

***For Whom the Bell Tolls* by Ernest Hemingway: A Study on Fighting for the Cause of Humanity**

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Abstract

There is no question that Ernest Hemingway was widely regarded as the best novelist of his time. Hemingway served as a representative of the entire generation that became aware of western European civilisation after the First World War in a broader sense. The victims of wartime violence are not the only ones who lose their innocence; the perpetrators also lose their innocence. After the massacre of the town Fascists, the ruffians in Pablo's hometown must confront their inner brutality. Lieutenant Berrendo must overcome his aversion to cutting heads off corpses, while Anselmo must overcome his aversion to killing humans. This paper aims to focus on fighting for the cause of humanity through Hemingway's characters.

Keywords: Humanity, fighting, wartime violence, victimization.

Introduction:

Hemingway received responses from academics at two important polar opposites. The majority of critics have praised his thematic structure, technical mastery, emotional intensity, and heroic code; nonetheless, a small number have categorised him as belonging to a little world of restrained style, violent setting, and mindless character. F. R. Leavis is right, when he says that in him there is "something positive American". (xi) With the acceptance of the great unknown of life, Hemingway, as Chaman Nahal observes, goes "a step further than Hawthorne, Poe and Melville." (27) Hemingway's literary world bears the deep suggestive power, archetype principle of human predicament and perfect symbolism. His artistic revolution in the problems and solutions of life is, no doubt, the panorama of American culture. Hemingway's concept of individual ethics in human predicament is connected to all his aptitudes and interest as seen in hunting, experiences of war, death and love. His most typical heroes are men whose lives are guided by a rigid inner discipline which also includes a sense of mankind and compromise. They are referred by some critics as "code heroes". His code hero reveals his nature and his inner discipline through 'grace under pressure' in a situation of danger, of high tension and moral dilemma. Robert Warren characterizes Hemingway as "essentially a lyric rather than a dramatic writer and for the lyric writer virtue depends upon intensity with which the personal vision is rendered". (8)

Hemingway can be called as a true American scientist of human issues. As a war correspondent he has real experiences of war and battlefield. His firsthand knowledge of war, says Sanderson, "affected not only his life, but also all that he was to write." (Qtd. Bakshi 6) He described war-torn generation through his heroes who are tough men. The spirit of sportsmanship enables them to face defeat and disaster with courage. His first novel, *The Sun Also Rises* reflects 'lost generation' through Jake Barnes. His *A Farewell to Arms* is a collaboration of two opposite aspects – Love and War. Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Cantwell in *Across the River and into the Trees* pass all the tests of human predicament. In facing the violent situation

over the sea, Hemingway establishes the separate identity of Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea*.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a superior masterpiece. The source of its title is a passage in the seventeenth *Devotion* of John Donne. Malcolm Cowley calls it as “the best of Hemingway’s novels”. (New Republic) *The New York Times* praised the book as “one of the major novels in American literature, the fullest and deepest and the truest.” (Cover page, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*) Hemingway has compressed the philosophy of the universe in the title of the novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* that the bell of death tolls for all mankind. He has borrowed the principle “No man is an island” from the master of Metaphysical School, John Donne. It is a deeper meditation of the poet over the pains of mankind and death. Hemingway has accepted the said principle of life and transfixed in the love story between Jordan and Maria in an adventure of Spanish war, Spanish peasant’s death and Spanish culture. In fact, the novel is not confused work as some critics believe. It deals with destiny of man. The war between Republicans and Fascists exemplify the struggle for transitory existentialism as well as loss of individual freedom in the world.

Hemingway introduces his characters in much realistic manner for using dramatic terminology. They are convincing, submissive as well men of action. They are- Robert Jordan and his heroine Maria, Jordan’s guide, an Anselmo, the guerrillas’ leader, Pablo and his wife, Pilar. Hemingway has demonstrated them as dramatic figures on the stage like Eliot’s and G. B. Shaw’s characters. The main dramatic action is performed by Jordan that is destroying the bridge. This duty of Jordan is highly usual as well as highly dangerous. The dangerous conflict between Jordan and Pablo turns at last in the death of Jordan, the international warrior in the form of American volunteer. He is not a classical hero like King Oedipus or Shakespeare’s Hamlet and Macbeth. He is a victim hero like Eliot’s Prufrock who is in hypertension of atom bomb world. Jordan is always in the complexities both in individual freedom as well as patterned society. A symbol of abstract universal brotherhood, he is in complete contrast with anarchist Pablo. He is a man of faith who has the feeling of solidarity with the Fascists as well as Republicans, with people known and unknown. While Anselmo’s faith protects him from his expose to the war, Pablo’s lack of faith breaks him completely. Between these two extremes of the naïve innocence of Anselmo and shattering awareness of Pablo stands Robert Jordan. He has both Anselmo’s essential humanity and also Pablo’s acute awareness. Jordan is aware like Pablo, of the hopeless situations of the bridge. Moreover, he has greater awareness than Pablo. His awareness does not break him like Pablo. He also remains as human as Anselmo, but he doesn’t have Anselmo-like irrational, blind faith in either religion or the Republic. Jordan holds a balance between the forces of Anarchy and blind sentimental commitment, between hopelessness and naïve hope and between awareness without commitment and commitment without awareness represented by Pablo and Anselmo. It permits him to function as the interstate or a compromised icon of American land. Anselmo’s and Pablo’s position is inadequate and even dangerous, while Jordan’s position of compromise acts as the focal point in the novel.

Jordan is associated with a small group of guerrillas, as opposed to a military bureaucracy built with strict discipline dominated by remote controls and impersonal voices. The guerrilla group grows well by loving and respecting each other like a family. It represents individual freedom and anatomy. This can be played at the risk of egoism like Pablo, or irresponsibly like Rafael. Robert Jordan recognizes all the complexity involved in both the personal freedom of guerrillas and the model society of military bureaucracy. He holds a highway between these two government groups.

His outlook on life is neither colored nor distorted. Despite disillusionment, Jordan accepts his duty to blow up the bridge and never betrays the better purpose of mankind. In the sense of this compromise and duty, there is Jordan's heroism. Therefore, he has always been a leader of some sort, an individual determined to carry out his mission, and has firmly set aside his private life for the benefit of society.

This novel is frequently seen as an anti-fascist book. For *Whom the Bell Tolls* introduces readers to Hemingway's wandering hero Nick Adams as Robert Jordan, who fulfilled his role as a warrior against the Fascists. Jordan has actively participated in the Spanish Civil War, but not because he is a Marxist; rather, he is ringing the bells of responsibility and post-war humanity. He cherishes inter-human cooperation. He is neither Oedipus the King or Hamlet, but he is a symbol of decency, love, and humanity. Surendra Singh Chandel rightly comments, "Jordan appears to recognize the tragic implications of the brutal and senseless slaughter of the Fascists – it was a time more for the explosion of irrational primitive violent emotions than a time to seek justice." (115) Jordan's love for Spanish culture, ethics and people is indicative of his love for humanity. He politely said, "There are no other countries like Spain" (82) He does mean, Spanish culture is apt to solve the problems of human sufferings in the universe, for it is a worldwide problem of human generation.

The fight between the Loyalists and the Fascists is the subject of this novel, and the Marxists support the cause of the Loyalists. The operation is being led by Russian General Golz, and the communists waged a losing battle before being routed by General Franco's troops. Jordan is a Republican volunteer from America who is motivated by the desire to vanquish foes. He perishes while carrying out his duty to blow off the bridge and stop the Fascist troops from marching across it. Jordan is dedicated to a few amorphous ideals of affirmations and victory. These words of Jordan are very significant:

You're not a real Marxist and you know it. You believe in Liberty, Equality and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness ... You have put many things in abeyance to win a war. If this war is lost all of those things are lost.(288)

At first, Jordan joins the Spanish war taking it a selfless profession of young doctors, priests and soldiers. With his growing knowledge of realities of war, his attitude towards life gets changed. Like Henry from *A Farewell to Arms*, Jordan too is wounded but unlike Henry, he does not lose hope in life, love, friendship and humanity. Jordan always maintains his faith in humanity and sacrifices his life for the welfare of mankind like Jesus Christ. Jordan does not appear essentially a practical man like Santiago but a lover of humanity compromising and amiable figure on the battlefield. Henry deserts Italian war without cause but Jordan does not like to desert Spanish war. He is ready to face the any problem, any hazard. He fights for saving democratic values of Spain. He represents higher stage of civilization beneficial for the survival of human generation. Jordan's cause of Republic is a religious stance for Anselmo, other important character in the novel. Like the Priest from *A Farewell to Arms*, Anselmo feels lonely but his faith fully encourages him for strength for understanding the plight of human life in war. He says, "I am lonely in the day When I am not working but when the dark comes it is a time of great loneliness.... I have worked well for the Republic." (191) Anselmo does not like violence, wounds, brutality, misery and pains. He imparts lesson of humanity to the world. Jordan bridges *Guru-Chela* relationship with Anselmo for understanding the meaning of life.

For Whom the Bell Tolls is an artistic failure of Hemingway like Shakespeare's Hamlet. Jordan has different confusions about his cause, faith, war,

and love like Hamlet. Hemingway fails to show psychological time like James Joyce but he has successfully shown Henry Bergson's motion of time and reality. According to E.M. Halliday, the novel aims "to show something true about human life (not necessarily something "constructive"); and he had come to take a more complex view of humanity at war than he projected in *A Farewell to Arms*". (Qtd. Homer 95) The hero, says D. K. Lal, may not be intellectual but he is "intelligent and brave". (59) Firstly, Jordan expresses his doubts about blowing up the bridge and never about his faith in the principle. Secondly, Jordan has various implications of his commitment to the human cause. Although Jordan's aim was merely blowing the bridge, later he turns at the track to feel for the plight of humanity. For the codes of human predicament Hemingway bridges a moral bond between Jordan and Maria who carry ideal relation like Adam and Eve. War represents the destructive forces whereas love represents the constructive ones. 'War' deals with death and 'love' deals with life. Jordan-Maria love affair is the subplot of the novel. Like Henry and Catherine from *A Farewell to Arms*, there is a biological trap between Jordan and Maria which leads at the mystic pattern of human life. Jordan does not believe in super natural power and his views towards problems of life are entirely cultured. There is a moral potentiality in this mystical affair because it is presented at times in Pillar's gypsy idiom. But Jordan rejects such gypsy stuff. He says,

The gypsy, he thought. He is truly worthless. He has no political development, nor

any discipline, and you could not rely on him for anything. But I need him for tomorrow. I have a use for him to-morrow. It's odd to see a gypsy in a war.

(262)

Jordan loves Maria deeply and he does not let his love interfere with his work that of the cause of human welfare in the war. Jordan also holds a balance between blind faith and crushing awareness between love and war. The hero seeks archetype principle of mankind through the unhappiness in war. He learns humanity in the inhumanity of war. It implies the concept of human solidarity and the participation of every individual in the cause of humanity.

Conclusion:

To sum up, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may be considered an intellectual revolution. Jordan fights in battles not as a Marxist but as a champion of democracy and humanity in the face of fascist atrocities. He steadfastly set aside his own affairs in order to advance society. Jordan does this in an effort to connect with timeless tragic heroes like Hamlet and Macbeth. The romance between Jordan and Maria serves as a transitional scene in the book. He puts aside his own affections in favour of societal progress. Jordan sees cruelty, disorder, and turmoil everywhere; as a result, he thinks about living, loving, and staying on the battlefield. His mission is to defeat evil powers and instil morality and love throughout the earth. From time to time, readers fail to understand the different shades of Hemingway's possible meanings. Hemingway Hero Robert Jordan is a relatively strong, uncompromising icon of the American country. Sometimes he thinks his plan to blow up the bridge is not only hopeless, but even his love for Maria is nonsense. He works like a man who believes in the correctness of the cause of the republic and the ideology in which he lives. In fact, he is not very interested in war, but he compromises on the situation of war because of the quality of his keen attitude towards life and his greater interest in humanity. He risks and eventually devotes his life to the Loyalist cause, even after losing political ties. He rings the bell of mankind for all the citizens of the world in the land of Spain. He confronted fascist tyranny in a bold way on the human

platform, not as a Marxist, but as a believer in freedom, equality, and friendship. He expressed his love and sympathy for his fascist friends. After ringing the bell of freedom, equality and friendship, Jordan dies. He is most often seen doing things and defending the cause of mankind.

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