

SOTTISIER

Making brilliant connections

It's very simple I think. And that's why the peasant figure is such a favourite with modernist writers. The peasant was tremendously popular with Ezra Pound, Wyndham Lewis. Hitler, of course, also, very keen on German peasants who were going to farm the Ukraine once he had taken it and exterminated the Slavs who lived there. (*Ironically.*) So peasant is good.

John Carey, professor of English Literature at Oxford, speaking on 'Modernism' on Melvyn Bragg's Radio 4 programme 'In Our Time', on 26 April 2001.

Art politics, Bloomsbury style

The Bloomsberries were politically kosher, nice social democrats; their opponents (Wyndham Lewis, at any rate) were fascistic.

Julian Bell, grandson of Vanessa Bell, defending the Tate Bloomsbury exhibition, *London Review of Books*, 13 April 2000.

Duncan Grant didn't look as good in the selection for the Tate show as I wanted him to.

Julian Bell, *London Review of Books*, as above.

A stupid phobia

Wyndham Lewis seems to me to be a virulent anti-woman figure because he thought that women represented things he hated physically, sort of softness and flabbiness and [that] somehow wasn't classical hardness. I mean that's all his philosophy seems to me to amount to, a few stupid phobias, and I think a lot of modernists are like that but Lawrence I don't think is so simple.

John Carey, speaking on 'In Our Time', as above.

Saint James in the charmed circle

Compared to his conservative modernist contemporaries—Pound, Lewis, Eliot, Yeats and Lawrence—Joyce fares politically and ideologically rather well under careful scrutiny, and promises to emerge as the relatively progressive 'good boy' of modernism against the protofascist and fascist manifestations of the 'bad boys'.

Margot Norris in *Rereading the New*, ed. K.J.H. Dettmar, 1992.

First affronting us as an élite artifact, it [*Ulysses*] eventually becomes a living experience—a lifestyle, almost—that knits its readers into sympathetic communities. My wish is that this volume helps bring a new generation of students and readers into our charmed circle.

Margot Norris, introducing *A Companion to James Joyce's 'Ulysses'*, 1998.

Flour bomb

Democratisation was a dirty word for most of the modernists.... Joyce I do think is genuinely different.... What it signals is how different Joyce was.... He is trying to be real...the scene with Gerty MacDougall [*sic*]....

John Carey, speaking on 'In Our Time', as above.

Poverty of Theory

It is a sobering thought to remember the praise the novel [*The Revenge for Love*] has received for its appeals to humanism or its dismantling of political meanings, if only because that praise attests to the inability of some of this century's most influential critical methods to discern the ideological operations of fascist modernism.

Brett Neilson, 'History's Stamp: Wyndham Lewis's *The Revenge for Love* and the Heidegger Controversy' in *Comparative Literature*, 1999.

Poverty of Research

Wyndham Lewis rejected fascism when it became, as a mass movement, too democratic for his taste.

Piers Brendon, *The Dark Valley: A Panorama of the 1930s* (Cape, 2000).

Articulate Oxford

Well I think we have to be a bit careful about this er my myself. Um. We have a knowledge of definitely élitist kind of groups and élitist-minded *persons* and art-works and and the massness of the time er and someone like Wyndham Lewis for example, who who espouses er fascism, writes the first book er in in England admiring of Hitler, for example, b- he he um is deeply preoccupied 'we live in an era of the masses' he's obsessed by that um er one reason why people um embraced, it seems to me, fascism was that was a political movement which er as it were explained or coped with or could deal with the massness of modernity.

Valentine Cunningham, professor of English Literature at Oxford University, speaking on 'In Our Time', as above.

Compiled by Alan Munton