



**The Conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh and its Influence on Society
(according to Akram Aylisli's "Stone Dreams", Gunel Movlud's "The
Camp" and Narine Abgaryan's novels)**

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Abstract

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is an ethnic and territorial dispute between Armenia and Azerbaijan which is going on in the Nagorno-Karabakh region and its surrounding territories. This conflict started from the beginning of the 20th century, but it was especially aggravated in the late of 1980s, when at the background of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Armenians demanded the independence of Nagorno-Karabakh and its separation from Azerbaijan.

The "Khojal Massacre"¹¹⁰ that occurred in February, 1992 caused mass casualties among the civilian population and large-scale forced

¹¹⁰ "Khojal genocide, which is directed against the whole Azerbaijani people, is the manifestation of barbaric action in the history of mankind; It is characterized by incredible cruelty and inhuman methods of punishment. This genocide is also a historical crime against all humanity."

migration. This tragic event became one of the most severe episodes of the conflict, which led to the demographic changes in the region and still remains a source of tension between the two countries up to these days. The intractability of the conflict continues to have an influence on regional stability and international relationship in the South Caucasus. The Karabakh conflict, along with forced migration, has a result in economic hardship and psychological trauma for many people. The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had a significant influence on the societies of both countries, Armenia and Azerbaijan, which was written in **Akram Aylisli's "Stone Dreams", Gunel Movlud's "The Camp" and Narine Abgaryan's** fiction novels, where the consequences and influence of this conflict are thoughtfully discussed.

Akram Aylisli's "Stone Dreams"¹¹¹, **Gunel Movlud's "The Camp" and Narine Abgaryan's "To Live On"** are works where the writers were able to stand above the worst human evils, defeat the enmity and cruelty in themselves, prolong and capture the pain and suffering of the opposite side.

Akram Aylisli, Narine Abgaryan and Gunel Movlud - are writers who are talking about the Karabakh war and the post-war period, about the fate of people who have been withdrawn from their land, home, and habitual existence, who have lost all their possessions.

Writers write about what they have seen and experienced with their own eyes. All three authors are trying with all their heart to share the pain and trauma that changed a person's entire life. All three authors are talking about the economic hardships and psychological trauma experienced¹¹² by forced migrated people and often mention the topics of conflict and war. (Alexander, 2004:5).¹¹³

The authors are presenting both sides of the conflict, their cultural heritage and issues of national identity, are talking about the

¹¹¹ <https://www.armin.am/images/menus/1400/AkramAilisi-Stone-dreams.pdf>

¹¹² Айерман Р. Социальная теория и травма / Р. Айерман // Социологическое обозрение. — Т. 12. — 2013. — № 1. — С. 125.

¹¹³ Казарян К., Исаев Г. Армяне и азербайджанцы залечивают психологические раны после войны.

absurdity and devastating consequences of war. Their characters are the representatives of people trying to maintain their dignity and continue living in the harsh conditions of war and conflict.

These literary novels offer us a unique opportunity to understand the complex nature of conflict and its influence on people's lives and society, thus helps to deepen empathy and mutual understanding.

The novels of all three authors are a kind of mirror that reflects a catastrophic truth: war and the resulting trauma are an invariable tragic component in human history, even in the modern world.

Keywords: traumatic memory; the post-war world of Nagorno-Karabakh and its influence on society.

Discussion

The main topics of the novels of Akram Aylisili, Narine Abgaryan and Gunel Movlud are: democracy, human rights, gender equality, minority rights, peacekeeping and human values. Their works discuss the impact of conflict on society from different perspectives and how war has changed the lives of ordinary people, resulting in trauma, forced migration and family breakdown¹¹⁴. Their novels also deal with topics of identity, memory and consolidation. They show us how people try to preserve their culture and traditions in the process of conflict. All three authors emphasize the tragic nature of war, its negative influence on society and their consequences:

Forced migration: the novels describe how the conflict forced the majority of people to leave their homes. All this changes the identity of the characters and their connection with their homeland.

- **Loss of cultural heritage:** the novels clearly show how conflict threatens and destroys cultural heritage. Not only do the characters experience physical trauma and

¹¹⁴ Alexander, Jeffrey C – Toward a Theory of Cultural Trauma – University of California press, Berkley 2004

suffering, but a part of their cultural identity is also threatened with future destruction.

- **Broken Relationships:** the novels describe how conflict destroys families and communities. Formerly peaceful neighbours (Azerbaijani and Armenians) became enemies due to the impact of the war.
- **Trauma and Memory:** the authors show how traumatic memory has an influence on the psyche of people. The characters are struggling with painful memories and trying to cope with the past.
- **Maintaining Humanity:** despite these difficulties, the texts show the characters' attempts to maintain compassion and humanity in the process of conflict.

The practical significance of this research means that these materials of the work will be able to be used to study the problem of traumatic memory, the impact of war in fiction literature.

These discussing points provide with an opportunity to analyse the complex nature of conflict and its multifaceted impact on society. They also offer perspectives for future research and policy development.

Introduction

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is one of the most difficult and long-lasting conflicts in the post-Soviet space. The conflict, which has been going on for decades, has had a deep influence on the life, culture and literature of the population of the region. Akram Aylisli, Narine Abgaryan and Gunel Movlud - all three writers from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds - write in their novels about the multifaceted impact of this conflict on society. The conflict caused:

- Massive forced migration;
- Economic difficulties in both countries;
- Increase in ethnic tension;
- Psychological trauma for many citizens;
- Complication of international relations in the region.

The research's interest of the paper is the discussion of Akram Aylisli's novel "**Stone Dreams**", Gunel Movlud's autobiographical novel "**The Camp**" and Narine Abgaryan's prose collection "**To Live On**" in the context of trauma discourse.

The main concept of the novels of the mentioned authors is the reflection of post-traumatic life. The main problem of the characters of the studied novels is the trauma received as a result of the war, its influence on the society and overcoming the received trauma.

The purpose of the study is to analyze and describe the reality of war, forced migration and artistic interpretation of trauma presented in the text of **Narine Abgaryan's** small collection "To Live On"¹¹⁵, **Gunel Movlud's** "The Camp" and **Akram Aylisli's** "Stone Dreams".

The relevance of the work is determined by the necessity of studying the problem of trauma and ways to solve it in modern fiction literature.

Trauma is a global, universal, eternal problem, and its study is a means of possessing memories and post-memory; A way to find answers to human and ethical questions. By analysing the fictions novels of these particular writers, we tried to understand the deeper, human side of the conflict and its influence on both individuals and society as a whole. This study will emphasize the importance of literature in understanding and describing hard social and political realities. The novels of all three authors offer us a unique opportunity to look into the lives of people in the epicenter of the conflict, to understand their feelings, hopes and fears. They write about not only the physical and material consequences of war, but also its profound psychological and social impact on society (Alexander, 2015:96)¹¹⁶.

¹¹⁵ Радио «Эхо Москвы» (11.09.2020) [подкаст радиointerview «Книжная кухня». Книга «Дальше жить» с Наринэ Абгарян в прямом эфире]. ელ.რესურსი: <https://echo-omsk.ru/programs/beseda/2707455-echo/> (გადამოწმებულია 10.05.2024)

¹¹⁶https://kulturiskvlevebi.weebly.com/uploads/1/8/3/7/18376403/cultural_trauma_and_collectivity.pdf

Analysing these literary works will allow us to understand the complex nature of conflict better and its influence on people's everyday lives, which otherwise will help to develop empathy and look for ways to resolve conflicts peacefully.

Method

In this study, the method of comparative literary analysis is used¹¹⁷, which aims to study the reflection of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in three literary works: "**Stone Dreams**" by Akram Aylisli, "**The Camp**" by Gunel Movlud, and "**To Live On**" by Narine Abgaryan.

1. **Selection and preparation of texts:** finding the original texts of all three works - if necessary, using translations (in Georgian or English).
2. **Identification of main topics:** separation of main topics related to the conflict in each work - categorization of topics (e.g., forced migration, identity crisis, trauma).
3. **Analysis of narrative techniques:** study of fiction techniques used by authors - analysis of character development and narrative style.
4. **Contextual analysis:** taking into account the historical and social context of the novels – searching for the biographical details of the authors, as far as it is relevant.
5. **Comparative analysis:** comparison of all three novels from thematic, stylistic and ideological points of view; Identifying similarities and differences.
6. **Assessment of social impact:** study of reception of works in relevant societies; A Review of Literary Criticism.
7. **Interpretation and synthesis:** interpretation of obtained data; Making conclusions on the literary representation of the conflict.
8. **Ethical issues:** consideration of sensitive topics in the analysis process; Maintaining objectivity and impartiality.

¹¹⁷ http://css.ge/wp-content/uploads/Tsuladze_Sociologiuri_Kvlevis_Tvisebrivi_Metodebi.pdf

This methodology provides a systematic approach to the analysis of the works and allows to reveal how different authors write about the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its impact on society, this methodological framework will allow us to study the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and its influence on the development of society in many ways, which provides with the depth of research and objectivity.

Results

The Nagorno-Karabakh conflict is a long-lasting dispute between Azerbaijan and Armenia due to control of the whole region. The conflict has gone through several stages, including wars in the 1990s, and in 2020, the conflict has significantly negative impact on:

- Migration of population: many locals were forced to leave the city due to military actions.
- Damage to infrastructure: the city's buildings and communications were significantly damaged as a result of the military actions.
- Economic impact: the conflict has seriously negative influence on the local economy, delaying trade and investment.
- Political instability: the status and governing of the city changed frequently during the conflict.
- Humanitarian crisis: the population suffered from lack of food, water and medical aid.

Demographic changes:

A dramatic decrease in the number of the population, a change in the ethnic composition in the region, an increase in the number of forced migrated people.

Socio-economic consequences:

Destruction of economic infrastructure of society, high level of unemployment among forced migrated people, reduced access to social services, psychological impact. High rates of post-traumatic stress

disorder (PTSD) among survivors, formation of collective trauma in Azerbaijani society, intergenerational transmission of trauma.

As a result of the research, several important aspects concerning the literary representation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict were revealed ¹¹⁸:

1. Thematic similarities:

Common topics were developed in all three novels: forced migration, identity crisis, trauma and endurance.

Aylisli's " Stone Dreams " and Abgaryan's "To Live On" pay particular attention to the absurdity of war and its impact on ordinary citizens. **Movlud's "Camp"** focuses on the experience of refugees, their struggle to adapt to the new reality.

2. Diversity of perspectives:

«Каменные сны» ("Stone Dreams" (Azerbaijani: Daş yuxular) is a requiem novel by the Azerbaijani writer Akram Aylisli, which is dedicated to the understanding of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict during its escalation in the late 1980s. The story of the author's native village - Ailis has an important place in the novel. In the area of Nakhchivan, the majority of the population of which were Armenians, were almost completely destroyed during the massacre of 1919. The novel is dedicated to the memory of the writer's compatriots, who left a great pain in his heart.

Aylisli offers us an Azerbaijani perspective, but tries to show the both sides of the conflict. As we have already mentioned, this novel by an Azerbaijani writer is about the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict. In Azerbaijan, the first days of January 2013 were marked by a scandalous news, after the publication of the book, it was publicly announced that the outstanding Azerbaijani writer Akram Aylisli insulted the Azerbaijani nation, the writer was accused of sympathizing with Armenians and criticized the Azerbaijani media, the Union of Writers (of which Aylisli was a member for more than 20 years) for solidarity

¹¹⁸ Gamaghelyan, Phil. "Rethinking the Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict: Identity, Politics, Scholarship." *International Negotiation*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2010, pp. 33-56.

with him. The writer explained the reason for writing the novel as follows: at first, I understood the complexity of the topic, I knew that it would be received ambiguously in society. After all, there are many people who are earning huge dividends from the tragedy of these two countries and building their careers on it. I predicted in advance how furious and bitter these people would meet the novel. To be honest, with this work I wanted to send a message to Armenians and, first of all, to Armenian citizens living in Nagorno-Karabakh. "I wanted to tell them that we have not forgotten the evil we had done against them. Yes, we have committed this evil. But they have done the same thing, and others, including the Armenian writers of Khojaly, have to say about all this. I want to emphasize that if Armenians continue to live in Nagorno-Karabakh, then we should not scare them. I sent a message to the Armenians that all is not lost and we can live together peacefully.

The novels of Narine Abgaryan based on "To Live On" ¹¹⁹: Abgaryan is an Armenian writer who often writes about Nagorno-Karabakh. She is directly connected with historical events, the war and the trauma she received is her personal tragedy. The Abgaryan family is a victim of the war, because they lived (and the writer's parents still live) in the border region - a place of frequent bombings and military actions. Living in the conflict zone between Armenia and Azerbaijan, **Narine Yurievna (Yuri's daughter)** was a direct eyewitness of the military actions that caused psychological trauma to most of the civilians, including her close relatives. The anthology contains autobiographical facts, observations and impressions. Close people, their stories and experiences played an important role in understanding the past. Abgaryan tries to show the impact of the conflict on ordinary people. **The author** focuses on the Armenian experience, but also explores universal aspects of the conflict ¹²⁰.

¹¹⁹ Абгарян Н. Дальше жить. Москва : АСТ, 2018. 256.

¹²⁰ Abgaryan, Narine. Three Apples Fell from the Sky. Oneworld Publications, 2020.

Gunel Movlud's "Camp"¹²¹: Movlud is the writing pseudonym of Gunel Imanova. The poet was born in the Karabakh region of Azerbaijan. At the age of 12, Gunel was forced to leave her native country with her family due to the Karabakh conflict. The work of the Azerbaijani writer shows the fate of people who have been withdrawn from their land, home, and habitual existence, who have lost all their possessions;

Hierarchy emerged in such a difficult situation, laws established by dominant individuals, coincidences and relationships arising from extreme conditions. Movlud focuses on human stories and the personal effects of conflict.

3. Narrative techniques:

Akram Aylisli uses symbolic language, expressive devices and magical realism to show the absurdity of the conflict.

Abgaryan uses the first-person narration, which increases the emotional influence on the readers.

Movlud uses a documentary style to create a realistic picture of the situation.

4. Identity issues:

All three works emphasize the importance of national and cultural identity. Characters often experience an identity crisis in the context of conflict.

5. Social influence:

Aylisli's book caused mixed reactions, varying in Azerbaijan, indicating the sensitivity of the topic.

Abgaryan's novels helped to inspire dialogue in Armenian society about the outcome of the war.

Movlud "The Camp" has become an important source for understanding the refugee experience.

¹²¹ «Девочка из Карабаха» — роман Гюнель Мовлуд о жизни беженцев, патриархальном Азербайджане и сильных женщинах, ელ.რესურსი: <https://www.rfi.fr/ru/kavkaz/20210308-девушка-из-карабаха-р-оман-гюнель-мовлуд-беженцы-война-азербайджан-женщины> (გადამოწმებულია 23.09.2024)

Гюнель Мовлуд, «Девочка из Карабаха».

6. Universal messages:

All three authors emphasize the importance of peace, consolidation and humanism.

The novels show the devastating consequences of war, encouraging the reader to seek a peaceful resolution of the conflict. As a result of the analysis of the fiction texts of the three authors, we can identify the following common topics:

1. **The tragic nature of war:** all three authors emphasize the destructive impact of the conflict on people's lives and future.

2. **Issues of identity:** the novels often discuss topics of national and personal identity in the context of conflict.

3. **Memory and Trauma:** the authors write about how historical memory and collective trauma have an influence on contemporary reality.

4. **Humanism:** all three writers try to show the human side of the participants in the conflict, regardless of their nationality.

5. **Perspectives of consolidation:** the novels often ask how consolidation and peace can be achieved.

Discussing these literary works allows us to see the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict from different perspectives and understand its complex nature. They also show the role of literature in understanding conflict and perhaps finding ways to solve it.

The results of the study show that despite their different perspectives, all three works make a significant contribution to understand the complex nature of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict and show its human dimension. All three texts show how multifaceted and deep influence the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict had and, in particular, the social tragedy had on the local, regional and international levels.

Conclusion

The study of the literary representation of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict in the works of Akram Aylisli, Gunel Movlud and Narine Abgaryan showed the complex nature of the conflict and its multifaceted impact on society.

The above-mentioned authors clearly and accurately shared all the events and problems to us that coincided with the most difficult period of their lives, namely the overthrow of the Soviet government, the bloody battles of Nagorno-Karabakh between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Analysing facts from the authors' lives revealed a number of factors that should be considered when analysing trauma.

Multifaceted perspective: analysing the works of three different authors allowed us to see the conflict from different sides. This diverse perspective contributes to a better understanding of the conflict and deepening empathy for all parties.

- **General topics:** despite the different perspectives, general topics were developed in all the works - forced migration, identity crisis, trauma and endurance. This indicates the universal impact of conflict on people's lives, regardless of their ethnicity.

- **The Role of Literature:** research has shown that literature can play a significant role in comprehending the conflict.

- **Humanist Approach:** all three authors, despite their different backgrounds, emphasize the human dimension of conflict and call for peace and consolidation. This shows the potential of literature to become a bridge between opposing sides.

- **Complexity of identity:** the works show how conflict complicates issues of identity and how it forces people to re-evaluate themselves and others. This helps us understand the deep psychological impact of the conflict.

- **Social Responsibility:** research has shown that writers have some emotional social responsibility in conflict situations. They can have an influence on public opinion and promote mutual understanding.

In conclusion, we can say that these literary works are not only fiction texts, but also important cultural documents that show society's attitude towards the conflict. They offer a unique opportunity to look beyond conflict and see a common human experience that can serve as a basis for future dialogue and consolidation.

This study highlights the importance of literature in understanding and solving conflicts, offering new perspectives for understanding the complex nature of the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict.

The novels mentioned above are to call for a person not to lose morality, responsibility, commitments even in the most difficult situation. Intellectuals, prominent cultural figures should not be indifferent to the injustice that is happening in the country, towards any nationality or group. Society should evaluate any event in the life of the country in a healthy, fair and objective manner.

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