

of the archive and its production. *Ruling the World* is a remarkable history that belongs on the shelf of any individual interested in understanding how the British Empire was ruled everywhere, all at once.

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ANNA MAGUIRE. *Contact Zones of the First World War: Cultural Encounters across the British Empire*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2021. Pp. 232. \$99.99 (cloth).  
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In *Contact Zones of the First World War*, Anna Maguire traces soldiers' experiences of and journeys through war. From recruitment station to troop ship, hospitals to commemorative parades, Maguire's examination of soldiers' voyages reveals the complex social and cultural realities of the First World War beyond the battlefield. She focuses on the experiences of soldiers and laborers from the British West Indies, New Zealand, and South Africa, primarily in Europe and Egypt. Drawing on published memoirs, private papers, images, and newspapers, she compares various combatant and noncombatant experiences. As she explains in the introduction, Maguire applies the idea of "contact zones" from Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (2008) to the spaces where soldiers, civilians, and laborers lived, fought, and loved—while reconciling the inherent inequities of their service (8–9).

Constructions of racial difference influenced Maguire's decision to focus on these particular case studies. She suggests that New Zealand's forces claimed racial integration between Māori and Pākehā (white) soldiers, unlike South African forces, which had explicit racial segregation. In the West Indies, questions about ethnic and class difference chafed against white British leaders' anxieties about Black militarism. Maguire observes that "Meeting people of different ethnicities, nationalities, religions or cultures did not universally challenge the racist modes of thought which many inhabited and had learnt by growing up in the British Empire" (4). In fact, Black and Māori servicemen often recounted experiences of exclusion and racism, which white servicemen saw as opportunities to perform their own inclusivity. These dynamics contributed to interpersonal and institutionalized racial violence, such as the tendency to give white soldiers, but not their Black or Māori counterparts, access to prophylactics.

The greatest strength of the work comes in Maguire's nuanced depiction of women's encounters with soldiers. Unsurprisingly, fears of miscegenation led both officers and white civilian workers to police segregated spaces and boundaries. Sometimes intimacy provided reprieve from embedded hierarchies and everyday discrimination. When soldiers billeted in women's homes, some women became mothering figures to soldiers who craved intimacy. White nurses likewise provided intimate care for servicemen across racial hierarchies, even if these encounters rarely existed beyond the hospital. This suggests that medical and military institutions facilitated contact but also imposed rules and established norms that hardened race, disability, gender, and class hierarchies. More could have been said about same-sex eroticization, particularly in white soldiers' frequent accounts of Black men bathing or swimming nude.

Maguire's discussion of sex with women shows how soldiers' perceptions of prostitution and so-called vice differed in various contexts. Some servicemen married the European women that they encountered. This was true not just for white soldiers, but also for some Māori and Black West Indian servicemen. Although officers discouraged or even banned

mixed marriages, newspapers reported these as evidence of wartime solidarity. These relationships also exposed class biases. For instance, through military funding, Black West Indian soldiers' wives were able to join them in Jamaica, but Black West African soldiers could not bring their wives back to Africa. Ultimately, these nuances mattered little to the white men who violently opposed relationships between white women and Black men during the British race riots in 1919. Maguire's sharp analysis reveals quite clearly that wartime contact zones were meant to be temporary.

At times, readers could have benefited from theoretical insights about how racial hierarchy reflects relationships of power, such as imperial rule, rather than fixed biological realities. For example, when discussing licensed sex workers in Cairo, Maguire suggests that they were "racially different to the colonial troops" (119). Gajendra Singh's *Testimonies of Indian Soldiers and the Two World Wars: Between Self and Sepoy* (2014) might have enriched the discussion of so-called martial races by showing how colonial soldiers navigated such concepts. Instead, Maguire's (acknowledged) limitations in sources by Black, Indigenous, and Māori writers leaves colonial leaders' and officers' perceptions of colonial troops to creep into the wider analysis. For example, Maguire suggests that while in London "white subjects would be visiting where they had *come from*, a significant moment of ancestral connection" (107). Further discussion of how people who identified as Irish, Afrikaner, or mixed heritage understood whiteness and Britishness might have given nuance to this account.

Engagement with Anne Spry Rush's *Bonds of Empire: West Indians and Britishness from Victoria to Decolonization* (2011) could have helped readers understand Black Britishness in the West Indies. Instead, Maguire suggests that British leaders were skeptical about Black soldiers' loyalty and discipline "given the history of rebellion in the West Indies" (32). Digging deeper into how racial capitalism, violence, and militarism spurred anticolonial rebellions might prevent readers from equating Blackness with disloyalty. In works such as Michelle R. Moyd's *Violent Intermediaries: African Soldiers, Conquest, and Everyday Colonialism in German East Africa* (2014), or Radhika Singha's *The Coolie's Great War: Indian Labour in a Global Conflict, 1914–1921* (2020), for instance, the authors never lose sight of the fact that soldiers and laborers lived and worked in militarized states built on racial violence. Occasional imprecision stands in contrast to Maguire's careful analysis of soldiers' navigation of racist traumas far from home. Still, Maguire aptly shows how the contact zones of war quickly retreated into racial exclusion. The decision to exclude Black and Indigenous troops from victory parades to pacify white Britons participating in race riots is an especially telling case. Here Maguire leaves implicit that contact zones existed only to achieve victory in war. Having done so, British leaders sent soldiers home to a world still steeped in racism and imperial violence. Soldiers' continued feelings of isolation were by design.

Overall, Maguire's work is a richly detailed and beautifully written examination of much-needed perspectives. As a literary journey, it transports the reader into the time and place of the First World War, with many characters, insights, and dynamics well worth considering. It provides students and scholars with ample questions and further reading in the histories of war, migration, and empire. Carefully researched and well supported by secondary source literature, *Contact Zones of the First World War* is an important and much-needed addition to the field.

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