

III. 25 February

Futurism

- Italian movement, literary in origin, grew to embrace painting, sculpture, photography and architecture
- Key text: Le Futurisme, by Filippo Tommaso Marinetti
- Intention was to reject the past, to revolutionize culture and make it more modern.
- Violent enthusiasm against the weighty inheritance of an art tied to the Italian cultural tradition

What did the futurists want?

- An aesthetic generated by the modern myth of the machine and of speed.

Futurists wanted to bring art into life.

What marks difference between futurists and Jünger?

- The experience of the war.
 - Jünger: actual war diaries
 - Futurists: pre-war
- Jünger's 'torrent of language' takes us away from what Walter Benjamin called 'communicable experience.'

Ernst Jünger b. 1895

<http://www.dhm.de/lemo/html/biografien/JuengerErnst/>

<http://www.worldwar1.com/tgws/gif/juenger2.gif>

- Foremost representative of fascist modernism
- In Stahlgewittern is a war memoir: recounts war service on western front repeatedly wounded and decorated

What are the emotions expressed?

- Range of emotions-- compassion to blood-lust but ignores the purpose or politics of the war--“doesn't matter why we fight, but how”
- Ecstasy of destruction

Storm of Steel

- Main point: to consider relationship between fascism and modernism
- Outlines the formation of a new kind of subjectivity during the First World War.
- Jünger has very specific things to say about the transformation of individuality and about the formation of a new form of masculinity.
- Jünger saw the trenches as a “school for the heart”
 - “Time only strengthens my conviction that it was a good and strenuous life, and that the war, for all its destructiveness, was an incomparable schooling of the heart.”

How did it imprint the minds of the soldiers who fought there?

How does Jünger describe violence?

Does it merely have destructive power?

Or, is there any creative power?

- The “new man” emerging from the trenches of the First World War was Jünger's fantasy... a fantasy of the transformation of male subjectivity under the stress of warfare.

What's the style?

Important passages:

- 314-15/ gruesome repetitions
- 288/ flashes of... beauty?

What are the essential characteristics of this new man? How would he differ from the ideal of manhood that Jünger claims is pre war?

- Jünger's "new man" was taken up as an ideal by right wing radicals during the Weimar Republic, these radicals included the Nazis among them, as their masculine ideal.

-If modernism in literature is understood as the attempt to problematize the apparent stability and transparency of representation and narrative...as the attempt to problematize language and subjectivity (Woolf, Joyce)...**then** can we say Jünger is a modernist?

-No-- he's too repetitive

-What's the function of this repetition? Strategy of replay and control

How does this compare to Stravinsky?

-To armor the emasculated German spirit

-Jünger doesn't grapple with the crisis of representation and language.

Was Jünger a fascist?

-Well, Jünger disdained the Nazis, but he's part of that project

-He validates aggression, death, and violence as ultimate meaning--this feeds into a cultural synthesis that made Nazism attractive and successful as a mass movement