

War I modernity—one that was grappling, as Shasore's title signals, with an emerging mass democracy and a shifting world order. This new approach began with a critique of a historiography that overemphasized modernism and replaced it with both a broader understanding of that modernism (modernisms as opposed to one monolithic International Style) and showed that it was only one among several attempts to resolve how architectural culture could adapt to contemporary modernity. Moreover, by its insistence on architecture as a set of discursive practices, rather than buildings alone, the new historiography of architecture shows the complexity of how and by whom architectural culture is produced and reproduced.

Shasore is, at times, prone to oversimplifying how he characterizes this new historiography, but he does so mainly, I suspect, as a rhetorical technique. The value of *Designs on Democracy* is that it provides, at last, a scholarly account of the missing half of interwar architecture. He shows the activities of modernist architects such as Max Fry and Wells Coates in context, and shows how what they did was often shaped by architects like Trystan Edwards who were more concerned with longer traditions of architectural culture. Equally, Shasore does groundbreaking work in weaving the imperial subconsciousness throughout his book and very pleasingly adds to the picture some of the many women who were central to contemporary debates and practice in architecture. He offers very useful accounts of the work of Miriam Wornum (at 66 Portland Place) and Dorothy Warren Trotter and her preservationist campaigning. More could, perhaps, have been made of how a reconfiguring profession was structured around the figure of a white male protagonist. This model increasingly constructed out the polymathic practices that many women involved in the built environment tended to pursue at this time—such as Wornum, interior designer; Trotter, gallerist and campaigner; and Elizabeth Denby, who makes several appearances throughout the book. This was at a time when increasing numbers of women were entering the profession, with the consequence that they were trained into that white male professional persona. At times Shasore's wide scope can be hard to digest and militates against sustaining the arc of his thesis. Nevertheless, this is an excellent book that should quickly become standard reading for all those interested in understanding historically how architecture was construed and practiced in the metropolitan London of the 1920s and 1930s and the way that this shaped the built environment long after.

Elizabeth Darling 

Oxford Brookes University
edarling@brookes.ac.uk

ARATHI SRIPRAKASH, SOPHIE RUDOLPH, and JESSICA GERRARD. *Learning Whiteness: Education and the Settler Colonial State*. London: Pluto Press, 2022. Pp. 176. \$26.95 (paper).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.184

In *Learning Whiteness: Education and the Settler Colonial State*, Arathi Sriprakash, Sophie Rudolph, and Jessica Gerrard explore both the history and present-day entanglements of education and settler colonialism in modern Australia. In this short but powerfully argued book, Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard assert that education has long functioned as a tool for those seeking to further settler colonialism as a political and capitalist project. Settler colonialism, they suggest, requires a set of hegemonic ideas about white domination and racial hierarchy. These ideas must be reinscribed in all aspects of social and political life through constant effort by both state and non-state actors. Education, they argue, is an important but overlooked space in which the settler colonial state claims a political future for itself on lands seized by the violent dispossession of Indigenous peoples. Formal and informal educational

institutions serve as sites for “learning whiteness,” an active process of fortifying an existing political structure predicated on white racial domination.

Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard provide a strong theoretical grounding across the book’s three parts. In part one they offer a cogent synthesis of recent scholarship, introducing and developing the key terms and concepts from which their core argument is drawn. This includes Alison Moreton-Robinson’s concept of the “white possessive,” the logic of white settlers creating new sovereignties to mask the illegitimacy of settler claims to colonized land (4), and Jessica Pykett’s “pedagogies of the state,” which suggests governance of the modern nation-state operates through interventions to teach and mold the political subject (10). Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard make a strong case for studies exploring how systems of white domination operate. Yet they remain attentive to work, particularly by Indigenous scholars, that highlights continuing challenges to the project of learned whiteness through Indigenous epistemologies and alternative educational visions. As such, the reader can see how settler colonialism functions as an intellectual project that constantly anticipates contestation.

Part two is the core of the book. In each of its three chapters, Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard explore a different aspect of how systems of white domination are sustained through education. In the first of these chapters, they consider the materialities of Australian education within racial capitalism, in the tradition of Cedric Robinson. In this wide-ranging chapter, Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard argue that Australian educational institutions were constructed through the dispossession and capitalization of Indigenous lands, maintained through racialized divisions of labor, and promote the commodification of education, including the creation of so-called prestige education products for national and international student markets that further entrench racial hierarchy. The second chapter in the section, on epistemologies, is also very successful. Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard convincingly demonstrate how the settler colonial state has used education to produce a hierarchy of learning, promoting epistemologies that promote white ignorance and safeguard “futures of whiteness” (15–16) while continuing settler colonialism’s eliminationist ambitions to destroy forms of Indigenous knowledge. This chapter adds important context to Australia’s ongoing culture wars, including popular debates, beginning under the Abbott government after 2013, about promoting histories of a triumphant white, Western, Christian civilization over those documenting settler colonial violence against First Nations peoples.

The third chapter in this section looks to education’s affective influence in the public sphere through popular media and other mass cultural products. Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard suggest that making whiteness familiar, “friendly” (71), “homely” (81), and therefore powerfully hegemonic required the promotion of the dual feeling-states of “happy benevolence” and “wounded fragility” around white Australia (76). These affective interventions cultivate a popular idea of Australia as an easy-going, friendly, open society. Yet, as Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard show, these interventions also encourage a sense of white victimization and outrage when faced with alternative visions of Australian society. Self-described progressive projects championing multiculturalism and diversity, too, reinscribe these affective dynamics by cultivating a popular concept of whiteness as generous and open-minded, without renegotiating racial power structures and material conditions.

In part three, Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard offer a brief conclusion, arguing for the need to denaturalize and make visible the ideological frameworks of race and settler-identity that continue to structure education’s aims and provision: *unlearning whiteness*, as a form of reparation and historical justice.

Readers expecting either an archive-based history of Australia’s education system or granular analysis of present-day policy debates in Australian education at a state or federal level will likely be disappointed. Though Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard describe the book as offering a “grounded account of the workings of British settler colonialism as a *globally* enduring project” (4) they do not offer much comparative analysis of former British settler colonies. Nor do they thoroughly unpack the transnational dimensions of settler colonial governance.

The reader is left with few tools to determine whether education's relationship to settler-colonialism in Australia should be considered typical among the settler colonial states, or what distinguishes Australia, versus, for instance, the Canadian example. Moreover, Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard highlight moments where debates over education reform in Britain and Australia have mirrored one another, including over issues of whiteness, racial othering, and national identity. Yet elementary, secondary, and higher education systems developed in very different ways in modern Britain and Australia. Each had its distinct relationships to modern state-building, political economy, and democracy. To counter this, the authors might have considered how the figure of the child operated in the settler-colonial imaginary as a symbolic future of the late British settler world. The parallel expansion of philanthropic child emigration from metropolitan Britain to Australia, and the forcible removal of Indigenous children from their families, relied upon ideas about interventions in child welfare, the role of the family, and children's physical and psychological development which straddled both the metropole and settler colony. Drawing on histories of settler colonial childhood might have helped more successfully put the Australian case in a broader imperial surround.

Nevertheless, historians ought to heed Sriprakash, Rudolph, and Gerrard's call to better understand how education has historically functioned as a tool of settler colonial governance in the so-called British world. *Learning Whiteness* is a highly useful, well-argued book that underlines how deeply enmeshed the politics of education is in sustaining the fiction of *terra nullius* on which settler-colonial nation states like Australia were built.

Lynton Lees
Columbia University
l.lees@columbia.edu

NATHANIEL ROBERT WALKER. *Victorian Visions of Suburban Utopia: Abandoning Babylon*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020. Pp. 576. \$160.00 (cloth).
doi: 10.1017/jbr.2023.182

In his lavishly illustrated *Victorian Visions of Suburban Utopia: Abandoning Babylon*, Nathaniel Robert Walker reconstructs and analyzes the “ideas, longings, and values that gave rise to the modern suburb” in Britain and the United States (1). Over the course of the nineteenth century, he argues, English-speaking voices on both sides of the Atlantic were involved in a continuous dialog about the problems of the modern city and potential alternatives to urban life. Walker contends that the writers of utopian and dystopian fictions played a particularly prominent role in this ongoing conversation, one that was consistently focused on escaping or replacing contemporary cities rather than reforming or improving them. Regardless of their individual political values (which ranged from conservative to socialist and all points in between), Walker argues, the writers of utopian fictions were united by a common criticism of urban “density” and the desire to address it via schemes of geographic and demographic “dispersal” (3–4). Walker contends that it is in this common vision that we find the origins of twentieth- and twenty-first-century suburban life, asserting that by the 1880s, on both sides of the Atlantic, “English language utopias” became “estranged from the modern city” and “universally fixated upon a glassy cottage at the end of a flowery cul-de-sac” (293).

Ebenezer Howard, founder of the garden city movement and celebrated promoter of suburban life, arguably is the figure around whom Walker's study turns. In later life, Howard recalled experiencing a life-changing epiphany after reading Edward Bellamy's *Looking Backward* (1888). Howard claimed that encountering this novel—a bestseller on both sides of the Atlantic—inspired him to give up his work as a stenographer and become an urban