

The Camouflage of the Sacred in Hemingway's Short Fiction¹

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This essay examines Hemingway's short fiction in the light of Mircea Eliade's notion of the camouflage of the sacred. Spiritual meaning and love are hidden beneath the dialogue of Hemingway's characters. In a short play ("Today Is Friday") and four short stories ("The Killers," "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," "Old Man at the Bridge," and "The Light of the World," light imagery, biblical allusions, Christological associations, reveal a hidden sacral dimension that has been largely overlooked by critics who dwell on the ostensible spiritual absence that characterizes Hemingway's fiction. [Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: <http://www.transformativestudies.org> ©2014 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]

KEYWORDS: Hemingway, Eliade, Short Story, the Sacred, "The Killers," "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," "Old Man at the Bridge," "The Light of the World," "Today Is Friday".

Ernest Hemingway's short fiction illustrates Mircea Eliade's notion that "the camouflage or even occultation of the sacred and of spiritual meanings in general characterizes all crepuscular eras" (*Autobiography* 153). In a short play ("Today Is Friday") and four short stories ("The Killers," "A Clean Well-Lighted Place," "Old Man at the Bridge," and "The Light of the World"), light imagery, biblical allusions, and the figure of Christ, reveal a hidden imaginary universe. This sacral dimension casts a subterranean love that pulsates beneath the terse dialogue of Hemingway's characters.

¹ An earlier draft of this article appeared in the December 2013 issue of *American, British and Canadian Studies*. The author wishes to thank the editor, Adriana Neagu, for permission to republish the revised article.

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