

Tribhuvan University

Death Drive in the Unconscious of the Protagonist Frederic Henry in Ernest  
Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

A Thesis Submitted to the Central Department of English, T.U.  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters in English

By

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Letter of Recommendation

Hemant Kumar Mishra has completed his thesis entitled “Death Drive in the Unconscious of the Protagonist Frederic Henry in Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*” under my supervision. He carried out his dissertation from July to March. I hereby recommend his thesis to be submitted for viva voce.

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Date: 10<sup>th</sup> April, 2018

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Death Drive in the Unconscious of the Protagonist  
Frederic Henry in Ernest Hemingway’s *A Farewell to Arms*” submitted to the Central  
Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Hemant Kumar Mishra in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in English has been  
approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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Abstract

*The research explores the psyche in the narrative of the protagonist Frederic Henry in Ernest Hemingway's A Farewell to Arms. The narrative raises curiosity in the mind of the reader with frequent reference to symbols of death, injury, pain, loss, love and repetitiveness. The research hypothesizes that the psyche of the Henry carries death drive within. The researcher uses ideas of psychoanalytic approach to analyse the text for examining the hypothesis. Several critics have postulated their arguments regarding the experiences of the protagonist and have explored those experiences dealing with his unconscious. The comparisons of those arguments help the research to examine the hypothesis. The mechanisms of psychoanalytic approach such as repetition, nostalgia, narcissism, aggressivity, trauma and jouissance play significant role to analyse the text. The narrative of the protagonist is full of nostalgia. It also contains several repetitiveness in the description. The suicidal tendency of the protagonist indicates narcissism in his psyche. The romance between the protagonist and his beloved induce the prevalence of jouissance within. The narrative as a whole is a description of several traumatic events. Hence, the psyche of the protagonist carries death drive in his unconscious. Death drive in his unconscious influences his behaviour such that it is self-destructive. The researcher explores death drive in the protagonist to recognize the state of death drive in the psyche of a character affected by tragedy of love and war.*

Keywords: unconscious, death drive, repetition, narcissism, nostalgia, trauma, jouissance

The present research work deals with the protagonist character Frederic Henry's psychology in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929). The novel is an account of past events, experienced during the First World War, narrated by the protagonist. His tale starts with heroism, develops with romance and ends with tragedy all of which experienced amidst the war. During the war, Henry is an American citizen but works for Italian army. Working as an ambulance driver, he seems to be driven by the ideals of war. But as the plot develops he seems to be running away from those ideals. However, he does not seem to be free from the fear of the consequences of the war. During his injury, he tries to forget the evils of the war and enjoys his love life with Catherine in a hospital in Milan. As he is sent back to the front, he cannot stand the developing anarchy among soldiers. He runs away from the front and goes back to Catherine. They reunite and escape to Switzerland settling happily in Montreux. But the fear of the war and getting caught as a deserted soldier does not seem to leave him. The delivery of his stillborn child and the consequent death of Catherine leaves him alone. Hence, the novel ends with horror that haunts the protagonist even at present.

The research examines the activities of the protagonist in the narrative and relation of those activities with death drive in his unconscious. It is based on the theoretical perspectives of several critics related to psychoanalysis and the link of those perspectives with the text. It explores the unconscious of Frederic Henry throughout the novel to affirm that he carries death drive within. For that, the research presents the scholarly ideas associated with the claim. It explains the concepts related to the drive theory. Then it interprets the text on the basis of those concepts analytically. The ideas and propositions of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan are central to the analysis of the text.

The protagonist in the novel is an American citizen. But he seems to be loyal towards his duty to serve as an ambulance driver for the Italian army. Why does he fight for Italy while there is no compulsion against his wish? During the war, he gets injured at one point. While being hospitalized, his friend Rinaldi tells him news about the award he is going to receive. But he is not happy about it. Why is he not happy although he is rewarded with medals 'for his heroism'? If he is happy to be with Catherine, why does he drink so heavily such that he gets jaundice? The developing relationship of love between Frederic and Catherine quoted by Catherine as 'strange' during the war is questionable. The ideologies of protagonist seem clashing in that situation. The novel starts with description that implies symbols of death frequently and it ends with the death of Catherine and her stillborn son. This recurring symbol of death throughout the novel arouses curiosity in the mind of the researcher. The narrative seems to be repetitive about certain events as they are similar in many ways. The quality of the narrative being repetitive to the extent it becomes boring questions the purpose of the narrator, who also is the protagonist. Throughout the novel, the researcher finds death symbols in the description of events. However, amidst the events of hardships to survive, the protagonist sinks in the nostalgia of love life with Catherine. The research attempts to answer all of the above questions.

The research hypothesizes that the unconscious of Frederic Henry carries death drive within throughout the novel. His narrative describes the past events which he experiences during the First World War. The research postulates that his psyche during his experience in past events and the psyche when he writes the account of his past events contain death drive within. Either war or love, Henry's activities are driven towards death. Irrationality of participating in war, transgression in

love, repetitive narrative style, repetitive compulsion, aggressivity in his behaviour with other people, etc. shows that his psyche operates with death drive.

The research solely focuses on the psychoanalytic approach to the text. The approach would try to explore the tools that prove the hypothesis regarding the presence of death drive. The text may carry a lot of possibilities regarding the presence of other psychoanalytic elements like life drive, delusion, anxiety, phobias etc. But the research concentrates its focus only on proving its hypothesis.

Psychoanalytic approach analyzes any text by exploring the unconscious mental process of a character or more in a text. It analyzes the activities of the character either textually or contextually. This approach is a method for seeing through the unconscious mental process. Dylan Evans, in his book *An Introductory Dictionary of Lacanian Psychoanalysis* (1996), writes: “He [Freud] distinguishes between psychoanalysis as (i) a method for investigating unconscious mental processes...” (155). Evans also affirms that Lacan’s approach to psychoanalysis is “the only one which is truly in line with Freud’s approach” (155). The research uses psychoanalytic approach by exploring Henry’s unconscious in the novel.

Unconscious mental process refers to the mental activities that are not directly observable. The unconscious drives the conscious behaviours of a person. It stores the information experienced by the person but he or she is not conscious about that. Many thoughts, ideas, memories, desires, emotions etc. get repressed in the unconscious part of the mind. But the person is not mostly aware about him or her being affected by that repressed part of the psyche. For example, the reason for a person’s claustrophobia may be an incident in which he or she is locked in a room for a long time while he or she is a child. The other reasons may be seeing someone locked and severely affected or himself or herself being trapped in some problems for a long



time. The possibility is not one and only. However, the unconscious part of the mind is objective and can be observed through psychoanalysis. *A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms* (1958), by Horace B. English and Ava Champney English, defines unconscious as “a part or region of the psyche or person defined by the character of the activities ascribed to it. The activities are not open to direct conscious scrutiny but have dynamic effects on conscious process and behavior”(569). The psyche of Henry represses a lot of information in its unconscious that is observable through psychoanalytical approach to the text. The research focuses upon the death drive in the unconscious part of Henry.

Drive is a state of psyche that affects the reactions of a person against any activity he or she is exposed to. A drive resides in the unconscious part of a person. The person acts as per the direction of the drive force. When a person is exposed to a certain stimulus, his or her reaction is affected by the drive present in his or her unconscious. English B. and English C. define drive as “a hypothetical state of activity of an organism, or of some of its organs or tissues that is a necessary condition before a given stimulus will elicit a class of behaviours” (164). Distinction between drive and instinct clarifies the term drive significantly. Instinct is a term related to biological needs but drive does not relate to biology. Drive has nothing to do with satisfaction as a goal to obtain an object. It leads a person to go round an object repeatedly and the pleasure comes from such circular movement. However, the person is not satisfied completely. Also the research clearly understands the differences between ‘drives’ and ‘instincts’ and moves with the warrant.

Evans contrasts the term ‘drive’ with respect to ‘instinct’ as:

... ‘instinct’ denotes a mythical pre-linguistic need, the drive is completely removed from the realm of biology. The drives differ from biological needs in

that they can never be satisfied, and do not aim at an object but rather circle perpetually round it. Thus the real purpose of the drive is not some mythical goal of full satisfaction, but to return to its circular path, and the real source of enjoyment is the repetitive movement of this closed circuit.(47)

The research analyses the drive in Henry's psyche in cultural context more than biological. His needs seem to be revolving around a certain object during certain situations. In the beginning of his tale, his description revolves around the war setting. His tale of war setting speaks of his war ideology. Ideology is a cultural construct. As the plot develops, his needs revolve around Catherine. He proposes Catherine several times to marry him. The desire of being together with Catherine is his ideology of marriage. The research uses both of these contexts as cultural construct to examine Henry's drive.

The drive towards death is obviously a death drive. For Freud, a body has an instinct to return to the state prior to life. Such instinct leads a person to self-destruction or to an attempt to become inanimate. All of us move towards death as if it is the final destination. We come from nowhere and we move to nowhere. Freud's ideas regarding death drive are based on biological instincts. He focuses on the fact that an organism lives for an internal reason, that is, death. In his book, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), Freud proposes that "If we are to take it as a truth that knows no exception that everything living dies for *internal* reasons- becomes inorganic once again- then we shall be compelled to say that '*the aim of all life is death*' and, looking backwards, that '*inanimate things existed before living ones*'" (32). In this way, Freud confirms the presence of death drive in human psyche.

Freud establishes a fundamental opposition between life drive and death drive. He opines that death drive is associated with pain, loss, repetition compulsion, trauma

etc. whereas life drive is associated with survival, propagation, sex and other creative life producing activities. Regarding death drive, Dylan Evans clarifies Freud's argument as, "life drives, conceived of as a tendency towards cohesion and unity, and the death drives, which operate in the opposite direction, undoing connections and destroying things" (33).

However, Lacan's idea of death drive is slightly a departure from Freud's idea. Lacan firmly situates death drive in the symbolic order. He argues that death drive is actually a fundamental tendency of symbolic order to produce repetition. This idea takes a departure from Freud's idea of biological instinct. Lacan articulates death drive with culture rather than nature. Also, for him, sexual drives are not life drives but death drives. Evans summarizes the claim of Lacan as:

Hence Lacan writes that 'every drive is virtually a death drive', because (i) every drive pursues its own extinction, (ii) every drive involves the subject in repetition, and (iii) every drive is an attempt to go beyond the pleasure principle, to the realm of excess *jouissance* where enjoyment is experienced as suffering. (34)

The drive to self-destruction can be found in the unconscious of the character protagonist Frederic Henry in the novel. Ideas that are associated with death drive as proposed by Freud and Lacan.

Trauma associates itself to death drive. It is the urge of the organism to return to an original inorganic state. The researcher sees this in Freud's speculation about the nirvana principle, which he interprets as the desire for the cessation of stimulation and tension. If the stimulation and tension is too great, too painful, then nirvana becomes inseparable from death (50). Nirvana represents the peace of the womb, or the grave.

Dori Laub and Susanna Lee, in their article, “Thanatos and Massive Psychic Trauma: The Impact of the Death Instinct on Knowing, Remembering and Forgetting” (2003), argue “Characteristics of traumatic experience, such as dissolution of the empathic bond, failure to assimilate experience into psychic representation and structure, a tendency to repeat traumatic experience, and a resistance to remembering and knowing, are considered as trauma-induced death instinct derivatives”(433). Most of these characteristics occur in the narrative of Henry in this novel. Dissolution of empathic bond relates to the several incidents that separate the lovers and beloveds. When a person gets detached from the other person with whom he or she shares the empathic bond, there is a rupture in the unconscious of the person. In his narrative, Henry shares such relationship with Catherine. The narrative develops with growing romance between the two lovers. However the death of Catherine at the end of the tale implies dissolution of empathic bond.

There is a situation during the war at the front when Henry becomes shell-shocked as well as injured. The narrative of describing the incident after being shelled is different than prior to that. The narrative changes from normal description to stream of consciousness technique. Such technique is used to provide the details of his experience when he is shell-shocked. He describes:

I tried to breathe but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and all the time bodily in the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. The ground was torn up and in front of my head there was a splintered beam of wood. (51)

Failing to breathe, feeling as if dead, floating, coming back to consciousness are all near death experiences. His perception of the experience of wounding leaves him passive and helpless. This is the situation of pain. He explains the details in a way that fails to assimilate his experiences. Henry transforms his writing from normal to stream of consciousness such that he wants to represent his actual pain through his writing. However, the writing dissimulates as a structure with stream of consciousness. Similarly, his psychic representation fails with the writing, too. Such characteristics induce the presence of trauma in the protagonist's unconscious and also imply that there is death drive.

William Adair refers to the scene of wounding as, "The scene implies a metaphoric descent into the dark regions of the mind for a momentary confrontation with the death. The wounding establishes the protagonist's dominant emotion- the fear of death" (44)

Frederic's pain is recognized by other scholars, too. The drive of a writer who writes about her/his traumatic experiences is certainly not pleasure. Trevor Dodman, in "'Going All to Pieces': 'A Farewell to Arms' as Trauma Narrative" (2006), opines:

[Henry's] traumatic memories bleed into and disrupt his present; his narration operates both as scar and wound, as tissue stitched together and lacerated apart. Though his prosthetic version of events insists on the potential for a separate peace, Frederic's telling of his past goes all to pieces in the enduring presence of pain and trauma too well remembered to be left behind. (250)

While he writes an account of his memories of injury, death, failure, loss, desertion etc., he disrupts his present. His narrative seeks peace in the narration of his experiences. However, his present state of mind is full of pain and therefore of

trauma. Remembering even the events of togetherness with Catherine does not seem to be pleasurable to the narrator. When Catherine and Henry meet at a hotel in Milan before going to the front, Henry recalls “This was the best hotel we could get in”. However, the blend of red plush furnishings and satin bedding in their many-mirrored room leaves Catherine feeling “like a whore”(137). They do manage to enjoy being together. After eating, they spend the remainder of their time discussing about the logistics of their expected child, and joking apprehensively about the possibility of Henry being wounded again. Their time together can be marked by shame, tension and uncertainty.

Narcissism is another element that associates with death drive. Freud defines narcissism as an investment of libido in the ego that is opposite to the object-love. (46) But according to Evans, Lacan proposes both an erotic and an aggressive character of narcissism. According to Lacan, as the myth of Narcissus shows, the subject is strongly attracted to gestalt, that is his image, implies that it has an erotic character whereas the wholeness of the specular image when contrasts with the uncoordinated disunity of the subjects real body, it threatens the subject with disintegration producing the narcissism of aggression. Both of these conditions lead subject to self-destruction through suicidal tendency (122-123).

Olga Eugenia Flores, in “Eros, Thanatos, and the Hemingway Soldiers” (1980), argues that although being an American citizen, Henry’s fight for Italy shows that he has an impulse for irrational heroism, proving he is driven by death drive. She argues, “As an American citizen, he [Henry] has no particular duty towards Italy, nor does he feel he has any. There has been no compulsion from any quarter to make him join the army against his wish. It has been a voluntary move, however casually he might have decided about making it” (29).

Although Henry does not valorize war in the beginning of the novel, he seems to be guided by the ideals of war. He is an American but joins the Italian army. When asked by the head nurse about why he joined the Italian army, he replies, "I don't know", "I was in Italy", "And I spoke Italian" (21). His reasons do not satisfy the question of compulsion to fight for Italy. He unconsciously seems to be searching meaning of life in heroism. While at the front, the dialogue between him and his fellow front man, Passini, reads as such:

"It could not be worse," Passini said respectfully. "There is nothing worse than war."

"Defeat is worse."

"I do not believe it," Passini said still respectfully. "What is defeat? You go home."

"They come after you. They take your home. They take your sisters."

"I don't believe it," Passini said. "They can't do that to everybody. Let everybody defend his home. Let them keep their sisters in the house."

"They hang you. They come and make you be a soldier again. Not in the auto- ambulance, in the infantry." (47)

Passini opines war as the worst. Henry disagrees with him. He considers defeat as worse than war. This shows Henry's ideology of the significance of war. He continues to provide reasons such as the enemies may take their sisters or hang them up or make them soldiers again. The dialogue shows Henry's opinions about participating in war. However, his opinions do not relate to his actual conditions. He is an American citizen. The winning army will not come for his sisters. He does not have even a single relative in Italy. At least, there is not a single mention of his family in the entire

novel, except slight reference to his mother and step father but without their whereabouts. Therefore, his reasons for participating in the war is not clarified.

When he gets injured at the front and admitted to the hospital, his friend Rinaldi visits him. He tells Henry about the medal he will get for his bravery. But the medal of heroism does not excite him. When Rinaldi expects his tale of heroism saying, “You must have done something heroic either before or after”, Henry replies, “I did not” (59). Henry does not count himself as being called a hero. Thus his interest to participate in the war is not inspired of war ideology either.

Irrationality of seeking heroism in his life is questionable. The narrative throughout the novel does not present the valid reason for his love for Italian army. His insistence of participating in war without a valid reason puts him in the category of showing a narcissistic behavior. Such behaviour underlies his suicidal tendency. Being an American citizen, he has no serious promise to fulfill like a true patriot but he joins the army with his unreasonable interest during the war that is dangerous to him. He becomes victimized in a number of occasions such as being injured due to a shell thrown by Austrian army (51), and being a target of his own army to get shot (200). Both of these incidents shows his suicidal tendency in his unconscious. Henry frequently mentions his act of drinking alcohol. This hints his habit of being alcoholic. His drinking habit grows to the extent that he catches jaundice while being treated in a hospital in Milan. Although the head nurse does not allow him to drink, he does not leave his habit. Such behaviour also implies his suicidal tendency.

Lacan, in *Ecrits*, maintains differences between aggressivity and aggression. The latter refers only to violent acts whereas the former is a fundamental relation which underlies not only such acts but many other phenomena also. Thus



aggressivity is, just as present, in apparently loving acts as in violent ones; it “underlies the activity of the philanthropist, the idealist, the pedagogue, and even the reformer” (81).

Lacan situates aggressivity in the dual relation between the ego and the counterpart. In the mirror stage, the infant sees its reflection in the mirror as a wholeness, in contrast with the uncoordination in the real body: this contrast is experienced as an aggressive tension between the specular image and the real body, since the wholeness of the image seems to threaten the body with disintegration and fragmentation. The consequent identification with the specular image thus implies an ambivalent relation with the counterpart, involving both eroticism and aggression. This ‘erotic aggression’ continues as a fundamental ambivalence underlying all future forms of identification, and is an essential characteristic of narcissism. Narcissism can thus easily veer from extreme self-love to the opposite extreme of narcissistic suicidal aggression.

Pamela A. Boker recognizes such aggressivity in Henry. She proposes, “As such ... he is vulnerable to the regressive fantasy of falling in love with, or being sexually drawn to, a woman who doubles as the narcissistically gratifying maternal object, thus enabling him to recapture ... his infantile lost paradise” (73)

The counterpart for Henry in the text is Catherine. Since the day one of their meeting, Henry tries to get closer to Catherine. Catherine is a V. A. D. (a type of nurse) working in a hospital in Gorizia. Henry’s friend Rinaldi takes him to the hospital to meet Catherine. As they meet, Henry and Catherine prefer each other to Rinaldi and Miss Ferguson for conversation. They develop likeness to each other. Similar to Henry, she is a foreigner- a British, working in a hospital in Italy. Henry gets attracted to her instantly (17-20).

In their later meetings, they develop or realize love for each other. Their romance throughout the text speaks about their dedication to each other. The image of Catherine to Henry is a counterpart acting as a specular image for him. Henry's love for her is a love for his own image, yet, fragmented from his own real body. Such fragmentation threatens him of the possible loss. His love for Catherine is his erotic behaviour towards himself. However, the fear of loss develops suicidal aggression as well. Henry confesses his love for Catherine. But immediately after that confession he goes to the front. Surprisingly, instead of an attempt to remain safe, he gets badly injured at the front due to his carelessness. The injury seems suicidal. He sits in a dugout with other friends just to eat and talk before getting shelled. He does not get injured because of fighting (51). When he is taken to for the immediate treatment, the medical captain speaks to him, "Incurred in the line of duty. That's what keeps you from being court-martialed for self-inflicted wounds" (55). The captain seems to be annoyed with the injury that is uncalled. His annoyance is due to the reason that the injury is self-inflicted.

After losing the war at a front, he deserts from the front. He cannot cope with the developing anarchy in his own army which tries to kill him. The deserting seems suicidal. He jumps from the hill to the river for an escape. His own army fire on him in the river (200). After reunion with Catherine, they escape to Switzerland. The escape is not easy. Henry rows boat all night long across the lake to Switzerland (242). Thus his activity being erotic with Catherine and suicidal at the front is narcissistic suicidal aggressive. The aggressivity in his unconscious induces that it is influenced by death drive. All of these events illustrate Henry's erotic aggressive behaviour as narcissistic and therefore, self-destructive.

Repetition is a concept that is mostly identified as repetition compulsion in Freud's drive theory. Freud's most important discussion of the repetition compulsion occurs in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, where he links it to the concept of the death drive. Freud posited the existence of a basic compulsion to repeat in order to explain certain clinical data: namely, the tendency of the subject to expose himself again and again to distressing situations. It is a basic principle of psychoanalysis that a person is only condemned to repeat something when he has forgotten the origins of the compulsion. The text contains a number of distressful situations when the narrator or the protagonist exposes himself or herself to repeatedly. Description of wound and injury recurs in the narrative. Description of the experience after being shell-shocked is one of them. Similarly, the description of his fellow army's death goes: "All the drivers wore puttees but Passini had only one leg. I unwound the puttee and while I was doing it I saw there was no need to try and make a tourniquet because he was dead already" (52).

The description of his experience after being shell shocked and the description of the death of his fellow army are compulsions to repeat the distressful situations. There were other injuries, too. However, his compulsion to repeat the wounds and injuries experienced by him comes out of the distressful memories repressed in his unconscious. His description of his own wound is sarcastically painful. After getting admitted to hospital in Milan, when the doctor asks him:

"Do you want to keep your knee, young man?"

"No," I said.

"What?"

"I want it cut off," I said, "so I can wear a hook on it." (88)

The sarcasm of replacing his legs wearing hooks hints his implicit pain due to his injury. His injury ruptures his self. Wearing hook symbolizes his wish to replace his own ruptured self at present. The narrative frequently mentions the description of wounds, injury and pain.

When Catherine does not deliver the child in the hospital normally, Henry asks the doctor about the Caesarean operation to be held for the delivery of his child:

“What do you think?”

“I would advise a Caesarean operation. If it were my wife I would do Caesarean.”

“What do you think?”

“What are the after effects?”

“There are none. There is only the scar.”

“What about infection?”

“The danger is not so great as in a high forceps delivery.”

“What if you just went on and did nothing?”

“You would have to do something eventually. Mrs. Henry is already losing much of her strength. The sooner we operate now the safer.”(284)

His concern about the after effects of Caesarean operation, infection, danger in the above dialogue shows narrator’s exposure to another distressful situation. His fear of losing Catherine repeats at the present as he tells about the incident in the hospital. Similarly, the meetings of Catherine and Henry occur repetitively in the narrative. The meetings do not have any significant contribution to the plot for its movement. Recurring description of their meetings and almost similar like conversations such as “Marry me”, “I love you” etc. and other trivial talks imply

another distress, that is, the loss of Catherine. Exposure to repetition of distressful moments keeps the narrator driven by death.

In the text, *the Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1998), Lacan proposes that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (20). Evans quotes Lacan’s reason why the unconscious is structured like a language is that ‘we only grasp the unconscious finally when it is explicated, in that part of it which is articulated by passing into words’. He also explains that the unconscious is the effects of the signifier on the subject, in that the signifier is what is repressed and what returns in the formations of the unconscious (symptoms, jokes, parapraxes, dreams, etc.).

Lacan uses the term ‘insistence’ to refer to the repetition compulsion. Thus repetition is now defined as the insistence of the signifier, or the insistence of the signifying chain, or the insistence of the letter; ‘repetition is fundamentally the insistence of speech’. Certain signifiers insist on returning in the life of the subject, despite the resistances which block them. Evans mentions, “In the 1960s, repetition is redefined as the return of *jouissance*, an excess of enjoyment which returns again and again to transgress the limits of the pleasure principle and seek death” (167). Whereas Freud defines repetition as an exposure to distressful situations repeatedly, Lacan links the term to the insistence of a signifier or a signifying chain or a letter.

There are a number of signifiers that get repeated in the text despite the narrator’s unwillingness. One among others is rain. Rain seems to be present throughout the text. However, it does not seem to be a deliberate effort of the narrator to describe, mention, or include rain for any calculated purpose. In the beginning, rain is just included to describe the scenario of the town he lives: “In the fall when the rains came the leaves all fell from the chestnut trees and the branches were bare and

the trunks black with rain"... "The vineyards were thin and bare-branched too and all the country wet and brown and dead with autumn"... "and with the rain came cholera"(4).

This passage describes about the town he lives in the beginning. The description of rain comes with the notable impacts on environment such as leaves falling, branches bare, trunks black, vineyards thin and bare-branched, and cholera. All of these signifiers suggest the presence of lack, loss or death. The notable similarity of lack, loss or death among these signifiers or the chain of signifiers portrays the state of unconscious of the protagonist. A signifying chain can never be complete, since it is always possible to add another signifier to it in a way which expresses the eternal nature of desire; for this reason, desire is metonymic. The chain is also metonymic in the production of meaning; signification is not present at any one point in the chain, but rather meaning insists in the movement from one signifier to another. Here, the meaning of death insistsits movement from falling of leaves to bare branches then black trunks then thin vineyards then bare-branched and then to cholera. All these signifiers insist the meaning of death that gets replaced by the close meanings such as falling, lack, darkness, weakness and illness. Hence the signifying chain of death is tied by thesingle thread of signifier that is rain.

Rain is a motif throughout the narrative of this novel. Catherine gets afraid every time it rains. When Henry repeatedly asks about the reason for her fear, she answers:"I'm afraid of the rain because sometimes I see myself dead in it,"... "And sometimes I see you dead in it" (114). Catherine's fear of rain is associated with death in her reply. In this dialogue too, rain functions as a metonymy for death. During a discussion among the drivers about the wine they are drinking with dinner, the driver

named Aymo says, “Tomorrow maybe we drink rainwater” (171). Indeed, the following day brings death to Henry’s disintegrating unit.

Whenever a battle starts, it rains continuously in each chapter. It is raining while the fugitive Henry rides the train to Stresa, raining when he arrives, and raining while Henry and Catherine spend the night together in his hotel room. The open-boat trip across Lake Maggiore takes place in the rain, with an umbrella used as a sail. Battle is a threat to our life. Similarly, outing for a fugitive is also a threat to his or her, especially when he or she is a deserter. Open boat trip across Lake Maggiore is an adventure of not getting caught by the security as he is a wanted person being a deserter. All these threats to life is associated with rain in the narrative.

Finally, when Henry leaves the hospital for lunch during Catherine’s protracted, agonizing delivery, he writes, “The day was cloudy but the sun was trying to come through” (282). The monologue of the sun coming through against cloud (rain) gives a literal ray of hope. During the operation, however, he looks out the window and sees that it is raining. Just after the nurse tells him that the baby is dead, Henry looks outside again and “could see nothing but the dark and the rain falling across the light from the window”(289). At the end of the narrative, after the death of Catherine, Henry leaves the hospital and walks back to his hotel in the rain, ending his writing, “After a while I went out and left the hospital and walked back to the hotel in the rain” (293). The novel ends with the death of his wife and his child with the rain.

The signifier rain associates itself with death in the narrative. Whenever it is raining something offensive associates with it whereas other weather signifiers such as sun, snow stand for hope in this novel. Similar signifier occur when before bidding farewell to Catherine while going to the front. It is a famous verse of T. S. Eliot which Henry recites to Catherine when it is time to go. The verse reads, “But at my back I

always hear, Time's winged chariot hurrying near" (139). Time functions as a metonymy of death in this situation. The verse is recited before going to the war. The war brings death. Henry deliberately hints to Catherine about the winged chariot of death hurrying near to pick him for he is going to the war. Although he does not die in the war, he is driven to death in the moment. The insistence of the signifier rain and repetitive occurrence of several distressful situations imply that the unconscious of the protagonist is driven by death.

Lacan's first remarks on the death drive, in 1938, describes it "as a nostalgia for a lost harmony, a desire to return to preoedipal fusion with the mother's breast, the loss of which is marked on the psyche in the weaning complex". (35) The loss persists in the unconscious of the subject all repressed since long. The person's actions are influenced with his attempt to compensate that loss.

Henry's narrative is a recollection of events that occurred during the First World War. The narrative is composed of romance as well as war events. However, the central focus of the narrative seems to be the romance with Catherine. Although he irrationally chooses war at the beginning, Henry is unable to identify himself with the manly activity of war. He is drawn to spend his leave of injury enjoying with Catharine in Milan rather than fighting in the mountains, and upon his return after meeting Catherine makes the observation that "it did not matter whether I was there or not"-that the war "seemed to run better while I was away" (16). Henry feels the war "did not have anything to do with me" (37).

He needed little incentive to lose confidence in the ideal of war, and the ease with which becomes to view his abstract heroic ideal as a pretense and a fake, suggests that he initially possessed an abstract conception of idealized heroism, and so has failed to establish a secure identification with the law of the father. As such, he is



vulnerable to the regressive fantasy of falling in love with, or being sexually drawn to, a woman who doubles as the narcissistically gratifying maternal object, thus enabling him to recapture his infantile lost paradise. To lie wounded and helpless in his hospital bed makes Frederic “feel very young,” like “being put to bed after early supper” (68). He seeks pleasure now being put to bed. Now he gradually loses his confidence in the war ideology and opts for fulfilling a desire of a woman. His longing for a woman to fall in love with or sexually drawn to can be compared with the longing for the lost harmony of the preoedipal phase of his life.

While at the mess with his friends, he thinks he does not want to go to Carpathians. It is where the battle happens. He confesses, “I could go to Spain if there was no war” (36). He decides to meet Catherine after the supper. Then he sinks to the thought of Catherine and wishes “she were here now” (36). He loses himself to the thoughts of her and sinks in the nostalgia while he is among his friends at the mess. The narrator describes his wishes of being together with Catherine in a paragraph of a complete nostalgia:

I wished I were in Milan with her. I would like to eat at the Cova and then walk down the Via Manzoni in the hot evening and cross over and turn off along the canal and go to the hotel with Catherine Barkley....we would drink the Capri and the door locked and it hot and only a sheet and the whole night and we would both love each other all night in the hot night in Milan. That was how it ought to be. (36)

These wishes are like dreams. His wish to get together with Catherine is his unconscious longing for his lost preoedipal paradise. He is at war. His ideology of war is the law of the father that does not allow him to run to a girl leaving the army. The law of the father does not permit his unconscious wish to obtain his lost paradise.

The resistance to fulfill his desires represses them to the unconscious. However, those desires render in the form of his nostalgic thoughts of being together with Catherine.

His location of the union with Catherine is far from the war location. After eating he goes along the canal in his dream like wish which represent his hidden space from the world governed by the law of the father. He wishes that the door locks. This represent his desire of being united in solitude far from the other world of grief and sufferings. His wish for loving each other for whole night represent his longing for the satisfaction in obtaining his lost paradise. Thus the paragraph above is Henry's nostalgia for the lost harmony.

Similar ideas appear when he is at front and remembers Catherine. He thinks about her perpetually. However, the narrative ends with the loss of that romance. The loss of Catherine can be compared with the weaning complex. The narrator loses his beloved but remembers her with the experiences he shares with the world. However, the memory gets more influenced of the lost harmony. The narrative itself sinks to nostalgia. The narrator seeks the events of promises and togetherness with his beloved. The narrative describes their meetings frequently.

Jouissance, another state of death drive, refers to an extreme pleasure. It's almost impossible to translate this French word, *jouissance*, precisely. Sometimes it is translated as 'enjoyment', but enjoyment has a reference to pleasure, and *jouissance* is an enjoyment that always has a deadly reference, a paradoxical pleasure, reaching an almost intolerable level of excitation. Due to the specificity of the French term, it is usually left untranslated. Lacan makes an important distinction between *jouissance* and pleasure. On the basis of Lacan's views, Evans clarifies that pleasure obeys the law of homeostasis that Freud evokes in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, whereby, through discharge, the psyche seeks the lowest possible level of tension. The pleasure

principle thus functions as a limit imposed on enjoyment; it commands the subject to enjoy as little as possible. *Jouissance* transgresses this law and, in that respect, it is beyond the pleasure principle. The symbolic prohibition of enjoyment in the Oedipus complex is thus, paradoxically, the prohibition of something which is already impossible; its function is therefore to sustain the neurotic illusion that enjoyment would be attainable if it were not forbidden. The very prohibition creates the desire to transgress it, and *jouissance* is therefore fundamentally transgressive. According to Lacan, insofar as the drives are attempts to break through the pleasure principle in search of *jouissance*, every drive is a death drive (93-94).

According to Braunstein, “*Jouissance* appears in guilt, in remorse, in confession, in contrition, more in paying than being paid, in destroying more than in conserving” (108).

As Frederic is disillusioned from the war he gradually is inclined to his love life with Catherine. Initially, although he proposes her for marriage his duty for the country is equally important for him. But as the plot develops, his love for Catherine gets deeper. Their repeated meetings do not provide perfect satisfaction to the protagonist.

In the beginning, Henry longs for union with Catherine. He even deserts from war to get reunited with her. But as he reunites with her, his feelings for her do not achieve the satisfaction he expects from her. As he becomes a fugitive in Switzerland, running away from Italy, his restlessness do not come to the end. He does not read newspaper as the trauma of war does not leave him. Similarly, desertion from the Italian army keeps him afraid from the possible arrest.

His union with Catherine does not lead him to the climax he expects from her. When he is together with her, he feels as if he comes home. However, he confesses,

“We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others” (249).

Although they are together, they lose the world. His togetherness with Catherine comes at the expense of his loss of the world. He confesses with Catherine, “My life used to be full of everything...Now if you aren’t with me I haven’t a thing in the world” (257). Therefore, this togetherness is actually a solitude from the world. His new everything- Catherine- is a threat to lose his old everything- the world. Thus, his love for Catherine implies the presence of *jouissance* that Lacan talks about. There is a pain beyond the pleasure Henry seeks in his love.

Their love goes through several orgasms of sexual acts. Those orgasms symbolize destruction of life. The protagonist confesses his love for Catherine repeatedly. However, the lost harmony of preoedipal phase is unattainable to him. Therefore, his love seems to transgress. Such transgression goes beyond the principle of pleasure and shows the presence of pain in the unconscious. Finally, the death of Catherine inflicts pain of guilt.

To sum up, the research deduces the conclusion that the unconscious of the protagonist character is driven by death. His narrative as a tale of pain, injuries, dissociation, separation, desertion, regret, guilt etc. creates the idea that it is traumatic. The characteristics of containing emphatic dissolution, resistance to remember and forget, and failure to assimilate psychic representation all makes the narrative traumatic. Aggressive behaviour of the protagonist at the beginning of the tale marks his suicidal tendency. His irrational decision of participating in the war and his fondness for Catherine both illustrate his narcissistic behaviour.

There are a number of times that the protagonist is exposed to the several distressful situations repeatedly in the past. However, including those distressful situations at the present is because of his ruptured self. It becomes his compulsion to

repeatedly get exposed to such situations due to the pain and sufferings he represses inside him. The traumatic experience revives in the memory in an attempt to mend his self. Similarly, insistence of signifiers and signifying chains in the novel that relate to death experience explains his exposure to repetitive compulsion. The signifying chain of rain and the signifier time relate to death in the novel.

Henry's longing for Catherine in the past and at the present represents his nostalgia for his lost paradise of the proedipal stage. He sinks in the thought at a moment wishing to get together with Catherine. Catherine functions as a lost paradise for him. Even at the present the narrator's narrative centrally focusing on Catherine with the setting of world war implies his nostalgia is still alive for Catherine.

Henry wills to get together with Catherine during the war. He becomes successful to get united deserting from the front. However, he does not attain the satisfaction he expects from her. Although they get together his restlessness does not go. Moreover, a single orgasm experienced with her is not the final satisfaction he expects. The meetings change to marriage but their love to each other grows to transgress such that there is a pain such that the lost paradise is not obtainable. Such presence of jouissance marks the presence of death drive in his unconscious.

Hence, the protagonist in the novel is driven by death in the past as well as at present. His narrative suffices us to analyze it with psychoanalytic approach. It gets us to the point that although we cannot directly observe what a person is influenced of, we can see through a person or a character textually by using a psychoanalytic approach.

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