэтической системы концепций), феноменологическая теодицея в том числе. Как было выявлено, применяя любое из этих двух устойчивых выражений (они выполняют также функцию закланий-оберегов), человек имплицитно осуществляет особый парадоксально-смеховой ноэтический акт, обозначенный нами как «парадокс трикстера». Он базируется на особой – трикстерски-ноэтической – модели поведения, которая феноменологически осуществляет этизирующую гармонизацию Универсума совместными усилиями Бога и человека. А заодно – в качестве необходимого промежуточного этапа – осуществляется еще и феноменологическая теодицея.

Ключевые слова: идишские фразеологизмы, евреи, Республика Молдова, «парадокс трикстера», феноменологическая теодицея

Summary

The Trickster Paradox in Yiddish Set Expressions of Jews of the Republic of Moldova as Elaboration of Phenomenological Theodicy (the Aspect of Noetic Intention in Actualizing/Safeguarding ICH)

The article examines two Yiddish set expressions (both of which are paradoxically risorial) in the context of the third one, “Do it, and I will help you,” which we define as a “dialogical” one. In fact, it exists as a confiding and encouraging remark from God inviting man to take some shared harmonizing activities. This article is one of the experiences of fulfilling noetic intention in actualizing/safeguarding Yiddish set expressions as ICH (by means of revealing their existential meanings). For this purpose, we have introduced a number of notions (within the framework of the noetic system of concepts developed by us), including phenomenological theodicy. As we have revealed, by using any of these two set expressions (which can also function as spells and protective charms), man implicitly performs a special paradoxically risorial noetic act defined by us as the “trickster paradox.” It is based on a particular – trickster noetic – behavioral pattern which phenomenologically practices ethicizing harmonization of the Universe by joint efforts of God and man. At the same time, phenomenological theodicy also takes place as a necessary intermediate stage.

Key words: Yiddish set expressions, Jews, Republic of Moldova, “trickster paradox,” phenomenological theodicy

Introduction

The article¹ examines two paradoxically risorial Yiddish set expressions (sayings) in the context of a specific Yiddish saying, “Do it, and I will help you” (“Di tiy un Ikh ver dir helfn”). We have defined this saying as a “dialogical” one, based on Martin Buber’s philosophy of dialogue (in particular, his book titled *I and Thou*), where “I and Thou” implies that existence is a “dialogue” between man and various “Thous”, including God.

In fact, this dialogical saying exists specifically as a confiding and encouraging remark from God who paternally invites man to take part in joint harmonizing activities. At the same time, each of the two above-mentioned paradoxically risorial set expressions is addressed to God in a trickster-like manner and phenomenologically is a distinctive response to His invitation.

The system of notions/terms used in this article (including “trickster” and “phenomenological theodicy”) is a component of the noetic system of concepts² developed by us and is explained below. Following V. Frankl and C. Geertz, we use the term “noetic” to describe the “spiritual” in the anthropological sense instead of the theological one.

This article is based on the concept of the *Catalog of Yiddish Set Expressions of Jews of the Republic of Moldova* (Cușnir 2024) which is being developed by us. This concept has the following specific features.

1. It is based upon Clifford Geertz’s idea of noetic experience and upon the noetic system of concepts.
2. One of the fundamental goals of the *Catalog* is safeguarding/actualizing Yiddish set expressions of Jews of the RM as intangible cultural heritage (ICH).

On the Trickster Noetic Behavioral Pattern as a Possibility

The paradoxically risorial Yiddish sayings examined here, as we shall demonstrate below, have an unexpected common feature.

Let us specify it: by using any of them, man implicitly practices a special paradoxically risorial noetic act (defined by us as the “trickster paradox”) based on a particular behavioral pattern which is also rather unexpected.

In fact, this behavioral pattern implements nothing less than ethicizing harmonization of the Universe by joint efforts of God and man. This activity occurs phenomenologically (i.e., at the level of profound experiences/sensations/meanings/intuitions, which often happens unconsciously). In addition, phenomenological theodicy is also implemented as

a necessary intermediate stage.

This behavioral pattern was developed by Yiddish folk consciousness as an implicit trickster cathartic response by action to the following question.

“What can still be done in a situation where there is nothing to be done?”

We have defined it as a trickster noetic behavioral pattern and will explain it in more detail below.

The notion of “phenomenological theodicy” is also characterized in more detail below.

As to the interpretations of such notions as “phenomenal consciousness” and “phenomenological” (within the noetic system of concepts), we believe it is necessary to provide them here.

“Phenomenal consciousness” is a term borrowed by us from analytic philosophy, where the interpretations of this concept are known to vary.

In particular, the following should be distinguished:

- 1) “a ‘thick’ view” based on the fact that “the phenomenal structure of experience is richly intentional and involves not only sensory ideas and qualities but complex representations of time, space, cause, body, self, world and the organized structure of lived reality in all its conceptual and nonconceptual forms” (Van Gulick);
- 2) “a so called ‘thin’ view according to which phenomenal properties are limited to qualia representing basic sensory properties, such as colors, shapes, tones and feels” (Van Gulick).

Our interpretation is based upon the following assumption by such a renowned specialist in phenomenology and philosophy of consciousness as David Woodruff Smith: “the domain of phenomenology – our own experience – spreads out from conscious experience into semi-conscious and even unconscious mental activity, along with relevant background conditions implicitly invoked in our experience” (Smith).

In other words, our interpretation is based on the fact that the notion of “subjective experience” includes unconscious foundations of subjective experience.

Accordingly (within the noetic system of concepts), phenomenal consciousness is understood as the entire psychic sphere associated with subjectivity.

In other words, by the term “phenomenal consciousness” we designate a sphere of the psychic that contains subjective experience in its entire conceivable fullness (including its unconscious foundations); in particular, that subjective experience which can be defined via Thomas Nagel’s famous “what it is like” formulation³, namely: “what it is like” to be a subject with first-person privileged access to one’s own subjective experience.

By the term “phenomenological”, we designate:

- 1) everything that really exists in phenomenal consciousness – even if often unaware – at the level of various structures of subjective experience (experiences, sensations, meanings, intuitions, their conscious/non-conscious/unconscious aspects/foundations, etc.);
- 2) that which pertains to phenomenological methodology and its toolkit, employed in the study of subjective experience across various disciplines.

To conclude, we would like to note that the trickster noetic pattern of behavior was discovered by us unexpectedly while we were interpreting the above-mentioned sayings when drafting the Catalog. It has become obvious that both of these sayings “activate” this pattern rather successfully when used by actors. Up to date, we have found only two Yiddish set expressions which demonstrate this property; probably no other similar expressions exist. However, we have identified the evidence of ancient origin of this behavioral pattern. It can be demonstrated that there is a profound phenomenological unity of the “trickster paradox” and the biblical story of Job – in the interpretation identified by us (Кушнir 2017: 181-183), where God gives back to Job his children alive. Still, such a research is beyond the scope of this article.

Noetic Intention in Actualizing/Safeguarding Existentially Significant Spoken Varieties of ICH: An Aspect of the Ethnological Noetic Approach

The particularities of interpreting Yiddish sayings in the Catalog mentioned above are determined by a specific intention in actualizing/safeguarding ICH which is defined by us as “noetic”.

It should be kept in mind that “it follows from UNESCO’s experience that the essential idea of safeguarding ICH implies its multifaceted and consistent actualization, while its specificity is largely determined by the particularities of ICH” (Cușnir 2024: 121).

Moreover, existential significance is often one of the most evident features of spoken varieties of ICH (Cușnir 2024).

Noetic intention in actualizing/safeguarding ICH is focused exactly on revealing, comprehending, and, as a result, providing multi-aspect assistance in perceiving and efficiently and creatively applying the profound existential meanings of particular ICH for a larger audience.

In other words, this is one of the forms of intention which, according to C. Geertz, encourages researchers to focus on comprehending “varieties of noetic experience,” i.e., “to get at the curve of some-

one else’s experience and convey at least something of it to those whose own bends quite differently” (Geertz 1983: 156).

The examined noetic intention is implemented by means of applying the ethnological noetic approach.

We shall use the term “ethnological noetic approach” to describe a noetic approach whose object is a variety of a particular ethnic group’s ICH, considering that the noetic approach to any object naturally incorporates K. Jaspers’ idea of the essential unity of mankind. A unity whose source as defined by Jaspers is “human essence as a unity of the highest rank” (Яснер 1991: 255)⁴.

We define the noetic approach as “purposefully oriented towards achieving such existential relevance that is hermeneutically and phenomenologically described by the following paradox-and-laughter maxim by J. Ortega y Gasset:

“Everyone who claims to be a thinker must say at least something one cannot live without” (Cușnir 2024: 122).

Therefore, the ethnological noetic approach is a special case of the noetic approach when a particular ICH of a specific ethnic group is its object. Hence, this approach has been certainly used previously, even before acquiring a terminological name. A number of its different varieties also exist. J. G. Herder’s approach to folk songs of various nations can be regarded as one of its earliest examples. Martin Buber’s approach to Hasidic lore should also be mentioned as one of the most prominent varieties of the ethnological noetic approach practiced in Jewish studies.

Consequently, M. Buber’s intention which motivated him to be guided by this approach could be regarded as one of the examples of noetic intention in actualizing ICH.

Phenomenological Theodicy: Its Specific Traits (Intuitiveness, Simplicity, Cathartic, “Holographic”, and “Extra-Legal” Nature); Its Basis (Noetic Presentiment); Specific Traits of Trickster Phenomenological Theodicy

The concept of “phenomenological theodicy” is introduced by us to denote a rather particular phenomenon which is not limited by ethnic or religious boundaries and could be identified phenomenologically.

In particular, a special kind of theodicy, the one which exists at the level of experiences, sensations, meanings, and intuitions, often without being consciously recognized, but which can also be transferred to the level of consciousness, is classified as “phenomenological”.

It should be kept in mind that theodicy (“justification of God”) is an interpretation of reality which allows answering the following question:

“If God does exist and is good and omnipotent, why is there evil/death in the world?”

As one can demonstrate, there are phenomenological variations of answers to this question in addition to the intellectual and philosophical ones; moreover, phenomenological insights serve as a basis for a number of philosophical maxims implicitly or explicitly related to this topic range.

In other words, man’s phenomenal consciousness uses the opportunity for phenomenological elaboration of theodicy/its components (even in an unconscious manner).

The worldview existing phenomenologically and constituting phenomenological theodicy has been identified by us (using specific examples, including the Yiddish sayings quotes below) and can be described as follows.

God is eager to and has the power to abolish evil/death and transform the existing reality into the true one; however, such an accomplishment takes time, and having assistants is desirable; man is such an assistant (if he desires to act in such a way); man’s assistance is provided (in particular) by means of any movements of his soul which are directed toward this goal, directly or indirectly, consciously or unconsciously.

The definition corresponding to this description is the following.

Phenomenological theodicy is an intuitive/phenomenological concept of God and man as a unified “team” in charge of cathartic and gradual transformation of the world into the state of true reality (a sort of “paradise during the lifetime”, which is eternal, where everything, including the individual essence, is preserved, yet death/evil is absent).

Let us list several definitions associated with this term.

“True reality – for mythological consciousness – is what our essence phenomenologically requires: infinity of life, love, creativity, creation, as well as abolition of death and evil in general (of eternal separation from the loved ones, betrayal, physical and mental torments, etc.)” (Кушнир 2024: 74).

Mythological consciousness is one of the most valuable components of phenomenal consciousness: everything existentially significant in the depths of the unconscious/extramental/intuition, as well as everything in the verbalized part of consciousness which is conditioned by it⁵.

“The essence is what man feels as the foundation of his individuality and the Universe – a basis which

exists as a sort of hidden infinity, a positive ‘subtle reality’ (felt as love, creativeness, freedom, etc.)” (Cușnir 2022: 68-69).

The implicit concept which prompted I. Kant to formulate the following twin categorical imperative can serve as an example of phenomenological theodicy (regardless of the way the author himself sees its genesis).

“<...> act as if the maxim of your action were to become by your will a universal law of nature” (Kant 1997: 31);

“So act that you use humanity, whether in your own person or in the person of any other, always at the same time as an end, never merely as a means” (Kant 1997: 38).

Therefore, proceeding from what Kant says, “man – by means of his ordinary behavioral practice – not only is able to, but should set the ‘universal law of nature’ which is supposed to be as ethical as possible; moreover, ethics protects man. <...> Hence, Kant’s categorical imperative actually (phenomenologically) postulates creativity as a way of transforming reality by means of ethical/noetic choice, and it should be kept in mind that the essential level of this harmonizing transformation is not limited by any factors at all. (Let us define this implicit postulate as the ‘noetics of Kant’s categorical imperative’)” (Кушнир 2024: 76).

An even more obvious example of phenomenological theodicy is the phenomenological notion which prompted N. Berdyaev to formulate his philosophical concept, according to which true reality “is not merely another world, but is this transformed world” (Бердяев 1995: 161).

However, such a transformation which bears salvation for everything (of course, with the exception of death and evil as such) requires man’s creative and purposeful initiative/participation: “God is craving for another person and a friend of his own, he is yearning for him, waiting to hear his response to his call to divine life, to divine completeness, to joint participation in God’s creativity which defies non-existence” (Бердяев 1931: 29). “God expects a creative act from man as man’s response to God’s creative act” (Бердяев 1990: 195).

A rather significant variety of phenomenological theodicy is the one which can be described as “trickster phenomenological theodicy”. It is precisely the one which is actualized while using the aforementioned Yiddish sayings. It will be demonstrated below that it is characterized by the following specific traits:

a) it is implemented in a paradoxical, roguish, trickster-like way;

b) it represents a phenomenological instrument for transforming reality into the true one by joint efforts of God and man.

We shall use the following interpretation of the notion of “trickster” which coherently correlates with the essence of the above-mentioned concept of phenomenological theodicy.

A trickster, also referred to as a beneficent trickster, is (for archetypal structures of mythological consciousness⁶) a being who accomplishes “purposeful blessings typologically close to universal salvation, but under the guise of trickery (theft, stupidity, clowning, deception, etc.)” (Cușnir 2019: 42).

Let us provide a variant of this notion: a trickster is a junior deity who acts in a similar way with the assistance of a senior deity⁷.

Therefore, emergence of phenomenological theodicy is not limited by any ethnic or religious boundaries and is not typical of popular consciousness only.

Phenomenological theodicy (including its trickster type) has a number of properties which philosophical theodicy may not possess. Their list includes simplicity, intuitiveness, cathartic, “holographic”, and “extra-legal” nature.

Considering the issue of theodicy in a philosophical manner is naturally focused primarily on its “legal” aspect: “Is God to blame for the existence of evil/death in the world? Or does their existence result from some circumstances beyond God’s control? Or is this question beyond human jurisdiction (at least due to human limitations)?”

The questions formulated in this way naturally imply complexity of argumentation, preferences for logical reasoning over intuition, and the lack of cathartic aspects.

As to mythological consciousness in its intuitive conceptualizing form, it is not necessarily interested in the “legal” aspect of the problem while considering phenomenological theodicy. It proceeds from an intuitive sensation: everything will be well (where the word “well” is a phenomenological synonym to the term “true reality”), and it is somehow ensured by the structure of reality itself. Therefore, one should realize how to act (implicitly/secretly based on this same sensation) even in a situation where acting is impossible.

The holographic nature of mythological consciousness results from the fact that such a worldview may exist in fragments, not in its entirety. However, since mythological consciousness is “aware” (though implicitly) of its entirety, even its fragment causes catharsis. For mythological consciousness, catharsis is a phenomenological criterion of truth, its verification.

Moreover, we have merely provided a brief, “condensed” phenomenological description of this intuitive sensation that “everything will be well”.

We refer to it as “noetic presentiment”. It is paradoxical and conforms to the following pattern in its full form.

1. This (true reality where everything except death/evil can be found) will exist.
2. I make my contribution to this / I have an intention toward this / I am glad to assist God (the Being) so that this exists.
3. This already exists (in a certain sense).

Phenomenological theodicy is apparently one of the specifications of noetic presentiment by the conceptualizing mythological consciousness.

In fact, empirically observed reality, for the most part, does not demonstrate that abolition of death/evil can somehow be reached “by itself” or due to man’s efforts alone. Since such a transformation of the world should take part, according to the testimony of noetic presentiment, consequently, there is a certain Being who acts as its guarantor. Only individual essence is able to set such a goal: after all, only it can be characterized by both the ability to set goals and kindness (which is required for this sort of goal-setting). And only omnipotence (of at least one of those who has set the goal) can guarantee reaching such a goal.

It results in phenomenologically shaping what could be defined as a “phenomenological proof of the existence of God”. After all, the Being who possesses such attributes as personality, goodness, and omnipotence is one of the most widespread ideas of God.

Two interrelated questions could be asked in connection with noetic presentiment.

1. Why does noetic premonition actually exist?
2. Does it lie to its possessor or tell the truth?

In our opinion, the problem range underlying this set of questions is a scientific problem which is ontologically similar to the hard problem of consciousness⁸ (which has been the epicenter of analytical philosophy for several recent decades) and is also insoluble within the framework of physicalism. However, examining this aspect is beyond the scope of this article.

Phenomenological Theodicy: Comprehending It on the Basis of Yiddish Sayings in the Aspect of the “Trickster Paradox”

We will demonstrate that using the Yiddish set expressions under consideration actually accomplishes such a significant (though often implicit) noetic act as implicit elaboration of the phenome-

nological image of an omniscient and loving God / phenomenological theodicy.

Let us explain it: "A noetic act is an act of intuitive ethicizing harmonization of the Universe by the mythological consciousness of the actor, moreover, an act that: (1) is carried out very purposefully (although usually at the level of the unconscious or only partially realized), (2) is phenomenologically oriented both to the local goal and to the transformation of the Universe into the state of true reality" (Cușnir 2024: 123).

It becomes clear due to this definition why paradoxically risorial sayings which are not only formulated as spells and protective charms and actually are them can also elaborate phenomenological theodicy and phenomenologically practice ethicizing harmonization of the Universe oriented towards transforming it into true reality.

Let us examine the first of these sayings.

1. *A sheyne reyne kapure*

Literal translation: "A beautiful pure sacrifice".

Initial external situation: losing a certain thing valuable and significant to its owner.

In other words, a very obvious destruction has taken place, and it cannot be repaired. Even a broken cup could have been precious as a memory or by itself. That is, evil has committed a sort of "attack" and achieved a victory which is quite absolute in a certain (though in a very limited) sense.

But this is exactly the state of things that cannot be allowed, as man intuitively senses. Something should be done in order to make this very victory of evil result in its absolute abolition, i.e. in transforming the world into true reality. Recalling the above-mentioned saying and resorting to it, man changes the self-perception which could be described as low spirits with elements of inner chaos to an entirely different mood. It should be mentioned that this change happens intuitively, but due to a very purposeful volitional impulse.

This is self-perception of a beneficent trickster phenomenologically restored by the actor within himself due to noetic experience actualized by this saying.

When using this saying, the trickster formally pretends that the thing has been destroyed / taken away from him not due to the circumstances, but because he has destroyed it / refused from it himself, i.e., sacrificed it. The implication is: "let this item serve as a ransom for..."

This is where the most interesting stage starts. The actor definitely mentally considers what good he would like to bring into existence and what evil he would like to avert. Usually, the actor's "cloud of

wishes" is phenomenologically quite close to the intuitive formula saying, "Let everything be well!" Such a formula describes nothing less than true reality, and the actor's intuition is "aware" of that, even if he has never thought of anything like that.

In other words, the act of using this saying turns out to be noetic.

But what happens here is not limited to this. In fact, as we know, the actor did not intend to cause any destruction, and it was actually not a sacrifice. It turns out that the actor is obviously lying, as if trying to deceive someone – and it is not hard to see Whom. Only the omnipotent higher powers, i.e., God could be the addressee of this request to make "everything well".

Thus, for some reason, the actor resorts to lying in relation to the omnipotent God, which seems meaningless: in fact, God is omniscient! Moreover, the trickster lies not only about their intentions/actions related to destroying the thing in question. He also pretends to think that this destruction is pleasing to God. It turns out that he considers God to be evil: a God who craves for destruction and enjoys it.

Still, if the actor believed God was evil, he would never have provoked His omnipotence with such an obvious and silly lie.

It turns out that the actor merely acts in a trickster manner. He knows, at least phenomenologically, that God is not only omnibenevolent, but is also glad to join the paradoxical risorial game initiated by the trickster and aimed at transforming the world into true reality. It should be kept in mind that laughter is the most ancient instrument of mythological consciousness for harmonizing the Universe, in particular, for abolishing death (Cușnir 2019; Кушнir 2017: 22-31, 45-51). Moreover, the trickster knows (at the same intuitive level) that God loves him infinitely – in fact, the trickster loves his near and dear ones this way, and for God, all people are near and dear ones.

The trickster is also aware of another idea: inviting God to harmonizing actions (prayer, any volitional impulse for good purposes) is also assistance to God, even though it is metaphysical.

Therefore, in spite of all its paradoxically risorial nature, the trickster's behavior in using such a saying as "A sheyne reyne kapure" is quite explainable.

As to phenomenological theodicy, it is crucial for implementing/living this noetic act and turns out to be a trickster tool for transforming the world into true reality by joint efforts of God and man.

Let us now examine the second saying where God is present quite clearly as the addressee of the utterance. The way the actor addresses Him is very

revealing. In Yiddish, the word “Gotenyu” is a familiar and affectionate form of addressing God.

2. *Gotenyu, shrek mikh, nor shtruf mikh nisht*

Literal translation: “Dear God, scare me, but do not punish me”.

Initial external situation: a person escapes a misfortune that he had reasons to believe had already occurred.

For example, he had reasons to suppose that a misfortune had befallen someone close to him, or that his material survival was threatened. Or perhaps he simply had a bad dream he perceived as an undeniable reality. In other words, it has become clear that the triumph of evil was actually a mere illusion, and that good is the reality.

Initial internal state: joy; happy uplifted mood accompanied by a subtle sensation that nothing bad could have actually taken place, and that only good could be real.

A person gets a phenomenologically sensed impulse to successfully implement risorial “consolidation” of this result, or its risorial “transfer” into a universal law, in other words, an intention to transform reality into the true one. It is accompanied by a phenomenological sensation that the higher powers (God) share the same desire, and this impulse can assist them in reaching it.

Moreover, a suitable “tool” – the ability to apply the above-mentioned saying – is available.

As a result, the actor who resorts to this saying (which additionally implements phenomenological theodicy) practices the same trickster “deception” concerning his ideas of God as when uttering the saying about a “beautiful pure sacrifice”. In fact, an idea of God who has a habit of cruelly punishing humans for minor breaches even the most ethical person cannot avoid is the concept of an evil God.

The fact that the trickster does not think of God this way is demonstrated not only by the gentle, trustful word “Gotenyu”, but also by the trickster’s apparently exorbitant request itself. The only way to ensure that nothing bad ever happens to the actor is actually to transform reality into the true one. Such a request can only be addressed to an omnibenevolent God who is truly perceived as a beloved and loving Father.

Even the trickster’s invitation to the actor – to scare him by cruel punishment – does not contradict such perception of God in this saying. In fact, the thing that might seem man’s concession to God’s evil inclinations is merely an element of a risorial game.

Proceeding from the above, we would like to formulate a definition of the phenomenon denoted by us as the “trickster paradox”. It also defines a num-

ber of meanings which are components of phenomenological theodicy.

We shall define the trickster paradox as a paradoxically risorial act which is:

1) possible only in the process of some degree of implementation of phenomenological theodicy (in the phenomenal consciousness of the actor, and, as a rule, of his audience);

2) filled with courage and confidence in God one needs to possess to adhere to phenomenological theodicy, regardless of the fact that evil does exist in the world, and chances of becoming its victim are real;

3) a phenomenological and roguishly formulated “invitation” to God to transform reality into the true one by joint efforts of God and man;

4) accompanied by catharsis which is phenomenologically, though implicitly, perceived by the actor and his audience as evidence of emergence of such a transformation;

5) implemented under the guise of purposeful pursuit of one’s own interests; in fact, this aspect which is extremely significant for the actor is also (rightfully) present – and shapes catharsis in many ways;

6) practiced under the guise of “deceiving” God; in particular, the trickster pretends to believe that God is evil, despite the fact that God is omniscient, and there is no use deceiving Him; therefore, this feigned deception is nothing more than an invitation to join a risorial game addressed to the being who is known to be kind and loving, and who obviously understands the speaker instantly. God (according to the trickster) will immediately realize that this is a risorial game and understand the higher purpose it is offered for.

It turns out (based on our examination of both sayings) that the trickster actor, whether in low spirits or in the state of spiritual uplift, applies the same behavioral pattern: actualizing/elaborating phenomenological theodicy and inviting God in a paradoxical roguish way to cooperate for transforming the world into the true reality.

Hence, the trickster exists in a heroic manner. In other words, this is a pattern of existence where ethics is the cornerstone. And this is a common pattern of existence enshrined in tradition at the level of sayings.

Therefore, the examined sayings “transmit” to man a pattern of the noetic act we refer to as the trickster paradox. In particular, an actor who implicitly elaborates phenomenological theodicy finds a paradoxical noetic opportunity to do everything in his power in order to transform reality into the true one. At the same time, his personal situation is also being harmonized.

It should be mentioned that this study can be regarded as an experience of implementing noetic intention in actualizing/safeguarding Yiddish set expressions (by revealing their existential meanings).

Notes

¹ The article was written while developing the Research subprogram: 170101 *Cercetarea și valorificarea patrimoniului cultural construit, etnografic, arheologic și artistic din Republica Moldova în contextul integrării europene*.

² For details on the noetic system of concepts, see, e.g.: (Cușnir 2022), (Кушнир 2024).

³ For details on Th. Nagel's "what it is like," see: (Van Gulick).

⁴ From here on, the translation in quotations is ours.

⁵ The term "mythological consciousness" is commonly used to denote the component of consciousness due to which man has been historically conceptualizing reality. This definition is based upon a number of ideas by many prominent myth researchers, including J.-J. Wunenburger, C. Hübner, and C. G. Jung.

⁶ The interpretation of the archetypal structure known as the "trickster" within the noetic system of concepts differs from the one developed by C. G. Jung.

⁷ Such as Hermes and Zeus in the Homeric Hymns III to Hermes and in Th. Mann's Joseph tetralogy (Кушнир 2017: 67-69).

⁸ On the hard problem of consciousness see, e.g.: (Van Gulick).

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Received 31.03.2026

Accepted 16.06.2026

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