

Therapeutic Potential of Prayer in the Narrative Structure of Ernest Hemingway's Short Prose

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Abstract. The article analyzes the therapeutic potential of prayer and the hierophanic imagery matrix employed in the narrative structure of Ernest Hemingway's short prose (1899–1961). The relevance of the study is stipulated by the focus of contemporary literary studies on crisis states and post-traumatic forms of literary activities (testimony) resulting from a radical shift in the episteme caused by war. The analysis covers the texts with a pronounced religious component, in particular those that contain a transitive plot, a sacred imagological matrix, elements of biblical personospheres, or even implied fragments of confession, life, or prayer, since such texts are capable of facilitating a cathartic effect and enabling the recipient to rediscover a transcendent center. This has determined the choice of an appropriate analytical perspective – namely, the application of Mircea Eliade's methodology of the “camouflage of the sacred”, which relies on describing the ways in which transcendent reality is implicitly embedded in the profane and presupposes that the recipient possesses experience in symbolic interpretation necessary for identifying hierophanies in a desacralized

world. In this respect, the spiritual (religious) experience of artists who were participants in combat acquires particular significance. Drawing on the works of Mary Claire Kendall, Alaimo O'Donnell, and Ali Zaidi, the article examines the influence of existential dimensions of faith (Catholicism) on the life and work of E. Hemingway, who repeatedly reinterprets sacred motifs within a (post-)secular context. The study is based on an analysis of the hermeneutic, receptive, and narrative potential of prayer and hierophanies in examples of his war-related short prose – “A Very Short Story”, “Soldier’s Home”, and “Now I Lay Me” – included in the collections “In Our Time” (1925) and “Men Without Women” (1927). The article also emphasizes the function of the sacred *topos* as a space of temporary protection from the traumatic reality of war. It regards Christian symbolism of labor, prayer, and the Kingdom of God, which reveals an existential rupture between the generation of parents (bearers of traditional religious values) and children whose ontological frameworks were destroyed by war. The motif of fishing is singled out as the one recoding the natural image of the fish into a hierophanic register and activates, in the consciousness of a competent recipient, biblical connotations of ichthyan archetypes and images of the apostles as “fishers of men” for the Kingdom of God (Peter and Andrew). The analyzed patterns of personal and communal prayer carry different functional meanings in terms of the cathartic-compensatory potential of the sacred. We conclude that prayer appears as: an act of living faith and a form of inner salvation; a means of self-soothing and controlling traumatic experience; an opportunity to experience the transcendent in a liminal situation; a “glimmer” that models a space of safety and stable support; and a mechanism capable of neutralizing war trauma. However, the effectiveness of prayer as healing is determined primarily by the individual’s inner demand – while in a state of existential crisis – for dialogue with God.

Keywords: prayer; therapeutic function of art; poetics; trauma; war; religion; Ernest Hemingway.

Introduction. Methodological Framework

In times of radical social upheavals (such as pandemics, revolutions, or war), when an established way of life is disrupted, individuals quite often reconsider their axiological orientations, which in turn stimulates the search for a new system of coordinates within which their values could be rearticulated. It is precisely during such crisis moments that people frequently turn to art, which simultaneously

contains a powerful humanistic potential and may function as a form of testimony. At the same time, this search also concerns the quest for a transcendent center capable of strengthening one's motivation to continue living and sustaining an optimistic vision of the future. Scholars of mythology, religion, and philosophy, such as Mircea Eliade, emphasize the therapeutic potential of the sacred, emphasizing that since ancient times, during periods of calamity, misfortune, natural disasters, or epidemics, people have returned to God through humble prayer. Similarly, Georges Bataille interpreted the sacred as transgression, which manifests itself in liminal situations (Bataille 1986: p. 64).

In literature, sacred images may function as such an ontological core. Their imagological matrix activates certain associative scenarios in the receptive consciousness, connected either with a transitive image (Jesus, the Virgin Mary, Archangel Gabriel, an angel) or with a narrative pattern, thereby forming the groundwork for catharsis. In this regard, not only contemporary war literature appears convincing, but also foreign classics, such as the short prose of Ernest Hemingway.

As an analytical framework, this study employs Mircea Eliade's concept of the "camouflage of the sacred". This idea relies on the description of how transcendent, divine reality (the sacred) is implicitly embedded in the everyday (the profane), requiring from the recipient a corresponding experience of symbolic interpretation and "hermeneutic openness" in order to recognize these hierophanies. M. Eliade points to the importance of the recipient's spiritual optics for identifying the sacred in the ordinary: "for those who have a religious experience all nature is capable of revealing itself as cosmic sacrality. The cosmos in its entirety can become a hierophany" (Eliade 1959: p. 12). The Romanian scholar fairly observes that the believer "attempts to remain as long as possible in a sacred universe", since the understanding of lived experience is fundamentally different compared to "the experience of the man without religious feeling, of the man who lives, or wishes to live, in a desacralized world" (Eliade 1959: p. 13).

Identification of Sacred-Symbolic Centers in E. Hemingway's Prose in Terms of Literary Discourse

One of the most comprehensive studies representing Hemingway's religious experience is the monograph "Hemingway's Faith" (Kendall

2024) by Mary Claire Kendall, which analyzes the influence of Catholicism on the life and work of the American writer. It is important that, using the texts “The Sun Also Rises”, “A Farewell to Arms”, “For Whom the Bell Tolls”, and “The Old Man and the Sea”, the author examines how Hemingway experienced faith from the moment of spiritual awakening during World War I to the impact of religious imagery on his prose.

It is known that Hemingway grew up in a Protestant family, belonging to the “strict” Congregationalist tradition on his father’s side and to a more moderate Anglican Church with lenient “Puritan rules” on his mother’s side (Kendall 2024: p. 5). “The dichotomy of fear and love in Hemingway’s childhood, especially when it came to his relationship with God, was the dynamic shaping his personality, with love winning out” (Kendall 2024: p. 10). In his youth, he distanced himself from institutional religion, criticizing church dogma. Although the writer was not an actively practicing believer, he demonstrated a profound existential and moral sensitivity close to religious experience. His worldview is often characterized as “secular sacredness”, since his texts do not preach faith but rather reinterpret sacred narratives within a (post)secular world (for instance, the one-act play “Today is Friday”).

Mary Claire Kendall emphasizes that shortly before Hemingway’s nineteenth birthday, one of the most dramatic episodes of his life occurred. During his voluntary military service in Italy, he

discovered the richness of Catholicism – with all five senses. He bathed in Mary’s love and soaked up the redemptive reality of her son Jesus hanging on that wooden cross, writhing in pain, to his very sinews, the great European cathedrals he visited punctuating this reality (Kendall 2024: p. 29).

After sustaining multiple injuries from 227 fragments of a mortar shell, lying bloodied at the threshold of death, the Protestant in a Catholic country began to pray.

Hemingway considered July 8, 1918, a day of spiritual rebirth. It was the day he had stared down death and was “anointed” and absolved of all his sins. Now he “called himself a Catholic” (Kendall 2024: p. 35).

The researcher stresses that this experience was both decisive and unexpected, since “he was in Europe to help fight a war, not to find God” (Kendall 2024: p. 29).

Matthew Nickel adds the following in this regard:

The priest appeared at a ripe moment for Hemingway, whether he was dying or not, and the wounding experience – the feeling that he had lost his soul and that it had come back, the very recognition of his soul – and the ritual performed by the priest which affirmed the sanctity of the soul and its eternal destiny, sparked an intense yearning for something that might also affirm the sanctity of transient flesh (Nickel 2013).

Hemingway is known to have visited European cathedrals devoutly and respectfully, and “despite his shortcomings in sacramental observance, he consistently adhered to rituals associated with Christmas, Easter, and other major feasts. And he loved and revered the Pope” (Kendall 2024: p. 175). It is significant that in addition to regular religious practice, Hemingway “gave his Nobel Prize medal as a votive offering to the Virgin of Charity of Cobre” (O’Donnell 2020). Moreover, as Matthew Nickel notes, Hemingway’s personal wartime experience was often extrapolated onto the character sphere of his texts:

While it is impossible to determine exactly what young Hemingway experienced, the possibility that it was shell-shock or a traumatic brain injury is very plausible. Many of Hemingway’s characters in his fiction deal with the after-effects of severe wounds, often received in battle, and the spiritual progression of several characters <...> is caught up with the effects of war and the ability of each character to reconcile with the facts of trauma and survival (Nickel 2013).

Perhaps the largest number of literary studies has been devoted to the sacred potential of Hemingway’s “The Old Man and the Sea”. Thus, Valeriia Honcharuk examines its symbolism and allegorical dimension, emphasizing the narrative’s ability to evoke deep emotional responses and self-reflection in the reader, allowing one “to engage with deeper meanings and interpretations” (Honcharuk 2023: p. 79). Ali Zaidi also analyzes Hemingway’s short prose through the lens of Mircea Eliade’s concept of the “camouflage of the sacred”, focusing on the presence of the sacred through allusions and Christological metaphors in the texts

“Today Is Friday”, “The Killers”, “A Clean, Well-Lighted Place”, “Old Man at the Bridge”, and “The Light of the World” (Zaidi 2014). In turn, this study examines the narrative specificity of prayer and hierophanies in samples of Hemingway’s short prose on war themes, such as “A Very Short Story”, “Soldier’s Home”, and “Now I Lay Me”, from the collections “In Our Time” (1925) and “Men Without Women” (1927).

Function of Sacred Space and Prayer in “A Very Short Story”

In the work “A Very Short Story”, the lovers – a hospital worker, Luz, and a soldier – visit the Duomo in the city of Padua to pray before his return to the front.

It was dim and quiet, and there were other people praying. They wanted to get married, but there was not enough time for the banns, and neither of them had birth certificates. They felt as though they were married, but they wanted every one to know about it, and to make it so they could not lose it (Hemingway 1987: p. 96).

After this, their paths diverge forever, although Luz attempts to maintain contact by writing to him at the front.

In the short story under discussion, the sacred topos of the cathedral functions as a space of temporary protection from the traumatic reality of war. The silence and semi-darkness of the church create a sharp contrast with the evident chaos of the front, allowing the characters to experience a moment of short-term inner stabilization. Within the parameters of a therapeutic narrative model, this episode functions as emotional “grounding”. The lovers’ shared prayer performs the function of symbolic integration of traumatic experience. They do not merely appeal to the transcendent; rather, they reinterpret their relationship as already fulfilled and “real”, independent of legal procedures – as if war were incapable of depriving them of the present experience of love. The characters seek marriage not as an institution but primarily as a symbolic confirmation of the reality of their bond.

At the same time, retrospectively, this episode acquires a tragic therapeutic paradox, since prayer does not save the relationship from dissolution. Nevertheless, the prayer does not appear futile: it fixes a moment of authenticity, even when the bond between the lovers ultimately collapses. Such an experience corresponds to what Mircea

Eliade described as the camouflage of the sacred: the sacred does not guarantee happiness but endows an event with ultimate meaning. Thus, this episode demonstrates that the therapeutic potential of prayer lies not in healing as an outcome, but in the possibility of experiencing the transcendent within a liminal situation.

Culminating Focalization of Prayer in a Short Story “Soldier’s Home”

One of the most representative texts in terms of the cathartic-compensatory potential of the sacred is Hemingway’s short story “Soldier’s Home”, which addresses the problem of a veteran’s (non)adaptation to the realities of a peaceful social environment. The psychological traumas of the protagonist, Krebs, are not immediately visible or comprehensible to those around him, since society likely expected veterans to provide sensational war narratives. For civilians, “typical”, “standardized” war stories had become routine and uninteresting unless they contained something exceptional capable of impressing the listener. Consequently, the expectations of others seem to compel Krebs to fabricate details in order to be noticed:

At first Krebs, who had been at Belleau Wood, Soissons, the Champagne, St. Mihiel and in the Argonne did not want to talk about the war at all. Later he felt the need to talk but no one wanted to hear about it. His town had heard too many atrocity stories to be thrilled by actualities. Krebs found that to be listened to at all he had to lie, and after he had done this twice he, too, had a reaction against the war and against talking about it. A distaste for everything that had happened to him in the war set in because of the lies he had told (Hemingway 1987: p. 98).

The narrator observes that these lies were “harmless”, since Krebs merely attributed to himself what other soldiers had seen and experienced; thus, they belonged to the realm of collective military memory. However, even this form of fabrication proves destructive for the protagonist, as falsifying his own experience deprives the veteran of an authentic connection with what he has lived through and, at the same time, deepens his inner isolation. The impossibility of being heard forces Krebs to distance himself not only from his war memories as such, but also from himself. This episode illustrates the absence, in postwar society, of a space

for the safe verbalization of traumatic experience. Krebs's need to narrativize the war constitutes an existentially conditioned stage of psychological healing; yet it is met with indifference and expectations of an "effective" story. For this reason, the protagonist chooses silence, which, however, does not heal but merely preserves the trauma.

Similar to contemporary realities is the sense of time articulated in "Soldier's Home", clearly divided by wartime events into a "before" and an "after", forming a specific narrative perspective:

There were so many good-looking young girls. Most of them had their hair cut short. When he went away only little girls wore their hair like that or girls that were fast. They all wore sweaters and shirt waists with round Dutch collars. It was a pattern (Hemingway 1987: p. 99).

After returning home, Krebs spends most of his time in the poolroom and the library, plays the clarinet, and walks around town. A particular receptive focus of the story is placed on his interest in reading books about the war, within whose fictional space the protagonist seems to return to the front, reliving his existential experience:

He sat there on the porch reading a book on the war. It was a history and he was reading about all the engagements he had been in. It was the most interesting reading he had ever done. He wished there were more maps. He looked forward with a good feeling to reading all the really good histories when they would come out with good detail maps. Now he was really learning about the war. He had been a good soldier (Hemingway 1987: p. 100).

It is obvious that reading performs a therapeutic-compensatory function, enabling the protagonist to structure traumatic experience and endow it with logic and order – qualities absent from real memories and reflections on the war.

War trauma also significantly affects Krebs's personal life. After returning from the front, he avoids any form of intimacy with others, unwilling to expend time and emotional resources on relationships:

He would have liked to have a girl but he did not want to have to spend a long time getting her. <...> He did not want any consequences. He did not want any consequences ever again. He wanted to live along

without consequences. Besides he did not really need a girl. The army had taught him that. It was all right to pose as though you had to have a girl (Hemingway 1987: p. 99).

In fact, this decision functions as a defensive strategy aimed at avoiding renewed emotional traumatization. As we can see, for Krebs, lying is repugnant in all spheres of life.

His relationships with his family prove no less complex. Only his sisters perceive him as a “hero”, while his father largely ignores him, and his mother, although asking him to talk about the war, listens inattentively. Her desire to quickly “return” her son to peaceful, “normal” life through work, social activity, and conformity to socially accepted models indicates her inability to grasp the depth of her child’s internal crisis. The involuntary comparisons she makes between Krebs and “successful” veterans only intensify his sense of alienation.

However, the central conflict of “Soldier’s Home” is structured around a sacred imagistic matrix represented by Christian symbolism of labor, prayer, and the Kingdom of God: “‘God has some work for everyone to do,’ his mother said. ‘There can be no idle hands in His Kingdom’” (Hemingway 1987: p. 100). Krebs’s response – “I’m not in His Kingdom” – introduces a radically different worldview vector in relation to his mother’s convictions (“We’re all in His Kingdom”), exposing an existential rupture between generations. Once again, Krebs’s “I’m not in His Kingdom” may be read as an intuitive “unmasking of the camouflage”, since the protagonist senses clear discrepancies between the potential of verbal sacredness and the reality of war, which has destroyed his ontological frames.

In this fragment, the mother’s religious discourse is directed toward “returning” her son to an ordered moral “cosmos”, in which every person has a defined place and duty. For Krebs, however, this system has lost its ontological persuasiveness and instead testifies to an existential emptiness caused by the experience of war. The maternal religious discourse thus functions in the story as a form of camouflaged sacredness.

The tension culminates in a peculiar “confession” by the mother, who, without realizing the depth of her son’s trauma, appeals to the retrospective narrative of prayer: “I pray for you all day long, Harold”

(Hemingway 1987: p. 101). Here, prayer functions as a marker of unconditional maternal love, but at the same time as the only available and potentially effective instrument for overcoming fear, guilt, and helplessness. Turning to God for the mother is not only an act of living faith, but also a means of self-soothing and of controlling her own traumatic experience.

The subsequent episode of shared prayer performs a therapeutic function primarily for the mother herself, who also proves to be traumatized by the war and by expectations regarding her son. Unlike Harold, she possesses a clear ontological need fulfilled through prayer and conversation with God. Krebs physically participates in the sacred act by kneeling, yet remains internally detached and incapable of verbalizing prayer. At the same time, the absence of unconditional acceptance of his otherness leads him to simulate faith and obedience, which only deepens his existential loneliness.

Thus, Hemingway's "Soldier's Home" reveals a profound conflict between a veteran's internal need for therapeutic comprehension of lived experience and society's inability to accept the truth of war without its aestheticization or heroization. Here, the sacred is not denied as such, but rather testifies to a deep anthropological crisis, in which a person, reflecting on the experience of war, is not engaged in dialogue with God and does not strive toward it – thereby rendering ultimate healing impossible.

Camouflage of the Sacred and Narrative of Prayer in a Story "Now I Lay Me"

The title of the story "Now I Lay Me" intertextually refers the reader to a well-known children's prayer:

Now I lay me down to sleep,
I pray, thee, Lord, my soul to keep.
If I should die before I wake,
I pray, thee, Lord, my soul to take.

The story centers on a soldier who, after being wounded, suffers from systematic sleep disturbances:

I myself did not want to sleep because I had been living for a long time with the knowledge that if I ever shut my eyes in the dark and let myself go, my soul would go out of my body. I had been that way for a long time, ever since I had been blown up at night and felt it go out of me and go off and then come back (Hemingway 1987: p. 222).

Accordingly, the narrative unfolds through a semi-oneiric mode of recollection. The protagonist remains physically awake but mentally combines fictional plots with memories of childhood and youth, thereby constructing an inner space of psychological survival.

According to Mircea Eliade, a hierophanic object represents a manifestation of the sacred within a particular object or phenomenon; it becomes something other than itself while preserving its own essence and nature. That is, it “continues to participate in its surrounding cosmic milieu” (Eliade 1959: p. 12) and at the same time functions as a “manifestation of the sacred”. In this way, the motif of fishing is repeatedly actualized in the text, transferring the natural image of the fish into a hierophanic context and activating biblical connotations in the consciousness of a competent reader. The ichthyic archetype symbolizes the primordial act of creation. Moreover, the text implicitly evokes the Gospel episode in which the simple fishermen Simon (Peter) and his brother Andrew become apostles – “fishers of men” for the Kingdom of God. This transformation of everyday labor into a sacred vocation exemplifies the “camouflage of the sacred”, in which the transcendent is concealed within the ordinary. A relevant explanation for the use of river and fishing imagery may be found in Mircea Eliade, who speaks of the purifying and regenerative functions of such symbolism:

In whatever religious complex we find them, the waters invariably retain their function; they disintegrate, abolish forms, “wash away sins”; they are at once purifying and regenerating. Their destiny is to precede the Creation and to reabsorb it, since they are incapable of transcending their own mode of being, incapable, that is, of manifesting themselves in forms. The waters cannot pass beyond the condition of the virtual, of germs and latencies (Eliade 1959: p. 131).

For the protagonist, fishing becomes a means of reducing the time of wakefulness. When he “could not fish,” he turned to prayer:

On those nights I was cold-aware and said my prayers over and over and tried to pray for all the people I had ever known. That took up a great amount of time, for if you try to remember all the people you have ever known, going back to the earliest thing you remembe (Hemingway 1987: p. 223).

He recited for each person the most well-known prayers, “Our Father” and “Hail Mary”. This rhythmic prayer structures his prolonged nocturnal time until “you could go to sleep, if you were in a place where you could sleep in the daylight” (Hemingway 1987: p. 223).

The protagonist’s memories are organized according to a pendulum principle: he moves from the prewar period to the moment of war and back to the safe space of childhood, when he first learned the prayer referenced in the title:

I am starting with just before I went to the war and remembering back from one thing to another. I found I could only remember back to that attic in my grandfather’s house. Then I would start there and remember this way again, until I reached the war (Hemingway 1987: p. 223).

Evidently, war functions as the key traumatic trigger that shattered the integrity of lived experience. Prayer, in turn, operates as a glimmer that models a space of safety.

In his hospital conversations with the wounded soldier John, the protagonist verbalizes their shared trauma and existential helplessness, even articulating the motivation behind participation in war. From their dialogue, the contemporary reader perceives the typological similarity of war’s destructive impact on the consciousness of its participants:

“I don’t know, John,” I said. “I got in pretty bad shape along early last spring and at night it bothers me”. “Just like I am”, he said. “I shouldn’t have ever got in this war. I’m too nervous”. “Maybe it will get better”. “Say, Signor Tenente, what did you get in this war for, anyway?” “I don’t know, John. I wanted to, then”. “Wanted to”, he said. “That’s a hell of a reason” (Hemingway 1987: p. 225).

At times, images merge within the protagonist’s traumatized consciousness; however, prayers remain his stable point of support. He

does not forget to pray for John as well, which demonstrates a high degree of empathic involvement: “I was glad he was not there, because he would have been a great worry to me” (Hemingway 1987: p. 226).

Thus, in “Now I Lay Me”, sacred imagery and the narrative of prayer function as psychotherapeutic mechanisms that allow the protagonist’s PTSD-affected consciousness to temporarily neutralize war memories. In keeping with Mircea Eliade’s concept, the sacred here does not manifest itself overtly but is camouflaged within repetitive rituals of memory, prayer, and everyday action, becoming a form of inner salvation. At the same time, prayer operates as a specific mode of rescue from war trauma, conditioned primarily by the character’s internal need for dialogue with God.

Instead of Conclusions

In 2025, there was published a book of essays by the Ukrainian writer and soldier Artur Dron, titled “Hemingway Knows Nothing”. In terms of his own personal traumatic experience, the author reflects on key ontological questions faced by a person placed in the existential situation of war – questions of God, love, faith, values, and fear. In the eponymous essay, the narrator, who previously knew war only from the books of the American classic, states: “I began 2022 still with Hemingway, but I knew nothing then. When I received a rifle in March of that year, I named it Ernest” (Дронь 2025: p. 101). For the narrator, the American classic had represented a model of literary style; the text is replete not only with references to Hemingway’s writing practice but is also saturated with intertextual codes drawn from his novels. However, the author later articulates the poetics underlying the chosen title:

No, I do not believe that Hemingway describes war implausibly. No, I do not think he lacked personal experience. And I certainly do not consider myself better than him. Yes, our shared youth has ended. Yes, we said goodbye and went our separate ways. And yes, this is undoubtedly the best outcome for both of us. Hemingway knows nothing about the Russian-Ukrainian war. That is all. I believed in what Hemingway said for a long time, but I encountered a completely different war than the one he saw (Дронь 2025: p. 103).

In this way, the difference between Hemingway's narrative rhythm and the short prose of contemporary Ukrainian authors – such as Serhii Zhadan, Artem Chekh, Artem Chapai, and Artur Dron – lies primarily in the writer's motivational involvement in war. For Hemingway, participation in military events at an early stage was largely a voluntary entry into the experience of a “foreign” war. For contemporary Ukrainian writers, by contrast, war does not appear as an adventure but as an existentially unavoidable struggle for the survival of their own country, filled with pain, dirt, and death, and devoid of any romanticization of heroism. This fundamental difference is aptly articulated by A. Dron:

Yes, Hemingway and I both went to war. But the difference is that I never wanted to be there. Young Hemingway went to war because he wanted to. And it was a foreign war that did not threaten his nation. Young Ukrainians fight because they must (Дронь 2025: p. 103).

Instead, the prose of Ukrainian authors reveals a profound awareness of personal vulnerability, traumatic loss, and responsibility for the collective fate of the nation. Nevertheless, the analyzed samples of Hemingway's short prose – particularly in terms of the therapeutic potential of sacred images-hierophanies and the narrative of prayer – constitute important artistic testimonies of lived war experience, remaining relevant in the context of searching for pathways toward healing a society traumatized by war (both military personnel and civilians).

We may conclude that the considered examples of personal and communal prayer carry different functional meanings in terms of the cathartic-compensatory potential of the sacred and, overall, occur as: an act of living faith and a form of inner salvation; a means of self-soothing and controlling traumatic experience; an opportunity to experience the transcendent in a liminal situation; a “glimmer” that models a space of safety and stable support; and a mechanism capable of neutralizing war trauma. However, the effectiveness of prayer as a form of healing is determined primarily by the individual's inner demand – while in a state of existential crisis – for dialogue with God. Thus, literary discourse that incorporates sacred and prayer-related codes demonstrates the capacity of verbal art to perform a cathartic-compensatory function, provided that

there exists a corresponding demand – whether on the part of the character (within the plot structure of the text) or on the part of the recipient, in terms of the cognitive and emotional impact of a literary work.

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ТЕРАПЕВТИЧНИЙ ПОТЕНЦІАЛ МОЛИТВИ В НАРАТИВНІЙ СТРУКТУРІ МАЛОЇ ПРОЗИ ЕРНЕСТА ГЕМІНГВЕЯ

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Анотація. Висвітлено терапевтичний потенціал молитви та ієрофанічної образної матриці, задіяних у наративній структурі малої прози Ернеста Гемінгвея (1899–1961). Актуальність розвідки зумовлена увагою сучасного літературознавства до кризових станів і посттравматичних форм літературної творчості (свідчень) унаслідок радикальної зміни епістеми, спричиненої війною. Аналізу підлягають тексти з виразним релігійним компонентом, зокрема ті, що містять транзитивну фабулу, сакральну імагологічну матрицю, елементи біблійної персоносфери чи навіть імпліковані фрагменти сповіді, житія або молитви, позаяк вони здатні сприяти реалізації катарсичного ефекту і віднайденню реципієнтом трансцендентного центру. Це зумовило вибір відповідної аналітичної оптики – застосування методології Мірчі Еліаде «камуфляжу священного», що ґрунтується на описі способів імпліцитування трансцендентної реальності у профанне, та передбачає наявність у реципієнта досвіду символічної інтерпретації, необхідного для ідентифікації ієрофаній у десакралізованому світі. У зв’язку з цим особливої ваги набуває духовний (релігійний) досвід митців – учасників бойових дій. У статті, з опертям на розвідки Мері Клер Кендалл, Алаймо О’Доннел, Алі Заїді, розглянуто вплив екзистенцій віри (католицизму) на життя й творчість Е. Гемінгвея, який неодноразово переосмислює сакральну сюжетику в (пост)секулярному контексті. Дослідження базується на аналізі герменевтичного, рецептивного й наративного потенціалу молитви та ієрофаній у зразках його воєнної малої прози – «Дуже коротке оповідання», «Вояк у дома», «Тихий вечір настає», що входять до збірок «У наш час» (1925) та «Чоловіки без жінок» (1927). Акцентовано функцію сакрального топосу як простору тимчасового захисту від травматичної реальності війни. Розглянуто християнську символіку праці, молитви й Божого Царства, що оприявлює екзистенційний розрив між поколіннями батьків (носіями традиційних релігійних цінностей) і дітей, чиї онтологічні фрейми були зруйновані війною. Виокремлено мотив риболовлі, який перекодовує природний образ риби в ієрофанічний регистр і активізує у свідомості компетентного реципієнта біблійні конотації іхтійних архетипів

та образи апостолів-«ловців людей» для Царства Божого (Петра й Андрія). Розглянуті зразки персональної та спільної молитви мають різне функціональне навантаження в контексті катарсично-компенсаторного потенціалу сакрального. Висновуємо, що вона постає: актом живої віри і формою внутрішнього спасіння; способом самозаспокоєння і контролю травматичного досвіду; можливістю прожити трансцендентне у межовій ситуації; «глімером», що моделює простір безпеки й стабільної опори; механізмом, спроможним нейтралізувати воєнні травми. Втім, дієвість молитовної практики як зцілення зумовлена передусім внутрішнім запитом людини, яка перебуває в ситуації екзистенційної кризи, на діалог із Богом.

Ключові слова: молитва; терапевтична функція мистецтва; поетика; травма; війна; релігія; Ернест Гемінгвей.

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