

[Ebook pdf] Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form

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Paul K. Saint-Amour

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Paul K. Saint-Amour : Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Tense Future: Modernism, Total War, Encyclopedic Form:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. A brilliant and beautifully-written work By Genchildren "Tense Future" fundamentally changed the way that I think about total war, trauma, and interwar fiction. More than that, it glitteringly demonstrates the very best of what can be achieved in literary scholarship. Saint-Amour's thesis namely that in the wake of WWI, the dread of another catastrophe saturated the cultural imagination in a type of pre-traumatic

stress syndrome is compelling verified in his readings of seminal works by Woolf, Joyce, and Ford. The argument also pivots on an array of mostly-forgotten cultural figures such as the RAF officer L.E.O. Charlton, the speculative-fiction writer Cicely Mary Hamilton, and the archivist Hilary Jenkinson. What's most impressive, perhaps, is the way that Saint-Amour explains difficult theoretical histories (i.e. queer temporalities scholarship, Derridean nuclear criticism, and encyclopedism) and turns our assumptions about them on their heads. What's more, the book is stunningly well-written. Lyrical, thoughtful, and often witty, Saint-Amour's prose is unrivaled. Buy this book. 4 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By newprof The man is a god. 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. As Expected. By Ryan J. Ortega The manner in which this work approaches Trauma and actually re-works the Field as a whole is the accomplishment that all of us who have worked toward a career as a Scholar have hoped for; this is a major work, and, as though *The Copywrights* (Cornell) weren't enough, we've yet another signpost to which we may all point when Professor Saint-Amour becomes the most important name in English Literature Studies. (He really is a wonderful person to hold as a hero within the field, as he benefits from a wonderful taste, as evidenced by the title *Modernism Copyright*, which he Edited, and yet did not include himself.)

We know that trauma can leave syndromes in its wake. But can the anticipation of violence be a form of violence as well? *Tense Future* argues that it can—that twentieth-century war technologies and practices, particularly the aerial bombing of population centers, introduced non-combatants to a coercive and traumatizing expectation. During wartime, civilians braced for the next raid; during peacetime they braced for the next war. The pre-traumatic stress they experienced permeates the century's public debates and cultural works. In a series of groundbreaking readings, Saint-Amour illustrates how air war prophets theorized the wounding power of anticipation, how archive theory changed course in war's shadow, and how speculative fiction conjured visions of a civilizational collapse that would end literacy itself. And in this book's central chapters, he shows us how Ford Madox Ford, Robert Musil, James Joyce, Virginia Woolf, and other interwar modernist writers faced the memory of one war and the prospect of another, some by pitting their fictions' encyclopedic scale and formal turbulence against total war, others by conceding war's inevitability while refusing to long for a politically regressive peace. Total war: a conflict that exempts no one, disregarding any difference between soldier and civilian. *Tense Future* forever alters our understanding of the concept of total war by tracing its emergence during the First World War, its incubation in air power theory between the wars, and above all its profound partiality. For total war, during most of the twentieth century, meant conflict between imperial nation states; it did not include the violence those states routinely visited on colonial subjects during peacetime. Tacking back and forth between metropole and colony, between world war and police action, Saint-Amour describes the interwar refashioning of a world system of violence-production, one that remains largely intact in our own moment of perpetual interwar.

"...*Tense Future* offers not only novel readings of major modernist texts alongside total-war discourse but also a compelling portrait of the interwar years as the moment when the experience of late modernity, structured by the expectation of terrible violence, is most strikingly articulated and challenged in literature. ...Saint-Amour's illuminating book opens up a stimulating new way to comprehend twentieth-century culture, and *Tense Future*'s performance of critical futurities...will no doubt shape, indeed drive, some significant scholarship still to come." --modernism/modernity "This short review scarcely does justice to the deftly plaited arguments of *Tense Future*, its interdisciplinary reach, conceptual daring, and literary brio. Saint-Amour's preface reveals that the book took ten years to be written, and its maturity testifies to the benefits of long gestation. Brilliantly original in conception and execution, *Tense Future* will terrorize the competition well into the future of modernist studies." --Modern Philology "By moving our vision from earth to sky, from soldiers in the trenches to civilians under air raids, Paul Saint-Amour makes rich and surprising our understanding of the twentieth-century and its literature. Virginia Woolf, James Joyce, Ford Madox Ford, and we ourselves emerge in the arresting light of this first modern collective anxiety." --Elaine Scarry, author of *Thermonuclear Monarchy: Choosing Between Democracy and Doom* "This book is a tour de force, introducing an entirely new approach to the modernist imagination. Saint-Amour makes us hear the undertones of menace in interwar literature, thereby reconfiguring modernist fiction as meditations on disasters to come." --Jay Winter, author of *Sites of Memory, Sites of Mourning: The Great War in European Cultural History* "Paul Saint-Amour reinterprets culture during the years between World War I and World War II as an era of anxious anticipation. Thoughtful, penetrating, and important, *Tense Future* expands our understanding of war's destructive power." --Mary L. Dudziak, author of *War Time: An Idea, Its History, Its Consequences* "Tense Future moves fluently through the cultural records of the First World War, interwar, Second World War, and Cold War. Creating a wholly new archive, Saint-Amour does nothing less than shift the tense of imaginative action in the literature of major record: from memory, which Paul Fussell established as its primary imaginative circumstance, to anticipation; from reverie to dread. Our way of reading the literature of a century of war will be changed by this comprehensive and compelling account." --Vincent Sherry, author of *Modernism and the Reinvention of Decadence* "...we should hope that a second volume of *Tense Future* is in the works..." -Public Books About the Author Paul K. Saint-Amour is Associate Professor

of English at the University of Pennsylvania. He is the author of *The Copywrights: Intellectual Property and the Literary Imagination*, winner of the MLA Prize for a First Book, and the editor of *Modernism and Copyright*. With Jessica Berman, he edits the *Modernist Latitudes* book series at Columbia University Press.