representation provided in statistic and demographic data, there is very little attention given to the neighbourhood's residents. Who were these Bronxites? And how did their everyday lives shape the character and social history of this important place? Gonzalez's analyses and arguments concerning Bronx neighbourhoods are driven by the belief that 'real estate operations created the city neighborhood by neighborhood' (p. 59). She provides discussions of the Bronx's intergroup tensions, especially during and after the Great Depression, and the rise of Black and Hispanic communities, but her choice to narrate these important subjects through accounts of the borough's 'social geography' provides very little information through anecdotes on human experience. Chock-full of numbers and percentages that bolster broad generalizations about the ways people related to one another and their communities, *The Bronx* nonetheless provides little information of how people interpreted their lived experiences. It is an excellent account of a place and its people, but it is almost devoid of stories about those people's lives.

This undoubtedly reflects a lack of sources. A sad reality that affects many urban histories is that scholars lack the records to place people's voices into a detailed analysis of where they lived and how it changed over time. The result in a genre of urban history that Gonzalez's text exemplifies: a close study of a place and how it changed over time, but a place that seems empty of people and their stories.

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Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert (eds.), *Capital Cities at War. Paris, London, Berlin, 1914–1919*. Volume II: *A Cultural History*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007. xiii + 545pp. 15 figures. Bibliography. £60.00.
doi:10.1017/S0963926808005609

In 1997 Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert published the first volume of their edited collection on Paris, London and Berlin during World War I, with focus on the social and economic history of capital cities at war and including chapters on the idea of sacrifice, on labour relations and the distribution of income, the changing patterns of consumption and demography.[1] Ten years have passed and they have published a second volume of this unique and important comparative study, concentrating on the cultural history of the war in the three capital cities. For anybody interested in the history of the Great War from a non-military perspective, for historians of modernity and modernism, or urban historians of the early twentieth century, these two volumes will constitute a major work of reference for many years to come.

The results of any comparative history project are determined principally by the choice of the case studies. The logic behind the comparison of Paris, London and Berlin is obvious and the wide-ranging empirical material explored by the authors enables us to identify the semantic specificity of responses to the conflict among the different cities' cultural actors. Different cases would have generated different results. For instance, Luzzatto's recent book on Padre Pio demonstrates the extent to which Italy perceived the Great War as a Catholic fight against Protestant

[1] Jay Winter and Jean-Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War. London, Paris, Berlin* (Cambridge, 1997).

barbarism, despite the defining role of Italy's traditional enemy, Austria, in the conflict.[2] The work of the group around Winter and Robert reveals a very different semantic. The use of religious pathos for purposes of propaganda was widespread in the triangle London–Paris–Berlin – including the voices of pacifist and ecumenist dissenters who rejected the belligerents' rhetoric – but the dynamic of the alliance between France and Britain made depiction of the enemy according to traditional patterns of religion and national culture more difficult. While Becker and Gregory include an interesting section on the Jewish communities and on the Quakers, one would have liked to read more about the attitudes of German and British Catholics to the war, possibly challenging the picture generated by the comparison. However, any macro-comparison involves a certain level of generalization. Starting from the comparability of the three metropolises and their specific relationship to the nation at war, throughout the volume the authors take care to point at differences between the three cities – differences in infrastructural development, in the level of exposure to events at the front or in the nature of cultural institutions (see for instance the contributions by Jan Rüger and Elizabeth Fordham). The chapters on the changing culture of streets, squares and railway stations during the war demonstrate the extent to which the book deals with three very different capital cities.

One of the book's great qualities lies in the organization of the wide-ranging thematic material in relation to the case studies, but this has also involved a number of difficult decisions. The volume deals with culture in a very broad sense, including sections on the arts, education and entertainment, but concentrating mainly on political culture, everyday culture and cultural practice in the wider sense. As a consequence the editors did not leave much space for culture in the sense of aesthetic and symbolic representation. The interesting and empirically very rich chapters on politics in the public space, on home life and family strategies, or on the medical and psychiatric treatment of soldiers, could easily form part of the first volume, dealing with the social and economic history of the war. The same could be said for the sections on food-shortages, 'shirkers' and the gendered division of labour. The inclusion of the chapter on religious practices makes better sense, but the figures used to describe religious attitudes in the three cities do not necessarily allow for comparisons. A more rigorous division between social-economic history and cultural history would have created space for empirical research on the arts during the war, on concert halls, theatres and opera houses. We learn about *Kriegsausstellungen* and about the tremendous success of the 'Tankland of Trafalgar Square' (p. 159), but not about *Kunstausstellungen* and the art market (mentioned only briefly in the conclusions). The authors assume that exhibitions 'reinforced the established order' (p. 143), but this depends entirely on the social and political context. For certain aspects of the avant-garde, which was able to create itself a forum during the war, this was certainly not true. Futurism, for instance, played an important role in interventionism, but other radical artists undermined the nations' war efforts. Jay Winter, in his chapter on hospitals, refers to Grosz's and Dix's sketches of amputees in the streets of Berlin, but these aesthetic challenges are not discussed as artistic representations of the war. A curious example of early 'performance art' was the Iron Hindenburg, a 125-metre statue unveiled in Berlin in 1915. The field-marshal's garments were meant to be covered with nails, which could be purchased for one mark, as a contribution to the nation's war effort.

[2] Sergio Luzzatto, *Padre Pio. Miracoli e politica nell'Italia del Novecento* (Turin, 2007).

Fortunately, even the war-enthusiastic Germans rejected the experiment as kitsch and the nailing of the hero as artistic barbarism.

Many aspects of urban culture are not covered at all by the volume. It would have been interesting to see how the repertoire of the opera houses changed between 1914 and 1919, or to analyse the war's impact on the international business of concert agents. How did Paris and London justify the performance of Viennese classic or German Romanticism?[3] Similarly, one might ask how the war shaped the fashion industry, design and architecture. Did it lead to an affirmation of national styles or did the international language of modernism prevail? Berlin, London and Paris were important centres of the publishing industry, but what was the war's impact on censorship and paper supply? And how did the war influence the taste of readers? We might understand why Gabriele D'Annunzio was translated into English, but what made Ernst Jünger popular in France and England? Discussing the 'solidarities displayed across the front lines' (p. 473), the latter could have served as a literary reference. Neither of them is mentioned in the volume. Some of Jünger's and D'Annunzio's works appeared only after the war, but the same is true for monuments and cemeteries, which the authors included in their project. Although the editors' emphasis on cultural practice and 'performative identities' in times of war is welcome, art, literature and 'serious' music would have deserved a more important place in a book that claims to be *A Cultural History*. It is perhaps a consequence of this particular thematic emphasis that the authors maintain that the war did not evoke 'radically new, modernist responses in urban European culture' (p. 139). They refer here specifically to cinema, popular theatre and music halls, but this seems to miss the point. The radical break with established forms of aesthetic representation did not manifest itself on the level of mass culture, but among the avant-garde, a term originating from military terminology and referring to a small group of cultural activists constituting themselves in radical opposition to established cultural forms and values. If the avant-garde does not articulate itself on the level of popular entertainment and leisure industry, this does not mean that the war did not generate a radical and 'modernist' break with the past on other levels of aesthetic representation. As a matter of fact it was exactly the cultural climate of the metropolis and the experience of rupture provoked by the war which created channels of communication for the aesthetic avant-garde.

Despite this conceptual criticism, in other respects the book approaches its subject matter with admirable care. The theoretical and methodological section of the introduction could be considered (too) thin – and much of what the editors claim to be specific for the period of World War I Simmel saw already manifested in the decades around the turn of the century – but later chapters present insightful explanations, for instance about the use of letters and notebooks in reconstituting family relationships (Catherine Rollet), or the shift in the culture of mourning from practices centred on the dead body to new rituals for men who did not return from the front (Carine Trevisan and Elise Julien). The Great War occupies a sometimes almost daunting place in collective memory (more so in Britain and France than in Germany), a memory which is often selective and usually channelled through a narrow focus on the war's place within national narratives. The two comparative volumes edited by Winter and Robert represent an important step towards the

[3] See in this context for instance John Ramsden, *Don't Mention the War. The British and the Germans since 1890* (London, 2006).

Europeanization of its memory; and drawing upon such a wide range of thematic material they will help to correct an image which is too often determined by images of the trenches in popular military history and TV documentaries. Regarding the topic's 'popularity', it is striking to see the extent to which the war is associated with feelings of nostalgia. The book explains why this is the case: war is a time when people realize the disappearance of what they took to be their traditional ways of life. Only a cultural history of the war can help us to demonstrate that. (Cambridge University Press did not curate the volume with the care it would deserve. This regards typos, the choice of illustrations and the inconsistency of formatting.)

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Elizabeth Darling, *Re-forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity before Reconstruction*. London: Routledge, 2007. 275pp. Bibliography. £75.00.
doi:10.1017/S0963926808005610

Re-forming Britain: Narratives of Modernity before Reconstruction considers the practice of architectural modernism during the period 1925–42. The focus is on the *doing* of architecture: the protagonists, clients and their social milieu rather than the largely unpopulated world of the illustrated architectural monograph. It sets out to challenge conventional accounts of the growth of modernism in the UK, principally the 'importation trope' introduced by Nikolaus Pevsner as early as the 1930s. The Pevsnerian account has modernism developed on the continent, introduced to the UK with imported copies of Le Corbusier's *Vers une architecture* (translated in 1927 by Frederick Etchells), through the architectural press, and, from 1933, with émigré architects such as Walter Gropius and Erich Mendelsohn.

Darling fundamentally challenges this orthodoxy of architectural history for being overly preoccupied with stylistic analysis and for seeing architects as the sole agents of change. Whilst we encounter home-grown modernists such as Max Fry, Wells Coates, Amyas Connell and Basil Ward (although, as Darling observes, Connell and Ward were New Zealanders and Coates was a Canadian born in Japan), more importantly, recognition is accorded to the importance of collaborative working. The latter raises fascinating questions about the nature of authorship in the design process – whether through groups such as MARS, the unit system in architectural education, the architect–housing consultant relationship as at Kensal House, or the active role of the client in design (such as the Pritchards at Coates' Lawn Road flats, completed in 1934).

A principal aim of *Re-forming Britain* is to explain the shift between the marginal status of modernism before the war and its dominance after 1945. (The story ends in 1942 with the Beveridge Report and the appointment of the Dudley committee, so there is little scope for considering the effect that war-time industry had on the later adoption of modernism). A starting point is Erno Goldfinger in conversation with Gavin Stamp: 'Let's get one thing clear: the '30s and the '40s are not separate things – they dovetail', and the book goes on to explore how this is so. Whereas others might have explored the stylistic links between pre- and post-war modernism, Darling considers changes in the underlying cultural conditions necessary for the propagation of modernism in the 1930s.