

TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY

Quest for Meaning in *Across the River and into the Trees* by Ernest Hemingway

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By

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled Quest for meaning in *Across the River and into the Trees* by Ernest Hemingway submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Milan Thapa, has been approved by the undersigned member of the research committee.

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Abstract

Colonel Cantwell is a male protagonist in the novel *Across the River and into the Trees* written by Ernest Hemingway. Colonel is a man of fifty who is a victim of First and Second World wars. He has been shot several times during the wars so he is psychologically as well as physically wounded, now. He had been suffering from heart disease also. It shows that Colonel is living a life without meaning or significance in the novel.

One day, he decides to go on a tour for duck shooting in Venice where he had fought for in the two great World Wars in his youth. He falls in love with nineteen year old girl named Renata during his trip. Renata and Venice give meaning into his life so he maintains hope for survival although he could be dead at any time.

At the end of the story, in the novel, colonel Cantwell returns from Venice to Italy, leaving his young beloved far behind in Italy. Both of them feel extremely lonely when they depart from each other. But, on the way to Italy, Colonel meets his tragic death inside the car.

Hemingway in the novel had depicted man's isolation, loneliness and alienation in the novel. Colonel Cantwell feels lonely in the beginning when he rejects home, lonely when Renata deserts him and flees away with her mother and lonely when he returns home in the end.

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Unit-First

Introduction

Hemingway, his themes and his works

Hemingway is one of the leading interpreters of an era of disillusion especially after the two great World Wars of the twentieth century in which people put their faith in liquor, sexual passion, violence and the ritual of sports. The intellectual as well as spiritual status of the people was ignominious. "Hemingway's works reflect the note of violent time and restless people: loneliness, alienation and disillusion"(Waldron 4). Hemingway dealt with the theme of love, grief, suffering, crisis and despair. Hemingway's characters depict the crisis of the war in a time of resentment. He is one of the most important writers of the twentieth century literature. Though his subject matter is not wide, he has "appropriate selection of relevant detail is that of a skilled artist" (Sanderson 3). Hemingway advocates freedom of oneself in leading his life, reflecting the significant traits of existential philosophy.

Writing in the idiom of ordinary speech rather than the expression of literature, Earnest Hemingway became an outstanding novelist and great literary influence of his time and the next generation. Archibald McLeish in his few lines comment on the life of Hemingway.

Veteran out of the wars before he was twenty,
Famous at twenty five, thirty a master,
Whittled a style for his time from a walnut stick...

(Baker 38)

Hemingway volunteered as an ambulance driver in Italy during the World War first, where he was badly wounded by the fragments of an Austrian trench mortar shell. He also worked as war correspondent in the World War Second. So, his experience in war is reflected in his fiction.

Hemingway's message to his reader is cultivation of courage, endurance, and fortitude. He seems to say that pessimism is not the right way to adopt life's suffering, pain, disintegration, despair and disillusionment. In such condition he says, one should be bold enough to face its consequences with a calm mind. Colonel Cantwell in *Across the River and into the Trees* accepts death calmly and stoically at the end of the novel. He is of the opinion that there is life after death. He has gathered experiences when he is wounded in the wars.

Hemingway came into such a world in which grief, suffering and despair were common for people due to the outbreak of the World Wars. So, he depicts the 20th century tragic vision in his stories and novels. He presents contemporary problems caused by the outbreak of the war. It is his age that provides the subject matters with his personal experiences. His chief preoccupation has been the portrayal of hardship of the external world and his main characters' excessive capacity for endurance and fortitude. He saw the grimness of the life in the company of his doctor father who had performed the caesarian operation of the pregnant Indian woman. His father did this operation with a thick jack- knife without sterilizing it, while her husband unable to endure pain of his wife, cut his throat with his razor. It remained the main clue for his story called "Indian Camp" included *in our Time*. Nick Adam, the hero of this story is the author himself. The injury received by Nick Adam, Robert, Jakes Barnes, Frederic and Colonel Cantwell is

the wound of Hemingway caused, in the Italian Front. He has used his first hand experiences in the novels and stories.

Hemingway seeks insight into life not through thought or any psychological mode but by invoking his characters in the dangerous physical action which would give them a full and true view of life. That is why; he generally deals with brutality, violence and death, which are common subject matters in American novels of his time. During the war, Hemingway yields the literary stature through these subject matters. In the superficial reading of Hemingway's novels, we find in them nihilism, the absence of positive values, but if we have a deeper investigation, the result is something different.

Hemingway has often used sex, as he uses drink to bring out painful thought. When passion turns into love in his world, it is, at once, taken up as the quest for meaning of cosmic order in his world. He used sex, only to bring out the healthy fact that sex is inevitable factor required for perfect communion and understanding. Colonel Cantwell and Renata reached their highest stage of happiness when they come together through the sex. In *The Sun also Rises*, both Robert and Brett are an example of what obsession with sex or unrestrained sexuality can do to a man.

Hemingway's characters pass their time in a great mental stress. In such a situation of peril, it is the present time, which has great significance. To avoid this peril, from mental torture, they consume excess drinking, the pleasure of sexual indulgence, good food eating and entertainment. There are certain recurrent themes in his writings. The theme of war, violence, brutality; cynicism and courage that coupled with his pessimism and disillusionment have been appeared again and again.

Hemingway's characters face defeat or death though they are not harassed. They are not compromiser or cowards. When they confront defeat, they realize that the stand they take and their stoic endurance mean a kind of victory. If they are to be defeated upon their own terms, some of them have been courted their defeat, certainly they have maintained even in the practical defeat, an ideal of themselves- how a man should behave in such a crisis. This distinguishes them from other ordinary man.

A basis for all of the actions of all Hemingway's key heroes is the concept of death. The idea of death lies behind all of the characters' actions in Hemingway's novels. This view contains his concept that when you are dead, you are dead. This is nothing more. If a man can not accept life of reward after death, the emphasis must be on obtaining or doing or performing something in this life. Man must seek his reward here, since after death nothing will remain there. Consequently, the Hemingway man exists in a larger part for the gratification of his sensual desires. He will devote himself to all types of material pleasure because these are the reward of this life.

Death is the end of all things; it then becomes the duty and the obligation of the Hemingway hero to avoid death at any cost. Life must continue. Life is valuable and it possesses a great value. Death is nothing. With this view, Hemingway's characters confront death. The matador, the big game hunter and the warrior in the war are in constant encounter with death. Hemingway formulates the idea of "grace under pressure" which means his man must have fear of death but not be afraid of it. He must have intellectual realization that death is the end of all things and it must be avoided in one way or another. That is why his characters face death bravely.

The individual in Hemingway's world more than in any previous age feels troubled by the problem of defeat, frustration, death etc. These problems value high in individual's mind and make his life more complicated. Science has failed to solve the mystery of death. Religion no longer shows the way out of the narrow alley in which modern man finds himself. *Across the River and into the Trees* is a characteristic products of its author thinking on these and related issues. Colonel Cantwell is in several ways is the typical modern intellectual man face to face with these issues, finding confront in love.

Due to the cause of World War, he went to Paris in December in 1921. He was introduced with Gertrude Stein, James Joyce, Ezra Pound and Sherwood Anderson and became a member of "expatriate group" and devoted himself in literature. In 1922, he published a book that contained a two page satirical fable, *A Divine Gesture*, a four line poem, *ultimately*. In the following year, another book, *Three Stories and Ten Poems* was published by Robert Mcalmon. He went through financial crisis that year. This book could not succeed. He, in the same year went to Spain and became an admirer of bull fighter

Hemingway published more than twenty fictional works in his literary career. At the outbreak of First World War in 1924, he published a book named *In Our Time* which was a collection of short stories. The book dealt with the themes of grief, violence, suffering and bullfight and other adventurous tasks that he liked very much. The books also contained the contemporary problem caused by the sudden outbreak of war, the despair and defeatism of the age, the disintegration the traditional values. Nick Adam, his hero of the short stories, resembles the hero of his other novels. The stories of *In Our Time* are autobiographical.

Hemingway published two books, *The Sun also Rises* and *The Torrent of Spring* in 1926. The former book dealt with the theme of random malevolence. He projected the real picture of war ridden society in this book. The book took Hemingway at the height of literary world and became his first successful and one of the finest novels. And the later novel shows the mood of despair, which is the silent trait of the writers of the “Lost Generation”. In another word, the novel presents The Lost Generation traits, people alienated by World War first and self anesthetized with alcohol as in the characters of T. S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*.

Hemingway kept on writing books in his literary career. Then, he published the most important book *A Farewell to Arms* in 1929. The book again brought Hemingway a great popularity. The novel became immensely popular in its tragic juxtaposition of love and war in Italy during World War first. It showed human predicament and despair in the midst of the degradation of the fruitless World War first. The novelist used his irony and symbolism and heightened the tragic effect of the novel.

Hemingway published *Death in the Afternoon* in 1932 in which he glorified a bull fighting as a ritualistic mortal combat in which each contestant gambles life in order to prove himself noble. In 1933, he wrote *Winner Take Nothing* which contained the theme of the destruction of the war and he dealt with the theme of dangerous bull fighting in the book *The Green Hills of Africa* which was produced in 1935. These two books were the product of his adventurous safari in Africa.

Later on, he published a book *For Whom the Bell Tolls* in 1940 in which he used his experience of Spain. The book contained the theme of the complex treatment of the political corruption, atrocities and futile loss of lives on both sides, namely Republican

Royalist and Fascist. The novel appeals for the real brotherhood of man. Then after, he published *To Have and Have Not*, *The Fifth Column* and *The First Forty Nine Stories* in 1938. These books contained the theme of guerilla war in Spain.

In 1952, he published *The Old Man and the Sea* which earned a lot of fame. Hemingway projected the Cuban setting and the continuous struggle of an old man in fishing in the novel. The book is a parable of man's struggle with the nature and man's noble courage and endurance. The novel is also about the story of loneliness, meaninglessness, and hollowness of modern world. The imminence of death is one of the central themes.

Before the publication of *The Old Man and Sea* in 1952, he published a book, *Across the River and into the Trees* in 1950. When the novel, *Across the River and into the Trees* was published in 1950, some one hundred and fifty critics reviewed the book and most of them panned it. Since its publication, the novel has been viewed from the different perspectives. For Robert W Lenis and Jr. Austin, "Across the River and Into the Trees, exactly, as a novel but as a statement of the theme of the love since love is Hemingway's master subject and that the study of his love ethic is a dominant and perhaps the essential way of grasping his art".

Commenting on the novel Peter B. High says, in *Across the River and Into the Trees*, the protagonist, like the hero of *Big Two Hearted-River*, is a man of many personal ceremonies. Everything he does –loading his haunting rifle or even pouring a glass of champagne- is done in a special way. It is a way of protecting his self respect. (149)

Commenting on the novel, Paul w Miller says, "Across the River and Into the Trees is more sophisticated work all done with three cushion shots, raises more question that it answers". He adds in the novel, "Hemingway also employed a Stendhalian approach to

composition but in spite of his high hope for the new book it turned out to be a critical disaster. Hemingway never again indulged so far as I can discover in boastful comparison with Stendhal and other dead other". (5)

Reviewing the novel, a critic says, "there is geometry of space and a psychology of time, entropy erodes events and diminished people".

Though the novel did not succeed, Hemingway projected loneliness, meaninglessness and isolation of a man in the universe.

In the novel, the male protagonist Colonel Cantwell is living a life without meaning. He is a man of fifty who is a victim of World Wars like Hemingway. He has been shot several times on his body. Colonel Cantwell is also suffering from heart disease. He is becoming lean and weak day by day. Though he has been very weak, he goes on a tour for duck shooting in Venice where he had fought for in two great World Wars. He also falls in love with a girl who is only nineteen years old named Renata. Renat and Venice give him meaning in his life.

Colonel Cantwell has rejected the world and the society in establishing separate peace with Renata. In spite of his tie with Reneta and the driver, Jackson; he is essentially a lonely man who finds refuge from boredom in liquor. His love with the girl, Renata gives him meaning to his life. His building up an isolated paradise in the hotel Gritti palace in Venice shows that he has found an ideal comradeship with Renata but his separation from her makes him as lonely as he was in the beginning. He finds meaninglessness in the world yet dares to live in it. He dose not lose his will.

Hemingway views man as trapped creature seeking love, communion and fulfillment in an alien and meaningless world. He expresses the meaning of life in our time with the

help of characters who are sick, wounded or queer, deformed by life. He finds the environment that his characters must confront as the barrier to complete their desire. To him, the environment means the entire western civilization of the time.

Hemingway world is not world of men without women, but of men without jobs, without parents, or children, men without homes even communities. His characters are rootless.

The love affair between Colonel Cantwell and Renata in the novel gives central idea for the pursuit of a meaningful life. Both of them, especially Cantwell, are stricken by war.

The war pre-dominated the sense of void and nothingness. Their intense hunger after a life sustaining principle reveals itself in the recurring encounter between the characters.

In the end of the novel, Cantwell returns to Italy from Venice but he dies alone in the car on the way to Italy. Since death is one of the major themes of Hemingway, Colonel

Cantwell also meets his tragic death in this novel.

The present study of Hemingway's *Across the River and into the Trees* is looked from the existential point of view. The first chapter is about the author's works including *Across the River and into the Trees* and criticism on the book. The second chapter deals with the theoretical modality. The third chapter analyses the text from the point of view of existentialist writers. The fourth or last chapter contains the conclusion of the research.

Unit-Two

What is Existentialism?

Introduction:

Existentialism is a philosophy of European origin, which has spread rapidly and became the most important modern international phenomenon. So, Existentialism is said to be the modern system of belief that started with opposing the doctrine that defined mankind as manifestation of an absolute value. The horrified western people began to think over their roles and activities of individual irrational in the existence of human being after the second world war of nuclear holocaust which proved that human rationality no more worked. The nineteenth century which was guided by certainties, coherence and scientific reasoning broke into fragments. The fragmented world began to be ruled by anxiety, absurdity and uncertainties. As a result, the new writer began to see the new world totally absurd, incoherent, disintegrated, chaotic, disordered, and not ruled by the law of providence but by pure chance and contingency. This feeling of an existence without justification became the proposition of twentieth century. The feeling of despair and of separation from the established order led to the idea that people have to create their own values in a world where traditional values no longer ruled. Existentialism admits that the mankind is thrown into the world in which suffering, pain, frustration, alienation, sickness, contempt, malaise and death dominates. The dark portrait of such a sickness could be found even in the works of confident and optimistic nineteenth century writers such as Karl Marx, Soren Kierkegaard and Fredric Nietzsche.

Existentialism has held a wider influence upon literature than other approaches of philosophy. The nineteen century conventional moral world has been attacked by the

process of industrialization and the heart rending two great World Wars that left gloom and despair in the mind of people. The mechanical laws, which governed the foundation of naturalism, seemed no longer valid. In the field of philosophy, this feeling of existence has become the touchstone in the twentieth century world. It is also a reaction against the falsification of idealism which disregards the freedom of personality to the level of mere tool, completely powerless and pitiable. Existentialism establishes a concept of “free individual” who tries to be a God when faith of Christianity has been diminished in the Nietzschean metaphoric declaration that “God is dead”. The philosophy of existentialism denied having faith on the “corrupted institutionalization.” By declaration of the death of God, the concentration of contemporary ideology is irreparably shattered.

The post war - period has been called the age of anxiety. The people who experienced depression and the Spanish Civil War produced existential philosophy. The disaster of war, the collapses of values, the prevalence of injustice, and the rise of totalitarian system all these took at the outbreak of the Second World War. They established a concept of new hope in the mouth of powerful death.

Existentialism is not only concerned with the perception of man’s behavior of morality but it also focuses his freedom, his feelings and actions. It has common interests, ancestry and common pre- supposition though it varies with its proponents. Some blamed existential philosophy “as a kind of desperate quietism” (Sartre 9). “And other charges us that we put the emphasis on the dark side of human life” (10). Existentialism is perhaps a dynamic philosophical attitude to interpret the basis of one’s existence. Jean Paul Sartre gives his views on the definition of existentialism as a reply to the charges against it.

In any case, what can be said from the Very beginning is that by existentialism we mean a doctrine which makes human life possible and in addition declares that every truth and action implies a human setting and human subjectivity. (10)

Existentialist philosophy is not a unified form of school of thought so existentialist philosophers' views on existentialism differ from one another. They maintained some common concepts through the two extremes; of Nietzsche who claimed 'The death of God' and Kierkegaard who believed that "God was infinite Subjectivity".

According to Sartre, there are two types of existentialist.

First, those who are Christian, among whom I would include Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both catholic; and on the other hand, the atheistic existentialist, among whom I class Heidegger, and then, the French existentialists and myself. What they have in common is that they think that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that subjectivity must be the starting point. (277)

The existential philosopher, above all defines the world in such a way that its meaning emerges. He cannot obviously, describe the world as a whole but at least he must try to make clear his intuition of significance. The development of existentialism in France can be traced with Sartre and other phenomenologist. Sartre, a leading interpreter of existentialism developed the concept of existence, "existence precedes essence". He clarifies this in this way; 'It means that first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene, and only afterwards, defines himself' (15).He further says that "man is nothing else but what he makes of himself". Such is the first principle of existentialism. It is also

called subjectivity,” the name we are labeled with when charges are brought against us” (15).

In this way, we can say existentialism is to make every man aware of himself and his responsibility towards other men and women. Man is nothing in himself but he has to learn and make himself incessantly.

Meaning of the Term

The term ‘existence’ is borrowed from the Latin word *ex* ‘out’ and *istere* from “stare” “to stand” (Cuddon 316). So, etymologically, existence means “to stand out in the universe” that is against us, and existentialism means “pertaining to existence”. One of the prominent figures of existentialist writers, Jean Paul Sartre defines existentialism “as an attempt to continue life” by creating a system in which one realizes “human loneliness” and “human subjectivity” (Existentialism 10). It is a “very intense and philosophically, specialized form of quest or selfhood” (Ellman and Feidelson 803). In this way, ‘Being’ is the focal point of existentialism and subjectivity as opposed to logical reasoning and “Objectivity”. It is based on individual experience and rather than abstract thought and knowledge which is fore grounded in this philosophy. In the context, Lavine defines “existentialism is a set of philosophical ideas that stress the existence of the human being, the anxiety and depression which pervade each human life” (Lavine 322). No single definition of existentialism is possible because of the diversity of position associated within it. However, it suggests a major theme that is the stress on “concrete individual human existence”. Regarding its subjectivity, individual freedom and choice, Rayan explains thus;

Hence there is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single definition of the word can be given. However, it may be said that with the existentialist, the problem of man is central and that they stress man's concrete existence, his contingent nature, his personal freedom, and his consequent responsibility for what he does and makes himself to be. (639)

Existentialists are really concerned with the problem of man. They focus on man's concrete existence, his personal freedom and his responsibility for his choice.

Existentialism focuses on the lack of meaning and purpose in life, and solitude of human existence. Existentialism maintains, "Existence precedes essence" that implies that the human being has no essence, no essential self and is no more than what he is.

Human being is only the sum of life in so far that he has created and achieved for himself. We may use the following extract to clarify Sartre's view.

We are like actors who suddenly find themselves on stage in the middle of a performance, but without having a script, without knowing the name of the play or what role they are playing, without knowing what to do or say –yes, without even knowing whether the play has an author at all- whether it is serious or farce. We must personally make a decision to be something or other- a villain or a hero, ridiculous or tragic. Or we can simply exist, immediately. But, that is also choosing a role-and that choice, too is made without our even knowing what the performance was about. (Skirbek and Gilje 444)

This is how, we are plunged into existence. We exist, we find ourselves here free because there are no prescriptions and we must decide for ourselves, define ourselves as the kind of person we are going to be. The essence thus follows existence.

Existentialism is a revolt against traditional European philosophy, which takes philosophy

as a science. Traditional philosophers take knowledge for granted. They produced such knowledge that would be objective, certain and universally true. The existentialists do not go with the traditional attempt to get the ultimate nature of the world in abstract system of thought. They point out the fact that every individual even the philosophers seeking absolute knowledge is only a human being. So, every individual has to confront important and difficult decision with only limited knowledge and time to make decision. This human condition resides at the core of the existentialist. They search for what it is like to be an individual human being in the world. They find human life as being basically a series of decision that should be made with no way of knowing conclusively what the correct choices are. The individual must decide what is true from false, what is right from wrong, which belief to accept and which to reject, what to do and what not to do. "Yet there are no objective standard or rules to which a person can turn for answers to problems of choice because different standard supply conflicting advice" (437) says the World Book Encyclopedia. Therefore, an individual must decide which standard to accept and which one to reject.

Thus, existentialists conclude that human choice is subjective as the individuals must make their own choice without any help from such external agencies as laws, tradition and

ethical rules. They choose freely, they are fully responsible for their own choice. In this context, Macintyre says, "Even if I do not choose I have chosen not to choose" (149). The human being thrown into the world is condemned to be free. He takes this freedom of being, the responsibility and guilt of actions. Each action negates the other possible course of actions and their consequence, so the human being must be accountable without excuse. The human being must not run away from his responsibility. There is no significance in this world and universe. The human being cannot find any purpose in life; his existence is only a contingent fact. His being does not emerge from necessity. If a human being rejects a false pretension like the illusion of his existence having a meaning, he encounters the absurdity and futility of life. Therefore, man's role as a human being in the world is not predetermined or fixed. Every person is compelled to make a choice. Choice is the thing that human being must make. The trouble is that most often the human being refuses to choose. He cannot realize his freedom and the futility of his existence.

Rayan summarizes this concept:

Man is free and responsible, but he is responsible only to himself. As with Nietzsche, man creates moral values. Besides being free, man is a finite and contingent being, existing in a world that is devoid of purpose. The pessimism resulting from this position is likewise expressed by Camus's doctrine of "the absurd". Absurdity and contradiction arises from the clash between hope and desires and the meaningless universe into which man has been thrown. (639)

In this way, Rayan focuses on the freedom of choice and responsibility that is for himself

only. Moreover, he finds man as a finite being.

Basically, there are two types of existence: Authentic and inauthentic forms. Human must strive to gain the authentic being that is rarely attained. The inauthentic (Being-in-itself) is

what the human being is diseased with for failure to act as a free agent and his impotency to reject bad faith. The inauthentic is characteristically distinctive of things. Human being is what can be but things are only what they are. Things are also determined, rigid and fixed whereas human being is free because he can add essence in the course of his life; and he is in a constant state of flux and able to comprehend his situation. He is free to realize his aims and dreams. He does not live in a predetermined world, human being has only the destiny, and he forges for himself because in this world, nothing happened out of necessity.

Anxiety arises from the human being's realization that destiny is not fixed but open to an undetermined future of infinite possibilities and limitless scope. The void of future destiny must be filled by making choices for which, he alone will assume responsibility and blame. Anxiety is present at every moment of the existence of human being and it is a part and parcel of authentic existence. Anxiety leads human being to take decision and commitment. The human being tries to avoid this anguish through bad faith. But the free authentic human being must be involved in his own responsibility, actions and his being which are his own. So the human being must be committed.

According to the existential philosophers, the metaphysical explanation of existence as given by traditional school of philosophy failed to produce satisfactory result. Being contrast with not only with knowing, but also with abstract concept, which can not fully

capture what is individual and specific. They also maintain that the problem of being ought to take precedence in all philosophical inquiries. Existence is always particular, individual and unique. It is essential and fundamental. "Being" cannot be made the topic of objective study. Being is revealed and felt by the human being through his own experience and situation. So, it is maintained that existence is the first and central problem.

History of Existentialism

Existentialism as a distinct philosophy began with Danish Christian thinker Kierkegaard in the first half of the nineteenth century. In another word, the beginning of existentialism can be traced back to Kierkegaard whose first prominent work of art *Either/ Or*, was published in 1843. He revolted against the Hegel's philosophical system which analyzed "Being" or "existence" in an abstract and impersonal way. He emphasized "Subjective Truth" and a person's conditioned thinking as an existing individual as against Hegel's objective and abstract academization of reality. He discussed man's essence with the existential predicament and limitations, hope, despair, anxiety and so on. Gaader, in *Sophie's World*, acknowledged that both the idealism of Romanticist and Hegel's Historicism had obscured the individual's responsibility for his own life" (377).

Therefore, it is obvious that existentialism is opposite of idealism, abstract thinking and objectivity. A man, according to Kierkegaard, has "a dynamic nature, freedom and responsibility. Then, nature of God is different from those of finite individuals" (376). He says "The most tremendous thing which has been granted to man is the choice, freedom" (Choice 834). H.J. Black Ham highlights Kierkegaard concept of choice:

Kierkegaard is really interested in only one thing, via-supreme ethical choice what one shall choose supremely is what one find it in one to choose supremely, and can be, nothing else. The object of supreme choice is in the nature of things ideal uncertainly real, and the more uncertain its reality is the more passionately must the man hold on to it, is subjective inwardness, not in a blind affirmation, but on the contrary, with unrelieved recognition of its objective uncertainty. (18-19)

Sartre divides existentialist thinkers into two groups: theistic and atheistic. Kierkegaard, Karl Jasper and Gabriel Marcel come under theistic existential thinkers who believed that God was “infinite subjectivity” whereas Martin Heidegger and the French existentialists including himself fall under atheistic group. Obviously, Nietzsche is the forerunner and chief source of inspiration for them who dose not believe in the existence of God but believes in the continuous struggle of anti-Christianity.

Theistic Existentialists

Kierkegaard is an existentialist because he accepts the absurdity of the world as fully as Sartre or Camus. But, he does not begin with the postulate of the non- existence of god with the principle that nothing in the world , nothing available to sense or reasons, provides any reasons or knowledge to believe in God. Without reason of heart or mind, Kierkegaard can only get to God by a leap of faith.

Kierkegaard rejects the concept of crowd and crowd behavior which according to him controls the true existence of a person and his/her freedom and responsibility. A person who believes in crowd may refuge his existence in the world as individual and lead a life of cowardliness.

Kierkegaard is against all the closed system and for him an individual is unique in nature. An individual is not a finished product who finds in uncertainty but takes risks and decides. “No God or Absolute decides in me but I do it on my own freedom” (History of Philosophy: Eastern and Western 425). Kierkegaard was a Christian mystic and believed in God who aimed from above at the existing individual. The individual experiences God in his momentary existence and ethical choice. He is united with God who does not annul the individual. The individual also maintains his individuality in union with God who remains an “Absolute Other”. Human existence, “the meeting point of time and eternity is thus analogous to the incarnation of God in Christ, the God man” (804).

Kierkegaard’s moral and religious seriousness offered a more promising basis for the development of existentialist theme than the basically nihilistic, egocentric and hopeless approach of Nazism, Sartre, Camus and the others. Philosophers who make their own leap of faith to Marxism of Sartre or Nazism of Heidegger have really discredited their own source of inspiration. Thus, while Sartre achieved for a time, a higher profile in the fashionable literary world, theistic existentialists concluded. Kierkegaard’s work was also went on with updated approaches to traditional religions . Atheistic existentialism exhausted itself really. The effort of will required for Sisyphus to maintain his enthusiasm is really beyond most human capacity, and better the solace of traditional religions than the vicious pseudo- religions of Communism or Fascism.

The Christian doctrine and its quest for objective truth have nothing to do with Kierkegaardian concept of Christianity. He believes only in the existence of God and not any doctrine. He argues that Christianity is therefore, not a doctrine, but the fact that “God

had existed” (Faith 857). Kierkegaardian faith is paradoxical. When we believe in God, we believe both in his finite and infinite existence. The finite related to the outward form or existence of God, whereas, the infinite is concerned with the inward faith and non-existence. Kierkegaard sees the whole world as a corporation of ambiguities and paradoxes. Considering the difficulty to exist in such paradoxical condition, Kierkegaard describes:

Existing is ordinarily regarded as no very complex matter, much less an art, since we all exist, but abstract thinking takes rank as an accomplishment. But really to exist, so as to interpenetrate one’s existence with consciousness, one and the same time eternal and as if far removed from existence, and yet also present in existence and in the process of becoming, that is truly difficult. (Concrete Existence 814)

Therefore, real existence is possible only when one becomes aware of the paradoxical presence of God, Christianity and man, for Kierkegaard. Suffering must be borne peacefully and happily, observes Kierkegaard because only the elect and the select of God, suffer (Faith 59). Abraham suffered because he was the beloved of God. Truth according to Kierkegaard, resides in that conception of life of individual.

Kierkegaard himself views:

The truth neither be communicated nor be received except as it were under God’s eyes, not without God’s help, not without God’s being involved as the middle term. He, himself, being the truth. It can therefore only be communicated by and received by the individual who as a matter of fact

can be every living man. The mark which distinguishes such a man is merely that of the truth. (240)

The main theme of Kierkegaard's writing is "Truth is Subjectivity". All existentialists have followed him in stressing the importance of passionate individual actions in deciding questions of both morality and truth. They have insisted that personal experience and acting on one's own conviction are essential to arrive at the truth. Thus, the understanding of a situation by someone involved in it is superior to that of a detached, objective observer.

Another famous philosopher Karl Jasper (1883) was a psychiatrist and a prominent theistic existentialist. Kant and Hegel influenced his philosophical activity from the beginning. As a psychiatrist, Jasper found that a person could not be treated merely as a "case" but some personal relationship was found necessary. He rejects scientific reasoning and rational truth.

For Jasper, the self does not exist as a transcendent reality, constituting a separable world, different from the world of our experience (2). Instead, there is only one world, which we may more properly appreciate as an appearance of the self. This existential exposition is supreme over all theoretical objectives and facts, but this supremacy does not lead us to a superiority being. Self is will in itself. The will is creative and it creates itself, which is consciousness. The existential self is thus, related to consciousness and to the world therefore to the historical situation in which it finds itself. Like other existential thinkers, he rejects the self-sufficiency of science and empirical observation and the seclusion of the individual from communication with other beings (Will 865). The individual cannot live

fully if there is no another being to communicate with him. Jasper is very close with all things around him. He says:

We can not have objective possession of a truth that is the eternal truth and because being- there is possible only with other being- there, and existence can come in to its own only with other existence, communication is the form in which truth is revealed in time. (866)

He wants to create a balance between rational and irrational movements of self. The truth is that it posses a perpetual question without which, we turn back into the more or less dirty stereotype of self satisfaction, which is inadequately thought. The possible truth and reality can sheath in despair, anxiety, suicide and dark passion. The existential root is not destructive will but a salvation from nihilism because it preserves confidence through its movement.

While talking about existentialism, we cannot forget Gabriel Marcel who regards philosophy is philosophy of reflection upon reflection to restore the unity of living and thinking. Marcel is a French thinker who believes the transcendental help of God. He contrives his philosophy round incarnation and invocation. He views that the essence of man is to be in a situation in the World. He sees God in faith ultimately, in the highest kind of faith; “we realize the supreme transcendence which is called God” (The Philosophy of Existence 437).

According to him, we can feel the presence of Absolute (God) if we confront the world with love, joy, hope and faith within us. In this opinion, both hope and love can exist only on the basis of faith. About mystery and faith:

Marcel opines:

The existence of other selves also is accepted on faith. In these several ways, we realize some presence going beyond the immediate here and now. Ultimately in the highest kind of faith, we realize the supreme transcendence, which is called God. Neither the existence of external object nor that of other selves of God is rationally demonstrable. Each is revealed by a direct contact of participation. (437)

Atheistic Existentialists

Modern individual has lost his faith on the eternal power of God. Fredric Nietzsche (1844-1900) was known for his doctrine of the will to power, super man etc. Nietzsche declared the 'death of God'. The total independence and isolation of a free man is found for the first time in Nietzsche. He is considered as the ethical ancestor of existentialism like Kierkegaard. Nietzsche regarded objectivity as the chief enemy of understanding. He struggles to establish human freedom and subjectivity. As God has made an individual valueless, Nietzsche claimed that such tyrannical God should be killed. He claims, "We choose our values, we collectively-create our values" (The Great philosophers 234).

Mary Warnock points out Nietzsche's point of view:

Nietzsche rejected the whole doctrine of the universalizability of the moral laws. For him, to legislate meant to legislate oneself. He rightly argues that universalizing one's maxim according to the Kantian formula is not a straightforward operation since an evaluative element comes in to the decision to describe one's act in a particular way. (19)

Nietzsche's moral philosophy is a total rejection of ethical naturalist who equally opposes the ethical institutionalism. The essential truth he talks is men's choice of their own

values and follow “will to power”. Like Kierkegaard, Nietzsche regarded “Objectivity” is the main enemy of understanding (Warnock 13).

Nietzsche emphasized upon the subjective intention and activities of individual. If a man troubles his mind on what other will think about him, he will be no more a man but an instrument, an object.

Clarifying this view Nietzsche writes:

The objective man is an instrument, a precious easily injured, easily clawed instrument for taking measurements. As a mirror he is work of art, to be handled carefully and honored. But he is not an aim, not a way out nor a way up, not a completely human being through him the rest of existence is justified, not a conclusion --- or content, a self less man.

(Subjective Will 817)

Martin Heidegger is an atheistic existentialist. Heidegger describes three fundamental characteristic of human being in his book *Being and Time*. The relation of a self to the world of objects and persons are inseparable and constitutive of its existence. An individual is pre- occupied with the inevitability of death. “Death is the goal of our existence. Man’s being is for death. Nothingness, in the Heidegger’s approach is connected with the finitude of human being, their essential movements towards their own end in death” (Warnock 60). He argues that the certainty of death makes an individual realize that his existence in the earth must be made useful and better knowing its temporality.

Heidegger says:

It would be immature to adopt the facile explanation that nothing is merely the negatory, equating it with the non-existence. We ought rather to equip ourselves and prepare for one thing only: to experience in nothing the immensity of that which gives every being its license to be, that Being itself. (61)

Heidegger uses the word '*Dasein*' for human being, literally 'Being there'. It expresses an existence which is chosen by individual. He says that only human being exists but animal and inanimate things do not exist. In *what is metaphysic?* Heidegger says, "Man alone of all existing things experiences the wonder of all wonders: That there are things in being" (106). He says that all of us have some possible choices and our concern is the world, present and the future. These choices are not made in vacuum but in the world. The feeling of dread due to the awareness of death may incite us to flee away from the problem of being, accepting a way of life, set by others instead of coming face to face with it. But, if we take the dread of death as an opportunity, we may construe our life unique, and our own on the necessity of being responsible to the true experience of life, Heidegger writes, (...) Therefore, representational and illuminating in this way, must be supplanted by a different kind of thinking which is brought to pass by Being itself and, therefore, responding to Being" (Recollection 880). He focuses on the problem of being. He regards his investigation as an attempt to disclose the concealed nature of being. His fundamental argument is why should there be only being at all ignoring nothing. Heidegger argued that humanity finds itself in an incomprehensible, indifferent world. Human being can never hope to understand why they are here. Instead, each individual must choose a goal and follow it with passionate conviction, aware of the certainty of

death and ultimate meaninglessness of one's life. For him, the principal object of investigation is the search for being (Sein) and more particularly, man's being (Dasein). In the history of existential philosophy, the most remarkable name is Jean Paul Sartre who became a pioneer of atheistic existentialism. Sartre's one of the major doctrines of existentialism is "existence precedes essence" which has become a vogue for the traditional concept of "essence precedes existence". According to Sartre, first of all man exists, turns up, appear on the scene and defines himself. For Sartre, "freedom becomes an absolute, resting on the individual's own decision as to how he will be engaged with the world" (116).

Sartre does not believe in the Christian dogma, or any ethics. Freedom occupies a central place in Sartre's thought. For Sartre, "man is nothing else but what makes of himself" (15). A man is free to choose his values and we always choose the good, which will be good for all "in choosing myself, I choose myself" (18).

Sartre regarded responsibility in utilizing freedom. Everything, which happens to me, is mine, according to him. A man is fully responsible for what he does or chooses. He accepts J. Romain's ethics "in war there are no innocent victims". One, who gets into war, has to bear the entire responsibility of this war. The feeling of being-in-the-world makes a man choose or act upon things.

According to Sartre, God does not exist and, therefore, an individual is all alone. He is giving a message to modern individual that each has to determine his values himself, enjoying his freedom and responsibility.

Human being lives totally not by any single action or commitment but by the whole actions that he chooses to carry out in his life. The authenticity of life demands it to make

a free choice, regardless of pre-established social values. To think about the social or moral duties is to indulge in the self deception or “bad faith”. But, Sartre does not isolate the freedom of the individual from the total commitment of the community. The contradictory nature of Sartre’s philosophy is mysterious because on the one hand he gives a total freedom to individual and insists that he should not choose his freedom in accordance with the values of dogma of societies but on the other hand, he leaves the individual’s freedom in relation with the freedom of his community, so that the communities, freedom directs him to act in certain way. The contradiction might be the outcome of his gradual attraction towards Marxism and later Neo- Marxism. Regarding the very difficulty in choosing freedom Sartre writes.

We will freedom for freedom’s sake, in and through particular circumstances. And in thus willing freedom, we discover that it depends entirely upon the freedom of others and that the freedom of others depends upon our own. Obviously, freedom as the definition of a man does not depend upon others, but as soon as there is a commitment, I am obliged to will the liberty of others at the same time as my own I can not make liberty my aim unless I make that of others equally my own. (Authenticity 842)

It clarifies that Sartre is being conscious of a system that seems more powerful than the total freedom of an individual. He is creating another system of human existence by negating the common social system, as people understand it.

In the list of atheistic existential thinkers, Albert Camus comes under it. Camus was a journalist, novelist and philosopher for whom the absurdity of life is the first concept.

Camus sees the condition of modern man similar to Corinthian king Sisyphus. Sisyphus is the martyr and teacher of all modern men who because of his disobedience to God and his passion for life suffer eternal torture heroically. According to Camus, when the absurd man becomes aware of his futile living, he is naturally filled with anxiety and hopelessness but he does not surrender himself in the mouth of death. Instead, he acknowledges the consciousness of absurdity as a reliable guidance to revolt against it. Camus hated the destruction of the world and mankind as carried out in World War I and II and second to get liberation from the anxiety of the absurd world. He opines that an individual lives in a dreadful condition, living in absurdity. The living absurd man depends upon the maximum struggle against this absurdity.

Existentialism has different innovation from the beginning. But, the universal isolation and finitude of mankind has become the milestone for all existentialist thinkers.

Existentialism is a philosophy of individualism and selfhood. Existentialist thinkers mainly focused on the personal freedom and responsibility.

Unit-Three

Textual Analysis of *Across the River and Into the Trees*

Hemingway's world brought violence, hostility and terror in the mind of men since his world is the world at war. There was no peace and tranquility in the societies. People were intellectually as well as spiritually disillusioned. People did not have faith on political and religious institutions because the faith in itself was no more valid in the society. Most of the inhabitants in the age, lead a life of sensation only, usually mistaking sexual desire for love, devoting themselves to excitement rather than positive achievement.

Hemingway observed the memories of World War first and second, which his character Colonel Cantwell fought in his youth and contemporary society in this novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. In other words, he has portrayed the brutality and horrifying condition of the generation through the nature and action of his characters in this novel. Hemmingway's characters are entirely without significance, they are like creatures without religions, morality, politics, culture or history.

Hemingway is consciously an artist, writing to achieve an aesthetic effect. He himself is emotionally involved in his own works. In the real life of Hemingway, he faced painful and dreadful experiences but maintained "a hope of survival" till the end of his energetic stage. He became the representative of what Gertrude Stein called "The Lost Generation" (1917-1936), for interpreting the world as a reality. Hemingway together with his characters lived in the world when the war had dislodged them from their homes and the old restrain, given them an unexpected and disillusioning education and left them entirely rootless.

Some individual heroism was of high value in the increasingly mechanized and corrupted bureaucratic world of the twentieth century. As a representative of an era, Hemingway has truly represented existential issue in this novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. The protagonist Colonel Cantwell in the novel is fifty years of age, with an irascibility and hot temper like Hemingway's. Cantwell like Hemingway was seriously wounded in the right knee near Fossalta in 1918 and has a young admirer named Reneta who dines with him at the Hotel Gritti Palace, where Hemingway lunched with his beloved Adriana Ivancich (1930-83) in April 1949.

Cantwell is a connoisseur of fine Italian wine, extra dry martinis, lobsters and steak and has bad eyes like Hemingway. Also like Hemingway, he has loved and lost three women, with one recently divorced, bearing an uncanny resemblance to Hemingway's third wife, Martha Gellhorn and so on ad infinitum, until one suspect that the only significant difference between Cantwell and Hemingway may be that Cantwell lost three battalions along with his three women.

Kierkegaard believes that "an individual is the only category through which human race as a whole must pass. He prefers the individual for his tombstone to be inscribed and said that "truth is possible only by becoming an individual and passing through it" (809-11).

The existential assumption is based on the fact that human being is basically alone.

Colonel Cantwell, the protagonist of the novel *Across the River and into the Trees* is alone. He is a retired veteran of both World Wars. Suffering from heart disease, literally as well as symbolically, he is deeply and understandably embittered by his unjust demotion from brigadier to colonel after the loss of his World War second regiment in

Germany-ironically a loss blamed on him because he followed “like a dog” the foolish order of his superiors, as the army requires (242). He is war wounded. He says:

He was hit three times that winter, but they were all gift wounded, small wounds in the flesh of the body without breaking bone and he had become quite confident of his personal immortality since he knew he should have been killed in the heavy artillery bombardment that always preceded the attack. ...no of his wound had ever done to him what the first big one did.

(24)

Love is the main theme of the novel *Across the River and into the Trees*. The colonel falls in love with a nineteen years old girl Renata. Renata is love and beauty that gives meaning to his life. In her absence, he feels lonely and alienated and he also becomes aware of his existence. In the context of love between Colonel Cantwell and Renata, we can bring the philosophy of Sartre. “Man is nothing else but what he makes of himself” (15). A man is free to choose his value. Colonel Cantwell also chooses to love the girl to get relief and meaning in the absurd world. The novel is all about the love between the protagonists, Cantwell and Renata and Cantwell’s love for Venice.

The colonel kissed her and felt her wonderful long, young, lithe and properly built body against his own body, which was hard and good, but beat- up, and as he kissed her, he thought of nothing. They kissed for a long time, standing straight. (80)

It clearly shows that the novel is full of love affair between colonel Cantwell and his beloved Renata. The love has become the foundation for the colonel to proceed his life, full of pain, sorrow and misery .In another word full of meaninglessness.

The novel is also deals with the heroic Cantwell's lamentable disgrace and demotion in the American Army during World War second, a story it is hard if not possible to reconcile with the superimposed, self-indulgent story of Hemingway in Venice, which invades the Cantwell's story and eventually obfuscated it.

Richard Cantwell feels completely alone in the society. At night he can't easily sleep on his bed . "The girl was asleep, still holding his bad hand that he despised, and he could feel her breath as the young breath" (180). When the girl is asleep, he is lying awake on the bed at night. It shows that Colonel Cantwell can't sleep well at night although the girl sleeps well together with him. Instead, he involves himself in liquor. He is a patient of heart disease. "There's a lot of oxygen in the air, he thought as he faced into the wind and breathed deeply" (58). Still, he maintains a hope for survival.

Man is all alone to face his own destiny. Cantwell struggles alone with his life. He hates the society. The loneliness of Cantwell seems to be horrible. Cantwell's suffering is his personal suffering (affair). He endures his pain stoically. One can sympathies upon grief of other but it proves too superficial as he can't really experience it. Cantwell says to the girl. "Nobody shares this trade with anybody. I'm just telling you how it works. I can insert anecdote to make it interesting, plausible".

For Cantwell, in one sense choice is possible, but what is not possible is not to choose (Sartre 41). Cantwell has to make a choice without fail.

Cantwell sees some value in the Army of United State before and enlisted him although he has deep interest in literature. When he was young, he had served in the army in several years. Now, he is a wounded man because he had been shot several times on his

head, hands and knees. He has become an old man. He begins to feel tired of the life. He could be dead at any time since he is suffering from heart disease also.

He decides to go on a trip to Venice for duck shooting. He has his freedom to travel as a free man. Since Richard Cantwell has a feeling of loneliness; he chooses to go on a tour to visit Perice to seek meaning in his life. The consciousness of Cantwell's isolation is the beginning of the quest for his individuality.

He is now physically and as well as psychologically wounded in his life. He is at his fifty now, decides to go on a trip for duck shooting. Venice is the city that Colonel Cantwell had fought for in two World Wars. He loves the city and feels that it is his own. In the novel, love plays an important role to maintain a hope in Colonel's life. During his trip, he indulges into his past memories and talks about the war unwillingly and military blunders with his beloved Renata who is only nineteen years old. After visiting the city, the aging man, colonel Cantwell dies alone in the car on the way to his home.

Though Colonel Cantwell is to have fun on his trip, he is getting awfully slow due to his sickness and oldness. "Somebody will take me down any day now", he thought (30).

According to Kierkegaard, the certainty of death makes an individual realize that his existence in the earth must be made useful and better knowing its temporality. So, colonel Cantwell is also trying his best to have fun. An individual is pre-occupied with the inevitability of death.

Colonel walks alone along the street road leaving his car on the road. He indulges himself again and again in the liquor. "The colonel took the drink Arnaldo, the glass eyed waiter made him" (52). And he goes to visit the place where he had fought in World Wars first

and second when he was a young, then. During his visit, he happens to remember the military blunders and war episode of the past.

They had fought, too, in the earlier stupid butchery on the Isonzo and Carso. But they were both ashamed of those who had ordered that, and they never thought about it expect as a shameful, stupid thing to be forgotten and the colonel remembered it technically as something to learn from.(...)(41)

He is in fact terrified with the destruction of the war and all traditional code of conduct of war ethics. He describes military blunders and the stupidity of superiors who were responsible for the death of many soldiers. He knows about the war and the follies of superior because Colonel Cantwell has served many years in the army of the United States.

Cantwell had the dreadful experience of war where he sees the decay of purity from the world, he himself feels lonely most of the time due to the cause of war. He knows how boring any man's war is to any other man, and he stops talking about because it makes him upset.

He says:

No one is interested in it abstractly except soldiers and there are not many soldiers. (...) there was no sense boring this boy. Who for all his combat infantrymen, badge his purple heart and the other thing he wore was in no sense a soldier but only a man placed against his will, in uniform, who had elected to remain in the Army for his own.(45)

Colonel Cantwell also talks about the war he fought with the girl Renata because Venice is the city that reminds him of the war. But, he is obsessed with the war and military

follies. He does not want to talk about the war. The girl insists him to tell about the war.

“Can you tell me about the war?” The girl asked, and he says:

When I was a boy I fought against Erwin Rohmel half way from Cortina to the Grappa where we held. He was a captain then and I was an acting captain; really a sub- lieutenant. (90)

He intends to forget about the war and be away from it. He asks the girl not to ask question about the war. In this context he says to his lover once.

There are many of them in our country. There is at least one in every town. No daughter, I am only a fighting soldier and that is the lowest on the earth. In that you run for Arlington, if they return the body. The family has a choice. (...) (166)

This was undoubtedly an existential urge to detach from the notion of glory of war and military blunders.

It is not only Cantwell but also Grand Maestro and Renata have shown the sign of weariness of war. As she says: “I hate the war monuments though I respect them” (93).

Colonel Cantwell during his conversation with his beloved Renata says: All right: I have made a decision too. “I am going to chuck the army and live in this in town, very simply on my retirement pay” (93).

He decides to select desertion in favor of life, to express in Sartrean terms: “you are nothing else than your life” (33). Here, too, this desertion is existential in spirit. He had his freedom to chuck the army of the United States. We note Cantwell’s complete disillusionment with the war even before the day of his death.

He discusses the ramification of war with his friends, which is supported by humanitarian sympathy but not with patriotic feeling. In any case, he is non-combatant now and he has a feeling that he is not in danger. War and army is depicted as a mockery: "in our army you obey like a dog at war. You always hope you have a good master" (177). This shows his participation in the war was a most casual affair. His irrational participation in war can be compared with the irrational existential modern phenomenon.

The choice of Cantwell and Reneta leads them to love. Their choice makes them commit themselves and move into a new dimension of sensibility. The choice leads into their happiness but the happiness is without significance, as it does not last for long when Cantwell leaves the girl alone in Venice. And, he returns Italy but on the way to Italy, he meets his death by heart attack in the car.

Cantwell's entire commitment is the love affair with Reneta. This is the most important theme in this novel; the choice of loving and hating each other was own their own selection. When Cantwell and Reneta love each other, they choose each other and the choice was freedom in Sartrean philosophy "their goal is freedom" (48). They take a risk of this action, "love making". It is the love that gives meaning into his life. In her presence, he no longer feels mediocre, contingent, or mortal. Reneta and the town, Venice are his happiness. Time and youth have been regained.

Cantwell tries to make a paradise of existence after they begin to live in a hotel at Gritti in Venice. The war is far away. They were not interested on it. For them, the outside world was almost ceased to stop. The protagonists, Colonel Cantwell and Renata reject the society and wartime responsibility. These two beings have attempted for a separate peace that is precarious and temporary which would end their relationship with the world.

They reduce themselves into the world of two by rejecting every kind of relationship and the “crowd” on Kierkegaardian philosophy. Their alienation from the society shows the existential note in their lives.

In the sense of Sartrean philosophy, this action is related to free choice. They choose to desert the morality in order to fulfill their desire to exist. In the urge of living in peace, they select desertion and are involved in “justifiable activity” from Sartrean perspective. Renata has already deserted her mother at home to live with her lover Cantwell. Sartre who *Being in Nothingness* mentions “alienation as one of the true for existence” (272). If we look at their love affair from the existential point of view, we can say that Renata leads the life of unconventionalist contrasting traditional values and moral values. She dismisses any need of a formal marriage ceremony. She often wants to make physical relation with Cantwell as a whore. As she says:

“The wind was very cold and lashed their faces but under a blanket there was neither wind nor nothing, only his ruined hand that searched for the island in the great river with the high steep banks. (112)

Renata never hesitates accepting the irrationality in her “love-affair”. She again says, “It is not a dirty trade it is the oldest and the best”. (820). Renata’s choice to lead a life of unconventionality unites her with Cantwell. This reminds us what Nietzsche says “the essential truth was that men choose their own value of ethical naturalism” (Ethical Origin: Kierkegaard, Nietzsche 16). Thus, Renata’s affair without formal marriage is her choice and ethical morality is not regarded necessary and this stand can be interpreted on the existential ground.

Cantwell's impotence creates a distance between Cantwell and the society as well as other people at the Gritti palace. This distance becomes the occasion for his intellectual and moral growth, which leads him to individuality. Cantwell's feeling of loneliness is different from his friends. He is war wounded. The wound is the great dividing line of his life. It has isolated him from other; it has given him insight into his life.

There are many characters that are living at the Gritti palace maimed by war. The people are isolated from their past and their family members and friends especially from the society. Due to the feeling of loneliness, they ask each other to join them in a drink at hotels or cafés. "Take a glass of this; the colonel said, reaching accurately and well for the champagne bucket with the ice, and uncorking the bottle, the grand maestro had uncorked, and then place a common wine cork in" (114). Some times, they go to Harry's restaurants to have fun.

The driver, one of the characters, is also detached and lonely from his house. The loneliness of the character is due to the cause of war. So, they are obsessed with the war. Jackson says, "My brothers got killed in the pacific and the guy who was running the garage was no good we lost. What we had put in it" (16). After the death of his brothers, Jackson is living a meaningless life; he chooses to drive a car to struggle for existence. "Man is noting else but what he makes of himself" (Sartre).

Contesa Dandola is an old woman character in the novel who is also alone in her house because all of her family members got killed in the war. Once Cantwell says about her:

She is over eight, and she is as gay as a girl and does not have any fear of dying. She dyes her hair red and it looks very well. She is a good companion and admirable woman. (84)

As Kierkegaard says; “the most tremendous thing which has been granted to man is the choice, freedom” (Choice 834). The woman has also freedom to create her own values. The life style of woman clearly shows the strand of existential concept. There are also women characters that are living the life without meaning. Alvarito’s mother stays out at the country house. She’s tired of being there. “She has lost a fine man and nothing really interests her” (35). After the desertion of her daughter, Reneta’s mother has also become alone who has also lost her husband and son in the war.

In this novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees*, all the characters are lonely and alienated. Renata says Richard Cantwell:

You learn fast about things you do not know and you make lovely quick decision. I would like you to have emeralds and you could keep them like a lucky piece and feel them if you were lonely. (76)

Colonel Cantwell feels extremely loneliness when the girl Reneta goes away leaving him behind at the Gritti palace for one night. It shows that the presence and love of the girl plays a vital role in the life of Colonel.

She opened the door with the key, which was in her bag. Then she was gone and the colonel was alone with the worn pavement, the wind which still held in the north and the shadows from were a light went on. He walked home alone. (120)

But, the colonel has a portrait of his lover with him that was given to him by Renata. His lover is not with him so he wished he had her lover with him because he feels lonely.

Although there was no one to talk to him, he begins to talk to the portrait in her absence

“Portrait”, he said “why the hell can not you just get into the bed with me instead of being eighteen solid stone block away. May be more. I am not a sharp now as I was, whenever. (...) (127)

According to Jasper, an individual cannot live fully if there is no other being to communicate with him so Colonel Cantwell also needs someone to talk to him. Colonel is living a life full of meaninglessness and loneliness in a sense that he has lost his three wives. He had recently divorced with one of them. He is in need of a woman who could balm his wound, which is done by Renata temporarily. He also did not want to remember his former wives because their remembrance caused him panic. He says:

She is forgotten, the colonel said and strangely enough she was. It was strange because she had been present in the room for a moment, and she had merely caused a panic, which is one of the strangest things there is, the colonel thought. He knew about panic but she is gone now for good and forever. (156)

Although Colonel and the girl love each other and they do not want to be far away from each other, the time has come for Colonel to go for duck shooting. Richard Cantwell’s love and devotion remains powerless at the end when Cantwell goes for duck shooting. And, again Reneta feels helpless against the sudden departure of her aging lover. she says to Colonel during their farewell:

“I suppose people that love each other have what ever they have and they are more fortunate than others. Then one of them gets the emptiness forever”. (198)

So, in the end of the novel, *Across the River and Into the Trees* when they separate from each other, the colonel felt extremely loneliness. He is often haunted by the remembrances of the girl.

You beauty, he said to himself. I wish you were here now and we were in the double blind and if we could only just feel the back of our soldiers touch. I'd look around and see you and I would shoot the high ducks well, to show off try to put one in the blind without having it hit you. (...) (206)

The existentialists are of the opinion that all of our personal human relationship is poisoned by the feeling of alienation from any other. Hemingway's hero Colonel is also alienated, rowing alone in the sea and returned alone with a boatman. In order to avoid alienation and isolation in the sea, Colonel wishes the companionship of the girl so that he can share something. He found himself isolated in the sea. The alienation shows the needs of companionship which can be noticed in Colonel's expression as, "I wish to hell, She was here" (215).

Alienation is a theme which Hegel started for the modern world on many levels and in many subtle forms. The alienation that exist in society reflects upon the alienation of individual human beings who look for their own desire in estrangement from the actual institutional working of their society. In fact, alienation lies on those who do not identify with the institution of their society, because they find their society empty, meaningless and nothingness.

Sartre who is known as the leading existentialist believes that existence precedes essence. existence has the primacy over essence which is the basic existentialist stand point. Alike Sartre, Compton's encyclopedia defines existentialism as:

Flowers, animals, and stones all exist. But people exist in a different way. Individuals are unique-able to think about themselves and the world in which they find themselves and make choices. They can choose because they are free, and the choices they make establish the future into which they project themselves. (371)

It shows that man is conscious subject rather than a thing to be predicted or manipulated, He exists as conscious being, and not in accordance with any definition, essence, generalization or system. Existentialist says I am nothing else but my own conscious existing. We can measure, Hemingway's hero, in the same existentialist parameter. Colonel is a conscious individual, unique in his decision and totally committed in his choice. He shows courage in his trip. We can find his subjectivity, dignity and pride. Colonel is nothing else but his conscious existence. Until he is dead, he is on his trip. In this context, we can bring the philosophy of Sartre. "Existence precedes essence". By the phrase "existence precedes essence" Sartre means if there is no cosmic designer, there is no design or essence of human being. Thus, to Cantwell also, existence comes first and essence comes later. Because, Cantwell is rowing the boat with very difficulty and taking the liquor time and again although he knows that he's going to die very soon because of the heart disease. He says:

I would sure as hell like to trade it in on a new one, the colonel though. I don't see why that one, of all the musicales, should fail me. But he said nothing of this; put his hand in his pocket. (87)

But he has still hope for life. He is struggling hard for existence. Indeed, the essence is what ever we decide it is going to be. By essence, Sartre is talking about a pre-defined human nature.

The existentialists say that one is condemned to choose. Even not to choose is to choose. Colonel Cantwell chooses going on a trip for duck shooting though he could not do well at shooting. To seek meaning in his meaningless life with patience and courage is choice. One has the freedom to choose knowingly and unknowingly. He is always making a choice. According to Kierkegaard, one is free to choose, yet he dose not like to go to perdition, he must make an ethico religious choice. The only way of enduring the anxiety of existing problem is to submit oneself in the realm of God. He says that one can choose absolutely when he has not chosen to choose this or that but the absolute and this absolute is "I myself in eternal validity" (Choice 831).

Many atheists like Cantwell choose the name of God while they are in danger and critical situation without real expectation. Joseph Waldmeir opines: "God is sometime prayed to by the Hemingway hero at the moments of crisis. His aids or successors are dependent upon, never really expected" (147).

Cantwell emasculated by a war-wound, is living a very lonely life, but he tries to stand in a very different relationship with his loneliness. Cantwell endures the loneliness of his condition by subjecting himself, no self pity in his appraisal of his owl life. Once he says to Jackson; "I'm tired of seeing you because you worry and you don't have fun. For Christ sake have your self some fun". It shows that Cantwell is having fun on seeing the Grand Canal through the window of the hotel in which he is living temporarily at the Gritti palace.

Although, the Colonel was alone and detached from his family, the trip to some extent, gives him solace and meaning in his life. He remembers everything there.

Remember all the fine ones in the resistance, remember Foch, both fought and organized and remember how fine the people were. Remember your good friends and your dead. (...) Cut it out, he told himself, you are on a trip to have fun. (20)

For Reneta and Colonel Cantwell, there is no community, no organized activity for dedication of social and political course. Thus, they appear in the stage purely as existential figures. Cantwell is lonely at the beginning lonely against the world and lonely at the end after he decides to go for shooting .He earns the horror and emptiness of life. “I try not to think and be old son of a bitch” (204).

At the end of the story, the protagonist colonel Cantwell decides to return to Italy since it was his trip. He only thought of her and how she felt and how close life comes to death when there is ecstasy because he is becoming very weak, lean and old. He takes medicine regularly. “He took two of the tablets and swallows of gin and looked across the grey ice” (215). But, the one way to Italy, he feels difficulty inside his chest and he dies alone in the car. In the context, we can bring the comments made by marry Warnock on Heidegger’s concept of existentialism as;

Heidegger regards this genuine acceptance of the future non-existence of himself as the first step towards the authentic way of life in accepting it, the human beings recognizes that he is alone, distinct from every other person and object in the world, no longer able to turn for support to people in general. He must die his own death by himself; so not existing at all is

the final end towards which he is moving. In this sense “Nichts” means “non- existence” or “nothingness”. (59)

Death is the goal of his existence according to Heidegger. His being is for death. It is the final nothingness that hangs over like a sword of Damocles at each and every moments of life. “Nothingness” in Heidegger approach is connected with the “finitude of human being” “their essential movements towards their own end in death” (Warnock 60). The final scene of the novel also shows the finitude of Colonel Cantwell.

Death is the recurring and most important theme of Hemingway’s novels. For him, the death is the ultimate end.

He thinks that death is inevitable and what count is how a man confront with it. What count for him is action rather than anxious thought of it. He wanted to put his life face to face with danger and death and take enjoyment of it. He wanted to confront it heroically and regularly. He got his great opportunity to read his own death’s obituaries in African plane crash. Like his character, he wanted to put his life at the stake. At last, he experienced his life by shooting himself in 1961.

Cantwell’s choice of joining the army was only because of his own interest. Cantwell’s rootlessness and aimlessness resembles the 20th century world. Cantwell’s non-attachment with the family is his rejection of the family relationship. Cantwell wants to occupy his mind in drink, duck shooting and love to escape from talking about the Wars that he fought. Cantwell’s alienation from his family prompts his existential urge for loneliness.

She (Ruth) stood in tears amid alien corn, the same that oft time hath,
charm'd magic casements opening on the foam (Keats: Ode to
Nightingale. (67-70)

As Ruth is forlorn, alienated and full of tears in the dangerous situation so is the condition of modern man in the war-ridden world. The 20th century wartime period milieu was very dangerous and the war torn world is alien to modern man. Nobody could rescue modern man from the dungeon, as he does not believe in the existence of god. Hemingway world is the exact replica of this bitter truth. In his world, either god has died as the world of Stare or Nietzsche or has been remote and uncaring like the god of Thomas Hardy. Hemingway's characters struggle for their existence. They are independent to do what ever they prefer. In order to avoid suffering and grief, they develop their own canon of bearing and the cruel blowing of the fate stoically. His feeling of nothingness and meaninglessness penetrated to the depth of existential dilemma that human being faces even today. Man is lonely and s/he has seen that the world is purposeless and there is no meaning beyond what man gives to his life. Action is to be performed for its own sake and it is its own justification . There are no gods or super human agencies that will support human being in crisis. If a man is to live meaning fully, he must evolve a code for himself based upon the empirical evidence of his senses. There is no life beyond the grave and therefore one must realize one's identity in this universe. Hemingway projects the picture of solitary man in one indifferent universe in this novel.

Identity is one of the themes of existentialism. People can identify themselves on the basis of their gender, ethnicity and nationality. Man often asks himself question: who am

I? What is my relation to the physical and social world? According to Sartre, there seems something problematic in the relationship between individual and community. The question of identity is central: basically who am I? Sartre thought that we are free to define our identity. There is no script for our roles. There is no essence that tells us who we are and who we ought to be. We are all free and we all bear the responsibility to find the answer to this existential riddle. For Hegel, it is a struggle of life and death, the question of who we are in relation to other is vital for us. In this novel too, the protagonist Colonel Cantwell is also struggling for his existence until his death. Here, struggle for identities are struggles within individual and between individual with group. Identity is not something we have, like the color of the hair or genetic make up. It is something we gain through a tension- filled inner-subjective process, and it is something that can be endlessly gained and re-challenged.

Hemingway has made his distinct identity by his distinct subject matter of love, death and struggle against meaninglessness and by his unique, deceptive style. Like Sartre, his literary protagonist Colonel Cantwell struggles with absurdity and meaninglessness of the universe and tries to find his identity. Because of such unique, distinct and different temperament, Colonel has made his existence in the literary field.

Here, Hemingway has depicted the theme of isolated individual who struggles until he is dead to create meaning and identity in a hostile and indifferent universe. Colonel appears to be strong willed man of action and thought having extra ordinary quality- strange old man. He is man of restless energy who enjoys living dangerously comparable to Nietzschean supermans who are also people of restless energy.

Hemingway's emphasis on the individual as rebel against convention, against nada, against absurdity and presenting the hero as distinct, a lonely man is his existential root in the novel. His loneliness represents Heidegger's doctrine of alienation and loneliness. Heidegger finds his life meaningless and gets no way to human happiness as Hemingway's protagonist Colonel. He is surrounded by difficult situation far out from which he can not run away but confronts it with a full conscience, patience and courage. Colonel finds himself lonely to achieve the goal of his finding meaning and identity in his life.

In spite of his strong existentialists stand points; we also can observe Hemingway distinct from existentialists. Hemingway never put himself in the group of existentialists though he had great strain of existentialism. Like Hemingway, many of the existentialists do the same including Camus and Heidegger. Most of the existentialists are European but Hemingway is an American however, he loved most Spain and France- the fertile land for existentialism. He lived his life as an existentialist. Hemingway is the contemporary of most of the existentialist. Unlike existentialist, he only wrote stories and novel about *Jivan* and *Jagat* rather than the philosophy and criticism about life and literature. What he had to said, he said in his novels and stories through his characters.

Unit-Four

Conclusion

Hemingway, depicts carefully, though differently, the horrors of the First World War and The Second World War in *Across the River and into the Tress* and the intellectual as well as spiritual disillusionment which followed them. Hemingway as a representative of a “Lost Generation” incorporates almost all the twentieth century modern philosophical theories, including the philosophy of existentialism in this novel. Hemingway carefully expresses his own experiences through the protagonists: Colonel Cantwell, Renata and hence, Hemingway’s notion can be examined through their choices and their consequences.

In the present work, an attempt has been made to study Hemingway’s *Across the River and into the Trees* in the light of existentialism. The major characters are the center of focus to quest for order and certitude amid the modern existence. In this novel, Hemingway ventures to persuade the value of love, understanding and human fellowship for the meaningful existence of mankind. He gives emphasis on human solidarity and integrity to wipe out the sense of void and vacuity from life.

In a world, that is replete with war and violence, his emphasis particularly goes to the spiritual unification of the people. He participates in the war so curiously not for the sake of war; neither does he fight to meet the needs of an individual man. His deep respect for humanity and a true appreciation for the cause of survival among other people stimulate him to join the war.

Hemingway is at pains to convey that the modern war means a total violence and pervasive death or death like experience. War is now a universal phenomenon not bound

to particular time and space .Every body, knowingly or unknowingly, gets involved in it. Therefore, the question of Cantwell's involvement in the war turns to be quite irrelevant. He fights for life, in order to ensure the authenticity of love for a meaningful survival of humankind. His urge for living among the other people emerged and developed out of this basis.

In the modern world, war has killed all the social, moral and ethical values of life. Nothing is able to hold humanity together except the concept of love. It has become a basic force of life that can bring meaning and certitude in a world that seems to offer nothing of the sort. Also, it is the code, the suggested bedrock for human existence in the present day society.

Hemingway uses the First World War and the Second World War in the novel to represent the condition of people in the modern world. Colonel Cantwell's love for a nineteen years old girl, Reneta can be spectacted as his love for all the people of the world who are now striving for peace and love. The perpetual violence and cruelty has brought tumult in the domain of human relationship. The complete peace can not be expected in Hemingway's world. Colonel can not be successful to bring peace and order in life because of this reason. But, certainly, he succeeds to teach the value of the code or the discipline to Renata for the authentic living in the world, which at times implies his message for all the human beings in the world. This theme of human existence constitutes the central message of the novel.

Colonel Cantwell appears as the mouthpiece of Hemingway. It is through him that the author has presented the facts of life of our modern world. His immediate concern is to live by flourishing the positive values of life. To him, the important thing is to continue to

exist by preserving as many right principles as possible. He teaches that pain and suffering are the common phenomenon of the modern public life. One should acknowledge them as the inseparable parts of every day life. A man's true manhood can be testified under such circumstances. In order to live life of virtue and dignity, one should have a deep sense of love and fraternity which can provide a proper outlet to all short of bitter experiences that a man faces inside and outside of himself. And, in this respect, the organization of value of love and spiritual salvation seem to be paramount of significance in our modern morally vacant world. Colonel Cantwell faces death with courage and stoic endurance and appreciates the real value of the cause in the end. His longing for a noble and dignified living even at the final moment of his life suitably justifies the case in point.

Hemingway has depicted the realities of the twentieth century modern world in this novel. Hemingway's emphasis on the individual as rebel against the convention, against the laws of the societies and presenting the hero as "an outsider", a lonely man is his existential root in his novels.

Colonel Cantwell in *Across the River and into the Trees*, as a rebel, a protester of the mechanized world, like Nietzsche who challenged the contemporary religious world by declaring that God is dead. Hemingway permits Colonel Cantwell to enjoy his freedom opposing the traditional ethics of morality and responsibility. He never fears his action and their consequences.

Hemingway has depicted man's isolation, loneliness and alienation in the novel. Colonel Cantwell feels lonely in the beginning when he rejects home, lonely when Renata deserts him and flees away with her mother, and lonely when he returns home in the end, his

loneliness represents Heidegger's doctrine of alienation and loneliness. Heidegger finds his life meaningless and gets no way to human happiness as Hemingway's protagonist's colonel Cantwell in the novel.

Colonel considers love as his religion and instead of following religious dogma; Colonel Cantwell shows his disbelief in the existence of God on Sartrean postures. Colonel Cantwell's disbelief on the war, in God, represents his notion of nothingness as existential philosopher, Kierkegaard's dictum of life as being meaningless. Colonel appears to be a sufferer, but he overcomes pain and suffering of life as a means not as an ultimate end, and leads himself towards his existential urge of loneliness.

Colonel makes a choice of retreat realizing the significance of love in a meaningless world, and later, learns some more information regarding the meaninglessness, however, leads his life in loneliness which is extremely existential. Colonel overcomes this anguish, through realization, and returns alone. Finally, he seeks to find authenticity of life in existential posture, though differently.

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