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**ШЕСТА МЕЃУНАРОДНА НАУЧНА
КОНФЕРЕНЦИЈА „ФИЛКО“ –
ФИЛОЛОГИЈА, КУЛТУРА И ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ**

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HEMINGWAY IN *HEMINGWAY'S GIRL*

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Апстракт

As a hybrid genre, biofictions open a wide range of interpretations. This is primarily due to the fact that they belong to both the literary and the historical realms, the fictional and the factual. As such, biofictions exhibit a specific genre play that ensues unique meanings. One such example is the building of Ernest Hemingway's character in Erica Robuck's *Hemingway's Girl*. This paper examines the genre play taking place in this narrative and discusses the portrayal of the actual literary figure of Ernest Hemingway in the half fictional space. A variety of meanings and insights are created as a result of the textual play and the building of the new narrative on the author's persona and life events.

Клучни зборови: Hemingway, biofictions, genre play

Introduction

In an attempt to re-tell Hemingway's life Erika Robuck's *Hemingway's Girl* (2012) renders Ernest Hemingway's persona as a unique blending of fact and fiction and thus creates various textual meanings. Described as a biofiction, *Hemingway's Girl* makes use of various historicographical and metafictional techniques to interweave fact and fiction while creating a compelling story about a specific part of Hemingway's life. One such specific instance linked to Pauline and the love triangle between her, Hemingway and Hadley and Hemingway's divorce from Hadley and marriage to Pauline in the same year can be traced here, and as a result, *Hemingway's Girl* can be considered a "sequel" of Paula McLain's *The Paris Wife*. Robuck's *Hemingway's Girl*, deals with another love triangle involving Hemingway, Pauline and a young American-Cuban girl from the Florida Keys.

"Painting" Hemingway

More precisely, the refracted images occur as a result of the narrative biopreservation of three different love triangles, Hemingway playing central part in all of them. The first one between Mariella, Hemingway and Gavin is used to illuminate Hemingway's figure as a rich successful author, extremely charismatic, but also married for the second time, as opposed to Gavin - a down-to-earth, honest ex-soldier. Despite their different socio-economic status, they are very similar, and Mariella's attraction is used to emphasize their contrasting figures. Gavin, like Hemingway, took part in WWI, enjoys boxing but he lacks Hemingway's literary fame. Robuck puts Hemingway's lady's man figure as an extravagant personality in the shade of his counterpart, Gavin.

The other love triangle parodically produces yet another meaning to contrast previous events in the author's life. Pauline, a woman known to have stolen Hemingway from his first wife, becomes insecure at the backdrop of the Hemingway-Pauline-Hadley triangle. Both Hemingway and Pauline are put to a test. It is a question of how they would each react in the appearance of another woman. This leads to the third love triangle, the one between Pauline, Hemingway and their friend Jane. By means of intertextuality Robuck juxtaposes different facets of the era: the indulgent extravagance of the Hemingways, in contrast to the hardships of WWI veterans, is as fascinating as it is heartbreaking. She generates meaning from the brute events by spicing up a historical event. The household drama is coupled with the desolate plight of the veterans. A reference is made to the Labor Day Hurricane in 1935 and the veterans' situation during the Depression of the 1930s, for which Hemingway wrote and

published the article "Who Murdered the Vets?" It was published on 17 September 1935, a few weeks after the Florida Hurricane as a first-hand report and a personal account. In the article, Hemingway asks. "Whom did they annoy and to whom was their possible presence a political danger? Who sent them down the Florida Keys and left them there in the hurricane months?" (Murphy 1989: 112).

The postmodern biofiction often takes the form of a detective story. Both Robuck and McLain adopt this style. As part of the genre bending, it appears McLain wants her readers to believe that this is not another mystery to solve but a factual account of Hadley and Hemingway's lives. Here Hadley, at the very beginning of the book, tells the story about the end of her marital bliss, giving implicit idea about the main perpetrator in this regard, Pauline. The audience recognizes and delights in such references. Although they know the real-life figures of the characters and how the story ends, such storytelling provides the thrill of getting to participate in their lives. Hadley's friend Kate, John Dos Passos, the Fitzgeralds, the Murphys, Gertrude Stein, Pauline, their families and friends on both sides of the Atlantic all play their part in the biopreservation sequences to emphasize the mystery of the biographical figures of Hemingway and Hadley in particular.

On the other hand, Robuck's images of the biographees are mainly illustrated through the love triangles.

'I don't know how I've become so helpless,' said Pauline. Mariella thought it sounded [more] like an address to the universe than a conversation starter, so she stayed quiet. 'It's because of how we started, me and Papa,' said Pauline. She now looked at Mariella, directly addressing her. 'And how's that?' asked Mariella – fully aware of how that was. 'He was married to Hadley when we fell in love,' she said. 'And now I'll always worry that he'll fall in love with another once he's tired of me. You're lucky to have your soldier, Mariella.' 'You've seen them,' said Pauline. 'Do you think he loves Jane?' (Robuck: 217)

The fact that Pauline became Hemingway's second wife as a result of her winning in a love triangle, is parodically used here to mirror her image in two other triangles.

The presence of Mariella and Jane around Hemingway throws Pauline into despair which is the opposite of the Paris Pauline in McLain's book. Robuck later introduces the character of Jane as one of the members of the party at Bimini as a counterpart of Pauline joining Hadley and Hemingway on their trips in Austria and the French Riviera. The friendships of the Hemingways with other people is intertextually used for that purpose. According to Hotchner, Hemingway wanted to spend his evenings with a "beautiful twenty-two-year-old beauty named Jane Mason". She was married but also started an affair with Hemingway.

'Did Pauline know about her?' I asked. 'Made sure she did. Unlike hiding my affair with Pauline from Hadley, I wanted to know what was going on with Jane. I wrote Pauline all about Jane, even sent her a photo of Jane and me on the Anita. 'You were giving her plenty of ammunition for a divorce?' 'It was time. But Pauline would not make the same mistake as Hadley. No hundred days.' (Hotchner 2015:134)

The factual presence of Jane Mason in Hemingway's life intertextually surfaced in the image of the third person in the love triangle. Her youth is embodied in the image of Mariella, but also in the fictional character of Jane.

The other love triangle, not involving Pauline mirrors both the image of Hemingway as a macho figure and his interest in boxing.

‘Winner takes all,’ said the yachtsman, dropping in twenty. ‘One round, knockout Papa.’ ‘When is the fight?’ asked Mariella.

‘Tomorrow morning. Nine o’clock,’ said Papa. ‘At the dock where you came in.’

Gavin nodded soberly and took a swig of his drink.

‘I’ll go easy on your face,’ said Papa. ‘Don’t worry about that.’ said Gavin. ‘Damage is done there.’(Robuck:220)

Robuck makes a significant point of challenging Hemingway’s image as a supreme boxer. She combines the dismantling of his winning image in sport with his winning image with women. Hemingway ends up losing both the match and Mariella to Gavin.

The epistolary aspect of the end of the story embodies truth and honesty and thus metafictionally functions as a parodical pastiche. Both Fowler and McLain use the letter exchange between Fitzgerald and Hemingway and their family and friends in the same way in their biofictions. In the many letters Robuck introduces there is one letter where Hemingway refers to Fitzgerald, after his death as another example of refracted images:

Still recovering from the Spanish Civil War. For the first time I felt like I was getting old for this shit. I’m hoping the Finca will restore me while I grieve humanity and some old friends I lost, most notably, F. Scott. When I got word that he died of a heart attack earlier this month I nearly had my own. I didn’t expect to outlive him. Thinking of him makes me sad and a little bit angry. With more discipline, a better tolerance and no Zelda he could have been a great man. But all of that was under his control (barring the tolerance issue), so I shouldn’t pity him. And who am I to pass judgment on others on the subject of drinking or women? (Robuck: 234)

The letter offers yet another image of the Fitzgerald-Hemingway friendship as a sequence to those in Fowler’s and McLain’s books. It intertextually inserts Hemingway’s claim that Zelda was the reason for Fitzgerald’s problems: “I did not know Zelda yet, and so I did not know the terrible odds that were against him. But we were to find that out soon enough” (Hemingway 2010: 176). He even called her “crazy”. In *A Moveable Feast* Hemingway’s makes a point to deride his friend Fitzgerald as a weak drunk:

Scott ate very little and sipped at one glass of the wine. He passed out at the table with his head on his hands. It was natural and there was no theater about it and it even looked as though he were careful not to spill nor break things. The waiter and I got him up to his room and laid him on the bed and I undressed him to his underwear, hung his clothes up, and then stripped the covers off the bed and spread them over him. I opened the window and saw it was clear outside and left the window open. (Hemingway 2010: 174)

He goes on to feel pity for Fitzgerald: “‘Isn’t Scott happy at all?’ ‘Maybe. Poor man.’ ‘I learned one thing.’ ‘What?’ ‘Never to go on trips with anyone you do not love.’ ‘Isn’t that fine?’” (Hemingway 2010:174). This idea was reflected in Robuck’s letter in which Hemingway is genuinely sorry for the loss of his friend, but also underlines that he does not pity him. In addition, he seems to no longer believe that he is better than Fitzgerald when it comes to women and drinking.

Robuck uses another letter to establish still more intertextual ties. Hemingway’s prize winning *The Old Man and the Sea* is mentioned in another letter he sends to Mariella.

I told you I would never use you. But I did. It was in *The Old Man and the Sea* – the only thing I’ve ever been really proud of. It was the truest writing I’ve ever done. Santiago was the best

man I ever wrote and the fish and the hunt was the best hunt. No doubt you think you are the boy. You are like the boy because you are good to me and because I always wished you were with me. (Robuck: 320)

The letter metafictionally refers to the story in *The Old Man and the Sea* and through the voice of Hemingway parodically establishes Mariella as the inspiration for the character of the boy in the book. In addition, the fact that this particular work brought Hemingway both the Pulitzer Prize for Literature in 1953 and The Nobel Prize for Literature a year later is used as source for Hemingway's special pride in it as expressed in the letter.

Conclusion

The above biofiction illustrates the unique genre play and the process of creating events and characters that ultimately shape the persona of the famous literary figure Ernest Hemingway. The selected sequences show how the process of storytelling swirls around key events only to solidify yet another possible aspect of the biographee's life story. The presented analysis illustrates how a biofiction can be cut through while extracting images, events and meanings of a "well-known" life story.

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