

Irish asylums, stress the role of the family in the committal process, questioning the supposed medical capture of madness by an incipient psychiatric profession.

One of the strengths of the volume is the extensive use by contributors of patients' records. Andrea Dorries and Thomas Beddies analyse 4000 case histories in a Berlin psychiatric hospital from 1919 to 1960, uncovering patient profiles and experiences in that institution. Research of admission records by Harriet Deacon (South Africa) and Jacques Gasser and Genevieve Heller (Switzerland) demonstrate a complexity of medical and social criteria in the admission process. Analyzing the admissions to two asylums in Victoria, Canada, David Wright, James Moran and Sean Gouglas compare patients' socio-economic status with that of the general population of Ontario, leading them to dispute the view of the asylum as a 'dustbin' for 'useless and unwanted' members of industrial society.

Roy Porter has been one of the most prolific writers on the history of psychiatry over the last few decades. While he did not contribute a chapter to this volume, he wrote the introduction in his usual eloquent style, in which he discussed the historiography, drew together threads from the various contributions and raised questions. The book is dedicated to the memory of Roy Porter, whose recent death in 2002 was a sad loss to the history of psychiatry and the history of medicine generally.

While none of the contributions relate to New Zealand, the volume raises questions for New Zealand historians of psychiatry and medicine. First is the dissemination of Western medicine. Writing on India, Sanjeev Jain shows how shock therapies were used in Indian mental hospitals within months of first being reported in European-based psychiatric journals. Porter comments in the introduction that this 'internationalizing' aspect of psychiatry has only recently received serious historical attention. New Zealand historians could well contribute to this discussion on the speed with which new ideas were transmitted around the globe. Secondly, as Porter also notes, the 'new' psychiatric history from the 1960s focused almost exclusively on Europe and North America. Only more recently has the discussion broadened to include the colonial context. Porter claims that this is of particular significance to the historian of psychiatry 'in the light of the commonly held view that medicine — and by implication psychiatry — are intrinsically *colonial* pursuits: they colonize the body, colonize the patient' (p.17). A study of psychiatry in the New Zealand colonial context might well reveal more complexities in the colonizing process, just as contributors to this volume found within their individual case studies. The volume raises questions and provides methodologies which New Zealand historians could profitably follow up.

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The Global Reach of Empire. Britain's Maritime Expansion in the Indian and Pacific Oceans 1764–1815. By Alan Frost. The Miegunyah Press, Melbourne, 2003. 383 pp. US price: \$45.95. ISBN 0-522-85050-2.

SINCE THE MAGISTERIAL WORK of V.T. Harlow historians have sought to explain the paradoxes in British imperial experience between 1760 and the end of the Napoleonic wars. By the end of this period its global reach was unsurpassed and it seemed that other European empires were held more as a consequence of British sufferance than as a result of military might. Yet in the middle of this period she had lost the largest chunk of her continental empire through a democratic revolution and the combined front of the forces of the Bourbon empire. Apparently averse to acquiring empires of settlement after 1763, she nonetheless continued to amass land territory and accrete a considerable

formal empire and extend her global sway. It is the extension of this power in the Asia and Pacific regions that is at the heart of Frost's book.

The title accurately summarizes the principal theme. He argues that before 1763 Britain's focus in strategic terms was principally on the Atlantic and Mediterranean and that it lacked the capacity to extend its authority beyond these areas. As a result of expanding economic strength, entrepreneurial activity, scientific advances, but above all, the vision of some key individuals, by 1815 the country had an imperial reach that encompassed the globe.

The key players in this process were not predominantly great statesmen. On the contrary, in the key decades from 1780 to 1800 it was often those in the second rank, or informal government advisers, who Frost sees as directing the enterprise. The exception was William Pitt the Younger, who, saddled with a mediocre collection of ministers in the years before the French revolution, was obliged to run the ship himself with the assistance of very junior officers.

Although the book spans a period of over 50 years its principal focus is on the 20 years following the end of the American War of Independence. The first section, *Unfurling the Oceans*, covers the mid eighteenth-century proposals for imperial expansion, the great voyages of exploration, the seven years war and the building up of the navy and defeat in the American War of Independence. All this is fairly well traversed territory although Frost fashions it to support his central thesis. The central component of the book focuses on the years after 1783 and in many senses it is a companion volume to his earlier work, *Convicts and Empire*. The scope is broadened geographically and thematically to take in more of India and East Asia and the Pacific, as well as the search for new raw materials and the restless ambitions of entrepreneurs. The core argument is that between 1786 and 1790 Prime Minister William Pitt, with his industrious cabinet colleague Henry Dundas and a small band of other colleagues, shaped a vision for global maritime domination. Key elements in this were the opening up of new markets in a free trade environment, production of new products and worldwide supremacy at sea. The Atlantic maritime triangle was to be replaced with a new one linking India, the Pacific and Europe. Bases such as that established by the convict colony in New South Wales were integral to this vision. Once articulated in these key years, 1786–1790, the vision persisted through to the conclusion of the Napoleonic war.

Frost's span is impressive and he has authoritatively documented the quite extraordinary scale of Britain's naval, commercial and scientific activity in the Pacific and Asia between the American War of Independence and Revolutionary wars. The primary interests and fears of the leading politicians, scientists and promoters in the field are systematically explored. There is a sense of *deja vu* about some of this material, and the grasp is a little less secure for the period after the Peace of Amiens when both the narrative and the themes are less well developed. The case for an all-embracing, systematically developed imperial vision is less convincingly outlined. There is too much that is hectic, uncoordinated, reactive and individual about British imperial activity in the 1780s and early 1790s. The interconnecting threads are too finely stranded; the lacunae too common. Frost himself notes examples of this such as the failure to annex the pivotal Hawaiian group, in spite of a local invitation to do so. He appears a little less than confident about the grand plan: 'The disparate activities I have described in this chapter were connected, if not always or immediately in the minds of those who proposed them, at least by the currents of history.' Having the chessboard, the pieces and two players does not necessarily ensure that there is also a grand strategy.

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