

Port and Starboard: Kierkegaardian Choices in Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms*

A. Ailean Zeralda

I BA English, Department of English and Research Center,

Sarah Tucker College, Palayamkottai.

Email: azeralda.englit@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* (1929) presents a narrative through which the protagonist Frederic Henry navigates choices that correspond to the philosophical stages articulated by Søren Kierkegaard. This article examines how the novel structures Henry's progression from a detached participant in war to a committed lover, from a deserter to an isolated survivor, demonstrating parallels with Kierkegaard's aesthetic, ethical, and religious spheres of existence. This analysis considers how Henry's final solitude in the rain represents not merely grief but a condition that reflects Kierkegaard's conception of the individual's absolute relation to the absolute, a relation that, in Hemingway's secular framework, becomes an absolute relation to love and loss. The article draws upon previously published scholarship to contextualize Hemingway's work within existential discourse, while incorporating primary source evidence from the novel to demonstrate how Hemingway's prose style creates conditions for existential

interpretation. The conclusion considers how the novel engages with questions of choice and commitment that resonate with Kierkegaardian categories.

Keywords: Kierkegaard, Existential choice, Aesthetic stage, Ethical stage, Religious stage.
