

**A SPANISH PORTRAIT: SPAIN AND ITS CONNECTIONS
WITH THE THEMATIC AND STRUCTURAL DIMENSIONS
OF FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS**

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ABSTRACT. *After having visited several countries in Europe and Africa, Hemingway found in Spain a land which would play a key role in his later literary career. His first stay in our country in the early twenties would mean the outset of a closed and long relationship with Spain that took almost forty years. During his different travels to Spain, Hemingway had the chance of discovering in the Spanish people a set of values and traits for which he felt a special attraction, such as violence, rebelliousness and, above all, a fatalistic vision of existence where death was inherent to life itself. In his most renowned novel, For Whom the Bell Tolls (1940), Hemingway offers a wider and deeper vision of those characteristics which made the Spanish soul so particular from his point of view. We identify some of them by analyzing the main structural and thematic elements of this novel set in the Spanish Civil War.*

Keywords: Spaniards, idiosyncrasy, image, war, themes, structure.

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**UN RETRATO ESPAÑOL: ESPAÑA Y SUS CONEXIONES
CON LAS DIMENSIONES TEMÁTICA Y ESTRUCTURAL
DE *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS***

RESUMEN. *Tras visitar distintos países en Europa y África, Hemingway encontró en España una tierra que marcaría su posterior carrera literaria. La primera visita que el escritor realizó a nuestro país a comienzo de la década de los veinte significó el comienzo de una estrecha y prolongada relación de casi cuarenta años con España. A lo largo de sus sucesivos viajes a la Península, Hemingway tuvo la oportunidad de descubrir en el carácter español una serie de valores por los que sentía una especial predilección, tales como la violencia, la rebeldía y, especialmente, una visión fatalista de la existencia donde la muerte era parte consustancial de la vida misma. En su novela más conocida, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), donde Hemingway ofrece una visión más amplia y detallada de aquellas características que, desde su punto de vista, particularizaban el espíritu español. Se identifican aquí algunos de estos rasgos mediante el análisis de los principales elementos temáticos y estilísticos de *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.*

Palabras clave: españoles, idiosincrasia, imagen, guerra, temas, estructura.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Having been ignored by the international community during the second half of the 19th century and the first of the 20th, Spain drew the attention of European and non-European countries at the outbreak of the Civil War which devastated the country between 1936 and 1939. Apart from countless historical, international and social analysis, the conflict generated a great number of poems, essays, novels like *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, plays, films and documentaries. Though they were created to support either the Republic or the Nationalists, many of them sympathized with the former and condemned the generals' rebellion. Beyond their mere propagandist value, these artistic manifestations are interesting because they still hold stereotypes inherited from the past; the cliché of Spaniards as ruthless, fanatic, violent and dauntless people was often associated with those who were for the Republican side, whereas the image given of the Nationalist side recalled the dark version of 16th-century Spain, as the rebels portrayed themselves as "crusaders' taking a stand against the infidel" (López de Abiada 2004: 246). As we can see, the conflict reactivated many Romantic stereotypes that had a powerful appeal for

many foreign volunteers who saw in Spain the opportunity to live an adventure and to fight for ideals not very different from those for which Byron fought in Greece: the defense of liberty against totalitarianism. Undoubtedly, this kind of motivation led many foreign volunteers to enlist in the International Brigades, which were the main manifestation of the Romantic spirit that nourished those who were determined to leave their relatively comfortable lives behind to defend the Republic on Spanish soil. However, the enthusiasm and idealism shown by the foreigners who visited Spain during the war –writers such as George Orwell, Stephen Spender and André Malraux were among them– started to wither soon as the military and numerical superiority of the rebels and the divisions existing in the Republican side became insurmountable obstacles for Loyalist aspirations.

The main goal of this essay is to reconstruct the image of Spain in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* through the analysis of the main structural and thematic elements of this novel published in 1940. Nowadays, the study of the image of a foreign culture contained in literary texts is one of the branches of Comparative Literature known as imagology. Though we can track the origins of this discipline to Ancient Greece, Herodotus being one of its pioneers, and later on with the contribution of authors like Herder, Goethe, Lessing and Mme. De Staël among others, it is not until the beginning of the 20th century, however, that imagological studies reach a scientific status. During the 1950's, imagology took a decisive turn coinciding with the criticism made from the United States by Rene Wellek against the French scholar Jean-Marie Carré, whose investigations showed, according to Wellek, a manifest influence of outdated Positivism and a lack of objectivity judging by their invectives against Germany. When the American critic called Carré's ideas into question, he was underlining the necessity to reconstruct comparativism which, in his opinion, had focused on factors external to texts rather than those internal to them. The distinction imposed by Wellek between intrinsic textual analysis and extrinsic contextualization provoked the paralyzation of Comparative Literature worldwide. This uncertain situation for imagology in particular and comparative studies in general came to an end thanks to the contributions made by Hugo Dyserinck during the 1960's and the 1970's. The German scholar formulated a series of theses –namely, the necessity for imagological analysis to be devoid of ideology and the existence of an image function inherent to the text– that revolutionized imagology. Since then, the study of national representations in literary texts has undergone a continuous transformation, especially in the 90's, at the hands of scholars like Daniel-Henry Pageaux, Jean-Marc Moura, Joep Leersen and Anthony Johnson. As a result, the new imagology has widened its scope to such an extent that nowadays the studies dealing with images are closely linked to different areas such as Anthropology, History or Philosophy.

Curiously enough, many of the studies carried out recently about the image of Spain abroad deal with its evolution from the 16th to the 20th century: we can take as examples publications like “Reflexiones sobre el ser de España” (1998), by Carmen Iglesias and *Sol y Sangre. La imagen de España en el mundo* (2001), by Rafael Núñez Florencio–. Especial attention has been paid to the anti-Spanish attitudes in the framework of the Black Legend as we can see, for example, in Ricardo García Cárcel’s *La leyenda negra: historia y opinión* (1992), Michel Fernández-Gaichat’s *Les Espagnols à Paris à l’époque de Philippe III* (1997), Ulrike Hönsch’s *Wege des Spanienbildes im Deutschland des 18* (2000), Trevor Dadson’s “The image of Spain in England during the 16th and 17th centuries” (2004) or J.M López de Abiada’s *Imágenes de España en culturas y literaturas europeas. Siglos XVI y XVII* (2004). Nevertheless, the image of the country in foreign literatures throughout the 20th century, particularly during the Civil War, is still a topic to be studied in detail. The ensuing analysis attempts to pave the way for further investigation about an issue that from an imagological point of view should render interesting results. This is more evident if we take into account that the Civil War meant for Spain, on the one hand, the aperture to the international scenery and, on the other, being the object on which many countries turned their eyes.

2. HEMINGWAY AND THE SPANISH CIVIL WAR

One of the most notable aspects in Hemingway’s biography is his persistent wish to leave his homeland. Neither his hometown –Oak Park, Illinois– nor by extension his country were significant for him; they just represented unpleasant family recollections –such as the suicide of his father– and a way of life with which he did not feel identified. Italy, France, Cuba or the African savanna were some of the many destinations that Hemingway visited during his lifetime. However, none of these places seduced him as much as Spain, a country for which he demonstrated a special predilection from his first stay in 1923 until his last days. Soon after his first visit to the country, Hemingway declared in a letter: “Spain is the very best country of all. It’s unspoiled and unbelievably tough and wonderful” (Baker 1985: 107). The American writer would not only discover in Spain beautiful spots, a quiet life and picturesque traditions, but also a people whose values were the same as his, such as their fatalist vision of life and innate rebelliousness. What the author got to know about Spain was not the result of an occasional stay in our country, but the outcome of a forty-year relationship; in fact, few foreign writers have been as closely linked to Spain. He declared in a letter written in 1956: “In spite of having been on the Republican side I am considered a Spanish author who happened to be in America” (Baker 1985: 873). Apart from those aspects in the Spanish personality which he found attractive, it was his special

interest in violence and death that drove him to Spain several times. Thanks to his fondness for bullfights and his experience in World War I and the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway dealt with two different sides of violence: the ritual and that not following any kind of rules.

The strong ties which Hemingway felt for Spain prevented him from remaining indifferent towards the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Despite having taken side for the Republican side, the ideals which caused him to live this conflict in first person were humanitarian rather than political. Then, it is no wonder that Hemingway was more liable in his war reports to tell the stories of small combat units or anonymous people than those related to the widely known events of the war (White 1967: 240). The absence of a firm political engagement in Hemingway was due primarily to his literary philosophy; according to him, the writer who sold out to political propaganda committed a fraud since its main function was to write clear and sincere prose dealing, above all, with human beings (Benson 1977: 280). Secondly, Hemingway's apolitical position towards the Spanish Civil War also stemmed from his experience as an ambulance driver in Italy during World War I; it was then that he could see the devastating effects of modern war, which caused him to mistrust the dominant political tendencies in the 1920's and the 1930's. At first he rejected Fascism as an ideology which concealed a categorical contempt for liberty behind an appearance of order and efficiency. For similar reasons, it would not take long for the author of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to reject the Communist postulates; in a letter dated in 1935 to the Russian critic Ivan Kashkeen, he confessed: "I cannot be a Communist now, because I believe only in one thing: liberty" (Baker 1985: 418). Like Orwell, Hemingway conceived Communist orthodoxy as a threat to individual liberties. However, his distrust of Communism, especially those who were not Spanish, did not prevent him from feeling a deep interest for the Republic. Like many other antifascist writers, Hemingway thought that the Republican cause represented not only a few ideals in which he believed –liberty, equality, justice – but also the Spanish people, to whom he always felt sympathetic: "The Reds may be as bad as they say but they are the people of the country versus the absentee landlords, the Moors, the Italians, the Germans" (Benson 1967: 458). Consequently, when the war broke out, Hemingway collaborated actively with the Republic either by raising funds in his country or working as a reporter in Spain. Between 1937 and 1938, Hemingway traveled to Spain on four occasions as a correspondent for the North American Newspaper Alliance. During his first trip, he visited the front line near Madrid, at Casa de Campo, Brihuega and the Guadarrama mountain range. Despite his intention to remain impartial before the wide range of political tendencies in Spain, he was soon associated with Communism. His antifascist tendencies

and close relationship with some members from the International Brigades as well as certain representatives of the soviet government –such as Koltsov– were interpreted as an evident sign of his sympathy for Communist ideology. However, like other writers such as André Malraux or Gustav Regler, Hemingway supported Communism for practical rather than ideological reasons; though none of them became a member of the Communist Party, they all believed that this organization had enough discipline and efficiency to defeat Fascism. Nevertheless, discipline meant for the Stalin-supported Communist Party the elimination of any element regarded as subversive or suspicious by the Soviet regime – as was exposed by Orwell denounces in *Homage to Catalonia* (1938). The American writer did not seem to care about this repression as he considered it a nasty, but at the same time necessary, means to amend in the fight against Franco.

Hemingway returned to his country in May 1937 with the purpose of arranging the soundtrack of the film *The Spanish Earth* and participating in the American Writers' Congress. His speech at this conference, held in New York on June 4th, has been seen as one of the most political acts in his lifetime (Cooper 1987: 84). Besides trying to make the intellectuals taking part in this meeting aware of the necessity to help the Spanish Republic, he also dealt with issues such as the difficult task of writing about war without regarding political matters. After a short stay in the United States, Hemingway returned to Spain again in August 1937. The panorama he found in Madrid was heartrending as he met a city devastated by air raids and hunger. In addition to the delicate situation of the capital, Hemingway received two pieces of bad news: the death of his friend Lukacz –one of the main officials at the International Brigades– and the control that Franco had obtained over three-fourths of the country. These were not obstacles to continuing with his journalistic and literary activity. Many times accompanied by the American reporters Herbert Matthews and Martha Gellhorn, he managed to slip into the areas where some of the decisive battles of the war were fought, such as Teruel, Brunete, and Belchite. During his visit to the last, Hemingway met Robert Merriman, an American volunteer from the 15th International Brigade who would inspire Hemingway to create the figure of Robert Jordan, the main character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*.

After leaving Spain in December 1937, Hemingway returned to our country twice. The first one was in March 1938, when, in spite of his apparent confidence in the Loyalist victory, he admitted privately that the defeat was inevitable (Baker 1956: 236); in fact, the war had evolved by then very favorably for Franco's interests while Germany and Italy continued to supply the Nationalists with men and weapons. The fourth and last time Hemingway visited Spain during the conflict was in September 1938. The writer stayed in the country until the end of the war, he witnessed the fall of Barcelona in January 1939 and later the defeat of Madrid

in March. When he went back to the United States, he worked hard on his novel *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, in which the author conveys –particularly through Jordan’s death– his conviction that the Republican defeat was due to foreign intervention and certain peculiarities in the Spanish character, such as selfishness, individualism, indiscipline and the tendency to insubordination and treachery. As a result, the Romantic portray of Spain painted by Hemingway at first darkened when he noticed the fallacy of the supposedly irreproachable behavior of the Spanish people (Broer 1974: 14).

Despite being out of Spain for fourteen years after Franco’s victory, Hemingway did not lose contact with his Spanish friends nor with the local culture. Finally, in the summer of 1953 and under the excuse of compiling materials for his book *Death in the Afternoon*, the American writer was able to come back to Spain on condition that he refrain from talking about politics. Hemingway saw his return to the Spain under Franco’s dictatorship as an adventure whose risks, far from scaring him, increased his desire to come back once again: he would say then that it had required great *cojones* to reenter Franco’s Spain (Baker 1985: 511). During his visit, Hemingway began a close friendship with the bullfighter Antonio Ordóñez. Moreover, the author showed his wife Mary the scenery which had served as an inspiration for *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He was really satisfied at his having described faithfully in the novel the landscape of the mountains near Madrid (Baker 1985: 512). He returned to Spain for the last time in 1960, when he continued to have the idea that travelling around our country was a good reason to go on living (Baker 1985: 544). However, Hemingway had sunk by then in a deep depression which led him to suicide one year later.

3. THE REFLECTION OF HEMINGWAY’S VISION OF SPAIN; ON THE STRUCTURAL AND THEMATIC ELEMENTS OF FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS

The structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is organized in several apparently unrelated stories. He had already used such an arrangement in *To Have and Have Not* (1937) in which he tells two seemingly unconnected stories –one of them concerning Harry and Marie Morgan and the other Richard and Helen Gordon. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the main story deals with the blowing-up of a bridge; this is the mission which Robert Jordan must accomplish with the help of a group of partisans who live in the mountains near Madrid. Apart from this principal matter, Hemingway introduces other of a considerable length in the novel; we can mention, for example, the love story of Jordan and María, the relationship between Pablo and Pilar or the life in the Republican rearguard where some historical characters –Karkov, Golz, Kleber, Marty, etc.– appear. Contrary to what some critics like Chaman Nahal have suggested (1971: 131), the different plots which make up

the internal structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* do not coexist separately. One of the reasons ruling out this hypothesis is the connection of the different stories developed throughout the novel hold with Jordan's mission. Taking this premise into account, it is possible to conceive an internal structure where the several plots are laid out in concentric circles around the main story. The blowing-up of the bridge is the starting point for the rest of the stories; we can take as an example the relationship between Jordan and María, a story which would never have begun if the American volunteer had not been entrusted with the mission of destroying the bridge. Now let us think about the turbulent marriage of Pilar and Pablo, who are about to split up when he runs away with some explosives needed to blow up the bridge. Carlos Baker has compared the set of secondary stories told in the novel with a network of radial roads which stem from and lead to the same point—the attack against the bridge (1956: 247).

This sort of construction is an element central to the understanding not only of the inner structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but also of the imagological dimension of the book. In his book about the Spanish War, Hemingway puts the image of the bridge in close relation to Robert Jordan, as his mission consists in destroying one of them in the mountains near Madrid. The author establishes this association between the bridge and the main character to emphasize two topics which are essential in his novel as well as in his vision of Spain: the close relationship between life and death and the interconnectedness among all existing things. It is no wonder that the first of these topics is especially important in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* since violence and death were two recurrent, even obsessive, themes throughout Hemingway's literary career. His contact with the Spanish culture was decisive for dealing with the binomial life-death from a new perspective; as it has been mentioned before, the American writer discovered in Spain a conception of death which, unlike in other cultures, did not consider this phenomenon as something contrary to life, but as a continuation of it. Bullrings were one of the places where Hemingway took notice of this peculiarity of Spanish culture: "The only place where you could see life and death, i.e. violent death [...] was in the bullring and I wanted very much to go to Spain where I could study it" (2003: 2). The author also saw in bullrings the possibility to observe "a certain definite action which would give me the feeling of life and death I was working for" (2003: 2). In other words, Hemingway found in bullrings the scenery where man and beast performed a show in which life and death intermingled extraordinarily.

The American writer introduced this conception of existence in many of his books, often by relating it to the image of the bridge; it is not a mere coincidence that, for example, in "The Old Man at the Bridge" (1938) the main character awaits for his time to come on a bridge. Similarly, in *Islands in the Stream* (1970), Thomas Hudson dies on the bridge of his ship. However, it is *For Whom the Bell Tolls* the

book that best represents the thin line separating life and death through the image of the bridge. Neither Robert Jordan nor the partisans he lives with face death until the ending of the novel, when they have to accomplish the destruction of the bridge. This mission involves a final attack which decides in a few minutes who can and cannot go across the bridge that separates life from death. Hemingway also resorts to this kind of construction to pose the above-mentioned topic of the ties binding all existing things. Robert Jordan undertakes the blowing-up of the bridge not only to fulfill the orders given by his superiors, but also on account of the interests of Mankind: "There is a bridge and that bridge can be the point on which the future of the human race can turn" (Hemingway 1967: 45). The idea that any deed or action, no matter how remote or isolated it may be, can have an effect on other spheres, according to the connection among all things, lies in these words uttered by Jordan. Under this conviction, the American novelist conceived the Spanish War as a conflict whose consequences would not only be felt within Spain, but also abroad. Many foreign volunteers understood the confrontation in the same way as Hemingway and they did not hesitate to come to the Peninsula to fight in a war that apparently was not theirs.

One of these combatants is Robert Jordan, who decides to fight in Spain on account of his love of the country and his Marxist ideals: "He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and if it was destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who lived in it" (Hemingway 1967: 158). Nevertheless, his idealism dwindles after he contacts Pablo's band. After having spent a few hours with the partisans, he realizes the difficulties he will find on his way to blow up the bridge; the selfish and treacherous behavior of Pablo, the incompetence and indiscipline of Rafael or the inadequate military training of all the members from the band are some of the obstacles that Jordan is not able to overcome to fulfill his mission successfully. Besides the blowup of the bridge, the American volunteer has another aspiration: reaching a state of absolute communion with everything around him. Achieving this aim involves, in the case of Jordan, the integration with the Spanish people and their customs. The interaction of the American volunteer with the local culture –represented by Pablo's band– is one of the narrative lines on which Hemingway projects his view of Spain to a larger extent. Despite being deeply acquainted with our country, Jordan cannot get rid of the customs and values from his homeland. As a result, his incorporation to Pablo's band means the clash between two cultures, an episode which reveals how the author regarded the Spanish personality. We can take as an example of this the distrust of Jordan shown at first by some partisans. They all think that the mission entrusted to the American volunteer will reveal their presence in the mountains and, therefore, put an end to the relatively tranquil life they had led so far. Hemingway underlines this reaction raised by Jordan's arrival

to emphasize two traits of the Spanish character: the initial mistrust towards the foreigner and the prevalence of individual interests over the collective ones.

Along with the key role played by the bridge blown up by Jordan, the internal structure of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* offers two further aspects which must be also regarded in connection with the vision of Spain contained in this book: the relation between the main plot and the historical context and the epic connotations of the novel. Regarding the first of these aspects, it is interesting to observe, as we have seen before, how Hemingway focuses more on a particular event –the destruction of a bridge– than on general issues concerning the war –often political and military matters. This circumstance reveals the greater attention the novelist paid to anonymous stories to the detriment of those alluding to the ideological side of the conflict. Unlike other books dealing with the Spanish War, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a work where the title role is not played by political theories, but by people who fought for them; making reference to his novel, Hemingway stated: “But it wasn’t just the Civil War I put into it, it was everything I had learned about Spain for eighteen years” (Sanders 1960: 134).

As for the second aspect, the use of the conflict as a background for a group of particular stories has been interpreted as a meeting point between the novel and the epic genre; with regard to this aspect, Brenner has underlined a parallelism between *The Iliad* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, inasmuch as in the former the main topic is Achilles’s wrath and not the Trojan War, whereas in the latter the narrator dwells more on the story of Robert Jordan rather than on the Spanish War (1983: 127). Another “epic” connotation of the novel would be the episodic nature of the inner structure since there is a main character who finds on his way several adverse situations to accomplish his mission and several stories inserted in the central plot. If Hemingway provided his book about Spain with an epic air it was not by chance; the identification of certain Homeric echoes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* may be owing to the author’s determination to portray Spain as a country stuck in a remote time where superstition and primitivism preserved the same vigor as many centuries ago. This hypothesis is in accordance with the description which the American writer made of Spain as an enclave whose people led simple lives and preserved a series of timeless and violent traditions. Moreover, Hemingway depicts the country as a place far from the *pernicious* influence of the modern world: “It was one of the few places left in Europe that had not been ruined by railroads and motorcars [...] Spain was the real old stuff” (Broer 1974: 5).

Some of the topics dealt with in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are closely linked to the vision which Hemingway held about the Spanish War in particular and the country in general. One of these themes is the opposition between life and death. A structural analysis of the novel reveals how scenes concerning these two topics

follow one another immediately. Far from being a mere coincidence, this disposition of scenes is attributable to a strategy by which the author intends to convey one of the features of the Spanish personality in which he was most interested: the Spaniard's inability to conceive life separated from death. The disposition of scenes is not the only means by which Hemingway hints at this topic, but also a series of symbols appearing throughout the novel. Many of them have a double meaning: a positive one, concerning life, and a negative one, alluding to death. The bridge that Jordan must blow up represents, according to his opinion, a place where the destiny of Mankind may change, but it is at the same time the place where he meets death; the mountains may be seen as an idyllic scenery, though they are shown in the end as a huge burrow where the main character and his partners are trapped and killed; the sleeping bag used by Jordan is the symbol of his love for María, but it recalls a tomb too (Grebstein 1973: 46); the Nationalist planes provoke Jordan's astonishment as he stares at them flying over the cave, but he does not forget that they are a "mechanized doom" for the Republic (Hemingway 1967: 85).

Another opposition that may be related to the image of Spain in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is between tragedy and comedy. Hemingway inserts throughout the novel some humorous hints interspersed with scenes of a remarkably tragic intensity. Apart from being a means of lessening the dramatic stress undergone at moments marked by violence and tragedy, humor also plays an important role in the depiction of the Spanish people; more specifically, Hemingway intends to show how they do not lose their sense of humor and optimism in spite of the adversities brought by war. We can see an illustrative example, though grim, of this in the attitude adopted by *El Sordo*, just before dying; it is then that, having given up any chance of not succumbing to the enemy fire, he cannot avoid laughing at death itself – "he joked about it to himself" (Hemingway 1967: 295). Though he is conscious that his life is about to come to an end, this character does not surrender to death easily and he resorts to mockery and irony as a way of expressing boastfully his resistance to disappear. Besides joviality and pride, the attitude shown by this partisan unveils one of the traits in the Spanish character which captivated Hemingway most in his progressive discovery of the local idiosyncrasy: rebelliousness. According to the American novelist, people in Spain assume death as universal fate. However, this does not involve a resigned acceptance of death, especially in those cases where the mode of dying is not honorable; in other words, Spaniards desire to die well. Hemingway first perceived this behavior in bullrings, where people swarmed in attracted by "the feeling of rebellion against death which comes from its administering" (2003: 233). On joking about his tragic fate, *El Sordo* shows his absolute rejection to a death which he considers unworthy of him. This partisan does not hate death itself, but the way he is going to die—under the bombs dropped by enemy planes instead of hand-to-hand combat.

The killing of *El Sordo* is not the only scene where death, violence and destruction are present. In fact, they are recurrent topics in Hemingway's books in general and in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in particular. This is no wonder if we consider that they were familiar to him during his lifetime, taking into account his participation in two conflicts –World War One and the Spanish Civil War– and the suicide of his father. The analysis of the different narrative segments reveals the importance of these themes throughout the novel; the stories told by Pilar and María are good examples. Instead of touching on few details, they both dwell on lurid images of horror and violence in their respective narrations. In this sense, Pilar remembers the slaughter of those who were supposedly for the Nationalists in Pablo's village at the beginning of the conflict. Far from being killed in a quick and clean way by the bullets of their executors, the victims undergo a slow and painful death occasioned by the injuries that a drunken mob inflicted on them with their pitchforks. The torture does not come to an end until their bodies are thrown into a river at the bottom of a cliff. Similarly, María narrates a story of barbarity and hatred as she recalls how a group of Fascists broke into her village, killed all the peasants they found on their way and raped several girls –María was in that number– whose heads had been previously cropped. Likewise, violence, death and horror pervade the moments previous to the fall of *El Sordo* and his men, as we can see in the image of a dead horse used as a barricade by the Loyalists or that of a Fascist official forcing one of his soldiers to get closer to the positions held by the partisans. Despite the cruelty and rawness present in the scenes above mentioned, there is nothing in the entire novel nowhere near as shocking and horrible as the decapitation of the corpses of *El Sordo* and his band.

The presence of the couple horror-death in many of the scenes which are key throughout the novel may be attributed to a double intention. On the one hand, Hemingway suggests the idea that the violent personality of Spanish people was responsible for the atrocities committed during the war. The American writer had witnessed a conflict aroused not only by the ideological differences, but also by the intense wrath which stemmed from the enormous social and economic gulfs –this to such an extent that he could talk about two Spains– and the radical interpretation of religious questions. Though Hemingway was acquainted with violence –apart from his participation in two wars, he also turned out in bloody spectacles like bullfights, cockfights and boxing combats– his experience in the Spanish Civil War gave him the chance to know a kind of violence he had never seen before. Thanks to his job as a war correspondent, Hemingway could have access to anonymous stories which he regarded as so cruel and horrifying that they seemed to have happened during the times of the Inquisition or the Black Legend rather than in the 20th century; as a result, this circumstance reinforced the image of Spain as a primitive and savage country anchored in its customs, a

vision of which Hemingway had been always fond. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the author introduces some scenes alluding to this timeless and unleashed violence inspired in real stories which he witnessed or which were reported to him. We can find a clear example of this in chapter 23; Jordan and Agustín –one of the members of Pablo’s band– lie in ambush for four fascist soldiers to pass. It is then that Jordan notices the increasing hatred and resentment that take hold of Agustín as he sees the enemy march in front of him. At that moment the partisan desires nothing more than to launch an attack on the fascists. However, Jordan, anticipating the disastrous consequences that this action could have for the band, dissuades Agustín from shooting the soldiers. This episode makes Jordan ponder on the deep contrast between the Anglo-Saxon coldness and pragmatism and the Spanish passion and irascibility:

Yes, Robert Jordan thought. We do it coldly but they do not, not ever have. It is their extra sacrament. Their old one that they had before the new religion came from the far end of the Mediterranean, the one they have never abandoned but only suppressed and hidden to bring it out again in wars and inquisitions. They are the people of the Auto de Fe; the act of faith. Killing is something one must do, but ours are different from theirs (Hemingway 1967: 273).

The high number of scenes of violent death and horror in the novel may also be regarded as a strategy employed by the author to protest against the atrocities carried out during the war. Hemingway does not tackle the conflict as a pamphleteer who condemns the outrages committed by the enemy and ignores those taking place on his own side. On the contrary, the American writer tries to offer a vision as objective as possible of what was happening on both sides; as Benson has pointed out, Hemingway shows the ravages of the Spanish war to call for the end of the destruction and the killing of thousands of innocents rather than to glorify the deeds of the Loyalist army and omit its mistakes (1977: 287). The anti-war position adopted by Hemingway is clearly connected to one the main themes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*: the communion between all existing things. More specifically, the author believes that the war must end because the death of any individual, regardless its ideological orientation, may have a negative effect on each of us.

Finally, we must not conclude our analysis without considering a series of scenes which, despite not being in direct relation to the main topics of the novel, are of paramount importance when interpreting Hemingway’s view of Spain and the Spanish Civil War that Hemingway casts in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Let us consider two scenes which are illustrative examples in this regards. The first is set at the prestigious Gaylord’s Hotel, the headquarters for many foreign war correspondents and Soviet commissars who stayed in Madrid during the war.

Unlike other places slightly described throughout the novel, Hemingway offers a more detailed depiction of the hotel which contains a satiric vision of the Loyalist rearguard; more specifically, the author criticizes, on the one hand, how the foreign journalists lived surrounded by all sorts of luxury comforts while the people of Madrid suffered the scourge of war and, on the other, the increasing control that the Communist commissars had on the Republican authorities. The second example refers to the scene where Jordan finds out that Pablo has fled with the explosives necessary to blow up the bridge. This disastrous event for the interests of the militiamen stirs up in Jordan's mind a series of reflections which are very revealing of the opposing sentiments that the Hispanic personality aroused in Hemingway. Ruled by frustration at that moment, the protagonist cannot help regarding the Spanish people as treacherous and selfish. However, a short time later the American volunteer rectifies and directs his criticism at the authorities that have ruled the country from the 16th century. This change of mind is quite meaningful as it hints at two aspects of the traditional Anglo-Saxon vision of Spain: the Black Legend and the belief that the Spanish are the best people ruled by the worst governments:

Muck the whole treachery-ridden country. Muck their egotism and their selfishness and their selfishness and their egotism and their conceit and their treachery [...] And that Pablo that just mucked off with my exploder and my box of detonators. Oh muck him to deepest hell. But no. He's mucked us instead. They always mucked you instead from Cortez, and Menéndez de Ávila down to Miaja [...] Muck all the insane, egoistical, treacherous swine that have always governed Spain and ruled her armies. Muck everybody but the people... (Hemingway 1967: 259-250)

4. CONCLUSION

The study of the internal organization of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* suggests the existence of some elements which must be taken into account when dealing with the image of Spain reflected in that novel. In this sense, we have considered the higher importance of the scenes where characters who are not widely known—such as Jordan or the partisans—take part and particular events happen—the attack on a bridge—over those concerning the political and military facets of the war. This fact has been interpreted in our study as the expression at structural level of the author's determination to paint the portrait of a divided and convulsed country where the great battles and ideological tendencies are left behind in favor of stories referring to common individuals. Another remarkable aspect concerning the internal structure of the book is the episodic structure, which, along with the consideration of war just as a background for the actions performed by characters

that are not known at first by readers, underlines the connections existing between the novel and the Homeric poems. It is not a coincidence that Hemingway inserts these epic connotations in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, but a strategy by which he intends to depict Spain as a place anchored in beliefs and customs characteristic of immemorial times. Lastly, it is also worth mentioning the arrangement of the different plots developed throughout the book around the scene where Jordan's mission comes unsuccessfully to an end. Like other Hemingway's works, the image of this sort of construction in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is strongly linked to death, in this case to the killing of the protagonist. That the American volunteer loses his life near a bridge in the most relevant scene throughout the novel is symptomatic, on the one hand, of the importance of death in Hemingway's literary universe and, on the other, of the fascination –even obsession– he became to feel about this topic since his first contact with the Spanish culture; not in vain, Hemingway did not only discovered in Spain a particular way of living, but also of dying.

In relation to the imagological dimension of the themes appearing in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, we can see how Hemingway makes use of them to show an image of Spain which, at first sight, is not very different from that appearing in *The Sun Also Rises* and *Death in the Afternoon*: a country whose ancient customs, especially bullfighting, reveal a conception of existence where death is anything but the prolongation of life. Nevertheless, the analysis of the thematic features of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* reveals a vision of Spain with a higher number of nuances; in this novel, set in the Civil War, Hemingway does not only employ the binomial life-death to convey his interpretation of the Spanish personality and customs, but also other themes framed in the context of war, such as violence, horror or humor. The reiterative presence of these topics in many scenes throughout the novel constitutes an image of Spain where the American author, apart from insisting on the particular way in which the Spanish people assume death, reflects on how certain facets of their personality –individualism, indiscipline, passion– were aroused with the outbreak of the conflict and how some of them contributed to the Loyalist defeat.

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