

## Tragedy and the Tragic: A Study of Ernst Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* and Naguib Mahfouz's *The Beginning and the End*

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**Abstract:** *This paper dwells upon the tragic vision of Ernst Hemingway and Naguib Mahfouz in their novels A Farewell to Arms and The Beginning and the End, respectively. Based on the development of the theory of tragedy from Aristotle to Hegel as well as the personal philosophy of life-as-tragedy of both Mahfouz and Hemingway, this paper discusses the tragic vision embodied in both novels. The novels are stories where every day moral dilemmas often present profound paradoxes with which heroes and heroines must deal. Tragedy, in the same vein, is such a paradoxical story where we have to deal at any rate with our everyday moral dilemmas, where we are sometimes called upon to make difficult choices not between right and wrong, but between what we might define as two rights. The philosopher George Hegel once said that "Genuine tragedies in the world are not conflicts between right and wrong. They are conflicts between two rights." (qtd. in The Divine Paradox 85). The tragic elements in the two novels make them Hegelian tragedies par excellence.*

**Keywords:** *Tragedy, the Tragic, the theory of tragedy, Ernst Hemingway, Naguib Mahfouz.*

### 1. Introduction

Tragedy plays a role in both Hegel's *Phenomenology of Mind* and his Lectures on the 'Philosophy of History.' According to Rebecca Bushnell: "For Hegel, tragedy is the conflict of two substantive positions... [It] can be resolved only with the fall of the hero... Hegelian tragedy is the conflict of two goods" (52). According to Hegel, the most arresting type of conflict in ancient tragedy is that which deals with the politic, that is, with "the opposition between ethical life in its social universality and the family as the natural ground of moral relations" (39). Second, Antigone, in the Lectures on the Philosophy of Religion, is mentioned in the clearest embodiment of the divine forces of family and community life: "The collision between the two highest moral powers is set forth in a plastic fashion in that supreme and absolute example of tragedy, Antigone." Finally, it is also mentioned in *The Philosophy of Fine Arts* on opposition between these divine powers, Hegel once again isolates the Antigone as "one of the most sublime, and in every respect most consummate works of art human efforts ever produced" (Marianne McDonald 47). Further, Hegel's theory of life and art explains that 'art is similar to life,' and this so applicable to Mahfouz and Hemingway as well. To conclude, Hegel's theory on the tragic helps us to a great extent analyze the tragic conflict in this play. He focuses on the tragic vis-à-vis tragedy. And for me, Hegel is the best whom can we depend upon analyzing Shakespeare's Othello. Not only that but also he uses other supportive techniques of increasing the tragic conflict.









