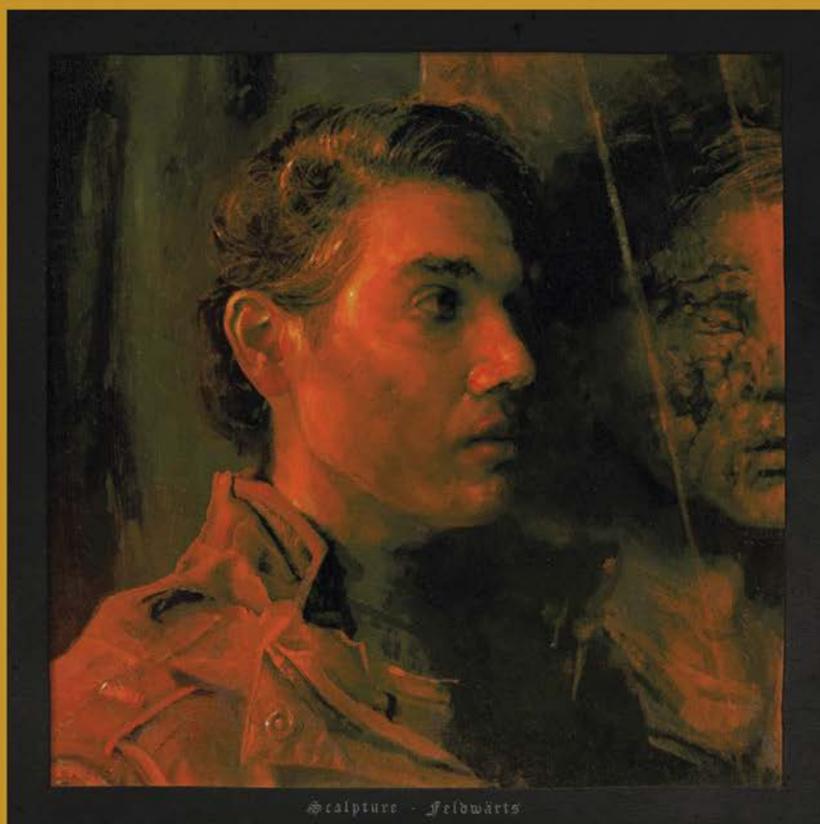


Claudia Junk (Hg.)

# Einsamkeit und Nähe

Zu Remarques Biographie und Werk

Universitätsverlag Osnabrück



sculpture - feldwärts



unipress

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Herausgegeben von Claudia Junk

im Auftrag des Erich Maria Remarque-Friedenszentrums

Claudia Junk (Hg.)

# **Einsamkeit und Nähe**

Zu Remarques Biographie und Werk

Mit 46 Abbildungen

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CLAUDIA JUNK

## Vorwort

Das diesjährige ERICH MARIA REMARQUE-JAHRBUCH/YEARBOOK wurde ohne thematischen Schwerpunkt zusammengestellt. Nach den Themenbänden zum 50. Todestag im Jahr 2020 und zum 125. Geburtstag im Jahr 2023 wurden, wie auch schon in 2024, Aufsätze mit ganz unterschiedlichen inhaltlichen Aspekten aufgenommen.

So widmet sich Uwe Zagratzki einem Vergleich der Prosa zum Ersten Weltkrieg von Erich Maria Remarque und Lewis Grassie Gibbon unter besonderer Berücksichtigung des Apokalypse-Gedankens. Magdalena Popławska untersucht die Einsamkeit der Exilanten in ausgewählten Romanen Remarques.

Bisher noch völlig von der Forschung unbeachtet sind die von Remarque angefertigten Zeichnungen, die von gelungenen Strichzeichnungen bis zu ironischen Skizzen reichen und häufig die Briefe an Marlene Dietrich zierte. Diesem Thema widmet sich die Kunstwissenschaftlerin Delfina Kotlińska unter Berücksichtigung seiner Biographie und Affinität zu Kunst allgemein.

Heiko Schulze berichtet anschaulich, wie es trotz des Filmverbots von *All Quiet on the Western Front* 1930 dennoch zu Aufführungen in Osnabrück kam. Bernd Stegemann widmet sich den Versuchen der Stadt Osnabrück Anfang der 1960er Jahre, die Wiedereinbürgerung Remarques durchzusetzen und zitiert dabei – teilweise erstmalig – aus den zahlreichen Briefen Remarques an die Stadt Osnabrück, um so das sich wandelnde Verhältnis zwischen dem Schriftsteller und seiner Geburtsstadt zu beleuchten. Einem ebenfalls biographischen Aspekt widmet sich Natalie Beer, wenn sie anlässlich einer Ausstellung in Washington über Remarques Geliebte Natalie Paley Wilson berichtet.

Ein größerer Beitrag ist einem ebenfalls aus Osnabrück stammenden Künstler gewidmet: Felix Nussbaum. Remarque und Nussbaum sind nicht nur durch ihre Geburtsstadt sondern auch durch die Epoche der Neuen Sachlichkeit miteinander verbunden und Nussbaum war etwa zur selben Zeit wie Remarque in Berlin – ein

guter Anlass, hier den durch die Nationalsozialisten ermordeten Künstler Nussbaum und seine Werke der 1920er Jahre näher zu betrachten.

Alice Cadeddu setzt ihre im letzten Jahr begonnene Reihe der »Werkstattgespräche« fort und stellt die Bielefelder Death-Metal-Band SCALPTURE vor. Weitere »Werkstattgespräche« für die nächsten Bände sind bereits in Planung und sollen fester Bestandteil des REMARQUE-JAHRBUCHS werden.

Die Art und Verwendung einer gendergerechten Sprache blieb den Autoren und Autorinnen überlassen.

Die Bibliographie neuer Remarque-Publikationen ergänzt den Band, wobei diese keinen Anspruch auf Vollständigkeit hat – für Hinweise auf weitere Publikationen weltweit (Studien, wiss. Artikel, Examensarbeiten) sind wir dankbar.

## Apocalypse and New Beginnings Discourses on War in Erich Maria Remarque's and Lewis Grassic Gibbon's Fictional Prose\*

Wars have had both a material and an immaterial side since time immemorial. Prior to the outbreak and after the end of wars societies reflect on the physical warfare by means of texts from mundane to literary, to religious or philosophical, or are aided by the arts and commemoration practices to do so. Scientific and philological discourses also thematise war and its consequences.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the immateriality of war appears in metaphors (›war on people's minds‹) or structural metaphors, where one concept is structured by another and is anchored in cultural traditions. In short, the beginning and ending of military warfare is not the beginning and ending of ›war‹.

Anti-war novels of World War I published in the inter-war years stand as adequate examples since they reveal a concept of war which comprises long-established dystopian discourses of: a) the destruction of humanity as articulated in the (biblical) apocalypse and concurrently utopian discourses of: b) ›cleansing‹ civilization in preparation for a regeneration as articulated pithily in the popular war time slogan of ›the war that will end war‹. It is held that this idea is also contained in apocalyptic texts (of old) themselves.

On the political level concepts originating before 1914 and pointing to overcoming what was widely felt an extensive stalemate re-surfaced across post-war Europe regardless of the fact that the countries had been either enemies or allies. In particular pacifism, internationalism (League of Nations), communism, and universalism, all being tinged with utopian visions, but also futurism and fascism

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\* This article was first published in: Adela Catana, Alina Bottez (eds.). *Woes of Wars in Text and Context*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2025.

1 As to the modernist literature under consideration in this essay, Rainer Emig argues that war destroys and concurrently shapes modernist culture and its works of Art; Rainer Emig, *Krieg als Metapher im Zwanzigsten Jahrhundert*. Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2001, 311.

took the ground in political and intellectual circles and were widely disseminated in prose texts inside and outside Europe.

Two authors from former enemy countries stand foremost in this post-World War I phenomenon. One, Erich Maria Remarque (1898–1970), the world-famous author of *All Quiet on the Western Front* (1929) and subsequent novels about the repercussions of war on the fledgeling Weimar Republic, built his novels subtly around the concepts of apocalypse and utopia. The other, James Leslie Mitchell (»Lewis Grassic Gibbon«) (1901–1935), the Scottish author of the trilogy of high repute *A Scots Quair* (1932–1934), favoured a more elaborate rhetoric of dystopia and utopia in his novels dealing with the war. Both authors though on opposing sides during the ›physical‹ war, one a combatant, the other not, but of the same generation, anchor their literary prose, at least partly, in similar immaterial sources when they ponder over the origin and consequences of the war.

## Definitions

In 1979 the American historian George F. Kennan drew critical attention to a metaphorical aspect, when he considered World War I »the great seminal catastrophe« of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>2</sup> By its etymology the term »catastrophe« denotes a »sudden, extensive or notable disaster or misfortune«.<sup>3</sup> Its closeness to the destructive potential of natural phenomena is obvious and by means of metaphorical transformation it is utilised in Kennan's definition for an a-historical explanation of war in the hands of bigger, inevitable and inhuman forces. Hence, moral and political responsibility of human agencies is neutralised or in Scott Denham's words: »[War] is an irrational force of nature not a part of mankind.«<sup>4</sup>

The mystification of the causes of war has a deeper religious dimension which is ingrained in the Christian tradition. In the eschatology of the *Book of Revelation* (and other prophecies in the Scripture as well as outside) Mankind is prophesied to be doomed to Apocalypse, that is decline and final fall. According to the Apoc-

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2 George Kennan. *The Decline of Bismarck's European Order. Franco-Russian Relations, 1875–1890*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 1979, 3. Contemporaries – here Sir Edward Grey – at the outbreak of war in August 1914 spoke in the same fashion: »The lamps are going out all over Europe. We shall not see them lit again in our time.« Quoted in Samuel Hynes. *A War Imagined – The First World War and English Culture*. London: The Bodley Head, 1990, 3.

3 *Collins English Dictionary*. Glasgow: Harper Collins, 1992, 254.

4 Scott D. Denham. *Visions of War. Ideologies and Images of War in German Literature before and after the Great War*. Berlin: Peter Lang, 1992, 41. Despite the wording of the title, Christopher Clark's study *The Sleepwalkers. How Europe Went to War in 1914*. London: Allen Lane, 2012, acknowledges political actors to be the cause of war, though he has a more lenient view on the German Reich and its aggressive pre-war politics than other historians.

alyptic doctrines, Judgement Day is the climax and end of a gloomy scenario of the breakdown of all orders and the beginning of the Anti-Christ's tyranny. In the course of time, Apocalyptic thoughts tended to incorporate a plethora of historical, geographical and astrological traditions which resulted in a substantial, though metaphysical, theory of history. The Apocalyptic Riders, the most powerful motif as they were said to bring war, hunger and pest, have survived the times and entered the European collective memory.<sup>5</sup>

Modern translations of Apocalyptic ideas are found, as suggested above, in reflections about the final battle between good and evil (Armageddon) in relation to World War I or in post-1945 discourses on a looming Nuclear War.<sup>6</sup> One of many expressive voices in European literature capturing the apocalyptic mood of the years 1914–1918, the English novelist D.H. Lawrence, predicted:

The world of ours has got to collapse now, in violence and injustice and destruction, nothing will stop it. I believe the deluge of iron rain will destroy the world here, utterly: nor Ararat will rise above the subsiding iron waters. We have chosen our extinction in death.<sup>7</sup>

Besides its eschatological meaning, the Apocalypse has a second implication – that of a world that leaves last things behind and takes the end of mankind and history as a chance for complete regeneration. Accordingly, God's realm on earth will come true and last for one-thousand years (the millennium; chiliasm), bringing justice, unity, common mutuality and heavenly joy. An entire modern utopian Weltanschauung revolving around the teleology of history and the »principle of hope« (Ernst Bloch) is rooted in the apocalyptic tradition of Ur-Christendom.

Unsurprisingly, utopian discourses were *en vogue* in *fin-de-siècle* literature across Europe. Man's perfectibility – a fundamental prerequisite of utopian deliberations – was less at the focus in these discourses, but War itself was ascribed a vigorous role in transcending the given, which is another asset of utopian deliberations. Chiefly German intellectuals and writers hugged notions of a re-vitalisation of culture with

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5 Another feature of medieval imagery found in modern war novels is the »dance of death«. Ernst O. Fink sums up: »It is this insistence on the near-identity of the bodies dead and living, the parallelism of fate, the identification of the living with the dead, and vice-versa, which has contained the essential horror of the message of the Dance of Death well up into our own days and nights«; Ernst O. Fink. »Recycling the Medieval Dance of Death in Modern War Novels«. *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature* 2 (1990), 5–17, here 11.

6 Emig adds the ambivalent aesthetic function of apocalyptic writing in modernism, which becomes visible in its – contradictory to modernist aims – closed endings; Emig, *Krieg als Metapher*, 317–320. For apocalyptic warnings and utopian alternatives in literature written in German see Theo Buck. *Vorschein der Apokalypse*. Tübingen: Stauffenberg Verlag, 2001.

7 Hynes, *A War Imagined*, 136–137.

teleological implications.<sup>8</sup> In these versions the German Reich would spearhead a world mission and be the executor of God's last Judgement.<sup>9</sup> Besides, different European models of utopia vied against each other:

Der Krieg wurde von Anfang an als ein ›Kulturkrieg‹ verstanden, als ein ›Krieg der Geister‹, ein ›Glaubenskrieg‹ – dies freilich nicht nur von deutscher Seite.<sup>10</sup>

As to a utopian regeneration of (German) post-war literature Kiefer disputably concludes that war had neither a repercussion on literature, nor would literature adapt to adequate aesthetic forms of expression owing to the choice of destructive formal devices in Avant-garde literature borrowed from war itself. At the heart of the conflict Kiefer assumes »the fundamental problem of ambivalence in Modernism«<sup>11</sup> and he consequently claims World War I to be for literature what it was for politics: the great seminal catastrophe.<sup>12</sup>

Literary responses in Britain looked alike, yet also different. From across the Channel H. B. Wells' eponymous dictum »the war that will end war«<sup>13</sup> (1914) carried a similar utopian message. In contrast to Wells, in British poetry and prose

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8 Thomas F. Schneider. »Pazifistische Kriegsutopien in der deutschen Literatur vor und nach dem Ersten Weltkrieg.« Hans Esselborn (ed.). *Utopie, Antiutopie und Science Fiction im deutschsprachigen Raum des 20. Jahrhunderts*. Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 2003, 12–28. English men of letters came to metaphorically describe war as a »disinfectant« or »cure« doing away with the »decadence« of the Edwardian past and its literature and as a »gap in history that could not be bridged.«; Hynes, *A War Imagined*, 11–24. For the national waves of war euphoria see Denham, *Visions of War*, chapter 4.

9 Denham, *Visions of War*, 49. A profound analysis of apocalyptic interpretations of the First World War in German literature before and immediately after the war is Klaus Vondung. »Apokalyptische Deutungen des Ersten Weltkriegs in Deutschland«. Franz Karl Stanzel (ed.). *Intimate Enemies. English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War 1914–1918*. Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 1994, 59–69 and especially 61–64.

10 Klaus H. Kiefer. »Kriegsziele und literarische Utopie im Ersten Weltkrieg / War Aims in Literary Utopia in the First World War«. *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature* 5 (1993), 19–40, here 30. »War from the start was considered a ›cultural war‹, a ›war of the spirits‹, a ›war of beliefs‹ – and not only by the Germans.« (transl. U.Z.). Kiefer points to the influential religious interpretations of the war by German priests and theologians (ibid., 27). Thomas Mann's *Gedanken im Kriege* captures the utopian spirit of the European pre-war public: »Krieg! Es war Reinigung, Befreiung, was wir empfanden, und eine ungeheure Hoffnung. Hiervon sagten die Dichter, nur hiervon [...]. Was die Dichter begeisterte, war der Krieg an sich selbst [...].«; Thomas Mann. *Gedanken im Kriege: Text Fischer Klassik Plus*. Frankfurt/Main: Fischer E-Books, 2009 (qtd. in Kiefer, »Kriegsziele«, 28). »War! It meant purification, liberation for us and tremendous hope. This is what the poets said, only this [...]. The poets were enthralled by war itself [...].« (transl. U.Z.).

11 Kiefer, »Kriegsziele«, 35 (transl. U.Z.).

12 Ibid., 32.

13 H. G. Wells wrote the book entitled *The War that Will End War* in 1914. Its title came to be used as a common phrase to refer to the First World War.

written by war participants Holger Klein notes early visions since 1914 and 1916 of constructive changes in society after the war on the grounds of overcoming nationalism and hatred such as: Charles Hamilton Sorley's *To Germany* and Siegfried Sassoon's *Everybody Sang*.<sup>14</sup> The demand for »renewal as a rejection of war, as a call for reconciliation and understanding«<sup>15</sup> grew in the 1920s, in particular in the concluding years of the decade. With regard to autobiography Robert Graves's *Goodbye to All That* (1929), though not outspokenly utopian, insinuates doubts about an evil German character:

We no longer believed the highly-coloured accounts of German atrocities in Belgium; knowing the Belgians now at first-hand.<sup>16</sup>

The same with patriotism, another strong pillar of war propaganda:

Patriotism, in the trenches, was too remote a sentiment, and at once rejected as fit only for civilians, or prisoners.<sup>17</sup>

The sobering experience of the ex-combatant leads to an increasing alienation from official war aims and their underlying ideology,<sup>18</sup> which in consequence reflects on his – and Siegfried Sassoon's – poetry in 1916, when the latter was working on his book *Old Huntsman* (1917) during a convalescence leave in England: »We

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14 Holger M. Klein. »Transcendent Visions of Renewal in First World War Literature«. *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature* 5 (1993), 9, 7–17. We can also add here William Owen, »Strange Meeting« (1918) for its direct address to the ex-enemy: »I am the enemy you killed, my friend. / I knew you in this dark; for so you frowned / Yesterday through me as you jabbed and killed. / I parried; but my hands / were loath and cold. / Let us sleep now [...].« in *The Pelican Guide to English Literature* 7. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1976, 175. Klein continues on page 7: »[...] the impulse behind the visions resembles that behind the Pastoral [...] the various myths of an Eden or Golden Age, and Utopias [...].«

15 Klein, »Transcendent Vision«, 13.

16 Robert Graves. *Goodbye to All That*. London: Penguin Books, 1960, 152–153.

17 *Ibid.*, 157.

18 »We decided not to make any public protest against war. Siegfried said that we must »keep up the good reputation of the poets« – as men of courage, he meant. Our best place would be back in France, away from the shameless madness of home-service. There, our function would not be to kill Germans, though that might happen, but to make things easier for the men under our command«; Graves, *Goodbye*, 192. When back in France as a commanding officer, he notes the changes in the soldiers' training: »The training principles had recently been revised. *Infantry Training*, 1914, laid it down politely that the soldier's ultimate aim was to put out of action or render ineffective the armed forces of the enemy. The War Office no longer considered this statement direct enough for a war of attrition. Troops learned instead that they must HATE the Germans, and KILL as many of them as possible [...]. Once more I felt glad to be sent up to the trenches.« *Ibid.*, 195–196. See also Sassoon's *A Soldier's Declaration Finished with the War*, July 1917, Graves, *Goodbye*, 213–214. A second collection of Sassoon's anti-war poems *Counter-Attack* came out in 1919.

defined the war in our poems by making contrasted definitions of peace.«<sup>19</sup> No wonder before the end of war, Graves was drawn to pacifist circles, among which some boasted Aldous Huxley, Bertrand Russell, Herbert Read and Wilfred Owen.<sup>20</sup>

In sum, European authors prior to its outbreak welcomed war as the liberator from a rotten civilisation and, consequently, presented their respective ideas of a post-war order on the basis of a re-vitalised culture and with strong nationalist undertones. In contrast, pacifist and progressive post-war literature imbued with the memory of utter demolition and aware of highflying pre-war illusions unfulfilled abandoned any idea of a civilisation coming into the world by war, but shaped an antithesis to pre-war speculations on the basis of anti-war prose and poetry.<sup>21</sup>

In Germany, at the other end of the political spectrum, nationalist writers, like Ernst Jünger, aggressively turned to fascism in the overheated struggle for the »correct« interpretation of Germany's defeat.<sup>22</sup> Futurism had a similar impact in Italy. Both gained inspiration from repressive militarism and the ideal of the man of action. In essence, the doctrine of unquestioned leadership and obedience of which the soldier was the epitome was to be transferred to society as a whole.

In opposition to fascist interpretations, anti-war prose at the end of the 1920s placed the outrage at war in the context of a moderately specified universal humanism. In consequence, nationalisms were identified to be principal causes of wars and attention was drawn to the soldiers' individual sufferings resulting from them. If utopian thoughts have as their »origin and driving force profound dissatisfaction with the world as it is at the moment, with conditions as they are«,<sup>23</sup> the works under consideration scrapped nationalist ideologies and envisioned instead international understanding. The veterans' *littérature engagée* was far from delineating an accomplished utopian vision of alternatives.<sup>24</sup> It carried instead the seeds of

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19 Ibid., 191.

20 Ibid., 204.

21 For Germany see Kurt Pinthus. *Menschheitsdämmerung. Symphonie jüngster Dichtung*. Berlin: Rowohlt, 1920, a collection of expressionistic poems. For a typology of pacifist utopias and anti-war prose see Schneider, »Pazifistische Kriegsutopien«, 14–17, 23–28.

22 Jünger's first edition of *In Stahlgewittern* (1920) is devoted to the Soldier on both sides. From 1923 a revised version became popular among nationalist and fascist circles of the Weimar Republic. See also Oswald Spengler. *Der Untergang des Abendlandes – Umrisse einer Morphologie der Weltgeschichte*. Wien: Braumüller, 1918 (Band 1: *Gestalt und Wirklichkeit*), München: C. H. Beck, 1922 (Band 2: *Welthistorische Perspektiven*). For a comprehensive discussion of Jünger's *In Stahlgewittern* see Denham, *Visions of War*, chapter 9.

23 Holger M. Klein. »Home is Utopia. Priestley's vision of an ideal society«. *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature* 11 (2005), 50–73, here 52.

24 »*Littérature engagée* is the application of commitment to the special field of literature. Its one and only requirement is that the writer should take part in the struggles of the age [...]. Committed literature has no special themes, style or methods [...].« Max Adereth. »What is ›Littérature engagée?«. David Craig (ed.). *Marxists on Literature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1997, 445–485, here 482.

hope, which in the course of time would blossom and overcome a dissatisfying reality. Siegfried Sassoon neatly phrases the core idea of de-othering the Other at the moment his fictitious autobiographical I-narrator encounters the German enemy for the first time:

There were four of them, and they were standing about thirty yards away, gazing in the other direction. They were wearing flat blue-grey caps and their demeanour suggested boredom and idleness. Anyhow, I was at last more or less in contact with the enemies of England. I had come from Edinburgh via Limerick and Jerusalem, drawing full pay for seven months, and I could now say that I had seen some of the people I was fighting against. And what I saw was four harmless young Germans who were staring up at a distant aeroplane.<sup>25</sup>

In the following novels of two representatives of the ›lost generation‹ from two previous enemy states are scrutinized and compared with regard to apocalyptic and/or utopian vestiges. As to aesthetics, their prose as a rule – apart from Gibbon's *Sunset Song* (1932) – is non-experimental. In terms of ethics, it is committed. Whereas Remarque's novels substantiate their criticism of the given on the basis of a universal humanism, Grassic Gibbon's reflections originate in humanist anarchism. The works in either case meet the criteria of *littérature engagée* as well as Ernst Bloch's definition of anticipation in literature and the arts which tracks down the ›utopischen, nämlich zukunfthaltigen Eigenschaften der Wirklichkeit‹.<sup>26</sup> Bloch, a German Marxist utopian philosopher, throughout his comprehensive work, advocates the irresistible human faculty of striving towards the light and leaving darkness behind.<sup>27</sup> Or more to the point, written against the background of World War I Bloch's philosophy argues in favour of a sustainable, constructive peace actively struggled for by means of hope, which he elucidates at length in his seminal work, *Prinzip Hoffnung* (1954).<sup>28</sup>

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25 Siegfried Sassoon. *The Complete Memoirs of George Sherston*. London: Faber and Faber, 1986, 642–643. Edward Blunden, *Undertones of War* (1928) is comparably dispassionate. Ford Madox Ford, *Parade's End* (1924–28; New York: Vintage Books, 1979) contains heterogeneous images of the enemy. German soldiers either symbolise the Apocalypse (486–487) or the perverse senselessness of war (562).

26 Ernst Bloch. *Ästhetik des Vorscheins*. Vol. I. Ed. by Gert Ueding. Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 1974, 265. Ernst Bloch also adds: »[...] the utopian, that is, the visionary qualities of reality«; Ibid., 279 (transl. U.Z.).

27 Ernst Bloch. *Geist der Utopie*. München, Leipzig: Duncker & Humblot, 1918, 57.

28 Hope has a direction, is the state of »not yet«, but its wilful energy is teleological. Cf. Johannes F. Evelein. »Pazifismus, Gewalt und Exil im Denken Ernst Blochs«. *Krieg und Literatur/War and Literature* 22 (2016), 27–36, 30, 35.

In essence, his notion of Utopia is synonymous with eternal peace and it therefore identifies features discernible in the literature under consideration. The quality of Remarque's and Gibbon's novels, though distinct from each other, resonates with the philosophical impetus of utopian literature – its anticipating reflection – rather than feature the constituents of a literary utopia.<sup>29</sup>

## Remarque's Universal Humanism

Ullstein Propyläen published the German original of Erich Maria Remarque's world bestseller *Im Westen nichts Neues/All Quiet on the Western Front* on 29 January 1929 after it had been serialised in *Vossische Zeitung* from 10 November until 9 December 1928. The publication of the English translation followed a day later on 30 January 1929. With the Hollywood movie production released in the US in April 1930 and the German Reich on 4 December 1930 the young author climbed the Olymp of international literature. Research has recently shown that his follow-up – *Der Weg zurück/The Road Back* (1931) which was originally divided into two parts – was meant to form a trilogy with *Im Westen nichts Neues*.<sup>30</sup>

As the by-product of a contract with United Press Association – a merger of three American news agencies founded by E. W. Scripps in 1907 – which determined the global copy rights for *Der Weg zurück* and its advance publication in international magazines, six »articles« (later contained in the collection *Der Feind/The Enemy*) were agreed upon to be written by Remarque. Between March 1930 and December 1931, they appeared in *Collier's Magazine*, thus framing the advance

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29 Wolfgang Biesterfeld. *Die literarische Utopie*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzlersche Verlagsbuchhandlung, 1982, 8. According to Vosskamp a literary utopia is identified by »negation«, »anticipation« and the »category of the possible«; Wilhelm Vosskamp. »Utopie als Antwort auf Geschichte. Zur Typologie der literarischen Utopien in der Neuzeit«. Hartmut Eggert (ed.). *Geschichte als Literatur: Formen und Grenzen der Repräsentation von Vergangenheit*. Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler, 1990, 273–283, 274. The last feature is more or less absent from Remarque's prose texts under consideration. In his text linguistic-based analysis of Remarque's political novels of the 1950s Heinrich Placke negating their genre character examines the semantic coherence in order to prove the »chiffres of the utopian«, which he distinguishes from the utopian motifs or topoi; Heinrich Placke. *Die Chiffren des Utopischen. Zum literarischen Gehalt der politischen 50er-Jahre-Romane Remarques*. Göttingen: V&R unipress, 2003, 16, 20–25. The present article seeks to find a residue of the utopian in Remarque's 1920s/1930s novels from a culture-based literary theory.

30 Thomas F. Schneider. »Das Leben wiedergewinnen oder zugrundegehen – Zur Entstehung und Publikation von Erich Maria Remarques *Der Weg zurück*«. Erich Maria Remarque. *Der Weg zurück*. Ed. by Thomas F. Schneider. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2019, 395–413. Advance publication was internationally coordinated and began in December 1930. In Germany again *Vossische Zeitung* got the novel into serial print (7 December 1930 – 29 January 1931). On Remarque's »publication offensive« see also Alice Cadeddu. »Erich Maria Remarques *Der Weg zurück* – Eine weltweite Publikationsstrategie«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook XXVIII* (2018), 45–66.

publication of *Der Weg zurück* from 13 December 1930 to 28 February 1931 in the same magazine.<sup>31</sup>

The fourth prose text under consideration – *Drei Kameraden/Three comrades* – had again been serialized in a US-American magazine. This time the women's magazine *Good Housekeeping* carried sequels from January to May 1937. Book editions came out in that year in the US, in the United Kingdom and Canada. It was not until 1951 that the first German version of *Drei Kameraden* by the emigrant publisher Querido Amsterdam in 1938 was succeeded by a first edition in Germany. Similarities with regard to the theme – survival under the conditions of a »catastrophe of life« in post-war times – and the individual anti-heroes' desperate attempts to escape the misery of their lives hint at a structure in common with the previous novels.<sup>32</sup> Neither in the Anglophone countries nor in Germany would the public regard it a trilogy. Long intervals between the publications of the single parts may have hampered this impression.

### *Im Westen nichts Neues / All Quiet on the Western Front (1928)*

Critical appraisal of *All Quiet on the Western Front* has chiefly focussed on four issues: the validity of the book in its capacity as a »war report«, the autobiographical components in the prose, the outspoken universal pacifism and – with more careful readers – its character of a post-war novel. Unsurprisingly, critics were less prepared to acknowledge the concealed political rhetoric. A pessimistic ending or the protagonist's refusal to reflect on the war and its causes stand as proof for the author's »apolitical« stance.<sup>33</sup> However, Wagener admits that the refutation of the

31 Thomas F. Schneider. »Nachwort – Versteckt und vergessen. Erich Maria Remarques Nachkriegserzählungen über den Ersten Weltkrieg«. Erich Maria Remarque. *Der Feind. Erzählungen*. Ed. by Thomas F. Schneider. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993, 63–76. This volume is the first German book publication of the stories. The 2014 updated edition (Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch; KiWi 1364) includes four more stories. The 2018 American edition *Eight Stories: Tales of War and Loss*. Introduction by Maria Tatar, Larry Wolff (Washington: Mews books; New York: New York UP) is based on *Collier's* plus two stories published there in 1934. See also Uwe Zagratzki. »Teil des kulturellen Gedächtnisses. Remarque in Nordamerika«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook XXX* (2020), 21–34, here 22, FN 3.

32 Thomas F. Schneider. »Von *Pat* zu *Drei Kameraden*. Zur Entstehung des ersten Romans der Exil-Zeit Remarques«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook II* (1992), 66–77. On the evolution of the text from its early stages to the publication see also Lena Dust. »Der Trilogiecharakter von Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*, *Der Weg zurück* und *Drei Kameraden*«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook XXVII* (2017), 115–140 and Tilman Westphalen's epilogue »Der Orden der Erfolglosen«. Erich Maria Remarque. *Drei Kameraden*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998, 384–398, here 387.

33 Hans Wagener. »Erich Maria Remarque, *Im Westen nichts Neues – Zeit zu leben und Zeit zu sterben*. Ein Autor, zwei Weltkriege«. *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook X* (2000), 31–52, here 47.

glories of heroic nationalism in the treatment and its pacifist stance speak for an implicit politics.<sup>34</sup> Pointing to an inherent political discourse Kloiber underscores that despite the protagonist's death at the end of the novel:

Das Prinzip des Lebens besteht auch nach der physischen Auslöschung der Träger seiner Idee weiter.<sup>35</sup>

At heart this statement relates to the life-confirming principle of hope articulated in the novel which the author is eager to save in the face of unspeakable war atrocities.<sup>36</sup> This does not deny that it takes long for the utopian vein to get the upper hand of its apocalyptic counterpart. Descriptions of an end-of-the-world sentiment vary. Two main categories stick out: the effects on the soldiers' psyche most drastically expressed in the feeling of doom<sup>37</sup> and the regression of civilised man<sup>38</sup> along with the visible destruction of the human and natural environment.<sup>39</sup> These parts are offset by a forward-looking belief in the indestructibility of the good in man. The ultimate value is man's innate social links (sociability) to his fellow human beings<sup>40</sup> of which physical love between members of the war-faring nations is a minor aspect.<sup>41</sup> Its strongest expression is the comradeship among the combatants which in the course of the novel outgrows its military limitations and including general brotherhood and solidarity turns into the common man's utopia of the ordinary born out of the misery of trench life:

Das Artillerief Feuer der Front umsummt unseren Zufluchtsort. [...] So sitzen wir uns gegenüber, Kat und ich, zwei Soldaten in abgeschabten Rücken, die eine Gans braten, mitten in der Nacht. [...] Wir sind zwei Menschen, zwei winzige Funken Leben, draußen ist die Nacht und der Kreis des Todes. Wir sitzen an ihrem Rande, gefährdet und geborgen, über unsere Hände trieft Fett, wir sind uns nahe mit unseren Herzen, [...]. Früher wäre keiner unserer Gedanken ähnlich gewesen – jetzt sitzen wir vor einer Gans und

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34 Ibid.

35 Harald Kloiber. »Struktur, Stil und Motivik in Remarques *Im Westen nichts Neues*«. Erich Maria Remarque *Jahrbuch/Yearbook* VI (1994), 65–78. »The principle of life persists after the physical extinction of the bearer of the idea«, 75 (transl. U.Z.).

36 Ibid., 72–75. Kloiber argues that aesthetic devices like the narrator's point of view are used for this purpose.

37 Erich Maria Remarque. *Im Westen Nichts Neues*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1993 (KiWi 319), 61–62, 63–68, 100–106.

38 Ibid., 244–246. See an identical theme in Ambrose Bierce's American Civil War story *Chicamauga* (1889).

39 Ibid., 56–58, 126, 255–256.

40 Ibid., 237–241.

41 Ibid., 134–140.

fühlen unser Dasein und sind uns so nahe, dass wir nicht darüber sprechen mögen.<sup>42</sup>

Brotherhood among their own ranks sharpens a desire for universal peace<sup>43</sup> and for the existence of humanism in and for all human creatures regardless of their culture.<sup>44</sup> Despite frustration and the refusal to consider political analysis and ensuing action<sup>45</sup> as means of change the novel reveals the characters' strong will to survive (against all odds) in the face of cruel forces and to finally to overcome them.<sup>46</sup> Apart from man's inward nature outward nature, either as bucolic idylls or »Mother Earth«, represents the radical opposite of the horror of the trenches.<sup>47</sup>

### *Der Feind (1930–1934) / Eight Stories: Tales of War and Loss (2018)*

Signs of apocalyptic reflections are nearly entirely missing from the collection of short narratives. One example is from the second narrative *Schweigen um Verdun* which reads like an apocalyptic elegy:

[...] denn bisher hat in allen Kämpfen am Ende die Natur die Oberhand gewonnen; das Leben wuchs wieder aus der Vernichtung [...]. Aber in diesem letzten, schrecklichsten der Kriege hat zum ersten Mal die Vernichtung den Sieg errungen.<sup>48</sup>

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42 Ibid., 90. »The sound of the gun-fire from the front penetrates into our refuge. [...] We sit opposite one another. Kat and I, two soldiers in shabby coats, cooking a goose in the middle of the night. [...] We are two men, two minute sparks of life; outside is the night and the circle of death. We sit on the edge of it crouching in danger, the grease drips from our hands, in our hearts we are close to one another. [...] Formerly we should not have had a single thought in common – now we sit with a goose between us and feel in unison, are so intimate that we do not even speak.« Erich Maria Remarque. *All Quiet on the Western Front*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1996, 93–94. See also Remarque, *Im Westen*, 191–192, 210–215, 244. In disagreement with an utopian undercurrent in the novel, see Johannes Waßmer. *Die neuen Zeiten im Westen und das ästhetische Niemandsland*. Freiburg: Rombach, 2018, 217–262, 250, 255–260. There is a reference to a Jewish-Christian ideal of redemption inherent in apocalyptic traditions.

43 »Weshalb soll nun wohl ein französischer Schlosser oder Schuhmacher uns angreifen wollen? Nein, das sind nur die Regierungen«; Remarque, *Im Westen*, 186. [»Now just why would a French blacksmith or a French shoemaker want to attack us? No, it is merely the rulers.« Remarque, *All Quiet*, 205]. See also Remarque, *Im Westen*, 198–207.

44 Ibid., 176.

45 Ibid., 84, 116.

46 Ibid., 262–263.

47 Ibid., 12–15, 54–55, 171–172.

48 Erich Maria Remarque. »Schweigen um Verdun«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 18–25, here 19; »[...] for in all contests hitherto nature, at the last, has regained the upper hand; life just grew up again out of

Or in *Karl Broeger in Fleury* the main figure memorises a battle in a characteristically apocalyptic wording:

[...] es war die Hölle, es war die reine Hölle, das Letzte, das Ende, ein Hexenkessel, hoffnungslos [...].<sup>49</sup>

Utopian features dominate the stories in a variety of shapes. Again, outward nature in opposition to man-made atrocities holds the spell of a visionary power.<sup>50</sup> In combination with the simplicity of life in the country side (*Der junge Lehrer*) it gains importance as a counter scheme.<sup>51</sup>

Anticipating the potential of a new future by acts of rebellion<sup>52</sup>, Remarque places his protagonists in a broader philosophical context corresponding to Camus' »man in revolt« and the Anarchist belief in the basic »instincts« of man applied to the common good.<sup>53</sup> Repeatedly, comradeship appears to be the epitome of social responsibility, and stripped off military limitations is practised at free will and includes the »enemy«<sup>54</sup>. In »Unterwegs« veterans practice solidarity in a post-war society.<sup>55</sup>

Rainer Jeglin argues that Remarque identified comradeship with a civilian code of friendship in contrast to Jünger's militaristic-hierarchical concept.<sup>56</sup> The short narratives read as a coherent prose text containing the elements required for an alternative post-war world, as they articulate the overall aim (»Nie wieder/Never again!«<sup>57</sup>) and speak about de-traumatisation as a prerequisite of a new beginning.<sup>58</sup>

Remarque's collection of »counter-memories« of the common soldiers opposes the glorifying memoirs and prose of veteran officers and nationalists dominating

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the destruction [...]. But in this last, most terrible of wars destruction has for the first time gained victory«; Remarque, »Silence«, *Eight Stories*, 20–33; here 23–24.

49 Erich Maria Remarque. »Karl Broeger in Fleury«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 26–33, here 32; »Hell it was, and it was nothing but Hell, the last, and the end, a cauldron, hopeless«. Remarque, »Where Karl has fought«, *Eight Stories*, 35–49, here 46.

50 Erich Maria Remarque. »Der Feind«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 9–17, here 10.

51 Erich Maria Remarque. »Der junge Lehrer. Plauderei eines Kriegslehrers«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 15–20.

52 E.g. the emotional acts of resistance (Ibid., »Ich hab die Nacht geträumet«, 79–88, here 85–88; »Jürgen Tamen«, 7–14, here 12–13) or the unofficial ceasefire in the frontline (»Der Feind«, 13–15).

53 Parallels to Ernst Bloch's notions of utopian vestiges in the given order (*Ästhetik des Verscheins*) are obvious.

54 Remarque, »Der Feind«, *Der Feind*, 15.

55 Remarque, »Unterwegs«, *Der Feind*, 89–100.

56 Reiner Jeglin. »Zweimal Osnabrück, Pappelgraben. Karl-May-Erinnerungen im Werk von Erich Maria Remarque«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook V* (1995), 52–64, here 54–55.

57 Remarque, »Karl Bröger in Fleury«, *Der Feind*, 32; »Where Karl had fought«, *Eight Stories*, 47.

58 Erich Maria Remarque. »Josefs Frau«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 34–43. »Karl Broeger in Fleury«. Remarque, *Der Feind*, 26–33. As to the psychoanalytical side in the stories see also Maria Tatar, Larry Wolff. »Remarque at Collier's: Writing about War for the American Public in the 1930s«. Remarque, *Eight Stories*, IX–XL VIII, here XXX–XXXVI.

the book market in the Weimar Republic and, of significant importance in the context of the present study, directs its focus to the long-term effects of war on post-war society, hence establishing an alternative act of remembrance born out of a »Never again!«<sup>59</sup>

*Der Weg zurück / The Road Back* (1931)<sup>60</sup>

Spooky marches of the dead<sup>61</sup> or mutilated<sup>62</sup> and nightmares of the ›lost generation‹<sup>63</sup> symbolize apocalyptic scenes. Unexpectedly, the end-of-the-world-depression merges into a vision of a peaceful future. When Georg Rahe, a war veteran, returns to the French battle fields to commit suicide, he has a final vision of dead soldiers of all war-faring nations marching for eternal peace:

[...] er sieht sie marschieren, sie stampfen und sind in Bewegung, sie marschieren langsam, und ihr Weg ist weit, es wird lange dauern, aber es geht vorwärts, sie werden ankommen und ihre letzte Schlacht schlagen, die Schlacht für das Leben, sie marschieren schweigend, eine dunkle Armee, den weitesten Weg, den Weg in die Herzen, es wird viele Jahre dauern [...].<sup>64</sup>

References to utopian perspectives include hints to the German 1918 November Revolution, which reflects »die Ahnung einer Zukunft, die unfaßbare Erwartung eines anderen Lebens«<sup>65</sup> and »eine wilde, atemlose Hoffnung [...] als ginge es jetzt geradewegs in ein Dasein der Freiheit und Gerechtigkeit hinein«. <sup>66</sup> In the same line of thought, John Fotheringham states »[...] the novel is, among other things, a lament for the lost opportunity of 1918 [...]». <sup>67</sup>

59 Schneider, »Nachwort«, 65, 73.

60 Or *The Way Back* in other subsequent translations.

61 Erich Maria Remarque. *Der Weg zurück*. Ed. by Thomas F. Schneider. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2019, 29, 54, 327–329.

62 *Ibid.*, 290–294.

63 *Ibid.*, 270–276.

64 Erich Maria Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 361; »[...] he sees them marching. They stamp and are in motion; they are marching, slowly, and their way is far; it will take long, but it leads forward; they shall come here and fight their last battle, the battle for life. They are marching in silence, a dark army, the longest way, the way into the heart. It will take many years [...]«. Erich Maria Remarque. *The Road Back*. New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1998, 332.

65 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 91; »hopes for a future, elusive expectancy of a new life«. Remarque, *The Road Back*, 81.

66 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 92; »a wild, breathless hope [...]: as though the road would now lead us straight on into the life of freedom and justice«. Remarque, *The Road Back*, 82.

67 John Fotheringham. »Looking Back at The Revolution«. Brian Murdoch, Mark Ward, Maggie Sargeant (eds.). *Remarque Against War*. Glasgow: Scottish Papers in Germanic Studies, 1998,

Since revolutionary dreams become unfulfilled for the young war veterans on their way back to the hardships of a civilian life in the Weimar Republic<sup>68</sup>, pragmatic solutions of a simple life gain the upper hand.<sup>69</sup> At the other end of the scale, occasional Dionysian debauchery<sup>70</sup> stands for a pragmatic alternative in the present borrowed from a utopia in the future. Again, Remarque's rustic idylls are meeting points of visionary counter designs: in contrast to the destruction soldiers got accustomed to in the front lines, »mystified« nature – sometimes associated with childhood memories – is pure and unspoilt.<sup>71</sup> Marc Hieger points to the impact German Romanticism had on Remarque's nature descriptions.<sup>72</sup>

On a political level, individual rebellion against state authorities, though rare, characterises a mood among the veterans pertaining to which points to Man's inherent desire for freedom and the absence of repression.<sup>73</sup> The motif of the dog fight reiterates the theme of a utopian »surplus« in societies.<sup>74</sup> Since the pre-war optimism of bringing about a new world by means of war<sup>75</sup> evaporated in the trenches of Flanders and France and since even the comradeship steeled during battles has a hard time in a competitive post-war society,<sup>76</sup> notions of a good life are projected on individual decency. It must be noted that romantic love is not considered a healer of social and political pains. The novel ends – in comparison to the pre-print – on a more optimistic note.<sup>77</sup> It can even be argued that it carries a notion of anticipation and hope Bloch describes as utopian »Vorschein« (premonition, foreboding) or »surplus« and which appears to lead a separate life of its own in any given reality. Being a spiritual force rather than a political concept, though according to Bloch's Marxist philosophy triggered by material circumstances, it pervades human existence. As a leitmotif of the novel the I-narrator puts it in a concluding metaphor:

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98–118, here 102.

68 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 92–95, 168.

69 Ibid., 34–37, 95–96. For an elaborate evaluation of the treatment of the November Revolution in the novel see Thomas F. Schneider. »Die Revolution in der Provinz. Erich Maria Remarque: *Der Weg zurück* (1930/31)«. Ulrich Kittstein, Regine Zeller (eds.). *Friede, Freiheit, Brot! Romane zur deutschen Novemberrevolution*. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2009, 255–267.

70 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 47–53.

71 Ibid., 197, 333–336. See also Jeglin, »Zweimal Osnabrück«, 54.

72 Marc Hieger. »Heimkehr als ziviles Scheitern«. *Erich Maria Remarque Jahrbuch/Yearbook XXVII* (2017), 141–171, 159.

73 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 189–193, 346–356.

74 Ibid., 258–262.

75 Ibid., 232–237, 339–340, 367.

76 Ibid., 218–219, 257.

77 Schneider, »Das Leben wiedergewinnen«, 404. As to the disappearance of comradeship in the trenches see Waßmer, *Die neuen Zeiten*, 263–279.

[...] ich will weitergehen und nicht umkehren [...]. Das Leben ist im Zimmer. In den Möbeln knackt es, der Tisch kracht und der Schrank knarrt. Man hat sie seit Jahren gefällt und zerschnitten, gehobelt und geleimt zu Dingen des Dienens, zu Stühlen und Betten; aber in jedem Frühjahr, in den Nächten des Saftes, rumort es wieder in ihnen, sie erwachen, sie dehnen sich, sie sind nicht mehr Gerät, Stuhl und Zweck, sie haben wieder teil am Strömen und Fließen des Lebens draußen.<sup>78</sup>

By implication, *The Road Back* of the title idealistically leads to a future beyond the dismal social reality of the Weimar Republic.<sup>79</sup>

### *Drei Kameraden* / *Three Comrades* (1936)<sup>80</sup>

A few years on from where the plot left off in *The Road Back* we meet three friends (and ex-combatants) struggling for economic survival in Berlin's ›Golden Twenties‹. Though the novel is set against the background of political turmoil and economic crisis of the late Weimar Republic, it is the fathomless love between Robert and Pat – the eponymous title figure of the first draft *Pat* – which is the backbone of the plot and – unlike *The Road Back* – the strongest source of utopian projections.<sup>81</sup> This is demonstrated in a characteristic passage in which the

78 Remarque, *Der Weg zurück*, 374–375; »[...] I will go on and not look back. [...] There is life in the room. It creaks in the furniture, the table cracks and the wardrobe also. Many years ago, someone felled these and split them, planed them and worked them into things of utility, into chairs and beds – but each springtime, in the darkness of the sap, it stirs and reverberates in them again; they waken, they stretch themselves, they are mere objects of use no longer, no longer chairs for a purpose; once again they have part in the streaming and flowing outside«. Remarque, *The Road Back*, 343–344. With this possibility in mind, Fotheringham's argument »what it really expresses is Remarque's bewilderment in the face of the development of Fascism« can be strongly disputed (Fotheringham, »Looking back«, 117). Mark G. Ward's assumption, however, that finally the forward-pointing strength lies with »individual identity and motivation«, the »fundamental nature« of man in the »natural environment« is more plausible. Cf. Mark G. Ward. »The Structure of *Der Weg zurück*«. Murdoch, *Remarque Against War*, 85–97. See also Waßner, *Die neuen Zeiten*, 288–293.

79 Without discussing the utopian undercurrent of the novel cf. Brian Murdoch. »Vorwärts auf dem Weg zurück. Kriegsende und Nachkriegszeit bei Erich Maria Remarque«. *Text und Kritik* 149 (2001), 19–29, 27.

80 As mentioned above, the title encapsulates Remarque's ›civilian‹ interpretation of comradeship and is synonymous of family rather than friendship. Erich Maria Remarque. *Drei Kameraden*. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1998, 361. There is an ironic undertone when the I-narrator characterises his friends, a group of taxi drivers, as a ›brotherhood of veterans‹ (Ibid., 135; transl. U.Z.) whose members come from all walks of life.

81 Schneider argues that in *Pat* »the utopian alternative« (transl. U.Z.) of love fails in the face of external forces and unchangeable fate; Schneider, »Von *Pat* zu *Drei Kameraden*, 72. Westphalen, in comparison points to the power of the ›eternal utopia and reality of love« (transl. U.Z.). See Tilman

I-narrator captures the climate of political violence at the end of the Weimar Republic without taking a clear stance of his political predilections.<sup>82</sup> The text strongly suggests that the murder committed in the passage involves Nazi thugs, yet also denies any sympathy for the extreme left. Both political camps appear to take politics for religion,<sup>83</sup> the more so that mainstream Christianity has no answers to the crisis of modernity.<sup>84</sup> Instead, radical individualism<sup>85</sup> prepares the way to enjoying the pleasure of the moment and the beauties of a simple life<sup>86</sup> revolving around alcohol, music, good food, smart dresses and in particular pure love.<sup>87</sup> Escapism from a bourgeois existence to nature or secluded places such as a sanatorium<sup>88</sup> or others out of time<sup>89</sup> denotes Remarque's doubts about the viability of outright political solutions for a society which is still living in the aftermath of World War I<sup>90</sup> while already standing at the brink of the next disaster, Fascism. The utopian spirit lingering in the prose unfolds its impact only by juxtaposing the Dionysian ›intoxication of life‹ with repetitive memories of war atrocities,<sup>91</sup> the veterans' sudden awareness of having luckily survived them<sup>92</sup> and grim passages describing the present economic destitution of large sections of the population.<sup>93</sup> In sum, Remarque's utopia of the present day in *Drei Kameraden* is as fleeting – a trait of all utopias – and fated as Man<sup>94</sup> and dies with the characters. Trace elements are lingering, though, surviving Pat's death.<sup>95</sup>

Trying to come to terms with a utopian discourse in Remarque's prose texts between 1928 and 1937, we claim that it is subtly embedded in their heterogeneous plots and settings. Deeply dissatisfied with the givens of post-war Germany Remarque's notion of a future ideal utilises traditional elements of utopian thin-

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Westphalen, »Der Orden der Erfolglosen«, 388. Jeglin and Pickerodt argue that in *Three Comrades* a collectivist utopia is replaced with the private utopia of love. See Rainer Jeglin, Irmgard Pickerodt. »Weiche Kerle in harter Schale. Zu *Drei Kameraden*«. *Erich Maria Remarque-Jahrbuch/Yearbook VIII* (1998), 217–234, here 234.

82 Remarque, *Drei Kameraden*, 315–329.

83 *Ibid.*, 318–319.

84 *Ibid.*, 361–376.

85 *Ibid.*, 219.

86 *Ibid.*, 125, 147, 148/49, 162, 376.

87 *Ibid.*, 241.

88 *Ibid.*, 299–300, 365.

89 *Ibid.*, 110.

90 *Ibid.*, 49, 349.

91 *Ibid.*, 336.

92 *Ibid.*, 36. See footnote 79. Comradship is rooted in civilian codes and is unrestrictive (e.g. Pat is a member of the group of male chums). For the underlying irony see Jeglin, Pickerodt, »Weiche Kerle«, 226–227.

93 Remarque, *Drei Kameraden*, 147, 268–269.

94 *Ibid.*, 153–154.

95 Cf. Footnote 35.

king which have a keen leaning towards common Man and Woman, their innate social sense (sociability), their mutuality translated into ›comradeship‹, a universal humanism and places remote from the destructive influence of civilisation. In the context of the prose under consideration utopian hope outweighs apocalyptic reflections, though the author is far from sketching a full-scale social model.<sup>96</sup> The intransigent reiteration of his maxims reveals a »militant pacifism« – not unlike Bloch's dynamic intervention of hope – that is the driving impulse of his prose.<sup>97</sup>

### Lewis Grassic Gibbon's Anarchist Utopias

Being three years Remarque's junior, the Scottish Lowlands author Lewis Grassic Gibbon (born James Leslie Mitchell) was too young to join the British Forces during war time. Any deliberations about the war in his prose thus relate to war discourses in the United Kingdom in the late 1920s and are not, unlike Remarque's, enriched by personal experience. Despite that, they share the radical anti-war spirit which was en vogue among European artists, writers and intellectual as mentioned above.

Gibbon's novels written within an immensely brief time span of four years refuse to be categorised as war novels in the strict sense of the word, but »war« can either be a motif, a historical reference or an impulse of a philosophical contemplation, in short, »war« in Gibbon's prose from the outset of his literary career (*Stained Radiancance* 1930) is a frequent hallmark and occasionally a backbone of the narrative.<sup>98</sup> It ultimately stands for complete destruction on the one hand and by means of its destructiveness has a potential for change on the other. For Gibbon, war has its origin in a base and rotten capitalist civilisation against which he sets its ideal of universal libertarian freedom. Love of freedom is written into all human cultures as it, according to Gibbon, originates from primordial times. Idealisation of the supposed natural order of prehistory is fundamental to Gibbon's discourse of freedom, which, however, also includes his interpretation of modern Communism, so far as it serves to surpass current ›civilisation‹ and assists in regaining

96 Since Thomas Morus's *Utopia* (1516), these aspects are reserved for social and state utopias.

97 Thomas F. Schneider. »Einleitung«. Erich Maria Remarque. *Ein militanter Pazifist. Texte und Interviews 1929–1966*. Ed. by Thomas F. Schneider. Köln: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 1994, 9–41, here 15. See also *Ibid.*, Heinz Liepman. »Remarque und die Deutschen – Ein Gespräch mit Erich Maria Remarque«, 110–117, here 112.

98 Scott Lyall. »The Battle for Civilisation in Gibbon's Science Fiction«. *The International Companion to Lewis Grassic Gibbon*. Ed. by Scott Lyall. Glasgow: Scottish Literature International, 2015, 119–132, here 126.