



The Ascendancy of Ernest Hemingway's Novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" on Petro Marko's Novels.

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Abstract

The recognition of Hemingway's translated works in Albanian literature and culture had begun in 1957, and it reached to peak in the last decade of the twentieth century. In all probability, Hemingway's works in Albanian literature were received with comfort, curiosity, respect, admiration, and enthusiasm both by readers and literary critics. In addition to the reception there are track down and proof that Hemingway in his novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" had instigated Petro Marko to write the novel "Hasta la Vista". This is anticipated to the actuality that the twain writers had gone to volunteer to brawl in Spain, for the world wars. Withal, they lined up in different brigades, Petro Marko in the XII Brigade and Ernest Hemingway in the XV Brigade. Both novels have similar themes, motifs, symbols, conflicts, events, and styles. Therefore, using qualitative and comparative literature methods this article will attempt to shed light on the impact of Ernest Hemingway's novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" on Petro Marko's novel "Hasta la Vista". The paper concludes, that when Hemingway recounted his experience in the Spanish Civil War in his novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" and after the Albanian writer, Petro Marko read his novel and had direct contact with Ernest Hemingway, he wrote his novel "Hasta la Vista" under Hemingway's influence. As a result, Petro Marko's novel is quite similar to Hemingway's novel though there are differences, as well.

Keywords: Comparative literature, American and Albanian literature, direct influence.

History has proven so far that writers, through their literary works, are the first challengers of war and any kind of oppression and exploitation. Therefore, they are scrutinized more by the political representatives of tyrannical regimes which contribute to and cause these social and human deformities and deficiencies more than any other category of the elite. Such a thing happened on the occasion of the Spanish War when in 1936, the Congress of anti-fascist writers was held. In Spain, more specifically in Madrid, Valencia and Barcelona, this Congress was held for several days in a row, which was attended by several well-known writers from different countries and was greeted through telegrams by outstanding scientists, artists, and researchers such as Romain Roland, Albert Einstein, etc. Petro Marko's journey to Spain had lasted a long time, so much so that it reminds the



Albanian readers and scholars to vicissitudes of Homer's *Odyssey*. Unfortunately, the "paratext", means prefaces, afterwards, translators' notes, reviews, and genuine analytical articles in the Albanian language. Apart from some journalistic writings, two or three critical treatises and a preface on the reception of Hemingway's work in Albanian works had not been accompanied by a quantitative and qualitative pretext Kurti, while some of the most distinguished researchers, scholars and literary critics, who wrote about Hemingway in Albanian literature areas" and research articles on Hemingway's influence in Albanian literature and culture. "When I read his novel" he claims "I was so amazed that I started writing my novel entitled *Hasta la Vista* on the same subject" (6). When it was published, I sent Hemingway a copy, where I wrote: "Deeply inspired by your novel dedicated to the American both novels belong to classical, Balzacian realism. This is because they have detailed and concrete expositions of the characters, setting places, events and basic conflicts of the characters. The characters are depicted first visually and externally and then internally and psychologically; the events are described in detail, without overlooking the character's social problems.

The dialogues, the external descriptions and the changes in the narrative points of view are proportional and in keeping with the best practices of the realism novel (Zyberaj, 2003, p. 20). For the poor tradition of the Albanian novel of that time, a model such as *Hasta la Vista* was nonetheless a good start for a new narrative school. The novel is a product of P. Marko's deep knowledge and experience of that Spanish reality and many facts and phenomena that have to do with various aspects of the Spanish Civil War (Qosja, 1981, p. 557). According to Dr Sadri Fetiu:

Through this novel, Petro Marko marks the beginning of overcoming the chronological form of recounting and depicting historical events, which was done thus far by Albanian novelists, who in their works explored true historical events of the periods before and after the National Liberation War (Fetiu, 1979, p. 52).

Moreover, Dr Agim Vinca, estimates that through this novel: "P. Marko brought to the Albanian novel of the 50s not only thematic freshness but also new structural, compositional, linguistic and stylistic elements, thus becoming the inspiration of new trends and processes in the later development of Albanian novel" (Vinca, 1995, p. 146).

On the other hand, Hemingway too, as a great, vocal and articulate representative of a remarkable literary tradition, who was familiar with all the great achievements in the modern novel, starting with James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, etc., and continuing with other great and innovative novelists, has preferred simple narrative techniques avoiding deep philosophical reflections, inner monologues and stream of consciousness narrative techniques. Moreover, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway chooses not to use even some of the most original achievements he employed in his earlier works: suggestive, implicit and straightforward dialogue, symbolic connotations of natural landscapes, the unfinished epilogue and the unwritten end. He displays and depicts the rich and turbulent internal state



of Robert Jordan through the clear dialogue of the protagonist with himself, a situation which is described through the following phrases:

“R. Jordan said to himself..., and himself told R. Jordan...” (Hemingway, 1995, p. 188).

In this respect, the two novels are quite similar because both authors demonstrate the same artistic and literary authenticity, candidness and efficiency. Suffices to explain that *Hasta la Vista* has all the elements of a historical novel and could be considered a model of the historical novel given that at the centre of the attention of its narrative is a historically world important event, the Spanish Civil War, and the characters and the author ever-present and comprehensive. In formal, structural and narrative parameters the two novels demonstrate simplicity, accuracy and functional perfection. But the novels do not have the same dynamic, the same expressive force in the most relevant neuralgic points. The protagonists of P. Marko’s novel have little psychological insight and complexity, and little social and human significance compared to E. Hemingway's heroes. Even at the get-go in their epigraphs, both authors reveal different intentions, P. Marko promises a homage novel for Albanian volunteers in Spain, while Hemingway vows to elaborate in prose a poetic and philosophical view of the poet John Donne, namely he undertakes to give an account of the tragic intertwining of the fate of each man with the whole human condition:

No man is an Iland, intire of itselfe; every man is a peece of the Continent, a a part of the maine; if a Clod bee washed away by the Sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if Promontorie were, as well as if a Manor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankinde; And therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; It tolls for thee.. (Hemingway, 1995, p. 4)

Hemingway uses the Spanish Civil War as an opportunity and an enormous experience to make his discoveries about human nature. He does not make a distinction between two types of killings: the martyrs, ours, on the one hand, and the others, the enemies, on the other hand, unlike Petro Marko, who even in the epigraph of his novel makes this distinction and announces this black and white, straightforward and explicit attitude. The hero of P. Marko’s novel *Hasta la Vista*, Gori Gjinleka is a static character, who remains a character on a dead end, not fully developed. He volunteered to participate in the Spanish Civil War an event of continental importance, though he lacked a strong, all-encompassing knowledge and experience of the world. The world for him consisted of only communists, proletarians-brothers and bourgeoisie enemies. He does not develop psychologically and mentally, he only gives himself up to the international-communist utopia and surrenders himself to the leaders of the revolutionary movement. The character Gjinleka has come to symbolize the essential feature of the crowds, the sincere submission to superiors, the reverence for the cult of the leader-commander and the blind worship of his political group. The cult of Professor Tomorri and the cult of communist commissars, in general, is a model of that submissive idolatry and fascination of the masses with the high communist leadership that would culminate in Albania years after *Hasta la Vista* was written. Indoctrination, dogmatism and philosophical



and political shallowness are not attributes of the conscious aesthetic characterization of the hero by the author but are traits of self-imposed restrictions of the author, certainly incited and induced by editorial pressure, self-censorship and pre-conceived practices force back then in Albania.

The above-mentioned inequalities are a reflection of the cultural and literary formation of the two authors, but, at the same time, they are a consequence of the discrepancies between the respective cultural-political environments. Innate talent, stylistic perfectionism and a life filled with extraordinary experiences are what distinguish Hemingway. But we would add that he was an extraordinary reader. From an early age, he had read and analysed all the masterpieces of literature, arts and philosophy that had been created and written in his country, Europe and Russia. However, although he was part of this great tradition, Hemingway decided not to write based on tradition but against it, employing radically innovative, original and legible style. In addition, he had a huge experience which he recounted in his novels, including *Hasta la Vista*. On the other hand, in P. Marko's case, it is his life experience until 1944 that had a huge effect on his writings because after that his familiarization, enrichment with western culture and natural intellectual developments becomes impossible. Hence, because of the communist regime in Albania, his experience as a participant and witness of great events, instead of being an advantage and a raw material for major literary works, turns into restraint, adversity and a strong motive of silence and concealment of his real outlook, convictions and opinions.

The first successful and promising P. Marko literary works in literature are not welcomed but instead become a cause of his persecution and all-around violence. The opposite is true of Hemingway. This is because in Hemingway's literary beginnings Ezra Pound upon expressing his conviction that Hemingway writes brilliantly and is the most stylistically talented prose writer, strongly influenced and convinced Ford Maddox Ford to open him on the path for a new literary career. Hemingway shows his gratitude to Ezra Pound by rescuing him years later from the death penalty. Looking at the concrete circumstances where and how E. Hemingway and P. Marko lived and worked, we can notice the inequalities between the two authors, through their works, as a result of the respective literature, cultures and traditions. Cultural tradition could not offer more to the talented P. Marko because for the cultural horizon of communist Albania at that time, the publication and presence in the library of a novel like *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was considered unnecessary and undesirable. Even in the decades that followed, Hemingway's and novels of other foreign authors were censored and banned and some of them were even legally punishable. Moreover, it is worthwhile to point out that in fact as a complete book Hemingway's novel in question reached the Albanian reader only by 2002.

Whenever a researcher is allowed to compare a literary work with another, regardless of the point of view he approaches, he will unavoidably compare various elements of those works. In this case, the two important novels, one the American literature *For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway and the other one *Hasta la Vista* by Petro Marko, which belongs



to Albanian literature, have similarities and differences and other common and special elements. In P. Marko's novels, discourse is a motivating element, which is sometimes personal and emotional with very diverse metaphorical language. All of Marko's works are interconnected and thus all his books constitute a sort of integral system, which narrates or displays similar issues and elements from different perspectives. They communicate with each other, connect with ideological, thematic and discursive bridges and they contain more or less similar characters, changing only their names, events, etc. He structures the text on the principle of thematic code, each end becoming a new beginning.

Thus, the themes he explores are personal, national and sometimes universal. Hemingway's works on the other hand are structured ironically and sarcastically, with short, indirect sentences, sometimes with idiomatic discourse, ironizing the futility of war, death, suicide and anxiety. Authors of both novels through their original ideas reveal the multiple importance of the Spanish Civil War. Through their works they remembered, praised and admired the solidarity of many fighters and soldiers of different countries who gave their contribution by being near those who needed support and help to fight against a world invader, the Nazi-Fascists. First, Hemingway, through his novel, tried to realize the initiative and support of all his compatriots, during the time of the terrible war, who were ready and willing to sacrifice themselves for the good of humanity, only to come to the aid of those in need and to respond to the destructive fascism. So, the very idea the author realized in the work moralizes the heroic gesture of the participating characters and through them reflects all the national support and backing of his entire country to the cause of this war. The initiative of many writers who have written various literary works about the Spanish Civil War, especially Ernest Hemingway's initiative, has influenced the prominent Albanian writer Petro Marko to do the same. Namely, he highly appreciates this initiative, this valuable work, which becomes a push, a motivation and a model for him to dedicate a literary work to all Albanian volunteers who took part in the Spanish Civil War. The development of the main theme of the Spanish Civil War by both writers is realized through a similar narrative. The description of events and situations in the development of battles is given in detail by both writers.

In E. Hemingway's novel, the theme is explored with the description of situations and events through characters, which are not so numerous, and the major theme and events mainly revolve around the protagonist of the novel Robert Jordan, who is portrayed as a missionary, whose mission is to blow up the bridge. On the other hand, Gori Gjinleka in P. Marko's novel *Hasta la Vista* is a character, who sets the plot in motion, because he acts in many situations, he is very cooperative and dear to others even though he is not charged with any special task or mission like Hemingway's protagonist, Robert Jordan. Since the themes of both novels deal with war, the reader goes through and experiences sensitive situations and moments, both emotional and spiritual, especially in certain instances. In both novels, in addition to the theme of war, the theme of love is also explored. This way, the lives and love affairs of the protagonists are described with sensitivity and emotionality, which makes them



feel motivated and it gives them courage and strength to accomplish tasks and missions they have set for themselves.

In E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Robert Jordan falls in love with Maria, while Gori Gjinleka in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* falls in love with Anita Gonzales. Both Maria and Anita are witnesses and survivors of the sad and tragic events of the war. While Anita escapes as the only survivor of her entire family, Maria is a victim because she is captured as a prisoner of war, thus their destinies intersect at one point as they both have a bitter fate (Zyberaj, 2003, p. 35).

The theme of love is explored by both writers but in a different ways. If in Hemingway's novel love appears and develops gradually and is ever-present, in Petro Marko's novel it has another temporal and spatial dimension. That is, love in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* emerges by chance but is nurtured by the sincerity of the past and the fidelity of the future. Gori's love for Anita aspires to be longer-lasting. It is more idealistic and contains a purpose behind it, which is not that evident in Robert Jordan's relationship with Maria. Hence, to his last love, Maria, he was not loyal in the physical sense, because Robert had previously had relationships and affairs with women, but in the spiritual sense, because he had felt with Maria the real pleasure of loving someone. Both protagonists and their girlfriends seem to express their feelings freely and strongly. Gori Gjinleka and Robert Xhordani appear as true protagonists, worthy of being loved and not afraid of the war, well aware of the goals and missions they have set for themselves to accomplish and continue with dedication and determination the fight to the end. In addition to the two main protagonists, we also have other characters who perform their actions, have dialogues, move the story along a plotline within the novel and give value and contribution to the fulfilment and completion of the novel substantively. Maria's fate in E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is almost identical to Anita's fate in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista*. The differences in destinies of the two characters are so small and insignificant that they are not worth noting.

Moreover, one has the impression that their similarity, along with some other motifs like that of the dilemma of the first murder of the enemy, is more a result of Hemingway's influence on P. Marko than of a casual correspondence and similarity between these two novels. In addition, in these two novels, we have images that are quite similar to each other, especially when it comes to the atrocities of the phalanges against the defenceless population, which were oftentimes carried out against innocent people only because some of them either supported the movement or sympathized with it. Other motifs that are similar in these two novels are the destruction of the bridge by XhemailKada in P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* with the demolition of the bridge by Robert Jordan in E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which is the leitmotif of the latter and around which almost all other events revolve. The adoption of orphans is a motif we encounter in both novels. Pilar's love and care for Maria until Robert arrives is almost akin to the French colonel's paternal care for Anita, whom he had adopted as his daughter, following the tragedy of the war. The pain of the murders



different characters are forced to commit is another motif we come across, which is similar in both of these novels.

When there is genuine contact and interaction between writers, there is a direct influence between two kinds of literature that extends beyond the borders of a country and a language. A literary influence cannot exist unless an author has read another writer's 'original' text or has had direct interaction with him or her. However, proving this relationship, which is based on clear-cut causation, between nationally distinct writers is difficult, if not impossible especially when some writers do not mention (deliberately or unintentionally) their debt, if any, to certain foreign writers or works. However, in this case, the Albanian writer, Petro Marko, was open, candid and transparent enough to admit that he not only had direct contact with Ernest Hemingway but that in writing his novel *Hasta la Vista* he was directly influenced by Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Both authors, Ernest Hemingway and Petro Marko wrote novels on the same world-historical event, the Spanish Civil War. These novels have undoubtedly similarities and differences. It is clear that when it comes to similarities, both Petro Marko and Ernest Hemingway, endeavoured to connect their literary works to the world-historical event, the Spanish Civil War, because they both participated in this event.

Both novels E. Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and P. Marko's *Hasta la Vista* were written for the same purpose, to represent and admire the struggle of various heroes who participated in the Spanish War. Through their works they remembered, praised and admired the solidarity of many fighters and soldiers of different countries who gave their contribution by being near those who needed support and help to fight against a world invader, the Nazi-Fascists. The development of the theme of the Spanish War by both writers is realized through a similar narrative, namely the description of events and situations in the development of battles given in detail by both writers. In addition to war as the main theme, both authors have simultaneously developed the theme of love. Moreover, in these two novels, we have images that are almost completely similar to each other, especially when it comes to the atrocities of the phalanges against the defenceless population. In both novels, the bridge is the main common motif and symbol of hope. The adoption of orphans is another motif which is quite similar in both novels. Since both novels were written with the same idea and motif, then no doubt that the features of the characters of these novels are similar in certain aspects and respects because they hold the same attitudes, ideas and visions about the war mission against the enemy, etc.

Differences between the two authors include their socio-cultural contexts, literary traditions and periods and the languages in which both authors wrote their novels. There are also differences when it comes to writing their novels because both authors used different methods and during their creative process, they created original novels, through an artistic process with genuine systems of aesthetic and ethical values. Petro Marko and Ernest Hemingway also had divergent creative and ideological approaches in exploring themes, motifs and conflicts in their novels. Much of this is due to the American literary, historical



and political great tradition, something that the Albanian tradition cannot claim due to various upheavals throughout its history. Authors of both novels employed original ideas to reveal the multiple importance of the Spanish Civil War. Another difference has to do with time, within which the events of these two novels take place.

There is also a conceptual difference between how Ernest Hemingway and Petro Marko see the solidarity between characters in the war. There are also differences as regards the development of the theme of war. War in these two novels differs in the social and psychological aspects. Petro Marko's *Hasta la Vista* is characterized by a pronounced emotional strain and boundless hopes that can very easily end in disappointment, while Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is characterized by a more rational action and a greater opportunity to face the challenges imposed by the the the war. And finally, the first tends to completely deny the past and partly the present for the sake of the future, while the second tends to defend the values of the present, primarily for their own sake and then for the sake of the future. It is based on these that the conceptual differences between the war and its development stemmed and were conditioned. The first is characteristic of the Mediterranean mentality in which P. Marko belongs as an Albanian in Spain, while the second is characteristic of the transatlantic mentality of people who are typified through the figure of Robert Jordan. On these premises, the conceptual differences between the war and its development are raised and determined. The first conceives it as a means to an end therefore one should pursue its goal as much as possible, without asking for the prize, while the second conceives it as a struggle but also as an ability that one must possess to care for people and their lives, even if he is an enemy. We hope that this paper on the influence of Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* on Petro Marko's novel *Hasta la Vista* will contribute to the deepening of Albanian and American literary and cultural ties and relations, to the better knowledge, dissemination, reading and recognition of Hemingway's work in Albanian literature and culture and to the incitement of other scholars to embark on conducting other researches on Ernest Hemingway's influence in Albanian literature and culture.

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