

THE SOUL-SEARCHING MOTIFS IN *HEMINGWAY'S FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

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For Whom the Bell Tolls was a novel by Hemingway, published in 1940. The title is derived from a sermon by Donne: "No man is an *Iland*, in tire of itself; every man is a piece of the *Continent* ... And therefore never sends to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee*." The novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is that the novel graphically describes the rough treatment of the civil war in Spain during this time. It is told primarily through the thoughts and experiences of the central character, Robert Jordan. The character was motivated by Hemingway's own experiences in the Spanish Civil War as a reporter for the North American Newspaper Alliance. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a wonderful piece of work. It is the most moving manuscript on the Spanish Civil War. It was perhaps the first outstanding novel on the World War II. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a great Hemingway's love story. The setting of the story presets bare facts reflected during the World War II. It is an emotional and tragic story- a story full of adventures in a war. It is a grave and gloomy tragedy Spanish tragedy fighting for their lives.

It is very interesting to investigate the topic of the Symbols in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell tolls*. This paper wants to discuss the bridge as connector, the bridge as the symbol of rebellion, the bridge as the symbol of power, Pablo as a Fox, Maria and Republican as Rabbit. In the novel, the bridge seems to symbolize the futility of the war, since it connects the fascists and the Republicans. The war has broken down distinctions between the two groups, each becoming as violent and disorganized as the other.

Robert Jordan meets the guerillas with whom he becomes hopelessly entangled-namely Pablo, Pilar, and Maria--because of his orders to blow up the bridge, and complications arise when Pablo takes issue with the plan, eventually sabotaging it and ensuring the guerillas' failure against the fascists. By exploding the bridge, the guerillas hope to block an incoming fascist offensive, and the plan stands as one of the Republicans final hopes. If the bridge is blown, no connections can be made between the fascist and Republican camps, and the Republicans can safely move down from the mountains to another area without being detected.

Despite the clear division between the Republicans and the fascists, throughout the novel, Hemingway suggests that there are fewer differences between the two opposing groups than either of them would want to believe. Both are engaged in the brutal acts of fighting and killing, and though Hemingway's preference for the Republican cause is clear (manifested through his stand-in Robert Jordan, a left-wing journalist like Hemingway himself), he describes the Republicans as a group of individuals who have become corrupted and distant from their original goals, disillusioned by the difficulties of war. Though Pilar declares herself 'for the Republic', it is no longer entirely clear what 'the Republic' represents. The Republicans are firmly against fascism, yet they lack a coherent vision of the future, and their morals are all over the map--ranging from Anselmo's devout pacifism to Pablo's bloodthirsty carnage. Though the fascists are not portrayed at length, a brief conversation depicted between fascist soldiers suggests their unwillingness to fight and their own disillusionment with their own cause. Ultimately, when the bridge collapses--the physical structure and symbol that was connecting the two groups--all hope for reconciliation or peace between the two groups is destroyed. With this event, the novel winds to a

pessimistic end: the fascists will take over, the Republicans will be killed or forced to surrender, and the war, at least for the Republicans, was futile.

How does an author create a piece of good literature that is enjoyable to the reader? Every single detail that the author writes must have some connection to everything that follows and this is especially true's for Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

To write a good novel the author needs imagery. Every detail means something and could be foreshadowing the future. Each character written about needs their own identity. "You need the hero of the story, the comic relief, and the bad guy to really bring the story to life. There has to be conflict, a reason that the main character is on this quest or whatever journey they are going on during the novel. The novel needs to have a theme a reason why the author is writing the story, is it teaching you something or just about a general subject?"(69). Some authors even use events that they have went through in their life time to help portray what it is that is going on in the story.

The most popular theme in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the loss of innocence in war, which happens at least once to all the characters in the book. Hemingway writes about normal men who are corrupted by their values and the values of their enemies. Dignity, a characteristic that comes in short supply in the novel separates the main character and hero Jordan. It is with dignity, that Jordan is able to overcome his conflict, even though this means he will die. Yet another symbol that Hemingway employs is the motif of technology. Mankind's loss of dignity and the frequent event of death all help Hemingway show the reader mankind's true nature.

A Farewell to Arms hardly ends with a happy conclusion. The readers are confronted with such sadness in the harsh reality of how the war has affected Fredrick Henry's life-His past, present, and future. In life though not everything is a Fairytale with grand endings and forever loves, that's just the reality of it. Ernest Hemingway's book is categorized fiction, but in something this complex and sad, we know that there is a biography being told, perhaps a moment of autobiography, because whether we want to like it or not, our heart is invested into the characters just like the author. Our investment makes us defensive, therefore I must justify Ernest Hemingway's ending of A Farewell to Arms by showing the importance of expressing its theme of nothingness and in the hardships of reality, in his relationships with other characters, and his belief in faith.

Society tells people that if they go to war and fight for their country, they are heroes. Every generation has war heroes that sacrificed a great deal. Many heroes die fighting for their nation while other heroes survive and have to live with post-traumatic symptoms either stimulated by physical and/or mental trauma. Ernest Hemingway, an expatriate of World War I, recognizes the effects of the war has on soldiers and effectively captivates the heroes' distress, alienation, and detachment in *The Sun Also Rises* through his writing style. A Hemingway terse and simple, yet effective, sentence captivates people into his novel. An interesting life and specific cultures can shape and influence the way authors typically write. Ernest Hemingway is a perfect example where his life developed his own works. The extravagant lifestyle of Hemingway consisting of love, war, and masculinity is a recurring theme in "A Farewell to Arms," and "Hills Like White Elephants." The brave young American is a character that portrays Hemingway in both stories. Ernest Hemingway pulls from his background and youth to expand similar settings and atmospheres through each story. Throughout Hemingway's stories, themes of love and masculinity are consistent factors that play prominent roles in the development of his stories.

Of course, the irony is unexpected because we are given the impression that everything will go as planned since from the get-go, Wilde establishes the story like any other love story destined for a happy ending. This is the beauty of irony. It satirizes and express as it amuses and rouses interest. It gives a new dimension to literature and it keeps each story distinct from another. From the Greek who were the first to experiment with this element of fiction, to present day fictionists, irony will always be a vital that appeals

to the reader and is handy for the writer for irony forces us to think deeply and analyzes harder--the power of irony.

Animal imagery pervades *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but rabbits and hares appear most frequently. Robert Jordan's nickname for Maria is 'Rabbit'. When Robert Jordan first meets Rafael, the gypsy is making traps for rabbits. Later, Rafael, distracted by trapping a pair of hares that he has caught mating in the snow, leaves his post. The guerrilla fighters have a somber meal of rabbit stew after the Fascists slaughter El Sordo's men. And shortly before his death, El Sordo invokes the image of a skinned rabbit when thinking about how vulnerable before enemy planes he feels on his hilltop. The association of the guerrilleros with rabbits underscores their fragile position relative to the Fascists. Throughout the novel, we get the impression that the Fascists are the hunters and the guerrilleros the hunted: much like rabbits, Robert Jordan and his band are prey rather than predators. Like rabbits, the guerrilleros live in close contact with the natural world: they are a small, vulnerable group, in sharp contrast to the well-equipped Fascists with their incessant plane patrols and threatening, industrial war machinery.

The novel opens with Robert Jordan lying "flat on the brown pine-needled floor of the forest." We see him amid the evergreens on the forest floor at several points throughout the novel, implying how he literally embraces the Spanish land. On the second night, after it snows, Robert Jordan makes a bed of spruce branches for himself and Maria to share. His embrace of Maria and his closeness to the ground becomes a physical act of love both for the woman and the country. Toward the end of the novel, Robert Jordan assumes his post as he awaits the start of the attack on the bridge. On he is again "on his belly behind the pine trunk" and feels the "give of the brown, dropped pine-needles under his elbows." His literal closeness to the earth highlights the natural, pre-civilized lifestyle that the guerrilla fighters lead in the wilderness. Robert Jordan takes this position one final time, at the very end of the novel, when he again lies behind a tree and feels "his heart beating against the pine needle floor the forest." Comparing his position at the end of the novel to his almost identical position at the beginning reminds us of the ways in which Robert Jordan has changed over the course of the novel. There is a new element at the end his beating heart, which he has reawakened through his relationships with Maria and with the guerrilla fighters. Omens abound in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and the belief in them indicates closeness to a pre-civilized, natural way of life. For example, the worry Pilar feels after reading Robert Jordan's palm is borne out when Robert Jordan is wounded at the end of the novel. Even characters who claim not to believe in signs often rely on them subconsciously. Although Robert Jordan professes not to believe Pilar's superstitions, he plays games with himself and repeatedly interprets natural phenomena as signs. His framing of other people's behaviors as good signs or bad signs further undermines his claim not to believe in omens. At the end of the novel, however, as Robert Jordan faces death and comes to terms with his life, he grudgingly admits that gypsies do indeed "see something . . . feel something." Ultimately, Hemingway implies that the wisdom associated with the natural, Spanish way of life trumps the other characters' cynical rationality and skepticism.

Throughout *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway characterizes suicide as an act of cowardice by associating it with characters who are vulnerable or lack strength of spirit. A number of characters contemplate suicide: Karkov always carries pills to use to kill himself if he is ever captured, and Maria carries around a razor blade for the same purpose. Robert Jordan's father committed suicide--an act that Robert Jordan says he understands but nonetheless condemns. The traits of these characters who contemplate suicide connect the act of suicide to weakness. Robert Jordan's father is characterized as weak, Maria is young and female, and Karkov is a man of ideas, not action. At the end of the novel, Robert Jordan contemplates suicide but rejects the idea, preferring to struggle to stay awake despite the pain. Robert Jordan's reliance on inner strength in his rejection of suicide contrasts the other characters' weakness, which demonstrates that the will to continue living requires psychological strength. Each of the characters in *the novel* loses his or her psychological or physical innocence to the war. Some endure

tangible traumas: “Joaquin loses both his parents and is forced to grow up quickly, while Maria loses her physical innocence when she is raped by a group of Fascist soldiers. On top of these tangible, physical costs of the war come many psychological costs. Robert Jordan initially came to Spain with idealism about the Republican cause and believed confidently that he was joining the good side. But after fighting in the war, Robert Jordan becomes cynical about the Republican cause and loses much of his initial idealism” (67).

The victims of violence in the war are not the only ones to lose their innocence--the perpetrators lose their innocence too. The ruffians in Pablo's hometown who participate in the massacre of the town Fascists have to face their inner brutality afterward. Anselmo has to suppress his aversion to killing human beings, and Lieutenant Berrendo has to quell his aversion to cutting heads off of corpses. War even costs the innocence of people who aren't involved in it directly. War journalists, writers, and we as readers of novels like *For Whom the Bell Tolls* have to abandon our innocent expectation that wars involve clean moral choices that distinguish us from the enemy. Hemingway shows in the novel that morality is subjective and conditional, and that the sides of right and wrong are almost never clear-cut. With no definite sides of right and wrong in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, there is no sense of glorious victory in battle, no sense of triumph or satisfaction that good prevails and evil is defeated. Many characters die during the course of the novel, and we see characters repeatedly question what can possibly justify killing another human being. Anselmo and Pablo represent two extremes with regard to this question. Anselmo hates killing people in all circumstances, although he will do so if he must. Pablo, on the other hand, accepts killing as a part of his life and ultimately demonstrates that he is willing to kill his own men just to take their horses. Robert Jordan's position about killing falls somewhere between Anselmo's and Pablo's positions. Although Robert Jordan doesn't like to think about killing, he has killed many people in the line of duty. His personal struggle with this question ends on a note of compromise. Although war can't fully absolve him of guilt, and he has “no right to forget any of it,” Robert Jordan knows both that he must kill people as part of his duties in the war, and that dwelling on his guilt during wartime is not productive.

The question of when it is justifiable to kill a person becomes complicated when we read that several characters, including Andrés, Agustín, Rafael, and even Robert Jordan, admit to experiencing a rush of excitement while killing. Hemingway does not take a clear moral stance regarding when it is acceptable to take another person's life. At times he even implies that killing can be exhilarating, which makes the morality of the war in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* even murkier. Even though many of the characters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* take a cynical view of human nature and feel fatigued by the war, the novel still holds out hope for romantic love. Even the worldly-wise Pilar, in her memories of Finito, reveals traces of a romantic, idealistic outlook on the world. Robert Jordan and Maria fall in love at first sight, and their love is grand and idealistic. Love endows Robert Jordan's life with new meaning and gives him new reasons to fight in the wake of the disillusionment he feels for the Republican cause. He believes in love despite the fact that other people--notably Karkov, who subscribes to the 'purely materialistic' philosophy fashionable with the Hotel Gaylord set--reject its existence. This new acceptance of ideal, romantic love is one of the most important ways in which Robert Jordan rejects abstract theories in favor of intuition and action over the course of the novel.

References:

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