

2. An Assessment of the Ernst Jünger Research Literature

2.1 Introduction

Given the extent of Jünger's output as a writer between 1920 and 1997 and the concomitant extent of responses to it, it is impossible to do justice to the full range of Jünger reception and scholarship here. Instead, I shall briefly assess the research literature dealing with the twin concerns of this thesis: first, Jünger's writing on the First World War between 1914 and 1925; and second, how these texts relate to 'modernity' and 'modernism', proceeding in both cases in chronological order.

2.2 Jünger and the First World War

2.2.1 1950s

The late 1940s and early 1950s saw an impassioned debate about the 'Fall Jünger' in which the key arguments which were to dominate subsequent exchanges about his life and work were first laid out, only to be recycled with depressing frequency over the course of the next half-century. Much writing on Jünger at this time addressed the significance of his life and work in general, and his supposedly imminent conversion to Christianity in particular. Nevertheless, two general books on Jünger and one article make specific reference to the First World War.

Kohlschmidt (1952) argues that in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (1922 and 1926) Jünger is following an aestheticised, Nietzschean agenda in this book, driven by 'das verzweifelte Bedürfnis, die Gestalt des Weltkriegssoldaten in einem schnell vergessenden Zeitalter nach ihrem Range zu fixieren um jeden Preis' (p. 122).¹ Consequently, Jünger is said ultimately to seek refuge in a Romantic realm beyond History. Although Kohlschmidt does point out the variety of perspectives Jünger adopts in this text (p. 114), he does not

¹ Werner Kohlschmidt, "'Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis': Ernst Jüngers weltanschaulicher Ausgangspunkt in kritischer Betrachtung", *Sammlung*, 7 (1952), pp. 22-31 (repr. in Werner Kohlschmidt, *Die entzweite Welt: Studien zum Menschenbild in der neueren Dichtung* (Gladbeck: Freizeiten Verlag, 1953)), pp. 113-26. I quote from the 1953 printing.

draw any conclusions from the contradictions involved, preferring instead, as many critics would do, to reconstruct a coherent agenda on Jünger's behalf.

Stern (1955) dedicates a substantial part of his general book on Jünger to the First World War.² Although he praises Jünger's war books, exclaiming that 'it is the veracity of the description which makes Jünger's passages surpass all literature of war as I know it' (p. 23), he goes on to condemn his 'language of the will which asserts in the voice of military command a lifeless order and rigid discipline where there ought to be living experience' (p. 27), a lack attributed to what Stern identifies as a 'single, defective mode of experience' (p. 25). Very much of the liberal-humanist tradition, Stern's normative assumptions about humanity and literature mean that he cannot establish a link between Jünger's objectivity and need to impose static structures on his experience, that link being, as I shall show, his classical modern heritage.³

Loose (1957) provided what remains one of the best introductions to Jünger's works.⁴ His thesis is that the key to Jünger's life and work is adventure, be this in the military, political or spiritual domains. Loose thus emphasises the importance of subjective autonomy for Jünger, albeit without linking this need for personal freedom to modernity as such. In his section on Jünger's war experience, Loose is able to show the extent to which he was motivated by a desire for self-realisation and autonomy, a judgement reinforced by Jünger's original war diary (cf. Chapter 5, p. 124 below). However, Loose concentrates on this one pole of classical modernity without paying sufficient heed to the need for authoritative interpretory structures also evident in Jünger's war books. As a result, Loose's interpretation remains somewhat narrow in its theoretical focus.

² J. P. Stern, *Ernst Jünger: A Writer of Our Time* (Cambridge: Bowes & Bowes, 1955).

³ Cf. Jonathon Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (London, Melbourne and Henley: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983). Culler defines humanism, or New Criticism, as a form of criticism 'that relies on common sense and shared values in interpreting literary works as aesthetic achievements which speak to us about familiar human concerns' (p. 19).

⁴ Gerhard Loose, *Ernst Jünger: Gestalt und Werk* (Frankfurt am Main: Klostermann, 1957).

2.2.2 1960s

Although the 1960s saw an intensification of political debate about Jünger, there was little specific research on the First World War books. The number of known war texts did increase, however, as Hans-Peter Des Coudres stumbled upon Jünger's 'forgotten' text *Sturm* which he republished in 1963.⁵ In his 'Nachwort' (p. 99), Des Coudres emphasised what he considered two key aspects: first, that the text was 'expressionistisch' in style and second, that it was strongly autobiographical. Both assumptions are highly questionable (Cf. Chapter 9, p. 216 ff. below). Henri Plard, one of Jünger's French translators, dedicated an article to *Sturm* (1968).⁶ Whilst he too believes the story to be essentially autobiographical (p. 601), he emphasises the stylistic affinities to *fin-de-siècle* decadent literature (pp. 606-07) and argues that the protagonist's death corresponds to 'une logique interne du récit: elle traduit l'impossibilité de survivre en un désaccord aussi violent avec soi-même' (p. 609), thereby making key points about the text.

2.2.3 1970s

The apparent success of the student unrest in the late 1960s led to a political radicalisation of academia, the result of which can also be seen in the three substantial accounts of Jünger's war books from this decade all of which are informed by left-wing assumptions about the bourgeoisie, history, capitalism and sexuality. Although by no means as crassly one-sided as Jünger 'research' in the DDR, they are very much of their time and place.

Prümm's two-volume book (1974) is one of the most exhaustive examinations of Jünger's early work to date.⁷ He attempts to read Jünger's Weimar work from an interdisciplinary point of view, integrating the war novels, essays and journalistic pieces into the general patterns of German conservative thought. Prümm's perspective is

⁵ Ernst Jünger, *Sturm* (Olten: Georg Rentsch, 1963). This was a private edition with a very small print run. A slightly longer version of the *Nachwort* was published four years later: cf. Hans-Peter Des Coudres, 'Bemerkung über *Sturm*', *Eckart Jahrbuch* (1967), pp. 137-52.

⁶ Henri Plard, 'Une œuvre retrouvée d'Ernst Jünger: *Sturm*', *Études Germaniques*, 23 (1968), pp. 600-15.

⁷ Karl Prümm, *Literatur des soldatischen Nationalismus der 20er Jahre: Gruppenideologie und Epochenproblematik*, 2 vols (Kronberg/Taunus: Scriptor Verlag, 1974).

extremely critical and at times extremely perceptive. Prümm makes a number of key points: first, he recognises that *In Stahlgewittern* is characterised by ‘traumatisch-pathologische Züge’ (p. 83); second, he sees the inconsistencies between Jünger’s insistence on the dominance of technology and his subjective perspective (p. 109), between his pursuit of *Bildung* and celebration of destruction, or between the image of the Babelian tower and the celebration of the primitive in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (p. 145); third, he recognises the ambivalence of *Sturm* (p. 185). However, his recognition of the inconsistencies and fault-lines of Jünger’s early texts is only partial for his left-wing perspective ultimately precludes him from seeing that the crisis enacted in these texts is not so much the crisis of the bourgeoisie, but of cultural modernity as a whole — and to admit that would be to undermine his own position as a ‘progressive’ critic. Nevertheless, Prümm’s book remains an important study, not to be overlooked.

Gerda Liebchen’s book (1977) has a different project — to locate Jünger’s work within a precise matrix of socio-economic interest groups.⁸ Whilst her research is thorough, her theoretical perspective does not extend beyond vulgar Marxism such that Jünger is blindly accused of being in the service of ‘imperialistischen Herrschaftsinteressen’ (p. 79) and of enthusiastically approving of ‘monopolkapitalistischen Produktionsverhältnisse’ (p. 221). Whilst attempting to investigate the relationship between socio-political factors and literary production is valid enough, it is absurd to suggest an implicit historical conspiracy by postulating that publication of *Sturm* was discontinued because it failed to further the revanchist aspirations of the officer caste (p. 147). Ultimately, Liebchen delivers little new insight either into Jünger’s war books or into his relationship with classical modernity.

Klaus Theweleit’s two-volume book (1977) on the War and *Freikorps* literature of the Weimar Republic broke new ground through its application of a left-orientated

⁸ Gerda Liebchen, *Ernst Jünger: Seine literarischen Arbeiten in den zwanziger Jahren. Eine Untersuchung zur gesellschaftlichen Funktion von Literatur* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1977).

psychoanalysis in an attempt to arrive at a psychopathology of the ‘soldierly man’ and thus, ultimately, of fascism.⁹ Given his subject, it is not surprising that Ernst Jünger should play a prominent role in his analysis. Theweleit argues that fascism was the result of bourgeois intellectuals’ compensation of their inadequate sexual and psychic development within the repressive strictures of their Wilhelmine upbringing. This compensation is said to have been found both in the libidinal excitement of warfare and in a tendency to produce totalitarian structures. Although his account of the veterans’ misogyny is completely justified, his attempt to turn their hatred of mud into a hatred of women is facile — it is simply inappropriate to compare the results of shelling Paeschendaele to the extent that water could no longer drain with menstruation. As an explanation of the National Socialist mentality, if indeed there was such a unified phenomenon, Theweleit’s book is inadequate for two main reasons: first, it neglects the historical and political details involved in the rise of the Third Reich; and second, it fails to investigate parallels with the economy of sex and violence in other ‘repressive’ or ‘liberated’ societies, such that its conclusions remain ultimately a matter of assertion.¹⁰ Nevertheless, the book does offer a number of useful insights. Most notably Theweleit argues in Vol. II that the men whose texts he scrutinises were concerned with producing unity (p. 102) and coherence (pp. 117-18) in Nation and Army on the one hand, and what he terms ‘bodily armour’ on the other, meaning those psychic structures used to guarantee the integrity of the subject under threat in battle. What he is pointing out, even if his theoretical assumptions prevent him from saying so, are two key phenomena of classical modernity: first, the subject’s need to be centred and coherent; and second, its complementary need for totalising meta-narratives. Ultimately, however,

⁹ Klaus Theweleit, *Männerphantasien*, 2 vols (Frankfurt am Main: Roter Stern, 1977).

¹⁰ Cf. Richard Overly, ‘Simple Pleasures of Killing’ (Review of Joanna Bourke, *An Intimate History of Killing: Face to Face Killing in 20th Century Warfare* (London: Granta, 1999)), *THES*, May 14 1999, p. 25. Drawing on evidence from Allied forces in the Second World War and from the American Army in Vietnam, Bourke shows that ‘[men in modern combat] kill easily, and in many cases, with unalloyed pleasure’. The evidence that ordinary, well-adjusted men from different levels of many different societies can behave thus undermines Theweleit’s argument that it was the specific socialisation of the Wilhelmine bourgeoisie that was responsible for blood-lust.

Theweleit's 1970s obsession with linking Wilhelmine sexual repression with fascism produces a perspective which distorts his book's frequent lucid and imaginative insights.

2.2.4 1980s

As the Cold War reached its most dangerous stage since the Cuban missile crisis only to culminate in the sudden collapse of the Soviet Union and the fall of the Berlin Wall, academic reaction to Jünger's war novels turned on the whole away from the political radicalism of the 1970s. Woods' book (1982) is an authoritative and balanced analysis of Jünger's political involvement and thus also includes extensive comments on the War books.¹¹ However, because Woods' concern is with the political, his focus is less on the cultural crisis articulated beneath the surface of Jünger's war texts and more on tracing the evolution of distinct aspects of Jünger's political thought in the period 1920-32 (cf. my comments p. 247 below).

Articles by Manfred Durzak (1985)¹² and Bernhard Spies (1985),¹³ and Johannes Volmert's book on *In Stahlgewittern* (1985) mark a return to a more polemical Jünger reception.¹⁴ Durzak compares Fritz von Unruh's *Opfergang* with Jünger's *Sturm* but his analysis amounts to canonising Unruh and demonising Jünger, conveniently ignoring the complexities involved in both sets of texts.¹⁵ Volmert aims to provide a 'historische, sozialkritische Analyse der *Stahlgewitter*' (p. 7), but does not offer much in the way of original insight, relying instead on Liebchen and Theweleit. Indeed, when he asserts that Jünger is guilty of a 'sehr freien, fast romanhaften Umgang mit historischen Daten', it becomes clear that he has not compared *In Stahlgewittern* with the available regimental histories, thereby seriously weakening the credibility of his analysis (Cf. footnote 4, p. 155

¹¹ Roger Woods, *Ernst Jünger and the Nature of Political Commitment* (Stuttgart: Akademischer Verlag Heinz, 1982)

¹² Manfred Durzak, 'Fritz von Unruh und Ernst Jünger, oder: Das Janusgesicht der deutschen Literatur', *L'80*, 36 (December 1985), pp. 116-40.

¹³ Bernhard Spies, 'Ernst Jüngers Kriegstagebücher', *Literatur für Leser*, 85 (1985), pp. 100-15.

¹⁴ Johannes Volmert, *Ernst Jünger: In Stahlgewittern* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1985).

¹⁵ Cf. my comments in Chap. 3.8.4, p. 81 on Unruh and Chap. 9, pp. 216 ff. on *Sturm*.

below). Spies's article is similarly reductive — Jünger's war writings are simply said to involve an aesthetic glorification of violence (p. 105) and a pathological need for submissive obedience (p. 109).

By contrast, Hans-Harald Müller's book (1986) is characterised by a concern with philological precision and, in the section devoted to Jünger's war books, Müller delivers one of the most authoritative accounts to date of the individual texts, especially the first three.¹⁶ Sensitive to the contradictions involved in Jünger's early texts, Müller argues convincingly that these are more often than not the result of the conflict between what he sees as Jünger's twin desires — to be both a heroic warrior and a cultured writer. What Müller does not do, however, is place this conflict within the context of cultural theory in order to examine how this conflict is related to a deeper-rooted cultural crisis.

Müller's Hamburg colleague Harro Segeberg has also contributed much to developing original and authoritative approaches to Jünger's work especially in a series of articles published 1989-91. In one article, Segeberg focuses on the role of technology in Jünger's war books.¹⁷ He summarises his own argument as follows: 'auf dem Höhepunkt einer aufs äußerste gesteigerten industrialisierten Vernichtungsschlacht entsteht die Kampfgemeinschaft der Elite-Krieger aus einer ebenso informellen wie wortlosen face-to-face Interaktion' (p. 22). He argues that Jünger's early work is characterised by the literary depiction of catastrophic experience (pp. 25-26) and that 'Jüngers Wahrnehmung des Schreckens favorisiert ein Gemeinschaftserlebnis, das zu seiner Entfaltung der Erfahrung des Krieges deshalb bedarf, weil erst sie den abstrakten Funktionalismus der zweckrationalen Großorganisation Militär fortsprengt' (p. 24). In his other 1989 article,¹⁸ Segeberg argues along similar lines, but this time argues: 'Ziel [of Jünger's early work –

¹⁶ Hans-Harald Müller, *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller: Der Kriegerroman der Weimarer Republik* (Stuttgart: Metzler, 1986).

¹⁷ Harro Segeberg, "'Letzthin ist der Untergang das einzige Normale': Über Krieg und Technik im Frühwerk Ernst Jüngers', *Der Deutschunterricht*, 41 (1989), Nr. 4, pp. 20-27.

¹⁸ Harro Segeberg, 'Regressive Modernisierung: Kriegserlebnis und Moderne-Kritik in Ernst Jüngers Frühwerk', *Wirkendes Wort*, 39 (1989), pp. 95-111.

JK] ist also die Re-Integration von Technik in die technisch gehärtete Auslese-Natur einer neuen Elitenhierarchie, die sich durch eine Verschwisterung von natürlicher und technischer Autorität auszeichnet' and that his works are characterised by 'eine mit den Mitteln äußerster Modernität forcierte Regressionsbewegung' and that 'Modernität, Überwindung der Modernität und die Fixierung auf vormoderne Leitbilder sind daher in dieses [Jüngers] Denkmodell projizierbar' (p. 97). His focus is thus on Jünger's reactions to the highly destructive nature of modern warfare and his attempts to counter this destructiveness by emphasising the constructive emergence of elite fighting groups and the result is one of the most interesting commentaries on the early Jünger to date, summarised and expanded in Segeberg's chapter (1991).¹⁹ However, Segeberg does tend to make the early Jünger retrospectively coherent and his emphasis on 'regression' underplays the extent to which the re-formulation of anthropological assumptions can be seen as a modern attempt to revise its totalising theories.²⁰ Furthermore, in the light of Jünger's manuscript war diary (Cf. Chapter. 5, p. 124 below), Segeberg's emphasis on combat groups in a specifically Jüngerian context appears a little exaggerated in retrospect, given the diary's very personal, subjective perspective.

2.2.5 1990s

Whilst Krull (1990) does not get beyond a brief and mildly critical commentary,²¹ Höfler (1991) attempts a quite new approach drawing on the renewed academic interest in media theory.²² He dedicates a substantial part of his analysis of literary reactions to technology in the First World War to Jünger, arguing that modern technology's transformation of the

¹⁹ Harro Segeberg, 'Regressive Modernisierung: Kriegerlebnis und Moderne-Kritik in Ernst Jüngers Frühwerk', in *Vom Wert der Arbeit: Zur literarischen Konstitution des Wertkomplexes "Arbeit" in der deutschen Literatur (1770-1930)*, ed. by Harro Segeberg (Tübingen: Max Niemeyer, 1991), pp. 335-78.

²⁰ Cf. Chapter. 3.8.6, p. 88 on Freud and Chapter. 8.2.4.2, p. 200 on the anthropology of *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*.

²¹ Wilhelm Krull, 'Im Foyer des Todes: Zu Ernst Jüngers *In Stahlgewittern* und anderen Texten über den Ersten Weltkrieg', *Text + Kritik*, 105/106: *Ernst Jünger* (1990), pp. 27-35.

²² Günther A. Höfler, 'Die Invasion der Kriegsmaschinen in die Literatur: Der Erste Weltkrieg als literarische Technikerfahrung', in *Medien und Maschinen: Literatur im technischen Zeitalter*, ed. by Theo Elm and Hans Hiebel (Freiburg: Rombach, 1991), pp. 225-44.

battlefield meant an intensification of ‘shock’ experiences akin to those produced by cinema or indeed by big-city life and that Jünger’s aestheticisation of these shocks is one way of dealing with the experience (p. 231). Literature is shown to be at once incapable of adequately representing the effects of technology in warfare and to adopt formal aspects of the new technological media: ‘Die im Kamerastil ausgewerteten Fronttagebücher konkurrieren nicht mehr mit dem neuen dominierenden Medium [photography and film – JK], sondern passen sich ihm an und erhalten dadurch Drehbuchcharakter’ (p. 241). Whilst it is disputable that *In Stahlgewittern* has anything like a passing resemblance to a film-script, Höfler does show how technological modernity transformed the battlefield and he does point out a number of ways in which Jünger’s texts reflect and deal with this shift. Nevertheless, his account is short on detail, working as he does with the *Sämtliche Werke* editions and he all too often glosses over the breaks and failings in Jünger’s written recordings of the War which betray the fact that he was not a camera lens but a human being under substantial stress.

In another essay a year later (1992), Höfler returned to Jünger and what he sees as a ‘new paradigm’ in war literature brought forth by the War.²³ If his film-script metaphor of 1991 was overly daring, his analysis one year later is much more usable. Jünger, he writes, ‘liefert Beschreibungen unverbundener Einzelbilder mit eingeblendetem Nebentext, mit rasch wechselnder Optik und sprunghaften Veränderungen des Sprachrhythmus, der aus der Not geboren ist, Synchronien und Synästhesien linear speichern zu müssen’ (p. 287). Furthermore, Jünger’s texts are ‘ganz auf das Äußere fixiert, die Texte bleiben flächig, ohne Tiefendimension. Seine Sichtweise ist eine quasi-pornographische, d.h. unbeteiligt registrierende, präzise “Linsenoptik” erfaßt mit gleichem Abstand sowohl lebende als auch tote Körper wie auch Gefechtsmomente [...]’ (p. 287).²⁴ This recording,

²³ Günther A. Höfler, ‘Das neue Paradigma des Krieges und seine literarischen Repräsentationen. Dargestellt an Detlev von Liliencron, Ernst Jünger und Thor Goote’, in *Intimate Enemies: English and German Literary Reactions to the Great War, 1914-1918*, ed. by Franz Stanzel and Martin Löschnigg (Heidelberg: Winter, 1993), pp. 277-91.

²⁴ The term ‘Linsenoptik’ was first used in regard to Jünger by Rausch (1950). Cf. p. 29 below.

instrumental perspective is deeply embedded in the epistemology of classical modernity, but rapidly reaches its limits under the sensory overload of the War — a fact which Höfler comments on only tangentially whilst, as before, not commenting on those places where this ‘cinematic’ writing breaks down.

Denham (1992) also describes Jünger’s writing as a ‘new literary response to combat’.²⁵ Its novelty is said to lie in its combination of heroic narrative and appreciation of the nature of modern warfare (p. 120) and its extremely subjective perspective (p. 128). Denham, like other commentators, shows how Jünger ‘consistently approaches his subject in a manner which reinforces his role as a narrator who is at the same time a participant and an observer’ (p. 122). Ultimately, however, Denham has little new to say about Jünger’s war books.

Jünger’s practice of writing and re-writing his texts, especially his earliest, has long caused problems for scholars. Although Böhme (1972) had included some work on the war books,²⁶ it was not until Knebel (1991) that research concentrating exclusively on this problem appeared.²⁷ Knebel shows in detail how Jünger rewrote *In Stahlgewittern*. Dempewolf (1992) examines the changes made to all his war books between 1920 and 1980 and explains the changes on the basis of political opportunism, a late echo of the political agenda of the 1970s.²⁸ Kunicki (1993) concentrates on analysing the changes to *In Stahlgewittern* within the context of Jünger’s texts which appeared contemporaneously with each new edition.²⁹ Kunicki argues that Jünger had a specific agenda with each new edition, and that with the first editions, this involved attempting to find a meaning for the

²⁵ Scott Denham, *Visions of War: Ideologies and Images of War in German Literature before and after the Great War* (Berne, etc: Peter Lang, 1992), p. 115.

²⁶ Ulrich Böhme, *Fassungen bei Ernst Jünger* (Meisenheim am Glan: Anton Hain, 1972).

²⁷ Hermann Knebel, “‘Fassungen’”: Zur Überlieferungsgechichte und Werkgenese von Ernst Jüngers *In Stahlgewittern*’, in Segeberg, *Vom Wert der Arbeit*, pp. 379-408.

²⁸ Eva Dempewolf, *Blut und Tinte: Eine Interpretation der verschiedenen Fassungen von Ernst Jüngers Kriegstagebüchern vor dem politischen Hintergrund der Jahre 1920 bis 1980* (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1992).

²⁹ Wojciech Kunicki, *Projektionen des Geschichtlichen: Ernst Jüngers Arbeit an den Fassungen von In Stahlgewittern* (Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang, 1993).

war — and that the meaning Jünger hoped to find was all too frequently undermined by his brutally honest depiction of modern warfare. Kunicki's account was held back by lack of access to the original war diary and by a lack of a theoretical perspective which could have added an extra dimension to his often very interesting insights.

Taking a historian's perspective on the different ways in which Jünger responded to the shock of technological warfare in his writings in the 1920s and 1930s, Rohkrämer (1994) makes four crucial points:³⁰ first, that Jünger's writing was characterised by three factors — a search for adventure, a celebration of 'Leben' and a need for ordering structures (p. 854); second, he shows how Jünger's war books involved differing sets of contradictions (pp. 855-58); third, he links these contradictions to a search for meaning which has its origins in a radical experience of absurdity (albeit with reference to Jünger's writing from the late 1930s onwards) (p. 859); and fourth, he gives three reasons why Jünger's early work cannot simply be dismissed as 'Antimodernismus' (pp. 869-70) — first, the term is too broad; second, to identify modernity with the Enlightenment and French Revolution is both normative and reductive; and third, Jünger does not celebrate the pre-modern but is rather concerned to find 'eine zeitgemäße Alternative zur existierenden Moderne' (p. 870). For these reasons he also considers the Herf's term 'reactionary modernism' (1984, cf. p. 33 below) to be inadequate as a description of Jünger's writing in this period. These four points are important and convincing, but lack of space prevents Rohkrämer from elaborating on them in detail and, moreover, he does not show the extent to which Jünger's concerns with adventure and ordering structures are themselves part of classical modernity.

Beltran-Vidal (1996) examines *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, pointing out how it struggles to deal with the notion of the heroic and showing how Jünger attempts to

³⁰ Thomas Rohkrämer, 'Die Verzauberung der Schlange: Krieg, Technik und Zivilisationskritik beim frühen Ernst Jünger', in *Der Erste Weltkrieg: Wirkung, Wahrnehmung, Analyse*, ed. by Wolfgang Michalka (Munich: Piper, 1994), pp. 849-74.

repress the intuition of absurdity by searching for meanings to the war.³¹ However, within the space available she is not able to do justice to the complexities involved in Jünger's text. Konitzer and Freudenberg (1996),³² in their article on *Sturm* and the 'psychodynamics' of German war literature as a whole, argue that a characteristic of this genre is a 'praeödipale Störung' (p. 166). Jünger's early work are said to constitute 'ein Korpus, in dem das ich-strukturelle Defizit der deutschen Kriegskultur sich selbst zur Sprache bringt' (p. 168). They see in *Sturm* and its hero 'den gesamten Kontext der deutschen männlichen Kriegsliteratur von Kleist über Hölderlin bis zu Jünger und Heiner Müller' (p. 174), a somewhat daring assertion not backed up by convincing argument.

Weisbrod (1997) adds little original to Jünger research, returning to familiar themes from political and psycho-analytical approaches.³³ He does, however, indicate some awareness of the breaks in Jünger's war texts: 'Aber es gibt nur zwei wirkliche Brüche in diesem anschwellenden Bockgesang von Schlachtenleid und Schlachtenlust: einmal das Treffen mit seinem verwundeten Bruder [...] zum anderen der Volltreffer [...]' (p. 174). However, given his polemic intent and limited, fundamentally liberal-humanist perspective, Weisbrod is unable to develop his account beyond negative rhetoric.

Gauger (1997) promises an investigation of 'das kriegerische Frühwerk Ernst Jüngers' together with a new approach based on a synthesis of three different perspectives — deconstructive, psycho-analytical and *werkimmanent*.³⁴ The results are somewhat limited — his deconstructive approach does not move beyond describing those places in *In Stahlgewittern* where Jünger recounts mental breakdowns (p. 28) in terms of Derridean 'différance'. In so doing, he goes one step beyond Weisbrod, but no further. His

³¹ Danièle Beltran-Vidal, 'Héros et Héraut dans *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*', *Les Cahiers Ernst Jünger*, 1 (1996).

³² Martin Konitzer and Nahib Freudenberg, 'Leutnant "Sturm" und "Krieg ohne Schlacht": Bildraum und Psychodynamik des deutschen Kriegers', in *Images d'Ernst Jünger*, ed. by Danièle Beltran-Vidal (Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang, 1996), pp. 163-76.

³³ Bernd Weisbrod, 'Ernst Jünger: *In Stahlgewittern*', in *Querlektüren: Weltliteratur zwischen den Disziplinen*, ed. by Wilfried Barner (Göttingen: Wallstein, 1997), pp. 168-86.

psychoanalytical approach provides interesting new interpretations of *Afrikanische Spiele* (1936) and *Die Zwille* (1973) but the validity of using literarised and fictionalised autobiography in an attempt to explain Jünger's war books on the basis of childhood experience is ultimately questionable. His *werkimmanent* work on the war is likewise solid but limited — he concentrates on *In Stahlgewittern* but his analysis goes no further than a summarising commentary of various thematic elements or pointing out the tension between Jünger's heroic aspirations and the sordid reality of the Front.

2.3 (post)-Modernity and (post)-Modernism

In recent years, literary and cultural studies have seen a wide-ranging debate on those socio-cultural phenomena termed 'modernity' and 'post-modernity' and on those aesthetic phenomena termed 'modernism' and 'post-modernism'. Philosophers, social theorists and critics of culture and literature have adopted a wide range of frequently contradictory positions in this debate both with regard to their evaluations of the phenomena and to possible definitions of what they in fact 'are'. Given that Jünger's works themselves comment extensively on modernity, and in particular on the changes wrought by modern technology, it is not surprising that they should have elicited a wide range of responses examining their relationship to the (post)-modern in its multiple guises.

2.3.1 1940s and Early 1950s

Whilst early work on Jünger did not have the theoretical intensity of more recent criticism, a concern with the modern is present from the beginning. Some of the Christian responses to Jünger in the 1940s and 1950s are characterised by a fundamental hostility to what is seen as modern 'nihilism', to which Jünger is said to offer a positive response in his supposed Christian turn. Rausch, in a stylistic analysis (1950),³⁵ describes Jünger's narrative perspective in his war books and elsewhere as characterised by a 'Linsenoptik' (p. 1072) and argues that the result is a frozen prose, too concerned to capture the objective

³⁴ Klaus Gauger, *Krieger, Arbeiter, Waldgänger, Anarch: Das kriegerische Frühwerk Ernst Jüngers* (Frankfurt am Main, etc.: Peter Lang, 1997), p. 16.

world to describe humanity adequately (p. 1074). However, Rausch lacked the theoretical apparatus to investigate the relationship between Jünger's literary perspective and classical modernity as such. Rey (1951-52)³⁶ argues that 'there is hardly any writer in modern German literature who is more seriously concerned with the crisis of civilisation than Ernst Jünger' (p. 249) but does not take his argument further than a perfunctory analysis of *Auf den Marmorclippen* (1939). Another account concerned with style is provided by Heller (1955) who argues that Jünger's writing, together with Benn's and Brecht's, is characterised by 'eisgekühlter Expressionismus'.³⁷ However, Heller's article neither proves this point nor links Jünger in any way to a more comprehensive understanding of modernism or, indeed, Expressionism.

2.3.2 Late 1950s and 1960s

Krockow (1957) takes a sociological approach in his analysis of Jünger, Schmitt and Heidegger, the Trinity of the German right-wing intelligentsia.³⁸ He argues that the work of all three is characterised by 'decisionism' as a reaction to historicism's relativising destruction of absolute values. Their response is said to be paradoxical for it involves both a rejection of decision for fear of constraint and a search for decision for fear of relativism's uncertainty. He sees Jünger oscillating between a celebration of warfare for its own sake in order to avoid decision on its meaning (p. 46) and a deep sense of despair beneath the decisionistic surface of *Der Arbeiter* (p. 115). Without doing so explicitly, Krockow is in fact exploring the tension between Jünger's classical modern claims both to subjective autonomy and to the certainty provided by totalising theory on the one hand and the paradoxes which resulted when modernity began to turn against itself and so entered a period of crisis which reached a preliminary culmination in the First World War. However,

³⁵ Jürgen Rausch, 'Ernst Jüngers Optik', *Merkur*, 4 (1950), pp. 1069-85.

³⁶ William H. Rey, 'Ernst Jünger and the Crisis of Civilisation', *German Life and Letters*, 5 (1951-52), pp. 249-54.

³⁷ Peter Heller, 'Eisgekühlter Expressionismus', *Merkur*, 9 (1955), pp. 1095-1100.

³⁸ Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt und Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke, 1957).

he devotes only a small number of pages to Jünger's war books and consequently cannot explore the paradoxes and breaks there in detail.

Hans-Peter Schwarz (1962) suggests that Jünger's work should be read as an 'Auseinandersetzung mit dem Geist eines Jahrhunderts, das er nicht liebt, obwohl es ihn häufig fasziniert' and argues that the author was never properly at home in modernity.³⁹ Although sensitive to Jünger's inconsistencies, Schwarz is concerned to develop a coherent account of his work which he then posits as anti-modern in its basic tenets — but without adequately exploring what modernity entails. Consequently, he is not able to see the extent to which Jünger's works, and especially his war books, are in fact dependent on modern assumptions or the extent to which the inconsistencies he does see reflect the crisis which these assumptions were in.

Two other 1960s works also touch on the issue of modernity: first, Nelson's dissertation (1962) focuses on Jünger's analysis of nihilism but does not contextualise it sufficiently to provide a coherent account of its relationship to modernity;⁴⁰ and second, Theodor Schwarz's article (1967) examines Jünger's philosophy of technology but never leaves the constraints of state-sanctioned DDR ideology.⁴¹

2.3.3 1970s

Karl-Heinz Bohrer's book (1978) proved to be a turning point in Jünger research and provoked considerable controversy in its own right through its resistance to the then dominant political mode of literary criticism.⁴² Bohrer was the first to read Jünger systematically within the context of 'die Moderne' — in this case within a cultural tradition reaching back to Poe and Baudelaire via *fin-de-siècle* décadents. His focus is very

³⁹ Hans-Peter Schwarz, *Der konservative Anarchist: Politik und Zeitkritik Ernst Jüngers* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1962), p. 14.

⁴⁰ Michael G. Nelson, 'Ernst Jünger's Interpretation of the Crisis of Modern Man' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Sydney, 1962).

⁴¹ Theodor Schwarz, 'Zur Technikphilosophie Ernst Jüngers', *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Philosophie*, 15 (1967), pp. 528-35.

⁴² Karl-Heinz Bohrer, *Die Ästhetik des Schreckens: die pessimistische Romantik* (Munich and Vienna: Carl Hanser, 1978).

much on aesthetics and he tends to reduce modernism to decontextualised style. Nevertheless, his argument that Jünger's war books develop *Décadence* to its logical conclusion in their search for extreme aesthetic experience is interesting, as is his argument that in Jünger's texts the collapse of mental ordering of events results in a purely iconographic semiotics (p. 140), pointing as he does to those moments of absurdity where modernity's ordering structures collapse for Jünger. However, Bohrer's arguments concentrate too much on aesthetic aspects and consequently his account of modernity and modernism is unbalanced for he fails to take account either of Jünger's debt to classical modernity's practices of knowledge or of the relationship between Jünger's 'aestheticism' and its socio-cultural context.

2.3.4 1980s

Hervier (1982) examines Jünger's relationship to 'la question de la modernité' but does not offer more than brief generalisations.⁴³ Hemmerich (1983),⁴⁴ in what is in effect an extended review of Bohrer's book, asks if Jünger can be considered a 'moderner Autor' and concludes that Jünger's work as a whole is 'modern' because it deals primarily with 'modern' issues. However, Hemmerich does not elucidate what he means by modern nor does he inquire how aesthetic modernity relates to socio-cultural modernity.

Lethen (1983-84) discovers significant parallels between the attitudes of Brecht and Jünger to the process of modernisation but his analysis concentrates on *Der Arbeiter* (1932) and not on the war books.⁴⁵ Roberts (1986) also takes a comparative look at Brecht and Jünger,⁴⁶ and likewise concentrates on the late Weimar republic, arguing that both authors attempt to revise classical modernity's individual subject into a collective one, a

⁴³ Julien Hervier, 'Ernst Jünger et la question de la modernité', *Revue d'Allemagne*, 14: *Kulturpessimismus, Révolution Conservatrice et Modernité* (1982), pp. 145-60.

⁴⁴ Gerd Hemmerich, 'Ernst Jünger — ein moderner Autor?', in *Germanistik in Erlangen*, ed. by Dietmar Peschel (Erlangen: Universitätsbund Erlangen-Nürnberg, 1983), pp. 389-96.

⁴⁵ Helmut Lethen, 'Ernst Jünger, Bertolt Brecht und der "Habitus" des Einverständnisses mit der Moderne', *Studi Germanici*, 21/22 (1983-84), pp. 273-89.

⁴⁶ David Roberts, 'Individuum und Kollektiv: Ernst Jünger und Bertolt Brecht zu Ausgang der Weimarer Republik', *Orbis Litterarum*, 41 (1986), pp. 157-75.

feature that we shall see in Jünger's political war books (Cf. Chapter 11), but which Roberts ignores in favour of *Der Arbeiter* (1932).

Herf (1984) discusses what he terms 'reactionary modernism' and devotes a substantial chapter to Jünger.⁴⁷ Although his book added considerably to the debate about modernity and modernism and its relationship to right-wing radicalism, his thesis has a number of problems (Cf. Rohkrämer and my comments p. 250 below).

Holthusen (1984), drawing on Leslie Fielder in an analysis of contemporary post-modernist German writers, counts Jünger among their number.⁴⁸ Like many accounts of Jünger and post-modernism, however, Holthusen focuses on late works, particularly the novel *Eumeswil* (1977) which he argues is characterised by a sense of *posthistoire* (pp. 915-16). Niethammer (1989) also includes Jünger in his analysis of *posthistoire*, likewise concentrating on *Eumeswil*.⁴⁹

Renner (1988) follows Bohrer in describing Jünger's aesthetic of violence 'als eine deutsche Version von Stilgesten, die als gesamteuropäisch zu bezeichnen sind' but goes beyond him in arguing that in Jünger's war texts are characterised by an 'Autonomisierung der Wahrnehmung [...] [die] das bloße Urteil zu übersteigern vermag und alle ideologischen Fixierungen außer Kraft setzt'.⁵⁰ He argues that as Jünger's radical aesthetics culminate in, say *Das abenteuerliche Herz*₁ (1929), his proximity to Nietzsche's anti-modern stance intensifies and, thus, that 'Jüngers aggressives Wahrnehmungspathos nicht auf eine bloße Verherrlichung der Gewalt aus ist, sondern vor allem auf eine Erkenntnis zielt, die aus Grenzerfahrungen hervorgeht und zu jenen Handlungsmodellen in Konkurrenz tritt, die auf Logos und Vernunft gegründet sind' (p. 271). In other words,

⁴⁷ Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984).

⁴⁸ Hans Egon Holthusen, 'Heimweh nach Geschichte: Postmoderne und Posthistoire in der Literatur der Gegenwart', *Merkur*, 38 (1984), pp. 902-17.

⁴⁹ Lutz Niethammer, *Posthistoire: Ist die Geschichte zu Ende?* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1989).

Renner sees Jünger's texts as characterised by a post-modernism which, he argues, accounts for a great deal of the hostility towards him amongst much of the German intellectual establishment with its persistent loyalty to classical modernity. However, convincing as Renner's thesis is, it does not show how this 'post-modern' stance actually evolves out of a crisis of Jünger's classically modern heritage as inscribed in the war books.

Two 1980s American articles on Jünger bear witness to a growing interest in the author outside of German and European *Germanistik*. Dagmar Barnouw (1988) emphasises Jünger's alienation from the Weimar Republic in the aftermath of the War experience but does not get beyond a series of general, if perceptive, comments on his work as a whole.⁵¹ Russell Berman (1989) links Jünger with the aesthetics of Leni Riefenstahl's films to argue that his 'fascist Modernism' is characterised by a privileging of the visual over the written.⁵² On the basis of one sentence in *Der Arbeiter*, Berman argues that Jünger's 'fascist Modernism' overcomes bourgeois individualism embodied in writing and reading, and, furthermore, in so doing 'fascist Modernism' also overcomes the Jews as the people of the written Law. Berman's argument is spectacular but flawed by his lack of knowledge about Jünger — he refers neither to Jünger's virulent rejection of writing in 'Revolution und Idee' (1923), nor to 'Über Nationalismus und Judenfrage' (1930) which has been interpreted by some critics as anti-Semitic.

Philippi (1989) argues that Jünger's tendency to seek metaphysical moorings means that he cannot be considered a 'modern' author, concluding: 'Für die ästhetische

⁵⁰ Rolf Günter Renner, 'Gewaltphantasien und ästhetischer Friede: Ernst Jünger oder der Eintritt in die Postmoderne', in *Die Postmoderne Konstellation: Theorie, Text und Kunst im Ausgang der Moderne* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1988), pp. 264-84 (p. 267).

⁵¹ Dagmar Barnouw, 'The Magic Spaces of Terror', in *Weimar Intellectuals and the Threat of Modernity* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 194-230.

⁵² Russell Berman, 'Written right across their faces: Ernst Jünger's Fascist Modernism', in *Modernity and the Text: Revisions of German Modernism*, ed. by Andreas Huyssen and David Bathrick (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), pp. 60-80.

Moderne ist er, wenn man sich nicht selbst blendet, kaum zu retten' (p 191).⁵³ In particular, Philippi is concerned to reject attempts to turn Jünger into a post-modernist author, arguing that he was instead conservative and backward-looking. Ultimately, however, Philippi remains unconvincing because he does not pause to examine what exactly he means by 'modernity' or 'modernism' and consequently overlooks numerous facets of Jünger's work which bear witness to a much more complex relationship to modernity than Philippi is prepared to admit.

2.3.5 1990s

Ibanez-Noe (1990) attempts a philosophical approach to Jünger's 'Theory of the Modern Age'.⁵⁴ In contrast to many other writers on the subject, Ibanez-Noe gives a cogent account of what he considers modernity to be — the liberation of the subject on the one hand and the domination of the world through technology on the other (pp. 2-17). His approach is to read Jünger's texts, primarily from *Der Arbeiter* onwards, as accounts of modernity and he does so from the perspective of 'the History of Being'. According to Ibanez-Noe, what distinguishes Jünger from other thinkers is his attempt to imbue technological modernity with a renewed sense of metaphysics. But rather than react negatively as Philippi does, Ibanez-Noe draws the daring conclusion that Jünger's work is 'an exemplary testimony of [sic] the culminating project of the modern age. In this respect Jünger is in the company of Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche and Heidegger' (p. ii). However, Ibanez-Noe's abstract ontological orientation means that he does not make any connection either between modernity as a socio-cultural phenomenon, or Jünger's particular reaction to it, with specific historical circumstances — the First World War is notable by its absence in his thesis. Furthermore, he makes it clear that his work is not philological in orientation (p. ii) and his attempts to

⁵³ Klaus-Peter Philippi, "'Versinken im Wirbel': Chaos und Ordnung im Werk Ernst Jüngers', *Deutsche Vierteljahresschrift*, 63 (1989), pp. 154-93.

⁵⁴ Javier Ibanez-Noe, 'Freedom and Modernity: An Interpretation of Ernst Jünger's Theory of the Modern Age' (unpublished doctoral dissertation, University of Toronto, 1990).

synthesise a coherent philosophical position for Jünger mean that, like many others, Ibanez-Noe remains inattentive to the breaks and contradictions involved in his early texts.

Kaempfer (1990) argues that modern literature is characterised by a spirit of revolt against the established social order (pp. 13-14).⁵⁵ Jünger is said to be ultimately complicitous with bourgeois capitalism and his works in the late 1920s to be 'trivialästhetisch' (p. 17) and his work as a whole unable to escape a circle of violence and destructive fantasy. Kaempfer's hostility to Jünger is well documented and this article is no exception. Kaempfer is content to criticise Jünger without examining his complexities and contradictions in their historical context, in particular the context of their crisis-ridden classically modern mentality.

Koslowski (1991) delivers another philosophical account of Jünger's relationship to modernity, this time from what he terms a 'post-modern' perspective.⁵⁶ Whilst Koslowski adds useful insights into the role of theosophical and Gnostic elements for Jünger, his thesis that Jünger's work can be seen as the unified 'philosophical' and 'epic' story of a modernity now past is problematical. Like Ibanez-Noe, he does not root his accounts of modernity and post-modernity in the actual experience of history or the complex interaction between historical experience and interpretative discourse. Indeed, it is often difficult to discern where Koslowski is interpreting Jünger and where he is paraphrasing him, a consequence in part of his own lack of clarity and tendency to adopt Jünger's own interpretative language. Thus, his book is often little more than an obscurely written commentary lacking adequate critical distance.

Brenneke (1992) attempts to place Jünger within the context of a variety of European avant-garde movements.⁵⁷ However, although his investigation of 'militanter

⁵⁵ Wolfgang Kaempfer, 'Gewalt und Wohlverhalten: Ernst Jünger und die Revolte der Moderne', *Text + Kritik*, 105/106 (1990), pp. 13-26.

⁵⁶ Peter Koslowski, *Der Mythos der Moderne: Die dichterische Philosophie Ernst Jüngers* (Munich: Wilhelm Fink, 1991).

⁵⁷ Reinhard Brenneke, *Militanter Modernismus: Vergleichende Studien zum Frühwerk Ernst Jüngers* (Stuttgart: M&P, 1992).

Modernismus' delivers both interesting insights and places Jünger in a hitherto unusual context, the book is flawed for a number of reasons. First, his comparative approach actually relegates Jünger to the margins; second, the various parts of his text are only tenuously linked together by a coherent argument; third, his reading of Jünger is often limited to summarising those parts of his texts which best suit his strikingly unoriginal position, namely that Jünger's war texts are concerned with an aestheticisation of the war and its technology and reveal nothing else; and fourth, he avoids defining at any stage what he means by 'Modernismus' and 'Moderne' other than in a section on 'reaktionärer Modernismus' (pp. 283-88) which consists of little more than a cursory review of Herf's book. Ultimately, then, Brenneke delivers little new to Jünger research.

1993 saw a special edition of *New German Critique* devoted to Jünger. A number of articles are relevant, if only tangentially: Hüppauf concentrates on the problems of representation which emerged on the battlefield, but his focus is on film; Kaes examines Fritz Lang's *M* in the context of Jünger's late Weimar writings on media technology; and Sokel declares *Der Arbeiter* to be a post-modern text. Unfortunately, none concentrate specifically on an analysis of Jünger's war books from such interesting, theoretically informed perspectives.⁵⁸

Schröter (1993) provides a substantial introduction to the scope of Jünger's thoughts on technology.⁵⁹ Unlike many critics, Schröter is aware of the contradictions involved in Jünger's work, particularly on the First World War, writing, for instance, of *Sturm*: 'Die Unmöglichkeit, Jünger eindeutig einzuordnen, die ihn so interessant macht, gleichzeitig aber seine Kritiker vexiert, zeigt sich hier zum ersten Mal' (p. 32). Concluding his section on the War, Schröter writes:

⁵⁸ Bernd Hüppauf, 'Experiences of Modern Warfare and the Crisis of Representation', *New German Critique*, 59 (1993), pp. 41-77; Anton Kaes, 'The Cold Gaze: Notes on Mobilization and Modernity', pp. 105-117; Walter Sokel, 'The "Postmodernism" of Ernst Jünger in his Proto-Fascist Stage', pp. 33-41.

⁵⁹ Olaf Schröter, '*Es ist am Technischen viel Illusion*': *Die Technik im Werk Ernst Jüngers* (Berlin: Köster, 1993).

Ernst Jüngers Beschäftigung mit den technischen Phänomenen des Ersten Weltkrieges ist von einer permanenten Widersprüchlichkeit und Ratlosigkeit geprägt. So wie er den Krieg nicht durch Analyse von Ursachen, sondern durch die Beschreibung seiner Phänomene zu fassen versucht, gelangt er zu dem von ihm vertretenen Sinn des Geschehens nicht durch Argumentation, sondern durch dezisionistisches Postulieren (p. 57).

This is a crucial insight which requires closer examination than Schröter was able to provide within the frame of his own investigation.

Kiesel (1994) examines the different ways in which Max Weber and Ernst Jünger approached 'modernity'.⁶⁰ Kiesel uses his substantial section on Weber's 'wissenschaftliche' analysis of rationalisation and *Entzauberung* to elucidate a coherent and sophisticated theoretical and historical concept of modernity which then provides the basis for his account of Jünger's 'dichterische' reaction to the phenomenon. It is this theoretical and historical foundation which makes Kiesel's work such an important step forward in the scholarly analysis of the relationship between Jünger and modernity and he makes a number of crucial points on this basis: first, he recognises the polyvalence both of modernity and of Jünger's reaction to it: 'Wie die Moderne ein vielschichtiges Phänomen ist und eine problematische Entwicklung durchlaufen hat, so ist auch Jüngers Verhältnis zu ihr vielschichtig und hat sich gewandelt' (p. 82); second, he highlights the positivistic heritage embodied by Jünger's father (pp. 86-88); and third, in a section on the 'Modernität von Jüngers Kriegsdarstellung' (pp. 99-109), Kiesel refutes Brenneke's criticism that Jünger was insufficiently avant-garde to be considered 'modern' and concludes that: 'Was an Jüngers Texten tradionalistisch wirkt, ist nicht Ausdruck des Wunsches nach Rückkehr zur Vormoderne, sondern Ausdruck des Wunsches nach Überführung der diskontinuierlich wirkenden Moderne in eine organologische Übermoderne' (p. 109). However, whilst Kiesel rightly emphasises Jünger's attempts to re-consolidate his world-view post-1918 he neglects to investigate the way in which these texts voice, consciously and unconsciously, the crisis of classical modernity and tends to underplay the extent of Jünger's long-

⁶⁰ Helmuth Kiesel, *Wissenschaftliche Diagnose und dichtersiche Vision der Moderne: Max Weber und Ernst Jünger* (Heidelberg: Manutius, 1994).

standing dependence on his father's classical modernity despite his apparent resistance to it.

In 1995, Jünger celebrated his 100th birthday and the occasion was marked by three *Festschriften* and a number of articles which address the issues of modernity and post-modernity should be mentioned briefly: Bergsdorf refers to 'den abnehmenden Utopiebedarf der Postmoderne' and argues that *Heliopolis* is 'die erste postmoderne Utopie' (p. 69) in its ultimate refusal of utopian meta-narrative in favour of a Gnostic-flavoured Christianity;⁶¹ Großheim contrasts Jünger's attitude to modernity in *Der Arbeiter* with Klages' attitude in *Der Geist als Widersacher der Seele*;⁶² Figal examines the post-1945 debate between Jünger and Heidegger about modern metaphysics and nihilism;⁶³ Renner argues that Jünger's late fiction is post-modern.⁶⁴ None, however, consider the war texts in this context. In an unrelated article,⁶⁵ Kron (1995) argues that *Das Abenteuerliche Herz*,¹ and *Der Arbeiter* can be read as avant-garde literature because of their radical style but he neither discusses modernism and modernity against the context of their historical and theoretical background nor does he address Jünger's War texts.

Figal (1997) elucidates further the aesthetic relationship between Jünger and Baudelaire, commenting that 'Baudelaires Charakterisierung des modernen ästhetischen

⁶¹ Wolfgang Bergsdorf, 'Über den abnehmenden Utopiebedarf der Postmoderne', in *Magie der Heiterkeit: Ernst Jünger zum Hundertsten*, ed. by Günter Figal and Heimo Schwilk (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta, 1995), pp. 59-71.

⁶² Michael Großheim, 'Ernst Jünger und die Moderne: Adnoten zum *Arbeiter*', in *Magie der Heiterkeit*, pp. 147-68.

⁶³ Günter Figal, 'Der metaphysische Charakter der Moderne: Ernst Jüngers Schrift "Über die Linie" (1950) und Martin Heideggers Kritik "Über 'Die Linie'" (1955)', in *Ernst Jünger im 20. Jahrhundert*, ed. by Hans-Harald Müller and Harro Segeberg (Munich: Fink, 1995), pp. 181-97.

⁶⁴ Rolf Günter Renner, 'Modernität und Postmodernität im erzählenden Spätwerk Jüngers', in *Ernst Jünger im 20. Jahrhundert*, pp. 249-68.

⁶⁵ Jürgen Kron, 'Weltliteratur als Montage: Ernst Jünger im Ausgang der Avantgarde', in *Weltliteratur Heute: Konzepte und Perspektiven*, ed. by Manfred Schmeling (Würzburg: Königshausen & Neumann, 1995), pp. 123-40.

Blicks kann als kurzgefaßte Poetik des Jüngerschen Werkes gelesen werden', but his focus remains firmly on aesthetic issues.⁶⁶

Kron (1998) offers a stylistically orientated account of Jünger's writing and concludes that it was always of outstanding aesthetic quality and always up to date, or, in other words, that he was an exemplary modernist, and subsequently, post-modernist author.⁶⁷ However, Kron does not pause to consider what actually constitutes modernist or post-modernist writing other than asserting that it involves an original artistic attempt to deal with modernity or post-modernity, both of which remain equally undefined, however provisional such a definition must necessarily be. Furthermore, his analysis of the war texts is not unproblematic. To argue, for example, that *In Stahlgewittern* is an avant-garde text because its setting is the Western Front and not the usual bourgeois settings of realist novels (p. 37), or to suggest that Jünger's depiction of the way the War reduced the individual to *matériel* is a modernist provocation of the bourgeoisie (p. 45) is simply to ignore the fact that both features are much better explained with reference to the nature of trench warfare 1914-18 and not to some genial originality. And in ascribing to Jünger a genial modernist originality, Kron completely overlooks precisely those aspects of *In Stahlgewittern* which reveal the crisis of the modern mentality. In his chapter on *Sturm*, Kron rightly discerns the novel's 'genuin poetologischen Charakter' (p. 59), but reduces the complexity of the novel to the banal conclusion that the realities of war triumph over the claims of art (p. 67). He does, however, show how *Sturm* prefigures a number of aspects of post-modern literature, in particular its intertextual playfulness (p. 85), but reduces this to a simple confrontation with *fin-de-siècle* literary antecedents. Ultimately, Kron's lack of historical and theoretical sophistication means that he delivers little that is substantially new.

⁶⁶ Günter Figal, 'Ernst Jünger, Baudelaire und die Modernität', *Revue de Littérature Comparée*, 71 (1997), pp. 501-8 (p. 505).

⁶⁷ Jürgen Kron, *Seismographie der Moderne: Modernität und Postmodernität in Ernst Jüngers Schriften von In Stahlgewittern bis Eumeswil* (Frankfurt am Main, etc: Peter Lang, 1998).

2.4 Conclusion

What we have seen, then, is that despite the increasing amount of substantial and interesting research on Jünger and the substantial move away from the limitations of politically motivated and polemical approaches, gaps still remain.

First, Jünger's manuscript war diaries from 1914-18 only became available to scholars in 1996 and have not yet been the subject of detailed scholarly investigation. I shall therefore dedicate a substantial chapter to just such an analysis (Chapter 5, p. 124 below).

Second, too many critics have tended either to neglect the inconsistencies, contradictions, breaks and *lacunae* in Jünger's early works in favour of reconstructing a consistent Jünger. I shall therefore concentrate throughout the thesis on investigating exactly where Jünger's texts break down.

Third, those critics who do recognise the breaks and gaps have often not been able to contextualise them adequately within the theoretical and historical issues involved in 'modernity' and those studies that do examine Jünger's relationship to 'modernity' and 'modernism', tend to neglect the war works, concentrating instead either on a purely aesthetic account of modernism or on texts said to be 'modern(ist)' such as *Der Arbeiter* or post-modern(ist) such as *Eumeswil*.

Therefore, before proceeding to an analysis of the manuscript war diary and subsequent published texts on the War, I shall use the next chapter to establish the axes of my argument, taking particular account both of theoretical debates about modernity, modernisation and modernism and of historical research into the nature of the First World War within that context. I shall thus produce an interdisciplinary account of the nature of what I shall term classical modernity during the period in question and show how many contemporary artists and intellectuals were affected by a deep sense of cultural crisis. In the next chapter, drawing on this frame of reference, I shall offer a new perspective on Jünger's early biography and show how, he too, was involved in the same sense of crisis, a

crisis of the 'conservative imagination', unable to give up its classical modern assumptions.