Farewell To Arms Essay, Research Paper

In this novel, A Farewell to Arms by Ernest Hemingway, Hemingway evolves Frederic Henry into a code hero. His beliefs and values are changed to the characteristics of a code hero by the end of the book with the aid of Catherine Barkley, a code hero herself. A code hero follows existentialism. The code hero also strives to live life to the fullest, and Frederic s behavior seems to show a similar want as the novel concludes.

In the beginning of the novel, Frederic Henry s mind is clouded by sensual pleasures and he cannot control himself. He possesses some traits of a code hero, however his mindset is not completely that of a code hero s. After meeting Catherine Barkley, he begins to learn to discipline himself. Henry drinks too much wine and loiters at whorehouses near his town. He has no control over himself as he lives and does as he pleases. In his extended period of stay at Ospidale Maggoire, he gets acquainted with Catherine in depth. With his mortar-shell wound to his leg he is hospitalized for a period of time. His time is well spent at the hospital for his love Catherine helps attend to him. There, Frederic spends nights awake staring into the mysterious darkness. Just as a code hero does, he fears the darkness, which symbolizes death and evil. For a period of time Catherine also spends her nights with him as she takes over for night duty. She makes his evenings very joyous. With their time spent together, Catherine passes on some of her code hero values onto Frederic as they converse and make love throughout the night. She eventually stops attending night duty and Frederic learns to control his urge for Catherine as he spends the rest of his nights alone in thought. Frederic s time spent with Catherine helps contour him into being a code hero.

Frederic ends the novel as a code hero and attains the characteristics of one within his actions and beliefs. His beliefs in the very beginning of the novel show that he is capable of being a code hero with some guidance. Catherine is just the right person and directs him to be one. He is involved with the war, but was somewhat detached with from the war as well. He is callous to all the killings and battles. It is inevitable when he completely removes himself from it. The dive into the river escaping death from the Battle Police is a catharsis from the cool waters of the Tagliomento River. With his escape from the Italian Army, Frederic had no more obligation [His] Anger was washed away in the river along with any obligation. (Hemingway 232). From here on Frederic begins to mold into a code hero.

Frederic now values and loathes the same objects as a code hero does. Frederic is an atheist, as he does not believe in the charm of St. Anthony that Catherine gives to him. As he says, It is only defeat that we become Christian (Hemingway 178), his disbelief in religion is shown. Without religion, there are no more moral codes to be followed. Thus Frederic has no regrets in deserting the Italian Army in their time of need. Also he is unfeeling of telling a lie during his questioning in Switzerland. Frederic does not follow any moral conventions either. He continues to make love to Catherine before marriage. She does not object to this because she is a code hero herself. Frederic does not believe in war as demonstrated from his departure from it. He says that man is in defeated from the start. Put him in power and see how wise he is. (Hemingway 179) He does not wish to continue to be a part of the futile war, which only hastens one s death, and rips off all his insignia on his sleeve. His behavior also defines who he is. Frederic sees himself as a man who does as he pleases to be content. He drinks, eats, and acts at his will and it defines his character. As the novel closes, his beloved Catherine Barkley falls ill from a failed Caesarian section. She is not able to survive her birth. Frederic is stupefied and cannot find words to express his feelings. As he goes back to his hotel room, Frederic contemplates, but cannot find a way to say goodbye, although he does accept her death in finality. Although her life ends, Catherine was unknowingly has made Frederic adopt her beliefs to make Frederic Henry a code hero.

Hemingway s code hero, Frederic Henry, evolves into a man whom the reader can identify with and understand. He becomes a code hero and follows Hemingway s existentialist beliefs with the help of Catherine. Frederic lives life to the fullest spending his time and effort with Catherine. He will now continue his life and eventually accept his own death in its finality.