

### 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

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