

War and Suicide:

A comparative analysis of Yukio Mishima and Ernest Hemingway in the context of Existentialism and Emile Durkheim's Study of Suicide

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2. The thesis does not contain material previously published or written by a third party, except where this is appropriately cited through full and accurate referencing.
3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Abstract:

Literature reflects its time and serves as a time capsule that encompasses pivotal experiences of the world and society. This paper will focus on an important timeline in human history and that would be the two World Wars, and how the macabre and bleak disposition of the war abetted the rise of despair and hopelessness in society. This paper will particularly analyse the interlaced themes of war, existential angst, and suicide and will do a side-by-side comparison of Ernest Hemingway from American literature and Yukio Mishima from Japanese literature. In this study, the primary aim is to bridge a link between these two authors, who have written numerous post-war novels about the war itself and society. *Arcane to the West*, Yukio Mishima shares many parallels with Ernest Hemingway due to his struggle with masculinity and World War II. While there are significant parallels between the themes of these two authors, there are also important differences in their method of writing, which this paper will be highlighting. The novels that will be analysed are *A Farewell to Arms*, *The Sun Also Rises*, *Confessions of a Mask*, and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*.

Chapter 1: Introduction:

Literature mirrors its society, the values, the religion, the politics, the virtue, the vices, and the deeply imbued multifarious dimensions of society, all of it is reflected in literature. Historical events in the guise of fiction, tell us real stories and narratives, encompassing sentimental experiences relatable to copious people. Life-altering events such as wars, genocides, social movements, and anarchy too are represented in literature. The world has seen ceaseless destruction, events that have permanently altered the life of the human population. The two World Wars are a prominent example of such an event, with approximately 120 million people dying due to these wars. The destruction, chaos, and mayhem contrived a feeling of forlorn melancholia across the world, making human beings question the meaning of life. Each society and culture affected by war raised a new generation with different values as society holistically dealt with unprecedented change.

Undoubtedly, with the world going through such a transition in the last decade due to the World Wars, it was the brave journalists, writers and authors who persevered with their writing, their perpetuation resulted in the formation of a facet of literature that highlights this unprecedented change in society and delineates the macabre reality to people in the guise of fiction. For my paper, two authors have been selected whose lives were altered due to this transition, from American literature, this paper will focus on Ernest Hemingway and from Japanese literature, we will be looking into the works of Yukio Mishima. Both Mishima and Hemingway bore witness to the catastrophic World Wars, Hemingway was directly connected to World War I and II and Yukio Mishima to World War II. As there will be a side-by-side comparison of their writings and novels, it is intriguing that these post-war icons chose to end their lives by committing suicide, albeit in two very different ways. For this paper, I will do an existentialist analysis of these two authors and their works, from Mishima, *Confessions of a Mask* and *Temple of the Golden Pavilion* and Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* and *A Farewell*

to *Arms*, to understand their stance on trying to find meaning in a disorderly society, a comparative analysis will be done while simultaneously inspecting their novels through the Japanese genre, “I-novel as a genre”, to comprehend the personal feelings expressed by the authors in their writing. Since my analysis is primarily on the two authors, this entails the usage of Durkheim’s study of Suicide to comprehend their life and life choices better.

Yukio Mishima and Ernest Hemingway were born in two very different societies and yet remain analogous to one another in terms of life and themes. Both of these key writers came from dysfunctional families, with them having a difficult relationship with at least one parent. Again, both authors are known to have complicated relationships with women, especially, due to their insecurity with their masculinity. Despite the parallels between these two authors, there has been little to no comparative analysis between them, but there remains ample space for various kinds of comparison. Furthermore, not only dysfunctional family, but war, and society play a fundamental role in their decision to commit suicide, and yet no research has been done to highlight these parallels. Another significant point to note would be how both of these authors utilise life events and incorporate them in their novels, their writings are a direct reflection of their inner ideologies and personal thoughts, often their central protagonist being an embodiment of themselves.

Despite their pivotal role as post-war authors, neither Mishima nor Hemingway directly served in either of the World Wars, but they were closely aligned with the wars. Yukio Mishima was not qualified to serve in the war on the pretext of tuberculosis, which was later proven that he advertently feigned illness to not serve in the Second World War, something that Mishima was deeply ashamed of as noted in his auto-biographical fiction *Confessions of a Mark*, yet he possessed no sense of contrition. As he was disqualified from serving, he was instead sent to work in an aeroplane factory, it was only once the war was over, that Mishima could resume his studies at Tokyo University where he formally began his writing career with short stories.

Mishima was no soldier one could even call him a coward for his counterfeit illness, yet his writing deeply resonated with the common people and it is because he was no soldier, his voice encompassed the sentiments of the mass population. Likewise, Hemingway too did not directly serve in the war, albeit one would argue he was more directly involved with the war than Mishima. He served as an ambulance driver in World War I, and in World War II, he was an American correspondent for the magazine *Collier's*, covering the news of the catastrophic war. Like Mishima, Hemingway too failed to qualify as a soldier, as he was rejected due to his poor eye-sight, but his biographer Kenneth Lynn doubts the genuine interest in Hemingway's wish to enlist, as he believed Hemingway was intimidated by the Warfare while simultaneously he desired the masculine validation of a soldier. (73). So, as there are ample parallels and nuances between these authors and their works, the primary aim is to formulate a link between them, while simultaneously analysing the deep intricacies of their fiction and lives.

Chapter 2: Methodology:

2.1. Existentialism:

Existentialism is a philosophy that expounds the tribulation of being human. A single philosopher or theorist cannot be ascribed as the fundamental founder of existentialism, this vastly multifaceted theory has been formulated over a prolonged duration of time through the collaborative contribution of many pivotal philosophers. Some of the key players in this field would be, Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, Fredrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, Jean-Paul Sartre, and so on, as each of them introduced a novel concept pertinent to the theory. Now, the significance of Hegel in the conceptualisation of Existentialism is immense, but factually, he was never an existentialist. The notion of existentialism rose as a repudiation of the notion of

Hegelianism by Hegel, whose ideas were rejected by Kierkegaard to establish the ideology of Existentialism. To elucidate the profundity of Existentialism in my paper, one must know that it is an incredibly multifaceted philosophy with varied exposition. To begin with, there are two approaches to this, one is theistic and the other is atheistic. Philosophers such as Sartre, Camus and Nietzsche have a more atheistic take on existentialism, while other philosophers such as Kierkegaard and Marcel remain devoted to a more theistic version of it. So, there are innumerable nuances to the philosophy depending on the philosopher but at its core, the philosophy of existentialism revolves around the essence of finding meaning in life.

For my paper, I will be scrutinising Jean-Paul Sartre's version of existentialism. In Sartre's book, *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre delves into his perception of life and crisis regarding human existence. For Sartre, freedom is a primary motif, in his definition, "We are condemned to freedom, as we said earlier, thrown into freedom And we can see that this abandonment has no other origin than the very existence of freedom" (Sartre 378), highlighting the arduous burden placed upon us as humans, the choices we make as free people is what gives meaning to our life. Yet, freedom does not void one of responsibility, he believes that men have the important space for freedom, which gives them the pivotal responsibility of making and owning up to their decisions. This entire responsibility of indefinite freedom is directly connected to mankind's relation with morality, accountability, and religion. To elaborate, Sartre believes men must choose to lead an authentic life by actively making decisions that make life genuine, in other words, the paramount goal in life is to lead an authentic life. In the words of Sartre, "Freedom is existence, and in it existence precedes essence", (Sartre 435), the role of human beings is to find the meaning of their lives instead of believing in any form of essentialism. This ideology of existence coming before essentialism directly is connected to the rejection of God. "The contingent cannot be God. Therefore, there is no God. Or starting from the other end, if God is not contingent, then he does not exist,

because existence is contingent.” (Sartre 22). So, Sartre claims our motive is rooted in objective meaning, and not in divine beliefs.

2.2 The I-Novel as a Genre:

The “I-novel” as a genre is a rather obscure and Japanese-centric genre that focuses on the lives of the authors, and how the writing is a direct reflection of their own lives and experiences. The conception of this genre was during the Meiji period, a tributary of “Japanese naturalism”. It is a genre that has become freighted with notions of the self, art, and literature. (Tyler 663). Albeit not a very popular genre in the West, authors utilise this genre of fiction, which consists of narrative writing, and setting, where events and thoughts described in the novels often parallel the life of the author. As Yamanouchi claims, “The 'I-novel' is a peculiarly Japanese phenomenon with the following features. First, it is a straightforward autobiographical confession of the hero who is none other than the author himself. Secondly, the hero is in search of a peculiarly personal ideal or moral vision, which is at odds with the bourgeois standard of life. Thirdly, as a result, the hero becomes inevitably alienated from and eventually defeated by society.” (3). It can be stated that Mishima and Hemingway, both authors utilised this concept of the I-novel as a genre to focus on their agony amidst their own experience with the World Wars and their personal story of alienation. While Hemingway is no I-novelist, his novels have deep parallels to his own life.

2.3. Emile Durkheim’s Study of Suicide:

French sociologist, Emile Durkheim wrote his book called, *Suicide*, in 1897, which was an extensive case study of society to discern certain patterns in the human proclivity to commit suicide. In his book, Emile Durkheim raised the question of how societies continue to hold

together, and he explained that the disposition of society is tantamount to a human body, where all body parts must function holistically for it to remain healthy. He states that two aspects matter in terms of suicide, one would be internal and pathological causes, and the other would be external causes such as climate, temperature, etc. Through his research, Durkheim claims that suicide can be divided into four patterns, Altruistic Suicide, Egoistic Suicide, Anomic Suicide, and Fatalistic Suicide.

In Durkheim's words, the two most important reasons behind suicide would be societal integration and social regulation. The stronger the integration one has with society, the lower the possibility of suicide. Several deciding factors make certain classes, religions and people more susceptible to suicide than others, for example, Catholics have a higher level of societal integration due to their religion, which is why they have a lower rate of suicide compared to protestants. Likewise, human relationships are fundamental in this aspect, suicide is higher among single people than people in stable relationships, again people coming from big loving families are less susceptible to suicide than those of dysfunctional or small families. Again, the rate of suicide was low during the war as due to war, societal integration increased, but in the period after the war, the suicide rate skyrockets, again, ironically, the suicide rate among soldiers is higher than civilians. The lack of belief in religion too is connected to Durkheim's study of suicide, "Religion protects man against the desire for self-destruction, it is not that it preaches the respect for his person to him with arguments sui generis; but because it is a society. What constitutes this society is the existence of a certain number of beliefs and practices common to all the faithful, traditional and thus obligatory." (125), as noted, people with certain religious beliefs feel more connected to society due to people with similar mindsets. (Durkheim 125). The more numerous and stronger these collective states of mind are, the stronger the integration of the religious community, and the greater its preservative value. (Durkheim 125). Now, to shed more light upon the four kinds of suicide

Altruistic Suicide: Altruistic suicide is a selfless form of suicide; one could even call its scarification for the greater good. Durkheim calls soldiers to wilfully give up their lives in war due to patriotism or a greater cause a prime example of altruistic suicide. Often, the people who do this do it out of a societal obligation because they believe this is expected of them.

Egoistic Suicide: Egoistic suicide takes place when there is a lack of societal integration, one's will to live is highly connected to the surrounding people and society, and it slowly diminishes with the lesser one can connect to these two surrounding things. For example, Suicide rates were higher for people coming from dysfunctional and smaller families, than people from loving and big families. Again, men had a higher rate of suicide than women, but women who reached adulthood without any close family had the highest rate of suicide. So, the stronger the sense of belonging one has to a community, the lower the chances of suicide.

Anomic Suicide: This is the suicide that takes place when people feel lost due to a lack of social regulation, without social standards people are left with a level of confusion and uncertainty within society. The unregulated freedom of choice becomes difficult for people, instead of feeling liberating in Durkheim's words normally after a great change in transition of society causes a rise in suicide.

Fatalistic Suicide: This is caused when there is no freedom in society. A primary example would be the society of North Korea.

While all four kinds of suicides are important, for my paper, anomic suicide and egoistic suicide will be analysed as it is prevalent with the authors.

2.4 Literature Review:

Richard Claude Thorsby in his thesis, titled, *Idealized Masculinity: Father-Son Relationships, Male Initiation, and Solitude e in Hemingway's Short Fiction*", discusses Hemingway's troubled life and the reason behind his intense desire for overt masculinity.

Thorsby discusses Hemingway's relationship with his father and how it has an effect on his character and writing, citing, "Ernest Hemingway's tumultuous relationship with his father created anxiety in his personal life but provided rich material and emotionality for his stories." (Thorsby 14). In many of his short stories, he would have an intricate relationship with his father which directly paralleled Hemingway's relationship with his father, and as written in this paper, an important segment related to that was "Male-Conflict". As described in the paper, "Perhaps the most important process for a character to achieve successful masculinity is careful navigation in the world of male conflict." (Thorsby 24), this key segment is notable in many of Hemingway's works irrespective of the characters relationship with his father and Thorsby states there is a recurring pattern in most of the short stories, where one would comprise of three things, firstly, an intricate father-son bonding, themes of male conflict, and finally solitude and healing, where they would have a period of introspective solitude, from which they come out as masculine adults (8).

Kinya Tsuruta's, *KINKAKUJI: Reality and Betrayal*, highlights the criticism of Mizoguchi's character, emphasising Mizoguchi's lack of growth as a character by the end of the novel, "Nakamura argues that Mizoguchi experiences no internal growth. This point is taken even further by Kobayashi Hideo, who, in his interview with Mishima, suggests that insofar as Mizoguchi never goes beyond his psychological walls and never forms any real relationships with the outside world." (352), while I do agree to an extent with this point, Mizoguchi does indeed not formulate any real relationship with the outside world, but I believe character growth always does not lead to positive growth, in Mizoguchi's case, his growth lies more in acceptance of his freedom. This development goes hand-in-hand with Mizoguchi's decision to burn the temple, which too has been speculated by his critics. According to Tsuruta, a popular theory of why Mizoguchi decided to burn the temple the destruction of the beauty

of the Golden Pavilion, was the belief that Mizoguchi wanted to burn himself alongside the temple, an attempt to surrender his life in the name of beauty, but this idea has been criticised by the literary critic Nakamura Mitsuo, who renders this ideology as redundant and illogical, citing her disappointment with Mishima's representation of Mizoguchi, citing him as a one-dimensional character. Now, Tsuruta delves deeper into the character of Mizoguchi while considering the opinion of both the critics, Tsuruta brings an important point into this discussion which is the need to control, leading a life where he had no control of his own, Mizoguchi's stammer is not his only reason for his lack of control, but his lack of cognitive ability to distinguish between the real world and his inner world is what makes Mizoguchi lack control, something reiterated by Tsuruta herself. An important question raised by Tsuruta was, "The question is, then, did Mizoguchi burn the temple to participate in life or to get back at life?" (Tsuruta 80), I believe, Mizoguchi's burning of the temple was for multifarious reasons, and one of them is to participate in life, throughout the novel, Mizoguchi slowly gains life-experiences that dismantle his view of the reality and inner world, the burning of the temple is his final straw of action that breaks the disillusionment of his inner world and reality.

In Hussein Mnahi Munshid and Abdul Ghani Ahu's paper, titled. *Representation of the Impact of War Violence on the Love in Ernest Hemingway's Fiction*, the authors probe the effect of war on Hemingway's characters, resulting in their desperate attempt to seek love. Munshid and Ahu claim, that in *A Farewell to Arms*, Frederic's alienation caused by the war made him indulge in numerous meaningless relationships, in their own words, "Sex with prostitutes while drunk makes Frederic away from the disturbances of the war; but, unusually, sex with prostitutes alienates him wholly from seeking peace." (52), they also focused on the homoeroticism caused due to the lack of intimacy due to the war, highlight how, the men would gaze at each other in an erotic gaze to gratify their sexual desires, implying Rinaldi and

Fredric's friendship, while I do agree there was love and affection between them, I highly believe that from Fredric's perspective, it was more of a comforting friend amidst dire times. Munshid and Ahu also highlight the emotional vacuum, where all the characters are deeply affected by war which leads them to do destructive things, such as Brett's promiscuity and Jake's dissociation. The paradigm shift caused by the Great War dismantled old values, which was highlighted in this paper as with "Traditional morality, ideal and religious belief began to collapse." (55), people refuted old values and accepted new morals. corroborates my point of people trying to find meaning in a world that they no longer recognise. Along with the change in values comes the change in perception of life, as Munshid and Ahu claim, "Henry is an idealist, and his idealism was shattered because of his war experience, forcing him to change, adjust, or develop a new philosophy of life." (54), this factor regarding the transition of Henry Fredric will be an important point in my paper, it can be highlighted how war forces people to develop.

Writer William Adair gives a humane approach to Hemingway's writings, in his article, *Ernest Hemingway and the Poetics of Loss*, while most of his critics associate Hemingway's writing with violence, debauchery, masculinity and war. Adair reveals a lesser analysed perception of his writing, which is the theme of loss. He affirms that the theme of "loss", and "fear of loss", pervades Hemingway's fiction, often being more important than the themes of violence and masculinity as Hemingway is an overtly masculine writer whose omission style of writing (lack of emotions presented) is the reason behind why people do not associate loss and vulnerability with Hemingway (Adair 2). A key point added by Adair war the longing for the past, due to the lack of discernible emotions in Hemingway's characters, it is easy to forget their moments of vulnerability and as Adair points out, "longing for the past is such a major aspect of his later work, Hemingway's protagonists spend a great deal of their story's time

remembering; so much time that they might be called Remembering Protagonists.” (Adair 299), which is evident by Fredric’s constant imagination about Catherine amidst difficult times on the battlefield. Adair’s humane representation of Hemingway serves as a reminder that despite his crass, erratic and obnoxious nature on the outside, he was still a man who had to deal with tremendous loss in his lifetime, which had undoubtedly affected his writing and himself.

In the paper *The Reluctant Masquerade”: Constructing the Closet in Yukio Mishima’s Confessions of a Mask*, by Sharon Michelle Gill, Gill an analysis of the character of Kochan Gill highlights how the “sexual and violent” urges that Kochan has for males are incompatible with the stern Japanese society of the 1940s and 1950s (Gill 1). As elaborated, his masquerade is used metaphorically to conceal his queer identity, as she highlights the dichotomy of the “Masculine” East and the “Feminine” West, as Gill highlights “He idealizes the hegemonic masculinity of the soldier, but he identifies with the modern, lavish femininities of Cleopatra and Tenkatsu. Gender studies scholar Jason Karlin argues that a shift in Japanese attitudes towards masculinity and femininity began in the Meiji period upon opening Japan’s borders to the West after more than two centuries of seclusion. (6). The feminisation of the West amplified the reactionary masculinisation that thoroughly pervaded through in Japan, especially in the Showa and Taishiro period, aggravated the masculine military policies amidst the Second World, making the standard of masculinity stricter. While unable to achieve this form of masculinity, Kochan’s reaction regarding the Ark dressed as a male could be a critical example of Kochan’s internalised hatred towards effeminate men, “This clever allusion directly links Kochan’s perceptions of gender with his sexuality: desire for men is a feminine trait and therefore a negative one. It also characterizes femininity and homosexuality as perverse and destructive in Kochan’s imagination, indicating that he suffers from a degree of internalized

homophobia.”, his internalised homophobia would also explain why Kochan repudiated his sexuality to the extent he did.

Hisaki Yamanouchi’s paper *Yukio Mishima and his Suicide* delves into the life of Mishima before his suicide and gives an elaborate detail on this young man. Other than his political agendas, Yamanouchi believes the incentive for Mishima’s suicide had “Politics, however, was just one facet of the multifarious implications of Mishima's suicide. It was also rooted in what may be called his personal and aesthetic motives.” (2), while aesthetic was a big part of it, I believe, his motive was more of a rebellious act, which will be discussed further in my paper. Yamanouchi thoroughly analyses Mishima in his paper as he claims, “What is particularly interesting in Mishima is the extraordinary tension between his life and works. In some of his works, such as *Confessions of a Mask* and *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, the major characters, handicapped in life in various ways, cannot accept the external world except as mere fiction, and their hunger for eternity, coupled with their death-wish, makes them desire the end of the existing order of the world.” (9), consolidating the idea of how Mishima’s own life played a monumental role in the establishment of his characters and fiction, this will be analysed further in my paper which also will be reflected on Mishima’s eventual suicide.

In Author Jackson J. Benson’s article, *Ernest Hemingway: The Life as Fiction and the Fiction as Life*, where Benson states how interconnected Hemingway’s fiction is with his own life, “It would seem that it has been nearly impossible to write at length about the fiction of Ernest Hemingway without referring to the author's life and ultimately mixing the fiction and the life together” (345), which leads to prolonged research between the connection of his characters and Hemingway himself, and critics trying to comprehend Hemingway through his characters, “Hemingway himself encouraged our confusion, not only through a strong

identification with his characters but by a reiterated doctrine of writing out of experience.” (347). While there remain nuances in how Hemingway portrays his characters, many of the adversities faced by characters were struggles of Hemingway himself, “The most potent of these would seem to be the war wounding, which has several different versions in the fiction, as it does in reports about the author's experience in life. As far as we can tell from what evidence we have, Hemingway underwent trauma when he was wounded, but it does not seem to have been as deep or as long-lasting in its effects as the trauma that his characters undergo.” (351). Yet, despite being highly influenced by Hemingway’s own life, the novels also highlight Hemingway’s insecurities, for example, “How much more difficult for him it must have been when he heard that Agnes would not come to him and when he was scolded by his mother for a lack of manliness” (352), despite being based on Hemingway’s own life, Hemingway’s modification of certain bits is a constipation attempt at fabricating his insecurities, which I will be delving on more in my paper.

Chapter 3: Existentialism

3.1: Existentialist analysis of the works of Mishima:

I: Alienation from Society and Self:

Alienation from society is a recurring theme in the works of Mishima, who bore witness to the catastrophic horror that dismantled the traditional essence of Japanese society before the Second World War. His writing encompasses his real-life experiences and adversities, so the alienation and isolation within the novels are personal to the author himself. To comprehend

how he depicts characters who are ostracised from society, I will be analysing Kochan from *Confessions of a Mask* and Mizoguchi from *Temple of the Golden Pavilion*.

The Temple of the Golden Pavilion is based on the true story of the burning of the “Kinkakuji”, otherwise known as the Golden Pavilion. The protagonist, Mizoguchi is the formulation of both fiction and reality, based on the person known as Hayashi Soken, a twenty-one-year-old temple attendant responsible for the burning of the Kinkakuji. While the written disposition of Mizoguchi is based on a real person, it is widely speculated that his inner ideologies and thoughts are of Mishima himself, corroborated by Tsuruta, “Mizoguchi's inner world has little to do with that of Hayashi. On the contrary, Mizoguchi's character seems closer to Mishima's psyche”, (Tsuruta 64). Ostracised by the people of his society, he has been characterised as an unattractive man with a lisp, resulting in his isolation from society. Subsequently, with little to no social integration from childhood, he has been thoroughly bullied by his peers in his school, leading him to embrace a self-serving fallacy to grapple with his sense of isolation, consequently, inducing him to embrace a superfluous facade that becomes his predominant mechanism to evade the onerous loneliness of ostracisation. This fallacy was the conviction that he was God’s chosen one, as he believes, “A young boy who suffered from an indelible drawback like mine should have come to think that he was a secretly chosen being? I felt as though somewhere in this world a mission awaited me of which I still knew nothing.” (Mishima 25). His proclivity to idealise and deceive himself further alienates him from the mass population. Yet, despite his facade, Mizoguchi shows instances of a desire to integrate with society, this becomes evident as he follows Uiko but when confronted by her, he is paralysed by the unprecedented reality of his circumstance, as he freezes and is unable to utter a word, perplexed by the gravity of social interactions. Mizoguchi’s fascination with Uiko is far from skin-deep, instead, mesmerised by her beauty, he believes beauty is the solution to his lonely existence, it is by being in contact with beauty, and by conquering beauty, that he

can erase his “ugliness” and integrate with the society (Swann 400). Despite the mishap with Uiko, Mizoguchi’s voracious desire for a sense of belonging does not falter as he approaches Kashiwagi, another cripple with deformed legs, with the incentive of forming a companionship under the guise of asking questions, a ruse instantly recognised by Kashiwagi as he responds, “Mizoguchi—that’s your name, isn’t it? Well, if you think that we ought to become friends just because we’re both cripples.” (Mishima 91). These incessant attempts highlight Mizoguchi’s underlying isolation and loneliness, as, despite the constant rejections, he yearns for social integration.

Now, in the case of Kochan from *Confessions of a Mask*, much like Mizoguchi, from his very birth, he struggles to integrate with society. Raised by a domineering grandmother, Kochan has been described as a feeble boy with a weak constitution, isolated from his peers due to his inadequate health, he longs for a sense of belonging within society. During his adolescence, with the commencement of his social interactions, Kochan soon realises he is different from “normal”. Feeling no desire to scan through the naked body of a woman, he simultaneously struggles with the inferiority of his puny build. As he grows older, his desire for social integration turns into an obsession with “normalcy”, instigating a division between his inner and outer persona due to his sexuality. While a facet of his persona is highly cognisant of his attraction towards men, the other facet incessantly repudiates his desire for men. This conflict within his inner self results in the espousal of his masquerade of normalcy. In society he was a conventional boy, playing “war” with his cousins when he had no desire to do so, and pretending to be attracted to women in uniform, while he “had never felt the slightest such sensual attraction toward bus conductresses.” (Mishima 86).

Set in a society that idealises masculinity due to the ongoing Second World War, Kochan’s feeble build sets him apart from the rest of the society. Idealising masculinity, Kochan convinces himself that his sexual attraction for his peer Omi is pure admiration of his

physique which he eventually concedes to be a lie, “I admitted to myself that I could never become an Omi and, upon further consideration, that my desire to become as Omi had been love for Omi.” (Mishima 100), despite knowing his carnal desires the novel carries on with Kochan feeble attempt at trying to fall in love with women. From, Nakuda’s sister, to pursuing a young woman named Sonoko and ultimately forming a relationship with her, he takes drastic measures to fall in love with women resulting in the exacerbation of his mental state, “I persuaded myself that I was in love with her, and it fought back with this spiteful fatigue. There seemed to be some terrible poison in this mental exhaustion.” (Mishima 100). But this realisation does not stop him, as throughout the very end, Kochan continues to try to get more physically intimate with Sonoko because he believes with physical intimacy he will fall in love with her, “Surely when I kiss her, surely then I will discover my normality, my unfeigned love.” (Mishima 160). But despite his incessant effort, Kochan is left with his isolation as he fails to fall in love with women.

Here, we see a common theme between these two novels, and that is isolation due to distinct outer appearance, Mizoguchi is deemed as an ugly man with a lisp, and Kochan is a slender effeminate looking man, and their outer appearance plays a significant role in their isolation from society, this is a direct reflection of Mishima himself as he too was insecure of his appearance as a young boy, which segregated him from society and isolated him.

II: Freedom and Morality:

To understand Sartre’s version of existentialism, we have to understand how freedom and morality within the meaningless world are all interconnected. Although Mishima’s works have mostly been analysed through a nihilist perspective, and seldom through an existentialist

lens, there are prominent and important themes of existentialism in the novels that will be discussed in this paper through Sartre's existentialism.

Sartre asserts that mankind is essentially free in this world, and by utilising that freedom people can find the purpose of their existence. This freedom also comes with the rejection of religion and objective morality. Again, the repudiation of one's search for subjective meaning often leads to engagement in bad faith, which in Sartre's words forbids people from finding the true meaning of their lives. In both *In Temple of the Golden Pavilion* and *Confessions of a Mask*, the protagonist struggles to find meaning in an absurd world and engages in "bad faith".

In *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, Mishima highlights the deplorable nature of mankind, a society full of hypocrisy and frivolous values. In the beginning, Mizoguchi is represented as a pitiful ostracised man, but as the novel proceeds, we see the alterations in Mizoguchi's character, from a naive stutterer with a self-serving conviction, he turns into a sadist gaining gratification from inhuman cruelty. Two things play a pivotal role in this, one is his idea of essentialism, where believes he is above everyone else, which allows him to embrace his "free will", and the second is his rejection of morality, which was highly influenced by hypocrisy of the turbulent society. Affected by the destruction of the Second World, he realises that despite everyone's pristine persona, no one is free of vices, "If the people of this world, I thought, are going to taste evil through their lives and their deeds, then I shall plunge as deep as I can into an inner world of evil." (Mishima 73). The first instance that instigated his awareness would be the death of Uiko, Uiko's forbidden romance with the deserter during war would evoke public enmity resulting in the ostracisation of Uiko, which would lead to her death at the hands of her own lover. Uiko's dark fate was an epiphany for Mizoguchi, where he realised the immoral disposition of the contemporary world, it was a reality of a broken world with no moral values, irrespective of one's beauty. As Mizoguchi gets older, the worldly view widens as he understands the duality of mankind, such examples would include the infidelity

of his mother. Mizoguchi's abhorrence towards his mother is notable, but other than being an obtrusive woman who nags him on to be the successor of the temple, her fornication with another man in the presence of Mizoguchi and his sickly father, made him question the morality of those closest to him. Again, the hypocrisy of Father Dosen, the chief priest of the temple, whose engagement in improper sexual activities with a geisha, directly goes against the principle of what he stands for. Another pivotal betrayal was of his friend Tsurukawa, who would warn Mizoguchi of Kashiwagi but by the end of the novel, we come to know that Tsurukawa himself would form a strong bond with Kashiwagi sending him dozens of letters whereas he sent Mizoguchi none. Characters such as the mother and father Dosen would covertly influence Mizoguchi, but it was the club-footed Kashiwagi, who had the most influence on Mizoguchi. Unlike other characters, Kashiwagi is against the fabricated "Puritan ideology" of society and openly embraces the vile disposition of human beings. With Kashiwagi as a friend, Mizoguchi affirms, "The first things that my contact with Kashiwagi always produced were small acts of immorality, small desecrations, small evils" (Mishima 129). Understanding that no one is free of vices, Mizoguchi's rejection of objective morality goes simultaneously with his rejection of God. From believing himself to be God's chosen one, Mizoguchi chants the famous line, "When ye meet the Buddha, kill the Buddha!.....When ye meet the disciple of Buddha, kill the disciple!.....and become free." (Mishima 218), as he burned down the Golden Temple. From an existentialist perspective, we see Mizoguchi embrace his free will and reject objective morality and religion, in hopes of becoming free.

Likewise, in *Confessions of a Mask*, the moral dilemma is a central theme. We come to know of Kochan's alienation that ruins his idea of the "normal". Growing up with little to no integration, Kochan yearns for integration even at the cost of his happiness, eventually, rejecting his sexual desires for men, in his desperate plea to be considered "normal". Kochan's engagement in bad faith refrains him from leading a genuine life, as rejects his sexuality to

adopt a fabricated persona of a straight man. He actively engages in behaviours that would align with a heterosexual person, creating a conflict within himself. His primary moral dilemma ultimately results in him pursuing the young Sonoko, who ultimately falls in love with Kochan while remaining indifferent towards her. Throughout the novel, we see Kochan's incessant attempt at forcing himself to fall in love with Sonoko, unbeknownst to him, causing great grief to Sonoko when he ultimately refused to marry her once he realised the gravity of the quandary he instigated. In Kochan's case, we notice his engagement in bad faith and moral dilemma, choosing to go against his wishes instead of utilising his freedom to pursue someone and causing anguish to appease his masquerade, his inability to go against the belief of society is what results in his anguish, "Right or wrong, by fair means or foul, I told myself, you simply must love her. This feeling became, as it were, a moral obligation for me, lying even heavier in the bottom of my heart than did my sense of sin." (Mishima 129)

Here we see two sides to it, Mizoguchi rejects his involvement in bad faith and conviction of essentialism, as he rejects objective morality to appease his inner wishes, On the other hand, we see Kochan, engaging in bad faith, causing anguish to himself and the people involved, not allowing himself to be free from societal obligation and morality, as he yearns to be free.

3.2: Existentialist Analysis of the Works of Hemingway:

I. Alienation, Identity Crisis, and The Lost Generation:

"All of you young people who served in the war.....you are a lost generation", were the famous words of the writer Gertrude Stein to the young Hemingway, when he was serving in the war as an ambulance driver. These words eventually coined the term, "The Lost Generation", which was popularised by Hemingway in his novels. As the author, Eugene

Goodheart phrases it, Hemingway primarily became the voice of the “Lost Generation”, as he became a symbol of a former soldier stuck in a world with decaying values and found meaning to his world by giving a voice to the aimless and lost generation of Americans residing in Europe (10). The recurring topic of the broken world is a common theme, as his writings explore the plight of the “lost generation”, where Hemingway underlines the emotion of despair and grief of the past. In *The Sun Rising and A Farewell to Arms*, he encompasses two disparate perspectives, one after the First World War and the other amidst the ongoing War.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, Fredric Henry shows monumental growth as a character. The protagonist of *A Farewell to Arms* begins as a quintessential “Don Quixote” (Levin 591), an idealistic native man blissfully unaware of the gravity of the war. From the beginning, we can see Fredric’s lack of individual incentive as a character, albeit not candidly stated, his actions insinuate a certain naivety in his decision to serve in the war. When asked about it by Catherine Barkley, his response consolidates his lack of agenda,

“Tell me. Why did you join up with the Italians?”

"I was in Italy," I said, "and I spoke Italian." (Hemingway 22).

Again, one would also argue that Fredric’s primary incentive stems from his desire to attain the “American Dream”, and to appease his virility. The idea that war can fulfil the masculine ideals of a man was disseminated across the globe, as Meyer states, “War, it was argued, would turn these physical weaklings and moral degenerates into ‘men’ by exposing them to masculinising experiences or eliminating them through violence.” (Meyer 3), and this idea was heavily proliferated which induced men into willingly join the army, Hemingway being one of them. As he joined the army without realising the repercussions, like every soldier, Fredric too enjoyed his time visiting whorehouses and drinking alcohol in his free time. His delusional lack of peril about the war is prominent when he affirms, “Well, I knew I would not be killed. Not in this war. It did not have anything to do with me. It seemed no more dangerous to me

myself than war in the movies.” (Hemingway 43), which shows his lack of cognisance regarding the peril of the war.

From a naive young man, Fredric’s idealised image of the war soon shatters as he is hit with the dark reality of it. The death of his comrade Passini, which he was a direct witness to, was an instigator of a chain of events which would influence Fredrick into comprehending the depravity of the war. As the novel goes on, the anguish and casualties caused to his comrades unveil the bleak nature of war, as he succumbs to a depraved isolated state. The pivotal turning point for Fredric was the attack by the battle police, which made him realise the fleeting nature of life as he understood there is no honour in war. (Hemmingway 257). As his rose-tinted glasses shatter, Fredric’s only consolation is in his lover, the nurse, Catherine Burkley. The development of his relationship with Catherine is symbolic of his growth as a character, from a casual flirtatious relationship that would soon develop into a passionate love affair with both parties finding solace in the other. Their relationship served as the only semblance of stability amidst war. Yet again, the cessation of their blooming love comes to an abrupt end as Catherine dies in childbirth, causing Fredric to lose his sense of home. Before Catherine’s death, we come to see Fredric’s isolation once again, in a world where he found a place of belonging in Catherine, he was aware of the imminent loss he was going to face, which was conspicuous in his unwillingness to face reality as he isolated himself in the space of the cafe, “I was not ready to leave yet. It was too soon to go back to the hospital” (Hemingway 352).

Catering around the war veteran Jake Barnes, *The Sun Also Rises* focuses on the despondent life of Jake and his friends. Unlike *A Farewell to Arms*, the novel focuses more on the generation after the First World War, known as the Lost Generation. As more and more characters are introduced, there is a common denominator between them all, which is the loss of hope as we get to know the primary characters, we realise that they too are clinging on to finding meaning in a meaningless world. The novel focuses on several characters instead of

just one, Jake, the primary protagonist is an impotent former soldier, Brett Ashley, representing the modern woman after the traumatic loss of her fiancé in the war, Robert Cohn a man ostracised from society due to his Jewish ancestry, and Mike Campell, a war veteran who uses alcohol to cope with life. From the beginning of the novel, our protagonist Jake is described as a workaholic, as his friend Robert tries to take him on a trip to South America. On the surface, Jake is a stoic and calm man, but he is hiding the despair and agony of a veteran alienated from society. His loneliness is evident as he picks up a prostitute named Georgette for company, but his reason for picking up Georgette is not a sexual one, but in his own words, an impulsive decision to have dinner with someone (Hemingway 37), this simple act of picking someone up for the sake of companionship highlights the prolonged loneliness in Jake's character. Jake from the outside seems like the quintessential masculine man due to his stoic nature but his despair due to his PTSD is highlighted throughout the novel, Jake admits to appearing reliable in front of people in daylight, "It is awfully easy to be hard-boiled about everything in the daytime, but at night it is another thing. (Hemingway 18). Not only struggling with PTSD, Jake also struggles with impotency which prevents him from forming a relationship with Brett Ashley. Both Jake and Brett concede their love for one another but due to Jake's impotency, and Brett's promiscuous nature, they are unable to form a relationship, causing Jake tremendous anguish, "I was thinking about Brett and my mind stopped jumping around and started to go in sort of smooth waves. Then all of a sudden I started to cry" (Hemingway 17). Likewise, Brett too despite being in love with Jake cannot form a relationship with him due to his impotency, resulting in her promiscuity of having multiple partners to cope with the anguish of the lover she lost during war. Despite their inability to have a relationship, it is evident that they have attempted to have physical intimacy but to no avail as noted,

Don't you love me?"

"Love you? I simply turn all to jelly when you touch me."

"Isn't there anything we can do about it?"

"And there's not a damn thing we could do," I said. (Hemingway 4)

So, from Jake's disposition, we can understand his loneliness and isolation from society. Not only suffers from PTSD due to the war but also his impotency renders it difficult for him to find meaningful relationships.

II. Freedom and Conflict of Morality:

As Robert Holmes claims, morality is complex, he states, "There is no one specific size and shape of ethics, it can be embodied by different people in different forms by its values to give colour to people's lives based on their inner conviction, so the primary question pertinent to ethics would be, how should I live? (20). But in Holmes' opinion, morality is non-existent, as he claims, "morality does not extend to the sphere of international relations, and to war in particular" (22). In *A Farewell to Arms*, Fredric shows signs of choosing subjective morality over objective morality. The first instance would be with his relationship with Catherine, as he concedes that the very first profession of his love for Catherine the first time was a lie, "I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like a bridge, in which you said things instead of playing cards." (Hemingway 36). For him, Catherine was another woman he had a frivolous relationship with to appease his sexual desires. A close inspection would allude to the very vile beginning of their relationship, with Catherine's vulnerable disposition, having lost her husband to the casualties of war. In such a circumstance, Fredric's unscrupulous attempt to pursue Catherine was due to the hope of physical intimacy with the beautiful blonde. But, as the novel proceeds, Fredric does fall in love with her, and his decision to forfeit and escape the war has been a topic of scrutiny, by societal standards, his reasoning for leaving the war midway was to gratify his interest in being with Catherine. To be a hero in the standard of society, the hero must follow through with the standard's objective

morality, but Fredric chooses his agenda. From an existentialist perspective, irrespective of the conscience and responsibilities Fredric chose to prioritise his self-interest over the norm, so he utilised his freedom to make a more self-serving decision. The chaos and destruction of the war contrived a nonsensical society, and as Fredric realises the futility of it all, he chooses to abandon the war. Here, we notice him using his freedom to go for subjective morality over objective morality, choosing to be with Catherine over serving in the war. So, at the end of the day, he chose his subjective well-being over the objective well-being of the nation. He utilised his freedom to make a decision that served him. Before realising the capacity of his freedom, his engagement in bad faith dictated a life that he believed he was supposed to live when he was directionless and engaging in frivolous relationships with women and drinking wine, but after his alienation and isolation due to the numerous catastrophic events that he had to endure, he chooses to decide for himself.

Now, *The Sun Also Rises*, perhaps Hemingway's most famous work, circles around the post-war society and the lost generation. The primary characters are stuck in an endless loop of debauchery, alcohol abuse, perversion, and promiscuity to cope with the adversities of a bleak world. The society is overtly hypocritical and full of lies, as noted by the duplicity of something as sacred as religion, it gives a glimpse of the unscrupulous principles of the society, Cohn's ostracisation and the position of the church are two critical examples, Cohn's is thoroughly ostracised and hated by the society due to his Jewish origin, this gives a glimpse of the bigotry possessed by society that is justified by using religious values. Again, the segregation of people due to religion and its justification of the Church unveils that at the core, it is always about self-interest and not about humanity and the value of life.

The protagonist Jake too is in a ceaseless loop of work and despair, Jake's struggle with his superfluous masculinity prevents him from overtly communicating about his impotence and his inability to consummate his relationship with Brett, adding to his inner turmoil due to his

lack of coping mechanism. This highlights his unnecessary scorn for Mike, Brett's temporary lover who is of Jewish origin, he is effeminate and querulous, and yet Brett's physical relationship with him aggravates Jake's inability to engage in physical intimacy. But Jake does not completely forsake life as he does show signs of effort to live his life, his fascination with certain outdoor activities such as fishing and bullfighting adds little momentary happiness to his life. A central point is Jake's unawareness of his freedom, throughout the novel, we see Jake's desperation and his idea that only Brett and Brett alone can bring him happiness. His desolation is due to not having Brett for himself as he watches her engage in relationships with other men. Although Jake is not a standard immoral character, he has made certain decisions which are dubious, setting up Brett with the handsome Pedro Romero despite knowing the relationship between them would be fleeting, but this incident plays a monumental role in Jake's realisation that Brett will truly never be his. By the end of the novel, as Brett comes back to Jake after a failed relationship with Pedro, we see Jake coming to terms with his circumstances, as the last dialogue of the novel ends with,

“Oh, Jake," Brett said, "we could have had such a damned good time together.”

“Yes," I said. "Isn't it pretty to think so?" (Hemingway 129).

Highlighting that Jake had accepted that he can never be physically intimate with Brett, realising the freedom he has as he slowly tries to accept his situation. While Jake is the only character who eventually realises his freedom, and the absurdity of this endless loop, as we slowly see him coming to terms with his impotency and choosing to end the absurd affair with Brett, while Brett remains the same promiscuous woman in her loop of men as she shows no sign of ending the cycle, only coming back to Jake in hope of a temporary sense of belonging.

3.3 Comparative Analysis: Parallels and Differences.

I. War, Society and Masculinity:

There are copious parallels in the writings of these two authors, which have been reflected in their novels. Despite the similarities, there has been little to no comparative analysis between these two authors. Both Mishima and Hemingway remain pivotal post-war modernist icons of their culture, with a fragment of their work revolving around the destruction of war and how it affects society. Now, themes of alienation, morality and the space of utilising freedom are eminent in both the works of Mishima and Hemingway but despite similarities, there are several key differences pertinent to their disparate culture which will be thoroughly discussed. Another pivotal point to notice would be the ambiguity in their endings, all of these novels end in ambiguous terms and language, leading it up to the reader to interpret in their language.

Both authors are critical of the hypocrisy of society, as this depravity of society goes hand in hand with the hypocrisy and deception of religious values. Both Hemingway and Mishima highlight the duality of religion in society, in *Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, Father Dosen's clandestine relationship with the geisha is a pivotal epiphany for Mizoguchi. This moment unveils the surreptitious dissipation of these religious preachers, "The man had been wearing a felt hat, an elegant overcoat, and a scarf, and had been walking with a girl in a rust-
vermilion coat, who was a geisha.....all these were the distinguishing traits of the Superior, Father Dosen." (Mishima 143). Again, Hemingway accentuates the hypocrisy of religion in his novel, the priests and the church are branded as emblems of kindness, yet in *The Sun Also Rises*, Hemingway showcases how these religious institutions exploit their image for self-serving reasons, as noted in the train, the conductor unveils that special reservations and seats are made for the priests, showcasing the exploitation of power, and discrimination from the

church, once again, “They ' thought we were snappers, all right, the man said. “It certainly shows you the power of the Catholic Church. It’s a pity you boys ain’t Catholic. You could get a meal, then, all right.” (Hemingway 90). Depicting how the Church discriminates against people based on religion.

Now, while there remain these similarities in themes, Hemingway’s narration tends to focus more on the generational crisis after the war. He focuses on people with a variety of problems in *The Sun Also Rises*, highlighting the copious complications dealt with by an entire generation and delineates how people cope with their struggles in their own way as they try to find meaning. Alterations in cultural elements are not paramount in Hemingway’s narration, as it has more to do with reinvigorating the will to carry on after a phase of despair. But, Mishima’s writing encompasses the despair of a bygone society, with the establishment of a modern, albeit bleak society with the proliferation of a new set of values, the loss of Japanese culture is cardinal for Mishima, for example, “I had not yet become accustomed to seeing city women wear the bloomer-type trousers of farm women or the slacks that had become the fashion of those perilous times,” (Mishima 108). Again, other references comprise Kochan’s distress with his sexuality amidst the strict Japanese society, and the decaying traditional values and destruction of Japanese monuments amidst the Second World War, such quandary remains deeply personal to the Japanese culture. The parallel here is the despair in loss, through grieving in disparate ways, neither Mishima nor Hemingway were concerned with victory. Despite the fact that America had won in both World Wars, while Japan had a morbid defeat in World War II, the desolation depicted in their works outlines the greater tragedy of war, which is be it the winning nation or losing nation, war brings joy to none. As noted in *Confessions of a Mark*, Kochan’s true feelings regarding the war, “It was all the same to me whether the war was won or lost. The only thing I wanted was to start a new life.” (Mishima 176). The same sentiment was also evident in Hemingway’s novel, *A Farewell to Arms*,

"There is nothing worse than war."

"Defeat is worse."

"I do not believe it," Passini said still respectfully (Hemingway 58).

This reveals that for society, there is little significance on win or loss, instead, society holistically suffers due to war.

The next important theme that remains parallel would be the ignited stereotypes of masculinity. Both Mishima and Hemingway struggled with their masculinity for disparate reasons, which were reflected in their characters. In the case of Hemingway, his character, Jake struggled with his masculinity after his impotency caused by an injury in war, throughout the novel, we see Jake's insecurity fleshed out in *The Sun Also Rises*, as his impotency infiltrates doubt and insecurities within him, it is his insecurity that causes him to chide Cohn on his petulant outburst. Again, Brett's emergence as the modern woman also is a bane to Jake's insecurity, dismantling stereotypes of a traditional woman, Brett strides with confidence and security in her sexuality, aggravating Jake's lack of security in his masculinity. Likewise, in *Confessions of a Mask*, Kochan struggles with his masculinity due to stereotypes ignited by the war, which were heavily instilled in society. As noted, there are two common denominators to this lack of insecurity in Mishima and Hemingway, one would be women and the other is war. In Mishima's novel, *Confessions of a Mask*, Mishima expresses Kochan's overt insecurity about his lack of masculinity, which is a direct parallel to Mishima's insecurity. But, notably, Mishima and Hemingway have very disparate methods of portraying this lack of insecurity, while it is true both had a standard binary in terms of representing characters, with males being the central protagonists and the role of women revolving around men, there still are conspicuous differences. One of the primary criticisms of Mishima according to his critics would be the overt sexualisation of his female characters, as stated by Rankin, "In Mishima, everything is sexual. Beauty, narcissism, tragedy, fate, death: all are erotic concepts. Beauty,

narcissism, tragedy, fate, death: all are erotic concepts.” (Rankin 38). Mishima’s overindulgence in sexual themes, especially his usage of female body parts would garner criticism, as not only were the women the “other” in his novels, but most of these female characters were overtly sexualised, as noted, the recurring mention of their beauty or body would circumscribe female characters into erotic embellishments of the novel, “Then I saw her white breasts. I held my breath. The woman took one of her full white breasts in her own hands. The officer held out the dark, deep-coloured teacup, and knelt before her. The woman rubbed her breast with both hands.” (Mishima 60). Again, more important characters like Uiko too were bound within sexual connotations, “When I masturbated, my mind would be filled with demonic images, I could see Uiko's breasts, then her thighs would appear before me.” (Mishima 74). This constant sexualisation of female characters of Mishima has been under heavy scrutiny, as he is known as a homosexual man, which can be explained, as Stroller claims that often perversion is the method used by authors to cope with threats to their own gender identity, be it one’s sense of masculinity or femininity (12). This thought is further corroborated as Mishima would adopt perverse or neo-sexual methods to cope with horrific loss and insecurity, including the usage of sexual violence, misogyny and sadomasochistic fantasies (Kawasaka 3).

In contrast to that, while Hemingway does follow the binaries of the self and the other regarding his male and female characters, but he does not have the recurring usage of perversion in his writing. Instead, Hemingway’s method is astronomically different from Mishima's as he indulges in the overt usage of hyper-masculinity in his male characters. Hemingway’s childhood relationship with his mother was a primary cause behind this, “The self-negating effects of the female identity appointed for him by the mother trigger the self-affirming repairs of the hyper-masculine identity he constructs for himself.” (Brown 59). The overt masculinisation of both Jake Barnes and Fredric Henry is thoroughly evident in his writings, Fredric thoroughly follows the “Hemingway Hero Code”, as he indulges in alcohol

and women, as he continues to suppress emotions of vulnerability, especially during his injury and his ambition to return to the war,

“But I can't wait six months.”

The doctor spread his delicate fingers on the cap he held and smiled. “You are in such a hurry to get back to the front?”

“Why not?” (Hemingway 110), for which he is deemed as a nobleman, are all overt signs of deeply imbued masculine ideologies within the characters. In contrast, Jake is an intriguing character because, in terms of personality, he comprises the same masculine ideology as Fredric, yet his masculinity is in constant threat of emasculation due to his impotency. This threat of emasculation is a personal insecurity of Hemingway himself as Brown claims, “Hemingway’s personality, life, and art were decisively shaped, not merely by the violence of a war wound in early adulthood, but by the violence of an androgynous wound in childhood.”

(5). Hemingway himself would try to maintain this charade of a masculine persona, in his fiction and characters, as he claims “Any man who would rather shoot himself in the head than run the chance that the enemy might eventually do that same thing can be, and is, written off as a hopeless coward and listed under, ‘Died of Wounds and Other Causes.’” (12). His characters would also portray his insecurity with emasculation and lack of security in his sexuality.

As evident, despite Mishima and Hemingway’s struggle with their masculinity, the method of delineating this struggle has its nuances, as Mishima resorts to the objectification of his female characters, while Hemingway follows the same binary of circumscribing women into the “other”, his focal point remains in the overt masculinisation of his male characters. Simultaneously, an important point used by both authors is the indulgence in homosexual allusion or undertones within the novels. While in *Confessions of a Mask* Kochan’s disdain for his own sexuality is a product of society, which is corroborated by Adrienne Rich’s article

Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence, as the essay explores the theme of normalisation of heterosexuality within the society as a result of patriarchy, which serves as a method of marginalising women. As noted in *Confessions of a Mask*, Kochan's disdain and repudiation of his own sexuality has been contrived by the tacit standardisation of heterosexuality within the Japanese society. Throughout the novel, we see various methods applied by Kochan to induce himself into fitting within the standards of Japanese society, while it is highly implied that Kochan's desire to be heterosexual is because he wants to fit into what is deemed normal. As Rich explains, heterosexuality is deemed as the standard sexual preference, "Women would choose heterosexual coupling and marriage; heterosexuality is presumed the "sexual preference" of "most women," either implicitly or explicitly." (633). Simultaneously Rich also asserts that, "institution of heterosexuality itself as a beachhead of male dominance." (633), so the essay highlights some key points, one is the heteronormativity of society, which is induced by patriarchy and male domination, and how this heteronormativity is utilised to marginalise women. Now, throughout the novel, other pivotal examples solidify this notion of heterosexuality going hand in hand with male dominance, which is notable in some key examples from the novel, such as Omi's advances towards the women in class that galvanises other students, a direct connection between heterosexuality and male dominance, Omi's popularity with the female students of his class validate his masculinity. While Mishima does delineate the heteronormativity of Japanese society, the ending of his novel signifies an important juxtaposition in his writings, while he was against the ideologies of the occupied post-war Japanese era, Mishima also contradicts the conviction of heteronormativity, as by the end of the novel, Kochan comes to the realisation that it is impossible of him to fall in love with Sonoko, highlighting that sexual attraction is not a preference.

Now unlike Mishima, while exploring the multiple faucets of human sexuality, Hemingway does not prod upon eroticism, but there are snippets of homosexual tension that are underlined throughout *A Farewell to Arms*. While the heterosexual relationship of Catherine and Fredric remains the centre of the novel, Hemingway does explore the vulnerability of comradeship between his characters, despite the fragments of homosexual themes, there is no conspicuous homosexual relationship. According to, Ilyas “affection dominates desire and same-gender attraction is an amalgamation of fraternal love, a desperate dependence for fellow humans and a jealous possessiveness for war comrades” (81), so the affection between the same sex is rendered as an amalgamation of various kinds of love but not romantic love, but that can be challenged and questioned with certain characters and their intentions. Fredric’s close war comrade Rinaldi shares an interesting dynamic with Fredric, while Rinaldi’s characterisation can be passed off as a boisterous Italian man, his proclivity to constantly call Fredric “baby”, with his innumerable attempts to kiss Fredric raises the question of Hemingway’s incentive of delineating such dynamics. Some key scenes consisting of Fredric and Rinaldi transgress the platonic bond of comradeship, such as when Rinaldi kisses Fredric, “He came in very fast and bent down over the bed and kissed me. I saw he wore gloves. "How are you, baby? How do you feel? I bring you this.” (Hemingway 67). According to Modellmog, “the abundance of same-sex passion directed at the two protagonists simply magnifies their attractiveness as people and hence their suitability for each other, and also counters the charge that they are sinning by not marrying.” (17), which could be the logical reason as to why Hemingway would incorporate such homosexual themes while depicting his protagonist in such a masculine light, but at the same time, another possibility would be the corroboration and solidification of Fredric as a masculine character, while before the establishment of Fredric’s sexuality, there were key homosexual innuendos in the novel that questioned Fredric’s sexuality, as implied by Rinaldi when he asserted, “Oh, I knew it. Sometimes I think you and he are a little that way.

You know.” (71), referring to Fredric and his companionship with the priest, implying a homosexual relationship. Again, Rinaldi’s relationship with Fredric too has homosexual innuendoes but this is repudiated by Fredric, as Fredric rejects Rinaldi’s kisses to which Rinaldi responds, “I won't kiss you if you don't want. I'll send your English girl. Good-by, baby. The cognac is under the bed. Get well.” (Hemingway 72), which serves as a pivotal scene to solidify Fredric’s attraction to women and not men.

So, while Mishima’s character challenges the heteronormativity of society by emphasising his inability to fall in love with the opposite sex, Hemingway’s characters solidify heteronormativity by rejecting the homosexual allusion of his writing, as Fredric chooses to be with Catherine instead.

II. Characters, Writing and Human Relationships:

Despite analogous themes and motifs, and both being regarded as prominent masculine authors, Hemingway and Mishima vary in multifarious ways. Firstly, the salient difference in their characters, and writing style, focusing on two different sides of the spectrum, their depiction is thoroughly polarising from one another. While, Mishima’s characters contain the aspect of the “I” more prominent in writings, in a sense that the readers get a glimpse of the inner monologues. In *Confessions of a Mark and Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, we come to understand the intricacy within the characters, their internal conflicts, and their inner introspective thoughts, the characters did not follow any binaries. A vast portion of the event would take place inside the mind of the protagonist, contrive a dream-like ambience. On top of that, the depiction of the characters has a semi-surrealist effect, as they possess a more deep and personal connection to the readers, whereas in Hemingway’s delineation of characters are more hero-coded general good people in a bad society, his characters come across as more grounded more realistically, regarding Mishima’s writing, “But his originality is a venal one,

and what he writes about.....people who live in a wasteland of violence and who have no emotional depth.” (Meyers 15), so as a reader reads Hemingway’s writing, it is a more peripheral vision. The writing too is incredibly different, while Mishima is detail-oriented with long sentences focusing on every meticulous detail, in contrast to Mishima, the veneer of Hemingway’s writing style seldom delineated the vulnerability of a “desperate voice”, instead, his writing is often shrouded with a superfluous tone of masculinity, resulting it to be more concise, often leading it to the reader to have their interpretation of his writings. For example, while writing an emotional crying scene, Hemingway keeps his dialogues simple, concise and to the point, while Mishima’s is far more detail-oriented and has a dream-like essence to it.

In *A Farewell to Arms*, “The nurse opened the door and motioned with her finger for me to come. I followed her into the room. Catherine did not look up when I came in. I went over to the side of the bed. The doctor was up when I came in. I went over to the side of the bed. The doctor was standing by the bed on the opposite side. Catherine looked at me and smiled. I bent down over the bed and started to cry.” (Hemingway 362)

In *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, “Although I had not cried at Father's death, I cried now. Tsurukawa's existence seemed to have a closer connection than my own father’s with the problems that beset me. I had been rather neglecting Tsurukawa since I had come to know Kashiwagi, but now, having lost him, I realised that his death severed the only thread that still connected me with the bright world of daylight. It was because of the lost daylight, the lost brightness, the lost summer, that I was crying.” (Mishima 79), both of these remain pivotal emotional scenes in the novels, and yet the delineation is astronomically different.

A vast chunk of the events is taking place inside the character’s mind, so The thing about Mishima’s works is most of the events, dialogues, and things are happening in the minds of the characters, we do not see active engagement with the setting. Kochan and Mizoguchi have very introspective inner thoughts and incidents happening there. You don’t

get a sense of the context of the time, or what is happening with the other characters minus the small details, his style is deeply personal where the reader is directly understanding the mindset of the central character. Now, onto another important theme, the sense of belonging and human relationships.

Hemingway's novels focus more on personal relationships and a sense of belonging among the characters, while Mishima's focus on finding meaning in alternate ways, in many ways, his novels feel more coming of age, whereas Hemingway's feel more finding meaning in human relationships, both focus on growth as a human being albeit in different ways.

Now, the themes of alienation and isolation due to a lack of masculinity and desire for social integration are prevalent in both the works of Mishima and Hemingway. In the case of Mishima, his alienation results in more personal isolation from society and oneself, we see character's like Kochan and Mizoguchi's internal struggle where the readers get a glimpse of their internal conflict with their isolation, Kochan's split in personality, one embracing his queer traits and the other chiding him for them, likewise in Mizoguchi, where a part of him believes himself to be superior, whereas his other inner voice knowing the true reality of the story, while both of these two characters remain segregated from the general society while yearning for normalcy and a deep connection with society. In both novels of Mishima.

But, the isolation and alienation in Hemingway's case are distinctively different, it is an alienation from the repugnant reality of the absurd world of chaos. His alienation from the reality of war, as his friend Rinaldi dies in front of him, is his isolation that ultimately suffocates him into choosing to run away, again in the case of Jake, it was alienation from society, we get Jake keeping himself busy with work and simple habits to distract himself from society. The isolation and alienation are not from within but from society itself.

Chapter 4: Suicide:

4.1 The Suicide of Yukio Mishima:

On 25th November 1970, the renowned Japanese writer, Yukio Mishima's death shocked Japan at its core. Not only was he a renowned author, but also made his place as a prolific writer, actor, and cultural figure. He was one of Japan's most successful writers, nominated for the Nobel prize thrice, he was dubbed "Japan's Renaissance Man" and "The Japanese Hemingway" (Cather). Yet, he remains arcane to most of the Western world, the dereliction of Asian literature is a common phenomenon in the Occident, resulting in the obscurity of talented authors like Mishima. But, in contemporary times, with the rise of authors like Haruki Murakami and Kazuo Ishiguro, Japanese literature has had an unprecedented focal point at a global level, with authors like Dazai Osamu, Yukio Mishima, Kobe Abe gaining a new sense of adulation. Despite leading an eventful life, his death tends to overshadow his literary genius in the West. Mishima's death was far from ordinary, a diehard nationalist, he committed a public suicide known as the Japanese ritual "seppuku". The tradition originates from the samurai class, it is a painful Japanese ritual of disembowelment through slashing the belly and considered to be a rather reverencing way to pass. Mishima's death has been a topic of speculation for years, causing society to ponder why this famous figure would opt for such a gnarly method to die. For a prolonged period, the media would render Mishima's death as the epitome of unalloyed madness, circumscribing this complex act of nationalism into the act of insanity, but nothing about this ardent author was not simple and neither was his demise.

His biographer, Henry Scott Strokes would unveil the primary cause behind Mishima's seppuku, citing that not a singular facet but in fact, an amalgamation of life experiences caused him to make this decision. One of Japan's notorious homosexual authors, Mishima was

an author with the proclivity to prod upon controversial topics in his writing, oftentimes, pertinent to his personal life. Along with Dazai Osamu, perhaps the most important figure in the popularisation of the I-novel as a genre, Mishima's novels were thoroughly inspired by true events, especially events pertinent to his own life. His novel, *Confessions of a Mask*, is the closest work resembling an auto-biography with Kochan being heavily analogous to Mishima himself. From Kochan's childhood, and family, to his weak constitution, all remain parallel to Mishima himself. From the analysis of *Confessions of a Mask* and the scrutinisation of Kochan as a character, we can comprehend Mishima's isolation and alienation from society

In both of his novels, there is a clear indication of Mishima's fixation with death, personal conflict and Japanese nationalism. For him, life was a performance and death was the perfect ending to this performance. From his very childhood, Mishima could discern the difference between him and his peers, he did not possess any form of sexual interest in the female body, instead, his interest and sexual desire lay in the male body. Even before Mishima's fame, he had the utmost inclination to be a normal part of society, which highlights his desire to feel like an integrated member of society. Kochan's alienation in *Confessions* is a direct representation of Mishima himself, despondent about the reality of his difference from the normal, Mishima embraces a masquerade of normalcy, with a counterfeit interest in women and an exaggerated masculinity. Kochan's masquerade is directly parallel to Mishima, as his biographer, John states, "Mishima wrote that it made no difference to him how badly his wife managed the household, so long as she comported herself in public in a manner appropriate to the wife of a writer:" (140). This also explains why despite being homosexual, Mishima married and had children as he wanted to seem like any other normal man in the society while engaging in clandestine relationships with men. While his desire for integration would seem like his suicide falls under egoistic suicide, and while there are elements of it, Mishima's suicide would mostly fall under the classification of anomic suicide.

Now, despite his struggles with homosexuality and masculinity, Mishima's biggest despair pertinent to his seppuku lies in the cultural decay of Japanese society. An ardent nationalist, the war was one of Mishima's greatest terrors, despite his overt virility, he was a man deeply affected by the plight of the war. As mentioned in both of his novels, the war had an astronomical effect on Japanese society, from altering old traditions to transitioning to newer American traditions, the Japanese population holistically embraced more modernised values, something vehemently despised by him. First and foremost, we need to understand the changes in Japan after the Second World War, after the catastrophic defeat, Japan was under the occupation of the United States, and in the words of Borton, "In view of the fact that the United States had borne by far the greatest share of the military and naval operations against Japan, it was obvious that the Supreme Commander should be an American", (256), which dictates that the Japanese society was thoroughly controlled by the Americans, which was known as the Japanese Modernisation, which according to Iriye, "When the study of American history and society picked up momentum because of the war, defeat, and occupation, young Japanese historians, social scientists, and literary critics eagerly absorbed American knowledge both through books and through studying in the United States.", (114), highlighting how the population of Japan ultimately started adapting to American traditions. This transition was also expressed in his novels as Mishima writes, "Everything had changed. It had become a foreign harbour. English-language street signs flourished menacingly at the intersections and American troops were walking about in great numbers." (Mishima 163). Mishima made no effort to conceal his disgust for the growing transition to newer cultural aspects, as noted by his biographer, Inote, Mishima claims, "I loathe women who do kendō, but from the start I have loved women who ride horses, I cannot bear women invading kendō which is purely Japanese and forms a purely male world." (Inose 711). He believed that Modern Japan was nothing but

a cheap imitation of the West, in his words, “the modernisation of Japan was an illegitimate child of the West, and an embarrassment to the old glory of Japan.” (Inose 589).

From what we can understand, with the change in Japanese society, it was a time of unprecedented transition for people, which is why his death falls directly under the category of anomic suicide. As Durkheim states, “When society is disturbed by some painful crisis or by beneficent but abrupt transitions, it is momentarily incapable of exercising this influence; thence come the sudden rises in the curve of suicides” (Durkheim 213). The changes within the Japanese society were due to the destruction and occupation caused by the Second World War, for a nationalist like Mishima, this was a cause of great anguish. As noted by Mehlkop, “A certain degree of conformity is a necessary condition for a society’s reproduction, social pressure is a useful implement in societies” (522), but Mishima, a radical extremist repudiated the ideal of conformity. His hatred for the New Japanese Government was profuse, resulting in him leading his own right-wing nationalist group known as “Tate No Kai”, comprising four other members with the incentive of bringing back Japan’s old glory. On the eventful day, Mishima and his companions descended into the Japanese Self Defence Force, as he subdued the Commanding general and took him hostage. Once the general was under control, Mishima went to the balcony to deliver his iconic speech regarding the reinvigoration of the former glory of Japan and the loss of Japanese tradition, after being mocked and jeered at by the audience, Mishima went back inside the office to commit his infamous seppuku. Contrary to what many people assumed initially, it was in fact well sought out plan and not an arbitrary decision. Now, the question arises, why? Why did the famed author choose to kill himself? The most viable answer would be rebellion. Mishima’s death was a symbolic repudiation of the modernisation of Japan and by choosing to die using the honourable Japanese tradition, he showcases his nationalism and his final act of rebellion against globalisation, sending the message that he refuses to be a part of the tainted new Japan. Suicide has been deemed in many ways as the

strongest form of masculine protest, as it is a way a man asserts his final sense of self (Adler 65), which corroborates Mishima's last thought of rebellion. As anomic suicide is maximised due to drastic economic, social and political changes, the ineptitude to conform results in anomic suicide, and in Mishima's case, his direct rejection to conform makes his suicide an anomic suicide.

4.2 The Suicide of Ernest Hemingway:

Hemingway's experience as a war veteran greatly impacted his life and his writing experience. His life can be best described as a cornucopia of emotions, as his life was full of innumerable volatile and difficult experiences, starting with his own family, to dysfunctional relationships with women and the deaths of important people in his life, which was reflected in his works. Ernest Miller Hemingway was born on July 1st, 1899 to his parents, Clarence Edmonds Hemingway and Grace Hall Hemingway. Hemingway's childhood was far from perfect, he had a rather complicated and difficult relationship with both of his parents which eventually affected him in multifarious ways as an adult, it can be noted how his overt masculinity came from a sense of insecurity caused by his parents. For the first couple of years of his life, he was treated as a girl by his mother, who often dressed him in female clothes and tried to pass him off as his sister's twin, resulting in a form of gender dysmorphia, Hemingway describes his mother as, "she is an all-time, All-American bitch" (Hemingway 1:51:02). Furthermore, both Hemingway and his siblings would unveil their mother's role behind the downfall of their father, as Hemingway describes his father as a kind caring father as a child, but the more he got older, his father turned tumultuous and erratic, "One minute he was laughing with his children, the next, he was punishing them with leather straps." (Hemingway 13:27). In Durkheim's words, societal integration is perhaps one of the most important factors pertinent

to suicide. The need for belongingness is almost essential for an individual to survive in a society. Durkheim also emphasises that family or the number of family members is pivotal, “The greater the density of the family the greater the immunity of individuals to suicide.” (Durkheim 15). Growing up in a turbulent household, Hemingway sought ways to leave his home, and the entry of the United States into war in 1917 was a turning point in Hemingway’s life. This showcases the turbulent relationship Hemingway had with family, explaining why social integration and a sense of belonging were significant for the author.

The war would leave a catastrophic impact on Hemingway, both mentally and physically. Struck by a mortar shell, Hemingway was gravely injured’ “A heavy-machine gun bullet ripped through his right knee. Part of him "died then," he wrote, and as he lay among the wounded and dying, he contemplated suicide.” (Hemingway 10:02”). For his bravery, he was awarded a silver medal and commemorated in his hometown. Despite the initial glory after coming back, Andrew claims, “There are several witnesses and examples that prove that Hemingway may have suffered from PTSD, which was still undiscovered and undiagnosed during his time. Although it was not diagnosed, Hemingway’s characters showed signs of PTSD.” (3), such as Jake Barnes from *The Sun Also Rises*, with his occasional head burns and chronic isolation. In Durkheim’s study, the suicide rate tends to drop during wars, as he cites that the feeling of integration heightens during this period as all soldiers are fighting for the same cause, but at the same time, the suicide rate is the highest among veterans after the war, as the political integration wears off, the sense of isolation reappears. He describes the mechanism’s underlying effect of war on suicide as an example of political integration. The mechanism of political integration would consolidate during such political crises as wars, the reasoning behind it is, that individuals would think more holistically than individually. As individual passions and enthusiasm are aroused, the good of the state becomes more salient than the good or convenience of the individual (Durkheim 52). Other than his turbulent family

upbringing and war, other deciding factors that led to Hemingway's spiral were abusing alcohol to cope with life and his hereditary proclivity for suicide. Substance abuse is a prominent part of Hemingway's life, first started due to his PTSD, alcohol soon became a source of solace after the war ended, but his consumption of alcohol would exacerbate, with it at its worst during his divorce from his first wife and at his father's suicide. With the possibility of bipolar disorder, along with his fusing temper, Hemingway was deemed as an unpleasant company in many of his social gatherings and among his friends. This also resulted him in attempting to find comfort and consolation in the arms of women, which resulted in him committing several adulterous relationships. This is highlighted in his lack of stable relationships, as most of his friendships and relationships were brittle. Hemingway's suicide primarily falls under the classification of egoistic suicide, in Durkheim's words, the suicide rate among the protestants is much higher than the Catholics, while Catholics despite their more fanatical views have a stronger integration within the community in contrast to the Protestants who promote secularism, individualism and freedom of choice (15). This is a direct example of the significance of social integration in alleviating the sense of isolation, which Hemingway could not achieve.

Women are a central theme in Hemingway's novels, and most of the women depicted in his novels reflect Hemingway's relationships with his wives. His constant search for validation and acceptance would lead him into having an erratic relationship, as his difficult upbringing would eventually impel Hemingway to find solace elsewhere, in many cases it would be at the hands of women and adulterous relationships, with three of his four marriages ending in divorce due to his innumerable extramarital affairs. Based on his own life, Catherine is the embodiment of his first love, Agnes Van Kurowsky. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Catherine's role in the context of the war is a healing one, she is an experienced nurse, and all the connotations with Catherine are soft and feminine. So, it can be said that Catherine is a prime

example of a heroine circumscribed into fulfilling the traditional feminine roles, she advertently makes her life revolve around Fredric, willing to change herself to gain his acceptance and constantly asking for assurance that he loves her, we can notice signs of a vulnerable insecure women trying to find fulfilment through male validation and acceptance in the context of war. Ironically, this is the opposite of the actual truth as Hemingway was madly in love with Agnes, and it was her who rejected him, thinking him to be immature and the entire relationship as a non-serious war flirtation. But from Catherin's depiction, it can be said that for Hemingway, women were a space for solace. So, Hemingway's suicide is a rather depressing one as we see a man who desires integration, yet his self-destructive ways dismantle every steady relationship he forms, either due to his volatile temper or due to his adulterous tendencies.

Hemingway's death was less dramatic than Mishima's. There was no prior planning to it, but in the end, we find a man who lived a turbulent life and continued to make irrational decisions, resulting in his social isolation and lack of integration. Ultimately, he could not fully integrate with society which led him to commit suicide. From Durkheim's category, Hemingway's suicide falls more under the category of egoistic suicide. Despite his numerous attempts at finding peace and integration in life, Hemingway's life was a tragic one, until his dying moment.

Chapter 5: Conclusion:

This paper aims to highlight the link between Hemingway and Mishima, both being pivotal post-war icons and eventually opting to end their lives by committing suicide. Overall Japanese authors, with the exception of Haruki Murakami and Kazuo Ishiguro, continue to remain arcane in the Western literary world, as a result, there is very little research done on

Yukio Mishima, and a comparative analysis of Mishima and Ernest Hemingway is mostly unprecedented.

Both Mishima and Hemingway incorporated their personal lives and emotions within their characters, which is why these novels can be deemed as “I-novels”, as there are direct parallels between the characters and the authors. This gives more insight pertinent to the despair felt within the authors, as Jake Barnes and Fredric Henry as an extension of Hemingway himself, which is why both of these characters show signs of Hemingway’s struggle with PTSD, emasculation and women. Likewise, Kochan is the full embodiment of Mishima, while Yozo’s ideologies and convictions remain tantamount to Mishima himself, so Mishima’s novels meet the requirement of an “I-novel” as well. The reason why the genre of “I-novel” is important is because it is through reading these novels, that we can get a clear comprehension of the direct connection of the characters with the authors, which gives insight into why these authors committed suicide. Their battle with integration, dysfunctional families, social relationships, and war are all reflected in their novels, which is why they serve as pivotal attestations to understanding the inner psyche of the authors and their choice of committing suicide.

Through an existential analysis, we come to understand the intricacies of despair and isolation within the authors, and it is important to note how despite the adversities, they continue to try to find meaning, something that is greatly relatable to the mass population suffering the after-effect of the World Wars. As some manage to find meaning in life and continue, while others engage in “bad faith”, without understanding the power of being free in a society where there are no moral values. It is by analysing these novels and understanding how the characters have been written by these authors which is a reflection of the despair and anguish felt by Hemingway and Mishima themselves, we can also understand the post-war society and probe into the personal struggles of the common people. This analysis also gives

insight to another important point and that is in war, irrespective of the winner and loser, it is the common people who suffer the most, as war has deep psychological effects on people which alter their lives permanently. As reflected both in Mishima's works and Hemingway's work, the fact that America won the World Wars does not void its people of the casualties of war, while their grief and agony remain disparate from the Japanese population, there is a sense of despair in both nationalities. As the Japanese deal with the American occupation and are forced to acclimate within a society aberrant from their own, an entire new generation of Americans also struggle with a new destructive world unknown to them. As there remain differences, there are also analogous themes such as struggle with masculinity, as the World Wars proliferated certain ideologies of masculinity which would induce men into adapting these ideologies, and those who failed struggled with the feeling of emasculation, and this feeling is not only pertinent to Mishima and Hemingway but thousands of voices that remain arcane to us. Again, the underlying effect of war in one's choice to cease life is also notable, as neither of these authors committed suicide right away, but the World Wars played a monumental role in their eventual decision. The reason why these authors resonate so much with the general audience is due to their relatability, neither of them was a soldier, and despite Hemingway serving as an ambulance driver, his experience was thoroughly relatable to the general audience. Finally, the comparative analysis not only unveils the basis of suicide within these authors but also meticulous details about their culture and society.

The comparison between Mishima and Hemingway leaves space for further debate and more research, not only is there a link between these two authors, but the comparative analysis of the culture and struggle of their respective societies underlines the great tragedy that is war itself. While there remain theories that can unveil other facets of this comparison, such as an important theme that also connects with both of these two authors would be Albert Camus's theory of Absurdism. So, it is a topic that entails much more research.

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