

work with the analyses of the demographic data. The book does, however, have the merit of presenting a lot of interesting information and references to sources on venereal disease in Sweden which will be of great help for scholars in the field.

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Catharine Coleborne and Dolly MacKinnon, *'Madness' in Australia: histories, heritage and the asylum*, UQP Australian Studies, St Lucia, QLD, University of Queensland Press in association with the API Network and Curtin University of Technology, 2003, pp. xiv, 269, Australian \$35.00 (paperback 0-7022-3406-0).

These eighteen chapters written by mostly different authors are interesting accounts of various aspects of Australian asylum care in the nineteenth century and mental hospital care in the early twentieth century. Although the emphasis is on the Victorian experience, some papers relate to more recent matters such as the infamous Chelmsford Hospital in Sydney.

Particularly poignant chapters are those by Janice Chesters and Tanja Luckins. Chesters describes the different experiences of three women emphasizing "the complexity and diversity of the asylum experience". For some women it was a "women's refuge, a hospital, and a home when there seemed nowhere else to go". For one patient, Jane S, the hospital was a disastrous experience, not because of the asylum treatment, as she died a few days after admission from complications of scarlet fever, but because she had been abandoned by general medical and hospital services, then had a long train journey to the asylum as the only place that would accept her. Luckins describes the sufferings of women who had lost loved ones in the First World War. These vignettes illustrate profound distress. It is an area that has not received the same attention as "shell shock in men".

Two papers by MacKinnon discuss different aspects of sound in mental institutions. Her first paper shows how noisy they could be in

contrast to the mostly silent shells of today. The second reviews the perceived benefits of music mostly for female patients with a discussion of the piano as the centrepiece for music programmes.

The paper by Fox describes the moves by nineteenth-century alienists to improve the lot of the intellectually disabled by training and education. However the process was reversed by the developing doctrine of eugenics to a state of "lifelong segregated institutionalisation".

Two papers relate mainly to the Cunningham Dax collection of psychiatric art. They critically describe one aspect of the life work of this eminent nonagenarian psychiatrist. He has collected over 9000 paintings and other art works. The meaningful illustration to this book is one of the collection. The contemporary purpose of this wondrous collection is now public education about the "primary experience of mental illness" as shown in patient art.

On the administrative front, the chapter by Susan Piddock on plans for an "ideal asylum" in South Australia illustrates that knowledge and concern were present to apply the principles of good moral therapy and non-restraint, but how various circumstances thwarted this ideal.

Andrew Crowther's paper on the 'Administration and the asylum in Victoria, 1860s–1880s', is a rather sad article illustrating the poor state of the asylums then and Dr Edward Paley's ineffectiveness as Inspector of Asylums (which contrasts markedly with Dr Frederick Manning's work in NSW at that time).

Overall the articles are well written and researched. They will encourage greater interest in and a more in-depth understanding of the asylum era, beyond the often facile stereotypes that exist in the community. Unfortunately there are no articles by clinical professionals who have worked in the mental hospitals. Nor is nineteenth-century treatment in New South Wales covered. In particular, there is no reference to the work and writings of Frederick Manning, Inspector General of the Insane in NSW, the most influential alienist in nineteenth-century Australia. Hopefully, the completion of his biography by myself and Peter Shea will add to our understanding of this era.

One small quibble is the occasional misuse of the term “asylum”. An intriguing clinical paper refers to the Orange Asylum in 1939 in NSW. In fact, this term had not been used for a hospital caring for the mentally ill in NSW since the previous century.

In conclusion I would recommend this book to the wide range of professionals who work in the mental health field and to all those in the community interested in the wider issues of mental health care.

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Florence Bretelle-Establet, *La santé en Chine du sud (1898–1928)*, Collection Asie orientale, Paris, CNRS Editions, 2002, pp. xv, 239, illus., €30.00 (paperback 2-271-06010-9)

This French volume on health in southern China offers a valuable insight into the health matters of a little studied area of China during a period of great chaos. It traces the decay of the Qing empire from 1898 to its collapse in 1911, followed by some years of warlord rule until a centralized Chinese government was reinstated under the Nationalist Party in 1928. It also chronicles how rapacious imperial powers carved out areas of preferential trading rights across Chinese territory. While never ceding direct rule to any foreign power, by the turn of the twentieth century the disintegrating Qing empire had granted France concession areas in six major Chinese cities in the three southern provinces of Yunnan, Guangxi and Guangzhou.

Bretelle-Establet focuses in particular on the south-western province of Yunnan, where the French imperialist effort was concentrated because of its juxtaposition to Indochina. After the outbreak of bubonic plague in Guangdong and Hong Kong in 1894, it became obvious to the French colonial authorities that the health situation in China needed to be carefully monitored if its settler population was to be protected and if disease was to be prevented from travelling along the expanding trade routes to Indochina. After the First World War, however, France’s strength as an imperial power waned

and those medical officers who remained in China had to turn from charitable medical activities to more lucrative private practice. This meant that their role shifted from one of observation of Chinese medical practices to a degree of participation with them. Bretelle-Establet is keen to point out that the type of doctor entering China in the late nineteenth century was, unlike his predecessor whose movements were confined to the coasts, a graduate of the Pasteurian school and of the scientific sort. She juxtaposes his viewpoint with the state of medicine and health relief in southern China at that time.

Here Bretelle-Establet offers a thorough account of the diseases prevalent in the region, the way in which local doctors approached them and the state institutions in place to deal with them. While stopping short of providing a distinctive Chinese medicine of the south-west, mainly due to a lack of comparison with medicine in other areas, Bretelle-Establet is successful in displaying some general trends in regional medical practice which will be of interest to other historians of Chinese medicine of the period.

Bretelle-Establet bases her study on a number of original primary sources. These include the sanitary correspondences of French medical officers, held mainly in the archives of overseas records in Aix-en-Provence, complemented by reports from medical missionaries based in the south-west. She also uses a variety of local Chinese prefectural gazetteers along with a handful of high-profile medical writings by doctors of the south-west.

Bretelle-Establet displays a clear understanding of nineteenth- and early-twentieth-century history of European medicine as well as a good command of the classical Chinese sources. If I do have a criticism it is that this history is perhaps too French in its orientation. Alphonse Laveran plays a centre role in the background to the history of malaria, but there is no mention of Patrick Manson, a man who spent some twenty years researching in south-east China. There are also a number of English-language works that would have assisted in the analysis of trends in nineteenth-century Chinese medicine but which appear to have gone