



Interpretation of space perception in an existential crisis: Psychological analysis of the Book of Job

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◆ **Abstract.** The article analysed a psychological model capable of providing support to military personnel who find themselves in an existential crisis – a state that threatens the integrity of the “Self”, the meaning of existence and the structure of personal values. The aim of the article was to use the example of the Book of Job to reveal the connection between a person’s state in an existential crisis and their perception of space, expressed in topological characteristics. The Book of Job was chosen as research material because it presents the complex psycho-emotional experiences of a person in a crisis situation, which are manifested in a symbolic description of space and allow to analyse the influence of the internal state on its perception. Using historical and psychological reconstruction, hermeneutic and phenomenological approaches, as well as analytical tools of dynamic psychology, a topological analysis of mental space was conducted. It has been established that changes in spatial characteristics correlate with stages of internal dynamics: the loss of spatial continuity corresponds to a fragmentation of meaning, while a narrowing of spatial extent corresponds to a limitation of the field of perception. The study also confirmed that the disruption of structure corresponds to the collapse of the hierarchy of values, and the distortion of dimension corresponds to the loss of depth of self-awareness. The feeling of finitude contributes to the formation of boundaries within which the meaning of life can be restored. An analysis of the plot of the Book of Job showed that experiences of intense emotional pain, internal protest, and states of devastation are critical psychological mechanisms that stimulate a rethinking of one’s own existence, mobilise the resources of the psyche to integrate crisis experiences, and contribute to the formation of a new meaning in life. The results of the study can be used to develop a model of therapeutic space in which the experience of pain, protest, and devastation serve as conditions for restoring meaning to life. Such a model can be applied in the psychological support of individuals who have experienced trauma, loss, or existential crisis, facilitating the integration of crisis experiences and the formation of adaptive strategies for overcoming psychological difficulties

◆ **Keywords:** deviant behaviour; continuity; topological analysis; structure; symbolism; finiteness

◆ Introduction

During periods of military action and large-scale social transformations, existential issues become particularly important for research, as such conditions highlight the need to create theoretical models for overcoming crisis situations.

In situations of radical change, familiar life guidelines, such as security, stability, and predictability of the future, lose their obviousness, giving rise to deep ontological doubts. Thus, there was a need for a thorough rethinking of the

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meaning of existence and ways to preserve inner integrity in situations of chaos and destruction. Military personnel are particularly vulnerable to such influences, as their professional activities are associated with increased risk, uncertainty, constant threat to life, and the need to make morally difficult decisions. Chronic stress, direct interaction with death and the consequences of violence create intense psychological strain that often exceeds an individual's ability to adapt. In such conditions, military personnel may experience not only acute stress reactions, but also deep existential crises associated with loss, the destruction of value systems, loss of meaning, or confrontation with the phenomenon of the senselessness of violence. The experience of losing health, loved ones, material resources or social status deprives the individual of key supports that provide a sense of identity and stability in life. Overcoming existential crises is a key process of psychological adaptation that ensures the restoration of meaning in life and the integrity of the "self". The inability to overcome existential problems correlates with the development of depressive states, social isolation, and suicidal risks. Studying these mechanisms in military personnel is of practical importance, as it allows for the development of evidence-based psychological and psychotherapeutic strategies for restoring meaning, mental stability, and adaptation in critical life situations. The Book of Job is relevant research material because of its archetypal reflection of the existential crisis of a person, manifested in deep psycho-emotional experiences and a symbolic description of space, which makes it relevant for analysing the mechanisms of mental adaptation and rethinking the meaning of life in existential psychology. J. de Joode's (2019) study systematised the spatial metaphors in the Book of Job, in particular, boundaries and containment, place and placelessness, direction and distance, and emphasised that these metaphors shape theology and the experience of suffering. J. Stala *et al.* (2023) analysed Job as a cultural and existential symbol of postmodernism, focusing on the paradigms of suffering, alienation and "loss of the world." C. Park (2024) examined the anthropological and literary problems of Job's suffering in the context of social roles, honour, shame, and spaces. It was determined how socio-spatial factors (status, exile, social field) change an individual's perception of their "place." A. Maran & M. Raj (2023) proposed an instrumental scheme applied when reading literary characters in a state of crisis (how the "place" of the hero changes), which allows tracing their internal dynamics. The study by D.W. Larsen (2020) is an example of the application of critical spatial theories by E. Sogi and A. Lefebvre to the canonical reading of biblical texts. The authors developed a methodological framework for integrating social and political geography into the exegetical analysis of texts. The philosophical and psychological article by L. IJzerman & A. Halsema (2025) defined "burnout" as the destruction of Heidegger's being-in-the-world and proposed relevant phenomenological schemes demonstrating how the loss of meaning or social role affects the experience of space.

An important area of research remains the study of deviance through the prism of the relationship between the antisocial behaviour of military personnel and their perception of space in conditions of existential crisis. Another aspect is sociocultural: research on deviance by E. Mancinelli *et al.* (2021) showed that differences in social norms and cultural distance influence the manifestation of antisocial behaviour. Despite the large amount of theoretical material on the subject, previous studies of crisis states have not provided a definitive answer to the question of the relationship between deviant behaviour and human spatial perception. The aim of this study was to use the Book of Job as an example to identify and characterise the relationship between a person's state of existential crisis and the peculiarities of their perception of space through its topological characteristics. The research hypothesis was that the spatial metaphors presented in the Book of Job (continuity, extent, structure, dimension, finiteness) change according to the stages of a person's existential crisis and reflect their internal psychological states. The text was analysed in accordance with the following objectives:

1. To analyse the structure of space in the Book of Job as a reflection of the subject's existential state, to investigate the transformations of topological characteristics (structurality, extension, finiteness, moderation, continuity), and show how their destruction correlates with destructive mental processes, including moral ambivalence and the crisis of the traditional ethical model of "guilt – suffering."

2. To identify the deep psychological mechanisms that determine the course of an existential crisis, in particular unconscious defence processes (repression, displacement, projection, devaluation, identification) and symbolic forms of expression of internal conflicts, including Job's physical symptoms as a manifestation of autoaggression, guilt, regression, and spatial isolation.

3. Justify the possibility of forming a therapeutic model based on the correction of spatial perception, showing that an existential crisis is accompanied by topological changes in the space of consciousness (breaks, collapses, stratification), and determine the potential of such approaches for working with people who have experienced traumatic events, in particular military personnel.

◆ Materials and Methods

The work applied a set of theoretical and analytical methods aimed at studying the existential crisis through the interpretation of the text "The Book of Job" as a psychological model of experiencing a radical loss of meaning, spatial disorientation, and transformation of subjective reality. The material for the study was the canonical text of the Book of Job in an interdisciplinary reading that combines psychology, hermeneutics, phenomenology, and topological analysis of the space of consciousness (Ogiyenko, 1988). The object of the study was the existential crisis as a psychological phenomenon accompanied by the destruction of the structure of inner space. The subject

was psychotherapeutic mechanisms for overcoming the crisis, reflected in the plot lines and symbolic structures of the Book of Job, in particular in the hero's interaction with spatial boundaries, corporeality, and the image of the Other. In addition to analysing the text of the Book of Job, the study drew on classical works in the fields of psychoanalysis, philosophy and existentialism, including W. James (1918) and K. Jaspers (1946). The concepts of C.G. Jung (1960; 1969) were used to identify unconscious mechanisms of adaptation, compensation, and integration of crisis experience through archetypes and symbols, and the work of V. Frankl (2020) was used to analyse meaning-making processes during an existential crisis. Methodologically, the work was based on a number of complementary approaches. First, hermeneutic analysis was used to reconstruct the semantic layers of the text that reflect the experience of crisis, the destruction of the familiar world order, and the emergence of a new configuration of mental space. Second, a phenomenological approach was used to describe Job's experience as direct evidence of changes in the structure of being – ruptures, collapses, and other transformations of the space of consciousness. Thirdly, a psychoanalytic interpretation is used to identify unconscious psychological defence mechanisms (repression, projection, displacement, identification, devaluation) that ensure the temporary preservation of the pre-crisis spatial structure. In addition, topological analysis is used to describe the spatial characteristics of consciousness through the categories of structure, extension, finiteness, dimensionality, and continuity. Through the deconstruction of the key stages of the plot of the Book of Job, the process of going through an existential crisis was modelled and compared with the psychological experience of military personnel who had survived traumatic events. The integration of these approaches provided a comprehensive understanding of the interaction of cognitive, emotional, and spatial aspects of the subject's mental experience.

◆ Results

The structure of mental space in the Book of Job as a psychological indicator of the organisation of the inner world of the individual. An existential crisis in a person is accompanied by changes in the perception of space, which manifest themselves in the transformation of its topological characteristics. In the case presented in the text of the Book of Job, the destruction of the familiar value-existential order leads to the experience of space as fragmented, disoriented, and devoid of supporting structures. The change in the topology of space reflects deep psychological processes associated with the loss of meaning, the disruption of the integrity of the personal world, and the rethinking of the relationship between man, being, and the transcendent. The pre-crisis space in which Job was inscribed was rigidly and clearly structured. This refers to a mental value system that is projected onto Job's external and internal worlds, forming a single value-oriented space. The division of this space into five semantic loci is shown in Figure 1.

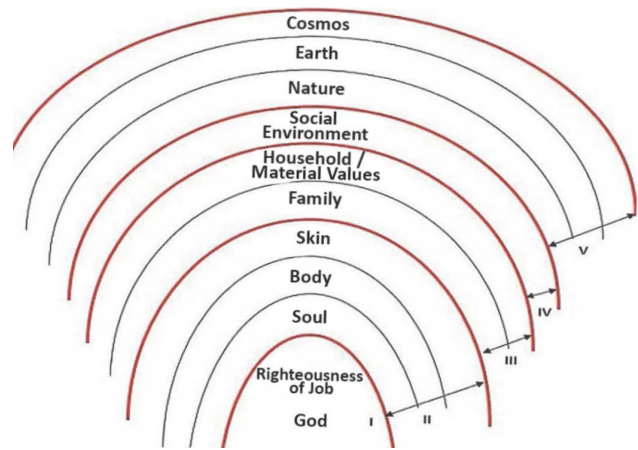


Figure 1. Job's perception of space

Source: developed by the authors

The central core ("God – righteousness") coordinates and integrates other loci, and its stability maintains the structure of the mental space. The bodily locus ("soul – body – skin") and social loci ("family," "social environment") are in constant interaction, creating conditions for adaptation or crisis. The locus "nature – earth – cosmos" sets the existential horizon that the psyche orientates itself towards during a crisis. In the religious beliefs of the Jews of Job's time (2000-1500 BC), human righteousness brings God's blessing, expressed in material goods. Material goods, in a sense, are a symbolic objectification of God's presence (de Joode, 2019). The spiritual value of the material environment is part of the religious and cultural identity of a pious person. The main issue causing Job's existential crisis is his doubt about the truth of his righteousness, caused by inability to reconcile it with suffering. Since these phenomena have no causal connection in the text, there is a need to rethink the traditional value-oriented space – in particular, human self-understanding and the idea of God's presence in human life (locus I). Job's crisis is also triggered by social unrest and natural disasters, as demonstrated in loci IV and V (Job 1:13-19). The fundamental, worldview-ethical concept of "righteousness" becomes the focus of existential issues. The loss of material well-being and family leads to the depth of emotional stress generating a psychogenic reaction – severe reactive depression, which is complemented by suicidal thoughts (Job 6:9-13; 10:18-22; 17:13-16) (locus II). Since Job sees himself as righteous, and therefore the rightful owner of all possible blessings bestowed upon him by God, the disruption of the orderly structure of the value-oriented space leads to an overload of the primitive unconscious defence mechanism of "omnipotent control". According to G.S. Blum (1953), if the desire to control the world is natural for an infant, then Job's unconscious desire to order the value-oriented space through his own righteousness can be seen as a form of his inner hatred. The connection between omnipotence and hatred was established by O.F. Kernberg (2022), thus Job controls God with his righteousness, which is symbolically

expressed in a value-oriented space. He unconsciously feels hatred towards the Creator. The loss of control over the situation and, consequently, unconsciously over God himself, leads to anxiety and causes Job to feel intense aggression. The target of Job's aggression should be God, as the legislator of righteousness and guardian of the value-oriented space, who, despite everything, has essentially violated the fundamental, ontological principles of ethics in Job's life. However, religious tradition does not allow to direct his anger at God, imposing a strict taboo on such expressions of aggression, and the sufferer suppresses it – a protective mechanism of repression comes into play. Along with repression, several other psychological defence mechanisms come into play – retaliation, devaluation, projection, identification. Job curses the day he was born and the night he was conceived, directing destructive aggression at himself (Job 6:9-13; 10:20-22; 17:13-16). In addition, Job unconsciously projects his aggression onto God, attributing to him various forms of destructive behaviour. In addition to reactive depression, compounded by existential depression and suicidal thoughts, the hero develops a pathology associated with the somatisation of mental state – Job is afflicted with “a grievous boils from the sole of his foot to the crown of his head” (Job 2:7). According to J. Bergeret *et al.* (2008), Job's focus on own skin may indicate an oral type, suggesting a disturbance in the formation of his identity. In the context of skin diseases in Job's suffering, D. Anzieu (1985) noted that scratching is one of the archaic forms of directing aggression towards the body. D. Anzieu emphasised that itching is an irresistible desire to be understood by a loved one. In his desire to be understood by God, Job simultaneously expresses hatred through skin disease, which, as a symbol of boundaries, expresses a painful separation from the world.

The psychoanalytic approach of J. Ulnik (2007) to the phenomenon of itching emphasised that it combines key characteristics – obsessiveness, connection with autoerotic impulses, feelings of guilt and a tendency towards self-punishment, as well as an unconscious desire to harm others through self-destructive actions. Hatred of a significant object manifests itself in self-destruction, where the skin is a symbolic representation of the significant object (Hirsch, 2010). In this context, Job's skin was unconsciously sacrificed to suffering in order to preserve life. The text expresses this idea as follows: “And the Lord said to Satan: Behold, he is in your hand, only spare his soul” (Job 2:6). This formulation conceals a predictably positive outlook on the fruits of suffering in the context of an existential crisis. M. Hirsch (2010) interpreted this biblical idea as the need to give up a part in order to preserve the integrity of the whole. In the text, Job's illness is referred to as leprosy, but in 2000-1500 BC, this term covered various skin diseases, including dermatitis, eczema and psoriasis (de Joode, 2019). Given the symptoms described, including intense itching, flaking and darkening of the skin, weight loss, insomnia and pain, the most likely explanation is that the affliction described was eczema (Job 30:30). In this

context, widespread eczema may reflect a regression to an infantile state of complete dependence, a somatic conversion of repressed fears (Anzieu, 1985). In childhood, Job experienced rejection from a significant object and did not feel a desire for understanding on his part. Since the image of God is often perceived through parent-child relationships, after the shock he experienced, Job perceives that God does not understand him, which stimulates his relentless search for an encounter with beloved object in order to obtain explanations and support. The act of materialising pain becomes a symbol of suffering – Job tears his clothes. The feeling of destruction of a value-oriented space, its external and internal loci, is illustrated in the Book of Job by the image of the awakened Leviathan (Job 40:20-26). This is not only an emotionally charged symbol, but also one of the oldest archetypes that goes beyond the Jewish cultural tradition, such as Lotan, Ouroboros, and Tiamat. The psychologically associative series of images in Job includes Leviathan, a creature that opposes the Creator. Everything that contradicts God was perceived as destructive, dark, and terrible – qualities inherent in Leviathan. Although he is a water creature, this does not limit his potential for negative influence on the world as a whole. The myth of Leviathan has a cross-cultural associative connection with the primordial pre-dawn chaos, the original untamed matter that God subjugates to himself, binding its spontaneity in the fetters of deep sleep. The primordial chaos is dormant, but under certain conditions it is capable of manifesting destructive power. *Materia prima* (the foundation of all that exists) acquires a positive meaning, but retains the tension and momentum that can return the world to its original chaos. Thus, primordial chaos and Leviathan exhibit ambivalence: they are both constructive and destructive, symbolising the beginning and end of existence. This allows to associate the awakening of Leviathan not only with apocalyptic events in general, but also with eschatological expectations, as the very end of world history is caused by the activity of the water monster. Thus, the awakening of Leviathan is a form of Job's feelings and sufferings, and at the same time an ambivalent image raised from the depths of the soul to explain what is happening to the world. According to A. Houtepen (1997), the Book of Job was one of the first to demonstrate the disconnect between suffering and guilt. Job's social environment becomes a source of conflict for him: his closest friends engage in discussions with him about his righteousness, which raises the problem of suffering and guilt (locus IV).

Psychological mechanisms of searching for meaning in conditions of social and internal conflict. The analysis showed that Job experiences an actual loss of meaning in life, but through a process of discussion and reflective activity, his meaning is gradually restored, which correlates with V. Frankl's (2020) concept of the potential of suffering as a factor in the actualisation of existential meaning. The problem of meaning for Job arises not from other people, but from life itself. Relying on material values or children is unstable and shaky, but the destruction

of wealth does not mean a final loss of meaning. Suffering, on the contrary, has a positive existential effect, protecting a person from apathy and spiritual death; suffering makes a person alive (Frankl, 2020). Job's friends tear their clothes and sprinkle ashes on their heads, expressing emotional solidarity with him, but in reality, they show no compassion for him. The monologues of Job's friends demonstrate not empathy, but an existential attack: they psychologically pressure the sufferer. The point is not to get a ready-made answer to the question of suffering, but in the existential search itself, which shapes a true sense of self. Job's friends are struck not so much by his suffering as by the fact that his righteousness, if proven correct, calls into question the familiar orderliness of the value-oriented space. For them, the cause-and-effect structure linking earthly goods, man, righteousness and God may be lost. The old semiotic space in which society is inscribed is at risk of destruction, and with it, the inner world of man and his habitual sense of self as an inhabitant of this space are undergoing a crisis. Job's friends attack him in order to protect their own inner world and preserve the stability of the value-oriented space. They try to convince Job of his moral incompetence, unaware of their own fears that drive their behaviour and aggressive statements. Job becomes a living parable-mockery for those around him, he is shamed and despised (Job 19:14-19). The physical space itself in natural phenomena turns against Job. The hero is focused on the terrifying phenomena of nature: mountains move, the earth is shaken from its foundations and its pillars tremble, the storm steals and the east wind carries away (Job 27:20-21). Thus, unconscious aggression arises.

Psychologists W. James (1918) and K. Jaspers (1946) associated human consciousness with a continuous flow. C.G. Jung (1960; 1969) partially reinterpreted the model of mental flow, emphasising the conventionality of the interrelationships between mental processes. Unconscious processes often function independently of conscious experiences, while conscious processes themselves are fragmented and disjointed. C.G. Jung interpreted the image of the night sky as a metaphor for fragmented consciousness: the sky symbolises the unconscious, while individual stars and constellations correspond to manifestations of consciousness. According to the above, the attractiveness of the starry sky for Job is a projection of the fragmentation of his consciousness, which he feels in this way due to the loss of the connecting meanings of consciousness, as well as a symbol of the loss of the structure of value-oriented space. Space is deprived of its vastness and collapses into the ashes – a place outside the village where the righteous man sits. Wife comes there and urges him to end his life, and his friends come there to engage in a defensive existential discussion with Job. The ashes are a place of separation, outside the village, i.e. outside the rules and constructive meanings such as rituals, social norms and connections; it is a place of chaos, a place that is unorganised and non-sacred. Outside the settlement, space loses both its semantic and physical extent for Job, as it cannot be measured by the

sufferer's journey through depression, illness and torment. The absence of extent is the inability to endure the absence of the Other for long. For Job, the image of the Other is projected onto God, whose absence the sufferer is unable to bear patiently. Thus, Job's six-dimensional space is not only structurally destroyed, but also collapses into a single point – ashes (Job 23:8-9). It is important to emphasise that in theory, the absence of extension does not always entail the minimisation of the measurability of space. In Job's situation, both measurability and extension coincide. At the same time, space is limited by the starry sky on pillars above and hell below, and on the right and left by waters and the end of the earth, which "hangs on nothing" in the void, corresponding to locus V. In this image of the world, the structure of the psyche is symbolically represented. The sky – a symbol of the Super-Ego, exerting pressure on the pillars, which tremble. The sky – the abode of God. Hell – a symbol of the unconscious, where horrors and fears are repressed. The wet, changeable, feminine, maternal unconscious is represented by the ocean waters, and the earth is a symbol of the ego. The absence of a significant object is represented by the symbol of the earth in the void: the structure of the psyche, expressed in the described image of the world, is filled with anxiety, suspended above the abyss of chaos. In a structurally destructive space, Job searches for God, exploring space in different directions, but cannot find Him. This may be evidence in favour of the continuity of space. A spatial rupture occurs when God intervenes from heaven with his voice and utters a reproachful word to Job. This disruption of the usual spatial order creates the conditions for an authentic encounter between the subject and the significant Other, that is, with reality.

◆ Discussion

Previous works have demonstrated a wide range of approaches. For example, J. Campbell (2008) analysed the therapeutic effect of narrative, while in the current study, the narrative of the Book of Job is considered differently: it serves as an analytical model of the topological organisation of consciousness, allowing to trace the configuration of its semantic loci, the mechanisms of their disruption, and the possibilities for reconstructing internal order. C. Jung's (1960; 1969) concepts of fragmented consciousness and symbols of space are integrated into the model of the study, supplemented by an analysis of specific images (the starry sky, ashes, Leviathan), which made it possible to combine psychoanalytic and existential perspectives. T. Bogg & B.W. Roberts (2004) found a link between awareness and deviation, but their analysis did not cover aspects of perception or organisation of psychological space. T. Bogg & B.W. Roberts also linked neuroticism with reactions to crisis. In the present study, these factors were given a concrete spatial embodiment: external disasters and social conflicts transform the internal topology of space, manifesting themselves in "breaks" and "folds" of consciousness. T.C. Pratt & F.T. Cullen (2000) and J.D. Miller & D. Lynam (2006) showed that low self-control,

impulsivity, and hostility are key predictors of deviant behaviour. In contrast, the current study shows how Job's aggressive impulses are directed both at himself and at God, integrating into the spatial structure of his psyche and determining the dynamics of its internal organisation. The work of J. Stala *et al.* (2023) emphasised the role of religious beliefs in overcoming stress, but the approach of this study integrated the religious context into a topological model of the psyche, where religious identity shapes the spatial organisation of consciousness and activates psychological defence mechanisms.

C. Park's (2024) analysis outlined general psychosomatic manifestations of stress, while this study details how somatic symptoms, particularly skin diseases, function as indicators of internal isolation and regressive mental processes in Job. In this approach, bodily manifestations were considered symbolic markers of mental state. The study by A. Maran & M. Raj (2023) highlighted the protective mechanisms of the psyche in crisis situations, but in this work, such mechanisms are specified through plot analysis: they support the structure of mental space and interaction with God, including manifestations of aggression, depression, and existential anxiety. The work of L. IJzerman & A. Halsema (2025) emphasised the influence of the social environment on the psyche, while this analysis showed that the social environment forms the external space of the crisis, which correlates with the internal topology of Job's consciousness. K. Syasyila *et al.* (2024) argued that crisis is accompanied by changes in the perception of space. At the same time, this study elaborated on this statement through an analysis of structure, duration, finiteness, measurability, and continuity, demonstrating the interconnection of these characteristics with mental processes. The work of C. Ó Ciardha & T. Ward (2012) showed a symbolic reflection of mental conflicts, while this article provided a comprehensive analysis of this reflection through the images of Leviathan and Job's skin, which symbolise chaos, isolation and autoaggression. E. Mancinelli *et al.* (2021) noted that crisis causes a change in value-oriented space and moral priorities. In the current study, such transformations are interpreted through the prism of structural-topological changes in the psyche, which allows to be described as the result of a reorganisation of the internal space of consciousness. The results also agreed with the position of E.H. Erikson (1968), who noted that identity crises, as well as existential crises, can be most clearly traced not only in empirical observations or clinical cases, but also in works of art or the actions of prominent people who have found their own solutions to such crises. In this sense, the story of Job is a classic example of how a person goes through a state of disintegration, loss of connection with the world, which can be psychologically interpreted as a form of deviance, and emerges from it by offering a new level of understanding of being. Thus, the analysis has expanded previous approaches by integrating the analysis of the mental, physical, social, and symbolic aspects of the crisis through the spatial topology of consciousness, which

allows for a detailed description of the mechanisms of its passage and potential therapeutic interventions. Existential space in crisis appears not only as a metaphor for suffering, but also as a psychological topology of the disintegration of personal integrity. Modelling these processes using the Book of Job as an example made it possible to recreate the dynamics of the existential crisis and identify the key mental and somatic manifestations that accompany it. The proposed approach demonstrated that the topological structure of existential space can serve as an effective analytical framework for studying mental transformations caused by trauma, crisis, and isolation.

◆ Conclusions

The combination of topological analysis with psychoanalytic and existential concepts has made it possible to identify universal mechanisms of disintegration and reconfiguration of consciousness, which are manifested both in the narrative of the Book of Job and in contemporary contexts of human experience. It has been found that the structure of mental space plays a key role in an existential crisis. Job's pre-crisis space was organised into five loci, which ensured a clear organisation and value-oriented structure. Social upheavals and cataclysms destroy this structure, which correlates with the development of severe reactive and existential depression, as well as with the activation of unconscious psychological defence mechanisms (repression, projection, devaluation, identification). Analysis of the topological characteristics of space has revealed the following transformations: narrowing of extent, reduction of dimensionality, blurring of boundaries between internal and external, and disruption of the continuity of space. These changes reflect psychological disorganisation, loss of meaning, social orientation and alienation from the social and sacred environment. At the same time, they are accompanied by increased anxiety, fear of emptiness, and regressive manifestations of mental processes, emphasising the role of space as a marker of psychophysiological state during a crisis. Job's perception of himself as a righteous man and the rightful owner of goods leads to an overload of the mechanism of "omnipotent control." Psychological defence mechanisms include repression, retribution, devaluation, projection, and identification. Retribution manifests itself in self-punishment – cursing one's birthday, devaluing oneself and directing aggression towards oneself, while projection directs aggression towards God. Somatic manifestations, in particular skin lesions, reflect the mental state through regression, conversion of fear and internal aggression. Changes in the spatial characteristics of the psyche correlate with the dynamics of the internal state: loss of spatial continuity corresponds to a breakdown in meaning, narrowing of space corresponds to a limitation of the field of perception, disruption of structure corresponds to a breakdown in the hierarchy of values, and distortion of dimension corresponds to a loss of depth of self-awareness. The feeling of finitude determines the limits within which the

restoration of the meaning of life is possible. An analysis of the plot of the Book of Job showed that intense emotional pain, internal protest, and a state of devastation are critical psychological mechanisms that stimulate a rethinking of one's own existence, mobilise mental resources to integrate crisis experiences, and contribute to the formation of a new meaning in life. This opens up prospects for the development of psychotherapeutic strategies, in particular for supporting military personnel and others who have experienced traumatic events. Further research may focus on testing the hypothesis that therapeutic correction

of spatial perception contributes to the normalisation of mental state and effective recovery from existential crisis.

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Інтерпретація сприйняття простору в екзистенційній кризі: психологічний аналіз тексту «Книга Йова»

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♦ **Анотація.** У статті аналізується психологічна модель, здатна забезпечити підтримку військовослужбовцям, що опинилися у екзистенційній кризі – стані, що загрожує цілісності «Я», сенсу буття та структурі особистісних цінностей. Метою статті було на прикладі «Книги Йова» виявити зв'язок між станом людини в екзистенційній кризі та сприйняттям нею простору, вираженого у топологічних характеристиках. «Книга Йова» була обрана як дослідницький матеріал, оскільки в ній представлені складні психоемоційні переживання людини в кризовій ситуації, що проявляються у символічному описі простору і дозволяють проаналізувати вплив внутрішнього стану на його сприйняття. За допомогою історико-психологічної реконструкції, герменевтичного та феноменологічного підходів, а також аналітичних засобів динамічної психології проведено топологічний аналіз психічного простору. Встановлено, що зміни просторових характеристик корелюють з етапами внутрішньої динаміки: втрата безперервності простору відповідає розірваності сенсу, звуження протяжності – обмеженню поля сприйняття. Дослідження також підтвердило, що порушення структурованості відповідає розпаду ієрархії цінностей, спотворення мірності – втраті глибини самоусвідомлення. Відчуття скінченності сприяє формуванню меж, у яких можливе відновлення сенсу життя. Аналіз сюжету «Книги Йова» засвідчив, що переживання інтенсивного емоційного болю, внутрішнього протесту та станів спустошення виступають критичними психологічними механізмами, які стимулюють переосмислення власного буття, мобілізують ресурси психіки для інтеграції кризового досвіду та сприяють формуванню нового сенсу життя. Результати дослідження можуть бути використані для розробки моделі терапевтичного простору, у якій переживання болю, протесту та спустошення слугують умовами відновлення сенсу життя. Така модель може застосовуватися у психологічній підтримці осіб, які пережили травму, втрату або екзистенційну кризу, сприяючи інтеграції кризового досвіду та формуванню адаптивних стратегій подолання психологічних труднощів

♦ **Ключові слова:** девіантна поведінка; безперервність; топологічний аналіз; структурованість; символізм; скінченність