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Hemingway and the Soča Front

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HEMINGWAY AND THE SOČA FRONT

by

REBECCA JOHNSTON

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of English
Department of Literature and Languages

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Dedication

This thesis is dedicated to the man who has held my heart since I was sixteen.

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“It is difficult to begin without borrowing.” (Thoreau location 21087).

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Abstract

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In 1918 Ernest M. Hemingway served along the Soča Front during the last months of the Great War. Better known as the Isonzo Front, the Soča Front was the battle lines between the Austro-Hungarian Empire and Italy. The history of this front is connected to the First World War from the very beginning. Hemingway's novel, *A Farewell to Arms (FTA)*, several of his poems, and the Nick Adams' stories are all based on the First World War. For this reason, the study of the history behind the war is important in order to better understand Hemingway's works connected directly to the war. Studying the historical and geographical setting of *FTA*, the Nick Adams' stories and Hemingway's poetry will give scholars and students a deeper understanding of the works as well as a deeper understanding of Hemingway. Furthermore, after a study of the historical setting, a group of often overlooked people groups becomes visible

buried underneath Hemingway's writing. This project will first look to the historical setting of *FTA* and Hemingway's poetry, and will then look to the "other" of Hemingway's writing in order to gain a better understanding of Hemingway and his writing.

Chapter One

Introduction

In 1918 Ernest M. Hemingway left the United States on a boat headed for Europe and World War One. He served along a lesser known front in the Great War, which was along the river known as the Soča river in Slovene and the Isonzo river in Italian, and the front would bear the name of the river. The Soča Front is known in most English speaking nations by the Italian name of the Isonzo Front. However, I have chosen to refer to the front by its Slovene name as many of the battles were fought on Slovene land.

The First World War would start within a day's drive of the Soča Front. Thus, the front was connected to the start of the war by distance, but also by ethnicity. The Italian army that Hemingway served with was fighting in Italy and also in Slovenia, which was in the former Yugoslavia along with the country that the First World War was ignited in. Given the connection both in distance and ethnicity of this front to the beginning of the war, a greater understanding of the beginning of the war will provide a deeper understanding of the front that Hemingway both served on and placed his protagonists in and will also give readers a better understanding of *FTA*. Furthermore, the start of the war gives a better understanding of the reasons behind the war that would lead to the disillusionment of a generation. While a thorough discussion of the First World War and the forces behind it would require a much longer work dedicated solely to the topic, I will be looking briefly at the reasons behind the start of the First World War in order to put *FTA*

in a solid historical context. The causality of the war is connected to Hemingway's personal experience in the war. Thus, a broader understanding of the war is beneficial to a discussion on *FTA*. I will move from a discussion of the European powers which controlled the war to a discussion on the causes of the war, with a concentration on Italy at the start of the war. I will then move on to the portions of the war used as a historical backdrop in the novel and the specific battles that Lt Henry is in or speaks of.

The Start of the Great War

The First World War was to be the war to end all wars. While this was not the case, the length of the war and the magnitude of the destruction led those involved to believe the war would accomplish this feat. Prior to start of the Great War, the European continent was fairly peaceful at the turn of the twentieth century. According to Wilkinson and Hughes, "By 1914, Europe had gone so long without a major war that the very idea was becoming a dim memory" (14). The wars of the last few decades were the Spanish-American War, the Boer War and the Russo-Japanese War, all of which were not on the European field of battle and all of which were wars of conquest to some degree. There were also conflicts in the Balkans, but those were, for the most part, contained in the Balkans. There were assassinations, but no major conflicts. The relative peace in Europe would disappear quickly. As Liddell Hart explains in *The Real War 1914-1918*, a book which which Hemingway owned, "Fifty years were spent in the process of making Europe. Five days were enough to defeat it" (*Hemingway's Reading* 54, Hart 3). The fifty years in the previous century that Hart was speaking of had been spent building nations and defining borders followed by decades of relative peace, and all of that would be destroyed in a matter of days with the mishandling of the Sarajevo assassination.

While there was a peace settled on the continent, a form of militaristic nationalism was gripping European youth. According to Wilkinson and Hughes, “during the first decade and a half of the twentieth century...war and military service suddenly became popular” (27). The youth of many European nations were eager to join the military, as Wilkinson and Hughes further explain, the “early twentieth century militarism was a movement of youth” (27). As militaristic nationalism grew in individual countries it led to fear in neighboring countries, which caused those countries to increase their own ability to defend themselves as a nation. According to Wilkinson and Hughes, “Diplomacy could not contain the resulting rush of nationalist fervor, which swept away prudence and reason on all sides” (29). According to Liddell Hart, “The fundamental causes of the conflict can be epitomized in these words—fear, hunger, and pride” (3). The nations of Europe were strong, and they wanted to be stronger. They wanted more land, more food, and more ability to make money. Some international boundaries had been defined only in the last fifty years, so these boundaries seemed especially questionable. Pride and nationalism pushed towards the consideration of those boundaries and what a shift in boundaries could do for each nation. According to Wilkinson and Hughes, “The First World War was produced by the confluence of two explosive pressures—the aspirations of the national minorities in Central and Eastern Europe and the dynamic of the rival alliance systems among the Great Powers. These two pressures met with disastrous consequences...by 1914 it [Europe] was spoiling for a fight” (29).

Nationalistic aspirations in this context are not the positive form of nationalism that Americans often think of. Americans tend to look positively on nationalism in the sense of pride in the nation and the hope the United States will be a great world power. Nationalism in Europe

of the early twentieth century wished for these same things but at the direct expense of other nations. The powers of Europe were willing to fight their neighbors to take what was needed for their own nation to be a strong world power. This was a violent nationalism and the youth of each nation were eager to fight and die for nationalism. The people of Europe did not imagine a long drawn out war with around 7,995,000 soldiers killed (Howard 146). This is an incomprehensible loss that no nation foresaw. As Wilkinson and Hughes explain, “Because people could not conceive of a disaster of these dimensions, few took the steps to avoid it, while some actively sought to encourage it for their own ends until all were overwhelmed by destructive forces they might well have mastered with more wisdom and greater will” (29). One of these countries that Wilkinson and Hughes are speaking of is Italy—the country that both Hemingway and Lt Henry served in. A better understanding of what brought about the war and how Italy joined the war on the side that she did will allow readers to have a better understanding of the army that Lt Henry and Hemingway served with and thus a better understanding of *FTA*.

Austro-Hungarian Empire

The Austro-Hungarian Empire was ruled by dual monarchies from Hungary and Austria and contained several smaller modern day nations such as Slovenia, Croatia, and Serbia (see Map One: Pre World War One Europe in Appendix A). The Austro-Hungarian Empire is perhaps the most difficult European power of the previous century for modern readers to understand. Even those in the early twentieth century saw the empire as a bit odd. As Liddell Hart explains, the Austro-Hungarian Empire was “a heterogeneous relic of the Middle Ages” (3). The dual monarchy behind the empire was a newer development, although not a development towards modernization. The dual monarchy was formed in 1867 (Howard 7) when the

Hapsburgs, the monarchy behind the empire, granted “the most powerful submerged nation, the Magyars, quasi-independence in the Kingdom of Hungary, which shared with the dominantly German ‘Austrians’ only a monarchy...an army, a treasury, and a foreign office” (Howard 7). The Magyars and the Austrians were considered a higher class of citizens within the empire. The Magyars “considered themselves a master race, and they ruled oppressively over their own Slav minorities—Slovaks, Rumanians, and Croats” (Howard 8). The Austrians over saw the Czechs, Poles, Ruthenes, Slovenes, Serbs and Bosnians as well as “Italian-speaking lands on the southern slopes of the Alps coveted by the new Kingdom of Italy” (Howard 8). The Austrian monarchy was more tolerant than the Magyars, but the kingdom was still comprised of many smaller puzzle pieces which desired independence. Thus, while nationalism in the other great powers of WWI individually drew nations together and strengthened them, nationalism in the Austro-Hungarian Empire pulled the empire apart at the seams as each ethnic group sought to be free of the monarchical oppression and dominance. There were varying degrees of strife within the ethnic groups, the most relevant of which will be discussed in chapter four. This is the army that the Italians will be fighting along the Soča Front, and the nationalities Hemingway mentions such as Magyars and Croatians were supporting the military of the empire they were bound to.

Russia

Russia is an interesting nation to consider next, as Russia gave support to the Slavs within the Austro-Hungarian Empire who sought to break from the empire, especially to the Serbians. At the turn of the century, Russia was not the modern nation that she is today. As Michael Howard explains, “Capitalism and industrialism came late to Russia...At the beginning of the twentieth century the Czars ruled over a population of 164 million, consisting

overwhelmingly of peasants who had been emancipated from actual serfdom only a generation earlier” (5). Actual serfdom. Russia was truly a nation behind the rest of the world in the decade prior to the First World War, but she was ambitious to change that. The Russian Empire was expanding “to the south and east [which] threatened both the route to India through the Middle East (which had led Britain to prop up the moribund Turkish Empire) and the frontiers of India itself” (Howard 5). Russians sought to expand into Asia, as well, which led to the Russo-Japanese War of 1904-5, where the Russians would be defeated. However, the desire for expansion and growth was not thwarted. Russia shared a dominance of Orthodox Christianity with Greece, Serbia, and Bulgaria, as well as a common Slavic ethnicity with Bulgaria and Serbia, which caused the nationalistic movements within these nations to look to Russia for support; a support she was willing to give (Howard 7). Liddell Hart speaks of the “ambition and idealism which swayed Russian policy, and the fear it generated beyond her frontiers, especially among her German neighbors” (3). This ambition and idealism would continue to further nationalism in nations she shared a border with such as Germany as each nation sought to hold their own and also to expand their borders.

Germany

Germany was an imperialistic nation which was unified in 1871 (Howard 8). According to Howard, “The unification of Germany in 1871 had created a nation that combined the most dynamic economy in Europe with a regime that in many aspects had hardly emerged from feudalism” (Howard 8). Germany was run by the Reichstag or parliament, Kaiser Wilhelm II, and the chancellor Otto von Bismarck in a tangled and complicated web of power. According to Howard, Wilhelm was “an individual who in his person embodied three qualities that can be

said to have characterized the contemporary German ruling elite: archaic militarism, vaulting ambition, and neurotic insecurity” (9). Under Wilhelm’s regime the military grew to be dominant in society. Men were required to serve in the military for three years, and retired officers became leaders in their communities (Howard 11). “The Kaiser appeared always in uniform as the All Highest War Lord, surrounded by a military entourage” which would have encouraged militaristic ambition and nationalism exponentially (Howard 11). This is why Lt Henry and the Italians he is serving with express fear when they hear that Germans are involved in the attack on Caporetto: “‘It’s Germans that are attacking,’ one of the medical officers said. The word Germans was something to be frightened of. We did not want to have anything to do with the Germans” (*FTA* 163). German militarism was well known and was feared on the Soča Front. The threat that Lt Henry and the Italians faced in the Battle of Caporetto was a valid threat. Hemingway chose this threat to add authenticity and a believable level of fear to *FTA*.

Backing this strong sense of nation and military was a strong growth in industry. Germany had “surpassed the British in the production of coal and steel, and together with scientists were pioneering a new ‘industrial revolution’ based on chemicals and electricity,” which was an ability that would lead to chemical warfare in the impending war (Howard 11). This progress, however, was not enough for the country which sought to be a *Weltmacht* or world power (Howard 12). In order to become a world power, Germany had to develop a dominating navy, and to accomplish this the German government leaned heavily on propaganda that would depict Britain “as the next great adversary” (Howard 12). This started a “naval building race” between Germany and Britain (Wilkinson and Hughes 27). According to Wilkinson and Hughes, “British sporting instinct was stung by the threat of being overtaken by

an upstart competitor, and German nationalists, spurred on by their emperor [Kaiser Wilhelm II], responded with massive support of the navy's program for challenging the traditional mistress of the sea" (27).

France

France had gone through a devastating revolution and a reformation of her government towards the end of the eighteenth century. After this reformation, lands and power were distributed among those who "remained staunchly resistant to any development, whether reaction or further revolution, that threatened to expropriate them; and their pattern of life did not encourage either the growth of population or the accumulation of capital that made economic development possible" (Howard 4). In 1871 neighboring Germany annexed Alsace and Lorraine from France which caused "fear of German power" and also frustration at the loss of land and infrastructure (Howard 5). To counter this defeat, France sought to conquer and control portions of Africa, which "created friction with Britain's imperial interests" (Howard 4-5). Thus far the stage has been set for war between Germany, Britain, Russia, Austria-Hungary, and France.

The United States

The United States was not an initial party in the Great War. However, the state of American society is worth a consideration as it is this society and culture that led to Hemingway's own service in the Great War. The United States was a nation steeped in religiosity towards the turn of the century. When the war started, groups such as the Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA), would present the war as "a religious cause" (*The Young Hemingway* 22). American society, as with many European societies, saw war as glorious, and death for one's nation in war as a glorious end to one's life—an honor to be bestowed on the best of society. This prevailing thought was likely behind Grace Hemingway's response to Hemingway's injury. In a

letter dated July 21, 1918, in response to his injury, she wrote, “to know that in the eyes of humanity my boy is every inch a man...God bless you, my darling...It’s great to be the mother of a hero” (Young 33). In Grace’s eyes, Hemingway became a man because he was injured on the battlefield in a time of war. Injury and death for one’s country was masculine, respected, and even glorified. In a letter to his parents written in October of 1918, Hemingway himself wrote that “we all offer our bodies and only a few are chosen, but it shouldn't reflect any special credit on those that are chosen. They are just the lucky ones” (Spanier and Trogdon 147).

President Theodore Roosevelt provided the ideal role model for boys of this era. According to Michael Reynolds, “For any boy born at the turn of the century, Theodore Roosevelt was a living legend: western rancher, rough rider, hero of San Juan Hill, the President, African hunter, South American explorer. In popular magazines like *National Geographic*, *Century* and *Outlook*, his essays regularly detailed his own adventures while preaching the strenuous life...At the dime matinee with all the other school children, Hemingway saw ‘the most dominant figure since Napoleon, in strenuous stunts peculiarly his own,’ as the movie was advertised” (*The Young Hemingway* 25). Thus, an outwardly religious nation was motivated towards war with the idea that the Great War, once it got started, was an honorable way for men to serve God and their nation. President Theodore Roosevelt had led an example that would motivate a nation of young men to have adventures in war, as he had, and to fight for the nation that they were raised to love. In *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway wrote that, “There is a class that controls a country that is stupid and does not realize anything and never can. That is why we have this war” (*FTA* 44). An argument can be made that Hemingway included Roosevelt in this class of people. In 1922 Hemingway wrote a poem he titled “Roosevelt”:

Working men believed
He busted trusts,
And put his picture in their windows.
“What he’d have done in France!”
They said.
Perhaps he would—
He could have died
Perhaps,
Though generals rarely die except in bed,
As he did finally.
And all the legends that he started in his life
Live on and prosper,
Unhampered now by his existence.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems 45)

Here Hemingway compares Roosevelt with those who actually did fight. Roosevelt died in his sleep at home in his own bed on January 6, 1919 (“Theodore Roosevelt Dies Suddenly”). The men who trusted Roosevelt’s idea that war was glorious went off to war and died in countries such as France. Roosevelt himself died while safe in his own bed. Hemingway is suggesting that Roosevelt sent men to do what he himself no longer could do, and to give their lives for their nation, something he himself had never done. Roosevelt was a part of the cultural movement that would lead men off to war. Just as with countries such as Italy, war was glorified and the young men had not known a time of war in their lifetime. They had been raised with stories of

war from the Civil War. They had seen soldiers and grandfathers who were soldiers paraded through town to remember the glory of their service (Reynolds *The Young Hemingway* 2). These young men would line up in the United States and across the globe to serve their nations and win the respect and the heart of their nations. Lt Henry was one of these men, jumping at the chance to serve in the Great War, just as many of the Italians he served with had done.

Great Britain

At the turn of the twentieth century, Britain was a “fully urbanized and industrialized nation” (Howard 3). She was a strong nation and had colonies on a few continents. As Howard explains, “She was still the wealthiest power in the world and the proud owner of the greatest empire that the world had ever seen; but she was more vulnerable than ever before in her history” (3). England at her heart was a nation that depended on foreign trade and the products of her colonies. In order to maintain this trade and the wealth that came with it, England needed to have a navy that commanded the world’s oceans. According to Howard, “The Royal Navy’s ‘command of the seas’ both held the Empire together and ensured that the British people were fed. Loss of naval supremacy was a nightmare that dogged successive British governments and dominated their relations with other powers” (3-4). England feared the rise of competitive foreign navies as those navies could threaten her ability to maintain her empire and feed the people on the mainland of England. In addition, while England had been a nation that preferred isolation, “Britain’s gradual movement from a policy of isolation into membership of the European system and her slow awareness to the reality of German feeling towards her” helped to compel England towards tangling alliances and eventual war (Hart 3).

Similar to the nations mentioned previously, British citizens had a respect for war and for those who went off to war. Young men lined up to volunteer for the war. This bent towards militarization in European youth is why Catherine tells Lt Henry that her fiancé “wanted to go to war” (*FTA* 16). Catherine’s fiancé wanted to serve his nation in what he would have seen as a great and glorious way to lay his life down in war. Catherine herself would have joined for similar reasons. She states that she had been in the war “since the end of ‘fifteen. I started when he did. I remember having a silly idea he might come to the hospital where I was. With a saber cut, I suppose, and a bandage around his head. Or shot through the shoulder. Something picturesque” (*FTA* 17). Catherine’s fiancé’s was killed in the Battle of the Somme, which occurred in 1916 (Keegan 208). Catherine and Lt Henry were speaking in 1917 and she explains that he was killed “last year,” which was the year of the Battle of the Somme (*FTA* 16). Catherine’s ideas of war, in alignment with the majority of those in her home nation, were connected with respect, awe, and childishness. There was no image of a war using howitzers and mustard gas in her mind. There was no image of trench warfare and “potato mashers”. British society saw war as glorious, unlikely, and short lived.

Chapter Two

Irredentism and D'Annunzio

The Italians had been experiencing a similar burst of nationalism and, as with the previous nations discussed, the “young people were bored. They knew too much of peace and nothing of war” (Wilkinson and Hughes 28). Although Italy had her own land, many did not believe that Italy was whole. Pre-World War One Europe can be seen in map one in Appendix A. Having spent a fair amount of time in Slovenia, I was surprised to hear how recently some of the borders with Italy had been fluid. According to Mark Thompson, in 1866 the “Italian peninsula was unified except for Papal Rome... In the Third Italian war for independence, the Italians, with the help of Prussia, gained Venetia from Austria as well as portions of Friuli (which is found in north eastern Italy today)” (7). However, the Italians did not gain the Isonzo Valley or Trieste or the borders between modern day Slovenia and Italy.

The borders were still not set in the nation's mind when the First World War started fifty years later. Italians felt there was a valid possibility of more land being added to the Fatherland from the Soča Valley and Trieste, which belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire at the time. These areas were considered “unredeemed lands” or land that was Italian and needed to be freed to become Italy. The desire to redeem Italian lands can be seen in the conversation Lt Henry has while drinking with some of the Italian soldiers: “We will get Nice and Savoia from the French. We will get Corsica and all the Adriatic coastline, Rinaldi said. Italy will return to the

splendors of Rome, said the major” (*FTA* 65). The borders seemed uncertain; more land should be added. The nation itself was uncertain. The language was not unified in this new state. People from northern Italy could not speak with people from southern Italy. According to Mark Thompson, “Most Italians had only the vaguest notion of the state; their lives were local and regional by dialect, custom, labour and experience” (17). (See Maps One and Eight in Appendix A).

Italians were pushed towards the drive for land by a small group of individuals known as irredentists. As with much of Europe, the nineteenth century saw many battles and border changes for Italy and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The irredentists had enough. They “wanted to ‘redeem’ the southern Tyrol, Trieste, Gorizia, Istria and Dalmatia by annexing them to the Kingdom of Italy. The Christian overtone was anything but accidental: for these nationalists, the fatherland was sacred and their cause was a secular religion” (Thompson 10). These “unredeemed” lands can be seen in maps one, two, four, five six, seven and eight in Appendix A. Tyrol is along the north eastern border of Italy and Austria. The fighting in this area was largely in the high mountainous areas. Istria is located along the Adriatic Coast and Dalmatia is in modern day Croatia. These last areas are not used for setting in *FTA*. The Italians would eventually be nearly halfway through the small country of Slovenia. According to Hugh Dalton, a Lieutenant in the Royal Garrison Artillery, “The gun positions of my new Battery were situated just outside the little village of Pec, inhabited mostly by Slovene peasantry before the war, now vanished” (location 195). Pec is a small village in the middle of Slovenia. Propaganda and well placed irredentists in the Italian government and military helped to move the country to fight for land to the midway point of Slovenia. These men were on a holy quest to redeem their fatherland

and to return land to Italy that they felt belonged to Italy rightfully—despite the fact that several of these cities were populated by Slovenes. Most Italians did not know this, however, given the disconnect in this nation that had been so recently put together. The propaganda convinced the Italian majority that this land was Italian.

Along with the irredentists, one specific man helped to move the country to war. As Thompson writes, “Even with the support of the press, the agitators and intellectuals could not reach a broad enough public. Eventually this vital task was contracted to Gabriele D’Annunzio” (39). D’Annunzio could be compared to a modern day celebrity. He was wealthy, good looking, and talented. He had been writing and publishing poetry since he was a teenager (Thompson 39). In “The Woppian Way” manuscript in MS Box 62 Folder 843 Hemingway describes D’Annunzio as “A lover who had failed in only one pursuit, that of death in battle” (“The Woppian Way”). Similar to President Roosevelt, D’Annunzio, the irredentists, and certain politicians were some of the people Hemingway complained of when he wrote, “There is a class that controls a country that is stupid and does not realize anything and never can. That is why we have this war” (*FTA* 45). And so Italy entered the war, for the glory of the fatherland and for the unredeemed lands.

Alliances

Another catalyst for the war was the alliances woven into the European political scene that committed countries to go to war on behalf of the other nations of their alliance under specific circumstances. These alliances were not meant to start a war. According to Liddell Hart, German chancellor Bismark intended the alliances to be “a shelter for the peaceful growth of his creation, the German Empire, and not as a magazine for explosives” (4). The German Empire

had only been created in 1871, and the new empire felt surrounded by enemies. According to Ian Kershaw, “It was difficult to imagine that prosperity, peace, and stability would not continue into the indefinite future, that they could be swept away so soon and so rapidly” (12). Thus, peace seemed sure, and the alliances were only to further ensure peace and stability.

Initially a “Dual Alliance” was formed between the German Empire and the Austro-Hungarian Empire in 1879 (Howard 12). Bismark would link “both into a Triple Alliance by supporting Italian territorial claims against France and her Mediterranean possessions” (Howard 12). Wilkinson and Hughes consider this alliance to be a “defensive alliance” (31). In 1890 Bismark would be dismissed by Emperor Wilhelm II (Wilkinson and Hughes 31). Historians have speculated that if Bismark had remained in power perhaps he could have steered the alliance away from the start of the Great War. In 1891 Russia and France “concluded a treaty, the Dual Entente, to confront the Triple Alliance, and the rival groups began to compete in the enhancement of their military power” (Howard 12). Similar to the race between Germany and Britain to control the seas with their navies, this competition was not to start a war but was built on the fear of that possibility. In 1904 the Dual Entente took a step forward when Britain and France overcame their historic differences to come to a “cordial understanding” (Wilkinson and Hughes 31). Russia and Britain would come to an agreement in 1907 (Wilkinson and Hughes 31). The alliances were agreements that the nations of the alliance would fight alongside of each other should one of the others be provoked into a war. According to Wilkinson and Hughes, “In theory, then, the Great Powers stood three against three: A Triple Alliance- Germany, Austria-Hungary, and Italy–faced a looser Triple Entente–Britain, France, and Russia” but Italy could not be counted on, and while France and Russia had a good agreement, Britain was not tightly

bonded with either nation. Essentially, these two alliances committed the nations involved to come to each other's aid, so when the matchstick was lit in Sarajevo in 1914, Germany would feel compelled to act on Austria-Hungary's behalf, and Russia, coming to the aid of Serbia, would call on France to do the same, sending the continent into what would become a long and drawn out war, which cost the lives of millions of Europeans.

In *FTA* Hemingway showed his disapproval of the First World War by showing the disillusionment of Lt Henry who had volunteered to serve alongside the Italian army and then was nearly executed by this same army. Hemingway did not put the blame for the First World War on the men he served with, or the men Lt Henry served with, but with those in charge. In the 1948 introduction to *FTA* Hemingway wrote that “it is the considered belief of the writer of this book that wars are fought by the finest people that there are, or just say people, although, the closer you are to where they are fighting the finer people you meet; but they are made, provoked and initiated by straight economic rivalries and by swine that stand to profit from them” (*FTA* IX). The political leaders of Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Russia and Great Britain are the men that initiated and provoked the European continent into the First World War. They sent men like Rinaldi into battle. Understanding the empty and vague reasoning behind the First World War brings into the light the depth of loss for those such as Catherine, whose fiancé was lost in a battle that was fighting for land that one country wanted to take from another for “straight economic” reasons. The youth of Europe realized quickly that this war was not glorious, and disillusionment would follow this enlightenment as can be seen in the lives of Catherine, Rinaldi, Lt Henry and the priest.

Chapter 3

The Sarajevo Assassination

The European stage was set for war due to the tensions between nations and the alliances which bound nations to one another. The war would begin within the Austro-Hungarian Empire, which is the nation Lt Henry would be working against. The Austro-Hungarian Empire was a dual monarchy with “no fewer than ten distinct linguistic and ethnic groups living together in uneasy union under the Monarchy” (Wilkinson Hughes 30). The Hungarian or Magyar rulers in Budapest were known to be tougher while the “rational bureaucrats of Vienna tried to treat their subject nationalities tolerantly” (Howard 8). Thus, decisions within the power base of the empire were not always consistent or well received. As time progressed, the nationalities under the rule of the empire started to become more and more nationalistic. This “growth of nationalism among the subject peoples threatened some day to rend the whole Austro-Hungarian empire asunder” (Wilkinson and Hughes 30). One of these nationalities was Italian as the empire stretched to include ruling over Italian speaking lands along the southern slopes of the Alps (Howard 8). The war started in 1914 in the empire Lt Henry was facing along the Soča Front, thus understanding how the war started will give a greater understanding of the historical background of the novel and a better understanding of the characters who lived through the beginning of the war, as Lt Henry did.

Some of Hemingway's notebooks are kept in Box OM 16 in the John F. Kennedy Library in Boston. In one such notebook he writes, "War is the health of the state. Whenever the state has been administered badly enough war becomes inevitable. War is the great temporary cure for unemployment. Whenever a state has been unable to resolve unemployment war always comes—bringing greater unemployment after it is over" ("Notebooks"). This thought draws heavily from Randolph Bourne (Bourne). Many in Bosnia and Serbia in the year 1914 would have agreed with at least the first half of this quotation. Bosnia is an often overlooked nationality in the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Bosnia, known today for the war in the 1990s between Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia, is situated between Serbia and Croatia. At the Congress of Berlin in 1878, Bismark brokered "an agreement that divided the Balkans into spheres of influence between Russia and the Dual Monarchy, and gave to the latter a 'Protectorate' over the most northerly and turbulent of the Ottoman provinces, Bosnia-Herzegovina. This settlement produced an uneasy peace that lasted until the end of the century, but Bismark's 'system' had begun to unravel long before then" (Howard 13). Bosnians did not want to be under the Dual Monarchy and Italy did not want Austria controlling more of the Balkans. This system would be one of the matchsticks that will strike to ignite the war as Bosnians fought Austro-Hungarian rule along with their Serbian neighbors. At the close of the nineteenth century Bismark was concerned that "a war in the Balkans between Austria and Russia might upset the balance that he had so precariously established" (Howard 13). The assassination in the Balkans would upset the balance between Austria and Russia and start the Great War, as Bismarck feared.

By the year 1914 nationalism was growing strongly in Bosnia. Groups such as Mlada Bosna (Young Bosnia) and Ujedinjenje ili Smrt (Unification or Death) formed in Bosnia/

Herzegovina and Serbia as the different ethnic groups sought to throw off the Austro-Hungarian Empire's control of the region and to express their interest in nationalism. According to Misha Glenny, "the majority of those who formed Young Bosnia after 1908 came from extremely poor rural backgrounds" (294). Many Bosnian youth were being raised in rural areas with a desire to see their ethnicity recognized and freed from imperialistic control. They found their outlet in Mlada Bosna. The Black Hand, another name for the group known as Unification or Death, was the group that would orchestrate the assassination which would start the Great War. The Black Hand had set up:

headquarters close to the Russian consulate in a building known as the Black House. The Black Hand, with its network of agents, had escaped the control of the military authorities and was increasingly assuming the role of an informal government of 'liberated Old Serbia.' After several weeks, the government in Belgrade started to appoint civilian administrators to these territories, but those who refused to submit to the demands of the Black Hand and the Četniks were scared. (Glenny 234)

Hemingway mentioned the "Black Hand" in his short story "The Woppian Way." Paul Smith stated that this story was written in Hemingway's "Chicago style" and was part of Hemingway's "Apprentice Fiction" (576). There exists two copies of "The Woppian Way" in the archives, the first of which has Pickles asking the protagonist "You know of the 'Mano Nar,' the Black Hand?" who then replies "It is like the Mafia and the Cammorra and in some cities it is very strong" ("The Woppian Way" 12). Indeed the Black Hand was very strong in some cities, and that strength would be the downfall of an empire.

Gavrilo Princip was a Bosnian who tried to volunteer before 1914 with the Black Hand. According to Glenny, Gavrilo and the young men like him were “fired by an emerging, ill-defined sense of south Slavic brotherhood” which led them to volunteer their services to the Serbian military and the Četnik irregulars (Glenn 248). On his way to volunteer with a friend, Gavrilo wrote a postcard stating “We have arrived, but where we go from here we do not know. For Freedom and fatherland” (Glenny 250). He was a young man willing to lay down his life to obtain freedom for his people and for his fatherland. Just as with the previous nations discussed, the young men were willing to fight and die for their nation’s advancement, and Gavrilo was only one of the many willing to do so. Gavrilo had grown up in a house that is described as being small, and too low to the ground to allow an adult to enter without ducking. The house had no windows and the only light in the house came through a hole in the roof which allowed smoke from the fire used to cook and heat the house to escape through (Glenny 295). There was no running water in the house and the floors were made of dirt (Glenny 295). This young boy had grown up in poverty and wished to prove himself and win a better life of freedom for his people, but he was accepted by the Serbian military as a volunteer. Major Tankosić of the Serbian military looked at Gavrilo and stated, “‘You are too small and too weak’... ordering him out of town and threatening to have him beaten up if he did not comply immediately” (Glenny 251). Gavrilo was humiliated and rejected on his quest to win freedom for his people. He would not, however, be discouraged from his goal. He travelled to Sarajevo determined to prove the Major wrong (Glenny 251). Gavrilo, like many poor Bosnians, had been in Sarajevo before. He was sent to Sarajevo to study and live with relatives in the city. The group of intellectual Bosnian youth he studied with were separate from those in the city, and they did not assimilate into life in a

cosmopolitan area. This group, despite being young and confused, represented: “the peasantry’s first authentic political voice and ‘could see that the population from the villages, ignorant and lacking organization, had been left to fend for themselves’” (Glenny 296). In 1908 when Bosnia Herzegovina was put under the Austro-Hungarian Empire by Bismark, the Bosnian young intellectuals were sent over the edge. Most of the masses of peasants in Bosnia were complacent, but not this group of young men. They would seek freedom for their country.

Archduke Franz Joseph of the Austro-Hungarian Empire would walk unknowingly into the cross hairs of the Black Hand. Franz Ferdinand was the successor to the Hapsburg throne (Zeman 28). On July 28, 1914 Ferdinand was on an official visit to Sarajevo with his wife (Zeman 36). Gavrilo Princip and five other young members of the Black Hand waited for their moment to kill Franz Ferdinand. The first four assassins were either too scared to act or too incompetent to accomplish their goal (Glenny 304). One of the assassins threw a bomb at Ferdinand’s car which bounced off of the car wounding a member of Ferdinand’s group and a passerby (Glenny 304). Princip would ultimately pull the trigger that would take the lives of the royal couple. According to Glenny, “Princip himself had a clear shot at the Archduke only because Franz Ferdinand’s Czech chauffeur, who had never been to Sarajevo before, missed the turning from Appel Quay and had to stop and reverse, making the Archduke a sitting target for twenty seconds” (Glenny 304). The Duchess was struck by Princip’s bullet when a bystander attempted to stop Princip, knocking the gun that was aimed at a military official causing the bullet to instead hit the Duchess (Glenny 304). The Archduke’s last words were “You must stay alive to take care of the children” to his wife, who was already dead, and “Es ist nicht” or it is nothing (Glenny 251). As he lay dying, the assassins took the cyanid pills given to them by the

Black Hand which had also supplied the bullets. The pills only caused severe pain and not death. Princip died in prison just before the end of the war (Glenny 304).

While history may blame Gavrilo Princip's shots for the start of the First World War, the blame must be spread much broader than on one boy. There were several assassinations of political leaders already in the twentieth century, so this death alone cannot be the cause of the war. However, this assassination left the Austrians "determined to crush their Serbian enemies for good. They issued an ultimatum that would, if accepted, have turned Serbia virtually into a client state of the Dual Monarchy. This the Russians could not have tolerated, and the Austrians knew it" (Howard 18). Thus, the Austrians made demands on Serbia that they knew Serbia could not accept so as to start a war with Serbia and Russia, whom they knew would back Serbia. As Hemingway mentioned in the 1948 introduction to *FTA*, Serbia and Russia would profit economically by remaining in the same position politically, and Austria-Hungary would profit economically by making Serbia into a client state (*FTA IX*). Thus both sides were moved by economic reasons, greed, and pride. Before issuing this demand, Austria checked with Germany to ensure that Germany would come to their aid should the fighting start when Serbia refused the demand. If the Germans had chosen to, they could have stopped the war before it started by choosing to restrain "their weaker Austrian ally" (Wilkinson and Hughes 33). Germany chose to back her ally, Russia chose to back Serbia, and France chose to back her ally Russia. The only question was whether or not Britain would join the war (Howard 26). The Serbs would deny the demands on July 28th, 1914 and the Russians would set their troops in motion two days later (Howard 28, 30). Britain demanded assurances that Belgium's neutrality would be respected, and when that demand went unanswered, Britain declared war on Germany in the first week of

August, 1914 (Howard 31). The First World War had begun from the starting point of Sarajevo, a few hours from what would become the Soča Front.

At this point, Italy had not chosen to join the war at the side of her allies, Germany and Austria. Presumably Austria and Germany did not expect Italy to join in their fight as “neither Austria nor Germany involved their ally in their summits” (Thompson 20). Thus, when Germany and Austria were securing their alliance and making plans for the demands on Serbia that would fail, they did not invite Italy, doubting her allegiance to their alliance. When the demands were given to Belgrade, the Austrians and Germans chose to keep “the text secret from Italy. This violated the letter of the Triple Alliance” and gave Italy a technicality to bow out of the Alliance should she choose to do so (Thompson 20). However, the Germans and Austrians still hoped for Italy’s support. Both governments had failed to understand power shifts in the Italian government that had led to a lessening of support of Italy’s allies (Thompson 20). San Guliano, an Italian political leader, told Vienna “that Italy would expect all of Italian-speaking south Tyrol as ‘compensation’ for the slightest Austrian gain in the Balkans” (Thompson 20). This suggested that Italy would support the alliance, given the correct circumstances which Italy knew would not occur. To further the idea that Italy would support the alliance, the Italian ambassadors in Berlin and Vienna “exaggerated their government’s loyalty to the Alliance” (Thompson 20). Furthermore, General Cadorna had said he would “respect the army’s existing commitment” (Thompson 20). Following these statements, when three classes of Italian military forces were organized in July of 1918, the Germans and Austrians hoped that the Italians would, after all, come to their aid (Thompson 20).

As the war got started, “the outbreak of war was greeted with enthusiasm in the major cities of all the belligerent powers” (Howard 32). For some, “war was seen as a test of ‘manhood’ such as soft urban living no longer afforded. Such ‘manhood’ was believed to be essential if nations were to be ‘fit to survive’” (Howard 33). Each side believed the war would not last for long, and their own victory was assumed. On the 17th of August, 1914, Germany invaded Belgium. A flood of refugees fled before the Germans and clogged up the roads (Howard 36). The German invaders feared a public uprising or resistance, so they shot around 5,000 Belgian citizens and burned buildings indiscriminately (Howard 36). Invading Belgium was enough to provoke Britain, however, “the manner in which the German forces enforced their occupation would have created almost irresistible pressure to do so” (Howard 37). The Battle of the Marne would begin the same month, and the First Battle of Ypres would begin that fall. The Russians came to the aid of the French on August 15th by driving into East Prussia with the Russian First Army and attacking the Germans with the Second Army, as well (Howard 41). Austria attacked the Serbs to the south and the Russians in the north (Howard 43). By the end of 1914 the alliances, with the exception of Italy, were embroiled in war.

Italy Breaks from the Pack

Although Italy was a part of the Triple Alliance with Austria-Hungary and Germany, she would not enter the First World War on the side of her allies. At this point the Austro-Hungarian Empire still straddled the Alps and Italy sought to control the lands on her side of the Alps (Thompson 4). As WWI was largely a war about gaining territory and power, Italy took the side that might give her land on her side of the Alps as well as territory leading up into Caporetto and along the Adriatic Coast. Cities such as Trieste and Gorizia, which are a part of

Italy today, were then a part of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Italy wished to claim these territories and enlarge her borders. In order to sway Italy to the side of the Allies and against the Central Powers of the once Triple Alliance, the Allies offered to give Italy much of the land she wanted. This bargaining came through the negotiated Treaty of London in the spring of 1915 in which Italy was told that “in exchange for fighting the enemies of France, Great Britain, and Russia within 30 days, Italy ‘will receive’ all of south Tyrol, Trieste, Gorizia, Istria, Dalmatia down to Trogit, near Spalato, plus most of the islands further south to Dubrovnik” (Thompson 31). The area promised to Italy would comprise of most of the southern border of the Austro-Hungarian Empire seen in Map One in Appendix A. As Italy was in an alliance with the Central Powers, this promise was kept secret by the governments involved at the time. Negotiations were done behind closed doors. After signing the Treaty of London in April of 1915, Italy’s ambassador announced to the Austrian government in Vienna on May 23 that Italy would be at war with Austria-Hungary from midnight that evening (Thompson 35). Despite the alliance between Italy and Austria, relations between the two nations were strained since Austria-Hungary had annexed Bosnia-Herzegovina in 1878. Italians living in what is now Croatia were afraid that this annexation would bring more Slavs into a region they hoped would become Italy (Thompson 13). Although this annexation had occurred over three decades earlier, this annexation made the decision to leave the alliance easier for Italy.

Italy leaving the alliance was not surprising. The reason she could leave the alliance was a simple loophole in the alliance, as was mentioned earlier. According to Thompson, the alliance required Italy to guarantee support if France attacked, which it did not (Thompson 13). Part of the alliance stated that any change to the status quo in the Balkans would require an

agreement between Italy and Austria-Hungary, which was a left over concern from the annexation of Bosnia-Herzegovina (Thompson 13). However, when Austria acted in the Balkans after the assassination, they did not have an agreement with Italy as to how that situation in the Balkans should be handled. If Austria-Hungary were to act in the Balkans without checking with Italy first, Italy was to be compensated with control of the southern Tyrol. When Austria-Hungary acted on her own in the Balkans, Italian leader “San Giuliano told Vienna...that Italy would expect all of Italian-speaking south Tyrol as ‘compensation’ for the slightest Austrian gain in the Balkans” (Thompson 20). Austria-Hungary was erroneously confident at that point that Italy would still support the alliance. However, because of Austria-Hungary’s actions in the Balkans Italy was free from the Alliance, and she could side with the allies who offered Italy the land that she was after in exchange for military action against her former alliance. These former allies are the enemies that the Italians alongside of Lt Henry are fighting in *FTA*. Italy ultimately chose the side of the war which seemed more likely to give her the land she wanted. Italy did not join the war against Austria-Hungary to fight for any reason other than pride, greed, and the desire for more land. As Lt Henry recounts the loss of life on Mount Grappa and in the Battle of Caporetto, he is doing so with the knowledge that this was a war over land. When the men speak of the war, the discussion is over land and the fatherland in general, not over right and wrong.

The Result of the War

The war would rage across the European continent and beyond from 1914 until late 1918. The cost of the war was staggering. Men had entered the war believing themselves to be heroes fighting for the sake of their fatherland, as Gavrilo Princip had, but in the end their blood was wasted in the earth, in the sea, and on the frozen mountains. The Austro-Hungarian Empire

would lose 1.2 million men from their population of 52 million, and the empire itself would crumble (Howard 146). Germany would lose 1.8 million men of the 67 million population, Turkey 320,000 of 2.8 million, and Bulgaria 90,000 of 1.2 million (Howard 146). On the side of the Allies, France would lose 1.4 million of 36.5 million, Britain 740,000 of 46 million, Russia 1.7 million of 164 million, Italy 460,000 of 37 million and the USA would lose 115,000 of 93 million (Howard 146). With such a large portion of society missing, and many more injured, the nationalities of Europe could not easily recover. The economies of Europe were devastated from four long years of funding wars. Farm lands had been destroyed. Schools had been closed, and many school buildings had been destroyed. Men had put university on hold in pursuit of war. Women were widowed; children were orphaned. Society was disillusioned. Russia had suffered through revolution and the murder of a monarch and his family. The stage had been set for the next world war and a cold war to follow it. This is the Europe that Hemingway would explore as a part of the Lost Generation. The cultural effect of the European society Hemingway lived in encouraged the disillusionment Hemingway himself felt and the disillusionment that can be seen in *FTA*.

Chapter 4

World War One as Seen in *FTA*

1915

Hemingway did not have the same experience in the First World War as his protagonist Lt Henry did. Hemingway did not arrive on the Italian Front until the late spring of 1918, several months after the Battle of Caporetto which occurred in October of 1917. According to Michael Reynolds, Lt Henry was in the war from the year 1915 (*Hemingway's First War* 87). As was mentioned earlier, Italy declared war on Austria-Hungary in late May of 1915, so Lt Henry was on the front lines in Italy the same year that Italy joined the war. The Soča Front consisted of twelve major offensives, and Hemingway himself would not arrive until after the twelfth offensive. While Hemingway does not date the first few chapters, the dates can be found through careful analysis of *FTA*. Jim Barloon wrote that “the vignettes and stories in *In Our Time* evince this same regard for the concrete, thus enabling us to place where most events occur” (110). Silvia Ammary concurs with Barloon when she wrote that Hemingway “manages in all of his fiction to chart out the geographical groundwork of his novels while managing to keep the background so conspicuously unobtrusive. This can be found...in his description of the Caporetto retreat in *A Farewell to Arms*, as the description is so accurate” (33). Hemingway’s eye for historical detail allows readers to place the events and setting of *FTA* accurately in history. The historical information in the novel is painfully correct, aside from, as Reynolds points out,

Hemingway's use of the American Hospital in Milan, which would not appear until 1918 when Hemingway would be the first patient, and the placement of the British nurses in Gorizia, both of which were necessary to the novel (*Hemingway's First War* 23).

A Farewell to Arms is set on the Soča Front. This front can be seen on map eight in Appendix A. As Gregor Kranjc explains, the Soča Front is named after the river known by the Italians as the Isonzo and by the Slovenes as the Soča. Thus, the Slovenes know the front as the Soča Front (209). Americans typically refer to the front as the Isonzo Front, after the Italian name. In the beginning of *FTA*, Hemingway states, "In the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains... To the north we could look across a valley and see a forest of chestnut trees and behind it another mountain on this side of the river. There was fighting for that mountain too, but it was not successful" (*FTA* 3-4). While this information is merely used as background setting for the novel, it can help to place the novel historically. Many historical details add authenticity to the novel without affecting the plot of the novel. For example, Lt Henry mentions that the king "lived in Udine and came out in this way nearly every day to see how things were going, and things went very badly" (*FTA* 4). The king did live in Udine, and often toured the battlefield in his car, and things were going badly for Italy at this point in the war (Reynolds *Hemingway's First War* 91). This fact lends a feeling of authenticity to the novel, and supports Hemingway's picture of how removed the men were who controlled the war from the front without affecting the plot. The King was safe at all times in Udine, but was able to tour the front when he wanted to, always able to return to his safe zone and never hungry. Close but not too close to the battle lines. Udine can be found on Map Eight in Appendix A. As Hemingway states, "The king found that things

were going very badly at the front in 1915. Between June and December of 1915, the Italian losses were 66,000 killed, 190,000 wounded, and 22,500 missing in action. None of the Italian objectives had been taken, and the front line had remained almost static” (Reynolds *Hemingway’s First War* 92). Furthermore, Hemingway mentions that “At the start of the winter came the permanent rain and with the rain came the cholera. But it was checked and in the end only 7,000 died of it in the army” (*FTA* 4). Reynolds explains that in the winter of 1915 a major cholera outbreak hit the Italian front. He states that “one ambulance hauled 80 cholera victims back from the lines in a single night” (Reynolds *Hemingway’s First War* 92). Thompson also concurs that a major outbreak of cholera happened in 1915, at the worst possible time. According to Thompson:

The men’s spirits were depressed by continuous anxiety and danger, by lack of sleep, by seeing comrades fall wounded or dead at every moment. The awful weather obliged them to live in mud and water. They slept—when the lice let them—without straw or blankets on bare, often soaking ground. They were weakened by enteritis, rheumatism and bronchial complaints. Even worse, Habsburg troops had brought cholera from the Russian front, and by mid-August it was spreading along the front. The rations were usually late, cold and not nourishing. Drinkable water was often scarce and brackish. (113)

Cholera came from the Russian front, and the weakened condition of the Italian troops left them wide open for the disease. Hemingway has used his iceberg principle by lightly stating that things went badly, when the Italians were losing tens of thousands of men, dwarfing the amount that they would lose to a disease that may have been fought off by providing better hygiene and provisions for the troops. The hint towards the needless loss of life due to cholera and the

separation of the King from the dangers he placed his soldiers in adds historical accuracy and depth to the novel but does not affect the plot.

Looking to the battle lines of the summer of 1915, the frontline was on the western side of the river which named the front—the Isonzo in Italian. Reynolds places this setting in either the town of Gradisca or Lucinico, both of which would have been close to the front line as both towns are not far on the western side of the river. Both cities can be seen on map nine in Appendix A. According to Reynolds, “we see that there is a valley north of both Gradisca and Lucinico that flows down the mountains on the Italian side of the Isonzo river. These mountains are dominated by Monte Sabotino, which was heavily fortified by the Austrians and which they held against Italian attack well into 1916. From June through October of 1915, there was fierce fighting on the slopes of Sabotino” (*Hemingway’s First War* 91). Both Lucinico and Gradisca are on the correct side of the river, and both are south of Sabotino. Reynolds leaned towards the city of Gradisca because of the wording in the diary of Gino Speranza. In 1915 in Italy, Gino wrote, “In front lay the Isonzo, with fields running down to its banks, across it, a low livid red mountain, the Carso, and farther away to the left (north), under the protection of the Austrian mountains, Gorizia!” (Reynolds *Hemingway’s First War* 89-91). This is a possible match for the town Lt Henry was originally stationed in. Igor Maver also points to Speranza’s diary, suggesting the description matches Henry’s description (61). However, Lucinico also looks over the river to Gorizia and to the north is an open plain followed by Monte Sabotino on the correct side of the river. Lucinico would have had a better view of the mountain than Gradisca because of proximity. Branko Drekonja and Aleksander Potočnik also assume the village Lt Henry was first

stationed in was Lucinico “where a unit of Italian ambulance cars had been stationed until the sixth offensive” (33).

1916

In 1916 Lt Henry returns from a break or a “permission” from the front. Along the Soča Front armies did not make major maneuvers during the winter as the snow was prohibitive of battle. Lt Henry’s break would have been acceptable. As Lt Henry returns he states that “the next year there were many victories. The mountain that was beyond the valley and the hillside where the chestnut forest grew was captured and there were victories beyond the plain on the plateau to the south and we crossed the river in August and lived in a house in Gorizia” (*FTA* 5). This last line supports the idea that Lt Henry had been stationed in Lucinico, which is situated nearly directly across the river from Gorizia. Thus, he could easily state that “we crossed the river...and lived in a house in Gorizia” (*FTA* 5). Keeping in mind that Sabotino is likely to be the mountain on the Italian side of the river that Hemingway is speaking of, “Sabotino saw thirty Italian assaults and did not fall to the Italians until August of 1916 when the Italians would take the mountain in less than an hour during the sixth battle of the Isonzo” (Thompson 172). Beyond the plain on the plateau to the south the Italians saw many victories. They pushed the Austrians past the Isonzo river and were able to take Gorizia, parts of the Carso, Monte San Michele, Mount Sei Busi and Cosich (Thompson 175-75). Thus, victories occurred beyond the plain on the plateau to the south and the Italians were able to move into Gorizia. According to Reynolds, “By August 10, a large sector of the Austrian defense on the Carso plateau collapsed, giving the Italians a sizable strategic gain. But the most important conquest for the Italians in 1916 was the town of Gorizia” (*Hemingway’s First War* 94). Gorizia had been the regional capital for the

Austro-Hungarian Empire (Thompson 121). Thus, Hemingway placed his protagonist in a town that was the symbol of victory for the Italians. Lt Henry is in the middle of a town which was a major victory, yet even that could not be held. In the end the town was lost in the retreat from the Battle of Caporetto. Hemingway does not include the fact that Italy would get Gorizia back. Instead, he shows that the great victory was useless. The lives lost in taking Gorizia were like the meat in a slaughterhouse if nothing was done with the meat. There was no true victory. Hemingway further cements the callousness of the Italian government when he explains that even in the town of Gorizia, “we were supposed to wear steel helmets...but they were uncomfortable and too bloody theatrical in a town where the civilians had not been evacuated” (*FTA* 24). The people who had not been evacuated, of Italian, Slovene, and German ethnicity, did not have helmets, but the Italian soldiers would be partially protected until their country had a need for them to spill their blood in the attempt to take a mountain.

Victory along the Isonzo river only moved the front further along, it did not end the war. As Hemingway said, “the mountains beyond it could not be taken” (*FTA* 5). This is why when Lt Henry moves into the house in Gorizia, he could still see fighting in the mountains beyond. The battle lines had simply moved over. As Thompson explains, “The Italians had shifted their problems several kilometers eastwards” (177). They were fighting the Austrians along Monte Santo and San Gabriele, and that fighting would be visible at night from Gorizia. As Reynolds explains, “the Austrians still held some mountainous territory on the Italian side of the Isonzo up river from Gorizia, and...none of the mountains on the Austrian side up river had fallen to the Italians at the end of 1916” (*Hemingway’s First War* 97). 1916 was a year of victories for the Italians, and once again the year of fighting would slow to an end in the fall and Lt Henry

would take his “permission,” returning in the summer of 1917 to the same town of Gorizia, but with more weapons and more damage done to the town. As Hemingway had stated towards the middle of chapter two, “Up the river the mountains had not been taken; none of the mountains beyond the river had been taken. That was all left for next year” (*FTA* 6). Next year was 1917 or chapter three.

1917

In the summer of 1917 Lt Henry returns to Gorizia to find more guns and “some new hospitals...British men and sometimes women, on the street, and a few more houses had been hit by shell fire” (*FTA* 9). Here Hemingway is setting up the possibility of Lt Henry meeting a British woman and falling in love, but he is also expressing the security felt by the Italians and their allies in the Gorizian victory. Hemingway mentions a few chapters later that from his location in Gorizia he could see that “there was a good deal going on up in the mountains. I watched the flashes on San Gabriele” (*FTA* 27). After a year of fighting to gain San Michele and Podgora, the Italian objective was to gain San Gabriele. This objective would necessitate frequent skirmishes and battles in and around San Gabriele between the Sixth Battle in the summer of 1916 and the Eleventh Battle in the summer of 1917 (Edmonds 21-38). The battles can be seen on maps two and six in Appendix A. The Mountain, Škabrijel being its original Slovene name, would not be taken at the cost of over 80,000 Italian lives (Edmonds 21-38). It is significant that Hemingway mentions this fighting in the background as it epitomizes the waste of Italian lives for an objective that would not be gained militarily.

When Henry returns to the front in 1917, he learns that he has not missed much. According to Rinaldi, most of the injuries and sicknesses along the front during Henry’s absence

came from frostbite, chilblains, jaundice, gonorrhea, self-inflicted wounds, pneumonia and hard and soft chancres. Rinaldi also mentioned that “every week someone gets wounded by rock fragments” (*FTA* 10-11). These injuries come from the Italian army not providing properly for their soldiers. Frost bite and pneumonia clearly come from exposure in a mountainous environment during the winter without proper equipment and clothing to keep warm. Chilblains, according to the Mayo Clinic, are “painful inflammation of small blood vessels in your skin that occur in response to repeated exposure to cold but not freezing air” (Mayo Clinic Staff). This was yet another preventable illness that the Italian military failed to protect its men from. Chancres are one of the first stages of Syphilis, lumping the chancres in with gonorrhea, which would have come from the whorehouses the Italian government authorized along the front lines (Mayo Clinic Staff “Syphilis,” Thompson 150). The jaundice would have come from the excessive alcohol the government supplied, despite the lack of clean water and proper food and hygiene along the front lines (Thompson 150). Injuries from rock fragments came from the need to build roads, tunnels and caves into mountain sides, without proper precautions being taken to ensure safety. In these few short lines Hemingway has reinforced the futility of a war where the government does not fully supply the needs of the men it forces to the front. The criticism of lack of proper care for soldiers on the front continues when Hemingway has Catherine ask Lt Henry if Rinaldi is any good as a doctor, since “you rarely find any one good this close to the front” (*FTA* 17). The men are not properly cared for, and they are not given the best possible medical attention on the front. Further on Hemingway comments on the steel helmets the men on the front were given to wear, “Most of the helmets were too big and came down almost over the ears of the men who wore them. The officers all wore helmets; better fitting helmets” (*FTA* 28). When

the men are given helmets for protection, those helmets do not fit. Thus, the helmets will not properly protect the soldiers on the front. Those in charge gave helmets that fit only to the officers, whose lives were of more value to their nation. Hemingway emphasizes this difference with short language, but his point has been made that the lives of Italian soldiers on the front are not valuable to those in power over them.

During Henry's time in Gorizia an offensive would begin. According to Reynolds, "The Gorizia command, which was largely the 2nd army, was responsible for attacking the Bainsizza heights between Plava and Gorizia, including Monte Kuk, Monte Vodice, Monte Santo, and Monte San Gabriele. On the Carso plateau, the Italian 3rd Army held responsibility" (*FTA* 97). Lt Henry was serving with the 2nd Italian army, thus he was supporting the attempt to take land from the Austro-Hungarian empire. While in 1915 the Italians were stopped at the Isonzo in some areas, they had also managed to take the town of Caporetto on the opposite side of the river and farther into the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The Italians also took the hamlet of Plava and some of the areas between Plava and Caporetto. However, between Plava and Gorizia lay the Bainsizza plateau which was still at least partly in the hands of the Austrians. This area, as well as the mountains mentioned above, were strategical goals for the Italian army as Lt Henry enters into 1917. The hamlet of Plava lies a short drive from the Italian border in modern day Slovenia. Hemingway writes that Lt Henry "visited the posts in the mountains and was back in town late in the afternoon" (*FTA* 14). These mountains are most likely the mountains around Plava. Plava is a twenty minute drive from Gorizia on modern day roads. Thus, even on the roads of WWI, Lt Henry could make it to the mountain posts around Plava and be back in Gorizia in the late afternoon. The area around Plava and Mount Kuk and

nearby Kanal was called “the infernal triangle” by an Austro-Hungarian soldier who was stationed there from December of 1916 through May of 1917 (Drekonja 170). Henry was driving into what this Slovene called an infernal triangle to check on posts on the Italian side of the lines in what was Slovene land. These areas can all be seen on map six in Appendix A.

Not long after Lt Henry returns to the front in 1917 he learns that “the offensive was going to start again...The division for which we worked were to attack at a place up the river and the major told me that I would see about the posts for during the attack. The attack would cross the river up above the narrow gorge and spread up the hillside” (*FTA* 14). Later on he states that “in two days the offensive was to start and I would go with the cars to Plava” (*FTA* 31). Plava is up the Isonzo river from Gorizia, and it is a hilly area where gorges can be found. He also states that “I had been up to the river to the bridgehead at Plava. It was there that the offensive was to begin. It had been impossible to advance on the far side the year before because there was only one road heading down from the pass to the pontoon bridge” (*FTA* 20). According to Branko Drekonja the bridgehead Hemingway is speaking of is the Bodrež bridgehead (18). The Italian army was known, and still is known in the area around Plava, for building roads and engineering. In 1916 they could not advance in the area around Plava because of the small road system, but the army had been busy building roads, which most likely led to some of the cases of frostbite and chilblains as well as injury from falling rocks.

Hemingway describes where the offensive near Plava was. He mentions that, “the Austrians still kept a bridgehead further down the river” (*FTA* 20). When Lt Henry says goodbye to Catherine before the offensive he states that he is “leaving now for a show up above Plava” (*FTA* 36). Thus, the fight would be above Plava, near the bridgehead, crossing a river and

attempting to head up a hill controlled by the Austrians. The bridgehead at Plava had been taken in the sixth offensive when Gorizia was taken (Thompson 175). This offensive that Lt Henry said would start in two days was the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo which started on May 23, 1917 (Thompson 251). According to Thompson the Italians came with 3,000 guns and crossed the Isonzo valley descending to Plava and heading up Mt Kuk (251). Mt Kuk, however, was not the only objective. Thompson also mentions that, “The Tenth Battle has to be understood in terms of ridges and summits. Mount San Gabriele, east of Gorizia, stands as an isolated summit. Monte Santo, further north, is the southern tip—and higher point—of a ridge that runs south-east for six or seven kilometers from Hill 383, above the Italian bridgehead at Plava” (Thompson 250). (See maps two and six in Appendix A). Perhaps, then, the area Lt Henry was in would have been in or around Hill 383.

On the way to the post near Plava, Lt Henry also mentions passing an area where “there had been a little town but it was all rubble. There was what was left of a railway station and a smashed permanent bridge that could not be repaired and used because it was in plain sight” (*FTA* 20). The Italians did destroy railway stations as they were sources for supplies and reinforcements in the towns the Italians were attempting to conquer. This little demolished town is believed by Reynolds to have been Zagora which is “on the slopes of Monte Kuk” (Reynolds 98). Zagora is a small village about four and half kilometers south of Plava on the opposite side of the Soča or Isonzo river. Drekonja and Potočnik also place Zagora near Plava as one of the three “satellite settlements on the left bank of the [Isonzo] river” making the village a likely the village Henry is speaking of (*FTA* 57).

While Lt Henry sat north of Plava waiting for the offensive to start, just before his injury, he spoke with Manera, Passini, and Gavuzzi. Gavuzzi asked Lt Henry, “Who goes to the attack” and “Bersaglieri,” was the answer (42). Bersaglieri is a division of the Italian army. The response comes that, “There are not enough troops here for a real attack” to which Lt Henry explains that the attack is probably a diversion from the real attack. Interestingly enough, the original plan was for the attack on the Bainsizza to be a diversion from the real objectives. According to Thompson, the original Tenth Battle was to start on the Carso, south of the Bainsizzia, but after a few days the emphasis would switch to the Bainsizzia. The hope would be that General Boroovic (a commander in the Austrian army), would see Bainsizza as the objective and pull troops from the Carso, leaving it open for an Italian attack (Thompson 250). However, Italian General Capello varied the plan to “attack across the river between Plava and Tolmein, creating a new bridgehead 10 kilometers north of Hill 383” thinking this would leave the drive to Monte Santo and Mount San Gabriele open once Borevic moved troops onto the Bainsizza (Thompson 250-51). The plan worked in that Boreovic did move his divisions off of the Carso and on to the Bainsizzia, but the Italians had reformed their plan to no longer include troops to swoop onto the Carso. Furthermore, Borevic was sent three more divisions as reinforcement to regain land taken by the Italians on the Carso (Edmonds 33). Thus, Bersaglieri in Henry’s portion of the Tenth Battle do appear to have been diversionary troops, as Lt Henry suggested. The Carso was very important to the Italians. Reynolds explains that “The Carso plateau was the key to the liberation of Trieste, which had been the watchword and goal of the Italian army from the beginning. The key, in turn, to the Carso was the Bainsizza plateau” (98). These areas can be seen in maps two, six and seven in Appendix A. The Italians had to conquer the Carso to reach

Trieste and the Carso could not be conquered without first taking control of the Bainsizza plateau. The Italians had to clear the Austrians from Montes Kuk, Santo and San Gabriele to reach the goal of Trieste, and those goals would not all be successful in this offensive.

Reynolds also addresses the military action north of Plava where Lt Henry was injured. According to Reynolds the attack “at Plava itself was successful in as much as the objective of Mount Kuk was taken” (*Hemingway’s First War* 99). He further cites that “contemporary accounts also called the attack successful; Monte Kuk was taken along with 6,000 prisoners in a 5 day period” (*Hemingway’s First War* 99). However, the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo was not seen as entirely victorious for the Italians. The Italians lost 36,000 soldiers, compared to only 7,300 Austrians (Thompson 254, Edmonds 33). Lt Henry would have been one of the 96,000 casualties of this battle, and he was involved in what would have been the successful part of the offensive, as Rinaldi stated, “ the operation was successful...They take nearly a thousand prisoners” (Edmonds 33, *FTA* 55). Because the operation around Plava was successful for the Italians, Lt Henry would be rewarded with medals for that success and his part in it. One can hear the echo of the men Lt Henry was injured with, “What if we take San Gabriele?” “What if we take the Carso and Monfalcone and Trieste?” (*FTA* 44). The “what ifs” are not realized in the battle that would take one of their lives and injure two others. Once some of these lands are taken, what good truly comes from it? Hemingway is again showing the futility of the war he found himself and his protagonist serving in.

As the story moves forward, Lt Henry is in a field hospital waiting for transport to Milan for treatment of his wounds. Rinaldi and a few of the men from Gorizia come to visit him before he leaves for Milan. The men update Lt Henry on the progress of the offensive he was

injured in. They discuss America declaring war on Germany. At this point Lt Henry is thinking, “I did not know what we had against Austria but it seemed logical that they should declare war on her if they did on Germany” (*FTA* 65). In hindsight, as Hemingway is writing this novel, Lt Henry no longer understands why Italy fought Austria. His use of pronouns is interesting. “We” is used when discussing fighting Austria initially. He wonders what “we” have against Austria, this “we” being the Italian military. However, he quickly switches to “they” when discussing the United States declaring war on Austria. The United States is separate from Lt Henry. The country and the government that controls it is “they”—a separate entity from Lt Henry, who has been serving alongside Italians for two years at this point. He is separate from the country of his birth and wondering what the country of his choosing had against Austria.

Historically speaking, America declared war in April of 1917, a few months before Hemingway headed to Kansas City (Howard 97, Meyers 24-6). Americans tended to favor joining the Allies in the war. This favor was encouraged by German U-boat activity in the Atlantic and “the image of Germany as a militaristic monster projected by her behavior in Belgium, her use of poison gas, and her ruthless conduct of the war at sea” (Howard 92-3). Germany was perceived as the instigator of violence in the war by the American people because she had invaded Belgium, used poison gas and had u-boats actively working in the Atlantic. Initially America had only supported the Allies by supplying needed ammunition, weapons, and food. As the last link in the chain that led to American troops on the ground in Europe, the Zimmerman cable was intercepted and decoded by the British. This cable called for the Mexican government to become openly hostile against the United States and to join the Central Powers (Howard 95). Wilson declared war on Germany on April 6, 1917, but men were not on the

ground in France until early 1918 (Wilkinson and Hughes 67). American troops would not enter Italy until the summer of 1918, when Hemingway was recovering in Milan (Seelinger). As the men discuss America coming to the aid of Italy, Lt Henry speaks sarcastically of Turkey being the United States' national bird and makes prophetic jokes about Japan wanting Hawaii (*FTA* 65). Lt Henry, in his sarcasm, has shown his "separate peace" from this war. He does not see, looking back, why they (meaning he and the Italians) fought Austria, nor did he put stock in the country of his birth positively affecting the war he found himself in.

Discussion of the war continues, and the men continue with the wishful comments that Henry's ambulance crew had made just before the explosion. Rinaldi comments, "We will get Nice and Savoia from the French. We will get Corsica and all the Adriatic coast-line...Italy will return to the splendors of Rome" to which Lt Henry responds "I don't like Rome...It is hot and full of fleas" (*FTA* 65). These areas are visible in map one in Appendix A. When he is questioned on not liking Rome, Henry returns to his sarcastic responses. The interesting point in the towns Rinaldi mentioned is that these goals were not achieved by Italy. While Italy did gain land from the Austro-Hungarian Empire after the war, including Gorizia and Caporetto, she did not gain all of the Adriatic Coast. Much of Istria did go to Italy, but not all of the Adriatic. Nice and Savoia (birthplace of Napoleon) did not go to Italy, and neither did Corsica. Hemingway could have had Rinaldi mention the lands they were actually fighting to gain, such as Caporetto, but instead he has Rinaldi mention land goals that were not realized by the Italian government. In doing so, Hemingway has reinforced the futility of the war. Lt Henry had just participated in the Tenth Battle of the Isonzo, which cost the Italian military "at least 25,000 casualties over the 19 days of the battle, on a front of three kilometers, for no gains whatsoever" (Thompson 260). Lt

Henry's friend lost his life supporting a diversionary tactic, a plan for wanton waste of life in the form of a distraction from the real objective. In the end, the diversionary tactic was left, and very little was accomplished. The Tenth Battle was a waste, the war was a waste, and none of the land goals mentioned would be truly realized.

When Lt Henry was in Milan, the American hospital was not opened yet. However, the American hospital was open when Hemingway himself was the first patient in the hospital in the summer of 1918. Looking briefly at the historical information in this section, the Italians had started to make some progress in the summer of 1917 while Henry recovered. Hemingway writes that "at the front they were advancing on the Carso, they had taken Kuk across from Plava and were taking the Bainsizza plateau. The west front did not sound so good. It looked as though the war were going on for a long time" (*FTA* 103). Hemingway even muses that perhaps the war would be another hundred years war. Only a few pages later, in the month of September, he reports that "the fighting at the front went very badly and they could not take San Gabriele. The fighting on the Bainsizza plateau was over and by the middle of the month the fighting for San Gabriele was about over too. They could not take it" (*FTA* 116). The Italian army had made progress on the Carso, the Bainsizza and on Mount Kuk (see maps two and six in Appendix A). Hemingway contrasts this progress with the loss of life on San Gabriele and the impossibility of permanent progress on the Bainsizza. This contrast emphasizes the feeling that the war will never end. The troops take a few steps forward only to take a few steps back. Similarly, later on Lt Henry and Catherine discuss their life after the war. Lt Henry asks Catherine, "where will we live after the war?" to which she responds, "in an old person's home probably...for three years I looked forward very childishly to the war ending at Christmas. But now I look forward till when

our son will be a Lieutenant Commander” (*FTA* 122). They see no end in sight to this war and make comments about their children growing up to serve in this same war. Ironically, Hemingway’s own son would serve in WWII, a war many attribute to WWI.

Consistent with the rest of the novel, Hemingway’s historical accuracy on the summer and fall of 1917 is perfect. This would have been the Eleventh Battle of the Isonzo, which cost the Italians over 40,000 soldiers (Edmonds 38). The eleventh Battle can be seen in map two in Appendix A. Unlike Lt Henry’s two “permissions” to leave the front during the winter, many men serving in the Italian military on the Carso and the Asiago plateaus had not had a two week permission since the winter of 1915-1916 (Thompson 261). At this point the men were getting tired on all sides of the war. According to Thompson, “the focal point [of the Eleventh Battle] would be the Bainsizza plateau between Gorizia and Tolmein” (278). The battle started in August, while Lt Henry was in Milan (Edmonds 35). The line of attack was sixty kilometers long and stretched from Tolmein to the Adriatic sea. Initially, as Hemingway reported, things were going well. The Austrians retreated from much of the Bainsizza (Thompson 281). However, Italy took heavy losses by the time the battle had stopped. Thompson states that, “The Eleventh Battle was a technical victory that felt like a defeat” (282). Thus, it went well, but it did not, as Hemingway aptly mentions. By September the losses were known: over 160,000 for the Italians and about 140,000 for the Austrians (Thompson 281-82). The Italians lost 25,000 men on San Gabriele alone, and once again they failed to take the mountain. The men who continued to charge up San Gabriele until the battle ended were forced to climb over the corpses of the soldiers who went before them. As Rinaldi mentioned to Lt Henry, “It’s Austrian cognac...seven stars. It’s all they captured on San Gabriele” (*FTA* 147). The mountain was not taken. Austrian

alcohol was the only gain Hemingway mentions, and this gain would further the sickness he is already fighting. Many of those who served in the Italian army felt, much as Catherine and Lt Henry did, that the war would never end and they had no choice but to continue to suffer through it. As the war dragged on, neither side seemed capable of winning. Lt Henry asks the priest, “Who won the fighting this summer? to which the priest replies “no one” (*FTA* 156). Neither side won, according to the priest, because so many lives were lost, which is a point Hemingway was emphasizing. Lt Henry continues that, “The Austrians won...They kept them from taking San Gabriele” (*FTA* 156). Although the Eleventh Battle was a strategical victory for the Italians, as Thompson said, Hemingway points out that the goal of San Gabriele was not reached. The battle was not won, and the war was still not ending.

As September of 1917 comes, Lt Henry comments on there being “riots twice in the town against the war and bad rioting in Turin” (*FTA* 116). As one would expect with Hemingway, this is another historical accuracy. According to Thompson, Turin was Italy’s only “proletarian city” and:

discontent was ably exploited by Marxists at the newspaper *New Order*. In August 1917, soldiers put down a protest against food shortages that turned into a riot. Around 40 people died. The unrest was more ominous because it was not simply about wages or shortages; these complaints focused a more political discontent and a smoldering sense of injustice over who was making the greatest sacrifice in the war. (271)

Just as with the soldiers Hemingway is writing about, the people of Turin are upset about the men whose lives are being sacrificed while those in power are at a safe distance from the front. They were tired of the carnage, just as the priest was.

An aspect of the riots was food shortages, which were a large problem for many of the countries involved in the war in 1917. Hemingway mentions this food shortage, as well. Initially, in the second chapter, Lt Henry is eating with the officers and there is plenty of food. Hemingway even refers to a “spaghetti course,” which implies that there were other courses in the meal (*FTA* 6). The men eat and laugh, enjoying the food and the company with no thoughts about food shortages as there was plenty of food at that point in 1916. When Lt Henry returns to the front after his injury, he travels to the Bainsizza where he visits one of the posts. Gino tells Lt Henry that “food is scarce and he would be glad to get a full meal in Gorizia” (*FTA* 159). Gino shows the level of his hunger by asking, “What kind of supper had I had?” (*FTA* 159). Lt Henry is able to comment that he had even had a form of dessert, even though it was only “bread pudding” (*FTA* 159). Further on Gino tells Lt Henry that when they arrived on the Bainsizza they found “fields of potatoes the Austrians had planted” (*FTA* 160). Lt Henry asks, “Has food really been that short?” to which Gino gives a longer response: “I myself have never had enough to eat but I am a big eater and I have not starved. The mess is average. The regiments in the line get pretty good food but those in support don’t get so much. Something is wrong somewhere. There should be plenty of food” (*FTA* 160-61). In 1916 Lt Henry was closer to the front and still had great food. Now, in 1917 the front lines have moved and the ambulance crews in the posts do not have enough to fill themselves. Gino was correct that something was wrong somewhere. As Gino explains, “They ought to feed them better. We are big eaters, I am sure there is plenty of food. It is very bad for the soldiers to be short on food. Have you ever noticed the difference it makes in the way you think?” (*FTA* 161). In the winter of 1916-1917 Thompson mentions that “some units went more than two days without food” (Thompson 132). Thompson cites Capello as having said

that the men were “walking shapes of mud. It is not the will to advance that’s lacking...what they lack is the physical strength” (132). Jaka Fili, a guide at the Kobarid Museum, echoes this concern for the soldiers on the front lines of the Soča Front, claiming that not only were there food shortages, but there were water shortages as well, particularly in the winter along the front. These are the food shortages that Hemingway is hinting towards. There were also food shortages for civilians. Howard mentions that “everywhere there were shortages of food, fuel, and raw materials” in the Russian and Austrian empires (81). Howard also mentions that “strikes and bread riots became endemic throughout Central and Eastern Europe” in 1917 (81). People were hungry, which led to the riots in Italy and elsewhere, and soldiers were weak from hunger and malnutrition. The food shortages across Europe can be seen on map three in Appendix A. However, food was not scarce for those in high command in Italy. According to Thompson, Cadorna’s “staff [was] lavished with privileges: working in safety, with fine food and drink, their families installed nearby and chauffeurs at the ready; given fast-track promotions, contact with ministers and the King, and unmerited decorations” (152). Soldiers were hungry and civilians were rioting for lack of food, while the leadership was “lavished with privileges” and “fine food” (Thompson 152). This is the larger problem Hemingway is hinting about when Lt Henry and Gino are speaking. Once again, the Italian military is shown by Hemingway to have allowed its men to suffer while sacrificing their lives needlessly for the fatherland.

As Lt Henry returns to the front, he is now able to see the Bainsizza, where as before he could not go far past Plava. For this reason the major tells Lt Henry, “You will want to see the Bainsizza” as he had not had that opportunity previously (*FTA* 145). The battle lines had changed while he was recovering. He finds that there was even more bombing in Gorizia and is

told that “it’s been a bad summer” (*FTA* 143-4). The ambulances are now spread to the Bainsizza plateau, with two more in the mountains, and two on the Carso (see maps two and six in Appendix A). Thus, at this point in 1917 the ambulances have been able to get into the front lines in the Bainsizza and the Carso and in the mountains beyond Plava that the Italians were fighting for. The balance is about to change, however, and Hemingway hints towards it when the major says, “They say they are to attack but I can’t believe it. It is too late. You saw the river” (*FTA* 145). Major offensives should have been winding down for the winter, and the Isonzo river being high would have made attacking across a river more difficult. However, Hemingway is hinting in that direction. Lt Henry heads up towards the new front lines and learns that there are now British ambulance cars, “further down the Bainsizza at Ravne,” which is situated north of Kobarid/Caporetto in the shadow of Mt. Krasji Vrh (*FTA* 158). The length of the Allied control over the Bainsizza has extended.

Once Lt Henry arrives on the front lines he learns that “the Austrians had a great amount of artillery in the woods along Ternova Ridge beyond and above us, and shelled the roads badly at night” (*FTA* 159). Even though the Italians have made some progress in moving the lines in their favor, the Austrians are still powerful and they are shelling the roads often. The tides are about to turn in favor of the Central Powers. While the Eleventh Battle of the Isonzo seemed favorable for the Italians, it was this very defeat that brought the situation to the forefront for the Germans, who decided they must act before the Austrian front was lost permanently. This brought about the Battle of Caporetto that Lt Henry is about to experience. Hemingway writes that “the wind rose in the night and at three o’clock in the morning with the rain coming in sheets there was a bombardment and the Croats came over across the mountain meadows and

through patches of woods and into the front line. They fought in the dark in the rain and a counter-attack of scared men from the second line drove them back” (*FTA* 162). According to Brigadier-General Sir James E. Edmonds, the battle began on October 24th at 2am when “the German artillery opened fire with gas shell on the identified Italian batteries and on the garrison of the forward trenches. This fire was continued until 4:30 am, when a pause of two hours was made” (51). Thus, the fighting began in the early hours of the morning, as Hemingway mentions. The fighting started with the Germans closer to Caporetto in towns such as Bovec/Plezzo where all of the Italian soldiers were killed with gas in a matter of seconds. As forty-five percent of the Austro-Hungarian army was Slavic, there were likely Croatians fighting the Italians (Thompson 78). Edmonds mentions that “light rain had begun early, but then turned to a heavy downfall with snow storms on the heights and mist in the valleys. Visibility even when day dawned was very poor,” verifying Hemingway’s report of the weather that night (51). Edmonds further mentions that “the Italian VII Corps, in reserve, behind the gap, whose role was to counter-attack, had been afraid to do so in the mist and had taken up a defensive position in the Army Line on the Colovrat heights” (52). Edmonds does not mention if this division managed to hold their defensive position and push back the Croatians, but both Hemingway and Edmonds refer to the reserves as a scared unit and both also mention the rain.

Hemingway continues to explain that “there was another attack just after daylight but it was unsuccessful...the bombardment started to the south below the long wooded ridge where the Austrian the Austrian guns were concentrated” (*FTA* 162). Edmonds’ account mentions that “at 6:30 am the bombardment was resumed with high-explosive and at 7 am the trench mortars joined in, and right down the line to the sea a general bombardment with guns of every

calibre was opened” (51). The unsuccessful attack could be what Edmonds mentions when he states that “Krauss’s men, who disregarded Below’s advice moved along the valleys, are said to have been held back by the fire of their own artillery” but generally things went very well for the Germans (52). At the end of the first full day, and the evening that followed, Hemingway writes that “we heard that Germans and Austrians had broken through to the north were coming down the mountain valleys toward Cividale and Udine” (*FTA* 163). On the third day of the Battle of Caporetto, Edmonds records that German troops were within five miles of Cividale, which is a twenty-four minute car ride on modern roads from Udine (56, see map eight in Appendix A). Hemingway mentions that the Italians planned to hold a line “across the mountains from Monte Maggiore,” which Edmonds agrees with, citing General Capello directly (*FTA* 163, Edmonds 53). Thus, after all of the fighting to gain the Bainsizza and the Carso, Hemingway records that “it rained steadily and the army of the Bainsizza moved down of the plateau in the October rain and across the river where the great victories had commenced in the spring of that year” (*FTA* 164). Hemingway chose a setting that would closely align the apparent victories of the Italians with their greatest defeat at the Battle of Caporetto in order to highlight the futile and wanton waste of life on this front.

When the possibility of retreat arises, Lt Henry questions, “If there is a retreat how are all the wounded evacuated?” (*FTA* 163). This is a valid questions which shows concern for the wounded. The response is that ““they are not. They take as many as they can and leave the rest.” ‘What would I take in the cars??’ ‘Hospital equipment.’ ‘All right’” (*FTA* 163). With the Germans and Austrians headed in their direction, killing thousands and taking thousands more prisoner, the concern of the Italian military leadership is for the equipment—not for the men. Lt

Henry shows concern in his question, but that concern is not returned by the leadership. Lt Henry records, “That night we helped empty the field hospitals that had been set up in the least ruined villages of the plateau, taking the wounded down to Plava on the river-bed; and the next day hauled all day in the rain to evacuate the hospitals and clearing stations at Plava” (*FTA* 164). Thus, contrary to the directions he was initially given, Lt Henry and his men were able to clear the field hospitals and the clearing station of the wounded. However, there is no indication of what happened to the men after this moment. Possibly they were loaded on to trains in Gorizia. However, there were not very many trains to use, and there were a lot of men to evacuate and a lot of equipment to move before the Austrians got to Gorizia. Hemingway has already shown readers that the importance lies on the equipment, not on the wounded men. There were 294,000 Italians captured in the Battle of Caporetto (Thompson 324). One can likely assume that these wounded men were left in Gorizia to wait for their captors as Lt Henry and the rest of the American Red Cross workers loaded the equipment they were directed to load into their cars before leaving Gorizia. The injured would have been some of the nearly 300,000 soldiers taken prisoner.

After Lt Henry and his men filled their ambulances with “the material piled in the hall” they joined the retreat moving towards Pordenone (*FTA* 165). Pordenone can be seen on map seven in Appendix A. They would find that the retreat was an unending line of cars, soldiers, and animals trying to flee the Austrians and Germans. While one may wonder how the retreat could move so slowly without being captured by the enemy, the answer is that it did and it didn’t. The Germans, with Lieutenant Erwin Rommel as one of the leaders, had to overtake every Italian stronghold between Caporetto and Gorizia—an hour and a half drive on today’s

roads, but one full of hills, valleys, twists, turns and mountains. At the end of the second day of the Battle, the Austrians and Germans controlled the Isonzo down to Tolmein, which is about a twenty-five minute drive from Kobarid on today's roads. It was the fourth day of the Battle before Thompson records the order came for the Third Army "to retreat to the River Tagliamento" (316). (see maps two and eight in appendix A). Cardona blamed the Second Army (the army Lt Henry was stationed with) for the defeat and necessary retreat, so the Third Army was given orders first to retreat and to blow up bridges. The Second Army was not told to retreat for another hour, as punishment for its guilt in Cardona's mind, and was left to use specific northern bridges on the Tagliamento, leaving the more accessible bridges to the Third Army (Thompson 316). The retreat was moving, but slowly and with disorder. Lt Henry's worry in the retreat was that, "No one knew where the Austrians were nor how things were going but I was certain that if the rain should stop and planes came over and get to work on that column that it would be all over" (*FTA* 173). In a slow moving or stalled column of trucks, soldiers, carts of peasants, and animals, Lt Henry was concerned the Austrians would come by air and bomb the retreat.

Lt Henry had spent the first night of the Battle of Caporetto on the Bainsizza Plateau, and all of the next day hauling wounded down to Gorizia. The second night he spent in Gorizia, then moving on in the retreat only to be stuck in the traffic of the retreat. He left the retreat to find his own path to Udine. He records the retreat as being confused when he stated that "there was no need to confuse our retreat. The size of the army and the fewness of the roads did that. Nobody gave any orders, let alone Germans" (*FTA* 187). Indeed, confusion was the order of the day. Rumors were circulating that Germans were in Italian uniforms, which they

were not. Aymo was shot and killed by Italians (*FTA* 185). The sergeants retreating with Lt Henry refused to work and left to retreat on their own, getting shot for their crime. Bonello decided to leave and surrender to the enemy (*FTA* 188). There were 294,000 Italians taken prisoner in the Battle of Caporetto and 350,000 men gone AWAL (Thompson 324). Bonello's decision to run and surrender was not unusual, nor was the decision of the "Peace Brigade" unusual which decided to head home after reaching the Tagliamento. The soldiers on the front were disillusioned by 1917, and a confused retreat with no guidance or oversight led to men surrendering or fleeing by the tens of thousands. As Piani states, if Lt Henry reports that Bonello went voluntarily to the Austrians, "If the war went on they would make trouble for his family" (*FTA* 189). Thompson also states that the Italian government punished the families of Italian POW's (352). Furthermore, Italian POWs would be treated by their government as "cowards or defectors who should be punished...Charity subscriptions for captured soldiers were prohibited" (Thompson 352). Often they would be interrogated upon their return to be sure they were not spies or had not committed treason. Hemingway has shown the truth that soldiers fled to become POWs, thinking it would mean safety and food, when even that was a false hope. In the end about 100,000 Italians would die as POWs (Thompson 421).

Lt Henry makes it to the Tagliamento, but just like Aymo, his greatest danger would be the Italians themselves. Hemingway's story of Lt Henry's near death on the Tagliamento is based on reality. According to Thompson, "An order on 31 October authorized any officer to shoot any soldier who was separate from his unit or offered the least resistance. This made a target of ten divisions of the Second Army. The worst abuses occurred near the northern bridges over the Tagliamento" (Thompson 319). Reynolds explains that "Frederic Henry serves in the

Italian Second Army, which was the only unit that experienced widespread desertions during the retreat. The bridge crossing at Todriopo on the Tagliamento river was the only place that executions of Italian officers took place, and it was at Codroipo that the Italian Second Army crossed the river” (*Hemingway’s First War* 21). This was not a new practice for the Italian army. In the spring of 1916 Cardona “urged the immediate execution of any soldier whose actions where “unworthy of an army that upholds the cult of military honour’, regardless of rank” (Thompson 263). This practice would come to be known as decimation. In 1917 an Italian Brigade protested their leave being canceled, so nine men were chosen and executed as punishment (Thompson 263). Severity of punishment can be seen in Lt Henry’s thought about wearing a pistol at all times as an officer because “you were liable to arrest if you did not have one worn in plain sight” (*FTA* 25). This is also why Lt Henry purchases a weapon before he returns to the front after his injury. Arrest for failure to have a weapon on at all times; death for complaining. In another example, Passini asks Lt Henry “were you there, Tenente, when they wouldn’t attack and they shot every tenth man?” (*FTA* 42). This is also based on the Italian policy of decimation. Military command thought that by shooting men randomly selected from a division that were expressing doubts on the war, they would motivate the rest of the division to continue fighting. Those randomly selected would be lined up and a few would be selected from that group for execution. Guilt or innocence did not matter. Even if a hearing was granted, the men would be tried as a group and guilt was assumed. Passini goes on to explain that one of the men shot was punished beyond his death. The Italian military went so far as to take away his parents’ rights as citizens (*FTA* 42-3). They could no longer vote, they had no right to keep their own property, and they were under house arrest (*FTA* 43). This is also why Hemingway writes

that when Catherine asks if Lt Henry will be arrested if he is caught out of uniform, Henry responds, “They’ll probably shoot me” (*FTA* 217). That is an accurate assessment, and one that Hemingway has used to further show that the men on the front lines were only tools in the hands of a callous government that was not concerned for their lives.

After escaping his near execution under the practice of decimation, Lt Henry makes his way to Milan. In Milan he finds stores and cafes open for business. The war is removed from the city of Milan. From this point on, Lt Henry’s only interaction with the war is through the newspapers. He learns that the retreat did not hold at the Tagliamento, where he was nearly executed. The Italian military would end up falling back to the Piave river, which would be the front line Hemingway himself would serve on briefly in 1918 (see map eight in Appendix A, *FTA* 253). The war is no longer the focus in this book of the novel. Catherine and Lt Henry live in their own world, trying to follow their own rules, for the months leading up to Catherine’s delivery. After the baby dies Lt Henry thinks, “Now Catherine would die,” a foreshadowing of the event that would come to pass (*FTA* 279). He continues, “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 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” (*FTA* 279-80). Lt Henry is not thinking of lives gloriously laid down for one’s country. He was thinking of lives taken without reason, as was the case with Aymo, or lives injured because of the lack of proper medical attention and provision for the soldiers on the front lines, as was the case with Rinaldi. Lt Henry

has realized that even those who live through the war would be permanently scarred by their experience, as he was.

Chapter 5

Slovenes and Friuli as the Other in Hemingway

Hemingway's relationship with the Italian people and culture is clear in *FTA*. Lt Henry's relationship with Catherine and his interaction with Rinaldi are on the surface of *FTA*. However, Hemingway famously wrote with an "iceberg theory," leaving much of the meaning of his writing below the surface (*FTA* xiv). Below the surface of *FTA* are the groups of people who were collateral damage during the battles of the Soča Front. Chapter four explained that Italy had invaded what was then the ethnically Slovene portion of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Thus, when Lt Henry was injured north of Plava, he was injured while assisting the Italian army in an invaded and occupied Slovene town. When he was stationed in Gorizia, he was stationed in a town that had been taken from the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Hemingway does not directly mention Slovenes or that the territory does not belong to Italy in *FTA*. According to Gregor Kranjc, "Hemingway never acknowledged, with the exception of a few obscure references to Slovene place names like Lom or Ravne, that the battles were taking place in territory that was largely populated by Slovenes" (209). In fact, while he did use the Slovene names for Lom and Ravne, he consistently used the Italian names for every other location in the published version of the novel, even those located within Slovenia. However, despite Hemingway's lack of direct mention of the victims of the Italian invasion, he did include them below the surface of his

writing. A second group existing below the surface is the Friuli, which is a people group within Italy today that is ethnically Italian but which does not speak Italian. Slovenes and Friuli are “the other” in *A Farewell to Arms*, “A Way You’ll Never Be,” “Now I Lay Me,” and “In Another Country” and are a part of the submerged iceberg in Hemingway’s writing, both unmentioned and integral to the story. A better understanding of the appearances of these groups in Hemingway’s writing gives readers a deeper understanding of the works while also giving a deeper understanding of Hemingway as readers see Hemingway’s concern for the collateral damage on the Soča Front.

Hemingway was influenced by the Italian culture during Irredentism, so the culture is an important consideration in this context. Lt Henry was a young American man who was in Italy and spoke Italian before he joined the war (*FTA* 19). He left behind his family, and in a sense he left behind his American culture. When he decides to join the war efforts, it is the Italians that he decides to support through the American Red Cross. Similarly, Nick Adams joins the American Red Cross and serves in Italy. Silva Ammary, a professor for John Cabot University in Rome, explains that, “A lot of the stories in this collection either take place in Italian locales or have Italian characters in them. Such a setting enables the protagonist to understand himself better while away from home” (8). Thus, the setting of Italy helps Nick and Henry to step away from themselves, in a sense, and to better understand who they are as individuals apart from their native culture. Looking to *FTA*, “Hemingway brings Italy to the fore in this story” walking the readers through streets, cafes and a racing track in Milan (Ammary 9). Hemingway geographically places much of his writing in Italy. According to Ammary, Hemingway “made every attempt to integrate himself to the foreign culture and not to act out of

a narrow minded Americanism” (3). In the cases of Nick and Lt Henry, the protagonist had left behind his culture and was integrating himself into Italian culture. He learned the language, and he enjoyed the food and pastimes of Italy. He connected with the culture and the people. Lt Henry is “embraced by Italians” which Hemingway compares with “the discriminatory attitudes against Italians that were so prevalent during that period” (Ammary 3). Hemingway illustrates a discriminatory attitude towards Italians when Lt Henry speaks with a nurse in Gorizia while asking to see Catherine. The nurse tells Lt Henry he can come back to see Catherine, “But don’t bring a lot of Italians” (*FTA* 19). Hemingway counters this American opinion of Italians with his own high opinion of Italians in “A Very Short Story” when Luz “made love” with an Italian major and “she had never known Italians before, and finally wrote to the States that theirs had been only a boy and girl affair” (*The Complete Short Stories* 107-08). Nick realizes that he is an inferior lover compared to the Italian and sees the Italian’s superiority in the bed as what ended his own relationship with Luz, a stand in for Agnes (*The Complete Short Stories* 107-08).

Hemingway’s heroes have positive interactions with Italians in much of his writing. Ammary even goes as far as to argue that “there is always something positive that comes out of their interaction with the Italian characters and land” (29). One could question that statement when looking at Lt Henry’s near execution on the Tagliamento or Nick Adam’s nightmares from the PTSD he received while serving with Italians. However, Ammary’s comment that “Frederic Henry’s close friendship with Rinaldi and the priest exemplifies the sense of brotherhood that has developed between the American Henry and the Italian officers” is very well stated (14). LT Henry and Nick are both well integrated into Italian society. They have left behind at least a large portion of their Americanism and have adopted the culture and language of Italy.

Hemingway's protagonists have immersed themselves in Italian culture, from Nick and Lt Henry through to Colonel Cantwell. Their immersion into Italian culture is likely connected to Hemingway's disconnection with the cultures that were hidden beneath the Italian culture. Italians and Slovenes have a history of struggle between them. The Italians sought to gain ethnically Slovene towns in WWI, and they took a lot of Slovene land in treaties after the war. In WWII Italians would once again invade Slovenia, burn villages, and create camps in Italy designed to hold Slovenes of all ages who fought or resisted the invasion in anyway (Wood 98-9). Even today, when traveling to Slovenia, if one mentions the city of Trieste, Slovenes are quick to inform that Trieste was a Slovene city that the Italians took from them. Thompson mentions a moment when Mussolini passed over the old border into ethnically Slovene land and asked the name of a young boy. The boy had the Slovene sounding name of Stanko. Mussolini asks his last name and Thompson states that Mussolini "does not realize that Stanko must be a Slovene" (144). When he is told the very Slavic last name of "Robančič, Mussolini "changes the subject" (Thompson 144). Mussolini would attempt to bury the Slovene culture and way of life to the point that if Hemingway did make an unknown visit to the setting of *FTA* before writing the novel he would not have known the area was Slovene. The facts and the language were buried. Putting aside the possibility of a visit, given the influence of Italians on Hemingway, it is not surprising that Slovenes are not given a larger role in his WWI writing. As Branko Drekonja states, "Inevitably...[Hemingway was] a victim of Italian irredentism" (19). However, Hemingway does include them, which gives their suffering importance in his works.

While the battles Hemingway uses as setting in *FTA* occur in modern day Slovenia, some of the Italians fighting with Lt Henry were not aware that the land that they were taking

was not Italian land. As was discussed in chapter four, Italian irredentism led Italians to believe that they were fighting for the fatherland and redeeming land that truly belonged to Italy. Italy had only been unified as a nation for a few decades, which may have allowed many Italians to feel that the entire nation was not unified but portions of the nation were still being held by the Austro-Hungarians, leaving the Slovenes occupying the land out of the equation. In Book Three of *FTA*, Gino and Lt Henry discuss the war and the difficulties of strategizing for a war in the mountains: “‘Yes,’ said Gino. ‘But those were Frenchmen and you can work out military problems clearly when you are fighting in somebody else’s country.’ ‘Yes,’ I agreed, ‘When it is your own country you cannot use it so scientifically’” (160). This discussion takes place before the Battle of Caporetto in a town on the Bainsizza plateau that the Italians had taken from the Austro-Hungarians. Yet, Gino and Lt Henry come to the conclusion that this war is hard to discuss scientifically because the fighting takes place in their own country of Italy. Conversely, when Lt Henry is speaking with his fellow ambulance drivers earlier in the novel, one of the men states that “war is not won by victory. What if we take San Gabriele?...One side must stop fighting...If they [the Austrians] come down into Italy they will get tired and go away. They have their own country” (44). Here Passini, Manera, Gordini, Gavuzzi, and Lt Henry are realizing the Italian army will not end the war through victory. The war had been going on for three years at this point, and the Italians had seen victories. The war was still going. These Italians have decided the war will end when one side gives up and stops fighting. The comment “what if we take San Gabriele” shows that they knew the land was not under Italian control. It would be taken, not taken back, but just taken. At this point men are realizing they are invading a country. If the Austrians came down from the mountain and invaded Italy, which happened after the

Battle of Caporetto, they would be in Italy, which implies that the speaker knew that the armies were not in Italy when fighting for San Gabriel. This is almost a contradiction with Gino and Lt Henry seeming to think the fighting was in their own country. When Henry is questioned alongside the Tagliamento during the retreat, he is told, “it is you and such as you that have let the Barbarians onto the sacred soil of the fatherland” (*FTA* 193). However, much of the land was not Italian to begin with. Perhaps in this contradiction Hemingway is showing the contradiction within Italy during the war. So many Italians felt that they were fighting for unredeemed Italian lands, but the obvious fact that they were outside of Italian lines fighting for a country not occupied by Italians was clear beneath the surface of Hemingway’s works. Not all Italians realized it, but soldiers on the front lines were beginning to figure it out.

Slovenes and Friulians can be found in the background of Hemingway’s works. For example, Lt Henry states that “in the late summer of that year we lived in a house in a village that looked across the river and the plain to the mountains” (*FTA* 3). This house was not built by the Italian military. Reynolds puts this house in either Gradisca or Lucinico, both of which were in the right location during 1915 to fit this description (*Hemingway’s First War* 91). I lean towards Lucinico, as I have explained in chapter four. The thought of who the house belonged to before the Italian military commandeered it is in the background, under the surface. The following summer, Lt Henry is stationed across the river from Lucinico in “a house in Gorizia that had a fountain and many thick shady trees in a walled garden” (*FTA* 5). Gorizia was a city which belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire before the war. This house most likely belonged to a non Italian resident of the Austro-Hungarian Empire who left before the Italians had control of Gorizia. Many of the citizens of Gorizia were evacuated before the Italians arrived, so when

Hemingway and the men he was serving crossed the river into Gorizia, the army was able to station them inside of houses that had been abandoned by civilians. Catherine stays in the house that serves as the British hospital, which Hemingway explains “had been the villa of a very wealthy German” (*FTA* 24). This was a house most likely abandoned by civilians. In “Now I Lay Me,” Nick is in a barn listening to silkworms chew (*The Nick Adams Stories* 144). That is a barn that belonged to someone who had a silk business that they most likely hoped to come back to. In “Nick Sat Against the Wall...” Nick leans against the wall of a church. That was a church where civilians would have gathered for worship, but now they are evacuated or in hiding and the dead lay in front of the church (*The Nick Adams Stories* 143). In “A Way You’ll Never Be,” Nick has nightmares of a yellow house. Hemingway writes:

Outside of Fossalta there was a low house painted yellow with willows all around it and a low stable. There was a canal, and he had been here a thousand times and never seen it, but there it was every night as plain as the hill, only it frightened him. That house meant more than anything and every night he had it. (*The Nick Adams Stories* 163)

The house appears in Nick’s nightmares, and the width of the river is inconsistent in his dreams. Paul S. Quick believes that Nick’s trip to the front in this short story was to discover the reality or non reality of the house (31). However, given the control the Italian army kept over its soldiers, there would have been orders along with any trip to the front during the war. Although discovering the reality of the house may have been a private motivation for Nick, there would have been an official reason for the visit, as well. In his waking moments Nick cannot find the house and the river is different, which suggests that the house was not real but was only in his dreams. Despite the idea that this house is not real, he would wake up “soaking wet, more

frightened then he had ever been in a bombardment because of a house and a long stable and a canal” (*The Nick Adams Stories* 162). Later in the same story, Nick cannot sleep because of the image of the house (167). Phillip Young’s traumatic wound theory, or the idea that Hemingway’s own injury was traumatic and had a powerful influence on Hemingway’s writing, is supported by the nightmares and Nick’s inability to sleep in this story. Scholars such as Reynolds, Smith and Benson suggest that Hemingway did not suffer a traumatic injury, but that his apparent “shell shock” after the war was minor as he “seems to have had a rather good time in the hospital” (Knodt 77). However, as Knodt points out, and as is supported by modern understanding of the effects of warfare on soldiers, Hemingway likely had Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) and has written that PTSD into Nick Adams. According to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, “Having a very intense or long-lasting traumatic event or getting injured during the event can make it more likely that a person will develop PTSD. PTSD is also more common after certain types of trauma, like combat and sexual assault” (National Center). Hemingway experienced an intense traumatic event in which he was injured when he was blown up along the Piave River in 1918 during WWI. The U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs also explains that, “It’s normal to have upsetting memories, feel on edge, or have trouble sleeping after this type of event” (National Center). Hemingway had trouble sleeping in the night after the war. He was still having trouble sleeping at night when he wrote a letter to Pauline Pfeiffer in December of 1926 (170).

Knodt suggests that for Nick to discover that “his nightmare image [of the yellow house] has no basis in reality has to be deeply disturbing” (80). The image is not real, and yet it gives him nightmares. Knodt further suggests that this image is likely a reoccurring nightmare

because of Nick's PTSD. Quick suggests that "the yellow house replaces the memory of the Austrian soldier who shot him" (32). To take that idea a step further, perhaps in this image readers get a glimpse of Nick's hidden guilt and concern for those who lived in the battlefield prior to the commencement of the war. The house should have been on the hill. A house and a barn belong on a canal more than dead soldiers do. Yet, the dead soldiers exist and the house does not. Nick regrets the loss of civilian lives and housing. That house would have been Friuli, given its location just beyond the Piave. Nick is regretting the Friulian suffering, without mentioning the Friuli by name. Even if the specific house was not real, the idea of the missing and bombed houses and lives is haunting Nick. Young explains that the vision of the yellow house "is so meaningful to him that almost twenty years later, under the name of Dick Cantwell he will make a personal pilgrimage to this very place in reality...nearly two decades were to elapse before Hemingway was to reveal, in *Across the River and Into the Trees*, that this scenery comes to Nick because this is the place where he was wounded" (41). Young explains that Nick is "a mask" that both reveals and distorts Hemingway's complicated personality (62-63). In the yellow house readers are given a glimpse into the struggle Hemingway was having accepting the death and destruction he saw to the lives not only of soldiers but also of the civilians in the war-torn area of northeastern Italy and south western Slovenia.

The Slovene and Friuli presence is also felt in the rubble that forms the background setting on the front. Hemingway mentions passing by "a broken farmhouse" and that "there were many iron shrapnel balls in the rubble of the houses and on the road beside the broken houses where the post was" (*FTA* 162). Lt Henry's post on the Bainsizza Plateau is situated near houses that have been blown up. At the start of the war this plateau was squarely within the Austro-

Hungarian Empire. This can be seen in map six in Appendix A. When Hemingway discusses Italians trying to take San Gabriele, they are speaking of Škabrijel, a mountain that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire within ethnically Slovene territory. When Lt Henry states that, “The town had been captured very handsomely but the mountains beyond it could not be taken,” he is speaking of the mountains past Gorizia, such as San Gabriele, which would have been in Slovenia (5). He is also speaking of the Ternova Ridge. Lt Henry describes Gorizia upon his return to the front in what would have been the summer of 1916, “The sudden interiors of houses that had lost a wall through shelling, with plaster and rubble in their gardens and sometimes in the street, and the whole thing going well on the Carso made the fall very different from the last fall” (*FTA* 6). In “A Way You’ll Never Be” Hemingway describes the destruction of homes on his way to the front, along with many dead soldiers, a scene Florczyk states Hemingway would have been familiar with (68). He is clear to separate “our own dead” from those who were not Italian (*The Nick Adams Stories* 155). Even in death they are separated from the soldiers who are fighting for their own land. Here Hemingway juxtapositions a scene of the destruction of the home of a Slovene or Friuli with the victory the Italians are finding on the Carso, which is another ethnically Slovene plateau that belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Through this juxtaposition readers gain a glimpse of the victory the Italians are finding in 1916 at the cost of the Slovenes and Friuli. By placing the victory next to the destruction of Slovene and Friuli homes, Hemingway is revealing his own concern and compassion for the collateral damage of the First World War.

There were civilians who had not evacuated from the midst of this destruction. Not all Slovenes and Friuli left before the war. Those who stayed behind during the war or the Italian

occupation, depending on location, had difficult lives. According to Gregor Kranjc, “Able-bodied civilians were dragooned into labour units to dig defensive trenches and to transport goods to the front. Women, the young and the elderly were required to shoulder more of the agricultural labour and even children were employed gathering the ‘cotton’ from the nettles for military uniforms” (214-15). The civilians who were left behind or who opted to remain during the war were put to work. Slovene and Friuli civilians worked for the military occupying their towns, and they worked to farm their own land. Thus, when Italians came to Slovene and Friuli towns, they found food in the fields. Even in the start of the novel Lt Henry notes that, “The plain was rich with crops; there were many orchards of fruit trees and beyond the plain the mountains...were brown and bare” (*FTA* 3). The mountains have been cleared for the battles or by the battles, but in the plain the after effects of the Slovene and Friuli citizens is still felt. Their crops are in the field. They have worked for their families and for the empire, but the fruits of their labors are left to be gleaned by Italian soldiers. For example, Gino explains to Lt Henry that “when we came here [the Bainsizza] we found fields of potatoes the Austrians had planted” (*FTA* 160). The Bainsizza, however, was not populated by Austrians. Gino may not have known the ethnicity of the peoples of Austria, but Slovenes would have planted the potatoes that Gino ate.

FTA is written retrospectively. Lt Henry is, just as Hemingway was, looking back and remembering what passed during the war. In this sense, Lt Henry has had some time to think about who the Italians were fighting. Lt Henry is able to declare “I did not know what we had against Austria” because he has had time to think about the reasons for the war (*FTA* 65). At that point in his life Hemingway had spent time in Austria vacationing with Hadley and friends. Just as when he was in Italy, Hemingway intentionally melded with the society around him. He did

not remain separate in Italy, Spain or Austria, but he drank with the locals and enjoyed the local culture and sports. He still felt a part of Italy, although he no longer knew why the Italians fought the Austrians, but did he know that the Slovenes were involved in the fight and that the fight was largely on their land? When Hemingway wrote about the weather in *FTA*, particularly in the Battle of Caporetto, he was careful to be accurate with the weather details from the actual nights he was writing about—even though he was not there to experience the weather himself. He researched thoroughly to insure accuracy. However, he does not accurately describe the army he is fighting, and he does not mention Slovenes by name in *FTA*. In Book Three, Lt Henry states that “the Croatians came over across the mountain meadows and through patches of woods and into the front line” (*FTA* 162). He also states that “there were Croats in the lines opposite us now and some Magyars [Hungarians]” (*FTA* 159). He does not mention Slovenes being in the army nor does he mention Slovenes in the entire novel. However, in a letter written to Jim Gamble on April 27, 1919 Hemingway wrote “Maybe we can go over and fight the Yugos” (Spanier 185). He knew the Italians were fighting Slovenes and given his influence by Italian irredentism, he was willing to fight the Yugoslavians again.

Slovenes were one of the Slavic nationalities serving in the Austro-Hungarian forces. Some Slavic soldiers were not there by choice. Gregor Kranjc cites Jan Triška who published his father’s journals from his time in the Austro-Hungarian army. Triška’s father was a Czech man in the Austro-Hungarian army. According to Triška, “for most of the Empire’s ‘second and third class citizens,’ that is, its non-German and non-Magyar nationalities, ‘the war had no meaning other than as a brutal interruption in their lives. They wanted the war to end, win or lose, and go home. Loyalty to the empire became meaningless’” (Kranjc 213). Thus, Triška is

using his father's experience to show that the Slavic soldiers in the Austro-Hungarian army did not care about protecting the empire, but they were forced to do so. The soldiers felt they were "second and third class citizens," below those who ethnically belonged to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. They were young men giving their lives to an empire they may or may not have cared about. Conversely, Slovenes were not in the same situation as other Slavs in the Austro-Hungarian army. According to Kranjc, "In the initial mobilization that followed the declaration of war in 1914, no less than 30,000 Slovene soldiers in Austrian uniform marched off to war, mostly on the Eastern Front. Tens of thousands of their comrades would follow their footsteps in the ensuing four years of war" (212). Many of these soldiers would initially be sent to the Eastern Front to fight against Russian and Serbian troops (Thompson 80). However, the Austrian army would find that Slavs did not do well fighting against other Slavs, so the Slavic troops were moved to fight Italians. The Slovenes soon found themselves fighting Italy in their own country. Slovenes were fighting for land that was populated by Slovenes, giving them a better motivation for fighting the invading Italians. According to Slovene historian Dolenjska, Franc Ruez was a Slovene soldier moved back to fight in his homeland. In his journal Ruez wrote:

My heart seized for a moment when I saw those lands where I will perhaps spill my blood and lay down my life. However, when I gazed upon our beautiful Littoral, when I reached the sea, the tension released and my resolve hardened even more that I am prepared to sacrifice myself so that our enemies do not seize our beautiful lands. (Kranjc 243)

The Slovenes felt differently than other Slavic soldiers who were sent to fight in Slovenia against Italy. While they were not necessarily in support of the empire, they did want to defend their

homeland. Thompson states that Slovenes were not aggressively anti Italian (144). However, with this Slovene's opinion in mind, one can understand that the Slovene citizens may not have fought actively against the Italians, but the Slovene soldiers in the Austro Hungarian army defended their homeland against Italy, and they were there fighting the very army that Lt Henry was supporting. Not only were Slovenes in the Austro-Hungarian army, they were performing well in the army. According to Kranjc:

Slovene troops gained a reputation for professionalism and persistency in battle. During the war Slovenes fought within the ranks of units that were almost purely Slovene, while other units were mixed. For example, the 17th and the 87th infantry regiments based in Ljubljana and Celje respectively, as well as the 2nd mountain rifles regiment were almost entirely Slovene, while the 97th infantry regiment based in Trieste was almost half Slovene. (212-213)

Thus, when Passini, Manera and Lt Henry are discussing the war and one of the men state, "What if we take the Carso and Monfalcone and Trieste," they were discussing fighting an army that was half Slovene (*FTA* 44). While Hemingway himself never fought on the Carso, in fact he never served on Slovene soil, in this setting the soldiers speaking should have known they were fighting Slovenes just as they knew they were fighting Croatians and Magyars. Hugh Dalton served with the British military in Italy and recorded mention of Slovenes in his book (796). He also acknowledges being stationed in a town that had been Slovene (796). The Slovenes are there, but they are not acknowledged by the Italian soldiers in the *FTA*, just as Mussolini did not acknowledge the ethnicity of Stanko.

Hemingway did not acknowledge Slovenes in *FTA* and Nick Adams' stories, but Slovenes most certainly acknowledged Hemingway. According to Igor Maver, "The novel *A Farewell to Arms* is of special importance for the Slovenians, since its events take place on Slovenian ground by the Soča River (the Italian name was Isonzo), on the so-called Isonzo Front during the Great War in which Hemingway personally participated" (57). Maver explains that into the fifties and sixties Slovenes watched Hemingway and "the author's private life and travels were followed with great interest" (52). Slovenes were interested in the American who had served on their Soča Front and written about their villages as they experienced the First World War. Gregor explains that the "Slovene tourist industry uses *A Farewell to Arms* to promote Primoska (Adriatic/Littoral)" (209). I can personally attest to this as I stayed in a bed and breakfast called "The Hemingway House" while researching in Kobarid and was told by the proprietor that Hemingway had spent a lot of time in Kobarid. In her article entitled "The Accidental Hero: Ernest Hemingway and Slovenia," Erica Johnson Debeljak even claims that "the Kobarid Museum...adopted Hemingway as its mascot" because of a large picture of Hemingway in the museum. I did visit the museum and will acknowledge the presence of the picture. However, the open acknowledgment of the staff of the museum is that Hemingway never visited Kobarid. Jaka Fili, a Slovene guide at this museum, which won Best Museum in Europe in 1993, compared Hemingway to Napoleon. He claims that many Slovene towns will say that Napoleon stopped in their village, drank in this bar, or stayed in this inn. Many in the Soča Valley make these claims for Hemingway, as well. Gustav Krklec visited Bovec, near Kobarid in 1970 and found a retired colonel who claimed to have known Hemingway in the war and to have visited Kobarid with Hemingway (Maver 58). An innkeeper also told Krklec that Hemingway

visited his pub during the First World War. As Drekonja explains, “in this novel [*FTA*] for the very first time an important literary work chose what is now Slovenian soil as the setting for its story” (19). However, so do the Italians. A simple Google search for “Hemingway” and towns he may or may not have visited such as Roncade or a visit to Venice will provide one with plenty of Hemingway legends, many of which are not based in reality. Hemingway is a hero in Kobarid for many. He made their town famous in the literary world. The question that remains is did he mean to highlight a Slovene town.

Slovenians and those living in Slovenia have made use of their connection to Hemingway to further tourism, and Slovene academics have looked to Hemingway’s works trying to detect the magnitude of their connection with Hemingway. One such Slovene, a journalist named Bogdon Pogačnik, travelled to Cuba in 1965 (Maver 4). According to Maver, Pogačnik “visited Cuba and the Hemingway estate Finca Vigia, where he was surprised to find that the housekeeper was Ana Starc, a Slovenian from Trieste, who had been a maid with the Hemingway [sic] for 16 years” (4). Thus, later in life Hemingway did have a direct connection to Slovenia or Slovenes from Trieste, a town attacked by Italians and defended by Slovenes, which would be awarded to Italy in after the war. Much later in life Hemingway visited Gorizia and Udine, putting him close to the setting of *FTA* and likely in contact with Friuli and Slovenes. In fact, he was familiar enough with Friulians that he was able to recognize what he felt were Friulian characteristics. In *A Moveable Feast (MF)* Hemingway described Gertrude Stein as having “beautiful eyes and a strong German-Jewish face that also could have been Friulano and she reminded me of a northern Italian peasant woman” (24). The manuscript for this portion exists in four versions, three of which are in the JFK archives in MS Boxes 25 and 26. Each

version in the archives uses “Friuliano” as a description for Stein. Thus, Hemingway was sure in this description. He was familiar with Friulians. Thus, he could have named them in *FTA*, but he chose not to.

Some Slovenes defend Hemingway’s silence on the subject of Slovenes. Maver states that “although Hemingway does not mention the Slovenians, one must bear in mind that the Slovenian language was not recognized as official in Italy before the Great War, and what is more, there were strong (but unsuccessful) tendencies to Italianize the Slovenian population of the Primorska region, tendencies which continued until the Second World War” (5). Rado Bordon, who translated *FTA* into Slovene in 1960, stated that “the young Hemingway did not know he was fighting on Slovenian ground, for he thought he was among the Italians on their ground” (57). While Bordon was incorrect in that Hemingway’s literary hero served in Slovenia and Hemingway did not, Bordon may be correct that Hemingway was not aware of the ethnicity of the setting he used in one of his most famous novels. He was familiar with Friulians, and despite his mention of “Yugos,” there is no direct mention of Slovenes in his writing. Slovenes may be a group of people that Hemingway did not recognize, as many Italians did not recognize them. Gregor Kranjc explains that “Hemingway’s silence on Slovenes in World War One characterizes Slovenia’s silence on World War One” (209). Slovenes, according to Gregor, overshadow the memory of the war with the independence gained from the Austro-Hungarian Empire that came afterward. Most of the country would become Yugoslavia, leaving only a portion to Italy, which was an embarrassment best not remembered. Slovenia, in this sense, “was both a victor and a victim of the Great War” and for many, the war is best left in the background unacknowledged-just as Hemingway does (Kranjc 209). As the “other” in Hemingway’s works,

Slovenes are present but not accounted for. However, a deeper exploration into the Slovenes in Hemingway's works will grant readers a deeper understanding of these works.

Slovene and Friulian Characters in FTA

Recently I had the opportunity to travel to Boston and research in the Hemingway archives through a research grant from the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library. Hemingway was a man who kept a lot of papers, receipts, and train tickets, so I looked for any connection between Hemingway and Slovenia. While looking through the folders of his travel brochures for Europe and Italy I hoped to find something for travel to Slovenia, or at least to the areas of Italy that are today Slovenia such as Caporetto and the Bainsizza Plateau. However, I did not find anything. The closest I came was finding an Italian travel brochure, made by the Italian State Railways in London, which mentions several locals around Italy, even the city of Udine, but does not mention the cities more recently gained by Italy such as Gorizia ("Travel Brochures: Italy"). The paper appeared to be published in the fifties, which would have excluded Caporetto from Italy as that portion of Slovenia became Yugoslavia after the Second World War. Another pamphlet mentions places in Italy to visit, including Padua and Tivoli, but again no Gorizia and no Udine this time. The final one that interested me was in the European travel brochures folder. This brochure also did not mention Gorizia and Caporetto as points of interest; however, it did mention Istria ("Travel Brochures: Europe"). Istria was awarded to Italy through the Treaty of Rapallo, most of which would become Yugoslavia after WWII and would be divided between Slovenia and Croatia after the demise of Yugoslavia. As Istria was a part of Italy when the brochure was printed, the brochure must have been printed before WWII. Perhaps this is a brochure he picked up in the twenties when he was making a trip with Guy Hickock in 1927 or

with Hadley in 1923. While I can imagine Hemingway fishing in the Soča River in Kobarid, I could not find any evidence in these folders or any others that he had an interest in visiting the towns he used as setting in *FTA* located in the ethnically Friuli and Slovene portions of what was Italy in the 1920s. Similar to his novel, his files are silent concerning Slovenes and Friuli.

Hemingway does recognize individuals of Slavic origins in his writing. In the Nick Adam's short story "Night Before Landing," Nick is on a steamship to headed to France. Traveling with Nick are two Polish men who will be serving in France (137). In both the manuscript and the published version, these men are Polish ("Along with Youth"). The men are his equals as he drinks with them and discusses his thoughts on war and possible death in war. However, similar to the Italians in *FTA*, these are men that Hemingway actually spent time with (Baker 40). He mentions Madame Marie's as being a Croatian on his journey from Constantinople (Baker 99, *Dateline* location 4384). He wrote an article entitled "King Business in Europe" for the *Toronto Star* on September 15, 1923 in which he mentions the next King of Yugoslavia (*Dateline* location 5224). He separates this king ethnically from Slovenes specifically, perhaps the only time he mentions Slovenes in an article. This article drew a response from the attorney of the would be King Alexander. Hemingway responded to the letter with a threat in kind and mentions the Kingdom of the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (Spanier 56-7). Thus, Hemingway did know the Slovenes existed, he just did not have personal connections with them and did not mention them by name in his fictional works.

An interesting consideration of ethnicity can be found in *FTA*. While traveling towards Plava, Henry sees "a long column of loaded mules, the drivers walking alongside beside he mules wearing red fezzes, They were bersaglieri" (38). The bersaglieri were Italian soldiers,

but the drivers walking besides the mules are wearing fezzes, setting them apart. Thompson notes that Bosnians were known for wearing “sky-blue fezzes” but these are red fezzes (128). He also notes that some Slovene, Croatian and Bosnians wore fezzes into battle, and the ferocity of these soldiers caused the fez to be associated with “primeval savagery” (Thompson 284).

Perhaps these mule drivers are an example of subjected Slavs dominated by the Italian Bersaglieri. Either way, each of the examples of this paragraph and the previous paragraph are people that Hemingway himself had some interaction with. Perhaps, then, the problem with *FTA*, Nick Adams, and Slovenes is that Hem did not spend time with Slovenes. There are, however, two characters in *FTA* whose ethnicity is worth considering.

Virgin Girls

During the retreat from the Battle of Caporetto, Lt Henry and his men stay in Gorizia for one night. Their instructions are to load up some of the equipment in the ambulances and head to Pordenone (*FTA* 165). In the morning the men head out with the ambulances, passing the tanneries outside of the town and leaving Gorizia (*FTA* 168). The ambulances are headed towards Udine, but the traffic consisting of troops and civilians stalls and leads to a stop and go situation that continues into the night. The following morning, Aymo picks up two girls in the retreat (*FTA* 170). Aymo is the character Hemingway based on the Italian cyclist Bartolomeo Aymo as a tribute to the cyclist (Cirino 108). Aymo tells Henry, “I can’t understand them” (*FTA* 170). The girls are not speaking Italian. Even though he has already stated that he cannot understand the girls, Aymo tells the girls to “tell the Tenente your name and what you’re doing here” (*FTA* 170). The girls cannot understand Aymo and are terrified. They “looked fiercely” at Henry (*FTA* 170). This line is followed up by the girl saying “something in a dialect I could not

understand a word of' (*FTA* 170). However, in the manuscript, Hemingway wrote the dialect "sounded like gibberish" and then crossed that line out (*A Farewell to Arms*. MS Box 07 383). This is a dialect that is completely unfamiliar to the men and the girls do not understand them. This is a foreign dialect.

Fitting with Henry's character, he allows the girls to retreat with them. As Young explains, "In Hemingway as elsewhere 'hero' meant not simply 'protagonist' but a man who stands for many men" (90). In this instance, he is standing for two girls caught in an evacuation. Lt Henry asks the girls "Sorella?" which is Italian for sister, and the girls smile and nod. It is unclear if they fully understand the word or if Lt Henry's hand motions pointing to the two of them aided in their understanding. The confusion continues as Aymo tries to explain to the girls that they will not be raped, that Aymo is a "good man," and that there is "no place for——" meaning there is no place for sex (*FTA* 170-71). The girls end up in tears at the thought that the Italian soldiers they are riding with will rape them. In the end, Lt Henry asks in Italian if they are virgins, and the girls seem cheered and "both girls nodded their heads and the elder said something in dialect" (*FTA* 171). Aymo responds that this is "all right" and the girls are cheered. However, they would not go into an empty farmhouse with the men. They continue on the retreat with Lt Henry and his men until Lt Henry points down a road telling them to go, giving them money to aid in their retreat, with the thought that they would be safer retreating with a group than they would be on their own. These girls are important to the novel as they show the compassion of Lt Henry and the men serving with him. They bring Catherine to his mind, as he seeks to protect them and wishes to protect Catherine, as well—a feat he will not accomplish on either account.

Discussion on the ethnicity of these two girls may be divided according to ethnicity of scholars. American scholars seem to be assured that the two girls are Friulian. Slovene scholars, and Americans working in Slovenia, prefer the idea that the girls are Slovene. Authors Branko Drekonja and Aleksander Potočnik state that the scene with the sisters is “a scene of special interest for Slovene readers since it could represent the only contact between Hemingway’s Lt Henry and local Slovene population” (201). They further state that Hemingway “mentions two girls that join Henry’s crew during their retreat from Gorica [Gorizia]. They speak with a strange accent that neither Henry nor the other soldiers can understand. But he never pays any attention to their particular language, so we shall never know if they were speaking Slovene or Friulian” (20). That may be the case. This may be an unsolvable mystery, but it is worth a reconsideration. Bruce McIver, while teaching in Ljubljana in Slovenia mentions that his “students believed that these girls are speaking Slovenian...It is very likely that two Slovenian girls would know a little Italian, particularly if they came from Gorizia, which at the time of the First World War was predominantly Slovene” (17). McIver felt there was a possibility of these girls being Slovene, as did his Slovene students. McIver’s students were aware of the ethnicity and the history of the Slovenes in that area as the university in Ljubljana is located only two hours from the setting of the novel. While Americans may be more likely to assume that young Friulian girls are on the Italian side of the front lines, Slovenes feel differently because they are more connected to the story of Slovene individuals who stayed on the Italian side of the front lines during the Great War.

Perhaps the best way to consider the ethnicity of the sisters is to consider if they could have been Slovene. McIver considered this when he wrote, “What would Slovenian

refugees be doing retreating from the advancing Austrian armies if Slovenians were fighting on their side?" (18). This is a valid question. McIver continues:

Perhaps they preferred to be on the Italian side. Even though the Hapsburgs held sway in the region before the war, the Italians were assigned the region in the Treaty of London (April 26, 1915). Perhaps the Slovenes had more economic affinities with the Italians than with their Austrian neighbors to the north? In fact I discovered that they very likely preferred not to fight in either army, being caught up in a desire for autonomy and self determination. So in a very real way it did make sense that Slovenian refugees would be swept up in the retreat from Caporetto out of the Soča Valley and onto the plains of Italy.

Where else could they go? (18)

McIver expresses his believe that the girls could have been Slovene, that Slovenes may have been caught up in the retreat, but the question remains if this is a possibility. McIver has described a scenario that shows it as a possibility, but is it likely?

Historically speaking, Slovenes were a prominent ethnicity along the Soča Front before the war began. According to Kranjc, "On the eve of the war, the Austrian authorities evacuated approximately 80,000 Slovene civilians from the vicinity of the Italian-Austrian border into the interior of the Empire, often to refugee camps...many of those who were not evacuated or chose to stay became displaced persons within Italy proper" (215). Thus, there were Slovenes who chose to stay within what became Italy during the war, choosing to stay in their homes rather than evacuate to a refugee camp. Branko Drekonja and Aleksander Potočnik tell of two residents of the Slovene town of Kanal who chose to stay in Kanal for most of 1915. The residents, including Marija Bajt, were eventually pushed out of the town, which would see

fighting well into 1917 and is likely the location of Lt Henry's injury in 1917. In a town closer to Gorizia, it seems likely that Slovenes would stay as the fighting slowed in 1916 when Italians seized control and there was a reprieve from fighting under Italian occupation until the Battle of Caporetto in 1917. The town was safe enough that Lt Henry laughs off wearing his steel helmet in town and walks unafraid to the whore house and to the British hospital (*FTA* 24). Perhaps, then, if Slovenes were determined to stay in Kanal, a town under much military attack in 1915, they would have stayed in Gorizia, a town that Lt Henry lives in. To take this a step further, Drakonja and Potočnik look to Marija's Slovene diary to discover that when she evacuated, she evacuated further into Italy and was treated fairly. According to Drekonja and Potočnik, Marija wrote in her diary at the time that "Italian soldiers tried to persuade us to go to Italy and save our lives. But despite the danger nobody felt like leaving his place of birth that day" (155). In August of 1915, when the town was finally needing to be evacuated fully, Marija retreated into Italy. She did not flee towards the Austrians whose side she was technically on. Instead, she retreated into Italy (Drekonja 109-10). There remains, then, the distinct possibility that two Slovene sisters living in Gorizia or near Gorizia during the Italian occupation would have fled further into Italy along with soldiers who have yet to have hurt them.

Mark Thompson states that Slovenes were the ethnic majority in much of the land fought over along the Soča Front. According to Thompson, the lands awarded to Italy under the Treaty of London were "home to some 230,000 German-speaking Austrians and up to 750,000 Slovenes and Croats, far outnumbering the 650,000 native Italians" (31). Areas such as the Carso and the Bainsizza plateau were populated almost entirely by Slovenes. Thompson even records a local story of a father and his small son watching the Italian military entire Caporetto in 1915

(70). Thus, while Caporetto and areas such as Bovec may have been eventually evacuated, they were not all entirely evacuated from the start, similar to the towns of Kanal and Gorizia. These cities can be seen on maps six through eight in Appendix A.

Slovenes may still have been in and around Gorizia in 1917. The city of Trieste held a majority of Italian civilians, overshadowing the Slovenes nearly four to one (Thompson 100). However, the areas around Trieste had an ethnicity of 51% Slavic civilians (Thompson 100). In these areas, Slovenes were used to living in Italian cities around Italian civilians. The idea of fleeing from Italians into a possible refugee camp in Austria may have seemed worse to many Slovene citizens, even though they did not speak Italian. Thompson explains that the Italians saw no “cultural achievements” in the Slovenes and found that Slovenes communicated “in an incomprehensible tongue” (103). Over the course of the war, the Italians sought to force the Slovenes to “assimilate” through forced Italianization (104). For this to happen, Slovenes must have remained in some of the towns along the front. In the cities of Trieste and Gorizia, Thompson estimates half of the city evacuated (133, 145). Those Slovenes who chose to evacuate went further into “the interior of Italy” where they could not understand any of the Italian language and often led separate and submissive lives (Thompson 140). Thus, there were Slovenes along the Italian side of the Soča Front who lead submissive lives and, in 1917, were forced to accept the Italianization of their surnames (Thompson 141). In fact, life was better for Slovenes who chose to stay in Italy under occupation than for those who evacuated into Austria (Thompson 145).

Hemingway mentioned in a letter to Bill Horne dated July 17, 1923 that “all the wrecked houses” along the old front had been “rebuilt and occupied by the people who spent the

war refugeeing in Sicily or Naples” (Spanier, Defazio, and Trogdon 34). Hemingway was aware of refugees fleeing deeper into Italy during the war, and these refugees would have been mostly Friulian or Slovene. McIver also believes that Slovenes would have retreated deeper into Italy during the war. McIver points to the refugees fleeing from Gorizia along with the Italian Army in *FTA* as likely Slovenes (58). The Slovenes who stayed in Gorizia and the surrounding areas had become accustomed to the life they lived. They had adjusted. The Italian army had not abused them. A new army was coming through. Many Slovenes were leaning towards independence and an ethnic identity, instead of leaning towards either empire. Slovenes would have had a fear that the Austrian army would not treat them as well as they had been treated in the previous occupation. There would have been a fear of becoming collateral damage. An invading army is always intimidating, and the idea of being taken as a spy by people who do not speak your language would have felt very real, as well. They had lived with the occupation of the Italian army, who already realized they were not spies. There could have been Slovenes in the retreat that Hemingway describes from Gorizia, making it possible the girls in Aymo’s car were Slovene.

Another possibility does exist. The sisters Lt Henry helps to evacuate could be Friulian. Both ethnicities would have been in the Italian held towns along the front in 1915-17 and both would have likely fled from the oncoming Germans and Austrians. The Germans had a reputation for fierceness along the front, so both ethnicities would have likely fled from the Germans. Perhaps, then, the language they speak, which is not specified, is worth a consideration. All that readers are told is that Aymo, an Italian, and Lt Henry, a man fluent in Italian, cannot understand the girls. McIver ponders that it seemed unlikely for Italian dialects to

be incomprehensible to one another and that “in all likelihood...foreign girls, that is, Slovene Catholic girls, would know these words in Italian if they knew any at all” (18). There are two points in that statement that need addressing. First, the Friulian dialect is a completely different dialect than Italian, and it is difficult to impossible for Italians to understand (di Fede). Secondly, McIver has made a solid statement that these girls were likely Catholic, as many Slovenes and Friulian were in those areas before the war.

To consider if the girls would have been Friulian or Slovene, I obtained translations of the lines the Lt Henry and Aymo speak to the girls which they do not understand. The following is a chart of the words in English, Italian, Friulian and Slovene:

ENGLISH	ITALIAN	FRIULAN	Slovene
1. “Hey...Tell the Tenente your name and what you’re doing here” (FTA 170).	Hey, di al Tenente come ti chiami e cosa ci fai qui (di Fede).	Hou, di al Tenent cemûd che tu ti clamis e ce che tu fasis ca (di Fede).	Povej tenenteju, kako ti je ime in kaj počneš tu! (Baklan) (Baklan).
2. “Sister” (FTA 170).	Sorella (di Fede).	Sûr (di Fede).	“Sorella?” (Baklan).
3. “All right” (FTA 170).	Tutto bene (di Fede).	Dut ben (di Fede).	Dobro (Baklan).
4. “Good man...Good man...don’t you worry” (FTA 170).	Buon uomo... Buon uomo... non preoccuparti (di Fede).	Bon om ... Bon om ... no sta preocupâti (di Fede).	Dober človek,”/.../ “Dober človek,”/ .../ “Ni se vama treba bati. (Baklan).

“Don’t worry...no danger of...no place for...car all full...no danger of...no place for...” (FTA 171).	Non preoccuparti ... non c'è alcun pericolo di ... non c'è posto per l'auto ... tutto pieno ... non c'è alcun pericolo di ... non c'è posto per ... (di Fede).	No sta preocupâti No lè nissun pericol di ... No lè spazi par ... L'automobil a jè totalmentri plene (di Fede).	Ni se ti treba bati,”/.../ “Ni nevarnosti pred –,”/.../ “Ni prostora za –. (Baklan).
“Here...stop crying” (FTA 171).	Ecco... smettita di piangere (di Fede).	Ve' ... finišile di vaî (oppure si puo dire basta piangere in questo modo "Vonde vaî) Basta = Vonde Smettila = Finišile (di Fede).	Na,”/.../ “Nehaj se cmeriti! (Baklan).
“Virgin? Virgin, too?” (FTA 171).	Vergine? Anche vergine? (di Fede).	Virgine ? Anče virgine ? (di Fede).	Devica?”/.../ “Prav tako devica? (Baklan).
“That’s all right” (FTA 171).	Va tutto bene (di Fede).	Al va dut ben (di Fede).	Je že v redu (Baklan).
“Come on” (FTA 171).	Su dai (di Fede).	Su dai, o puoi scrive anche "Su pò" (di Fede).	Pridita (Baklan).
“Come on, Get in” (FTA 171).	Su dai, vieni (di Fede).	Su po', ven o puoi scrivere "Su po' ničiti" Su dai muoviti (di Fede).	“Gor!”/.../ “Zlezita noter!” (Baklan).
11. “Go down there...You’ll meet people...Friends! Family!” (FTA 179).	Andate laggiù ... Incontrerete delle persone ... Amici! Famiglia!” (di Fede).	Valà lajù ... tu incuintrâras cualchi persone..... Amîs ! Famee (di Fede).	Pojdita po tej poti,”/.../ “Bosta že srečali ljudi.” “Pojdita po tej poti!”/.../ “Priateljji! Sorodniki! (Baklan).

Figure 1. Translations

Giuseppe di Fede, an Italian translator, explained that dialects like Friulian and Sicilian are very different from Italian. Di Fede further explained that he has to teach his students the meaning of Sicilian words in Italian literature as Italian students cannot understand Sicilian words (di Fede). Out of curiosity I had the translators used above record the lines in their respective languages. The languages in the recordings do not sound similar enough for individuals to understand one another, just as the written languages are very different.

Slovene is also a very foreign language to Italian. Having travelled extensively in Slovenia, and having spoken with Italians on both sides of the border, these two languages cannot communicate directly with one another. The Friulian and Italian words for “virgin” are quite close, but the words for “sister” are not very close. While the word for “sister” in Slovene and Italian in figure one are both the same, the Slovene word for “sister” is actually “sestra.” Bordon translated *FTA* into Slovene and for stylistic reasons chose to use the Italian word for sister in his translation of the novel (Fili, Baklan). There is room for speculation as to the words the girls would have learned while living in villages and towns occupied by Italians, but that will only remain as speculation that cannot be solved. There is, however, a third possibility. If, as McIver stated, the girls were Catholic, they would have sat through services in Latin, in Slovenia and in Friuli. The word for sisters in Italian is “sorella” while in Latin is it “soror”. The Latin word for virgin is “virgo” and it is “vergine” in Italian. Perhaps, then, as Catholic girls they could have understood these two words in Italian. However, both Friuli and Slovene girls could have been Catholic, giving both an avenue for understanding the words that Henry spoke. An interesting note on the Slovene translation of the lines above is the exclamation points. While Henry does not shout at the girls, in the Slovene edition of *FTA*, the girls are yelled at when told

to tell Henry what they are doing there. When the girls are asked to “stop crying” in English, readers get the idea of comforting or of the men feeling bad that the girls are crying. According to Vid Baklan, a Slovene translator, Bordon’s translation of *FTA* uses a phrase more similar to “quit bawling!” (Baklan). Again, when the girls are told to get in the ambulance, in English the command is more of an invitation. In Slovene it is a command with an exclamation point. Thus, in Slovene the relationship between the men and these sisters is one of resent, command, and control, not a relationship suggesting protection and compassion, as it is written in the original manuscript. This is, perhaps, an instance of Slovene culture, or the culture of the original translator, affecting the text.

There is another consideration for the sisters caught up in the retreat with Lt Henry and his men. There is another set of young girls stuck along the front towards the end of the war. In a manuscript left unpublished by Hemingway, currently housed in the JFK archives, Hemingway wrote about two sisters in the city of Roncade. These two girls live in Roncade which “was a hot white town in the backwash of the June offensive” (“How Death Sought”). In Box OM22 WWI: Red Cross Folder number four in the JFK Archives is a WWI report from the Red Cross written by Major Guy Lowell. The report mentions that “the months of June and July [in the year 1918] were signalized by the great Austrian offensive and the successful Italian counteroffensive; consequently, special attention was given to the activities centering along or near the front. The ambulance and rolling canteen service were very busy” (“WWI: Report” 5). Thus the Austrians had pushed past the Piave river, where the Italians had stopped after the retreat from Caporetto, and the Italians were able to push them back over the Piave and beyond. This put Roncade in the backwash of a June offensive that Hemingway himself would have

experienced the end of (Florczyk 67-8). Roncade can be found on map seven in Appendix A. It is located near the red marker on map seven. Hemingway explains that Roncade is empty except for the two sisters, the town major, and the girls in the Villa Rosa or the whorehouse. At the beginning of the story the whorehouse is being emptied, leaving only the girls, who run a trattoria, and the town major. Roncade is located about twenty minutes by car on modern roads from the area on the Piave that Hemingway was injured on. Thus, in the summer of 1918, when Hemingway was injured, Roncade was in the backwash of the June offensive. This is a town that Hemingway would have been familiar with from his time spent on and near the Piave.

As the story moves forward, the whorehouse is emptied and Hemingway writes, “so there was no one in Roncade except the town major and the two girls who ran the trattoria and cafe. Of course there were lots of other people...but all of them were going up toward the war or else coming back broken from the war” (“How Death Sought”). Thus, as the story begins the two girls are very much alone in the town with one man. One man who is not off fighting the war. The people passing through are either heading towards the Piave to support the Italian effort to push the Austrians past the Piave, or coming back injured from the fighting along the Piave. In a second version of this short story in the JFK archives, Hemingway focuses more on the town major, who is named Vergera (“How Death Sought” Folder 477a3). Hemingway reveals that the major is “afraid to die” and the vehicles passing through the town to the battle make him more afraid of death. Vergera is a man who is using his position of power and perhaps he even took this position to avoid the war. Hemingway describes Vergera as having “pudgy fingers” and as being “fat...a thin red veining ran over his nose and cheek” (“How Death Sought” Folder 477a3). He sits behind the lines in his comfortable and safe job and admires a knife he got from an Arditi,

and he looks at grenades and imagines the action. He is controlled by the “maggots of fear” in his mind.

The two girls sleep “together in one bed” even though “there were plenty of beds in the Albergo [hotel] but they were frightened of the guns” (“How Death Sought”). All three are afraid, but the girls choose to sleep together for protection and comfort. They are sisters, and they find comfort in one another. They are afraid the Austrians will break through on the offensive along the Piave and pray for the Italian soldiers on the front. My proposal is that these two girls and Aymo’s virgins are one and the same. The timeline would be that the girls fled the area around Gorizia in the fall of 1917, following the Battle of Caporetto, and retreated along with the Italians just past the Piave (where the retreat halted). They found work in Roncade in a cafe, perhaps through the lies they claim the town major has made to them. At the time of the retreat they did not speak Italian, and in this short story readers are not told what they speak. They have no problems speaking with an Arditi, which suggests they speak Italian. The assumption must be made that the girls have learned Italian from October of 1917 to June of 1918, an achievable goal for two girls in a desperate situation. Their Italian would only need to be enough to converse with the Arditi briefly and to work in the trattoria.

One detail worth consideration is that one of the sisters is pregnant in Roncade, while both girls claim to be virgins in Gorizia. However, we only have the girls’ word that they are virgins at that time. Possibly they would have claimed to be virgins in the hopes of avoiding a forced sexual encounter with soldiers. However, given how afraid they are of the men, they may have been virgins. Going with that assumption, readers are given a look into Hemingway’s portrayal of two innocent lives sucked up into a retreat and an offensive. Leaving Gorizia as

virgins, they seek safety further in Italy. Once there, they meet the town major of Roncade. The pregnant sister claims the town major is the father of her child, though he is an adult and she is sixteen. She claims to have “loved no one,” and thus the idea is given that she did not have a choice in this sexual encounter. She fled Gorizia in fear of being raped. Lt Henry looks at her with compassion, keeping her safe and sending her on to safety. However, the safety he sends them to is not true safety and their worst fear comes to fruition. Hemingway has created a picture of lost innocence and disappointment in these young girls who were a part of the unnamed collateral damage that haunted the dreams of Nick Adams.

The soldiers who pass through the town look to the girls and shout “obscenities” to the girls. The soldiers are covered in dirt heading to the battle, and only their eyes are clear, their eyes being the only part of their face showing signs of life and normality and those signs are connected to the girls. The girls wave to them, showing compassion on the soldiers. The girls should have been able to connect with the men they felt compassion for. Instead an Italian politician has raped and impregnated one of them. Here Hemingway has shown a progression in disillusionment similar to the progression in *FTA*. The sisters’ lives are worth nothing to the Italians in leadership and politics. They have no hope. The war has destroyed them. What should have been safety for them is death and destruction. The only positive connection the men have is with each other, and the only positive connections the girls have is with each other and with the Italian soldiers passing through. An interesting note along this line is Hemingway’s use of Bartolomeo Aymo as the soldier who initially finds the girls and wants to help them. According to Mark Cirino, “Although Aymo’s excellence in these important cycling events is noteworthy, for the Hemingway reader it is more relevant that Aymo came close to winning events far more

often than he actually won them” (109). Aymo tried to save the girls from the destruction brought on by those in leadership, but in the end the girls still suffered. In *FTA* Hemingway wrote that during the retreat, “In the night many peasants had joined the column from the roads of the country and in the column there were carts loaded with household goods” (*FTA* 173). Later on he adds that “the whole country was moving, as well as the army” (*FTA* 189). Civilians are being displaced. Henry could not save them all, but he tried and failed to save two innocent girls.

As the story continues, an Arditi passes through the town and speaks with the girls. The Arditi figures out what has happened, confirming readers’ suspicions that the girls were not willing sexual partners with the town major. Hemingway once described the Arditi as “volunteers organized partly from criminals saving time for little mistakes like murder and assault” (“The Woppian Way”). The description is fitting for the punishment the Arditi gives out. The Arditi goes up stairs to the town major’s bedroom. The location of the bedroom further supports the girls’ fear of the man. They choose to sleep in one bedroom downstairs, while there are plenty of bedrooms. They do not even sleep on the same floor as the town major. The Arditi finds the man’s bedroom and ties up the town major. The Arditi then puts a grenade in the town major’s mouth and runs as the bomb goes off. Thus, the Arditi, who is possibly a reformed criminal, saves the girls. This Italian soldier saves the girls from the politician who is too afraid and fat to participate in a war he supports. Hemingway, Lt Henry and Nick could not save the girls and the peasants who lived along the Italian front. They could not save the Slovene and Friulian civilians from the Italian government. The Arditi could, however, save these two sisters who fled Gorizia in time and were accosted in Roncade. The criminal-soldier saved the girls from the rape of the Italian government. In this image Hemingway has given a picture of the rape of the Slovene and

Friulian civilians who have been “raped” by the Italian government, which has no concern for their lives. The politicians will do nothing to better the lives of these civilians, but the soldiers, even those from base backgrounds, can save the civilians.

The question still remains if these girls are Slovene or Friulian. Looking at the historical timeline, the girls could have been either. Looking to the languages, Slovene and Friulian is possible as the words “virgin” and “sister” would have been understood by girls who likely attended mass in Latin. A third piece of evidence worthy of consideration is the act of the girls praying for the safety of the Italian soldiers passing through Roncade to fight in the Battle of the Piave. Slovene and Friulian girls may have prayed out of compassion for the soldiers passing through their town. The Italian soldiers would have been walking past them daily and coming back gravely wounded daily, as well. As Catholic girls, they would have felt compassion for the men and prayed for them. Thus, again both ethnicities are possible.

The sisters could have been Friulian. However, Hemingway compared Gertrude Stein to a Friulian peasant woman, and he was familiar with some dialects in the area of north eastern Italy (*MF* 93). In “Out of Season” Hemingway mentions a character speaking partially in “d’Ampezzo dialect and sometimes in Tyroler German dialect. He could not make out which the young gentleman and his wife understood best so he is being bilingual” (*The Complete Short Stories* 137). The young man answers “yes’ in German, causing the other man to assume Tyroler to be the dialect the young man understands. In this short story Hemingway shows that Hemingway understands the existence and name of some of the dialects in and along the Soča Front. Both of these dialects would have been used further up in the Dolomites and not along the Piave or the Soča rivers. Hemingway took a trip to Italy in 1927 with Guy Hickock who recorded

the both of them speaking with a priest who “worked hard at talking Italian instead of the San Marino dialect” (Trogon 191). The priest showed Hickock and Hemingway all over town, including the view from a tower that allowed them to see “clear across the Adriatic to Jugoslavia” (Trogon 191). Hemingway was aware of Friuli and of dialects in north eastern Italy, but he does not show his familiarity with the Slovene language. Their language was “gibberish” in his writing, and he was willing to go back after the war to fight them. They were the “other” in his writing. He could have named the girls as Slovene, and he could have named the dialect as Slovene or possibly Friulian. In leaving the girls nameless and without an ethnicity, he has shown the complacency of the Italian government towards death of the civilians along the battle lines of the war, and he has done so by using the example of two innocent girls.

Milton A. Cohen explains that in *In Our Time* Hemingway has a complicated mix of diversity that Hemingway does not always define. Cohen points to Hemingway’s short stories that feature protagonists speaking American-English and serving with a foreign unnamed army that appears to be French mixed in with Nick serving with the Italian army (24). The nationalities in the background blend well together in Hemingway’s writing as his protagonists connect with the cultures they are living with at the time, as Hemingway did himself. Finding the “other” nationalities in Hemingway’s works is like watching the ripples on a pond and following the ripples back to find where they started or what the source was. The sisters in *FTA* are Slovenes who, like Marija Bajt, fled the oncoming battle in Gorizia further into Italy where they could avoid being in a refugee camp and would be free from shelling. Just as the war is not mentioned in “Big Two Hearted River,” yet the war is essential to the story, Slovenes and Friuli are in the background, forming an important part of the story. They are the ripples in the story that lead to

the “other” in Hemingway’s works. Hemingway has shown his compassion, the compassion of a man who has been along the front lines, compared to the lack of compassion of the government that forces men into battle and destroys the homes and lives of innocent bystanders.

Chapter 6

Ernest Hemingway's Poetry

Ernest Hemingway's poetry has not received a lot of scholarly attention compared to his novels and short stories. Hemingway was not known for being a poet, yet he had written seventy-three poems by the time he published *FTA* (Gerogiannis xi). Of the eighty-eight poems he had written over his lifetime, only twenty-five were published (Gerogiannis xi). While there is some debate over the poetic value of his poetry, or the value of his poetry as a measure of his progression as a writer, his poetry is beneficial to study as a measure of the emotional turmoil Hemingway was going through at the time. Of the poems written before 1929, those which focus on World War One give readers and scholars a clearer idea of the emotional trauma and level of disillusion Hemingway went through after the war. *FTA* is based in WWI and Lt Henry and his closest friends in *FTA* all become disillusioned with the war and the motivation behind the deaths of their fellow soldiers. Understanding Hemingway's own emotional turmoil that he was working through in the years leading up to *FTA* allows scholars to better understand the emotional turmoil Lt Henry, Rinaldi, the priest and Catherine go through in *FTA*.

Hemingway did not boast of his own poetic abilities. As Verna Kale explains, "This uncharacteristic reticence is particularly striking because Hemingway was a self-proclaimed expert on any subject that interested him" (58). Kale quotes several contemporary critics who reviewed Hemingway's poetry including Edmund Wilson who felt that his poetry was "not

particularly important” (59). Kale goes on to cite several of Hemingway’s contemporary critics, none of whom found his poetry to be of value. However, Kale sees value in the poems as a possible apprenticeship for Hemingway’s prose writing (70). Gertrude Stein wrote that “Hemingway should stick to poetry and intelligence and eschew the hotter emotions and the more turgid vision” a recommendation Hemingway did not follow, and not an entirely favorable critique (17). Critics were not the only readers who did not favor Hemingway’s poetry, as Phillip Young explains, some of Hemingway’s 1920s poetry “caused quite a scandal” in Oak Park (175). Gerogiannis cites similar negative reviews for Hemingway’s poetry, but sees value in some of the poems as they reveal what was concerning Hemingway at the time (xvii). Gerogiannis wrote that “there is anger in Hemingway’s poetry...at times Hemingway’s anger is turned upon himself and the poems reflect the depression caused by the author’s ambivalence. At other times his anger is directed at the world in which he lives” (257). Perhaps, then, the value in Hemingway’s poetry is found in discovering more about Hemingway’s emotional state. For the purpose of this essay, I will be focusing on Gerogiannis’ idea that some of Hemingway’s poetry reveals Hemingway’s inner thoughts. I will be analyzing the war poetry written before 1929, but I will not be analyzing the poetics of his poems nor their connection to his development as a prose writer. My sole interest is in the poetry’s revelation of Hemingway’s traumatic injuries and the continuing effect of the First World War on Hemingway, which can further illuminate historical aspects of *FTA*.

Keeping in mind that all of the poetry discussed in this essay was written after the war, one can clearly see the disillusionment Hemingway was going through. The poem entitled

“All armies are the same” was written around 1922 but was never published in Hemingway’s lifetime. This is the version in the JFK Library in MS Box 36 folder 230a:

All armies are the same

Publicity is fame

Artillery makes the same red noise

Valor is an attribute of boys

Old soldiers all have tired eyes

All soldiers hear AN [unclear writing] same old lies

Dead bodies always have drawn flies.

(“All Armies are the Same”)

Having served alongside the Italian military, Hemingway had been exposed to irredentism and the idea that one side of the war was correct and the other side was an evil that needed to be controlled or at least removed from the Patria. By 1922 he had been disillusioned from the idea that there was a defensible reason for the war. While his time along the front lines was short, he would have seen wide spread carnage along the Piave during the June 1918 offensive, which would have contributed to his disillusionment (Florczyk 46). “All armies are the same,” thus there is no difference between the Italian army and the Austrian army they were fighting. Both armies used the same kind of artillery. Both armies were full of boys of valor. Gerogiannis states that this poem “describes the men who are entrapped by the war; there is little sense of D’Annunzian adventure in it” (265). Gerogiannis saw a connection between D’Annunzio’s writing and some of Hemingway’s poetry, but not this poem. This poem is focused on disillusionment across the battle lines. Notice the use of the word “boy” instead of “men.”

Hemingway does not see the soldiers who went to the front lines in 1918 as men. He sees them as boys, suggesting that they were taken advantage of by those who sought “publicity” and “fame,” such as D’Annunzio. Those who seek publicity are not given a positive word, but are the ones who spread lies—the same lies on both sides of the war. The boys dying on the front lines are the ones who have “valor”. In the end, they all end up dead, and the bodies of both sides are rotting with maggots.

Just as “All Armies are the Same” focuses at least in part on dead soldiers, so does the poem “Arsiero, Asiago,” although this poem also brings attention to the collateral damages of war:

Arsiero, Asiago,
Half a hundred More,
Little border villages,
Back before the war,
Monte Grappa, Monte Corno,
Twice a dozen such,
In the piping times of peace
Didn’t come to much.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems, 49)

Arsiero and Asiago are both villages along the front lines of the First World War. Arsiero is a village about a forty minute drive from Vicenza on modern roads (see map four in Appendix A). The Red Cross had headquarters in Vicenza while Hemingway was stationed in the area, so this is an area he was familiar with (Florczyk 43). Hemingway spent fifteen days as a driver out of

Schio, which is about a twenty minute drive from Arsiero, making it likely that he brought wounded down from Arsiero (Florczyk 43). Asiago is in the same province as Vicenza, but it is a bit further away. On June 15th, 1918 the Austrians attempted to gain ground around the Piave river in Italy in the Battle of the Asiago (Edmonds 194). This poem is significant because in *FTA* and the Nick Adams stories Hemingway does not express direct concern for the villages which were along the front. Hemingway's open concern for the villages along the front in this poem gives legitimacy to the idea that this same concern is in the portion of Hemingway's iceberg that lies beneath the surface of *FTA* and the short stories. Hemingway names two villages in this poem, but acknowledges that there were "half a hundred more." Fighting around the Piave claimed nearly 80,000 soldiers from the Austrian and Italian armies combined (Edmonds 220). The death toll was enormous, but the collateral damage to these villages was also severe. The line "twice a dozen such" reinforces the idea that there were many such villages that were destroyed by the war. Hemingway compares the "piping times of peace" with the vision of the villages after the war with the line "didn't come to much". These are the villages that Lt Henry and Nick pass which they describe as being rubble (*FTA* 20, *The Complete Short Stories* 307). Here readers are given a glimpse of Hemingway's inner turmoil over the destruction of the lives of civilians along the Soča Front. This view of Hemingway being distraught over the collateral damage of the war shows that this concern was also behind his inclusion of the villages that had become rubble in *FTA*.

There is a second version of "Arsiero, Asiago" which can be found in MS Box 36 in folder 250a. The poem begins with a partially finished stanza:

My love walked there,

And every [unclear] in Somebody

Was Like a bit of Arcady

My love was there

Arsiero, Asiago

Twice a hundred more,

Nameless little villages,

Back before the war

Just a lot of houses [crossed out]

[a few crossed out illegible lines]

White washed plaster houses,

Mostly cobble streets

Women in the doorways

Bare armed peaking breasts [a bit unclear]

Santa Caterina, Posina (and such)

and not in the geographies

Back before the war [unclear line order]

The first stanza speaks of Hemingway's "love" walking there. The village he is speaking of is likely Treviso, where Hemingway visited Agnes von Kurowsky on December 9, 1918 (see map four in Appendix A, Meyers 39). Hemingway visited this village as a surprise for Agnes. This poem is likely speaking of some of the villages he witnessed on that road trip, as Treviso is only

about an hour east of Vicenza and he passed through war torn villages such as Nervessa on that trip (Spanier & Trogdon 161).

Gerogiannis connected “Arsiero, Asiago” with Hemingway’s article “A Veteran Visits the Old Front” in which he mentions Gorizia, Mount San Gabrielle, and Grappa “and in all the places where men died that nobody ever heard about” (*Dateline* location 3318). In this version Hemingway has increased the damage in this area “nobody ever heard about” by using “twice a hundred more,” instead of “half a hundred more”. Hemingway’s use of a greater number of villages in the earlier draft suggests that he was attempting to convey a high number of villages destroyed by the war. He calls the villages “nameless,” as many of them would remain in *FTA*. Thus, he shows compassion for the villages and those in them whose lives were destroyed, yet he does not give the villages names. The villages are “arcady” or ideological rustic paradises. These are the villages “not in the geographies”. In other words, the villages were of so little value to those organizing the war, those seeking publicity and fame, that the villages are not even awarded names in official maps before or after the war. He gives the villages value, when those in power have not done so. He does name Monte Grappa and Monte Corno in the version published in Gerogiannis’ collection, but in this version he mentions Santa Caterina and Posina. Posina is a small village near Vicenza, thus it is a small village Hemingway would have known about such as Arsiero and Asiago. Santa Caterina is likely speaking of Santa Caterina di Valfurva, which is located in the Alps between Austria and Italy. Both locations can be seen on map five in Appendix A. The houses with “white washed plaster” also does not make the cut in the shorter version of this poem. In this poem the plaster houses have not been damaged yet, but in *FTA* Henry sees “the plaster of the broken houses” and Nick also sees “much rubble of plaster

and mortar” (*FTA* 161, *The Nick Adams Stories* 154). This is the future of these little pieces of ideal rustic paradise, and Hemingway’s concern for these villages Lt Henry passes in *FTA* is clear in his poetry.

In a similar poem entitled “Riparto d’ Assalto” Hemingway also looks to specific towns from the Isonzo Front. This poem is set near Mount Grappa, which is located close to the Asiago plateau (see map eight in Appendix A) where the last poem was set:

Drummed their boots on the camion floor,

Hob-nailed boots on the camion floor.

Sergeants stiff,

Corporals sore.

Lieutenants thought of a Mestre whore—

Warm and soft and sleepy whore,

Damned cold, bitter, rotten ride,

Winding road up, the Grappa side.

Arditi on benches stiff and cold,

Pride of their country stiff and cold,

Bristly faces, dirty hides—

Infantry marches, Arditi rides.

Grey, cold, bitter, sullen ride—

To splinter pines on the Grappa side

At Asalone, where the truck load died.

(*Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems* 37)

Phillip Young compares this poem with poems by Vachel Lindsay, declaring it a “patent imitation,” and suggesting that at this time Hemingway was imitating Lindsay (175).

Hemingway may have been borrowing styles from authors he respected to express his traumatic memories of the Great War. Riparto d’Assalto took place on Monte Grappa. The town of Mestre is just under two hours from Mount Grappa, and Mestre is also mentioned in *FTA* (195). Mestre and Mount Grappa can be found in map ten in Appendix A. Gerogiannis suggests that this poem “presents a contrast between sexual fantasies of a non-combatant Lt and an ambulance full of mortally wounded Arditi” (265). Indeed there is a comparison in the poem. The sexual memories of the Lieutenant are juxtapositioned with death. However, the men are not mortally wounded as they are winding up a road into the mountain to fight. The wounded would have been winding down the road after the battle. The men are given very human qualities in the first line, which attaches readers to the men. The men drum their boots on the floor of the truck they are riding in, as many would. They are wearing “hob-nailed boots” or boots with nails in the bottom to help them climb up the side of an ice covered mountain. They are headed to a front where they will need to climb up Mount Grappa while dodging the bullets of the Austrians who hold the high ground on the mountain. The only comforting thought comes from the whore the Lieutenant is thinking of. The whore is warm, cozy and loving, but the love is fake and purchased. Just as the war that is sending these men up the mountain was based on an untrue idea—the idea of a greater Italy, of redeeming lands that were seen as Italian—the idea of a just war. The officers and Arditi are in the same situation, and in this case even those walking are in a similar situation. They are the pride of their country, but their country has allowed them to be cold and stiff. Similarly, in *FTA*, Rinaldi recounts injuries that soldiers faced such as chilblains which came from soldiers not

being kept warm (*FTA* 10). Hemingway is consistent in pointing out that the Italian government did not provide well for those they sent into battle. In the end these soldiers will only break pine trees with their bullets. The “whole truck load died” according to Hemingway. There were frequent fights on Mount Grappa, including fighting just before the Battle of Vittorio Veneto. According to Meyers, Hemingway arrived at the battle of Vittorio Veneto, “when the Italian offensive was at its full height,” but had to return to the hospital in Milan the following day to treat his jaundice (39). Furthermore, while he was stationed in Schio, before he joined the canteen service, his unit at Schio was in Bassano helping to bring wounded soldiers down from Mount Grappa (Florczyk 91). Thus, this was an area he was very familiar with.

Instead of focusing on those destroyed by the war, the poem entitled “Bird of Night” reveals Hemingway’s own certainty of death as a result of the war:

Cover my eyes with your pinions

Dark bird of night

Spread your black wings like a turkey strutting

Drag your strong wings like a cock grouse drumming

Scratch the smooth flesh of my belly

With scaly claws

Dip with your beak to my lips

But cover my eyes with your pinions.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems 36)

Gerogiannis considers this to be a sexual poem about a woman, and he further points to a possible connection between this poem and the style of D’Annunzio (263). While there may be a

connection between the poem and D'Annunzio's style, there is a different approach to this poem. Hemingway did not serve for long on the front lines of the war. He did, however, serve along the frontline of a war before his nineteenth birthday. Hemingway was a young man who saw the suffering and death of those he removed from the front lines of the war. He stood near Italian soldiers while delivering for the canteen when a mortar exploded, taking the life of one of the men he was standing with. He knew he survived because that man stood between him and the explosion. These are not memories that a young man can easily get past. Hemingway may have titled this poem "Bird of Night" with a vulture in mind, which would have picked the bones of dead animals clean as well as the bones of those who were unable to be buried along the front lines. He would have seen this in the wilderness of his childhood, and he likely saw birds such as these eating the flesh off of the bodies after the fighting along the Piave. The bird comes at night, as Hemingway's own distress and fear of death comes at night. Hemingway's fear of the night can be seen in Nick Adams' fear and inability to sleep at night "Now I Lay Me". The first line calls on the bird to cause him not to see death coming. He assumes death will take him at night, but he does not want to see death coming. He asks the bird to cover his eyes to this effect. He then calls on the bird of night to remove what is left of his life or flesh.

The lines "spread your black wings like a turkey strutting/ Drag your strong wings like a cock grouse drumming" stay with the idea that the bird of death is black and not seen, and yet also suggest a level of pride in the bird. A turkey struts with its wings spread out in pride looking for a mate. In this case the call for the bird to stretch its wings out would help Hemingway not to see even more as the wings cover his eyes. When the bird is scratching at his stomach or dipping its mouth into Hemingway's, it is eating the rotting flesh of his body. The

bird is eating a corpse, and thus Hemingway is suggesting that he has accepted the inevitability of his own death, but he does not want to see death when it arrives. While Gerogiannis connected this poem with a “prelude to domesticity” (263), there may be a clearer connection with the following two poems:

“Killed Piave-July 8-1918”

Desire and

All the sweet pulsing aches

And gentle hurtings

That were you,

Are gone into the sullen dark.

Now in the night you come unsmiling

To lie with me

A dull, cold, rigid bayonet

On my hot-swollen, throbbing soul.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems 35)

Staying consistent with a sexual interpretation, Gerogiannis connects this poem with “the date of his wounding to the image of a nocturnal lover who is described as ‘A dull, cold, rigid bayonet/ On my hot-swollen, throbbing soul’” (263). Reynolds points to the original title of the poem, which was “Killed—San Dona di Piave. June 15, 1918” and suggests that the poem was a tribute to Edward McKey, the first Red Cross worker killed in Italy (148-49). Steven Florczyk looks at the final title and considers it to be a poem about Hemingway’s own wounding (117). James Mellow also sees this poem as being about death, and points to the date as the context clue for

the subject of the death (64). He further suggests that the poem is written from the perspective of the wife or lover of the dead soldier. While the subject of the poem is death, as Hemingway survived the explosion, the death which serves as subject matter for the poem is not Hemingway's. When Hemingway was blown up he survived because there was an Italian soldier standing closer to the explosion than he was. This man was killed and parts of him were blown up onto Hemingway. This would have been a very traumatic event for an eighteen year old boy. As Florczyk explains, "Those who staffed the rolling kitchens serving hundreds of soldiers each day had the potential for more substantial contact with the foreign military than did many of their fellow workers" (65). Hemingway would have had the opportunity, over his two weeks in the canteen service, to get to know this man and the unit he was stationed with. Hemingway would have keenly felt the death of a man he had been standing next to at the time of his death. This man died, and all of his desires and hurts were gone, as the poem states. Everything that made up that man, whom Hemingway was likely speaking with at the moment of the explosion, was gone. Hemingway had trouble sleeping in the night for fear of death. This poem suggests that the man haunted Hemingway's dreams. The idea of nightmares in this scenario seems very likely. This man's memory keeps Hemingway awake at night, laying next to his hot throbbing soul.

A poem left untitled in the Hemingway archives gives readers a further look at Hemingway's thoughts on the nearness of death. The following poem is found in MS Box 55 folder 609 in the JFK Library:

Night comes with soft and drowsy plumes

To darken out the day

To stroke away the flinty glint

Softening the clay

Before the final hardness comes

Demanding that we stay

Once again, death comes in the night, just as Hemingway's own near death experience on the battlefield came in the night (Baker 44-5). In this instance night is death. Death comes in softly and darkens out the day, wiping away the flint in the fight and softening the clay. The "clay" can be seen as representative of the dirt or the ground softening to accept the newly fallen corpse, or it could be pointing to the Biblical idea that God created man out of clay. Hemingway would have heard that idea in church growing up, so this may be a reference to the human body softening in death—no longer fighting and tense but soft and relaxed. The "final hardness comes" when rigor mortis sets in and the body becomes rigid. At that point death has demanded that the body stays. Either way, death is demanding and the soldier cannot fight it off.

Death is a common theme in Hemingway's war poetry from the 1920s. Moving on from his own death, Hemingway again focuses on soldiers who die in the war in the poems "To Good Guys Dead" and "Champs d'Honour." Looking first to "Champs d' Honour":

Soldiers never do die well;

Crosses mark the places,

Wooden crosses where they fell;

Stuck above their faces.

Soldiers pitch and cough and twitch;

All the world roars red and black,

Soldiers smother in a ditch;

Chocking through the whole attack.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem 27)

These men of honor are the soldiers who die in the war. “Champs” is French for “Fields,” thus the poem is about fields of honor where soldiers are buried. Reinforcing what he would come to express in *FTA*, these soldiers do not die well. These soldiers were as Aymo, killed for no good reason, their lives wasted (*FTA* 185). There is no honor in the deaths that Hemingway saw on the Soča Front, instead the deaths were as the meat in Chicago stockyards if nothing was done with the meat (*FTA* 161).

While Gerogiannis connected several of Hemingway’s poems with D’Annunzio’s style, this poem he states “depicts a view of the Great War that is far different from D’Annunzio’s heroic style” (265). This poem is full of the disillusionment that came towards the end of WWI, instead of the heroism which was more commonly spoken of at the beginning of the war. Henry mentions wooden crosses being made in the field hospital before he went to Milan (*FTA* 66). The soldiers who could be buried on the Soča Front were first buried in graves with small wooden crosses. At times too many soldiers died to mark each grave or to separate soldiers by army, so after the war soldiers were charged with digging up the mass graves and reburying the dead in separate graveyards (Fili). Mussolini would later call on the Italian military to dig up the Italian dead again to be placed in giant ossuaries. These are the graveyards that can be visited today in Italy and Slovenia. For now, as Hemingway expresses in this poem, the dead would lie under small wooden crosses. Florczyk notes that in the Battle of the Piave, which Hemingway saw the end of, the casualties “could have been reduced by half if the army combatants had been more thoroughly trained” (134). Many of these men under the crosses

could have lived if they had been given proper training, a fact Hemingway was sure to have noticed as he studied the war and wrote his novels and poems in the 1920s, and a fact that led to the regret over loss of life in *FTA* and his poetry.

In this poem Hemingway's focus is not on the hope a wooden cross might bring, but to the face of the soldier who is buried underneath the cross. He does not see the soldier as one who is gone, but as one whose face is still under that cross. He focuses on the deaths he most likely saw in his short time on the front, on their cruelty and lack of hope. John Dos Passos once expressed his concern for the Italians they brought in their ambulances when he wrote, "What I liked to think I was doing was dragging the poor wounded wops out from under fire, not jollying them into dying in a war that didn't concern them" (location 1026). Hemingway and Dos Passos drove wounded men from battle, and not all of them would survive. Later Dos Passos clearly questioned his role in the war, just as Hemingway showed his regret for the men who died and his connection to them. The next poem is "To Good Guys Dead":

They sucked us in;
King and country,
Christ Almighty
And the rest.
Patriotism,
Democracy,
Honor-
Words and phrases,
They either bitched or killed us.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems 47)

This poem was written in 1922 and was left unpublished. Gerogiannis explains that this poem “bitterly denounces the patriotic sentimentalist and heroic words that only resulted in dead soldiers”(265). He further connects the words of the poem with the well known lines in *FTA* about honor, glory and the stockyards in Chicago (*FTA* 161). Katie Owens-Murphy looked to these same lines in *FTA* and stated that Hemingway was “unable to find meaning in abstractions” and thus these abstract words were “obscene,” but what made them obscene for Lt Frederic Henry was that these words were used by “military leaders and propaganda to manipulate those like Gino. As Frederic states here, his experience does not confirm the existence of these ideals” (89). Military leaders, politicians, and religious leaders had used these abstract words to motivate young men to go to war, and Hemingway now sees their use of these words to bring men to death in battle as being obscene. Here Hemingway aligns himself with the soldiers, not focusing on his own impending death, nor on the villages destroyed, but on the soldiers deceived into laying their lives down. The first line shows that Hemingway believes the soldiers were tricked into fighting. The lines “King and country,/ Christ Almighty / And the rest” point to the motivations used to put boys on the front lines. The British motivated soldiers to fight for king and country. The Red Cross had religious motivations for supporting those on the front line, yet this support inevitably supported a war that Hemingway no longer saw as religiously supportable. This poem compares nicely with a poem by Will M. Cressy which is housed in the JFK archives along with Hemingway’s World War One belongings and paperwork. The pamphlet appears to have been given out to men serving in the war, which is likely as Cressy himself was a Vaudeville entertainer who travelled to France in 1918 to entertain troops (John Greenwood).

Cressy's poem is entitled "God Help America to Help God Save the King." The first two stanzas speak about a song that "we all sing at night." The last four stanzas are as follows:

The words are a little different
According to where you sing.
Here—we call it "America,"
And there, "God Save the King."

But we all of us know the music:
The notes are just the same;
And we can make it a mighty chorus
As we play this great war game.

"My Country, 'Tis of Thee;"
Those are words that they can sing.
And we're mighty glad to join them
In singing, "God Save the King."

So let's twine the leaves of maple
Around the eagle's wing,
And all join in the chorus
Of "God Help America to Help God
Save the King." (Cressy)

These are words and phrases that Hemingway read. Cressy sought to motivate boys to serve their country and “Save the King”. The poem gave young men like Hemingway the idea they were on a mission for God, saving the very King of England, which was a high and mighty motivation. The war was only a game, and they were honorable for playing it. These were the motivations that moved Hemingway and hundreds of thousands of other men to serve in a war that Hemingway, at this point, was completely disillusioned with. In Cressy’s poem “Keep the Home Flag Flying” he compares the death of young boys in battle to the red in the flag when he writes “The red is the blood of our heroes; / Our boys, who are giving their lives” which encouraged young boys such as Hemingway to see death on the battlefield as honorable (Cressy). In the last stanza of the same poem Cressy encourages families who lost boys in the war to show their flag with honor, “For if they’re worth the dying/ In the land across the foam,/ They’re good enough for flying / In your own boy’s home” (Cressy) These deaths are honorable and should be shown pride. In the poem “When the Blue Stars turn to Gold” Cressy compares death on the battlefield to Christ’s death on the cross. These are the poems that Hemingway read during the war, as did many other boys who went off to serve their country in a war over land. King and Country and Christ Almighty sucked them into fighting, and then “bitched them” in useless death or injury. They were the men who “went happily to death” as in Hemingway’s poem “Shock Troops” (*Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems* 43).

The motivations of patriotism, king, and country brought many to the front lines. In a poem published in *Querschnitt* entitled “The Age Demanded,” Hemingway discusses the motivation that brought men to war:

The age demanded that we sing

And cut away our tongue.
The age demanded that we flow
And hammered in the bung.
The age demanded that we dance
And jammed us into iron pants.
And in the end the age was handed
The sort of shit that it demanded.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poems 53)

Hurwitz, who connected Hemingway's poetry with Pound's apprenticeship, looked at this poem "as obviously an adaptation and imitation of Pound's 'Maurberley' especially in its tone of futility and frustration" (15). Perhaps Hemingway used some of Pound's style in this poem while explaining his thoughts on the disillusionment he was feeling. Patriotism and honor motivated men to go off to a war that was neither glorious nor honorable. The "age demanded" that these men sing, but took away their ability to sing. It demanded that they flow and dance, but disabled them from doing either. The age does not ask or suggest—it demands. Hemingway sees that the soldiers in the First World War were given no choice. They were raised to fight for their aggressively nationalistic countries. The age demanded things that it then would not allow them to do. These boys were capable of fighting in an honorable fight, but that was not given to them. The possible was demanded and made impossible by the demander. In the end, the "sort of shit" that was handed back to the age is the result of fighting in an unjust war. Society and individuals, such as Hemingway's own mother, did not accept the man he had become. His writing was at times offensive and unacceptable. This poem was finally published three years after he wrote it,

but only in a German magazine. It was unacceptable by the society that encouraged him to go off to war. The shit he handed back to society in the form of unacceptable writing, in both his poetry and *FTA*, was the result of the war it demanded of him.

While “The Age Demanded” did not mention specific individuals, Hemingway would mention names in his poem entitled “Roosevelt,” which was published in *Three Stories and Ten Poems*, Hemingway looks directly at a specific individual as having pushed men to their deaths on the Isonzo Front. This poem looks at Roosevelt as one of those generals who “rarely die except in bed/ As he finally did” (45). These men sent others off into a war that would claim their lives, although the leaders themselves would live. Craig Carey pointed to Woodrow Wilson as being one of these men. Carey suggested that “the first wound of the war was thus a broken promise, not a bloody limb; a rhetorical shift, not a physical fracture. For Americans, WWI became Wilson's war because it was his rhetoric of peace that had been broken...his leadership that had uprooted a generation and thrust them into the entangling realities of a war torn landscape” (6). Wilson was another politician who helped bring a generation of young men into a battle they would not all walk away from. Michael Reynolds concurs that Wilson and Roosevelt helped to lead Hemingway’s generation to war when he states that, “Hemingway...had seen the disaster in Europe and America’s retreat into isolation. The pre-war values, both European and American, had died in the trenches. By 1928 the heroic rhetoric of Teddy Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson had become a joke” (62). In MS Box 39 folder 326a are a few lines of a manuscript that reveals some of Hemingway’s thoughts on the men who led others into battle. At times those who led fellow soldiers into battle did not allow the soldiers to have a choice as to whether or not they would serve in the front lines, due to the practice of decimation. A soldier

would serve without complaining or be shot and his family back home would be punished, as well. Hemingway looks to one of these leading officers:

They say a sergeant of Marins said, “come on
you sons of bitches do you want to live forever?” after
which, I suppose, the men died gladly. But I, me, I,
saw tired soldiers burying dead solders and two of
the tired ones lifted a big one of the dead ones
and they said, “Jesus Christ this bastard’s heavy”.

(“Same Name”)

The sergeant asks a rhetorical question suggesting that the men following him should accept that they would likely die in the battle. In deed, Italian generals such as Cardona did send men to their deaths, knowing that the death toll from that battle would be in the thousands, but they were sent anyways. Their lives were not of value, and Hemingway is highlighting that by having an officer suggest they do not even want to live forever. When Hemingway suggests “the men died gladly,” he is using sarcasm to highlight that they did not want to die. He reinforces this contradiction by describing how tired the soldiers are who are left to bury the dead. War weariness has set in and these soldiers are disillusioned with the cause that is demanding their deaths. Yet, the job of burying the dead has become so common place that they are able to complain of the heaviness of the dead. They are accustomed to their gruesome task, just as the officer who sent the soldiers into battle has accepted the death surrounding him. This poem was not published by Hemingway. These soldiers are some of the soldiers Hemingway likely had in mind when he wrote that “they were badly beaten to start with. They were beaten when they took

them from their farms and put them in the army. That is why the peasant has wisdom, because he is defeated from the start. Put him in power and see how wise he is” (*FTA* 157). The peasants are the “sons of bitches” being pushed into battle by their officers, such as in this poem. They were defeated from the start because there was no hope for them. They would die in battle.

Hemingway realized that if these peasants had the opportunity to be calling the shots, they would end the war. They were the wise ones.

Another poem which reveals Hemingway’s disgust with those who sent soldiers into war is “D’Annunzio”:

Half a million dead wops

And he got a kick out of it

The son of a bitch.

(*Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem* 28)

Gerogiannis wrote that this poem is “meaningless when considered by itself” (259). While meaningless is a strong term, the poem is better understood when considered in the light of historical context. D’Annunzio was a famous Italian poet. He had reached celebrity status before the war, and he used his status to move the country into the war. He is perhaps best remembered for taking the island of Fiume after the war. Italy lost 460,000 soldiers in the war, so Hemingway’s mention of “half a million dead wops” is fairly accurate if not ethnically insensitive (Howard 146). Hemingway is suggesting that D’Annunzio “got a kick out of” or enjoyed the death of Italian soldiers. Considering that D’Annunzio watched the act of decimation being carried out, Hemingway’s thoughts could be justifiable. During one set of decimation or baseless execution of Italian soldiers, Thompson records that “D’Annunzio hurried back to

witness the executions” (261). Hemingway also mentions D’Annunzio in his short story “The Woppian Way,” which is housed in the JFK Archives in MS Box 62 folder 843. Hemingway wrote of D’Annunzio” “the great amourist [sic] who had exhausted the love of women and now was wringing the last drops of nations aside by his Filibuster. This hero with his occupation gone. A lover who had failed in only one pursuit, that of death in battle. Would he find the death he was looking for at Fiume, or would he be cheated again?” (“The Woppian Way” 2). Hemingway also compares D’Annunzio to a “bald headed old vulture,” which is an apt description given the habit of vultures of preying on the dead (“The Woppian Way” 2).

Hemingway’s concern for Italian soldiers stretched from those lost at war to those taken captive in war. This poem entitled “Captives” was published in *Three Stories and Ten Poems* in 1923:

Some came in chains
Unrepentant but tired.
Too tired but to stumble.
Thinking and hating were finished
Thinking and fighting were finished
Retreating and hoping were finished.
Cures thus a long campaign.
making death easy.

(*Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem* 26)

Here Hemingway addresses the disillusionment experienced by those who served on the Isonzo Front. This is the group that Bonello would have belonged to in *FTA* (*FTA* 188). Bonello would

have gone in chains in the sense that he would have been a POW, regardless of the actual use of chains. In Box 5 Folder 13 there are several postcards of Austrian POWs. These are postcards Hemingway saved. They meant something to him. He scrapbooked many of the postcards from this collection. They told a story, and it was one he could not forget. These men, Bonello among them, left tired from the war, as POWs, but not repentant for fighting in the war. They were no longer thinking, hating, or fighting. They were done. Done retreating and done hoping.

Disillusionment had set in. The long time of fighting was done, and death would now be welcomed by these men. Seeing that of the 600,000 Italian prisoners of war 100,000 died, death was a likely scenario for many of these men (Thompson 6). Hemingway is expressing his grief for the death they would face. He is expressing a grief that was not shared by the Italian government. According to Thompson, “Only the Italian government treated its captured soldiers as cowards or defectors, blocking the delivery of food and clothing from home” (5). Hemingway has highlighted an area of callousness of the Italian government where compassion would have and should have been drawn from most. Connecting this poem with Bonello’s decision to surrender helps readers to see Hemingway’s compassion for Bonello and his understanding of Bonello’s decision.

The next poem, which is entitled “Neothomist Poem,” reveals the religious state of Hemingway’s personal thoughts. There are four documents at the Kennedy Archives which are a version of or a portion of this poem. One of these is the following version which was published in *Exile* in 1927:

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not
want him for long.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem 83)

The short poem is clearly irreligious, suggesting perhaps that religion is quickly moved past and that Hemingway does not have a need for the god of his youth anymore. However, much more is revealed by looking to the manuscript found in MS Box 55 folder 597a, which is a longer version still being worked on:

The lord is my shepherd

I shall not want him for long

He maketh me to lie down in green pastures

And there are no green pastures

He leadeth me beside still waters

And still waters run deep

The wind blows and the bark of the trees is wet from the rain

The leaves fall and the trees are bare in the wind

leaves float on the still waters

there are wet dead leaves in the basin of the fountain.

(“Neothomist Poem”)

In this version Hemingway has looked at the entirety of Psalm 23. As a comparison:

Psalm 23

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want. He makes me to lie down in green pastures: he leads me beside still waters. He restores my soul: he leads me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Even though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for you art with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort

me. You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies: you anoint my head with oil' my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the LORD for ever. (*The Bible* 392-93)

Hemingway has played on the idea that because the Lord is my shepherd I will have no needs and changed the lines to suggest that he will not be wanting God for long. In other words, Hemingway has learned God is not worth wanting. Similar to "The Age Demanded," the next lines state that God has made him to lie in green pastures, but that is impossible because there are no green pastures. The still waters are deep and dangerous, not calm and restorative. There is no restoration or hope, just as Lt Henry cannot find restoration and hope, even in Switzerland.

Hemingway goes on to describe a scene that he does not develop, but will develop in the next version of the poem. The next version is in folder 597b which includes a note that the poem was written at Rue Notre Dame des Champs. The section on the Lord's psalm which is seen above, was crossed out in this version so that it begins as follows:

The wind blows in the fall

And it is all over

The wind blows the leaves

From the trees

And it is all over

They do not come back

And if they do

We are gone

You can start it any time

[line scratched out]

It will finish its self [sic]

When it goes it takes

Everything with it

[crossed out:

Surely goodness and mercy shall

Follow me all the days of

My life and I shall

Never escape them

Though I walk Through the

Valley of the shadow

Of death I shall return

To do evil.

[the following portion is circled:]

In the morning and the evening

Especially in the evening

The wind blows in the fall

And it is all over [arrow to below next stanza]

When I walk through the valley of the shadow of death

I shall fear all evil

For thou art with me

[next page:]

The lord is my shepherd
I shall not want him long
He maketh me to lie down in
Green pastures
And there are no green pastures
He leadeth me beside still
Waters
And still waters reflect they face [un deep crossed out]
For thou art with me
[crossed out three lines:]
In the night the wind
Blows and I don't hear it for
With me
You have gone and it is all gone with you [two lines crossed out].
("Neothomist Poem")

Gerogiannis writes that this was actually the first version of this poem, and the published version was the final version (119). He further suggests that the poem was not initially going to be a religious poem, although the final published version does appear to be religious. Gerogiannis connects the beginning of this version with the beginning of *FTA*. While the connection is there, this poem seems to be coming at the end of the war when "it is all over" and "they do not come back". The soldiers are dead and gone, and the war has ended. The religious lines taken from Psalm 23 in this version point to further disillusionment as Hemingway writes that mercy and

goodness would follow him all the days of his life and he “shall not escape them”. He cannot escape his life. He promises to return to the valley of the shadow of death to do evil, perhaps thinking of returning to battle to do evil, and states that he will fear evil *because* God is with him. The still waters reflect God’s face, but in the night the wind has come and blown away God’s reflection and the still waters. God is no longer with him. When Hemingway wrote of the impossible demands made by the society he grew up in in “The Age Demanded,” he mentioned handing the age “the sort of shit that it demanded”. This is the sort of shit it demanded—disillusionment and loss of faith or religion. This same loss of religion and faith is seen in *FTA* when Henry cannot believe as the priest does and only prays for Catherine’s life in the end—a request which is not granted (*FTA* 62, 282).

Looking now to a poem which focuses on the time just after the war, Hemingway wrote this poem entitled “Poem, 1928” in Berlin in 1929 (*Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem* 95). This version is housed in the JFK Archives in MS Box 56 Folder 649b:

They say its over
The need, now, is for order,
Not for substance
For piety
We must be full of grace, or on the way there,
Our works must lead to something
Morally instructive, dull,
But stemming from the classics
Which mostly death, if I remember

With unrest, rapes, and wars
And dirty stories
My cried, James, where is it got to-
But we
Who have killed other men,
Have fought in foreign wars,
Buried our friends,
Buried our fathers, when these did school themselves for
Economic reasons-
An American gesture to replace bare [unclear] with the colt or
Smith and Wesson
Who know our mothers for bitches
We who have slept with women in different countries
And experienced great pleasures,
Have contracted diseases,
Been cured, married and born children
Who have seen revolutions, counter-revolutions and
Counter-counter-revolutions
Who have seen many systems of government
And many good men murdered
Who have been at Troy
In Flanders Artios and in picardy

During the fighting there,
(I speak literally)
Who have seen an army defeated in Asia minor
And cast into the sea
Who have lived in other countries as well as our own
Have spoken and understood the languages of these countries
And have heard what was said by the people,
All of these things are over now [The last few lines are illegible].
("Poem, 1928")

The war is over, and the need is for order now, no longer for fighting. Society calls for piety, not for battle. Hemingway must use his time to write things that are "morally instructive" which he thinks would be dull. He is called on to write things connected to classics, and he points out that the classics are full of death, unrest, rape, war and "dirty stories." Thus, his novel published at the time (*The Sun Also Rises*), was not any different than the classics in topic. He goes on to describe himself, yet he places himself in a larger group of men who have "killed other men...fought in foreign wars,/ Buried our friends" and fathers, as well. Hemingway points to his own father when he mentions the father schooling himself for economic reasons, which was the reason assumed for Hemingway's father's suicide. This line dates the poem after Hemingway's own father died in 1928 (Meyer 209). Hemingway goes on to describe adventures he has and has not had, and he ends with the last few lines in which he describes himself as we, "who have lived in other countries as well as our own/ Have spoken and understood the languages of these countries / and have heard what was said by the people". He is separate from the society who is

making these demands on his writing. He has lived in these countries and understood not just the people's words but also their intent—something the rest of society had not done. This is why he was able to write *FTA*—he understood the Italian people. He spoke their language, and he had lived with them through the end of the war. Thus, he could present their story of WWI. While the ending was not clear in this version of the manuscript form, Gerogiannis published the following ending:

We have something that cannot be taken from us by an article

Nor abolished by a critical agreement of Professors

The searchers for order will find that there is a certain

discipline in the acceptance of experience.

They may, that is;

They rarely find out anything they cannot read in books or

articles

But if we last and are not destroyed

And we are durable because we have lasted. We do not destroy

easily.

We'll write books.

They will not read them

But their children may

If they have children.

(Ernest Hemingway: Complete Poem 96)

Gerogiannis suggests that in this poem “Hemingway was reacting to what he sensed to be an academic attempt to reduce the experiences of his generation to an abstraction” and states that the ending lines make “Hemingway’s argument weak and abstract because of its bluntness” (266). The last few lines are blunt in a style that was typical of Hemingway in lashing out at those who had criticized his works. He has separated himself from his critics through the use of pronouns. He accepts that these critics will not read his books, but he will write them anyway. He became the result of what the age demanded of him, and then the result was not accepted by the society who placed those demands on him. Yet, he was determined to continue writing what was in his mind, and he trusted that one day another generation would read his books. With this mindset he wrote *FTA*, writing what was on his mind but possibly not what society was ready to receive.

Hemingway went off to war following the expectations and encouragement of cultural influences such as President Theodore Roosevelt. He had in his possession books of patriotic and popular songs for soldiers to sing in World War One. He held on to this book of songs which is now housed in the JFK archives in Boston in Box OM22 World War One: ARC folder 3. Songs such as “The Battle Hymn of the Republic,” “Onward Christian Soldiers,” “America! First and Forever!” and “Over the Top” sent young men like Hemingway off to war believing in the glory and honor they would find there. Prejudice was encouraged with books such as “Milt Runkle’s War Jokes and Kaiser’s Last Will and Testament,” which encouraged Hemingway and others to believe they were fighting an enemy who was less valuable or important than their own countrymen (Donohue). This image of a righteous war was destroyed in the short time Hemingway spent on the front lines in Italy. When he started to write about the

war in *FTA*, the thoughts produced by the war in him were not fully accepted by the society that sent him to war. He had works banned in more than one country. While society of his day may not have wanted the “shit” he handed them, for the last few decades society has been fascinated with his works.

Conclusion

The First World War had a devastating effect on the continent of Europe, and this effect was permanent in Hemingway's life. Hemingway wrote *FTA* and *The Sun Also Rises* with WWI in mind. The war is seen in his poetry, in his journalism, and in his short stories. An in depth study of the war, its motivations, its battles and the disillusionment left in its wake is necessary to gain a more in depth understanding of Hemingway's life and the life of his characters. The disillusionment of Rinaldi and the priest in *FTA* is more clearly understood when the wonton waste of life they faced is understood. Similarly, when the cultural push towards war is understood, alongside the purely economic and nationalistic reasons for the war, a greater understanding is gained of Hemingway's poetry. Acknowledgment and understanding of the "other" in *FTA* and Hemingway's short stories provides a greater understanding of Hemingway's compassion towards the civilians lost in the First World War and a greater understanding of the compassion of Lt Henry, as well. A greater understanding of the historical context is also needed for Hemingway's works placed in Spain and in Cuba.

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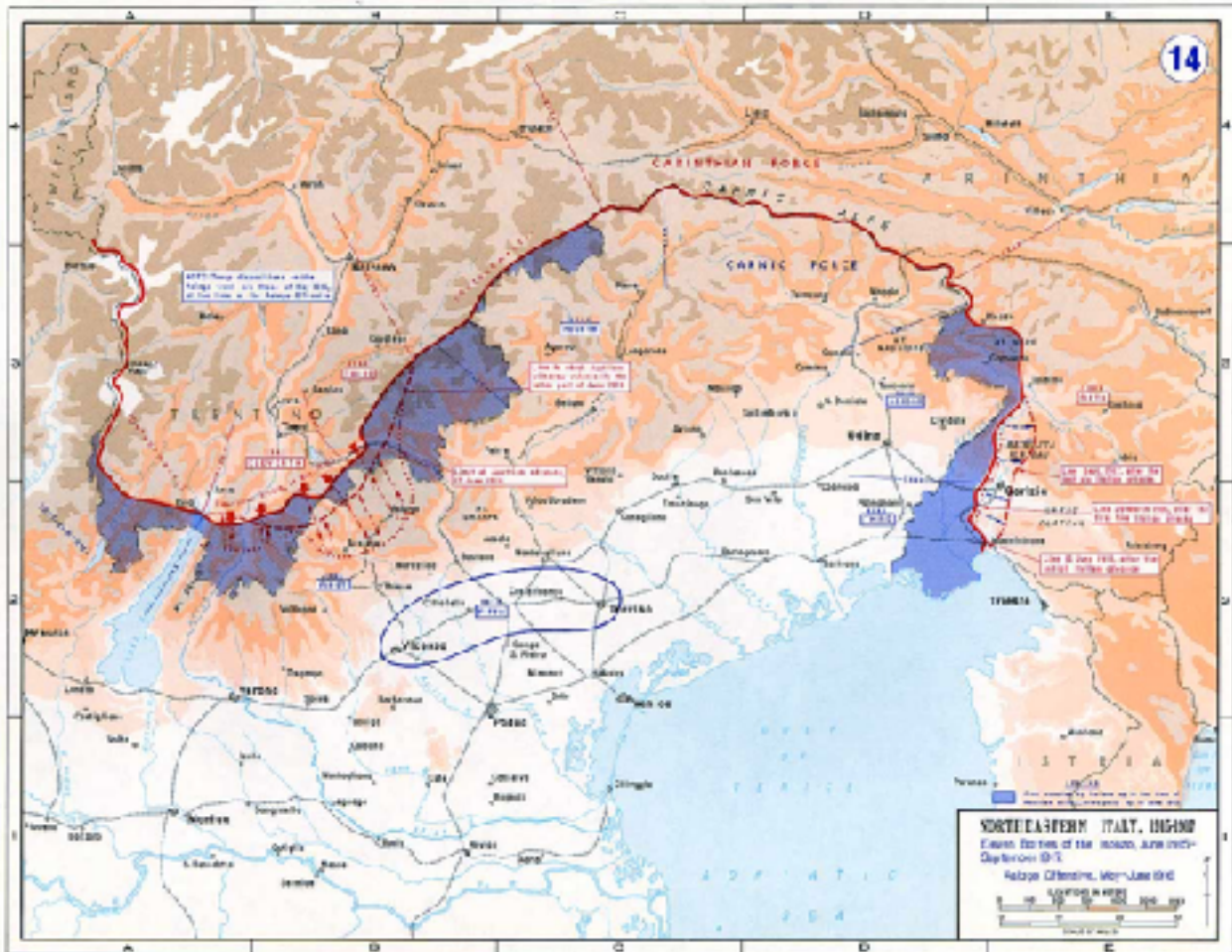
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Appendix A: Maps



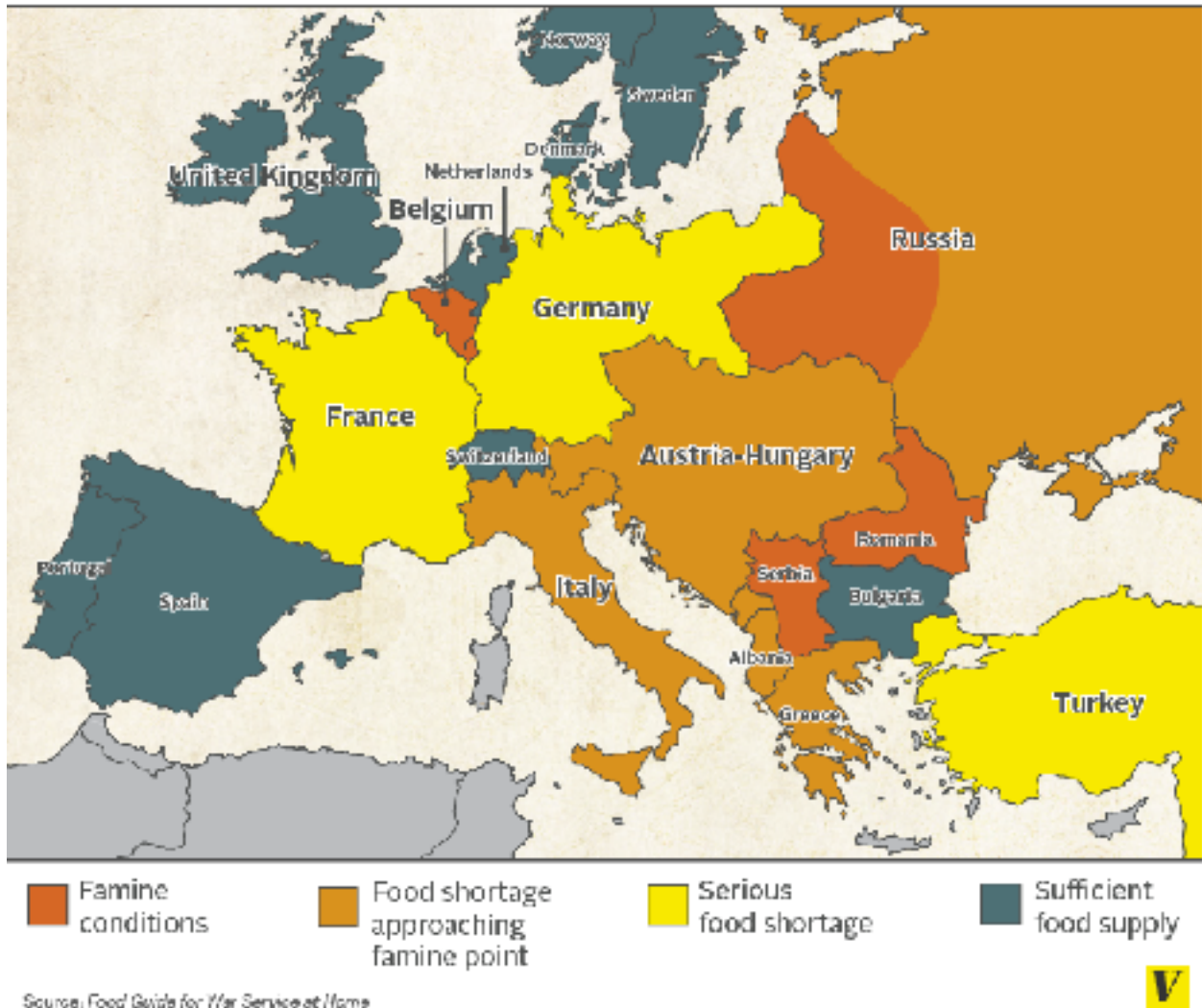
Map One: Pre-World War One Europe (Barkhorn).

Appendix A: Continued



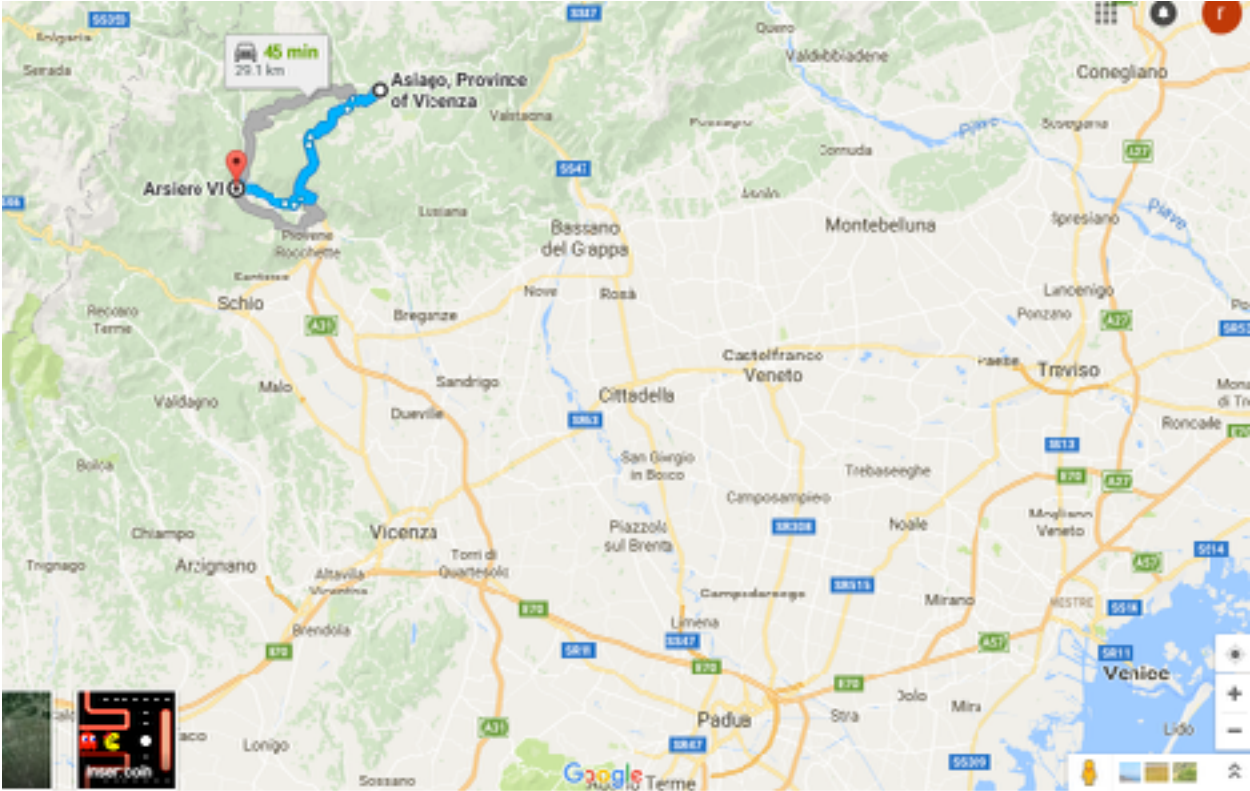
Map Two: The Twelve Battles of the Isonzo (Barkhorn).

FOOD SHORTAGES IN EUROPE, 1918



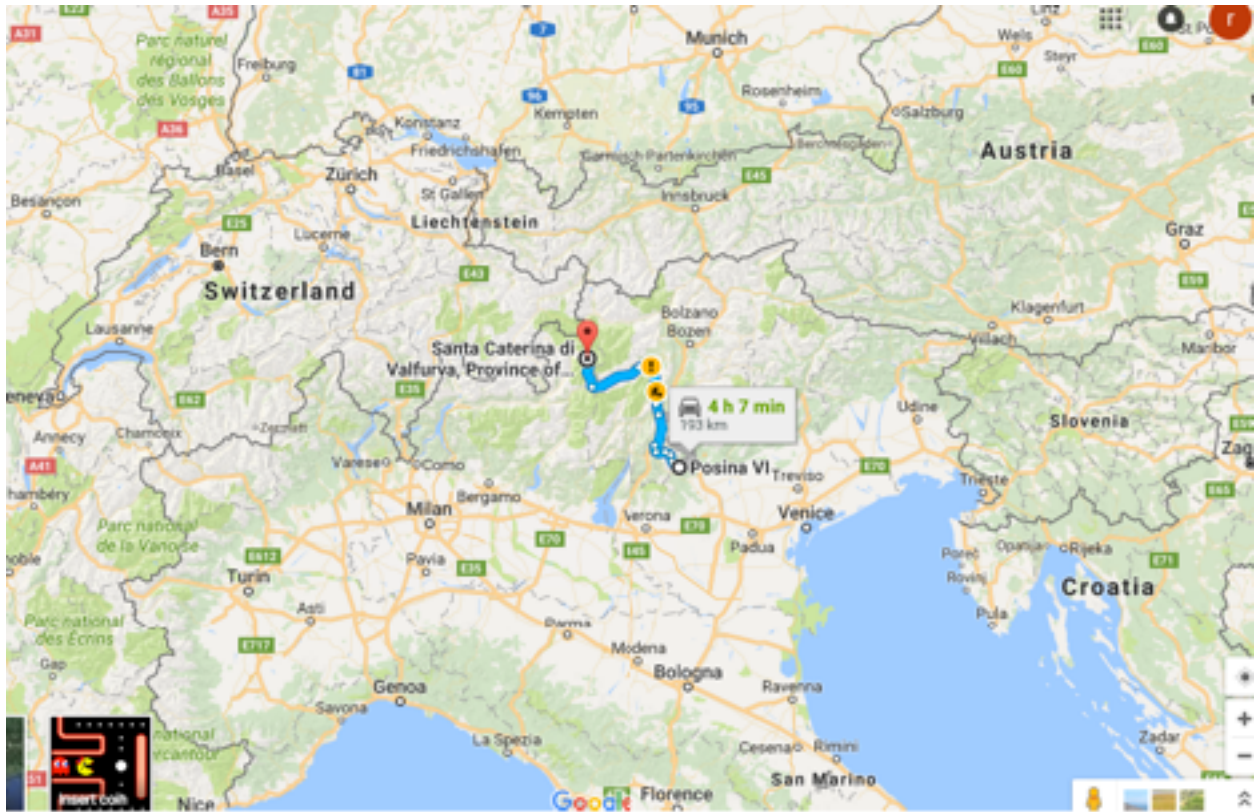
Map Three: Food Shortages (Barkhorn).

Appendix A: Continued



Map Four: Modern Italy. Map, Google Maps. Accessed March, 2017.

Appendix A: Continued

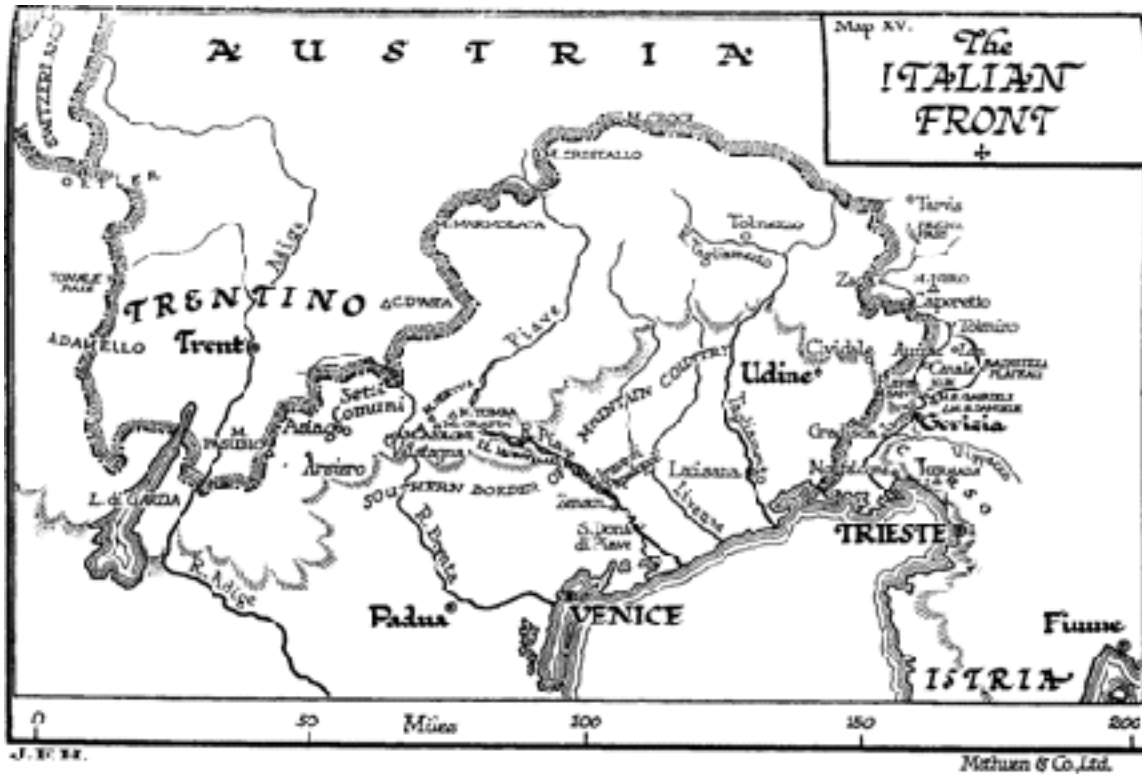


Map five: Modern Italy II. Map, Google Maps. Accessed March, 2017.



Map Six: The Soča Front (*Isonzmap*).

Appendix A: Continued



Map Seven: The Italian Front (*Italian Front*).

Appendix A: Continued



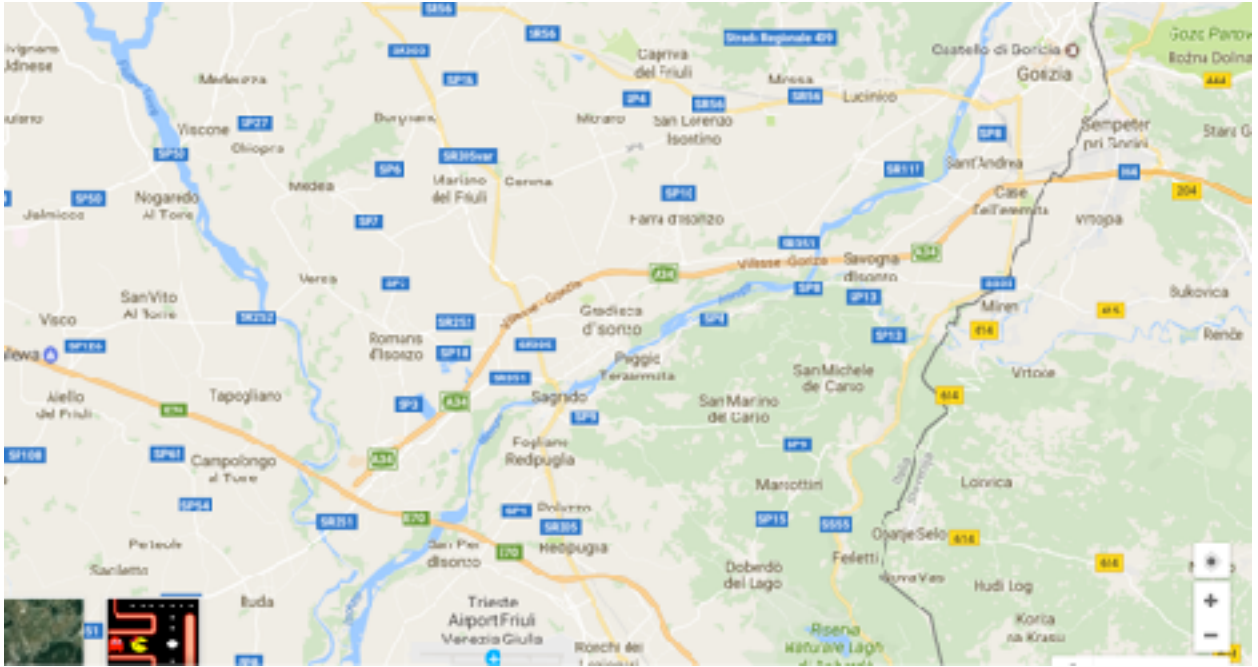
Map eight: Modern Italy III. Map, Google Maps. Accessed March, 2017

Appendix A: Continued



Map nine: Gorizia and the Isonzo river. Map, Google Maps. Accessed March, 2017

Appendix A: Continued



Map ten: Lucinico. Map, Google Maps. Accessed March, 2017