MEDITATIONS ON HEMINGWAY'S ROBERT JORDAN:

An Ontological Democratic Deontology

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> Whoever contemplates the world in the light of an Ideal—whether what he seeks be intellect or art, or love, or simple happiness, or all together—must feel a great sorrow in the evils that men needlessly allow to continue, and—if he be a man of force and vital energy—an urgent desire to lead men to the realization of the good which inspires his creative vision.
>
> Bertrand Russel, *The Proposed Roads to Freedom* (iv)

A SYNOPTIC SEARCH FOR A METHOD

I would like to propose a process to reflect on Robert Jordan as the protagonist in Ernest Hemingway's epic For *Whom the Bell Tolls* (1941) in general and the origin and evolution of his onto-political ethics in particular. Still, my methodological approach to this process does not imply any foreknowledge of it. Just the same, I am predisposed to choosing and employing an aggregate of meditations to serve me as an overall intuitive critical approach. Each of these meditations will consist of a series of open-ended explorations and disclosures. I trust disclosures of what the fictional narrative of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* of necessity encloses as part of the bundle of the mysteries of its open-ended semantics, revealing them to the reader as simultaneous acts of reading and interpreting. I would say, from within this revelatory interpretive point of view, Robert Jordan divulges the generative ground of an *ontology* of inner freedom with its own deontology or ethics of freely chosen acts and the inevitable responsibility for them as evolutionary, creative, and imaginative undertakings.

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To guide me in finding the most effective way to proceed, there will be distant echoes of the long ago and far away stoics' philosophy and metaphysics of Marcus Aurelius in his *Meditations (1626)* and Epictetus in his *Enchiridion* (55-135 C.E.). Furthermore, I draw from the temporally proximate 20th-century French literature on philosophy in a general sort of way. I rely on my lifelong preoccupations with Hemingway's coevals. In particular, I am inspired by French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre's *Being and Nothingness* (*L'être et le néant* 1943), phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty's (*Phénoménologie de la perception* (*Phenomenology of Perception*, 1945) and its primacy of cognition, and ethicist Emmanuel Levinas' *Entre nous: essais sur le penser-à-l'autre* (Between Us: Essay on Thinking-of-the Other, 1999), with its focus upon ontology, ethics and metaphysics. And last but not least, I find the concept of the militant in André Malraux's novel *La condition humaine* (*Man's Fate*, 1934) also enlightening.

From Sartre I have borrowed the well-known and fundamental concept of freedom as consciousness of something outside of itself. One experiences consciousness in-itself as *nothingness*. It is so, as Sartre argues, because our *consciousness is always consciousness of something outside itself*, except when it considers itself as an object as an *image and enters into the endless realm of imaginal*. From Merleau-Ponty, I rely on his general theory of how my lived experiences of my lifeworld make up what I consider to constitute their significations for me, including the theoretically unlimited semantics and interpretive activities of my reading experiences. I use Levinas' important ontology of deontology to expand our notion of contingency as opposed to predetermination. It enormously assists an empathetic human being searching for such freedom of thought and action to have a comprehension of another human being's lifeworld—affectively, intellectually, psychosomatically, or otherwise.

Consequently, each of my meditations conveys my own reflections and contemplations within my templates as a reader and interpreter, as my own culture of reading as a whole. As an object of consciousness of my own lived experiences preceding and during my act of reading and interpretations, two other features also come forth in my meditations. First, there is the truth of what Carl Jung in "The Importance of Dreams" reminds us regarding "psychic identity or 'mystical participation,' which has been stripped off our world of things" (*Man and his Symbols* 31). Second, my meditations are subject to my attunement, receptivity, and availability to personal revelations as I go along.

ROBERT JORDAN AS THE PROTAGONIST IN *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

Now within the combinatory parameters of the meditational, I will situate my act of reading *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Subsequently, in that simultaneous act of reading and interpreting, I become aware of how I experience Robert Jordan as *being virtually real* and extant. As such, for me it has a solid validity of its own as a complex imaginal existence in the free domain of human consciousness as consciousness of something outside itself, except when it considers itself as an imaginal ground of creativity and therefore as freedom, always. As I shall discuss more fully in due course, Robert Jordan's fictional appearance on the first page of this classic of the Spanish Civil War (1936–1939) immediately intimates to the reader his intricate emerging view of his militant, democratic mission. He distinguishes himself by making manifest the essence of his humanity as *empathy,* translated from the Greek *empatheia*, or passion, which the German language expresses as *Einfühlung* or having a passionate inner understanding of the other psychophysically, intellectually, and spiritually. He is ready and eager to join the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War in their fight for freedom. He considers their fight as his own and takes utmost responsibility for it. I see him as shaping up within an ensemble of confirmatory actions based on the generative concept of liberty and justice for all as its socio-economic corollary through an honest hard-to-establish representative democracy.

Consequently, I consider Robert Jordan seeking an ethics of freedom arising from humanity's basal evolutionary demands for establishing and maintaining a cooperative society. He has chosen to defend the freedom of human beings who are conscious of their consciousness. Therefore, individually and societally, they are accountable for themselves and others. They know fully and well it entails going through a maximally extreme challenging series of life-and-death situations or extremities. This awareness of possible self-annihilation continually hovers around Robert Jordan and creates a certain gloomy suspense within the reader's hermeneutic activities, establishing a negative surplus meaning of our lifeworld as being inclined to be ruled from top-down. This stubborn instinctive tendency and the fight against it permeates *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Nevertheless, on a higher ethical plane, Robert Jordan takes a remarkably liberating spiritual voyage in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as he leads the reader along with him on his redemptive defiant fight against the nascent Spanish ultra-nationalist Falangist ideology, which for him is tantamount to Fascism.

AN ANALYSIS OF *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS* AS A TITLE

Let us commence our mediations at the very inception of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as a work of creative imagination largely grounded in the experiential: its *telltale title*, as I think of it. I imagine a theoretical physicist engaged in the implications of the Big Bang Theory might find a title to be comparable to the instant after the origin of the universe: high density and scorching heat, gradual cooling off, and then the creation of quarks and electrons as molecules or waves. Keeping that comparison in mind would be somewhat helpful as one briefly defines the title of a text by classifying and situating a title within the general structures of a literary work. Without exaggeration, a title such as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* announces the birth of intricate concentric circles, setting in motion momentous theoretical and virtual fictive experiences.

So, a title designates the moment of conception and gestation of the oral or scripted narrative while bearing hints of its further pending developments. Subsequently, it designates the writer's and later the reader's initial place of entry into the vast, elaborate domains of writing, reading, and above all *interpretive* processes. As a result, the reading that follows opens onto theoretically ever-expanding semantic expanses of referential prose and multireferential fictional narrative. In their entirety, they usher the reader into boundless interpretive and exploratory probes, trying to transmute the as-yet nonknowledge into knowledge in the act of dialogical reading and responding to the text. Putting a technical twist on it, such readings and interpretive activities are simultaneously hermeneutic and heuristic. As such, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is an auspiciously effective title. After many readings over many decades, I find its lingual poetic alchemy magical in its implications.

As I have already suggested, a highly imaginative, elegant, and cogent title such as *For Whom the Bell Tolls* partakes of the intrinsically magical art of poetry. Its prose is at once lyrical, experiential, and metaphilosophical. As a title, it situates us within a poignant shared life-and-death event or lived experiences of what German philosopher Edmund Husserl (1859–1938) referred to as "lifeworld" *(Lebenswelt)* and by implication its opposite: death as the final horizon of life. Thereby, consciously or unconsciously, such titles permeate each reading act from the outset—at once retrospectively and prospectively. Full of evocative and suggestive discourses and disclosures, the title generates keen anticipations of coming events and actions. Hidden in the silence of the as-yet-unsaid and the invisibility of the as-yet-unseen dimensions of fictive narrative, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as a title seeks to hint

at them as they gradually appear to our consciousness. In their aggregate, these intimations remain interrupted messages until the reader emerges from the darkness of the undisclosed into the lights of disclosures in the act of reading this epic.

In the light of the preceding general meditation on titles, I would claim *For Whom the Bell Tolls* comes forth as a most appropriate, eloquent, and, yes, elegant title for Hemingway's Spanish Civil War epic. It is poignant as an inordinately comprehensive, profound, poetic, and meditative title. Introducing the reader to the mysterious primeval and *problematic* human condition, it educates us about our common universal twin oneness and otherness or alterity and a way out of its destructive, divisive duality. I consider *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as a title that establishes an austere delineation of a transcendent ontological inquiry into our meditations on the human condition at a profound level.

ROBERT JORDAN AS FICTIONAL EMBODIMENT OF JOHN DONNE'S "NO MAN IS AN ILAND"

It is our common knowledge that Hemingway adroitly borrowed this moving and numinous title from John Donne's exhortatory and moving "Meditation 17." The vista of possibility and potentiality of a freely unified, progressive, and humane world of connections, a structured bonding with others through empathy and kinship, appears in it as facticity and certainty rather than a hypothesis. One reads:

> No man is an *Iland*, intire of it selfe; every man is a peece of the *Continent*, a part of the *maine*. . . . Any Mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in *Mankinde;* And therefore never send to know for whom the *bell* tolls; It tolls for *thee* ("Devotion upon Emergent Occasions, 1624, Meditation 17," 243.)

What bursts forth from Donne's spiritually expressed noble notion of "mankind" is the impossibility of a civilized individual human life to exist and acquire wholeness in a sort of islanded separation from others. His notion of humankind *apprehends* us to the extent that we *apprehend* it in its noteworthy double sense of apprehension. So much so that preventing its nullification constitutes the crux of the metaphysics and ethics of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Robert Jordan, as its main character, assumes the role of such a human being. He acquires his knowledge as a member of the human species, who as a result turns into a *human being through interconnectedness*

with other members of the species; that is to say, with emotional and cognitive empathy as interconnectedness with the whole of human species.

For Whom the Bell Tolls depicts a life-or-death combat to break through the alienation of being a solitary individual. It provides an example of veritably entering the realm of free, active, fair relations with others. No one else can do this for him. It takes an individual experiential liberation and subsequent communal sense of commitment and responsibility for oneself as a part of the human community in its entirety. That is a goal not easily achieved. For historically at the horizon of such unity, massive threats of prehistoric primal forces in the biosphere repeatedly threaten its destruction.

As Sigmund Freud discovered and so brilliantly articulated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920) and *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), two dauntingly opposite instinctive forces are hard at work, threatening the existence of such peaceful lived experience of genuine human togetherness. There is Eros as life instinct, and the death instinct or drive, Thanatos. Libido and its pleasure principle possess an eventual reproductive goal. According to Freud, the death instinct, Thanatos, surprisingly manages to ally itself with libido, with its own irreducible quotient of conscious-unconscious might, as in violent sexual rivalries and often in the sexual act itself, by introducing into *libido* sadomasochistic acts in varying forms and degrees of intensity. Thus, Thanatos perpetually exercises remarkable annihilative potency in general and in self- destructiveness, in particular, by permeating life instincts as it does precisely in sadomasochistic tendencies and potencies in their numerous modes.

As a result, being maximally cognizant of the given contradictions and complexities of the human condition and taking an honest, active, and intelligent analytic attitude toward fundamental human unity in freedom and justice can make an authentically heroic and ethical difference. It is an honorable act of free rebellion in doing what is helpful and right against tyrannical evil regardless of its outcome. It would seem to me to be the only way to save the human race from self-destruction. However, it is no easy or simple task by any means. Yet it is still, always and everywhere, the only way to proceed ontologically and morally evolve, as does Robert Jordan as a fictive example.

Robert Jordan offers an ideal opportunity for discussing important matters, which sometimes appear to go beyond knowledge as a clearing for disclosures, beyond which rationalizations sink into opacity of nonknowledge. Through acts of imagination, we can reanimate lived experiences so that

they intimate knowledge that our mind alone would find simply hermetic and inaccessible, but a spiritual mind-body continuum as he experiences it would reveal. A case in point is his sexual passion for young Maria, which mysteriously transmutes itself into a spiritually transcendent love. Similarly, the defense of the poor and dispossessed of the world makes itself manifest in his consequential acts of bravery and eventual self-sacrifice. Often the nature of such matters becomes dialectical in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, and consequently, it is harder to grasp their oppositional nature as phenomena such as situationally having to synthesize life and death, war and peace, sexual love, and mystical love. In such textual and contextual reflections, Robert Jordan shapes up surprisingly well within our imaginal world as well as our experiential lived world, the sum of our lived experiences. Through his actions, Robert Jordan helps us, however often tragically, to think the unthinkable and get beyond its hatred, violence, and despair for a humane world.

ROBERT JORDAN'S SIGNIFYING APPEARANCE IN THE FIRST SENTENCE OF *FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS*

Robert Jordan's appearance in the first sentence of the first paragraph on the first page of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* carries intimations of the epic's conception, development, and unfolding through its protagonist's thoughts, actions, and their implications. Every time I read it (and there have been a considerable number of times), I am intuitively wont to read and re-reread this paragraph with utmost care. Perhaps it is because Robert Jordan immediately comes through in it as the central focus of struggle against Spanish Falangists in this epic, whom he considers as Fascists in the Spanish Civil War. Within other concerns, this one stands out as an essentially instinctive political ideology, carrying with it considerable consequences for individuals and nations. Thus on the very first page, his presence establishes the inaugural signifying spatiotemporal moment of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Here, Robert Jordan commences to concentrate generally on his manifold life-world experiences of thoughts, feelings, and actions under what Swiss-German psychiatrist and philosopher Karl Jaspers (1883–1969) refers to as "limit situations"—at once perilous and yet maximally edifying and engrossing to the reader.

From my point of view, Robert Jordan immediately sets in motion the ground of emergence of the fictional narrative's wide-ranging theoretical, practical, and ethical concerns. He quickly provides an overall inkling of the epic's gradual development in its diverse multilayered stylistics and plural-

istic semantics as they unfold in the rest of the narrative. I consider it valuable to analyze it here further. The reader finds Robert Jordan as

> He lay flat on the brown, pine-needled floor of the forest, his chin on his folded arms, and high overhead the wind blew in the tops of the pine trees. The mountainside sloped gently where he lay; but below it was steep and he could see the dark of the oiled road winding through the pass. There was a stream alongside the road and far down the pass he saw a mill beside the stream and the falling water of the dam, white in the summer sunlight. (*FWBT* 1)

He still does not see the bridge he plans to demolish in support of the Spanish Republic. To see that all-important bridge and experience its destruction by Robert Jordan, the reader needs to wait patiently to see that focal point of the novel's action. He does make manifest his immediate attunement with the Spanish earth with all its secrets as a biosphere existing solidly beneath him and the ambient clear sky above pine trees with their mysteries hovering overhead. Symbolically, the contrast summarizes the lived experience of his immediate finite situation as it transmutes itself into the physics and metaphysics of various aspects of his struggle ahead of him.

A saintly, sixty-eight year old man by the name of Anselmo, who belongs to a group of Republican guerillas operating nearby, awaits to assist Jordan. He is from the city of Barco de Avila. He is a caring, thoughtful, courageous older man. He shall help Jordan blow up a designated bridge of strategic significance. A devout Catholic, he is opposed to killing, but he cannot tolerate the alliance of Fascism with Catholicism on the Falangist side, so he revolts against his own beloved religion, and joins the rebels. There is a sense of hidden camaraderie between Robert Jordan and Anselmo, radiating from their first exchange. It constantly grows more intense as the narrative expands.

The reader's takeaways from Hemingway's opening description of Robert Jordan lying on the brown pine-needled forest floor in Spain's Sierra Mountains near the Escorial are simultaneously poignant and thought-provoking. With Robert Jordan placed at its center, this miniature depiction of landscape presages and imaginatively foretells the following narrative. The French language properly would refer to it as an *aperçu*, a sparing outline, but illuminatingly well-conceived and properly stated. The brown of the

pine-needled forest floor and the branches of pine trees hovering above Robert Jordan's head is reminiscent of images of the art of painting in its vividness. For me, they evoke Paul Cézanne's *Large Pine and Red Earth* (1895) and its inevitable connotative associations with the perceiver and the perceived coinciding with it in interpretive acts. Hence from this supine position, Robert Jordan can forecast the novel's narrative unfolding.

JORDAN'S PROFESSION AS AN ACADEMIC AND ITS ROLE IN HIS FIGHT FOR DEMOCRACY

Robert Jordan's life as an academic, scholar, and militant anti-authoritarian goes through fundamental transformations in Spain as he observes the rise of Fascism in a country he loves. He initially emerges as a politically committed anti-Fascist, devoting himself primarily to the cause of the Spanish Republic as a dynamiter. Demolition is a skill he learned from working on road construction in his native Montana. He now utilizes his knowledge as a tactician militating on the side of the Spanish Republic against Falange (*falangismo*), the ultra-nationalist Fascist movement.

Hemingway portrays Jordan as a "young man, who was tall and thin, with sun-streaked fair hair, and a wind- and sun-burned face, who wore a sun-faded flannel shirt, a pair of peasant trousers, and rope-soled shoes" (*FWBT* 3). His apparel notwithstanding, he appears not to be a Spaniard. Yet his sincere willingness to fight and if necessary die to preserve the democratic aspirations of the Spaniards he loves does not always make him one of them, not entirely. Just the same, he is not the Other (l'*autrui*) as the French language puts it. He is non-Spaniard, an *inglés* because he speaks English; but he is not the Other (*autrui*), the Outsider, the stranger—in short the *not-us*. The sincerity and purity of his commitment to democratic principles makes him a trusted comrade to the small band of guerrillas fighting for the Republic. Initially only Pablo finds him a foreigner, an authoritarian character.

In a general and connotative manner, Robert Jordan at once establishes the overall spatiotemporal dimensions of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Within the corporeal awareness of the novel's characters, Jordan helps reveal the states of their consciousness, as well as the physics and metaphysics of nature (suggested by the infinity of the heaven above the pine trees). One might say that his gaze appears suspended somewhere between his lived experience of lying on the brown pine-needled forest floor and the infinite all-enveloping sky above, ablaze in sunshine, above the top of the pine trees.

The pine trees intimate a mixture of life-and-death archetypes. They stand for the objects of human consciousness rooted at once in the finite lifeworld in the here-and-now and its antithesis in infinity and immortality. This coincides with the unfolding of what our conscious-unconscious life attributes to the dark earth down below and the transcendent luminous spheres of the heaven above. It is comparable to the differentiation between the human condition as given and the realization of a zone of freedom in thoughts, action, creative activities, and their safeguarding and expansion. As a result, the transformation or at least modification of the instinctively determined human situations becomes then an existential goal of human imagination manifest in creativity and innovative consciousness. Ideally, combined they offer an inkling of the potential of a society inspired and conceived as ethical.

The reader may reasonably conclude that Jordan is definitely a modern, intellectually active academic thinker and freedom fighter. In a sense, one can perceive him to be engaging in an altruistic, even self-sacrificial fight for freedom, which includes a passionate emotional and sociopolitical *empathy*. I believe it helps the reader with receiving, interiorizing, interpreting, and eventually phenomenologically appropriating *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as his or her own in reading it this way.

In his theories and methodologies of interpretation (hermeneutics) and processes of discovering and disclosing (heuristic) approach to learning context, Robert Jordan eventually helps each reader comprehend *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in its prodigious range of significations according to his or her own culture of reading. On the one hand, these significations draw from economics, philosophy, religion, political ideology, psychology, and guerrilla warfare as conceptual activities combined with Robert Jordan's lived experiences of them. On the other hand, grippingly, they include metaphysical and mystical notions of *empathy* and love hidden in the chambers of his heart as *apprehension* in its double significations of seizing and comprehending of a transcendental union with all that exists within and beyond our human understanding. These two modes of knowledge unfold, extend, and expand on their respective dialectical planes of intellect and passion, where the right and left side of the brain connect in the realm of the imagination. It all begins as Robert Jordan appears in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* from his preliminary supine position Earth and looks at the Heaven above and beyond the top of the pine trees rooted in the forest ground.

I have intentionally focused on Robert Jordan's contributions in his given

novelistic task as a protagonist for fully rendering the plot, styles, stylistics, and thematics of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* virtually real. The protagonist, in its original Greek *prōtagōnistēs* meant a "*struggler*" as well as its modern meaning as a major character in a novel or drama. Thus, Robert Jordan struggles as a militant for democracy and creates, transforms, and alters elements of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* as an epic and makes it possible to shape it up as a remarkably multidimensional narrative text. Finally, the extraordinary vision Hemingway proffers upon Jordan enables the readers in creating their own methods of discovery with Robert Jordan as a reliable guide and instructor, the reader establishing a frame of reference within which he or she may claim it as a part of their own totalized and scripted lifeworld adventures.

Hemingway portrays Robert Jordan as an exceedingly round character. As such, he remarkably remains our contemporary after nearly eight decades, so he can arouse in us a wide range of interactions—instinctive and emotional as well as conceptual and speculative. By interaction I mean his ability as a fictive character who can simultaneously draw us into his totalized lived experiences as we draw him into our own imaginal lifeworld. What happens is a mode of imaginative *appropriation* of Robert Jordan through the act of reading. Reportedly, the late Senator John McCain did this throughout his adult life and he was in an excellent position to appreciate *For Whom the Bell Tolls.* He had firsthand experience of Carl Jasper's "limit situations" when his Skyhawk Bomber was shot down over Hanoi, North Vietnam, and he was wounded, captured, and imprisoned.

ROBERT JORDAN AS A MODERN 20TH CENTURY SCHOLAR

One justifiably might say Robert Jordan in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* exemplifies the modern 20th century socio-politically committed, progressive academic and scholar. The reader discovers in him a distinctly different figure from the more cerebral, traditional educator-scholar prone to solitary theoretical, analytic, literary, and artistic pursuits. It is clear, however, he militantly advocated matters concerned with human engagement in unity with those struggling to remain free and divested from any form of authoritarianism and totalitarianism. Such human beings consider freedom of choice and its inevitable accountability to be the fundamental ontological basis of their morality. Their ethics in turn also impose upon them huge moral duties and obligations. One might say that Robert Jordan stands steadfastly in unity and communion with others as he offers a prototype of what he considers a salutary sociopolitical commitment. His ethics generate their own

direct consequences for him, and by extension, for others. Of necessity, Robert Jordan's theory of epistemology and pedagogy make manifest a new ontological deontology.

As we know, Robert Jordan taught Spanish at the University of Montana. He was spending his sabbatical year (1936–1937) in Spain, which coincided with the Spanish Civil War. He volunteered in the war on the Republican side. He tells us, "I left in the summer of thirty-six and though the leave is for a year you do not need to be back until the fall term opens in the following year" (*FWBT* 165). As a scholar, he had written a book about traveling for twelve years in Spain before engaging in the Spanish Civil War. He also plans to write another book about his experiences in the war. He informs the reader that

> He would write a book when he got through with this. But only about the things he knew, truly, and about what he knew. But I will have to be a much better writer than I am now to handle them, he thought. The things that he had come to know in this war were not so simple. *(FWBT* 248)

Robert Jordan learns that the primacy of perception is the only way to know anything "truly." In answer to the guerrillero Augustín's question, "How did you happen to come to Spain?", Jordan responds, "I came first twelve years ago to study the country and the language . . . I teach Spanish in a university," later adding that he does so "as an instructor" (FWBT 209). He also tells us, "I learn fast" (*FWBT* 229). Indeed, he has mastered the Spanish and he speaks it with native fluency. The admirable Republican guerrillero Anselmo declares, "He [Robert Jordan] speaks Spanish as we do" (209). He has achieved native fluency by learning the language through cultural immersion. About writing a book about his living and fighting experiences in the Spanish Civil War, he assures himself, "It will be a good book if you can write it. Much better than the other" (*FWBT* 165).

Robert Jordan manifests an extensive knowledge of Spanish literature, geography, history, religion, politics, geography, culture, and bullfighting, Spain's national sport. He shows a keen awareness of the interplay of the various geographic regions of Spain and their cities, towns, and rural areas in their intertwining kinships and disparities. Robert Jordan points out,

> A Spaniard was really only loyal to his village in the end. First Spain of course, then his own tribe, then his province, then his village, his family and finally his trade. If you knew Spanish he was prejudiced in your favor, if you knew his province it was that much better, but if you knew his village and his trade you were in as far as a foreigner ever could be. He [Robert Jordan] 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. (*FWBT* 135)

Thus, the idea of lived experience as the basis of both nonknowledge *and* knowledge make possible the transformation of one into the other for Robert Jordan, and would appear to be of crucial importance in his fight against the Falangist movement, which makes up the theoretical basis of the Spanish modality of authoritarianism Hemingway considered as Fascism in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. What makes this transformation achievable for Robert Jordan is his choice of sharing the living, pulsating reality of Spaniards, primarily through the miracle of language as speech. He experiences Spain as the dwelling place of a people whose language through its signs and symbols shines a piercing light on the existential mysteries of their way of life and their aspirations.

Speaking Spanish fluently works as basic communication theory for Robert Jordan. He can penetrate into the Spanish mind and its connection with the Spanish earth. His Spanish communication theory makes it possible for him not to feel like a foreigner, except by the accident of birth. Pablo, the presumed bandleader of the group of Republican freedom fighters who is afraid that Robert Jordan's demolition of the nearby bridge threatens his guerilla band's nominal security and peace, accusingly asks Robert Jordan, "What right have you, a foreigner, to come to me and tell me what I must do?" (*FWBT* 15). Jordan replies, "I have to do what I am ordered to do and I can promise you of its importance. That I am a foreigner is not my fault. I would rather have been born here" (*FWBT* 15). That last sentence clarifies the extent of Robert Jordan's attachment to Spain through his lived experiences of its language and its culture. "They trusted you on the language, principally. They trusted you on understanding the language completely and speaking it idiomatically and having a knowledge of the different places" (*FWBT* 135).

Incidentally, accrediting Robert Jordan with bilingualism was perhaps the basis of Hemingway's desire to impart the actual aural *feel* of the spoken

Spanish to the reader in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway expresses that bilingualism in a signifying way to make manifest in the lexical, syntactic, and semantic dimensions of spoken Spanish that permeate the novel and generate its special Spanish mood, its setting, and distinctive cultural quality. Accordingly, in parts, reading the novel gives the uncanny impression that *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a work of translation from Spanish.

COOPERATION WITH OTHERS AS A MODE OF MERE EMPATHETIC TOGETHERNESS

> Men of my generation," wrote French novelist Albert Camus, "have had Spain in our hearts. . . . It was there that they learned . . . that one can be right and yet be beaten, that force can vanquish spirit, and that there are times when courage is not rewarded.
>
> Adam Hochschild, *Spain in Our Hearts: Americans in the Spanish Civil War* (xvii)

Robert Jordan's camaraderie with Anselmo at the very beginning of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* comes through as a stripped-down, direct engagement in dialogue with his fellow fighters. *Empathy* defines itself as a concurrent inner cognition and recognition of attentiveness as care and concern of one human being for another. Empathy comes across as a splendid form of affirmation of attachment of one human being for another in freely chosen acts of benevolence toward all humans as related *beings*. It confirms the essence of our humanity as *being-and-caring for one another* and negates alienation. Rooted in freedom, it surfaces as a mode of *onto-existential togetherness* among all human *beings* so significant to Emmanuel Levinas' ethics.

Empathy, as I define it, allows individuals to get together and act freely in communal gatherings of shared values. It signifies potentials and possibilities of what one might call solicitude among human beings, or better an inner state of being we call soul with all its ramifications. Robert Jordan tries to extend and expand this feeling of empathy among himself and the Spanish Republican freedom fighters in their mountain hideaway. In various degrees of intensities and on different planes of significance, he meets with success in nearly all of them, aside from Pablo initially. Considering himself the leader of the small band of fighters, Pablo tries to sabotage Robert Jordan's mission to blow up the strategic bridge, fearing the lost security of his cave life and horses he loves. It is also noteworthy to

mention Robert Jordan's conduct toward two significant women, the courageous Pilar, who is the real leader of the group rather than Pablo, and Maria the young girl gang-raped by the Falangists, who characterizes Robert Jordan's relationship with women. He mystically and reciprocally falls in love with Maria. He also shares genuine admiration, affection, and veritable respect with the intelligent, brave and empathetic Pilar. There is no trace of phallocratic or alpha male tendencies in those contacts; quite the contrary is true.

VIGILANCE AGAINST INHERENT HIERARCHIC POWER STRUCTURE

As we ponder Robert Jordan's assignment as a dynamiter assigned to blow up a crucial bridge to disrupt the assault on the city of Segovia held by Spanish Republicans, we might initiate a discussion of the thorny and open-ended nature of inescapable hierarchical bureaucracy—military or civilian. I perceive it as a primal evolutionary inherent development, and therefore inevitable. The unavoidable mixture of totalitarian and authoritarian methods of bureaucracy as well as libertarian hierarchies is immensely disturbing. I would say, always and everywhere, power hierarchies inherently cultivate pernicious primal structural styles of hierarchical exercise of power that approximates the predetermined. It gradually acquires an ever-present oppressive independent presence of its own, even in democratic bureaucracies. In that sense, one might suspect hierarchical power in the human sphere as with being by a no means ever a haphazard domain emerging from nowhere. Such exercise, by definition, either dominates the less powerful or drastically minimizes fair and equal power-sharing. We need to try to delineate its biosphere physics and metaphysics as scarcity of power in our lifeworld and analyze its instinctual structures, transforming them by developing theories of equal power-sharing practices. By definition, such theories must go beyond our everyday instinctive desire to get the upper hand in relationships with others, to be always in control, and to acquire power and exercise over others in one way or another. I would call it nascent Fascist tendencies, residing and then unfolding instinctively in every one of us in our basal everyday interactions with one another as the powerful and the powerless—often in the most cruel, corruptive, and ugly ways. It is a melancholy thought, though, if we are cognizant that its most organizational structures are going to remain susceptible to being oppressive and undemocratic for a long time to come.

We learn, for example, that Robert Jordan experiences defects in orders he receives from the so-called higher-ups as flawed in practice. He says, "*They were bad orders all right for those who would have to carry them out*" (FWBT 43, emphasis added), Yet he is a man of firm discipline with an equally strong sense of duty, even an idealist aware of the vagaries of ideals. As it turns out, however, he is going to have to demolish the bridge under nearly impossible conditions, this time because Pablo, the guerrillero who "has gone bad," so to speak, asserts his own power against Robert Jordan's mission, and to some extent, he succeeds. He manages to throw away the fuses for the dynamite, because blowing up the bridge endangers their safe cave and his horses.

Robert Jordan freely chose to act in defense of the cause of the Spanish Republic with a sense of utmost personal responsibility. As such, in the novel's dire world of violence and strife, he comes through as heroic but without any trace of being aware of his heroism, just the opposite. As a result, one may consider him merely as an existential hero, fully cognizant and acceptant of the serious implications of what he has decided to do. He carries out his duties "under orders from those who are conducting the war," (*FWTBT* 15). He follows the Soviet officer Golz's orders, who commands a division in the International Brigade in the Spanish Civil War.

However, Golz himself is carrying out the plan of Vicente Rojo, the inept Chief of the General Staff of the Spanish Armed Forces (1894–1966). Golz is referring to Rojo's orders, "as another of the unsuccessful professor's masterpieces" (*FWTBT* 6). In his conversation with Robert Jordan, Golz sarcastically mentions Rojo's name because of his past as an educator at the Infantry Academy in Toledo and as the editor of several books on military matters. Following Rojo's orders, Golz asks Robert Jordan to demolish a specific bridge just before his division's surprise attack, which turns out to be anything but a surprise.

Even if all goes well according to the plan, the bridge's demolition is a highly demanding, time-sensitive, and risky operation. It can go awry in a variety of ways and does. Nevertheless, by temperament, experiential expertise, educational formation as an instructor, and total loyalty to the cause of the Spanish Republic, Robert Jordan succeeds in fulfilling his duty. This confers upon him a dimension of *apprehension*, in the multiple meanings of the verb, as understanding, capturing, and making one's own the veritable spirit of the Spanish Civil War. He instructs the reader how to capture the sense of melancholy of an ironic hieratic fight for democratic freedom. Robert Jordan can indeed make us *see* in our mind's eye, what it means to

live, fight and be ready to die, if necessary, in a horrific fratricidal and sororicidal civil war.

Our meditation on this grave matter is just the start of unlimited discussions of the theory of power and its praxis, via authoritarianism and anarchism on the one hand, and then freedom and justice on the other. I find it an endlessly complicated matter to deal with, if not truly impossible. A perspectival understanding and interpretation of Robert Jordan's reminder to himself makes this necessity clear: "*There are necessary orders that are no fault of yours and there is a bridge and that bridge can be the point on which the future of human race can turn. As it can turn on everything that happens in this war*" (*FWBT* 43, my emphasis). As is true of innumerable sentences in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, these two sentences resonate on many semantic and hermeneutic planes of signification.

It is not hard to detect the contradiction between Robert Jordan's fundamental independence of mind, the realm of personal freedom in which he creatively thinks and functions, and the hierarchical structure and its culture within which he operates as an anti-Fascist. Yet it is hard to believe that he has to subject himself to this top-down authoritarianism. Subordinates still cannot participate in decision-making and matters administrative even in the combat for freedom. Therefore, it poses an enormous problem because it is as foreseeable as it is destructive. One needs to be aware of the systematic *hierarchic* nature of human organizations; whether authoritarian or democratic, they all preserve their instinctive authoritarian and hierarchical propensity to acquisition and malpractice of power over others. Only the triumph of choosing and practicing our subjective freedom saves us from availability to "ur-Fascism" as an impulsive-compulsive modality of adherence and behavior.

CONVERSATION AS THE "ONLY CIVILIZED THING WE HAVE"

At their best, the matters we have mediated upon partake of the intimacy, immediacy, and above all *freedom* that numerous forms of conversations bestow upon us through a journey of discovery. Conversations lead us across the problematic terrain of the human condition even in dealing with what appears to be "limit-situations." Pilar converses "as though she were speaking to a classroom; almost as though she were lecturing" (*FWBT* 98). Pilar then adds, "Furthermore, I like to talk. *It is the only civilized thing we have*" (*FWBT* 98, emphasis added). That is no doubt so. Our conversations, oral or scripted, are all that have remained for us to reclaim our humanity and our shared history as human beings. Lingual communications

offer us a veritably "civilized" communicative opportunity and admirably continue to do so. It is a human realm of potentiality of reciprocal dialogic give-and-take.

Within the limits imposed upon him by the fundamental boundaries of his circumstances, Robert Jordan considerably enlarges his understanding of his assignment through immense dialogic possibilities at his disposal. In a strong sense, that is a big part of what he is fighting for, freedom of speech as primal force of the architectonics of unrestricted dialogic discourse. He seeks knowledge about the liberating possibilities of knowledge through such untrammeled bilingual interactions. He declares, "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. I wonder if you only learn them now because you are over-sensitized because of the shortness of the time?" (*FWBT* 381). Death seemingly does stop the human dialogue as such, but in its scriptural form, it restores its powers.

ROBERT JORDAN SITUATED WITHIN BENEVOLENCE AND MALEVOLENCE

> I really am a pessimist. I've always felt that fascism is a more natural governmental condition than democracy. Democracy is a grace. It's something essentially splendid because it's not at all routine or automatic. Fascism goes back to our infancy and childhood, where we were always told how to live. We were Meditations told, Yes, you may do this; no, you may not do that. So the secret of fascism is that it has this appeal to people whose later lives are not satisfactory.
>
> Norman Mailer "*On Democracy and Secret of Fascism*," The ScottishPlayer, 2010

> "*Qué cosa más mala es la guerra*," he said to himself, which meant, "What a bad thing war is." (*FWBT* 322)

Yes, war is bad; it is malign; it succeeds best when it destroys all that is benign in the mixture of malignity. In its unqualified sense, it is evil in a sort of malignant way, always and everywhere. Robert Jordan offers us a proper vantage point to consider matters of extreme violence and abysmal cruelties in the Spanish Civil War, which happened *on both sides*. Wars are all fundamentally gratuitous and senseless, with a primeval "will to power," as Niet-

zsche might have called it, which is most unfortunately, as Freud warned us, all tied up with our Libido as enhancer of sexuality and reproductive instincts. As such, it literally forces us to speechlessness and into involuntary silence of incomprehension. They evoke, in most readers, the primal twilight zone of human consciousness where every act is merely instinctively rudderless, where the superior force always wins, rightly or wrongly. Pablo's wanton and savage killing of Falangists and the brutal attacking and gang raping of the innocent young Maria by them are examples of such carnages. War, as the realm of ineffable horror, creates an *unspeakable* void where the civilized dialogue dies an ignoble death. It can often lead to a sense of psychophysical numbing by the sinister and inexhaustible forces of united libidinal and death wish.

In *For Whom the Bell Tolls* from the depth of its narrative, the silenced induced by the unthinkable gives birth to the architectonics of the lingual and imaginal from which all linguistic human capabilities, audible and scripted, bubble up to the surface and express themselves. This fictional language as the possibility of the imaginative disclosure of the lifeworld's tragic experience emerges also from the unfathomable depth of silence. Thereby it provides a respite from the onslaught of the inevitable human capacity for utter depravity. On a certain analytic plane, the whole immorality appears to exist as a fundamental, primal, instinctive struggle for acquisition of power, its maintenance, and its unconstrained expansion and exercise, which corrupts the human species as moral beings. Surprisingly, the lack of power also signifies the dread of destructive powerlessness as corruptive and annihilative power hanging over individuals and groups. To an appreciable extent, Robert Jordan sees Fascism as exploitation, a double-edged sword of hunger for power without moral considerations corrupting all aspects of the biosphere in general and within its human province in particular. Again, as Freud taught us, the biosphere is the arena where *life and death instincts fight to the death*—often the death instinct allying itself with its opposite for its own inescapable purposes.

In my considered opinion, good and evil dialectically permeate *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Well-conceived patterns of Robert Jordan's thoughts, contemplations, remembrances, and concrete actions persistently face having to juxtapose moral opposites. He tries synthesizing life and death, peace and war, honor and dishonor; transcendent love and copulation; fight for freedom and repression; justice and injustice; ecstasy and downright depression. Not an easy task, yet as tragic as one finds it, often unthinkable and unspeakable atrocities and acts of decency and nobility of spirit astonish-

ingly coexist side by side with the human struggle for superiority and strength. In the midst of our lifeworld, with our instinctive desires for acquiring and maintaining power, we justify what appears to be a dialectical and often diabolical vicious circle.

This inevitable instinctive duality of the evolutionary creative demands collective cooperative commitments, and the desire rarely ends up the indisputable winner always and everywhere. For it also tends to mark the place of what one might consider as the fertile emerging ground of hierarchic solidarity as primeval Fascism in the forms of tribalism and later different modalities of nationalism and populism, xenophobia, and so forth. The evolutionary structural design of economics of power clearly rules our lives—individually and as a group, even when we determinedly fight against Fascism as Robert Jordan does. It suggests thus the potential of a little fascist residing in every one of us. It approximates a primal virus with no foreseeable remedy. I would suggest that through Robert Jordan, Hemingway was aware of this primordial problem while writing *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Much to his credit, he dealt with it courageously and adroitly, strongly supporting the progressive side of the struggle against tyranny, both against authoritarianism *and* anarchism.

Hemingway makes Robert Jordan a unique fictional presence in the Spanish Civil War who is, in my estimation, an evolutionary progressive anti-Fascist. That is why Robert Jordan is capable of coming to grips with the abyssal chasm in the tragic twilight zone between Good and Evil. He remains a progressive with an evolutionary transcending view of human lifeworld and consequently embraces a transformative horizon of imaginative evolutionary creativity. This open horizon prevents him from becoming an absurdist, as it did later for French philosopher and novelist Albert Camus (1931–1960).

As Pilar remarks to old El Sordo (the deaf one), the leader of a group of supporters of the Spanish Republic about Robert Jordan : "The boy is smart," and she adds, "Smart and cold. Very cold in the head" (*FWBT* 94). Here, I read "cold" as clear-headed, straight thinking, and lucid. She is right, of course. She has seen him refuse killing the thuggishly selfish but wickedly smart Pablo. He does so calmly because Pablo might have easily killed him in a moment of inattention. It could have also detracted from Robert Jordan's comprehensive situational vision of the pragmatics of blowing up the bridge. It would have interfered with the band's retreat afterward. Robert Jordan realizes that only Pablo can lead the retreat through Sierra de Gredos, the vast jagged mountains located between Avila, Cáceres, Madrid, and Toledo. The location also might have engendered the nearby small munici-

palities of Navarredonda de Gredos. Finally, even Pablo tells Robert Jordan, "I have admired your judgment much today, *Inglèse*," as they call him because he has an English name and speaks English. Pablo mentions, "I think thou hast much *picardia* [cunning]. That thou art smarter than I am. I have confidence in thee" (*FWBT* 332–33).

So Robert Jordan develops a pragmatic heuristics, or a series of common sense logarithms to solve problems that unexpectedly arise. For him, particulars of his mission to blow up the bridge are of paramount importance, but his actions are specific instances of his unwaveringly held, philosophical, political principles freely chosen. His unique blend of physical alertness and his keen vitality, and intellectual powers make Robert Jordan a compelling character. Perhaps one can say that all the way through the novel he exudes *charisma*, in the double etymological Greek meanings of a "favor freely given,", a "gift of grace." He imparts a sense of charm, emanating from valiant acts, which impart the impression of freely bestowed blessings, embodying good intentions, and effective actions.

ROBERT JORDAN AND THE PROBLEMATICS OF IDEOLOGY

> . . . Fascism is a lie told by bullies. A writer who will not lie cannot live and work under fascism.
>
> —Ernest Hemingway, Speech at a meeting of the Writers' Congress (July 4, 1937) published in *New Masses* as "Fascism Is a Lie" (June 22, 1937)

> If you reread Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* you will discover that Robert Jordan identifies his enemies with Fascists, even when he thinks of the Spanish Falangists. And for FDR, "The victory of the American people and their allies will be a victory against fascism and the dead hand of despotism it represents."
>
> Umberto Ecco, *Five Moral Pieces* (70)

Robert Jordan's loyalty to the Republican cause in the Spanish Civil War is manifestly total. However, he can be as ruthlessly critical of the Republican side and their conduct of the war as he is in his own self-criticism, which borders on ferocious. His critical spirit is both an indication of his authenticity as an academic thinker and scholar as much as it is, in my opinion, an indication of his being profoundly undogmatic ideologically, always thinking and evolving in the here-and-now and the matters-at-

hand. He realizes the classical serious distinction between thought and action, yet he conjoins them by dialectically synthesizing militant endeavors with actions maintaining an edge in his present extreme situation. He tells himself, early on in the narrative, "Turn off the thinking *now*, old timer, old comrade. You're a bridge-blower *now*. Not a thinker" (*FWBT* 17, emphasis added). He remains keenly aware that intentional thinking and purposeful action can and do change the environing world. Regrettable as it is, blowing up a strategic bridge, that symbol of connection, in wartime is one of them.

Still, Robert Jordan ultimately chooses to operate within dictates of his own personal lived experiences and its ontological ethics he freely chooses to impose upon them. It is a principle that integrates all his abilities and aspirations, allowing his intellectual and experiential and instinctive faculties to remain intact, perhaps even sharper in a time of consequential gravity with an eye always on the inner evolutionary and transformative liberty our consciousness bestows upon all. He remains a genuine individual, subjectively autonomous, subjectively free, and responsible onto himself and through inter-subjectivity with others.

Above all, he opts to remain in solidarity with a cause he considers just and liberatingly redemptive. As he clearly states, "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, nor his faculties for seeing and hearing,* and if he were going to form judgments he would form them afterwards" (*FWBT* 136, my emphasis). That is at the heart of what I regard as Robert Jordan's admirable non-ideological stance as an academic and militant thinker in the Spanish Civil War as a fight against Fascism.

Here is a conversation between Maria, Pilar, and Robert Jordan that I find most illuminating:

> "He is a communist," Maria said. "They are very serious *gente* [people]."
>
> "Are you a communist?"
>
> "No, I am an anti-fascist"
>
> "For a long time?"
>
> "Since I have understood fascism."
>
> "How long is that?"
>
> "For nearly ten years." (*FWBT* 66)

This conversation signifies that it has taken Robert Jordan ten years to arrive at the understanding of what Fascism means to him ideologically as an authoritarian regime and totalitarian mode of thought, which is why he has chosen to take direct action to combat it. Elsewhere, he maintains, "He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed, life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it. He was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war. Here in Spain the Communists offered the best discipline and the soundest and sanest for *the prosecution of the war*" (FWBT 163). So Robert Jordan, an assertive individualist, is also cooperative when need be. Yet with his own way of seeing, perceiving, and experiencing his lifeworld he could in no way accept the Utopian, hierarchic authoritarian system, the so-called "dictatorship of proletariat" as Karl Marx formulated it. "What were his politics then?" he understandably asks himself (*FWBT* 163). For me, not surprisingly, his clear answer is, "*He had none now*" (*FWBT* 163, emphasis). In my view, an undogmatic, academic, non-authoritarian and therefore unrestricted dialogic communication in its fullest ethical progressive context underlies and undermines Robert Jordan's most valuable characteristic. He adds, "I am going back and earn my living teaching Spanish as before, and I am going to write a true book" (*FWBT* 163).

If Robert Jordan is not risking his life for ideological beliefs, what is he exactly doing then? In an unguarded moment, he tells himself that "You learned the dry-mouthed, fear-purged, purging ecstasy of battle and you fought that summer and that fall for all the poor in the world, against all tyranny, for all the things that you believed and for the new world you had been educated into" (*FWBT* 236). But none of this has anything to do with a "*planned society*" (FWBT 163). Nor does it have anything to do with a "*materialistic conception of society*" (*FWBT* 305, emphasis added). He goes on to say "You are not a real Marxist and you know it," reminding himself,

> *You believe in Life, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity. You believe in Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness. Don't ever kid yourself with too much dialectics. They are for some but not for you. You have to know them in order not to be a sucker. You have put many things in abeyance to win a war. If this war is lost all of those things are lost.* (*FWBT* 305, emphasis added).

This is Robert Jordan as readers like me remember, love, and respect for a lifetime. All he seeks in his participation in the Spanish Civil War is a veritable solidarity with the evolutionary Homo Sapiens and their progressive evolutionary past, and their present struggle to build a civilized future in pursuing Life, Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity as the foundation of the architectonics of a just, and free civilization. Often I think of the possibility of a nearly mystical horizon of human life in its limitless creative evolution with its own ontology and epistemology as a sacred society as Robert Jordan did. He compares this feeling of being in spiritual union with others in the fight against oppressive authoritarianism comparable to the "feeling you expected and did not have when you made your first communion. It was a feeling of consecration to a duty toward all the oppressed of the world which would be as difficult and embarrassing to speak about as religious experience . . ." (*FWBT* 235). He found it also to be a feeling that "gave you a part in something that you could believe in wholly and completely and in which you felt an absolute brotherhood with the others who were engaged in it" (*FWBT* 235).

Robert Jordan felt so deeply about this possibility of a sacral union among human beings that "your own Death seemed of complete unimportance" to him (*FWBT* 235). This feeling of oneness with the powerless, dispossessed, oppressed, and forgotten of the world is not so much a Marxist expression of unity with the masses but a mystic one. In its own way, it proposes an ontological vision of profound human responsiveness to unbound human love and compassion. In short, Robert Jordan firmly believes in an ontological ethics conceived in freedom and carried out as the unsurpassable universal human oneness in love for the neglected and the oppressed of the world. His belief borders on spiritual ecstasy of being in love only experienced in self-sacrificial acts of relatedness to others, which envelops his participation in the cause of the Spanish Republic.

In a revealing conversation initiated by Pilar, the similarity between religion, ethos and the belief in the Republican cause becomes quite clear. She tells Robert Jordan:

> "I believe firmly in the Republic and I have faith. I believe in it with fervor as those who have religious faith believe in the mysteries."
>
> "I believe you."
> "And you have the same faith?"

> "In the Republic?"
> "Yes."
> "Yes," he said, "hoping, it was true."
> "I am happy," the woman said. "And you have no fear?"
> "Not to die," he said truly. (*FWBT* 91)

If the reader is responsive to such matters, this conversation is profoundly honest, exhilarating, and truly exalting. What noticeably comes forth from the attentive reading of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are the disclosures that Robert Jordan is deeply independent in his mind and actions, which shows he is a well integrated human being with an essential élan. I must reemphasize independence as the foundational aspect of his mind. He tells us "I have read the handbook of Marxism that Emil Burns has edited. That is all" (*FWBT* 244). Yet more than likely he would like to read more about Marxism. It is what a true academic and scholar does. Just the same, it is a revelation of considerable significance that in the midst of the ferocious rival ideologies such as Communism, Marxism, Socialism, and Anarchism on the one hand, and populism, nationalism, Fascism, and Nazism on the other, Robert Jordan remains firmly committed to his own vision of a creative evolutionary world of representative democracy with all of its vulnerabilities.

Robert Jordan is no Utopian or perfectionist. He acts and dies impressively as a *sovereign* individual subject *rather than a mere object of a particular ideology or reacting purely instinctively*. In a remarkable way, he has solved for himself and his like-minded human beings the seemingly myriad contradictory forms of innovative individual distinctiveness, versus authoritarianism and conformity. He knows well that at any given time a human being is capable of making a choice between *being* free and *acting* free, as he deals with gods of benevolence or malevolence and their secret powers. After all is said and done, to me, Robert Jordan's sacrificial and, yes, sacred death carries with it an aura of splendor and proffers a sense of hope for a human life free of oppression and cruelty.

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