

## 7. Military Theory (1)

### 7.1 Introduction: Context and General Remarks

Between 1920 and 1923 Lt. Ernst Jünger wrote a number of articles for the *Militärwochenblatt*, the weekly *Reichswehr* gazette published by E. S. Mittler in Berlin.<sup>1</sup> Although Jünger's highly controversial political journalism has been thoroughly researched (cf. Chapter 11.1, p. 246 below), very few Jünger scholars have taken the time to examine these particular articles. Indeed, with the exception of a paragraph of Hans-Harald Müller's on one,<sup>2</sup> some general comments from Thomas Nevin (pp. 77-78) and Wojciech Kunicki's more substantial analysis of another (cf. p. 183 below), Jünger research has to all intents and purposes ignored these articles. I can only presume that the reason for this neglect is the (false) assumption that articles which appear to be about military theory have little to say (or conceal) that would further our understanding of Jünger's early work from a literary, historical, cultural or political angle.

They are, however, characterised by an acute tension between their status as (modern) theoretical contributions to a professional military journal and the (anti-modern) decentring experiences and issues which they implicitly or explicitly address. I wish to

---

<sup>1</sup> Mühleisen (1995) lists 5 articles (pp. 101-02). The texts mentioned in the bibliography are all to be found in the *Militärwochenblatt* as described. However, one article, 'Auf welchen Grundgedanken beruht die Infanterietaktik?', *Militärwochenblatt*, 107 (1922), No 4, pp. 51-52, is not attributed to Ernst Jünger in the journal itself, but is instead described as 'Von einem jungen Offizier'. Now, whilst this in itself is not sufficient to make us doubt Jünger's authorship, the style and themes are sufficiently distinct to call it into question and I agree with Nevin (p. 252) in this respect for the following reasons. First, the author is keen to bolster his essay with quotations from various generals — in all the other articles, Jünger appeals to the authority of the front experience itself. Second, there is a noticeable rhetorical emphasis on the disabling effects of the Versailles treaty and on 'wir Deutsche', sentiments that Jünger no doubt shared at this stage, but which in the other articles are much less prominent. Third, the article lacks Jünger's constant emphasis on technology and, furthermore, emphasises the importance of traditional 'militärische Tugenden', which Jünger elsewhere, both in the articles and in *In Stahlgewittern*, implicitly mocks in favour of a modern approach.

Jünger mentions these articles once in *Siebzig verweht II*, entry of 9 November 1979, p. 536: 'In diesen Tagen sandte mir Dr. Stahl vom Bundesarchiv eine Reihe von Aufsätzen aus dem *Militärwochenblatt* von 1923 [sic] über Infanterietaktik, Angriffsgeschwindigkeit, la guerre totale und Ähnliches. Ich hatte sie völlig vergessen, ebenso wie die Erzählung *Sturm*, die etwa um die gleiche Zeit in einer hannoverschen Zeitung erschien und vom unermüdlichen Archivarius des Coudres wiederentdeckt wurde'.

argue that these articles, read carefully, illuminate the development of Jünger's thought in this period in a number of important ways.

The most significant conflict which can be traced in these early articles is between two fundamentally contradictory understandings and visions of the First World War. By 1920, Jünger had started to develop a highly technicist understanding of the War, which appears to accept fully the domination of technical systems over the individual. But this understanding contrasts with the conservative rhetoric in which it is embedded.

## 7.2 'Skizze moderner Gefechtsführung'

Jünger's first article for the *Militärwochenblatt*, 'Skizze moderner Gefechtsführung', appeared in 1920,<sup>3</sup> shortly after *In Stahlgewittern*<sub>1</sub>. In this article, Jünger complains that traditional forms of drill and exercise are becoming re-established in the *Reichswehr* and expresses his outrage that the tactical lessons learnt in the War are being ignored in favour of out-dated modes of training — or, in other words, that the memory of the trenches is being neglected, the experience forgotten and thus made worthless. As a corrective to this waste, which implicitly devalued the sacrifice of many of his comrades, he sets about 'der Versuch schematischer Skizze eines modernen Gefechtstages' (p. 433) which consists in the description of a successful, but completely imaginary, *Stoßtrupp* assault with the focus held tightly at Company level.

In his extensive survey of the numerous editions of *In Stahlgewittern*, Wojciech Kunicki includes an analysis of 'Skizze' (pp. 40-45). He sees in the text a continuation of the tension that he detects in *In Stahlgewittern*<sub>1</sub> between two levels of language — between the sober description of fact and Jünger's attempt to raise the experience onto a higher,

---

<sup>2</sup> *Der Krieg und die Schriftsteller*, p. 242-43. Müller briefly discusses 'Die Technik in der Zukunftsschlacht'.

<sup>3</sup> 'Skizze moderner Gefechtsführung', *Militärwochenblatt*, 105 (1920), No. 20, pp. 433-35. Jünger's article is followed by an anonymous editorial recommendation of *In Stahlgewittern*: 'Der Verfasser, der sich nach siebenmaliger Verwundung den Orden *Pour le mérite* erworben hat, erfaßt seine Aufgabe mit hohem Schwung und ausgesprochenem Geschick, wovon der vorliegende Aufsatz Zeugnis ablegt. Das Lesen seines Buches wird zu einem erschütternden Ereignis. In lebendiger Darstellung wird der Leser in das Grauen der ungeheuren Feldschlachten geführt und am Erleben des Weltkrieges unmittelbar beteiligt'.

heroic plane of meaning which is clearly inappropriate to the actual experience. For Kunicki, the tension in 'Skizze' is between Jünger's descriptive "realism" on the one hand and his rhetoric of heroism on the other, specifically the idealised image of the *Stoßtruppführer*. Jünger's description of him and his like as 'Männer, die Friderizianischen [sic] Angriffsschneid, altpreußischen Geist verbinden mit selbständiger, sportmäßiger Ausnützung des Geländes und wissenschaftlicher Schulung im Gebrauch der technischen Mittel' creates an idealised figure, who, in Kunicki's interpretation '[...] in seiner Gestalt die Spannungen zwischen dem modernen Charakter des Krieges und den überlieferten Agon-Vorstellungen aufzuheben verspricht' (p. 44). Whilst Kunicki's conclusion that Jünger's description of a successful breakthrough is symptomatic of a 'Wunschspäre, die tief in den Erfahrungsbereich Jüngers ragte' (p. 45) is unproblematic, his analysis of the relationship between traditional and modern forms of battle in the article needs closer attention.

Let us first turn to the tension between modern and traditional views and experiences of warfare which, for Kunicki, is characteristic of Jünger's earliest work. In this article Jünger is actually keenly aware of the impact of industrialised forms of warfare on the profession of soldiering. Indeed, by describing the profession in his opening sentence as 'der Handwerke härtestes' which demands a 'rein zweckmäßige[r] Form des Handelns' (p. 433), he has already distanced himself from a heroic concept of war. Rather, Jünger has located the military within the sphere of ruthless efficiency and the pure functionality of modern rationalisation with the result that the heroic and the glorious are sidelined. That Jünger allows himself no illusions here about the role of technology in the War is quite clear: 'Maschine und Material haben überragende Bedeutung errungen und verleihen dem Kampf sein immer furchtbareres Gepräge' (p. 433).

This explicit recognition of the modernity of the War co-exists with the rhetoric of heroic action. But how? Having emphasised the lethal technology of modernity, Jünger declares:

Trotzdem liegt letzte Entscheidung in der lebenden Kraft, immer noch kommt es in diesem Flammenwirbel von Sprengstoff und Eisen zuletzt auf den "Mann" an, auf seine Eigenschaften, seine Tüchtigkeit, seine Schulung und seine Art, sich zu schlagen (p. 433).

The adverb 'trotzdem' is crucial, for it concedes the irreversible dominance of modernity's storm of steel and reduces what follows to something merely compensatory. Unconsciously, Jünger's 'trotzdem' — echoing the much repeated phrase 'Und doch' of the *Kriegstagebuch* (cf. p. 146 above) and prefiguring its use in *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis* (cf. p. 205 below) — encapsulates his fissured and ambivalent attempts to resolve his experience into a coherent vision and account.

Jünger's vision of the young officer and his élite troop is also less than unitary. The heroic rhetoric which, according to Kunicki, fulfils a 'sinnstiftende' role is strangely repetitive and grotesquely exaggerated:<sup>4</sup>

- eine Auslese der tüchtigsten Jugend seines Landes (p. 433)
- eine Eliteschar (p. 433)
- eine jugendliche Verkörperung höchster soldatischer Energie (p. 434)
- Ihr Angriff ist höchste Zusammensetzung erlesener Kräfte, Entfaltung äußerster Energie, das Ideal kriegerischer Tat (p. 434).
- die ausgewählte Schar (p. 434)

Although this vision is a reflection of certain aspects of tactical organisation in the German Army towards the end of the First World War, its romanticisation of tactical necessity and its quasi-messianic tone make it less than convincing.<sup>5</sup> Moreover, the metaphors, especially

---

<sup>4</sup> In this article Jünger also delineates what would turn out to be his vision of the New Man (cf. Chapter 11.5.3, p. 269 and Chapter 11.6.1, p. 271). The troops are not just an 'Eliteschar' but 'Meister des Sprengstoffs, tollkühne Draufgänger, zähe Verteidiger des Gewonnenen, Kameraden auf Leben und Tod' (p. 433).

<sup>5</sup> The history of the German storm units is clouded by myth making. What is certain is that each Army Command set up a *Sturmataillon* which was deployed in offensive operations but whose main task was to train line infantry in the new tactics. Thus, by the time of the *Michael* Offensive of March 1918, virtually all the infantry regiments involved in the initial assault could be described as storm units. Cf. Barrie Pitt, 'Germany, 1918: New Strategy, New Tactics' in *Furnell's History of the Great War*, 6 (1971), Nr. 14, pp. 2616-26. Furthermore, battalion, regimental and divisional commanders all improvised storm units on an essentially *ad hoc* basis. However, the tactical principle of deploying selected troops in mobile and heavily armed *Stoßtruppen* comprised of 8 men and an NCO remained fairly constant. Cf. Hellmuth Gruss, *Die deutschen Sturmataillone im Weltkrieg: Aufbau*

those of energy, form a subtle contrast to the implicit intention of the heroic discourse, which is to re-centre the human in warfare and thus resist the domination of technology. However, to refer to the human more or less in terms of high energy fields actually has the effect of denying the primacy of the organically human.

To complete the problematisation of the apparently heroic nature of Jünger's depiction of warfare here, let us turn to the end of the article. Kunicki emphasises that the final success of the exemplary (and fictitious) assault is an attempt to compensate for the failure of the 1918 offensive (p. 44). Of that, there is little doubt. But, in the article, the *Stoßtrupps* are actually sidelined since victory is ultimately brought about by tanks:

Die Stunde zum Einsatz der modernen Kampfelefanten hat geschlagen. Schwerfällig kriechen zwei Panzersturmwagen heran. Das Feuer der ganzen Umgebung springt gegen sie an. Einer bricht mitten auf der Strecke zusammen; ein Volltreffer klappt ihn auseinander wie ein Kinderspielzeug, der andere erreicht, von Einschlägen umpeitscht, das Ziel, durchbricht den Draht und wälzt sich feuerspeierend am Werk entlang. *Nachdringende Stoßtrupps* [my emphasis – JK] vollenden das Werk, ein vielstimmiges Hurra flattert über das brodelnde Gelände (p. 435).

Here, it is the tanks, more emphatically combat machines than massed artillery, that assure final success: the reverse of the situation in March 1918 when their absence from Ludendorff's *Michael* offensive assured its failure.<sup>6</sup> Machines lead, men follow, and, we note, machines speak: 'Immer spricht die Artillerie, sprechen Begleitwaffen ihr gewichtiges Wort' (p. 435). Thus, despite their appeal to a conservative elitism, Jünger's *Stoßtrupps* remain peripheralised and silenced by technology.

What then of the *Stoßtruppführer* at the centre of the article? According to Kunicki, this figure promises to resolve for Jünger the problem of the anonymity of the mass, conscript army by re-introducing the possibility of individual action (p. 44). And

---

*und Verwendung* (Berlin: Junker und Dünnhaupt, 1939), Martin Samuels, *Doctrine and Dogma: German and British Infantry Tactics in the First World War* (New York, Westport, CT and London: Greenwood Press, 1992) and Lupfer. For a different view, cf. Paddy Griffith, *Battle Tactics of the Western Front: The British Army's Art of Attack, 1916-1918* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1994) Griffith, who was also responsible for the error-ridden introduction to Constable's republication of *The Storm of Steel* in 1994, offers a very pro-British view and attempts to deflate the 'myth of the storm trooper' (p. 195).

indeed, following Ludendorff's sweeping reforms of 1916-17, the junior officer of the German Army did enjoy much greater responsibility and freedom of decision at a tactical level than officers of their rank had ever enjoyed before as the High Command strove to improve tactical and strategic efficiency.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, despite the undisputed role that charismatic leadership can sometimes play in battle, the streamlining of battlefield command was very much a modern, systems orientated move that reduced the scope for old-school heroism. Thus, the company commander of 'Skizze' actually functions much less as heroic leader than as a networked information processing unit:

Sein Stab entspricht früherem Brigadestab. Begleitartillerie-, Minenwerfer-, Maschinengewehr-, Nachrichten-, Verbindungs-offiziere, Bataillonsordonnanzen und Meldeläufer sind bei ihm, um bei Kampfbeginn ihre verschiedenen Fäden zum Netz des kombinierten Gefechts zu spinnen.

And when the engagement with the enemy begins:

Der [Kompagnieführer] ist in höchster Tätigkeit. Zonenfelde des Feindes, Anschlüsse werden festgestellt, Verbindung zum Bataillon, zu den Hilfswaffen geschaffen, Beobachtung eingerichtet, Begleitwaffen herangezogen und eingebaut (p. 434).

In other words, the role of the junior officer, co-ordinating his own units, establishing enemy positions and passing information on to the next level of command, is in many ways merely that of an intelligent information management system. He appears as little more than pure function, which undermines the antiquated language of 'ausgewählte Scharen'.

Paradoxically, it would seem that precisely this depiction of a perfectly operating information system, capable of functioning under the exigencies of War and thus successfully mastering the experience is, in this text, the locus of imaginary compensation. For in contrast to the idealised company commander of 'Skizze', the narrator of *In Stahlgewittern*, and more starkly, the author of the manuscript diaries, was far from being the optimal officer and was often overwhelmed by events running out of control. To be sure, the 'Skizze' admits that uncertainty is inherent in modern forms of battle: 'Tausend

---

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Terraine, who remarks scathingly of the absence of cavalry or armoured units from Ludendorff's plan: 'To launch an offensive intended to win the war with [no exploiting arm at all] was not just foolish: it was criminal' (p. 286).

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Lupfer, pp. 11-24 and Samuels, pp. 88-96.

entwirrende Eindrücke überstürzen sich' (p. 433). However, in the 'Skizze', compensation is enacted in this information field: 'bald verliert sich das Flüssige des Kampfes. Spähende Augen durchforschen das scheinbar tote Gelände nach Erdaufwurf und feiner Dampfsäule heißer Maschinengewehre; Skizzen werden gezeichnet, Läufer eilen in kurzem Zickzacksprung zum Kompanieführer' (p. 434). This never happened to Ernst Jünger: chaos and ambivalence characterised his experience of action at the front as that is related both in his war diary and in the early versions of *In Stahlgewittern*.

In other words, 'Skizze' represents a transformation of the war experience by the Jünger's conservative imagination. As narrator, Jünger sees everything and can order it; possessed of theoretical understanding, he knows everything and his 'hero' functions perfectly, almost transformed into a cyborg fighting unit. Time, too, becomes smooth on this imaginary battle field as machines and men progress to historic victory. In *In Stahlgewittern*, however, time is jagged and subjective; offensives collapse and information processing is often reduced to passively registering endless craters, endless enemy fire and the endless dead. In 'Skizze', Jünger's conservative imagination attempts to reinstate classical modernity's measuring and ordering epistemology and its calculating instrumentality and so tries to imagine a flawless machine utopia of battle. However, when he attempts to re-centre the human through the pathos of heroism utterly at odds with his technical vision, the two competing visions of combat co-exist in the text in a form of near textual schizophrenia, each staking its own distinctive claims as if the other did not exist and deconstructing the attempt to restore the assumptions of classical modernity.

### **7.3 'Die Technik in der Zukunftsschlacht'**

Jünger's next article for the *Militärwochenblatt* was published in October 1921.<sup>8</sup> 'Technik' marks a distinct evolution in Jünger's thinking about the relationship between the human subject and military technology. As we have seen, 'Skizze' is pulled between two fundamentally incompatible discourses: a heroic rhetoric of elite warriors on the one hand,

acceptance and celebration of radically modern forms on the other. In ‘Technik’, however, Jünger confronts the implications of military modernity more boldly and attempts to move decisively to a technicist and post-humanist understanding of warfare.

For a start, ‘Technik’ more clearly recognises the decisive role of machinery in warfare:

Die Technik [emphasis in original – JK] ist es, die ihn [den Ersten Weltkrieg] von früherem Kriegen grundlegend unterscheidet. Wohl hatte man — am eisernen Ladestock, Zündnadelgewehr und gepanzerten Schiff — ihren entscheidenden Einfluß kennengelernt. Doch eine solche Fülle der Erscheinungen, so vielfache Verzweigung, so massenhaften Einsatz und raschen Wechsel hatte niemand erträumt. Immer überragender wurde die Maschine (p. 287).

To an extent, these comments only reinforce the recognition in ‘Skizze’ that ‘Maschine und Material’ have come to dominate the battlefield but Jünger’s diagnosis is not limited to this general, if powerful, observation: in ‘Technik’ Jünger no longer attempts to conceal the implications of this diagnosis for the human subject and instead mercilessly exposes the illusions he had allowed himself in ‘Skizze’:

Wo die Maschine [emphasis in original – JK] auftaucht, erscheint der Wettlauf des Menschen mit ihr aussichtslos. Wie will sich der Handwerker auf die Dauer gegen die Maschine wehren? Er muß sich zu ihr bekehren oder untergehen. Was könnte ein Stoßtrupp auch mit erlesenster Mannschaft mit veralteter Bewaffnung ausrichten? Ein einziges M.G., ein sekundenlanges Gleiten des Ladegurtes — und die Technik hätte gesiegt (p. 287).<sup>9</sup>

Furthermore, Jünger explicitly rejects the quasi-heroic solutions he had proposed in ‘Skizze’. He asks ‘Verlassen wir nicht zu sehr auf die menschliche Kraft?’ (p. 287) and ridicules the traditionalist thinking that maintains that infantry ‘bei entschlossenem Zufassen’ can hold off a tank assault. He concludes: ‘Unsere Infanterietaktik der letzten Jahre — der in die Breite und Tiefe verstreuten Gruppen — ist Notbehelf und Spätform’ (p. 288), thereby implicitly conceding the futility of the *Stoßtrupptaktik*, and

---

<sup>8</sup> ‘Die Technik in der Zukunftsschlacht’, *Militärwochenblatt*, 106 (1921), No 14, pp. 287-90.

<sup>9</sup> Compare *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*: ‘Ein Maschinengewehr, nur ein sekundenlanges Gleiten des Gurtes — und diese 25 Mann, mit denen man eine weite Insel kultivieren könnte, hängen im Draht, zerfetzte Bündel, um langsam zu verwesen’ (p. 75). It would seem that elements of ‘Technik’ passed directly into *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, where, however, they formed but one part of a number of often contradictory attempts by Jünger to establish certainty about the War and its meaning.

*Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*<sub>1</sub> refers to the first edition (Berlin: E.S. Mittler & Sohn, 1922).

states: ‘Vielleicht geht die Entwicklung [der Technik und der Taktik] dahin, daß die Infanterie durch Maschinen bedienende Sonderwaffen ersetzt oder doch stark ergänzt wird’ (p. 288). This hypothetical observation is, however, crucial for it actually represents a major shift in Jünger’s thinking — since the infantry is the most human of all the army wings, it implies that he has accepted technology’s radical decentring of the human factor in warfare. Moreover, even ‘Skizze’s idealised image of the *Stoßtruppführer* as information management system is thrown into question as Jünger concludes that in contemporary infantry combat: ‘Zusammenhang und Führung sind [...] in Frage gestellt’ (p. 288) — i.e. that the pure function imagined in ‘Skizze’ is utopian.

Instead, Jünger attempts to understand the implications of technology for future forms of conflict, extrapolating from his own experience of the First World War. Learning from the first British offensive at Cambrai in 1917 and from the Allies’ extensive use of tanks in their summer offensive of 1918 (and thus implicitly recognising the German defeat), Jünger recommends the deployment of huge numbers of light and heavy tanks (p. 288) and urges that even the smallest unit should be able to deploy massive fire-power (p. 288). But it is his strategic vision that is most revealing:

Je überwiegender die Technik wird, desto mehr tritt die Bedeutung des Geländes zurück, desto mehr dürfte sich Mechanisierung und *ein automatisches Schema* [my emphasis – JK] herausbilden, wie wir es in den letzten Kriegszeiten bereits erlebt haben. Die Träger des Kampfes werden infolge der gesteigerten Waffenwirkung immer weiter voneinander abrücken. Das führt zu Kraftfeldern von ganz erheblicher Staffelung [...] Langsam werden sich die Kraftfelder vorschieben, die glühenden Ränder in die Tiefenstellung des Feindes hineinschmelzen. (pp. 288-89)

Here, Jünger is reaching the conclusion that technology will forge its own battleground which will be entirely self-sufficient and divorced both from the human order of infantry combat and from the very ground on which the battle is fought. Indeed, the metaphor of ‘Kraftfeldern’, drawn from the realm of high-energy physics, relocates his understanding of warfare much further away from the human order than had been the case in ‘Skizze’, and his vision of warfare as ‘ein automatisches Schema’ is a radicalisation of the non-anthropocentric systems-orientated implications of major parts of ‘Skizze’.

This shift in Jünger's understanding of the war experience is reflected in the examples he gives of the ideal warrior:

Vorbilder des Zukunftskämpfers sind: der M.G.-Schütze, der im wirbelnden Trommelfeuer allein schwierige Ladehemmungen beseitigte, der Flieger, der hinter tausendem Propeller den Feind suchte, und der Mann, der im Motorengewirr des Tanks die Höllenfahrt durch brüllende Trichterfelde wagte (p. 290).<sup>10</sup>

More radically than the *Stoßtruppführer* of 'Skizze' the *Zukunftskämpfer* is characterised by his position in a technologically defined system. If the former could still promise, even in the palest fashion, the glory of heroic victory, the latter is subordinate to the machine, decentred as subject and thus destined never to be celebrated in epic writing.

It is in 'Technik' that Jünger first articulates the line of thought that will have its culmination in *Der Arbeiter* (1932) and *Über den Schmerz* (1934) — namely that technology has brought about a profound ontological shift which causes in turn a fundamental change in human Being.<sup>11</sup> In *Der Arbeiter* this shift is identified meta-historically as a change in *Gestalt* — from that of the *Bürger* to that of the *Arbeiter*, but in 'Technik' the origins of this diagnosis are to be seen in a historical analysis of the war in technician, systems-orientated, almost cyborg terms.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*, pp. 74-75. Much of the elegising language is taken over directly and again prefigures the transformation into a new subject of History in the mid-1920s: 'Sie sind die Männer, die im Wirbel der Vernichtung mit sicherer Hand eine schwierige Ladehemmung beseitigen, die rauchende Handgranate dem Gegner zurückschleudern [...] Es sind die Stahlgestalten, deren Adlerblick geradeaus über schwirrende Propeller die Wolken durchforscht, die in das Motorgewirr der Tanks gezwängt, die Höllenfahrt durch brüllende Trichterfelder wagen, die tagelang, sicherem Tod voraus, in umzingelten, leichenumhäuften Nestern halbverschmachtet hinter glühenden Maschinengewehren hocken [...]' (p. 74).

<sup>11</sup> Compare *Der Arbeiter: Herrschaft und Gestalt* in *Sämtliche Werke*, VIII (1981): *Zweite Abteilung. Essays II. Der Arbeiter*, pp. 17-317. Section 33, pp. 115-18, is particularly interesting in this respect. Jünger identifies the soldiers of the second half of the War with the new *Typus* in which, he argues, the *Gestalt des Arbeiters* manifests itself. Thus, the individual becomes functionalised: 'Seine [des Einzelnen] Kampfkraft ist kein individueller, sondern ein funktionaler Wert; man fällt nicht mehr, sondern man fällt aus' (p. 115). Examples of this allegedly new form of warrior are to be found 'dort, wo die Eigenart ihres Zeitalters bereits mit besonderer Deutlichkeit in der Anwendung der Mittel zum Ausdruck kommt: bei den Erd- und Luftgeschwadern, bei den Stoßtruppen, in denen die zerfallende und durch Maschinen zermürbte Infanterie eine neue Seele gewinnt [...]' (p. 116). For the Jünger of 1932 this is a race 'die der Einzelne nicht als Person oder als Individuum, sondern als Typus repräsentiert' (p. 117). The thematic and visual continuities with 'Technik' are quite obvious.

Cf. also Herf, p. 105: '[In *Der Arbeiter*] Jünger's symbolism of the worker-soldier presents an image of modernity that is neither liberal nor Marxist but purely technological'.

<sup>12</sup> Compare Andreas Huyssen, 'Fortifying the Heart — Totally: Ernst Jünger's Armored Texts', *New German Critique*, 59 (1993), pp. 3-24. Comparing *In Stahlgewittern* to *Terminator II*, Huyssen

Nevertheless, as in ‘Skizze’, Jünger’s apparently seamless view of the past and future is fissured inasmuch as his technicist vision continues to be compromised by the human factor. As in ‘Skizze’, this happens via conservative values. In ‘Technik’ Jünger concludes: ‘Das Schlachtfeld der Zukunft wird dem gehören, der neben höchstentwickeltem Material auch eine Mannschaft von körperlich, geistig, moralisch und technisch überwiegender Tüchtigkeit einzusetzen vermag’ (p. 290). It is in the old-fashioned concepts of *Geist* and *Moral* that Jünger’s flawless, technological battlefield experiences its Other, for as *ethical* values and *intellectual* imperatives they foreground the human against the *mechanical* and *systematic* nature of the imagined battleground. In this context, the temptation of the totalitarian state is that it holds the promise of eliminating that human element which threatens the imagined pure function.

#### **7.4 Conclusion**

These two articles show both how radical Jünger was prepared to be in abandoning classical modern assumptions and just how tenaciously these assumptions reasserted themselves. His attempts to focus on heroism (and thus on subjective autonomy) in battle stood in a profound deconstructive tension with his recognition of the effects of military rationalisation. His ideal modulated between technical functionality, epistemological clarity and autonomous, ethically motivated subjectivity in a desperate attempt by the conservative imagination to rescue these key elements of classical modernity into the post-war age when in fact the experience of the War meant that such a position was no longer tenable. The result is a set of discourses which continuously unravel each other, as would be the case in Jünger’s next text, *Der Kampf als inneres Erlebnis*<sub>1</sub>, which, as I shall show in the next chapter, can likewise be read as a flawed exercise in (modern) theory.

---

comments that Jünger was ‘already then post-Schwarzenegger, whose role in the film is that of an all-too-human machine’ (p. 8). Huyssen not only compromises his comments by not specifying to which edition of *In Stahlgewittern* he is referring, but also shares the tendency of much critical writing to see a Jünger, who is far too free from fissures. Ironically, this suggests that Jünger’s own efforts to

---

disguise these fissures have been successful in distracting critical attention to the polished surfaces of his texts.