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Review of "Germany's Other Modernity: Munich and the Making of Metropolis 1895-1930" by Leif Jerram

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conclusion offers the most concrete assessment of all: Wilde "conceived of art in ways distinct from the masculinist, rationalist conception that had dominated Western culture . . ." (143). As such, Fortunato suggests that Wilde made a significant, anti-dualist intervention into modern conceptions not only of aesthetics but of the subject. Fortunato's own important contribution with this book is to situate Wilde as a kind of proto-feminist epistemologist.

***Germany's Other Modernity: Munich and the Making of Metropolis, 1895–1930.* Leif Jerram. Manchester and New York: Manchester University Press, 2007. Pp. vii + 229. $84.95 (cloth).**

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One must credit Leif Jerram for writing a book with an ambitious theoretical and historiographical agenda. *Germany's Other Modernity* seeks to contribute both to the "historicisation of modernity" (13) and the long-debated question of whether Germany's path into the modern world was a deviant one (a *Sonderweg*). Jerram takes as his case study Munich's urban development in the waning years of the *Kaiserreich* (or, perhaps more accurately in the Bavarian context, the *Prinzregentenzeit*) as well as the Weimar Republic. Yet no matter how many telling insights he coaxes out of his primary source material, the evidence that he marshals—perhaps inevitably—is insufficient to accomplish his ambitious goals.

Throughout the book, Jerram displays an impressive familiarity with both the theoretical literature on modernity as well as the German historiographical literature on the *Sonderweg*. He also clearly reveals which lines of argumentation he opposes and which he supports. Jerram particularly critiques those scholars (such as Zygmunt Bauman and Detlev Peukert) who have identified pathological sides to the modern world, and those (such as George Mosse and Fritz Stern) who have focused their attention upon the notorious antimodern German thinkers who helped to pave the way for the Third Reich. All of these scholars, he charges, have ignored the positive features of modernity and have overlooked those German elites who, while finding fault with the metropolis (*Großstadt*), tried to humanize it instead of rejecting it.

Jerram's desire to offer a corrective to this historiographical trend is praiseworthy. The same can be said of his call to restore a sense of open-endedness to Germany's historical development prior to 1933. At the same time, however, his anti-teleological position leads him to marginalize the very political turmoil that made Munich the birthplace of Nazism and helped to propel Germany down the path of disaster. As a result, *Germany's Other Modernity* ultimately emerges as a curiously detached book, one that, to paraphrase Trevelyan, might be described as a history with the era's political tumult left out.

Jerram's book is organized into four chapters, all of which outline what he takes to be moderate, philo-modern trends within Munich's overall urban development. Chapter One focuses on those urban planners in the city who agreed with Georg Simmel's assessment that urbanization had produced adverse psychological consequences (nervousness, stress, angst) and who, in response, tried to provide solutions to counteract them. City building official Hans Grässl was one who advanced this cause by trying to infuse an air of *"Heimat"* (a complex word connoting vernacular rootedness) to architectural projects. Jerram cites Grässl's Implerstrasse school in the Munich neighborhood of Sendling, which was functionalist in orientation but also contextualist in the way it fit into its environment. Some city officials sponsored exhibitions on urban design (most notably in the years 1908 and 1928) that promoted the values of "simplicity and good taste" and stressed the need for technology to serve the *Heimat* (42). Finally, other officials embraced Viennese city planner Camillo Sitte's belief in the need to enclose citizens in comfortable artistic

626 spaces, doing so most clearly in their "12,000-Programme" (a city program to construct 12,000 housing units) in the years 1928–1931.

This sympathy for moderate solutions to the problems caused by modernization is further explored in the book's other chapters. In Chapter Two, Jerram shows how city officials endorsed the idea of the metropolis by formally incorporating outlying towns and villages into the city's boundaries. Moreover, the new functional structures that were built in these newly incorporated areas, whether schools or gasworks, were designed according to artistic principles. Finally, the modern-traditional design of new buildings in the city center, such as the Technisches Rathaus (a city hall annex housing offices for city services, such as electricity and gas), revealed local support, Jerram argues, for technical modernity. In Chapter Three, Jerram describes how Munich city officials also strove to shape the interiors of new buildings in ways that would humanize their sterile modern features and forge a synthesis between "[t]he head and the heart" (121). Again, Hans Grässl was prominent in this campaign, insisting on bright colors and homey furnishings for orphanages and hospitals. Other city administrators, meanwhile, attempted to create humane domestic spaces for Munich's citizens. Women were given a greater degree of agency thanks to the thoughtful kitchen design concept of the *Wohnküche* (a flexible space merging cooking and dining areas) that freed them from isolating walls and enabled them to serve as the home's spiritual core. Chapter Four, finally, shows how the city's recognition of the shortage of well-designed, affordable housing for workers in the late Nineteenth century led to later public housing projects, such as the Thalkirchner apartment complex and the Alte Heide complex, both of which boasted standardized features that, while not modernist in appearance, were fully in sync with modern production and design concepts.

Jerram is right to direct our attention to all of these progressive efforts and is correct that they reveal a broader German faith in modernity prior to 1933. Where he is less convincing, however, is in claiming any degree of representativeness to this trend. What is missing from his book is a vivid sense of the darker political currents that accompanied all of the cultural phenomena of the *Kaiserreich* and Weimar years in Munich. The repressive, antimodernist cultural tendencies of the Bavarian state during the *Prinzregentenzeit* find next to no mention in his account, despite his bibliographical inclusion of the studies by Peter Jelavich and Maria Makela. The reactionary political climate that followed the revolutionary turmoil of the years 1918–1919 (epitomized by the assassination of Kurt Eisner, the eruption of Freikorps violence, and creation of the NSDAP) also finds little mention.

More problematically, there is no reference to the famous *Kunststadt*-Debate of the 1920s, exhaustively surveyed in a text that is missing from Jerram's bibliography, Christoph Stölzl's 1979 volume, *Die Zwanziger Jahre in München*, which contains a seminal essay by architectural historian, Winfried Nerdinger, "Die 'Kunststadt' München." This study clearly describes the political motivations behind the local hostility towards modernist culture and explains how Munich acquired a reputation in the 1920s as one of the least hospitable cities towards modern architecture in all of Germany. Its discussion of the city's conservative brand of interwar architecture (known as the "*Münchner Weg*") would have helped Jerram wrestle with the question of whether interwar buildings should indeed be seen as modernist in character. Consulting Vittorio Magnago Lampugnani and Romana Schneider's 1992 volume, *Moderne Architektur in Deutschland, 1900 bis 1950: Reform und Tradition*, would also have been helpful in this regard.

In the final analysis, *Germany's Other Modernity* should be praised for addressing important issues regarding the conceptualization of modernity and modern Germany history. It should also be commended for reminding us about those Germans who tried to find modern solutions to modern problems. Yet, without rigorous comparison with the forces that stood opposed to modernity in important ways (and that ultimately triumphed), the relative significance of the "other modernity" in Munich, in Germany, or in the West more broadly, will remain unclear.