

“THERE’S NO ONE THING THAT’S TRUE; IT’S ALL TRUE:”

LANGUAGE AND IDENTITY

IN ERNEST HEMINGWAY’S

*FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

by

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## ABSTRACT

Few critics have investigated the way in which Hemingway addresses the act of translation within his 1940 novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In “‘There’s No One Thing That’s True; It’s All True:’ Language and Identity in Ernest Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls*” I utilize *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to explore Hemingway’s method of translating Spanish to English. I argue that Hemingway simultaneously espouses and eschews language as a medium to convey the daily struggles and culture of the disenfranchised Spanish people. By keeping certain words and phrases in Spanish, Hemingway imposes a sense of foreignness onto the text, and I argue that keeping the original Spanish helps the audience to identify with another culture and to enrich the target language of English.

Hemingway also seeks to alienate the reader from understanding Spanish culture by portraying the Spanish language as a distinct, untranslatable medium of regional identity. The entirety of the conversations written in English involves an invisible, but palpable, translation from Spanish, and I explore the way that this invisible translation adds a layer of ambiguity and uncertainty to the text as a means of conveying the untranslatability of culture except through the lens of an ‘insider’ narrator. My analysis further complicates the idea of an ‘insider:’ is it possible to be an insider to another culture so much so that the insider can ‘translate’ culture for a foreign audience? Following this reading, I assert that translation plays a powerful role in Hemingway’s presentation of events and characters insofar as he repeatedly acknowledges the power of language in defining personal identity while underscoring the failure of language to define experience. “‘There’s No One Thing That’s True; It’s All True:’ Language and Identity in

Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* addresses scholarly lacuna by demonstrating that Hemingway sophisticatedly represents Spanish translation, and lack thereof, to both invite the reader into Spanish culture during the Spanish Civil War and also to exclude the reader from true cultural understanding because of the reader's lack of personal experience with the Spanish people.

## DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to my friends and family, and in particular, my husband James. Without his tireless understanding in the midst of buying and moving house, searching for jobs, commuting to school, and writing my thesis, I know that I would not have produced the work that I have. To all of the many hands that have surrounded and supported me throughout my educational journey, thank you. Mom, Dad, Granny, Megan, Patsy, Tommy, Parker, Shirley, and so many others, you have rallied around me and carried me. And for my Granddaddy, thank you for inspiring me to learn more and ask the good questions. This thesis is for all of you.

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

NANA North American Newspaper Alliance

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## INTRODUCTION

Ernest Hemingway's works have been anthologized time and again, with *The Sun Also Rises*, *A Farewell to Arms*, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and *The Old Man and the Sea* being the most prominent. Therefore, the critical editions and multivolume collections of Hemingway's work all seem to include these four seminal texts, with various other short texts added depending on the volume. Hemingway was widely popular when he was originally published, and remained so throughout his lifetime. He became a prominent figure as a First World War writer and for his portrayal of war during the Second World War. Through his connections with Fitzgerald and other writers living in Paris in the 1920s, Hemingway was seen as a central voice for his generation and has had extensive influence on writers through style and themes during the century. Hemingway received the Nobel Prize in 1954 for his body of works and most recently *The Old Man and the Sea*, thus creating another wave of popularity as some books went through subsequent editions at this time to accommodate the surge of readings of his work. Further, two original works were published posthumously, after his death in 1961. During this period, literary critics capitalized on his continued popularity, and critical Hemingway publications were produced en masse.

For this reason, Hemingway's legacy extends far beyond his lifetime since these original works and numerous collections of texts were published within ten years after his death. Some of these works explore his writing about places like Africa, where Hemingway went on safari, so that another aspect of his oeuvre received attention, though not as much as his novels. Along

with his literary legacy in novels, Hemingway also published many short stories, nonfiction, and journalistic writings that are being explored more in recent critical studies, although there are numerous works in each genre that have been overlooked. Hemingway has also found popularity in movies, from film adaptations in his lifetime (some immediately after the novel's original publication) to biographical films and mini-series that feature extensively famous casts. From the wide array of interest in Hemingway, his legacy is far reaching into the twenty-first century, and critics will continue to explore his work and the way in which it continues to influence contemporary writers.

Following a renewed interest in Hemingway over the past ten to fifteen years, this paper appears at a particularly prescient time for Hemingway studies since it addresses themes of internationalism and the rise of nationalist policies that are widely talked about due to the current political climate in 2017. Further, the burgeoning field of translation studies since the late 1980s provides tools and concepts that are useful in exploring the themes of identity and language, particularly across cultural divides. With the rise of translation studies as a field of literary studies, Hemingway should be considered within the context of translating language and further, culture: I suggest scholars study Hemingway's use of language as a means of identifying with and appropriating foreign cultures. For this purpose, I will explore issues with Hemingway's translation and description of Spanish people and their culture by close reading passages from his 1940 novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. In part, I make use of theories of untranslatability and ineffability to explore the personal and cultural aspects of language in Hemingway's work.

Though this paper seeks to address a gap in Hemingway studies with respect to his use of language as a means to capture personal and national identity during a time of war, scholarship that relates his work to current social concerns seems provocatively relevant. Questions of

national identity and experiences of oppression collide with issues of personal agency and privilege both in 1930's Spain and in the modern Western world. With this dichotomy in mind, the phrase "there's no one thing that's true; it's all true" (467) becomes an increasingly relevant and important point of discussion about how language and identity affect personal experience and how these issues are shared with a contemporary audience.

The foundational information about Hemingway's publication and reception history comes from Edgar Grissom's 2011 *Ernest Hemingway: A Descriptive Bibliography*. This bibliography is the most inclusive and researched bibliography to date as stated by *The Hemingway Journal*, and it replaces Audre Hanneman's 1967 *Ernest Hemingway: A Comprehensive Bibliography* as the foundational research text on Hemingway. Hemingway's family has been active in publishing memoirs and biographies about his life and work, which has constituted a significant part of the historical and biographical work done on him.<sup>1</sup> Hemingway's letters and war dispatches, both collections edited by his biographer Carlos Baker, are used in this paper to lend context to his experience of the Spanish Civil War and his process of writing the novel in reaction to what he saw while there. Though he did not participate directly in the war, he did raise funds for ambulances to be sent to the Republican army and reported for the North American Newspaper Alliance over multiple trips to Spain during the war period.

According to Hemingway in a letter to his editor Maxwell Perkins in November of 1933, he saw himself as "a reporter *and an imaginative writer* and I can still imagine plenty and there will be

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<sup>1</sup> Hemingway's wife Mary donated his letters to the John F. Kennedy library in the 1970s so that the Hemingway Society founded there now has the largest repository of his letters in the world. The Hemingway Society is also currently undergoing a project to publish all of his letters in seventeen volumes by the Cambridge University Press. The publication as a whole is forthcoming, but some volumes have already been released. In addition, *The Hemingway Review* and *The Hemingway Newsletter* are also published by the Hemingway Society bi-annually and annually respectively. These publications reach a membership of about 600 across the globe and include articles and enumerations of that year's publications of the author.

stories to write *as they happened* as long as I live” (400). Further, Hemingway wrote to his then in-laws, the Pfeiffer family, “for a long time me and my conscience both have known I had to go to Spain” (457). As such, Hemingway was obviously highly invested in the war effort and felt it his duty to write as much about it as he deemed necessary. Throughout my thesis, I demonstrate the function of language as a unique tool for emphasizing Hemingway’s investment in Spain as well as his effort to chronicle the war. To that end, Hemingway utilizes language to invite the reader into the war experience in Spain but also to keep the reader at a distance from fully identifying with the experience and culture of the Spanish people. Thus, in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway manipulates his language to create a liminal space between knowledge as an outsider and understanding as an insider—of the Spanish language, Spanish culture, and the war experience in itself.

In this paper, I explore Hemingway’s 1940 novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, by focusing directly on Hemingway’s use of language as a means of explaining identity, both personal and national. I argue that Robert Jordan’s character exists as a bridge between the American audience and his depiction of the Spanish people during the Spanish Civil War. By allowing the protagonist to exist in a liminal space between cultures and languages, Hemingway is both including the English-speaking audience in the action of the story while also emphasizing the foreignness of the setting. In this way, Hemingway is able to create a sense of familiarity for the reader while also estranging her from understanding the cultural mores that are essential to the complexity of the novel. To illustrate this point, Hemingway wrote to Perkins in July of 1940 that since “there is so much panic and hysteria and shit going around now I don’t feel like writing any flagwaving stuff” (506). I argue that Hemingway not only includes Spanish phrases and cultural anecdotes to give the novel a sense of local color or “quaint[ness],” as Joseph

Warren Beach asserts (84) but also to productively complicate the novel enough to make the experience of reading the text at once linguistically recognizable and unrecognizable.

This ambiguity is productive, of course, only if the text makes use of its style in order to illustrate a broader point. I argue that Hemingway successfully utilizes the liminal space between language and culture to illustrate the complexity of the Spanish Civil War itself. The Spanish Civil War, fought between 1936 and 1939, was a brutal conflict between the democratically elected government (Republicans) and the rebel military (Nationalists). The Nationalists became unified early in the war under General Francisco Franco who later adopted Fascist policies aimed at restoring the traditional power structures in Spain that were threatened by the Republican government. Importantly, many Nationalist supporters were members of the upper classes and clergy—the traditional strongholds of power in Spain—and they received aid from Fascist countries such as Italy and Germany.

The Republican government, however, was comprised of citizens from varying social classes who held a variety of political views that ranged from staunchly Communist to moderately conservative. This government was a compilation of many disenfranchised people who were united with the goal of reform for Spain. Though many Republicans, including the peasant guerilla fighters in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, were not ideologically tied to a political agenda as much as a social one, the Republic was frequently understood to be aligned with Communism because of the support they received from the U.S.S.R. during the war. In a letter to John Dos Passos in March of 1938, Hemingway condemns Dos Passos for suggesting the government is strictly communist, writing, “for you to try constantly to make out that the war the government is fighting against the fascist Italian, German Moorish invasion is a communist business imposed on the will of the people is sort of viciously pitiful” (464). Hemingway clearly

discerned the complexities of war in Spain with respect to political affiliation, so much so that Robert Jordan frequently questions the ethics of associating with Russian war leaders while fighting the war on the side of the Republic in the International Brigades, a volunteer group of fighters from countries who chose to remain neutral during the conflict. As Jordan wrestles with the political ambiguity of being “anti-fascist” as opposed to communist, he also tries to reconcile his ambiguous understanding of the Spanish people. While musing about his relationship with the guerilla fighters, Jordan thinks, “He never felt like a foreigner in Spanish and they did not really treat him like a foreigner most of the time; only when they turned on you” (135). Here, Jordan connects his proficiency in Spanish with his understanding of the people themselves, yet he also suggests that since he is still a foreigner, he will never be privy to completely feeling at home in Spanish culture.

Further illustrating Jordan’s ambiguous use of language, the novel also associates confusion of language with confusion about experience. Jordan takes part in the Spanish Civil War by fighting in guerrilla warfare alongside local Republicans; while he transitions from life as a Spanish professor to that of a Republican dynamiter, he also continuously reflects that when he goes back to his life in the United States, he will write a book about his experiences in the war. Thus, both the text of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and Jordan’s imaginary novel represent writers engaging in recounting the experience of the Spanish Civil War. The narration is framed as the basis for Jordan’s novel that never gets written because of his death at the end of the story, yet *For Whom the Bell Tolls* represents in itself this unwritten story. Hemingway sets up a narrative of uncertainty and ambiguity where meaning is questioned, the narrator questions himself, and the unknown prospect of death through the use of translations and translations of thought within the metanarrative frames. However, while decentering the narrative frame is a valid starting

point in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway also continuously refers to the act and physicality of writing as unreliable and misleading. Therefore, Hemingway uses the play of language between Spanish and English to allow for disunity and uncertainty: this uncertainty about language mirrors the characters' uncertainty about their identity in times of war.

As a journalist covering the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway took care not to violate Republican censorship laws regarding the types of messages that could be sent out of the country. For this reason, Hemingway strategically chose to report on eyewitness accounts of the war (Vernon 59). Though Hemingway did not specifically name *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as his attempt to write what he was censored from writing during the war, he did write to Perkins from France in 1938, "Really will have quite a lot to write when this is all over. Am very careful to remember and not waste it in dispatches" (467). I argue that Hemingway's prose style and content are undoubtedly an expansion of his censored reporting, or at the very least his insistence on eyewitness accounts that "limited the larger panorama of the Spanish Civil War" (Capellán 245). Hemingway addresses both sides of the war, Republican and Nationalist, as fractured and complex in his novel—this ambiguity, about the Republican side at least, would have been anathema while he was reporting since the censors wanted to portray the Republic favorably to rouse the international community to their aid (Vernon 45). However, after the war was over, Hemingway was able to grapple with the implications of the war more tenuously, by portraying his characters from a very personal level and utilizing his narrative to explore the moral implications of the conflict by, as Alex Vernon notes, "a multiplying of perspectives" (152). Hemingway even writes to Perkins, "I don't want to write that syndicated patriotism" (506). I argue that Hemingway engages in this negotiation and multiplication through his use of language and translation in order to both give voice to the experience of his Spanish Civil War and to call

into question the nature of the war itself. I assert that this is accomplished in part by the uncertainty Jordan feels in being both an insider because of his language skills and an outsider because of his foreignness.

Jordan explores this tension throughout the novel, and these moments of introspection typically coincide with deep emotional moments of reverie or dialogue that serve to complicate Jordan's experience of the war effort. Jordan's interactions with the Spanish people force him to confront his views on national identity along with his notion of personal identity. The reader experiences this uncertainty along with his character as Hemingway both clearly describes the culture, environment, and Spanish people, while also perpetuating a cultural divide between an American audience and the Spanish war effort by mixing in bits of the Spanish language. While the moments of reverie make the novel long, even dull, compared to the constant action and crispness of earlier Hemingway works, according to his collected letters, he consistently wrote his friends about the intentionality of writing a novel this long. Hemingway asserts in his letters that in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, he sought to write "as good and big a novel as I can" (496), concludes that "it is very long and so far it hasn't a bad word in it. *Extraordinary*" (500), and claims "every damned word and action in this book depends on every other word and action" (514). Painstakingly reading over each word daily (482), Hemingway clearly took pride in the length and depth of this work to convey the emotional and political complexity of the Spanish Civil War.

While much Hemingway criticism has been done on *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, little has focused on the particular effect of paralleling epistemological uncertainty and the written text. Edward Fenimore writes about the issues of translation throughout the novel in general, and he also touches on the uncertainty and unfamiliarity of using Spanish phrases in order to open up a

range of linguistic meaning in the story. However, these observations are limited to the context of translation, forming an epic narrative, and uses of semantic constructions; he does not address the manipulation of language as a whole. Likewise, Gary Brenner also focuses on Hemingway's use of language to create an epic style in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, yet his argument is tangentially related to how the author, through use of two languages, multiplies linguistic possibilities within the work. Again, neither critic addresses Hemingway's use of Spanish to suggest that the act of translation both invites the reader into the events of the novel while also keeping the reader from full immersion in the action. In contrast, this paper seeks to expand the field of Hemingway studies by arguing that Hemingway at once invites the reader into a personal experience of the Spanish Civil War while also alienating the reader with repeated uses of Spanish; I argue that the effect of this pushing and pulling, as it were, mimic Hemingway's experience of coping with the war itself and his place within Spanish culture.

Hemingway indeed uses translation to create an abstraction between the characters and their own experiences. While *For Whom the Bell Tolls* could be interpreted simply as Hemingway performing his journalistic experience of the war as if he were a Spaniard who fought (which is problematic because his knowledge of the Spanish people is limited since he is not one), I argue that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* can be interpreted as Hemingway's performance of Spanish culture *and* his failure to understand it. At times Robert Jordan, as a member of the International Brigade, is portrayed as having insider knowledge into the Spanish culture like when he and two of the guerilla fighters are walking back to the guerillas' camp in the mountains of Extremadura<sup>2</sup>. The band is led by a seasoned fighter named Pablo, who was once revered as a vicious Republican but has now begun to recoil from his fervor while they are hiding in the cave,

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<sup>2</sup> Extremadura is spelled with an "s" in the novel as Estremadura.

waiting to blow up the bridge per Jordan's orders from the Russians. Jordan, Anselmo (known as the 'old man' in the band of guerilla fighters), and Fernando (a traditional peasant fighter) are walking back to the cave together, and Jordan comments on Pablo's perceived loss of manhood. This scene appears about halfway through the novel once Robert Jordan is familiar enough with the peasant fighters to joke with them and to affirm his knowledge of their language. During the exchange, Jordan both contemplates the sound of the Spanish language and exhibits mastery of it by telling a bawdy joke about eggs: "'Back to the palace of Pablo,' Robert Jordan said to Anselmo. It sounded wonderful in Spanish. '*El Palacio del Miedo*,' Anselmo said. 'The Palace of Fear.' '*La cueva de los huevos perdidos*,' Robert Jordan capped the other happily. 'The cave of the lost eggs'" (199). Here, Jordan uses his knowledge of Spanish to build camaraderie between the men, but Fernando misses the joke about eggs being testicles, and Jordan refers him to a book (that Fernando cannot read because of his illiteracy). In this way, Jordan positions himself as a more educated Spaniard than the Spanish peasant with whom he is fighting, thereby creating a social rift between himself and Fernando.

Hemingway was criticized by early Spanish readers of the novel who felt that he had no right or justification for acting as if he could give voice to Spaniards during the war. Arturo Barea notably states, "its failure to render the reality of the Spanish war in imaginative writing—seems to me to be due to the fact that he was always a spectator who wanted to be an actor, who wanted to write as if he had been an actor" (361). However, Ángel Capellán deftly argues, "Barea's major problem was a flawed reading of the novel" (127), particularly when he criticized Hemingway for putting characters together who came from different parts of the country. Barea's criticism is particularly moving, however, considering that Hemingway was writing as a

member of the cultural elite, the bourgeoisie, while attempting to narrate the experience of the peasants, the proletariat, of a country to which he was not a native.<sup>3</sup>

Jordan also belies his own sense of foreignness throughout the novel as well. The juxtaposition of these instances allows the reader to participate in the novel to try and piece together Jordan's own understanding of his identity. As an example of this juxtaposition, Jordan recounts how Pilar, Pablo's wife and matriarch of the guerrilla fighters, tells her story of the attack on Ávila<sup>4</sup>. As Pilar asserts, the peasants in Ávila led a massacre of the supposed Nationalists living in the village, including shop-owners, wealthy landowners, and priests. Though Pilar makes sure to note that many of the townspeople who were killed did not align themselves with fascism specifically, they were still held accountable by the peasants for their perceived wealth and privilege. This distinction is important because Hemingway uses this scene to identify the disparity between politics and the actuality of living through the war.

As Pilar is talking, Jordan is thankful that he had lived in Spain before the war and spoke the language so well, thinking, "They trusted you on the language, principally. They trusted you on understanding the language completely and speaking it idiomatically and having a knowledge of different places" (135). Here, Jordan recognizes the primacy placed upon knowledge of a place, particularly when that place, Ávila, has been the site of such carnage that can only be understood if one understands the social dynamics at play there. Importantly, as Jordan admits to himself his own privileged position among the Spanish speakers, he also exposes to the reader

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<sup>3</sup> According to his letters, Hemingway traveled to Spain in the 1920s for leisure activities and continued to travel there for various periods of time throughout his life. During the Spanish Civil War, he would be in Spain for weeks or months at a time to report on the status of the war.

<sup>4</sup> Hemingway writes Ávila as "Avila" in the novel. This misspelling serves to highlight his lack of complete familiarity with the Spanish language, though Jordan's character supposedly teaches Spanish at a university.

that his knowledge of the Spanish language comes from his ability to travel freely to and from Spain—this privilege is exactly what most of the Spanish peasants lack.

Jordan, however, does come to understand that he is still foreign, no matter how much he is respected for knowing the language, when he muses, “If you knew Spanish he was prejudiced in your favor, if you knew his province that was much better, but if you knew his village and his trade you were in as far as any foreigner ever could be” (135). In this example, Jordan again comments on his own proficiency of Spanish while conceding the limits of identifying with the Spanish people. Though Jordan admits his insider knowledge of the Spanish people, positing that he is as much of an insider as possible without having been born in Spain, his next comment demonstrates his self-conceived sense of foreignness as well. He muses, “He never felt like a foreigner in Spanish and they did not really treat him like a foreigner most of the time; only when they turned on you” (135). Here, Jordan raises tension about his own sense of familiarity with the Spanish people. Interestingly, Jordan claims that he did not feel like a foreigner “in Spanish;” not that he felt at home in *Spain*, but that he felt at home in the *language*. The Spanish language defines Jordan’s sense of identity, and he intimately connects his identification with the language to his identification with Spanish people—knowing their province, village, and trade. Jordan therefore conflates the Spanish language with cultural identity and asserts that he is privy to understanding both.

Jordan also complicates his relationship with the Spanish people, and by association, their language, when he abruptly shifts his thoughts from identification to ostracization. In the next few sentences Jordan retracts his feeling of being ostracized, or at least about Spaniards only ostracizing him as a foreigner. He claims, “Of course they turned on you” (135). I address issues of generalizing the Spanish people in the next section, but for now, I assert that Jordan realizes

early in the novel that no matter how well acquainted he is with the people or their language, he is not one of them. Following this recognition of foreignness, however, Jordan again reasserts his position within Spanish culture as he continues in his meditation. Jordan states, “They turned on you often but they also turned on every one. They turned on themselves, too” (135). In a few short sentences, Jordan has identified himself with the Spanish people and their language, retracted this identification by acknowledging his foreignness, then qualified both of his previous statements by asserting that either way, the Spanish people “turned on you.” From this short reverie, Jordan is wrestling with his identity *and* the identity of the Spanish people.

Clearly Jordan questions identity with apprehension and concern, particularly since he realizes that his questions may not be answered in the three short days he has yet to live (it is worth noting that Jordan recognizes the probability of dying during the bridge attack). As a result of his awareness of death, Jordan struggles to justify his thoughts and his conclusions about his own experience. Following the previous statements, Jordan chides himself, “This was no way to think; but who censored his thinking? Nobody but himself” (135-136). Harkening back to Hemingway’s letters where he writes, “Really will have quite a lot to write when this is all over. Am very careful to remember and not waste it in dispatches” (467), I argue that these moments of reverie are carefully rendered by Hemingway to tell the truth about the war in a way that censored dispatches did not allow. Hemingway utilizes the conventions of the novel to explore Jordan’s inner monologue and fictionalize a war experience for the reader.

I argue that throughout the novel, the central questioning of identity is explored in conjunction with the questioning of war and its implications. This point is further illustrated since Jordan continues his meditation by referring his thoughts back to the war and his place within the conflict. He thinks to himself, “He would not think himself into any defeatism. The

first thing was to win the war. If we did not win the war everything was lost. He was serving in a war and he gave absolute loyalty and as complete a performance as he could give while he was serving. But nobody owned his mind, [...]" (136). Hemingway uses similar language to this scene when he writes in a letter to Perkins in 1939, "But if you have a war you have to win it. If you lose you lose everything [...]" (498). As such, though Hemingway is admittedly writing fiction and did not personally fight in the Spanish Civil War, he inserts his own Hemingwayisms into the novel in order to capture the urgency and feeling of the war effort in Spain. This inclusion is important and central to my argument as this paper addresses the intimate connections of using language to grapple with identity and war.

In this same passage, Jordan shifts his thoughts from his personal identity to his identity in the war, and he uses his commitment to the anti-fascist cause, the *Spanish* cause even, in order to justify a sense of stoicism. Jordan fails to shut off his thoughts, however, so he concedes that "if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards. And there would be plenty of material to draw from. There was plenty already. There was a little too much sometimes" (136). Jordan's commitment to write about the war afterwards parallels Hemingway's own commitment to tell the truth of the war, and he even echoes Hemingway's language about not wasting material in dispatches. I analyze this passage in order to illustrate Jordan's battle with himself to make sense of the war and his place within it. By allowing Jordan's thoughts to roam over his identity and the identity of the Spanish people (particularly by conflating language and culture), then moving to how that identity affects his position within the war, Hemingway narrates for the reader a sense of confusion. I argue that the effect of narrating questions of identity joined to questions about war and an assertion to write about war amplifies Jordan's need to resolve his dissonance regarding these issues. As such, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a

model of this cognitive process and educates the reader on the experience of being involved in the Spanish Civil War.

Hemingway frequently referred to writing as telling the truth (he has been most famously quoted for this sentiment in *To Have and Have Not* and in the introduction to *Men at War*). For this reason, I argue that Hemingway utilizes Jordan's free indirect discourse—where Jordan really hashes out his feelings about himself, Spaniards, and the war—in order to give a comprehensive version of the truth, inasmuch as possible when writing about a war in which Hemingway did not fight. This truth-telling, then, directly relates to the contradictions in the novel. It even predicates these contradictions in order to give full voice to the range of emotions that might have been experienced by real anti-fascist fighters. The effect of narrating the novel as both insider and outsider thus allows Hemingway to explore the complexities of identity and the war experience.

## LANGUAGE AND PLACE

The most prominent features of Hemingway's translations from Spanish to English occur when he attempts to recreate the informal address in Spanish (*tú*) with the English *thee* and *thy*. Interestingly, the few times Hemingway refers to the informal second person in Spanish, he incorrectly writes "tu" without an accent (the Spanish possessive, *your*) instead of *tú* (the Spanish informal second person pronoun, *you*). In one such passage, Agustín yells at Pablo after a verbal altercation, "'And thou! Thou!' Agustín turned from the door and spoke to him, putting all his contempt in the single, 'Tu'" (214). Though this is a common error in Spanish grammar for both native and non-native speakers, eliding an accent mark on various words throughout the novel betrays his own sense of foreignness when writing in or about another language.

Further, although the informal address occurs throughout the novel, the first instance of using *thee* and *thy* in chapter one also serves to highlight Hemingway's repeated meta-discourse on Spanish as a trope for foreignness in the novel: "The old man turned toward him [Pablo] suddenly and spoke rapidly and furiously in a dialect that Robert Jordan could just follow. It was like reading Quevedo. Anselmo was speaking old Castilian and it went something like this, "Art thou a brute? Yes. Art thou a beast? Yes, many times. Hast thou a brain? Nay. None" (11). In this excerpt, Hemingway first introduces his use of the antiquated informal *thee* and *thy* along with an overt reference to the foreignness of the peasant's Spanish dialect. Joseph Warren Beach even suggests that the "flavor of the native idiom" is "charming, picturesque and dramatic" (84). This commentary seems outdated by today's standards, and I contend that Hemingway seeks

more to affect unfamiliarity with the verbiage as opposed to simply enforcing the “stateliness” of the Spanish language (84). Hemingway even wrote to his editor, “I have made the thees and thous as accurately used as possible without giving the book an archaic-ness that would make it un-readable. When I used you instead of thee etc. I know what I am doing” (513). Thus, even though *thee* and *thy* are English words that represent the informal address, their usage has been outdated for centuries, and Hemingway is conscious of this anachronism: he uses these forms purposefully and knowingly. However, utilizing a now arcane form of speaking, even in the target language, creates a gap between the reader and the subject matter. Additionally, this disparity is multiplied since Hemingway incorrectly writes *tu* when he means *tú*—therefore, the reader’s gap in understanding, whether she is conscious of it or not, is similar to Hemingway’s own incomplete understanding of the Spanish language. Moreover, Hemingway’s archaic translation of the Spanish informal address, whether because of anachronism or untranslatability, further distances the reader from the speakers in the text but also allows the reader to still understand the words and the novel’s actions. Perhaps as a result of Hemingway’s own foreignness, he accomplishes this estrangement of the reader well enough that he does not make his novel “un-readable.”

As a reader, the experience of being able to understand a text without feeling familiar with the language of the text creates an unhoused sense of identity with one’s native tongue. This unhousing of identity by way of language plays a pivotal role in the novel—first, as a means of showing the connection between language and identity; and secondly, showing the untranslatability of identity through the means of language. Until this point, Jordan converses with Anselmo using *you* instead of *thee* and *thy*. Hemingway makes strong use of informal pronouns in this passage not only to show familiarity between characters, but also to show a

camaraderie between countrymen. If Jordan has only used *you* until this point, presumably he is showing respect for the older and unfamiliar man with whom he is working. The use of formal pronouns thereby enhances the distance between Robert Jordan and the Spanish men who are helping him during the war. As analyzed at the beginning of this section, in order to compound this sense of the unfamiliar, Hemingway adds details about Anselmo's dialect that further distance Jordan (and therefore the reader) from the Spanish characters. Thus, from the first chapter, Hemingway establishes that translating Spanish informality as *thee* and *thy* is meant to show an unbridgeable gap between understanding a language fluently and translating that language to a foreign audience.

Hemingway also transliterates Spanish syntax into English. This use of Spanish syntax additionally alienates the reader and allows for a more overt reference to the Spanish language being spoken. For example, during the previously mentioned interchange between Jordan and Anselmo, Hemingway writes, “‘Back to the palace of Pablo,’ Robert Jordan said to Anselmo. It sounded wonderful in Spanish. ‘*El Palacio del Miedo*,’ Anselmo said. ‘The Palace of Fear’” (199). Not only does Hemingway choose to write a possessive in the ‘noun plus *of*’ construction, but he also follows this construction with a Spanish version of a possessive when he writes, “‘*El Palacio del Miedo*.’” The repetition of the possessive phrases in both languages urges the English reader to recognize that a transliteration has just occurred. Particularly if readers were not familiar with Spanish, these sorts of phrasings would seem strange. Does Hemingway choose to include English and Spanish side by side to make the reader feel connected to the experience of being immersed in a language, or does he seek to keep the reader at arm's length in order to build up his own personal ethos as a “fluent” Spanish speaker?

In order to make sense of why Hemingway utilizes both languages, the reader must also pay attention to overt passages that discuss how the Spanish language affects Jordan's interactions with his Spanish-speaking comrades. For this, one last passage should be close read in order to highlight the function of Spanish within the novel and to elucidate Hemingway's problematic use of language as an ideology. As Jordan ruminates on his time in the war and his method of survival, he thinks to himself, "You learn in this war if you listen. You most certainly did. He was lucky that he had lived parts of ten years in Spain before the war" (135). As cited earlier, Jordan then goes on to ponder how he was accepted by the Spaniards for knowing their language, village, and trade, but that he concludes Spaniards will always turn on an outsider and even another Spaniard. In this passage though, Hemingway posits Jordan as a comrade with the Spanish peasants and not as an outsider. Hence, Jordan's relationship with the Spanish speakers has now transformed from the use of the formal *you* address to that of *thee* and *thy*, or *tú* in Spanish. Now that Jordan feels comfortable with the Spaniards, he only uses *thee* and *thy* to speak with them from here on in the novel. Though *thee* and *thy* are so widespread throughout the novel along with generous sprinklings of Spanish words and phrases, the audience only gets a partial view of what the Spanish conversations are like. In this way, Hemingway keeps the audience in a liminal position so as to emphasize the foreignness of the action, to immerse the readers in the setting of the novel, and to position Jordan as the mediator between Spanish and American culture.

As exemplified in the last passage, Hemingway writes about Jordan's meta-linguistic rumination to show the perceived value of language in interactions with his Spanish comrades. With these examples of the use of language in mind, readers must question Hemingway's rhetorical purpose for at once distancing and immersing readers in such a foreign experience.

Here lies the main issue with Hemingway's use of translation in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

Hemingway frequently references how much Jordan is a part of Spanish culture. While assuming this to be a *roman a clef* would be problematic without clear primary evidence, Hemingway no doubt uses Jordan to assume a place within Spanish culture. The above excerpt is only one of many that generalize all Spaniards as acting or thinking a certain way. At the very least, *Jordan* thinks that he is an honorary Spaniard because of his cultural capital in speaking Spanish and knowing "[their] village[s] and trade[s]" (135). Jordan also recognizes his own liminal position, though, when he recounts, "Of course they turned on you. [...] They always turned on everyone" (135). Here, Hemingway accounts for a sense of Jordan's own foreignness, for an understanding that not all people can be generalized, and for a self-awareness of his assumptions. Hemingway is both identifying Jordan as a part of a culture and distancing him from ever fully understanding the identity of the people in one quick turn of phrase.

Through this free indirect discourse, Robert Jordan questions the nature of the Spanish people while at other times he also questions the nature of being American. While dining with Pablo's band, Jordan thinks, "Remembering to bring the whiskey was one of the reasons he loved these people. Don't go romanticizing them, he thought. There are as many sorts of Spanish as there are Americans. But still, bringing the whiskey was very handsome" (204-205). Again, at the end of the novel, Jordan questions the nature of the Spanish people while in a rage, then he negates his previous thoughts, much as in the last passage, to be more moderate in his views. He begins, "Oh, muck my grandfather and muck this whole treacherous muckfaced mucking country and every mucking Spaniard in it on either side and to hell forever. [...] If that were true what are you here for? It's not true and you know it. Look at all the good ones. Look at all the fine ones. He could not bear to be unjust" (369-370). Jordan makes extremely general and essentialist

claims about the Spanish people because of his rage when Pablo steals ammunition for the bridge. While such claims are not justified, Jordan switches from his bigoted thoughts to moderately giving credit to individuals instead of lumping an entire group of people into one box. Though the reader may read these scenes and be appalled at Hemingway's insensitivity and injustice toward Spaniards when he has no right to judge them, Hemingway allows enough room in Jordan's thoughts so as to propel the reader to question the nature of prejudice and blind assumptions that Jordan makes.

I argue finally that this inability to feel at home in a foreign culture (and a refusal to allow an audience to feel at home in a foreign setting) creates an uncanny reading experience in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway uses language as a vehicle for creating an atmosphere of being unhoused and not at home. While Hemingway has Jordan assume a sense of cultural parity with the Spaniards (which is problematic in itself), Jordan also problematizes his own cultural awareness by recognizing his prejudices and unfair assumptions. Does this mean that Hemingway can be excused for generalizing a whole group of people and for positing his protagonist as an expert on all things Spanish, in contrast to an audience that is consistently kept out of understanding that experience? Perhaps not. Yet, Hemingway does employ language as a vehicle for exposing and exploring identity that is fascinating and powerful. Whether the audience feels familiar or uncannily formal by reading *thees*, *thous*, transliterations, and meta-narratives about Spanish culture, Hemingway consistently calls into question the value of language as a signifier of identity that allows for questions and self-reflection for one's own relationship with a mother tongue.

## LANGUAGE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Hemingway highlights the experience of language throughout the novel, principally noticed when names, phrases, and personal expressions are italicized in Spanish. These examples showcase the intrinsic interplay between language and experience that is woven throughout the novel. The protagonist, Robert Jordan, is referred to throughout the novel as (*Don*) *Roberto*, *Inglés*, or by his English name. However, Jordan's English name is used by the narrator and not the Spanish characters—interestingly, the Spanish speakers refer to Jordan as *Inglés* which means English and not American, so that he is constantly referred to by the wrong nationality. While the narration is in English, it is helpful to note that all conversations and many of Jordan's free indirect discourse thoughts are translated from Spanish to English without mention of the translation. Therefore, instances of Spanish words remind the reader of the foreignness of the text and of the idiomatic nature of these speakers of Spanish. Further, besides Jordan's name, Anselmo is frequently referred to as *viejo* and Maria<sup>5</sup>, a Spanish girl living with the guerilla fighters and Jordan's love interest, is referred to as *guapa* and rabbit. These nicknames serve to emphasize not only the familiar relationship between the characters, but also to lend a sense of familiarity of the Spanish language to the reader. In addition, common Spanish phrases like *hombre*, *mujer*, *qué va*, *vámanos*, and others are dotted throughout the text without translation so that they become a regular feature of the dialogue and contribute to a sense of familiarity for the reader. Hemingway also uses idiomatic obscene phrases like *me cago en la leche*, roughly

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<sup>5</sup> Again, Hemingway omits an accent when he writes this character's name. Typically, that name would be spelled *María*.

translated as *I shit in the milk*, sometimes compounded with other phrases like *I shit in the milk of your mother*. Here, Hemingway bypasses censorship on obscenities in English and adds a sense of local color to the text. Each of these specific instances highlights the foreignness of reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls* for American readers, particularly since many readers will not speak Spanish.

Another example of the use of Spanish phrases throughout the text occurs when characters express intense emotion or personal feeling. These expressions are not always translated, but the point is that they emphasize Spanish as a unique means of communicating emotion that deserves to be printed and read by English speaking readers. For instance, one such scene of intense emotion that is paired with commentary on the Spanish language occurs when Jordan contemplates how Sordo's men are aerially attacked while fighting on a hill. In a related, historical incident, Hemingway describes the bombing of a band of men in Tortosa: "Ahead of us all this time, the Heinkels were circling and diving with the mechanical monotony of movement of a quiet afternoon at a six-day bike race. And, under them, a company of men lay behind rocks in hastily dug fox holes and in simple folds of the ground, trying to hold up the advance of an army" (284). Though this description comes from Hemingway's NANA dispatch from April 15, 1938, he uses similar language to narrate the scene with El Sordo's men; this simple imagery of a small number of men defending against a whole army is powerful in itself.

To illustrate a similar scene in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway gives voice to the men who died defending the Republic, and he makes use of the Spanish language in order to convey the emotional depth of feeling that must accompany such a doomed fight. In this way, Hemingway unites Spanish idioms with the scene of impending death so that the language is intimately entwined with the war experience. The narrator muses, "how does it go in Spanish?"

*Un callejón sin salida*. A passageway with no exit. I could go through with it alright. You only have to do it once and it is soon over with. But wouldn't it be a luxury to fight in a war sometime where, when you were surrounded, you could surrender? *Estamos copados*. We are surrounded. That was the great panic cry of this war" (306). Again, Spanish is used during the same scene when the narrator describes Joaquín, a member of Sordo's band, lying on the hill with Sordo's surrounded men. The narrator remarks, "he lay waiting for the planes to come and he thought of a joke in Spanish. It was, '*Hay que tomar la muerte como si fuera aspirina*,' which means, 'You will have to take death as an aspirin.'" (308). Joaquín then goes on to repeat the Communist motto to himself as the planes do come and he is preparing to die. "'*Resistir y fortificar es vencer*,' Joaquín said, his mouth stiff with the dryness of fear which surpassed the normal thirst of battle. It was one of the slogans of the Communist party and it meant, 'Hold out and fortify, and you will win.'" (308). Other such examples later in the novel include "'*Qué cosa más mala es la guerra*,' he said to himself, which meant, 'What a bad thing war is'" (322) and "'*Qué puta es la guerra*,' Agustín said. 'War is a bitchery'" (465). Each of these instances of using Spanish phrases occurs in intensely emotional and personal scenes in the novel. The use of Spanish here gives voice to personal experience during the war while also creating an abstraction from clear understanding simply because of the act of translation. Hemingway achieves this abstraction by using translation as a barrier between the reader, the narrator, and the characters. In this way, the war experience becomes ambiguous and is presented through layers of language that remind the reader that they can not fully understand the experience of the Spanish people or the war itself.

Throughout the novel, Jordan also belies his sense of self-doubt and vulnerability as he oscillates between the world of Spanish and his own mind, where he struggles to make the Spanish-speaking world in which he lives a personal reality. Maria seems to be the character that

often propels Jordan into his own thoughts. As Stacey Guill notes, “Pilar and Maria [...] can be appreciated as Hemingway’s feminist homage to ‘The New Woman of Spain’” (8). Further, Alex Link argues, “in presenting the same story to Jordan, as both ‘rabbit’ and ‘Maria,’ she presents to him precisely what he loves in her and, through her, in Spain” (138). Link makes the connection between Maria and Spain because of her nickname “rabbit” since “the 1898 edition of *Brewer’s* gives the first origin of ‘Hispania’ as the Punic word ‘*Span*’ for rabbit (609). According to Trench H. Johnson, when Phoenician explorers arrived at what is now Spain, they named it for the ‘wild rabbits which abounded in the peninsula’ (337)” (135). Maria, as a depiction of the New Woman of Spain, enacts this change in his thinking and allows him to see beyond binaries and national prejudice. Hemingway uses Maria’s name and nickname to suggest a kinship between her and Spain, whereby Jordan is prompted to reevaluate how he grapples with his own identity and what others will make of it.

After sleeping with Maria one night (and by association, becoming intimate with Spain), Jordan begins to realize what sort of effect she has on him and his thinking. He comments, “That was one thing sleeping with Maria had done. He had gotten to be [...] bigoted [...] and phrases like enemies of the people came into his mind without his much criticizing them in any way. Any sort of clichés both revolutionary and patriotic. His mind employed them without criticism. Of course they were true but it was too easy to be nimble about using them” (164). Jordan then goes on to wonder how his life would be if he moved back to the United States with Maria. He speculates, “I suppose that I am ticketed as a Red there now for good [...]. Though you never know. You never can tell. There’s no proof of what you do, and as a matter of fact they would never believe it if you told them [...].” (165). Here, Jordan begins to question his politics and how he thinks freely about the war along with how he can communicate his experiences if he

were to go home to the United States. As when Pilar tells the story of Ávila, Jordan begins to understand that stories of oneself are meant to make others feel what you did; however, from his association of Maria to the idea of a New Spain, he begins to realize that not all experiences can be communicated, particularly across cultural divides.

This realization is acted out when Jordan attempts to show his knowledge of Gredos, a village in Spain, in order to convince El Sordo and Pilar of a different route after their attack has ended. In this scene, Pilar snaps at Jordan for interfering in their discussion: “‘It is thy business,’ Robert Jordan said. ‘I do not put my hand in it.’ ‘But you did,’ Pilar said. ‘[...] go back to the Republic but do not shut the door on others who are not foreigners and who loved the Republic when thou wert wiping thy mother’s milk off thy chin’” (150). From Jordan’s realization earlier in the novel, he understands the consequences of his actions even before Pilar reprimands him. He explains his folly by saying to himself, “And I have made a mistake, Robert Jordan thought to himself. I have told Spaniards we can do something better than they can when the rule is never to speak of your own exploits or abilities. When I should have flattered them I have told them what I think they should do and now they are furious” (148). Although Jordan seems to assume an essentialized version of the Spanish people and how they will react in a given situation, Jordan both reinforces and challenges the idea that this American novelist, Hemingway, is imposing his voice and culture upon that of the Spanish people. Hemingway then exposes strategic essentialism, to use a term from Spivak and defined in the *Postcolonial Studies Dictionary* as “[a] form of essentializing useful in that it furthers the interests of particular communities, especially historically oppressed or marginalized ones, when they make claims as a homogenous community with shared needs and aspirations out of necessity and for a political purpose” (142). Typically this term is used to describe a method used by the marginalized groups

themselves to push against an oppressive authority, however I argue that Hemingway uses Jordan to complicate essentialism and to show that the peasants of the novel, though not consciously, are engaging in strategic essentialism to oppose fascism and fight for the Republic. This tactic is crude and interesting both because the complexity of Jordan's experience during the war allows the reader to question his motives, actions, and perception of the world as he simultaneously questions these features himself and because the Spanish peasants are the given voice and complexity that characterized their fight during the war but that had not clearly been told to an English speaking audience, particularly from countries who chose to remain neutral in the conflict.

## LANGUAGE AND PERSONAL IDENTITY

Throughout the novel, Jordan questions his own understanding of language so that instances of a meta-linguistics coincide with instances of heavy translation. For instance, when Jordan is walking with Maria after a passionate encounter in a field, his mind wanders for most of the chapter over various topics. During one such rumination, Jordan recounts how he feels he has rapidly experienced true life by being with Maria and the band of fighters in the mountains. Jordan also questions himself in almost every paragraph as to his beliefs and perceptions of his experiences in the war and his perception of killing and death. He wonders, “did big words make it [demolition] more defensible? Did they make killing any more palatable?” (165). Shortly after, Jordan then engages in a semantic argument with himself about the nature of words and how to describe his sudden zest for life while being with this band. He asks:

So if your life trades its seventy years for seventy hours I have that value now and I am lucky enough to know it. And if there is not any such thing as a long time, nor the rest of your lives, nor from now on, but there is only now, why then now is the thing to praise and I am very happy with it. Now, *ahora, maintenant, heute*. Now, tonight, *ce soir, heute abend*. Life and wife, *Vie and Mari*. No it didn't work out. The French turned it into husband. There was now and *frau*; but that did not prove anything either. Take dead, *mort, muerto*, and *todt*. *Todt* was the deadest of them all. War, *guerre, guerra*, and *krieg*. *Krieg* was the most like war, or was it? Or was it only that he knew German the least well? Sweetheart, *chérie, prenda*, and *schatz*. He would trade them all for Maria. There was a name. 166-167

From this passage, both an anxiety about death and a struggle with the issue of translation are side by side. This pattern of constant confusion within Robert Jordan's stream of consciousness serves to tie together the ambiguity of language and experience as Jordan attempts to make sense of the war-torn country in which he finds himself and the violence to which he has subjected himself by engaging in the fighting.

Because of Jordan's uncertainty about himself and his role in the war, the reader is asked to question the veracity of his experience through the novel's retelling; for example, Jordan frequently remarks upon 'Spanish' qualities in the people and challenges his own understanding of them. As quoted earlier, Jordan thinks, "Of course they turned on you. They turned on you often but they always turned on every one. They turned on themselves, too. If you had three together, two would unite against one, and then the two would start to betray each other. Not always, but often enough for you to take enough cases and start to draw it as a conclusion" (135). At times, Spanish characters also acknowledge their own self-conceived identity, like when Pablo comments, "but a *Spanish* priest. A *Spanish* priest should die very well," to which Pilar counters, "What people the Spaniards are, [...]. And what a people they are for pride, eh, *Inglés?* What a people" (128). Thus, Alex Vernon contends, "Hemingway has forewarned his reader to distrust Jordan's self-serving perspective" (184). The framing of identity in these passages contributes to an overall confusion of what it means to be Spanish as conceived by a self-professed foreigner and a native of the country. While it may seem contradictory to view Jordan as both an essentialist and a challenger of essentialism, Hemingway uses Jordan's free indirect discourse to showcase the questions and emotions encountered by a foreigner who identifies with language but nevertheless grapples with identity.

Hemingway further acknowledges the power of language to confirm or deny the validity of identity through experience in two scenes of the novel. First, Jordan reminisces about his time with his family in Montana and remembers his turbid relationship with his father. He is struck with fear and resentment that cause him to want to avoid his feelings altogether. He remarks, “I’ll never forget how sick it made me the first time I knew he was a *cobarde*. Go on, say it in English. Coward. It’s easier when you have it said and there is never any point in referring to a son of a bitch by some foreign term” (338). Here, Jordan uses language as a means to escape reality, not to explore and confront it as in other scenes where he muses on the power of language to capture his feelings. Even so, language does capture his emotion. He simply avoids this realization at first because identifying with his past causes pain and confusion.

Later, as Jordan prepares to begin the attack on the bridge, he says good-bye to Maria and struggles with his emotions, presumably because of his fear of the attack and death, yet he refuses to put his feelings into exact words. Jordan thinks to himself, “the good-by was only a part of the awkwardness he felt about the meeting. You’re getting them again, he told himself. But I suppose there is no one that does not feel that he is too young to do it. He would not put a name to it” (406). As this scene of good-bye occurs, Jordan remembers when he said good-bye to his father years ago in Montana. Jordan relates the feelings he has at that departure with those that he has now, yet still he fails to give concrete language to what he is feeling. At this point, his failure to verbalize his feelings results not from an insufficient vocabulary, but from a desire to not acknowledge the past and a part of his own identity that recurs in this moment.

Since both of these scenes regarding the power of language to define feelings and identity occur along with Jordan’s memories from the past, it serves to notice that memories, and the language that abstracts them, are another device Hemingway employs in order to keep the reader

at a distance from the action in the novel and to express the ineffability of the character's experience in the war. Memories, whether from long ago or from days ago, are easily misrepresented in the mind, yet they still have profound effects on the person remembering. Similarly, language skews meaning but also deeply influences the way that a person perceives the world, even if no language is exact enough to depict their perceptions. As Mark Cirino astutely notes when discussing Hemingway's use of memory, "he is describing memory the way most of us experience it" (152). From this scarcity of language, Hemingway utilizes free indirect discourse in order for Jordan to make sense of himself and his surroundings, even though he instinctively knows that his experience cannot be pinned down by language.

In one such scene of memory, Robert Jordan remembers talking with his grandfather about battles in the Civil War, and he hopes to live up to the strength and courage that his grandfather displayed. During this reminiscing, Jordan remarks, "he had a letter in his things in the trunk in Missoula from General Phil Sheridan to old Killy-the-Horse-Kilpatrick that said his grandfather was a finer leader of irregular cavalry than John Mosby" (339). He then goes on to think he would like to tell General Golz, Jordan's Russian commander, about his grandfather, but that Golz had probably never heard of these Civil War veterans. He also recalls his conversations with Karkov, a Russian journalist and fighter, about him going to the Lenin Institute to be a soldier. This is the same conversation where Karkov discussed writing a book about experiences during the war. One must note that this scene not only recalls instances of written communication that will not be understood, but also that the reason this particular letter about the Civil War will not be understood is because of a language and cultural barrier between the Russians and Jordan, both speaking in Spanish. Jordan remembers his grandfather as a source of inspiration and nostalgia, however he realizes that no matter how he could try to communicate

this memory or part of his identity formation, his audience somehow always seems to be unable to understand, because of context or language or both.

On a larger level, Hemingway is also not capable of translating his experience of the war to his American readers, so he uses abstraction through language to highlight the differences between what Americans believe the war to be and what it might actually be, though no one can effectively communicate what that is: even “the US government itself wrestled with the question of PCE and USSR influence over the Republic” (Vernon 66). Hemingway has no doubt, however, that the American idea of Red Communism is not the same as Communism for the Republic in Spain, and he tries, although he realizes full comprehension may fail, to tell the audience a story that will convey this ineffable experience. In that way, though translation theorist David Bellos argues that the ineffable is irrelevant in translation by writing, “the intuitive knowledge that we feel is unique to us and can never be fully identified with anything felt by anyone else. That inexpressible residue of the individual [author in a source language] is ineffable—and the ineffable is precisely what cannot be translated [into a target language]” (151), this argument against conveying ineffability does not apply to *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway is not translating a Spanish novel into English; rather, he is conveying a story that is intrinsically connected and woven between Spanish and English. For this reason, the gap between languages demands a framing of the ineffable because the languages are intimately connected with human experience and identity. As Jordan asserts at the end of the novel, “I wish there was some way to pass on what I’ve learned, though. Christ, I was learning fast there at the end. [...] There’s no *one* thing that is true. It’s all true” (467). Thus, Hemingway utilizes multiple frames within the novel in order to create an ambiguity of language and meaning. This ambiguity seeks to express that truth to which Jordan refers, the aporia of meaning that is both contradictory and

complementary, between English and Spanish, between characters and narrator, between author and audience.

## LANGUAGE AND WAR

Madrid.—The window of the hotel is open and, as you lie in bed, you hear the firing in the front line seventeen blocks away. There is a rifle fire all night long. The rifles go tacrong, capong, craang, tacrong, and then a machine gun opens up. It has a bigger calibre and is much louder, rong, cararong, rong, rong. 262

Hemingway begins his North American Newspaper Alliance (NANA) dispatch titled “A New Kind of War” from April 14, 1937 with these lines narrating the sound of insurgent shellings from his hotel window in Madrid. Throughout the dispatch, Hemingway describes the carnage on the street in gruesome detail and then goes on to tell of his meeting with a wounded American volunteer soldier named Jay Raven. Hemingway speaks to the man about the story of his injury and doubts the veracity of the tale; yet, when Hemingway speaks with Raven’s commanding officer, the officer confirms Raven’s injury story. In response, Hemingway ends his dispatch saying, “This is a strange new war where you learn just as much as you are able to believe” (262-267). Following the rhetoric of this early dispatch from the Spanish Civil War, I argue that in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* Hemingway plays upon repeated references to violence in war, like above when he uses onomatopoeia to describe the guns, in order to bring the reader into the horrors of the conflict. I also assert that he utilizes themes of uncertainty and language, like when he is surprised to learn the truth of Raven’s injury, in order to mimic the experience of participating in this “strange new war.”

Utilizing the dichotomy of language within the novel to highlight personal and moral contradictions, Hemingway allows the reader to experience intense emotion by toggling between expressions in both English and Spanish. The duality of language allows for multiplied meaning and does not trap the reader into one understanding of the interactions between Jordan and the Spanish fighters. Furthering this multiplication of meaning, Hemingway models a “fractured style [...] to find a new language to address traumatic experiences so intense that they cannot be ‘spoken’ in conventional terms” (Strychacz 82, 87). The traumatic experiences are war experiences, and Hemingway takes care to omit instances of translation or complicates the veracity of information in order to amplify ambiguity in the novel so that his formal choices mirror the affect of the characters—that of fragmentation and distrust.

During the course of the novel, Jordan speaks solely in Spanish to his comrades in the mountains with whom he spends the four days of the novel preparing to blow up a strategic bridge. Additionally, Jordan speaks in Spanish to the Russian leaders who are leading the Spanish revolutionary fight against the Fascists. Some of these leaders are also from France and have come to aid in the war with the International Brigades. As such, with the exception of the native guerrilla fighters, hardly anyone speaks their native tongue. The audience generally does not know when Jordan is thinking in Spanish or English because the narrative is written in English, and most of the Spanish conversation is omitted in its original language. As Leo Gurko notes, “A good deal of the book consists of thoughts passing through Jordan’s mind. These, of course, are in English and contrast dramatically with the flow of his language when he is actually speaking” (115). This use of an invisible, yet palpable translator creates layers of ambiguity that Hemingway uses to separate the reader from the text much in the way that the characters are

separated from understanding their experience of the war due to the inability of language to fully express their experience.

Hemingway uses translation as an act of giving language to the ineffable, specifically when the ineffable is an experience that the American audience, and to some extent Hemingway himself, does not have access to. Hemingway's portrayal of the war, while not a preexisting facet of the Spanish language or the Spanish experience of the war, now becomes a part of that experience and language because of the way he takes ownership of it. While this can be seen as an appropriation of Spanish culture, Hemingway somehow convincingly gives credence to his own depiction of the Spanish Civil War because of his portrayal of performance and by creating a level of ambiguity between the characters, the narrator, and the audience. From this ambiguity, Hemingway allows the reader to feel just as much of an outsider as the narrator, and Jordan, while also inviting the reader to be an insider into this war experience through his manipulation of language. Since Jordan is constantly acknowledged as both a non-native Spaniard and as an *Inglés*, Hemingway does not let the reader forget that American involvement in the war is limited and that Jordan does not belong with the Spanish band. However, Jordan acknowledges his presence as an outsider through his musings on the nature of language and his choice to participate in the conflict. In this way, Jordan is not unaware of his foreignness, nor does he try to become Spanish, but he allows his foreignness to give him a relationship to the reader as an observer while also utilizing this status as an outsider to show the ineffable nature of the war experience and of the experience of another culture.

In order to illustrate the ineffability of war, Hemingway uses translation as a key to adding multiplicity to meaning. Though the work of Walter Benjamin is convoluted, tangled, and at times contradictory, his writing on translation is helpful to understand Hemingway's strategic

work as a translator when he posits, “the basic error of the translator is that he preserves the state in which his own language happens to be instead of allowing his language to be powerfully affected by the foreign tongue” (22). Hemingway indeed allows his English to be influenced by the Spanish, so much so that the level of meaning is amplified and made ambiguous by the translation so that experience is seen as more complex. In this way, by capturing experience that defies simple explanation or language, I argue that Hemingway refutes David Bellos’ earlier stated claim, “That inexpressible residue of the individual is ineffable—and the ineffable is precisely what cannot be translated” (151). Bellos makes this argument in response to translators who, to his thinking, concern themselves too much with attempting to translate phrases or cultural situations that carry emotional weight to the translator. These instances, Bellos argues, cannot be exactly described in any language, so that translating such personal connotations is fruitless. In contrast, while translators of work originally published in another language may not be responsible for the ineffable, Hemingway as author must craft his narrator and Jordan as translators of language and experience even though the audience fails to see this transaction. In this way, the ineffable is precisely the point because translation proves the complexity of experience and the intrinsic connection between language and identity, between dynamic language and dynamic portrayal of identity through experience.

Writers and artists alike, from Orwell to Picasso, documented the Spanish Civil War for its carnage and destruction of civilian lives and settlements by the Axis powers, yet Hemingway also portrays the infrastructure and instability of the Republic, acting as proxy to the Soviet Union, in his novel. Hemingway depicts an International Brigades fighter from the United States, Robert Jordan, during four days in the countryside of Extremadura where he encounters civilian guerrilla fighters for the Republican cause and leads them in the demolition of a strategic bridge.

The novel takes care to engage with the politics of the war (Fascism versus Communism); but more importantly, the novel engages with the personal lives of civilians affected by the atrocities of this conflict and how they make sense of their situation. Hemingway chooses to narrate the experiences of Jordan and the guerrilla band as a means of exploring the individual lives and consequences of war in order to show the injustice of both violence and politics. However, the character of Robert Jordan, as much as he strives to connect with the peasant fighters, is in fact a privileged member of the bourgeoisie (or at least associates with them in Madrid); as a result, Jordan can not fully connect with the peasant proletariat even though he prides himself on understanding their language and customs and prefers to spend his time in their company.

To this end, Marxist notions of interpellation and relative autonomy are exposed through participants in Spanish society. Robert Dale Parker defines interpellation as, “the process of being passively, unconsciously drawn into dominant social assumptions” (234) and defines relative autonomy as, “the superstructure’s partial independence from the base. Relative autonomy suggests at least a little independence from the clutches of the system, from interpellation, but such independence does not have to come in the form of individualism” (235). In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Jordan is interpellated into the bourgeoisie but attempts to resist this association through a sense of relative autonomy while the peasants are interpellated into the proletariat but seek independence from the system in which they are entrenched. Yet reading the text through a Marxist lens does not also suggest that the novel portrays Marxist agreement with Communist ideology during the Spanish Civil War. Additionally, since the text itself presents multiplicities of perspectives on the war, a purely Marxist reading of the novel also fails to capture the reality of human motivation and suffering present in the lives of the characters. Even so, Hemingway invites the reader to explore the novel through a Marxist lens if not as an end in

and of itself, but as a vehicle (much like the Marxist politics of the war were simply a vehicle) of understanding the complexities of coping with human suffering and war. The Marxist terms of proletariat and bourgeoisie also help the audience distinguish between the Spanish peasants and Robert Jordan (as a part of the International Brigade), and I outline the various gaps in understanding between the two groups. This gap in understanding is both stark because of prior experiences, notably Jordan's freedom of mobility versus that of the peasants and his differing national identity, but the gap is also ambiguous because despite Jordan's position of privilege, he seeks to tell the story of the war in all of its contradictions, even acknowledging his own contradictions in the process. The ambiguity of the class and cultural distinctions between Jordan and the Spanish peasants is the main tension in the novel and serves to more realistically portray the experience of the war from an outside perspective.

Beginning in 1937, Hemingway set out on several expeditions to Spain in order to cover the Spanish Civil War for a variety of news publications. During this time, Hemingway gained a first hand account of the brutalities of this new type of war that would serve as a precursor to the aerial bombings of civilian spaces less than a decade later. Recounting the war in fiction, Robert Jordan joins the International Brigades since the United States chose a position of neutrality regarding the Spanish Civil War. He thus takes orders from Soviet forces leading the Republican fight against the Spanish Nationalists. While this description of Jordan's position in the war is apt, one must note that the Spanish fight against the Nationalists, and even the International Brigades' fight against Fascism, is much more complicated than Communism fighting Fascism. As Robert E. Fleming notes in his essay on Hemingway's politics, "*For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940) was critical not merely of the International Brigades, 'Soviet-style 'secret police and ... propaganda agents [but also of] Communist ideology'" (293). Exposing these nuances allows

Hemingway to explore the class relations of Spain within the novel without aligning his writing specifically to one side. To that end, neither left wing nor right wing political terminology neatly makes sense as descriptors of how he is dealing with the conflict as an outsider. James R. Mellow quotes Hemingway as saying there is “no left and no right in writing. There is only good and bad writing” (477), yet he also states in a letter to his friend Harry Sylvester, “The Spanish war is a bad war, Harry, and nobody is right. [...] It’s none of my business and I’m not making [sic] it mine but my sympathies are always for exploited working people against absentee landlords even if I drink around with the landlords and shoot pigeons with them. I would as soon shoot them as the pigeons” (456). From these quotes, Hemingway represents himself as a member of and advocate against the cultural elite. He therefore writes as both a successful American author and using the style of simplistic realism to give voice to the masses. He himself is a part of the bourgeoisie while attempting to exercise his relative autonomy, much like Jordan, in how he participates in and portrays the horrors of the war as an advocate for the Spanish people.

Hemingway allows the reader to see a multitude of power structures that at once are opposed and also working simultaneously. This dual nature of the novel allows Hemingway to examine the Spanish people while also criticizing these people in the process. I analyze how Hemingway explores the free play of storytelling through language and communication in order to further tell the confusing experience of war by multiplying meaning in his use of meta-narrative and translation. By allowing this multiplicity of meaning to coexist, Hemingway points out the nuances of the Spanish Civil War that transcend political affiliation and argues that times of war are full of contradictions and paradoxes because of the chaos surrounding the revolutionary landscape.

Through Jordan's free indirect discourse in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Hemingway presents a frame by which to evaluate the Russian Communist leaders alongside the Fascist leaders who both commit injustices to the detriment of the common Spanish people. Neither ideology is championed, and yet Jordan fights squarely on the Republican (and presumably Communist) side. In fact, Elizabeth Roberts remarks, "In reaction to both works [*For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *Homage to Catalonia* by Orwell] there is a palpable sense of disappointment that an author with the talent to command public attention failed to portray the Republican cause in a wholly favourable light" (131). In this way, Hemingway uses characters who fight for the Republic to show the class divisions and injustices of Spain in the 1930s while also using the characters as critical lenses of the structures within which they operate. In David Winston Conklin's chapter concerned with Hemingway's use of macro and micro theories of revolution, he addresses Hemingway's approach to Marxism saying, "Ultimately, particular types of ideology [Marxism] as well as political and economic conditions cannot explain comprehensively why individuals rebel. [...] but apart from assuming ideology, they do not explain an individual's embrace of ideology as a justification for action" (Conklin 154). While Conklin argues in his essay that micro theories of individuality have more effect in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in dictating behavior, I argue that characters instead fight for democratic principles that free peasants to live autonomous lives and have a voice in their government and that these motivations bring together people from disparate backgrounds to have a shared emotional and psychological experience.

Throughout the novel, Jordan notes that he is not ideologically aligned with Marxist principles, but instead fights under the Russians only because they serve as an institutional vehicle powerful enough to oppose Franco's forces of authoritarianism. As Jordan is preparing to

blow up the bridge, he thinks to himself, “he was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war. Here in Spain, Communists offered the best discipline and the soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the war. [...] They were the only party whose program and whose discipline he could respect” (163). In the same vein, literary critics like Kerstin Hamann explore the characters’ lack of unified political agenda. Hamann writes, “thus rather than offering support for a specific type of polity, or defending a specific political ideology, the political aspect of the novel is more nuanced. It describes the Republican struggle during the war and profoundly depicts the impact of politics in defining people’s lives” (133). Hamann argues that Hemingway could not adopt one ideological perspective for writing about the Spanish Civil War since various factors influenced citizens’ views of the war. Hamann also focuses on Hemingway’s concern with the individual’s rebellion more than with strict adherence to political ideology. I expand on this base of examining rebellion by focusing on the extent of ambiguity and identity within a rebelling environment. Focusing on these ideas highlights Hemingway’s manipulation of certainty in language or culture in order to explain how individuals cope with the complexities of war.

As a further example of how Hemingway questions divisions in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Jordan thinks to himself about his own motivations for joining the war and whether or not he wants to champion the people for whom he is fighting. Jordan describes himself saying, “You went into it knowing what you were fighting for. You were fighting against exactly what you were doing and being forced into doing to have any chance of winning. [...] but the Republic would have to get rid of all of that bunch of horse thieves that brought it to the pass it was in when the rebellion started. Was there ever a people whose leaders were as truly their enemies as this one?” (Hemingway 162-163). Jordan’s comment serves to emphasize the failure of grouping

together members of a nation or cause while also essentializing the Spanish people and their leaders. However, Jordan is right to muse about himself, “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. [...] If this war is lost all of those things are lost” (305). In this example, Jordan fluctuates in how he views his own position in Spain, recognizing that he is following orders that he does not agree with, but that he also does so for the furtherance of his cause, the Republic, and more so, for democracy. The tension between how he views his position, as an outsider, is further amplified when he explores his relationship to the Spanish people with whom he is fighting. As noted previously, Hemingway utilizes language as a chief mechanism to show both fragmentation and emotional complexity as Jordan attempts to reconcile his understanding of himself, the Spanish people, and his role within the war.

As Jordan continually reassesses his knowledge of the Spanish people, he fluctuates between generalizing the nation as a whole while also becoming extremely attached to individuals and the experiences he shares with them. Jordan again sleeps with Maria, this time after she tells him of the execution of her parents and her own rape. From this knowledge, he thinks more and more about her people, the ones who abused her, and his relationship to them. He criticizes the Spanish while also acknowledging his own inability to grasp the complexities of human experience outside of his own experience. Jordan wonders, “What a people they have been. What sons of bitches they have produced. [...] There is no finer and no worse people in the world. No kinder people and no crueler. And who understands them? Not me, because if I did, I would forgive it all. To understand is to forgive. [...] In English he whispered very quietly, “I’d like to marry you, rabbit. I’m very proud of your family” (354-355). Not only does Jordan demonize the people when he is upset, but he also continually revises his assumptions and

arrives at even more dubious conclusions. Now that language and knowledge are stripped of power in and of themselves, Jordan must grapple with the nature of truth and experience on his own terms. Even so, he still unconsciously holds on to his English language as a source of identity and comfort as he uses it to confess his love to Maria, thereby masking his own vulnerability unnecessarily even when she is asleep.

Hemingway sets up Jordan's privilege and social distance from the peasants as he describes Jordan's experience at Gaylord's Hotel where the protagonist remembers his political and ideological shifts to accept the dominant Soviet system of conducting war affairs. Where Jordan is earlier noted to be employing what Spivak would call the 'strategic essentialism' of Marxist principles to achieve his goal of a democratic Spanish Republic, Jordan is also shown as interpellated into Communist ideology and the bourgeoisie through his acceptance of Soviet customs. In this way, Jordan appears to be interpellated into the Communist form of war so much so that he acknowledges his own contradictions as if suggesting his relative autonomy, but also allows himself to be swayed by the system set up at Gaylord's. Jordan admits:

If a thing was right fundamentally the lying was not supposed to matter. [...] He did not care for the lying at first. He hated it. Then later he had come to like it. [...] You couldn't wait for the real Peasant Leader to arrive and he might have too many peasant characteristics when he did. So you had to manufacture one. [...] At the start when he had still believed all of the nonsense it had come as a shock to him. But now he knew enough to accept the necessity for all of the deception and what he learned at Gaylord's only strengthened him in his belief in the things that he did hold to be true. 229-230

When Jordan recounts his time at Gaylord's, he first comments on how "he had not liked Gaylord's, the hotel in Madrid the Russians had taken over, when he first went there because it

seemed too luxurious and the food was too good for a besieged city and the talk too cynical for a war. But I corrupted very easily” (228). In these passages, Hemingway shows Jordan’s malleable ideology as the means by which he makes sense of the war and how he succeeds in gaining trust within the Russian ranks. Not only do his initial perceptions of the war change by being at Gaylord’s, but he also begins to question the nature of truth in communication. This theme of ambiguity in communication, even deception or avoidance of communicating, persists throughout the novel and amplifies Jordan’s uncertainty about his personal identity and how he views the Spanish cause.

Another such instance of ambiguous communication involves Karkov, the Russian journalist, and his memories of the war as he speaks with Jordan in Spanish. This scene, like many of Jordan’s other memories of Karkov, involves multiple layers of abstraction; first, like the scene aforementioned, because Karkov’s native tongue is Russian and he comes from a different background than Jordan, they both speak Spanish to each other. Even more abstraction occurs because Jordan is remembering his discussion with Karkov where Karkov tells Jordan about his memories of the war. Jordan narrates, “Karkov was not cynical about those times either when he talked. [...] The government had abandoned the city, taking all the motor cars from the ministry of war in their flight and old Miaja had to ride down to inspect his defensive positions on a bicycle. Robert Jordan did not believe that one. He could not see Miaja on a bicycle even in his most patriotic imagination, but Karkov said it was true. But then he probably wanted to believe it was true after writing it” (237). In this same scene, Karkov asserts, “‘*nuestra gloriosa tropa siga avanzado sin perder ni una sola palma de terreno,*’ Karkov said in his strange Spanish. ‘It didn’t really say that,’ Robert Jordan doubted. ‘Our glorious troops continue to advance without losing a foot of ground,’ Karkov repeated in English” (239). Karkov finishes the

scene by telling Jordan, “‘you are not supposed to like things. Only to understand,’ Karkov had told him. ‘I teach you a little each time I see you and eventually you will acquire an education. It would be very interesting for a professor to be educated’” (244). To add to the confusion of the scene, Karkov’s assertions are doubtful and most likely lack truth behind them, yet he insists that Jordan is gaining “an education” from him by their discussions. Clearly the education transcends knowledge, at least university knowledge, and yet it is based on “understanding.” If Jordan is to understand, Karkov posits that he does not need facts or truth, but simply to find meaning and familiarity with the system. Thus, Karkov pushes Jordan to question his notion of truth altogether, a question that Hemingway reiterates throughout the novel about the veracity of identity and war as well. Within the frames of the scene, Hemingway sets up multiple layers of abstraction in order to distance Jordan and the reader from facts or truth and the reality of the recalled situation. As such, Jordan realizes that notions of his identity, the identity of the Spanish people, and the nature of war are fractured: therefore, the statement “there’s no one thing that’s true; it’s all true” (467) speaks to Jordan’s understanding of identity, war, and truth itself.

As an example of how Jordan separates himself from the lavish lives of the Russians and more closely aligns with the Spanish peasants in the wartime effort, Jordan again recalls Gaylord’s and is thankful for his new knowledge of how the Russian system works. From the same passage quoted earlier, Jordan remembers, “Sure, Gaylord’s was the place you needed to complete your education. It was there you learned how it was all really done instead of how it was supposed to be done. He had only started his education, he thought” (230). From this reflection on his time in Madrid, Jordan both acknowledges his lack of insight into the war and admits his own disillusionment that truth is not necessarily true or valued by the Russians. The Russians use written literature and journalism to disseminate information that may or may not be

true. In this way, translation is invisible as Russians write in Spanish in order to affect change during the war, but no such translation is credited as a part of them distancing the public from the true happenings of the Communist leaders. Jordan claims to accept this depiction of reality, but he also pushes against the idea at some point in his “education.” The memory of Gaylord’s reminds him of the instability associated with truth and reality and the power of language to affect such a distortion of meaning.

## LANGUAGE AND WAR WRITING

While Hemingway was reporting on the Spanish Civil War, he frequently wrote in letters and dispatches about the tension between truth telling and writing what was allowed by the censors. When writing to his then mother-in-law in January of 1938, Hemingway discusses going to and from the United States for his reporting since he says, “You have to get out of the country to write your uncensored stuff” (458). Again, when writing a dispatch in September of that year, Hemingway narrates an encounter with a fellow journalist who asserts, ““There is a terror here [in Madrid]”” (294). Throughout the dispatch, titled “Fresh Air on an Inside Story,” Hemingway simply recounts how the man had only been in Madrid for one night, without truly going outside, so that he could not have known what Madrid was really like, only his perceived conception of what it should be like during the war. The unnamed journalist even attempts to persuade “an American woman journalist [possibly Martha Gellhorn]” (295) to deliver a sealed envelope with an “already censored dispatch of his from the Teruel front” (295). Hemingway instead delivers the envelope to the Censorship office only to discover that the journalist was attempting to report on this “terror in Madrid”—a terror that Hemingway had already confirmed was at bay due to government intervention. As such, Hemingway is infuriated that the man would put the American journalist in danger of being shot as a spy had she been caught with his envelope containing false information. Hemingway wryly concludes this dispatch by musing:

If a censorship does not permit a newspaper man to write the truth the newspaper man can try to beat the censorship under penalty of expulsion if caught. [...] The remarkable story at that time was that there was no terror in Madrid. But that was too dull for him.

It would have interested his newspaper though because oddly enough it happened to be a newspaper that has been interested for a long time in the truth. 297

These examples of Hemingway's experience during the war concretize my assertion that the author frequently calls the written word into question, both in his non-fiction and in his fiction. The effect of such questioning highlights Hemingway's famous assertion that writing is about telling the truth.

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* includes several scenes in which the efficacy of the written word is called into question. Many of these such scenes involve the dissemination of news during the war, which touches on the connection between writing journalism and writing literature that both Hemingway and characters like Jordan and Karkov must navigate. As noted earlier, Jordan ruminates on his time at the Gaylord Hotel in Madrid where the Russians have headquarters for the Republican side of the war. Once again, Jordan references his experiences with the journalist Karkov who tells him stories about the war prior to Jordan entering. During this lengthy reverie, Jordan thinks to himself that "he could not see Miaja on a bicycle even in his most patriotic imagination, but Karkov said it was true. But then he had written it for Russian papers so he probably wanted to believe it was true after writing it" (237). From this memory, Jordan recalls Karkov's words, presumably in Spanish, though he notes that Karkov can also speak English. In this example, Jordan highlights the use of writing to transform the truth of a situation, not just for the readers, but also for the author who may have prevaricated the story. Another such example involves a different conversation between Jordan and Karkov in which Jordan asserts, "but to

get a full picture of what is happening you cannot read only the party organ.’ ‘No,’ Karkov had said. ‘But you will not find any such picture if you read twenty papers and then, if you had it, I do not know what you would do with it. I have such a picture almost constantly and what I do is try to forget it’” (246). This exchange only further highlights the lack of veracity in newspapers circulated at the time, and even more, the lack of willingness from those who know the truths of war to want to cope with them. In this way, Hemingway allows the reader to see the necessity for falsehoods within written accounts and also to question whether such falsehoods are right to make the account more bearable or simply more polished for the audience. With this in mind, characters in both examples question the veracity of communication during the war while also pointing out the layers of hidden meaning embedded in translating spoken linguistic experience into written language. Hemingway utilizes the novel itself to expose these layers of meaning and to attempt to tell the truth about experiencing the war, even though the truth-telling act is confusing and is enacted in a work of fiction.

Throughout the novel, Jordan finds that relating his experiences through writing seems cathartic for him, yet this catharsis is only rendered to the audience through an omniscient narrator. After the most passionate scene of the novel with Maria, Jordan’s mind wanders to contemplating his convoluted feelings about war. In this way, Jordan sums up his discomfort with killing by musing, “my guess is you will get rid of all that by writing about it [...]. It will be a good book if you can write it. Much better than the last” (165). In addition, through reminiscing about speaking with Karkov, Jordan remembers that Karkov mentioned he wanted to write a book about the war “which is very necessary” since “I am a journalist. But like all journalists I wish to write literature” (244). Even so, Karkov “had read the one and only book [Robert Jordan] had published. The book had not been a success. [...] but Karkov said it was a

good book. 'I think you write absolutely truly and that is very rare.' All right. He would write a book when he got through with this. But only the things he knew truly, and about what he knew" (248). The act of writing thus also becomes a channel for Jordan to rid himself of his conflicting emotions about the war as a method of 'truth-telling,' yet this story still only exists in his head and not on paper. Assumedly, the text in front of the reader is a false representation of what Jordan experienced, and the text itself is a layer between experience and the retelling. Interestingly enough, the reader is still unaware (aside from the hint in the epigraph) that Jordan will not live to tell his story in print so that the tension and uncertainty of the outcome is heightened until the ending. Even then, however, the novel ends before Jordan actually dies but leaves room to guess whether or not he committed suicide or died in battle, almost as a memoir would end right before the author's death. While Hemingway as author, Jordan as protagonist, and the omniscient narrator cannot be conflated, the novel presents a confusing play between written novel and experienced reality and the nature of fidelity to either reality.

Throughout the text, Jordan also muses on his choice of words within his proposed published novel, at times choosing to omit or condense scenes in order to effectively convey his story and to eliminate disunity for the intended reader. When Jordan mentally examines the politics and multiplicity of motives within the Spanish government and armies, he notes that their leaders seem to be "enemies of the people" (163). Jordan then goes on to strike out his assertion by thinking, "that was a phrase he might omit. That was a catch phrase he might skip" (163-164). Jordan rationalizes this decision by considering his lack of knowledge of the people and their backgrounds so that he cannot justify writing about them in such stark terms without evidence. On the other hand, Jordan made this particular assertion because of his experiences with the people and because of his sympathy with their plight. Noting the inherent contradiction

of respecting a people while also slighting them, Jordan chooses to omit this dissonance in his imagined text so as to alleviate his internal discomfort about having to balance the paradoxes he notices during the war. Within the narrative frame though, such observations and dissonance are not omitted but are detailed. Either *For Whom the Bell Tolls* should be perceived as telling all the details that would not have been written if Jordan had survived or it should be perceived just as untrustworthy a telling of a factual story as Jordan's imagined text. This ambiguity only adds to the multiplicity of meaning set up by the novel so that it denies a simple reading. What's more, Hemingway highlights this confusion for the reader so that, again, the experience of grappling with the truth of war and Jordan's place within the war is mirrored in the form of the narrative.

Past the framework of detailing connections between journalism and literature in the landscape of the novel, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* also deals heavily with the lack of primacy that can be placed on the written word through scenes where the written word is not only false but also fails to communicate sufficiently. This point is concretized both in Hemingway's letters and his war dispatches, particularly when Hemingway writes to his ex-wife, Hadley Mower, about a story on the war that the New York Times failed to publish: "to [...] have your work absolutely and completely sabotaged, add in the papers that printed two columns of things Max Eastman wished he'd said and wished he'd done to me as facts without ever asking me what happened or any of the witnesses what really happened [...]" (462). As Emily Wittman asserts, "He [Hemingway] had a particularly adversarial relationship with Max Eastman, who thought Hemingway was a macho idiot." Accounting for Hemingway's personal bias, I argue that Hemingway points out the inefficacy of journalists reporting on the war, particularly when they do not take into account multiple perspectives about specific events. Hemingway elaborates on

this point throughout the novel and uses the trope of miscommunication, or false communication, as a central device that complicates the plot.

The transmission of information in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* relies heavily on written communication and the use of written documents to make decisions and strategize. The climax of the story centers around the guerrilla band as they prepare to blow the bridge and Andrés as he attempts to carry a message to General Golz to stop the attack. Andrés continuously gets delayed at each post as officers distrust his papers first, saying, “papers can be forged. [...] I will go with thee myself to the Commander” (376). Next a Lieutenant Colonel must write Andrés “a very strong *Salvoconducto* to the *Estado Mayor* of General Golz for me to sign” (399) so that another document is needed in order to complete this hasty mission. At the next post, Andrés and his companion Gomez ask Commissar Marty for help because “[Gomez] had read articles by him in *Mundo Obrero* translated from the French. [...] he knew him for one of France’s great modern revolutionary figures [...]” (417). Unfortunately, Marty chooses to take the dispatch from them without reading it because he seems to have lost his mind and is in fact paranoid. Contributing to the picture of his mental instability, Marty could not read his own topographic map in order to properly command troops. Instead, “in his mind he was commanding troops; he had the right to interfere with and this he believed to constitute command. So he sat there with Robert Jordan’s dispatch to Golz in his pocket and Gomez and Andrés waited in the guard-room and Robert Jordan lay in the woods above the bridge” (423). Marty is only famous for his written articles that were translated, so that he is appointed but fails to meet any requirements to be a commanding officer. In particular, he cannot read his own map, and instead fakes knowledge of suitable places to attack so that unknowing troops are killed haphazardly, and perhaps intentionally, due to his mistakes.

On top of these lies, Marty also haphazardly detains Andrés and Gomez so as to delay the delivery of their message to Golz in time to stop the attack. Flashing back to the front lines, Jordan often thinks to himself when considering Andrés' mission, "we should have the portable short-wave sets" (432) instead of having to rely on written and unreliable communication. As represented by the ambiguous translation mentioned earlier, neither spoken nor written communication adequately creates a streamlined sense of meaning throughout the novel so that the continual distrust of written and spoken facts amounts to a sense of disunity and anxiety in the text. This anxiety parallels the overall fears of death, the uncertainty of whether or not Jordan will die, and what will happen after death. Just as Jordan contemplates his own understanding of life, his uncertainties are reflected in the instability of meaning presented throughout the novel.

Tying the issue of translation, death, and uncertainty in writing together, Jordan finally has a moment of pretend calm the night before the planned attack on the bridge. At the end of this passage, Jordan tries to determine whether or not Andrés' mission to Golz will be successful. He then concludes, "the uncertainty, the enlargement of the feeling of being uncertain, [...] that had been with him ever since he had dispatched Andrés with the report to Golz, had all dropped from him now. He was sure now that the festival would not be cancelled. It's much better to be sure, he thought. It's always much better to be sure" (340). This last conclusion suggests that while Jordan realizes Golz may or may not receive the message, he instead chooses to believe in a particular outcome in order to steady his nerves and to "just not think" (340). Jordan determines that he must choose to believe a particular outcome for the attack regardless of whether or not he had the facts because he recognizes the failure of his document to impart his message to Golz. In order to rectify that dissonance, Jordan chooses to focus solely on what he thinks he can be sure of so as not to be disconcerted with uncertainty before the battle.

The issue of translation and inefficacy in writing both suggest that within this narrative, language barriers prevent an unadulterated understanding of the story, and the story of the attack attempts to be told even though Jordan's death prevents him from writing it himself. In both cases, the free play of language calls into question true meaning of experience, so that anxiety permeates the text about the nature of reality and how meaning can be communicated, even if it is not pure meaning or first hand experience. With this in mind, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* still actively engages the reader to buy into the meta-narrative that the novel attempts to reconstruct so that the emotional experience of the characters is somehow conveyed despite, but perhaps because of, the instability of language and communication barriers.

## LANGUAGE AND EXPERIENCE

As noticed in the previous scenes, assertions of an education based on experience abound in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. As proved in the earlier scene between Karkov and Jordan, an education refers not to knowledge or facts, but to experience and understanding of an abstract truth. Jordan continues to explore whether this truth is based on perspective or experience or whether it can be grasped at all. As such, he plays with the uses of language to make sense of the nature of his reality. A particularly poignant scene occurs after Pilar tells her story of the taking of Ávila. Jordan feels unsettled because of the way in which she narrated the story, so he begins to think, “I’ve always known it and hated it [...]. But that damned woman made me see it as though I had been there. Well, he thought, it is part of one’s education. It will be quite an education when it’s finished” (135). This train of thought also occurs immediately before he begins to think about how his mastery of Spanish has ingratiated him with the guerrilla band and how they might turn on him. Thus, in this scene, Jordan still treats his “education” as a reworking of understanding the reality of war and the Spanish people. First, Karkov educates him on the lies and deceit of the Russians, then Pilar educates him on the truth of the atrocities during her experience in Ávila. While one story is based on fabrications and the other on personal experience, both are signs of Jordan’s education and his plasticity of understanding.

Characters within *For Whom the Bell Tolls* narrate stories that detail the complexity of living through the Spanish Civil War, and it is only by means of each fractured narrative that the audience gains “an education” of their own about the experiences of the war. Pilar describes

several Fascists who were executed by Pablo and his Republican band, citing some as having much economic capital in the town. This story is seen as a form of “education” for Robert Jordan to understand the lives of the Spanish peasants during the war. Just as Guill notes in her chapter on the Spanish Civil War, “decades before the establishment of the Second Republic, most of Spain’s rich farmland (*latifundia*), particularly in the provinces of Andalusia and Extremadura, was controlled by wealthy, often absentee landowners” (396), so too are wealthy Fascists depicted in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. One landowner, Don Benito, is heckled by his tenant during his execution because “there had been a dispute about a piece of land by the river that Don Benito had taken from the man and let to another and this man had long hated him” (109). Another wealthy Fascist is described as “an undoubted fascist and the fattest man in town. He was a grain buyer and the agent for several insurance companies and he also loaned money at high rates of interest” (121). In this way, the peasants are given the voice throughout the novel with realistic simplicity, just as Vernon notes that Pilar’s story “resembles the ‘informant narrative [...] that became so popular in the 1930s. [...] such stories [...] were chiefly a colloquial, proletariat form” (xvii). Here, Hemingway mimics his eyewitness journalistic dispatches of the war as Jordan attempts to understand a social system that he clearly cannot fully grasp, thereby acknowledging the failure of his language mastery to inculcate him into Spanish society.

To further “educate” Jordan, Pilar gives examples of the dress and customs of the men in her town so that he better understands the massacre. “Men in the double line across the plaza [the line of executioners] wore clothes in which they worked in the fields [...] but some, not knowing how to dress for the first day of a movement, wore their clothes for Sundays or holidays” (106). These peasants are comically depicted as wearing the best clothes that they own or their workers’

attire in order to participate in the bloody massacre of the town's Fascists who are described as wearing "a nightshirt that was tucked into his trousers," "a shirt on with no collar," and one "with his fat neck bulging over the back of the collar band of his shirt" (109, 111, 119). From this depiction, both the peasants and the Fascists are unprepared for the movement in the town and so both groups of people appear foolish because of this wartime situation. However, the reader, along with Jordan, would most likely have been unaware of this oddity in the spectacle had Pilar not taken pains to explain the situation.

Another scene that illustrates experiential learning is when Fernando and Anselmo both remark that their intention for fighting is to have equality in the new Republic. Anselmo specifically hates killing men but does so in order to achieve his goal of the Republic. Fernando states, "for me the revolution is so that we will all say Don to all [...] thus should it be under the Republic" (210). Anselmo goes further as to imagine life in the Republic saying, "I would not kill even a Bishop. [...] I would make them work each day as we have worked in the fields and as we work in the mountains with the timber, all of the rest of their lives. So they would see what man is born to. That they should sleep where we sleep. That they should eat as we eat. But above all that they should work. Thus they would learn" (41). This idea of "learning" goes far beyond a traditional education about ideology; in fact, the audience realizes from Anselmo that to learn about the Spanish peasants defies ideology and is instead based on experience. Anselmo and the rest of the peasants are illiterate, so their culture (as defined by language and customs) cannot merely be consigned to the written word. The peasants are fighting to defend a way of life, and clearly even those people who are from the same nation and speak the same language are failing to grasp this way of life. So too is Jordan failing to understand this culture. Yet Hemingway utilizes Jordan's narrative throughout the novel to depict an experiential education of a

privileged outsider into a culture. Therefore, Jordan effectively notices that the ‘truth’ lacking in Russian and journalistic depictions of the war is due to a lack of experience with the people involved in the war. Though Hemingway himself was an outsider, and did not participate in the war, he is using this novel to somehow tell a truth of the people that he feels is lacking, yet he also acknowledges that he cannot grasp its full weight. This struggle between truth telling and breadth of experience characterizes the novel; the ambiguity and conflict between the two are necessary to multiply meaning in order to make any sense of the war experience.

Though Jordan at first allowed the reader a measured sense of familiarity with the Spanish people and their war, at the end of the novel, he begins to understand that his experience of the war is as ineffable as culture—though language may be a touchstone for cultural interaction, it is not sufficient to understand people; likewise, though reading news about a war may help grasp images of the conflict, experience itself is needed in order to fully grapple with its implications. By connecting Jordan’s sense of personal identity to language and his experience of the war, Hemingway allows the reader to at once connect with the confusion of the war experience while accepting that this experience “cannot be ‘spoken’ in conventional terms” (Strychacz 85). In the last chapters of the novel, Jordan reflects on his “education” when he speaks to Maria: “‘You’ve taught me a lot, *guapa*,’ he said in English. ‘What did you say?’ ‘I have learned much from thee.’ ‘*Qué va*,’ she said, ‘it is thou who art educated.’ Educated, he thought. I have the very smallest beginnings of an education. The very small beginnings. If I die on this day it is a waste because I know a few things now” (381). From this above quote, Jordan clearly pushes against the idea of an education as it is traditionally considered. Although he has the ability to teach Spanish, he feels he is devoid of an education, at least of an education where communal experience and understanding take precedence over individual study.

Although Spaniards have the ability to be chivalrous and patriotic, he considers their education worthless in light of what happened to Maria and definitively rethinks his position on education as he once understood it. During this part of the novel, Jordan has only experienced a few days with the guerrilla band, but he has already changed his mind about how he views truth and the necessity for “education,” one that differs from the Russian ideal of one. In this excerpt, Jordan first begins speaking to Maria in English, a language he told Pablo he uses “when I get very tired [...] or sometimes when I get very disgusted. Or baffled, say. When I get highly baffled I just talk English to hear the sound of it. It’s a reassuring noise” (180). Since Jordan speaks to Maria first in English, he demonstrates his sense of confusion or insecurity, just as he explained to Pablo. English to him is a comfort, a soothing part of his identity, even as he lives his life in Spanish. As Jordan reminisces on his lifetime and redefines his sense of an education, he begins his reverie by acknowledging kinship to his native tongue. At the same time, he accepts the influence of the Spanish language, not just as a language he knows, but as his experience of fighting with the guerrilla band.

While Jordan is both distanced from the Spanish people because of his privileged position as an American fighter, he is also connected to them because he seeks to learn about and share their experiences during the war. Through this act of gaining an “education,” Jordan realizes that he can no longer think of himself simply as an insider because of his knowledge of the Spanish language; on the contrary, he must gain an “education” through experience, and it is this experience that proves to confuse him and raise questions about his conceptions of identity, both national and personal. If Jordan is at once at home and confused by his experiences in Spain, so too is the reader both invited in and distanced from the action of the novel by the narrative’s strategic mixture of the familiar and unfamiliar.

## CONCLUSION

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* seeks to assert truth through its multiplicity of meaning so that Robert Jordan is characterized as both an outsider to Spain and as a participant in the war. While his experience is biased towards an Anglo-centric way of thinking that sympathizes with the Spanish, he comes to realize that learning a language does not constitute learning an identity. At the end of the novel, he ties together the themes of war, language, and truth by recognizing that experience is ineffable in language but that language is also ineffable in itself. Since language is tied to identity, and language is ever changing just as identity is ever changing, then so is truth ever vacillating from one idea to the next. This free interplay of signifiers and signified does not mean that language or translation are pointless or fruitless. Quite the contrary. As language is translated, just as experience is communicated, meanings multiply to create more than was originally experienced. In this way, Hemingway asserts that language and translation are invaluable to this search for meaning regarding identity, the nature of war, and the complexity of telling the truth about an experience. Though no one pure language may be found at any single moment, the act of translating, just as the narrator translates Spanish to English, allows the reader to participate in this free play of knowledge, thereby enlisting in an education of war that sees language as more than a vehicle, but as a means of bearing truth and identity.

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