

## Introduction

This study sets out to analyse and present the formal qualities of the novels of Erich Maria Remarque. The aim is to show that these works cannot justifiably be classified as lowbrow literature or *Trivialliteratur*, as has often been done. Particular attention will be paid to the narrative perspective, although other aspects of the form – structural and textural – will likewise be incorporated in the examination. The analysis will form the basis for the consideration as to whether Remarque’s narrative techniques remain relatively unvarying throughout the novels – does the author adhere to an *Erfolgsrezept?* – or whether they are characterized by development. For this purpose the novels will be presented in chronological order, with each thesis-chapter covering one or two of Remarque’s books. The decision as to which novels should be treated together rests on similarity in content and form to the extent this is possible whilst still preserving the original sequence of the novels. The thoughts behind the division points will be elaborated upon in the individual chapters.

Due to his unprecedented commercial success with *Im Westen nichts Neues*,<sup>1</sup> Remarque has remained almost entirely associated with this particular work. However, over five decades, he authored a total of fourteen novels, several essays, plays and more than three hundred and fifty short stories and poems. Following his success with *Im Westen*, however, Remarque dedicated himself almost exclusively to the novel form. Thomas F. Schneider perceives Remarque’s oeuvre as consisting of two parts. *Im Westen* constitutes the dividing point. The part written prior to Remarque’s breakthrough with *Im Westen* in 1929 and which has remained largely unknown to the

wider readership, Schneider refers to as the *Frühwerk*. The other half, that is, from *Im Westen* and onwards, Schneider calls the *Hauptwerk*, the *Spätwerk* or *das eigentliche Werk*.<sup>2</sup> In compliance with Schneider's definitions, this study will apply the terms *Frühwerk* and *Spätwerk*. It should be noted, however, that for the sake of clarification and due to the lack of a more suitable expression, the word *Hauptwerk* will be used as signifying *solely* the eleven novels from *Im Westen* and onwards which earned Remarque his fame and on the basis of which his authorial skills have largely been judged.

Remarque was born in the German town of Osnabrück 22 June 1898 and was named Erich Paul Remark. As a child, he attended first the *Domschule* and later the *Johannisschule*, both situated in Osnabrück. Remarque's lower middle-class background eliminated the possibility of obtaining private education, but his completion of the three year Catholic *Präparande* in 1915 allowed him to enter the Catholic teaching training seminary in Osnabrück. However, a year into the course, in 1916, Remarque was conscripted for the army. The preliminary military training took place at the Caprivi barracks in Westerberg near Osnabrück, and later Remarque attended Celle training camp on the Lüneburg Heath. In mid-June 1917, Remarque was sent to Flanders on the Western Front where he was assigned to sapper duty. Approximately six weeks after his arrival at the front, on 31 July 1917, Remarque was wounded. After three weeks in an army hospital in Thorhut, he was transferred to St. Vinzenz Hospital in Duisburg where he remained until the end of October 1918. He did not return to the front, but spent the last days of the war in a reserve regiment in Osnabrück.

A letter composed by the hospitalized Remarque in the autumn 1917 and addressed to his friend on the front, Georg Middendorf, suggests that the former was working on a war novel. 'Schreib sich doch mal vom Leben, wie sich ist jetzt. Hat sich großes

Interesse, weil sich schreibt Roman.<sup>3</sup> Remarque additionally gathered information about the front experience by questioning fellow patients in the hospital. However, the war novel did not materialize until a decade later in the form of *Im Westen*. In the hospital episode of this work, an array of possible war injuries is described. The narrator concludes that '[e]rst das Lazarett zeigt, was der Krieg ist' (*Im Westen*, p. 177). The statement suggests that the injuries and individual war accounts Remarque came across at St. Vinzenz contributed to his turn to pacifism. There are, for instance, no moral doubts to detect about the paramilitary *Jugendwehr* in the short prose text, *Von den Freuden und Mühen der Jugendwehr*, which Remarque produced only months before being conscripted in 1916.<sup>4</sup> Rather, the short account portrays the organization's militaristic activities with a tone of excitement and as an adventurous game. The tone contrasts sharply with that of *Im Westen* and the novels thereafter, which suggests that Remarque's anti-war viewpoint developed as a result of his participation in the Great War and particularly his witnessing of individual victims. The focus of individual suffering against a background of major political occurrences indeed came to characterize most of Remarque's novels.

The first of the three novels contained in the *Frühwerk*, *Die Traumbude* (1920),<sup>5</sup> was intended as a literary celebration of one of Osnabrück's artists, Fritz Hörstemeier, around whom a small circle of local youths with an interest in art and a fascination for Hörstemeier's personality had formed. Remarque was part of this crowd and his profound sense of loss when Hörstemeier died prematurely in March 1918 can be read from his personal diaries of that year.<sup>6</sup> *Die Traumbude* incorporates a number of Hörstemeier's poems which, combined with the overly precious expressions of Remarque's narrative, give the novel an atmosphere of decadence. *Die Traumbude* has therefore, justifiably, been rejected as Remarque's 'Jugendsünde',<sup>7</sup> and been said to

‘[try] the patience of even the most willing reader’.<sup>8</sup> Only few critics have subsequently paid this work any attention.<sup>9</sup>

After the war Remarque completed his teaching training and, in the period from August 1919 to November 1920, was employed as a substitute teacher in three different schools. He thereafter left the teaching profession and, for a short period of time, had miscellaneous jobs in Osnabrück. These included, for instance, employment as a sales assistant in a stone masonry, and playing the organ in a psychiatric institution; both experiences are echoed in the later novel, *Der schwarze Obelisk*. More importantly, during this period, Remarque also began to write as a means of making a living. Employed by the *Osnabrücker Tageblatt* and the *Osnabrücker Landeszeitung*, he functioned as a theatre and concert critic, but he was also successful in getting his own work – poems and short pieces of prose – published in a number of newspapers and magazines.

In 1922, Remarque moved to Hanover to work as a copywriter and editor at the *Echo Continental*, the magazine of the rubber manufacturer and tyre company *Continental*. In his spare time, Remarque worked on his second novel, *Gam*, which would remain unpublished until 1998. A short story by Remarque, *Steppengewitter*, which is lifted more or less directly from *Gam*, did, however, appear in the Munich magazine *Jugend* in July 1924.<sup>10</sup> Although Remarque never completed *Gam*, the novel fragment reflects – in parts – the succinct, journalistic style which later came to characterize the *Hauptwerk*. Whilst employed in Hanover, Remarque’s continued composing of short, sharp essays and short stories for the *Echo Continental* clearly contributed to the author’s immense but positive stylistic leap from *Die Traumbude* to *Gam*. As a matter of fact, many elements of *Gam* reappear later in Remarque’s oeuvre.<sup>11</sup> The names of Clerfayt and Ravic constitute two such examples,<sup>12</sup> but also the overall theme of *Gam*’s

self-exploration and search for life is found later in the *Hauptwerk*. There is, for instance, a striking similarity between Gam and the protagonist, Lillian, in *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*.

In December 1924, Remarque moved to Berlin to fill the post as editor for the Hugenberg publication, *Sport im Bild: Das Blatt für die gute Gesellschaft*. Whilst living in the capital, Remarque wrote his next novel, *Station am Horizont*.<sup>13</sup> The work was serialized in *Sport im Bild* during the winter 1927/ 28, but despite being relatively successful, *Station am Horizont* was not published in book form until 1998. As in the earlier short story, *Das Rennen Vanderveldes*,<sup>14</sup> which Remarque had produced in 1924, the plot of *Station am Horizont* revolves around car-racing.<sup>15</sup> Remarque resumes this theme several times during the *Hauptwerk*. It forms the basis for the film treatment *The Other Love* which was turned into a film and released under the same title in 1947,<sup>16</sup> and it is also at the centre of the novel *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge* from 1961. The car theme is only one of many recurring elements which are found throughout Remarque's oeuvre and which, at times, connect the seemingly most unrelated works.<sup>17</sup>

Remarque was prolific as a writer throughout the 1920s, and many of his essays, poems and short stories were published in various newspapers and magazines throughout Germany. *Station am Horizont* had appeared in *Sport im Bild*, which could boast of having featured writers such as Robert Walser, Axel Eggebrecht, Carl Zuckmayer, Robert Musil and even Bertolt Brecht. Despite the opposite claim from Ullstein Publishing House, Remarque had therefore become part of the Weimar 'Crème der Literaturszene' even prior to the origin of *Im Westen*.<sup>18</sup>

In its advertising campaign for *Im Westen*, Ullstein introduced Remarque as a debut author, whose psychological struggle to come to terms with his experiences on the Western Front had resulted in the writing of a war novel.<sup>19</sup> Neither the jet-set life style

of the characters in *Station am Horizont*, nor the long-winded philosophizing in *Die Traumbude*, was compatible with this picture of Remarque as a war-traumatized man. This perhaps explains why Ullstein attempted to obtain and destroy remaining copies of *Die Traumbude*,<sup>20</sup> and why *Station am Horizont* was not published in book form in the wake of the success of *Im Westen*.

After being published, first in serial form in the *Vossische Zeitung* in November and December 1928 and then in book form in early 1929, *Im Westen* immediately became a bestseller; it has even been professed to be the most frequently printed book, following the Bible.<sup>21</sup> Translations exist in more than fifty languages and the work has sold over twenty million copies worldwide.<sup>22</sup> The novel's initial, commercial success was first and foremost the result of Remarque's presentation of the 'lost generation' as experienced through the eyes of a young foot soldier. Even a decade after the end of the Great War, many former soldiers still struggled to process their war experiences. However, in response to his novel, Remarque received many letters from war veterans who claimed that *Im Westen* had helped them digest the past and move forward. It seems Remarque managed to express in words the emotions experienced by the former soldiers but which they could not themselves verbalize.<sup>23</sup>

Other major pacifist novels existed alongside *Im Westen*. The most obvious examples are Arnold Zweig's *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa*, Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* and Edlef Köppen's *Heeresbericht*, but no other works attracted the same level of attention as *Im Westen*. This was partly due to Ullstein's intensive advertising campaign (although *Krieg* was also well-promoted), partly because the novel focused on the psychological impact of war. Moreover, the vague references to time and location in *Im Westen* made Bäumer's narrative applicable to any war, anywhere, at any time. The narrative thereby achieved an air of continued and universal relevance.

Remarque's naturalistic presentation of the war and his employment of a first-person narrator led to the widespread, although erroneous, assumption that *Im Westen* was autobiographical. The popularity during the early war years of authentic accounts and diaries from the battle front presumably also contributed to this misinterpretation of *Im Westen*. The war diaries and reports had given precedence to authenticity rather than aesthetics and even though the appeal of this genre had faded by the time *Im Westen* appeared, its journalistic form caused some confusion. The novel was even criticized for its vague information on time and place names, despite the fact that this characteristic had also dominated the original, supposedly non-fictional diaries.<sup>24</sup> The autobiographical interpretation of *Im Westen* nonetheless seems illogical, given Bäumer's death at the end of the novel. This event is a weighty indicator that Remarque and his protagonist cannot possibly be identical.<sup>25</sup>

The extent of the publicity and fame *Im Westen* achieved was to a certain degree the result of the time at which it appeared.<sup>26</sup> Emerging at a time when Germany was still attempting to determine its identity following its defeat in the war, *Im Westen* was met by either strong support or just as fierce opposition depending on the reader's stance to the – at the time – unvanquished nationalistic mood and re-emerging militarism.

Another important factor contributing to the popularity of *Im Westen* was its form, which made it approachable even to inexperienced readers. Peter Dörp comments on this aspect of the novel's appeal: 'Remarque hatte es verstanden, mit Hilfe raffinierter erzähltechnischer Mittel beim Leser weniger an den Verstand zu appellieren als vielmehr, wie Goebbels es formulierte, an das "Herz"'.<sup>27</sup> Remarque thus targeted a wider audience than for instance Arnold Zweig in *Der Streit um den Sergeanten Grischa* or *Junge Frau von 1914*, which both contain far more complex sentence structures and a broader vocabulary than *Im Westen*. Unfortunately, the seemingly

simplistic form of *Im Westen* became ammunition for those who resented Remarque because of his fame or his political stance. Landshoff's statement on the nature of German literary criticism offers an explanation as to why the form of Remarque's work was used as an argument for dismissing his literature as inferior: 'Es besteht zu oft die Neigung, die literarische Qualität eines erfolgreichen Autors zu unterschätzen und die Erfolglosigkeit eines Werkes bereits als Zeichen des literarischen Wertes zu beurteilen'.<sup>28</sup> Wagener voices a similar observation and contrasts German and American literary criticism:

Es ist meines Erachtens kein Zufall, daß ein Gutteil der kritischen Auseinandersetzung mit Remarques Werk bisher von der amerikanischen Germanistik geleistet wurde. Der Grund dafür ist nicht nur im Thematischen zu finden, sondern meines Erachtens in einem anderen Kultur- und Literaturverständnis, in einer anderen Erwartungshaltung der Literatur gegenüber. Kultur ist in Deutschland traditionell etwas Hohes, etwas Hehres, wovor man Ehrfurcht hat. [...] Ein Buch der sogenannten hohen Literatur muß in Deutschland philosophische Tiefe haben – in Amerika kann und soll Literatur zwar gedankenreich sein, muß gleichzeitig aber auch Unterhaltungswert besitzen.<sup>29</sup>

Paradoxically, it can be argued that less striking sales figures might have been favourable to Remarque's literary reputation as he might have been looked upon with more benign eyes both by other major authors as well as by scholars.

The next two novels, *Der Weg zurück* and *Drei Kameraden*,<sup>30</sup> both explore the post-war period. Similarly to *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* was serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung*, and in the spring of 1931 it became available in book form. However, the pacifist message of the novels was not compatible with the National Socialist ideology, and *Im Westen* and *Der Weg* were therefore amongst the books blacklisted and burned 10 May 1933 on the *Opernplatz* of Berlin.

Remarque did not experience the book burning. He had moved to Switzerland in April 1932, and had acquired a villa, Casa Monte Tabor, in Porto Ronco. Here he wrote *Kameraden*, which he dedicated to his then wife, Ilse Jutta Zambona, whom he had married whilst living in Berlin. As Remarque's novels were banned in Germany, *Kameraden* was translated and released in a number of other countries in 1936/ 37 before it was published in its original language the following year by the exile publishing house, *Querido*, in Amsterdam. The novel only became available in Germany in 1951. Although Remarque would return to the Weimar period in the later novel, *Der schwarze Obelisk*, *Kameraden* brought an initial end to the First World War as a theme for Remarque's novels.

In 1939, as it became increasingly unsafe to remain in Europe, Remarque emigrated to the USA. The previous year Remarque's German citizenship had been annulled,<sup>31</sup> but despite his stateless status, which lasted until 1947 when Remarque obtained American citizenship, his international fame enabled him to retain his previous, comfortable lifestyle. The novels Remarque wrote during this period, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*,<sup>32</sup> however, focus on that larger proportion of exiles of National Socialism who were less privileged.

Both novels were received positively in the English speaking world. *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* was, for instance, nominated 'book of the week' in late April 1941 in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*,<sup>33</sup> and *Arc de Triomphe* became Remarque's second bestseller with high sales figures particularly in America.

Similarly to *Kameraden*, neither *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* nor *Arc de Triomphe* was published in Germany until the early 1950s. German versions had, however, been available abroad, as *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* was published by Bermann Fischer in Sweden in 1941 and *Arc de Triomphe* by the Swiss publisher F. G. Micha in 1946.

*Liebe Deinen Nächsten* was the last of Remarque's previously banned novels to be brought out in Germany. This did not occur until 1953. Its reception by German reviewers was modest; not least because Remarque's controversial concentration camp novel, *Der Funke Leben*,<sup>34</sup> had appeared only the year previously, and the heated debate which followed in its wake undoubtedly had a negative impact also on the reception of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*.

Remarque began working on *Funke Leben* in 1946, and it took him five years to complete the novel. As Remarque had spent the war years in America, he had not personally witnessed or experienced concentration camp imprisonment, and he therefore consulted reports; witness accounts; interviews and photos to acquire the knowledge necessary to write such a novel. Remarque wanted to explore 'wie Menschen andere Menschen so zu quälen im stande waren, ohne es als Unrecht zu empfinden'.<sup>35</sup> However, Remarque also had personal grounds for writing this novel, as one of his sisters, Elfriede Scholz, had been executed for 'Wehrkraftzersetzung' in 1943. A contract regarding *Funke Leben* had been signed with the leading Swiss publishing house, Alfred Scherz, before the work was even complete, but as Scherz received the final product in 1951, they rejected the novel arguing that its contents were too controversial and would result not only in a boycott of Remarque's novels in general, but possibly of all Scherz publications.<sup>36</sup> The German publisher Desch likewise recoiled.<sup>37</sup> Kiepenheuer und Witsch, however, agreed to publish the novel despite the outcry it was expected to cause, and though neither Remarque's novels nor the publishing house was boycotted, the sales figures were low. Reviews were mostly negative and often questioned the credibility of the novel's content by pointing to Remarque's *Nicht-dabei-gewesen-sein*. There were however also complimentary reviews which predominantly commented on the author's courage for treating the

Holocaust topic.<sup>38</sup> The accusation of being a *Nestbeschmutzer*, a claim which had adhered to Remarque since the writing of *Im Westen*,<sup>39</sup> did not deter Remarque from writing yet another novel set in Germany under the Second World War. Remarque dedicated the work, *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben* to 'P. G.', Paulette Goddard, whom he later married.<sup>40</sup> Although the issues dealt with in *Zeit zu leben* – the crimes of the *Wehrmacht* and the collective guilt of the German nation – were perceived controversial at the time, it was not the topics which attracted most attention, but rather the fact that the German version had been subjected to censorship. The novel was published by Kiepenheuer und Witsch in September 1954, but only a month later the Danish newspaper, *Information*, reported of the discovery of differences between the Danish translation and the supposedly original version published in Germany. Gyldendal, the publishing house of the Danish and Norwegian versions, confirmed that its publications were based upon the manuscript Remarque had sent to his English translator, Denver Lindley, in America.<sup>41</sup>

Kiepenheuer und Witsch insisted that Remarque had requested the publishing house's editorial assistance and that he had consented to their suggestions. The purpose of editing the work was, according to the publisher, to make the novel 'zeitgerecht' in respect to 'die technischen Details (Fragen des Milieus, der Terminologie und andere mehr zum äußeren Kleid des Romans gehörende Dinge)'.<sup>42</sup> However, *Die Welt* suspected a different motive. It noted: '[g]estrichen wurde, was die Unverbesserlichen und Unbelehrbaren ärgern könnte'.<sup>43</sup> The Danish paper, *Information*, examined the differences between the two versions and concluded that statements portraying the German soldier in a perceived dishonorable light had been omitted.<sup>44</sup> In his diaries, Remarque claims that he accepted the changes only 'mit schweigendem Disgust',<sup>45</sup> and he may indeed have felt pressurized to work with the publisher in order to get published

for the German market. Remarque had, in fact, supposedly requested that the Danish translation should be based on the original manuscript rather than on the published German version. This further supports the view that the author was unhappy about the censorship *Zeit zu leben* had been subjected to in his home country.<sup>46</sup> The alterations undertaken were of a kind that changed the message of the German publication decidedly from that of the foreign language versions. In the original manuscript, for instance, Graeber expresses the realization of both his own and the collective guilt: ‘‘Mörder’, sagte er noch einmal und meinte Steinbrenner und sich selbst und unzählige andere’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 398). Although a key statement in the novel in as far as it conveys Graeber’s first direct defiance of the Nazi regime, it was omitted from the German version. Graeber’s killing of Steinbrenner is instead legitimized by referring to it as ‘Notwehr’. The novel’s impeaching quality was further softened by a number of other alterations and omissions. References, for instance, to Steinbrenner’s past in the SD and the SS as well as his activities in a concentration camp were erased, as was his persecution of the quarter-Jewish character, Hirschland, who in the German version appeared as Aryan and with the name Hirschmann. Understandably, Heini’s accounts of the sadistic treatment of Russian prisoners were likewise taken out.

Given that the novel was brought out during the Cold War, it is perhaps not surprising that in addition to the already stated amendments, Remarque’s sympathetically depicted Communist, Immermann, was given a political makeover and was transformed into a Social Democrat. A similar argument might explain why (in the censored version) the released Russian prisoners who shoot Graeber are explicitly said to be partisans. Not only are the Russians portrayed as being dangerous and untrustworthy, the confirmation of their identity as partisans also mitigates the harshness of an execution, carried out early on in the novel, of a similar group of Russian suspects. Although the members of

this group look like innocent civilians (just like the Russians who eventually kill Graeber) the suspicion arises that they too *could* have been partisans. Remarque's uncensored version is devoid of such a connotation.<sup>47</sup>

The censored version of *Zeit zu leben* remained the only publication of this work in German until 1989.<sup>48</sup> It had, however, become impossible to trace a copy of Remarque's original manuscript, and the censored sections were subsequently rewritten from foreign translations. Based on Denver Lindley's English translation, Thomas F. Schneider and Angelika Howind undertook this task. Despite the fact that German readers since 1989 have had access to a version of *Zeit zu leben*, which conveys in close proximity the message Remarque originally intended, it is nonetheless not Remarque's exact work, but a product in which some vocabulary and sentence structures might differ – albeit to only a small extent – from Remarque's original. Considering that parts of the text have been translated twice – first from Remarque's German original into English, and then back again – it is only to assume that at least stylistic differences, even if minor, have appeared during the translation processes. Moreover, potential mistakes in the first translation must naturally be incorporated also in the translation back into German. Remarque himself was aware of this issue. 'Keine Übersetzung aber kann dem Originalmanuskript gerecht werden. Die Originalität jedes Schriftstellers beruht zum großen Teil auf seiner Sprache. Rhythmus und Klang der Sprache sind die beiden Dinge, die nicht übersetzt werden können'.<sup>49</sup> He also accentuates the problems revolving around translation in his humorous essay, *Größere und kleinere Ironien meines Lebens*. With regards to *Im Westen*, he explains: 'Überall erschienen Piratausgaben. In einer, in Indien, war durch ein Dutzend schlechte Übersetzungen von noch schlechteren Übersetzungen zum Schluß ein Eifersuchtsdrama zwischen einem Förster und einem Walddieb daraus geworden'.<sup>50</sup> This may be an exaggeration, as

Remarque's essay continues to embellish the legends surrounding his person. It nevertheless highlights the question of accuracy in translations. In the example above, Remarque claims that the plot had transformed entirely, but even in cases where the overall content remains unaltered, misinterpretation of a single word or its possible implications, might cause a slight deviation from the author's originally intended meaning.<sup>51</sup>

*Zeit zu leben* is not the only work by Remarque that no longer exists in its original German form. In the early 1930s, Remarque produced a number of short stories for the American magazine, *Collier's Weekly*. These stories, which are set in the immediate post-war period, are now available in the publication *Der Feind*.<sup>52</sup> Whereas only parts of *Zeit zu leben* are translated from English, *Der Feind* is entirely based on the English version, since a German original has never been located. This is also the case with the film synopsis *Die andere Liebe*, which came to form the basis for the film *The Other Love* from 1946.

In his next novel, *Der schwarze Obelisk: Geschichte einer verspäteten Jugend* (*Obelisk*)<sup>53</sup> from 1956, Remarque returns to the past and again depicts the period of the Weimar Republic. The work was, however, written and intended to be read with the Second World War in hindsight. As in his previous works, Remarque's message is one of pacifism, and the novel was consequently highly topical when it appeared in the mid-1950s, as the East-West tension intensified, and rearmament and development of ever more destructive weapons were on the agenda. Despite its relevance, German critics did not take kindly to *Obelisk*. This was not least a result of Remarque's overt criticism at the end of the novel of the widespread acquittal of German war criminals, a topic which Remarque elaborated on in his essay, also from 1956, *Seid wachsam! Zum Film 'Der letzte Akt'*.<sup>54</sup>

In 1959, Remarque was asked to write a novel for the Springer magazine, *Kristall*, which at the time was in financial difficulties. It was hoped that the serialization of a work by a prominent author would evoke interest and increase the magazine's sales figures. Johannes Mario Simmel, had originally been offered the contract but had declined. The chief editor of the magazine, Pierre Pabst, visited Remarque who, unimpressed with the initial fee offer, allegedly dragged his guest from one drinking establishment to another until Pabst, intoxicated by large amounts of alcohol, wrote out a cheque for a considerably higher sum than initially intended.<sup>55</sup>

The work which Remarque delivered, *Geborgtes Leben*, was published in book form in 1961 under the revised titled *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*.<sup>56</sup> This novel, like *Zeit zu leben*, carries a dedication to 'Paulette Goddard', but now with the additional name 'Remarque'. Thematically, *Der Himmel* differs from the rest of the *Hauptwerk* in that it does not revolve directly around the topics of war, exile or *Vergangenheitsbewältigung*. It nevertheless classifies as a typical Remarque novel, in as far as it examines the same overall aspects as Remarque's other works: life, death and victimization.

Remarque's last two novels, *Die Nacht von Lissabon*<sup>57</sup> and *Schatten im Paradies*<sup>58</sup> can be perceived as indirect sequences to the earlier exile novels, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*. *Lissabon* portrays the existence of refugees in the period from 1939-1942 as they seek to escape the European continent, and *Schatten* further explores this issue in its depiction of the existence of those who manage to reach America. *Lissabon* was published in 1962 and, in Germany, the reception was relatively positive, a reflection of the fact that the nation had begun to acknowledge and process its National Socialist past.

The history revolving around the production of Remarque's last novel, *Schatten*, merits some attention. The inspiration for this work is thought to originate in a private

writing project which Remarque began in 1950 as a means of getting to terms with his failed relationship with the Russian actress, Natascha Paley-Wilson. The project – at the outset labelled *Das Buch N.* – had by 1967 developed into a manuscript which Remarque intended to entitle *New York Intermezzo* or *New York Story*.<sup>59</sup> However, as typical of Remarque's writing procedure, he rejected this novel draft and embarked upon creating an entirely new version of it. This last manuscript, he named *Das gelobte Land*.

When Remarque died on 25 September 1970, the manuscript was still incomplete. On 20 April 1971, under much publicity, his widow, Paulette Goddard, nevertheless sold the first version for publication at auction to the highest bidder. As a result the novel was published by Droemer-Knauer as opposed to Kiepenheuer und Witsch who had been Remarque's publishers since 1952, when they had first agreed to bring out Remarque's controversial concentration camp novel.

Remarque had worked on different sections of the novel simultaneously, but whereas the early chapters had been revised several times, the concluding part existed only in note form. The later chapters thus needed completion and amendments to succeed the already revised chapters logically. Droemer-Knauer, Goddard and Remarque's former agent, Felix Guggenheim, all claimed that the novel, published under the title *Schatten im Paradies*, was Remarque's last version of two manuscripts. However, Marc Wilhelm Küster has shown that the published novel is, in fact, based on an earlier, and by Remarque discarded, version.<sup>60</sup> In addition, significant changes were made by the editor at the publishing house. The length of the novel, for instance, was reduced by approximately ten percent, a substantial reduction which in its nature resembled censorship. The deleted passages consisted predominantly of political statements about post-war Germany and satirical or negative allusions to American culture. One passage

was furthermore extracted from the main text and transformed into a prologue. Finally, the title, 'Schatten im Paradies', was not formulated by Remarque, but derived from an English title, *Shadows in Paradise*, proposed by the American editor.<sup>61</sup> Due to all these alterations which Paulette Goddard authorized, despite the fact that she never mastered the German language, it must be concluded that *Schatten* in its published form is not entirely Remarque's work. In 1998, Kiepenheuer und Witsch published the last, although fragmented, version of the manuscript which Remarque had been working on when he died, and which he had entitled *Das gelobte Land*. Many episodes of *Schatten* and *Das gelobte Land* are relatively identical in their contents, although character names differ considerably. A significant difference, however, is found in the conclusions of the two works. In both versions the refugee narrator returns to Germany after the war, but is disillusioned with the sentiments with which he is met. Whereas *Schatten* concludes at this point, the notes at the end of *Das gelobte Land* suggest that Remarque was still undecided whether to include the themes of revenge and suicide.

As *Schatten* was not completed by Remarque nor submitted for publication by him, the mainly negative reception which this work received cannot be blamed on Remarque or justly be regarded as reflecting his ability as a writer. His authorial reputation should therefore not beg defending through points of reference to this novel. In this examination of Remarque's narrative methods and the subsequent evaluation of his merit as an author, there is therefore no full justification for taking *Schatten* into account. It would be of equally little purpose to base an analysis on the final manuscript, *Das gelobte Land*, as it remained fragmentary. Given Remarque's tendency to rewrite his manuscripts several times before eventually submitting the final version for publication, *Das gelobte Land* would presumably have become subject to further revision or perhaps even formed the basis for a third or even fourth manuscript, had

Remarque's health allowed it. Comments on *Schatten* are therefore restricted to occasional references for comparative purposes.

In addition to the fourteen novels, Remarque wrote a large amount of short stories, essays and reviews, and even ventured into different literary areas such as those of poetry and cartoon strips. His experimentation with this variety of literary genres took place mainly in the 1920s and was chiefly the result of his employment at the *Echo Continental* and *Sport im Bild*. However, after his breakthrough with *Im Westen*, the novel took precedence as Remarque's preferred literary medium. The short stories and essays he did write parallel to the *Hauptwerk* concentrated on the same issues as his novels: situations of crisis and their victims. In the early 1930s, Remarque produced the six short stories which now constitute the publication *Der Feind*. These narratives emerged from a contract with the American news agency *United Press* which bound Remarque to deliver the mentioned short stories alongside the novel *Der Weg*. In 1930, three of the six stories were printed in *Collier's Weekly*. The remaining three followed the year after, but they did not appear in book form (or in German) until 1993, when Kiepenheuer und Witsch published them under the title of one of the short stories, *Der Feind*. Another compilation, *Ein militanter Pazifist*, appeared in 1994. This book contains essays and interviews of which a central theme – as the title suggests – is Remarque's pacifist standpoint. Two additional compilations, *Das unbekannte Werk, Band I-V* and *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten* followed in 1998 and 2001 respectively. The latter contains a wide variety of short stories, essays and reviews, almost all of which are also in volume four of *Das unbekannte Werk*. This five volume publication was brought out in connection with Remarque's centenary in 1998. Volume one holds the three early, and relatively unknown, novels: *Die Traumbude*, *Gam* and *Station am Horizont*. The manuscript, *Gelobte Land*, which Remarque was working on when he

died, is contained in volume two. In the 1950s, Remarque had created a film script based on Judge Michael A. Musmanno's report, *Ten Days to Die*. This report portrays the final phase of the Second World War as experienced from within Hitler's underground air-raid shelter in the vicinity of the *Reichstag*.<sup>62</sup> Remarque's draft of the film script, *Der letzte Akt* and the play, *Die letzte Station*, comprise volume three of *Das unbekannte Werk*.<sup>63</sup> Volume four contains short stories, essays, poems and the cartoon strip, *Die Contibuben*, to which Remarque delivered the text whilst working for *Echo Continental* in Hanover. The fifth and final volume contains a selection of private writings in the shape of Remarque's written correspondence and his diaries.<sup>64</sup> Much material overlaps in the publications *Der Feind*, *Ein militanter Pazifist*, *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten* and *Das unbekannte Werk*, but apart from *Der Feind*, each compilation also holds material which is excluded from all the others.

Although these publications allow us to explore a part of Remarque's oeuvre which has remained relatively unknown to the wider readership, it is questionable whether the author would have welcomed their discovery. In a television interview conducted by Friedrich Luft in 1965, for instance, Remarque expresses relief at the fact that his early writings had seemingly been consigned to oblivion. Referring to the time before his breakthrough, Remarque states: 'Davor habe ich ganz anders geschrieben, und zwar ziemlich dumm. [...] Ich bin ganz froh, daß sie [the writings prior to *Im Westen*] vergessen sind'.<sup>65</sup>

Viewed in isolation, the *Frühwerk* is indeed of little literary worth, aside from the fact that it testifies to the learning process Remarque underwent during the 1920s.<sup>66</sup> Schneider states: 'Auch heute noch beginnt Remarques Werk für die breite Öffentlichkeit mit *Im Westen nichts Neues*, dem Welterfolg, der quasi aus dem Nichts kam. Wenn überhaupt, gab es davor "Versuche", die getrost zu vernachlässigen und

noch weniger Gegenstand öffentlichen oder gar wissenschaftlichen Interesses sind'.<sup>67</sup>

The *Frühwerk* will therefore largely be excluded from this study, which instead will focus on the ten novels from *Im Westen* to *Lissabon*. Parallels or contrasts to other aspects of the oeuvre will, of course, still be highlighted where relevant. The *Hauptwerk* has been selected as the subject for analysis on the basis of this study's aim to refute Remarque's classification as an author of *Trivalliteratur*. This negative labelling originates in the *Hauptwerk* alone, since all Remarque's other writings remained relatively unknown and unavailable until Kiepenheuer und Witsch began to re-publish them in the 1990s.

Remarque's success with novels which appear to be formally relatively simple certainly contributed to his work being spurned as 'Trivalliteratur, Unterhaltungsprose, Kolportage, Kitsch gar'.<sup>68</sup> However, there is indication that the form alone did not instigate this, but that political and ideological opposition as well as envy within the profession likewise contributed to the rejection of Remarque as an author of lowbrow literature.<sup>69</sup>

With the release of *Im Westen*, Remarque rapidly gained fame as the novel's sales figures went through the roof. Major, German authors such as Thomas Mann and Arnold Zweig subsequently exhibited hostility towards this professed debut author who, in comparison to them both, had a much less complex authorial style. Traces of envy, concealed behind expressions of contempt, can be found in letters and private journals of some of Remarque's contemporaries. Thomas Mann, for instance, refers to Remarque as 'minderwertig' on a number of occasions,<sup>70</sup> and after the release of *Im Westen*, Arnold Zweig allegedly called both this novel and Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* "gute" Dilettanten-Romane', "gut" mit herablassender Färbung'. Zweig even suggested: 'Remarque hätte aus seinem Buch sogar einen großen Roman machen können'.<sup>71</sup>

During the Second World War, Remarque again attracted envy. Whilst in exile, he was able to maintain his previous, comfortable lifestyle, whereas many, internationally less known, German authors in exile struggled to make a living. Bertolt Brecht belonged to the latter category and, perhaps predictably, found Remarque's extravagant lifestyle objectionable. He mentions Remarque in his private journal in which, after an encounter at a social gathering, he sarcastically describes Remarque's arrival at the party. The latter is reportedly wearing a tuxedo and is accompanied by a Hollywood star. Brecht notes: 'r [emarque] ist im smoking, sieht aus wie hans heinz ewers, und irgend etwas fehlt mir an seinem gesicht, wahrscheinlich ein monokel'.<sup>72</sup> A number of Remarque's colleagues evidently found the degree of his fame as well as the privileges it brought him unwarranted and, as the above comments suggest, negative and condescending murmuring thus typically surrounded Remarque's name within the literary community.

In German public discourse, Remarque and his novels were also much debated, and the discussions were more often political than literary. This was not least because Remarque, in *Im Westen* and also in many of his following novels, wrote on controversial topics which provoked strong reactions. The widespread antipathy towards the views conveyed in the novels was subsequently projected on to Remarque's authorial abilities, which were questioned or even discredited.

The difference in response to Remarque's novels in- and outside of Germany testifies to the effect politics exercised on the reception. *Im Westen* and *Der Weg* were largely greeted positively by American reviewers, whereas a considerable proportion of German critics expressed open opposition. The difference presumably rests in fact that Germany was directly engaged with the contents of these two works, whilst the uninvolved Americans could assume a relatively objective stance and judge the books on their literary merits rather than on their ideological message. A similar reception

pattern characterized other Remarque novels. *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*, which treat the topic of the Second World War, also found an overall positive reception abroad, whereas Germany exhibited hostility, despite the omissions and alterations which had been made to the German editions, particularly to *Zeit zu leben*. The reception of the individual novels will be incorporated in the following chapters. In the novels of the Second World War, Remarque's portrayal of the German people offended many of his former fellow countrymen who wished to forget their own more or less active role in the National Socialist regime. Recognizing themselves as the main target of the author's indignation, these people subsequently struggled to remain unbiased in relation to Remarque's novels. Understandably, Remarque therefore received more impartial – and more positive – criticism abroad.

Along with all the other former German citizens who had been disenfranchised during the National Socialist period, Remarque's German citizenship was never revalidated (an application was required in order to regain citizenship and Remarque refused to submit one), but perhaps as a gesture, in the 1960s, the author was awarded both the *Möser-Medaille* from the city council of his hometown, Osnabrück, and the *Großes Verdienstkreuz* from the West German government. In addition, the Swiss municipalities, Ronco and Ascona, declared Remarque an honorary citizen and he was furthermore granted membership of the *Deutschen Akademie für Sprache und Dichtung*. In 1968, a street in Osnabrück was named after Elfriede Scholz, and posthumously, in 1975, Remarque too had this honour as the *Karlsring* in Osnabrück was renamed the *E.-M.-Remarque-Ring*.<sup>73</sup> Finally in 1991, the *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenspreis* was created. In the memory of the author, this money-prize is awarded every second year for literary, journalistic or scientific work related to the theme of 'innerer und äußerer Frieden'.<sup>74</sup>

Negative vibrations have adhered to Remarque's name in Germany, which perhaps explains why the author has remained known as an *Unterhaltungsautor*. Moreover, until recently, Remarque's work remained the subject for researchers predominantly outside of Germany.

However, attitudes have started to change, and particularly the last ten to fifteen years have witnessed increased interest in Remarque's novels, also amongst German academics.<sup>75</sup> Discourse on Remarque, his life and oeuvre has, for instance, been encouraged through the publications of the *Remarque Jahrbücher* and the - likewise annual – *Krieg und Literatur*. Aside from these journals, other measures have been taken to spread awareness of Remarque's work. In 1989, for instance, the *Erich Maria Remarque-Archiv* in Osnabrück was established. This archive, which in 1998 was renamed *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum*, comprises an array of materials relating to Remarque. It has become the chief collection in the world and is an invaluable information store for researchers of the author and his oeuvre. Many original documents are, however, contained in the Fales Library at New York University to which Paulette Goddard left Remarque's entire estate. In addition, activities such as lectures and exhibitions are arranged by the *Remarque Gesellschaft Osnabrück* which was founded in 1986.<sup>76</sup> It is also noteworthy that contemporary researchers are more detached from the historical events Remarque focused on in his novels, and that this undoubtedly has had an objectivizing and, for Remarque, positive, effect in relation to the continued assessment of his novels. Nevertheless, prejudices still dominate the view on Remarque's authorial skills and these can only be fought through detailed research on the works that gave rise to that attitude. By examining the form of Remarque's novels, this study therefore aims to show that even though Remarque's books were (and still

are) popular, they are nevertheless of considerable, literary substance and should not be discarded as *Trivallliteratur*.

The terms for lowbrow literature are impressively numerous in German and include expressions, such as *Plüschlektüre*, *schlechte Volksliteratur*, *Mülleimer-* and *Pfefferdütenliteratur*.<sup>77</sup> Remarque's name is, however, generally seen in combination with the more common terms of *Trivallliteratur* and *Kolportage*. In order to repudiate this view on Remarque, the classification itself – *Trivallliteratur* – needs illuminating. German dictionaries define *Trivallliteratur* as ‘nur der Unterhaltung dienende, anspruchslose, inhaltlich u. sprachlich oft minderwertige Literatur’<sup>78</sup> and ‘meist als künstlerisch wertlos erachtete Unterhaltungsliteratur’.<sup>79</sup> *Unterhaltungsliteratur* is described as ‘Literatur zur Unterhaltung [...], ohne Problematik u. tiefgründige Gedanken’.<sup>80</sup> Peter Nusser proposes a similar description of the genre: ‘So verbindet sich mit dem Begriff Trivial nicht nur die Vorstellung des allgemein Bekannten, Gewöhnlichen, Abgegriffenen, sondern auch die des Einfachen und Unkomplizierten’.<sup>81</sup> In the context of Remarque, a particularly apt definition is found in a Danish work on literary history, *Litteraturhåndbogen*. This work suggests that ‘whilst the highbrow literary text can ordinarily be read and reread and still create new insights, *the lowbrow literary text is a commodity item which is used up after a single reading*’.<sup>82</sup>

The term *Trivallliteratur* clearly has negative connotations – not least because it functions as an antonym to *Hochliteratur*, which generally refers to quality literature of high aesthetic value. In addition to the actual work itself, aspects such as its reception and the author's intention are likewise determining factors in its classification as either high- or lowbrow literature. Whereas *Hochliteratur* is generally regarded a product of conscious, artistic endeavour, *Trivallliteratur* hardly passes as *Kunst*. Indeed, as the Danish definition above suggests, its commodity value may be the author's chief

motivation. This, however, does not mean that high sales figures, as for instance those of *Im Westen* or *Arc de Triomphe*, denote literary inferiority, although such a tendency has been registered as characteristic of German literary criticism: '[Es ist] gerade unter deutschen Kritikern oft die Gewohnheit, einen schwer verständlichen Autor, der selbst einfache Gedanken kompliziert auszudrücken versteht, höher zu werten, als den Autor, der komplizierte Gedanken in verständlicher Form zu formulieren weiß.'<sup>83</sup> Almost all major studies on Remarque expresses disbelief that a tag of triviality continues to adhere to Remarque's name. However, only few offer an actual argument against the classification. Sternburg looks to the themes of the novels for an answer. He questions whether the issues of the works – exile, war and notably the Holocaust – can justifiably be labelled trivial.<sup>84</sup> This line of argument is, however, not infallible, as these themes and especially that of war are indeed not uncommon in, what might be termed, trash novels. This study will therefore seek to take a different approach. It will consider the *formal* qualities of the novels and thereby not only show that although the style appears simple, this is part of Remarque's conscious narrative technique, but also that Remarque's novels have more to offer than merely a single reading.

Literary criticism can be divided into extrinsic and intrinsic methods of study.<sup>85</sup> The latter can be separated into content and form, and form can be further sub-divided into a number of individual elements which all have an impact on the overall work. There is no definite border between these different elements, and this study – although focussing on the perspective – will subsequently venture into also other areas of the form. This will not only add to the understanding of the narrative perspective, but will also provide insight into the consideration Remarque has given to individual aspects of his novels. The form will furthermore be viewed in context of the contents, so that Remarque's awareness of their relationship will be brought to light. Whereas most Remarque studies

merely express disagreement with the *Trivilliteratur* label but offer no arguments to counter this view, this study aims to produce a less subjective argument based on the texts themselves and, thereby, to convey the novels' true literary merit.

There is an array of works exploring and promoting different approaches to literary criticism. Many of these are, however, repetitive in contents. Hence, although acknowledging also other works such as Wayne C. Booth's *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, Bennett and Royle's *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, Warren and Wellek's *Theory of Literature*, and Forster's *Aspects of the Novel*, this study will first and foremost base its analysis on Boa and Reid's detailed work on narrative strategies in the German novel, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*.<sup>86</sup> The preference for this work is due to its thorough outlining of the various elements comprising the form, but also to its attention to the interdependence of the elements and how they in unison create a whole – the novel.

Boa and Reid view the novel as consisting of structural elements which affect the work in its entirety, and textural elements which have only local impact. The aspects which have bearing on the structure include point-of-view, time, patterns and space. Texture, in contrast, is created by register, narrative and dialogue, imagery and tone. It should, however, be noted that the textural elements at times exceed their otherwise solely local impact, and instead pervade the entire work. They do, in other words, occasionally take on structural qualities.

The narrative perspective is, in many respects, of particular importance to a literary text. It generally determines how a story is presented and it is thus closely connected to the contents. However, formal elements – structural and textural – likewise widely depend on the point-of-view. The nature of their application would therefore presumably be subject to alteration, if a different narrative perspective was introduced.

The point-of-view is thus a key element in relation to both the novel's content and its form, and for this reason, it will be given precedence in this study.

Considering the extent of Remarque's commercial success, the amount of secondary literature available on his oeuvre is relatively low – a testimony of the persistence of the *Trivilliteratur*-tag. Darina Popstefanova expresses surprise about the continued neglect of Remarque:

Mit Überraschung stellt man fest: In der breitgefächerten Auswahl von Prosawerken unseres Jahrhunderts von Arthur Schnitzler über Max Mell und Ernst Penzoldt bis zu Franz Xaver Kroetz wird der deutsche Schriftsteller Erich Maria Remarque einfach ausgeklammert. Verwundert sucht man nochmals im Namensverzeichnis, doch vergebens. [...] Nicht einmal *Im Westen nichts Neues* entspricht dem hohen literarischen Anspruch der Autoren des Handbuchs.<sup>87</sup>

The few major studies that do exist on Remarque relate to his life, the themes of his novels and their reworking into films. The formal qualities of his work, however, have been widely neglected and are mostly mentioned only in passing.<sup>88</sup> Such general studies include titles by Alfred Antkowiak, Christine Barker and R. W. Last, Richard Arthur Firda, Harley U. Taylor, C. R. Owen, Hans Wagener, Mariana Parvanova, Haim Gordon, Heinrich Placke, Bernhard Nienaber and, soon, also Brian Murdoch.<sup>89</sup> Also Wilhelm von Sternburg's recent Remarque-biography explores the novels in considerable detail. However, several of these studies contain basic mistakes which leave an impression of unreliability.<sup>90</sup>

Amongst the major Remarque studies, Antkowiak makes possibly the most interesting observation in relation to the narrative perspective. He suggests a connection between shifts in the narrative perspective and the themes explored by Remarque in his novels.<sup>91</sup>

He further proposes that whenever the author delves into a new theme, this is accompanied by a shift also in the narrative perspective. He states that *Im Westen, Der Weg* and *Kameraden* examine issues related to the 'lost generation', and proposes that Remarque applies a first person perspective, because these novels are based on 'Erfahrungswirklichkeiten [...], deren Wurzel eigenes Erleben ist'.<sup>92</sup> Antkowiak views the following novels, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, *Arc de Triomphe*, *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*, as revolving around an anti-fascist theme. In contrast to the three preceding novels, these four are written from a third-person perspective. This narrative approach creates a certain distance between the reader and the story, and Antkowiak regards the newly acquired distance a reflection of the fact that Remarque only experienced the build-up to and the Second World War as a spectator in exile.

Antkowiak's theory falters towards the end of the *Hauptwerk*. Whereas the exile novel, *Lissabon*, employs a framework structure and, essentially, two first-person narrators, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* also revolve around the refugee topic, but are both narrated in the third person.

Antkowiak is the only critic who searches for a logical pattern between the narrative perspective and the themes of the novels, although other critics too have interpreted Remarque's use of an *Ich-Erzähler* in his First World War novels as the result of their autobiographical elements.<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Remarque incorporates aspects from his own life into, basically, all of his novels, and the argument is thus not infallible.

In addition to the principal studies on Remarque, there are a number of literary critical essays on the author and his writings, of which a decided majority are concerned with *Im Westen*. These are mainly occupied with the novels' content, and only a few of them consider any aspects of the form. Murdoch's *Narrative Strategies in Remarque's 'Im Westen nichts Neues'*, is an exception as it explores the techniques (the perspective

included) which Remarque applies in *Im Westen*.<sup>94</sup> In other studies of Remarque's novels, however, the narrative perspective is an area which has remained largely unexplored or, when acknowledged, its significance has been underestimated, at times, resulting in misunderstandings. It has been claimed, for instance, that *Im Westen* and the immediately succeeding novels are written in the first person *singular*,<sup>95</sup> despite the fact that *Im Westen* opens with the plural pronoun 'wir'. Such interpretations discount Remarque's technique of interweaving singular and plural first person pronouns in this novel. In the case of *Im Westen*, the interchanging 'ich' and 'wir' is, as Murdoch has shown, a vital part of Remarque's conveyance of the understanding of the protagonist's psyche and thus to the understanding of the work as a whole. Other essays note the changing perspective, but do not elaborate on the matter. This is for instance the case in Harald Kloiber's otherwise insightful essay on structural and textural elements in *Im Westen*,<sup>96</sup> and also in John W. Chambers II and Thomas F. Schneider's contribution to the recent *Text+Kritik* volume on Remarque. The latter essay proposes that *Im Westen*'s protagonist, Bäumer, refers to 'wir' more often than 'ich', but fails to comment further on this.<sup>97</sup> There are numerous equally vague references to the narrative perspective of *Im Westen*. In fact, apart from Murdoch, M. Travers delivers the most insightful interpretation of the use of personal pronouns in *Im Westen*.<sup>98</sup> In his chapter on this novel, Travers approaches the narrative perspective from a different angle compared to Schneider and Chambers, in that he considers, not the frequency with which the singular and plural personal pronouns occur, but rather *where* in the story Bäumer presents himself as an individual, and *where* he narrates from a collective point-of-view. Although focusing on a different formal element – in this case, imagery – Howard M. De Leeuw's Master's thesis *The Function of Simile in Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues"* is not irrelevant. Unlike most critics of Remarque, De Leeuw carries out a

formal analysis and thereby shows that even *Im Westen*, which dominates a vast majority of literature on Remarque, is far from fully explored. As they have attracted less interest, the same can naturally be said also about the other novels. De Leuw's study has remained unpublished, but an essay based on his thesis can be found in the *Remarque Jahrbuch* of 1994.<sup>99</sup> With regards to *Der Weg*, Wagener, Murdoch and Mark G. Ward all treat, in more or less detail, the perspectival shifts which occur in the work.<sup>100</sup>

Aside from the two early First World War novels, the narrative viewpoint has not been explored in great detail in any of the other novels. The only other work which has been granted some attention in relation to its viewpoint is *Lissabon*. This is due to its striking application of a framework, a formal device predominantly associated with the classical German novella. Most of the major studies on Remarque's oeuvre note the use of a framework in *Lissabon*, but only Murdoch proceeds to examine this formal device even in slightly more detail.<sup>101</sup> There are likewise only few references to *Lissabon*'s distinctive structure to be found in the literary critical essays. Helga Schreckenberger's *Durchkommen ist alles* is an exception. She interprets the intertwining of the two characters' narratives as connected to their physically moving from one establishment to another, whilst Schwarz (the narrator of the framed story) tells of his years in exile.<sup>102</sup>

Most literary studies on any work tend to concentrate – and rightly so – on the contents and the message the author is attempting to put across. However, the formal elements should not be neglected. In fact, acknowledgement of their existence and nature can reveal important information about the work. The perspective has, for instance, decisive impact on characterization. This has, however, not yet been fully looked at in relation to Remarque's novels, and severe misconceptions can be found in existing secondary material. Hans Wagener's following statement exemplifies this. In his treatment of *Im*

*Westen*, he claims that the characters' lack of political insight and their failure to consider the war in a wider perspective are due to the fact, 'daß es sich hier – mit Ausnahme des Erzählers Bäumer – um ziemlich schlichte Gemüter handelt [...]'.<sup>103</sup> This is neither a fair nor a correct judgement. Firstly, three of the other young soldiers are, similarly to the narrator, Bäumer, school leavers, and there is no indication that they should be intellectually inferior to the protagonist. In fact, Müller is said to dream of taking the *Notexamen*, and in shell fire 'büffelt er physikalische Lehrsätze' (*Im Westen*, p. 12). Secondly, the other soldiers who have left work and family for the front, such as Tjaden, Haie Westhus, Detering and Kaczinsky, are by no means portrayed as inferior or 'schlicht', but rather with respect. They have invaluable experience in survival, and Bäumer expresses only admiration and appreciation for their practical knowledge. Apart from the two closing paragraphs, the narrative is presented entirely from Bäumer's point-of-view. Had Wagener taken this into consideration, he would not have misinterpreted the presentation of the characters.

Despite the fact that a few essays have attempted to kindle interest in the formal qualities of Remarque's work,<sup>104</sup> researchers have thus far focused heavily on the thematic aspects of the novels. Moreover, a majority of these deals only with *Im Westen*, leaving the greater part of the novels relatively unexplored. This study will suggest that the extent of the neglect is closely related to the *Trivilliteratur* tag which has been attached to Remarque's name since he wrote *Im Westen*. It will, moreover, claim that this labelling of Remarque's work is undeserved because it arose, predominantly, as a result of the times at which the novels were published, and because of the general nature of German literary evaluation. Thus, by analyzing the formal qualities of the *Hauptwerk* – the part of the oeuvre which gave Remarque fame, but which subsequently also caused his widespread rejection – it is the aim of this study to

show that the novels are indeed worthy of academic interest. It will propose that Remarque was an author of popular-, but not trivial literature. With reference to already existing work on Remarque, this study will seek to further the understanding of his novels and their literary value, and, in a wider context, to instigate academic discourse in this much neglected area.

## Notes to Introduction

1. Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues* ([1929] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Im Westen*.
2. Thomas F. Schneider, 'Die andere Liebe. Anmerkungen zu den Erzählungen und Essays von Erich Maria Remarque', in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten: Erzählungen und Essays*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001), p. 305; Thomas F. Schneider and Donald Weiss, *Erich Maria Remarque: Die Traumbude, Station am Horizont. Die unselbständigen Publikationen (1916-1968). Eine Bibliographie* (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1995), p. 8.
3. Erich Maria Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), p. 23. For this early novel idea, see also Thomas Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts: Eine Biographie in Bildern und Dokumenten* (Bramsche: Rasch, 1991), p. 21.
4. This short story with which Remarque won a competition in the *Heimatsfreund: Ein Blatt für die Jugend des Regierungsbezirks Osnabrück* is the earliest known publication by Remarque. Remarque, 'Von den Freuden und Mühen der Jugendwehr', in *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp. 17-21.
5. Remarque, 'Die Traumbude', in *Das unbekannte Werk, I: Die Traumbude, Gam, Station am Horizont*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), 19-173.
6. See, for instance, diary entries from 20 August and 10 September 1918 in *Das Unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, pp. 251-53, 255-57. Hörstemeier died prematurely of tuberculosis, a disease which, perhaps as a result of Remarque's close friendship to Hörstemeier, forms an underlying theme in several of Remarque's later novels.
7. Petra Oerke, 'Erläuterungen: Die Traumbude (1920)', in *Das unbekannte Werk, I: Die Traumbude, Gam, Station am Horizont*, pp. 563-70 (p. 563).
8. Richard Arthur Firda, 'Young Erich Maria Remarque: *Die Traumbude*', *Monatshefte*, 71 (1979), pp. 49-55 (p. 51).
9. Some exceptions include: Firda, 'Young Erich Maria Remarque'; Wilhelm von Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal. Erich Maria Remarque: Eine Biographie* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2000); Brian Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque: Sparks of Life* (Rochester etc: Camden House, 2006), pp. 13-18.

10. Remarque, 'Steppengewitter', in *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp. 144-49. The almost identical sections are: Remarque, 'Steppengewitter', pp. 146-49 and Remarque, 'Gam', in *Das unbekannte Werk, I: Die Traumbude, Gam, Station am Horizont*, pp. 175-361.
11. Schneider, 'Erläuterungen: Gam (1924)', in *Das unbekannte Werk, I: Die Traumbude, Gam, Station am Horizont*, pp. 571-75. Also, Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 20-21.
12. Both of these names are found in *Gam*. Clerfayt later returns as the male protagonist of the novel *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*. With regards to the name of Ravic, it not only features in *Gam*, the protagonist of *Arc de Triomphe* is also known by this name. Remarque's last novel, *Schatten im Paradies*, likewise has a character by the name of Ravic. Moreover, Remarque often referred to himself as Ravic. See: "Sag mir, daß du mich liebst...": *Erich Maria Remarque – Marlene Dietrich, Zeugnisse einer Leidenschaft*, edited by Werner Fuld and Thomas F. Schneider (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001), for example pp. 122-23, 134-37.
13. Aside from being published in *Das unbekannte Werk* together with *Die Traumbude* and *Gam*, of the three early novels, only *Station am Horizont* has been published individually. Erich Maria Remarque, *Station am Horizont* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2000). All references will be based on the latter edition.
14. Erich Maria Remarque, 'Das Rennen Vanderveldes', in *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 155-61. The short story is also contained in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 46-52.
15. In both *Station am Horizont* (Chapter Seven) and *Das Rennen Vanderveldes* the protagonist loses an important race because he rescues a dog from the racetrack. However, he thereby gains the affection of the story's heroine.
16. A German translation of the treatment is contained in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*. Remarque, 'Die andere Liebe', in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 132-47.
17. Although the works are not obviously connected, the name of Ravic, for instance, features in *Gam*, *Arc de Triomphe* and *Schatten*.
18. Schneider, 'Erläuterungen: Station am Horizont (1927)', in *Das unbekannte Werk, I: Die Traumbude, Gam, Station am Horizont*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp. 575-80 (p. 579). See also Schneider and Weiss, *Erich Maria Remarque: Die Traumbude, Station am Horizont. Die unselbständigen Publikationen*, pp. 10-11.
19. See, in particular, Schneider, 'Erwartungen von Rezensenten an Kriegsliteratur: Die Rezeption von Erich Maria Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*, 1928-1930', *Lili-Zeitschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Linguistik*, 28 (1998), pp. 119-32. See also, Schneider, "Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz" – *Im Westen nichts Neues: Autor- und Textsysteme im Rahmen eines Konstitutions- und Wirkungsmodells für Literatur*, *Krieg und Literatur*, 1 (1989), pp. 23-39; Schneider, 'Prolegomena zur

Darstellung der “Entstehung” und “Rezeption” von Erich Maria Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*’, *Krieg und Literatur*, 4 (1992), pp. 85-100.

20. Wilhelm von Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 102; Oerke, ‘Erläuterungen: Die Traumbude (1920)’, p. 563; Richard Arthur Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context* (New York etc.: Twayne, 1993), p. 26; Claudia Glunz and Thomas F. Schneider, *Elfriede Scholz, geb. Remark: Im Namen des deutschen Volkes; Dokumente einer justitiellen Ermordung* (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1997), p. 15.

21. Tilman Westphalen, ‘Ein Simplicissimus des 20. Jahrhunderts. Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen’ in *Im Westen nichts Neues*, p. 200.

22. The figures quoted are not consistent. Sternburg suggests that *Im Westen* has been translated into 49 languages, whereas Tilman Westphalen claims that it is more than 50. The number of copies sold also varies. Both Westphalen and Sternburg approximate the amount to be around 20 million, whereas Harley U. Taylor proposes that the figure was between 30 and 40 million at the time of the author’s death in 1970.

In an interview from 1966, Remarque states that the number of sold copies is 20 to 30 million, but he also notes that the exact figure is impossible to determine due to widespread, illegal publication of the novel in the former Soviet Union. Tilman Westphalen, ‘Ein Simplicissimus des 20. Jahrhunderts’, p. 200; Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 147; Harley U. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography* (New York: Peter Lang, 1989), p. 63; Erich Maria Remarque, ‘Größere und kleinere Ironien meines Lebens: Interview mit sich selbst (1966)’, in *Ein militanter Pazifist: Texte und Interviews 1929-1966*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider ([1994] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp. 138-43 (p. 141).

23. Axel Eggebrecht, ‘Gespräch mit Remarque (1929)’, in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 43-51 (p. 48).

24. Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller: Der Kriegsroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986). See, in particular, section 3.2.1: ‘Normale Ansprüche an die poetische Matrix des Romans’, pp. 67-72.

25. A number of critics have overestimated the connection between Bäumer and Remarque. Firda treats their identities as interchangeable: ‘Remarque’s memory and portrait of his father in key pages of *All Quiet* is often an unflattering one. When the young soldier Paul Baumer [Bäumer] comes home on leave, he says that his father would prefer to see his son only in uniform, but Paul refuses him. The novel suggests that there was little personal warmth between Remarque and his father [...]’ Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels* (New York: Peter Lang, 1988), p. 2. Firda expresses similar confusion in relation to the mothers of Bäumer and Remarque respectively: ‘Not much is known about Remarque’s mother, other than the literary portrait of her found in a few pages of *Im Westen nichts Neues*’. Firda, ‘Young Erich Maria Remarque’, p. 53. Also Hilton Tims’ insertion of solidi between the name of the author and that of some of his protagonists – ‘Bäumer/ Remark’ and ‘Bodmer/ Remarque’ – gives the impression that these works are autobiographical. Hilton Tims, *Erich Maria Remarque: The Last Romantic* (London: Constable und Robinson, 2003), pp. 7, 16. A similar disregard for the differing identities of Remarque and Bäumer is

found in Bohdan Czesko's short article on this novel in the Polish weekly paper, *Kuznica*, in 1946. 'Es blieben ein für immer in der Schreibtischlade vergessenes, vor dem Abmarsch an die Front von Remarque angefangenes Drama "Saul" und ein Stoß Jugendgedichte'. Bohdan Czesko, 'Ich habe Remarque erschossen [1946]', in *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 2 (1992), pp. 33-34 (p. 33).

26. For the reception and political impact of *Im Westen*, the following sources are particularly valuable: Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*. Also, *Der Fall Remarque. Im Westen nichts Neues: Eine Dokumentation*, edited by Bärbel Schrader (Leipzig: Reclam, 1992).

27. Peter Dörp, 'Goebbels' Kampf gegen Remarque: Eine Untersuchung über die Hintergründe des Hasses und der Agitation Goebbels' gegen den Roman *Im Westen nichts Neues* von Erich Maria Remarque', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 1 (1991), pp. 48-64 (p. 55).

28. Fritz H. Landshoff, *Amsterdam, Keizersgracht 333. Querido-Verlag. Erinnerungen eines Verlegers: Mit Briefen und Dokumenten* (Berlin and Weimar: Aufbau, 1991), p.103.

29. Hans Wagener, 'Remarque in Amerika – zwischen Erfolg und Exilbewußtsein', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 9 (1999), pp. 18-38 (p. 21).

30. Remarque, *Der Weg zurück* ([1931] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). Remarque, *Drei Kameraden* ([1938] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). All page references will hereafter be based on these editions. The titles will be abbreviated to *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, respectively.

31. The German Foreign Ministry states in a document from 21 March 1938: 'Erich Remark hat mit Unterstützung durch die jüdische Ullstein-Presse jahrelang in gemeinster und niederträchtigster Weise das Andenken an die Gefallenen des Weltkriegs beschimpft und sich schon dadurch aus der deutschen Volksgemeinschaft ausgeschlossen'. There is a copy of these documents in Alexander Stephan, 'Ausgebürgert: Erich Maria Remarque und die Nazi-Bürokratie', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 7 (1997), pp. 7-26. Remarque's German citizenship was never restored.

32. Remarque, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* ([1941] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). Remarque, *Arc de Triomphe* ([1946] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). All page references will hereafter be based on these editions. The titles will not be abbreviated.

33. Tilman Westphalen, 'Ein Mensch ohne Paß ist eine Leiche auf Urlaub: Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 321-40 (p. 335).

34. Remarque, *Der Funke Leben* ([1952] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2000). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Funke Leben*.

35. Remarque, 'Der Funke Leben. Vorwort (1952)', in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 91-93 (p. 92).
36. Westphalen, 'Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar: Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in *Funke Leben*, pp. 375-401 (pp. 391-93).
37. In his diary 22 March 1952, Remarque wrote: 'Nach dem schweizerischen Verleger Scherz hat nun der deutsche Verleger Desch Angst bekommen vor dem letzten Buch. Guggenheim [Remarque's agent] hat mit Kiepenheuer abgeschlossen'. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 469.
38. Westphalen has quoted a number of both positive and negative reviews in 'Die Würde des Menschen ist unantastbar', pp. 394-97. See also, Claudia Glunz, "Eine harte Sache". Zur Rezeption von Erich Maria Remarques *Der Funke Leben*', in "Reue ist undeutsch". *Erich Maria Remarques Der Funke Leben und das Konzentrationslager Buchenwald: Katalog zur Ausstellung* (Bramsche: Rasch, 1992), pp. 21-27.
39. Schneider, "'Und Befehl ist Befehl. Oder nicht?"; Erich Maria Remarque: *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu Sterben* (1954)', in *Von Böll bis Buchheim: Deutsche Kriegsprosa nach 1945*, edited by Hans Wagener (Amsterdam etc.: Rodopi, 1997), pp. 231-47 (p. 232). Although, not specifically relating to Remarque, Liepman claims that by dealing with the issue of the National Socialist past, 'Publizisten und andere Mahner – [sind] immer wieder beschuldigt worden, auf solche Art das eigene Nest zu beschmutzen'. Heinz Liepman, *Ein deutscher Jude denkt über Deutschland nach* (Munich: Ner-Tamid, 1961), p. 33. The booklet includes an article by Liepman entitled *Sollen wie unser eigenes Nest beschmutzen?* in which he focuses on Germany's struggle to acknowledging its immediate past.
40. Remarque, *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben* ([1954] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Zeit zu leben*.
41. Leif Blaedel, "'Information" afslører: Remarque sat under censur i Tyskland', *Information*, 9 October 1954, p. 10; See also, Blaedel, 'Den tyske forlægger om censuren af Remarque', *Information*, 18 October 1954, no page.
42. Westphalen, 'Wann wird zum Mord, was man sonst Heldentum nennt? Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in Remarque, *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*, pp. 401-20 (406). See also, Maggie Sargeant's chapter on Remarque in *Kitsch und Kunst: Presentations of a Lost War* (Oxford etc.: Peter Lang, 2005).
43. Westphalen, 'Wann wird zum Mord, was man sonst Heldentum nennt?', p. 406.
44. Blaedel, "'Information" afslører: Remarque sat under censur i Tyskland'. An article from December the same year, 1954, discloses that in 1949, when publishing a shortened version of Jaroslav Hašek's novel, *Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*, Kiepenheuer und Witsch apparently omitted sentences which were likewise deemed too satirical for the German readership. Blaedel, 'Nyt fra vestfronten: Remarques censor paa krigsstien igen', *Information*, 11 December 1954, no page. See also: Hannes Heer, 'Blockierter Schmerz: Warum das Erinnern an die Verbrechen der

Wehrmacht so schwerfällt', *Neue deutsche Literatur: Zeitschrift für deutschsprachige Literatur und Kritik*, 5 (1999), pp. 19-32 (pp. 21-22).

45. Excerpt from Remarque's diary entry 11 April 1954. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 495.

46. Blaedel, 'Den tyske forlægger om censuren af Remarque'.

47. Only the chief alterations are mentioned here. For more detail see Westphalen, 'Wann wird zum Mord, was man sonst Heldentum nennt?', especially pp. 409-414. See also, Schneider, "'Und Befehl ist Befehl. Oder nicht?'".

48. Schneider, "'Und Befehl ist Befehl. Oder nicht?'", p. 232.

49. M. Feldmann, 'Gespräch mit E. M. Remarque (1946)', in Remarque, *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 84-90 (p. 86).

50. Remarque, 'Größere und kleinere Ironien meines Lebens. Interview mit sich selbst', p. 257.

51. See, Murdoch, 'We Germans...? Remarques englischer Roman *All quiet on the western front*', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 6 (1996), pp. 10-34.

52. Remarque, *Der Feind: Erzählungen* ([1993] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998). The short stories are also comprised in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 69-114, as well as in *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 324-69.

53. Remarque, *Der schwarze Obelisk* ([1956] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2002). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Obelisk*.

54. Printed in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 96-101; *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 241-48; *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 404-09. The film script *Der letzte Akt: Drehbuch* was written by Remarque in 1955. This is contained in *Das unbekannte Werk, III: Die letzte Station, Der Letzte Akt* (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp. 11-151.

55. Based on information by Johannes Mario Simmel, Werner Fuld gives an amusing account of the episode. Werner Fuld, 'Ein Treffen mit alten Bekannten: Zur Vorgeschichte des Romans "Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge"', *Text + Kritik: Zeitschrift für Literatur: Erich Maria Remarque*, 149, edited by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Richard Boorberg, 2001), pp. 65-68.

56. Remarque, *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge* ([1961] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2000). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Der Himmel*.

57. Remarque, *Die Nacht von Lissabon* ([1962] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 2001). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Lissabon*.

58. Remarque, *Schatten im Paradies* ([1971] Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998). All page references will hereafter be based on this edition. The title will be abbreviated *Schatten*.
59. Schneider, 'Erläuterungen', in *Das unbekannte Werk, II: Das gelobte Land*, pp. 435-42 (pp. 436-37). Westphalen, 'Ein Tornister voll mit Blei: Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in *Schatten*, pp. 495-514 (pp. 498-99).
60. Marc Wilhelm Küster, 'Die Manuskriptlage zu Remarque's "Schatten im Paradies"', in *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 5 (1995), pp. 88-108.
61. Westphalen, 'Ein Tornister voll mit Blei', pp. 498-501.
62. This perspective has been portrayed also in Joachim Fest's *Der Untergang* and Traudel Junge's *Bis zur letzten Stunde. Hitlers Sekretärin erzählt ihr Leben* both of which formed basis for the 2004 German film production *Der Untergang*, Released in English as *Downfall*.
63. Titles of plays by Remarque include: *Die letzte Station*; *Die Heimkehr des Enoch J. Jones*; *Brunnenstraße* and the fragmented comedy *La Barcarole*. As early as 1920, Remarque allegedly composed a play entitled *Bubi*. For information on time of origin and premieres of the plays see Schneider 'Erich Maria Remarque – Kurzbiografie in Daten', *Text und Kritik*, 149, pp. 79-92. See also, Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal* for further details of the plays. Taylor constitutes yet another source. He devotes a chapter to *Full Circle*; the name under which *Die letzte Station* was staged in America. Taylor, *A Literary and Film Biography*.
64. The diary entries contained in *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher* constitute only about ten percent of Remarque's personal journals. The other ninety percent can be accessed in the *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum* in Osnabrück.
65. Friedrich Luft, 'Das Profil. Gespräch mit Erich Maria Remarque (1963)', in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 118-33 (p.131).
66. See, for instance, the chapter 'A Writer's Apprenticeship', in Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, pp. 23-29.
67. Scheider and Weiss, *Erich Maria Remarque: Die Traumbude, Station am Horizont. Die unselbständigen Publikationen*, p. 7.
68. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 30.
69. Schneider, "'Ein ekler Leichenwurm": Motive und Rezeption der Schriften Erich Maria Remarques zur nationalsozialistischen deutschen Vergangenheit', *Text + Kritik*, 149, edited by Heinz Ludwig Arnold (Munich: Richard Boorberg, 2001) pp. 42-54 (pp. 43, 53).
70. Thomas Mann, *Tagebücher 1937-1939*, edited by Peter de Mendelssohn (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1982), pp. 387,413.

71. Harry Graf Kessler, *Aus den Tagebüchern 1918-1937*, edited by Wolfgang Pfeiffer-Belli (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1965), p. 287.

72. Bertolt Brecht, *Arbeitsjournal. Erster Band 1938 bis 1942*, edited by Werner Hecht (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1973), p. 350.

73. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 434.

74. *Der Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenspreis der Stadt Osnabrück und seine Verleihung*: <http://www.remarque.uos.de/richtl.htm> The web-site was accessed 22 September 2003 via the web-site of the *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum*: <http://www.remarque.uos.de/intern.htm> .

75. ‘Die Folgen dieser Rezeption des Autors Erich Maria Remarque in der frühen Bundesrepublik waren nachhaltig: Bis zur Mitte der achtziger Jahre gab es keinerlei literaturwissenschaftliche Beschäftigung mit dem Autor und seinem Werk (Ausnahme: “Im Westen nicht Neues”) in der Bundesrepublik, erst Anfang der neunziger Jahre erfolgte die erste Dissertation über Remarque; bis heute existiert keine Ausgabe aller Werke – die frühen Romane, die Theaterstücke, Drehbücher, die über 300 Texte Lyrik, Kurzprosa, Essays wurden in einer Auswahl erst 1998 publiziert, der Umfang des Gesamtwerks ist noch unbekannt. Ebenfalls erst 1998 erschien eine zuverlässige Biografie [...]’. Schneider, “Ein ekler Leichenwurm”, p. 53.

76. Martina Kruse, ‘10 Jahre Erich-Maria-Remarque-Gesellschaft e. V. in Osnabrück’, *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 6 (1996), pp. 57-73.

77. Hans Friedrich Foltin explores the wide range of alternative labels which have been attached to high- and lowbrow literature and outlines their contrasting meanings. Hans Friedrich Foltin, ‘Die minderwertige Prosaliteratur. Einteilung und Bezeichnungen’, *Deutsche Vierteljahrschrift für Literaturwissenschaft und Geistesgeschichte*, 39, no. 2, pp. 165-329 (pp. 288-323); also, Foltin, ‘Zur Erforschung der Unterhaltungs- und Trivilliteratur, insbesondere im Bereich des Romans’ in *Studien zur Trivilliteratur*, edited by Heinz Otto Burger (Frankfurt am Main: Vittorio Klostermann, 1968), pp. 242-270 (p. 261).

78. *Duden: Das große Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache in sechs Bänden: VI*, edited by Rudolf Köster and Wolfgang Müller (Mannheim etc.: Duden, 1981), p. 2632.

79. *Deutsches Wörterbuch: in sechs Bänden: VI*, edited by Gerhard Wahrig, Hildegard Krämer and Harald Zimmermann (Wiesbaden etc.: F. A. Brockhaus, 1984), p. 299.

80. *Deutsches Wörterbuch: in sechs Bänden: VI*, edited by Gerhard Wahrig, Hildegard Krämer and Harald Zimmermann, p. 423.

81. Peter Nusser, *Trivilliteratur* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1991), p. 2.

82. Translated from Danish: ‘Mens den litterære tekst almindeligvis kan læses og genlæses og stadig skabe ny erkendelse, er den *trivillitterære tekst en forbrugsvare, som kan udtømmes ved en enkelt gennemlæsning* [...]’. *Litteraturhåndbogen*, edited by

Ib Fischer Hansen, Jens Anker Jørgensen, Knud Michelsen, Jørgen Sørensen, Lars Tonnesen (Copenhagen: Nordisk, 1981), p. 511.

83. Landshoff, *Amsterdam, Keizersgracht 333*, p. 103.

84. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 31.

85. Warren and Wellek divide literary analysis, roughly, into extrinsic and intrinsic methods of approach. The extrinsic method is concerned with setting, environment and external causes, and may, for instance, consider a work in its social or political context. In contrast, the intrinsic method focuses on the form and the techniques the author applies. René Wellek and Austin Warren, *Theory of Literature* ([1942] London etc.: Penguin, 1980).

86. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* ([1961] Chicago etc.: University of Chicago Press, 1983); Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle, *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* ([1995] Harlow etc.: Prentice Hall, 1999); Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature*; E. M. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, edited by Oliver Stallybrass ([1927] London etc.: Penguin, 2000); Elizabeth Boa and J. H. Reid, *Critical strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century* (London: Edward Arnold, 1972).

87. Darina Popstefanova, *Weltbürger. Auf den Spuren Remarques in Osnabrück. Literaturwerkstatt Remarque: Unterrichtsmaterialien (Text- und Quellensammlung)* (Unpublished teaching material. Available in the Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum in Osnabrück), p. 4.

88. The only major studies which predominantly concentrate on an aspect of the form are Howard M. De Leeuw, *The Function of Simile in Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues"* (unpublished Master's thesis, University of Arizona, 1989); Mariana Parvanova, "...das Symbol der Ewigkeit ist der Kreis": Eine Untersuchung der Motive in den Romanen von Erich Maria Remarque (Berlin: TENEA, 2003).

89. Most of the studies of the general oeuvre nevertheless give precedence to *Im Westen*. See, for instance, Alfred Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk* (Berlin: Das europäische Buch, 1983). Antkowiak's study which constitutes less than 150 pages dedicates more than 30 of these to *Im Westen*. A similar pattern is found in Hans Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*. In Wagener, *Im Westen* occupies almost 30 pages, whereas none of Remarque's other novels is allocated more than 10 pages. Hans Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque* (Columbia, South Carolina: University of South Carolina Press, 1991). Barker and Last's study of Remarque is, alongside Murdoch's *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque: Sparks of Life*, one of the most informative, general secondary works about Remarque. However, Barker and Last likewise allow considerable more space to *Im Westen* than to any of the other novels. Christine R. Barker and R. W. Last, *Erich Maria Remarque* (London: Oswald Wolff, 1979). Moreover, the dust jackets of the latter work and that of Tims' *Erich Maria Remarque: The Last Romantic* make a point of stressing that they are about 'the Author of All Quiet on the Western Front'.

90. Wagener suggests, for instance, that Bäumer in *Im Westen* visits Josef Behm's mother whilst on leave. It is, however, Kemmerich's mother he goes to see (*Im Westen*,

p. 21). A few pages later Wagener also refers to Bäumer as Franz Bäumer (his real name is Paul Bäumer), presumably because of the phonetic resemblance to Franz Baumer; the author of the short biography *Erich Maria Remarque*. It is also possible that he has confused the first names of (Paul) Bäumer and (Franz) Kemmerich. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 21,29. This is indeed what Wilhelm J. Schwarz does in his *War and the Mind of Germany*, 1 (Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter/ Herbert Lang, 1975), p. 30. Antkowiak's general, Remarque-study also contains basic mistakes. In relation to *Der Weg* he states, for instance, that Ludwig Breyer shoots himself, whereas, in fact, he cuts his wrists. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 52.

91. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, pp. 74-75.

92. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 74.

93. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 112-13.

94. Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in Remarque's 'Im Westen nichts Neues'', *New German Studies*, 17 (1992/3), pp. 175-201.

95. Barker and Last say: 'From *Im Westen nichts Neues* onwards, [...] Remarque's novels are [...] written in the first person singular [...]'. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 112-13. Also, Antkowiak ignores the first person plural which is found in a number of Remarque's novels. Nonetheless, Antkowiak's table dividing the novels in two categories hasw the headings: '1. Person Singularis' and '3. Person Singularis'. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 74.

96. Harald Kloiber, 'Struktur, Stil und Motivik in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 4 (1994), pp. 65-78 (p. 68).

97. John W. Chambers II and Thomas F. Schneider, "'Im Westen nichts Neues" und das Bild des ,modernen' Krieg', *Text+Kritik*, 149, pp. 8-18 (p. 9).

98. Travers points to, for example, the ambiguity of Bäumer's references to 'einer' and 'jeder' in a particular paragraph of *Im Westen* (*Im Westen*, p. 16). M. P. A. Travers, *German Novels on The First World War and their Ideological Implications, 1918-1933* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Hans-Dieter Heinz, 1982), p. 91.

99. De Leeuw, 'The Function of Simile in Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues"'. A part of the thesis is published in Howard M. De Leeuw, 'Remarque's Use of Simile in *Im Westen nichts Neues*', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 4 (1994), pp. 45-64.

100. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 43-44. Mark G. Ward, 'The Structure of *Der Weg Zurück*', in *Remarque Against War: Essays for the Centenary of Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, edited by Brian Murdoch, Mark Ward, Maggie Sargeant (Glasgow: Scottish Papers in Germanic Studies, 1998), pp. 85-97. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück: Kriegsende und Nachkriegszeit bei Erich Maria Remarque', in *Text+Kritik*, 149, pp. 19-29.

101. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*. The framework structure is treated somewhat in Firda, *A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*; Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*; Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*; and Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*.

102. Helga Schreckenberger, “‘Durchkommen ist alles’”: Physischer und psychischer Existenzkampf in Erich Maria Remarque's Exil-Romanen’, *Text+Kritik*, 149, pp. 30-41 (p. 35).

103. Hans Wagener, ‘Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues – Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu Sterben: Ein Autor, zwei Weltkriege’, in *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 10 (2000), pp. 31-52 (p. 41).

104. De Leeuw, ‘Remarque's Use of Simile in *Im Westen nichts Neues*’; Kloiber, ‘Struktur, Stil und Motivatik in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*’; Murdoch, ‘Narrative Strategies in Remarque’s ‘Im Westen nichts Neues’; Parvanova, “...das Symbol der Ewigkeit ist der Kreis”.

## Chapter 1

### *Im Westen nichts Neues*

In *Im Westen*, which brought Remarque immediate fame, the author takes a stand which differs from the majority of German First World War novels. Contrary to the British heritage of First World War literature, in which the war is generally portrayed as a completely senseless loss of lives, a dominating percentage of German war literature from that same period poses the antithetic view that the war was an inevitable, natural happening and a vital part of an organic development of the individual and, thus, of the nation as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Works, which present the war from a nationalistic point-of-view and, at the time, aimed to revive and nourish the military spirit, include, amongst many others, titles by Franz Schauwecker, Ernst Jünger, Werner Beumelburg, Georg Bucher and Thor Goote. Remarque's narratives of the war, the Weimar years and the group of young men commonly referred to as the 'lost generation', however, do not comply with this paradigm. Alongside a minority of other German authors, such as Ludwig Renn, Arnold Zweig, Edlef Köppen, Fritz von Unruh and Ernst Johannsen, Remarque distanced himself from the nationalistic point-of-view expressed by the majority of his compatriotic fellow writers.<sup>2</sup> Ann P. Linder has noted that despite their opposing views, the liberal and the conservative (or nationalistic) German First World War novels have certain common thematic traits:<sup>3</sup> They generally emphasize the essentiality of comradeship whilst exhibiting the hostility of the soldiers on the front towards the echelons and people at home.<sup>4</sup> In addition, both types of novels search to make sense of the war and also suggest that it has caused a change in the individual.<sup>5</sup> Despite their

ideologically opposing views, there are therefore nevertheless considerable parallels between the liberal and the conservative war novels. This is the case not only in relation to their contents, but also with regards to their form. In order to appear authentic and more convincing, but also to give the works a sense of immediacy and thereby add dramatic effect, many of the war narratives are, for instance, presented from the *Froschperspektive* and reflect, with more or less consistency, the view of a single individual.<sup>6</sup> Given these similarities, references to works of both doctrinal camps will be incorporated in the analysis of *Im Westen*.

Before turning the attention to *Im Westen*, its relationship to the succeeding two novels, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, deserves mentioning. The three works are thematically linked in as far as they all deal with the Great War and the Weimar years. In a prologue to the manuscript, *Pat*, which Remarque later developed into the novel *Kameraden*, the author states that the ‘vorliegende Buch der letzte einer Reihe [ist]’. Thus, *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Pat* were initially intended to form a trilogy concerned with ‘die Frage des Lebens und des Todes; die Frage: warum?’.<sup>7</sup> In the process of reworking *Pat*, however, Remarque omitted the prologue, but the final product remains focussed on the question: why? In fact, attempting to make sense of life and death came to form a continuing thread through most of Remarque's works. Despite this shared underlying theme as well as other, thematic and formal, links between *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, similarities in locations and characters in the former two works are discontinued in *Kameraden*. The three works nevertheless remain unequivocally bound together, although the connection between *Im Westen* and *Der Weg* is more pronounced. The characteristics of the two protagonists, Bäumer and Birkholz, are, for instance, strikingly similar. They share the initial, ‘B’ and both names provoke thought associations to trees: Bäumer/ *Baum* and Birkholz/ *Birk* and *Holz*.<sup>8</sup> Set in the war and

immediate post-war era, respectively, *Im Westen* and *Der Weg* can be paralleled with Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* and *Nachkrieg*, and Ernst Glaeser's *Jahrgang 1902* and *Frieden*. Despite the fact that *Kameraden* does not immediately appear to form a direct continuation of *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*, it nevertheless follows up the theme of former soldiers coping with the return to civilian life in the Weimar Republic. Further links between the three novels shall be explored in Chapter Two, and it will be argued that Remarque's First World War novels do indeed constitute a trilogy.

*Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden* are all related by first-person narrators. A particular problem generally arises when reflecting on the perspective of first-person narratives – that of the relationship between the author and his narrator, and which of the two is truly relating the story. The erroneous fusion by literary critics of Remarque's and Bäumer's identities has already been touched upon in the Introduction chapter, but even when the two are acknowledged as separate entities, the narrative perspective has nevertheless proven to create confusion. Howard M. De Leeuw, for instance, suggests that *Im Westen* is presented from both Remarque's and Bäumer's perspectives, but treats them as 'interchangeabl[e]', as he finds it 'not of primary importance' to determine '[w]here the two perspectives differ'.<sup>9</sup> As the author, Remarque is, of course, the creator of Bäumer and, therefore, the mind behind both the novel's content and its form. De Leeuw, however, mistakenly concludes that the narrative perspective subsequently also becomes that of Remarque. However, if a first person narrator is entirely consistent, the reader will be presented with this narrator's viewpoint only. A narrative in the first person should therefore not be treated as necessarily communicating directly the views also of the author, as even in works where the author appears to sympathize with his narrator (such as in *Im Westen*) this harmony might not be absolute. Bäumer, for instance, deliberately suppresses his feeling of guilt about

killing Duval, and states: 'Krieg ist Krieg schließlich' (*Im Westen*, p. 156). This, however, does not reflect Remarque's sentiment (he is taking an active pacifist stand by writing a war novel), but serves to show Bäumer's inner conflict and also forces the reader to question the validity of his excuse. It is therefore an understatement that *Im Westen* is told 'primarily from Bäumer's point of view [my emphasis]'.<sup>10</sup> The perspective is, in fact, solely and consistently that of Bäumer until the closing paragraph – a consistency which contrasts with many of the other first- person fictional narratives of the Great War.<sup>11</sup> As already stated, provided that the narrator is consistent in his or her role, it remains solely this narrator's point-of-view that is presented. A first-person account can thus only be said to be told from the author's perspective when the work is autobiographical. This is not the case with any of Remarque's novels, although a number of the books incorporate fictionalized versions of people and experiences from the author's own life.

The question of the relationship between author and narrator also affects other areas of the novel's form aside from the perspective. Whereas the overall spatial structure, such as chapter lengths and their division points, is likely to be understood as Remarque's personal undertaking along with the proportion of dialogue to narrative, other formal aspects, such as, the register, imagery and the general tone, are, it can be argued, those of the first-person narrator. The latter points are thus, paradoxically, not directly the product of Remarque, but are rather side products determined by the narrator the author has chosen for his work. Having given life to Bäumer in *Im Westen*, Remarque thus retreats to the background and it is solely Bäumer's voice and views which are heard.

In *Im Westen*, Bäumer's story is preceded by the novel's famous short prologue.

Dieses Buch soll weder eine Anklage noch ein Bekenntnis sein. Es soll nur den Versuch machen, über eine

Generation zu berichten, die vom Kriege zerstört wurde –  
auch wenn sie seinen Granaten entkam (*Im Westen*, p. 9).

The opening words, '[d]ieses *Buch*' [my emphasis], initially gives the reader the impression that the author is the speaker. The prologue's last line has thus often been criticized because it claims that the novel will report about those who were destroyed by the war '– auch wenn sie seinen Granaten entkam'.<sup>12</sup> This objective is, however, not met in the novel, as all the significant characters die, and, moreover, the novel concludes before the end of the war. Even if some of the chief characters had been alive at the conclusion of the work, it would have remained uncertain whether they would survive the war. That Remarque should have overlooked such an obvious contradiction between his prologue and actual plot seems unlikely. Firstly, he worked, as Thomas F. Schneider has shown, at the novel for a lot longer than the mere six weeks which both Remarque and Ullstein Publishing House maintained in the advertising campaign for *Im Westen*.<sup>13</sup> Secondly, Remarque continued to add changes to the manuscript between its serialization in the *Vossische Zeitung* (from 10 November to 9 December 1928) and its publication in book form (31 January 1929). Although he omitted, for instance, two other lines from the prologue, he retained the seemingly incompatible closing lines, quoted above.<sup>14</sup> Richard Littlejohns regards the inclusion of the last lines as an indication that 'war itself, paradoxically, is not the focus of interest in *Im Westen*', but that the novel is rather 'about the difficulty of coping with the subsequent peace'.<sup>15</sup> Also Thomas F. Schneider points to the novel's theme of the problematic reintegration of soldiers into Weimar society, but sees this reading of *Im Westen* in context of Remarque's originally intended trilogy about the war and its aftermath.<sup>16</sup> There is, however, no certainty that the prefatory statement is voiced by Remarque and therefore no reason why its perspective should not be reconsidered, although this, of course,

could trigger an entirely different debate on intentional fallacy. The introductory statement could in fact alternatively be read as a foreword composed by Bäumer as a prologue to his personal account of the war. Despite the fact that critics generally interpret the prefatory statement as Remarque's introduction to his novel, the idea that it should be part of Bäumer's narrative seems in many respects more fitting. For obvious reasons, the novel's closing paragraph cannot be Bäumer's since it describes his death. However, aside from this part, the entire story, *including* the prologue, could be Bäumer's, not verbalized, but written account of the war; an account noted down in the course of the war, as for instance Renn's protagonist does in the novel *Krieg*. Keeping a diary was a popular activity amongst First World War soldiers, and particularly during the early war years many such personal accounts, in which the authenticity generally weighed heavier than their aesthetic value, were published.<sup>17</sup> Murdoch too has brought attention to 'Bäumer's fictitious diary',<sup>18</sup> and even in the parody, *Vor Troja nichts Neues*, the protagonist, a curious mixture of Bäumer and Remarque, is keeping a diary, which he intends to publish after the war. This is further supported by the fact that Remarque entitled one of the early manuscripts of *Im Westen: Im Westen nichts Neues: Aus den Tagebüchern des Freiwilligen Georg Bäumer*.<sup>19</sup> The impression that Bäumer's narrative *could* be a diary is reinforced when, at times, the story (despite its use of the present tense) appears to be told, not as it unfolds, but with hindsight. Having killed the French soldier, Duval, in a bomb crater in no man's land, for instance, Bäumer is unable to expose himself and escape until after dark the following evening. When he is eventually able to crawl out of cover, he is focusing entirely on relocating the German trenches, and he explains: 'Den Toten habe ich vergessen' (*Im Westen*, p. 155). Yet, although he narrates in the present tense, such an assertion can be made solely on reflection. It is thus only possible to report on a forgotten or repressed matter when done

in retrospect – in this case perhaps when noting down the event in a personal diary or journal. A similar time gap is detectable in Bäumer's acknowledgement of his own insincerity when promising to support Duval's family financially, *if* only he himself should survive. In reality he attempts to bribe fate: '[E]ine kleine Hinterlist, daß man nachher immer noch erst einmal sehen könne' (*Im Westen*, p. 153). He is thus writing or stating this *after* the actual event has taken place. In relation to the front-line diary by Hermann Löns, Murdoch has noted a similar characteristic: 'Lengthier passages in which Löns describes being under fire were written immediately after the event, although in the present tense. [...] [I]t was presumably written the day or night after the events, but as if they were happening at the moment of writing.'<sup>20</sup>

That Bäumer enjoys writing can be gathered from his reference to a play, *Saul*, which he had been working on prior to the war. Nevertheless, due to the extremity of the situation, Bäumer (similarly to Renn in *Krieg*) has difficulties describing the war experience: '[m]an kann das nicht niederschreiben' (*Im Westen*, p. 126). The phrasing is unusual and a more natural wording would be that he cannot 'put into words' or 'explain' the situation. The fact that he specifically points to the impossibility of *writing* this down therefore suggests that this is exactly what he is attempting to do.

There are further indicators pointing to the novel's introduction being part of Bäumer's story. Aware that the war must be drawing to an end, Bäumer concludes his account by considering how to resume civilian life after the war. Naturally, as far as he is concerned, his story is that of a soldier who participated in, but nevertheless survived, the war. Being the only surviving member of a whole school class Bäumer's (written diary?) story is therefore an account of 'eine Generation [...], die vom Kriege zerstört wurde – auch wenn sie seinen Granaten entkam'; that is, until the very last paragraph, of which Bäumer, of course, remains unknowing. The prologue therefore correlates better

with Bäumer's narrative than with Remarque's novel as a whole. In other words, the prologue loses its demand for a subsequent novel, only if written without knowledge of Bäumer's death. Bäumer, of course, is unaware of this, whereas Remarque is not. Remarque stated in an interview by Friedrich Luft that he had found the writing of the sequel, *Der Weg* to be 'notwendig'.<sup>21</sup> It has generally been presumed that Remarque saw the necessity to write *Der Weg* in order to meet the objectives stated in the introductory lines of *Im Westen*. However, the 'Notwendigkeit' of the sequel can also be viewed in the context of Bäumer's unexpected death, and to Bäumer it *is* unexpected as '[j]eder Soldat bleibt nur durch tausend Zufälle am Leben. Und jeder Soldat glaubt und vertraut dem Zufall' (*Im Westen*, p. 75). As the war (and the novel) draws to an end, Bäumer is already looking to the future and he imagines life – his own life – in peacetime. It may be at this point – having already written his account – that Bäumer composes the prefatory statement, perhaps with possible publication in mind. The war is practically over, and this could explain why he applies the past tense to his short introductory words, when he speaks of those who 'entkam' (*Im Westen*, p. 9). Then he dies and as a result a part of his prologue becomes untenable. Bäumer has previously been ruled out as a possible narrator of the prefatory statement, but the arguments above show not only that this is a possible option, but that the introductory words do, in fact, become more fitting and logical if read as Bäumer's.

Although the presentation of war in *Im Westen* consistently reflects the viewpoint of Bäumer, the novel continues beyond the conclusion of his account, and following Bäumer's death an external, though not omniscient, narrator reports this event in a single paragraph on the novel's final page. Initially this nameless narrator and Remarque could be interpreted as one and the same person, but if the two are regarded as identical, the question then arises as to why Remarque, who after all has created

Bäumer and thus is all-knowing in respect to this character, expresses uncertainty through the use of the subjunctive. Bäumer is said to look ‘als *wäre* er beinahe zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war’ [my emphasis] (*Im Westen*, p. 197), and ergo the third person narrator is revealed to know only the external circumstances. The feeling of uncertainty is further strengthened by the insertion of the adverb ‘beinahe’ (*Im Westen*, p. 197).<sup>22</sup> The identity of this narrator remains unclear, but the limitations to the perspective create an important barrier between Bäumer and the reader. It highlights Bäumer’s insignificance against the background of the millions of other soldiers who were killed during the war.

By letting his narrator die – ironically at the end of the war – Remarque stresses the indiscriminate nature and pointlessness of war. Hans-Harald Müller, though, sees another explanation to Bäumer’s death. He suggests that Remarque not only attempts to justify his own failure as a writer (prior to writing *Im Westen*), but symbolically tries to erase this feeling of failure by killing the novel’s protagonist.<sup>23</sup> Müller’s interpretation can only be viewed as an example of over-analysis. Had Bäumer, however, survived he would, in all certainty, not have entitled his story *Im Westen nichts Neues*, as this title only gains meaning *following* Bäumer’s death. Admittedly, there are a few, albeit well-disguised, references to the title within Bäumer’s narrative.<sup>24</sup> The title is nevertheless predominantly tied to the anonymous narrator’s final remark, and serves to stress the contrast between the irreversible impact which dying has on the individual and those emotionally attached to him (including the reader), and the insignificance of that individual in the eyes of the authorities who regard the front soldier merely as cannon fodder or *Material* in the *Materialschlacht*.

Although *Im Westen* is a fictional account of the First World War, a statement by Kaiser Wilhelm II, quoted in Edlef Köppen's *Heeresbericht*, reflects a detached attitude and lack of concern for his individual subject:

Ich glaube, daß wir [...] wissen [...] daß wir lieber unsre gesamten 18 Armeekorps und 42 Millionen Einwohner auf der Walstatt liegen lassen, als daß wir einen einzigen Stein von dem, was Mein Vater und der Prinz Friedrich Karl errungen haben, abtreten.<sup>25</sup>

Against such figures, the loss of a few individuals on a comparatively quiet day on the Western front would certainly not seem worth reporting. In one of the early manuscript-versions of *Im Westen* which, as Schneider has shown, had a more explicitly pacifist tone, Bäumer condemns the exploitation of the ordinary soldier: 'Sie wissen es, sage ich dir, sie wissen alles ganz genau, sie kennen Krieg und Lazarette und Massengräber, sie wissen, das wir alle nichts anderes sind als Kanonenfutter für eine Anzahl Ehrgeiziger und Verdienner und Quatschköpfe – und sie hören trotzdem nicht auf'.<sup>26</sup> Although based on the final and less direct version of the novel, the 1930 film production of *Im Westen* likewise attacks the attitude of the Kaiser. Here, his absence from the front has not gone unnoticed by Tjaden. When the soldiers (in both the book and the film) speculate about the origins of the war, Albert Kropp explains that war begins with one country or people offending another, but Tjaden humorously points out: 'Wenn das so ist, wäre ich nicht hier – ich fühle mich nämlich nicht beleidigt! [...] Ich gehe nach Hause. Er [der Kaiser] ist schon dort!'<sup>27</sup>

Remarque chooses to highlight the wording of the military report by entitling his novel: *Im Westen nichts Neues*. Viewed in context of the entire work, the title stresses the fact that Bäumer is a mere representative of the front-line soldier, and although the novel depicts war only from his perspective, neither his story, nor his death, are

extraordinary. He is just one of millions of men who experienced the battlefields of the war. On the basis of Remarque's choice of title, it must therefore be assumed that Remarque regarded the loss of individualism and the insignificance to which the life of the individual soldier was reduced as a central theme of his work.

The release of *Im Westen* was followed by a considerable amount of literary responses, mainly satires and parodies, which generally communicated their connection with Remarque's work through titles such as *Im Osten nichts Neues*; *Im Westen doch Neues*; *Im Westen wohl was Neues* and *Vor Troja nichts Neues*.<sup>28</sup> The latter – possibly inspired by an earlier parody, *Triumph des Thersites*, of Jaroslav Hašek's novel, *Die Abenteuer des braven Soldaten Schwejk*<sup>29</sup> – was humorously published under the pseudonym Emil Marius Requark.<sup>30</sup> *Vor Troja* mirrors Remarque's theme of disregard for the life of the individual, and particularly that of the common soldier. In a reported, recent battle apparently only low-ranking combatants, but no warriors of considerable status or fame, have fallen. Chief Commander Agamemnon and his brother and chief of the general staff, Menelaos, are, as a result, uncertain how to phrase their military communiqué. They discuss the dilemma:

“Ein paar Muskoten sind auch getötet und ein paar  
Verwundete ins Lazarett eingeliefert worden...”

“Muskoten interessieren mich nicht. Die kann ich in  
meinem Heeresbericht nicht brauchen. Ist denn keiner von  
unseren Helden ausgerückt?”

“Nein [...]”<sup>31</sup>

Finally they word their report: ‘[n]ichts Neues vor Troja’.<sup>32</sup>

Additionally to showing the army leaders' indifference towards the life of the common soldier, the above dialogue-extract indicates mockery and questioning of the *Heldentum* of those who are credited with (or indeed themselves take credit for) any *Heldenmut*

exhibited on the battlefield. The heroes Agamemnon speaks of relate particularly to Bäumer's presentation of corporal Himmelstoß whose fear, however, proves to exceed that of his former recruits (*Im Westen*, p. 95). In an attempt by the Germans to cross enemy lines, Bäumer suddenly sees Himmelstoß, who has sought shelter in a crater whilst the other soldiers continue to charge towards the enemy. Bäumer is furious. He shakes Himmelstoß and shouts at him, despite the higher rank of the latter. It is, however, not the verbal attack itself, but the pictures within Bäumer's language that truly show his different views of the corporal and the common front soldiers. Both are likened to the same animal, a dog, but whereas Himmelstoß is negatively described as 'ein Kötter' (*Im Westen*, p. 95), Bäumer's sympathy for the young recruits is reflected in his description of them as 'brav[e], arm[e] Hunde' (*Im Westen*, p. 94). Many of the comparisons in *Im Westen* are connected through common objects or themes which extend over a few paragraphs. The dog-comparison, for instance, continues following Himmelstoß's first front battle. He has realized the reality of war, and Bäumer says of him: 'Seine Schnauze hat er verloren' (*Im Westen*, p. 99).

Aside from parodying Himmelstoß, the heroes in Agamemnon's army also represent the older men in Bäumer's hometown. Similarly to the Greek heroes, they do not directly participate in the war, and yet they speak as if they are actively involved and indeed understand the war to a greater degree than the front soldiers. On home leave Bäumer encounters, for example, his former teacher of German, who asks: 'Na, wie steht es draußen. Furchtbar, furchtbar, nicht wahr? Ja, es ist schrecklich, aber *wir* müssen eben durchhalten [my emphasis]' (*Im Westen*, p. 117). The use of direct speech gives a feel of objectivity and although this seeming neutrality is somewhat deceptive in that the passages of direct speech are, in reality, also narrated by Bäumer, the reader feels that s/he is being *shown*, rather than being *explained*, the sentiment of the older

generation.<sup>33</sup> Naturally, the reader is encouraged to take a particular stance, but through its objective feel, the use of direct speech lessens the reader's impression that an opinion is being imposed upon him or her. Although Bäumer at that point recognizes the ignorance and unrealistic expectations of his elders, he explains how, prior to the war, he and his school friends believed in the rules and judgement of their elders. As a result, Bäumer's former class teacher, Kantorek, was able to manipulate the entire class to volunteer for the army. Again through the use of direct speech, Kantorek is *shown* to have tactically utilized the language to achieve this: 'Ihr geht doch mit, Kameraden?' (*Im Westen*, p. 17). Since Kantorek himself is not going to the front, his use of 'mit', which seems to imply his own participation, is merely a tool to pressurize the pupils; likewise his fake use of 'Kameraden'. The equality implied by this word is clearly invalid in the hierarchic relationship between the teacher and the class members. The insincerity is, at the time, not recognized by the pupils: 'darüber machten wir uns damals noch keine Gedanken' (*Im Westen*, p. 17); it is, however, obvious to the reader, who consequently sympathizes with the naïve and exploited pupils. In this manner, the young front soldiers come across as innocent pawns in the hands of a few *Kriegsgewinnler* and zealously patriotic members of the older generation. Despite their readiness to self-sacrifice, the soldiers are treated, not as an army of individuals, but simply as an army.

The insignificance of the individual soldier is typically mirrored in the nationalistic war novels, but in these works the soldiers perceive their loss of individuality as necessary and as a positive step towards a stronger Germany. In *Wir fahren den Tod*, Thor Goote's protagonist, Lingen, states, for instance: 'Wir sind ja nur Nebensächlichkeiten im ganzen Geschehen. Das Volk als Ganzes ist doch alles.'<sup>34</sup> Franz Schauwecker's *Der feurige Weg* similarly highlights this depersonalization: 'Das

freie Leben der Persönlichkeit ist weggefegt. Ich bin nicht mehr ich, sondern Füsilier Sowieso. [...] Ein Gemeinschaftsziel erhebt sich star.<sup>35</sup> [I]ch bin nicht mehr ich, ich bin ja Füsilier Sowieso. Einer von Millionen. Kamerad. Soldat.<sup>36</sup> In *Im Westen*, on the contrary, Bäumer's tone is negative and indicates that he does not regard the assumed group identity as constructive: 'Es ist, als ob wir früher einmal Geldstücke verschiedener Länder gewesen wären; man hat sie eingeschmolzen, und alle haben jetzt denselben Prägestempel. [...] Wir sind Soldaten und erst später auf eine sonderbare und verschämte Weise noch Einzelmenschen' (*Im Westen*, p. 183). Indicated already in its title, Ernst Wiechert's anti-war novel *Jedermann: Geschichte eines Namenlosen* also contains references to the soldiers' absorption into a 'Gleichmaß' or 'Vielheit'.<sup>37</sup> Like Bäumer, Johannes in *Jedermann* feels his personal identity threatened: "Vielleicht muß man morgen auch dort sitzen", denkt Johannes, und unter seinen Füßen gleichsam fühlt er, daß er eben "man" gedacht hat, nicht "ich".<sup>38</sup> Johannes clearly regards the external uniformity of the soldiers as a threat and a deliberate indoctrinatory measure undertaken by those in charge in order to build up a feeling of togetherness and loyalty:

Er vertauschte die Gesichter und die Kopfbedeckungen,  
und nichts änderte sich. Er erkannte, daß es ein  
Massengesicht war, und in dieser Erkenntnis ging ihm  
unvermittelt der Sinn der Uniform auf, des Helmes, des  
Gleichschrittes. [...] "Man muß das Gesicht aus der  
Uniform retten", dachte er. [I]ch muß lernen, mich zu  
verlassen, mein Haus abzuschließen und auf eine Reise zu  
gehen...<sup>39</sup>

Despite the fact that Bäumer, in comparison, appears to be relatively comfortable within the group, it soon becomes clear, not least through the characteristics Bäumer highlights in relation to the other characters, that the strong, family-like bond which has developed between the soldiers and which has remoulded them from many individuals

into one entity, is based on their personal wish to survive the war, rather than on ideological principles. To Bäumer the close *Kameradschaft* makes up an essential physical and psychological support network. The soldiers share, for instance, what food they can acquire, and when Bäumer in no-man's-land gets disorientated and feels a rush of panic, the sudden, low voices, which he believes to be those of his comrades, extinguish his fear and are described as 'das Stärkste und Schützendste, was es überhaupt gibt' (*Im Westen*, p. 145). This strong bond is conveyed, perhaps subconsciously, by Bäumer as he narrates the novel not only in the first person singular, but, for a large part, also in the first person *plural*. As a matter of fact, the novel opens with the pronoun 'wir'; as do chapter three, four, nine and eleven. It is thus only on the novel's second page that Bäumer unveils his own name and age which he casually interposes in the midst of sketchy descriptions of the other members of his immediate group. This strengthens the impression that Bäumer's personal identity is given no precedence, but that it is fused with that of the group from within which he narrates at the outset of the novel.<sup>40</sup>

Throughout *Im Westen*, Bäumer's *wir* does not consistently refer to one specific group of people, but rather changes according to the content of the narrative. Although Bäumer does not generally specify who *wir* are, it can (despite Harald Kloiber's claim of the opposite<sup>41</sup>) on the whole be concluded from the context.<sup>42</sup> There are thus instances where this plural pronoun embraces merely Bäumer and one other person, such as when he and Kat roast a goose, whereas at other times it encompasses Bäumer's former school friends; his immediate group of comrades on the front; the entire company; the German army or even soldiers universally. At a single occasion 'wir' applies to members of society's lower social spectrum: '[S]o sind wir, so sind sie, die armen Leute' (*Im Westen*, p. 136), but aside from this statement, the novel is largely

devoid of social comments. As one of the major themes of the novel is the wide chasm between generations, there are naturally also incidents of ‘wir’ pertaining to young people, and particularly those who are participating in the war. However, as both Travers and Murdoch have noted, the narrative perspective becomes gradually more individualistic as the novel progresses; shown through an increase in the first-person singular paralleled with a decrease in the use of *wir*.<sup>43</sup> Bäumer’s utilization of personal pronouns is significant in that it follows and reveals his psychological development (or deterioration), and so the changing singular and plural perspective serves as an important narrative tool in *Im Westen*.

Structurally, *Im Westen* is characterized by short, self-contained episodes. Some critics suggest that the apparent lack of causality between the individual episodes makes it possible to arrange them in any arbitrary order.<sup>44</sup> However, although there appears to be no causality in the plot from chapter to chapter,<sup>45</sup> Bäumer’s psychological decline and his gradual retreat from the group – underlined, for instance, through manipulation of the pronouns – would be lost if the order was changed radically. In his elaborate examination of the structure of *Im Westen*, Kloiber has indeed shown that the sequence of the episodes is far from random. Rather, there appears to be three cycles consisting, roughly, of times of rest; descriptions of the misery of war; and incidences of death. On the basis of his study, Kloiber concludes that *Im Westen* is an ‘Episodenroman, der mit einer komplexen, genau durchdachten Großstruktur das Interesse des Lesers auf das Ende des Romans hin ausrichtet’.<sup>46</sup>

When focusing on Bäumer and his psychological development, however, *Im Westen* divides into two parts, where part one (chapter one to ten) occupies more than ninety percent of the work’s space. In this part Bäumer describes, mainly from within the group, the experience of war through a mixture of relatively cheerful episodes as well as

very serious ones. Part two, on the other hand, consists only of chapter eleven and twelve, but the shortness of this part serves, in effect, to accentuate Bäumer's psychological degeneration and gradual withdrawnness. In contrast to the many specific incidents presented in the first ten chapters, the second part describes war more generally and almost constitutes a summary of the preceding ten chapters; only, the occasional moments of vivacity, found in part one, have disappeared. Part two therefore includes only a few specific episodes depicting the terrible manner in which a number of Bäumer's fellow soldiers find their end. In contrast to the elaborate presentation of the dying Kemmerich at the outset of the work, the deaths occurring in part two are described succinctly and with relatively little pathos. Death has become an accepted and virtually expected part of everyday life: 'Seit zwei Jahren war er bei uns, ohne daß er verwundet wurde, da mußte ja endlich etwas passieren' (*Im Westen*, p. 190). Only the cause of death varies: 'Ruhr, Grippe, Typhus – Würgen, Verbrennen, Tod. Graben, Lazarett, Massengrab – mehr Möglichkeiten gibt es nicht' (*Im Westen*, p. 190). The occurrences of death therefore accelerate as the novel moves into part two. This is, however, equally a result of the general picture Bäumer at this point gives of the war. Whereas the individual episodes of the novel's first part stretch over limited time periods such as a week, a day, a night, a few hours or perhaps merely minutes, in part two, time speeds up and assumes the same general characteristic as Bäumer's description of the war. 'Es war Winter, als ich ankam'; 'Die Monaten rücken weiter'; 'einige Regenwochen liegen hinter uns'; 'Sommer 1918'; 'Es ist Herbst' (*Im Westen*, p. 183, 191, 191, 196). In a paradoxical manner time appears to accelerate and yet to have stopped: 'wir zählen die Wochen nicht mehr'; 'diese Tanks sind Maschinen, ihre Kettenbänder laufen *endlos wie der Krieg* [my emphasis]' (*Im Westen*, p. 183, 190).

In chapter eleven and twelve – or what might be referred to as part two – Bäumer’s emotional and physical exhaustion is mirrored in the narrative, which compared to the rest of the novel, becomes taciturn and more reflective. Whereas Bäumer at the opening of the novel identified with his group, he now withdraws from this position. He is, of course, to a certain degree forced to detach himself, as the members of the group gradually die, but he does not establish a new support network. In fact, in part two, Bäumer rejects the men’s adaption to the existence on the front and thus, in a way, also the comradeship between them: ‘es [das Leben] hat uns mit Stumpfheit durchsetzt, damit wir nicht zerbrechen vor dem Grauen, das uns bei klarem, bewußtem Denken überfallen würde, - es hat in uns den Kameradschaftssinn geweckt, damit wir dem Abgrund der Verlassenheit entgehen [...]’. Yet, Bäumer proceeds to state that this adaption is ‘künstlich’ (*Im Westen*, p. 184); a theme which Remarque takes up again in *Der Weg*.

Bäumer’s solitude in the novel’s last two chapters is highlighted through his use of the past tense when he explains the deaths of Müller, Bertinck and Leer as well as the disappearance of Detering. These characters are thus not present with Bäumer in part two, but merely figures in his memory. It is really only Kat who still interacts with Bäumer, so when he too dies, Bäumer’s introversion and individualization process becomes complete.

The sequence in which the characters die or otherwise get separated from Bäumer seems to be determined by their relationship to the latter. The tie between Bäumer and his former two classmates Kemmerich and Behm, for instance, is not described as particularly strong. Their function in the novel is predominantly to make up numbers and to depict the pointless death of very young people, but they have no real influence on Bäumer’s life on the front. These two characters therefore die first. Bäumer’s two

closest friends, Albert and Kat, however, are the last two to get injured or die before Bäumer himself is killed. In this manner death moves ever closer to Bäumer as the novel progresses.

The character of Kat plays an important part in the novel. With his forty years and valuable experience in warfare, he has come to fulfil the roles of both father and mentor to Bäumer and many of the other recruits. His death is consequently a severe loss to Bäumer, who, following this event, for a moment cannot grasp that the surrounding world does not collapse. He has lost his only remaining friend and he feels truly alone for the first time.<sup>47</sup> However, alongside all the other horrors he has witnessed, Bäumer suppresses his grief for Kat. Earlier in the novel, Bäumer explains, how the experiences of war sink ‘wie Steine’ inside him, but also that they are only dormant and will have to be dealt with later (*Im Westen*, p. 99, 101.) For the moment he must focus on his own survival. ‘Jede Lebensäußerung darf nur der Daseinserhaltung dienen [...] [a]lles andere ist verbannt, weil es unnötig Kraft verzehren würde’ (*Im Westen*, p. 184.) Nevertheless, after Kat’s death he has to direct all his will at facing an existence alone. He does this only with difficulty: ‘Ich stehe *langsam* auf [my emphasis]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 195).

Remarque clearly considered the impact of including the adverb, ‘langsam’, because it was only added in the course of his revision of an early manuscript.<sup>48</sup> It is thus not due to indifference that Bäumer states: ‘Es ist alles wie sonst. Nur der Landwehrmann Stanislaus Katczinsky ist gestorben’ (*Im Westen*, p. 195). Rather, he finds this information almost incomprehensible. His choice of phrasing is, of course, also an indirect foreboding of the lack of attention his own death will stir.

Bäumer’s particular appreciation of his friendship to Kat and Albert is communicated through exploitation of the distinction in meaning between the terms *Kamerad* and *Freund*. Whereas all the front soldiers in *Im Westen* are referred to as *Kameraden*, most

of them are connected only through external circumstances – in this case the war. The expression therefore assumes a somewhat impersonal meaning. In comparison, the term *Freund* suggests a stronger bond that exceeds the war, and whereas a *Kamerad* can be substituted, a *Freund* is much harder to replace. The difference in closeness which the two terms imply, is, as stated, utilized by Bäumer. When having to leave Albert behind in hospital, Bäumer says: ‘Der Abschied von meinem Freunde Albert Kropp ist schwer’ (*Im Westen*, p. 181). Rather than lengthy explanations, the inclusion of ‘meinem Freunde’ expresses concisely, yet clearly, their solid friendship. In relation to Kat, Bäumer does equally not state explicitly their close relationship, but the warmth with which he speaks of the older soldier reveals this unequivocally.<sup>49</sup>

Despite their mutual friendship with Bäumer, Albert and Kat are opposites. Bäumer and the former are the same age and both have a school education. Kat, on the other hand, is twice their age, is a cobbler of profession and possesses a degree of life experience not obtainable from books, but vital to survival on the front. These two people provide Bäumer with a sense of stability in the midst of the chaotic and uprooted existence they lead on the front. His friendship to Albert goes back to his school days and thus represents to him the carefreeness of their lives prior to the war. Through Albert, Bäumer retains a connection to the naïve and untroubled world of his school days, which makes their friendship of great importance to Bäumer’s mental wellbeing. Bäumer’s close relationship with Kat, on the other hand, centres much more on physical survival. Kat is said to have a sixth sense for shell fire and a nose for tracking down food, and he evokes in Bäumer the feeling of being under a father’s protection: ‘[I]ch liebe ihn, seine Schultern, seine eckige, gebeugte Gestalt – und zu gleicher Zeit sehe ich hinter ihm Wälder und Sterne, und eine gute Stimme sagt Worte, die mir Ruhe geben’ (*Im Westen*, p. 72). Bäumer’s sense of peace around Kat is also conveyed in the simile:

‘[Kats] Schatten fällt über mich wie eine Heimat’ (*Im Westen*, p. 73). In contrast to this stout picture of Kat as a provider of food and security, Bäumer refers in the same episode to himself as a soldier ‘der mit seinen *großen Stiefeln* und seinem Koppel und seinem Brotbeutel *klein* unter dem *hohen Himmel* den Weg geht, der vor ihm liegt [my emphases]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 72). The large boots and the deep sky contrast and accentuate Bäumer’s description of himself as ‘klein’. In the context of the picture given of Kat, Bäumer thus comes to liken a vulnerable child who is watched over by Kat and who arouses sympathy in the reader.

Bäumer’s search for a stable point of focus psychologically reveals itself on several accounts in the course of the work. Bäumer describes the front as ‘ein unheimlicher Strudel’, and his inner struggle to resist being drawn in by this whirlpool shows itself when he physically clings to objects such as a pillow, his rifle or the window frame of the train carrying him home on leave. These items momentarily substitute the stability Bäumer’s life is lacking but which he needs in order to cope with the frightening experience of the front. Lingen reacts in a similar fashion in *Wir fahren den Tod*. Landing in shell fire whilst driving an ammunition wagon, he explains: ‘Ich klammere mich mit den Händen ganz fest, nicht weil ich fürchte herunterzufallen, sondern so, wie ich es beim Zahnarzt tue. Ich will nur meiner sicher sein. [...] Ich verrutsche meine Hände immer wieder, obwohl sie gut liegen.’ After the attack ceases, he relaxes: ‘Ich habe das Gefühl, als seien Tiere und Menschen nun entspannt. Jetzt kann ich auch meine Hände lösen und mich zurechtrücken.’<sup>50</sup>

Leonhard Frank applies the same technique in *Der Mensch ist gut*. A father who is monitoring the war situation from home through the propagandistic newspapers refuses to accept the very different first hand accounts of the war depicted in his son’s letters: ‘Er [der Vater] klammerte sich an seine Zeitung an, las die neueste Siegesnachricht des

Kriegsberichterstatters: in sein sofort wieder beruhigtes Gehirn ließ sich ein Ausschnitt leichenbedeckter Erde nieder'. However, his wife points to the dissimilarities between the version of events as written in the paper and the son's letters respectively, so the father's grip of the paper tightens – both physically and psychologically: “Das ist ja Unsinn.” Der Vater packte die Zeitung fester [...].<sup>51</sup>

Bäumer's visit to the French women's house also shows his search for some form of stability. In contrast to the prostitutes the soldiers are said to ordinarily visit, the three French girls represent civilian life. As Bäumer and his friends have to swim across a river to reach the house of the women, they arrive wearing only their boots. Not being dressed in a uniform alights in Bäumer a sensation of having become a person or individual, rather than being an anonymous soldier. As with the rifle, the pillow and the window frame, Bäumer's wish to gain and retain the stability and safety the women signify, is communicated through his body language towards one of the women: 'Dann aber fühle ich die Lippen der Schmalen, Dunklen, und dränge mich ihnen entgegen, ich schließe die Augen und möchte alles damit auslöschen, Krieg und Grauen und Gemeinheit [...]. Und um so tiefer presse ich mich in die Arme, die mich umfassen, vielleicht geschieht ein Wunder' (*Im Westen*, p. 107). But all of Bäumer's attempts to create any sense of stability in his uprooted existence fail, and eventually even Albert and Kat, the two central points in Bäumer's life, are eliminated. However, although Bäumer feels 'so allein und so ohne Erwartung', he manages to find the strength within himself to face his uncertain future. His resolution is detectable from his action: 'ich stehe auf' (*Im Westen*, p. 197). It is almost as if, for the first time, he looks beyond the war and, physically as well as psychologically, considers his future way back to ordinary, civilian life. The physical and emotional exhaustion he signalled following

Kat's death by standing up 'langsam' has alleviated. At this stage Bäumer's introversion appears to proceed, as Murdoch has suggested, to a subconscious level.<sup>52</sup>

Ich bin sehr ruhig. Mögen die Monate und Jahre kommen, sie nehmen mir nichts mehr, sie können mir nichts mehr nehmen. Ich bin so allein und so ohne Erwartung, daß ich ihnen entgegensehen kann ohne Furcht. Das Leben, das mich durch diese Jahre trug, ist noch in meinen Händen und Augen. Ob ich es überwunden habe, weiß ich nicht. Aber solange es da ist, wird es sich seinen Weg suchen, mag dieses, das in mir "ich" sagt, wollen oder nicht (*Im Westen*, p. 197).

The atmosphere is calm. The conscious Bäumer who has so far acted as narrator, appears to be strangely absent, as if he is simply a shell surrounding another Bäumer, the actual Bäumer, the life-force within him. Using Bäumer, the shell, as a mouthpiece, the id reveals to the reader that this individual has the willpower to try to overcome the war experience. When an anonymous third person narrator then announces that Bäumer died in October only weeks before the end of the war, Bäumer is therefore described as looking only 'als wäre er *beinahe* zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war [my emphasis]' (*Im Westen*, p. 197).

In *Der Weg*, the soldiers who survive the war continue to live in its shadow as they attempt to process their experiences. At the end of *Im Westen*, Bäumer's subconscious appears to have started this process already. He is bruised physically as well as mentally, but the last paragraph of his narrative unveils a buried, and perhaps to Bäumer's conscious self unknown, source of strength. Like Birkholz in *Der Weg*, he might thus eventually have been able to adjust to civilian life, had he survived. This makes his death doubly ironic: having endured years of physical and mental strain, he not only dies at the closing stages of the war, but his prospects for overcoming the

experience mentally had he not been killed also appears to have been relatively good, unlike many of the soldiers who actually did survive.

As described thus far, Bäumer's individualization process is accompanied by his utilization of the personal pronouns *ich* and *wir*, but there are also examples of Bäumer narrating in the neutral and more generalizing *man*. When in hospital his change in narrative perspective from the first to the third person has a distancing effect:

Man kann nicht begreifen, daß über so zerrissenen Leibern noch Menschengesichtern sind, in denen das Leben seinen alltäglichen Fortgang nimmt. Und dabei ist dies nur ein einziges Lazarett, nur eine einzige Station – es gibt hunderttausende in Deutschland, Hunderttausende in Frankreich, Hunderttausende in Rußland. Wie sinnlos ist alles, was je geschrieben, getan, gedacht wurde, wenn so etwas möglich ist! Es muß alles gelogen und belanglos sein, wenn die Kultur von Jahrtausenden nicht einmal verhindern konnte, daß diese Ströme von Blut vergossen wurden, daß diese Kerker der Qualen zu hunderttausenden existieren. Erst das Lazarett zeigt, was der Krieg ist (*Im Westen*, p. 177.)

Although this extract is narrated by Bäumer, his use of *man* removes the focus from his person and, in combination with the content of the passage, the reader is zoomed out from Bäumer's subjective story and is offered a wider view of the consequences of war. The quoted paragraph is closely linked to the novel's early description of Kemmerich's death, in which Bäumer likewise makes use of the more neutral *man*: 'Man sollte die ganze Welt an diesem Bette vorbeiführen und sagen; Das ist Franz Kemmerich, neunzehneinhalb Jahre alt, er will nicht sterben' (*Im Westen*, p. 29). When Bäumer therefore, above, accentuates the numerousness of the *Lazaretten* in Europe, the picture of Kemmerich on his deathbed transforms, in the mind of the reader, each of the hundreds of thousands of wounded in Germany, France and Russia into individuals and innocent victims who, analogously to Kemmerich, do not want to die.

The sudden expansion of the view in the above extract is not unique to Remarque, but is also found in, for instance, Leonhard Frank's *Der Mensch ist gut*: 'Wie viele Schmerzenslager gibt es knapp hinter der Front? Und wie viele in allen Städten und Städtchen des Heimatlandes? Wie viele in Rußland, Frankreich, England, Italien? Wie viele Schmerzenslager gibt es in Europa?'<sup>53</sup> Both Frank's and Remarque's quotes leave the reader with a temporary impression of witnessing events from an ever greater distance. However, whereas *Der Mensch ist gut* is written from an array of perspectives, Remarque's work is showing only Bäumer's view. There is a flicker of omniscience only when Bäumer disappears behind the pronoun *man*. Subsequently, although *Im Westen* is narrated by a single individual, the reader is not allowed to forget that Bäumer, like Kemmerich, is merely one of millions of soldiers who fought and died in the war.

In a diary entry from 1929, Harry Graf Kessler reports of a conversation with Remarque regarding the approach of the latter to the writing process. Remarque's explanation suggests that he considered the perspective to constitute the very basis of his work, but also that he was aware that he could manipulate this aspect to achieve a specific effect:

Wenn man auf der Eisenbahn fahre, sehe man manchmal gegen Abend irgendwo, zwischen Sowieso und Sowieso, einen einsamen Menschen über ein Feld gehen, und gegen den Himmel erscheine er unendlich groß. Das sei es! Man müsse seine Menschen gegen den Himmel stellen, den Hintergrund hinter ihnen aufbauen [...]. Das versuche er, seinen Menschen den Hintergrund des Unendlichen zu geben.<sup>54</sup>

Remarque clearly focussed on this image when writing not only *Im Westen*, but also his subsequent novels. In *Im Westen* the actual image of a tiny figure against the

boundless horizon appears. When Kat and Bäumer share the experience of stealing and roasting a goose, Bäumer reflects upon life and, gripped by the atmosphere, his narrative takes a sentimental turn. This is caused partly through a seeming switch in perspective:

[U]nd eine gute Stimme sagt Worte, die *mir* Ruhe geben, *mir*, einem Soldaten, der mit *seinen* großen Stiefeln und *seinem* Koppel und *seinem* Brotbeutel klein unter dem hohen Himmel den Weg geht, der vor *ihm* liegt, der rasch vergißt und nur selten noch traurig ist, der immer weitergeht unter dem großen Nachthimmel [my emphases] (*Im Westen*, p. 72).

In the succeeding paragraph Remarque lets Bäumer continue to narrate entirely from this external position. His description of himself as ‘der Soldat mit den großen Stiefeln und dem zugeschütteten Herzen’ certainly amplifies the sentimentality of the passage. Along with the quiet sadness expressed in the rest of the paragraph, this also serves to show Bäumer’s sensitivity:

Sind am Horizont nicht Blumen und eine Landschaft, die so still ist, daß er weinen möchte, der Soldat? Stehen dort nicht Bilder, die er nicht verloren hat, weil er sie nie besessen hat, verwirrend, aber dennoch für ihn vorüber? Stehen dort nicht seine zwanzig Jahre?

Bäumer’s indirect reference to his lost youth through imagery, ‘Horizont’ (lost), ‘Blumen’; ‘Landschaft’; ‘Bilder’ (youth), also adds texture locally and thereby creates variation in the narrative and enhances the reading experience.<sup>55</sup> The use of the distancing third-person pronoun again reminds the reader that Bäumer is a representative of an entire generation. The quoted passage is set almost half way through the novel, and it is the only use of the third-person in the novel. At the very end

of the work the narrative is taken up by an external narrator and the third-person perspective therefore no longer functions as an aesthetic device. Interestingly, whereas Bäumer's passage switches from a first to a third-person perspective mid-sentence, and thus leaves no doubt that *er* refers to Bäumer, the identity of the third person singular in the novels closing paragraph is unspecified.

Er fiel im Oktober 1918, an einem Tage, der so ruhig und still war an der ganzen Front, daß der Heeresbericht sich nur auf den Satz beschränkte, im Westen sei nichts Neues zu melden. Er war vorübergesunken und lag wie schlafend an der Erde. Als man ihn umdrehte, sah man, daß er sich nicht lange gequält haben konnte; – sein Gesicht hatte einen so gefaßten Ausdruck, als wäre er beinahe zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war (*Im Westen*, p. 197).

This closing paragraph does not once mention Bäumer by name, and ambiguity also characterizes the identity of those who determine that 'er' has died. Additional distance between the dead soldier and the reader is created by a switch from the present to the past tense. Bäumer's identity has dissolved and he has become just another victim of the war.

Murdoch has pointed out that the use of *wir* implies the existence of a contrasting group consisting of *die anderen*.<sup>56</sup> Their identity naturally depends on who *wir* are, but there is generally an implied chasm between the two; a gap characterized by contrast or opposition. Opposites are, in fact, a common feature in *Im Westen* in relation to both the content and the form. The novel depicts, for instance, two generations and their opposing views. There is also the gap between front and home, past and present, and life and death. Formally, contrasts occur locally in antonymic expressions such as: '[w]ir sind verlassen wie Kinder und erfahren wie alte Leute' (*Im Westen*, p. 90); '[n]icht viel für zwanzig Jahre – zuviel für zwanzig Jahre' (*Im Westen*, p. 68) and 'wir

sind verbunden auf eine einfache und schwere Art' (*Im Westen*, p. 145). Although concise, these statements are memorable. The reader is presented with seemingly conflicting assertions which are nevertheless valid when read in context of the novel. This encourages the reader to consider the thoughts behind the words and the meanings of the individual antonyms in their context. By use of antonyms, Remarque therefore engages the reader in the novel and, as with his utilization of direct speech, discussed above, leaves the reader with a feeling of having drawn his or her own conclusions rather than being lectured.

Apart from Bäumer, the characters in *Im Westen* have generally been criticized of being, what Forster has termed, 'flat'.<sup>57</sup> Such criticism, however, reflects a lack of appreciation for the narrative perspective. Since the entire novel, aside from its closing paragraph, is presented solely from Bäumer's point-of-view, the portrayal of the other characters depends on Bäumer's relationship to them. A third-person narrator, for instance, would in all likelihood have mentioned Kat's civilian profession in the initial introduction of this character. To Bäumer and his account of events on the front, however, this information is insignificant, and he makes only a fleeting reference to this: 'Von Beruf ist er, glaube ich, Schuster, aber das tuts nichts zur Sache [...]' (*Im Westen*, p. 34). Bäumer is neither an omniscient nor an objective narrator and this naturally affects the characteristics he highlights (or omits) in relation to the other characters. Günter Hartung's criticism of what he perceives to be an incomplete characterization of Tjaden, Kat and Detering is thus not justifiable.<sup>58</sup>

*Im Westen* has likewise been criticized for being too explicit in relation to battle and hospital scenes as well as in episodes referring to defecation or sex. The American version of the novel, in fact, censored such passages, as these were regarded too graphic for American readers.<sup>59</sup> The original version was not published in America until 1975.

*Im Westen* does allude to subjects which to a certain extent have remained taboo, but when Richard Littlejohns talks of ‘unabashed vulgarity about sexual and lavatorial matters’,<sup>60</sup> this is hardly a fair comment. He also condemns the ‘pleasure which Bäumer and his mates take in the earthy physicality [sic] of life at the front’ as ‘perverse’.<sup>61</sup> However, with suffering and death incessantly reminding the soldiers of their own mortality, it is understandable that the morals and values of civilized society should fade to insignificance. Resulting from the constant threat of personal extinction, bodily functions and physical sensations rather come to assume a symbolic meaning almost of life itself. Bäumer’s reaction to seeing the dying Kemmerich in hospital demonstrates this:

Meine Füße bewegen sich in den Stiefeln vorwärts, ich gehe schneller, ich laufe. [...] Meine Glieder bewegen sich geschmeidig, ich fühle meine Gelenke stark, ich schnaufe und schnaufe. Die Nacht lebt, ich lebe. Ich spüre Hunger, einen größeren als nur vom Magen (*Im Westen*, p. 32).

The intense sensation of joy from simply being alive is not unique to Bäumer. In Remarque’s later novel *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* in which he depicts European exiles during the interwar years, the character Steiner tells another, younger refugee about a particular incident from his time as a First World War soldier. Watching one of his comrades dying only intensified Steiner’s own hunger to live and hence his hunger for food; a means of feeling alive physically.

Und während ich fraß wie ein heißhungriges Vieh, selbstvergessen mit Genuß fraß, sah ich über den Rand der Schüssel das Gesicht meines Freundes, die zerborstenen, aufgerissenen Lippen, ich sah, daß er unter Qualen starb, zwei Stunden später war er tot, und ich fraß

und es schmeckte mir wie nie in meinem Leben (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 32).

Steiner proceeds to explain that it was not an ordinary hunger, but a hunger intensified by the fact that he, personally, had escaped unharmed. ‘Einen halben Meter neben dir geht für einen andern die Welt unter in Gebrüll und Qual – und du spürst nichts. Das ist das Elend der Welt!’ (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 32).

Remarque has given the characteristics of Bäumer careful consideration, not least because of the novel’s inclusion of the delicate topics mentioned above. By creating a relatively educated narrator, whose lower middle-class background is echoed in his courteous language, Remarque is able to present the war experience as naturalistically and yet non-offensively as possible. Thus, although the extreme conditions on the front gradually eliminate conventional, civilized behaviour amongst the soldiers, including their inhibitions regarding, for example, defecation, Bäumer chooses his vocabulary with care whenever the narrative touches upon such topics. After the company has consumed a hearty meal, for example, he says: ‘[Kat] läßt einen kräftigen Laut hören’. Following this action Kat proclaims: ‘Jedes Böhnchen gibt ein Tönchen’ (*Im Westen*, p. 36). Although a harmless response, it nevertheless shows the difference between Bäumer and Kat, as despite the influence of the environment, Bäumer remains somewhat polished and he would not have voiced this unrefined rhyme. Inoffensive language is likewise used to describe Lewandowski’s fifteen minutes of intimacy with his wife in a hospital bed whilst the other patients turn their backs and play cards: ‘[B]eim Kommiß gibt es *darin* keine Geheimnisse. Es findet auch keiner etwas *dabei* [my emphases]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 178-79). The other patients’ reaction to the wife’s initial reservations about crawling into her husband’s bed is similarly free from boorishness: ‘Wir grinsen gutmütig und machen wegwerfende Handbewegungen, was

schon dabei sei!’ (*Im Westen*, p. 179). Similarly, Bäumer does not quote Tjaden’s coarse comment to Himmelstoß directly, but explains that Tjaden, unknowingly, cites the ‘bekannteste[s] Klassikerzitat’ (presumably Goethe’s *Götz von Berlichingen*). ‘Gleichzeitig lüftet er seine Kehrseite’ (*Im Westen*, p. 64). Diminishing the offensiveness of otherwise taboo subjects through the use of insinuation and neutral vocabulary is also a technique which Remarque applies through Bäumer during the train journey of the latter to the hospital. Bäumer has to ask a nurse for the location of the lavatory, but he is unable to recollect any adequately polite expressions. When describing to the reader his subsequent embarrassment, he therefore opts for the vague term *Dinge*: ‘[I]ch habe keine Ahnung wie man die Dinge fachmännisch benennt’ (*Im Westen*, p. 168). ‘Da kommt Albert mir zu Hilfe [...] aber auch Albert weiß nicht mehr, wie er sich tadellos und anständig ausdrücken soll.’ (*Im Westen*, p. 168). The coarser tone of the front is only *implied* but not *applied* by Bäumer, and Brian A. Rowley is therefore incorrect in claiming that ‘[s]catological terms certainly do appear in the characters’ vocabulary’.<sup>62</sup>

Bäumer’s sensitivity, unequalled in any of the other characters in *Im Westen*, also allows Remarque to add the occasional poetic touch to the narrative, such as in Bäumer’s exclamation:

Nie ist uns das Leben in seiner kargen Gestalt so  
begehrenswert erschienen wie jetzt; – der rote  
Klatschmohn auf den Wiesen unserer Quartiere, die  
glatten Käfer an den Grashalmen, die warmen Abende in  
den halb-dunklen, kühlen Zimmern, die schwarzen,  
geheimnisvollen Bäume der Dämmerung, die Sterne und  
das Fließen des Wassers, die Träume und der lange Schlaf  
– o Leben, Leben, Leben! (*Im Westen*, p. 191).

A similar tone also characterizes the narrative when Bäumer, whilst on home leave, looks through his bookcase in an attempt to regain enthusiasm for life: ‘Der Wind der

Wünsche, der aus den bunten Bücherrücken aufstieg, soll mich wieder erfassen [...]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 121). Critics have generally regarded the sentimentality which at times crops up in Bäumer’s narrative as a weakness of both the novel and its author.<sup>63</sup> Sentimentality is, admittedly, not an uncommon feature in Remarque’s novels, but then *Im Westen* and Remarque’s other works do focus on individuals who have become innocent victims of circumstances out of their control. Their future is uncertain and death often looms in the background of their existences. Realization of the irrevocability of death tends to provoke emotion and so the nature of the content of Remarque’s novels justifies (perhaps even requires) that the characters display a certain degree of sentimentality. Bäumer’s inner monologue with his mother on his final evening on leave, for example, is certainly emotionally loaded, but if contemplating the scenario, Bäumer cannot be reproached for expressing poignancy: His mother is dying and he must return and participate in a war he does not believe in, but which may nevertheless cost him his life. He is, in fact, unlikely to see his mother again. Bäumer’s reiteration of ‘ach Mutter’ expresses not only his sadness, voiced in the ‘ach’, but the many repetitions (unnatural in ordinary speech or thought) of ‘Mutter’ and indeed the mother’s continuous reference to Bäumer as ‘mein Kind’, stress Bäumer’s young age and his inner questioning of the rationality in his having to return to the front: ‘Ach Mutter, Mutter, wie kann man es begreifen, daß ich weg muß von dir, wer hat denn anders ein Recht auf mich als du’ (*Im Westen*, p. 129). This question is, of course, directed at the reader. The sentimentality on these pages therefore serves to encourage the reader to question the morality of war, and thereby underpins the pacifist message of the work.

Although Bäumer acts as the single narrator of *Im Westen*, there are incidents in the work where he appears to be oblivious of the aesthetic quality of his choice of

vocabulary or syntax. Such examples therefore remind the reader that there is a creator and editor behind Bäumer and his story. When Bäumer, for instance, says: ‘Wir müssen hier auf dem Friedhof bleiben’ and ‘da weiß ich wieder, daß wir auf dem Friedhof liegen’ (*Im Westen*, p. 53), he is unaware of the ambiguous meaning these statements hold. To the reader, however, they signal the crumbling border between life and death for Bäumer and the other soldiers. Play on words related to the topic of death is also used humorously in the novel. Being transported by train to the hospital, Bäumer confesses: ‘Ich bin *tödlich* erschrocken [my emphasis]’. Bäumer uses the adverb to accentuate his state of alarm, but to the reader the expression is amusing, since Bäumer’s life is not at that point endangered; instead his shock is caused by having to inform a pretty nurse whether he needs the lavatory in order to relieve himself of ‘[k]lein oder groß’ (*Im Westen*, p. 168).

The above examples are related to semantics, but there are also incidents where aestheticism is created through the phonetic or visual impression of the text. This is achieved, for instance, through alliterations which are numerous in *Im Westen*, perhaps because Remarque found the audible impact of his novels important.<sup>64</sup>

Aber wir werden wieder mit vorwärts gezogen, willenlos und doch wahnsinnig wild und wütend, wir wollen töten, denn das dort sind unsere Todfeinde jetzt, ihre Gewehre und Granaten sind gegen uns gerichtet, vernichten wir sie nicht, dann vernichten sie uns! [my emphases] (*Im Westen*, p. 84-85).

This extract is particularly euphonic. In addition to the underlined alliterations, there is assonance in the fourth and fifth line.

At a glance, the form of *Im Westen* appears to be relatively simple, but close reading unveils the careful design that must have preceded the final product. Certainly, the

complexity of the narrative perspective suggests that both content and form of *Im Westen* were thoroughly planned and coordinated with one another. Other studies which have considered the different formal aspects of the work substantiate this assertion.<sup>65</sup> *Im Westen* was neither the first nor the only pacifist First World War novel to appear during the interwar years. However, the work had a general appeal in that it showed the impact of modern warfare on the individual, regardless of nationality, religion and, to some extent, even which war was being fought. At the same time the novel's limited length together with the relatively simple vocabulary and syntax made it approachable even to otherwise non-readers. Due to its high sales figures, its pacifist message and the increasing political tension in the latter years of the Weimar Republic, however, the criticism *Im Westen* received was generally biased and often reflected the political stance of the individual critic.

A short article in *Die nationale Erziehung* from 1931 shows the connection between the political view of the reviewer and the stance taken to *Im Westen*. The author of the article is clearly unable to view the novel objectively:

[W]er im Anfang in dem Verfasser einen wahren Dichter erkennen zu müssen glaubte, muß seinen Irrtum bekennen. Denn Remarque ist nichts weiter als geschickte Aufmachung, gerissene Journalistik. [...] Aber denen, die Pazifisten sind und von Geiste der Wehrhaftigkeit nichts begreifen und lieber sich dem äußersten französischen Chauvinismus verschreiben als gewillt sind, mit dem erwachenden deutschen Nationalismus einen Modus vivendi zu finden, denen hat er eine Waffe gegeben, die damit die Seele des Volkes verwüsten.<sup>66</sup>

The opposing camp is presented, for instance, by Egon Danklieb in *Signal: Blätter für Junges Schaffen*:

Mit der Kunst wird heute viel Schundluder getrieben.  
Remarques Buch ist Kunst, ist lebendige Gestalt; denn es  
ist da und lebt und reißt Tausende in seinen Bann. – Der  
Inhalt, die Idee des Buches macht es erst zum Kunstwerk.  
Es hat keine Tendenz. Aber die so intensive erlebte  
Wirklichkeit der furchtbaren menschheitstragödie schafft  
sich selbst eine passende Form. – Ist nicht Kunst eine  
vollkommene Synthese zwischen Inhalt und Form? Inhalt  
bedingt die Form und diese erlöst jenen. [...] Leben thront  
über der Kunst – aber ist nicht oft innerstes Erlebnis erst  
mit der Gestaltung möglich? - - Der Krieg selbst ist  
wirklicher als Remarques Buch! – Aber läßt Remarques  
Gestaltung uns den Krieg nicht vielleicht tiefer  
erleben? –<sup>67</sup>

It is the complete contrast between such articles which warrants – even necessitates – a detailed study of Remarque’s narrative abilities, so that the postulations can finally be either substantiated or refuted.

In the latter quotation, Egon Danklieb stresses the interconnection between content and form. The conveyance of Bäumer’s psychological deterioration and gradual retreat from the group is indeed supported by the formal elements, such as the overall structure, but particularly through skilful exploitation of pronouns. In addition to the striking switch from *wir* to *ich*, Bäumer furthermore narrates in the third person singular using both *man* and *er*. These pronouns are used deliberately and enable Remarque to create distance between his narrator and the reader. This, in effect, reduces Bäumer’s position from central figure and an individual to being simply a representative of an entire generation. Interestingly, the perspective nevertheless remains solely that of Bäumer and this is one of the novel’s strong points. It is the consistency of Bäumer as narrator that makes the story so convincing and it is therefore somewhat ironic that it was this deceptive authenticity that caused many critics to reject the work.

## Notes to *Im Westen nichts Neues*

1. Ann P. Linder, *Princes of the Trenches: Narrating the German Experience of the First World War* (Columbia: Camden House, 1996). Chapter three, 'The Experience of War', is particularly relevant in this context as it explains the German soldiers' differing psychological reaction to the war compared to that of their English and French opponents. The chapter also contains an interesting discussion about the importance of the link between *Erlebnis* and *Bildung* in the German national consciousness until 1945.

2. Despite their quantitative dominance, the nationalistic works of the First World War have almost all gone into oblivion. Indeed, German First World War literature is now predominantly associated with the message of pacifism. The disappearance of the nationalistic works must be seen in historical context. The Second World War had proven the beliefs expressed in these works of a Germany of superior culture and civilization incorrect or at least unfounded. Moreover, to many Germans, any reminder of the result of Hitler's regime was less than welcome. Wolfgang Natter, *Literature at War 1914-1940: Representing the "Time of Greatness" in Germany* (New Haven etc.: Yale University Press, 1999), p. 2.

3. Eric J. Leed distinguishes between, what he calls, 'liberal' and 'conservative' narratives of the First World War. However, as Linder has pointed out, the term 'conservative' has a wider meaning than 'nationalistic', though the two are used more or less interchangeably in Leed's work. Eric J. Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat & Identity in World War I* (Cambridge etc.: Cambridge University Press, 1979), p. 25. Linder, *Princes of the Trenches*, p. 2. See also: Linder's chapter three, 'The Experience of War', pp. 45-113.

4. It must, however, be noted that, due to censorship, the population at home was presented only with a partial and often incorrect picture of the situation on the battle fronts. Edlef Köppen portrays this distortion of reality in his novel *Heeresbericht* by incorporating excerpts from approximately 145 authentic documents, such as newspaper publications, governmental decrees and military communiqués. The contrast between the senseless killing experienced by the protagonist Reisiger on the front and the rhetorical propaganda fed to the German civilian population is striking. Edlef Köppen, *Heeresbericht* ([1930] Reinbek/ Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1985).

5. See Linder, *Princes of the Trenches*, chapter 3.

6. Travers, *German Novels on The First World War*, pp. 130, 134. See also, Brian Murdoch, 'Hinter die Kulissen des Krieges sehen: Adrienne Thomas, Evadne Price – and E. M. Remarque', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 28 (1992), pp. 56-74 (p. 56).

7. Thomas F. Schneider, 'Von Pat zu Drei Kameraden: Zur Entstehung des ersten Romans der Exil-Zeit Remarques', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 2 (1992), pp. 66-77 (p. 69). See also, Schneider, "'Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz'", p. 29.

8. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', p. 20.
9. De Leeuw, 'The Function of Simile in Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues*', p. 25.
10. Firda, *All Quiet in the Western Front: Literary Analysis and Cultural Context*, p. 46.
11. Other consistent first-person narrators are found in Ludwig Renn's *Krieg* and Ernst Johannsen's, now almost forgotten, *Fronterinnerungen eines Pferdes*. As the title indicates, the latter offers the war experience from a horse's point-of-view. For a rare examination of Johannsen's novels, see Murdoch's essay *Tierische Menschen und menschliche Tiere* in which he juxtaposes two of Johannsen's novels with Remarque's *Im Westen*. Brian Murdoch, 'Tierische Menschen und menschliche Tiere. Ernst Johannsen: *Vier von der Infanterie* und *Fronterinnerungen eines Pferdes* (1929)', in *Von Richthofen bis Remarque: Deutschsprachige Prosa zum 1. Weltkrieg*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Hans Wagener (Amsterdam etc.: Rodopi, 2003), pp. 249-60. Ernst Johannsen, *Fronterinnerungen eines Pferdes* (Hamburg-Bergedorf: Fackelreiter, 1929). Ludwig Renn, *Krieg/ Nachkrieg* ([1928/ 1930] Reinbek near Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1988).
12. See, for example, Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*, pp. 52-53. Also, Kloiber, 'Struktur, Stil und Motivid in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*', pp. 65, 72-73.
13. Schneider points to the fact that at least three revised manuscripts of *Im Westen* exist. The novel was thus not written spontaneously and in the course of just six weeks, as claimed by Remarque and his publisher, Ullstein. Schneider, "'Am besten nichts Neues?'" Zum Stand der Remarque-Forschung', in *Erich Maria Remarque: Leben, Werk und weltweite Wirkung*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1998), pp. 27-39 (pp. 36-37). For examples of the changes undertaken, see, Schneider, "'Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz'", pp. 32-36; as well as Schneider, 'Prolegomena zur Darstellung der "Entstehung" und "Rezeption" von Erich Maria Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*'.
14. The omitted two lines: '[Dieses Buch soll] vor allem aber kein Erlebnis sein; denn der Tod ist kein Erlebnis mehr für den, der ihm gegenübersteht' are included in A. W. Wheen's English translation. Wheen's text was based on an earlier manuscript in which Remarque had not yet omitted the line, above. See, Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues: Text – Edition – Entstehung – Distribution und Rezeption (1928-1930)* (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Osnabrück, 1999), A-B, 1, pp. 465-67.
15. Richard Littlejohns, "'Der Krieg hat uns für alles verdorben": The real theme of *Im Westen nichts Neues*', *Modern Languages: Journal of the Modern Language Association*, 70 (1989), pp. 89-94 (p. 93).
16. Schneider, 'Erwartungen von Rezensenten an Kriegsliteratur: Die Rezeption von Erich Maria Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues, 1928-1930*', p. 124.

17. For all aspects of publication during the First World War, see: Natter, *Literature at War 1914-1940*.
18. Murdoch, 'Paul Bäumer's Diary: *Im Westen nichts Neues*, the War Diary and the Fictionality of the War Novel', in *Remarque Against War: Essays for the Centenary of Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, pp. 1-23 (p. 9).
19. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues: Text – Edition – Entstehung – Distribution und Rezeption (1928-1930)*, p. 463.
20. Murdoch, 'Paul Bäumer's Diary', p. 18.
21. Friedrich Luft, 'Das Profil: Gespräch mit Erich Maria Remarque (1963)', p. 120.
22. Murdoch too comments on the use of the subjunctive and the inclusion of the word *beinahe*. Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues"', p. 195.
23. Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*, p. 52.
24. Aside from the famous closing remark by the third person narrator: '[...] im Westen sei nichts Neues zu melden' (*Im Westen*, p. 197), Bäumer says, for instance: 'Es ist still, die Front ist ruhig [...]' (*Im Westen*, p. 152); '[d]ie Front bleibt ruhig' (*Im Westen*, p. 154). Also, referring to Duval's death, he says: 'Es ist ja nichts Neues [...]' (*Im Westen*, p. 155). Finally, when Kat dies: 'Es ist alles wie sonst. Nur der Landwehrmann Stanislaus Katczinsky ist gestorben' (*Im Westen*, p. 195).
25. Köppen, *Heeresbericht*, p. 172. Although stated as early as in 1888, the exhibited attitude was just as valid at the time of the First World War.
26. Schneider, 'Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz', p. 35. The excerpt does not reveal exactly who the plural pronoun 'sie' refers to, but in an earlier quotation in the same article by Schneider, Bäumer's group talks of 'dem der Krieg was nützt', Schneider, 'Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz', p. 33. Other pacifist statements which are not included in the book publication of *Im Westen* can be found in Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues: Text – Edition – Entstehung – Distribution und Rezeption (1928-1930)*, p. 1221.
27. Schrader, *Der Fall Remarque. Im Westen nichts Neues*, p. 342. Barbel's work includes a German translation of the entire film script by Georg Abbott, Maxwell Anderson and Dell Andrews.
28. Presumably as a result of the fame of Remarque's work, the communiqué has become a commonly used phrase. Allusions to it also figure regularly in titles of both English and German recent publications such as Steve Humphries, *All Quiet on the Home Front: An Oral History of Life in Britain During the First World War* (2004); Colin Ward, *All Quiet on the Hooligan Front: Eight years that shook Football* (1996); Angelika Hennecke, *Im Osten nichts Neues? Eine pragmalinguistisch-semiotische Analyse ausgewählter Werbeanzeigen für Ostprodukte im Zeitraum 1993 bis 1998*

(1999) and Hans-Jürgen Wagener, *Im Osten was Neues: Aspekte der EU-Ostweiterung* (1998).

29. Günter Hartung, 'Gegenschriften zu *Im Westen nichts Neues* und *Der Weg zurück*', in *Erich Maria Remarque: Leben, Werk und weltweite Wirkung*, pp. 109-50 (p. 123).

30. Emil Marius Reuquark, *Vor Troja nichts Neues* (Berlin: Brunnen, 1930). Max Joseph Wolff is assumed to be behind the pseudonym. For a closer examination of *Vor Troja nichts Neues*, see, Murdoch, 'All Quiet on the Trojan Front: Remarque, Homer and War as the Targets of Literary Parody', *German Life and Letters*, 28 (1989), pp. 49-62. Also Hartung, 'Gegenschriften zu *Im Westen nichts Neues* und *Der Weg zurück*'.

31. Reuquark, *Vor Troja nichts Neues*, p. 10.

32. Reuquark, *Vor Troja nichts Neues*, p. 12.

33. 'Ich will meine Leser weder überzeugen noch überreden oder erziehen. Ich beschreibe, was mich bewegt, und weil ich mich als normalen Menschen betrachte, weiß ich, daß auch andere durch das bewegt werden, was mich bewegt.' Heinz Liepman, 'Remarque und die Deutschen: Ein Gespräch mit Erich Maria Remarque (1962)', in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 110-17 (p. 114).

34. Thor Goote, *Wir fahren den Tod* ([1930] Berlin: Gutenberg, 1940), p. 348.

35. Franz Schauwecker, *Der feurige Weg* (Leipzig: Der Aufmarsch, 1926), p. 6.

36. Schauwecker, *Der feurige Weg*, p. 9.

37. Ernst Wiechert, *Jedermann: Geschichte eines Namenlosen* (Munich: Georg Müller, 1931), p. 42.

38. Wiechert, *Jedermann*, p. 9.

39. Wiechert, *Jedermann*, pp. 27-28.

40. This plural perspective was not originally intended by Remarque. In one of the early manuscripts, Bäumer figures as 'allwissender Erzähler und Augenzeuge [...] Bäumer hat eine eigene Meinung, die expliziert wird. In der Buchfassung [...] wird die personale Perspektive zugunsten des, das Ideal der Kameradschaft auch in der Erzählperspektive reflektierenden "wir" zurückgenommen.' Schneider, 'Es ist ein Buch ohne Tendenz', p. 36.

41. Kloiber, 'Struktur, Stil und Motivik in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*', p. 68. Travers additionally points to the ambiguity of Bäumer's references to 'einer' and 'jeder' (*Im Westen*, p. 16). Travers, *German Novels on The First World War*, p. 91.

42. Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in "*Im Westen nichts Neues*"', pp. 190-91.

43. Travers, *German Novels on The First World War*. Also, Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in "*Im Westen nichts Neues*"'.

44. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 171-72. Maria Brandi and Nicole Lehmann, “‘Unsere durchsiebten, durchlöchernten Seelen’: Krieg und Kampf in sprachlichen Bildern bei Erich Maria Remarque, ‘Im Westen nichts Neues’”, in *Das deutsche Reich ist eine Republik: Beiträge zur Kommunikation und Sprache der Weimarer Zeit*, edited by Horst D. Schlosser (Frankfurt am Main etc.: Peter Lang, 2003), pp. 29-37.
45. Forster argues that a plot is dependent on causality, and that a plot additionally requires a time-sequence. Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, p. 87. Travers raises the question as to whether *Im Westen* has a plot or not, but he does not take a definite stand. Travers, *German Novels on The First World War*, p. 91.
46. Kloiber, ‘Struktur, Stil und Motivik in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*, p. 68.
47. One character, Tjaden, remains unaccounted for, but he survives the war as he reappears in *Der Weg*. In the closing chapter Bäumer states rather vaguely that ‘[v]on den alten Leuten sind nicht mehr viele da’, and it is possible that Tjaden is amongst these few. In the novel’s second part, he does not, however, play a significant role in Bäumer’s existence. In one of the early manuscripts and in the serial in the *Vossische Zeitung*, Tjaden too is killed, which leaves no survivors from Bäumer’s original group. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues: Text – Edition – Entstehung – Distribution und Rezeption (1928-1930)*, p. 1211.
48. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues: Text – Edition – Entstehung – Distribution und Rezeption (1928-1930)*, p. 450.
49. The close friendship between the characters of *Im Westen* is examined in David J. Ulbrich, ‘A Male-Conscious Critique of Erich Maria Remarque’s All Quiet on the Western Front’, *Journal of Men’s Studies: A Scholarly Journal about Men and Masculinities*, 3 (1995), pp. 229-40.
50. Goote, *Wir fahren den Tod*, pp. 42, 45.
51. Leonhard Frank, *Der Mensch ist gut* ([1917] Hanover: Fackelträger, n. d.), p. 75.
52. Murdoch, ‘Narrative Strategies in “Im Westen nichts Neues”’, p. 194.
53. Frank, *Der Mensch ist gut*, p. 118.
54. Kessler, *Aus den Tagebüchern 1918-1937*, p. 287.
55. Imagery, and particularly similes, is used liberally throughout the novel. See, De Leeuw, ‘The Function of Simile in Erich Maria Remarque’s *Im Westen nichts Neues*’.
56. Murdoch, ‘Narrative Strategies in “Im Westen nichts Neues”’, p. 191.
57. See especially: Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*. Also, Schrader, *Der Fall Remarque. Im Westen nichts Neues*. Forster, *Aspects of the novel*, pp. 73-81.

58. Hartung states: 'Bei allen Nicht-Schülern, höchstens Westhus ausgenommen, bleibt der persönliche Hintergrund völlig dunkel; von ihrer Lebensweise vor dem Kriege erfährt man nichts; im sozialen Hintergrund fehlen alle Züge von Daseins- und Existenzkampf. Und am problematischsten wird schließlich die Art und Weise sein, wie die Figuren zu ihrem Ende gebracht werden. Kurz, man merkt ihnen an, daß sie nur mühsam und nur für einen Nebenzweck erfunden worden sind.' Günter Hartung, 'Zum Wahrheitsgehalt des Romans *Im Westen nichts Neues*', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 1 (1991), pp. 5-17 (p. 10).

59. Firda, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, pp. 17-18, 50-51.

60. Littlejohns, 'Der Krieg hat uns für alles verdorben', p. 91. Also, Schwarz, *War and the Mind of Germany*, p. 29; and Brandi and Lehmann, "Unsere durchsiebten, durchlöcherten Seelen", p. 31.

61. Littlejohns, 'Der Krieg hat uns für alles verdorben', p. 90.

62. Brian A. Rowley, 'Journalism into Fiction: *Im Westen nichts Neues*', in *The First World War in Fiction*, edited by Holger Klein (London etc.: Macmillan, 1976), pp. 101-11 (p. 103).

63. Barker and Last, for instance, note: 'Remarque's greatest failing as a writer is this tendency towards oversentimentality, emotional self-indulgence, and pretentiousness'. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 114. Helena Szépe too notes: 'Zweifelloos beruht ein großer Teil der Wirksamkeit der Remarqueschen Romane darauf, daß der Autor den Fortsetzungsstil der Illustrierten meisterhaft beherrschte: einfache, saloppe Sprache, gewandter Dialog und eine wohlproportionierte Mischung von Humor, Sentimentalität und Spannung'. Helena Szépe, 'Der deklassierte Kleinbürger in den Romanen Erich Maria Remarques', *Monatshefte*, 65 (1973), pp. 385-92 (p. 385).

64. In an interview from 1968, Remarque states: 'Ich schreibe mit den Ohren. Ich höre alles, was ich schreibe. Ich wähle Worte nach ihrem Klang. Mit Oropax in den Ohren beispielweise könnte ich keine Zeile schreiben, weil ich sie nicht hören könnte. Weil ich musikalisch bin, weil ich mal ein ganz guter Organist war, weil ich eigentlich Musiker werden wollte, deshalb klingen meine Romane alle gut, wenn sie gelesen werden'. Manfred Lütgenhorst, 'Emigrant zweier Welten', *Münchener Abendzeitung*, 22 June 1968, p. 6.

65. Kloiber, 'Struktur, Stil und Motivik'; De Leeuw, 'The Function of Simile in Erich Maria Remarque's *Im Westen nichts Neues*'; Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in Remarque's "*Im Westen nichts Neues*"'. Also: Rowley, 'Journalism into Fiction'; and Travers, *German Novels on The First World War*.

66. N. N. , 'Preussenzentrum und Remarques Kriegsbuch *Im Westen nichts Neues*', *Die nationale Erziehung*, 12 (1931), pp. 314-16 (pp. 314-15).

67. Egon Danklieb, 'Im Westen nichts Neues', *Signal: Blätter für junges Schaffen*, 2 (1929) pp. 23-25 (pp. 24-25).

## Chapter 2

### *Der Weg zurück* and *Drei Kameraden*

‘Mensch, paß auf, es ist Frieden!’ (*Der Weg*, p. 14). These words are voiced by Willy Homeyer in the opening chapter of *Der Weg zurück*, when unexplainable silence suddenly characterizes the otherwise permanently noisy front. His outcry indeed reflects the main issue of both *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*. Willy uses the phrase, ‘paß auf’, not in its literal sense as a warning, but idiomatically to stress the ensuing part of his exclamation: ‘es ist Frieden’. Nevertheless, through Willy’s formulation, Remarque signals to the reader that the uneasiness, which lurks under the surface of the soldiers’ hesitant jubilation, is justified. Moreover, Willy’s outcry is said to ‘fall like a bomb’, and indeed in both *Der Weg* and the following novel, *Kameraden*, peacetime proves to also take its casualties. Aside from the introductory chapter of *Der Weg*, the two works are set after the war and portray the former soldiers’ struggle of reacclimatizing to civilian life and values.

Compared to the vast amount of German literature presenting the event of the First World War, the post-war phase and the problems faced by the returning soldiers have been treated by only a limited number of authors. In addition to Remarque’s *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, the best known works on this topic are probably Ludwig Renn’s *Nachkrieg* and Ernst Glaeser’s *Frieden* which function as sequels to the war novels *Krieg* and *Jahrgang 1902* respectively. However, Josef Roth’s *Zipper und sein Vater* likewise deals with the subject; as do Hans Sochaczewer’s *Menschen nach dem Kriege* and Hans Fallada’s *Bauern, Bonzen und Bomben*. Also, twenty years and another World

War later, Remarque would return to the theme of First World War soldiers' reintegration into Weimar society in his novel, *Der schwarze Obelisk*. This novel too employs a first-person narrator. However, the fact that it is written with the consequences of the Nazi rule in retrospect distinguishes this work from the two novels discussed in this chapter. For this reason, but also for the purpose of keeping to the novels' chronological order, *Obelisk* will be discussed in a later chapter.

Whilst the study of a novel's themes can function independently from the form of the given work, the opposite is not the case, as the form is generally a reflection of the message the author wishes to convey. Examining the form of two novels concurrently would therefore necessarily incorporate organizing four variables (the two works' contents and forms) simultaneously. For the sake of clarity, but also in order to be able to identify possible developments in Remarque's narrative techniques, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden* will therefore largely be examined separately. Similar successive, relatively independent analyses will also be carried out in the following chapters.

The title *Der Weg zurück* is ambiguous in that it can be interpreted as the soldiers' physical return to Germany as well as their subsequent journey to psychological recovery. The latter proves, in both *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, to be a particularly lengthy and, in some cases, even an impossible process. The difficulty in overcoming the war experience is a theme which Remarque had touched upon already in 1920 in his short story *Der junge Lehrer: Plauderei eines Kriegslehrers*.<sup>1</sup> There are numerous similarities between the content of this story and the section in *Der Weg*, which depicts the protagonist, Birkholz's, teaching experience in a small village. In the process of writing *Der Weg*, Remarque therefore clearly drew on earlier material for inspiration.<sup>2</sup> Particularly noteworthy are the lyrics recited by the short story's young teacher and

first-person narrator. The link between the first line of the citation and the title of Remarque's novel 'Der Weg zurück' is obvious.

O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück,  
Den lieben Weg zum Kinderland.<sup>3</sup>

In context, 'Kinderland' does not necessarily refer to childhood but can equally be interpreted as a state of innocence. In this instance, it thus refers to the pre-war period when the narrator was still unaware of the true nature of war. The intensity of the young teacher's wish to resume ignorance and the difficulty (if not impossibility) in doing so are communicated in the 'o' and 'doch' in 'O wüßt ich doch den Weg zurück'. This short lamentation is effectively also the central problem in *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, although there are no direct connections between the latter novel and the short story *Der junge Lehrer*.

*Der Weg* opens on the Western front on one of the last days of the war. It thus picks up more or less where *Im Westen* concludes and embarks upon portraying the problems encountered by the men as they return home after the war. In addition to the link created by the time factor, there are other correlations which bind *Der Weg* to *Im Westen* as its sequel. After the war, for instance, the narrator, Birkholz, is visiting a former school friend, Giesecke, who has been admitted to a psychiatric hospital following a particularly horrific incident on the front. During the visit, another unnamed patient approaches the narrator: "Was Neues draußen?" fragt er. "Nein, nichts Neues", erwidere ich' (*Der Weg*, pp. 144-45). Birkholz's response clearly alludes to the title of Remarque's preceding work.

The strongest connection, however, is generated by the reappearance in *Der Weg* of a number of names first encountered in *Im Westen*. Tjaden, for instance, the only member

of Bäumer's group in *Im Westen* who remains unaccounted for at the end of the novel, features also in *Der Weg*. The names of Leer, Müller, Haie Westhus, Stanislaus Kaczinsky, Franz Kemmerich and, most notably, Paul Bäumer are also all mentioned; albeit as fallen comrades of the narrator (*Der Weg*, pp. 21, 107, 275). Birkholz refers specifically to the amputation and subsequent death of Kemmerich (*Der Weg*, p. 275) and he tells of Bäumer's death taking place in October 1918 (*Der Weg*, p. 275).

Birkholz must thus have been with Bäumer's company throughout the narrative of the latter. However, at the end of *Im Westen*, Bäumer states that only a few men are left of the original company. Birkholz must necessarily have been one of them and it thus seems strange that Bäumer should exclude him from his narrative – especially considering the marked degree of similarity in their personalities and backgrounds.

The two protagonists are the same age and are from families of similar social status. Their fathers are both bookbinders by profession, but, most notably, place and street names even suggest that they share the same hometown, Osnabrück. Bäumer and Birkholz furthermore both reminisce about the *Pappelgraben* as a symbol of their youth and a favoured place of recreation during their childhood. It therefore seems unlikely that they should not be acquainted and that Bäumer should exclude Birkholz from his narrative, if they had indeed served in the same company on the front. Literary critics have suggested that Remarque, in writing *Der Weg*, regretted the irreversible elimination of Bäumer at the end of *Im Westen*, and hence created an almost identical protagonist for the sequel.<sup>4</sup> However, despite an astonishing uniformity in the two characters, particularly with regards to their external circumstances, there are some marked differences between the two.

As discussed in the previous chapter, Bäumer uses a courteous language throughout the novel. In *Der Weg*, on the contrary, profanities such as 'verflucht', 'verdamm't' or

‘Arschloch’ (*Der Weg*, e.g. pp. 15, 94, 130), but also stronger expressions like ‘Schleimscheißer’ or ‘Satansbiest’ (*Der Weg*, pp. 56, 94) are numerous. Whereas Bäumer tactfully says ‘[Kat] läßt einen kräftigen Laut hören’ (*Im Westen*, p. 36), Birkholz is more blunt: ‘[Willy] läßt einen gewaltigen Furz losheulen’ (*Der Weg*, p. 97). The different level of politeness between the expressions ‘Laut’ and ‘Furz’ need no clarification, but the verb ‘losheulen’ too is more emphatic and colloquial than Bäumer’s neutral ‘läßt hören’.

Birkholz also uses a number of other vernacular, though inoffensive, phrases, which give the novel a more light-hearted and less dreamy tone than the preceding work. Most interesting is the recurring play on army-related words and expressions, which add texture locally and, at times, also humour to the work. When the retreating troops, for instance, stop at a pub on their march back towards Germany, Kosole dances with ‘einem strammen Deubel mit mächtiger Brustwehr, an der er eine gute Gewehrauflage hat’ (*Der Weg*, p. 39). Similarly, a night club in Birkholz’s hometown is said to be ‘bombenvoll’ every night (*Der Weg*, p. 188). Birkholz likewise turns to figurative speech when explaining how Bethke, who could cope with any situation on the front, is helpless when faced with the prejudices of his local community regards the unfaithfulness of his wife: ‘hier aber hängt er im Drahtverhau und zerreißt sich Hände und Gesicht’ (*Der Weg*, p. 258). The register applied by Sochaczewer’s character, Brand, in *Menschen nach dem Kriege*, reveals his past on the war front in a similar manner, but whereas Birkholz appears oblivious to the reflection the war casts on his language, Brand is conscious of the effect it exercises on his vocabulary: ‘Hab’ dich vorhin ‚Mensch‘ genannt; hast’s vielleicht gar nicht bemerkt, ich spürte es selber erst, als es gesprochen war. Liegt mir noch vom Krieg her in den Knochen, diese Anrede’.<sup>5</sup>

Aside from the aesthetic effect, Birkholz's play on words also serves to indicate that he still observes his surroundings from a soldier's point-of-view, although having returned to civilian life.<sup>6</sup> In line with the novel's theme, there are allusions to the war which are beyond the influence of the characters and, hence, must be regarded as the author's play on words: In the pub, for instance, the music is not coincidentally from 'Die lustige Witwe' (*Der Weg*, p. 85), and although the operetta is not, of course, about a war-widow, the inappropriate combination of 'lustig' and 'Witwe', particularly in the context of a war-novel, adds a hint of dark humour to the work.

Similarly to Bäumer in *Im Westen*, Birkholz relates a large part of *Der Weg* in the first-person *plural*. This accentuates his ongoing perception of himself as part of a greater whole – the army community. However, as the novel approaches its conclusion, Birkholz (like Bäumer at the end of *Im Westen*) finds himself physically alone: Ludwig and Rahe have committed suicide and the comradeship of the others is gradually disintegrating. In the *Ausgang* of *Der Weg*, a significant change of perspective takes place from the first-person plural to the first-person singular. The subsequent reiteration of 'ich' is striking against the previous use of 'wir'. Also, as the novel draws to a close, references to the past are related in the plural 'wir', whereas speculations and hopes for the future pertain to Birkholz alone and are expressed by use of 'ich'.<sup>7</sup> Mark Ward suggests that the other characters recognize 'the need for individual action and individual purpose [...]'. He continues:

[T]here seems agreement that each must go his own way, something which is then enacted in the text in the separation of the characters: "Wie blicken uns an. Kosole will etwas sagen, schweigt dann aber. Wir denken alle dasselbe. Die Stadt kommt mit Straßen und Lärm. Valentin steigt aus. Dann Willy. Dann Kosole".<sup>8</sup>

Ward thus proposes that the characters consciously choose to reject their former group identity. However, although they do indeed assume a more individual stance, this must be regarded, at least partly, as an involuntary, natural development – a part of the readjustment process – rather than the result of a conscious decision taken by the returnees.

Birkholz's lingering soldier-identity is also communicated in a number of similes where the vehicles relate to warfare and thereby further accentuates that Birkholz's life experience is limited to his years on the front. These allusions to the war are found throughout the work. In a thunderstorm, for instance, flashes of lightening 'flammen wie nahes Mündungsfeuer von Geschützen' (*Der Weg*, 54), and on a peaceful outing, shouting from a nearby forest sounds 'als lägen dort Verwundete' (*Der Weg*, p. 309). In effect, Birkholz overcomes the war experience only when he learns to accept its occurrence and use the insight he has gained as a foundation for his future: 'Dann werden die Toten schweigen, und die Vergangenheit wird mich nicht mehr verfolgen, sondern mir helfen' (*Der Weg*, p. 310).

Notwithstanding the serious theme of *Der Weg*, humour is often juxtaposed with graveness. Aside from Birkholz, the characters Willy and Tjaden are particularly important elements in reducing the solemnity of the topic. There nevertheless remains an underlying tone of desolation until the *Ausgang* in which Birkholz eventually finds a way to deal with the past. On occasion, humour appears unexpectedly in the midst of an otherwise dark episode. One such example is the case of Troßke's court appearance during which a comical interruption by Tjaden seems somewhat incongruous with the seriousness of the circumstances. It does nevertheless constitute a pleasant interruption of the depressing issue depicted. Tjaden's reaction can, however, also be interpreted otherwise. On the battle front, humour was commonly used as a defence mechanism

against reality, as Remarque also shows in *Im Westen*. Considering his background, Tjaden's reaction in court can thus be read as his manner of coping with the unpleasant situation. In the following novel, *Kameraden*, 'Galgenhumor' is in fact also applied by the tubercular patients', as a means of dealing with their condition (*Kameraden*, p. 350).

Albeit not one and the same character, the similarities between Bäumer and Birkholz are striking – even to the extent of implausibility – but perhaps the exact identity of Birkholz is as insignificant as that of Bäumer, who, as discussed in the previous chapter, essentially stands as a representative of any soldier. A similar generality governs *Der Weg*. The various characters take different paths, but none of them is unique; rather, they demonstrate a number of possible reactions to surviving the First World War.

It is perhaps not surprising that the number of characters presented in *Der Weg* exceeds that of *Im Westen*. Whereas the latter work depicts a homogenous group of front-soldiers in an environment with little room for individuality, *Der Weg* shows the soldiers' return to a civilian setting where they find themselves free to let their individuality reign – within the scope of the written and unwritten rules of society. This creates a number of problems. In addition to the alienation of the former soldiers from the civilian population (the older generation in particular), other divisions develop. External forces, such as the values of civilian society and class differences quickly regain their influence on the thoughts and actions of the returning men. The previously uniform group of soldiers disintegrates due to personal and external circumstances. Some are troubled by the knowledge of their actions on the front, whereas others cling to the rhetorical phrases of the war time. Consequently, some characters are able to overcome the war experience relatively quickly – they simply move on – whereas others, Birkholz included, initially struggle to readjust, but gradually learn to accept the past. A proportion of the returning soldiers, however, also break under the

psychological effect of the war and, at worst, either commit suicide or are admitted to mental institutions. The mental impact of the war proves extensive, but the numerousness of the characters enables Remarque to depict an array of reactions from soldiers and civilians to the reintegration of the returning men of different levels of education, social classes and ages.

*Der Weg* is predominantly a first-person narrative, but three episodes have generally been identified as deviating in perspective.<sup>9</sup>

The first of these deals with the failed marriage between Bethke and his wife. Bethke's homecoming story, in fact, consists of two episodes: The first one describes his arrival home and subsequent realization that his wife has been unfaithful. Although Bethke eventually forgives her, a later section depicts the devastating effects of the ongoing harassment of the couple by their local community.<sup>10</sup> Both parts of the Bethke-story are narrated in the third person, but they are ably embedded in Birkholz's narrative and therefore interpretable as a part of it. As an indication of the switch, Birkholz explains: 'Schließlich höre ich dann alles' (*Der Weg*, p. 125). This statement is followed by Bethke's story. At the conclusion of his account, the focus is again returned to Birkholz when Bethke asks his opinion on the matter: "Was soll man bloß machen, Ernst?" Adolf [Bethke] sieht auf' (*Der Weg*, p. 128). With regards to the narrative perspective, consistency between the main plot and Bethke's story is also achieved through the register. Bethke's account thus reflects the same vernacular tone which characterizes Birkholz's main narrative. When Bethke's wife, for instance, begins to cry as a result of their quarrels, this is explained in the colloquial terms generally characterizing the soldier's jargon: 'Da geht die Heulerei auch schon los' (*Der Weg*, p. 126).

Although Bethke's story appears to be voiced by Birkholz, there is information in the passage that only an omniscient narrator could know: '[S]ie [die Frau] ist nicht lustig,

wie er [Bethke] es möchte. Er weiß nicht, daß es ebensosehr an ihm liegt wie an ihr [...]’ (*Der Weg*, p. 256). If Bethke is unaware of his own contribution to the crumbling of the marriage, this statement would have to be an assumption by Birkholz. This is likewise the case later in the narrative, as the seemingly third-person perspective is intersected with the narrator’s commentary:

[Bethke] redet weiter, bis die Frau am Gossenstein in der Ecke steht, wo das Licht nicht hinfällt, und wieder weint, wie ein Kind. Er sieht, das er sich verlaufen hat. *Ach, Kinder sind wir alle, verlaufene, törichte Kinder, und immer steht die Nacht um unser Haus.* Er hält es nicht aus, er geht fort [...] [my emphases] (*Der Weg*, p. 257).

Birkholz is clearly not present, and he is also only superficially acquainted with the civilian Bethke. The narrative perspective thus evidently exceeds the scope of Birkholz’s vision.

If similar episodes of inconsistency did not feature elsewhere in *Der Weg*, the deviation from Birkholz’s perspective in Bethke’s story could be dismissed as perhaps authorially unintended. However, two further episodes in *Der Weg* digress from the viewpoint of Birkholz. These depict, first, the suicide of Ludwig, who has contracted syphilis during the war and, second, Rahe, whose sense of guilt and disillusion over the lost comradeship bring him to take his own life too. The narrative perspective of these two suicides likewise surpass Birkholz’s view span. As both Ludwig and Rahe are alone at the time, the possibility that Birkholz (or anybody else) could have gained knowledge of their last actions and thoughts is effectively ruled out.<sup>11</sup>

The identity of the omniscient narrator of these two detailed episodes which extends to include the emotions of Ludwig and Rahe before they pass away therefore remains unknown. Antkowiak erroneously claims that Ludwig shoots himself, whereas, in fact,

he cuts his wrists.<sup>12</sup> In doing so, Ludwig attempts to rid his body, symbolically and physically, of the syphilitic blood. Birkholz has previously escorted Ludwig to the doctor's. The description of the physician as a 'Brilleschlange' initially comes across as an almost adolescent derision, used simply to describe the doctor's spectacled face (*Der Weg*, p. 239). However, references to snakes and venom are used figuratively on several occasions during their visit. The medical man's use of the word 'Lues', for instance, as opposed to 'Syphilis', sounds to Birkholz, 'als wäre es eine dünne, schwarze Schlange' (*Der Weg*, p. 239). By diagnosing Ludwig with syphilis, the doctor thus indirectly delivers a venomous bite, and Ludwig comes to perceive his condition as a poison travelling the bloodstream. When he later commits suicide, he consequently cuts his wrists and observes 'ein Bild, an das er oft gedacht hatte: dieses verhaßte, vergiftete Blut [...] [my emphasis]' (*Der Weg*, p. 273). The underlined part of the statement functions as interior monologue or *erlebte Rede*. This allows the reader to momentarily access directly the thoughts and emotions of Ludwig. Another such moment occurs shortly before he falls unconscious, at which point he believes to see 'Flamingos, mit weiten rosagrauen Schwingen, viele, ein Keil – zogen nicht einmal Wildenten in einem Keil gegen den sehr roten Mond, rot wie Mohn in Flandern? – ' (*Der Weg*, p. 273).

The depiction of Ludwig as an innocent victim of the war is certainly intensified by these insights into his final thoughts. However, the specific reference to pink flamingos also form part of a leitmotiv which symbolically indicates that significant change is about to take place; in this case, Ludwig's death. In the opening chapter of the novel, a similar sight occurs. (It is this which Ludwig recalls.) Birkholz's group observes a flock of geese crossing the sky above the battle front.

“Da sind sie! Wilde Gänse!” Vor dem trüben Grau der  
Wolken zieht dunkler ein Strich, ein Keil. Die Spitze

steuert den Mond an, jetzt durchschneidet sie seine rote Scheibe, deutlich sind die schwarzen Schatten zu sehen, ein Winkel von vielen Flügeln, ein Zug mit quarrenden, fremden, wilden Rufen, der sich in der Ferne verliert (*Der Weg*, p. 9).

At that point, the sight of the birds signified change in the form of the end of the war, and the soldiers' subsequent return home. In the end of the novel, wild geese again cross the sky, this time symbolizing new circumstances for Birkholz personally, as he finally comes to believe in a future. However, changes are also taking place at a wider scale. The re-emergence of militarism is, for instance, already detectable in the next generation of impressionable youths, and so, although the novel closes on a relatively positive note for Birkholz personally, the geese forebode a negative development in German society.

The leitmotiv of the bird formation in the sky did, however, as Tilman Westphalen notes, only assume its function as both an introducing and a concluding motif when *Der Weg* was published in *book* form, because although the episodes serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung* (from 7 December 1930 to 29 January 1931) were more or less all included in the book version,<sup>13</sup> Remarque altered the sequence of some of the episodes. This affected both the opening and the ending of the story, resulting in the geese motif becoming specifically linked to these two parts of the novel.<sup>14</sup> As Westphalen speculates, however, Remarque's purpose for revising the order may have had little to do with aesthetics. Rather, it could have been an attempt to ease the pessimistic note on which the serialization in the *Vossische Zeitung* concluded. Thus, whereas the book ends with Birkholz expressing hope, at least, for his personal future, the serialization concluded in Rahe's suicide.

As noted above, three episodes distinguish themselves as differing from Birkholz's main narrative. In addition to Bethke's homecoming, Ludwig's suicide and Rahe's

return to Flanders constitute the other two episodes. Like the sections dealing with Bethke and Ludwig, Rahe's suicide is depicted in the third-person. However, whereas the former two are told in the language of the soldiers and appear to reflect the perspective of an omniscient third-person narrator intersected with *erlebte Rede*, the register of the Rahe episode is devoid of colloquial expressions and mainly seems to present the third-person limited perspective of Rahe's own character.

In addition to Bethke's story and the novel's two suicides there are a number of other occasions on which the perspective temporarily switches from the first to a third person. In order to describe one of the most obvious examples, the overall structure of *Der Weg* must be outlined briefly: The novel contains an introductory *Eingang* and a concluding *Ausgang*. There is a certain ambivalence attached to Remarque's use of these terms. The *Eingang*, or beginning, describes the end of the war and takes place in the autumn, a season generally symbolizing a closing stage. In contrast, the work's *Ausgang* relates to Birkholz's future and reveals his embryonic ideas of the path he wishes to take. The notion of a new phase emerging – both for Birkholz personally but also in a wider, political context – is reinforced by the fact that it has become springtime as the novel draws to a close. In tandem with the paradoxicality surrounding the use of the two terms 'Eingang' and 'Ausgang', Murdoch has noted a similar confusion relating to this novel's title and the work's sense of direction – literally and figuratively. The soldiers do, of course, physically make their way back to Germany. However, emotionally, there is no way *back* and the characters rather have to find a way *forward*.<sup>15</sup>

Aside from the *Eingang* and *Ausgang*, *Der Weg* is divided into seven main sections or *Teile*, each of which again consists of three to five numbered subsections. *Erster* and *Vierter Teil* differ from the other five main sections, in that these two have short pseudo-introductions preceding the actual numbered subsections. It is the unnumbered,

introductory page of the *Erster Teil* which is of interest in relation to the narrative perspective. It describes the soldiers on their march back to Germany. The description is, however, not delivered by Birkholz, but by an anonymous observer whose external position is communicated in the use of third person pronouns when depicting the long columns of soldiers from a birds-eye-view:

Schweigsam ziehen *sie* dahin, wie *sie* schon so viele  
Straßen entlang marschiert, [...] in so vielen Trichtern  
gelegen haben, ohne viele Worte: so ziehen *sie* jetzt auch  
diese Straße in die Heimat und den Frieden.  
[...] So ziehen *sie* vorwärts, schritt um Schritt [...]  
[e]ntronnene der Unterwelt – den Weg zurück ins Leben  
[my emphases]’ (*Der Weg*, p. 23).

Since Birkholz is amongst the retreating soldiers, the cited passage must be related by an external narrator. In *Im Westen*, Bäumer admittedly applies a similar distanced standpoint when describing himself in the third person as ‘ein kleiner Soldat’. However, as discussed in the previous chapter, this forms part of Bäumer’s characterization as a poetic nature. Birkholz, on the other hand, is more earthbound than his predecessor and his language generally reflects this.

The perspective also stretches beyond the periphery of that of Birkholz’s awareness in the pages depicting the war maimed as they advance through the streets, demonstrating against their derisory allowances. The demonstration is also described in the third person and there are no clues as to the identity of the narrator. The only statement which, fleetingly, suggests a continuous presence and thus turns the attention from the miserable picture of the procession to the person behind the narrative voice, is a short reflection which differs from the descriptiveness of the rest of the episode: ‘*Es ist sonderbar* – diese Menschen sind alle blindgeschossen; sie bewegen sich deshalb anders als Blindgeborene [my emphasis]’ (*Der Weg*, p. 243). This commentary could initially

be interpreted as delivered by Birkholz. However, he cannot be the reflective narrator, because the third-person narrative then expands from a purely external view to omniscience:

Sie [die Blindgeschossene] aber spüren kaum die milde und zärtliche Luft des Abends an ihren Stirnen – mit ihren groben Stiefeln gehen sie langsam durch die ewige Dunkelheit, *die um sie wie eine Wolke gebreitet ist*, und zähe und trübe *klettern ihre Gedanken* die geringen Ziffern auf und ab, die für sie Brot, Versorgung und Leben sein sollen und doch nicht sein können. Träge *rühren sich Hunger und Not in den erloschenen Kammern ihres Gehirns*. Hilflos und voll dumpfer Angst *fühlen sie ihre Nähe und können sie doch nicht sehen* [...] [my emphases] (Der Weg, p. 244).

Only an omniscient narrator would be able to describe both the physical surroundings and simultaneously relate the experience from the viewpoint of the visually impaired as they march through the streets.

There are a number of other short deviations from the prevailing first-person perspective of Birkholz, but these have generally gone unnoticed. Although this inconsistency in perspective reminds the reader of Birkholz's fictionality and therefore exercises an adverse effect on the closeness between reader and protagonist, it also has a favourable impact on the novel. Whereas *Im Westen* largely depicts a single, uniform entity – the front-line soldiers – *Der Weg* seeks to present different reactions to the war experience. The limited effect of a consistent first-person account could therefore prove inadequate. Such a narrator would, of course, know the details of his own experience of returning home, but only Ludwig and Rahe can truly comprehend the experience of committing suicide, and Ludwig alone would know of his last minute regrets, at which point, however, he is physically too weak to reverse his actions. As both Ludwig and Rahe are alone at the time of their deaths, these events can only be described fully by an

omniscient narrator. Remarque's depiction of the problem of reintegration thereby comes to cover a wider scope than could have been achieved through a consistent first-person narrative. In comparison to *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* thus explores a perspective which exceeds that of the consistent first-person viewpoint.<sup>16</sup>

In many cases, estrangement between the soldiers and the civilian population (depicted also in *Im Westen*) continues after the return of the former. Bethke and his wife have grown apart and Willy's mother is despairing over the attitude of her son. He has, for instance, returned from the front with only two of four pairs of socks (and the remaining two pairs are even 'lauter Löcher [...]. Beste Wolle war das!' (*Der Weg*, p. 70)). The young soldiers who resume their education are incapable of accepting the submissive role as students, and mutual lack of understanding also come to characterize Birkholz's relationship with his uncle Karl and aunt Line, as well as with his father. At his bourgeois aunt's dinner party, for example, Birkholz suggests that his itchiness may be caused by a few remaining lice. His aunt immediately fears for the reputation of her family, but Birkholz concludes; 'Aber so sind *sie*: Helden sollen *wir* sein, doch von Läusen wollen *sie* nichts wissen [my emphases]' (*Der Weg*, p. 105). The pronouns 'wir' and 'sie' communicate unambiguously the existence of two camps.

As discussed in the previous chapter, the first and third person plural pronouns can act as indicators of inclusion or exclusion respectively. In *Im Westen*, this is utilized to show the split between home and front, but also a gap between generations. The effect of personal pronouns is similarly exploited in *Der Weg* where the civilian setting rapidly causes criteria, such as class; political conviction; level of education and age to decide the soldiers' relations with one another. New groups consequently come to form across the comradeships from the wartime, previously believed to be indestructible. The first signs of dissolution, or at least restructuring, of this comradeship are noticeable even

before the soldiers reach German soil. Birkholz's company encounters a group of American soldiers and on the approach of their former enemy, the Germans instinctively take a defensive position with their backs against a shed: 'Wir stehen immer noch in der Ecke [...] nicht weil *wir* Angst haben, sondern weil *wir* zusammengehören [my emphases]' (*Der Weg*, p. 26). At this point, 'wir' clearly relates to the German army. However, Kosole then learns that one of the American soldiers had lived in Kosole's neighbourhood in Dresden, prior to the war. The two men's common link to Dresden instantaneously creates a bond between them, which is reflected in Kosole's subsequent use of the inclusive 'wir': '[D]aß *wir uns* da nicht gesehen haben! [...] [B]eide erinnern sich an die Elbe und an das Schloß und strahlen sich deshalb an, als wären sie alte Freunde' [my emphases]. Birkholz's external position in his description of the two men, 'als wären *sie* alte Freunde, is likewise of import, since it communicates the exclusion of everybody else from the sudden bond between Kosole and the American.

The disintegration of friendships continues as old values resurface and social conventions once more come to govern the minds of the former soldiers. Back in Germany Valentin Laher, for example, meets a former war comrade in the street. However, whereas Valentin regards his formerly close friend from a soldier's point-of-view, the other man judges Valentin as a civilian. Their differing vocabulary and manner of addressing one another convey clearly their conflicting stances:

“Mensch. Kuckhoff, altes Haus, wo kommst *du* denn her?” [...] Der andere sieht ihn abschätzend eine Weile an. “Ah, Laher, nicht wahr?” “Klar, Mann, *du* warst doch mit mir an der Somme.[...] Wo bist *du* eigentlich geblieben nachher?” Der andere gibt eine unbestimmte Antwort. Dann sagt er: “Nett, sich getroffen zu haben. Wie geht es *Ihnen* denn, *Laher*?” “Was?” gibt Valentin verblüfft zurück. “Wie es *Ihnen* geht? Was machen *Sie*?”

“*Sie?*” [...] Einen Moment starrt er den andern an, der in elegantem Covercoat vor ihm steht. Dann sieht er an sich herunter, wird glührot und schiebt weiter. “Affe!” [my emphases] (*Der Weg*, pp. 165-66).

In Thor Goote’s *Wir fahren den Tod*, the protagonist, Lingen, predicts exactly this scenario: ‘Man wird wider “Herr” zueinander sagen – – [...] [Die Zeit] wird wieder Abstände zwischen Menschen schaffen und zwischen Menschenklassen. Sicher wird das so sein, – sicher’.<sup>17</sup> Yet, whereas Lingen is of the opinion that the general feeling of comradeship will prevail, *Der Weg* suggests the opposite. This is portrayed also at the soldiers’ reunion party, where the army hierarchy instantaneously gives way to a ranking system based on social status. When Tjaden ridicules Kosole’s overcoat, the latter ‘wird tatsächlich verlegen, und als er sich ungeachtet glaubt, betrachtet er verstohlen den verspotteten Mantel’ (*Der Weg*, p. 179). Consequently, Kosole begins to question Birkholz about the profession of the fathers of the other young soldiers, and when it is revealed that one is an *Amtsrichter* and another a *Steuersekretär*, Kosole concludes: ‘Na, da werdet *ihr* ja wohl bald mit *uns* nicht mehr zu tun haben wollen [my emphases]’ (*Der Weg*, p. 180). However, he brightens up when he realizes that some of the other soldiers, Birkholz included, are from more modest backgrounds. Kosole’s use of ‘*ihr*’ and ‘*uns*’ again serves to reflect that the class-system has resumed power and that it speedily erodes the former close comradeship of the soldiers.

Through careful observation at this reunion party and through his experience from the First World War, Birkholz determines that the two hierarchical systems – the army and social class – reward different qualities. In other words, the same person does not occupy equivalent ranks within the two hierarchies. When Birkholz becomes a teacher in a rural school, he draws a similar conclusion from comparing the individual pupil’s status in the classroom with that in the schoolyard.

Birkholz's views and comments on the hierarchy in the army and wider society respectively, in conjunction with his claims of the negative effect of school education, suggest that he believes in a natural order, as opposed to an artificially made, social structure.

[A]ufrichtig und ahnungslos wie junge Tiere kamen sie von ihren Wiesen [...] in die Schule – noch galt unter ihnen das einfache Gesetz des Lebendigen –, der Lebendigste, Kraftvollste war der Führer, dem die andern folgten. Aber mit den Wochenportionen der Bildung wurde ihnen allmählich ein anderes, künstliches Gesetz der Bewertung aufgepfropft (*Der Weg*, p. 214).

Birkholz therefore does not object, but simply nods to Willy's intention of redefining the concept of homeland in the minds of his pupils: 'Ich will meinen Jungens da beibringen, was wirklich Vaterland ist. Ihre Heimat nämlich, und nicht eine politische Partei. Ihre Heimat aber sind Bäume, Äcker, Erde [...]' (*Der Weg*, p. 308). This rings reminiscent of the German, *völkische* ideology and particularly the romantic and irrational belief that a people was deeply connected to and rooted in the landscape surrounding it, yet having experienced the war, Birkholz and Willy combine their *Heimatgefühl* with internationalism.<sup>18</sup>

In *Der Weg*, nature has not only been applied in the form of imagery which runs parallel to and emphasizes Birkholz's moments of both despair and hope, it is also central to the conveyance of Birkholz's gradual psychological recovery. Only when he eventually seems to merge with nature, does he find the resources to move on. As the train with the returning soldiers approaches Birkholz's hometown, a storm forebodes the psychological problems that await them: 'Im Schein der Blitze stechen am Rande der Landschaft die schmalen, dünnen Türme der Stadt in den Himmel. Donnernd fällt die Dunkelheit jedesmal wieder darüber hin, aber bei jedem Blitz kommen die näher'

(*Der Weg*, p. 54). In search for ‘die Landschaft [s]einer Jugend’ (*Der Weg*, p. 136), Birkholz goes fishing in the Pappelgraben, a recreation also mentioned by Bäumer in *Im Westen*. The catch amounts to two sticklebacks which he puts in a clear jar. ‘[I]ch halte es vorsichtig und sehe manchmal hinein, klopfenden Herzens, als hätte ich meine Jugend darin gefangen und trüge sie nun mit mir nach Hause. [...] Aber plötzlich durchfährt mich ein rasender Schreck – runter, runter, Deckung, du stehst ja ganz frei im Blickfeld!’ (*Der Weg*, p. 135-36). He drops the glass and the water runs out. However, he manages to save the sticklebacks by refilling the jar. The brief connection to his childhood is nevertheless lost (like the first jarful of water), but hope remains, because the key element, the sticklebacks, have been saved. The dual, but conflicting sides to Birkholz’s psyche reveal themselves in this episode. Suddenly, as the spell of the childhood recreation of fishing is broken, Birkholz instinctively inspects the terrain from a soldier’s point-of-view and considers the best position for defence: ‘[D]ie Pappeln müßte man abhauen [...]’ (*Der Weg*, p. 136). The poplars, however, also stand as a symbol of Birkholz’s life prior to the war, and the suggested necessity to chop them down in an imagined war situation shows the struggle between Birkholz’s civilian and military identities. Nevertheless, Birkholz’s metaphorical reference to his recovery process emanates optimism and suggests that he will find a way back – or, indeed, a way forward:

Ihre Äste sind kahl, aber ein leichter, blauer Hauch hängt in ihnen. Eines Tages werden sie wieder grünen und rauschen, und die Sonne wird wieder warm und selig über diesem Stück Erde liegen, das so viele Erinnerungen meiner Jugend umfaßt (*Der Weg*, p. 134-35).

In the latter half of the *Ausgang* near the end of the novel, Remarque continues the arboreal imagery. Having spent the entire day in the woods, Birkholz rents a room for

the night in an inn. Sitting in his room, his senses are heightened to an almost supernatural level and he becomes aware of life pulsating all around him. Even the wooden furniture radiates energy: ‘Man hat sie vor Jahren gefällt und zerschnitten, gehobelt und geleimt zu Dingen des Dienens [...]’. The furniture then begins to creak, as if alive. Similarly to the manipulated wood of the furniture, the war-veterans have been artificially moulded to serve a particular purpose. The animism of the wooden furniture and floorboards therefore aims to show that Birkholz (like these objects) contains an unconquered ability to return to, what might be termed, his ‘natural state’ of life. The day spent in the woods has, in fact, instigated Birkholz’s realization of his niche in life: ‘Nicht jeder braucht ein Pionier zu sein – es werden auch schwächere Hände und geringere Kräfte gebraucht werden. Dort will ich meinen Platz suchen’ (*Der Weg*, p. 310). The novel’s conclusion alludes to this resolution in yet another image concerning trees, and it thus ties in logically to the name of Birkholz:

[N]eben dem Wege vor der Tür treibt selbst der zersplitterte, morsche Stamm einer Linde dicke braune Knospen – in wenigen Wochen wird er ebenso kleine seidengrüne Blätter haben, wie die weit verbreiteten Äste der Platane, die ihn überschatten (*Der Weg*, p. 312).

Analogously to the lime tree, Birkholz will settle for modesty, and thus undoubtedly be overshadowed by more ambitious elements. However, with an aim for the future, Birkholz has located his ‘way back’. Remarque’s message is hence that just as the lime tree and the poplars will become green again, Birkholz will learn to deal with his past and experience his own belated springtime in life.

The symbolic conveyance of Birkholz’s recovery inevitably comes to mind when reading the opening chapter of Remarque’s next novel, *Drei Kameraden* in which a plane tree is said to be standing fully green. Read in succession to *Der Weg*, there is

therefore a suggestion in *Kameraden* that time has passed. *Kameraden* is, as a matter of fact, set almost a decade later than Birkholz's account. It covers the period from March 1928 to March the following year, and depicts the love between Robert Lohkamp and Patrice Hollmann. Their relationship is intensified by the fact that Pat has tuberculosis, which eventually makes irreversible separation through death inevitable. Despite the fact that Pat's death is intrinsically natural (as opposed to the killings presented in *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*), she too is indirectly a victim of the war. Her condition was precipitated by food shortages and subsequently malnutrition during the war. Her death is therefore presented as equally pointless to those depicted in Remarque's preceding two novels. In *Kameraden* the focus is largely on Pat and her battle against her illness, but the novel additionally depicts the struggle of the exploited lower social classes to uphold a tolerable existence. *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden* therefore all focus on the battle of the individual against personal extinction, whether this should occur suddenly in war combat, gradually through illness or through physical and psychological strains generated by unemployment, poverty or the memory of the war. This thematic link alone does, however, not validate the categorization of these three works as a trilogy. In fact, all of Remarque's novels concentrate on people who have fallen victim to circumstances beyond their control.

There are, however, also more concrete links between *Kameraden* and Remarque's two preceding novels. The names of Katczin[s]ky, Müller, Leer and Kemmerich, for instance, appear, not only as characters in *Im Westen* and in the memory of Birkholz in *Der Weg*, but are also mentioned in *Kameraden* as fallen comrades of Robert (*Kameraden*, p. 259).<sup>19</sup> The name of Karl Bröger likewise forms a discrete link between two of the novels. In *Der Weg* a character of this name features as a comrade and

former school friend of Birkholz; in *Kameraden*, a Karl Bröger is said to have been shot in the coup of 1920.<sup>20</sup>

Another connection between all three novels is insinuated when Robert recalls his whereabouts in early July 1917. At that time, his company was positioned in Flanders. Due to severe losses, however, the company was reduced to only thirty-two men (*Kameraden*, p. 181). A similar incident is related by Bäumer following intensive battle: 'Eine Reihe, eine kurze Reihe tappt in den Morgen hinaus. Zweiunddreißig Mann' (*Im Westen*, p. 98). In *Der Weg* too, Birkholz mentions a combat resulting in the survival of only thirty-two men, and although this episode is said to have taken place only weeks prior to the start of Birkholz narrative, in the autumn of 1918 (*Der Weg*, pp. 26-27), the recurrent figure of thirty-two suggests a bond between the novels. These seemingly overlapping experiences of the three narrators, in conjunction with their shared memories of the comrades Kat, Kemmerich, Müller and Leer suggest that Robert and Birkholz must both have been present, although anonymously, in the background of Bäumer's narrative. As already established, there is no reference to soldiers called Lohkamp and Birkholz in *Im Westen*. They could, however, have served in Bäumer's company – but outside the periphery of his immediate group. Thus, although *Im Westen* precedes the creation of the characters Birkholz and Robert, it nonetheless paradoxically offers a certain level of insight also into their war experiences.

As typical of Remarque's work method, *Kameraden* was the product of considerable rewriting and revision of several drafts. An earlier manuscript exists under the title *Pat*. This early version of *Kameraden* includes a short introductory statement which reveals Remarque's initial idea of producing a First World War trilogy:

Das vorliegende Buch ist das dritte und letzte einer Reihe,  
zu der »Im Westen nichts Neues« und »Der Weg zurück«

gehören. Es hat im Grunde das gleiche Thema; [...] die Frage des Lebens und des Todes; die Frage: Warum?<sup>21</sup>

The manuscript was, however, not submitted for publication.<sup>22</sup> Instead Remarque commenced a lengthy revision process which involved significant alterations. One such amendment consisted in the omission of the exordial statement, which had unequivocally bound this third novel to the preceding two.<sup>23</sup> Yet, as shown above, with regards to both content and form, there remain many similarities between the end-product, *Drei Kameraden*, and the two preceding novels. Subsequently, without wishing to initiate debate on intentional fallacy or Barthes's concept of 'Death of the Author', it is still possible to suggest that *Drei Kameraden*, also in its final form, comprises a third and concluding part of, what could be labelled Remarque's trilogy on the 'lost generation', despite the author's own apparent abandonment of the trilogy-aspect during the revision process of the *Pat*-manuscript. Wagener has stated exactly this to be the case:

*Three Comrades* is in many respects a continuation of the preceding two novels, and although Remarque never intended it as such, it may be considered the final part of a trilogy.<sup>24</sup>

However, apart from commenting on the three novels' major thematic connection through topics such as the First World War, the 'lost generation' and comradeship, Wagener offers little textual evidence to support his point. Indeed, he goes on to mention what looks like an opposing view, that American reviewers of *Kameraden* did not judge this work against *Im Westen* (as had been done with *Der Weg*), because 'the subject matter was so radically different that a comparison did not suggest itself'.<sup>25</sup> Although other critics too have proposed a link between the three novels, their

assertions have likewise remained largely unsubstantiated. Careful attention to both contents and form, however, reveals the close connection between the three novels.

The immediately noticeable modification which Remarque made to the *Pat*-manuscript was that of re-titling it *Drei Kameraden*. This, in effect, shifted the focus from Pat's character to the three comrades and former First World War soldiers, Köster, Lenz and Lohkamp. Moreover, by using the word '*Kameraden*' in his new novel-title, Remarque came to communicate (through the title alone) the work's thematic connection to the First World War. In comparison, a title such as *Pat* would have been neutral and uninformative. The term *Kameraden* is, of course, not solely associated with comradeship in the army (although the connotation would have been stronger when the work was written), but can signify relationships in a variety of contexts. However, Remarque's reputation as an author of war-literature inevitably affects the reading of the title, and evokes thoughts particularly of *Frontkameradschaft*. Amongst the other titles that Remarque considered for the third novel are, for instance, *Auf verlorenem Posten* and *Kameraden* which, as with the ultimately chosen title, are also reminiscent of war.<sup>26</sup> It must therefore be presumed that Remarque deemed war and its effects to be a central theme also of the third novel, even if he nonetheless framed it with the love-story between Pat and Lohkamp. Consequently, in spite of Remarque's decision to omit the prologue and thereby erase his explicitly stated connection between *Pat* and the two novels preceding it, he created a more subtle link by applying a new title with an undertone of war.

Whereas the narrator, Birkholz, in *Der Weg* commences his story at the approximate time and place where *Im Westen* concludes, *Kameraden* does not follow this pattern.<sup>27</sup> Continuity is nonetheless detectable. As Mark Ward rightly concludes in relation to *Der Weg*: 'the insight that he [Birkholz] achieves remains untested in the real world to

which he will have to return and which he will have to inhabit'.<sup>28</sup> This is, effectively what Lohkamp does in *Drei Kameraden*.

As with *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*, *Kameraden* has a first-person narrator, Robert Lohkamp, whose everyday life is spent together with his comrades. Lohkamp, Lenz and Köster all work in a garage belonging to the latter. Haim Gordon claims that 'the true friendship between the three comrades creates a home in the world for themselves and for others'.<sup>29</sup> Yet, despite Lohkamp's lasting connection with Lenz and Köster, his narrative reveals a void in his life: 'Es ging mir nicht schlecht, ich hatte Arbeit, ich war kräftig, ich wurde nicht leicht müde, ich war heil [...] aber es war doch besser, nicht darüber nachzudenken. Besonders nicht, wenn man allein war!' (*Kameraden*, 9).<sup>30</sup> Whereas Bäumer and Birkholz commence their narratives from the midst of their comrades on the front, and communicate the import of their group identities by presenting a plural perspective,<sup>31</sup> Lohkamp's position at the opening of *Drei Kameraden* is noticeably detached and individualistic. The first few paragraphs of the novel feature only Lohkamp's character. This isolated position is, shortly after, mirrored in his narrative, where his continued use of the pronoun *ich* indicates an unambiguous singular stance. On Lohkamp's thirtieth birthday, for instance, the three friends visit an inn where they encounter Pat for the first time. However, rather than participating in the general conversation, Lohkamp's narrative reflects introversion:

*Ich* hielt mein Glas in der Hand. Der Rum schimmerte. *Ich* dachte an den Zettel, den *ich* morgens in der Werkstatt geschrieben hatte. *Ich* war etwas traurig gewesen. *Ich* war es jetzt nicht mehr. Es war alles gleich – solange man lebte. *Ich* sah Köster an. *Ich* hörte, wie er mit dem Mädchen sprach; aber *ich* achtete nicht auf die Worte. *Ich* spürte den weichen Glanz der ersten Trunkenheit, der das Blut wärmer machte und den *ich* liebte [...] [my emphases] (*Kameraden*, p. 18).

Lohkamp's behaviour bears resemblance to a description by Ernst Glaeser's protagonist in *Frieden* of the men who have returned from the battlefield: 'Männer, die nicht lachten, sondern oft abseits sahen, als hätten sie sich verirrt'.<sup>32</sup> Lohkamp's liking for alcohol is revealed to consist in its ability to efface his memory of the past temporarily,<sup>33</sup> but also the reality of his present with its 'Trostlosigkeit der öden möblierten Zimmer' and 'Verzweiflung der Existenz' (*Kameraden*, p. 20). The inclusion of the adjective *öde* reinforces the impression of loneliness, despite Lohkamp's durable friendship with Lenz and Köster. When the three of them conclude Lohkamp's birthday in another drinking establishment, *Freddys Bar*, the maritime vocabulary and similes inevitably call to mind the expression of 'drowning one's sorrows':

[...] und aus den Schwaden hob sich wie ein erleuchtetes, buntes Schiff Freddys Bar. Wir gingen mit Karl vor Anker. Golden floß der Kognak, der Gin glänzte wie Aquamarin, und der Rum war das Leben selbst. Eisern saßen wir auf den Barstühlen, die Musik plätscherte, das Dasein war hell und stark; es floß mächtig durch unsere Brust, [...] die Bartheke war die Kommandobrücke des Lebens, und wir fuhren brausend in die Zukunft (*Kameraden*, pp. 19-20).

Lohkamp's assumption of a plural perspective in this excerpt correlates with his temporary escape from loneliness through alcohol. However, the following morning, soberness and reality again govern the narrative. The contrast to the drunken passage above is striking:

*Ich* zog mich sehr langsam an. Das gab mir das Gefühl von Sonntag. *Ich* wusch mich, *ich* wanderte im Zimmer umher, *ich* las die Zeitung, *ich* brühte den Kaffee auf, *ich* stand am Fenster und sah zu, wie die Straße gesprengt wurde, *ich* hörte die Vögel singen [...]. *Ich* wählte

zwischen meinen paar Hemden und Strümpfen, als hätte ich zwanzigmal soviel, *ich* leerte pfeifend meine Taschen aus [...] [my emphases] (*Kameraden*, p. 20).

The reiteration of *ich* stands out, but attention is furthermore brought to this personal pronoun through the staccato effect caused by the almost consistently asyndetic clause-coordination. Lohkamp's soberness also influences the general tone of the narrative and, despite whistling, his matter-of-fact, short clauses, which are devoid of similes and sparse of adjectives, convey boredom and indifference. Although essentially describing Lohkamp's Sunday-routine, the excerpt also serves to demonstrate the triviality which has characterized Lohkamp's life since the war. In the opening chapter, when reflecting upon the years from 1918 to the narrated present, Lohkamp recalls only few memorable events. He has no recollection, for instance, of his whereabouts in 1921: 'Das Jahr fehlte einfach' (*Kameraden*, 8), and following the culmination of the inflation in 1923, the occurrences of the years become indistinct: 'Und dann? Die Jahre darauf? Ich legte den Bleistift hin. Hatte keinen Zweck, das alles nachzurechnen. Ich wußte es auch nicht mehr so genau. War zu sehr durcheinandergesungen' (*Kameraden*, 8). Lohkamp's laconic summary of the post-war years reflects emotional apathy and lack of engagement in life; a consequence of the war-experience, which is described already in *Im Westen nichts Neues*.<sup>34</sup> Lohkamp's indifference does, however, also offer an element of comparison to the overall time-scale of *Drei Kameraden*. Whereas Lohkamp relates the events of more than a decade in barely two pages (*Kameraden*, pp. 7-8), the rest of the novel covers only one year. This considerable difference in space (or author-time) allocated respectively to the time *before* and *after* Pat enters Lohkamp's life, helps communicate the impact she comes to exercise on his interest in life, and thus on his perception of time.<sup>35</sup>

Despite the fact that Lohkamp introduces his story from a more individual standpoint than Bäumer and Birkholz do in *Im Westen nichts Neues* and *Der Weg zurück*, his comradeship to Köster and Lenz nonetheless forms the focal point of his existence. At the beginning, the inclusive *wir* (when it occurs) generally refers to this trio (or quartet, if counting Karl, the zoomorphized car), but when Lohkamp meets Pat, this gradually changes. Pat is adopted into the group, and she and Lohkamp regularly function as individual members of this larger group. However, the two of them likewise associate as a complete unit detached from the main group, and this sub-formation eventually comes to persist also when in company with others. In fact, Lohkamp's transition from being predominantly a comrade to taking up a serious relationship with Pat is finalized at a particular moment at which Lohkamp consciously chooses Pat over his comrades:

Köster hielt in der Nähe des Friedhofs. [...] Wir [Pat und Lohkamp] stiegen aus. Die beiden [Köster und Lenz] sausten sofort weiter, ohne sich anzusehen. Ich blickte ihnen nach. Einen Augenblick war das sonderbar. Sie fuhren ab, meine Kameraden fuhren ab, und ich blieb zurück, blieb zurück. [...]  
"Ich [Pat] will nicht, daß du meinetwegen etwas aufgibst."  
"Was fällt dir ein", fragte ich, "was gebe ich denn auf?"  
"Deine Kameraden . . ." [...] "Du warst früher viel mehr mit ihnen zusammen."  
"Weil du nicht da warst", erwiderte ich [...] (*Kameraden*, pp. 140-41).

Although relating to German soldiers' psychological impact of the *Second* World War, the metaphorical image of travelling by tram which Heinrich Böll applies in his short story, *Geschäft ist Geschäft*, could equally be used to describe Lohkamp's situation in the quotation above:

Und als wir nach Hause kamen, sind sie aus dem Krieg ausgestiegen wie aus einer Straßenbahn [...]. [...] Wir aber fahren inzwischen weiter mit der Straßenbahn und warteten, ob irgendwo eine Station käme, die uns bekannt genug vorgekommen wäre, daß wie auszusteigen riskiert hätten: die Haltestelle kam nicht. [...] [D]ie Endstation kam nicht [...].<sup>36</sup>

Lohkamp had indeed achieved some level of stability in his existence prior to meeting Pat, but this stability was characterized by indifference. In view of the previous novel, *Der Weg*, it can be argued that Lohkamp, only after meeting Pat, begins to steer away from the war and from his role as predominantly a soldier and *Kamerad*. In contrast to Böll's first-person narrator in *Geschäft ist Geschäft*, who does not dare to leave the tram at any of the stops (expressed in his use of the subjunctive 'riskiert hätten'), Lohkamp takes the chance. He gets out of the car with Pat, and observes how Köster and Lenz drive away without looking back. Through this action, Lohkamp effectively chooses a specific civilian life, represented by Pat.

It is significant that they get out of the car next to the cemetery, a location which is bound to the development of their relationship. It is, for instance, in the cemetery that Lohkamp starts addressing Pat with the informal *du*. However, Pat's illness eventually proves fatal, so when she and Lohkamp disembark at the cemetery, this is indirectly to become her 'stop' (to return to *Geschäft ist Geschäft*). Following Pat's death at the end of the novel, Lohkamp, however, gets back on the figurative tram, at which point his indifferent tone suggests that he, similarly to Böll's narrator, determines that there is indeed no terminus or *Weg zurück*.

The fact that Pat gives Lohkamp's existence a purpose reflects one of the marked differences between Lohkamp and Remarque's earlier narrators, Bäumer and Birkholz. The latter are both largely preoccupied with aspects of life related to *survival* (physical as well as psychological), whereas Lohkamp comes to pursue *quality* of life through his

relationship with Pat. She, on the other hand, is in a situation not dissimilar to that of Bäumer and Birkholz, as she too must deal with the possibility of premature, personal extinction through circumstances beyond her control. Thus, despite not having experienced the battle front, the circumstances of Pat's character nonetheless make her function as a link to the previous two works.

Pat's condition is not disclosed until approximately halfway through the novel, and yet allusions to death pervade Lohkamp's narrative from the beginning. There is, for instance, a considerable amount of vocabulary commonly associated with death, and certain settings automatically induce images of demise in the mind of the reader. These implicit references to death are especially prolific in relation to two aspects of the novel: Pat's character and Lohkamp's memories of the war. The adjective *geisterhaft*, for example, is used time and again in descriptions of Pat, but also in Lohkamp's flashbacks of his years on the front. This parallel between Pat and war suggests a connection between the two, and signals that Pat, similar to a First World War soldier, moves in a sphere between life and death.<sup>37</sup> To further this notion, Ferdinand Grau, a painter otherwise specializing in producing portraits of deceased people, offers to paint Pat. At this point, her illness has not yet been revealed. However, the ghostly impression of her character is perhaps conveyed most clearly when she and Lohkamp, after a day at the racetrack, sit on a bench in the cemetery next to Lohkamp's boarding house. The location alone suggests death and decay; an association which is furthered by the dense fog on that particular evening. Indeed, despite the fact that their relationship is, at this time, still at its initial stage, the entire passage reflects gloom and finality:

Der Nebel machte alles unwirklich – auch uns. [...] [Mir schien], als sei sie [Pat] geisterhaft angerührt worden von

dem Wehen in den Wipfeln, von dem feuchten Rinnen die Stämme hinab, als lausche sie auf einen dunklen, unhörbaren Ruf hinter den Bäumen, hinter der Welt, als müsse sie gleich aufstehen und fortgehen, durch den Nebel [...]. [...] Der Nebel zog und zog. Die Kreuze der Grabsteine ragten blaß aus den Schwaden. Ich deckte meinen Mantel über uns. Die Stadt war versunken. Die Zeit war gestorben . . . (*Kameraden*, pp. 103-04).

The episode in the cemetery is equally interesting in relation to the narrative perspective. In contrast to *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*, *Kameraden* is narrated entirely in the past tense and is subsequently lacking the immediateness that characterizes Bäumer's and Birkholz's present-tense narratives. This makes *Kameraden* appear less dramatic, as the past tense automatically creates distance between the reader and the story told. On a single occasion, however, (in the episode on the cemetery) the tense changes, resulting in the focus shifting from Lohkamp's past self in the story, to Lohkamp, the narrator: 'Nie *werde* ich dieses [Pats] Gesicht vergessen – nie *werde* ich vergessen, wie es sich dann zu mir neigte [...] [my emphases]' (*Kameraden*, p. 104). In this statement, Lohkamp's *narrator-present* overlaps with the *narrated present* and, although only occurring briefly, the direct observation of Lohkamp (the narrator) gives this character, and thus his story, added tenability.<sup>38</sup> Aside from this incident, the entire novel, including Pat's death, is related in the past tense. Hence, when Lohkamp describes Pat in ghostly terms prior to revealing her illness to the reader (and when he himself had yet no knowledge of it), this merely reflects the fact that he is narrating in hindsight.<sup>39</sup>

There are nevertheless aspects of the register which appear to function independently from Lohkamp's retrospection. Regardless of his use of the past tense, Lohkamp's narrative emits a certain level of immediateness, achieved through careful manipulation of the register. His changing address of Pat, for example, communicates the

development of their relationship. Although Lohkamp's narrator-present cannot be determined, the past tense indicates that it must be later than March 1929, the time of Pat's demise and the novel's conclusion. At that point, the relationship between Lohkamp and Pat had reached a depth and durability comparable to the comradeship which the soldiers experienced during the war, and which Bäumer describes through most of *Im Westen*. However, when Lohkamp relates his initial acquaintance with Pat, he refers to her in the full name of Patrice Hollmann. Parallel to this, there are occasions on which he simply calls her 'das Mädchen'; an impersonal address which shows that Lohkamp, at that time, was not yet emotionally involved. The formalness equally conveys his respect for Pat and his intent to make a good impression. As their relationship develops, 'Patrice Hollmann' becomes 'Pat' and Lohkamp assumes a more relaxed tone, characterized, for instance, by the occasional insertion of an emphasizing 'verflucht', even in Pat's presence. Antkowiak's claim that the language in *Kameraden* is 'rauhbauzig', 'breit-behäbig' and 'bier-bäuchig' is nonetheless exaggerated, and can only be regarded as the result of that critic's fixation with the fact that Remarque did not take a more overt political stance in his novels.<sup>40</sup> Considering that Lohkamp is narrating with hindsight, the gradual change in his formality in relation to Pat seems unnatural. He would, for instance, not use her full name in his narrative, apart from possibly in an initial introduction of her character. Thus, although voiced by Lohkamp, parts of the register appear to derive from an external mind (Remarque's), and to have been manipulated to correlate with the plot. Hence, although offering solely *Lohkamp's* verbalized presentation of his relationship to Pat, Remarque simultaneously shows the reader the gradual development of this relationship through, for example, his narrator's language.

In contrast to the present tense of *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*, the past tense of *Kameraden* has a legitimizing effect on the occasional inconsistencies in the narrative perspective. A particular episode depicts Köster and the doctor, Jaffé's, journey from Berlin to Fräulein Müller's house where Pat has fallen ill. Robert does not experience the journey as it unfolds, but he justifies his detailed knowledge of the trip: 'Später hörte ich von Jaffé, wie es gewesen war' (*Kameraden*, p. 193). Nonetheless within the doctor's account, there appears to be information that exceeds *his* perspective too. Before Köster, for instance, locates the whereabouts of the doctor and picks him up, 'überfuhr [er] alle Verkehrszeichen – er kümmerte sich nicht um die heranstürzenden Schupos. Er riß den Wagen wie ein Pferd durch den Verkehr' (*Kameraden*, p. 193). Jaffé did not experience this since Köster, at that point in time, had not found him yet. Equally, Jaffé was made to believe that the journey was relatively short; Köster 'wollte den Arzt nicht vorzeitig erschrecken' (*Kameraden*, p. 193). Yet, because the novel is narrated in the past tense, such inconsistencies are explainable and do not jeopardize the plausibility of Lohkamp's story: Köster could, for instance, have given the doctor this added information in the course of their journey or he could have told his account of the drive directly to Lohkamp at a later date.

Köster and Jaffé's car journey is the only lengthy passage presented from a seemingly different perspective. Nevertheless, the perspective appears to become temporarily omniscient on a number of occasions. This is, for instance, the case when Lenz's killer hides from the police: 'Daß Köster und Alfons hinter ihm her waren, wußte er nicht' (*Kameraden*, p. 330). At the time, Lohkamp could not have known of the killer's unawareness, but it is possible that he later acquired this information. Despite lacking the same level of immediateness as a present-tense-narrative, the past tense thus holds

the advantage that the first-person narrator can deviate slightly from the otherwise limited perspective, without jeopardizing the story's credibility.

Whereas *Der Weg zurück* concludes with Birkholz looking to the future, but offering only a vague picture of what it may encompass,<sup>41</sup> *Drei Kameraden* depicts elaborately the 'ways back', chosen by three former soldiers. Aside from all working in the *Auto-Reparatur-Werkstatt Köster und Co*, Lohkamp, Lenz and Köster each develop their own passion through which they assuage their war-memories: Lenz engages in politics, Lohkamp concentrates on his relationship to Pat, and Köster occasionally competes in car-racing with his car, Karl.

The naming of the vehicle and the recurring zoomorphic presentation of it inevitably brings to mind the image of a loyal dog, rather than a car. This notion is reinforced by Lohkamp's use of similes in which the vehicle is 'Hund' or 'Wolf' (*Kameraden*, pp. 176, 351, 361), but also through general references to the car as a sentient being: 'Dreckbespritzt, mit hängenden Ohren, stand er [Karl] im Schnee. Wollen wir ihn waschen, fragte ich. Nein, nicht unterwegs, sagte Köster. Das nimmt er übel' (*Kameraden*, p. 350).

This description of the car creates a link to *Der Weg*, in which Birkholz indeed has a dog – named Wolf. His depiction of it as 'ein Kriegshund, ein alter Soldat' and as having '[ein] zerschossenes Ohr' (*Der Weg*, 217, 219) leaves an impression not dissimilar to that of the car in *Kameraden*: Despite the scruffy exterior, the dog and the car are, in essence, both loyal and good-natured. Lohkamp, Lenz and especially Köster's compassion for the car is not irrational. Despite the car's pathetic body, it conceals a powerful engine which Lohkamp refers to as 'das große Herz eines Rennmotors' (*Kameraden*, p. 13). This description is, however, in a modified version, equally applicable to the three comrades who, although depicted sympathetically, enjoy

only little status in a society governed by materialism and appearance. They are, to quote Jeglin and Pickerodt, ‘weiche Kerle in harter Schale’.<sup>42</sup> Lohkamp, Lenz and Köster thus identify with the car which may be the reason for their inclusion of it in their midst. If the car is likened to a pet or even a fellow war comrade, then the races it participates in become simulated battles. Indeed, if juxtaposing the vocabulary employed to describe warfare in *Im Westen* with the one used in *Kameraden* to depict the atmosphere at the racetrack, there are considerable parallels. In his description of the Western front, Bäumer notes: ‘Die Abschüsse krachen, daß unser Wagen bebt, das Echo rollt tosend hinterher [...]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 44). ‘Es sind kleinere Geschosse; - dazwischen orgeln aber auch die großen Kohlenkästen [...]’ (*Im Westen*, p. 48), and ‘wenige Minuten später heult die Luft, die Erde bebt’ (*Im Westen*, p. 162). Lohkamp describes the race in similar terms: ‘Das Geknatter der Motoren wanderte wie Maschinengewehrfeuer um die Bahn’ (*Kameraden*, p. 96). ‘Das Donnern der Motoren übertönte alles Weitere. Die Luft bebte. Erde und Himmel bebten. [...] In das verklingende Tosen orgelten die Lautsprecher’ (*Kameraden*, p. 98). The war image is continued when Lenz almost gets involved in a brawl with one of the competing drivers. He is restrained by Lohkamp who says: ‘Laß den Quatsch [...]. Wozu willst du schon vorher ins Lazarett!’ (*Kameraden*, p. 97). Equally, as the cars steer into their final and decisive round, Lohkamp speaks of the ‘Endkampf’ (*Kameraden*, p. 99). In fact, even the party’s retreat to enjoy a picnic after the race resembles a company’s return to the *Hinterland* for recuperation and a meal following a battle; not least because Pat notes about the full picnic basket: ‘[D]as ist ja für ein Regiment’ (*Kameraden*, p. 101).

Initially, the connection between war and car-racing seems distant. However, in context, when considering the sense of comradeship which both events elicit, the comparison becomes more apparent. The race indeed represents an important incident

with regards to Pat's integration into the group. It is on this occasion that Lenz, as the first of the three friends, addresses her by her first name: 'Also auf gute Kameradschaft, Pat!' (*Kameraden*, p. 96). Similarly, Pat's own sensation of amalgamation with the group is conveyed in her application of the inclusive 'wir' when telling the barman and former soldier, Alfons, about Karl's victory in the race: "'Wir haben gewonnen, Alfons!'" rief sie [my emphasis]' (*Kameraden*, p. 101). The exclamation mark signals her excitement about the outcome of the race and thus, indirectly, also her growing sense of belonging to the group.

Although *Drei Kameraden* essentially focuses on a small circle of friends, it additionally introduces a considerable number of minor characters, much like *Der Weg*. These constitute mostly victims in one way or another. The novel therefore not only portrays the personal misfortune of Pat, but shows miscellaneous faces of suffering. It presents the reader with a critical picture of the continued exploitation by a system and its entrepreneurs of a population struggling with both an increasing unemployment rate and the psychological ballast of the outcome of the war and the perceived imposition of the Treaty of Versailles.

These peripheral characters initially appear to be depicted uncompromisingly one-dimensionally. However, the presentation of the characters in *Kameraden* is based entirely on the opinion of the first-person narrator Lohkamp, who is not actually acquainted with many of these individuals. He merely observes their suffering empathetically and the black-and-white presentation is thus both warranted and credible. A vast majority of those who are victimized or suffer (and particularly those who do so in silence) are portrayed sympathetically. In the hospital, for instance, Lohkamp notices about the first patient he encounters: 'Die Stirn war *edel*' [my emphasis] (*Kameraden*, p. 233). Similarly, a man from whom Lohkamp and Köster buy

a taxi notes down his address ‘*eifrig* mit seinen schweren, *ehrlichen* Händen’ [my emphases] (*Kameraden*, p. 115), when Köster states that the garage may be able to offer this man employment. The adjectives ‘*eifrig*’ and ‘*ehrlich*’ insinuate that this man is both hardworking and honest. In contrast, many of those in auspicious financial situations or (after Pat’s illness has been unveiled, those who are blessed with good health) are depicted as disagreeable. Guido Thieß, who also wishes to purchase the taxi from the hardworking, honest man – preferably as cheaply as possible – is thus described as ‘*unangenehm* *forsch*’ (*Kameraden*, 112). Analogously, in the vicinity of the sanatorium, Lohkamp takes dislike to the healthy look of some female skiers: ‘Ein Paar mit Öl eingeschmierte Frauen mit kräftigen, sonnverbrannten Gesichtern und breiten, weißen Gebissen waren dabei. Sie schrien sich zu, daß sie Hunger wie die Wölfe hätten. [...] “So was lebt natürlich”, sagte ich. “Lebt und ist gesund bis in die Knochen. Zum Kotzen!”’ (*Kameraden*, p. 348). The description of these women clearly serves as a contrast to that of the slender and *geisterhaften* Pat.

Many of the episodes surrounding minor characters have the purpose of depicting victims; thereby showing the universality of suffering. Such episodes include Lohkamp’s visit to the bookmaker’s; his tour in the hospital and his visit to the museum. In the betting shop, Lohkamp notices two men. ‘Sie hatten jeder ein Ticket in den Händen, aber ihre Gesichter waren so eingefallen, als hätten sie seit Tagen nichts gegessen’ (*Kameraden*, p. 242). Then:

In diesem Augenblick kippte jemand um. Es war einer der mageren Leute, die vorn neben den Tischen gestanden hatten. Er rutschte an der Wand entlang und schlug hart auf die Erde. [...] Ich wunderte mich, wie wenige Leute sich um den Ohnmächtigen kümmerten. Die meisten sahen nur flüchtig hin, dann wandten sie sich wieder den Wetten zu (*Kameraden*, p. 244).

The lack of response from the crowd testifies that signs of starvation are not unusual, and that the general population is without excess funds or energy to aid those in severe need. The widespread indigence is likewise conveyed in the museum, where Lohkamp expresses his surprise with regards to the crowded exhibition halls. A guard in the museum explains: ‘Das sind fast alles Arbeitslose. Die kommen nicht wegen der Kunst, sondern weil sie nichts zu tun haben. [...] Jetzt ist das noch gar nichts [...]. Im Winter müssen Sie mal kommen! Da ist alles proppenvoll. Wegen der Heizung’ (*Kameraden*, p. 268). When given a tour of a hospital, Lohkamp equally describes the silent pain which he witnesses also there.<sup>43</sup> A similar image of widespread suffering (quoted also in the chapter on *Im Westen*) is offered by Bäumer, when he is hospitalized:

Man kann nicht begreifen, daß über so zerrissenen  
Leibern noch Menschengesichtern sind, in denen das  
Leben seinen alltäglichen Fortgang nimmt. Und dabei ist  
dies nur ein einziges Lazarett, nur eine einzige Station –  
es gibt hunderttausende in Deutschland, Hunderttausende  
in Frankreich, Hunderttausende in Rußland (*Im Westen*, p.  
177).

*Drei Kameraden* depicts the ubiquity of misery by utilizing language and narrative perspective in a similar manner. When Lohkamp concludes that the Hasses’ marital problems derive from financial deprivation, he states: ‘Ich dachte daran, daß es Millionen solcher Menschen gab und das es immer nur das bißchen Sicherheit und das bißchen Geld war’ (*Kameraden*, p. 253). As in Bäumer’s statement, above, Lohkamp also makes use of the non-specific pronoun *man* to divert the attention away from his own character and reflect a wider, more general attitude: ‘[D]as Leben war zu dreckig geworden für das Glück, [...] *man* glaubte nicht mehr daran [my emphasis]’ (*Kameraden*, p. 254).

It is in particular the endurance and resoluteness with which many of the characters seek to escape the harshness of their existences (mostly fruitlessly) that awakes sympathy in the reader. To reinforce this effect, Remarque applies a technique which he also makes use of in many of his other novels. By incorporating more or less obvious comparisons of the characters to helpless children, he appeals to the reader's protective side. In *Kameraden*, this is especially the case in relation to Lohkamp's character. Despite the fact that the three friends in their childhood attended school together, 'alte[r] Vater Lenz' addresses Lohkamp as 'Kind', 'Kindchen', 'Baby', 'der Junge' and 'Knabe' respectively (*Kameraden*, pp. 156, 46-47). Pat likewise calls him a 'Kindskopf' (*Kameraden*, pp. 91, 94).

One of the principal common (but by no means straightforward) themes of *Im Westen nichts Neues* and *Der Weg zurück* is that of comradeship. This is, as the title also indicates, continued in *Drei Kameraden*, and not only with reference to the close bond between Köster, Lenz and Lohkamp. In conversation with Pat, Lohkamp expresses his affection for her using inadequate, male-and-war-orientated terms. This does not invalidate his sincerity, however, but rather suggests that his feelings are as intense as those he felt for his comrades in the trenches. Teaching Pat to drive on their first date, Lohkamp therefore, somewhat unusually, describes the relaxed atmosphere between them as 'ein Gefühl von Kameradschaft' (*Kameraden*, 68). His recurring address of her as 'alter, tapferer Bursche' or 'alter, guter Bursche' (*Kameraden*, pp. 345, 363) likewise reflects his emotional involvement – possibly even to a greater extent than his occasional, traditional compliments. In using such address, Lohkamp in fact equals their relationship to that between front soldiers and therefore indirectly communicates the closeness he feels to Pat. The notion of Pat being a comrade is furthered through her boyish stature. Lohkamp describes her as 'eine schmale, junge Amazone' (*Kameraden*,

p. 33); points out that she has a surprisingly deep voice (*Kameraden*, p. 15) and suggests that her hands are ‘eher etwas knochig als weich’ (*Kameraden*, p. 17). Yet, descriptions of her physique are repeatedly intersected with the adjective ‘schmal’ (*Kameraden*, pp. 14, 122, 159, 359) which, in combination with her boyish build and Lohkamp’s reference to her as a comrade, bring to mind the young recruits in *Im Westen* who likewise resembled children rather than soldiers:

[D]en meisten ist die Uniform zu weit, sie schlottert um die Glieder, die Schultern sind zu schmal, die Körper sind zu gering, es gab keine Uniformen, die für dieses Kindermaß eingerichtet waren (*Im Westen*, p. 95).

In *Der Weg*, the same technique is used in relation to the character Giesecke who seems physically fragile and childlike: ‘Er hat ein schmales, gelbes Gesicht und sieht mit dem spitzen Kinn und den abstehenden Ohren viel jünger aus als früher’ (*Der Weg*, p. 144). Both Pat and the recruits in *Im Westen* are described as facing death – or their ‘terminus’ – with bravery, and the impression of courage is intensified by their frail, child-resembling exterior. This combination of physical weakness and bravery is a means of creating sympathy, and a technique utilized in many of Remarque’s novels.<sup>44</sup> Although Lohkamp depicts Pat as a courageous figure, he presents himself as an anti-hero. His friends’ addressing of him as ‘Knabe’, ‘Kindchen’, ‘Baby’ and ‘Junge’ suggests that Lohkamp is not particularly authoritative. Hence, at the outset of the story as the three men celebrate Lohkamp’s birthday, the latter remains quietly in the background, whilst Lenz proceeds to call Pat by her first name. Lohkamp subsequently points out his own inadequacy: ‘Ich starrte ihn an. Während ich immer noch mit der Anrede herumlavierte, machte er am hellen Nachmittag unverfroren solche Sachen!’ (*Kameraden*, p. 96). With regards to his own character, however, Lohkamp is what

Wayne Booth has called an unreliable narrator.<sup>45</sup> Pat even says about him: ‘Du bist überhaupt ganz anders, als du denkst. Ich habe selten jemand gesehen, der so über sich selber im Irrtum ist wie du’ (*Kameraden*, p. 213). Remarque thus manages to preserve Lohkamp’s modest nature simultaneously to depicting him as a worthy hero of his novel.

Lohkamp proposes that life exists only in ‘das Gefühl und der Abglanz der Träume’, whereas reality is ‘trotlos und Fahl’ (*Kameraden*, p. 38). Escapism through illusion is an aspect which pervades the entire novel, and a strategy applied (often subconsciously) by many of the characters to cope with the grimness of their realities. Hasse, Georg and Rosa are three such examples. Illusions are, however, also woven into the lives of Pat and Lohkamp, not to mention Köster, whose perception of his car, Karl, is almost that of an imaginary friend – or perhaps, in this case, comrade.

Proposing a connection between courage and ‘the unconcealing of truth’, Haim Gordon points to Pat and Lohkamp as two ‘courageous persons who struggle to unconceal truths and encourage others to see and to relate to these unconcealed truths. Lohkamp and Pat unconceal truths about the beauty of love [...]’. Gordon continues: ‘Remarque’s novels indicate that the blending of courage with the quest to unconceal truth is crucial for a worthy life, and also for both heroism and friendship to emerge’.<sup>46</sup> However, even at the end of the novel, Lohkamp and Pat continue to evade the topic of Pat’s terminal illness. Shortly before her death, Lohkamp still pretends: ‘[W]enn der Föhn aufhört, dann wird es dir besser gehen, und wir werden hier fortfahren’ (*Kameraden*, p. 380). At this stage, Pat takes a more realistic stand, but Lohkamp recoils: ‘Wir wollen nicht mehr darüber sprechen’ (*Kameraden*, p. 380). Pat and Lohkamp have found in each other a means of escape from reality, and it is therefore exactly the *concealing* of the truth (not the opposite, as Gordon proposes) that adds

worth to their relationship and lives. On their first date, for instance, Lohkamp spontaneously adopts Lenz's travel adventures in South America as his own: 'Ich hörte mich sprechen, aber es war, als wäre ich es nicht mehr, als spräche jetzt ein anderer, der ich hätte sein mögen' (*Kameraden*, p. 38). Concurrently, Pat withholds the truth about her illness and in this manner evades reality. Despite his expressed sympathy for these two characters, Gordon paradoxically rejects the Jewish students in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, because they 'lack the courage to live with a despicable truth which confronts them';<sup>47</sup> yet, this is exactly what also Lohkamp and Pat do.

Illusion continues to characterize the lives of Pat and Lohkamp as the former is admitted to a sanatorium. The buildings and their interior design alone resemble, as Lohkamp notes, a hotel rather than a hospital: 'Ich hatte erwartet, es wäre wie ein Krankenhaus eingerichtet; aber es glich wenigstens im unteren Stock, viel mehr einem Hotel. In der Halle brannte ein Kamin, und eine Anzahl kleiner Tische war mit Teegeschierr gedeckt' (*Kameraden*, p. 290). Even a bar, Pat explains: '[...] gehört zur Behandlung. Alles vermeiden, was nach Krankenhaus aussieht' (*Kameraden*, p. 346).

The sanatorium is, perhaps not surprisingly, a place in which the topic of death is shunned. On Lohkamp's inquires to one of the other patients, Pat's answer is vague: "'Abgereist", [...] und ich begriff, was sie meinte' (*Kameraden*, p. 347-48). This euphemistic use of the word *abreisen* is utilized symbolically towards the end of the novel as Pat's condition worsens.<sup>48</sup> Returning home from an annual ball, knowing that she will not attend any more such parties, Pat packs away her dress in a suitcase. The fact that she chooses the case as opposed to the wardrobe communicates her awareness of her own approaching death or *Abreise*.

The episode of the ball is interesting in as far as it assumes what Boa and Reid call an extrinsic, thematic pattern, 'the retelling of an archetypal story in contemporary guise or

with contemporary implications':<sup>49</sup> In this case, the narrative exhibits obvious parallels to the popular version of the Grimm fairytale of *Cinderella*. Prior to the ball, for instance, Pat has to alter an old dress which has become too large for her, and on the evening, the transport to the village consists of horse-drawn sledges rather than cars: '[F]estlich nickten die bunten Federbüschel auf den Köpfen der Pferde im Mondlicht' (*Kameraden*, pp. 368-69). At the party, it is the first time Pat and Robert dance together: 'Ihre silbernen Schuhe berührten kaum den Boden' (*Kameraden*, p. 370). The illusion is furthermore terminated suddenly for both Pat and the real Cinderella. Whereas the magic in the fairytale dissolves at midnight, causing the dress, horses and carriage to evaporate, Pat's strength is used up, and although only indirectly, her dress too disappears as she packs it away in the suitcase.

Following the ball Pat's health declines rapidly and she dies shortly after. At the conclusion of the novel, the illusions have dispersed for the three comrades, as the war indirectly continues to haunt them: Lenz has been killed by National Socialists following a political meeting,<sup>50</sup> and although his death is not unequivocally connected to the war, the surges of political instability during the Weimar period were, at least in part, a product of the discontent that followed the defeat of the war. Lohkamp loses Pat, who dies from tuberculosis originating in malnutrition during the war (*Kameraden*, p. 349), and Köster eventually sells Karl to subsidize Lohkamp, his former war comrade, so that he can afford to stay with Pat in the sanatorium until her death. In addition to losing Pat, Lenz and Karl, both the garage and the taxi have been sold, both of which could have offered the basis for a livelihood and daily routine for the two remaining friends. Thus, contrary to the relatively positive note on which *Der Weg* concludes, at least for Birkholz personally, *Drei Kameraden* presents a more pessimistic outlook. It shows how the war continues to exercise a negative effect on the lives of the former

soldiers and on society at large, even a decade after the war. Having lost Pat and thereby failed the attempt to move on, Lohkamp reverts to the detached and singular perspective from which he narrated at the opening of the novel:

*Ich* habe ihr dann das Blut abgewaschen. *Ich* war aus Holz. *Ich* habe ihr das Haar gekämmt. Sie wurde kalt. *Ich* habe sie in mein Bett gelegt und die Decken über sie gedeckt. *Ich* habe bei ihr gesessen, und *ich* konnte nichts denken. *Ich* habe auf dem Stuhl gesessen und sie angestarrt. Der Hund kam herein und setzte sich zu mir. *Ich* habe gesehen, wie ihr Gesicht anders wurde. *Ich* konnte nichts tun, als leer dasitzen und sie ansehen. Dann kam der Morgen, und sie war es nicht mehr [my emphases] (*Kameraden*, p. 383).

These words conclude the novel. There is no indication as to what befalls Köster and Lohkamp after Pat's death. However, at this point, the work's use of the past tense gains added significance, because it suggests that a sense of nothingness continues to dominate Lohkamp's life, certainly until his narrator-present. Thus, the gloom which underlies the love story (expressed, for instance, in the frequent use of terminology associated with death) reflects Lohkamp's attitude at the time of narrating. This suggests that he does not move on following the death of Pat. Instead, the statement: 'Ich konnte nichts tun, als leer dasitzen [...]. [S]ie war es nicht mehr' and the matter-of-fact tone of the final paragraph indicate that Lohkamp's life will continue to be characterized by indifference and emptiness. Unlike Birkholz, he is unsuccessful in finding a 'way back'.

In the early manuscript, *Pat*, the death of the young woman does not conclude the novel. Remarque relates the ending in a synopsis of his novel:

Beide [Lohkamp and Köster] sind ohne Arbeit – aber sie klagen nicht – sie sehen sich an. Ohne viele Worte gehen

sie in das Leben zurück – in den Kampf – geschlagen –  
aber nicht vernichtet, ohne Hoffnung, aber ungebrochen,  
mutig und ohne Furcht ---- wieder SOLDATEN IN DER  
GROSSEN ARMEE DES LEBENS.<sup>51</sup>

Although this version shows Lohkamp to be ‘nicht vernichtet’ and ‘ungebrochen’ despite Pat’s death, it still ends without a solution or closure for Lohkamp. Indeed, the final words and especially their capitalization imply that the war remains a central part of the two men’s identities. The concluding lines furthermore suggest that Lohkamp and Köster are but two of an army of men. Regarding the perspective, the conclusion of Remarque’s early manuscript, *Pat*, therefore resembles that of *Im Westen* which (as discussed in the previous chapter)<sup>52</sup> concluded by presenting Bäumer as just another victim of the war. What Remarque proposes is that the exact identity of all three narrators, Bäumer, Birkholz and Lohkamp is, in fact, relatively insignificant. Their characters merely serve to depict three different historical times comprehensively (the war, the immediate post-war years and late Weimar) as experienced by the ‘lost generation’. The essence of the three novels is not the individual lives of the three narrators, but rather the war’s continued effect on an entire generation. The extent of this is conveyed to the full only in the third novel, *Kameraden*, where Lohkamp’s application of the past tense surrounds the narrator-present with uncertainty. The novel thereby gives no specific time-limit to the reach of the war. In addition, the time gap of a decade between the war and Lohkamp’s narrated story furthers the impression of the war’s long-term effect. Similarly to Birkholz, Lohkamp’s language too reveals the strong hold the war-experience continues to exercise on him and, despite the fact that both Bäumer (immediately before his death) and Birkholz conclude their narratives radiating will and perseverance, Lohkamp shows that the war-experience cannot be overcome. The objectives stated in the prologue of *Im Westen nichts Neues* are therefore

not fully met until this third and final novel in Remarque's 'trilogy'. These famous lines express the intention to report of a generation which was 'zerstört', but whereas *Der Weg zurück* suggests that at least a few of the returning men, including Birkholz, may find a way forward (and thus are *not* destroyed by the war-experience), *Drei Kameraden* depicts a more pervading and permanent *Zerstörtheit*. Although Lohkamp's narrative does not pick up directly where Birkholz's story concludes, he nevertheless presents a possible scenario of the surviving soldier's life a decade after the war. If viewing the three novels as comprising a trilogy, the title of the concluding work, *Drei Kameraden*, assumes added meaning. It thus describes not only the bond between the three men in the third novel, but in context of the proposed trilogy, also the link between the narrators Bäumer, Birkholz and Lohkamp; three soldiers, all victims of the war, and indirectly comrades.

## Notes to *Der Weg zurück* and *Drei Kameraden*

1. Erich Maria Remarque, 'Der junge Lehrer: Plauderei eines Kriegslehrers', in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 11-15.
2. The narrator of the short story hopes that village life – complete with a dog named Wolf – and working with children who are still ignorant of the reality of war will enable him to overcome his own war experiences. Birkholz too regards his teaching post in the country as a possible way back to ordinary life.
3. Remarque, 'Der junge Lehrer: Plauderei eines Kriegslehrers', p. 13.
4. See, for example, Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 52; and Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', pp. 19-20.
5. Hans Sochaczewer, *Menschen nach dem Kriege* (Vienna: Paul Zsolnay, 1929), p. 111.
6. The continued impact of the war on the returning men's psyche is also revealed in their reactions to their surroundings. Wagener notes, for instance, that the noise of a tram makes Willy and Birkholz seek cover as they mistake the sound for an approaching shell. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 41. In another episode, Birkholz describes his sudden rush of fear when he finds himself in an exposed position near the *Pappelgraben* (*Der Weg*, pp. 135-36).
7. In relation to the past, Birkholz says, for instance: 'Und vielleicht hätte ich mich doch noch im Vorgelände verirrt [...] wenn nicht Ludwigs Tod wie eine Rakete vor *uns* aufgeschossen wäre und *uns* den Weg gezeigt hätte. Wir verzweifelten, als *wir* sahen, daß der Strom *unsere* Gemeinschaft [...] nicht [...] der Selbstsucht wegfegte [my emphases]' (*Der Weg*, p. 310). The future, on the other hand, relates only to Birkholz: '*Ich* will an *mir* arbeiten und bereit sein, *ich* will *meine* Hände rühren und *meine* Gedanken, *ich* will *mich* nicht wichtig nehmen, sondern weitergehen, auch wenn *ich* manchmal bleiben möchte [my emphases]' (*Der Weg*, p. 310).
8. Ward, 'The Structure of *Der Weg zurück*', p. 93.
9. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', p. 25. See also: Ward, 'The Structure of *Der Weg zurück*'; and Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*.
10. In *Der Weg*, the topic of estrangement between married couples following the husband's long absence during war is described in relation to both Kosole and Bethke (*Der Weg*, for example, pp. 6, 51, 126). It is also an issue which Remarque brings up in the Second World War novel *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*, p. 72; the short story *Das seltsame Schicksal des Johann Bartok*; the plays *Die letzte Station* and *Die*

*Heimkehr des Enoch J. Jones*. Remarque, 'Das seltsame Schicksal des Johann Bartok', in *Der Feind*, pp. 54-61; also included in, *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 108-14; *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 363-69. Remarque, *Die letzte Station*, in *Das unbekannte Werk, III: Die letzte Station, Der Letzte Akt*, pp. 153-257. The play, *Die Heimkehr des Enoch J. Jones* has not been published. It can be accessed at the *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum*, in Osnabrück. A summary of the play is found in, Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 118-20. In this context, see also: Murdoch, 'War, Identity, Truth and Love: Leonhard Frank's *Karl und Anna*', *Forum for Modern Language Studies*, 38, 1 (2002), pp. 49-62.

11. Murdoch proposes that the details of Ludwig's suicide *could* be perceived as taking place in Birkholz's, then, feverish mind. However, even with the recognition of this possibility, Rahe's suicide inevitably remains outside the span of Birkholz's perspective. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', p. 25.

12. Antkowiak, Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk, p. 52.

13. There are a few exceptions: The serialization incorporates a visit to Albert Troßke in prison, but this event does not feature in the book. A paragraph from the episode of Rahe's suicide in which he expresses his despair with the authorities for their failure to accept responsibility for the outcome of the war is likewise missing in the book. Tilman Westphalen, 'Kameradschaft zum Tode. Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in *Der Weg*, pp. 313-34 (pp. 328-29).

14. In the version serialized in the *Vossische Zeitung*, the opening is not set on the Western front. Instead, it is presented as a flashback experienced by Birkholz in his family home. Although it must remain speculation, it is possible that Remarque eventually switched to a chronological presentation of events, so that the novel would be more suitable for a film project. Certainly, the sequence of the episodes of reflection in *Im Westen*, were changed to a chronological order for the film production of the book. Between the serialization of *Der Weg* in the *Vossische Zeitung* and the publication of the work in book form, Remarque furthermore altered the conclusion. Rather than Rahe's suicide in the serialization, Remarque changed the ending to the less pessimistic episode of Birkholz finally expressing hope for his personal future. Westphalen, 'Kameradschaft zum Tode. Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', pp. 328-29.

15. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', p. 23; also: Kathleen Devine, 'The Way Back: Alun Lewis and Remarque', *Anglia: Zeitschrift für englische Philologie*, 103 (1985), pp. 320-335, p. 330. The play on words in the title has relevance to different aspects of the novel: The soldiers return physically to Germany, but psychologically too they must attempt to find a way forward, as – they soon realize – there is no way back. Rahe fails to identify such a way forward and returns to Flanders where he commits suicide.

16. Remarque has possibly found inspiration in Sochaczewer's novel *Menschen nach dem Kriege*, which he reviewed in the *Vossische Zeitung*, February 1929. Remarque, 'Menschen nach dem Kriege: Hans Sochaczewers neuer Roman', in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 220-21. This novel, set in 1927, revolves around two former comrades

who meet almost a decade after the war. However, whereas one of them, Nock, rarely thinks of the past, the other man, Brand, cannot come to terms with Germany's defeat,

the perceived imposition of the Versailles Treaty and the loss of the close comradeship of the army. Similarly to Remarque, Sochaczewer went into exile during the National Socialist rule and, indeed, spent several months in Remarque's Swiss residence in 1933. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts*, p. 73.

17. Goote, *Wir fahren den Tod*, p. 399.

18. The concept of the *völkische* ideology is discussed in Linder, *Princes of the Trenches*, chapter two, 'The Children's Crusade', pp. 19-44.

19. The spelling of 'Katzinky' in *Kameraden* differs from that of 'Katzinsky' in *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*. However, as the name is presented by three different narrators, spelling-variations do not necessarily exclude the possibility that Lohkamp should be referring to the same Katczin[s]ky as Bäumer and Birkholz. Lohkamp is relating his story more than a decade after the war and his memory of the pronunciation – not to mention the spelling – of his fallen comrade's name could be failing. Lohkamp furthermore embeds the name of Katczin[s]ky amongst other names likewise encountered in *Im Westen* and partly also in *Der Weg*. This too suggests that it is the same 'Katczin[s]ky' they all refer to.

20. Amongst the short stories Remarque wrote for *Collier's* in 1930/31 and which are now compiled in the publication *Der Feind*, one of the stories revolves around a character named Karl Broeger. Although currently unverifiable, the anglicised spelling of Broeger, as opposed to Bröger, may be a product of translation from English to German, since a German original text has, thus far, not been located. The short story, *Karl Broeger in Fleury* has been published in, *Der Feind*, pp. 26-33; *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 339-45; *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 84-90.

21. Schneider, 'Von Pat zu Drei Kameraden', p. 69. See also: Tilman Westphalen, 'Der Orden der Erfolglosen: Nachwort', in *Drei Kameraden*, pp. 384-398 (p. 387).

22. A reason for this is offered by Jeglin and Pickerodt: '30. Januar 1933 [lag] eine Erstfassung unter dem Titel Pat [vor]. Regimewechsel und Remarques Emigration sind verantwortlich für den neuerlichen Umarbeitungsprozeß zu *Drei Kameraden*'. Rainer Jeglin and Irmgard Pickerodt, 'Weiche Kerle in harter Schale: Zu *Drei Kameraden*', in *Erich Maria Remarque: Leben, Werk und weltweite Wirkung*, pp. 216-234 (p. 217).

23. Schneider, 'Von Pat zu Drei Kameraden', p. 71; Jeglin and Pickerodt, 'Weiche Kerle in harter Schale', p. 217; Westphalen, 'Der Orden der Erfolglosen', p. 387.

24. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 45. Also: Taylor. *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 105; and Hartung, 'Zum Wahrheitsgehalt des Romans *Im Westen nichts Neues*', p. 11. In addition: Ian Campbell, 'Remarque in Exile: The Correspondence with Arthur Wheen (1933-36)', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 11 (2001) pp. 87-92 (p. 89). Firda. 'Young Erich Maria Remarque: *Die Traumbude*', p. 54; Rikke Christoffersen, 'Three Comrades – One Perspective:

Contextualizing Remarque's *Drei Kameraden* with the two early War Novels', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 15 (2005), pp. 36-62.

25. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 52.

26. Schneider, 'Von *Pat* zu *Drei Kameraden*', pp. 67-68 (p. 76).

27. Unlike *Drei Kameraden*, the early manuscript, *Pat*, picks up shortly after the conclusion of *Der Weg zurück*, spring of 1920: 'Von meinem Sommer will ich erzählen,- von meinem Sommer 1920'. Quoted in: Schneider, 'Von *Pat* zu *Drei Kameraden*', p. 69. For clarification regarding the time of the conclusion of *Der Weg zurück*, see Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück', pp. 20-21.

28. Ward, 'The Structure of *Der Weg zurück*', p. 93.

29. Haim Gordon, *Heroism and Friendship in the Novels of Erich Maria Remarque* (New York etc.: Peter Lang, 2003), p. 72.

30. In *Der Weg zurück*, Troßke experiences a similar emptiness in his life. Barker and Last explain: 'Much as he cherishes his companionship with Birkholz and his other friends, Trosske wants someone more, someone who really belongs to him and who will love him; and above all he wants children, who will have experienced nothing of the war'. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 77. Birkholz too registers a pureness – a lack of contamination by war – in his young pupils. It is, of course, this innocence, that Troßke hopes to somewhat re-experience through fatherhood.

31. Murdoch, 'Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück'; Murdoch, 'Narrative Strategies in Remarque's "Im Westen nichts Neues"'.  
32. Ernst Glaeser, *Frieden* (Berlin: Gustav Kiepenheuer, 1930), p. 168.

33. 'Alles war zusammengebrochen, verfälscht und vergessen. Und wer nicht vergessen konnte, dem blieben nur die Ohnmacht, die Verzweiflung, die Gleichgültigkeit und der Schnaps' (*Kameraden*, p. 49).

34. 'Wir sind verbrannt von Tatsachen, wir kennen Unterschiede wie Händler und Notwendigkeiten wie Schlächter. Wir sind nicht mehr unbekümmert – wir sind fürchterlich gleichgültig' (*Im Westen*, p. 89).

35. The term 'author-time' has been defined by Boa and Reid as: 'the 'time' or rather space the author devotes to each part of the narrative-time [the time covered in the events narrated]'. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, p. 14.

36. Heinrich Böll, 'Geschäft ist Geschäft', in *Wanderer, kommst du nach Spa . . . : Erzählungen* ([1967] Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1980), pp. 133-34.

37. A similar crossing of the spheres of life and death is depicted in the famous cemetery scene in *Im Westen nichts Neues*, where Bäumer, unknowingly, seeks cover

under a corpse. Likewise, in *Der Weg zurück*, both Rahe's suicide and Birkholz's breakdown are preceded by visions of the dead.

38. In this context, the term 'Narrator-present' refers to the time at which Lohkamp (as narrator) delivers his story. 'Narrated present', on the contrary, signifies the time about which he narrates; the time which the characters in the story would have experienced as their present (in this case, the gradual progression of the year between March 1928 and March 1929).

39. Even before actually *seeing* Pat, Lohkamp's register reflects death in relation to her character: 'Aber bevor er den Mund auf tun konnte, öffnete sich plötzlich, wie durch eine *Geisterhand*, die zweite Tür des Buick – [...] dann stieg ein Mädchen aus und schritt langsam auf uns zu [my emphasis]' (*Kameraden*, p. 14). Later, Pat's voice is likewise described as 'geisterhaft' (*Kameraden*, p. 27), and when Lohkamp waits for Pat in a confectionary, but does not notice her arrival until she stands next to the table, he asks: 'Wo sind Sie denn nur so *geisterhaft* hergekommen? [my emphasis]' (*Kameraden*, p. 33). In the episode set at the cemetery, Pat is again described with the adjective 'geisterhaft' (*Kameraden*, p. 103).

40. Antkowiak. *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 69. Antkowiak's accusation seems unfounded. When Lohkamp has a verbal duel with a stranger in the street, the expressions voiced are foolish, but not coarse: '[t]räumerische Känguruh', 'dekadenten Plattfuß', 'arbeitslosen Leichenwäscher' and similar phrases are exchanged (*Kameraden*, p. 39). However, analogously to Bäumer, Lohkamp only alludes to, but never voices directly, profanities which may be perceived as offensive: 'Line schob den [Kinder-] Wagen. Der Schmied machte darüber solche Witze, daß ich vorzog, mit Patrice Hollmann ein Stück zurückzubleiben' (*Kameraden*, p. 73); "'Jetzt wird es Zeit aufzubrechen", sagte ich zu Pat. "Das Lied da kenne ich. Es hat mehrere Strophen, die sich mächtig steigern. Fort von hier!"' (*Kameraden*, p. 105).

41. Wagener erroneously claims that Birkholz, similarly to Willy, 'now looks forward to returning to his village as an instructor to teach his students about, as his friend Willy puts it, "real love of one's homeland". He has overcome the dark shadows of his past and has found a new task in his life, limited as it may be'. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 44. There is, however, no indication that Birkholz intends to resume a teaching career. The plans for the future which Wagener describes are those of Willy only.

42. Jeglin and Pickerodt, 'Weiche Kerle in harter Schale'.

43. The setting of a hospital for depicting suffering and victimization is used in many of Remarque's other novels. In *Arc de Triomphe*, for instance, Remarque utilizes his protagonist, Ravic's, profession as a surgeon to offer social criticism.

44. Gordon thus rightly claims that Remarque's 'heroic' characters are generally 'not great generals or political figures. They are not successful capitalist entrepreneurs or famous artists. They are what is usually termed simple people'. Gordon, *Heroism and Friendship in the Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 6.

45. Booth defines an ‘unreliable narrator’ as a narrator who does not speak or act ‘in accordance with [...] the implied author’s norms’. Booth offers an example in which the ‘narrator claims to be naturally wicked while the author silently praises his virtues behind his back’. In a slightly modified form, this example could apply to Robert and his supposed erroneous perception of his own personality. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction*, pp. 158-59.

46. Gordon, *Heroism and Friendship in the Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 22.

47. Gordon, *Heroism and Friendship in the Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 23.

48. The term ‘abreisen’ is likewise used in Remarque’s novel *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge* in which another of Remarque’s female characters has terminal tuberculosis.

49. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, p. 26.

50. Antkowiak has criticized Ilja Fradkin for his identification of the perpetrators as Nazis: ‘[...] wobei allerdings unerfindlich bleibt, woher Fradkin weiß, daß es sich um einen faschistischen Mörder handelt; aus dem Text ist es jedenfalls nicht ersichtlich’. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 63. However, although the killers are not explicitly identified as Nazis, their political identity is implied, partly in the description of them as ‘vier junge Burschen. Einer trug hellgelbe, neue Ledergamaschen, die andern eine Art von Militärstiefeln’ (*Kameraden*, p. 321). Their young age is not irrelevant. In *Weimar Culture*, Peter Gay explains the particular attraction the Nazi Party exercised on the younger section of the population. Peter Gay, *Weimar Culture: The Outsider as Insider* ([1969] Great Britain: Penguin, 1974), pp. 146-51. See also: John Fotheringham, ‘Looking Back at the Revolution: Toller’s *Eine Jugend in Deutschland* and Remarque’s *Der Weg zurück*’, in *Remarque against War*, pp. 98-118 (p. 115). It is, however, particularly Köster’s reason for wishing to take personal revenge rather than leaving the matter to the police that conveys the political conviction of the killers: ‘Diese Burschen wissen, daß sie milde Richter finden!’ (*Kameraden*, p. 327). With reference to young, right-wing militants, Peter Gay points out that regards prison sentences, ‘the Republic was always generous with its enemies’. Gay, *Weimar Culture*, p. 161. Contemplating also the time of origin of *Drei Kameraden*, such a statement unambiguously points to the four men being supporters of the National Socialist Party.

51. Quoted in Schneider, ‘Von *Pat* zu *Drei Kameraden*’, p. 71. The article includes the full synopsis.

52. Hartung suggests the identity of the third-person narrator as being possibly that of Ernst Birkholz, a theory which supports the idea that at least Birkholz, but perhaps also Lohkamp, are present in the background of Bäumer’s narrative. Hartung, ‘Zum Wahrheitsgehalt des Romans *Im Westen nichts Neues*’, p. 16.

## Chapter 3

### *Liebe Deinen Nächsten and Arc de Triomphe*

Following *Kameraden*, Remarque shelved the theme of the First World War and its effects. Instead, he turned his attention to the European exile problem which had been instigated by Hindenburg's appointment of Hitler as Chancellor and the rise of the latter to power in January 1933. With this, Germany had entered a new historical phase. Many of those who subsequently came to suffer racial or political prejudice fled, initially, to neighbouring countries and later, if possible, to extra-European destinations. Amongst them was a considerable proportion of German writers. With the Nazis' introduction of regulations affecting all spheres of cultural life, many authors were unable to continue their literary activities in Germany. These regulations aimed to cleanse Germany of, for instance, books and authors who countered the nationalistic foundation of Hitler's regime. Writers who had expressed undesirable views in previous works, and those who refused to become members of the *Reichsschrifttumskammer* were therefore, in addition to non-Aryan and Communist writers, banned from publishing in Germany.<sup>1</sup> Remarque was one of these authors. *Im Westen* and *Der Weg* were both rejected for their supposed 'literarischen Verrat am Soldaten des Weltkrieges'.<sup>2</sup> However, when this was proclaimed at the book-burning in May 1933, Remarque had already left Germany. Although Remarque did not experience the material deprivation with which many of his fellow nationals in exile were faced, including a majority of writers in emigration, he shared with them the same loss of national identity and feeling of uncertainty for the

future.<sup>3</sup> It is therefore not surprising that Remarque, like many of his fellow writers in exile, should take up the themes of expatriation and disenfranchisement in his next two novels, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*.<sup>4</sup>

*Liebe Deinen Nächsten* precedes *Arc de Triomphe* in terms of both time of origin and time of plot. Their analysis in this study shall follow this sequence too. In these two works, Remarque not only turns to a new theme; he embarks upon this challenge by also applying other narrative strategies. Hence, whereas the preceding three works are all related in the *first* person, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* both employ *third-* person narrators. This necessarily affects all other aspects of the novel. In the introductory chapter of this thesis, the various elements which, in unison, constitute form were shown to be interdependent, and the borders between them to often be indistinct. When assuming a different narrative stance, it is therefore to be expected that also other formal aspects of the work will be affected. In consistent first-person narratives, such as *Im Westen*, the formal elements all relate back to the *Ich-Erzähler*. This restriction, however, does not govern third-person narratives as, for instance, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*. Instead, the author faces an array of perspectival possibilities during the process of writing, which naturally enables a more complex use also of the other formal elements. The register, tone and use of imagery, for example, can all vary considerably depending on whose perspective is being presented at any given moment in the novel. The examination of the perspective in Remarque's third-person novels will therefore necessarily also consider how other formal elements are used in conjunction with the perspective, and which effects are achieved as a result.

Set in the year 1936/37, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* commences, geographically, in Vienna, but regular deportations and the changing political climate in Europe take the

refugee-characters to Czechoslovakia and Switzerland, as well as to France. The focus is predominantly on two German refugees, Kern and Steiner, who become acquainted at the opening of the novel when they are arrested at the same boarding-house in Vienna. As with *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*, this novel also opens, seemingly, in the midst of events: 'Kern fuhr mit einem Ruck aus schwarzem, brodelndem Schlaf empor und lauschte' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 7). However, although it appears that the reader comes to observe Kern's and Steiner's lives from a coincidental moment in time, the opening of the novel has been planned carefully and serves a number of purposes: First of all, the police-raid introduces immediate drama to the work, but with Kern and Steiner being brought to the police station for questioning, it also creates a situation in which these two characters must identify themselves in some detail to the police. The reader thereby acquires basic information about the two main characters. Secondly, the arrest necessitates an acquaintance between Kern and Steiner as they come to share a cell for a fortnight along with other detained refugees. Finally, whilst under arrest, the physical confinement of the characters automatically restricts the novel's plot temporarily. Consequently, conversation flourishes amongst them. This offers the reader insight into the general plight of the refugee-existence and the conditions with which the dispossessed were faced in late 1930's Europe. The individual stories reflect the indifference and hostility with which the emigrants have been met in the host-countries, and the title *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* can therefore, as Taylor has pointed out, be perceived as a statement of irony.<sup>5</sup> Although Sternburg opposes to this reading, both critics highlight the same fundamental point: that the work is a genuine entreaty for *Nächstenliebe*.<sup>6</sup> The same biblical imperative is, in fact, used by Gottfried Nickl in his *Gegenschrift, Im Westen nichts Neues und sein wahrer Sinn* from 1930. Nickl, however, applies a rigid interpretation of the words to support his nationalistic views:

Christus, den wohl auch du als Vertreter edelster Menschenliebe anerkennen wirst, predigte: "Liebe deinen Nächsten wie dich selbst!" Er sagte nicht: "alle Menschen", sondern "deinen Nächsten". Wer ist wohl eher unser Nächster: Sippe, Stamm und Volk oder die dieses Volk bedrohende feindliche Welt? Christus lehrte auch: "Liebet eure Feinde!" Aber er fügte diesmal nicht hinzu: "wie euch selbst"!<sup>7</sup>

It must remain speculation whether Remarque ever read Nickl's reply to *Im Westen*, but his exile novel, *Liebe Deine Nächsten*, certainly challenges Nickl's reading of the biblical phrase. It shows that national identity is irrelevant to the concept of friend and enemy, and to true *Nächstenliebe*.

Kern and Steiner have been forced into exile for different reasons. Kern who is twenty-two and a former medical student fled because of his partly Jewish ancestry. Steiner, on the other hand, is in his forties and a political refugee. The age gap between them but also the mentorial role which the latter quickly assumes bring to mind the relationships of Bäumer and Kat in *Im Westen*, Birkholz and Bethke in *Der Weg*, but also Graeber and Pohlmann in the later work, *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu Sterben*.<sup>8</sup> Despite being characterized by mutual respect, all of these relationships are governed by an inequality which originates in the younger men's lesser degree of life experience and their subsequent vulnerability. In *Im Westen*, Kat's 'riesiger, gebeugter Gestalt' and his 'gute Stimme' evoked in Bäumer a sense of serenity and safety (*Im Westen*, pp. 72-73). Comparable descriptions of Steiner and the comfort his presence offers Kern are found in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. As the two of them part after their release from the arrest, for example, they shake hands: '[Steiner] gab Kern die Hand. Sie war groß und trocken und warm' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 32). Although narrated in the third-person, this subjective description reflects Kern's perception of the handshake. Although the

handshake is, in itself, insignificant to the plot, the adjectives 'groß'; 'trocken' and 'warm' communicate the feeling of safety which Kern experiences from being around Steiner.

As a means of depicting Kern's inferior position in his friendship to the older emigrant, Remarque uses a technique which he applied already in *Kameraden*. As discussed in the previous chapter, Lohkamp's rank within his circle of friends is communicated by their reference to him as 'Knabe', 'Kindchen', 'Baby' or 'der Junge' (*Kameraden*, e.g. pp. 156, 46-47). This manner of address is echoed in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, where Steiner rarely makes use of Kern's name. Instead he asserts his position as Kern's senior, but also implies a certain affection and wish to protect the younger man, when calling him 'Kleiner', 'Baby' or 'Knabe' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, e.g. pp. 114, 116, 118, 123, 266). Kern's young age is conveyed also in the motherly comment from the landlady of the boarding-house: 'Gott ja, er wächst wohl noch' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 26). In Prague, Kern falls in love with another young emigrant, Ruth Holland, and Steiner's quasi-paternal affection is extended to include also her. She is subsequently referred to as 'kleine Ruth' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 127, 274, 269). Steiner's view of the young couple as children relates as much to their lack of experience in exile life, as it refers to their actual younger age. A similar attitude was discussed in the analysis of the First World War novels. In *Im Westen*, for instance, Bäumer speaks of 'steinaltes Militär', 'altes Frontschwein' and 'mich alten Soldaten [my emphases]' (*Im Westen*, pp. 33, 36, 124). These statements are likewise unrelated to the age of the soldiers, but rather signify battle experience.

In the course of the novel, Steiner and Kern do not travel together. Their paths do, however, cross on three occasions. These three encounters are placed at the beginning and at the end of each of the novel's two clearly designated parts; the *Erster* and

*Zweiter Teil*. This relationship between plot and overall structure can be illustrated as taking the form of the figure '8': The upper circle of the '8' represents the *erster Teil*; the bottom circle corresponds to the *zweiter Teil*. Kern and Steiner set out from the same point – from the very top of the '8' – but go in different directions. Halfway through the novel, at the end of part one – and halfway down the '8' – their paths intersect. At the end of the novel, the two men meet once more – the bottom point of the '8'. As Kern and Steiner are at different geographical locations throughout most of the novel, the focus switches intermittently between them; depicting their individual experiences in short, predominantly self-contained episodes.

Kern and Steiner have roughly been allocated the same proportion of space in the book. However, due, largely, to Remarque's utilization of narrative perspective, Kern figures as the actual protagonist. From the outset, the two characters are depicted with dissimilar perspectival distance. On the opening page, Kern is not only employed as focalizer, he is also the only character who is named. The other two men present are referred to only in the indistinct terms of 'der Pole' and 'der Mann' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 7-9). Since the narrator's perspective is initially limited to that of Kern, the impersonal reference to the two other men indicates that they are relative strangers to Kern. It is thus only when Kern overhears Steiner's name at the police station that the narrator begins to refer to this older emigrant by name also. Kern's character is thus clearly granted precedence from the outset.

The character, Kern, was modelled on an emigrant with whom Remarque became acquainted whilst residing in Switzerland.<sup>9</sup> The author regularly found inspiration for his characters in the people he encountered in real life, although he generally altered the names slightly as part of the fictionalization process.<sup>10</sup> Remarque's diaries testify that a name-modification occurred also in the creation of the character Kern. The real

emigrant's name was, in fact, Korn; a name which Remarque used also for his character during the embryonic stages of writing *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*.<sup>11</sup> However, Remarque eventually changed it to Kern and thereby detached this character somewhat from its source of inspiration, the non-fictitious emigrant. More importantly however, the name modification simultaneously came to suggest this character's role as the actual protagonist and *Kernpunkt* of the novel.

Although Kern constitutes the focal point in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, the central voice is that of the third-person narrator. In order to examine this perspectival element of the novel, it is necessary to consider the relationship between author and narrator, and which of the two is really telling the story. This problem was highlighted already in relation to first-person narratives, but the dilemma recurs, possibly to an even greater extent, when attempting to analyse a third-person narrative. A third-person narrator is often anonymous and it can therefore be problematic trying to distinguish the narrative voice from that of the author. The first-person narrators, Bäumer, Birkholz and Robert Lohkamp, all had definite and consistent identities which clearly distinguished them from the author. The third-person narrator in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, on the other hand, remains indistinct, not least because (s)he does not participate in the events unfolding. The narrative voice *could* therefore be interpreted as being identical with that of Remarque. According to Gérard Genette, however, any narrator of fiction should be differentiated from the author.<sup>12</sup> Genette further proposed that the narrator should be perceived as a medium through which the author directs his or her story. In an analytical situation, the narrator therefore takes the form of an additional character. An examination of the narrative strategies in a third-person narrative must therefore necessarily consider the views, not only of the characters in the plot, but also those expressed, directly or indirectly, by the narrator.

Despite using what Boa and Reid term a subjective medium,<sup>13</sup> in an interview from the late 1930s, Remarque reveals his awareness of the impact perspective can have on the perceived objectivity of a work:

[D]er Autor eines Buches in der Dritten Person kann sagen “diese oder jene Figur hat diesen oder jenen Charakter”, weil er selbst die Figuren erfunden hat, während der Erzähler in der Ersten Person nur schreiben kann “diese oder jene Person hat jenes getan, deshalb glaube ich, daß er diesen oder jenen Charakter hat”. Aus all diesen Gründen heraus wird ein in der Ersten Person geschriebenes Buch, das dennoch objektiv sein soll, schwerer gelingen als ein Buch in der Dritten Person.<sup>14</sup>

Remarque’s assumption of a third-person narrator in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* might therefore not have been solely the wish for an authorial challenge.<sup>15</sup> His decision could equally reflect that he wanted to depict the exile experience as objectively as possible. A diary entry by Remarque from 1941 indeed implies this:

Kritik New-Yorker. Schlecht. Vermißt die Handlung u. die interessanten Leute. Findet die Minor-Charaktere viel interessanter als die Hauptch. Stimmt. Ich wollte das auch. Wollte Kern u. Ruth als Dutzendmenschen durchgehen lassen.<sup>16</sup>

Rather than offering the perspective of only one individual who then comes to represent a wider picture of suffering and victimization (as was the paradigm applied in both *Im Westen* and *Der Weg*), Remarque uses the third-person perspective to show the emigrant-existence in a relatively objective light.<sup>17</sup> The actual plot of the novel does, of course, also influence the author’s choice of narrative point-of-view. Hence, when Remarque in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* depicts two refugees, who through most of the novel are at different geographical locations, a third-person narrative approach seems almost inevitable. It would have been near impossible to achieve an equally coherent

presentation of this plot through an *Ich-Erzähler*. Remarque could, of course, have applied a framework-structure to the novel and thereby maintained the first-person perspective; He indeed opted for this solution in the later exile novel, *Die Nacht von Lissabon*. Under such a scenario, however, the perspective would essentially come to resemble that of a first-person narrative and thus be entirely subjective.

Boa and Reid claim that drama, as a medium, is more objective than the novel: '[In drama,] objects – characters, location, events – speak for themselves and are physically present before the audience'. The novel, on the other hand, is always narrated 'through the medium of someone else's mind, from a particular and subjective point of view'.<sup>18</sup> In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, Remarque borrows certain traits from the drama-form and thereby seeks to evade the inevitable subjectivity of his chosen medium. A considerable part of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* is, for instance, related through dialogue. Although the direct speech is interspersed with clarifying comments by the third-person narrator, these statements mostly depict characters or events from an external perspective only. Embedded in passages of dialogue, the narrator's remarks subsequently come to resemble stage directions. In line with Boa and Reid's claim above, this gives the impression that *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* unfolds objectively in front of the reading audience. The following quotation exemplifies this perspectival strategy which characterizes much of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. In the excerpt, Kern is in the Prater fairground, where he is practising to become Steiner's assistant in the performance as 'Alvaro, das Wunder der Telepathie'. The objective comments by the narrator are highlighted, below. The connection to the drama form is obvious:

*Direktor Potzloch erschien mit Getöse im Eingang. "Lernt er's?"*

“Wir wollen gerade probieren”, erwiderte Steiner. “Setzen Sie sich mal hin, Direktor, und verstecken Sie was an sich. Haben Sie eine Stecknadel bei sich?”

“Natürlich!” Potzloch griff nach seinem Rockaufschlag.

“Natürlich hat er eine Stecknadel!” Steiner drehte sich um. “Verstecken Sie sie. Und dann komm, Kern, und führe mich.”

Leopold Potzloch nahm die Nadel mit einem listigen Blick und klemmte sie zwischen seine Schuhsohle. “Los, Kern!” sagte er dann. Kern ging zur Bühne und nahm Steiners Hand. Er führte ihn zur Potzloch, und Steiner begann zu suchen.

“Ich bin kitzlig, Steiner”, prustete Potzloch und kreischte auf. Nach einigen Minuten fand Steiner die Nadel [My emphases] (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 120).

The reader observes events from a purely external perspective. There is no direct information or insight into the thoughts of the characters. This objective tone of the narrator is achieved, for instance, through the striking lack of adjectives. Although large parts of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* employ this kind of limited view, the novel is not narrated entirely from an external perspective. At the opening of the work, for example, the narrative is confined to reflect the perspective of Kern. The reader is thus given information only within the scope of Kern’s physical and mental realm:

Kern sah auf das Leuchtzifferblatt seiner Uhr. Es war kurz nach fünf. Das Zimmer war noch fast finster. Grau und undeutlich schimmerten die Laken der beiden anderen Betten durch die Dunkelheit. Der Pole, der an der Wand schlief, schnarchte. Im selben Augenblick rührte sich der Mann, der im mittleren Bette lag. “Ist was los?” flüsterte er (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 7).

Although narrated in the third person, the narrator fades into the background; leaving the reader only with what appears to be Kern’s perspective. There is no standard term for this narrative approach, but Jonathan Culler’s suggestion of ‘third-person limited

point-of-view' seems fitting.<sup>19</sup> This kind of limited stance enables Remarque to preserve some of the closeness between reader and character which is otherwise only characteristic of first-person narratives. However, in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, the viewpoint alters already on the novel's second page: 'Sie liefen so leise, daß sie den schlecht zugedrehten Wasserhahn über dem Ausguß tröpfeln hörten' [my emphases] (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 8). The narrator is no longer restricted to the third-person limited stance of Kern, but is able to access the minds also of other characters.

Whereas the narrative perspective in the three First World War novels is relatively consistent or – as in the case of *Der Weg* – fluctuates with intermittence and seemingly logically, it does not appear to follow any patterns in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. At times the narrator offers a purely external view of events; at other times, (s)he assumes Culler's third-person limited perspective. Although these two narrative stances dominate the work, there are also examples of narrative omniscience.

Depending on which of these three stances the narrator applies, the distance between reader and character varies. This is demonstrated particularly well in relation to the characters of Kern and Steiner. As has been established, the two of them occupy more or less equal space in the novel. However, the perspective from which they are depicted differs. Steiner is almost exclusively depicted from an external point-of-view through either his actions or through dialogue. His thoughts and true nature must therefore remain largely conjecture, and the subsequent dependency on interpretation creates a certain distance between the reader and this character. On few occasions the narrator does assume the third-person limited perspective of Steiner, but these incidents are too few and too brief to exercise any significant impact on the reader/ character relationship. In comparison, Kern is presented from varying degrees of distance: As with Steiner, he is sometimes viewed only from the outside, but the narrator also

regularly adopts his restricted perspective. Although the insights into Kern's thoughts rarely constitute more than a glimpse, these occurrences offer the reader the opportunity to witness directly at least some aspects of Kern's nature. The dissimilar stances from which Kern and Steiner are depicted show that the application of a particular narrative perspective and its level of omniscience invariably influence the sense of distance which the reader experience to a character.

In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* Remarque utilizes both content and form to present an unbiased picture of the exile-experience. There is nevertheless some truth in the claim that the individual character is 'wholly good or wholly bad, in true fairytale tradition'.<sup>20</sup> However, none of the actual groups featured in the work, whether refugees, legal nationals or representatives of the law-enforcement, are depicted one-sidedly. Rather, each group proves to consist of a variety of individuals and this makes the narrator appear to be relatively unbiased.<sup>21</sup> The impartiality is nevertheless deceptive, but due to the novel's extensive use of dialogue and focalization, the narrator's standpoint is well-disguised. When examining whether there is an underlying subjectivity in the narrative voice, the narrative must therefore be considered in its entirety. The narrator's use almost exclusively of emigrants as focalizers,<sup>22</sup> for example, suggests a keenness to portray the points-of-view of especially this group of individuals. The recurrent ship-related imagery also conveys the narrator's sympathy with the emigrants. The figurative description of the small party of refugees who are gathered in a hotel room on New Year's Eve, 1936, hence serves as an omen for the future that awaits them as a group:

Auf einem Balkon des Hauses gegenüber brannte ein kleiner Mann in Weste und Hemdsärmeln eine Schale mit Grünfeierpulver ab. Die ganze Front leuchtete auf. Das grüne Licht blendete in das Zimmer Edith Rosenfelds hinein und machte es unwirklich – als wäre es nicht mehr ein Raum in einem Hotel in Paris, sondern eine Kabine in

einem versunkenen Schiff, tief unter Wasser' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 279).

Set in the years 1936-37, Paris is still relatively safe for the emigrants. Europe would, however, become increasingly dangerous to refugees of the National Socialist Regime, and many of them would perish. The gloomy imagery of the excerpt, above, forebodes this. A trope with a similar maritime resonance is used when an elderly, Jewish refugee, known as Vater Moritz is dying. On his deathbed he has a vision of travelling to an afterlife by boat. The section commences:

Moritz Rosenthal beobachtete, ohne den Kopf zu bewegen, wie die Fenster des gegenüberliegenden Hauses hell wurden; es schwamm wie ein Riesenschiff in der Dämmerung, wie ein Ozeandampfer kurz vor der Abfahrt.[...] [E]r sah, wie plötzlich die Fenster sich weit öffneten und wie jemand, der ihm glich, aufstand und hinausschritt. Über den Schatten hinweg, hinüber zu dem Schiff, das in der langen Dämmerung des Lebens sacht schwankte und nun die Anker lichtete und langsam davonglitt' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 311).

Whereas Vater Moritz's escape is illusory, the ship-imagery transforms and becomes an actuality at the conclusion of the novel. Many emigrants must remain in Europe and face extinction by the ever rising tide of National Socialism, but Ruth and Kern, are amongst the few who are able to leave for America on a real ship. A similar use of the ship-imagery recurs in Remarque's later exile novel, *Die Nacht von Lissabon*, also.<sup>23</sup>

In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, the ship-imagery hints at the impending collapse of Europe. The seemingly neutral stance of the narrator is deceptive, as the expansion of Hitler's Germany is unambiguously depicted as a negative development. The tone might be objective locally in the text, but the focus of the overall narrative reveals a clear subjective stance.

On three occasions, focalization is used to convey sympathy for the emigrant. In these episodes the focus is diverted away from the main story revolving around Kern and Steiner. Instead, the reader is invited to identify with three different refugees: Barbara Klein; Vater Moritz and Goldbach. These characters are essentially without significance to the general plot. Over a few pages, however, the narrative becomes confined to their individual experiences; depicted mainly through use of a third-person limited perspective. By having access to the minds of these characters, the reader witnesses, close up, the quiet sufferings particularly of Dr. Goldbach and Barbara Klein. No equivalent close-ups are offered of any of the legal nationals in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. In allowing the refugees' circumstances and views to take precedence, the narrator expresses sympathy with the victims, and the reader is encouraged strongly – although indirectly – to take a similar stand.<sup>24</sup>

In addition to these three minor characters, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* contains an extensive list of other peripheral characters. This is not surprising since the novel revolves around the experiences of Kern and Steiner. As exiles, they have no permanent base, but are forced to move on regularly. They subsequently encounter numerous fellow émigrés but also legal nationals and representatives of law and order, and this naturally has an expanding effect on the character list. Firda is right in claiming that *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* 'sacrifices depth of characterization for the "fate" of individual exiles linked to the course of social and historical change'.<sup>25</sup> The many minor characters nevertheless serve two specific, contrary and yet complementary purposes in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*: In view of the novel as a whole, they help convey a general picture of the exile existence, but because of the nuances in their suffering and problems, each encounter with a new character also aims to distinguish the refugees and show them as individuals rather than as a homogenous and faceless group of victims.

The prevalence of emigrant characters in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* is, of course, related to the fact that the main plot revolves around the experiences of Kern and Steiner. As exiles, they constantly fear exposure, and they therefore limit their dealings with the legal citizens of the host countries. Any interaction with strangers is done with caution and there is a pronounced hesitancy about revealing any personal details. Remarque illustrates this through Steiner's response, when approached by a man unknown to him: "Sind Sie Steiner?" fragte [der Unbekannte]. "Nein", sagte Steiner. "Warum?" (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 284). In order to convey the larger scale of the emigrants' watchfulness, many of the characters remain unnamed. Instead they are identified by pseudonyms based on particular characteristics in their appearance or behaviour. At times the narrative perspective indeed demands anonymity. An episode set in the Bureau for Emigrant Aid, for example, is focalized through Kern. He observes the other refugees present and as they are strangers to him, the narrator (who is restricted by the scope of Kern's perspective) must refer to them without use of names: 'Neben Kern saß ein bleicher Mensch mit einem Birnenschädel, der einen Geigenkasten auf den Knien hielt. Auf der anderen Seite hockte ein alter Mann, über dessen gebuckelte Stirn eine Narbe lief' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 36). The two men are thereafter distinguished simply as: 'der Geiger' and 'der alte Mann mit der Narbe auf der Stirn'. Even amongst acquainted refugees, the use of pseudonyms is not uncommon. Whilst working on a fairground, for example, Kern is known to his colleagues under a number of names: 'George', 'Charlie', 'Alfons', 'Peperl' and 'Schani' respectively (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 124-26).<sup>26</sup> The emigrants' loss of personal identity recurs as a theme in both Remarque's next novel, *Arc de Triomphe*, and the later book, *Die Nacht von Lissabon*. In the former, the protagonist explains: 'Ravic ist bereits mein dritter Name. Ich habe ihn seit fast zwei Jahren. Nichts passiert seitdem. Scheint mir Glück zu

bringen. Gewinne ihn täglich lieber. Meinen wirklichen habe ich schon fast vergessen’  
(*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 53).

As shown in relation to *Im Westen*, many First World War novels likewise raise the topic of loss of individuality. However, the emigrants’ problem in relation to personal identity differs from that of the front soldiers’. In Schauwecker’s and Wiechert’s First World War novels, for example, the war participants are said to have been consciously moulded into a uniform whole.<sup>27</sup> This is intended to create unity amongst the men, and nurture their sense of national identity. The refugees are faced with the opposite scenario. Many of them have been disenfranchised and although they are able to preserve their individualism, they have to erase their authentic identities, in order to avoid deportation or even imprisonment if discovered to be a previous offender. Stefan Zweig notes in *Die Welt von Gestern*:

Und ich zögere nicht zu bekennen, daß seit dem Tage, da ich mit eigentlich fremden Papieren oder Pässen leben mußte, ich mich nie mehr ganz als mit mir zusammengehörig empfand. Etwas von der natürlichen Identität mit meinem ursprünglichen und eigentlichen Ich blieb für immer zerstört.<sup>28</sup>

Similar words are voiced by Döblin: ‘Ich erinnere mich nicht, je zu irgendeiner Zeit meines Lebens so wenig ‚ich‘ gewesen zu sein!’<sup>29</sup>

Despite the fact that the German First World War soldiers found themselves far from home and mostly living in peril, the army sought to preserve a spiritual bond between these men and their country. The European exiles of the 1930s, as depicted by Remarque, were isolated both physically and emotionally from their homeland and from their previous way of life. Remarque refers to this as living ‘ohne Wurzel’,<sup>30</sup> and for the characters of his novels this essentially means that their lives disintegrate as they find

themselves excluded from a traditional way of life. In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, Ruth's and Kern's experience of their exclusion is communicated through their unsuccessful attempts to participate in everyday activities. Visiting a dance hall, for example, Ruth, Kern and a third emigrant, Binder, struggle to assume the carefree mood of the other people present:

Es war eine Menge junger Leute da, die auch nicht älter waren als sie . . . aber trotzdem wirkten sie auf eine sonderbare Art wie drei verirrte Kinder, die mit großen Augen dasaßen und nicht dazugehörten. Es war nicht ihre Heimatlosigkeit allein, die wie ein grauer Ring um sie lag – es war auch die Freudlosigkeit einer Jugend, die ohne viel Hoffnung und Zukunft war [my emphasis] (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 177-78).<sup>31</sup>

Their comparison to children is, in this case, not only intended to stir the reader's sympathy for the young refugees, but it also conveys Ruth and Kern's feeling of inadequacy by the situation.

Their experience of exclusion is again depicted when Kern and Ruth take a ride in the Ferris Wheel in the Prater fairground high above the ground. A sudden panoramic perspective unfolds before the two young emigrants.

[U]nd es schien ihnen plötzlich [...] als säßen sie in einem lautlosen Aeroplan und unter ihnen drehte sich langsam die Erde fort – als gehörten sie gar nicht mehr zu ihr, als wären sie in einem Geisterflugzeug, das nirgendwo mehr einen Landeplatz hatte und unter dem tausend Heimaten vorüberzogen, tausend erleuchtete Häuser und Stuben, abendliches Heimkehrlicht bis zu den Horizonten, Lampen und Wohnungen und schirmende Dächer darüber, die riefen und lockten, und keines war das ihre. Sie schwebten darüber im Dunkel der Heimatlosigkeit, und alles, was sie anzünden konnten, war die trostlose Kerze der Sehnsucht . . . (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 126-27).

In this excerpt, physical and emotional distance is closely intertwined

The sight of the illuminated city reminds Ruth and Kern of their refugee status and awakens their carefully suppressed longing for a conventional existence in safety. This feeling is intensified by the fact that the Ferris Wheel temporarily separates them physically from the rest of the world.

It is essential to keep these two incidents in mind to fully understand the implication of the novel's concluding remarks. Having received information that they will soon be able to leave Europe, Ruth declares: 'Komm, wir wollen hier heraus! Laß uns auf die Straße gehen. Nach draußen. Ich möchte hier weg. Laß uns auf die Straße gehen' (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 319). Ruth's urge to get out does, however, equally relate to the social void in which she and Kern have thus far had to exist. Until then, there has always been a risk involved in going out, but having acquired temporary staying permits and the tickets for America, Ruth and Kern's status has altered. They are no longer *bürgerliche Tote*, but have been granted permission to exist again.<sup>32</sup>

Above, it was shown that the physical distance between the young couple in the Ferris Wheel, the ground and Vienna signifies the emotional exclusion they experience. As the novel draws to a conclusion, this congruity between the physical and emotional position is repeated: Ruth and Kern no longer observe life from afar. Instead, they go into the crowded, Parisian streets and mingle with the commuters. They are no longer exiles in hiding, but have a route of escape and are soon to commence the longed for, conventional way of life they see around them. Standing in the midst of the busy streets, Ruth and Kern experience – for the first time – the sensation of being admitted to the community from which they have thus far been excluded: 'Kern sah Ruth an. "Wie

viele Menschen es gibt”, sagte er. “Ja”, erwiderte sie. “Furchtbar viele Menschen”” (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 319).

Analogously to the many common aspects which link Remarque’s three early First World War novels and result in a smooth transition between them, *Arc de Triomphe* picks up more or less where *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* concludes, both geographically and in relation to the time at which it is set. *Arc de Triomphe* thus opens in Paris in the late autumn of 1938 just before Armistice Day, only months after Kern and Ruth have supposedly left for America. Whereas the characters in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* are continuously on the move, the exile protagonist of *Arc de Triomphe*, Ravic, has created for himself a relatively stable existence in Paris. Despite his status as an illegal immigrant, his expertise as a former chief surgeon in Germany enables him to earn enough to survive. He carries out difficult operations in a practice owned by two less skilful French doctors in return for a fraction of the profit. His accommodation consists of a modest room in *Hôtel International*. This establishment also features in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and thus forms one of the numerous bonds connecting all of Remarque’s books. By recycling names, places or events, Remarque systematically organizes his novels in relation to one another, so that they each come to function as a separate piece in a wider picture. The slight overlapping in Remarque’s novels gives the impression of concurrence and parallelism between the lives of the protagonists; although the individual characters are almost never acquainted.<sup>33</sup> Hence, Ruth and Kern do not cease to exist at the end of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* simply because the narrative comes to an end. They escape to America and pursue a new life whilst Ravic, in *Arc de Triomphe*, lives as an illegal emigrant in Paris in the years leading up to the Second World War. Even when Remarque in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* turns to the topic of exile, the theme of the First World War is not entirely abandoned.

Steiner and Ravic both participated in the First World War and would, in fact, have been at the age of Bäumer, Birkholz and Lohkamp at the time. Although *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* focus on the topic of exile, Ravic and Steiner therefore not only serve as representatives of the refugee community, but also constitute a link to Remarque's earlier novels in their roles as First World War survivors, two decades on. The reception of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* was modest and Remarque was indeed aware that his novel had stylistic weaknesses.<sup>34</sup> He consequently modified his narrative strategies considerably in the writing of his next novel, *Arc de Triomphe*, although he retained the third-person perspective.

As discussed above, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* follows the exile-experience of two refugees. A considerable proportion of the work is depicted from an external perspective, often intersected by passages of direct speech. The novel also applies a third-person limited perspective, but there is little consistency in its application, and in fact the most rounded characters are to be found, as also Barker and Last point out, amongst the minor characters.<sup>35</sup> In contrast to this, *Arc de Triomphe* is viewed almost entirely from the third-person limited perspective of a single character, Ravic.<sup>36</sup> In addition, this novel contains a much more restrained use of dialogue, and the passages of straight narrative have been manipulated so that they appear to reflect Ravic's view even when this is not indicated directly. As in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, the third-person narrator in *Arc de Triomphe* thereby remains relatively unnoticeable, but without adhering to the almost dull neutrality of the narrative voice in the former work. In order to achieve the consistent impression that *Arc de Triomphe* is effectively presented solely from Ravic's perspective, Remarque utilizes an array of narrative tools.

The most noticeable of these tools is the narrator's recurrent combination of Ravic's name with verbs related to the senses or the conscious mind. These include, for

instance: *sehen, beobachten, betrachten, hören, fühlen, wissen* and *denken*. Even lengthy passages, if introduced or interjected by a short phrase incorporating one of these verbs, automatically appears to convey the viewpoint of the subject of the verb. In *Arc de Triomphe*, Ravic constitutes this subject. At his initial encounter with Joan Madou, for example, the description of her appearance subsequently seems to be presented from Ravic's view:

Die Frau legte ihre Hände auf den Tisch. Sie tat das, als wollte sie sie nie wieder hochnehmen. Die Hände waren gepflegt, aber das besagte nichts. Sie waren auch nicht sehr gepflegt. *Ravic sah*, daß der Nagel des rechten Mittelfingers abgebrochen und scheinbar abgerissen und nicht weggefeilt worden war. An einigen Stellen war der Lack abgesprungen [my emphasis] (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 12).

The inclusion of the words 'Ravic sah' is without relevance to the actual description of Joan. In terms of the narrative perspective, however, it makes a decisive difference: Although narrated in the third person, it causes the entire quotation to become a reflection of *Ravic's* perception of the woman. When the narrator proceeds to depict Joan's face and then her manner of dress, the same technique is applied once more:

*Ravic betrachtete sie*. Sie hatte ein ausgelöschtes Gesicht, fahl, fast ohne Ausdruck. Der Mund war voll, aber blaß, die Konturen schienen verwischt, und nur das Haar war sehr schön, von einem leuchtenden, natürlichen Blond. Sie trug eine Baskenmütze und unter dem Regenmantel ein blaues Schneiderkostüm [my emphasis] (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 13).

Again, the perspective is affected by the information that Ravic is observing Joan. Similar examples are found in abundance throughout the work.

Remarque, however, also makes use of a number of other narrative techniques to divert the attention away from the narrative voice and to make it seem that the novel is

related from Ravic's point-of-view. The application of the particles *vielleicht*, *wohl* and *wahrscheinlich*, for instance, indicate uncertainty and therefore convey limitation in perspective as well as the presence of a conscious mind. A similar effect is produced by the impression of inference which is achieved through use of the verb *müssen*. This is exemplified in the sentence: 'Er sah Joan, als sie hereinkam. Sie war umgezogen und *mußte* gleich, nachdem er das Hotel verlassen hatte, zurückgekommen sein [my emphasis]' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 221). The narrator does not state factually that Joan returned to the hotel after Ravic's departure, but presents a conclusion drawn from the fact that she has changed for dinner. This creates the effect of Ravic's thought processes of inference being illustrated as they occur.

Although *Arc de Triomphe* is written in the past tense, the narrative includes time expressions which grammatically seem incongruous with the preterite. *Jetzt*, for instance, is used several times in the narrative: 'Er hatte geglaubt, in einer Stunde zurück zu sein. *Jetzt war* es drei Stunden später [my emphases]' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 120).<sup>37</sup> When adding present tense time-expressions to an otherwise past tense narrative, the distance decreases between the reader, and the events and characters depicted. The third-person narrator, however, fades into the background, as the present tense time-references relates to the *narrated* present. If the time-word *jetzt* should have been presented from the narrator's perspective, it would have been modified to correlate with the past tense and the narrator's distance to the described events. Thus, instead of: 'Jetzt war es drei Stunden später', the sentence could have sounded: 'Es waren drei Stunden vergangen' or 'drei Stunden waren vergangen'. The inclusion of present tense time-references in *Arc de Triomphe* therefore indicates that the perspective is that of Ravic's. This impression is further upheld through consistency of register and tone. If viewed in isolation, the perspective of the following excerpt, for example, is undeterminable:

Nur noch der weite Platz war da mit den verstreuten, trüben Monden der Laternen und dem steinernen Bogen des Arc, der sich riesig im Nebel verlor, als stützte er den schwermütigen Himmel und schützte unter sich die einsame, bleiche Flamme auf dem Grab des Unbekannten Soldaten, das aussah wie das letzte Grab der Menschheit inmitten von Nacht und Verlassenheit (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 15).

The point-of-view is unclear. However, the poetic tendency and the subsequently melancholic atmosphere of the passage are echoed shortly after in a statement by Ravic. Travelling to the clinic by taxi, he orders the driver to speed up. As this almost results in a collision with another vehicle, Ravic tells him to slow down at crossroads:

“Das wollte ich sowieso. Verdammte Schmiere auf der Straße. Aber weshalb fragen Sie mich eigentlich, wenn Sie nachher nichts hören wollen?”  
“Weil ich müde bin”, erwiderte Ravic ungeduldig. “Weil es Nacht ist. Meinetwegen auch, weil wir Funken in einem unbekanntem Wind sind. Fahren Sie zu” (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 20).

The two examples above appear in close proximity. In other parts of the work, similar congruence exists between Ravic’s tone and that of the passages characterized by perspectival ambiguity. These parts of the novel therefore all come to read as reflecting Ravic’s point-of-view.

As discussed in the previous chapter, *Kameraden* is written solely from the perspective of Lohkamp. When he first encounters Pat, she is therefore initially referred to with the impersonal term of *das Mädchen*. Reminiscent of this technique, the characters Ravic becomes acquainted with in the course of *Arc de Triomphe* are not named by the narrator until Ravic has acquired the knowledge of their identities. The narrator’s register, even with regards to names, is thus carefully considered in order not to exceed

the scope of Ravic's perspective. This is demonstrated in relation to Joan's character as well as with the disagreeable Bobo. The relationship between the former and Ravic will be elaborated upon below, but the example of Bobo also warrants some attention. In his profession as a doctor, Ravic visits a young woman, Lucienne. Her boyfriend, Bobo, refuses to leave the room during the examination:

Der Bursche grinste und spreizte behaglich die Beine. Er trug spitze Lackschuhe und violette Strümpfe. "Bitte, Bobo", sagte Lucienne. "Es dauert sicher nur einen Augenblick."  
Aber Bobo beachtete sie nicht. Er fixierte Ravic (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 124).

Until this moment, the narrator has – in line with Ravic's perspective – referred to Bobo exclusively as *der Bursche*. The narrator only starts applying Bobo's name after the doctor gains knowledge of it. The use of what must be presumed to be the boyfriend's nickname also functions to convey, succinctly, Ravic's perception of Lucienne's boyfriend: Whereas the girl's emotional involvement with the dandy explains her use of his nickname, the narrator's application of it gives the tone a tinge of mockery. This subtle ridicule shows that Ravic regards the boyfriend to be unworthy of any level of respect.<sup>38</sup>

As opposed to the recurrent use of the external perspective in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, a considerable part of *Arc de Triomphe* is directly concerned with the thoughts and emotions of Ravic. Grammatically incomplete sentence-structures are used to simulate thoughts, which after all generally appear in disorder and rarely in compliance with grammatical rules. In the following extract, Ravic returns to his hotel after having carried out an operation. He goes to the bathroom to freshen up:

Er drehte die Dusche an. Das kühle Wasser strömte über seine Haut. Er atmete tief und trocknete sich ab. *Der Trost der kleinen Dinge. Wasser, Atem, abendlicher Regen. Nur wer allein war, kannte auch die. Dankbare Haut. Leichtes, in den dunklen Kanälen hinschießendes Blut. Auf einer Wiese zu liegen. Birken. Weiße Sommerwolken. Der Himmel der Jugend. Wo waren die Abenteuer des Herzens geblieben? Erschlagen von den finsternen Abenteuern des Daseins.* Er ging in das Zimmer zurück [my emphases]’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 30).

The short, mostly incomplete grammatical units resemble the manner in which thoughts often occur. In contrast, the sentences which explain Ravic’s actions are grammatically complete. Both in terms of form and content, these sentences thus constitute a framework for the thoughts. The highlighted lines in the quotation above thereby appear to take place in Ravic’s mind, while the framework-lines explain his physical activities.

In addition to adding texture locally, repetition is also applied in *Arc de Triomphe* as a means of making the narrative resemble thoughts. When Ravic realizes that he is losing Joan, his body language and manner of conversing remain composed. However, a sudden, pronounced change in sentence-structure and the use of repetition reveal that, inside, he is in fact in a state of panic. As in the above example, the underlined parts show Ravic’s thoughts:

“Das ist die älteste Frage der Menschheit, Joan. Warum – die Frage, an der alle Logik, alle Philosophie, alle Wissenschaft bis jetzt zerbrochen sind.”  
*Sie ging. Sie ging. Sie war an der Tür.* Etwas schnellte in Ravic hoch. *Sie ging. Sie ging.* Er richtete sich auf. *Es war unmöglich, alles war unmöglich, nur eine Nacht noch, eine Nacht, einmal noch das schlafende Gesicht an der Schulter, morgen konnte man kämpfen, einmal noch diesen Atem neben sich, einmal noch in dem Fallen die sanfte Illusion, den süßen Betrug. Geh nicht, geh nicht, wir sterben in Schmerzen und leben in Schmerzen, geh nicht, geh nicht, was habe ich denn?* [my emphases]’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 361).

The change in register from Ravic's direct speech to the straight narrative is striking. The repetitions convey Ravic's distress at the prospect of Joan leaving. The shortness of the repeated statements 'sie ging – sie ging' and 'geh nicht, geh nicht' creates a staccato effect and increased pace which correlate with Ravic's palpitating heart in his moment of panic. Another noticeable aspect in the latter quotation is its switch from the past tense to the present – and regards perspective: from *erlebte Rede* to direct interior monologue.<sup>39</sup> The switch to the present tense and Ravic's assumption of a first-person narrative voice reduce the distance between the reader and Ravic. This technique of switching to the first-person via *erlebte Rede* occurs on a number of occasions in the novel. It thus plays a significant part in the successful creation of Ravic as a 'round' or believable character. In comparison, the extensive use of an external perspective in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* leaves Kern, Steiner and Ruth less convincing.

As in *Drei Kameraden*, *Arc de Triomphe* opens with the protagonist's encounter with a woman and concludes with this woman's death. It therefore cannot be disputed that Joan Madou plays a key role in *Arc de Triomphe*. As an individual, though, she is of little import to the story; it is rather her function as an agent in Ravic's emotional development that is the essence of her role. Joan is thus portrayed as Ravic sees her, from an external perspective only. Despite the novel's historical backdrop, the relationship between Joan and Ravic has often been the centre of literary criticism in relation to *Arc de Triomphe*. This is not least because of the inspiration which Remarque allegedly found for this novel in his relationship with Marlene Dietrich.<sup>40</sup>

Joan Madou is not named from the beginning. Instead, the narrator uses the impersonal third-person pronoun *sie* or refers to her as *die Frau*. After Ravic learns her name, she is

mentioned by her full name. It is only after they start a relationship that Joan is referred to by her first name. A similar gradual decrease in the formality of address was identified also in the analysis of *Kameraden* where it assisted in conveying the developing relationship between Pat and Lohkamp. However, whereas Lohkamp delivered the narrative voice in *Kameraden*, Ravic is not the narrator of *Arc de Triomphe*. Nevertheless, since the narrator's different references to Joan correlate with Ravic's gradual emotional involvement with her, the changing manner of address furthers the impression that the passages which are essentially ambiguous in terms of perspective are indeed showing Ravic's point-of-view.

Although the narrative adheres to Ravic's perspective, there are a few occasions on which also Joan's emotions are exposed. In order that the perspective should not exceed that of Ravic, however, the reader does not gain direct access to Joan's thoughts. Instead, she declares her emotions verbally: '*Ich fühle, daß ich lebe; ich fühle es mit allem, was ich bin*'; and shortly after: '*Es ist da etwas, das allein bleiben will. Ich fühle es*' [my emphases] (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 158). In this manner the reader gets a little insight into her mind; although, of course, the insight is not firsthand but based on what Joan *claims* to be experiencing emotionally. Nonetheless, this extra facet to the presentation of her assists in making her character believable.

As discussed above, register, and particularly the aspect related to sentence-structure, can have an impact on the pace and thus on the whole manner in which a piece of narrative is understood. It was shown to constitute an important narrative tool in marking Ravic's direct interior monologues, as the reader would subsequently automatically understand the straight narrative to be representing Ravic's thoughts. In relation to Joan's character the register is used to depict her personality. The portrayal of her thereby comes to seem less biased, since the reader is encouraged to draw his or

her own conclusion purely from Joan's language. Joan Madou is essentially a materialization of life itself. Her pursuit of a carefree existence is expressed not only in the plot, but also through the form. Whereas Ravic is melancholic and philosophical to the extent that the pace of the narrative, at times, almost comes to a halt, Joan is superficial and fluttery. This is conveyed in the following monologue, where she jumps from topic to topic, as the individual thoughts occur to her. Her statement follows an argument which resulted in Ravic and her spending the day apart:

Vergi, was heute war! Denk nicht einmal mehr darber nach! Du fhrst wunderbar Auto, weit du das? Was du da eben gemacht hast, war groartig. Die Idioten haben es auch gesagt. Sie haben gestern gesehen, was du mit dem Wagen anstellen kannst. Du bist unheimlich. Du hast keine Vergangenheit. Man weit nichts von dir. Ich weit schon hundertmal mehr aus dem Leben der Idioten als aus deinem. Glaubst du, da ich irgendwo einen Calvados bekommen kann? Nach all den Aufregungen heute nacht [sic] brauche ich einen. Es ist schwer, mit dir zu leben (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 224).

Whereas Joan signifies life, the Nazi, Haake, represents death.<sup>41</sup> The latter is said to have tortured and eventually caused the death of Ravic's wife. There is therefore a certain balance in the opposition of the characters Joan and Haake, and their connections with Ravic. The first half of the work focuses on Ravic's relationship to Joan; the concluding half is to a large extent concerned with his revenge on Haake. At the end of the novel, both Joan and Haake die, although Ravic does his utmost to save Joan's life. In contrast to this, he endeavours and indeed succeeds in taking that of Haake. Joan and Haake both stir strong, but antithetic, emotions in Ravic. These extremes of emotion – love and hatred – make him feel alive, and the link between Joan and Haake is thus that they both contribute to bringing Ravic out of the state of indifference which governs his life at the opening of the work.<sup>42 43</sup> The novel in fact concludes with a sense of closure for Ravic. This is implied also in his resumption of his

real name Ludwig Fresenburg.<sup>44</sup> In the course of the novel, Ravic (or Fresenburg) therefore reaches a sense of emotional fulfilment: ‘Er hatte einen Menschen geliebt und ihn verloren. Er hatte einen anderen gehaßt und ihn getötet. Beide hatten ihn befreit. [...] Es war nichts zurückgeblieben, was unerfüllt war’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 451). He therefore does not seek to escape arrest as France enters the war.

A discreet parallel can be drawn between the events in Joan’s life as an individual, and those affecting France as a nation. In her private life, Joan has in the past nonchalantly dismissed threats from jealous lovers: “‘Er wollte mich töten.’” Sie lachte. “Immer wollen sie einen töten. Ein paar Monate später wollte mich der andere töten. Sie tun das nie” (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 156). At a much larger scale, France (and the rest of Europe) similarly ignored the possible danger which Hitler imposed. Ravic’s employer, Veber, represents the general French attitude which is as carefree as that expressed by Joan: ‘Veber sah auf [...]. Er vergaß, die Zigarre anzuzünden. “Es kann keinen Krieg geben, Ravic! Es kann einfach nicht! Es ist Gebell und Gedrohe. Im letzten Augenblick wird noch etwas geschehen!”’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 446). Both Joan (the individual) and France (the nation) prove to have misjudged their situations. The consequences they each face as a result are described figuratively. The images applied are inconspicuously intertwined. Only hours before Joan is shot by her theatrical lover, Ravic notices that the city of Paris has been partly blacked out. This event is expressed in images of disease and death:

Wie räudige Stellen in einem glänzenden Fell sprangen hier und da Flecken *kranker* Finsternis hervor. [...] Einzelne Straßen lagen schon *blind* da, als wären schwarze Würmer durchgekrochen und hätten allen Glanz zerdrückt. Die Avenue George V hatte kein Licht mehr; in der Avenue Montaigne *starb* er gerade [...]. Die eine Hälfte der Avenue Victor Emanuell III war *erloschen*; die andere stand noch hell da – *wie ein paralysierter Körper in Agonie, halb schon tot, halb noch voll Leben. Die*

*Krankheit sickerte überall durch [my emphases] (Arc de Triomphe, p. 453).*

The city is personified and compared to a dying body. This adds a certain aesthetic quality to the passage, but the real notion behind the figurative language only reveals itself when Joan is shot in a succeeding paragraph. In contrast to the description of the city, the seriousness of her injuries is conveyed through references to darkness:

Die Wunde wurde einen Schatten grauer, als wehe ein Hauch Dunkelheit darüber. [...] Das Blut hatte noch immer den bleiernen Schein. [...] Das Blut wurde dunkler. Es war, als zögen draußen Wolken und würfen ihre Schatten vorüber. Als stünde jemand vor den Fenstern und zöge die Vorhänge zu (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 465).

The images applied in relation to Joan and the blacked out city of Paris have thus been inverted. This creates a subtle link between them, in addition to giving the narrative aesthetic quality locally.

The Arc de Triomphe which gives the novel its title figures as a recurrent motive throughout the work. It is one of the monuments mostly associated with Paris and the title therefore immediately suggests the geographical setting of the work.

It is its representation of a powerful and victorious France, however, which is significant. Throughout the novel, the monument is continuously submerged in fog, and, on one occasion, the sound of a military orchestra playing in its vicinity is thus thin and barely audible:

Der Himmel war bedeckt, und die Strahlen der Scheinwerfer warfen den Schatten der Fahne matt, verwischt und zerrissen gegen die ziehenden Wolken. Es sah aus, als versinke dort ein zerfetztes Banner in der langsam tiefer werdenden Dunkelheit. Eine Militärkapelle spielte irgendwo. Es klang dünn und blechern (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 48).

Symbolically, this portrayal of the arch and the imagery of a torn flag signify the weakened position of France. As war breaks out at the end of the novel, the arch is therefore no longer visible: ‘Nirgendwo brannte ein Licht. Der Platz war nichts als Finsternis. Es war so dunkel, daß man auch den Arc de Triomphe nicht mehr sehen konnte’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 480). France has entered an era of darkness literally as well as symbolically. As the arch submerges into darkness, so does also the memorial for the unknown soldier beneath it. This feature, which is referred to a few times in the novel, constitutes one of the many connections to Remarque’s early works, as Bäumer from *Im Westen* is – or rather becomes – the unknown soldier. However, at the end of *Arc de Triomphe*, the monument and the memorial grave are no longer visible. With the oblivion of his memory, the pledge which Bäumer made his French victim, Duval, is also broken. Bäumer’s promise of ‘nie wieder’ (*Im Westen*, p. 154) becomes void as Europe braces itself for the Second World War.<sup>45</sup>

In terms of minor characters, *Arc de Triomphe* is less prolific than *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. This is mainly a reflection of the fact that the plot of the former revolves around Ravic’s life in Paris, whereas Kern and Steiner in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* have no fixed base, but move from place to place. The three months in the spring of 1939 which Ravic spends attempting to re-enter France following deportation are not depicted. The details of this period are essentially of little relevance to the plot, since the novel’s main storyline is Ravic’s development as he experiences emotions of love, hatred and revenge. Had Ravic’s three months in Switzerland been included in the novel, the list of characters would inevitably have been longer.

A considerable part of the characterization of the minor characters takes place implicitly through their direct speech. There is, for instance, no doubt about the anti-Semitic stance of the hospital nurse, Eugenie, when she states: ‘Schönes Hotel, die

Judenbude' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 87). Also the manner in which statements are being delivered can be informative. Veber's trouble-free life, for example, is partly communicated through the mere fact that he delivers most of his lines with a smile.<sup>46</sup> One of the nurses in the clinic speaks with a similar blitheness. In her case, the contrast between her carefree tone and the suffering she is surrounded by is particularly striking:

Die Schwester *lächelte über ihr Apfelgesicht*. "Ich habe ihn gern", erklärte sie redselig. "Manche Kranke sind natürlich anstrengend, aber die meisten sind sehr nett. Madame Brissot hat mir gestern ein schönes, fast neues Seidenkleid geschenkt. Und die letzte Woche habe ich von Madame Lerner ein Paar Lackschuhe bekommen. Von der, die dann zu Hause gestorben ist." *Sie lächelte wieder* [my emphases]' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 131).

The tone of the nurse reveals her emotional disengagement with the reality of the hospital environment, and suggests that she is incapable of identifying with the stress and pain endured by many of the patients. A more extreme example of inappropriate joyfulness is found in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. The Nazi-character, Steinbrenner, is made especially disagreeable by the fact that he speaks with a giggle. This produces an unpleasant contrast between the seriousness of his words and the cheerful manner in which he delivers them:

"Ich habe dich nicht vergessen, Steinbrenner", erwiderte Steiner ruhig.  
"Wird dir auch schwerfallen", *kicherte* der Mann.  
"Herzlich willkommen zu Hause! Freue mich wirklich, dich wiederzusehen. Wirst ja jetzt wohl ein bißchen bei uns bleiben, was? Wir haben ein wunderschönes, neues Lager, mit allem Komfort."  
[...] "Ja, die Liebe!" *kicherte* Steinbrenner. "Führt die ausgekochtesten Vögel ins Nest zurück – zum Wohl des Staates und zur Freude ihrer Freunde" [my emphases] (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 308).

Although the perspective of *Arc de Triomphe* remains almost consistently that of Ravic, Stephani is not entirely correct in claiming that ‘die monoperspektivische Darstellung [...] bis ans Ende des Romans konsequent beibehalten [wird]’.<sup>47</sup> There is a limited extent of deviation from the otherwise consistent perspective of Ravic, their rarity and fleeting occurrences make it justifiable to discard them merely as authorial slips.<sup>48</sup> Remarque in fact perceived *Arc de Triomphe* to be a novel written from a single perspective. In a newspaper interview from the late 1960s, the author explains:

Ich habe immer alles in Szenen geschrieben, dramatisiert, alles von einem einzigen Punkt, von einer einzigen Person aus. Nehmen Sie den Ravic in “Arc de Triomphe”, wenn er nicht da ist, ist kein Buch mehr da. Das gibt die Spannung, das ist schwer zu schreiben; über der Leichtigkeit vergessen die Leute, wie genau es gearbeitet wird, und warum alles vibriert.<sup>49</sup>

In order to maintain the impression that Ravic is the central mind of *Arc de Triomphe*, Remarque continuously situates his protagonist so he becomes a witness to any events the author wishes to incorporate in the novel. Even unlikely information therefore reaches the attention of Ravic:

In der Schlächterei unten stand jetzt der Geselle, ein gelbgesichtiger Mensch ohne die Passion der Wirtin. Er hackte lustlos herum. Seit dem Trauerfall war er bedeutend müder geworden. Seine Chance, die Meisterin zu heiraten, war gering. Ein Bürstenbinder gegenüber im Bistro erklärte das laut und auch, daß sie ihn vorher ebenfalls zum Friedhof bringen würde (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 127).

The source of Ravic’s insight is identified as local gossip voiced loudly by a broom- and brushmaker in the pub. Hence, the perspective remains in line with that of Ravic.

Even events during which Ravic has clearly not been present are skilfully manipulated, so as to suggest that Ravic has been told about them. This is achieved through a simple alteration of tense from the imperfect to the pluperfect: ‘Nachts ging er noch einmal zur Klinik. Kate Hegström schlief. Sie *war* abends *aufgewacht*, *hatte erbrochen*, ungefähr eine Stunde unruhig *gelegen* und *war* denn wieder *eingeschlafen* [my emphases]’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 108).

The analysis above focuses predominantly on the aspect of narrative perspective. *Arc de Triomphe* does, however, equally reflect the author’s careful application of other formal elements, such as the register, imagery and structure (especially locally). Some of these have also been explored in the analysis. When considering the development of Remarque’s writing skills, though, the change in the narrative perspective is particularly striking between *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*. It is applied with much more control in the latter novel, and Remarque uses a narrative stance which is more apt for the contents of the work. Only a detailed study of the numerous tools which Remarque applies in order to create a consistent perspective reveals the extent of technical improvement from *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* to *Arc de Triomphe*, and the dominating attention to the narrative point-of-view was therefore unavoidable.

Remarque’s choice of form in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* is plainly dissimilar. In these two novels, Remarque demonstrates the range of possibilities which are open to an author writing through a third-person narrative voice. The two works differ considerably in terms of perspective, and the reader’s sense of distance to events and characters therefore also comes to vary. In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, for example, the recurrent application of an external perspective makes it difficult to get close even to the main character, Kern, and although this appears to have been Remarque’s intention,<sup>50</sup> the contrasting and consistent use in *Arc de Triomphe* of Ravic’s third-person limited

perspective and the regular access to his thoughts makes this character much more rounded and convincing.

Remarque might have had film in mind when he decided to narrate a considerable part of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* from a camera-like viewpoint, as this would certainly ease an adaptation of the novel into a film.<sup>51</sup> However, considering the form of Remarque's original medium – the novel – it is precisely the possibility of entering into the mind of the characters that constitutes a part of its appeal.<sup>52</sup> The repeated insight into Ravic's thoughts in *Arc de Triomphe* thus encourages the reader to empathize with his character. The fact that much of the novel focuses on the mind of its protagonist did, however, also complicate the task of adequately adapting *Arc de Triomphe* for the screen, and the final film-product did indeed not enjoy great success.<sup>53</sup>

Within the context of Remarque's oeuvre, the narrative strategies applied in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* show development as well as continuation of previously used techniques. The most noticeable formal transition in Remarque's narrative strategies is, of course, his switch to the third-person perspective. In *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, the author thus experiments with distance and perspectival possibilities within the frame-work of this perspective. As a result, Steiner and Kern are not presented with equal centrality to the story. In his diaries, Remarque identifies Kern as his protagonist – not Steiner – so it is justifiable to assume that the author was aware of the effect which perspective and distance exercise on the reader-character relationship. Nonetheless, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* remains somewhat disorganized and unimpressive in relation to its narrative strategies. Too many different perspectives are used without consistency or apparent logic. In comparison, *Arc de Triomphe* displays a much more controlled handling of the perspective. In fact, due to the fact that the narrative point-of-view in *Arc de Triomphe* is almost exclusively identical with that of

Ravic, his character almost functions as an *Ich-Erzähler*. The claim that Ravic is ‘sketchily drawn and out of focus’ is therefore unjust,<sup>54</sup> and it indeed seems to correlate poorly with the fact that *Arc de Triomphe* has been termed Remarque’s ‘second bestseller’.<sup>55</sup> Despite high sales figures, particularly in America, the reviews remained largely modest in Germany.<sup>56</sup> The *Tägliche Rundschau* is especially negative: ‘Remarque ist abgeglitten. [...] Es ist bezeichnend für die Mentalität des heutigen Amerikas, daß ausgerechnet dieses in jeder Hinsicht zweifelhafte und nihilistische Literaturwerk drüben zu den “Best-Sellern” gehört’. *Arc de Triomphe* was generally criticized for being too sentimental. However, similarly to *Im Westen*, this work presents the subjective perspective of a single individual and, as with many of Remarque’s other protagonists, Ravic is depicted at a time of historical and personal crisis. The argument which was applied in the analysis of *Im Westen* is therefore equally applicable to *Arc de Triomphe*: A certain amount of sentiment is not only justifiable, but perhaps even required in order to make the depiction realistic. In comparison, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* adopts an external perspective through large parts of the novel. The work, as a whole, is subsequently ineffective in encouraging the reader to engage with the seriousness of the issues depicted. Although neither of the two novels discussed in this chapter received impressive reviews, they testify to a development in Remarque’s narrative strategies. Whereas *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* can be perceived an initial experiment in terms of both form and content, *Arc de Triomphe* skilfully combines the exile-theme and third-person perspective with the close-up portrayal of a single individual and representative of a wider group of victims.

## Notes to *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*

1. Matthias Wegner, *Exil und Literatur: Deutsche Schriftsteller im Ausland 1933-1945* (Frankfurt am Main and Bonn: Athenäum, 1968), pp. 32-37.
2. The burning of Remarque's books was preceded by the words: 'Gegen literarischen Verrat am Soldaten des Weltkrieges! Für Erziehung des Volkes im Geist der Wehrhaftigkeit! Ich übergebe der Flamme die Schriften von Erich Maria Remarque!' Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 240; Hans Wagener, 'Remarque in Amerika – zwischen Erfolg und Exilbewußtsein', p. 18.
3. Wegner points to the duality of the pressure of emigration life. He speaks of both the 'äußere' and 'innere Belastung des Exils', and, to stress the effects that the psychological pressure alone exercised on the individual, suggests that the 'innere' more than the 'äußere' strains led to the suicides of both Stefan Zweig and Ernst Toller. Wegner, *Exil und Literatur: Deutsche Schriftsteller im Ausland 1933-1945*, pp. 13-14, 94-100.
4. The emigration-theme was explored by many other writers in exile such as Lion Feuchtwanger, Stefan Zweig, Hans Habe, Anna Seghers, Alfred Döblin, Carl Zuckmayer and F. C. Weißkopf.
5. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 147.
6. In this context, Sternburg comments 'daß Ironie generell kein vertieftes Stilmittel seiner [Remarques] Epik ist. [...] "Liebe Deinen Nächsten" ist also einer der kategorischen Imperative, die der Schriftsteller Remarque einer moralisch enthemmten Welt entgegensetzt. Und er meint dies nicht ironisch, sondern bitterernst'. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 295-96.
7. Gottfried Nickl, *Im Westen nichts Neues und sein wahrer Sinn: Eine Betrachtung über den Pazifismus und Antwort an Remarque (Heimgarten Sonderheft)* (Graz: Leopold Stöcker, 1930), pp. 15-16.
8. Taylor likewise notes the resemblance between the relationship of Steiner and Kern, and that of Bäumer and Katczinsky. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 148.
9. 'Die Geschichte der Hauptfigur Ludwig Kern beruhte auf einer tatsächlichen Biographie eines Exilanten, mit dem Remarque gesprochen hatte'. Jan-Christopher Horak, 'Ewig auf der Flucht: Die Romanverfilmung *So Ends Our Night*', in *Erich Maria Remarque: Leben, Werk und weltweite Wirkung*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1998), pp. 235-49 (p. 239). In connection with negative reviews of

*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, Remarque's diary entry from 22 April 1941 states: 'Typisch, – weil ich Kern kannte. [...] – das verschob das klare Bild der Erfindung'. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 351. The following year Remarque likewise notes: 'Mittags gefunden, was falsch war in Flotsam [*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*]: Steiner nicht zu Hauptfigur zu machen. Grund: Kern, der persönlich in Porto Ronco erschien, mich beeinflusste'. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 358.

10. Hanns-Gerd Rabe, 'Remarque und Osnabrück', *Osnabrücker Mitteilungen: Mitteilungen des Vereins für Geschichte und Landeskunde von Osnabrück*, 77 (Osnabrück: Meinders und Elstermann, 1970), pp. 197-246 (pp. 230-39).

11. A diary entry from 20 March 1938 states: '[...] Zwanzigjähriger Emigrant. Seit vier Jahren von Grenze zu Grenze geworfen. Ausgestattet für Schwarzfahrt Paris, damit er dort falschen Paß kaufen kann. Entsetzliches Leben. War aber hoffnungsvoll. Hat ein Paar hundert Franken. Soviel, wie nie früher. Später Korn zur Bahn gebracht' (From the unpublished diaries). The diaries then testify that, only weeks later, Remarque started working on an exile-novel. The characters 'Ruth u. Korn' (not Kern) are mentioned in the diaries from the 19 February and 5 March 1939. (From the unpublished diaries. Source held in the *Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrum*, Osnabrück). The mixture of fiction and reality is confirmed when Remarque, a couple of years later, having created a fictional emigrant named Kern, accidentally refers to also the real refugee as 'Kern' (see quotation in note 9).

12. Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 213-14.

13. Boa and Reid juxtapose the perspective of drama with that of the novel. They propose that drama unfolds itself and that its form is subsequently direct and objective. In contrast, the novel is always narrated through a medium, and they therefore ascribe it the characteristics of indirectness and subjectivity. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, p. 1.

14. Jeanine Delpech, 'Remarque in Paris', *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 7 (1997), pp. 110-16 (pp. 111-12).

15. Asked in 1938 by interviewer Jeanine Delpech if he intended to continue writing novels from a first-person perspective, Remarque replied: ' – Nein, ich werde in Zukunft eine andere Technik haben, andere Romane schreiben. Ich finde jedoch, daß es für einen Anfänger eine gute Übung ist, in der Ersten Person zu schreiben'. Delpech, 'Remarque in Paris', p. 111. The assumption of the third-person perspective in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, which Remarque started working on around the time of the interview, can thus be interpreted as Remarque's exploration of other narrative approaches.

16. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 352.

17. Antkowiak notes: '[D]ie Erzählform in der dritten Person erlaubt eine "objektivere" Musterung des Wirklichen; sie schafft gewissermaßen Distanz'. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 73.

18. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, p. 1.

19. Jonathan Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford etc.: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 90. For alternative expressions, Boa and Reid propose Robert Humphrey's term 'indirect interior monologue', whereas Genette speaks of 'focalization'; that is, the narrative is limited to the viewpoint of one or more characters, whilst the third-person perspective is preserved. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, p. 3; Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, pp. 189-94.
20. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 115.
21. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 56-57.
22. This modified form of Genette's terms 'focalization' or 'focalizing' has been employed by Jonathan Culler. It refers to the character(s) through whom focalization takes place. The verb 'to focalize' can likewise be found in Culler's work. Culler, *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 88-89.
23. The recurrent evocation of images of ships makes the English title, *Flotsam*, particularly apposite.
24. The three passages depicting Barbara Klein, Vater Moritz and Dr. Goldbach need to be read in their entirety and viewed in the context of the novel as a whole, in order for the reader to understand the circumstances and despair that govern the lives of these characters, and eventually drive Barbara to commit suicide. It therefore does not seem beneficial to provide short excerpts from the passages in question. The three sections are found in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, pp. 180-84, 203-05 (Dr. Goldbach); 279-83 (Barbara Klein); 311-13 (Vater Moritz).
25. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 117.
26. 'Ravic ist bereits mein dritter Name. Ich habe ihn seit fast zwei Jahren. Nichts passiert seitdem. Scheint mir Glück zu bringen. Gewinne ihn täglich lieber. Meinen wirklichen habe ich schon fast vergessen' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 53). His real name, Ludwig Fresenburg, is only disclosed at the end of the novel. For the sake of clarification however, the narrator continues to apply the name, Ravic, under which the reader has come to know this character.
27. 'Er versuchte, eine Beziehung zu den Gesichtern herzustellen, eine Art von Gesetzmäßigkeit, die jede Erscheinung des Zufälligen entkleidete, aber es gelang ihm nicht. Er vertauschte die Gesichter und die Kopfbedeckungen, und nichts änderte sich. Er erkannte, daß es ein Massengesicht war, und in dieser Erkenntnis ging ihm unvermittelt der Sinn der Uniform auf, des Helmes, des Gleichschrittes.' Wiechert, *Jedermann*, p. 27; 'Ich bin nicht mehr ich, sondern Füsilier Sowieso. Es gibt kein Sonderstreben mehr. Ein Gemeinschaftsziel erhebt sich starr.' Schauwecker, *Der feurige Weg*, p. 6.
28. Stefan Zweig, *Die Welt von Gestern: Erinnerungen eines Europäers* ([1944] Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1981), p. 468.

29. Alfred Döblin, *Schicksalsreise: Bericht und Bekenntnis* ([1949] Leipzig: St. Benno: 1980), p. 21.

30. Remarque introduces *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* with a short statement that also features in a diary entry from around the time when he was writing the novel: ‘Man braucht ein starkes Herz, um ohne Wurzel zu leben – ’ (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 3); Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 331.

31. As mentioned above, there are only few occasions on which the narrator’s point-of-view reveals itself locally. This quotation constitutes such an exception. It is not focalized; it is the narrator’s standpoint which is depicted. Hence, the simile ‘wie drei verirrte Kinder, die mit großen Augen dasaßen’ conveys an image of helplessness and neglect with which the narrator aims to create sympathy for the emigrants.

32. Whilst in Switzerland, Kern appears in court and explains his situation to the judge: “‘Ich bin ein Schatten, ein Gespenst, ein bürgerlicher Toter. [...] Wir existieren für Deutschland nicht mehr. Für die übrige Welt nur noch als Subjekte für die Polizei.’” Der Richter schüttelte den Kopf. [...] “‘Sie sind doch viele Tausende; und Sie müssen doch irgendwie existieren dürfen!’” (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 209).

33. There are few exceptions. As with the reappearance of, for instance, Katzcin[s]ky’s name in the First World War novels, Remarque’s last novel *Das gelobte Land (Schatten im Paradies)* brings up the names of both Ravic and Joan Madou (*Das gelobte Land*, pp. 78, 356). These reencounters with already familiar character-names contribute towards tying the novels together and creating a wider image of often overlooked groups of victims. Each novel thereby contributes its particular facet to this image.

34. In his diary, Remarque states, for instance: ‘Kritik New-Yorker. Schlecht. Vermißt die Handlung u. die interessanten Leute. Findet die Minor-Charaktere viel interessanter als die Hauptch. Stimmt. Ich wollte das auch. Wollte Kern u. Ruth als Dutzendmenschen durchgehen lassen. Darin liegt wohl der Fehler des Scriptes. Hätte andere Typen nehmen müssen. Bestimmt! Das ist die Schwäche. Als “Hotel International” wäre es viel besser gewesen. Lernen’. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, pp. 352.

35. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 112.

36. Susanne Stephani’s article on *Arc de Triomphe* comments on the narrative perspective. Susanne Stephani, “‘... Weil wir Funken in einem unbekanntem Wind sind’”. Erich Maria Remarque: *Arc de Triomphe*, *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 13 (2003), pp. 42-77 (pp. 49-52).

37. Other examples are found: ‘Er wußte *jetzt*, daß er wartete [my emphasis]’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 145); ‘*Nun* wußte er es [my emphasis]’ (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 305).

38. The same technique is used in *Drei Kameraden*. The new lover of a recently widowed man tries to persuade him to buy a flashy car: “Sieh mal, Puppi, das ist ein Wagen! Fabelhaft! Das lass’ ich mir gefallen!” Im nächsten Augenblick hatte sie die Tür schon offen und saß drin, schielend vor Begeisterung. “Das sind Sitze! Kolossal! Wie Klubsessel! Das ist was anderes als der Ford!” “Na, komm schon”, sagte Puppi

mißmutig' (*Kameraden*, p. 82). The latter use of the nickname 'Puppi' displays the same ridiculing effect as the narrator's reference to Lucienne's boyfriend as 'Bobo' in *Arc de Triomphe*.

39. Whereas *erlebte Rede* shows a character's thoughts in the *past tense* and without any external interference, direct interior monologue displays the character's thoughts as they develop and in the *present tense*. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies: German Fiction in the Twentieth Century*, pp. 3-4.

40. Hilton Tims suggests that *Arc de Triomphe* is dedicated to M. D. (Marlene Dietrich), although this is not the case. Tims, *Erich Maria Remarque: The last Romantic*, p. 129. Nonetheless, there are indications of a connection between Remarque's liaison with Dietrich and the contents of *Arc de Triomphe*. In a diary entry from 1941, for instance, Remarque notes: 'Gestern abend ungefähre Grundidee zum: Arc de Triomphe gefunden. Ähneln verzweifelt einer Autobiographie der letzten Jahre, – emotionell'. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 352. In his written correspondence with Dietrich, Remarque also regularly uses the pseudonym, Ravic and speaks of 'unserm Buch'. "Sag mir, daß Du mich liebst" . . . , edited by Fuld and Schneider, p. 181.

41. As with many of Remarque's other characters, both Haake and the Nazi, Steinbrenner, in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* have phonetically harsh names which provoke negative thought associations. As a result, the name Steinbrenner seems fitting for an unpleasant and merciless Nazi. It is, therefore, a name which Remarque also uses for Nazi-characters in *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*. Likewise, in relation to Haake, the vocal connection to the noun 'Haken' is hardly coincidental. Little imagination is needed to turn the name into a horrific object in the hands of a torturous interrogator. In addition there is, of course, also an apposite link to the noun 'Hakenkreuz'. Another play on words in connection with character-names in *Arc de Triomphe* is offered in the backstreet abortionist, Mme Boucher. Her operations are not always successful; at times they even lead to the death of the patient. Hence, the appropriateness of the name.

42. As Stephani points out, Joan's character also contrasts with that of Kate Hegström: 'So steht Kates Ruhe, Sicherheit und Eigenständigkeit (z.B. fährt sie alleine nach Florenz) in enormen Kontrast zu Joan's Unbeständigkeit, Verantwortungslosigkeit und Unselbstständigkeit (z.B. fährt sie nur in männlicher Begleitung weg). Diese stilistische Kontrastierung arbeitet eine klare Kontur der jeweiligen Person heraus'. Stephani, "' . . . Weil wir Funken in einem unbekanntem Wind sind'", p. 52.

43. The staccato effect which dominates the narrative as Ravic realizes that he is losing Joan, therefore also characterizes the passages revolving around Haake. To achieve this effect, Remarque applies both asyndetic and grammatically incomplete sentence-structures. Again, the subsequently increased pace comes to represent Ravic's heartbeat; this time, at the prospect of revenge and the fear that something should prevent it: 'Das Gesicht, dieses Gesicht, es muß eine Ähnlichkeit sein, irgendeine hundsgemeine, verfluchte Ähnlichkeit, ein blöder Trick, den meine Nerven mir spielen – es kann nicht in Paris sein, dieses Gesicht, es ist in Deutschland, es ist in Berlin, die Scheibe war verregnet, man konnte nicht deutlich sehen, ich muß mich geirrt haben, bestimmt . . .' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 88). See also: pp. 88, 396, 400, 404). Whether stimulated by the

feeling of love or hatred, Ravic's palpitating heart – imitated through the pace – signifies that he is no longer 'ein Toter auf Urlaub' (*Arc de Triomphe*, pp. 176, 326).

44. Schreckenberger, "Durchkommen ist alles": Physischer und psychischer Existenzkampf in Erich Maria Remarques Exil-Romanen', p. 35.

45. 'Ich verspreche es dir, Kamerad. Es darf nie wieder geschehen' (*Im Westen*, p. 154).

46. 'Veber lachte', 'Veber schmunzelte', 'sein Gesicht leuchtete'. Similar phrases interrupt the flow of his words, and they continue to characterize Veber's mood until the end of the novel, when he realizes that a war is inevitable (*Arc de Triomphe*, for instance, pp. 21-22, 24, 137, 236).

47. Stephani, "... Weil wir Funken in einem unbekanntem Wind sind'", p. 50.

48. There are no lengthy deviations from Ravic's perspective. The ones that do exist mostly consist of brief statements. For instance: "Du da oben", sagte er [Ravic] gegen das erleuchtete Fenster und lachte und wußte nicht, daß er lachte' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 325). "Du warst immer mit mir", sagte er [Ravic] und merkte nicht, daß er plötzlich deutsch sprach' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 471). In both quotations, the perspective exceeds that of Ravic. On a few other occasions, the narrator assumes the third-person perspective of one of the other characters: 'Kate Hegström fühlte die Melodie auf ihrer Haut wie Quellwasser im April. Sie war plötzlich voller Echos, aber niemand war da, der nach ihr rief. Verweilte Stimmen murmelten, vage Erinnerungsfetzen flatterten, manchmal blinkte es wie Brokat, aber es verwirbelte, und niemand war da, der rief. Niemand rief' (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 101).

49. Lütgenhorst, 'Emigrant zweier Welten'.

50. The diary entry from 30 April 1941 testifies that Remarque consciously decided to preserve distance between the characters in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and the reader. 'Wollte Kern u. Ruth als Dutzendmenschen durchgehen lassen.' Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 352.

51. Indeed, Talbot Jennings who was hired to write the film script aimed to remain faithful to the novel, as far as the difference in media would allow. Horak has noted on the final product: 'In der Tat weicht das Drehbuch, wie auch der von Cromwell inszenierte Film in keinen wesentlichen Punkten von der Vorlage ab. Sogar die meisten Dialoge scheinen wörtlich aus dem Roman entnommen werden zu sein'. Horak, 'Ewig auf der Flucht: Die Romanverfilmung *So Ends Our Night*', pp. 239-40.

52. 'In daily life we never understand each other, neither complete clairvoyance nor complete confessionals exist. We know each other approximately, by external signs, [...] [b]ut people in a novel can be understood completely by the reader, if the novelist wishes; their inner as well as their outer life can be exposed.' Forster, *Aspects of the Novel*, pp. 56-57.

53. C. R. Owen goes as far as referring to the film as a 'complete fiasco'. C. R. Owen, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Critical Bio-Bibliography* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1984), p. 248. Firda's general study of Remarque summarizes the reception of the film and

contains a number of reviews. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, pp. 137-38. Taylor examines the production and the less than positive reception of the film. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, pp. 178-180. See also: Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 331-32.

54. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 112.

55. Wagener comments on the reception of both works. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 59; Wagener, 'Remarque in Amerika – zwischen Erfolg und Exilbewußtsein', pp. 25-26; Hans Wagener, 'Erich Maria Remarque', in *Deutsche Exilliteratur seit 1933*, 1, part 1, edited by John M. Spalek and Joseph Strelka (Bern etc.: Francke, 1976), pp. 591-605 (pp. 596-97). More detail and several reviews are accessible in Sternburg's study. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 301, 328-31.

56. Werner Ilberg, 'Amerikas 'meistgekauftes' Buch: Bemerkungen zu Remarques 'Arc de Triomphe'', *Tägliche Rundschau* (Berlin), 23 March 1949, no page.

## Chapter 4

### *Der Funke Leben and Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*

Remarque has been described as a chronicler of the Twentieth Century<sup>1</sup> and in his next two novels he indeed proceeds to focus on the Second World War. Although historically an obvious thematic progression from the exile theme, the development should also be viewed in the light of Remarque's realization that his sister had been executed by the National Socialists in 1943.<sup>2</sup> An essay on *Der Funke Leben* which he produced in 1952-1953 suggests as much. Although narrated in the third person, Remarque speaks of his own authorship:

Es war ein sehr schwieriges Buch zu schreiben, aber der Autor fühlte sich gezwungen, es zu schreiben. Viele seiner Freunde und seine Familie waren Opfer der Nazis, und er wollte seinen Teil dazu beitragen, daß dies nie wieder geschehen könne.<sup>3</sup>

It is possible that Remarque felt somewhat contributory to Elfriede's death, as Roland Freisler, acting judge in the case at the People's Court in Berlin, allegedly proclaimed at the trial: 'Ihr Bruder ist uns leider entwischt, Sie aber werden uns nicht entwischen'.<sup>4</sup> *Funke Leben* was nevertheless supposedly intended to be 'weniger eine Anklage [...] als eine Bestätigung des Lebenswillens und ein Triumph des Geistes'.<sup>5</sup>

Remarque was not the only author to take up the theme of the Second World War. The names of Heinrich Böll and Günther Grass automatically spring to mind, as do those of Theodor Plievier, Hans Werner Richter and Hans Helmut Kirst. However, Hermann Lenz also needs mentioning in this context. Similarly to Remarque's *Zeit zu leben*,

Lenz's novel *Neue Zeit* raises the question of a wider guilt, including that of his protagonist who takes refuge in ignorance and passivity.<sup>6</sup>

German reviewers of Remarque's Second World War novels generally criticize the fact that Remarque did not personally experience life in Hitler's Germany.<sup>7</sup> In response, however, Remarque noted 'daß ein Schriftsteller nicht einen Mord begangen haben muß, um einen Mord beschreiben zu können'.<sup>8</sup>

Nevertheless, the Holocaust which forms the backdrop of *Funke Leben* has commonly been described as 'indescribable'. On the basis of this claim, it is justifiable to assume that it would be near impossible for those without first-hand experience of camp imprisonment to produce an accurate account of this. However, it could equally be argued that emotional detachment could prove beneficial when dealing with a sensitive topic such as the Holocaust. *Funke Leben* is therefore one of the few fictional concentration camp novels authored by an outsider.<sup>9</sup> For this reason, and perhaps also due to the literary prejudice lingering around Remarque's name, *Funke Leben* rarely finds its way into studies on holocaust literature. However, as with Bruno Apitz's *Nackt unter Wölfen* – a fictionalized version of an authentic concentration camp story and a novel which is seldom overlooked in studies of holocaust literature – *Funke Leben* is founded on authentic material. 'Es war notwendig, und – leider – existierte material dafür in erdrückenden Massen, – es gab Photographien, Filme, Bücher, Tagebücher und Tausende Zeugen zu interviewen'.<sup>10</sup> Remarque specifically mentions Eugen Kogon's report *Der SS-Staat* as one of his sources of information.<sup>11</sup> Kogon's detailed portrayal of Buchenwald certainly testifies that even the most horrific episodes of Remarque's novel are realistic. Indeed, many of the particularly unpleasant incidents in *Funke Leben* also feature in Kogon's report. Moreover, when comparing *Funke Leben* with the numerous

autobiographical accounts produced by former camp prisoners, there are apparent links in terms of both content and form.<sup>12</sup>

When Remarque nonetheless struggled, first of all, to get this novel published for the German-speaking market, and then found it received with hostility when the book was finally brought out by Kiepenheuer und Witsch, this must be viewed in the light of the German nation's general wish, at the time, to distance itself from its Nazi past.<sup>13</sup> The publication of the novel *Nacht* by Edgar Hilsenrath, also points to this being the case. Depicting life in a Jewish ghetto in the Ukraine, *Nacht* proved too controversial for the German readers and the publishing house, Kindler, decided in 1964 to withdraw the book from the market.<sup>14</sup> With succeeding generations, however, Germany came to acknowledge its past. In fact, *Nacht* was re-published in 1978 and achieved sales figures exceeding one hundred thousand copies. 'Als sei die Zeit erst später reif dafür gewesen.'<sup>15</sup>

Ernestine Schlant proposes in *The Language of Silence* that following the war, the larger part of the German population adopted an illusory self-perception in which they saw themselves as victims. Pointing to the famous study from the 1960s by Alexander and Margarete Mitscherlich, she further notes that this was essentially a psychological defence mechanism which enabled the Germans to deny their own role as collaborators or even as active persecutors during the National Socialist period.<sup>16</sup> With this in mind, it is not surprising that neither *Funke Leben* nor the ensuing novel *Zeit zu leben* in which Remarque again places the responsibility of the atrocities with the German nation, were well received in Germany. As with Remarque's First World War novels, *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* were, as it appears, evaluated on their political implications rather than on their literary merits.

This tendency is illuminated also in the very different receptions which Remarque's 1956 play, *Der letzte Station*, had in East- and West Germany respectively. In the West, the mood of the critics was largely characterized by 'restiveness and grumbling',<sup>17</sup> a reception which was presumably linked to the play's ambiguous presentation of the Red Army as brutal but nonetheless also as liberators. Due to the Cold War, this portrayal was less than welcome in the West. In addition, the play insinuates that guilty individuals, similar to the fictitious SS-Oberscharführer Schmidt, might have evaded prosecution and thus remained part also of post-war German society.<sup>18</sup>

Similarly to Aplitz's *Nackt unter Wölfen*, *Funke Leben* covers the last few months of the war. It commences in March 1945, a fact which is communicated through indirect time indicators such as: 'Guter Bohnenkaffee war selten im Frühjahr 1945' and '[d]er Märznachmittag war milde' (*Funke Leben*, pp. 11, 13). The work concludes shortly after American troops rescue the camp in late April or early May. The novel is mainly set in Mellern Concentration Camp which, although modelled on Buchenwald, remains a fabrication by Remarque.<sup>19</sup>

The nearby town, likewise named Mellern, has commonly been identified as Osnabrück.<sup>20</sup> However, despite many topographical likenesses, the town Mellern is not identical with Remarque's home town. Their geographical differentiation is unambiguously stated in the novel's specific naming of Osnabrück in a news report about an attack by the Allied Forces: 'Dazu die Meldung, daß zwei Flieger über *der Stadt*, die Hälfte der andern über Minden, Osnabrück und Hannover abgeschossen worden seien [my emphasis]' (*Funke Leben*, p. 46). In this report, 'der Stadt' signifies Mellern, and since Osnabrück is named as a separate geographical entity, the two towns cannot be identical. Mellern town is therefore as fictional as the camp at its outskirts. However, by juxtaposing it with real towns, Remarque conveys the approximate

geographical situation of his imaginary town and simultaneously suggests that Mellern town is not unique. The implication is rather that the sentiment of the portrayed population equally characterized that of other German towns at the time.

The avoidance of an authentic setting as background for the plot allows Remarque a much wider flexibility as to the substance of his work, without jeopardizing its credibility. As a matter of fact, it is exactly the fictional nature of the work which enables Remarque to adopt and rearrange selected incidents and facets of the concentration camp everyday from authentic sources. In this manner, the individual elements which together make up the contents of *Funke Leben* cannot be disputed, although it invites the question as to what extent this selectiveness and reshuffling of real events may distort the truth. Remarque addresses this possible subject for criticism in advance in his initially intended introductory statement to *Funke Leben*.<sup>21</sup> He first of all emphasizes that Mellern is a fictitious camp, but he simultaneously defends the validity of the plot by stressing, 'daß es existiert haben könnte'.<sup>22</sup> Thus, although Remarque manipulates the data and thereby arguably bends the truth to a certain extent, his claim is not to deliver an accurate picture of a particular camp, but merely to remain within the framework of realism.

The fictitiousness of *Funke Leben* has another advantage. In relation to the narrative perspective, it frees Remarque from the restrictions which would inevitably have dictated the presentational angle, had the authorial aim been to portray a true-life concentration camp. In such a case, Remarque would necessarily have been limited to the perspective of his source of information.

As in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*, Remarque continues to write from a third-person narrative perspective in *Funke Leben*. However, unprecedented in the two previous works, *Funke Leben* displays confident employment of an omniscient narrator

through whom an array of views is rendered. Therefore, as opposed to autobiographical concentration camp accounts, such as those written by Primo Levi, Wieslaw Kielar and Eugen Kogon, Remarque presents a much wider view of the concentration camp experience. It is thus not solely the prisoners' perspective which is depicted in *Funke Leben*, but also that of members of the SS and that of the civilian population in the nearby town.

The third-person narrator in *Funke Leben* relates with omniscience regularly throughout the work, but locally the viewpoint is characterized by varying degrees of limitation in the form of focalization: Thus, at times the perspective is restricted to a particular *group* of people, such as the inmates, the civilians or the camp staff. Mostly, however, focalization occurs through a number of *individual* characters. Nonetheless, at no point in the novel are any of the characters placed in prolonged and exclusive focus, and the work therefore comes to contain several convincingly portrayed, 'round' characters.<sup>23</sup>

Before elaborating on the topic of the characters of *Funke Leben* and the techniques Remarque utilizes in his presentation of them, the narrator's position and visibility in the work needs consideration. It can, after all, be argued that the third-person narrator is the principal, although non-participating, character in the novel. In both *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* the third-person narrators remain relatively unnoticeable. In the former novel, the factual tone and the recurrent limitation to a purely external perspective have a de-personifying effect on the narrative voice. Likewise, in *Arc de Triomphe*, a multitude of techniques are introduced to draw the attention away from the third-person narrator and to put focus on Ravic instead. Juxtaposed with these two novels, the narrator of *Funke Leben* plays a more prominent

role. The narrative voice does not go unnoticed but regularly displays a firmly subjective stance. This is the case, for instance, when the narrator uses heavy irony.

Beide waren in Baracke 22 gestorben und mittags im Krematorium abgeliefert worden, Buchsbaum allerdings nicht ganz vollständig; drei Finger, siebzehn Zähne und ein Teil des Geschlechtsgliedes hatten gefehlt. Sie waren ihm während seiner *Erziehung* zu einem *brauchbaren Menschen* verlorengegangen. Die Sache mit dem Geschlechtsglied war an den *Kulturabenden* in der SS-Kaserne sehr belacht worden. [...] Einfach, wie alle *großen Einfälle* – eine Einspritzung mit hochprozentiger Salzsäure, *weiter nichts*. Steinbrenner hatte sich damit sofort Achtung unter den Kameraden verschafft [my emphases] (*Funke Leben*, p. 13).

In this excerpt the narrative is not focalized through one of the characters. However, the narrator introduces the kind of euphemisms which are generally associated with National Socialist terminology.<sup>24</sup> However, because these are embedded in blunt and realistic descriptions of the actions which the euphemisms are essentially meant to conceal, the entire passage assumes an ironic and highly critical tone. The effect is twofold. The reader not only realizes the physical and mental terror inflicted on Buchsbaum, but also becomes aware of the degree of incongruity between the neutral and misleading expressions which characterized the Nazi jargon, and the very different realities these words covered.

The above quotation is not the only incident of irony in *Funke Leben*. The technique occurs regularly, and it unambiguously shows an anti-Nazi stand. Cutting irony or sarcasm is, however, found only in the narrator's personal statements. It features neither in dialogue, nor when the narrative reflects the viewpoint of one or more of the characters. Strong irony therefore becomes a trait associated only with the narrator, who subsequently comes to have a distinguishable identity, almost in line with the actual characters of the work. Although this study leans towards a structural approach and thus

largely ignores extra-textual factors, such as Remarque's social and cultural background, and the psychological climate under which his novels were written, the clear biased stance of the narrator in *Funke Leben* also expresses Remarque's own indignation and outrage about the inhumanity which characterized the National Socialist period. The ironic tone likewise characterizes other works about the Holocaust. It can be found, for example, in Wieslaw Kielar's autobiographical work, *Anus Mundi: Five Years in Auschwitz*. In fact, the following excerpt from the work bears considerable resemblance to the above quotation from *Funke Leben*:

The SS men were busy with the prisoners of war, preoccupied with a fraction of the vanquished army, in front of whose survivors they swaggered with their superiority, and whom they maltreated in a sophisticated way, in a way worthy of the knights with the SS insignia, who were bravely fighting in a dangerous sector of the front, the newly set-up, so-called prisoner-of-war labor camp. Within the next few weeks these "brave" SS men achieved such outstanding "success" with the Soviet prisoners of war that they could no longer cope with the incinerating of corpses in the crematorium [...].<sup>25</sup>

Despite the fact that the visibility of the narrator in *Funke Leben* markedly exceeds that of Remarque's previously employed third-person narrators, there are some common properties in their manner of relating. The narrators of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*, for example, both utilize the effects of apparent objectivity. This technique is also used in both *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*. Initially, this claim seems to contradict the assertion, above, that the narrator in *Funke Leben* expresses a clearly biased standpoint. However, a closer examination of the use of objectivity in *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* shows that a neutral tone is applied to serve very different purposes in the latter two novels. It also shows that apparent objectivity locally in *Funke*

*Leben* is not, as could perhaps be expected, irreconcilable with the otherwise clear subjective stance the narrator displays elsewhere in the work.

As proposed in the previous chapter, the factual tone in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* (which governs large parts of the work) assists in camouflaging the presence of a narrator. In that novel, the purpose of the neutral voice is therefore specifically linked to the formal element of narrative perspective. In *Funke Leben* however, matter-of-factness plays a role in the novel's aesthetic impact and its communication of a difficult topic. As mentioned above, the Holocaust is widely deemed to be almost impossible to explain to those who did not experience it firsthand. Nevertheless, the neutral tone locally in *Funke Leben*, particularly in relation to the brutal treatment of the detainees, serves to transcend the alleged limitations of language. In descriptions of the so called indescribable, factuality can indeed be both more memorable and more convincing than extensive use of adjectives, imagery or hyperbole. There is in fact the danger that the subjective tone which generally accompanies the use of these tools could lead to the narrative being interpreted as exaggerated and unrealistic. Comparisons to, for instance, Dante's *Inferno* or to hell do not necessarily convey well – or credibly – the camp experience.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, it can be argued that in the case of the Holocaust, there are no sufficiently horrific pictures with which it can be compared. The impact of the depicted concentration camp experience, when unknown to the reader, may therefore be impeded rather than aided by the use of such imagery. Some authentic concentration camp accounts therefore shun imagery and other subjectivizing narrative tools, and aim instead to deliver a succinct and factual description of events.<sup>27</sup> Paradoxically, the omission of adorning elements can have a particularly poignant effect. In addition to evoking the reader's sympathy with the victims, the coldness of the neutral tone works

aesthetically as well as communicatively, in that it implies an emotional rigidity of both the environment and the persecutors.

As Pascal Nicklas discusses in his article *The Disappearance of the Body: Pain and the Representation of War*, there is no satisfactory language by which it is possible to express, unambiguously, degrees of pain.<sup>28</sup> The same can be said for other sensations, both physical and emotional. However, a sizable proportion of Holocaust accounts revolves around sensations. Hunger, fear and exhaustion, which are all pain in one form or another, are probably the most recurrent sensations depicted in concentration camp material. Yet, Reiter notes in her study on Holocaust literature that torture, with its combination of pain and humiliation, is one aspect central to the concentration camp experience, which is commonly mentioned only in brief or even omitted in autobiographical accounts. She proposes that ‘victims felt ashamed to write of the abuse to which they had been subjected’.<sup>29</sup> However, it is equally likely that these people were lost for words – literally. Perhaps language simply proves inadequate and insufficient when the topic is, not the sensation itself, but its intensity.

In visual media, this void can be overcome by using, for example, a blank screen to represent the feeling of, for instance, all-consuming pain.<sup>30</sup> In literature, on the contrary, where language constitutes the tool of communication, it is more difficult. In *Funke Leben*, when it comes to depicting events where even a factual presentation would not suffice to convey the experience, Remarque adopts a special narrative approach. In one of Mellern’s bunkers, prisoners are confined in solitude, but intermittently these individuals are tortured to varying degrees. A particular method of torture is related in some detail: An inmate, Lübbe, has been chained to the central heating system; feet slightly above the ground. He has consumed only salty foods and beverages for days. The SS-man in charge, Breuer, prepares to continue the assault, when he is interrupted

by the sound of groaning from a neighbouring cell. With this, the perspective switches temporarily to reveal only an audible version of events:

Er [Breuer] [...] schloß die zweite Zelle auf und ging hinein. Man hörte ihn murmeln; dann kamen dumpfe Geräusche wie Tritte; dann Poltern, Klirren, Stoßen, Schieben und plötzlich gellende Schreie, die langsam in Röcheln übergingen. Noch ein paar dumpfe Aufschläge, und Breuer erschien wieder. Sein rechter Stiefel war naß (*Funke Leben*, p. 327).

The impact of this restricted perspective lies in the fact that only the imagination of the reader sets the limits as to what the torture encompasses. As a result, there are no boundaries for the horror which the prisoners may be subjected to. Of course, this does not communicate the actual *level* of pain the victim experiences. Yet, the ‘gellende Schreie’ which gradually give way to a mere ‘röcheln’ indicate, in the most basic language, the suffering of the prisoner. Simultaneously, this limited perspective shows the mental torture which the detainees in the other cells are subjected to. They too have only their imagination from which to form a picture of the treatment their fellow inmates are undergoing, and they will simply have to wait to realize, from personal experience, the nature of the torture methods used by Breuer. The audible perspective not only exemplifies the psychological abuse inflicted on the prisoners; in view of narrative strategies, it also reveals an effective manner of evading both unpleasant descriptions and the proposed limitations of language.

As mentioned above, the fictitiousness of Remarque’s concentration camp novel allows the author to explore the concentration camp experience from different angles: that of the inmates, that of the camp authorities and that of the citizens in the nearby town. Although authentic accounts perhaps create a more profound impression on the reader than a piece of fiction, the latter does have some advantages. By offering insight,

not merely into the minds of the victims, but also into that of the persecutors, the fears and sufferings experienced by the inmates are shown to be justified. The camp staff is proven, through direct observation of their thoughts and beliefs, to be as indoctrinated and as indifferent to the sufferings of their detainees, as the latter would claim. In an authentic account, the reader has no such irrefutable proof, but must judge solely on the perception and interpretation of the author, who tends to be one of the victims.

As has been established, *Funke Leben* does not focus only on one individual or one group, but relates from a multitude of perspectives. As a tool for character development, Remarque uses focalization as well as *erlebte Rede*. The latter is particularly applied prolifically in *Funke Leben*, and despite the fact that the narrator distributes his attention amongst the characters, two of them, the *Obersturmbannführer* Neubauer and the prisoner known merely as 509, form the core of the plot and therefore deserve specific notice. Each in his own way, these two characters occupy significant positions within the camp. As the official head of the concentration camp, Neubauer's status and influence is self-evident. The power of 509, on the other hand, is less definable. It begins to develop when he defies the camp authorities by refusing to volunteer for medical experimentation. Through circumstances he escapes execution and, as a result, becomes a symbol to his fellow prisoners of hope and of successful defiance of the oppressive system.<sup>31</sup>

Although they are both powerful figures within the camp, Neubauer and 509 constitute opposites. Since they play equally central roles in the novel, the extreme contrast between their lives, their beliefs and their general characteristics create an aesthetic balance, not dissimilar to that of Joan and Haake in *Arc de Triomphe*.

Neubauer's character resembles perhaps too well the standard caricature of a Nazi and this is indeed a point on which *Funke Leben* has received some criticism.<sup>32</sup> He is an

uneducated man, whose social status has risen enormously under National Socialist rule, and who as a result will defend it zealously. He deludes himself into believing that his actions of exploitation and cruelty are justifiable, because they are not in breach with the attitude of the regime, and when his carefully repressed conscience occasionally stirs, he shuns all responsibility by hiding behind excuses and empty rhetoric. The recurrent tension between Neubauer and his conscience, displayed to the reader in the form of *erlebte Rede*, gives his character both depth and credibility. Thus, although he does indeed embody the archetypical Nazi, the actual *manner* of depiction through *erlebte Rede* and focalization is effective. Moreover, to Remarque's defence the characteristics of the novel's other Nazis differ from those of Neubauer.

Despite considerable focus on Neubauer, the central character in *Funke Leben* is that of the prisoner known as 509. There appears to be no particular meaning attached to exactly this number, and its significance should thus be sought in its arbitrariness. The main quality of the number 509 is precisely that it is *not* striking. There is nothing extraordinary about this particular inmate, and that the novel could equally have focussed on any other prisoner.<sup>33</sup> In line with Remarque's work in general, the protagonist of *Funke Leben* therefore functions as a representative figure of a much wider group of victims; a role which is conveyed, for instance, through the impersonal reference to this character purely by his inconspicuous prisoner number.<sup>34</sup>

The reading process would presumably become somewhat confusing if a considerable number of characters was identified and distinguished only by numbers. In fact, aside from 509 and the brief appearance of inmate number 7105, the other prisoners in *Funke Leben* are all (nick-)named. When 509, however, is mentioned only by number, this is partly due to his representative role, but it also serves to convey the non-human state to which this character has degenerated as a result of the conditions in the camp. It might

indeed be for the same purpose that the blurb of Kielar's Auschwitz novel bears the headline: 'Prisoner 290'.<sup>35</sup> Kielar further explains on the matter:

After we had been divided into small groups, we were led into the basement where all our personal belongings were taken away; this included the removal of hair from every part of our body, followed by a bath in ice-cold water. We were handed a cardboard tab with a number which was to replace our names from now on. My number was 290, Romek Trojanowski's 44, and Edek Galinski's 537. Thus, in a perfectly simple manner, we became numbers.<sup>36</sup>

The impersonal reference is but one of the techniques which Remarque utilizes to convey 509's poor physical and mental condition. The novel's opening paragraph displays a number of other methods used to communicate unambiguously his deterioration:

Das Skelett 509 hob langsam den Schädel und öffnete die Augen. *Es* wußte nicht, ob *es* ohnmächtig gewesen war oder nur geschlafen hatte. Zwischen dem einen und dem andern bestand auch kaum noch ein Unterschied; Hunger und Erschöpfung hatten seit langem dafür gesorgt. Beides war jedesmal ein Versinken in moorige Tiefen, aus denen es kein Auftauchen mehr zu geben schien. 509 lag eine Weile still und horchte. Das war eine alte Lagerregel; *man* wußte nie, von welcher Seite Gefahr drohte, und solange *man* sich unbeweglich hielt, hatte *man* immer die Chance, übersehen oder für tot gehalten zu werden – ein einfaches Gesetz der Natur, das jeder Käfer kennt [my emphases] (*Funke Leben*, p. 11).

The entire passage presents 509 as existing in an unnatural sphere between life and death. He is depicted not as a human being, but as a ghostly creature posing in the form of a skeleton.<sup>37</sup> He is not named, but is referred to simply by number. In addition, vocabulary is used which is generally associated with death. When raising his head

from the ground, the word ‘Schädel’ is used rather than the more obvious option of ‘Kopf’. The ethereal image is supported by a careful use of personal pronouns. The second sentence thus reads: ‘*Es* wußte nicht, ob *es* unmächtig gewesen war [...] [my emphases]’. Although ‘es’ is grammatically the correct pronoun for the noun ‘das Skelett’, it endorses the impression of 509 being non-human. Richard Kirn also points to this aspect in his review from 1952: ‘Man ist nur noch “es”, kein Mensch mehr oder doch nur der Schatten eines Menschen’.<sup>38</sup> In the latter half of the same passage the impersonal and generalizing pronoun ‘man’ is used. As a result, no specific confirmation of 509’s human identity (or gender) is given. Naturally, the direct reference to the setting as a ‘Lager’ aids the reader in turning the initially abhorrent picture of a skeletal creature into an image of a pitiable, emaciated human being. 509 is however only really humanized in the novel’s second paragraph in which his character is finally referred to as ‘er’.

The opening paragraph hence depicts the camp as a place of hunger, despair, dehumanization and death. Although a mere vernacular term of phrase, 509 pinpoints his own and the other prisoners’ low status by figuratively parallelizing prisoners and bugs: ‘[E]in einfaches Gesetz der Natur, das jeder *Käfer* kennt [my emphasis]’. In expressing his situation as a law of nature, 509 reveals his resignation to the situation. In fact, at the beginning of the novel, 509 is not dissimilar to the so-called *Muslimänner* or Mussulmen in the camp: He is physically and psychologically exhausted and is essentially waiting to die.

Was außerhalb des Stacheldrahtes geschah, ging ihn nichts an. [...] Er lag in der Bodensenkung *wie in einem Grab* [...]. [E]r würde hier liegenbleiben und sterben, endlich übermannt von der letzten Schwäche, gegen die er so lange gekämpft hatte. Er versuchte sich zu wehren, aber es half wenig; er spürte es nur noch stärker, ein

sonderbar ergebenes *Warten*, das sich in ihm ausbreitete, in ihm und über ihn hinaus, als *warte* plötzlich alles – *warte* die Stadt, als *warte* die Luft, als *warte* selbst das Licht. Es war wie bei einer beginnenden Sonnenfinsternis, wenn die Farben schon den Hauch von Blei haben und die ferne Ahnung einer sonnenlosen, toten Welt – ein Vakuum, ein *Warten* ohne Atem, ob der Tod noch einmal vorübergehen würde oder nicht [my emphases] (*Funke Leben*, 16).

The simile ‘wie in einem Grab’ confirms the extent of 509’s resignation.

Simultaneously, time is brought almost to a halt through the reiteration of both the verb- and noun-form of ‘warten’. 509 is waiting and so is the reader. In terms of literary effect, the stagnated pace builds up anticipation that something significant is about to occur. This turn of events is constituted by an air raid on Mellern town, which proves to have a vital impact on 509 in that he regains his will to live. His switch from lethargic acceptance to wishing to persevere is mirrored in a change in the vocabulary. The above passage thus repeatedly points to the *passive* state of waiting by reiterating the different forms of the word ‘warten’. The bombing of the town, however, prompts physical and mental activity in 509. This is conveyed, for instance, through the repetition of the *active* word of ‘Ruck’. Moreover, Remarque applies it in both its literal and figurative sense, and thereby adds an aesthetically pleasing detail to the passage:

Er war plötzlich ganz wach. Die Todesmüdigkeit war wie Rauch in einem Wirbelwind verfliegen. Jeder *Ruck* aus dem Boden wurde zu einem *Ruck* in seinem Gehirn. Eine Zeitlang lag er noch still – dann, fast ohne zu merken, was er tat, schob er behutsam eine Hand vorwärts und hob den Mantel von seinem Gesicht so weit hoch, daß er darunter hinweg zur Stadt hinabspähen konnte (*Funke Leben*, p. 17). [...] Da lag die Stadt und brannte. Da waren Qualm und Zerstörung, und es ging ihn doch etwas an. [...] Er wollte nicht sterben! Jetzt nicht! Jetzt nicht mehr [my emphases]! (*Funke Leben*, p. 21).

Hope has been rekindled. The incipient reawakening of 509's defiance and will to live is illustrated also by a switch in the proportions of dialogue and narrative in the first few chapters. At the opening of the novel, 509 shows only indifference towards his surroundings. He is lying on the ground outside one of the prisoner blocks. Chapter one stresses his state of resignation and isolation both physically and mentally, by being entirely devoid of dialogue. However, following the bombing, chapter two sees 509 returning to the prisoners' living quarters where he, confused but also excited about the attack, initiates conversation with the other inmates. Although 509's initial state of resignation and detachment is the product of ten years imprisonment, it also functions as a means of self-protection. All his energy is directed at survival, and unnecessary emotions have to be resisted as they could prove fatally draining. Only half way through the novel, when German defeat is no longer questionable even to the inmates, 509 finally permits himself to voice his real name and thereby to abandon an important part of the protective shell which his withdrawn state has constituted.

Sogar seinen Namen hatte er nicht mehr hören wollen. Er war kein Mensch mehr gewesen, und er hatte es nicht mehr sein wollen; es hätte ihn zerbrochen. Er war eine Nummer geworden und hatte sich nur noch als Nummer genannt und nennen lassen. [...] Neben der Tür hockte jemand. "509!" flüsterte er. Es war Rosen. 509 schrak auf, als erwache er aus einem endlosen, schweren Traum. Er blickte hinunter. "Ich heiÙe Koller", sagte er abwesend. "Friedrich Koller" (*Funke Leben*, p. 207).

This self-acknowledgement of his true identity marks an important stage in the psychological development of 509. It shows how the initial spark of hope which the air raid of Mellern town produced has flared up and produced will to live. It is this decisive will, which the title *Der Funke Leben* refers to.

The title signifies the inner strength which enables life and humanness to persevere in the individual; even when this person exists under inconceivable circumstances. It is this ‘Funke’ which comes to distinguish 509 from the Mussulmen of the concentration camp.<sup>39</sup> ‘[Die Musilmänner] bewegten sich wie Automaten und hatten keinen eigenen Willen mehr; alles war in ihnen *ausgelöscht* [...] [my emphasis]’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 65). The verb ‘auslöschen’ is especially apposite in context of the novel title. The hope of the Mussulmen has in figurative terms been extinguished like flames, and they no longer possess the spark of life.

In many of Remarque’s novels, the title (or the concept it deals with) reappears in more or less disguised form in the course of the work. In *Im Westen*, for example, the expression ‘nichts Neues’ is alluded to on several occasions. *Der Weg* and *Arc de Triomphe* likewise have obvious ties between their titles and narratives. These works therefore exemplify the careful consideration which Remarque pays to creating such ties. In *Funke Leben* too, the word ‘Funke’ features on a number of occasions;<sup>40</sup> generally referring to that ‘spark’ of hope and will to survive which distinguishes for instance 509 from the *Musilmänner*.<sup>41</sup>

In this context, one particular episode warrants attention as it applies the noun ‘der Funke’ literally and metaphorically. One of the inmates, Lohmann, is dying. He has extracted his only gold tooth, to avoid it falling into the hands of the Nazis. During the night, 509 and another prisoner, Berger, strike one of their few matches to examine the tooth and the extraction wound:

[509] fühlte die Hitze der Flamme an seinen Fingern, aber er hielt sie, bis er nicht mehr konnte. Er hörte Berger zurückkommen. Dann war die Dunkelheit plötzlich da, als sei er blind geworden. “Hast du noch ein Streichholz?” fragte er den Mann im mittleren Bett. “Hier.” Der Mann gab ihm eins. “Das letzte.” Das letzte, dachte 509.

Fünfzehn Sekunden für die fünfundvierzig Jahre, die noch Lohmann hießen. Die letzten. Der kleine flackernde Kreis. [...] Die Flamme sengte seine Finger. Ein Schatten von der Seite schlug nach seinem Arm. Das Licht erlosch. "Gute Nacht, Lohmann", sagte 509. [...] Lohmann erwiderte nichts mehr (*Funke Leben*, pp. 61-62).

The distinctive parallel between the tiny flame of the match and the life of Lohmann adds aesthetic weight to the passage. As if bound together, Lohmann dies as the match extinguishes. The flame from the match – small against the darkness of the night – serves as a symbol of each of the prisoners in the camp. Living in the dark era of German history, each individual 'flame' or 'spark of life' is threatened and stands insignificantly against the wider background of the regime.

Considering the novel's setting, it is not surprising that the themes of death and humiliation dominate the work. In the concentration camps of the Third Reich, the Nazis' attempt to dehumanize the prisoners worked at two levels. It partly functioned to crush the spirits of the inmates, but it also served to alleviate any doubts the camp staff experienced in regards to the morality of their own and the regime's activities. Both of these effects of dehumanization are demonstrated in *Funke Leben*.

The prisoners' alienation from their human identity is expressed directly: 'Die Häftlinge standen nackt da; *jeder einzelne* war ein Mensch; aber das hatten sie schon fast vergessen [my emphasis]' (*Funke Leben*, p. 161). The statement 'jeder einzelne war ein Mensch' is characteristically Remarquean. It might equally have read: 'Sie waren alle Menschen'. The meaning would not have been vastly different. Yet, Remarque's specific reference to the individual holds an added implication which pinpoints the core of his general narrative strategies. Even in a depiction of a *group* of prisoners, Remarque focuses on a single victim and thereby indirectly reminds the reader that although the prisoners in their numerousness appear as a relatively uniform and

impersonal mass, each one of them is a human being; or, to use 509's phrase: 'ein Stück Mensch' (*Funke Leben*, p. 137).

This concept, however, is foreign to the *Lagerkommandant* Neubauer:

Er [Neubauer] war durch viele Jahre ohne Kritik daran gewöhnt, das, was er selbst glauben wollte, als Tatsache anzusehen. Deshalb erwartete er auch jetzt, daß die Gefangenen ihn so sahen, wie er es wollte: Als einen Mann, der unter schwierigen Umständen sein Bestes für sie tat. Daß sie *Menschen* waren, wußte er [Neubauer] längst nicht mehr [my emphasis] (*Funke Leben*, p. 317).

Whereas the previous quotation spoke of the prisoners in terms of 'jeder einzelne', the narrator now adopts a more detached and impersonal tone. There is no regard for, or mention of, the individual. Instead, the inmates are presented as a group of 'Menschen'. 'Menschen', of course, is what Neubauer does *not* perceive the inmates to be. In his and many of the other Nazis' view they are merely animals. In an attempt to convey the concept of the 'Untermensch', Remarque incorporates animal comparisons in a number of ways. This is most commonly found in the language of the SS and the *Kapos*.<sup>42</sup> Their address of the prisoners consists of cursing, often intermingled with either the words 'Hund' or 'Schwein': 'Laß deine Schweinesprache, Idiot!' (*Funke Leben*, p. 37); 'verdammte Saubande!' (*Funke Leben*, p. 50); 'Lausehund' (*Funke Leben*, p. 92); 'Schweinehund' (*Funke Leben*, p. 155). These examples convey the abuse and dehumanizing treatment to which the prisoners are subjected.

The continuous parallelizing between the inmates and animals is also found in the novel's imagery and, notably, in its similes. There are particularly many comparisons to insects, which again stresses the perceived insignificance of the inmates. Although the imagery is mostly found in passages of straight narrative, this should not be interpreted as the narrator's perception of the prisoners as inferior beings. Describing the detainees

in their striped uniforms as they attempt to carry out orders by the SS to run, jump and crawl, the narrator states: ‘Sie lernten auf diese Weise die Erde des Tanzplatzes schmerzlich genau kennen. Nach kurzer Zeit war der Platz ein Durcheinander von wimmelnden riesigen gestreiften Maden, die wenig Menschliches an sich zu haben schienen’ (*Funke Leben*, pp. 55-56). Despite the fact that the image of a sea of maggots evokes revulsion, the revulsion is not aimed at the suffering prisoners, but is guided towards the camp staff and the brutality of the system aiming to reduce people to pitiful creatures.<sup>43</sup>

Another recurrent animal-image used to describe the inmates is that of a bird or birds. At one level, these comparisons serve to create, in the reader, clear and memorable, inner, visual impressions: ‘Ihre Hände hingen wie Vogelkrallen am Stacheldraht’ (*Funke Leben*, pp. 89-90); ‘Sie krächzten und keuchten und zirpten wie verwundete Vögel’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 157); ‘Auf allen Seiten erhoben sich Häftlinge wie verängstigte Vögel. Die flatterten mit den Armen und taumelten ziellos umher’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 346). In addition, a transport from another camp is described as ‘eine Horde großer, müder Vögel, die nicht mehr fliegen konnten’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 255). These comparisons, however, also function at a symbolic level. The bird is commonly associated with the concept of freedom as is stated, for instance, in the idiom of being ‘free as a bird’.<sup>44</sup> The similes above thus not only induce memorable, mental pictures of emaciated and helpless human beings; by likening them to birds, their loss of autonomy is doubly stressed and somewhat sentimentalized. The aim of the adoption of the bird-imagery is thus also to appeal to the sentiment of the reader.

Indeed, a similar comparison is found in the earlier work of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. Fleeing from National Socialism, a small group of Jews find themselves isolated and helpless in France. They have no knowledge of the language and being incapable of

verbally interacting with their surroundings, they rapidly deteriorate to a seemingly sub-human state. Kern and a fellow exile encounter the Jews outside an administrative office for refugees:

[S]ie wurden aufgehalten durch eine Schar armselige Juden, die wie ein Schwarm zerzauster, hungriger Dohlen sie umkreiste. “Bittäh – helfen . . .” Der Älteste trat vor mit weiten, fallenden, demütigen Bewegungen. “Wir nicht sprechen französisch – hel – fen – bitte Mensch – Mensch . . .” “Mensch – Mensch . . .”, fielen die andern im Chor ein und flatterten mit ihren weiten Ärmeln. “Mensch – Mensch . . .” Es schien fast das einzige Wort Deutsch zu sein, das sie kannten, denn sie wiederholten es ununterbrochen [...] und nur die Älteste fügte hinzu: “. . . auch – Mensch. . .” (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 249).

In *Funke Leben*, a man from a human transport which has temporarily stopped in Mellern but is destined for an extermination camp seeks the help of 509 and his fellow prisoners. His plea is almost identical to that of the Jews, above: ““Verstecken – Mensch – Mensch –” Er wiederholte es immer wieder und stieß sich mit dem Zeigefinger vor die Brust. Es war das einzige Deutsch, das er kannte’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 266). By forcing this anonymous character to verbally confirm his humanness, Remarque emphasizes the fact that every prisoner, even if remaining unnamed, is an individual with a right to life. In the context, Remarque explains in an interview:

When I saw five million died – the figure is a blank. Five million deaths does [sic] not equal one death. Five thousand dead in a concentration camp – there is that same difficulty. The figure is blank. But if I say five died, then perhaps. And if I say one died – a man I have made you know and understand – he lived so, this is what he thought, this is what he hoped, this was his faith, these were his difficulties, these his triumphs and then he – in this manner, on this day, at an hour when it rained and the room was stuffy – was killed, after torture, then perhaps I have told you something that you should know about the Nazis.<sup>45</sup>

In *Funke Leben*, the bird-image recurs also on other occasions and with different symbolic meanings. Following an air raid, Neubauer discovers that the fashion firm which he has bought from a Jewish business man for a fraction of its value has been severely damaged. As the building combusts, Neubauer hurries to save a roll of fabric from the reach of the flames. However, he desists as further action proves too dangerous: ‘Wütend starrte er auf den Ballen zu seinen Füßen, den er gerettet hatte; es war ein hellblauer Stoff, in den fliegende Vögel gedruckt waren’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 239). The birds on the textile symbolize, in context, the prosperity and carefree existence which Neubauer has enjoyed under Hitler’s rule. However, the regime is crumbling and, subsequently, so is Neubauer’s social status. In anger, Neubauer throws the roll in the fire, and as the blue material with the flying birds perishes, as does the untroubled and comfortable lifestyle which the business and the regime have thus far enabled him to lead.

One further figurative use of the bird-image is found in *Funke Leben*. It revolves around two prisoners, Josef Bucher and Ruth Holland.<sup>46</sup> Conversing through the fence separating the women’s and the men’s camps, they become aware of birdsong. “‘Wo singt sie?’” “‘Drüben. Dort, wo die Bäume stehen.’” Ruth Holland starrte durch den Stacheldraht zu dem hinüber, was drüben war: einer Wiese, Äckern, ein paar Bäumen, einem Bauernhaus mit einem Strohdach und, ferner, auf einem Hügel, einem weißen, niedrigen Hause mit einem Garten’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 200). The bird is outside the confinement of the camp and, together with the surrounding peaceful landscape, represents freedom. Whilst Ruth and Bucher are able to discern the peaceful landscape visually and audibly, the life it reflects is beyond their reach. The song of the bird is therefore ‘sehr süß und unerträglich’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 201). They then discuss what

might become of them should they live to witness the liberation of the camp. Although German defeat has become a certainty, they recognize their own fragility and the fact that they might not endure the final stage of camp existence. The image of the bird is again applied to illustrate this:

Sie sahen den Vogel erst, als er dicht heran war. Sie sahen einen kleinen schwarzen Ball mit Flügeln. Sie sahen ihn vor dem mächtigen Himmel, er flog hoch und kam dann plötzlich herunter, sie sahen ihn, und sie wollten beide etwas tun und taten es nicht, einen Augenblick, gerade bevor er sich dem Boden näherte, war die ganze Silhouette da, der kleine Kopf mit dem gelben Schnabel, die ausgebreiteten Flügel und die runde Brust mit den Melodien, und dann kam das leichte Krackeln und der Funke aus dem elektrisch geladenene Verhau, sehr klein und blaß und tödlich vor dem Sonnenuntergang, und es war nichts mehr da als ein verkohlter Rest mit einem herabhängenden kleinen Fuß auf dem untersten Draht und einem Fetzen Flügel, der den Boden gestreift und den Tod herangeweht hatte (*Funke Leben*, p. 202).

The sudden extinction of the bird and the freedom it represented show, figuratively, the plight of Ruth, Bucher and the other prisoners.

In *Funke Leben*, one of the central leitmotifs – that of a white house – serves to show that the damage and pain inflicted on the prisoners of the concentration camp are not healed with their liberation. Whilst waiting for the Americans to reach Mellern, Bucher and Ruth seek comfort from the sight of a white house in the distance, beyond the confinement of the camp:

Bucher blickte zu dem weißen Haus auf dem Hügel jenseits des Lagers hinüber. Es stand in der schrägen Sonne zwischen den Bäumen und schien unversehrt. [...] “Glaubst du [Ruth] es jetzt endlich?” fragte er. “Du kannst ihre Kanonen hören. Sie kommen jede Stunde näher. Wir kommen heraus.”

Er sah wieder auf das weiße Haus. Es war sein Aberglaube, daß, solange es heil war, alles gut gehen würde. Ruth und er würden am Leben bleiben und gerettet werden (*Funke Leben*, p. 303).

The white house is mentioned several times in the course of the novel. It comes to represent freedom to Ruth and Bucher and it fuels their hopes for the future. The white colour is thus not coincidental, as it signifies goodness and peace. However, following liberation as they leave the camp and approach the house, reality proves to differ from their expectations:

Der Garten blühte; aber als sie an das weiße Haus herankamen, sahen sie, daß hinter ihm eine Bombe eingeschlagen war. Sie hatte den ganzen hinteren Teil zerstört; es war nur die Fassade, die unbeschädigt geblieben war. Sogar die geschnitzte Eingangstür war noch da. Sie öffneten sie; aber sie führte auf einen Schutthaufen. "Es war nie ein Haus. All die Zeit" (*Funke Leben*, p. 371).

The white house has been a mere illusion and, as Taylor suggests, 'perhaps their [Ruth and Bucher's] love would also prove to be an illusion'.<sup>47</sup> Ruth and Bucher admittedly appear to be relatively unscathed: they are alive. Wagener even suggests that *Funke Leben* is one of the rare Remarque novels that offer an 'optimistic ending'.<sup>48</sup> However, National Socialism has severely disrupted and altered their existences. The only 'optimistic' aspect of *Funke Leben* is therefore the actual release of the prisoners. These are drained physically and emotionally, and are at the end of the novel faced with the immense task of rebuilding their lives. Despite Ruth and Bucher's regained freedom, the novel's conclusion can thus hardly be termed 'optimistic'.

In his next novel, *Zeit zu leben*, Remarque continues the theme of The Second World War. However, whereas *Funke Leben* concentrates on the conditions within a

concentration camp, the succeeding work depicts the war as experienced by a young soldier in the *Wehrmacht*, Ernst Graeber. Hence, *Zeit zu leben* shows the war from an angle entirely different from that presented in *Funke Leben*. Yet, although Graeber as a soldier on the Eastern Front plays an active role in the safeguarding of National Socialist rule, the central plot revolves around his gradual alienation from this regime and his re-evaluation of the notion of implication and guilt. Despite the fact that the prisoner 509 and the soldier Graeber represent opposing sides, they are therefore paradoxically both victims of the same regime.

As with *Funke Leben*, *Zeit zu leben* is narrated in the third person. With only few exceptions, the viewpoint is focalized through the protagonist, Ernst Graeber. Remarque appears to have sought inspiration from the narrative strategies he applied in *Arc de Triomphe* in which he likewise presented a single viewpoint from a third-person perspective. As shall be evident from the analysis, below, many of the narrative tools which are utilized in *Arc de Triomphe* to create the impression that the viewpoint is that of Ravic recur in *Zeit zu leben*.

As in the exile novel, the most conspicuous technique is the use of verbs which are linked to the conscious mind or the senses. These include the verbs *sagen*, *denken*, *überlegen*, *erwarten*, *beschließen*, *fühlen* and *spüren*, *sehen*. By applying these verbs in conjunction with Graeber's name, the narrative reads as reflecting his perspective. In the previous chapter it was shown that the perspective of an *entire* passage might be affected if a passage is introduced or intersected by a short sentence incorporating one of the above verbs. In *Zeit zu leben*, it is applied, for example, when a Russian woman suspected of being a partisan is to be executed: 'Graeber sah die Frau an. Sie stand ruhig in ihrem roten Rock vor dem Grabe. Sie war kräftig und jung und gesund und gemacht, Kinder zu gebären [my emphasis]' (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 25). The underlined

statement puts focus on Graeber and his visual sense. The subsequent description of the woman thereby comes to reflect *his* view, rather than that of the third-person narrator.

Despite recurrent use of the narrative tool explained above, there are also descriptive passages in *Zeit zu leben*, in which neither Graeber's consciousness nor his senses are referred to. Instead, the author commences these passages by confirming Graeber's presence at the given location. The following example illustrates this:

*Er ging den Weg durch das Dorf zurück. Man hatte Planken und Bretter über die Wege geworfen, um Verbindungen über den schmelzenden Schnee zu schaffen. Die Planken bewegten sich, während er darüber stapfte, und es war leicht abzurutschen; nichts war mehr fest darunter. Er kam an der Kirche vorbei. Sie war klein und zerschossen, und der Leutnant Reicke lag darin. Die Tür stand offen [my emphases] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 36).*

The underlined statements confirm Graeber's presence. The narrator could essentially have described both the muddy street and the contents of the church, but by placing Graeber at these locations, the entire passage comes to reflect his perspective. The door of the church is thus not closed, as this would make Graeber unable to look inside. Graeber's perspective is furthermore conveyed through use of *erlebte Rede*. The following example shows how a passage from the novel first introduces Graeber's perspective by use of a verb relating to his senses; in this case 'sehen'. Moreover, the narrative then switches to reflect Graeber's *erlebte Rede*; bringing immediateness to the passage: 'Über das Visier *sah* Graeber den Russen. Es war der Alte mit dem Bart und den blauen Augen. Das Visier schnitt das Gesicht entzwei. Graeber senkte es. Er hatte das letztmal jemand dem Unterkiefer weggeschossen. *Die Brust war sichere*' [my emphases] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 27).

As in the case of Ravic in *Arc de Triomphe*, sentence structures have equally been manipulated to simulate the thoughts of Graeber. Grammatically incomplete clauses and sentences cause the narrative to resemble the erratic manner in which thoughts generally occur.

Graeber stapfte den Weg um das Dorf herum. [Hence, the focus is on Graeber and the passage reads as reflecting his perspective]. Der Sommer 1940 in Frankreich. Der Spaziergang nach Paris. Das Geheul der Stukas über einem fassungslosen Land. Straßen, verstopft mit Flüchtigen und einer zerfallenden Armee. Der hohe Juni, Felder, Wälder, der Marsch durch eine unzerstörte Landschaft, und dann die Stadt mit dem silbernen Licht, den Straßen, den Cafés, die sich öffnete ohne einen Schuß. Hatte er damals gedacht? War er beunruhigt gewesen? Nein (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 33).

The lack of predicates is especially effective when simulating thoughts. Detached, individual images are conjured up: the march, the noise, the streets.

Remarque occasionally applies the pluperfect when the perspective would otherwise exceed that of Graeber. On guard duty, Graeber and his comrade Schneider decide to take different routes around the village in which they are encamped. Suddenly Graeber hears shots, but before he can locate Schneider, he encounters another soldier, Steinbrenner. The latter exclaims: “Die Schweine! Sie haben Schneider erwischt. Durch den Kopf!” The narrative voice continues: ‘Es *waren* Partisanen *gewesen*. Sie *hatten* sich im Nebel *herangeschlichen*. Schneiders roter Bart *war* anscheinend ein unfehlbares Ziel *gewesen*. Sie *hatten* wohl *erwartet*, die Kompanie schlafend zu finden [my emphases]’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 57). Graeber has not witnessed Schneider’s killing, but the pluperfect tense transforms the narrative to resemble a short recap presumably of Steinbrenner’s explanation. This ensures that the perspective remains within Graeber’s scope of knowledge. The inclusion of the particles ‘*anscheinend*’ and ‘*wohl*’ indicates

conjecture and therefore further shows that the above explanation of events is seen from Graeber's point-of-view, following his encounter with Steinbrenner.

As stated above, the narrative perspective in *Zeit zu leben* is almost exclusively that of Graeber. However, in the novel's two opening chapters – set on the Eastern Front – the reader gains temporary access to the minds of Steinbrenner and Muecke. Yet, as the work progresses, the attention becomes increasingly focussed on Graeber, and as he returns to Germany for three weeks' holiday, the home front is depicted solely from Graeber's point-of-view.

Initially there appears to be no definite indication as to why Remarque at the beginning of the novel should choose to offer glimpses into the minds of characters other than Graeber. The access to the thoughts of Steinbrenner and Muecke do not significantly aid their characterization to an extent which could not equally have been realized through direct speech or in consistency with Graeber's third-person limited perspective. However, when viewing the introductory section on the front as a whole, a structure emerges. First, a general picture of the front is drawn. Then the view is reduced to a particular group; and finally the attention is concentrated on just Graeber. The focus thereafter remains on this one character, and as the novel progresses, Graeber's centrality to the story becomes such a matter of course, that a number of chapters commence by referring to him not by name, but merely as 'er'.<sup>49</sup>

Thematically, *Zeit zu leben* has obvious links to *Im Westen*, and it has indeed regularly been analyzed in conjunction with this novel. Considering the success of *Im Westen*, in which an element of its appeal is constituted by the immediateness achieved through the present tense and the application of an *Ich-Erzähler*, it is perhaps surprising that Remarque should not make use of a similar voice in *Zeit zu leben*. Antkowiak suggests that whilst Remarque participated in the First World War, he was in America during the

Second World War and therefore only experienced it as an observer. The critic argues that Remarque subsequently opted for the more detached voice of a third-person narrator in *Zeit zu leben*.<sup>50</sup> However, it is equally plausible that Remarque simply did not wish to lend the personally loaded voice of an *Ich-Erzähler* to Graeber who, despite being presented in a sympathetic light, nonetheless collaborates with the National Socialist regime. Moreover, had *Zeit zu leben* been narrated in the first-person, the reader might have identified too strongly with Graeber, and thereby found it difficult to acknowledge and indeed accept his implication and guilt in the crimes depicted. *Im Westen* did not impose such a dilemma, as Bäumer and his comrades were depicted as innocent victims.<sup>51</sup> Graeber is likewise portrayed as a victim of historical circumstances, but he is not depicted as guilt free. The third-person perspective therefore seems an apt choice in *Zeit zu leben*, as it allows both the author and the reader to *sympathize* with Graeber without necessarily *identifying* with him.

Remarque's novels generally reflect a close relationship between content and form. It is partly on the grounds of this tight network of different elements in the novels – the manner in which Remarque creates of each work an aesthetic whole by tying together formal aspects and the content – that this study seeks to refute the classification of Remarque as an author of *Trivalliteratur*. In order to identify the true extent to which Remarque utilizes and unites content and form a short summary of the plot and a note on the work's general structure is necessary.

*Zeit zu leben* can essentially be divided into three sections: The introductory section is set on the Eastern Front. It is here Graeber's doubts first materialize, encouraged by a fellow soldier Ludwig Fresenburg.<sup>52</sup> An almost identical connection rules the relationship between Henry Metelmann and his comrade, Franz, in the autobiographical work by the former about his time in the *Wehrmacht* on the Eastern Front.<sup>53</sup> However,

at this stage, Graeber (like Metelmann) does not yet acknowledge his doubts. Then follows the novel's main section, covering the three-week furlough Graeber spends in his hometown Werden. The misery of the civilian population, the fear which clearly controls the people and the destruction of the country trigger Graeber to question the system which he has thus far supported. Graeber's development is strengthened by his sympathy for Elisabeth and Pohlmann, who both – more or less openly – oppose Hitler's regime. As a result of his gradual alienation from Germany and his own National Socialist identity, Graeber is overcome by a sense of emptiness as his existence proves devoid of purpose or a focal point. The unrelenting air-raids on Werden have erased all signs of his former civilian identity. His parents are missing and the parental home has been reduced to rubble. He consequently attempts to fulfil this gap by marrying Elisabeth, believing that she will provide him with a viable focal point and a reason to persevere.<sup>54</sup> A final short section concludes the novel. It depicts Graeber's return to the battle front and his subsequent death. In the course of this closing part, Graeber acknowledges that the foundation for his marriage was too shaky and his implication in the war and its crimes too great to be overcome. In a conscious action of repentance he shoots the former SS-man Steinbrenner and saves the lives of four Russian prisoners by releasing them. Firda thus speaks rightly of Graeber's 'cathartic quality'.<sup>55</sup> Perhaps ironically, though, it is by the hands of one of these Russians that Graeber is killed.

Viewing the novel as a whole, Graeber is thus initially a *Mitläufer* who chooses to turn a blind eye to the inhumanity of the National Socialist principle, but he gradually acquires a more critical mind and he finally takes an active stand against the regime by killing the committed Nazi, Steinbrenner.<sup>56</sup> This act of repentance is combined with a remark which was promptly censored from the German edition. Having killed

Steinbrenner, Graeber is looking at the body: “‘Mörder’, sagte er [...] und meinte Steinbrenner und sich selbst und unzählige andere’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 398). With *Zeit zu leben*, Remarque therefore accuses not merely the committed Nazis, but also those numerous individuals who essentially opposed the regime but remained passive and compliant.<sup>57</sup>

A number of formal aspects have been used to aid the conveyance of Graeber’s state of mind and gradual transformation. These do not occur in succession, one after the other, but run parallel to one another throughout the novel.

Most striking is perhaps the symmetry between Graeber’s emotional state and his surroundings. It is noted on more than one occasion that Graeber experiences only emptiness: ‘Er spürte wie leer er war. Es war eine Leere ohne Schmerz’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 151); ‘Graeber fühlte nichts als Leere’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 159); ‘Er war völlig entspannt und leer’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 191); ‘Er fühlte sich leer und ausgebrannt’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 232); ‘Er fand nichts; es war nur Leere da’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 373). The recurrent reference to Graeber’s sense of emptiness shows the permanence and intensity with which this mood dominates his mind. However, meaninglessness, emptiness, death and decay also characterize Graeber’s external world.

Graeber’s hometown, Werden, is largely depicted in a ghostly light. The streets are empty and it is quiet. ‘Er sah kaum Leute’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 85); ‘Die Straße war leer’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 161); ‘Dann ging er durch die totenstille Stadt zue Kaserne’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 172); ‘Die Straße war leer’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 179). These images of abandonment are, of course, partly the result of the regular air-raids and the preventive measure of blackening out the town. However, the seemingly deserted environment also serves to illustrate and emphasize Graeber’s loneliness. In fact, at times the external and the internal emptiness are described in conjunction with one another: ‘*Der Schulhof war*

*leer*. Niemand war da [...]. [...] Er [Graeber] roch den beklemmenden Schulgeruch und sah die halbdunkle Treppe und die dunkel gestrichenen Türen, die zur Aula und zu dem Konferenzzimmer führten. Er empfand nichts. [...] *Graeber fühlte nichts als Leere* [my emphases] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 159).

Another method which Remarque utilizes to show the solitary position of Graeber, is that of featuring a considerable number of unnamed characters. As Graeber returns to Germany on leave, the people he encounters both on the journey and in search of his parents are mostly strangers to him. Since the perspective presented is largely consistent with that of Graeber, these characters must thus necessarily remain anonymous. They are therefore identified merely by profession, actions or striking attributes: ‘der Kahlkopf’, ‘der Schlosser’, ‘die Maus’, ‘der Baß’ (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 80-81), ‘ein SS-Mann’, ‘ein Briefträger’, ‘[z]wei Radfahrer’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 182). Indeed, even the familiar faces which Graeber does encounter are merely those of distant acquaintances. Being unable to locate his parents and having lost also his childhood home and thereby all material traces of his past, Graeber therefore essentially finds himself alone, without a civilian identity and without a sense of belonging.

The consistent coincidence between Graeber’s state of mind and his physical surroundings could be perceived as overly rigid and it could be argued that it reduces the aesthetic impact of *Zeit zu leben*. However, such an interpretation would disregard the fact that the perspective rarely deviates from that of Graeber. In fact, if remaining true to this perspective, Graeber’s sense of desolation must necessarily have a certain impact on the presentation of the environment. This is verified when Graeber suddenly notices the people around him in the streets.

Graeber blickte die Leute an, die ihnen [Graeber und Elisabeth] entgegenkamen. Er sah sie plötzlich anders als

früher. Jeder war ein Mensch und hatte ein Schicksal. Es ist leicht, zu verurteilen und tapfer zu sein, wenn man nichts hat, dachte er. *Wenn man aber etwas hatte, änderte sich die Welt* [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 252-53).

Until this point, the desertedness of Graeber's physical surroundings has been stressed time and again. Elisabeth, however, has only shortly before the above quotation accepted Graeber's marriage proposal and thereby given his existence renewed purpose. Indeed, she comes to constitute the 'etwas' which alters Graeber's perception of the world. 'Wenn man aber *etwas* hatte, änderte sich die Welt [my emphasis]' (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 253). The use of the indicative mood shows that Graeber at least *believes* to have acquired renewed will to live. However, it is the sudden change in the presentation of the surroundings – the fact that the streets are no longer deserted – that truly reflects and conveys the inner change Graeber is experiencing.

As stated above, *Zeit zu leben* opens with a general picture of the conditions on the Eastern Front. Whereas all the preceding works commenced with immediate focus on the protagonist, either through a direct introduction by name or through the presence as an *Ich-Erzähler*, the opening pages of *Zeit zu leben* are strangely devoid of people. No specific characters are introduced. Instead focus is placed on the dead. Their prevalence is stressed through a liberal application of vocabulary associated with or alluding to death and putrefaction. These include: 'Leichen', 'unbeerdigt', 'geisterhaft', 'Skelette', 'trockener Tod' and 'schmieriger, stinkender Tod' (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 11). In fact, the nouns 'Tod' and 'Tote' occur ten times, alone or as constituents in longer nouns, on the two opening pages of *Zeit zu leben*.

On these two pages, similes are additionally applied which allow the dead to resume life temporarily:

[D]as Gas hatte die Toten gefüllt, und sie hatten sich geisterhaft im Licht der fremden Sterne gehoben, als kämpften sie noch einmal, schweigend, ohne Hoffnung, jeder für sich allein; – aber schon am nächsten Tage hatten sie begonnen zu schrumpfen, sich der Erde anzuschmiegen, unendlich müde, als wollten sie hineinkriechen [...] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 11)

The living soldiers are in contrast only alluded to through passive sentence structures or through use of the impersonal personal pronoun ‘man’: ‘*Man* begrub sie wie Bretter [my emphasis]’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 12). The differing attention the narrator pays to the living and the dead creates the impression of a world in which the living exist in the shadow of those who have been killed. It is an environment in which death is both active and dominant.

The anonymity of the narrator and the fact that specific characters are only introduced on the novel’s third page would initially suggest that the gloomy picture of the battle front is presented from the perspective of the narrator. However, the very opening sentence offers a clue about the perspective: ‘Der Tod roch anders in Rußland als in Afrika’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 11).

This is clearly a subjective statement by somebody who has experienced death in exactly these two geographical areas. As *Zeit zu leben* progresses it is revealed, on more than one occasion, that Graeber fought on the African continent, before he was transferred to Russia (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 33, 219, 260). It can therefore with reason be presumed that although Graeber’s character is only introduced on the novel’s ninth page, the opening sentence and indeed its succeeding short but dark description of the front is seen from his perspective. The gloomy atmosphere and the descriptions of the environment therefore correlate with Graeber’s frame of mind from the very opening sentence of *Zeit zu leben*.

Aside from its parallelization with the presentation of the surroundings, Graeber's mental state is illustrated also through other narrative techniques. Two leitmotifs merit particular attention.<sup>58</sup>

The first leitmotif which plays a role in conveying Graeber's emotions is that of a mirror. On more than one occasion, Graeber's reaction to his own reflection is described. Analogously to the aesthetic parallel between Graeber and his surroundings, his reflection too alters according to his mental state. Revisiting the rubble of his childhood home, Graeber discovers that another family has already taken shelter in its ruins. The last traces of Graeber's civilian identity are thereby conclusively obliterated. The loss and rootlessness he subsequently experiences are not verbalized, but communicated indirectly through, for instance, his perception of his own reflection in a mirror which has been placed in a window display:

Es war sonderbar – als sähe er einen Doppelgänger und wäre schon nicht mehr er selbst, sondern nur noch eine Erinnerung, die weggewischt werden könnte, wenn er noch einen Schritt weiterginge. [...] Er sah seine Augenhöhlen und darunter die Schatten, die die Augen verdeckten, als habe er keine mehr und wäre schon ein Totenkopf. [...] Er sah sein Bild noch im Spiegel, aber ihm war, als müsse es gleich undeutlich werden, wellenförmig, als müßten die Ränder zerfließen und sich auflösen, aufgesogen von den schweigenden Pumpen, zurückgezogen aus dem Begrenzten und der zufälligen Form, die für kurze Zeit Ernst Graeber hieß, zurück in das Grenzenlose, das nicht nur Tod war, sondern entsetzlich viel mehr, Auslöschung, Auflösung, Ende des Ich, Wirbel sinnloser Atome, Nichts. [...] Was blieb, wenn er nicht mehr da war? (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 226-27).

In answer to this question, Graeber shortly after proposes to Elisabeth. He thereby hopes to preserve at least the memory of his person, should he be killed in the war. Her acceptance evokes in Graeber a renewed sense of youthfulness and hunger for life.

Having changed to civilian clothing and studying the result in a mirror, Graeber thus no longer sees a transparent and easily extinguishable figure:

Er betrachtete sich im Spiegel und *erkannte sich kaum wieder*. Ein unfertiger, halb ausgebackener, junger Mensch sah ihn dort verwundert an – jemand, den er nicht ernst genommen hätte, wäre er ihm draußen begegnet [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 238).

Graeber can barely identify with the person in the reflection. He has become estranged from civilian life and from the carefree attitude of youth. As a result, the fresh image in the mirror seems irreconcilable with the psychologically drained Graeber. Nonetheless, despite his exhaustion, Graeber sincerely attempts to regain the energy and will to persevere, by marrying Elisabeth.

The last few days prior to Graeber's departure for the front, the newly wed couple lodges in a guesthouse which, although being situated in a heavily bombed part of town, stands miraculously untouched. The room they rent contains amongst other fittings a mirror. 'Er [Graeber] blickte auf [...] das wehende Silber und Grau im Spiegel, und ihm war, als stände ein Geheimnis sehr dicht dahinter und müsse sich im nächsten Augenblick entschleiern' (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 350-51). The secret path back to his youth nonetheless remains hidden from Graeber; instead the mirror discloses only the extent of his ruin. 'Er sah, während er zum Bett ging, sein Gesicht in dem grauen und silbernen Spiegel. *Er erkannte es nicht. Es war das Gesicht eines anderen* [my emphasis]' (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 352). At the earlier occasion when Graeber studied his reflection in the mirror, he was said to *barely* recognize himself.<sup>59</sup> He was, however, not entirely estranged from the youthful image in the mirror, and thus still held the conviction that he could successfully create an anchor (Elisabeth) to keep him fixed during the physical and psychological turbulence of the war. However, immediately after the wedding

ceremony Graeber does not experience the sense of security he had anticipated : ‘Ich müßte eigentlich sehr glücklich sein, dachte er; aber er fühlte es nicht so, wie er es erwartet hatte’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 275). Outwardly, Graeber nonetheless appears to be enjoying the remaining time with Elisabeth; but the contentedness he displays is artificial. The night prior to leaving for the front, Graeber again sees his own reflection in the mirror. He is, however, met only by the gaze of a stranger. In this episode the mirror not only forms part of one of the novel’s central leitmotifs, it also plays a symbolic role and alludes to the illusory aspect of a mirror reflection. The stranger in the mirror is thus a deceptive image of the real Graeber. This, however, also means that the existence which is mirrored – the marriage and the security and happiness it signifies – is an illusion too. As Graeber returns to the front, the memory of his transitory relationship to Elisabeth proves insufficient in providing him hope for the future: ‘Er hatte eine Lampe aufstellen wollen, um zurückzufinden; aber er hatte sie aufgestellt, bevor das Haus gebaut war. [...] Drüben hatte er das nicht gewußt. Er war dem Licht gefolgt und hatte nicht gefragt und hatte glauben wollen, es sei genug, ihm zu folgen. Es war nicht genug’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 387).

The connection which has been shown to exist between Graeber and his surroundings is supplemented with the mirror-leitmotif to depict the emotions he undergoes in the *Heimat*. As shown above, Graeber’s varying perceptions of his appearance inform the reader, indirectly, about his state of mind at these given moments in time. Aside from its aesthetic function, the mirror-leitmotiv therefore serves to express Graeber’s emotions, without actually verbalizing them. Thus, although staying within the scope of Graeber’s perspective, the mirror-images convey information which exceeds the knowledge of his character. When on his final day in Werden Graeber does not recognize his own mirror-reflection, the reader is therefore indirectly notified that Graeber has not succeeded in

creating a durable link to civilian life. At this point, however, Graeber still nurtures his self-delusion:

Er dachte über das nach, was sie über ein Kind gesagt hatte. Es war gewesen, als würde plötzlich eine Wand durchbrochen. Eine Öffnung erschien, und dahinter schwankte ungewiß wie ein Garten ein Stück Zukunft. [...] Wie endlos das wurde, wenn man es weiterverfolgte, und wie sonderbar es war, zu fühlen, daß das Leben über die Wand, vor der es bisher aufgehört hatte, weitergehen könnte und daß das, was er bisher fast wie einen hastigen Raub betrachtet hatte, noch einmal ruhiger Besitz werden könnte, weiterzugeben an fremdes, ungeborenes Dasein in eine Ferne, die kein Ende hatte und voll von einer Zärtlichkeit war, die er nie gekannt hatte (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 358).

Viewed in the context of the novel as a whole, Graeber's emotional development is initiated by a period during which he starts expressing doubts about the National Socialist regime and its actions. These doubts are intensified as he returns to Germany and realizes the extent to which Nazism has destroyed his country and his life. Through conversation with a former teacher, Pohlmann, and through his relationship with Elisabeth, Graeber not only comes to accept his own implication in the crimes of the regime, he also recognizes the possibility of building a new life in which he can attempt to atone his actions.

The second leitmotiv which equates with these different stages in Graeber's inner development is more intricate than that of the mirror. It consists in itself of a parallelization of the image of a human hand reaching upwards in a pleading gesture, and that of a tree stretching its branches towards the light. In addition to the obvious visual similarity between these two images, the hand and the tree are connected through their common link to the concept of survival.

The leitmotif is already introduced on the opening pages of the novel. The body of a dead soldier gradually comes to sight as the snow around him melts: ‘Zuerst sah man nur einen grauen Flecken im welkenden Weiß. Eine Stunde später war es eine Hand, die sich verkrampt emporreckte’ (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 12-13). The plea of the stretched out hand also characterizes Graeber’s emotional state at this point in the novel. Indeed, turmoil continues to reign Graeber’s inner world, as he returns to Germany on leave. This is depicted indirectly through an image of scorched trees: ‘Verkohlte Bäume standen auf einer Seite. Die Zweige und die kleineren Äste waren verbrannt, die Stümpfe und ein paar Hauptäste ragten noch auf. Sie sahen aus wie riesige schwarze Hände, die sich aus der Erde zum Himmel reckten [my emphasis]’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 86). The simile in the latter sentence is reminiscent of the frozen soldier’s hand depicted at the opening of the novel. The plea he appeared to be gesturing is thereby echoed in the image of the scorched tree. This tree not only serves to illustrate the physical destruction of the town, but also to convey the helplessness and despair which Graeber experiences as he finds his civilian past obliterated.

The tree-and-hand leitmotiv is used again following Graeber’s initial conversation with his former teacher, Pohlmann. It is worth noting that this dialogue constitutes one of the key episodes in the novel, and features Graeber’s important question: ‘Wann wird zu Mord, was man sonst Heldentum nennt?’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 188). Pohlmann offers no conclusive solution to Graeber’s dilemma, but their conversation does bring the younger man a sensation of closure. His thoughts unequivocally convey this:

Ihm war zumute wie jemand, der nach einer langen, ungewissen Gerichtsverhandlung endlich ein Urteil bekommen hat und dem es fast gleichgültig ist, ob es ein Freispruch ist oder nicht. [...] Er war völlig entspannt und leer und hätte nicht sagen können, ob er trostlos war oder

nicht. Er wollte nur plötzlich nicht mehr denken. Es war nichts mehr zu denken (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 190-91).

It is, however, Graeber's acknowledgement of a large limetree and the positive light in which he perceives it that truly shows his altered frame of mind.

Er sah eine große Linde, die vor einem eingestürzten Hause stand. Sie war unbeschädigt und reckte ihren Stamm mit den Ästen aus der Erde *wie eine ungeheure, weit offene Hand*, die sich, mit Grün überflogen, dem Licht und den hellen Wolken entgegenstreckte [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 191).

In this passage, the limetree symbolizes what might be termed the 'new Graeber'. The collapsed house, on the contrary, signifies his former self: Graeber, the soldier and defender of National Socialism. The fact that the tree is undamaged, green and reaches for life indicates Graeber's restored hope for the future. Indeed, shortly after, when dining with Elisabeth, the leitmotiv appears again and this time, in the form of a simile, Graeber explicitly juxtaposes his own character with the tree:

Der Nachmittag war weit weg. Geblieben war nur der Widerschein des Augenblicks, als das Leben ihm plötzlich sehr nahe war und mit Bäumen aus Pflastersteinen und Ruinen zu brechen schien, um mit grünen Händen nach dem Licht zu greifen. Zwei Wochen, dachte er. Zwei Wochen Leben noch. *Ich sollte es greifen wie die Linde das Licht* [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 192).<sup>60</sup>

On returning to the front, however, he realizes that the memory of Elisabeth is too weak to preserve his hope for the future. Remarque again applies the hand/ tree leitmotiv to communicate this:

Graeber sah vor sich, im Flackern der Explosionen, einen Helm mit weißen Augen darunter, ein aufgerissenes Mundloch, und dahinter, *wie einen knorrigen, lebendigen Ast*, einen Arm, der ausholte – er schoß hinein, riß dem Rekruten neben sich eine Handgranate weg, mit der er nicht fertig wurde, und warf sie hinterher. Sie explodierte [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 377).

The passage is introduced with the words ‘Graeber sah’, so the perspective is that of Graeber. The visual likeness between the arm of an enemy soldier and the branch of a tree is therefore established by him. In the *Heimat*, the limetree had represented, to Graeber, life and the prospects of a righteous existence. Throwing a hand grenade at the enemy soldier with the arm stretched out like a branch, Graeber thus not only causes the destruction of another human being, but also sees his own hopes being obliterated.

The emptiness and loneliness which dominate the atmosphere of *Zeit zu leben* form an interesting contrast to *Funke Leben*. Both novels essentially depict the same war in similar, provincial towns, and both have a concentration camp nearby. The towns are not strictly identical: 509’s camp is situated at the outskirts of Mellern, whereas Graeber’s home town bears the name Werden. Nonetheless, as proposed in the analysis of *Funke Leben*, the actual identity of the town is of little import. It is its quality as a representative of any German town and the portrayal of the attitude of the German population during the Second World War which are significant. Yet, despite being set in similar geographical locations during the same historical period, the perspectives from which the two novels are related differ considerably. *Funke Leben* observes the war predominantly from within the confinement of the camp. The excessive overcrowding of prisoners and their physical restriction therefore give the novel a claustrophobic feeling which extends to affect the reader. *Zeit zu leben*, on the contrary, shows the war from the viewpoint of a soldier in the *Wehrmacht*. He gradually comes to experience both alienation and emptiness, emotions which, for aesthetic and amplifying purposes,

are paralleled in Graeber's physical environment. Fear inhibits honest interaction between Graeber and his comrades on the front, and the same problem characterizes his contact with the population in the *Heimat*. In Werden there is no trace of Graeber's parents and his parental home is in ruins. The seclusion and loneliness Graeber as a result experiences give *Zeit zu leben* an air of emptiness and vastness, which sharply contrasts to the claustrophobic atmosphere of the preceding work.<sup>61</sup>

The narrative strategies discussed thus far in relation to *Zeit zu leben* have largely revolved around Graeber and the manner in which his perspective and character are conveyed. The novel is, however, also rich on local details which add texture, and enhance the overall understanding and reading experience of *Zeit zu leben*.

On a number of occasions Remarque uses, for example, vocabulary or expressions which hold both a literal and a figurative meaning. Juxtaposing these two meanings, often within the same sentence, Remarque not only stresses the duality of the word or expression in question, but simultaneously creates an aesthetically pleasing effect.

Sitting on a bench at the outskirts of Werden one evening, Graeber and Elisabeth look at the blacked out town:

“Wie Schwarz das ist”, sagte sie und deutete auf die Stadt. [...] “Sieh nicht hin. *Dreh dich um*. Da ist es anders.” Die Bank stand gerade auf der Kuppe der Anhöhe, und der Hügel senkte sich nach der anderen Seite langsam hinab – zu Feldern, mondbeschienenen Wegen, Pappelalleen, einem Dorfkirchturm, und dann zu Wald und zu den blauen Bergen am Horizont. “Da ist aller Frieden der Welt”, sagte Graeber. “Einfach, was?” “Einfach, wenn man das kann – *sich umdrehen* und nicht mehr an das andere denken.” “Das lernt man bald [my emphases]” (*Zeit zu leben*, pp. 151-52).

Initially, ‘umdrehen’ is referring to the physical action of turning around. In the latter instance, however, the word has taken on the figurative (metaphorical) meaning of

‘turning a blind eye’. This becomes particularly clear from Graeber’s subsequent response: ‘Das lernt man bald’.

A related technique, chiasmus, is used when towards the end of the novel Graeber has to return to the front. Wishing to avoid a prolonged farewell, he leaves Elisabeth at the guest house and sets off alone for the train station: ‘Er sah sich nicht um. Er ging nicht zu langsam und nicht zu schnell. Der Tornister war schwer, und die Straße war sehr lang. Als er *um die Ecke bog*, *bog er um viele Ecken*’ [my emphases] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 360). The repeated element (um die Ecke biegen) is applied firstly in its literal and then in its figurative sense. As Graeber turns at the street corner, he physically distances himself from Elisabeth and the life she represents. However, the physical departure creates in Graeber also a strong sensation of emotional distance; expressed metaphorically as ‘turning many corners’.<sup>62</sup>

Another narrative tool which Remarque applies locally in *Zeit zu leben* is that of reiteration. Following an air raid, for example, extensive use of vocabulary associated with fire serves to convey the extent of the conflagration:

Die Stadt stank nach *Brand* und Tod und war voll von *Feuern*. [...] [E]s gab *Feuer*, die fast zärtlich an stehengebliebenen Häuserfronten emporwehten, dicht, scheu, die vorsichtig umarmend, und andere, die mit Gewalt aus Fensterhöhlen schossen. Es gab *Feuersbrünste* und *Feuerwände* und *Feuerstürme*, es gab *feurige* Tote, und es gab *feurige* Verletzte, die schreiend aus den Häusern brachen [...]. “Die *Fackeln*”, sagte jemand, der neben Graeber stand. “Man kann sie nicht retten. Sie *verbrennen* lebendig. Das verfluchte Zeug aus den *Brandbomben* bespritzt sie und *brennt* durch alles, Haut, Fleisch oder Knochen [my emphases]” (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 288).

As Graeber inspects the casualties, Remarque again adorns the narrative. Two sets of alliterations, consisting of ‘aus-’ and ‘zer-’, follow in succession of one another. The

latter is particularly apposite in the given context, as the prefix ‘zer-’ implies a negative development or destruction, and the force with which it is taking place:

Wie ein Schlachthof, dachte er [Graeber]. Nein, nicht ein Schlachthof; ein Schlachthof war ordentlicher, die Tiere waren nach Regeln zerschnitten, *ausgeblutet* und *ausgenommen*. Hier waren sie *zerfetzt*, *zermalmt*, *zerrissen*, *versengt* und *gebraten* [my emphases] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 289).

The connection between the names and qualities of many of Remarque’s characters has already been noted. In *Zeit zu leben*, Remarque again makes use of this strategy. The name of the protagonist, Ernst Graeber, for example, consists of two elements which both correlate with the sadness and emotional decline of this character: The first name can be read as the German adjective ‘ernst’, and there is an obvious phonetic relationship between the surname Graeber and the plural of the noun ‘Grab’ (i.e. ‘Gräber’). The full name of the protagonist thus implies a gloominess which proves descriptive of both Graeber’s character and the general atmosphere of the novel.

One of the peripheral characters, who does not even feature in person but appears only in the memories of Graeber, is that of his former school headmaster. ‘Schimmel, der Direktor, hatte glühende Reden vor ihr gehalten über Rache, Großdeutschland und die kommende Vergeltung. Schimmel hatte einen dicken, weichen Bauch gehabt und immer sehr geschwitzt’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 160). There is an obvious parallel between Graeber’s headmaster in *Zeit zu leben* and Bäumer’s former teacher, Kantorek, in *Im Westen*. However, whereas the name of the latter is neutral, ‘Schimmel’ implies outdatedness and decay. It is furthermore indicative of the obsolete values of this character and the heinous ideology he represents. Returning for a moment to *Funke Leben*, a similar play on words in relation to character names is likewise to be found in

that novel. A particular unpleasant *Kapo* named Strohschneider addresses some emaciated prisoners as ‘Heuschrecken’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 83). The connection is inconspicuous, but exemplifies Remarque’s attention to detail.

Reiterations, tropes and play on words exercise their effect by being registered by the reader. There are, however, also narrative tools which function at a more subconscious level. Arriving in his home town and seeing the scars of the air raids on buildings and streets, Graeber is gripped by fear for his parents’ welfare: ‘Eine wilde Angst hatte ihn plötzlich gepackt’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 86). However, in addition to this direct statement, the panic he experiences is further communicated through alterations in the pace:

Ihm war eingefallen, daß nicht weit vom Hause seiner Eltern sich ein kleines Kupferwerk befand. Es konnte ein Ziel gewesen sein. Er stolperte über die Straßen und über die schwelenden, feuchten Ruinen, so rasch er konnte, er stieß an Leute, er rannte vorwärts, er kletterte über Schutthaufen, und *dann* blieb er stehen. Er wußte nicht mehr, wo er war [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 86).

The same technique was examined in relation to *Arc de Triomphe*. The asyndetic coordination of short clauses, characteristic for this passage, has an accelerating effect on the pace and therefore illustrates the increased heart rate of Graeber’s panic-stricken body. The pace is brought to a sudden halt following the clause: ‘und dann blieb er stehen’. The adverb ‘dann’ has a particularly decelerating effect in that it implies a switch from one condition to another: Having stumbled, run and climbed, Graeber ‘dann’ stops. The verbs indicating physical activeness are contrasted with the passive action of standing still. The inclusion of ‘dann’ simultaneously builds up the reader’s anticipation and curiosity as to what happens next.

A moment later, as the chapter draws to a close, this strategy is repeated:

Graeber versuchte sich zu orientieren. Er hätte von hier aus den Turm der Katharinenkirche sehen müssen. Er sah ihn nicht. Vielleicht war auch die Kirche zusammengestürzt. Er fragte niemand mehr. Irgendwo sah er Bahren stehen. Leute schaufelten. Feuerwehrmänner rannten herum. Wasser klatschte in Qualm. Eine düstere Lohe hing über dem Kupferwerk. *Dann* fand er die Hakenstraße [my emphasis] (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 86).

The short sentences expedite the pace. However, in the closing sentence, ‘dann’ stops the flow, but it also awakens the curiosity in the reader who will want to know the state of Graeber’s childhood street. To find out, the reader must therefore move to the next chapter.

The above formal analysis shows that Remarque applies an array of narrative tools in both *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*. These include perspectival elements, register, imagery, leitmotivs and the proportion of straight narrative to dialogue. The formal elements have been shown to fulfil two purposes. They partly increase the aesthetic impact of the novels; they partly compliment the contents and aid the conveyance of Remarque’s message.

However, as for example Wagener has pointed out, the two novels were received considerably better abroad than they were in Germany.<sup>63</sup> One German critic expressed the following wish about *Funke Leben*: ‘Es war hoffentlich der letzte Cocktailscherz des Herrn Remarque!’<sup>64</sup> As the study by the Mitscherlichs also asserts, German reviews reflect the German nation’s difficulty in accepting an overall guilt in the crimes of the regime. Some critics even attempt to parallelize the sufferings of the concentration camp victims with the hardship experienced by the civilian population, particularly as the war progressed. With reference to Dostoyevsky’s *From the House of the Dead*, one critic describes the concentration camp experience as follows: ‘Vor allem aber ist da eines: die Einsicht in die eigene Schuld [that of the prisoners], die nur im Glauben

möglich ist. Es spielt eines Tages keine Rolle mehr, was der Oberreichsanwalt, das Volksgericht oder die Gestapo über einen verhängt haben. Deshalb sitzt man nicht hinter dem Draht. Mit sich selbst hat man etwas auszukämpfen. Die Gegenseite erkennt man plötzlich als Marionetten, ebenso gefangen wie man selbst ist [...]'.<sup>65</sup> This attempt to depict the general population as victims is also found in other reviews:

Aber die Deutschen, die noch leben, haben auch einiges überstehen müssen, und sie haben es vielleicht oft schwerer getragen als Remarque glaubt. Die Rücksicht auf den "Funken Leben", der das deutsche Volk über die schweren Jahre nach dem Kriege hinweggebracht hat, veranlaßt uns, den neuen Roman von Remarque mit aller Schärfe abzulehnen.<sup>66</sup>

Schneider thus concludes about the German reception of Remarque's work from the Adenauer period:

Der Verdacht liegt nahe, dass man sich durchaus darüber klar war, wie berechtigt und zutreffend Remarques Mahnungen und Anklagen waren, und dass man daher zu anderen Mitteln greifen musste, um sie als irrelevant abzutun: der bewusst falsche Vorwurf sachlicher Fehler, die Kritik wegen ästhetischer Mängel, der Vorwurf der Trivialität, die Einbindung in die publizistischen Fronten des Kalten Kriegs.<sup>67</sup>

Although negative criticism was also voiced outside the German borders, the tone was less aggressive, and positive points featured alongside the less enthusiastic comments. Hence, as was initiated already in 1929 with the publication of *Im Westen*, the political impact of *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*, and their dealing with topics which were preferred left alone, clearly influenced their overall reception in Germany. The sales figures of *Funke Leben* remained low: 'Noch 1961, also neun Jahre nach Erscheinen des

Buches, war der an Remarque gezahlte Vorschuß nicht durch die Verkaufserlöse abgedeckt'.<sup>68</sup>

However, the importance of the reviewer's or the reader's personal distance to the events depicted should not be overlooked as an influence in the evaluation process of the novels. The passing of time generally creates emotional distance to an experience or event. In relation to the reviews of Remarque's novels, the critics' opinions seem very much governed by their own relationship to the depicted issues. In the 1950s when *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* were first published, Germany's Nazi past was still a delicate topic for many Germans. This is clearly conveyed in the already quoted review: 'Aber die Deutschen, die noch leben, haben auch einiges überstehen müssen, und sie haben es vielleicht oft schwerer getragen als Remarque glaubt'.<sup>69</sup> The same critic, however, openly praises Remarque's treatment of the *First World War* in *Im Westen*. Nonetheless, in the late 1920s, *Im Westen* had been met by an even greater outcry than both *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* when they appeared in the decade following the Second World War. This critic's agreeable attitude towards *Im Westen* in the 1950s can therefore be interpreted as reflecting his own emotional detachment from the historical event of the Great War, whereas the Second World War still figures as a recent event in his memory. However, even in an article from the 1990s, Edgar Hilsenrath finds it necessary to defend and stress that Remarque is *not* an author of *Trivilliteratur*. This indicates that such a classification of Remarque's oeuvre is still widely perceived to be justifiable. As the analysis of *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* show, though, both novels are meticulously written with consideration for the interrelationship between content and form.<sup>70</sup> Moreover, both novels were intended to educate and shake up the German nation and should therefore not be rejected as *Trivilliteratur*, if this genre indeed tends towards '[eine] außengeleitet[e] Anpassung [...] an die Bedürfnislage ihrer

Leserzielgruppen, die, statt die Wahrheit erkennen zu wollen, nur die scheinhafte Befriedigung ihrer Wünsche im Sinne hätten'.<sup>71</sup>

## Notes to *Der Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*

1. This categorization is used, for instance, in the title of the publication: Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts*.
2. Remarque's sister, Elfriede Scholz, was executed on 16 December 1943. The circumstances of her death are alluded to on occasion in both *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*. The most obvious example is found in *Zeit zu leben* where Graeber reads a newspaper article about four citizens who have been sentenced to death because they doubted German victory: 'Man hatte ihnen mit einem Beil die Köpfe abgehackt. Die Guillotine war längst abgeschafft worden im Dritten Reich. Sie war zu menschlich' (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 271). Although the connection between this statement and the case of Remarque's sister is obvious, the two incidents are not, as Owen suggests, 'identical'. Elfriede Scholz was executed on a guillotine. Owen, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Critical Bio-Bibliography*, p. 269. For more on Elfriede Scholz, see: *Elfriede Scholz, geb. Remark: Im Namen des deutschen Volkes; Dokumente einer justitiellen Ermordung*, edited by Claudia Glunz and Thomas F. Schneider (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1997); "Reue ist undeutsch". *Erich Maria Remarque's Der Funke Leben und das Konzentrationslager Buchenwald: Katalog zur Ausstellung*, edited by Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Bramsche: Rasch, 1992). The first American edition of *Funke Leben* was dedicated to Remarque's sister. This dedication was also included in, for instance, the Italian, the Spanish and the French translations of the work, but it did not feature in the German edition, and was only introduced to this in 1988. Bernhard Nienaber, *Vom anachronistischen Helden zum larmoyanten Untertan: Eine Untersuchung zur Entwicklung der Humanismuskonzeption in Erich Maria Remarques Romanen der Adenauer-Restauration* (Würzburg: Königshausen und Neumann, 1997), pp. 34-35.
3. Remarque, 'Der Funke Leben (1952/ 53)', in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 94-95 (p. 95).
4. Thomas F. Schneider, 'Mörder, die empfindlich sind: Zur Entstehung von *Der Funke Leben*', in "Reue ist undeutsch", pp. 14-20, p. 16. See also: *Elfriede Scholz, geb. Remark. Im Namen des deutschen Volkes*, edited by Glunz and Schneider.
5. In written correspondence with Kiepenheuer und Witsch from June 1952 and prior to the German publication of *Funke Leben*, Remarque suggests that the cited purpose of the work should be printed on the book's protective cover. See *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, pp. 148-49.
6. Schlant proposes that 'no other postwar author has scrutinized this passivity as unremittingly as Lenz'. Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence: West German Literature and the Holocaust* (New York etc.: Routledge, 1999), p. 127. Although Schlant does not draw comparisons between Lenz's and Remarque's works, the passivity which Lenz's protagonist, Eugen Rapp, displays in *Neue Zeit* is largely transferable to the main character, Ernst Graeber, in *Zeit zu leben*. He realizes that his lack of direct opposition is an indirect support of National Socialist. Schlant, *The Language of Silence*, p. 127. The two protagonists differ, however, in the fact that Rapp is unable to overcome his passivity, whereas Graeber makes an attempt to defy the

regime and to thereby repent the wrongs he has previously done through relatively unquestioned compliance.

7. This is noted in, for example: Owen, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Critical Bio-Bibliography*, p. 264; Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts*, p. 101; Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, pp. 146, 175; Schneider, “‘Ein ekler Leichenwurm’”, p. 45; Thorkild Hansen, ‘Intet nyt fra østfronten: Erich Maria Remarques nye roman om den anden verdenskrig’, *Information*, 3 September 1954, no page.

8. Remarque, ‘Der Funke Leben. Vorwort (1952)’, p. 92.

9. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 68; Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, pp. 146-47.

10. Remarque, ‘Der Funke Leben (1952/ 53)’, p. 94.

11. Remarque, ‘Der Funke Leben. Vorwort (1952)’, p. 92.

12. Andrea Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, translated by Patrick Camiller (London etc.: Continuum, 2000). Reiter’s study includes a wide selection of authentic accounts by former inmates. She examines the writers’ – many first-time authors – approaches to explaining their experiences.

13. ‘Es mag von Interesse sein, daß es selbst 1952 für ihn [den Autor] schwer war, einen Verleger in Deutschland zu finden. Selbst das größte Schweizer Verlagshaus, das einen Vertrag für *Der Funke Leben* abgeschlossen hatte, weigerte sich, das Buch nach der Fertigstellung zu drucken, und gab als Begründung an, daß dieses Buch und alle anderen Bücher des Verlages in Deutschland boykottiert würden, wenn es erschiene. Andere Verleger wollten Änderungen. Als das Buch schließlich in Deutschland herauskam, war die Reaktion zum größten Teil feindselig, vorsichtig und zurückhaltend, – zu einem kleineren Teil wurde das Buch ohne Einwände angenommen. Deutschland hatte schon begonnen, die Welt von 1933 bis 1945 (so schnell wie möglich) zu vergessen, – nicht zu bereuen. Zu vergessen. Es war die Zeit des “Deutschen Booms”, des “Wirtschaftswunders”. Auch waren die meisten Nazis zurück. Das Buch verstörte zu dieser Zeit. Der Autor bedauert das nicht. Er hofft, weiterhin auf diese Art “verstörend” zu sein.’ Remarque’s indignation and his increasingly overt political stance is clearly expressed in this excerpt. Remarque, *Der Funke Leben* (1952/ 53), p. 95.

14. Anke Zimmer, ‘Seine verbale Spitzen gegen Autoren, Verleger und Kritiker sitzen. Ein Gespräch mit Edgar Hilsenrath: “Reich-Ranicki ist ein Idiot”’, *Fuldaer Zeitung*, 23 October 1999, no page.

15. Zimmer, ‘Seine verbale Spitzen gegen Autoren, Verleger und Kritiker sitzen’.

16. Ernestine Schlant, *The Language of Silence*, pp. 11-12. However, it should be noted that as a communist state, the GDR largely perceived itself detached from the National Socialist Regime, as it interpreted the rise of Hitler as rooting in capitalism. In addition, communists constituted a considerable proportion of the prisoners in the concentration

camps. With the lack of a similar ideological shield to hide behind, it was hence predominantly West Germany which struggled to deal with its Nazi past.

17. Thomas F. Schneider, 'The Empty Stage: Comments on the Stage 'War' about Erich Maria Remarque's *Die letzte Station*', in *Modern War on Stage and Screen/ Der moderne Krieg auf der Bühne*, edited by Wolfgang Görtschacher and Holger Klein (Lewiston etc.: Edwin Mellen, 1997), pp. 53-65 (p. 58); Schneider, "'Ein ekler Leichenwurm'", pp. 52-53.

18. Schneider, 'The Empty Stage: Comments on the Stage 'War'', p. 55. See also: Liepman, *Ein deutscher Jude denkt über Deutschland nach*, p. 12. Liepman produces a list of cases in which, following the war, Nazis successfully assumed new identities and thereby managed to evade disclosure and prosecution for more than a decade. To highlight the numerousness of such cases, Liepman notes that his examples constitute the cases which were mentioned in the press during just one week in the year of 1959.

19. A sketch by Remarque shows how the author imagined the physical structure of Mellern concentration camp. This drawing is included in: Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts*, pp. 98-99.

20. See, for example: Franz Baumer, *E. M. Remarque* (Berlin: Colloquium, 1976), p. 84; Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 196; Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 69.

21. Although the novel does not include a preface, the preliminary serialization of the work in the American magazine, *Collier's*, was introduced by a short statement. See, 'Erläuterungen', in *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 144-60 (p. 150).

22. Erich Maria Remarque, 'Der Funke Leben. Vorwort', p. 91.

23. Wagener even nominates Neubauer as 'one of the most well-rounded characters he [Remarque] has ever described'. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 74.

24. For concentration camp jargon and the euphemistic nature of National Socialist lingo, see: Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, pp. 86-93. In relation to Nazi euphemism, see also Hannes Heer, *Vom Verschwinden der Täter: Der Vernichtungskrieg fand statt, aber keiner war dabei* (Berlin: Aufbau, 2004), pp. 100-01.

25. Wieslaw Kielar, *Anus Mundi: Five Years in Auschwitz* (London etc.: Penguin, 1982), pp. 73-74. The work was published in Polish in 1972. The first English translation was published in 1981.

26. Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, pp. 98-123. The *Inferno* is used as an image of comparison in, for example, Kielar, *Anus Mundi*, p. 177.

27. Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, pp. 166-67.

28. Pascal Nicklas, 'The Disappearance of the Body: Pain and the Representation of War', in *Modern War on Stage and Screen/ Der moderne Krieg auf der Bühne*, pp. 523-40 (pp. 524, 528).

29. Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, p. 44.

30. Nicklas, 'The Disappearance of the Body: Pain and the Representation of War', pp. 536-37.

31. An episode with a similar outcome is reported by Kielar. Arriving on a transport destined for the gas chambers, a young Jewish woman snatches a gun from one of the SS guards and kill him. Enraged, other SS men shoot down the entire transport rather than following the usual procedure of extermination through gas. 'The incident passed on from mouth to mouth and embellished in various ways grew into a legend. Without doubt this heroic deed by a weak woman, in the face of certain death, gave moral support to every prisoner.' Kielar, *Anus Mundi*, p. 178.

32. See, for example, Pfeiler's review from 1952 which describes them as 'stereotypes'. W. K. Pfeiler, 'Erich Maria Remarque. *Der Funke Leben*', *Books Abroad*, Summer 1952, no page. In contrast, Taylor regards Remarque's SS-characters as 'the perfect representatives of a regime which is evil incarnate'. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 185.

33. Indeed, a reviewer of *Funke Leben* erroneously speaks of 'Häftling 508' which – although unintentionally – stresses the individual behind the number. 'Ein KZ-Roman wie er vom Übel ist', *Heute und Morgen*, 1952, p. 1134.

34. Taylor has likewise noted this: 'By designating Koller [509's real name] by number rather than by name Remarque succeeds in conferring on him "Everyman" status. His fate, therefore, serves as a symbol for the greater tragedy of the hosts of victims who lost their lives because of Nazi crimes'. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 183.

35. Kielar, *Anus Mundi*.

36. Kielar, *Anus Mundi*, p. 5.

37. Kielar does not refer to the particularly weak as human beings either. Instead he says: '[...] [T]hese sick, starving, filthy, dying *creatures* made a fearful impression on me. To look at them was appalling [my emphasis]'. Kielar, *Anus Mundi*, p. 133.

38. Richard Kirn, 'Ein Buch, das seinen Autor ehrt', *Frankfurter Neue Presse*, 27 September 1952, p. 18. See also: Bernhard Nienaber, *Vom anachronistischen Helden zum larmoyanten Untertan*, p. 36.

39. "Musulmans" is one widespread expression peculiar to the camps: it designated those living dead who gave up struggle for existence and let all the rigours of the camp wash over and bury them. The origin of the term is not altogether clear. Hermann Langbein reports that he first came across it in Auschwitz, and that 'musulman' was only later used in other camps. He also thinks that the term – which applied to female

prisoners, too – arose from the bent body posture that distantly reminded people of a praying Arab.’ Reiter, *Narrating the Holocaust*, p. 87.

40. The idea of describing life as a ‘spark’ recurs in several of Remarque’s novels. In *Im Westen*, for example, Bäumer says of Kat and himself: ‘Wir sind zwei Menschen, zwei winzige Funken Leben, draußen ist der Nacht und der Kreis des Todes’ (*Im Westen*, p. 72).

41. Recurring regularly in the novel, these indirect allusions to the title form a red thread through the work: ‘[E]s war, als hätte jemand einen lautlosen Befehl über all die todmüden, abgezehrten, halbverhungerten Männer hingeschrien, als hätte ein *Funke* ihr Blut entzündet, ihr Gehirn aufgeweckt und ihre Nerven und Muskeln zersammengerissen [my emphasis]’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 152). ‘Das Echo wieder, ein fernster Herzschlag, die schmale Trommel des Pulses, und mehr: das Echo im Echo, Hände, die wieder Hände waren, der *Funke*, nicht erloschen – glimmend wieder, und: stärker als vorher [my emphasis]’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 187). ‘So wanderten sie über den Platz [...] – eine geisterhafte Promenade von Skeletten, in denen ein *Funke* Leben trotz allem nicht erstorben war [my emphasis]’ (*Funke Leben*, p. 345).

42. ‘*Kapos* (vom Italienischen “il capo” = das Haupt, der Vorstand), Häftlinge, die den Befehl über Arbeitskommandos hatten und dem SS-Kommandoführer verantwortlich waren, der sie durch den Arbeitsdienstführer einsetzen ließ. Die *Kapos* hatten *Vorarbeiter* zur Seite und waren nichts als Aufsichtspersonen, die disponierten, selbst aber nicht arbeiteten. [...] Meistens handelte es sich, besonders in den Anfangsjahren, um robuste Naturen – damals vor allem um ehemalige SA-Leute, Fremdlegionäre und Kriminelle –, die mit dem Prügel umzugehen verstanden [...]’ Eugon Kogon, *Der SS-Staat* (Stockholm: Bergmann-Fischer, 1947), pp. 63-64.

43. Jan Strümpel, ‘Kammersymphonie des Todes: Erich Maria Remarques “Der Funke Leben”, Anna Seghers “Das siebte Kreuz” und eine Gattung namens ‘KZ-Romane’, in *Text+Kritik*, 149, pp. 55-64 (pp.59-60).

44. There might be a connection to Wilhelm Busch’s famous poem, *Es sitzt ein Vogel* in *Kritik des Herzens* from 1874. On Remarque’s early cartoon strip, *Die Contibuben*, Thomas Schneider mentions its similarity to *Max und Moritz* who, similar to Remarque’s *Contibuben*, carry out a number of pranks referred to as ‘erster Streich’, ‘zweiter Streich’, etc. Remarque, *Das Unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, Vol. 4, pp. 465-70, 547-48.

45. Robert van Gelder, ‘An Interview with Erich Maria Remarque: Who outlines his rules for handling luck, loneliness and refugee living. January 27, 1946’, in *Writers and Writing* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1946), pp. 376-81 (pp. 377-78). Also: Thomas F. Schneider, *Unabhängigkeit – Toleranz – Humor: Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970* ([1998] Osnabrück: Rasch, 2001), p. 214.

Remarque’s statement reappears in different context in his later novel, *Der schwarze Obelisk*. In the year of 1923, the protagonist, Bodmer, feels both indignant and saddened when he almost witnesses the political murder of a supporter of the Weimar Republic. Having participated in the First World War, he therefore wonders: ‘[W]ir alle haben doch so viele Tote im Kriege gesehen, und wir wissen, daß über zwei Millionen von uns nutzlos gefallen sind – warum sind wir da so erregt wegen eines einzelnen, und

die zwei Millionen haben wir schon fast vergessen? Aber das ist wohl so, weil ein einzelner immer der Tod ist – und zwei Millionen immer nur eine Statistik’ (*Der schwarze Obelisk*), p. 128.

46. The name Ruth Holland constitutes another example of Remarque’s recycling of character names. The young woman whom Kern falls in love with in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* is likewise called Ruth Holland.

47. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 190.

48. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 72.

49. See chapter seven, nine, twenty-one and twenty-five of *Zeit zu leben*.

50. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, pp. 73-75.

51. For a comparison of the protagonists Bäumer and Graeber, see Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 77-79; Wagener, ‘Erich Maria Remarque, Im Westen nichts Neues – Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben: Ein Autor, zwei Weltkriege’.

52. As has already been proposed, Remarque’s novels are bound together through more or less discrete similarities, often in relation to names. In *Arc de Triomphe*, Ravic’s real name is Ludwig Fresenburg. This is likewise the name of Graeber’s comrade in *Zeit zu leben*. Moreover, they are both approximately forty years old. The two Fresenburgs cannot, of course, be one and the same person, as Ravic would not have fought on the side of the National Socialists.

53. Many parallels can be identified between Metelmann’s account and that of, not only Graeber, but also Bäumer. At the sight of a dead enemy soldier, for instance, Metelmann’s reaction is not dissimilar to that of Bäumer’s in *Im Westen*: ‘His helmet had rolled away from his head and he seemed to be gripping into the earth with both his hands. In death his face had no enemy look about it. I could not keep my eyes off him, and wondered what kind of a man he had been, how he had earned his bread, had he a wife, parents or children?’ Henry Metelmann, *Through Hell for Hitler: A Dramatic First-Hand Account of Fighting on the Eastern Front with the Wehrmacht* ([1990] Staplehurst: Spellmount, 2001), p. 62. Following a shift on guard, Metelmann even tells his successor: ‘[...] all was quiet on the Eastern Front’. Metelmann, *Through Hell for Hitler*, p. 137.

54. Presumably on the basis of this aspect of the novel, one of the early manuscripts of *Zeit zu leben* has the different title of *Insel der Hoffnung*; a title which has been preserved in the French translation *L’Île d’Espérance*. Schneider, “‘Und Befehl ist Befehl. Oder nicht?’”, p. 234.

55. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 172.

56. For the structure of *Zeit zu leben*, see also: Schneider, “‘Und Befehl ist Befehl. Oder nicht?’”, p. 235.

57. Nienaber likewise comments on this message in *Zeit zu leben*: ‘Wo sich die Menschen aus ihrer moralischen Verantwortung für den Zustand der Gesellschaft zurückziehen, um durch ein Lebensmodell aus Privatismus und Familie die Sicherung der eigenen Existenz zu gewährleisten, deckt der Text diese Praxis als Schuld auf, weil sie Barbarei möglich macht. Da der Mensch als das Subjekt der Geschichte den Verlauf des historischen Prozesses bestimmt, ist auch das Unterlassen von Handlungen geschichtlich wirksame Praxis’. Bernhard Nienaber, ‘Der Blick zurück: Remarques Romane gegen die Adenauer-Restauration’, in *Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, edited by Tilman Westphalen (Bramsche: Rasch, 1988), pp. 79-93 (p. 87).

58. The only leitmotif in *Zeit zu leben* which has generally attracted the attention of literary critics is that of blue eyes. At both the opening and conclusion of the novel, Graeber is transfixed by the bright blue eyes of a Russian, suspected partisan. Recognizing the humanness behind the eyes makes it all the more difficult for Graeber to accept the order to execute the suspects. Moreover, at home, Graeber notices that both his former teacher, Pohlmann, but also a civil servant who shows only kindness towards Elisabeth and Graeber, have similar blue eyes. In his mind, Graeber therefore draws a parallel between the latter two and the Russian victims. Through his positive impression of Pohlmann and the German official, Graeber comes to associate bright blue eyes with benevolence. This, of course, also affects Graeber’s perception of the supposed enemy and leads him to question further the righteousness of his loyalty to the regime.

59. *Im Westen* depicts a similar episode during which Bäumer, having changed into civilian clothing, explores his own reflection in a mirror. Like Graeber, he finds it difficult to combine the boyish exterior with the aged soldier inside: ‘Ich betrachte mich im Spiegel. Das ist ein sonderbare Anblick. Ein sonnenverbrannter, etwas ausgewachsener Konfirmand sieht mich da verwundert an’ (*Im Westen*, p. 116).

60. Graeber parallelizes the human and the arboreal species on other occasions. At the sight of a damaged tree which stands in full bloom (despite a broken trunk and the fact that its roots have been partly torn) Graeber states: ‘Sie [die Bäume] geben uns Lehren. Heute Nachmittag war es eine Linde, jetzt ist es dieser. Sie wachsen und treiben Blätter und Blüten, und selbst wenn sie zerrissen sind, treibt der Teil weiter, den noch ein Stück Wurzel im Boden halt’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 204). On a later occasion, the sight of the limetree again infuses Graeber with a strong sense of being alive: ‘Er sah die Linde dunkel vor dem zerstörten Hause aufragen, und plötzlich fühlte er seine Schultern und seine Muskeln und dasselbe starke Lebensgefühl, das er das erste Mal gespürt hatte, als er sie gesehen hatte’ (*Zeit zu leben*, p. 265). The conclusion of *Der Weg*, of course, also applies the image of trees/ wood figuratively as a means to convey the mental state of the protagonist (*Der Weg*, pp. 311-12).

61. Remarque’s film script, *Der letzte Akt*, and his play, *Die letzte Station*, both from the 1950s, stand in a similar perspectival relationship of opposition to one another as do *Funkel Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*. *Der letzte Akt* describes the concluding ten days of Hitler’s life, and it hence depicts the collapse of the regime from the perspective of the Nazis. *Die letzte Station*, on the contrary, revolves around an escaped concentration camp prisoner during the last few days of the war.

62. At the end of the novel, the reader is left to speculate whether or not Elisabeth is pregnant, and she therefore plays an important role thematically. Elisabeth's possible pregnancy leads to the question of the future of the child and his or her position, later in life, to the actions of the father. Stylistically, however, Elisabeth's character is not especially striking. This is not least because, from Chapter Three, the narrative is focalized through Graeber, and the formal elements therefore mostly reflect back on his character.

63. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 75, 80.

64. Reggow, 'Wir haben nicht auf Herrn Remarque gewartet! Wer es nicht erlebte, sollte besser darüber schweigen', *Sonntagsblatt. Hannover*, 42, 1952, no page.

65. Reggow, 'Wir haben nicht auf Herrn Remarque gewartet!', *Sonntagsblatt. Hannover*.

66. H.H., 'Der Funke Leben. Ein neuer Roman von Remarque', *Westdeutsche Zeitung*, 252, 30 October, 1952, no page.

67. Schneider, "'Ein ekler Leichenwurm'", p. 53.

68. Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen, *Erich Maria Remarque: Werke der frühen fünfziger Jahre. Der Funke Leben, Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben, Die letzte Station. Bibliographie der Drucke*, edited by Claudia Glunz (Osnabrück: Rasch, 1995), p. 7.

69. H.H., 'Der Funke Leben. Ein neuer Roman von Remarque', *Westdeutsche Zeitung*.

70. Anke Zimmer, 'Seine verbale Spitzen gegen Autoren, Verleger und Kritiker sitzen. Ein Gespräch mit Edgar Hilsenrath: "Reich-Ranicki ist ein Idiot"', *Fuldaer Zeitung*, 23 September 1999, no page.

71. Nusser, *Trivialliteratur*, p. 6.

## Chapter 5

### *Der schwarze Obelisk* and *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*

Remarque had worked on *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* as two parallel novel projects. During the production of these two works, the author became acquainted with the reputable psychoanalyst, Karen Horney, and as Remarque's diaries from this period suggest, consultations with her led to considerable personal development for Remarque.<sup>1</sup> However, also professionally, the 1950s became a time of transition and exploration of new avenues for the author. Whereas the *Hauptwerk* had thus far emerged in historically chronological order – treating initially the topic of the Great War; then the interwar years and the exile experience; and, finally, the Second World War – Remarque's next two novels, *Der schwarze Obelisk* and *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*, would revert to past themes and recycle plot ideas conceived decades earlier.

Since writing *Im Westen* in the late 1920s, Remarque had, with only few exceptions, favoured the novel as his medium. However, as his diaries from the early 1950s disclose, the emotional stability Remarque acquired during this period of introspection resulted in an increased level of creational motivation and a wish to venture into and explore other aspects of the literary arena. Whereas the diary entries from the late 1940s are characterized by Remarque's admissions to work apathy and subsequent exclamations of self-reproach, the overall tone changes in the early 1950s:

Der Wunsch, anders zu schreiben. Sich zu teilen: das  
dramatische in Stücke zu tun, – die Romane epischer zu

machen. Der Stil Thornton Wilders für Romane, – zusammenfassender, beschreibender, weniger Szenenfolge als Überschau, – der Erzähler starker fühlbar, nicht unsichtbar, wie bis jetzt – und das, was nicht dafür gebraucht wird, in Bühnenstücken austoben. Was im Roman (bei mir) wie Sensationalismus wirkt, wird auf der Bühne Kraft. Experimentieren!<sup>2</sup>

As a step towards adopting a more overt political stance, Remarque had already temporarily deviated from his role as a novelist in the later war years. In 1944 on request of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS), he had outlined a possible strategy for regeneration and re-education in Germany following the war. The text was entitled *Practical Educational Work in Germany after the War* and explored some of the themes – Nazism, nationalism and militarism – which would also come to dominate Remarque's Second World War novels.<sup>3</sup> The author's engagement with literary genres other than the novel nonetheless remained limited until the mid-1950s when his interest in other media became more marked.<sup>4</sup>

During the 1950s, Remarque explored the spheres of both film and theatre. He drafted, for instance, the initial script to a film adaptation of Judge Michael Musmanno's work, *Ten Days to Die (Der letzte Akt)*.<sup>5</sup> The film, completed in 1955, played in as many as fifty-two countries, and thus became the most successful post-war film produced in German.<sup>6</sup> Depicting Hitler's last days and eventual suicide in the bunker under the *Reichskanzlei* in Berlin, the film concludes with the warning: 'Be Vigilant'.<sup>7</sup> Despite a lack of concrete information, Remarque is furthermore believed to have been involved in the production of films such as *From Here to Eternity* (1953); *On the Beach* (1959); *The Guns of Navarone* (1961) and *Judgement at Nuremberg* (1961).<sup>8</sup> In addition to these activities, Remarque accepted the role of Pohlmann in the 1958 film adaptation of *Zeit zu leben*.

The 1950s were an equally prolific decade for Remarque in relation to drama. In 1956 he produced the play *Die letzte Station* in which he again addressed the issue of the Second World War.<sup>9</sup> In West-Germany, the reviews were cautiously modest and *Die letzte Station* subsequently soon disappeared again from the German stage. In comparison, the play gained such popularity in the former Soviet Union that it ran for thirteen consecutive years in Moscow. It was likewise shown over lengthier periods of time in both Poland and the former Czechoslovakia.<sup>10</sup> Although only staged posthumously by the *Probekühne* in Osnabrück in 1988, parallel to *Die letzte Station*, Remarque further wrote the play *Die Heimkehr des Enoch J. Jones*.<sup>11</sup> Also from the 1950s are the plays *La Barcarole* and *Brunnenstraße*, of which the latter was staged by the *Probekühne* in 1991.<sup>12</sup>

Considering this expansion to Remarque's area of creativity, it is perhaps not surprising that also the novel-projects initiated in this decade, *Der schwarze Obelisk* and *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*, should deviate from the previous pattern of compliance with historical chronology. Indeed, a certain correlation seems to exist between Remarque's delving into the past as part of his psychoanalytic treatment, and the novels he produced during this period. As the diaries show, the sessions with Karen Horney involved analysis of memories from both Remarque's childhood and youth years;<sup>13</sup> a reversion to past times which is comparably matched in the author's resumption of earlier themes in both *Obelisk* and *Der Himmel*. Thus, despite the fact that *Obelisk* and *Der Himmel* are dissimilar in both content and form, they are nonetheless related through their time of production, their mutual resumption of old themes and the fact that they essentially bring an end to the otherwise logical sequence which had thus far characterized Remarque's *Hauptwerk*. In addition, *Obelisk* and *Der Himmel* both occupy isolated positions within the framework of the *Hauptwerk*, in the

fact that neither of the novels form part of a novel-pair. Such a pattern governs Remarque's other works. *Im Westen, Der Weg* and *Kameraden* thus comprise a subtle First World War-trilogy; *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe* complement one another in depicting the exile experience; and *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben* present the Second World War from two different angles: that of the prosecuted and that of the prosecutor. Remarque's last two novels which will be treated in the next chapter likewise form a pair. In these works the focus is on the émigrés as they are forced to leave Europe (*Die Nacht von Lissabon*) and take refuge in America (*Schatten im Paradies*). Viewed in the context of Remarque's otherwise thematically arranged novel-pairs, *Obelisk* and *Der Himmel* differ through their lack of sequential relations to any of the other works. Despite their intrinsic differences, these two novels will therefore be treated together in this chapter as Remarque's two free-standing and somewhat deviating novels.

A number of critics would contest the assertion that *Obelisk* is free-standing within the framework of the *Hauptwerk*. This work has, for instance, regularly been interpreted in conjunction with the First World War novels.<sup>14</sup> Other critics, however, have placed it in the context of Remarque's books on the Second World War.<sup>15</sup> There is an argument for either categorization. The case for drawing parallels between *Obelisk* and the First World War novels rests on the numerousness of both thematic and formal similarities between them. In *Obelisk*, Remarque not only reverts to the first-person narrative which he had otherwise abandoned following *Kameraden*; the *Ich-Erzähler*, Bodmer, also shares a number of properties with the previous protagonists Bäumer, Birkholz and Lohkamp. Similarly to the former two, Bodmer, has the initial 'B', and the second syllable of his name is identical to that of Bäumer. The common aspect of the naming of the protagonists is, however, but one of a number of similarities which bind the novels

loosely, but unambiguously, together. Both *Der Weg* and *Obelisk* incorporate, for example, a character named Willy Ho(h)meyer.<sup>16</sup> Both novels describe him as having bright, red hair and as being of the same age as the protagonist. In addition, he is said to be a former school friend and war comrade of both Birkholz and Bodmer, respectively. Due to the fictitiousness, it is perfectly possible that a character named Willy Ho(h)meyer should be a childhood friend and war-comrade of both Bodmer and Birkholz, and that the existences of the latter two should nonetheless seem to be unconnected.

The chief link between *Obelisk* and the three early First World War novels is, of course, constituted by the protagonists' shared experience of the Great War. Also, they all develop a pacifist point-of-view as a result. In these four novels – *Im Westen*, *Der Weg*, *Kameraden* and *Obelisk* – the reality of war and its consequences are at the centre of the plots. Yet, one vital factor separates *Obelisk* from Remarque's early First World War novels: *Obelisk* is narrated with the Second World War in hindsight, and it is this differentiation which has led to the other classification of *Obelisk* as a sequence to *Funke Leben* and *Zeit zu leben*. In order to fully appreciate the impact of the narrator's hindsight in *Obelisk*, the novel's structure need first be examined.

*Obelisk* consists of a prologue, followed by twenty-six chapters of more or less equal length. Although the prologue and the main story are both presented in the first person, they are narrated from two different points in time. The introductory statement shows knowledge of the Second World War. It states, for example, its intention to take the reader back to a time when the narrator believed, 'daß ein Krieg genug Belehrung sein müsse für eine Generation' (*Obelisk*, p. 9). This statement must therefore succeed, at least, the outbreak of the Second World War. The opening chapter thus proceeds to depict the narrator's experience of German society in the year of 1923. Chapters one to

twenty-five are entirely concerned with the period from April to December of that year. However, in chapter twenty-six, the narrator returns to the post-war point in time from which he also related the prologue. This is revealed to be 'zehn Jahre nach dem Zusammenbruch der Nazis', i.e. the year of 1955. This closing chapter summarizes the effects which Nazism came to exercise on a number of the novel's characters. Together with the prologue, chapter twenty-six thus functions as an epilogue and forms a time-frame within which the actual story – Bodmer's experiences in 1923 – is set.<sup>17</sup>

The connection between the introductory statement and the concluding chapter in *Obelisk* adds clarification as to the time of the former. As stated above, the exordial words indicate that the narrator is speaking in retrospect of the Second World War, but the time is not specified further. However, in the light of the time-frame which the prologue and chapter twenty-six form in unison, it must be presumed that the identification, in the closing chapter, of the year as 1955 is equally applicable to the prologue.

A similar line of argument can be used to establish the identity of the, initially, unidentifiable first-person narrator in the exordium. The link between chapter twenty-six and the prologue inevitably influences the perspective from which also the latter is read. Whereas chapter twenty-six is unambiguously narrated from the perspective of Bodmer, the prologue initially resembles an authorial declaration:

Scheltet nicht, wenn ich einmal von alten Zeiten rede. Die Welt liegt wieder im fahlen Licht der Apokalypse, der Geruch des Blutes und der Staub der letzten Zerstörung sind noch nicht verflogen, und schon arbeiten Laboratorien und Fabriken aufs neue mit Hochdruck daran, den Frieden zu erhalten durch die Erfindung von Waffen, mit denen man den ganzen Erdball sprengen kann.–  
Den Frieden der Welt! Nie ist mehr darüber geredet und nie weniger dafür getan worden als in unserer Zeit; nie hat

es mehr falsche Propheten gegeben, nie mehr Lügen, nie mehr Tod, nie mehr Zerstörung und nie mehr Tränen als in unserem Jahrhundert, dem zwanzigsten, dem des Fortschritts, der Technik, der Zivilisation, der Massenkultur und des Massenmordens.–

Darum schelte nicht, wenn ich einmal zurückgehe zu den sagenhaften Jahren, als die Hoffnung noch wie eine Flagge über uns wehte und wir an so verdächtige Dinge glaubten wie Menschlichkeit, Gerechtigkeit, Toleranz – und auch daran, daß *ein* Weltkrieg genug Belehrung sein müsse für eine Generation.– (*Obelisk*, p. 9).

The use of the first-person perspective and the direct address of the reader create thought associations to the opening statement of *Im Westen*. They also give the impression of an authorial statement. Yet, given the thematic connection between the prologue and chapter twenty-six, the narrator of the prologue can only be interpreted as being Bodmer too.

Without the framework, *Obelisk* would have been a novel depicting solely the aftermath of the First World War.<sup>18</sup> However, the framework alters the work's overall message considerably. It confirms the narrator-present to be 1955 and thereby gives this work an added dimension which the early First World War novels necessarily lacked. Placke has pointed to Martin Walser's cryptic description of the relationship between perspective and the passing of time as showing the impact this can have on the presentation of events.

[S]olange etwas ist, ist es nicht das, was es gewesen sein wird. Wenn etwas vorbei ist, ist man nicht mehr der, dem es passierte. Als das war, von dem wir jetzt sagen, das es gewesen sei, haben wir nicht gewußt, das es ist. Jetzt sagen wir, daß es so und so gewesen sei, obwohl wir damals, als es war, nicht von dem wußten, was wir jetzt sagen.<sup>19</sup>

Whereas *Im Westen, Der Weg* and *Kameraden* were written without realization as to the historical development under Hitler's rule, *Obelisk* depicts the 1920s with the Second World War in retrospect. Walser's words explain why this would affect the narrative. Published in 1956, *Obelisk* was therefore not only *written* in knowledge of the outcome of Nazism, but was also intended to be *read* with this in mind. Pointing to the increased acceptance towards political radicalism during the Weimar years, Remarque requests the reader to consider the elements which contributed to Hitler's assumption of power and allowed the Second World War to eventually take place. Observing, in the mid-1950s, the intensifying Cold War and Germany's inconsequent manner of dealing with its Nazi past, Remarque thus uses *Obelisk* as a means of calling for vigilance, so as to avoid a possible third world war. Despite essentially depicting the early Weimar years, *Obelisk* can therefore nonetheless be classified also as a Second World War novel. It is exactly this duality of *Obelisk* that distinguishes this work from the rest of the *Hauptwerk* and justifies its labelling as one of Remarque's deviating novels.

One aspect which clearly distinguishes *Obelisk* from Remarque's earlier novels is its particular utilization of time as part of its narrative technique. Whereas the previous works all depict a single, limited period in the lives of each of the protagonists, *Obelisk* essentially spans over more than three decades. As established above, the framework is set in Bodmer's present, 1955. The entire framed story, on the other hand, seemingly constitutes an uninterrupted flashback. Although supposedly representing past events, the flashback is narrated in the present tense. This gives the reader the impression of witnessing the Weimar account directly through the eyes of the younger Bodmer.

It might seem irrelevant whether the flashback presents the perspective of the older Bodmer or his younger self; after all, in either case, the narrator would be one and the same character. However, recalling Walser's words on perspective and time, it is

evident that both elements exercise an influence on the contents of a story. Bodmer is therefore likely to present and evaluate the same events differently at different times. Whereas the older Bodmer views the year of 1923 with distance and considerable life-experience, his younger equivalent necessarily lacks this added dimension in his perception of that year.

Despite the time-difference between the framework and the Weimar account, Remarque narrates both of these in the present tense. Set in 1955, the introductory statement and chapter twenty-six represent the present of both the author and the narrator. Remarque's reason for writing these parts of the novel in the present tense is thus self-evident. With regards to the framed story, however, the purpose behind the application of the present tense is not as obvious. In the opening sentence of the prologue, a first-person narrator voices his intent to speak of the past: 'Scheltet nicht, wenn ich einmal von alten Zeiten rede' (*Obelisk*, p. 9). It would therefore seem logical to present the subsequent narrative in the preterite. However, as stated above, this is not the case. As a result, the thirty-year time shift from the exordial statement to the commencement of chapter one becomes almost visual, in the sense that it imitates the manner in which films generally produce flashbacks. In the movies, unless accompanied by a background narrator relating in the past tense, flashbacks are presented with the same level of immediateness as the film-present. In both instances, the viewer believes to take the role of a direct witness. Apart from the actual introduction and termination of the individual flashback in a film, the presentation of the material gives no clear indication as to whether the events unfolding are present or past. In literature, on the other hand, the narrative tense might be utilized as an indicator and reminder to the reader that a particular passage is a present or past occurrence. In *Obelisk*, however, Remarque imitates the immediateness of a film-flashback.

The framed story essentially constitutes the older Bodmer's *recollection* of the events of 1923. When his memories are nevertheless narrated in the present tense, this serves to illustrate that the sentiments depicted were not characteristic only of the past. The framework indeed emphasizes that patriotism and militarism are re-intensifying in the 1950s. Then, reverting to the Weimar years, Bodmer depicts similar tendencies in the 1920s. The present tense of the Weimar account therefore serves to communicate the topicality of the Weimar period to the historical developments of the author-present.<sup>20</sup>

Whereas the first twenty-five chapters of *Obelisk* are narrated in the present tense, the closing chapter switches noticeably to the preterite: 'Ich habe keinen von allen wiedergesehen. Ich wollte ab und zu einmal zurückfahren, aber immer kam etwas dazwischen, und ich glaubte, ich hätte noch Zeit genug, aber plötzlich war keine Zeit mehr da. Die Nacht brach über Deutschland herein, ich verließ es, und als ich wiederkam, lag es in Trümmern' (*Obelisk*, p. 392). The narrative has shifted from 1923 to 'zehn Jahre nach dem Zusammenbruch der Nazis' (*Obelisk*, p. 393). Following this leap in time, the pace of the narrative escalates, as Bodmer, in less than three pages, summarizes the effects National Socialism came to have on a number of the novel's characters. He does, however, evade details as to his own life following the year of 1923, and discloses merely that he left Germany during the National Socialist period. His close friends, Georg Kroll and Willy Hohmeyer, are likewise mentioned only succinctly: 'Watzek ließ Georg in ein Konzentrationslager sperren, obschon er schon fünf Jahre vorher von Lisa geschieden worden war. Ein paar Monate später war Georg tot' (*Obelisk*, p. 392). 'Willy fiel 1942' (*Obelisk*, p. 393). In comparison, the lives of those of the characters who came to sympathize with Hitler's regime are depicted more elaborately. About the aspiring poet, Hans Hungermann, for example, Bodmer reports:

Hans Hungermann wurde Kulturwart und Obersturmbannführer der neuen Partei. Er feierte sie in glühenden Versen und hatte deshalb nach 1945 etwas Sorgen, da er seine Position als Schuldirektor verlor – inzwischen sind aber seine Pensionsansprüche vom Staat längst anerkannt worden, und er lebt, wie unzählige andere Parteigenossen, sehr behaglich davon, ohne arbeiten zu müssen (*Obelisk*, p. 392).

Bodmer's preoccupation in the epilogue with those of his characters who embraced Nazism unveils the actual theme of the novel. Hence, although focusing on Bodmer, *Obelisk* is predominantly about the elements in society which allowed National Socialism to prosper.

Even though the framed story is related in the present tense, there are indicators throughout the Weimar account of retrospection. Anachronism constitutes the most obvious marker, and occurs on a number of occasions. A commonly noted anachronism revolves around a speech by Hitler which one of the novel's characters, Watzek, allegedly listens to on a 'Sechsröhrenapparat' (*Obelisk*, p. 144). This type of radio-apparatus was, however, not on sale in Germany until 1925.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the first political speech to be broadcast on the radio was delivered by Stresemann in 1926, three years after Watzek supposedly heard Hitler's oration.<sup>22</sup> Another anachronism consists of the reference to I.G. Farben. This conglomerate was, in fact, not founded until 1925.<sup>23</sup>

Despite their number, the anachronisms in *Obelisk* have largely been overlooked by critics. Wagener even comments on the novel's 'historically accurate background'.<sup>24</sup> Schwindt and Westphalen, however, note the incongruence between dates and events, and argue that the frequency of anachronistic elements points to their inclusion being deliberate and part of Remarque's overall narrative strategy in *Obelisk*.<sup>25</sup> Placke takes a similar stance. He perceives the anachronisms as constituting 'eine Textstrategie [...], die darauf abzielt, durch diese Anspielungen [auf die Geschichte Deutschlands von

1923 bis 1955] im Bewußtsein der originären Leserschaft Resonanzen herzurufen.

Diese resultieren aus der Tatsache, daß diese Leserschaft wie der Autor weiß, wohin die politische Entwicklung geführt hat'.<sup>26</sup> Although easily overlooked by today's reader, the

anachronisms would have been more visible to Remarque's initial target group: the reader of the 1950s and especially those who had lived through both world wars.

Remarque generally researched historical facts thoroughly for his novels, and the anachronisms are thus too numerous to be explained as accidental. They must have been incorporated for a purpose. They allude almost exclusively to the National Socialist rule which should later follow, and thus function as markers of the particular political developments and the attitudes in German society during the Weimar period which eventually allowed for Hitler's autocracy to become a reality.

In addition to the overt anachronisms above, *Obelisk* occasionally plays on words to allude to events which would take place after 1923: One such example is the abbreviation S. S. which describes the granite ('schwarz' and 'schwedisch') from which the obelisk is made. The initials are, of course, a play on the shortened form of the *Schutzstaffel*, the SS, which was not founded until 1925. Another anachronistic abbreviation is constituted by the word, Nazi.<sup>27</sup>

In *Obelisk*, the time difference between the framework and the framed story becomes an added variable to consider in a formal analysis. It is, for instance, difficult to determine whether the register, the imagery and the tone of the Weimar account reflect the characteristics of the younger Bodmer as he was in 1923, or the older Bodmer whose memory the story essentially constitutes.

There are certain aspects of the register which clearly suggests that the events of 1923 are viewed from the perspective of the young Bodmer. As a recent, active soldier, the vernacular slang alluded to in *Im Westen* and applied by Birkholz and Lohkamp in *Der*

*Weg* and *Kameraden* recurs in *Obelisk*. Bodmer's existence is thus depicted using vocabulary and phrases such as: 'fressen'; 'Pratzen'; 'alter Knacker'; 'den Schnabel halten' and 'pissen' (*Obelisk*, pp. 26, 60, 62, 65, 174). It is, of course, possible that the older Bodmer's language is characterized by a similar colloquial tone. However, the framework is characterized by a high level of formality and is devoid of the jargon found throughout the 1923 account. In addition to an effective reiteration of 'nie', the introduction includes lofty formulations and statements such as: 'im fahlen Licht der Apokalypse'; 'der Geruch des Blutes und der Staub der letzten Zerstörung sind noch nicht verflogen'; and 'als die Hoffnung noch wie eine Flagge über uns wehte' (*Obelisk*, p. 9). Although the tone is less elevated in the epilogue, the concluding pages are free of the slang used in the framed story.

In addition to the register, imagery likewise appears to reflect the mind of the younger Bodmer in the 1923 story. As the Weimar account is set only a few years after the Great War, and during the period of escalating inflation-rates, these two issues are central to Weimar society and to the life of the young narrator. The abundance to similes relating to war or inflation therefore gives the impression that the perspective is that of the young Bodmer: 'als zöge er in die Schlacht', 'wie eine Granate', 'wie ein Feldherr' and 'wie ein erschrecktes Pferd bei einem schwerem Granateinschlag' (*Obelisk*, pp. 155, 283, 138, 266). Although descriptively ineffective, the simile-vehicles revolving around the topic of inflation are humorously unconventional: 'Der Winde ist milde und so sanft, als wäre der Dollar gestern um zweihundertfünfzigtausend Mark gefallen und nicht gestiegen'; '[p]lötzlich ist alles weit weg. Es ist so weit weg wie die Inflation, die vor zwei Wochen gestorben ist' (*Obelisk*, pp. 239, 378).

As shown above, the present tense of the framed story and the use of language and similes relating to that historical period, create the overall impression that events are

viewed through the eyes of the young Bodmer. It can, nevertheless, be argued that the perspective must be that of the older Bodmer, since the Weimar account is the product of his memory. It is, in fact, impossible to clearly separate the two perspectives; not least because they are divided by time only. This intertwining of Bodmer's past and present self is part of Remarque's narrative strategy. The inseparable voices of the younger and the older Bodmer, stretching essentially over more than three decades, serve to diminish the time-gap between the 1920s and the 1950s. The topicality of Remarque's Weimar story to the 1950's political climate is thereby emphasized again.

The point-of-view does occasionally exceed that of both the younger and the older Bodmer. 'Döbbling *wäre es lieber gewesen*, keiner von uns wäre erschienen'; 'Eduard lächelt, *weil er glaubt*, eine Flasche gespart zu haben'; 'Heinrich *ist verblüfft*. So leicht hat er sich das *nicht gedacht*' [my emphases] (*Obelisk*, pp. 121, 206, 298). Many similar examples of apparent incongruence with Bodmer's perspective (young or older) can be found in *Obelisk*. However, in colloquial discourse when conveying past events, it is not uncommon to present an *interpretation* of other people's statements or behaviour as factual. This is exemplified well in the following excerpt from *Obelisk*. The inclusion of the personal pronouns 'mir' and 'uns' corroborates that the perspective is that of Bodmer, despite the fact that it appears to be focalized through another character, a waiter. In the passage quoted, Bodmer and one of the female characters, Gerda, are dining in Eduard Knobloch's hotel, *Walhalla*. Knobloch dislikes Bodmer because he possesses a large number of valid meal tickets which he acquired prior to the inflation. As prices rocket and Bodmer continues to use the tickets, he receives the meals more or less free:

Der ehemalige Gefreite [der Kellner] weiß nicht, was er machen soll. Er hat den Befehl von Eduard erhalten,

Gerda ein generöses Stück, *mir* aber ein Scheibchen zu geben, und er hat ihn ausgeführt. Jetzt sieht er, daß das Gegenteil daraus geworden ist, [Gerda has given Bodmer the generously cut slice of meat] und er bricht nahezu zusammen, da er auf einmal selbst die Verantwortung dafür übernehmen muß, was er jetzt tun soll. Das ist in *unserm* geliebten Vaterlande nicht beliebt [my emphases] (*Obelisk*, p. 138).

Although Bodmer cannot, of course, know of the inner turmoil experienced by the waiter, the inclusion of the latter's emotions does not make the narrative less convincing. The accentuated personal pronouns clearly identify Bodmer as the narrator, and the reader is therefore aware that the presentation of the waiter is based on Bodmer's interpretation of him. In addition, it should be noted that from his narrator-present in 1955, Bodmer does not attempt to depict the *individual* characters from his past with meticulous precision; rather, he aims to draw an *overall* picture of the prevailing sentiments of the early Weimar years.

The warning in the prologue against a possible third world war fought with mass-destructive weapons is repeated in symbolic form in the object of the black obelisk, which offers the novel its title. Chiselled in black granite, its colour signifies both danger and death. Given the wording of the introductory statement, it is therefore possible that Remarque perceived a visual resemblance between this monument and the vertical dust cloud following an atomic explosion. Such a reading is, in fact, depicted graphically in the materials from a Remarque-project which took place at Osnabrück University in 1984. The project which eventually led to the staging of a play based on *Obelisk* contains, for instance, a sequence of drafts of the theatre poster which was to advertise the production. One draft is particularly effective in conveying both the theme of National Socialism, but simultaneously also Remarque's warning of future warfare involving nuclear weapons. The poster shows, in *Froschperspektiv*, a black obelisk at

the pinnacle of which a swastika balances enclosed in a large circle. In its entirety, the object assumes the abstract, but nonetheless recognizable, shape of a mushroom. Tilman Westphalen has pointed to the various interpretations of the obelisk, but concludes: ‘Das Rätseln in der Kritik über den Sinn des Obelisk-Symbols, soweit es überhaupt als solches zur Kenntniss gekommen wird, führt zu keinen schlüssigen Lösungen’. Die Zitate ließen sich in großer Vielfalt und Widersprüchlichkeiten ergänzen’.<sup>28</sup> The warning of atomic warfare is therefore only one of a number of symbolic readings which can be attached to the obelisk. The monument is situated in the garden of the stone masonry in which Bodmer is employed. Although believed to be unsellable, the obelisk eventually comes to crown the grave of a prostitute, known as ‘das eiserne Pferd’. Owing to the nature of her profession, but probably also to her favoured use of long, black boots, her former colleagues conclude that the obelisk would make a fitting gravestone: ‘Eigentlich nicht schlecht für das Pferd’ (*Obelisk*, p. 384). The monument therefore also functions as a classic phallic symbol.

The speculations as to the ultimate meaning or purpose of the obelisk should, however, equally consider that the black stone was not a figment of Remarque’s imagination. A postcard sent to the author shows a photograph of just such a monument. The sender, Hermann Vogt, was the owner of a stone masonry in Osnabrück at which Remarque had been employed during the early 1920s. The accompanying message indicates that the pictured obelisk was known to Remarque: ‘Zur Erinnerung an den Wäschepfahl’.<sup>29</sup> It is therefore possible that the idea of including the obelisk in the novel emerged before the actual objects or concepts it supposedly symbolizes. Indeed, in an article from 1957 Remarque says:

I had been thinking about writing ‘The Black Obelisk,’  
about treating that early part of my life, for years [...]. I

wanted to write about Genevieve, the girl in the asylum.  
[...] Then I gradually came to feel that I wanted to write  
about all the other things at the same time – the tombstone  
business and so on [...].<sup>30</sup>

Although this does, of course, not invalidate the symbolism of the obelisk, it is nonetheless an indicator that the various readings might not all be of profound significance to the understanding of the novel.

One further possible reading of the obelisk deserves mentioning. It concerns the concepts of nationalism and militarism. As Bodmer describes the garden of the stonemasonry, he pictures the stones and monuments as follows:

Da stehen sie, angeführt wie eine Kompanie von einem  
dünnen Leutnant, von dem Obelisk Otto, der gleich  
neben der Tür seinen Posten hat. Er ist das Stück, das ich  
Heinrich geraten habe zu verkaufen, das älteste Denkmal  
der Firma, ihr Wahrzeichen und eine Monstrosität an  
Geschmacklosigkeit (*Obelisk*, p. 23).

It is reported that the stone masonry has been in the Kroll-family for sixty years, i.e. from the early 1860s. The obelisk would therefore have arrived in the Kroll's garden at the time of Bismarck's endeavours to create a large, united Germany. The 'Obelisk Otto' thus presumably alludes to this historical figure. By describing the monument as 'eine Monstrosität an Geschmacklosigkeit', Bodmer communicates his disagreement not only with the concept of a politically dominating Germany, but also with the achievement of a such through militarism and nationalistic sentiment.

Having stood unsellable in the garden of the Krolls' stone masonry for six decades, the history of the obelisk begins a new era, when it is sold off as a gravestone. The changing circumstances for the obelisk are paralleled in the lives of the characters, Isabelle and Bodmer, which likewise alter directions. The former, whose real name is

Geneviève Terhoven, has been diagnosed with schizophrenia and admitted to a mental hospital which is situated on a hill at the outskirts of Bodmer's hometown, Werdenbrück.<sup>31</sup> Employed to play the church organ in the institution on Sundays, Bodmer encounters and falls in love with her as 'Isabelle'. Her illness, however, and the unique logic which governs her thoughts give her an air of untouchability. As, at the end of the novel, she is cured and discharged from the hospital, Bodmer's associations with Isabelle cease, as she resumes her real identity as Geneviève Terhoven.

Prior to her cure, it is the thought-provoking notions which emerge from Isabelle's schizophrenic mind that especially catch Bodmer's fascination: 'Dazu kam, daß oft eine sonderbare Weisheit durch das schimmerte, was sie sagte; es war nur verschoben und gab dann überraschend einen Fernblick frei, der einem das Herz klopfen ließ [...]' (*Obelisk*, p. 48). The isolated and elevated position of the institution and the oracular presentation of Isabelle create the impression of a realm of a higher insight and spirituality.

Sie [die Ärzte] haben sie [Isabelle] zur Strecke gebracht.  
Aber was ist es, das sie zur Strecke gebracht haben? denke ich. Ist es vielleicht in jedem von uns, verschüttet, verborgen, und was ist es wirklich? [...] [I]st alles nur ein bißchen tiefgründig scheinendes Durcheinander, eine Verschiebung der Sinne, eine Täuschung, Unsinn, der wie Tiefsinn aussieht, wie Wernicke [der Arzt] behauptet? Aber warum habe ich es dann geliebt [?] [...] War es nicht trotz Wernicke, als ob in einem geschlossenen Raum eine Tür geöffnet worden wäre, und man hätte Regen und Blitze und Sterne gesehen? (*Obelisk*, pp. 352-53).

This spiritual air surrounding Isabelle's person and the hospital remains a reflection of Bodmer's perception of the place. The tranquil surroundings of the institution are of great import to the development that Bodmer undergoes in the course of the novel.

Ich liebe den Park [des Hospitals], weil er still ist und weil ich hier mit niemand über Krieg, Politik und Inflation zu reden brauche. Ich kann ruhig sitzen und so altmodische Dinge tun wie auf den Wind lauschen, den Vögeln zuhören und das Licht beobachten, wie es durch das helle Grün der Baumkronen filtert (*Obelisk*, p. 39).

Isabelle's illness is in itself of secondary import to the story. However, her character has a positive influence on Bodmer's self-exploration. Due to the schizophrenia, which justifies Isabelle's spontaneous philosophizing, the dialogues between her and Bodmer are mostly confusing or even nonsensical. It is, nevertheless, this alternative logic of Isabelle's mind which triggers Bodmer to question the real world and his individual role in it. Besides Isabelle, the hospital vicar, Bodendiek, and the doctor, Wernicke, who represent the opposing camps of religion and science respectively, also stimulate Bodmer's introspective mode. The institution on the hill thus becomes a location to which Bodmer retreats temporarily in order to consider life from a wider perspective, away from earthly issues. It is with some justification that most general studies on Remarque's work note the parallelism between *Obelisk* and Thomas Mann's *Der Zauberberg*.<sup>32</sup>

In line with Remarque's other novels, an important theme is, of course, the existence of irrationality not only in Isabelle's mind, but also in the real – and supposedly rational – world. Having participated in the Great War and experienced the inflation of the early 1920s, it is not surprising that Bodmer should juxtapose ordinary life with that of the mental institution, and question the concept of madness. In conversation with Isabelle, Bodmer almost airs his thoughts on this: '*Draußen*, bei den Verrückten, hätte ich fast gesagt [my emphasis]' (*Obelisk*, p. 84). A few pages later, he proceeds to exemplify the senselessness of the allegedly rational world outside of the hospital: '[I]ch hätte damals auch nie geglaubt, daß ich einmal Menschen töten und dafür nicht aufgehängt, sondern

dekoriert werden würde, und trotzdem ist es so gekommen' (*Obelisk*, p. 91). The employment of oxymoron locally in the novel further suggests an underlying irrationality in the prevailing and generally accepted values and way of life outside the mental institution: "Ich [Heinrich Kroll] habe das Kreuzdenkmal verkauft", sagte er mit gespielter Bescheidenheit, hinter der ein gewaltiger Triumph *schweigend brüllt* [my emphasis]' (*Obelisk*, p. 18). Although this example shows the oxymoron used in a trivial context, its paradoxical aspect creates the impression of incongruity in relation to Heinrich's character. He is, of course, later revealed to be a keen supporter of the far right, and the illogical quality of the oxymoron thus projects onto also Heinrich's political conviction and suggests it to be equally irrational.

Although Bodmer applies oxymoron largely to show the irrationality of the presumed sane world, the contradictory figure of speech is not entirely excluded from depictions of life also within the mental hospital. Hence, oxymoron is used in Bodmer's description of the ward with war-inflicted, psychological conditions:

Die Explosionen der Granaten sind immer noch in diesen armen Ohren, die Augen spiegeln noch wie vor fünf Jahren das fassungslose Entsetzen, Bajonette bohren sich ohne Unterlaß weiter in weiche Bäuche, Tanks zermalmen jede Stunde schreiende Verwundete und pressen sie flach wie Flundern, das Donnern der Schlacht, das Krachen der Handgranaten, das Splittern der Schädel, das Röhren der Minen, das Ersticken in zusammenstürzenden Unterständen ist durch eine schreckliche schwarze Magie hier präserviert worden und *tobt nun schweigend* in diesem Pavillion zwischen Rosen und Sommer weiter [my emphasis] (*Obelisk*, pp. 154-55).

Even then, the target of criticism is found in the world outside the institution. Bodmer does not suggest that the behaviour of these former soldiers is intrinsically irrational.

Rather, the senselessness is blamed on the concept of warfare and the elements in society which allow or even promote its occurrence.

Possibly as a result of his experiences in the war (and similarly to Birkholz and Lohkamp in *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*), Bodmer finds himself at the opening of *Obelisk* without direction or purpose in life. The effect of this on his psyche is conveyed most clearly in the tonal difference between the passages of Bodmer's direct speech, and those dominated by his thoughts. The dialogues and descriptions of other characters are mostly both humorous and light-hearted. This is exemplified, for instance, in Bodmer's depiction of his friend, Georg:

Georg Kroll ist knapp vierzig Jahre; aber sein Kopf glänzt bereits wie die Kegelbahn im Gartenrestaurant Boll. Er glänzt, seit ich ihn kenne, und das ist jetzt über fünf Jahre her. Er glänzt so, daß im Schützengraben, wo wir im selben Regiment waren, ein Extrabefehl bestand, daß Georg auch bei ruhigster Front seinen Stahlhelm aufbehalten müsse – so sehr hätte seine Glatze selbst den sanftmütigsten Gegner verlockt, durch einen Schuß festzustellen, ob sie ein riesiger Billardball sei oder nicht (*Obelisk*, pp. 13-14).

When Bodmer is alone, however, the tone of the narrative changes and reveals an introspective and melancholic individual. In chapter two, for instance, Bodmer sits alone in his room above the stone masonry. Having glanced at some poetry he composed whilst in the army, he decides to take a stroll in the garden. There, he suddenly hears the song of a thrush:

Sie jubelt und klagt und bewegt mir das Herz. [...] [E]s schwemmt mich weg, es lockert alles auf, ich stehe auf einmal hilflos und verloren da und wundere mich daß ich nicht zerreiße oder wie ein Ballon in den Abendhimmel fliege, bis ich mich schließlich fasse und durch den Garten und den Nachtgeruch zurückstolpere, die Treppe hinauf, zum Klavier, und auf die Tasten haue und sie streichle und versuche, auch so etwas wie eine Drossel zu sein, und

herauszuschmettern und zu beben, was ich fühle [...] (*Obelisk*, p. 35).

The previously colloquial and light-hearted tone of the description of Georg has switched to reveal a voice in Bodmer which is both sentimental and poetic. This impression is generated by the nature of both the content and the language. In the course of the novel, the latter is indeed adorned by aestheticizing elements almost exclusively when Bodmer is alone. Remarque thereby allows the reader to see a vulnerable aspect to Bodmer's character which is otherwise hidden from his surroundings. In his description of the hospital park, for instance, Bodmer poeticizes the language through alliteration: 'Nach dem Frühstück gehe ich in den Park der Anstalt. Es ist ein schönes, weitläufiges Gelände mit *Bäumen*, *Blumen* und *Bänken* [...] [my emphases]' (*Obelisk*, p. 39).

Another aestheticizing tool which Bodmer applies is that of reiteration. This particular device is used as Bodmer, inspired by the singing thrush, attempts to express his emotions through the piano:

Ich kann nicht richtig spielen, weder auf dem Klavier  
noch auf dem Leben, *nie*, *nie* habe ich es gekonnt, *immer*  
war ich zu hastig, *immer* zu ungeduldig, *immer* kam etwas  
dazwischen, *immer* brach es ab – aber wer kann schon  
richtig spielen, und wenn er es kann, was nützt es ihm  
dann? Ist das große Dunkel darum weniger aussichtslos  
[...] [my emphases]? (*Obelisk*, pp. 35-36).

Aside from the reiteration of the antonyms 'nie' and 'immer', texture is created by the juxtaposition of the direct and the figurative use of the verb 'spielen' in relation to the piano and life, respectively.

The 'große Dunkel' which Bodmer speaks of in the quotation above expresses not only his depressive state of mind, but also that this revolves around a lack of belonging or having a focal point. As shown in relation to *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, a

similar void characterizes also the lives of the former soldiers in those novels. Bäumer, for instance, subconsciously attempts to create a focal point, by physically clinging to things in the material world. In *Obelisk*, Bodmer's sense of having been uprooted is conveyed in a different way. In order to explain this, it is necessary first to contemplate the two women in Bodmer's life in the year of 1923.

As established above, Isabelle is depicted in an almost spiritual light, and Bodmer's attraction appears to be directed primarily at her mind. Barker and Last in fact claim the bond between Bodmer and Isabelle to be 'far more spiritual than any other man-woman relationship in Remarque's work'.<sup>33</sup> In his hometown, Werdenbrück, Bodmer then encounters Gerda, who is the antithesis to Isabelle. She works as an acrobat, is earthbound and uncomplicated. In contrast to his fascination with Isabelle's intellect, Bodmer's attraction to Gerda is predominantly physical. Yet, despite the fact that these two women are fundamentally dissimilar, neither of them constitutes a true focal point in Bodmer's life. In other words, neither of them fills the void or 'das große Dunkel' which Bodmer experiences. Separately, they each pose him the same question: 'Wo warst du all die Zeit?'; 'Wo bist du gewesen?'; 'Wo warst du?' (*Obelisk*, pp. 41 (231), 84, 146). Bodmer's answers are always vague: 'Irgendwo – da draußen –'; 'Draußen, irgendwo –'; 'Draußen'; 'Irgendwo' (*Obelisk*, pp. 41, 84, 146, 231). His reference to both worlds as 'draußen', conveys his sensation of belonging in neither the physical realm of Gerda, nor in the spiritual sphere of Isabelle.

Bodmer's search for a meaning to life is communicated through the number of questions in his mind. The episode during which Bodmer plays the piano concludes in precisely such a flow of questions:

[A]ber wer kann schon richtig spielen, und wenn er es kann, was nützt es ihm dann? Ist das große Dunkel darum weniger aussichtslos, brennt die verzweiflung über die

ewige Unzulänglichkeit darum weniger schmerzhaft, und ist das Leben dadurch jemals zu erklären und zu fassen und zu reiten wie ein zahmes Pferd, oder ist es immer wie ein mächtiges Segel im Sturm, das uns trägt und uns, wenn wir es greifen wollen, ins Wasser fegt? Da ist manchmal ein Loch vor mir, das scheint bis in den Mittelpunkt der Erde zu reichen. Was füllt es aus? Die Sehnsucht? Die Verzweiflung? Ein Glück? Und welches? Die Müdigkeit? Die Resignation? Der Tod? Wozu lebe ich? Ja, wozu lebe ich? (*Obelisk*, pp. 35-36).

Similar passages of successive questions occur regularly throughout *Obelisk*. It is therefore the absence of questions – indeed, of any thought – which eventually marks the moment of closure for Bodmer. As Isabelle is cured and resumes her real identity of Geneviève, Bodmer says goodbye to her in his mind. However, his words are equally directed at his own person, as he realizes that he can let go of the past and overcome his experience of the war:

Leb wohl, Isabelle! Du bist nicht ertrunken, ich weiß das plötzlich. Du bist nicht untergegangen und nicht gestorben! [...] [D]u bist immer da, und du wirst nie untergehen, alles ist immer da, nichts geht jemals unter, Licht und Schatten nur ziehen darüber hin, es ist immer da, das Antlitz vor der Geburt und nach dem Tode, und manchmal scheint es durch in dem, was wir für Leben halten, und blendet uns eine Sekunde, und wir sind nie ganz dieselben danach! (*Obelisk*, p. 353).

Following this self-revelation, Bodmer's reaction resembles that of Bäumer, following Kemmerich's death. He runs down the hill towards the town and relishes in the mere fact that he is alive. He then realizes: '[E]s gibt keine Fragen und keine Antworten mehr!' (*Obelisk*, p. 353). Isabelle's recovery has brought also Bodmer a sense of closure. Soon after, he leaves Werdenbrück to begin a new job in Berlin. Sitting on the train, his thoughts wander to his experiences of 1923, and although the year has been characterized by introspection, Bodmer finally breaks with the past:

‘[Z]uletzt denke ich an gar nichts mehr’ (*Obelisk*, p. 392). The Weimar account concludes with this statement. Bodmer is no longer governed by the past, but travels to Berlin to commence his ‘verspätete Jugend’.<sup>34</sup>

At this point in the novel, time advances to 1955. Bodmer summarizes the influence of National Socialism on the people from his life of 1923. He proceeds to stress the extent of material damage Germany suffered during the war. In Werdenbrück, only the mental hospital and the adjacent building, a birth clinic, were left undamaged. In relation to the former, Bodmer (and Remarque) thereby implies that the destruction exceeded the visual scars. Indeed, an expansion of the mental institution proved necessary. Also the birth clinic was expanded. In the light of the didactic undertones of the novel as a whole, Bodmer (and, as above, Remarque) suggests that a new generation could provide hope for the future – if these people and the reader would only learn from the past. If not – the novel claims – they will become the next generation of soldiers.

Remarque’s next novel, *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*, takes the reader to the countries of Switzerland, France, Italy and the principality of Monaco. The work is set in the year of 1950 and is, in addition to *Obelisk*, the only Remarque novel dealing with the time following the Second World War. However, whereas the war is central to the message of *Obelisk*, the historical setting plays merely a subordinate role in *Der Himmel*.

In this novel, Remarque distances himself from his otherwise favoured themes of war and exile. Instead, he depicts a woman’s realization and gradual acceptance of being terminally ill with tuberculosis. It is this temporary thematic shift as well as the employment of a female protagonist which distinguish *Der Himmel* from the other novels of the *Hauptwerk*.

Despite the free-standing position of *Der Himmel*, there are certain links to the other novels which cannot be overlooked. Lillian Dunkerque's name constitutes the most pronounced example. As shown in the Introduction of this thesis, the name features several times and in a variety of spellings in Remarque's collected works. In relation to the plot, *Der Himmel* shares a number of common points particularly with *Kameraden*, but also with the early novel, *Station am Horizont*; the short story, *Das Rennen Vanderveldes*; and the film synopsis, *The Other Love*. These pieces all revolve around at least one of the topics of cars, racing and tuberculosis. The similarities between *Der Himmel* and *Kameraden* are especially plentiful and exceed the obvious connection between Pat and Lillian through their incurable illness. In both works, for example, the sanatoria are camouflaged to resemble hotels. This warped image is consciously upheld by the hospital staff with a stubbornness that borders on dishonesty towards the patients. The topic of death is shunned, as exemplified in the euphemistic use of 'abreisen' in references to deceased patients (*Der Himmel*, pp. 48, 51, 87-88, 310; *Kameraden*, pp. 347-48). Another aspect which further links *Der Himmel* to *Kameraden* is the zoomorphic depiction of the cars, Karl and Giuseppe. This was discussed also in chapter two of this thesis, in which the likeness of the former to a loyal dog was highlighted. In *Der Himmel*, Giuseppe is comparably described as 'ein alter Löwe', and the sound of the car engine is subsequently termed 'Giuseppes Gebrüll' (*Der Himmel*, p. 14). The initial encounters between Lohkamp and Pat in *Kameraden*, and Clerfayt and Lillian in *Der Himmel*, furthermore revolve around these two vehicles, and the cars therefore play core roles in the plot development early on in the two novels.<sup>35</sup>

*Station am Horizont* and *Das Rennen Vanderveldes* are connected to *Der Himmel* largely through their shared theme of car-racing. However, especially the former two have striking similarities. Hence, the storyline of the short prose, *Das Rennen*

*Vanderveldes*, reappears in a barely revised version in *Station am Horizont*. One final link to *Der Himmel* which has, however, largely been overlooked by literary critics is that of the novel-fragment *Gam*. The lack of attention to this latter relationship must be seen as a reflection of the fact that *Gam* remained unpublished until 1998. Only few critics incorporate *Gam* in their studies on Remarque and his novels.<sup>36</sup> Sternburg, 1998, is the earliest example. He nevertheless fails to identify the correlation between this early novel-fragment and the much later work, *Der Himmel*. However, when Sternburg describes the character, Gam, as ‘von der Sucht nach Leben getrieben’, this statement is equally applicable to Lillian.<sup>37</sup> In fact, in *Der Himmel*, an almost identical assertion is made about latter: ‘[S]ie war auf der Jagd nach dem Leben’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 137).

Sternburg’s lack of recognition of the relationship between Lillian and Gam presumably originates in his perception of the former as a typical Remarquean, female character. As seen in the novels analysed thus far, the leading female characters of Remarque’s works are rarely developed in depth. The distance between the reader and these characters is partly caused by their depiction from an external perspective only. The female protagonist Gam, in the novel-fragment of the same name, is an exception. Her character and viewpoint dominate the work, and Sternburg justly emphasizes her status as ‘Titelheldin’. However, he places Lillian in the same category as Remarque’s standard female characters; in the shadow of the male protagonists: [Die Frauen] erscheinen doch letztlich nur als das große Echo der Liebespassionen von Remarques männlichen Helden. “Gam” aber erzählt der Autor fast vollständig aus dem Blickwinkel der Frau’.<sup>38</sup>

Sternburg’s line of reasoning is not infallible, as a careful examination of the narrative perspective of *Der Himmel* will show.

*Der Himmel* is related in the third person, and has a perspectival structure comparable to that of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. In the latter, the focus has been shown to switch

intermittently between the émigrés, Kern and Steiner. The examination of the narrative perspective, however, led to the conclusion that Kern is the chief focalizer and, hence, the protagonist. The composition of perspective and focus is similar in *Der Himmel*. Throughout this novel the focal point alternates between the two characters of Lillian and Clerfayt. The latter is a racing-driver with whom Lillian goes in search for life. Notwithstanding the switching focus between these two characters, an analysis of the space they each occupy in the story reveals that inequality also characterizes the relationship between Lillian and Clerfayt. Whereas he figures in only approximately half of the pages of the novel, Lillian is present almost throughout the work. An assessment of the perspective shows a similar tendency. The amount of pages presented from Lillian's view far exceeds those which reflect the perspective of Clerfayt. Despite the duality of the focus and the point-of-view, the disproportionate presence of the two characters on the individual pages clearly suggests that Lillian is the actual central figure in *Der Himmel*. Returning briefly to Sternburg's claim that the character, Gam, should be Remarque's only female protagonist, it appears that the critic has overlooked Lillian's prevailing presence and viewpoint in *Der Himmel*. This is all the more unfortunate since Sternburg's argument for Gam's distinctive status is based precisely on her dominance of the narrative perspective.<sup>39</sup>

Having determined that Lillian constitutes the central element in *Der Himmel*, it can be established that the novel is not primarily a depiction of the tragic love story between Lillian and Clerfayt – as has generally been suggested – but rather that of Lillian's love for life, and her eventual recognition that heaven has no favourites.

With Lillian at the core of the story, the function of Clerfayt's character within the narrative begs some consideration. Lillian's 'Jagd nach dem Leben' (*Himmel*, p. 127) would, for instance, have been equally conceivable without Clerfayt at her side. As the

novel stands, however, it is his arrival at the sanatorium which brings Lillian to consider the possibility of stopping treatment and leaving the mountains. In Lillian's view, Clerfayt becomes a representative of freedom and of life away from the physical and emotional confinement of the altitudinal sanatorium. The character of Clerfayt is likewise at the centre of the plot when his sudden death brings the novel to its climax. However, in addition to Clerfayt's role in these key events locally in the work, he forms – more importantly – a contrast to Lillian and the *Lebensphilosophie* she adopts. Clerfayt's character becomes the main narrative tool utilized to show the difference between Lillian's outlook on life and that of the general population who live in relative oblivion of their own mortality, a category, to which also Clerfayt belongs.

Initially, it appears that Clerfayt and Lillian lead similar existences governed by uncertainty. In this respect, Remarque remains partly loyal to his previous theme of depicting circumstances which exceed the control of the individual victims. Lillian has been diagnosed with terminal tuberculosis, and in his profession as a racing driver Clerfayt too lives in relative proximity to personal extinction: 'Wir sind ja ähnlich, dachte sie [Lillian]. Wir haben ja beide keine Zukunft! Seine reicht immer nur bis zum nächsten Rennen; und meine bis zum nächsten Blutsturz' (*Der Himmel*, p. 124). They therefore share the aspect of racing against time – he, in sports-competitions, she, with regards to death. However, the fact that Clerfayt ultimately has a choice whether to race or not, differentiates his situation entirely from that of both Lillian and many of the characters in Remarque's other novels.

It is the seeming lack of choice which affects Lillian's state of mind prior to her departure from the sanatorium. As the patients have to abide by the hospital rules and follow the strict routine of treatment, the environment is shown to reduce their degree of autonomy to that of children. A similar lack of control is said to also have characterized

Lillian's existence before her admission to the sanatorium four years previously. Due to the war, she and her family went into exile, and they subsequently had only little control over the direction of their lives. As Lillian is only twenty-four years old, she would have been a child when the war broke out. She would, at that stage, therefore still have been governed by her parents. Into adulthood, however, her life has remained determined by circumstances beyond her reach, and it is the anxiety that she might not live to experience independence and a sense of control which is the key issue for Lillian and the cause of her fear, at the opening of the novel.

In this aspect, Lillian bears resemblance to Remarque's earlier protagonist, Kai, in *Station am Horizont*: 'Kai wurde unruhig; er empfand plötzlich, daß Minuten und Sekunden seines Lebens ohne Wiederkehr versanken, während er hier mit halber Teilnahme saß; – immerfort ging lautlos irgendwo der Strom der Zeit, rätselhaft und beängstigend in seinem unaufhaltsamem, schattenhaften Vergleiten, ohne Aufhören wie ein unerbittliches Verbluten' (*Station am Horizont*, p. 8). The connection between the latter statement and Lillian's fear of experiencing a fatal haemorrhage should not be overlooked.

Lillian attempts to explain to a fellow patient, Boris Wolkow, her reason for wishing to leave the hospital. However, she struggles to verbalize her emotions: 'Boris, es ist alles falsch, was ich sage, es wird falsch, während ich es sage, die Worte sind falsch und banal und sentimental und treffen es nicht [...]. [W]enn ich ehrlich sein will, und selbst wenn ich glaube, ich sei ehrlich, bin ich es immer noch nicht, siehst du denn nicht, daß ich es selbst nicht weiß?' (*Der Himmel*, p. 102). Although, in the opening chapters, Lillian is unable to define her fear of dying before having realized personal autonomy, her anxiety is communicated indirectly by use of different narrative techniques. Hence,

despite the fact that she cannot explain her trepidation, this is conveyed to the reader in other ways.

One such technique consists of the utilization of light and darkness. The section set in the sanatorium is, for example, noticeably prolific in references to the latter. This is especially the case, when the narrative is focalized through the character of Lillian.

Darkness commonly functions as a symbol of danger and death, and its prominence in Lillian's perception of her surroundings therefore indicates her constant preoccupation with her medical condition and the possibility of having a fatal haemorrhage.

Remarque's conscious use of light and darkness, as expressive of Lillian's emotions, is exemplified in the following excerpt. Another young, female patient has passed away and, wishing to say her goodbyes, Lillian enters the room in which the coffin and its content await collection. The room is lit only by moonlight, and Lillian suddenly imagines the possibility that the deceased might not be dead after all:

Konnte es nicht sein, daß Agnes Somerville jetzt, gerade jetzt, in der *engen Dunkelheit* der raschelnden Seide zu schreien versuchte, mit vertrockneter Kehle, ohne einen Laut hervorbringen zu können? Ich bin verrückt, dachte Lillian; was denke ich da? [...] *Licht*, dachte sie, ich muß *Licht* machen! Sie ging zur Tür zurück; aber plötzlich blieb sie stehen und lauschte. Sie glaubte ein Knistern gehört zu haben, sehr leise, aber deutlich, als kratzten Nägel auf Seide. Rasch drehte sie den Schalter an. *Das scharfe Licht* der ungeschützten Lampe an der Decke trieb die *Nacht*, den Mond und das Entsetzen zurück. Ich höre Gespenster, dachte sie. Es war mein eigenes Kleid. Es waren meine eigenen Nägel. Es war nicht ein müder, letzter Rest von Leben, der sich noch einmal geregt hat. Sie starrte wieder auf den Sarg, der jetzt im *grelle Licht* stand. Nein – dieser *schwarze*, polierte Kasten mit den Bronzegriffen enthielt kein Leben mehr. Im Gegenteil – in ihm war die *finsterste* Drohung eingeschlossen, die die Menschheit kannte [my emphases] (*Der Himmel*, pp. 22-23).

Darkness and light are clearly used symbolically in this passage. Initially, the room is lit only by the pallid light of the moon. Influenced by the atmosphere, Lillian envisages the suffocating darkness inside the coffin, and she becomes aware of the fact that she too is shrouded in the blackness of the night. As she imagines the revival of the dead girl, the demarcation line between the realm of the living and that of the dead diminishes. This impression is reinforced by the all-pervading darkness and its traditional symbolic meaning of death and danger. Lillian consequently rushes to turn on the light, so as to draw a clear boundary between her own person and that of the deceased, and to thereby confirm, to herself, that she is indeed still alive. Through the brightness of the light, the division between the dead and the living is restored, at least temporarily. Towards the end of the quotation, Lillian seeks emotional refuge in the light, which is described as both 'scharf' and 'grell'. The dead girl, on the other hand, is confined to the coffin which (in contrast to the sharp light) is of black material and said to conceal 'die finsterste Drohung'.

The figurative property of light and darkness recurs on several occasions in the novel. When Lillian departs from the sanatorium and emotionally ceases to live in the shadow of her illness, the literal brightness of the light is used symbolically to reflect Lillian's state of mind:

Die Ausgangstür war jetzt ganz nahe. Die Sonne blendete von draußen herein. Noch ein paar Schritte, dachte Lillian, und das Spießrutenlaufen ist zu Ende. Noch einen Schritt! [...] Sie war draußen. Der Schnee reflektierte das Licht so stark, daß sie kaum sehen konnte. "Auf Wiedersehn, Hollmann!" "Auf Wiedersehn, Lillian. Ich komme bald nach." Sie blickte auf. Er lachte. Gott sei Dank, dachte sie, endlich kein Schulmeister (*Der Himmel*, p. 108).

Her sense of escaping is not expressed solely through the brightness of the light, but is also underlined by the specific mention of the main entrance. The doorway thus comes to mark the initial dividing point for Lillian between imprisonment and freedom; death and life; helplessness and being in control.<sup>40</sup>

Leaving the sanatorium, Lillian experiences a sensation of being readmitted to, what might be termed, the realm of the living. The psychological impact of physically distancing herself from the world of the sanatorium culminates as she travels through the Gotthard Tunnel. This part of the journey and its impact on Lillian is described through parallel and partly overlapping symbolic images. Light and darkness are, for example, again applied as illustrative of the concepts of life and death. The gloom of the tunnel and the knowledge of being underground causes Lillian to long for light: ‘Die ferne Furcht jeder Kreatur, die auf dem Boden und nicht in ihm lebt, die Furcht, begraben zu werden, ließ sie so heftig auf das Licht und auf den Himmel warten, daß alles andere ausgelöscht wurde’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 114). Nearing the end of the tunnel, Lillian anticipates the escape from, not only the literal darkness of her immediate surroundings, but also the figurative darkness of the sanatorium and death. The literal light at the end of the tunnel not merely represents life. It also symbolizes the new and unknown existence which she is about to commence. Clerfayt casually comments: ‘Und seit vier Jahren waren Sie nicht unten? Das ist dann ja fast so, als wären Sie noch einmal geboren’ (*Der Himmel*, pp. 115-16). The seemingly hyperbolic quality of his statement is thus, at a conceptual level, more fitting than he realizes. Although focalized through the character of Lillian, Remarque presents the latter part of the journey as a metaphorical rebirth. Having already referred to the tunnel as ‘der steinernen Bauch der Erde’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 114), Lillian’s experience suddenly assumes a striking resemblance to the birth of a child – visualized from the perspective of the latter:

Sie würde auf einem neuen Planeten auftauchen, hinausgeworfen aus der Erde, stürzend und gleichzeitig vorwärts geschleudert, ohne anderen Gedanken mehr als den einen: hinauszukommen und zu atmen. Ihr war, als würde sie in letzter Minute durch einen Grabesschlauch gerissen, dessen Wände dicht hinter ihr zusammenstürzten und sich verschütteten, vorwärts, dem Lichte zu, das plötzlich wie eine milchige Monstranz vor ihr auftauchte, auf sie zuraste und da war (*Der Himmel*, p. 115).

The extensive application of symbolism in the episode of the Gotthard Tunnel serves to stress the impact this short journey has on Lillian, her sensation of being reborn. Whereas Clerfayt presumably finds the dark train ride tedious and a trivial occurrence – his perspective is not disclosed – the journey touches Lillian spiritually, in that it definitively transports her – physically as well as mentally – back to the world of the living.

Since the journey through the Gotthard Tunnel signifies Lillian's psychological crossover from death to life, this episode appropriately also marks the introduction of the extrinsic, thematic pattern of Ovid's version of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice.<sup>41</sup> More than once, Lillian equates the drive through the tunnel with the crossing of the Styx, the river which allegedly winds around Hades nine times: 'Der alte Planet, auf dem das Sanatorium stand, blieb hinter ihr für immer; sie konnte nicht zurück, so wenig man zweimal den Styx überqueren konnte'; 'Über den Styx geworfen und gerettet' (*Der Himmel*, p. 115). The same episode also refers to another river, Acheron, which likewise separates Hades from the world of the living: 'Der acherontische Lärm wurde zu normalem Knattern und schwieg dann. Der Zug hielt in einem weichen Rauschen von Grau und Gold und milder Luft. Es war die Luft des Lebens nach der gewölbekalten, toten Luft des Tunnels' (*Der Himmel*, p. 115). Through the application of imagery relating to Greek mythology and especially to Hades, the Gotthard Tunnel

assumes the added symbolic meaning of the realm of death. It is not coincidental that Remarque has chosen a tunnel (as opposed to a bridge, a valley or a national border) to mark this point in Lillian's mental transformation. Its physical attribute of travelling underground is a key element in the overall metaphorical impact of this episode. Hence, as Lillian's train emerges from the darkness of the tunnel, her equation of this with an ascension from the underworld becomes especially fitting.

With reference to the central plot of Ovid's narrative, Murdoch has noted its reflection in *Der Himmel*.<sup>42</sup> The similarities are mostly unambiguous, although the seemingly differing conclusions of the two tales necessitate explanation. Although Clerfayt initially retrieves Lillian from the world of the dead, he loses her again when he fails to abide by the rules of their relationship. Lillian has explicitly communicated her wish to remain free, and yet Clerfayt attempts to confine her through marriage. As a result, he loses both Lillian and even his life. Although this development differs from the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, the principle is similar. Orpheus too ignores the condition attached to the retrieval of his loved one from Hades. He is prohibited from looking at her until they reach the upper world. Orpheus is, however, incapable of resisting a quick glance, and Eurydice immediately falls back to the underworld. Although, as Murdoch notes, the parallels are not exact,<sup>43</sup> the outcome of the two stories is related in as far as Clerfayt and Orpheus fail to keep Lillian and Eurydice, respectively. Moreover, in both cases the loss is the outcome of the man's disregard or misjudgement of the consequences of breaking the rules.

The similarity between the story of Orpheus and Eurydice, and that of Clerfayt and Lillian is not merely implied. A clear parallel is drawn by one of the characters, Levalli, in *Der Himmel*. When Clerfayt explains, figuratively, that he met Lillian at the gateway to Hades, Levalli comments:

Vor den Toren des Hades. Ich will sie nicht weiter fragen. Es ist genug, um die Phantasie blühen zu lassen. In dem grauen Zwielight der Hoffnungslosigkeit, dem nur Orpheus entrann. Aber selbst er mußte den Preis zahlen: doppelte Einsamkeit – so paradox das auch klingt – weil er eine Frau aus dem Hades zurückholen wollte. Sind Sie bereit zu zahlen, Clerfayt? (*Der Himmel*, p. 182).

*Der Himmel* contains many other, less specific, references to Greek mythology. These occur predominantly when the narrative is focalized through Lillian, but, as the extract above shows, they are by no means restricted to her person. The mythological references do therefore not function as a means of conveying the characters' level of education. Rather, they serve as a tool for the third-person narrator to create a translucent, but continued, link between *Der Himmel* and Ovid's depiction of Eurydice's failed attempt to return to life.

Although the first implications of the story of Orpheus and Eurydice are not introduced until the episode set in the Gotthard Tunnel (one third into the novel), the mythical tale nonetheless functions as a thematic model for *Der Himmel* in its entirety. Remarque's novel commences and concludes in the sanatorium which is presented, metaphorically, as a place of death. The fact that Lillian starts out and completes her short life of independence in the sanatorium therefore mirrors the two deaths – the first from a snake bite; the second from Orpheus's misdemeanour – which Eurydice endures in the myth.<sup>44</sup>

It could be argued that an important factor differentiates the two characters of Lillian and Eurydice, and their motion across the spheres of life and death. Whereas the latter does not reach the 'upper world'<sup>45</sup> before her husband's disobedience of the gods forces her to return to the underworld of Hades, Lillian successfully leaves the sanatorium, passes through the Gotthard Tunnel and emerges with a sensation of having been

readmitted to the world of the living. However, Lillian's recommencement of life is deceptive. She does not return to the realm of the living as an equal.

Lillian's continued existence on the periphery to death is implied in her physical appearance and the manner in which she is perceived by the other characters. Above, it was shown how Lillian experiences the journey through the Gotthard Tunnel to be irreversible: 'Der alte Planet, auf dem das Sanatorium stand, blieb hinter ihr für immer' (*Der Himmel*, p. 115). Although she does not verbalize this particular figure of speech, Clerfayt soon after uses a similar term of phrase in a reference to Lillian's person: 'Die Dame kommt von einem andern Stern und kennt unsere Gebräuche hier unten noch nicht' (*Der Himmel*, p. 118). Even as Lillian again becomes acquainted with ordinary life, the descriptions of her exterior reveal that she remains an observer rather than becoming a participator in life. In a Parisian fashion store when trying on new dresses, the sales woman compares the visual impact of Lillian to that of 'einem gefallenem Engel' (*Der Himmel*, 136). She also tries on some jackets, 'die den Körper fast substanzlos machten' (*Der Himmel*, p. 138). As Clerfayt later catches sight of Lillian wearing one of these jackets, his impression of her is likewise that of an otherworldly being:

[O]ben, in ihrem Zimmer, würden ihr [Lillian] wahrscheinlich plötzlich aus der goldenen Bolerojacke zwei Flügel wachsen, und sie würde durch das Fenster fliegen, rasch, hinaus, nicht zur Sainte-Chapelle, von der sie ihm erzählt hatte, sondern auf einem sehr eleganten Hexenbesen, der vermutlich auch von Balenciaga oder Dior war, direkt zu einer Walpurgisnacht, an der nur Teufel in Fracks teilnahmen, die jeden Geschwindigkeitsrekord gebrochen hatten, sich in sechs Sprachen fließend unterhielten, von Plato bis Heidegger alles kannten und nebenher noch Klaviervirtuosen, Boxweltmeister und Poeten waren (*Der Himmel*, p. 159).

Whereas the sales woman compares Lillian to an angel, Clerfayt analogizes her with an enchantress. He thereby expresses his attraction to her and implies the power she has over him. The main point is, however, that whether equated with an angel or a witch, Lillian differs from the people around her. Even after having ascended to what Greek mythology would call the 'upper world', she cannot become an integral part of ordinary life: 'Sie lebte in einer schwerelosen, grauen und silbernen Welt' (*Der Himmel*, p. 139). Despite residing in the midst of the vibrant and colourful city of Paris, Lillian is not part of that life.

Having, at least metaphorically, returned to the world of the living, Lillian discovers that her values have changed with the knowledge of her impending death. Her outlook on life has therefore altered from that of standard society. Lillian's uncle, for instance, whom she estimates to be approximately eighty years old, budgets excessively as if he still had a long life to finance. In contrast, Lillian takes a hedonistic approach to life, and Clerfayt says to her: 'Du lebst mit mir wie jemand, der morgen nicht mehr dasein wird. Wie jemand, der immer am Abreisen ist' (*Der Himmel*, p. 272). Clerfayt refers, of course, to Lillian's unwillingness to commit to a relationship and settle down, but unbeknown to the speaker, Remarque consciously employs the ambiguous verb 'abreisen' in his character's comment. Having defined it as a euphemism of death in the opening section of *Der Himmel*, the author thereby plays on this connotative verb also at this later stage in the novel. He thereby pinpoints the aspect which distinguishes Lillian from the majority: the fact that she is dying.

One of the central narrative strategies which Remarque applies in this novel is the impact that narrative and dialogue, respectively, have on the perspective. As noted above, *Der Himmel* is narrated in the third-person and focalized intermittently through the characters of Lillian and Clerfayt. There are, however, a few exceptions to this

pattern, and the reader is occasionally allowed temporary access to the thoughts of also Lillian's fellow patient and close friend in the sanatorium, Boris Wolkow. He and Clerfayt come to constitute the two main persons in Lillian life. The two men essentially represent opposing worlds: Whereas Wolkow has accepted his terminal tuberculosis and his subsequent confinement to the sanatorium, Clerfayt has no health problems, but leads a busy lifestyle which takes him all across Europe.

Despite their central roles in Lillian's existence, the relationship between Lillian and the two men proves to be characterized by dishonesty, miscommunication or lack of communication. The following examples relate to statements by Clerfayt, Wolkow and Lillian: 'Es war nicht wahr' (*Der Himmel*, p. 36); "'Ich habe ihn akzeptiert", sagte er und wußte, daß es nicht wahr war' (*Der Himmel*, p. 64); 'Lillian wußte, daß sie nicht die Wahrheit sagte' (*Der Himmel*, p. 101); 'Ich lüge auch bereits, dachte er' (*Der Himmel*, p. 101); 'Ihr kam keinen Augenblick der Gedanke, ihm die Wahrheit zu sagen' (*Der Himmel*, p. 221); 'Es war nicht wahr' (*Der Himmel*, p. 233). Although evident to the reader, the three characters are oblivious to the persistency of this flaw in their relationship. The reader, however, being able to observe both the contemplations of the individual characters and their accompanying dialogues, cannot but notice the recurrent incongruence between thought and verbalization.

Wolkow and Clerfayt both wish to retain Lillian in their individual worlds. The former attempts to stop Lillian from leaving the sanatorium, and Clerfayt tries to bind her through marriage. She revolts against both ties, but none of the implicated parties manages to communicate effectively their emotions on the matter. The episodes depicting the verbal clashes which take place between Lillian, and Wolkow and Clerfayt, respectively, are heavily dominated by thought, as opposed to actual dialogue. Their communication is simultaneously lacking honest information and willingness to

listen. The dialogues are subsequently fruitless and without satisfactory conclusion. To attain a proper impression of the uneven proportion of narrative and dialogue, as well as the extent to which secrecy and untruthfulness characterize the interaction between Lillian and the two men, the individual episodes need reading in full. The following excerpt, however, offers at least partial insight into the workings of narrative and dialogue in *Der Himmel*. The example shows Wolkow confronting Lillian about her departure from the sanatorium:

“Laß Clerfayt abfahren, und du wirst in wenigen Tagen einsehen, wie falsch es gewesen wäre, diesem Rattenfänger zu folgen”, sagte Wolkow. “Boris”, erwiderte Lillian hoffnungslos. “Es ist nicht Clerfayt. Muß es denn ein anderer Mann sein?” Er antwortete nicht. Wozu sage ich ihr das, dachte er. Ich bin ein Narr, ich tue alles, um sie weiter fortzujagen! Warum sage ich ihr nicht lächelnd, daß sie recht hat? Warum benütze ich nicht den alten Trick? Weiß ich nicht, daß verliert, wer festhalten will, und daß man dem nachläuft, der lächelnd losläßt? Habe ich das vergessen? “Nein”, sagte er. “Es muß nicht ein anderer Mann sein. Aber wenn es nicht so ist, warum fragst du dann nicht mich, ob ich mit dir kommen will?” “Dich?” Falsch, dachte er, wieder falsch! Wozu dränge ich mich ihr auf? Sie will der Krankheit entfliehen – wozu sollte sie da einen Kranken mitnehmen? Der letzte Mann, mit dem sie reisen möchte, bin ich! “Ich will nichts mitnehmen, Boris”, erwiderte sie. “Ich liebe dich; aber ich will nichts mitnehmen.” “Du willst alles vergessen?” Wieder falsch, dachte er verzweifelt (*Der Himmel*, pp. 102-03).

The extract is succeeded by a lengthy, unbroken passage in which Wolkow further reflects upon their situation. He nevertheless does not voice his contemplations, but brings the discussion to an end with the following short utterance of resignation:

‘Adieu, Lillian’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 104). When, later in the novel, Clerfayt shows Lillian his house in the South of France and suggests marriage, the narrative again reflects a breakdown in communication. Clerfayt refuses to acknowledge Lillian’s lack of

enthusiasm towards the idea. Instead the conversation concludes with Clerfayt enforcing his plan: “Wir können es wenigstens versuchen”, sagte Clerfayt. “Wenn es nicht geht, verkaufen wir das Haus” (*Der Himmel*, p. 273). Lillian does not consent to the proposal, but she likewise does not express her objection to Clerfayt. The reader, however, has access to the thoughts which successful communication would have required Lillian to state openly: ‘Ich habe keine Zeit mehr, etwas zu versuchen, dachte Lillian. Und ich habe keine Zeit mehr zu Experimenten mit häuslichem Glück. Es macht mich zu traurig. Ich muß fort!’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 273).

In *Der Himmel*, the focus is predominantly on Lillian’s character. A first-person narrative perspective would therefore perhaps have been a more fitting choice for this work. Certainly, it would have created a level of immediacy and closeness between the reader and the narrative which is not equalled in the novel as it stands. Notwithstanding, as a first-person narrative, the viewpoint would have been limited to Lillian’s experience of events. It would thus have failed to present fully the true relationship between Lillian and the two men. The extent to which Lillian’s illness has altered her approach to life indeed only assumes real clarity when considered against the perspectives of Clerfayt and even Wolkow who, unlike Lillian, has come to terms with his impending death. (Lillian only achieves a similar state of mind at the end of the novel.)

Resulting from the continued lack of effective communication, a barrier remains between Lillian’s character and those of Clerfayt and Wolkow. A similar assertion is applicable also to Lillian’s interactions with other characters. She continuously voices or conveys an image to her surroundings which differs from her thoughts. Dining with Peystre, a friend of her uncle, Lillian appears to be listening politely to his contribution

to the conversation. However, her thoughts disclose that she is less engaged in his talk than her reaction suggests:

Ihm folgte nach einigen Minuten ein Kellner mit einer kleinen Flasche Framboise. [...] “Alter Himbeergeist”, sagte Peystre mit Andacht. “Noch rarer!” Lillian dachte: was würde er tun, wenn ich ihm den Himbeergeist jetzt in sein überzüchtetes Gesicht gösse? Wahrscheinlich würde er das auch verstehen und einen hübschen Satz darüber sagen (*Der Himmel*, p. 262).

The excerpt develops into a paragraph set exclusively in Lillian’s mind; indeed, a large part of the novel revolves around Lillian’s thoughts. As exemplified in the quotation above, even in company, the narrative is often dominated by Lillian’s unspoken contemplations. This prioritized focus on her inner self, combined with the fact that she fails to communicate successfully and honestly with the other characters, creates an overall impression of Lillian’s character being – partly voluntarily – lonely and emotionally secluded. *Remarque* therefore also utilizes the perspective and the unbalanced proportion of narrative and dialogue to pinpoint the isolated position of his female protagonist.

Lillian essentially moves in a sphere which is inaccessible to most people, a sphere between life and death. To highlight Lillian’s preoccupation with her own mortality, but also the reality of the constant threat which death imposes on her existence, the novel incorporates numerous direct and indirect references to demise. As shown above, death is, for example, represented symbolically in the form of darkness. It is, however, also a much used topic in the novel’s similes: ‘Und was sollte dieser Handschuh daneben, der wie eine tote, schwarz gewordene Hand aussah [...]’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 54); ‘Die Reihen der Gondeln, die vor den Anlegestellen wie schwarze Särge auf dem spiegelnden Wasser schwankten, wie schwarze, große Wassergeier [...] [my emphases]’ (*Der*

*Himmel*, p. 210)<sup>46</sup> Other narrative tools have likewise been utilized to convey the message of Lillian's proximity to extinction. Although the hyperbolic verb of 'totlachen' (*Der Himmel*, p. 34) is essentially not concerned with death, it is nonetheless an example of the types of linguistic details which add to the overall gloomy theme of the novel. Lillian's familiarity with the presence of death is also expressed through her use of pronouns. Riding in a horse carriage in the vicinity of the sanatorium, she passes another wagon transporting away the coffin with the deceased patient, Agnes Somerville:

Der Kutscher bekreuzigte sich und trieb das Pferd wieder an. Schweigend fuhren sie die letzten Kurven hinauf und hielten vor dem Seiteneingang des Sanatoriums. Eine elektrische Birne unter einem Porzellanschirm warf einen Kreis gelben Lichtes auf den Schnee. Darin lagen ein paar abgerissene grüne Blätter. Lillian stieg aus. "Es hilft alles nichts", sagte sie mit einem mühsamen Lächeln. "Man kann es eine Weile vergessen – aber man kann *ihm* nicht entgehen [my emphasis]" (*Der Himmel*, p. 39).

As a masculine noun, 'der Tod' necessarily requires the personal pronoun 'er'. There is, however, no direct mention of death in the entire episode, and yet Lillian finds it sufficient to refer to it by pronoun. Another example occurs when Lillian and the young poet, Gérard, stumble across the body of a dead woman in the streets of Paris. Whereas Lillian wishes to notify the authorities, the young man is horror-stricken. 'Gérard ging so eilig, daß sie ihm kaum nachkommen konnte. Als sie die Quais erreicht hatten, sah sie, daß er sehr blaß war. "Es ist etwas anderes, *ihm* gegenüberzustehen, als darüber zu reden, wie?"' sagte sie mit bitterem Spott [my emphasis]' (*Der Himmel*, p. 267). Again, Lillian does not state directly that the pronoun refers to death. This does, however, not blur the reader's comprehension of her statement, but only stresses the implied leading role death has come to play in her existence.

Lillian's ineffective communication with other people results in her conveyance of a false image to her surroundings. Remarque utilizes this aspect of her character to create a convincing leitmotif in the form of mirrors. The deceptive image Lillian communicates verbally is thus illustrated and stressed effectively through her recurrent consultations with her own mirror-reflection. She seeks affirmation that her illness cannot be visually detected, and she finds solace in the fact that she is able to keep her condition secret. By hiding her illness, it becomes less pervasive of her existence and subsequently less real and frightening to her. Her illusory reflection in the mirror therefore serves to deceive not only her surroundings, but to a certain extent also her own mind. Following the taking of an x-ray in the sanatorium, Lillian inspects the black and white image:

[P]lötzlich war ihr, als sähe sie sich selbst, tot, nach Jahren im Grabe, das Fleisch bereits zerfallen zu grauer Erde und nur die Knochen noch fest, das einzige, was standgehalten hatte. Sie legte die Filme auf den Tisch. Ich mache wieder Unsinn, dachte sie – aber sie ging trotzdem zum Spiegel und blickte hinein [...] (*Der Himmel*, pp. 88-89).

A similar example occurs when Lillian enters the dining-room of the sanatorium. In the doorway, she almost collides with another woman who subsequently screams in surprise: 'Lillian ging eilig an den Tisch zu Hollmann und Clerfayt und sah sich dann nach der Frau um. "Was schreit sie denn?" flüsterte sie. "Ich bin doch kein Gespenst! Oder doch? Schon?" Sie suchte nach ihrem Spiegel' (*Der Himmel*, p. 28).

Throughout the novel, Lillian continues to use the mirror as personal confirmation that she is indeed still alive. As a leitmotif, the mirror is therefore especially effective as it not only functions aesthetically, but simultaneously also reflects an important side of Lillian's psyche.

Through most of the novel, Lillian perceives herself as a victim. ‘[P]lötzlich kam wieder einer der Augenblicke, wo alles unverständlich war und alle Tricks nicht halfen, wo das Elend sie überwältigte und alles in ohnmächtigem Aufruhr in ihr schrie: Warum? Warum gerade ich? Was habe ich getan, daß gerade ich getroffen werden mußte?’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 281). However, as a twist to the tale, Clerfayt has a fatal accident in what was intended to be his final car-race before retiring from that profession. Having thus far regarded herself singled out as a victim, Lillian’s initial reaction to the announcement of Clerfayt’s demise is one of disbelief. This is conveyed indirectly by use of different narrative strategies. In Lillian’s mind, for instance, the reiterated prefixation of the noun ‘Spielzeug-’ reveals her incomprehension of what has occurred: ‘Es kann nicht sein, dachte etwas in Lillian. Nicht in diesem *Spielzeugrennen*, nicht in dieser *Spielzeugstadt* mit dem *Spielzeughafen* und dem bunten *Spielzeugpanorama!* [my emphases]’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 292). Lillian basically equates death with illness, but has not considered the numerous other perils which are part of everyday life and which strike unexpectedly and unannounced.

As she associates death with a preceding phase of illness, Lillian is shocked when the hospital announces that Clerfayt has passed away. To stress this, Remarque uses reported speech to depict Lillian’s interaction with other people as she attempts to arrange the funeral. The reported speech conveys effectively Lillian’s confused state of mind and her difficulty in comprehending the turn of events. The exemplifying excerpt is part of a lengthier passage narrated predominantly in reported speech:

Der Portier erklärte ihr, daß die Behörden benachrichtigt werden müßten. Ob sie eine Obduktion wünsche? Manchmal sei es nötig, um die Todesursache festzustellen. Wozu? Wegen der Rechtsansprüche. Die Autofirma könne versuchen, die Rennveranstalter verantwortlich zu machen. Dann seien noch die

Versicherungen zu berücksichtigen; auch könnte es andere Verwicklungen geben – am besten wäre es, auf alles gefaßt zu sein (*Der Himmel*, pp. 300-301).

Lillian's view of her own situation alters following Clerfayt's accidental death, as she realizes that heaven has no favourites, and that everybody potentially lives in the shadow of death. She subsequently decides to return to the sanatorium, as she no longer feels the need to reject a lifestyle governed by her illness.

*Der Himmel* concludes with a short paragraph reminiscent of the closing passage of *Im Westen*. The similarity becomes especially obvious when individual sentences of the two texts are juxtaposed. In *Im Westen*, the narrator says of Bäumer:

*Er fiel im Oktober 1918, an einem Tage, der so ruhig und still war an der ganzen Front, daß der Heeresbericht sich nur auf den Satz beschränkte, im Westen sei nichts Neues zu melden [my emphases] (Im Westen, p. 197).*

In *Der Himmel*, the final paragraph begins:

*Lillian starb sechs Wochen später, an einem weißen Sommermittag, der so still war, daß die Landschaft den Atem anzuhalten schien [my emphases] (Der Himmel, p. 318).*

The highlighted elements show that the two sentences are structured identically, and that, in both examples, death occurs on a particularly quiet day. The similarity between the demise of Lillian and that of Bäumer continues:

*Als man ihn umdrehte, sah man, daß er sich nicht lange gequält haben konnte [...] [my emphasis] (Im Westen, p. 197).*

*Als er [Boris Wolkow] zurückkam, fand er sie tot auf ihrem Bett [my emphasis] (Der Himmel, p. 318).*

Even the closing words of each work reveal a connection:

Sein Gesicht hatte einen so gefaßten Ausdruck, als wäre er beinahe zufrieden damit, daß es so gekommen war (*Im Westen*, p. 197).

[D]as Gesicht wurde schöner, als er [Boris Wolkow] es seit langem gesehen hatte. Er glaubte auch, daß sie glücklich gewesen sei, soweit man einen Menschen jemals glücklich nennen könne (*Der Himmel*, p. 318).

Another connection to *Im Westen* is found in an earlier episode of *Der Himmel*. The day after having discovered the body of a dead woman in Rue de Seine, Lillian searches the newspapers for information of the victim: ‘Sie fand nichts. Es war zu unbedeutend für eine Zeitungsnotiz, daß ein Mensch gestorben war’ (*Der Himmel*, p. 270). This clearly alludes to the notion presented in *Im Westen*. There is, however, not an obvious similarity between the characters of Lillian and Bäumer, and it thus seems curious that Remarque should echo the famous closing words of *Im Westen*, in *Der Himmel*. Graeber in *Zeit zu leben*, for instance, has more in common with Bäumer than does Lillian. The inner journeys of Bäumer and Lillian can, of course, be equated in as far as they both eventually come to terms with their individual situations. However, within the context of the Hauptwerk, Lillian and Bäumer are essentially just another two victims of circumstances beyond their control.

Neither *Obelisk* nor *Der Himmel* received outstanding reviews. The latter in particular was criticized severely. Reich-Ranicki, for example, says of the novel: ‘Die Gestalten sind schablonenhaft, die Aphorismen pubertär, die Symbole mehr als aufdringlich, die

Geschmacklosigkeiten unüberbietbar. Der Stil ist beschämend, die Sentimentalität schauerhaft, die Routine abstoßend'.<sup>47</sup> Reich-Ranicki does, however, also make the point that Remarque's novels have remained evaluated on the basis of reviewers' stance to the early novel *Im Westen*. He then proceeds to imply his own assimilation with the category of those 'die ihm [Remarque] schon vor vielen Jahren gezürnt haben'.<sup>48</sup> The critic thereby admits his biased standpoint, and hence discredits – although unintentionally – his own review.

Remarque-research has nonetheless thus far focused almost exclusively on the war and exile novels. Even in the sixteen *Remarque Jahrbücher* published to date there are no articles focusing on *Der Himmel*. The major studies on Remarque likewise largely reject this novel as weak. Barker and Last, who otherwise offer one of the most valuable interpretations of Remarque's novels, claim in relation to *Der Himmel* that 'a charge of superficiality would on this occasion be difficult to refute'.<sup>49</sup> However, similarly to many of their colleagues, they barely pay the novel any attention. Rather, they treat it on only a few pages in their chapter *The Aftermath and the Inflation Years*. As the title of the chapter suggests, the focus is on the 1920s and *Der Himmel* is predominantly analysed alongside *Kameraden*. However, as the examination of the *Der Himmel*, above, shows, the narrative strategies have been carefully selected to correlate with and support the contents of the work. The perspective, the proportion of narrative to dialogue; symbolism and aesthetic elements applied locally in the novel all fulfil individual functions in conveying the psychological process Lillian undergoes.

A similar interdependence between content and form governs *Obelisk*. Nevertheless, Antkowiak rejects what he calls Remarque's literary routine: 'Im künstlerischen Sinne freilich kann man Remarque leider nur eine allzu große Seßhaftigkeit bestätigen. Seit dem Roman "Der Weg zurück" hat sich Remarque nur zuweilen mit unendlicher Mühe

von der literarischen Routine befreien können'.<sup>50</sup> Charles Poore, however, says: 'The less things change in the novels of Erich Maria Remarque the less they are the same'.<sup>51</sup> Remarque does indeed recycle many elements from novel to novel, but the author also introduces new techniques and material. The above examination of *Obelisk* shows, for example, that *Obelisk* is, simultaneously, a First *and* Second World War novel. Also, despite the fact that the first-person perspective of the framed story echoes techniques found already in *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, Remarque introduces the framework-structure in *Obelisk*, and thereby entirely alters the workings of the text as a whole.

Aside from Reich-Ranicki's attack on *Der Himmel*, of the two novels treated in this chapter, German reviewers generally object more markedly to *Obelisk*. As with Remarque's previous books, this reaction from his native country must be regarded as the result of the work's political message. *Der Himmel*, for instance, although containing scattered criticisms of Germany's inability to deal with its National Socialist past effectively, does not focus on this issue. In *Obelisk*, on the other hand, it constitutes a central theme. The political impact of *Obelisk* can be gathered also from the fact that perceptions of the work have altered with the passing of time. In 1999, for example, Thomas Oppermann explained his introduction to *Obelisk* and its author as follows: 'Alle kennen diesen niedersächsischen Autor der Weltliteratur – Im Westen nichts Neues –, aber was hat er sonst noch geschrieben? Ich lese mit Neugier und Begeisterung'.<sup>52</sup>

## Notes to *Der schwarze Obelisk* and *Der Himmel kennt keine Günstlinge*

1. The diary entries from July 1950 to August 1951 are especially informative of Karen Horney's impact on Remarque's state of mind. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, pp. 425-62. See also: Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 342-49.
2. Remarque, *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, p. 491.
3. A German original is not known to exist. However, for a translation from English by Thomas F. Schneider see: Erich Maria Remarque, 'Praktische Erziehungsarbeit in Deutschland nach dem Krieg', in *Herbstfahrt eines Phantasten*, pp. 226-42. The essay is also in: *Ein militanter Pazifist*, pp. 66-83; and in *Das unbekannte Werk, IV: Kurzprosa und Gedichte*, pp. 387-403. An examination of the text is found in: Lothar Schwindt, 'Geheimdienstarbeit: Remarques Schrift *Practical Educational Work in Germany after the War*', in *Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, pp. 65-78.
4. Although Remarque produced a great number of short stories, essays and poems during the 1920s, most of these were written specifically for the *Echo Continental* or *Sport im Bild*. Remarque gained the financial security and therefore the authorial independence to choose his genre, themes, target group and style following the success of *Im Westen*.
5. Remarque, 'Der letzte Akt: Drehbuch', in *Das unbekannte Werk, III: Die letzte Station, Der letzte Akt*, eds. Thomas F. Schneider and Tilman Westphalen (Cologne: Kiepenheuer und Witsch, 1998), pp.11-151.
6. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 386; Heinrich Placke, 'Die politischen Diskussionen um den Remarque-Film *Der letzte Akt* (Österreich 1955)', in *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook*, 5 (1995), 65-87 (p. 80). See also: Hermann Flau, 'Remarque-Verfilmungen: Ungewollt politisch – politisch ungewollt', in *Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, pp. 113-36 (pp. 125-27).
7. This direct warning statement was not included in Remarque's manuscript. See: Placke, 'Die politischen Diskussionen um den Remarque-Film *Der letzte Akt*'. It must therefore have been added in the process of rewriting which Fritz Habeck undertook. Yet, the same words of caution were adopted by Remarque to form the title of an article which he wrote for the *Daily Express* in 1956. With reference to *Der letzte Akt*, the article unambiguously reflects the author's indignation at the apparent nonchalance with which Germany dealt with its Nazi past. Erich Maria Remarque, 'Seid wachsam! Zum Film *Der letzte Akt*'.

8. Flau lists four further film titles which Remarque were allegedly involved in the production of. These are *Inherit the Wind* (1960), *Exodus* (1960), *The Longest Day* (1962) and *The Victors* (1963). Flau, 'Remarque-Verfilmungen: Ungewollt politisch – politisch ungewollt', pp. 116, 132.
9. Remarque, 'Die letzte Station'.
10. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 395.
11. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, pp. 396-97; Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 118-19; Thomas F. Schneider, 'Erich Maria Remarque – Kurzbiographie in Daten', pp. 88,92.
12. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 4.
13. See Remarque's diary entry from 15 August 1950. *Das unbekannte Werk, V: Briefe und Tagebücher*, pp. 428-31
14. Firda perceives it as 'the last part of Remarque's trilogy on his life in Osnabrück [...]'. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 188. Barker and Last likewise examine *Obelisk* in conjunction with the early First World War novels. Their analysis of this novel is included in the chapter entitled: *The Aftermath and the Inflation Years*. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 69-109. Wagener too takes this stand. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 82.
15. Bernhard Nienaber: *Vom anachronistischen Helden zum larmoyanten Untertan; Heinrich Placke, Die Chiffren des Utopischen: Zum literarischen Gehalt der politischen 50er-Jahre-Romane Erich Maria Remarques* (Göttigen: V & R unipress, 2004).
16. The spelling differs slightly in the two novels. The character in *Der Weg* is named Willy Homeyer (*Der Weg*, p. 9); Bodmer's friend in *Obelisk*, however, is called Willy Hohmeyer (*Obelisk*, p. 228).
17. For the overall structure and the function of the framework in *Obelisk*, see also: Nienaber, *Vom anachronistischen Helden zum larmoyanten Untertan*, pp. 165-66.
18. Perhaps as a result of its implied criticism of the Cold War, the introductory statement was not included in the American edition of *Obelisk*. As a result, the novel's message changed altogether. See Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 85-86, 92.
19. Placke, *Die Chiffren des Utopischen*, p. 46. Martin Walser, *Ein springender Brunnen* (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1998), p. 9.
20. This interpretation of Remarque's use of the present tense in the Weimar story is likewise suggested by Bernhard Nienaber, 'Der Blick zurück: Remarques Romane gegen die Adenauer-Restauration', p. 89.
21. Placke, *Die Chiffren des Utopischen* p. 66.

22. *Man kann alten Dreck nicht vergraben; er fängt immer wieder an zu stinken: Materialien zu einem Erich Maria Remarque-Projekt der Universität Osnabrück, Fachbereich Sprache Literatur Medien, und zu der Inszenierung der Probebühne. Der schwarze Obelisk: Eine Textkollage*, edited by Lothar Schwindt and Tilman Westphalen (Osnabrück: Department for Language, Literature and Media in the University of Osnabrück, 1984), p. 206. See also: Placke, *Die Chiffren des Utopischen*, pp. 66, 80-86.
23. Artur Schneckenburger, *Die Geschichte des I.G -Farben-Konzerns: Bedeutung und Rolle eines Großunternehmens* (Cologne: Pahl-Rugenstein, 1988), p. 8.
24. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 84.
25. *Man kann alten Dreck nicht vergraben*, edited by Schwindt and Westphalen, p. 206.
26. Placke, *Die Chiffren des Utopischen*, p. 82.
27. *Man kann alten Dreck nicht vergraben*, edited by Schwindt and Westphalen, p. 218.
28. Tilman Westphalen, 'Unser Golgata: Nachwort von Tilman Westphalen', in *Obelisk*, pp. 395-414 (p. 396).
29. Schneider, *Erich Maria Remarque: Ein Chronist des 20. Jahrhunderts*, p. 28. See also: Tilman Westphalen, "'Mein Thema ist der Mensch dieses Jahrhunderts, die Frage der Humanität': Erich Maria Remarque als Chronist deutscher Geschichte", in *Erich Maria Remarque 1898-1970*, pp. 13-28 (p. 20).
30. Anon., 'Erich Maria Remarque, Violent Author... Quiet Man', *News Week*, 1 April 1957, p. 108.
31. With regards to Remarque's oeuvre, *Obelisk* has generally been identified as the novel containing most autobiographical elements. The interweaving of fictitiousness and reality is reflected alone in the name, Werdenbrück, which immediately creates thought-associations not only to Osnabrück, but also to Graeber's hometown, Werden, in *Zeit zu leben* which was likewise modelled on Osnabrück.
32. See, for instance, Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 399; Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, pp. 193- 219. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 88-89. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque: Sparks of Life*, pp. 212, 215. Placke compares the two novels several times: Placke, *Die Chiffren des Utopischen*, for example, pp. 47, 55, 86. *Obelisk* has also been mentioned alongside Voltaire's *Candide*. See Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 193; Charles Poore, 'Books of the Times', *The New York Times*, 2 April, 1957, p. 29.
33. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 99.
34. *Obelisk* features the additional title: *Geschichte einer verspäteten Jugend*. Wagener has interpreted this as referring to Bodmer's time in Werdenbrück, prior to leaving for Berlin: 'Bodmer's youth has passed and he must now face the reality of life in the big city'. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 90. Barker and Last apply a

similar reading: 'For Bodmer, bidding farewell to Isabelle means that he is also bidding farewell to his own youth'. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 100. However, in conversation with his friend, Georg Kroll, Bodmer clearly states that he has not yet recovered the youth he lost during the war: "‘Ich [Georg] dachte, man hätte dir die Jugend beim Militär gestohlen?’ “Stimmt. Ich [Bodmer] bin immer noch auf die Suche nach ihr, finde sie aber nicht. Deshalb habe ich einen doppelten Weltschmerz”” (*Obelisk*, p. 195). This pain is only alleviated at the end of the novel when he parts from Isabelle, and leaves Werdenbrück. It is thus only then that Bodmer can resume and begin to assume the belated youth which the additional title refers to.

35. In *Kameraden*, Lohkamp and his friends race – in Karl – against a large Buick in which Pat is a passenger. As the cars stop at an inn, Lohkamp encounters Pat for the first time. In *Der Himmel*, as Clerfayt arrives in the vicinity of the sanatorium, the engine of his car, Giuseppe, cuts out. Having identified and repaired the fault, Clerfayt revs the engine a few times, but thereby frightens the horses of a passing horse-drawn sledge. Having assisted in calming the animals, his attention turns to the passengers of which Lillian is one.

36. Given the fact that *Gam* was only published in 1998, it is not surprising that the studies which include this novel fragment are mostly relatively recent. See, for example: Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*; Parvanova, "‘...das Symbol der Ewigkeit ist der Kreis’"; Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*.

37. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 127.

38. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 129.

39. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 129.

40. For the use of light and darkness in Remarque's novels, see also: Parvanova, "‘...das Symbol der Ewigkeit ist der Kreis’", pp. 168-75. Despite the fact that light and darkness convey important information about Lillian's psychological development, most critics of *Der Himmel* have failed to notice the importance of the function of these opposites. Firda, for example, stresses, and justly so, the importance of Lillian's almost spiritual experience in the Sainte-Chapelle. Her visit to the church has a profound impact on her journey towards accepting her illness. However, Firda then erroneously suggests that the change in Lillian's frame of mind is 'achieved by the therapeutic and healing power of great art'. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 235. It is rather the fact that Lillian is 'umhüllt von Licht' (*Der Himmel*, p. 144) which has a calming effect on her. This is stated directly: '[D]as Licht nahm sie auf und schützte sie' (*Der Himmel*, p. 144).

41. Boa and Reid distinguish between extrinsic and intrinsic patterns. (This is not to be confused with Wellek and Warren's use of extrinsic and intrinsic interpretative approaches.) The extrinsic pattern, Boa and Reid again divide into two categories: Thematic and formal. The thematic extrinsic pattern, they describe as 'the retelling of an archetypal story in contemporary guise or with contemporary implications'. In contrast, a formal extrinsic pattern – or submerged form – has 'a clearly defined shape and tradition'. Boa and Reid mention, for example, the detective novel, which generally follows such a set pattern. Boa and Reid, *Critical Strategies*, p. 26. The extrinsic pattern

of *Orpheus and Eurydice* is treated by Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque: Sparks of Life*, pp. 213, 14.

42. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 213-14.

43. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, 213.

44. Eurydice essentially dies a second time when she has to return to Hades following Orpheus's disregard of the gods' rules. See, for instance, Mandelbaum's translation which incorporates the phrase: 'second death'. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid: A New Verse Translation by Allen Mandelbaum* (San Diego etc.: Harvest, 1993), pp. 325-28 (p. 327).

45. Ovid, *The Metamorphoses of Ovid*, p. 327.

46. At this point, Lillian is in Venice and, as several critics have pointed out, the location suggests that Remarque found inspiration for *Der Himmel* in Thomas Mann's *Der Tod in Venidig*. Barker and Last especially note that Remarque's reference to 'the river Styx and to gondolas resembling black coffins again suggest the influence of Thomas Mann'. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, pp. 93-94.

47. Marcel Reich-Ranicki, *Deutsche Literatur in West und Ost* (Munich: R. Piper & co, 1966), p. 256.

48. Reich-Ranicki, *Deutsche Literatur in West und Ost*, p. 253.

49. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 95.

50. Alfred Antkowiak, 'Zu einem neuen Roman von Erich Maria Remarque: "Der schwarze Obelisk"', (Ost Berlin, no title), 2 December, 1956.

51. Charles Poore, 'Books of The Times'.

52. Oppermann, 'Mit Wall und dem kleinen Gespenst', *Göttinger Tageblatt*, 20 January 2000. Also: 'Mein Lieblingsbuch: Ein echter Klassiker', *Oranienburger Generalanzeiger*, 7/8 December 2002; Köbi Kuhn, 'Meine Bestenliste', *Die Weltwoche*, 19 September 2002.

## Chapter 6

### *Die Nacht von Lissabon*

In his final two novels, *Die Nacht von Lissabon* and *Schatten im Paradies*, Remarque presents a chronological and thematic continuation of his earlier emigration novels.

Whereas the previous works, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Arc de Triomphe*, portray the problems and perils with which the European refugee was faced in the interwar years, Remarque's last two novels focus on emigrant life during the war years. The latter two conclude by also touching on the subject of Germany's failure to deal with its National Socialist past, following the war. As with most of Remarque's works, *Lissabon* and *Schatten* are linked thematically and form an indirect novel-pair. They are likewise related to the two early exile novels, and can justly be viewed as loosely constituting a tetralogy.

The four novels, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, *Arc de Triomphe*, *Lissabon* and *Schatten*, are certainly connected through their chronological development, and their common dedication to the theme of exile. Moreover, collectively they draw a general image of those who were victimized by the National Socialist regime and who subsequently fled, initially to the adjoining countries, but with the advancement of German troops, also to other European countries. This continued journey of escape, the so called *Via Dolorosa* of the refugee, often concluded at the ports of Bordeaux or Lisbon where the emigrants hoped to board a ship for extra-European destinations; notably America. In his exile

novels, Remarque depicts different stages of this journey. However, in spite of the overall thematic link between the four works, the author does not mention an intended bond between them, as he does in relation to his First World War novels in the prologue of the manuscript *Pat*. Also, whereas the early war novels, *Im Westen*, *Der Weg* and *Kameraden*, are evidently overlapping, not only with regard to their theme, but also in their application of similar first-person narrators, the exile novels are less consistent with regards to protagonists and narrative perspective.

The true relationship between Remarque's exile novels is furthermore obscured by the fact that Remarque never authorized the publication of *Schatten* because he died prior to completing this novel, and the work was only published after a considerable degree of censorship, rewriting and stylistic alterations – such as the title – had been carried out by the Droemer-Knaur Publishing House.<sup>1</sup> If viewing the title of a text as performative – as suggested by Derrida – its alteration essentially changes the 'promise' of that title; in other words, such a change could shift the overall focus of the text.<sup>2</sup> Remarque is thus not the sole or actual author of the final product, and it must remain conjecture how closely he intended *Schatten* to be connected to *Lissabon* and the early exile novels. Nevertheless, the biblical expression, 'das gelobte Land', which Remarque had seemingly planned to entitle his final novel (published as *Schatten*) occurs on more than one occasion in the preceding work, *Lissabon*: 'Wer von hier *das gelobte Land* Amerika nicht erreichen konnte, war verloren'; '[...] und vor uns *das gelobte Land* Portugal mit dem Hafen von Lissabon zum *noch gelobteren Lande* Amerika'; 'wir werden *das gelobte Land*, auf das du wartest, nicht zusammen sehen' [my emphases] (*Lissabon*, pp. 5-6, 232, 300). The phrase in fact also features in Anna Seghers's exile novel, *Transit*: 'Bei seinem Anblick zog sich mein Herz zusammen in einem Gefühl von schmerzlich

freudigem Fernweh, eine Art von Hoffnung, doch wußte ich nicht, auf was. Vielleicht auf die Weite der Erde, auf unbekanntes *gelobtes Land* [my emphasis]'.<sup>3</sup>

To Remarque's refugees, America signifies the Promised Land where they hope to resume an existence free of persecution. In *Schatten/ Das gelobte Land*, Remarque proceeds to depict the existence of those of the emigrants who managed to escape to America. Entitling the manuscript *Das gelobte Land*, thereby emphasizing this religiously loaded expression which the author had already introduced in *Lissabon*, Remarque therefore possibly wished for his last two novels to be read as somewhat interconnected. However, as noted above, the revision process of *Das gelobte Land* was never completed. In fact, whereas most of Remarque's other novels emerged from extensive rewriting and editing of several manuscripts, only two manuscripts exist of *Schatten*. This would certainly suggest that Remarque's amending of this novel reached only an early stage, and the reader can only speculate about how further reworking of this last novel would ultimately have changed the direction of the work.

As argued in the Introduction, this study will exclude *Schatten* to a great extent, and only *Lissabon* therefore remains for a full analysis and evaluation. However, in view of Remarque's narrative strategies, this novel is important. The intricate use of perspective not only testifies to the author's continued creative initiative and experimentation, but it is also an important factor in the novel's solidly structured relationship between form and content. It is therefore not without reason that this work has been termed 'formal das komplexeste Erzählwerk Remarques'.<sup>4</sup>

*Lissabon* essentially comprises a single event. Having endured the emigrant's *Via Dolorosa* through Europe, an unnamed, German refugee has reached Lisbon from where he and his wife hope to escape by ship to America. However, bureaucratic barriers with regards to the acquisition of visas and an excessively high demand for

travel tickets make it near impossible. Parading along the quay, the anonymous emigrant then encounters a fellow refugee, Schwarz, who offers the former man two tickets for his desired destination, if he is prepared to listen to Schwarz's personal exile account. Although initially sceptical about the sincerity of the offer, the unnamed man acquiesces and spends a night listening to the story of Schwarz. A likeness to Segher's *Transit* cannot be denied. In this work, an *Ich-Erzähler* and emigrant addresses the reader directly who thus comes to function as the attentive listener to the narrator's exile experience: 'Ich möchte gern einmal alles erzählen, von Anfang bis zu Ende. Wenn ich mich nur nicht fürchten müßte, den andern zu langweilen. Haben Sie sie nicht gründlich satt, die aufregenden Berichte? [...] Ich für mein Teil habe sie alle gründlich satt. [...] Ich möchte trotzdem einmal alles von Anfang an erzählen'.<sup>5</sup> Following this introduction, the exile account follows.

In *Lissabon*, the tale of Schwarz occupies the larger proportion of the work, but at the end of the novel, the anonymous listener has earned his tickets and is able to travel to America with his wife, Ruth. This turn of events bears considerable resemblance to the conclusion of the earlier exile novel, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, in which Kern and his girlfriend – likewise named Ruth – acquire tickets for America in an equally unlikely manner.<sup>6</sup> However, whereas *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* ends on a relatively positive note, at least for Kern and Ruth, the tone of the conclusion of *Lissabon* is different altogether. The unnamed refugee and his wife separate soon after their arrival in the States and, when the former returns to Germany after the war, he is disillusioned by the wide-scale suppression of the subjects of National Socialism and the war.

*Schatten* in fact concludes in a similar manner. The *Ich-Erzähler* and protagonist, Robert Ross, returns from exile in the USA to post-war Europe. Like the *Ich-Erzähler* in *Lissabon*, he finds only disappointment and he draws the same conclusion as, for

instance, Birkholz in *Der Weg*. Ross says: ‘Man kann nicht zurückkehren, nichts steht still, weder man selbst noch der andere’ (*Schatten*, p. 494).

Although the time of the framework in *Lissabon* is stated to be 1942 on the opening page, the *Ich-Erzähler* presents his story in the past tense and thereby indicates that his narrator-present (the moment from which he is talking) succeeds his coincidental meeting with Schwarz in that particular year. This is confirmed in the novel’s closing paragraphs which are narrated with the war in hindsight. As in *Obelisk* and *Im Westen*, the pace increases in the closing pages of *Lissabon*, as the *Ich-Erzähler* laconically summarizes the collapse of Hitler’s regime and his own disappointment on return to post-war Germany.

Formally, the most striking aspect of *Lissabon* is its employment of a framework structure.<sup>7</sup> In the context of Remarque’s other works, it therefore has some structural kinship to the earlier novel *Obelisk*, although their likeness is far from complete. As discussed in Chapter Five, the framework and the framed story in *Obelisk* are narrated by the same character – Bodmer – at two different stages of his life. *Lissabon* is, in comparison, presented from the points-of-view of two separate characters.

Although Remarque utilizes frameworks in both *Obelisk* and *Lissabon*, his application of this compositional tool differs in a number of ways in the two novels. Despite, for instance, the occurrence of anachronism in *Obelisk*, resulting in the presence of the mature Bodmer becoming perceptible in the framed 1923 account (although only elusively), the framework and the framed story of *Obelisk* are structurally clearly separated. In *Lissabon*, however, regular interruptions of Schwarz’s story persistently remind the reader that the actual source of the tale is not Schwarz, but rather Schwarz’s original listener, the *Ich-Erzähler* of the framework. A similar pattern characterizes *Transit* in which sudden exclamations by the narrator reminds the reader of his/ her role

as the listener: ‘Haben Sie bitte Geduld mit mir! Ich werde bald auf die Hauptsache kommen’; ‘Bitte verzeihen Sie diese Abschweifung!’; ‘Selbst wenn ich Sie jetzt noch einmal mit der Familie Binnet langweile – wir stehen schon wieder dicht vor der Hauptsache [...]’.<sup>8</sup>

In *Lissabon*, the interruptions of Schwarz’s story vary in length, but mostly they consist of brief exchanges of views between the *Ich-Erzähler* and Schwarz in relation to the tale of the latter. As these short dialogues display Schwarz’s actual status in the novel as a third-person character, they create distance between the reader and Schwarz. This is illustrated, for instance, in the following excerpt where the *Ich-Erzähler* proposes to buy Schwarz’s passport:

*Schwarz schüttelte den Kopf.*

“Warum nicht?”

“Ich kann ihn nicht verkaufen”, *sagte Schwarz*. “Ich habe ihn selbst geschenkt bekommen. Aber ich kann ihn Ihnen schenken. Morgen früh. Können Sie ihn brauchen?”

“Mein Gott!” *sagte ich atemlos*. “Brauchen! Er würde mich retten! Ich habe in meinem kein amerikanisches Visum und wüßte nicht, wie ich eins bis morgen nachmittag bekommen könnte.”

*Schwarz lächelte schwermütig*. “Wie sich alles wiederholt! Sie erinnern mich an die Zeit, als ich im Zimmer des sterbenden Schwarz saß und nur an den Paß dachte, der mich wieder zu einem Menschen machen sollte [my emphases]” (*Lissabon*, p. 158).

These temporary but recurrent returns to the actual plot – marked clearly by the resumption of the perspective of the first-person narrator of the framework – constitute one of the major differences between the applications of a framework in *Obelisk* and in *Lissabon*. There are, however, also other noteworthy dissimilarities. Whereas the latter work bears some structural resemblance to the *Novelle*,<sup>9</sup> *Obelisk* is not an obvious

candidate for such a classification. Bodmer's narrative does, for example, not present a single, unusual but possible event, which is one of the key characteristics of the *Novelle*. *Lissabon*, however, comprises exactly one such incident in the shape of the *Ich-Erzähler's* encounter and conversation with Schwarz. This chance meeting – the 'fairytale motif'<sup>10</sup> – between the two emigrants presumably saves the lives of both the *Ich-Erzähler* and his wife, and can only be viewed as 'eine sich ereignete unerhörte Begebenheit'; another quality which, aside from the framework-structure, characterizes the *Novelle*.<sup>11</sup> The centrality of the passport should equally not be overlooked. This document, Wagener notes, 'works like a magic cloak in this case. When [Schwarz] waves his passport and walks out of the French internment camp, it almost seems as if he were protected by superhuman forces'.<sup>12</sup> The passport does, however, play a much more important role than this single incident suggests. It is, in fact, the very essence of the novel as it provides Schwarz – as well as his predecessors and successors – with an identity and a chance to survive. Equally, it is the passport which enables Schwarz to return to Germany and be reunited with his wife. It is, however, also this document which binds the *Ich-Erzähler* to listen to Schwarz's account, as this is the only way by which he can obtain it. Within the context of the *Novelle* genre, the passport can thus be perceived as constituting the story's 'falcon'.<sup>13</sup>

Although the character, Schwarz, presents himself by this name, he admits that this is not his real identity. Schwarz and Robert Ross in *Schatten* have, in fact, both inherited a name and passport from another long-deceased refugee.<sup>14</sup> As Schwarz reveals, the passport has passed through the hands of several emigrants – aiding and surviving them all. Remarque uses this chain of anonymous victims to emphasize that the case of Schwarz is not unique. Hence, although the reader is basically presented with the experiences of a single individual, the history of the passport implies the existence – and

indeed continued existence – of many similar sufferers. The continuity is emphasized at the end of the novel where the much desired document is passed on to yet another emigrant. The *Ich-Erzähler* explains:

Nach dem Kriege ging ich nach Europa zurück. Es machte einige Schwierigkeiten, meine Identität zu etablieren – denn zur selben Zeit gab es Hunderte von Herrenmenschen in Deutschland, die die ihre zu verlieren suchten. Den Paß der beiden Schwarz schenkte ich einem Russen, der über die Grenze geflohen war – eine neue Welle von Emigranten hatte begonnen, sich zu formen. Weiß Gott, wo er inzwischen geblieben ist! (*Lissabon*, p. 310).

An almost identical, although more blunt, critic of post-war German society is found in *Schatten*: ‘Ich war nicht mehr der einzige mit einem falschen Namen. Es gab jetzt viele Hunderte, die rechtzeitig ihre Pässe umgetauscht hatten und eine Emigration von Mördern bildeten’ (*Schatten*, p. 493). The closing exclamation from *Lissabon*, cited above, is purposely manipulative. It seeks to stimulate the reader’s curiosity and encourage consideration as to the possible story of this latest bearer of the Schwarz-passport. At the conclusion of the novel, the exile experience may thus have ended for the *Ich-Erzähler*, but Remarque is careful to remind his reader that this does not bring to a close the issue of forced emigration or what could appropriately be termed *schwarzexistieren*.

In the course of *Lissabon*, the current Schwarz depicts his exile experience to the *Ich-Erzähler* and, in return, grants his attentive listener two tickets for a ship to America in addition to two passports – one of which is the Schwarz-passport. Schwarz’s narrative, which is reported through direct speech and thus, in itself, resembles a first-person narrative, constitutes the framed story within the framework-structure. However, viewed in the context of the novel as a whole, Schwarz’s story is, of course, filtered through and

thus essentially superseded by the perspective of the framework's anonymous *Ich-Erzähler*.

The interweaving of Schwarz's story and the direct voice of the narrator of the framework can, at times, cause momentary uncertainty as to who is speaking; the two men do, after all, both relate their individual tales in the first-person. Remarque does, however, use a number of methods to assist the reader in distinguishing the voices of the two characters. Lengthier passages of narrative by either of the men do, for instance, often conclude with a requested response from the other man. This indicates to the reader that the narrative voice is about to switch. The following extract exemplifies this: Schwarz describes his reluctance to have a physical fight with his brother-in-law, a dedicated Nazi. At the end, he asks for the *Ich-Erzähler's* opinion on the matter and thereby warns the reader that a shift of narrative voice is about to occur:

Es ist eine merkwürdige Sache mit der körperlichen Überlegenheit. Sie ist die primitivste, die es gibt, und hat nichts mit Mut und Männlichkeit zu tun. [...] Jeder weiß, daß wirklicher Mut anderswo beginnt, und daß das Muskelpaket, das herausfordert, da wahrscheinlich elend versagen würde – trotzdem suchen wir nach lahmen Erklärungen und überflüssigen Entschuldigungen und fühlen uns jämmerlich, wenn wir ablehnen, zum Krüppel geschlagen zu werden. *Ist das nicht so?* [my emphasis] (*Lissabon*, p. 164).

The closing question immediately draws the reader's attention from Schwarz's story to the actual plot of the two emigrants' conversation in Lisbon. Following Schwarz's question, the reader thus automatically expects the succeeding sentence to represent the voice of his listener. The switch in perspective can occur without confusion.

Throughout *Lissabon*, shifts in the perspective are announced indirectly by use of this technique. Hence, the following non-rhetorical questions and requests for a response all

conclude longer statements by Schwarz: ‘Kennen Sie Münster?’; ‘Sie kennen das?’; ‘Oder glauben Sie nicht?’; Verstehen Sie das denn nicht?’; ‘Sie denken wahrscheinlich, ich rede mystischen Unsinn’; ‘Waren Sie in Marseille?’ (*Lissabon*, pp. 35, 98, 155, 156, 198, 259).

Schwarz’s story is essentially about the reunion with his wife and their joint escape from National Socialism. Their flight requires constant geographical mobility, and Schwarz’s story therefore includes only few named characters, such as, for instance, Helen’s brother, Georg Jürgens. A vast majority of the other characters, however, are people they encounter only fleetingly on their journey. As in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* and *Zeit zu leben*, these characters are subsequently referred to not by name, but according to the roles they fulfil, or by striking traits in their appearance or behaviour.<sup>15</sup> As in the previous works, the omission of names again serves to pinpoint the loneliness and isolation experienced by the novel’s protagonists, in this case, as a result of being in exile.

It is not only the peripheral characters of Schwarz’s account who figure anonymously. In fact, even the identity of the main character – Schwarz’ own person – remains somewhat unaccounted for. Disguised by the fake name of Schwarz, he reveals only that his first name is Josef (not Georg, as Franz Baumer claims)<sup>16</sup> and that Osnabrück is his hometown. Helen additionally implies that Schwarz used to be an editor by profession, but aside from this limited information, Schwarz provides no details about his life or person prior to fleeing Germany.

This front of secrecy is not unique to Schwarz, but characterizes Remarque’s emigrants in general. It becomes especially noticeable when viewed against the First World War novels which are prolific in information and reflections of the time prior to the war. The lack of similar attention to the past in the exile novels serves to accentuate

the refugees' forced abolition of their former identities. Although Remarque's First World War soldiers are also stripped of their individuality, they are valued in their masses, if only for cannon fodder. The refugees, however, are universally unwanted and face hostility, banishment, imprisonment or even execution if transported back to German territory. As a result, the persecuted are forced to suppress their real identities and essentially obliterate their personal history in their struggle for self-preservation. Perhaps for this reason, perhaps because his real identity is insignificant to the context, Schwarz never mentions directly his actual name: "Ich heiÙe Schwarz", sagte er. "Es ist nicht mein richtiger Name; er ist der, der auf meinem PaÙ steht. Aber ich habe mich an ihn gewöhnt, und er wird für heute Nacht genügen" (*Lissabon*, p. 13). Indirectly, Schwarz nevertheless discloses his real name through the information he gives about his wife. Despite pressure from her family, Helen has kept her husband's surname, so when Schwarz seeks her in an internment camp for women and asks for 'Helen Baumann', he simultaneously reveals his own family name (*Lissabon*, pp. 204, 207). The disclosure of the name of Baumann is nevertheless paradoxical, when taking into account that Schwarz's story is truly voiced through the *Ich-Erzähler*, because at the end of the novel, the latter claims to have forgotten Schwarz's real name: 'Ich fuhr sogar einmal nach Osnabrück und fragte nach ihm, obschon ich seinen wirklichen Namen vergessen hatte' (*Lissabon*, pp. 310-11). The discrepancy might be accidental; it certainly does not appear to serve a particular purpose. At most, the forgetfulness of the *Ich-Erzähler* serves to stress Schwarz's ordinariness and the fact that it could have been anybody falling victim to unfortunate historical circumstances.

The anonymity of Schwarz is more complete than those of, for instance, Ravic in *Arc de Triomphe* or 509 in *Funke Leben*. Whereas the latter two eventually resume their real identities at the end of the respective novels, Schwarz also rejects his fake identity and

becomes truly anonymous: ‘Schwarz hatte den Ausweis eines Anmeldebüros für die Fremdenlegion bei sich; er brauchte nur die Grenze zu überqueren und in der Kaserne meinen Paß wegzuwerfen. Die Legion interessierte sich nicht für die Vergangenheit’ (*Lissabon*, p. 307). In the reader/ character relationship, Schwarz likewise poses as a much more anonymous individual than both Ravic and 509 whom the reader accompanies and observes over a certain period of time. This impact of time should not be underestimated. Schwarz’s story admittedly covers three years of his life in exile, but as his narrative is regularly interrupted, the reader is never allowed to forget that the actual acquaintance with Schwarz remains brief, lasting less than twenty-four hours. The novel’s title is, of course, the chief reminder of this fact. For both the *Ich-Erzähler* and the reader, the encounter with Schwarz is ephemeral, and the anonymity shrouding Schwarz’s character subsequently seems much more impenetrable than in the cases of Remarque’s other protagonists. Resulting from the shortness of the encounter and the fake identity of Schwarz, the reader is confronted with the story of a refugee who, despite relating in considerable detail his experience of forced emigration, remains a stranger. Schwarz’s character thereby assumes the same representative quality that generally typifies Remarque’s protagonists in the *Hauptwerk*, a quality which the author achieves through different techniques from novel to novel. In *Lissabon*, this is realized through Schwarz’s impersonality. Summed up, Taylor comments on this issue: ‘[Remarque] is expert at capturing the mood of that desperate situation and in telling the story of many people by concentrating on the fate of a few’.<sup>17</sup> The problems Schwarz faces – the anxiety, the helplessness, the loss of identity, the dehumanization and the involuntary separation from his loved one – therefore become descriptive not only of Schwarz’s personal exile existence, but of refugee life in general. It is thus no surprise that similar experiences and emotional strains are also depicted in other exile fiction,

such as Anna Segher's *Transit*, Hans Habe's *Drei über die Grenze*, Lion Feuchtwanger's *Exil* as well as in the autobiographical refugee accounts by Alfred Döblin, Carl Zuckmayer and Stefan Zweig.

The representative role of Schwarz's character is additionally communicated through his continued juxtaposition with the framework's *Ich-Erzähler*. A pattern of similarity quickly emerges between the tribulations they have both had to face as emigrants. These common aspects of their time in exile are communicated, indirectly, through Schwarz's reiterated enquiry into his listener's familiarity with the problems he depicts: 'Verstehen Sie?'; 'Kennen Sie das auch?'; 'Verstehen Sie, was ich meine?' and 'Sie kennen das?' (*Lissabon*, pp. 13, 16, 76, 98). The *Ich-Erzähler*'s answers are exclusively affirmative and Schwarz's questions gradually transform into statements of assumption: 'Es war die rasende letzte Ungeduld, die Sie wahrscheinlich auch kennen'; 'Sie kennen das ja selbst'; 'Es war eine der Stunden, die Sie kennen'; 'Sie kennen ja den Weg der Emigranten'; 'Sie kennen ihn sicher auch' (*Lissabon*, pp. 130-31, 178, 180, 187, 235). Hence, although the novel predominantly focuses on Schwarz's character, it also conveys a great deal about the *Ich-Erzähler*. Seghers applies the same technique to engage the reader in his/ her role as the emigrant listener: 'Sie kennen das alles genau so gut wie ich selbst.'; 'Ich brauche Ihnen nicht zu erklären, daß dieses Gefühl uns trög'; 'Sie kennen ja selbst das unbesetzte Frankreich aus dem Herbst 1940'.<sup>18</sup>

The *Ich-Erzähler* functions as the actual narrator in *Lissabon*, but he takes a stance equally anonymous to that of Schwarz. In fact, whereas the latter reveals his true name (although unintentionally), the *Ich-Erzähler* does not offer even a pseudonymous name.<sup>19</sup> This indistinctiveness of both the framework-narrator and Schwarz is consciously upheld. Remarque thereby creates an image of two seemingly random emigrants who are not acquainted and whose individual paths have thus far remained

uncrossed. Yet, as noted above, their exile experiences have been marked by similar strains which suggest that the emotional and physical sufferings endured by the two emigrants are common amongst refugees.

The *Ich-Erzähler* accepts the fact that he has to address his fellow refugee by the fake name of Schwarz, and the latter – lacking even a pseudonym by which to address his listener – resigns to calling the *Ich-Erzähler* ‘Herr’: ‘Wir gingen weiter zum Hafen hinunter. “Herr”, sagte er nach einiger Zeit. “Wer sind wir? [...]”; ‘Was geschieht damit, Herr?’ (*Lissabon*, pp. 138, 156). Neither the *Ich-Erzähler* nor Schwarz enquires about the other man’s real identity or background. In all probability, neither would expect a truthful answer anyway. More likely, however, their mutual lack of interest also reflects the fact that such personal information is without real import to either party. The *Ich-Erzähler* has no interest in Schwarz’s story, but listens because he needs the two travel tickets promised by Schwarz in return. The identity of the *Ich-Erzähler* is likewise irrelevant to Schwarz. Doubting the reliability of his own biased stance to his deceased wife, Helen, he wishes to preserve a truthful memory of her by storing it in the mind of an uninvolved and, Schwarz presumes, impartial individual. The exact identity of this individual is, however, without relevance to Schwarz’s objective, as he is not looking to have a dialogue, but rather to deliver his autobiographical monologue to a willing listener. Most random by-passers could have fulfilled Schwarz’s criterion, and in his anonymity the *Ich-Erzähler* does in fact, remain just such a random emigrant:

Ich war ein fremder Mensch, der für einen Nacht seinen [Schwarzs] Weg kreuzte und vor dem er keine Hemmungen zu haben brauchte. Eingehüllt in den anonymen Mantel eines fernen, toten Namens – Schwarz – begegnet er mir, und wenn er den Mantel abwarf, warf er damit auch seine Persönlichkeit ab und verschwand wieder in der anonymen Menge [...]’ (*Lissabon*, p. 103).

In *Lissabon*, the narrative perspective alone testifies to the impossibility of Schwarz's aim. Presenting his story from a biased viewpoint – intensified by his distress at Helen's death – Schwarz is incapable of presenting an objective account of events for the *Ich-Erzähler* to store in his mind. The implied infidelities of his wife, for instance, he simultaneously insinuates and yet shrouds in an act of emotional self-preservation. The trustworthiness of the *Ich-Erzähler's* memory should equally be questioned. Firda understands the role of the *Ich-Erzähler* to be 'Remarque's own *objective* commentator [my emphasis]', but this interpretation seems to reflect Schwarz's *assumption* about his listener, rather than reality.<sup>20</sup> Hence, despite his presumed neutral stance in relation to Schwarz's account, the *Ich-Erzähler* is restless and preoccupied with the tickets for America. On several occasions, his thoughts turn to the ship in the harbour, whilst outwardly resembling the attentive listener of Schwarz's narrative: "Wenn ich in Amerika bin, werde ich gern darüber nachdenken", fügte ich hinzu, um ihn [Schwarz] daran zu erinnern, daß er mir die Billetts versprochen hatte. [...] [I]ch hätte nicht gern diskutiert. Ich hatte keine Ruhe dazu. Unten lag das Schiff; 'Ich war auch nervös, weil ich das Schiff nicht mehr sah. Wer wußte, ob es nicht nachts noch die Anker lichtete, früher als angesagt war, wegen irgendeiner Warnung'; 'Das Orchester spielte Tanzmusik; einen Tango, in dem kurze, gedämpfte Hornstöße mich an die fernen Sirenen eines abfahrenden Schiffes erinnerten. Nur noch ein paar Stunden, dachte ich, bis zur Dämmerung, dann kann ich gehen. Ich fühlte nach den Fahrscheinen in meiner Tasche. Sie waren da'; 'Ich war so voll Aufruhr über das Versprechen von Schwarz, mir seinen Paß zu geben, daß ich nicht hörte, was er sagte. Ich dachte nur darüber nach, was ich tun könnte, um auch für Ruth ein Visum zu bekommen' (*Lissabon*, pp. 12, 38, 73, 159).

Although Schwarz's story is constructed to resemble a first-person narrative, it is essentially presented from the viewpoint of the *Ich-Erzähler* of the framework. However, the attention of the latter is clearly focussed on his and his wife's safety, and, as Wagener correctly points out with regards to the framework narrator, 'Schwarz's fate does not directly concern him [the *Ich-Erzähler*]'.<sup>21</sup> Subsequently, Schwarz's story becomes 'subject to falsification through the listener's [the *Ich-Erzähler*'s] mind'.<sup>22</sup> The concluding pages of the novel furthermore reveal that the *Ich-Erzähler* has been narrating from the post-war era; i.e. several years after his short encounter with Schwarz in 1942. He even admits that his memory of Schwarz has submerged into 'einem geisterhaften Rauch' (*Lissabon*, p. 309). Together, all of these elements cast doubt on the reliability of the principal *Ich-Erzähler*'s version of the other man's story.

Despite the fact that he holds only a blurred image of Schwarz, after the war the *Ich-Erzähler* believes he recognizes the former in a random by-passer in the streets of Osnabrück: 'Auf dem Weg zurück zum Bahnhof glaubte ich, ihn [Schwarz] zu erkennen. Ich lief ihm nach; aber es war ein verheirateter Postsekretär, der mir erzählte, daß er Jansen hieße und drei Kinder habe' (*Lissabon*, p. 311). The *Ich-Erzähler*'s seemingly fallible memory in relation to Schwarz's person might seem incompatible with his otherwise detailed presentation of the other man's exile experience. However, this slight discrepancy is not the actual point of interest. The importance rather rests in the ordinariness of the man whom the *Ich-Erzähler* believes to be Schwarz. Neither his name, profession nor family situation is striking, and the implication is that Schwarz – like Jansen – ought to have been allowed to lead an ordinary life; work; be a family man and a respectable member of civilized society. In other words, what the *Ich-Erzähler* and Remarque suggest is that Schwarz and the other emigrants – '[die] unzähligen einzelnen Herren Schwarz' (*Lissabon*, p. 104) – were ordinary people who became

innocent victims as a result of circumstances outside their control. The details of Schwarz's account as presented to the reader by the *Ich-Erzähler* might be slightly different from the story related during that Lisbon night. However, drawing from his own refugee experiences, the *Ich-Erzähler* is nonetheless a reliable narrator, because he can convey a *realistic* image of life in exile.

It is the emotional strain of continued social seclusion which makes Schwarz to return to his German hometown – risking captivity in doing so. However, the mentality he encounters is foreign to him and he realizes that the Germany of his memories has ceased to exist. Schwarz's return therefore initially triggers an unanticipated sensation in him: 'Ich fühlte mich plötzlich einsamer als je zuvor außerhalb Deutschlands' (*Lissabon*, p. 34). Waiting for his wife in his former flat, Remarque communicates the degree of Schwarz's loneliness through repeated references to darkness and emptiness.

Nach einer Weile begann sich lautlos ein ungeheures Gefühl des Verlustes in mir auszubreiten. Es war nicht schmerzhaft; es war eher wie eine *Dämmerung*, die weiter und weiter kriecht und alles *überschattet* und *leert*, bis sie selbst den Horizont *verhüllt*. Eine Schattenwaage balancierte eine *leere* Vergangenheit gegen eine *leere* Zukunft, und in der Mitte stand Helen, den *Schattenbalken* der Waage auf ihren Schultern, und auch sie schon verloren. Es war mir, als sei ich in der Mitte meines Lebens; der nächste Schritt würde die Waage verschieben, sie würde langsam sinken, der Zukunft zu, sich mehr und mehr mit *Grau* füllen und nie wieder im Gleichgewicht sein [my emphases] (*Lissabon*, pp. 104-05).

The incorporation of a metaphorical set of scales, resting on the shoulders of his wife and which the slightest movement might bring in irreversible unbalance, further conveys the importance of this moment to Schwarz.

Darkness is, of course, also suggested in the very name of Schwarz. As with many of Remarque's other characters, Schwarz's name is reflective of the role he fulfils in *Lissabon*. The symbolic implication of the colour black, or darkness, was explored in relation to the psychological impact of Lillian's illness in Chapter Five. In *Lissabon*, Schwarz's situation is equally threatening to both his physical and emotional safety: He has not only lost his nationality, his identity and his wife, but like Remarque's previous narrators, Schwarz also suffers under the inhuman treatment he receives as a refugee: 'Wir hatten Pässe. Wir waren Menschen bis September 1939. Wir waren Menschen bis September' (*Lissabon*, pp. 153-54). The repetition adds local texture to the narrative, but it also emphasizes Schwarz's sensation of loss, not only of his homeland and former life, but of his very status as a human being. It is this gloomy situation of the emigrants which Remarque hints at in his choice of name for Schwarz's character.

Taking the symbolic implication one step further, Schwarz's name also alludes to his role as a representative of the average refugee from Hitler's regime. With a personal history applicable in its degree of deprivation to the larger proportion of the emigrant community, Remarque's character, Schwarz, has purposely been given an indefinite identity which is shrouded in a darkness also expressed in his fake name. Remarque furthermore plays linguistically on Schwarz's name in relation to his character's illegal existence. Schwarz explains, for instance: 'Ich bin *schwarz* über die Grenze gekommen' and '[Ich] arbeitete nachts *schwarz* in einem Restaurant [my emphases]' (*Lissabon*, pp. 59, 261). Remarque's emigrant not only crosses the border and works 'schwarz'; without the right to reside anywhere, he basically exists 'schwarz'. The name thus illustrates the very essence of Schwarz's, and indeed any other illegal emigrant's, refugee life.

During the five years Schwarz has spent in exile, he has had no contact with his wife. He therefore associates her with his former existence, the life he led prior to fleeing. When she decides to join her husband in exile, Schwarz regains a focal point by which he begins to plan their joint escape to America. However, although their love is rekindled, Schwarz cannot conceal his hurt at Helen's lack of complete commitment. She does, for instance, not follow her husband into exile in order to remain close to him, but – like Lillian in *Der Himmel* – in order to find life and evade the knowledge of her terminal illness. Unlike Lillian, however, Helen is aware of her own flight from her condition: 'Ersticke mich nicht mit deiner Sorge und deiner Angst vor Verantwortung! Ich bin nicht deinetwegen weggegangen. Begreife das doch! Nicht deinetwegen! Meinetwegen! [...] Auch wenn es nicht so aussieht! Ich wollte weg! Daß du kamst, war ein Zufall. Versteh das doch! Sicherheit ist nicht immer alles' (*Lissabon*, p. 175). It remains undeterminable whether Schwarz and his wife have grown apart during their separation, or whether Schwarz's years of absence have caused his memory to apply a deceptively rosy tint to an already malfunctioning relationship. There is, though, some indication that the latter plays a certain role. Schwarz does, for instance, recognize that the uncertainty of the situation intensifies his emotions. Hence, he suggests that had history developed differently, they would simply have become: '[e]in *mittelmäßiges, langweiliges* Paar, das in Osnabrück ein *mittelmäßiges, langweiliges* Leben geführt hätte mit *mittelmäßigen* Gefühlen [my emphases]' (*Lissabon*, p. 241).

Schwarz gradually comes to suspect that Helen is unfaithful to him, but he turns a blind eye. Rather than confronting his wife, he directs his attention at their escape and – like Bäumer in *Im Westen* – temporarily represses his emotions. This is conveyed, for instance, through his reaction to the discovery amongst Helen's belongings of a bundle of letters, presumably from another man: '*Ich dachte nichts* und legte sie in ihren

Koffer. [...] Ich sah auf die nassen Dächer und *dachte nichts* [my emphases]' (*Lissabon*, pp. 287-88). Again, Remarque utilizes repetition as a narrative tool. In this case, it serves to emphasize his character's detached state of mind. Schwarz's reaction is therefore not dissimilar to that of Bäumer and many of Remarque's other protagonists who generally acknowledge that the emotional strain of dealing with stressful issues consumes unnecessary energy and potentially becomes a hindrance to survival. In *Arc de Triomphe*, for instance, Ravic says about his own situation:

Er lebte, das war genug. Es lag ihm nichts daran in einer Zeit, wo alles schwankte, etwas aufzubauen, das in kurzer Zeit wieder zusammenstürzen mußte. Es war besser, zu treiben, als Kraft zu verschwenden, sie war das einzige, was unersetzbar war. Überstehen war alles [...]. Eine Lawine war nicht aufzuhalten, wenn sie im Rollen war – wer es versuchte, kam darunter. Besser abzuwarten und später die Verschütteten auszugraben (*Arc de Triomphe*, p. 55).

Schwarz's reaction must thus be viewed in the light of his specific situation. After all, Helen's dishonesty is dwarfed by the much more serious problems they face as refugees of Hitler's regime.<sup>23</sup> In *Schatten*, Remarque takes up this theme again, as Ross in relative safety begins to deal with issues he had thus far suppressed.

Ich wußte plötzlich, daß ich jetzt, wo ich an dieser fremden Küste angelangt war, die Gefahr noch nicht überstanden hatte, daß sie im Gegenteil erst richtig begann. Nicht die äußere, sondern die von innen. Ich war so lange mit dem einfachen Überleben beschäftigt gewesen, und darin hatte gleichzeitig mein Schutz gelegen (*Schatten*, pp. 18-19).

*Lissabon* explores how people experience and react to situations of crises. In fact, similarly to Bäumer, Ravic, Graeber, 509, Lillian, Ross and all of Remarque's other

major characters, Schwarz and the *Ich-Erzähler* of the framework are victims of external circumstances. As illegal emigrants, they face severe dangers and, like Steiner in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, Schwarz even risks his life when returning to Germany in seek of his wife. A convincing depiction of the exile experience therefore requires the author to convey the emotional stress and fear arising from the constant threat of being caught. However, as explored in relation to *Funke Leben*, language has limitations and is especially lacking when attempting to verbalize and communicate degrees of emotion or physical sensation. The analysis of the concentration camp novel showed that Remarque consequently allows the reader to witness the torture of an inmate only audibly, as this offers greater insight into the pain and fear inflicted than any visual description or explanation through similes. Although Remarque does not apply the exact same technique in *Lissabon* to convey the emotional strain experienced by his refugee characters, his approach roots in the same notion of overcoming the shortcomings of language. Hence, the level of stress they experience is conveyed through descriptions of involuntary, physical reactions: ‘Es war der Körper, nicht der Kopf, der reagierte; es war der Magen, der zu Stein, der Mund, der eine Raspel wurde’; ‘Ich fühlte, daß mein Hemd klebte’; ‘Meine Kehle war trocken’; ‘Das Herz krampfte sich mir zusammen’; ‘[T]rotzdem spürte ich die Enge im Halse, während zur selben Zeit der Schweiß von den Achselhöhlen am Körper heruntersicherte’; ‘Mein Mitfahrer saß dort, noch unruhiger als vorher. Er schwitzte und rieb sich Hände und Gesicht mit einem nassen Taschentuch’; ‘Der Schweiß brach mir aus’; ‘Ich spürte jetzt den Schweiß unter meinem Hemd auf dem Rücken’ (*Lissabon*, pp. 31, 32, 46, 70, 98, 127, 211, 294). In *Schatten*, when recalling past experiences from a concentration camp, Ross explains in similar terms: ‘Trotzdem fühlte ich, wie jedesmal der Schweiß von meinen Achselhöhlen herunterrann, und ich stöhnte wie jedesmal, hilflos und dem Erbrechen

nahe' (*Schatten*, p. 187). The reader can relate to these reactions and thereby gain understanding of both Schwarz's and Ross's emotional state; they are, in fact, probably more effective in communicating the degree of fear and anxiety than most combinations of adverbs and adjectives relating directly to these emotions.

In isolation, some of the physical reactions described above could mistakably be read as hyperbolic phrases, serving merely to create drama. However, Schwarz (and Remarque) makes a point of defending his choice of wording and preventing accusation of exaggerating:

Als ich noch ein Mensch war, der das Recht hatte, seine Füße irgendwohin zu stellen, habe ich oft gezweifelt, wenn ich las, wie die Schriftsteller Angst und Schreck beschrieben – daß dem Opfer das Herz stillstehe, daß er wie erstarrt dastände, daß es ihm eisig den Rücken herunter und durch die Adern liefe, daß ihm der Schweiß am ganzen Körper ausbrache –; ich hielt das für Klischees und schlechten Stil, und es mag sein, daß er das ist; aber eines ist es auch: es ist wahr. Ich habe das alles empfunden, genau so, obschon ich früher, als ich noch nichts davon wußte, darüber gelacht habe (*Lissabon*, p. 43).

Schwarz voices similar arguments a number of times: '[S]o ist das wieder ein Klischee, und es ist wahr und nicht wahr, aber trotzdem fühlte ich es'; '[D]a ist wieder so ein Klischee, an das man erst glaubt, wenn man es erfahren hat' (*Lissabon*, pp. 59, 70). By stressing the literalness of the physical sensations he describes, Schwarz draws further attention to the continued fear in which the emigrants are forced to live.

Schwarz's reference to the style of lowbrow authors should, of course, not be overlooked. Without real import to the story, the specific mention of the writing profession in the extract above serves purely the extra-textual purpose of defending Remarque's own narrative techniques. Throughout his writing career Remarque had

been criticized for his succinct and approachable narrative style which especially German critics regarded as inferior and as an indicator of lacking literary merit. In *Lissabon*, however, Remarque rejects these criticisms through the mouth of his character Schwarz. In fact, as also Barker and Last suggest, the framework-structure allows Remarque to disguise his authorial voice behind both Schwarz and the *Ich-Erzähler*,<sup>24</sup> and still, simultaneously, to express his contempt with the unjust criticism with which his novels have persistently been targeted. Despite this, *Lissabon* has been condemned on a number of points. The Nazi character Georg Jürgens has been rejected as archetypal: ‘Helens Bruder selbst gleicht bis zum Verwechseln den Gestapoknechten aus “Liebe Deinen Nächsten” und “Arc de Triomphe” [...]’.<sup>25</sup>

The portrayal of the National Socialist characters may come across as somewhat trite, but only if one disregards the relationship between the contents and narrative perspective of the work. As in the earlier novels of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, *Zeit zu leben* and *Funke Leben*, the Nazis in *Lissabon* take pleasure in torturing their fellow man. One of them is subsequently referred to as ‘der Lächler’ (*Lissabon*, pp. 276-81) which, of course, is reminiscent of the Nazi in *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* who likewise giggles (‘kicherte’) at the prospect of inflicting pain to his victims (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 308). Less archetypal Nazis would perhaps have been favourable. However, it should be remembered that the descriptions are delivered from the viewpoint of past targets of the regime’s brutality. The one dimensional portrayal thus becomes justifiable and a mere reflection of the sadistic treatment the victims have endured in the hands of the Nazis. *Lissabon* does, however, not only feature violent individuals of the SS – the traditional image of a Nazi. In fact, the wife of Schwarz’s childhood friend, Rudolf Martens – although not a member of the party – is suggested to be sympathizing with the regime. Martens explains:

“Ich kann dich nicht in meine Wohnung nehmen. Ich habe geheiratet. Vor zwei Jahren. Du verstehst – ” [...] “Meine Frau gehört nicht zur Partei”, sagte Martens hastig. “Aber wir haben nie über einen Fall – ” er blickte mich verwirrt an “gesprochen, wie diesen jetzt hier. Ich weiß nicht genau, wie sie darüber denken würde” (*Lissabon*, pp. 51-52).

In addition to Martens’ doubts about his wife’s degree of loyalty towards the regime, Remarque then hints at the well known National Socialist promotion of the woman’s role in the spheres of *Kinder, Küche und Kirche*. Applying the same alliteration whilst distorting the familiar phrase, Martens mentions that his wife has been on the phone discussing ‘Kleider, Krieg und Kinder’ (*Lissabon*, p. 63). Neither Schwarz nor Martens appears to note the seemingly accidental assimilation of the Nazi slogan, but Remarque does, of course, consciously play on the similarity as a means of conveying the wife’s true sentiment towards National Socialism.

Within the modern setting, in *Lissabon* and indeed in many of his other novels, Remarque incorporates imagery rooted in stories from the Old Testament. With specific reference to the America-boat, the *Ich-Erzähler* of the framework in *Lissabon* speaks for instance of ‘eine Arche zur Zeit der Sintflut’ (*Lissabon*, p. 5). The parallelization with the biblical story of Noah’s Ark is developed further in the succeeding lines: ‘Der Berg Ararat war Amerika, und die Flut stieg täglich. Sie hatte Deutschland und Österreich seit langem überschwemmt und stand tief in Polen und Prague [...]’ (*Lissabon*, p. 5). By juxtaposing the emigrants with Noah – God’s chosen survivor or indeed ‘Günstling’ – the narrator expresses and encourages sympathy with the refugees. National Socialism, on the other hand, is analogized with the destructive force of water masses, a comparison which unambiguously conveys the narrator’s anti-Nazi position.

A related imagery is found later in the novel, where Remarque on a number of occasions refers to another tale from the Old Testament: ‘Wir leben wie die Juden beim Auszug aus Ägypten. Hinter uns die deutsche Armee und die Gestapo, zu beiden Seiten das Meer der französischen und spanischen Polizei, und vor uns das Gelobte Land Portugal mit dem Hafen von Lissabon zum noch gelobteren Lande Amerika’; ‘Es war wie ein Traum; wir durchschritten ihn [den dichtgedrängten Klumpen der Emigranten], er teilte sich vor uns wie das Rote Meer vor den israelitischen Emigranten des Pharaos’ (*Lissabon*, pp. 232, 263). Considering that anti-Semitism and the exodus constitute two of the main issues generally associated with Hitler’s reign, the biblical story of the Jewish people’s escape from Egyptian oppression seems an appropriate choice for an analogy.

The journey through the parted, Red Sea under the guidance of Moses is especially apt in the context of *Lissabon*. As with the tale of Noah’s Ark, this part of the story revolves around the element of water, and although the sea does not pose the actual threat to Moses and his group, it nonetheless represents a considerable danger which they must defy. The Bible sides with the fleeing people, and Remarque’s reason for choosing this story from the Old Testament for comparison with his Twentieth Century emigrants is thus relatively self-explanatory. In fact, in *Schatten*, Ross applies a similar comparison: ‘Ich ließ mich durch die anonyme Stadt treiben, deren heller Rauch zum Himmel stieg. Eine düstere Feuersäule bei Nacht und eine Wolkensäule bei Tag – hatte nicht Gott auf ähnliche Weise dem ersten Volk der Emigranten in der Wüste den Weg gewiesen?’ (*Schatten*, p. 18). Although Ross is physically safe in America, he is still an emigrant and continues to struggle with his involuntary exile and past experiences. The use of biblical imagery has a particular effect. The crime of the National Socialists’ victimization, not only of the Jewish people, but also of political opponents,

homosexuals and people with disabilities, is emphasized by the religious pictures, which suggests injustice in the eyes of an intrinsic law transcending that of humans.

Both of the biblical stories mentioned above revolve around the element of water. This natural element plays a central role in *Lissabon* too in its literal form as well as figuratively. The Atlantic Ocean constitutes the chief physical obstacle which the emigrants must defeat in order to reach the 'Gelobte Land', America. As already noted, the *Ich-Erzähler* is preoccupied with the thought of boarding the America-ship, and Remarque further stresses this by incorporating a great number of maritime-related imagery into the language of his emigrants. The following statements are partly voiced by the *Ich-Erzähler*, partly by Schwarz. At the time of the two men's conversation, the latter admittedly no longer desires to escape Europe. However, he is depicting a period of his life during which his chief aim was to reach America, and his language can therefore be viewed as reflecting his *then* state of mind: 'Ich nahm an, er sei auch einer der vielen *Gestrandeten*'; 'Wissen war ein bißchen *Schaum*, der über eine *Woge* tanzt'; 'Sie schienen mir jetzt *Häfen* der Humanität zu sein'; 'Wir sind wie *Schiffbrüchige*'; 'Man hat andere *Ufer* erreicht'; '[Die Schreie der Zeitungsrufer] übertönten die Motoren wie *Mövenschreie das Rauschen des Meeres*' [my emphases] (*Lissabon*, pp. 7, 99, 155, 155, 174). This, of course, also calls to mind the English title of the earlier exile novel, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, which was published as *Flotsam*. The opening page of *Lissabon* furthermore contains an effective metaphor in which water is used for comparison. The National Socialist regime is likened to a flood in which Europe is gradually becoming submerged: '[U]nd die Flut stieg täglich. Sie hatte Deutschland und Österreich seit langem überschwemmt und stand tief in Polen und Prag [...]' (*Lissabon*, p. 5). This figurative image consistently dominates the entire passage. Maritime

imagery thus constitutes an important tool in Remarque's conveyance of the emigrants' desperation to attain tickets for America.

As with Remarque's novels in general, *Lissabon* received a mixed response from reviewers. In *Aufbau*, for instance, Hans Habe praises 'die hohe erzählerische Kunst Remarques';<sup>26</sup> the *Abendpost* notes that Remarque has also covered the topic of exile in previous novels, but adds: 'Vielleicht aber noch nie so technisch vollkommen wie in der "Nacht von Lissabon"'.<sup>27</sup> The *New York Times Book Review* is likewise relatively positive: '[I]t may not quite be a great novel, but it is surely one of the most absorbing and eloquent narratives of our period'.<sup>28</sup> However, five days later, another review in *The New York Times* expresses less enthusiasm: "'The Night in Lisbon" lacks the conventional virtues of well-individualized characters and of dramatic narrative'.<sup>29</sup> Finally, the *New Statesman* voices open disappointment: 'Before Mr. Remarque's book can claim more than the lending-library fame which its American best-seller status entitles it to, it must say something more than we know. This it does not. Tired writing and unproductive philosophical exchanges are a further objection'.<sup>30</sup>

Above, the analysis speaks against the negative criticism of the *New Statesman*. There are admittedly elements of Remarque's previous novels detectable in *Lissabon* also, in relation to both form and content, and one reviewer in fact suggests that Remarque merely follows his 'Erfolgsrezept'.<sup>31</sup> Nevertheless, it is the first time that Remarque has used the *Novelle*-form and explored how a traditional framework-structure works in conjunction with other narrative tools. It could be argued that his unusual structure adds a complexity to the work that sets it apart from the *Trivilliteratur*-genre.<sup>32</sup> *Lissabon* may appear to be just another novel focussing on a few individual victims, but Remarque has not previously used the framework as a means of placing the story of his protagonists into a wider context and thereby conveying their representative role.

It is perhaps surprising that the German critics were more enthusiastic about *Lissabon* than their American colleagues. This may, of course, be partly related to the stance of the individual reviewer. Hans Habe, for example, had not only authored a novel on the exile topic, entitled *Drei über die Grenze*, in Ascona, he owned the neighbouring property to Remarque's and was indeed a trusted friend of his.<sup>33</sup> The answer may, however, also lie in the changes which German literature underwent during the late 1950s and the 1960s. These years saw gradual shifts in the attitude to the topic of the Second World War, as a new generation of Germans grew up and began to question the role of their parents under National Socialist rule.

In literature, following an initial numbness after the war, authors such as Heinrich Böll, Günter Grass, Siegfried Lenz and Martin Walser emerged and forced Germany to begin to deal with its past. As claimed in relation to *Zeit zu leben* and *Funke Leben*, the expressly hostile reception of Remarque's early post-war novels was influenced by the fact that the author was presenting issues which Germany was not yet ready to acknowledge. Remarque was thus to a certain extent ahead of his time and more daring, perhaps, than his contemporaries, when he produced *Zeit zu leben* and *Funke Leben*. The overall gentler tone of German literary critics in relation to *Lissabon* certainly seems to confirm that Remarque explored issues, not only in *Im Westen*, but in fact in most of his novels, which were too topical for their time of publication. The response was classification and rejection of Remarque as a lowbrow author, a defensive reaction which caused Remarque's reputation widespread damage and encouraged his continued exclusion from academic discourse.

## Notes to *Die Nacht von Lissabon*

1. Tilman Westphalen, 'Ein Tornister voll mit Blei', p. 499. See also Küster's detailed analysis of Remarque's supposed work process for his final novel. Marc Wilhelm Küster, 'Die Manuskriptlage zu Remarques *Schatten im Paradies*'.
2. See Andrew Bennett and Nicholas Royle's chapter on the performative in *Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory*, pp. 215-221; Jonathan Culler also has a chapter on performative language in his *Literary Theory: A Very Short Introduction*, pp. 94-107.
3. Anna Seghers, *Transit* ([1944] Darmstadt etc.: Luchterhand, 1981), p. 36.
4. Schreckenberger, "Durchkommen ist alles", p. 35.
5. Seghers, *Transit*, p. 6.
6. There are other similarities: 'Although *The Night in Lisbon* is largely devoted to Josef Schwarz's story, it resembles *Flotsam* in that it reports the fate of two individuals, one of whom manages to escape to America in the end. Moreover, the heroes of the two novels, Josef Schwarz and Josef Steiner, have the same first name. Both men risk their lives and return to Germany in order to see the wives they had left behind. Both Steiner's wife and Schwarz's wife suffer from cancer. In both cases their illness is not revealed until later in the novel'. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 101. These similarities are noted also in Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 117.
7. The framework-structure has generally been acknowledged by critics, but few explore further its specific relationship to other formal aspects of *Lissabon*. Remarque's possible idea behind its application has remained unquestioned. The most elaborate studies on the framework of *Lissabon* include: Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 130; Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 242; Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 103; Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 113.
8. Seghers, *Transit*, pp. 9, 11, 39. Similar examples are found throughout the novel.

9. Murdoch discusses this in detail. Murdoch, *The Novels of Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 141. See also Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 104; Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 413.
10. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 104.
11. J. A. Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, revised by C. E. Preston (England etc.: Penguin, 1999), pp. 600-601.
12. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 104.
13. Paul Heyse's *Falkentheorie* is explained in Cuddon, *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, p. 303.
14. The emigrant currently holding the Schwarz passport explains to his listener that his real first name is identical to the one in the passport, Josef (*Lissabon*, p. 20). In *Schatten*, Ross likewise appears to have inherited only the surname of the previous passport holder. When encountering an acquaintance from Germany, Betty Stein, in New York, she is unaware of the previous Ross's death, but she immediately refers to the *Ich-Erzähler* as Robert (*Schatten*, p. 48).
15. The list of characters includes, for instance: 'ein schwitzender, dicker Mann', 'ein SS-Mann', 'ein Chauffeur', 'ein Zollbeamter', 'ein barmherziger Wächter', 'ein kleiner, alter Spanier', 'ein Apotheker', 'eine bucklige junge Frau', 'ein lächelnder Mann in Zivil' (*Lissabon*, pp. 33, 42, 108, 119, 182, 183, 194, 270, 276).
16. Baumer evidently confuses the Christian name of the character, Schwarz, and that of Schwarz's brother-in-law, Georg Jürgens. In the same sentence, Baumer further claims that *Lissabon* brings to life 'die Atmosphäre der Emigrantencafés in Zürich und Wien'. Baumer, *E. M. Remarque*, p. 73. Schwarz is indeed in Zürich for a short while. Vienna, however, is barely mentioned in Schwarz's tale. Considering that his narrative only commences in the spring of 1939 – a time at which Austria had been under Nazi domination for about a year – Schwarz only reluctantly journeys through Austria on his way to Germany. 'Ich beschloß, es über Österreich zu tun. Die Grenze dort kannte ich etwas, und sie war sicher nicht so scharf bewacht wie die deutsche. Warum sollten beide überhaupt scharf bewacht sein? Wer wollte schon hinein? Aber viele wollten wahrscheinlich hinaus. [...] Österreich gehörte damals seit einem Jahr zu Deutschland' (*Lissabon*, pp. 28, 30). Baumer presumably mistakes the plot for that of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten* which in part is set in the Austrian capital.
17. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 244.
18. Seghers, *Transit*, pp. 6, 24, 25. Similar examples are found throughout the novel.
19. Taylor mistakenly believes the *Ich-Erzähler* to be named Josef: 'Before he left, Josef Baumann gave the exile-narrator Josef his passport and Helen's passport which enabled him and his wife Ruth to escape to America'. Taylor, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Literary and Film Biography*, p. 244. Taylor in fact repeats the mistake in his article: 'Humor in the Novels of Erich Maria Remarque', *West Virginia University: Philological Papers*, 29 (1983), pp. 38-45 (p. 43). He states: 'Josef Baumann, a native

of Osnabrück, tells his story in Lisbon to the novel's narrator, another exile named Josef. The novel does indeed mention a coincidental consistency in the Christian names of two of the emigrants. This does, however, not relate to the *Ich-Erzähler* and Schwarz, but rather to the latter and the man from whom *he* inherited the passport. In the following quotation, Schwarz tells the *Ich-Erzähler* about his acquisition of the passport: "Er gehörte einem Österreicher mit dem ich im Café de la Rose bekannt geworden war. Der Mann starb und hinterließ mir den Paß und sein Geld." [...] "Sie haben den Paß geändert?" fragte ich [*Ich-Erzähler* of the framework]. "Nur das Foto und das Geburtsjahr. Schwarz war fünfundzwanzig Jahre alter als ich. Unsere Vornamen waren gleich" (*Lissabon*, pp. 17-20).

20. Firda, *Erich Maria Remarque: A Thematic Analysis of His Novels*, p. 248.

21. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 105.

22. Wagener, *Understanding Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 105.

23. The impact of the exile situation on the norms and priorities by which people exist is likewise portrayed in the earlier novel of *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*. Attending court for residing illegally in Switzerland, Kern's revised view on life stands in clear contrast to that of the judge. The latter suggests: "Alles, was ich tun kann, ist für Sie eine Eingabe zu machen an das Obergericht, daß Sie nur Haft bekommen und kein Gefängnis." "Danke vielmals", sagte Kern. "Aber das ist mir gleich. Darin habe ich keinen Ergeiz mehr." "Das ist gar nicht gleich", erklärte der Richter mit einem gewissen Eifer. "Im Gegenteil, es ist sogar sehr wichtig für die bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte. Wenn Sie Haft bekommen, gelten Sie nicht als vorbestraft, das wissen Sie vielleicht noch nicht!" Kern blickte den ahnungslosen, gutmütigen Menschen eine Weile an. "Bürgerlichen Ehrenrechte", sagte er dann. "Was soll ich damit? Ich habe ja nicht einmal die einfachsten bürgerlichen Rechte! Ich bin ein Schatten, ein Gespenst, ein bürgerlicher Toter. Was sollen mir da die Dinge, die Sie Ehrenrechte nennen?" (*Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, p. 209).

24. Barker and Last, *Erich Maria Remarque*, p. 114.

25. Antkowiak, *Erich Maria Remarque: Sein Leben und Werk*, p. 145.

26. Hans Habe, 'Der neue Roman von Remarque', *Aufbau*, 25 January, 1963.

27. Stefanie Zweig, 'Wenn Wein nur nach Wein schmeckt: "Die Nacht von Lissabon" und die Lanze für das Mittelmaß', *Abendpost*, 2 March, 1963.

28. Maxwell Geismar, 'Terror Marched With a Goose Step', *The New York Times Book Review*, *The New York Times*, Section 7, 22 March, 1964.

29. Orville Prescott, 'Books of the Times: Punishment for Being Innocent', *The New York Times*, 27 March, 1964.

30. 'Refugees', *New Statesman*, 11 December, 1964.

31. Stefanie Zweig, 'Wenn Wein nur nach Wein schmeckt'.

32. Nusser, *Trivialliteratur*, p. 7.

33. Sternburg, *Als wäre alles das letzte Mal*, p. 428.

## Concluding remarks

This study set out to illuminate the complexity of Remarque's narrative strategies and, hence, to refute the widespread and continued assumption that Remarque's novels do not constitute appropriate subjects for serious literary discourse and research. As a means to achieve this objective, focus was placed on the formal qualities of the novels. These were then considered against the topics of the novels so that it could be established how successfully Remarque uses the form to guide the reader's emotions and views in a particular direction and thereby help to convey his message.

Although the preceding chapters have sought to illustrate Remarque's general, technical, narrative skills, priority was given to a single formal element – the narrative perspective. This limitation proved a necessity, as an examination of the formal elements in general would have exceeded a study of this size by far. As argued in the introductory chapter, the choice of the perspective was based on the notion that the narrative point-of-view constitutes a key determiner for both the form and content of a work. It was therefore an obvious choice of focus, when evaluating Remarque's authorial skills. Notwithstanding, the interrelationship between the various formal elements (the perspective included) and the contents made an analysis exclusively of the point-of-view impossible. As a result, an examination of aspects other than the narrative

perspective proved necessary, not least because this, at times, illuminated the point that the complexity of Remarque's novels largely stem from the author's understanding and subsequent careful utilization of the interweaving of the various elements making up a novel.

Adherence to the chronological order of the examined novels served to give insight into whether Remarque's narrative methods undergo a development from novel to novel, or whether the style remains relatively static. It appears that certain techniques are indeed recurrent throughout Remarque's *Hauptwerk*, and these must consequently be perceived as central to the Remarquean narrative approach. The novels are, for instance, all constructed of relatively short, self-contained episodes, and the language remains consistently accessible due to, what may be called, the journalistic style in which the major works are usually – although not always entirely – written. Furthermore, rather than elaborate descriptions, Remarque frequently exploits the impact of succinct statements which in their simplicity achieve added effect. The reference to the youth of some of the victims Remarque depicts in his novels offers one significant example of this technique: 'Das ist Franz Kemmerich, neunzehneinhalb Jahre alt, er will nicht sterben' (*Im Westen*, p. 29); 'Karel trug das rote Abzeichen des politischen Gefangenen. Er war elf Jahre alt' (*Funke Leben*, p. 23). Referring to the age in conjunction with the horrors these young individuals endure, Remarque excludes any direct explanatory information, but rather allows the statements to speak for themselves. As a result, the statements appear to be deceptively unbiased; yet in context they become deliberately poignant. The approachable and concise format of Remarque's novels is thus not the result of a lack of authorial aptitude or linguistic ability, but rather a narrative style to which Remarque consciously adheres. The author states this clearly in two different interviews from the mid-1950s: 'Immer wieder kürze ich meine

Manuskripte, schreibe so lange um, bis sie sich lesen, als ob sie gerade so dahergeschrieben worden seien. Das Wesentliche meiner Art zu schreiben, ist, daß ich alles, was der Leser wissen oder sich denken könnte, weglasse'.<sup>1</sup> “Man muss lange suchen, bis man das Wort findet, das am besten und kürzesten ausdrückt, was man dem Leser klarmachen will”, sagt Remarque.<sup>2</sup> Indeed, more than a decade later, in an interview on the occasion of his 70<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1968, Remarque repeats this: ‘Alles, was ich beim schreiben getan habe, war, daß ich radikal alles strich, was der Leser schon wissen konnte. Ich strich Kapitel, Absätze, Sätze, Worte, so lange, bis ich wußte, jetzt muß ich aufhören, sonst geht alles kaputt’.<sup>3</sup>

Remarque’s play on words, often in relation to character-names, should equally not be overlooked as a recurrent narrative trait of this author. Almost every novel reflects a sense for detail and, at times, humour in the appropriate and insinuating names of particular characters. These have been explored in the individual chapters and include, for instance, Knobloch, Haake, Steinbrenner, 509 and, last but not least, Schwarz.

As an analysis of the novels demonstrates, Remarque also uses imagery throughout his work. This he applies to reflect, indirectly, the nature of the character voicing it or to create a particular atmosphere. The imagery often extends to cover or even exceed entire paragraphs. The gloomy air surrounding Robert and Pat’s first date in *Drei Kameraden* remains especially memorable as an example of this and, as shown, serves as an early indicator of Pat’s terminal illness. The extent of Remarque’s exploration of the formal element of imagery is, however, perhaps best illustrated in *Der Himmel* where – closely intertwined with the thematic pattern of the legend of Orpheus and Eurydice – imagery constitutes an important tool in the conveyance of Lillian’s changing perception of herself, her surroundings and her illness.

Despite the recurrence with which the above narrative techniques appear in Remarque's novels, they are used with varied frequency and prevalence in the individual works. Remarque does not merely follow what has been referred to as an *Erfolgsrezept* in the writing of his books, but uses narrative tools selectively depending on the topic and message of the works. The variation in the narrative perspective alone disproves any claim as to the novels' uniformity. This study shows that Remarque throughout his works employs both first- and third-person perspectives and additionally experiments with different degrees of insight into the minds of his characters. In *Obelisk* and *Lissabon*, the author furthermore explores the framework technique, but from the perspective of one and two characters respectively. The combination of these different viewpoints must, of course, also be considered in relation to the other formal elements. The choice of tense, for instance, can have a decisive influence on the overall message, as the conclusion of *Kameraden* shows. Remarque's experimentation with perspective and his subsequent gradual acquisition of experience with this formal element is evident from work to work. The first novel written in the third-person, *Liebe Deinen Nächsten*, does, for instance, not reflect the same confidence and skills as are found in the later novels written from this perspective. There are, thus, not two novels in which Remarque uses the element of perspective in exactly the same manner; rather in each work he utilizes previous experience and attempts new effects by the combination with other formal elements.

For the casual reader the approachability of the works might disguise somewhat the actual complexity of Remarque's novels. In fact, only close reading reveals the actual extent to which Remarque must have considered the different narrative techniques and how best to join them in order to create a cohesive and harmonious whole. Studies of Remarque subsequently generally voice surprise about the lack of interest and

acknowledgement given this author. This study has suggested a number of likely causes for the continued neglect of Remarque's work, but political reasons – often based on misunderstanding – and envy of the author's instant fame probably constitute the two chief reasons. The general nature of German literary evaluation should, however, also be taken into consideration as a possible cause. As mentioned in the Introduction, Popstefanova expresses her disbelief at Remarque's widespread omission from literary encyclopaedia. Wagener, however, points to the difference between American and German perception of literary value and sees Remarque's exclusion, at least partly, as a reflection of this. However, as so much authoritative material dealing with the evaluation of modern German literature is still written by German scholars, foreign scholars will often be faced with these for information and can, hence, easily overlook the existence and value of Remarque's work. The objective of this study has therefore been to analyse the formal aspect of Remarque's novels with the intention of providing an unbiased argument against the still widespread classification of Remarque's novels as *Trivilliteratur*. It is hoped that it will provide new ammunition for advocates of Remarque's novels and thereby serve to encourage more widespread interest in his works, including at an academic level.

## Notes to Concluding remarks

1. Klaus Budzinski, “Keine Zeit für Hitler-Film”. E. M. Remarque in München. Der Schriftsteller macht Urlaub – Aber dann...’, *Die Welt*, 18 August, 1954.
2. Felicitas von Reznicek, ‘Erich Maria Remarque: “Schriftsteller ist man – man kann es nicht lernen”’, (Zürich), 1955, pp. 60-61, 102. The actual source is unknown. However, it could be the *Zürcher Woche*, as Reznicek wrote several articles on Remarque for this paper.
3. Lütgenhorst, ‘Emigrant zweier Welten’.

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### Conventions of reference

Much of Remarque's work and the studies on him are comprised in compilations. For the sake of clarity, this bibliography therefore cites the individual authors and articles, rather than referencing only the details of the overall compilations. Square brackets indicate the original dates of publication.

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