

Univerzita Palackého v Olomouci

Filozofická fakulta

Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

**Today the Struggle: Reflections of the Spanish Civil War in
English Language Literature**

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Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D.

Olomouc 2024

Prohlašuji, že tuto bakalářskou práci jsem vypracovala samostatně pod vedením Mgr. Davida Livingstonea, Ph.D. a že všechny použité zdroje jsem uvedla v sekci bibliografie.

Olomouc, 24.06.2024

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I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor Mgr. David Livingstone, Ph.D. for his guidance in selecting the topic of my thesis, as well as his patience, advice, and feedback which has been invaluable to the completion of this thesis.

I would also like to acknowledge the help provided by Mgr. Daniel Esparza, Ph.D. His generous consultation and assistance with sources on the historical chapter helped me immensely.

Contents

Introduction	4
War Writing	5
Historical Overview	6
Themes and Literary Devices	9
Historical Context	11
Tensions Leading to the Spanish Civil War	11
The War and International Involvement	13
Foreign Volunteers	15
The Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War	17
Writing about the Spanish Civil War	18
<i>Homage to Catalonia</i> by George Orwell	19
Biography	20
George Orwell and Socialism	22
Genre of <i>Homage to Catalonia</i>	23
Reflections of the War in <i>Homage to Catalonia</i>	24
<i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i> by Ernest Hemingway	26
Biography	26
Political Thinking of Ernest Hemingway	29
The Genre of <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>	30
Moral Complexity in <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>	31
Discipline and Communism in <i>For Whom the Bell Tolls</i>	32
Robert Jordan’s Journey	34
“Spain” by W. H. Auden	35
Biography	36
The Political Thinking of W. H. Auden	39
The Genre of War Poetry	41
The Vision of “Spain”	42
The Aim of “Spain”	43
Orwell’s Criticism and Revisions of “Spain”	44
Conclusion	45
Resumé	47
Abstrakt	51
Abstract	51
Annotation	52
Bibliography	53

Introduction

This bachelor thesis focuses on the presence of the Spanish Civil War in literature written in English, namely on *Homage to Catalonia* (1938) by George Orwell, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) by Ernest Hemingway and “Spain” by W. H. Auden. Analysing these works with the knowledge of historical and political context creates an opportunity to evaluate how they portrayed the war. Each of these authors also published his work with a different objective: while Orwell tried to remain objective and create a reportage, Hemingway used the war as a setting to let his story play out, and Auden was pressured into writing a poem through the Leftist lens. Proving how the chosen media enhances the intended effect on the readers establishes another layer of this thesis.

War writing is a massive part of literature. It is centuries old, underwent many changes, and every culture has its own canon. Moreover, war writing is not monolithic. A great deal of modern war writing comes from the need of an author who experienced war directly to make living with horrendous memories more manageable which is extremely subjective and can result in completely different writings regarding the same war. For the purposes of this thesis, mainly war writing in English in the twentieth century will be discussed and only the genres of the primary texts will be described in more detail. Moreover, war writing is not monolithic and what applies to some works does not need to apply to others. There will also be, however, a historical overview and common themes of war writing are described and used as a starting point for the analysis of the primary texts.

To illustrate the reality of the Spanish Civil War both in Spain and abroad, it is necessary to understand the political climate. The Nationalists quickly unified under the leadership of General Francisco Franco whereas the Republic stayed fragmented even with political intrigues among the individual parties taking place. This was the reason why it was possible that George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway, and W. H. Auden, three writers with different ideologies, were all on the side of the Republic. Orwell came to fight against fascism and for his own idea of Socialism which was distinct from the one under Stalin. Hemingway loved Spanish culture and to protect it from fascism he believed it would have been the best to unify under Communism. Auden had been, a bit involuntarily, proclaimed a speaker of the left writing about the evils of capitalism. Auden’s experience in Spain, however, started the disillusionment not only with the political Left, but also with the expectation that poets should comment on the political situation.

The cases of George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway and W. H. Auden in some way exemplify the feelings of many in the turbulent and uncertain decade of the 1930s. Fascism was

spreading throughout Europe, the threat of another war was in the air. Spain was a chance to fight fascism for the first time so many saw it as something more than just a civil war in a European country. The authors discussed played an active role in making the masses interested in what was happening in Spain. Each writer chose a different method to achieve this.

Orwell published *Homage to Catalonia* while the war was still ongoing and even without knowing the result, Orwell was able to correctly point out the weaknesses of the Republic: the dividedness among the Republican parties and the lack of allies which resulted in old and unreliable weapons. The political difference then turned into fights, Orwell talks about the Barcelona May Days and its consequences that made him leave Spain. *Homage to Catalonia* falls into the category of a reportage which Orwell helped create. He writes about what he experienced in Spain in parts full of subjective reflections, but also explains the war to the readers abroad which he attempts to do with journalistic objectivity. While addressing the political aspect of the war, Orwell corrects the misunderstandings and outright lies published in British newspapers.

Hemingway was trying to raise funds for the Republic in the US during the war. He worked on a documentary together with John Dos Passos and wrote a play *The Fifth Column* which did not meet with critical acclaim and did not have much success. It was the only time Hemingway was politically engaged and the loss of the Republic disappointed him bitterly. He wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* only after the war and focused mainly on the human suffering instead of the politics. Robert Jordan, the protagonist, illustrates the experience of many foreign volunteers in the war and the reasons for their involvement in the Spanish Civil War. The character is autobiographic to an extent sharing the love for Spanish culture with Hemingway.

Auden wrote a leftist poem “Spain” which appeared as a pamphlet meant to motivate others to fight in Spain. The poem is rather abstract as Auden abstained from directly speaking about what he had witnessed in Spain, but it was the beginning of Auden’s disentanglement from leftist politics. The last stanza of “Spain” is an outright call to arms for foreigners. Auden clearly understood that a war in Spain would have lasting consequences for the next several decades. He later repudiated the poem fully demonstrating his personal change of political opinions.

War Writing

Most of the Western population alive today has been fortunate enough to never personally witness the horrors of war – and yet war is a part of our day-to-day lives. It is present in the

language we use to talk about disagreeing with somebody, about battling life challenges, about situations when one wins and others lose. Samuel Hynes comments: “We have not all been soldiers, but we have all had our wars. And we have found images in art and literature to express our feelings about those wars.”¹ The way war is portrayed in the media, for the majority of human history it was literature, shapes our thinking about it.

With every invention in war technology, with every new societal convention, and eventually with the appearance of psychology, war writing had to change as well. From the writings of Homer who portrayed the destinies of famous ancient heroes during the Trojan War, through memoirs written by gentry or the aristocracy to writings of World War I which was the first time in history the psychological trauma of soldiers was being recognized. World War I also changed war poetry since before there were propaganda poems and now poets were sharing the misery of the trench life. War writing in the twentieth century saw different perspectives with women sharing their experiences and with writings being more focused on the inner suffering of soldiers.

Historical Overview

War has always formed a part of human history therefore it is not surprising that with the first ancient literary works also came war writing. L. V. Pitcher argues that the writers of antiquity were among the first to try to resolve the problem of how to write about war and everything it causes.² This was not only a question of what overall idea they wanted the readers to receive, but also what literary devices and techniques would prove to be effective. The importance of Homer’s *Iliad* cannot be stressed enough as it greatly influenced the subsequent war writing. *The Aeneid* by Virgil, as Pitcher reasons, might be the single work that could compete with the *Iliad* in terms of its impact on later literature.³ Although these works acknowledged the horrors of war, the Greco-Roman tradition was more concerned with immortalizing the accomplishments of mythological heroes.

War writing further developed in medieval times since war was a constant in people’s lives. If we take England as an example, the medieval period was full of war battles: starting with the raids of the Vikings, through the conquest by the Normans and the rivalry with France culminating in the Hundred Years’ War, to the Wars of the Roses. In terms of literary

¹ Samuel Hynes, *On War and Writing* (Chicago, United States: The University of Chicago Press, 2018), 93.

² L. V. Pitcher, “Classical War Literature,” in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (New York, United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 71–80, 71.

³ Pitcher, “Classical War Literature,” 72.

development, this period added chivalric ideals into warfare and religious themes since this time saw the Crusades as a holy mission. Corinne Saunders emphasizes that this era saw the emergence of a culture of war as a means of proving manhood.⁴ Writers of medieval romances used these ideals to create virtuous brave knights fighting in the Crusades.

By the 18th century in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of war writing, the idealization of soldiers began to fade. The changes in society, influenced by the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars, and the rise of the British Empire, led to more dependency on the army. Many professional soldiers wrote their memoirs, however, as Gillian Russel notes, these works have not been recognized in literary history.⁵ Contemporary readers were also hesitant to accept such voices, it was not clear who was entitled to share their war experience.

During the Victorian era, war moved from the British Isles to places far away, usually even outside of Europe. War literature from this time thus has an air of adventure and exotic locations. The population largely acknowledged the hardships of a common soldier yet still saw war as a means to success.

As the 19th century progressed, the American Civil War became a defining event in the American literary canon of war writing. This war had the greatest impact, compared to any other war, on American politics, society, and cultural identity while also being the war with the most American citizen casualties. The Civil War was the first time American writers wrestled with an American war, since, as Edward Larkin writes, works on the Revolutionary War only reacted to the cultural and political uncertainties without ever addressing it directly.⁶ There are just as many perspectives and interpretations of Civil War literature as there are historians arguing over the beginning and causes of the war. The beginning of the twentieth century especially saw what Will Kaufman labels as “the literary appropriation of the Civil War for a variety of political and social objectives.”⁷ This was the case with, for example, writers like William Faulkner who attacked the mythmaking around the war.

World War I marked a significant rupture in the tradition of war writing, as the horrors of modern warfare led to a shift in focus and perspective. The war horribly changed to soldiers fighting over metres of ground while living in inhumane conditions and witnessing so much

⁴ Corianne Saunders, “Medieval Warfare,” in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (New York, United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 83–97, 87.

⁵ Gillian Russell, “The Eighteenth Century and the Romantics on War,” in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (New York, United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 112–25, 121.

⁶ Edward Larkin, “American Revolutionary War Writing,” in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (New York, United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 126–34, 132.

⁷ Will Kaufman, “The American Civil War,” in *The Cambridge Companion to War Writing* (New York, United States: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 148–59, 156.

violence. The new weapons transformed the nature of war, with the soldiers facing horrors never seen before. War writing changed as well. Poetry sharing propaganda ideals is not considered part of the literary canon of World War I; instead, the focus is on the poetry written by those who fought in the war like Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon. Even novels about this time are written by authors who saw the hell in the trenches, and they add their own experiences and memories to their books. Lynne Hanley in her work explores what she calls the “collective consciousness of the twentieth century” that these works began shaping.⁸ This war helped recognize the mental trauma known as shellshock of soldiers returning home as a real illness which other war writers have been including in their works since then. World War I was a first instance of a modern war and the literature concerning this war moulded the war writing that came later.

The war writing on World War II is more complicated as there is not even a semblance of unity, and the literary canon cannot be agreed upon. Hynes comments on this fact saying that making a list of great books about World War I is fairly easy, however, when making that same list for World War II, the answers would be more variable and written down with less confidence.⁹ The war was fought all over the globe and there are simply too many perspectives, thus primarily following texts written by war veterans would not be enough. The experiences of civilians, members of resistance movements, prisoners of war and victims of genocides should all be considered. In World War II, more civilians lost their lives than combatants since regimes were targeting entire ethnic groups and murdering whole cities. Art stood appalled against so much suffering. Margot Norris notes that the discussion of how to portray this level of violence in art was replaced by the question if one can or even should speak of it.¹⁰ Holocaust writing and writing on the Hiroshima bombing should be included in the World War II literature.

The Korean War does not have many literary works discussing it as it did not stir much interest in the American public. The same, however, cannot be said for the Vietnam War. Hynes believes that the World War II generation can consider themselves virtuous and deem their enemies as evil while the Vietnam War generation cannot think in such black and white terms.¹¹ Vietnam divided the political opinions of the US population and the disillusionment with US participation in Vietnam is also reflected in war writing of this period. The writings do not shy

⁸ Lynne Hanley, *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory* (Amherst, United States: University of Massachusetts Press, 1991), 23.

⁹ Hynes, *On War and Writing*, 38.

¹⁰ Margot Norris, *Writing War in the Twentieth Century* (Charlottesville, United States: University Press of Virginia, 2000), 99.

¹¹ Hynes, *On War and Writing*, 35.

away from the physical horrors making them often disturbing to read. It was the first major war in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of war writing in the twentieth century where the American army lost, and the soldiers cannot claim they stood on the right side of history.

Establishing war literature from the latter half of the twentieth century until today is a challenging task. Some experts in this field claim that literature has been replaced by different mediums like photographs, films, and even social media. Hope Wolf illustrates this fact by looking through the lens of war writing at Farah Baker's tweets who as a teenage girl reported on Twitter on the bombings in Gaza in the summer of 2014. Wolf notes that being an ordinary girl gave Baker a presumed authenticity, possibly because she could recollect an immediate impression of the events.¹² People are all connected globally through the internet, and it has become very easy to share our experiences online and even build an audience. With war being just as present today as it has always been throughout history, people taking to social media platforms and talking about living in war zones will surely happen more often. Although social media have their own sets of problems, like the algorithm being biased towards one party in a conflict, only time will tell if these types of personal accounts will one day be recognized and studied as a part of the diverse tradition of war writing.

Themes and Literary Devices

War writing is not a uniform genre. It includes both autobiographical and fictional accounts in prose, such as novels, short stories, diaries, letters, memoirs, and essays. Poetry varies just as much as prose. The types of poetry found in war writing comprise famous ancient epics and medieval romances singing praises of heroes, poetry that serves the function of propaganda, poetry celebrating the bravery of common soldiers and poetry portraying the horrors of war. Still, it is possible to find some shared themes, symbols and writing techniques, such as the loss of innocence, the importance of friendship or war writing as a masculine domain. Although they may not be present in every literary work, it is worth exploring them further.

War writing usually utilises established characters, a practice dating back to Homer's depictions of the main heroes of the Trojan War. Modern research shows that our brains have trouble comprehending large numbers and thus describing individual characters makes readers more likely to empathize with them. This is what ultimately conveys the circumstances the characters found themselves in and allows readers to fully grasp the experiences of war through

¹² Hope Wolf, "Paper Is Patient: Tweets from the '#AnneFrank of Palestine,'" in *Writing War, Writing Lives* (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, 2017), 137–56, 141.

the perspectives of well-developed characters. This pattern holds true even for nonfictional recollections of war veterans as they would mostly describe the fates of people close to them in war. Although George Orwell met many people when he fought in Barcelona, in his work *Homage to Catalonia* there are only a few individuals that are described in more detail, and more is written about their destinies.

War memoirs and fictional novels often describe the loss of innocence of the narrator or protagonist. It is the result of a continuous collision of the romantic notions of what war should be like with the cruel reality. Up until the beginning of World War I, the idea that war made boys into men was widely believed and heavily featured in war propaganda materials. After a whole generation of adolescent boys and young men went through the first global conflict, writers started pointing out that nothing about war is romantic. Seeing so many young lives lost or destroyed, the public finally believed it. Paul Bäumer, the protagonist of *All Quiet on the Western Front*, joins the army due to the influence of patriotic speeches his teacher gave, and then not too long after experiences a shock over how much he changed while on a visit home. He is not the same person who left for war. The theme that war does not change people for the better, but for the worse has been present in modern war writing.

Many works of war prose, fictional or not, and war poetry present a strong sense of friendship or even love. In a reality full of violence, it is only human to cling to strong bonds with others in the same situation, to remember ardently loved ones at home or to fall in love in war. Reading about closely formed friendships gives the reader a moment of calm before being thrown again into terrifying descriptions of war's effects on physical and mental health. Fictional war novels, with carefully crafted stories and relationships, often fulfil more than one narrative function. Norris states how having a love story in a war story can cause the standards of one to alter the standards of the other.¹³ Perceiving a character as a human with the ability to love another might make the reader overlook the killings committed by them. Love could also function as part of a character's awakening when they start to see what life is about. Robert Jordan from *For Whom the Bell Tolls* came to Spain to fight in the Civil War because of political ideologies, but it is María, the woman he falls in love with, who consumes his thoughts as he is getting ready to blow up the bridge.

When reading autobiographical works or fictional works of authors writing from their own experience, what is written is just as important as what is absent. The role of silence is a very specific aspect of war writing. When something is absent from a war memoir, when the

¹³ Norris, *Writing War in the Twentieth Century*, 70.

author is silent about it, it holds a distinctive meaning. Sometimes talking about certain events is simply too painful so they turn to euphemisms or complete silence. Other times silence has a political meaning such as, according to Jay Winter, Japanese soldiers not including the atrocities committed in China in their memoirs.¹⁴ Authors can choose not to speak of something for many different reasons which are implicitly transmitted to the readers through the absence of writing.

Silence can be considered in a broader sense as well. All the voices that were never heard coming from women, marginalized groups or war veterans that could not cast their minds back to what they had been through, form the silence within war writing. Winter writes that war memoirs are about the war and the aftermath of it and memoirs by women such as Pat Barker and Doris Lessing powerfully described the horrifying effects of war on their male relatives.¹⁵ Privileging only the voices of soldiers means focusing only on one part of what war does to a generation and overlooking the wider social, cultural, and emotional impacts of war.

War writing was a strictly masculine space for the most of its existence. Female perspectives started appearing as a part of the canon only in the twentieth century and these writings were usually about a woman's experience with the men in war. There were accounts of female nurses or women whose male family members fought in a war. World War II brought a change. Hanley comments on how American and European women were forbidden from entering into combat but the war came into the zone of civilians, so they felt the war's effects directly.¹⁶ World War II was not fought only on the fronts, it was everywhere and women experiencing the war firsthand too was an undeniable fact, leading to a greater recognition of female accounts. Although war writing has always been the domain of male writers, there is more acceptance of writings by women and other marginalized groups. The genre is thus being expanded to include more voices and perspectives.

Historical Context

Tensions Leading to the Spanish Civil War

When Spain chose to become a democracy on 14 April 1931, people were celebrating in the streets. The transition from a monarchy into a Republic, which happened without violence, was seen by many as a glorious opportunity for a new beginning of Spain in the modern world.

¹⁴ Jay Winter, "War Memoirs, Witnessing and Silence," essay, in *War Stories: The War Memoir in History and Literature* (New York, United States: Berghahn, 2018), 27–47, 38.

¹⁵ Winter, "War Memoirs, Witnessing and Silence," 40. Both female writers described the effects of World War I on their relatives. Pat Baker wrote about her mother caring for her father and then stepfather, two war veterans in *The Regeneration Trilogy*. Doris Lessing's *Alfred and Emily* contains her recollections of her disabled father.

¹⁶ Hanley, *Writing War: Fiction, Gender, and Memory*, 77.

The Republican parties won the election of 1931, and they began implementing much needed reforms. The areas of agriculture and education especially required restructuring. Spain did not have enough schools, as Hugh Thomas puts it: “in 1930 in Madrid alone there were 80,000 children who did not go to school.”¹⁷ Out of the little schools available, most of them were run by the church. Although anti-clerical sentiments appeared, as Thomas comments, the true problem was the lack of schools therefore the Republic should have built new schools instead of criticising the already existing ones.¹⁸

The land reform also proved to be problematic. The central part of Spain resembles a desert and the soil that was fertile was owned by a few landowners while most of the population was kept in poverty. Agrarian reform would thus help not only increase production but also lessen the conflicts between social classes. The Republican government, however, approached the reform in a way that did not satisfy the poor nor the rich landowners. The working class was asking for expropriations at a higher rate and on a larger scale whereas the rich were opposed to any changes.

The disillusionment with the Republican government grew until the next elections in 1933 which showed the population favoured CEDA, a conservative Catholic party led by José María Gil-Robles. CEDA having the majority in Cortes, started undoing the little progress made by the reforms and even taking political prisoners. The explosive atmosphere in Spain at that time is best exemplified by the uprising in Asturias in 1934. The Asturian working class perceived the government as a fascist threat and took over Asturias by force, destroying churches and killing religious and police leaders. The uprising was crushed by the Army in 15 days.

In 1936 Spain went through its last elections before the war. The socialist and leftist Republican parties felt the threat of fascism approaching not only through Europe but also through the CEDA. They decided to form a political alliance as the *Frente popular*, The Popular Front, with Manuel Azaña as the leader and won the elections. As Anthony Beevor clearly states, however, it was a very narrow victory and yet the left proceeded to behave as if they won an overwhelming support of revolutionary changes.¹⁹ One of the first steps of the Popular Front was to send anti-Republican generals, for example general Francisco Franco, away from continental Spain.

¹⁷ Hugh Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, 4th ed. (London, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd, 2003, Kindle), Loc 1072, chapter 4.

¹⁸ Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Loc 1124, chapter 4.

¹⁹ Antony Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939* (London, United Kingdom: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2006, Kindle), Loc 1028, chapter 4 “The Popular Front”.

The politically motivated violence was augmenting. The idea of a fascist coup d'état was a very real possibility with the anti-Republicans already planning. The rebels were waiting for the right opportunity that would make their attack justified. The opportunity presented itself in the form of the assassination of José Calvo Sotelo, a spokesperson for the anti-Republican views and a rightist monarchist. Calvo Sotelo was arrested in connection with the assassination of José Castillo, a Spanish Police lieutenant, whose coworkers took justice into their own hands on 13 July 1936.

On 17 July 1936, the anti-Republican army began the attack. What was supposed to be a flash coup d'état turned into almost three years of civil war.

The War and International Involvement

The Spanish Civil War is sometimes regarded as World War II on a smaller scale. The same enemies and allies, that later fought in the World War, were already present in Spain. The Civil War helped Hitler, Mussolini, and Stalin to test new weapons and strategies. The international politics surrounding the Spanish war proved to the fascist regimes the unwillingness of the UK and France to step in.

Hitler was involved from the very beginning. Since many generals were stationed outside of continental Spain, they needed a way to travel with their troops there. The Spanish navy supported the Republic, but it was not a big setback for the Nationalists because Hitler sent Junkers 52. Beevor refers to it as “the first major airlift in history.”²⁰ Ever since then, the Nationalists have been connected with Nazi Germany and fascist Italy.

It should be noted that the both the Nationalists and the Republicans began the war with similar chances of winning. Both territories, what was left of the Republic and the area seized by Nationalists, had their benefits and drawbacks which made the situation balanced. Yet the Republicans committed a series of mistakes, and their political allies were passive which finally cost them the victory.

Both sides were forced to request assistance from abroad, most motivated by the immediate need for weapons. By 26 June 1936, Germany and Italy were supplying arms and troops to the Nationalists. Meanwhile, international politics obstructed any active help to the Republican side. Beevor writes that France was advised by the British Foreign Office to not send any help to the Republic, as it would only encourage Hitler and Mussolini. Their preferred

²⁰ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Loc 1664, chapter 7 “The Struggle for Control”.

method of helping was preventing support from going to the rebels.²¹ Later the policy of non-intervention was proposed and agreed upon by twenty-seven European states. The Non-Intervention Agreement prohibited “the direct or indirect export [...] of arms, munitions, materials of war, aircraft and vessels of war.”²² The policy of France and the UK was even stricter as they abstained from all interference.

The policy of non-intervention was ineffective. Germany and Italy were blatantly violating the agreement while the Non-Intervention Committee immensely impeded the aid sent to the Spanish Republic by the Soviet Union. John McCannon explains the willingness of the Soviet Union to help the Republicans as an opportunity to prove to the West their good intentions in combating fascism.²³ Additionally, the presence of socialist parties within the Popular Front was not dismissible and thus Stalin continued with the aid covertly. The Soviets, however, also obtained something in return. Hughes notes that in the beginning of the war, Spain had the fourth highest gold reserve in the world. It was shipped to Russia as a sort of ‘current account’ which the Republic could use to pay for supplies.²⁴

Apart from the Soviet Union, the Republic only received help from Mexico and from individuals who became volunteers. Historians believe that had the war been fought without international interference, the Republicans would have won because the Nationalists would have been too worn down to keep fighting. It should be noted, as stated by Richard Baxell, that there are official documents proving that the British government knew that the Non-Intervention Agreement benefited the Nationalists.²⁵

The Republic’s hope for help especially from the UK and France was finally crushed after the Czechoslovakian crisis and the Munich Agreement in September 1938. It became increasingly clear that the European powers were doing everything they could to appease Nazi Germany. Franco assured them of Spanish neutrality in the case of a European war and nobody would hinder the German and Italian involvement after this statement. During the war that was

²¹ Beevor, *The Battle for Spain: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939*, Loc 2805, chapter 13 “Arms and the Diplomats”.

²² Ann Van Wynen Thomas and A. J. Thomas, Jr., “NON-INTERVENTION AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR.” in *Proceedings of the American Society of International Law at Its Annual Meeting (1921-1969)*, vol. 61 (Cambridge University Press, 1967), 2.

²³ John McCannon, “SOVIET INTERVENTION IN THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR, 1936–39: A REEXAMINATION.” in *Russian History* 22, no. 2 (Brill, 1995), 158.

²⁴ Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Loc 6944 and 6952, chapter 27.

²⁵ Richard Baxell, “Introduction, 1 Who Were the British Volunteers?, 2 Why Did They Go?,” in *British Volunteers in the Spanish Civil War*, 1st ed. (London, United Kingdom: Routledge, 2004), 1–46, <https://www.taylorfrancis.com/books/mono/10.4324/9780203357101/british-volunteers-spanish-civil-war-richard-baxell?context=ubx&refId=a36ea9d9-159c-4bee-9176-a6a830f6a5cd>, 4.

coming a strong and neutral dictatorship in Spain would have been more valuable than an ally Republic too weak to function without foreign investment.

Foreign Volunteers

Right after it became clear that what was supposed to be a quick uprising to seize the control over Spain turned into a war, the Nationalists marched towards Madrid. Franco anticipated that the fall of the capital would mean a swift victory. The Republic was still organizing its army and no official aid was coming. That is when substantial numbers of foreign volunteers started arriving to fight alongside the Republic. The attack on Madrid took place in November 1936 and the capital remained undefeated until the end of the war.

The Soviet Union was heavily involved in the process of getting volunteers to Spain. José Largo Caballero, a socialist, Prime Minister, and Minister of War since September 1936, was a key figure in the relationship with Soviet Russia. The Communist International or Comintern managed the International Brigades as its parent organization and used it for propaganda purposes. Dan Richardson notes that the Comintern tried to pass the units as a spontaneous response to the threat of fascism.²⁶ It was beneficial for Stalin as it allowed him to aid the Republic without directly breaching the Non-Intervention Agreement.

The recruitment of volunteers into the International Brigades was coordinated by the Communist Party in France. The French communist André Marty played a significant role as the Political Commissar. The political ideologies of the volunteers were one of the biggest reasons, if not the reason, for them to come fight alongside the Spanish Republicans.

When a person wanted to volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, they would contact the local Communist Party branch. They would be interviewed to see if they were fit for military action but also if they were politically compatible. Then came the actual travelling which needed to be done in secrecy if the country was a member of the Non-Intervention Agreement. In the case of British volunteers, they were risking a fine or even imprisonment if caught, although nobody was actually prosecuted. They travelled to Paris and from there, they were smuggled by a route through the Pyrenees to Spain. The headquarters of the International Brigades in Spain was in Albacete, a city in the Castilla La Mancha region. After military training in Spain, they were usually sent to the front lines.

²⁶ R. Dan Richardson, "Foreign Fighters in Spanish Militias: The Spanish Civil War 1936-1939." in *Military Affairs* 40, no. 1 (1976), 7.

To consider the motivation behind volunteering in a war that did not affect them, it is necessary to know who the volunteers were. According to Thomas, about 60 percent of the volunteers were communists before volunteering and a further 20 percent likely became communists while fighting in Spain. Around 80 percent of the International Brigades members came from the working class.²⁷ The volunteers should not be perceived as young idealists, as Baxell warns. From the volunteers with dates of birth on their official records we know that over a quarter of them were over the age of 30. There were more mature recruits than previously believed.²⁸

Although their affiliation with the communist ideology is a part of the explanation behind the incentive to become a volunteer in the Spanish Civil War, there are other factors. The Communist Party of Great Britain (CPGB) had around 11,500 members by January 1937,²⁹ yet only around 2,500 volunteers in Spain were British and not all of them were even communists. Firstly, there is a history of British citizens fighting in foreign wars, the most famous example being the poet George Gordon Byron who fought in the Greek War for Independence (1821–1829). Other than some volunteers seeking adventure, their motivations are a bit obscure. Even George Orwell in *Homage to Catalonia* wondered what prompted him to join a fight in a foreign country: “If you had asked me why I had joined the militia I should have answered: ‘To fight against Fascism,’ and if you had asked me what I was fighting for, I should have answered: ‘Common decency.’”³⁰

This answer, to fight against fascism, is probably the true ideological reason for so many volunteers. Baxell, who examined many interviews and memoirs by the volunteers, remarks they were not fighting for something, but rather against fascism.³¹ The fascist regimes in Germany and Italy happened as coups meaning there was no chance for defence. In Spain, on the other hand, there was a war which finally presented an opportunity to fight the fascist aggression in Europe.

The position of a volunteer became more skewed later in the war. The volunteers came to fight of their own free will believing that they were also able to leave whenever they wanted. They came to fight without signing any contracts and without any precise knowledge of how long they would be needed. When some of the volunteers attempted to go back home, they were

²⁷ Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Loc 7042, chapter 27.

²⁸ Baxell, “Introduction, 1 Who Were the British Volunteers?, 2 Why Did They Go?,” 22–23.

²⁹ Adrew Thorpe, “The Membership of the Communist Party of Great Britain, 1920-1945.” in *The Historical Journal* 43, no. 3 (Cambridge University Press, 2000), 781.

³⁰ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Harmondsworth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966), 46.

³¹ Baxell, “Introduction, 1 Who Were the British Volunteers?, 2 Why Did They Go?,” 30.

not permitted to do so by the communist authorities. Thomas comments that the communist leadership proved to ignore humanitarian needs.³² The flow of young men from Anglo-Saxon countries volunteering decreased while many volunteers were still coming from Eastern Europe.

The volunteers also got involved in the political moves of the different parties within the Republicans. Whereas the Nationalists soon after the start of the war became united under Franco, the Republicans continued to be divided. This led not only to constant debates about the next steps to take, but also to fights among themselves and using newspapers the villainize the other Republican parties. One such instance is described by Orwell, who came to Spain with the documentation under POUM (Worker's Party of Marxist Unification). The tensions of the Republican factions broke out in Barcelona in May 1937 in a violent conflict. After the violence stopped, the whole blame for a very complicated clash was placed on the POUM. The newspapers were calling the POUM members fascists and Trotskyists, any people affiliated with the POUM were arrested. All the while POUM militiamen were at the battlefronts fighting the real enemies of the Republic.

The Aftermath of the Spanish Civil War

Madrid surrendered and the Nationalist troops entered the capital on 28 March 1939 and the war officially ended four days later, on 1 April. Franco celebrated his victory with the grand parade on 19 May. Franco did not lose any time to start implementing his ideas. One of the first major steps was to return the land to its formal owners. Franco envisioned Spain as a country that could be self-sufficient, without any imports. The reality was a country torn by war that lost most of its gold reserves. On top of that, it was time to start paying back for the support of Germany. The agreement with Germany allowed them to exploit Spain's mining resources which meant that Spain did not make any profit until the end of World War II.

There were three major waves of emigration. The first one happened in 1937, the second one after the fall of Catalonia during January and February of 1939, and the last one at the end of the war. France was facing a huge influx of war refugees. Although the French government forbade men of military age to cross the border, they still needed to deal with around 400,000 Spanish refugees. Concentration camps were constructed on the French border and the conditions were abysmal. Thomas describes them as "open spaces of sand dunes near the sea, enclosed by barbed-wire, from which the inmates were prevented from leaving. Men dug holes

³² Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Loc 9293, chapter 34.

for themselves like animals, to find some shelter.”³³ The French government received criticism for the conditions in the camps but figuring out how to care for so many refugees with so little time was a difficult task.

Franco’s regime was different from the regimes created by Hitler or Mussolini. The Catholic Church played an important role in the dictatorship. Ismael Saz Campos says the Church was in effect given a monopoly over both primary and secondary education.³⁴ Furthermore, to ensure that the regime would not disintegrate by the end of World War II, Franco worked on good political relations with the USA. Franco hated communists and this made him a good European ally during the Cold War.

One of Franco’s supporters during the Civil War were the monarchists so to appease them, Franco proclaimed Spain a monarchy in 1947 with him reigning in the position of a de facto regent. Franco led Spain as a dictator until his death on 20 November 1975 and he established Juan Carlos I to be the king as his successor. Juan Carlos I promised to maintain the regime as it was. Instead, he changed the trajectory of Spain, and the country became a constitutional monarchy.

Writing about the Spanish Civil War

The literature concerned with the Spanish Civil War has many specific characteristics. First of all, works by Spanish authors are not really considered in the canon of this war. During the war, it was poetry which immediately processed the new reality. Great Spanish poets like Antonio Machado or Juan Ramón Jiménez, both supporters of the Republic, rendered the images of the war in their poems. Kessel Schwartz writes that even the critics of *Hora de España*, a monthly Spanish journal, considered poetry the best genre to capture the relation between the human equation and the Republic.³⁵ The Civil War turned the focus of poetry back to the most human aspects of our lives.

Lisa Lines in her paper summarizes the thoughts of multiple scholars who argue that Spanish accounts of the Spanish Civil War were often overlooked or dismissed because the West did not trust literary works coming from Franco’s regime.³⁶ The majority of Spanish

³³ Thomas, *The Spanish Civil War*, Loc 13301, chapter 49.

³⁴ Ismael Saz Campos, “Fascism, Fascitization and Developmentalism in Franco’s Dictatorship.” in *Social History* 29, no. 3 (Taylor & Francis, Ltd., 2004), 348.

³⁵ Kessel Schwartz, “Literary Criticism and the Spanish Civil War,” *Hispania* 52, no. 2 (May 1969): 203–12, <https://doi.org/10.2307/338433>, 206.

³⁶ Lisa Lines, “Representations of the Spanish Civil War in Twenty-First Century Anglophone Novels (2000–14),” *Journal of War & Culture Studies* 10, no. 2 (August 5, 2016): 150–64, <https://doi.org/10.1080/17526272.2016.1215051>, 151.

intellectuals stood on the side of the Republic and so when Franco established his dictatorship they either could not write freely because of censorship, or they were in exile. The following generation of Spanish writers still commented on the bleak reality of post-war Spain and the silencing done by the censorship yet the recognized literature connected with this war usually came from foreigners.

The exile generation is an interesting occurrence as it was more important for Mexico than for Spain. Mexico was perhaps the greatest ally of the Republic. The Mexican government under president Lázaro Cárdenas helped in any way they could. While the Soviet Union wanted payments in gold for the weapons sent, Mexico accepted payments in the devalued Republican peseta. After the victory of Franco, as Mario Ojeda Revah states, Mexico accepted as many Spanish immigrants as possible and never acknowledged Franco's regime which allowed for a Republican government in exile.³⁷ The immigrants coming to Mexico were the intellectuals of Spain who greatly enhanced Mexican culture, science, industry, letters, and educational system. The influence of Spanish immigrants on the development of Mexico was so great that Carlos Fuentes, one of the most notable Mexican writers, created a fictional interview with Lázaro Cárdenas in which he noted: "The immigration of Republicans multiplied and strengthened the Mexican cultural life. Science, art, law, philosophy. It pains me to say this, Mexico won the Spanish Civil War."³⁸ While Spain was under a dictatorship until 1975, its elite was helping to build a country that had taken them in.

***Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell**

Born as Eric Blair, George Orwell was one of the most important British writers of the previous century. As the son of a British civil servant in India, he had unique insight into British colonialism. After spending his formative years in Britain, Orwell developed a disdain for the rich upper class. His alliance with the working class is very apparent in his works.

Another theme Orwell depicts in his books is political commentary. His hatred for fascism and his scorn for socialism under Stalin intertwine in *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell claims that he came to fight in the Spanish Civil War because of the threat of fascism and part of the reason he left were the machinations within the Republican parties ordered by the Soviets under Stalin. He represented the looming World War II even in a non-political *Coming Up for*

³⁷ Mario Ojeda Revah, "Introducción," in *México y La Guerra Civil Española* (Madrid, Spain: Turner, 2004), 11–28, 12. My translation.

³⁸ Carlos Fuentes, "Lázaro Cárdenas: Entrevista al General," *El País*, August 18, 2003, 30. My translation.

Air, the Stalinist regime in *Animal Farm* and the forewarning of a totalitarian society in *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. The Spanish Civil War was needed for the further development of Orwell's political ideas.

Biography

Orwell was born on 25 June 1903 into a middle-class British family in India where his father worked as a minor British civil servant. It was customary for British children born overseas to grow up and attend boarding schools in Britain. Orwell was an adventurous child who was friends with the local working-class children which was frowned upon by the strict social norms of Edwardian society. An important part of Orwell's childhood was his scholarship in the prestigious school St. Cyprian's. He absolutely hated the school. It was a cruel snobbish institution where Orwell got bullied by the upper-class students and he was regularly beaten or caned. Bernard Crick notes that Orwell despised the punishments particularly for their arbitrariness and injustice.³⁹ His years in St. Cyprian's are described in his autobiographical essay "Such, Such Were the Joys" published posthumously.

Despite the misery at St. Cyprian's, Orwell excelled as a student and was offered a scholarship into the most prestigious British school, Eton. After graduation, he decided to follow in his father's footsteps. He became a member of the Indian Imperial Police and went to Burma where his mother was raised. Orwell only stayed with the Indian Imperial Police for five years. While in Burma, he started rejecting imperialism and finally resigned from service. Crick mentions that Orwell resigned because "he disliked putting people in prison for doing the same things which he should have done in the circumstances."⁴⁰ Two essays, "A Hanging" and "Shooting an Elephant", stand out the most from his work about Burma *Burmese Days*.

He never gave up on his dream of becoming a writer and he left for Paris shortly after he came from Burma. To make a living, he had to work as a dishwasher in Parisian hotels and restaurants. Coming back to London two years later, Orwell wanted to keep studying the poor members of society. This was written about in *Down and Out in Paris and London*. This interest in the working class and the abominable conditions in coal mines is central to *The Road to Wigan Pier*. Again, Orwell lived among these people for a few months to be able to truthfully speak of his experience. His affiliation with socialism is clearly stated as he believed it would help the poor working-class people.

³⁹ Bernard Crick, *George Orwell: A Life* (London, United Kingdom: Secker & Warburg, 1980), 26.

⁴⁰ Crick, *George Orwell: A Life*, 100.

In December 1936, Orwell travelled to Spain to fight in the Civil War on the side of the Republic. His documents were under the POUM (*Partido Obrero de Unificación Marxista*, the Worker's Party of Marxist Unification) which was an anti-Stalinist communist party. While his motivation for going was quite abstract claiming that he was fighting against fascism, seeing socialism realized in Barcelona was a marvellous experience. This made Orwell think that the fighting was truly worth it. He spent roughly three months serving on the Aragon front where he did not see much action. In his *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell mostly writes of the hardships caused by the weather and tobacco shortage. Yet he got shot in the throat and the Spanish doctors caring for him claimed it was a miracle he survived. It was not the injury, however, that soured his leave in Barcelona. Orwell was a part of the Barcelona May Days in 1937 when after months of tension different political parties started fighting in the streets over the control of telecommunications. After the situation calmed down, the whole conflict was attributed to the POUM by the communist parties supporting Stalin to suppress their political opponent. As a result, the POUM was declared illegal, and its members were being arrested. Orwell escaped arrest only because his wife alerted him and made him flee the hotel where they were staying. Orwell came back to Britain in mid-July with a pure hatred towards communism under Stalin. When *Homage to Catalonia* was published, it ruffled feathers among European intellectuals who largely supported communism.

Orwell spent a part of World War II as a writer and broadcaster for BBC programmes targeted at India. The goal was to make the population there support the Allied forces. World War II was a time when Orwell had to learn to tolerate political propaganda because fighting fascism took precedence. His political ideas were instead expressed in *Animal Farm* which truly established Orwell as a worldwide recognized writer. The book is highly anti-Stalinist which further shows that Orwell supported his own version of socialism, not the politics practised by the Soviet Union under Stalin. The only Orwell's book that overshadowed *Animal Farm* was *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, his last book and a warning of totalitarian regimes that police even the inner life of its citizens. After finishing the manuscript for *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, his tuberculosis forced him to stay at a hospital, and he never left. Orwell passed away on 21 January 1950 at just 46 years old. Crick speculates that it might have been the five years in Burma that broke Orwell's health as he had been struggling with a respiratory illness ever since then.⁴¹ Orwell might have lived only for a short time, but it was an eventful life.

⁴¹ Crick, *George Orwell: A Life*, 100.

George Orwell and Socialism

Orwell's political thinking is not that easy to define because he had his own ideas and generally did not associate with any existing political party. His ideology of socialism came from two things which Philip Bounds lists as a feeling of being excluded from his social class with a romantic attachment to the working-class culture.⁴² Thus Orwell did not form his opinions by subscribing to a specific political party but rather by pondering on what he himself experienced. While living among the poor members of the working class, he admired the sense of community and helping others which he thought lacked in the other social classes. This moral standing translated into the political ideology of socialism only in 1936 for Orwell.

Through his compassion for the poor members of society, Orwell thought of communists as natural allies in the fight against poverty. This, however, did not mean that Orwell was a communist. He often criticised the steps taken by the CPGB (Communist Party of Great Britain) just as much as he criticised the British communist writers. Moreover, the British communists have been libelling Orwell during his life and after. Bounds notes that even as late as 2003 *Morning Star*, a British socialist daily newspaper, featured an article calling Orwell a fascist collaborator in the Spanish Civil War.⁴³ This was a rhetoric created by the communist parties supporting Stalin that stood on the side of the Spanish Republic during the war. As Orwell was documented under the POUM and this party was used as a scapegoat for provoking the Barcelona May Days, the British communists adopted the false claims. In *Homage to Catalonia*, Orwell dedicates a whole chapter to commentary on the fact that newspapers internationally did not investigate and only parroted what was in the official report on the May Days – even when some had reporters in Barcelona at that exact time.

The events Orwell witnessed in Spain intensified the negative feelings he already had about communism. His suspicion grew into enmity. Although Orwell was on the political left, he was not like the typical left supporter. What distinguished him from other leftist intellectuals was his deep hatred of the Stalinist regime. He could envision socialism only in a society functioning on the moral responsibility of individuals.

Orwell's work is in general political. He either promotes his ideology, as in *Down and Out in Paris and London* and *The Road to Wigan Pier*, or he expresses his concerns, as in *Animal Farm* or *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. Granted, Orwell wrote in a time full of political regimes threatening democracy, but he also assumed, as Bounds argues, that no respectable

⁴² Philip Bounds, *Orwell and Marxism: The Political and Cultural Thinking of George Orwell* (New York, United States: I.B.Tauris & Co Ltd, 2009), 15.

⁴³ Bounds, *Orwell and Marxism: The Political and Cultural Thinking of George Orwell*, 6.

contemporary writer would abstain from political commentary on the injustice around them.⁴⁴ Orwell called for writers to truthfully portray the social conditions around them and contribute to change. Sincerity is an especially important point since Orwell looked down on propaganda writers.

Genre of *Homage to Catalonia*

The first question to solve when it comes to *Homage to Catalonia* is its genre. It is not a typical book of war writing, perhaps because the Spanish Civil War was unique in that regard. As Orwell himself wrote: “It was above all things a political war. No event in it, at any rate during the first year, is intelligible unless one has some grasp of the inter-party struggle that was going on behind the Government lines.”⁴⁵ Orwell grew up reading accounts of World War I, but he could not replicate them. War writing from World War I was penned by people who were caught up in the middle of a huge war, trying to survive and make sense of what was happening. Orwell went to Spain knowingly because he saw men who fought in World War I share a special connection that was nostalgic yet very bitter. The Spanish Civil War, however, was nothing like World War I. The writers before never had to convey the politics whereas Orwell had to include it. Yet Orwell talks about the politics behind the war in separate chapters to give the reader a permission to skip them. David Wykes proclaims that Orwell expects the readers to recoil from the horrors of war politics and so he tried to facilitate it by putting it into separate chapters which reflects his own distaste.⁴⁶ On the one hand, Orwell acknowledges that describing the political scene of a civil war does not make an interesting reading experience. On the other hand, he needs to include these chapters in his book to be able to complete the picture.

It could be more valuable to consider *Homage to Catalonia* a reportage. The Spanish Civil War was at that time the most reported on and the fact was boosted even more by photographs accompanying the articles in international newspapers. Orwell also writes that he came “to Spain with some notion of writing newspaper articles”⁴⁷. Upon arriving in Barcelona, however, Orwell became influenced by the atmosphere there and entered the militia so his journalism could hardly be considered objective and purely informative. As a result, *Homage to Catalonia* features parts more expected in fictional prose, such as describing his own feelings

⁴⁴ Bounds, *Orwell and Marxism: The Political and Cultural Thinking of George Orwell*, 87.

⁴⁵ George Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia* (Harmondsworth, United Kingdom: Penguin Books Ltd, 1966), 46.

⁴⁶ David Wykes, “ORWELL IN THE TRENCHES,” *The Virginia Quarterly Review* 59, no. 3 (Summer 1983): 415–35, <https://doi.org/http://www.jstor.org/stable/26436538>, 421.

⁴⁷ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 8.

and events which were important to him, but not to the course of the war. The inclusion of both the subjective and the objective fits the way James D. Wilkinson defines the genre of reportage arguing that it is the combination of documentary elements with highly charged emotional accounts characterises reportage the most.⁴⁸ *Homage to Catalonia* contains a great deal of valuable information on the Spanish Civil War and dismantles many fake notions held by international observers, and at the same time reads as a narration in a novel.

Since *Homage to Catalonia* demonstrates characteristics of a reportage, Orwell should be recognized as a key figure in the development of reportage. By the 1920s and 1930s, reportage was only becoming thought of as a valid literary genre. Peter Monteath notes that part of this reluctance to grant reportage a position within valid literary forms was a bourgeois distrust as reportage had often been used as a tool of the class struggle.⁴⁹ Although Orwell does not use *Homage to Catalonia* to celebrate communism, he still shows his own political bias which is something he acknowledges while trying to describe the political climate: “I warn everyone against my bias, and I warn everyone against my mistakes.”⁵⁰ Writing objectively is what Orwell admitted was a struggle: “I have tried to write objectively about the Barcelona fighting, though, obviously, no one can be completely objective on a question of this kind.”⁵¹ The disclosure of a partially failed attempt at objectivity could be interpreted as a sign of proper journalism.

Reflections of the War in *Homage to Catalonia*

Homage to Catalonia is very limited in its perspective. Apart from the chapters on politics and international reporting, the book offers a very narrow look on the war. Orwell describes only the situation in Barcelona which, although complex, could not stand for the whole country. Nor could he explore all the horrors of the Spanish Civil War in his writing. Only seeing the more passive Aragon front, Orwell had no experience with the brutal fighting elsewhere. Orwell also never witnessed the unique terror of a civil war – one neighbour turning on another. This might be the cause of Orwell’s cynicism in some parts. It is possible that if he had seen more actual suffering, he would be more sympathetic in his tone.

What Orwell took from war writing is the focus on the common soldiers. Wilkinson emphasizes that Orwell as a foreign journalist could have tried to interview politicians, yet he

⁴⁸ James D. Wilkinson, “Truth and Delusion: European Intellectuals in Search of the Spanish Civil War,” *Salmagundi*, no. 76/77 (Winter 1988): 3–52, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/40547962>, 9.

⁴⁹ Peter Monteath, “5. The Spanish Civil War and the Aesthetics of Reportage,” in *Literature and War (Rodopi Perspectives on Modern Literature 3)* (Amsterdam, Netherlands: Rodopi, 2011), Loc. 1038. Kindle.

⁵⁰ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 153.

⁵¹ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 153.

chose to share what ordinary people went through.⁵² He writes about the soldiers who were with him in the militia, people he fought with and the doctors, nurses, and fellow patients he met while recovering from being shot. Writing about people he personally knew contributes to the overall limitedness of the book but interestingly also lends to the credibility of Orwell. This is because, as Wilkinson claims, the readers are more inclined to accept Orwell's conclusions because they see all the situations that led to such conclusions.⁵³ For example, it is accepted that many of the Republican militia soldiers at the beginning of the war received very poor training and even worse weapons because Orwell writes about incidents happening during his training. "Several days passed and the recruits learned to march in step and spring to attention almost smartly, but if they knew which end of a rifle the bullet came out of, that was all they knew."⁵⁴ Anecdotal evidence is thus applied to a bigger picture, and it allows the reader to sympathize with the ordinary people entangled in a war.

One of the major themes of the book is the political disillusionment Orwell suffers while fighting for the Republic. The account begins with Orwell's excitement over Barcelona being under the control of communists and socialists. "It was the first time that I had ever been in a town where the working class was in the saddle."⁵⁵ Orwell's personal idea of socialism perfectly aligned with what he saw in Barcelona and so he "recognized it immediately as a state of affairs worth fighting for."⁵⁶ He went to fight full of motivation. Going on leave back to Barcelona after 150 days on the front, Orwell was already somewhat disappointed with the war as he felt he did not really have a chance to fight the fascists. In Barcelona he was consequently faced with even greater disenchantment when he noticed that the distinction between lower and upper class had been reestablished. He was risking his life while people far away from the war front forgot any changes it brought.

This political disillusionment reached a climax after the Barcelona May Days as Orwell found himself named an enemy by the Republic he fought for. The Republican propaganda was calling to make the POUM illegal and arrest its members even when those were soldiers who had just returned from the war fronts. Spanish Republican newspapers were labelling the POUM members as fascists while there were still men in the front fighting the true enemy of the Republic. The last part of Orwell's stay in Spain was converted into trying to avoid being arrested and finding a way to get back to Britain safely. Orwell observed that the "safest thing

⁵² Wilkinson, "Truth and Delusion: European Intellectuals in Search of the Spanish Civil War," 19–20.

⁵³ Wilkinson, "Truth and Delusion: European Intellectuals in Search of the Spanish Civil War," 20.

⁵⁴ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 14.

⁵⁵ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 8.

⁵⁶ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 9.

at present was to look as bourgeois as possible.”⁵⁷ It was a complete turn from the Barcelona Orwell first witnessed.

Orwell’s political journey throughout his time in Spain could be compared to a frequent theme of war writing – the loss of innocence. In this case it is about the delight Orwell took in seeing in Barcelona a society fully ruled by the working class which might have shown a bit of political naiveté. His political thinking was changed after the events of the Barcelona May Days, losing the hope that communists, socialists, and anarchists can temporarily unite to fight fascism without pushing their own agendas. The Spanish Civil War made Orwell give up many positive political expectations and can be identified as one of the reasons Orwell created books like *Animal Farm* and *Nineteen Eighty-Four*.

***For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway**

Ernest Hemingway was a key figure in the formation of literature in the twentieth century. His writing came from life experiences. Without living through so many historical events and traveling to so many places, Hemingway could not have written nearly as much. As a writer, he was a pioneer in a very economical style of writing which many writers copied from him. As a thinker, he tried to define masculinity and the role of men. He is remembered for his excellent novels and short stories and was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature for his masterful craft.

Hemingway visited Spain even before the Spanish Civil War which resulted in a part of his first novel *The Sun Also Rises* being set in Spain and *Death in the Afternoon*, a nonfiction book on bullfighting published in 1932. When the Spanish Civil War began, Hemingway was sent there as a reporter for American newspapers and stayed in the country until the very end of the war when Franco ordered all reporters to leave Spain. The war inspired him to write his only play, *The Fifth Column*, which was not very successful. The most important book that came from Hemingway in the Spanish Civil War was *For Whom the Bell Tolls* which many literary critics call the most impressive Hemingway’s novel.

Biography

Ernest Hemingway was born on 21 July 1899 in Illinois and his life was like an adventure ever since his childhood. He learnt to shoot and take care of a gun; his father took him hunting and

⁵⁷ Orwell, *Homage to Catalonia*, 215.

camping. His first encounter with journalism came during his school years when he wrote and edited his school paper. He continued with journalism after his education and started a six-month apprenticeship in *The Kansas City Star*. Mary V. Dearborn notes that apart from being an amazing opportunity to start his career, it was also the first time Hemingway lived independently and where his lifelong habit of drinking began.⁵⁸ His drinking would later contribute to his physical and mental health problems.

Hemingway wanted to contribute to World War I and as he was rejected for military service for failing a medical exam, he became a member of the Red Cross and travelled to Italy. He arrived in Italy in 1918, became an ambulance driver and saw enough gruesome scenes that he described them in multiple works of prose. After two months of his service, Hemingway was injured by mortar fire. It was a serious wound, one of many he would experience during his life, yet Hemingway managed to help multiple Italian soldiers. He received the Silver Medal of Bravery for this deed, and it became one of his favourite memories to share. Dearborn brings to attention that Hemingway made the tale more colourful almost every time he told it.⁵⁹ This is one of the instances of Hemingway purposely making himself look better, a frequent critique of literary scholars.

Hemingway returned to his family home a changed man unable to follow the rules of his middle-class conservative parents. Instead, he went to Paris with his first wife. The Paris literary scene was very valuable to Hemingway. He met Gertrude Stein who became his mentor and coined the term “lost generation” which Hemingway later popularized in *The Sun Also Rises*. He was introduced to modernist writers like James Joyce and Ezra Pound. While living in Paris, Hemingway worked as a foreign correspondent for the *Toronto Star* newspaper covering European affairs of that time. Hemingway also struck up a friendship with F. Scott Fitzgerald and after reading the *Great Gatsby*, Hemingway decided he would write a novel too.

Hemingway moved to Key West in Florida with his second wife Pauline. The same year he finished *A Farewell to Arms*, one of the great World War I novels, his father committed suicide which is partially depicted in the inner monologue of Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Together with Pauline, they went to Safari in Kenya which resulted in nonfiction book *Green Hills of Africa*.

When the Spanish Civil War started, Hemingway went there as a journalist for the North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA). Hemingway stood with the communists while his wife as a Catholic supported Franco which led to many arguments and later to Hemingway’s second

⁵⁸ Mary V. Dearborn, *Ernest Hemingway: A Biography* (New York, United States: Alfred A. Knopf, 2017), 45.

⁵⁹ Dearborn, *Ernest Hemingway: A Biography*, 61.

divorce. Through his reporting he met Martha Gellhorn, another journalist and his third wife. He wrote *The Fifth Column*, his only play, while he was in Madrid during bombarding of the capital. Hemingway returned to Spain twice in 1938 and witnessed the Battle of Ebro, one of the bloodiest battles of the Spanish Civil War. He continued with his reporting until Franco's order that journalists had to leave.

Hemingway, however, was not only a passive figure reporting on what was happening around him. Hemingway was interested in Spain years before the Civil War started and as many intellectuals of that time, he observed the rise of fascism in Europe with anxious anticipation of another war. Hemingway wanted to raise support for the Republic. Anton Nilsson lists that "in 1937 alone, he produced a film, wrote a play, gave a public speech, and organized a fundraising campaign during which he visited the White House"⁶⁰. All this effort was in vain when not only Franco won the war, but World War II started soon after.

After the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway and his third wife lived in Cuba where he also wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He became a KGB spy in China for a short time when Martha was sent there as a reporter. Being a spy gravely disappointed him and instead travelled to London to report on World War II. After a serious car accident, Hemingway met Mary Welsh, a reporter for the *Time* magazine, who would become his fourth wife. He was present in Normandy and saw many other instances of the violence of World War II. The author of two great books on war was expected to publish a World War II novel but that never happened.

Hemingway and his fourth wife moved to Cuba. It was not a good period; Hemingway suffered another serious injury to the head and many of his literary friends were passing away. His mental illness started showing in this time, yet he managed to write *The Old Man and the Sea* which brought him the Nobel Prize. Shortly after that he survived two plane crashes and a bush fire which resulted in worsening physical condition. He spent his last years in Idaho where he was treated for his depression. After psychiatric treatment, Hemingway returned in even worse condition, and he started losing his memories because of electrotherapy. On 2 July 1961, Hemingway woke up, selected a shotgun, and ended his own life.

Hemingway lived his life fully, seizing every opportunity given to him. His writing came from everything he lived through, his own experience filtered through the economical language he was famous for.

⁶⁰ Anton Nilsson, "Ernest Hemingway and the Politics of the Spanish Civil War," in *The Hemingway Review* 36, no. 1 (Fall 2016): 81–93, <https://doi.org/10.1353/hem.2016.0022>, 81.

Political Thinking of Ernest Hemingway

Hemingway's politics were not formed by his family nor by what he experienced during World War I. Instead, he began forming his own political thinking as a journalist in Europe in the 1920s. He reported on important events of that time such as the Conference in Genoa or the Greco-Turkish War. Thus, he was surrounded by a completely different political climate than his fellow American citizens. Stephen Cooper even claims that Hemingway's experience between the two world wars was the opposite of the American one as he spent the 1920s, years of the boom of American economy, in Europe in relative poverty and enjoyed financial success of his writing during the Great Depression.⁶¹ Perhaps it was because of the years Hemingway spent observing and reporting on the events in foreign countries that allowed him to form his own opinions. His views of this time could be summarized as sympathy with the ordinary working people and hate of fascism, both very general ideologies.

Hemingway's participation in the Spanish Civil War could be explained by three reasons. Firstly, as many intellectuals, he wanted to fight a fascist regime trying to take control of yet another European country. Then it was Hemingway's personality. He saw something adventurous and thrilling in war and wanted to be in the middle of historical events. Not even Hemingway, however, would go fight in a foreign civil war if it were not for his love of Spain built in years prior. The liking he took for the country, the culture and the Spanish people is the final part of Hemingway's reasoning for being so invested in the war.

The Spanish Civil War changed Hemingway's writing. The previously not very politically engaged reporter was suddenly working on propaganda materials to gain support for the Republic. *The Fifth Column* was written in the middle of the war and thus, as Cooper argues, features elements of propaganda and lacks the emotional distance of the author.⁶² This fact illustrates the effort Hemingway was putting into helping the Republic as *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, written after the war, could depict the war more objectively, for example by depicting selfish Republicans and decent men fighting for Franco.

Hemingway supported the communists during the Spanish Civil War. Although he shared several ideas with the communist ideology, Hemingway himself was never a communist. He chose to favour communists in the Spanish Civil War because he believed they provided the best training and instilled proper discipline into the soldiers. His thinking was more practical than ideological as he simply wanted to follow the party which, according to him, had the

⁶¹ Stephen Cooper, *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway* (Ann Arbor, United States: UMI Research Press, 1987), 47–48.

⁶² Cooper, *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway*, 91.

biggest chance of defeating Franco. Cooper states that Hemingway's loyalty to the Republic and not to the Communist Party can also be proven by Hemingway saying: "The Commies acted like a bunch of filthy swine in Spain."⁶³ Still as he preferred the Communists, they are portrayed in a positive light in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

After World War II, Hemingway generally did not include politics in his writing. It is possible that all the effort he put into the Spanish Civil War which was to no avail made him withdraw from more public commentary. Still, it is known that he supported Fidel Castro's revolution in Cuba. Hemingway shared the high hopes for the future of Cuba many Hispano-American writers displayed. He never saw what came of Castro's regime otherwise he would have removed his support.

The Genre of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

For Whom the Bell Tolls is undeniably a novel, because of its form and because of its plot. The question is how the novel fits into war writing – whether it can be called a war novel or not. Hemingway was much more focused on unravelling his story which happened to take place during the Spanish Civil War than on writing about the said war. In a letter to F. Scott Fitzgerald, Hemingway talks about war as the writer's "best subject," because it "groups the maximum of material and speeds up the action and brings out all sorts of stuff that normally you have to wait a lifetime to get."⁶⁴ Hemingway's own words perhaps reveal that he approached war writing from the perspective of literature first and foremost, the perspective of a witness of war came secondary.

If we were to categorize *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as a war novel, Hemingway subscribed to the idea of a modern war novel. Originally, the war novel celebrated the soldiers' bravery and great victories. Then Stephen Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* became the first war novel that changed the expectations of this genre as it did not feature the grandiose language around war. The full dismantling was finished by war novels from World War I that were written out of the necessity to record the author's gruesome experience. Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi claims that confronting the issue can be a coping mechanism for the writer, a way to free his mind of such memories.⁶⁵ Thus war novel usually comes from a man with direct experience.

⁶³ Cooper, *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway*, 82.

⁶⁴ "Ernest Hemingway to F. Scott Fitzgerald", 15 December, 1925, in *Ernest Hemingway: Selected Letters, 1917–1961*, ed. Carlos Baker (New York, United States: Charles Scribner's Sons), 176.

⁶⁵ Chikwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi, "The Poetics of the War Novel," *Comparative Literature Studies* 20, no. 2 (Summer 1983): 203–16, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40246397>, 203-204.

The shared elements of modern war novels are their tone, the intended effect and overall anti-war attitude. Great war novels as *Under Fire* by Henri Barbusse or *All Quiet on the Western Front* by Erich Maria Remarque portray the common soldiers as victims of war and call for a world where nothing similar would be able to happen again. Works in the modern war novel genre underline the absurdity of war claiming there is no sense in it which further develops the anti-war stance. Other than the noble ideals, according to Ogunyemi, such novels also introduce few female characters and if they do, they are quite stereotypical.⁶⁶

Hemingway creates a complex code of ethics in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but the tone is more about fighting for ideals larger than the human life than about the condemnation of war. Not all his characters are victims, some are people using the circumstances of a civil war for monetary gains. The point about stereotypically drawn female characters to some extent stands true, Hemingway's critics talk at length about his inadequate characterisation of women. Alan Holder refers to the consensus that Hemingway's female characters generally fall into two categories "the bitch" that is a threat to his male characters, or "the dream girl" who exists to satisfy the needs of the man and demands nothing in return.⁶⁷ María from *For Whom the Bell Tolls* would fit into the second category.

Categorization of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* based on its genre can be argued in two ways. Either the novel stands on the margin of what we perceive as war novels, or Hemingway successfully updates the genre.

Moral Complexity in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

As a journalist, Hemingway was more interested in the suffering war inflicts on ordinary people and he did stray from this principle while writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. George Orwell called it a political war and yet Hemingway managed to craft a story around the politics without delving into it too much. By focusing on regular people, Hemingway depicted several instances of morally good and bad people on both sides of the conflict.

Firstly, Hemingway mainly through Robert Jordan establishes that killing in war is necessary and thus should be morally neutral. In a discussion about killing, Anselmo expresses he sees it as a sin even in war but together with Robert they agree that it must be done: "To win a war we must kill our enemies. That has always been true."⁶⁸ Killing in a war is seen as something that must happen and thus, although it might weight on a person's conscience, is not

⁶⁶ Ogunyemi, "The Poetics of the War Novel," 211.

⁶⁷ Alan Holder, "The Other Hemingway," *Twentieth Century Literature* 9, no. 3 (October 1963): 153–57, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/441033>, 153.

⁶⁸ Ernest Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (London, United Kingdom: Vintage Books, 2005), 44.

wrong. This is reinforced in the very last page of the book when Robert is lying on the forest floor injured with a submachine gun. The enemy approaching Robert is Lieutenant Berrendo, an officer Hemingway portrayed before as a decent, honest man, and so the alluded scene is a mortal fight between two respectable soldiers. Both need to fight but it does not tarnish their characters.

Charles Molesworth calls the killing of men in war out of necessity but never out of pleasure the core of the novel's moral message.⁶⁹ It is indeed the ability to understand if and when killing is legitimate and justified that causes problems for many characters. Most notable Robert's decision not to kill Pablo who ruins his original plan of blowing up the bridge which costs the life of Anselmo and Robert himself. Pilar's account of the execution of fascist sympathizers in her village is chilling and constitutes the most powerful moment of the book precisely because the killing is very hard to justify as necessary with some people enjoying the murders. The only person who takes killing lightly is Hemingway's version of André Marty, the chief commissar of the International Brigades, whom the other characters call crazy. Marty's inner monologue shows a paranoid man: "He knew that he could trust no one. No one. Ever. Not your wife. Not your brother. Not your oldest comrade. No one. Ever."⁷⁰ Describing a real political figure as a mentally unstable character brought Hemingway criticism from communists.

Secondly, Hemingway truly embodies the thought of depicting people caught up in the middle of the war. In Chapter 15 when Anselmo is keeping watch on the road to the bridge post, the perspective shifts in the middle to the enemy soldiers inside the sawmill. The conversation of these soldiers is so ordinary. They are complaining about the snow in May and sharing what their hometowns look like, while doing everyday chores. They are no longer the faceless enemies which is how Hemingway makes the reader see the human side of the fascist soldiers. There are people like anybody else, only on the other side of the war.

Discipline and Communism in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

For Whom the Bell Tolls cannot under any circumstance be called a work of propaganda but still there are certain aspects that show Hemingway's support for the communists during the war. The guerrilla group Robert is supposed to work with are not trained nor do they have much

⁶⁹ Charles Molesworth, "Hemingway's Code: The Spanish Civil War and World Power," in *Salmagundi*, no. 76/77 (1987): 84–100, <https://doi.org/https://www.jstor.org/stable/40547964>, 86.

⁷⁰ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 438.

experience. This is proven in the way the group often talks about the time they had blown up a train before Robert appeared. It is spoken about as if it were an amazing victory while Robert thinks to himself: “It was not much of a show. It cost the fascist one engine and killed a few troops but they all talk as though it was the high point of the war.”⁷¹ Keeping away from the real battles of war made the group unaware of how minor has been their contribution to the Republic.

Robert needs to teach them the basics of warfare, such as surveying their enemies, while working around their poor education and illiteracy. There is very little organization within the group and when military methods are applied, they are useless. When Robert and Anselmo are approaching the group’s camp, they are halted by a sentry man who demands the second half of a password although he knows them both. When asked to provide the first half of the password, the man says: “I have forgotten it,” to which Anselmo comments: “That is called guerrilla discipline,”⁷². The members of Pablo’s group are not merely comrades as is made evident by María comforting Joaquín: “I love thee and thou hast a family. We are all thy family.”⁷³ They are not soldiers, only people willing to fight for the Republic.

In the novel it takes the foreigners to implement discipline and organization, especially Russians like Karkov or General Goltz or people under the commands of the Russians like Robert Jordan. This portrayal speaks for the larger reality of the Spanish Civil War as it comments on the dividedness and lack of organization within the Republic. Cooper asserts that the problems of Pablo’s group represent the problems faced by the various parties fighting for the Republic.⁷⁴ Not only the members of Pablo’s group have different ideas about what should be done, they also vary in the level of commitment to the Republican cause. This is visible in Chapter 4 as the group must decide whether to work with Robert. Pablo is against calling it too dangerous while Pilar replies: “I am for the Republic, [...] And the Republic is for the bridge.”⁷⁵ Pilar and Anselmo are completely dedicated to the cause, Pablo is more concerned about survival. Interestingly, Robert in an inner monologue reveals he agrees with Pablo since the others cannot see the seriousness of the operation.

This is very deliberate on Hemingway’s part. To start with, Hemingway chose to depict a guerrilla group although, as Michael Seidman brings to attention, guerrilla warfare was relatively unimportant in the Spanish Civil War and the existing groups were a part of the Soviet

⁷¹ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 155.

⁷² Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 47.

⁷³ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 145.

⁷⁴ Cooper, *The Politics of Ernest Hemingway*, 112.

⁷⁵ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 57.

NKVD.⁷⁶ Instead these characters state they are not communists, they are only for the Republic and therefore had no formal training. This reinforces the way Hemingway wrote about war both as a journalist and a novelist – he wanted to emphasize the tragedy war produces for human lives.

In addition, his representation of Pablo's group and the foreigners can stand for his personal support of the communists in the war. The Spanish in the middle of a civil war cannot see things as clearly as foreigners, they cannot simply disregard the differences between the many parties constituting the Republic. Robert is not a communist and yet he recognizes the need for unity to win the war and thus accepts the communists' strict discipline and punishments. Robert goes even as far as admitting in a conversation with Karkov that he understands the need for political cleansing in a war: "I do not like [the shootings] but I do not mind them anymore."⁷⁷ Unlike Karkov, Robert is not a communist member, but he acknowledges the organization brought by said party for practical reasons.

Robert Jordan's Journey

Robert's decision to come fight in the Spanish Civil War is both an illustration of many foreign volunteers' experience and Hemingway's autobiographical reasons. Robert shares Hemingway's love for Spain, he is a university professor of Spanish with a profound knowledge of the country's culture. The author also gave the protagonist similar male figures in his life that are a part of the motivation for going to war. There are several instances in the novel of Robert finding solace when he thinks about his grandfather in the American Civil War. On the other hand, thinking about his father who committed suicide brings unwanted feelings of resentment and cowardice.

Robert and the international volunteers have in common the very vague motivation for coming to fight. When asked about his political views, Robert replies "I am an anti-fascist"⁷⁸ which many intellectuals also provided as a reason to fight for the Spanish Republic. Moreover, Robert is aware that coming to Spain through Comintern would have repercussions should he ever go back to the US: "I don't know whether I'll be able to be a professor when I get back. They will probably run me out as a Red."⁷⁹ Although Robert never subscribed to the communist

⁷⁶ Michael Seidman, "The Artist as Populist: Hemingway and the Spanish Civil War," in *Mediterranean Studies* 4 (1994): 157–64, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41166886>, 160–161.

⁷⁷ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 254.

⁷⁸ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 69.

⁷⁹ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 252.

ideology, to his own government he would have been a communist through his association with them.

It is through the eyes of an American citizen that Hemingway chose to tell the story taking place in a very Spanish war. Despite the fact that Robert has an understanding of the Spanish culture and political history, he is an outsider. Several characters in the novel remind Robert, usually in the heat of emotions, that he is a foreigner. “What right have you, a foreigner, to come to me and tell me what I must do?” exclaims Pablo in the very first interaction he has with Robert. Even Pilar who stands firmly with Robert in the matter of the bridge can be just as critical when Robert advises the group on what to do after the bridge: “Then just shut up about what we are to do afterwards, will you, *Inglés?*”⁸⁰. Robert understands it very well that although he is fighting for the Spanish Republic, everybody will always see him as a foreigner. Michael J. B. Allen believes that Robert’s role as a foreigner is the most pervasive part of Robert’s character.⁸¹

Robert as a foreigner accomplishes two important things as a literary device. Hemingway is thus able to explain the Spanish Civil War to international readers making them understand exactly what the Spanish are fighting for. It also brings a theme of solitude into the book. Robert is surrounded by people, yet he is constantly reminded that he is a foreigner. This solitude is then emphasized in the last scene of the book with Robert being completely alone and awaiting his death.

“Spain” by W. H. Auden

Wystan Hugh Auden was one of the most influential British-born poets of the twentieth century. He was friends and collaborated with other poets and writers such as Luis MacNeice, Cecil Day Lewis, Stephen Spender and Christopher Isherwood. Although those artists were never officially a literary group, they were not even all in the same room together, it did not stop journalists from calling them the Auden Group.

Auden’s poetry covers both private thought, such as poems about love, religion or one’s identity, and political and social issues. He incorporated current events into his poetry, so he was able to describe the turbulent 1930s, World War II or the Cold War. Another element present in his poetry is his statelessness. Auden obtained American citizenship, but he lived in so many

⁸⁰ Hemingway, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, 156.

⁸¹ Michael J. B. Allen, “The Unspanish War in ‘For Whom the Bell Tolls,’” in *Contemporary Literature* 13, no. 2 (Spring 1972): 204–12, <https://doi.org/10.2307/1207824>, 204.

places that he always had the talent to observe the places with the perspective of an outsider. His poetry also gives insight into his changing ideas as he repudiated some of his poems later in his life since they no longer reflected his beliefs.

Biography

Auden was born on 21 February 1907 and grew up in Birmingham in a family environment that was devotedly Christian but also very scientific. His father was a physician who was knowledgeable in many other fields, his mother a nurse. Auden's father also ignited a passion for Norse legends in his son as he believed the family was of Icelandic descent because of the family name resemblance to Icelandic Auðun, as Humphrey Carpenter describes in the chapter "Childhood".⁸²

At eight years old, Auden was sent to a boarding school, a very common experience for middle-class boys. While at St. Edmund's preparatory school, Auden became friends with Christopher Isherwood who would later become a successful novelist and a member of the so-called Auden Group. Auden passed World War I there and later in his poetry commented that school life was more important to him than a war he did not directly feel the effects of:

The Great War had begun: but master's scrutiny
And fists of big boys were the war to us;
It was as harmless as the Indian Mutiny,
A beating from the Head was dangerous.⁸³

Auden began writing poetry in his teenage years, but his parents still expected him to choose a career in science. In 1925 he started studying at Oxford University specializing in biology and later switched his studies to English Literature. During his university studies, Auden was not only building his reputation as a poet but also exploring his sexuality. Carpenter remarks that Auden often explicitly shared his sexual pursuits with his friends since he believed it was important to talk openly about gay practices.⁸⁴ This was correspondingly the time when Auden abandoned the Anglo-Catholicism he was raised in partially because of his sexuality.

What literary critics would later call the Auden Group began to emerge during his studies. At Christmas 1925, Auden and Isherwood rekindled their friendship after finding out

⁸² Humphrey Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography* (Oxford, United Kingdom: Oxford University Press, 1992), 6–7.

⁸³ W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, "Letter to Lord Byron, Part IV," in *Letters from Iceland* (London, United Kingdom: Faber and Faber, 1967), 198–208, 201.

⁸⁴ Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography*, 48.

they were both writers. Auden began spending more time with Cecil Day Lewis in summer 1927 and Stephen Spender approached Auden the winter of the same year. The public began thinking of these writers as joined together, as Justin Replogle writes, in 1932 when the Hogarth Press published *New Signatures*, an anthology of rising English poets, and poetry by Auden, Spender, and Day Lewis appeared together.⁸⁵ Ever since then, the writers were associated with one another in literature. The existence of the group as a literary concept, however, is more of a myth. Although the members were friends, they did not meet regularly, nor did they have any official programme or shared ideals. At most it is possible to say that all the writers were politically on the left and incorporated Marxist ideology into their poetry in the 1930s.

Artists of the previous generation chose Paris as the cultural centre; Auden went to live in Berlin. He fell in love with the German language and the theatre there. When Hitler came to power in 1933, Auden had already left Germany and was a teacher at a prep-school. From Britain, he helped Erika Mann, the daughter of the novelist Thomas Mann, escape Nazi Germany by marrying her which made her a British Citizen. They never lived together, it was a marriage of convenience, but they had a good relationship for the rest of their lives.

Auden travelled to Iceland in 1936 spending three months there which was the source of *Letters from Iceland*, a travel book written together with Luis MacNeice and published in 1937. In Iceland, he learnt about Icelandic poetry and met with students and professors who taught him more about Icelandic culture and history. In July, he was travelling around the Icelandic countryside and thus learnt of the beginning of the Spanish Civil War late when he finally reached a town. Carpenter argues that this is described in the poem “Journey to Iceland” where Auden wrote about the beautiful scenery tainted by the events in Spain.⁸⁶ Even away from Europe, he could not escape what was happening there.

Islands are places where Europe is absent.

Are they? The world still is, the present, the lie,⁸⁷

Auden wanted to go to Spain for the same reasons many intellectuals voiced. It was a chance to take concrete action against the spread of fascism in Europe. He had the intention of driving an ambulance there and left for Barcelona which Orwell described in the beginning chapters of *Homage to Catalonia*. In January 1937, when Auden arrived, the city was under the control of workers. What Orwell initially saw as a socialist ideal, however, Auden observed

⁸⁵ Justin Replogle, “The Auden Group,” *Wisconsin Studies in Contemporary Literature* 5, no. 2 (Summer 1964): 133–50, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1207328>, 135–136.

⁸⁶ Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography*, 199.

⁸⁷ W. H. Auden and Louis MacNeice, “Journey to Iceland,” in *Letters from Iceland* (London, United Kingdom: Faber and Faber, 1967), 23–28, 24.

more sceptically. He observed just how fragmented the Republic was and the food crisis, but what left him shocked the most were the burned churches. There is no precise idea of Auden's movement in Spain, but Carpenter estimates that he spent a few days in Barcelona and then went to Valencia.⁸⁸ Instead of helping as an ambulance driver, Auden was tasked with creating Republican propaganda. Auden returned to London in early March, only a few weeks after he had come to Spain. He left the country disillusioned after not only witnessing political machinations but also feeling like he did not help to fight against Franco at all. Auden did not speak very much about his experience in Spain. It seems that he went there ready to support the Republic because he believed in the leftist changes it promised – after he left, he was still for the Republic but only because it was better than Franco's victory.

Together with Isherwood, Auden made a trip to China, which was described in *Journey to a War*. On their way back to the UK, the poets visited New York and decided to settle there. This became Auden's most controversial move. When World War II started, Auden and other artists who chose to live in the US were attacked. For many people, it was a betrayal to leave Europe and live safely in America. Despite Auden's reputation suffering in Europe, he enjoyed great success in New York being awarded the Pulitzer Prize and even becoming a US citizen. It was also in New York where he met Chester Kallman, his lover and life-long companion.

He returned to Britain in the 1950s and became a Professor of Poetry at Oxford. Still, he often travelled to New York and spent his summers in Austria. The feeling of statelessness, not belonging to any particular country, was apparent in his poetry too. In "Prologue at Sixty" Auden questions where he belongs:

Who am I now?
An American? No, a New Yorker,
Who opens his *Times* at the obit page.⁸⁹

Auden died at the age of 66 during the night from 28 to 29 September 1973 in Vienna. He lived the life of an artist until the very end. He died only mere hours after giving public poetry reading of his works.

⁸⁸ Carpenter, *W. H. Auden: A Biography*, 210.

⁸⁹ W. H. Auden, "Prologue at Sixty," in *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, expanded second edition (New York, United States: Vintage International, 2007), 297–300, 299.

The Political Thinking of W. H. Auden

In some regards, Auden followed the exact path of political ideas of most intellectuals in the West. Brought up in a middle-class family, he started developing leftist opinions as he was coming into adulthood. All the members of the Auden Group shared the political left but to a varying degree. Auden never belonged to any political party and the political themes that can be found in some of his works describe the general ideas of the left – the support of the working class, the criticism of capitalism.

Auden agreed with Marxism but not with communism and his interest in it came from the needs of an artist. Auden frequently used Freudian psychology as the base of his work, but he felt it did not address all the difficulties of the human condition. As John R. Boly states, through Marxist social theory Auden was able to find answers to problems that psychology did not inspect.⁹⁰ Auden was always sympathetic to the struggles of the working class and supported some form of socialism, but he never thought of communism as the ultimate solution – contrary to some intellectuals who suffered a rude awakening later.

The 1930s, or as Auden called it, “a low dishonest decade”,⁹¹ was a time of uncertainty, political tensions and threats hanging in the air. It was expected of English poets that they would use their poetry to share social concerns and raise awareness around inequalities. Auden also wrote poems in this matter. He wrote about unemployment and poverty in poem “XXII” published in his first ever poetry collection *Poems* (1930):

Smokeless chimneys, damaged bridges, rotting wharves and choked canals
Tramlines buckled, smashed trucks lying on their side across the rails;
Power-stations locked, deserted,⁹²

Auden criticised the capitalist society that was not interested in individuals but only in profit. This sense is very visible in the poem “The Unknown Citizen” where Auden describes a nameless middle-class member of society and everything that comes with belonging to the middle class. It is a pessimistic view of a human being deprived of any individual identity.

And had everything necessary to the Modern Man,
A gramophone, a radio, a car and a frigidaire.
Our researchers into Public Opinion are content

⁹⁰ John R. Boly, “Auden and Modern Theory,” in *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 137–51, 147.

⁹¹ W. H. Auden, “September 1, 1939” in *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, expanded second edition (New York, United States: Vintage International, 2007), 95–97, 95.

⁹² W. H. Auden, “XXII,” in *Poems (1930)*, paperback (London, United Kingdom: Faber and Faber, 2013), 65–68, 65.

That he held the proper opinions for the time of year;⁹³

By observing the rise of fascism and the unwillingness of the British government to intervene, Auden felt that another war was coming. Some of his poems contain the warning of something tragic coming. In *Dog Beneath the Skin*, a drama written in collaboration with Christopher Isherwood, Auden expresses his disillusionment with the system of democracy that was not doing its job properly:

The General Public has no notion
Of what's behind the scenes.
They vote at times with some emotion
But don't know what it means.⁹⁴

From the same play comes the poem known as "The Tow" which has a sinister feeling of danger that is coming:

The sky is darkening like a stain,
Something is going to fall like rain
And it won't be flowers.⁹⁵

When the Spanish Civil War broke out, it was expected even more that artists should aim their works at serving the good of society in such times. Patrick Deane mentions the Second International Congress of Writers for the Defence of Culture taking place in Valencia, Madrid and Barcelona from which came a *Manifesto* addressed to writers internationally to "take up their stand without delay against the menace which hangs over culture and humanity."⁹⁶ Auden was pressured firstly into producing propaganda while staying in Spain, and then secondly into writing "Spain" to help the cause although his leftist beliefs were shaken after leaving Spain. By the end of the decade of the 1930s, Auden was trying to distance himself from politics in poetry.

Moving to New York was a very controversial step. Various sources agree it was the above-mentioned pressure to write politically that made Auden relocate to United States. Auden believed that politics do not fit into art saying: "art is a product of history, not a cause." and then added that "if not a poem had been written, not a picture painted, not a bar of music

⁹³ W. H. Auden, "The Unknown Citizen" in *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, expanded second edition (New York, United States: Vintage International, 2007), 93, 93.

⁹⁴ W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin, or, Where Is Francis?* (London, United Kingdom: Faber and Faber, limited, 1935), 40.

⁹⁵ Auden and Isherwood, *The Dog Beneath the Skin, or, Where Is Francis?*, 16..

⁹⁶ Patrick Deane, "Auden's England," in *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25–38, 35.

composed, the history of man would be materially unchanged.”⁹⁷ The society of that time could not comprehend this stance and instead, rumours circulated that Auden was seeking fame in America since he had been known there as a poet too. With the beginning of World War II, the move to New York seemed even more of a betrayal to British citizens.

Later in his life Auden turned into less leftist and liberal beliefs and focused more on the general idea of human suffering during wars and other trying times. “We must love one another or die.”⁹⁸ He found his way back into religion and stayed sympathetic to the struggles of the working class. Considering him a fully political poet may be a bit unfair. He was most radical in his young adulthood and as he was maturing, his poetry featured less and less politics. This growth is also apparent in the fact that he repudiated some of his poems because he grew as a person and no longer believed in what he wrote when he was younger.

The Genre of War Poetry

War poetry, just as war writing as a whole, underwent many changes. Until the twentieth century, war poetry was written with one purpose: to celebrate. There were poems about great battles that ended in victory and if they were written about individuals, they applauded men in high military positions.

World War I changed both features of previous war poetry. Modern war poetry does not celebrate war but instead depicts the mental and physical suffering, the pointlessness of war. Its scope is also much smaller. It does not focus on a whole battle but on individuals.

The aim of writing modern war poetry is completely different from war poetry in the earlier centuries. The authors want to warn the population, they want to contribute to a world where war does not happen and if that is not possible yet, then they want to express what war can do to a person. One of the challenges of modern war poetry is how much gruesomeness they should describe. Richard Fein remarks on the fine line an author must find in order not to exploit the horrors of war for its shock value.⁹⁹ Modern war poets serve the common good in society, but they stir away from politics. Modern war poetry is hopeless, sees no heroism in war, emphasizes how technological development only led to more effective ways of killing and actively distances itself from any military successes.

⁹⁷ The English Auden: Poems, Essays and Dramatic Writings 1927–1939, ed. Edward Mendelson (London: Faber and Faber, 1977) quoted in Patrick Deane “Auden’s England,” in *The Cambridge Companion to W. H. Auden* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 25–38, 37.

⁹⁸ Auden, “September 1, 1939,” 97.

⁹⁹ Richard Fein, “Modern War Poetry,” *Southwest Review* 47, no. 4 (Autumn 1962): 279–88, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/43467426>, 281.

English poetry written about the Spanish Civil War represents an exception to the aforementioned elements of modern war poetry. British and American poets were overwhelmingly pro-Republican. Even those who had preferred to stay out of the conflict became anti-Franco when the murder of Federico García Lorca, one of the best Spanish poets and dramatists, reached international newspapers. The Spanish Civil War was written about as the legitimate Republic defending itself from the evils of fascism. Thus, poetry on this topic was hopeful and praised any victory of the Republic. This, as Fein points out, was only a fleeting exception in the genre of modern war poetry.¹⁰⁰

To talk about “Spain” as belonging to the genre of modern war poetry is a bit problematic because not everyone perceives it as a war poem. Samuel Hynes suggest that it is a war poem that is written in a very abstract and detached manner.¹⁰¹ John Farrell instead proposes that we should read “Spain” as a call to arms¹⁰² which does not fit into the genre of war poetry.

The Vision of “Spain”

“Spain” is a poem in 26 stanzas of four verses that has no regular patterns and no rhymes, the lines differ in length and the only regularity is the third line which is always the shortest. Although the poem has no formal structural pattern, it does not mean it has no structure. The way Auden chooses specific words and uses repetition all contribute to the elaboration of his argument.

“Spain” is built on the juxtaposition of ‘yesterday’, ‘today’, and ‘tomorrow’ and the poem can be split into three sections based on what they discuss. The first one is ‘yesterday’ where Auden depicts the past. It is the part that celebrates the human curiosity and creativity that is behind great inventions.

Yesterday the installation of dynamos and turbines,
The construction of railways in the colonial desert;
Yesterday the classic lecture

¹⁰⁰ Fein, “Modern War Poetry,” 279.

¹⁰¹ Samuel Hynes, *The Auden Generation: Literature and Politics in England in the 1930s* (New York, 1976) p. 254, 253, 255, quoted in John Farrell, “Auden’s Call to Arms: ‘Spain’ and Psychoanalysis,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 38, no. 3, Special Issue: AFTER MODERNISM? (September 2009): 225–42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42966949>, 226.

¹⁰² John Farrell, “Auden’s Call to Arms: ‘Spain’ and Psychoanalysis,” *The Cambridge Quarterly* 38, no. 3, Special Issue: AFTER MODERNISM? (September 2009): 225–42, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/42966949>, 227.

On the origin of Mankind.¹⁰³

Farrell calls ‘yesterday’ “a realm of freedom”¹⁰⁴ but this realm is no longer accessible. We find ourselves in ‘today’ in the middle of the war with only some hope towards ‘tomorrow’. Auden promises peace once again and utilizes the imagery of the basic human emotions, joys and art that will come back ‘tomorrow’. The poem, however, does not let the hopeful feeling linger in the reader for long since everything is brought back to ‘today’.

To-morrow the exchanging of tips on the breeding of terriers,
The eager election of chairmen
By the sudden forest of hands. But to-day the struggle.¹⁰⁵

Again, ‘tomorrow’ is inaccessible, it is locked behind the struggle of ‘today’. Any chance of arriving to the vision of future Auden lays out is conditioned by facing ‘today’. Spain seems to stand at crossroads and the winning side will choose the version of future for the country. Auden presents the future of the Republic as the harmonious one and thus portrays it as a cause worth fighting for.

The Aim of “Spain”

The poem was written immediately after Auden came back from Spain. It was published first as a pamphlet in 1937 with all profits donated to the Spanish Medical Aid. “Spain” was not written as a poem to only appear in a collection among many others, it was supposed to bring change. This is the exact reason why “Spain” is perceived more as a call to arms, and it should be read that way.

The part of ‘yesterday’ is used to contextualize the conflict in history. In the whole poem, the perspective seems to look at things from a great distance. Spain is described as

that arid square, that fragment nipped off from hot
Africa, soldered so crudely to inventive Europe;¹⁰⁶

and the historical development of humanity is compressed into one ‘yesterday’. Slowly the description of the past gets interrupted by the visions of the present. The repetition of the phrase “but to-day the struggle”¹⁰⁷ creates a sense of urgency and does not allow the reader to enjoy the achievements of the past.

¹⁰³ W. H. Auden, “Spain” in *Selected Poems*, ed. Edward Mendelson, expanded second edition (New York, United States: Vintage International, 2007), 54–57, 55.

¹⁰⁴ Farrell, “Auden’s Call to Arms: ‘Spain’ and Psychoanalysis,” 230.

¹⁰⁵ Auden, “Spain,” 57.

¹⁰⁶ Auden, “Spain,” 56.

¹⁰⁷ Auden, “Spain,” 55.

Then, by placing the current Spanish Civil War into ‘today’, Auden creates even more urgency as this is the moment which will become a historical turning point. He builds motivation in the readers to not just passively observe but to take action. Now is the time when history is being made and it is the responsibility of everyone to ensure that the better version of the future is realized. “I am your choice, your decision. Yes, I am Spain,”¹⁰⁸ claims Auden and encompasses the notion that the Spanish Civil War is not just a war in a foreign country but rather an internationally important conflict whose result will impact the rest of history. The last stanza outright calls for action:

The stars are dead. The animals will not look.
We are left alone with our day, and the time is short, and
History to the defeated
May say Alas but cannot help or pardon.¹⁰⁹

It is important to also consider that the poem is not specifically political, it does not even distinguish between the Republicans and the Nationalists. It was still highly praised by the political left, but many people have since noted how the poem seems dishonest. A. L. Rowse notes it is written in a very indirect, allusive manner with obscure meaning.¹¹⁰ Auden was writing this poem after he had suffered a great disappointment with the left during his visit to Spain. He was still trying to create a poem that would help the Spanish Republic, but he no longer believed in the ideology of the Republic. It is essentially a work to motivate people to go fight in Spain written by a person who went there to help but never got the chance to actually do something.

Orwell’s Criticism and Revisions of “Spain”

The poem “Spain” appeared in the collection *Another Time* published in 1940 but there were changes compared to the pamphlet in 1937. This was a reaction to what George Orwell said in “Inside the Whale”, his essay published in 1940. There Orwell used “Spain” as an example of the attitude of the new generation towards violence even though they had no direct experience of it. Orwell was commenting on the lines:

To-day the deliberate increase in the chances of death,
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the necessary murder,¹¹¹

¹⁰⁸ Auden, “Spain,” 56.

¹⁰⁹ Auden, “Spain,” 57.

¹¹⁰ A. L. Rowse, *The Poet Auden* (New York, United States: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1988), 52.

¹¹¹ Auden, “Spain,” 57.

Orwell criticised Auden for talking about murder lightly: “[N]otice the phrase ‘necessary murder’. It could only be written by a person to whom murder is at most a *word*.”¹¹²

Auden took the critique to heart, perhaps because the original pamphlet aimed to send volunteers to fight in Spain. Orwell’s criticism put forward the propagandistic aspect of “Spain” which Auden wrote a bit because of the pressure of helping Spain. Now after the war won by the fascists, “Spain” no longer needed to lean towards the propaganda. Auden changed the lines which now stood as:

To-day the inevitable increase in the chances of death,
The conscious acceptance of guilt in the fact of murder;¹¹³

Douglas Dunn poses the question whether writing political poetry means taking a risk of being untruthful to a degree based on how Auden backtracked.¹¹⁴ People change and evolve as their lives progress and the modern world changes just as much. All of this is something a poet cannot control. Auden revisiting “Spain” shows growth in personal beliefs. It is also a result of the world where readers connect the artist to their work, where art does not exist in a vacuum.

Conclusion

The Spanish Civil War was an interesting war in many aspects and the writings about this war are just as interesting. It is one of the few cases where the saying that history is written by the victors does not apply. All the writings on this war that are valued come from writers on the side of the Republic. This relates to another reason for the uniqueness of the Spanish Civil War – it was a war in one country that made the whole world watch to the point that some became volunteers. In Franco’s regime, no books supporting the Republic could have been published so it was the foreigners who could openly write and mourn the loss of the Republic and the emergence of another dictatorship. The perspective of foreigners is therefore respected and establishes the literary canon of the Spanish Civil War.

Orwell, Hemingway and Auden faced the struggle of portraying a foreign war to English-speaking readers. Each of them did it differently. Orwell focused on what was happening at that time without explanations about what had led to the war in the first place.

¹¹² George Orwell, “Inside the Whale,” in *Inside the Whale and Other Essays* (London, United Kingdom: Penguin Books, 1971), 9–50, 37.

¹¹³ Quoted in Bernd Dietz, “W. H. AUDEN EN LA DECADA DE 1930: ‘SPAIN’, O EL ESTIGMA DE UN PASADO IMPOSIBLE,” *Atlantis* 4, no. 1/2 (June 1982): 5–19, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41054472>, 8.

¹¹⁴ Douglas Dunn, “Back and Forth: Auden and Political Poetry,” *Critical Survey* 6, no. 3 (1994): 325–35, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41555851>, 332.

Auden wrote about the war on a larger scale concentrating on what the war meant for the spread of fascism. The menace of fascism and another war was a theme present in many of his poems prior to “Spain”. Only Hemingway truly tried to make readers abroad understand what the Spanish were fighting for. In a conversation with the Spanish characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert is answering their questions about US society. Even a mention of agriculture in the USA makes the other characters excited proving they, contrary to international volunteers, are not fighting for abstract ideals but for the concrete changes in their country.

Homage to Catalonia with its base in journalism earned a place in literature about history read today. Many of the sources I have consulted for this thesis quote *Homage to Catalonia*. Orwell’s reportage is able to support purely historical and statistical records because it emphasizes the individual experience of common soldiers giving the war a human aspect among the data and numbers. Only reading *Homage to Catalonia* to gain historical knowledge, however, would be unfavourable. What Orwell describes about his own experience is Spain is very useful, but it is limited. He only witnessed a few months of the war, stayed in Barcelona and fought on the Aragon front where military action was minimal. The chapters concerned with the politics of the Spanish Civil War are the only ones that attempt to paint a bigger, complete picture. Out of the discussed texts, *Homage to Catalonia* delves into politics the most which is not surprising as it was precisely that which soured Orwell’s memories.

It is rather difficult to debate on how the Spanish Civil War is portrayed in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway was never, not even as a journalist reporting on numerous conflicts in Europe in the 1920s and 1930s, interested in the political background of conflicts, only in what the common people were going through. That is exactly what he described in his novel – the lives of ordinary people caught up in the middle of a civil war. The focus is on the people, their relationships and decisions in the time of the war. Hemingway used the war as a background for his setting to justify heightened emotions and anxious impatience in his characters. Robert and María’s relationship develops fast because they simply do not have time and Pablo shows such animosity towards Robert because trust is hard to build in this dangerous period.

“Spain” is the least specific in its portrayal of the Spanish Civil War. This could be attributed to two reasons. Firstly, poetry is usually subjective, but its allusiveness was also probably deliberate on Auden’s part who did not wish to comment on his experience in Spain. Although abstract, its imagery is still powerful and the basic structure of ‘yesterday’, ‘today’ and ‘tomorrow’ creates the foundation upon which Auden builds the message. The historical achievements of ‘yesterday’ are constantly interrupted by the struggle of ‘today’ and even while

hoping for a better future of ‘tomorrow’, the reader cannot forget what is happening in the present. The aim of “Spain”, however, is not to inform the readers of the situation in Spain, but to motivate them to be proactive. The last stanza is clearly a call to arms to fight the threat of fascism. The changes after Orwell’s criticism and the repudiation of the poem later show Auden’s growth as a person and an artist who no longer wished to use poetry for political purposes.

All three writers went to Spain with a clear mission and all three left the country disappointed. Orwell became convinced of the evils of Stalinist communism to later become one of its the most notable critics even in times when the Soviet Union was seen as an ally. For Hemingway, the Spanish Civil War was the first and only time when he was publicly politically engaged while trying to raise funds for the Republic. When it all came in vain, he was very disillusioned and sorrowful that Spain, his beloved country, turned into Franco’s dictatorship. Auden wanted to meaningfully help, but when he was assigned to produce Republican propaganda, his ideals started falling apart. Many point to “Spain” being dishonest because Auden no longer believed in the left, he only believed that the left was better than fascism. Auden’s experience in Spain ended his position as the speaker of the left.

Orwell, Hemingway and Auden knew that Franco’s rise to power would only worsen the already tense situation in Europe. With anxiety, they watched the unwillingness of Western countries to stop the spread of fascism and the policy of appeasement towards Hitler. They all knew that another great war was looming over Europe. They were right in their predictions.

Resumé

Španělská občanská válka se vymyká jiným válkám v historii hned v několika ohledech. Je to jedna z mála válek, u které neplatí, že historii píše vítězové. Válku vyhráli nacionalisté pod vedením generála Francisca Franca, ale literaturu o španělské občanské válce tvoří hlavně autoři na straně padlé republiky. Další neobvyklostí je vliv lidí ze zahraničí nejen na průběh občanské války, ale také později na uměleckou tvorbu. Toto jsou dva hlavní body, na které je tato práce zaměřená, protože pro analýzu byla vybrána díla autorů z Velké Británie a z USA: George Orwella, Ernesta Hemingwaye a W. H. Audena. Pro možnost prozkoumání těchto otázek ve vybraných dílech je nutné mít povědomí o historickém kontextu, ale také o tradici psaní o válce jako literárním žánru.

Psaní o válce je obrovská část literatury, která procházela četnými změnami v průběhu historie a která je navíc specifická pro každou literární tradici. Z tohoto důvodu není možné

popsat psaní o válce jako celek a tato práce se soustředí hlavně na psaní o válce ve dvacátém století a v tradici anglicky psané literatury. Po většinu historie měly texty o válce tendenci válku buď oslavovat, nebo romantizovat. Oslavovala se vítězství a velikáni v oboru válečnictví a romantizace se vyskytovala od středověku, kdy autoři popisovali chrabré rytíře se silným kodexem cti. Nejpatrnější změnu přinesla první světová válka. Nehumánní podmínky v zákopech, zbraně, které zabíjely s vysokou efektivitou, a válčení doslova o metry území – to vše změnilo nejen historii, ale také literaturu o válce. V anglické tradici se jedná o básníky jako Siegfried Sassoon, Wilfred Owen nebo Isaac Rosenberg, kteří se účastnili zákopové války a ve své poezii popsali své zkušenosti a děsivé vzpomínky. Stejně se změnil i válečný román, který nyní vycházel hlavně z autobiografických zkušeností spisovatele, pro něhož psaní slouží jako metoda pro vyrovnání se s hrůzami války.

Když v červenci 1936 nacionalisté zahájili útok, mělo se jednat o rychlý politický převrat, ale místo toho začaly boje na další téměř tři roky. Obě strany v občanské válce začínaly s poměrně vyrovnanými šancemi, ale republiku stály vítězství hlavně dvě věci. Nacionalisté se poměrně rychle sjednotili pod velením generála Franca, ale republika zůstala vnitřně rozdělena. Pomocí politických intrik o moc zápasili socialisté, komunisté a anarchisté, ale tyto tři základní směry se dělily ještě na více oddílů. Druhá nevýhoda republiky byla mezinárodní politika. Evropské státy brzy po začátku španělské občanské války uzavřely dohodu o nevměšování se, což znamenalo žádnou finanční pomoc ani dovoz zbraní nebo zásob. Dohodu podepsalo i Německo pod Hitlerem a Itálie pod Mussolinim, ale obě země dohodu otevřeně porušovaly a pomáhaly Francovi. Naproti tomu republika pomáhal pouze Sovětský svaz, který si jako platbu vzal podstatnou část španělské zlaté rezervy, ale tato pomoc nebyla tak pravidelná.

Kvůli podepsané dohodě o nevměšování se byla většina pomoci pro republiku neoficiální, a to v podobě mezinárodních dobrovolníků. Byli to lidé, kteří dobrovolně přicházeli do Španělska, aby bojovali za demokracii. Z pohledu zahraničí tato válka totiž symbolizovala něco více než jen konflikt v jedné z evropských zemí. Španělská občanská válka vypukla v období, které bylo už tak plné nejistoty a napětí. Světem se rozpínal fašismus a ve vzduchu visela hrozba další světové války. Ve Španělsku ale pokus svrhnout demokratickou vládu nevyšel a situace se rozvinula do plného konfliktu. Bylo to poprvé, kdy existovala šance bojovat proti fašismu. Hitler i Mussolini převzali moc ve svých státech bez možnosti odpor a Španělsko tak představovalo jedinečnou příležitost pro zabránění zhoršení situace v Evropě. Přesně toto byla motivace většiny mezinárodních dobrovolníků. Nepřicházeli do Španělska, aby bojovali pro něco, ale naopak proti něčemu.

George Orwell sám také popsal své důvody pro dobrovolnou účast ve válce ve Španělsku stejně abstraktním výrokem, jako je boj proti fašismu. Když Orwell v prosinci 1936 dorazil do Barcelony, měl už plno životních zkušeností. Sloužil několik let jako policejní úředník v Barmě a několikrát si vybral dočasný život ve špatných podmínkách, aby ze svých zkušeností mohl později čerpat při psaní knih, které popisovaly nuzné podmínky pracovní třídy. Orwell vždy soucítil s pracovní třídou, ale nikdy se nehlásil k žádné politické ideologii, jen vyznával vlastní formu socialismu. V Barceloně ho uchvátily revoluční změny, kdy se město dostalo pod vládu pracujících. Dodalo mu to motivaci vstoupit do armády. Zařadili ho na frontu v Aragonu, kde moc válečné akce nebylo, a proto bylo nejhorším zážitkem povstání v Barceloně v květnu 1937. Republikánské strany mezi sebou bojovaly o kontrolu telekomunikačních přístrojů, a když se konflikt podařilo po několika dnech uklidnit, celá věc byla dána za vinu politické straně POUM (Dělnická strana marxistického sjednocení), pod kterou byl evidován i Orwell. Jednalo se o politické machinace ze strany komunistů, protože POUM nepodléhala Stalinovi. Jako výsledek byli členové POUM prohlášeni za zločince a Orwell musel ze Španělska rychle odejít, aby se vyhnul zatčení. Tato zkušenost jen posílila jeho nenávist vůči Stalinovi, později se Orwell stal jedním z jeho největších kritiků.

Z Orwellovy účasti ve Španělsku vznikla kniha *Homage to Catalonia*, v překladu *Hold Katalánsku*. Jedná se o válečnou reportáž, Orwell byl jednou z klíčových figur ve vytvoření tohoto žánru. Reportáž se vyznačuje kombinací subjektivních a objektivních informací. Orwell v knize popisuje vlastní postřehy a pocity, stěžuje si například na nedostatek tabáku na frontě nebo na náuru Španělů, kteří nic nedělají načas. Takové pasáže jsou ale proloženy kapitolami zaměřenými na politiku, kdy Orwell objasňuje kroky jednotlivých stran tvořících republiku, a pečlivě vyvrací veškeré dezinformace nebo přímo lži, které se objevily v britském tisku. Argumentaci zakládá na jednotlivých příkladech, které vztahuje na větší celky – je tedy schopný podat výpověď o stavu zbraní na straně republiky podle toho, co viděl při vlastní přípravě před cestou na frontu. Protože čtenář přesně vidí, odkud tyto závěry vychází, dodává to Orwellovi na věrohodnosti.

Naproti tomu Ernest Hemingway se soustředil na vystavění příběhu, ne na objektivní předání informací. Hemingway nebyl příliš politicky angažovaný, dokonce i jako novinář se věnoval spíše popsání utrpení běžných lidí než na rozhodnutí vlád. Během občanské války se sice snažil získat prostředky pro republiku, protože si Španělsko s jeho kulturou zamiloval, ale román *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, v překladu *Komu zvoní hrana*, je hlavně příběh. Zasazení románu do období španělské občanské války umožňuje Hemingwayovi použít postavy, které kvůli neustálé nejistotě a strachu jednají bezprostředně a jejich vztahy se vyvíjejí zrychleně.

Robert Jordan, americký dobrovolník a hlavní postava, zažije rychlý, ale velmi intenzivní vztah s Mariou, protože více času nemají. Nepřátelství s Pablem, které je pouze výsledkem protichůdných názorů, nutí Roberta přemýšlet nad zabitím Pabla, protože si nemůže dovolit, aby něco ohrozilo jeho misi.

Využití perspektivy Američana navíc dává Hemingwayovi prostor pro přiblížení španělské války čtenářům ve Spojených státech. Robert často vnitřně rozebírá kolektivní návyky Španělů, a protože je to profesor španělštiny, může se se španělskými postavami pouštět i do hlubších rozhovorů. Hemingway tak popisuje názory Španělů na náboženství nebo jejich představu zemědělské reformy, oba velké důvody, proč k občanské válce došlo.

W. H. Auden k tomuto tématu přistupuje nejvíce abstraktně. Ve 20. a 30. letech minulého století se tento britský básník proslavil také poezií, která narážela na politická témata jako pomoc pracovní třídě nebo kritika kapitalismu. Stal se z něj neoficiální mluvčí levice, přestože jeho poezie obsahovala spíše obecné levicové názory než konkrétní ideologie. Cítil potřebu pomoci ve Španělsku, chtěl se stát řidičem sanitky, při jeho příchodu do Španělska ho ovšem přidělili k produkci propagandy pro rádiové vysílání. Auden se do Velké Británie vrátil jen několik týdnů po odjezdu a o svých zkušenostech ve Španělsku nikdy nemluvil. Zdálo se, že byl připraven podporovat španělskou republiku, protože skutečně věřil ve změny, které mohla přinést, ale tolik se zklamal, že už v republice viděl jen menší zlo než v režimu Franca. I tak se od něj čekalo, že o Španělsku napíše, patřilo to k britské tradici, která nutila básníky vyjadřovat se k politice. Výsledná báseň pod názvem „Spain“ se politice vyhýbá, dokonce ani nerozlišuje mezi republikány a nacionalisty. Auden zde používá strukturu ‚včera‘, ‚dnes‘ a ‚zítra‘, která přináší řád do básně s nepravidelným rytmem i rýmem. Část ‚včera‘ oslavuje historické vynálezy nebo umělecké směry, Auden však nenechá čtenáře v oslavné náladě dlouho, protože ‚dnes‘ se pomalu vynořuje a popisuje utrpení války. ‚Zítra‘ může lidstvo získat skvělou verzi budoucnosti, ale vše to záleží na boji ‚dnes‘. Báseň má motivovat lidi v zahraničí, aby se aktivně zapojili, protože osud Španělska bude mít velký dopad. Auden později v životě báseň „Spain“ zavrhnul. Jeho pozdější tvorba politiku vytěsnila úplně, jak se Auden pomalu stával více konzervativním ve svých názorech.

Orwell, Hemingway i Auden viděli ve španělské občanské válce šanci uklidnit situaci v Evropě, a proto po prohře republiky úzkostlivě přihlíželi tomu, co bude následovat. Na Španělsku fašistické režimy viděly neochotu ostatních států zakročit, místo toho Velká Británie a Francie prosazovala politiku appeasementu. Všichni tři autoři předpovídali začátek nové války a ve svém odhadu se nezmýlili.

Abstrakt

Tato práce analyzuje, jak se španělská občanská válka odráží v knize Hold Katalánsku George Orwella, románu Komu zvoní hrana Ernesta Hemingwaye a básni „Spain“ W. H. Audena.

Tato tři díla, ačkoli hovoří o stejné válce, jsou velice rozdílná. Rozdíly jsou způsobeny několika důvody, jako je žánr díla, politické smýšlení autora nebo zamýšlený efekt, který má dílo na čtenáře mít. Pro plné pochopení historického kontextu práce obsahuje část o španělské občanské válce se zaměřením na mezinárodní politiku a dobrovolníky ze zahraničí. Dále se teoretická část věnuje historii a tématům v psaní o válce.

Klíčová slova: George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway, W. H. Auden, španělská občanská válka, psaní o válce, válečný román, reportáž, válečná poezie

Abstract

This thesis analyses the way the Spanish Civil War is reflected in *Homage to Catalonia* by George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway's novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and the poem "Spain" by W. H. Auden. Although these works discuss the same war, the accounts are very different. The differences are caused by multiple reasons such as the genre, the author's political thinking or the intended effect the work should have on the reader. The thesis contains a part about the Spanish Civil War focused on the international politics and foreign volunteers to fully understand the historical context. The theoretical part also examines the history of war writing and its themes.

Key words: George Orwell, Ernest Hemingway, W. H. Auden, Spanish Civil War, war writing, war novel, reportage, war poetry

Annotation

Number of pages: 48

Number of characters: 129,328

Number of sources: 46

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