

in the 1990s, sought to recover the eugenic histories behind evacuation policy and the responses to it by voluntary organizations. Mair does not argue against this latter, now dominant, conception of how working-class children and families were treated by state policy, but her work—particularly in its use of the Mass Observation source material—undoubtedly extends such debates in interesting ways. Foremost among these, by using a biopolitical framework, she allows notions of care to be placed back into the story in non-simplistic ways that avoid the trap of nostalgia while acknowledging individual positive experiences and narratives. Mair reminds us of the politics underlying any discourse of care, drawing on feminist theory and animal studies to demonstrate that *care* implies an unequal relationship between giver and receiver. She consequently articulates a convincing argument not just for why attention to a politics of care is a productive lens for approaching gendered histories of the family, but also—if scholars of British history wish to extend this work forward chronologically—how it might allow for fresh perspectives on the history of the postwar British state.

Within Mair’s analysis of histories of communities and care, her book also—as would be expected from a volume published as part of the Mass-Observation Critical Series—makes an original contribution to study of the Mass Observation project. Mair builds upon long-standing scholarship—from the work of Nick Hubble or James Hinton on Mass Observation as a social movement to Claire Langhamer and Hester Barron’s analysis of the project through the lens of affect—to consider Mass Observation “as source and agent” (13) in its own story and to implicate the historical researcher in its methodological recovery. Mass Observation, Mair suggests, was itself part of an ambivalent project of care: gathering usable data on the population and its morale, while justifying its ability to present the idiosyncrasies of individuals and, in turn, “care” for their stories. Although she specifically makes these claims with the 1937 Mass Observation archive in view, it will be interesting to see how far scholars push her conclusions toward the 1981 revival of the project.

Mair’s book, as she concludes forcefully, is ultimately about recovering the possibilities within Mass Observation to work against teleological narratives; the potential for change, different modes of care, or “alternative futures . . . imagined” (169) by the Mass Observation writers. The value lies in the ability of the Mass Observation archive not only to make visible hierarchies (of care and between researcher-researched) but also to force scholars to confront and complicate (if not circumvent) them in their analyses—to provide due care to their historical subjects.

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JATINDER MANN and IAIN JOHNSTON-WHITE, eds. *Revisiting the British World: New Voices and Perspectives*. Studies in Transnationalism Series 5. New York: Peter Lang, 2022. Pp. 276. \$94.95 (cloth).

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Edited by Jatinder Mann and Iain Johnston-White, *Revisiting the British World: New Voices and Perspectives* reintroduces the British World as an idea to be historicized; a scale of inquiry; and a category of analysis in global, imperial, national, and transnational studies in history and political science. The contributions trace its intellectual genealogy back to J. G. A. Pocock’s “British History: A Plea for a New Subject” (*New Zealand Journal of History* 8, no. 1 [1974]: 3–21), which was built upon in the edited collection by Phillip Buckner and R. Douglas Francis,

Rediscovering the British World (2005). As Mann and Johnston-White narrate it, British World historiography emerged in the late 1990s and early 2000s, when some scholars felt that post-colonialism and histories of enslavement, dispossession, and colonial violence dominated the field. Referring to *Historiography*, edited by Robin Wink (vol. 5 of the *Oxford History of the British Empire* [1999]), they write that the perceived peripheralization of “the former British dominions . . . was one inspiration for British World historians to draw focus back to British migration and colonies of settlement” (253). The volume’s contributors are aware of the many criticisms of British World historiography that have resulted since then, as voiced by Rachel Bright and Andrew Dille (“Historiographical Review: After the British World,” *Historical Journal* 60, no. 2 [2017]: 547–68); Saul Dubow (“How British Was the British World? The Case of South Africa,” *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 37, no. 1 [2009]: 1–27); Tamson Pietsch (“Rethinking the British World,” *Journal of British Studies* 52, no. 2 [2013]: 441–64); and the contributions by Tehila Sasson, James Vernon, Miles Ogborn, Priya Satia, and Catherine Hall in “Britain and the World: A New Field?” (*Journal of British Studies* 57, no. 4 [2018]: 677–708). Prominent among this criticism is the imprecision of the term “British World” and how it can facilitate the uncritical recentering of the histories of white people, good-intentioned colonialists, and Anglocentric culture if used in an ethnonationalist, colonialist, or imperial nostalgic way. *Revisiting the British World* does not offer a direct refutation of these critiques. Instead, the collection of seemingly disparate pieces under the rubric of “British World” suggests the diversity of scholarship that could exist under a big tent understanding of the concept.

The volume’s nine chapters are bookended by an introduction and conclusion from Mann and Johnston-White. While the chapters are not organized into subsections, the first three, the middle three, and the final three have enough elements in common to suggest they belong together. The first grouping entails chapters about a specific topic within one setting, namely separation movements in nineteenth-century Australasia by André Brett; sahib-subject relationships in India by Sucharita Sen; and settler colonial discourse in two Canadian textbooks by Danielle E. Lorenz. None of these authors use or need the British World as an organizing principle; instead, they are focused on intervening in their respective national and colonial historiographies. And yet they offer approaches that could be used fruitfully elsewhere and show how “Britishness” was also created within and tempered by colonial interactions. Sen’s chapter is one of two in the volume that discusses race in any sustained way and Lorenz’s is the only one to engage with settler colonialism as an anti-Indigenous project.

The second group is focused on people and forms that traveled around the British World: Karen Fox’s take on the celebrated Australian opera singer Nellie Melba; Paul Kiem’s chapter on the Australian caricaturist Vasco Loureiro; and the standout piece of the volume, Richard Scully’s “‘For Gorsake, Stop Laughing! This Is Serious’: The British World as a Community of Cartooning and Satirical Art.” Scully shows how satirical publications, especially *Punch*, developed out of the crisscrossing network of artists moving about the Anglophone sphere (including India, Hong Kong, and the United States) and created a British World brand of visual satirical humor that had transformative local inflections. Anyone interested in *Punch*, visual discourse, or Anglo-American commonalities will find this chapter engrossing.

With chapters from Mann, William A. Stoltz, and Andrew Kelly, the third group is about high politics in the twentieth century in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Canada, particularly in terms of international relations, foreign policy, immigration, and citizenship. This last group of essays shows that the British World as an imagined community had very real consequences, structuring dominion immigration and citizenship policies and serving as an alibi for Australian imperialism.

Ultimately, it is unclear whether readers of this volume will come away with a new appreciation for the “British World” as a heuristic framework. In terms of politics, it is clear that dominion policy makers took the British World seriously and created structures whose legacies continue today. Post-Brexit overtures to an ethnonationalist British World in Britain and

elsewhere, particularly apparent during Charles III's coronation, show the renewed popularity of the concept and the need for it to be historicized. What critical leverage does the British World get us? This is still fuzzy. The volume reproduces aspects of the historiography that have already been critiqued by those mentioned above. There is a slipperiness between Anglophone, Englishness, and Britishness, an almost willful avoidance of the growing literature on whiteness, and silence about anything transnationally Indigenous or African. With the exception of Kiem's chapter, continental Europe's influence is noted but rarely analyzed, to the extent that Canada is too often reduced to "English Canada" in order to cram it into a comparative framework with Australia. Nevertheless, the efficacy of the concept, much like all transnational analysis, continues to be most apparent when scholars use it to critique insular nationalist historiographies; this is showcased well in *Revisiting the British World*. This collection will intrigue scholars interested in complicated histories of Britishness that happened outside of Britain and how the question of Britishness shaped developments in Australia, Aotearoa New Zealand, and Canada.

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GARETH MILLWARD. *Sick Note: A History of the British Welfare State*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2022. Pp. 256. \$39.95 (cloth).
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Gareth Millward's *Sick Note: A History of the British Welfare State* is the result of a Wellcome Trust Humanities Fellowship and represents detailed archival research on the history of the sick note, or doctor's medical certificate, in the British welfare state. The sick note provides the bureaucratic gateway to social security sickness payments and employers' sick pay. Millward argues that it also carries powerful cultural meanings, legitimizing people's claims to being sufficiently ill to be absent from paid work or to be entitled to payments from the state. Despite this legitimizing status, the sick note also carries connotations of "malingering" (32) or cheating. Millward explores how policy makers, doctors' organizations, employers, and the media have viewed the sick note as a cultural symbol of both legitimacy and deceit from 1948 to the present day.

Millward shows that sickness and eligibility for sickness payments, whether through the state or employers' sick pay, is deeply embedded in social structures. Sickness prevalence is affected by the type of work that people do and eligibility for payments is affected by the ways in which capacity for work is assessed. In turn, each of these is affected by social structures of gender, age, social class, disability, and ethnicity, as well as changing medical and cultural expectations over time. Millward has a close focus on the bureaucratic and cultural meanings of the sickness certificate, both within social security systems and within the workplace. Millward begins *Sick Note* in 1948 at the foundation of the National Health Service and new National Insurance and means-tested social security schemes within a culture of postwar national renewal. From there, Millward provides detailed analysis of the changing expectations of the role of the family doctor (general practitioner) in certifying illness during periods of significant social change, economic crises, and the recent challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Chapter 2, "The 'Birth' of the Sick Note," begins in 1948, providing detailed analysis of contemporary debates in medical journals, newspapers, and Parliament, showing the concerns of doctors, politicians, and others about malingering and about the potential burden on general practitioners in the newly launched National Health Service.