

induced comas. Much is known about these controversial treatments in international contexts, but Kelly opens up discussion about their use in Ireland for the first time. The closing sections of the book cover late-twentieth-century deinstitutionalisation and the return of many mentally ill patients to the community, aided by new psychotropic drugs and improved non-institutional services. Kelly concludes by speculating on current mental health policies and the potential futures of Irish psychiatry which, he hopes, will draw from the challenges and mistakes of the past.

Kelly's *Hearing voices* avoids the trappings of many internalist, practitioner-written medical history books by refraining from offering an optimistic, but narrow, account of progress and improvement in knowledge, therapeutics and institutional care. Instead, Kelly, a psychiatrist, provides a reflective and meticulously researched book which refuses to shy away from the problems inherent in Ireland's mental health care system (past and present) and willingly uses historical analysis as a critical tool for interrogating present-day issues. *Hearing voices* is pragmatic but also deeply contextual.

There are few problems with Kelly's book. However, the north of Ireland is dealt with rather cursorily, even in the pages dealing with the pre-partition period. This is surprising given that extensive records exist for asylums in cities including Belfast and Derry. The author's self-imposed restriction to the south provides an occasion for strong analysis of the politics of mental healthcare in the southern jurisdiction. However, an opportunity seems to have been missed for examining (or at the very least commenting on) the trauma studies conducted after the west Belfast internment riots of the early 1970s, the strain placed on Northern Irish mental healthcare by conflict, not to mention ongoing controversies about Bloody Sunday and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Perhaps, also, more could have been said about the development of psychological services in Ireland and their relation to twentieth-century psychiatry and the integration of non-acute categories such as stress into psychiatry's diagnostic repertoire.

Nonetheless, overall, *Hearing voices: the history of psychiatry in Ireland* offers a comprehensive account of Ireland's mental healthcare system, covering the nineteenth to twenty-first centuries. This well-researched and well-written book will appeal to both historians and practitioners and is likely to become the standard text on the history of mental healthcare in Ireland. Relatively unexplored themes are covered which could form the basis of future research: intellectual disability, deafness, the categorisation of homosexuality as a psychiatric problem. The book is also well-designed and illustrated.

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YOUNG IRELAND AND THE WRITING OF IRISH HISTORY. By James Quinn. Pp vii, 227. Dublin: University College Dublin Press. 2015. €30 paperback.

The growth of interest in the study of history that so characterised the nineteenth century was in Britain marked especially by the idea that, throughout past ages, things had, on the whole, got better and better; in Ireland it was largely marked – and especially so in what might broadly be called nationalist circles – by the notion that things had got worse and worse. Thus historical wrongs lay at the centre of nationalist interpretations – Cromwell's massacres, the betrayal of Limerick, the penal laws – wrongs which were in no way mitigated by the passing of time. Indeed Thomas Davis 'saw this nurturing of grievance as one of the key uses of national history: so long as Ireland remembered her betrayals "her conscience will smite her, and her pride irritate her" until she was driven to right these wrongs'. And the Young Irelander who, as

James Quinn points out in this excellent and pioneering book, came closest to developing an explicit theory of history, John Mitchel, attacked Victorian historical complacency from precisely this angle, dismissing Macaulay as writing what amounted to self-congratulatory propaganda revolving around, as he put it in his *Jail Journal* of 1854, 'reverential flattery to British civilization, British prowess, honour, enlightenment, and all that, especially to the great nineteenth century and its astounding civilization'.

James Quinn shows that, while such ideas concerning the reading, uses, and writing of Irish history certainly pre-date the 1830s and 1840s, it was Young Ireland that shaped them into a distinct philosophy in which particular interpretations of the past could be used as weapons in contemporary political debates, a process which found a notable apotheosis in the 1916 Declaration of Independence's insistence that 'in every generation the Irish people have asserted their right to national freedom and sovereignty', that, indeed, 'six times during the past three hundred years they have asserted it in arms'.

None of this, however, meant, as Quinn makes clear, that the chief actors involved were either close or knowledgeable students of the past. Indeed, few Young Irelanders made any bones about the fact that their historical endeavours were designed to serve immediate political ends and were based on interpretations that were of a strongly 'present-centred, doctrinaire and determinist' character 'in which complexities, contradictions and discontinuities were ironed into a grand narrative of heroic resistance'. Those who wrote in the *Nation* thought it more important that works concerned with the past should be lively and inspire rather than that they should be 'comprehensively researched'. Quinn valuably analyses the reasons why this should have been so and why Young Ireland was, in this respect at least, by no means out of step with certain contemporary developments elsewhere in Europe where too were to be found writers intent on the creation of notably 'national' historical moods and dispositions among those who read their works. In this at least Davis and the others were at one with Macaulay and Carlyle, an identification they would undoubtedly have rejected with very considerable force.

The Young Ireland view of the past not only grew out of particular historical circumstances but was indeed part of a universal phenomenon enjoying a persistent and lengthy afterlife in which it became both common and even at times respectable to bend historical 'facts' to the requirements of ideologies of various, and by no means always beneficent, kinds. What lies at the centre of such developments is the plasticity of the very concept of what 'history' is and should be, whether a discipline with internal rules of procedure and propriety or a myth kitty from which to extract arguments attractive to contemporary political gladiators of various kinds. That the Young Irelanders, like so many of their English contemporaries, largely followed one of these paths is a reflection of the times in which they lived and of their very human inability to escape from its shackles and influences.

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WAR IN THE SHADOWS: THE IRISH-AMERICAN FENIANS WHO BOMBED VICTORIAN BRITAIN. By Shane Kenna. Pp xxx, 410. Sallins: Merrion. 2014.

Fenian violence and politics have been well scrutinized by scholars; research by Vincent Comerford, John Newsinger, Matthew Kelly, Niall Whelehan, Jonathan Gantt, and Owen McGee (among others) provides good examples of prior work. Shane Kenna's detailed and impressive monograph *War in the shadows* could have engaged more fully and historiographically than it does with such scholarship. But the depth of