

# Man Within Metaphors



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## INTRODUCTION

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**T**en years have passed since the death of Józef Tischner, during which time a lot has been said about his concept of man. His philosophizing on human matters is well examined, and it seems that all the crucial stages of this thought have been identified. Such attempts have been made by Barbara Skarga, Adam Węgrzecki, Karol Tarnowski, Tadeusz Gadacz, Aleksander Bobko, Adam Workowski, and many others. There is no point in repeating these remarks, or in following the same paths. However, it is worth mentioning the major points, to see what aspects of Józef Tischner's philosophy have yet to be unravelled.

Józef Tischner consistently used the notion of “the philosophy of man” instead of “philosophical anthropology,” which had been adopted in the phenomenological tradition from which he

26 descended. This was conspicuous in the name of the department<sup>1</sup> he ran at the Pontifical Academy of Theology,<sup>2</sup> in the name of the subject he lectured on,<sup>3</sup> as well as the titles of the textbooks he prepared for his students.<sup>4</sup> What are the differences between the philosophy of man and anthropology? Tischner was aware of how phenomenology understands the tasks of anthropology. His works do not confirm his interest in questions concerning man's place in the universe, especially in terms of the search for the essence of man, which would consist in looking for a set of characteristics that make human beings stand out from the world of animals. It does not mean, however, that the question of man's essence encompassed in the classical question, "Who is a man?" was unfamiliar to Tischner. Certainly, these differences led Tischner to use the term "the philosophy of man," carefully observing man as he faces various fields of reality. Thus, it may be said that "man in the world" is at the heart of his philosophy. Man who faces values, who faces another human being, and who ultimately faces God. These three issues determined Tischner's reflections. One might propose a hypothesis — though proving it would require a separate study — that Józef Tischner took a relational stand in his philosophy of man: his way toward understanding man consisted in illuminating the various relationships in which man gets involved. These relationships are extremely important in establishing who man is. At the same time, for Tischner himself they constituted an attempt to move beyond the substantialist vision of man and people he had often criticized.<sup>5</sup>

Scholars of Tischner's thought generally divide his philosophy into periods.<sup>6</sup> It is assumed that three<sup>7</sup> can be distinguished, differing from one another in terms of the scope of his thought's inspiration and his methods. Of course, these differences have significance for his understanding of man and his world.

The first period was marked by the strong influence of phenomenology in the tradition of Roman Ingarden's thinking. It is conspicuous both

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<sup>1</sup> T. Gadacz, A. Michalik, W. Skoczny (eds.), "Wydział Filozofii Papieskiej Akademii Teologicznej (prezentacja)" [The Philosophy Department of the Papal Theological Academy (a presentation)], *Logos i Ethos* 1/1991, p. 167.

<sup>2</sup> This academic institution emerged from the theology faculty of Jagiellonian University. Nowadays called The Pontifical University of John Paul II, it is located in Krakow, Poland, and is under the supervision of the Vatican (Translator's note).

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>4</sup> J. Tischner, *Wybrane problemy filozofii człowieka* [Selected Issues in the Philosophy of Man], Krakow 1985, and: J. Tischner, "Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów" [The Philosophy of Man for Priests and Artists], in: J. Tischner, *Myślenie w żywiole piękna* [Thinking in the Realm of Beauty], Krakow 2004, pp. 139–336.

<sup>5</sup> J. Tischner, "Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów," *op. cit.*, p. 163f., and: J. Tischner, *Wybrane problemy filozofii człowieka*, *op. cit.*, p. 8f, and: J. Tischner, "Człowiek przez okna systemu" [Man through the Window of the System], in: J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, Krakow 1993, p. 353f.

<sup>6</sup> A. Bobko, "Poszukiwanie prawdy o człowieku" [In Search of the Truth of Man], *Znak* 3(550)2001, pp. 56–70.

<sup>7</sup> J. Tischner, "Wstęp. Józefa Tischnera myślenie o człowieku" [Introduction. Józef Tischner's Thought on Man], in: J. Tischner, *O człowieku. Wybór pism filozoficznych* [On Man: A Selection of Philosophical Writings], Wrocław–Warsaw–Krakow 2003, p. XVIIIf.

in the subject matter it explored — subjectivity, values, axiology — and in its attempt to build a concept of the axiological-I, as well as in its linguistic form. Its technical language filled with phenomenological jargon in no way resembles Tischner's language from the eighties or the nineties. Texts from this period were published in *Świat ludzkiej nadziei* [The World of Human Hope],<sup>8</sup> and partially in *Myślenie według wartości* [Thinking in Values].<sup>9</sup> Yet, his thinking is most fully visible in his post-doctoral thesis, entitled *Fenomenologia świadomości egotycznej* [The Phenomenology of Egoistic Consciousness].<sup>10</sup>

The second period involves Tischner's marked turn toward the philosophy of dialogue. At this point he was strongly inspired by the work of Emmanuel Lévinas and Franz Rosenzweig. For Tischner, such notions as the encounter, the other, and the Face became key. This period is marked by *Filozofia dramatu* [The Philosophy of Drama],<sup>11</sup> where both his way of speaking about man and the language itself changed. Tischner presented various forms of human drama, and wanted to describe man in his relationships with others through a new web of concepts/metaphors.

Finally, Tischner's third period of thinking about man, initiated by *Spór o istnienie człowieka* [The Controversy over the Existence of Man],<sup>12</sup> displays the growing influence of religious thinking. To the language of his philosophy of man Józef Tischner introduces concepts taken straight from theology: mercy and salvation. Good becomes the central category, whereas the previous axiological horizon, from the first period, is replaced by the agathological horizon. This period is, perhaps, the most mysterious. The author of *The Controversy...* takes up issues which he never managed to complete, due to his illness and untimely death. Thus, what is visible is only an outline of the profound turnabout in his thinking, his thoughts on man inclusive.

One can argue whether or not these three periods are separated by revolutions in Tischner's thinking, or if the transition between them is fluid. Undoubtedly, each of these changes places his thinking on man in a slightly different perspective. However, something else is worth pointing out. Apart from the evolution in content, there is another evolution which has been frequently given less attention. A comparison between the earlier works — written more or less before 1978 — and the later ones shows an explicit transformation of style. The early Tischner was full of the precise language of phenomenology, culminating in his post-doctoral thesis. Later this somewhat rigorous language relaxes, as Tischner often employs the language of metaphor and symbol, which is when the key notions — so significant in the philosophy of the late Tischner — of the Face, drama, the encounter, and the promise begin to appear in his

<sup>8</sup> J. Tischner, *Świat ludzkiej nadziei*, Krakow 1975.

<sup>9</sup> J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, Krakow 1993.

<sup>10</sup> J. Tischner, "Fenomenologia świadomości egotycznej," in: J. Tischner, *Studia z filozofii świadomości* [Studies in the Philosophy of Consciousness], Krakow 2006, pp. 131–418.

<sup>11</sup> J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu. Wprowadzenie*, Krakow 1998.

<sup>12</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, Krakow 1998.

28 works. These notions are stylistically a far cry from phenomenological phraseology.

Tischner scholars generally explain this transformation in a straightforward way: Tischner had become better at using language; Tischner needed freer notions to describe the experiences he was dealing with, experiences that verged on philosophy, his work as a priest, and journalism; Tischner was suffocated by the straitjacket of phenomenological jargon. All these explanations ascribe an intentional, but not a particularly special place to the new language.

Does this all just concern stylistic changes, or does the metaphorical quality of language point to a more serious issue?

Around 1980 Tischner announced three texts which may be read as his individual philosophical manifesto. Having written the works for his academic degree, Tischner, a fifty-year-old thinker, attempted to ask himself what his mode of thinking was and would be like. In the introduction to *Thinking in Values* he tried to debate his own philosophizing, while avoiding identification with any “-ism.” These three texts included in the above-mentioned collection are “Thinking in Values,”<sup>13</sup> “Myślenie religijne” [Religious Thinking],<sup>14</sup> and the article that interests us most here: “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory” [Thinking from Within a Metaphor].<sup>15</sup> These three types of “thinking” attempt to describe Tischner’s philosophical self-understanding at the time.

The text “Thinking from Within a Metaphor” attempts to investigate the place of the metaphor in philosophical thought. There are several interesting tropes which will be developed in Tischner’s later texts. They show that this mode of philosophizing was not an ornament; it arose from convictions of a metaphysical nature. Since a great deal has already been written about Józef Tischner’s philosophy of man, there is no point in repeating these well-known theses. Thus, instead of inquiring into the WHAT of this reflection on man, we ought to pose a question regarding the HOW.

How does Tischner consider man, what words and structures does he use in his reflections? What can be the significance of these ambiguous metaphors, which seduce some with their beauty, and irritate others with their imprecision? This paper will focus on one issue: Józef Tischner’s perspective on man.

## Within Metaphors

When we look at the use of metaphors in terms of linguistic expression, the natural opposition to this way of describing the world is literalism. Therefore, the metaphor is juxtaposed with the concept. The concept is

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<sup>13</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie według wartości,” in: J. Tischner, *Myślenie według wartości*, op. cit., pp. 506–523.

<sup>14</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie religijne,” in: *ibid.*, pp. 357–382.

<sup>15</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: *ibid.*, pp. 490–505.

precise, unambiguous, and has a great deal of clarity; the metaphor, on the other hand, is ambiguous and unclear. According to Tischner, this juxtaposition corresponds with a deeper tension which is metaphysical in nature.<sup>16</sup>

As such, the use of metaphors is juxtaposed with facticity. Facticity — a structure of the world assumed by a natural attitude or from a common-sense examination — can be expressed with a simple phrase: things are what they seem to be, the world is as we experience it. The world is an accumulation of facts and as such, it is the ultimate reality. It explains itself, it needs no external “extra-worldly” explanations.

The approach to reality changes radically when man tells himself that things might not be what they seem. The most explicit example of this kind of problematization appears in Plato’s work, in the cave parable: the world is only a shadow of the world, and things are shadows of the true reality.<sup>17</sup> Therefore, only a sense of an equivocality and an accompanying sense of a lack of ultimacy found in the facticity of worldliness prompts the use of metaphors. Metaphorization is an attempt to adequately describe a mystery encountered in the world. If facticity is questioned, then the concept is undermined as well, along with its clarity and transparency. Since what we see is only an appearance, a reflection, if it is not reality itself, then other means are necessary to describe it. And here the metaphor comes into play. The use of metaphors in language only reflects a use of metaphors of the world on a metaphysical level. Just as showing the structure of the metaphor on the linguistic level and its relation to the concept (the literal meaning) may be easy, difficulties emerge in showing metaphoricality on a metaphysical level.

Let us consider one example. In analyzing the symbolism of evil, Paul Ricoeur considers the following situation.<sup>18</sup> There is a literal meaning of the word “stain,” referring to a certain physical state. The word “stain” comes from the colloquial order; it refers to a certain uncomplicated, real state. This literal meaning is shifted onto a different plane: a stain implies guilt, a sin; guilt is a sort of stain. The latter meaning is not literal, yet the former one is not entirely cancelled out. Calling to God to “wash away my sins, cleanse me of my sins,”<sup>19</sup> the psalmist plays on both of these meanings. This is one aspect of the metaphorization process: a shift of the literal meaning onto the symbolic plane. The overlap between these two planes and both their constant presence makes the symbol retain its lack of transparency. This is what distinguishes it from the ready-made sign. Ricoeur is an important reference point for Tischner, and he is quoted in many texts, including “Thinking from Within a Metaphor.”<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 504f.

<sup>17</sup> Plato, *The Republic*, trans. W.H.D. Rouse, in: *Great Dialogues of Plato*, New York 1956, and: M. Heidegger, “Plato’s Doctrine of Truth,” in: Martin Heidegger, *Pathmarks*, trans. W. McNeill, Cambridge 1998, pp. 155–182.

<sup>18</sup> P. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, Harper & Row, New York 1967.

<sup>19</sup> Psalm 51.4.

<sup>20</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: op. cit., p. 503.

However, there is another aspect of this process which is perhaps less interesting from a hermeneutical perspective — which finds the world already described through symbols — yet is highly important from a phenomenological point of view. Not conceptualized and unnamed, but demanding a form of expression. The experience of one's own sinfulness lies at the root of the symbol of guilt, which is a stain of sorts. A man experiences something, but also senses that reality with which he has come in contact cannot be expressed in simple words, it cannot be described literally. The reality of evil, therefore, requires less the concept than the metaphor. At this stage we might say that the world of human experience is divided into two spheres: one described by means of concepts (a camel, a sheep, a tent, a well) and the other by means of symbols. The latter requires a symbolical expression, as it contains a certain mystery and lacks transparency. Neither love, nor guilt, nor the sacrum is transparent. Describing these spheres through concepts would imply their falsification.

To make these reflections more precise, we might introduce a distinction between the symbolized and the symbolizer. In the case of guilt as a stain, guilt is symbolized as the stain, but the stain is the symbolizer in relation to the experience of guilt.

Such an understanding of a symbol<sup>21</sup> clearly shows that it cannot be taken for a “proto-concept.” A symbol does not succumb to mere disenchantment in terms of: once people created symbols as they were unable to analyze the problem of evil, whereas today we can develop these symbols into concepts and clarify those that were initially vague. A symbol always remains dark and unclear,<sup>22</sup> and it has an entirely different impact on our understanding than a clear, transparent concept.

In specific situations the realm of the metaphor encompasses the whole world, casting all conceptual presentations into question. Such is the case, for example, in the metaphor of Plato's cave. Once again, we find a repetition of Ricoeur's schema. There is the literal meaning of the cave, which is transferred onto a different plane: the world (or: the world of human experience) is a kind of a cave, which is dark, reflects shadows etc. This image is complemented with the other side of the metaphorization process. The world, which we experience as unique (and final, in this sense), is not unique and final; it is not what it appears to be through the testimony of our senses. What is it then? It is a shadow of the world, it is a reflection of the real world. Since this is the case, since the seemingly unproblematic experience of the world reveals a kind of equivocality, a mystery, then concepts have to be replaced with metaphors. Concepts would be mere falsification, as they would create an illusion of transparency and self-sufficiency. And so, through its lack of transparency,

<sup>21</sup> For the sake of this paper, I use the concepts of “a metaphor” and “a symbol” interchangeably, just as Tischner did in his texts. He was aware of the difference between them, yet — as he himself pointed out — Paul Ricoeur also identified them with each other. See J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: *op. cit.*, p. 503.

<sup>22</sup> P. Ricoeur, “Existence and Hermeneutics,” in: *The Conflict of Interpretations*, ed. D. Ihde, Northwestern University Press, Evanston 1974.



a symbol indicates “another world,” a truer reality. Metaphors are born from within the experience of doubtfulness and equivocality of the world. As such, they express a fundamental philosophical truth. 31

Another example of the totality of symbolical thinking is primitive cultures in which every fact is an epiphany, where the whole of reality — and not only a certain sphere of experience within reality — becomes a manifestation of sacrum, and thus a symbol of something else. In these cases, the metaphorization is in a sense turned around. An ordinary tree acquires a symbolic meaning because it is an expression of another world. We still say “a tree,” but the reality which is hidden within this word is far more complex and less obvious than the natural fact: the structure of tissues and the processes taking place in them. At the same time, this tree continues to be a tree of “flesh and blood.” The question arises as to whether or not these two processes of symbolization are identical in nature. In the first, the word “stain” is understood in a non-literal way, and becomes a metaphorical expression of the experience of guilt; in the second case, however, the same tree reveals its “profundity” in a certain experience, thus becoming a symbol of “something else.” If we tried to distinguish between these two cases phenomenologically, and thus point to the phenomena in the experience, then in the first we have the experience of guilt as a stain (the stain is something that has been added), and in the second, the experience of a tree as an epiphany of the sacrum. This genetic order is crucial from the perspective of phenomenology, but from the perspective of hermeneutics it becomes less crucial in the ready-made symbol. Hermeneutics makes use of a certain symbol that constitutes a living tension between literalism and the use of metaphor.

However, this structure is significant from a phenomenological perspective. What is the object of experience in the metaphorized world? Symbols, or experiences which are then expressed by means of symbols? In the context of Tischner’s philosophy, this is a relevant issue.

In “Thinking from Within a Metaphor” Tischner quotes several metaphors. He presents Plato’s cave,<sup>23</sup> he mentions the Cartesian malicious demon<sup>24</sup> (this metaphor is developed in *The Controversy over the Existence of Man*),<sup>25</sup> but the metaphor of giving birth<sup>26</sup> is given special significance. Tischner looks at its usage in the context of the Holy Trinity. On a literal level, giving birth is a biological life process. New life is born, but it takes place in the pain and suffering of the mother. In the context of the Holy Trinity, this act of giving birth undergoes an idealization. God cannot suffer, so giving birth is disassociated from pain. Thus, what we have is a birth-giving in a non-literal sense. What remains is the process which describes the relationship between the Father and the Son. Why can they not be described non-metaphorically? The conclusion is obvious:

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<sup>23</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: op. cit., p. 491.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 493.

<sup>25</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 19f.

<sup>26</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: op. cit., p. 498f.

32 the sphere of the sacred is inaccessible and non-transparent to us, any statements made about it using transparent concepts may lead to its falsification. One such concept would be a cause-effect relationship or the category of creation. Yet both these perspectives introduce a relationship of co-existence. The Son seen as an effect would be less perfect than the Father, and if he was seen as a creation, at most he would be the reflection of God, he would be metaphysically different — as different as the creation is from the Creator. Thus, all that is left is metaphor. To our day, the symbolism of birth has repeated this schema.

However, Tischner highlights another moment: the metaphor returns to the earth. The metaphor of giving birth — transformed to allow us to think about the Holy Trinity, and already deprived of pain and suffering — becomes useful in describing other spheres of reality, e.g. the birth of the truth. Metaphors oscillate between the two worlds, then return to earth transformed.

Where, then, is the real life of metaphors? Definitely not in replacing concepts with “soft concepts,” that is, with metaphors. Plato does not transfer his whole story to the cave parable. He tries to explain the parable, while his thought continually travels between one world (the mysterious encounter with the truth of the idea) and another (a blind, chained man leaving the cave). Hence, a metaphor is not an allegory which has a 1:1 relationship with a given issue. A metaphor is in constant tension between literalism and the use of metaphors. The reduction of the metaphor to only one element — to a stain, a cave, or to giving birth — negates this way of thinking. Thinking from within the metaphor is a constant process of leaving and returning. A reduction to the non-literal pole of the metaphor can be seen as excessive poeticization, allegorization. This process draws the metaphor away from thinking and from philosophy. However, a reduction to the other pole — the replacement of metaphors with precise concepts — Tischner calls “terrestrial.”<sup>27</sup> This involves the recognition that the world of facts is obvious, self-explanatory, and final. The symbol does not exist on the same level as allegory.

### Three Anthropological Metaphors

The above analyses have presented Józef Tischner as a theoretician of the metaphor. He did not, however — like Ricoeur — hunt metaphors in texts on culture. The article “Thinking from Within a Metaphor” is a manifesto. Tischner wanted to think in metaphors because he believed this to be the only way to access the mystery of experience, the mystery of man. Precise language no longer attracted him, as he saw it as a threat to his philosophical search. The metaphor points to uncertainty and to equivocality; through its tension between the literal and the metaphorical

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<sup>27</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie religijne,” in: op. cit., p. 377.



it embodies the whole drama of the world. Since man lies at the heart of Tischner's philosophy, it is worth examining the metaphors he used to describe man. Tischner the theoretician is followed by Tischner the practitioner of metaphors. To what extent did he remain faithful to his own theoretical stipulations? How do metaphors operate within his thinking? 33

Let us try to select three out of many metaphors Józef Tischner used. This selection has a certain arbitrariness, yet it allows us to show the tension in metaphorical thinking.

The first metaphor in this constellation is the song: "A man is like a song flowing through time."<sup>28</sup> He is an instrument and an artist at the same time. He sings his own song, following a musical score which is made of values. In this metaphor Tischner radically rejects a substantialist presentation of man.<sup>29</sup> A song is not ready-made, and cannot be reduced to a musical score. A real song has been sung. The relationship between a song and a musical score is defined by the freedom of man.

The second metaphor is the definition of man as a dramatic being, which means: "experiencing a given time while surrounded by other people and standing on the ground as if it were a stage."<sup>30</sup> Furthermore: "To be a dramatic being means — rightly or wrongly — that perdition or salvation are in the hands of man."<sup>31</sup> This metaphor is a foundation for the whole concept of the philosophy of drama where theatrical symbolism — the stage, the mask, drama etc. — are used to describe man in the whole of his existence.

Finally, a third metaphor, which appears in the last stage of Tischner's creative output, is the death of man. Here, Tischner enters into a polemic with the tradition of Michel Foucault: "Man seeks to prove that he did not do what he did [the evil of Auschwitz and Kolyma<sup>32</sup> — author], as if he never existed. Thus, the concept of 'the death of man' is created."<sup>33</sup> This metaphor has a special quality: the thesis of the death of man undermines mankind, the condition of man is non-existence. Tischner sees the significance and the universal nature of the experience of twentieth-century totalitarian systems. At the same time, he proposes a thesis: "even if 'man is dead' (...), this implies that he once existed; and if he existed, this implies that he can be born."<sup>34</sup> Man is dead, but people live. Thus, a living man pronounces the death of man. This self-referentiality introduces a new element to Nietzsche's statement "God is dead." There man pronounced the death of God; here man pronounces his own death. One

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<sup>28</sup> J. Tischner, "Etyka wartości i nadziei" [The Ethics of Values and Hope], in: D. von Hildebrand, J.A. Kłoczowski, J. Paściak, J. Tischner, *Wobec wartości* [On Values], Poznań 1982, p. 53.

<sup>29</sup> J. Tischner, "Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów," in: op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>30</sup> J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, op. cit., p. 7f.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>32</sup> A region located in the far north-eastern area of Russia, in what is commonly known as Siberia, where the Gulag labour camps were established under the rule of Joseph Stalin (Translator's note).

<sup>33</sup> J. Tischner, *Spór o istnienie człowieka*, op. cit., p. 57.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

34 might say that this is only a metaphor, in the sense of an allegory, a comparison which in no way obliges us. The death of man is a degradation of a model of humanity, of a certain idealization of man, the end of our understanding to date. Yet the structure of this use of metaphor is more complex: man can survive his own death. In addition, there is the statement that if man is dead, this means he once was alive, and so can be reborn. Who can be reborn? The same man, or another? If a man is dead, and he led himself to self-destruction, then why would we resurrect him?

Each of these metaphors deserves a detailed analysis. Yet let us now concentrate on their common structure. Our subject of research is not WHAT Tischner says about man, but HOW he says it. He speaks of man through metaphors. But do these metaphors resemble those he referred to in “Thinking from Within a Metaphor”?

In Paul Ricoeur’s work an unfamiliar experience (sin, guilt) is explained through a familiar concept (a stain, losing one’s way). What is symbolized is unclear, and therefore it requires a symbolizer. The symbolizer is taken from everyday life: the stain, losing one’s way — everyday experiences which every man understands. They are essential in presenting what is difficult to express through concepts. In this way, a metaphor is born. This was also the case with the parable of the cave. Plato’s listener certainly did not know what ideas were and how to get to them — this was achieved through Plato’s lengthy dialectical thinking and exceptional perceptiveness. Yet the same listener could easily imagine the fate of the chained man: the experience of darkness and illumination, and the accompanying experience of being blinded by the excess of light — these are events from everyone’s everyday life. Plato leads us from the familiar into a mystery.

When Józef Tischner uses metaphors in his philosophy of man, he wants to tell us that man is mysterious, that he does not succumb to simple explanation, and that man cannot be reduced to the earthly: the reduction to facticity — the terrestrial — falsifies the truth about man. Apart from these similarities to symbolical structures researched by Ricoeur, Tischner proposes his own way, digressing slightly from this understanding of the metaphor. He metaphorizes man, though what Tischner uses as the symbolizer does not come from everyday life. In fact, man in the world experiences a song, theater, and death, and he can say something about them, but it is not difficult to see that these symbols are different from the stain, losing one’s way, or the cave. What does the difference consist in?

Every word Tischner refers to has a certain lack of transparency. A man experiences songs: he listens to them and sometimes sings them, but at the same time, there is something mysterious in music. Music is governed by mathematical harmonies,<sup>35</sup> but it has an impenetrable aspect. Like any art, it has an immeasurable, irrational element that is difficult to analyze. This is also the case with theater. In a sense, we can describe it as a stage, audience, actors, and staged dramas, but at the same time

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<sup>35</sup> J. Tischner, “Bezdroża spotkań” [The Offroads of Encounters], *Analecta Cracoviensia*, vol. 12, 1980, p. 152.

the specificity of theater is also in its mysterious aspects. Such were the ancient functions of theater, and such is the Polish dramatic tradition that was close to Tischner's heart: Mickiewicz's *Dziady* [Forefathers' Eve], Wyspiański's *Wesele* [The Wedding], and the theaters of Grotowski, Kantor, and Staniewski constantly grapple with mystery. Theater might seem even more mysterious than man himself. And finally the death of man. The paraphrase of Nietzsche's famous statement "God is dead,"<sup>36</sup> shifted onto man, attempts to express a hazy experience by using a word whose meaning is less than obvious as well. Death itself is a mystery for man, as it is situated beyond any experience and fills man with fear and horror.

Thus, Tischner creates a completely new tension in his metaphors. The unknown apprehends itself in the unknown, the symbol remains impenetrable, completely unlike Ricoeur's analyses and his theoretical investigation of the metaphor. There the metaphor was launched "skyward" before it came back to earth. Here the symbolizer does not descend to the earth (if the "earth" is understood as something tamed, colloquial and clear). What, then, does Tischner want to tell us?

Can we speak of a mistake here? Can it be assumed that Tischner, seduced by the symbolism he had invented, missed his own understanding of the metaphor he had designed? Such suspicions are always risky. There can be no question of a mistake, if Tischner's words are to be taken seriously. In the introduction to *The Philosophy of Drama* he establishes the aim of his considerations: "The primary aim is to restore the due weight of the genre to the word 'drama.'"<sup>37</sup> Did Ricoeur try to restore due weight to the word "stain"? No, his aim was to explore the symbolism of evil. The stain was simple and comprehensible, the stain has little genre significance if it does not allow us to better understand the phenomenon of guilt. Therefore, the aim of metaphorization is not to enhance the status of the symbolizer, but to better understand the symbolized.

In Tischner's case, however, the situation is confused. It would seem that the aim of the philosophy of drama project is to show a truth about man, an important truth expressed in the metaphor of a dramatic being. Yet, we might notice something else here: a better understanding of the notion of drama. This may suggest that Tischner's main aim is to create a philosophy of the theater. If man appears in it, he is only a means of restoring "the weight of the genre." Yet, Tischner is not interested in theater as such, as confirmed by almost all the analyses in the above-mentioned book. He is not even interested in drama itself — except as a convenient metaphor to explain human fate. Moreover, one might risk the hypothesis that Tischner wrote the introduction to *The Philosophy of Drama* with entirely different considerations in mind. He wrote, for example, that the substance of drama is time.<sup>38</sup> The substance is something

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<sup>36</sup> F. Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. W. Kauffman, New York – Toronto: Vintage, 1974, p. 108.

<sup>37</sup> J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, op. cit., p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

36 extremely important — just as in the metaphor of the song, time is “the inherent reality of the melody,”<sup>39</sup> indispensable to the song’s existence. But we will find few analyses of time and temporality in *The Philosophy of Drama*. Tischner also writes a bit about the stage,<sup>40</sup> but quickly abandons this aspect of the metaphor. Beyond the introduction, the stage interests him little.

Therefore, we are grounded in neither man, nor drama. How to escape from this trap? Tischner’s method is different. It seems that in these three important metaphors, the use of words demanding explanation is not by accident. These metaphors appeared at different stages: the “song” first appears in the mid-seventies; the metaphor of “drama” appears at the end of the same decade<sup>41</sup> and culminates in the publication of *The Philosophy of Drama* (first edition — 1990); and the analyses of “the death of man” appeared in the mid-nineties. Thus, these are the decades of Tischner’s consistent “practice of metaphorization,” which differed from the theory he proclaimed.

Since this is clearly no accident, and the repetition of the same process over the years indicates a kind of consistency, we should investigate the method. What is Tischner’s metaphor? The symbolizer and the symbolized remain in constant tension. Man is a mystery and drama (song, death) is mysterious. Metaphors are built to understand man better. In Tischner’s case this is not only a hermeneutical process. He sees man as a dramatic being, he experiences human existence as drama. In this respect, his thinking closely resembles Ricoeur’s. In distinguishing between a symbol and an allegory, Ricoeur says that the latter is always a hermeneutics, while the former is not; the symbol remains on a different level, it precedes hermeneutics.<sup>42</sup> If Tischner sees drama as such a metaphor, then the drama is experienced, and not chosen as a convenient tool. If it was only a tool, it could be replaced with another tool. Yet if drama and dramatics are phenomena of human experience, then their presence is not contingent. This explains why Tischner stated that one of his aims was to restore the weight of the genre to drama. It is not that the aim of his project was neither drama nor man. It is both man and drama at once. If we restore due weight to the word “drama,” we will better reveal the truth about man. We are no closer to understanding man through a “mediocre” drama.

Tischner saw the complexity and the mystery of the subject, which he explored all his life. This probably explains the changes in his thinking: it focuses on explaining man, but in an appropriate language. There was one more stage before those previously mentioned in Tischner’s philosophy of man: the language of Thomism he acquired at the seminary.

<sup>39</sup> J. Tischner, “Filozofia człowieka dla duszpasterzy i artystów,” in: op. cit., p. 233.

<sup>40</sup> J. Tischner, *Filozofia dramatu*, op. cit., p. 8n.

<sup>41</sup> It is difficult to pinpoint one specific place, but an important highlight in this field was Tischner’s article “Fenomenologia spotkania” [Phenomenology of the Encounter], published in *Analecta Cracoviensia*, vol. 10, 1978.

<sup>42</sup> P. Ricoeur, *The Symbolism of Evil*, op. cit.

Tischner quickly noticed its inadequacy for describing the human experience.<sup>43</sup> What followed was an attempt to find a language to express man: with his exteriority and his hidden depths, and both his simplicity and his mystery. 37

To do this, Tischner needed his “dark metaphors.” He did not translate the complexities of man into the allegorical language of another network of concepts, though it may seem as if he did: the world is a stage; relationships with people are dramas etc. He combined two “dark” notions in one embrace. The metaphor did not rise into the sky, nor did it descend weightless — Tischner saw this as a threat to metaphorization.<sup>44</sup> Perhaps this is what he feared, as he rarely referred to colloquial notions, such as “a stain.” This metaphorical embrace goes even deeper: a song, drama, death (if we treat them ontologically, and not ontically) are not in themselves conceivable without man. But the stain and the cave are. And so these metaphors of Tischner’s are tied to man not because of Tischner’s bidding, but because of their very nature. This contributes to the fact that one of the aims of the philosophy of drama — even seen as an intellectual tool to illuminate certain phenomena of human fate — also has to be work on drama, as without it, illumination would fail.

## The Logos of the Metaphor

The aim of this paper has been an attempt to show less WHAT Józef Tischner wrote about man than HOW he formulated it. The linguistic level was both a tool and a method, based on beliefs of a metaphysical nature. Thinking from within the metaphor is grounded in the conviction that “a metaphor and a symbol are not contingent phenomena in radical thinking; they are manifestations of its radicalism.”<sup>45</sup> At the same time, this radicalism constitutes an agreement to prevent thinking from becoming dominated by the desire for simple explanations, clarification, or univocality. There are places in thinking which can only be thought “from within a metaphor.” Thus, the metaphor is not external with regard to what can be thought through a linguistic expression, it lies at the basis of such thinking.

By the same token, metaphors can be used to present their internal logos, a structure which is extremely precise. A special logos is within the metaphors of Tischner himself, who thinks of man from within concepts as ambiguous and mysterious as “drama,” “a song,” or “death.” In his philosophy these concepts are tied to the concept of man through a very strong and not entirely penetrable relationship: to describe man, one has

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<sup>43</sup> *Spotkanie. Z ks. Józefem Tischnerem rozmawia Anna Karoń-Ostrowska* [Encounter; Anna Karoń-Ostrowska in conversation with Father Józef Tischner], Kraków 2003, pp. 41 and 55f.

<sup>44</sup> J. Tischner, “Myślenie z wnętrza metafory,” in: op. cit., p. 502.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 504.

38 to draw from the metaphor of drama; but to do this, one has to restore the due weight of the genre to the notion. How can this be achieved? Tischner demonstrates this in his *The Philosophy of Drama*: he describes man using dramatic metaphors, showing various critical experiences in his life: the drama of temptation, the drama of truth, the drama of beauty. The presentation of these phenomena through this new symbolism reveals their internal tension and connections, which might not have been previously visible. At the same time, each of these analyses restores the weight of the genre to drama. Both extremes of the metaphor are mutually indispensable. Bringing one under the control of another — which may suggest the distinction between “the symbolized” and “the symbolizer” — is not as easy as it is with metaphors that refer to the colloquial. The polarities of Tischner’s metaphors exist through each other, and they are joined more tightly with every turn in his thinking.

The three metaphors quoted above were used by Tischner at different stages in his philosophizing about man. Each can be analyzed in detail to capture the deeper structures of the “logos of the metaphor.” Many other metaphors can also be indicated: the face, home, the hiding place etc., to complete Tischner’s universe of symbols. All of these tasks exceed the available space. What remains? A strong conviction that Tischner is still ahead of us, and that we need to make a new attempt to analyze Tischner’s philosophy of man, based on a thorough consideration of the logic (or rather: dialectics) of Tischner’s metaphors. This attempt is still before us.