






The battle with marlin and sharks in Ernest Hemingway's "The Old Man and the Sea" – a perspective on literary descriptions of extreme human activities in the prevention and therapy of innovative agonology

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Abstract

The world of literature is created by words; by evoking images they authenticate human activity. Through the magic of words, one can create every possible and impossible reality that is difficult to imagine. The purpose of this research essay is a crossover discussion of literature and praxeology aspects from the perspective of using innovative agonology in prevention and therapy. The old fisherman's struggle, first with the marlin, then with the sharks described by Nobel Prize winner Ernest Hemingway, is again captured in the shorthand descriptive language of praxeology. An old fisherman in extreme conditions constructs simple, practical, and useful tools to fight the sharks. It respects the rules of noble combat (as with the human subject). His actions are directed at the body of the opponent (similar to the specifics of combat sports) but in the final phase of the fight with the marlin and during the confrontation with the sharks, he uses methods and means appropriate for destructive combat. In a sense, martial arts bibliotherapy plays a similar role in influencing the intellectual (mental) sphere as fun forms of martial arts do in influencing the psychophysical sphere of personality, that is, the mental, somatic, and energetic (neurophysiological) spheres together.

Keywords: bravery • courage • extreme form of physical activity • method of cunctation • moral power/strength • praxeology

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Praxiology – science about good work. *A Treatise on Good Work*, a fundamental lecture of praxiology by Tadeusz Kotarbiński (the first edition in 1955) has been translated into majority of the so-called congress languages (English, German, Russian) and as well: Czech, Japanese, and Serbo-Croatian.

A positive position and a negative position – “An acting subject places itself in a positive position towards an action’s aim if it does not need to strain in realization of this aim (...) in a negative position (...) in it must strain in achieving it because an automatic course of events without its interference is tending to a discordant to intended state of matter” [36, p. 131].

The method of cunctation – a cunctator is the one who postpones. A method of cunctation in a certain sense is a special case of using a method of intensification the forces’ ratio on own benefit (a choice of a correspondent place and time). It is left anyway in a certain antagonism towards a method of forming accomplished facts (this quest is elucidated by Kotarbiński [37, p. 235, also [4]).

Rudniński’s rule of the highest degree of generality for extremely difficult countermeasures – “in an action, in which the material or environment is in a movement that is independent of the actor, while at the same time creating strong and varied resistance, act as if you can change both the plan of action and its manner as quickly as possible at any time” [19, p. 25].

Bravery – means efficiency in good deeds, efficiency combined with estimable aspirations [38].

Courage – a skill in a fair matter. In the case of courage to a praxiological evaluation one adds the moral evaluation [38, p. 59].

Extreme form of physical activity (EFPA) – “are extreme sports, often classified according to the environment in which they are performed (water, land, air), extreme form of physical recreation as well as gainful activity or voluntary service, and all varieties of physical activity that meet at least one classification criterion

INTRODUCTION

The world of literature is created by words; by evoking images they authenticate human activity. Through the magic of words, one can create every possible and impossible reality that is difficult to imagine. Words inform, convey thoughts, attitudes, and emotions; they are signals, signs, and symbols. Thinking is done using words, concepts, and images. Gods, heroes, rulers, brave individuals – in a word: the heroes of literature speak in a peculiar way to the reader and are part of the dialogue, an agreement with the writer as the creation of time. A writer is usually seen through the fate of his characters. Acceptance of the character is at the same time acceptance of the creator. Psychotherapy cannot stand the disjunction of ideas but relies on their compatibility. Example, model, teaching, warning, and support find in this concept an ally, mostly in the readers seeking sensation, emotion, and therapy.

Literature as a theoretical and practical contribution to the genesis of praxeology – the science of efficient action (which includes the general theory of struggle, called agonology by Tadeusz Kotarbiński [1]) – encompassing various disciplines and interdisciplinary inspirations, becomes an interesting area of substantive and research inquiry. Praxeology, and especially innovative agonology (because of its language and methods [2]), and the framing of these sciences in terms of humanistically and culturally integrated knowledge, imply an opportunity to use literary material in analyses and interpretations that broaden the view and understanding of the world. (multifacetedness). Conclusions point to the rationality of the presented human actions (literary agonies), whose logic almost always includes means and methods leading to an end. For example, the works of Ernest Hemingway [3, 4], Henryk Sienkiewicz, and other Nobel Prize winners bear this out [5]. Modern mass culture replicates and modernizes very often the battle patterns of years past in such popular genres as fantasy, horror and comic books, role-playing and computer games. However, new gladiatorial ideas [6] and the concept of the “superman” fit into a completely different system of values and ethical principles (commercialism and ludic consumerism).

It is precisely the struggle that inspires not only the creators of literature since its beginnings and is an important motif of the heritage

of global culture. It is all the more surprising that science about struggle has only been promoted in the global scientific space for a few years [7-12]. A general definition of struggle (negative cooperation) in broad praxeological terms explains that it is “any activity that is at least a two-subject one (premising that a team can be a subject) where at least one of subjects hinders the other [13, p. 549]. It does not follow Kotarbiński’s definition that only a person or a group of people can be a party to a struggle. Thus, an analysis of human-animal(s) struggles based on praxeological criteria is warranted.

The purpose of this research essay is a crossover discussion of literature and praxeology aspects from the perspective of using innovative agonology in prevention and therapy.

STRUGGLE WITH ANIMALS IN A CULTURAL CONTEXT

Since the dawn of history, man has documented in various forms of cultural, literary, and artistic records the struggle for existence. His opponents were other people, dangerous animals, and the destructive forces of nature. Long marches, running, and dexterity were the deciding factors for life or death when trekking and crossing vast terrains. The acquisition of experience was expressed in the ability to cope with adverse circumstances. Hunting, foraging, and winning battles co-determined existence, marking the boundaries of a world that was becoming tamed, sympathetic, and thus close.

An eloquent expression of this perpetuation and recording are the oldest cave paintings depicting man’s struggle with animals during hunting, including dangers and fatalities. In turn, one of the most famous sculptures of antiquity depicts Laokoon, the legendary Trojan prince, who, together with his sons, fights an unequal battle against snakes and their deadly embrace. Venomous African snakes appear in “Pharsalia” by Lucan, who lived during the time of Nero and described in it the history of Caesar’s battles with Pompey [14]. In numerous hagiographic legends, Saint George (patron saint of England and chivalry) slays a dragon (cf. e.g. paintings by J. van Eyck and Raphael). In chivalric poems, including the German epic of the Nibelungenlied, the brave knight Siegfried also slays the dragon [15].

The serpent and the dragon embodied evil, the enemy, the antagonist, hence in Christian iconography images of the Virgin Mary trampling the serpent with her feet are extremely popular.

Heracles, the greatest of the heroes of mythological Greece, as an infant strangled snakes sent to him by the hostile goddess Hera. According to the Delphic oracle, he performed 12 very dangerous and difficult jobs [16]. Most of his opponents were dangerous animals (monsters) with which he had to fight a devastating battle. It included killing the Nemean lion, exterminating the Lernean hydra, capturing the Erymatian boar, defeating the bull of Crete, abducting the giant ox of Gerson, and kidnapping Cerberus from Hades. Myths taught, conveyed value systems, behavioural patterns, rites, and rituals. The oldest were devoted to the genealogies of the gods, their struggle for power and dominion over the world, people, nature, and the dangerous elements.

THE CONTINUATION OF AGONS IN TRADITION

The revival of bestial traditions is invariably linked to the popular culture of the present. Literature – comic books, fantasy – and film resurrect various fantastic monsters (monstrosities): dragons, dwarfs, trolls. They feature animals from thousands of years ago, such as dinosaurs, pterodactyls, and monkeys. The most famous include King Kong, Godzilla, and the reptiles representing the paleontological world in “Jurassic Park”. Heroic heroes fight them in the name of humanistic premises, defending endangered lives and civilizational gains. There is also no shortage of contemporary versions of Tarzan and “The Jungle Book”. “Moby-Dick; or The Whale” by Herman Melville, a novel filmed by American director John Huston, exemplifies the hunt for a huge mammal that grows in imagination into a malignant monster that concentrates evil and sinks a whaling ship along with its tracking captain and crew. It is also an allegory of man’s struggle with the nature of fate as seen through the lens of animate and inanimate nature.

Modern fantasy and its concepts that characterize mass culture and literature unite its immense interest. This specific “key to the imagination” accompanies, for example, contact with “Star

Wars”, which fascinates the enthusiasts of fantasy worlds around the globe and is based on the continuation of a well-known code from literature – the ethos of chivalry. In Star Wars, the Jedi, meaning the good and noble people, have their “decatalogue”: in upholding peace, they use their powers to defend themselves (never to attack), for the good of the galaxy they respect every form of life and serve others instead of ruling them, and they want to improve themselves through knowledge and training. George Lucas, the creator of the film trilogy, won over audiences around the world with this.

HEMINGWAY IN THE FACE OF MAN’S STRUGGLE WITH ANIMATED NATURE

In the history of cultural and literary thought on the phenomenon of man’s struggle with animated nature, the undisputed apogee is Ernest Hemingway’s widely known short story “The Old Man and the Sea” [17], which decided on granting it the 1954 Nobel Prize for literature. A story that synthesizes and accumulates the most important features of the work of a writer of worldwide achievement, it presents uniquely the long and devastating struggle of the old fisherman Santiago first with the great marlin and then with the voracious sharks to keep his catch. The descriptions of destructive combat are accompanied by an instinct for competition, masculine morality, and a drive to achieve victory. The author of “A Farewell to Arms”, hunting, fishing marlins, befriending boxers, and toreadors, like his literary heroes, adhered to the principle of not giving in to adversity and did not tolerate weakness. The animal world played a special role in his life philosophy. He, himself, is the author of a compendium of knowledge about Spanish bullfighting (tauromachy), which he has been passionate about all his life. “Death in the Afternoon,” from 1932, a kind of praxeological textbook, contains information about bulls, toreadors, the audiences that filled the arenas of Spanish cities, and the course of battles with the strong and dangerous animal. Furthermore, the edition includes an extensive glossary explaining the meanings of Spanish words and phrases associated with the corrida and a bibliographical note. The background discourse captures the writer’s important considerations of courage, struggle with fate, and death [18].

of the feature associated either with extreme risk of injury or death, or extreme body burden with high level of effort, or extreme coordination difficulty” [39, p. 19].

Moral strength (on the basis of agonology) – of a unit or a team in an unarmed struggle is a deep emotional and rational conviction about the need of continuing the struggle – regardless of changing circumstances – and about the possibility of winning, irrespective of the enemy’s forces [19].

Moral power (on the border of sociology and political science) – is the degree to which an actor, by virtue of his or her perceived moral stature, is able to persuade others to adopt a particular belief or take a particular course of action [40].

SANTIAGO'S STRUGGLE WITH MARINE ANIMALS (AN EXAMPLE OF FISHING IN THE DIMENSION OF EXTREME PHYSICAL ACTIVITY)

After eighty-four days of unsuccessful fishing, an old fisherman from Cuba goes to sea hoping to break the string of failures. Unexpectedly, the bait is devoured by a giant marlin that puts up an unusually strong resistance. Pulling a line with a hook and bait, he tows the fishing boat to the high seas. Old Santiago reflects while fighting the marlin, treating it as an opponent who thinks and acts rationally. The struggles are brutal. For the entire time, the line cuts into his hands to the blood. As the line jerks, the fisherman falls and lacerates his face, with trickles of blood running down it.

At noon the next day, the marlin continues to pull the boat onto the high seas. Santiago, respecting the fish like an opponent in battle, is convinced he will kill it the next day. His hands, however, begin to grow numb and are troubled by unbearable cramps; the marlin's sudden jerks cause further falls and cuts. While eating raw tuna to conserve his strength, he empathetically thinks about feeding the enemy he is about to kill (empathy). Identification with the inhabitants of the sea and its element, treating it with friendship (the sea in the fisherman's imagination is feminine) creates a kind of parallel between the world of people and nature. At the same time, he feels the lack of a companion and friend on the boat to help him in the struggle with the fish. Not wanting to show weakness, he consoles himself with prayer, remembering the arm-wrestling he won in the harbour tavern. By treating nature in human terms (anthropomorphism), he wants to face up to the challenge. He tries to rest during the gruelling battle, quenches his thirst, and falls asleep at times.

When, after several days of struggling with the fish, the weakened marlin jumps out of the sea for a breath of air, Santiago already knows that the decisive moment has come – the line loses tension; a sign that the marlin is beginning to give up. While circling the boat, the weakened fish makes the circles smaller. The fisherman, despite his fatigue, prepares to strike the decisive blow. To encourage himself, he thinks of the noble fight to the end, but also about the possibility of the other side winning. Many times he seems to lose consciousness from exertion.

With the last of his strength, he strikes the fish in the side with his harpoon. The marlin, which seems to come to life, rises above the sea waves for the last time and then falls dead, bobbing on the surface of the sea. The motionless corpse stains the water's surface with blood, which is not insignificant for the further course of the plot. The fisherman drags the dead animal onto the boat and tethers it with ropes.

The fight has only seemingly reached its finale, for soon another, as if a second round begins. The fish is attacked by bloodthirsty sharks attracted by the gore. Fighting them is doomed to failure. After killing the first one that had taken a bite of the marlin, others appear. It is becoming increasingly difficult to defend himself without the right tools. Santiago gets an idea and ties the knife to the handle of the paddle. Persistent thoughts recur about the purpose of killing the fish, which is to supply food and satisfy hunger, and honour man's victory over the opponent. Sharks, according to him, are "killers" and aggressors to be defended against. After their arrival, he takes up arms against them with the tools he has made. He strikes them in various paralyzing organs (the skull, brain, eyes) with little effect. The sharks are devouring more and more chunks of the meat from the marlin. The old fisherman knows he has failed, but he continues to fight with the wooden stick. The devastating struggle lasts many hours. Once the pack of sharks arrives, the only thing left in his hand is the tiller from the rudder. The last shark swims away after the tiller splinters from impact. All that remains of the fish is a skeleton with no meat, yet at night the sharks launch an unexpected attack. Old Santiago does not put up a fight (no tools) and focuses his attention on sailing to shore. Upon his return, he falls asleep exhausted, dreaming of lions.

DESCRIPTION WITH THE LANGUAGE OF PRAXEOLOGY – ASPECTS OF NEGATIVE COOPERATION AND REFERENCE TO THE GENERAL RULE OF STRUGGLE

The parties to the destructive struggle described in detail above are man (a subject deprived of the support of other people) and animals: first the marlin and then the sharks (paradoxically, they "bother" the fisherman in that they eat the marlin). A person can lose their life and health. Animals are also threatened with death, but,

importantly, they are personified by him, that is, treated in the categories of living people. This has important implications for the praxeological and ethical view of the subject matter. The fisherman has to work hard to achieve his goal, the animals are in a favourable position (see glossary) – although their behaviour guided by instinct is hard to predict. Besides, the fisherman has to reckon with strong and varied resistance from their side and the hostile aquatic environment throughout the fight (a reference to Rudniański's rule of the highest degree of generality for extremely difficult countermeasures [19] – see glossary). The animals have both the freedom to use their own strength and virtually a terrain without any borders, although the movements of the marlin trapped on a hook are restrained by a line. However, they may, due to their superiority, choose a method of action (figuratively speaking, because, in reality, they do it instinctively): jerking and moving towards the deep sea; they may even cause a frail boat to sink or tilt (take on water) and cause the man to fall overboard; it is possible to continue escaping to the high seas and make other movements, such as sudden surfacing and jumping out of the water.

The fisherman, like a competitor in a fight, knowing the superiority of his opponent, makes tactical predictions in his mind and counts on the marlin's fatigue, which will be the decisive moment in a ruthless clash. Loosening the line is a means (i.e., an intermediate goal) of the anticipation method (see glossary). Moments of rest, the accumulation of forces and resources are supposed to tip the balance of victory to his side. Santiago is spiritually strong and resilient; he has acquired skills in numerous fishing exploits and has been a sailor on ships (the role and importance of action preparation and training), so he operates efficiently.

The old fisherman is interested in baseball games and sport competition. Earlier in the conversation with his young friend, he voices his opinions on the importance of strength and endurance in confrontations and their effective use at the right place and time. In extreme conditions, he constructs simple, practical, and useful tools for fighting the sharks. It respects the rules of noble combat (as with the human subject). The actions are directed at the body of the opponent (similarity to the specifics of combat sports) – but in the final phase of the fight with

the marlin and during the confrontation with the sharks, he uses methods and means appropriate for destructive combat [20].

The human claims victory over the marlin in the previously described first round of action taken. Throughout the battle, however, he suffers defeat. The second round, that is, the fight against the attacking sharks – the enemies from which he defends his prey – becomes his defeat. By not putting up a fight (abandonment – lack of tools) when they arrive for the last time, he accepts defeat. His bare-handed actions would no longer have an impact on making the goal a reality. He returns to shore with a huge fish skeleton stripped of its flesh and hooked up to a boat to be admired by tourists.

Another reading of the struggle presented may be due to the introduction of the concept of material in a praxeological sense. Then it is legitimate to analyse this struggle as an armed one – the material will be the opponent and the tools used, such as those used by the fisherman, including the flail and harpoon used for killing and, above all, the sharks' teeth. This is illustrated, among others, by films about cannibal sharks, such as the American "Jaws" and its highly popular references, sequels, and replicas, which are set in mixed lands of legendary animals and people representing different eras.

BRAVERY AND COURAGE IN HEROIC DIMENSIONS

The fisherman, despite his struggles with the animals, maintains sensitivity and critical self-assessment. He does not demonstrate force, he is not driven by aggression, and he has respect for living creatures. Although he puts them to death, he respects the principles of the enemy's fighting ethos. He knows the importance of contact with vibrant nature and animal instincts. He is agile, courageous, alert, has a sense of observation and foresight, focuses on practical things important to combat strategy; he makes the right decisions under adverse circumstances. His goal is to successfully complete the task also in harmony with the realm of the spirit. The fish caught is to satisfy hunger, bring in a modest income from the sale of the meat, and give testimony that he is still capable of a lot (professionalism, responsibility, consistency). By overcoming his own weaknesses

and limitations, he becomes stronger, wiser, and bolder. Fortitude contributes to the formation of his personality, finding a foothold in his own strength and attitude in life, and being active and economical in his activities.

SYMBOLISM AND OPTIMISM

The meaning of the dramatic battle fought at sea by the man has an even deeper semiotic and allegorical significance. It speaks of the human fate of each individual (the universal dimension), for in Hemingway's concept life is a struggle. In it, a person finds their self-worth, fortitude, and heroism in life. Hemingway takes the side of the brave people. In his moral and literary code, the loser is not the one who, despite failure, is convinced of the rightness of his actions and their purposefulness. In this understanding of humanity, the concept of defeat is foreign. In the allegorical tone of the story, the internally shattered and externally crippled old Santiago is given a chance to be reborn through his friendship with a young boy, Manolin, who brings optimism to his ruined world. Treating the old fisherman's failure as his own, she decides to accompany him fishing and bring him luck. As a disciple of the master, he will be his successor in the future. The dream of lions in the story's ending symbolizes the return of strength, courage, and faith in improving one's lot. It means moral victory.

Similarly, Hemingway's other best-known short stories, such as "The Undeclared" and "My Old Man", are tales of his characters' typical attitude toward life – one may lose (without suffering defeat in the sense of moral decline), but the struggle should not be abandoned. Like many of the writer's heroes, they achieve moral victory (see in the glossary the difference between the term "moral struggle/power" defined in the language of agonology and the languages of modern sociology and political science).

This is an example not only of man's struggle with an animal, but in its essence a struggle with himself, with his weaknesses, but also and above all with the effects of aging and his own helplessness.

Hemingway's characters are also involved in major national conflicts. This is evidenced by two great novels, such as "A Farewell to Arms" (World War I) and "For Whom the Bell Tolls" (Spanish Civil War).

These are examples of the macro and medium scales while entangling individuals in armed struggle and the enormity of warfare. The stage play "The Fifth Column", on the other hand, is based on the plot of the struggle of formations inside the defensive zones and enemy borders [21].

THERAPY, PSYCHOTHERAPY, AND THE PHILOSOPHY OF LITERATURE

Literature influences thinking, shapes the worldview and human sensitivity, strengthens the sense of value, has educational and didactic functions, and teaches empathy. This is important in an era of turbulent change, civilizational challenges, and instability. Today's trends demand efficiency in every area of public life. The sources of psychic impulses found in literature, their therapeutic, cathartic, and compensatory functions give hope for success in the theatre of life, in which man plays various roles and puts on relevant masks. Ethical persuasion and literary ethos help to embrace the world, organize its space, and bring some order. Focusing and calming while reading provides respite, creative relaxation, and stimulates reflection. Perfecting our imagination makes us identify with the characters portrayed and their adventures.

What matters today is not so much the knowledge provided by an Internet search engine but the ability to think creatively and conceptually. It is at the intersection and in the integration of various sciences that the impetus for interdisciplinary research gives rise to original ideas that challenge the prevailing stereotypes and templates of knowledge. However, we have more than just mental reluctance when associating paradoxically distant fields. The same is true in combat: as you respond to blows, your opponent's assimilate in their reactions and actions. It is an imitation, often subconscious and involuntary, that gives impetus to analogous behaviour. The point is to turn this into actions that are not only effective but also decent [22-24].

Clash – by definition it requires at least two entities with incompatible goals. The strategy and method of effective action are of interest mainly to pragmatists and praxeologists. The devastation of the blows inflicted, directing all forces for destruction is the domain of martial arts theorists. Agon and agonology, agonist terminologically and

historically link the participants of fights, sports competitions, competing in poetry contests, and taking part in artistic performances [25]. Literature unexpectedly becomes a fruitful and constructive terrain for the symbiosis of various fields and themes, views, and aspirations. This undeniable asset is useful in finding influences, relationships, and connections between different categories of science and serves a variety of cognitive purposes.

With the right reading choice, one can begin the tough journey of preparing for the hardships of life and the next stages of education, in which practical knowledge is indispensable. Negative cooperation, or struggle as it is known, is commonly present in the spheres of rivalry and competition of the modern globalized world. Literary fiction, by projecting and identifying responsibility, determination, courage, and strength in actions, can serve as a preparation for the life endeavours and tasks that await a person in the real world. Moreover, instrumental and ideological relations create an interesting discourse about the roles of a human – the subject in a complicated reality (bibliotherapy), giving sense to his actions and choices in every sphere of personal and public life (organizations, management, planning, motivating, controlling). Plato's triad of classical philosophy thus gains a new background: *Truth* is seen in its cognitive aspect, *Goodness* in its practical aspect, and *Beauty* has been the domain of aesthetics for centuries. In sports competition, respectively, e.g. the athlete demonstrated his fitness and skill, and fought honourably as well as beautifully.

IN PLACE OF A CONCLUSION

Human life takes place in contact with other people and in a world that is not always favourable to humans. Antagonism, competition, and struggle make up the experiences, decisions, and strategies that are used in daily practice. When dealing thematically with human destiny, literature, art, and other determinants and designators of culture in the broadest sense [26] – with the exception of many disciplines of science – are based on free premises, which makes it easier for creators to grasp, in a basically unfettered way, the rigors and truths useful in overcoming the hardships of life and achieving success. Undoubtedly, martial arts (especially in the practical layer)

build optimistic beliefs in the minds of readers, which include perspectives for active deeds in various situations and prepare for achieving ambitious goals. Literary agonies (the realm of intellect) show man's physical potential (muscular strength), spiritual potential, and mental capacity. The issue of struggle is analysed not only as man against man (including multi-subjective) but also as man against animal and inanimate nature.

In media information (journalism) and popular ludic genres, the concept of struggle is both literal and figurative. It defines armed actions, struggles of actors (including the struggle with oneself and disease, e.g. the book by Jerzy Stuhr – a well-known Polish actor – about the struggle with cancer [27]), generally the clash of various interests, competition, and rivalry. It is not easy to exhaust the connotations of the concept of struggle and its associations, e.g. the struggle for life, the struggle against the terror of the Islamic State, the struggle in Ukraine, the struggle for jobs, the struggle of football hooligans (illegally arranged), the struggle against the elements (the struggle of the elements), the struggle against the effects of flooding, the struggle of the police against crime, the ideological, political, parliamentary electoral struggle, the struggle for power, the struggle against the pandemic, or sports struggles, etc. J. Rudniański noticed fittingly that a person most often uses the words “a struggle”, “to fight” and synonymic terms when “(...) a given action is distinguishable by a high level of difficulty and psychic suspense” [19, p. 16]. Formulating this statement more than 30 years ago he simultaneously asks a question that in further development of science these actions will be separated into a specific group, perhaps (Krzemieniecki and Kalina [4] signalled this issue 10 years ago by analysing similarly in the literature and praxeology another struggle described by Hemingway).

The themes of martial arts stimulate the imagination and are transposed into the cultural psychophysics of human beings [28-31]. Overcoming weaknesses, being disciplined, winning without violence, being defensive or offensive, and extinguishing emotions can all be inspired by reading. The persuasive role of literature persuades, encourages, and urges people to change their attitudes or behaviours; it reinforces their confidence in pursuing and achieving their goals and the effectiveness of their actions. The point is to get away from negative influences, live a fuller and more joyful life, and create a friendly community

and a decent existence. The imaginative process, mental agility, social competence, and creativity make up the potential to help resolve dilemmas and transform the world (mental training). Classics and contemporary literature prove that martial arts in literary messages (images, scenes, including descriptions of extreme situations [32]) are a compelling and unique complement to their phenomenon, which fascinates and determines the reading in the choices of readers (E. Hemingway, J. Jones, J.K. Rowling, A. Sapkowski, H. Sienkiewicz, J.R.R. Tolkien, and others). Performing a therapeutic function and showing personal models and characters' fates in a different light and a multicultural dimension, literature remains an unquestionable

medium to which the recipient invariably returns, wishing to understand the world. The more so that the thematic resources of literature cannot be exhausted, because it still surprises, has a relaxing, cognitive, and educational value. Thus, bibliotherapy remains an essential element of mental training also in combination with combat sports and martial arts.

It is not an exaggeration to say that martial arts bibliotherapy [5, 33] plays a similar role in influencing the intellectual (mental) sphere as fun forms of martial arts [34, 35] influence the psychophysical sphere of personality, i.e. mental, somatic, and energetic (neurophysiological) together.

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