

**EXPATRIATED UNION: HEMINGWAY'S FIESTA AND APPLETON
AND BURNETT'S EVERYBODY COMES TO RICK'S IN
LITERATURE AND FILM**

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Abstract

Those who are avid reader of books often tend to disagree, but films, rather than books, tend to leave almost indelible influence on the minds of those watching them. And it is because of their wider influences on the audience's mind than books' that films often tend to popularise certain characters for a considerably long period of time. Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet (1597), a play, might have been widely appreciated over and over hundreds of years for immortalising two amorous young Italians from opposing families, but even in the twenty-first century the characters 'Rick Blaine' and 'Ilsa Lund', and 'Jake Barnes' and 'Brett Ashley' have retained their popularity and acceptability as two pairs of star-crossed lovers. Other than their 'presence' in two popular publications, they feature in two films – Casablanca (1943) and The Sun Also Rises (1957) – directed respectively by MihályKertész (anglicised as 'Michael Curtiz') (1886-1962) and Henry King (1886-1982). Prepared for the H.E.R.S.-sponsored international-level conference on 'Comparative Literature and Culture', the present paper proposes to make a comparative study of these two narratives or films – their different aspects and their deviations – to show how they principally concern themselves with presenting the life of expatriates seriously affected by global belligerences. Importantly, both the pairs in the two narratives/films ultimately fail to unite themselves – an aftermath of the all-annihilating nature of confrontation – and this fate actually unites these expatriates, and hence the sub-title of the present essay.

Keywords:-portrayals, films, books

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Those who are avid reader of books often tend to disagree, but films, rather than books, tend to leave almost indelible influence on the minds of those watching them. And it is because of their wider influences on the audience's mind than books' that films often tend to popularise certain characters for a considerably long period of time. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* (1597), a play, might have been widely appreciated over and over hundreds of years for immortalising two amorous young Italians from opposing families, but even in the twenty-first century the characters 'Rick Blaine' and 'Ilsa Lund', and 'Jake Barnes' and 'Brett Ashley' have retained their popularity and acceptability as two pairs of star-crossed lovers. Other than their 'presence' in two popular publications, they feature in two films – *Casablanca* (1943) and *The Sun Also Rises* (1957) – directed respectively by MihályKertész (anglicised as 'Michael Curtiz') (1886-1962) and Henry King (1886-1982). Prepared for the H.E.R.S.-sponsored international-level conference on 'Comparative Literature and Culture', the present paper proposes to make a comparative study of these two narratives or films – their different aspects and their deviations – to show how they principally concern themselves with presenting the life of expatriates seriously affected by global belligerences. Importantly, both the pairs in the two narratives/films ultimately fail to unite themselves – an aftermath of the all-annihilating nature of confrontation – and this fate actually *unites* these expatriates, and hence the subtitle of the present essay.

As far as the production histories of the two critically-applauded films are concerned, The Hungarian-American Kertész's film, *Casablanca*, is based on the play *Everybody Comes to Rick's* (1940) written by Joan Appleton (1901-92) (also 'Joan Alison') and her husband Murray Burnett (1910-97), while King directed his movie on *The Sun Also Rises* (also often referred to as 'Fiesta', 1926), one of the award-winning novels by the American Nobel-Laureate Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961). Though the pairs – Blaine, the American owner of *Rick's Café Américain* in Casablanca, Morocco, under the *Vichy French* regime, and Lund (a Czech Resistance-member who, in Appleton and Burnett's play, appears as 'Lois Meredith'), and Barnes, the Paris-based American journalist and Great War-veteran rendered impotent by a war-wound, and Ashley, a twice-divorced English

socialite (Early 22), are not usually compared and contrasted, a comparative study between the two sets of characters carries different possibilities. In fact, these four characters retain so many similarities that they symbolically unite to become the most successful portrayals of sensitive individuals separated and permanently devastated by the two principally-European wars. Understandably, the Europeans and Americans who watched the films in the 1950s and 1960s often saw them consecutively.

What symbolically unites Blaine, Lund, Barnes, and Ashley is that they all are disillusioned Euro-American expatriates living in places in France or in French-controlled areas(though at different time periods). Both the male-characters – Blaine of the film *Casablanca* and Barnes of *The Sun Also Rises* – have experiences of participating in belligerence. While Barnes, as already mentioned, is a First World War-veteran, Blaine reportedly ran guns to Ethiopia during the Ethiopian-Italian confrontation and fought for the Republicans in the Spanish Civil War (1936-39). Both these male characters are impotent – Barnes physically and Blaine because of his traditional respect for the institution of marriage – and lose their beloveds to people they do not especially appreciate: Barnes symbolically ‘loses’ Ashley to the Scotsman Mike Campbell while Lund marries Victor Laszlo, a fugitive Czech Resistance-leader. These sacrifices are, however, borne unflinchingly by Blaine and Barnes because of their selfless love for their ladyloves, which ennobles them. In the film versions – Humphrey Bogart (1899-1957) and Ingrid Bergman (1915-82) enacting, respectively, ‘Rick Blaine’ and ‘Ilsa Lund’, and Tyrone Power (1914-58) and Ava Gardner (1922-90) playing ‘Jake Barnes’ and ‘Brett Ashley’ (Early 21) – have successfully though unconsciously portrayed similarities between these characters: an aspect which deserves appreciation.

Though, unlike *Everybody Comes to Rick’s* (and, in extension, *Casablanca*), *The Sun Also Rises* is not exactly a war-narrative, Hemingway in his 1926-publication undertakes to explore the sexual freedom of the 1920s and the issue of changing moralities in a Europe unalterably ravaged by the First World War. The histories of composition of *Everybody Comes to Rick’s* and *The Sun Also Rises* are, however, different though both the productions/publications have emanated from personal experiences of respective authors. Burnett conceived the play in 1938 when he went to the Nazi-occupied Vienna to help his Jewish relatives smuggle out money of that country. He later visited a southern French town on the Mediterranean where he met a Franco-African pianist playing jazz for the French, the Nazis, and the expatriates. Having had returned to the United States of America, after a few weeks tour to the United Kingdom, Burnett and Alison completed their anti-Nazi play within one-and-a-half months. In contrast, Hemingway got the idea for his novel in

June 1925 when, visiting Pamplona, Spain, with his first wife Elizabeth Hadley Richardson (1891-1979), he met and was attracted to the English socialite Mary Duff Stirling (or, 'Lady Twysden') (1893-1938). He was jealous of Stirling's American litterateur-lover Harold Loeb (1891-1974), and was involved in complicacies when the Spanish matador from Ronda, Cayetano Ordóñez (1904-61), tried to flirt with his wife Richardson. Hemingway's experiences with mediocrity, bickering, and sexual jealousies amongst the American and English expatriates in Pamplona – William Smith, Donald Ogden Stewart, and Patrick Guthrie also being among them –forced him to rethink about the realities of the ideals and goals of his acquaintances. Through the character of Brett Ashley (modelled on Stirling) he also re-examined the validity and scope of liberalised women freely socialising and having sex with men.

The diplomatic usage of sex by liberalised women has been also subtly suggested in *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. Audience have interpreted that Lois Meredith (in the film *Casablanca*, her name has been changed to 'Ilsa Lund', and her nationality from American to Norwegian) sleeps with Rick Blaine especially because she wants the crucial letters-of-transit which would get her and her husband safely out of the occupied Moroccan town. Moreover, *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and the film *Casablanca*, which won three awards (for being the most 'Outstanding Motion Picture', and for 'Best Director', and 'Best Writing and Screenplay') at the 16th Academy Awards Festival (Lebo 193-94), also deal with the loneliness and related perplexity of sensitive individuals.

Blaine – at the beginning of both the play and the film – is a lonely American expatriate in the Moroccan town, having had lost his former beloved (Auge 28-30). At the end of the film/play too, when he and the formerly Vichy-loyalist Captain Louis Renault (enacted in *Casablanca* by Claude Rains) walk away together to join the *Free French* in Brazzaville, then too he symbolically remains unaccompanied – his beloved Lund having had been convinced to fly away to Lisbon with her husband Laszlo (enacted by Paul Henreid). This loneliness can also be noticed in the characters of *The Sun Also Rises* – they are perceptively confused American and English members of the diaspora who are lonely in one another's company, and enter into troubles with one another because of their boredom with humdrum life. In fact, both Blaine and Barnes are – what may be identified as – victims of the existential angst. They have identifiably failed to comprehend the absurdity of the world which is devoid of divinity and their search for truth and values have failed. While Ashley is a promiscuous woman who would not be tied to a single person – that too to an impotent First World War-veteran, Lund – in spite of her professed love for Blaine from Paris in 1940 – fails to meet him at the Casablanca Railway Station prior to the

fall of the Moroccan town to the German Army because she receives news about the sickness of her husband, Laszlo, whom she earlier believed to have been killed while attempting to escape from a Nazi concentration camp. While Paris connects both Blaine and Barnes – both initially work there and also find their ladyloves in the French capital – they self-migrate themselves: Blaine to Casablanca and Barnes to Pamplona. In the new towns, they fail to have a grip on the incidents which tend to gradually devastate them. Barnes fails to understand with who Ashley is exactly in love: Count Mippipopulous, Mike Campbell, Robert Cohn, or Pedro Romero. He does not, however, seek clarification, and avoids any questioning when, towards the end of the novel and film, he receives a telegram from Ashley (who has been deserted penniless at an unsavoury Madrid hotel by Romero) to go to the Spanish capital and help her out. He obeys her and helps her to return to her fiancé, Campbell, and he is left only with memories of unreciprocated love before returning back to Paris. It can be presumed that with the intention of joining the Free French volunteers towards the conclusion of *Everybody Comes to Rick's* and *Casablanca*, Blaine would also return to the French capital. His control over incidents is lost not only because of the divided love of Lund but also when Victor Laszlo orders Blaine's hotel-band-players to play "La Marseillaise" in defiance of "Die Wacht am Rhein" being sung by the officer-followers of the German major Heinrich Strasser and his orders are subconsciously ratified by Blaine, following which *Rick's Café Américain* is temporarily closed down by the infuriated major (enacted in the film by Conrad Veidt). Having had been uncontrollably dragged to the situation of convincing Lund to board, along with Laszlo, a Lisbon-bound aeroplane, he, much like Meursault of Albert Camus's *The Stranger* (1942), kills an intervening Strasser, and allows himself to be taken away by Renault to join the Free French volunteers and thus be involved in more action and uncertainties. These uncertainties become the proverbial Sisyphus' stones for both Blaine and Barnes – they would continue to survive in absence of their beloveds and be involved in various activities without any real importance for them.

What deserves special mention for *Casablanca* is that in the film, which deals with the life of an American expatriate, a number of German and other European refugees have played minor roles (Kriger and Gandel 195-212). Veidt himself was a German actor who had fled the Nazis but had to impersonate Nazi characters in different Hollywood films. Some of the mentionable expatriate actors who played different insignificant roles in Kertész's epoch-making motion picture include the Austrians Lutz Altschul (playing a refugee at *Rick's Café Américain*), Richard Ryen ('Captain Heinze'), and Ludwig Stössel ('Mr.Leuchtag'); the Polish Hans Twardowski ('an arguing German officer'), and the Germans Trude Berliner ('a baccarat player at *Rick's*'), Ilka Grünig ('Mrs.Leuchtag'),

LottePalfi ('a refugee'), and Wolfgang Zilzer ('an executed refugee with expired transit-papers'). Among these actors, Zilzer later married Palfi, his co-artist from the film. In contrast, Henry King's 1957-film did not usually cast the expatriates. In it, most of the minor characters were enacted by Americans - by Gregory Ratoff (as 'Count Mippipopulous'), Errol Flynn ('Mike Campbell'), Mel Ferrer ('Robert Cohn'), Eddie Albert ('Bill Gorton'), Juliette Gréco ('Georgette Aubin'), and Robert Evans (as 'Pedro Romero'), for example.

The production-team for *Casablanca* did not experience any mentionable interference by the writers Burnett and Alison unlike Hemingway's active participation (and therefore creating problems) during the shooting of *The Sun Also Rises* (Grissom 163). Actually, when Irene Diamond discovered Burnett and Alison's play in New York in 1941, it was unproduced, and the playwrights were little known. Actually the editor Diamond persuaded the producer Hal Wallis to purchase the rights for the play for \$ 20,000. Bogart and Bergman were the first choices of the director to play the lead roles (in spite of Bergman being two inches taller than Bogart), which was agreed upon by all those on the production team. On the other hand, there cropped up considerable differences among the members of the production unit for *The Sun Also Rises* (Grissom 163). Darryl Zanuck, who had purchased the rights for the film in 1955, did not at first select Power and Gardner to play the lead roles, but wanted Gregory Peck (1916-2003) and Jennifer Jones (1919-2009) instead. Later, Jones and, thereafter, Gardner refused to play 'Ashley' because of their previous commitment to acting in other films, following which the producer had to approach Susan Hayward (1917-75). Importantly, Hemingway repeatedly insisted on Gardner playing 'Ashley', and thereafter Hayward was removed in favour of Gardner. The novelist also refused to permit the suit-salesman Robert Evans (b. 1930) to enact 'Pedro Romero', but he was overruled by Zanuck. These differences caused the film's production date to be postponed from September 1956 to February 1957. However, director Kings hot most sequences of *The Sun Also Rises* outdoors -at Moreli in Mexico, Pamplona in Spain, and at Biarritz and Paris in France - which caused the film to spend a total of U.S. \$ 3.5 million (Solomon 250). In contrast, Kertész filmed *Casablanca* between May and August 1942 principally at the *Werner Brothers Studio* at Burbank, with a single sequence (of the first-time arrival of Strasser at the town of Casablanca) having been taken at the *Van Nuys Airport*, Van Nuys, Los Angeles. Such thoughtful arrangements helped Kertész to complete the entire film within the budget of U.S. \$ 0.87 million (Schatz 218). Interestingly, while King's film earned U.S. \$ 3.81 million, *Casablanca* earned U.S. \$ 3.7 million immediately upon its release.

Both *Casablanca* and *The Sun Also Rises* ran into trouble with the original writers after their release. Hemingway, upon attending the première of the 130-minute-film-version of his *The Sun Also Rises*, departed after the passage of twenty-five minutes, finding it 'pretty disappointing', and accusing the producer Zanuck of 'silliness' and 'inconsiderateness'. Similarly, after the initial success of *Casablanca*, Burnett and Alison did not receive any extra attention from the officers of *Werner Brothers*, and even the leading actors were actually not aware of the fact that the film was based upon a play by Alison and Burnett. In 1973, the writers legally complained against the screenwriter Howard Koch for 'unjustly' criticising their storyline, and, in 1983, they sued *Werner Brothers* for royalties while a television-series on the film was released in the U.S.A. In 1997 too, the writers threatened to sue *Werner Brothers* over the copyright issue.

Artistic license was welded neither by Zanuck nor by King while *The Sun Also Rises* was being filmed. It was most probably because Hemingway was already a reputed and influential litterateur. Only the unspecified 'mid-1920s' of his novel's setting was changed to 1922 in order to let the audience have a definitive idea of the society being shown. In contrast, Kertész, having had been permitted by the producer Wallis, made a number of changes in the storyline of the original novel while shooting for *Casablanca* – that is, the film version of *Everybody Comes to Rick's*. Other than changing the name of the writing, the production-team altered the name and nationality of the original U.S. citizen Lois Meredith to 'Ilsa Lund' and 'Norwegian', as already mentioned. The name and nationality of the Italian police-officer 'Luis Rinaldo' was altered to 'Louis Renault' and 'French', and the name of 'The Rabbit' to 'Sam'. 'Senor Martinez' became 'Signor Ferrari'. In Burnett and Appleton's original play, Blaine is not a café-owner but a lawyer, and though he meets Meredith in Paris, his beloved does not meet Laszlo until she has had ended her relationship with the lawyer. The 'beginning of a beautiful friendship' between Renault and Blaine at the end of *Casablanca* does not feature in the original play; the film's producer Hal Wallis actually contemplated such a possibility. Zanuck and King, working on Hemingway's novel, tried to keep even sixty percent of the dialogues straight out from the print version of *The Sun Also Rises*.

Finally, after attempting a comparative study of Hemingway's novel and Burnett and Appleton's play and of their film-versions, the issue of why these writings should be studied in the twenty-first century and why the films should be watched needs to be addressed. Two exhaustive and efficient studies of the psychological constructs of the expatriates, who found relevance and appreciation as *members of the Lost Generation* during the inter-war period, Hemingway's novel and Appleton and Burnett's play are – in

fact – existentialist examinations of the predicament of modern individuals. Though a section of twenty-first-century film-critics tend to pooh-pooh *Casablanca* as a mere propaganda-based motion picture prepared against the German *National Socialists* during the Second World War, it does not lack in dept of its plot, and delves deep into the problems of people living in German-occupied towns and cities. Hemingway's novel and King's film are minute studies of the bickering and jealousies that threaten to spoil human relationships, and an exhibition of the America author's conception of the nada. Barnes secures practically nothing at the conclusion of the novel and the film. Both the films and both the writings demonstrate that in spite of the predominance of evil all around, there are still some honest individuals and honest relationships. Blaine and Barnes also unite themselves by the fact that in spite of being cast in an unintelligible and unfriendly world, they do not contemplate compromise or suicide, but continue to fight against the absurdist world trying to crush them into insanity.

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