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LITERARY REACTIONS TO WORLD WAR I: A STUDY OF WRITERS IN
OPPOSITION

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ABSTRACT

In order to deal with the brutality of the World War I, many turned to writing to let out their pain and emotion; writers on both sides dealt with the aftermath of the war through writing. American writer, Ernest Hemingway and Hungarian writer Dezső Kosztolányi, men on opposite sides of war, approached the war in their writings quite differently, but their works contain similar examples of loss. Both Hemingway and Kosztolányi use miscarriage, abortion and prematurity, both literally and metaphorically as a means of expressing political views.

This paper will provide a historical and political view of World War I in order to better place and give context to the work of Ernest Hemingway and Dezső Kosztolányi. Works by both authors will be analyzed in order to better understand the conversation between literary reactions to World War I from men on opposite sides of the war.

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Chapter 1

Social and Political Context

Hungarian writer Dezső Kosztolányi and American writer Ernest Hemingway wrote extensively about World War I and of their experiences during the “War to End All Wars.” In order to understand the context of their works, the social and political context of the time must be established along with an understanding of each author.

Dezső Kosztolányi, born in 1855 in Szabadka, Hungary (now part of Serbia), worked as both a writer and a translator. He first began writing poetry quite early and his first and second collection of poems, *Within Four Walls* and *The Complaints of a Poor Little Child*, established him as a talented and popular writer. Soon after, he created a literary journal, *Nyugat*, with friends he made at the University of Budapest. He worked as a journalist and published short stories before writing his first novel in 1921 (Szirtes v-vi). “Having been somewhat traumatized by the First World War and its consequences, he preferred to keep his distance from party political commitment” (Szirtes vi). His writing, particularly his novels *Anna Édes* and *Kornél Esti*, reflect his experiences living through World War I in Hungary and also his subvert political ideals.

Kosztolányi’s introduction of himself as a character in the last chapter of the *Anna Édes*, proves an interesting literary device. The characters in the novel see Kosztolányi in his home and comment on him, his writings and his political beliefs. Kosztolányi appears quite literally in his own novel. Since his political ideals were expressed through metaphors and stories, rather than through bold statements, he “was sometimes

mistrusted as a result” (Szirtes vi). Creating himself as a character allows him to speak almost directly to his critics and his readers.

Anna Édes, originally published in 1926, focuses on a tumultuous time in Hungary’s history. During the setting of the novel, Hungary had just been defeated in World War I, and was experiencing brief periods of socialist revolutions and would soon lose two-thirds of her territory in the Treaty of Trianon. In the last chapter of novel, Kosztolányi speaks directly of the political situation in Hungary after World War I. He writes,

But the unit of currency, the korona, is also falling. It’s value: 0.22. People are in despair. How to eat, or dress, or heat the flat at this price. They wait in trepidation for the coming winter. At noon the stock market is in uproar. It’s inflation, people are winning and losing fortunes. What remains of Hungary after Trianon is accepted into the League of Nations. Another year passes. It is now 1922 (*Anna Édes* 217).

Hungary is dealing with not only the tremendous loss of life after World War I, but also going through a severe economic crisis. The depth of this economic crisis can be seen even in the upper middle class as presented in the form of the Vizy household. At the beginning of the novel, the couple struggles, along with everyone else to find enough food. Mrs Vizy

brought in the supper on a wooden tray. A cup of tea, a couple of slices of toast and the butter she had bought that afternoon. Vizy, who had only had a bit of liver and some vegetable marrow for dinner, glanced down at the weak grass-green tea, the suspicious-looking slices of black and yellow maizebread which looked

unappetizing even after toasting and enquired sourly if there was anything else (*Anna Édes* 11).

Throughout the novel, the economic situation slowly improves as seen through the increase in the quantity and quality of food. However, the peasants in the country often fared better than the upper middle class in the cities because they were able to grow their own food. The novel alludes to this later when Anna's father and step mother come to Budapest for her trial, "They presented the honourable lawyer with the two chickens, a pot of cream and some fresh curd, saying it was good to stow something away in case of slack business in the legal profession" (*Anna Édes* 198).

Kosztolányi also addresses the war in the last chapter of the novel. Three characters walk past Kosztolányi's home and see a boy, presumably Kosztolányi's son, who plays with lead soldiers on the tea table on the veranda. As he plays, he asks his mother, "for advice, how the Hungarian troops around the milkpan and teacups could beat the larger force of Frenchmen with their tanks and poison gas" (*Anna Édes* 219). In the war, Hungary was outnumbered and doomed to fail from the start. Against Western Europe's sophisticated weapons of heavy artillery and chemical warfare, the herdsmen soldiers from the Puszta stood little chance.

Kornél Esti, also focuses on the plight of the Hungarian people. However, the novel was published in 1933 and so focuses less on the immediate after-math of World War I, but instead on the daily lives of the interwar period. Kosztolányi mentions the first Communist revolution in 1919, in only a single line, "In that starting, that revolution, came spring" (*Kornél Esti* 10). Rather than discuss the war and the politics of Hungary

after the war, Kosztolányi chooses instead to use anecdotes throughout the work that stand as political statements of society and Hungary's new place in the world.

While Kosztolányi writes on the effects of war on society, he does not write about the war itself. There are no battle scenes and even the Romanian invasion appears quite mild in *Anna Édes*. Kosztolányi wrote to ethnic Hungarian people, many of whom were living outside of Hungary's ever changing post-World War I borders. Although a journalist, he understood that the Hungarian people already knew the horrors of World War I; they simply had to look outside their doors to see the ravages of war. Kosztolányi wrote about the domestic life in order to comment on society and to help his Hungarian readers better make sense of the world around them.

Kosztolányi's political opinions appear throughout his works, but are veiled. He does not write openly of his political opinions which often left readers wondering of his true political opinions, something he addresses in *Anna Édes*. Indisputable however, was Kosztolányi's fervent nationalism for the sovereignty of Hungary and the sanctity of the Hungarian language.

Hemingway's background differs quite significantly from that of Kosztolányi, yet both experience World War I and use similar metaphors to express their political beliefs. Born in 1899 in Oak Park, Illinois, Hemingway grew up as the son of a doctor. He worked as a journalist for many years before writing short stories and novels. He volunteered for the Italian ambulance during World War I. He later lived in Paris for a number of years, before calling Florida and Cuba home. His writing style was famous for its terseness. "He was personally famous as the hard-drinking, fighting, shooting, fishing 'Papa' of legend. Hemingway was, among many other things, a Nobel laureate and

Pulitzer Prize-winner, a big-game hunter, fisherman, wartime ambulance driver, Communist sympathiser, womaniser and alcoholic” (Johnson). He committed suicide in 1961.

Hemingway, unlike Kosztolányi, never appears as a character in his work although many wrongly assume that he “wrote only about his own firsthand experiences and that his central male character was a thinly veiled self-portrait” (Reynolds 109). Hemingway drew on his own personal experiences, but he did not recreate himself in his writing. Hemingway lived through experiences similar to Frederic Henry’s in *A Farewell to Arms*, but their experiences during the war differed significantly,

The truth was that Hemingway served a few weeks as a Red Cross ambulance driver on the Italian front in 1918 before being injured by an Austrian mortar burst while distributing chocolate to Italian troops on the Piave River. He turned nineteen in the Milan hospital, where he fell in love with an American nurse, Agnes von Kurowsky, who was eight years his senior and who eventually sent him back to America before telling him that she was too old for him. There was just enough correlation to encourage the reading of *A Farewell to Arms* as Hemingway biography (Reynolds 110).

Casting Hemingway into the protagonist he writes, misrepresents his writing and creates a fictional narrative of Hemingway’s real life. Hemingway’s work through the lens of biography distorts the characters and the narrative he writes. Both Frederic Henry and Robert Jordan stand as characters in their own right, apart from the idealized character created of Hemingway.

As in life, Hemingway differs from Kosztolányi in his approach to writing on World War I. Hemingway was an American expatriate living and writing about various places in Europe. He wrote about the war itself. Both *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* contain grisly accounts of war wounds, if not battle. Hemingway's audience differed from Kosztolányi's audience; Hemingway wrote to a mostly American audience. Americans were removed much more from World War I than Europeans. The war started in 1914, but the United States did not enter the war until April of 1917 ("World War I"). While American soldiers saw action and there were American accounts of the war, the American public had no direct contact with the fighting of the war. Understandably then, Hemingway wrote about the war experience rather than the domestic lives of those affected by the war.

Hemingway again differs from Kosztolányi in his treatment of politics throughout his novels. Hemingway's political opinions, or political opinions of his characters appear quite clear. In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, Robert Jordan fights for The Republicans in the Spanish Civil War. Jordan, as well as other characters, often discuss their political beliefs throughout the text. During the fighting Jordan thinks of the men he has killed throughout the war,

Don't you know it is wrong to kill? Yes. But you do it? Yes. And you still believe absolutely that your cause is right? Yes. It is right, he told himself, not reassuringly, but proudly. I believe in the people and their right to govern themselves as they wish. But you mustn't believe in killing, he told himself. You must do it as a necessity but you must not believe in it. If you believe in it the whole thing is wrong (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 304).

These battle scenes in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* allows Hemingway to discuss political viewpoints in a manner that appears natural and unforced. As his character debates the sanctity of the war and his cause, the reader better understands both the character's motive for fighting and The Republicans' motive for fighting in the Spanish Civil War.

The differences between the writers' approaches to World War I stems from their different experiences with World War I. Kosztolányi lived through and experienced the war first-hand and he wrote to people who also lived through the war. His writing stands not as a history of the war, but a political commentary of the war through the descriptions of domestic life. Hemingway only saw the war for a short time and so relied on heavy research in re-creating the battles his characters fight and live through. He writes of the war directly, but also juxtaposes his battle scenes with domestic life. He writes to an audience that does not understand the tragedy of war firsthand and this shapes his writing and his overt political commentary. An understanding of the context of the war and its ramifications on society, prove essential in understanding the works of both Kosztolányi and Hemingway.

Chapter 2

Abortion, Miscarriage and Prematurity as a Political Metaphor in *Anna Édes* and *A Farewell to Arms*

Throughout their respective works, Ernest Hemingway and Dezső Kosztolányi both examine the ideas of abortion, miscarriage and prematurity. The abortion, miscarriage and prematurity in their writing serves as both a literal metaphor for the lost generation and also a metaphor of the political situation in Europe during and after World War I.

The murder of Mr and Mrs Vizy at the hands of Anna at the end of *Anna Édes* leave the reader questioning what caused her mental breakdown. This question allows the reader to search for cause of Anna's break from character. The reader must look back at Anna's trauma in her exploitation by all those in power over her, the abandonment by her master with whom she has a relationship and her subsequent abortion.

Anna's story is one of exploitation and abandonment. Her last name, Édes, literally translates to "sweet." She proves as sweet and docile as her name suggests, pure innocence. However, Anna constantly becomes an object for those around her to exploit. Esti, the caretaker of the Vizys' apartment building and relative of Anna, offers Anna's services to the Vizys. Esti does not ask Anna, she has little choice in the matter. His Communist political position in the ever changing world of Hungary, remains precarious and Esti realizes how important it is to remain in the good graces of a powerful man like Vizy. He "did all he could to entice his relative away... He knew what was at stake. Every

morning he saw Communists being dismissed from their jobs” (*Anna Édes* 29). Fisor cares only for himself and uses Anna to protect himself.

Later it is the nephew of her employer that exploits Anna. The Vizy’s host their nephew, Jancsi, in Budapest so that he can “perform his Christian middle-class duty and heed the spirit of the age by seeking some practical, financial position” (Kosztolányi 98). While staying with his aunt and uncle, Jancsi decides to sweep Anna off her feet and begins a relationship with her. He uses her for his own desires and leaves her when he feels too attached. Later, Anna realizes she is pregnant by Jancsi. He gives her medication to induce an abortion and leaves her to fend for herself. She suffers for hours in immense pain. “For days her vision was impaired and her ears rang... She also felt a great pressure on her heart, just as she did that night: she felt so small and everything around her so large” (*Anna Édes* 138).

Anna’s and Jancsi’s relationship and her abortion illustrates the class struggle of the early 20th century in Central Europe. Jancsi, because of his position of power and social status, waltzes into the kitchen, which also serves as Anna’s bedroom. He takes advantage of her because she is a woman, a peasant and a servant. He encourages her to have an abortion although she has reservations: ““By morning it will have done the trick. But let nobody see it. Because it’s illegal. If they found out they could put you in prison for it.’ ‘But then perhaps I shouldn’t take it, master?’ ‘Nonsense. Of course you should. But say nothing to anyone. Be careful.’” (*Anna Édes* 135). Because Anna works as a servant in the Vizy household and because Jancsi lives as a member of that household, Anna responds in a subservient manner in calling her former lover “master.” Jancsi shows his dismissal of Anna through the word, “nonsense.” His response is not only

dismissive, but commanding. Jancsi gives Anna no choice in the matter: she must have the abortion and not tell anyone. Jancsi utilizes his position of power to force Anna into the abortion and also into secrecy.

Abortion appears more than just in the case of Anna. When discussing earlier maids, Mrs Vizy recounts past failures. She remembers one Lidi, “She was ugly as sin, but one morning, there she was in the kitchen, lying on a blood-soaked mattress, unconscious from loss of blood, her face ashen, already gasping for breath... She had tried to perform an illegal abortion on herself” (*Anna Édes* 17). The novel shows the ongoing situation of exploited young girls who are forced to perform abortions to continue to work as maids. Kosztolányi shows these abortions in such a way as to highlight the pain of these girls. Lidi, like Anna, suffers and struggles to survive the ordeal. By showing the brutality of the abortion, Kosztolányi better illustrates the pain and struggles of the working class.

Anna’s abortion terminates her pregnancy. Her and Jancsi’s child remains permanently premature. Outside of the literal prematurity in *Anna Édes*, prematurity also emanates from Jancsi. Jancsi grows up during the war and lives through his brother’s death. The text states, “He watched his teachers and elders trooping off to war, becoming dead heroes from one day to the next. Like everyone else he quickly aged with the war” (*Anna Édes* 97). The translated term “aged” creates ambiguity in the text. While the term “aged” means to grow older, it may also mean to grow tired or weary of the war. The phrase “teachers and elders” implies that Jancsi had a connection to those men who became, “dead heroes.” The phrase “from one day to the next” implies a continuation of loss. Again and again, Jancsi loses those whom he cares about. This continual loss lasted

while Jancsi was fourteen to eighteen years old. At those young ages, he was too premature to handle such loss.

Jancsi again shows his prematurity, or immaturity, as he ages. Instead of dedicating his life to a useful cause, “He became something of a socialite. He danced his time away at parties, courted the local girls and developed a reputation as an impromptu wit. He dreamed of being a film star. He did not fancy any other career. For two years he stalled” (*Anna Édes* 98). After the stress of war, and the very real possibility of going to the front, Jancsi parties his life away. He wants to escape from the death and destruction of the war and fills his life with pleasure. After the practicalities of war, Jancsi favors the frivolous. While understandable given his youth, it shows a lack of maturity.

Anna’s experience in prison highlights her mistreatment at the Vizy household. Anna appears shocked at her new prison home when she first enters, “Her warders took her up to the third floor and locked her in a cell. It contained a bed, a chair, a table and a closet, but it was relatively clean, and lighter and more spacious than her kitchen. She could hardly believe that this was prison” (*Anna Édes* 196). Compared to her accommodations at the Vizy household, prison seems luxurious to Anna. Thus, the Vizy’s miscarried their duty as her employers; they did not provide for Anna in the way that they should.

Throughout the trial, it becomes clear to the reader that Anna’s sentence is a miscarriage of justice. The police and the court hound Anna over and over again to discover how the murders happened. She simply does not remember the events and what her motives were. However, during the court proceedings, the court demands an explanation, “Finally she stuttered out how it happened. Not so much in her own words

as in the words used by the police and by the examining magistrate” (*Anna Édes* 204).

Anna’s testimony not only forces her to incriminate herself, but also forces her to use the language and the invented story the magistrates created. This then, constitutes a miscarriage of justice because the trial proves unfair.

The political element of Anna’s trial comes through in the form of a witness. Throughout Anna’s employment at the Vizys and her trial, only one person continually comes to Anna’s aid and defense, the Vizy’s neighbor, Dr Miklós Moviszter. The court calls on him to testify against Anna. The passage in which he speaks to the court, proves he is the political voice of the novel, Miklós Moviszter “‘My impression,’ he stubbornly repeated, ‘my impression is that they did not deal with her as with a human being. To them she was not a human being but a machine. They turned her into a machine,’ he raised his voice almost to a shout. ‘They treated her without humanity. They were beastly to her.’” (*Anna Édes* 211). While not physically abusive to Anna, the Vizys treated her as if she were beneath them and thus were emotionally and psychologically abusive to Anna. The Vizys utilized their political and economic power to, even unintentionally, belittle and abuse Anna. Moviszter realizes that more so than the abuse itself, is the idea that the Vizys were unaware of their actions. After the trial, the district returns once again to domestic harmony. “And so all memory of her faded. By now nobody knew who she was or anything about her. She was quite simply forgotten. She simply disappeared, and it made no difference to anyone whether she was in the prison at Mária Nosztra or resting under the acacias of the graveyard beyond the Danube, in the village of Balaton-Főkajár” (*Anna Édes* 216). The memory and the suffering of the lower classes does not leave an

impression. Through Anna's plight, Kosztolányi highlights the inequality of the poor and their mistreatment by society.

During the last chapter of the novel, Kosztolányi directly discusses political viewpoints. The character Szilárd Druma, a neighbor of the Vizi's, encounters Kosztolányi at his house. Druma and his friends realize it is "the journalist" Kosztolányi. The friends debate Kosztolányi's political viewpoints, stating he first a Communist, then a Christian, then a Bolshevik. The friends continue their conversation of Kosztolányi,

‘What does he want in any case. Which side is he on?’ ‘That’s simple,’ Druma resolved the debate. ‘He’s for everybody and nobody. He minds which way the wind blows. First he was in the pay of the Jews and took their side and now he is hired by the Christians. He’s a wise man,’ he winked. ‘He knows which side his bread is buttered’ (*Anna Édes* 220).

Kosztolányi continues writing of the three men, “It was obvious they still didn’t fully understand. One could see that they were indeed used to thinking one thing at a time; one could see that two thoughts were beyond them” (*Anna Édes* 220). By having the characters encounter the writer, Kosztolányi cleverly creates a dialogue that would be impossible otherwise. He confronts ideas of his political viewpoints. His statement after the discussion of the three men allows Kosztolányi to express his own views. The phrase “two thoughts” shows that Kosztolányi maintains more than one political viewpoint and refuses to be pigeon holed into one set of ideals.

Anna's experiences serve as a metaphor of Hungary during World War I. Austria took advantage of Hungary in a similar fashion that Jancsi took advantage of Anna.

Austria viewed Hungary as subservient and treated her as such. When Austria wanted to

enter World War I, she dragged Hungary into it as well. As a result of World War I and the Treaty of Trianon, Hungary lost two-thirds of its territory. This loss spurred Hungary to later enter World War II and still stands as a painful loss in the collective memory of the Hungarian people.

Hemingway's *A Farewell to Arms* exhibits similar elements to *Anna Édes* in the politics of abortion, miscarriage and prematurity. However, the death of Frederic's and Catherine's son differs from that of Jancsi and Anna's unborn child. Catherine goes through all the motions of labor and has a Caesarian section. The boy is stillborn and dies due to asphyxiation. Frederic cares little for his son's death saying of his birth, "He nearly killed his mother" (*A Farewell to Arms* 277). Frederic values the life of Catherine over the life of his son. He cares more for the living than those not yet born. Before the birth of the baby Frederic states, "We knew the baby was very close now and it gave us both a feeling as though something were hurrying us and we could not lose any time together" (*A Farewell to Arms* 266). Rather than an exciting event, the birth date of the child seems an expiration date on the intimacy of Frederic and Catherine's relationship.

Catherine and Frederic talk of marriage during the pregnancy. Catherine says, "I know one thing. I'm not going to be married in this splendid matronly state'... 'We want to have splendid wedding with every one thinking what a handsome young couple" (*A Farewell to Arms* 253). Catherine wants to deny the pregnancy. She uses the term "splendid" ironically here, because she continually speaks of how she dislikes the changes pregnancy has had on her body. She wants a "splendid" wedding where the guests will approve of her and Frederic physically as a couple. She cares less about her child than she does the opinion of others. The use of the term, "young" reinforces the idea

of youth and immaturity in Frederic's and Catherine's relationship and idea of parenthood. Both Frederic and Catherine exhibit their lack of maturity in their treatment of Catherine's pregnancy. Frederic and Catherine do not want the child, but only want to return to their life before the child was conceived. Catherine discusses this several times. She continually speaks of her weight and how she "will be thin again, darling" (*A Farewell to Arms* 265). She wants her life, and her body, to return to their former state before the pregnancy.

Catherine and Frederic move to Lausanne for the birth of the baby. There Catherine realizes she her lack of preparation. "You know what I have to get, darling," she said, "What?" "Baby clothes. There aren't many people reach my time without baby things" (*A Farewell to Arms* 264). Most mothers shop immediately for children's clothes when they first learn they are pregnant. Catherine, however, only wants to keep the child small and her figure thin. She continues, "I'll find out what is necessary" (*A Farewell to Arms* 264). This shows Catherine's lack of maturity and motherly instinct. Although a nurse, she seems not to know what the child will need. The child is an afterthought. In the event of the pregnancy, the end result, a child, seems forgotten. The novel portrays the child as an obstacle to overcome, rather than a joyous occasion, which was the notion of the past. This child does not fit into Frederic's and Catherine's new idea of their lives together. The child and marriage stand for old ideas of the ideal life, an ideal they want to put aside in their own lives. Frederic and Catherine only want the birth of the child so that they can go back to their previous self-involved lives.

Catherine later dies during the childbirth from multiple hemorrhages, "I'm going to die," she said; then waited and said, "I hate it." (*A Farewell to Arms* 282). Both

Catherine and Frederic flinch from the idea of Catherine's death. During Catherine's difficult delivery, Frederic's inner monologue shows his desperation for Catherine's safety, "She won't die. People don't die in childbirth nowadays. That was what all husbands thought. Yes, but what if she should die? She won't die" (*A Farewell to Arms* 274). Frederic carries on this inner monologue questioning Catherine's safety and reassuring himself. When Catherine starts hemorrhaging, he begs "God please make her not die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. That was alright, but don't let her die" (*A Farewell to Arms* 282). Again, Frederic shows he values Catherine's life over that of his son. He accepts his son's death, but refuses to accept Catherine's death.

The miscarriage of the baby highlights Hemingway's struggle to define what is living and what is dead. Frederic's exchange with the nurse, who informs Frederic his son is not alive, shows this struggle, "'He wasn't alive.' 'He was dead?' 'They couldn't start him breathing. The cord was caught around his neck or something.' 'So he's dead.'" (*A Farewell to Arms* 279). Frederic tries to assign the term "dead" to his child, whereas the nurse tells Frederic that the child "wasn't alive." Later, Frederic thinks, "But what if he never breathed at all. He hadn't. He had never been alive" (*A Farewell to Arms* 279). Through all the death that he has witnessed, Frederic tries to grapple with what is living and what is dead. He concludes that his son could not have died because his son never lived.

As Frederic struggles with what is life and what is death, he also struggles with death itself. He states,

I wished the hell I'd been choked like that. No I didn't. Still there would not be all this dying to go through. Now Catherine would die. That was what you did. You died. You did not know what it was about. You never had time to learn. They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you. Or they killed you gratuitously like Aymo. Or they gave you the syphilis like Rinaldi. But they killed you in the end. You could count on that. Stay around and they would kill you (*A Farewell to Arms* 279-280).

Frederic wavers on whether he wishes to be alive or dead. He first says, he wants to be dead, but then changes his mind. He struggles with survivor's guilt, because in death, "there would not be all this dying to go through." The line, "You never had time to learn" illustrates the naivety and youth of those killed in World War I. The men, boys really, never had time to learn what they were fighting for. They are innocent of wrongdoing, yet death still takes them. This is further illustrated in the line, "They threw you in and told you the rules and the first time they caught you off base they killed you." The reference to base refers to baseball, a game of youth. By comparing the war and death to a youth game, Hemingway illustrates the youthfulness of those killed.

Throughout the small passage, Hemingway intentionally uses "they" seven times. This use of "they" is juxtaposed against the use of "you." The verbs associated with "they" are all destructive: threw, caught, kill. These are all actions. Whereas "you" is passive. "That was what you did. You died." This suggests a passivity in death. "They" force death on a person. The person simply bows to the pressure of death. Hemingway

fails to define this “they;” he is still questioning what causes death and what allows for life.

Aymo and Rinaldi’s death proves to be an abortion of sorts; their lives are cut short. Hemingway writes of the retreat of the Italian Army. During the retreat, Aymo was killed by the Italians, his own side, who mistakenly thought he was the enemy, “Two more shots came from the thick brush and Aymo, as he was crossing the tracks, lurched tripped and fell face down...He died while I was stopping the two holes... ‘Those were Italians that shot’” (*A Farewell to Arms* 184-185). Aymo’s death at the hands of the men he fights alongside with, shows the needlessness of his death. The Italian rear guard aborts the life of their own in killing Aymo. Rinaldi too has an aborted life. Frederic thinks that Rinaldi, known throughout for his love of women, dies from syphilis, a sexually transmitted disease. The very nature of humanity and acts of love condemn Rinaldi to death. Love aborts Rinaldi. Through these experiences and through losing his son and Catherine, Frederic surmises that the only thing one could count on in life was death.

Whereas, the characters in *Anna Édes* speak openly of politics, the characters in *A Farewell to Arms* run from politics. Frederic runs from the politics of his own country, the United States by joining the Italians. Yet, again he runs from politics by joining the ambulance unit, rather than a fighting unit. Catherine too runs from politics. She enters the war as a nurse on the Italian front rather than going to the Western front or remaining in Britain to take care of returning soldiers. She removes herself from the politics of her country. Frederic and Catherine view the war as horrific, but the ideals and politics appear removed from them. There are no ideals for fighting the war; there is only

fighting. The war functions as an element of the novel, but the novel does not center on the war. Personal interactions and feelings take precedent over world issues. By removing politics from the perspectives of Frederic and Catherine, Hemingway highlights the meaningless nature of World War I.

While both Kosztolányi's and Hemingway's work contain abortion and miscarriage, their works differ in their intent. Kosztolányi's novel became part of the collective identity and memory of Hungary. Hungarian reader's identified with his work because it spoke of an experience they knew all too well. The memory of loss unites the Hungarians. However, Hemingway does not contribute to a collective memory. As an American fighting in Italy, neither the Americans nor the Italians have a collective memory similar to Hemingway; Hemingway stands for individuality. His memories serve as a seemingly singular experience. Kosztolányi's work unites its readers and contributes to a collective identity whereas Hemingway's work creates its own identity of individualism.

Chapter 3

Abortion, Miscarriage and Prematurity as a Political Metaphor in *Kornél Esti* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*

Kornél Esti and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* focus on the later period after World War I, rather than the immediate war and the immediate aftermath seen in *Anna Édes* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. The ideas of abortion, miscarriage and prematurity, take a metaphorical form in *Kornél Esti* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, rather than a more literal form. These metaphorical forms take shape through the use of translations as well as events throughout each work. The ideas of abortion, miscarriage and prematurity allow the writers to explore the political and social structure of the period after World War I.

Both Kosztolányi and Hemingway utilize translations. These translations serve as a metaphor for miscarriage: each translation miscarries the original message, if only slightly. The idea of translation serves a model for political discussion in Kosztolányi and Hemingway's works. Both employ translation in order to reach English readers. Kosztolányi wrote *Anna Édes* and *Kornél Esti* in Hungarian and the works were later translated to English. The conversations between the characters of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* take place in Spanish and Hemingway uses several literary devices to indicate to the reader this translation. These translations affect] the way in which the reader interacts with the work.

As a Hungarian writer as well as translator of English texts into Hungarian, Kosztolányi worked with translation on a continual basis. He translated the works of Shakespeare, Edgar Allen Poe, Walt Whitman, Lewis Carroll and many other prolific English writers into Hungarian, but felt true translation impossible. In his 1922 essay, “Nyelvtudás”, or “Language Learning,” he writes, “It is possible to know a foreign language very well, but never well” (Varga). As a translator, he believed translation, “to be an impossible task: a text cannot be rendered into a different language, it can only be re-created” (Varga).

Kosztolányi argued not only for the sanctity of Hungarian, but for the sanctity of all languages. Kosztolányi’s views placed him in opposition to Antoine Meillet, a professor at Collège de France and author of *Les langues dans l’Europe nouvelle*. In a changing world where empires, countries and ethnic groups were in constant flux, Meillet argued for the elimination of smaller languages in favor of more universal languages (namely, French). Kosztolányi wrote a letter to Meillet in which he accused Meillet of “considering thought prior to and separate from language...[and] as a belated exponent of the rationalism inherited from some seventeenth and eighteenth century thinkers who envisaged a universal language modelled on mathematics” (Szegedy-Maszák 11). Kosztolányi believed language to be a manifestation of a cultural experience. He “believed that language, rather than ethnicity, defines a particular community and its world-view; and that language does not simply give form to expression but defines the very nature of thinking” (Varga). In his 1927 essay, “Káté az írásról” (“The ABC of Language and Soul”) Kosztolányi writes,

Only in my mother-tongue can I be my true self. From its deepest deepness bubble up those unconscious screams, verses. Here I forget that I speak, write. Here my recollections of words are as old as if they were of the things themselves. Here concepts and their signs are fused together fatefully and inseparably. About knife [kés], I know it is culter, couteau, Messer, knife, coltello, navaja. However, if someone very much wanted, he could convince me I'm wrong. But about kés, no one could convince me it is not kés (Varga).

The importance of language proves political. Kosztolányi defends the sanctity of each and every language. The different languages separate different ethnic and cultural groups and their distinct language helps solidify this distinct identity. Wiping out languages, as Meillet suggest, implies wiping out entire ethnic identities and cultures. Kosztolányi fights for the integrity of language because language creates ethnic and cultural groups. By defending languages, he defends the people who speak them. He argues for their right to exist as groups and ultimately as sovereign nations.

Kosztolányi discusses the idea of translation and communication in *Kornél Esti*. While traveling on the train to Turkey, Kornél passes through Bulgaria. Kornél decides to hold a conversation with the Bulgarian train guard, despite the fact that he speaks little Bulgarian. He attempts to convince the guard that his knowledge of Bulgarian rivals that of a professor from Sofia. He speaks only “yes” and “no,” but conversation flowed from the guard. Esti states,

It's characteristic of foreigners always to try and speak the language of the country in which they're traveling, they're too enthusiastic about it, and in no time at all it emerges that they're foreigners. Natives, on the other hand, those

born here, will just nod and make themselves understood by signs. Words have to be dragged out of them. Generally they shy away from elegant turns of phrase and succinct literary constructions. As far as possible they don't speak, which is wise, because if they had to give several hour long lectures from a rostrum or write a hefty tome, both their students and their critics would be quick to point out – and not even entirely without foundation – that they hadn't even the first idea of their own native language (*Kornél Esti* 124).

Esti's assessment of language shows that native speakers, tend not be those who *speak* the breadth of the language. Rather native speakers are those that *comprehend* the full knowledge of the language. This idea coincides with Kosztolányi's assessment of language. Expression is only a form of language; thought is the essence of language.

Kosztolányi again addresses translations in an anecdote in *Kornél Esti*. Kornél writes of his friend Gallus a translator and a kleptomaniac. In the translation, Gallus pilfers items from the English text. "He worked in a variety of ways. Most often items simply disappeared entirely. In the Hungarian text I found looted wholesale the carpets, the safes, and the silverware" (*Kornél Esti* 202). While humorous, the story does more than provide comic relief. Through a seemingly innocuous story, Kosztolányi shows the miscarriage that occurs in translation; loss in some form always happens in translation.

Kornél tells stories, many farfetched, throughout *Kornél Esti*. He tells of a story of a rich peasant father and his daughter. A young man fell in the love with the daughter and two soon happily marry. As per the custom, the father gave a dowry to the young man in the form of forty-thousand-korona notes. The father began to waste away, "He wasn't even very upset that Zsuzsa'd left him alone in his old age. It was the money that upset

him, that heap of money, those forty-thousand-korona notes out of which – he himself couldn't understand how – he'd been diddled. That he never forgave" (*Kornél Esti* 137). The young couple would fight and the girl would run home to her father. Each time she ran home, the father forced the husband to pay to get her back. Eventually, the father recouped the entire dowry and was happy once again while the young couple lived in poverty until the war. The story illustrates the father's miscarriage of duty towards his daughter; he cares more for his money than his child's happiness. After the father's death the husband placed all their inheritance in war bonds. When the husband went off to war and died, he left the wife penniless. Here Kosztolányi makes a political statement: while the husbands suffer through their deaths, the wives are left to suffer for the rest of their lives.

The metaphorical ideas of abortion, miscarriage and prematurity also appear in Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Hemingway focuses on translation, a metaphorical form of miscarriage. Hemingway's translation of Spanish conversations into English better helps the reader understand the cultural differences Robert Jordan experiences while working for the Republican side of the Spanish Civil War. The dialogue appears written as direct translations from Spanish and often produces awkward phrasing. These translations aid the reader in the understanding of the action of the work. When Robert speaks to El Sordo, Robert wonders at his simple use of speech, "I come tonight. Then hunt horses.' 'What change for horses?' 'Maybe. Now eat.' Does he talk that way to every one? Robert Jordan thought. Or is that his idea of how to make foreigners understand?" (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 146). This choppy sentence structure helps the reader understand the Spaniards view of Robert Jordan as an outsider. Later,

when El Sordo begins to speak with him in a conversational manner similar to other conversations seen in the novel, the reader understands that El Sordo begins to accept Robert.

Hemingway uses dialogue spoken in English and juxtaposes it with dialogue spoken in Spanish to highlight the differences in phrasing. “‘What?’ Pablo asked. ‘What do you propose?’ ‘Nothing,’ Robert Jordan said. ‘Got your saddles covered up good?’ ‘Yes.’ Then in English Robert Jordan said, ‘Going to grain those horses or peg them out and let them dig for it?’” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 180). Robert Jordan’s Spanish sentence, “Got your saddles covered up good?” is grammatically incorrect. The term “good” functions as an adjective and modifies nouns. Since the word “good” modifies in the sentence is “covered,” a verb, the term used should be an adverb. Thus, the grammatically correct English sentence would read, “Got your saddles covered up well?” This grammatically incorrect sentence helps the reader understand that the sentence is a translation from Spanish. This idea is reinforced by the grammatically correct English sentence that immediately follows the grammatically incorrect Spanish translation.

Throughout the novel, Hemingway uses the terms “thou” and “thee” to stand for the informal Spanish pronoun. By changing the pronoun to “thou” and “thee” the intimacy between characters comes through. This proves especially apparent in the relationship between Robert and Maria, the girl living in the guerilla fighters’ shelter. The two quickly fall for each other and the language shift illustrates this, “‘I am ashamed,’ she said, her face away from him. ‘No. You must not be. Here. Now.’ ‘No, I must not. I am ashamed and frightened.’ ‘No. My rabbit. Please.’ ‘I must not. If thou dost not love me.’ ‘I love thee.’ ‘I love thee’” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 70). The language switches

from the formal “you” to the informal “you” in the passage. This cues the reader to their new intimate relationship.

Translation proves political in the novel. Jordan works as a Spanish professor in the United States before going to Spain to aid the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War. He muses on this saying, “I don’t know whether I’ll be able to be a professor when I get back. They will probably run me out as a Red” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 244). Jordan’s reason for joining with the Republicans in Spain will be “lost in translation” or miscarried back to the United States.

Events in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* serve as metaphors of miscarriage. Pablo along with his band of guerillas brutally kills the fascist men of their town. Pilar, Pablo’s woman, tells Jordan the story. Pablo, “placed them in two lines as you would place men for a rope pulling contest...they were armed with flails such as are used to beat out the grain and they were a good flail’s length apart...those that did not have flails had heavy herdsman’s clubs, or ox-goads, and some had wooden pitchforks” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 104). Pablo forced the fascist men through the line of flails and clubs and had them beat to near death before throwing them off the side of the town’s cliff. Pilar tells the story and grows more and more disgusted as she recounts the gory details. While she fervently disagrees with the fascists, she too understand the gross miscarriage of justice in the actions of Pablo.

Robert Jordan’s life ends early or is aborted in a Fascist confrontation. However, unlike Hemingway’s portrayal of lives cut short in *A Farewell to Arms*, Robert’s death is meaningful rather than meaningless. As he lays on the ground with his broken leg, he thinks, “*And if you can wait and hold them up even a little while or just get the officer*

that will make all the difference” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 470). Rather than portray Robert’s death as a hollow casualty of war, Hemingway gives Jordan’s life a purpose. This speaks to the political context of the work. By portraying Jordan’s death as meaningful and necessary to further the Republican aims during the Spanish Civil War, Hemingway shows how this conflict differed from World War I. World War I was fought based on ancient territorial lines and as final fight of the monarchies of Europe, whereas the Spanish Civil War was a fight of ideals and a fight for freedom. Thus, Hemingway implies that a life given for political ideals and freedom, is a life worth giving.

Chapter 4

Critical Reactions

Dezső Kosztolányi and Ernest Hemingway both achieved a well-respected literary status in their writing careers and they both wrote numerous works of renown. As such prolific writers, their works generated critical reactions by the literary academic community. Through this body of critical work on each of the writers, the critics aim to better understand and interpret their writings.

Kosztolányi appears very little on the radar of Western critics. Criticism of his work typically appears in Hungarian literary circles, both within Hungary and outside its modern geographical borders. Seemingly, the only commentary of the writer stems from those with Hungarian backgrounds and interests. Tucked away in Central Europe, Kosztolányi's profound work, although skillfully translated to English, is largely ignored by the larger literary community.

Critics of Kosztolányi cite how "he is perfectly impartial and highly skilful in delicately shifting the narrative from one subject to another. These voices are then free to betray themselves without too much comment by the author" (Szirtes vii). A wonderful example of this impartiality of narrative shift occurs in *Anna Édes*. At a dinner party hosted by the Vizys, the narrative allows the characters to "betray themselves." Mrs Viza offers Anna sponge cakes in front of the dinner guests, but Anna politely declines. The dinner party comments on the incident and Dr Miklós Moviszter states,

Servants are often afraid to like what they like, so they convince themselves that nice things are not nice. That's their defence. Perhaps it prevents them from too much suffering. Why should they desire things that can never be theirs? They're right too. They couldn't live any other way (*Anna Édes* 80).

Dr Moviszter's opinions, however, differ from Vizy, who "had good reason for his boundless hatred of the Reds. He had starved under Bolshevism... He had been ruined by the war, having from the outbreak sunk all his money – some two hundred and fifty thousand crowns in gold – in war-bonds and securities" (*Anna Édes* 12). Vizy talks of ruination while eating relatively lavish dinners and employing a servant, while Anna lives as such a lower class of society that she cannot even allow herself to think she enjoys finer things. Kosztolányi juxtaposes Vizy and Moviszter, Anna's defender, throughout the text. He allows the characters to develop their own identities throughout the novel. Each have their own merits and entitlement to their own opinions. Thus, when Moviszter speaks or Vizy speaks, the reader accepts the statements from the character rather than as a mouthpiece of Kosztolányi. This mode of writing allows the characters to function more genuinely throughout the text. Kosztolányi uses his characters and their situations to make various and differing political statements. By allowing the characters to "naturally" make these statements, the message appears genuine and unforced to the reader. In an ever-changing dangerous world, Kosztolányi took caution to portray multiple political perspectives.

Jeff Waxman writes, that Kosztolányi in *Kornél Esti* "collides with circumstances by turns blackly comic, sinister, hilarious, and bleak" (Waxman 240). In the novel, Esti helps a poor widow and her family. He believes he saves the family, but over time

realizes that he could not save them. Esti “shook the old woman in her black clothes, struggled with her... He was still gasping from the outburst. And yet he was happy. Inexpressibly happy that at last he had well and truly gotten over her” (*Kornél Esti* 197). The passage serves as the bleakest and most sinister of the passages. Esti truly believes he can help the woman and does everything in his power to aid her. Learning he cannot save her, shocks him to his core. The scene shocks the reader because of how Esti reacts to the situation. Kosztolányi writes the scene such a way that the shock Esti experiences when realizing he cannot save the family mirrors the shock of the reader reading the passage.

Waxman continues of Kosztolányi, “Everything is unbelievable, but neither the author nor the reader ever disbelieves. There is something wonderful in these pages, a European-inflected magic realism...As one of Kosztolányi's last works, this book seems full of wry regret at having had but one life to live” (Waxman 240-241). One such unbelievable story is when Esti recounts a lavish and outrageous story to the narrator of the time he stayed in the “most excellent hotel in the world” (*Kornél Esti* 143). Esti stays in the hotel and the numerous staff treat him like a king. However, he leaves without paying the staff. Esti states, ““When all was said and done, it would have been unthinkable to insult so excellent a hotel, such excellent staff, by offering them money. That would have been tactlessness, gross tactlessness”” (*Kornél Esti* 154). Through this comic nonsensical story, Kosztolányi highlights the highly respectful nature of Hungarian society. Commercialism functions only if it co-exists with societal norms.

Whereas Western criticism of Kosztolányi remains thin, criticism of Hemingway’s work proves extensive in both its breadth and its scope. After Hemingway’s death, President John F. Kennedy wrote,

‘Few Americans had a greater impact on the emotions and attitudes of the American people than Ernest Hemingway. From his first emergence as one of the bright literary stars in Paris during the 20s, as a chronicler of the 'lost generation,' which he was to immortalize, he almost single-handedly transformed the literature and the way of thought of men and women in every country in the world’ (Young 310).

With such praise, it seems little wonder that critical responses to Hemingway are numerous – and still growing. However, one line of Kennedy’s statement stands out, “he almost single-handedly transformed the literature and the way of thought of men and women in every country in the world.” With his global impact, Hemingway’s work must be analyzed in relation to international texts.

Hemingway’s writing style is well known, “Hemingway’s prose is hard and bare, secular and insistently non-literary” (Anderson 109). Hemingway uses simple sentence structure and basic vocabulary throughout his work. An example of this is the scene in which Frederic Henry is wounded,

a roar started that started white and went red and on and on in a rushing wind. I tried to breathe, but my breath would not come and I felt myself rush bodily out of myself and out and out and out and out and all the time bodily with the wind. I went out swiftly, all of myself, and I knew I was dead and that it had all been a mistake to think you just died. Then I floated, and instead of going on I felt myself slide back. I breathed and I was back (*A Farewell to Arms* 47).

The simple language helps the reader understand the elemental nature of what happens to Frederic. The sentence structure illustrates the confusion and the rush of being wounded. The repetition of “and out” four times shows that Frederic drifts away from his body before coming back to himself again. The rhythm of the passage is more poetic than prosaic. This poetic form translates a very out of body and altogether foreign experience to the reader in a way which would fail in a journalistic approach. His style allows the reader greater insight into the battlefield of World War I.

The criticism of Hemingway varies with the decade and the generation. Early scholarship implicitly understood the world of World War I Hemingway writes, Hemingway's world is one in which things do not grow and bear fruit, but explode, break, decompose, or are eaten away. ... It is a barren world of fragments which lies before us like a land of bad dreams, where a few pathetic idylls and partial triumphs relieve the diet of nightmare. It has neither light nor love that lasts nor certitude nor peace nor much help for pain. It is swept with the actualities of struggle and flight, and up ahead in the darkness the armies are engaged (Young 245).

The quoted critic, Philip Young, draws on Matthew Arnold's “Dover Beach,” a poem from the mid-nineteenth century, in the last two sentences of this excerpt of criticism on *A Farewell to Arms*. It's interesting that Young brings a mid-nineteenth century poem into a criticism on Hemingway's treatment of World War I. Writing in the mid-nineteenth century, Arnold had no foresight into the future and to World War I. “Dover Beach” implies that war at some point “ahead in the darkness” of the future would break out once again. Young points the reader toward the universality and the perpetual nature of war by

referencing “Dover Beach.” Young points out what Hemingway writes: the elemental nature of wars change little throughout history.

Catherine’s experience through World War I proves a popular topic among critics through numerous generations. Early critics appreciated her traumatic experience of losing a fiancé and the strength it took her to love again; for them she stands the heroine of the story, “A model of courage and stoic self-awareness, Catherine is determined to forge a meaningful and orderly existence---if only temporarily---in a world in which all traditional notions of meaning and order have been shattered” (Spanier 76). However, later critics differed in their views toward Catherine. These later critics approached his work with World War II experience. These waves of criticism vary based on their world perspective and understanding. The later critics of World War II see Catherine quite differently than their critical fathers. They argue, that “there are two types of Hemingway women, those who destroy men and those whom men could only dream of. And Catherine Barkley long has been accepted as the prototypical dream girl, the classic ‘amoeba-like’ Hemingway heroine” (Spanier 75). Later still, critics approached *A Farewell to Arms* with a Vietnam era perspective. These Vietnam era critics approached *A Farewell to Arms* in a similar manner to their grandfather critics of World War I. “Like the so-called lost generation, we again have witnessed a young generation sent off in the name of heroic idealism to a pointless war they could not understand or believe in or even win” (Spanier 100). The change of the world changes critic’s perception of the work, “we would do best to view her not in the sometimes distorting light of our own times, but in the truer light of her own” (Spanier 101).

Hemingway's portrayal of women expands in *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. He writes strong women in the form of Pilar and Maria. Stacey Guill writes, that Hemingway, "deliberately infused his characterizations of the women with these significant changes in Spanish gender relations during this important historical period" (Guill 7). While some argue that Maria falls into the "dream girl" role they also cast Catherine in, Maria stands as a strong character. She too, experiences trauma; Pilar finds her bruised, beaten and sexually assaulted after Pilar's guerrilla group blows up the train. Pilar carries her to safety and takes care of her broken body and mind. Maria suffers and yet remains brave. Like Catherine, she bravely opens herself up to love. The other female character in the novel, Pilar, stands as a strong, competent leader. When her man and gang leader Pablo refuses to help Robert Jordan blow the bridge, Pilar stands with Jordan and declares herself the new leader, "'Not in joke,' the woman said. 'Here I command! Haven't you heard *la gente*? Here no one commands but me. You can stay if you wish and eat of the food and drink of the wine, but not too bloody much, and share in the work if thee wishes. But here I command'" (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 55). This scene clearly shows Pilar's power and control of the guerilla group. She takes control of the group and the group does not question her authority, despite her gender. By showing a strong female leader, Hemingway acknowledges the changing gender roles in Spain. Hemingway's work remains grounded in the period he writes. He focuses on the changing political and social structures of the world and reflects this changes in his writing. His acute observations aid the reader in better understanding these changes.

Kosztolányi and Hemingway not only contrast between each other in elements of their writing, but they contrast within their own writing. Frederic Henry of *A Farewell to*

Arms stands as a significantly different character than Robert Jordan of *For Whom the Bell Tolls*. Throughout the entire novel, Frederic remains detached from the politics of the war. He is immature and entirely naïve as to the ramifications of the battle. He works as a cog in the Great War machine without ever understanding why. When he attempts to visit Catherine at the hospital, the head nurse asks, “‘Tell me. Why did you join up with the Italians?’ ‘I was in Italy,’ I said, ‘and I spoke Italian’” (*A Farewell to Arms* 19).

Throughout the rest of the text, Frederic never gives a more meaningful answer as to why he joined the Italian ambulance. Robert Jordan, however, stands as an active political figure. He is mature and understands who he fights for and the reasons why he fights,

He fought now in this war because it had started in a country that he loved and he believed in the Republic and that if it were destroyed life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it. He was under Communist discipline for the duration of the war. Here in Spain the Communists offered the best discipline and the soundest and sanest for the prosecution of the war. He accepted their discipline for the duration of the war because, in the conduct of the war, they were the only party whose program and whose discipline he could respect (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 163).

Robert realizes the consequences of the war and that if the Republic failed, “life would be unbearable for all those people who believed in it.” He also explains his reasoning for joining with the Communist party. Robert continually refers to his moral beliefs and his political beliefs throughout the text. These references show the reader that Robert understands the importance of the war and the part he plays in the war.

Kosztolányi's characters differ in much the same way as Hemingway's characters. Anna lives her quiet life unaware of the political symbol she becomes and the political conversation taking place around her. The Vizy and their friends speak of Anna often and the novel catalogues her work. Rarely however, does Anna state opinions of her own, or state much of anything. Other than when she murders Vizy and Mrs. Vizy, Anna only makes one decision for herself in the novel. She decides she wants to leave the Vizys and went to tell Esti, the relative that brought her to the Vizys. "Esti, who had been sprawling on the sofa, took his pipe down from its hook and started berating her. He threatened her with her stepmother...Then he chased her back upstairs. Anna never again considered leaving (*Anna Édes* 64). The people around Anna make the decisions for her. She maintains little control over her life. Even when she finally makes the decision to murder Vizy and Mrs. Vizy, she again loses control of her life as she goes to jail. The world takes charge of Anna and she is powerless to stand up for herself. Understandably then, "She preferred to stop thinking all together" (*Anna Édes* 64). The writer in *Kornél Esti* differs from Anna. He understands the relationship between himself and Esti, "Slowly, imperceptibly, we drifted apart, but despite all that I understood him and he understood me. It was just we kept passing judgment on one another secretly. The thought that we understood one another, yet didn't, set us both on edge. We went our separate ways" (*Kornél Esti* 2). As the novel continues, the writer and Esti renew their relationship. The writer remains aware of the situations in his life, even if he exercises little control over the relationship between himself and Esti.

The common practice of comparing two works of the same writer allows critics to comment on an author's body of work and stands as an important critical conversation for

both Hemingway and Kosztolányi. Rarely however, do critics place Hemingway or Kosztolányi in conversation with foreign writers and rarer still creating conversation on writers on the opposing side of World War I, a significant literary oversight. Placing the work of Kosztolányi and Hemingway into conversation with each other, allows for a deeper global literary perspective. Both men stand as literary icons in their respective nations, both men experienced the heartbreak of World War I and both used literature to respond to World War I. Their personal, ethnic and political differences only make the comparison more necessary – and more intriguing. Often in the literary bubble of the West, the greater global canon of writing is overlooked. However, when these works are placed in conversation with one another, their similarity bears importance.

While there are many similar literary elements between Kosztolányi and Hemingway, they differ on their employment of realism. Kosztolányi, employs the use of magical realism in *Anna Édes* and *Kornél Esti*. Anna's demise from her normal subservience into the Vizys murder shocks the reader. The scene where she kills them takes on a surreal tone, "Mrs. Vizy woke to find someone sitting on the bed. She rose a little from the pillow and stared at the figure. In the ambitious moonlight it looked like a ghost, with a surrounding halo of silver mist" (*Anna Édes* 180). The murder and the realization of Anna's involvement shocks the reader. Kosztolányi's magical realism, however, shines in *Kornél Esti*. Esti takes the writer to an "honest town." "It's the truth. Just understand that: it's the truth. Here nobody hides the truth under a bushel" (*Kornél Esti* 60). The signs in the shops reflect the truth, "At the clothes shop the sign shrieked: *Expensive poor-quality clothes. Kindly bargain, because we will swindle you.* At the restaurant: *Inedible food, undrinkable drinks. Worse than at home.* At the patisserie: *Stale*

cakes. Made with margarine and egg substitute” (Kornél Esti 60). This fictitious “honest town” appears real because of the descriptions. The use of magical realism allows Kosztolányi to describe far-fetched ideas and events in a way that allows the implications of the stories to be taken seriously.

Hemingway writes both *A Farewell to Arms* and *For Whom the Bell Tolls* with a strong sense of realism. The events and the battles in *A Farewell to Arms* convey a real sense of the war of World War I, “‘Come on,’ I said. We would make for the side-road and work to the south of the town. We all started down the embankment. A shot was fired at us from the side-road. The bullet went right into the mud of the embankment” (*A Farewell to Arms* 184). The descriptions of the Italian retreat allows the reader to start to understand the war. Things change quickly; one minute the characters are walking down an embankment and the next, “Aymo, as he was crossing the tracks, lurched, tripped and fell face down” (*A Farewell to Arms* 184). In *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, similar descriptions of battle take place. Robert Jordan also attempts to remember the details of the Spanish Civil War realistically, “Don’t idealize him, either. Hunters kill animals and soldiers kill men. Don’t lie to yourself, he thought. Nor make up literature about it” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 287). The realism in Hemingway novels allow the reader to better understand the events of war, while not attempting to glamorize war.

Kosztolányi and Hemingway also differ in their treatment of the actual history of the war differs. Hungarian readers, both period and modern, understand the complex social and political issues present in Kosztolányi work. The issues of Kosztolányi’s generation remain the issues of the modern Hungarian generation. World War I scarred the country so deeply that the wounds of the war still affect the nation. World War I

affects everything from the nation's modern borders, and the millions of ethnic Hungarians left outside those borders, to the country's eventual experience with Communism. These issues all stem from World War I. While the war drifts away from personal memories with the flow of time, the war remains a firm memory in the collective pain of the Hungarian people. The Western period readers of Hemingway remained farther away from action of the war than Kosztolányi's readers. World War I took place all throughout Europe, but America remained innocent in the first-hand knowledge of modern war. Hemingway's descriptions of war and battle aim to help Western readers understand. In the element of time, modern Western readers stand even more removed from World War I than the period readers. The memories of World War I appear as grainy as the film of *All Quiet on the Western Front*. World War I stands only as precursor to World War II. The horrors of trench warfare, the confusion of seeing the world ripped apart remains just a page in a history book; the war is no longer alive. Hemingway's works help modern readers better understand the war and why the war still influences politics. The implications of the war, while not distinctly felt in the United States and Western Europe, still clouds Central and Eastern Europe. The gun smoke still has yet to clear over Hungary.

Despite their cultural differences, Kosztolányi and Hemingway both reach similar literary conclusions. Kosztolányi and Hemingway exhibit loss in their works. This loss is not only the loss of innocence, but the loss of human life and the loss of a generation. Both also grapple with the idea of life, both struggle with the idea of prematurity, both struggle with justice and both use these ideas literally and metaphorically as political commentary. The metaphor of miscarriage carries through to World War I. World War I

serves as an example of miscarriage of justice. The dividing nature of World War I loses in the end; each side of the war experienced the same pain, the same loss. There appears universality in war; the misery of life after war unites all humanity – the victors and the losers.

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IBM, Somers, NY

Financial Analyst Co-op, Global Technology Services, Strategic Outsourcing

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