

Introduction

14–18: Retrouver la Guerre is the title Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker chose for their recent book on France and the Great War.¹ The word ‘retrouver’ can be translated as ‘recovering’, ‘regaining’, ‘re-finding’, and more. It implies that something has been lost – and Audoin-Rouzeau and Becker do indeed discuss the war’s neglect in French national history – but also that this is an event to be looked at again, afresh. This is not a feeling confined to France. The 1914–18 War is seen as ripe for reconsideration and analysis amongst historians of other nations too. The organisers of one recent conference began their email announcement by citing Pierre Nora, who has suggested that ‘the Great War has undergone the kind of reappraisal applied to the French Revolution a decade ago ...’ They went on to draw attention to the influence of L’Historial de la Grand Guerre at Péronne, and the collaborative projects which have ensued once French, British and German historians are gathered together.² This work, they wrote, ‘epitomises what could be dubbed the second upheaval of the Great War: the academic upheaval, which has meant that the isolated study of the military, cultural or economic facets of the war is no longer possible.’³ The same year saw other conferences in Britain; these were well attended by graduate students, making it quite clear that there has been a resurgence of research into the war. I would add only that this ‘reappraisal’ is not yet complete, and that there is much work yet to be done.⁴

The focus of study has shifted. There is a new enthusiasm for tracing the way in which the war has been remembered – or forgotten – over time, which in turn is connected with research into the nature of memory and has been influenced by the rise of ‘public history’. There is also a renewal of interest in how different groups of people lived through the war, and what we really ‘know’ about their various experiences. As a result there has been an increase in research with a comparative European perspective (as exemplified by Jay Winter and Jean Louis Robert’s edited collection, *Capital Cities at War*) but, at the same time, a willingness to break down the vast, multi-faceted edifice of war history, and look for *detail*.⁵ Both kinds of approach are to be found in recent writings and are necessary if we really

are to 'look again' at all aspects of 1914–18. While many solid and well-constructed social and economic texts on the war have been published since the 1960s, we have also seen far too many books which are weighed down with symbolism, or dominated by over-arching theories. When I read, for example, that a particular new work is about 'one of the most devastating conflicts in modern history. The Great War traumatised a generation, and shaped the whole of the twentieth century', warning bells ring.⁶ This kind of statement demands to be deconstructed, and raises questions in my mind about what other 'devastating conflicts' around the world are implicitly ignored or marginalised, what is meant by 'a traumatised generation' (who, exactly?), and quite how the twentieth century was, or was not 'shaped' by four years of European war.⁷ A succession of texts in the 1970s and 1980s fed this kind of approach, including books by Paul Fussell (1975), Eric Leed (1981), Roland Stromberg (1982), and Modris Eksteins (1989), all of which are to be found on every university's bookshelves, and are invariably included in reading lists on the social and cultural impact of war.⁸ These books concentrate on Western Europe, particularly the supposed effect of the Western Front experience, lean heavily on literary sources, and seek to show how the war separated the old world from the 'modern', innocence from experience, and so on. The influence of the classic British image of the war – as created in part by a select group of war poets, and known and loved by the population at large – can be seen in the work of Fussell in particular, with his quotations from Philip Larkin, who talked of '... the innocents of the remote Great War, those sweet generous people who pressed forward and all but solicited their own destruction.'⁹ In this world of patriotic, naive, middleclass young men (volunteers in Britain until 1916, though not, of course, in France or Germany), who threw themselves into war and faced death, or survived bitter and disillusioned, even the weather is co-opted as a symbol of some other, sweeter, era. Fussell writes:

Although some memories of the benign last summer before the war can be discounted as standard retrospection turned even rosier by egregious contrast with what followed, all agree that the prewar summer was the most idyllic for many years. It was warm and sunny, eminently pastoral. One lolled outside in a folding canvas chaise, or swam, or walked in the countryside. One read outdoors, went on picnics, had tea served from a white wicker table under the trees ... Siegfried Sassoon was busy fox-hunting and playing serious county cricket.¹⁰

It is clear that Fussell has fallen under the spell of a romanticised Edwardian England and become fascinated by 'the English' – fascinated above all by the sincerity and patriotism of the upper and middleclass young men who volunteered. He is writing about the making of a 'myth', yet his own prose further promotes the idea of 1914 as the last golden summer and the end of innocence. He subscribes to the idea (as often claimed during the war, and in the years that followed) that '... a whole generation was destroyed that might have furnished the country's jurists, scholars, administrators, and political leaders ...'¹¹ He freely admits that

he is trying, with his descriptive prose, to ‘illuminate’ a different world for the benefit of American readers, which perhaps accounts for the feeling of nostalgia which permeates the book. Although he is a literary, not social, historian, his work has certainly influenced not just his compatriots, but many British and Europeans writing on the wider emotional and cultural impact of war as well.

For all his faults – and Martin Stephen, Brian Bond and John Terraine all, in their different ways, make serious attempts to point out his inaccuracies and misconstructions¹² – it is clear that Paul Fussell has a personal interest in his subject. He is moved partly because of his own memories of the Second World War. He writes about young men who died a generation before, but he is also remembering his contemporaries. Whether one agrees with his approach or not, he did indeed have some new things to say about literature, war poetry and the English ‘memory’ of war. Other less original writers, who claim that the war symbolised something deep and dark in the twentieth-century psyche, or marked the birth of a cynical modern age, are troubling. They write as though the war has some kind of universal historical significance. They write with hindsight, yet with a strange lack of awareness that this may have coloured their judgement. They also write as though the sequence of events which followed on from 1914 was inevitable: world history was fixed from that moment. As Pierre Sorlin, writing about cinema and the war, has said:

In pictures, the War has been turned into myth. It is like a Greek tragedy: we can tell the story again and again; we can create new characters and circumstances; but we can change neither the plot nor the symbols which define the period.¹³

Some have placed a major part of the blame for this portentous approach amongst historians fairly and squarely on Fussell’s immediate predecessors, the writers of the 1960s who readily adopted the English war poets as the voice of a generation, and influenced countless readers, young and old. However, attempts to use the war as representative of a new kind of evil (with the implicit assumption that 1914–1918 was worse than any other conflict in history), or as a symbolic watershed between old and new societies, or as the inevitable product of a decadent civilisation’s malaise – and any of these contradictory claims may feature in books which generalise about its wider impact – began long before. Daniel Pick, in *War Machine: the Rationalisation of Slaughter in the Modern Age*, traces this preoccupation back to nineteenth-century dread about the nature of ‘future’ warfare, and points out that even in 1914 there were writers who greeted the conflict with a kind of grim satisfaction. The war they prophesied had arrived, and they anticipated that their worse fears would be realised – but this was before a trench was dug or a war poem published. Pick looks at how more recent writers have interpreted these sources, and pleads for a more subtle interpretation:

My point here is not to make the (absurd) claim that wars, least of all perhaps the First World War, should be seen as simply continuous with a 'pre-war' culture and society, but to suggest that a highly idealised juxtaposition of past and present may come to operate, imbuing the war with a range of philosophical, evolutionary and psychological functions which eerily echo the war philosophy of the nineteenth century. These need to be analysed, not taken for granted. The First World War cannot be seen as either the final signified or the new signifier which emerges out of nothing – and yet so often it is.¹⁴

As he points out, it is possible to lean too heavily on some of the gloomy, or apocalyptic commentaries of the time without understanding the personal views of those writing or the intellectual debates about the nature of warfare which had characterised the preceding decades. His book also shows how writers (of all kinds) have always been willing to utilise the war in support of their fears about the future, or their judgement of the past. This is demonstrated well by Roland Stromberg's 1982 book, *Redemption by War*. Although he begins with the admirable aim of showing that there was no simple division across Europe between war-mongering (elderly) politicians and pacifist (young) intellectuals, his anxieties about his own time somehow come to dominate the text and influence his conclusions about the war. Thus he writes that:

The resemblance between today's youth and a much smaller band of intellectuals and artists in 1914 continually strikes us. Violence, often of the most extreme sort (*à la* Charles Manson, *Clockwork Orange*, urban guerrillas), is invoked as an answer to the unendurable clockwork society; a thirst for community, adventure, spirituality, can lead to the neoprimitivism of hippy communes but is within a hair's breadth of street battles with the police, demonstrations turning into riots, or Tupermaro-style terrorism ... the disaffection of Timothy Leary, Paul Goodman, Frantz Fanon, and Herbert Marcuse, for example, seem only vulgarized versions of the 1914 malaise.¹⁵

Are these comments helpful? Do they tell us anything at all about 1914? Even Bernard Bergonzi, in his thoughtful critical text on war poets, *Heroes' Twilight: a Study of the Literature of the Great War*, nevertheless concludes by writing:

The Great War is not likely to be forgotten: the memory of its waste and dumb heroism is part of twentieth century sensibility. It started as a war to end wars, but instead it pointed forward to the totalitarian state, to an even greater war and a concept of unlimited conflict in which not merely uniformed armies but whole populations, down to the smallest child, are regarded as appropriate victims for destruction on a scale that makes the slaughter on the Somme appear ordinary.¹⁶

Key aspects to note here are references to 'dumb heroism', 'the war to end wars' (although it could not possibly have 'started' as this), the inevitable connection with totalitarianism, the claim that this war created

a new kind of warfare, and the suggestion that civilians first became legitimate targets during 1914–18 – an idea which is clearly untrue, as any cursory look at military campaigns across the centuries will show. And does the slaughter on the Somme now ‘appear ordinary’? When such generalisations about the effect of the war on world history dominate the text there is no place for dispassionate analysis or discussion.

While this kind of approach remains common in popular history books, school curricula and internet sites – all of which, perhaps inevitably, seek to tell simplified stories about the war – it has also featured in enough academic writing to be problematic. For example, all the books I have mentioned so far will be found on the average reading list for undergraduates, and they are influential – they are the starting point for many of those who begin research into some aspect of the war. This is why recent trends in the field of the social and cultural history of the war are so important. From the 1990s onwards there has been an increasing interest in the complexity of the war’s impact on different societies and social groups, and a growing recognition that there was no one ‘war experience’. There is also a new willingness by diplomatic, economic, military, social and cultural historians to share information, and to compare the war’s effect across different nations. Conferences and edited collections of papers have become an extremely important part of this process: it is necessary for the different strands of history to mix. If we are to have detail, we need people to look closely at small parts of the jigsaw – but at the same time, these pieces need to fit together.

At this point I could offer lists of ‘useful’ books or papers which exemplify the encouraging trends evident in the last few years, but lists are, in isolation, not that interesting. Instead, as an example let me consider some of the background reading one might need to do if researching some aspect of the wartime experiences of young men in the British Army in France. What kind of work has already been done, and what debates are going on? The work of a substantial number of historians has already provided a great deal of information, and demonstrates that there were many kinds of war for young white men alone, let alone their wives or sisters, their parents, and their allies or foes. Key texts on the Army would include the work of Tim Travers and Tony Ashworth. In *The Killing Ground: the British Army, the Western Front and the emergence of Modern Warfare 1900–1918*, and *How the War was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army*, Travers gives us practical detail on the nature of warfare, including how the British Army transformed itself and turned near defeat to victory in 1918. He also places the army in a social context and considers how war was viewed by strategists in the years before 1914.¹⁷ Ashworth, in *Trench Warfare, 1914–18: the live and let live system*,¹⁸ is informative on the practicalities of warfare, the diversity of experience in the trenches, and the nature of day-to-day life in the army. He shows how the ordinary soldier spent a considerable amount of time behind the lines, and how both the British and German soldiers often

tried to keep life in the trenches as quiet as possible, avoiding direct engagement with each other. Joanna Bourke and Ilana R. Bet-el both offer valuable information on the more mundane aspects of army life – what happened when men joined up, what was training like, what did soldiers write home about?¹⁹ The former, in *Dismembering the Male*, goes much further, including interesting discussion of soldiers' sexual behaviour (including some reluctance to visit prostitutes) and providing useful material on the treatment of disability, sickness and 'malingering'. Several writers have recently published work on wounded soldiers, and what became of them. How were 'the crippled' viewed in early twentieth-century Britain, and how were these views influenced by the arrival home of so many young disabled men? These issues are discussed, for example, by Seth Koven in 'Remembering and Dismemberment: crippled children, wounded soldiers and the Great War in Great Britain', and Jeffrey Reznick in 'Work Therapy and the disabled British Soldier in Great Britain in the First World War: the case of Shepherd's Bush Military Hospital, London.' Deborah Cohen, in *The War Come Home*, compares the British and German treatment of returning disabled soldiers, and the political repercussions in the years that followed.²⁰

When considering the culture within which these young men grew up, Graham Dawson's book *Soldier Heroes* is useful, while Fuller's *Troop Morale and Popular Culture* offers a picture of what men did with their leisure time, including concert parties, sports and entertainment. For a critical view of the war poets, who they were, their social and cultural background, how their work was received, Martin Stephen, already mentioned, is enlightening, and so too is Elizabeth Marsland, who compares the poetry of Britain, France and Germany in *The Nation's Cause*, placing it in its literary and social context, and looking beyond famous names.²¹ In the field of political/military history, Keith Grieves' book, *The Politics of Manpower, 1914–18*, gives us information about how the army was raised, describing the relations between army and government, the move to conscription and its impact. This was published the same year as Peter Simkins' *Kitchener's Armies: the Raising of the New Armies 1914–16*.²² It is educative to read these alongside *A Nation in Arms: a Social Study of the British Army in the First World War* (edited by Ian Beckett and Keith Simpson) which includes Jay Winter's essay on workingclass recruits, their economic/social background and their health. One glance at the photograph on page 192 – headed 'Specimens of men in each of the four grades', and showing examples of physical fitness – will emphasise the separation between the world of the workingclass soldier and Fussell's England of wicker chairs and tea in the garden.²³

Of course, the enthusiastic scholar might also be interested in how the army experiences of British men compared with those of the Empire, whether New Zealander, Australian, Canadian, or West Indian, African, Indian and Chinese? Or, how different was life as a French or German soldier, or American, whether black or white? And what of conscientious

objectors or deserters? The list of books and articles grows accordingly, and it is soon apparent that one needs to appreciate work produced by writers from a range of different disciplines, from the military historian to the feminist, from the literary to the economic; all have their own particular skills and knowledge to bring to bear on the material. The few books I have mentioned here all have a different approach to the subject of men in the army, and all are illuminating in one way or another. This range of material reveals both the advantages and disadvantages of working on the war. The literature is vast, especially if one is also interested in the way it has been interpreted and remembered over the years by each separate nation – and I must recommend Keith Wilson’s *Forging the Collective Memory: Government and International Historians through two World Wars*,²⁴ which is invaluable for showing how governments (and official historians) attempted to justify their own nation’s part in the war from the outset. (This book is a sobering reminder of the extent to which all of us, as historians, have been influenced by prevailing national wisdom regarding the war’s origins and influence.) The amount of research, across all areas, with which one needs to keep pace is therefore daunting. On the other hand, this very richness is what now allows us to review the war so effectively. For the more one finds out about the experiences of individuals, social groups, armies, populations, the more one sees that the classic, simplified picture of the war, as described by Fussell, Leed, Eksteins or others like them, is not only disturbingly Eurocentric, but deeply flawed, even on its own terms. The Western Front, for example, was not the only kind of battlefield in 1914–18; in other areas, environment and strategy were different. Those seeking to use the mud, the blasted landscape of No Man’s Land, and the tunnels and trenches as some kind of metaphor for a dark twentieth century have usually ignored this inconvenient fact. In contrast, as Ben Bar-Yosef writes in a recent article, ‘The Palestine campaign, with its feasible objectives, linear narrative, relatively few casualties and, most important, its unequivocal victory, simply could not – and cannot – be moulded into an Apocalypse.’²⁵ The impact of war was more complex, more diverse, more interesting, than some ‘classic’ texts would have us believe. This is why reading across historical disciplines is useful. Again, a single example will suffice. The development of ‘modern warfare’ is an issue for debate amongst recent military historians. It is *not* widely accepted that 1914–18 was the ‘first modern war’, or that it was some kind of template for twentieth-century warfare. It has to be viewed in the context of developments in weaponry and tactics during the American Civil War, the German wars, the Japanese-Russian war and, indeed, the Boer War. ‘Modern war’ certainly does not just mean using machine guns, digging trenches or killing thousands of soldiers, as far too many social/cultural historians seem blithely to assume.²⁶

We may well be past the point of needing ‘big’, single author, books about the war – it is not possible for any one person to understand, let

alone interpret, all aspects of the conflict across continents. (I say this even though Hew Strachan's multi-volume history promises to be an excellent survey and analysis of the war's political, military and social scope.²⁷) The future lies in collaboration and comparison. A more modest approach to writing about the war in general would also be useful, together with an acknowledgement of how much there is still to find out. It sometimes seems as though writers about the war feel obliged to make grandiose statements or dwell on wide-ranging themes, as though only such an approach will suit the magnitude of the conflict; this does not necessarily add to our understanding.

The essays in this book all bring something fresh to debates about the war. Some of these debates are long running, and others are new; one interesting facet of war history is the way some arguments fall out of fashion while others continue to inspire research. The first two chapters, by Catherine Moriarty and Deborah Thom, join the growing body of work on the way in which the British have interpreted the war, and continue to remember it. No other country marks Armistice Day with the same fervour, although all have their own ways of viewing the war, as essays in John R. Gillis' *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*, show well.²⁸ Adrian Gregory (another contributor to this book) has written elsewhere about Armistice Day's shifting meaning over the decades, and many historians expected its importance to fade away as the last few old soldiers died.²⁹ However, it has seen a renaissance in recent years, and the fluctuating public focus between Remembrance Sunday and 11 November has served to make both days part of a formal or personal festival of remembrance. It is often difficult for historians from other nations to understand the extent to which the war has entered the consciousness of the 'ordinary person' in Britain, or to believe that there can still be arguments (as there have been) about whether or not TV newsreaders wear poppies. People will tell you they *know* about this war – even though they are unlikely to claim much knowledge of many other historical events.³⁰ In England, Wales and Scotland the war occupies the kind of space in our collective imagination filled by the 1789 Revolution in France, or the Civil War in the United States. Furthermore, the historians of Eire too are now eager to recognise the part played by Irishmen in the British Army, and there has been a wave of new work on this subject.³¹ The war is widely seen as some kind of defining moment for the nation, while the ambiguities inherent in the way we remember it are glossed over. Even in France, with whom we share the experience of the Western Front, the war has been less prominent in national memory – although recent work suggests that the French people (particularly the young) are rediscovering it.³² The classic British war story has also been nurtured from the 1960s onwards by television drama, documentary and films, including the BBC's *Great War* series, the dramatisation of Vera Brittain's *Testament of Youth*, the ITV serial *Upstairs, Downstairs*, and the film of *Oh What a Lovely War*, all of which are part of popular culture. The importance of

film is discussed in Michael Paris' book, *The First World War and Popular Cinema*, and he may well be right when he suggests that this, rather than literature, has embedded a particular view of war in our national consciousness.³³ Pierre Sorlin, in the same volume, describes how 1918 newsreels, often showing staged scenes, have been shown over and over again ever since, 'so that spectators accept them as authentic'.³⁴ This story, or series of pictures, is not passing away with time: the war poets are still favourite subjects for school English lessons, while Pat Barker and Sebastian Faulks have written popular novels which revolve around the Western Front, and which build on what we 'know' about the war.³⁵ Even in 2002, the BBC was prepared to give us a bizarre interpretation of the 'soldier's experience' with its 'reality TV' series, *The Trench*.³⁶ As Paul Fussell discovered, the British story is one of lost Edwardian summers, enthusiastic young men, poetry, disillusionment and battles waged by doltish army commanders who cared nothing for the soldiers who died. Implicit in this too is the idea that the war was unnecessary and pointless: that it should not have happened; 'never again' is the motto, even after another world war, the Falklands, the battle against Iraq and Afghanistan.³⁷ (Cynics might say that recent wars are acceptable as long as *our* men do not die in their thousands.) Yet still we see, again and again, how the war exerts its power on those seeking connections between our own time and 'the past'. It is extraordinary that nearly thirty years after Fussell, another American (with British connections) can write an eight page article for the *London Review of Books* in 2002 about her search for a great uncle's war grave in France, and her own obsession with the war and that generation. Again, we see how present preoccupations interact with one person's view of the war; in this case her interest was revived by the events of 11 September 2001.

He [the uncle] lives in the same world as I do – the familiar valley of sorrows, fuck-ups and relentless, chain-reaction human disasters. (How acutely one feels the 11 September violence to be, like so much in our time, simply one of the hundreds of geopolitical aftershocks of the First World War.³⁸

But of course, not only was Terry Castle moved to write this, an editorial team was happy to publish it: the *London Review of Books* knew that its readers would recognise the issues, the connections and the relevance of such a piece, even now.

An increasing number of historians are looking at why the British picture of the war has remained so potent and so resilient. In his introduction to *Forgotten Victory*, Gary Sheffield, a military historian, grapples with the origins of the standard idea that the war was simply futile, and that Britain's military commanders were inept fools, tracing the way it has been interpreted by TV, film and radio.³⁹ Daniel Todman (a social historian), explores the way so many people still feel connections with the war, long after the death of grandfathers or great uncles, and take pride in

their role.⁴⁰ Both these writers look at the influence of the 1960s, and the fiftieth anniversary of the war, and both see the importance of family memories. For many of us, family history (middle class and working class alike) began with that war: photographs, letters, medals and other memorabilia, are treasured. They are also our immutable connection with a great event in history – our ancestors were *there*. At the same time, the rise of research into material culture, as exemplified by the work of Nick Saunders, has established valuable connections between art, archaeology and social history, together with an appreciation of the visual impact of war iconography, and an awareness of the psychological effect of war memorabilia, from postcards to war memorials.⁴¹

Both Catherine Moriarty and Deborah Thom are here concerned with some of the early representations of the war in Britain, and the way in which these have affected us, as ‘ordinary people’ and as historians. Catherine Moriarty’s chapter, “‘Though in a Picture Only’: Portrait Photography and the Commemoration of the First World War’, explores two forms of memorial, and two aspects of the powerful visual record with which we live in Britain.⁴² The war memorial is concrete, symbolic and designed to unite a community in mourning. Soldiers’ photographs – the product of the rise in portrait photography during these years – in contrast remind us that every man who fought was an individual. These pictures, of the young or middle-aged, the handsome or plain, the smiling or serious, were often the only mementoes of lost husbands, fathers or sons. En masse, as seen in the Imperial War Museum’s collection of portrait photos, this can be shocking. Photographs add an extra dimension to the national ‘memory’ of the war, and even outside the context of the family album their resonance remains. Who has not seen, as Catherine Moriarty describes, a sepia-coloured postcard in a junk shop of a young soldier, and wondered whether he survived, or died during the war? From the photograph alone we cannot tell whether he perished on some muddy battlefield or returned home to a good job and a long and prosperous life, but there is always the fear that he too must have been a victim of the war. As for war memorials, Moriarty reminds us that in both Britain and France these were specifically *designed* to reach out to the viewer and make an emotional impact: they were supposed to act as a focus for those – individuals and communities – who had been bereaved.⁴³ It is hardly surprising that these were, for many of us, a childhood introduction to 1914–18. Their carved angels, their stone soldiers – departing with one last wave of the hand – their alphabetical lists of ‘the Fallen’, all affect us still. This is a legacy bequeathed by the survivors of the war. Such powerful imagery, public and private, goes some way to explaining why this long-gone conflict still maintains such a hold on our imagination – and inevitably affects us as writers about the war, for better or worse. I would say we ‘remember’ the war exactly as sculptors wanted us to, but that the impact of their formal memorials is, ironically, re-inforced by the personal photograph.

Deborah Thom, in ‘Making Spectaculars: Museums and how we remember Gender in Wartime’, writes about the Imperial War Museum, and in particular the origins of the Women’s Work Collection, which has had an enormous impact on both popular and academic views of women’s participation in the war. As Thom shows, exhibits were chosen for a particular reason: the collection was to exemplify what women *could* do in time of war, and thus the emphasis was on the unusual, the heroic, the picturesque. The theme of women’s splendid war work was dear to the hearts not just of patriots or politicians, who hoped to mobilise volunteers and illustrate support for the war effort, but to feminists as well. Agnes Conway, the organiser of the collection and a feminist herself, was delighted to have the opportunity to show how skilled and resourceful women could be when the nation called. The Women’s Collection is a wonderful and unique resource, yet there is a danger that it is seen – partly because of its sheer scale – as ‘the truth’ about women and the war. As Thom reveals, it is important to be aware of what was left out, or marginalised. Furthermore, the very quality and variety of the photographs, as seen in exhibitions at the time, or reproduced in countless books since, has influenced public perception of women’s role. There is a telling contrast between these pictures and those discussed by Moriarty. While the men are frozen in time as soldiers, victims of war, their civilian identities disguised by uniform, the women appear to be workers of all kinds and all classes: clerical, professional, industrial, rural, they all appear vibrant and alive. However, it is notable that there are few pictures of women working in the ‘traditional’ industries, let alone mopping floors, cleaning stairs or cooking (unless they are in the Army Corps) and no pictures of women campaigning about low pay and long hours. And, while we frequently see pictures of wounded men, photographs of sick or injured women are rare, even though they suffered from the effects of TNT poisoning and a variety of industrial injuries. Nor do pictures or models tell us anything about why women took up their war work. Was it for patriotic reasons or for the money – or a mixture of both? Photographs show much, but require careful examination, and knowledge of what the photographer was trying to achieve.

The next few chapters examine some aspects of the war which are supposedly ‘known’, but are open to reinterpretation. Adrian Gregory, in ‘British “War Enthusiasm” in 1914: a Reassessment’, looks critically at the widely accepted belief that the British public greeted the prospect of war, and indeed that their jingoistic response helped urge politicians into declaring war – as suggested by so many historians for decades, including a number of recent writers. He quotes W. J. Reader’s confident pronouncement that ‘The suddenness of the onset of war fever and the way in which it smothered all other national pre-occupations ... is one of the best documented aspects of the outbreak of the Great War.’¹⁴⁴ Nor is this claim made for Britain alone. Marc Ferro’s words represent the standard picture: ‘In Paris, London and Berlin they left exuberant, “with flowers in their rifles”.’¹⁴⁵

Niall Ferguson raises the subject afresh in *The Pity of War*, but provides little new evidence for his counterclaim that the amount of enthusiasm was exaggerated.⁴⁶ While Becker challenged this idea for France over twenty years ago, and Verhey has recently reassessed the German response, there is still little sign of detailed work on the British response.⁴⁷ In his chapter for this book Adrian Gregory uses newspapers, diaries and autobiographies in an attempt to find out more about the views of those who were more cautious in the summer of 1914. His careful reading of these reveals a more measured approach amongst both journalists and other observers, from clergymen to union officials, and shows the way in which opinion seemed to change as the conflict shifted from threatened to real.

It should be noted, however, that Gregory does not claim that enthusiasm did not exist. We have all seen the pictures of cheering crowds, though the date of such pictures is important, and so too is the context. Are these pictures of crowds waiting for news of war's declaration, or of men queuing at recruiting offices in the autumn, or of families gathering to greet returning soldiers? Film of women smilingly waving off their men is real, but we do not know what lies behind any of these pictures. There are many reasons why crowds gathered – there was the desire to give volunteers a good (often civic) send-off, there were genuine feelings of patriotism or pride, but at the same time there were often doubts and fears amongst those who stayed at home. 'Enthusiasm' for war need not have been the sole, or even dominant response.⁴⁸ It is important to acknowledge that the response to talk of war was often more ambiguous and varied amongst ordinary people than is usually suggested. The views of those who were more phlegmatic, nervous or fearful at the thought of war are no less valid. If we accept this then we can see that the idea of 1914 'enthusiasm' and later inevitable 'disillusionment' is simplistic. Just as some people remained against the war, others supported it throughout. The neat picture of innocence and experience is immediately undermined. There is also much more, as Gregory points out, for us to discover about the response to war in different geographical areas, even within the United Kingdom. Reactions may have varied between town and country as well as between regions. Furthermore, it is surely time that men's feelings of duty, obligation, or patriotism (as individuals and as groups) were looked at more closely by historians.⁴⁹ Gregory's essay shows that a range of opinion existed, but does not seek to replace one dogmatic assumption about what 'the British people' felt with another.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 all discuss some aspect of the long running debate about 'women and the war'. This is an intriguing subject, as it crops up in different ways in different strands of history writing. The supposed impact of the war on 'women' (and the all encompassing word is singularly unhelpful in this context, given differences in age, class, race, region) is always mentioned in general history books, whether they are about Europe (for which read Britain, France and Germany) or Britain alone, where women's war experiences as VADs (volunteer nurses) and muni-

tion workers are a key part of the greater war story. Deborah Thom's chapter on the Imperial War Museum goes some way to explaining why the images of working women are so familiar to us, as the photographs from its collection are widely used by press, magazines and TV. In addition, women's own experiences, the effect of their work on them as individuals, and the longer term impact of war on their role at home and work are often cited in both popular and more academic texts. The amount of space given to this varies from a few paragraphs to several pages in those many books concerned with broader arguments about the war, while of course whole volumes are devoted to the subject by writers within the field of women's history. The latter, however, include practitioners from a range of historical disciplines, and their approach varies accordingly. For convenience, one might divide these into 'social historians' and 'gender historians', though these terms are problematic as the main proponents are by no means as sharply defined as their names imply. Deborah Thom's book, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls*, includes an extremely useful chapter on 'The History of the History of Women and War' which outlines the developments of the last forty years, and lists some of the key texts; I would recommend this to anyone seeking more information about the shifts in methodology within women's history.⁵⁰

British social historians (women and men) have long been interested in the impact of war on different social groups, and the apparent change in what was acceptable work for women, together with the emergence of new kinds of factory work in the postwar period, the extension of suffrage, smaller family size, changes in the nature of marriage, and so on. These have all been subjects for detailed discussion – sometimes linked together, and sometimes as separate topics. Penny Summerfield's valuable essay on 'Women and War in the Twentieth-century' in June Purvis's book, *Women's History: Britain, 1850–1945*, gives an excellent overview of writings about social policy, and the search for dynamic effects on 'society' as a result of war. (It is intriguing that so many of the same issues emerged from discussions about the Second World War as well, given the vastly different economic, social and political background.)⁵¹ 'Progress' is usually accepted as being the expansion in women's employment opportunities, higher wages, work for married women, availability of birth control and childcare, improved diet and health. These areas of women's physical/social/economic lives seemed to be improving during the early twentieth century, and the question is the extent to which such a process was accelerated by what happened during the war. This kind of approach to women and war should ideally be read alongside other research examining just how much of an impact the conflict may or may not have had on a variety of institutions, industries and individuals. Constantine, Kirby and Rose list the main areas of debate in the introduction to their edited collection of essays, *The First World War in British History*.⁵²

The rise in the history of gender – often closely linked to cultural history – over the past twenty years has encouraged the fragmentation of

‘women’s history’. This in turn has promoted a different kind of approach to women and the war. The years between 1914 and 1918 have been defined as a critical time for issues of gender: women appeared to step outside their usual arena, but were still barred from heavy or skilled work, and from the battlefield. Their social world was thus seen as expanding, but certain territory was still ‘male’ and still forbidden. This fact has nurtured the idea that 1914–18 instituted a ‘sex war’, encouraging hostility between men and women. Another question then arises: did the war result in longer term changes in gender roles and relations or not? Again, it must be said that English language writing in this area is extensive, although books are usually firmly focused on Britain and France. In many ways the debate has shifted towards issues of psychology and perception, and it is significant that the primary sources used to support this strand of history are often literary.

There is nothing inherently contradictory in these two kinds of approach, but there are sometimes tensions between practitioners, as well as a lack of cross-disciplinary discussion. This may be in part because the ‘social’ historians are often European, with their own strong links to other areas of French and British writings about war and society, and frequently with politically left wing or liberal ideology too, while many of the ‘gender’ historians are American, working within a rather different intellectual and political tradition – though this statement is itself a generalisation, and may be seen as provocative! It is notable, however, that continuing interest in women and war has resulted in so much English language writing, while issues of race and racism lag far behind. A few key texts have emerged over the years, but there is little of the wide-ranging and heated debate one finds about women. It is perhaps surprising that historians interested in the war’s supposedly liberating effects on wider society have rarely chosen to compare the experiences of a range of socially disadvantaged groups and set them in context.⁵³ Intriguing similarities can appear. For example, there were expectations amongst a wide variety of groups campaigning for economic and civil rights that the war would bring about change. Thus women’s suffrage organisations and unions in Britain and France, black leaders and recruits in the United States, and ordinary black or Asian troops from nations within the British Empire all expressed the hope that they would prove their worth as citizens, and would gain respect, if not reward. Disappointment was thus widespread in the 1920s amongst those who returned home from war service to find that, on the contrary, the world had not really changed. Hostility towards working women in Britain led to critical newspaper articles or insults in the street. In contrast, racism led to murderous attacks against African American soldiers who returned to the United States with a greater sense of self-worth. ‘Rights’ did not automatically follow war service in any of the combatant nations. There are thus interesting comparisons to be made in this area which seldom appear in general books about the war, and are rarely noticed by those who concentrate only on issues of gender.⁵⁴ This is disappointing.

My own contribution to this volume, ‘Winners or Losers: Women’s symbolic role in the War Story’, looks at the superficial approach to women which characterises those many books which refer to the war as a ‘watershed’ of some kind. A number of writers, writing about the war in general, merely repeat the familiar claim that women’s status was raised by their war work, their higher wages, greater independence and so on. Authors of these kinds of book have no particular interest in women’s experiences: they simply seek a few sources which will provide a synthesis of what they already ‘know’ about the war and women, given this is part of the classic war story – in Britain, and to some extent in other nations. (One of the problems is the frequency with which the ‘British experience’ is then adopted as the norm.) Arthur Marwick’s work is often cited, particularly *The Deluge* and *Women at War*, and there is usually no mention of the debates which have featured in feminist history since the 1970s.⁵⁵ One or two quotes from books asserting women’s changed wartime/postwar role will suffice, and idea that the war instituted major social reform is then reiterated. Yet, curiously, a number of books by the ‘new’ gender historians share many of the same faults. Authors such as Susan Kingsley Kent (*Making Peace: the Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*), and Sandra Gilbert (*No Man’s Land: the Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*) are now widely read, and they are seen as specialists on women and war, but they too eschew detail, satisfy themselves with a small range of sources, and choose to discuss ‘women’ as though all ages and classes went through a single, defining, war experience.⁵⁶ Evidence which points to other interpretations is simply not used; variety is ignored and discussion of what actually happened to women as individuals or social groups is still dominated by literary texts.

In contrast, Susan Grayzel and James McMillan look closely at particular claims made for women’s changing role, both during the war and since, and test these. Grayzel, in ‘Liberating Women? Examining Gender, Morality and Sexuality in First World War Britain and France’, offers a perfect illustration of the complexity of women’s experience. Women were sometimes described as behaving ‘like men’ in the wake of widening employment opportunities. This claim, although apparently humorous – as in the cartoon analysed by Grayzel – could also be seen as critical, or even hostile. In what ways were women perceived as being ‘like men’? Was this because the newly visible young workers were more independent, smoked, drank, or were sexually predatory? Grayzel duly examines three related subjects: anxieties about workingclass women’s drinking habits; maternity and abortion; and public debates about women’s sexual behaviour, prostitution and venereal disease. She looks at what *seems* to have been taking place, in social/economic terms, and what a number of commentators *believed* – or even feared – was taking place. The distinction is important: as I have written elsewhere, when considering the history of women during the war one always needs to take account of the way in which ingrained prejudice about ‘women’s proper role’ influ-

enced the comments of their critics. It is clear from Grayzel's essay that while cultural norms and anxieties may have varied between Britain and France, for many workingclass women in both these countries the idea of greater sexual freedom was an illusion. Women certainly did not, and could not, behave 'like men'.⁵⁷

In 'The Great War and Gender Relations: the Case of French Women and the First World War Revisited', James McMillan engages with what evidence really exists for the idea that the War instituted a 'crisis in gender relations' as maintained by Mary Louise Roberts, one of the new wave of feminist cultural historians (whose work is also mentioned in Grayzel's chapter). Roberts is best known for her book, *Civilization without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927*, which, as McMillan points out, suggests that '... debate concerning gender identity became a primary way to embrace, resist, or reconcile oneself to changes associated with the war'.⁵⁸ Implicit in this approach is the assumption that attitudes changed, although, as McMillan points out there is often very little comparison with anxieties and debates before 1914. McMillan goes on to test the Roberts hypothesis by considering the war's apparent impact on three aspects of gender relations. Under the category of 'Power Relations' he looks at the range of work available to women, and the way their war work affected the suffrage debate. In 'The Body and Sexuality' he considers how the war impacted on the physical lives of men and women: for the former it meant, as always, the possibility of injury and death; for the latter, it could mean rape, and the risk of abortion, but not the danger of the battlefield. Finally, under the heading of 'Private and Public', McMillan looks for signs of any change in the prevailing belief that women's primary role was maternal. In all these areas he finds, that 'traditional' views of men's and women's place in society remained as strong as ever, and that the experience of war probably reinforced a conservative agenda after 1918. It is true to say, therefore, that James McMillan's view of the war's effect on women's status in general (as also expressed elsewhere in his own books) is fairly negative,⁵⁹ but again it needs to be recognised that he, like Grayzel, is not arguing that some changes, whether temporary or permanent, did not occur: of course women entered various new trades, of course there was criticism and debate about their wartime and postwar role, but this can hardly be interpreted as a 'crisis'. Both Grayzel and McMillan illustrate that the only way to engage in argument about the war's impact is to look in detail at what did or did not appear to change, at economic, political and personal levels.

Much used, but little understood, the term 'shellshock' is the subject of Laurinda Stryker's essay, 'Mental cases: British Shellshock and the Politics of Interpretation'. The trauma of war, and its impact on the fighting man, remains an issue for doctors and psychiatrists. Post-traumatic shock syndrome is now discussed by those looking at the health of soldiers who fought in the Falklands and Iraq, and its cause is by no means established. Over the past few years there has also been renewed interest in this sub-

ject amongst social and military historians and historians of psychiatry, as evidenced by the work of Paul Lerner and Ben Shephard.⁶⁰ A complete issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* was dedicated to the subject in 2000, and included essays by Jay Winter, Marc Roudebush, Catherine Merridale and Joanna Bourke, as well as Lerner, with themes ranging across Britain, France, Germany, Ireland and Russia in the twentieth century.⁶¹ This more historical, and historicist approach is to be welcomed, but it still remains true that one of the most well-known contemporary writers on shellshock is Elaine Showalter, a cultural historian, whose arguments have received attention and widespread acceptance amongst many historians and literary critics, as well as journalists. Her feminist credentials have made her work well-known to those outside the academic arena, and encouraged the notion that shellshock should be compared to women's 'hysteria' as defined by Victorian physicians – with all this implies for discussion of gender roles, sexuality and power during the war years. Such an approach is beginning to seem rather dated in the context of recent medical debate, but nevertheless Showalter is often seen as a reliable source of solid information on diagnosis and treatment. (It should also be noted that several contributors to a recent collection of essays on medicine and war point out how the kind of approach to shellshock exemplified by Showalter has even distorted arguments within the history of psychiatry and mental illness.⁶²) We therefore find that even Joanna Bourke cites Showalter as a reliable source, in *Dismembering the Male*, within a chapter otherwise well supported by primary material.⁶³ In this essay, Stryker looks closely at Showalter's hypothesis and her evidence, including the influence of Eric Leed, whose own original source material – concerning a variety of subjects, it has to be said – is scanty. She goes on to show that even within the British medical establishment (and Stryker is adamant that national differences need to be recognised to a far greater degree than Showalter allows), treatment varied from doctor to doctor, and changed over the course of time. Stryker reveals a more practical, even humane, approach amongst many doctors than Showalter claims, and suggests that her wider arguments lack logic and consistency. Given that a brief mention of shellshock and its connection with the Edwardian concept of 'masculinity' is almost obligatory in many recent books about the social history of war, it is important to encourage a more questioning attitude to the Showalter thesis and remind ourselves that an interesting idea, strongly influenced by a limited number of literary sources, is not actually 'proof' of very much. At this point it is worth wondering whether the intensification of the debate about sex roles and sexuality in our own time has allowed anachronistic attitudes about the war, and those who experienced it, to gain a footing. Does a preoccupation with shellshock as an issue of gender, rather than as a medical condition – allowing for the influence of social and cultural nuances, as with many other psychiatric illnesses – reveal more about *our* times than those of our forebears?

Keith Allen, in 'Food and the German Home Front: Evidence from Berlin', takes as his theme rationing and the provision of hot food to Berlin's inhabitants. The allied blockade caused food shortages and increasing hardship from late 1914 onwards, and there are few doubts about the physical and mental anguish endured by Germany's civilian population. However, the wider *significance* of this hardship has exercised political, social and economic historians. It is ironic that while there is often a tendency amongst writers to isolate the years between 1914 and 1918 from the period that followed, in the case of Germany attempts to connect wartime events with the political developments of the 1920s and 1930s are almost obsessional. Why did Weimar fail, is the call, and why did the Nazis come to power? What fault lines may be traced back to the divisions and jealousies of the home front, or the way local bureaucracy and national government seemed to fail the people as food shortages grew desperate? These are perhaps natural questions, particularly in view of the voluble discontent expressed by Germany's ex-servicemen in the 1920s, yet does hindsight adversely influence both focus and judgement? The efficiency of the allied blockade is acknowledged, and it is recognised that civilian hardship was inevitable (particularly during cold winters) yet there is still more than a hint of a suggestion in the work of many writers that the German nation, or its people, were tested and in some way found wanting – that there were clearly moral shortcomings in a country which allowed the blackmarket to flourish, and failed to distribute its limited resources fairly and efficiently. Avner Offer's superbly provocative book, *The First World War: an Agrarian Interpretation*, has perhaps encouraged this judgmental approach, with its claim, for example, that an obsession with meat was part of Germany's downfall.⁶⁴ Yet food shortages are bound to engender conflict, and rationing will always raise strong feelings: the latter requires that judgement is made about which groups of workers are most important to the war effort, as well as most needy. It will often set one group against another, and this was not (and is not) a problem unique to Germany. Belinda Davis's recent book, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday life in World War I Berlin*, has shifted the debate further, considering the role of popular protest and, in particular, the experiences and influence of the so-called 'women of lesser means'.⁶⁵ She raises further questions which certainly have a particularly German dimension. What was seen as a 'proper' German meal at the time, under what circumstances would people use soup kitchens, would married women accept state provision of the main family meal, who were defined as 'weak' or 'strong', and how were they treated by the rationing system? What class divisions were reinforced by feelings of injustice? One has also to agree that her account of women's protests, and their role in food riots, does indeed beg the question of 'what constitutes politics, who are the political actors, and where [do] they act politically'.

However, she too sees Berlin's food administration as failing the people. Keith Allen's view is rather different. He looks at how the city tried to

deliver nutritious food to its inhabitants through dining rooms or the provision of ‘take home’ meals, and how it managed bread rationing. His conclusion is that, despite the difficulties caused by a complex government structure and genuine food shortages, Berlin did remarkably well – it was not until after the war that things started to fall apart. The city succeeded to a considerable degree because it forged a unique partnership with both volunteer groups and tradespeople. The former were usually middleclass women, and it is rare to read an account – of any nation – which recognises their crucial wartime role in the maintenance of day-to-day food preparation and provision, although it is true to say that thousands were involved in running factory or troop canteens and soup kitchens across Europe. Allen also suggests that the role of local bureaucrats was far more important than is usually claimed – particularly by those who concentrate on the increase in state control during the war. Allen’s chapter, and his recent book, thus offer an alternative interpretation and a different kind of emphasis, but both he and Davis are adding to a debate which will no doubt continue.⁶⁶ In one crucial regard they are similar: they both show how necessary it is to look at what was happening ‘on the ground’ amongst city dwellers, and to examine the nature of ordinary life and urban administration at an extraordinary time. There are no easy generalisations to be made about the German people during these years.

With the last two chapters, we move into a less familiar world. There are many spaces in Western Europe’s history of the war, even within the realm of the British Isles. In each nation, regional variations have often been neglected, and so too have the experiences of different age groups (particularly the children who made up such a large portion of the workforce in industry and farming), various other social groups, and a whole range of industrial workers who fell outside the arena of weapons production. Nevertheless, although we should certainly be cautious in our interpretation of autobiographical data, a vast amount of oral testimony, personal opinion and description does exist. The British, or French, or German histories of the war include many voices, for all their omissions. When considering the history of Russia and Italy we enter a different arena. These two major participants in the war have been excluded from the greater picture not merely because of the general preoccupation with the Western Front (and the relative familiarity of English/American academics with the French and German languages), or because their experiences lie outside some of the standard paradigms of Great War history, but because their own records, and their own memories, have been damaged or occluded by succeeding communist or fascist governments.⁶⁷ To a large extent the neglect by English-speaking historians has thus reflected the unavailability of written and oral evidence within both Russia and Italy. Furthermore, while many of us in Western Europe and the United States have grown up immersed in a film culture which has shown us, over and over again, what the war ‘means’ for us, reiterating

(for good or ill) its importance to national pride, its tragic waste, its impact on ordinary men and women, Russia and Italy also lack a familiar visual fictional and documentary record.⁶⁸

Russia is an extreme case. As the authors of one recent article have written, it is 'a society, possibly unique in the whole world, where remembering has been dangerous at least since the 1920s'.⁶⁹ The history of the years between 1914 and 1917, defined by communists as an imperialist struggle, was completely overshadowed by revolution and civil war: it was deemed irrelevant to Soviet society. This silence lasted not just for years, but for generations. Although oral historians are, painfully, beginning to piece together a record of the experiences of ordinary Russian people in the twentieth century, it is too late to find survivors of the 1914–17 war. Opinions and feelings about wartime life must be gleaned from contemporary writing. Even now, the sheer scale of the political and social conflicts of the 1920s and 1930s, or the military struggles of the 1940s, continue to marginalise the experiences of those who lived through the earlier war, destructive though that was.⁷⁰ In his essay for this volume, 'The Epic and the Domestic: Women and War in Russia, 1914–1917', Peter Gatrell is therefore reconstructing part of a history which was almost literally 'lost'. There are other ways in which he is making the obscure 'visible' too. Firstly, little has been written *at all* about Russian women during the war. Here, Gatrell offers us some background on life before 1914, and discusses the kinds of attitudes towards women which were carried forward into the war. Secondly, although millions of people were displaced by the fighting in Eastern Europe, their experiences are virtually unknown: there is even less written about their lives than about the civilians who struggled through four years of occupation in northern France.⁷¹ When Gatrell turns his attention to refugees, many of whom were women, he shows us something of what life was like for people who have been doubly neglected by history, as women, and as the displaced. Historians of women will recognise some familiar themes – including anxiety about what was 'fit work' for women (both refugees and the charitable workers who organised them), and fears about the sexual behaviour of young women released from family supervision. At the same time it is clear that while gender influenced experience, class and ethnic background also influenced the way refugees were perceived in their new communities, and indeed the kind of work they saw as appropriate for themselves. This chapter is, therefore, a revealing example of how one historian sensitive to issues of gender, but not dominated by them, may include these as part of a wide-ranging exploration. It also becomes clear that in Russia, as elsewhere, there could be no all-encompassing general 'women's experience' of war.

Simonetta Ortaggi, in 'Italian Women during the Great War', begins by discussing the impact of Fascism on the historiography of the war in Italy. The Fascist regime literally marginalised and threatened the women who had been activists during the war, and also influenced the way in which

the conflict was defined and remembered. Ortaggi's work is rooted in the vibrant tradition of oral history which emerged in Italy in the 1970s, and which has given a voice to many workingclass people. Yet ironically (or perhaps not!) this strand of writing, which sprang from the history of organised labour, has itself sometimes down-played or side-lined the role of women during the war.⁷² Anna Bravo and a small group of feminist historians shifted the perspective of oral history to women, and in this essay Ortaggi continues the process, concentrating on the way in which Italian peasant women and workers reacted to a deeply unpopular war. Many were 'politicised' (my term) by their experiences, and played their part in resisting the war effort, even while they maintained food production or laboured in munitions factories. They spoke out: they tried to stop their men from going to war, and protected the deserters who sought refuge in the countryside. There is little doubt about the fact that the war had a drastic effect on many workingclass women. However, Ortaggi makes it clear that any 'gains' in independence were often illusory or temporary. Both this chapter and Gatrell's thus bring extra data to the debate about the war's impact on women, and show how dramatically different lives could be, even while anxieties and suspicions about their changing wartime role were remarkably consistent across national boundaries.

Each chapter in this book can be read alone, as a separate essay which engages with one or more of the critical themes in current war history. Common concerns run through them all – what is the nature of the evidence available, what is its provenance, how has it been used by historians over the years? However, if the essays are read together other connections will fall into place; comparative pictures also emerge, particularly in the areas of women's history, and the development of 'received wisdom' about the impact of war in general. The key words here are *detail* and *context*.

These essays fit into a history of 1914–18 which is not only vast, but multi-dimensional. We need to know about national experiences, and look across boundaries for similarities and differences, but we also need research which concentrates on small groups, individual lives, the events of a few days or weeks. We need to appreciate the scale of the war's disruption, but at the same time we need to put this into perspective and see it as part of the longer term. There was a time before 1914, and attitudes to the war were moulded by this. There was also a time after 1918, and other disasters played their part in people's lives – the general strike and the depression in Britain, the rise of Fascism in Italy, the reign of Stalin in Russia were not minor events, and could easily overshadow 1914–18. I hope that micro and macro research mean that the picture should become more complete in time, and also more complex. This is all part of the writing of history.

However, in one respect the war is unique. No other event in modern history has generated so much writing over the last ninety years. Nor has any war inspired so many novelists, poets and artists, thus attracting the attention of cultural and literary historians too. But much of this writing is

in English; it is dominated by the interpretation of anglo-american historians, and strongly influenced by the British war story – even writings in French are seldom translated, which is a grave loss to the English-speaking readership. Also, the bulk of available visual material, from portrait photography to film, is Western European. There are two inherent ‘problems’ with this emphasis. Firstly, although the arena of research is now expanding to encompass Russia, Italy, Austria and, one hopes, many smaller nations, there remains the danger that the main perspective remains white and concentrated on Britain/France/Germany, with conclusions about the war’s impact still tailored accordingly. If issues of gender are still perceived as a minority interest, this is even more so of other social, racial and ethnic groups. The role of colonial troops, their interaction with standing armies, and the effect of war on their home nations remains shamefully neglected by all but specialist researchers. We need more diversity in the ‘greater’ war story.

The other ‘problem’ could be viewed as more of an opportunity. We have an event which has been discussed for so long, and in such a public manner, that we can chart the changes in emphasis over the years. People of the 1920s and 1930s wrote about it in a different way from those of the 1960s and 1970s, let alone historians of the 1990s. Layers of storytelling have built up, many of which need to be examined carefully, some of which may be misleading – like the idea that Europe was gripped with war enthusiasm in 1914 – but the emergence of these stories is itself important. How has the war been *interpreted* by journalists, or historians, or politicians, or policy makers, in different nations at different times? The writers of 1914–18 were part of their own time with particular preoccupations and concerns, but so too were the historians of the 1960s or the 1990s. The focus has varied accordingly. For example, it is clearly no coincidence that the 1970s saw an increase in the number of people researching women and the war or the women’s peace movement. This makes the use of ‘secondary sources’ challenging, and implies, I think, that there are *always* themes which need to be re-examined, not merely as more papers come to light, or new collections are utilised, but in a conscious attempt to refine, and if necessary revise, the standard picture. We should never depend on what historians have already said. It is also true, of course, that we can choose to look back at the shifting interpretation of texts, memoirs, reports, descriptions, as national and international events impinged, and comment on this process. The history of writing about the war may be as absorbing as the event itself, and all the essays in this book are, to some extent, about this aspect of war history as well.

So, to return to the word ‘retrouver’. One commentator, to whose rather jaundiced views I have referred in my own chapter as well, complained that:

Since the World War ended, a thousand writers have set down their impressions of the conflict, and a thousand more have declared the falsity of these

impressions. Already the truth about the War has been told so often by eye-witnesses whose accounts are mutually destructive that history in the future must, as plain history has always done in the past, confine itself to the bare bones of event ...⁷³

Can we really ‘recover’ what Ward, with unconscious grimness refers to ‘the bare bones’ of 1914–18? My conclusion has to be cautious. There is no universal ‘truth’ about the war, beyond its magnitude and its destruction of countless men. Statements about what impact it had on individuals, groups, or societies must always be tempered. But at the same time I understand what he means, just as I understand all those others who complained so bitterly in the 1920s (and indeed in the decades that followed) about the way ‘their’ war had been appropriated, defined and *used* by novelists, poets and journalists.⁷⁴ If we are to respect the people for whom the years 1914–18 were part of life, or death, we must be careful how we utilise their experiences or their opinions, and delicate in our interpretation. Our view of events cannot possibly resemble theirs, no matter how well we feel we know the war: it is a superimposition of interpretations built up over time. Sometimes it is enough to recognise this and work with it, but sometimes we need to look beneath, and, quite simply, start afresh.

Notes

Simonetta Ortaggi died shortly after finishing the main text of her chapter for this book. I am grateful to Simonetta’s husband, Paolo Cammarosano, for his work on completing the references, and making publication of this chapter possible. Simonetta’s work has been translated by Guido Franzinetti, a colleague and friend of hers. My thanks to him for undertaking this task, and also for his patient discussion of the subtle issues of interpretation which emerged during the translation of Italian into English.

1. Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker, *14–18: Retrouver la Guerre*, Gallimard, France, 2000.
2. This is both a museum and research centre, and the connection between the two is important. Jay Winter describes its establishment in 1989 in ‘The Generation of Memory: Reflections of the “Memory Boom” in Contemporary Historical Studies’, in the German Historical Institute Bulletin (U.S.), <http://www.ghi-dc.org/> (accessed 2002). My thanks to Pierre Purseigle for this reference.
3. Email announcement by Pierre Purseigle and Jenny Macleod, June 2001, of *La Grande Guerre aujourd’hui: actualité de la recherche*. Lyon, 7–8 September, 2001.
4. *Mars in Ascendant: the Great War and the Twentieth Century*, 31 July–4 August, 2001, University College, Northampton. This five day conference included an enormous number of papers on less familiar aspects of the war, bringing together social, military, cultural and film historians. The 2001 West of England and South Wales Women’s History Network 8th Annual Conference theme was *Women and War*, and included many papers on the Great War. See <http://humanities.uwe.ac.uk/swhisnet/2001prog.htm> (accessed 2002). The Imperial War Museum was also the venue for *Materialities of Conflict: Anthropology and the Great War 1914–2001*, 8 September 2001. For new scholarship see the University of Sussex on-line postgraduate *Journal of Contemporary History*,

- accessed via the University, <http://www.susx.ac.uk> (2001). Articles in issues 1 and 2 include Peter Edwards, 'Mort pour la France: Conflict and commemoration in France after the First World War'; Martyn Oliver, 'Addressing the Crisis in the Representation of Traumatic Events: Great War historiography and the Lessons of the Holocaust'; Dominic Harman, "'The Truth about men in the Front Line": imagining the Experience of War in Memoirs of the Western Front'. Issue 3 includes Jenny Keating's article on postwar adoption, 'Struggle for Identity', which contains material on illegitimacy during and after the War.
5. Jay Winter and Jean Louis Robert (eds), *Capital Cities at War*, Cambridge University Press, 1997.
 6. Longman's History catalogue, 2000.
 7. For a useful article on the wider impact of history books written by academics, but aimed at a general readership, and their dangers, see Susan Carruthers' review of three books on the twentieth century, 'Small Corners of a Century's Killing Fields', *Times Higher Education Supplement*, 21/01/00.
 8. Paul Fussell, *The Great War and Modern Memory*, Oxford University Press, 1975; Eric Leed, *No Man's Land: Combat and identity in World War I*, Cambridge University Press, 1981; Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War*, Regent Press, 1982; Modris Eksteins, *The Rites of Spring: the First World War and the Modern Age*, Peter Davidson, 1989.
 9. Fussell, *Great War*, 19. As Fussell acknowledges, Larkin was writing many years later, but I am not sure that he fully engages with the relevance of this fact.
 10. I fear he is not being ironic. Paul Fussell, *The Great War*, 24. It is not pedantic to point out that as cricket and fox-hunting take place at different times of year, Sassoon would not have been hunting in July, and that although an enthusiastic cricketer he did not play 'county cricket'. See Jean Moorcroft Wilson, *Siegfried Sassoon: the making of a war poet*, Duckworth, 1998, for more on Sassoon's life in summer 1914. Fussell's description is similar to many others in tone, particularly in the field of popular history; for example Lyn Macdonald, who writes 'There was hardly a hint, in that golden summer of 1914, that the world was about to come to an end,' and proceeds to wax lyrical about the weather, garden parties, village fetes, courting couples and so on. *The Roses of No Man's Land*, Michael Joseph, 1980, 2.
 11. Fussell, *The Great War*, 337.
 12. Martin Stephen, *The Price of Pity: Poetry, History and Myth in the Great War*, Leo Cooper, 1996; John Terraine, *The Smoke and the Fire: Myths and Anti-Myths of War*, Sidgwick & Jackson, 1980; Brian Bond (ed.), *The First World War and British Military History*, Clarendon Press, 1991, Introduction.
 13. Pierre Sorlin, 'Cinema and the Memory of the Great War', in Michael Paris (ed.), *The First World War and Popular Cinema; 1914 to the present*, Edinburgh University Press, 1999.
 14. Daniel Pick, *War Machine: the Rationalisation of slaughter in the Modern Age*, Yale University Press, 1996, 196. Pick also includes a useful critique of the work of Paul Fussell.
 15. Roland Stromberg, *Redemption by War*, 9–10.
 16. Bernard Bergonzi, *Heroes' Twilight: a Study of the Literature of the Great War*, Macmillan, 1980, 222.
 17. Tim Travers, *The Killing Ground: the British Army, the Western Front and the emergence of Modern Warfare 1900–1918*, Allen and Unwin, 1987, and *How the War was Won: Command and Technology in the British Army*, Routledge, 1992.
 18. Tony Ashworth, *Trench Warfare, 1914–18: the live and let live system*, Macmillan, 1980.
 19. Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male: Men's Bodies, Britain and the Great War*, Reaktion Books, 1996; Ilana R. Bet-el, *Conscripts: Lost Legions of the Great War*, Suttons Publishing, 1999. For an interesting insight into the way men were treated in hospitals, and wartime medical techniques, see Eileen Crofton, *The Women of Royaumont: A Scottish Women's Hospital on the Western Front*, Tuckwell Press, 1997; these women were working with French soldiers, their offers to the British Army having been rejected.
 20. Seth Koven, 'Remembering and Dismemberment: crippled children, wounded soldiers and the Great War in Great Britain' in *American Historical Review*, 99, October 1994;

- Jeffrey Reznick, 'Work Therapy and the disabled British Soldier in Great Britain in the First World War: the case of Shepherd's Bush Military Hospital, London', in David A. Gerber (ed.), *Disabled Veterans in History*, University of Michigan Press, 2000; Deborah Cohen, *The War Come Home*, University of California Press, 2001.
21. Graham Dawson, *Soldier Heroes*, Routledge, 1994; J. G. Fuller, *Troop Morale and Popular Culture in the British and Dominion Armies 1914–1918*, Clarendon Press, 1991; Elizabeth Marsland, *The Nation's Cause: French, English and German Poetry of the First World War*, Routledge, 1991.
 22. Keith Grieves, *The Politics of Manpower, 1914–18*, Manchester University Press, 1988; Peter Simkins, *Kitchener's Armies: the Raising of the new Armies 1914–16*, Manchester University Press, 1988.
 23. Ian F. W. Beckett and Keith Simpson (eds), *A Nation in Arms; a Social Study of the British Army in the First World War*, Manchester University Press, 1985. Jay Winter's chapter is one of many useful essays: 'Army and society; the demographic context.'
 24. Keith Wilson (ed.), *Forging the Collective Memory: Government and International Historians through two World Wars*, Berghahn, 1996. A very useful chronology of the ebb and flow of 'who was to blame' for the war can be found in Annika Mombauer, *The Origins of the First World War: Controversies and Consensus*, Longman, 2002.
 25. Ben Bar-Yosef, 'The Last Crusade? British Propaganda and the Palestine Campaign, 1917–18', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 36 (1), January 2001, 108. For a complete history of events see Anthony Bruce, *The Last Crusade: The Palestine Campaign in the First World War*, John Murray, 2002.
 26. I am indebted to Alan Scott for many of these references. Brian Bond, *British Military Policy between the Two World Wars*, Oxford, 1980, and Bryan Ranft (ed.), *Technical Change and British Naval Policy 1860–1939*, Hodder and Stoughton, 1977, both demonstrate that there was no 'straight line' between the warfare of 1918 and that of 1939. Lieut.-Colonel G. S. Hutchison DSO MC, *Machine Guns: Their History and Tactical Employment*, MacMillan & Co, 1938, illustrates just how tactically and practically complex the implementation of machine guns actually was. Timothy Lupfer, *The Dynamics of Doctrine: the changes in German tactical doctrine during the First World War*, Leavenworth Papers No 4, Ft Leavenworth Kansas, 1981, demonstrates the sheer complexity of the German system of defence in the West, possibly the largest fixed position ever to be tested by frontal assault in European warfare. Jay Luvaas, *The Military Legacy of the Civil War: The European Inheritance*, Chicago, 1959, is interesting not just because he shows just how soon the new firearms forced field entrenchment, or how difficult it is to extrapolate from one war to the conduct of warfare on another continent, but for illustrating many of the practical problems of the time, like the difficulty of reducing earthworks by artillery fire; W. R. Murray and A. R. Millett (eds), *Military Innovation in the Interwar period*, Cambridge University Press, 1996, includes excellent essays on changing technology and the nature of warfare; Denis E. Showalter, *Railroads and Rifles: Soldiers, Technology and the Unification of Germany*, Hamden, 1975, offers indispensable insight into infrastructures and technical development, and the willingness or otherwise of combatants to sacrifice troops in the face of the new firearms as a battle tactic; Hew Strachan, *European Armies and the Conduct of War*, Routledge, reprinted 1993, is a remarkable synthesis of issues to do with politics, economics, industry, technology, strategy and tactics of war in Europe in the modern period; John Terraine, *Right of the Line*, Wordsworth Editions, 1997, illustrates how circumspect it is necessary to be about the idea that large scale strategic bombing 'began' during the Great War; M. F. Boemeke, R. Chickering and S. Förster (eds), *Anticipating Total War: the German and American Experiences, 1871–1914*, Cambridge University Press, 1999, and S. Förster and J. Nagler (eds), *On the Road to Total War*, Cambridge University Press, 1997, both include essays which show how sophisticated the current debate about technology, strategy and war is.
 27. Hew Strachan, *The First World War*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, 2001.
 28. John R. Gillis (ed.), *Commemorations: the Politics of National Identity*, Princeton University Press, 1994. See also the war's impact on Australia, once part of the Empire,

- where its memory remains important. For an overview, see Joan Beaumont, *Australia's War 1914–18*, Allen and Unwin, 1995, and for a comparison of memorialisation, see David W. Lloyd, *Battlefield Tourism: Pilgrimage and the Commemoration of the Great War in Britain, Australia and Canada 1919–1939*, Berg, 1998. George Mosse, in *Fallen Soldiers: Re-shaping the Memory of World War I*, Oxford University Press, 1990, offers an interesting interpretation of the immediate postwar-war years in Britain, France and Germany, and compares the way the war story was used by politicians and nations.
29. Adrian Gregory, *The Silence of Memory: Armistice Day 1919–1946*, Oxford, 1994.
 30. Of course the 1939–45 war is also 'remembered', but is usually seen as a 'good' war, rather than an event to be mourned. Although more people across the world died during this conflict (including far more civilians), there is no talk of a 'lost generation' in 1939–45. See Williamson Murray, 'Armoured Warfare: the British, French and German Experience', in Murray and Millett, *Military Innovation in the Interwar period*; footnote 11, on page 35, discusses relative casualties, and the mistaken perception that the 1914–18 war was 'worse' in terms of numbers killed and wounded across the warring nations.
 31. 'For Evermore: Fading Evidence of the Great War', an exhibition at the Gallery of Photography, Dublin, 2000, raised much interest; its catalogue includes extracts from discussions about Ireland's part in the war. Also, soldiers from Catholic areas of Ulster were often forgotten or ignored in British history until the 1990s. One speaker at a recent conference reported how his own family had no idea that his grandfather's name appeared on the local war memorial, as remembrance ceremonies were effectively run by the Orange Order: Jim Haughey, 'The Great War and an Irish Town', unpublished paper presented at *Mars in Ascendant* Conference. See also Adrian Gregory and Senia Pašeta (eds), *Ireland and the Great War: 'A War to unite us all?'*, Manchester University Press, 2002, and Keith Jeffrey, *Ireland and the Great War*, Cambridge University Press, 2000, (which includes a useful bibliographical essay).
 32. Apart from the Revolution of 1789, French historians have to engage with the Napoleonic era, the revolutions of 1830 and 1848, the Franco-Prussian War and the Paris Commune, all of which mean that there can be no suggestion that the 1914–18 war marked the end of a peaceful century – which is a key part of the British war story. However, Stéphane Audoin-Rouzeau and Annette Becker suggest that since 1998 the war is the subject of growing interest; see 14–18, *Retrouver la Guerre*.
 33. Paris, *The First World War and Popular Cinema: 1914 to the present*, Introduction. See also Jill Liddington, 'What is public history? Publics and their pasts, meanings and practices' in *Oral History*, 30 (1), Spring 2002, for discussion about the rise of 'public history' and its influence. The work of John Lowenthal, cited by Liddington, is also important when considering nostalgia and the lure of the past: *The Past is a Foreign Country*, Cambridge University Press, 1985. Samuel Hynes has much to say about the importance of 'myth' and the way we use this, in 'Personal Narratives and Commemoration', in J. Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (eds), *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, Cambridge, 1999, 207; see also Samuel Hynes, *A War Imagined*, Pimlico, 1992, and *The Soldiers' Tale*, Allen Lane, 1997.
 34. Pierre Sorlin, 'Cinema and the Memory of the Great War', in Michael Paris, *The First World War and Popular Cinema*, 13.
 35. Pat Barker, *The Regeneration Trilogy*, Penguin, 1992–96; Sebastian Faulks, *Birdsong*, Vintage, 1994. The interpretation of war in these novels remains largely unchallenged in Britain, but see M. Loschnigg, '... the-novelist's-responsibility-to-the-past: History, myth, and the narratives of crisis in Pat Barker's "Regeneration trilogy" (1991–1995)', in *Zeitschrift für Anglistik und Amerikanistik*, 47 (3), 1999, 214–228, and Esther MacCullum-Stewart's essay at <http://www.whatalovelywar.co.uk/Regeneration.htm> (accessed 2003.)
 36. This was screened in March 2002. Volunteers lived in a reconstructed trench, complete with mud, noise, bugs, etc., and were supposed to understand the physical discomfort of life as a soldier. Of course, sudden death was not included. To be fair, the BBC also co-produced (with PBS) the recent *1914–18* series on the Great War, with its rather more sophisticated approach to the conflict.

37. The British view is very confused: we are at once proud of the men who died, and therefore, by extension, proud of our nation's role, and yet we accept the idea that the war was wrong and unnecessary. What exactly are we commemorating on Remembrance Day?
38. Terry Castle, 'Courage, mon amie', *London Review of Books*, 4/04/02.
39. Gary Sheffield, *Forgotten Victory*, Headline, 2001. Brian Bond engages with the British preoccupation with the war's disasters and the usual jaundiced view of the Army in *The Unquiet Western Front*, Cambridge University Press, 2002.
40. Daniel Todman, "'It's a family affair": the First World War and family history in Britain, 1918–1998' unpublished paper presented to *Mars in Ascendant* Conference.
41. Catherine Moriarty, 'The Material Culture of Great War Remembrance', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 34 (4), 1999; Saunders, *Trench Art: a brief history and guide, 1914–1939*, Leo Cooper, 2002.
42. See also Catherine Moriarty, 'The Absent Dead and Figurative Sculpture', *Transactions of the Ancient Monuments Society*, 39, 1995. For a fascinating discussion of the imagery of soldiers wearing greatcoats used by memorial sculptors, see Moriarty, "'Remnants of patriotism": the sculptural appeal of the greatcoat after the First World War', unpublished paper for the *Drapery and Visual Culture* Conference, National Gallery, London, August 2002.
43. It is hard to avoid the feeling that for some people war memorials may have made both mourning and the process of recovery more difficult, just as many war widows and old soldiers chose to avoid formal Remembrance Day gatherings. For a detailed discussion of war memorials, their building and their symbolic status, see Alex King, *Memorials of the Great War in Britain: the Symbolism and Politics of Remembrance*, Berg, 1998
44. W. J. Reader, *At Duty's Call: A Study in Obsolete Patriotism*, Manchester University Press, Manchester, 1988, 104.
45. Marc Ferro, *The Great War, 1914–18*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1973, xi.
46. Much of his argument is based on secondary sources. Niall Ferguson, *The Pity of War*, Penguin, 1999.
47. Jean-Jacques Becker, *1914: Comment les Français sont entrés dans la guerre*, Presses de la Fondation Nationale des Sciences Politiques, 1977; J. Verhey, *The Spirit of 1914: Mobilization, Militarism and Myth in Germany*, Cambridge University Press, 2000.
48. It might also be instructive to compare the reports of 1914 with press coverage of other twentieth-century wars. The Falklands War, for example, was greeted by a jingoistic tabloid press, and pictures of departing Royal Navy ships showed cheering crowds of friends, wives and children waving their men off to war. However, many of us will recall that there was little celebration or enthusiasm amongst a substantial part of the population, and that this cynicism about the necessity for war was not widely reported at the time.
49. An article by Keith Grieves is an indication of what local history can bring to the debate. In "'Lowther's Lambs": rural paternalism and voluntary recruitment in the First World War', *Rural History*, 4 (1), he discusses men's reasons for volunteering in Sussex. He suggests that there was a strong feeling of local community spirit, and loyalty to the county, in urban areas as well as rural. This was probably more influential than patriotism.
50. Deborah Thom, *Nice Girls and Rude Girls: Women Workers in World War I*, I. B. Tauris, 1998. Thom also cites June Purvis, 'From Women Worthies to Post-structuralism', in Purvis (ed.), *Women's History: Britain 1880–1945*, UCL Press, 1995. This explores developments in women's history.
51. Penny Summerfield, 'Women and War in the Twentieth-century' in Purvis, *Women's History*. The experiences of women in Britain in the two wars are contrasted and compared by Penny Summerfield and myself in *Out of the Cage*, Pandora, 1987.
52. Stephen Constantine, Maurice Kirby and Mary Rose (eds), *The First World War in British History*, Edward Arnold, 1995.
53. George Robb's book, *British Culture and the First World War*, Palgrave, 2002, is an exception. The first chapter of this very useful overview is devoted to aspects of the war's impact on 'Nation, Race and Empire'.
54. For essays on the varied experience of men and women in African nations, see Melvin Page (ed.), *Africa and the First World War*, Macmillan, 1987. Men were sometimes con-

- scripted, sometimes forced into the army by tribal obligations, or were even volunteers. While some sought to show themselves as too soft and weak for battle in order to avoid call-up, others took pride in a fighting heritage, and were then frustrated by the fact that they were confined to work as porters and labourers, never trusted to be soldiers in the front line. The scale of recruitment is surprising. For example, according to Geoffrey Hodges, in Kenya the British utilised 50,000 African soldiers, who were accompanied by over a million followers and casual labourers, while 130,000 men were sent to Belgium. See Hodges, 'Military Labour in East Africa and its impact on Kenya' in Page, *Africa and the First World War*, above. See also Albert Grundlingh, *Fighting their own war: South African Blacks and the First World War*, Ravan Press, 1987; and Myron Echenberg, *Colonial Conscripts*, Heinemann, 1991 for the French African experience (about which far more has been written); for the colonial context see David Killingray and David Omissi (eds), *Guardians of Empire: the Armed Forces of the Colonial Powers c. 1700–1964*, Manchester University Press, 1999; David Omissi, *Indian Voices of the Great War*, Macmillan, 1999. For the expectations of black American soldiers see A. Barbeau and F. Henri, *The Unknown Soldiers: Black American troops in World War I*, Temple University Press, 1974. For American Indians, see Thomas Britten, *American Indians in World War I: at home and at war*, University of New Mexico Press, 1997. There is also plenty more to be discussed about the experiences of other minorities within each nation, and postwar life. See, for example, P. Panayi, *The Enemy in our Midst: Germans in Britain during the First World War*, Oxford University Press, 1991, and Mark Connelly, 'Assimilation and integration: East End Jewish Ex-Servicemen, the memory of the Great War and the fight against fascism', unpublished paper presented to *Frontlines: Identity, Gender and War* Conference at Monash University, Melbourne, July 2002. It is a sad fact that more words have been written about the British war poets than about all the non-white troops put together.
55. Arthur Marwick, *The Deluge: British Society and the First World War*, Macmillan, 1965 (reprinted 1991); Arthur Marwick, *Women at War*, Fontana, 1977.
 56. Susan Kingsley Kent, *Making Peace: the Reconstruction of Gender in Interwar Britain*, Princeton University Press, 1993; Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *No Man's Land: the Place of the Woman Writer in the Twentieth Century*, Vol. II, *Sexchanges*, Yale University Press, 1989.
 57. In passing it should also be noted that, as Frances Bernstein points out, the figure of 'the dangerous single woman' in wartime was common to many other nations too, whatever their differences. Frances Bernstein, 'Visions of Sexual Health in Revolutionary Russia' in Roger Davidson and Lesley A. Hall (eds), *Sex, Sin and Suffering: Venereal disease and European Society since 1870*, Routledge, 2001. This book includes valuable discussion of attitudes to single women and prostitutes during both wars.
 58. M. L. Roberts, *Civilisation without Sexes: Reconstructing Gender in Postwar France, 1917–1927*, University of Chicago Press, 1994, 5.
 59. James McMillan, *Housewife or Harlot*, Harvester, 1981.
 60. See Ben Shephard, *A War of Nerves: soldiers and psychiatrists, 1914–1994*, Cape, 2001, and Paul Lerner's review of this, 'Hard Cop, Soft Cop: the awkward paradox of military psychology' in the *Times Literary Supplement*, March 9, 2001. See also Lerner's article, 'Hysterical cures: hypnosis, gender and performance in World War I and Weimar Germany', in *History Workshop*, 45, Spring 1998, and 'Rationalising the Therapeutic Arsenal: German Neuropsychiatry in World War I', in Manfred Berg and Geoffrey Cocks (eds), *Medicine and Modernity: Public health and Medical Care in Nineteenth- and Twentieth Century Germany*, Cambridge University Press, 1997. For the Irish dimension, see Joanna Bourke, 'Shell-shock, psychiatry and the Irish soldier during the First World War', in Gregory and Pašeta, *Ireland and the Great War*.
 61. *Journal of Contemporary History*, 35 (1), January 2000, entire issue, but especially Jay Winter, 'Shell-shock and the cultural history of the Great War', Paul Lerner, 'Psychiatry and the Casualties of War in Germany, 1914–18', and Joanna Bourke, 'Effeminacy, Ethnicity and the Evil of Trauma: the suffering of "shell-shocked" men in Great Britain and Ireland 1914–39'. For a German perspective on the experiences of discipline in different

- armies, see Christoph Jahr, *Gewöhnliche Soldaten. Desertion und Deserteure im deutschen und britischen Heer 1914–1918*, Göttingen, 1998.
62. See Roger Cooter, Mark Harrison and Steve Sturdy (eds), *War, Medicine and Modernity*, Sutton, Publishing, 1999, in particular Roger Cooter's own essay, 'Malingering in Modernity: psychological scripts and adversarial encounters during the First World War', and Mathew Thomson, 'Status, Manpower and mental fitness: mental deficiency in the First World War'. The volume is also notable for its editors' attempt to define and describe what they mean by 'modernity' in the introduction, an essay which includes a useful critique of the way many historians have employed the words, 'modern', and 'modernism'.
 63. Joanna Bourke, *Dismembering the Male*; see also Jason Crouthamel, 'War Neurosis versus Savings Psychosis: Working-class Politics and Psychological Trauma in Weimar Germany', in *The Journal of Contemporary History*, 37 (2), April 2002. This is an interesting article, but he nevertheless directs the reader to Showalter 'for research on male hysteria and British psychiatrists' assumptions about social class' in a footnote on page 163.
 64. Avner Offer, *The First World War: an agrarian interpretation*, Clarendon Press, 1989.
 65. Belinda Davis, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics and Everyday life in World War I Berlin*, University of North Carolina Press, 2000; see also her essay, with Thierry Bonzon, 'Feeding the Cities', in Jay Winter and Jean Louis Robert, *Capital Cities at War*.
 66. Keith Allen, *Hungrige Metropole. Essen und Wohlfahrt in Berlin*, Ergebnisse, 2002
 67. There is still little written in English about many other smaller nations during and after the war, including Serbia and other parts of the Austro-Hungarian empire.
 68. See Giovanni Nobili Vitelleschi, 'The Representation of the Great War in Italian Cinema', and Denise J. Youngblood, 'A War Forgotten: the Great War in Russian and Soviet Cinema', in Paris, *The First World War and Popular Cinema*.
 69. Daria Khubova, Andrei Ivankiev and Tonia Sharova, 'After Glasnost: oral history in the Soviet Union', in the *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Studies*, Vol. I, Oxford University Press, 1992 (Special editor, Luisa Passerini).
 70. For example, one otherwise useful volume on the changing face of Russian history includes no essays on the 1914–17 war, although it is mentioned in passing by some of the contributors. See Nurit Schleifman (ed.), *Russia at a Crossroads: History, Memory and Political Practice*, Frank Cass, 1998. For a powerful description of the nature of work as an oral historian in Russia today, see Catherine Merridale, *Night of Stone: Death and Memory in Russia*, Granta, 2000.
 71. Life during the invasion is now attracting more attention. See Annette Becker, in *14–18, Retrouver la Guerre*, and Helen McPhail, *The Long Silence; civilian life under the German Occupation of Northern France, 1914–1918*, I. B. Tauris, 1999. A good overview is to be found in Margaret H. Darrow, *French Women and the First World War: War Stories of the Home Front*, Berg, 2000.
 72. For more on oral history and Italian fascism see *The International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, Vol I, Introduction, by Luisa Passerini, and the Review article, by Alfredo Martini, 'Oral History and Italian Fascism.' For the shifting view of the war in Italy, and its later co-option by fascism, see Vitelleschi, 'The Representation of the Great War in Italian Cinema,' in Paris, *The First World War and Popular Cinema*.
 73. A. C. Ward, *The Nineteen-twenties*, Methuen, 1930, 1.
 74. Martin Stephen, *Price of Pity*, on page 78 quotes from memoirs cited by G. A. Panichas, *Promise of Greatness*, Cassell, 1968: 'I never met an 'old sweat', as we liked to describe ourselves, who accepts or enjoys the figure in which we are now presented ... Is it any use to assert that I was not like that, and my dead friends were not like that, and the old cronies that I meet at reunions are not like that?'