

A Farewell to Arms

- Abstract
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Ernest Hemingway's novel, *A Farewell to Arms*, is a seminal work in American literary history. A dramatic adaptation of the work would serve to expose students to Hemingway's views on human nature and the often devastating dichotomy between love and war. The adaptation will aim to connect the current state of the world, including issues as diverse as religion, homosexual rights, the Ukrainian conflict and the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria, with issues germane to Hemingway's own time.

The objective of this project is to illuminate the struggle of the individual to act in accordance with moral and ethical imperatives when faced with the obstacles of doubt, disillusion and inconceivable loss. The play will examine the dire costs of war, including both the physical loss of life and the spiritual deaths which inevitably accompany it. Ultimately, the purpose of the play, as with the novel itself, will be to extol the virtues of selfless love and compassion.

In addition to sources relating directly to adapting novels for the stage, I will draw from Hemingway's fiction as well as his letters, and others' writings about him during the production process. For the research symposium I will utilize historical resources relating to World War I as well as Hemingway's life as a whole.

PROPOSAL

- Description

Ernest Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* tells the story of an American man, Frederic Henry, serving as an ambulance driver in the Italian army during World War I. During his time on the Italian front, Frederic falls in love with an English nurse, Catherine Barkley. He then suffers a severe injury and is removed to a hospital away from the front. Catherine joins him there and the relationship blossoms until Catherine becomes pregnant with Frederic's child. Frederic reluctantly returns to the front but the Italian army soon caves, and a massive retreat reunites the lovers. They are forced to flee to Switzerland where the two live quite happily for a brief time. Finally though, both Catherine and the child perish during childbirth.

This adaptation will follow the relationship between Frederic and Catherine, as well as another romance based loosely upon minor characters from the novel. This parallel story will feature an equally tragic relationship between a driver in Frederic's company and a priest attached to the army near the front. The inclusion of this storyline will demonstrate the unique circumstances faced by homosexuals forced to hide their identities, but will also show the undeniable sameness of their love and that of their heterosexual counterparts.

These love stories are framed by one of the bloodiest conflicts in history- World War I. The adaptation will attempt to illustrate the irony that such an enormous conflict can be overshadowed by the circumstances of four seemingly insignificant people. The play will feature imagery related to other global conflicts, both past and present, including World War II, ISIS, the Arab Spring and the currently unfolding conflict in Ukraine. However, these images will be transient in nature as the purpose of the play is to tell the personal stories of the characters involved. Their presence will strictly serve to remind the audience of the relevance of Hemingway's words in our own time, despite the intervening years since they were written.

The characters in this play are young people, just entering adulthood. They could be considered peers to the students of this university. Their relationships with each other are not limited to romance; they are faced with incredible challenges, and unthinkable circumstances.

Throughout the play, they will grow and learn with each other, just as college students grow and learn in their time at school. Responsibility, integrity, loyalty and faith are tested and proven in the actions of these characters.

Finally, this play will seek to draw hope from the disastrous events that befall its main characters. Despite the story's tragic nature, the evident truth of the triumph of love awakens in readers a determination to bear and ultimately eradicate the implacable burden of iniquity.

This grant will be used to secure the rights to perform the adaptation from the Hemingway Estate. The estate's representatives at Lazarus and Harris LLP have offered a "limited non-exclusive non-commercial license to adapt for the stage the novel *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway" at the special discounted fee of \$500, which is the amount being requested in this proposal. Of course, the Undergraduate Research Program will receive full credit and gratitude for their funding in any advertisements for the play.

- Timetable and Presentation Outlet

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The adaptation will be written over the next several months with the play itself to be performed in Carol Belk Theatre in April of 2015. The rights to adapt the novel will be secured as soon as the funds are available. I would like to give a presentation at the Spring Symposium. The presentation will have two main parts: first, an overview of the challenges accompanying the production from start to finish, and the solutions to those challenges; second, a more scholarly look at the history surrounding Hemingway's creation of the novel and a comparison to current events.

- Budget

Limited non-exclusive non-commercial license to adapt for the stage the novel *A Farewell to Arms* by Ernest Hemingway.....\$500

- Bibliography

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