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Senior Thesis

Lines of Communication: Uncovering War's Reality through Fictional Styles
A Comparative Analysis of Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front* and
Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

In *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Paul Fussell claims that there is a “necessity of fiction in any memorable testimony”(Fussell 311) and the scenes written on World War I are originated “largely within the application of mind and memory to the events of the Great War” (Fussell 35). Fussell argues that memory plays a vital role in presenting the past, allowing for fictitious or exaggerated details to penetrate horrors of the past and relay the trauma to its own audiences and modern audiences. His book supports the use of fiction to create sentiments of the past through memory because of the difficulty in perfectly recalling a memory, in particular traumatic ones. In the wake of World War I, war novels and poems emerged, remembering the horrible reality of the trenches and war front; fiction helps to ease these horrors but coincides them with tones concerning the status of society's morality. That is, many authors writing for the ‘Lost Generation’ work to dispel the frivolity of many people's behavior in trying to return to the innocence of a pre-war society, as well as criticize the ignorance with which people treated returning soldiers and the necessity to revive societal consciousness within individuals. By utilizing fiction and authors calling on their own memories of the war, the fragmentation of society becomes more relatable to ordinary citizens, and the horrific and actual details of the war environment could be mitigated by the suspension of truth to some effect; audiences may interpret the events and the subtext of the authors' words, but remain distant enough to not feel personally attacked or offended.

The element of fiction allows for a non-specific portrayal of events and people and of a society's consciousness that provides a level of interpretation that is not presented in history textbooks or autobiographies and memoirs. Fictional works render the emotional responses of society to the vicissitude of peace and conflict, and to the fluctuating philosophies and communication between the warfront and the home front. Furthermore, fiction serves as a good medium of retelling history because the names and faces of the characters are not real. For many civilians, World War I was fought right near their homes and many had relatives fighting and dying on the front lines (Wilkinson 43). It is important to have a detachment from these personal, tragic stories in order to properly invest time in trying to reevaluate the moral status of civilians and honestly learn of the horrors through which their country's young men were living. It is easier to digest a story, if there is a realm of fantasy, a sphere in which the story is partially separate from the truth and when an actual person's name is not directly linked to the experiences being told. Especially during a time when society was divided between soldiers and civilians, fiction helps illustrate the struggle of soldiers, whose youth and innocence perished in the trenches of World War I and never returned home, or those came back psychologically damaged from what they witnessed, which could be a worse fate than the deaths their comrades suffered. That struggle is imperative to the home front in understanding the nature of World War I and the ways in which society needs to improve morally and socially upon their soldiers' return and the end of the war.

Why does fiction prove to be the most effective way to communicate to mass audiences of society suffering from a demanding and emotionally draining war? And why does looking at literature pertaining to the cultural crisis surrounding World War I hold

such merit within writing of the 20th century? The unimaginable atrocities mankind could do upon one another were actualized with World War I and changed the face of war and society alike, as it would never be able to revert back to old values and systems. The Great War was a milestone in the increasing severity of human trauma, even realized by people living at that time, even with the desire to suppress it. One contemporary historian quotes an admiral, who says ““This war is really the greatest insanity in which white races have ever been engaged ... We are exterminating each other”” (Gilbert 88); young men had to kill their peers, innocent youth called to participate in war blinded by visions of proposed glory. As the Great War continued with bloody battles and prolonged fighting, the temperament of society began to alter, trying to rationalize the inhumane machinery and hopeless outlook resulting from a war expected to be short and easy to fight. Yet, civilians could not imagine the harsh conditions of war, settling to live within the bubble of the home front; they focused solely on their own troubles, despite the dying youth and damaging effects war was having on soldiers. The ways of Old Europe began to die along with the numerous soldiers sent to the trenches, leaving a void for civilians to fill on how to recover from four years of such unbelievable events and how to assimilate soldiers back into their communities. To honor these heroes, monuments and memorials have been constructed, but more importantly, reactions of the war front came to light in various novels, poems, and memoirs. Within their pages are windows into the lives of soldiers, a reality that neither the home front nor the returning soldiers cared to remember, but needed to face in order to recover and rebuild society with purposefulness and a more empathetic comprehension of what it means to be a frontline soldier.

The emergence of the 'Lost Generation' personifies the crisis of the interim of two world wars, and the reluctance to face the Great War and rehabilitate how countries and even the basis of humanity should function and relate to one another, though it was unknown that a second world war was looming. There was an innate need to completely alter how humans interact with each other and overcome the disparaging impact of a hopeless four years that left physical and psychological burdens. Authors turned to writing war literature to articulate the flaws that need to be confronted in their society. Samuel Hynes claims,

“As the monuments rose, another, alternative version of the war’s meaning was also taking form, a version that we might call collectively the anti-monuments ... often, they were conscious, aggressive rejections of the monument-making principles; they turned away from celebration, in search of war’s reality” (Hynes 283).

The greatest of these 'anti-monuments' grew out of the 'Lost Generation' and into its most powerful form in fictional war novels and poems, remembering the battles and comrades of the trenches without delusions of grandeur about war. These 'anti-monuments' demonstrate the uncertainties following the Great War and the attempt to explain the truth of war and redefine societal morals after such an immense period of violence. Hynes further explains a cultural divide between conservative and traditional culture, and those who rejected war and its principles, who were the supporters of the 'anti-monuments'. Those who were searching for war's reality encouraged the voice of soldiers that were freed by the Great War's end, trying to come to terms with what they experienced and somehow share that with their families and friends. Many historical critics, such as Modris Eksteins, Fussell, and Hynes, have studied the wave of literary works that succeeded the Great War, and how these authors depicted the war they lived

through, most of them as soldiers. Hynes and Eksteins both address the search for reality following the war and the literature that came about as cultural critiques. These fictional accounts of war reflect the personal attitudes toward the brutal fighting and the compilation of individual experiences that began to shape the post-war illustration of the Great War's destructive reality and society's reluctance to mend it.

The disastrous atmosphere of World War I spanned the globe, with authors from Europe and the United States writing on their war experiences and the ways in which each of the cultures were affected. Erich Maria Remarque and Ernest Hemingway are two distinguished authors writing on the effects of World War I on their respective countries and their returning soldiers. Published in 1929 and 1926 respectively, *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Sun Also Rises* are two novels that contextualize the historical effects and attitudes caused by the war. Remarque writes a first-hand account of Paul Bäumer, a young German soldier, and his time spent serving on the front lines. The controversy of Remarque's famous novel was sparked from his detailed and candidly brutal descriptions of life for soldiers in the trenches; Remarque aims to relate the horrors of the warfront to the home front, in an effort to break the illusion of a celebratory war that was expected and to reveal the misery of their glorious soldiers. The Nazi powers found the novel unpatriotic and a betrayal of the First World War soldier (Murdoch 9). However, it became internationally revered as a good war story, and today is widely studied because of its ability to penetrate the mysteries of the warfront, as well divulge the morality of being a human being forced to survive in such a bestial situation created by fellow human beings.

Hemingway's novel, although written three years prior to Remarque's novel, is set during the post-war period, as Jake Barnes and his friends, American expatriates, travel around Europe. As a young author at the time, Hemingway is a member of the 'Lost Generation' writing on the disillusionment following a war that drastically failed in meeting societal expectations and compromised their values in trying to navigate this new bleak society masking this tragedy with materialistic wealth and leisure. Through his simple diction and straightforward and limited description, Hemingway exploits the disconnect between a post-war society and its returning soldiers. He also exploits the faulty morality consisting of frivolous and juvenile behavior, which deters the realization of the magnitude of the Great War's effect on its young soldiers, as well as the way in which their society functions. Barnes is representative of the soldier's personal battle at war and the difficulty of returning and assimilating back into a society that has lost itself among the chaos of war, yet has had barely any exposure to the actual reality and tragedies of the warfront.

Many critics have neglected to give *All Quiet on the Western Front* an in-depth scholarly reading (Murdoch ix), and much less juxtapose it with Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*. Though some critics, such as Margot Norris, have looked at Remarque's novel in comparison with Hemingway's other famous World War I novel *A Farewell to Arms*, there is a richer knowledge that comes with seeing the progression of a post-war society through studying *All Quiet on the Western Front* with *The Sun Also Rises*. Both writing in the 1920s, Remarque and Hemingway each have their own personal and unique experiences with battles of the First World War that is integrated into their characters' lives. Also, they are writing for different audiences, as Remarque is in

Germany, and Hemingway is in the United States. Yet, despite their personal differences, Remarque and Hemingway serve a similar purpose, and ultimately reach a global audience in trying to eliminate the disconnect between the home front and the warfront. Each works to communicate to the home front, the broken society that is lost within itself, trying to find a purpose to life after suffering from the shattered hope and pride that was expected to come from a short war.

Extracting two novels concerning the First World War in the post-war period allows for the historical and cultural criticisms to be seen through fictional accounts; the search for reality that critics, like Eksteins, Fussell, and Hynes, analyze can be represented in these two novels by iconic authors. Remarque and Hemingway do not only illustrate the perspectives of soldiers, one in the trenches and one as an American expatriate on the post-war European home front. The perspectives these two works provide coincide to portray a progressive display of a soldier's death, from the trenches, where death is immediate, to the post-war home front where soldiers suffer psychological turmoil. This trauma began with the unimaginable violent aspects of war and is perpetuated by the amoral and ignorant behavior of the home front. Through contrasting writing styles, both authors reveal the fragmentation of human moral aptitude in the wake of such violence. Remarque and Hemingway both aim to instruct humans on the need to change their outlooks and judgments of other people, especially those risking their lives to preserve such a respected society that Europe was known for at the turn of the century. Remarque's and Hemingway's heroes alike suffer through alienation and marginalization from the civilians sheltered from the war's reality, as their youth and hope of honor and glory are dispelled. Paul Bäumer and Jake Barnes are both killed by the war, either

literally or metaphorically, and that death still lingers within the society, a society that Remarque and Hemingway work to criticize and educate through war fiction; their novels are an effort to reveal the reality of war, criticizing the lost morality of society and the ignorance of the soldiers' peers to demonstrate the vital help necessary to rehabilitate those damaged from the First World War and rediscover past fundamental values of humanity.

I. Life Inside the Lines: Analyzing the Divide Between Trench Life and the Home Front through First Person Narration in Erich Maria Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*

The realm of fiction serves as a buffer to illustrate circumstances that are difficult to express in straightforward and raw factual accounts. The First World War, one of the most violent periods of history, complicated the relationship of frontline soldiers to civilians on the home front because the nature of war changed drastically at the turn of the 20th century. Almost a decade after the end of the First World War, Erich Maria Remarque published *Im Westen nichts Neues*, translated as *All Quiet on the Western Front*, in an attempt to portray the physical and psychological effects of war. Writing in a society trying to recover from a traumatic global war, Remarque works to communicate the horrors of war through first person narration and not only reveal the hardships endured by front line soldiers, but also the Great War's effects on European society in the 1920s. Paul Bäumer serves as Remarque's hero, revealing the horrifying truth of war and explicating the experience of a front line soldier, making it more accessible to civilians. With emotional and abundant detail, Remarque's personal and journal-like narrative of Paul Bäumer and his company helps bridge the gap between soldiers and the home front,

by addressing the universal fear still palpable in society as people work to regain a sense of normalcy after their hope has been stripped away. By using prose and writing in an honestly raw style and with horrific imagery, Remarque explores the transformation from innocence to desensitization, not only of Paul and his comrades but of the home front, as well, that depicts the shortcomings of society in its broken post-war culture.

If Remarque attempts to ‘bridge the gap’ between the war front and the home front, there must be an understanding of why this divide has occurred and how this fissure can be mended. The vicissitude of events between the trenches and no man’s land affect all of the soldiers who witness violent deaths and overwhelming destruction. At times, their choices are practical and insensitive to other soldiers, complicating their relations to civilians, who will never be exposed to the damage and death endured in the trenches. In *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque exposes disconnect between society and its soldiers fighting for their country, emphasizing the alienation of the soldiers in the post-war society. The acts of soldiers are appreciated from a distance and with ignorance, as the home front relies on front page news stories, political propaganda, and censored letters for the battle events and their soldiers’ wellbeing (Natter 86, Wilkinson 58). By envisioning their soldiers fighting with honor and glory, and by reading biased newspapers, civilians were able to live through the war focusing on their own hardships and avoid the real truth of the horrors on the battlefronts and in the trenches. “The ideal invoked by war propagandists in each belligerent country was a partnership between the home and the military fronts – an equitable sharing of dangers and burdens” (Wilkinson 58), where civilians remained mostly absorbed in their own economic problems as the war became one of attrition. It is this sphere of domestic

hardship that civilians surrounded themselves with that creates a division with the inability and unwillingness to confront and understand the damaging nature of war. Once soldiers return from war, they are rejected and viewed as grim reminders of the war and the difficulties endured on the home front. The challenge for soldiers to tell first hand of what they lived through is complicated by the civilians' perception of the war front. By being able to relate the horrors of the war front to the home front, soldiers could recover from the Great War's destruction if they had support from those they left behind.

Remarque's narration through the voice of a young soldier in a foreign and hostile environment illustrates the horrors and chaos of war that are indescribable to the home front, providing some type of explanation for civilians to understand that being negligent of the poor physical and psychological state of soldiers risking their lives to protect them will only intensify the problems of the First World War and the lack of morality in the post-war society. Remarque not only writes to communicate the feelings and struggles that the soldiers could not convey to their families and friends, but he also criticizes the ignorance of society as a whole on who they view as heroes and their perception of the war's challenges. Through reporting his experiences, Remarque's hero Paul Bäumer reveals hardships of the warfront and shatters the illusions of glory and honor perceived on the home front; Remarque creates a way to cross this separation of the fronts and work toward a universal realization of the war's actual atmosphere. Paul's voice acts as a means through which to digest and interpret the cultural crisis after the fighting has ceased and humans must reform their personal and societal values, accompanied by the call to revitalize the youth they have lost.

Upon its publication in 1929, many critics collectively saw Remarque's novel as too harsh, claiming that "he misrepresented the physical reality of war" and "such shoddiness, they claimed, was his lack of understanding of the moral aspects of soldiers' behavior" (Eksteins 282). His novel has been classified as *Trivialliteratur*, with a tone not serious enough for a war novel (Murdoch ix), and caused much controversy because of the 'truths' about war it described and society's reluctance to understand the war that Remarque criticized through his characters. In 1930, Cyril Falls claimed Remarque's novel was "a good novel of the more brutal naturalistic school" but also "unnecessarily coarse" and "frank propaganda" (Hynes 453). Sir Ian Hamilton praised Remarque's novel, but also argued that Remarque goes too far and asks, "Is there not victory for those ... who survived everything ... and afterwards still found courage enough to turn themselves into making the world a better place for themselves and everyone else?" (Hynes 455). Hynes claims that many soldiers said no to Hamilton's claims. Little victory seemed to follow the soldiers home after the barrage of death and destruction unexpected on the front. Though Remarque's novel gained much popularity nationally and internationally, it has a more significant purpose than just being a fictional war novel. *All Quiet on the Western Front* is not trivial in its story, but purports the disunion between civilians and the ones shipped to the front; it blames the home front for their ignorance in knowing the actual truth of the war atmosphere, their interactions with the war veterans, and the lasting implications of living in a post-war society turning a blind eye to soldiers' suffering.

While Remarque's contemporaries criticized his novel for its triviality and its harsh and distorted portrayal of war (Eksteins 282), modern day critics have looked back

to study Remarque's novel and its integral purpose in explaining how his generation is lost after the Great War and the imperative need for civilians to help soldiers and themselves recover their morality and youthfulness. By looking at literary devices, such as style, theme, and structure, modern critics can analyze the value of Remarque's novel within history and how it attempts to teach on the tragedy of war and society's flaws. Brian Murdoch argues that *All Quiet on the Western Front* is a historical novel with the advantages of a diary that portrays "their thoughts, experiences, and reflections directly to the reader" (Murdoch 33) and "presents the war as such being shown with the vivid and deliberately shocking realism associated with the term *neue Sachlichkeit* (new objectivity)" (Murdoch 37). It is Remarque's factual tones that relay these points of realistic combat to his audience. Contrastingly, Margot Norris takes a different perspective on Remarque's novel; she argues that the compelling nature of the novel lies in "poetic techniques that are themselves coeval with cultural and aesthetic technologies ... Remarque's novel is better read as a poetic allegory of modern manmade mass death" (Norris 80). Through this allegory, Norris argues, Remarque implements subjectivity into the suffering experienced in military action and recreates the no-man's land where soldiers have a voice, expressing the environment they are trapped in, that is impossible to be heard in social and psychological realms (Norris 83).

Both Remarque's contemporaries and more modern critics make compelling arguments, analyzing *All Quiet on the Western Front* and its strengths and weaknesses with being a war novel. Whereas Remarque's novel initially stirred up controversy and ill feelings because of its violent imagery and brutal language, it was vital to explicating the nature of the trenches to those at home. Today's critics can not only analyze the history

of the post-World War I decade, but also the literary contribution to history that comes from reading Remarque's novel arguing on its most effective literary techniques. It is not solely through poetic allegory or through shocking realism that Remarque illustrates the struggles of Paul and his comrades, and thus, the moral ineptitude of his culture. The raw feelings through Paul's journal-like narrative portray the emotional implication of war, a war that is stripping away the morality of youth and society. The elements of realism parallel Paul's inner conflicts revealing the psychological exhaustion of trying to find a peace of mind within a dehumanizing environment. The audience's ability to digest Paul's story and interpret Remarque's criticisms seen through the intertwined passages of realism and metaphor is what will help bridge the gap in reconciling the detachment of the home front to the soldiers fighting in the trenches, along with working to rehabilitate the broken morality that has been fueled by ignorance and disillusionment. Even today, the use of fiction serves as a window to the past and a way to teach on the unsteady temperament that humans can create and will need to mend. Remarque's criticisms of the separation between soldiers and civilians in *All Quiet on the Western Front* is still widely studied to demonstrate how this expectation of war and the soldiers' experiences can impair society's perception of the trenches and perpetuate the devastating results of a war that compromises human morality and inflicts the wellbeing of civilians and, more drastically, soldiers.

Additionally, through Paul's earnest account of his experience, Remarque highlights the severity of the violence soldiers have suffered through and the necessary, if also cold and forthright, rationale required of soldiers in action. Paul's increased dehumanization portrays the compromised morality of soldiers for the proposed glory

they were fighting for to honor their country. In showing Paul's struggles, Remarque succeeds in enhancing his audience's understanding of the soldier's war experience of murder and unfulfilled glory. His journal-like narration has passages portraying a desensitized tone, which necessarily heighten the seriousness of the levels of violence that soldiers are suffering through and the difficult division between emotion and action soldiers need to follow if hoping to beat the enemy and live. More importantly, the diary style writing aims to eliminate the home front's ignorance of the real nature of war. In *Rites of Spring*, Modris Eksteins argues that in Remarque's novel "There is no delicacy. The language is frequently rough, the images often gruesome" (Eksteins 282). The immediacy of Paul's brutal descriptions does not allow for a gentle conveyance of war. Yet, without the immediate and juxtaposed realism of infantry action with the damaging psychological effects of war, Remarque's novel would not be able to minimize the misunderstanding between the home front and the trenches. The rapid change between emotion and description to factual and orderly account of battle is the necessary and damaging mindset of a soldier – time when there is no room for emotion or doubt or thinking – just orders. These orders have consequences not known to the home front and that the home front cannot comprehend because they are not in that situation and witnessing mass amounts of violence. Remarque attempts to express these dire consequences through Paul's voice, and where Paul fails to communicate directly to the other characters in the novel, Remarque succeeds in revealing the realities of war to his audience and begins to mend the separation between soldiers and the home front.

Though the novel takes place during wartime, Paul's record of his experiences includes reflections on the past when he was a young student with ambition and pride to

serve his country, regretting the faith that he, and civilians alike, placed in authority figures and propaganda; the false projection of war and the glory that comes with being a soldier is what entices Paul and his classmates to enlist in the army. This is the notion of the “Iron Youth” that authors, such as World War I veteran Ernst Jünger in his autobiography *Storm of Steel*, refers to as the promise held in the young soldiers to fight and win in this bloody war. As Paul fights in the trenches, he loses classmates one by one and realizes the uselessness of the information they learned in the classroom together before the war. Paul, frustrated, admits “We remember mighty little of that rubbish. Anyway, it’s never been the slightest use to us” (Remarque 85) and they are left with little guidance with what to do after the war. Paul says, “All I do know is that this business about professions and studies and salaries and so on- it makes me sick, it is and always was disgusting. I don’t see anything in it at all,” leaving him with a burden of confusion and hopelessness (Remarque 87). After surviving numerous attacks, Paul realizes the aspects of his life that have meaning, that there is more happening in the world and many people’s concerns are insignificant in comparison. Paul’s earnest narration of his and his comrades’ daily lives consistently has an undertone of fear and angst; the lack of preparedness the young soldiers have places them in a world of horror and evil, a terror that is inexplicable to the soldiers before they leave and to the home front after they have fought and returned. Discussing the ways the nature of war is shown, Murdoch claims, “The most obvious is the direct presentation of the horrors... the reader is, however, also prompted to consider the nature of war by being privy to the inconclusive and often humorous discussions by the young or uneducated soldiers” (44). The mask of humor attempts to mitigate the devastation of the war, yet it is the horrors

which fuel Paul's reflection on his life and youth before the war, a life that is now lost; these horrors also ultimately provide an image of the war atmosphere, from which the home front can learn. Furthermore, if Paul and his classmates make it through the war, there is very little to which they have to return. The confusion of their purpose in war and hope for their future is enhanced by living in the midst of the ignorance of a society trying to recover from a war, while ignoring the depths of the damage soldiers have suffered, which is portrayed through Paul's narration, and enabling the alienation soldiers feel from the 'normal' lives to which they are trying to return.

Paul's trip on leave reveals the difficulties and emotions upon returning home, but also the isolation from normal civilization that soldiers face; Remarque succeeds in showing the gap between the warfront and the home front, even when Paul personally fails to close the disconnect between him and his family. After suffering through a bombardment in chapter six, chapter seven portrays Paul's trip away from the front to his home. Despite his initial eagerness to be away from the war, Paul feels detached from his family, unable to fully relate to them and answer their questions, mostly with his father. He cannot give them the whole truth of what he has seen on the battlefield or his opinion of it, which has already been depicted for Remarque's audience. Upon seeing his family, shock overcomes Paul and he confesses, "I cannot speak a word ... I struggle to make myself laugh, to speak, but no word comes, and so I stand on the steps miserable" (Remarque 158). The usual excitement associated with returning home is missing; Paul has been isolated from his family, from a sense of normalcy that speaking and laughing with them is foreign to him. There is a sense of powerlessness for soldiers being among civilians again after only being surrounded by soldiers and their guns. It is a lack of

control, of comfort in what is routine, that makes Paul feel helpless in the life he once knew well. Paul cannot even articulate what is wrong and why he is crying to his sister because there are no words to express how horrific the war front is and how alienated he now feels from his own family, as the events are incomparable to any civilians that may have gone through during the war.

Remarque illustrates the gap between the trenches and the home front through Paul's relationship with his father while on leave. His father wishes to use Paul like a trophy, proud that his son is fighting for Germany; but Paul knows that there is little glory in being a frontline soldier, and people will never be able to realize the actuality of the war that is falsified by the government and that they only read about in newspapers. As previously mentioned, many of the letters from the war front and propaganda produced by the government were censored to prolong the positive morale of the home front and mitigate the distressing depiction of violence and death. The home front is sheltered from knowing of the destruction their relatives must face. Also, Paul worries that the magnitude of what he has witnessed cannot be translated into casual conversation nor written down so that it is easily understood. In trying to digest his father's questions about the warfront, Paul claims:

“I realize he does not know that a man cannot talk of such things; I would do it willingly, but it is too dangerous for me to put these things into words. I am afraid they might become gigantic and I be no longer able to master them. What would become of us if everything that happens to out there were quite clear to us?”
(165).

For Paul, the realities of war he has witnessed and participated in are too difficult to convey, and the struggle becomes greater when trying to relay to the home front the violence and the annihilation being caused by young men, like himself. It is easier to stay

lost in his actions and try to forget by simply following orders, than rationalize and think about shooting and killing others. Since he cannot articulate what he has gone through to his father and his peers, Paul feels afraid of his place in society now and even more so afraid of what he may think of himself if he begins to analyze his actions and conceive of the brutal nature of the war in which he volunteered to fight. His morality is jeopardized along with his rational thinking; Paul knows that following orders is what is required, but reliving his actions through telling his stories to his family and others on the home front will do little to help them understand the scale of the fighting. Attempting to explain the nature of war will only infringe upon his sanity and morality in trying to cope with following orders and having to murder innocent men, who are only trying to defend their country and reach the same goal as him – make it home alive.

Though Paul and his classmates must conform to a soldier's mentality, taking orders as a group rather than making individual decisions on the battlefield, they are nonetheless each uniquely affected by the war; the war is made up of individual soldiers, soldiers that in the "logic of army corps are only pawns who do not count ... their accounts are of no value, because their point of view was too limited to understand" (Winter 83). These individual pawns, however, that make up the war experience and bring their stories back. Paul becomes the representation of that individual for Remarque's audience in the post-war world and today, vitally opposing this assumption because it was these individual soldiers who made up and suffered through the war's battles. The alternating tones Paul has, between remembering his life before the war and actively serving as a soldier, reveal the earnest struggle of the young men fighting in the trenches and the compromised morality that gradually diminishes, as violence and death

are daily occurrences on the battlefield. The strongest scene of Paul's internal conflict is his encounter, and eventual murder, of the 'enemy' – a French soldier. In reference to this scene, Norris states "the scene is significant to the reader, who becomes witness to a double murder - the killing of the French printer doubled by the killing of a great heart, war as a perpetrator not only of the death of bodies but also of the murder of moral man, the murder of humanity, empathy, civility, and compassion" (Norris 97). What is at stake is greater than military victory; it is preservation of man's virtue.

Paul is trapped in this trench with an enemy as he tries to protect himself from being hit; yet, his conflict while in the hole are that of a man, faced with another civilian also brought into the war by his country, under the impression that wearing a uniform and defending his country's flag would lead to honor and glory. Here, again, Remarque juxtaposes Paul's military mindset with his confessional journal entries, both with an underlying tone of moral corruption and regret. Paul's dilemma with the French soldier fills the span of almost ten pages, creating a divide between his youthful and innocent thinking and the expected militaristic thought process of a soldier in combat. As the French man enters the trench, Paul says, "I do not think at all, I make no decision – I strike madly at home" (Remarque 216) because soldiers are trained to act, to fight and kill, despite any outside consequences. There is no room for contemplation or second guesses and human emotion needs to be eliminated from the situation. However, as Paul is stuck in the hole to protect himself, his morality resurfaces in opposition to his militant mentality. He attempts to help cover the French man's wounds and whispers "I want to help you, Comrade, camerade, camerade, camerade -' eagerly repeating the word, to make him understand" (Remarque 220), revealing his morality that has been suppressed

by his military role. The constant inner conflict between military responsibility and human morality exaggerates the horrors of being in war; the doubt on how to act deeply affects the psychological state, and at times the sanity, of soldiers that are subjected to the violence of war and unprepared to kill with their own hands. Bäumer's psychological conflict alludes to Remarque's criticism of society's acceptance of the diminishing youthful innocence and of the easy abandonment of morals. Also, the reluctance to acknowledge the fears of wartime allows for an ignorance of morality, a refusal to try and break the illusion of war and help recover from its destruction, which was perpetuated by censored letters (Natter 79), falsified reports, and propaganda (Winter 155). Bäumer first suffers a psychological death and then a physical death of wartime; his morality is destroyed upon killing the French man, and Paul in turn becomes a victim of wartime violence, even when the home front hears day to day that there is 'nothing new in the west' and sees little significance in one more youthful life lost to the atrocities of war. Paul's fate at the end of *All Quiet on the Western Front* symbolizes the innumerable lives lost throughout the war, even outside major battles. Remarque's ability to communicate Paul's moral loss and his eventual death allows Remarque to reveal the flaws within the home front's perception of war and bridge the gap between soldiers and civilians, to help heal the unforeseen losses of the war and renew humanity's sense of morality.

II. Expatriate Isolation: Exploring a Soldier's Stream of Consciousness and Post-War Psychological Death in Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*

In Ernest Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises*, similar to what is seen in Remarque's novel, the visceral confusion of a soldier returning home is felt through Hemingway's

hero, Jake Barnes, and his narration. Barnes exemplifies the psychological damage suffered by soldiers trying to rebuild their lives and integrate back into 'normal' society. Of his injurious experience on the Italian front line in World War I, Barnes recalls, "Of all the ways to be wounded. I suppose it was funny ... Well, it was a rotten way to be wounded and flying on a joke front" (Hemingway 38); now, Jake is attempting to rebuild a normal lifestyle among the society of the 'Lost Generation', suffers through not only his own emasculation resultant of the war's violence, but also the difficulty of adapting back into a culture that is disoriented in trying to piece their lives back together. Yet, besides some conversation and Bill Groton's jokes on Barnes's injury, very few details are told concerning the actual sequence of events of Barnes's injury, giving it a sense of mystery, though the severity and danger of it is implicit in Barnes's brevity and disturbance in thinking about it. Ernest Hemingway is one of the iconic writers of the 'Lost Generation' trying to convey meaning in the world and in humanity after enduring the destruction and moral conflicts of war, which are trying to be suppressed by civilians and soldiers in a post-war world. Hemingway's novel *The Sun Also Rises* epitomizes the spirit of the 'Lost Generation' and Jake Barnes represents the psychological death that many soldiers underwent upon returning from war and being thrown back into society with distorted perceptions of war and the violence that was occurring on the front lines. Unlike Remarque's journal-like narration, Hemingway's writing style that consists of short and simple sentences tell a fairly action-less plot; his style aims to exploit the currently morally devoid atmosphere that Barnes is experiencing after returning from war and the meaninglessness of the materialistic and lavish lifestyles his friends have taken up to recover from those tragedies.

Barnes's injury and personal experiences on the war front are somewhat mysterious, and these vague passages contribute to his isolation within this culture, a culture that only exaggerates the pain and psychological impact of war by trying to heal only through tangible things, like alcohol and vacationing in Europe. As a part of the 'Lost Generation', Hemingway not only criticizes the ignorance of the American society he is a part of, but also sheds light on the even greater struggles that soldiers faced and now must live with while trying to adapt back into normal society. Hemingway uses Barnes as his suffering hero; he is a soldier that has returned physically injured from war, but also psychologically damaged because of the irrevocable horrors he has witnessed and taken part in. The concise narration that Hemingway writes mediates the relationship between soldiers and civilians, even after World War I is over. As Hemingway strips away detail from his writing, he parallels the character of his society that is suffocating under the materialistic and seemingly necessary aspects of life, only perpetuating the pain and isolation of returning damaged soldiers and civilians trying to mask the truth of war by hiding behind such physical elements. The psychological death that Barnes suffers from also alludes to the tragedy that all soldiers face on some level upon returning home. Hemingway exploits the reluctance of society to accept the actual truth about soldiers' experiences and difficulties living in a post-war world, displaying the poor morality of a post-war society.

Set in the 1920s, *The Sun Also Rises* illustrates the challenges of post-war Europe to reinvigorate the spirit of society from Barnes's perspective of being an expatriate vacationing in countries where most of the war was fought. Many civilians, including former soldiers, are attempting to cover up the overwhelming wave of disillusionment

with empty and unfulfilling activities. The ambiguity of Barnes's experiences on the war front does little to help his friends learn and understand the actual environment of the front lines; his post-war experiences portray the difficulty for soldiers to incorporate the routine of their military lives and the tragedies they have suffered through back into the careless and juvenile behavior of many people trying to cope with the devastation of an incomprehensible war. Barnes is metaphorically killed by the war, in that he has lost passion for life and the ability to find importance in his friends' plans, his relationships with them, and his society's culture as a whole. It is through Hemingway's style that Barnes's 'death' is portrayed. In spite of the first-person narration, Barnes appears detached and uninterested in the extravagant places he visits, providing a stream of consciousness simply telling of his daily activities and conversations. Hemingway purposefully uses Barnes as a window into the true character of 1920s' post-war society and the lives of expatriates abroad; Barnes's alienation is emphasized by Hemingway's terse sentences and simple descriptions. Much more is revealed about the broken morality of society and their poor efforts to improve life after the war than Barnes's personal reflections on his experience. Barnes serves as Hemingway's filter to analyze the tragic state of humanity and denounces the troubled young people with little concern to improve their lives – only to return to a Europe untainted by war and to “a settled, stratified, deferential society unthreatened by change” (Wilkinson 127).

Hemingway has been made famous by his unique writing style, omitting elaborate detail and descriptive passages when writing his stories, which helps illuminate the realities in which his characters live. When *The Sun Also Rises* was published in 1929, many critics wrote on Hemingway's use of dialogue and whether or not it effectively

builds up his characters and plot. Some critics, such as Allen Tate and Edwin Muir, criticize the lack of importance attached to his characters and to human life; Tate argues that Hemingway “doesn’t fill out his characters” and his subject matter has mixed or incomplete significance (Meyers 94). Other critics, such as Conrad Aiken and Herbert Gorman, comment on the cold reality Hemingway’s characters live in, and how that portrays an honesty of the spiritually ruined society (Meyers 93). As a young writer at the time, Hemingway received criticisms, in particular because of the obscene language he uses, from a society that was the subject of his novel, the society he was criticizing through his broken characters and somber atmosphere lingering after World War I. Max Perkins, the vice president of Scribner at the time of the novel’s publication said, “It would be a pretty thing if the very significance of so original a book should be disregarded because of the howls of a lot of cheap, prurient moronic yappers” (Sova 272). However, it is this distinctive writing that makes Hemingway’s work vibrant.

Hemingway develops the story and characters through dialogue. More importantly, the value of his words lies in the subtext; the undertones within Barnes’s conversations give a larger importance to Hemingway’s novel than just the flaws of his characters. It is beyond the characters’ interactions that Hemingway creates the environment of a spiritually lost and morally compromised society. The acute attention Hemingway gives to his word choice is important beyond the characters’ dialogue. Amongst the profanity and fleeting conversations, Barnes’s impersonal thoughts purport Hemingway’s criticism of his society, which is unable to sift through their relationships with returning soldiers and with each other to dispel the cover of lavishness and rebellion in reaction to the violent and detrimental aftermath of war.

After the sentiments of the 'Lost Generation' subsided, later critics reflect on Hemingway's novel and the relevance of its stylistic contribution to literature. Scott Donaldson argues that Hemingway utilizes humor "to assess character and underline theme without descending to parody or black comedy" (Wagner-Martin 39). Arnold E. and Cathy N. Davidson purport the use of a 'code of fiction' and tones that allow for different interpretations of the novel and Barnes's character as either heroic or pathetic (Wagner-Martin 103), and it is the "self-contradictions in and of the text that make this book still eminently readable" (104). The humor that does arise in the characters' remarks does help enrich Hemingway's depiction of a disillusioned home front. However, it is the stream of consciousness that Hemingway uses for the novel's style in conjunction with concise dialogue and description that most effectively reveals the detachment that Barnes and his friends have from their own morals and feelings of self-purpose. The rapid, back and forth dialogue between the characters and the simple descriptions of their travels exploit the brokenness of society's morals and how the souls of people living in a post-war society have gone astray from how to heal from World War I's physical and psychological wreckage. Even today, Hemingway's portrayal of a broken society purports the importance of finding a way to ground oneself within a chaotic and disoriented environment. By writing a terse and direct narrative, Hemingway illustrates the value of mitigating the frivolousness and excess of a lifestyle to cover up the damage not only of culture as a whole, but of the individual and one's abilities to interact with others and keep their morality intact. The stripping away of details represents the mentality of post-war Europe in working to create a life separate from any reminders of the past four years of tragedy. Though Hemingway's writing style reveals little about the

personal lives of the characters and reads more as a stream of consciousness, it works to reveal the complications of a soldier's mindset in trying to deal with fighting, but also in adapting back into a society that is taking great efforts to cover up and ignore the real tragedies of war.

The conversations that occur between Barnes and his friends move quickly and change subject frequently, alluding to the angst associated with discussing a subject too in-depth and emotional or bringing up anything that is relatable to the horror of the recent war. Nevertheless, there are undertones throughout the dialogue that suggests the unsatisfying trips Barnes is taking with his friends and the attempt to block out the past by drinking and going to exciting events in foreign countries, especially bull fighting in Spain. In chapter thirteen, Barnes is with Lady Ashley Brett, Bill Gorton, Mike Campbell, and Robert Cohn discussing the bull fights and the fiesta in Pamplona. As Mike grows irritated with Cohn, Barnes and Bill try to find a way to control the situation, without Mike growing angry again. Yet, there is little done as a result of the conversation they have. As Bill and Barnes discuss Mike's attitude, Bill says,

“He was terrible. I don't like Cohn, God knows ... but nobody has any business to talk like Mike” (150).

“How'd you like the bulls?”

“Good. It's grand the way they bring them out.”

“To-morrow come the Miuras.”

“When does the fiesta start?”

“Day after to-morrow.”

“We've got to keep Mike from getting so tight. That kind of stuff is terrible.”

“We'd better get cleaned up for supper.”

“Yes. That will be a pleasant meal.” (Hemingway 149-50).

Within ten lines, Barnes and Billy search for a few different topics to discuss, and although the conversation may depict their opinions on the day's events, the progression

of the conversation shows their main concern lies with Mike's behavior. Yet, the bullfights, the fiesta, and dinner are taking precedence over Barnes and Bill devoting their full attention to help mediate the rocky relationship between Mike and Cohn. The fluidity of Hemingway's style in this passage accentuates the willingness of these friends to suppress any emotion that might cause more of a conflict or make themselves more vulnerable; rather than uncovering their attitudes towards each other, Barnes and his group of friends choose not to explore the entire truth of a situation.

This 'Lost Generation' lives under a veil, unwilling to look past what is on the surface to accurately and properly rationalize the reality of the world they live in. Nevertheless, there is an impossibility to entirely escape the horrors of their past by simply trying to immerse themselves in physical and tangible activities, mostly involving alcohol, so that they can numb any emotion that may arise and remind them of the tragedies of the past four years. Barnes remembers, "It was like certain dinners I remember from the war. There was much wine, an ignored tension, and a feeling of things coming that you could not prevent happening. Under the wine I lost the disgusted feeling and was happy" (Hemingway 150). Relating his dinner in Pamplona to the time he served in the army, Barnes demonstrates the similar sentiments on the war front and on the home front; both soldiers and civilians are experiencing angst and a kind of disgust for the violence they just suffered through. Nevertheless, Barnes cannot candidly talk to his acquaintances about the war he lived through and the psychological harm of such a time because of this tension being ignored and the further isolation he would experience with whom he now talks and travels.

In analyzing this dinner scene in comparison to Paul Bäumer's trip on leave in Remarque's *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Barnes and Bäumer both must try to make it through dinner with those who have not witnessed the actual reality of the warfront. Bäumer cannot relate to his own family, disturbed by the casual way in which battle is discussed when they have little knowledge of what is actually occurring. For Barnes, he must try and work out living in a broken post-war society detrimentally impacted by war. The ignored tension from those wartime dinners is exactly what Bäumer reveals when he is talking about politics with his comrades, and he attempts to convey a type of normalcy while on leave and at dinner with his family's acquaintances. Although Bäumer and Barnes are living in two different countries and decades, they serve as examples of the soldiers who have lost their youth and hope. Now they must somehow relate the horrors they have seen back to society, without igniting the 'ignored tension' of the terrible outcome of World War I that is suppressed by everyone, but which marginalizes the soldiers' actions and the innocence and hope that they were stripped of after living alongside the 'enemy'.

As further testament to society's marginalization of soldiers and their efforts in fighting for their countries, Hemingway continues to use terse statements with weighty undertones that constitute his descriptions of the change of Europe in the aftermath of World War I. The ease with which Barnes narrates the story enhances the shocking details that are communicated in the simplest way. The veteran soldiers who are working to adapt back into society are the ones who are least appreciated by civilians because they are a constant living reminder of the destructive and tumultuous world they had to live through. Wilkinson states, "To the 'lost generation,' the old precepts rang hollow and

meaningless. With half their number dead or maimed, the rest felt burned out and adrift, no longer sure of the significance of their own lives or of the society in which they lived” (Wilkinson 63). Barnes represents the drifting soldier burdened by this psychological death. His injury, since it is not visible, causes him to more likely be welcomed back into his normal social circles. Even more so since he, much like Bäumer and many others, cannot fully articulate what they have seen on the front nor do his acquaintances want to hear the whole truth about the tribulations caused by the war, the reality of combat can be further ignored upon his return and during their travels. However, for the soldiers who must live with visible injuries, it is even more difficult to assimilate back into the lifestyle they once knew because of the physical damage they have gone through and the psychological impact of suffering an injury, but also the alienation from civilians who want no visible reminders of the war.

One particular passage in the final chapter of Hemingway’s novel embodies the everyday reactions injured soldiers received in a society morally ruined by the war. After the bull fights, Barnes goes to San Sebastian, Spain to relax for a few days after parting from Mike and Bill. As he is walking around town, he observes people outside in the morning. He recounts the scene:

“Everything was fresh and cool and damp in the early morning. Nurses in uniform and in peasant costume walked under the trees with children. The Spanish children were beautiful. Some bootblacks sat together under a tree talking to a soldier. The soldier had one arm. The tide was in and there was a good breeze and surf on the beach” (Hemingway 241).

One short sentence regarding the appearance of the soldier alters the entire tone of this passage, and simulates the compromised lifestyle that Barnes and other soldiers must live through every day, without trying to dwell on the broken spirits that follow them home

from the warfront. Hemingway's straightforward description is easy enough to pass over as another part of Barnes's stream of consciousness; yet, it can either be ignored, much like the attitude of many civilians at the time, or it can be emphasized. If Hemingway's audience disregards the soldier's apparent injury, the audience proves the ignorance of the 'Lost Generation' and the imperative need to consistently suppress and avoid any aspect of war.

On the other hand, if the statement is acknowledged and exaggerated, then the soldier becomes that terrible reminder of war, a permanent figure of war that cannot be erased nor fixed. Juxtaposed with scenes of children, nurses, and shoeshines, of normal society in general, the soldier detracts from the simple beauty and enjoyment of the moment and the leisure of the day. Though the passage would be different without the comment on the soldier's arm, Hemingway necessarily includes it to cause his audience to react as civilians would react to seeing a soldier with one arm in public. Barnes's direct narration allows the scene to be laid out to the audience with an element of surprise, who then must work through their own reaction to the scene and, therefore, the question of their own moral judgments on the soldier and the lasting implications of war. Even more so, Hemingway maintains the distance between Barnes and his audience, so that the alienation and difficulties Barnes has in trying to gain back a regular lifestyle and his own thoughts on seeing the soldier is not explained to nor influences the audience, who has already passed judgments on those who are returning from the war front. Hemingway writes simply so that this separation can be realized and learned from, to help guide the 'Lost Generation' back to a society with some type of moral compass and purposefulness for what they do and how they act, especially in regards to healing from World War I and

helping soldiers regain a sense of purpose after subjected to the violence of the war front and, consequently, the alienation from normalcy in a civilian setting.

III. Still Fighting Through Voice: Teaching the Horrors of Humanity's Past in War and Culture Through Fiction

“The soldiers went abroad with visions of glory and self-sacrifice and a belief in an ideology of war that was blown, quite literally, away; men and women who remained at home, who did not experience the shock of industrial warfare, continued to maintain their beliefs” (Haytock 95). As Jennifer Haytock looks at the differences between the home front and war front, she addresses the separate worlds created during war, as well as the role the home front plays as a “testing ground on which and for which ideological battles are waged” (Haytock 116). Hemingway and Remarque illuminate the divide between the home front and the war front in two iconic novels of the 1920s. The ‘Lost Generation’, in both Europe and America, returned with shattered hopes of glory and honor, only haunted by the violence and destruction fellow men had done unto one another and the psychological burden of how to adapt back into ‘normal’ society that is deterring any effort to heal from World War I.

Though Hemingway writes for a primarily American audience and Remarque for primarily a German audience, both of their novels reached international audiences and took on the challenge of demonstrating the disillusioned state of society in Europe and America and the necessity to restore human morality and interaction to a state of civility. The success of their fictional works shows the effectiveness of telling stories to discuss difficult and sensitive topics. *All Quiet on the Western Front* and *The Sun Also Rises* are two novels exemplifying the wandering and dilapidated youth of the 20th century, as their

authors communicate the most central flaws of ignorance and frivolity that is harming society and further enabling the pain of psychologically damaged soldiers and hopeless civilians after World War I. Samuel Hynes claims, “the war generation divided ... into those who fought, and so could imagine the war in its actuality, and those who hadn’t, and could only imagine its consequences” (Hynes 388). That divide and the unimaginable horrors of the warfront are portrayed through Remarque’s and Hemingway’s fiction, a fiction that delves into the actual problems facing society after World War I and the individual experiences of soldiers to stimulate a need for change and present the unimaginable realm to further narrow this divide between soldiers and civilians.

As Paul Bäumer reminisces about his home while on duty, he recalls his eagerness to enlist, saying, “The war swept us away ... We, however, have been gripped by it and do not know what the end may be. We know only that in some melancholy way we have become a wasteland” (Remarque 20). Losing their optimism and dreams of glory, Paul Bäumer and many young soldiers fall victim to diminished youth and hopelessness, ravaged by guns and violence that humans do unto each other in the trenches. The uncertainty that now hovers around their fate is not only uncertainty with their physical survival, but their psychological strength to come to terms with the harsh reality of this violent war and be able to live again among civilians, who never had to witness such horrors. However, the wasteland Paul describes is not only caused by being in the trenches; civilians have also become submerged in a morally deteriorated society, wandering and lost in their own consciousness. In *The Sun Also Rises*, Jake Barnes becomes representative of the post-war moral wasteland in which soldiers and civilians alike are lost, trying to find some meaning within their lives, but failing to find faith in

humanity. Though Remarque's novel is set during the war and Hemingway narrates the lives of frivolous expatriates post-World War I, their novels work in conjunction with one another to criticize the morality of their society and the debilitating post-war environment that soldiers, who are psychologically damaged by war, are thrown back into by their peers; these peers are civilians who have stayed ignorant of the reality of the frontlines and remain reluctant to rebuild their country's morale after such a drastic loss of life and optimism for the post-war future.

Remarque and Hemingway both use contrasting writing styles to explain the destructive forces endured on the front lines; the creation of a wasteland of fallen comrades accompanied by lost youth and hope transfers into the post-war society suffering from a deteriorating morality. Commenting on *All Quiet on the Western Front*, Remarque states, "This book is to be neither an accusation nor a confession ... It will simply try to tell of a generation of men who, even though they may have escaped the shells, were destroyed by the war" (Remarque, front matter). Through imagery and dialogue, this destruction depicted in Remarque's and Hemingway's novels, tells of their heroes and their 'deaths' resultant of the front lines. More importantly, both Paul's invested narration and Barnes's detached account emphasize the problems in each of their societies and the urgent call for moral action to revitalize the youthfulness of their countries that has been buried along with their soldiers on the frontlines. Nevertheless, this youthfulness and morale can be rediscovered with recognition and a willingness to recover the morality and hope amongst their veterans and peers, if only humanity can find the courage to acknowledge and begin to mend the effects of war and no longer be lost and wandering in their wasteland.

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