

## The Light and the Darkness Metaphoric and Symbolic Constructs and the Issue of the “Traumatized Subject” in Hagiographical Myth

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**Abstract:** The light and the darkness metaphoric and symbolic representations were considered in the mechanism of the “traumatized subject” development in hagiographical literature. Attention was drawn to the roles of myth, poetic and sense-making potential of the light and the darkness in the process of forming special type of hagiographical myth narrative identity. It is noted that detailed analysis of religious texts hagiographical frame through updating the light and the darkness symbolic constructs in the dynamics of trauma experience allows to underline the ways of forming socially regulating mechanisms of the Christian spiritual tradition.

**Key words:** light, darkness, “traumatized subject”, hagiographical literature, martyrdom.

The following expression of Professor Fr. T. Peabody remains relevant in the today’s reality: “Contemporary social issue is a moral issue” [7, p. 19]. Researches of the means of axiological gradation of intellectual activity of a subject as an instrument of social and cultural regulation take special meaning. Special type of the sense based on world view and attribution to full religious or social community serves as a “gradient” of judgments. Person’s moral formation and development do not exclude possibility to obtain trauma experience at a micro-level through the fall and, therefore, are characterized by certain confession modifications. The latter finds its expression, concerning the sense view of hagiographical and patristic literature, in translators of cultural codes, archetypal and symbolic constructions of the light and the darkness. Understanding reasons, course and possible consequences of local trauma forms the grounds for prevention or solving global traumas.

“Trauma discourse” actualization in the national science is mostly related to translation of western sociologists or to issue or reissue of the works based on sociological approach (J. Alexander, W. Eiermann, V. I. Ognienko, O. Yu. Rozhdestvenska, O. Trubina, P. Sztompka, S. Ushakin), sociology and theology synthesis (T. S. Goryachaya), phenomenology (J. Lacan, E. Lévinas, R. Bernet). However, studies of trauma issues in the Christian religious traditions represented by hagiographical texts from the perspective of culture phenomenology (G. D. Pankov) were not widely and deeply researched in the national culture studies.

Purpose of the research is to carry out cultural understanding of sense-making, metaphoric and symbolic representations of the light and the darkness in the view of the “traumatized subject” issue by the example of common life literature. Object of the research is Christian hagiographic literature, the subject is sense and symbolic implementation of the light and darkness in the view of hagiographic narrative.

Methodology of the research is based on using axiological, semiotic, hermeneutic, phenomenological and theological methods. Scientific novelty of the work is aimed at the effort to identify mechanisms of the “traumatized subject” idea development as a special type of narrative identity and influence thereto of sense and symbolic constructs of the light and darkness by the example of texts hagiographical frame. Analysis of saints’ life history in terms of semantic field of symbolic add-ins of the light and darkness allows to specify the ways of forming social and regulating mechanisms of the Christian culture.

In hagiographical literature the being units of trauma experience equivalence are placed in the field of depravity (darkness, infernality) being a contrast to celestial (light, holiness).

Trauma experience in saints’ life history is transformed into narrative matrix wherein metaphoric and symbolic constants of the light and darkness serve as indicators of ontological marks: pre-traumatic (“At that time the Turks seduced them (children – M. Ch.) into the Islamism, therefore, turning the children of divine light into the children of darkness and illusion” [1, p. 293]), traumatic and post-traumatic (“The Most Holy God “does not seek death of the unjust one but only to return the unjust one from his way and he will live!” [3, p. 867], touched a heart of the abjurer by His grace and suddenly Konstantin’s thoughts have lightened up with the divine light: he deeply felt his unholy fall and fully understood from what height and to what death abyss the miserable one fell. He bitterly cried for a long lime due to his grief just like repented Petro... Finally, regardless shame and fear... he appeared in the sultan’s palace... where he gladly accepted the crown of martyrdom” [1, p. 433]).

Each subject is prone to obtaining traumatic experience in the prospective. This is a particular ambivalence of possibility to change the characterizing pre-traumatic stage of personality existence. In the Christian religious tradition mental progress, ascetic practices served as a guarantee of personal identity divided by apriority of sin existence therein, hunger for flesh (common, darkness, infernal powers) and belonging to godhead, hunger for spirit (holly, light).

R. Bernet determines dialectics of the traumatic period dual actuality as follows: “The traumatized subject is kept under excess pressure. It is torn between two opposite imperatives: 1) to learn something foreign; 2) to escape to secure and save what is common to itself” [2, p. 134]. Consequently, there is a bipolar ontological necessity of sin, darkness perception – “foreign” from one part, and “regeneration” of divine light, spirituality, from the other part.

Trauma, as American psychoanalyst Alan Bass notes, develops as “differentiation trauma”, namely as painful process of distinction between the past and the future [15, p. 19]. The “personality” issue being a center of the Orthodox anthropology is a synthesis of the learning about a person as the God’s image and is considered in the unity of spiritual, moral and body display [5, p. 47]. In life of saints sin draws a sacral and temporal line between the light and darkness, possibility to obtain Kingdom of

heaven and to lose it: "... to seducer and cheater... guilty in death of many nations... believed in him and instead of the light they plunged in the darkness" [1, p. 223]. The darkness ruining human's connection element with the God – the light, is an equivalent of loss of personality's spiritual entirety or traumatic experience, as the New Testament says: "... you are light in the God, – behave like children of light" [3, p. 226].

Agonal state of the person obtained sin experience is a retrospective expression of the traumatic event: "Position of those refused from the faith due to fear of torment and death for the Christ was sad. After that they had to suffer from other severe agony of soul. They felt guilty for cowardice and betrayal of the faith they themselves believed saint. They suffered from the fear that they exchanged eternal salvation for earthly life. They suffered from shame before the Christians they turned away from" [12, p. 13]. The scale of emotional stress is leveled up by the feeling of "separation" from the light, the God, reproduction of the experience, thus, further existence is considered as "continuous pain circulation" (according to S. Ushakin [15, p. 28]) due to the actions committed. We can read the following in Saint George's life history: "Blinded by worldly vanity he got the Islamism but soon after recognition of lie as the truth, darkness as the light, having come out from mental blindness, vividly felt the severity of his crime, he bitterly cried and was looking for the means of his improvement" [1, p. 209]. Rudolf Bernet says that loss of subjective identity due to the reasons beyond the subject's control (traumatic event) constitutes death [2, p. 121]. In life history of Saint Macarius of Egypt who was forced to get another faith it is noted: "Shame as a black cloud lauded his heart preventing from passing a happy ray of his reunion with the Creator of heaven" [1, p. 221].

In the process of personality self-reflection, the light and darkness serve as estimated markers due to which there is a "selection" of actions, activities, events at the two poles (the good, the sanctity, divinity / evil, wickedness, infernality). In the Christian anthropology the "personality" is a dynamic structure [5, p. 88], in turn, the dynamics of the traumatic experience associated with the identification stage, as "transformation occurring to the subject upon its assimilation with its image" [9, p. 509], namely as sinful being. In the Christian theology, the redemption is construed as restoration of human union with the God, broken as a result of the fall because of the person, as the overcoming of alienation and reconciliation between the two [11, p. 35]. Metaphoric and symbolic construct of the darkness becomes a representative of destructive processes of personality, stigma (Greek – mark, spot) of spiritual trauma. Critical self-consciousness as a result of remorse for the resulting traumatic experience (sinning) synchronizes the two vectors of the asceticism, namely, renunciation vector (from the darkness, sin, the world of temptations) and direction vector (towards the light, holiness, God). Thus, post-traumatic experience of repentance shall be separated as an act of personalization.

Understanding the morphosis of own spiritual core serves as an impulse for searching pastoral instructions, necessity to stay in the church's bosom for the joint search of the ways to overcome trauma: "The ancient saw

implacability of the saint, and that divine fire was lighten up in his soul, consulted with other experienced fathers who, after a joint council, gave their consent for Macarius to martyrdom" [1, p. 222]; "After getting the Muhammadanism... they confessed, and to better reassure the God left by them, they went to the holy mountain and joined one spiritual ancient, and asked him for an advice what they should do further. "We want to die, and there is no other way as to capture our regret and faith confession than by our own blood", they said. After all useless over-persuasions from their part, the old man accepted the great desire of the apostates repented" [14, p. 19].

Unity in spiritual victories (repentance, awareness of own sinfulness both actual and theoretical, nullity of mortal body, and so on) and therefore consolidation becomes, in some way, a mean of collective memorialization. "Memories about traumatic experience become natural social and cultural context of existence", and church fraternity often becomes "the principal author and the principal addressee of trauma stories" [15, p. 10]. Social isolation (life in desert, caves and other deserted places) is an alternative of collective feeling of traumatic experience in terms whereof "trauma symbolic localization" [15, p. 30] is carried out due to establishment of communication channel between human and the God through prayer practices.

Polycoding of the light and darkness symbolic modulates in the view of hagiographical narrative solves the issue on searching discursive tools in the process of trauma verbal fixation. Sin, fall "set path of the work therewith not becoming a subject of the work" [15, p. 13]: "... all Neocaesarea was in the darkness of idolatry" [8, p. 13]; "... everything is in the darkness of unbelief and barbarism ..." [6, p. 281].

As noted by S. Ushakin, the desire to enter trauma marks in everyday life structure becomes the sense of post-traumatic life [15, p. 9]. Traumatic topos "post" forms and establishes the state of ineradicableness and non-return. Awareness of the loss of spiritual integrity and derogation from the basic values of the Christian tradition, reproducing the sense of loss of the Lord's light becomes the basis for searching involvement in the divine, holy, Father of the Light Jesus Christ: "Joining the realm of freedom through the free choice of death they carry spiritual breakthrough to God, approving the ideal of the Christ likeness as a criterion of holiness" [4, p. 40]. Since sin excludes the individual adoration during the earthly life, martyrdom opens up the prospect of eternal bliss by sacral sacrificing. Therefore, the peculiarity of the Holy Fathers' life is not only a statement of trauma (darkness, sin) and adapting it to personality's contemporary life, but the election of peremptory existential vector – martyrdom in the name of the light, faith.

Special type of narrative identity is formed in lives of saints, ratifying ambivalent thematic horizon: personal / common. Form the one part, attention is drawn to certain personal, unique life and saint's achievement through transcendence acts (critical reevaluation of themselves through reorientation from egonomy to theonomy, critical reevaluation of the world through negligence of secular and aiming at sacral, prayers, purification, enlightenment) using semantics of symbolic constructs of the light and darkness. From the other part, availability of "relevant

groups canonical narration” [13, p. 59] is separated, namely, similarity and indivisibility with the Christian culture in general.

José Alaniz researched forming of certain narrative traditions aimed at institutionalization of death “non-seeing means” [15, p. 33]. Categoricalness in selection of the ontological direction in favor of martyrdom death (or killing flesh, desires as one of the key idea of the ascetics) in the name of the God, the Light, the Christian faith in the saint’s life history serves as a model, symbolic pattern wherein certain spiritual experience is specified: “... to publicly identify yourself as a Christian and the Jesus Christ as a true God and then to wash off the darkness spot from own soul by martyrdom death” [1, p. 221]. Overcoming the instinct of self-preservation of “Me physical” multiples overcoming trauma, adoring “Me spiritual” through martyrdom act. Ideologemes of beneficence, firmness and invincibility are designated not only to determine the meaning of each separate martyrdom act, but also to underline specifics of the Christian tradition directly related to the idea of participation with Jesus Christ. Job Boretsky, Metropolitan of Kyiv, wrote the following in “Advices on Devoutness”: “To take death with pleasure through martyrdom by the example of the Christ” [16, p. 255]. Martyrdom is one of the most significant axiological constants of Christian spirituality: “... but fellow co-heirs of the Christ, only when we suffer together with Him to become renowned together with Him” [3, p. 187]. So the idea of the Christ crucifixion in terms of traumatic experience and in personality spiritual development in general is the major sense and existential intention: “The path of martyrdom is elected for a conscious desire to

build your life on the model of the earth achievement of the Christ. Voluntary suffering as succession of the Christ is the achievement of the holy martyrs” [4, p. 40].

As noted by Yu. M. Lotman, any language is not only communicative but also modeling system [10, p. 22]. That is why hagiographical narrative has educative, pedagogic value. Hagiographical text is of back and liaison direction, namely it allows to solve one of the most important tasks to “determine own essence” [10, p. 83]. The specified causal relationships, alternatives of behavioral sequence and binary of being equivalences through the system of cultural codes integrated to the religious text sheets are aimed at the humanity spiritual education, the Orthodox ascetics popularization in its contemporary interpretation.

Metaphoric and symbolic potential of the light and the darkness represents special constructs of the traumatized subject in the view of hagiographical narrative in accordance with temporal and ontologic differentiation. Ultimatumness of the being road reorientation towards “radical ascetics” – martyrdom, is related to the idea of participation with the Jesus Christ as the basis of the Christian spiritual tradition. In the process of forming special type of the hagiographical myth narrative identity, the light and darkness serve as sense-making and myth and poetic tools itself crystallizing the principal archetype of the Christian worldview.

Prospective of the further researches are related to study influence of the symbolic constructs of the light and darkness on the process of forming, polycoding of sense-making, visualization of the holiness in the Christian and Orthodox culture.

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### **Метафоро-символические конструкты свет и тьма и проблема «травмированного субъекта» в пространстве агиографического мифа**

**М. А. Чумаченко**

Рассмотрено метафоро-символические репрезентации света и тьмы в механизме конструирования «травмированного субъекта» в плоскости агиографической литературы. Акцентировано внимание на роли метафоро-поэтических и смыслотворческих потенциях света и тьмы в процессе формирования особого типа нарративной идентичности агиографического мифа. Отмечено, что детальный анализ агиографического корпуса религиозных текстов вследствие актуализации символических конструктов света и тьмы в динамике травматического опыта позволяет выделить пути формирования социорегулирующих механизмов христианской культуры.

**Ключевые слова:** свет, тьма, “травмированный субъект”, агиографическая литература, мученичество.