

I. Introduction

This study will focus on examining how the central character in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* struggles for his existence amid the horror of war. His struggle is against the hostile and alien world. Ultimately he becomes disillusioned of war and indifferent universe.

In Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms*, the central character Frederic Henry is tired of and badly wounded in war. He is hospitalized. He has been assigned the task of recovering and bringing back bits and pieces and fragments of dead bodies at the front. Both experiences invite him to experience death and despair that plant with him the psychological effects. He feels futile experience of war. He finds the universe to be disordered. There is no god to watch over man, to dictate codes of morality to ensure justice. Instead, the universe is indifferently hostile to man's plight. This indifference is best exemplified by the war as ultimate futile struggle of man against man. He believes that there are no winners in a war and there is no reasoning behind the lives. Henry accepts this fact of the universe. He comes to know that there is no god; there are no universal moral codes, no abstract values such as "justice" or "glory" and certainly no need for moral conventions. Henry rejects these, but imposes order upon his life through personal values- integrity, dignity, courage etc. This is what he learns in the course of the war. He learns that he himself is a crucial source of meaning. Finally, such person must accept the finality of death knowing him to be caught in a meaningless existence. Henry searches the meaning and order through the struggle, which is life, amid the sorrows and pains without complaint. He fights to the meaninglessness of life through his love affair with Catherine, among many

other things. The indifferent universe, of course, challenges their love many times and wins with the Catherine death in the end but Henry's struggle is a heroic one. With these sorrows and pains, he searches for the value and meaning of life out of such dilapidation, which enables him to overcome the anguish of contingency by giving him the rich feeling of his own existence.

Hemingway is a leading interpreter of an era of disillusionment. During the time, people put their faith mostly in violence, sexual passion, liquor and the ritual of sports. Intellectual as well as spiritual status of the people was ridiculous. His work reflects the spirit of the violent time and lonely, alienated and disillusioned people. Love, grief, suffering, crisis and despair are some of the commonly used themes in Hemingway's writings. He depicts the struggle of the individual against Godly power. Indeed, the twentieth-century witnesses the banishment of God from the horizon of human consciousness. Hemingway, like Sartre, Heidegger, Jaspers, Camus, places emphasis on the importance of the individual as the only one genuinely vital entity of existence. He sees that individuality is not a quality, which can be superimposed externally but it can be achieved by a decision of a person. Our age has lost the greatness of man. Modern mind is incapable in creating the highly exalted hero who will bear the passion and splendour of the tragic conflict. It is because he is alienated from nature and God. As for certain existentialists like Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger, in regarding the absence of the God, Hemingway sees the traditional ethics and the existence of God as invalid. Modern hero is very much alone in the world because he has no God. We can get the dying flames of religion in the characteristics of Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*.

Hemingway used to be very much influenced by the tales of Harotio Alger, which later inspired him in the fictional world of literary genius. In the time of his literary career, he encounters literary giants of the age Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Gertrud Stein and Sherwood Anderson. He was deeply influenced by them particularly Ezra Pound and his writing style. *A Farewell to Arms* by Hemingway is based on his own personal experience. The main character of the novel, Frederic Henry, experiences many of the same situations that Hemingway lived. He volunteered as an ambulance driver in Italy during the war where he is badly wounded by the fragments of an Austrian trench mortar shell as Henry in his novel *A Farewell to Arms*. He was assigned the task of recovering and bringing back the pieces and fragments of the dead bodies at the front which entails the experience of death and despair that plants with him the nihilistic thought.

Hemingway's protagonist often suffers physical as well as emotional scars and tries to manifest "grace under pressure" (5). His heroes are often the wounded men who consider "life as a struggle" (Young 168), and maintain existential hope in the mouth of death. They struggle to assert their positive view in the world fighting against meaninglessness of the world.

Hemingway dwells with the theme of love, loneliness, death and courage from his experience of the thirties and forties. He himself goes to the front and experiences death and nihilism of life that inspired him select relevant themes.

His world is the world at war, which brings violence, hostility and horror in the mind of men. There is no peace in the society. People are intellectually and spiritually disillusioned. The faith of people on political and religious institutions remains no more valid. Most of the inhabitants in the age lead a life of sensation

only, usually mistaking sexual desire for life, devoting themselves to excitement rather than positive achievement. Hemingway observes war and the contemporary society as a participant in the both. He is inspired to create his masterpiece in the form of war memories; *A Farewell to Arms* in 1929. In the novel, Hemingway, carefully depicts the brutality and horrifying condition of the generation through the nature and actions of his characters. His characters are entirely without significance, they are creatures without religion, morality, politics, culture or history. He is consciously an artist, writing to achieve an aesthetic effect and he himself is emotionally involved in his own works. In the real life of Hemingway, he faces painful and dreadful experiences but maintains “a hope of survival” till the end of his energetic stage. He, together with his characters, lives in the world where the war has dislodged them from their homes and old restraints, given them an unexpected and disillusioning education and left them entirely rootless. The generation is culturally and spiritually uprooted, as one of them expressed into the dark maw of death and violence. As a representative of the era, Hemingway has truly represented existential issues in his *A Farewell to Arms*.

Hemingway is a representative novelist of a “lost generation”. The concentration on the individualism and alienation from the society has been reflected in his popular novel *A Farewell to Arms*. The novel more or less reflects despair and loneliness as the out of advent strange situation. The breakdown of traditional code of conduct or the rejection of ethical morality has been rampant in *A Farewell to Arms*. The spirit of existentialism: ‘loneliness’, ‘alienation’, ‘anxiety’, ‘choice’, encompasses the entire spectrum of the novel. Hemingway himself was a victim of horror of the great world war and vicious civil wars. As a

result, Hemingway obviously depicts a new dimension of subjectivity and freedom through his character in the novel. Henry's struggle in *A Farewell to Arms* deserves existential interpretation through his choices and actions. Henry, in *A Farewell to Arms* appears to be a rootless and aimless American who hardly feels any attachment for his family. He has neither any fixed interest nor definite direction. He makes a choice and enlists himself in the Italian front in Sattrean posture, however, he neither loves Italy nor hates for Austria. Almost all of his experiences of war and of sex are unreal and hence, can be interpreted on the ground of existentialism. His meaningless and unconnected life is shared by many of his friends who do not involve in the serious relationship. Even the relationship with Catherine and fleeing to Switzerland with her, is more oriented towards his pleasure making and rejecting the horror of war than any meaningful relationships. He himself considers his love as a game like bridge. He makes a choice of deserting the army and retreat. He even plunges in to Tiglimento as a choice to be away from the war front. For Henry, the code of morality and religious faith seem useless as for Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger. Thus Henry feels utterly alone in the strange world because he has no regard for any faith. He himself rejects the value of society. He chooses to form his own ethics. Henry, at the end of novel stands at a nihilistic situation but however, his choice orients toward existence and he returns back to his hotel alone. Henry remembers his indifference to the fate of small creatures as the flame licked up around the log and later he himself finds the reality of life.

Hemingway presents his hero Frederic Henry as a trapped creature amid the tensed universe. His universe is a wasteland of suffering and death. In the

novel, the central character, Henry is isolated, lonely and rootless. He endeavors to release from this implacable universe to live in love with his beloved, Catherine. It is not easy to come out from the chain of social ethics and morality but Henry does struggle to be freed by rejecting all the obligation of war morality and selects desertion with enduring pain and suffering in favor of life. The desertion is an existential in spirit. Henry's revolt from the war front is a great challenge on the code of conduct and morality of war as Nietzsche challenges the contemporary religious world declaring that the God is dead. For Henry war is quite against the humanity.

Henry's love with Catherine gives meaning to his life. His building up an isolated paradise in Switzerland shows that he has found an ideal comradeship with Catherine but her death makes him as lonely as he was in the beginning. Henry finds irrationality prevailing in the world whenever he seeks rational explanation of things. He finds meaninglessness in the world yet dares to live in it. He does not lose his will.

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* is not a novel glorifying war, instead it is tragic love story where protagonist bids farewell to arms for his own existence and to free this crazy world of arms and weapons. The majority of characters also remain ambivalent about war, resentful of the terrible destruction. It caused people doubtful of the glory it supposedly brings. In the novel, Hemingway suggests that war is nothing more than dark, murderous extension of world that refuses to acknowledge, protect or preserve true love.

Hemingway's compelling inspiration is struggle; it is a personal experience and a continuing condition of mankind. Many critics have commented and

analyzed Hemingway's novel *A Farewell to Arms* from different perspectives. A large number of them have found his protagonists as representative of suffering of humanity who find no purpose in their plan and no prize for their effort. The theme of loneliness, alienation and courage that coupled his struggle for existence has appeared again and again in *A Farewell to Arms*.

II. Existentialism

Background

Existentialism is the modern system of belief that started by opposing the doctrine that viewed human being as manifestation of an absolute value. As the two great world wars proved that human rationality no more worked, the terrified western people began to think over the role and activities of individual. The certainties, coherence and scientific reasoning that ruled nineteenth Century and before collapsed into fragments. Anxiety, absurdity and uncertainty ruled the fragmented world. The writers saw the world totally absurd, incoherent, disintegrated, chaotic and disordered, and governed by pure chance and contingency.

Existentialism, historically and culturally, is a philosophy of European origin, which spread rapidly and became a most important modern international phenomenon. It has held a wider influence upon literature than any other approaches of philosophy. The 19th Century conventional moral world has been shattered by the process of industrialization and the heat-rending world wars that left gloom and despair in the mind of men. The mechanical laws, which governed the foundation of naturalism, seemed no longer valid. The code of conduct formed in the systematization of traditional art remained powerless in the realm of chaos and anarchy. This feeling of existence has become a touchstone in the field of philosophy in the 20th century world. It is also a reaction against the falsification of idealism, which disregards the freedom of a personality to the level of a 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”. Nietzsche has seriously attacked the value of transcendental quality. By declaring the death of God the concentration of contemporary ideology is irreparably shattered

Existentialism has certain similarity with romanticism, personalism and vitalistic concepts of philosophy as it stands categorically in favor of individualism, subjectivity, introspection and human feeling. Existentialism is not only concerned with the perceptions of man’s behaviors of morality but it also focuses his freedom, his actions and his feelings. It has common interests, common ancestry, and common presuppositions though it varies with its proponents who even reject the title of existentialism. Existentialism is perhaps a dynamic philosophical attitude to interpret the basis of one’s existence. John K. Ryan in *Encyclopedia Americana* defines existentialism as Follows:

The term used to name certain philosophical attitudes and doctrines that have come into prominence since World War I, particularly in Germany and France. The various thinkers popularly called existentialists differ greatly in important ways, and some of them have even repudiated the name. Hence there is no single existentialist philosophy, and no single strict 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)

The human being thrown in the world is condemned to be free. He takes this freedom of being, the responsibility and guilt of his action. Each action negates the other possible course of action and their consequence, so the human being must be accountable without excuse. He must not slip away from his responsibilities rather needs to take decisions and assume responsibilities. 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 the false pretensions like, the illusion of his existence having a meaning, he encounters the absurdity and the futility of life. Therefore, human being's role 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. Hence he cannot realize his freedom and the futility of his existence. Ryan adds by summarizing this concept:

Man is free and responsible, but his 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' doctrine of "the absurd". Absurdity or contradiction arises from the clash between human hopes and desires and the meaningless universe into which man has been thrown. (639)

In this way, Ryan focuses on the freedom of choice and responsible that is for himself only. Moreover, he finds man as a finite being and shows the human limitation too like Hemingway.

Some blamed existential philosophy as “a kind of desperate quietism” (Sartre 9), and others “Charge us is that we put the emphasis on the dark side of human life” (10). Jean Paul Sartre supplies his views on the definition of existentialism as a reply to the charges against it:

In any case, what we 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 a human subjectivity. (10)

Existentialism is, thus, humanism not in the sense that man as the ultimate end but in the sense that he is the creator of all values which is concerned with the approach of subjectivity. It may be termed as psychological approach, and experiences human crisis, despair and death instead of focusing on mechanical laws and traditional ethics of society.

Though, existentialist philosophers depicted their views, they have not formed a school of thought. 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”. There are, in accordance with Jean Paul Sartre, two kinds of existentialists:

First, those who are Christian; among whom I would include Jaspers and Gabriel Marcel, both Catholic; and on the other hand the atheistic existentialists, among whom I class Heidegger, and then

the French existentialist and myself. What they have in common is that they think that existence precedes essence, or, if you prefer, that subjectivity most be the starting point. (277)

The post-war period has been called the age of anxiety. The generation that experienced depression and the Spanish Civil War is the generation that produced existential philosophy. The disaster of war, the collapse of values, the prevalence of injustice, the rise of totalitarian system all these took at the outbreak of the Second World War. Thus, existentialism is developed through nihilism. They established a concept of “new hope” in the mouth of powerful death. The 19th century philosophers and writers found the world as a meaningless wasteland and they tried to formulate existential concept, which regards the subjectivism a great deal. Jean Paul Sartre depicts his views on subjectivity as:

The World subjectivism has two meanings and our opponents play on the two. Subjectivism means, on the one hand, that an individual chooses and makes himself; and on the other, that it is impossible for man to transcend human subjectivity. The second of these is the essential meaning of existentialism. When we say that man chooses his own self, we mean that every one of us does likewise; but we also mean by that is making this choice he also chooses all men. (279)

The Existentialist philosopher, above all must describe the world in such a way that its meaning emerge. He cannot obviously, describes 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 phenomenologists.

Sartre, a leading interpreter of existentialism developed the concept of existence, 'existence precedes essence'. He clarifies this in the following 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 what is called subjectivity, the name we are labeled with when charges are brought against us" (15).

In this way, we can say that existentialism's first move is to make every man aware of himself and his responsibility towards other men and women. Man is nothing in him but he has to learn and make himself incessantly. This is the doctrine of existentialism.

Basically, existence is of two types: authentic and inauthentic forms of existence. The authentic being is only rarely attained by humans still it is what humans must strive to gain. The inauthentic (being-in-itself) is characteristically distinctive of things; it is what the human being is diseased with for failure to act as a free agent and his impotency to reject bad faith. Things are only what they are, but human being is what can be. Things are determined, fixed and rigid 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. The human being does not live in a predetermined world; the human being is free to realize his aims and his dreams. Hence, he has only the destiny he forges for himself because in this world nothing happens out of necessity.

An existentialist is always stranger than others and certainly going to have no patience with conventions. The isolation produced by existentialist value

decision also explains why few existentialists are self-identified as such. Calling some are an “Existentialist” imposes an essence on them, telling them what they are. This violates their absolute autonomy and freedom and makes it sound like they actually have something important in common. This is intolerable for them. If we live our life just because of the completely free and autonomous we make, this creates nothing that is common with others. If we adopt something that comes from someone else, which could give us a common basis to make a connection with him or her, that is in authentic existence. If it just happens, by chance, that our own decision produce something that matches those of someone else, well then we have a connection, but it is likely to be volatile. As we make new decisions, the probability of our connection with other is going to decline. We are isolated by our own autonomy. The values and decision of other, whether authentic or inauthentic, will be foreign or irritating.

Theistic Existentialism

The theistic or “Christian” existentialism can be traced back to Kierkegaard whose first prominent work of art *Either/ or*, was published in 1843.

Existentialism may be dealt “as the revolt of life against thought of passion and feeling against reflective contemplation” (*History of philosophy: Eastern and Western* 424).

Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish thinker and a Christian moralist (1810-1855) was one of the pioneers of existentialism. Kierkegaard revolted Hegel’s doctrine of Pure Thought, which is said to decipher the immanent movement of being, and give objective truth. Kierkegaard emphasized, “subjective truth and a person’s conditioned thinking as an existing individual” (376). A man according to Kierke

gaard has a dynamic nature, responsibility and freedom. “The 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.Blackham highlights Kierkegaard’s concept of choice:

Kierkegaard is really interested in only one thing, Viz., a supreme ethical choice what one shall choose supremely is what one finds it in one to choose supremely, and can be nothing else. The object of supreme choice is in the nature of things deal 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)

Kierkegaard was against all the closed systems and for him an individual is quite unique in nature. An individual is not a finished product who finds him / her in uncertainly 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 rejects the concept of crowd and crowd behavior which according to him is against his/her freedom and responsibility. A person who believes in crowd may refuse his existence in the world as “individual” and lead a life of cowardliness. Kierkegaard himself presents the point:

A crowd in its very concept (crowd) is the untruth, by reason of the fact that it renders that individual completely impenitent irresponsible, or at least weakens his sense of responsibility by reducing it to a fraction. (237)

Truth, according to Kierkegaard, resides in that conception of life of an individual.

Kierkegaard himself views:

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

Karl Jaspers is a prominent founder of modern existentialism. His philosophical activity was from the beginning influenced by Kant and Hegel, but Kierkegaard and Nietzsche have dominated his thought. He was a psychiatrist, as a psychiatrist found that a person could not be treated merely as a “case” but some personal relationship was found necessary. He rejects the scientific reasoning and rational truth.

Jaspers is in exploring of truth and reality, which can speak even in despair, in suicide, in the passion towards darkness, in every form of negative determination. Truth disappears from the field of observation and is replaced by a variety of observation and opinions. For him disgrace and anxiety are the essential consequence of free will. He rejects, the declared religious dogma, but takes the authority of churches as philosophical faith. Agreeing with Husserl and others, Jaspers regards our consciousness as always intentional that is directed meaningfully to something, which we seek to realize clearly as given (History 431). We connect merely with other objects and consult with objective world. He says that the self needs to be creative, free and original and that truth is infinitely more than scientific correctness. Communication is the way to truth in all its forms. Thus the intellect finds clarity only in discussion and experiences.

He distinguishes three different methods of philosophizing. The first is called philosophical world orientation. The second is the elucidation of existence and the third is the metaphysics. Jaspers argues that in the subjective search of his private consciousness, man find crisis, freedom and decision; they are existence. Aligning himself with Husserel and other philosophers, he regards our consciousness as always intentional. Existence or self in its free being is equated by Jaspers with 'Will'. Jasper's humanism moved between narrow limits. The question he raised as to what "the truth values of life were real but his attempt to answer them suffered from his elitist view" (96).

Each individual is unique. The self cannot be made an object of consciousness because it is 'being- on self', while the world is 'being -there'. The self is related to the world. The self, existence, and will

are the same. The self is immortal in the sense that being and immortality are the same. The absolute can be known only symbolically. (380)

Karl Jaspers rejected the scientific reasoning and rational truth as:

Existenz – philosophy in this light is not on the side of the choice and irrational movements, but rather should be seen as a counterblow to them: and the chaotic and ruinous can just as easily appear in the deceptive garments of rationality as in a frank irrationalism. (864)

A person can't know oneself, a human being in his own greatest mystery (*A History of Philosophy* 605). He himself put his views about an individual and immortality:

Jaspers is aware of economic as well as spiritual crisis on the futility of its “welfare state”. He talks of true communication with the feeling of other self “My own freedom can only exist if the other is also free” (*The will to communication*) 867.

A unique feature of Jasper's metaphysics is his theory of transcendence. According to Jaspers, in the face of insecurity, suffering despair, conflict violence, guilt and death, which are the lot of the existing being, a man does his work with a faith, which enables him to transcend the world in it. John wild reads Jasper's transcendence as the following:

This transcendence, however, is most poignantly revealed to one in my own free acts, true freedom always dimly knows what it can not stand alone, that it depends on something beyond. When cut off

from transcendence it fades away and disappears freedom exists only in certain closeness to transcendence. (157)

Jaspers accepts the Bible as a highly suggestive instrument for his philosophical faith but rejects the proclaimed religious dogma as an ultimate truth. It would be a mistake if we take mythical and religious ideas literally and not symbolically.

Jasper's philosophy is characterized by anguish, despair and preoccupation with death. As Kierkegaard's "Sickness unto death", Heidegger's "being for death", and Jasper's contention that man doomed to ruin by virtue of his freedom, the fulfillment of his being with the note of despair.

Martin Buber is a famous religious existentialist and says that a person exists only in relation to God and the World. He says that in life, the love of God must be expressed through love for each individual. He believes in the power of God who is almighty and is only one object of the sufferers.

Buber rejects the idea of separate existence of human being. He holds that our existence is always attached with other men, nature and God. Buber emphasizes the importance of the relation between self and other (I-Thou) and its radical differences from the relation between self and object (I-It). According to him the relations should be concrete and immediate, an "I" to a "Thou" and not an abstract and objective, an 'I' to an "It" one (primary 870). He says the word is two fold, in accordance with his two-fold attitude. "The primary word I- thou", Buber writes, can only be spoken with whole being. The primary word " I-It" can never be spoken with whole being"(870). Making Buber's point clear, Ellmann and Feidelson write, "Every 'Thou' tends to collapse into an 'It' and inert thing, but every 'It' is destined to be regenerated as a 'Thou' in the eyes of art and love"

(807). The “I-It” relationship is not a genuine relationship because while I regard others as “It”, I happen to be perfectly alone. Buber writes

He who is overcome by the world of ‘It’ is bound to see, in the dogma immutable process; in every truth this dogma enslaves him only the more deeply the world of ‘It’. But the world of ‘Thou’ is not closed. He who goes out to it with concentrated being and raises power to enter into relation becomes aware of freedom. (875)

The relationship between “I-It” has to do with past because all objective knowledge is about one’s past, whereas the “I-Thou” relationship has to do with present because we are prepared for any and every response to our address. Therefore, we should assume our relationship with God as “I-Thou”. Our “I-Thou” relationship with the worldly objectives might turn into “I-It”, when tiredness overtakes, but our “I-Thou” relationship with God never changes into “I-It” because God is absolute and always present with us.

While talking about existentialism we cannot forget Gabriel Marcel who regards philosophy is a philosophy of a reflection upon reflection to restore the unity of living and thinking. Marcel is a French thinker who believes the transcendental help of God. Marcel contrives his philosophy round incarnation and invocation. He views that the essence of man is to be in a situation in the world. Marcel has an “unshakable conviction that God does not want to be loved by us over against the created but to glorified through the created and starting from it” (*Existentialism* 383). Marcel depicts “distraction between having and being, 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).

Some religious existentialist philosophers like Buber and Marcel tried to solve the problem of an individual with the direct relationship with God whereas, others stressed on individual rather than strong religious dogmas.

Atheistic Existentialism

Sartre divides existentialist thinkers in to two groups: theistic and atheistic. Martin Heidegger and the French existentialists including him fall in atheistic group. Obviously, Nietzsche is the forerunner and chief source of inspiration for them who does not believe in the existence of God but believes in the continuous struggle of anti-Christianity. The authentic existentialists repudiate the concept of God as an authentic shelter. Atheistic existentialists continue to create a system in which the individual is paradoxically free and condemn choosing a rugged path in life. Heroes choose authentic existence whereas cowards choose inauthentic existence.

Heidegger declares that the individual has to face the absolute problem of being, that is one has to decide one's own existence to create one's potentiality and make cliché and promises. Sartre praises the freedom of the individual human being. He describes existentialism as a means of confronting the result of world war and issue of world that wants an absolute power like God. He focuses on freedom of choice, commitment and responsibility. Sartre claims that there is no absolute reality at all but in action.

Camus believes that anxiety, despair and crime have emerged from world wars first and second. The external supports in which the public belief rested in the past were religious in character. Camus, like many other existentialists,

believes that the decline of religious belief in modern period forces people to realize the dilemma of Sisyphus.

Modern individual has lost his faith on the eternal power of God. Fredric Nietzsche (1844-1900) is known for his doctrine of the will to power, superman etc. Nietzsche declares the “death of God”. The total independence and isolation of 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 struggle to establish human freedom and subjectivity. God has made an individual valueless. Nietzsche claimed all the time that such tyrannical God should be killed. Nietzsche claims “We choose our values we collectively-create our values" (*The Great philosophers* 234).

Nietzsche says that morality is a kind of discipline, which constrains a man to act in a manner, which he will not choose but follow. Nietzsche agreed with Kant that morality is essentially a matter of laws. Mary Warnock points out Nietzsche’s point of view:

Nietzsche rejects the whole doctrine of the universalizability of the moral law. For him, to legislate means to legislate for one. He rightly argues that universalizing one’s maxim according to the Kantian formula is not a straightforward operation, since an evaluative element comes into the decision to describe one’s act in a particular way. (19)

Nietzsche's moral philosophy is a total rejection of ethncal naturalism that equally opposes the ethncal institutionalism. The essential truth he talks is men’s choice

of their own values and follows 'Will to power'. Like, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche "regards 'objectivity' as the main enemy of understanding" (Warnock 13).

The 'Will to power' is essentially practical, and from it arises "not only our decisions as to the classification and description of the world but also our decisions as to behavior" (15). For Nietzsche 'Will' is the origin and the source of man's strength. One who has a strong 'Will', can be a superman in any civilization.

Nietzsche strongly supports his will to power as:

Our life, cognitive, ethical, practical and creative, is the concern of our will, which just is the power to change things. The will to power is identical with the will to live. If we are alive and conscious then we must plan and aim to master our world. We experience it as a world- to-be mastered. (15)

He attacks on values based on the logical methods. Nietzsche favors "new values" but rejected historical old values, "If we are to have an authentic value system, we have got to carry out a complete re-evaluation of our values" (qtd. *In the great* 240). Nietzsche finds all the scientists wrong who think they discover objects like moralists who themselves claim to be correct all the time. His message has to parts: the first is that men ought to choose a different set of values and the second is they can choose a different set of values.

Nietzsche proclaims the death of God and goes on to reject the entire Judeo-Christian moral tradition in favors of heroic pagan ideals. He calls Christianity a slave morality and holds that religion provides no truth because God is dead and Christianity has become the shelter of weak and disables people that

he hates (Russell 732). In his famous essay, “The Death of God and Antichrist”, he centers his arguments against Christianity:

The Christian conception of God- God as god of the sick, god as a spider, God as spirit- is one of the most corrupt conceptions of the divine ever attained on earth. It may even represent the low-water mark in the descending development of divine types. God degenerated into the contradiction of life, instead of being its transfiguration and eternal, God as the declaration of war against life, against nature, against the will to live. (912)

Even to think of God is to go against life, against the will to power. As there is absence of God in the world, the supermen are the Gods. The supermen are higher men who declare war over the masses of inferior men and are free from any restrictions imposed by the society.

Another German thinker, Martin Heidegger, who publicly praises Hitler and Nazism, is a leading figure of atheistic existentialism. He was influenced by Husserl, founder of phenomenological school. Heidegger describes three fundamental characteristics of human beings in his book *Being and Time*.

The relations of a self to the world of objects and persons are inseparable and constitutive of its existence. According to Heidegger, anguish controls man’s existence. An individual is preoccupied with the inevitability of death. Death is the goal of our existence. Man’s being is for death. Nothingness, in Heidegger’s approach is connected with the “finitude of human beings, their essential movement towards their own ends in death” (Warnock 60).

The feeling of dread due to the awareness of death may incite us to flee away from the problems 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 construct our life unique, and our own. Heidegger argues that the certainty of death makes and 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-existent. We ought rather to equip ourselves and prepared for one thing only: to experience in nothing the immensity of that which gives every being its license to be. That is, Being itself. (61)

The realization of man's finitude was the beginning of his recognition of the concept of nothing that is the realization of mortality of man. Mary Warnock comments 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 being 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).

Heidgger uses that word 'Dasein' for human being, literally 'Being there'. It expresses an existence, which is chosen by an individual. Heidgger says that only human being exists but animals and inanimate things do not exist. In *What is Metaphysics?*, Heidgger says, "Man alone of all existing things experiences the wonder of all wonders: that there are things is being" (106). He says that all of us have some possible choices and our concern is the world present and future. These choices are not made in vacuum but in the world. Heidgger often deals with dread as an important concept, which is raised in man as a dread of death. Everyone has it as it is unavoidable and certain.

The most remarkable name in the history of existential philosophy is Jean Paul Sartre who was a journalist, a French novelist, dramatist and philosopher and became a pioneer of atheistic existentialism. Disclosing atheistic existentialism, Sartre evaluates:

It states that if God does not exist, there is at least one being in whom existence precedes essence, a being who exists before he can be defined by any concept, and that this being is man, or as Heidgger says, human reality. What is meant here by saying that existence precedes essence? It means that, first of all, man exists, turns up, appears on the scene and only afterwards, defines himself.

(15)

Sartre is deeply influenced by the irrationality and contingency of all forms of existentialism. Sartre's one of the major doctrines of existentialism is 'existence precedes essence' which has become a vague for the traditional concept of 'essence precedes existence'. According to Sartre, first of all man exists, turns up,

appears on the scene and defines himself. For Sartre, “freedom becomes for him an absolute, resting on the individuals own decision as to how he will be engaged with the world” (116).

For, Sartre loneliness and anguish go together. Existentialism is humanism not in the sense of regarding man as the ultimate end but as creator of all values. A man is choosing and making legislation for the world. According to Sartre, Gods does not exist, and therefore an individual is alone. He is giving a message to modern individual that each has to determine his values himself enjoying his freedom and responsibility. Sartre adds atheistic views as:

Existentialism isn't so atheistic that it wears itself out showing that God doesn't exist. Rather, it declares that even if God exists, that would change nothing. There you have got our point of view. Not that we believe that God exists, but we think that the problem of his existence is not the issue. (51)

Death of the individual personality makes life “nothingness”. Sartre in his *Being and Nothingness* says:

My fear is free and manifests my freedom. I have put all my freedom into my fear, and I have chosen myself as fearful in this or that circumstance. Under other circumstance, I shall exist as deliberate and courageous, and I shall have put all my freedom into my courage. In relation to freedom there is no privileged psychic phenomena. All my “modes of being” manifest freedom equally since they are always of being my own nothingness.(445)

Sartre states that if god does not exist, there is at least one thing in which existence precedes essence, and that being is man. He does not believe in the Christian dogma or any ethics. Freedom occupies a central place in Sartre's thought. For him, "man in nothing else but what he 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 man" (18).

Sartre regards 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. Roman's ethics "In war there are no innocent victims". One who gets into war, he has to bear the entire responsibility of this war. The feeling of being in the world makes a man choose or act upon things. Sartre points out his doctrine of responsibility:

Man is anguish. What that means is this: the man who involves himself and who realizes that he is not only the person choose to be, but also a law maker, who is at the same time choosing mankind as well as himself; cannot help escape the feeling of his total and deep responsibility. (18)

In this present study, I would like to support my views throughout atheistic existentialism with the ideas of Nietzsche, Heidegger and Sartre.

Struggle is the tension between life and death. The major characters in *A Farewell to Arms* are focus of the struggle for order and certitude amid the chaos and disorder of modern existence.

Fredric Henry in *A Farewell to Arms* stands as a rebel, a protester of mechanized world like Nietzsche who challenged the contemporary religious

world by declaring that God is dead. Hemingway permits Henry to enjoy his freedom opposing the traditional ethic of morality and responsibility. He never fears his actions and their consequences as his beloved Catherine does. The hero of this novel appears to be a strong-willed man of extraordinary quality comparable to Nietzschean superman. Catherine, the heroine of the novel also leads the life of unconventionality contrasting traditional and moral values. She dismisses any need of formal marriage ceremony. She often makes physical relation with Frederic as a whore.

Henry's disbelief on God shows clearly his atheistic feeling about choosing his values throughout his action. His concept corresponds what Heidegger speaks about atheistic existentialism. Catherine's final achievement of life is more concerned with Heidegger's "freedom towards death".

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Henry not only revolts from the war front but also from all traditional code of conducts. Catherine, too, makes a choice of deserting one by her close friend Ferguson while fleeing away to Switzerland from Stresa. Both are free to make their choices according to Sartrean philosophy.

III. Struggle for Existence in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

Struggle for existence involves a continual tension between life and death.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, the central character Henry, in his searching for the meaning of life, does struggle in a continual tension between an ideal, which he searches, and the reality of the universe based on death. Henry expects no reward and no vindication for the suffering. His continual struggle with patience and courage is not only for survival rather it is existential struggle against indifferent universe.

In Hemingway's world the war has cast away all the traditional values of life God and Christianity no longer could be the saviour of human being. Besides this, Nietzsche's declarations of the death of God and the rapid development of modern science have changed all the thoughts based on religion. In this Godless universe man could get no meaning of life. Man is alone in the universe. What we see is only anarchy, disorder, meaninglessness and absurdity. Out of this absence, in *A Farewell to Arms* Hemingway's hero Frederic Henry formulates a system of love to exist in this earth. But his mission could not long last. His dream is broken into pieces. However, he bears it stoically and does not turn to anybody's help. The suffering of Henry is never justified. His failure in his quest for meaning and order and his most agonizing defeat testify his greatness. The suffering makes Henry face the truth in all its fear and terror of his situation. It also gives him the moral strength to rise out of the grave of despair. The tragic suffering does not induce the feeling of resignation. Having the bitter experiences, Henry after the tragic demise of Catherine faces this condition calmly without complaining any thing. He faces the chaos of catastrophe in life. Amid such pain

and suffering, his struggle of life gives him courage to confront the unknown disaster.

For Hemingway as for certain existentialists like Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger, God is dead in our time and the traditional ethic is invalid. Modern hero is very much alone in the world because he has no God and no real brother. We can get only the dying flames of religion appear to glow from time to time, as in the prayer of Henry in *A Farewell to Arms*. The Godless existence of Henry is pictured through the cold vision of his life. He is not at home in the world but thrown into the world abandoned to a life. The life ends in death without anything after that. The living world of Henry is war where seven thousand armies die. There is “nothing but frostbites, chilblains, jaundice, gonorrhoea, self-inflicted wounds, pneumonia and hard and soft cancers. Every week someone gets wounded by rock fragments. There are few real wounded” (12). Hemingway places his hero, Henry at the war front where human beings kill each other in thousands. Beside this, the setting tone of the novel is also terrific and horrific. He presents a frightening setting. The maimed ‘trunks’, ‘dusty leaves’, ‘the early fell leaves’, ‘brown plain and bare mountain’, ‘the winter’, ‘dead and brown vineyards’ and ‘the rain and cholera’ signify the hopelessness in the novel. At the last of the first chapter, Henry says about the death of many soldiers: “At the start of the winter came the permanent rain checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army” (4). Here, he shows the indifference of universe like the indifferent Messiah who is watching the death of ants in the end of the novel. In this setting death walks in the landscape and hurts every living being.

In such a situation, the love affair between Henry and Catherine gives different meanings. Regarding the love affair of them Ajit Kumar Mishra in his *Loneliness in Modern American Fiction* (1984) says:

A Farewell to Arms begins with the officers talking about girls in the whorehouse. No other form of relationship has any meaning in the life of the soldiers awaiting orders to lunch an offense. Behind the love story of Frederic and Catherine, there is another story. It is about the quest for meaning and certitude in a world that seems to offer nothing of the sort. (130)

Here, he deals the love affairs between Henry and Catherine with the search for order in the war-ridden society. Both of them are stricken by war. It is the war that leads them to a continuing search for a significant life that predominates the sense of void and nothingness.

In the beginning he is not responsive to love because the brothel house was the center of sexual love. It is spiritual decay on the one hand. On the other hand Catherine is a person already brutalized because her lover was killed at war. So, she tries to create her existence through the love affair with Henry. In the course of love affair between them, Henry is informed that Austrians are going to attack them. As a soldier, war is a compulsion for him even he is trying to avoid it. The Austrian mortar shell wounds Henry, at the war front. He is physically as well as psychologically wounded in the war. He experiences death on his pulses:

I tried to breathe but breathe would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out fall the time bodily in the wind. I went out swiftly, and of myself and I knew I was dead

and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. (44)

Henry is injured at the front and the reality of the war is actualized for and understood by him through suffering. This severe injury to the body suggests a comparable severe injury to the psychic nature. Henry's experience is itself almost equivalent to a death.

The wound has traumatically separated Henry from all other beings. Suddenly he is not a patriot. He will no longer seek objectively in the abstract and meaningless noun 'patriotism', nor in any army slogans where the responsibility does not fall upon the individual. Violence has isolated him from the formless lump of humanity where he exists. His suffering and bitter experiences force him to think. He finds the hollowness between traditional ideas and ideals and the clichés and slogans that justify war. His mind is filled with nausea at the big abstract words:

I always embarrassed by the words sacred, glorious and sacrifice and the expression in vain . . . they were many words that you could not stand to hear and finally only the names of places had dignity. Certain numbers were the same way and certain dates and these with the name of the places were all you could say and have them mean anything. Abstract words such as glory, honor, courage, or hollow were obscene beside the concrete names of villages, the numbers of roads, the names of rivers, the numbers of regiments and the dates. (191)

In above statement, the existential philosophy is expressed. The existential values are not only living in abstraction but in concrete places such as rivers, roads and number of regiments and the dates. Hand in hand with the discovery of the universe's indifference comes a rejection of abstract values as well as organized religion. The only worthwhile things are those that are concrete or personal.

Henry is a disillusioned man of the modern world searching for some values or some system that he can believe in. Modern science has achieved the amazing success and provided modern man with only the material facility not the spiritual advantages. So, modern hero is restless. He has lost faith in the traditional values inherent in Christianity because they are no longer operatives in modern world.

Henry sees many death scenes in the battlefield. Christianity has not been found to be effective to rescue human being from the threats of war and death. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Henry stands as a rebel against religious faith like Nietzsche who challenges the contemporary religious world by declaring that God is dead. In chapter two, when the priest asks Henry whether he loves God, he replies, "No" (75), which shows clearly his atheistic feeling about choosing his values throughout his actions. Henry believes that Christianity has become failure to protect people from the possible disaster. Thousands of soldiers are cruelly killed but God remains indifferent to the suffering of human beings. He denies his belief on God. While he goes to the war front Catherine hands over him a medal of St. Anthony. When Henry is wounded in the war, he does not find St. Anthony:

All right I said. I undid the clasp of the gold chain and put it around my neck and clasped it. The saint hung down on the outside of my

uniform and I undid the throat of my tunic, unbuttoned the shirt collar and dropped him in under the shirt. I felt him in his metal box against my chest while we drove. Then I forget about him after I was wounded I never found him some one probably got it at one of the dressing stations. (46)

This loss of St. Anthony given by Catherine is symbolical of the loss of religious faith in the age, which clearly shows the strand of existential concept. St. Anthony fails to protect Henry from the injury. It means God has failed to protect human being from crisis in violent time.

Hailing the death of God, Nietzsche spells out all the metaphysical implications to be drawn from God abandoned world. Among the existentialists, Nietzsche is atheist. Hemingway is Nietzschean in view of the world. Hemingway seems to feel that the disappearance of God is one of the factors that make our time so different and so difficult. Hemingway's hero, Henry recalls about the death of ants and God:

Once in camp I put a log on the top of the fire and was full of ants. As it commenced to burn the ants swarmed out and went first towards the center where the fire was. Then turned back and ran towards the end. When there is enough on the end they fell off into the fire . . . I remember thinking at the time that it was the end of the world and a splendid chance to be a Messiah and lift the log off the fire and throw it out where the ants could get off onto the grounds. But I did not do anything but throw a tin cups of water on the log so that I would have the cup empty to put whisky in before I added

water to it. I think the cup of water on the burning log only steamed the ants. (338-9)

In the above statements, Henry remembers his supreme indifference to the fate of the small creatures as the flame licked up around the log. Why he came near to being their Messiah was to throw a cup of water on them. Actually, the water steamed them, and he only wanted the cup empty in order to drink whisky from it. The whole passage is a rather fine outburst of indignation against the great impersonal 'they' (338) that breaks and kills those who are very good or strong in the world. It is pagan in telling opposite of Christian faith in Hemingway world. For him the fiery death of the ants presents a frightening symbol of the end in the world. In his world his opinion even of a priest is sarcastic though he is Henry's nearest friend. "The priest every night five against one" (10), shows the spiritual masturbation and infertility. Religion is a jock in his world.

Henry is the sleepless man haunted by nada. Hemingway's concept of nothingness and loneliness of the sleepless man has been clearly depicted in the life of Henry. *A Farewell to Arms* begins with the officers talking about girls in the whorehouse. No other form of relationship has any meaning in life but Henry derives his sensual appetite into the true love in the later stage. Henry, the man haunted by nada knows that "the night can be a dreadful time for lonely people once their loneliness has started" (Warren 250). Henry cannot avoid his nihilism, "I sat in the high seat of the fait and thought: about nothing" (34). Henry once goes to the hospital to meet Catherine when she is not there. Henry again feels lonely:

I went out the door and suddenly I feel lonely and empty. I had treated seeing Catherine very lightly, I had gotten somewhat drunk

and had nearly forgotten to come but when I could not see her there.

I was feeling lonely and hollow. (43)

Here, Henry feels empty about not seeing Catherine only after he loses the chance to see her for the night. In the American hospital of Milan for treatment of Henry's knee, Mrs. Walker goes out leaving him in his bed. Henry feels thus:

I was alone in the room. It was cool and did not smell like a hospital. The mattress was firm and comfortable and I lay without moving, hardly breathing, happy in feeling the pain lesson. After a while, I wanted a drink of water and found the bell on a cord by bed and rang it but nobody came. I went to sleep. (88)

Henry has been admitted to hospital amid such alienations far away from the frontier and most of the attention has been given to the rapid development of their love. In the beginning Henry is not responsive to love because the brothel house was the center of sexual love. This image of the novel depicts him as a man of wandering from one house of prostitution to another, and is incapable of finding out any meaning in life. In conversation with the priest from the Abruzzi, Henry knows about the systematic and disciplined life. Actually, he wanted to visit this place but he could not because he does not function well in this whirlwind existence of disorder and confusion. Mean time he meets Catherine and makes a 'bridge game' (sex) with her. But as he becomes more and more involved with her, he sees in their relationship a type of order, a kind of commitment to a regular existence in the middle of war. Previously he is estranged from himself and his self is divided. He does not want to fall in love with Catherine. He says "God knows I had not wanted to fall in love with her. I had not wanted to fall in love

with anyone. But God knows I had . . .” (97). He is indifferent both to war and love. It was Catherine's love and self-effacement, which make Henry change his mind. Catherine is a person already victimized because her lover was killed at war. She tries to erase her dread (angst) of the death of her former finance to create her existence through the love affair individually in Henry's. She says: “There is not any me. I'm you. Don't make me up a separate me . . . Don't I make you a good wife and you are my religion. You are all I have got” (119-20). Henry is also in deep love with Catherine and says, “when I saw her, I was in love with her. Everything turned over inside of me” (95). Henry and Catherine fight the indifference of universe with the weapon of love. After careful consideration, we can draw the conclusion that the love between the two is initiated by a desire to search for meaning and order that have been ruined by the indifferent war. As stated in the above statement, Henry does not lose the desire to search for meaning, although he feels the universe is meaningless and indifferent. Catherine provides his distracted mind not only sustain by giving hope and encouragement but also rekindle in his soul the light to become ready for the struggle of public life once again. Regarding the ideas B.M. Bhalla adds:

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine's sole business is not only to sustain him by giving hope and encouragement but also to rekindle in his soul that light which would steady his mind and reintegrate it to become ready for the struggle of public life once again. (50)

Bhall in above statement shows how Catharine's love not only provides Henry hope and courage but also knowledge of his soul that helps him to continue his life struggle once again.

But Henry must leave the love of Catherine and return to the front after his recovery. At the front, Henry sees the confusion and disorder. Soldiers have been killed for no cause in the Italian side. He maintains a distance from the futile world because he is almost killed as a spy. After this he resolves to desert the army and be reunited with his beloved, Catherine. He plunges into the flooded Tigrimento river to reemerge as a free man and gives himself to a life of love. The choice of his retreat is his own who takes a risk to run away from the assigned liability, involves in desertion, which is deep analysis of the text proves to be his central action.:

Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. Although that ceased when the Carabineer put his hands on my collar. I would like to have had the uniform off although I did not care much about the outward forms. I had taken off the stars, but that was for convenience. It was no point of honor. I was not against them. I was through. I wished them all the luck. There were the good ones, and the brave ones, and the calm ones and the sensible ones, and they deserved it. But it was not my show any more and I wished this bloody train would get to Mestre and I would eat and stop thinking. (241)

Henry's disaffiliation is a conscious act of choice by disgust and loneliness. His act is the product of urge to unite Catherine to make a separate peace to impose authentic life in chaotic world. He rejects all the obligation of war morality with his choice of deserting army. He not only revolts from the front but also from all traditional code of conduct of war ethics. Henry is probably free to make this

choice according to Sartrean philosophy. He avoids all the forbidden to disregard war codes and patriotic obligation by the contemporary society.

Henry's plunging in to the flooded river has some significance. As R.P. Warren in his introduction to *A Farewell to Arms* in *Three Novels of Ernest Hemingway* points out:

And from the waters of the flooded Tigliamento arises the Hemingway hero in his purest form, with human history and obligation washed away, ready to enact the last phase of his appropriate drama, and learn from his inevitable defeat the lesson of lonely fortitude. (36)

Warren links Henry's plunging into the river to avoid war obligations and escape execution as a renewed, a symbol of his entering the world of initiated by desolating the war.

Henry feels tired of life in the front when he could be shot at any time. Thus he selects desertion in favor of life, to express in Sartrean terms "you are nothing else than your life" (33). He is in fact terrified with the destruction of war and therefore he deserts it to save his life as he regards life more important than anything else.

Henry's desertion in *A Farewell to Arms*, has been commented by Malcolm Cowley in *Nightmare and Ritual in Hemingway*:

When Frederic Henry dives into the Flooded Tigliamento, in *A Farewell to Arms*, is performing a rite of baptism the prepares us for the new life he is about to lead as a deserter from the Italian Army: his act is emotionally significant, but it is a little unconvincing on

the plan of action. There are perhaps the only two cases in which Hemingway seems to loosen his grip on reality. (46)

Henry's abandonment of war is apparently illustrated in above statement. The act of avoiding the horrific war is a kind of redemption for Henry. His plunging into the Tigliamento river is a way out for gaining new hope and aspiration for his eternal life. It is also a choice of deserting the army and retreat; a choice to be away from the front. For Henry, the code of morality and religious faith seem useless as for Nietzsche, Sartre and Heidegger. It is a deliberate act of Henry because he is well aware of the fact that war ultimately does not bring out the peaceful life.

Henry discards the uniform and puts on the civilian dress. When on the way to Stresa in order to find Catherine, he dislikes even reading the newspaper, which informs about the war as to know the war is to get mentally involved in it. He intends to forget and be away of the war going on: "I was going to forget the war. I had made a separate peace. I felt damned lonely and was glad when the train got to Stresa" (252). This is undoubtedly an existential urge to detach from the notion of glory of war. At the hotel in Stresa, he asks even the barman not to talk about the war. His thoughts even in that hotel too are projected towards existential loneliness, "We could feel alone when we were together, alone against the others" (258).

Henry and Catherine are on the threshold of an isolated existence even in each other's company. Henry expresses his feeling of loneliness and alienation in the following extract:

It has only happened to me like that once. I have been alone while I was with many girls and that is the way that you can be most lonely. but we were never lonely and never afraid when we were together. I know that the night is not the same as the day that all things are different, that the things of the night cannot be explained in the day, because they do not exist, and the night can be a dreadful time for lonely people once their loneliness has started. But with Catherine there almost no difference in the night except almost no difference in the night except that it was an ever better time. (265)

Henry has the dreadful experience of war where he sees the decay of purity from the world and he himself feels lonely most of the time. Henry appears to be a rootless aimless American who hardly feels any attachment for his family. He has neither any fixed interest nor any definite direction. He makes a choice and enlists himself in the Italian front on Sartrean posture; however, he neither loves Italy nor hatred for Austria.

Henry is completely disillusioned with the war. He discusses the situation of war with his friends, which is supported by current humanitarian sympathy, but not with patriotic feeling. In any case, he is a non-combatant and he has a feeling that he is not in danger. War is depicted as a mockery: "Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me myself than war in the movies" (38). This shows his participation in the war is a most casual affair.

Amid such situation, Henry tries to make the paradise of existence after escaping with Catherine into Switzerland and settle down in a mountain villa. The

war is far away and they are not interested on it. The outside world has almost ceased to exist for them. The protagonists, Henry and Catherine reject society and reject wartime responsibility. These two beings have attempted for a separate peace. They reduce themselves to the world of two by rejecting every kind of relationship. Their alienation from society shows a struggle for existence in their lives. Caporetto retreat is anti-patriotic and a trail to reject society getting themselves into loneliness. However, in the sense of Sartrean philosophy, this action is related to their free choice. They chose to desert the morality in order to fulfill their desire to exist keeping themselves away from the hell of war. War involvement is analyzed in this way "I would always get out of it by suicide or by desertion: these are ultimate possible" (54). In the urge of living peace they select desertion and are involved in justifiable activity from Sartrean perspective. His philosophy further assures Sartre, who, in *Being and Nothingness* mentions "alienation as one of the true feeling of existence" (272). Henry desertion as:

I am responsible for my very desire of fleeing responsibilities to make myself passive in the world to refuse to act upon things and upon others, is still to choose myself, and suicide is on mode among others of being-in the-world. (57)

Indeed, life has brought us to such a point where there are not many ways. There are just two ways, two possibilities: either to exist or to commit suicide. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Henry chooses the path of desertion. His desertion is not his suicide rather his existential struggle.

The choice of Henry leads him to love his beloved but he is oriented to the direction to the tragic end. His choice makes him commit himself and moves into

a new dimension of sensibility. The choice leads him into his happiness when Catherine is pregnant but the happiness is without significant as it leads to the death and destruction.

As in the war, Henry does not accept any medal. He has not meditated and achieved reward of solace in love. But his entire commitment is to the love affair with Catherine. The choice of loving or hating each other between Henry and Catherine is on their own selection when they love. They choose each other and the choice is their freedom in Sartrean philosophy "their goal is freedom"(48). Henry takes a risk of this action-love making but unfortunately it could not last for long. In the course of their love, Catherine seems pregnant. Her pregnancy, which shows her desire for domestic life and Henry's proposal of marriage, are the basic clues for the quest for order in the completely dilapidated world where anarchy rules in the absence of God. When God is not there, the world is without values and the rebel must set up his own laws and moral codes. Henry formulates his own codes to endure the lawlessness of the world. During Catherine's delivery, she experiences severe pain. Henry thinks on this occasion very pathetically: "poor, poor dear Cat. And this was the price your pain for sleeping together. This was the end of trapped. This was what people got for loving each other" (330). The doctor decides to perform the Caesarian operation. The child is found dead. Henry says this statement about his newly born child "I had no feeling for him. He did not seem to have any thing to do with me. I felt no feeling of fatherhood" (335). Here, Henry again rejects society by rejecting any sorts of funeral ceremony of the dead child in Nietzschean posture.

On the other hand, Catherine has a terrible hemorrhage as consequences of operation. She becomes unconscious and has the bleeding continuously. The doctor could not stop it. In such critical condition, Henry evokes the intensity of event and emotions in pain with repetition of words and sentences:

I sat outside the hall. Everything was gone inside of me. I did not think. I could not think. I knew she was going to die and I prayed that she would not. Don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please don't let her die. God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. (234)

In above appealing statement to the God indicates that how the human being is helpless in the chaotic world. Human being is shown as a pathetic creature in the Godless world. Henry's prayer to the God seems to be pouring out his grief at the critical time. Henry knows that God is nowhere in the world. In the absence of God, he discovers his own sense of being, his own potentiality. He bears the conditions stoically.

Henry stays with her until she dies: "She was unconscious all the time and it did not stay with the long to die" (343). He would like to stay with dead body of Catherine but it is of no use. Ultimately, Henry comes to the realization that the cruelty of fate can be endured with courage:

If people bring so much courage to this world, the word has to kill them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. But those that will

not break, it kills. It kills the very good and the very gently and very brave impartially (258-9)

The world breaks everyone and afterwards many are strong at the broken places. But those that do not break, it kills. That is how the novel ends. Catherine is killed and Henry is broken while trying to be strong. He, on looking at the dead body of Catherine, comes to know that she is “like a statue” (343) and death is the end of all things.

By the end of the novel Henry is disillusioned from the cruel indifference of nature, the danger of obstructive illusion, the brutal morality of life. Lionel Trilling in *The Philosophical quest* presents Henry as a disillusioned man in Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*:

There death is appalling negator, the great destroyer, there from Catherine's death, Frederic Henry does learn of the nature of the world and his place in it. Though Henry faces death in the incidents of war in that book, it is Catherine's death that is instructive, the carries real significance for both Henry and us, and the reader. (534)

Here, Trilling says that war is the great destroyer and horrific like that of Catherine's death. Though Henry has experienced many deaths in war but the death of his beloved ultimately leads him to the enlightenment and his place in it.

Finally, Henry is driven into stoic isolation with nothing more to say, making his farewell to the dead Catherine. It is like saying good-bye to a statue. Henry is lonely at the beginning, lonely against the world when with Catherine and lonely at the end after Catherine's death. However, he learns the horror and

emptiness of life “I tried not to think and to be perfectly calm” (340). And after this in the rain Henry alone returns back to the hotel. He loses the game of love. He goes to the hotel like a winner who is talking nothing away from the gambling table except a self, which has become vulnerable to the injuries, which the world inflicts on human beings. Even though the paradise of love ultimately fails with heroine’s death in a world in which human beings die like the ants of a burning log, the value of the effort cannot be denied. His condition is equal to the condition of the dog, which “was nosing at one of the empty cans and found nothing but dust and some dead flowers” (325). He also tries his best to formulate the domestic life through love and separate peace. At last he could get nothing like the dog. He lives the life of ‘grace under pressure’. When he faces the death of Catherine he bears it stoically and does not complain to other. Henry does struggle in order to ensure the triumph of life over death and though in the end he is overcome, he reveals the human greatness in his unequal struggle.

IV. Conclusion

In Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* the major character, Henry, struggles for his existence amid the chaos and disorder of modern world. Modern mechanical war has killed the age-old heroic ideals and demolished the old moral social values. War has become a deep and permanent crisis in public affair. In war man dies for nothing and no godly power can be his saviour. This God abandoned world has become a place of vacuity, anguish, and fear.

Meantime Hemingway hero gets birth amid the war where men kill each other in a demonic way. No supernatural power comes to rescue him from this prison of life. So he ceases to believe in the abstract. Seeing this terrible reality Henry comes to a conclusion that life has lost its meaning. It is nothing like death. The world is ruled by some malignant power that is haunting Henry and has no meaning. Yet he tries to make his life meaningful. There is a deep urge of quest for order and certitude in his heart. First of all we find him in the prostitute house. He goes there to avoid the ugliness of war and does not like it. After his confrontation with the nurse, Catherine, he stops going to the brothel. The heroine effacing her self tries to mould the domestic life. Amid this disorder and anarchy they are able to live making 'a separate peace' in the Swiss Alps.

The quest for meaning is no less manifested in the desire of Henry and Catherine's pre-occupation with marriage and child. The home image in the novel intensifies it. The home is the symbol of family, affection, understanding and oneness. Catherine is the only source of happiness for Henry. Realizing this fact he escapes from war and comes into the arms of Catherine. As he is alone he gets someone to share his feelings. Her love enlivens Henry's soul. Both of them are

very eager to set up their family but the society is hostile. They both escape to Switzerland for peace, security and domestic life. Their happy life is short there. Catherine dies in childbirth. Their aspiration of certitude, meaningful life, order, peace and harmony is crushed like the ants of the burning log. Catherine dies without getting afraid of death. She dies stoically which makes Henry strong at the broken place. Looking at her dead body he utters no word and returns back to the hotel in the rain. He endures it bravely.

Henry bids farewell to the war for the sake of life but this time he has to bid farewell to Catherine too. No doubt in his striving for a meaningful life, order and stability he is defeated. But the power of love keeps him alive even after the tragic demise of Catherine he cherishes the positive values.

Henry's noble attempts have been broken but he does not give up his struggle. Putting down the aid of the absolute power he depends entirely upon his power and free decision. He discovers that the attempt to find universal meaning in the limited meaning of personal relationship is doomed to failure. After Catherine's death, he is left with nothing like the stray dog nosing in the waste bin and getting nothing. In this way he comes a full circle from loneliness to loneliness. He has restored a few things from the ruins of his own life. From the memory of his love he has gathered a powerful experience and set the values cherished by all Hemingway's heroes-action, discipline, endurance and fortitude. At the end of *A Farewell to Arms* Henry returns alone being strong at the broken places. He searches the value and meaning of life out of such dilapidation. Within this 'boundary situation' he formulates his new life for his existence. Love

is the basic force of human existence. It enables him to overcome the anguish of his contingency through realization.

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