

War in Hemingway and Kadare's Novels



Literature

Keywords: Hemingway, Kadare, war, novel, politics.

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Abstract

War is a really common topic, but different authors treat it differently. We see this in Hemingway and Kadare's novels as well. I saw some of Hemingway's great novels, Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls, and Islands in the Stream, and Kadare's General of the Dead Army, Chronicle in Stone, and November in a Capital City. Through different characters they described what people went through, they discuss about the horror that war brings, the pain people experienced, etc, but also expressed their attitude and opinion on war and politics. We see their novels contain horrifying images of what war can bring – death and destruction. Both Hemingway and Kadare are on the side that fights fascism, since they saw fascism as the most destructive force of humankind. Fascism was the cause of all the suffering and that's why it should be fought by any case. However, Hemingway and Kadare witnessed another kind of war, which maybe was worse, it was a class war, which Hemingway experienced in Spain and Hemingway in his native Albania. There are many other important aspects to be discussed about these great literary figures, two writers who are distant in space and time, but still have a lot of common, so I believe that Hemingway and Kadare's novels will be objects of future studies of many prosperous researchers.

War is a very common theme used in novels. Different authors treat it differently, but still, all of them stress the pain, suffering and consequences people face with. In this paper I will give an account of how war is treated in two different authors – Hemingway and Kadare. So, in order to have a clear image, I tried to make an overview of war in these Hemingway's novel: Farewell to Arms, For Whom the Bell Tolls, and Islands in the Stream, and in Kadare's General of the Dead Army, Chronicle in Stone and November in a Capital City.

Hemingway witnessed wars as a young boy. Just after he finished high school, he went reporting for The Kansas City Star from the centre of war conflict in Italy, and later from France, and Spain, he reported from the First World War, the Spanish civil war, witnessed the second world war, etc He was influenced by the diplomatic experience, court charm and political sagacity of the old count Greppi, who was used as a prototype of Greppi in Farewell to Arms. Greppi was a kind of a political guru to him. All this built his political attitude and influenced his writing, especially his war novels. He especially liked Spain, and was not indifferent on the political situation there. He was there, when the regime of Primo de Rivera was rejected, and the parliament was divided into parties and fractions in 1931. Hemingway was on the side of the leftists even earlier, in America, but he got more attached to it in Spain. The class division in Spain endangered the ideals of the Spanish statehood, and this made Hemingway dedicate his life to the civil war that happened in 1937. He served as a war correspondent in the Spanish civil war and a propagandist of the Spanish republican government, which was supported by the soviets. However, his ideals here begin to narrow, since the leftism in Spain was not as he thought it was, there was a lot of corruption, authority, etc, so at a certain point he says – I will not outline my political beliefs to you since I have no need to, and since I could be jailed for the publication but if they are not much further left than yours which sound like sentimental socialism, I will move them further. We see that he doesn't deny leftism, but he neither accepts Stalinism. Hemingway fought for the protection of the Spanish republic, against fascism, and continued his fight in the Second World War; he was interested in Cuban revolution, etc.

Beside all the fondness towards, relation with and support of communism, he denied being a communist, maybe because he was aware of the danger that came from the ideological and party control over his work, i.e. his creative process.

War atrocities, dreadful events, people's behavior at war are realistically described in Hemingway's greatest novels and, as an atavistic concern fascinates him and compels him to reflect. ... War and its metaphors and metonymies heard as echoes in Hemingway's novels are in any way an advocacy of war. In his novels, war is present in every moment of people's life – in their discussions, dialogues, and it affects every part of their life, especially people who are involved in fighting. They hate the war, say that it is disastrous, and look forward to its end. Death is the most possible outcome of war – it comes from weapons, wounds, suffering, etc. The characters foresaw their deaths and sufferings, so they in a way need some self sacrifice for the sake of the mass, and so they have altruistic attitudes

-As an American, Hemingway, saw the war with more idealism than Europeans, who were fed up with armed conflicts. In his earlier novels, Hemingway idealizes and praises the war and the cause he serves, and on the other hand, the character narrator of Farewell to Arms, due to the dramatic intensity of events he should face with, gradually loses his views on fame of that long and dirty war that served nobody anything. It was Hemingway's attitude towards war expressed through the narrator, Frederic Henry, who, as a great idealist, loves peace, equality, and wants to help people, so he becomes a part of these war activities. War was a place to express his manhood and humanity, he thought, so it might be the greatest motive for him to favor war. He thought that the elite groups of soldiers are brave and well disciplined, they have to fight unconditionally. He says I believe we should get the war over... It should not finish it if one side stopped fighting. It would only be worse if we stopped fighting.

The loss of war, for Hemingway meant loss of freedom. He is terrified by the idea of losing the war, and so he follows the Hegelian idea of fighting till death, and gives himself an imperative to win the war.

Hemingway's vision reveals itself not so much as war against peace; or life against death; or creation against destruction; or self-generation against self-destruction but as a hint of a mystical vision of the interconnectedness of all things harmonious and disharmonious, reconcilable and irreconcilable, and, yes, fraternal and fratricidal in lived human experience. I would say that there

is an integrative wholeness in this vision that is much vaster and exceedingly more complex than what one might technically refer to as a “compromise formation.”

However, as time passed by, the war itself turned the narrator into a bitter opposition, since he gradually saw the vanity of war. Thus, he expresses his bitterness towards brutality, violence, vanity and insanity of war.

A literary critic, Nakjavani says:

I would say that the dualities of Hemingway’s attitude toward war and the conduct of men at war simultaneously bear marks of the antithetical Freudian and the early Christian thinking on the subject. I will go so far as to suggest that the dualities of his thought on war signal an effort to reconcile these two seemingly irreconcilable modes of thought: Christian dogmatics and Freudian psychoanalysis. The former commands: “Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself” and “Love thine enemies”—which, combined, speak the essence of the mysteries of the concepts of Christian love and charity. Freudian psychoanalysis considers the “neighbor” as the “stranger,” the Other, and therefore as either a real or potential enemy .

This change of attitude of the author towards the war, corresponds with the images in the novel – The road was crowded and there screens of corn –stalk and straw melting on both sides and matting over the top, so that it was like the entrance to a circus or a native village , however, during the catastrophic retreat – The road ended with a wrecked village. The lines were far beyond.. The houses were badly smashed... ,and was a kind of anticipation of a disaster.

Henry’s life is difficult – military surrounding, soldiers, parades, battle preparations, moaning, is all that he can see around. He now thinks that the war is strange and alien, people are helpless, caught in irrational actions- for example when he is wounded - I sat up straight and as I did so something inside my head moved like the weights on a doll’s eyes and it hit me inside in back of my eyeballs .

The doll image on one hand refers to the domestic atmosphere, and on the other hand it refers to the feeling of mechanization of soldiers. This is a feeling of duality, life cycles and its negations, the feelings of life and war that are ironically united and later opposed. This paragraph refers to the landscape without army- the water was clear and swiftly moving and blue in the channels. , and the landscape with the army the dust they raised powdered the leaves of the trees. , but also the distortion of the natural cycle the leaves fell early that year , that is actually an objective description, but a negative opinion on war as well. The war images at the beginning foretell the tragedy that Hemingway presents at the end. The narrator views his own destiny reflected in the destiny of the Italian soldiers, and brings a key decision, to desert. His desertion is dramatic, and we can see that not only in the desertion itself, but in the difficulties he faces with while he runs in the cold winter and the icy river. He finally arrives in Milano, and then to Stresa, where he finds Catherine, and both of them run to Switzerland through the dangerous and wild waters and the heavy rain. The desertion itself is what shadows all these macho deeds of the hero.

Through Frederic Henry’s experience we are acknowledged with real places in Italy and the real battles that took place there, so thus we notice Hemingway’s realism. This is how we enter the war pathos, we understand the war madness, and we feel the pain of the wounded people, we sympathize for thousands of dead soldiers and get terrified by the horrible war images, shelling and killing. Violence is all around – wounded heads, broken bones, accidents, shootings, shot legs, bellies, gangrene, and venereal diseases, dysentery, etc. For example: My legs felt warm and wet and my shoes were wet and warm inside. I knew that I was hit and leaned over and put my hand on my knee. My knee wasn’t there. My hand went in and my knee was down on my shin. I wiped my hand on my shirt and another floating light came very slowly down and I looked at my leg and was very afraid. .

Other terrible moments when we see how unreasonable and disastrous war is, are when Pazzini loses his legs and dies, when Henry is wounded, when a young boy bleeds to death, etc. These microcosmic events result in an individual protest in the frames of the war horror. Hemingway is sometimes accused of being obsessed by war, but on the other hand, other critics stress his realistic awareness of life. A Farewell to Arms is one of the novels written in the Twenties by men who had seen the war and who utterly rejected the values of war and the conduct of war .

For Whom the Bell Tolls is about the Spanish civil war, where Hemingway describes the harsh reality of war violence in details. The greatest concern is that the war releases the darkest human part: passion for blood, pleasure in killing and the madness of revenge, and this makes a murder be acceptable by those who fight.

The war requires a great sacrifice on both sides, so the violence and the horror of the war are part of both conflicting sides. Jordan represents guerillas point of view on Spanish civil war. Everyone in For Whom the Bell Tolls loses ones’ innocence in war, no matter if it is psychological, moral or physical. Some of the characters experience great traumas, like for example Joakim, whose parents die, Maria is raped, etc. but there are many psychological consequences as well, like the loss of Jordan’s idealism, Maria’s psychological pain, etc. thus, human life loses its value, it is brought to a point of something unserious, invaluable, and ordinary. The moral values and beliefs of people as well have deteriorated in war, since in order to win, you have to either defeat or kill your enemy, and thus violence is inevitable. Killing means death, so death and war is a real match. Almost every major character is made reconcile with one’s death and the death of their beloved. Heroes are exposed to danger in every military action, but they must fulfill their duties, since it is a part of masculinity of the character. A general ideal of people is to be a man, so many of characters in the novels require a great bravery and masculinity.

Beside the inevitable danger that comes from the enemy, the participants in war face with variety of dangers from inside their ranks. In For Whom the Bell Tolls, we see it when guerilla fighters are endangered by their own people, for example when Pablo, who is a kind of Judas, steals the detonator. Pablo is recognizable symbol for the general canker of defeatism, gnawing the tissues of republican morale from within, and leading to the larger betrayal.

Another inner danger is the inefficiency of the republican bureaucracy, and the Spanish temperance as well.

One of the novels that deal with the 2ndWorld War is Island in the Stream, no matter that it is in the third part only that Hemingway deals with war. In the third part of Island in the Stream the main character, Thomas Hudson, is searching for German submarines in the coasts of Cuba. Here we also have death, wounding, running, chasing, pain and destruction, which according to Hudson, hurts a lot.

A really terrible example is the extraction of bullets from the dead bodies of murdered peasants, than, the assassination of the wounded German soldier, etc. Searching the submarines, Hudson, comes across the murdered peasants, a wounded German soldier, a massacre, and so on. Thus, Hemingway tries to give the beastly side of fascism, tries so stress the pain, vanity and suffering that war causes, and the cause of war is fascism.

The story in *Island in the Stream*, in fact, is not about any big battle or conflict. The Germans and their submarines here are never presented as anything more than a dangerous big game, which is given in the form of a chase of submarines, but with a lot of painful obstacles.

The sense of the horrifying is present in Kadare's novels as well. It corresponds to the events which bring extremely difficult, colossal, apocalyptic global tragedy. For the author, the real nature of the horrible is divested of everything human, of all spiritual and cultural values, and is identified with the barbarian force, vandalism, wilderness, exposing the animal, mysterious, irrational bestiality, with the only purpose to frighten the human. So, according to the author, the cause for this tragedy is war and the repressive political systems. The relation between the causes of the tragic with the horrifying events is very important in the aesthetic plan, since it makes the author point out a whole global tragedy. One of these occurrences is war, and Kadare has experienced all the violence of war as a child, since Albania was involved in the 2nd World War. He stresses the consequences, or the effects that the war leaves, physical and psychological ones, and writes about this in his novels.

The General of the Dead Army is set 20 years after the 2nd World War. So, it is a post bellum novel, but it gives a clear image of what the effects of war are. It talks about the effects of the 2nd World War, when millions of people died, and everything was destroyed. Millions of people suffered from fascism, Nazism, Stalinism, the incomprehensible race for conventional weapons, biological and chemical, etc. However, in *The General of the Dead Army* there are no typical war scenes of battles, but we have scenes when bodies of killed fascist soldiers during the 2nd World War in Albania were exhumed. The exhumation is a metaphor to express the anti fascist and anti-war attitude of the author. It was a great mission that had to be completed, until the last body was found, which instead bringing some pride and comfort, it resulted in sadness and humiliation. The burial of a whole army in Albania is a universal symbol of a global grotesque tragedy in history of humankind. The individual destinies, on the other hand, had a partial and submissive role towards this tragedy, as for example the tragic destiny of Nica, of her daughter, of the soldier, miller, etc. which are episodic in comparison to the general national destiny.

There are a lot of details in the novel that create the dark and sad tone of the novel, and thereby indicate the destructive nature of war, as for example – killings, shootings, rapes, fires, mutilations, sufferings, etc. we also see that a whole army has been turned into tones of phosphorus and calcium, and the graffiti remind us of the fascist paroles written in the bodies of Albanians, etc. Another symbol of a great suffering is also the diary of the dead soldier, the sad story of Nica, etc. All these are just parts of the jig saw, but give us a clear image of the atrocities of war, violence accumulated in years.- All this violence in Kadare's works is a dark territory, a winter night, full of fear, dark intrigues and horrible images, a hell full of human nightmares. .

According to Kadare, the communist dictatorships represent a real hell on earth, for example the regime of Hoxha in Albania, which is not a metaphor. Kadare will begin the creation of this hell vision precisely with the *General*. Here the physical integrity of people is endangered, and according to Kadare, all this makes us understand that the war is completely hostile towards humans; it destroys people physically and intellectually. The *General* at the end is mentally destroyed - he suffers a nervous breakdown in the wedding.

Value of life, price of life, blood taxes, burial and exhumation, secret trolleys and heavy pyramids, resurrection and re-dying (killing), the ash urn and the black dossier, the niche of disgrace and the monument of honor, the eternity and the oblivion, self-sacrifice and the sacrifice, shame and spirit, etc. are all essential artistic expressions of the author, in which he talks about the war.

But, death is the saddest and the most possible outcome of the war. It is presented in both individual and collective form, natural and heroic, true and imagined. This is perfectly presented in *General of the Dead Army*, where we face will dead bodies of a whole army, death of the deserter, of the prostitute, Niza's family, colonel, etc., and all due to the madness of the war, terrifying ideology, that do not show any respect towards human life. ?

In *Chronicle in Stone* war is presented through child's eyes. It is encrusted with autobiographic – parody elements from the World War II and class war between communists and nationalists. It presents an infant vision, with a dosage of levity or humor, found in the childish games, discussions, old mythical beliefs in magic, that the citizens of the stone city were preoccupied with, etc. All this is followed by horrible war scenes of murders, massacres, a lot of deaths, murders, burnings, wounding, and consecutive executions of capital punishments etc. The author does an artistic reflection of the war and everything that is directly or indirectly under the influence of war, but he gives an image of how people lived in his native city, he pointed all good and bad sides. This is why *Chronicle* is not only a war novel.

The life of a whole city during the 2nd World War is in the centre of the novel. Kadare gives a lot of autobiographical details, especially the horrible experiences he and the inhabitants of Gjirokastra faced with.

The novel describes a period that corresponds to the Italian and German occupation of Albania 1939-43, and it is set in Gjirokastra, the birth place of Kadare, and Enver Hoxha as well. Gjirokastra experienced these harsh days of occupation. As a reaction to the repression, a movement for national liberation was launched, and was led by two parties, National liberation front (led by the Communist party of Albania) and the nationalist front, led by Balli Kombetar. Soon a conflict appeared between them, they stood on different sides, so the German invaders helped the nationalists, and the British army supported the partisan forces.

Chronicle in stone brings the non conformist rebellion of the author to the edges, and in incomprehensible way accuses the Communist party, which triggered the civil conflict and transformed the national war against fascism into a class war. Nationalists and partisans accuse each other of the horror that occurred. For example, chapter 15 begins with the episode about Enver Hoxha, and there we have violent and terrifying images: Hoxha's house was burned, and she is leading the war against fascism, but he is also the one who launched the class war. The class war is exemplified in the murder of the Italian commander, the imprisonment of narrator's brother, who was later executed together with two young girls, than Javier kills one of the Ballist commanders, his own

uncle – one by one the bullets wounded his cheeks, skull and a part of his head. Pieces of meat and parts of Azem's head fell on the dining table.

These are author's words, since the narrator didn't witness the terrible events. So we see that the anti fascist war turned into class war against the inner enemy. As Jezo says, In this war, brother kills his own a brother, son kills his father. He kills him in the house, next to the dining table. She says that this class war is Hoxha's product, and is a strategy to come to power.

There are other examples of class war, and we can see it when Sheh Ibrahim was watching the communists coming, and he wants to nail his eyes and get blind, so that he could not see them, then, when a manufacturer is punished by the national court and shot together with his son, etc.

The penultimate chapter shows the exodus of the people because of the possible pressure by the German side when they enter the city. The children watch the city burn– This is my house! – Why, who is a partisan from your house?! – My uncle. – And what about my brother that went a partisan from my house? and then they quarrel about the smoke, -what smoke would come from the thick books, let along from the fat granny! .

November in a Capital City describes a war period, a period when Tirana was liberated from the German invader, in November 1944. Fascism was breathing its last breath, but a new regime was being established in Albania, and it was communism. Communism is very similar to fascism, people are forced to live under strict rules and conditions, they had to cooperate and submit to the regime. Whoever was against, either was killed or persecuted, so they life is turned into hell. Not even intellectuals were spared from this tragedy, and this is what November in a Capital City is about.

People were happy that the invaders were leaving, but another conflict began, maybe crueler, a class war. The old system was being replaced with a new one, communism. The same happened with Radio Tirana; - it was attacked and taken by the communists. It was a great example of this class war, which was more and more entering the Albanian everyday life. The new regime seemingly advocates a social equality, but it was full of egoism and authority, everyone who didn't agree with its ideals, was considered an enemy. As a result, the disobedient were executed, interned, etc. The new regime required a total loyalty and obedience; on the contrary, there was pain, horror, and death. So, we see elements of class war, death, suicide, etc., as well. Neither could the politically uncommitted intellectuals escape this terror. They were declared as traitors and extradited or killed. There we have the example with Viktor Guma, a writer, who is politically inactive, and is considered a traitor. We see him being psychologically destroyed, so that he has no way out except committing a suicide. Kadare uses some real historical events to stress this, when he talks about the alleged suicide of many intellectuals in hotel Bristol. This means that in this time out of time, suicide is nothing more than a murder in a sophisticated manner, ordered by the regime. It is closely related to the politics, and this class war is political. However, it is possible that the author's real aim was to give a condemnation of communism, the readers to see the real face of communism.

So, as we can see, even though Hemingway and Kadare are distant in space and time, they belong to different national literatures, Hemingway to American and Kadare to Albanian literature, and lived and worked in different periods, we can clearly notice that there are similarities between them. One of the similarities between them is the theme of war; they both discuss war, they both tell about destructivity and sad consequences of war, about politics as a cause of war, about class war, they both praise their heroes, who are characterized by morality and bravery, etc. But the most important thing is that both of them condemn wars and stress the vanity of wars.

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