

policy as it influenced decision-making in the mid-1830s. Attwood then shows the extent to which the Aboriginal aspects of this story were quickly filtered out to be replaced with a settler narrative. Attwood explains this as forgetting, an excision of uncomfortable aspects of the narrative which could lead to consideration of Aboriginal dispossession.

Attwood may hope that remembering dispossession will insert questions of the legitimacy of Australia's origin into popular debate, but his own book shows the difficulty of achieving this through the writing of history. For although Aboriginal history is testimony to the re-emergence of Aboriginal peoples in the present, the attempt to reconstruct what their ancestors thought they were doing in meeting and dealing with the band of European explorers and their Aboriginal companions from New South Wales in 1835 is beyond the tools of orthodox historical sources. An oral history had grown up around Batman by the 1930s, but its detail was as malleable and political as the foundational settler myths. There is little in the historical record to explore the Aboriginal history of Batman's expedition and its consequences. Attwood is unfortunately left with only a series of surmises about the nature of Aboriginal responses, based on generic understandings about Aboriginal relationships with the land. This allows him to explain how similarities between the Kulin's *tanderrum* ceremony and those involving European land purchase could allow a very different understanding of the same events by both parties. However, these are as much political principles as historical explanations. The principles deny the concept of ownership as used in the European world, and see relationship-building and treaties as key parts of Aboriginal identity, the maintenance of continuity with the land and diplomacy. Such principles comprise the standard responses of indigenous communities anywhere to the assault of European settler societies.

While aboriginal responses to Batman cannot be reconstructed from the voices of specific Aboriginal participants themselves, Attwood manages superbly to show the intense European political debates over indigenous rights in the 1830s. These debates are rich and nuanced and give both words and identity to the European actors, but none of this is possible for the Aboriginal participants, whose names are all we can know, and then only for a few. In New Zealand, where debates between tribal leaders have so often come down to us in their words and sometimes in their own writing, it is often much easier to explore the politics occurring on the indigenous side of contact.

There are politics to this book and those politics provide the volume with a great deal of its heft. Attwood is calling on Australia to accept the reality of its dispossession of its indigenous peoples, and while doing so he shows that the more recent histories of Batman — Batman the agent of genocide, Batman the fraudster and even Batman the drunken womanizer — exhibit some of the same tendencies to prefer political myth over historical rigor. It is this quality and complexity of argument which is the book's huge strength.

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Reading 'Madness': Gender and Difference in the Colonial Asylum in Victoria, Australia, 1848–1888. By Catharine Coleborne. API Network, Curtin University, Perth, 2007. 219pp. Aust price: \$35.00. ISBN 978-1-920-84534-6.

Madness in the Family: Insanity and Institutions in the Australasian Colonial World, 1860–1914. By Catharine S. Coleborne. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2009. 256pp. US price: \$80.00. ISBN 978-0-230-57807-4.

FOR SEVERAL DECADES NOW, historians of medicine have been exploring various themes in the history of the mental hospital, from the social context of confinement to the clinical treatment of patients. A generation ago the scholarship in the field was polarized between those who characterized the mental hospital as an imperfect step towards more

humane methods of caring for the mentally ill and those 'revisionists' who largely depicted the asylum as a locus of social control, segregating the unwanted from society at large. Slowly over time, these two dichotomous positions have been superseded by a new generation of publications that has emphasized the pluralistic aspects of the lunatic asylum, characterizing these controversial institutions as acting in multiple medical, social, even political, capacities interactively with the communities in which they were situated. In this new historiography, medical men cease to be the all-powerful actors who imposed top-down psychiatric diagnoses and treatment; instead, a host of non-medical individuals figure prominently in the decision to seek institutional confinement, the choice of therapeutic intervention and the timing of discharge. The voices of these lay groups are encapsulated in the case books through their testimonies to local general practitioners and magistrates during the committal process and in the letters to patients and medical superintendents.

Catharine Coleborne has been at the forefront of mining this rich vein of historical evidence. In these two books she charts the rise of the lunatic asylum, first in the colony of Victoria, and in the second, in transcolonial perspective. The first — *Reading Madness* — reflects Coleborne's intellectual debt to women's studies and literary theory. As its title suggests, the central themes revolve around modalities of 'reading' mental instability in the various texts that survive for historical scrutiny. In a gentle nod to Michel Foucault, Coleborne seeks to uncover how madness was 'invented' within the medical discourses of the early British world asylum doctors. Using the Yarra Bend asylum in the colony of Victoria as her case study, Coleborne explores the descriptions of lunatic behaviour embedded in admission certificates, medical case books and inspectors' reports. In an echo of Andrew Scull's oft-repeated quip that asylums created the need for their own patients (rather than the other way around), Coleborne affirms that the asylum 'made meanings of madness within its own walls' (p.84). Reaching farther back in the scholarship on the mental hospital, one hears more than a faint suggestion of Erving Goffman's seminal work when Coleborne conceives of the unusual behaviour of some of the female inmates as forms of resistance; the abatement of symptoms can be construed, at times, as 'performances of recovery' (p.114).

Throughout the chapters of *Reading Madness*, Coleborne examines the rise of Yarra Bend asylum, the first generation of medical superintendents and the gendering of work, leisure and accommodation within the institution. She details increasing state involvement and regulation, from the Dangerous Lunatics Act of 1843 to the 1867 Lunacy Statute, through to the Parliamentary Inquiry of 1876 and the Royal Commission into Asylums (Zox Commission) in the 1880s. She touches briefly on therapeutic interventions — hydrotherapy, force feeding and straightjackets, as well as intermittent use of drugs such as digitalis, opiates, quinine and laxatives — while also discussing the use of insanity as a defence in criminal trials and the growing problem of what to do with 'incurable lunatics'. Much of the narrative arc will be familiar to historians of psychiatry, as Coleborne illustrates the growing medicalization of madness and the ultimate failure of moral treatment in the face of larger, custodial institutions. In summary, *Reading Madness* achieves a dual purpose — providing an excellent account of the rise of the lunatic asylum (and psychiatry) in the colony of Victoria, whilst contributing to the international literature on women and madness in the nineteenth century.

Madness in the Family constitutes both an extension of her first book and a more ambitious agenda. As the book's title reflects, Coleborne draws on the scholarship on the asylum in the British world and explores one important thread of the new historiography — the role of the family — to the fullest extent to date by any English-language historian. This second book is all the more powerful because it scrutinizes multiple colonial sites — New South Wales, Queensland, Victoria and New Zealand — to identify the commonalities of insanity and institutions in the 'Trans-Tasman' world. Using admission records and case book entries in a sophisticated and sensitive manner, Coleborne identifies multiple factors in the origins

of committal, including the 'effects of poverty, colonial dislocation and family separation ... and their impact on the asylum-family relationship' (p.6). This complicated asylum-family dynamic emerges in the multiple stories that humanize the mad, through sombre narratives of psychological distress, household abuse and spousal abandonment. Coleborne makes a powerful case for the differences in the historiographies of the asylum in settler versus European jurisdictions. European families in settler societies, she argues, 'occupied a different relationship to the state compared to older societies with established patterns of charitable and state-provided poor relief' (p.6). In the absence of such state-provided relief (like, for example, the Poor Law system in England), settler societies relied more heavily on juridical authorities, often using gaols as temporary sites of sequestration. The isolation of communities and the relatively long distances to asylums clearly informed the use of the asylum in New Zealand and Australia, just as they did in colonial South Africa and Canada.

Both of Coleborne's books are intimately invested in the archive and the way it structures historical knowledge. Her textual analysis is thus one that pushes the historiography closer to analytic trends in cultural studies or critical theory and away from the quantitative social history that dominated much of the scholarship from the mid-1980s to the mid-2000s. Coleborne's exhortation to re-imagine the field of asylum studies by moving beyond 'micro-level analyses' is surely well taken. With any luck, her encouragement for us to explore 'larger historical networks and patterns' (p.7) will open the field to more transnational studies. Ultimately her analysis — which privileges the 'textual production of meanings of the asylum and its patients' (p.2) and emphasizes the 'primary division of sexual difference' — places her in the fine tradition of other accomplished feminist historians of the asylum, such as the American Nancy Tomes and the Canadian Wendy Mitchinson. With these two books, and a clutch of important edited volumes both published and in press, this body of work surely places the author as the pre-eminent Australasian scholar on the history of the asylum.

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Glamour in the Pacific: Cultural Internationalism and Race Politics in the Women's Pan-Pacific. By Fiona Paisley. University of Hawai'i Press, Hawai'i, 2009. 291pp. US price: \$55.00. ISBN 978-0-8248-3342-8.

IN THE WAKE OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR, 'cultural internationalism' became a topical way of ensuring global pacification and salvaging an increasingly unstable 'civilization'. Material and intellectual culture were exchanged between nations, lifting the standard of the global pool of knowledge, and aiming to achieve world peace through greater cross-cultural sympathy. Motivated by a humanist understanding of culture defined, essentially, as excellence in human creative endeavours, culture and cultural exchanges were understood as leading to peace, while 'civilization', with its competitive drive to efficiency, was understood as leading only to war. It is within this historical development and its immediate legacy that Fiona Paisley's *Glamour in the Pacific: Cultural Internationalism and Race Politics in the Women's Pan-Pacific* examines the transnational Pan-Pacific Women's Association (PPWA), later known as the Pan-Pacific and South East Asian Women's Association. The PPWA represented the interests of a range of Western and non-Western women delegates from countries spread across the Pacific. The women participated not only in the sweeping trends of cultural internationalism but also in much more firmly established women's internationalist networks. As *Glamour in the Pacific* demonstrates, women of the PPWA participated in cultural internationalism by manipulating 'race' to create an international community centred in the Pacific, while exchanging intellectual, emotional and material culture in a performance of glamorous, gendered modernity.