

ANALYSIS

For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940)

Ernest Hemingway

(1899-1961)

“Ernest Hemingway lived in Cuba until Castro’s revolution. But the novel he published in 1940, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, was a symbolic return to society after a spiritual exile that had begun for him in 1918, with the wound he received in Italy.”

Malcolm Cowley

Exile’s Return: A Literary Odyssey of the 1920s
(1934; Viking/Compass 1956, 13th printing 1971) 292

“In many quarters, *Bell* was considered ‘great’ (*Time*, Oct. 21, 1940); a ‘smash success’ (*PW*, Nov. 2, 1940). The leftist [Communist] Alvah Bessie protested on the grounds that Hemingway still did not show an understanding of the common man: ‘For all his groping, the author of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has yet to integrate his individual sensitivity of every living human being’ (*New Masses*, Nov. 5, 1940). Many critics without a political axe to grind thought *Bell* his best book (see Howard Mumford Jones, *SRL*, Oct. 26, 1940). Carlos Baker began his writing on Hemingway in July 1940 with a general interpretation of his critical reputation (*Delphian Quarterly*) and a defense of his complexity....

Hemingway [was] accused of being a mere ‘spectator’ of the Spanish scene. But, as might have been expected, Maxwell Geismar approved of the new Hemingway: *Bell* marked ‘a major reorientation in his thinking’ (*VQR*, Autumn 1941). W. H. Mellers (*Scrutiny*, June 1941) also offered a qualified approval: Hemingway had ‘come back’ after several failures. Eleanor M. Sickels was pleased to note that Hemingway’s vision is ‘nearer the classic attitude of Sophocles, to ‘see life steadily and see it whole.’ *Bell* was to her a ‘reaffirmation of the value of the individual in an age of collectivism’ (*CE*, Oct. 1941). Hemingway’s contemporary among novelists, Sinclair Lewis, wrote, in an introduction to a special edition of *Bell* (Princeton, N.J., 1942), that ‘here was a crystallization of the world revolution that began long ago...and that will not cease till the human world has either been civilized or destroyed.’ Edward Fenimore (*ELH*, March 1943) called it ‘an epic of our time’... Robert Penn Warren (*Horizon*, Apr. 1947)...said that ‘the shadow of ruin is behind the typical Hemingway situation. The typical character faces defeat or death.’ The discipline of the code ‘makes men human.’ The code was variously defined, as a way of improvisation, of grace under pressure, of a laconic acceptance of fate. Warren put Hemingway’s characters into a secular world, ‘the God-abandoned world, the world of Nature-as-all.’ He ascribes much of Hemingway’s success to the triumph of technique over *nada*, and made him out to be, all but unconsciously, a spokesman of our time.

Three types of disposition toward Hemingway now took over: the tendency to ‘sum him up,’ as though *Bell* were a culmination; the special study, of style, language, heroic pattern, mythic patterns, etc.; the expectation of something more revealing than *Bell* and at least as stimulating as it.”

Frederick J. Hoffman

“Ernest Hemingway” [1940-47]

Sixteen Modern American Authors: A Survey of Research and Criticism
(Duke 1969; Norton 1973) 379-81

“*For Whom the Bell Tolls* was published in 1940 and was given more praise than any previous work, even that accorded *A Farewell to Arms*. Some critics, dwelling sadly on the non-fictional works preceding *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, spoke of the novel as though Hemingway had risen from the literary dead and dying. In general the critics stressed the same things: the characterization, particularly that of Pilar, the woman guerilla leader; the style; the love story; Pilar’s account of a massacre; and, probably most important, Hemingway’s social theme. Critics who considered characterization complimented Hemingway.

They were tremendously impressed by Pilar but gave relatively little attention to the major figurer, Robert Jordan. The style, of course, presented a unique challenge to critics because of the use of Spanish terms and because Spanish was, presumably, spoken throughout the novel. But, while they were quick to respond to the complexity of the style, critics did not investigate it. Therefore, however complimentary the remarks were, they were also rather evasive.

Critical consideration on Pilar's recounting of the massacre in her native village was reminiscent of the emphasis on the retreat at Caporetto in *A Farewell to Arms*. Only Howard Mumford Jones was offended by it, concluding that it could have been left out without loss. The love story was another matter. It was probably inevitable that it would be compared to that in *Farewell*, but it was not generally cheered and comments on it ranged from sardonic rejection to almost ecstatic acceptance.

The social theme was of great concern. Critics had regarded *To Have and Have Not* as a social involvement but not as an artistically acceptable work. Now the critics had another social involvement and an artistically acceptable work. Two vital questions concerned them: (1) Had Hemingway in creating a major character whose efforts were on the side of the Communists gone over to the left? (2) What was the precise nature of the social theme, particularly in relation to previous works? The critics did not find Hemingway guilty of being a Communist and to support this conclusion they pointed out that he had presented the Communists as well as the Fascists as brutal and corrupt. They also indicated that Robert Jordan had chosen to fight on the Communist side only because it was the most likely force to save Spain, the primary purpose of his dedication to the cause. But, more significantly, the critics were convinced that there was in the theme a universality which transcended the time, place, and circumstance of the Spanish Civil War. Edmund Wilson's review was the most emphatic statement of this position.

Wilson observed that the main action of the novel, the blowing up of the bridge, is 'aimed to reflect the whole course of the Spanish War, to show the tangle of elements that were engaged in this, and to exhibit the events in a larger perspective than that of the emergency of the moment.' Though he judged Hemingway's social analysis to be less acute than that of Malraux, he felt that he provided a 'criticism of moral qualities' often lacking in the novels of Malraux. Hemingway, he argued, is concerned with the 'kind of people people are rather than their social-economic relations...' In this way Hemingway not only offers a 'conception of the Spanish character' which underlies the social types but, Wilson asserted in his strongest statement on the universality of the theme, shows us 'the Spanish conflict in its essential and primitive aspects of groups imperfectly equipped and more or less groping human beings maneuvering over the face of the earth'."

Frank L. Ryan

The Immediate Critical Reception of Ernest Hemingway [1940-41]
(U Press of America 1980) 29-31

"The title is derived from a sermon by Donne: 'No man is an *island*, entire of it self; every man is a piece of the *Continent*... And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; it tolls for *thee*.' Robert Jordan, an American, has entered the Loyalist army during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, and has been sent to join a guerilla band in the mountains near Segovia to blow up a strategic bridge at the exact minute that will help a Loyalist advance. During the three days and nights that he spends in the guerilla's cave, he awaits with a romantic opposition to heroism what he suspects will be his own destruction and that of his companions. He falls in love with Maria, daughter of a Republican mayor, who has seen her parents killed and was herself raped by Falangists. Her close-cropped hair is a symbol of her tortures; Jordan helps her to regain her desire to live.

Their passionate love is abetted by the powerful woman Pilar, who dominates the group by her force of character, gusto, and love of the Republic. Her man Pablo is wily but lacks belief and hence courage. The others include foul-mouthed Augustin; pedantic, dignified Fernando; the gypsy Rafael; and the adoring Andres. A sense of the impending disaster develops, with smoldering opposition within the group, a Falangist attack on the guerilla leader El Sordo on a neighboring hill, acts of cowardice by Pablo, and a mission by Andres to Loyalist headquarters to carry a note from Jordan saying the advance is likely to fail, with the messenger impeded by the Communists' bureaucracy and suspicion. The generals finally realize they should have cancelled the attack, but it is too late. Leaving the retreat, Jordan successfully blasts the

bridge. In the attempt to flee he is wounded, and forces the others to leave him. He lies on the hillside almost delirious, restraining himself from suicide so that he may shoot the leader of the Fascists, and thinks, 'I have fought for what I believed in for a year now. If we win here we will win everywhere.'

James D. Hart
The Oxford Companion to American Literature, 5th edition
(Oxford 1941-83) 255

"This, the most 'successful' of Hemingway's novels, takes its title from Donne (the Random House edition of whose work is said to have been sold out after it appeared!).... Robert Jordan is no conscript; neither has he, like Hemingway's earlier heroes, stumbled into war or embraced it in the spirit of adventure. He is here in Spain because he believes that the battle for human freedom is going to be lost or won in this peninsula, and he wishes to be counted against the dragons and with the gods. Whether he is right or wrong in his judgment, and whether one accepts or rejects the political implications which are currently being read into Donne's statement, the irresponsibility of *The Sun Also Rises* is clearly gone. And this time the spire of meaning does unmistakably raise itself out of the fable."

Edward Wagenknecht
*Cavalcade of the American Novel:
From the Birth of the Nation to the Middle of the Twentieth Century*
(Holt 1952) 377-78

"*For Whom the Bell Tolls* offers many examples of the author's determination to maintain that balance without which art may degenerate into propaganda. One of the most conspicuous is Pilar's account of the massacre of the leading citizens of a town near Avila by Pablo and his mob. Pilar has the artist's observational and almost clinical interest in how each of the fascists will die. Deeper than this interest runs her sense of the humanity of the killed and the strange furious mixture of bestiality and humanity among the killers. She watches the spectacle with a cold fascination. But her humanity is revealed in the sick disgust which assails her from time to time, as it troubles some of the individuals in the mob itself. One finds explicit recognition of how far out of the line of right human action this mob-murder is. But there is also a strong implicit suggestion of the criminal neglect, the inhuman apathy which has allowed the social situation in the villages of Spain to deteriorate so far that such mob action is now the sole recourse of the underdogs. After the massacre, says Pilar, 'I went back inside the room and I sat there and I did not wish to think, for that was the worst day of my life until one other day.' The 'other day' was the day of reckoning. It came seventy-two hours later when Fascists took the town.

Pilar has led a hard life and is as tough as an old eagle. Yet the heart still beats for humankind even when the head coldly admits the need for violent activity against the enemy. Pilar's sentiments find many echoes among the more sympathetic characters of the novel. When they are put together, they show clearly that, unlike Picasso's 'Guernica,' *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is not a study in black and white. It is a study of the betrayal of the Spanish people—both by what lay within them and what had been thrust upon them—and it is presented with that special combination of sympathetic involvement and hard-headed detachment which is the mark of the genuine artist. One could not rightly call the novel bipartisan. Yet it is partisan in a larger way than the modern use of the term ordinarily suggests. Its partisanship is in the cause of humanity....

Hemingway's grasp of the motivations which strengthened and united, but also split, the extreme leftists is well illustrated in Jordan's contrast between the two communisms of Madrid. One was symbolized in Velasquez 63, the palace which served as headquarters for the International Brigades. Here was the almost puritanical, religious-crusader's side of party feeling. It gave its adherents something like 'the feeling you expected to have and did not have when you made your first communion.... It gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it.' The religious reference emphasizes how far this secular substitute for religion—a substitute with its own propaganda-built hagiology and its own liturgy—had been able to go in capturing the devotions of foreign idealists.

Six months of the fighting effectively dissipated such devotions for any who kept their eyes and ears open. The idealist involved was shortly aware of the other symbol—the hotel called Gaylord's where the Russian directors of the Republican movement had congregated. Gaylord's symbolized the cold, practical, hard-headed, cynical ruthlessness of the Comintern mind, completely unsentimental and in no way deceived by the propaganda which it daily originated and disseminated. A part of the struggle in Spain lay in the attempt of the idealist to keep his devoutness whole in the face of the actualistic education he got at Gaylord's.

Another of the tensions at work under the surface of Spain's tragedy is dramatized through the boy Joaquin, one of the republican partisans on El Sordo's chancre-like hilltop. This is the conflict between the Catholic faith and the secular pseudo-religion of the communists. At eighteen, Joaquin is just old enough in 1937 to have been raised under the wing of the Church, and just young enough to have suffered irreparably when the fascists shot his parents in Valladolid. Joaquin is imbued now with the party doctrine. He especially reverences La Pasionaria, the secularist Joan of Arc in Marxist Spain.

While El Sordo's men prepare their hilltop position, Joaquin admiringly quotes La Pasionaria's slogan: *Resister y fortificar*—to hold out and to fortify is to win. The boy is obliged to endure some good-natured raillery from those of his companions to whom such propagandist watchwords are a dirty joke. Yet through the early stages of the fight on the hilltop La Pasionaria sustains him well. Then the planes come. Joaquin has not considered the vulnerability of even Pasionaria-built fortifications to attack from the air. While the drone of the fascist bombers grows in intensity, Joaquin, heavy with dread, begins to invoke La Pasionaria once again. This time her words stick in his dry throat.... When the explosions of the fascist bombs roll under the boy at the very moment of his losing consciousness, he is still repeating the petitional phrase, 'Now and at the hour of our death.' La Pasionaria is for other times.... La Pasionaria is for bringing passionately inspired news of Marxist victories. She is the occasion for a fine travesty on sentimental propagandists like the *Izvestia* [Russian news] correspondent at Gaylord's hotel....

In the welter of opposed hatreds and in the company of sentimental mystics, the artist must keep his human and moral values unimpaired. Of the native Spaniards in the book, none better exemplifies the right human norm than Antonio, Jordan's sixty-eight-year-old guide and friend. Other members of Pablo's band show the range of political and moral attitudes across the popular front. At one extreme is the blood-thirst of Pablo, not unlike that of the moonfaced Cuban revolutionist in *To Have and Have Not*. Near him, though at a higher level, stands the brave, relentless, fanatical hater, Agustin, who fiercely says that he would like to swim ten leagues in a broth made from the *cojones* of all the fascists. At the opposite extreme stands, or rather lolls, the irresponsible paganism of the gypsy Rafael. But Anselmo willingly endures discomfort out of loyalty to Jordan's trust, as Rafael would obviously never do. And unlike Pablo or Agustin, Anselmo, with the wisdom of his years, still hates killing even while he admits that it is necessary. Anselmo's important function is to serve as a yardstick of human values, as Kent does in *King Lear*.... The Republic must win and Anselmo will fight for the Republic. Yet much that he must do cuts cruelly across the absolute Christian grain of this admirable old man. With Anselmo as a norm, the tragedy of Spain shows all the darker.

Like Anselmo, Robert Jordan is capable of working for a cause without allowing its heretical errors to eat their way like acid into his deeper convictions. Knowing the inside of both Velasquez 63 and the hotel called Gaylord's, Jordan can qualify as the educated man who is in no way 'sucked in.' Working efficiently as a dynamiter with the Republican guerillas, loving Spain, hating fascism, sympathizing with the people who have been and are being betrayed, Jordan still manages to be temperate without being at all tepid. His brain is neither dominated nor deceived by the propagandistic. He remains the free man, the man not taken in, the man doing the necessary job but also making the necessary mental reservations.

Jordan's soliloquy—as he listens from below to the hilltop battle in which El Sordo's partisans die—is a key passage in this connection. He reflects that he is in love with Maria, even though 'there isn't supposed to be any such thing as love in a purely materialistic conception of society.' Then he catches himself. Since when did he really entertain any such conception? 'Never. And you never could have. You're not a real Marxist and you know it. You believe in Liberty'... Robert Jordan is with, but not of, the communists. For the duration of the war he is under communist discipline because they offer 'the best discipline and the

soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the [Spanish] war.' This is simple common sense, just as (though Robert Jordan did not live to see it) it was probably common sense for the Allies to fight side by side with the Russians in the second World War—in order to win it. But where the communist dialectic runs contrary to the older dialectics of the French and the American Revolutions, Jordan will remain as an essential nonconformist, a free man not taken in, though doing his part in the perennial attempts which free men must make if the concept of freedom is to last.

The structural form of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has been conceived with care and executed with the utmost brilliance. The form is that of a series of concentric circles with the all-important bridge in the middle. The great concentration which Hemingway achieves is partly dependent on his skill in keeping attention focussed on the bridge while projecting the reader imaginatively far beyond that center of operations. Chapter One immediately establishes the vital strategic importance of the bridge in the coming action. Frequent allusions to the bridge keep it in view through the second chapter, and in Chapter Three Jordan goes with Anselmo to make a preliminary inspection. From that time onwards until its climactic destruction, the bridge continues to stand unforgettably as the focal point in the middle of an ever widening series of circles.

The brilliance of execution becomes apparent when the reader stands in imagination on the flooring of the bridge and looks in any direction.... Since the battle strategy which requires the bridge to be destroyed is early made available to the reader, he has no difficulty in seeing its relation to the next circle outside, where a republican division under General Golz prepares for an attack. The general's attack, in turn, is enough to suggest the outlines of the whole civil war, while the Heinkel bombers and Fiat pursuit planes which cut across the circle—foreign shadows over the Spanish earth—extend our grasp of one more circle outwards to the trans-European aspect of the struggle. The outermost ring of the circle is nothing less than the great globe itself. Once the Spanish holding operation is over—such is the structural achievement of this novel—becomes the hub on which the 'future of the human race can turn.' Wherever the reader moves along the circumferences of the various circles, all radial roads lead to and from this bridge....

One civil war easily suggests another, as in Jordan's memories of his grandfather who bore arms in America's war of the rebellion. Behind that, in the long perspective, is the bridge where the republican (and anti-monarchist) 'peasants' of Concord fired the shot heard round the world. On a bridge across the Tiber young Horatius delayed briefly the advance of a superior force. Still further back is the action of Leonidas against the Persian host at the hot gates of Themopylae.... [This] bridge is at the center of the history of holding actions; and although his problem is small in scale, it is so conceived and projected as to suggest a struggle of epic dimensions.

As a prose epic of the Spanish people, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*...is a living example of how, in modern times, the epic quality must probably be projected. The failure of certain modern practitioners of the epic manner rests perhaps primarily upon ignorance of the uses of synecdoche, the device by which a part can be made to function for the whole, and the fact to gain an emblematic power without the loss of its native particularity. Hemingway's war novel, rich as it is in symbolic extensions, is somewhere near a synecdochist's triumph.

What elements of the epic manner may be successfully adapted to modern needs? Despite the obvious gap between Spain and Ilium, the student of the epic may find part of his answer in considering the Homeric parallel. A primitive setting, simple food and wine, the care and use of weapons, the sense of imminent danger, the emphasis on masculine prowess, the presence of varying degrees of courage and cowardice, the rude barbarism on both sides, the operation of certain religious and magical superstitions, the warrior codes—these, surely, are common ties between the two sets of protagonists. Jordan is not to be scorned as the type of Achilles, and one can recognize in Pablo the rude outlines of a debased and sulking Ajax. Pilar the gypsy, though she reads the lifeline in Jordan's palm instead of consulting the shape and color of animal entrails, makes the consciousness of the supernatural an operative factor.... Hemingway developed a language suitable to his epic purposes. The masculine vigor in the march of the narrative comes about, not alone from the author's skill in the unfolding of events but also through his responsiveness to language values....

The will to report has given place to the willingness to invent, though the values of the will to report have not been sacrificed in the process. There were formerly only limited vistas back through time. Now the full panoply of time past is at work in time present. This mode of operation is likewise habitual to the epic genre. If *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a kind of epic, it is above all a tragic epic. Like the *Iliad*, it may be seen as a study in doom. Madrid, like Troy, was fated to fall. Seventeen months of hindsight on the Spanish war helped to mature in Hemingway a feeling that the republican defeat had been virtually inevitable. 'The Spanish civil war was really lost, of course [he wrote in 1940] when the Fascists took Irun in the late summer of 1936. But in a war you can never admit, even to yourself, that it is lost. Because when you admit it is lost you are beaten'....

The struggle could not seem to be hopeless. Yet, as a study in doom, the novel must early isolate and dramatize those adverse powers and power-failures which would ultimately combine to defeat the Spanish republic. Robert Jordan's first sight of Pablo gives him an insight into the nature of one power-failure. No republican, at the beginning of the movement, was more in command of himself or the situation than Pablo. Now the guerilla leader is so far gone in defeatist 'sadness' and moral cowardice as almost to doom in advance any undertaking in which he is to play a part.... Pablo is a specific Judas, as his stealing of the detonator will later show. But he is also a recognizable symbol for the general canker of defeatism, gnawing the tissues of republican morale from within, and leading to the larger betrayal.

A second internal danger is the inefficiency of the Republican bureaucracy. A third is an aspect of the Spanish temperament. One gets the impression that a radical inefficiency stretches all the way from the higher echelons in Madrid down to the gypsy Rafael, who is so irresponsible that he runs off to shoot rabbits when he should be standing guard near Pablo's cave. The Russian General Golz, only half-believing that his attack will not be doomed to failure before it even starts, points up the larger difficulties.... Tangled in red tape like Laocoon in serpents, Golz is not free enough to prosecute a war successfully. The Rafaels of the republican side are too free, and too irresponsible. Bureaucracy and temperament, two more internal foes of the republic, help to fix the doom.

But the most awesome symbol of doom is the air-power of the foreign enemy. All the Spaniards hate it, as they hate the foreigners for interfering in their civil war. When the fascist planes roar over the mountain hide-out, it is always in threes, like the weird sisters, or in those multiples of three with which practitioners of black magic used to conjure... They have the shape but not the motion of sharks.... It is by three such planes that El Sordo's band will be wiped out at three o'clock of the following Monday afternoon...linking of the modern bombers with the ancient magic-symbol number three greatly enhances the emotional effectiveness of the plane passage. The old epics and the great dramatic tragedies could employ supernatural agents in the full expectation that they would intensify the emotions of pity and terror in the spectator. The rise of Naturalism, and the partial decay of superstition, denied the tragic artist direct access to one of his most evocative instruments. Yet within the shadowy subconscious, the perennial human capacity for fear and awe remained to be touched by any artist who could empower new symbols with old terrors.

The book touches the edge of the supernatural also by a considered use of premonitions. The primary human agent is the gypsy Pilar, who is both a woman and a kind of witch, though a witch very naturalistically portrayed and very womanly in her witchhood. Her function in part is to sharpen the reader's foreboding and thus to deepen his sense of impending tragedy. Having watched Pablo's degeneration through fear, she is both too wise and too fond of Jordan to reveal that she has seen his coming death in the lines of his hand. (Like the Circean 'witch' of *The Sun Also Rises*, she is a good judge of quality.) But the reader's knowledge of Jordan's coming death gives special point to the passage in which Pilar describes, with naturalistic precision, the three blended odors of the smell of death to come.

The woman-witch dialectic is marked often in the book. In this instance, the woman withholds what the witch has gloomily discovered. Her certainty that Jordan will die has motivated her in bringing the lovers together. This is done both for the therapeutic effect of a healthy love affair on Maria, and in order to give Jordan, through Maria, as much of life as three days will hold. This, one might guess, is the tender side of Pilar. But in the passage on the smell of death to come, she adopts the very tone which will arouse Jordan's doubts as to the truth of what she is saying. He doubts and he argues, and the doubting arguments divert

his thoughts at least from the probability, if not from the possibility, of death. The rough railing humor of her presentation is meant to save him from a fear which might undo his resolution, or, at any rate, spoil the closing hours of his short, happy life....

A marked 'capacity for life,' a full acceptance and love of the world, is always a driving motive with the Hemingway hero. It grows even stronger as one moves with Hemingway's work through the nineteen-thirties.... Jordan's predicament is something like that of the torero who knows that he may be killed but despises death and enters the ring in spite of the possibility. The knowledge, derived through Pilar, that Jordan not only may but will die gives every incident in Jordan's seventy-hour span of life the special poignancy that would be felt by a spectator who knew in advance that he was watching the last fight of a torero. Through this double perspective, Hemingway gets into his novel the very 'feeling of life and death' which he was seeking when he first went to watch the Spanish bullfights.

But the idea that a sane consciousness of death will give added depth and meaning to the events of life is only one of the familiar Hemingway themes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Sparing but effective use is also made of the men-without-women, the father-and-son, and the home-versus-war themes.... Jordan, for example, shows a kind of spiritual relationship to Pilar in that he can be, by turns, both tender and tough-minded.... He cannot often expand warmly; as soldier he must contract coldly within himself.... It is not now a liking for hardy masculine comradeship in hunting or fishing or skiing which motivates the Hemingway hero, but a preoccupation with the work a man must do, where women have no place and may even be in the way... At the end of the book... He is the republican soldier coolly drawing a bead on the fascist Lieutenant Berrendo, and the husband covering his wife's escape.

The closing scene also rounds off the father-and-son theme which has been introduced in Jordan's soliloquies at various earlier times. Jordan's grandfather fought bravely and successfully in the American Civil War. His father, like the father of Nick Adams, died by his own hand. Jordan has long since forgiven his father for the act, but he is still as ashamed of it as he is proud of his grandfather's soldierly bravery. Now, at the end of the line, as Jordan lies nearly fainting under the ballooning pain from his fractured leg, the father-grandfather opposition once more commands his mind. Suicide would be permissible under the circumstances. But the memory of his grandfather, his true spiritual ancestor, helps him to hold onto his courage and to die in combat.

The significance of Maria, when she is seen in the light of such other heroines as Catherine Barkley, Marie Morgan, and even Dorothy Bridges, is finally symbolic...she comes to stand as the image of 'home.' Most of Hemingway's women tend to take on this special symbolic meaning.... Catherine Barkley and Marie Morgan, though in different ways, represent normal domesticity vanquished by war and by the economic struggle for survival. Similarly, Maria stands for the normal in the midst of terrible abnormality. She has been subjected to all sorts of outrages by her fascist captors. The rape is an act of supreme brutality; only the true tenderness of Jordan, as Pilar well knows, can erase the psychological scars the fascists have left. The cutting of Maria's hair is a symbol of her loss of normal womanhood or girlhood, just as its growing-out indicates her gradual return to balance and health....

One might argue, of course, that the normal male-female situation in Hemingway is something like what took place in the Garden of Eden just after the eating of the fruit of the tree, but before the malediction. All these Eves are as pleurably ductile as the Adams are hirsute and sexually vigorous. Like all travesties, such a characterization would have its element of truth. But it would tend to ignore the real tenderness with which the 'good women' in Hemingway are treated. The fate of the heroines is that they are almost never at home; their virtue is that the best of them carry the home-image with them wherever they go.

A fourth well-tried theme handsomely adapted to the uses of the Spanish tragedy is that of *nada*, or nothingness militant. By placing the action among the high slopes of the Sierra de Guadarramas, a clean, well-lighted place where the weather is cold and the air clear, Hemingway has achieved a kind of idyll in the midst of war, an island...surrounded by the sinister. It is there that Maria, raped and probably infected by fascist soldiery, is restored to health and sanity. This is a mountain fastness like Burguete in *The Sun Also Rises*, or like the priest's homeland of Abruzzi in *A Farewell to Arms*, or like the Alpine sanctuary to which Frederick and Catherine retire for their short happy life together. One sees again the lowland-versus-

highland image; on the plain before Madrid the fascists are deployed, but here are high slopes, concealment, and something like the good life, a veritable island in the midst of nada. Still, in the words of Donne's devotion, 'no man is an island.' In this savage war, no mountain can serve as a permanent sanctuary. El Sordo, on his high hilltop position, finds no good life. Fascist cavalry surround it, and three fascist planes destroy it from above. Similarly, when the bridge is blown, Pablo's mountain cave becomes untenable as a refuge. The partisans plan to retreat across the war-swept lowlands to another mountain fastness in the Sierra de Gredos. But the planes of the enemy, in sinister 'threes and threes and threes,' can presumably come there, too....

Hemingway's sense of fascism's betrayal of the Spanish people has in fact much of the nightmare quality of Picasso's allegorical painting. The mountain-sanctuary, an essentially private symbol in Hemingway's earlier books, is now shown to be open to invasion and destruction by fascist bombers, which the artist carefully establishes as symbols of the power of evil.... The 'Guernica' of 1937, occasioned by the bombing of an open Spanish city by foreign planes, regrouped the symbols of the bull and the horse and broke the calm human figures of the *Minotauromachy* into fragments of anguish and fear.... The horse, transfixed by a spear which has fallen from above, is however for Picasso a specific symbol for the Spanish people. In somewhat the same way, the destruction of El Sordo's band on the hilltop, like the roar of Heinkel bombers above Jordan's high sanctuary, suggests the horror of brutality and darkness unleashed against a betrayed people....

In the deeper meaning of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the invasion of the high sanctuary *from above* marks a transition in the affairs of the artist. Unless the force is stopped, it can mean the death of art as it can mean the death of everything else the artist values and needs. Fascism has become militant, imperialistic, and international. The artist, devoted though he must be to the development of his art, can no more ignore it than he could ignore a storm blowing in at his study window and scattering the pages of his work in progress....

The central organizing image of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is also geometrical. We have, of course, in the chief characters, a series of smaller rounds disposed at equal distances about the central object or situation. But beyond these, and spreading out to the edge of the world, we have a whole series of concentric circles. The human relations of the war in Spain 'stop nowhere'—any more than the tragic implications of the art of the bullfight stay confined within the two hours' traffic of a particular afternoon. In fact Hemingway's novel follows an architectural plan comparable to that of a Spanish bullring, which is constructed in a series of concentric circles, so arranged that from any point one can watch the action taking place at the center....

Before the war began, Pablo worked around bullrings. The boy Joaquin planned a career as torero. And by her own boast, Pilar lived for 'nine years with three of the worst-paid matadors' in the business. One of the most striking and memorable parts of the novel is organized in terms of a pictorial metaphor of the bullfight. This is Pilar's account of the murder of the fascists in the village square at the hands of Pablo's lynch-mob. The natural resemblance between the square and an arena has been furthered by piling carts before the several street-entrances to the square. This is the usual custom in preparation for a *capea*, or amateur bull-baiting show, at the time of a fiesta....

Pilar's feeling is itself a fitting symbol for the reaction of many a reluctant observer to the tragedy of the Spanish war, the international bullfight with a poorly armed matador arrayed against the 'brutality and darkness' of Pan-European fascism. If one at this instant remembers 'Guernica,' he sees that the artists Picasso and Hemingway, drawn as by a magnetic attraction to the pictorial imagery of the bullfight, move along lines precisely parallel. The major difference is that Hemingway, working with a different and more extendable medium, can take care to paint both sides of the picture. He has...an opportunity to draw more circles, more wheels of fire....

In the quiet of his last Sunday evening inside the cave of Pablo, while Jordan draws his circles and makes his mathematical computations for the dynamiting of the bridge, the simile of a wheel comes into his mind. 'It is like a merry-go-round, Robert Jordan thought'....the temporal merry-go-round and the wheel of fortune.... It is a vast wheel, set at an angle, and each time it goes around and then is back to where it starts....nothing is settled.' Call it the wheel of human conflict. For Jordan, as for all men, the turn of the

wheel shows tragic implications. When it has completed its revolution, the rider is back where he started, as on the little wheel of Jordan's relations with Pablo. He has been twice now on *that* wheel, 'and twice it has gone around and come back to where it started.' Jordan wants no more rides with Pablo, though he will have them before his day is done. In the giant clockwork of human relations, the turning wheels may be as small as the arguments with Pablo, or as vast as the elliptical rise and fall in the action of a year of war. In either of these instances, in three days or three years, you come back to where you began—and nothing is settled.' This is the wheel-like turn of Spain's tragedy, indeed, that after all the agony and all the blood, nothing should be settled, and that Spain should be back where it began, in a medieval situation."

Carlos Baker
Hemingway: The Writer as Artist
(Princeton 1952, 1973) 240-63

"It is hardly any distance at all from 'a man alone ain't got no...chance' [*To Have and Have Not*, 1937] to 'No man is an *Island*, entire of it self....' These words from Donne which supply a title for...*For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), signified at the start that Hemingway and the hero, now named Robert Jordan, had not gone back on anything. However, Jordan has by now thought more about politics...and he has come to a kind of position. The American college instructor, in Spain as a Loyalist guerilla, is—he makes clear—not a communist.... But his position is always a fluctuating one, and when Pilar asked if he has her great religious faith in the Republic he answers, "Yes..." hoping it was true.'

When he himself inquires into his politics he is at time able to reply that he has none.... At other times he is 'realistic,' 'cynical,' or 'superficial'—according to one's own politics—about the possibilities of socialism. Mark Twain once said—using a saw that must have been already dull—'I know too much about human nature' to believe in a cooperative society. Jordan has a very similar comment: 'If you had three together, two would unite against one, and then the two would start to betray each other.' It is easy to see why American communists were confused about the novel, which was thoroughly denounced in the *Masses* and in the *Daily Worker*, and prominently displayed in Party bookshops in New York. However, despite Jordan's doubts, and the confusion in the Party line, the final impression of the book is one of at least tentative affirmation—affirmation of a just cause, and of the goodness of life....

To Jordan there is nothing black and white about his enemies and his friends; as in life, there are shades of gray. The most barbaric atrocity in the novel is perpetrated by his friends, the Republicans—an important irony which looms so large that it alone would protect the book against the charge that it had falsified the complexity of the problems by stacking the moral cards. But it is not alone. Indeed the things Jordan learns in this war are, he realizes, 'not so simple' in general. Through hard, old Pilar he has become aware of odd and mystifying things about sex and fate; from others he has learned, the hard way, the difficulty of subscribing to any cause, which will invariably pervert in practice its original aims.

The trouble is, instead, that readers have regretfully found that the bitterness and cynicism of *A Farewell to Arms* ring somehow truer than Jordan's expressions of faith and belief, which he *hopes* are true. The man seems to be forcing himself, to be forcing something that does not come naturally and is thus not wholly his own. And he must apologize for it: his belief is 'true no matter how trite it sounded,' he tells himself, and this is surely an obscure kind of admission that even he senses that something is wrong. Hemingway seems involved here in a difficulty he had referred to years before, the difficulty of 'knowing what you really felt, rather than what you were supposed to feel, and had been taught to feel.' This difficulty is an appalling one, actually, and it is Hemingway's inability to surmount it completely, and thus convince his readers of the full and untentative sincerity of the hero's ideals, that primarily keeps this novel from greatness.

But it is a very good novel which displays the gifts that Hemingway at his best always had. Not even *The Sun Also Rises* evokes more richly the life of the senses, or is thicker with an awareness of them, or gives a closer feeling of the presence of a solid physical world in which the action takes place. And this action is plotted as surely and skillfully as ever, the minor events growing directly out of deeply understood characters, and the final tragedy wholly prepared for. The secondary characters are as real as ever. Pilar and Pablo, a supporting heroine and an off-and-on villain, respectively, are most fully developed, but equally impressive are the other Spaniards—Anselmo, Augustin, Primitivo, and a wonderful, worthless

gypsy. Their conversation, written down in translated Spanish as the ear of an American would hear it (a device practiced occasionally with French in *The Sun Also Rises* and with Italian in *A Farewell to Arms*) is a triumph. The speech gives the full taste of the original, is both enormously expressive and extraordinarily precise, and is all the while entertaining. The substitution of the word 'obscenity' for the incessant Spanish obscenities is not a completely successful circumvention, but on the whole the dialogue is witty—or even, at times, hilarious—and would alone make the book a joy to read.

In other ways this novel is different from, say, *A Farewell to Arms*. The prose, for instance, is more graceful, and less tense; there is almost no use of understatement, now deprecated by Jordan as an 'English pose,' the obverse of the Latin's 'bravado.' The chief differences, however, between this book and the rest of Hemingway's novels result from the fact that here the author has shortened the time span of the action to a few packed days while at the same time greatly lengthening the treatment of them. The book cannot have, then, the quick clean brilliance of some of his other work. And though one is unwilling to say that in going slower than before Hemingway has also gone deeper, it can be said that he does give a solid and much broader view of things, and that his characterizations are on the whole less spectacular but more substantial—all as befits the more leisurely pace. This is the most underrated of his books....

One might guess...that what the author has done in this novel of the Spanish war was to insert his own contemporaneous love interest—presumably his third wife, to whom the novel was dedicated, and whom in appearance Maria somewhat resembled. Even if it is not to be taken literally, however, his inscription, 'To Ingrid Bergman, who is the Maria of this book,' in a gift copy for the actress who later played the role in the movies, confuses the issue. But whatever her origins, such considerations point to the trouble: Maria is far too good to be true.... More than Catherine, though rather less than Renata, the most recent version of the ideal, Maria is just too ethereal for the world she is in—is submissive and devoted beyond credibility and to the extinction of her own character...she exists for her lover alone and has no other interest or function in all life or the world but to serve him. Although she is for a while a very lovely vision, as we get to know her she becomes more and more a vision until ultimately she ceases to be a person at all. This idyll, Jordan's love affair with Maria, is compounded of romanticism like that in *A Farewell to Arms*...

Jordan is the hero as before. But the complicated man of insomnia and nightmare, damaged by what he has seen and been through, has come to a climactic triumph over his disabilities. The end of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* does not find him like Jake sitting hopeless in Paris waiting for rain; nor like Frederic Henry, walking in it away from the only thing that had meaning for him. It ends with Jordan lying on the forest floor awaiting his death, to be sure. But it is a death dedicated to life that he awaits; this time the hero has won. He has won over his incapacitating nightmares; he has held off the giants, grasped the code, worked his way out of his long bitterness and blown the bridge, which was his job to do."

Philip Young
Ernest Hemingway: A Reconsideration
(Penn State 1952, 1966) 103-09, 114

"*For Whom the Bell Tolls* came out of Hemingway's experiences in the Spanish Civil War. The hero, Robert Jordan, is an American teacher who has come to Spain to fight for the Loyalists out of idealism. The early chapters describe his trip into the mountains north of Segovia and his contact with a secret guerilla band he is to lead on an important mission: the destruction of a bridge on the highway leading out of the canyon into Segovia. The guerilla band includes Pablo, its brooding and cowardly leader; Pilar, his courageous and colorful wife; and Maria, daughter of a government official, who has been mistreated [raped] by the Fascists before her rescue by the guerillas. Jordan and Maria fall in love and become intimate; they hope to marry and go to America eventually, but they also realize that in their present situation they must seize every moment of pleasure while they can. For her part Pilar has no illusions; she has read Jordan's fate in his hand and knows he is soon to die.

As plans are laid to blow up the bridge a neighboring guerilla squad is searched out and massacred by Fascist troops aided by plane, but there is nothing Pablo's band can do to help. In another scene Jordan makes his way through enemy lines to the Loyalist army; he is struck with the contrast between the devotion and bravery of the guerilla bands and the confusion and corruption of the army in the plain. He now knows that the battle will be lost, but he returns to his mission. Finally, as a Fascist column comes

down the canyon to finish off the battle around Segovia, the band attacks the bridge, drives off the guards, and drops the steel structure into the river with a few well-placed charges. The plans must be revised at the last minute, however, because of Pablo's treachery, and as a result Jordan is fatally wounded. The others offer to attempt to carry him off, but he insists on remaining with a machine-gun in a spot where he can ambush and mow down the pursuing Rebel column before he is killed.

On the factual level an adventure novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is in a deeper sense a study of war and the reactions it provokes in men and women. Men are carried away by the partisan slogans of the war, but women, wiser, see that life is more important than parties. Jordan the idealist is willing to give his life for his cause, but Maria's loyalty is to her lover. Pablo is a third type: a moral coward, he becomes a defeatist and seeks to avoid personal danger. In doing so he endangers the whole group, imperils the project of blowing up the bridge, and even causes the death of Jordan. Pablo is wrong; but both Jordan and Maria are right in their way. Pilar stands somewhere between these extremes: a courageous and fervent patriot, she nevertheless understands the importance of individual human happiness."

Donald Heiney
Recent American Literature 4
(Barron's Educational Series 1958) 159-60

"Laid in the era of the Spanish Civil War (1936-39), the story follows the fortunes of Robert Jordan, an American volunteer on the side of the Loyalist forces. He is sent to join a guerilla band in order to blow up a bridge, and the narrative tells his experiences during the three days in the course of which he decides that the enterprise is one that will do more harm than good, falls passionately in love with Maria, a girl who has been tragically wronged by the Falangists, seeks to have the order to blow the bridge countermanded, finally carries it out, but is fatally wounded as he does so. The novel introduces a host of well-drawn characters, in particular that of a dominating woman named Pilar, fanatically devoted to the Republic. The title of the book is taken from one of John Donne's *Devotions*: 'No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent...therefore never seek to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee.' In the course of the novel Hemingway shows how the communists used the Spaniards as tools for their own ends."

Max J. Herzberg & staff
The Reader's Encyclopedia of American Literature
(Crowell 1962) 348

"Sometimes, however, a Hemingway novel has a merely mechanical unity, the limitations of which are made obvious by individual episodes so good that they separate out and become self-contained short stories. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* suffers in this way. It contains many fine episodes—the death of Sordo, Pilar's account of how the war began in her village, Andres' journey with the message for Golz, the destruction of the bridge. Each of these episodes has its independent emotion, far too powerful to be contained by the form of the novel as a whole, a good journalist's political analysis of the Spanish Civil War. Like much journalism, this analysis has not worn well, and it has only the loosest relevance to the feelings of the separate episodes of the moving aspects of Robert Jordan's mind."

Arthur Mizener
The Sense of Life in the Modern Novel
(Houghton 1964) 215

"The appearance of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*... Here Hemingway has largely sloughed off his Stalinism [Hemingway denied he was ever a "Stalinist"] and has reverted to seeing events in terms of individuals pitted against specific odds. His hero, an American teacher of Spanish who has enlisted on the side of the Loyalists, gives his life to what he regards as the cause of human liberation; but he is frustrated in the task that has been assigned him by the confusion of forces at cross-purposes that are throttling the Loyalist campaign. By the time that he comes to die, he has little to sustain him but the memory of his grandfather's record as a soldier in the American Civil War. The psychology of this young man is presented with a certain sobriety and detachment in comparison with Hemingway's other full-length heroes; and the author has here succeeded as in none of his earlier books in externalizing in plausible characters the elements of his own complex personality. With all this, there is an historical point of view which he has learned from

his political adventures: he has aimed to reflect in this episode the whole course of the Spanish War and the tangle of tendencies involved in it.

The weaknesses of the book are its diffuseness—a shape that lacks the concision of his short stories, that sometimes sags and sometimes bulges; and a sort of exploitation of the material, an infusion of the operatic, that lends itself all too readily to the movies.”

Edmund Wilson
“Hemingway: Gauge of Morale”
The Wound and the Bow: Seven Studies in Literature
(Oxford 1965) 196-97

“My notion about *The Bell* is that he wrote it with at least a vague image in mind of *War and Peace* and that the image spurred him on to produce what is truly the best and richest of his novels. One can say that its low standing with the critical profession is a scandal, but to compare the finished book with *War and Peace* is more than Hemingway himself would dare. ‘Nobody,’ he told Miss Ross long after *The Bell* was published, ‘is going to get me in any ring with Mr. Tolstoy’.”

Malcolm Cowley
“Taps for the Lost Generation” (1972)
A Second Flowering: Works and Days of the Lost Generation
(1973; Viking/Penguin 1980) 251-52

For Whom the Bell Tolls...seems to me the most complex and powerful of Hemingway’s works, as it is certainly the longest. Often it is dismissed by critics as if they had reached a tacit agreement, but that appears to be the result of circumstances quite apart from its literary value. One circumstance is its popular success; critics always distrust a novel that has had an enormous sale—in this case eight hundred thousand hardbound copies in the first few years—after being announced as a masterpiece by the daily reviewers. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has suffered from the additional handicaps of dealing with the Spanish Civil War, a subject that many critics wanted to forget, and of dealing with it in a fashion that offended most of the political factions: Fascists, Stalinists, Trotskyites, pacifists, Spanish patriots on both sides, almost the whole spectrum. As time passed the book was so bitterly condemned on political grounds that critics did not feel they had to read it with close attention. Nothing they said against it was likely to be challenged, even if their judgments were based on obvious misinterpretations....

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a much more complicated novel than it is often given credit for being. In one of its many aspects it is of course an adventure story about the blowing up of a bridge. It begins with Robert Jordan’s inspection of the bridge as he lies on the pine-needled floor of the forest. It proceeds in a rigorous sequence of hours and actions, with the tension always mounting, and it ends with Jordan, his mission accomplished, waiting for death on that same pine-needled floor. The mission, however, merely provides a framework for the novel, and we must look beyond it for underlying themes.

In another aspect, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is concerned with one man’s relation to the future of society. Robert Jordan is identical in spirit—one might almost say in flesh—with Hemingway’s earlier heroes. As Frederic Henry he had made his farewell not so much to arms as to armies and, in a sense, to every type of institution. As Jake Barnes, the maimed hero (the Fisher King), he had existed in a social wasteland. Now, having committed himself to a dream of the social future, he regains his ability to love, and he goes to his death a willing victim.

In still another aspect—an important one to the author—the novel is concerned with a victory over time. Jordan when facing the likelihood of being killed finds himself capable of living as full a life in seventy hours—sixty-eight by actual count—as he might have lived in seventy years. When he is with the woman he loves, time is transformed into an eternal present. Hemingway’s working title for the novel, before he found an epigraph from John Donne, had been ‘The Undiscovered Country.’ Obviously that country is not Spain; it is the timeless region, the ‘Now and forever now,’ that Jordan enters with Maria.

A final aspect of the novel...depends on the earlier-noted suggestion that Jordan is a Christ figure leading a band of disciples. Among the twelve, Pablo is certainly Judas. Pilar is Mary, and there are other

biblical analogies as we approach the crucifixion. Then comes a departure from the Gospel story. While Jordan is waiting alone for death, the disciples having vanished, he determines to kill a Fascist officer as his last service to the cause. 'If you wait and hold them up even a little while,' he tells himself while trying not to faint from the pain of a broken leg, 'or just get an officer that may make all the difference.'

The book appeared in the autumn of 1940. I suspect that if it had been finished two years earlier, it might have ended as another optimistic tragedy like *The Grapes of Wrath*, but Hemingway was writing in a less hopeful period. He knew that the Spanish Republic was already doomed when Jordan set out on his mission behind the Fascist lines.... Hemingway knew that Jordan's exploit in blowing up a bridge would not help the Loyalists to win even a single battle, and he shows us, in fact, that the battle was lost before it started. Then, as if twisting a knife in the wound, he tells us the name of the Fascist officer whom Jordan was waiting to kill. 'The officer,' we read, 'was Lieutenant Berrendo...his thin face serious and grace.' Earlier in the novel Berrendo had been introduced to us as a brave man and a Christian who served his country well, even though fighting on the wrong side.

What then shall we say about Jordan's final sacrifice? Was it not only useless but evil in its result? And might the same be said of his whole service as a dynamiter and destroyer for liberty? Those inescapable questions leave us feeling that the novel has ended as did the historical 1930s, with admiration and something close to envy for the brave men who fought and died in vain, but still in a mood of disillusionment and self-questioning, a postwar mood essentially, at a time when a greater war was under way."

Malcolm Cowley
--*And I Worked at the Writer's Trade:*
Chapters of Literary History 1918-1978
(Penguin 1979) 27, 110-12

"Of course, the Spanish Civil War often has since been characterized as representing democracy's last chance to oppose European fascism so as to avert World War II, so the stakes are very high, as Jordan recognizes. Yet the democracies sat out the war, leaving the fascist rebels (supported by Germany and Italy) and communist 'republicans' (supported by the Soviet Union) to fight it out between themselves. This adds to Jordan's dilemma, for he understands at least a little of the war's tangled politics. He is much more a thinker than is Frederic Henry, and the novel's tone is far more introspective as a result. Also as a result, the meanings of the characters' actions are more easily accessible to readers. (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* was the first of Hemingway's novels to make the yearly top-ten bestseller list.)"

Frederic J. Svoboda
"The Great Themes in Hemingway"
A Historical Guide to Ernest Hemingway, ed. Linda Wagner-Martin
(Oxford 2000) 163

FEMINIST INTERPRETATION

"Hemingway wrote *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) at the end of a decade of attacks on his work and his person. In a sense, the novel confronts the fear of emasculation, the fear of powerlessness and of loss; loss of identity, of courage, of sexuality... Throughout the novel, the characters speak literally and metaphorically of *cojones*—Spanish for 'balls'—and of what befalls the man who loses them. As conceived in this book (and throughout the 1930s in Hemingway's life and fiction), the danger of emasculation comes from the mannish woman who challenges the man's sexual and artistic authority. The stories of Kashkin, Finito, and Pablo all present foreboding examples of emasculation. In the most extreme case, the man emasculated by a bullying woman, like Jordan's father (and Hemingway's), is driven to shoot himself (339). But Jordan, unlike his predecessors (Kashkin and Hemingway's own father), retains his manly identity through his courageous behavior.

What makes Jordan's success possible is that in this novel the threatening woman and the romantic heroine are not the same. That is, Hemingway resolved his own long-standing fear of emasculation by splitting the intimidating woman of his earlier fiction into two separate characters. In Pilar and Maria, he

created separate embodiments of those female qualities he feared and those he loved. Pilar is an incarnation of the archetypal woman in her most fearsome guise... Thus identified with the cycles of births and death (and the sea), Pilar may be read as the archetypal Great Mother, both nurturing and terrifying (Gladstein 66-72).

Jordan respects Pilar for her solidity and endurance—he compares her to a mountain (136)—but he also fears her as a rival. Her experience makes her a superb teacher, mentor, and leader to the guerilla band. She epitomizes the mannish woman whose superiority threatens the man's performance. In age and maturity, confidence, nurturance, leadership ability, and material appearance she resembles both Hemingway's mother and Gertrude Stein. She resembles them as well in her possible lesbian inclinations, making her a potential sexual rival to Jordan for Maria's favors (154-55; Gould 73-75).

More significant for Jordan, a would-be writer, is Pilar's storytelling ability—her most convincing teaching tool—which fills him with admiration and envy. After her long, harrowing account of the massacre at the *Ayuntamiento*, he thinks, 'If that woman could only write. He would try to write it and if he had luck and could remember it perhaps he could get it down as she told it. God, how she could tell a story' (134)... Pilar's artistic, oracular dimension links her to the author himself, as well as to female models like Grace Hemingway and Gertrude Stein....

In contrast to Pilar, Maria is a woman Jordan can love without fear of emasculation. Like Brett (*SAR*) and Catherine (*FTA*), Maria is a war victim, but she is younger and more childlike. Having been gang-raped by the Fascists, she is more fragile than any of Hemingway's other women. Lacking the callousness of Brett or the worldliness of Catherine, she is in need of protection and guidance. Her vulnerability is stressed by the comparisons between her and a variety of soft, helpless animals; his term of endearment for her—*guapa* ('little rabbit')—combines that vulnerability with the sexual innuendo of the Spanish term. At the same time, Maria is associated throughout with sunlight and earthly beauty, testifying to her essential health.

What we have identified as Hemingway's solution to the confusions of modern life—reciprocity between the sexes, achieved in a natural setting remote from society—is well illustrated by the love between Jordan and Maria. Maria is the female principle that complements Jordan's male nature; her qualities unite with his, and the idyllic love affair blossoms. Maria imagines that she and Jordan will be 'as one animal of the forest and be so close that neither one can tell that one of us is one and not the other' (262). In describing (or rather, not describing) their lovemaking, Hemingway mysteriously invokes the cosmos. His incantatory verbal rendering of the sex act (which goes beyond mere sex) suggests a transcendental fusion of the couple with each other and with the universe: 'for now always one now; one only one, there is no other one but one now, one...one and one is one...' (379). The book's best-known (and sometimes ridiculed) line—'And then the earth moved' (160)—is Hemingway's attempt to convey the significance and the rarity of true organic union between the sexes."

Rena Sanderson
"Hemingway and Gender History"
The Cambridge Companion to Hemingway
(Cambridge U 1996) 186-89

Michael Hollister (2015)

For Whom the Bell Tolls is a novel by Ernest Hemingway published in 1940. It tells the story of Robert Jordan, a young American volunteer attached to a Republican guerrilla unit during the Spanish Civil War. As a dynamiter, he is assigned to blow up a bridge during an attack on the city of Segovia. It was published just after the end of the Spanish Civil War (1936â€”1939), whose general lines were well known at the time. It assumes the reader knows that the war was between a democratically elected, pro