

**Culturalistics: Journal of Cultural, Literary, and Linguistic Studies, [2] (1),
[2018], [69-73]**

Available online at: <http://ejournal.undip.ac.id/index.php/culturalistics>

Article

Received: 04/01/2018; Accepted: 08/01/2018; Published: 31/01/2018

**A Scholar in Foreign Warfare:
Characterizing Dislocation in *For Whom the Bell Tolls***

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Abstract

This paper is aimed at analyzing literary devices used to establish the sense of dislocation in Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The research study uses objective approach to literature using E.M. Forster's analytical tool and nomenclature to novel that is formulated in *Aspects of the Novel*. As the results demonstrated, dislocation is established through: 1) juxtaposition of the character's history and 2) Hispanicization of the main character's identity. The character's "history" emphasizes the contrast of the main character's life prior to the narrated events. Contradictions are apparent in the main character's internal dialectic between being a scholar and becoming a soldier. The second approach to dislocation is caused by linguistic and cultural barrier between Anglophone and Hispanophone characters demonstrated through deliberate Hispanicization.

Keywords: dislocation; novel; Ernest Hemingway; character analysis.

1. Background

Early twentieth century novels, and literary psyche in general, are characterized by their strong sense of dislocation. Realist novels lamented corruption, moral degradation, emotional crisis, and moral dilemmas at all levels of society (p 528).^[1] The dislocation did not exclusively belong with "content", however, but also "form". Authors aggressively experimented with the form of literature (p. x),^[2] making the period a direct confrontation to the highly stylized Victorian literary landscape.

Amid the *zeitgeist*, Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls* was produced. Hemingway's writing technique is widely agreed as revolutionary and influential.^{[3] [4] [5]} He is practically the face of the twentieth century novel. Recent critic Salter^[6] believes that Hemingway's writing technique "...break through into a new language, a genuine American language that had so far been undiscovered, and with it was a distinct view of the world." Critics often identify his unique aesthetic as iceberg theory, or theory of omission,^[7] where meaning is achieved by evading explicit narratives.

As this paper will demonstrate, *For Whom* apparently engineers literary devices as the text wrestles with "omissions". Robert Jordan, the main character in the novel, is an American scholar living in Spain during Spanish civil war (1936-1939). He fights with the International Brigades for the Republic against Francisco Franco's fascist forces. The tension of the plot revolves around the anxiety to complete his main objective, which is, as a dynamiter, to detonate a bridge as part of a tactical move of the guerilla fighters.

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As it turns out, Robert Jordan's tension complicates beyond the completion of his goal. Working with native Hispanophone guerillas, he is confronted with culture shock, which is presented by the narrative with frustration and excitement at the same time. Robert Jordan seems to be overestimating his adaptability with the Spaniards, because he uses to be a Spanish instructor back in the US. Down the road, this naivete meets harsh reality. The narrative portrays this, for instance, in the Spaniards' refusal to call his name Robert. They use the Spanish translation "Roberto" instead. Robert Jordan is also frequently identified as "Ingles", a simplification that refuses to recognize Anglo-America as a separate cultural identity. Biographically speaking, Hemingway personally encountered similar cultural dialectic. His confidence in his understanding about Spanish culture is often ridiculed by the Spaniards.^[8]

This paper will further analyze how literary devices are used to characterize dislocation in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. As the title of this paper suggests, one of the most apparent findings is its use of contradiction. The main character is a scholar before becoming a soldier, hence the contradiction of two contrasting world where one represents stability and order, and the other is instability and chaos. The sense of dislocation is also apparent in frustrating linguistic issues. Rudat^[9] pointed out that the character Robert Jordan's failure to properly use Spanish slang term "Rabbit" as nickname may originate from Hemingway's inadvertent misunderstanding of the Spanish language. The failure itself, however, is a discernible cultural dislocation outside or inside the narrative.

2. Method

The main data of this paper is Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Quotes from the novel are selected based on their relevance, while some parts of analysis do not necessarily rely on particular direct quotes. The secondary data were historical and biographical studies to support the understanding on cultural dislocation. They include general background of Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) and Ernest Hemingway's relationship with Spanish culture.

This paper uses objective approach to literature using E.M. Forster's analytical tool and nomenclature to novel that is formulated in *Aspects of the Novel*.^[10] Characters, or "people" in Forster's terminology, in literary works are aesthetically framed by the author. Forster (1955: 61) argues that "... people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed. And this is why they often seem more definite...". There are at least five general approaches to characterizing people in literary works according to Forster, they are birth, food, sleep, love, and death. The analysis, even though does not use exactly these terminologies, is conducted with corresponding concepts.

Finally, the issue of dislocation referred to by this research is limited to the experience of the main character in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. However, it is not a reconstruction of the main character's perceptive dislocation. It is rather aimed at the narrative's attempts to demonstrate dislocation.

3. Discussion

The analysis will be divided into three sub-topics, they are 1) a scholar in a foreign warfare, 2) ingles, and 3) Robert or Roberto. The first sub-topic covers the issue of dislocation represented by juxtaposition. The second and third sub-topic cover the major issue of Hispanicization.

3.1. A Scholar in a Foreign Warfare

The fundamental source of dislocation in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is the main character's past life and what he has become, or in Forster's terms, the "birth" and the "food". Robert Jordan's birth is a life as academia. In contrast to this, his contemporary life to the narrative is a soldier in the middle of a war.

"I came first twelve years ago to study the country and the language," Robert Jordan said. "I teach Spanish in a university."

"You look very little like a professor," Primitivo said.
"He has no beard," Pablo said. "Look at him. He has no beard."
"Are you truly a professor?"
(p. 209) ^[11]

The narrative juxtaposes two opposing imaginations. Academia represents order, structure, and stability. The war represents the stark opposite: disorder, instability, and unpredictability. To add the dramatic effect, Robert Jordan's motive for coming to Spain is to study the country and language, until he is caught being in the middle of a civil war.

The stated motive signifies another unsettling development to Robert Jordan. There is a crucial change in the dynamics of the relationship between Robert Jordan and his object of study. Previously, what he conceives as Spanish country and language is voiceless and detached. At the narrated event, however, his object speaks and even resists ("But it is, in a way, presumptuous for a foreigner to teach Spanish," p. 209). Not only does this represent the eternal conflict between theory and practice, the stated mission also marks Robert Jordan's transition from spectator to actor.

Consequently, the narrative often characterizes Robert Jordan for his being too intellectual and calculating. These qualities contribute significantly to the sense of dislocation and that Robert Jordan is probably not fit for war.

"Why kill him?"
...
"I thought it might molest you others or the woman."
...
"I cannot in that way. It is repugnant to me and it is not how one should act for the cause."
(p. 60-61)

Other characters, on the other hand, are spontaneous and take the war personally, which constantly make Robert Jordan an outsider. While Robert Jordan is driven by universal values ("not how one should act for the cause"), his counterparts act simply for the purpose of survival.

3.2. *The Inglés*

According to Cambridge's Spanish-English Dictionary, ^[12] *inglés* is simply the Spanish word for English or Englishman. The word is frequently used by the Spaniards to address Robert Jordan, who is, as he has clarified, not an Englishman.

"With that rare thing he drank in the cup and all. Listen to me, Ingles."
"Not Ingles. American." (p. 67)

The Spaniards are apparently aware of the difference ("Few Americans here," p. 141). However, they keep using the incorrect demonym to identify Robert Jordan's nationality. The *inglés* is also a method to characterize Robert Jordan through other characters. The Spaniards' refusal to discern national differences between England and the US is a typical representation of the process of othering. If Robert Jordan is not Spanish, it does not matter if he is English or American or anything.

As a proper noun, the *inglés* is actually a strong verbal statement of alienation. While his social dislocation (being too educated in the middle of guerrilla fighters) is only referred to implicitly, the *inglés* is explicit. As the center of the narrative, Robert Jordan is antagonized by this statement. However, the *inglés* is also often used in friendly context. In the last occasion the *inglés* is used by a character in the narrative, the situation is a melodramatic farewell.

"Salud, Ingles," Agustin said, clenching his right fist.
"Salud," Robert Jordan said. "But get along, man." (p. 466)

Over time, the *inglés* is normalized. On the other hand, Robert Jordan also internalizes the process of othering without resistance. Its significance as a marker of alienation, however, remains.

3.4. Robert or Roberto

The name Robert is Hispanicized to be Roberto. Compared to other signs of dislocation, however, Robert Jordan's acceptance to his Hispanicized name comes very early in the narrative.

"... How do they call thee?"

"Roberto," the young man answered.

...

The young man, whose name was Robert Jordan, was extremely hungry and he was worried. (pp. 3-4)

It is interesting that the third person narrative has to clarify Robert Jordan's real name, indicating that Robert Jordan has completely internalized his Spanish name. In addition, the change of name's significance includes the redefining of identity of Robert Jordan. He lost the control of his own definition, as he often corrected. But when corrections fail, he does not have a choice other than to compromise other people's perception about his identity, and later, with his own perception.

4. Conclusion

In Ernest Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, the issue of cultural dislocation experienced by the main character Robert Jordan is presented in two main ways, they are juxtaposition and Hispanicization. The juxtaposition is related with Forster's concept of "history" of character, which is the life of a character prior to the narrated event. In this case, the history of Robert Jordan is a university lecturer being juxtaposed to become a soldier in a foreign warfare.

Hispanicization happens as the means of redefining Robert Jordan's identity. He is addressed as both *inglés* and Roberto by Hispanic characters he encounters. The process, however, is more of a process of othering than acceptance.

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