



## Albanian Journalistic and Literary Criticism on Ernest Hemingway

**Dr. Lirak Karjagdiu**

*University of Prishtina, Faculty of Philology, Department of English, Republic of Kosovo*  
[lkarjagdiu@hotmail.com](mailto:lkarjagdiu@hotmail.com)

### ABSTRACT

The theme of this paper is not only topical but inspirational and challenging. It is topical given that this is the first paper written in English on Ernest Hemingway's works in Albanian, which have been translated since 1950s, continued to be translated throughout 1970s, but have been translated much more during the last decade of the past millennium. Furthermore, the theme is inspiring and challenging as despite the presence of a considerable number of Hemingway's works in Albanian literature, the journalistic and literary critique has either responded with moderately or has even sometimes overlooked his works. Therefore, conscious that Hemingway's works not only deserve but they require a more profound attention and consideration, we decided to try to shed some light on the reception of his works in Albanian language, literature and culture. The Albanian journalistic and literary journals and magazines have been writing about Ernest Hemingway's life and works ever since 1960s. "Jeta e re", one of the most reputable literary journals in Kosova, published different journalistic and literary critiques written by various Albanian and international authors. Therefore, in this paper we will focus on the journalistic and literary critique published in "Jeta e re" but in some other books as well.

**Key words:** Ernest Hemingway, Albanian literature, Albanian journalistic and literary critique, reception, presence.

### 1. ALBANIAN JOURNALISTIC CRITICISM ON ERNEST HEMINGWAY

#### 1.1 Hemingway on Literature

Albanian journals and magazines have been publishing critiques on Hemingway's works since 1960s. One of the most authoritative literary journals in Kosova "Jeta e re" published since 1960s run series of critiques written by different Albanian and international authors. Therefore, on this occasion our focus will turn on journalistic critique published in "Jeta e re" columns. The second edition of "Jeta e re" published in 1960 run an article titled: "Hemingway's latest interviews on his life and literary creation".<sup>1</sup> The anonymous author of the article made an attempt to pick and choose some of Hemingway's statements and opinions given to various European and American journals and magazines. The correspondent of "Art" Paris newspaper quotes Hemingway saying: "Writers should read, observe and

<sup>1</sup> "Jeta e re" no. 2, Prishtinë, 1960, p. 197-8.

*keep silent*".<sup>2</sup> According to the correspondent, Hemingway didn't like to talk about himself. The correspondent informed Hemingway that he is the fifth most popular author among French readers. But, when Hemingway asked him who the first one was, he replied Dostoyevsky. When Hemingway asked him: "*What about Shakespeare?*", the journalist replied, it seems that he is the tenth most popular writer in France. Taken aback Hemingway stressed out that in fact Shakespeare is greater than Dostoyevsky and any other writer.<sup>3</sup>

In another interview when the editor of "Week" American magazine asked Hemingway to say something about the features of his style, he replied that he had always attempted to describe life as it is, although he has sometimes used a common language. However, according to some critics, it is the common and individual language used by Hemingway that characterised his "style".<sup>4</sup> When asked how long would it take him to write a book, he stated that it depended pretty much on the kind of book. According to him a good book can take about a year and a half to be written. Hemingway also thought that young and inexperienced writers take writing for granted thinking that they could never fail. That's why they write so much with so ease because they simply disregard the readers. However, as soon as they gain sufficient experience and start to pay more attention to the readers, they get to understand that the art of word (literature) is not as easy as they thought it was.<sup>5</sup>

### **1.2 Dictators Hated Hemingway**

In the first chronicle of "Jeta e re" published in 1961 the following article was run: "Hemingway, persona non-grata in Spain". The article notes that Hemingway's works, published in American journal "Life", have provoked the reaction of a number of newspapers, journals and magazines, some of them even suggesting that he should be expelled from Spain and be banned from entering Spain in future. "Life" published in instalments one of his works titled "The Dangerous Summer". The main theme of this work is the rivalry between two well-known bullfighters Domingo and Ordonez. Namely, in 1959 the two bullfighters had escorted Hemingway in his visits in Spain. The American writer and artist, as a thorough and sensitive observer of human and social events, occurrences and phenomenon, according to this article, took the liberty to give his remarks by reproaching and criticising General Franko's stern reaction.<sup>6</sup> It is interesting that soon afterwards, a pro-government journalist from Madrid in one of his comments pronounced Hemingway as a "distinguished communist" and thus, said the journalist, he was unwelcome for Franko's regime.<sup>7</sup>

### **1.3 Is Hemingway an Existentialist?**

In the second edition of "Jeta e re" published in 1961, a chronicle with the following title was published: "Is Hemingway and Existentialist?". The article hubs on some selected opinions and thoughts from John Killinger's book titled: "Hemingway and the Dead Gods". This contemporary American critic points out that although Hemingway was not an existentialist philosopher, some of his beliefs and opinions were existentialist. According to him, Hemingway maintained that each individual has its own identity, but the identity of an individual can be either independent or part of the silent crowd.<sup>8</sup> The American critic pointed out that Hemingway's preoccupations were akin to those of Sartre and Camus.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid .

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid , p. 198

<sup>6</sup> "Jeta e re", no. 1, Prishtinë, 1961, p. 138-9.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> "Jeta e re", no. 2, Prishtinë, 1961, p. 293.

According to the American critic, he held similar views on Absurd and Contempt. Furthermore, certain Hemingway's characters bear similar traits with Sartre and Camus characters. Killinger also analyses and compares the similarities of Hemingway's opinions with those of the aforesaid two French authors.

He concludes that there were some differences noted here as Hemingway had supported the social commitment (engagement) only at the outset of his literary career, while as far as the subject of love is concerned his ideal heroines usually acquiesced to the protagonist, which was not the case with the characters of Camus and Sartre.

#### **1.4 Passing of a Giant**

In the forth edition of "Jeta e re" published in 1961, another anonymous review was published titled: "On the Death of the Great American Writer Ernest Hemingway". The review deals with the death of Hemingway, his life and works, and also focuses on the reactions and statements of some prominent international literary, cultural and political personalities. At the beginning of the review, it is said that a giant or one of the greatest and most prominent writers and perhaps one of the best American writers had passed away. It says that he was "*The father of the modern generation of American writers.*"<sup>9</sup> This was more or less how most of the American newspapers and journals reacted on the death of Hemingway. After some relevant information on his life and works given in chronology, it was pointed out that his first work "Three Stories and Ten Letters" (obviously a mistake was done here, as instead of the word "letters" in the title the word "poetry" should have been used), was not very well received neither from the public nor from the readers.<sup>10</sup> It is only his first novel "The Sun Also Rises", published in 1926, says the review, that brought him his first great success, while "A Farewell to Arms" made him famous and definitely established his literary reputation. In the critical review, it was also noted that Hemingway was a humanist and antifascist, that he had condemned the Italian fascist politics in Ethiopia since 1935 and that he was a war correspondent and supported the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War, where he got the idea to write one of his best novels "For Whom the Bells Tolls". Namely, according to the author of the review, the aforesaid novel "*with its originality and conceptions conquered the world for more than ten years*". There are some slight mistakes done in the review since the author refers to some Hemingway's short stories and novelettes such as "The Snows of Kilimanjaro" and some others as "novels".<sup>11</sup>

The review reminded the readers that in 1954 Hemingway was awarded the Nobel Price for Literature for his short novel "The Old Man and the Sea", which was translated in almost all world languages and many films were made (produced) based on the novel.

The edition carries the reactions and opinions of some of distinguished writers and personalities on his suicide. Tennessee Williams, contemporary American playwright, said that Hemingway not only loved literature but he loved life as well, and that oftentimes he was capable of saying things that were impossible to express; this way he became embodied with his works. The renowned writer John Priestley underscored that Hemingway had influenced many writers worldwide. Of course, the influence was more positive than negative. "*He was a subtle writer*", Priestley went on to say that Hemingway was capable of passing on a message in a very simple, clear-cut and lucid way, which the English author considers a virtue and a special gift.<sup>12</sup>

William Faulkner, a well-known American novelist, who wrote stream of consciousness novels, had a very high opinion about Hemingway. The author of the review quotes Faulkner's saying: "*He was as great as the books he left behind. He was my great friend. He dedicated his entire life to the writing*

<sup>9</sup> "Jeta e re", , no. 4, Prishtinë, 1961, p. 550-552..

<sup>10</sup> Ibid .

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, p. 551.

craft".<sup>13</sup> W. Faulkner was confident that Hemingway was capable of coping not only with comedy but with tragedy, as well, and that's why he will live among future generations. Hemingway's publisher, Scribner, declared that he was a great writer and he ought to remain great in future since "*His books were special and will live for centuries ahead*", said Hemingway's publisher.<sup>14</sup> The distinguished French writer François Mauriac declared that this was a heavy loss for literature, in general and for American novel, in particular. While the great Italian writer and novelist Alberto Moravia said that "*Hemingway's loss left America without one of the two best American writers. Faulkner was the second.*"<sup>15</sup> Last but not least, the then President of USA John Kennedy gave a very important statement on Hemingway's passing. Namely, he asserted that no American has influenced the American people like Hemingway did. Moreover, President Keneddy added that Hemingway has transformed the way of thinking of all the readers of the Planet and thus became a world citizen. He ended his statement saying: "*He ended his life, the way he began it, at the heart of America to which he brought fame and from which he immersed the power for his art.*"<sup>16</sup>

### **1.5 Has the Legend on Hemingway Been Forgotten?**

The sixth edition of "Jeta e re", published in 1965, runs Abdullah Karjagdiu's article titled: "Was the Legend on Hemingway Forgotten?". The article informs us that even five years before Hemingway passed away, his wife had "*To defend the legend about him*". She had put in a request with the New York Supreme Court to ban the publication of A.E. Houchner autobiographical book titled: "Papa Hemingway". The reason for such a request was because the book in question contained many unknown and unpleasant facts about the very interesting, exciting and stormy life of the great American writer. The book unravels his love adventures, some unaccountable and stormy episodes of his life, his passion for hunting, and some episodes and events, which are full of disappointments and attempts to kill himself. In addition, publisher Houchner, as Ernest Hemingway's friend, in this book reminisced his childhood, recalled the Paris literary scene in the twenties, remembered his early years as a writer, recounted the real events that lay behind his fiction, etc. Hotchner took all this down, had all these events on record, including some corny and scandalous events. Although Mrs. Hemingway had requested from the Court that Houchner's book not be published, the chances of Court granting her request were slim. Therefore, it was believed that the book would become a bestseller.<sup>17</sup>

## **2. ALBANIAN LITERARY CRITICISM ON ERNEST HEMINGWAY**

### **2.1 Hemingway and the Readers**

One of the first literary critiques written in Albanian about Hemingway's life and works is the one published at the end of the Albanian translation of his novel "The Old Man and the Sea", which was translated by Ramiz Kelmendi and Masar Murtezai in 1957. Although the author of the critique is anonymous, most likely the critique in question was written in another language and this is only its translation into Albanian. The first part focuses on Hemingway's popularity among his many readers. The critical review says that Hemingway is not only a world citizen (cosmopolitan), but a worldwide known

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid, p. 552.

<sup>17</sup> "Jeta e re", no. 6, Prishtinë, 1965, p. 1012-1013.

writer, since his books can be found in all the meridians and parallels of the globe.<sup>18</sup> In it it is concluded that: *“His works are read by pupils, civil servants, philosophers, housewives, travellers, retired, workers, semi-literate, literate, educated, sonobs, his admirers, indifferent scholars, etc”*.<sup>19</sup> The critique tries to elucidate the different motives of readers to read Hemingway’s works, some read it to avoid boresomeness, others for fun, some others to kill the time, there are those who read it to get to know human psychology better, there are readers who like the philosophy behind his works and there are those who read his works to forget about their everyday hardships. There are readers who think that Hemingway is a good narrator, but tends to stash or leave something out, not so much to disappoint the reader as to make him curious.<sup>20</sup> However, according to the critique, *“the first, the second, the third, and the tenth kind of reader are disappointed sometimes with the writer. As Hemingway, this great fisherman, is as strange as the sea, he can impress, cheat and deceit”*.<sup>21</sup>

The second part of the critique talks about his interesting life. It brings many details and information about his: family, milieu, childhood, youth, departure from family, career as a journalist, participation in WW I, activities as a reporter, woundings, adventures in Mediterranean, moving to Paris and participation in life, ambitions and failures of the Lost Generation, fishing, voyages in different places, participation in the Spanish War, acclaim and popularity gained with his novel *“A Farewell to Arms”*, the success of his novel *“For Whom the Bell Tolls”*, friends and admirers, journalistic activities and participation in WW II as well as winning of Nobel Prize for Literature in 1954.<sup>22</sup> The next part titled *“Hemingway’s Books”* a list of Hemingway’s works and of his works translated into Albanian in chronology is published. The next part titled *“Hemingway’s Minimalism”* focuses on Hemingway’s simple and plain life, which was anything but boring. In this part it is also said that Hemingway always avoided depicting intricate events and dramas. According to this literary critique Hemingway has brought about a lot of innovations when it comes to the narrative and composition of literary works, although he had oftentimes infringed the rules of the traditional plot and of some other classical elements of the prose.

The critique said that Hemingway wrote simple, light, lucid, fluent, concise short but sometimes long sentences in order to avoid tiring and boring his readers. He lets his characters develop their own dialogue spontaneously, without intrusion, so as to make the artistic life true to real life.<sup>23</sup>

The last part of the critique titled *“Hemingway is not Really Simple”* points out that although Hemingway was very popular, acclaimed, admired, imitated, praised, criticised, distinguished, industrious, interesting and clear, he was not so simple after all. His simplicity, according to the critique, was as elaborated, planned and meticulous as the simplicity of a telegram. His style was clear and short, the words used in his sentences alluded to the words and things that were not stated directly, so his works could be read and enjoyed by both attentive and thoughtful readers as well as inattentive readers, who do not bother to think, judge and react while reading his works.<sup>24</sup> At the outset of his career, Hemingway especially in his short stories he wrote sketches, which depicted short but shocking social events dealing with topics of the ordinary and everyday life, which were sometimes even timeless. These sketches did not have any organic relation to the short stories, but they were placed at the heart of a story so as to attract the attention of the readers and prevent them from understanding the story in a biased way. So for example, before the story where Nick Adams is portrayed fishing trout, Hemingway put a sketch in which

<sup>18</sup> Hemingway and something else, in Ernest Hemingway, *The Old Man and the Sea and other novels*. Translated by Masar Murtezai dhe Ramiz Kelmendi, Publishing House “Milladin Popoviq”, Prishtinë, 1957, p. 179-187.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid, p. 179.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid, p. 180.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, p. 181.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, p. 183.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, p. 184.

the character remembered killing the first enemy soldiers, and thus it was clear to his readers that his conscience was not clear as it appeared.<sup>25</sup>

## **2.2 Hemingway- The Measure of Ethics**

In the fourth edition of “Jeta e re” published in 1961, the Albanian translation of Hemingway’s short story “Soldier’s Home” translated by Tajar Hatipi was published along with a short passage written by one of his earlier critics Edmund Wilson. Though it doesn’t say who translated the critic’s note, we believe that it was translated from Serbian.<sup>26</sup>

Edmund Wilson is one of the most acclaimed contemporary American critics, who lived and worked between WW I and second half of the XX-th century. In American literature he is known for his poems, novels, short stories, plays and in general for his historical researches, but he is most of all known as a literary critic especially for his following books “Axel’s Castle”, “Classics and Commercialists”, “The Shores of Light”, etc. In this passage he analyses some of the Hemingway’s short stories, on the one hand, and tries to shed some light on Hemingway as a critic of the society of that time, on the other hand.<sup>27</sup> He focuses on one of his short stories titled “Old Man at the Bridge” in which the reader is impressed by the pale face of the old man, who although never showed interest in politics was forced to leave two goats and a cat, his dear friends and everything else because of the attacks of the fascists army. Now he is worried about them. This story, according to Wilson, resembles the Kamot’s and Goya’s pictures, the elegance and acuteness is noted even in his earlier works.<sup>28</sup> The story is simple, but for Wilson, through this story, Hemingway depicted the city life, the social atmosphere, clergy, the movements of the working class and the life of the weary and botched bullfighters.

Analysing the subject of women’s struggle to dominate men, in general, and the antagonisms between men and women, in particular, Wilson asserts that Hemingway dealt with the subject in his earlier works too. He reminds us that in his short story “The Doctor and the Doctor’s Wife”, the character of Nick Adams preferred to rather go to hunt squirrels with his dad than to listen to his mother preaching. In his “Cross Country Snow”, according to Wilson, the character regrets for having to say farewell to his friends with whom he skied and had good time in Switzerland and to go back to America, where his wife was pregnant and was waiting for him. Likewise, a young lover in “Hills Like White Elephants”, forces his loved one to abort against her will. In another short story titled “A Canary for One”, Wilson says that Hemingway centres on the issue of a separated women from her husband. The peasant in the short story “An Alpine Idyll” insults his wife’s corpse, while Brett in “The Sun Also Rises”, according to Wilson, is a symbol of a destructive power. She would make a better wife had she married Jake, but he was isolated from her because of his impotence. The protagonist of the novel Jake Barnes, in his novel “A Farewell to Arms”, according to the critic, after showing devotion, modesty, humility, after experiencing the birth of their dead child and after the death of his loved one, the ill-fate frees him from the “obligations” towards his wife.<sup>29</sup>

Furthermore, Wilson maintains that Nick Adam’s best experience with women were the ones of his youth with the young Indian ladies, who accepted the subjugation from men with ease and did not attempt to change men’s behaviour and so the men were able to get read of them whenever they wanted. In “The Fifth Column”, Mr. Philip gets rid of Dorothy brutally and avoids being influenced and discouraged and

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid, p. 186.

<sup>26</sup> Edmund Wilson, *Hemingway –The Measure of Ethics*, in “Jeta e re”, no. 4, Prishtinë, 1961, p. 498-502.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid, p. 499.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 500.

hence is able to join the communist movement. Wilson concludes that the protagonist (Jake Barnes) in “The Sun Also Rises” is saved from his physical trauma, which enables him to revenge the naive Brett. Harry Morgan is portrayed as a man who can not satisfy his wife as Pol Banyan (a legendary giant), and thus he leaves his wife to go and face the death.<sup>30</sup>

Likewise, Wilson believes men’s instinct to subdue women comes from the fear of women’s desire to control men. In Hemingway’s short story “The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber” and “The Snows of Kilimajaro” men are married to a very precarious and vicious type of American women. According to Wilson’s opinion, the character in the short story “The Snows of Kilimanjaro”, loses faith in everything and dies from the feeling of emptiness and uselessness in a safari in Africa. Hemingway’s short story “The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber” deals with the subject of a man saving his soul and dignity at the last moment, but as soon as he does that his unfaithful and foolish wife kills him as she doesn’t want him to have a soul, dignity and be high-toned. Winston considers that Hemingway, among others, was influenced by Rudyard Kipling, who believed that those who travel alone travel faster and that the women are more ghastly than men.

In the end, the well-known literary critic Wilson concludes that many politicians were wrong when they accused Hemingway of being indifferent towards the society where he lived. Conversely, according to Wilson’s opinion, Hemingway reacted against any suppression and moral persecution, which touched on the roots of human relations. He criticized and stigmatized the society of his time in a very susceptible manner. For Hemingway, when it comes to politics and ethics, everything depends on bravery and individual strength. He maintained that braveness and strength were more important and valuable than physical size. Therefore, for Hemingway the courageous bullfighter, who puts his life at risk, is braver than any other man.<sup>31</sup> However, although Hemingway’s main focus is on physical fights and races, his characters are almost always physically crushed though they are constantly moral winners.

### **2.3 Ernest Hemingway-Life and Works**

“Jeta e re” no. 1, published in 1974, run a rather long review by Hasan Mekuli titled “Life and Works of Ernest Hemingway”, which consists of four parts. The author of the review focuses on three Hemingway’s works: his collection of short stories “In Our Time”, his novel “The Sun Also Rises” as well as his well-known novel “A Farewell to Arms”. Hasan Mekuli at the outset points out that the American literature from the 1920s till present has been growing and enriching with a lot of writers, whose works have not only artistic and literary values, but extraordinary aesthetic and ethic values, as well. Among them, “*the most characteristic generation of American writers are the so-called writers of the lost generation*”, says Mekuli.<sup>32</sup> Mekuli explains that the name lost generation was first used by Gertrude Stein. According to Gertrude Stein, the intellectuals who belonged to the lost generation were exceptional intellectuals, writers and artists who because of their participation in the war were traumatized, demoralized and discouraged and thus escaped from the gloomy and unfavourable atmosphere at home to Paris. Hemingway was one of the members of the lost generation.

Talking about Hemingway’s short stories, Mekuli believes that Hemingway’s short stories contain themes, conflicts and events that are related to author’s personal life. Mekuli also explains the way Hemingway wrote his short stories. He says Hemingway did not know how he got the idea for a short story: sometimes the idea simply came to him while he was working but he never knew how the story would end as this depended on the turn of events. This is how he writes a story.<sup>33</sup> Mekuli assumes

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, p. 501.

<sup>32</sup> Hasan Mekuli, *Ernest Hemingway, Life and Works*, in “Jeta e re”, no.1, Prishtinë, 1974, p. 112-130.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid, p. 114.

that he proved his talent as a short story writer not only with “In Our Time”, but with other short story collections such as “Today is Friday”, “Men Without Women”, “Winner Take Nothing”, “Snows of Kilimanjaro”, etc.

According to Mekuli, in short story collection “In Our Time”, most of the themes and events are somehow related to certain episodes of author’s life. Therefore, the young Nick Adams is the young Hemingway; Nick’s father, a doctor, is Hemingway’s father, who was also a doctor, the character lives in Chicago or Michigan, where Hemingway passed his boyhood. However, according to the Albanian literary critic, in most cases his real life episodes were transposed in a highly artistic manner. The personification of the author’s personality was represented with different names, but with similar behaviours, attitudes, opinions, character and temperament.<sup>34</sup> Among these short stories, Hemingway used some sketches, which Mekuli calls “*poetry in prose*”. Commenting on the short story “The End of Something”, where the main theme is love, Mekuli says that this short story is about Nick, who falls out of love and feels bad as he thinks that everything is upside-down. He is not interested in Marge anymore and parts from her forever. While in his short story “The Three Day Blow”, Mekuli writes that the characters in this short story along with Nick, spend most of their time drinking, having adventures with women, playing sports, discussing about literature and killing their time to no purpose.

In the second part of his review, Mekuli was of the opinion that in the following short stories “The Killer”, “Ten Indians”, “The Capital of the World”, “The Short and Happy Life of Francis Macomber” the main theme is death. Most of the characters, according to him, have suffered in life, they are disappointed, alienated, in conflict with their families and surroundings and hence are unable to find their way out of the life labyrinth.<sup>35</sup>

In the third part of the review Mekuli tries to analyse on some of the characteristics of Hemingway’s novel “The Sun Also Rises”. With this novel, he noted, citing the American critic Philip Young, “*Hemingway enters in American Literature through the big door*”. This novel, in which the events are narrated by the protagonist Jack Barnes in the first person, is about his mundane society and the lost generation in Paris, who wandered around searching consolation in alcohol, in empty dialogues, in lust, in disastrous passions and in chasing women. Mekuli makes a survey of the protagonist Jack Barnes, who epitomizes the destiny of the lost generation, and of Robert Cohn, who is the antithesis of Barnes. Mekuli believes that the most attractive and the best portrayed character is Barnes, who with his attitude towards creative work, on the one hand, and, on the other hand, because he is in a very uncomfortable and tragical position (as his genitals were damaged) is different from other characters. However, even he is sometimes down in the dumps and thus drinks in order to calm himself down; he is in love with the beautiful and adventurous Brett Ashley, but unfortunately the war wounds have disabled him from having a normal love relationship. Even at such a state he does his utmost to preserve his friendship and his friends, by wishing them well and by seeking peace and consolation in nature and art. On the other hand, Robert Cohn is a character, who according to the critic remains a charming mediocre, though he does not have a conscience and any considerations towards the others. Mekuli gives a brief overview of Lady Brett Ashley, Bill Gorton, Mike Campbell, Count Mippipopolous, etc. Each of the characters is emptier than the other. They all lost their faith in life and were wandering, having fun and spending their time to no purpose.<sup>36</sup>

In the forth part of the review, Mekuli focuses on Hemingway’s novel “A Farewell to Arms”. The novel was written against the war and not only does it reveal the true colours of the war, but it also accuses and criticizes severely the meaningless militarization and bloodshed. The critic then quotes the words of an episodic character of the novel, Pasini, who told the main character Henry the following:

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid, p. 115

<sup>35</sup> Ibid, p. 116

<sup>36</sup> Ibid, p. 123

*"We are governed by a class of fools, who don't and will never understand a damn thing. That's why we are having a war. It suits them as they earn money."* However, as the critic rightly noticed, at the same time the novel consists of a touching, subtle and romantic history. Both these subjects love and war are interrelated in a perfect way. *"War as a tragic end of a love relationship between the American gentlemen Henry and the British nurse Catherine Barkley"* says Mekuli, *"coalesces with their love and kindness, or love as a ray of hope, obscured and extinguished by the gloomy shadow of the war and the tragedy that it causes"*<sup>37</sup> Mekuli thinks that the novel consists of two main stories, the first one is about the cruel and merciless reality and the second one is about love as a nice dream of happiness and human tragedy. Mekuli concludes that love is what gives the protagonist of the novel Henry strength to cope with sufferings and dangers, to defect from war, to evade the execution, but when he thought that he would become the happiest man on earth, while waiting for Katherine to deliver the baby, both Katherine and the baby die.

## **2.4 A Man in a Stormy Fate**

In "Jeta e re" no. 4 published in 1978, the well-known Albanian literary critic Hasan Mekuli, published a critical and analytics review titled: "A Man in a Stormy Fate", where he focuses on some of the main features Hemingway's short novel "The Old Man and the Sea". In this critique, reiterating that this novel too has autobiographical elements, he thinks that in it all the aesthetic, ethic and stylistic Hemingway's traits were sublimed. Mekuli went on to say that: *"In this novel, in a natural and consequent way, we come across with the same short, clear-cut and lucid sentences, with sensible and frequent descriptions, with the same witty and fluent dialogues, with the colloquial and always genial language..."*<sup>38</sup>

According to our critic, the main theme in this novel is the struggle of the individual to find the meaning of existence, to find and use even the last atom of his creative energy, positive ambition and endless desire, in general and in particular to lead and rely on active life. The strange old man Santiago confirms the author's belief that a man can sometimes face tragedies but he can not be wiped out as he will never concur to be defeated.<sup>39</sup> Mekuli in his analyses considers that this novel has only one character and that society does not play any particular part in it. According to him, man in the storms of life is the main preoccupation of the author.

Mekuli thinks that "The Old Man and the Sea" above all is a poem in prose, and a prose in poem as well, where the author narrates the story of a Cuban fisherman Santiago, who after many sufferings and sluggishness, because of failing to catch a fish for days, goes off to the sea alone and catches a huge fish. The old man does anything in his power to protect his hunt and his destiny, fights with other sharks, remains only with the skeleton of the hunted fish, but in the end he wins. This way, although an old man, he manages to not only regain his self-confidence and authority but to also prove that man can be wiped out, but he can never be defeated.<sup>40</sup>

It suffices to say that Mekuli expresses an interesting opinion on the destiny of Hemingway's work in Albanian. Namely, he gives the following opinion on this issue: *"For some time now Hemingway enjoys a huge authority as one of the dearest and most read and admired writers since his mindset, sentence, observance and culture in general have become part of our culture in a very characteristic way, no doubt as a very pure aesthetic value"*.<sup>41</sup> According to Mekuli's taste two of his most popular and most

<sup>37</sup> Ibid, p. 125.

<sup>38</sup> Hasan Mekuli, *Man with a Stormy Fate, The Old Man and the Sea*, in "Jeta e re", nr. 4, Prishtinë, 1978, p. 601-608.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid, p. 602.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid, p. 603.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid, p. 605.

appreciated works among Albanian reader are “For Whom the Bell Tolls” and “The Old Man and the Sea”.

As per the later novel Mekuli believes that Ismail Kadare’s Albanian translation is fluent and accurate, *“perhaps because this is where the two lyrical thinkers have met, two poets inspired by creative optimism and two authors, who attract us with the beauty of their art, with peculiarities of their thoughts and their full dedication to literary work”*, concludes Mekuli.<sup>42</sup>

Though Mekuli’s reviews are comprehensive and serious, we have the feeling that they are full of descriptions and paraphrasing and sometimes even repetitions of opinions and sociological ideas, which may not be adequate for commenting, discussing and interpreting Hemingway’s works.

## **2.5 Few Words on Hemingway’s Poetry**

In “Jeta e re” no. 4 published in 1988, Fadil Bajra writes a short article on Hemingway and the Albanian translation of some of his poems. Bajra believes, as many other critics do that in order to understand the works of Hemingway, one of the most prominent and popular American writers, it is essential to first know his life. He concurs with some American critics that Hemingway inserted autobiographical elements in almost all his works.<sup>43</sup>

Talking about Hemingway’s collection of poems “88 Poems”, which were published posthumously in 1979, he says that only 25 of them were published while he was alive, whereas the others were published post-mortem.<sup>44</sup>

On the occasion of publication of Hemingway’s “Three Stories and Ten Poems”, the well-known critic Wilson, according to Bajra wrote the following: *“Hemingway’s poems are not so important, but his prose is excellent”*.<sup>45</sup> Hemingway preferred to write meditative and lyrical poetry. He divided his collection of poems “88 Poems” into four cycles. The chronology of the poems was done based on the author’s biography. According to Bajra, in the first cycle Hemingway had imitated the earlier Kipling’s verse, the second cycle consists of love poems and satirical poems against the war and critics, in the third cycle some of his descriptive and satirical poems were included and the fourth cycle contains his reflexive and meditative poems.<sup>46</sup>

Hemingway tried his hand on poetry with the help of the distinguished modern poet Ezra Pound. Pound believed that Hemingway had a sort of talent to write poetry, but he excelled in prose. Hemingway was influenced by Gertrude Stein, especially when he wrote his long poem “The Soul of Spain” published by “McAlmon and Bird”. Hemingway had mainly published his poems in some elitist literary journals. However, there were journals that refused to publish his poems as he used rude language and therefore Hemingway published them as illegal pamphlets.<sup>47</sup>

After reading his poems, as Bajra notes it appears that Hemingway wrote most of poems hastily, some others were revised, while some of his poems were in manuscript. In one of his poems written during the 1930s titled “Advice to a Son”, which is a meditative and didactic poem, the main topic is discouragement and demoralization as he advises his son to never trust a white man, to not kill Jews, to

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p. 607.

<sup>43</sup> Ernest Hemingway, *The Extraordinary Actual Event*. Note on the author and translation of his poems by Fadil Bajra, in “Jeta e re”, no. 4, Prishtinë, 1988, p. 439 – 456.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p. 439.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid, p. 440.

<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid, p. 443.

not volunteer to go to the army, to not not get married too many times, to not say no to good things in life, to not trust the wars, to honour his heritage, to not blackmail people and to not get married to bitches.<sup>48</sup>

## **2.6 The Best Thing in Life– A Genuine Prose**

In the preface of the Albanian translation of collection of short stories and other Hemingway's works titled "Snows of Kilimangaro, short stories, novels and other works", which has 500 pages and was published in 1990 in Tirana, the author of the preface Pirro Misha, uses as his motto the Hemingway's opinion that the most difficult thing is to write a candid and earnest prose.<sup>49</sup> In the first part of his concise preface he first dwells on Hemingway's biography then he writes about his style and finally comments and discusses briefly on some of his best short stories. Suffices to mention that in the first part of his preface the critic and the translator Pirro Misha asserts that Hemingway once had said to a friend that the best way to become a writer is if you have a difficult and unhappy childhood. Hemingway, notes our critic, meets the criteria.<sup>50</sup>

At the same time, he is confident that all Hemingway's works, starting from Nick Adam's short stories going to his last novel "The Old Man and the Sea", which was published while he was alive and even the works published posthumously, are a sort of fictionalized autobiography. Emphasizing the consequences of Hemingway's adventures, wounds and traumas during his life, P. Misha was inclined to believe that the war experience had made Hemingway the most prominent representative and the spokesman of the post-WW I depressing, empty, confused and rebellious atmosphere, when all ethical and traditional values were put at stake. From the big traumas experienced by the young generation after the war, he was spiritually traumatized due to the consequences of the brutal clash between his youth dreams and illusions with the merciless and cruel reality of death. This generation, believes Misha, "*is a lost generation*".<sup>51</sup>

The critic went on to analyse and discuss Hemingway's works, claiming that despite many reactions and discussions on his short story collection "In Our Time", the work in fact did not bring him so much popularity. It is only after the publication of "The Sun Also Rises", which is the one of the most representative novels of the lost generation "*and is still considered as Hemingway's masterpiece*" that his reputation as a great modern novelist was established. According to P. Misha, this novel deals with a group of disillusioned young people after the war. They spend their time fishing, drinking in café's and having adventures and endless discussions. Nevertheless, behind this apparently debauched life, the critic believes lays "*their attempt to at least preserve something from the ruins*", and that's why "*They struggle to maintain their welfare, sincerity and love so as to give the minimum logic to their lives*", notes Misha.<sup>52</sup>

By the end of 1920-s Hemingway had become very popular and famous. Our critic thinks that Hemingway had become a preferred and attractive theme for sensational journalist. Pirro Misha notes that Hemingway at that time was sometimes disappointed and sometimes ironic, sometimes unrestrained and sometimes ardent, sometimes lonely and gloomy and sometimes moving and ready to face dangers. This is a time when he preferred more to participate in war than to be a war reporter. There are two main values that dominate the Hemingway's philosophy: courage and manhood, while Hemingway's hero and role model was a stoic man, who can face death bravely, as only he who can conquer fear is a man of

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid, p. 455.

<sup>49</sup> Piro Misha, *Preface*, in Ernest Hemingway, *Snows of Kilimangaro, short stories, novels and other works*". Translated from original by Piro Misha, Tiranë, 1990, p. 3-25. In this high volume collection included are two other parts: "A Moveable Feast" and "Hemingway on Literature"

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, p. 5.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid, p. 9.

dignity and deserves to be esteemed. The Albanian critic maintains that Hemingway's novel "To Have and Have Not" (1937) marks the beginning of a new era in his life, experience and outlook. Harry Morgan, the protagonist of the novel, does not only epitomize the American individualism, but a fearless man who *"is ready to stand up and fight to protect his way of living, but at the moment of death he winds up as a loner, deserted and punished..."*. According to the critic, although it was not very well received the novel is important as it marks the end of belief in individualism.<sup>53</sup> The critic has a very high opinion about Hemingway's novel "For Whom the Bell Tolls" because the novel *"is one of the most important Hemingway's works, a complex novel, with a tragical, stoic and typical hero for Hemingway's philosophy, a novel on war, a shocking epopee and an antique tragedy"*.<sup>54</sup> However, according to the critic, after all Hemingway's work is a reflection about the man himself. Hemingway during the WW II was considered as a very engaged writer. In the world press his name was mentioned quite often as a staunch fighter against fascism. Back then he was a reporter and supported the cause of the democratic forces outside America, in France, where he participated in the dislocation (landing) of Allied Forces in Normandy and after that in the liberation of Paris. However, during that period he did not have time to write literature. It is only in 1950, as P. Misha notes, that Hemingway wrote his next work titled "Across the River and into the Trees". The work was not very well received by some of the critics, says P. Misha. However, his next novel "The Old Man and the Sea", which the critic considers as Hemingway's "Swan Song", is believed to be among his best works which, on the one hand, expresses the real meaning of his maturity and, on the other hand, revived Hemingway's popularity. When in 1954 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature and when he trusted in the powerful feeling of social (collective) solidarity, Hemingway, according to the Albanian critic, becomes *"one of the leading and most influential writers in world literature. He made a huge step forward by increasing his image as a sportsman and a man of action, which he created for himself."*<sup>55</sup> Unfortunately, after that his health deteriorated.

P. Misha is right in highly praising Hemingway's style which is powerful and laconic, but full of Hemingway's vigour and which oftentimes sounds like part of real life dialogues. P. Misha considers Hemingway's dialogue as spontaneous, challenging, ordinary, dramatic, fluent, free from intrications and fictionalization and very true to life. Hemingway also hated big rethorical words, which were consumed (hackneyed) from their long misuse. The Albanian critic says that Hemingway believed that all the modern American literature derived from Mark Twain's "The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn". According to the critic, this way Hemingway distinguishes the best period of American literature that lasts from Mark Twain till then, a literature that needed fresh blood for reviving and enlivening the spoken language of the people, the words and language of which are despised by academics.<sup>56</sup>

The Albanian critic also comments on the style of Hemingway's short story collections. He says that Hemingway in his book titled "Death in the Afternoon", wrote that when a novelist is in the swim with the subject even if he omits certain things that he knows the reader would not only be able to guess what the writer meant but the writer would even achieve a greater effect then if he would have mentioned those things. Iceberg moves so solemnly only because 1/8<sup>th</sup> of it is above the water. This is, according to P. Misha, the famous principle of Iceberg with which Hemingway was proud of.<sup>57</sup>

The Albanian critic is convinced that for Hemingway it is important to emphasize his aim to depict the truth about the life and reality in a way *"that would be integrated in the reader's conscience, in the way that would be the same with his/her real life experience."*<sup>58</sup> So the reader would react on the events in the novel as if they were part of the event by following and concentrating on the words, behaviours,

<sup>53</sup> Ibid, p. 11.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid, p. 12.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid, p. 14.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid, p. 17.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 18.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 19.

thoughts and gestures of the characters. Another novel that has attracted the attention of the Albanian critic is “Green Hills of Africa”.

This novel, according to the Albanian critic, is about the writer’s mission in life and his moral integrity so the reader is under the impression that not only does the author make self-analyses, but he also considers the artist’s role and importance, in general and his fragility when facing difficulties and temptation, in particular.

Herry in this novel is a character underestimated by his wealthy wife and just before he dies he starts thinking about his life and decides to not allow anything to come in his way in accomplishing his mission in life. But just when he decides to do so he dies.<sup>59</sup>

In some of his short stories Hemingway goes back to the world of childhood and adolescence with displeasure and soreness. These feelings, writes the Albanian critic, emerge in his novel titled “Murderer”, where the character rejects the evil, he is indignant and protests, but is aware of his hopelessness and feebleness. Touching upon some other Hemingway’s novels, the Albanian critic concludes that “A Clean Well-Lighted Place” is Hemingway’s most interesting and popular short stories. He was very proud of it, *“a realistic background, where he unfolds some self-evident or presumed dramas (events), and where there are to key words – dignity and “nada” (oblivion)”*.

In his short story “The Undefeated”, Hemingway talks about the dignity of an old bullfighter, who though a failure he knows how to preserve his pride. In his short story “The Capital of the World”, according to P. Misha, the author deals with the dreams of a young village boy, who moved to town. *“And for the first time”* concludes P. Misha, *“Hemingway depicts the death of an innocent man, who did not have time to live his life.”*<sup>60</sup> At the end of this critical preface, the critic reminds the Albanian readers that they were first introduced to Hemingway in 1950s, and then during 1960s three of his works were translated into Albanian. Later on in Kosova, went on the critic, the Albanian translation of “For Whom the Bell Tolls” was published, however, *“there are still quite some works that need to be translated”*, noted the author of the preface asserting that by collecting part of Hemingway’s short stories, he tried to at least partly bring the short prose of the well-known, contemporary American author in Albanian literature.<sup>61</sup>

## 2.7 A Spiritual Feast for Albanian Readers

In the preface of Hemingway’s selected short stories in Albanian language “Today is Friday” (1996), translated by Artjan Guskiqi, the author of the short preface says that the selection was made based on the main theme, which is war and its title is the main motive of the selection.<sup>62</sup> *“Friday is the day when Christ was crucified”* is said in this preface, *“it is the day that awaits thousands of soldiers, who were thrown in the slaying and bloody war, where man fights against man”*. Hemingway’s last credo, which matches Marlow’s and Satre’s credo, was the severe war for the lost cause. While the last character in this short story is the Christ. Crucifixion of the Christ was portrayed as a grave act. The enduring of pain by Christ incited the solidarity of Roman soldiers.<sup>63</sup> According to the author of the preface, war with its tragical consequences was an inseparable part of Hemingway, in general, and, in particular, it became as his main inspiration and “raw material” for his works. Therefore, Hemingway’s message is very humanistic, though his humanism is somewhat harsh and profoundly realistic. War

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 22.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid, p. 24.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid, p. 20.

<sup>62</sup> Two Words, in Ernest Hemingway, *Today is Friday*. Short stories. Translated from original by Artjan Guskiqi. Publishing House “Toena”, Tiranë, 1996, p. 3-5.

<sup>63</sup> Harry Levin, *Observations on the style of E. Hemingway in: American Critical Essays*, London, 1961, p. 311.

experienced profoundly with its horrendous consequences “*in Hemingway’s pen create a meaningful symbolism, which is very educational for the future generations*”<sup>64</sup>, concludes the anonymous author.

In this short preface titled “Two Words” it is noted that the translation of works of distinguished writers into Albanian “*is always a spiritual feast*” for Albanian readers.

In the end, he emphasizes that Hemingway is one of the most popular and famous American writers, and that his main novels and short stories that know “*speak Albanian*” have already entered the Albanian libraries. The anonymous author of the preface ends the preface with the following words: “*A new translated work Hemingway’s work in Albanian becomes a feast for the reader*”.<sup>65</sup>

### 3. CONCLUSION

The destiny of the well-known and popular American writer Ernest Hemingway in Albanian literature had deserved such a study even earlier, due to the fact that his translated literary works are contemporaries and age-mates of the beginnings of the development and growth of the contemporary Albanian prose in the second half of the XX century. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to prove that Hemingway’s work in Albanian was received very well and that Albanian journalistic and literary critique, though not even nearly enough, responded and followed the translation of some of his works into Albanian through prefaces, introductions, articles, reviews, critiques, interpretations, comments, discussions and evaluations. Albanian journals and magazines have been publishing comments, articles and critiques on Hemingway’s works from 1960s. One of the most authoritative literary journals in Kosovo “Jeta e re” published since 1960s, run a series of critiques, reviews and analyses of Albanian and international authors on Hemingway’s reception in Albanian language, literature and culture. Therefore, on this occasion our focus turns on journalistic and literary critique published mainly in “Jeta e re” columns. The reception of Hemingway’s literary works in Albanian literature had begun nearly half a century ago and his work, despite the lack of serious response of the literary criticism in Albanian, has been welcomed warmly, accepted with curiosity and spread out spontaneously. In brief, his reception in Albanian language, literature and culture is very successful. Moreover, his masterpieces and popular works were published frequently, while the artistic and ethic values as well as the code of his characters have expanded both the horizon of expectation and aesthetic taste of Albanian readers. At the same time, Hemingway’s works in Albanian have accompanied the growth of modern Albanian fiction in a particular atmosphere, whereas the mere fact that even after half a century, especially at the last decade, the interest for his work has been steadily growing, confirms that Hemingway has become one of the most favorite and popular authors for almost all kinds of Albanian readers. Therefore, I think that this paper would in a way fill up a vacuum, which has existed so far in the reception of Ernest Hemingway’s work in Albanian language, literature and culture.

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid, p. 4.

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