Chapter IV

The tragic vision of Hemingway and the inevitability of death as the end of man
The Tragic Vision of Hemingway and the Inevitability of Death as the End of Man

Human life is fixed in space and time, where pleasure and pain alternates as a cycle. Though pleasures appear to enhance happiness, man is aware of the impending pain that will alternate in the event of a struggle or failure, when death becomes inevitable. The human mind or psyche is aware and constantly conscious of the fact that life will end in death. The hope and heroism of individuals however strong they may be cannot overcome the turmoil of life that ends in death. The valiant humans experiment with their heroism and face death as the inevitable end of the individual which repeats itself in the life of every living being.

Hemingway’s search was an existentialist one in search of peace amidst appalling violence and death. He considered death as inconsequential and as not an end but flow of life from one form to another. Come what may; this was his stand - an easy flow to observe what is happening around like a keen journalist and make, an existential stand in the modern sense. In his secret spiritual journey which is expressed in his novels, Hemingway stops at poise in the character of the old Man in the novel.

Hemingway offers through his novels the consciousness of an individual awaiting death and struggling for one final time to exhibit the values by which he lives. The proximity to death makes Hemingway’s heroes to cultivate a personal vision of life. Hemingway is explorative and creative in his preoccupation with death and nature. Violence and war are agents of death for Hemingway. Death occupies the centre of life. There is an ever abiding relationship between man and death. Though man and death wrestle or sport against each other, they understand each other. The stories of
Hemingway never fail to reveal this tragic vision. “Hemingway has not evolved new moral values; rather, he has reaffirmed man’s oldest ones—courage, love, humility, solidarity and interdependence” (Clinton 52).

The research analyses the select novels of Hemingway with the focus on death and the variety of signification expressed by the narrative.

The novel The Sun Also Rises portrays Jake, who is not deprived of his desire to love, and he is unable to suppress fully his passion for Brett, though aware of its futility. Therefore he suffers the pangs of death in life throughout the novel.

There are many references to stuffed animals, symbols of men who are dead inside as a result of the wound or symbolic death. Jake’s British friend Bill says he is “going to give all his friends stuffed animals” (SAR 63). When he hears that Brett is going to marry Michael, he starts thinking of wedding present, “what’ll I send them? Think they’d like a couple of stuffed race-horses?” (SAR 64). Of course, he could never have found a more appropriate present: when Jake and Bill arrive at the inn in Burguete, facing them is a tableau that mirrors their condition. “There was one panel of rabbits, dead, one of the pheasants, also dead, and one panel of dead ducks” (SAR 93). But Bill and Jake have newly arrived in Spain, a different country. While Jake and Bill are talking about stuffed animals and the taxidermist, Bill comments: “That was in another country . . . . And besides that the animals were dead” (SAR 64). The other country is Italy where the wound occurred. Being in Spain now there is hope of shedding feeling of dead within. Mike who does not develop morally in the course of the novel or even at the end. He is said to be “looking like a death mask of himself” (SAR 175).
Hemingway continues his narration on a positive note. Love is dead, men are dead inside, but still regeneration is possible in this context. Coming back from the war, man is both physically and morally wounded. Man’s return to nature and normal living is an attempt to regenerate his mental and physical wounds.

Jake and Bill are happy for a brief while in the remote countryside outside Burguete not as a disengagement from the social world. It is not a desire for liberation but desire for a newer pleasure. Boredom is the invention of modern man whose psyche is most of the time seeking fresh and new experience, adventure or sport which would result in pleasure. And in their search for a newer pursuit they come to realize at the end that the challenges of nature are up against them all the time. The beginning on the superficial level seems to accept the adversities that come their way. The uncertainty of impending dangers resulting in death is a permanent state of mind. They turn desperate placid and entertaining and their destination seems to lead them to loss or death. This is the recurring vision in the major novels of Hemingway. The journeys in life begin with due preparation but no one knows whether the preparation is adequate to destination, which is death.

In this novel man is close to nature and regenerated. Hunting, fishing and bullfighting are images of independent manhood. The ritual of fishing is taken very seriously by Bill and Jake. Even the noon meal they eat by the river is carried on like a mock-serious religious ceremony. Bill Gordon performs a mock ritual of consecration over the luncheon boiled eggs, fried chicken, and wine. Eating the killed symbolically becomes a religious rite and a moment of celebration for the post war generation. “Let me tell you. We will say, and I for One am proud to say – and I want you to say with me, on your knees, brother. Let no man be ashamed to kneel here in the great out-of-
doors. Remember the Woods were God’s first temples” (SAR 102). For them religion is dead, but fishing gives strength and regeneration as no religion can. Fishing has this type of effect on all the Hemingway heroes.

In The Sun Also Rises, Harris comments on the fishing and says, “Really you don’t know how much it means. I’ve not had much fun since the war” (SAR 12). The bullfight is all the more central to the novel. It signifies death that charges ahead unmindful of who the persons are. The bull rushes ahead only to do away with anyone across its path. The unalert, inexperienced, the unskillful and the unintelligent are killed by the bull. Even the horses, the steers and the careless on looker is tragically wounded or killed by the bull. The bullfights in the novel are an art communication to illuminate manhood.

Hemingway’s heroes are ‘toreros’ in one way or other. Their fight is against bullish death and doom. Every event and context in nature seems to be unfavorable to man. Everything in nature seems to favour death. Such a state of affairs doesn’t dismay Hemingway’s heroes. Their only way to attain immortality, other than through progeny is to be like the torero, like Pedro Romero, brave, masculine, dignified and in control of his destiny. Philip Young describes the bullfighters aptly: “The bullfighter is a good example of the man with the code. As he acts out his role as high priest of a ceremonial in which men pit themselves against violent death, and with a behavior that formalizes the code, administers what men seek to avoid, he is the very personification of “grace under pressure” (Young 14). Jake says, “Nobody ever lives their life all the way up except bullfighters” (SAR 10).

Kevin Alexander Boon finds symbolic purposes in the description of the bullfighting and says,
The ring, which symbolizes life, is where a bullfighter faces a bull, an act that parallels a man facing danger, like a soldier in war. Hemingway contends that life is richer and more meaningful when danger is involved and that a man is manlier when he faces danger without filching. (Boon 80)

Romero is an excellent matador. Who is totally involved in bullfight as a professional. He engages the bull with such courage, dignity, dedication, discipline and skill that the act becomes a sacrament for him and for those who are initiated participants. He does not create an illusion of being close to the bull as the fake matadors do, but he really comes close to the bulls and dexterously uses his skill to the great surprise of spectators. “The matador represents,” says Melvin Backman, “a great force held in check, releasing it proudly in a controlled yet violent administering of death” (Backman 1).

For a moment the bull and the matador become one in the ritual of administering death, which is performed with a sense of dedication like that of a priest. The ‘aficionados’ such as Jake and Brett also vicariously participate in the sacrament.

The bullfighter kills because he believes killing is the price paid for the renewal of life. Death in the arena is an ordeal and traditional ritual. The matador who is dealing out death, become God-like and shares with the spectators the sensation of immortality he experiences. Hemingway’s concept of immortality differs from the conventional concept. Hemingway knows that the conventional immortality is a dream. So he claims that bullfighting gives the new feeling of immortality.
He is performing a work of art and he is playing with death, bringing it closer, closer, closer to himself, a death that you know is in the horns because you have the canvas-covered bodies of the horses on the sand to prove it. He gives the feeling of his immortality and, as you watch it, becomes yours. Then when it belongs to both of you, he proves it with the sword. (Hemingway 189)

Here, the bullfighter is very close to death and to Hemingway’s concept and feeling of immortality. Hemingway says,

It would never have much success among the amateur sportsman of America and England who play games. We, in game, are not fascinated by victory and we replace the avoidance of death by the avoidance of defeat... it takes more cojones to be a sportsman when death is a closer party to the game. (Hemingway 25)

To Hemingway the appeal of the Spanish bullfight was aesthetic and hence a source of intense joy. It is, as he puts it, ‘an art that deals with death and death wipes it out.’ In a bullfight man confronts the ultimate fact of death. Man’s problem is to dominate death. The duty of the bullfighter is to take on the bull which is the embodiment of death.

The emphasis on death in Hemingway’s conception of the bullfight does not imply any morbidity on his part; it is in reality his characteristic approach to the search for the intense and real life. That violence is the order in the world of Hemingway, which is obvious to the casual reader. His men are either victims of violent death or have courted dangers and survived.
Hemingway’s preoccupation with violent death was closely allied to his lust for life. In 1954, surviving a plane crash in Africa, he made a fine distinction between ‘seeking death’ and being ‘in the proximity of death’, he explained, “to know more or less what she is, and it is quite another thing to seek her” (Hemingway 426). If Hemingway craved the proximity of death, of violent death in particular, he did so for the sake of living intensely. For he did not believe in just letting his life pass, but wanted to really live.

*The Sun Also Rises* portrays a few gruesome events symbolizing the dance of death on the second day after an earlier street show of Spanish folk music and dance. Twenty-eight year old man is gored to death in the running of the bulls. Two days later the man’s wife and two children walk behind his coffin through the streets, “The drums marched ahead and there was music on the fifes …” (*SAR* 165). The whole affair with death for the Spanish seems like a journey for the dead men to another fiesta beyond life. And death is the pervading consciousness for the young men and women and their actions tell that some acts like agents of death and some trying to run away from death and some fight most valiantly not to save themselves but in the service of life.

Death is understood precisely when one observes death taking away his loved ones; while in the midst of the thick environment of violence or war. The more we observe, the better becomes one’s understanding of the existential realties. It is the truism that everyone has seen incidents of death in one’s life time. The responses vary from individual to individual. The story is about a generation of young men and women who went through terrible tides of the Great War and were personally affected one way or the other. They were snapped from the cultural moorings. What they lost were not only their loved ones but they also lost their constructed values. Some of them are half
men and half women like Jake. They were unhelpful to the dying generation like the
great marlin which Santiago calls as ‘half fish’. Jake and others were alive; they are like
the Ancient Mariner who went about in the spirit of death. Death was in their
countenance.

_The Sun also Rises_ is a story of ‘half fish’ that shows a semblances to life and
the living. Half fish is a fish caught and wounded and making its last few breath. It
carries all the semblance of being alive. It is a vegetative state of being. The life in it is
unhelpful to it or to its companions. It is a dead weight upon others. There are men and
women who are like the dead fish or a dead weight upon the society. They continue to
carry the attractive appearances and often people are willing to spend their life for the
half fish, fight in its defense or feel sympathetic to it. The story stands for the sigh of
death that has undone so many. Deaths which are prematurely caused by war and
violence are made to appear as one of nature’s rhythm and remain normal as long as the
human psyche finds justification for war and violence. Premature death appears cyclic.
Human beings are either killed or permanently maimed by violence, war and death.

People’s sport increasingly has become inclined towards blood sport and
violence exhibiting games. Hunting, fishing American rugby, brutish wrestling and
boxing and dangerous car and bike racing feed the frenzy for violence and death. The
more one enjoys seeing these visuals for pleasure is in one way or the other is violent
and is in league with death. Here, there is no innocence in these acts. Cohn is no way
free from aiding death than Jake Barnes or Romero. Even Brett is a promoter of
violence and death by holding Romero’s cape during the bullfight and carrying the cut
bleeding ears of dead bulls. She acts like the servant of Hades. She is finally
comfortably leaning against Jake the ‘half fish’ like Santiago with the great marlin.
Death appears at the very beginning of the novel *A Farewell to Arms* when Hemingway sets the scene and sounds a muted fanfare: “At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with rain came cholera. But it was checked and in the end only seven thousand died of it in the army” (*AFTA* 4). The novel presents the most devastating picture of doom. Thousands of soldiers are dying; many owing to the lack of adequate food supply, still others owing to diseases which come in the wake of the war and weather. Many have met their death in the indiscriminate killing. Still the end of war is not in sight. Early chapters of the novel captures the sense of disorganization and the loss of human lives during the war. This sense of disorganization is shown more at the time of retreat, but soon becomes a love story, a love which is overshadowed by death. In the novel one finds the whole gamut of different types of dying soldiers, dying from grenades, bombs or machine-gun, shot for deserting, outside the range of fire, the threat of drowning, and finally death in childbirth. The hero, Frederic Henry, personally comes into close contact with all these forms of death.

The retreat of the soldiers is in the rain, which is a very powerful symbol of death. Though rain is the giver of water and life to nature, here it assumes fresh dimension that is detrimental to the soldiers in retreat, war beaten escaped from the jaws of death in the battle field, but not fully saved from death. The impending danger of hunger and disease that can kill the worn out soldier marching in the rain. The retreat is a movement from the battle field to avoid further loss of lives, but the war machine which is in momentum cannot prevent nature from taking its toll. The inevitability of death is the message that one gets when one reads the first few chapters of *A Farewell to Arms*. 
The conversation of Frederic and Catherine is often about death. Catherine had loved somebody before meeting Frederic. Her first lover had died in the war. Catherine tells Frederic not to be jealous of someone who is dead. Frederic is alive and has everything. Catherine is afraid of rain because: “Sometimes I see me dead in it. And sometimes I see you dead in it” (AFTA 126). When Ettore, the Italian officer is recounting his war experiences, he says: “I shot that son of the bitch all right. How did he look when you shot him? Simmon asked. ‘Hell,’ how should I know? Said Ettore. I shot him in the belly. I was afraid, I’d miss him if I shot in the head” (AFTA 122).

There is more death all around; one gets the feeling that death is endlessly in pursuit, of life. Frederic is back from his leave. Rinaldi gives him an account of the happenings in his absence: “Since you are gone we have nothing but frostbites, chilblains, jaundice, gonorrhea, self-inflicted wounds, pneumonia and hard and soft chancers. Every week someone gets wounded by rock fragments” (AFTA 12).

A close scrutiny of the above lines, however, reveals that Hemingway has tried to seize and examine in them some of the basic truths of life. The dead cold treatment meted out to man by nature infects him with ugly diseases like frostbites and chilblains; the promiscuous-profligate living brings in gonorrhea and other venereal ulcers. The self-inflicted wounds ultimately prove fatal to him as they did to Rinaldi himself.

The execution of officers by the battle police is a situation radically different from that of Frederic’s killing of the sergeants. What the carabiniere are doing, is in complete contrast to the hero’s personal experience of the sergeant’s treacherous desertion. They shoot officers who are separated from their units. How the officers got separated is an irrelevant question to them. The absurdity of the impersonal system is brought out in the following dialogue between the police and the retreating officers.
‘Your brigade?’ He told them.

‘Regiment?’ He told them.

‘Why are you not with your regiment?’ He told them.

‘Do you not know that an officer should be with his troops?’ He said.

That was all. Another officer spoke.

‘It is you and such as you that have let the barbarians on to the sacred soil of the fatherland’.

‘I beg your Pardon’, said the lieutenant colonel. ‘It is because of treachery such as yours that we have lost the fruits of victory’.

‘Have you ever been in a retreat?’ the lieutenant colonel asked.

‘Italy should never retreat’. (AFTA 193)

‘Have you ever been in a retreat?’ exposes the whole absurdity and the impersonal system the carabiniere represent. Instead of shooting their own officers, the Italian military should have been working for the halt of the advancing enemy force.

What the battle police in fact represent is confusion dressed up as system.

Frederic has already seen this confusion of the Italian army while in retreat on the river bridge. When he sees a batch of Germans, he says in outrage: “the whole bloody thing is crazy. Down below they blow up a little bridge. Here they have a bridge on the road. Where is everybody? Don’t they try and stop them at all” (AFTA 211).

After Frederic has escaped death by jumping into the Tagliamento river, “Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation” (AFTA 232). A statement which the critics have subjected to all sorts of symbolic interpretation. While for Aldridge, Frederic’s plunge into the river is “an act of purgation symbolizing the death of war and the beginning of new life of love” (Aldridge 9). For Wylder, the “hero has
been bathed in the waters of death, not life, and he is reborn, if at all, into death in life” (Wylder 78). What Aldridge is suggesting is that the novel falls into two parts dealing separately with war and love, which is not true, for love and war appear almost together in the opening chapter of the book. Wylder’s contention is that when the hero “makes a farewell to military arms, he also says farewell to arms of love- and almost at the same time” (Wylder 78). This is also wrong, for Frederic does not lose his love for Catherine after he has deserted the war. In fact after his desertion. His desertion is to live a normal human life and enjoy the love of Catherin in the process of raising a family on neutral territory – Switzerland.

In this world full of death and brutality, Frederic and Catherine’s love really makes them vulnerable. Frederic and Catherine realize their situation. Another country appears heaven like at first. Love seems to defeat death. It only anesthetized them from being active in preparing for the home and the baby. And their interest is spent in the following lines:

‘There is only us two and in the world there’s all the rest of them. If anything comes between us we’re gone and then they have us.’ ‘They won’t get us,’ I said. ‘Because you’re too brave. Nothing ever happens to the brave.’ ‘They die of course’. ‘But only once’. ‘I don’t know. Who said that?’ The cowards dies a thousand deaths, the brave but one... he was probably a coward, she said. He knew a great deal about the cowards but nothing about the brave. The brave dies perhaps two thousand deaths if he’s intelligent. He simply doesn’t mention them. (AFTA 139-140).
When she loses her fiancé in the war, she discovers life to be a callous mirthless routine. Frederic, however, still struggles to seize the essence and strikes an altogether different note. He thinks that life might be hard to manage. When Catherine finds meaning in life under the loving care of Frederic, she wishes to live a full life. She realizes then that thing, indeed “are hard to manage” (*AFTA* 137). She fears that ‘they’—the malignant forces—are decoyed against her and her lover. “Because there is only us two …. If anything comes between us we’re gone and they have us” (*AFTA* 139).

Later, Frederic realizes that whether you “drink it down” on the front and fight and lose and flirt or you desert the front and move to the hills of Switzerland, you are always trapped; you are “trapped biologically” (*AFTA* 139). Because of the basic remorselessness of life, you are caught in the net; your physical prowess and mental ingenuities are utterly ineffectual. It is subsequent to his experience in the world of bullets and the world of love that he ponders over the tragic destiny of man:

> If the people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them, to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry. (*AFTA* 249)

But whether man is brave or not, in the end he is trapped. He is trapped biologically in this case by the natural process. The harrowing scene at the hospital is a pointer. He is trapped by the society at the end of a retreat where you take off or get shot. Either way it can only end tragically, or there are no other way that can be thought of.
Despite a few moments of respite that man can have, he has finally to encounter death. Life is relentless and essentially a tragic experience. Whether man feels happy or unhappy, he would find death inescapable. It drives him, as it were, into a blind alley and leisurely beat him down. When Catherine is dying in the hospital, Frederic recalls minding the pathetic sight of trapped ants that were unsuccessfully trying to escape fire:

Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it commenced to burn, the ants swarmed out and went first towards the centre where fire was, then turned back and ran towards the end. When they were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out, their bodies burnt and flattened and went off not knowing where they are going. But most of them went toward the fire and then back toward the end and swarmed on the cool end and finally fell off into the fire. (AFTA 327-328)

Through the parable of ants, Hemingway has conveyed his treatment of death in A Farewell to Arms. Frederic feels happy being with Catherine and not seeing other people. Without her, he is lost. If his love dies, he will no more exist as an authentic man. When she is finally brought to the hospital. Frederic waits in the hall. Though not religious, he prays for her. She is having a hard time of it in the delivery room. When he sees her lying in the grip of pain he thinks: “the price you paid for sleeping together. This was the end of the trap. That was what people got for loving each other ... So now they got her in the end. You never got away with anything. Get away hell; it would have been the same if we had been married fifty times” (AFTA 320).

The moral implications are clearly understood. This is not a punishment visited upon Catherine because of her sinfulness. Her condition has nothing to do with the
sacrament of marriage. It is death that cunningly prepares and springs the trap, and sooner or later everyone is caught in it. No one ever gets away with anything. Frederic keeps on thinking about Catherine and her probable death. They constantly brood over death:

And what if she should die? She won’t die. People don’t die in childbirth nowadays. That was what all husbands thought. Yes, but what if she should die? She won’t die. She’s just having a bad time. The initial labor is usually protracted. She’s only having a bad time. Afterwards we’d say it wasn’t really so bad. But what if she should die? She can’t. I tell you. Don’t be fool. It’s just a bad time. It’s just nature giving her hell. It’s only the first labour which is almost always protracted. Yes, but what if she should die? She can’t die. Why would she die? What reason is there for her to die? …. But what if she should die? She won’t die. But what if she should die? She won’t. She’s all right. But what if she should die? She can’t die. But what if she should die? Hey, what about that? What if she should die? (AFTA 274)

Their brooding finally hatches into a tragic birth and death.

Frederic tries to fit Catherine’s pain into a larger context of natural causes, but this approach leads him to one fact of nature, the indisputable fact of death. Having already discounted the possibility of moral retribution for the sin of illicit love, Frederic can find no other logic for her death. But he has learnt the gratuitousness of death in war (Aymo’s death, for instance, and his own near execution) and he knew that death strikes without discernable reason and kills impartially. Death is merely inevitable, not rational. His final response is a simple declarative assertion of faith. ‘She can’t die’.
But Frederic’s panic increases as he is flung back again and again to the initial and still unanswered question. ‘But what if she should die?’ The unconscious is often unhelpful.

The feelings about death here are almost like those of a paranoiac. Frederic’s complaint against death, however, does not necessarily imply his belief in nihilism. He only expresses his hero’s love of life. He values life as the highest good and he hates and resents death. The unconscious fear of death being very near is like an endless swing till the chain of moral courage snaps. Death in this novel has been treated as unjust, unreasonable, and cruel and the author’s attitude towards death is that of hatred. Frederic has, therefore, become excessively preoccupied with the fact of man’s mortality.

As Frederic realizes from his war experiences the horror of being caught in the trap of a rigidly patterned society, so in his love experience he receives the shock of Catherine’s death as a biological trap. The hero shows his consciousness of being trapped early in the novel. When Catherine asks him if he “felt trapped” he replies that he always did ‘biologically’. Later, when Catherine is dying in the hospital, the hero actually realises what until now has only been a feeling: “Poor, poor, dear Cat. And this was the price you paid for sleeping together. This was the end of the trap” (AFTA 274).

The vast war spoilt landscape and the concomitant distraction and death everywhere in the killing fields of Italy create despair and a heart of darkness. In spite of the affectionate companionship of Rinaldi and the young priest, the mindless bombing by the enemy at the border and the heavy death toll by Cholera make life in the army doomed. Henry is nearly killed in the trench-mortar explosion. The priest visits him at the field hospital. The priest and his religiously coloured narrative of his highland country is an argument in favor of life similar to paradise. War and Violence
and the resultant death and destruction make one select pseudo joy, a pleasure in cheating the system, institutions and conventions. Henry has reasonable justification to bid a farewell to arms. He does it because Italian war machinery has failed. It would equally be foolish not to escape after killing the sergeant. The Italian army by now has turned into a mindless mob. The military carabinier was seizing all retreating officers and executing them after a brief trial.

Frederic after his war wounds and his brush with death and the associated bitter battle front experiences, tries to generalize. He says,

If the people bring so much courage to this world, the world has to kill them to break them, so of course it kills them. The world breaks everyone and afterward many are strong at the broken places. But those that will not break it kills. It kills the very good and the gentle and the very brave impartially. If you are none of these you can be sure it will kill you too but there will be no special hurry. (AFTA 216)

Frederic is presumptuous. The human psyche instead of moving into the now of the present, wastes ones energies on brooding over a dead past. One’s own personal experiences are insufficient for a generalization. Moreover generalization or conclusions are merely accumulated past. Mind brooding over a dead past is half dead. It is a mere phantasmagoria. It is unhelpful to the present. Frederic and Catherine are weakened by projecting a doom and there by inviting doom upon themselves. When the world outside is in disorder and violent, the individual mind is equally so. The mind and the world outside are one and the same. The best and intelligent action should be to observe one’s own disordered mind. The couple should have been far more valiant instead of presuming a tragic future and inviting there by a tragedy and should have
stopped the blame game the unconscious promotes. Instead of blaming the world for its disorder, it is better for the individual to dismantle the disorder in his mind. Frederic’s pseudo philosophy, however interesting or emotive it may be, is quite unhelpful in enjoying the fullest of life.

The couples feel they are in a trap. The trap is an assumption without a basis. The illusion is self-deceptive. They feel the world and the nature are up against them and have the couples trapped. The centre of all these phantasma is the human psyche. This human centre which is the centre of all emotional drama itself is an unreal centre. This causes darkness. They react to the unfounded desperation caused by the centre. A shadow upon a shadow forces humanity to think of the world and nature as antithetical to human life. The trap is his own separatist oriented unconscious mind. Nature around Montreux is beautiful and splendid. The backdrop offers a sense of timelessness and transcendence. “We walked along beside the lake and saw the swans and the many gulls and terms that flew up when you came close and screamed while they looked down at the water. Out on the lake there were flocks of grebes, small and dark, and leaving trails in the water when they swan” (AFTA 251).

The couple’s cause for worry and angst is not something outside them. The people at Montreux were very glad to see them. The shopkeepers were cheerful people. The human unconscious always seeks for pleasure substitutes and at the same time keeps beating the gong of imagined pain ahead. It justifies the premonition by referring back to a painful past. The ‘now’ may not have any of this pain or pleasure but a happiness which is the transcendence offered by nature by its splendor and beauty and by a sense of compassions for the fellow life - forms.
Though the mind knows death and its nature, yet it considers death as pain and has engineered ways and gadgets for pleasure and to keep the mind from observing death as existential reality. And when pleasure which is transient, has ended, one is bored or alarmed of the feeling of blankness and emptiness of the future. The mind, so, spoils the present with sickening sense of doom as in the words of Frederic, in a long paragraph beginning with “poor, poor dear cat”. …. “And what if she should die? She won’t die. She’s just having a bad time. The initial labor is usually protracted. She is only having a bad time … but what if she should die? She can’t die. Yes, but what if should die? She can’t, I tell you” (AFTA 274).

The pull between the question and the unsure answer goes on like the African drumbeat of self-inflicting pain. The unconscious human mind thrives with such trouble-shooting between pain and pleasure and moving between the past and the future time. It never allows one to be fully alive in the joys of the present. This is the trap and all external traps are phantasma. It wants all moments to be sensational and sensationalizing. The novel does the work perfectly in this rhythm. There is no signification in the frenzied moments of pleasure enjoyed by the couple and their frenzy of an impending doom which is agonizing.

The narrative in A Farewell to Arms is not a discourse of philosophical, moral or a religious kind. It’s a piece of life, an artifact of an aesthetic design offering a timelessness to the reader and conclusions of any kind on the novel can only be meta narrative on a meta narrative.

For thousands of years man’s psyche practices the endless game of imputing, guilt, sin or flaw at the time of failure, loss or a tragedy. The blame game imagines victimizers both concrete and abstract - death, fate, God the devil and the rest of it.
Then one might say that the universe is tragic or nature is at enmity with life. The swing of the blame game is endless.

Hemingway has fashioned a new form of tragedy in which the hero acts not mistakenly but supremely well and suffers a doom which is not directly caused by his actions at all. The belief that life is a tragedy, life itself has become the backbone for a new literary structure. The crucial point is that in *A Fare well to Arms* as in any tragic work, the readers are made to feel that the hero’s doom is inevitable. “If people bring so much courage to this world the world has to kill them to break them to break them, so of course it kills them….. It kills the very good and the very gentle and the very brave impartially” (*AFTA* 258-259). When he awaits Catherine’s death: “you did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you if base they killed you” (*AFTA* 338)

The most famous omen is of course the rain, which accompanies every disaster in the book, from the marching of the soldiers in the first chapter to the night of Catherine’s death. Just before she is to give birth, readers learn that Catherine is ‘narrow’ in the hips. And this leads to a second paraphrase of the Marvell poem: “We knew the baby was very close now and it gave us both a feeling as though something were hurrying us and we could not lose any time together” (*AFTA* 321). In the novel itself, as Carlos Baker has said that Catherine’s dying is directly associated with the whole tragic pattern of fatigue and suffering, loneliness, defeat and doom of which the war is it the broad social manifestation. Frederic and Catherine are victims. And surely they are not ‘responsible for what happens to them’. Hemingway has portrayed his lovers in the one light which makes the tragedy possible. Unlike Romeo and Juliet or Willy Loman for that matter - Frederic and Catherine are not portrayed as moral
innocents; they are very much aware of the unjust world which victimizes them. Their decision to love is conscious choice, made without illusions. Ultimately, this makes all the difference in response to their fate.

As in all tragedies, Hemingway establishes his fictional world as more or less what Fredric thinks it to be a world which breaks and kills indiscriminately, where nothing is sacred. Everything in the novel justifies Frederic’s most severe view of this world, which is tragic if not nihilistic.

The human psyche is ever in love with the kick of pleasure in conflicts and violence or else it feels dead without them. Then when it meets tragic situations, the blame game added with fear the mind is fatuated with imagination of fate working against them. Death or the devil is the most hated spectre which must be fought against or blamed for the tragedies. The whole thing is a human construct and fate is as abstract as predestination. These fictional elements prevent humanity from being intelligent and brave and from active thinking.

When death alone is the high pitched metallic music and there are no other sound perceptions like social, political, moral, religious or humane is possible. And when the decibels turn unbearably sickening and frightening one either succumbs to the music or runs away, far from it. And one throws away all norms, standards or values to the wind. Only the fleeing is important. Frederic is in such a predicament. Death is at both the ends and is exactly what he says,

Once in camp I put a log on top of the fire and it was full of ants. As it concerned to burn, the arms swarmed out and went first toward the centre where the fire was; then turned back and ran toward the end.
When there were enough on the end they fell off into the fire. Some got out; their bodies burnt and flattened, and went off not knowing where they were going. (AFTA 280)

And in a similar context Frederic attempts an escape. At first the escape from arrows of death in the battle front is offered when he is packed off to Milan for treatment. The new context away from death and squalor is like the change of music. He is at pleasure with a temporary freedom and in concert with his lady love. He need not care about any norms, social, political, cultural or the military. He is quite ignorant at that time in Milan of the natural order which is a struggle between two opposed forces. Later at the end of this story, he thinks of this order as a trap.

When he is back at the camp and the war front he hears of more terrible events. Subsequently the gruesome death scenes and the senseless murder of retreating officers by the war-police become too unbearable for meek acceptance. Frederic plunges into an illusion of an escape into a new context of love and pleasure and a landscape and country of milk and honey. His act is an illusion because he and Catherine presume that they will not die. And at the end they are disillusioned with death. Every Hemingway hero suffers serious physical wounds. The wounds initiate the disillusion of reality and of the final wound of death. They are the ones who predict the tragedy M.V.Kamath in the book, *Philosophy of Life and Death* refers to Yudishtira’s answer to Yaksha which is, “O Yaksha, he says, ‘we see our fellow beings dying around us every moment and yet the living think they never will die. That, surely, is the most wonderful fact of all” (Kamath 4).

There is only one way by which man is born, the biological way through man and wife. But death comes to man in myriads of ways and all of them seem unpalatable
to man’s pleasure centered psyche. And all man’s action seems to be to prolong life of
pleasure. He avoids pain because pains for him are little deaths. Even after one realizes
the fact that death is inevitable and inescapable, one has an illusion that they never will
die. And when disillusion dawns on them, Frederic and Catherine develop another
illusion of a trap, a trick. A trap or trick assumes that the victim is innocent or ignorant.
The couple in *A Farewell to Arms* thinks they are victims of a trap or trick. Trick, trap,
innocence and ignorance are a fallacy.

Whatever the game one plays in life, should always be played within the
nature’s order of a struggle between opposed forces. If war and violence are right and
justified, fine as they are, the opposed force is the human will. The human willpower
finds an escape. And if escape from war and violence are right and justified, fine as
they are, the opposed force is either pain or death. One thesis invites opposing
antitheses and the interim may offer a synthesis and subsequently the syntheses invite
opposing antitheses once again. There is no finality and even death is not a final. The
desperation of Frederic or Catherine is caused when they are disillusioned with the
hope they will not die.

The symbols denoting death are many in *A Farewell to Arms*. Abruzzi meant
life and living while wandering elsewhere and away from Abruzzi is distaste and dead
like. The time with unfamiliar women is deadness. No living relationship is built up
there and no progeny which is life enhancing is established in the brothels. It represents
a masturbatory dead end. When Frederic says in stupor and in madness, “the world all
unreal in the dark and so exciting that you must resume again unknowing and not
caring in the night, sure that this was all and all and not caring. …. But I did not know
that then, all though I learnt it later” (*AFTA* 12).
Frederic and Catherine are both afflicted and affected by war. She mourns for her dead fiancé who was killed in the war. Henry is sick and tired of war. They both want to get rid of their mental pain. They find each other as one in this state of affairs. She wants to distance herself from the pain of her loss. He wants to get as far away as possible from the talk of the war. What began as a game of love both non-serious and unanchored turns into a serious relationship of attachment at Milan. They are physically separate for a while. There is no pain, sorrow or disloyalty in their relationship, though they are separated by physical distance. It would have gone on well for both until Frederic switches his loyalty and abandons the army.

The narrative justifies his action. And there is no justification in the novel for Frederic to seek a buddy when the code is to brave the odds alone. He creates a trap in which Catherine is tragically moved from her station. She would have had better prenatal as well as post-natal care. She is almost allured into accepting Frederic’s uprooting suggestion. He did not see the trap. She was not aware of the consequences of the unintentional trick. Frederic could have withstood the onslaught of loneliness until Catherine had had her safe delivery. The hero could not face the opposed forces alone. He pulls a companion and a weak one for it which ultimately ruined the life of all the three which includes the baby. The world is not against love but human actions are. There is no trap or trick but it is a failure to face death alone. And when one takes the help of the other, the tragedy affects even the uninvolved and the innocent. The accompanying accusations, blame games and the expletives are sad reflections on the part of the protagonist and they don’t represent the realities. Love is not killed in the story. Death separates only people and their chivalry or love. Love becomes a frozen
statue and an aesthetic artifact. Love is not defeated and as long as humanity lives love is a continuum and a constant.

*For Whom the Bell Tolls* is a novel of an assortment of different events of people and places. It is a story of Robert Jordan who with the help of some assorted group in the hills of Guadarrama in Spain blow up a strategic bridge. The group represents the wide variety of people with differing opinions about death. They all have either faced death or fighting it. Some of them have assisted death or acted in its place. Deaths have ruined them all. In spite of all the tragic events that are taking place around them and over Spain, their life shows what positioning they have taken about life. Each one of the characters is memorable as ‘a piece of life suitable for discourse’.

Pablo at first is a bandit. He is crafty and brutal and blood thirsty. The Spanish civil war gives him an opportunity to attack the rich and the powerful fascists. More and more publicans, commoners and the irreligious join him, some for revenge and while some others joined him for loot or for sport. And with a new badge on him as a republican fighter or a guerrilla leader, he was more in command of himself or the situation. He turned into a servant of death. The brutal events at Ayuntamiento in chapter Ten pages 105 to 135, say that Pablo was “Massacring people with this slowness and brutality” (*FWBT* 125).

He is animal like in existence. As long as he was in command with the situation of causing death to others, he felt safe and secure. And when he saw a danger to him, his horses, his cave, his wife and the rest of his assorted social group, he visualized death closing in on him. He carries defeatist sadness. He turns double minded in his approach to Jordan’s assignment. There is only the private cause, his own cause to fight for. He is shameless and cowardice almost willing to betray the cause of the Republic.
He turns sneaky when he thinks death is sneaking on him. He is not villainous but a skillful mountain rat that could still be relied on for the final escape plan after the bridge falls. He is one of common humanity’s brave son whose mind swings between pleasure and pain and thinks that self-preservation is his first priority.

Pilar is a tribal, who displays tribal instincts in all matters of life and death. The violent attitudes in all her actions make her a true representative of the basic instinct of violence that Hemmingway subtly conveys through his characterization. He introduces Pilar to portray the strong presence of tribal influence in the thought process of the modern human mind which has not evolved to the extent that mankind may claim. Though she may be influenced by the forces of the civil behavior still she tries to express her distaste for violence and death which is another dimension of the duality in man’s nature.

Pilar whose feminist freedom and strength is sufficiently provided by intelligent reasoning and sensibilities. She is representative of a complementary fulfillment for the society that lacks wisdom. She is the liberal spirit and a conscience keeper. She is very much aware of the ways of death and has a primitive skill of reading one’s future and of smelling death on a man nearing death. She is one sensible centre of disjointed men in the cave. She is in command now after Pablo falls out of favour. Her insight of death gives the needed push for Jordan in his mission. She may not hold any philosophical view of life or death or the Republican Movement but she knows she is in every way on the right side. She is in favour of life and man slaughtering is sickening and indigestible to her.

Maria has passed through death and now is a second lifer. She is no more afraid to die. Piler has nurtured the sense of life and living in her. The compassionate
understanding of Robert Jordan offers a complete sense of living within those three days of her love affair with Jordan. She has achieved this without the help of religion or traditional moral philosophy but by compassionate fellow human beings.

Anselmo is deeply rooted to his past belief system. He is an appealing character because he is still moored to traditional belief on killing and death. He is duty bound because he considers such position righteousness. The sense of guilt which is a religious construct makes him hate killing. He wants corrective systems instead of death as punishments. He is courageous and willing to die in action. Anselmo’s soliloquy needs a deconstruction. He says,

I hope I am not for the killing. Anselmo was thinking. I think that after the war there will have to be some great penance done for the killing. If we no longer have religion after the war then I think there must be some form of civic penance organized that all may be cleaned from the killing or else we will never have a true and human basis for living. The killing is necessary, I know, but still the doing of it is very bad for a man and I think that, after all this is over and we have won the war, there must be a penance of some kind for the cleansing of us all. …but I think anyone doing it will be brutalized in time and I think that even though necessary, it is a great sin and that afterwards we must do something very strong to atone for it. (FWBT 204-205)

The thought of Anselmo reveals that the human psyche is not helpful. The pendulum swings between killing as necessity and killing as wrong doing. And when the killing is a grave sin, the unconscious keeps the mind chained to a guilty feeling. At the same time the swing moves to the other side providing a cleansing system. When
there is a way out for the guilt, killing would only continue not abate. This cannot be a
true and human basis for living.

Real human existence is not solely depending on one individual man or woman
but on all living individual human beings together. The individual is the integral part of
one humanity. The killer and the killed are one. The victim and the victimizer are one.
The individual’s thought of ‘I am’ and therefore ‘I’ exist is unreal and does not really
exist. It is a mind’s construct. All the obvious and the observable difference between
individuals are peripherals. The individual is a body and life placed together. And life
really has no name, gender or any peripheral identities. This being the reality the life in
the victim and the life in the victimizer are one and the same: this is the unity of souls
or life. When the “I” don’t exist, there is no other. The other is “I” too. Then, the whole
list of disorder and division solves. The power game whose basis is peripheral
differences dissolves. There is not a hurt feeling, hatred or animosity or violence.

When the whole set of humanity whose individuals are one and the same, there
is no basis for division or separatist ideas. Death does not frighten the individual
anymore because the rest of the individuals who are him too continue to live. The dead
lives in the alive. Death is not an end of any life. Only the individual body dies or
disintegrates. The dead continue to live as long as the humanity lives. The dead would
be dead only when the humanity becomes extinct. This is the true and human basis for
living.

The sin and guilt is a memory of the past. When the individual is always in the
now of the moment, he has moved away into the now. His real living ought to be in the
present. Any swing to a non-existent past is a movement away from living- it is a
moment to a dead past. No corrective system can enter a dead past. Religion has
constructed the guilt to hang on to one’s neck as a dead past. In the ever anew present one can fully live and not sicken over the nonexistent past. Therefore guilt is dead. Sin is dead. The unconscious is the centre from which these unrealities are forced upon individuals. To get rid of them is to be fully alive in the present. The now is timeless. The unconscious thrives by troubleshooting and bringing up guilt, worry, fear, sadness and the rest of the negative feelings. And it immediately offers faith and hope which swing towards the future. The future too is unreal and non-existent. Neither Anselmo nor the novelist has sensed the fact of life. The artifact, the novel is fictional and so is the discourse on life and death.

The episode of El Sordo at battle with the fascist on his mountain hide out is like a play within a play. El Sordo is a hero-material. He is skilful, understanding and helpful. His valiant fight till death has all the trappings of a heroic story. El Sordo’s mind is not clouded by any philosophy about death. He takes death sportingly and as part of life’s various fun or frolick. In a gripping moment of final fight back, he says, “You will have to take death as an aspirin” (FWBT 318). The hill was too betraying. They were fully exposed to firing. His horse was killed. He lay in pain and desperation. And no retreat is possible: no communist slogan could energize them. El Sordo stood to his ground. He is the hero of that drama within a drama. His thoughts are:

Dying was nothing and he had no picture of it or fear of it in his mind.

But living was a field of grain blowing in the wind on the side of a hill.
Living was a hawk in the sky. Living was an earthen jar of water in the dust of the threshing with the grain flailed out and the chaff blowing.
Living was a horse between your legs. (AFTA 304).
His thoughts turning more and more aesthetic about life reveals that he is more a servant of life than death. They were murdered brutally by the bomber planes. The mechanization of war brought senseless killing during wars. It enacts a mockery of the heroic principle.

The rest of the novel is the repeat of the story of El Sordo. Jordan is defeated by the treachery of the landscape, added by his fall from the horse. But Jordan is portrayed as a developed character when compared to El Sordo. The novel shows a profound maturity because Jordan has a developed perception about the realities of life, death and the circumstances one faces in life.

_For whom the Bell Tolls_ carries much unanswered fictional uncertainties. A climate for a shootout between Jordan and Pablo is created, but it fizzles out. Such moments are drawn twice in the novel. The suspense of a tragic turn of events hang above Jordan’s head because of Pablo’s disordered actions. The EL Sordo episode is a disconnect. It merely takes the place of a play within a play design. The destruction of the brave folk by bomber planes does in no way connect to the tragedy of Jordan. The episode is merely preparing the reader to Jordan’s to be an EL Sordo in the climax. Jordan’s story is surely not an unhappy one; neither is it full of worry, sadness, fear, malice, revenge or other inveterate emotional actions or reactions. He is noble and fearless. One can find no trace of self-contradiction or self-aggression. He is poised for victory. Everything goes well until Pablo does a treacherous misdeed of stealing away the explosives and the detonators. Anselmo is killed while the Bridge gets blown. The fall of Jordan is striking and unexpected as the unexpected stroke of death on the great and the noble. And Jordan doesn’t lose heart or his mind. He moves the rest of his compatriots to a safe distance and awaits a superb action of chivalry. He had
already dismissed death from disrobing his psyche by his clear perception of existential realities- living in the now and sensing the unity of individual human lives as one humanity and seeing death as not an end but an opportunity for a self-realization.

Death is no surprise to Robert Jordan, and he is not afraid of death, “because everyone has to die and once you understand death as a reality, all your fear disappears” (FWBT 439) He fights for his cause till the last moment and never withdraws because of the danger of death. He dies well with courage and bravery, sacrificing his life for the noble cause of humanity.

For Whom the Bell Tolls has been recognized as a novel full of different types of deaths, because of the unusual number of violent deaths and killings. Carlos Baker calls this novel “a study in doom,” (Baker 250) and Philip young describes For Whom the Bell Tolls as one “impregnated with the atmosphere of violent extinction of life.” (Young 80) William T. Moynihan describes the novel as ‘the study of a man going inexorably to his death for a purpose’. It is one of the best of all Hemingway’s fiction to examine his thought about death and dying. The novel stands as an in-depth study of death, a theme not only reflected in its title, but in Hemingway’s alternative title The Undiscovered Country from whose sojourn no traveler returns.

The novel represents the greatness of Jordan’s triumph over his foreknowledge of death to come if he blows up the bridge. Jordan goes through it because he is intellectually convinced that he is helping to defeat fascism. Pilar goes through it because she is a part of the revolution as she cannot stop. Pablo’s strong instinct to live makes him desert at the last moment and destroy the detonator. Then he, too, realizes in his own way that ‘No man is an island.’ He cannot stand to the idea of dynamiting the bridge. It is said that Hemingway took the title from a passage called “Devotions
“XVII” by John Donne. “No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main; if a cold be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were,… any man’s death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind; and therefore, never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee” (Bartlett 308). W.M. Frohock says: “The reader has not trouble in identifying himself satisfactorily with Jordan through their common humanity; he admits it that, in true fact, that man’s death diminishes him…” (Frohock 286).

Pilar has seen everything in the hands of Robert Jordan. She knows that the operation will be extremely difficult and Robert Jordan may lose his life. She reads death in the palm of Jordan, as she reads death in the face of the earlier dynamiter Kashkin, and even detected the odour of death on him. She knows that they are all in the shadow of death. She knows that the end of the bridge means the end of their lives. Pilar’s long and detailed account of the mob, led by Pablo, massacred the fascists of their village outlines for us many brave and less dignified ways to die. This part of the novel is full of atrocity, cruelty and death.

Pilar carefully narrates the details of the killings, stressing to Jordan, the difference between those who die well and those who do not, the difference between a dignified death and a miserable death. She is particularly upset when the peasants degenerate to a drunken mob and do not permit Don Guillermo to die with dignity. Lamenting the brutality because it does not allow a clean death to those who deserve one, no matter what their politics, she tells Jordan “… If Don Guillermo was to be killed, he should be killed quickly and with dignity” (AFTA 115). Even Pablo, who enjoys the slaughter as much as Pilar detests it, recognizes the importance of how one dies. He complains that the fascist priest lacked dignity when he died. To Pilar’s retort
that it is difficult to have dignity when chased by a mob, Pablo insists, “He died very badly. He had very little dignity” (*AFTA* 125).

There is El Sordo’s last hopeless battle against the fascists, Hemingway once again draws a distinction between dying well and dying poorly. “Trapped on the top of a hill, with three wounds, with a superior force surrounding him below, and airplanes bringing certain death from above, El Sordo does not fear death, but is angry at being trapped. He says he can take death as an aspirin” (*FWBT* 290).

Robert Jordan’s action does not show surrender but a humility that is representative of compassion and a readiness to challenge death. Robert Jordan’s choice is never a suicide. He considers suicidal death jumping ahead of time, as being irresponsible and cowardice. Suicide, according to Jordan, is an escape from the moment of truth.

One could deduce a list of perceptions in Jordan which could be called heroic perceptions. “He knew he himself was nothing and he knew death was nothing” (Hemingway, 410). The perception is intelligence because it is the existential reality. Individual “I” does not exist neither is there any ego, nor any divisions connected with the “I” of an individual. The individual is the undivided integral part of one large humanity. Robert Jordan expresses another perception in the following words to Maria who feels individuals are divided beings and separation is the end of the other person you love: “As long as there is one of us there is both of us…. I am thee also now…. You are me now.” (Hemingway 481-482). These words could be true for the whole of humanity. These are representative of what compassion and love ought to be and the true vision that one should see is: “….and let the hate go out. There is no others, once you got rid of your own self, the always ridding of self…” (Hemingway 465).
For Robert Jordan humanity and himself being one, the general cause of humanity alone matters and for him ‘death was nothing’. Robert Jordan has the right perception about the existential reality of the timelessness. Accordingly all full and energized actions should be in the present. One can keep the unconscious at bay by being fully present in the ‘now’. One’s happiness and fulfillment is available always in the timeless ‘now’ and never in the future or the past. Jordan says it often, “There is nothing else than now. There is neither yesterday, certainly, nor is there any tomorrow. How old must you be before you know that? There is only now…” (Hemingway 177).

Another important perception that we note in Jordan is that to set the disorder everywhere, one begins his action “here” and in the now. “If we win here, we will win everywhere” (FWBT 485). And of all Hemingway’s heroes in the earlier stories and novels, Robert Jordan is a character with more intelligence and much more sensibility. He steadily reaches a greater spiritual maturity and mental poise in the character of Santiago. The ‘I am’ in the individual and death are ‘nada’ or nothing and to live in the real sense would be to brave out against all adversities and yet remain compassionate with the rest of the life - forms.

Santiago is an elderly poor fisherman. He has been unlucky for the past eighty four days. He lives in an almost empty shack. The sails of his boat and his shirt are patched up at many places. His only companion is a boy named Manolin. Manolin has been fishing with the old man since the age of five. He was his apprentice. Manolin’s father made the boy join the crew of another boat because the boy and the old man caught no fish for forty days. The boy continues to maintain his affection and respect for the old man. He nurses him with a good sense of responsibility. They discuss
football while they eat. The story constitutes of four eventful days in the life of the old man, alone and very far off at sea.

The first day events run to about twenty nine pages. The boy wishes the old man good luck and the old man is in the dark sea and out of the harbor with only a bottle of water that would last for a day. Santiago decides to fish far out. Like all other Hemingway’s heroes, he chooses a context more challenging and risky. Hemingway’s heroes consider their action sporty even while sensing the inherent tragedy and death and consider them as a positive, accomplishment, achievement and victory over death.

The sea is a symbol of life and death. The sea is as symbolic as fishing-which is one of the oldest occupations of the human race all over the world. The sea is a giver of life to mankind. The imagery used by Hemingway is rather subtle as the fishing community is engaged in catching fish, to sustain their lives. Man tills the land raises a crop for a year or so and then makes his harvest, which is a long drawn process. Hunting animals or land for food is a very difficult job, whereas fishing is comparatively an instant life sustaining occupation. The sea is considered as mother by some fishing communities in some countries. It also acquires the symbol of death, when the sea becomes rough and the fisher man is unable to fish and save themselves from the storms on the high seas. The engagement of man with the sea is chosen by Hemingway to reiterate the futility of life. Hemingway forces the reader to contemplate and understand the inevitability of destruction for individuals when Santiago repeats the refrain. ‘Man can be destroyed but not defeated’.

The sea is both a symbol of life and death. The old man’s ruminating mind considers lightly of young men who think of the sea as masculine, “a contestant” or “even an enemy” (OMS 27). To him the sea was feminine “something that gave or
with - held great favors” (OMS 27). The writer’s unconscious expression exhibits his stand on life and death. While the majority may consider death as a no respecter of persons; as a contestant against the living or as an enemy to life and the living, he considers it as an opportunity for continuity and ‘great favors’. This is a poised maturity and a positive relation.

The old man is far out at sea with much hubris and courage to see if victory was his. Mere courage is insufficient for victory and it might be dangerous without a sense of being alive or without ingenuity and skill. The old man has all of this and much sensibility too. The old man follows a man-of-war bird. The dolphins are too fast for him to hook one. The bird leads him to a school of tuna. He snags a ten pound fish. He plans to use it as bait to catch a bigger fish. The question still remains - are our ingenuity, skills, courage and sensibility enough to understand and gain victory over death or death’s many minions? Hatred, violence, war and now terrorism are a few in the list of death’s minions. One makes a sacrifice and food of only the meek good ones. And thereby spend much of our life in safe guarding the food we have hunted from the rest of the humanity and the angry carnivores. Leave alone the meek good ones to survive and our battle against the minions of death would be prevented.

The narrative follows what one might call nature’s food chain, the nature’s rhythm, what Katherine T.Jobes calls it “a pattern of natural ritual” (Jobes 4). There is a continuum of hunting and being hunted. The dolphin catches the flying fish and is in turn caught by the old man. The victim fish energizes the old man and the victor catches a bigger fish he in his turn is victimized by sharks, while sharks in their turn are killed by man for man’s survival. Here is man caught up in the vortex of competing opposites of the victim and the victimizer, of war and peace. The common thought is to
win a war in order to win peace. The victorious enjoy peace but it is another war for the loser. And to be heroic is to take sides and try to outbrave the other in spite of the imminent death. There is no ideology or religion here. Just play the sport along the flow and rhythm to one’s own conviction. The novel is expressive of no moral.

The old man senses that he has hooked a large marlin on the first day of his expedition. The marlin tugs at the boat and pulls the boat farther out to sea. It swims against the current signifying that to Hemingway a heroic living is most of the time against the current. It continues to pull him out to sea into the night. Santiago reveals himself in these lines. ‘Fish’, he said softly, about, “I’ll stay with you until I am dead”. He will stay with me too, I suppose, the old man thought and he waited for it to be light” (OMS 44).

This is indeed a parable that signifies the unconscious working of the human mind-in attempting to defeat death by violence, one gets into the enduring trap of the push and pull, the tug of war that is endless. The mind is tempted to seek moral courage or a helpmate or worn out religious utterances. The killing silence of the interim between the now and the restless future is very much desperate and a brush with death. And the old man raves in expletives on the second day of the episode. The marlin shows no signs of tiring.

The line of relationship between life and death is taut – stiff at one point, a bird rests on the line but soon flees away when the marlin jerks the line, cutting the old man’s hand. His hand develops cramp. The day wearily ends. The human mind has its own stupid game at hand- to move to the past or sleep and dream. Such unrealities are as unhelpful as faith. The mental pain of the old man is clearly expressed. First, he says,
“‘Fish’ I love you and respect you very much. But I will kill you dead before this day ends “let us hope so, he thought” (OMS 45). Then he says, “I wish the boy here and that I had some salt, he said aloud” (OMS 39), some of these speeches, to himself, the bird or the fish help him relieved of his mental restlessness. Though old, his physical body does well to brave out the odd. It is the ignorance of the unseen that sets the minds rooster in disorder. “I wish I could see him only once to know what I have against me” (OMS 39).

The Marlin is never coming up, not changing its course seeming steadily under water at the depth six hundred feet. The old man begins to brood over the qualities of his enemy. He senses risk, loss and even death. However he determines to fight till the very end. The life and death battle continues and the strange fish is not getting tired. The old man is resolute to wrestle till the end though he is bleeding in his hands and his body racked with fatigue and pain. He expresses his exhaustion in these words. “You are killing me fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to. Never have I known or seen a greater, or more beautiful, or a calmer or more noble thing than you, brother come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who” (OMS 75). By the night on the second day Santiago gets some respite, rest, food and sleep. The stars were out. They were his distant friends. Then he begins to connect with the fish.

The fish is my friend too”, he said aloud. “I have never seen or heard of such a fish. But I must kill him. I am glad we do not have to try to kill the stars” Imagine if each day a man must try to kill the moon, he thought. The moon runs away. But imagine if a man each day should have to try to kill son? We were born lucky, he thought”. (OMS 61)
His thoughts end up like this: “I do not understand these things, he thought. But it is good that we do not have to try to kill the sun or the moon or the stars. It is enough to live on the sea and kill our true brothers” (OMS 61).

Hemingway’s outlook on life and death is obvious in these lines, when the cycle of nature gains promise, either the man will kill the fish or the man will be killed by the fish. Santiago realizes that he is a part of nature and the cycle of birth, life and death is a natural process, where everyone, whether man, fish or beast will get eliminated in the process. That is why Santiago calls the fish his natural brothers. The common old fisherman like Santiago understands the pattern of nature, where man is a part and parcel of nature. The intelligence of man may help him gain a momentary superiority over nature but ultimately nature is the Victor and man is the vanquished. Man is disturbed but mankind is not defeated, as the struggle with nature and within nature continues. Hemingway makes his reader realize this truth that life in the individual is always at risk, but the human race will continue to survive and cannot be defeated.

Hemingway’s attempt at philosophizing over killing and living is at once metaphysical and mundane in the text. Then he feels incapable of a true living philosophy. One need not kill in order to live. All life forms have come to live and die a natural death and not by killing the other. The universe is intelligent enough not to set man to kill the stars and the moon for survival. Anyway the grotesque style of thoughts rightly represents the lay old fisherman’s desperation. The old man has invited the moment upon himself. He has challenged not the strange fish but Death himself. The six hundred feet deep sea dweller is like death which is commonly thought of dwelling in Hades, a place immeasurably deep and dark.
Santiago might represent people who for, sport, pride or living try to hook death and may end up alive but are the haggard tired and broken signifying that they have already made a tryst with death. The old man continues to rave. “Thank God, they are not as intelligent as we kill them; although they are nobler and more able” (OMS 52). And a little later, “Let him think I’m more than I am and I will be so. I wish I was the fish … with everything he has against only my will and intelligence” (OMS 53). And further on he says, “I will kill him in all greatness and his glory’…..I’ll show him what a man can do and what a man endures” (OMS 54). This seems he is in a stupor, drunk with pride and he raves like a minion of death. He is not seeking food but in supper with death. He is in a dragnet of his psyche, ignorant of a more sickening battle in which he is going to lose like a gambler. And one might ask, what is so heroic about Santiago, then? The centrality of the novel is that none of these effect a change in his indomitable courage and in his willingness to fight again and again.

In the dawn of the third day, the fish is still circling and jumping. It resembles some strange cultic dance of death or some signaling to surrender in worship. But Santiago is too lesser a god for patience and blurts out,

‘Fish’, the old man said ‘fish’, you are going to have to die anyway. Why you have to kill me too? That way nothing is accomplished, he thought. His mouth was too dry to speak but he could not reach for the water now. I must get him alongside this time, he thought. I am not good for many more turns. Yes, you are, he told himself, you are good forever. (OMS 75)

The hunt has turned into a battle for life now for Santiago. The bull is let lose and the bullfighter has to kill the animal. Usually the matador dodges to suit his
piercing the bulls’ heart. But here in the story the fish dodges about. Finally, the marlin weakens. The old man pushes himself beyond his limits, pulling in line every time the fish circles. He works restlessly until around noon. The fish is now near enough to the boat and Santiago drives his harpoon into the ‘fish’ heart. The marlin’s ‘strange’ death occurs at noon. It is a moment of defeat for the fish while it is a climax victory for the old man. The reality of life is such that no defeat and no victory is final. It is a moment among many such moments and the victor may exchange his victory with the defeated. The victim becomes the victimized. And such an episode is waiting to unfold pretty soon.

_The Old Man and the Sea_ is indirectly indicative of the signs, symptoms, and the state of the mind and behavior of an aged man. The story is structured to portray an old veteran fisherman hero’s final moments when death is at his door and how he physically or morally responds. They are externalized as an eventful fishing affair far into the sea and the rest of it. The old age behavior is part of the human nature which in turn is part of Nature.

In the last moments of parting from life, the super annulated think they are unlucky and their inner mind is exactly like this: “He was an old man who fished alone…and he had gone eighty four days now without taking a fish… The sail was patched…, it looked like the flag of permanent defeat” (_OMS 1_). His dress, his countenance and the rest of it are externalized statements of his inner self. “Everything about him was old except his eyes ….were cheerful and undefeated” (_OMS 1_). “His shirt had been patched so many times that it was like the sail. ….The old man’s head was very old though and with his eyes closed there was no life in his face” (_OMS 17_). the aged and the dying are mostly sad, lonely but calculative and wishful. “But he
thought, I keep them with precision. Only I have no luck any more, but who knows? May be today. Every day is a new day. It is better to be lucky” (OMS 29). They feel that death is around and the quote from the novel is “…perhaps my big fish is around them. My big fish must be somewhere” (OMS 30). The aged often talked to themselves as in the story lines: “He had probably started to talk aloud when alone, when the boy had left” (OMS 30).

A sense of loneliness creeps in and the old people seek the presence of their kith and kin. The old man has sent the bait down and is hoping for the big fish to go for it. The bait itself is an enhancer of death. A smaller fish is fed to catch the next bigger one and subsequently the next bigger one is used as a bait to catch the largest one. In nature everything and everyone is killed by the next powerful in the hierarchy.

The old man’s struggle with the line between him and the marlin is intense. Only brief moments of respite are now and then experienced and the tension resumes. These are similar to the experience at the old age – one goes through alternating sense of rest and restlessness, of wellbeing and ill-health, of hope and hopelessness. Deep down the trench and fathoms down in one’s mind the thought of death begins to gnaw and tug.

Then it came again. This time it was a tentative pull, neither solid nor heavy, and he knew exactly what it was. …The old man held the line delicately, and softly, with his left hand, unleashed it from the stick. Now he could let it run through his fingers without the fish feeling any tension. (OMS 35).
First the aged ones wish death to be slower and as days drag on they wish it was over sooner. One often is seen saying, ‘God, please, take me soon’. Such a moment is expressed by these lines in the novel. ‘He’ll take it’ the old man said aloud. “God help him take it” (OMS 36). Santiago unrolls most of his reserve coils representing the aged who is drained off all his hold on life, all his reserves out, the pride drowning deeper and the great wait for death is draining off. Death for many plays sport like the marlin here in the story, before finally taking away. Sometimes death leaves them to live some more time.

This one last battle has to be fought alone but Santiago says “I wish I had the boy. To help me and to see this, “…. no one should be alone in their old age, he thought” (OMS 40). Older men think of birds and animals as loved ones. They often address the birds, animals and even the sun, the moon and the stars. They often make a careless move and hurt themselves and might end up bleeding like Santiago. One often develops long cramps like him. The visuals of the great fish resemble the Renaissance picture of death with his armour. “His sword was as long as a baseball bats and tapered like a rapier... And the old man saw the great scythe-blade of his tail...” (OMS 52) As their final moments of life many pick up prayer and worship like Santiago does in his battle with the marlin. “… Jesus, Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners now and at the hour of our death” (OMS 54)

One becomes senile, impatient, restless and irritated like Santiago. The tight fishing line and the way he held it represent his heavy tension filled moments and he cries out saying, “Fish”, the old man said. “Fish you are going to have to die anyway. Do you have to kill me too?” … “You are killing me fish, the old man thought. But you have a right to ….come on and kill me. I do not care who kills who”. (OMS 75)
One wants to get rid of the few last stray guilt feeling he might have. He may even want to confess his sins “I shouldn’t have gone out so far, fish,” he said. “Neither for you nor for me”. “I’m sorry fish” (OMS 89). The journey with the death is a smooth ride for Santiago but it did not last long. The sharks make a mess of the affair. They try to intervene and wanting to play a spoil sport and they succeed in spite of the valiant fight that Santiago gives. The defeat leaves the marlin stripped bare and skeletal. Not only was the marlin stripped naked but also Santiago. It signifies the preparative last rite and Santiago thinks rightly,

“Bed is my friend. Just bed, he thought. Bed will be a great thing. It is easy when you are beaten, he thought. I never know how easy it was” (OMS 96). This is a sign of compassion and humility and life ends fulfilled with death. The love of nature increases as one nears death. One prepares for death by developing compassion for fellow creatures. Death in life or life in death experiences are representative of an ordeal by loneliness. You cannot have a partner except the nature around you which stays neutral. The critical statement of an Earl Rovit is, “In this moment Santiago loses Santiago, Santiago merges into his struggle with the fish, merges into the fish and the universal struggle of life and becomes elemental Man and quest hero”( Jobes 105).

The old man identifies himself completely with the great fish and other animals about him who are in the cycle of kill and get killed, more violence in nature’s chain of violence and more violence in the style of “I don’t care who kills who” (OMS 75). His determination to kill the fish never relaxed as well as his sorrow for the plight of the fish. Is he hypocritical or is there a sense of angst, for living creatures’ inability to break this tragic destiny and destination. He really puts himself in the place of the fish. The plight of the fish is his plight, too. By killing the noble fish, he has also killed his
ego and himself. He is not out of the blues yet. He cannot be so soon out of nature’s rhythmic cycle of violence and death. Nature did not thrust it on him. He has invited it upon himself. The two of them like brothers start on their journey. The marlin is much larger than the man had assumed - about a thousand five hundred pounds - too large to get into boat with him. He straps the fish to the side of the boat. He raises his patched sails and sets his course, confident that he will be able to navigate back to land.

An hour passes by when a large Mako shark appears. It takes a bite out of the marlin before the old man drives his harpoon into the shark’s brain, killing it. He loses the harpoon in the process. Two hours later, two shovel-nosed sharks appear. The old man kills one with his make shift weapon of a knife rigged to the oar. The attack and the spree does not save the marlin. One – quarter of the marlin has been eaten. More and more sharks appear. At midnight, Santiago’s mad attacks with improper weapons fail to save the situation. The battle is unequal and all the players are equal and unconsciously violent. While it is a battle for Santiago, it is feast for the sharks. The flesh of the fish is gone. The implication is that no weapons hold good in the battle of life. It is a battle too subtle and ever shifting and altering, treacherous and fatal.

A series of thoughts crowd his mind. The thoughts are representative of the thoughts of the general humanity everywhere in a similar situation. Santiago feels for the marlin alive and dead. First the idea of sin crops up. “I have no understanding of it and I am not sure that I believe in it. Perhaps it was a sin to kill the fish. I suppose it was even though I did it to keep me alive and feed many people. But then everything is a sin” (OMS 85).

The unconscious is a tricky trap. It leads one nowhere. It keeps us in a senseless pain of guilt and sin. The unconscious brings up the thought first and later its
negation followed by a justification. The swing is endless. The imputation of the ego is “You killed him for pride and because you are a fisherman. You loved him when he was alive and you loved him after. If you love him it is not a sin to kill. Or is it more?” (OMS 85). The pattern of the unconscious is clearly the same all the time. It has led humanity nowhere. It has ever been the centre of everything we call civilization and culture. ‘Or is it more?’ (OMS 85). Leads to another swing away from the joys of the present. How can love and killing go together it’s a justification peddled by the human psyche, by the unconscious mind.

The skeletal remains of the marlin are not an indicator of defeat. It is not a marker of Santiago or a man’s defeat. They are the end – marks of violence. They are end - marks of violent past, a violent human history. It is the mark of heroic history in the life of a common man. The skeleton of the marlin is garbage on the beach now. Yet, it still possesses a strange beauty and mistaken for the very thing that destroyed it most brutally.

Sin or guilt has no place in the scheme of things in Hemingway’s novels. The old man’s thoughts and action do not border on religious doctrine. The intended picture is the resultant state of the common humanity in their moments of defeat or loss. It expresses the sense of futility of one’s own labour. Sin is an interpolation and so is violence and death in the stream of life. It is not a tragic flaw either. Flaw is just a euphemism for sin.

Ordinarily seen the story ends in defeat. But looking at the goal and purpose of Santiago’s action, it is not a defeat. His objective was to break the spell of unluck. He proposed to fish very far into the sea and to catch a large fish. All his objectives have fruitioned. He won but lost the trophy. What followed was an adversity. He played
into the new sport both bloody and deadly. The fight was valiant through day and
night. He was merely hurt like Jacob in the Bible story, who wrestles with a
supernatural being until day brake only to be hurt in his thigh. So does the old man and
limping and hurtling forward proudly to his rest and dream of white lions on an African
beach.

In another sense, Santiago braved far into the sea. The sea signifies death in
myriad ways. The sea in the story did not employ the storm or natural calamities to
defeat him. Neither did it use the giant marlin against him. He invites the rest of the
moment upon himself. Santiago calls the marlin his brother, fellow life-form in the
existential reality. In such a reality it did not matter who kills whom as long as there is
no animosity. On the contrary the sharks seem to act like minions of violence and
death. In such a battle between life and death, no one really seems to win or lose but the
courage and conviction matter. And so is the novel whose significance is, “Man may
be destroyed but not defeated” (OMS 84).

Death according to Hemingway is not defeat but a fulfillment and a completion.
Nature is secular in character. It is human nature, his psyche that has created religious
significance in nature. Man in his fear of death and in his sense of insecurity of a future
in the universe that is emotionless, has created Gods and a metanature called heaven or
hell. Hemingway’s characters carry the marks of religion over them. They are
peripheral markers or as pointers show their emotional drive and not a belief system.
These religious words have long remained in the languages of men but their privileging
is lost and they are no more at the centre. The Old man and the sea offers a tragic
experience. Santiago’s crying for the help of Gods do not actually help him. They
express his emotions and not religion. They don’t control the significations of his
tragic experience at sea with the marlin. Leo Gurko’s statement needs an analysis in this connection as it says,

In this universe, changeless and bare of divinity, everyone has his fixed role to play. Santiago’s role is to pursue the great marlin, “That which I was born for”, he reflects; the marlin is to live in the deepest parts of the sea and escape the pursuit of man. The two of them struggle with each other to the death, but without animosity or hatred. (Bloom 14)

It is true the universe is changeless and bare of divinity. But to say that everyone has a role fixed is still a religious statement which shows a belief in the theology of predestination. No one fixes the role. The place, circumstances and the actions are for human nature and the nature outside him to fall upon. The play and the game is open to nature and man. The story does not portray any destiny but a flow and the unexpected and the unknown show themselves on the way while one responds either decisively or like a minion. What matters, then, is whether to be alive, positively or passively die and fizzle out.

Further on, Gurko says that Hemingway’s heroes show a “movement to get out of society and its artifices is not motivated by the desire to escape but by the desire for liberation” (Gurko 19). Henry deserts from the Italian army but he only goes into a sort of hibernation of pleasure and more pleasure. And when reality of tragic loss one after another, takes place, the story ends not with a bang but a whimper. Robert Jordan does not disengage from the society, but keeps on finding new ones to engage like in a family. His relationship with Maria is not hibernating for pleasure but an active engagement with pro-life forces and against anti-life ideologies. Clinton S. Burhans JR. says,
Hemingway has not evolved new moral values; rather then he has reaffirmed man’s oldest ones-courage, love, humility, solidarity and interdependence. It is their basis which is new- a basis not in supernaturalism or abstraction, but hard-won through actual experience in a naturalistic universe which is at best indifferent to man and his values. (Jobes 80)

Hemingway tells us, as E.M.Halliday observes, that “We are part of a universe offering no assurance beyond the grave, and we are to make what we can of life by a pragmatic ethic spun bravely out of man himself in full and steady cognizance that the end is darkness” (Bloom 52).

The old man’s struggle is every man’s struggle in nature. Nature has a permeating order. Man has to play his game of life within this order. The order is similar to the Hegelian logic of thesis and anti-thesis. This explains the rhythmic tension of opposed forces in nature. The tussle has endless varieties. Animals have only one which is auto programmed. One kills the other for food and subsequently the victimizer becomes the victim to a powerful one higher than itself. Man has stopped killing other man for food a long time ago. The flying fish struggles against the man-of-war bird; the warbler struggles against the hawk, the great winged fish struggles against Santiago. Earlier men have hunted each other for food. Modern games and sports are an imitation of the hunting and killing styles or in similar actions and movements. And the hunt for food is replaced by goals or scores. The order of the struggle between opposed forces is represented by two competing teams or players. And Hemingway’s playing of baseball in the story is aesthetically congruent and blending with the narrative. The present struggles are of political, economic or intellectual kind. Now mankind is caught
up in the vortex of the opposed political ideologies or expected social roles. The struggle runs towards violence and death. And in the real life context heroes are those who perform like Santiago.

Hemingway is not trying to measure the world with man as his gauge or standard but he is attempting to observe the predicament man is facing and against what forces. The major novels bring out the predicaments the American Dream invites. The Americans live by their wants. They live by their fears. They live by their hopes. They hope on material plenty, material happiness and material security. The word ‘material’ could also be substituted by the word physical. They hope the ending would be happy if they get these. And in reality they get the material plenty like the giant marlin. But, security and happiness keep eluding them. They lose hope; they turn aggressive and violent. They feel more and more insecure. They seek to grip their hope on weapons. The weapons are as weak as Santiago’s against the sharks. Their fear of death becomes increasingly dominant frustration and morbidity takes over. The American dream is all along concretized in Hemingway’s novels.

Things in nature and far more independent are freer spirits than man as the animals, birds, wind, fire, earth and water are. There are far more powerful things than him- the sun, moon and stars. They too do not fear death. Therefore in these propensities, they are Santiago’s brothers. The sun, moon and stars are beyond killing by man. Santiago is amidst strong brotherhood and he need not feel lonely, even while he is far off at sea. He has to know that he need not feel proud, either, for being courageous and fearless of death. There are other brothers who are much more powerful than him. This reading of man’s unity with the rest of the universal soul is the only moral courage to cling on to in battling against death all alone. The fellow human
beings indicated by the boy and the community are quite far away while Santiago is alone at the troubled waters. “No man is an island” is, then, affirmed in *The Old man and the Sea*.

Santiago’s story is a one-man-up attempt against death. He goes far off at sea. He catches the big marlin to prove to death that he could win like in an arm wrestling against

The great Negro from Cienfuegos who was the strongest man on the docks. They had gone one day and one night with their elbows on a chalk line on the table and their forearms straight up and their hands gripped tight. Each one was trying to force the other’s hand down onto the table. … Blood came out under the finger nails of both his and the Negro’s hands … the Negro’s shadow was huge and it moved on the wall as the breeze moved the lamps. (*OMS* 57)

Santiago tries to arm twist death with his indomitable courage skill and endurance on the sea. He wants to prove his prowess with the biggest of his catch. At the end the lesson he learns is that death sought not the big fish but his hubris. No other sacrifice would appease death other than his humility. The opposing forces represented by the sharks bring him to a self-realization.

Will Durant comments on the philosopher Arthur Schopenhauer who wrote *The World as Will and India* in 1818. The tragic death of Napoleon, is described as, “ – Will defeated at last, and dark. Death the only Victor of all the Wars.” (Durant 300). The inevitability of Death is similarly echoed by in all his novels where man is a speck and the universe is overwhelmingly incomprehensive as felt by Santiago. The role of
man, is represented in the role of Santiago – the aged fisherman, doing one of the most ancient of occupations trying to overcome nature, firm in his ideal, yet certain that death will strike him.

Finally Santiago observes that even death could shy away before his humility which is part of self-realization. The experience communicated by the literary artifact becomes a part of one’s lived experience and seems actually to have happened.