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A New History of the Irish in Australia

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role to play in the shaping of New Zealand's future if only we can wake ourselves to it' (32–3).

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A New History of the Irish in Australia

By Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall. Sydney: NewSouth Publishing, 2018. Pp. 436. A\$34.99 paper.

Elizabeth Malcolm and Dianne Hall have put the 'New' into the history of the Irish in Australia, delivering a fresh and informative perspective on the subject. The book is not a comprehensive survey, but the strength of the authors' collaboration lies in the breadth of topics they cover (some new to Irish Australian scholarship), and the variety of methodologies they adopt in doing so. They make use of novel primary source material and draw upon Australian scholarship as well as recent research on the Irish diaspora elsewhere in the world.

As Malcolm and Hall argue, the diaspora is a complex, multi-national, multi-generational network, and the Irish who moved through this space from the 1790s to the mid-twentieth century were a complex people. Under the three headings of 'Race', 'Stereotypes' and 'Politics', the authors tease out the contradictions inherent in the Irish diasporic experience in an Australian context. Malcolm and Hall do not always reach definitive conclusions, but that in itself is an acknowledgement of the complexity of the Irish experience. Importantly, the book avoids the trap of exceptionalising the Irish experience. The *New History* sits firmly within its Australian context, and the authors take care to note that the recourse to stereotypes, discrimination and the application of pseudo-science such as eugenics were not directed only at the Irish.

The book opens with a four-chapter exploration of the question of the Irish 'race' by tracing the thread of racialisation from negative stereotyping in the convict era, to the positive interpretations of Irish distinctiveness that

emerged as Irish Australians gained confidence in the nineteenth century. In their study of relations between Irish and Indigenous Australians, and with Chinese immigrants, the authors demonstrate the shifting position of the Irish in Australia. As elsewhere in the diaspora, the Irish played a significant role in delineating the boundaries of what it meant to be white in Australia. They may have been largely outsiders in Protestant British Australia, but the Irish strove to distinguish themselves from the Chinese and (with a few notable exceptions) enthusiastically supported immigration restrictions. The Irish/Indigenous encounter reveals the ambiguity of the Irish immigrant experience. Rather than highlight Irish involvement on either side of the frontier wars, Malcolm and Hall detail Irish involvement (as at the Myall Creek Massacre) as aggressors, but also as magistrates, police and judges. In the twentieth century, the authors note the common cause identified between Irish republicans and those involved in the Aboriginal Tent Embassy in Canberra.

Under the heading 'Stereotypes', the following two chapters make careful use of novel primary source material. Pictorial, written and theatrical sources reveal the depictions of Irishmen in Australian popular culture, ranging from the 'terrorist Fenian, [to] the stupid Paddy and the corrupt Irish politician' (159). In 'Bridget need not apply', Malcolm and Hall survey nineteenth-century employment advertisements, digitised by the National Library of Australia's Trove. In drawing out the 'No Irish Need Apply' (NINA) advertisements, Malcolm and Hall chart attitudes towards, and discrimination against, Irish workers, particularly female servants. The chapter also details for the reader the way in which the Irish community responded to NINA advertisements. Their response managed (at times) to undercut the advertisements' effectiveness, turning them into a rallying cry against discrimination.

Rounding out their study of stereotypes, Malcolm and Hall re-assess the history of the Irish and crime and madness in Australia. When Irishmen appear in general works on Australian history, they usually do so as participants in a series of well-known violent events. The authors undertook a statistical analysis to address the perennial question of how lawless and violent the Irish really were, and why Irish-

born immigrants were admitted to lunatic asylums in apparently disproportionate numbers in the nineteenth century. Their conclusion on both questions is qualified by the need for further research, but they suggest that working-class Irish adults were indeed more likely to make use of asylums, just as they were more likely to be arrested for public order offences. Malcolm and Hall call for a longer-term and more substantial study of crime in colonial Australia, and for further research on the multifaceted relationship between the Irish and asylums.

The final section of the book covers Irish involvement in colonial politics, spanning the Catholic Irish premiers of the nineteenth century, and Irish Australians in the political arena after 1900. These chapters provide a comprehensive study of Catholic Irish involvement in politics, building upon the themes of race and stereotyping laid out in the first chapters of the book.

The *New History* makes a serious contribution to the field of Irish Australian studies, to Australian history, and to Irish diaspora studies more broadly. The book showcases a variety of methodologies, uncovers new sources, and generously highlights numerous opportunities for further research. The authors deliver new perspectives on questions relevant to Australian history, such as the encounter on the frontier, and crime and mental health in colonial Australia. They also remind historians that the pervasive nature of stereotypes should not be overlooked. As Rónán McDonald wrote in his epigraph for the *New History*, Malcolm and Hall provide a necessary corrective to the false unity of the term 'Anglo-Celtic'. In their hands, the multifaceted nature of Irishness and the Irish experience in Australia is carefully traced, without overlooking the commonalities of experience with other groups in Australia's past.

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Frontiers of Labor: Comparative Histories of Australia and the United States

Edited by Greg Patmore and Shelton Stromquist.
Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2018.
Pp. 375. US\$32.00 paper.

Over the past decade, historical scholarship that brings Australia and the United States into the same frame has emerged as a flourishing area of research. Building upon the pioneering 1990s scholarship of Ian Tyrrell, Diane Kirkby and David Goodman, recent work by the likes of Marilyn Lake, Frances Steel, Benjamin Mountford, Ann McGrath, Clare Wright and Katherine Ellinghaus testifies to the entangled histories of and considerable human and intellectual traffic between the twin settler colonial societies. This scholarship is in part reflective of a broader turn towards the 'Pacific world' and the 'trans-Pacific' that has also seen a proliferation of US-Asian histories and renewed interest in America's 'Pacific empire'. More specifically, growing interest in the interconnected world of settler colonial societies, combined with the impulse to consider transnational ties beyond Britain, has nudged Australian scholars, in particular, towards research that places our own pasts in conversation with American history and historiography. To date, the fields of women's, indigenous, environmental and political history have all been enriched by this turn towards the United States.

Now, the publication of the edited collection *Frontiers of Labor* brings the fruits of this approach to labour history. With one editor from Australia (Patmore) and a second from the United States (Stromquist), and featuring nineteen contributors from across both countries, this is a truly transnational volume that draws novel comparisons and illuminates hitherto unrecognised connections between the histories of organised labour, working-class identities, radical politics and labour regulation on either side of the Pacific. The collection, which emerges from a 2015 conference at the University of Sydney, is premised on an obvious yet confounding question: why, given the otherwise remarkably similar trajectories of Australia and the United States, have the two countries had such seemingly divergent histories of labour? As noted in the introduction, Australia's high rates of unionisation and formidable Labor Party stand in stark contrast to the US's relatively anaemic labour movement. Over sixteen chapters, divided into six thematic sections, the book delves into the historical forces that undergird this divergence via a series of case-studies that extend from the coerced convict labour of the colonial era up until the anti-union agendas of our contemporary neoliberal age. Although the authors mobilise a wealth of empirical evidence to paint complex